

Roman Policies towards Antiochus III and the Greeks from Winter 197/196 B.C. to Autumn 196 B.C.

[Roms Politik gegenüber Antiochos III. und den Griechen zwischen Winter
197/196 a.c. und Herbst 196 a.c.]

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Abstract

In the Second Macedonian War (200-196 B.C.), the *res publica* reduced the strength of the enemy King Philip V apparently to establish a new political order in Southern Balkans: Assumedly a pro-Roman balance of forces should prevail there, untainted by influence of another major power. A particular senatorial policy towards the Greeks probably did not exist before the fighting in Hellas came to an end in summer 197 B.C. In the same year, the Seleucid king Antiochus III brought large parts of the west coast of Asia Minor under control and set about crossing the Hellespont. Rome subsequently stylized itself as the guardian of freedom for the Greeks living in Hellas and Asia Minor. The statesmen of the *res publica* could have perceived Antiochus' expansion as a threat to the mentioned new order. Therefore, the Roman Policy of Freedom was possibly applied primarily to take action against the Seleucid king.

Keywords: Antiochus III – Greek Freedom – Roman Eastern Policy.

Zusammenfassung

Die *res publica* verminderte im Zweiten Makedonischen Krieg (200-196 a.c.) die Macht des gegnerischen Königs Philipp V - anscheinend um eine neue politische Ordnung im südlichen Balkanraum zu etablieren: Vermutlich sollte dort ein romfreundliches Kräftegleichgewicht vorherrschen, auf das keine andere Großmacht Einfluß hat. Eine speziell an die Griechen gerichtete Politik seitens des römischen Senats gab es wahrscheinlich nicht vor Ende der Kampfhandlungen in Hellas im Sommer 197 a.c. In dem Jahr erweiterte der seleukidische König Antiochos III. seinen Einflussbereich auf große Teile der kleinasiatischen Westküste und schickte sich an, den Hellespont zu überqueren. Rom stilisierte sich in der Folgezeit zum Freiheitsgarant der in Hellas und Kleinasien lebenden Griechen. Antiochos' Expansion könnte von den Staatsmännern der *res publica* als Bedrohung der genannten neuen Ordnung angesehen worden sein. Demzufolge wurde die römische Freiheitspolitik möglicherweise in erster Linie angewendet, um gegen den seleukidischen König vorzugehen.

Schlüsselworte: Antiochos III – Freiheit der Griechen – Römische Ostpolitik.

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In each source on Roman policies towards Antiochus III, king of the Seleucid Empire, and the Greeks from winter 197/196¹ to autumn 196 the Catchphrase of Freedom is used by the *res publica*. Only little is transmitted with regard to the emergence and the intentions of this political program and the little we know is often vague or contradictory. The same applies to the actions and the responsibilities of the involved Roman institutions and statesmen. Since the latest research in this field² does not seem to abolish or solve such uncertainties and contradictions this essay tries to clarify the situation while recognizing, isolating and describing possible political programs. In order to accomplish this, first of all significant events taking place in the Aegean Region and Southern Balkans during the months prior to winter 197/196 are shown. A description and study of sources is displayed in the next part followed by an analysis of Roman policies directed towards Antiochus and the Greeks. Subsequently, a conclusion is given.

Historical Background

In early summer 197 a Greco-Roman³ force led by proconsul T. Quinctius Flamininus defeated a Macedonian army under the guidance of King Philip V (Battle of *Cynoscephalae*). The Second Macedonian War (MW II) was thus settled in favour of the *res publica* and their Greek allies. Just after *Cynoscephalae* Antiochus III extended his sphere of influence into the Aegean Region. He brought large parts of the west coast of Asia Minor and the Thracian Chersonesos under his control. In spring 196 he crossed the Hellespont.

¹ All dates mentioned in this study are BCE unless otherwise noted.

² E.g.: ASTIN, A. E., "Roman government and politics. 200-134 B.C." (pp.163-196), *CAH VIII*, 1989; DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan of Freedom and Early Roman Politics in Greece*, Oxford, 2011, pp.143-224; ECKSTEIN, A. M., *Senate and General. Individual Decision Making and Roman Foreign Relations. 264-194 B.C.*, Berkeley, 1987, pp.268-318; ERRINGTON, R. M., "Rome against Philip and Antiochus" (pp.244-289), *CAH VIII*, 1989; GRUEN, E. S., *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, Berkeley, 1984, pp. 132-157, 382-398, 437-456; HAMMOND, N. G. L. & WALBANK, F. W., *A History of Macedonia*, Vol. 3, Oxford, 1988, pp. 443-447; PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flamininus. Untersuchungen zur römischen Griechenlandpolitik*, Göttingen, 2005, pp. 278-342; SCHLEUSSNER, B., *Die Legaten der römischen Republik*, Munich, 1978, pp. 50-59; WILL, É., *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique. 323-30 av. J.-C.*, Vol. II, Nancy, 1982, pp. 161-174.

³ Approximately one out of three of this army came from Hellas (Liv. XXXIII 3, 9-10, XXXIII 4, 6.).

Description and Study of the Sources

Polybius:⁴ In winter 197/196 the *senatus romanus* (SR) nominated a commission of *decemviri* to operate in Greece.⁵ These legates brought with them a *senatus consultum* (SC) governing affairs in the Aegean Region and Southern Balkans.⁶ The SC declared all Greeks in Hellas and Asia Minor free and subject to their own laws. By this decree king Philip was requested to abandon his possessions in Greece and to hand them over to the Romans. This should happen until the next Isthmian Games taking place a few months later. The two legions fighting previously against Philip's troops withdrew from Hellas only in 194.⁷ A concrete date of their pull-out was not mentioned in the SC. The SR empowered the ten commissioners to make their own decisions regarding a provisional stationing of Roman troops in Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias.⁸ In the previous decades the Antigonids⁹ controlled these strategically important locations.¹⁰ The Aetolians regarded the regulations directed by the SC as an attempt of the *res publica* to acquire Philip's former hegemonic position in Hellas. Subsequently, in spring 196, this view was taken over by many Greeks.¹¹ Due to the success of the Aetolian "defamations" Flamininus appealed to the legates not to occupy the mentioned territories: Everyone should see that Rome was serious about the Greek Freedom. Concerning the danger of a Seleucid invasion in Europe, the officers decided to seize these places for the *res publica* first.¹² However, following an agreement made during the MW II the Achaeans obtained Corinth immediately. Nevertheless, the Romans stationed a garrison at *Acrocorinth*, the strategically decisive stronghold of that city.¹³ Despite the decision first to maintain the two legions in Hellas and to occupy important key positions, during the aforementioned Isthmian Games Flamininus

⁴ Dates of birth and death: 200, ~120.

⁵ At this time the two nominated commissioners P. Sulpicius Galba Maximus and P. Villius Tappulus were already operating in Hellas (Liv. XXXIII 28, 12).

⁶ Pol. XVIII 44, 2-7: "ἦν δὲ τὰ συνέχοντα τοῦ δόγματος ταῦτα, τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους Ἑλληνας πάντας, τοὺς τε κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ κατὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην, ἐλευθέρους ὑπάρχειν καὶ νόμοις χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις· τοὺς δὲ ταπτομένους ὑπὸ Φίλιππον καὶ τὰς πόλεις τὰς ἐμφρούρους παραδοῦναι Φίλιππον Ῥωμαίοις πρὸ τῆς τῶν Ἰσθμίων πανηγύρεως, Εὐρωμον δὲ καὶ Πήδασα καὶ Βαργύλια καὶ τὴν Ἰασέων πόλιν, ὁμοίως Ἄβυδον, Θάσον, Μύριναν, Πέρινθον, ἐλευθέρας ἀφεῖναι τὰς φρουρὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν μεταστησάμενον· περὶ δὲ τῶν Κιανῶν ἐλευθερώσεως τίτον γράψαι πρὸς Προυσίαν κατὰ τὸ δόγμα τῆς συγκλήτου· τὰ δ' αἰχμάλωτα καὶ τοὺς αὐτομόλους ἅπαντας ἀποκαταστήσαι Φίλιππον Ῥωμαίοις ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς χρόνοις, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς καταφράκτους ναῦς πλὴν πέντε σκαφῶν καὶ τῆς ἐκκαϊδεκῆρους· δοῦναι δὲ καὶ χίλια τάλαντα, τούτων τὰ μὲν ἡμίση παραντικά, τὰ δ' ἡμίση κατὰ φόρους ἐν ἔτεσι δέκα"

⁷ Liv. XXXIV 48, 2-XXIV 52, 12. The respective passage in Polybius is lost.

