

BRILL'S COMPANION TO THUCYDIDES



Edited by
Antonios Rengakos
& Antonis Tsakmakis

BRILL

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ANTONIOS RENGAKOS AND ANTONIOS TSAKMAKIS



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ABBREVIATIONS

A.	Aeschylus
Ar.	Aristophanes
Arist.	Aristotle
D.	Demosthenes
D.L.	Diogenes Laertius
D.S.	Diodorus Siculus
E.	Euripides
Hdt.	Herodotus
Hes.	Hesiodus
Pi.	Pindar
Plb.	Polybius
Plu.	Plutarch
Th.	Thucydides
X.	Xenophon
<i>ADB</i>	<i>Allgemeine deutsche Biographie</i> , 56 vols. (Leipzig 1875–1912, rpt. Berlin 1967–71)
<i>CAH</i>	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> , 14 vols. (Cambridge 1970–2001)
<i>CTC</i>	<i>Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum</i> (Washington 1960ff.)
<i>DK</i>	H. Diels – W. Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin 1952)
<i>FGrHist</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , 15 vols. (Berlin, 1923–30; Leipzig 1940–58)
<i>HCT</i>	A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, K.J. Dover, <i>A Historical Commentary on Thucydides</i> , 5 vols. (Oxford 1945–1981)
Hornblower, Comm.	S. Hornblower, <i>A Commentary on Thucydides</i> , vol. I: <i>Books I–III</i> , Oxford 1991, vol. II: <i>Books IV–V.24</i> (Oxford 1996)
<i>LGN</i>	<i>Lexicon of Greek Personal Names</i> (Oxford 1987ff.)
<i>ML</i>	R. Meiggs – D.M. Lewis, <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC</i> , 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1988)
<i>NDB</i>	<i>Neue deutsche Biographie</i> , vol. 1ff. (Munich 1953ff.)

<i>OCT</i>	Oxford Classical Texts
<i>PCG</i>	R. Kassel – C. Austin, <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> , 7 vols. (Berlin/New York 1983ff.)
<i>PG</i>	J.-P. Migne, <i>Patrologiae Graecae Cursus Completus</i> , 166 vols. (Paris 1857–1866)
<i>RE</i>	A. Pauly – G. Wissowa, <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , 83 vols. (Stuttgart 1894–1980)
<i>SH</i>	H. Lloyd-Jones – P. Parsons (eds.), <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> (Berlin/New York 1983)
<i>StV</i>	H. Bengtson, <i>Die Staatsverträge des Altertums</i> , vol. 2: <i>Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 700 bis 338 v. Chr.</i> (Munich, 1975)
<i>VD 16</i>	<i>Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts</i> , Abt. 1, vols. 1–22 (Stuttgart 1983–95)

INTRODUCTION

The publication of a *Companion to Thucydides* hardly requires justification. What is perhaps surprising is the fact that thirty-eight years—a “generation”, roughly speaking—have elapsed since the publication of the last wide-ranging collective work on Thucydides, the *Wege der Forschung* volume edited by Hans Herter (1968; the volume reprinted earlier articles [in German] and itself covered another one-“generation” period, the years 1930–1965). Interestingly enough, one of the contributors to the present volume, Hans-Peter Stahl, first published on Thucydides in 1966, shortly before Herter’s collection came out; what is more, his still-influential German monograph was recently published in English (2003), the language of the present volume.

The last forty years have seen a number of notable changes in Thucydidean studies: the focus has shifted from Thucydides’ method of investigation to modes of representation, from Thucydides’ values to his way of thinking, from the quest for anthropological constants and national characteristics to interpretations based on sociological and political categories, from the author’s philosophy of history to his self-awareness as a writer.

During the course of the twentieth century, Thucydidean scholarship has progressed from a certain “inward-lookingness”, imposed upon it by the subject-matter itself, toward a dialogue with current ideas and events. Prior to this shift, generations of students had grown up with *the* Thucydidean Question concerning the date and process of creation of the incomplete work. Until the middle of the twentieth century, this complex issue absorbed a great deal of scholarly energy and critical effort, and determined the direction of research, regardless of the specific topic of investigation. However, subsequent generations of scholars felt the need to confront the Thucydidean world with contemporary questions, either explicitly or implicitly. The contrast between progress and disaster, between the humanism and the barbarism of the two World Wars; the emergence of ambitious leaders with popular support and unrestricted power; the rise and fall of the superpowers and the bipolarity of the Cold War; the Vietnam War and Western democracy’s existential crisis; the totalitarian practices of the “new world order” and the rise of “neoconservatism”:

all these have left their mark on Thucydidean scholarship, just like various epistemological doctrines or literary theories—positivism, historicism, new criticism, structuralist narratology, the realist school in political science, post-structuralism, etc.

So it is clear that to a certain extent, modern Thucydidean scholars are faced afresh with the fundamental questions concerning the classification and evaluation of Thucydides' work. Scholarship frequently oscillates between admiration and criticism, and judgments sometimes depend on the answers to the questions: Whose counterpart did Thucydides intend to be? And who claimed to be his counterpart thereafter? Unlike Herodotus or Xenophon, the other surviving historians of classical Greece, Thucydides has convinced generations of scholars that he is to be taken seriously as a historian. But is this really so? Who among the three is more of a "historian", and why? And what influences is a historian subject to, when he is simultaneously trying to be a skilled literary artist, a profound moral thinker, a political scientist or a geographer? The varied perspectives of modern Thucydidean studies allow different images of Thucydides to emerge—the scientist striving for accuracy, the psychologist, the narrator, the political theorist—so that the scholarly community always finds in the Athenian a reliable counterpart.

The present volume aims to give an idea of current developments in Thucydidean studies. It does not attempt to sweep away old controversies or to impose one particular approach at the expense of others. Thucydides is rather privileged in the sense that his work has never ceased to be controversial, at least in some important respects. Although his own contribution to the formation of a *communis opinio* on issues such as Pericles and Cleon, the Peloponnesian War and the Delian League, Herodotus and the Greek enlightenment is beyond doubt, there are important aspects of his work about which there is no truly *common* opinion.

Under these circumstances, the production of a short introductory volume seemed unrealistic. Despite this, some readers may still detect certain omissions. Some of these have been deliberate: the once popular theme *Thucydides and the Sophistic Movement* seems to break down into a variety of distinct problems, and indeed the term *sophistic* ceases to be meaningful in modern scholarship. In the case of further, minor omissions, we would invoke the need to keep the volume to a reasonable length, and our desire to minimize delay in its publication.

On the other hand, we have not confined ourselves to summarizing research and illustrating recent progress—we have made an effort to represent the multiplicity of approaches. In many of the contributions to this volume, the focus is on argument rather than exhaustiveness, and it follows that they are to be read in a critical way. Particular emphasis has been placed on Thucydides' *Nachleben*, even though not all scheduled contributions on the historian's reception in contemporary thought came to fruition. Readers should note that the bibliography includes only the titles cited by the authors of individual contributions.

Lastly, the editors would like to express their warmest thanks to Simon Hornblower and Peter Funke for helpful suggestions; to Anna Pettiward for thorough stylistic refinement and editorial assistance; and to Brill's Classics editors Michael Klein Swormink and Irene van Rossum for their cooperation and unfailing patience.

Antonios Rengakos and
Antonis Tsakmakis

Thessaloniki-Nicosia, June 2006

PART ONE

AUTHOR, CONTEXTS, IDEAS

BIOGRAPHICAL OBSCURITIES AND PROBLEMS OF COMPOSITION

Luciano Canfora

Date of Birth

Thucydides cannot have been born later than 455 BC; he was elected *stratēgos* for the year 424/23, and it was customary for no one under the age of thirty to hold that post. There is no reason to believe that he was one of those who ran for the *στρατηγία* as soon as he was old enough. It should also be remembered that Alcibiades, who became *stratēgos* for the first time in 420 at the age of thirty, was considered “too young” (Th. 6.12.2; 6.17.1).

The opening words of Thucydides’ work also offer a clue as to the year of his birth. In the first four lines of his introduction, the historian states that he felt instinctively, “from the moment the first symptoms emerged” (εὐθὺς καθισταμένου), that the conflict that was about to unfold would be “more serious” than “anything that had gone before”. He explains the reasoning and evidence that led him to this belief (1.1.1). He seems, then, to be insisting on the maturity of his own historical and political perception, specifically with reference to the period in which the conflict was brewing (436–432 BC). Thucydides was essentially implying that in those years he was already a competent politician possessed of appropriate historical knowledge. This too suggests that his date of birth may not have been 455 but some years earlier.

Family

At the beginning of the introduction, Thucydides refers to himself simply as “Thucydides the Athenian”. A well-known passage (4.104.4) mentions his father’s name as being Oloros, while his mother’s name, Hegesipyle, comes down to us from ancient biographical tradition.

In actual fact, doubts have been raised over his father’s name. The ancients themselves were not at all certain on this point; the

only ancient biography we have, written by Marcellinus,¹ says: “it should be pointed out that ΟΡΟΛΟΣ—not ΟΛΟΡΟΣ—was his father’s name: the λ is in the first syllable, the ρ in the second. Didymus too claims that the first spelling is wrong. The stele over his tomb that reads ΘΟΥΚΥΔΙΔΗΣ ΟΡΟΛΟΥ ΑΛΙΜΟΥΣΙΟΣ proves that ΟΡΟΛΟΣ is the correct version” (*Vit. Thuc.* 16). This passage has been picked apart by modern commentators, but it would serve no purpose here to consider the various opinions. The negative effect of these rather forced interpretations is clear from the fact that the words on Thucydides’ tombstone, quoted by Marcellinus, are almost always corrected² by modern editors, in spite of its generally being inadvisable to correct what is written on a tombstone, and in spite of the consistency evident throughout this passage in Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 16).³ A single correction is sufficient: at the beginning of the sentence it is evident that one of the two very similar and closely related names⁴ has been omitted. Biographical tradition, or at least Marcellinus’ version of it, clearly refers to a document—a tomb presumed to be Thucydides’ discovered by the archaeologist Polemon of Ilium (ca. 220–160 BC) among the “Cimonian monuments (Κιμώνια μνήματα)” —but not to the words of Thucydides himself. Nevertheless, according to our manuscripts, Thucydides refers to himself in 4.104.4 (he was *stratēgos* that year) as “Thucydides, son of OLOROS”: what more authoritative source could there be for any discussion on the exact spelling of his name? Yet ancient scholars—at least if we are to judge by Marcellinus—based their conclusions not on the text but on documentary evidence. William Prentice (1939) 38, deduced from this that ancient scholars (in particular Didymus, Marcellinus’ source in this case) *did not* find the name “Oloros” in Thucydides’ text

¹ According to Hemmerdinger (1955) 62–63, Μάρκελλος.

² ΟΡΟΛΟΥ becomes ΟΛΟΡΟΥ. There is a single noteworthy exception: Krüger (1832) 3; cf. also Krüger (1847).

³ At the beginning of his biography Marcellinus writes Όλόρου: the other spelling derives from the sources (most importantly Polemon) he uses when writing § 16. Precisely for this reason, then, it is inadvisable to correct.

⁴ The correction suggested here differs from the generally accepted one, which inverts the order of the two names. As far as the variant readings of the manuscripts are concerned, the most complete information is provided by Alberti (1972–2000) 1.4. Obviously, the preferred text is the Palatinus (Heidelbergensis) Gr. 252 (X–XI cent.), the most ancient source for the *Vita Thucydidis*. Here, in fact, this is the text we have followed, ignoring the numerous corrections of Grauert, which are usually taken as definitive solutions.

(otherwise they would have cited it) and that therefore the patronymic⁵ should be removed from the text in 4.104.4.

Such an action would have far from insignificant consequences. It would mean the disappearance of Thucydides' own testimony to his Oloros ancestry, the author's testimony to a relationship that ancient biographers connected with Thrace (where one of the kings was called Oloros and had a daughter named Hegesipyle) and with the family of Miltiades and his son, Cimon.⁶ If the author's testimony regarding the patronymic Oloros is removed, the only supporting evidence for such connections would be the writing on his tombstone, and some doubts might legitimately be raised as to the authenticity of that inscription.

There is another possible explanation, however. Marcellinus' interesting discussion of ΟΛΟΡΟΥ/ΟΡΟΛΟΥ can be interpreted as follows: the form ΟΡΟΛΟΥ was found in the inscription on Thucydides' tombstone (which, for the ancients, was incontrovertibly authentic); this led to doubt being cast on the other form, *even though* it appeared in Thucydides' works. If we accept this explanation, then the supporting evidence would remain in Thucydides' text.⁷

It is nevertheless rather curious that Thucydides' father is the only ΟΛΟΡΟΣ recorded as having lived in Attica; even from the mass of archive material available today, he can still be defined as the only Athenian of that name. This might lead some to surmise that in 4.104.4 τὸν Ὀλόρου was inserted *after* the "discovery" of the tombstone bearing the name and patronymic (but on the subject of the burial place, cf. below, § 3).

Even if the biographical evidence is ignored, it is undeniable that Thucydides himself alludes to his connections and prestige in Thrace, and also clarifies them. The reference occurs on the page where he

⁵ In addition, the spelling differs from that on the tombstone.

⁶ On the Thracian Oloros, prince of Σαπαῖοι, cf. Hdt. 6.39.2; 6.41.2. This Thracian ruler also had a daughter named Hegesipyle whom he gave to Miltiades, father of Cimon, as a wife. On the form of the name, see Luschnat (1956) 134–39; Cavaignac (1929) 282.

⁷ In Thucydidean manuscripts the form Ὀλόρου (4.104.4) seems to have been preferred from a rather early date. It is found in a vast number of writers from the first to the ninth century: from Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Rh.* 6.1) to Plutarch (*Cim.* 4.1); from Aelius Aristides (III, p. 200 Canter) to Themistius (*or.* IV, p. 85 Schenkl-Downey), from Agathias (*Historiae* 2.28.2) to Photius (*Bibl.* ch. 60, 19b41). Marcellinus' mention of the tombstone inscription as evidence of the correct form of the name is therefore all the more precious.

relates his own experience as *stratēgos*, in particular the surrender of Amphipolis before he was able to come to the city's aid (4.105.1). "On that occasion," he writes, "Brasidas, fearing the arrival of help in the shape of [Thucydides'] ships from Thasos, and aware that Thucydides owned the rights to the gold mines (κτησίν τε ἔχειν τῶν χρυσείων μετάλλων ἐργασίας) in that part of Thrace, as a result of which he had considerable influence (δύνασθαι: this is a verb of no little force) on the most prominent people in the area,⁸ speeded up his attempts to capture the city [Amphipolis] before that help arrived". If we were to follow Marcellinus' paraphrase of this text (*Vit. Thuc.* 14: καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ Θράκης κτήματα καὶ ἐν Σκαπησύλῃ μέταλλα χρυσᾶ) we would have to insert καὶ after ἔχειν into Thucydides' own sentence and take it as meaning—as is perhaps preferable⁹—that in Thrace Thucydides owned both "estates" (κτησιν or κτήματα) and the lucrative contract rights to the Pangaeus goldmines.¹⁰ These Thracian "estates" cannot be unconnected with his family ties. The idea of a strong link between Thucydides and Thrace,¹¹ or rather the Thracian ruling classes, an idea prevalent in ancient biography, is thus given more weight.

Three Strange Monuments

The more complete information we have regarding an actual family tie with Miltiades and Cimon is quite a different matter. The basis of this was essentially the supposed tomb of Thucydides discovered by Polemon at the beginning of the second century BC "amongst the Κιμώνια μνήματα, near the Melite gate, in the deme of Koile (ἐν Κοίλῃ)"¹² in Attica. It is not known exactly why Polemon, the

⁸ In the same passage Thucydides says of himself (though attributing the thought to Brasidas) that he was in a position to call upon troops from Thrace as allies to Athens.

⁹ Cf. Canfora (1979) 377 n. 424.

¹⁰ The mines were obviously owned by the state, cf. J.K. Davies (1971) 237.

¹¹ The establishment of a close link between Thucydides and Thrace actually gave rise to a theory that Oloros (the historian's father) was a Thracian who had moved to Athens (P. Oxy. XV, 1800, fr. 2, col. 2, 68–69).

¹² Not, then, in Halimous, which according to the stele is the deme where Thucydides was born. Plutarch (*Cim.* 4.4) too was perplexed by the fact that Thucydides was buried with Cimon's family even though he belonged to another deme. A fellow-*stratēgos* of Thucydides', Nicostratus Σκαμβωνίδης, belonged to the

discoverer, was called *στηλοκόπας*, but one interpretation of the term—Karl Reinhardt's—is "falsifier of tombstone inscriptions".¹³ Furthermore, the *Κιμώνια μνήματα* that Polemon gave as the archaeological site of the tomb can only refer to the burial, outside the city, of Κίμων Κόάλεμος and his mares (Hdt. 6.103), whom the sons of Peisistratus had killed in 524 BC.¹⁴ For it to be plausible that Thucydides and his son Timotheus were also buried there—as Polemon maintains—it would be necessary to accept that down the years the entire lineage, including Miltiades (son of the so-called Κόάλεμος) and his son Cimon, was buried near those *μνήματα*. But it is not at all clear that this was the case. Apart from anything else, we have an excellent source for the fact that Cimon was buried in Cyprus.¹⁵ Marcellinus, clearly following Polemon, observes that "[Miltiades and Thucydides] must have been related: in fact no outsider is buried there" (*Vit. Thuc.* 17). However, serious doubt is cast on this theory by the very way in which Marcellinus (or his source) describes that tomb; he writes: "it is there that the tomb (τάφος) of Herodotus and Thucydides is pointed out (δείκνυται)" (*Vit. Thuc.* 17). The only possible sense that can be attributed to this invaluable expression is that the tomb in question—a single tomb: the Greek is quite unambiguous on this point—must have been a monument, obviously erected at a relatively late date,¹⁶ designed to celebrate *both* fathers of history, Herodotus and Thucydides. A similar monument in which the two historians are represented by a two-faced herma (a copy of a model apparently dating back to the fourth century BC) is now in the *Museo Nazionale* at Naples;¹⁷ further confirmation of the connection between the two historians is found in the ancient anecdote which details how the young Thucydides was accompanied by his father, Oloros, to Herodotus' public readings (Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 54).¹⁸

same tribe (IV) as the historian, if indeed Thucydides was Ἀλιμούσιος. As is well known, contemporary historians have discussed similar cases, which are generally considered exceptional.

¹³ Cf. Luschkat (1956) 139.

¹⁴ Cf. Wilamowitz (1877) 347; Stein (1894) 199, *ad loc.*; Pasquali (1913) 178. But even earlier than Wilamowitz there is Krüger (1832) 85–86.

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Cim.* 19.5 (quoting Naucrates, a pupil of Isocrates).

¹⁶ It seems in fact that, before Polemon, no one was aware of its existence.

¹⁷ Inv. 6239. On this cf. *CIG*, III, nr. 6065, where previous editions are listed; Arias (1966) 1029.

¹⁸ The anecdote is to be found in Photius, *Bibl.* ch. 60 and in Suidas, *s.v.* Θουκυδίδης (I/2, p. 721 Adler). It involves all three of the characters named on the monument: Herodotus, Thucydides, and Oloros.

In short, the monument was almost certainly erected some considerable time after Thucydides' death, when the "cult" of this master of historiography (considered worthy of a place on the pedestal next to Herodotus) was already firmly established. It may have happened after the "canonization" resulting from the work of the Alexandrians.¹⁹ In any case, the "monument", first reported by Polemon, had no value as a biographical *document*. It should be pointed out that the inscription underneath Thucydides' bust in the two-faced herma is simply ΘΟΥΚΥΔΙΔΗΣ (without the patronymic).

Marcellinus would not have read Polemon directly but through the work of Didymus of Alexandria, his main source for the death and burial of Thucydides (*Vit. Thuc.* 31–33). His account is therefore an indication of how much was known about Thucydides' tomb *at the time Didymus was writing* (i.e., at the end of the first century BC). Didymus mentions various other tombs of the historian, both in Thrace and in Athens: the one in Athens bore a mysterious symbol (ἱκρίον), attesting to the fact that the deceased had died in exile and the tomb was empty.

The prevailing thinking on the subject some two centuries later can be gathered from the *periēgētes* Pausanias, whose *Description of Greece* is thought to have been written between 160 and 180 AD, almost four centuries after Polemon and almost six centuries after the death of Thucydides. In the Book on Attica, Pausanias briefly refers to "Thucydides' tomb" as "not far from the Melite gate" (1.23.9): the same monument, then, that Polemon described as Ἡροδότου καὶ Θουκυδίδου τάφος.²⁰

There is another point of interest in Pausanias' account, although the text is undoubtedly unsound. He reports that the creator (or rather, patron) of the monument in honour of Thucydides on the

¹⁹ It is superfluous to point out that modern scholars have devoted much time and energy to correcting this sentence. The various solutions have involved removing the name of Herodotus from the text (Schwartz [1909] 498, n. 2), changing *Herodotus* to *Herodes* [Atticus] (Korais [1811] 390), or to *Oloros* (Sauppe [1896] 74), this last suggestion receiving the overenthusiastic approval of Wilamowitz (1877) 344 n. 27.

²⁰ On Pausanias' considerable dependence on Polemon (regarding the Acropolis in Athens) cf. Wilamowitz (1877) 347 n. 31 ("... in Pausanias' *Burgbeschreibung* [...] kein Werk erwähnt wird, das nachweislich jünger als Polemon wäre") and, even earlier, Bergk (1845) 964.

Acropolis was Oinobius,²¹ and that it was said to have been Oinobius who “had engineered the decree allowing Thucydides to return to Athens” (1.23.9). Pausanias, who often reports what the local *ciceroni* said about the various monuments, certainly does not mean that Oinobius was the artist or the craftsman,²² but rather that he *had commissioned* the work.

It seems almost too good to be true, but Kyriakos Pittakys, the curator of ancient history at the Museum of Athens, maintains in his most famous book, *L’Ancienne Athènes*, published in Athens in 1835, that he himself found on the Acropolis “sur un fragment de piédistal, cette inscription:

ΘΟΥΚΥΔΙΔΗΣΟΛΟΡΟΥ
.....Α...

Jahn and Michaelis’ dismissal of this document is based on rather debatable premises: the “disappearance” of the fragment that Pittakys said he had found (a not unusual occurrence) and, above all, a pre-conceived judgement of Pittakys (“fallaci Pittacis ut videtur auctoritate”). Moreover, the harsh reviewer in the *Quarterly Review* is enthusiastic about the mention of this particular discovery in Pittakys’ book and

²¹ Arias (1966) 1029 sums it up well: “Not far from the Melite gate in Athens his [Thucydides’] tomb was erected by Oinobius (Pausanias, 1.23.9)”.

²² According to Rocha-Pereira (1981) 263. Obviously, *ἐργον* (the word Pausanias uses) together with the genitive can also very often mean the *artist* responsible for creating that particular monument.

²³ Pittakys (1835) 272. (I owe my acquaintance with this rare book to the kindness of Professor Marino Zorzi). Pittakys’ finding was then mentioned by Giffard (1837) 147. Giffard’s reference was noted by the (anonymous) reviewer of the *Quarterly Review* (July 1837, 229), who in fact quoted the theretofore unknown epigraph [*CIG* I had been published some years earlier, in 1828, too early for it to be included]. The following year Schubart-Walz (1838) 111, mentioned the epigraph in their book on Pausanias, referring to the review in the *Quarterly Review*. Thus what circulated as a result of this book was the information as reported by the *Quarterly Review* rather than that by Pittakys’ book—see, for example, Bergk (1845) 964 n. 6, who quotes Schubart-Walz (1838). The anonymous reviewer of the *Quarterly Review*, 228, was harsh in his judgement of Pittakys (“exhibiting very little discrimination”) while recognizing his “great industry and enthusiasm”. In 1848 Preller, 365–66, accepted the validity of the document, but he too relies on Schubart-Walz (1838). Hitzig-Blümner (1896) 262, spoke of “angeblich gefundenes Fragment”, which was however “verschollen”. Gurlitt (1890) 158, was skeptical. In 1901 Jahn-Michaelis, 50, opined that Giffard should not have given credence to Pittakys and suggested that the whole thing had been invented. In the meantime, in effect, Pittakys’ credibility had been somewhat undermined. On Pittakys, cf. Larfeld (1907) 86–87.

Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, who was well acquainted with the work of the Athenian curator, appreciated his “praktischen Verstand und grosse Erfahrung”.²⁴ There is no factual proof that the inscribed fragment did *not* exist.

As for Pausanias, Pittakys supposed that the *periēgētes* had actually seen two different statues: one of Oinobius and the other of Thucydides. This was obviously pure fantasy; the passage from Pausanias is wholly ambivalent. Pausanias’ text does however give an idea of the late but rich blossoming of local scholarly study of the Acropolis. And the fragment found by Pittakys probably belonged to a relatively late monument, whose creator had already adopted the name Oloros as Thucydides’ patronymic.

The legend was bolstered by another pseudo-erudite discovery, namely that Oinobius was responsible for an *ad personam* decree authorising Thucydides’ return from exile. The idea of any such decree is clearly nonsensical, despite the fact that the ingenuous Pausanias believed it:²⁵ in 404, according to biographical hearsay the year of Thucydides’ return, the victorious Spartans had issued a decree permitting *the return of all exiles* (Xenophon, *HG* 2.2.20) (there is thus no reason why Thucydides should have needed a special decree). And after the surrender of the Thirty (September 403) there was again a general amnesty (Aristotle, *Ath.* 39). In short, at no point in the period in question did the preconditions exist for an *ad personam* decree allowing Thucydides to return.²⁶ What certain *ciceroni* (ἐξηγηταί) blithely related to Pausanias—who proceeded rather confusedly to include it in his own brief account—is therefore unfounded. The

²⁴ Fatouros (1999) 1462.

²⁵ A harsh but amusing indictment of the approach adopted by Pausanias and by modern commentators on him is to be found in the best biographical essay on Thucydides: *Die Thukydideslegende* (1877) by Wilamowitz.

²⁶ Unless, that is, one chooses to believe, like Hermippus (third century BC), that Thucydides was a distant descendant of Peisistratus (Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 18); and in that case one has to wonder how he could ever have been elected *stratēgos*! However, it is well known that this universally discredited idea is a naïve inference based on the respectful tone with which Thucydides speaks of Peisistratus and the far from “sympathetic” tone with which he speaks of the so-called tyrannicide perpetrated by Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Another solution is to imagine that Oinobius (an Oinobius was *stratēgos* in 410–409 BC) had had a decree passed for Thucydides in *that* year (see Jacoby, *FGrHist* 328 F 137, Comm. 409–410 n. 4) and that Thucydides had preferred not to take advantage of it. The theory looks forced if one takes into account the clear connection Pausanias makes between Oinobius’ initiative and Thucydides’ tragic return to Athens in 404.

legend feeds upon itself. According to Pliny the Elder (*HN* 7.111), Thucydides' recall from exile was a token of recognition of his historiographical works: "Thucydidem imperatorem Athenienses in exilium egere, rerum conditorem revocare, eloquentiam mirati cuius virtutem damnarunt". The passing of time spawned an ever-increasing number of highly imaginative explanations, understandably enough. It is significant that Polemon, Pausanias' literary source, did not speak of Oinobius—one might expect to find mention of him in Marcellinus (Didymus).

The inspiration for all this creativity was the fact of Thucydides' twenty-year exile (423–404 BC). Let us take a closer look at this.

*Stratēgos*²⁷

The only incontrovertible fact in Thucydides' biography, apart from the matter of the plague which he contracted in 430,²⁸ is that in 424–423 BC he was *stratēgos* "with specific responsibilities in Thrace (στρατηγὸν τῶν ἐπὶ Θράκης)", and that he shared these responsibilities in this sensitive area (which was under serious threat from Brasidas) with a certain Eucles, "to whom, right from the moment when he left Athens, the task of defending Amphipolis had been entrusted (ὅς ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηναίων παρῆν αὐτοῖς φύλαξ τοῦ χωρίου)" (4.104.4). In the assignment of duties to the council of ten *stratēgoi* of that year (who included Nicias, Cleon, Lamachus, Demosthenes, and Hippocrates among others) considerable importance was surely attached to the fact that Brasidas, with unexpected enterprise, was threatening Athenian positions in Thrace and that Thucydides was famously well connected with the local leaders in that area. The assignment of specific areas of operation to the individual *stratēgos* was not arbitrary; given

²⁷ The current "vulgata" on Thucydides' career is the following: "By family tradition he was a conservative, though an admirer of Pericles. He had some connection with Thracian gold mines (4.105.1), which may explain why he was stationed as admiral in that region in 424. Exiled, perhaps justly, for failure to relieve Amphipolis from Brasidas' attack, he tells us only that this enabled him to get information from both sides (5.26.5). He probably died in Athens soon after 399 and was buried there. There is, however, wide ancient speculation on the place and manner of his death" (Immerwahr [1985] 441). This widely accepted opinion needs to be reconsidered.

²⁸ Th. 2.48.3: αὐτός τε νοσήσας.

his interests in the mines of the area, it is not impossible that Thucydides had requested this assignment himself. From the same text (4.104.4) we also know that while Brasidas was exerting political or diplomatic pressure on the city from his camp close to Amphipolis, Thucydides “was on the island of Thasos” and had with him “a total of seven ships” (4.104.5).

Underestimating how far Brasidas’ audacity would take him (although far from his base, he conducted the campaign in Thrace in the middle of winter), the Athenians had taken no special measures to fortify the Thracian front. Only two *stratēgoi*—Eucles and Thucydides—had been assigned there, together with a modest military contingent; Eucles was directly responsible for Amphipolis and Thucydides for patrolling the relevant coast.²⁹ This poor strategic assessment must be attributed to the council of *stratēgoi* as a whole, to the assignment of the tasks as decided by the ten of them collectively—and not solely to imprudence or irresponsibility on the part of the two envoys to the region. Blame has been laid with Thucydides on account of his having been at Thasos with a fleet of ships;³⁰ yet his decision to be based there gave him maximum mobility: movement by sea is far, far quicker than movement by land, and as he had to watch over both the mines and Amphipolis, he chose to avail himself of a small naval force that was ready to sail quickly in either direction. What could not have been foreseen was that the local political situation in Amphipolis would be so unfavorable, and that Brasidas’ appeal (unconditional “freedom”) would be so attractive that the city would surrender to and agree terms with him in a matter of hours. Faced with this disastrous state of affairs in Amphipolis, Eucles had no choice but to send for Thucydides. Amphipolis was fifty miles, or half a day’s sailing, from Thasos (4.104.4). Thucydides needed another half-day to retrace the journey made by Eucles’ messenger. In spite of leaving immediately and moving rapidly, Thucydides did not reach Eion till evening, by which time Amphipolis had already defected (4.106.3–4). He did however manage to save Eion; had he not acted so quickly, Brasidas, who was already moving in an attempt to get there before him, “would have taken Eion at dawn” (4.106.4).³¹

²⁹ Amphipolis is not on the coast; it was reached by sailing up the river Strymon from its estuary, from the river port of Eion.

³⁰ Cf. Westlake (1969) 134–35.

³¹ On Mazzarino’s erroneous hypothesis (1965–66) 1.253–55 (“una menzogna di Tucidide”) cf. Canfora (1970a) 111–12 n. 3.

The whole of chapter 4.108 is devoted to describing and insistently emphasising the serious consequences for Athens of the defection of Amphipolis, the panic that this caused (108.1), and the measures taken by the Athenians as a result (108.6). However, there is no mention of the punishment inflicted on the *stratēgoi*; this is noteworthy, given that elsewhere (4.65.3) Thucydides mentions disciplinary action taken against the *stratēgoi* as an immediate consequence of the account of events that had led to it. He insists on the seriousness of the setback suffered at Amphipolis with the same force he uses to describe the effects of the defeat in Sicily (8.1) and of the defection of Euboia (8.96). The twenty-year exile resulting from his “command in connection with Amphipolis (τὴν ἐς Ἀμφίπολιν στρατηγίαν)”³² is spoken of “quite by chance” (“nur auf zufällige Veranlassung”)³³ in 5.26.5, in a digression in the so-called “second introduction”. It has not gone unnoticed that this important detail, full of implications for his historiographical work amongst other things, was not hinted at “with even a single word”³⁴ in the passage to which it most obviously belonged (i.e., the passage on the consequences of the defection of Amphipolis); nor that there is no reference to it in the very long initial introduction (1.1–22) which in fact culminates in the description of Thucydides’ historiographical method (collecting and examining data: 1.22). Eduard Schwartz³⁵ found this so unacceptable that he conjectured that Thucydides’ “posthumous editor” had inserted material into 5.26.5 which was intended for the only introduction in which it would make any sense, namely the “first” (1.1–22). This introduction, moreover, seems clearly (from various pieces of evidence) to have been written in the light of the defeat of 404; in other words, in the form in which we read it, it was written after that date. This undermines the theory of a second introduction written by Thucydides himself.

³² This is the only translation that makes any sense. In Canfora (1970a) 123–26, I listed some of the odder translations suggested by modern commentators. Andrewes, *HCT* 5.432 n. 1, came up with: “after my leading of a force with Amphipolis as object”, but this deprives *στρατηγία* of its usual associations with the magistrature.

³³ This was noted by Classen-Steup (1912) 225. See also Mosca (1942) 46: “È pur notevole la sua [i.e. Thucydides] grandezza d’animo, perché colpito ingiustamente d’esilio durante la guerra del Peloponneso, consacra appena poche righe a descrivere l’episodio che gli aveva fruttato l’ingiusta condanna”.

³⁴ “Auch nur mit einem Wort”: von Fritz (1967) 1.538.

³⁵ (1919) 59–60.

The Editor

In his discussion of the so-called “second” introduction (5.26), Eduard Schwartz referred to the “posthumous editor”. For ancient scholars the editor in question was Xenophon (D.L. 2.57: “he could have appropriated Thucydides’ unpublished work for himself, and yet he published it in Thucydides’ name”).³⁶ It is clear to anyone reading the opening words of the *Hellenica*—which are clearly not opening words—that this first part of Xenophon’s work, which constitutes an unfinished and unequal “Supplementum Thucydidis”, makes sense only if it is taken *together with Thucydides’ Book VIII*; in other words, it is part of those *Θουκυδίδου βιβλία λανθάνοντα* which, according to Diogenes (2.57), Xenophon wished to publish rather than present as his own work. A work that had been conceived not only as “continuatio Thucydidis”, but also as formally self-contained, could not have begun *ex abrupto* with *μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα*.

In all probability, then, Xenophon is the “editor” whose touch Schwartz recognized in 5.26.

Since Thucydides marks the end of every single year of the war in his narrative (which is in fact divided into years, each one corresponding to a book) with his own name, and since this “signature”³⁷ is systematically missing from 5.1–83, we are forced to conclude that these chapters were also not Thucydides’ definitive version but rather part of the *βιβλία λανθάνοντα* edited by Xenophon. This throws more light on 5.26—the introduction is in fact the work of the “editor”, not of Thucydides—and provides explicit information about the discovery and circulation of those *λανθάνοντα*: “This part too was written by the same Thucydides the Athenian, following the same criteria . . .” (5.26.1).³⁸

³⁶ The source of this important piece of information may be the ever-reliable Demetrius of Magnesia (first century BC). The ancient debate on the “real” author of Thucydides’ Book VIII, of which there are echoes in Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 43), and in which Xenophon’s name was mentioned, provides indirect confirmation of what Diogenes says.

³⁷ As Hemmerding (1948) 104–17, rightly calls it; cf. Dain (1964) 116–17.

³⁸ Likewise the philosopher Seneca, when posthumously publishing his father’s historical works, included a *praefatio* in which he spoke of the dead author and his work (*Luc. Annaei Senecae opera quae supersunt*, ed. Fr. Haase, III [Lipsiae 1878] 436–37). The almost word-for-word repetitions from 5.25.1 found in 5.27.1–2 demonstrate that 5.25–26 is new material inserted into a preexisting context.

So, is the autobiographical information in 5.26.5 regarding the exile of the writer to the Peloponnese actually about *Xenophon* (who had in fact spent his period of exile in the Peloponnese: *An.* 5.1) and *not* *Thucydides*? This hypothesis, which has been put forward on other occasions,³⁹ has been objected to on the grounds that τὴν ἐς Ἀμφίπολιν στρατηγίαν does not seem appropriate to *Xenophon*.⁴⁰

The traditional view—that it is *Thucydides* who in 5.26.5 describes himself as having spent twenty years in exile—is doubtful for two reasons: a) the author of 5.26.5 says that his period of exile was spent in the Peloponnese, while *Thucydides*' ancient biographers unanimously placed him in Thrace; b) a fragment of Aristotle (137 Rose = 125 Gigon), mistakenly twisted or ignored by modern scholars, attests to *Thucydides* being in Athens in 411, not in exile.

There are two further points that undermine the traditional view: 1) Aristotelian scholars appear to be unaware of *Thucydides*' exile;⁴¹ 2) both *Demetrius of Phalerum* (*FGrHist* 228 F 3) and *Philochorus* (*FGrHist* 328 F 137) assert that after the defeat in Sicily (413 bc), Athens approved the return of the exiles, which raises the question: for what possible reason would *Thucydides* not have returned at that time?

Eduard Schwartz, once again eschewing the liberties taken by the "imitators" who "correct" both *Demetrius* and *Philochorus*, proffered an explanation which, though weak, seemed convincing to *Felix Jacoby*: "Wie dem auch sei, [italics L.C.] Thukydidēs hat von der rechtlichen Möglichkeit, nach Athen zurückzukehren, während des Krieges keinen Gebrauch gemacht, sondern hat gewartet, bis Athen gefallen war".⁴² But in that case *Thucydides* would not have referred

³⁹ Canfora (1970a); (1977a); (1999b).

⁴⁰ However, once 5.1–83 is no longer read as *Xenophon*'s "Paraleipomena" and 5.26 is no longer read as an introduction written by the "editor", ἐς Ἀμφίπολιν is an almost inevitable interpolation. It is still very possible that ἐς Ἀμφίπολιν is a note that was inserted in the margin of the text when 5.26 was generally considered to be *Thucydides*' second introduction. If this is the case, then στρατηγία (said by *Xenophon* of himself) is to be interpreted as the command of the Ten Thousand (the formal role of the leaders was "stratēgos").

⁴¹ Canfora (1999b) 49–65. *Theopompus* of Chios (378–? bc), who continued and emulated *Thucydides*' work, also seems to exclude *Thucydides* from the ranks of illustrious Athenian exiles. In a passage of Book VII of the *Philippica* he provides a list (*FGrHist* 115 F 105), adopted by *Cornelius Nepos* (*Chabrias*, 3.2–4), but does not include *Thucydides* in this.

