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CITIES OF PROVINCE ACHAEA IN ROMAN PERIOD

Greek history under the Roman Empire was sadly neglected and woefully under-researched. The situation began to change in the second half of the XX century, especially after the intense archaeological excavations in Greece post-1970. Greek history did not end with the destruction of Corinth in 146 BCE. Next century, filled with Roman civil wars, proved to be very challenging for the Greek cities of the province Achaea. Achaea suffered destruction and economic collapse. But, with the coming of the Principate and Octavian Augustus, Greek cities experienced an unprecedented era of peace. That peace, however, brought some changes. New elites, new settlements, new settlement patterns emerged. Many a Roman emperor was interested in the old glory of Hellas, and most of all the famous philhellene Hadrian. The crisis of the third century CE and barbarian invasions at last affected Achaea. The Heruli came and pillaged the province in 267 CE. This paper aims to give an overview of the history of the province Achaea from the destruction of Corinth to the invasion of the Heruli.

Keywords: *mainland Greece, province Achaea, Roman colonies, Greek cities, Corinth, Roman Empire*

Introduction

The history of Greece under Roman rule has long been neglected.[1] Most of the textbooks on the history of Ancient Greece end their narrative either with the battle of Chaeronea 338 BCE or the Achaean War 146 BCE. The fate of Greek *poleis* after that date did not merit the attention of researchers. The period of the Roman Empire was regarded as a time of decline and collapse of the Hellenic polis. This is best reflected in George Finley's 1857 work.[2] Finley paints the province of Achaea in very dark colours and believes that Roman times led to the impoverishment and depopulation of Greece. Narrative sources corroborated this view of Greece under Roman rule.[3]

1 Up until circa 1970s.
2 G. FINLAY 1857.
3 Strab. 8.8.1; Plut. *De def. or.* 413F–414A; Dio Chrys. 7.33–36; 33.25; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 26.

However, archaeological material testifies differently. Intense archaeological research in Greece after 1970 provided extensive material that allowed the province Achaea to be seen in a new light. As a result, more books and more articles have emerged that give a new perspective on this topic.[4] It turned out that the *poleis* of Achaea were far from decaying and depopulating. Although they could not be compared to the Greek cities in Asia Minor, the cities of Achaea still had a significant history.

From the Achaean War to Octavian Augustus

As early as the end of the Second Macedonian War (197 BCE), it could be said that the Roman Republic was the dominant force in the Balkan Peninsula. Macedonia fell in 167 BCE and Greece after the Achaean War in 146 BCE. Achaean League, at the time the most powerful political entity in mainland Greece, was abolished. Further, consul Lucius Mummius destroyed Corinth, one of the League's most important cities. The bulk of the population of Corinth was sold into slavery, and the land became *ager publicus* rented by the Senate to Sicyonians to cultivate it and collect revenue. The rest of the Greeks, except free *poleis* like Athens, were under the authority of the governor of Macedonia.[5]

The Roman state seems to have paid little attention to Greece for the next half-century. That changed drastically with the Civil War period. Lucius Cornelius Sulla clashed with generals of Pontic King Mithridates during the First Mithridates War (88–84 BCE) in Greece. Athens was besieged and devastated because of its alliance with Mithridates, Delphi was looted, and the final battles between the Romans and Mithridates' forces took place at Chaeronea and Orchomenus.[6]

The main conflict between Julius Caesar and Gnaeus Pompey took place in Greece. The Peloponnese and central Greece were loyal to Pompey, and the northern and northwestern parts were loyal to Caesar. Caesar was gradually drawing Greek cities to his side, but some cities remained pro-Pompey until the end. The final battle took place at the Thessalian city of Pharsalus in 48 BCE.[7] From that moment on, Greece slowly began to transform into a province of the Roman Empire. Pompey and Caesar had other interests in Greece beside the war. After his victory over the pirates, Pompey settled almost 20,000 captives on the site of the Achaean city of Dyme, a territory that had been abandoned for some time. That pirate settlement did not last long.[8] A far more permanent settlement was created by Caesar, who restored Corinth as a Roman colony into which he settled the freedmen of Rome and the war veterans. He also settled a Roman colony in Butrotus (present-day Butrinto).[9]

Greece was also the stage of conflict after Caesar's assassination. Marcus Junius Brutus recruited Roman youth in Athens and burdened Greek cities with war taxes. Mark Antony also extracted money from cities. After the Battle of Philippi, Greece came into the field of interest

4 A. KOUREMENOS 2019: 53; S.E. ALCOCK 1993: 27.

5 Paus. 7.16; Cic. *Leg. Agr.* 1.5; Strab. 8.6.3; G. FINLAY: 1857: 40, 45; H. HILL 1946: 37–38; D. G. ROMANO 2003: 280; D. ENGELS 1990: 15–16, 96; D. G. ROMANO 2006: 71.

6 M. MIRKOVIĆ 2014: 242–250.

7 E. J. OWENS 1976: 719–720.

8 Plut. *Pomp*. 28; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 132; U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 550.

