volume is significant as it puts the act of reading Herodotus in the spotlight.

Eran Almagor The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Polly Low, *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece. Morality and Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 313 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-87206-5.

This book, which owes its origin to a Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, employs theoretical approaches from the field of International Relations (hereafter IR) to challenge the widely held view that Greek interstate relations and diplomatic practices were excessively unrestrained, anarchic and violent, and that the contemporary theories of interstate behavior were correspondingly under-developed and unsophisticated. Polly Low (hereafter L.) contends that, quite to the contrary, during the period under examination (roughly 479-322 B.C.), a developed normative framework did exist, which shaped the conduct and representation of interstate relations and was underpinned by complex thinking. She concedes, however, that this thinking did not amount to the sort of highly developed IR theories that exist in modern times.

L. starts her presentation with a survey of the dilemmas and debates that accompanied the formation of IR as an academic discipline in modern times. In the wake of World War I, the so-called "idealists" believed that a liberal state of mind could supersede pure military power in the conduct of interstate relations and serve as a basis for a stable world order. The conspicuous failure of the brainchild of this conception, the League of Nations, seemed however to vindicate the claim of their rival "realists", who held that moral considerations were and should be irrelevant to the study of relations between states, as these are, and were, dominated by nothing but naked force. Ancient history intersected with IR right from the beginning, not the least thanks to the enthusiasm of Sir Alfred Zimmern (author of 'The Greek Commonwealth'). Zimmern freely drew analogies between the British and Athenian empires, and recommended the application of ancient history, in particular Thucydides, to the study of IR. Following World War II, a whole series of further "debates" ensued, without however producing a theory that could save the discipline from the humiliation of failing to prognosticate the collapse of the communist regimes in the late 1980s. For the latter part of the twentieth century, neo-realism dominated the scene. In the U.S., in particular, human nature was viewed as uncompromisingly egotistical and inclined to immorality. In the absence of an overall sovereign power able to curb excesses, international relations were thought to be more or less synonymous with 'spying, deceit, bribery, disloyalty, ingratitude, betrayal, exploitation, plunder, repression, subjection, and genocide' (25). British scholars, however, identified the operation of another force, the dim perception of common interests and practices by the actors involved in the game. They argued that the alleged anarchy that prevails in relations between states might be caused not so much by selfishness and brutality as by the relativity of these actors' moral judgments.

Shifting focus to ancient Greece, L. shows that an international society of states did exist. It is evinced in our sources above all by a network of reciprocal relationships which manifested themselves in the form of *philia* ('friendship') or *sungeneia* ('kinship') between states, and in grants of citizenship by one state to the citizens of another. All these relationships operated in interpersonal, domestic political, as well as external, contexts, and were often supported by *eunoia* ('goodwill') and *homonoia* ('fellow-thinking'). For the formation of multilateral groupings of states, further principles were often brought into play, such as ideology (e.g., the division of Greek states into democrats who favored Athens and oligarchs who favored Sparta during the Peloponnesian War), ethnicity (e.g., the case of the ethnically based leagues and federations) and Panhellenism (which urged the Greeks to see Greece as a "shared homeland" or "one polis"). The problem of the often-shifting boundaries of this society of states (e.g. 'of where Greece stops and

the barbarians begin', 62) introduces the need for a further distinction, of egalitarian and hierarchical (i.e. those headed by a leader) state systems. The principles outlined above are illustrated by three case studies.

Next L. moves on to Greek international law, a subject notable for its neglect by ancient historians. This was largely due to a fixation on modern international law, which misled scholars into judging Greek international law by its standards. L. claims that even though there was no "code" of, or theoretical or philosophical work on, Greek international law, such laws — οἱ Ἑλλήνων νόμοι — clearly existed and introduced some order to the regulation of international affairs. Presumably resulting from the extension of domestic law to the international sphere, these laws took the form of agreements across leagues and groups of allies, the rules of Amphictyonic Leagues, truces and religious regulations. Most of the evidence bearing on them is epigraphic and comes from Athens, where interstate agreements were often formally identical to domestic *nomoi*. Of course, there were also "customs" (νόμιμα), and "unwritten laws", whose rules and obligations were not sanctioned by positive law but were seated in 'the habit and the will, the hearts and minds of a society' (102). An interesting section on the application of these laws, and the imposition of sanctions (for instance, through arbitration, curses, fines, hostage-taking and military action), illustrates their relative effectiveness. The fact that these sanctions did not always involve physical force helps reinforce the conclusion that these actions were, indeed, constrained to an extent by *nomoi*, and prevented the Greek society of states from sliding into anarchy.