⁴² Schwartz (1906) 28–29; *Jacoby*, *FGrHist* 328 F 137, Comm. 409–10 n. 4.

to twenty years of exile as simply being a *consequence* of the Amphipolis affair: those long years of exile were at least partly the result of an autonomous decision of his own.

If the information we read in 5.26.5 regarding exile does refer to Thucydides, then there is only one (partial) solution that does not force us to ignore the hard facts; it can be summarized as follows:

- a. After the failure at Amphipolis, the two *stratēgoi* responsible (or perhaps Thucydides alone?⁴³) chose to go into exile,⁴³ thus avoiding having to give the ritual “report”, which, given popular anger at the defeat they had sustained, would probably have led to some kind of punishment.
- b. In 413 all exiles, including Thucydides, were given the option of returning.⁴⁴
- c. In 411 Thucydides was in fact in Athens (as Aristotle was aware) and was able to witness at first hand the oligarchic revolution; he even knows some of the highly secret *arcana* concerning it (the role of Antiphon, for example: 8.68.1; the fact that the list of the Five Thousand did not exist: 8.92.11).
- d. After the demise of the Four Hundred or after the full restoration of democracy, perhaps because he was too closely connected with the authors of the oligarchic conspiracy, Thucydides preferred to leave Athens again, until, with the surrender in 404, there was no longer any reason for him to choose to remain in exile.
- e. The editor to whom we are indebted for the “second introduction” may be speaking of a total of “twenty years” (not consecutive) spent outside the city, leaving out the troubled period 413–411; this is one way of explaining Thucydides’ involvement and confirms the relationship between the posthumous editor (Xenophon) and Thucydides.
- f. In the so-called “second introduction” (5.26) it is Xenophon speaking “in persona Thucydidis”. As Hemmerdinger rightly noted, he frees himself once and for all from the obligation to “sign” for

⁴³ In these cases too, the term is *φεύγειν* (scholars of ancient law speak of *pseudophugē*; cf. Kahrstedt [1934] 91–92).

⁴⁴ This assertion has been demolished by modern commentators, who remove it [τὴν ἐν Σικελίᾳ] from Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 32, even though Marcellinus says he takes the information from Demetrius and Philochorus.

Thucydides. He provides information that was meant to go in the first and only introduction, as Schwartz has pointed out. He gives a mediocre and occasionally flawed explanation of Thucydides' original decision to view the various conflicts in the period 431–404 as constituting a single war⁴⁵ (to support this idea he even resorts to mentioning the oracle's prediction that the conflict would last twenty-seven years) and seeks the reader's assent with an expression (26.2) which recurs, in almost identical form, as the last sentence of *Cyropaedia* (8.8.27).

- g. He reveals that Thucydides had left a *more or less complete* account of the *entire* conflict (26.1) and also provides a piece of biographical information, namely that during his years of exile from Athens, Thucydides had been able to observe the conflict from the Peloponnese camp (the connection *παρὰ τοῖς Πελοποννησίων διὰ τὴν φύγην* is strong).⁴⁶
- h. He writes as if the conflict had finished quite some time previously; in fact he speaks of it as an event from the distant past, a "memory" ("I remember that, until it finished, they used to say that . . ."). This too is (indirect) biographical information about Thucydides.

His Death

Another serious doubt regarding the traditional biography seems to be raised by the reassessment of an inscription in Thasos, which would alter the date of the historian's death by several years. According to ancient (and modern) biographers, Thucydides either died in exile or just after his return from exile (Pausanias actually maintains that he died *during the return journey*).

The document in question is the list of the archons of Thasos. In the year 398–397 the archon is listed as Λίχας ὁ Ἀρκεσιλάου. A Spartan Λίχας Ἀρκεσιλάου⁴⁷ is well known to us from the wealth of information Thucydides provides on him. Who was Lichas? In 421

⁴⁵ He speaks (incorrectly) of Ἐπιδεύριον πόλεμον but makes no mention at all of the war against Syracuse.

⁴⁶ Obviously this does not refer to the years of peace (421–415/4) when anyone and everyone would have been able to enter the ex-enemy's territory.

⁴⁷ The name together with the patronymic is found in Th. 5.50.4; 8.32.2 etc.

he had been sent as ambassador to Argos (5.22.2); in 420 his *quadriga* won at Olympia but he was prevented from crowning his charioteer and was whipped and driven away “in spite of his age (ἄνδρα γέροντα)” (X. *HG* 3.2.21; cf. Th. 5.50; Paus. 6.2.1–3). In 418/17 he negotiated the treaty between Sparta and Argos (5.76–79). In 412/11 he was sent along with eleven envoys to Asia, where he found himself having to deal with the delicate diplomatic negotiations between Sparta and Persia, to the point of becoming involved in a dispute with Tissaphernes (8.39; 42–43; 52; 57–58). He tried in vain to appease the inhabitants of Miletus who were hostile to Persian rule, attempting to persuade them to be patient “until the war was finished” (8.84.5). It is in this context that Thucydides refers to Lichas’ death as occurring “later” and to the refusal of the Milesians to allow him to be buried there (8.84.5). For Pouilloux-Salviat,⁴⁸ Lichas, son of Arkesilaos, who appears as archon in Thasos in 398/97, and Lichas the important Spartan diplomat are one and the same person. To arrive at this conclusion, however, they must a) ignore the fact that Xenophon describes Lichas as already being “old” in 420; b) accept that Lichas managed to obtain the honorary title of archon in Thasos despite being a Spartan; c) stretch Thucydides’ “later” in 8.84.5 to cover a time lapse of at least thirteen or fourteen years. This raises the question of why exactly Lichas would have been in Miletus of all places at the time of his death. Maybe Jeanne and Louis Robert,⁴⁹ were right in their assertion that the information regarding his death at Miletus and the Milesians’ refusal to allow him to be buried there “colle aux événements de 411 et non à un séjour postérieur qui n’est inventé . . . que pour s’accorder avec l’archontat honorifique à Thasos”. They further point out that Lichas was a very common name,⁵⁰ although they do not mention other instances of Λίχας Ἀρκεσιλάου.

All things considered, it can be said that the argument based on the identification of the two figures named Lichas has too many weaknesses to form the basis of a reorganization of Thucydides’ biography. Does this then make 404–403 preferable as the date for the end of Thucydides’ twenty-year exile, his return and death?

Not necessarily. It is true that Thucydides makes no reference to the Thirty. For a historian who wrote at such enormous length on

⁴⁸ (1983) 376–403.

⁴⁹ (1984) 468–70.

⁵⁰ Cf. also Fraser-Matthews (1997) 275 (but also Fraser-Matthews [1987] 289).

the rule of the Four Hundred, of whose leaders at least Theramenes and Critias were *key figures in both oligarchies*,⁵¹ this silence is quite extraordinary and rather suggests that Thucydides was not alive at the time of the Thirty. On the other hand, he knows all about the consequences of the outcome of the conflict and makes reference to, or presupposes, these at various points in the first book as well as in the long *excursus* in the second (2.65),⁵² where he gives his assessment of the causes of defeat. The implication of all this is that the historian had the chance to ponder over his assessment, when the war evidently had finished and the Thirty were already in power. In some oratorical passages⁵³ Thucydides even seems to resort to a kind of “*ex eventu* prophecy” on how Spartan rule would quickly become intolerable. He has these words spoken by the Athenians *on the occasion of their very first oration* (1.77.5–6). Speaking in the Debate at Sparta, long before the outbreak of the conflict, the Athenian representatives tell their future enemies: “For the subjugated, the ruler of the day (he who is making his strength felt at any given moment) is the hardest to bear. If you were to defeat us and take over our empire, *you too would soon lose the goodwill which you have gained* on account of others being afraid of us.” Are we to interpret this as a prophetic intuition of what would happen to Greece under Spartan military dominion, or is Thucydides writing about what he has already seen taking place, including the *rapid decline* (in the Spartans’ popularity)? Moreover, given that in an *excursus* on Archelaus of Macedonia (who died in 399 BC) he says that the king had built roads and fortresses “that are *still there*” (2.100.2), he is clearly writing *after the death of the king*, who, according to peripatetic biographers, had welcomed Thucydides as a “guest”.⁵⁴

Plutarch maintained (at the end of the first century AD) that Thucydides had never returned but had been murdered in Thrace at Skapte Hyle, where he was managing his mining concessions (*Cim.* 4.3: τελευτῆσαι μὲν ἐν τῇ σκαπτῇ ὕλῃ λέγεται φονευθεὶς ἐκεῖ). Evidently he never returned to Athens. He stayed on his estates from

⁵¹ This silence regarding the demise of Theramenes may mean that we are dealing with a narrative written shortly after the events took place.

⁵² Cf. Maas (1973) 67. This can even be taken as Thucydides’ second introduction: it is more compact and profound than the halting 5.26.

⁵³ And these were written later; on this point see below, § 9.

⁵⁴ Praxiphanes, fr. 10 Brink = Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 29–30.

the moment he left the city at the time of the trials following the restoration of democracy. Was this perhaps the reason why he made no reference to the tragic events involving the Thirty or to the civil war (403–404), even if he was alive in the decade beginning in 390 BC? Did he have *no first-hand experience of these events* in those years?

The Writing of the “Peloponnesian War” and the “Thucydidean Question”

In the first lines of the introduction, Thucydides asserts that he “undertook the writing out of his work” at a very early stage, “from the first signs of conflict (ἀρξάμενος εὐθὺς καθισταμένου).” The conflict lasted fully twenty-seven years.⁵⁵ His writing, at least as regards the “first draft”, therefore *kept pace with events as they unfolded*, which meant that he was writing over an extremely long period of time. Furthermore, since it is highly probable that Thucydides died after Archelaus of Macedonia (who died in 399), he may have continued to write after the conflict had finished: a period of thirty-five years in total. And yet it is generally held that the work breaks off with the events of 411: that is, well before its natural climax, the surrender of Athens in the spring of 404; but judging by what is written in the so-called second introduction, the historian *was still alive* then.⁵⁶

It is generally accepted that the account of the last seven years of the war is missing because it was never written. The basis for this widely accepted theory is that the numerous medieval Thucydidean manuscripts (going back to the late antique editions) divide the work into eight books of narrative, breaking off in 411. Evidence for this theory is also found amongst the ancients, from as early as the time of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, who speaks of these eight books as making up a narrative that is broken off in 411.⁵⁷ Dionysius’ comments show that the arrangement of the text found in subsequent manuscripts was already accepted in the Augustan age, an era

⁵⁵ Plus six months, if one takes into account the surrender of Samos six months after the capitulation of Athens.

⁵⁶ “Τέτραφε [...] μέχρι οὗ τὴν τε ἀρχὴν κατέπαυσαν τῶν Ἀθηναίων Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι”. With the exception of Schwartz (1919) 320, modern commentators have preferred to ignore this statement, which is wholly incompatible with the idea that the narrative finishes in 411.

⁵⁷ Dionysius, always harsh in his criticisms of Thucydides, once went as far as to say that by stopping in 411, the historian had made a very bad *choice* of finishing-point for his work. Sometimes malice blunts judgment.

that was in many ways crucial to the handing down of texts to posterity.

But there is other evidence. In his treatise *De garrulitate* (513 B–C), Plutarch refers to an “eighth book of Thucydides” that covers the period up to the second fall of Alcibiades (407 BC), which we read about in Xenophon’s *Hellenica* (1.5.16–17). And Diodorus Siculus, who obtained the information for his literary history from written historical records, on one occasion describes Thucydides’ account of the war as covering 22 years, on another occasion 24 years (12.37.2; 13.42.5).⁵⁸ It can be argued that for a long period of time, the Xenophon edition of the “Complete” Thucydides had not been entirely supplanted by the version that would eventually prevail, become the definitive edition by the time of Dionysius, and then, in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, provide the basis for the manuscripts we have today. The edition that “won out” did not include Xenophon’s final “Paraleipomena”. He had edited “Thucydides’ unpublished work” (τὰ Θουκυδίδου βιβλία λανθάνοντα), adding to it his account of the civil war.

The fact that no Thucydidean account exists of the crucial last seven years of the war could thus turn out to be a false problem. Schwartz defined it as a “puzzle”.⁵⁹ “Weshalb er hier [= 411 BC] abbrach, ist bis jetzt ein Rätsel”; several years later he pointed out that it had never been explained exactly why Thucydides had *not even* “made notes” on events after 411.⁶⁰ And yet these “notes”, these rough drafts, do exist: they make up *HG*, 1–2.3.10. Precisely because they are rough drafts, they contain both polished and sketchy passages: concise notes on key points, nothing more than starting points for appropriate expansion (for example, the “final” scene in which Lysander arrives at Piraeus and the destruction of the city walls [2.2.23]), appear alongside long, detailed accounts (for example, the battle of the Arginusae and the trial of the *stratēgoi* [1.6.1–35] take

⁵⁸ In addition, Cicero (*Brut.* 29) seems to mean that from speeches by Critias and Theramenes “we can get an idea *ex Thucydidis scriptis qui ipse tum fuit*”. It would be a mistake to attach too much importance to this evidence, but it does seem to imply that at the time Cicero was writing *Brutus*, he had to hand editions of Thucydides which also included *Hellenica*, 1–2 (where Critias and Theramenes in fact deliver opposing speeches).

⁵⁹ (1906) 28.

⁶⁰ “Die bis jetzt nicht erklärte [...] Tatsache, daß er die Ereignisse nach 411 nicht mehr aufzeichnete” (Schwartz [1909] 498).

up more than a third of the entire story of the years 411–404); barely organized pages (1.4.13–20)⁶¹ are found next to sophisticated and well-crafted speeches in *oratio recta* (1.7.16–33).

Xenophon, to whom we are indebted for saving all this, could not have acted otherwise: he would certainly never have *rewritten* Thucydides' text; he could only *add* to it (and in fact he does add his "diary" of the Athenian civil war: 2.3.11–2.4.43). The same is true of the text covering years XI–XV of the war (Th. 5.25–83) and perhaps also of the end of year X (5.18–24): these, in fact, are the years that lack the signature Thucydides appended to the text on each year of the war. After the account of the end of the ten-year war, though, there is an introduction (5.25–26) in which whoever is writing speaks clearly of Thucydides as a separate person: Hemmerdinger,⁶² who identifies Xenophon as the editing author, is right when he points out that "Xénophon profite de la fin de la guerre pour se débarrasser une fois pour toutes de l'obligation de signer pour Thucydide à la fin de chaque *volumen*". In this part too, there are clear signs that some of the writing is intended only as drafts. In one case it is even possible to see the "memos" that mark places where missing details need to be inserted (5.76.3: δύο λόγῳ φέρων ἐς τὸ Ἄργος, τὸν μὲν καθ' ὅτι . . . τὸν δ' ὥς εἰ . . .).⁶³ Moreover, it can be seen that this entire section of the work is full of documents quoted either in full (5.77 and 5.79) or in part (5.76.3; 5.80.1), concerning the changing of sides by Argos (winter 418–417): some of these would probably have been condensed into very precise paraphrases that would have completed the notes καθ' ὅτι/ὥς. This diplomatic "about-face" proved almost completely ineffective since very shortly afterward (5.84.1) Alcibiades intervened physically to remove the pro-Spartan "faction" from Argos. So it is obvious here that the posthumous editor took "religious"⁶⁴ care in having all the materials (that Thucydides had left) transcribed, but clearly made no attempt to select among them. Let us recapitulate. Thucydides had gathered a whole variety of data and documents on the extremely short-lived

⁶¹ Cf. Canfora (1982a) 140–44.

⁶² (1948) 107.

⁶³ Cf. Wilamowitz (1902) 308. Steup (1912) 188 provides an instructive example of the way in which an inspired solution can be cheerfully and obtusely rejected by scholars who are not in the same league as their interlocutor; Wilamowitz's withering reply ([1919] 955f.) is entirely justified.

⁶⁴ Wilamowitz (1919) 955: "mit der allergrößten Pietät".

agreement between Sparta and Argos (the ultimatum [5.76.3], the “draft of the agreement” [5.77], the agreement itself [5.79], the consequent discussions on its implementation [5.80]). It is obvious that he would have condensed all this material, and more obvious still that he would not have copied *two almost identical texts one after the other* (5.77 and 5.79). But the editor could not do the author’s work for him; the only option open to him was editorial “Pietät”. For us though, this is a great stroke of luck, for it gives us a glimpse into Thucydides’ “workshop” and a chance to view his “collection of raw materials” as it was when the work was suddenly interrupted (perhaps on account of the author’s death), preventing some parts of it from being rewritten into a “definitive” form. The same happens in *HG*, 1–2.3.10, where rough notes and polished text are found side by side, but where, on the whole (except for the parts dealing with the Arginusae and the trial of the *stratēgoi*), the narrative is skeletal and impoverished, as is also the case in some parts of *Th.* 5.25–83 (years XIII and XV, for example).

This piece of good fortune enables us to provide a fairly concrete answer to the question of how Thucydides worked. Obviously his method involved various stages: collection of materials, rough notes, “definitive” versions that were probably written not in rigid chronological sequence but episode by episode. The discovery of—or rather, the chance to observe—this way of working is useful in the reappraisal of the hypothesis, largely arbitrary but accepted by many, that Thucydides broke off his account at the Peace of Nicias (421), recommenced the narrative with the Sicilian expedition (415) and then filled in the “gap”, albeit not particularly brilliantly.⁶⁵ One of the weaknesses of this hypothesis is that it is based on analysis of the eight books as we know them today, in their later, perhaps Alexandrian form.⁶⁶ But Thucydides arranged the material into completely different, shorter units that corresponded to years of the war. Any questions about whether the work was “complete” or not must therefore be asked with reference to these units; and pseudo-problems such as the frequently bemoaned “lack of speeches in the eighth

⁶⁵ This theory has been the basis for various reconstructions, most notably that of Ullrich (1846) 66–150, esp. 134f., which has continued to be a model for other critics. A well-argued and original development can be found in De Sanctis (1939), esp. 414–16.

⁶⁶ Hemmerdinger (1963) 314.

book” disappear. For Thucydides there never was an “eighth” book; there were simply the years XIX (= 7.19–8.6), XX (8.7–60) and XXI (8.61–109: unfinished). Now, in year XIX there are speeches, in year XX there is just one brief discourse, by Peisander in *oratio recta*; but also in year XVIII (6.94–7.18) there is no speech, except for the ἐπιστολὴ Νικίου (7.11–15). In short, the two starting points for anyone trying to understand how the work was constructed are: a) taking the years of the war (each “signed” by the author with his formulaic signature) as the writer’s unit of division; b) identifying, where possible, objective clues to the unfinished state of parts of the narrative (these invariably bring us back to those blocks of years from which the author’s signature is missing [5.1–83 + *HG*, 1–2.3.10]).

We do not have many ancient descriptions of how writers worked, but the few we do have are helpful. Polybius (16.17.9) distinguishes three stages in a historian’s work: a) ζήτησις τῶν πραγμάτων (“searching for data”), b) χειρισμὸς τῆς ὑποθέσεως (“organization of material”), and c) κατασκευὴ τῆς λέξεως (“striving for elegance of form”). In the case of Virgil’s *Aeneid*—whether this is the result of conjecture based on the state of the work or based on reliable biographical information is difficult to say—the *Vita Donati*⁶⁷ speaks (§§ 23–24) of a) an initial prose draft, b) the dividing up of the material into twelve books, c) the crafting of the material episode by episode. In other words, it speaks of poetic writing which, in its first phase, included “quaedam imperfecta”, because the author did not want to lose his “impetus”, and even incomplete lines which Virgil called “supporting pillars” (*tibicines*).

As regards Thucydides, thanks once again to Marcellinus (or rather his sources) we have a precise description that is worth considering (*Vit. Thuc.* 47): “From the beginning of the war he made notes on (ἐσημειοῦτο) speeches and events, but in that first stage he was not concerned with perfecting the form (τοῦ κάλλους). In the first stage he was only interested in *safeguarding the facts by noting them down* (τῇ σημειώσει). Later, during his period of exile in Skapte Hyle in Thrace, he gave a finished artistic form to those notes which, right from the beginning, he had been using simply as an aid to memory”. It can be seen that Marcellinus emphasizes the distinction between the two stages: the “making of notes” and the giving of a “finished artistic

⁶⁷ Which was probably based on Suetonius, cf. Rostagni (1956) 87.

form”; and he maintains that Thucydides’ claim to “have begun working immediately at the first signs of conflict” is in fact a reference to the work of note-taking which he carried out day by day, following events as they unfolded. It is evident that he (or his source) *deduces* all this by inference from Thucydides’ text (1.1.1 and 1.22 are more than enough for his purposes), but the inferences are far from arbitrary. In fact it is Thucydides’ description of the “tiring” work of constantly comparing the various accounts of his sources and noting down what he actually saw with his own eyes (1.22.2–3) that fully justifies the reconstruction presented as hard fact by Marcellinus (or his sources).

The only weak point here is the absurd idea that, once in exile in Skapte Hyle (423 BC), Thucydides settled down happily to the job of “artistic rewriting”: as if in the year 423—that is twenty years before the end of the war—the “work of note-taking” was already finished! The dates do not match at all, notwithstanding the fact that at one point the ancients themselves had arrived at similar conclusions regarding Thucydides’ exile,⁶⁸ an exile that Aristotle and those following in his footsteps knew nothing about. Henry Dodwell was aware of the discrepancy:⁶⁹ “non scripsit certe in exilio ut volebant veteres!”; for the sake of consistency, however, he was obliged to stretch out Thucydides’ life in order to enable him to write the whole work after his exile (and after the end of the war).

What can be taken as fact, however, is that the σημείωσις was continuous and began very early. So the “Rätsel” that bothered Schwartz is resolved only thanks to the identification of the *two* “Paraleipomena” edited by Xenophon (Th. 5.25–83 and *HG*, 1–2.3.10).⁷⁰ To these final “Paraleipomena” Xenophon added the account of the civil war: so the man responsible for continuing and editing Thucydides had witnessed similar events to Thucydides himself, from a similar point of view—one experienced at first hand the oligarchy of 411, the other, the oligarchy of 404.

Subsequently, after he had written and circulated *Anabasis* under the pseudonym Themistogenes of Syracuse (*HG*, 3.1.1–2; Plutarch,

⁶⁸ Plutarch, *De exilio* 605c.

⁶⁹ (1702) 28–29.

⁷⁰ It is useful to remember that there is ample manuscript evidence for the following title for the *Hellenica*: Ξενοφώντος Θουκυδίδου Παραλειπόμενα (namely, the title that initially referred only to the completion of Thucydides’ narrative); cf. Canfora (1977a) 7–8; 35 n. 12.

De glor. Ath. 345e), Xenophon returned to writing history. His new historical work (Ἑλληνικά)⁷¹ begins with what is now the third Book: and just as the “Paraleipomena” refer back to Thucydides (5.26.1), so the *Hellenica* opens by recalling Themistogenes (*HG*, 3.1.2).⁷² Scholars in the ancient world were well aware that the “Paraleipomena” and the *Hellenica* were two separate works and that Xenophon had intentionally and explicitly connected one to the other.⁷³ Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 45), obviously following his sources, is particularly enlightening on the subject: “Thucydides died in Thrace *after* the Peloponnesian war while he *was writing his account* of year XXI. The war lasted twenty-seven years. The remaining seven years were “supplied” [or “completed”: the verb used, ἀναπληρῶ, has both meanings] by Theopompus and Xenophon: to those seven years the latter joined his *Hellenica* (οἷς συνάπτει τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν ἱστορίαν)”.⁷⁴

Marcellinus is right when he says that Thucydides died while giving a finished form (συγγράφων) to his account of year XXI (and here he inevitably establishes a time-cause link between the breaking off of the work and the death of the author),⁷⁵ because it was at the end of the summer of that year that the working of his collected materials into a finished narrative form broke off. At the end of the broken-off account there is a note that it is safe to assume belongs to the author or the editor: “When the winter following this summer ends (τελευτήσῃ),⁷⁶ year XXI is complete”.

Clarification of the Question of Documents Quoted in Thucydides’ Work

From very early on it has been argued that the inclusion—considered temporary, of course—of documents copied out in their entirety

⁷¹ A title taken from Thucydides, 1.97.2.

⁷² On the gradual expansion of the *Hellenica*, cf. G.C. Lewis (1833) 1–44.

⁷³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Pomp.* 4.1: τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν καὶ ἥν κατέλειπεν ἀτελεῖ Θεουκυδίδης; Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 45.

⁷⁴ Niebuhr (1827) 196–98, understood the meaning and significance of this phrase perfectly. His article, together with those (above-mentioned) of Lewis, who was an admirer of Niebuhr and translated him into English, is the most important on the history of the text of the *Hellenica*.

⁷⁵ But note that μετὰ τὸν πόλεμον opens up interesting possibilities as far as dates and times are concerned.

⁷⁶ It is worth noting that τῷ πολέμῳ τῷδε is not even there. It is clearly not a scholium: there is no conceivable reason why a scholium should look forward to the end and completion of the missing account.

constitutes evidence, namely that the parts of the work in which these documents feature are in an unfinished state. In the “definitive” version they would have been substantially and essentially absorbed into the text. Once again it was the twenty-eight-year-old Wilamowitz in his *Thukydideslegende* who suggested the idea, *en passant*, in a note.⁷⁷ Shortly afterward Adolf Kirchhoff, the great scholarly expert on epigraphy, undertook a systematic study of the various texts from documents included in the work, culminating in 1895 in the publication of the volume entitled *Thukydides und sein Urkundenmaterial*, in which all of Kirchhoff’s previous contributions are collected and rearranged. He came to a similar conclusion and also included a hypothesis that was well received: Thucydides had only had access to the documents after his return from exile; this was why in many cases he was unable to integrate them into the main body of the work, which was left in an imperfect, unfinished state due to the author’s death. This theory is mistaken, however. The documents in question were in fact all treaties drawn up between two or more sides; an official copy would therefore have been available not only in Athens but also in the other places that were signatories to each one: Sparta was a signatory to all of them. Given that Sparta was a party to all the treaties (and Argos, Elis, and Mantinea to one [5.47]) and that the author of 5.26.5 refers to exile *παρὰ Πελοποννησίων*,⁷⁸ if the writer in question is Thucydides, then the inevitable conclusion is that *no document was unavailable to him* during his twenty-year exile (424–404).

The idea of a connection between the word-for-word quotation of documents and the unfinished nature of the passages in which they feature is valid, however, even if it cannot be applied indiscriminately.⁷⁹ Its validity is confirmed by the fact that Thucydides included many other documents in condensed form, while sometimes reporting the most important phrases (usually resolutions passed in assembly, but also treaties) word for word. One need only consider

⁷⁷ (1877) 338 n. 21.

⁷⁸ Even if one accepts the variant *Πελοποννησίους*, it makes no difference here.

⁷⁹ Meyer (1899) 283–96 sought to refute the theory that Thucydides had only provisionally included the documents in his work. Momigliano (1930=1992) 90–103, developed Meyer’s reasoning with new and sometimes convincing arguments: “If Thucydides collected the documents it could only have been in order to reproduce them [p. 93]” (but this theory is too simplistic). But as early as 1881, in the first volume of his *Weltgeschichte*, Leopold von Ranke praised Thucydides for his decision to “report the various treaties word for word, even using the original dialect, even when they were not particularly important” (von Ranke [1932] 294).

the decisions taken at the meetings that decided on the expedition against Syracuse (6.26.1), or at the assemblies that led to the fall of democracy (8.67.1–3), etc. There is therefore no reason why he should have felt the need to reproduce texts word for word *in those nine cases only*.

In the middle of the account of the Pylos campaign there is a lengthy paraphrase (4.16.1–2) of the terms of the truce between Sparta and Athens (425/24 BC), which opens with ἐγγίνοντο σπονδαὶ τοιαῖδε and, over the course of about twenty lines, presents the various articles of the agreement in detail. One cannot but agree with Schwartz⁸⁰ that the roughly thrown-together material regarding the annual truce of 423 (4.118–19: here we find, in its original unaltered form, the Attic decree approving the truce) was also intended to be reworked and polished. And in fact it is out of question that those precious chapters (4.118–19), which give us a remarkably clear idea of the procedures followed in such circumstances, could, in the process of a definitive rewriting, have remained in the form in which we find them. It is highly significant that they come *immediately* after year VIII, which ended with the usual formula incomplete, without Thucydides' "signature" (4.116.3).⁸¹ It seems reasonable to stress two points: that it had still to be decided how exactly this event (the truce and, more particularly, the preparations for it [4.117], which had already begun in the winter⁸² of year VIII) would fit into the general chronology; and that the transition from year VIII to year IX had to be related in such a way as to take account of the new truce, of its most important terms and, above all, of exactly when it would come into effect—this in fact was a point of contention and enabled Brasidas, *in extremis*, to bring about other, highly controversial (4.122.3), defections (4.120). So the account of that transition from one year to the next required further work, and in fact the "signature" is missing at that very point, as it is from the blocks of text 5.1–83 and *HG*, 1–2.3.10.

The fact that *all* the other documents (apart from the three treaties between Sparta and Persia) are squeezed into 5.1–83—where the "signature" is systematically missing—is in itself significant. But while it is true that the vast amount of space given over to ephemeral

⁸⁰ (1919) 30.

⁸¹ On this final formula, see below.

⁸² Steup (1912) 226.

texts such as the four-way pact (5.47) and the Argive-Spartan alliance (5.77 and 5.79) provides *prima facie* evidence that these are “materials” intended for reworking, it is by no means clear that the full text of the Peace of Nicias (5.18–19) would not have survived a definitive rewriting. In fact, comparison with 4.16 (the truce at Pylos) leads one to think that, to round off the account of the ten-year conflict, the full text of the peace treaty that ended it would have been included. It is precisely the detailed information about the terms of the agreement that enables the reader to understand the gradual deterioration of the situation described from chapter 5.27 onwards. The same cannot be said for the text of the Spartan-Athenian alliance (5.23–24), an agreement that never came into effect.

It was surely not the author’s intention to reduce the full text of the three treaties between Sparta and Persia (8.18; 8.37; 8.58), the most important diplomatic events of the entire war. All three treaties were in year XX of the war, a year “perfect” in every way from an editorial point of view. It is difficult here to find a good reason why the author might have intended not to include the full text—unless one goes along with the generic and much-favored argument of consistency of “style”.⁸³ But it makes no sense to invoke what is not some “law” of the art of writing but merely a hypothesis elaborated by modern commentators on the basis of a few (sometimes controversial) cases. The decisions of Meyer and Momigliano to push in the opposite direction to Norden, Wilamowitz, and Schwartz are laudable.

Conclusion

The matter of the end of the eighth year of the war is highly instructive. It is one of the isolated cases in which the signature is missing. The only other case (outside of the two blocks in which the signature is systematically missing) is at the end of the first year of the war (2.47.1). There is another common factor: in these two cases, and only these, the end of winter is denoted not by ὁ χειμὼν ἐτελεύτα or ταῦτα ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ χειμῶνι but by διελθόντος αὐτοῦ (*i.e.*, τοῦ

⁸³ This is the *Stilgesetz* identified by Nipperdey (1877) 415 and theorized by Norden (1915) 89–91, to whom Wilamowitz (1877) 388, (1885) 18, and Schwartz (1919) 20 gave their full backing.

χειμῶνος): this formula is very similar to the one found in the last sentence of the unfinished year XXI, which modern commentators tend for no compelling reason to expunge, and which also denotes an incomplete year. In effect, καὶ διελθόντος αὐτοῦ means “and when the winter finished”: the phrase is therefore *a substitute for an account still to be finished*.⁸⁴

It is enlightening that at the end of the first year of the war the phrase is used immediately after Pericles’ Funeral Oration: the speech, an assessment of what the Athenians had been through in which Thucydides expresses his thoughts in the light of their defeat, was clearly written later (it is the necessary complement to 2.65, where the historian offers his final *post cladem* reflections). The insertion of the Funeral Oration at that point meant that Thucydides was going to have to rework the part of the text dealing with the end of the first year of the war, but he did not have the opportunity to do this.

It is reasonable to assert that, generally speaking,⁸⁵ the speeches belong to the later, more mature phase of Thucydides’ writing, and that consequently they were written in blocks, which explains the correspondences between some of them and why, despite being far apart in the text, some of them form a kind of “dialogue”. There are numerous speeches in the first part of the work, whereas from the present Book VII onward there are very few.⁸⁶ This may also be because in the course of more than thirty years working on this unfinished history, Thucydides more than justifiably modified his style.⁸⁷

The theory that the first and eighth years of the war had still to be polished (and that this is precisely why they do not bear the “signature”) offers a more coherent explanation for the state of the text than the oversimplified idea of two edited blocks of text (1–4; 5.84–8) and two unedited blocks (5.1–83; *HG*, 1–2.3.10). Even if he very

⁸⁴ Another sign of incompleteness can be seen in the much-debated ἐπύρχοντο in 4.120.1, on the subject of which cf. *HCT* 4.607–608 (it is not necessary to conjecture a possible derivation from ἐπάρχομαι).

⁸⁵ It is not appropriate to be as rigid on this point as Cwiklinski (1873) 42ff.

⁸⁶ This was noted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Th.* 16), perhaps taking up the point made by the mysterious Cratippus that in Book VII there were very many occasions upon which directly quoted speeches would have been highly appropriate: πολλῶν μὲν κατὰ τὴν Ἰωνίαν γενομένων, πολλῶν δ’ ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις, ὅσα <διὰ> διαλόγων καὶ δημηγοριῶν ἐπράχθη.

⁸⁷ Weil (1975) 162–168.

probably circulated self-contained parts of his work (the Sicilian Books?), Thucydides certainly did not *publish* it (except in the limited sense of the word in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, namely of distributing *ad personam* within a particular circle). It was only with the Xenophon edition, then, that the work, never previously published *in its entirety*, was really made available to a public. This means that τὰ Θουκυδίδου βιβλία λανθάνοντα,⁸⁸ which according to Diogenes Laertius ended up in Xenophon's hands at one point, actually refers to Thucydides' books taken as a *whole* and not just to the two "Paraleipomena", which were so far from being finished to the author's satisfaction that his "signature" is systematically missing from them.

⁸⁸ D.L. 2.57.

THE NEW GENRE AND ITS BOUNDARIES: POETS AND LOGOGRAPHERS

Aldo Corcella

Since he wished to say, I think, that he was the most important historian, he gave his vote to his war.

Aristides 28.70 (tr. Behr)

1. One of Thucydides' contemporaries, Hippias of Elis, gained wide popularity in Sparta for the conferences he held "about the genealogies of heroes and men and the foundations of cities in ancient times and, in short, about antiquity (*archaiologia*) in general"; in Plato's ironical picture, Hippias' prodigious memory allowed him to display an impressive "knowledge of many things", and the Spartans "made use of him as children do of old women, to tell stories agreeably (*hēdeōs mythologēsai*)" (*Hp. Ma.* 285d2–286e2). Clement of Alexandria attributes the following words to Hippias:

Of these things some perchance are said by Orpheus, some by Musaeus, but only briefly, by the former in one place, by the latter in another place; some are said by Hesiod, some by Homer, some by the rest of the poets; some are said, too, in prose compositions (*syggraphais*), by Greeks and by barbarians as well. I, from all these, putting together the things of most importance and of kindred character, will make the present discourse new and varied. (*Strom.* VI 15 = DK 86 B 6 = *FGrHist* 6 F 4)

For his collection of "things", which is easily identifiable as Plato's *archaiologia*, Hippias drew on both poets and prose writers.¹ Indeed, from the beginnings of epic poetry down to the fifth century, "the genealogies of heroes and men", as well as "the foundations of cities in ancient times", had been sung about by many poets. From the end of the sixth century onward, these same topics had also become the subject of prose works.

¹ There is a thorough analysis of Hippias' fragment in Patzer (1986); on *archaiologia* see Camassa (2002).

2. By referring to ancient times, the Greeks had shaped their identity.² Once upon a time, the gods mingled with mortals and begat mighty and noble heroes. The aristocratic families traced their lineage back to these heroes, and through them to the gods. The “collective personality” of a city was also established by the repetition of tales about the heroic deeds of its founder on ceremonial occasions.³ Thus the celebrated heroes of the Argonautic saga or the Trojan War, like Heracles or Odysseus, came to be thought of as the ancestors of many lineages and communities—and not only in Greece: as Elias J. Bickerman masterfully showed, even “the beginnings of a barbarian race were integrated into the system of Greek pre-history” through the invention of an appropriate ancestor.⁴

The preservation of these traditions was assigned to the memory specialists: the poets. In principle, they were entrusted with the handing down of “the truth” to posterity; however, this truth could always be modified and reshaped.⁵ Some clues of particular interest for genealogies are to be found in Homer: in *Il.* 20.306–8 the poet alludes to Aeneas’ descendants, who are likely to have been his patrons.⁶ In Eumelus’ *Korinthiaka*, heroic ancestors and foundation legends contributed to an attempt to connect various places all over the world to Corinth.⁷ The epic cycle as a whole constituted a comprehensive exposition of the heroic age; in the final poem of the cycle, the *Telegonia*, which probably dates from the sixth century, Eugammon of Cyrene introduced an Arkesilaos, son of Odysseus, thereby giving an epic ancestor to Cyrene’s royal house.⁸ The final version of the most ambitious attempt to integrate various traditions into a systematic “ancient history” of the origins of the world probably also dates from the first half of the sixth century: in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, as expanded in the *Catalogue*, the genealogies of the gods

² Recent studies on “hellenicity” (e.g., J.M. Hall [2002]) have awakened new interest in the ways in which Greek identity was shaped in antiquity and “reconstructed” in the romantic age, an issue which was central to classic works such as Mazzarino (1965–66). For an interpretation in terms of “intentional history”, see Gehrke (1994).

³ See Giangiulio (2001) 116–20.

⁴ Bickerman (1952) 407; cf. Fromentin and Gotteland (2001).

⁵ The claim to “historical truth” was founded on the “theory” outlined in Fränkel (1973) 19 n. 26. On poets and truth, cf. Detienne (1967).

⁶ On the “panhellenic” catalogue of ships, see Giovannini (1995).

⁷ See M.L. West (2002).