⁸ Pol. XVIII 45, 9-11. In this essay the possession of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias includes the domination of the cities and the strongholds unless otherwise noted.

⁹ Ruling house of Macedonia from 306 to 168.

¹⁰ The garrison in Chalkis could swiftly bring under its control Boeotia, Locris and Phocis, the one in Corinth the Peloponnese and the one in Demetrias Thessaly and Magnesia (Pol. XVIII 11, 6-7.).

¹¹ Pol. XVIII 45, 8.

¹² Pol. XVIII 45, 7-12.

¹³ Pol. XVIII 45, 12.

explicitly declared free every Greek who was previously controlled by Philip V including the inhabitants of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias as well.¹⁴ After the festival the proconsul and the ten legates¹⁵ informed Antiochus III that (1) he should stay away from autonomous cities in Asia Minor, (2) abandon those towns previously belonging to the Macedonian and Ptolemaic Empire and (3) he was enjoined to not cross the Hellespont.¹⁶ These demands were justified with the claim that all Greeks should be free. A few months later,¹⁷ when Antiochus had already crossed the strait, Roman envoys met him in Lysimachia in Southern Thrace. Here they repeated the first two demands and notified the king that his presence in Europe seemed to the Romans as a preparation for war against the *res publica*.¹⁸

G. A. Lehmann postulates a general confirmation of a trustworthiness of Polybius' *Histories*.¹⁹ R. Pfeilschifter tends towards the same direction.²⁰ Following B. Dreyer, the ancient historian basically argued neither emotional nor hold prejudice.²¹ However, Polybius' prepossession in favour of Achaea as well as Rome and against the Aetolians, the Boeotians and Sparta cannot be disputed. Further, it seems implausible that someone who had suffered so heavily from the consequences of the own political involvement faced his opponents in his historiographical writing unbiased.²² B. McGing rightly points out that in the *Histories* kings and courtiers are "generally depicted in various shades of wickedness."²³ Polybius often lacked the understanding of the Macedonian attitude and Philip's actions.²⁴ F. W. Walbank correctly recognizes that the ancient historian analysed this Antigonid king not as a political force.²⁵ Instead Polybius carried out a psychological study on the sovereign.²⁶ Thus, I cannot entirely agree with such statements as those of Pfeilschifter, Lehmann or Dreyer. Nevertheless, Polybius' high reliability concerning the accurate report of "historical facts" is

¹⁴ Pol. XVIII 46, 5: "Ἡ σύγκλητος ἡ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Τίτος Κοῖντιος στρατηγὸς ὑπάτος, καταπολεμήσαντες βασιλέα Φίλιππον καὶ Μακεδόνας, ἀφιᾶσιν ἐλευθέρους, ἀφρουρήτους, ἀφορολογήτους, νόμοις χρωμένους τοῖς πατρίοις, Κορινθίους Φωκέας, Λοκρούς, Εὐβοεῖς, Αἰχαιοὺς τοὺς Φθιώτας, Μάγνητας, Θετταλοὺς, Περραιβοὺς"

¹⁵ It can be taken for granted that both Roman messages to Antiochus in 196 were composed by the SR (Pol. XVIII 45, 10, XVIII 49, 2-3, XVIII 50, 5-6.).

¹⁶ Pol. XVIII 47, 1-2: "διακελευόμενοι τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσίας πόλεων τῶν μὲν αὐτονόμων ἀπέχεσθαι καὶ μηδεμιᾶ πολεμεῖν, ὅσας δὲ νῦν παρείληφε τῶν ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίων καὶ Φίλιππον ταπτομένων, ἐκχωρεῖν. σὺν δὲ τούτοις προηγόρευον μὴ διαβαίνειν εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην μετὰ δυνάμεως· οὐδένα γὰρ ἔτι τῶν Ἑλλήνων οὔτε πολεμεῖσθαι νῦν ὑπ' οὐδενός οὔτε δουλεύειν οὐδενί"

¹⁷ October 196 (HAMMOND, N. G. L. & WALBANK, F. W., *A History of...*, *op. cit.*, pp.443-447).

¹⁸ Pol. XVIII, 50.

¹⁹ LEHMANN, G. A., *Untersuchungen zur historischen Glaubwürdigkeit des Polybios*, Münster, 1967, p.357.

²⁰ PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flamininus...*, *op. cit.*, p.28.

²¹ DREYER, B., *Polybios. Leben und Werk im Banne Roms*, Hildesheim, 2011, p.132.

²² DEININGER, J., "Besprechung von: G. A. Lehmann, Untersuchungen zur historischen Glaubwürdigkeit des Polybios" (pp.229-238), in K. STIEWE & N. HOLZBERG (eds.), *Polybios*, Darmstadt, 1982.

²³ MCGING, B., *Polybius' Histories*, Oxford, 2010, p.150.

²⁴ WELWEI, K.-W., *Könige und Königtum im Urteil des Polybios*, Herbede, 1963, p.51.

²⁵ WALBANK, F. W., *Philip V of Macedon*, Cambridge, 1967, p.281.

²⁶ WALBANK, F. W., *Philip V of...*, *op. cit.*, p.281.

indisputable.²⁷ I follow therefore the approach of J. Deininger²⁸ which in my opinion has received too little attention until now: to distinguish clearly between “historical facts” and “value judgments” - question and analyze the later. I determine “historical facts” as descriptions of political and military actions and regard “value judgments” as intentions of participants. According to this scheme, I discuss Polybius' report on Roman policies towards Antiochus and the Greeks between winter 197/196 and autumn 196, but first I describe and study differences between this account and those of other ancient authors:

The relevant passages of T. Livius'²⁹ *Ab urbe condita libri CXLII*³⁰ correspond with those of Polybius' *Histories*. Therefore, Livius' account is not listed separately here. His sources on the events in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean from 200 to 146 were almost exclusively the *Histories*.³¹

Plutarchus³² reports the *decem legati* were “merely” equipped with counselling authority whereas Flamininus had the power of decision.³³ Due to Antiochus' threat the commissioners advised³⁴ the general to take possession of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias and to declare all others Greek communities free.³⁵ Flamininus - being angry and resentful in consequence of the Aetolian seditions - decided to leave the three places without a Roman garrison. He aimed to grant the Greeks a total advantage.³⁶ During the Isthmian Games, the proconsul proclaimed freedom for all Greeks previously dominated by Philip.³⁷ After the festival a legate of the commission travelled to Antiochus in order to negotiate freedom for those Greeks living in Seleucid-controlled areas.³⁸ Plutarchus reports on the Roman policies towards Antiochus and the Greeks in 196 and 197 in his *Vita of Flamininus*. The main source of this writing were Polybius' *Histories*, but it should be noted that Plutarchus inserted annalistic material in the Polybian context which does not appear in Livius.³⁹ It calls into question why Plutarchus (unlike Polybius) attributed Flamininus the authority over Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias. An answer might be found in the objectives of Plutarchus' *Vitae*: The author aimed at depicting the character of the addressed person, particularly its moral values.⁴⁰ Plutarchus did not view himself as a historian but as a

²⁷ E.g.: DEININGER, J., “Besprechung von: G...”, *op. cit.*, p.437; LEHMANN, G. A., *Untersuchungen zur historischen...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-357; WELWEI, K.-W., *Könige und Königtum...*, *op. cit.*, p.51.

²⁸ DEININGER, J., “Besprechung von: G...”, *op. cit.*, pp.436-437.

²⁹ Dates of birth and death: ~59, 17 A.D.

³⁰ Liv. XXXIII 24, 3-7, XXXIII 30-35, XXXIII 39-40.

³¹ TRÄNKLE, H., *Livius und Polybios*, Basel, 1977, pp.13-14.

³² Dates of birth and death: 45 A.D., 125 A.D.

³³ Plut. *Flam.* X, 1.

³⁴ Plut. *Flam.* X, 1: *συνεβούλευον*.

³⁵ Plut. *Flam.* X, 1.

