

RECENSIONS / BOOK REVIEWS

Paris Arnopoulos

EXOPOLITICS

Polis-Ethnos-Cosmos

Classical Theories and Praxis of Foreign Affairs

255 pages (glossary in appendix)

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Exopolitics, Polis-Ethnos-Cosmos is a book dedicated to exploring the thoughts and practices of the ancient Greeks in a field that we call today "International Relations". Exopolitics, from the Greek words exo and polis, means external affairs in contrast to internal affairs, for which we could coin another Greek work, endopolitics.

As the author aptly points out, the classics may well have been scrutinised and analysed extensively throughout the millennia, but they have not been studied from an exopolitical viewpoint. It may be mentioned that attention has been given only to Thucydides. As a matter of fact, only Thucydides has been viewed as the classic theorist of international relations.

Arnopoulos offers readers and researchers a new perspective by insisting on the importance of other classics of Greek antiquity which refer to the theory and praxis of international relations, e.g. Plato and Aristotle or even poets like Pindar and Aeschylus.

Using a theoretical model based on the trilemma of theory, policy and history, the author goes through the praxis of Ancient Greek external relations and their philosophical/ideological underpinnings. The result is an important study and analysis of the classical theories and praxis of foreign affairs during a unique historical period, the zenith of ancient Greek civilisation. In fact, from Polis to Ethnos and from Ethnos to Cosmos, the author succeeds in integrating classical political thought into modern international theory.

Arnopoulos strikes a chord when he states that despite the little though that classical Greek philosophers apparently gave to exopolitics, the student of international relations may nevertheless benefit from the distilled ideas of the past.

From both a theoretical and practical viewpoint, Arnopoulos' book is a veritable odyssey through a brilliant civilisation, inside and around the history of the genesis of politics. He explores concepts, ideas, utopias, ideals and theories against their historical context. He raises the eternal contradiction of the human condition within the central hypothesis in trilemma form (Polis-Ethnos-Cosmos) before giving readers a magistral exposé of the theoretical notions and historical events.

The importance of this book also stems from its contents, 18 chapters in three sections: Genealogy, Ideography and Philosophy. In the Genealogy section, the author examines the Greek reality and classical philosophy while developing a theoretical model (taxonomy, methodology, ideology). He then presents the political genesis of the Hellenic era and its political dynamics (IR, internal affairs and national entropy).

In the second part, Ideography, Arnopoulos presents what is most important for the humanities, the Platonic and Aristotelian eras. The reader moves from the Polis to the rise of Macedonia and subsequent panhellenism and with Alexander the Great, to the panhellenic movement which leads to cosmopolitanism or what the author calls cosmopolis. This is, or was, a time characterised by a multinational and multilingual superculture in which Greek became the *lingua franca*.

In the third part, Philosophy, Arnopoulos describes political constitutions, statesmanship, foreign policy, and raises the broader theoretical implications of the philosopher's exopolitics to a systemic world order model. The author then develops a synthesis of the comparative study of classical theory and modern reality (chapter 17, Historical Dialectics).

The author continues his conceptual framework to include future anticipation. The present realist nation-state thesis is challenged by

subnational urbanism and transnational continentalism. Nation-states are pressured to share their jurisdiction, which smaller entities — the cities — and larger entities — the international organisations. Under this circumstances, the nation-state is subject to the "stress and strain created by three contradictory tendencies from

- Above, by supranational IGOs (Intergovernmental organizations);
- Beside, by the international TNCs (Transnational corporations);
- Below, by the infranational LOCs (Local ethnic communities)."

Arnopoulos goes on to give scenarios, such as one of "increasing global interdependence which makes the need for stronger international law and tighter supranational organization imperative conditions of maintaining a dynamic world order. For chaos to be avoided, systemic complexity must be directly proportional to cybernetic harmony." He concludes this scenario by saying that "if present integrating tendencies continue unabated, a strengthening of planetary institutions of legislative, executive and adjudicative functions will inevitably accelerate into the next century."

A second and parallel scenario is that of "transnational globalization [which] goes on besides nation-states, interpenetrating their jurisdictions by socioeconomic forces which do not respect national borders or state politics. Multinational institutions and transnational flows of people, goods and money are presently making nation-state divisions anachronistic and meaningless.

Finally, subnational forces emanating from about a thousand provincial governments and five thousand ethnic languages or imagined communities in the world divide nation-state sovereignties among their local constituencies. (The former USSR alone officially recognized a hundred ethnic groups. South America also has a hundred, Indonesia, three hundred, Europe, seventy-five, and China, fifty). If the recent trends of large state breakdown into smaller ethnic components continues unabated, the present hundreds of nation-states could multiply into thousands of city-states."

According to Arnopoulos, the optimistic scenario of international relations in the future combines both realistic and idealistic theories, as well as synchronic and diachronic dialectics; i.e., "by synthesizing ancient philosophy with modern technology, it describes and prescribes a probable future society." He goes on to add that "the classic principles of strong local community, integrity and simplicity, join with modern notions of humanity, equality and liberty to create a peaceful, tolerant, multicultural coexistence; thus avoiding both pessimistic scenarios of either chaotic anarchism or sclerotic totalitarianism."

In conclusion, the author provides us with a timely reminder that, like the ancients, we face the Polis-Ethnos-Cosmos trichotomy and live in a similar trilemma which can only partially and temporarily be resolved. In one way or another, we are condemned to deal with complex issues and seek ways to world peace and freedom, as did the ancient Greeks.

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