⁸ On the epic cycle, see M. Davies (1989).

were followed by the unions of gods and mortals and the births of heroes; among the latter one could find Makedon, Graikos, Hellen and his offspring, the ancestors of Greek communities, but also figures like Medeios, eponymous with the Medes, and Latinos.⁹

Between the seventh and fifth centuries, other poets treated “ancient history” in elegiac metre.¹⁰ Tyrtaeus’ *Eunomia* contained a sketch of the Heraclids returning to the Peloponnese; in Mimernus’ *Smyrneis* the foundation of Smyrna and certain episodes in its history were probably narrated; Semonides’ *Early History of the Samians* is also likely to have been an elegy, as are Xenophanes’ *Foundation of Colophon* and *Migration of Colophonians to Elea*. Scholars tend to draw comparisons between the “historical narratives” contained in Archilochus’ tetrameters and Solon’s elegy *Salamis*, which was sung in public to vindicate Athens’ claims on the island. In the fifth century, Panyassis of Halicarnassus composed 7,000 lines of *Ionika*, an overarching account of the foundation of Ionic colonies in the mythical age of the Athenian king Kodros and his son Neleus.¹¹

Poems like these about origins and *archaiologia*, sung in sympotic or festive contexts, seem to have been especially popular in the colonial world, where the confrontation with the mother-cities and the surrounding “barbaric” peoples made the establishment of a “collective identity” a matter of some relevance.¹² The poets’ task, however, was to sing of “things that are and that shall be and that were aforetime” (Hesiod, *Th.* 38, cf. 32): memorable events in recent and contemporary history were also a good subject for poems. Archilochus gave an account of the Thasian campaign, in which he himself took part; Mimernus dealt with the war between Smyrna and the Lydians, which dated back to his father’s generation. However, when Choerilus of Samos devoted an entire epic poem to the Persian Wars, he was aware of the innovation he was introducing, and justified his choice by affecting to regret that the traditional topics had already been “shared out” by the ancient poets (*SH* fr. 317).¹³ The great deeds of the Greeks and Persians were well suited to celebratory poetry in

⁹ See M.L. West (1985a) and March (1987) 157–59; cf. Bertelli (2001) 73–76.

¹⁰ There is a survey in Bowie (1986) and (2001).

¹¹ Panyassis: Matthews (1974).

¹² See Giangulio (2001); on the patterns of Greek colonization tales, see Dougherty (1993).

¹³ Choerilus (ed. Radici Colace [1979]); Hollis (2000); Hose (2000) 3–5.

the heroic style. Simonides of Ceos composed poems on Artemisium, Salamis, and Plataea; the narrative section of the elegy on Plataea was introduced by an address to the greatest hero of the war against Troy, Achilles: “an effective mode of heroizing the fallen at Plataea”.¹⁴

This view of the Trojan War as a mythical antecedent for the Persian Wars is well known from Herodotus (and from Thucydides). More generally, it was not unusual for Greek poets to celebrate and interpret contemporary events and characters by referring to heroic times, as Pindar’s odes abundantly show.¹⁵ In comparison with the “mythical” age, which was subjected to the reconstructions and systematizations we have briefly outlined, the more recent past, before the “axial age” which culminated in the epic confrontation with the Persian empire, had not awakened the same interest. Traditions clustered around the very remote past, whereas the time intervening between this crucial time and the present tended to be forgotten—the phenomenon of the “floating gap”,¹⁶ well known to anthropologists.

Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility that (say) Mimnermus’ *Smyrneis* contained a continuous “history” of the city; and we know for certain that the same Tyrtaeus who narrated the return of the Heraclids also gave an account of the First Messenian War under king Theopompos, an equally fundamental event for Spartan institutions (fr. 5 West). The legitimation of the Spartan kings rested upon their descent from Heracles, and Herodotus reports the full ascending genealogies, up to the mythical ancestor, of both Leonidas and Leotychidas, who were kings in the 480s (7.204; 8.131.2). In spite of the Spartans’ fondness for “ancient history”, it is hard to believe that these lists were based on official records dating back to a time in the very distant past.¹⁷ In any event, they are representative of a new age in genealogical speculation in which attempts were made to fill in the “floating gaps” by supplying the missing links between the heroic ancestors and more recent forebears who were still part of the living memory of families and communities.

3. On the one hand, the prose works that dealt with genealogies between the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth

¹⁴ Bowie (2001) 58. On Simonides’ elegy on Plataea, see Boedeker – Sider (2001).

¹⁵ See Erbse (1999).

¹⁶ For discussion and literature, see R. Thomas (1989) and (2001).

¹⁷ See Huxley (1962) 102; Vannicelli (1993) 35–45.

continued the tradition of theogonic and catalogue poetry: Hecataeus and Acusilaus are quite frequently quoted by later writers as authorities, together with Hesiod. On the other hand, as Robert Fowler has noted, “in spite of dozens of eponyms it has occasion to mention, the *Catalogue of Women* only once deigns to point out the connection with existing place names, whereas the practice is ubiquitous from Hecataeus on”:¹⁸ an indication that these prose writers were to some degree interested in emphasizing the unbroken continuity of history. A fragment from Pherecydes’ *Histories* offers a further example of a genealogy extended from the heroic age down to the present time: the lineage of the Philaidai, from Ajax’ son Philaias to Miltiades (*FGrHist* 3 F 2). Such a “full genealogy” may have been an isolated case within Pherecydes’ work;¹⁹ yet it can easily be compared—and often has been—to the pedigrees of the Spartan kings and to Hecataeus’ “connecting his lineage to a god as his sixteenth ancestor” (*FGrHist* 1 F 300 = Hdt. 2.143). In Pindar’s fourth *Pythian*, dating from 462 and addressed to Arkesilas IV, king of Cyrene, the mention of Battos and of his descent from the Argonaut Euphemos, in addition to some emphasis on a special relationship to Sparta, are all but exceptional; less obvious is Pindar’s almost pedantic attention to detail: Battos is said to have carried out Medea’s prophecy “in the seventeenth generation” (l.10) after Euphemos, “son of Europa daughter of Tityos” (l.45); the same Euphemos is dated four generations before the return of the Heraclids (l.46); Arkesilas IV “flourishes eighth in the line of Battos’ descendants” (l.65). Pindar is showing off his knowledge of a full genealogy of the Battiadai, from Arkesilas IV up to Euphemos, Europa, and Tityos; and this genealogy is expressly connected with that of the Heraclids, i.e. of the kings of Sparta.²⁰

I would suggest that here Pindar is proudly displaying his mastery of a new, more systematic method of reconstructing genealogies and establishing a continuous history from heroic times down to the present, as the first prose writers had done, and as Hellanicus and Herodotus would subsequently do. According to *Pythian* 1, dating to 470, the renown of past men is preserved by “storytellers and singers alike” (*kai logiois kai aoidois*), and this is illustrated by two examples

¹⁸ Fowler (2001) 113. The fragments of the early genealogists are now collected in Fowler (2000).

¹⁹ See Fowler (2001) 114 and n. 34 for discussion.

²⁰ Cf. Giannini (1990) 74f.

from relatively recent history, Croesus and Phalaris (92ff.); a similar expression occurs in *Nemean* 6.29–30, probably dating to the 460s.²¹ By the middle of the fifth century, prose was competing with poetry for the handing down of tradition: prose narrated not only the “genealogies of heroes and men” but also the “foundations of cities in ancient times”, and attempts were made to write continuous “histories” of cities and communities, from their origins down to the present. To be sure, the exact dating of the earliest prose “foundation histories” (*ktiseis*) and “annals” (*horoi*) has been a much-disputed issue since Felix Jacoby proposed his “evolutionist” thesis according to which Herodotus’ “universal history” antedated, and stimulated, local historiography.²² In the absence of sufficient evidence, it is no more than idle speculation to wonder whether such-and-such a “local historian” published his work (say) ten years before or after Herodotus, whatever we take “publishing” to mean; moreover, “local” and “universal” history are abstractions which cannot easily be applied to the mobile reality of the fifth century.²³ Be that as it may, even Jacoby ranked Ion’s *Foundation of Chios* among the juvenile productions of the celebrated poet, prose writer, and philosopher, who lived from ca. 480 to 422.²⁴ In the years when Thucydides was composing his history, it is likely that the prose works of Xenomedes on ancient Ceos, Eugeon on Samos, and Dei(l)ochus on Cyzicus had already been published, and probably also the *Horoi* written by authors such as Creophylus of Ephesos and Aethlius of Samos.²⁵ The same can be said of the more ambitious *Lydiaka* by Xanthus, and of Dionysius of Miletus’ *Persika*; *Persika* were also composed by Charon of Lampsacus,

²¹ For interpretation of these passages, see Gentili, Angeli Bernardini, Cingano, and Giannini (1995) 361f.; cf. Nagy (1990) 215–25.

²² On Jacoby’s view, as illustrated in Jacoby (1949) and throughout the commentary on *FGrHist*, see Marincola (1999) 283–90; Luraghi (2001a) 4ff.

²³ See the reasonable observations of Fowler (2001) 95–100, as well as the other papers collected in Luraghi (2001c). On the unreliability of the list of “ancient historians” in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Thucydide* 5, against Toye (1995) 282–85 and Fowler (1996) 62–69, see Porciani (2001) 13–63.

²⁴ Ion (*FGrHist* 392): M.L. West (1985b); Dover (1988a) 1–12.

²⁵ *FGrHist* 442 (Xenomedes), 535 (Eugeon), 471 (Dei[l]ochus, cf. Vecchio [1998]), 417 (Creophylus), 536 (Aethlius). Other early authors of *horoi*: *FGrHist* 379 (Aristophanes the Boiotian), 443 (Artemon), 448 (Heropythus), 552 (Malacus); cf. 378 (Armenidas’ *Thebaika*), 497 (Eudemus of Paros/Naxos), 550 (*anagraphe* of Sicyon). The works of Cadmus (*FGrHist* 489) and Amelesagoras (*FGrHist* 330) are likely to be falsifications; on Hippys of Rhegium (*FGrHist* 554) see recently Vanotti (2002).

who in addition wrote *Hellenika* and *Horoi* of his native city—a good example of the contiguity between “local” and “great” history.²⁶

A further work ascribed to Charon, a chronicle entitled *Spartan authorities*, may possibly have been alluded to by Thucydides.²⁷ As we shall see, Thucydides probably read the *Sikelika* by Antiochus of Syracuse, in which events from ancient times down to 424/3 were narrated (Antiochus’ other work *On Italy* was perhaps limited to *archaiologia*);²⁸ he certainly knew Herodotus and Hellanicus of Lesbos. Among Hellanicus’ multifarious works, many were devoted to a systematic history of the heroic age, in which genealogies played a relevant role; some focused on local and regional history, among them a work on the foundation of Chios but also *Lydiaka* and *Persika*. In the *Atthis*, the ancient times were connected to the present by means of the usual genealogical devices (the full genealogy of the Philaidai, Andocides’ descent from Hermes and Odysseus), but an annalistic arrangement was adopted, at least for the most recent events. Hellanicus moreover investigated the lists of the victors at Carnean festivals (as did Hippias with the Olympic victors) and found a chronological backbone for his reconstructions in the sequence of the Argive priestesses of Hera, an attempt that was not fully appreciated by Thucydides but deserves a fairer evaluation.²⁹

4. In different ways, and with different scope, the authors we have listed contributed to the laborious effort(s) to reconstruct the entire history of mankind from its origins down to present times. In doing this they were confronted with a crucial problem. When giving him the inspiration to sing, Hesiod’s Muses began by saying, “We know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things” (*Th.* 27–8) [tr. Evelyn-White]. In other words, Hesiod was claiming that he was going to give a truthful account, whereas other poets just told plausible lies.

²⁶ Xanthus (*FGrHist* 765); von Fritz (1967) 1.97, 2.348–77; Dionysius (*FGrHist* 687) and Charon (*FGrHist* 262, 687b); Moggi (1972) and (1977); Damastes of Sigeum (*FGrHist* 5) wrote on the Trojan War and on “Greek events”, as well as on ethnography.

²⁷ *Th.* 2.2, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.238; Möller (2001) 249–50.

²⁸ An excellent treatment of Antiochus (*FGrHist* 555; cf. Cuscutà [2003]) can be found in Luraghi (2002).

²⁹ Among more recent works on Hellanicus, see Ambaglio (1980); Lenardon (1981); Schreiner (1997); Joyce (1999); Möller (2001).

Different and mutually incompatible versions of the same sagas had been elaborated and sung about, according to “political” bias or “mythopoetic” fantasy, so that any attempt to integrate the various traditions into a systematic framework implied choosing one version as “true” and rejecting the rest. We do not know which criteria Hesiod based his choices upon: the theory of divine inspiration was sufficient to authenticate his reconstruction and to guarantee the poet’s truthfulness. Nevertheless, “poets tell many lies” became a proverb, which was quoted as early as Solon.³⁰ Moreover, it was fairly often the case that poets’ stories were intrinsically unbelievable. Pindar found the “earlier stories” about Pelops irreverent and rejected them as false (“the speech of mortals beyond the true account can be deceptive, stories [*mythoi*] adorned with embroidered lies”, *O.* 1.28–29); he vividly depicts the magnifying power of Homer’s art, which “seduces with stories (*mythois*)” (*N.* 7.20–23).

Poets could always innovate and invent new versions, as tragedians often did.³¹ It is characteristic of Pindar, and of his times, that he not only claimed that his version was true but also gave arguments—as far as his genre permitted—for rejecting the other versions. In principle, prose allowed for fuller argumentation. We cannot say much about Acusilaus, Pherecydes, or Hellanicus; much has been said about Hecataeus, and the proem to his *Genealogies*:

Hecataeus the Milesian speaks as follows: I write down these things as they seem to me to be true, for the tales of the Greeks are many and ridiculous, as they seem to me.³²

The remedy for the multiplicity of traditional stories and for their ridiculousness is the personal judgment of the author. To what extent Hecataeus’ judgment was determined by “rationalism” is not clear: he may have “demythologized” some traditional tales (Hesiod’s version in *FGrHist* 1 F 19), but his work as a whole is likely to have been “a curious amalgam of rationalism and fantasy”.³³ In *FGrHist*

³⁰ Fr. 29 West; cf. Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 1; Arist., *Met.* 1.8, 983a 3; [Plato], *Just.* 374a (the scholium explains that in the beginning poets were truthful, but since they had to compete in contests they chose to lie, in order to please the audience!); see Pratt (1993).

³¹ A number of cases are studied by March (1987); on “truth” and “corrections” of myths in Stesichorus and Pindar, see Arrighetti (1982).

³² See Bertelli (2001) for full discussion.

³³ A.B. Lloyd (1975–88) 1.136.

1 F 15, Hecataeus wrote that Aetolos, the eponymous hero of Aetolia, was the son of Oineus son of Phytios, these latter having been named after the vine which had sprouted from of a root brought forth by Orestheus' dog. While accepting the mythical features of the story, Hecataeus resorted to certain methods of "etymologizing" in order to motivate the particular lineage he chose to write down. These methods, whose significance was pointed out by Hermann Diels in his classic paper on "the beginnings of philology among the Greeks", were widespread within Greek culture from the seventh to the fifth century and were more than just convenient devices: those who first traced the name of the Persians back to Perseus, or postulated a migration of Teucrians from Crete to Troy by observing that the same name, Ide, occurred in both places, were probably persuaded they had *discovered* historical truths—not unlike today's scholars when they argue about Ahhiyawa and Achaeans, or about river-names attested in different areas. Hecataeus for his part also professed to know that Danae was called Danâ by the Phoenicians (*FGrHist* 1 F 21)—a kind of "comparative studies" that Herodotus practiced with momentous results.³⁴

(Re)constructing genealogies and ancient history implied collecting and comparing traditions, reasoning and making conjectures—the same methods that were applied in investigating natural philosophy. The authors of poems and treatises *On Nature* competed with Hesiod, substituting the new entities of their cosmogonies for the gods of the epics. Xenophanes of Colophon, who also wrote on the ancient history of his native city, developed a full critique of traditional religion and of the "fictions of the ancient"; his theory on the nature of the sea was founded on the observation of fossils (DK 21 A 33; B 1.11–16). It is no wonder that, between the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth, Heraclitus recognized the existence of some sort of *respublica litterarum* within which "poets", "philosophers", and "historians" (as we catalogue them) had equal merits (and demerits): "The learning of many things teacheth not understanding, else would it have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hecataeus" (DK 22 B 40, tr. Burnet). In another fragment, Heraclitus gives this "learning of many things" (*polymathie*)

³⁴ See Diels (1910) 4–6; Bickerman (1952); Mazzarino (1965–66) 1.42–4 (Callinus fr. 7 West on Teucrians and Ide); Fowler (1996) 71–73.

its proper name: *historiē*, “research, inquiry”, which Pythagoras would have practiced more than anybody else (DK 22 B 129).³⁵ *Historiē* is the word Herodotus uses to define his own work—a term both reminiscent of an intellectual tradition and related to contemporary debate.³⁶ The wide range of subjects and problems Herodotus deals with is a good summary of the multiplicity of fields *historiē* could inquire into, but also shows that all these fields could be considered from a comprehensive point of view. Herodotus’ investigations into Egypt are stimulated by (or perhaps reduced to) the fundamental question of understanding how Egypt became what it is, and how its history could be connected to that of other countries; geology, meteorology, geography, ethnography, studies on religion, and scrutiny of traditions contribute to giving an answer to this question, which in turn leads to the undermining of the assumptions of Greek genealogists and chronographers.³⁷

In those same years, Anaxagoras, Protagoras, and Democritus formulated theories about the evolution of mankind from primitivity to civilization. Democritus, in particular, is said to have explained his views in a work that he himself claimed to have written “seven hundred and thirty years after the capture of Troy” (DK 68 B 5). If this testimony is to be believed, Democritus shared the chronological interests of Hellanicus—and of Herodotus, who was able to date Homer and Hesiod four hundred years, and the Greek Heracles nine hundred years before himself (2.53.2; 2.145.4). The same Herodotus shows that such computations were made possible by converting genealogies—provided that these were mutually consistent. Those who established “full genealogies” are likely to have filled the gaps left by traditions and memories by resorting to names attested in families in more recent times; yet the number of links was not irrelevant, for the gods and heroes at the origin of each stem had to be contemporary with one another: reconstructing “full genealogies” implied a chronological system.³⁸ Hecataeus, who discovered that his

³⁵ On the authenticity of this fragment, see Marcovich (1978) 46–49.

³⁶ Herodotus’ links with contemporary scientists have been reasonably reexamined by Thomas (2000); I would not wish to overstress the contrast between the “science” of the mid and late fifth century and older *historiē*, on which Snell (1924) 59–71 is still the classic work.

³⁷ See Vannicelli (2001), where the relevant literature is quoted.

³⁸ See Mitchel (1956); R. Thomas (1989) 123ff., 158ff.; Bertelli (1996) 68ff.; Möller (2001); Vannicelli (2001).

sixteenth ancestor had been a god, had a definite idea of how far Greek history extended, namely from the time of the gods down to his own time. According to Herodotus, however, once Hecataeus went to Egypt he discovered to his great surprise that the Egyptian priests reckoned on 345 well-documented previous human generations (2.143), hence Herodotus' demolition of Greek "ancient history": most Greek gods derived from Egypt, where they had lived more than ten thousand years before his own time; therefore current Greek genealogies could not be trusted in their claims to trace back, in the space of a few generations, to heroes begotten by gods (2.144–46). According to this reconstruction, however, while other gods and heroes are denied a real existence in Greece, the Heracles of Greek tradition is not recognized as the son of a god but is seen as a historical figure dating to nine hundred years before Herodotus (2.145.4); his lineage can be traced back to Perseus and to the Egyptians, without any divine intervention (6.53–55). "In this way the Greek Heraclid genealogies are saved"; and not only the Greek ones, for Perseus is the ancestor of the Persians, while several non-Greek dynasties originate from Heracles, who is an "interface" between the Greeks and the barbarians.³⁹

Herein lies the paradox of these attempts to reconstruct the heroic age and connect it to the present. As Theodor Mommsen caustically remarked, "the Egyptian priests of Greek conversational literature ridicule the so-called historical research of the Hellenes and its treatment of poetical fables as real tradition from primitive past times".⁴⁰ One could reply, with Bickerman, that in this way the Greeks "tried to understand the common past of mankind historically", and "as so often in Greek science, they failed because they attempted too much".⁴¹ The fact remains that even Herodotus, even Thucydides, who knew very well that poets "lie", could not persuade themselves that the whole thing was a fiction: after all, Heracles and Agamemnon had been historical figures. Some of the traditions handed down by poets, as well as some of the less "structured" oral traditions featuring more recent times, could be rejected, but others needed to be interpreted and corrected, with any unknown information supplied; how to do this, and to what extent, was the question.

³⁹ Vannicelli (2001) 230 n. 33 and 232.

⁴⁰ Mommsen (1886) 2.259.

⁴¹ Bickerman (1952) 414.

5. Herodotus professed to be acquainted with the whole of Greek poetry: only Aeschylus, he says, makes Artemis the daughter of Demeter (2.156.6); and no poet reports the particular tradition on the return of the Heraclids which is attested in Sparta (6.152.1).⁴² After all, he counted Panyassis among his relatives and Sophocles among his friends. In the fifth century, however, any educated person knew his poets; and any investigator of “ancient history” needed to collect poems, compare versions, and argue about which was the most plausible: Antiochus of Syracuse, who selected “the clearest and most convincing elements out of the ancient tales” in his work *On Italy* (*FGrHist* 555 F 2), rejected the “Athenian” version of the foundation of Metapontum, diffused by Euripides, on the grounds of a monument and of the diverging testimony of the epic poet Asius of Samos (F 12).⁴³

Herodotus also knew that “poets tell many lies”, and believed these to include the river Ocean which supposedly surrounded the world, the Eridanos, and the Hyperboreans (2.23; 3.115; 4.32). In his opinion, these poet-fabricated fictions ought not to have been taken seriously by later authors: he who attributed the flooding of the Nile to the Ocean (Herodotus is apparently referring to Hecataeus here) “took the issue into the invisible and admits of no refutation” (*ouk echei elegchon*, 2.23). On the other hand, Herodotus rigorously examines the work of the mysterious epic poet Aristeas of Proconnesus, who claimed to have visited northeastern Eurasia but referred to the Hyperboreans (4.13–36).⁴⁴

Herodotus’ critical attitude is displayed to the full in his discussion of Helen (2.112–20). According to the Egyptian priests, he says, Helen never went to Troy, but remained in Egypt, where Alexander’s ship had been carried by the wind. Homer was acquainted with this story, as can be deduced from certain lines that allude to the voyage of Alexander to Egypt, but discarded it “because he thought it less adapted for epic poetry than the version which he followed” (2.116.1); nowhere, however, did he explicitly describe Helen’s arrival at Troy (for the *Cypria* are not by Homer). In Herodotus’ own opinion, the

⁴² On Herodotus and the poets, see Diels (1910) 21–25; Verdin (1977) 54–65; on Herodotus and other “genres” more generally, see Boedeker (2000).

⁴³ See Luraghi (2002) 74–76.

⁴⁴ On “Ocean”, see A.B. Lloyd (1975–88) 2.100–1; R. Thomas (2000) 168 n. 2, 200ff., 243. On Aristeas, see Bolton (1962); Corcella and Medaglia (1993) x–xx, 239ff.

“Egyptian” version was reasonable, whereas the story of Priam enduring ten years of siege and losing many sons for Helen’s sake, “if we may credit the epic poets” (2.120.3), was foolish. The many problems raised by this passage cannot be discussed here.⁴⁵ What is most relevant in the present context is the principle of *raison poétique*, according to which poets can be suspected of having deliberately discarded truth in favor of a more “poetical” version—a point upon which Thucydides agreed.

Hence Herodotus’ skepticism about the truthfulness of epic poets, whose tales were to be scrutinized by resorting to other sources and to likelihood. When dealing with “ancient history”, Herodotus displays all his skill, and yet “ancient history” is not his main concern. In referring to the genealogy of the Heraclids as reconstructed by “the Greeks”, after having insisted on his cherished view that no god should be inserted there, he omits further details, “since others have told of them; but the things with which others have not dealt, of these (he) will make mention” (6.55). These “others” could be poets, or prose writers, or both.⁴⁶ Herodotus is skeptical about the role that they assigned to the gods but otherwise professes to accept their stories; however, he is more interested in narrating something else, namely the recent history of the Spartan kings. Likewise, although he knows much about Minos and his “empire” (1.171–73; 7.169–71), Polycrates of Samos was “the first Greek of whom we have any knowledge” to conceive a plan to dominate the sea, “excepting Minos and any other who may have been master of the sea before him; of that which is called ‘human generation’, Polycrates was the first” (3.122.2). Minos is a historical figure, but Polycrates is placed on a different level.

The fact is that Herodotus is well acquainted with the stories about heroic times, mentioning them whenever he thinks it convenient, but chooses to give a full account of a more recent period, roughly spanning three generations from ca. 570–60 to 479/8.⁴⁷ The reasons for this choice are given in the proem, by means of a sort of “zooming-in” technique. The initial announcement that Herodotus of Halicarnassus is going to set forth his own inquiry (*historiē*) creates multiple

⁴⁵ See A.B. Lloyd (1975–88) 3.43–52, especially 46–8; on the Egyptian priests, see Moyer (2002).

⁴⁶ See Vannicelli (1993) 29–30.

⁴⁷ For full argumentation, see Vannicelli (1993).

expectations, so many are the fields which *historiē* investigates. The scope of the inquiry is firstly specified as “the deeds of men” and “the works great and marvellous, which have been produced some by Hellenes and some by Barbarians”: the object of Herodotus’ *historiē* is “human history”. There is then a further narrowing-down: “especially the causes for which these waged war with one another”. The Persian Wars are obviously meant here, but how far back did the “chain of events” extend? As far as heroic times, some would say. Herodotus wittily ascribes this thesis to Persian “historians” (and to Phoenicians), who are said to call into question the mythical rapes of Greek and barbarian heroines, just to make fun of those foolish Greeks taking vengeance for the rape of their women, who “would never have been carried away if they had not themselves been willing to go” (1.1.1–1.5.2). The “Persian” account is in fact a good piece of Greek *archaiologia*, where the tales about Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen are integrated into a structured and reasonable “history” concerned with migrations and changes of name (the origins of the Phoenicians and “the land which is now called Hellas”, 1.1.2), the differences between the state of ancient Greece and subsequent stages in its evolution (“Argos was at that time the first city”, 1.1.2), and chronology (“in the next generation”, 1.3.1). Nevertheless, Herodotus’ work will be no *archaiologia*: he is not going to say whether these things happened thus or otherwise; he will point out the man “who first, within (his) own knowledge, began to commit wrong against the Hellenes”, after which he will “go on with the story” (1.5.3). The man in question is Croesus, king of Lydia in the sixth century, who, “first of all the Barbarians of whom we have knowledge”, subdued some Greeks and imposed a tribute upon them, made others his friends (1.6.2). The narrative on Croesus introduces the history of the rise of the Persian Empire from Cyrus onwards—the true “cause” of the Persian Wars, which thus becomes the main subject of Herodotus’ work.⁴⁸

Within the wide field of “research”, Herodotus selects recent history, of which he claims to have genuine knowledge, and rejects ancient history, about which he knows many stories, the truth of

⁴⁸ On Herodotus’ proem, see Erbse (1956) (gradual definition of the subject); Pelliccia (1992) (traditional “false start” and innovating *recusatio*); Hommel (1981) (Herodotus’ evolution); Asheri (1988a) xviiff. (*historiē*).

which he prefers not to judge—the exact opposite of Hecataeus, who wrote down ancient tales “as they seem(ed) to (him) to be true”. In fact, Herodotus also investigated *archaiologia*, as shown by many “digressions” in his work, but a full treatment is reserved for more recent times. The proem, even if (or precisely because) it leaves some room for all human “deeds” and shows off Herodotus’ skill as an ancient historian, emphatically focuses on this different choice to narrate what falls within the historian’s own personal knowledge. If Herodotus really started out as a practitioner of *historiē*, as some have supposed, and then directed his interests towards “history” in Egypt, where he fully realized the unreliability of Greek *archaiologia*, his proem would closely reproduce the stages of his personal development, and the emphasis laid on the final issue would show that he was fully aware of his intellectual conquest.⁴⁹

This conquest has often been described as “the discovery of ‘historical space’”—a rather ambiguous formulation.⁵⁰ Within the history of mankind, in any case, a more recent period, to which Croesus and Polycrates belong, is stated to be genuinely “known”. This means, firstly, that in contrast with previous times, the memory of which has to be recovered by reasoning on the basis of the unreliable tales of poets (and the prose writers who followed them), the history of this period can be more confidently reconstructed. To be sure, this point is taken for granted rather than properly demonstrated. Herodotus’ sources for recent history were mostly oral traditions, often as untrustworthy and contradictory as “myths”. How did Herodotus choose the particular version of Cyrus’ origins, which he claims is “true”, as opposed to those that “magnified” his exploits (1.95.1)? And is the famous statement that his business is “to report what is told” without committing himself as to its credibility (2.123.1; 7.152.3) really different from the *non liquet* about the mythical rapes (1.5.3)? The sources for recent history in fact required no less “research” and “reasoning” than those for ancient history; on the whole, however, the “social memory” of the period that culminated in the

⁴⁹ This “developmental hypothesis”, formulated by Jacoby (1913) 333–92 and perfected by von Fritz (1967) 1.104–57, has shared the fate of all “genetic” reconstructions, which have not been held in high repute by more recent scholars (cf. e.g., V.J. Hunter [1982] 304–8); see, however, Hommel (1981); Canfora and Corcella (1992) 443–48.

⁵⁰ See the reasonable remarks in V.J. Hunter (1982) 86ff.

Persian Wars appeared more reliable to him—and he was not entirely mistaken.⁵¹

It was not just a matter of sources and their credibility. According to Herodotus, an earthquake at Delos in the year 490 portended the evils that were to come in the three generations corresponding to the reigns of Dareios, Xerxes, and Artoxerxes, evils much greater than any that had occurred in the twenty previous generations (6.98.2). Twenty generations are likely to have been computed up to the war at Troy (or the return of the Heraclids). In Herodotus' opinion, the last century was not like the previous ones: it had been marked by momentous events which only bore comparison with the most celebrated events of the mythical past—in fact, they were still greater. When describing the preparations for Xerxes' expedition, Herodotus says that his army was the greatest ever gathered, greater than the army of Dareios against the Scythians or that of the Scythians who invaded Asia, and also—"to judge by that which is reported"—greater than Agamemnon's expedition, and that of the Mysians and Teucrians into Europe (7.20.2–21.1). The expression "to judge by that which is reported" (*kata ta legomena*) marks the passage to the "mythical age", to what is known from less reliable traditions—by which, as usual, he means the tales of poets and *archaiologiai*. The events handed down by means of such sources cannot be established precisely; in as much as they can, however, they are judged to be less great than those of the Persian Wars. Recent history is not only better known; it is also "greater".

Nevertheless, Herodotus had too much of a sense of humor and irony to proclaim the "greatness" of recent history with no further qualification. At the end of the proem he says that he will give "an account of the cities of men, small as well as great", for "human prosperity never continues steadfast" (1.5.4). Greatness is always relative, and what was great in Herodotus' time will not always be so. As Wolfgang Rösler has noted, Herodotus is speaking to his future audience, before whom he "historicizes himself" and his time—the quiet attitude of a man who was citizen of the world, and to whom the vision of a multimillennial human history had been revealed.⁵²

⁵¹ On all of these questions and on Herodotus' oral sources, see Luraghi (2001b); Murray (2001a) and (2001b).

⁵² Rösler (1991); cf. Corcella (1984) 192–94; Canfora and Corcella (1992) 441–43.

6. The beginning of Thucydides' work contrasts sharply with that of Herodotus', and leaves no doubt as to the subject of his work: he "wrote the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians".⁵³ This is "the greatest disturbance yet known in history", greater than both the events that immediately preceded it and those of remote antiquity; these cannot be clearly ascertained, yet evidence "points to the conclusion that there was nothing on a great scale" (1.1). This statement is illustrated through a survey of Greek history from its origins, at the end of which Thucydides grants that he has established the "true dimensions" of past events, though "it will be difficult to believe every detail" (1.20.1). The reason is that most men accept traditional stories, even those about their own country, "without applying any critical test whatsoever (*abasanistōs*)": the Athenians believe that Hipparchos was tyrant, which he never was (1.20.1–2). Even contemporary matters are not precisely understood: "the Greeks" mistakenly believe that the Spartan kings have two votes each, and that there is a "company of Pitane"; "so little pains do the vulgar take in the investigation of truth, readily accepting the first story that comes to hand" (1.20.3, hinting at Hdt. 6.57.5 and 9.53.3). Thucydides, by contrast, has drawn reliable conclusions from the clearest of evidence:

Assuredly they will not be disturbed either by the lays of a poet displaying the exaggeration of his craft, or by the compositions of the prose writers (*logographoi*) that are attractive at truth's expense; the subjects they treat of being out of the reach of evidence (*anexelegkta*), and time having robbed most of them of historical value by enthroning them in the region of romance (*mythōdes*) (1.21.1, tr. Crawley, modified).

Unreliable tales have been further distorted by poets and "logographers".⁵⁴ Founded as it is upon these, Thucydides' own *archaiologia* is informed with caution.⁵⁵ In the first part (1.2–11), which examines the history of "the country now called Hellas" down to the

⁵³ See Erbse (1970), esp. 67f.; from a narratological point of view, Dewald (1999).

⁵⁴ Like Pindar's *logioi* (vs. *aidoi*, cf. X. *Cyr.* 1.2.1), Herodotus' *logopoios* (cf. *epopoios* and *mousopoios*), and Hippias' *syggraphai* (vs. *poiētai*), Thucydides' term *logographoi* expresses a "formal difference" with poets (Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.58–59); the word, however, also suggests "writing down tales" (*logoi*, as Herodotus called the sections of his work), in contrast to Thucydides' writing of one single great event.

⁵⁵ See Täubler (1927); Tsakmakis (1995a) 25–63; Alonso-Núñez (2000) 19–55; Nicolai (2001).

Trojan War, Thucydides selects relevant data from epic poetry (Homer, “if we can accept his testimony”, as he says at 9.4 and 10.2) and from “tradition” (*akoē*, unspecified at 4, “by those Peloponnesians who have been the recipients of the most credible tradition” at 9.2).⁵⁶ These data are checked step by step against what is reasonable given probability and general assumptions about the development of mankind—“evidence” subjected to a “critical test”. Minos and Agamemnon, however, remain historical figures: while Thucydides distrusted poets’ exaggerations, he shows a “basic acceptance of the epic tradition, critical though he is of some of the detail”.⁵⁷ The second part of the *archaiologia* (1.12–19), about the period after the Trojan War, has a slightly different tone: it is still a “reasoned” exposition, but—apart from a reference to “ancient poets” at 13.5, which is in fact a flashback—facts are more plainly stated, and remote events are precisely dated, with reference to the capture of Troy (1.12.3) and to the Peloponnesian War (1.13.3–4), without any expression of caution.

Ancient history can only be reconstructed by examining evidence; yet some facts, and a chronological backbone, are ascertained: according to 1.21.1, *most* of ancient history, as handed down, is unreliable—in other words, the rest can be accepted. Thucydides did not in fact wholly despise the work of his “predecessors” who had narrated “Greek history before the Persian War or the Persian War itself” (1.97.2). In his outline of the ancient history of Sicily (6.2–5), he rejects the epic traditions on the Kyklopes and Laistrygones and deals with the most remote migrations by comparing geographical names (the Sikanians were Iberians, coming from the river Sikanos in Iberia: “a truth discovered”, 6.2.2) and appealing to probability (6.2.4); he then lists the foundations of Greek cities, giving the exact date for each. This is *archaiologia* at its best, probably drawn, at least in part, from Antiochus of Syracuse.⁵⁸ Like Herodotus, Thucydides

⁵⁶ Hellanicus may be meant at 1.9.2 (cf. Gomme, *HCT* 1.109; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.32), or alternatively local oral traditions (Porciani [2001] 117–24); as 1.20 shows, Thucydides assimilates “collective” traditions and authors who write them down uncritically, cf. Nicolai (2001) 277ff.

⁵⁷ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.31. On Thucydides and poets, see Verdin (1977) 65–75; Jung (1991), esp. 38–60.

⁵⁸ The thesis was put forward by Wölfflin (1872), then variously reassessed: see Dover (1953); van Compernelle (1959) 441–73; *HCT* 4.198ff.; Luraghi (1991); Sammartano (1998). On 6.2–5, more generally, Tsakmakis (1995a) 157–75; Alonso-Núñez (2000) 70–77.

considers the history of the most remote past unreliable on principle, as well as less “great”, but when dealing with it he adopts the methods of his predecessors and “chronologically-minded contemporaries”.⁵⁹ He is just more emphatic than Herodotus, and more consistent in leaving out ancient history—although this is not completely excluded from his work.⁶⁰

As for recent history, Thucydides selects only a part of it. Herodotus started from Croesus and emphasized the continuity in the historical process from Dareios down to his times. It is likely that Thucydides’ initial project was a wider Greek history, but that he then chose to isolate the Peloponnesian War as his sole and “splendid” subject.⁶¹ Thus, the history of the fifty years after the Persian Wars (1.89–118), which starts at the point where Herodotus left off, is confined to a digression.⁶² According to 1.97.2, that period had not been narrated by Thucydides’ predecessors, apart from Hellanicus, who touched upon it in his writing on the history of Athens, “but only briefly and with some chronological inaccuracies”. In establishing his own chronological system, Thucydides is persuaded that he has improved on Hellanicus, as 2.2.1 and 5.20 suggest;⁶³ in the outline of the “fifty years”, however, where chronology is not his main concern, his corrections of Hellanicus remain implicit; the reference to Hellanicus could indeed be a later addition.⁶⁴ In any case, Thucydides’ attention is focused on his true goal: “the history of these events contains an explanation of the growth of the Athenian empire” (1.97.2), where “explanation” (*apodeixis*) is likely to allude to Herodotus’ proem.⁶⁵

In the arrangement of the work as we have it, the stress is strictly on contemporary events, immediately contrasted with the Persian Wars, “the greatest achievement of past times” that “yet found a speedy decision in two actions by sea and two by land” (1.23.1). This statement, isolated from the *archaiologia*, highlights Thucydides’

⁵⁹ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.38.

⁶⁰ Cf. the “Herodotean” narrative of Sitalkes’ expedition at 2.95–101, and 1.24.1–3, 2.15, 2.29.3, 2.68, 2.102, 3.88.1–3, 4.102, 4.120.1. At 3.104, “Homer” is quoted, without any caution, not as a source for ancient history but as a witness for his own times.

⁶¹ Ziegler (1929), revived by Canfora (1982b).

⁶² On the *Pentekontaetia*, see Stadter (1993); Tsakmakis (1995a) 64–100.

⁶³ Cf. Lendle (1964); Möller (2001) 259–61.

⁶⁴ Literature in Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.147–48 and Möller (2001) 260 n. 81.