³⁶ Plut. *Flam.* X, 2.

³⁷ Plut. *Flam.* X, 3-4.

³⁸ Plut. *Flam.* XII, 1.

³⁹ TRÄNKLE, H., *Livius und Polybios...*, *op. cit.*, pp.138-139.

⁴⁰ SCARSIGLI, B., *Die Römerbiographien Plutarchs*, Munich, 1979, p.3.

biographer.⁴¹ He is writing at the beginning of the *Flaminianan Vita*: “φιλοτιμότατος δὲ καὶ φιλοδοξότατος ὧν ἐβούλετο τῶν ἀρίστων καὶ μεγίστων πράξεων αὐτουργὸς εἶναι”⁴² Thus, it seems likely that Polybius’ report on Flamininus’ authority in Hellas was deliberately discarded in order to emphasize one of the general’s character traits. The Roman claims on Antiochus in 196 mentioned by Polybius might have been abridged in Plutarchus’ *Flaminianan Vita* since they carried no weight for the protagonist’s life. However, the stated deviations could also be a result of the fact that Plutarchus sometimes drew on an annalistic non-Livian source.

Diodorus⁴³ generally added to his account several secondary sources.⁴⁴ Concerning the period relevant for this essay, he mainly used Polybius’ *Histories*. When looking for Roman policies towards the Greeks from 201 to 197, in Diodorus only a report on negotiations between Philip V and Flamininus still exists.⁴⁵ They took place a few weeks after Flamininus assumed command in Hellas (spring 198).⁴⁶ In Diodorus the Roman general reported during these negotiations on his senatorial order to free “μὴ μέρος τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν αὐτήν”⁴⁷ However, such an instruction is not mentioned by Livius (and Polybius)⁴⁸ although the rest of his appropriate account is identical with regard to contents to the Diodorus-passage.⁴⁹ Rome probably adapted the Catchphrase of Freedom neither before nor during the combat actions of the MW II. That the *res publica* seems to have used this political slogan in winter 197/196 for the first time, will be discussed later in greater depth. Taking the previous investigation into account, it is likely that Diodorus mainly adopted Polybius’ report⁵⁰ of the negotiation in spring 198, but borrowed the order to free the whole of Hellas from a heavily distorting annalist. S. Dmitriev postulates the assumption that Diodorus, after adopting the claims from Polybius, summarized these whereby he came to the conclusion that all of Greece should be free.⁵¹ With regard to Roman policies towards the Seleucid Empire in 197 and 196 in Diodorus only the account of the meeting at Lysimachia still exists. Just like in Polybius’ report the monarch is asked to abandon the former Macedonian and Ptolemaic cities and to leave Europe.⁵² However, the order to stay away from autonomous cities in Asia Minor is not mentioned. Attention should

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁴² Plut. *Flam.* I, 2.

⁴³ He lived in the first century.

⁴⁴ MEISTER, K., *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Hellenismus*, Stuttgart, 1990, p.179.

⁴⁵ Diod. XXVIII, 11.

⁴⁶ Liv. XXXII 9, 6-10.

⁴⁷ Diod. XXVIII, 11.

⁴⁸ The respective passage in Polybius is lost, but in all probability it was identical with regard to content with the respective report of Livius (v.s.).

⁴⁹ Liv. XXXII 10, 3-8.

⁵⁰ Concerning the period relevant for this essay Diodorus mainly drew on Polybius (v.s.). The respective report of Polybius is lost, but very likely we know its content (See footnote 48).

⁵¹ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., pp.168-169.

⁵² Diod. XXVIII, 12.

be paid to the fact that in Diodorus the Catchphrase of Freedom is deployed during the negotiation in spring 198 but not in Lysimachia. Presumptions, such as, in Diodorus' view this political statement was designed only for the Greeks of the mainland, cannot be justified. Thus, no further suppositions will be made here.

According to Appianus⁵³ *Macedonica* during the preliminary negotiations after *Cynoscephalae* Flamininus "merely" required Philip to abandon "τοις Ἑλλησιν ὦν πρότερον ἀντέλεγε χωρίων"⁵⁴ Thereupon, the SR determined freedom for the Greek cities previously controlled by the Macedonian Kingdom.⁵⁵ At the Isthmian Games this decision was declared by Flamininus.⁵⁶ To sum up: In Appianus the Roman general aimed at excluding Philip from Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias⁵⁷ whereas the SR intended to free all of Greece.⁵⁸ Contrary to Polybius' account, not Flamininus but the SR appears as the benefactor of the Greeks. Even if Appianus generally worked with certain cursoriness,⁵⁹ the divergence listed here is more likely a result of a biased twist.⁶⁰ Appianus used a specific source for each of his books.⁶¹ Therefore, he most probably adopted this deviation from the writings of another ancient historian.⁶² In virtue of the permanent hostile attitude towards Flamininus, this source unknown to us dates probably back to the second century.⁶³ Concerning the Roman policies towards the Seleucid Empire in 197 and 196 the accounts of Appianus and Polybius are essentially consistent with each other: The formerly Macedonian and Ptolemaic possessions, the Catchphrase of Freedom and the assessment of Antiochus' appearance in Europe as action against the *res publica* are mentioned.⁶⁴

For the period from 200 to 146 the primary source of Cassius Dio's⁶⁵ *Roman History* were Polybius' writings.⁶⁶ It cannot be determined with absolute certainty whether Dio worked on annalistic transferences⁶⁷ or directly with the *Histories*.⁶⁸ Unlike Polybius in

⁵³ Dates of birth and death: ~90 A.D., ~160 A.D.

⁵⁴ App. *Mac.* IX, 2.

⁵⁵ App. *Mac.* IX, 3.

⁵⁶ App. *Mac.* IX, 4.

⁵⁷ App. *Mac.* IX, 2: "Φιλιππον δὲ ἐκστῆναι τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ὦν πρότερον ἀντέλεγε χωρίων". This sentence refers to Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias, because in winter 198/197 Greek envoys and thereupon the SR demanded from Philip to abandon these territories (App. *Mac.* VIII, 1; Pol. XVIII 11.). SCHWARTZ, E., *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber*, Leipzig, 1959, p.366.

⁵⁸ App. *Mac.* IX, 3: "ἐκέλευσε τὰς πόλεις ὅσαι ἦσαν Ἑλληνίδες ὑπὸ Φιλιππῶ, πάσας ἐλευθέραι εἶναι". For the other Greek cities were already free, this statement relates to all of Greece. SCHWARTZ, E., *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber*, Leipzig...", *op. cit.*, p.366.

⁵⁹ BRODERSEN, K., "Appian und sein Werk" (pp.339-363), *ANRW* II.34.1, 1993.

⁶⁰ SCHWARTZ, E., *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber...*, *op. cit.*, p.367.

⁶¹ BRODERSEN, K., "Appian und sein..."", *op. cit.*, p.357.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.357.

⁶³ E.g.: SCHWARTZ, E., *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber*, *op. cit.*, pp.368-370; WALBANK, F. W., *Philip V of...*, *op. cit.*, p.286.

⁶⁴ App. *Syr.* III.

⁶⁵ Dates of birth and death: 163 A.D., 229 A.D.

⁶⁶ SCHWARTZ, E., *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber*, *op. cit.*, p.411.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.411.

⁶⁸ ROSENBERG, A., *Einleitung und Quellenkunde zur römischen Geschichte*, Berlin, 1921, p.260.

Dio (extract from Zonaras) Philip was not supposed to pass his Hellenic possessions to the Romans.⁶⁹ The discussion about the possession of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias is not mentioned. In accordance with a senatorial decision Flamininus declared all Greeks free and the withdrawal of the legions took place in 194.⁷⁰ Rome's diplomatic contacts with Antiochus in 196 are not described in detail, it is only reported that embassies were exchanged and complaints produced.⁷¹ According to E. Schwartz, Dio had no understanding of the oligarchic republic.⁷² Its struggles encouraged neither the ancient historian's imagination nor his emotions.⁷³ As a result, Dio was not able to find the significant aspects distinguishing between the issues that matter and those that do not.⁷⁴ Regarding his report on Roman policies towards Antiochus and the Greeks between winter 197/196 and autumn 196, I do not agree with this view. Taking into account that Dio utilized the *Histories*, he appears to have adopted what was essential for Rome and omitted the unimportant: After the MW II was over Rome granted freedom to Greece. At that time the Roman-Seleucid enmities commenced and in this context legations were exchanged.

