THUCYDIDES

DE ROMILLY (J.) *The Mind of Thucydides*. Translated by Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings. Edited and with an introduction by Hunter R. Rawlings III and Jeffrey S. Rusten. Pp. xx + 195. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012 (originally published as *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide*, 1956). Cased, US$35. ISBN: 978-0-8014-5063-1.

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D.R.'s *Histoire et raison* was published in 1956, nearly a decade after her monograph, *Thucydides et l'imperialisme athénien: La Pensée de l'historien et la genèse de l'œuvre* (1947). Both works offered unrivalled insight into the structure of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, altering the landscape of Thucydidean scholarship. While D.R.'s first book was translated into English in 1963, her second has remained unavailable to Anglophone readers until now.

This translation is the collaborative effort of E. Trapnell Rawlings, French translator, and classicists H.R. Rawlings III and J.S. Rusten. According to the introduction by Rawlings and Rusten, D.R.'s scholarship, which established the *History* as a product of the most profound authorial intention and intelligent design, constituted a watershed in Thucydidean studies. D.R. spelled out the futility of the composition question and demonstrated the virtues of treating Thucydides' text as a work of literary art rather than a source of historical data. Two overarching claims emerge from *The Mind of Thucydides*. First, the *History* is the product of a discerning and rigorous mind, of Thucydides' relentless and systematic application of the process of reasoning, or *logos*, to history. Second, while Thucydides is indebted to his classical Greek predecessors and contemporaries – including epic poets, tragedians, sophists and philosophers – he also brings that inheritance to new heights. In particular, Thucydides takes the techniques of dialectical argumentation and reasoning to their logical culmination.

D.R.'s book consists of four substantive chapters and a short introduction and conclusion. The four chapters, she notes, form part of a whole. Each articulates and affirms the conclusions of the others. Notably, D.R.'s methodology coheres with her substantive claims about Thucydides' unified vision and his preoccupation with the common denominator of the largest number of events.

Chapter 1 and 2 illustrate how the *History*'s battle narratives manifest Thucydides' intelligent design. They clarify the techniques of selection, arrangement, word choice, repetition, juxtaposition and interruption that constitute Thucydides' narrative and its historical meaning. While D.R. moves swiftly between episodes, Chapter 1 focuses on Athens' failed attempt to invest Syracuse (6.96–7.9). The opposing aims of these two parties, D.R. shows, lend this episode its dramatic force and unifying logic. Thucydides, by excluding all extraneous detail and particularity, clarifies the vital tension – the clash of wills between Athens and Syracuse – that renders this battle sequence intelligible and compelling. Careful verbal echoes and precise arrangement likewise allow the keen reader to follow the narrative's essential logic. As even the simplest battle narrative shows, Thucydides' extraordinary selectivity creates unity and continuity, rendering visible the guiding threads that sustain narrative coherence.

Chapter 2 takes this argument further, showing how Thucydides' narrative techniques recur in complex battle accounts, where he foregrounds the intention, or *gnome*, of opposing actors. D.R. focuses on the sea battles of Book 2 and the harbour battle at Syracuse in

Book 7, but also considers how Thucydides' narrative threads a connection between plan and action in the battle of Olpae, the Athenian landing at Sphacteria and the battle of Potidaea. The battle narratives with speeches allow D.R. to articulate her boldest claim, namely that the speeches stage a dialectical duel, whose outcome is decided by the subsequent battle.

Chapter 3 moves from narrative to speech, showing how antithetical speeches are used to juxtapose two contrasting processes of reasoning. The paired speeches of Hermocrates and Euphemus at Camarina (6.75–88), for instance, reflect the consummate artistry of sophistic argumentation. Thucydides is so rigorous and austere in his deployment of antilogy, D.R. claims, that it 'becomes an arithmetic of arguments' (p. 135).

Chapter 4 offers an analysis of Thucydides' Archaeology, which D.R. sees as paradigmatic of the work as a whole and of Thucydides' mind. Here Thucydides pushes reason to its limits. Whereas Chapters 1–3 show how rational interpretation arranges historical material and structures the narrative and speeches that give that material meaning, Chapter 4 shows how Thucydides' Archaeology calls upon reasoning to supply historical data when such data are absent. This is where Thucydides' rationalism reaches its peak and – as D.R. rightly acknowledges – discloses its limits. D.R. raises some cogent, perhaps devastating, criticisms: Thucydides is too preoccupied with Athenian thalassocracy, too invested in an evolutionary 'theory of progress' (pp. 167, 172), and ultimately rationalist to the point of imprudence (p. 177). Instead of pursuing the full implications of these arguments, D.R. – as if hit by a sudden wave of piety – mysteriously backtracks, minimises their importance, and concludes with a defence of Thucydides' faith in reason.