⁶⁵ See Tsakmakis (1995a) 81f.; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.148.

special competition with Herodotus.⁶⁶ This is why Herodotus is punctiliously criticized not for his narrative of past times but—more insidiously—for his failures in investigating “matters of contemporary history, which have not been obscured by time” (the two votes of the Spartan kings, and the “company of Pitane”, 1.20.3).⁶⁷ Thus, Herodotus is dared to fight on Thucydides’ own field, and is overcome. Thucydides, for his part, takes the trouble to set out the criteria by which contemporary events should be investigated (1.22.1–3): having said that some make mistakes *even* in dealing with contemporary matters, he is then obliged to explain that investigating contemporary history, as he has chosen to do, is far from easy.⁶⁸

Competition, however, implies imitation. Thucydides’ Sicilian narrative is partly modelled on Herodotus’ account of Xerxes’ expedition, and the involved considerations at 6.31 presuppose Herodotus 7.20.2–21.1: the Athenian armada has surpassed Xerxes’ army.⁶⁹ As Eduard Schwartz pointed out, Thucydides fully grasped the greatness of the Peloponnesian War when Athens attacked Sicily.⁷⁰ Such a momentous event could only be compared to the Persian Wars as they had been narrated by Herodotus.

7. To sum up, Thucydides defines the scope and methodology of his work by means of a close confrontation with his “predecessors” (as he calls them at 1.97.2). The events of ancient history are reputed to have been great, but Thucydides is able to scrutinize them more rigorously than others have done and to show, in opposition to poets and writers of *archaiologiai*, that the reverse is true. As for more recent history, the Persian Wars, praised by Herodotus, were not so great, while Hellenicus’ history of the growth of the Athenian empire is brief and chronologically inaccurate in comparison to Thucydides’

⁶⁶ Thucydides’ use of Herodotus cannot be questioned: see Hornblower (1987) 13–33 and *Comm.* 1.19–38, 122–45; Moles (1993); Scanlon (1994); Tsakmakis (1995b); Rogkoti, this vol. The starting point of the *Pentekontaetia* suggests that Thucydides knew Herodotus’ work in its final written form; this is confirmed by the term *logographoi*, “prose writers” (cf. Rösler [1991]; Canfora and Corcella [1992] 439–43; in general, Crane [1996] 1–27).

⁶⁷ On these (presumed) mistakes, see Kelly (1981); Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.57–58. “Not obscured by time” is ironical: Canfora (1972) 75.

⁶⁸ On 1.22, see Marincola (1989); Tsakmakis (1998).

⁶⁹ For a full discussion, see Corcella (1996a); cf. Rood (1998b) and (1999); Harrison (2000b); Raaflaub (2002a); Rogkoti, this vol.

⁷⁰ Schwartz (1919), esp. 206–16.

own narrative, concise though this is. Only contemporary history is truly great, and Thucydides—unlike Herodotus—knows how to investigate it.

Thucydides' competitive attitude was more than just a trait of his character (which must have been less than amiable). "Agonistic" spirit was as old as the epics ("minstrel is jealous of minstrel": Hes. *Op.* 25–6); in public performances, as well as in symposia, poets had always vied for first place. "Philosophers" like Xenophanes and Heraclitus disputed with "poets" and with one another. In the fifth century, "sophists" and scientists displayed their polemic spirit in exchanging and discussing their ideas.⁷¹ Controversy and debate were a typical feature of Thucydides' world, and vindicating the excellence of one's own work by criticizing one's predecessors was far from unusual. Poets, while following tradition, were expected to introduce innovations. "Praise wine that is old, but praise the flowers of songs that are new", Pindar said (*O.* 9.47).⁷² In the passage quoted at the beginning of this contribution, Hippias claimed that his work drew upon poets and prose writers but was nevertheless original: they had narrated single matters unsystematically and "briefly" (just like Thucydides' Hellanicus!) whereas he himself had arranged the traditional tales in a manner that would be charming, for it was "new and varied".⁷³ Thucydides' contemporary subject is brand new (and great), and as for the way it is treated,

the absence of romance (*to mē mythōdes*) in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid (*ōphelima*) to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. *In fine*, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time (*ktēma te es aiei mallon ē agōnisma es to parachrēma akouein xygkeitai*: 1.22.4, tr. Crawley).

Thucydides is anticipating probable criticisms, like Hippias,⁷⁴ but his response is not to say that his work will nevertheless be charming;

⁷¹ See G.E.R. Lloyd (1979) and (1987); R. Thomas (2000).

⁷² Cf. Lanata (1963); Nagy (1990) 339–81; Gianotti (1992) 149–65; Hose (2000).

⁷³ Good organization and variety are among those merits whose lack made Thucydides' work unpleasant, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus: see Fornaro (1997). However, Hippias cannot have been just an uncritical collector, as his note on the term *tyrannos* shows (DK 86 B 5 = *FGrHist* 6 F 6; cf. Th. 1.13.1).

⁷⁴ Note the structural analogy, with *isōs* introducing the possible remark.

on the contrary, it will not, for it lacks *to mythōdes*, the seductiveness of traditional tales alluded to by Pindar, the quality of “telling stories agreeably” to which Hippias owed his success.⁷⁵ Its merits lie elsewhere. “The Muse does not give me in needy fashion to taste only what is at hand, but goes on her way reaping everything”, said a poet (*PMG* 947). This statement can be compared to Thucydides’ “so little pains do the vulgar take in the investigation of truth, readily accepting the first story that comes to hand” (1.20.3); here, the stress is laid on “truth”, Thucydides’ own innovation.⁷⁶ Pindar was also concerned with truth, as we have seen above; his criticism of epic traditions seemingly led him to refuse “Homer’s trodden way” in order to “seek the deep path of wisdom” (*Pae.* 7b.10ff.) and to “find something new and submit it to the touchstone for testing (*basanōi es elegchon*)”, which is “a danger”, for envy lies in wait (*N.* 8.20ff.): the research into, and scrutiny of, truth may expose one to incomprehension and censure, for “the heart of the mass of men is blind” (*N.* 7.23–4).⁷⁷

People do not like truth, preferring the immediate pleasure given by competition pieces; only a few will appreciate the “durable possession” (*ktēma es aiei*) that Thucydides has elaborated. Bacchylides’ “immortal monument of the Muses” was “a pleasure for mortals” too (10.9ff.). Thucydides sides with Pindar and haughty ‘intellectuals’ like Heraclitus, according to whom “men are unable to understand (t)his speech which is always (*aei*) true both before and after they hear it” (DK 22 B 1).⁷⁸ Yet he is especially speaking of—and to—his contemporaries. In his reflections on deceptive speeches Gorgias mentions the performances of scientists and philosophers along with “contests (*agōnes*) in which a single speech pleases and persuades a large crowd, because it is written with skill, not spoken with truth” (*Hel.* 13, tr. MacDowell). In Thucydides’ opinion, the Athenian assembly has a dangerous propensity to give credit to appealing speeches which are untrue and harmful (see, e.g., 6.8.2,

⁷⁵ *Mythōdes*: see Gomme, *HCT* 2.149 and Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.61 for the essentials.

⁷⁶ On truth and originality, cf. Gorgias, *Pal.* 26; *Dialex.* 6.1.

⁷⁷ See Snell (1961) 56ff.; Hose (2000) 10–12.

⁷⁸ On the interpretation of this much-debated text, see Diano – Serra (1980) 89–109. One can make a comparison with Empedocles DK 31 B 114, or some pieces of “sympotic wisdom” as interpreted in Bielohlaweck (1940). On this “rhetoric of austerity”, cf. Crane (1996) 209–58.

7.8.2, 7.14.4, as well as Cleon's and Diodotos' considerations at 3.38 and 42–3); Pericles was great because he did not flatter the multitude but contradicted them, something his successors were not able to do (2.65.8ff.); Antiphon, a man Thucydides highly admires, “did not willingly come forward in the assembly or upon any public scene (*agōna*), being ill looked-upon by the multitude owing to his reputation for talent; and yet (he) was the one man best able to aid (*ōphelein*) in the courts, or before the assembly, the suitors (*agōnizomenous*) who required his opinion” (8.68.1, tr. Crawley).⁷⁹

This portrait of Antiphon is also Thucydides' self-portrait: he despises the superficiality of public meetings, yet he knows his truths can “aid”. His tone is that of the politician rebuking the assembly that does not listen to useful though unpleasant advice (e.g., D. 3.21–2). Otto Lendle is probably right in suggesting that Thucydides' *ktēma es aei* refers not so much to posterity as to contemporary audiences, who are given the opportunity to receive lasting teaching instead of the usual seductions: ephemeral pleasure and true enrichment are opposed, as in the sayings of moralists (cf. e.g., Critias fr. 6.22–3 West: excessive drinking gives immediate pleasure but causes permanent harm). Nevertheless, one may assume that Thucydides envisaged his work being read both during his life and after his death, on public and private occasions alike.⁸⁰ In any case, Thucydides' ideal audience are the happy few who share his views and appreciate his high critical standards—the opposite of the Athenian masses, who do not even know that Hipparchos was not tyrant and turn the unimportant episode of his murder into a “founding myth” of democracy (1.20.2, 6.54–8). Thucydides' experience of Athenian political life was just as important as the confrontation with his predecessors in determining the character of his work.

8. In common with other ancient historians, Thucydides selected and defined his subject and methods through a close confrontation with his predecessors, whom he recognized as such: he shared much

⁷⁹ On Antiphon, see Gagarin (2002). On rhetoric and method, see Butti de Lima (1996); Pires (1998); Tsakmakis (1998).

⁸⁰ See Lendle (1990); different points of view are found in Flory (1990); Nicolai (1995); Moles (1999). On Thucydides' text recited (as was usual in an “aural” culture, cf. Corcella [1996b] on Hecataeus), see Canfora (1971) 657–58; Hornblower (1987) 29 and *Comm.* 2.60–61. *Agōnisma*: Sifakis (1997–98).

with them yet was innovative in his concentration on contemporary history and on critical standards, thus asserting his own aristocratic excellence. This, we hope, justifies the reading in terms of “agonistic intertextuality” proposed in the present work. As John Marincola writes at the end of his masterly illustration of the interplay between tradition and innovation peculiar to the historiographical genre:

Only by a process of comparison and an attempt to find the fluid border between convention and innovation will we come closer to an understanding of genre and the individual work that both comprehends and challenges it.⁸¹

⁸¹ Marincola (1999) 321; cf. Marincola (1997), esp. 12–19.

THUCYDIDES AND HERODOTUS: ASPECTS OF THEIR INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP

Zacharias Rogkotis

This paper explores aspects of intertextuality between Thucydides and Herodotus. An examination of thematic, structural, and lexical links between the two historians is useful from two points of view: first, it provides evidence that the two historians are considerably closer in their methods, literary presentation, and views of historical causation than is sometimes, almost axiomatically, believed; second, it helps establish the extent of Thucydides' awareness of—and perhaps influence by—the work of his predecessor.

I must begin with a methodological caveat, however. I believe that the extent and nature of the interrelation between Thucydides and his predecessor are dim, if not obscure. This is largely due to Thucydides' conspicuous failure to refer to his predecessor by name and in so doing directly acknowledge the extent to which he used his work as a source or model. Given this, any attempt to investigate the relationship between the two historians cannot be much more than speculation. This is all the more obvious if we simultaneously consider the vast amount of literary material lost forever or surviving only in fragmentary form, and also the great influence of Homer, lyric poetry, and tragedy, those inexhaustible and communal "reservoirs" of intellectual and literary debt which must be taken into account whenever comparisons are drawn between two ancient authors.

Furthermore, any attempt to define Thucydides' relation with Herodotus and possible debt to him will come up against many generations of critics who have maintained passionately that the relationship between the two can only be polemical and agonistic. From antiquity onward, Thucydides' explicitly outlined historical methodology, his correction of historical information found in his predecessor,¹ and

¹ I refer to Thucydides' impatient correction of Herodotus' information on the votes of the two kings in Sparta and on the Pitanate *lochos* (Th. 1.20.3; Hdt. 6.57.5 and 9.53).

his professed dislike for, and avoidance of, τὸ μυθῶδες² have all been viewed as head-on attacks on Herodotus. This interpretation has laid the foundation for the overriding view that Thucydides despised Herodotus and treated his work as almost a travesty of history, that the two “complement one another, but as opposites”,³ with Thucydides showing “little inclination to imitate his predecessor”,⁴ or using the work of Herodotus only to correct and refute it.

Only recently has scholarship started to bridge the divide that for centuries separated the two historians. In the last few decades there has been a gradual but steady trend in Herodotean and Thucydidean research that aims to rectify long-held misconceptions and clichés about the “scientific” and “objective” historian versus the “naive” and “gullible” storyteller. This in turn has led to more “Thucydidean” and “Herodotean” readings of Herodotus and Thucydides respectively, and scholarship has started to approach the relationship between the two in a more positive way; striking similarities have been observed, ranging from factual information, verbal parallels, and literary motifs to religion and historical methodology.⁵

Being the intellectual “offspring” of these developments in Herodotean and Thucydidean criticism, this paper will focus on passages that strongly suggest that—*mutatis mutandis*—Thucydides displays certain methodological similarities with his predecessor and also traces of his influence. More specifically, attention will be drawn to one aspect of historical causation on which the two historians seem to hold considerably similar views, namely the use of empirical psychology in their attempt to explain the two major military defeats recounted in their work: the destruction of the Athenian fleet at Sicily and the failure of Xerxes’ expedition against Greece respectively. The historians appear to resemble one another in their treatment of psychological

² Th. 1.21.1; 1.22.4.

³ Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1908b) 7.

⁴ Usher (1969) 23.

⁵ On Thucydides’ factual dependence on Herodotus, see Hornblower (1992b), reprinted in Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.122–37 (Annex A); *id.* (1994a) 59–60. On similarities between Herodotus and Thucydides in poetic diction, see Hornblower (1987) 28f.; on a shared literary motif, namely the so-called “wise-adviser” motif, see Pelling (1991) and Marinatos (1980). On a shared religious stance, see Marinatos-Rawlings (1978); on common methodological tools, see Fowler (1996) 76f. and R. Thomas (2000). See also Connor (1984) 267 (references to Herodotus in the Index); Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.137–45 (Annex B); Rood (1998b); *id.* (1999); Kallet (2001) 85–120.

factors—and in particular deep urges and desires—as *stimuli* for historical action, which—since they defy moderation and reason—lead individuals and peoples to their downfall. In so doing, it will be shown, the two historians *qua* narrators make use of focalized narration, a narrative technique widely known in Thucydidean studies as “inferred motivation”:⁶ in their account of the preparatory stages of the Athenians’ and Xerxes’ critical military operations, they momentarily adopt the point of view of the participants, peering into their psyches and inferring the psychological motives that underlie their subsequent action.⁷

Furthermore, I shall argue, Thucydides deliberately exploited the literary presentation of oriental despots in Herodotus in his own characterization of the Athenians in the period culminating in the decision to invade Sicily. In so doing, Thucydides appears to be conveying an implicit negative judgment on Athens’ intellectual deterioration and acquisition of tyrannical features—in sum, its emergence as a new Persia—a view that resonates with the general perception of Athens by a great part of Hellas in the period following the Persian Wars.⁸

The Invasion of the Irrational

I begin with Thucydides’ account of the Athenians’ reaction to Nicias’ second dissuading speech at the assembly in Athens in the context of the launching of the Sicilian Expedition (6.24.1–2). “Thus spoke Nicias (ὁ μὲν Νικίας τοσαῦτα εἶπε) . . . The Athenians, however, far from losing their desire to sail (οἱ δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦν τοῦ πλοῦ οὐκ

⁶ The term “focalization” was introduced by Genette (1972) 203–24; Genette’s terminology has provoked a great deal of theoretical discussion; for the most important refinements of his concept of “focalization” see Bal (1985) 100–110; Chatman (1978). On focalization in Thucydides, see Hornblower (1994b) 134f.

⁷ “Inferred motivation” refers to Thucydides’ extraction of the deeper motives of the characters of his narrative by means of personal conjecture based on the observation of subsequent events. See de Romilly (1956); V.J. Hunter (1973a); Schneider (1974); Westlake (1989b).

⁸ Cornford (1907) was the first to foreground the intriguing parallels between Thucydides’ Sicilian account and Herodotus’ narrative of Xerxes’ invasion. More recently, Thucydides’ deliberate connection of the Sicilian Expedition with Herodotus’ Persian Wars has been argued for compellingly by Rood (1999) and Kallet (2001) 85–87.

ἐξηρέθησαν), became even more enthusiastic about it (πολὺν δὲ μᾶλλον ὥρμητο).⁹

It is hard to resist relating this passage to the beginning of Herodotus' Book IX, where Mardonius' hasty march against Athens is described. When he reached Boeotia, we are told, the Thebans attempted to persuade him to stop, encamp in Boeotia, and try to conquer Greece by means of bribery. The Thebans' advice was undoubtedly based upon a reasonable assessment of the situation, but Mardonius did not go along with it. Herodotus provides us with a psychological motive (9.3.1): "the Thebans conveyed this advice (οἱ μὲν ταῦτα συνεβούλευον), Mardonius however was not convinced (ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐπείθετο), but a fierce desire to seize Athens a second time was dripping inside him (ἀλλὰ οἱ δεινός τις ἐνέστακτο ἥμερος τὰς Ἀθήνας δεύτερα ἐλεῖν)".

The similarities between the passages in which Nicias and the Thebans respectively fail to make the Athenians and Mardonius see sense are too striking to be accidental. Both passages display a similar shift in perspective: the narrative is at first "external", describing Nicias' and the Thebans' attempts at dissuasion, then becomes "internal": focalized through the Athenians and Mardonius, it conveys their internal desires, which turn out to have been one of the main reasons for their actions. On a literary level, both scenes make use of the so-called "wise-adviser" or "tragic-warner" motif:¹⁰ conveying advice based on moderation, Nicias and the Thebans attempt—to no avail—to avert hasty decisions, addressing agents governed by a passionate urge for action. On the syntactic level, the two authors make similar use of a strong antithetical construction that sharply opposes the clashing poles of rationality and irrationality. Both writers refer first to the giving of the advice (οἱ μὲν ταῦτα συνεβούλευον . . . ὁ μὲν Νικίας τοσαῦτα εἶπε) and then mention what the recipients of this advice did not do, namely change their minds because of it (ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐπείθετο—οἱ δὲ οὐκ ἐξηρέθησαν), and what they did do, i.e., show an even more intense desire and eagerness (ἀλλὰ οἱ δεινός τις ἐνέστακτο ἥμερος—πολὺν δὲ μᾶλλον ὥρμητο).

⁹ Thucydides is cited from I.B. Alberti's recent edition (1972–2000). Herodotus is cited from the *Oxford Classical Texts* edition of C. Hude (Oxford 1908). Translations are by the author.

¹⁰ The standard work on "wise advisers" in Herodotus is Bischoff (1932); see also Lattimore (1939); Immerwahr (1956) 16–45; Marinatos (1980); Pelling (1991).

The two scenes describing Nicias' and the Thebans' ineffectual advice thematically and structurally evoke the preparatory stage of Xerxes' expedition against Greece. In the latter context, Artabanus, the "wise adviser" *par excellence*, intervenes to avert military action (7.8–11; 7.46–52), but his exhortations for moderation meet with strong resistance in the form of Xerxes' eagerness for the expedition, encapsulated in the verb ὀρμάομαι, and further provoked by repeated visions during his sleep.¹¹ At 7.19.1 we are told that "after Xerxes had been seized by the urge to go forth to the war (ὀρμημένῳ δὲ Ξέρξῃ στρατηλατέειν), a third vision appeared to him in his sleep".

Xerxes' ὀρμή for the expedition against Hellas appears to have been inherited from his father. At the beginning of Book VII ὀρμάομαι is used to describe Darius' psychology after receiving the news of the battle of Marathon (7.1.1): "and at that moment his anger against Athens grew even stronger and he became all the more eager to campaign against Greece (καὶ μᾶλλον ὀρμητο στρατεύεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα)". A few lines later (7.4) Darius' deep-seated desire to launch the campaign is mentioned again, after the issue of his succession has been settled and Xerxes is publicly proclaimed as next in line to the throne: "having thus publicly appointed Xerxes as his heir, Darius was eager to lead forth his army (ὀρμᾶτο στρατεύεσθαι)".

At this point the Athenians' ever-increasing ὀρμή for the expedition against Sicily after Nicias' second speech comes to mind. And it is noteworthy that within the preparatory stage of the Sicilian Expedition, their deep psychological urge expressed by the verb ὀρμάομαι becomes a key element and is repeatedly mentioned in both narrative and speeches.

¹¹ Herodotus' account of the procedures leading up to Xerxes' final decision to invade Greece clearly indicates the ambiguous nature of his historical causality, where divine and human motivation appear to go hand in hand. This duality in Herodotus' view of the world, i.e. his belief that human life is a mixture of divine intervention and human responsibility, should not lead us to attribute to him an inconsistent, quasi-schizophrenic perception of causality. As Lateiner (1989) 207, has noted, in Herodotus "the necessity of fate and the existence of human choice are two different, not incompatible, ways of looking at the same event". In other words, divine and human causes are not mutually exclusive but complementary. Xerxes' expedition, for instance, is at the same time metaphysically destined, politically explicable, and psychologically driven. No doubt the idea of this kind of "double motivation" has its roots in Homer where characters' actions are repeatedly explained in terms of both personal and divine agency. Attic, and especially Sophoclean, tragedy was based on a similar perception of causality. For more on the co-existence of "the magical and the mechanical, the demonic and the naturalistic" in Herodotus, see Pelling (1991) 139.

At 6.6.1 Thucydides implicitly reveals that his authorial aim in incorporating the preceding digression of the *Sikelika* was to highlight—by means of all the information about the history and geography of Sicily—the large population and size of the island and hence the unreasonableness of the Athenians’ wish to attack it: “these were the peoples, Greek and foreign, which inhabited Sicily (τοσαῦτα ἔθνη Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων Σικελίαν ὄκει) and even though the island was of this size, the Athenians were eager to attack it (καὶ ἐπὶ τοσόνδε οὖσαν αὐτὴν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι στρατεύειν ὥρμηντο)”. A few lines later the verb ὁρμῶμαι is employed by Nicias, who during his first speech (6.9.3) advises the Athenians: “I will try to explain to you that this is the wrong time for hasty actions and that the objects of your desire are not to be gained easily (οὔτε ῥαδίᾳ ἐστι κατασχεῖν ἐφ’ ᾧ ὥρμησθε)”. The same verb is picked up by the narrative after the speech of Alcibiades (6.19.1), where we are told that the Athenians—in a way resembling Darius’ enhanced desire to campaign against Greece—“after listening to Alcibiades, to the Egestans and to some exiles from Leontini, became much more eager than before to launch the expedition against Sicily (πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον ὥρμηντο στρατεύειν)”. There is another striking occurrence of the verb at the beginning of Nicias’ second speech (6.20.1), where it is again used in reference to the Athenians’ mental state. Nicias has started to realize the magnitude of the irrational forces that have befallen Athens. His last hope is to enumerate in detail all the adversities and dangers the Athenians would have to face in Sicily: “since I can see that all of you Athenians are eager for the expedition (ἐπειδὴ πάντας ὁρῶ ὑμᾶς, ὧ Ἀθηναῖοι, ὥρμημένους στρατεύειν), and may everything turn out as we wish, I shall now tell you my opinion on how things stand at the moment”. To no avail: Thucydides concludes (6.24.2) by referring to the Athenians’ even greater enthusiasm (πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον ὥρμηντο) in the passage already cited.

So if we present the references to the element of ὁρμή at this early stage of the expedition schematically, we have the following sequence: (1) Thucydides’ reference to ὁρμή after the *Sikelika* chapters; (2) Nicias’ reference in his first speech to the Athenians’ ὁρμή; (3) Thucydides’ reference to the Athenians’ even greater ὁρμή after the speech of Alcibiades; (4) Nicias’ reference in his second speech to the Athenians’ ὁρμή; (5) Thucydides’ second reference to an even greater ὁρμή after all the speeches had been heard. This repetitive and alternate reference to the Athenians’ ὁρμή by Thucydides and Nicias underlines

the hopelessness of the struggle against the forces of unreason which, far from being reduced, is described as constantly growing and propagating itself like some kind of disease.

The idea of a diseased collective psychological state is enhanced by Thucydides' concluding comment on Athens' decision to invade Sicily at 6.24.3, where, by means of another authorial psychological comment, we are informed that "a passion for the enterprise befell all Athenians alike" (καὶ ἔρωξ ἐνέπεσε τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐκπλεῦσαι). This phrase strikingly evokes Herodotus' description of Mardonius' psychology prior to attacking Athens at 9.3.1 (ἀλλὰ οἱ δεινός τις ἐνέστακτο ἥμερος τὰς Ἀθήνας δεύτερα ἐλεῖν). In virtue of their vocabulary and syntax (dative "object" accompanying verbs of motion compounded with the preposition ἐν-), both phrases create the impression of something invading the body from outside. In the case of Mardonius, Herodotus' rare and poetic ἐνέστακτο¹² gives the impression that Mardonius was intoxicated by a desire that was dripping like poison inside his body. Similarly, Thucydides' ἐνέπεσε evokes a powerful metaphorical image of an ἔρωξ,¹³ that invades from outside like a disease.

By its very nature, ἐμπίπτω is a negatively charged verb, reserved for the description of calamities, such as diseases and natural catastrophes, or something irrational, a passion or a frame of mind that defies logical calculation and interpretation.¹⁴ For instance, it is used by Thucydides in his account of the sudden first outbreak of the plague in Athens (ἐξαπιναιῶς ἐνέπεσε, 2.48.2)¹⁵ and later to describe one of its unpleasant symptoms, namely attacks of ineffectual retching (λύγξ τε τοῖς πλέοσιν ἐνέπιπτε κενή, 2.49.4). The verb is also employed in the speech of Pericles that follows the description of the plague, in which the great Athenian leader reprimands his people for showing a lack of resolution after a great and sudden disaster, i.e. the plague, had befallen them (καὶ μεταβολῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ταύτης ἐξ ὀλίγου ἐμπεσοῦσης, 2.61.2).

¹² Cf. *Od.* 2.271; *Il.* 19.39; 354.

¹³ The use of ἐμπίπτω in connection with a disastrous ἔρωξ appears to be a literary commonplace, since it occurs in all three great tragedians. See *A. Ag.* 341; *S. Ph.* 965; *E. IA* 808.

¹⁴ See Connor (1984) 109 n. 3; 115 n. 12; Hussey (1985) 132 and n. 28; Hornblower (1987) 178 n. 85; Ludwig (2002) 155.

¹⁵ I prefer the reading ἐνέπεσε to Herwerden's emendation ἐσέπεσε. Cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.481.

Within the narrative of battles proper, the verb is occasionally used metaphorically to describe the sudden “invasion” and destructive effect of a negative psychological element like fear, consternation, or panic.¹⁶ At 7.80.3, for example, describing the Athenians’ nocturnal retreat after the final destructive battle in the Syracusan harbor, Thucydides refers to the general disorder that afflicted the army (καὶ αὐτοῖς . . . ἐμπίπτει ταραχή) due to their growing fear as they were in enemy territory at night with the enemy in close pursuit. The metaphorical image of an increasing panic enhances our perception of the demoralization of the Athenian army in the final stage of the Sicilian Expedition.¹⁷ The negative use of the verb elsewhere in the *History* in connection with calamities and adverse psychological conditions clearly suggest that Thucydides perceived the Athenians’ frame of mind on the eve of the Sicilian Expedition as dangerous, if not pathological.

Furthermore, the use of ἐμπίπτω in connection with a negative emotion in the preparatory stages of a momentous military operation offers another possible intertextual connection with Herodotus. I refer to the sudden fear that befell Xerxes’ army (φόβος ἐς τὸ στρατόπεδον ἐνέπεσε, 7.43.2) during the night after Xerxes’ visit to Troy.¹⁸ The fear of the army seems inexplicable in the context of the extravagant and overoptimistic marching of the Persian expeditionary force against Greece. Surprisingly, Herodotus provides no explanation for it; however, it may constitute an implicit and ominous hint. At the beginning of the expedition, where great emphasis is laid on the magnitude of Xerxes’ preparations and army, fear suddenly takes hold when Xerxes visits Troy: the sight of Troy may subconsciously have made the Persians think that great cities (like Troy) and therefore great empires are destined to decline; or per-

¹⁶ Cf. Ludwig (2002) 155.

¹⁷ For φόβος striking in this way, see 2.91.4; for ἐκπληξις, see 4.34.2. Also worthy of mention in this context is the interesting use of the verb ἐμπίπτω to refer to the ὁρμή that seized the Athenian soldiers to fortify Pylos (4.4.1) and the γέλως that befell some Athenians on hearing Cleon’s “crazy” promise that he could settle the Sphacteria affair in just twenty days (4.28.5). Both references to the Athenians’ emotions enhance the general impression that the whole Pylos incident was related to a great extent to the irrational factor of τύχη, chance. They might also be silent Thucydidean comments on the Athenians’ gradual loss of reason and their subjection to impulses, emotions, and desires that culminated in the Sicilian ἔρως.

¹⁸ Herodotus apparently employs the verb ἐμπίπτω in a similar way, to describe a negative psychological element attacking from outside, usually fear. Cf. 4.203.3; 8.38.

haps it made them recall that this glorious city of the East was destroyed by the nation they were now marching against; or brought home to them for the first time the magnitude of the military operation they had undertaken, the severity of the imminent war, the potential catastrophe.

Apart from lexically resembling the phrase describing the invasive ἔρωξ of the Athenians at Th. 6.24.3, the sudden fear of the Persians before they crossed into Europe invites comparison with another psychological comment made by Thucydides just before the launching of the Sicilian Expedition. A few chapters after the references to their psychological urge for the operation and, surprisingly, in the context of the detailed description of the extravagant armada which was setting sail against Sicily, Thucydides informs us (6.31.1) that the Athenians “at that very moment, when they were really about to part from each other with a risky enterprise ahead, became more aware of the dangers of the situation than they had been at the time when they had voted for the expedition (μᾶλλον αὐτοὺς ἐσήμει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ὅτε ἐνηφίζοντο πλεῖν)”.

It is clear then that the two historians are connected by a similar emphasis on moderate advice that is ignored, strong passions that appear to invade as if from outside like a sort of mental illness, second thoughts and momentary dwelling by the participants on consequences before the operation; both authors appear to perceive the first stages of the momentous military operations they are about to describe partly as a struggle between the rational and the irrational.

The Element of Deception

Intellect affected by passion renders both individuals and peoples susceptible to deception, which in both historians manifests itself in two ways: either as an aggravating agent who is pursuing private interests, or as groups of people who convey false promises. This deception in turn dangerously fosters the characters' initial passion, and therefore their commitment to irrationality.

As we have already seen, it is Mardonius in the case of Xerxes and Alcibiades in the case of the Athenians who perform the role of the deceptive aggravator. The urgings of both cannot be considered objective and trustworthy since they themselves are already intoxicated by personal desires and expectations.

Early in Book VII Herodotus reveals the reason behind Mardonius' attempt to persuade Xerxes to launch the expedition against Greece (7.6.1): "he was saying these things due to his love of mischief (νεωτέρων ἔργων ἐπιθυμητής) and his desire to become governor of Greece himself (καὶ θέλων αὐτὸς τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑπαρχος εἶναι)".

In a passage reminiscent of Herodotus' comment concerning Mardonius' true reasons for urging the expedition, Thucydides reveals the deeper motives behind Alcibiades' attempt to convince the Athenians to invade Sicily (6.15.2), saying that he was the most ardent champion of the expedition "due to his strong desire to be the general (καὶ μάλιστα στρατηγήσαι τε ἐπιθυμῶν) and his hope that it would be through him that Sicily and Carthage would be conquered, and that at the same time his successes would benefit him on a personal level in terms of both wealth and reputation".¹⁹

Not only do certain individuals have a delusive effect, but the main agents of the action also fall victim to the delusive promptings of groups of people. At 7.6.2–5 we are told that as well as the exhortations of Mardonius, certain other events contributed to Xerxes' decision, namely an invitation by the Aleuadae, the Thessalian reigning family, who promised him zealous assistance (πᾶσαν προθυμίην παρεχόμενοι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα), and the similar urgings of the Peisistratids in Susa. These were rendered even more effective by the deceptive agency of Onomacritus, an Athenian collector of oracles, who had arranged and edited Musaeus' oracles so as to reveal only those that were favorable to Xerxes, at the same time omitting any prophecy that suggested a setback to the Persian cause.

Using the technique of *narrative delay*,²⁰ Herodotus saves the disclosure of the fraud of Aleuadae for where it is most appropriate,

¹⁹ It is remarkable that Alcibiades' very first appearance in the *History* is directly related to ἀπάτη in the form of a devious trick played on an embassy from Sparta at 5.45, which led to an alliance between Athens and Argos. Bearing in mind that in Thucydides the scenes in which the main characters are introduced contribute decisively to their general characterization, we can conclude that Thucydides' authorial intention in constructing Alcibiades' opening scene is to present Alcibiades early on as an incarnation of ἀπάτη and hence to prepare us for his role in the preparatory stage of the Sicilian expedition.

²⁰ *Narrative delay* is the intentional postponement of information to a point at which it is most relevant. It was a popular narrative device in Homer and archaic poetry. See Taplin (1992) 198, who, after Schadewaldt, calls it a "technique of increased precision". On Thucydides' technique of narrative delay, see Erbse (1989) 43; Hornblower (1994b) 139–45, who calls it "narrative displacement".

i.e. the point at which Xerxes actually arrives in Thessaly late in Book VII (7.130): “In this speech Xerxes was referring to the sons of Aleuas, since they had been the first of the Greeks to submit themselves to the king, having the impression that they had pledged their alliance in the name of the whole Thessalian people (δοκέων ὁ Ξέρξης ἀπὸ παντός σφεας τοῦ ἔθνους ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι φιλίην)”. A few chapters later the Thessalians are explicitly told that they really had no part in the intrigues of the Aleuadae immediately preceding Xerxes’ expedition. Herodotus’ use of the verb μηχανάομαι clearly signals the interference of the element of deception (7.172): “the Thessalians did not submit to the Persian cause until they were forced to do so, for they made it plain that the machinations of the Aleuadae were not to their liking (οὐ σφι ἤνδανε τὰ οἱ Ἀλευάδαι ἐμχανῶντο)”.

Similarly in Thucydides the promptings of Alcibiades are supported and made more effective by the urgent invitation of an embassy from Eggesta, a city that was on bad terms with its neighbor, Selinus (6.6.2). Selinus was being helped by Syracuse, and the Eggestans appealed for help to their allies at Athens, promising to provide all the money necessary for the war. Note the reference to ὁρμή through the use of the verb ἐξώρμησαν: “the Athenians were particularly urged by the Eggestan ambassadors (μάλιστα δ’ αὐτοὺς ἐξώρμησαν Ἐγεσταίων πρόσβεις), who were present at the time and were eagerly inviting them . . . arguing that it would be a wise thing for Athens, along with the allies she still had, to put a check on Syracuse, especially since the Eggestans would provide sufficient financial resources for the enterprise”.

The assembly decided to send an embassy to find out if the temple treasures about which the Eggestans had said so much really existed, and to report back on the state of the war with Selinus (6.6.3). The envoys returned in the spring with some Eggestan citizens, who brought with them sixty talents and uncoined silver, a month’s pay for the ships they hoped to obtain from Athens. Here Thucydides inserts a striking authorial comment regarding the veracity of the Eggestans’ report (6.8.2):²¹ “and the Athenians summoned an assembly and listened to what the Eggestans and their own delegates had to say, which were all things alluring to the ear but untrue (τά τε ἄλλα ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῆ), particularly regarding the money

²¹ For an excellent analysis of the Eggestan deception, see Kallet (2001) 69–79.

which was said to be ready for disposal in large quantities in the temples and the treasury. So they voted to send sixty ships to Sicily”.

Thucydides’ evaluation is vindicated some chapters later (6.46), at which point the Athenians at Rhegium are informed by the three ships that have been sent ahead to Egesta that the sums of money in question do not actually exist and that only thirty talents are available. We are then told that the Athenian envoys had been fooled by an ingenious trick:

The Egestans had led them to the temple of Aphrodite at Eryx (ἐξ τε τὸ ἐν Ἐρυκί ἱερὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀγαγόντες) and displayed all the offerings (αὐτοὺς ἐπέδειξαν τὰ ἀναθήματα)—bowls, goblets, censers (φιάλας τε καὶ οἶνοχόας καὶ θυμιατήρια), and much else, which were of silver and therefore looked very impressive, although their monetary value was comparatively small. The Egestans also entertained the ship’s crew everywhere with gold and silver cups (ἐκπώματα καὶ χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ) borrowed from all the neighboring towns, both Phoenician and Hellenic.

The Athenian envoys were accordingly dazzled and back home talked at great length about the vast quantities of valuable objects they had seen. Thucydides concludes that they “had been deluded themselves and persuaded their countrymen (καὶ οἱ μὲν αὐτοὶ τε ἀπατηθέντες καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τότε πείσαντες)”.

What is more, on a more subliminal level there may be a deeper delusion here. There are verbal analogies between Thucydides’ detailed description of the Egestans’ treachery and the lavish account of the Athenian fleet’s departure from Piraeus against Sicily. Just before the magnificent fleet sets sail, the Athenians perform a ritual in which they pour wine into mixing bowls and make libations from cups of gold and silver (ἐκπώμασι χρυσοῖς τε καὶ ἀργυροῖς, 6.32.1).

Thucydides’ inclusion of this visual detail anticipates the reference to the delusive objects of the Egestans’ display a few chapters later. The repetition may suggest an ironic parallel: in the case of the Egestans, the gold and silver cups are a deceptive token of the non-existent Egestan wealth, an objectification of the ἀπάτη of the Egestans. The gold and silver cups in the departure scene may be symptomatic of a wider delusion: that of the Athenians regarding the real ability of their city to fund and successfully carry out the expedition.²² This

²² Cf. Jordan (2000), who has suggested that “the glittering façade of the Sicilian armada concealed its essential weakness” and that “despite the large sums of money said to be leaving Athens, the reality was that the armada was seriously underfunded” (63 and 73 respectively).

interesting case of intratextuality may serve a rhetorical purpose: Thucydides, I would suggest, deliberately connects the scenes of the departure for Sicily and the trickery of the Egestans because he interpreted—and perhaps wanted his readers to interpret—the whole spectacle organized by the Athenians at Piraeus as a large-scale deception. Thus the incident at Egesta may be taken as a “miniature” version of the larger delusion that took place at Piraeus: the Athenian envoys draw conclusions about the nonexistent Egestan wealth and are finally deceived (καὶ οἱ μὲν αὐτοὶ τε ἀπατηθέντες) by means of a display of precious metal objects; the Athenians at Piraeus are reassured about Athens’ financial power by observing the magnificent—and deceptive—appearance of the departing fleet (τῇ ὥρῃ ἀνεθάρσυν). Ironically, both “deceptions” are revealed simultaneously. At 6.46—and by means of *narrative delay* (as in the case of the promise of the Aleuadae in Herodotus)—the trickery of the Egestans is exposed: only thirty talents are at their disposal (6.46). At this point, the generals in charge of the operation find themselves short of money; each of the different plans of action proposed by Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lamachus (6.47–49) aims at finding resources for maintaining the force. Only a few chapters earlier the armada at Piraeus was called πολυτελεστώτη; at Sicily, the shortage of money becomes a vital problem; appearances—we now know—were indeed deceptive.

