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The gliding scale between oligarchy and democracy: the case of Archaic and Classical Tegea

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Abstract

In this article, I analyse the available evidence on the political system of Tegea with a comparative tool, which I have called the Gliding Scale Model. I find that Tegea was probably a relatively stable oligarchy even after the fall of Sparta as a great power. The now popular notion that Tegea's defection from the Spartan military alliance after Leuctra in 371 BC meant democratic revolution at home is criticized, and a case is made for moderate, competitive oligarchy throughout the Archaic and Classical periods.

Introduction

A comprehensive understanding of Greek society has always relied on comparisons across the vast number of poleis and the connecting of scattered information from them. Too seldom have these comparisons been done explicitly and methodically, however, which is what I am going to do in this article in an attempt to classify the political system of ancient Tegea. Using the meagre literary and epigraphic sources available, and arguing from the economic circumstances, geopolitical setting and comparative history, I will formulate a possible answer to where on the spectrum of political systems we may find Tegea in the pre-Hellenistic period.¹ For this purpose, I have, building on the comparative historical tradition from Aristotle, M.I. Finley and the findings of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, developed a comparative tool, *the Gliding Scale Model*, which details the possible political variations of the key institutions known from the ancient Greek and Roman world.² The emerging scholarly consensus that Tegea's defection from Sparta in the first half of the 5th century and again in 370 BC meant democratic revolution at home³ is criticized and a case is made for a stable, moderate and competitive oligarchy.⁴ In this respect, Tegea was probably more typical of the majority of Greek city-states than either of the two better-known systems of Athens and Sparta.

1. It was J.C. Meyer's deep involvement in comparative history that made me pursue a career in ancient history, and his constant encouragement and wealth of ideas have been a great source of inspiration for me in my research.

2. The Gliding Scale Model was used for an analysis of the political system in Syracuse in Mæhle 2017, but was originally developed for the study of Tegea during my participation in the 2011 excavation under the guidance of Knut Ødegård and Vincenzo Cracolici. I am very grateful for their hospitality and help. I am also very grateful for the detailed comments and suggestions for this paper provided by Eivind H. Seland, Per-Bjarne Ravnå, Michael Sommer, Erik Østby and Robin Lorsch Wildfang. I have also profited very much from my discussions with Matthew Simonton.

3. The connection was hinted at by Leonard Whibley (1896, 87, n.10) and James Roy (1968, 186-8) and is assumed for the year 370 BC by Thomas Heine Nielsen (2002, 343); cf. Kralli 2017, 9-11; Simonton 2017, 50-51; 159; 226. However, for the view that Tegea was coerced into the league, see Hornblower 2002, 248. Erik W. Robinson (2011, 41-44) does not include Tegea among the democracies created in the aftermath of the battle of Leuctra.

4. I will differentiate between a) dynastic oligarchy, b) plutocratic oligarchy and c) competitive oligarchy, where the latter is defined as a system where the rulers are elected from a broad enough base of candidates that competition for popularity is the norm, and property requirements for voting in the assembly are low or non-existent. Historical examples of this include Solonian Athens, Sparta and the Roman Republic. This will be discussed further below.

The sources

With regard to the political system of ancient Tegea, there can be no certainties. Our main literary sources for Archaic and Classical Greek history, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Diodorus Siculus, mention Tegea only in passing, and nowhere discuss the city-state's institutional set-up in detail. This, of course, was not an oversight on their part, since the internal organization of Tegea had little impact on the major powers and their conflicts, which was the proper theme of history at the time. Even in describing the major powers—Athens, Sparta, Syracuse, Corinth and Thebes—the Greek historians only wrote the bare minimum about their constitutional situations, and in the case of Corinth and Thebes, not even that. The description of constitutions was a separate genre, and ancient readers who wanted to know about these things were advised to consult the growing *Politeia* literature,⁵ or the many more or less accurate local histories of individual cities.

Plutarch was in a position to cite both the *Politeia* of Tegea and the shorter-lived Arcadian Confederacy, written in Aristotle's empirical school of politics.⁶ We are not so fortunate, however, since all but one of the 158 constitutions produced by Aristotle and his students are lost. From the lucky discovery of the *Athenian Politeia* in the sands of Egypt in 1888, we can guess at what the Aristotelian, Tegean *Politeia* might have looked like, but whereas the peculiarities of many constitutions of lesser powers found their way into the discussions in Aristotle's comparative study, the *Politics*, Tegea seems to have been thoroughly unremarkable, and not graced by even one single reference. Although arguments from silence are weak and never conclusive, I will suggest that the reason why Tegea was not mentioned was precisely that it was more 'typical' than its neighbour Mantinea, which 'once' had an interesting variant of moderate democracy, praised by Aristotle.⁷

New information about the Tegean political system must be found primarily through archaeological excavations, because another miraculous discovery in the sands of Egypt is too much to hope for. We already have a few published inscriptions mentioning various magistrates and a council, which will be discussed in detail, together with the literary sources, in this article. A comprehensive excavation of the entire agora would probably give us more relevant epigraphic material and reveal civic structures such as a council house and possibly other clues to the political system. However, the *Hellenic-Norwegian Excavations at Tegea* have so far primarily revealed the late Roman and Byzantine city and provided no information on civic structures.⁸

If found in future excavations, the measurements of the bouleuterion may or may not add plausibility to the hypothesis that 'the 300' mentioned in the inscriptions were a council, and 'the 50' a committee of this council.⁹ The fact that this council is named after its number of councilors may lead

5. *Politeia* was first used as an abstract noun in Hdt. 9.34 and denoted the system of rules, written and unwritten, governing a society. Blok 2013, 197.

6. Plut. *Mor.* 292.5: 'Who were the "good" among the Arcadians and the Spartans? When the Spartans had come to terms with the Tegeans they made a treaty and set up in common a pillar by the Alpheius. On this, among other matters, was inscribed: "The Messians must be expelled from the country; it shall not be lawful to make men good." Aristotle, then, in explaining this, states that it means that no one shall be put to death because of assistance given to the Spartan party in Tegea'; Plut. *Mor.* 277. 52: 'Aristotle, in fact, says that there is written in the treaty of the Arcadians with the Spartans: "no one shall be made good for rendering aid to the Spartan party in Tegea"; that is, no one shall be put to death.' Trans. F.C. Babbitt. Cambridge, Mass. 1942.

7. Arist. *Pol.* 6.2.2: 'to have control over electing magistrates and calling them to account makes up for the lack of office, since in some democracies even if the people have no part in electing the magistrates but these are elected by a special committee selected in turn out of the whole number, as at Mantinea, yet if they have the power of deliberating on policy, the multitude are satisfied. (And this too must be counted as one form of democracy, on the lines on which it once existed at Mantinea.)' Trans. H. Rackham. Cambridge, Mass. 1932.

8. Ødegård et al. (forthcoming). A version of this article will also appear in that volume.

9. Nielsen 2002, 339.

us to the likely supposition that we are dealing with something similar to the ‘The People’s Council of 500’ in Athens, and not a council of a senate type, consisting of elite members with lifelong membership. But without information about how ‘the 300’ were recruited, what their powers were and for how long they enjoyed these powers, we are left to speculate. Similarly, lists of magistrates only tell us the names of various offices but very rarely their precise function. One may argue from name to function, but as we know from Athens, functions may alter significantly over time, while the name remains the same. If it contains no more than the appellation of various offices, such a list only confirms what we already take for granted, that there were magistrates in Tegea, as in all the other Greek *poleis*. Although there is still much to learn through continued excavations, we are unlikely to find anything that will compensate for the loss of the *Tegean Politeia*, by the school of Aristotle. The source situation consequently only allows for a tentative reconstruction of Tegean government and society.

Archaic Tegea (8th-6th Century B.C.)

