

## 5

## Between Demarcation and Integration

## The Context of Foreign Policy in Ancient Greece

*Hans Beck*

Around 575 BCE, Cleisthenes, the aristocratic leader of Sicyon, proclaimed a contest for the hand of his daughter Agariste. After having won a victory with his four-horse team at Olympia, he declared that any Hellene who thought himself worthy to become his son-in-law should travel to Sicyon within sixty days and stake his claim. The Greek historian Herodotus, who relates the story (6.126–30), goes on to present a list of illustrious suitors hailing from Italy to mainland Hellas and Ionia, “Greeks who were inflated with pride in themselves and in their homeland” (6.126.3). In the end, an Athenian named Hippocleides prevailed, or so it seemed. On the night of the final banquet, Hippocleides, after indulging in large amounts of wine, commanded the band to play some of his favorite songs, and jumping up on to the table he performed Laconian and Attic dances to accompany the music. Next, he stood on his head and shook his legs in the air. Witnessing the scene, his host judged that Hippocleides had “danced away his marriage” (6.129.4) and announced that he would betroth Agariste to another suitor.<sup>1</sup>

Herodotus’ story reveals much about the governing concepts of intercommunal affairs in Greece. As can be seen on closer examination in what follows, it displays the full array of the defining protocols and normative patterns of foreign policy exchange in the late-Archaic period. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace the conceptual development of foreign policy as a widely

<sup>1</sup> The following abbreviations are used: M&L = *Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC*, edited by R. Meiggs and D. Lewis. Oxford: Clarendon; R&O = *Greek Historical Inscriptions, 404–323 BC*, edited by P. J. Rhodes and R. Osborne. Oxford: Oxford University Press; *StV II* = *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums*, Vol. 2, edited by H. Bengston. Munich: Beck.

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recognized practice in the governance of intercommunal relations in ancient Greece. The establishment of this practice was tied to the rise of the polis as a state in the Archaic period (eighth to sixth centuries BCE). While the evolution of foreign policy concepts was thus interdependent with the process of state formation, it will be argued that the Persian Wars deeply impacted the way the Greeks construed their intercommunal relations. It marked a key moment in the transformation of foreign policy concepts. Under the threat of war against a seemingly omnipotent invader, the prevailing practices in the realm of intercommunal affairs quickly showed themselves to be insufficient. In response to this challenge on the battlefield, the Greek cities extended both the contents and scope of their foreign relations. Effectively, in the post-Persian War era, the foreign action of city-states was governed by assumptions that were deeply entrenched in Greek political culture; the new foreign policy paradigm was considered a decidedly Hellenic practice. With this also came a conceptual shift. As a governmental realm in which the body of citizens exercised the full authority of the state, the polis developed a rigid sense of its inside sphere. Yet in their foreign policy exchange, Greek city-states also drew on patterns of interstate behavior that were counter-intuitive to the separation of inside and outside spheres. In the later sections of this chapter, I will demonstrate how some of the most basic foreign policy operations of the polis, including its engagement in federalism, impacted the demarcation of both spheres. I will argue, effectively, that the foreign behavior of the polis imperiled the boundary-drawing quality of interstate action, and posed an insurmountable challenge to the creation of a non-violent interstate equilibrium.

### 5.1. FOREIGN POLICY IN ANCIENT GREECE: NEITHER FOREIGN, NOR A POLICY

The investigation of foreign policy paradigms in ancient Greece is inevitably fraught with caveats. The term foreign policy appears anachronistic to the world of ancient Greece. It is a truism to note that the participating partners in the intercommunal exchange between Hellenic city-states did not perceive each other as being foreign. Herodotus' *Histories* in fact endorses the opposite idea, highlighting that all Hellenes were bound together by a common lineage, the same language, religious belief and culture (8.144.2). In his portrayal of Cleisthenes' story, Herodotus, too, accentuates the Hellenic ties that united the suitors' despite their fierce competition over Agariste. Indeed, the contest's cultural frame of reference was thoroughly determined by the notion of Hellenicity: proclaimed at Olympia, the most eminent transregional sanctuary

of the day, the contest for Agariste was open only to Hellenes, whose intentions, according to Herodotus, were once again fueled by their shared Greekness. Foreign suitors were deliberately excluded from the circle of Cleisthenes' potential sons-in-law. The term foreign, therefore, merely follows English language convention, without implying an actual degree of foreignness—however defined—among the engaging communities.

Neither was foreign policy in Archaic Greece strictly speaking a policy, or even necessarily political in a conventional sense. In the absence of a grounded form of state organization and lacking the means of a collectively binding decision-making process that was sanctioned by a sovereign, late seventh-century communities had a limited arsenal of political institutions at their disposal to shape their policies, both foreign and domestic (Hall 2013). It is axiomatic, again, to observe that foreign policy in the late-Archaic period, was mostly subject to the exchange between local aristocrats, who established a catalogue of ritualized forms of contact to pursue non-violent relations with one another. Cleisthenes' example attests to the principle of mutual status recognition and intermarriage (Cox 1998; Schmitz 2008: 35–70). Associated with this were the practices of ritualized friendship (*philia*) (Herman 1987) and early forms of guest friendship (*proxenia*) (Gauthier 1972; Cojocaru 2012), as well as the exchange of gifts (*dōra*, sing. *dōron*), which in itself included a greater variety of reciprocal actions or transactions to initiate or perpetuate amiable relations, emerging from, or leading to, friendship or intermarriage (von Reden 1995; Mitchell 1997; cf. also Jones 1999 on the notion of kinship diplomacy). The resulting bonds might have blended into broader agreements, such as to fight together in war. At times, the exchange led to the opposite, causing friction and open hostilities. But whatever the status of their interaction, it should be remembered that the relations forged by aristocratic agents embodied the quality of an official exchange that was undertaken on behalf of the community. In a way, the conduct of foreign policy was monopolized by aristocratic agents who, in interstate affairs, were identical with the community itself; their actions abroad coincided with their community's foreign policy.

Cleisthenes' case is again instructive. At an earlier point in his life, prior to his Olympic victory, he had served as executive general during the so-called First Sacred War (traditionally dated to the decade following 595 BCE) that was fought by the Amphiktyony of Delphi against the city of Kirrha (Hall 2007: 276–81). The command gained Cleisthenes substantial prestige as well as funds with which he financed a new *stoa* in Sicyon and several buildings at Delphi, among them the first treasury of the Sicyonians. His actions as a foreign policy agent thus intersected with the foreign affairs of his community. Sicyon's relations with Athens were, in turn, governed by Cleisthenes' decision to marry his daughter Agariste to one of the most esteemed Athenian aristocrats of the day. Their marital union had a formative impact

on the mutual relations between Sicyon and Athens for much of the sixth century BCE.<sup>2</sup>

## 5.2. NEIGHBORHOOD EXCHANGE, PEER POLITY INTERACTION, AND THE RISE OF POLIS-INSIDES

Archaic Greek city-states had only limited conceptual and even fewer actual capacities for the conduct of large-scale interstate operations. Their foreign policy was confined to the fundamental practice of interaction with their neighbors, e.g. raids of territories or quarrels over pastures and fishing grounds.<sup>3</sup> All the while, the possibility of a much broader background of non-violent exchange should not be dismissed. Military action was only the peak of an interaction that was otherwise characterized by more peaceful forms of exchange: the celebration of regional cults and festivals including their potential for social interaction; non-violent competition in athletic games; concerted building programs in translocal sanctuaries; or early attempts at arbitration and conflict resolution (Ager 1996, 2013). The very nature of state organization put the conduct of affairs in the hands of local leaders such as Cleisthenes and the like, who, in conjunction with their followers—clans, clubs, factions—were the actual agents in the foreign arena.

