

# **Synoikizing Megalopolis: The Scope of the Synoikism and the Interests of Local Arkadian Communities\***

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This paper examines what can be deduced about the political interplay among Arkadian communities over the planning of the synoikism of Megalopolis, despite the divergence of Diodorus 15.72.4 and Pausanias 8.27.3-4 on the extent of the synoikism. Mantinea renounced any ambition to expand into and beyond northern Mainalia (except possibly for Helisson), but Tegea was still free to extend its influence over some southern Mainalians. If Methydrion, Thisoa, and Teuthis were detached from Orchomenos as part of the synoikism, that would favour Kleitor and Mantinea. The failure to include Kynuria in the synoikism, as seen from *IG V.2, 1*, is surprising, but may be because Elis and Triphylia to the west were friendly at the time. These considerations do not determine whether Diodorus or Pausanias offers the better account of the synoikism, but do show some of the interests at stake.

Megalopolis was synoikized some time between the battle of Leuktra in 371 and 367 B.C.; the precise date is not critical for the present study.<sup>1</sup> The synoikism was managed by a board of ten oikists appointed by the Arkadian Confederacy, and was clearly a matter of federal policy. One major purpose of the synoikism must have been to unite what became the Megalopolis basin under the control of a single *polis*, thus making easier the strategic control of the several major routes through the basin.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the synoikism a particular concern was to

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\* I am grateful to Dr. Th.H. Nielsen for comments which have improved this text, but responsibility for remaining faults is of course mine.

1. See Hornblower 1990; Roy 1994, 193.

2. On the routes in the area see Pikoulas 1988, 198-227 and 1999b: see also Jost 1973, with a very useful map (Planche IV). Both Diod. Sic. 15.72.4 and Paus. 8.27.1 suggest that the synoikism was carried out for strategic reasons (see Nielsen 2002, 415 and 419), and Demand 1990, 111-8, lays stress on this aspect of the synoikism.

hinder the Spartan army from marching from the Eurotas valley over the comparatively low watershed into the southern Megalopolis basin and from there southwest to Messenia, west to Elis and Triphylia, north to central Arkadia and beyond, or east, to Asea, Tegea, and beyond. To achieve this purpose the new community must have been intended from the outset to have a large territory. How large the territory needed to be, or in other words which earlier Arkadian communities needed to be incorporated in the new Great City, must have been a federal decision. The decision would affect both the communities to be incorporated and the larger Arkadian *poleis* which had on occasion extended their influence into the area now given to Megalopolis. It is this paper's purpose to consider both some of the strategic issues at stake in planning the synoikism and the interests which some of the more powerful Arkadian communities had in the area.

Modern historians debate exactly how much territory Megalopolis received, especially because the two main ancient literary sources, Diodorus Siculus and Pausanias, give very different accounts, or perhaps accounts with very different emphasis. Diodorus 15.72.4 says that 20 villages of the Mainalians and Parthians were incorporated in Megalopolis, while Pausanias 8.27.3-4 lists 39 or so communities which it was planned to include in the new foundation.<sup>3</sup> Pausanias also knew, however, that not all the communities in his list did actually join Megalopolis. Some historians, including the present writer, have argued that Pausanias' list is derived from a federal decree, but others dispute that view. The problems involved have been set out with admirable clarity in the very recent book on Arkadia by Nielsen, and it is sufficient here to refer to his account.<sup>4</sup> Nielsen also gives good reasons for believing, as most modern scholars do, that Pausanias' list, whether or not derived from an authentic federal decree, is a reliable guide to the topography of the area.<sup>5</sup>

Another important text is the inscription *IG V.2, 1*, an Arkadian federal decree honouring an Athenian. To the decree are appended the names of federal *damiorgoi* listed according to their home communities. Of the fifty, ten were from Megalopolis; five each from Tegea, Mantinea, Kynuria, Orchomenos, Kleitor, Heraia, and Thelpusa; three from Mainalia; and two from Lepreon. Though a puzzling number of communities, particularly of northern Arkadia, are missing, it is at any rate clear that those states which do appear in the list were members of the Confederacy at the time of the decree. Since Megalopolis is mentioned the decree is certainly later than the synoikism, and so clearly the

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3. At least one name appears to have been lost in a lacuna in the text.