Tegea is first mentioned in the *Iliad*, in the ‘catalogue of ships’, among other Arcadian centres providing ships and warriors for the Trojan War.¹⁰ This means that Tegea was already a recognizable geographical entity when the *Iliad* was composed sometime in the 8th century. The Tegean sanctuary of Athena Alea was the only sanctuary that reveals material before 800 BC,¹¹ and Tegea ‘grew up’ alongside this sanctuary in the Archaic period.¹² We do not know when the synoecism took place, which amalgamated the ‘Tegeans’ into a political unity, but the discovery by Erik Østby of a monumental Archaic predecessor to the famous Classical Temple of Athena Alea¹³ provides us with a probable late 7th century date. The scale of this probably Doric temple, built with marble from the nearby Doliana quarry and 6 x 18 wooden columns, strongly suggest the concerted efforts of a highly organized society.¹⁴ The decision of the polis to build on this scale showed that it had regional aspirations.¹⁵ Likewise, the extra-urban temples, like the early marble temple at Psili Korphi found near the Doliana marble quarry, should be interpreted as a claim to control of the territory.¹⁶

While the archaeological excavations conducted by Knut Ødegård and Vincenzo Cracolici in the Tegean agora suggest that urbanization began around the middle of the 6th/early 5th century,¹⁷ the *polis* nature of Archaic, non-urbanized Tegea from the 7th century onwards cannot be denied. This the Spartans learned to their cost when, fresh from having subdued Messenia, they turned their imperialist ambitions toward Arcadia in the middle of the 6th century, only to be defeated by the Tegeans.¹⁸ Herodotus tells the tale of how:

Thanks to a good soil and a numerous population the Lacedaemonians soon shot up and flourished like a sturdy tree. No longer content to let things by, they took into their head that they were better men than the Arcadians, and consulted the oracle at Delphi with a view to the conquest of the whole of Arcadia. This was the answer they received:

10. *Il.* 2.607.

11. Material from sanctuary context goes back to the 10th century: Voyatzis 1999, 131-132; Østby 2014a, 15-19. There is now still earlier evidence from the sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Lykaion: Romano & Voyatzis 2014. Osborne 1996, 71

12. Nielsen and Roy 2009, 255; Voyatzis 1999, 132-133.

13. Paus. 8.3.4; Østby 2014b

14. See Østby 2014a for a plausible reconstruction of the Mycenaean and Dark Age development of Arcadia, Tegea and its principal sanctuary.

15. Voyatzis 1999, 143-144.

16. Nielsen and Roy 2009, 260.

17. Ødegård 2018, 283.

18. *Hdt.* 1.65-68.

Already? Great is the thing you ask. I will not grant it.
 In Arcadia are many men, acorn eaters,
 And they will keep you out. Yet, for I am not grudging,
 I will give you Tegea to dance in with stamping feet
 And her fair plain to measure out with the line.

The Lacedaemonians failed to perceive the ambiguity of this oracle, and decided to leave the rest of Arcadia alone and march against Tegea: and so confident were they of reducing the men of Tegea to slavery that they took the chains with them. But they lost the battle, and those who were taken prisoner were forced to wear on their own legs the chains they had brought, and to ‘measure out with the line’ the plain of Tegea as labourers.¹⁹

The chains hung for centuries in the Athena Alea temple as a symbol of Tegean martial prowess and independence.²⁰ According to Pausanias, even the women of Tegea were fierce warriors, which they demonstrated during the first Spartan invasion:

There is also an image of Ares in the marketplace of Tegea. Carved in relief on a slab, it is called Gynaecothoenas (‘He who entertains women’). At the time of the Laconian war, when Charillus king of Lacedaemon made the first invasion, the women armed themselves and lay in ambush under the hill they call today Phylactris (‘Sentry Hill’). When the armies met and the men on either side were performing many remarkable exploits, the women, they say, came on the scene and put the Lacedaemonians to flight. Marpessa, surnamed Choira, surpassed, they say, the other women in daring, while Charillus himself was one of the Spartan prisoners. The story goes on to say that he was set free without ransom, swore to the Tegeans that the Lacedaemonians would never again attack Tegea, and then broke his oath: that the women offered to Ares a sacrifice of victory on their own account without the men, and gave to the men no share in the meat of the victim. For this reason Ares got his surname.²¹

The triumph over Sparta, the very model of a hoplite state, indicates that the hoplite tactical reform had successfully penetrated Tegean society, but we have no information about how the emerging city state was organized. Erik Østby suggests that *the development of the polis state took place within the framework of a traditional monarchy*, and cites a late source (Herodian, 3rd century AD) that mentions the reigning queen Permidê during the wars with Sparta in the early 6th century.²² If Tegea was monarchically ruled at this time, however, it is strange that Herodotus did not mention this, since he names the Spartan kings at the time, Leon and Agasides, and he himself visited Tegea and saw the chains hanging in the temple of Athena Alea.²³ Neither did Pausanias mention any kings or queens of Tegea, even though he provides a (probably artificial) list of the first Arcadian kings.²⁴

Except for the fragment from Herodian, there is no evidence of an early monarchy in the *polis* Tegea. As was pointed out by Aristotle, the term *basileus* was interchangeable with other terms denoting leaders or chiefs, such as *prytanis* and *archon*.²⁵ In the absence of specific evidence for this period in Tegea, the best general model seems to me that of Robert Drews, who, after a careful sifting of the evidence, rejects the notion of a monarchical phase in the development of the *polis* in ancient Greece:

19. Hdt. 1.66. Trans. A. de Sélincourt. London 1972.

20. Hdt. 1.66.2; Paus. 8.47.2; 8.48.2.

21. Paus. 8.48.4-5. Trans. P. Levi. London 1971.

22. Østby 2014a., 53; *FGrHist* frg. 306 F 4. Permidê is not, however, described as a *basileia*, but rather as *dunesteia*, and with the nickname Choira, which means sow. Marpessa, the leader of the fighting women of Tegea, mentioned by Pausanias (above), was also called Choira, and Herodian may in fact refer to her.

23. Hdt. 1.65-66.

24. Paus. 8.5.

25. Arist. *Pol.* 6.5.12-13.

Through most of the Geometric period the typical polis was governed by a group of *basileis*, and [...] only toward the end of the period was a single magistrate appointed over the entire state. The man who held this position – whether called *basileus*, archon, or *prytanis* – must have enjoyed unprecedented power and prestige. In the late Archaic period (after the heyday of the tyrants) the *poleis* went to some lengths to divide responsibilities among several officials, lest one individual attain too much personal power.²⁶

The early tendency to concentrate power, albeit temporarily, in just a few hands often resulted in tyrannies,²⁷ but it seems that Tegea escaped that fate and settled into a republican form of government quite early in its development. Although there may have been dark-age kings in Arcadia at the pre-polis or *ethnos* stage, and the name of one of these kings, Tegeates, was later used to name the city of Tegea,²⁸ the Archaic *polis* was probably aristocratically governed by a collective of *basileis*, who individually had dominated smaller parts of the Tegean *khora* in their own ‘right’.²⁹ Government by the few, whether called an ‘aristocracy’ or an ‘oligarchy’, was the default position in Archaic Greek political systems, but the remarkable internal stability of Tegea suggests that the oligarchy here was rather benign.

Sparta gave up the outright conquest of Arcadia, but it was still a Spartan ambition to dominate its neighbours. Herodotus relates how the Spartans again sought the advice of the oracle in Delphi, this time with better success: if they just brought home to Sparta the bones of Orestes, son of Agamemnon, from where they were buried in Tegean territory, they would prevail over the Tegeans.³⁰ A talkative blacksmith told one of the Spartan spies about an enormous skeleton he had found. The Spartans took this to be the bones of Orestes, since the men of the heroic age were imagined to be much taller and stronger than contemporary Greeks. That discovery, most likely of mammoth bones, launched an ancient bone rush in Greece as every city-state attempted to find the remains of legendary heroes.³¹ After bringing ‘Orestes’ to Sparta and building a shrine for him, the expansion continued, until all of Arcadia and most of the Peloponnese had to accept Sparta as hegemon.

Classical Tegea (5th-4th Century B.C.)