Aristocratic agency soon expanded beyond the realm of neighborhood affairs. The great transregional sanctuaries of Delphi and Olympia offered a vibrant platform for the exchange between local elites from throughout the Hellenic world. Their engagement during the athletic games and in other modes of social interaction has been labeled as peer (polity) interaction, which describes the full range of exchanges taking place (including imitation, emulation, competition, and the exchange of material goods, knowledge, and information) between independent peers (or self-governing peer polity units) from within a wider geographic region.<sup>4</sup> The notion of aristocratic peer interaction at Olympia speaks for a gradual widening of foreign policy horizons in the Archaic Greek world. While the actual radius of a city's foreign policy was often confined to the conduct of neighborhood contacts, aristocratic agents such as Cleisthenes transcended the realm of local affairs through

<sup>2</sup> Agariste's husband was Megacles from the family of the Alcmaeonids. Other examples of aristocratic foreign agency include the actions of Peisistratos of Athens, Kypselos of Corinth, and Theagenes of Megara. Cf. Stein-Hölkeskamp 2009 on the typology of tyrants in the Archaic Age.

<sup>3</sup> The so-called Lelantine War is a perfect example for this kind of conflict, cf. Hall 2007: 1–8.

<sup>4</sup> The classic text on peer polity interaction is Renfrew and Cherry 1986; cf. Scott 2010: 16–17 and *passim*.

a wide network of social engagements with their peers from all over the Hellenic world.<sup>5</sup>

In conceptual terms, the picture is more complicated. For instance, the epic tradition of the Trojan War (an encounter that the Greeks believed had happened centuries before the Archaic Age) offers a prominent example of a foreign policy event that surpassed the local dimension. In the *Iliad*, which was composed toward the end of the eighth century BCE, the Trojan War is staged as a conflict between a pan-Greek coalition of states against the pan-Eastern alliance of the Trojans and their allies. The very fabric of Homer's poetry thus seems to speak in favor of a foreign policy event with multiple agents and of—literally—epic magnitude. But in the actual conditions of the Archaic Age, such an enterprise was unimaginable. As was demonstrated by Kurt Raaflaub, Homer's poetry draws on a much simpler foreign policy concept. In the course of the narrative, the underlying model of conflict is that of a violent counter-raid that responded to an earlier raid. Indeed, on the occasion of the depiction of Achilles' shield (*Iliad* 18.509–41), the war is portrayed as a combat between two neighboring cities. So despite the large-scale geographical dimensions of the *Iliad*, its conceptualization of foreign policy follows the small-scale constellation of the Archaic Age with bilateral affairs between neighbors as the prevailing paradigm in foreign policy.<sup>6</sup>

Early Greek treaty-making supports this assessment. The earliest attested foreign policy treaties date from the middle of the sixth century BCE, i.e. only a decade or two after Cleisthenes' declaration at Olympia. Although the body of evidence is slim, some of the assumptions about the conduct of foreign affairs shine through. In a binding agreement between the Sybarites and the neighboring Serdaioi in southern Italy from c.550 BCE, both parties call for an alliance (*synmachia*) and "for friendship (*philia*) faithful and without guile forever" (M&L #10). In a similar treaty (called *rhêtra*) between Anaitoi and Metapioi, the participants declare that there shall be friendship for fifty years; "those who do not observe, those the *proxenoi* and seers shall keep away from the altar" (Effenterre and Ruzé #51). In the Peloponnese, around the same time (550–500 BCE), an agreement between Elis and Heraia stipulated an alliance (*synmachia*) for a hundred years; "if anything is needed, either word or deed, they shall stand by each other in all matters and especially in war; and if they stand not by each other, those who do the wrong shall pay a talent of silver to Olympian Zeus to be used in his service. And if anyone injures this

<sup>5</sup> This is most vividly attested by the high quantity of aristocratic dedications at Delphi and Olympia, cf. Scott 2010: 29–40. Papalexandrou 2005 elicits the case with regard to the genre of tripod-dedications.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Raaflaub 2015. This is also true for the First Sacred War, which was set in motion by the criminal deeds of two small local communities who were harassing pilgrims at the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. The *amphiktyones* (literally "those who dwell around") decided to step up and punish the villains. Cf. also Funke 2013: 453–8.

writing, whether private man or magistrate (*telesta*) or community (*damos*), he shall be liable to the sacred fine herein written” (M&L #17).

Despite the notorious difficulties these short texts pose for an in-depth study, they offer some structural insight into the governing assumptions of foreign policy. (1) all of the foreign policy treaties listed here govern the relations between neighboring communities. At their very core, late-Archaic foreign policy treaties mostly regulated the affairs between neighbors.<sup>7</sup> (2) The explicit stipulation regarding the duration of the agreement is striking. The timeline itself varies (50 or 100 years, with the latter number most likely equaling the notion of forever). It is notable, however, that the explicit reference to time emancipates the agreement from the agency of individuals, most eminently the role of individual aristocratic agents. Associated with this process of emancipation is (3) the rising prominence of communal offices that were vested with the authority to lead the foreign policies of their community. The actual designation of these offices varies from city to city, and the scope of their responsibilities is difficult to assess. But the thrust toward a more persistent, commonly communicable vocabulary is conspicuous.<sup>8</sup> Within less than one generation after Cleisthenes, actorhood in foreign policy had started to shift from elite agents toward more abstract institutions and officials that were empowered by the community and acted on its behalf.<sup>9</sup> The conduct of foreign policy was proto-formalized, and the discussion of its contents put before the magistrates and the people of the community, who could in turn be held responsible for their action.

This movement toward institutionalization was of course part of a much broader trend that was connected to the rise of the polis as a state. Throughout the sixth century BCE, most Hellenic city-states established more or less similar political offices and institutions that were vested with the authority to govern the affairs of the community. Citizen bodies were demarcated by means of citizenship laws and property qualifications (usually the ability to provide for one’s hoplite armor), the body of citizens (*politai*, sing. *politēs*) was institutionalized through the creation of polis assemblies, which were set in relation to the city’s manifold executive offices. The conduct of politics was assigned to an abstract realm of authority. This was clearly a landmark in the general development of politics. With it came the call for strict obedience to the rule of yet another abstract concept, law (*nomos*), and a tapestry of checks

<sup>7</sup> See also the treaty between Sparta and Tegea from c.550 BCE, which impacts the triangular neighborhood relations between Sparta, Messenia, and Tegea.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., for instance, M&L #1, as discussed earlier. The document refers to a *symmachia*, *philia*, and the idea of *proxenia* (line 5). On the latter, cf. also M&L #4. The rise of polis institutions with vested authority in the realm of foreign policy has now been charted by McAuley 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Note how *philia* in M&L #10 equals the friendship ties that were previously maintained by leading aristocrats. By the time of the treaty, this *philia* is exercised by the community of citizens.

and balances to uphold—and reinforce—the law in everyday politics.<sup>10</sup> As mentioned earlier, the immediate implication of this politicization of foreign policy was the gradual inhibition of aristocratic agency and its predominant practices in the foreign arena. But the shift toward magistrates and polis procedures brought other, more profound changes than the institutional perspective suggests. With the arrival of the polis, a new cognitive perception of a community's inside and outside took shape; effectively, this brought a new social meaning to the practice of foreign policy.

The notion of citizenship in particular provided communities with a robust sense of a demarcated inside. Ancient Greek has no equivalent to the modern noun “citizenship.” The idea was usually expressed by self-identification as a *politēs* of Athens, Thebes, etc., or simply through the use of the ethnic, e.g. “being a Theban” (*Thēbaios*, pl. *Thēbaioi*). When citizens referred to their distinct status as *politai*, they captured this by stressing that they had “a share in the things of the gods (*hiera*) and in all human affairs that are pleasing to the gods (*hosia*).”<sup>11</sup> Unlike more modern, secularized concepts of citizenship, the ancient Greek notion implied a sacred covenant between all members of the community who, as a collective, governed the grand total of communal affairs. The prevalent assumption was that the *politai* were in fact identical with the community of the polis as such. In early Greek legislation, this idea is vividly attested in the formulaic expression that something was “decided by the polis”—the polis thus figuring as both an abstract socio-political entity and a collective of citizens who exercised the governance of the polis.<sup>12</sup> The ideas of belonging together and communal responsibility for human and divine affairs put the citizens at the center of the polis. The citizens were, as Paul Cartledge put it, those who were “in the club”: they constituted a status group that occupied the very inside of the community (Cartledge 1993/2002: 105–32). And their inside was construed in binary opposition to groups that were determined by varying degrees of outside: slaves, non-citizens, women (in most city-states), and the entire realm beyond the city as such, both as its abstract and its physical outside.<sup>13</sup>

The tracing of physical boundaries between inside and outside requires further contextualization. In a seminal work on the rise of statehood in the Archaic Age, François de Polignac (1984/1995) argued that the emergence of citizen-states in Greece was closely connected with the gradual integration of the polis' hinterland into its communal space. In short, the developing concept of political authority was interrelated with the perception of space and

<sup>10</sup> These aspects are covered in a variety of contributions to Beck 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Extrapolated from Thucydides 2.52.4 and Antiphon 5.62; 82. Cf. Blok 2013 with further references. The best introduction to city-ethnics in ancient Greece is Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 58–70.

