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Philia and Constructing Interstate Alliances in Xenophon

Xenophon's various writings document a large number of alliances between *poleis* in the geopolitically-chaotic decades after the Peloponnesian War. The examples centralize around the Spartan kings of both royal lines, and their relationships with and foreign policies towards other Greeks and non-Greeks. While each collaborative enterprise recorded in Xenophon had its own unique expression, the majority was based upon the social relationship of φιλία and was articulated in such terminology. The relationship of φιλία encompassed both affection as well as reciprocal duties, in particular that encapsulated in the phrase "harming enemies and benefitting enemies." The examples reviewed in this paper demonstrate that this was more than an empty phrase and was a guiding principle for Spartan kings, in particular Agesilaus, towards enemies, rivals, and friends.

Modern scholarship of Classical Greek history, even those works with an anthropological inclination, has generally neglected the combination of φιλία and the construction of interstate alliances because it is heavily influenced by the putative realism of Thucydides, such as the Melian Dialogue. By transferring the focus to the historical record of Xenophon, this paper argues that cooperative activities of Greek *poleis* were not exclusively based on material concerns but also ideational interests, especially φιλία. Applying the theoretical international relations model of Constructivism, this paper reexamines the interstate alliances in fourth-century Greece with specific attention to the geopolitical role of φιλία. It concludes that in the fourth century cooperation was just as important as conflict, and that conventional social norms, in particular the role of φιλία, influenced and constructed the interstate alliances among Greek *poleis* themselves, as well as between Greek and non-Greek.