About ten years after her triumphant showdown with Sparta, in c. 550 BC, Tegea became a loyal ally of Sparta in what, by the end of the 6th century, came to be known as the Peloponnesian League.³² The Tegeans were treated with great honour and acquitted themselves very well in the Persian Wars. The harmony does not seem to have been total, however. In an obscure reference in Herodotus’ *Histories* to a war against Sparta in connection with an Arcadian revolt, sometime after the Persian Wars and before 465 BC,³³ we hear that Tegea was beaten in battle by the Spartans. The information takes the form of a prophecy about five battles that would be (and eventually were) won by Sparta, but are not otherwise described in detail nor placed in time in any of our sources:

They were the following: first the battle of Plataiai (...), second, the fight at Tegea against the Tegeans and Argives, third at Dipaia against the combined forces of Arcadia, excluding Mantinea, fourth against the Messenians at Ithome, and last, against the Athenians and Argives at Tanagra.³⁴

26. Drews 1983, 198.

27. Arist. *Pol.* 5.4, 5.8.

28. Paus. 8.45.1.

29. Drews 1983, 71-76.

30. Hdt. 1.167-168.

31. Mayor 2011, 110-111.

32. Osborne 1996, 288-289.

33. Powell 1988, 106-107.

34. Hdt. 9.35.2, Trans. A. de Sélincourt. London 1972.

The only other reference to a conflict with Sparta at this time is found in the 2nd century AD writer of military stratagems, Polyainios:

The inhabitants of Tegea suspected that their leaders secretly supported the Lacedaemonians. In order to increase this suspicion, when [the Spartan king] Cleandridas ravaged their territory, he scrupulously avoided damaging the estates of their leaders. As a result of these signs of favour from the enemy, the leaders were immediately charged with treason. When they found that the resentment of the people against them was running high, they feared that they would be condemned on this charge. Therefore the leaders were forced by the false suspicion to become real traitors, and betrayed their city to Cleandridas.³⁵

Thomas Heine Nielsen associates a constitutional change with the suppression of this revolt: *[if] it is accepted that this betrayal of the city led to a shift in power, then we may assume that this shift was from a democratic to an oligarchic constitution.*³⁶ However, although Polyainios based his information on the usually trustworthy Ephoros, and Ephoros had a reliable source for this event, there is nothing in Polyainios' text about constitutional changes, nor are the parties labelled 'democrats' and 'oligarchs'. The most we can say with any confidence is that there was a conflict between a large majority of the common people and parts of the elite over foreign policy, a common enough phenomenon in the Greek world.

The episode referred to was more likely a division *within* the elite between those who wanted to stay loyal to Sparta and those who wanted to join Tegean fortunes with Mantinea, Argos and other anti-Spartan states. If Polyainios' source was reliable, the anti-Spartans evidently had more support from the common people, *perhaps* because of their hope for a democratic turn in Tegean home affairs. When opportunity knocked again in 423 BC, in the form of an invitation from other Arcadian states to join in an attempt to break out of the Spartan alliance, Tegea stayed loyal and fought its neighbour Mantinea with the help of Sparta. It is of course possible that Tegean loyalty was now based on oligarchic measures after a Spartan-backed crackdown on the democracy suggested by Nielsen, but this hypothesis remains without any support in the sources.

A better case for the establishment of a democracy can perhaps be made for the dramatic aftermath of the Spartan defeat at Leuctra in 370. While the Mantineans were busy rebuilding their walls and reclaiming their democracy after the Spartan demolition of both in 385 BC, the Tegeans were having a *stasis* over their future military allegiance, and the pro-Spartans were losing ground:

Among the Tegeans the party led by Callibius and Proxenus were agitating in favour of forming a united state of Arcadia with the provision that whatever was passed in the general assembly should be binding on the various cities in the union. The party of Stasippus, on the other hand, were for leaving things in Tegea as they were and for following the constitution of their ancestors. In the council of the magistrates the party of Callibius and Proxenus were defeated, but, thinking that if they could rally the whole people together they would have the advantage in numbers, they came out openly in arms. They killed Proxenus and a few of the men with him, and drove the others back in flight.³⁷

This ended in bloodshed, and 800 families (possibly a number inflated by the pro-Spartan Xenophon) fled to Sparta, which decided to take revenge on both the Arcadian party at Tegea and the Mantineans who had helped them.³⁸ Tegea joined, together with her troublesome neighbour Mantinea, the Arcadian confederacy, and broke her old alliance with Sparta. Xenophon had his flaws as an historian and often failed to mention things he did not like to think about. He did, however, conscientiously report

35. Polyainios 2.10.3 Trans. Attalus.org.

36. Nielsen 2002, 343.

37. Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.6-7. Trans. R. Warner. London 1966.

38. Xen. *Hell.* 5.6.8-10.

on political revolutions when they coincided with changes of military alliance. It is therefore significant that he did not present the anti-Spartans as democratic revolutionaries. In my opinion, the reason for this omission is simply that they were not trying to change the system, only break the alliance with Sparta. Apart from some interesting details about political procedure in the above quote, to which we will return shortly, there is nothing in Xenophon's history to substantiate a democratic revolution.

Diodorus Siculus, writing about the aftermath of the colossal Spartan defeat, is perhaps a little more forthcoming in support of Nielsen's 'democratic revolution',³⁹ using the labels 'oligarchs' and 'democrats' for the factions that sprang up in the Peloponnese after the battle of Leuctra:

After autonomy had been conceded to the various peoples, the cities fell into great disturbances and internal strife, particularly in the Peloponnese. For having been used to oligarchic institutions and now taking foolish advantage of the liberties which democracy allows itself, they exiled many of their good citizens, and, trumping up charges against them, condemned them. Thus falling into internal strife they had recourse to exilings and confiscations of property, particularly against those who during the Spartan hegemony had been leaders of their native cities. Indeed, in those times the oligarchs had exercised authoritative control over their fellow citizens, and later as the democratic mob recovered its freedom it harboured a grudge.⁴⁰

Diodorus goes on to name a number of cities that experienced *stasis* and constitutional changes (Phialeia, Corinth, Megara and Sicyon), but again, significantly, Tegea, one of the most important cities, is not mentioned. The silence of our only two sources, Xenophon and Diodorus Siculus, in the end does not prove that Tegea *did not* change its constitution in a democratic way, and with a large number of Spartan loyalists exiled, it would not be surprising if the political system drifted towards a more democratic form or practice. Also, it is certainly possible to argue that the allegedly democratic nature of the Arcadian Confederacy that Tegea now entered may have reinforced democratic tendencies at home. The handing over of sovereignty in military affairs to an Arcadian Federation with the express purpose of thwarting the ambitions of Tegea's oldest ally, was dramatic enough in constitutional terms to cause *stasis*, however. Moreover, the democratic nature of the Arcadian Confederacy is not undisputed. Eric W. Robinson points out that it may have been democratic in spirit, but that we know too little about the powers of the league *boulê* versus the assembly of the "Ten Thousand", and the various offices like the *damiourgoi*, *archontes* and the single *strategos*, mentioned in the sources. The "democracy" exercised may have been representative, several cities seems to have no representation in the common council (Tegea had 5 out of 50), and the use of one single supreme commander, the *strategos* is an autocratic feature in the system.⁴¹

The acceptance of a fully-fledged democratic revolution in Tegea, however, requires more solid evidence. In the absence of this, it seems to be a more fruitful approach to leave for a while the attempts at sweeping generalizations about the *character* of the constitution and concentrate instead on the *institutional set-up* of Tegea before 370 BCE. This was a set-up it probably returned to after the demise of the Arcadian Confederacy in 363 BC. Two years later, the Tegeans were, after all, fighting alongside the Spartans once again. Back to normal, in other words. But what are we to do with this information when trying to reconstruct the contents of the lost *politeia* of the Tegeans?

Some constants in the flux of variations: social groups

M.I. Finley presupposed that there were some constants in the flux of social and organizational variation in the vast number of Mediterranean city-states, and this has found strong support in the results

39. Nielsen 2002, 343.

40. Diod.Sic. 15.40.1-2. Trans. C. Sherman. Cambridge, Mass. 1952.

41. Robinson 2011, 44-45; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.23-25, 7.4.34; *IG* 5.2.1.

of the Copenhagen Polis Centre.⁴² The social divisions of the population and the citizens, the political institutions of the city-state, and the link between landholding, military and financial obligations and political rights, all show recognizable similarities through space and time. The discussion so far has suggested that Tegea was relatively stable constitutionally, and that we may look for enduring structures from the beginning of the Archaic to the end of the Classical period.

The population in the Greek *poleis* fell into three basic categories: the citizens, the resident aliens (free non-citizens) and the unfree. These groups were not so much distinguished from each other based on material wealth ('class') but were divided by rights and obligations, often inherited ('order'). A privileged slave could be in better material circumstances than a free man, and resident aliens,⁴³ whether they were scholars from other cities, traders, craftsmen, musicians or just adventurers looking for economic opportunities, were found along the entire socio-economic scale.

The citizens were the privileged part of the population, who owned the land, fought in the wars and participated in the people's assembly. In every ancient city-state we know of, there was a close connection between the citizens' economic resources, social status, military and financial obligations and political rights.⁴⁴ The earliest assemblies probably developed from the military assemblies of heavily armed conscript infantry, called 'hoplites'. They ideally wore protective armour such as bronze helmets, breastplates, greaves and even broad armbands, in addition to the large wooden shield with bronze plating, spears and a short sword.⁴⁵ The total weight and cost of this equipment were considerable, and it also required a slave to carry it between battles, which of course added to the expense. In order to raise more men and increase mobility, body armour became lighter in the 5th century.⁴⁶

In addition to the elite cavalry of the knights, these hoplites, recruited from farmers who could arm and provision themselves, fought together in the ranks of the phalanx infantry and constituted the main military strength of the city-state.⁴⁷ The hoplites consequently had a higher status and more political rights than those who could not so arm themselves, the sub-hoplites.

