



Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History

By Darien Shanske

Cambridge University Press. Hardcover. Condition: New. 282 pages. Dimensions: 9.2in. x 6.2in. x 1.0in. This book addresses the question of how and why history begins with the work of Thucydides. The History of the Peloponnesian War is distinctive in that it is a prose narrative, meant to be read rather than performed. It focuses on the unfolding of contemporary great power politics to the exclusion of almost all other elements of human life, including the divine. Western history has been largely an extension of Thucydides narrative in that it repeats the unique methodological assumptions and concerns that first appear in his text. The power of Thucydides text has never been attributed either to the charm of its language or to the entertainment value of its narrative, or to some personal attribute of the author. In this study, Darien Shanske analyzes the difficult language and structure of Thucydides History and argues that the text has drawn in so many readers into its distinctive world view precisely because of its kinship to the contemporary language and structure of Classical Tragedy. This kinship is not merely a matter of shared vocabulary or even aesthetic sensibility. Rather, it is grounded in a shared philosophical position,...

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