

《 Review 》

Astrid Dössel, *Die Beilegung innerstaatlicher Konflikte in den griechischen Poleis vom 5.-3. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*

(Peter Lang Verlag: Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe III: Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften Vol. 954 Frankfurt/M.-Berlin-Bern-Bruxelles-New York-Oxford-Wien 2003, Pp.311)

Werner Riess

This book is the printed version of a PhD dissertation submitted at the University of Hamburg in 2002 by Astrid Dössel (D.). It was written under the supervision of the late ancient historian and Greek epigrapher Peter Herrmann.

In full awareness that the Greek world is more than just Athens, D. undertakes an ambitious project. Building upon H.-J. Gehrke's book on *stasis*, published in Munich in 1985, which gave an overview of internal strife in Greek cities, D. is interested in the way Greek communities tried to overcome inner-urban conflicts. *Staseis* were a frequent phenomenon in Greek *poleis* of classic and Hellenistic times, and one wonders why so few scholars have tried to come to grips with the plentiful, intriguing, but also complex material about these tensions. Based on case studies taken from all over the Greek world and ranging from the 5th century to the 3rd century BC, D. examines the preconditions, mechanisms and the chances of success the *poleis'* endeavors had to settle conflicts peacefully. Although the book is mainly based on inscriptions, at the same time, D. takes into full consideration both the literary evidence as well as the results of modern conflict research. In doing so the author has given us an important contribution to the history of conflicts and conflict resolution.

The book falls into 13 chapters, i.e. an introduction, 11 case studies covering a wide geographical and thematical range, and a conclusion.

After setting out the theoretical framework in the introduction, the first chapter deals with two inscriptions, i.e. curse and oath formulas from Teos dating to the beginning of the 5th century. All inscriptions throughout the book are presented with a full Greek text and translation. D. draws from the sometimes extensive secondary literature on each inscription and bases her translations on current editions and previous comments and interpretations. At the beginning of the 5th

century some individuals obviously damaged the community of Teos to such a degree that they engendered conflicts within the city. In the first inscription examined the inhabitants of Teos are seen having collected older curses of different periods in order to deter wrongdoers from harming the constitution. In the second, later inscription, curse formulas were written down again, but now pledges for the future were also included, pledges that should be read aloud every year and bind all citizens to a behavior in compliance with the current rules and constitution of Teos. This change from curse to pledge neatly demonstrates a marked shift in mentality that D. does not fail to notice. Citizens began to regard themselves as individuals bearing a certain responsibility towards their hometown. The well-being of a city did not depend any longer on the gods' pleasure or wrath only, but also on everybody's active participation and playing according to the rules. Around the middle of the 5th century Athens issued a decree that regulated the reintegration of Erythrai into the Delian-Attic alliance. Since anti-Athenian circles had prevailed in a *stasis*, ousted supporters of Athens from power, and finally made the *polis* defect from Athens, Athenian hegemonial power deemed it necessary to interfere in Erythrai's domestic policy in order to prevent a future defection from Athens. To this end Athens sent *episkopoi* and a garrison to the allied partner to keep her under tight control. This blatant use of power was meant to pacify the *polis* and keep Athens' friends in charge.

D. embeds Athens and its civil strife in 410 and 403 BC in the larger context of Greek *staseis* and various types of endeavors attempted to overcome them. Athens is a unique case in two respects: it provides more sources than any other Greek city-state thus giving us an invaluable insight into her inner developments over years, and it underwent two different attempts to put aside one and the same conflict between oligarchs and democrats, the first failing, the second one being successful. D. offers a detailed study of the relevant events and thereby demonstrates that she is not only in command of Greek epigraphy, but also of the relevant literary sources. By putting the known facts into the theoretical framework of conflict research, she succeeds in shedding light on the differences between the attempts of 410 and those of 403 to overcome the conflict. After 410 the decree of Demophantes resurrected the old legislation against tyranny. In addition, an oath obliged every citizen including the oligarchs to defend the restored democratic order. Through this oath the old pledges sworn by the oligarchs were dissolved, but not the ones sworn by the democrats, a measure that made it abundantly clear who had prevailed in the conflict. It is conceivable that the oligarchs bore a grudge against the new regime. A climate of mutual mistrust held sway in Athens. Thus, the measures of 410 rather perpetuated the conflict than resolved it. The smoldering tensions finally led to a civil war that was put to an end by the reconciliation in 403, the famous *diallage*. Several treaties and oaths helped to overcome the old antagonism between democrats and oligarchs and stabilized the domestic situation for more than