The sub-hoplites could be used as lightly armed infantry, as slingers, archers or for similar military tasks, but did not thereby fully share the prestige of the hoplites, even though their much higher mobility in battle was often crucial for success. The hoplites in their turn had lower status and fewer political rights than the knights, who could afford to bring a warhorse to the battle. These three groups were often topped up by a fourth group, the nobility, which was either an office-holding cross section of the knights, an elite of super-rich within this category or families with especially prestigious ancestors.

Hans van Wees has convincingly argued that a further distinction should be made between working class hoplites and leisure class hoplites.⁴⁸ The leisure class hoplites was the small elite within the hoplite category (in total about 35-40% of the citizenry), of perhaps 5% of the citizenry, that were wealthy enough to live off the work of others, but not rich enough to belong to the horse-owning class (ca. 5-10 %) or the super-rich "liturgical class" (ca. 5%).⁴⁹ In his discussion of Solonian Athens, he suggests that the so-called *zeugitai*, or "yokes-men", named for their ownership of a span of oxen, belonged to this hoplite leisure class, and were given a part in the offices and the newly created "Peo-

42. Finley 1983; Hansen and Nielsen 2004.

43. Free, resident aliens, or *xenoi* are mentioned in an inscription (*IG* 5.2.3) as having grazing rights near the temple of Athena Alea.

44. Kagan and Viggiano 2013, xii.

45. Viggiano 2013, 116.

46. Krenz 2013, 134-135.

47. Arist. *Pol.* 4.3.1-2.

48. Van Wees 2006, 374; Simonton 2017, 46.

49. Van Wees 2006, 360-367.

ple's Council".⁵⁰ Only the leisure class hoplites paid war tax and were obligated to serve as soldiers, while the remaining working 30-35 % of the hoplites belonged to the *thetes*, and served on a voluntary basis, and for pay.⁵¹ Although van Wees' reconstruction is based on the controversial property qualifications in the Aristotelian "Constitution of Athens", the distinction between leisure class and working class hoplites is still valid, and makes sense of the oligarchic regime of "the 5000" in Athens in 411-410.

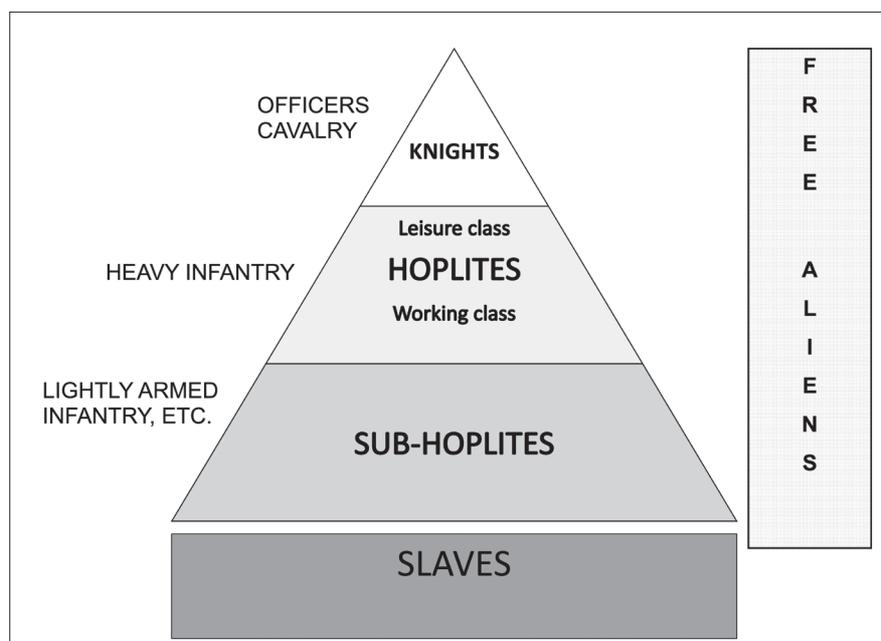


Fig. 1: Social divisions in the ancient city-states.

The names and precise economic and social criteria for knights, hoplites and sub-hoplites varied, and we do not know the details from Tegea. We can, however, safely assume that the categories were present and important for the working of the political system. We have already seen how successful Tegea was as a hoplite state. Despite the fact that one of the major questions for any regime in the ancient world was what to do with the sub-hoplites, we hear nothing of them in a Tegean context. Where the Spartans marginalized them to the point of expelling them from the citizen body, the Athenians employed them in the navy and treated them almost equally with the hoplites. In Athens the sub-hoplites probably comprised about half of the citizen population and they obviously had to be taken into account in one way or another. When the oligarchs gained power, they tried to expel them, which was not very practical in the long run. As a naval state and commercial centre, Athens needed its poor. But was this the case in Tegea?

Tegea had neither access to the sea nor the size and commercial clout of Athens. It was situated in a fertile plain, which it reluctantly and not always peacefully shared with Mantinea, on one of the main routes between the northern and southern Peloponnese. The plain was well watered to the point of flooding, but the altitude (c. 650 m above sea level) made olive growing difficult because of winter frost.⁵² The marginal landscapes on the hillsides could be terraced or used for animal husbandry,⁵³

50. Van Wees 2006, 367-368.

51. Van Wees (2006, 372), citing Thuk. 6.4.31 and Arist. *Pol.* 4.10.8-10

52. Roy 1999, 329.

53. Roy (1999, 353) points out that animal husbandry required access to farmland, and that large-scale husbandry, in the absence of any evidence of transhumance, was probably in the hands of the rich. At best, therefore, I would suggest that the sub-hoplites were employed in this activity.

and the Doliana marble quarry, various trades, crafts and building activity may have provided an income for sub-hoplites. Nevertheless, it is clear that the alternatives in Tegea to what became the most important solution to poverty in Arcadia, leaving home and joining mercenary service, were very limited.

Arcadian mercenaries were in high demand in Antiquity and were praised by ancient authors.⁵⁴ Mercenary service for the surplus males was in many ways the perfect solution from the point of view of the Tegean state. That the Tegeans fostered a strong military tradition is beyond doubt, and the value of lightly armed troops on the flanks of the hoplite phalanx is clear. The breaking point for any family on the verge of falling below the poverty line was the division through inheritance of a one-family farm between two or more brothers. Mercenary service may have provided a solution, in that the most able-bodied and adventurous of the sons could find an income elsewhere, while the stay-at-home son worked all the agricultural land inherited from the father and perhaps paid a rent to his brother(s). The expensive protective armour of the hoplite soldier could be stripped off a fallen enemy in the course of a mercenary career, and a slave to carry it between battles captured, and so the lightly armed sub-hoplite, trained and utilized by the Tegean state during his youth, could become a full hoplite in maturity in the employ of whoever needed soldiers. The rewards could be substantial, but so were the risks. The export of sub-hoplites was probably an important reason why Tegean society seems to have enjoyed a large measure of political stability.

But how did the hoplites keep the elite knights in line, presuming, as I do, that Tegea was a moderate, as opposed to a strict, oligarchy? In a society where military prestige was directly translatable to political power, it is important to note that the Tegean cavalry were not that formidable. The plains were potentially good horse country, but horse rearing here was, to an even greater degree than in less mountainous territories, in competition with human needs for grain. Moreover, successful cavalry training demanded unsown plains, which were probably in scarce supply. Anyway, when Tegean military exploits are mentioned, it is exclusively the hoplite army we hear praised, and when Peloponnesian cavalry is mentioned at all (without specific cities being named), it is because it performed rather poorly. At Thermopylai the Tegean contingent fought with 500 men, until they were discharged by the Spartans to fight another day,⁵⁵ while at Plataiai there were 1500,⁵⁶ and at a later battle against the Persians we hear of lightly armed and heavily armed soldiers fighting together:

The attack was a heavy one, and made it impossible for them to carry out their purpose, so that the Lacedaemonians and Tegeans, whom nothing could induce to leave their side, were left to fight alone – the former 50,000 strong, including the lightly armed auxiliaries, the latter 3,000.⁵⁷

The knights of Tegea must either have comprised a very small cavalry together with the allies, and accomplished little worth mentioning, or have fought as officers in the hoplite phalanx. The general impression from the sources is that Sparta relied on Boeotian cavalry,⁵⁸ in addition to poorly trained knights from the Peloponnesian elite. Probably including the allies in ‘the Spartan cavalry’, Xenophon analysed this basic weakness before the showdown with Thebes in 371 BCE thus:

The Theban cavalry, as a result of the war with Orchomenus and with Thespia, was in good training, but the Spartan cavalry at that time was in a very poor shape. This was because the horses were kept by the very rich, and it was only after an order for mobilization that the appointed cavalryman appeared to get his horse

54. Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.23, cf. Thuc. 3.34.2-3; 7.57.9.