9 Strab. 8.6.23; App. *Pun.* 136; Plut. *Caes.* 57; Dio Cass. 43.50.3–4; G. FINLAY 1857: 66; H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 24; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 133; D. ENGELS 1990: 16; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 62; D. ÉLISABETH 1975: 285.

of Mark Antony.[10] In 36 BCE Peloponnese was given to Sextus Pompey to incorporate him into the ruling system. However, this situation lasted for a short time, as Sextus Pompey soon died. Antony charged the Greek cities with monetary levies and in preparation for the showdown with Octavian. The final clash of the two was in a naval battle near Actium, again off the coast of Greece.[11] In commemoration of his victory, Octavian created the city of Nicopolis (the "city of victory") in the position where his camp was located near Actium. By forced synoecism, the population of large parts of Epirus, Aetolia and Acarnania, was settled in Nicopolis, an action which left those areas mostly unpopulated.[12] In line with his adoptive father Julius Caesar, Octavian created the colony of Patrae in 14 BCE on the south shore of the Gulf of Corinth. He synoecised a large number of settlements from both sides of the Gulf of Corinth.[13]

Mainland Greece was affected by Octavian's reorganization of the Empire in 27 BCE. The province of Achaea was formed, which included *poleis* in the Peloponnese, central Greece and southern Epirus.[14] Not later than the period of the Antonines, Epirus, with Acarnania and the Ionian Islands, was separated from Achaea and became a separate procuratorial province with a capital in Nicopolis.[15] The province of Achaea was initially senatorial, which meant that it was governed by a proconsul whom the Senate had sent.[16]

A short history of Achaea province during the Principate

As mentioned above, Greece has been gradually transformed into a province since the time of Julius Caesar. When Antony introduced constant levies on the cities of the Greek mainland Octavian turned those levies into regular taxes for the Roman coffers.[17] In the year 27 BCE Achaea became a senatorial province. This meant that the Senate sent governors to the province, elected from former consuls. Besides, the emperors relied on the local elite.[18]

The Achaea province was not on any front, which largely determined its history. Deprived of direct military danger, the cities of the Achaea developed peacefully until the third-century crisis and the barbarian invasions. It is by far the longest peaceful period that Greek cities have ever experienced.[19]

However, at the beginning of the Principate, the cities of Achaea experienced many economic difficulties.[20] The Roman colonies of Corinth and Patrae were created precisely to stimulate Greece's dilapidated economy. Fiscal levies continued to burden Greek cities, so much so that the provinces of Achaea and Macedonia were added to the province of Moesia and exempted

10 E. J. OWENS 1976: 725.
11 E. J. OWENS 1976: 726–727; M. MELFI 2014: 756.
12 G. FINLAY 1857: 68; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 133, 138; U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 554, 558–559, 561.
13 Paus. 7.18; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 133, 136–138; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 64; U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 550–551.
14 Strab. 17.3.25; G. FINLAY 1857: 42; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 14; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 351; F. K. DROGULA 2015: 366; U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 558.
15 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 14, 145.
16 Dio 53.12.4; cf. E. J. OWENS 1976: 718.
17 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 20; E. J. OWENS 1976: 729.
18 Strab. 17.3.25; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 16, 18; F. MILLAR 1966: 163–164; On Roman provinces see also J. RICHARDSON 2001.
19 C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 202–203.
20 Cic. *Ad Fam.* 4.5; Paus. 7.17; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 85; A. RIZAKIS 2013: 22.

from tax at the beginning of Tiberius's rule. This is the most significant change that Tiberius has implemented.[21]

Caligula had no major influence on the province of Achaea. His successor Claudius separated provinces of Achaea and Macedonia from Moesia and returned them to the Senate.[22]

Nero proved to be the first in a series of Roman emperors who were admirers of Greek culture. He toured in early 66 CE the most important places of the Achaea, accompanied by a large escort. Inspired by the example of Titus Flamininus, Nero proclaimed the freedom of the Greeks in the same place, on Isthmus. This time, it practically meant an exemption from direct taxes paid to Rome. The move made Nero popular among the Greeks, and proved to be a significant economic boost to the province itself.[23]

It turned out that this ordinance lasted as long as Nero was alive. Vespasian, the sole victor of the civil war in 68–69 CE, repealed this decree to recover the finances of the Roman Empire.[24] When Corinth was hit by a devastating earthquake during the 70s CE, Vespasian invested heavily in rebuilding it. The new city was built in marble. The extent of the reconstruction was such that the city was re-established as a Vespasian's colony called Colonia Iulia Flavia Augusta Corinthiensis.[25]

The era of the Antonine dynasty proved to be very beneficial to the Greeks, and in that time the province of Achaea reached its greatest prosperity. As part of his preparations for the war against the Dacians, Trajan built a road in the west of the Achaea province that started from Hermione and connected the most important centres: Patrae, Corinth and Nicopolis.[26] His successor Hadrian proved to be the greatest benefactor of the Greeks, which is why he was given the title of *Restitutor Achaeae*.[27] It is difficult to enumerate all his benefactions to the Greek cities. It should be noted that Corinth and Athens, the administrative and cultural centres of Achaea, reaped the greatest benefits of his philhellenism. Hadrian built an aqueduct in Corinth that brought water from Stymphalian Lake 30 kilometres from the city. He extended the route between Corinth and Megara.[28] In Athens, he completed the construction of the famous Temple of the Olympian Zeus, begun as early as Pisistratus' reign. He also built an aqueduct in Athens that would bring water from Mount Lycabettus, but the project was completed by his successor, Antoninus Pius.[29] In the time of the Antonines, all cities in the province had better water supply, which significantly improved the quality of life.[30] Another important Hadrian's project was the Panhellenion. It was an association, based in Athens, that brought together Greek cities in the Aegean Basin. The Panhellenion had no

21 Tac. *Ann*. 1.76; G. FINLAY 1857: 44; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 16, 22.

22 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 16.

