
Positiv herauszuheben sind die systematischen Untersuchungen zu den christlichen Lehrern im spätantiken lateinischen Schulbetrieb (350–394). Wenn hier auch oft auf die ‘kritischen Aussteiger’ aus dem Bildungsbetrieb Augustinus und Hieronymus rekurriert werden muß, so wird doch deutlich, wie sehr die Tätigkeit von Christen in diesem Bereich Normalität war.

Insgesamt stellt die Arbeit deutlich und klar nachvollziehbar das Faktum dar, daß im Laufe des 4. Jh. und in der gesamten lateinischen Spätantike die rhetorische Bildung und Praxis sowie deren Bewertung wesentlich situationsbezogen und daher stark wandelbar waren.

Der Rezensent bedauert, daß die Untersuchung im großen und ganzen vor dem Werk des Papstes Gregor I. endet. Gerade das riesige Œuvre dieses lateinisch-christlichen Schriftstellers, das sich in sehr verschiedenen Gattungen und Sprachstilen darbietet und gut untersucht ist, hätte die Gelegenheit geboten, die Ergebnisse der Untersuchung am Beispiel eines ‘gebildeten’ Autors am Ende der Spätantike insgesamt zu verifizieren.


Jena

Christof Rudolf Kraus

---


Inevitably, modern studies of ancient interstate relations are to a large degree shaped by contemporary assumptions about the nature of the international system, the parameters of foreign policy, and discourses of morality and power. While this may sound like a truism, it is a notable fact that such assumptions have hardly ever been the object of debate in the works of ancient historians. L. courageously addresses these big questions in an innovative and stimulating, if not unproblematic, study of interstate politics in the Greek world of the fifth and fourth centuries BC. The book is all the more welcome as it may serve as a counterweight to a recent monograph by Arthur Eckstein, who also seeks to apply international relations (IR) theory to classical antiquity but effectively fails to look beyond the school of Realism with its focus on power and security.¹

Unlike Eckstein, L. is highly sensitive not only to hierarchies and the use of force but also to the significance of customs and conventions, of norms and ideas, and of interstate ethics and morality. Her lucid introduction starts by rejecting

the common view of Greek diplomacy as unsophisticated and ineffective, which may to a large extent be due to the concentration of past research on individual authors, most notably Thucydides, or on specific aspects, such as treaties and reciprocity. Seeking to overcome these limitations, L. makes out a strong case for considering a broader set of questions concerning the nature of interstate society, and for taking advantage of the tools and models used by political scientists.

Following this general introduction, chapter 1 on IR and ancient history is designed to lay the groundwork for the rest of the enquiry by outlining a number of concepts and paradigms of a field quite unfamiliar to the majority of classicists. Unfortunately, this is one of the more disappointing parts of the book. Above all, L. makes the infelicitous decision to structure the discussion around the history of IR as a discipline rather than around the actual tenets of its principal schools and approaches. Admittedly, this has the advantage of showing that the existing models did not develop in a historical vacuum, yet it not only leaves the reader without a clear idea of the claims made by the various theories but also serves to privilege the most ancient traditions of Realism and Idealism. While much ink is spilt tracing the academic career of the relatively minor figure of Sir Alfred Zimmern, several important schools like Institutionalism (cf. p. 23 on varieties of Idealism) and Constructivism (cf. p. 27, n. 85 on links with the so-called ‘English school’) hardly figure at all in this chapter. The virtual absence of Constructivism is particularly odd, given that the book as a whole – rightly in my view – puts a lot of emphasis on cultural, normative, and ideological factors.

