Speaking the Same Language
Speaking the Same Language

Speech and Audience in Thucydides’ Spartan Debates

PAULA DEBNAR

Ann Arbor
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS
τοῖς φίλοις
This book is an examination of the role played by the internal audiences in Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* and focuses on debates in which Spartans are either speakers or auditors. My analysis for the most part takes the form of discursive commentaries on the speeches, with particular consideration given to the historical as well as the narrative context. I make no apology for this approach; Thucydides demands close reading coupled with attention to historical detail.

As is true of any study of Thucydides, the organization of *Speaking the Same Language* is itself a structure imposed on the History. Its three parts correspond to a progressive change I perceive in Spartan discourse—and attitudes to discourse—as the History moves farther away from the prewar debates in Sparta in both time and place. There are of course numerous details that do not fit easily into this schema. Nonetheless, a large-scale movement of profound significance is the result of the individual speeches and events in the History. As Thucydides says concerning the plague, a general phenomenon can be recognized even when individual cases differ (2.51.1). Without such a view of the relation of particular and general, he would not have been able to speak of “what happened and what will happen—or something close to it—given what is human” (1.22.4).

Since my hope is that this book will be of use to a broad range of readers of Thucydides, I have translated all the Greek in the main text. Except where noted, translations are my own; I have tried to adhere closely to Thucydides’ often awkward Greek, especially where the word order has some bearing on my analysis. The notes are addressed primarily to scholars; discussions of syntactical and textual problems of the Greek, and of points of historical fact, are restricted to those areas where they most affect my argument. I have retained the latinized forms of Greek proper and geographical names, more out of fondness than any ideological conviction. Unless otherwise noted, all
in-text references are to Thucydides; citations are from the Oxford text by Stuart Jones and Powell, and references to the scholia are to Hude.

My deepest gratitude goes to Mary Bellino, a fine Hellenist whose superb editorial skills and relentless queries helped to deliver this book from a purgatory of drafts. In this project as well as in earlier articles, I have benefited greatly from Justina Gregory’s astute observations and suggestions. I extend my thanks as well to Carolyn Dewald, Jeffrey Rusten, and my anonymous referees for their detailed comments. And for invaluable assistance at the beginning and the end of a seemingly interminable process, I would like to thank Ellen Bauerle, for her enthusiastic response to my initial submission, and Joan Davis, for her splendid work on the index.
Contents

ix  List of Abbreviations
1  Introduction
25  PART ONE • SPARTANS AT HOME
27  Introduction to Part I
30  CHAPTER ONE • The Spartans as Audience
59  CHAPTER TWO • The Spartans among Themselves
77  CHAPTER THREE • The League as Audience
91  PART TWO • SPARTANS ABROAD
93  Introduction to Part II
96  CHAPTER FOUR • The Seige of Plataea
102  CHAPTER FIVE • The Politics of Olympia
125  CHAPTER SIX • The Trial of the Plataeans
147  CHAPTER SEVEN • Pylos and the Offer of Peace
169  PART THREE • ENEMIES WITHIN
171  Introduction to Part III
173  CHAPTER EIGHT • Brasidas’ Spartans
201  CHAPTER NINE • Alcibiades’ Spartans
221  Conclusion
235  Bibliography
245  Index of Greek Terms
247  General Index
Abbreviations

For classical authors and works the abbreviations used are those of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.


IG *Inscriptiones Graecae*. 1843–. Berlin.


Spratt  A. W. Spratt.


Steup, Anhang Appendices in Classen-Steup.