two generations. D. rightly underscores the willingness of the Athenians to reconcile the two opposing groups. The amnesty, i.e. the prohibition to sue somebody on grounds of what had happened under the tyrannic regime of the Thirty, was the fundamental basis of winning the oligarchs' favor for or at least acceptance of the newly established democracy. At the same time, the Thirty and their immediate supporters, as well as people who had killed with their own hands, were exempt from this amnesty and could be prosecuted. In democratic eyes this exemption enabled taking revenge on a reasonable level. For those oligarchs who could not imagine living under the new regime, Athens granted permission for emigration to Eleusis on generous terms, i.e. the oligarchs would remain Athenian citizens and would keep their property in the city. The temporary exodus of people unwilling to accept a compromise helped to calm things down in Athens. In a wise and mature manner the Athenians flexibly handled the process of assigning guilt. Only a small number of leading oligarchs had to face trial, most silent adherents of the oligarchy, however, were protected by the amnesty. In cases where someone's guilt was contested (Agoratos in Lysias 13; Philon in Lysias 31), a free and public debate resulted. In the long run, this culture of dialogue and free speech, called discourse by D., ensured the success of this reconciliation. Unlike most Greek city states, Athens displayed an amazing ability to remember, forgive and to work out a feasible reconciliation that laid the foundations for the resurgence of Athens during the 4th century BC. D. arrives at these results by skillfully combining the literary with the epigraphic evidence.

The next case study is Athens' decree about the reintegration of Iulis on Keos into the Second Attic League in 362 BC. Similar to the case of Erythrai mentioned before an anti-Athenian party came out on top of a violent conflict against supporters of Athens. As a consequence, the *polis* defected to the Boiotian League. The supporters of Athens fled to Athens. Their rule was reestablished after Chabrias had won the *polis* back. After the commander and the Athenian fleet were gone, the oligarchs, in a second overthrow of the government, prevailed again, killing the followers of Athens or sentencing them to death and seizing their property. Athens once again intervened on behalf of her friends and restored law and order. In contrast to the first revolt, where the rebels were put to death in their absence, the insurgents of the 2nd revolt were merely banished from Athens and Keos, their property seized in favor of Iulis. This relatively lenient measure was intended to make possible a new beginning. Athens tried to curb the returning exiles' urge for revenge. They had to promise not to do anything against their fellow-citizens. So Athens interfered again and acted as arbitrator in a city within her sphere of influence. As in 403 Athens gave up the idea of punishing the majority of the population so as to not endanger the possibility of a long-term reconciliation. This peaceful development would finally ensure Iulis' and Keos' loyalty towards Athens.

After the *diagramma* issued by Alexander the Great in 324 BC on behalf of the exiles, quarrels ensued between the population at home and the former exiles. In order to get some clarification, Mytilene sent two embassies to Alexander the Great. He responded, and the reconciliation agreement as expressed in an inscription from Mytilene seems to reflect his influence. The terms were specified and supplemented in a second decree. Both inscriptions emphasize harmony among the citizens, a claim that was obviously not founded upon reality. The Mytileans came to this agreement through pressure from outside; it is highly unlikely that there was any structural change in the behavior of the opposing parties.

Around 300 BC the citizens of Chersonesos Taurica took an oath that only represented one side of the parties living in *stasis* with each other. The oath taking party reinforced their commitment towards democracy and their *homonoia* among themselves. Through careful textual analysis and comparison with parallel sources D. achieves a clearer definition of the term *homonoia*. It does not describe a situation as it is, but rather as it is supposed to be in the future. In this sense, the oath is directed against the enemies of democracy who had seceded from the city and had gathered somewhere outside the *polis*, but on its territory. What we gain is not insight into a pacified situation, but into the middle of ongoing disputes about constitutional matters.

The law promulgated by the *polis* Ilion, soon after the overthrow of an oligarchy around 281 BC, is the most radical reaction of a *polis* to a *stasis* known. Old regulations concerning the treatment of enemies of the democracy (banishment, rewards posted for their killing) are extended and tightened, esp. with regards to the magistrates active in the spheres of justice and finances. Persons who bore the main responsibility for the abolishment of democracy were deleted from the *polis*' records and thus excluded from the *polis*' remembrance forever – an extremely stringent penalty.

In 273 the Arcadian town of Alipheira declared an amnesty and set up rules regarding debts. The prohibition of lawsuits was intended to mitigate conflicts that probably resulted from the high debts the citizens owed each other. As a remedy, the debts were partly waived, a measure that was a pragmatic reaction rather than a far-sighted and comprehensive strategy to alter and improve structural deficits.

