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Section 2 Work in Progress

Elena FRANCHI (Università degli Studi di Trento)

### **Federalism and Border Management in Greek Antiquity (FeBo)**

It is well-known that some Greek polities of the Classical age organised as *koina* were major players of Greek history, among them the Thessalians, Boiotians, Chalkidians, and also the Phokians and Arkadians for a short period. The Aitolians, on the other hand, were a relatively anonymous Greek people, the Achaians, for their part, lived in a region in the north of the Peloponnese where the main political actors were others (in addition to the Spartans, the Arkadians and the Messenians). And yet, of all the Greeks they would be the ones to negotiate on equal footing with Hellenistic kings and Roman generals. Both *koina* expanded and became major players on an international level. As a powerful and well-managed political alliance, the *koina* allowed traditional “Greekness” to survive in an expanding Hellenistic world. What was the secret of their success?

FeBo starts from the assumption that one of the secrets of their success was smart border management. Successful *koina* developed an effective border-management culture and invented strategies that provided them with the means to efficaciously administer internal borders and to expand and effectively manage newly acquired territories. A comprehensive approach to these strategies could provide a better understanding of both intra-federal and inter-federal relations. It can help explain why certain wars took place and specific situations of stability arose. Why were some federal states more durable than others? Why did they expand and why were they able to negotiate with the great powers of the day in the Hellenistic period (whereas others did not). In relation to all of this, the specific objectives of the project are to show that (a) Greek federal states developed a specific border culture and sometimes even implemented precise border-management policies, that (b) the main focus of this culture was not peaceful coexistence, but rather a balance of power, and that (c) in order to be successful, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious networks had to be taken into account, i.e., there had to be a multi-level culture of border management.

This main objective consists of two sub-objectives, one relevant to intra-federal borders, the other to external borders. As far as intra-federal borders are concerned, the first sub-objectives (SO 1) of this project are to show that (1) an internal border management policy was effective in Greek koina when it was able to temper conflict and competition between member states in such a way as to ensure that none of the parties gained too much power; and (2) that an effective control mechanism of this kind required a full consideration not only of political factors, but also of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious elements. As far as external borders are concerned, the second sub-objective (SO 2) is to show that a successful border management culture considered not only political, but also economic, ethnic, cultural and religious aspects of the communities involved (i.e. a multi-level border-management policy). With regard to both internal and external borders, a holistic approach is applied. The research activities consider the mythical, religious, ethnic and economic landscape in which border disputes, inter-polis competition, and conflicts between political communities of different kinds are embedded. This means that not only the evidence on the conflicts themselves is taken into account, but that also all sources providing information on the conflicts' aforementioned broader circumstances are studied in detail. With regard to external border areas, this involves the collection and analysis of data relating to mythical stories, cults and rituals, and economic networks relating to frontier territories. In order to unveil possible transformation processes, the data are examined in relation to three different points in time: before, during and after the annexation of a territory to a federal state. For comparative purposes, the following cases will also be considered:

(a) conflicts fought in those regions of ancient Greece that never knew a federal type of organization. It will be asked what happened when border management could not be entrusted to a central body because no such central instances existed;

(b) koina organized as federal states in a very broad sense (e.g., the Kretans) or

(c) in alternative supra-state bodies (such as the hegemonic symmachies, and amphiktyonies, etc).

The project is carried out by the PI, two post-doc collaborators, two PhD students and a philologist IT technician. This team will be in continuous exchange with the guests of the FeBinars, i.e., two separate webinar series dedicated to internal and external border management respectively.