23 Paus. 7.17; Suet. *Nero* 24; Dio Cass. 63.11.1; Philostr. *VA* 5.41; Nero's tour and freedom of Greeks: S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 16; D. ENGELS 1990: 20; B. E. LEVY 1989: 63, 66; P. A. GALLIVAN 1973: 231–234; K. R. BRADLEY 1979: 152–157; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 351; J.-L. FERRARY 2011: 13; economic boost: H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 78;.

24 Suet. *Vesp.* 8; Paus. 7.17; Philostr. *VA* 5.41; G. FINLAY 1857: 56; D. G. ROMANO 2003: 298; D. ENGELS 1990: 20; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 351.

25 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 26; D. G. ROMANO 2003: 298–299; D. ENGELS 1990: 62; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 328.

26 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 121.

27 G. FINLAY 1857: 73–74; H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 62. See also P. VITTI 2016; D. ENGELS 1990: 53; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 356.

28 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 124; D. ENGELS 1990: 53.

29 *SIA* VI 2; Dio Cass. 69.16.1; C. C. VERMEULE 1968: 24, 68; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 360; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 98.

30 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 125–126; C. ANDO 2000: 309; J. P. NAY 2007: 11.

political function, but it served to celebrate the imperial cult, as a link between the emperor and numerous Greek cities and made possible the connection of the elite of the various *poleis*. Also, its importance is that it is the first entity in the Roman Empire to encompass more than one province.[31]

The well-being achieved under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius continued under Marcus Aurelius, another famous philhellene emperor, and his son Commodus. Achaea remained out of the civil war that followed Commodus' assassination. The Severan dynasty continued with imperial benevolence over the Greek cities. Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus, was especially respected.[32] However, after the end of that dynasty in 235 CE, a difficult period for the Empire ensued. The civil wars were accompanied by a general economic collapse. The impoverishment of the Achaea province probably occurred. The barbaric incursions that shook the border provinces did not reach Achaea for a long time. However, in 267 CE a large force of Goths and Heruli descended into Greece. They ravaged Athens, Corinth and Argos, before heading back and finally being defeated at Naissus by emperor Claudius Gothicus.[33]

Cities of the Province of Achaea

Achaea was one of the most urbanized provinces of the Roman Empire, and polis were the basic organizational units within the province.[34] Under Roman rule, the provincial cities experienced a long period of peace and economic progress. During the civil wars that followed the fall of the Republic, many were devastated or otherwise economically crippled.

Two types of cities need to be distinguished: old polis and Roman colonies. Poleis that were previously city-states in a real sense of the word, in the Roman Empire are actually more or less autonomous cities, with their own administration and sometimes large territory. The Romans left the cities their nominal independence.[35] This meant that the cities had retained earlier seemingly democratic order. The *poleis* were still governed by their old political bodies: assembly, councils and elected magistrates. However, their powers were significantly restricted, primarily to domestic politics and religious matters. The Roman predominance mostly reflected in the fact that the cities had virtually no independent foreign policy and had to pay taxes.[36] There were also exceptions: Sparta and Athens were exempt from taxes (*civitates liberae et immunes*), but could be burdened with irregular duties.[37]

The most important old cities in the province of Achaea were Athens, Sparta, and Argos, which flourished in the imperial times thanks to the interest sparked by their illustrious past. Athens, the province's true intellectual center, especially thrived.[38] On the other hand, famous cities such

31 *IG* IV² 1 384; Dio Cass. 69.16.2; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 17; M. W. GLEASON 2006: 232; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 360; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 81–83, 86–87, 92; J.-L. FERRARY 2011: 14.

32 C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 340.

33 C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 340; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 98; D. ENGELS 1990: 21, claims that the Heruli did not reach Corinth.

34 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 18; cf. S. DMITRIEV 2017: 195–209.

35 Plin. *Ep.* 8.24; J. P. NAY 2007: 7.

36 Plut. *Praecepta* 824E-F; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 150–151; M. W. GLEASON 2006: 234; J. P. NAY 2007: 8; D. ROUSSET 2008: 317.

37 Plin. *Ep.* 8.24; Strab. 8.5.5; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 22.

38 Dio Chrys. 44.6; Strab. 8.6.18; J. H. OLIVER 1970: 80; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 266; R. SWEETMAN 2012: 31, 35; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1986: 95.

as Megalopolis, Sicyon, Megara and Thebes were diminishing.[39] Nicopolis was one of the significant new cities in Achaea, until Epirus was detached as a separate province. It was a memorial of Octavian's victory over Antony at Actium. Nicopolis was not a Roman colony, but a purely Greek city with Greek institutions, created by compulsory synoecism. The population of Epirus, Aetolia and Acarnania was settled there. Nicopolis was inaugurated in 27 BCE, the same year that Octavian received the title of Augustus. Two festivals were established about the same time: Actia and Sebastia, which served to glorify the emperor. Nicopolis was included in the reorganized Delphic Amphictyony, in which Nicopolis received 6 delegates out of 30.[40]

The province of Achaea had several colonies of Roman citizens: Dyme (until included in Patrae), Patrae and Corinth.