As shown above, the respective accounts of Appianus, Cassius Dio, Diodorus and Plutarchus differ from Polybius' report, although - with one exception - they are based on the *Histories*. Nevertheless, most deviations can be explained well.

Analysis of Roman Policies towards Antiochus III and the Greeks from Winter 197/196 to Autumn 196

When accepting the reliability of Polybius' "historical facts" at least the following questions arise: What led to the application of the Catchphrase of Freedom? Which goals were pursued with this slogan? Did any superior political program/s exist? If so, how was the Catchphrase of Freedom integrated into its/their structures? Why did the SR declare all Greeks free whereas it empowered a commission to decide on a provisional presence of Roman troops in Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias? Regarding the Corinthian Declaration of Independence: What was the role of the ten commissioners? Were they directly involved in the declaration's development or did they possibly even have a negative attitude towards this announcement? Therefore also the following question arises: With which authorities were the legates and the general equipped? Did a correlation between the SC, the Declaration of Independence and the messages to Antiochus from 196 exist? There are ambiguities concerning the "value judgments" as well: Did Flamininus want the legions to abandon Greece so that everyone would believe Rome sincerely had the liberation of the Greeks in mind and

⁶⁹ Dio. (Zon.) IX, 16.

⁷⁰ Dio. (Zon.) IX, 18.

⁷¹ Dio. (Zon.) IX, 18.

⁷² SCHWARTZ, E., *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber...*, op. cit., p.404.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

not its own interests? Is it justifiable to label the Aetolian reaction on the clauses of the SC as “defamation”? Based on an analysis of Roman policies towards Antiochus and Greece from winter 197/196 to autumn 196 I will attempt to answer these questions:

The SC and the Declaration of Independence suggest the recognition of some kind of autonomy for the Greek states. It is likely that - among others - this concession aimed at making Rome popular and indispensable as liberator and “freedom-guarantor”. Furthermore, it seems the *res publica* did not want any Greek state with so much power that it would have the ability of ruling any greater community let alone entire Hellas. The following three examples are indicative in this context: (1) After *Cynoscephalae*, Roman statesmen admitted Locris and Phocis to the Aetolian League.⁷⁵ However, (with one exception)⁷⁶ the Aetolians were refused to control certain cities in Phthiotic Achaia⁷⁷ as well as in Leucas⁷⁸ (Acarmania) and Pharsalus⁷⁹ (Thessaly). The requested occupations would have substantially spread Aetolia’s sphere of influence in Central Greece. (2) Under penalty of war Rome prohibited Philip in 200 to take action against any Greek city by force of arms.⁸⁰ In spring 198⁸¹ and winter 198/197⁸² Flamininus demanded a complete withdrawal of Macedonian troops from Hellas (In fact a repetition of the claims of 200)⁸³. When Philip showed willingness to accept this demand after *Cynoscephalae*, neither Flamininus nor the SR increased this claim significantly.⁸⁴ It seems that since 200 Macedonia’s power should be reduced first of all by terminating its hegemony in Greece.⁸⁵ After *Cynoscephalae*, Rome and Flamininus ensured that Macedonia will remain a sovereign empire with a reduced army and Philip as king. The degraded state probably was supposed to perform as a “bulwark” against those “barbaric” tribes living beyond its northern, eastern and western borders⁸⁶ and also as a “counterweight” to the Aetolian League.⁸⁷ (3) In 195 the Romans

⁷⁵ Pol. XVIII 47, 9.

⁷⁶ After *Cynoscephalae* the Aetolians laid claim to the Phthiotic cities of Larisa Cremaste, Pharsalus, Thebes and Echinus. In Polybius (XVIII 38, 3-9.) Flamininus concedes them merely Thebes, in Livius (XXXIII 13, 7-13.) all but Thebes. Based on a closer inspection of the Aetolian-Roman treaty from 212 or 211, J. Deininger (*Der politische Widerstand gegen Rom in Griechenland. 217-86 v. Chr.*, Berlin, 1977, pp.61-62) and R.M. Errington (“Rome against Philip...”, *op. cit.*, p.269.) present convincingly that Polybius’ account of this Phthiotic issue is more plausible than the one of Livius.

⁷⁷ Pol. XVIII 38, 3. As mentioned in footnote 76: Larisa Cremaste, Pharsalus, Phthiotic Thebes and Echinus.

⁷⁸ Pol. XVIII 47, 8.

⁷⁹ Pol. XVIII 47, 8.

⁸⁰ Pol. XVI 27, 2, XVI 34, 3.

⁸¹ Liv. XXXII 10, 3-5.

⁸² Pol. XVIII 1, 13.

⁸³ What is the use of a garrison that is not entitled to intervene?

⁸⁴ Pol. XVIII 38, 1.

⁸⁵ E.g.: DEROW, P. S., “Polybius, Rome and the East” (pp.1-15), *JRS* 69, 1979; RADITSA, L., “Bella Macedonia” (pp.568-574), *ANRW* 1, 1972.

⁸⁶ E.g.: The Dardanians, the Illyrians, the Scordisci or the Thracians. In Polybius (XVIII 37, 9.) Flamininus even mentions the “bulwark-argument” to the Greeks.

⁸⁷ This is supported by the statements that at *Cynoscephalae* the Aetolians fielded 6000 foot soldiers and 400 equestrians (Liv. XXXIII 3, 9.), while a few months later by Roman demand Philip had to reduce his army to a contingent of 5000 men (Liv. XXXIII 30, 6. Nevertheless, this is not mentioned in Polybius’ *Histories*.).

also allowed the defeated Spartan ruler Nabis to keep his realm. Sparta very probably should act as a “counterbalance” to the Achaean League on the Peloponnese. To summarize, since 200 at the latest Rome seemed to pursue the establishment and maintenance of a zone in the Southern Balkans⁸⁸ that was free from the influence of other major powers and preferably orientated pro-Roman.⁸⁹ The foregoing shows further what - according to H. Gesche⁹⁰ - R. M. Errington⁹¹ already assumed: A balance of power should prevail between the local states. The Roman demands on Philip from 200 to 197 suggest that *res publica* likely aimed to reduce Philip’s strength to establish this political system.⁹²

Coming from Coele-Syria following the coastline of Asia Minor with land forces and a fleet in autumn 197 Antiochus captured Ephesus⁹³ and laid claim on Thrace.⁹⁴ With possessions in this area the Seleucid king who was well known for the readiness to expand his realm⁹⁵ could have directly invaded Macedonia. Due to the losses of the MW II and the following restrictions Philip was not in a position to offering severe resistance against Antiochus’ battle-scarred contingents. They might have moved on straightforward from Macedonia to Hellas or Illyria. Moreover, the prosperous Greek port cities in Western Asia Minor would have offered a good basis for the preparation of a maritime landing operation on any coast of the Aegean Sea. The Seleucid influence in Thrace and Western Asia Minor thus must have posed a threat to the new political order of power balance in Southern Balkans. This could explain why the SR had a negative opinion about Antiochus expansion in the Aegean Region. The two Roman messages to Antiochus from 196 substantiate this attitude: Despite the recently (winter 198/197) affirmed Roman-Seleucid friendship⁹⁶ the monarch was asked to abandon his port cities in Asia Minor. In addition, the *res publica* prohibited him to annex Thrace and later criticized his invasion in this region. These demands will be dealt with in more detail at a later point.

⁸⁸ Approximately present Greece, Albania, Macedonia and southwest Bulgaria.

⁸⁹ In all probability, the swiftly arising Aetolian-Roman alienation after *Cynoscephalae* was mainly caused by Flaminius (PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flaminius...*, *op. cit.*, pp.141-146.).

⁹⁰ ERRINGTON, R. M., “Rome against Philip...”, *op. cit.*, pp.269, 289.

⁹¹ GESCHE, H., *Rom. Welteroberer und Weltorganisator*, Munich, 1981, p.98.

⁹² Contra: GRUEN, E. S., *The Hellenistic World...*, *op. cit.*, pp.145-146, 397-398: Rome waged the MW II to improve its image with the Greeks.

⁹³ Pol. XVIII 40, 2.

⁹⁴ Pol. XVIII 39, 3.

