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## Book reviews

Emily Mackil, *Creating a common polity. Religion, economy, and politics in the making of the Greek koinon* (Hellenistic Culture and Society, 55), Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, University of California Press 2013, xvii + 593 pp. ISBN 9780520272507.

Emily Mackil's (henceforth EM) book is an impressive treatment of Greek federal states, a subject of ancient history which has received increasing attention in recent years. *Creating a common polity* focuses on regional interactions and co-operative mechanisms that eventually led to the creation and expansion of federal structures, primarily in the later Classical and Hellenistic periods. The book is based on the author's original Princeton Ph.D. thesis from 2003, and focuses on three *koina* in the region of the Corinthian Gulf, composed of Boiotia, Achaia, and Aitolia (i.e. areas covering most of Central Greece and the northern Peloponnese). The decision to limit the book to a study of these federal states works well in terms of structure, and allows for an in-depth exploration of various subjects and themes, without letting data compilation getting the upper hand. There is also a clear geographical logic in looking at these three *koina* as recent research has highlighted the significance of the Corinthian Gulf as a significant zone of multiple interactions that helped to shape the political and economic developments of the northern Peloponnese and Central Greece in various periods (see K. Freitag, *Der Golf von Korinth. Historisch-topographische Untersuchungen von der Archaik bis in das 1. Jh. v. Chr.*, München 2000, and more recently A. Bonnier, *Coastal hinterlands. Site patterns, microregions and coast-inland interconnections by the Corinthian Gulf, c. 600–300 BC* (BAR-IS, 2614), Oxford 2014).

The first part of the book traces the political history of the three regions, providing a fairly traditional narrative of urbanization, political and territorial developments in the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods (pp. 21–143). Of the three

regions, Boiotia provides the earliest indications of both urbanization and federal structures, though as EM recognizes it is highly difficult to assess the nature and function of a possible pre-446 BC *koinon* in Boiotia. Federal developments in Achaia and Aitolia can instead be traced in the 4th century BC, again being roughly simultaneous with major periods of urbanization. Here more use could have been made of the archaeological record, even if EM cites some key publications. A discussion on published archaeological data and gaps in the archaeological record would in particular have been useful in combination with the more traditional political narrative, also in regards to available survey data from both Boiotia and Aitolia. The section is nevertheless suitable in providing an overview of the historical framework of these three *koina* as well as the way in which patterns of regional and interregional interactions are portrayed by different (written) sources.

The second part of the book is, however, the most interesting as it provides an in-depth discussion on various forms of interaction processes which according to EM helped to develop, formalize and expand the different *koina*. The first chapter of the second section (Chapter 4, pp. 147–236), 'Cultic communities', looks specifically at the role of religion and sanctuaries in providing shared identities, spaces for interaction and ways of formalizing hierarchies and federal subordination, most specifically expressed in the case of Boiotia which is also the region which provides the most detailed sources. A key factor in the importance of cult sites is the ability of sanctuaries to attract visitors from different communities and geographical zones. Such patterns of mobility focused on significant sanctuary sites would, according to EM, have helped to form the regional networks that would later be developed into salient political structures most readily seen in the formalization and expansion of *koina* in the different regions.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the chapter 'Economic communities' (Chapter 5, pp. 237–325). Here

the study explores the way in which patterns of economic integration helped to shape federal institutions as well as the concern of federal politics in providing opportunities for economic mobility and the pooling of resources. Co-operative coinage, for example, seems to develop prior to formal federal institutions in these regions, suggesting that economic links between *poleis* were an important factor behind the development of more formal political ties within a *koinon*. EM also stresses the importance of ecological variability and environmental fragmentation in what stimulated economic integration and the concern of federal institutions in integrating microregions within broader federal economies. EM rightly points to the significance of property rights (*enktésis*) within the broader territory of a *koinon* as way in which to promote economic mobility and a way to break down the potential effects of individual *polis*-boundaries. In this section EM admittedly uses many of the ideas of environmental fragmentation and connectivity discussed by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in their influential work *The corrupting sea* (Oxford 2000), and which are interestingly explored in regards to the development of *koina* in *Creating a common polity*.

These themes are further expanded upon in relation to the geographical catchment of federal states and the significance of mountain economies, particularly in regards to Achaia and Aitolia. EM is certainly right in stating that the mountainous nature of these federal territories would have stimulated a strong need for integrating upland resources with broader distribution systems. Significant upland resources would have been timber as well as stock breeding and pastoral production. In both these cases surrounding lowlands, the coastal zone of the Corinthian Gulf in particular, would have offered suitable outlets and nodes for the sale and transfer of such products and for the imports of necessary staples that could not be sufficiently produced in upland areas. Federal structures and wide spread rights of *enktésis* within a *koinon* would have removed any obstacles presented by individual *polis* territories.

In this context the book convincingly demonstrates why *koina* successfully expanded in these regions and why individual *poleis* may have sought to become integrated within federal structures, moving away from outdated views of parasitical upland economies gaining resources only through plundering neighbours and other military means (specifically in terms of the Aitolian *koinon*). More could perhaps have been done with the available archaeological data also in this chapter, but we are certainly provided with an in-depth discussion on the significance of economic integration which will be highly important for future research on Greek *koina*.

The final chapter (Chapter 6, pp. 326–399) of the second part looks more specifically at the role of political networks and cohesion, leading to and expanding federal structures in the three regions. A central feature to the discussion on poli-

tics is again the significance of regional networks being active in developing and shaping federal political structures. In many instances military cooperation seems to have been central to how common ties between communities were established prior to the development of formal *koina*. This can for example be seen in regards to Aitolia where tribal groups forming part of the broader Aitolian *ethnos* could unite in order to face external enemies in at least the later 5th century BC. But the impact of potential external military threats seems to have been a driving force in the development of federal structures in all of the three *koina*. According to EM, interstate relationships and a common foreign policy seem to have been central factors for the political function of these *koina*. The chapter further provides an interesting discussion on the rights of citizens in the different *koina* and the degree to which citizenship was given to all members of individual *poleis* in a *koinon*. This discussion is important as it highlights some of the problems of how to understand the impact of federal politics on individuals within *polis*-communities, in particular the newly incorporated cities and regions.

The conclusion (pp. 400–407) is comparatively brief but interesting, and stresses the dynamic effects of regional mobility and processes of interaction in creating and expanding federal structures. An appendix follows which consists of a large number of selected epigraphic documents (pp. 409–504). EM states that the purpose of this epigraphic dossier is not to present an exhaustive collection of inscriptions relating to the political life of the three states but rather to provide key texts to illustrate the various themes and aspects of Greek *koina* explored by the book. This works very well and the provided texts are well edited with useful translations and commentary.

Overall the book provides highly interesting and novel perspectives on federal states and in particular the dynamic impact of mobility in shaping Greek federal states. This significantly widens our understanding beyond the more common political and administration focused histories of Greek *koina*. For these reasons *Creating a common polity* is a significant contribution to the history of central Greece and the northern Peloponnese in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, as well as to broader research on federal politics and ancient economic history in general.

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