To be fair, it ought to be noted that L. also makes a number of perceptive and insightful observations, for instance on the permeability of the boundaries between Realism and Idealism (pp. 22f), on the concept of international society as developed by the ‘English school’ (pp. 27f), or on the misleading notion of a dichotomy between morality and power (pp. 29f). At the same time, however, she has very little or nothing to say about crucial problems like interdependence, perceptions and misperceptions, or the interconnexion between international and domestic politics (p. 16, n. 36: the separation between the two fields ‘has been increasingly challenged’). Granted, it is neither possible nor necessary to give an exhaustive survey of IR theory in a book on interstate relations in classical Greece, yet L.’s poorly structured discussion leaves out too many essentials to deserve recommendation as introductory reading. Inevitably, these shortcomings also serve to narrow the perspective of the study as a whole, though it turns out that this is much less serious than might be expected.

Taking up the concept of international society, chapter 2 sets out to make sense of the complex world of bilateral relationships and multilateral networks in fifth- and fourth-century Greece. Looking at a broad range of issues like friendship, vengeance, grants of citizenship, kinship, and goodwill, L. convincingly argues that reciprocal interactions should be seen ‘as reflections of a more structured, formalised – even societal – approach to the construction of connections and relations between states’ (p. 43). Having stressed the centrality of bilateral ties, she goes on to suggest that multilateral frameworks formed around political ideology, ethnicity, and Panhellenic discourse may be no less relevant.

At the same time, L. is fully aware that all of these connexions are subject to construction and manipulation, and rightly underlines their implications in terms of power. Thus, she points out that communities have a potential to exclude as well as to include and are often characterised by hierarchy rather than equality. Considering the importance of these insights, it is difficult to understand why the chapter’s conclusions are essentially confined
to an apology for not according pre-eminence to either bilateral or multilateral structures. This would certainly be misleading. Still, more could have been done than to submit the view that the two spheres are inseparable and that the respective elements «can overlap, confirm, or contradict each other» (p. 68). Rather than elaborating on this, L. presents three snapshots, all of which serve to bring out the instrumental character of appeals to reciprocity and community (pp. 69–76).

Aspects of power and the idea of construction also figure prominently in the next chapter on the much-neglected field of Greek international law. Seeking to avoid using the categories developed by modern international lawyers, L. prefers to approach the subject by examining the specific context of social and legal institutions in ancient Greece. In particular, she adds a number of epigraphic documents relating to both domestic and foreign affairs in order to demonstrate the considerable overlap between internal and international law. Calling attention to the wide spectrum of meanings of the term nomos, she further underlines the close relationship between law and custom as well as the need to understand them as constructs, concluding that «the rules and obligations of international law can be found, precisely, in the habits and the will, the hearts and minds of society» (p. 102).

Following her treatment of the sources and scope of Greek international law, L. goes on to address questions of application and enforcement by looking at a broad range of procedures and practices, such as arbitration, military sanctions, and oaths. While acknowledging the relation of these features to issues of power and hierarchy, her balanced discussion is no less sensitive to societal and ethical aspects, suggesting that all of the aforementioned institutions serve to encourage adherence to the norms of interstate behaviour, and to punish transgressions (p. 126). Considering the frequent occurrence of breaches, L.’s insistence on the centrality of consensus may seem somewhat exaggerated, yet she is undoubtedly right to point out that «[t]he international rules, customs and laws of the Greek world are always subject to creation, recreation and reinterpretation» (p. 127).

Chapter 4 takes a closer look at the often indistinct boundary between domestic and foreign affairs, trying to establish the extent to which the Greeks viewed the two spheres as structurally analogous. Much of this enquiry consists of a lexical analysis of the language of praise and blame in both epigraphic and literary sources that relate to internal as well as to external contexts. Thus, L. demonstrates that there is not only considerable linguistic overlap but also a widespread tendency to shift between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. At the same time, she finds hardly any evidence for the contrary view of a strict separation between the domestic and external worlds. Given the abstract nature of the distinction and the lack of theorising about interstate relations in ancient Greece, this result may not come as a great surprise, though.