The κρατήρες and ἐκπώματα of the Athenians’ libations before Sicily are also interesting for their possible intertextual allusion to Herodotus and for the rhetoric that may lie behind this. Just before crossing the Hellespont into Europe, Xerxes performs a similar extravagant rite of passage, pouring wine into the sea from a golden goblet (ἐκ χρυσῆς φιάλης), which he eventually throws into the Hellespont along with a golden bowl (χρύσειον κρητῆρα) and a Persian sword called “acinaces”. This extravagant display of Persian wealth, which practically constitutes the opening scene of the expedition against Greece, inversely mirrors the destructive end of Xerxes’ enterprise. After the battle of Plataea, which sealed the failure of the Persian expedition, the victorious Hellenes sweep into the camp of the defeated Persians and acquire their rich possessions. Among other things, they find golden mixing bowls and goblets and cups (κρητῆράς τε χρυσεύους καὶ φιάλας τε καὶ ἄλλα ἐκπώματα). The repetition of these precious objects at the beginning and the end of the Persian invasion has a rhetorical function: it highlights the tragic reversal of the Persian situation. Items that once symbolized Persian affluence and power pass into the hands of the Hellenes, underscoring the overriding idea that

material wealth does not guarantee military success. On the contrary, it appears that precious objects have sinister implications for those who possess them.²³

Thucydides may be playing on a similar idea: shining, precious objects like *φιάλαι*, *κρατήρες*, and *ἐκπώματα* create a sense of foreboding and impending catastrophe when mentioned.²⁴ Moreover, there are two other references to precious metal in the context of the preparatory stages of the Sicilian Expedition, which in retrospect take on a sinister connotation. At 6.24.3 the covetous desire of the masses and the soldiers in Athens for more money is explicitly defined as one of the main reasons behind their eagerness for the expedition (*ὁ δὲ πολὺς ὄμιλος καὶ στρατιώτης ἔν τε τῷ παρόντι ἀργύριον οἴσειν*). And a few lines below, Thucydides asserts that a sum of many talents was being taken out of the city (*πολλὰ ἂν τάλαντα ἠϋρέθη ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τὰ πάντα ἐξαγόμενα*, 6.31.5). As in the case of the aftermath of the battle of Plataea, where Herodotus by his detailed description of the Persian booty acquired by the victorious Greeks visualises the reversal of the Persian cause Thucydides' detailed account of the Athenians' extravagant and costly preparations for the expedition inversely mirrors a scene encapsulating its pathetic final outcome at Sicily. After the surrender of Demosthenes and his men on the condition that they not be killed, Thucydides concludes, in a visually evocative scene (7.82.3): "they laid down all the money in their possession, putting it into the hollow of some shields, and they filled up four shields (*καὶ τὸ ἀργύριον ὃ εἶχον ἅπαν κατέθεσαν ἐσβαλόντες ἐς ἀσπίδας ὑπτίας, καὶ ἐνέπλησαν ἀσπίδας τέσσαρας*)".

With its visual detail and numeral precision, the passage attempts to focus our attention on the profound reversal of the city's fortunes and the destruction of its financial resources.²⁵ The extreme wealth poured into the expedition and the hope of further riches eventually

²³ No doubt the motif of sinister possession of precious objects in Herodotus is programmatically established in the story of Croesus, the archetypal case of extreme wealth giving way to downfall.

²⁴ This view gains credibility if one takes into account the fact that Thucydides—unlike Herodotus—makes particularly sparing use of references to—or descriptions of—objects. Note that Herodotus uses *χρυσός* 65 times and *χρύσεος* 61 times and compare this with Thucydides' use of *χρυσοῦς* only four times, two of which, as we have seen, are in the context of the initial stages of the Sicilian Expedition.

²⁵ Hornblower (1987) 34: "the precision here makes it easier to visualise, and the enumeration adds pathos".

dwindle to a meager, pathetic amount that fills just four shields.²⁶ One cannot help but consider the possibility that Thucydides' emphasis on the Athenians' extravagance at the beginning of the expedition is an ironic—and quasi-Herodotean—allusion to the eventual catastrophe.²⁷

Delusive Displays

The connection between the trickery at Egesta and the departure scene at Piraeus and Thucydides' interpretation of the launching of the expedition as an *ἀπάτη* are further enhanced by another verbal analogy. As part of their trick, recall that the Egestans took the Athenian envoys to the temple of Aphrodite at Eryx and showed them the treasure laid there in offerings. The key word here is *ἐπέδειξον*, the aorist of *ἐπιδείκνυμι*, "to display" or even "to show off". The Egestan trickery comprised an exposition, an *ἐπίδειξις* of precious objects. Let us compare this with 6.31.4, where Thucydides describes the impression the departure of the magnificent Athenian fleet made on the rest of the Hellenes: "and to the rest of the Greeks it looked more like a display of the power and sovereignty of Athens (*ἐπίδειξιν μᾶλλον εἰκασθῆναι τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐξουσίας*) than an expeditionary force against the enemy". In contrast with the easily manipulated and deceived Athenians, the other Hellenes, using their critical thought and conjecture (*εἰκασθῆναι*), conclude that what they are seeing is simply a well-prepared show of Athenian power rather than a preparation for military action.²⁸ This twofold interpretation of the same

²⁶ Using sophisticated mathematical equations, Kallet (2001) 175 estimates that the total amount implied here is only ten to twelve talents.

²⁷ A word of caution is necessary here: in suggesting that Thucydides was influenced by Herodotus in his description of the initial and final stages of the Sicilian Expedition, we refer strictly to literary presentation, not to issues regarding morality and Herodotus' metaphysical scheme of "hybris-retribution". It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the extent to which, by echoing Herodotus' description of Xerxes' expedition against Greece in his Sicilian narrative, Thucydides alludes to the possibility that what befell the Athenians at Sicily was a justified retribution for the imperial insolence they had displayed earlier (most notably in the Melian Dialogue).

²⁸ The use of *ἐπίδειξις* is probably a metaphor from oratory. In classical Athens the word had become a technical term used by the sophists to describe a public demonstration of oratorical skills. Thucydides is aware of and uses this meaning at 3.42.3. See Dodds' (1959) note on *Gorgias* 447a5 and Hornblower (1987) 100. See

spectacle strengthens the impression that the Athenians had suffered intellectual deterioration as a result of their ever-increasing submission to the element of the irrational.

The idea of the ἐπίδειξις of Athenian power is ironically picked up in the paragraph immediately following the ἐπίδειξις of the Egestans. At 6.47, referring to the Athenian forces that were sent to Egesta, Nicias suggests that “they should sail past the Sicilian cities and make a display of the power of Athens (καὶ ἐπιδείξαντας μὲν τὴν δύναμιν τῆς Ἀθηναίων πόλεως), and after showing their eagerness to help their allies, sail back home again”.

The stem ἐπιδεικ- appears only seven times in the *History*. It is not accidental, I believe, that three of these occurrences are within the space of a few paragraphs (two of them in the consecutive paragraphs 6.46.3 and 47). The reason for this may be Thucydides’ desire to emphasize how deluded the Athenians were at the beginning of the Sicilian Expedition by pointing out that they draw conclusions about crucial fiscal matters on the basis of mere displays and appearances.

The theme of the display of Athenian power first occurs in the *History* at the beginning of Book III where we are given information about the alliance that the Lacedaemonians concluded with the Mytileneans. The islanders, we are told, had revolted from Athens and convinced the Lacedaemonians to launch a new invasion against Attica, thinking that the Athenians would not be able to do much about it, having already moved a substantial part of their fleet to Lesbos. The Athenians realized that these negotiations had been made upon the basis of assumptions about their weakness and consequently wanted to show the world that they were fully capable of warding off the fleet from Peloponnesus without recalling their own fleet at Lesbos. To this end they manned a hundred triremes with both citizens and metics and “sailed to the Isthmus and made a display of their strength (ἐπιδείξιν τε ἐποιούντο), landing their soldiers in such parts of Peloponnesus as they thought fit” (3.16.1). The Athenians eventually achieved the intended result. Faced with this greatly unexpected turn of events (ὁρῶντες πολλὴν τὸν παράλογον), the Lacedaemonians thought that the Mytileneans’ estimation of the

also Thomas (2000) 250f., who writes: “the ἐπίδειξις or display piece is most often associated with the sophists, and perhaps in particular with the firework display of a rhetorical mock-defense such as Gorgias’ *Helen* or *Palamedes*”.

Athenians' strength must have been mistaken and that the whole enterprise was too difficult, and therefore decided to go back home (3.16.2).

Besides the use of ἐπιδείκνυμι, there are other similarities connecting the ἐπιδείξις here with the ἐπιδείξεις of the departure against Sicily and the trickery of the Egestans. In all three cases, for instance, the spectacle seems to defy reason and to cause disbelief or surprise among the spectators. In the passage just cited the Lacedaemonians are said to interpret the spectacle put on by the Athenians as παράλογον, a word Thucydides uses when he describes situations which defy logical calculation. At Piraeus the Athenians rush to the harbor to watch a spectacle that is beyond belief (ἄπιστον διάνοιαν). In addition, the fleet is said to cause θάμβος for its daring. This poetic word is a *hapax* in Thucydides and constitutes an effective Homeric resonance.²⁹ In Homer it has been suggested that the noun describes "a paralysis caused by amazement or surprise".³⁰ Similarly, in Egesta the Athenian envoys are said to be struck by a great surprise (μεγάλην τὴν ἐκπληξιν) at the sight of the treasures.³¹

What is more, in all three situations the spectacles described seem to defy or cancel out the effectiveness of a set of preceding—persuading or dissuading—λόγοι. In Book III the spectacle created by the Athenians manages to defy the preceding λόγοι of the Mytileneans; at Piraeus the spectacle of the departing fleet manages to dispel from the minds of the townspeople any doubts that may have remained from Nicias' earlier skeptical speeches. Finally the spectacle the Egestans present to the Athenian envoys also succeeds in neutralizing Nicias' warnings about the Egestan promises.

The resonance between the three scenes highlights their profound differences. In Book III the Athenians are without doubt the subject of the whole spectacle. They appear to be in absolute control of the trickery they employ in order to create a convincing impression of

²⁹ Cf. *Od.* 3.372; *Il.* 4.79.

³⁰ Jordan (2000) 68 n. 12.

³¹ The use of the word ἐκπληξις in this context is noteworthy. As Kallet (2001) 78 has pointed out, the word normally has the meaning "fear" or "terror" in the *History*. Thucydides here manipulates its meaning—it expresses a marveling astonishment but at the same time sounds ominous notes and implies criticism. V.J. Hunter (1986) 418 has shown that the word describes a blow to the wits. This is in keeping with Thucydides' presentation of the Athenians at the beginning of the expedition as being driven by emotions and passion rather than reason.

their power. At Piraeus the Athenians are simultaneously the subject and the object, the addressers and the addressees, the agents and the victims of the spectacle; they fall into the trap of their own ἐπίδειξις and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of their fleet from its splendid appearance. Finally at Egesta, the Athenians are the object of the trickery. The Egestans' spectacle aims at, and succeeds in, deceiving them. The progression from the "activity" illustrated by the Athenians in the ἐπίδειξις of Book III to the "passivity" of the ἐπιδείξεις of Book VI is yet another manifestation of the post-Periclean intellectual deterioration of the Athenians, who become increasingly prone to basic errors of judgment and misinterpretations.³²

Thucydides may also be conveying a negative judgment on the intellectual disintegration of Athens by means of Herodotean allusions. It has long been noticed that the deception at Egesta thematically echoes a similar trick in Herodotus, namely that which Oroetes, satrap of Sardis, used to bring about the downfall of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos.³³ Here I would like to suggest an allusion to another famous scene in Herodotus. When wise Solon arrived at Sardis, following Croesus' orders, "servants took him on a tour of the royal treasuries (περιῆγον κατὰ τοὺς θησαυρούς) and displayed (καὶ ἐπεδείκνυσαν) the richness and magnificence of everything" (1.30.1). With the use of both ἄγ- and ἐπιδεικ- stems, the scene resembles the tour of the Athenian envoys and the exposition of the Egestan treasures at 6.46.3 (ἔς τε τὸ ἐν Ἐρυκι ἱερὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀγαγόντες αὐτοὺς ἐπέδειξαν τὰ ἀναθήματα).

If this is indeed an allusion to Herodotus, then Thucydides is making a negative comment on the Athenian envoys by suggesting this comparison: wise Solon avoids drawing conclusions on the basis of appearances—in contrast with his compatriots at both Piraeus and Egesta, who do not follow his example. Elsewhere Thucydides shows that in this respect he himself is somewhat Solonian. Early on in his *History* he programmatically puts forward one of the most important

³² As Kallet (2001) 75 observes, the envoys made two basic errors of judgement, "thinking that the displayed wealth represented power, and that precious metal objects represented *dunamis chrematon*. Especially damning is that they were shown the treasures of Eryx, not Egesta . . . Even if, as Thucydides charges, the Athenians possessed insufficient knowledge about the peoples of Sicily, the envoys should still have been more than a little suspicious when they were shown treasures in a region different from Egesta".

³³ Cf. Kallet (2001) 72f.

credos of his historical methodology: “we have no right to judge cities by their appearances rather than by their actual power” (οὐδὲ τὰς ὄψεις τῶν πόλεων μᾶλλον σκοπεῖν ἢ τὰς δυνάμεις, 1.10.3).³⁴ If the city of Athens were to be deserted, Thucydides adds that “one would conjecture from what met the eye that the city had been twice as powerful as in fact it is (διπλασίαν ἂν τὴν δύναμιν εἰκάζεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς φανερώς ὄψεως τῆς πόλεως ἢ ἔστιν)”. This phrase is echoed at 6.31.3 where, as mentioned above, the rest of the Hellenes, following the same principle as Solon and Thucydides, do not judge by appearances, inferring (εἰκάζεσθαι) that what they are seeing is simply a display (ἐπίδειξιν) rather than a proof of power.

There is another scene in Herodotus that brings to mind the Egestan ἐπίδειξις. At 7.146 the Greeks decide to send spies to Sardis to check on Xerxes’ army and report back. Xerxes’ soldiers catch the spies. The king decides not to kill them but instead (and again note the use of the ἀγ- and ἐπιδεικ- stems) “he ordered his servants to take them round and let them see the whole army (ἐκέλευσέ σφεας τοὺς δορυφόρους περιάγοντας ἐπιδείκνυσθαι πάντα τε τὸν πεζὸν στρατὸν καὶ τὴν ἵππον)”. Moreover, the Greek envoys in Herodotus are called κατὰσκοποι. Let us compare this with Thucydides’ use of κατασκοπή to refer to the Athenians’ investigation of the money at Egesta (6.46.2): “and the Egestans employed this treachery when the first delegates from Athens had come to look into the issue of the money (ὅτε οἱ πρῶτοι πρέσβεις τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἦλθον αὐτοῖς ἐς τὴν κατασκοπὴν τῶν χρημάτων)”.

There is a sharp contrast between the two scenes, though. In the end, Xerxes’ aim fails. He has assumed that the Hellenes would give up their freedom on hearing the news of the κατὰσκοποι, but his expectations are proved wrong. On the contrary, the Athenians believe the news conveyed by their own envoys, hence falling into the trap of the well-organized ἀπάτη. If we accept these Herodotean allusions, the point is a forceful one: Solon, the old Athenian, has the ability to look deeper, whereas his present-day counterparts do not; what was a presentation of the truth to the enemy at Hdt. 7.146 now becomes, catastrophically, the presentation of a lie to an ally.

³⁴ On the connection of this programmatic statement with the displays at Piraeus and Egesta, see Jordan (2000) 73; Kallet (2001) 55f.; cf. Hornblower (1987) 31–33.

Vision and Emotion

The connection of vision with emotion—the potentially illusory nature of which we saw in the previous section—merits further examination, since it plays a leading role and becomes a sort of *leitmotif* in Thucydides' account of the preparatory stages of the Sicilian Expedition.³⁵ One of the crucial factors in the final decision was the Athenians' desire to see the distant Sicilian land (τῆς ἀπούσης πόθῳ ὄψεως καὶ θεωρίας, 6.24.3). Thucydides informs us in detail of how the entire population of Athens, citizens and foreigners, went down to Piraeus to see the departing fleet, full of hope and lamentation at the same time (καὶ μετ' ἐλπίδος . . . καὶ μετ' ὀλοφυρμῶν), thinking of the conquests that might be made but also of those whom they might never see again. At this moment, as already mentioned, the Athenians became keenly aware of the danger of the situation, in a way they had not been at the time they voted for the expedition. Nevertheless they were heartened by their own strength and by the sight of the quantities of every kind of armament displayed before their eyes (διὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἐκάστων ὧν ἐώρων, τῇ ὄψει ἀνεθάρσουν). As for the foreigners and the rest of the crowd, they came merely to see the show (κατὰ θέαν) and to admire the incredible ambition of the enterprise. Thucydides concludes with a visually evocative evaluation of the Athenian armada: "this expedition that first set sail was certainly by far the most costly and the finest-looking force of Hellenic troops that up to that time had ever come from a single city" (παρασκευὴ γὰρ αὕτη πρώτη ἐκπλεύσασα μῖα πόλεως δυνάμει Ἑλληνικῇ πολυτελεστάτῃ δὴ καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτῃ τῶν ἐς ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ἐγένετο, 6.31.1). A few lines later, as we saw above, we are told that the whole expedition is regarded by the rest of the Hellenes as more of a demonstration (ἐπίδειξιν) of the power and greatness of Athens. Moreover, at 6.31.6 we are told that what made this expedition so famous was (among other things) its astonishing daring

³⁵ On the importance of vision in Thucydides' account of the initial stage of the Sicilian Expedition see Jordan (2000) and Kallet (2001) 21–84. The connection of vision with *erōs* was widespread in ancient Greek thought, which regarded the sense of sight as the channel through which the image of the desired object entered into the soul to inspire love. This idea, which appears frequently in melic poetry (cf. Pi. fr. 123 Maehler; Sapph. fr. 31.7f. Voigt), seems to be related to the theory of perception, especially vision, developed by the Presocratics (cf. DK 31 A 86; DK 82 B 11.15).

(τόλμης τε θάμβει) and the brilliant spectacle that it provided (καὶ ὅψεως λαμπρότητι).

There is no doubt that this sight at Piraeus enhanced the feeling of ἔρωσ already possessed by the Athenians. And it is by no means accidental that references to vision and its effect on the emotions appear again toward the end of the Sicilian Expedition in the account of the final sea battle in the Great Harbor at Syracuse, where a considerable amount of the narrative is focalized by the perspective of those who were watching the battle from the shore. In the space of just a few lines (7.71.2), numerous visual terms occur (τὴν ἔποψιν, τῆς θέας, σκοπούντων, ἴδοιεν, βλέψαντες, τῆς ὅψεως) presenting the whole scene as a spectacle and simultaneously describing the effect that this had on the emotions of the spectators (ἀνεθάρσισαν, ὀλοφυρμῶ τε ἅμα μετὰ βοῆς ἐχρῶντο).³⁶

So the whole Sicilian account, from the departure of the fleet to the final sea battle, is framed by the theme of vision, a technique that helps Thucydides emphasize the tragic reversal: the Athenians watched the spectacular departure of the fleet at Piraeus; the soldiers on the shore watched the destruction of the same fleet in Syracuse. And if vision at Piraeus brought about θάρσος, vision at Syracuse eventually caused lament and desperation.

Thucydides' ability to construct elaborate visual scenes is a manifestation of ἐνάργεια, the technical term ancient critics employed to describe how language creates a vivid, visual presence, bringing the described event—and the emotions that attend its perception—before the readers' eyes.³⁷

Thucydidean ἐνάργεια has been the object of admiration in both ancient and modern criticism, constituting yet another *tertium comparationis* in the evaluation of all subsequent historiographers. The visual scenes at Piraeus and Syracuse are both—to use contemporary narratological terminology—interesting cases of *mise en abyme*, i.e., scenes that themselves contain other scenes, the result being that we are watching the spectators watching a spectacle.³⁸ Such scenes have high

³⁶ On the pivotal role of the sense of vision and its influence on emotions in the narrative of the sea battle at Syracuse, see Davidson (1991) 24; Walker (1993); Kallet (2001) 163–66.

³⁷ On ἐνάργεια in Greek historiography, see Walker (1993) 353–77.

³⁸ As Walker (1993) 362, notes, “the spectators who watch the scenes (of ships embarking or at the battle) are themselves part of a larger scene that includes the

rhetorical value, since they enhance the verisimilitude of the narrative, thereby increasing the reader's involvement in the story.

Here we may quote Plutarch, who used the description of the battle in the Syracusan harbor as evidence of the high esteem in which ancient criticism held Thucydides' skill in creating visually emotive scenes:

Assuredly Thucydides is always striving for this vividness in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator and to produce vividly in the minds of those who peruse his narrative the emotions of amazement and consternation which were experienced by those who beheld them. The most effective historian is he who, by vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narrative like a painting.³⁹

Modern criticism has likewise often commented on and praised this Thucydidean quality. Connor writes that "every attentive reader of Thucydides could expand the list and note the close bond between visual detail and the mood of the scene and the feelings of the participants. Vision in Thucydides is the privileged sense most commonly invoked and most directly linked to the emotions".⁴⁰ This emphasis on vision and evocation of feelings in the reader has inspired Thucydidean scholars like de Romilly to speak of various "theatres" of action in Thucydides,⁴¹ or to argue, as Cornford has done,⁴² that his narrative technique owes more to the dramatists of the fifth century than to his generic predecessor Herodotus.⁴³

It is obvious from this last comment that Herodotus has, surprisingly, been excluded from the possible lists of influences. Yet Herodotus

first". The term *mise en abyme* was originally coined by the French writer André Gide to refer to an internal reduplication of a literary work or part of a work. Gide's novel *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (*The Counterfeiters*, 1926) is a prime example: its central character, Edouard, is a novelist working on a novel called *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, which is similar to the novel in which he himself is a character. Since then the term has been used in literary theory to describe any kind of internal reduplication in literature. For more on the term, see Baldick (1990) 138.

³⁹ Plutarch, *On the Fame of the Athenians*, ch. 3 (*Mor.* 347A).

⁴⁰ Connor (1985) 10. Cf. T. Hobbes, *Preface to the Translation of Thucydides* (London 1629), who praised Thucydides as "the most politic historiographer that ever writ. The reason whereof I take to be this . . . (is that) he maketh his auditor a spectator".

⁴¹ De Romilly (1956) 123 and (treating the battle of the Syracusan harbor) 161–65.

⁴² Cornford (1907) 129–52.

⁴³ Finley (1942) 322 also suggests (citing E. *Supp.* 719–20 and *Ph.* 1388–89) that Euripides "observes, as Thucydides does at the height of the struggle at Syracuse, the varied emotions of the onlookers", thus arguing that there is a connection between Thucydides and Euripides.

displays a great degree of *ἐνάργεια* in his narrative, repeatedly using visual scenes and dwelling on the effect that sight has on human emotions.⁴⁴ The prominence of the visual theme in many scenes in the *Histories* makes Herodotus—alongside tragedy—a strong candidate for literary influence on Thucydides.

Vision is effectively evoked by Herodotus in his description of the greatness of Xerxes' expeditionary force. At 7.20.2, just like Thucydides' reference (6.31.1) to the unprecedented magnitude of the fleet against Sicily quoted above and alluding with the use of the infinitive φαίνεσθαι to vision and display as an integral part of the expedition, he comments that "of all the known expeditions this was by far the greatest, so that the force of Darius against Scythia and that of the Scythians themselves looked nothing in comparison (στόλων γὰρ τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν πολλῷ δὴ μέγιστος οὗτος ἐγένετο, ὥστε μήτε τὸν Δαρείου τὸν ἐπὶ Σκύθας παρὰ τοῦτον μηδὲνα φαίνεσθαι μήτε τὸν Σκυθικόν)".

The greatest manifestation of the "visual theme" in Herodotus is Xerxes' desire to "show off" his power at the beginning of the expedition, in a way anticipating the ἐπίδειξις of the Athenian power during the departure of the magnificent fleet at Piraeus. For instance, Herodotus concludes that it was his desire to demonstrate his power (ἐθέλων τε δύνανμιν ἀποδείκνυσθαι) that made Xerxes have the canal dug at Athos: he wanted to leave something to be remembered by (7.24).

No passage is more telling in terms of the visual theme and the effect that sight has on people's thoughts or emotions than 7.44, in which Xerxes wants to hold a review (ἠθέλησε Ξέρξης ιδέσθαι) of his army. On a hill nearby, a white marble throne has already been specially prepared for him by the people of Abydos; so the king sits upon it and, looking down (κατορῶν) over the shore, is able to see (ἐθεῖτο) the whole of his army and navy at a glance. As he watches them he is seized with the desire to witness (θηεύμενος δὲ ἰμέρθη . . . ιδέσθαι) a rowing match. A match accordingly takes place and is won by the Phoenicians of Sidon, to the great delight of Xerxes, who is as pleased (ἥσθη) with the race as he is with his army. And when he sees (ὥς δὲ ὥρα) the whole of the Hellespont hidden by ships and all the beaches and plains of Abydos filled with men, he

⁴⁴ On Herodotus' focus on vision and spectacle, see Konstan (1987); cf. Kallet (2001) 86 and n. 6. On Herodotean *ἐνάργεια*, see Flower and Marincola (2002) 5.

calls himself happy (ἔωσπὸν ἐμακάρισε)—and the next moment bursts into tears (ἐδάκρυσε) (7.44–45).

This passage has attracted its fair share of scholarly attention as a conspicuous manifestation of Herodotus' philosophy regarding the vicissitudes of human happiness.⁴⁵ Here I would like to stress the “Thucydidean” narrative technique by means of which it acquires its effectiveness. The passage is a clear case of *mise en abyme*, a scene embedded in another scene, in that we are watching Xerxes watching his army. The narrative furthermore conveys the effect that the sight had on Xerxes' emotions. The resemblances to the spectacle of the departing fleet at Piraeus⁴⁶ and of the final sea battle at Salamis should not go unnoticed.

In general, the whole narrative of Xerxes' march toward Europe contains numerous uses of the “visual theme”. Time and again Xerxes appears to want to be a spectator in different situations; vision seems to have a direct effect on his psychological state. Being a spectator enhances his initial desire for the expedition. At 7.43.1, for instance, when his army reaches the river Scamander, Xerxes has a strong desire to see Troy (ἵμερον ἔχων θεήσασθαι).⁴⁷ A few chapters later, in crossing the Hellespont into Europe (7.56.1), he watches his troops (ἐθηεῖτο τὸ στρατόν) march by under the lash; when everyone in his army has been counted (7.100.1) he feels the urge to view them all himself (ἐπεθύμησε . . . θεήσασθαι); later (7.128.1) he has the desire to see the mouth of Peneius river in Thessaly (ἐπεθύμησε . . . θεήσασθαι), while at Thermopylae the connection of sight with emotions is further established, when Xerxes jumps up from his throne three times, fearing (δείσαντα) for his army while watching (θηεύμενον) the fierce battle with Leonidas' men. Similarly at Salamis, in a way that resembles Thucydides' reference to the “spectators” of the final sea battle on the shore, Xerxes is presented as a “spectator”, watching (ὅκως . . . ἴδοι) the sea battle from the foot of Mount Aegaleos and having his secretaries write down the names of the officers that he sees behaving with distinction (8.90.4). It is from this same point that he will soon watch the utter destruction of his magnificent fleet.

⁴⁵ On Xerxes' tears and their significance, see the elegant analysis of Flory (1978); cf. Lateiner (1987) 94f.; Konstan (1987) 63f.; Harrison (2000a) 50 and n. 51.

⁴⁶ Note especially how Xerxes' momentary tears at the sight of his magnificent expeditionary force resemble the Athenians' momentary ὀλοφύρμοι and somber thoughts about the expedition at the sight of their magnificent departing fleet (6.30.2).

⁴⁷ On the repetitive use of θεῶμαι by Herodotus, see Crane (1996) 238f.

Thus both Thucydides and Herodotus use the visual theme at the beginning and end of the Athenians' and Xerxes' expeditions respectively, thereby creating a sort of ring composition that rhetorically underscores the tragic reversal of the situations. At the beginning sight inspires confidence and enhances the initial *ἔρως* of the expedition; at the end it becomes the channel through which the eventual disaster is perceived, and the initial magnificence of both expeditionary forces gives way to their final annihilation.

And there seem to be further authorial intentions in the use of such "theatrical" scenes. Konstan has shown how there is a specific rhetoric behind Herodotus' repeated use of the visual theme when it comes to oriental monarchs, especially Xerxes. Konstan believes that the purpose of such scenes is to underscore the "quantitative and extrinsic quality of Persian power", which is in deep contrast with Hellenic *ἀρετή*.⁴⁸ In other words, Xerxes' frequent desire to see reflects the fact that for the Persians, power is interpreted in terms of observing and enumerating certain visual manifestations such as precious objects or great numbers of soldiers. By contrast, the Hellenes are hardly ever portrayed as spectators, since they interpret power in a different way; for them real power is the human excellence or *ἀρετή* that lies within. The course of events in the end proves that the Persians' confidence, based as it is on the magnificence and the numerical superiority of their army, is in effect a complete misinterpretation of their true power.

I believe that Konstan's remarks have a bearing on Thucydides' portrayal of the departure of the Athenian fleet against Sicily. The Athenians who run to Piraeus to watch the magnificent fleet resemble Xerxes in his desire to view his army. Their feelings of confidence are based on the "show" that unfolds before their eyes. Luxury, extravagance, and numbers are portrayed as all-important. The Athenians' concern with and admiration for quantity and appearance develops in a quasi-Xerxean manner. Ironically, appearances will ultimately prove deceptive in exactly the same way.⁴⁹

I suggest that in exploiting the visual theme in relation to the Athenians within his Sicilian narrative, Thucydides may be consciously

⁴⁸ Konstan (1987) 59–93.

⁴⁹ On the false interpretation of Athenian power before the Sicilian Expedition on the grounds of delusive display and appearances, see the excellent discussion by Kallet (2001) 21–84; cf. Ober (1994a) 123 n. 40; Jordan (2000).

alluding to Herodotus' frequent portrayal of Xerxes as a spectator, thus establishing an interesting parallel: interpretation of power on the grounds of luxurious and deceptive appearances, intrinsically associated with oriental despotism, has affected Athens: the city has gradually moved away from the Hellenic ἀρετή displayed in the Persian Wars and acquired a quasi-oriental and despotic materialism, with the emphasis on the appearance of luxury.⁵⁰ This impression is further enhanced by the close association in ancient Greek thought—and especially in Herodotean narrative—between ἔρως—the emotion that invaded the collective psyche of the Athenians on the eve of the Sicilian expedition—and tyranny.

Erōs and Tyranny

It is interesting that in Herodotus ἔρως is a feeling particularly associated with despots and tyrants and invariably carries negative overtones, leading to mischief, the subversion of moral institutions, and even death.⁵¹ In its literal sexual meaning, it appears early on as the true reason for the downfall of Candaules, who “conceived a passion for his own wife, and because of this he thought she was the most beautiful woman on earth” (ἡράσθη τῆς ἑωυτοῦ γυναικός, ἐρασθεὶς δὲ ἐνόμιζέ οἱ εἶναι γυναῖκα πολλὸν πασέων καλλίστην). This passion sparked off the whole Gyges episode, which was to result in Candaules' death (1.8.1).

At 2.131 we read about the incestuous and disastrous passion of king Mycerinus for his daughter (Μυκερῖνος ἡράσθη τῆς ἑωυτοῦ θυγατρὸς), which Herodotus says is the reason for her suicide. Similarly, Cambyses falls in love with his own sister (ἡράσθη μῆς τῶν ἀδελφέων), a situation that leads him to a marriage with her which is “uncustomary”, according to Persian law (3.31.2).

⁵⁰ This is in keeping with Kallet's (1998) suggestion that the Athenian *dēmos* was not only a tyrant in its relations with the allies, but also an extravagant, μεγαλοπρεπής, tyrant in the way it spent money on the city.

⁵¹ See Hall (1989) 208 who notes that in Herodotus “the transgressive desire denoted by the term *erōs* is attributed only to tyrants and kings”; cf. Benardete (1969) 137f. and n. 8; Immerwahr (1973) 27; Harrison (2000a) 238 and n. 34. On *erōs* as a tyrannical feature in general, see Ludwig (2002) 153.

Another interesting case of sexual ἔρως with negative overtones occurs in 6.62.1. This is the only time that ἔρως is used not in connection with an oriental monarch, but with a Spartan. Ariston falls in love with Agetus' wife, the most beautiful woman in Sparta (τὸν δὲ Ἀρίστωνα ἔκνιζε ἄρα τῆς γυναικὸς ταύτης ἔρως). His desire for her leads him to the following ingenious trick to win her favors (μηχανᾶται δὴ τοιάδε): he convinces Agetus to make an agreement, sealed by oath, according to which each of them can ask the other for any of his possessions as a gift. Agetus could not have imagined that Ariston would ask for his wife since he was already married. Herodotus concludes the story clearly characterizing Ariston's plan as a deception (ἀναγκαζόμενος . . . τῆς ἀπάτης τῇ παραγωγῇ). This once again brings to mind the element of ἀπάτη, which as we saw above is often associated with ὁρμή, a major manifestation of which is ἔρως. The last occurrence of ἔρως and its cognates in Herodotus' *Histories* occurs in relation to Xerxes and his unlawful desire for Masistes' wife (ἥρα τῆς Μασίστεω γυναικός, 9.108.1), which resulted in Masistes' death.⁵²

All of the above situations caused by ἔρως are eloquently summed up by Otanes in the Constitutional Debate: enumerating the worst excesses of tyranny (3.80.5), he states that a tyrant can break up the structure of ancient tradition and law (νόμοιά τε κινέει πάτρια; cf. Cambyses' marriage to his sister), forces women to serve his pleasure (καὶ βιάται γυναῖκας; cf. all the above examples), and puts men to death without trial (κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους; cf. Masistes' death).

It is also interesting that Herodotus twice directly links ἔρως with despotism or tyranny. In the section that deals with the history of the Medes up to the reign of Astyages (1.95–107), Herodotus mentions Deioces' desire to grasp more political power by a reference to his desire for power (ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος, 1.96.1), while in 5.32 he refers to Pausanias' deep desire to rule over Greece (ἔρωτα σχὼν τῆς Ἑλλάδος τύραννος γενέσθαι) as the alleged reason for his marriage to Megabates' daughter.⁵³ More intriguing is the use of a cognate of ἔρως, the noun ἐραστής, directly related with tyranny. At

⁵² Benardete (1969) 137.

⁵³ An idea about Pausanias repeated by Thucydides at 1.95.3: καὶ τυραννίδος μᾶλλον ἐφαίνετο μίμησις ἢ στρατηγία. Cf. Alcibiades' accusations that he "wished for a tyranny" (ὡς τυραννίδος ἐπιθυμοῦντι, 6.15.4).

3.53.4 Periander's daughter is trying to convince Lycophron to succeed his father to the throne. One of her arguments is that "power is a slippery thing—it has many suitors" (τυραννὶς χρήμα σφαλερόν, πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῆς ἐρασταὶ εἰσι) and that for this reason Lycophron should not let his inheritance go to another. The noun ἐραστής is a *hapax* in Herodotus and rare in surviving literature. It may not be sheer coincidence that the word makes a striking reappearance in Pericles' Funeral Oration, where the great Athenian statesman urges his fellow citizens to "look every day at the greatness of Athens and fall in love with her" (τὴν τῆς πόλεως δύνανται καθ' ἡμέραν ἔργω θεωμένους καὶ ἐραστάς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς, 2.43.1)⁵⁴ This is especially so if one takes into account the fact that a few paragraphs later (2.63.3), in stressing the dangers of giving up the empire that the Athenians have acquired, Pericles explicitly likens Athens to a tyranny (ὥς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἔχετε αὐτήν) which it may have been wrong to establish, but is certainly dangerous to let go. In fact, this is just one of a number of explicit analogies drawn between Athens and tyranny in the *History*.⁵⁵ At 1.122.3, for instance, the Corinthians blame the members of the Peloponnesian alliance for having allowed a dictator state (i.e. Athens) to be set up in Hellas (τύραννον δὲ ἐῴμεν ἐγκαθεσθῆναι πόλιν) and at 1.124.3 warn that the same dictator city that has been established in Hellas (καὶ τὴν καθεστηκυῖαν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι πόλιν τύραννον) is there to dominate everybody alike and is planning to subdue what has not been subdued already. It is Cleon who next (3.37.2) presents Athens' empire as a tyranny (τυραννίδα ἔχετε τὴν ἀρχήν) exercised over subjects who dislike it and are always plotting against it. Finally, the Athenian speaker Euphemus explains to his Sicilian audience (6.85.1) that they can readily gauge Athenian intentions because "for a man who is tyrant (ἀνδρὶ δὲ τυράννῳ) or for a city that has an empire (πόλει ἀρχὴν ἐχούσῃ) nothing is irrational if advantageous and there is no bond except reliability".

I would suggest therefore that Thucydides may have deliberately reserved one of his two uses of the noun ἔρως⁵⁶—a word so intrin-

⁵⁴ On Pericles' erotic metaphor, see especially Monoson (1994); cf. Immerwahr (1973) 27; Connor (1971) 97 and n. 14; Saxonhouse (1983) 150f.; Forde (1986) 439f.; Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.311; Kallet (2001) 46; Ludwig (2002) 161. Note also the connection of vision with *erōs* implied by Pericles.

⁵⁵ On the metaphor of Athens as a "tyrant" city, see V.J. Hunter (1973b); Connor (1977b); Tuplin (1985); Scanlon (1987); Kallet (1998); Rood (1999) 150 and n. 30.

