

Thucydides



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War is a harsh teacher' wrote Thucydides in the fifth-century BC. Rood analyses the techniques through which Thucydides' narrative explains the origin and course of the Peloponnesian War and exposes harsh truths about how individuals and states behave. Rood concentrates on how the use of techniques, such as selectivity, interaction of speech and narrative, and manipulation of time and perspective, points at one level to general human constraints, at another to the self-destructiveness of Athens' imperial power. The book explores some techniques that have received little attention and offers new ways of reading others; it gives new insight into Thucydides' sophistication and the way he relates to his predecessors. It is also important for its attempts to refute views that Thucydides' History is made up of different compositional strata or inspired by pro-Athenian bias. And it addresses directly the way modern historians use Thucydides, contributes to the contemporary debate over narrative history, and shows the value of applying some of the concepts of recent narrative theory to historical texts.

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