There is much to commend in this volume. D.R. provides incisive, close reading and has an impressive feel for Thucydides' deft use of language. E. Rawlings' translation permits readers without the requisite French and Greek to appreciate how Thucydides' linguistic decisions strengthen the dialectical aspects of the text. Beyond possessing the schematic frame of mind needed to distil Thucydides' technique, D.R. puts her broad knowledge of classical antiquity to good use in her various explorations of the relationship between Thucydides and his contemporaries.

The fact that the two most salient features of D.R.'s work are also prominent refrains in the reception history of Thucydides suggests either her influence or her perspicacity. D.R. shares with several historical heavyweights, most notably Hobbes and Nietzsche, the conviction that Thucydides' narrative subtly but effectively instructs the attentive and discerning reader. Subsequent scholars who have offered close readings and unitary interpretations of the structural and narrative organisation of the *History* include H.P. Stahl (1966), V. Hunter (1973), L. Edmunds (1975), H. Rawlings (1981), W.R. Connor (1987), S. Hornblower (1994), T. Rood (1998) and J. Morrison (2006). D.R. is also neither the first nor the last to make a case for Thucydides' rationalist cast of mind. Her emphasis on his preoccupation with 'scientific method and dialectical rigor' (p. 105) recalls C.N. Cochrane (1929) and anticipates J. Ober (1998, 2006).

D.R.'s account of Thucydidean rationalism is simultaneously the book's main contribution and the source of its greatest difficulty. *The Mind of Thucydides* is an apt re-titling, for D.R.'s Thucydides exercises 'total and absolute control' (p. 7), is completely omniscient and deploys a reductionist rationalism with perfect intentionality (p. 142). D.R. acknowledges chance, contingency and unpredictability, but also sees disorder as an anticipated product of rationality and a sign of its success (p. 100). Irrationality is put on a tight leash in D.R.'s world; disorder is similarly subsumed and effected by intelligent design. The romanticisation of rationalism and intellectual mastery is problematic for at least three reasons. First, it risks obscuring Thucydides' thematic emphasis on the limits of

reason, foresight and knowledge, cogently detailed in much of the post-De Romilly Thucydidean scholarship, including L. Strauss (1964), H.P. Stahl (1966), W.R. Connor (1977), J.P. Euben (1990), C. Orwin (1994), M. Taylor (2010) and E. Foster (2010). Second, D.R.'s reductionist view of the paired speeches, which registers opposing arguments as competing causal hypotheses to be adjudicated by the narrative, evinces a naïve positivism and elides the very stuff of politics. Are speakers representing causal inferences or are they engaged in tendentious acts of persuasion, misrepresenting reality in order to change it? Third, D.R.'s rationalism conflates Thucydides and his characters, unwittingly granting normative authority to what Thucydides describes. Is Thucydides a rationalist or are rationalism and mathematical reductionism objects to reflect on, and perhaps criticise, in the text? There is much at stake in these objections for historiography and politics. The fact that D.R.'s book elicits them more than 50 years after its publication speaks to its enduring import.

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PAPERS ON XENOPHON

HOBDEN (F.), TUPLIN (C.) (edd.) *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry*. (*Mnemosyne* Supplements 348.) Pp. xii + 791. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. Cased, €221, US$307. ISBN: 978-90-04-22437-7.

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This collection of papers comes from a conference held in Liverpool in 2009. Among the contributors are emerging as well as established Xenophontics, and the odd unexpected guest. It adds to a growing stock of major publications on Xenophon such as Tuplin (*Xenophon and his World* [2004]), Lane Fox (*The Long March* [2004]), Narcy and Tordesillas (*Xénophon et Socrate* [2008]), Gray (*Xenophon* [2010] and *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes* [2011]) and Flower (*Xenophon's Anabasis* [2012]). The title seems to represent the division of Xenophon's works into those that are significantly informed by his Socratic philosophy, and those that are deemed historical inquiry; so we have, on the one hand, Schepens on Xenophon's account in *Hellenica* of the mission of Timocrates to Greece before the outbreak of the Corinthian War and Brennan on the missing days in the march of Cyrus in *Anabasis*, and, on the other, Dorion on how Xenophon conceived of *sophia* as an ethical principle or Hau studying words coined with *phron-* for their ethical qualities. For the papers in between, the title offers roomy accommodation.

There is new information in the first three papers, on Xenophon's reception. Stadter shows how Plutarch appropriates passages from a range of the works to produce relevant messages for his own time; an instance is his rereading of Xenophon's account of Agesilaus. Humble brings new material to her investigation of how the reception of the praise of the laws of the *Spartan Constitution* in renaissance translators is dictated by their historical and personal contexts. Rood expands horizons in another of his characteristically elegant reflections, on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reception of Xenophon's account of his 'delightful retreat' at Scillus in *Anabasis*.

The re-assessment of established problems in Xenophon's historical works is found in Schepens and Brennan above, while Gish makes a more generous assessment of Xenophon's attitude to the Athenian democracy in the trial of the generals in *Hellenica*.