55. Hdt. 7.202.

56. Hdt. 9.28.3.

57. Hdt. 9.61.2. Trans. A. de Sélincourt. London 1972.

58. Thuc. 4.95.

and whatever arms were given him; he then had to take the field at once. Also the men who served in the cavalry were the ones who were in the worst physical condition and the least anxious to win distinction.⁵⁹

We know nothing about Tegean cavalry, other than that cavalry was weak in the Peloponnese generally, and weaker still among the Spartans and their allies. This does not mean that Tegea lacked a class of knights, but it does mean that these knights could not easily overwhelm their fellow citizens through a military coup.

Some sort of oligarchy is, in my view, the default position for any ancient city-state, whereas democracy has to evolve. Neither natural resources, economic complexity nor strategic considerations favoured such a development in Tegea:

1. The military relied on hoplite soldiers. The cavalry was small, a fleet was non-existent and poor hoplites and sub-hoplites to a large degree found work elsewhere as mercenaries. The hoplites were probably a solid majority of the citizenry.
2. The Spartans were allies who let Tegea run its own affairs and keep its *patrioi nomoi*—the laws of its fathers. In the absence of windfalls from silver mines or empire, as was the case in Athens, there was little incentive for political change.
3. Mantinea was the closest neighbour, and therefore the natural enemy. Aside from the usual border quarrels, there was the aggravation caused by the water that runs downhill from Tegea onto the Mantinean part of the plain.⁶⁰ The fact that Mantinea was democratic would not have made democracy more appealing to neighbouring Tegea. One does not just copy the political system of an enemy.
4. Democratization would require an anti-Spartan alliance with the democratic states of Mantinea, Argos and possibly Athens. Before Leuctra, however, war with Sparta was always a bad idea.
5. When Tegea entered the Arcadian Confederacy in 370 and participated in the ‘Assembly of the Ten Thousand’, this was no real break with the principle that had probably been the core of Tegean society since the 7th century: those who fight vote. Nielsen’s hypothesis that the Ten Thousand included all male citizens, whether they fought or not,⁶¹ is improbable, given the military nature of the institution and its purpose. I agree with Rhodes that these must have been hoplites, and probably satisfied some minimum property qualification.⁶²
6. Tegean membership in the Arcadian Federation in 370 was not a radical departure from a conservative past, but a realistic response to the fact that Sparta was humbled as a power in the region, and that federations were the new style in defence policy. After the break-up of the Arcadian Confederacy in 363, it took only two years before Tegea fought on the side of Sparta again.

59. Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.10-11. Trans. R. Warner. London 1966.

60. Bakke-Alisøy this volume.

61. Kralli 2017, 9; Nielsen 2002, 479.

62. Rhodes 2010, 252.

*The Gliding Scale Model: political institutions*⁶³

So what was the Tegean oligarchy like? We have learnt to expect an assembly, elected officials, a senate and a system of law courts from any developed Greek city state, whether it is democratic or oligarchic.⁶⁴ In addition, we may find another council, alongside the senate, with a probouletic function for the people's assembly, and even officials selected by lot, if we are dealing with a democracy. Not very surprisingly, excavations have not revealed any mechanism for the drawing of lots, nor remains of any kind of ostracism.

Indeed, if Tegea had had such typically democratic features, it would most likely have been commented upon in Aristotle's many discussions of democracies in the *Politics*. However, inscriptions from Tegea and stray remarks from Xenophon reveal many interesting details about the political institutions.

<p style="text-align: center;">SENATE</p> <p>Lifetime membership Indirectly (former magistrates) or directly elected among the elders Finance, foreign affairs, religion, (court). Overseers of the constitution Advice to magistrates</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PEOPLE'S COUNCIL</p> <p>One or two years Election or sortition by lot</p> <p>Prepares cases for the Assembly, Overseers of the constitution Advice to magistrates</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MAGISTRATES</p> <p>Usually one year Elected by the people's assembly Military, civilian, financial, religious tasks Propositions to the people's assembly</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">OFFICIALS APPOINTED BY LOT</p> <p>One year Committees Only civilian tasks and competence limited.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY</p> <p>Several meetings a year Citizens participate by attending Laws, war, alliances, (court). Elects the magistrates</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COURTS</p> <p>Jury-courts led by magistrates/ officials Usually previous arbitration Crimes, civil suits, religious and political transgressions.</p>

Fig. 2: Political institutions in the ancient city states.

First of all, it seems from a passage in Xenophon (below) that we have a senate of the Areopagos type, known from Athens, with former high magistrates with life membership, and not of the Gerousia type, found in Sparta, with members directly elected from men over a certain age. In connection with the conflict over membership in the Arcadian Federation in 370 BC, Xenophon gives us a rare glimpse into the political process:

Now the followers of Proxenus and Callibius, defeated in the council of the magistrates, and conceiving the thought that if the people came together they would prove far superior in numbers, gathered openly under arms.

63. I am very grateful for the extensive discussions I have had with Matthew Simonton, the author of *Classical Greek Oligarchy* (2017), the most thoroughly researched monograph on the subject since Leonard Whibley's *Greek Oligarchies, Their Character and Organisation* (1896), and the detailed feedback he has given me on the Gliding Scale Model, both of which have provided my argument with more clarity and additional sources. We remain, however, in fundamental, but cordial disagreement about many things regarding democracy and oligarchy, specifically on whether a "gliding scale" existed at all.

64. Leppin 2013, 146-147.

ἡττώμενοι δὲ οἱ περὶ τὸν Πρόξενον καὶ Καλλίβιον ἐν τοῖς *θεαροῖς*, νομίσαντες, εἰ συνέλθοι ὁ δῆμος, πολὺ ἂν τῷ πλήθει κρατῆσαι, ἐκφέρονται τὰ ὄπλα⁶⁵

This council of the magistrates, the *thearoi*, meaning ‘spectators’, or better still, ‘observers’, was most probably what we can call the senate of former, and possibly still serving, magistrates, an institution well known from Athens, Rome and other city states. These senators typically saw themselves as ‘watchers’, ‘overseers’ and ‘guardians of the constitution’.

We also find a second council called ‘the 300’, which reminds us of the Athenian ‘Council of 500’. Whereas the ‘council of the magistrates’ obviously is an elite council, the latter is probably a people’s council. In a law dated to the 4th century concerning limitation of public contracts, we find references to a possible people’s council called ‘the 300’ (*triakasioi*), magistrates called *strategoï* (whose primary function was to command the armies), *esdoteres* (‘the givers of contracts’) and the *dikasterion* (the courts). Together with the assembly and the senate, mentioned by Xenophon, this 4th century Tegean inscription constitutes the full panoply of political institutions:

Concerning . . . if any trouble occurs between the contractors on the same task as regards the task. (3) The man who has been wronged is to summon the person who has committed the offence within three days from the day on which the offence occurred, and not later, and whatever those who issue the contracts decide is to be valid.

(6) If war prevents the completion of any of the works that are under contract, or destroys any work that has been done, the **Three Hundred (*triakasioi*)** are to decide what should happen.

The generals (*strategoï*) are to account the income to the city, if it seems that it is war which has prevented or destroyed the work, when the sale of war booty takes place.

But if someone who has taken a contract has not started the work, and war prevents work, he is to give back whatever money he has received and be released from the work, if those who have issued the contract so order.

But if anyone gets together to oppose the allocation of the contracts, or does harm by destroying the work in any way, **those who issue the contracts (*esdoteres*)** are to punish him with whatever punishment they think fit, and let him be summoned to judgment and brought into whatever **court (*dikasterion*)** is appropriate for the magnitude of the penalty.

(21) It is not to be permitted for more than two people to contract jointly for any of the works. In case of any breach, each is to be fined 50 drachmas, and the ***haliastai* (members of the court)** are to enforce this; anyone who wishes may make an **exposure (*imphmneiri*)** for a reward of half the penalty. In the same way, if anyone has contracts for more than two pieces of work, either sacred or public, in anyway, to whom the *haliastai* have not given express and unanimous permission, he is to be penalized 50 drachmas a month for each work over two until he completes those supernumerary contracts.