Instead of closing this somewhat artificial debate, L. goes on to embark on a major digression on the tension between to dikaios and to sympherai – an interesting topic, to be sure, but hardly a pertinent one (p. 165): «the issue becomes, strictly speaking, irrelevant to the subject of this chapter»). What is more, the whole discussion about the analogy between internal and external affairs appears to bypass the more difficult – and, arguably, more interesting – question of the actual interconnexions between the two spheres, i.e. the impact of domestic politics on the interstate world (the so-called ‘second image’) and vice versa (the ‘second image reversed’). Notwithstanding, L. makes an important point when she concludes by highlighting «the shaping and reshaping of the boundaries of the many, often intersecting, ‘communities’ which participate in the Greek interstate system» (p. 174).

The following chapter on intervention is in many ways the most problematic part of the book, not least due to the fact that its connexion with the present is especially apparent (p. 177: the choice of focus is «prompted by debates which are prominent in contemporary interstate relations»). Despite, or perhaps rather because of, the suggestive force of the modern analogy, L. seeks to emphasise differences rather than continuities between the ancient and contemporary worlds, though this hardly makes her argument less loaded with political implications. Thus, she undertakes to contrast a UN declaration on the principle
of non-intervention with the ideal of ‘helping the wronged’, which she suggests should be viewed as a «norm of intervention», or of «counter-intervention», in classical Greece (p. 186).

This appears to be quite misleading. Firstly, L. depicts the positive representation of ‘helping the wronged’ as essentially unproblematic, without even asking what the supposed wrongdoers might have thought of the slogan.\footnote{Only in a footnote (p. 178, n. 7) does she concede «that many, if not all, of the examples referred to in this section are also open to less idealistic interpretation». Indeed they are.} One-sided reading of the evidence is all the more puzzling as she is perfectly aware of the fact that the sources almost invariably reflect the point of view of the intervening party (p. 199). By contrast, her detailed discussion of the concept of autonomia heavily – and rightly – stresses the potential ambiguity and frequent manipulation of the term. Secondly, it is staggering to see how little attention L. devotes to the complexities surrounding the issues of intervention and imperialism in the 20th and 21st centuries. Apart from failing to deal with contemporary practice (which is often quite different from the norm of non-intervention), she completely ignores current debates about pre-emptive and preventive action – as if the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the ‘war on terrorism’ had never occurred (p. 176, n. 2 briefly refers to Cambodia, Somalia, and Yugoslavia).

Only at the end of the chapter does L. consider the question of ‘empire’ and objections to intervention, suggesting that, in this respect, there may after all be «a substantial similarity between ancient and modern» (p. 202). At this point, she also appears to realise that there might be something wrong with the preceding parts of the discussion; for she perceptively observes that «the behaviour involved may seem objectively extremely similar to that which came under the heading of ‘helping the wronged’... It might, therefore, seem legitimate to suspect that the difference lies solely in the perspective from which such actions are seen» (pp. 203/05). While this is true enough, it also makes it exceedingly difficult to determine what L. actually wants to say in this chapter. To judge from her concluding remarks, it may appear that she wishes to attach more weight to the less idealistic assessment: «interventions both represent and sustain positions of power», not least on account of their «openness to perpetual redefinition and recharacterisation» (pp. 210f).

In the final chapter, L. addresses the problem of change, which is evidently difficult to accommodate in a study that postulates a fairly stable set of rules and norms for the whole period from 479 to 322 BC. In particular, she seeks to establish the scope of the transformations brought about by the rise and fall of the Athenian Empire. Thus, she is at last forced to confront the evidence of Thucydides, which is largely sidelined in the preceding chapters. From a methodological point of view, this may not be entirely satisfactory since L. is obviously not prepared to make more than limited adjustments to her main line of interpretation at this stage. However, she is probably right to contend that a single author should not be allowed to dominate the overall picture to the extent Thucydides has tended to do in past scholarship.