⁹⁵ In 223 Antiochus came into power. At this time, the Seleucid Kingdom was situated in a phase of dissolution: During the previous decade many satrapies had detached themselves from the Empire. After consolidating his realm until 213, between 212 and 205 Antiochus reincorporated defecting outskirts (E.g.: Armenia or Bactria). In 204 and 203, he probably operated in Asia Minor. Coele-Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia were occupied between 202 and 200. In the ensuing period until 197, the kings spent structuring these territories (ERRINGTON, R. M., “Rome against Philip...”, *op. cit.*, pp.248-252).

⁹⁶ Liv. XXXII 8, 9-16, XXXII 27, 1.

Following Polybius, at the very beginning of the consular year 196⁹⁷ considerable senatorial discussions took place ending in the decision to confirm peace with Philip.⁹⁸ Undeniably, the SC outlines the summarized results of these debates.⁹⁹ Its clauses display a new political program not only referring to Macedonia but also to the Greeks in Europe and Asia - thus also to Antiochus. That this new policy was concluded in the mentioned debates is therefore very likely. As history shows the SR decided in 196 to abstain from a first strike against Antiochus and to begin with negotiations. Therefore, in the preceded debates the diplomatic strategy needed to be clarified. It is likely that it also had to be determined in which case a military intervention should be conducted. The SR probably also discussed how to be best prepared for such a potential military conflict.¹⁰⁰ These issues will be studied below.

Which diplomatic methods did the Romans choose to proceed against Antiochus III?

The SC and the two Roman messages to Antiochus from 196 show clearly four basis points of diplomacy:

Firstly, all three decrees exhibit the use of a Policy of Freedom.¹⁰¹ Officials of the *res publica*¹⁰² acting in Hellas could have known this program at least since 200 because in this year Rome's allies Attalus of Pergamum and Rhodes applied it to persuade the Aetolians of entering the war.¹⁰³ It is quite likely that neither before nor during the MW II an appropriate catchphrase was used by a Roman institution or individual.¹⁰⁴ An

⁹⁷ Begin of the consular year 196: Approximately the 5th or 27th December 197 (BRISCOE, J., *A Commentary on Livy Books XXXI-XXXIII*, Oxford, 1989, p.25).

⁹⁸ Pol. XVIII 42, 1-2.

⁹⁹ Pol. XVIII 42, 4.

¹⁰⁰ There are two accounts which substantiate the assumption that Rome most often entered a war well-prepared: (1) Following Polybius (II 23, 8-11, II 24), in 225 the *res publica* took well-considered measures to face the upcoming war against the Celts. (2) One year before the Second Punic War broke out the Second Illyrian War took place (219). Therefore, the latter Roman involvement could be understood as a method to secure the Adriatic Sea and the Illyrian Protectorate for the longer term so that in the case of war against Carthage no capacities would be drafted for such actions.

¹⁰¹ Pol. XVIII 44, 2 (“ἦν δὲ τὰ συνέχοντα τοῦ δόγματος ταῦτα, τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους Ἑλληνας πάντα, τοὺς τε κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ κατὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην, ἐλευθέρους ὑπάρχειν” Extract from the SC.), Pol. XVIII 47, 1 (“διακελευόμενοι τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσίας πόλεων τῶν μὲν αὐτονόμων ἀπέχεσθαι καὶ μηδεμιᾶ πολεμεῖν” Extract from the first Roman message to Antiochus in 196.), identical with regard to content in Pol. XVIII 50, 7 (From the second Roman message to Antiochus in 196.) and Pol. XVIII 47, 2 (“οὐδένα γὰρ ἔτι τῶν Ἑλλήνων οὔτε πολεμεῖσθαι νῦν ὑπ’ οὐδενός οὔτε δουλεύειν οὐδενί” Extract from the first Roman message to Antiochus in 196).

¹⁰²E.g.: M. Aemilius Lepidus, C. Claudius Nero and P. Sempronius Tuditanus (These were the legates of a Roman commission acting in Hellas in spring 200 (Pol.: XVI 25-36) or P. Sulpicius Galba Maximus (From spring 210 to 208 or 207: Commander of the Roman contingents operating in the Aegean Sea and in Illyrian coastal areas. From autumn 200 to autumn 199: Commander of the Roman troops operating in Hellas. From early spring 197 to early spring 195: Legate in Hellas (E.g.: Pol. IX 27, 11; Liv. XXXI, 14, 1-2, XXXIII 28, 12, XXXIII, 24, 7).

¹⁰³ Liv. XXXI 15, 10.

¹⁰⁴ It is very likely that between 200 and winter 197/196 the Roman policy towards Greece consisted of the demand on Philip to abandon Hellas (v.s.).

undeniable application of such a slogan on behalf of the Republic is documented for the first time in the SC.¹⁰⁵ In this decree Rome postulated itself the “freedom-guarantor” for any Greek in Asia Minor and Hellas. Dmitriev assumes the SR could have been encouraged of adopting such policies by embassies from Lampsacus, Smyrna and/or other Greek cities of Asia Minor.¹⁰⁶ This conjecture is supported by the statement that ambassadors of these communities were present in Rome in winter 197/196 when the senatorial debates on the further policies towards Hellas and also Antiochus most likely took place.¹⁰⁷ As a consequence the SC was ratified.¹⁰⁸ The application of a Policy of Freedom had to be very advantageous for Rome: First of all, it was favourable for further engagements in the Greek political world since the Republic „had neither justifiable grounds for interfering in Greek affairs nor formally established relations with any city in Asia Minor this time.”¹⁰⁹ A Policy of Freedom gave Rome the opportunity to wage war against Antiochus while appearing as a selfless defender of Greek freedom¹¹⁰ and this program fitted well into the concept of a pro-Roman power balance without foreign influence: Due to a proclamation of freedom the gratitude of the “liberated” could be expected as well as their resistance to the influence of a foreign power. To sum up, Rome’s Policy of Freedom was very likely first of all a measure to protect the new order in Southern Balkans. Thus, the establishment and maintenance of this regulation - apparently the primary objective of the SR’s Eastern Policy - had to be of higher priority than winning the favour of every Greek by using the Catchphrase of Freedom. I think Deininger summarizes the “freedom” granted to the Greeks very accurately with the following words: „Rein juristisch sollten die Griechen in der Tat ohne Vorbehalte frei sein, politisch jedoch nur soweit sie nicht durch ihre Dankbarkeit verpflichtet waren, den Willen Roms zu respektieren.”¹¹¹

Secondly, Rome directly and¹¹² indirectly¹¹³ requested Antiochus to withdraw from those Asia Minor cities previously controlled by Philip. The *res publica* was entitled to command these towns from winter 197/196 on after the *populus romanus* ratified the

¹⁰⁵ Diodorus is the only ancient historian reporting on a usage of a Catchphrase of Freedom on part of the Romans before winter 197/196. It seems that he is wrong with this statement (v.s.).

¹⁰⁶ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., p.173.

¹⁰⁷ Diod. XXIX, 7; Pol. XVIII 42.

¹⁰⁸ Pol. XVIII 42.

¹⁰⁹ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., p.198.

¹¹⁰ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., p.197.

¹¹¹ DEININGER, J., *Der politische Widerstand...*, op. cit., p.63). Transl.: “From a legal point of view, the Greeks should be free without reservation. Nevertheless, due to their gratitude to Rome, from a political standpoint they should respect the SR’s will.”

¹¹² Pol. XVIII 47, 1 (“ὄσας δὲ νῦν παρέιληψε τῶν ὑπὸ [...] Φίλιππον ταπτομένων, ἐκχωρεῖν” Extract from the first Roman message to Antiochus in 196.) and identical with regard to content in Pol. XVIII 50, 5-6 (From the second Roman message to Antiochus in 196).