(31) If anyone brings litigation concerning the terms of the contract for work on any matter, he is not. . . If not, it shall not be possible for him to be a litigant anywhere other than in Tegea; if he is condemned, he is to pay double the amount for which the suit is brought, and the surety for the penalty is to be the same person as was surety for the work, for its payment.

65. Xen. Hell. 6.5.7. Trans. R. Warner. London 1966.

(37) If someone who has taken a contract for work also does harm to some other existing work, whether sacred or public or private, contrary to the terms of the contract, he is to make restitution of what has been damaged at his own expense to a condition not worse than it was at the time he undertook the contract. If he does not make restitution, he is to pay the penalties just as is ordained for other works which are overdue.

(45) If any contractor or workman seems to be abusive against the work or does not obey those put in charge or shows contempt for the penalties that have been imposed, **those letting the contract** are to have power to exclude a workman from the work and penalise a contractor in **court** in the same way as is prescribed for those who oppose the allocation of contracts. Whatever work is allocated, whether sacred or public, the general contract is to be valid in addition to the contract that is written with regard to the particular work.⁶⁶

The inscription refers to a separate court, consisting of *heliasts*, or jurors, to which contractors might refer their cases to if arbitration by the adjudicators (*esdoteres*) failed. We find the 300 together with the 50 as a subcommittee in another inscription from the turn of the 5th century BC:

The sacred cattle ought not to graze in the sanctuary of Alea by day or night, even if it happens that they are driven through; if one does graze one owes one drachma per head of cattle, one obol per head of small livestock, one drachma per pig unless one obtains the consent of 50 of the 300.⁶⁷

That the council called the 300 had a precisely numbered subcommittee called the 50, with rather mundane functions, strengthens the hypothesis that we are dealing with an annual appointed council or “People’s Council”.

It is clear that Tegea had, in the 4th century BC, a sophisticated system of adjudicators, law courts and “the council of 300”, with a sub-committee of “the 50” to control both contractors and office-holders. We do not know whether this auditing power was in the hands of the common people or the elite, and whether, in the eventuality that the commoners were involved, these functions were limited to the leisure class part of the hoplites. The provision that anyone who wishes could prosecute, and the reward for a successful prosecution, suggests that the court system had many similarities with the Athenian model. The open prosecution was traditionally attributed to Solon.⁶⁸

It is important to emphasise that we are dealing with a system with two types of councils working at the same time; the *thearoi* of former magistrates, and “the Council of 300”. This points towards a more open oligarchy than if Tegea only had a senate. The inscriptions from 4th Century Tegea also mention two kinds of religious officials, the *hieromnemoi* (board of priests) and a *demiurgos*, both connected to the temple of Athena Alea, but again we do not know how and from which groups they were appointed.⁶⁹

I suggest that we analyse Tegea on a gliding scale, on which ‘oligarchic’ and ‘democratic’ are the opposite poles of a continuum (Table 1, pp. 248-249).⁷⁰ Only when we see the full range of institutional possibilities within the city state systems of ancient Greece is it possible to make a really educated guess about what kind of system we are dealing with.

66. IG 5.2.6. Trans. P.J.Rhodes and R. Osborne 2003.

67. IG 5.2.3 Trans. R.L Wildfang. Translation by Dr Robin Lorsch Wildfang. I am very grateful that she did this translation as a favour to me in connection with my work on the Tegean political system.

68. Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 9.

69. IG 5.2.3

70. An earlier version of the Gliding Scale Model was introduced in Mæhle 2017. In the present version, the scope is expanded, and some mistakes and inaccuracies are corrected.

If grey background indicates where we have certain knowledge and shaded background where we can make a plausible guess, **Table 1** does not inspire confidence in sweeping generalizations about the political system. As for the **assembly**, we mostly have to assume its existence, and that it elected the officeholders and voted on laws. The election of officials like the *strategoï*, the *esdoteres* ('givers of contracts'), the *triakasioi* ('the 300') and possibly the religious officials, the *hieromnemoi* and a *demurgos*, does not tell us much about its powers, how often it met, and who summoned it, put forward proposals and debated. I do, however, think that the sub-hoplites were included among the *demos*, for two reasons: first, because excluding them would not be necessary to keep control, and would be counterproductive in terms of putting enough soldiers in the field; second, because Tegea seems to have had a people's council, which suggests a milder form of oligarchy. It is puzzling, however, that we do not see the assembly in action, even in political turmoil. When faced with defeat in the senate over membership of the Arcadian Confederation in 370, the opponents, even though Xenophon claims they had many people supporting them, had recourse to arms, not votes. Everything political mentioned in our sources takes place in the senate, not in the assembly.⁷¹

If the *triakasioi*, or 'the 300', is indeed a **people's council**, it is probably of the 'pre-Kleisthenic type': a) consisting of the leisure class,⁷² b) strictly probouletic (preparing cases for the people's assembly); and c) overseeing routine business and lesser magistrates in the daily running of the state (contracts, markets, public building, etc). With further excavations in the agora area, we may find verification or falsification of these guesses in the form of inscriptions, ballots or even fragments of lottery machines. We must also remember that even in democratic Athens the sub-hoplites were formally excluded from the people's council, so it would be strange if they were included in Tegea. **The senate**, called *theoroi* by Xenophon, probably oversaw the larger issues of war and peace, although we should not imagine a very clear boundary of competence between the two councils. They were probably former magistrates, like the ex-archons in the Areopagos council in Athens, and the significance in Xenophon's story points towards an oligarchic regime. We do not know, however, what it took to become a member of this council and to reach high office, nor do we know the demarcation lines between the competences of the various institutions. If you had to become a knight to hold **office**, and you had to hold office to become a member of the council, the system leaned heavily towards oligarchy. If it was good enough to be a hoplite, and several of them were, the system leaned more towards the democratic. We do know, however, that even in Athens the people preferred to elect the socio-economic elite to important positions.

Perhaps more important for ordinary people was the control over the **jury courts**. They were there, as we know from *IG 5.2.6*, not just part of an official's province, but we do not know who could be jurymen. We do well to remember, though, that the Greeks seemed to be rather egalitarian in this matter. Having already ruled out a strict oligarchy, we can safely assume that it was not reserved for knights. Whether it also included the sub-hoplites is anybody's guess, but I will go with my Solonian parallel here too. Sadly, we have no idea if the Tegeans used liturgies or financial obligations connected to the offices in financing the polis, which would tell us a great deal about their political system.

Conclusion

In place of the old terms of moderate or radical democracy, strict or moderate oligarchy, I would like, in conclusion to introduce what I believe to be more precise terms to describe the development of constitutional regimes. Although property requirements for political participation (in assembly and

71. Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.7.

72. Most scholars believe that the property qualifications were simply ignored, even though they remained "on the books", when Athens became democratic.

courts) remains the demarcation line between oligarchy and democracy,⁷³ moderate property requirements for office-holding and membership in council(s) cannot exclude a system from being classified as a democracy, since members of the lowest property class, the *thetes* were formally disqualified from office-holding in Athens throughout its democracy.⁷⁴ To differentiate further between different kinds of oligarchy and democracy, we must take into account the distribution of power between the various political institutions, assembly, council(s), courts and office-holders.

- **Dynastic⁷⁵ oligarchy:** The rulers are not elected freely from the citizenry, but offices belong to certain wealthy families from “aristocratic” lineages or a cabal of individuals, and the electorate can only choose from these, if they vote at all. The elite control the council(s), courts and the debate in the popular assembly. Examples: the Eupatrides in Pre-Solonian Athens, the patricians in the early Roman Republic, Thebes (Thuc. 3.62.3) + Ps-Aristotle *Rhetoric to Alexander* (*hetaireiai*).
- **Plutocratic⁷⁶ oligarchy:** The rulers are elected to offices based on a high property assessment and the citizens with voting power are predominantly from the leisure class. The elite control the council(s), courts and the debate in the popular assembly. Examples: The oligarchies in Athens 411 (“the 400” and the “the 5000”), 404 (“the 30 tyrants”).
- **Competitive oligarchy:** The rulers are elected on a high property assessment, but property requirements for voting in the assembly are low (this includes the working class) or non-existent (this includes the poorest). As a consequence, competition for popularity and honour is the norm, and the electorate may even be presented with political alternatives. As in the stricter forms of oligarchy, the elite control the council(s), courts and the debate in the popular assembly, but the competition inside the elite for popular favour, allows the people some choice. Examples: The Roman Republic after 367 fvt., Sparta, Solonian Athens).
- **Representative democracy:** All political decisions are taken by the people’s elected representatives and the government is either elected (presidential systems) or based on a majority of the elected representatives (parliamentary systems). Plebiscites are advisory and not binding on the representative bodies. In cases where the electorate is limited by a property assessment, “oligarchy” rather than “democracy” applies. All examples are modern, with roots in the American and French revolutions in the 18th Century.
- **Delegative democracy:** Although sovereign power resides in the popular assembly, a council (appointed by election or sortition) has been delegated authority to decide most of the political issues. We know of only one example, “the older form of democracy” that existed in Mantinea (Arist. *Pol.* 6.2.2.), but there are examples in the development of democracy from the 4th Century onwards, such as the role of the *nomothetai* in Athens, and the often alleged decreased frequency of assembly meetings and greater discretionary powers of elected officials and councils in the so-called “Hellenistic democracies” (more research is required, however).