<sup>12</sup> M&L #2, from c.650 to 600 BCE.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Cartledge 1993/2002 on these dichotomies; on the spatial dimension, McInerney 2006.

its physical penetration by means of liminal cults, sanctuaries, and processions to the periphery. As a result of this interconnection between state authority and conceptions of space, the binary of the polis' inside and outside was neither set in stone nor was it static, but was exposed to the dynamic forces of change.<sup>14</sup> Although the communal space within the polis is usually regarded as the inside of the city-state, the separation between this inside and its various outsides was more complex. The polis was clustered around the city center and the market place (agora) in particular, which became the focus of the polis' political life. The agora symbolized the heart of the community—naturally, the assembly of citizens met in the agora. Monuments such as stone slabs with public inscriptions (foreign policy treaties as mentioned earlier, decrees, etc.) were set up there, which placed them, literally, inside the citizenry (Hölscher 1998; Hölkeskamp 2002). Beyond its urban center, the polis entailed various degrees of other insides to which the community was related in one way or the other: the suburban inside, the *chōra* or hinterland, the liminal zones of border shrines or sanctuaries that served as relay stations toward neighboring communities, or the extended inside of a polis' membership in a tribal organization.

### 5.3. THE ETHNICIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY AND THE CREATION OF A HELLENIC MACRO-INSIDE

In Asia Minor, the aristocratic agency model generally prevailed for a longer period of time than on the mainland. For the most part, the relations between the Greek city-states and the Persian Empire were in the hands of aristocratic leaders, who, along with their faction or clan, ruled their city, often supported by Persia. Around 555 BCE, the ruling elites of Ephesos concluded an alliance with Kroisos, the king of Lydia (*StV* II 109). In 526, Polycrates of Samos sealed a similar agreement with Persia (*StV* II 118). In the same vein, Miletus concluded an alliance with the Persian king in c.546 (*StV* II 115). Under the rule of Histiaios, who owed his rule to Dareios I, Miletus remained faithful to his Persian alliance, despite growing tensions between the Greek cities of the region and the Persian court. As suspicions about Miletus' loyalty grew, Histiaios was called to Susa to act as advisor to the king and, effectively, be detained there. The leadership was handed over to his son-in-law Aristagoras. From there, things deteriorated. After an unsuccessful attempt to extend his rule over Naxos, for which he had borrowed 200 ships from the Persian satrap

<sup>14</sup> The work of the Copenhagen Polis Centre (CPC) has contributed much to this question, cf. Hansen and Nielsen 2004 for the Centre's summary research results and in particular *Acts of the CPC* 4 from 1997.

at Sardis, Aristagoras was practically dead. In an attempt to save his head, he put in motion a revolt among the Ionian cities (499 BCE). The Greek poleis of Asia Minor expelled the Persian fleet commanders from their harbors and captured their ships. With support from Athens, they proceeded to attack the satrap at Sardis and managed to sack the city, robbing the temples and burning some of its sanctuaries. The Persian invasion of Greece nine years later (490 BCE) was explicitly considered an act of retaliation to those events.<sup>15</sup>

The Persian War marked a profound watershed in the political experience of the Greeks. In the realm of foreign policy, the war presented the Greeks with an unprecedented challenge. As noted earlier, intercommunal affairs between citizen-states were mostly a matter of small-scale operations. Under the threat of invasion by a massive empire, the picture changed. If anything, only a concerted effort on the part of the Greeks seemed to prove an effective counter to the Persian attack. In 490 BCE, during the first Persian campaign that was targeted at Naxos, Eretria, and Athens, the Greeks apparently showed little, if any, effort to coordinate their defenses. Neither Naxos nor Eretria received support from their neighbors; it is unknown whether or not they had even sent out distress calls to rally assistance against Persia in the first place. When the Persian troops landed in the Bay of Marathon in Attica, the Athenians called for military help from Sparta—a request famously denied because the Spartans were busy celebrating a religious festival. The Marathon campaign was thus fought by Athenian forces alone, with the notable exception of hoplite aid from Plataia, Athens' closest neighboring polis.<sup>16</sup>

By the time of the second Persian invasion (480/479 BCE), Greek attitudes toward the foreign challenge had already changed. In anticipation of the Persian strike, the Spartans invited the Hellenic poleis to participate in a conference in the fall of 481 to determine a joint war strategy. The meeting was most likely held at Sparta in a place that was henceforth known as *to hellenion*, “the Square of the Hellenes” (Pausanias 3.12.6), which in itself vividly spoke of the conference agenda (see Holland 2005: 226). The response was enormous. Over sixty cities sent representatives to what became the inaugural meeting of the Hellenic League. The wide geographic spread of participants from throughout the Greek world attests to an all-new willingness to cooperate in a foreign policy enterprise that transcended local affairs. Indeed, both the league designation—it was simply referred to as “the Hellenes who have sworn the oath” (Herodotus 7.148; cf. Sommerstein and Bayliss 2013: 191–2)—and other references to the Hellenic dimension of their

<sup>15</sup> This outline follows Herodotus' account of the Ionian Revolt, 5.30–6.33. A more up-to-date and equally well-versed narrative is offered by Holland 2005: 154–61.

<sup>16</sup> Sparta's response: Hdt. 6.106; Plataia: Hdt. 6.108. On the Marathon campaign, which has recently also received public attention in the course of the 250th anniversary of the event, see <<http://www.marathon2500.org>>, cf. Krentz 2010; Billows 2010.

cooperation indicate that the league was a truly transregional endeavor. Some of the participants of the Hellenic League were actually at war with one another and had declared to end their quarrels for the time being. In other words, the member-states of the Hellenic League agreed to surrender their local intra-Hellenic wars in service of a larger, pan-Hellenic conflict.<sup>17</sup> In the following spring, the Hellenes reconvened to lay down their actual war strategy. The allies decided to send the League's army to Thessaly and face the invaders in the Vale of Tempe in the borderlands toward Macedon, which would prevent the enemy from fully capitalizing on its superior manpower. When the Hellenes arrived in Thessaly, they learned that some of Thessaly's aristocratic elites had already medized, i.e. they had surrendered their cities to the Persian cause (Hdt. 7.122–3; cf. Beck 1997: 122–3). The fait accompli on the Thessalian battleground forced the Hellenes to re-strategize, which they did with significant speed. The new defenses were lined up further south at Thermopylai on land and Artemision on Euboea at sea. Meanwhile, several Peloponnesian poleis contemplated drawing back to a defensive line that was closer to their own security needs, the Great Isthmus Corridor near Corinth. The Spartans were evidently nervous about alienating the members of the Hellenic League and hence supported the Thermopylai/Artemision-line, but the contingent sent to Thermopylai was small in number—again on the grounds of alleged festival obligations at home that prevented them from sending out the entire army.<sup>18</sup>

This brief outline of events illustrates the challenges of cooperation in the Hellenic League. Collective action in interstate affairs at large—let alone in a confederate league—was unprecedented among the Greeks. In addition, the wide geographic spread of league members from Thessaly to the Southern Peloponnese put different cities at different levels of risk—at least for the time being—which made the quest for a collective defense strategy more complex. Controversies over the leadership of the alliance and, in all likelihood, the actual amount of allied contributions of funds and manpower further complicated the enterprise.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the issue of the Thessalian cities reveals that the conduct of a joint foreign policy as such posed profound problems. Beyond the actual scope of the league's mission, the procedural aspect and, associated with this, the notion of authority and reliability were all critical to the action of the Hellenic League. While some members were represented in the league by polis officials who spoke with the vested authority of their citizen community

<sup>17</sup> According to Hdt. 7.145.1, several poleis set aside their grievances in light of the Persian threat. Most prominently, the hostilities between Athens and Aigina were suspended. Cf. also Hdt. 8.3.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Cartledge 2006 on the Thermopylai campaign.

