

BOOK REVIEW

War, Peace and Alliance in Demosthenes' Athens. By Peter HUNT. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xiii + 317. £63.00/\$104.00. ISBN 978-0-521-83551-0.

This book is a study of Athenian foreign policy based mainly on the Assembly speeches of Demosthenes and other orators. Chapter 2 ("Economics") argues against the view of Finley and others that the profit motive was one of the main reasons why Athens went to war. Hunt observes that speakers in the Assembly almost never argue that the Athenians should attack an enemy to gain booty or territory. On the contrary, military expeditions were expensive, and the gains of victory hardly ever outweighed the costs. Hunt rejects the view of de Ste. Croix that the need for imported grain made the Athenians imperialistic but accepts the ancient view that the poor were more in favor of war than the rich (*pace* Badian) until the Theoric Fund provided a substitute for pay in the armed forces. Hunt fails to note, however, that Eubulus used the Theoric Fund to build an arsenal and dockyards for the fleet (Aeschin. 3.25; Din. 1.96) and neglects Demosthenes' praise of the fund in the *Fourth Philippic* (37–9).

Chapter 3 ("Militarism") argues that the Athenians admired military virtues and celebrated victories in war (like most nations) but were no more militaristic than other ancient states. Though the funeral orations often exaggerate Athenian success in war and thus encouraged aggression, realistic calculations about military resources often influenced decisions about whether to go to war or make peace. Chapter 4 ("Unequal Treatment of States") examines to what extent the Athenians took ethnicity, religion, and political regime into account in foreign relations. Hunt argues that these factors may have played a role in specific cases (for example, the occasional appeals to Panhellenism), but that the Athenians tended to place more emphasis on a state's actions than on its status. Hunt underestimates, however, the power of Athenian hostility to tyranny (see, for example, Dem. 23.141–3 and the *Philippics*).

Chapter 5 ("Household Metaphors") explores how orators often deploy metaphors based on relationships within the household to encourage Athenians to fight. These include accusing those who oppose war of acting like slaves (109–17) or women (117–23) and exhortations to match the virtues and achievements of one's ancestors (123–32). Chapter 6 ("Defense and Attack") comes to

the unsurprising conclusion that the Athenians and other Greeks often justify going to war as an act of self-defense. Chapter 7 (“Calculations of Interest”) starts with a brief discussion of the Realist School of International Relations. Hunt finds many arguments in Assembly speeches based on self-interest though often interspersed with appeals to help victims of injustice. He also observes that both Demosthenes and speakers in Thucydides invoke the “balance of power.” This does not tell us anything new.

Chapter 9 (“Legalism”) argues that the Greeks observed a set of inter-state norms that one can call “international law,” a theme that has been studied in greater depth by others such as Giovannini, whose work is missing from Hunt’s bibliography. Athenian law is not Hunt’s strong suit: on pp. 221 and 227 he contradicts himself about the contents of the Judicial Oath, has not read recent work about the concept of *epieikeia*, consistently mistranslates *dikastēs* as “juror,” wrongly believes that Athenian law relied largely on self-help, that the courts took public service into account when reaching a verdict about guilt (see *Dike* 9 [2006] 157–81 and passages like Aeschin. 3.195; Din. 1.14; Dem. 21.143–7; Dem. 24.133–6; [Dem.] 59.116) and that the aim of the legal system was only to continue a dispute in a different setting. *Pace* Hunt, the “consensus” mentioned at p. 235 n. 128 does not exist. Chapter 10 (“Peace”) takes up some of the same themes of Chapter 3 and finds that the Athenians were neither pacifists nor warmongers.

His general conclusion is that debates in the Assembly were based on rational considerations of national interest. While some scholars view the Athenians as primitive, Hunt (rightly in my opinion) sees many similarities with contemporary ideas about international relations. Yet if the Athenians were so rational, why did they lose so many wars in the fourth century BCE? Like Ober, Hunt is more interested in rhetoric than in events. Readers who want to know why the Athenians picked the wrong side in the Corinthian War and the Third Sacred War, were humiliated in the Social War, and trounced at Chaeronea will have to look elsewhere.

In a bibliography of 25 pages (283–308) I counted only thirty works written in languages other than English, some of the more notable omissions being Paulsen on Dem. 19, and Aeschin. 3 (more reliable than MacDowell on historical issues) and Nouhaud on the orators’ use of historical examples.

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