Dyme was resettled by Gnaeus Pompey with captured pirates, but the establishment did not last long. Later, Caesar, Antony, and Octavian each re-founded and changed its name until Octavian included it with synoecism in Patrae. The location of Dyme was attractive because of the abundance of arable land.[41]

Corinth was re-founded as Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis under Julius Caesar. He settled there about 3,000 veterans and freedmen from Rome.[42] From these humble beginnings Corinth later became the seat and the largest city of the province.[43] Many Roman emperors were the benefactors of the city, and Nero proclaimed the freedom of the Greeks here in 66 CE. Corinth also had two ports: Lechaium in the north, in the Gulf of Corinth, and Cenchreae in the south in the Saronic Gulf.[44] This favorable position made Corinth a trading center and contributed to the rapid development of the city. Craftsmanship followed the development of trade. Crafts and trade were the main occupations of the Corinthians, given that there was not enough arable land.[45] At the time of the establishment of the colony, Caesar parcelled out 100 square kilometers of arable land and distributed it to the colonists. In addition, he planned to dig the Corinth Canal, and even started some preliminary work. Caligula and Nero also gave thoughts to this project.[46]

Corinth was destroyed in the earthquake of 77 CE. By the efforts of the emperor Vespasian, it was restored more magnificent than before.[47] The pinnacle of Corinth occurs during the times of the emperors Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. At that period, the city had between 100,000 and 120,000 inhabitants.[48] By comparison, contemporaneous Ephesus had 150,000, Antioch 200,000, and Alexandria half a million.[49] In order to supply water to such a population, Hadrian

39 Paus. 2.7, 8.33; Strab. 9.2.5; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 160, 163.

40 Paus. 10.38; Strab. 7.7.6, Suet. *Aug.* 18; creation of Nicopolis: C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 210; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 133, 138, for the map of Nicopolis, see in the same volume, pages 134–136; character of Nicopolis: G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 94; U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 559; games: B. M. TIDMAN 1950: 124–125.

41 Plut. *Pomp*. 28; H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 26–27; U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 550.

42 Strab. 8.6.23; App. *Pun.* 136; Plut. *Caes.* 57; Dio Cass. 43.50.3–4; H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 24; D. G. ROMANO 2003: 283; D. ENGELS 1990: 67; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 67; C. A. YEO 1959: 130.

43 Apul. *Met.* 10.18; H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 25; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 133; D. ENGELS 1990: 19; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 216; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 352.

44 D. G. ROMANO 2006: 65

45 D. ENGELS 1990: 27–29.

46 Cutting the Canal: Plut. *Caes*. 58; Suet. *Caes.* 44, *Callig*. 21, *Nero* 19; Josep. *BJ* 539–540; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 141; D. G. ROMANO 2003: 297; D. ENGELS 1990: 20, 60; centuriation: D. G. ROMANO 2006: 68; D. ROUSSET 2008: 315.

47 D. ENGELS 1990: 20; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 328; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 365.

48 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 160; D. ENGELS 1990: 8, 28, 82.

49 M. W. GLEASON 2006: 231.

built an aqueduct from Stymphalian Lake to Corinth.[50] The ethnicity of Corinth's inhabitants has changed over time. Roman/Italic colony at first, by Hadrian's time it had become a purely Greek city, although with a Roman colonial constitution. However, the Romans had brought them a love for gladiatorial games. For this reason, in the 3rd century CE, Corinthians built a coliseum that was larger than the one in Rome.[51]

Patrae was Octavian's response to Caesar's Corinth. Patrae was originally a military settlement, populated by veterans of the X and XII legions. Soon after, the inhabitants from various settlements on both sides of the Gulf of Corinth were added to the population of Patrae. Patrae's founder, Octavian August, had a cult in the city connected to the local cult of Artemis Laphria. The cults of the synoecised cities were transferred to the new urban centre.[52] Patrae originally had a peacekeeping role, i.e. veterans were settled to prevent any possible rebellion against Rome. City later became a significant trading centre.Patrae was also known in the Roman Empire as the center of the flax industry. Elean linen was processed in Patrae from which famous cloths were made.[53]

Both colonies, Patra and Corinth, had the same constitution. Leading magistrates were two *duumviri* modeled after the consuls in Rome. Beside them, two *aediles* held the executive power. They were aided by the city council (*ordo decurionum*), also modeled after the Roman Senate. Citizens (*cives*) voted on local issues and elected the city magistrates in the city assembly (*comitia tributa*). Later, the election of magistrates moved from the assembly to the council.[54] Romans founded settlements in the province of Achaea near the sea and facing Italy, so that troops from those cities could intervene throughout the province. This ensured Roman domination over Achaea, as well as the economic development of these cities.[55]

Villages in the Province

Each larger *polis* also had a hinterland with villages and individual farms. Corinth is estimated to have 20.000 people living in the city's hinterland. The village landscape changed significantly in Roman times. The number of villages declined during the Hellenistic period, and this tendency continued in Roman times. Attica, central Greece, Corinthia and Argolis have experienced a decline in rural settlements. Elsewhere, the number of villages has increased slightly. Besides, some new villages were created while others, such as the famous Askra in Boeotia, disappeared.[56]