4. Nielsen 2002, 414-55.

5. Nielsen 2002, 280-1.

Mainalians and the Kynurians continued to exist as political entities after Megalopolis was founded. Since the decree is for an Athenian, and since an image of Fortune touching a trophy on the stone suggests some connection with a military victory, the decree is probably later than the Arkadian-Athenian mutual defence pact of 366. Since both Mantinea and Tegea are represented, the decree must have been passed either before they took opposite sides when the Confederacy split ca. 363 or after a reunification, if any such ever occurred.<sup>6</sup> Thus, even if not datable with certainty, the decree was most likely passed between 366 and ca. 363.

In order to unite the Megalopolis basin it was necessary to give Megalopolis a territory including the Eutresians, in the northern and north-west part of the basin, and the Parrhasians, in the west and south-west parts. It was also necessary to incorporate in the synoikism the territory farther south recently taken from the Spartans.<sup>7</sup> It is generally agreed that these areas were included in Megalopolis, even though Diodorus' report of the synoikism does not mention Eutresian territory.<sup>8</sup>

Pausanias and Diodorus agree that Mainalian territory was also incorporated in Megalopolis, but Mainalian *damiorgoi* appear on *IG V.2, 1*, and it is clear from Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.5.5, that at least some southern Mainalian communities were separate from Megalopolis in 362. According to *IG V.2, 1* the Mainalians had only three *damiorgoi*, although we know of ten or more Mainalian communities; since the Kynurians, for whom only four communities are known, had five *damiorgoi*, the three Mainalian *damiorgoi* probably did not represent all Mainalians.<sup>9</sup> The obvious explanation is that the Mainalians were divided at the time of the synoikism, some southern Mainalians remaining separate while other Mainalians joined Megalopolis.<sup>10</sup> Oresthasion at least of the southern Megalopolitan communities probably joined Megalopolis, since it controls a major route eastwards out of the southern Megalopolitan basin.<sup>11</sup> Other southern Mainalian communities – Asea, Pallantion, Eutaia, Iasaia, and Peraitheis<sup>12</sup> – while of strate-

6. Roy 2000, 312; Nielsen 2002, 305, 310, 435 and 477.

7. On Arkadia's fluctuating frontier with Lakonia see Shipley 2000, 369-76.

8. The excellent map of Arkadia originally published in Jost 1985 is reprinted on a smaller scale in Nielsen 2002, 640-1, and also in Jost 1998.

9. On the membership of Arkadian 'tribal' groups like the Mainalians and Kynurians see Nielsen 2002, 537-9.

10. Moggi 1974, 76.

11. On Oresthasion, situated at modern Anemodouri, see Pikoulas 1988, 102-12. It is odd that later in the 4th century an Oresthasian appears in *SEG* 20, 1964, no. 716.23 apparently separately from Megalopolis: this may be because the man was evidently resident at Tegea.

12. On the locations of these communities see Jost 1998 on Pausanias 8.27.3 (Eutaia and Iasaia), 8.36.7 (Peraitheis), 8.44.3 (Asea), and 8.44.5-6 (Pallantion).

gic importance for control of the area west and southwest of Tegea, lay outside the Megalopolitan basin and well to the east of the territory which had to be under Megalopolis' immediate command.

Whether or not Mainalian communities joined Megalopolis was important for both Mantinea and Tegea. During the Peloponnesian War Mantinea had extended its power through northern Mainalia into Parrhasia, building up a network of subordinate allies. This extended Mantinean influence was lost when Sparta defeated Mantinea and its allies in 418.<sup>13</sup> At the same time Tegea also led a group of allies, and it is very hard to see where Tegea could have found such subordinate allies except in southern Mainalia. How long this Tegean alliance lasted is unknown.<sup>14</sup> Despite its setback in 418 Mantinea kept an interest in northern Mainalia, as the inscribed *sympoliteia* agreement between Mantinea and Helisson shows.<sup>15</sup>