<sup>19</sup> Hdt. 8.2–3 says that Sparta's leadership was by no means unrivalled. In particular, it was felt that the Athenians should take command of the fleet. Yet the latter yielded and chose not to resist openly in order to safeguard the integrity of the alliance.

(and, presumably, with a defined mandate), the representatives from Thessaly, for instance, were more like aristocratic freelancers who acted independently from any kind of communal mandate.

The shift toward mandated polis-agents is well attested in the incident that set the Persian War in motion. When Athenian envoys arrived in Sardis in 507 BCE to conclude an alliance, the governor of the Great King requested that they offer “earth and water to King Darius” (Hdt. 5.73). “Eager to bring out the alliance,” Herodotus continues, “they took the responsibility on themselves and consented to offering earth and water, for which they faced serious charges when they returned to their own land” (Hdt. 5.73). The incident was hotly debated amongst Athenians, who later denied any responsibility for the envoys’ submission. Evidently, the affair put the Athenians in an awkward position since they had subjected themselves to the supreme power of the Great King before the outbreak of the Ionian uprising. In consequence, this shed a dubious light on their policy toward Persia during the following years, including their support for Aristogoras and his rebels. But the matter here is not so much one of denial or responsibility: did the envoys act on their own at Sardis or did they carry out the orders from the Athenian assembly, or were they simply caught off guard by the governor’s request?<sup>20</sup> More importantly, the incident discloses that by the early 440s BCE (the time at which Herodotus was writing) there was a lively discourse about the exercise of authority in the foreign arena. While the actions of sixth-century aristocrats were hardly subjected to civic checks and balances, by the fifth century the conduct of affairs abroad was firmly in the hands of polis institutions. Herodotus’ Athenians were able to claim that the envoys at Sardis had acted on their own initiative simply because such a separation between polis-authority and foreign policy “free play” was already in place. There is no one particular moment at which such a separation came into being. The sending of sanctioned envoys to Sardis, empowered to make an alliance with Persia, already attests to more than a rudimentary organization of foreign affairs prior to the Persian War, as do many abstract polis offices and institutions that are attested for the late sixth century. At the same time, the war with Persia itself marked a transformative event in this development of foreign policy practices, which were increasingly governed by abstract powers, principles, and authorized personnel.

In a recent study of interstate relations in Classical Greece, Polly Low examined the broad array of foreign policy practices as well as the inherent principles and norms that governed their conduct. Contrary to the commonly held view that foreign policy in Classical Greece was characterized by unsophisticated action, if not downright anarchic agitation, Low’s analysis

<sup>20</sup> In any case, the Athenians never formally renounced their submission during the following years; cf. Holland 2005: 141–2, with some pointedly sharp remarks.

discloses a complex network of customs and moral codes which pervaded all areas of interstate behavior.<sup>21</sup> In the realms of alliance-building and third-party intervention, for instance, the self-understanding of poleis as independent citizen communities intersected with a variety of norms (i.e. helping other wronged communities) that provided city-states with a widely acknowledged canon of potential options in the foreign arena (Low 2007: 77–128). In several sources from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, those norms are referred to as “unwritten laws” or “common laws amongst the Hellenes,”<sup>22</sup> which indicates that the exercise of foreign policy became charged with a cultural and an ethnic dimension that added a new quality to the practice.

The formation of Hellenic identities through opposition to Persia is, of course, a commonplace observation; the Persian Wars fostered a qualitatively new sense of belonging, which led to all sorts of responses at the cultural, social, and political levels.<sup>23</sup> Foreign policy concepts followed suit. The experience of joint action in the war against Persia clearly inspired the Greeks, instilling them with the idea that the success of their at-large cooperation was fuelled by the common bonds that united them as Hellenes. The Hellenic League thus not only accelerated the advancement of foreign policy exchange, but it also glossed the conduct of interstate affairs with a distinctly Hellenic tone. In other words, the Hellenicity that was invigorated during the war with Persia led to a cultural encoding, or ethnicization, of foreign policy concepts in Greece (cf. Hall 2002: 172–89). It did so in two ways. On the one hand, the Persian War led to an all-new juxtaposition between Greeks and non-Greeks. It constituted a new outside that was distinctly alien, foreign, or barbarian. Prior to the Persian War, the cooperation with that outside and its various agents was generally unproblematic and unsuspecting with regard to moral charges of betrayal—none of the alliances with the Great King discussed earlier appears to have been stigmatized as an act of treason to the Hellenic cause. The military conflict with Persia altered the picture. In the aftermath of the war, the charge of medism became a prominent and weighty allegation that was directed against individuals and states alike. The implicit assumption of the charge was that violators had put themselves outside of the community of Hellenes.<sup>24</sup> Associated with this, on the other hand, was the idea that the

<sup>21</sup> See Low 2007. Earlier approaches to disclose the governing principles of diplomacy include, most famously, Adcock and Mosley 1975, who offer a narrative exposition of Greek history seen through the lens of prevailing diplomatic practices.

<sup>22</sup> Thuc. 2.37.3 (from Pericles’ funeral oration); cf. also Sophocles, *Antigone* 449–61; R&O #35, lines 13–4: “the common laws of the Hellenes.”

<sup>23</sup> Note, however, that the orthodox view of identity formation through binary opposition has recently been challenged by Gruen 2011, who projects a much more nuanced, complementary picture of the mutual perceptions of Greeks and Persians.

<sup>24</sup> See earlier on the medism of Thessaly. The theme of medism runs through Herodotus’ account of the Persian War. Most prominently, the city of Thebes was branded for its willful collaboration with Persia, and henceforth stigmatized as traitors to the cause of the Hellenes.

proper conduct of foreign policy itself was considered a Hellenic practice. As the frequent references to the “common laws amongst the Hellenes” show, interstate exchange after the Persian War was determined by hardwired criteria that were so deeply rooted in the political culture of the day that they were equated with an intrinsically Hellenic set of values. This Hellenic quality helped to demarcate those who participated in a conduct of foreign policy according to “common laws amongst the Hellenes” as opposed to those who did not abide by those laws and who, effectively, belonged to a new outside, or foreign sphere. In this sense, the institutionalization of foreign policy constituted a new social order of knowledge in Classical Greece that followed, and in turn fed into, a specific cultural practice.<sup>25</sup>

Foreign policy concepts in the post-Persian War period then built mainly on the threefold idea that (1) the polis, as community of citizens, had assumed full authority in the conduct of interstate affairs. The political and physical space of the polis was demarcated by mechanisms of political participation, social customs, and defined borders; everything that related to affairs within that demarcated space, vis-à-vis its outside, was under the authority of the community. (2) In response to the Persian War, a new macro-inside was created that separated the Hellenes from the greater outside non-Hellenes; opposition to Persia manifested itself not only in ethnically charged notions of belonging together but also in the application of customs and unwritten laws that were in themselves considered Hellenic, and hence separated the Greeks from peoples outside their cultural sphere. (3) In their dealings within the Hellenic macro-inside, the Greek city-states acknowledged, in principle, the integrity of the inside of other poleis, with whom they shared the same customs, traditions, beliefs, and political culture. Their foreign policy exchange was characterized by the interaction between equal parties who had demarcated their communal insides on equal terms.