¹¹³ Pol. XVIII 44, 4 (“Ἐϋρωμον δὲ καὶ Πήδασα καὶ Βαργύλια καὶ τὴν Ἰασέων πόλιν, ὁμοίως Ἄβυδον, Θάσον, Μύριναν, Πέρινθον, ἐλευθέρας ἀφεῖναι τὰς φρουρὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν μεταστησάμενον” Extract from the SC. Philip was asked to abandon cities being *de facto* under the control of Antiochus (Euromos, Iasos and Pedasa).

peace treaty with the Antigonid king.¹¹⁴ At this time Philip's former possessions Euromos, Iasos and Pedasa counted to the Seleucid sphere of influence - and this lasted since late summer 197.¹¹⁵ Thus, in winter 197/196 the Republic virtually was not entitled to order Antiochus to abandon these places. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the Seleucid king annexed those cities in a period when the fighting in Hellas had already come to an end but officially no peace was yet established.¹¹⁶

Thirdly, the Seleucid king was summoned to abandon cities previously controlled by the Ptolemaic Empire.¹¹⁷ Since 273 an *amicitia* between the *res publica* and the Egypt Kingdom existed.¹¹⁸ This relation very likely did not provide a legal basis for Rome to declare the Ptolemaic possessions free or forbid Antiochus to administrate them.¹¹⁹ At Lysimachia the same Roman legate who recited this demand offered Antiochus to mediate in the war which the monarch currently conducted against the Ptolemaic Kingdom (Fifth Syrian War, 202-195).¹²⁰ This strange combination had to appear like pure mockery to the monarch.

Fourthly, the Seleucid king was prohibited to cross “εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην μετὰ δυνάμεως.”¹²¹ Later in Thrace, a commissioner informed the monarch that Rome regarded the Seleucid presence in this area as an attack on the *res publica*.¹²² At first, this statement might seem odd coming from Thrace located several hundred kilometres from the Illyrian coastal area which was the closest “official” Roman Protectorate and even further from the Apennine Peninsula, the closest Roman state territory. I think in order to understand this assertion the thesis of a new regulation in Southern Balkans must be considered. As mentioned above, a Seleucid-ruled Thrace would pose a constant threat to it. Hence, the *declaration of war on Rome* is likely to be read as *declaration of war on Rome's new political order*. Nevertheless, the *res publica* had no legal basis to forbid Antiochus from crossing the Hellespont and occupying Thrace while the king's dynastic claims on these areas were probably¹²³ justified.

¹¹⁴ ERRINGTON, R. M., “Rome against Philip...”, *op. cit.*, pp.271-272.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.271-272.

¹¹⁶ Philip's possessions in Asia Minor were situated north of Rhodes. Before the battle of *Cynoscephalae* took place, the Rhodians prohibited Antiochus to pass the promontory of Chelidonia. The islanders were afraid that the Seleucid king could intend to help Philip. After the result of *Cynoscephalae* become apparent they raised their prohibition and Antiochus proceeded northward (Liv. XXXIII 20.).

¹¹⁷ Pol. XVIII 47, 1 (“ὅσας δὲ νῦν παρείληφε τῶν ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίων [...]ταπτομένων, ἐκχωρεῖν” Extract from the first Roman message to Antiochus in 196.) and identical with regard to content in Pol. XVIII 50, 5-6 (From the second Roman message to Antiochus in 196).

¹¹⁸ HÖLBL, G., *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches. Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung*, Darmstadt, 1994, p.54.

¹¹⁹ DAHLHEIM, W., *Struktur und Entwicklung des römischen Völkerrechts im dritten und zweiten Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Munich, 1968, pp.137-140, 146.

¹²⁰ Pol. XVIII 49, 2-3.

¹²¹ Pol. XVIII 47, 2 (From the first Roman message to Antiochus in 196).

¹²² Pol. XVIII 50, 9 (“πλὴν γὰρ τοῦ προτιθεσθαι Ῥωμαίοις ἐγχειεῖν αὐτόν, οὐδ' ἔννοιαν ἐτέραν καταλείπεσθαι παρὰ ὀρθῶ λογιζόμενοις” Extract from the second Roman message to Antiochus in 196).

¹²³ Pro: E.g.: HAMMOND, N. G. L. y WALBANK, F. W., *A History of...*, *op. cit.*, p. 446; MA, J., *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor*, Oxford, 2002, p. 32: Antiochus' claims were justified, but he applied

In summary, it can be said that the SR argued on the basis of a Policy of Freedom, with claiming the spoils, as the protector of an allied state and with the right to defend the Roman state territory. The Catchphrase of Freedom was a clever way to intervene into Greek affairs prospectively and, if necessary, to justify a military action against Antiochus. It seems that the demand from the king to abandon the former Macedonian and Ptolemaic possessions had no legal basis, in fact just like the prohibition of an engagement in Thrace. Therefore, in winter 197/196 the Catchphrase of Freedom very likely was the SR's most powerful argument towards Antiochus expansion. But how did the Romans assess that the Seleucid king would fulfil their claims? Due to the lack of sources only vague assumptions can be uttered. Perhaps the SR envisaged some concessions since Antiochus had to take the demands seriously knowing that one year ago Philip V was entirely beaten down by the power of the Roman military machine because he insisted on exerting influence on Greek cities.

In which case would the res publica have intervened against Antiochus III with military means?

Rome reacted to Antiochus invasion in Hellas (autumn 192) with the deployment of a large military contingent in this area. In spring 191 the monarch's troops were defeated by the legions at the Thermopylae pass whereupon the king left Hellas. The Romans followed him to Asia Minor and beat him a second time (December 190). Subsequently, the monarch had to abandon his entire possessions in Asia Minor (He already had lost Thrace before).¹²⁴ Before Antiochus invaded Hellas the political situation in the Aegean Region only differed slightly from that of 196. Therefore it seems that Rome waged the Syrian War (192-188) in order to maintain the new political system in Southern Balkans. Thus, I also guess that in 196 the Republic would have reacted with a military intervention if the Seleucid troops would have invaded Greece or Macedonia.¹²⁵ That Rome seemed to reduce Philip's strength in order to establish the new order strengthens this assumption. In 196 and during the following years the SR was very likely unwilling to start a war against the Seleucid Empire due to reasons of conditions of ownership in Asia Minor and Thrace. Errington who also supports the mentioned assumptions about Rome's willingness for war in 196 supposes concerning 193: *"If Antiochus restricted himself to the Chersonese and neighbouring districts of Thrace, the Senate would, though under protest, accept this as the necessary price for peace."*¹²⁶

them "not simply in reference to accepted legal principles, but in order to cover up or legalize aggressions against other kingdoms"; RAWLINGS, H. W., "Antiochus the Great and Rhodos. 197-191 B.C." (pp.2-28), *AJAH* 1, 1976. Contra: E.g.: ERRINGTON, R. M., "Rome against Philip...", *op. cit.*, p.275.

¹²⁴ HAMMOND, N. G. L. y WALBANK, F. W., *A History...*, *op. cit.*, pp.449-453.

¹²⁵ ERRINGTON, R. M., "Rome against Philip...", *op. cit.*, p.280.

¹²⁶ ERRINGTON, R. M., "Rome against Philip...", *op. cit.*, p.280.

Which measures were implemented to prepare Rome for a potential war against Antiochus III?

It can be deduced from Polybius' *Histories* that after *Cynoscephalae* Flamininus and most of the Senators in Rome aimed to grant Philip favourable peace terms so that he (presumably hoping for Antiochus assistance) would not wage war.¹²⁷ An effectively operating Antigonid-Seleucid cooperation could have been a serious threat for Rome, at least for its sphere of influence in Hellas and Illyria.¹²⁸ Thus, in the mentioned senatorial debates it was probably decided to win Philip as an ally or at least to fix him in a position where he would remain neutral in case of a military confrontation between Rome and the Seleucid Empire. This supposition is substantiated by a report from Spring 196 in which the Roman legate Cn. Cornelius Lentulus advised Philip to ask the *res publica* for an alliance.¹²⁹

From Rome's point of view it had to be desirable to keep the two legions in Hellas and to control Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias for various reasons: At first, in this way it would have been quite difficult for Antiochus to successfully invade Hellas and relatively easy for Rome to expel him from Macedonia or Thrace.¹³⁰ The large harbours of Chalkis and Demetrias were moreover very suitable places to prepare and start maritime (landing) operations to the west coast of Asia Minor.¹³¹ Into the bargain, the legions would have been able to rapidly take action against rebellious Greek states.¹³² However, during the preceding MW II the three mentioned places carried no great weight since Rome won the conflict with three "locomotor-campaigns".¹³³ Additionally, in a Roman-Seleucid war it must have been advantageous for both sides to win the Greeks as allies. What could Rome make more popular among these people than emphasizing its Policy of Freedom by means of a complete troop withdrawal?¹³⁴ Furthermore, for a long time Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias were symbols of Macedonian power over Hellas and hence many Greeks accredited hegemonic claims to the possessor of these places.¹³⁵ It also should be recalled that in the early second century Rome "merely" had a militia at command.¹³⁶ Winter camps in foreign

¹²⁷ Pol. XVIII 39, 4 (Flamininus), XVIII 42, 44 (The SR).

