# THRASYBULUS

R. J. BUCK: *Thrasybulus and the Athenian Democracy: the Life of an Athenian Statesman.* (*Historia* Einzelschriften 120.) Pp. 141. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998. ISBN: 3-515-07221-7.

The book opens with Hitler and closes with Churchill—grand company for Thrasyboulos Lykou Steirieus, but B.'s concern is that history undersells Thrasybulus, and a major aim is 'to see why he was comparatively neglected' by ancient sources. B. sees him clearly, anyway: 'honourable, honest, and sincere', a man of intelligence and firm democratic principles, not a 'moderate' but a Periclean imperialist—and rather old-fashioned, being (like Pericles) 'reserved, honourable, and courageous, morally and physically'. In short, 'a rather attractive figure, holding purposefully to his love of democracy, a nice man who was apt to finish last'. Readers may be surprised, more because they have never tried to characterize Thrasybulus than because they would do it differently. A specifically Periclean overtone looks unwarranted (B. alleges parallels between *Hell*. 2.4.13f. and the Periclean *epitaphios*, but §17 evokes the ideology of the funeral speech—'the good death'—not Pericles in particular), and the wider moral evaluation may over-interpret a contrast with more plainly ambiguous figures (Alcibiades, Theramenes, Conon, Critias); after all, Thrasybulus met his end in less than pretty circumstances—much smoke (Lysias 28, 29), but surely some fire.

These circumstances do mean we can contemplate eliminating 'Thrasybulus the moderate', but here too I would see some things differently. For example, B. suggests that ἔστεργον τὰ πάροντα (*Hell. Oxy*. 9.3) means the ἐπιεικεῖς and property-holders endorsed Demaenetus' mission, thus dissociating Thrasybulus from that group and from a moderate position. But (i) ἐπιεικῆς does not mean 'moderate', (ii) Thrasybulus could still agree with those ἐπιεικεῖς who did not στέργειν τὰ πάροντα (*Hell. Oxy.* only credits *some* ἐπιεικεῖς with contentment), and (iii) the whole argument is unnecessary: Thrasybulus can be prudent in 397 without being damned as a 'moderate' (just as he can agitate in 411 and occupy Phyle in 403 without being a firebrand ideologue). But he was sometimes unwisely immoderate. B. doubts the authenticity of his speeches at *Hell*. 2.4.40f. (injudiciously triumphalist) and 3.5.16 (undiplomatic). One could disagree (some city-men probably felt bad about abandoning the ἀρχαῖοι νόμοι, so his line may have been psychologically correct; and the situation in 395 surely authorized the observation that Athens was repaying Theban help with interest), but another possibility is that Thrasybulus was simply guilty of misjudgement: compare his misjudgement about rewards for heroes of the revolution or the undiplomatic cry of cowardice hurled at fellow-Athenians after Corinth. Is there a pattern? Might it embrace some of whatever lies behind Ergocles' prosecution? Thrasybulus seems apt to be blunt and in danger of being thought threatening: compare Strattis 20 (αὐθάδης), sch. Ar. *Eccl.* 202–3 (impatient). No more Mr Nice Guy.

As for his neglect: Paus. 1.29.3 describes Thrasybulus as the best of all famous Athenians, but one initially sympathizes with B.: the hero of 403 somehow ought to be more of a name to conjure with. But a name to conjure with in what constituency? The world at large recognizes few classical Athenians (Pericles, Demosthenes, Alcibiades [?]); the 403 War of Liberation is too limited an episode to promote Thrasybulus that far, and any rôle as the 'real' victor of Cynossema, Abydus, and Cyzicus will not even register on the clapometer. Professional observers, by contrast, know that one of the points about classical Athens was the difficulty of getting (and staying) out of the ruck

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of political hopefuls. B. says 'the ancient sources we have largely pass [Thrasybulus] by'; but do they do so more than with many of his contemporaries? Conon is no better served, Archinus, Anytus, Epicrates, Cephalus, and Agyrrhius a good deal less well. B. alleges 'an attempt to supplant [Thrasybulus] by Archinus for the honour of the overthrow of the Thirty', but I am unclear about the evidence (it is a different matter from saying Archinus was a prominent figure after the overthrow), and about a further claim about Callistratus and other faction-leaders being credited with Athens' joining the anti-Spartan front in 395. And if the allegations of neglect do not quite strike home, neither do the suggested explanations, namely, that sources display anti-democratic bias, did not think what Thrasybulus did was significant, and/or regarded him as old-fashioned: the first would be more cogent if one could name Athenians whom sources overvalue because they are anti-democratic, the second just restates the problem, and the third only works as another way of saying Thrasybulus was boring compared with, for example, Alcibiades—as were most people.

In short, given the general understatement to which Athenian politicians are subjected by our post-Thucydidean sources, Thrasybulus does not come off badly. Perhaps B.'s book should really be seen as a protest about modern undervaluation. Great efforts have been expended extracting Callistratus or Eubulus, for example, from the shadows, whereas Thrasybulus is simply taken for granted. This is certainly unfair: no Athenian was more prominent both sides of 403/2, and his career might have made a good Plutarchan life. B. is no Plutarch, but he is right to remind us of what we have missed.

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## ROYAL WOMEN

E. D. Carney: *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*. Pp. xiv + 369. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. Cased, $42.95. ISBN: 0-8061-3212-4.

This excellent book will be welcomed by scholars of Macedon and of women in antiquity alike. In a series of some twenty articles published over the last two decades, Carney has established herself as the leading expert on Macedon's royal women and the dynastic issues associated with them. These lucid, meticulous, and open-minded pieces now find summation in this volume, which continues their virtues and also does much to consolidate other good work in the field by le Bohec, Heckel, and, in particular, Greenwalt (originally to be a co-author).

It is surprising that there has not been a general book on Macedonian royal women since 1932, when Grace Macurdy, to whom C. rightly refers as her 'distinguished predecessor', published her *Hellenistic Queens*, a book very much ahead of its time, however quaintly it may read now, and the scholarly depth of which is belied by its light use of references. The interval from Macurdy is all the more surprising given the rise of women's studies and the fact that Macedonian and Hellenistic royal women are among the very few individual women in the ancient Greek world about whom we actually possess a few connected facts. Perhaps C. is right to hold a feminist disdain for the élite responsible for this neglect.

Her book presents us with more or less everything that can be known about the women associated by marriage or paternity with the kings of Macedon in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. The first seven chapters skilfully integrate narrative history

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