

**Edith Foster, *Thucydides, Pericles, and Periclean Imperialism*.** Cambridge University Press, 2010. 978-0-521-19266-8. \$85.

Hot on the heels of Martha Taylor's *Thucydides, Pericles, and the Idea of Athens* (2010), CUP has produced another book with a title starting with the same two names. The two books are also more loosely linked by the position they take on Pericles: while many scholars in the past have talked in lavish terms of Thucydides' devotion to Pericles, and while some scholars more recently have suggested links between the way Thucydides deals with the past and the way he portrays Pericles alluding in speeches to the past, both Taylor and Foster resist any simple equation of Thucydides and Pericles. While Taylor ranges over the imaginative construction of the idea of Athens throughout the history, Foster more narrowly focuses on the Periclean period proper and in particular on Thucydides' presentation of material culture ('the habit of reading references to material objects and elements of nature for their connections to the themes and plot of the narrative' (p. 5)) – the central focus of her 2002 Chicago dissertation, *Material Culture in Thucydidean Narrative*. Her book is especially provocative in its analysis of the contrasts between Periclean speech-making and Thucydidean narrative and in the opposition between Pericles' (admitted) political insight and his (short-sighted) materialistic imperialism, which she sees as overriding traditional attachments. Earlier scholars have made similar arguments: Gregory Crane, for instance, in *The Blinded Eye: Thucydides and the New Written Word* (Lanham, MD, 1996) has a similar view of Pericles' overthrow of conventional bonds of loyalty – but Crane sees Thucydides as taking Pericles' side, not criticising him. The merit of Foster's book is to provide a sustained and convincing focus on the material aspects of Thucydides' analysis of Athenian imperialism.

The structure of Foster's book is linear. After a short introduction, the first chapter discusses 'War Materials and their Glory in the Archaeology'. Foster's analysis offers a good corrective to scholars who read the *Archaeology* as an implicit justification of Athenian imperialism and as an expression of confidence in Athenian naval power. She stresses instead how Thucydides' analysis brings out the cost of acquisitiveness: Thucydides does not read the past as a story of continual progress, but interprets material acmes as self-destructing. In Chapter 2 Foster proposes that the development of Corcyra's navy can itself be seen as an example of the cycle set out in the *Archaeology*. Successive chapters then deal with the debate at Sparta and the *Pentecontaetia*, with particular focus on Themistoclean walls (Ch. 3); Pericles' early appearances and his first speech (Ch. 4); the Plataea episode, the war preparations, Archidamus' speech at 2.10, Pericles' indirect speech at 2.13 and the account of the abandonment of Attica (Ch. 5); and finally Pericles' imperial rhetoric in both the *Epitaphios* and the final speech (Ch. 6). A short conclusion in the final chapter allows for a final summary – and a brief leap into our present (p. 220): Thucydides 'shows Pericles' complex personality, which operated under the pressure of the possession of resources and imperial capacity that seemed to Pericles unique. The historian knew better, and offered a study of Pericles' deepening dilemma. I suggest that his analysis cannot be a matter of indifference to us.'

Though Foster could have explained at greater length just why Thucydides' analysis is so relevant in the present, she is alert to the central problem that some readers may find with her arguments: 'If Thucydides displays Pericles' failings to this extent, how can he praise him so highly?' (p. 183). Her answer is that 'Thucydides emphatically associates Pericles with an accurate knowledge of Athens' acme, at the same time as repeatedly demonstrating that his speeches exaggerated the power and meaning of those very resources' (p. 184). While I am generally sympathetic to Foster's approach, she does seem to lessen the difficulties posed to her position by the authorial judgement at 2.65. In particular, I disagree with her translation of one key sentence (2.65.5) in that section: 'he seemed also in this [situation] to have recognized [the city's] power' (p. 213). This translation allows Foster to argue that the sentence 'does not seem to refer to Thucydides' view, but still reflects the People'; but this misses both the force of *phainetai* with the participle *prognous* and the fact that the verb is a genuine present. Martin Hammond's translation in the recent Oxford World's Classics edition is preferable: 'it is clear that he had provided for the strength of Athens in war too.'

Foster's book at times reads like a running commentary on Thucydides 2.1–65. She does draw some useful links between different parts of the work, and she also makes some nice stylistic points (embellished with references to the nineteenth-century commentator Poppo). She also scatters her footnotes with many useful references to parallels in Herodotus, though some of these brief comments could do with more elaboration (e.g. the interesting allusion on p. 14 n. 7 to Hdt. 9.122 in relation to the 'rich soil paradox' in the Archaeology). What is not always clear is how these scattered comments relate to the overall theme of the book: in Chapter 2, for instance, the intriguing discussion of Thucydides' literary use of mythical geography (the river Acheron) opens up an issue that is slightly tangential to the main theme of the book. Overall, I did wonder at Foster's decision to focus only on the Periclean period rather than offering a more sustained engagement with the theme of material culture through the course of the *History* as a whole.

Foster's bibliographical coverage is generally good, though I did regret that she did not take account of two items: E. Irwin, 'The politics of precedence: first "historians" on first "thalassocrats"', in R. Osborne (ed.), *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution: Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Politics, 430-380 BC* (Cambridge, 2007), 188–223, and D. Kagan, *Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy* (New York, 1990). Engagement with Irwin's sophisticated piece (which perhaps appeared too late) might have made Foster press harder her own very different discussion of Minos. As for Kagan, when Foster writes that 'a comparison with Sophocles' Oedipus would be worth a review' (133 n. 36), she could have followed this up by engaging with Kagan's effusive use of the Pericles/Oedipus parallel (in a chapter entitled 'Hero'). Discussion of this (again very different) take on Pericles could have prompted Foster to elaborate her brief closing statement about the contemporary relevance of Thucydides' analysis.

Overall, Foster has provided a very useful addition to Thucydidean scholarship which all Thucydidean scholars will want to consult. While the book is generally well-produced, a few items are misplaced or missing (e.g. Wells (1983)) in the

Bibliography – and is ‘Harmodious’ (pp. 21, 51, and Index) a mere typo for the tyrannicide ‘Harmodius’ or a brilliant pun?

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