The principle of equality contributed immensely to the acceptance of the governing foreign policy norms throughout the Greek world. The frequent interaction between poleis, in a relatively dense natural environment, led quickly to the persistent application, and repetition, of those norms. Along the way, this repetition reinforced the idea that the exchange between poleis was fundamentally characterized by equality. Again, the initial experience of the Hellenic League was crucial. Although the Greeks had elected a leading state to coordinate the defenses on the battlefield (Sparta), the league against Persia was an essentially multipolar enterprise. It was comprised of a

<sup>25</sup> An interesting case to attest to this is that of the Aitolians, who were genuinely disregarded by many polis-Greeks as villains operating on the fringes of Hellenicity. Euripides labels them as “semi-barbarians” (*Phoenissae* 138; cf. also Thuc. 3.94.5). In a document from around the mid-fourth century BCE (R&O #35), their foreign policy behavior is branded as “contrary to the common laws of the Hellenes.”

multitude of city-states which, despite divergent contributions to the operation, principally had an equal say in foreign policy. So despite the obvious power gradient between poleis with large-scale and well-equipped hoplite forces and those with smaller contingents, the relations between those states were, normatively speaking, between equal foreign policy agents. The victory monuments dedicated after the war capture this spirit of multiplicity. The most eminent of these dedications was set up in Delphi. It consisted of a serpent-shaped column that was inscribed with a plain text. After the opening formula “These fought the war” follows a plain list of thirty-one city-states who had participated in the operations of the Hellenic League. The listing itself implies some hierarchy amongst the participants: Sparta is mentioned first, followed by Athens and Corinth; so the order evidently reflects the position of Sparta as league-leader, succeeded by the two states who had sent the largest contingents. But the text itself offers no explanatory reference to this, nor does it assess the contributions of participants in any other way. It does not even qualify the war as such, i.e. it does not address its various stages or distinguish between individual battles to which different cities made different contributions. The inscription of the Serpent Column is guided by the message that the communities who had participated in the Hellenic League were all on equal terms, with an equal right to recognition and fame.<sup>26</sup>

The idea of equality clearly distinguished foreign policy practices in Greece from those of other contemporary interstate agents. It has been noted that ancient Greece was situated outside the foreign policy “conveyor belt” of central Asia. From Hittite diplomacy to the Neo-Assyrian and the Persian Empire, the predominant concept of interstate exchange was that of asymmetry and inequality. The Great Kings of Persia, or Tiglath Pileser III (eighth century BCE) before them, operated on the assumption of absolute suzerainty. Their understanding of foreign policy was essentially monolithic, allowing for no exchange with parties of equal rank; the famous notion of “The King of Kings” captures this, referring not to the King amongst other vassal-kings, satraps, or local chiefs but exclusively to a relationship with regard to preceding sovereigns (Wiesehöfer 2001: 56). When the Persian King dealt with the Greeks, he did so through satraps or emissaries, who were vested to speak on behalf of a strictly hierarchical administration. In their dealings, Persian foreign policy agents followed a distinct code and protocol, and they had a very clear understanding of their relations with others. The request for earth and water implied that the relations between Persia and others states were never considered an exchange between equals but one that was prefigured by a stark power gradient.

<sup>26</sup> The Serpent Column: M&L #27, with commentary. Cf. Jung 2006: 248–50; Beck 2009: 63–5.

The Greeks were aware of this attitude, but it did not translate into their political culture. No Hellenic community had the material means at its disposal to support, justify, or implement such a call for asymmetry. When the defining notions of a foreign policy conduct took shape in the Archaic Age, the political environment was too distinct from that of the Asian “conveyor belt” to provide for a similar thrust. In a way, the notion of equality and the call for, in principle, symmetrical exchanges between equally empowered citizen communities added to the understanding of their interstate patterns as distinctly Hellenic vis-à-vis Persian practices that were considered unilateral and despotic.

#### 5.4. EXTENDED INSIDES: SPARTA AND ATHENS

The first polis community to develop a foreign policy concept that transcended the local realm of action was Sparta. By 550 BCE the Spartans had conquered most of the southern Peloponnese, including Messenia, a region outside of Sparta’s homeland and across the mountain ranges of Mt. Taygetos to the West. Next, the Spartans turned to the central Peloponnese, but when they set out to conquer the city of Tegea it became obvious that direct rule over a polis of Tegea’s size was a precarious path to follow. The distance to Tegea was too far to deploy forces on a permanent basis; in addition, volatile relations with Messenia spoke against the detachment of troops more than a day’s march away from home. So in lieu of blunt subjugation, the Spartans offered the Tegeans an alliance, but the terms of the agreement made it clear how both sides thought of their role in the treaty. The Tegeans were forced to implement a hostile policy toward the Messenians and “follow the Lakedaimonians [i.e. the Spartans] wherever they might lead them.” The Spartans, in turn, offered the Tegeans a defensive alliance (*StV* II 112). The incident is commonly referenced as the formative moment of the embryonic Peloponnesian League, Greece’s earliest and longest-lasting fighting alliance (in Greek, *symmachia*). Shortly after the treaty with Tegea, other Peloponnesian states entered the *symmachia* and the league grew quickly to embrace most of the Peloponnese, with Argos being the only conspicuous abstention. By the end of the sixth century BCE, the league had become a formidable power block with members from the Peloponnese itself and from central Greece. The Peloponnesian League thus provided the Spartans with an effective militaristic, yet also coercion-intensive, organization that lay at the heart of Sparta’s military prowess (Ste. Croix 1972: 105–24; Figueira and Jensen 2013: 480–2).

Although its members were technically only allied with Sparta and not with one another, the alliance monitored the foreign policy of all league participants. Around 522 BCE, the league was confident enough to embark on its first

long-range operation across the Aegean and intervened in affairs on the island of Samos, but the campaign evaporated after a protracted period of siege warfare (see Hdt. 3.56). A few years later, in 510 BCE, the Spartans and their allies intervened in Athenian affairs on behalf of one of the city's competing factions. Despite its initial success (the Spartans managed to install the party they had favored in power for a short time), the operation also taught them that involvement in a place as remote as Athens bore unforeseeable risks. Within less than a year, their garrison was pressured by a fierce and furious Athenian citizen militia. With no support troops within range, the Spartan king was left with no choice but to negotiate the terms of surrender and withdraw from Athens (cf. Holland 2005: 129–42). The episode was nothing but traumatic for the Spartans. Over the next thirty years or so, Sparta's foreign policy action ostensibly limited itself to affairs in the Peloponnese; the great Isthmus corridor that connected the Peloponnese to central Greece presented both a physical and mental barrier that demarcated Sparta's area of engagement. When Aristagoras of Miletus arrived in Greece in 499 to win support for the Ionian revolt, the Spartans refrained from any long-distance commitment.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, when Athenian heralds arrived on the eve of the Battle of Marathon to request aid against Persia, the Spartans denied their support again.

By the time of the second invasion of the Persians in 480 BCE, the general attitude about foreign policy practices had already changed in Greece and the Spartans were the most obvious choice for the leadership of the Hellenic League, although their claims were not unrivalled. Although they were the leaders of the alliance, their commitment remained weak. As soon as fighting in mainland Greece had come to an end, in 478 BCE, they returned to their Peloponnesian priorities and withdrew their forces from the Hellenic League. Sparta's foreign policy radius extended the local realm of its homeland Lakonia, but it continued to be predetermined by the natural environment of the Peloponnese, which was conceived of as the polis' extended sphere of interest. The prevailing concept of foreign policy at Sparta was thus one of multiple layers and critical junctures. Around their polis, the Spartans identified different spheres of interstate interest that covered the entire Peloponnese and, hence, a realm that exceeded the boundaries of the Spartan city-state. Yet, the extended concept of foreign policy itself was tied to the interests of their citizen community and pieced together by coercive practices and military force, with limited impact on the conception of Sparta as a city-state itself. If anything, hegemonic rule over others called for an even sharper separation between the Spartans and everybody else in the Peloponnese.

<sup>27</sup> Hdt. 5.38, 49–50, where Sparta's negative response is actually couched in a telltale pretext about long-distance journey from Sparta in Asia.

The Athenians took over from where the Spartans had left the Hellenic League. After the resignation of the Spartan commander-in-chief in 478 BCE, Athens assumed leadership of the alliance, which was soon remodeled into an all-new confederation. The relationship between the Hellenic League and its Athenian-led successor is a much-debated topic in ancient history scholarship. The circumstances and motivations that led to the transformation were already a cause of disagreement amongst the ancient observers; based on the nature of the evidence available, the issue might never be decided.<sup>28</sup> Be that as it may, when the Athenians took over, the alliance was altered both in its outlook and nature. Its governing assumptions fundamentally set the new league apart from its predecessor.

