
15) See, e.g., p. 119, where Lakhmann is confident to have detected an apologetical tendency in Gellius’ comment on ‘Taurus’ severe behaviour.

16) Inferring Taurus’ exemplary character from, i.a., his friendship with Stoics (p. 123) is questionable, at the least. Equally naive is the contention (p. 122) that his visiting the Pythian games proves him to be “einen weltoffenen Menschen, der nicht zurückgezogen nur für sein Wissenschaft lebte, sondern den Kontakt zu seiner Umwelt suchte und Interesse für das öffentliche Leben hatte.” One may also compare p. 164.

17) The author has a rather “essentialistic” approach to human character, leaving little room for development, inconsistencies, arbitrariness, and contingencies. A person just follows his nature. See, e.g. p. 178: “Daß die mahnnenden Worte des Taurus bei Gellius nicht den gewünschten Erfolg erzielen, liegt wohl daran, daß Gellius immer mehr Rhetor als wirklich Philosoph war und sein wollte.” Why could it not be the other way round? Gellius’ reaction to Taurus’ instruction is assigned some kind of inevitability—ex eventu. This way his self-image receives scholarly sanction. See also p. 4; 220.


This book consists of a number of essentially preliminary studies of the basic aspects of Cretan society. The author avowedly avoids a pre-conceived idea of its nature or evolution. Regarding the fragmentary nature of our knowledge, this point of departure is justified. The three main themes, ‘population’ (p. 9-51), ‘family’ (p. 53-96), and ‘the state’ (p. 97-118) concentrate on respectively the full citizens and the unfree, kinship, marriage and inheritance, and the office of kosmos. The approach is, thus, formal rather than sociological.

To be a full citizen, L. observes, one had to be a member of an ‘Andreion’ or men’s club. Citizenship was hereditary, and to have been an ‘erémenos’ was not a prerequisite to become a member of an ‘andreion’. Citizenship essentially belonged to the family. This, L. argues, is proved by the laws which regulate adoption. A marked social and economic inequality existed, however, among the various ‘andreia’ depending on the wealth and status of their leaders. The position of the ‘klarotai’ or ‘oikeis’ according to L.
was very near that of slaves, although the small scale of Cretan societies prevented an evolution of social antagonism as in Sparta. Contrary to common opinion, the texts do not prove that the kla-rotai could not in principle be sold, did have a title to property of their own, or could conclude legal marriages. Debt-slavery must have been of minor importance because of the cancellation of debts at the death of the debtor. The latter point, however, recently has been questioned by M. Maffi (see SEG XLII 802bis). Link’s study, however, leaves the position of the considerable number of free without full citizen status, the ‘aphetairoi’ who did not belong to an andreion, unclear.

In the second part L. first explodes the idea that originally Cre- tan society had been organised by clans and had passed through a stage of matriarchy. This is convincing, but one should realize that the evolutionary concepts from which these ideas had been derived, are since long outdated. L. shows that the rules of marriage and inheritance, and especially of inheritance by women and heiresses, do not testify to the existence of common property rights of extended kin groups, but rather to the concern to guarantee the continuity of individual oikoi. These were the fundament of the Cretan cities. Similarly, the powerful office of ‘kosmos’ was rotated between groups, while iteration of office by individuals was restricted as much as possible.

The Cretan cities, L. concludes, were no ‘ordinary’ oligarchies. Power was kept in the hands of a small circle of aristocratic ‘houses’. Their handling of pederastic relationships indeed can be considered as a kind of alternative ‘marriage policy’ (p. 27). The system of both rotation of office and a ban on iteration, was designed to keep them in control of the state. On the other hand, they continuously rivalled to extend their individual ‘Hausmächte’. This perspective explains the rules which restricted how much could be given to women or inherited by them. In the end, L. concludes, this led to a stagnation of the entire political system.

Conceptually, however, the author begs the question. The ‘state’ is taken for granted, without questioning how this concept is to be defined and applied to the Cretan polities of the 6th to 4th centuries B.C. Similarly, L. reads the Gortyn law-code as if it were a modern legal text. His terminology, speaking of the ‘legislator’ (‘Gesetzesgeber’) and his (supposed) intentions, strengthens this impression. He does not ask the fundamental question of the right way how to approach and to interpret the actual meaning of archaic codifications, as, among others, K.-J. Hölkeskamp has