Mantineia, which was prominent in the Arkadian Confederacy and provided two of Megalopolis' ten oikists, must at the very least have acquiesced in the decision to give northern Mainalia to Megalopolis, and so renounced any ambition to expand through the area again. In return Mantinea may have got *sympoliteia* with Helisson, if that actually coincided with the synoikism, for which there is no evidence.<sup>16</sup> Another Mantinean gain may have been a curtailment of Orchomenos' influence (see below). If it was originally planned to incorporate the southern Mainalians in Megalopolis, Tegea must also have initially renounced the possibility of expansion; but, as events turned out, Tegea could still extend its interests among the southern Mainalians. In fact Xenophon, *Hellenica* 7.5.5, says that in 362 those Arkadians who sided with Thebes were "the Tegeans and the Megalopolitans and the Aseans and the Pallantians and any *poleis* which, because of being small and being located in the midst of these, were compelled." The Aseans and the Pallantians were themselves southern Mainalians, and other small communities in the area will also have been either Mainalian or within Megalopolitan territory. Nielsen suggests that the phrase "ἐν μέσσοις ταύταις", translated above as "in the midst of these", should if taken strictly mean that the smaller *poleis* were actually located within the territory of one or other larger *polis*, and therefore dependent *poleis*.<sup>17</sup> Nielsen may well be right but, whatever

13. On this Mantinean expansion see Nielsen 2002, 367-72, citing Thuc. 4.134.1-2; 5.28.3-29.2; 5.33.1-3; 5.47; 5.67.2; 5.81.1; and also Pikoulas 1990. On the topography of northern Mainalia see Pikoulas 1999a.

14. On the Tegean alliance see Nielsen 2002, 366-7.

15. *SEG* 37, 1987, no. 340. On the date see Nielsen 2002, 359-63, 447-9: several scholars have suggested the earlier 4th century, but 350-40 has also been proposed recently.

16. Nielsen 2002, 359 notes that the *sympoliteia* inscription "could very well date to ca. 370."

17. Nielsen 2002, 349-50.

the precise interpretation of the phrase, Xenophon's reference to compulsion suggests that the larger *poleis* exercised considerable influence over these smaller neighbours, and Megalopolis and Tegea presumably had the strength to claim more influence than Asea and Pallantion. Yet the situation in southern Mainalia was accepted by the Confederacy, as the presence of Mainalian *damiorgoi* on *IG* V.2, 1 shows. It thus appears that, while Mantinea had given up any possibility of dominating northern Mainalia (except perhaps Helisson) and beyond it Parthasia, the Confederacy allowed Tegea scope to exercise influence over southern Mainalian neighbours.

To the north of the Megalopolis basin lay three communities, Methydrion, Thisoa, and Teuthis, according to Pausanias 8.27.4 in *synteleia* with Orchomenos. His meaning is not clear, but his term suggests that the three communities were somehow subordinate to Orchomenos.<sup>18</sup> Also in this general area were three other communities, Kallia, Dipoina, and Nonakris, described as the Tripolis (Paus. 8.27.4): their locations are not certain, but may lie north of Methydrion, Thisoa, and Teuthis.<sup>19</sup> According to Pausanias all six communities were to be incorporated in Megalopolis. Some indirect support for his account may be provided by an inscription showing the Arkadian Confederacy demarcating a frontier from the point where Orchomenos, Torthyneion, and Methydrion met.<sup>20</sup> If the frontier between Orchomenos and Methydrion was being defined, and if the inscription is of the 360s as has often been supposed, then the occasion may well have been the separation of Methydrion from Orchomenos and its incorporation in Megalopolis.<sup>21</sup> Teuthis and Thisoa lay west of Methydrion, and must also have been detached from Orchomenos if Methydrion was. Megalopolis did not need to possess these six communities in order to control the Megalopolis basin, though they would provide manpower, resources, and control of routes north from the basin. There may however have been another reason for giving these communities to Megalopolis.

According to Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.36-37, Kleitor and Orchomenos were at war in 378, though he mentions the war only incidentally and does not say why or where it was fought. Since Kleitor and Orchomenos had no common frontier, the war must therefore also have concerned other communities in north-central Arkadia, possibly including Methydrion, Thisoa, Teuthis, and the Tripolis. At any rate Kleitor and Orchomenos were clearly hostile in the decade before the synoikism of Megalopolis. Kleitor evidently gained some prominence

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18. Nielsen 2002, 352-7.

