The history of International Law is a popular subject among internationalists. Ziegler’s recent manual, the companion to Ipsen/Menzel’s *Völkerrecht* in Beck’s well-known series\(^1\) testifies once more to its vogue. We have now in German two recent manuals. Ziegler’s book with its 320 pages is modestly presented as an ‘introduction’ and has indeed grown out of Ziegler’s course at Hamburg. Grewe’s *Epochen* with its 900 pages has a more formidable character, but it did apparently find a public numerous enough to warrant a paperback edition in 1988. Yet even Grewe is of course dwarfed by Verzijl’s massive work.\(^2\) For the English and American public Nussbaum’s classical work\(^3\) probably still is the most popular introduction.\(^4\) This is somewhat surprising as

---

\(^{\ast}\) Faculty of Law, Utrecht University.


\(^{4}\) Volume 7 of the Max Planck Institute’s *Encyclopedia of Public International Law* (Amsterdam, New York, Oxford, 1984) contains a historical introduction by several well-known scholars, Grewe among them. Probably because the *Encyclopedia* is not
there is no lack of historical studies in the field as anyone familiar with the 
American Journal of International Law or the European Journal of Internatio-
nal Law will attest. The fairly general interest in the subject has indeed recently 
led to the formation of an interest group mainly constituted by American schol-
ars. What is the mainspring of this interest in history among internationalists? 
As far as Germany is concerned, the answer is given in unmistakable terms by 
both Grewe and Ziegler. In this essay I will in inverse chronological order dis-
cuss at some length both Ziegler and Grewe and throw in some remarks on 
Verzijl. I do not pretend to an exhaustive review of these books, since I am 
here mainly concerned with the ideological point of view of the authors and 
not, at least not primarily, with the practical merits of their works as sources of 
information for students and scholars.

Ziegler
From another point of view than the one I adopt here, more might be said on 
the technical aspects of what is indeed a very useful manual in short compass. 
It is easy to handle, its bibliography is outstanding, especially as regards Anti-
quity. The book is indeed admirably suited for its purpose as a manual for use 
in an extensive course of the History of international Law. As a teacher of in-
ternational law and its history I regret that the use of Ziegler’s book in an aca-
demic course is almost completely precluded by the lack of knowledge of Ger-
man among Dutch students. It robs them among other things of the opportunity 
to acquaint themselves with an interpretation of the history of the Law of Na-
tions, viz., the thesis of a continuity from about 1500 B.C. to the present. The 
readers of Grotiana are familiar with Ziegler’s views from his article on Groti-
us in the last issue of this review, yet his terse introduction deserves quoting at 
some length (Ziegler, p.1, 2):

‘Jede vertiefte Betrachtung des Rechts bedarf der historischen Perspektive. Das 
gilt in besonderem Maße für das Völkerrecht; denn wie kein anderes Gebiet des 
geltenden Rechts ist es mit der Geschichte verbunden. Völkerrecht ist wesentlich 
das zwischenstaatliche Recht, der Inbegriff der Rechtsnormen, die für die Bezie-
hungen zwischen Staaten, gegebenenfalls auch anderen Suibjekten des interna-
tionalen Rechtverkehrs gelten. ... Der Sache nach ist das Völkerrecht praktisch so 
alt wie die in organisierten Verbänden auftretende Menschheit: Kriegführung und 
Friedensschluß, Bündnisse, Handelsabkommen, Entsendung und Empfang von 
Unterhändlern oder Gesandten, kurz, völkerrechtliche Tatbestände und darauf be-
readily accessible to the general public, this introduction has not so far succeeded in re-
placing Nussbaum’s book.
3 The initiative is due to D. Bedermann, Emory University, Atlanta.

53