This brings L. to the puzzle, outlined in Chapter 1, of whether or not interstate behavior was affected by the kind of moral considerations that regulated intrastate behavior. A study of the extent to which the same items of vocabulary designating blame and praise (e.g. ἀγαθός, προθυμία, αἰσχρός) were found in both domestic and external contexts suggests that the divide between individuals and states was not great; the standards of behavior expected in both spheres were pretty much the same. The analysis of larger patterns of interstate morality and their connection to morality within the polis, and of passages in which clashes are described between power, self-interest and justice in both spheres, points in the same direction: the absence of any firm distinction between the morals of domestic life and those which applied beyond the polis. In the present reviewer's view, this point is somewhat overstated, and does not make sufficient allowance for the sentiments and emotions signified by the moral vocabulary in question. Those sentiments and emotions had to have been far more intense in the dynamic, interactive relationships between the living inhabitants of the same state than between the abstract, legal entities of two or more states. The metaphorical transfer of interpersonal moral terms to interstate relationships is more a matter of form than substance. (L. makes a fleeting reference to this problem on p. 174.)

This takes us to the widespread practice of intervention by one state into the affairs of another. Seeking to identify the intersecting norms by which this intervention was governed, L. makes three points: that there existed norms of intervention in classical Greece, regularly couched in moral terms, the commonest being βοηθεῖν τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις (to help the wronged); that, although intervention clashed with the ideal of state-*autonomia*, there was no difficulty justifying it in practice due to the extreme fluidity of that term; and finally, that, in view of that fluidity, and the moral norms with which acts of intervention could be justified, intervention could become a convenient stepping-stone to empire building. This is a fascinating analysis, which brings together fields that were previously considered disparate.

The final chapter of the book is an attempt to answer the charge that, whereas diachronic progression, or regression, in the conduct of interstate relations is an integral part of Greek interstate politics, the discipline of IR is ill-equipped to cope with change: it presumes, by and large, a static international world. The conclusion that emerges from this way of putting things might seem paradoxical: despite historical change, the system of international relations remained essentially stable; there existed, as we might now put it, an IR template that did not change

significantly throughout the whole of the classical period. This fact is illustrated by examples, such as the Athenian inscription honoring the Eteocarpathians (now *IG*^{3} 1454), which in terms of the system of international relations envisaged can be fitted equally well into the imperial context of the fifth century and the non-imperial one of the fourth, as well as the history of Thucydides, whose descriptions of the practicalities of international relations do not differ dramatically from the activities of later periods. There might be a flow of events, but the underlying structure remains the same. This claim must, of course, face the objection that the Athenian empire, with its unique use of tribute, does resemble a shifting pattern. L. resolves this difficulty by conceding that the system of IR was, after all, flexible at times: 'some of the norms of interstate interaction might be pushed to the margins in this period, but they return to the centre with remarkable speed' (251).

L. has successfully demonstrated her thesis, but much more important — she has created in this book a framework for the analysis of Greek interstate affairs which future students of Greek IR should adopt. One might of course disagree with some of her methodological premises and conclusions. The present reviewer would have been much happier if the stability of the Greek state system had been illustrated by concrete counter-examples of essentially unstable systems, or if the highly abstract, almost mechanical terms in which the basic features of IR were here presented would have been related to that historical school which views the issue of personality as important (arguably, the development of the Athenian empire would have followed a different course were it not for the political genius of Themistocles, the charisma of Pericles, and the communal spirit of the Athenian demos). But this is the sort of criticism that could be directed against any original piece. L. has written a truly groundbreaking book, for which we should be grateful.

Gabriel Herman The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Kostas Vlassopoulos, *Unthinking the Greek Polis. Ancient Greek History beyond Eurocentrism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xiv + 288 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-87744-2.

Vlassopoulos's (henceforth V.) ambitious book advocates a change of paradigm in the study of ancient Greek history. Drawing his inspiration from the school of the *Annales* and the rapidly developing fields of world-system history, global and world histories, and regional studies, V. calls for studying the ancient Greek world in general, and the Greek polis in particular, in their wider Mediterranean, Near Eastern and global contexts. Unfortunately, even though V.'s thesis deserves full attention, the present book only provides a preliminary starting point, since its discussion remains general and its theoretical premises are questionable.

As the introduction advertises (1-10), the book tackles two issues which V. presents as interrelated. On the one hand, V. challenges the view that the *polis* should be the sole framework of analysis for the political, social and economic history of the ancient Greek world, as has been the case in modern studies since the nineteenth century. On the other hand, he challenges the modern Western meta-narrative which has turned Greek history into one stage — the first — of European history. This combined heritage has been responsible for the misleading equation of the ancient Greek world with the nation-state. Not only has Greek history been taken out of its wider Mediterranean context, but the study of the Greek world has been geographically reduced to the Peloponnese, the Southern Balkans and the Aegean islands. Restoring ancient Greek history to its wider regional context requires, in V.'s view, deconstructing the primacy of the *polis*. He does this in two ways: first, by insisting that the alternative forms of polities, the *ethnos* and the *koinon*, are to be studied together with the *polis*, and secondly, by deconstructing the polarities that oppose citizens and non-citizens within the *polis*. Part I (Chapters 1-3) of the book is dedicated to the deconstruction of the basic premises of the historiographical views that are challenged. Part II