



The Folds of Parnassos: Land and Ethnicity in Ancient Phokis

Jeremy McNerney

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Independent city-states (*poleis*) such as Athens have been viewed traditionally as the most advanced stage of state formation in ancient Greece. By contrast, this pioneering book argues that for some Greeks the *ethnos*, a regionally based ethnic group, and the *koinon*, or regional confederation, were equally valid units of social and political life and that these ethnic identities were astonishingly durable.

Jeremy McInerney sets his study in Phokis, a region in central Greece dominated by Mount Parnassos that shared a border with the panhellenic sanctuary at Delphi. He explores how ecological conditions, land use, and external factors such as invasion contributed to the formation of a Phokian territory. Then, drawing on numerous interdisciplinary sources, he traces the history of the region from the Archaic age down to the Roman period. McInerney shows how shared myths, hero cults, and military alliances created an ethnic identity that held the region together over centuries, despite repeated invasions. He concludes that the Phokian *koinon* survived because it was founded ultimately on the tenacity of the smaller communities of Greece.

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