During the Hellenistic period, the rural population in Greece was dispersed. In Roman times, settlements became larger. There were two reasons for this. The rural population migrated to cities in search of jobs and income, as in the case of Phlius and Methane in the Peloponnese, with smaller rural settlements converging into larger ones.[57] A further consequence

50 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 124; D. ENGELS 1990: 20; D. ROUSSET 2008: 318.
51 Dio Chrys. 37.26; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 168–169; D. ENGELS 1990: 48, 71; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 207; J.-L. FERRARY 2011: 8.
52 Strab. 8.7.5, 10.2.21; Paus. 7.18, 22; military settlement: G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 67, 69; H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 28; cult: S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 140; C. A. YEO 1959: 130; territory: U. KAHRSTEDT 1950: 551, 558, 561.
53 Paus. 7.21; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 111.
54 G. FINLAY 1857: 69; D. ENGELS 1990: 16–18.
55 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 23, 89; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 68–69.
56 Paus. 9.29; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 37–49, 57–58, 97; D. ROUSSET 2008: 307–310. On the villages of the Principate era see also C. ANDO 2017: 118–136.
57 Dio Chrys. 7.33–36; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 72, 85, 98, 115–117; A. RIZAKIS 2013: 29.

of this process is the consolidation of land tenure and the emergence of large landowners, such as Titus Pomponius Atticus, Gaius Julius Eurycles in Sparta and Herodes Atticus. The emperor himself had some possessions in the province of Achaea, but they were not of considerable size.[58] However, vast latifundia estates never developed in Achaea. The rural estates appeared in the Principate era, which were again of medium size - the surface of those estates was up to 600 square meters, with a holding of up to 50 hectares.[59] In the Late Antiquity, the reverse was the case: people moved from towns to villages, which became dispersed, and there were more rural settlements.[60]

The provincial elite

As elsewhere, Octavian relied on the local elite to manage provinces more effectively. His successors continued this practice. The new framework of the Roman state made it easier to connect prominent people from different political and geographical backgrounds. Also, it has made it easier to own property in both the Achaea and other provinces. Thus, over time individuals who had large estates throughout the empire appeared.[61]

Sulpicius Galba, father of the future emperor, was the proconsul of Achaea, and was married to Mummia Achaica, the descendant of Lucius Mummius, the conqueror of Corinth, and one of their sons was also governor of the province. Another associate of Augustus, Marcus Vinicius, was governor of the Achaia province.[62]

In Sparta, Octavian's supporter was Gaius Julius Eurycles. His father was allegedly a pirate, and Eurycles left Antony just before the battle of Actium and came over to Octavian. In return, he was appointed to rule Sparta, and was granted possession of the island of Cythera.[63] Eurycles was a true adventurer. In Sparta, he came into conflict with the old elite led by Brasidas' descendant of the same name. He then became involved in the court clashes of King Herod of Judaea. According to sources, he caused unrest in Cilicia, and then again on his return to Achaea. He was eventually exiled from Sparta under the pressure of the Spartan old aristocracy.[64] However, his son Gaius Julius Laco later appeared in Sparta as a prominent citizen, and Eurycles later had his own festival. His distant descendant was Gaius Eurycles Heraclanus, who was a prominent citizen of Sparta, and senator under Trajan and Hadrian.[65]

A prominent member of the Corinthian elite was Claudius Pulcher. He was an acquaintance of the writer Plutarch, emperors Trajan and Hadrian, duumvir in his city, archon of the Panhellenion, military tribune and juridicus of Alexandria and Egypt.[66]

58 Paus. 8.43, 10.32; Nep. *Att.* 14.3; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 74–75; D. ÉLISABETH 1975: 286.
59 A. RIZAKIS 2013: 35–36.
60 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 49.
61 Plut. *Praecepta* 814C; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 155–156; A. RIZAKIS 2013: 26–27.
62 Suet. *Galba* 3; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 15, 19.
63 Dio Cass. 54.7.2; Plut. *Ant*. 67; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 78; H. LINDSAY 1992: 290–291; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 59, 92.
64 Strab. 8.5.5; Josep. *BJ* 1.513–531, *AJ* 16.301–310; Plut. *Apophth. Reg.* 207F; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 78; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 56, 105.
65 *Corinth* VIII 2 68; Strab. 8.5.5; Tac. *Ann.* 6.18; Eurycles and Heraclanus: G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 60, 143; Laco: H. LINDSAY 1992: 296; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 350.
66 D. ENGELS 1990: 69; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 362, 368–369.

One of the most significant people of the province throughout its history was Herodes Atticus, a philosopher and rich man whose family originated from the Attic deme of Marathon.[67] His ancestors collaborated with Caesar and Octavian, and are credited with building the Roman Agora in Athens.[68] Herodes' grandfather Hipparchus saw his properties seized by the emperor Domitian, but the family recovered from the blow. Herodes' father appears as an extremely wealthy man who bequeathed a great fortune to the Athenians.[69] Herodes Atticus tried to disregard that promise, which led to a conflict between him and the Athenians, in which the emperor himself had to interfere.[70] Herodes was highly educated, companion of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, and teacher of Marcus Aurelius. He was a member of the Second Sophistic, and his home in the Marathon was a gathering place for young philosophy students in Athens. Despite the conflict with fellow citizens, Herodes remained known as one of the most significant euergetes of Athens. His legacy is the Odeon and the Panathenaic Stadium.[71]

