

R. CRAWLEY-D. LATEINER, *Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Introduction and notes by Donald Lateiner. Translated by Richard Crawley and revised by Donald Lateiner, New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2006, 605 pp., ISBN-13 978-1-59308-091-4. ISBN-10 1-59308-091-3.

The Catalan writer Josep Pla said to the Cistercian friar Agustí Altisent, “Vostè creu que un país pot ser alguna cosa sense tenir completa la traducció de Tucídides?” “Do you believe that a country can be anything before it has its translation of Thucydides complete?”¹ Pla was thinking of Catalonia and a Catalan translation. In the major countries of classical scholarship, the concern which he expresses was never allayed by a single translation of Thucydides. One was never enough. Especially in recent times, new translations of Thucydides and revisions of old translations have multiplied rapidly. The book under review is part of an international trend. After I discuss this book and its rather long history, I shall return to that trend and one of its implications.

The translation of Thucydides by Richard Crawley (1840-1893) appeared in 1876. After an early failure with the separate publication of Book One, to which he refers morosely in his introduction, Crawley was to have a success unparalleled amongst English translators of ancient Greek authors. J. M. Dent (London) reprinted Crawley’s masterpiece in its Temple Classics series in several editions. In the United States, it was reprinted by the Modern Library in 1934 (the last time Crawley’s introduction was included). The 1934 publication also carried a new introduction by Joseph Gavorse. Thereafter, the Modern Library published editions with introductions by John H. Finley, Jr. (1951) and by T.E. Wick (1982). In 1993, an Everyman Edition appeared, with an introduction by W. R. Connor. In 1996

¹ June 1978. Quoted in Manuel Balasch, *Tucídides: Història de la guerra del Peloponès*, vol. 8, Col·lecció Bernat Metge, Barcelona 1982, 7.

came a newly revised edition from the Free Press, supplemented with maps, notes, and appendices by Robert B. Strassler, and with an introduction by Victor Davis Hanson².

Crawley's own introduction was followed by a very short "Select Bibliography," which, with an item dated 1903, post-dates the translator. I do not know if this bibliography goes back to one in the first edition, which I have not seen. It is a valuable reminder, in any case, of the scholarly resources which Crawley had available (the commentaries, for example, of Thomas Arnold, Karl Wilhelm Krüger, Gottfried Böhme, and Johannes Classen and Julius Steup). The Thucydides whom Crawley read and translated was not exactly the same Thucydides whom we read. If a translation is an interpretation, Crawley's Thucydides cannot be our Thucydides. For this reason, revision was necessary early on (already in 1903, by R.C. Feetham), and, after 1934, Crawley's opinions about Thucydides, expressed in his introduction, were of no further interest. While the translation itself remained compelling, it needed new introductions, new revisions, and an apparatus of notes.

Before Lateiner's Crawley, Strassler's was the most comprehensive updating of Crawley, and it is the one with which Lateiner's Crawley should be compared. Lateiner's introduction (xv-xliv) is much longer than Hanson's (ix-xxiii) and provides a good introduction to every major issue in Thucydidean studies, except the Greek text. Lateiner has been working on Thucydides throughout his career and his voice is that of an expert. His bibliography is far more extensive than Strassler's and is helpfully presented by topic. His notes are more copious than Strassler's and more likely to go beyond factual information and to enter into questions of interpretation. The scholarly gravamen of Strassler's edition lies in learned appendices by the likes of Alan Boegehold, Paul Cartledge, Gregory Crane, Nicolle Hirschfeld, and William Wyatt (also Strassler himself and Hanson). But Strassler's maps and the typography and design of the book itself are clearly superior. Lateiner was not well served in these areas

² Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, New York 1996.

by Barnes and Noble, which surely has a book designer capable of something more effective than the unattractive mix of bold-face and italic sub-heads in the introduction (not to mention the banality of the font).

Both Strassler and Lateiner have revised Crawley. Without collating the two editions, it would be difficult to say who has revised more and how the tendencies of the revisions differ. Lateiner explains his policy: “I have lightly revised the translation in places, occasionally dividing sentences in two or otherwise repunctuating them. I have systematically replaced British ‘corn’ with American ‘grain’, obsolete ‘galley’ with ‘trireme’, and the quaintly literal Athenian ‘council of the bean’ with ‘council chosen by lot’, the *boule* or senate” (xlv). For reflections on the difficulties of translating Thucydides and an appreciation of Crawley’s achievement, see xl-xlii.

As a test case, I compared Strassler’s and Lateiner’s handling of the end of Book 7, where Thucydides, having explained why Nicias was executed, when he thought that he would be safe if he surrendered to the Spartans. Thucydides pronounces the well-known epitaph (86.5).

ὁ μὲν τοιαύτη ἢ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τούτων αἰτία
 ἔτεθνήκει, ἥκιστα δὴ ἄξιός ὦν τῶν γε ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ
 Ἑλλήνων ἐς τοῦτο δυστυχίας ἀφικέσθαι διὰ τὴν
 πᾶσαν ἐς ἀρετὴν νενομισμένην ἐπιτήδευσιν.

The long prepositional phrase at the end of this sentence is notoriously difficult³. (Hobbes omitted it entirely.) Crawley translated:

‘This or the like was the cause of the death of a man who, of all the Hellenes in my time, least deserved such a fate, seeing that the whole course of his life had been regulated with strict attention to virtue.’

³ K. J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 4, Oxford 1970, 463 concludes his analysis of the difficulties: “Hence lit., ‘through his practice all observed into goodness’, i.e. ‘because he had ordered his whole life by high moral standards.’”

