

# Review of: "Shrewdness, coup d'œil, and genius: the cognitive attributes of the consummate general (Greek antiquity, Byzantine era, modern times)"

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Shrewdness, *coup d'œil*, and genius: the cognitive attributes of the consummate general – Ami-Jacques Rapin; review by Annemarie Ambühl

The present paper is a thorough and at the same time wide-ranging study belonging to the field of the history of terminology – or rather the history of concepts – from Greek antiquity to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The following thoughts are not intended as a criticism of the paper's analysis of the Greek sources and their reception, which is for the most part convincing, but rather as hints at possible further avenues to be explored.

First, in my view, the focus on the senses and the idea of embodiment that both transcend a purely intellectual capacity are especially interesting. Having worked myself on the role of sensory perceptions in ancient war narratives and specifically on touch and taste [1], I was intrigued by the association of *Takt* with touch (p. 23: "[...] one of the translators of *Vom Kriege* also discerns a tactile connotation, i.e., the ability to *touch* the object of reflection."). I would like to hear the author's thoughts whether he thinks such a dimension (i.e., a combination of predominantly visual perception and mental processing) is already present in the ancient sources.

Second, what about the Latin side of things? Wheeler in his discussion of Latin equivalents of the Greek *ankhínoia* (ἀνκῆνοια) tentatively brings into play the terms *consilium* and *providentia* [2]. However, in historiographical works concepts sometimes are conveyed not so much through terminology but rather through narrative. Often in Caesar's own accounts it is precisely the combination of his strategical skills with his battle experience that allows him to make the right decision on the spot, a quality that also extends to his soldiers (e.g., during the battle of the Sabis in *BG* 2.20-25) [3]. Therefore I wonder whether there is a role to play for Julius Caesar as well in the history of the *coup d'œil*? No doubt military writers in modern times were inspired by Caesar's writings, too. There is even an anecdote in Charles de Coynart's biography of Le Chevalier de Folard (1914, p. 20), according to which the young Folard when still a pupil at the Jesuit college was inspired by his nightly reading of Caesar's *Commentaries* to pursue a military career.

Finally, a few formal errors that should be corrected in a revised version of the paper (besides the ones already noted by the other reviewers): "Wheller" should read Wheeler (several times); p. 5: "Titus Quinctius Falminus" should read

Flamininus, “the battle of Mantineum” should read Mantinea; p. 6: “Heraclius” should read Heraclides (as a bit further below); p. 16: “Daston did not base his analysis” should read her analysis.

[1] Annemarie Ambühl (ed.), *Krieg der Sinne – Die Sinne im Krieg. Kriegsdarstellungen im Spannungsfeld zwischen antiker und moderner Kultur / War of the Senses – The Senses in War. Interactions and tensions between representations of war in classical and modern culture = thersites. Journal for Transcultural Presences and Diachronic Identities from Antiquity to Date* 4, 2016 (<https://thersites-journal.de/index.php/thr/issue/view/4>); Annemarie Ambühl, The Touch and Taste of War in Latin Battle Narrative, *Trends in Classics* 11.1, 2019, 119-138.

[2] Everett L. Wheeler, *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery* (Leiden: Brill 1988), 53-54.

[3] On Caesar’s self-presentation as the consummate general see Kimberly Kagan, *The Eye of Command* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 2006), esp. 134-136 and 147-154 on *coup d’oeil* (with reference to Clausewitz). Cf. also J.E. Lendon, The Rhetoric of Combat: Greek Military Theory and Roman Culture in Julius Caesar’s Battle Descriptions, *Classical Antiquity* 18.2, 1999, 273-329 (also on Clausewitz); Adrian Goldsworthy, ‘Instinctive Genius’: The Depiction of Caesar the General, in Kathryn Welch and Anton Powell (eds.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments* (London and Swansea: Classical Press of Wales 2009), 193-219; William Batstone, Caesar Constructing Caesar, in Luca Grillo and Christopher B. Krebs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2018), 43-57.