The entire elite of Achaea (and the surrounding provinces) were assembled in the Panhellenion.[72]

Province and *koina*

Pausanias famously stated that the Romans after 146 BCE abolished all Greek *koina*.[73] This situation lasted for some time, after which some of the Greek federal leagues were renewed. The biggest difference was that these renewed leagues had no political function, but mostly religious one.[74]

Relatively early, already in the 120s BCE the Achaean League reappears in some form.[75] Its headquarters were for a time in Olympia and later in the restored Patrae. During the first century of the new era, the Achaeans, the Locrians, the Boeotians and the Euboeans merged into a single *koinon*. This league was called the *koinon* of the Panachaeans and the Panhellenes. It existed until the time of Hadrian.[76] In the time of Emperor Claudius, if not earlier, the Greek *koina* were associated with the imperial cult.[77] The Delphic Amphictyony continued to exist even in Roman times but was reorganized by Octavian. Under the new constitution, there were 30 delegates, Nicopolis, Macedonians and Thessalians each sending 6, while the rest were distributed among other Greeks. Another novelty was that not all delegates were present at the same time but rotated. Only Nicopolis and Athens regularly sent delegates.[78]

67 *IG* II² 3175; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 78; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 144–145.
68 *IG* II² 1716; Cic. *Ad Att.* 6.1; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 242–243.
69 Philostr. *VS* 2.547, 549; A. RIZAKIS 2013: 25.
70 Philostr. *VS* 2.549; H. OLIVER 1970: 30, 34, 66–67.
71 Philostr. *VS* 2.549, 551; C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 262; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 99–100.
72 A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 86–87.
73 Paus. 7.16; C. ANDO 2000: 61.
74 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 153, with a list of *koina* that existed even in the imperial era; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 91.
75 *SEG* 15: 254.
76 *IG* II² 3538; *IG* IV² 1 665; *IG* VII 2711; *IOlymp.* 328, 333 (= *SEG* 17:198), 367, 401, 415, 420; *Corinth* VIII 2 68; Syll³ 767; about those *koina* see S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 165–166; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 92–93; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 353; J.-L. FERRARY 2011: 11.
77 *IG* II² 3538; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 91; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 354.
78 Paus. 10.8; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 98; H. OLIVER 1970: 93; I. ROMEO 2002: 24.

Octavian separated the perioecic settlements in Lacedaemon from Spartan rule and created a *koinon* of Eleutherolacones ("Free Laconians"). Nevertheless, that *koinon* kept contacts with Sparta, especially with Gaius Eurycles.[79]

The most significant supra-political institution of the Greek world in the new era is the Panhellenion created by the emperor Hadrian in the 130's CE.[80] The Panhellenion had about 30 member cities mainly in the Aegean Basin.[81] It was governed by an archon, who was elected once every 4 years and who was based in Athens. Beside him, there was a council of panhellenes who were elected every year. The cities sent a different number of councillors. Almost all the archons were Roman citizens, while the Panhellenes were peregrines. The existence of the Secretary of the Panhellenion is based on an inscription from the period of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, while Spawforth and Walker believe that there was also a Treasurer, meaning that the Panhellenion had some funds.[82] The Panhellenion's role was mostly to celebrate the imperial cult, but sometimes it also served as a judicial court. Apart from that, it represented a useful link between the imperial administration and individual cities, as well as a framework for connecting the elite in Achaea and beyond.[83]

Military presence in the province

Since Achaea was a senatorial province and was not directly threatened by external enemies, there was no permanent legionary garrison.[84] Nevertheless, there must have been some military forces to preserve peace. It is very certain that the governor of the province had a military escort. A large number of soldiers went east through Athens during numerous eastern campaigns. One equestrian cohort was stationed at Cape Taenarum near Sparta. The centurions are attested in Caristos in Euboea, the reason being the securing of a mining facility. Larger military forces were brought in only in the 3rd century AD. However, when the Heruli ravaged the province, there was no army that could oppose them.[85]

The provincial economy

Greek cities were economically degraded at the end of the first century BCE due to the civil wars. The Principate represents a time of economic recovery. Particularly beneficial were the tax exemptions from the time of Tiberius to Claudius and in the last years of Emperor Nero. However, no *polis* was able to cover its expenditures and finance public works. Therefore, they had to rely on wealthy benefactors from the ranks of citizenship. The emperors were the supreme benefactors, and the benevolence of the various emperors to the individual cities, mainly Athens and Corinth, contributed to their economic progress.[86]

79 *IG* V 1 970; Strab. 8.5.5; Paus. 3.21; G. FINLAY 1857: 68; H. LINDSAY 1992: 292; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 91.
80 *IG* IV² 1 384; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 17; C. ANDO 2000: 62; H. OLIVER 1970: 119–120.
81 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 167; H. OLIVER 1970: 130; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 360; I. ROMEO 2002: 22–23; J.-L. FERRARY 2011: 14.
82 The Secretary: H. OLIVER 1970: 1, ll 24–25, 29; Treasurer: A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 79, 86–88; I. ROMEO 2002: 25.
83 H. OLIVER 1970: 134, 136; I. ROMEO 2002: 29.
84 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 18; R. K. SHERK 1957: 52–53, 60.
85 *IG* V 1 1268; *CIL* III 6108, 12286; SHA *Claud.* 16; R. K. SHERK 1957: 61–62.
86 Paus. 7.17; Philostr. *VA* 5.41; Tac. *Ann.* 1.76; taxes: S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 16, 22, 151; benefactors: M. W. GLEASON 2006: 235; cf. A. HELLER, O. M. VAN NIJF 2017.