First, the Athenians showed themselves to be both ambitious and determined leaders. While Sparta had displayed weak commitment to operations in the Aegean, Athens' radius of foreign policy was seemingly unlimited. As early as the 470s BCE, operations were carried out throughout the Aegean Sea and Asia Minor. In a famous funerary stele from around 460, the casualties of the Athenian borough (Greek *phylē*) Erechtheis are listed. The register includes the names of citizen-soldiers who had fallen on Cyprus, Egypt, Phoenicia, on the Peloponnese, the island of Aigina as well as Megara in the vicinity of Athens (M&L #33). The document casts light on Athens' bewildering foreign policy engagement in the post-Persian War era. Under Athenian leadership, the sea-bound alliance conducted multi-track, large-scale military operations in geographical areas that were vastly remote from one another. Their strong allied navy allowed the Athenians to intervene anywhere in the central and eastern Mediterranean up to the Levant, while their—equally strong—hoplite army continued to carry out operations on land throughout the Hellenic mainland and the Peloponnese. The Athenian Empire thus became the first Greek foreign policy agent that displayed the ability to engage in interstate affairs throughout the Greek world and balance multiple foreign policy interests in realms that were geographically disconnected.<sup>29</sup>

The ability to strike throughout the western Mediterranean was complemented by a new conceptual frame of reference. In their dealings with the allies, the Athenians applied a series of measures that gave the alliance a unique profile. Unlike the Hellenic and Peloponnesian Leagues that were

<sup>28</sup> The classic contradiction is the one between Thuc. 1.95–6, who claims that the allies resorted to the Athenians and requested that they became their new leaders, and the opinion of Herodotus (8.3.2) that the Athenians openly reached for the hegemony; on the latter view, see also [Aristotle] *Constitution of the Athenians* 23–4.

<sup>29</sup> On the tribute list of 443/2 BCE, the principle of grouping allied members under a system of fiscal districts which were comprised of larger geographical regions appeared: Thrace, the Hellespontine region, the islands district, Caria, and Ionia (M&L #39). This appears to have been the first attempt to structure the alliance's realm of action and organize it in a meaningful way.

confined to the conduct of war, the Athenian alliance appended the realm of warfare with an arsenal of prescriptions that strengthened the ties between Athens and the allies. To fund large-scale league operations, a more stringent system of contributions to the common war chest was implemented.<sup>30</sup> Those installments were soon merged into a rigid system of taxation. In 454 BCE, the league synod was suspended and the common treasury moved from Delos to Athens, which effectively brought it under the control of Athenian financial officials. The transfer was accompanied by legal provisions that streamlined the legislative process within the league, targeting both the allies' affairs with Athens and the political organization of the allies themselves. In many member-cities, the political executive was remodeled; for instance, new boards of leading magistrates were inaugurated that were elected from a remodeled citizen assembly. This process of intervention in the affairs of member-states is sometimes understood as the intentional democratization of league members' constitutions, but the more immediate intention came once again from the desire to provide a higher degree of coherence between the political affairs of Athens and its allied states. In each of these cases of intervention, the Athenians saw to it that, first and foremost, the new political authorities would comply to their leadership (cf. Raaflaub 2009: 105–6; Brock 2009). At some point during the second half of the fifth century BCE, a decree was issued that implemented common standards for the use of weights and measures amongst league members, and that introduced a common currency for economic exchange with Athens (M&L #45). In the terms of historical sociology, the Athenians crafted a capital-intensive, commercial network of interaction that was clustered around a single urban center with a highly developed administration and effective mechanisms of articulating, and reinforcing, its authority on the periphery.<sup>31</sup>

Athenian measures to wield state authority over the allies have been studied in great detail by historians of the ancient world, and much ink has been spilled over the issue. The inconsistent terminology that is applied in this discussion to refer to the league—Athenian Confederacy, Delian League, Athenian Empire, or, more tautologically, Athenian *archē*—indicates itself how difficult it is to disentangle the many perspectives that relate to this question. Most recently, it was argued by Ian Morris that Athens “tried to develop an Ionian Greek territorial state with Athens as its capital city” (2009: 141). Consequently, Morris states that the Athenian League was designed as “the first stage in the transformation of a city-state into a Greater Athenian

<sup>30</sup> Based on the so-called first assessment of Aristeides from 478/7 BCE (Thuc. 1.96; [Aristotle] *Constitution of the Athenians* 24; Plut. *Life of Aristeides* 24), which continued to be the basis of taxation for the greater part of the alliance's history; cf. Rhodes 1985: 5–8; Raaflaub 2009: 95.

<sup>31</sup> The measures surveyed here are usually associated with the transformation process “from league to empire” as it is commonly understood in scholarship. The most recent contribution to this is the edited volume Ma et al. 2009.

State” (2009: 141). Such an interpretation of the league as hyper-polis, as it were, overstates the case, yet it also offers a valuable working hypothesis that accentuates a shift in Athens’ conception of its own foreign policy engagement. Previous interstate leagues had confined themselves to the conduct of warfare; participation of a polis in a *symmachia* was an act of foreign policy in itself, and the joint affairs of those leagues again related to the field of warfare. In each case, membership in a league did not conflict with the demarcation the inside of a member-state; the domestic sphere of every member-poleis remained untouched, and the division between the political realms of the inside and outside of a city-state were kept in place. The Athenian model, on the other hand, affected that division. In their attempt to structure the league and harmonize its policies, the Athenians showed very little respect for the traditional inside-spheres of its participating members. As a consequence of having joined the league, confederate cities surrendered many prerogatives of their genuine polis authority to the Athenian state. Their traditional insides disintegrated along the way. In the conceptual language of the day, the Athenians jeopardized the *autonomia* of their members, i.e. their right to self-governance and adherence to political protocols and procedures that were sanctioned, and carried out, by the community of citizens.<sup>32</sup> It fails to surprise, then, that when league allies articulated their dismay with Athenian leadership practices or went on to open revolt, the call for the perseverance of the most basic tenets of a political community figured most prominently in the justification of their cause.<sup>33</sup> The Athenians, on the other hand, understood incidents of insurrection and revolt as actions against the domestic sphere of the alliance. In their line of reasoning, they had brought league-members under the umbrella of a newly extended inside which combined participating poleis under their leadership.

Once again, the domestic nature of this extended inside was emphasized through the creation of genuine polis institutions at the level of the league. When the governing bodies of the league were transferred from the island of Delos to Athens in 454, the citizen-body at Athens absorbed the authority to carry out league decisions on behalf of the allies; their prerogatives as independent foreign policy agents were incorporated into the Athenian state. The introduction of a new, Athens-centered currency added to this process.

<sup>32</sup> On the notion of autonomy, Ostwald 1982 continues to be helpful. Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 87–94 entertain the concept of varying degrees of actual dependency rather than full-fledged independence, but this tends to underscore the political charge of the discourse on *autonomia*.

<sup>33</sup> This was the broad tenor of the many revolts against Athenian leadership, starting as early as c.471 BCE with the insurrection of Naxos. On the eve of the Peloponnesian War, it allowed the Spartans to present themselves as “liberators of Hellas” (Thuc. 2.8.4), while Athens was regarded as an enemy to Hellenic freedom (Thuc. 3.6–67).

At the same time, the super-inside of the alliance was garnered with a distinctive cultural agenda. The cultic calendar of the league included many festivals that were created to celebrate the communality of league members and express this in joint processions and sacrifices to the city goddess Athena (cf. Raaflaub 2009: 107). In this sense, too, the new inside acquired the typical qualities of a genuine polis inside. As pointed out by Morris, the degree of foreignness between the various league members was therefore “very weak” in comparison to other ancient empires (2009: 132; cf. 132–41). Yet, this asset was also the alliance’s greatest weakness, as most city-states were unwilling to surrender their quality as a polis community to Athenian leadership.