⁵⁶ I refer here to the actual use of the noun ἔρως, which in the *History* appears

sically associated in Herodotus with tyranny—to characterize the Athenians' collective psychology on the eve of the Sicilian Expedition: it may be a tacit assertion on his part that his city had indeed emerged as the "tyrannical" successor of Herodotus' despots.

Conclusions

I have drawn attention to some of the ways in which the works of Thucydides and Herodotus resonate with one another. From this it has emerged that they exhibit intriguing similarities in their views on historical motivation, and that methodological qualities particularly associated in the past with Thucydidean historiography first find their expression in Herodotus. More specifically, we have seen how both historians lay the foundations of the momentous military operations they describe (that of the Athenians in the case of Thucydides, that of Xerxes in the case of Herodotus) partly in psychological terms.

In so doing, they make use of focalized narration (or inferred motivation), a technique particularly associated with Thucydidean methodology in the past: they provide direct access to the participants' psyches and emphasize their commitment to passion, which, it is hinted, is one of the decisive factors in their downfall. Similarly, an important aspect of Thucydides' celebrated *enargeia* (in particular, elaborate scenes in which the readers are watching spectators watching a spectacle), and the effect of vision on the spectators' emotions, is used extensively in Herodotus and in similar contexts.

Regarding the vexed issue of the direct influence of Herodotus on Thucydides, intertextual links strongly suggest that in his characterization of the Athenians' attitude toward the Sicilian Expedition, Thucydides found a convenient literary archetype in Herodotus' depiction of oriental despots. Time and again the collective Athenian mentality strikingly evokes the irrationality, submission to passion and disillusionment of a Xerxes or a Mardonius. What is more, the portrayal of Athens in noticeably Herodotean terms appears to be more than a literary technique: it is an implicit but effective way for

only in Diodotus' speech at 3.45.5 and in relation to the Sicilian Expedition at 6.24.3. Cognates of ἔπος occur at 2.43.1; 6.13.1; 6.54.1; 6.54.2; 6.54.3; 6.57.3; 6.59.

Thucydides to pass judgment on the transformation of his city into an imperialistic tyrant and also on its progression from the classical intellectualism and values eulogized in Pericles' Funeral Oration to a quasi-oriental obscurantism, emotionalism, and materialism.

Of course my purpose in positively comparing the two authors is by no means to equate them as thinkers or artists. To examine the ways in which they resemble one another is not to blur the profound differences between them in method, ideology, and literary presentation. However, what emerges from an intertextual approach to their historiography is that, far from being separated by an unbridgeable chasm, they display numerous striking affinities. This in turn suggests that with his *History*, Thucydides offered a creative continuation, development, and refinement—rather than a pugnacious refutation—of his predecessor.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ I would like to thank Prof. A. Rengakos for kindly inviting me to contribute to this volume and Prof. S. Hornblower for reading a draft of this paper and for his suggestions. I am also grateful to Prof. C. Pelling and R. Thomas, who, as examiners of my PhD dissertation, offered valuable criticism.

THUCYDIDES' INTELLECTUAL MILIEU AND THE PLAGUE

Rosalind Thomas

Thucydides' Intellectual Milieu

Thucydides hoped his *History* would be useful for those wishing “to have a clear picture of what had happened in the past and of similar events that may be expected—given human nature (κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον)—to happen in the future” (1.22.4). Such a statement about human nature as a universal constant places Thucydides immediately in connection with the sophistic movement and the development of medicine in the latter half of the fifth century. Both stressed the human and the generic, the constants, and the larger general rules behind the observable world. In placing “human nature” at the center of history so emphatically, he also implicitly rejected any idea that the divine might play a part in either individual actions, or the larger patterns of history. The *History* is also much indebted to the techniques of epic, and possibly tragedy;¹ and recently Thucydides’ relationship with Pindar and the world of epinician poetry has been explored.² He knew the *Histories* of Herodotus, and much could be said about how far he was influenced by them, either in emulation or in reaction.³ Herodotus had set the pattern for a narrative history with speeches as vehicles of analysis of individual character, motivation, moral lessons, and contrasts of national character. But this too brings us back to the developing techniques of argument and persuasion of the latter part of the fifth century. Herodotus’ awareness of the new and evolving techniques of argument and proof, of the effective use of evidence and deductions from that evidence, show some relation to developments that are more usually labeled

¹ See Macleod (1983a), “Thucydides and Tragedy”, for instance; most recently Rood (1998a) and Rengakos, this vol. for his narrative technique; Hornblower (1994b) on “narratology”.

² Hornblower (2004).

³ See Hornblower (1987) ch. 1 and Rogkottis, this vol.

“sophistic”. These seem to belong to the wider milieu of intellectual style that was manifested both in the “scientific” work of medical writers and in the growth of the art of persuasion, and often in both.⁴ Thucydides both uses such language and builds upon it: for instance in his opening, where he stressed his careful deduction from evidence and proof (1.1), and his section on his method (1.20–22), he is claiming a similar scaffolding of careful deduction from tested evidence for his research into the past, and compressing it, unlike Herodotus, into one main magisterial statement of intention.

Herodotus was participating in these wider intellectual developments, rather than passively taking over various undigested ideas, and despite his liking for overt disagreement, it is likely that there was more silent controversy and correction of others than is always obvious. This is even more true of Thucydides, who does not usually engage in open and explicit polemic, in the open dissection of why others are wrong. It is true that he attacks the uncritical acceptance of tradition in his explanation of his superior method (1.20–21), and again outlines his correct account of the tyrannicides in Book VI (53.2–60), but the sustained and rhetorical polemic of Herodotus on theories about the Nile, for instance (2.20ff.), is not a feature of Thucydides’ style. This type of polemic seems to belong to a more flamboyant and argumentative style that was part of intellectual discourse and argument in the second half of the fifth century and particularly suited to the display lecture—which Herodotus seems to flaunt—but this makes it all the more striking that Thucydides avoids it. Thus his complex relationship to various intellectual currents is left usually implicit rather than overtly displayed. He makes silent corrections, as Hornblower has shown most eloquently in the area of religion,⁵ and the seamless flow of his narrative takes his audience inevitably in certain directions without giving them any chance of tasting alternative views (except in the speeches), contrasting versions, or differing evidence. Thucydides’ intellectual debts and milieu have to be read directly from the nature of his historical analysis, language, and arguments.

The central influence seems to be the intellectual movement known as the sophistic movement, though the exact relationship is harder

⁴ See on this Thomas (2000) *passim*.

⁵ Hornblower (1992a) for the “religious silences” of Thucydides; Hornblower (1987) ch. 2 for his selectivity.

to define. When Thucydides claims famously that his work is going to be less pleasureable to its listeners because of the absence of τὸ μυθῶδες (1.22.4), this seems to be a jibe at Herodotus and the poets. When he concludes that it is to be a possession for ever, rather than an ἀγώνισμα for immediate listeners (1.22.4), the reference seems more obviously to be to the wider phenomenon of competition pieces, display speeches, of the kind that were much loved by sophists and indeed others, medical writers included.⁶ Hints at sophistic displays recur occasionally in a form that suggests disapproval: Cleon refers disparagingly to his democratic audience as listening to political debates as if they were merely “spectators of the sophists” (σοφιστῶν θεαταῖς), conquered by the pleasure of the ear, rather than deliberating about affairs of the city (3.38.7). The tone is harsh, and Cleon is hardly Thucydides' favorite politician, but the implication that serious political deliberation is quite opposed to sitting in the audience of sophistic speeches seems echoed in Cleon's earlier contrast between “fair judges rather than competitors (ἀγωνισταί)” (3.37.4) and Thucydides' own rejection in his own person of the ἀγώνισμα. One of the features of the undeniably destructive *stasis* at Corcyra in Thucydides' account is the competition or prize in intelligence won by treachery, perfidious treachery winning the ξυνέσεως ἀγώνισμα (3.82.7).⁷ What is lost is honesty, integrity, judgment, and laws at the expense of clever but duplicitous contests in greed and φιλοτιμία, the political virtues manifested in “deviant form”, the teaching of war revealing human nature.⁸

But, of course, Thucydides was utterly aware of the various techniques of style, argument, and persuasion, and certain theories associated with the sophists in general. He was probably aware of individual theories associated with particular famous sophists, for we should beware of seeing these as a unified group, even if Plato did his best to treat them as a group of teachers of rhetoric⁹ (thus it is usually preferable to talk in terms of individuals, Protagoras, Prodicus, Hippias, Gorgias). Thucydides was quite familiar with the

⁶ *Agōnisma* as sophistic display: Solmsen (1975) 84; Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.61f. (*ad loc.*) and 1.75; Thomas (2000) ch. 8 and p. 267 on Thucydides.

⁷ “A kind of prize for cleverness”, Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.485 (*ad loc.*).

⁸ Macleod (1983c) 128; cf. also 135.

⁹ See particularly Guthrie (1971) and Kerferd (1981) for analysis of individual sophists, and the question of whether they constituted a unified group; also Wallace (1998), distinguishing distinct periods, and Bett (2002) on “sophistic ethics”.

techniques of rhetoric commonly associated with the new sophistic techniques, with arguments from εἰκός or expediency (τὸ συμφέρον), antithetical pairings of λόγος and ἔργον, for instance, or νόμος and φύσις, and ready to use them with lethal effectiveness, especially in the speeches. He was in the vanguard of experiments with language and style in the period—he used the balance and rhyming characteristic of Gorgias’ style though less excessively,¹⁰ he seems to have been fascinated by the use of antithesis, and by forms of argumentation.¹¹ Finley saw this as so fundamental a part of the political training of the sophists that Thucydides’ political understanding and analysis was also in essence a product of the sophistic age and their training.¹² The idea of the “law of nature” as equivalent to the rule of the stronger occurs in the Melian Dialogue (5.105.2) and is comparable to Antiphon’s arguments in *On Truth*.¹³

Yet ability to use these sophistic techniques is not equivalent to acceptance of some of the most radical theories—and loose assumptions that Thucydides was sophistically inclined in the radical sense founders primarily on the fact that even in the slight evidence we have, different sophists held quite different views even on the central questions such as the importance of *nomos*. Indeed, one of the common characteristics loosely associated with the sophists is the notorious “sophistic relativity of values”, that is, the idea that a set of values may be accepted by one group, and another set by another, and that neither set is necessarily superior, or clearly correct—an argument famously associated with Protagoras (Pl. *Tht.* 167c; 172b).¹⁴ But Thucydides cannot possibly be said to belong to this school of thought—though he is aware of it—for his analysis of the Corcyrean *stasis* is all about values being perverted, and the meaning of words being changed from meaning something noble to innoble: there is nothing about relativity of values here, even if his curiosity about the subtle gradations of meanings might owe something to Prodicus.¹⁵

¹⁰ Denniston (1952) 10–13 on Gorgias and Thucydides; cf. J.H. Finley (1967) ch. 2.

¹¹ See Finley (1942) ch. 2 on “Intellectual Background”, and J.H. Finley (1967); cf. further Nestle (1914); Luschkat (1970) 1147ff.; Solmsen (1975).

¹² J.H. Finley (1942), esp. 43–46.

¹³ Note the anticipation of the νόμος φύσεως in Pl. *Grg.* 483e3; Kerferd (1981) 112.

¹⁴ See most recently Bett (1989) on sophistic relativity; and Bett (2002) on sophistic ethics.

¹⁵ Cf. 3.83.1: “Every form of iniquity took root in the Hellenic world because

The problem of definition we are encountering here has been well set out by Winston on the problematic meaning of "sophistic": when something is labeled as sophistic, does this mean that "this is an idea we must also attribute to one or other of the sophists, or sophists generally (however identified); or are we dealing with the much stronger thesis that what we find in the play or speech is there as a result of the influence of some particular sophist, or sophists generally (however identified)?"¹⁶ The presence of an idea or technique in Thucydides does not by itself imply that he accepts it, rather than attributing it to one of his speakers. Macleod has indeed persuasively suggested that Thucydides might use the new rhetorical style to show the falsity of rhetoric, of the arguments used, of the speakers and their pretensions; thus that knowledge of the techniques might be manipulated in a subtle way so as to undermine them.¹⁷

In the study of intellectual milieu, it is crucial not merely to state (for instance) that Thucydides knows of a certain idea from a particular writer: ideally one would also be able to analyse how Thucydides has used it, altered it, and to what extent he questioned it. Perhaps the fundamental problem here is that Thucydides lived in the middle of the period at which many forms of intellectual enquiry were intensely active, and of those, the sophists were one group; but there was much critical inquiry into political systems, society, man; and a set of techniques of argumentation were being developed simultaneously across a broad spectrum of groups—medical writers, the famous sophists, speakers and politicians, writers of history. Medical writers clearly used techniques of rhetoric that are usually called sophistic (see *Art, Breaths*); some were more sophistic than others. Euripides played with many of the more extreme experiments of the sophists (and no doubt his own). Medicine was influenced by philosophy, and the two were sometimes quite impossible to distinguish or disentangle. Some sophists wrote and lectured on medicine and the nature of man. Prodicus, for instance, had a theory about phlegm and may

of *stasis* . . .": Hornblower's apt comment on the whole sentence, *Comm., ad loc.*: "a clear, absolute, and conservative authorial rejection of the 'relativistic' moral teaching of certain of the sophists"; cf. Hussey (1985) 133; Solmsen (1975) 92ff. for Thucydides' interest in minute differences in meaning, and 106ff. on his discovery of "false synonyms" at 3.82f.

¹⁶ Winton (2000) 94.

¹⁷ See Macleod (1983c) ch. 10 (Mytilenean Debate), ch. 12 (Corcyrean *stasis*); ch. 9 (Th. and rhetoric); ch. 8 (Melian Dialogue).

have published a work *On the Nature of Man*, Gorgias wrote on vision.¹⁸ There was thus a broad spectrum of intellectual activity with various currents, conflicting ideas and theories, in which it is unwise to attribute all new intellectual techniques to the sophists, interesting though they were. To return to the elaborate passage on the Corcyrean *stasis* (3.82–83), in particular the analysis of the way the meaning or connotations of words changed, we see no trace of the contemporary sophistic discussion of Prodicus, Democritus, Protagoras, and later Plato, of “correctness of names”, whether names had a “natural” meaning, or whether their meaning was merely a matter of convention.¹⁹ Or perhaps Thucydides was well aware of that debate and quietly sidestepped it by assuming throughout his description that of course the meaning of words—courage, honor, etc.—change as society changes, for it is society that attributes meaning.²⁰ What is most significant here is what Thucydides states in his own person.

For the rest of this chapter, I will concentrate on Thucydides’ relation to medicine and in particular the passage on the Plague as a case study for the complexity of attributing intellectual influence or debts to Thucydides.

Thucydides and the Medical World: the Plague

What was Thucydides’ relationship to the new art of medicine represented by the medical writings collected under the name of Hippocrates? Thucydides’ description of the Plague in Book II, a *tour de force* in its description of medical symptoms and the social and religious devastation that resulted, pushes this into the foreground of any question of Thucydides’ intellectual debts. Scholars are now not so ready as Cochrane (in 1929) to see Thucydides as a close affiliate of the Hippocratic school of medicine, and a scientific historian con-

¹⁸ See G.E.R. Lloyd (1979) 87 n. 146; Guthrie (1971) 276f. discusses the evidence; G.E.R. Lloyd (1987) 92–5; Thomas (2000) 160f.

¹⁹ For the controversy on this, culminating with the *Cratylus*, see Guthrie (1971) 222–24; Kerferd (1981) ch. 7, and most recently Sluiter (1997) 172–88; Sedley (1998); Solmsen (1975) 106ff. on 3.82–83.

²⁰ Cf. Price (2001) 43: “In this as in other matters Thucydides’ insights were not registered by the sophists and philosophers of the fourth century”, and he adds, that this is not simply because the texts have been lost. See ch. 2 generally on the transvaluation of words.

tinuing their methods.²¹ Research into Greek medicine and its place in Greek society has been particularly rich over the last twenty years, and scholars tend to stress the degree of philosophical, abstract deduction involved as opposed to (or as well as) the gathering of empirical evidence that has been hailed as the advent of scientific medicine.²² In any case there is the tricky question of which medical works are to be taken as characteristic. The Hippocratic Corpus contains essays by different authors covering the late fifth and fourth centuries, and even the late fifth-century essays are not all by Hippocrates himself: the essays *Airs, Waters, Places, On the Art, Breaths, Nature of Man, Ancient Medicine, On Generation, Nature of the Child, Diseases IV, On the Sacred Disease*, and *Epidemics I* and *III* are agreed to be "early", late fifth century.²³ *Nature of Man* was attributed by Aristotle to Polybus, Hippocrates' son-in-law. The doctrines, intellectual style, methods of argumentation, and degree of abstract philosophical argument, as opposed to empirical observation, of these essays vary considerably. *Art* and *Breaths* are so sophistic in their style and argument, so short on medical observation, and so rhetorical in general that scholars used to think they were not by doctors at all. *Nature of Man* makes it clear that there were current debates that impinged on medical theories but that are conducted by men who did not think of themselves as doctors, indeed they sound like natural philosophers (*Nat. Man* ch. 1). This multiplicity broadens the range of intellectual styles we have access to; perhaps even more important, it reminds us that the intellectual world of the late fifth century was a highly complex one. The more rhetorical of the essays are invaluable as rhetorical display pieces, complete examples of a kind of literature that is mostly lost from famous sophists like Protagoras or Prodicus.

Which are most closely comparable to Thucydides? *Epidemics I* and *III* contain closely observed lists of case studies with the state of the patient noted from day to day, or with gaps, often closing with the death of the patient (*Epid. III*, case 13: "34th day. Death").

²¹ Cochrane (1929) esp. 7ff. and ch. 7 (taking Hippocratic medicine to be fairly unified). Weidauer (1954), with review by Diller (1955): Weidauer concentrates primarily on the use of particular words (e.g., εἶδος, πρόφασις) and Thucydides' statements of method and aims for the *History*, which he sees as closely comparable to the medical method of prognosis.

²² See, esp., G.E.R. Lloyd (1979); (1987).

²³ Note also *Regimen* and *Regimen in Acute Diseases* which may also be relatively early.

They are prefaced by a Constitution or *katastasis*, outlining the weather and types of illnesses around that year. It is these closely observed, densely factual treatises, quite different from the rhetorical essays and hailed as the beginning of empirical medical science, which are most often associated with Thucydides' narrative, his claims to give a true account stripped of τὸ μυθώδες (1.22.4), and most especially his account of the Plague: these are the prime examples of "scientific method", in the sense that they form empirical research and an impressive set of data, from which the doctor can deduce knowledge about the course of the disease and its treatment.²⁴ Written in a quite unliterary Greek without full sentence structure, the style of these works adds to this impression. Yet even here caution is needed. It is sometimes implied that the *Epidemics* treat bare facts, the "mere" observable facts, pure empirical evidence, yet even the lists of symptoms in *Epidemics* are partly related to the doctor's theory of what should be observed, which facts are significant. In other words, even here, the very facts chosen to note are themselves selected as those the doctor thinks important—pain, fever, rigor, discharges, and so on.

The other essays are as much part of fifth-century medicine as the dry *Epidemics*: more general essays on the importance of medicine as an art or *technē* (*Ancient Medicine, On the Art*) or arguments for specific theories, the humors, for example (*Nature of Man*). Nor is it entirely fair to treat these medical works as if in a quite separate category from the other philosophical or scientific developments of the age. As Lloyd has shown, the medical writers were in this period trying to develop their art as a separate one, a separate *technē* which was not simply a type of philosophy, and which could be declared to be more effective than religious solutions (see esp. *On the Sacred Disease, Ancient Medicine*).²⁵ This was the more urgent partly precisely because some medical treatises were indeed very close to Presocratic philosophy and developed their theories from philosophical argument rather than observation of human beings, very far from the experimental or observation-based activity we might expect (see for instance the way *Nature of Man* develops its theory about the humors).²⁶ Others again were highly rhetorical; doctors needed rhetorical skills in order

²⁴ See, e.g., Weidauer (1954).

²⁵ See esp. G.E.R. Lloyd (1979); (1987).

²⁶ For the interaction of doctors, philosophy, and natural science, see Jouanna (1992) 366–403; G.E.R. Lloyd (1979); (1987); Longrigg (1993); Mansfeld (1980).

to persuade patients and sometimes a large public audience, as Aristophanes indicates of our first attested public doctor (*Ach.* 1030–32). Some essays were probably display pieces for live audiences, which are distinct from sophistic display pieces in little but their subject, health (*Breaths, Art*).²⁷ These fascinating essays offer a spectrum of methods, argumentation, and style that leave the dry case descriptions of the early *Epidemics I* and *III* look rather isolated. The lines between medicine and other intellectual disciplines look decidedly blurred, and to compare Thucydides only with the *Epidemics* gives a misleading impression both of fifth-century medical activity and of the intellectual currents of the period.²⁸

Does Thucydides show any knowledge or affinity with any aspects of Hippocratic medicine, then? And if so, how far does it influence his account of the Plague? Direct knowledge of Hippocratic medicine might be hard to prove if knowledge of medicine was part of the educated man's background, and if it was widely diffused by certain sophists who also had their own theories about the nature of man. The nature—and very definition—of technical language in medicine is also difficult to define: how do you recognize specialist medical vocabulary when technical medical vocabulary (and *any* technical vocabulary) was slow to develop, and a shortage of other prose works from the period leaves little comparative evidence for ordinary medical Greek. A fundamental study by Page examined minutely the language of 2.49 and surrounding chapters, and tried to show that Thucydides' account was packed with terms “apparently with the same meanings, as the standard terms in the contemporary doctors”;²⁹ that his vocabulary showed “familiarity with medical parlance”.³⁰ He seems to have deliberately avoided the expression “technical term” (it occurs finally on p. 109), and indeed Thucydides himself usually tried to avoid technical language,³¹ but the exhaustive examination of words is taken to show that Thucydides was very definitely using language which would not be out of place in a medical work.

²⁷ See Jouanna (1992); (1984).

²⁸ It is worth noting also that dedicated research on the dry “scientific” style of, e.g., *Epidemics* is only a recent development: see van der Eijk (1997).

²⁹ Page (1953) 97.

³⁰ Page (1953) 100; now to be supplemented by the new concordance by Kühn and Fleischer (1986).

³¹ Hornblower (1987) 96–100.

Page's study was prompted by the desire to understand as exactly as possible the nature of the Plague in order to identify the disease. Parry and others, however, have pointed out that the account of the Plague had a more poetic, tragic meaning in the *History*—and Parry in particular argued that it should not be taken as pure science; Thucydides' description is meant to heighten the drama and pathos with "a poet's precision".³² Most words, Parry claimed, were ordinary Greek, and he pointed out some exaggeration on Page's part.³³ In other words, the piling on of detail might be an example of "tragic *akribeia*" rather than showing his scientific or medical ability.³⁴ Yet this seems to go too far, and doubts linger. There seems to be some relationship to current medical technique: the question is what it is, and it is an illuminating case study for the question of Thucydides' intellectual debts.

Take the vocabulary first. It might indeed be that χολή, λύγξ, σπασμός, are simply the ordinary Greek words for bile, retching, spasm, but if so they are the ordinary Greek words that are used as the standard terms in the medical works. More significant, the very idea of setting out the symptoms in this extraordinary detail is not quite "ordinary Greek": it belongs to a discourse, a habit of listing symptoms that belongs to a particular group. The evidence Page assembled shows that word after word also occurred in the medical writings, and the accumulation of such words and descriptions of such processes in different parts of the body would not look out of place in Hippocratic texts. Whether or not they are "technical", then, is probably the wrong question precisely because exclusively technical medical terms are still pretty rare in the late fifth century; moreover study of the nonliterary "scientific" Greek texts is still in its early stages.³⁵ If we take λύγξ, for instance, the word for retching, hiccuping, it occurs in Thucydides' Plague, the Hippocratic Corpus, and Plato, as does παρμός, sneezing. Neither, then, are so technical as to be out of place in the *Symposium*, though we may note that

³² Parry (1969) 114.

³³ Parry (1969) 111ff.: e.g. claiming "sneeze" was a medical term. Parry appears to accept that the language is not "greatly at variance with common medical usage" (p. 112); "it is with the widely accepted implications of Page's arguments, rather than with their declared assertions, that one must take issue". Parry (1969) 112f. lists the very few terms he thinks are exclusively medical.

³⁴ See also Hornblower (1987), esp. ch. 2 on "tragic *akribeia*".

³⁵ Van der Eijk (1997) generally, and esp. 101f. on slow development in medicine.

Aristophanes is first hiccupping, and then teasing the doctor Eryximachus on the relation between hiccupping and sneezing, so there is a dig at doctors even there (*Smp.* 185d; 189a). But then they are regularly noted in the medical works too. There are a mass of terms in Thucydides for physical reactions, the progress of pain or of the disease through the body, which can be paralleled in medical descriptions (e.g., κατέβαιναν ἐξ τὰ στήθη ὁ πόνος, ἐπικατιόντος τοῦ νοσήματος), and several expressions of degrees of heat and burning experienced: θερμαί ισχυραί, ἐρυθήματα, ὑπέρυθρον, φλόγωσις, of which only the last does not occur in Hippocratic medical work.³⁶

These terms may not be formally technical in the sense that they are only usable and understood by specialists. But the fact remains that, for example, θερμαί, in the plural has an almost exclusively medical usage,³⁷ “violent fevers” (θερμαί ισχυραί) uses the adjective ισχυρός which is much used by doctors, and ἐρυθήματα is one of the many nouns ending in -μα that become regular in the medical works, especially the *Epidemics*, as part of a process of nominalization to create words for symptoms.³⁸ It is not attested before the description of the Plague. φλόγωσις, another word for burning/inflammation, is according to Page, “the only Thucydidean term which appears to be missing from the Hippocratic vocabulary”,³⁹ but we can hardly lay much stress on this, since φλογμός, closely parallel in derivation appears in the contemporary *Ancient Medicine* (19.1) as well as tragedy, and *Ancient Medicine* also uses φλεγμονή which is the more normal Hippocratic word. A standard vocabulary seems not to be established yet, and one might guess that the process of settling on one or other primary term for medical use was not smooth or established overnight. The overall impression in Thucydides, then, is of a sustained display of medical terms, sophisticated and unusual if not actually “technical”. And of course the very observation of degrees or types of heat is precisely what the Greek doctor would have been expected to do.

³⁶ Page (1953) 104 gives references.

³⁷ Page (1953) 101 and n. 1; Kühn—Fleischer (1986) note that it often occurs in the plural. θερμαί ισχυραί is used at 2.49.2.

³⁸ See van der Eijk (1997) 101f., along with nouns in -σις, -μος. Willi (2003) esp. ch. 4–5 includes an interesting discussion of technical and sophistic coinages in this period.

³⁹ Page (1953) 101.

A further pointer lies in the mention of δίαίτα, diet or to put it more technically, regimen at ch. 51.3 where Thucydides says that even those tended by every type of regimen (τὰ πάσῃ διαίτῃ θεραπευόμενα) died nevertheless. This is of course a standard word in Hippocratic medicine,⁴⁰ but more than that, it is central to Hippocratic treatment of illness. Is this, then, a sly dig at Hippocratic ideas of cure? We might well wonder if there is an oblique and critical reference being made here.

Another hint lies in the way Thucydides mentions “all kinds of purging of bile named by the doctors”, ἀποκαθάρσεις χολῆς πάσαι ὅσαι ὑπὸ ἱατρῶν ὀνομασμέναι (49.3). Parry used this as an example of Thucydides’ unwillingness to slow the narrative, and his aristocratic disdain for technical terminology, translating it “vomiting of bile ensued, the kinds of vomiting that the doctors have named”.⁴¹ But the expression is more significant than that. It certainly reads as if Thucydides is saying that he is not going to bore his readers with specialized vocabulary, distancing himself from that usage.⁴² It may also suggest disdain for the fine distinctions made by the doctors that were no use in combating the disease. But Thucydides is not distancing himself completely: while hinting that he knows there were further terms, he uses a phrase ἀποκαθάρσεις χολῆς, that is erudite in itself and very much the kind of expression a doctor might like. Bile of various colors was a central analytical tool for Hippocratic doctors, and ἀποκάθαρσις is attested in the Hippocratic works, once in the contemporary *Diseases IV* (ch. 37).⁴³ The verb ἀποκαθαίρω appears in *Ancient Medicine* (19.5) and in many other works. As we saw above, verbal nouns ending in -σις were being developed in this period for the medical analysis or listing of symptoms.

The very setting aside of a passage to describe the symptoms and gradual progression of the disease seems hard to separate entirely from the descriptions evidenced in the Hippocratic doctors, especially in the *Epidemics*, where symptoms are given day by day. For example, at *Epid. III*, case 5: “Fifth day. Seemed to be relieved, but there was heaviness in the bowels with pain; thirst; painful night.” But Thucydides seems to use that medical template in order to do

⁴⁰ Mentioned in passing by Page as such: (1953) 108.

⁴¹ Parry (1969) 113.

⁴² Hornblower (1987) 97: “a kind of apology”.

⁴³ Page (1953) 108 thought it absent, but is now superseded by Kühn and Fleischer (1986).

something different, perhaps to better the doctors, or to go several steps further in a different direction. His close description of its character comes, after all, *after* the grim introduction about the inability of any human *technē* to combat the Plague. He opens ch. 49 with the remark that “that year was otherwise, as agreed, unusually free of sickness” (49.1). This is sometimes thought reminiscent of the medical habit of *Epidemics I* and *III* to give a constitution, *κατάστασις*, sketching the weather and winds of the period,⁴⁴ but if it is, its purpose is quite different. Thucydides mentions no weather, he is not setting the scene in climatic or meteorological terms for the disease that follows (compare *Epid. I*, ch. 4, 2nd constitution: “In Thasos early in autumn occurred unseasonable wintry storms, suddenly with many north and south winds bursting into rains”, etc.). His comment aims instead to portray the Plague as even more extraordinary, even more contrary to any expectations, not susceptible to rational calculation or prediction: it is left quite unconnected with any natural phenomena, weather, other illnesses. This has profound consequences for his vision of the course of the war, the contrast between Periclean Athens and the Athens of the post-plague years. Indeed the Plague, though natural, almost has a supernatural quality.

Similarly his remarks about doctors, laymen, and possible causes seem to throw aside any attempt to treat the Plague rationally or with medical expertise, at least in its current state. He says the doctors were helpless: the doctors died themselves (2.47.3: see further below). After the description of the disease, he adds, perhaps surprisingly, that each case was slightly different, that none of the usual illnesses befell people, or if they did they ended in death (51.2). Most damaging to the claims of any doctors, “people died, both those who were neglected and those who received a lot of care. No single remedy (ἵαμα), at it were, established itself; for what was beneficial for one harmed another” (51.2). Both strong and weak constitutions were laid low (51.3).⁴⁵ The idea that the same illness or medical problem

⁴⁴ E.g., Page (1953) 98, following Cochrane (1929) and others.

⁴⁵ The expression *σῶμά τε αὐτάρκες ὄν* (51.3) is interesting. It also occurs in the Periclean *Epitaphios*, 2.41.1, and also Hdt. 1.32.8; cf. Macleod (1983) 151 on the possible tragic significance of this. Gomme's translation is: “No one was distinguished from the rest by bodily strength or weakness so as to be capable of resistance” (*HCT* 2.157). It sounds as if it had a medical tinge: *αὐτάρκης*, meaning sufficient, complete, is a very popular word in the Hippocratic Corpus (see Kühn – Fleischer [1986]).

will affect different people quite differently is, in fact, well expressed in early Hippocratic writings also. For instance *Epidemics I* talks of the “common nature” of the illness, and the particular individual (*Epid. I* 23 init.; cf. *Breaths* 6 on the differing reactions to the same illness). Thucydides’ remarks could be seen as an affirmation of this medical insight: but there is a Thucydidean twist here, that it meant the doctors were no help.

We hear nothing in Thucydides about any causes—nothing of mixtures, balancing hot and cold, coction, how fevers subside. Such, for instance, is presented by the author of *Ancient Medicine* as part of his argument that the humors’ imbalance cause illness and that cure is arrived at by coction and mixture (18–19). The author of *Breaths* has a section on communal illnesses, i.e., plague, and how they are caused by air (6), which has been the subject of an interesting comparison with Thucydides by Demont (see below). But here too, Thucydides seems quietly and decisively to indicate that the doctors were inadequate to the challenge:⁴⁶ the doctors were unable to do anything but died themselves, “nor was any other human art (τέχνη)” any help (47.3). This is the language of the τέχνη, but contrary to the doctors’ claims for their τέχνη, he says it was to no avail. This does not show unfamiliarity with medical theory on Thucydides’ part so much as his independence.

Thus he effectively dismisses theories about its nature and cause in ch. 48: “Let others, doctors or laymen, speculate (λεγέτω . . . ὥς ἕκαστος γινώσκει) about whence it originated, and the causes (αἰτίαι) which each thinks might be sufficient to cause so great a disturbance (μεταβολή). But for myself I will set down its nature (lit. what kind of thing it was), and the symptoms by which anyone who knows them beforehand should recognize it if it should ever strike again. These I shall demonstrate (δηλώσω) having myself suffered the disease, and having watched other people suffering it” (48.3).⁴⁷ The idea that there was no determinable cause is repeated again in 49.2 (ἀπ’ οὐδεμιᾶς προφάσεως).⁴⁸ Both style and comment are very interesting

⁴⁶ A point also stressed by Diller (1955); cf. Gomme, *HCT* 2.149 on Thucydides’ impatience.

⁴⁷ See the important note by Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.320 on this and the implications for Thucydides’ view of the usefulness of his description.

⁴⁸ See Gomme, *HCT* 2.154f. and references there for argument that πρόφασις does not indicate a special medical usage; Weidauer (1954) 8–20 examines the term in Thucydides and the Hippocratic texts.

for Thucydides' relation to medical research and current intellectual trends. The form of expression, "others may decide", "let each decide for himself" is a technique implying tolerance or suspended disbelief that is used by Herodotus and occasionally early medical works in a rather polemical manner.⁴⁹ Early on in Herodotus' *Histories*, for instance, "I cannot say whether these events may have happened like this or otherwise, but I do know . . . I will continue further into my account (προβήσομαι) . . ." (1.5.3). *On the Nature of Man* begins polemically, "whoever is accustomed to hear speakers discuss the nature of man beyond its relation to medicine will not find the present account of any interest . . . Such accounts I leave (παρίημι) to those who wish to give them" (1.1ff.). This seems to be a polemical way of saying that this writer is doing something different—and of dismissing his predecessors—which we may imagine is part of contemporary, late fifth-century intellectual discourse. It seems unlikely to be mainly a habit of the medical writers: we are probably seeing a wider intellectual style common to various attempts—medical, sophistic, historical—to get at what was perceived as the truth. As with these two examples, Thucydides uses it as a foil to emphasize his more worthwhile intentions: he, however, will show how it actually progressed.⁵⁰

Similarly, the first-person statement and Thucydides' claim to authority via his own experience are strikingly rare in his work and very common, of course, in Herodotus. Even for his account of political events which he lived through and experienced, he claimed he did not rely only on his own experience and memory (1.22). In Book IV, he talked of his actions as general in the third person, and this has—quite plausibly—been seen as a way of reinforcing his authority and objectivity.⁵¹ Yet for the Plague it is rather different. Thucydides here turns to an emphatic personal statement: his experience here is his authority, and the train of the passage in 2.48.3 effectively contrasts his account of its nature, drawn from his own experiences and his observation, with these other questions that others may wish to discuss. He seems to be picking up here the style and method

⁴⁹ Thomas (2000) 245.

⁵⁰ Cf. also Th. 6.2 (polite dismissal of Cyclops); further examples in Herodotus in Thomas (2000) 245.

⁵¹ See Woodman (1988), esp. 4, 23; also Gribble (1998) on narrator interventions.

that is emphatically visible in the fifth-century medical works and seems to be a hallmark of the medical rhetoric of authority. The first-person argumentative style of early medical writings is a particularly striking feature of their technique, especially in the more rhetorical pieces (e.g., *Nature of Man*, *Ancient Medicine*, *Art*, *Breaths*).⁵² If we look for first-person experience or autopsy, it is interesting that it occurs in the less rhetorical pieces: *Epidemics I* and *III* often state that the writer has personal knowledge (e.g. *Epid. I*, ch. 14, 1.14: "I know of not a single case . . . which proved fatal when proper bleeding occurred").⁵³ *On the Nature of the Child* gives a brief (and very puzzling) narrative from the author's experience as proof (ch. 13). In a sense, then, Thucydides is presenting himself as a medical writer in his own right, independent, original, with his account based on his own experience.

It is tempting, then, to think that Thucydides is aware of certain types of discourse, of style—not just vocabulary—that were associated with medical discussions. He shows this by slipping into that style occasionally for the plague account, departing from his more usual magisterial style of narrative. Or this style might rather be part of a wider intellectual style of expression, given the close relationship between medicine and other areas of intellectual inquiry at the time. But one suspects that he uses this language partly to go one better, to dismiss the doctors who could do nothing to effect a cure, and to give his own version of the disease, without descending into theoretical discussions about causes that had little authority or proof in his eyes.⁵⁴ All this is consistent with the sense that the Plague has a part in the *History* as a tragedy and a *πάθος* almost beyond comprehension (as Parry and others have argued). That is precisely why he says only that he will describe it so that people will recognize it again.

Even in his statements about its extraordinary nature there is a possible further medical twist. Demont has made a very interesting observation about Thucydides' stress in 2.50.1 on the way the Plague was more than human nature could bear (an awkward phrase: *τό*

⁵² G.E.R. Lloyd (1987) 57ff. on "egotism"; Jouanna (1984); R. Thomas (2000) 235ff. for connection with Herodotus.

⁵³ Also *Epid. I*, ch. 16, 1.12, ch. 20, 1.29–30; cf. also van der Eijk (1997) 115–19 on first-person usage.

⁵⁴ This is, of course, a major difference from the medical works.

τε ἄλλα χαλεπωτέρως ἢ κατὰ ἀνθρωπείαν φύσιν προσέπιπτεν ἐκάστω) and the possible connection with his emphasis on the way animals and birds were also affected by the Plague. For this latter statement Thucydides gives proof, unusually (2.50.1–2). Since the Plague had, in modern terms, passed from one species to another, it was indeed beyond ordinary human understanding. Demont points out a relevant discussion in the rhetorical *Breaths* (ch. 6) about the kind of fever which is communal (κοινός), that is, plague or λοιμός, the cause of which he believes is air.⁵⁵ The author imagines an objection to the theory which is revealing: why then, the objection goes, do such diseases attack only one species? And he provides an answer. The assumption, then, for his audience, presumably an educated one, was that plague was a purely human illness. If this was the standard educated and medical view, then Thucydides seems to have his eye on this as he claims that the Plague effectively crossed species. In other words, behind Thucydides' statements about its power is an implicit comment on what was more commonly thought. He is thus saying, as Demont points out, that the Plague goes beyond the categories and abilities of current medical thought. He offers a picture in fact more consistent with the vision of plague in epic and tragedy,⁵⁶ but he does so with the scrupulous language and proof of current "scientific" debate.