The cities of Achaea paid direct taxes to the Roman State, as well as a number of indirect taxes such as 2.5% *portoria* on trade and several others. Money thus collected served in most cases to pay the legions that defended the Roman borders. Since the legions were not stationed in Achaea, the excess tax money went out of the province.[87] There were also exemptions from the payment of taxes, like already mentioned Athens and Sparta.[88]

It can be with relative certainty stated that a large percent of Achaea's population were food producers. They cultivated grain, grapevine, olives and other vegetables, raised livestock and caught fish.[89] Nevertheless, larger settlements still had to import food, i.e. wheat, because they could not produce enough for themselves, like Corinth, whose territory could feed only a tenth of its population.[90] Athens from the Hadrianic times is an exception because the emperor provided the city with grain supplies.[91]

Greeks from the province of Achaea were skilled craftsmen, and cities were large producers of textile, ceramics, metalwork etc. Different cities specialized in different products. Attica was known for its honey, Patrae for producing linen, Aulis for pottery, Laconia, Euboea and Hermione were known for their high quality purple colour, and Corinth for its special bronze.[92]

The cities of Achaea were dependent on mutual trade. The largest cities like Corinth, Patrae, Athens and Nicopolis were seaside settlements, which made them trading focal points. Corinth, with its two ports, Lechaeum and Cenchreae, was undoubtedly the hub of maritime and land routes. Commerce through Corinth and subsequently the province was enhanced by the roads built by Emperors Trajan and Hadrian, which connected Corinth with other major provincial cities such as Patrae, Nicopolis and Athens.[93]

It has already been said that there had been a concentration of rural population in larger villages and towns. This left large areas of land untreated, which favored the development of livestock farming, which prospered under Roman rule.[94] Mines, especially marble mines, were another source of well-being. The Caristus in Euboea and the island of Melos had mines in their territory.[95]

The cities of Achaea were able to mint their own money, mainly bronze denominations used in local transactions. The imperial mints were in Corinth, Patrae, Nicopolis and at one time in Dyme, which was expected given the founders of those cities. Other provincial mints were located in Athens, Argos, Sicyon, Aegae, Phygalea, Orchomenus, Heraea and Lacedaemon.[96] Emperor Vespasian deprived the Achaean towns of the right to mint the money, but his son Domitian

87 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 21; D. ENGELS 1990: 44; J. P. NAY 2007: 8.
88 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 23, provides a map of the cities that were at one time exempt from the contributions.
89 A. RIZAKIS 2013: 21; see also A. BRESSON 2016: 258–260, and especially chapter *The Mediterranean Trilogy*. Although dealing mostly with Classical and Hellenistic periods, Bresson's work can be applied to Roman times as well.
90 D. ENGELS 1990: 27–29.
91 Dio Cass. 69.16.2; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 90.
92 Paus. 7.21, 9.19; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 111; D. ENGELS 1990: 36–37; A. RIZAKIS 2013: 37–39; A. BRESSON 2016: 279, 281.
93 Paus. 1.44.6; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 356; Roads: S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 121; sea and trade: C. KATSARI 2011: 191, 232; Corinth: D. ENGELS 1990: 50–51; wealthy cities: A. RIZAKIS 2013: 49.
94 Dio Chrys. 7.33–36; S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 87.
95 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 101, 110.
96 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 94–95 ennumerates the mints; Corinth as the main mint of the province: B. E. LEVY 1989: 65; for Sparta see M. MELFI 2014: 753.

reversed that decision.[97] The cities continuously minted money during both the Antonine and the Severan periods. The mints also worked during the military emperors. The large number of hoards of money from the third century crisis indicates that the economic crisis has also affected Greek cities.[98] Corinth had the most liberty in placing motives on money. As the Roman colony Hellenized, so did local mythological motifs replace Roman ones. Patrae had a little less liberty, and Nicopolis put almost only Roman motifs, very often motifs of Actia festivals.[99]

August and his heirs used colonial money from Greece for propaganda. The coins in Corinth and Dyme depicted Caesar crowning Octavian. Members of the imperial family also appeared on the Corinthian coins. Nero's declaration of the freedom of Greeks found its artistic expression on the money of Corinth and Patrae. Much later, at the time of Septimius Severus, money was still used for dynastic and propaganda purposes, so Empress Julia Domna was portrayed on Corinthian coins.[100]

At the time of the Septimius Severus' heirs and later during the third century crisis, cities stopped minting money. Patrae minted money until the time of Emperor Elagabalus, and Corinth ceased a little earlier, in the time of Emperors Caracalla and Geta. Nicopolis minted money until the time of Emperor Gallienus.[101]

Religion

Religious practices underwent some changes. The two most significant ones are the worship of the imperial cult and the advent of Christianity.[102]

The Greeks gave divine honors to the prominent Romans in the Republic period.[103] The difference was that the State had expected the worship of the imperial cult in subordinate areas during the imperial period. All major cities had one or more temples dedicated to the imperial cult.[104] In the cities of Achaea, worship of the imperial cult was closely linked to the emperor's benevolence. Corinth was also the seat of reverence for the imperial cult, and in addition to the Isthmian Games, the Corinthians organized the Caesarian Games and Imperial Contests, instituted by Tiberius.[105] Nicopolis was known for the *Actia* and *Sebasteia* festivals that celebrated the emperor.[106] At the time of Hadrian, Athens saw the introduction of several new festivals: the Olympic, in honor of the Temple of the Olympian Zeus, the Panhellenic in honour of the Panhellenion, and the Hadrianic, whose *agonothetes* was the Emperor himself.