Suggesting that the historian of the Peloponnesian War pursues a «tactic of marginalising normative explanations» (p. 232), L. convincingly argues that it would be wrong to dismiss these aspects as entirely irrelevant to fifth-century interstate relations. As for the Athenian Empire, she submits the view that its uniqueness is essentially a matter of ethics, calling attention to the profound implications of the tribute and to the unidirectional nature of the evidence of reciprocal exchange between Athens and the individual members of the Delian League. In the last analysis, this imbalance is interpreted as reflecting a massive disparity in the distribution of power between the poleis of the Greek world (pp. 248/59). While the importance thus attached to the polarity of the interstate system sits rather uncomfortably with L.’s emphasis on normative and cultural factors, this explanation nevertheless enables her to maintain her principal frame of analysis with its focus on both morality and power.
These two categories and «the mutual and inextricable connection» (p. 254) between them are again stressed in the rather brief conclusion, which serves to reaffirm the significance of an overall framework of customs, rules, and norms. Beyond this, L. insists on the fundamental difference of ancient interstate relations from the world(s) of modern IR theorists, highlighting the great variety of actors and the absence of a strict division between domestic and external affairs in classical Greece (pp. 256f). However, this verdict seems to overlook that such features are of central concern to IR, too – not to traditional Realism, to be sure, but to a number of other approaches that focus on 'two-level games' or on the rôle of non-state actors and international regimes.¹

In some respects, L.’s failure to acknowledge these trends is characteristic of the book as a whole; for despite the attention devoted to IR theory in chapter 1, the engagement with its concepts and paradigms is actually quite limited and somewhat inconclusive throughout the rest of the enquiry. As the important question of the study’s implications for the field of IR is not even raised, there is little doubt that Realists, Institutionalists, and Constructivists alike will interpret L.’s findings as confirming their respective assumptions. However, ancient historians, too, may not find it easy to come to grips with her habit of stressing the relevance of a wide range of factors that are described as being inseparable or overlapping.

While the present review has been more concerned with the book’s shortcomings than with its merits, this should not obscure the fact that L.’s study is ground-breaking in that it addresses plenty of important and complicated questions that classicists have hitherto neglected or ignored. What is more, the enquiry avoids offering facile explanations, and unfailingly demonstrates great sensitivity to norms, ideas, and representations without losing sight of the pervasive impact of power and hierarchy. At the same time, L. shows excellent knowledge and judgement in selecting relevant material from a wealth of literary as well as epigraphic sources.

Notwithstanding the extent of the ground already covered, future research should strive further to expand the scope of analysis. Thus, it may be worth exploring the value of archaeological material, which L. has consciously and understandably left out of the picture (cf. pp. 3f on the limitations of her approach), with a view to broadening the perspective beyond Athens. Apart from this, economic factors and the outer environment of the Greek world would appear to deserve more attention. Perhaps most importantly, though, there should be more input from various branches of political science, most notably with regard to the interrelationship between domestic structures, decision-making processes, and political culture on the one hand and interstate affairs on the other.

Given the innovative and challenging character of L.’s book, it is quite natural that more questions are raised than answered. After all, many of the complex problems concerning the interplay of morality and power are bound to remain matters of controversy as long as the study of the human condition continues.

Regardless of these difficulties, L.’s enquiry will hopefully mark the beginning rather than the end of a productive debate between ancient historians and specialists of IR in the modern and post-modern worlds.

Coimbra

Manuel Tröster


Kapitel 1 behandelt die täglichen Aufgaben der Vestalinnen im Bezirk der Vesta. Dabei geht es W. in erster Linie darum, die in der älteren Literatur anzutreffende Interpretation der Handlungen der Priesterinnen im Rahmen des Atrium Vestae als ‘häusliche Tätigkeit’ zu widerlegen und aufzuzeigen, daß den Vestalinnen vielmehr eine Doppelerle als Handlungsträgerinnen in Reinigungsriten einerseits und als Hüterinnen des ‘symbolic storerooms’ (18) von Rom andererseits zukam. Kapitel 2 ergänzt die vorangehenden Untersuchungen um die Rolle der Vestalinnen in öffentlichen Prozessionen und Festen. W. interpretiert die Handlungen der Priesterinnen im Zusammenhang mit Wasser und ihre Aufgaben


https://doi.org/10.17104/0017-1417_2009_3_228


Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.