The impression that Thucydides was "doing medical research" in his own right is supported by the fact that his account recognized that the Plague spread by contagion. He also outlined what modern medicine would call acquired immunity—those who had the Plague and survived did not suffer it again, or if they did, they suffered only mildly.⁵⁷ The principle of contagion was quite unknown and unrecognized by the various Hippocratic writers—for them disease was due to a misbalance of humors, or air (*Breaths*), or diet. No wonder Thucydides had a poor view of the efficacy of doctors, if the Athenian ones shared Hippocratic theories. Citing this discovery of Thucydides to argue that he was not *au fait* with current medical theory would be beside the point. Thucydides was producing his own medical theory, and probably in rivalry to the doctors. He hints

⁵⁵ Demont (1983).

⁵⁶ See Demont (1983).

⁵⁷ See Holladay and Poole (1979); and Holladay (1987).

by vocabulary, style, and method, that he was well aware of what the medical *technē* was doing. But he was able to do it too, and he implied, do it better. Several late fifth-century writers who were not primarily doctors had theories pertaining to medicine and health—Gorgias, Prodicus.⁵⁸ Thucydides was another. A piece like *On the Nature of Man* owed so much to philosophy that in some respects it is the self-definition of the author that marked it as medicine. No wonder the Hippocratic texts had to argue so vehemently that medicine was indeed a *technē* separate from philosophy.

Are there parallels between Thucydides' account of the Plague and his aims for his *History*? As often noted, he hoped only that people would be able to recognize the disease should it strike again (2.48.3). This is reminiscent of the Hippocratic stress on diagnosis and especially prognosis rather than cure: it was important to know how a patient's illness would progress so as to prepare the patient for what was to come, and to know if death was going to be the inevitable outcome. Is this similar to Thucydides' stated hope that those who wanted to examine clearly the past and the future would judge his work useful (1.22.4)—was he, that is, listing the symptoms or events, assuming no cure, no ability to alter the course of human history, no moral lessons, just as there was no cure for the Plague, only clear description?⁵⁹ This goes too far, however, and may be making too much of the medical parallel. For one thing, we have seen that Thucydides sets aside the pursuit of causes for the Plague, yet this is clearly not the case for the rest of the *History*: no one would deny that he was interested in causation in the rest of the *History*. As for the doctors engaged in prognosis, it is true that prognosis was partly important so that the doctor should know well in advance if a possible patient was incurable. But the doctors did hold a basic belief that they could help people, cure and improve people's health (see any Hippocratic work for this). The emphasis on prognosis was not entirely pessimistic, a matter of charting rather than helping. In any case the Plague is presented as an exception to rational explanation, and it is described by Thucydides as beyond any cure as part of its terrible nature. The way it befell Athens totally unexpectedly had much to do with the decline of Athens after Pericles'

⁵⁸ For Gorgias' theory of vision, Pl. *Men.* 76cff.; and see n. 18 above.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Macleod (1983c) ch. 13, Parry (1969), both stressing Thucydides' "pessimism"; Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.320–1.

death.⁶⁰ This need not necessarily be read into his hopes for the usefulness of his *History* as a whole.

Thucydides departs dramatically, however, from any medical model, in his analysis of the social and moral effects of the Plague, and most of his account of the Plague concerns itself with the psychological, social and religious implications and effects (parts of ch. 51, ch. 52, 53), rather than the physical progress of the disease itself. Thucydides points out the importance of ἀθυμία, despondency, which helped the disease take grip, and which, he stresses, took away a person's power to resist the disease (2.51.4). He claims that this despondency was the cause of the greatest mortality (καὶ τὸν πλείστον φθόρον τοῦτο ἐνεποίει, 51.4). Those who survived, on the contrary, thought themselves uniquely blessed (51.6). The influx from the countryside made the effects of the disease worse, along with the heat and the temporary shelters (52.1–2). Sacred and profane matters, conventions of religion, were all neglected in the calamity, and all νόμοι concerning burial were thrown into disarray (52.4). Finally we are told that the Plague introduced, or was the origin of, other forms of ἀνομία, lawlessness, into the city, the corruption of morality, the neglect of honor (πρωτόν τε ἦρξε . . . τὸ νόσημα, 53.1).⁶¹ “Neither fear of the gods nor the *nomos* of men” held anyone back for it was seen that honoring the gods seemed to have no effect, and they might not live long enough to be punished by the human world (53.4: θεῶν δὲ φόβος ἢ ἀνθρώπων νόμος οὐδεὶς ἀπεῖργε).

Two points are worth making here about contemporary medicine. First, that the effect of despondency is not unknown to the medical writers, and second, there are hints that this might be allowed to have an effect on the progress of the disease. Early Hippocratic texts take note of mental states, sometimes noting lack of spirits, depression.⁶² *On the Sacred Disease* both claims that fears and terrors are caused physically by a change in the brain (ch. 18, 1.8ff. Loeb edition) and

⁶⁰ See Allison (1983) on Pericles' policy and the Plague.

⁶¹ Oddly, these extreme effects are not well illustrated by the rest of Thucydides' narrative. Gomme, *HCT* 2.159 points out that the Athenians do seem to recover their general morale. Hornblower suggests (*Comm.* 1.326) that the Greek verb ἦρξε might be ambiguous; however, the following paragraph which details the ἀνομία, does clearly link these further developments with the Plague; and Pericles refers to the effects of such suffering and μεταβολή (2.61.2).

⁶² E.g., *Epid. III* 1, case 11, notes that the woman had δυσθυμία and φόβοι, and *Sacr. Dis.* ch. 4 notes fears and terrors.

that fear of the mysterious will affect the physical state of the body, even bring on a seizure (ch. 13, l. 15ff.). Thus while *On the Sacred Disease* mainly stresses the uniformity of the laws of nature, and that natural causes rather than the gods lie behind epilepsy, the writer recognizes that emotional states may bring on physical ill health. In general, as von Staden has shown, the Hippocratic patient has to go along with the doctor in resisting the illness, since some sort of mental and emotional resistance has to help in the healing process.⁶³ But though the writer of *Art* comes close to saying that the very ill patient will not resist because he is fearful (ch. 7.3 J), he is really trying to exculpate the doctor to claim that it is the patient who is unable, through his illness, to follow the doctor's instructions. Despite, or perhaps because of these hints, the contrast with Thucydides is all the more striking: Thucydides makes ἀθυμία a prominent cause, a further lethal factor in the progress of the disease. On current evidence, this seems to be another innovation of Thucydides.

In his emphasis on the effects of the Plague on perceptions of social norms, on ordinary decent values and behavior, religious practices, and even the very belief in the gods, however, Thucydides moves far beyond anything the medical writers were interested in. He puts such emphasis and intellectual power into charting these effects that the physical, medical description of the Plague pales beside it. It is the long-term effect on Athenian society which holds most importance for Thucydides.

It has always been tempting to see this analysis on the break-down of *nomoi*, social conventions, as partly a product of the contemporary sophistic preoccupation with *nomos*, and the relation between *nomos* and *physis*. There are affinities with theories about the development of early human society, in that the building blocks of Thucydides' analysis of what keeps society together are also there in Protagoras' ideas about human society (Plato, *Protagoras*), and in the theoretical speculations about the development of civilization in *Ancient Medicine*.⁶⁴ Thucydides' remark about fear of the gods being removed by the Plague is reminiscent of the radical theory expressed by the

⁶³ See von Staden (1990) 90ff. *Diseases* II 72 lists φροντίς ("anxiety") alongside other maladies—and it includes fears and terrifying dreams, particularly common in the spring.

⁶⁴ See Guthrie (1971) ch. 4 on theories of human progress, with passages pp. 79–84; also Kerferd (1981) 127 for *Anon. Iamblichī* on ἀνομία.

central character in Critias' *Sisyphus* that the gods were invented by some wise man to ensure that human beings did not do wrong even when they would be undetected (88 B 25 DK). Thucydides does not go so far as to say that the gods were an invention, but they clearly do nothing to help with the Plague, and he says with devastating simplicity that fear of the gods is no longer a restraining factor on people's behaviour, for they saw the pious and the neglectful perishing alike (2.53.4). This implies that whatever personal beliefs he had about the gods himself, he thought religious belief was useful or important in maintaining social cohesion. There may be some relationship with other contemporary thinkers who considered the sensitive question of the origin of religious belief, Democritus who thought that belief in gods originated partly through fear of the violence of nature,⁶⁵ Prodikos who thought they originated in gratitude for benefits of nature. Yet Thucydides' emphasis on fear puts the psychological at the basis of human society. Elevated still further as the fundamental force in society by Hobbes' *Leviathan*, fear is also prominent in the *Sisyphus* fragment (above) and to a lesser extent in Democritus.

Thucydides' emphasis on the negative ἀνομία, lawlessness, creates a picture of the new developments that is a mirror image of the social compact suggested by some sophists, especially Protagoras. He may indeed elevate this negative *anomia* to a far greater height than the main sophists (so far as we can see), and it is interesting, for what it is worth, that *anomia* as an abstract noun in its own right occurs in Diels-Kranz only in the *Sisyphus* fragment, and the *Anonymus Iamblichus*.⁶⁶ Herodotus' interest in the νόμοι of different peoples, and his affirmation of the centrality of *nomos* in human society (e.g., 3.38), are breezily cheerful by comparison to Thucydides' dark emphasis on the reverse, on social breakdown. In any case, while the sophists dealt in abstract theories, Thucydides went far beyond, applying the insights to analyzing and describing the chilling manifestation of the breakdown of *eunomia* in contemporary Athens.

⁶⁵ Guthrie (1962–1981) 2.478, citing Sextus, *Math.* 9.24 (= 68 A 75 DK) and 9.19 (= 68 B 166 DK).

⁶⁶ It also occurs in Hdt. 1.96–97 three times: it is interesting that this is his section on Deioeces, the Mede whose wise judgments became so indispensable that he was made king.

Such an analysis must have been informed or influenced on some level by current intellectual discussions of the importance or role of νόμος in society, the relative value of φύσις, theories of the origins of society. But it remains entirely Thucydidean in conception. Its very separateness gives it, like the passage on the Corcyrean *stasis*, a status which is almost that of a set piece, a virtuoso piece—whose elements are not in fact very visible in the succeeding detailed narrative of events. The fact that the description of the Plague ends emphatically with a description of its religious, mental, and social effects, with the breakdown of society, only underlines how very distinct from the medical writers Thucydides really was. He could use their methods and language, but for his own purposes.

CONTRACT AND DESIGN: THUCYDIDES' WRITING

Egbert J. Bakker

Thucydides has written *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians*. We acknowledge that achievement, not only for its intellectual vigor and its insight in history and human nature, but also for the advance it represents in the development of writing as a medium in its own right. With Thucydides, Greek writing has moved beyond the mere transcription of words spoken. Thucydides, we observe, is a real writer, who addresses directly, perhaps for the first time in history, a reading audience. *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is a “readerly” text, a discourse that is meant for direct ingestion from the written page, without the mediation of a reading voice. In this regard there is a natural contrast between Thucydides and Herodotus’ “hearerly” *History*, a work that is meant to be heard in performance, displaying many features that are related to the presence of a voice.¹ The contrast is, from Thucydides’ own standpoint, not only a matter of medium but also of the durability of the message. Thucydides’ writing enables him to address a readership beyond his audience of the moment: the κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ wins out over an ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν. Writing outperforms speech.

But such a comparison between Thucydides and Herodotus does not mean that Thucydides’ writing is self-evident or unproblematic. Indeed, the work’s very insistence on its own writtleness should caution us against taking things too much for granted. The question that needs to be addressed is how an Athenian at the end of the fifth century BCE would have conceived of texts that were not meant to be a script for performance or a written version of a public speech.

Let us begin with exploring the way in which Thucydides presents his work in relation to writing. The work’s opening sentence

¹ On Herodotus vs. Thucydides as regards “writtleness”, see Havelock (1963) 53–54 n. 8; cf. Gentili-Cerri (1983) 8–11 (both focusing on the phrase κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ, on which see more below). Some scholars do not exclude oral presentations of Thucydides’ work in private settings, e.g., Hornblower (1987) 29. On Herodotus and “spokenness”, see Bakker (2002a) 11–12; (2006).

presents writing as a transitive link between the author's name and the War:

Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐπολέμησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους (1.1.1)

Thucydides of Athens has written the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, how they waged war against each other.

The tight connection between the name and the war as they are joined transitively in writing recurs throughout the work, at the end of each section dealing with a new year of the evolving conflict:

καὶ [τὸ] δεύτερον ἔτος ἐτελεύτα τῷ πολέμῳ τῷδε ὃν Θουκυδίδης ξυνέγραψε (2.70.4)

And the second year ended for this present war which Thucydides has written.²

Furthermore, the identification of the Athenian *stratēgos* at Amphipolis as the writer of the present text yields a similar formula:

Θουκυδίδην τὸν Ὀλόρου, ὃς τάδε ξυνέγραψεν (4.104.4)

Thucydides son of Oloros, who has written these words.

It appears, then, that the central term used for the writing of *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the compound verb *ξυνγράφειν*. The present chapter will examine this verb's syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in search of an understanding of Thucydides' writing in the terms of his own time.

That time knows of *συγγραφαί*, written compositions, treatises on a given subject. Thucydides himself mentions (1.97.2) the "Attic *ξυγγραφή*" of Hellanikos, and we meet the term in philosophical and sophistic contexts as well.³ We do not have to look into the semantics of the verbal idea *ξυγγραφ-* to note that Thucydides' syntax of the verb *συγγράφειν* differs from the use connected with such treatises. Authors of treatises typically write "about" or "on" their subject. For example, at the beginning of his treatise *On Horsemanship* (Περὶ ἵππικῆς), Xenophon mentions a certain Simon, who "has written [a treatise] about horse-

² The other year-endings carrying Thucydides' signature: 2.103.2 (3rd); 3.25.2 (4th); 3.88.4 (5th); 3.116.3 (6th); 4.51.1 (7th); 4.135.2 (9th); 6.7.4 (16th); 6.93.4 (17th); 7.18.4 (18th); 8.6.5 (19th); 8.60.3 (20th); see also Luschkat (1970) 1109–10.

³ Heraclit. B 129 DK (the *συγγραφαί* of Pythagoras), Hippas B 6 DK.

manship” (συνέγραψε . . . περὶ ἵπικῆς), and the author of the Hippocratic treatise *On Diet* (Περὶ διαίτης) criticizes “all those who have written before [him] on human diet” (τῶν προτέρων ξυγγραψάντων περὶ διαίτης ἀνθρωπίνης).⁴

But sometimes the relation between the act of συγγράφειν and its subject matter is more direct than a mere “about”. In Plato’s *Gorgias* we hear about the Sicilian master cook Mithaikos, who has written not *about* cookery: he is the one who “has written cookery” (ὁ τὴν ὀψοποιίαν συγγεγραφώς).⁵ Thucydides construes the verb in the same way. Neither in the first sentence nor in the recurrent year-end formula do we find prepositional phrases specifying a treatise’s subject matter: grammatically, the War is the verb’s direct object. Thucydides does not write a treatise *about* the Peloponnesian War; he writes the war. The War is his work. This means that “The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians” can be taken as the work’s title,⁶ but, more importantly, it also means that the war is more than mere subject matter to which the text “refers”. The war as Thucydides’ work presents it, perhaps its very existence, is bound up with its very writing. The verb συγγράφειν, as we shall see, can provide insight in the relations between work and war as they are fused in writing.

An attempt in this direction has been made by Nicole Loraux in a suggestive article dealing with Thucydides’ opening sentence and the chapters on his method (1.21–22). Loraux argues that the accomplishment of the first sentence is a double one that comes close to being a paradox: the writer instates himself as the subject of the transitive verb for writing, as the agent who is responsible for the finished product in front of the reader. And subsequently the subject effaces himself, neutralizing the act of writing, and the historian’s research, into the verb’s direct object, which is the war itself. The syntax of the sentence is one of pure transitivity.⁷

Paradoxically, Loraux argues, the writer’s absence constitutes his very authority. How could any reader possibly question the facts, indeed the actions, of the war themselves? The writer disappears,

⁴ X. *Eq.* 1; Hp. *Vict.* 1.1; 1.2; cf. Hp. *Acut.* 1.

⁵ Pl. *Grg.* 518b6.

⁶ See Loraux (1986b) 149. Cf. the first line of the Hippocratic treatise *Acut.*, where the modifying participle καλεομένης is used to disambiguate the reference: οἱ συγγράψαντες τὰς Κνιδίας καλεομένης γνώμας “the work with the title *Cnidian Sentences*”.

⁷ Loraux (1986b) 139–40; 142–43; 149.

his writing, his research, and his source criticism disappears; all that remains are the *erga* of the war, who find their unmediated representation in the writer's *ergon*.⁸ No selection has been made, nothing has been added, no further research is necessary: access to the totality of the war is immediate and unlimited. Thucydides' text as Loraux sees it is what Roland Barthes would call "writing degree zero": it offers itself as a "natural", representational sign that effaces itself in its pretension to be a direct substitute for reality.

No poststructuralist critical skills are necessary here to see that such total identification of the work with the reality of the war is problematic in terms of semantics and referentiality. Most modern readers of Thucydides would agree that not only writing but also language itself is, inevitably, a mediating factor. Language cannot hide its constructed nature. Thucydides' predecessor Herodotus may be closer to the world of epic and the mentality of performance, but he is fully aware of *logos* as the medium of his research and of its presentation. For Herodotus, *logos* is "difference": it represents conflicting, differing, accounts of reality no less than reality itself, and this is manifest in Herodotus' narrative.⁹ Thucydides mentions conflicts between eyewitness accounts (1.22.3), but that remark merely serves as basis for asserting that the task of arriving at the version we are offered was "difficult".

Is Thucydides, in spite of the evident advances in the written medium he represents, a less critical historian than Herodotus? Or is it Loraux's analysis that has pushed Thucydides in this way? Is it fair to judge Thucydides at all by the standards of the source criticism of modern historiography? Does he really intend to present us the War itself, the "War in person"?¹⁰ The answer hinges upon Thucydides' own notion of writing, *ξυγγράφειν* (or rather *ξυγγράψαι*). In what follows I will first explore Loraux's idea of the author's self-inscription and subsequent self-effacement by bringing in the writing of self-commemorative inscriptions. Thereafter I shall address the question of the reader who is confronted with a war that is turned into a written monument: did Thucydides really want to present to

⁸ On Thucydides' notion of *ἔργον* (as opposed to Herodotus'), see Immerwahr (1960) 276–77; 286.

⁹ See Bakker (2002a) 16–19.

¹⁰ Loraux (1986b) 144; 161.

his temporally distant readers “the war itself”? Finally, we will return to the central notion of writing: the understanding of Thucydidean *ξυγγράφειν* that suggests itself in the course of the preceding argument appears to be supported by a body of evidence that so far has not been taken into consideration.

The Presence of Writing: The Text as Monument

Pure transitivity, the complete transferal of energy from a subject to an object: a subject presents himself only to disappear into the presence of the resulting object. Loraux’s vision, at least this part of it, is confirmed in a number of features of Thucydides’ discourse that in their turn point the way to further vistas. In a contribution building on Loraux’s argument, Lowell Edmunds draws attention to what he calls the “*nunc* of the text” or the “*hic* of the writer”: “The act of writing is brought into the present, and the writing is thus present to the reader”.¹¹ Thucydides, according to Edmunds, has two ways to refer to himself as a writing subject: he can refer to himself in the third grammatical person and with past tenses as someone who wrote his *συγγραφή* in the past, or he appears in the first grammatical person, with primary grammatical tenses, as a writer who is present “to the reader at any given time”.¹² It is the second type of self-reference, Edmunds argues, that achieves Loraux’s double movement of authoritative self-creation and subsequent disappearance. What remains is the writing and its presence, which is also responsible for the complete assimilation of the work to the war.

An important linguistic reflex of this presence is the deictic value with which the war is endowed. Edmunds draws attention to the proximal deictic pronoun *ὅδε* that modifies the reference to “war” in Th. 1.118 and in fact throughout the work.¹³ The pronoun cannot have the internal, “cataphoric” function of pointing to what is to follow in the discourse. Instead, the pronoun is discourse-external, and points to the war as a whole, as Thucydides has written it, and

¹¹ Resp. Edmunds (1993) 837; 838; 840.

¹² Edmunds (1993) 834–35; 837–38 (citation p. 838).

¹³ 1.118.1 (τοῦδε τοῦ πολέμου); 1.118.2 (τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦδε τοῦ πολέμου); 1.118.2 (ἀρξαμένοις τόνδε τὸν πόλεμον); cf. 1.8.1; 1.13.3; 1.18.1; 1.18.3; 1.19; 1.23.3; 1.24.5; 1.97.1 (μεταξὺ τοῦδε τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τοῦ Μηδικοῦ); 5.20.1, 3.

so to the work itself.¹⁴ The war is marked for “hereness” and is as present as an object placed before the reader’s eyes.

Another striking instance of this deictic situation, also signaled by Edmunds, occurs in the first sentence of Book II, the start of the war proper:

ἄρχεται δὲ ὁ πόλεμος ἐνθὲνδε ἤδη Ἀθηναίων καὶ Πελοποννησίων (. . .)
γέγραπται δὲ ἐξῆς ὡς ἕκαστα ἐγένετο κατὰ θέρος καὶ χειμῶνα (2.1)

Here, at this moment, begins the war of the Athenians and Peloponnesians (. . .); <here/now> stands written chronologically how each of its events came to pass in summer and in winter.

The start of the war is defined as a point in space as well as a point in time that coincides with the reader’s here and now. The deictic space adverb ἐνθὲνδε shares with the pronoun ὅδε the suffix -δε for proximal deixis; an object and the start of a movement are both located in space: here. Present tense (ἄρχεται) and the primary ending on the middle perfect (γέγραπται) contribute to the sense of *nunc* that follows from the spatial *hic*.

But the deictic markers of proximity occur in the other set of Edmunds’ Thucydidean self-references as well, the occasions at which Thucydides seemingly locates himself and his writing in the past. The obvious example is the recurrent year-end formula announced in the extract above and already cited as an example of Thucydides’ self-reference as a writing subject:

καὶ ὁ χειμὼν ἐτελεύτα οὗτος, καὶ εἰκοστὸν ἔτος τῷ πολέμῳ ἐτελεύτα τῷδε
ὄν Θουκυδίδης ξυνέγραπεν (8.60.3)

And that winter ended, and the twentieth year ended of this war here which Thucydides has written.

The verb is aorist (ξυνέγραπεν), and so past according to our grammars, whereas the deixis is again the proximity of the present (πολέμῳ . . . τῷδε). Has Thucydides written a sentence that contradicts itself in referential opacity? Hardly so. It is true that the aorist situates the act of writing, even its completion, in the past; it also denotes, as Loraux points out, that the war has been written in its totality.¹⁵ But

¹⁴ In this regard, Thucydides’ war is not different from Herodotus’ ἀπόδεξις, which is equally modified with ἤδε; see Bakker (2002a) 29–31.

¹⁵ Loraux (1986b) 141. But she attributes this sense more to the preverb συν- (on which more later) than to the aspectual value of the aorist.

that is not all it does. The aorist also places the *result* of that completed act, the written text, in the present. A quick look at any Greek discourse reveals that aorists are typically used when a past action warrants a statement in the present. The aorist, and not the imperfect, readily combines with the temporal adverb νῦν to turn a past act or event into a present statement.¹⁶ The aorist, in short, denotes a past that intrudes as speech into the present.¹⁷

The aorist can also denote a past action that intrudes into the present as a material object: votive, funeral, or commemorative monuments will typically, when provided with an inscription, attribute their existence to an act (“has made”, “has put up”) that has become an aorist verb. Thucydides himself cites such an inscription in his excursus on the Athenian tyrannicides:

μνήμα τόδ' ἦς ἀρχῆς Πεισίστρατος Ἰππίου υἱὸς
 θῆκεν Ἀπόλλωνος Πυθίου ἐν τεμένει (Th. 6.54.7; cf. *IG* I³ 761)

This here <is> the memorial of his archonship <which> Pisistratus son of Hippias has set up in the precinct of Pythian Apollo.

The verb θῆκεν does not merely denote a “completed action”. It denotes presence of the past in the present. There is complete transitivity: an agent has performed an action and has subsequently disappeared in the action’s concrete result. The monument owes its existence to the memorable action of a dedicator, but can signify only in the latter’s absence. The monument’s presence is what prompts the inscribed deictic speech act, which, according to Jesper Svenbro’s narratology of archaic and early classical private inscriptions, is performed through the voice of the reader.¹⁸

The syntax and pragmatics, indeed deictics, of Pisistratus’ (Jr.) inscribed monument, as of so many others, are similar to the way in which Thucydides inscribes himself and his writing in the work. The name, the constitutive act, and the proximity of its product (signaled with the proximal deictic and the aorist verb) are all features shared between Thucydides’ work and the monuments found on the Acropolis and throughout the Greek world. Just as the inscription’s proximal τόδε (μνήμα/σῆμα) refers to itself no less than to the

¹⁶ Within Thucydides, e.g., 1.69.2 (νῦν γε ξυνήλθομεν); 1.120.1 (νῦν ξυνήγαγον).

¹⁷ See Bakker (1997) 19–27; (2005) 154–176.

¹⁸ Svenbro (1993) 44–63.

monument (there is no difference), so Thucydides' proximal deictics confound the work and the war. *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is the War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians. Thucydides' first sentence is an inscription to the war turned into a monument. It presents the author's name and fame as secured through readers' encounter with his work in the future.¹⁹

"All Those Who Will Want to Look": The Future Reader's Present

If the parallel with inscriptions is a constructive one, an important question now arises: how exactly did Thucydides think the encounter between his work and the reader would take place? The actual reading of inscriptions in the archaic and classical age is a problematic thing, and we may wonder whether the *kleos* of the monument's dedicator is not more a matter of the latter's intention in erecting the monument and inscribing his name, based on a certainty of the inscription's enduring presence, than of an actual reading in the future. Inscriptions are less durable than their creators sometimes think, and they are hard to read when not printed in the *IG* pages. Nor is the ancient passer-by as dedicated a reader as today's professional epigraphists.

Pisistratus' inscription is a case in point. Its letters are already faded for its reader Thucydides (ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι, 6.54.7), and the citation takes place for reasons other than the simple propagation of the dedicator's *kleos*. Thucydides cites the inscription to prove a point: Hippias (the dedicator's father) and not Hipparchus was tyrant of Athens: the tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton did not kill the tyrant but his brother. The Athenians were wrong in thinking that Hipparchus was Pisistratus' eldest son. Thucydides, in order to prove this point, had to go out of his way to look at the evidence and read inscriptions that apparently no one read anymore.²⁰

¹⁹ Cf. Svenbro (1993) 150, stressing (n. 10) the connection between μνήμα and κτήμα (ἐξ αἰεί). See also Moles (1999) section 4, who dismisses the link between Thucydides' work and funerary (or dedicatory) monuments, having a different sort of inscription in mind—see further below.

²⁰ See also, at 6.55.1, the stele of the injustice of the tyrants. Another inscription cited by Thucydides, Pausanias' private inscription on the tripod dedicated from the spoils of the Battle of Plataea (1.132.2), does not even exist at the moment of writing, since the Spartans erased it. On Thucydides' use of inscriptions, see Hornblower (1987) 88–90; Higbie (1999) 59–62. The reading of inscriptions in antiquity is discussed in Bing (2002).

The excursus on the tyrannicides serves to highlight Thucydides' superior insight and effort in the exploration of the past. The issue is foreshadowed at the beginning of the section on method (1.20.2), when Thucydides mentions it as an example of the uncritical and unreflective way in which people accept dubious or outright erroneous stories even about their own recent epicchoric past. The search for truth requires effort and is not given to the many, who turn too easily to what is ready at hand, giving in to the pleasures of the moment.²¹ And this applies to the text's future readers no less than to the researcher himself.

The typical term in this respect is σκοπεῖν. This verb denotes a critical looking into matters that do not provide ready or obvious evidence. At the beginning of the *Archaeology*, Thucydides admits that detailed and precise knowledge about the past before his own time is impossible, but he does claim that on close and critical inspection of evidence as far back as he can see (ἐπὶ μακρότατον σκοποῦντί μοι, 1.1.3) neither the wars of the past nor any other aspect of history were of the magnitude of the conflict he has set out to write. When discussing the size of the Spartan army in the Battle of Mantinea (5.68.2), Thucydides says he cannot "write" (γράφαι) the actual number of soldiers, but provides a formula according to which one can make a reasonable estimate (ἐκ . . . τοιοῦδε λογισμοῦ ἔξεστί τῳ σκοπεῖν).²²

The act of σκοπεῖν can also be a looking through what *appears* to be evidence, but is in reality only a misleading surface. Thus observers in the future would do well to look (σκοπεῖν, 1.10.3) into the actual power (δυνάμεις) of cities and states, rather than into whatever physical remains (ᾧψεις) would be left of them, or they could be seriously misled: looking at the *polis* of Sparta (no more than a collection of villages without impressive temples or monuments), one would be skeptical as to the real power it once actually wielded, whereas looking at Athens, one could be easily misled into thinking that the city's power was twice as great as it actually was.²³

²¹ See also Edmunds (1993) 847–48.

²² See the similar case of the number of Greeks before Troy (1.10.4–5), a "method" of reasoning that, as Jeffrey Rusten [pers. comm.] points out, ironically yields a result that is not in Thucydides' interest in arguing for the unprecedented magnitude of "his" war: the Achaean force at Troy would outnumber any force assembled in the Peloponnesian War. Rusten also proposes to contrast σκοπεῖν with εὐρεῖν, the verb for hard, positive research results.

²³ On this passage, see also Parry (1981) 100f.; Kallet (2001) 38f.; 56–58.

Thucydides' text leaves little doubt about it: the only way to acquire real knowledge about the actual δυνάμεις of cities of the past, in particular Athens and Sparta, is Thucydides' text itself, which constitutes "the events themselves" of the war. Thucydides' work, in fact, presents itself as the object of its future readers' σκοπεῖν. The text urges the reader to calculate the war's chronology (σκοπεῖτω δέ τις, 5.20.2) according to the temporal grid of winters and summers as it stands written (ὥσπερ γέγραπται, 5.20.3), rather than on the basis of the confusing array of magistrates' names in the various *poleis* involved. Whoever wants to look will find in Thucydides' work a superior order.

Searching and discriminating readers will also find a war that is not past, but present, since they are face to face with αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα, "the events themselves":

καὶ ὁ πόλεμος οὗτος, καίπερ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν ᾧ μὲν ἂν πολεμῶσιν τὸν παρόντα αἰεὶ μέγιστον κρινόντων, παυσασμένων δὲ τὰ ἀρχαῖα μᾶλλον θαυμαζόντων, ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων σκοποῦσι δηλώσει ὅμως μείζων γεγενημένος αὐτῶν (1.21.2).

Even though people will always consider that war the greatest in which they happen to be fighting at any given moment (whereas they will start admiring ancient wars again once the present one is over), still, this war in question will make manifest to them, if they are looking from the events themselves, that it has been the greatest of them all.

For once, the deictic element modifying πόλεμος is not the proximal and self-referential ὅδε but the more distal and dialogic οὗτος, which typically situates the person or thing pointed at close to the speaker's addressee.²⁴ But then the perspective has shifted in the important methodological chapters 1.21 and 1.22: even though Thucydides' writing voice remains in place, the deictic orientation is now temporarily projected onto the reader. Πόλεμος οὗτος, "that war that you are writing": this is not the egocentric self-reference of a commemorative inscription, but a moment of dialogue between Thucydides and his readership in the future. The war of the present will be the war of the future as Thucydides and his readers are linked in joint σκοπεῖν.

The war, we are now in a position to see, is different from being a written double of the events of the past, as it is in Loraux's ade-

²⁴ On the dialogic properties of οὗτος see Bakker (1999).

quation of writing with reality. The war is a hermeneutic template that allows readers to interpret their own present and recognize in it the same fundamental human behaviors that Thucydides captured in his rendition of the Peloponnesian War.²⁵ In this regard we note that the phrase αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων at 1.21.2 (in the extract above) allows of a reading that differs from the one that stresses unmediated access to the reality of the war. Thucydides' readers will be able to make sense of their own time on the basis of Thucydides' presenting the ἔργα of the war *in their essential identity*: not so much the events themselves as the events *in themselves*, the events reduced to their essence. Thucydides allows us, in almost Platonic language, to see (σκοπεῖν) through the surface of the events of our own time on the basis of the essence of the events of Thucydides' war.²⁶

Thucydides' war and its constitutive events becomes the model for the understanding of future events. The Plague that struck Athens in the second year of the war is a prime example. The account of the epidemic is set forth in such a way as to enable future observers, looking carefully (σκοπῶν, 2.48.3) into Thucydides' account, to recognize the symptoms of the epidemic and not be caught unawares should it strike again in their own time.²⁷ The general principle is memorably announced in Chapter 1.22:

ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αὖθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίων ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἀρκούντως ἔξει (1.22.4)

All those who will want to look into the evidence of past events that at some point, with the constancy of human nature, are bound to recur with the same or very similar qualities—it will be sufficient for me if this work is useful in the judgment of these people.

The reader's past and Thucydides' present, the reader's present and Thucydides' future are all linked by human nature (κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον)

²⁵ In the question of the “usefulness” of Thucydides' *History*, the opposition between “theoretical/scientific” (e.g., Gomme, *HCT* 1.149) and “practical/political” seems to me artificial and anachronistic, insofar as Thucydides' work intends to be a monument of *politikē technē*. See also the discussion in Nicolai (1995) 13–16.

²⁶ Hornblower (1987) 34–44, in drawing attention to Thucydides' “selectivity”, comes close to this conception when he speaks of selective “instances” of certain types of events, citing Finley's term “general ideas” (p. 42).

²⁷ See also Erbse (1989) 138 (“der jeweilige Leser in seiner Gegenwart”). Thucydides strikingly dismisses the search for “causes”, αἰτίαι, as irrelevant. On αἰτίη and ἱστορίη in Herodotus, see Bakker (2002a) 13–14.

and the reader's conscious choice to look into Thucydides' fundamental account of it. The statement of the work's axiomatic status follows upon words that have puzzled many readers: Thucydides openly admits not to represent the actual words that were spoken as speeches during the crucial decision-making moments of the war. It was impossible, Thucydides writes (1.22.1), to attain full detail and exactness (term used: ἀκρίβεια)²⁸ in the reporting of things said (τῶν λεχθέντων), whether he himself was present at the event or not. Therefore, the speeches will be presented according to the following principle:

ὥς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἔμοι ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ' εἰπεῖν, ἐχομένῳ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται (1.22.1)

The way in which each side's speakers said what was in my opinion particularly called for in their respective situations (while I keep as close as possible to the overall sense of what was actually said), that is how their speeches have been represented.

The decision to write what was “called for” (τὰ δέοντα) in the particular circumstances has been puzzling to modern historians, who often see in the sentence an unresolved tension, or even an outright contradiction between “objectivity” and “subjectivity”.²⁹ However, the sentence states an essential element of Thucydides' project, whether or not that compromises him as a historian in *our* view. Only when the speaker's real motives and assumptions are laid bare can *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* serve the paradigmatic function its creator envisages. The Athenians who say to the Melians (5.89) that they will not justify their empire with an appeal to their victory over Xerxes are in reality very likely to have said precisely that. But Thucydides, having no way of knowing what was really said at Melos, availed himself of the occasion to cut through propaganda and ideology and impart to posterity the essence of empire and *Realpolitik*.³⁰ The actual words spoken, if available at all to Thucydides, might have been just as misleading to the future reader as the actual ruins of the city of Athens.

²⁸ On this term, see Crane (1996) 50–65.

²⁹ E.g., Hornblower (1987) 45 (“two hearts beat in Thucydides' breast”); Rusten (1989) 7–16; Rood (1998a) 46–48.

³⁰ See also Raaflaub (2002b) 152; Kallet-Marx (1993) 75–76 n. 18. For the opposing view, in which Thucydides, here and elsewhere, cannot have strayed far from the “truth”, see, e.g., Adcock (1963) 29.

The monument that carries Thucydides' name, then, does not proclaim the *kleos* of that name in self-sufficient isolation, as do the dedicatory or funeral inscriptions. The monument he has created is timelessly relevant and serves a vital purpose in each new reader's particular present (this is the force of αἰεὶ in κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ). Thucydides' aim is to go beyond mere exact reporting (ἀκρίβεια); *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* is construed in such a way as to allow readers to better understand their own time, with its empires and its wars. Thucydides, in writing, assumes the presence in any time of people who will want to look, who will want to go out of their way to read Thucydides' recalcitrant prose, just as Thucydides has gone out of his way to read the faded letters of Pisistratus' inscription.

"All those who will want to look" (ὅσοι βουλήσονται . . . σκοπεῖν, 1.22.4), in fact, is a phrase that by itself evokes the discourse of inscriptions and of monumental writing. As John Moles has pointed out,³¹ the phrase recalls a recurrent formula found in Athenian public inscriptions: τῷ βουλομένῳ σκοπεῖν, marking the decree of the *demos* as a public record that offers itself to the scrutiny of the inquisitive citizen.³² No one has to read the inscription's text, but those who have an interest in tracing the city's decisions and policies will always have the chance to do so. Thucydides' privately inscribed monument borrows the language of the public monuments of the state, in reaching out to a select, searching audience that is modeled on the ideally reflective citizen of the democratic *polis*.³³

One sentence is left in Thucydides' most famous chapter. The programmatic remarks about usefulness in the future are followed by the work's best-known self-presentation:

κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρήμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται
(1.22.4)

My work is not a success to be savored in an immediate present; rather, it holds together as property for each new generation.

³¹ Moles (1999) sections 2 and 6–7.

³² See Thomas (1989) 60–61 with n. 151. Examples include *IG* I³ 60, fr. c, 31; 133, 11; 140, 7; 1453, G, 16; 1453, B/G 12,2; *IG* II/III 463.30 (τῷ βουλομένῳ . . . εἰδέναι καὶ ἐξετάζειν—see also the next section); 487, 8; cf. Pl. *Plt.* 299c8–9.

³³ Lisa Kallet points out to me that there may be irony intended: a democratic formula is used as declaration of intent of a work that shows precisely the failure of democracy.