97 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 52.
98 C. KATSARI 2011: 43–44, 104–105, 110–111, 118–119, 145–146, 157–158.
99 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 65, 84; C. C. VERMEULE 1968: 147.
100 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 42–44, 49–50; D. CALOMINO 2015: 59, 65–66; B. E. LEVY 1989: 60, 64. On Augustus' money in the provinces see also A. BURNETT 2011: 1–30.
101 H. PAPAGEORGIADOU-BANI 2004: 88; D. ENGELS 1990: 54.
102 On this generally see E. M. GRIJALVO, J. M. C. COPETE, F. L. GÓMEZ 2017; B. ECKHARDT 2017: 71–81.
103 Flamininus had an elected priest who offered sacrifices and libations and sang hymns in his honour in Chalcis, see Plut. *Flam*. 16; in Athens Sulla received a statue (*IG* II^2 4103) and a festival (*SEG* 20:110, 37:135) in his honour.
104 Paus. 3.11, 8.9; L. WANDSNIDER 2015: 77; rededication of temples: C. P. DICKENSON 2016: 283–285; cult of Augustus: S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 181–182; Roman cults in general: D. ENGELS 1990: 101–102; D. ROUSSET 2008: 320. On imperial statues in the province of Achaea see C. C. VERMEULE 1968: 169, 175 and further.
105 C. ANDO 2000: 177; D. ENGELS 1990: 52; A. AJOOTIAN 2014: 352.
106 Strab. 7.7.6; G. W. BOWERSOCK 1965: 83; R. RIEKS 1970: 103.

The Panhellenion merged with the cult of Hadrian Panhellenios, whose center of worship was in Athens.[107] The great Panhellenic Games (Olympic, Isthmian, Nemean, and Pythian) continued to exist and became associated with the imperial cult. Modelled after them were other Imperial Panhellenic games like *Megala Kaisareia Sebasteia Mouseia* in Thespiae or *Olympia Commodea* in Sparta.[108]

Christianity appeared in Greece already in the first century CE. Apostle Paul first preached in Athens, where he converted the famous Dionysius the Areopagite, but he had the greatest success in Corinth.[109] There a strong Christian community took roots, originally among the poor. Corinth later became the seat of the Archbishop of Achaea, although the church community there was torn apart by internal strife. Even so, Corinth was the most significant center of Christianity in Greece and one of the most important in the eastern Mediterranean.[110]

Conclusion

If the history of the Achaea province were to be studied only through narrative sources, an image of the decay and static of the provincial cities would inevitably be obtained. This picture is largely wrong. Inscriptions and other archaeological remains testify to the very dynamic history of Greek *poleis*.

There were several factors that shaped the history of Achaea. First of all, the province was not on the border of the Roman Empire, and was therefore largely protected from barbarian incursions. The *poleis* of the province had had a peacetime development since the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE to the invasion of Heruli in 267 CE. In those nearly 300 years, many cities had developed and had been built.

Another significant factor were the emperors themselves. Many of them have left their mark on the province, often from their own sense of philhellenism. The most famous for this is probably Hadrian, whose benevolence towards the Greeks was never surpassed by his descendants. The emperors were drawn to the old glory of the *polis* and famous festivals and displayed their imperial grace in various material ways, most notably the construction of magnificent structures. The most enduring acquisitions are probably the various fountains, *nymphaea* and aqueducts that had been built throughout the province and had significantly improved water supply and, consequently, the quality of life in cities.

Many old cities like Athens, Sparta and Argos prospered under Roman rule. In addition to their importance are the cities that the Romans founded: Dyme, Nicopolis, Patrae and the most important one, Corinth. At the time of the Antonines, Corinth was the province's largest city, an administrative and economic center. The only *polis* that could be measured to some extent with Corinth is Athens, the undoubted intellectual and cultural center of the province of Achaea, and beyond. Hadrian chose Athens as the seat of his Panhellenion because of its old glory.

107 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 17; I. ROMEO 2002: 29; A. J. SPAWFORTH, S. WALKER 1985: 90–91, 94.
108 S. E. ALCOCK 1993: 189–190; cf. M. A. SKOTHEIM 2016: 2–3.
109 D. ENGELS 1990: 107–109.
110 Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.25, 4.23, 5.23; D. ENGELS 1990: 21, 110–112, 116, 118.

Roman rule is also significant due to the fact that the boundaries between the *poleis* lost significance for the first time. This facilitated communication and trade between cities as well as construction of roads and aqueducts. Also, there is a supra-*polis* elite, whose members have holdings throughout the province of Achaea and hold magistracies in several cities and transregional organizations.

The invasion of Heruli in 267 CE marks a turning point in the history of the Achaea province. It can be said that the period of Late Antiquity in that area begins. Shortly thereafter, a dominate system was established in which the *poleis* lost their earlier characteristics.

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