This translation seems to dodge the problem of *νενομισμένην*. Strassler preserved Crawley's version. Lateiner revised it:

‘This or the like was the cause of the death of a man who, of all the Hellenes in my time, least deserved such a fate, seeing that the whole course of his life had been regulated with strict attention to decency, morality, and courage.’

Lateiner provides, however, a substantial footnote, in effect parsing his interpretation of the difficult prepositional phrase.

To conclude this comparison of the two editions of the well-known Crawley translation, I would say that, if I could own only one, I would choose Lateiner's, but I would prefer to own both.

Lateiner's edition of the Crawley belongs to a proliferation of English translations of Thucydides. In 1998, two new translations appeared, one from Norton by Walter Blanco (with an introduction by Jennifer T. Roberts), aiming at accessibility, and another, more literal, by Steven Lattimore⁴. In 1997, David Cartwright published *Historical Commentary on Thucydides: A Companion to Rex Warner's Penguin Translation* (Michigan). The Penguin translation, with introduction and notes by M. I. Finley, is hardly the only one still in print. There are R.W. Livingstone's (Oxford 1943), David Grene's edition of Hobbes', and of course C. F. Smith's in the Loeb Library (1919-23). The story is not over. Benjamin Jowett's translation (Oxford 1900) is to be revised by Simon Hornblower.

The proliferation just sketched belongs to a still larger trend, discernible in all the major countries of classical scholarship. Spaniards in the mid-twentieth century read the Thucydides of F. Rodríguez Adrados (Biblioteca Clásica Hernando, 1955). Then, in a single year, 1989, three new translations appeared, those of Antonio Guzmán Guerra (Alianza), Luis M. Macía Aparicio (Akal), and V. Conejero Ciriza (PPU, with an introduction by J. Alsina). The next year, 1990, the first volume (Books 1-2) of

⁴ *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis 1998. Review by Kevin Carroll in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 1999.06.18.

J.J. Torres Esbarranch's appeared (Biblioteca Clásica Gredos, with an introduction by J. Calonge), to be completed in 1992 (four volumes).

Italy has five translations in print, those of Ezio Savino (Garzanti, 1974), Mauro Moggi (Rusconi, 1984), Claudio Moreschini (Rizzoli, 1986), Luciano Canfora (Einaudi, 1996), and Guido Donini (UTET, 2005). That of Moreschini is a revision and edition on the scale of the two Crawley editions which I compared. The translation, from the 1960s, is revised and introduced by Franco Ferrari, with notes by Giovanna Daverio Rocchi and a twenty-page bibliography. This edition includes an Italian translation of Moses Finley's introduction to the Penguin edition.

In France, besides the Belles Lettres edition by Jacqueline de Romilly, Raymond Weil, and Louis Bodin (1958-72), there is an edition by de Romilly alone (translation, introduction, notes), with an essay, "La Campagne avec Thucydide," by Albert Thibaudet (Robert Laffont, 1990). It is on the scale of the Crawley editions by Lateiner and Strassler. In the same period appeared Jean Capelle's translation (Flammarion, 1993). An older Gallimard edition (1964), Thucydides translated by Denis Roussel, Herodotus by André Bargaet, with an introduction by de Romilly is still in print. Another older translation still in print is Jean Voilquin's, with notes by Jean Capelle (Garnier, 1948-1950). Gallimard published Roussel's translation separately, with an introduction by Pierre Vidal-Naquet (2000).

Germany has been more moderate, content with only two translations: those of Georg Peter Landmann (Artemis, 1960) and of Helmuth Vretska (Reclam, 1966).

Neither the commercialism of publishers nor the aspirations, intellectual or other, of translators can completely explain the large number to which this survey amounts. Nor can the style and personality of Thucydides, which are without charm, not to say rebarbative. Could the continuing, strong appeal of Thucydides be the intimation of grim lessons for us? If so, Crawley, in his now suppressed introduction, had it right when he said: "The reader will ... see ... [the] nature [of man] painted in its true colours, free from the varnish with which it is often decorated. The actors in our pages avow their motives with a plainness sometimes

shocking to modern feeling; whether it be that we have an improved standard of right, to which even the most determined offenders must do homage, or that hypocrisy is more congenial to our artificial civilisation, and less difficult than it must have been in the intense political life of small Greek communities⁵.”

Many have seen, in the calamitous events unfolding in the Middle East since the United States-led invasion of Iraq, the latest cycle of “those things which at some point will turn out more or less the same” κατὰ τὸ ἀθρώπινον (1.22.4). In discussion of these events, Thucydides is cited so often that one cannot read him or review a new edition of Crawley without again making the connection between Thucydides’ Athens and current U.S. foreign policy. Even before the invasion of Iraq, in a remarkable essay in *Die Zeit* in June 2002, Jens Jessen spelled out the comparison: defensive expansion; export of its own form of government; rhetoric of freedom; claim to hegemony; narrowing of domestic and foreign policy; historical-moral pressure on allies (Athens: we saved you from the Medes ≈ U.S.: we saved you from Hitler); right of the stronger as natural right⁶. Jessen was thinking of the formation of the Athenian Empire and the U.S. “war on terrorism,” as it was then called. The Sicilian Expedition began on March 20, 2003⁷.

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⁶ “Wer hat Angst vor Thukydidies? Vorschlag einer antiken Lektüre, um Amerikas Feldzug gegen den Terrorismus besser zu verstehen,” *Die Zeit*, June 13, 2002 at literaturbeilage.zeit.de. Accessed July 14, 2006.

⁷ For bibliographical help, I am grateful to Antonio Aloni, Markus Asper, Emilio Crespo, Marianne Hopman, and Jordi Pàmias.