One of the strangest attempts at putting aside an inner conflict is handed down to us by the Sicilian town of Nakone (after 254 BC). Two clans had fought for dominance in the *polis*. In order to replace or supplement existing bonds new fictive brotherhoods were created that comprised five members each who had to comply with a certain code of behavior. Two of them were deliberately chosen from the opposing parties and three uninvolved persons were added to form this new unit. These purely fictive units were to celebrate once a year in remembrance of this reconciliation. We have no indication whatsoever whether or not these new “family” ties fulfilled their purpose.

The institution of foreign judges was of prime importance in the Hellenistic world and is therefore amply documented with around 250 cases. The case of Kalymna (2nd half of the 3rd century BC) honoring the judges sent by the city of Iasos and the city itself serves as an example. Coming from outside the judges from abroad stood for impartiality and incorruptibility. They helped other towns come to grips with their legal disputes, the number of which was often overwhelming. In a tripartite approach to resolving conflicts they would start out with a kind of mediation. If this first step failed, they would try to negotiate a settlement out of court. If unsuccessful at this stage, they would resort to giving a verdict that was binding to both parties. Inviting judges from abroad testified to the willingness of all parties to settle conflicts peacefully. Often, the Hellenistic kings backed this procedure, because, by avoiding the escalation of a conflict, a ruling elite loyal to the king would remain in power and thus stabilize the king's rule over a certain territory. As deeply felt as was the foreign judges' interference in the affairs of a city, it did not touch the underlying structural problems involved. In this respect the inscriptions honoring the judges are revealing. They pass over in silence the conflicts themselves, but rather concentrate on the restored *homonoia* of the citizens. Their focus lies on the correct performance of highly formalized diplomatic rituals in order to pay due respect to the selfless help of the foreign judges.

This book's conclusions do not come as a surprise – similar features also hold true for the Roman world – Greek communities almost never solved their conflicts by altering the internal structures of their communities. Rather, they tried to reconcile the quarreling parties by bringing about a change in their respective modes of behavior. In most cases we do not know much about the success rate of these endeavors. These superficial solutions, as efficient as they might have been in the short run, fell well short of a thorough-going resolution of a conflict. Permanent solution required the willingness and intellectual capacity to analyze the deficiencies of the deeply rooted structures of one own's town. D.'s remarks on this point sound a bit like a reproach, and I wonder to what degree our own societies are able to step aside and analyze from a distance our own deficits *sine ira et studio*. Another precondition to the final settlement of a conflict lies in the ongoing discourse a society is willing and able to sustain on both the conflict situation and the behavior of the parties involved. Athens' success after the amnesty of 403 BC and her ensuing stability during the 4th century are the direct consequence of such a sophisticated discourse.

Some minor blemishes need to be mentioned. The criteria for the selection of the inscriptions included are not made totally clear. On page 249 D. mentions the existence of around 250 inscriptions testifying to judges from abroad, but it is not made clear why she chose the particular case of Kalymna.

Surprisingly enough, D. passes over in silence to what extent Athenians learned from the traumatic defeat in the Peloponnesian War. The success of the amnesty in 403 as well as the codification of the laws and the introduction of the *nomothesia* cannot be completely understood without taking into consideration the long-term effects of the Peloponnesian War.

D. arranged her chapters in chronological order, and rightly so. One wonders, however, if this strict rule should not have been handled a bit more flexibly in the case of Athens. The purely chronological order disrupts analyses that actually belong together or should have been treated together, e.g. Athens' decrees on the reintegration of Erythrai and Iulis after their respective defections from Athens. Since the first event occurred during the first Delian-Attic alliance and the second one during the second maritime alliance during the 4th century, these incidents could have offered the chance of direct comparison. This might have been a valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion about differences in Athens' treatment of her allies and the question whether or not Athenians learned from their past mistakes. Instead, D. inserts the pivotal points of Athenian conflict history, i.e. the events of 410 and 403 BC, thus separating the maritime decrees from each other. One misses an index of names, sources and terms, which would greatly improve the accessibility of the book.

None of these minor flaws, however, detracts from the merits of this book. By taking into account modern conflict theory without distorting the ancient evidence, D. offers a state-of-the-art examination of many difficult inscriptions. This vigorous use of an interdisciplinary method is exemplary, because the author never stretches the evidence and is careful about her conclusions. It is by this careful application of modern theory to the ancient sources that D. opens new windows and achieves far reaching results that will trigger further research on this and related topics.