19. Nielsen 2002, 314; note the cautious comments of Jost 1998, 220.

20. Thür and Täuber 1994, no. 14.

21. See Nielsen 2002, 352.

in the early years of the Arkadian Confederacy, since it provided two of the ten oikists of Megalopolis.<sup>22</sup> Orchomenos on the other hand opposed the formation of the Arkadian Confederacy and remained loyal to Sparta as long as it could (Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.11-17 and 29). According to Xenophon Orchomenos acted in this way out of enmity towards Mantinea, another prominent member of the Confederacy. It would therefore be entirely understandable if the Confederacy chose to weaken Orchomenos by depriving it of the three communities associated with it, and giving them and also the Tripolis to Megalopolis, which would be strong enough to ensure that Orchomenos did not recover its influence in the area.<sup>23</sup> In that case Kleitor and Mantinea, while making no direct gain, would have seen the influence of a hostile rival curtailed.

Finally the Kynurians, west of the Megalopolitan basin, must be considered. Their territory controlled important routes from Megalopolis to Elis and Triphylia, and it might have seemed prudent to include Kynuria in Megalopolis in order to strengthen Megalopolis' western frontier. According to Pausanias 8.27.4 the Kynurians were indeed to be synoikized, but Kynurian *damiorgoi* appear in *IG V.2*, 1. Since the Kynurians had five *damiorgoi*, while we know of only four Kynurian communities, it seems very unlikely that the Kynurians had been divided as were the Mainalians. Thus, at least in an early phase of Megalopolis' existence, the Kynurians were not part of it. It is impossible to tell whether Pausanias is wrong and it was not originally intended to include the Kynurians in the synoikism, or whether they successfully resisted an attempt to incorporate them; but clearly the Confederacy, by allowing the Kynurians to have *damiorgoi*, recognized that they were not part of Megalopolis. The fact that they were not included considerably weakened Megalopolis' control of the routes which led into the basin from the west. However, that may not have seemed to be a problem at the time of the synoikism. Beyond Kynuria lay Elis and Triphylia, friendly territory in the early years of the Confederacy.<sup>24</sup> The Triphylians in fact adopted Arkadian nationality and became part of the Confederacy, thus removing any concern about routes from Megalopolis to Triphylia.<sup>25</sup> It had however been a main objective of the Eleans to regain control over Triphylia (Xen.

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22. Paus. 8.27.2. It is not necessary to suppose, as does Jost 1998, 217, that the list of oikists shows that the Confederacy was originally conceived in modest terms: a board of ten oikists would be sufficient to carry out the synoikism, and a membership made up of two men each from the two major eastern Arkadian *poleis* (Mantinea and Tegea), a major north-Arkadian *polis* (Kleitor), and two of the communities included in the synoikismos (Mainalia and Parrhasia) would allow a reasonable range of interests to be represented.

23. See Roy 1972.

24. On Peloponnesian politics of these years see Roy 1994.

25. On Triphylia see Nielsen 2002, 248-69.

*Hell.* 6.5.2), and they must have been extremely displeased to see the Triphylians becoming Arkadian. By 368 the Eleans were sufficiently disenchanted with the Arkadians to be gratified when the Spartans defeated the Arkadians and their allies in the ‘Tearless Battle’ (*Xen. Hell.* 7.1.32), and by 365 the Eleans and the Arkadians were at war (*Xen. Hell.* 7.4.12-13). However, despite this later deterioration in Elean-Arkadian relations, it may well have seemed unnecessary at the time of the synoikism to make Kynuria a western bulwark of Megalopolitan territory, since the Kynurians were themselves members of the Arkadian Confederacy.