73. *Pol.* 4.5.1.

74. Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 7.34, 9.

75. According to the pseudo-Aristotelean *Rhetoric to Alexander* (1446b25-26) oligarchies are based either on property qualification (*apo timematon*) or membership in a political club (*hetaireia*); see Simonton 2017, 37. In *Politics* (4.51) Aristotle classifies a *dunasteia* as a particularly narrow form of oligarchy where certain families pass on power to their sons. I have classified the oligarchy by cabal and family under the terms dynastic oligarchy.

76. *Ploutokratia* is used in some sources as a byword for oligarchy; see Simonton 2017, 36 with examples: Xen. *Mem.* 4.6.12, Menander Rhetor, p. 359 Spengel.

- **Participatory democracy:** Only military commanders and other offices which require special skills (finance, etc.) are elected, whereas civilian offices, a probouletic council and popular juries are filled by lot from the citizenry at large. People are rulers and ruled in turn. Examples: Athens and Syracuse from the 5th Century.

The balance of power may have shifted with time and circumstance, but there is a strong case to be made for constitutional constancy in Tegea, gravitating towards a **competitive oligarchy**, where the rulers were elected on a high property assessment, but property requirements for voting in the assembly were low (including the working class) or non-existent (including the poorest). Consequently, competition for popularity and honour was the norm, and the electorate may even have been presented with political alternatives.

The exact constitutional mix remains obscure due to the sources we currently have at hand. But I do not think we would be far off the mark if we took the oligarchy of Solon as a model for the people-friendly, yet elite-governed small city states outside the democratic sphere of influence.⁷⁷ The longevity and cohesion of this, as far as we can tell, stable political system was due to the strength of its institutions and the absence of influential oligarchic hardliners. In a 1st century BC inscription, we find the reassuring formula: *The strategoi and the boule of the Tegeans on behalf of the boule and the demos rejoice.*⁷⁸

77. Cartledge 2009, 53.

78. *IG* 4.2.21: [— — — —]έων στρατηγοὶ ναὶ ἡ [βουλὴ Τεγεατῶν τῆ βουλῆ καὶ] [τῷ δήμῳ χ]αίρειν. τῶν ἐψ[ηφισμένων — — — — — — — — — —].

Table 1: The Gliding Scale Model of oligarchic and democratic traits in ancient political systems

	FUNCTIONS	OLIGARCHIC TRAITS		DEMOCRATIC TRAITS	SOURCES GENERAL	TEGEA
POLITICAL ACTIONS	Elections	Senate	People's Council	Assembly	Thuc.8.70.1 ⁱ , Arist. <i>Pol.</i> 6.2.2 ⁱⁱ	<i>IG</i> 5.2.6
	War, peace, alliances, decrees.	Senate	People's Council/ Sections of the demos in turn/ Boards of magistrates	Assembly	<i>Pol.</i> 4.4.6 ⁱⁱⁱ , 4.11.2-5 ^{iv} ; 4.12.9 ^v ; 6.1.8 ^{vi}	<i>Xen. Hell.</i> 6.5.7
	Legislation	Senate	People's court	Assembly	<i>Pol.</i> 4.4.6, 6.1.8	
	Control office-holders	Senate	Jury Court People's Council	Assembly	<i>Pol.</i> 4.4.6, 4.11.7; 6.1.8	<i>IG</i> 5.2.6
	Exile	Senate	Jury Court	Assembly	<i>Pol.</i> 3.8.2 ^{vii} , 3.8.5-6 ^{viii}	<i>Xen. Hell.</i> 5.6.8-10 ^{ix}
	Preparation agenda general assembly	Senate, <i>Probouloi</i>	Council of elected officials	People's Council	<i>Pol.</i> 4.12.8 ^x , 6.5.10 ^{xi}	<i>IG.</i> 5.2.6 <i>IG</i> 5.2.3
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	Participation	Hoplites and knights		Sub-hoplites included	<i>Pol.</i> 3.6.6-7 ^{xii} , 4.5.1 ^{xiii} , 4.7.3 ^{xiv} , 6.12.10-11 ^{xv} ; Thuc. 2.8.65.3 ^{xvi} , 8.97.2 ^{xvii}	
	Discussion	Officials and councillors		All citizens	<i>Pol.</i> 4.11.3; Thuk. 2.40 ^{xviii}	
	Proposals	Preliminary Councillors (<i>Proboloi</i>), the chief, regular officials		The People's Council, all citizens	<i>Pol.</i> 4.12.8; Thuk. 2.40	
	Frequency	Seldom and irregularly		10-40 and regularly	<i>Ath.Pol.</i> 43.4-6 ^{xix}	
	Voting units	Property and age		Birthplace or domicile	Hdt.5.69.2 ^{xx} ; Cic. <i>Rep.</i> 2.39, <i>Leg.</i> 3.44; <i>Flacc.</i> 15-17 ^{xxi}	
OFFICIALS	Eligibility	Knights (plutocratic oligarchy), certain families/ a cabal (dynastic oligarchy)		Hoplites (radical: sub-hoplites)	<i>Pol.</i> 2.8.5 ^{xxii} , 3.2.8 ^{xxiii} , 4.3.7 ^{xxiv} , 4.4.1 ^{xxv} , 4.4.3 ^{xxvi} , 4.5.1 ^{xxvii} 4.7.3 ^{xxviii} , 4.12.10 ^{xxix} , 5.7.10 ^{xxx} 6.1.8-10, 6.12.10-11; Thuc.2.37.1 ^{xxxi}	
	Civilian and Religious	Election	Sortition from a list previously elected by vote	Sortition	<i>Pol.</i> 4.7.3 ^{xxxii} , 6.1.8-9, 4.12.11 ^{xxxiii} , <i>Pol.</i> 4.7.3, 4.11.7 ^{xxxiv} , 2.3.11 ^{xxxv} ; Arist. <i>Rhet.</i> 1.8.4 ^{xxxvi}	<i>IG</i> 5.2.6 <i>IG</i> 5.2.3
	Military	Election			<i>Pol.</i> 6.1.8; Ps-Xen. 1.3 ^{xxxvii}	<i>IG</i> 5.2.6
COUNCIL APPOINTED FOR LIFE (Senate)	Membership	Knights		Hoplites	<i>Pol.</i> 4.11.6, 6.12.10-11	
	Recruitment	Co-optation		Direct or indirect election	<i>Pol.</i> 2.6.18 ^{xxxviii} , 4.11.9 ^{xxxix}	<i>Xen. Hell.</i> 6.5.7
	Powers	Advise and control magistrates, guardian of the laws, veto	Law court	Religion and ceremony	<i>Pol.</i> 2.6.17 ^{xl} , Arist. <i>Ath. Pol.</i> 3.6, 4.4 ^{xli} , 25-26.1 ^{xlii} , 57.3-4 ^{xliii}	