### 5.5. HYBRID INSIDES: GREEK FEDERALISM

Athenian efforts to redraw the boundaries of the polis were previously unheard of, and they appear to have been incompatible with the nature of the Greek city-state. But the general idea of transcending the conceptual borders of the polis and of banding together with other states in politics was not unprecedented. From Macedon in the north to the southern Peloponnese, from Italy to Hellas and Asia Minor, the rise of so-called federal states (*koina*, sing. *koinon*) is widely attested from the late sixth century BCE. Federalism started from the idea that the inhabitants of different geographical regions—e.g. Boiotia, Arkadia, and Aitolia—believed in a shared ethnic identity that united them across their local communities. The origins of this belief went back to the late eighth century BCE. Over time, the idea of tribal togetherness merged into a vibrant sense of ethnic coherence and primordial descent, as expressed in regional foundation myths, heroic genealogies, festivals, material culture, and dialectal diversification (cf. Hall 1997; McInerney 1999: 8–39; Morgan 2003). In many ways, the process of ethnic identity formation complemented the rise of the polis as outlined earlier. Indeed, the two forces seem inextricably interwoven. On the one hand, the rise of local communities fostered the advancement of civic structures and state formation. On the other hand, the frequent interaction between those nascent local states (economic ties, the celebration of cults, and arbitration attempts amongst others) provided a platform for the development, and dissemination, of the idea of ethnic togetherness (cf. Beck and Funke 2015b). Recent studies have demonstrated the ways in which this new sense of ethnic belonging was instrumental to the integration of multiple city-states into a *koinon*. While the *koinon* absorbed some of the political prerogatives of its member-states, it also allowed them a certain degree of autonomy for the conduct of genuinely political affairs. In a federal league, the authority of the *koinon* and of the

polis were thus in a state of vertical separation and of persistent negotiation between the federal center and its periphery.<sup>34</sup>

Among the most prominent Hellenic federal states was the Boiotian League in central Greece. At some point in the mid-fifth century BCE, the cities of Boiotia joined forces in order to establish an all-new federal alliance (cf. Larsen 1968: 33–40; Beck and Ganter 2015). The state firmly subscribed to the idea of proportional representation. All of its members shared the same privileges and obligations according to the size of their population. The constitution of this league survives in a historiographical work that was copied on papyrus leaves. The author of the work is unknown; it is commonly referenced as *Hellenika from Oxyrhynchos* after the Egyptian site at which it was found. In a digression from his overall narrative theme, the author sets out to explain how the individual cities in Boiotia ran their polis affairs through a sophisticated system of mutually dependent city councils. He then proceeds to explain the constitutional outline of the federal state:

All who lived in the region were divided into eleven districts. Each of these provided a *boiotarch* [i.e. a federal executive magistrate] in this way: [a list of the Boiotian communities and their share in the *boiotarchia* follows]. In this way the districts sent their magistrates. They provided 60 councillors per *boiotarch* and paid their daily expenses. For the army, each district had to provide 1,000 hoplites and 100 cavalry. To put it simply, depending on the numbers of its magistrates, each city shared in the federal treasury, paid taxes, appointed jurors, and shared equally in all public burdens and benefits. In this way they all came together to participate in federal politics, and the board and common assemblies of the Boiotians met in the Kadmeia. (*Hellenika from Oxyrhynchos*, 19.3–4, Chambers 1993)

In his description of the league, the Oxyrhynchos historian highlights the idea of separation between the political realms of polis and *koinon*. Each of the Boiotian cities ran their state operations by means of a uniform political organization. Their citizens were eligible to serve on city-councils and hold polis offices. Both qualifications empowered the community of citizens to direct the affairs of their city in accordance to the basic tenets of a genuine polis with its inherent right to self-governance and political independence. All the while, the *koinon* provided the Boiotian city-states with an overarching organization that pooled their resources and governed some aspects of state action. The conduct of foreign policy was naturally the key area of concerted governance, but foreign policy and warfare were complemented by more civic realms of action that gave the *koinon* a distinct state quality. The creation of federal assemblies, courts, and executive officials, the collection of taxes, a

<sup>34</sup> On the political design of a Greek *koinon*, cf. Larsen 1968; Beck 1997; McInerney 2013; Mackil 2013; Beck and Funke 2015a.

federal treasury, and the emission of league coinage all attest to the authority the federal state exercised over its members. The most eminent expression, however, was the crafting of a federal citizenship that united the local citizenries across the region and allowed them to participate in a political organization that extended both the means and scope of a polis community. Glossed with overtones of tribal togetherness and primordial descent, the political arena of the *koinon* provided the inhabitants of Boiotia with a sphere of interaction that marked a political, cultural, and perceptual inside in its own right.

In Boiotia, then, and in other Greek federal states, the traditional inside–outside matrix of a polis community was augmented by a vertically layered federal inside that made the boundaries of the polis more complex. In a *koinon*, the constituent members subscribed to an arrangement that extended this matrix through the creation of an intermediary or hybrid concept of inside that was shared by multiple city-states. While each of those poleis maintained their own inside, their mutual relations were transferred to a new, extended inside, which in itself took on the quality of a state. In consequence, this extended inside also reconfigured the affairs of multiple insides with regard to the outside, i.e. communities that were not considered part of the tribe. In Boiotia, the integration into the *koinon* was eased by the fact that the local communities of the region had streamlined their political organization through the creation of a uniform council system; in fact, the *koinon* copied the local principle of mutually dependent city-councils that acted in close correspondence with each other (Thucydides 5.38.2). In other federal states, the membership was more diverse. At times, league members differed vastly in size, from small settlements to villages and towns and cities with advanced urban infrastructures and large citizen figures; in some *koina*, smaller sub-tribes were considered members of the union.<sup>35</sup> This points to yet another facet of diversity. Unlike the Boiotian League, many federal states consisted of communities that were a lot less coherent in their internal political organization; often, the *koinon* integrated political insides that were structurally different, with different degrees of state advancement and divergent political trajectories. Once again, the unification of such heterogeneous communities was facilitated not only through political skill but through the lively sense of togetherness and, hence, the willingness to unite on the grounds of ethnic belonging, which made the inside quality of the *koinon* so convincing to its members.

<sup>35</sup> For example, in the Aitolian and Arkadian Leagues; cf. the respective regional studies in Larsen 1968 and in Beck and Funke 2015a.

### 5.6. FOREIGN POLICY PITFALLS: WAS THERE TOO MUCH FOREIGN POLICY?

Interstate relations in the Classical Greek world were notoriously unstable. Violence and warfare were omnipresent, and military force was the foremost resolution to intercommunal dispute and conflict, no matter how petty the issue might have been (cf. Meier 1990). In an attempt to unearth the underlying forces of that instability, Jacob Burckhardt in his *Griechische Culturgeschichte* (1898–1902) referred to the so-called agonistic principle (*agonalen Prinzip*) of Greek culture, i.e. the inherent thrust toward competition among the Greeks—individuals, social groups, entire communities—that made the threshold for military action dangerously low. More recent studies complement Burckhardt’s assessment by pointing to a distinct ethos of revenge in ancient Greek culture that made armed conflict a virtually compulsive, if not inevitable pattern of behavior in interstate affairs (Gehrke 1987; cf. Burkert 1994). On the surface, this reference to the self-perpetuated spiral of violent competition and an ethos of revenge appears convincing. Once a citizen community had demarcated its sphere of politics and fully embraced its role as foreign policy agent, the competition with other communities fuelled the forces of interstate rivalry and strife. In the small natural environment of Greece, with an even smaller amount of arable land, natural produce, and treasures of the soil, yet a very high density of communities that competed for those resources, interstate rivalry became even fiercer.

From the analytical perspective of foreign policy as a boundary-drawing practice, the question of accelerated interstate violence is, however, more complicated. First, the foreign action of Greek city-states did in fact entail a wide variety of attempts to structure their mutual relations and organize them in a meaningful way. The rising prominence of a distinct interstate arbitration culture and the quest for a common peace mechanism were but two of these structuring devices. The implicit assumption of these attempts was to protect the autonomy of the polis and safeguard its independence from external threat and domination.<sup>36</sup> Second, and more importantly, in their effort to stabilize the interaction with other poleis, Greek city-states applied a broad spectrum of measures that were geared toward various degrees of political integration. In this sense, the tendency to demarcate—rigidly so—the inside of the polis was counterbalanced by numerous attempts that weakened, remodeled, or, effectively, altered this inside. As indicated earlier, the Greek portfolio of interstate cooperation and integration included a wide range, from military alliances to fully fledged federal states. Between both poles existed a broad array of

<sup>36</sup> The leading account on the architecture and underlying concept of Common Peace initiatives in the fourth century BCE is Jehne 1994; on arbitration: Ager 1996 and 2013.

variants of political integration, including the ties between mother-city and colony,<sup>37</sup> the absorption of smaller poleis into larger ones,<sup>38</sup> the fusion of city-states by means of a *sympoliteia*,<sup>39</sup> as well as networks of amphiktyonic integration (Funke 2013). In all these projects, the inside–outside matrix of participating states was impacted. While recalibrated by some, it was suspended in others, and in yet others it was abandoned altogether.