These various considerations do not allow a choice in favour of either Diodorus’s relatively limited version of the Megalopolitan synoikism or Pausanias’ larger version. It is entirely plausible, though not certain, that Megalopolis was given at its creation territory north of the Megalopolitan basin comprising Methydrion, Thisoa, Teuthis, and the Tripolis, which would favour Pausanias’ account rather than Diodorus’. On the other hand the *damiorgoi* listed in *IG V.2, 1* show that some Mainalian and Kynurian communities listed by Pausanias among those to be incorporated in the synoikism did not in fact join Megalopolis on its creation, and that the Arkadian Confederacy recognized their status as communities separate from Megalopolis. At the time of the synoikism these Mainalian and Kynurian communities may well not have seemed necessary for the control of access to the Megalopolitan basin. Though both Pausanias and Diodorus report that some communities which were meant to be synoikized resisted incorporation, their reports do not explain why those particular Mainalian and Kynurian communities, if part of the planned Megalopolitan territory, were able to extract themselves from the synoikism. Diodorus (15.94.1) reports a widespread and violent reaction against the synoikism by constituent communities, but his report clearly refers to communities actually incorporated in Megalopolis, and is dated to 361, probably too late to explain any community’s appearance in *IG V.2, 1*. Pausanias’ report of resistance (8.27.5-6) is not clearly dated but seems to refer to the time when Megalopolis was being created. He suggests that most of those who were to join Megalopolis did so without complaint, but that four communities opposed the synoikism: Lykoa (Mainalian, or possibly Kynurian), Trikolonoi (Eutresian), Lykosoura, and Trapezous (both Parrhasian). It is difficult to see in his account a process which would explain how four Kynurian communities and some five southern Mainalian ones, if expected to participate in the synoikism, succeeded in extricating themselves. Pausanias also, after listing communities that in one way or another suffered from the synoikism, says (8.27.7) that Pallantion alone “even then” enjoyed a milder fate: the words “even then” may refer to the time of the synoikism<sup>26</sup> and so explain why a plan to include Pallantion in the

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26. So Jost 1998; *contra* Nielsen 2002, 426-7.

synoikism was not carried out, but Pausanias explicitly refers only to Pallantion and not to a group of several southern Mainalian communities. In fact there is much that we do not know about the internal politics of the Arkadian Confederacy in the 360s, and it is conceivable that two groups of communities which did not seem essential to the strategic needs of Megalopolis were able to negotiate with the Confederacy their withdrawal from the synoikism and their representation among the *damiorgoi*. We are therefore left with a choice between believing that, as Pausanias says, it was originally planned to include in the synoikism of Megalopolis the Kynurians and all the Mainalians, but that, as Pausanias does not say, the Kynurians and some southern Mainalians then succeeded in extricating themselves and persuading the Arkadian Confederacy to recognize their continuing independence; or believing that Pausanias is simply wrong in including the Kynurians and all the Mainalians among the communities to be synoikized. Diodorus' report of the synoikism is very brief and almost certainly incomplete, omitting as it does any mention of the Eutresians, and it would not be surprising if his figure of 20 for the communities incorporated in Megalopolis were inexact.

It is however clear that there was an interplay of interests within the Arkadian Confederacy when decisions were taken about what to include in Megalopolis. A similar interplay, and even a willingness to make concessions, is evident in other decisions of the Confederacy. In the distribution of *damiorgoi* seen in *IG V.2, 1* Megalopolis had ten while no other Arkadian community had more than five, and the communities which had been powerful within Arkadia like Mantinea and Tegea had no more *damiorgoi* than less prominent federal members. It seems that the *damiorgoi* were assigned in such a way as to ensure that none of the older Arkadian communities enjoyed a dominant position, and that these major communities accepted such a distribution. Likewise when decisions were made about which communities to include in Megalopolis there was some willingness to make concessions. The Mantineans accepted that territory over which they had extended their influence in the later 5th century should be Megalopolitan and therefore unavailable to them, though they may have received some compensation. Moreover they, like other Arkadians, apparently acquiesced when most of the southern Mainalians were left outside Megalopolis, even though as a result the Tegeans could reestablish some of their earlier influence in southern Mainalia. If, as seems likely, Megalopolitan territory was extended in the synoikism well north of the Megalopolitan basin in order to deprive Orchomenos, at first an opponent of the Confederacy, of influence in central Arkadia, then yet other interests affected the scope of Megalopolis. And finally, if, as is possible but not certain, Pausanias is right that it was originally planned to include in Megalopolis both Kynuria and the southern Mainalians, then yet more political manoeuvring must have taken place in order to allow these communities



to remain outside the new *polis*. Thus, despite our limited evidence, we can see some of the political interplay which determined the scope of Megalopolis, and we have grounds for suspecting more.

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