¹²⁸ E.g.: HAMMOND, N. G. L. & WALBANK, F. W., *A History of...*, op. cit., pp. 449-451. Walbank (*Philip V of...*, op. cit., pp. 127-128.) even assumes Rome went to war in 200 for many senators regarded the alleged agreement between Antiochus and Philip (203/202) as a threat for the *res publica*.

¹²⁹ Pol. XVIII 48, 4.

¹³⁰ PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flamininus...*, op. cit., p.293.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² The Aetolians, the Boeotians, the Eleans and Sparta could have been elements of uncertainty.

¹³³ PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flamininus...*, op. cit., p.290.

¹³⁴ Antiochus also applied a Policy of Freedom: In the course of his Asia Minor expansion in 197 he repeatedly brought cities under his control pretending to release them from Macedonian or Ptolemaic tyranny (DREYER, B., *Die römische Nobilitätsherrschaft und Antiochos III. 205 bis 188 v. Chr.*, Hennef, 2007, p.285).

¹³⁵ Pol. XVIII 11, 4-5.

¹³⁶ GSCHNITZER, F., "Das System der römischen Heeresbildung im Zweiten Punischen Krieg. Polybios, die Annalisten und die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit" (pp.59-85), *Hermes* 109, 1981.

territories were very unpopular among the troops.¹³⁷ As mentioned before, over the course of the senatorial debates a commission was arranged consisting of ten legates.¹³⁸ Following Polybius, - among others - they had to decide about a provisional occupation of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias regarding the threat of Antiochus.¹³⁹ I think that such an authorization took place on the one hand because of powerful pro and contra arguments and on the other hand because at that time Antiochus advanced too fast for them to be informed in time¹⁴⁰ - in contrast to a delegation working in Hellas. Nevertheless, the Greeks in Asia Minor and Hellas were to be declared free and a potential seizure of the Greek territories should only be of a provisional nature. This was most probably a result of the newly adapted Policy of Freedom (v.s.). Since the legions only withdrew from Greece in 194,¹⁴¹ it seems that apparently the SR could not arrive at a decision in winter 197/196. To summarize, Rome's measures to be prepared for a potential war against the Seleucid Empire apparently were: being on good terms with Philip, declaring the Greeks free, keeping the troops in Hellas for the moment and transferring the authority of a provisional seizure of strategically important places in Hellas to a commission.¹⁴² Other possible steps of preparation like amassing stocks shall not be discussed here.

Implementation of Roman political decisions by T. Quinctius Flaminius and the Decem Legati

The ten commissioners must have thought it would be the best for Rome to occupy the three mentioned locations provisionally and this is what they decided. Despite his vehement protest Flaminius was not able to convince them from the contrary.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, the ten legates agreed with him to give the town of Corinth to the Achaeans immediately and to seize "merely" the strategically decisive stronghold *Acrocorinth*. On behalf of Flaminius and the SR the Isthmian Proclamation granted any person living in Philip's former Greek sphere of influence freedom with the right

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.69.

¹³⁸ It seems that in the first half of the second century it was a common senatorial praxis to transfer complex tasks being not relevant for the national existence to a commission. E.g.: In 201 and 200 Flaminius sat in two such committees (PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flaminius...*, op. cit., p. 34). The delegation acting in Hellas in 196 was mentioned several times before in this essay. Within the scope of the Peace of Apamea (188) a commission of *decemviri* operated in Asia Minor (ERRINGTON, R. M., "Rome against Philip...", op. cit., p. 289.). After Rome's victory over Philip's son Perseus in 168 again such a legation was called into action (Liv. XLV 17, 1-2.).

¹³⁹ Pol. XVIII 45, 10.

¹⁴⁰ ERRINGTON, R. M., "Rome against Philip...", op. cit., p.272.

¹⁴¹ Liv. XXXIV 48, 2 - XXXIV 52, 12.

¹⁴² Pol. XVIII 42-XVIII 52.

¹⁴³ I would like to point out that besides all worries about the Roman credibility and the thirst for glory the proconsul could have had other reasons for his aspirations: In Rome existed quite likely a circle of influential men promoting his career (PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flaminius...*, op. cit., p. 101.). Hence, it is possible that he took over their views and implemented measures corresponding to their will. His claim to declare all Greeks free and to withdraw all legions immediately (Pol. XVIII 45, 9.) could be attributed to these patrons.

to live by one's country's law and without garrison or tribute.¹⁴⁴ The Greeks were already informed by the SC about the prospective relations between Rome and Hellas. Therefore, from an administrative point of view there was no need for a further announcement. In a way "that sounded more familiar to the Greeks"¹⁴⁵ the Declaration of Independence repeated the essential content of the SC, namely the Catchphrase of Freedom. Considering additionally the dissatisfaction of many Greeks in spring 196 and Antiochus' successful Aegean expansion since 197, it is very likely that the Declaration of Independence was merely a propagandistic manoeuvre.¹⁴⁶ It seems as if Flamininus having announced this publication advocated the Policy of Freedom, while before the SC appeared in Hellas he did not.¹⁴⁷ One question arises: Did the commissioners support the Isthmian Declaration - perhaps even conceived it together with the general - or did they view it negatively? In this context it seems to be helpful to ascertain whether the ten even had the right to prevent the release of that proclamation. At this point the responsibilities of the *decem legati* and the proconsul need to be investigated: In general, Roman commissions acting within the scope of a peace settlement had the task to implement the agreements consented by the *populus romanus* and the former opponent.¹⁴⁸ Following Polybius, the legates of the "Hellas-Committee" received the order to manage Greek affairs in conjunction with the proconsul and to assure the liberty of the Greeks.¹⁴⁹ As stated above, it is further reported that in regard to a provisional Roman annexation of the three mentioned territories the ten commissioners were empowered to take their own decisions - if necessary even against Flamininus will. Polybius additionally accounts, in all other matters the *decem legati* had definite instructions from the SR.¹⁵⁰ Nothing is directly reported in our sources about Flamininus' responsibilities in this affair. However, it should be noticed that for traditional reasons commanders of the Roman Republic had a considerable radius of operation "in situations that allowed more than one possible solution."¹⁵¹ The Roman people regularly ratified the results of the mentioned senatorial

¹⁴⁴ Pol. XVIII 46, 5.

¹⁴⁵ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., p.180.

¹⁴⁶ E.g.: ERRINGTON, R. M., "Philhellenismus und praktische Politik" (pp. 149-154), en G. VOGT-SPIRA y B. ROMMEL y I. MUSÄUS (eds.), *Rezeption und Identität. Die kulturelle Auseinandersetzung Roms mit Griechenland als europäisches Paradigma*, Stuttgart, 1999; DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., pp.157-165; WALBANK, F. W., *Philip V of...*, op. cit., pp.179-181.

¹⁴⁷ E.g.: DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., pp.159-164; GRUEN, E. S., *The Hellenistic World...*, op. cit., pp.145-149; PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flamininus...*, op. cit., pp.278-282.

¹⁴⁸ SCHLEUSSNER, B., *Die Legaten der...*, op. cit., p.40.

¹⁴⁹ Pol. XVIII 42, 5.

¹⁵⁰ Pol. XVIII 45, 10.