	FUNCTIONS	OLIGARCHIC TRAITS	DEMOCRATIC TRAITS	SOURCES GENERAL	TEGEA	
JURY COURTS	Membership	Knights	Hoplites	Sub-hoplites	<i>Pol.</i> 2.9.2 ^{xliv} , 2.9.3 ^{xlv} , 3.6.6-7 ^{xlvi} , 4.13.4 ^{xlvii} , 6.1.8	<i>IG</i> 5.2.6
	Recruitment	Vote		Sortition	<i>Pol.</i> 4.13.4	
	Powers	Not political trials, which take place in the senate		Political trials included	<i>Pol.</i> 4.13.3.	
COUNCIL APPOINTED ANNUALLY (People's Council)	Membership	Hoplites		Sub-hoplites	<i>Pol.</i> 4.7.3, 4.11.6 ^{xlviii} , 6.1.8, 6.12.10-11	
	Recruitment	Election or cooptation		Sortition by lot and rotation	Thuc. 8.67.3 ^{xlix} , 8.70.1, 72. 1; <i>Pol.</i> 6.1.8	
	Powers	Preparing the agenda for the assembly (probouletic)		Probouletic & Controlling officials	<i>Pol.</i> 4.4.6, 4.12.8-9, 6.5.10	<i>IG</i> 5.2.6
OTHER INDICATORS	Payment political participation	No		Yes	<i>Pol.</i> 6.1.9, 7.7.3; Thuk. 8.65.3, 8. 92.2 ⁱ	
	<i>Nomophylakes</i> (Guardians of the Law)	Yes		No	<i>Pol.</i> 4.11.9	
	Censor/ Guardian of the Women, Children, etc.	Yes		No	<i>Pol.</i> 4.12.9 ^{li} , <i>Philochoros</i> , <i>FGrHist</i> 328 F 65, Cic. <i>De leg.</i> 2.64-66 ^{lii}	
	Sponsorship of public tasks	Elected officeholders		Liturgies	<i>Pol.</i> 6.4.6 ^{liii} , 5.7.11-12 ^{liv}	

NOTES

- i. Thuk. 8.70.1: The oligarchically constituted council of 400, elects the officeholders in 411 B.C.
- ii. Arist. *Pol.* 6.2.2: Mantinea.
- iii. *Pol.* 4.4.6: *Demos* in complete control over decision-making and judge the officeholders, as opposed to a system governed by laws.
- iv. *Pol.* 4.11.2-5: Various forms of deliberative bodies.
- v. *Pol.* 4.12.9: Systems where the assembly deliberates on most matters through frequent meetings, weakens the council(s).
- vi. *Pol.* 6.1.8-10: The characteristics of democracy
- vii. *Pol.* 3.8.2: Democratic states institute ostracism.
- viii. *Pol.* 3.8.5-6: Exile is necessary in all forms of government.
- ix. Xen. *Hell.* 5.6.8-10: The exiles in Sparta fled from a civil conflict. We do not know which institution formalised their banishment.
- x. *Pol.* 4.12.8: Officials elected to prepare the agenda for the assembly: *Proboloi*
- xi. *Pol.* 6.5.10: Preparation of the agenda for the assembly in oligarchies and democracies.
- xii. *Pol.* 3.6.7: On the wisdom of letting the common people have part in the deliberative (assembly) and judicial functions (as *dikastes*), like in the Solonian institution.
- xiii. *Pol.* 4.5.1: Various types of oligarchy, some based on property qualifications, others hereditary.
- xiv. *Pol.* 4.7.3: Democracies have no property qualification, or a very small one for participation in the assembly
- xv. *Pol.* 6.12.10-11: Property qualifications to office and assembly, election and sortition.
- xvi. Thuk. 8.65.3: The oligarchy of «the 5000» in Athens 411 BC.
- xvii. Thuk. 8.97.2: All Athenians citizens able to equip themselves as hoplites gets full political rights, 410 BC.
- xviii. Thuk. 2.40: Pericles' «Funeral Speech» - everybody can participate in discussion
- xix. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 43.4-6: The regularity of assembly meetings and the posting of business beforehand.
- xx. Hdt. 5.69.2: Cleisthenes inscribes the people in demes and new tribes.

xxi. Cic. *Rep.* 2.39, *Leg.* 3.44; *Flacc.* 15-17: In the Roman system oligarchy was preserved, not by depriving the poorer element the vote, as was common in Greek oligarchies, but by grading the influence of the voters through voting units (*centuriae*) that disproportionately advantaged the wealthier citizens.

xxii. *Pol.* 2.8.5: Most people (the educated, no doubt) think that the rulers should be chosen not only for their merit, but also for their wealth, since it is not possible for a poor man to govern well, because he has no leisure for his duties (nor education)

xxiii. *Pol.* 3.2.8: Since manual labour is slavish, only extreme democracies let the craftsmen and day-labourers political rights.

xxiv. *Pol.* 4.3.7: When the free are sovereign, there is democracy, but when the rich are sovereign (full political rights belong to the wealthy), there is oligarchy.

xxv. *Pol.* 4.4.1: There are several kinds of oligarchy and democracy, distinguished by which class has which political rights.

xxvi. *Pol.* 4.4.3: Offices can have property qualifications in democracies, if the requirements are low.

xxvii. *Pol.* 4.5.1: High property assessment in oligarchies excludes the majority of the citizens.

xxviii. *Pol.* 4.7.3: It is democratic to have property qualifications for office-holding, oligarchic to have it.

xxix. *Pol.* 4.12.10: Eligibility for office, according to class, birth or a cabal.

xxx. *Pol.* 5.7.10: It is democratic for every citizen to be eligible for office.

xxxi. Thuk. 2.37: Pericles' «Funeral Speech» - ability, not class is a prerequisite for political office.

xxxii. *Pol.* 4.7.3: It is democratic to assign the offices by lot, oligarchic for them to be elected.

xxxiii. *Pol.* 4.12.11: Various forms of appointing officeholders including election, sortition, combinations of the two (i.e. the archons of Athens after 487 BC) and appointment by turn from different sections of the citizenry (*demes*, *tribes*, *phratries*).

xxxiv. *Pol.* 4.11.7: Offices appointed by election, sortition or a combination of both.

xxxv. *Pol.* 2.3.11: Selection by lot from a list previously elected is common for both oligarchies and democracies.

xxxvi. Arist. *Rhet.* 1.8.4: In a democracy the offices are shared by the people through lot, in an oligarchy by those who possess a property qualification, and in an aristocracy by those who possess an educational qualification.

xxxvii. Ps-Xen 1.3: Military and financial officials are elected from the elite, also in democratic Athens, whereas less important officials are shared among the common people through lottery.

xxxviii. *Pol.* 2.6.18: Election to the *Gerusia* in Sparta

xxxix. *Pol.* 4.11.9: It is advantageous to co-opt some persons to the council in oligarchies.

xl. *Pol.* 2.6.17: The judicial power of the *Gerusia* in Sparta

xli. Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 3.6: The old power of the *Areopagos*-council: Guardianship of the law, control all public affairs.

xlii. Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 25: The reforms of Ephialtes in 462/461 B.C. removes the guardianship of the laws and additional powers from the *Areopagos* and transfers them to the People's Council, the People's Court and the Assembly.

xliii. Arist. *Ath.Pol.* 57.34: Trials in the *Areopagos*.

xliv. *Pol.* 2.9.2: Solon let all citizens participate in the jury courts, which was democratic.

xlv. *Pol.* 2.9.3: The introduction of payment for jury-duty, introduced by Pericles, made Athens more democratic.

xlvi. *Pol.* 3.6.6-7: While it is not safe to give the highest offices to the poor, it is wise to give them a share in the deliberative (assembly) and judicial (jury-courts) power in order for them to be loyal to the political system.

xlvii. *Pol.* 4.13.4: Various forms of constituting the courts; by lot or vote, from one class or from all citizens.

xlviii. *Pol.* 4.11.6: Election of a deliberative body based on property qualifications.

xlix. Thuk. 8.67.3: The appointment of "the 400" was a form of cooptation. See also Whibley 1896, 146-147.

i. Thuk. 8.97.2: Pay for office-holding banned in the Athenian oligarchy of 411-410 BC.

ii. *Pol.* 4.12.9: A Guardian of the Children (*paidonomos*) or Guardian of the Women (*gynaikonomos*) was an aristocratic feature, according to Aristotle, because prohibiting women from going out of doors would be impossible for poor families. We know of *paidonomoi* from Sparta, and the oligarchic regime of Demetrius of Phaleron introduced *gynaikonomoi* to watch over women, the sumptuary legislation and the gymnasia.

iii. *Philochoros*, *FGrHist* 328 F 65, Cic. *De leg.* 2.64-66: On the sumptuary laws of Demetrius of Phaleron.

iiii. *Pol.* 6.4.6, Trans. H. Rackham. Cambridge, Mass.1932: 'And furthermore the most supreme offices also, which must be retained by those within the constitution [the oligarchs], must have expensive duties attached to them, in order that the common people may be willing to be excluded from them, and may feel no resentment against the ruling class, because it pays a high price for office. And it fits in with this that they should offer splendid sacrifices and build up some public monument on entering upon office, so that the common people sharing in the festivities and seeing the city decorated both with votive offerings and with buildings may be glad to see the constitution enduring; and an additional result will be that the notables will have memorials of their outlay.'

liv. *Pol.* 7.5.11-12: Public services (liturgies) such as equipping choruses, torch races and suchlike expensive and use-less things should be avoided in democracies.

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