

## BOOK REVIEW

*Greek Federal Terminology*. By JACEK RZEPKA. Akanthina 12. Gdańsk, PL: Foundation for the Development of University of Gdańsk, 2017. Pp. 110. Paperback, 40 PLN. ISBN 978-83-7531-237-9.

This book counts fewer than eighty content pages, but it packs close analysis of an array of primary sources between its covers. Since it jumps directly into its topic, the volume best serves a relatively specialized audience. Those already well-versed in the evidence and scholarship surrounding ancient Greek federal states will find this volume to be an intellectual feast.

The book's main contention is that the ancient Greeks developed consistent ways of talking about what we today call federalism. In this regard, Rzepka builds on recent work to excavate a theory of federalism in ancient Greek sources. His exemplary contribution to this aim is to plumb the epigraphic record. In addition to analyzing the usual writings of Xenophon and Polybius, among others, he covers a dizzying number of contemporary inscriptions, from inter-state treaties to honorary decrees.

A major strength of the book is its attention to regional variation. Scholarship about Greek federalism often divides into regional silos, because of the depth of knowledge necessary to master any given region. Undaunted, Rzepka takes a relatively global approach to the Greek mainland. Following the evidence, he most commonly touches on and compares the federal language of the Achaeans and of the Aetolians, and to a lesser extent that of the Boeotians. However, his analysis also weaves in the vocabularies of federal states less consistently visible in the historical record.

The organization of the book brings out comparison. Instead of organizing around individual federal states, it proceeds thematically. Most chapters focus on a specific Greek term or set of terms. Chapter 1 captures the fuzziness of the term τὸ κοινόν, which Rzepka argues often indicates the federal state government or more specifically its assembly (versus a less institutional understanding of community). Chapter 2 explores the term συνέδριον and its use for council-based government on a supra-civic level. Chapter 4 investigates the relative frequency of words with a συν- prefix in Polybius and later documents, before Chapter 5

more specifically looks at the use of the terms *συμπολιτεία* and *συντέλεια*, alongside *ἰσοπολιτεία*. The analysis largely complicates the terms and avoids summary definitions of them. Although the terms' uses often resist simple definition, the addition of a glossary to the book could have offered an interesting intellectual exercise and helpful guide for readers, especially those less familiar with Greek federal terminology. Regardless, these chapters accomplish their mission: they paint the development of a federal consciousness within and among Greek federal states.

Meanwhile, the remaining chapters look at this language in practice. Chapter 3 accounts for this shared consciousness by contending that federal states influenced each other relatively directly. It does not delve very deeply, however, into what mechanisms helped facilitate and account for knowledge sharing and the adoption of successful elements between federal states. Chapter 6 considers the use of shared federal language in treaties of association, and Chapter 7 looks at how individuals who belonged to federal states stylized themselves when they were away from home. The latter argues that the ethnics (e.g., civic and/or tribal) that individuals used abroad often depended on how far away from home they were. Much as, when asked "where you from?," Americans traveling a few hours away from home might give their hometown, but they might respond with their state or the biggest nearby city, when traveling in other countries.

The chapters focus almost exclusively on the *koinon* and related terminology of a particular scale: the institutions associated with *ethne*, such as those of the Achaeans and Boeotians. Of course, however, the Greek terms studied were also applied to institutions of smaller and larger scale. The term *koinon* can apply to a grouping of artisans, and it can apply to broader associations such as the so-called Pylaeo-Delphic Amphictyony. This latter scale of the *koinon* is touched on only briefly in the volume. Yet, in order to understand fully what τὸ κοινὸν and associated terms meant to ancient Greeks, arguably we need to understand more fully what they meant across scales, even if some levels seem less "federal" to us. In this regard, I expect that this book will laudably set the groundwork for future studies.

Additionally, with its focus on the Greek mainland in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods, the book invites further comparison with other periods and regions (e.g., southern Italian mainland, the Aegean islands, Lycia). For instance, the short epilogue only briefly touches on the Roman imperial period, primarily through the writings of Pausanias. As someone who works on the epigraphic record of the imperial Greek mainland, I see more continuity in federal language

between the Hellenistic and Roman imperial periods than Rzepka allows for in this concise epilogue. I would like to highlight, however, that this sort of conclusion has been made much more possible with the arrival of this short but significant book.

Therefore, those of us interested in Greek federal terminology owe a great debt to Rzepka: he has taken up the complicated and disparate evidence for Greek federal terms in their heyday and offered a rich and nuanced study of them.

Note from the press: The volume can be purchased through the Foundation's website at <https://frug.ug.edu.pl/en/the-foundation/>.

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