In light of omnipresent policies of integration, was it really just the ubiquitous ethos of competition and revenge that made peace so difficult? Or was there a more systemic flaw that levied the stable exchange in the foreign field with insurmountable obstacles? It is a truism to note that the different forms of political union referenced here were driven by different motives; once an integration project was initiated, it was again powered by specific expectations and geared toward the individual goals of various participants. Neither the structural motives nor the specific expectations were inevitably mutually exclusive, but they were not necessarily conformative, either. The classic example for such non-conformity again comes from the Athenian alliance. Thucydides' narrative outline of the league's history makes it clear that the expectations of the participant members were at odds with those of the Athenians from the early days of the alliance onwards. Most member-states had joined the alliance for the Persian retreat from Greece in order to pursue the war against the Great King in Asia Minor; the operating assumption behind their participation was the pursuit of a specific goal: the war against Persia. Athens, on the other hand, while recognizing the need for immediate action on the battlefield, envisioned a more inclusive union, the purposes of which went beyond the order of the day.<sup>40</sup>

The chances to resolve grievances peacefully decreased when non-conformity in motive and expectation was complemented by, or cemented in, obligations that were in themselves inconsistent with a polis' underlying premises for the conduct of foreign policy. Thucydides provides a perfect example. The people of Potidaea in northern Greece regarded themselves as colonized by their mother-city Corinth. They had close ties with Corinth,

<sup>37</sup> Graham 1983 continues to be immensely influential on the topic but his views are challenged by more recent case studies. For Corinth and its colonies, Stickler 2010 offers an insightful account.

<sup>38</sup> Cf., for instance, the amalgamation of Mantinea and the small village of Helisson from the fourth century BCE as attested in *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 37.340; cf. Funke 2009: 8–11.

<sup>39</sup> The union of Corinth and Argos from 392 BCE is the best example, cf. Robinson 2009. On the wider phenomenon of *sympoliteia*, mostly as an integration tool in the Hellenistic period, cf. Scholten 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Associated with this is the notorious question over the so-called Peace of Kallias, which was allegedly made between Athens and Persia in 449 BCE. If authentic, it would have stripped the alliance of its immediate purpose once and for all. The historicity of the peace treaty is debated ever since antiquity, cf. Ste. Croix 1972: 310–14 as a good starting point.

which included the reception of annual magistrates and joint festivals. Among the foreign relations the Potidaeans had with various other cities, their relations with Corinth were governed by a particular bond of loyalty. As a Corinthian colony, foreign affairs with the mother-city were situated in an extended intermediary inside rather than a strict outside sphere. At the same time, and in part as a result of the Persian War, Potidaea was a member of the Athenian Empire. In the course of this membership, Athens had gradually altered the traditional inside sphere of the polis of Potidaea and absorbed its capacities to act as an independent agent in foreign policy. Since both the Athenians and the Corinthians demanded that the Potidaeans comply with, and act in accordance to, their respective obligations, this created a set of competing loyalties; as both of these loyalties were justified on the grounds of a policy that impacted the core of Potidaea's inside sphere as citizen community, there was little, if any, room for peaceful reconciliation. Furthermore, while the relations between Potidaea, Corinth, and Athens connected polities that were hundreds of kilometers apart, Potidaea was situated in a geographical environment with its own regional dynamics. Several regional powers, among them Macedon and the Chalcidian federal state, laid their claims on Potidaea. While the Chalcidians were eager to integrate the Potidaeans into their *koinon*, and effectively assimilate its foreign policy, the king of Macedon sought to reduce the city to a tax-paying subordinate. So although the Potidaeans were becoming the focal point of macro-politics and were dragged into the growing hostility between Athens and Corinth, their city was also exposed to the stakes of other regional powers. These closely interconnected but still antithetical obligations made the northern fringes of Greece an extremely complicated terrain of conflicting foreign policy obligations (cf. Thuc. 1.56–65; Ste. Croix 1972: 329 and passim; Beck 2008: 18). On the eve of the Peloponnesian War, many city-states found themselves trapped between mutually exclusive foreign policy expectations and obligations. Since many of those contradictions were rooted in multiple policies of integration (membership in an alliance or a *koinon*, traditional bonds between mother-city and colony, etc.), they were forced to juggle foreign policy obligations that were as such incompatible.

Multiple, and at times changing, foreign policy networks created a tapestry of competing loyalties and conflicting expectations. These conflicts posed a tremendous structural challenge to the Hellenic interstate equilibrium. In their efforts to shape their foreign relations with others, many city-states engaged in the integration projects that tied their polity to those of others. The cooperation with another polis and integration into a federal state impacted the idea of independence and self-governance not only in a strictly political sense, but also with regards to the conceptual understanding of the drawing of boundaries between the inside of the polis and its outside. In a *koinon*, those boundaries were blurred by the creation of an intermediary, hybrid inside. From the perspective of boundary-drawing, the challenge of the politics of

integration was that it created a patchwork of polis-insides that were mostly incongruent and, as the case of Potidaea indicates, incompatible with other forms of construed insides.<sup>41</sup> Despite the insistence on demarcated polis spheres of inside and outside, the practical conduct of foreign policy was thus exposed to the systemic challenge of a much less clear-cut separation of both spheres.

### 5.7. CONCLUSION

The foreign policy environment of ancient Greece took shape toward the end of the Archaic Age. The defining notion in this process was the rise of a demarcated sphere that was reserved for the conduct of politics. Governed by a collective of citizens, the sphere of politics was equivalent to the very inside of the community itself; it formed the center of the polis, and it rigidly separated the polis from its surrounding outside world. The war with Persia marked a deep, powerful moment of transformation for the evolving concept of foreign policy. Prior to the war, polis communities conceived of their foreign action mostly as neighborhood relations; indeed, foreign policy operations that went beyond the realm of regional affairs were conceptualized, in principle, as local conflicts. The experience of war with Persia broadened both the scope and the concept of foreign affairs. First, the concept of interstate action became an increasingly multilateral one that recognized the multiplicity of foreign policy agents near and far. Second, foreign policy became a coherent concept that was governed by clearly defined practices, procedures, and protocols. Participation in these practices was regarded as a distinctly Greek affair; in that sense, the concept was ethnicized, which means it was filled with Hellenic societal and cultural meaning.

Yet ancient Greece had no empire-building capacity. In the aftermath of the Persian War, the Greeks continued to value the idea of self-governance within the demarcated space of the polis. Despite this hardwired assumption, the Greek city-states ventured on all sorts of foreign policy operations that, either implicitly or explicitly, modified the boundaries of demarcated polis-spaces. Federal states, confederacies, the amalgamation of states, dependencies between mother-city and colony: these various forms of interstate integration opened different avenues for foreign behavior; they fueled multiple obligations among their participants; and they put the boundary between the inside of the

<sup>41</sup> Note also that the citizenry hardly ever stood undividedly behind the official foreign policy of its community. Rather, different factions supported different networks and potential allies. In turn, this opened the door to internal turmoil and third party intervention.

polis and its outside under persistent negotiation. Moreover, the boundary-drawing quality of foreign policy as such was jeopardized by these projects of integration, which tended to create antithetical, conflicting insides that made a coherent governance of the polis' outside affairs infinitely more difficult. The general instability of Greek interstate affairs was thus once again increased by an overabundance of integration policies, which left the polis with too many inconsistencies and conflicting conceptualizations. Unlike the states of the foreign policy "conveyor belt" in central Asia, unlike the Roman Empire, and probably unlike any other foreign policy environment in the pre-modern era, the Greek polis managed to absorb its outside relations into its very inside, the community of citizens. The actual conduct of foreign policy, however, made the differentiation between both spheres infinitely more complicated and left its agents with much greater *aporiae* than is commonly assumed.

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