¹⁵¹ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, op. cit., pp.163-164: "the *senatus consultum* of 212 allowed M. Claudius Marcellus to take any course of action that he deemed fit for the interests of the Roman state and his own trust (*e re publica fideque sua*); Sicily was to be given to one of the consuls in 204, with the permission to cross over to Africa, "if he considered it to be advantageous to the state" (*si id e re publica esse censeret*); the *senatus consultum* about philosophers and rhetoricians, which was issued in 161, ordered that they should be expelled from Rome but left the way in which this was to be done to the direction of the praetor M. Pomponius (*e re publica fideque sua*)."

debates,¹⁵² namely the SC, and therefore neither Flamininus nor the commissioners could alter or neglect them. Hence, their decisions had to be in line with the clauses of this decree.¹⁵³ Due to an alleged inconsistency between the actions of the proconsul and the ten legates É. Will assumes that both “parties” were able to proceed without the agreement of the other.¹⁵⁴ A. M. Eckstein supposes that Flamininus could have acted without the approval of the *decem legati* based on the power of his *imperium*.¹⁵⁵ Polybius’ statement about the SR’s definite instructions in nearly every matter could lead to the impression that the Roman officials operating in Hellas were given only little room for manoeuvres. Despite the Policy of Freedom, in summer 196 the ten commissioners wanted to assign the Euboic cities of Oreus and Eretria to Eumenes¹⁵⁶ of Pergamum.¹⁵⁷ Flamininus disagreed because of his aim to free entire Hellas.¹⁵⁸ The decision was devolved to the SR.¹⁵⁹ The general would have had to accept the legate’s purpose if there had been a senatorial decree concerning all Greek matters (with exception of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias) since this would have inevitably included these two Euboic towns as well. Flamininus and the *decem legati* would not have disputed. This “Euboic-account” rather suggests that Roman officials were not as restricted as Polybius makes us believe.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, - and in a way disagreeing with Eckstein’s and Will’s assumptions - this report could point to a “veto power” of the two “parties” (of course except for the three territories Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias).¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, in regard to the authorities only one thing seems to be irrevocable: Flamininus and the legates of the *decemviri* were only allowed to take decisions that were in accordance with the SC and other instructions of the SR. Therefore, one cannot be sure whether the commissioners were entitled to prevent the Isthmian Proclamation or not. Thus, no progress was yet made concerning the question of their attitude towards this declaration. Not wanting to neglect this uncertainty, an attempt to solve this issue by referring to the pragmatic situation follows: Despite their decision to seize three strategically important locations the legates could have had good reasons to support the Isthmian Proclamation, possibly even to advise Flamininus of announcing a statement like this: In order to maintain the credibility of the Policy of Freedom it had to be important for the commissioners to make it clear to the Greeks that it was not Rome’s aim to gain any further influence in Hellas. If the

¹⁵² Pol. XVIII 42, 4.

¹⁵³ DMITRIEV, S., *The Greek Slogan...*, *op. cit.*, p.163.

¹⁵⁴ WILL, É., *Histoire politique du...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-146.

¹⁵⁵ ECKSTEIN, A. M., *Senate and General. Individual...*, *op. cit.*, p.295.

¹⁵⁶ Attalus’ successor.

¹⁵⁷ Pol. XVIII 47, 10-11.

¹⁵⁸ Pol. XVIII 47, 10-11.

¹⁵⁹ Pol. XVIII 47, 10-11.

¹⁶⁰ Pro: E.g.: AYMARD, A., *Les premiers rapports de Rome et de la Confédération achaienne. 198-189 avant J.-C.*, Bordeaux, 1938, p.173; PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flamininus...*, *op. cit.*, pp.337-338. Contra: E.g.: ECKSTEIN, A. M., *Senate and General. Individual...*, *op. cit.*, p.295.

¹⁶¹ SCHLEUSSNER, B., *Die Legaten der...*, *op. cit.*, p.53.

proclamation of the Isthmian Declaration was the idea of Flaminius, it would possibly have been a risk for the *decem legati* to prohibit him from such a publication: With the occupation of the three locations they had already overruled the commander who was standing at the peak of his power between 198 and 196, holding mighty patrons in Rome and in general seeming to be revengeful and avid of glory.¹⁶² Nevertheless, due to the legates' aim of seizing Greek territory for Rome and Pergamum they likely did not feel much obliged to the Policy of Freedom.¹⁶³ At least it seems that in their opinion freedom and the presence of foreign troops were not contradictory each other. The commissioners were probably also supported by mighty patrons whose political will they attempted to enforce. In addition, the *decem legati* could have been envious of the young and successful proconsul and on this account they tried to deny him further fame and glory.¹⁶⁴ Summing up, no definite conclusions can be drawn when considering the pragmatic situation either. Hence, I think there is no way to clearly determine which attitude the *decem legati* had towards the Isthmian Proclamation.

Conclusion

Polybius' *Histories* are highly reliable in reporting "historical facts". Based on this reliability plausible explanations for the differences between the *Histories* and the writings of other ancient historians can be found in the Roman policy towards Antiochus and the Greeks from winter 197/196 to autumn 196. Nevertheless, Polybius' report leaves many questions unanswered, especially in matters pertaining the intentions, strategies and responsibilities of Roman institutions and individuals.

It is quite likely that since 200 at the latest the *res publica* intended to establish and hold a pro-Roman area in Southern Balkans with no influence of any other great force - a balance of power was supposed to prevail. Apparently during the MW II Rome reduced the strength of Philip V first of all to realize this aim. The senators seemed to consider Antiochus' III expansive attitude and the extension of his sphere of influence to the west coast of Asia Minor and Thrace after *Cynoscephalae* as a threat to the new order. Rome probably determined for that reason a new political program directed against the Seleucid Empire in winter 197/196. In this context it could have been decided to abstain from a military intervention and prompt Antiochus to abandon his latest annexations by using diplomacy. Probably to establish a basis for these claims,

¹⁶² E.g.: BADIAN, E., *Titus Quinctius Flaminius. Philhellenism and Realpolitik*, Cincinnati, 1970, pp.326-327; GÜNTHER, L.-M., "Titus Quinctius Flaminius. Griechenfreund aus Gefühl oder Kalkül?" (pp.120-130), en K.-J. Hölkeskamp y E. Stein-Hölkeskamp (eds.), *Von Romulus zu Augustus. Große Gestalten der römischen Republik*, Munich, 2000; PFEILSCHIFTER, R., *Titus Quinctius Flaminius...*, *op. cit.*, p.389.

¹⁶³ From spring 210 to 208 or 207 commissioner P. Sulpicius Galba Maximus commanded the Roman contingents operating in the Aegean Sea and in Illyrian coastal areas (v.s.). During this long duration he even sporadically applied a policy of absolute destruction and pillaging towards the Greeks. For example, under his command the brutally capture of Aegina in 210 took place (Pol. IX 42, 5-8, XI 5, 8.).

¹⁶⁴ SCHLEUSSNER, B., *Die Legaten der...*, *op. cit.*, pp.51-53.

Rome stylized itself as the protector of the Greek freedom in Hellas and Asia Minor - a concept that was in accordance with the new political order in Southern Balkans. It can be assumed that the SR also decided to react with military intervention in case of a Seleucid invasion in Macedonia or Hellas. During such a conflict the possession of the strategically well positioned areas of Chalkis, Corinth and Demetrias and legions stationed in Hellas would have been very beneficial for Rome. Nevertheless, probably many things spoke against an occupation and deployment of that kind. Finally, a commission was assigned whose *decem legati* had the task of deciding in terms of a provisional seizure of these territories and to present the Greeks and Antiochus the new Policy of Freedom. The legions should initially remain in Hellas. Despite the Catchphrase of Freedom the commissioners decided to occupy *Acrocorinth*, Chalkis and Demetrias preliminarily.

It is most likely that the establishment and maintenance of a pro-Roman power balance in Southern Balkans was the primary objective of the SR's Eastern Policy. Consequently, the protection of this new state order had to be of higher priority than winning the favour of every Greek by using a Policy of Freedom. I guess this explains why the SR on the one hand declared all Greeks free and on the other hand initially kept the two legions in Hellas and gave a commission of *decemviri* the authority to seize provisionally the three strategically important places in this region. It becomes clear that there is a need for questioning Polybius' "value judgments". The Aetolian "defamations", the doubts about the honesty of the Roman aims to free Hellas were somehow justified: When regarding international affairs the Greeks only should act in territory authorized by the *res publica*. Hence, Flamininus could have had good reasons to plead in favour of a complete troop withdrawal from Hellas to substantiate the credibility of the liberation. It cannot be said with complete certainty which attitude the ten legates of the *decemviri* adopted towards the Isthmian Declaration and if they were empowered to prevent such a proclamation. Referring to their responsibilities, it merely seems to be sure that their decision had to be in line with the clauses of the SC. This most likely applied to Flamininus as well. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the Isthmian Declaration is a repetition of a political manner already announced by the SC, namely the Catchphrase of Freedom.