

The present study argues that the regional concerns of the Elean symmarchy were typical of Peloponnesian League members during the fifth century, and that the preservation of the Elean league was a defining aspect of Peloponnesian politics. After the inception of Sparta's Peloponnesian League in 506 B.C., members of this League developed their own alliances that co-existed with the League, despite growing Spartan supremacy in the Peloponnesos. The development of these regional alliances was possible because the rules that governed the Peloponnesian League were most often created on an ad hoc basis (Kagan 1969, 21) and because the initial arrangement between city-states and Sparta was reciprocal. Hence, membership in the Peloponnesian League did not restrict city-states from expanding and developing regional alliances or symmachies. But the proliferation of these alliances eventually prompted Sparta to dissolve them and ultimately deprive the hegemon of their dependent allies.

The Copenhagen Polis Centre has surveyed the archaic and classical communities of Greece in an effort to refine the definition of a Greek *polis* (see Hansen, *CPCPapers*, 2004, 131-132). In particular, Thomas H. Nielsen has examined the communities of Arkadia and has defined the various degrees of dependency within Arkadia. His study has shown that Arkadian communities were attached to larger leagues, such as the Peloponnesian League, through regional hegemonic leagues such as the Mantinean and Tegean leagues (Nielsen, *CPCPapers*, 1996, 63-77). In the western Peloponnesos, the Eleans also controlled various dependent communities from the city of Elis and Olympia (Roy, *CPCActs*, 1997, 282-319; Roy, *CPCPapers*, 2002, 257). Just as the competition for the control of territory and smaller communities was a factor in the development of the Arkadian leagues, (Forsen, *CPCPapers*, 2000, 52-54), so too was the control over dependent communities a concern for the Elean symmarchy. The present paper will argue that the Elean preoccupation with the preservation and growth of the Elean league was similar to that of the southern Arkadians and that in the Peloponnesos, regional concerns of the smaller symmachies were major components of fifth-century Peloponnesian politics. Caroline Falkner's observation that the quarrel between Elis and Sparta over Lepreon "was a turning point in Elean-Spartan relations" (Falkner, *Historia*, 1999, 387) is certainly correct. But more importantly, the issue was not merely the control of Lepreon, but Elis' concern for the protection of its regional symmarchy.

The Elean League is a precise example of a regional symmarchy that co-existed with the Peloponnesian League. Inscriptional evidence from Olympia (Siewert, in *Federazioni e federalismo*, 1994, 257-264) and a sixth-century alliance between Elis and an Elean community support the existence of an Elean symmarchy prior to the Persian Wars (*IvO 9*; Roy and Schofield, *Horos*, 1999). This alliance was eventually dissolved by Sparta c. 400 after Elis had defected from the Peloponnesian League (Xen. *Hell.* 3.221-31). Although the mechanics of the Elean League remain obscure, it is certain that Elis was concerned with the preservation and extension of its own symmarchy against Sparta and its abrasive Peloponnesian policy.