Most scholarly energy has been spent on the way in which these words might reflect Thucydides' stance with regard to his predecessors, particularly Herodotus, with κτῆμα representing the durability of writing and ἀγώνισμα the fleetingness of oral presentation.³⁴ But let us here concentrate on what Thucydides says about himself. Moles sees a second allusion here: κτῆμα (ἐς αἰεί) . . . ξύκειται (1.22.4) recalls, in his view, the Homeric formula κτήματα κεῖται as it refers to ancestral wealth deposited in private space.³⁵ For Moles, Thucydides' work presents itself here as a prized possession "set down for always" in transcending its own time frame.³⁶ It is true that κτῆμα conveys the idea of private possession, durable monument, even of personal achievement.³⁷ But the modifier ἐς αἰεί suggests a more dynamic permanency as well. The work is presented as an asset for each new generation of readers, thus conveying the idea of an eternal process no less than the idea of an eternal materiality: Thucydides' bond with his readership is renewed across generations.³⁸ This dynamic conception is confirmed in ξύκειται, for which the idea of a "deposit" (as in the Homeric κεῖται) is surely too passive. Moreover, it ignores the preverb ξυν-, the element that ξύκειται has in common with

³⁴ E.g., Havelock (1963) 54 n. 8; Gentili-Cerri (1983) 8–11; Lendle (1990). Nagy (1990) 169 sees in κτῆμα a symbol of the "private possession of knowledge" as opposed to "the public display or performance of such knowledge" (as negatively expressed in ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρήμα ἀκούειν). Thomas (2000) 267 proposes to see in ἀγώνισμα a reference not only to Herodotus, but also to the entire debating and performance culture of his time. See also Bakker (2002a) 31–32, who proposes to see in ἀγώνισμα the implicit characterization of Herodotus' work as a *popular* success, as opposed to Thucydides' own timeless value.

³⁵ Moles (1999) sections 3–5; cf. *Il.* 9.382; *Od.* 4.127. Both times the phrase refers to Egyptian Thebes. Moles refers to Th. 1.129.3, an allegedly verbatim rendition of a letter of the Persian king Xerxes thanking the Spartan general Pausanias: κείσεται σοι εὐεργεσία ἐν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ οἴκῳ ἐς αἰεὶ ἀνάγραπτος. See also Crane (1996) 13, who sees in the phrases an instance of the "language of financial accounts" as it is made durable by writing.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, section 3.

³⁷ Especially compelling is Moles' idea of κτῆμα as a prize "won in war or in any agonistic context": in this way Thucydides' work wins "the prize of everlasting usefulness" and so "absorbs and transcends" the prize for instant and ephemeral success that is evoked by ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρήμα ἀκούειν.

³⁸ See also περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων at 1.22.1, which picks up τὸν παρόντα αἰεὶ μέγιστον (1.21.2): the particulars of specific situations are different each time, but the discriminating eye can see through them and grasp the common denominator. The use of αἰεὶ recalls the Athenian inscriptional formula τὴν βουλὴν τὴν αἰεὶ βουλευούσαν: individuals may change, but the institution remains the same. See further Bakker (2002b) 19.

the work's prime self-reference ξυν-έγραψε. In the next section we will see that this element not only ties the work even more to inscriptional discourse and its motivation, but it also strengthens the bond with the reader that is built into the architecture of Thucydides' work.

The Semantics of ξυγγράφειν

It would be circular reasoning to assign to ξυγγράφειν in Thucydides such senses as "history-writing" or "prose composition", since those senses came to prominence only as a result of the reception of Thucydides' work in the formation of a Greek tradition of writing prose. Instead, we need to know exactly what the preverb ξυν- contributes to the verbal idea γραφ-, and more generally, what writing meant to an Athenian of Thucydides' time when he was not preparing, as the tragedians, for instance, a script for performance.

For Loraux, ξυν- means the totality of the written war, the linguistic expression of the adequation of *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians* with the War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians.³⁹ Thucydides has literally "written together" the war and brought together a wide array of heterogeneous events, dispersed in time and in space, into one single monumental text. The "togetherness" expressed by ξυν-, we might say, is effected on the side of the object, as in ξυν-άγω "drive together" or συλ-λέγω "col-lect".⁴⁰ By contrast, Edmunds proposes that ξυν- "does not refer to putting things together in writing, to a process of composition, but is either confective ('to achieve the writing of') or intensive ('to write down')". For Edmunds the fundamental sense of ξυγγράφειν is "to record", with the underlying idea that whatever is recorded preexists the act of writing.⁴¹ Both Loraux and Edmunds see in Herodotus's use of συγγράφειν the principal source on which Thucydides draws.

In light of the preceding discussion of Thucydides' future intent, however, we may wonder whether a past-oriented "has recorded" is

³⁹ Loraux (1986b) 145; see also Canfora (1972) 108–10, whom she follows.

⁴⁰ Contrast subject-related togetherness, the idea of doing something together, as in συν-δουλεύω, συν-διακινδυνεύω, συμ-ποιέω, etc. See further n. 43 below.

⁴¹ Edmunds (1993) 836; see also Hornblower (1987) 8 n. 2 with references to accounts of ξυγγράφειν as a "collecting", a "compiling".

the right understanding of ξυνέγραψε. And it seems gratuitous to assume the lexical influence of Herodotus where Thucydides pointedly avoids the far more important Herodotean terms ἱστορία or ἀπόδειξις to refer to his own work.⁴² It appears, in fact, that contemporary Athenian usage of ξυγγράφειν provides a context for a different understanding of Thucydides' self-presentation in writing. The historian himself offers some useful starting points.

First there is the language of political treaties. An example occurs at 5.41.3, when the Spartans "agreed with" (ξυνεχώρησαν) the Argives' demands and "drew the agreement up in writing" (ξυνεγράψαντο).⁴³ There is of course the idea of recording the result of the deliberations, a transcoding of the agreement from oral to written. But it remains to be seen whether that is what ξυνεγράψαντο expresses. The recording proper is only a preliminary step toward a document that is oriented to the future. The sequence "agreement-written articulation" can, or should, be followed by a public presentation, a deixis, to the communities involved. This is the case in the Argive-Spartan treaty just mentioned, which could reach its fulfillment (τέλος) only after a "presentation to the people of Argos" (δείξει τῷ πλήθει). After oath-taking on both sides, the treaty, now cemented, can be referred to as τὰ ξυγκείμενα, as happens frequently in Thucydides: the treaty, enacted and ratified, is "holding together" as a solid structure.⁴⁴

A second sphere with which Thucydides shares the terms of his self-presentation is legislation. At 8.67.1, he writes that Peisander's party proposed to the *demos* to elect ten "writing commissioners with full powers" (ξυγγραφέας αὐτοκράτορας), who were to write a proposal (ξυγγράψαντας γνώμην) as to how the city could be governed best. Thucydides is using the language of official decrees and may well be paraphrasing an actual inscription.⁴⁵ Very similar, and even

⁴² The only exception is remarkable, however. At 1.97.2, Thucydides uses ἀπόδειξιν for his own achievement in pointed opposition to the ξυγγραφῇ of his rival Hellanikos. ἱστορία does not occur in Thucydides.

⁴³ Note that the verb is in the middle voice, as opposed to the uses discussed below and Thucydides' own usage. The act of ξυγγραφή is performed by two parties, who literally form two subjects writing together: one implicates oneself in the writing of the other party (see n. 40 above). For other instances of ξυγγραφή as the written articulation of a political treaty, see 5.35.2.

⁴⁴ E.g., 3.70.2; 4.68.5; 5.25.2; 5.47.8.

⁴⁵ E.g., *IG* I³ 78a.3 (422 BCE?): τάδε οἱ χσυγγραφες χσυνέ[γρ]αψαν; cf. *IG* I³ 21.3.

closer to the language of the Assembly's resolutions set in stone "for whoever wants to look" is Xenophon's wording of the beginning of the regime of the Thirty:

ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ τριάκοντα ἄνδρας ἐλέσθαι, οἱ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους συγγράψουσιν, καθ' οὓς πολιτεύουσιν (X. *HG* 2.3.2)

There was a resolution in the Assembly that thirty men be elected, who were to write the ancestral laws, according to which the city was to be governed.

The Thirty clearly are not entrusted with making new laws, but neither are they merely recording existing, "ancestral" laws. If they were, it is hard to see why their writing was necessary at all (unless the suggestion is that the predemocratic legislation was not recoverable anymore). Rather, the idea seems to be that they were asked to reformulate and rearrange the city's pre-democratic laws as the basis for a new constitution. The resulting "text", which we should call a *συγγραφή*,⁴⁶ records previous behavior, but its real purpose is to shape and regulate subsequent behavior. The Thirty's original assignment was to provide a blueprint, a template for future governance. Just as in the case of treaties, the text (*συγγραφή*) of the original proposal has to be "shown" in order to be valid and binding. Neither stage was ever effected by the Thirty, who, Xenophon writes (2.3.11), were always postponing "writing and delivering" (ἀεὶ ἔμελλον συγγράφειν τε καὶ ἀποδεικνύναι) the new constitution.

Thucydides shares the central term of his self-presentation with the language of treaties and constitutions, two activities that equally involve Herodotus' central term *ἀπόδεξις* to denote the final stage of the process. "Recording" is quite inappropriate for the kind of writing and text concerned: the *συγγραφή* looks ahead to be put in practice and the process is not completed until that goal has been reached.

The referentiality of the technical manuals of the time, which were called *συγγραφαί*, shares in this kind of writing: their writer rearranges and systematizes previous practice in order to facilitate subsequent practice, and so writes the art's envisaged *ἔργον*. We saw already that Mithaikos' cookbook is a *συγγραφή*, and we may in this connection also think of the *Canon* of Thucydides' contemporary Polycleitus,

⁴⁶ Pl. *Plt.* 297–300 (e.g., 297d6, 300a1) has *σύγγραμμα* for this kind of document.

the text directed towards sculpture's ultimate ἔργον: the representation of the ideal human body. In measuring the proportions of man and looking beyond the surface of any particular person's physique, Polycleitus definitively wrote the human body.⁴⁷

Before we look at Thucydides in this perspective, there is a further body of evidence to be considered: the language of the public building projects of the city of Athens. Our evidence comes from the public inscriptions representing the decree pertaining to the monument's construction and its commission. It would seem that these documents have no function beyond the completion of the building (ἔργον) whose construction they announce, but occasionally the inscription claims to be of interest in itself, and to carry its information so that it is possible "for any interested Athenian to know and to investigate" (τῷ βουλομένῳ Ἀθηναίων εἰδέναι καὶ ἐξετάζειν, *IG* II/III.463.30): again, a select public is invited to inquire into the truth about the *erga* of the past.

The central terms are again συγγράφειν and συγγραφή. Both are used for the architect's writing as it specifies the details for the building and its construction.⁴⁸ The well-known decree commissioning the building of the Nike temple provides an example:

καὶ τὸ Hieròn θυρῶσα-
ι καθ' ὃ τι Καλλικράτες χσυγγράφωσ-
ει: (*IG* I³ 35.6–8)

and to furnish the sanctuary with doors, according to whatever Callicrates writes.⁴⁹

The sense of the verb here is just as teleological as when the Thirty were to write the law code of Athens or when a master writes his art. Instead of recording any preexisting reality, Callicrates writes the temple and so provides a necessary condition for the completion

⁴⁷ On Polycleitus' *Canon*, see Pollitt (1974) 14–22. Our principal source, Gal., *De Plac. Hipp. et Plat.* 5.3.16, speaks of σύγραμμα. The term may be simply technical for "treatise" in Galen's time, but we cannot discard classical usage. Cf. Plato's use of the term in *Politicus* (n. 46 above).

⁴⁸ See Bundgaard (1957) 97; Holloway (1969) 286–89; Pollitt (1974) 212–13.

⁴⁹ Cf. *IG* I³ 79.16 (λίθοις δὲ κατ- | [ακ]αλύφσαι τὰς διαρροὰς τῷ Πρε[τ] | ὁ καθότι ἂν χσυγγρ<ά>φσει Δεμομέλ- | [ε]ς ὁ ἀρχιτέκτον.); *IG* II/III 463.32 (τὰς συγγραφὰς) ἄς ἂν [εἰσ]ενέγκω[σι]ν οἱ ἀρχ[ι]τ[έ]κ[το]νε[ς]. The idea is not confined to Attica or to the 5th cent.: e.g. *IG* XII (Rhodes) 1.1.10–11 (καθ' ἃ κα ὁ ἀρχιτέκτων συγγρά[ι] | ψη[ι]); see further Higbie (2003) 55.

of the ἔργον. And those responsible for its achievement cannot but follow, with complete trust, the architect's specifications.

The architect's συγγραφή need not be purely a matter of artistic design; in detailing such aspects as workers' wages, time of delivery, or materials to be used, it often comes close to what is for us a contract, according to which (κατὰ τὰς συγγραφάς)⁵⁰ the work is to be carried out. The monument that has reached its completion (τέλος, a state that presupposes its being συγκείμενον "fitting together")⁵¹ must be "shown" to the appropriate officials for the delivery to be performed correctly:

ταῦ]-

τα δὲ ποιήσας ἅπαντα δόκιμα κατὰ τὴν συγγραφὴν ἀπο[δει]ξάτω τοῖς
ναοποιοῖς κ[αὶ] τ[ῶι ἀ]ρχιτ[έκτον]-
[ι] ὁ μισθωσάμενος τὸ ἔργ[ο]ν τέλος ἔχον (*IG* II/III.1678, face A16–18)

Having done all that to satisfaction according to the contract, the contractor shall show/deliver the work, when it has reached completion, to the temple-officials and the architect.

Just as the new constitution of Athens, or the treaty between Sparta and Argos, the building project typically begins its life as a συγγραφή and ends in the act of ἀπόδειξις.

Contract and Design

The lexicon of Liddell-Scott lists architects' writing as the sixth sense of συγγράφειν, separate from "draw up a contract" (sense III) and "draw up a form of motion" (IV). This is questionable both from the standpoint of lexical semantics and of cultural history. We have seen that a single central idea runs through a series of cultural fields (treaties, technical manuals, architecture, etc.). So instead of these fields constituting different "senses" of συγγράφειν, the verb, conversely, codes what the fields have in common in the way in which their processes are constituted, or set in motion, by writing. The writing of designs and contracts is what constitutes the domain of which "compose a writing" or "write in prose" (now given as the more central sense II) is the metaphorical extension.

⁵⁰ E.g., *IG* I³ 402.19; *IG* II/III.244.39; 463.108; 1168.11; 1668.95; 1670.23, 25.

⁵¹ E.g., *IG* II/III.1678, face A, 8. Herodotus (5.62.3) uses συγκείμενον in connection with temple construction in the sense of "contract", συγγραφή.

We have seen that the sense “write in prose” is already present in Thucydides’ time, or at least slightly later, in the phrase “write (a treatise) about” (συγγράφειν περί). Thucydides himself is closer to the source domain. His ξυνέγραψε draws on the language of architecture, treaties, and legislation, and so endows his work with important attributes of these fields. The idea of a historian as the designer or architect of a war may seem problematic to the modern scholar, but we may wonder whether any contemporary would have had a firm grasp of this “event” if Thucydides had not “written it together”, according to the architecture of summers and winters that is the prime locus of his signature. Thucydides constructed as *one* war what everyone thought was *two*, and his strong insistence on the scope of ‘this war’ shows that he considers his work the only way of access to a reality of which he has laid out the fundamental structure.

The link with other fields whose writing is called συγγράφειν in contemporary texts suggests that a one-to-one correspondence between work and war as Loraux proposes is not what Thucydides had in mind. This is not the War itself, the War in Person, but its model. The war is not a past reality that is recorded in total and exhaustive detail, but a reality “towards which” the work is written. That reality, as we saw, is the reader’s own reality, made understandable by Thucydides’ recipe for understanding. His συγγραφή can serve this purpose only when it distills the essential out of a bewildering array of things done and things said, not unlike Polycleitus’ *Canon* which went beyond the details and measurements of any single human body.

The συγγραφή aims at the essential, but for that very reason it is incomplete: someone will have to finish the ἔργον envisaged, build the temple, live by the law, or honor the treaty. In Thucydides’ case the completion of the work is the task of the reader. Thucydides’ work is a contract with future generations of readers, a cementing of trust, a συγγραφή turned into συγκείμενον. The readers, in addressing their own time through the prism of Thucydides’ war, occupy the position of the builders or engineers who are bound by the architect’s specifications as well as the contracted party that is required to live by the συγκείμενα, the treaty’s definitive structure. The final delivery, or ἀπόδειξις, is deferred, and it may not be too misleading to say that this task is left to the reader, whose desire to “look” will have Thucydides’ work as indispensable instrument. In placing the burden of achievement on the beginning of the process, on

συγγραφή, Thucydides does more than merely avoid the terminology of his predecessor. He enters the world of the reader.

If the act of συγγράφειν as it was performed in classical Athens can be seen as a metaphor for the modern understanding of reading as the completion of the written work, then Thucydides embodies that metaphor in modeling his work on the writing of his time. He has imparted to posterity not only a model for understanding the present on the basis of the past, but also the very notion of writing as an act that seeks complementation. Thucydides has written *The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians*, each time that the work is read anew.⁵²

⁵² I thank Lisa Kallet and Jeffrey Rusten for their remarks and suggestions.

THUCYDIDES AND THE INVENTION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Josiah Ober

It is commonly supposed that Thucydides was, first and foremost, a historian and that his claim to fame lies in his work as a historiographical innovator. According to this view, Thucydides took up the nascent prose genre of history from earlier writers, including Hellanicus and Herodotus, and transformed it into a rigorous and “scientific” discipline. Herodotus (1.1) had stated that the purpose of his *Histories* was the preservation of memory, “so that things done by men not be forgotten in time, and that great and remarkable deeds . . . not lose their glory.”¹ Like Herodotus, Thucydides was intensely aware of his own role, as a writer, in the cultural process of preserving memory of the past, and he followed Herodotus in presenting a sequential narrative of remarkable past events. The standard view of Thucydides as a historian has much to recommend it. He certainly regarded earlier Greek practitioners of self-conscious history-writing as rivals. Like the early red-figure vase painter Euthymides, who wrote on a signed masterpiece amphora “As never Euphronios,” by censuring Hellanicus by name for his inaccuracy in regard to dates (1.97) and Herodotus by implication for factual errors, Thucydides situated his work in a competitive relationship with that of earlier historians.² But the vase painters Euthymides and Euphronios were participants in what both would presumably have recognized as a single artistic genre, a rule-bounded enterprise in which bold innovation was possible but which also recognized and respected clear generic guidelines.³ It is not so clear that Thucydides would have accepted that he was working in just the same generic enterprise as Herodotus—he did not describe his text as *historiai*.⁴ Indeed, it is not

¹ Hdt. 1.1.

² The two famous Herodotean errors: 1.20.3. Thucydides in a competitive critical community: Ober (1998) ch. 2.

³ Neer (2002) esp. 51.

⁴ Th. 1.1.1 “*xynegraphe ton polemon*” might suggest that he saw himself as writing

clear that the rules structuring fifth-century prose writing were nearly as clearly defined as were, e.g., vase painting styles or poetic forms. The essential point is that Thucydides' text seems clearly to break with, as well as to build upon, the texts written by the Greek founders of the enterprise of writing history.

Modernity and Reflexivity

This essay will suggest that Thucydides developed a new approach to describing and using the past, and that his approach amounted to nothing less than the invention of a new discipline, political and social science. By this I mean that he regarded as inadequate the motivating purposes of all previous (and many later) historians: preserving memory for its intrinsic worth, praising heroic exploits, exposing moral errors, and making causal connections between apparently disparate events in the past. Although we can find substantial traces of each of these purposes in Thucydides' writing, his description of past events was a means to an end rather than an end in itself. This is stated explicitly in the key programmatic statement at 1.22.4: The author will be content if his text is judged "useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future."⁵ The text thus does seek to offer a precise account of the past. Yet the purpose of offering such an account is not the preservation of memory of the past for its own sake, but rather guiding action in the future. I suggest that Thucydides' text teaches its reader that the key to effective future action is understanding sociopolitical systems, i.e., political science.

The programmatic statement at 1.22.4 suggests that Thucydides' work was intended as a sort of "political systems users' manual". Its integration of sociopolitical theory with an accurate narrative of past events was meant to enable human agents (i.e., his readers) to gain leverage upon and thus to participate actively within an interlocking

a *xyngraphē* i.e., as working in the same literary genre as Hellanicus whose *Attikē xyngraphē* Thucydides cites (1.97). But Thucydides never describes his work as a *xyngraphē*; cf. Edmunds (1993).

⁵ There has been much debate on this passage: Gomme, *HCT ad loc.*, e.g., tries to avoid the evident meaning in order to keep Thucydides within the fold of disciplinary historians.

system of social and political structures. It was meant to give human agents knowledge that would be useful in terms of expanding their capacity to exercise individual agency within their societies. Such agents would enter into a reflexive relationship with society: Thucydidean agents would be not only the products of society, but would also be catalysts in the evolution of their societies.⁶

One way to specify authorial purposes is to define the field of arguments with which a text is engaged.⁷ Thucydides' text engages with a considerably wider field than that defined by the writers we now think of as the "early Greek historians." Most obviously, he compared his own enterprise with that of both poets and prose writers (*logographoi*: 1.21.1). The poetic tradition with which he is explicitly concerned is, *imprimis*, Homeric, although the influence of tragedy is apparent as well. The *logographoi* to whom he refers probably included historians, but also writers of political tracts and authors of speeches for Athenian law courts. Like historians, both poets and legal speech-writers dealt with the past and both had developed elaborate "rhetorical" schemes through which the content of past events (real or imagined) could be given the artful and pleasing forms that Thucydides bluntly rejects.⁸

Thucydides was certainly familiar with tracts critical of Athenian democracy—the close intellectual relationship between certain of Thucydides' core concerns (e.g., sea power and empire) and those of the somewhat earlier Ps.-Xenophontic *Athēnaiōn Politeia* has long been recognized.⁹ Thucydides also borrowed from the methods and language of the Hippocratic tradition of medical writing. And he was eminently capable of citing and mimicking the arguments and styles of Sophists (e.g., in the Melian Dialogue) and assembly orators (e.g., in the Mytilenean and Sicilian Debates). Among teachers of sophistry and rhetoric were some who claimed explicitly to have developed a "political science"—*politikē technē*. But the sophistic/rhetorical conception of *technē* was narrowly instrumental; it did not rest,

⁶ Cole (1991) argues that Thucydides' text was a *technē* in the sense of a manual of useful arguments. This seems to miss the point of the work as one of systems analysis.

⁷ Skinner (1978), with Tully (1988).

⁸ 1.21.1, 1.22.4 with Ober (1998) 55–63.

⁹ See, recently, Hornblower (2000a), who argues (against the *communis opinio*, and on grounds I find unconvincing) for Thucydides' priority.

as Thucydides supposed any proper understanding of “political science” must, upon a systematic understanding of sociopolitical structures and their dynamic interaction within larger societal systems. In brief, Thucydides quite deliberately confronted contemporary intellectuals from across a wide range of what we now think of as literary genres—and as a result there is no single established or emergent field of literary endeavor into which his work can reasonably be pigeon-holed.¹⁰

Although Thucydides’ prose is spectacularly artful in its own way, I believe that we should take him seriously when he suggests at 1.22.4 that the lasting value of his text (and thus his claim to preeminence in the intellectual contests in which his text engages) is not to be found in its pleasing literary expression, but in the precision, penetration, and practical applicability of its analysis. Thucydides’ claim for the permanent worth of his work (i.e. as a *ktēma es aiēi*) rests upon the accuracy of two foundational insights: First, that the world in which he grew up (that is, Athens of the mid-fifth century) was something new and profoundly different from both Athens of the past and from the rest of the Greek world. Next, Thucydides saw that, despite its dazzling newness, the Athenian world remained grounded in features of human psychology that were constant. Neither insight was original to Thucydides, but I will argue that he deployed these two foundational conceptions in ways that render his work extraordinarily original. Thucydides’ deployment of these two ideas also renders his work distinctively “modern” *avant la lettre*. It is hardly surprising to claim that Thucydides is in some ways “modern”; he has long been claimed as a forefather of the modern discipline of “scientific” history.¹¹ But I propose that he is modern in a sense that is much more comprehensive and more disturbing to our own academic conception of appropriate disciplinary boundaries.

Since the mid-nineteenth century of our era, much sociological and political analysis has been devoted to explicating the features of “modernity” and thereby distinguishing modernity from “traditional” premodern societies. Anthony Giddens usefully focuses on three key

¹⁰ Of course Thucydides is not alone in his self-consciousness of multiple genres and his self-conscious attempt to surpass them: cf. Nightingale (1995) on Plato’s relationship to various genres of poetry and prose. Indeed it is hard to define prose genres of the fifth and early fourth century with any specificity.

¹¹ Thucydides as “modern scientific” historian: Cochrane (1929).

factors: 1. separation and zoning of time and space (which he calls “distanciation”), 2. the development of “disembedding mechanisms” that “lift out” social activity from localized contexts (including government administration), and 3. the reflexive appropriation of expert knowledge.¹² While acknowledging that there remain many salient differences between Athenian modernity and our own (e.g. in terms of organization of labor and scale of globalization), I argue that Thucydides had identified something akin to each of Giddens’ three distinguishing factors in fifth-century Athens and thus that we may legitimately speak of Thucydides’ modernity and the modernity of the Athens in which he grew up.

Without papering over salient differences or forgetting what is genuinely distinctive about our modernity, we can learn something about both Thucydides and Athens by recognizing that Athens was modern in certain of the ways that contemporary political and social scientists have defined the term. Furthermore, by adopting Giddens’ conception of social change as a product of a reflexive relationship between knowing agents and social structures, it is possible to suggest that Thucydides participated actively in *making* his own time and place modern: Thucydides self-consciously sought to gain expert knowledge of sociopolitical structures. And he also sought self-consciously to engage his expert knowledge in a reflexive relationship with those structures. That is to say, his analysis was specifically meant both to make some relevant parts of social structure understandable (to his readers, educated by his text) and to promote change in the social system through the willing activity of appropriately educated human agents. His text then is a sort of super-*technē*—it teaches the techniques that allow systems to be both grasped and reflexively influenced by those who have become technical experts.

If we pursue Giddens’ argument to its end, it would appear that as structures and systems are destabilized through the activities of

¹² Giddens (1990). Giddens’ view of history is binary: premodernity and modernity. Yet his pre-modern traditional society is apparently based primarily quite narrowly upon medieval western Europe (e.g., vague political boundaries, lack of monopoly of violence, concern with divine providence)—in some ways, then, his view of traditional society fails for the Greek *poleis* generally. But I will suggest, below, that in important ways most of Greece remained “traditional” and that Athenian modernity was therefore not a global phenomenon. This makes its history radically different from that of our modernity—but that is no reason to ignore salient differences between Athens and other Greek *poleis*.

persons who have come to be “Thucydidean technical experts” (and as these agent-experts themselves are changed through their own formation within evolving social structures), the sort of expertise that Thucydides’ unchanging text could offer must eventually become dated and thereby irrelevant. This is because the system cannot remain stable once it has reflexively incorporated expert knowledge of itself—it must morph into something other than what it was, and so the past will thereby be meaningfully discontinuous with the future. But Thucydides apparently thought otherwise: In his programmatic statement of purpose he specifically stated that his work, describing a particular past, was intended as a legacy (*ktēma*) for all time (1.22.4). It remains to be seen whether that claim is best read as a sort of limit-marker (a *horos*) of Thucydides’ modernity (and if so where the *horos* should be placed), or whether the text might be able to sustain a claim that its lessons would always enable an agent to work effectively within social systems, even as those systems continue to evolve through the reflexive interaction with knowledgeable agents.

Tradition versus Modernity

In answer to a query by the unthinkableably wealthy Croesus of Lydia, Herodotus’ Solon states that in his opinion the happiest man ever to have lived was his fellow Athenian, Tellus, who “was from a prosperous city, and his children were good and noble. He saw children born to them all, and all of these survived. His life was prosperous by our standards, and his death was most glorious: when the Athenians were fighting their neighbors in Eleusis, he came to help, routed the enemy, and died very finely. The Athenians buried him at public expense on the spot where he fell and gave him much honor” (Hdt. 1.30.4–5). Herodotus’ account of Solon’s reply to Croesus is deliberately retrospective, and it may be taken as defining “traditional Greek social ethics.” In the fifth century, most citizens of most Greek *poleis* would still, I think, have readily recognized “Tellus’ world”—that is the social system that sustained Tellus’ ambitions and actions—and many would have endorsed the life plan described as “best” by Herodotus’ Solon. While granting that few men, if any, would ever achieve Tellus’ level of happiness, they would have seen nothing in their communities that would have made living such a life an unrea-

sonable aspiration. In this sense, we may say that most of Greece remained “traditional” rather than “modern.”¹³

By the age in which Thucydides received his social formation and with which he is concerned—the age of Pericles, Cleon, and Alcibiades—Athenians might still have looked back upon “Tellus’ world” with nostalgia, but their own lives were lived in conditions that had transformed that world in fundamental ways: As the administrative center of an Aegean empire and Mediterranean-wide trade network, Athens had become prosperous and powerful beyond the wildest dreams of Herodotus’ Solon. Tellus’ last battle was a border skirmish with the Megarians, who lived in the next valley over from Athens. In the new age of empire, war was not limited to formulaic land battles with neighbors: Wars were fought in far-flung places, by naval forces in close coordination with land armies, and according to complex strategic plans.¹⁴ Tellus’ hopes for the future were secured first by the survival of his own fine children and grandchildren and then by a funeral monument attesting to his individual glory. The new world of Athens encouraged citizens to imagine the future in terms of the glory of their *polis*; Athenian war dead were given a standardized collective burial in a public cemetery.¹⁵ Tellus was able to make life choices with a certain degree of confidence, based on his own inductive knowledge of how his world worked. He understood the social structures that defined the relatively simple sociopolitical system of which he and his family were parts. Thucydides’ contemporary Athenians inhabited a vastly larger and more complex society, one in which confidence in personal inductive knowledge had necessarily been replaced by a calculus of risk management based on trust placed in a highly complex system—a system that was difficult, perhaps impossible, to grasp as a whole.¹⁶ It was this system and its workings that Thucydides’ text sought to render comprehensible.

¹³ In terms of population and home territory, classical Athens was something like fifty times the size of a “normal *polis*” (see Ruschenbusch [1978]; Hansen [1996]), and this hypertrophy of scale was a prerequisite to its “modernity”. Hanson (1995) offers an idealizing portrait of traditional Greek communities, but also presents evidence for the prevalence of Greek traditionalism in “normal *poleis*” during the classical era; see also Gehrke (1986); Brock and Hodkinson (2000).

¹⁴ Development of new forms of war and strategy: Ober (1996) chs. 5 and 6.

¹⁵ See Loraux (1986c). Of course, Athenians continued to have personal concern for their own children and reputation; the transformation was never total.

¹⁶ Giddens (1990) usefully distinguishes between “confidence,” based on personal

The transformation of Athens, from the world of Tellus to the world of Pericles, from a relatively simple and traditional society to a complex and “modern” one, was in large part a product of democracy and empire. Herodotus (5.78.1) had recognized that in the years after the fall of the Peisistratid tyranny in 510 BC, freedom and equality, the hallmarks of democracy, had resulted in a phenomenal growth of Athenian military capacity. Meanwhile, the democratic institutional reforms of Cleisthenes resulted in a new administrative system. By interlocking local social networks into a master political network, that system permitted Athens to transcend the limits of governance methods dependent upon the personal knowledge typical of a small, “face-to-face” society. As the new administrative system was put into operation, and as they gained experience of it, the Athenians willingly exchanged their traditional confidence, based on inductive knowledge of one another as individuals, with trust in the system itself and in its capacity to control risk through mechanisms of accountability and transparency. The result was a highly effective public administration that could operate at a heretofore unimaginable scale and with unprecedented speed.¹⁷ At the same time, the public space of the city was likewise transformed: New buildings were erected for specifically public purposes within a clearly bounded public zone, a spatially delimited agora.¹⁸ Even the conception of time changed, with a standardized public calendar and close attention paid to the demarcation of short-term public and legal time by technological means.¹⁹ After the defeat of the Persian invaders, the Athenians turned almost instantly to the creation of a vast alliance, which quickly, through interaction with the evolving Athenian administrative system and the new conception of space-time, developed into an Athenian empire.

The need to control the empire—militarily, financially, and administratively—led to innovations that further challenged traditional assumptions about time and space, about citizenship and locality. A fleet of hypersophisticated warships, moving across the Aegean with startling speed, defeated conventional ideas about force and distance.

inductive knowledge and typical of traditional societies, with “trust”, based on the ability to calculate risk within complex modern societies.

¹⁷ Cleisthenic system: Manville and Ober (2003); Ober (2004).

¹⁸ Agora and public space: Ober (1995); Camp (1992).

¹⁹ On the distinctive Athenian relationship to measured time, see D. Allen (1996).

The pace of life increased dramatically: Public decisions were made and experimental policies were developed faster than traditionalists imagined possible. Property and local residence were no longer stable structures grounding individual lives: Many Athenian citizens now lived much of their lives abroad, as clerouchs or garrison troops, and many others controlled substantial foreign holdings or were involved in overseas commercial ventures. The Athenian system of People's courts took on new duties of imperial control, so that once-local disputes were now transported to Athens and arbitrated in the imperial center. Standardized coinage for the empire revolutionized the use of money as a symbolic measure of value, while developing systems of credit and borrowing allowed for the partial disembedding of the economy from traditional social relationships.²⁰ Record-keeping was increasingly standardized and publicized.²¹

The new Athens revolutionized thinking about power and agency: Novel forms of power, political and military, were developed and quickly deployed on a previously unknown scale. Social and political life became interpenetrated in new and surprising ways. Overall, there was an increased self-consciousness about the role of willed human activity as the source of all humanly relevant phenomena. And yet, at the same time, the increasing complexity of the system seemingly rendered its mastery by any one individual increasingly less likely.²² In the place of individual mastery of the whole stood a network of knowledges, expert and amateur. Expert knowledge (in the form, e.g., of secretaries to magisterial boards) was interwoven with the political practice of amateurs (e.g. lotteried magistrates). Meanwhile, self-proclaimed specialists in various kinds of useful social knowledge (including the Sophists) actively promoted their expertise as a commodity that could be exchanged and reproduced through rational processes of learning. The reflexive interaction of these standardized and commodified forms of social knowledge with the society further stimulated ongoing social change.

²⁰ See Kallet-Marx (1993) and Kallet (2001) for discussion of money in Thucydides' era; and the debate between von Reden (1997), Seaford (1998), and Kurke (1999) on the symbolic value of coinage in the *polis*. Other recent work on the impact of money includes Figueira (1998), Trevett (2001), and Schaps (2004).

²¹ See Sickinger (1999) for a collection of the evidence; Hedrick (1999) for democracy and publicity.

²² Although cf. below: Thucydides on the leadership role of Pericles and its relationship to deep knowledge of systems.

In the face of this Athenian juggernaut of innovation, the future was no longer securely predictable, but trust in the system allowed individuals to calculate risk and thus to participate actively in the new order. And yet, was the system itself actually stable enough to be worthy of trust? Were Athens' contradictions and tensions, its restless newness, its brash future orientation, sources of strength or of weakness? Would this strange new phenomenon prove to be an inexorable force that would ultimately push traditional communities out of existence? Or was it a sport of historical contingency, an anomaly doomed to quick extinction? Could it coexist over time with traditional societies that valued stability and continuity above innovation and change? These were the sorts of questions that Thucydides set out to answer for his readers.

Dynamic Systems and Conflict

In the next two sections I offer a story about how Thucydides, who grew up in the "world of Pericles" I have described above, came to invent political science by making analytic sense of that world and its relationship to traditional Greece. It is, of course, impossible to trace the actual course of development of Thucydides' thought: We cannot know the sequence in which he took up and developed the ideas and understandings that ultimately resulted in the production of the text as we have it. So the postulated developmental scheme that follows should be regarded as a heuristic device rather than as a defensible hypothesis. But the order in which thoughts occurred to Thucydides is actually not important for my argument. What is important is specifying the several intellectual elements without which the text as we have it could not have come into existence, and their relationship to one another.

The foundations of Thucydides' text were, I suggested above, two basic insights: First, that human psychology was (more or less) constant, and next that democratic Athens, the Athens of Pericles *et al.*, was in fact something new, and therefore represented an important break with the traditional Greek forms of social and political organization that I have dubbed "the world of Tellus." We need not suppose that either of these basic insights was original to Thucydides himself. The notion that human nature is quite standard was a central postulate of the mid-fifth century Sophists. Ps.-Xenophon's tract and Aristophanes' comedies (*inter alia*) suggest that it had become a

commonplace, at least within intellectual circles, to claim that “the new Athens is importantly different”—and different in ways that were potentially catastrophically disruptive to the norms and practices of traditional Greek communities. Indeed, Thucydides may have borrowed more or less directly from his predecessors in the way in which he introduced his readers to “new and different Athens.” Ps.-Xenophon adopts the literary conceit of the knowledgeable insider explaining to a naive and incredulous non-Athenian reader the extent and specificity of Athenian difference. Likewise, Thucydides’ Corinthians (1.68–71), take the role of knowledgeable experts, seeking to explain to an apparently naive and initially incredulous Spartan audience just what is new and different about Athens.

Thucydides’ Corinthians contrast the “modern Athenians” with the “traditional Spartans.” The two societies are presented as polar opposites based on various criteria: Athens was quick to act, while Sparta was slow; Athens was technically innovative, while Sparta was utterly conventional; Athens was risk-prone, while Sparta was risk-averse, and so on. The modern-Athens/traditional-Sparta contrast is played out in Thucydides’ text in speeches by Archidamus and Pericles and with further elaborations: Athens’ navy is contrasted to Sparta’s land army; vast Athenian capital resources are juxtaposed with non-existent Spartan financial capital; Athenian volatility is compared to Spartan stability. There is every reason to suppose that by the time Thucydides came to write his text, the Athens/Sparta contrast was well established as a *topos* of intellectual political discussions. Moreover, many of the elements emphasized by Thucydides’ speakers as fundamental to Athenian modernity were certainly well established topics among fifth-century writers. There is no reason to suppose that Thucydides was being particularly original in listing them. Finally, the relationship between democracy as a political form and the more obvious elements of Athenian modernity was well established. What then was Thucydides’ distinctive and original contribution?

Having grasped clearly the standard fifth-century topics regarding what I am calling Athenian modernity and the ways in which it contrasted with Spartan traditionalism, Thucydides’ first substantial breakthrough was to see that the contrast was not just a static “fact about the world.”²³ Rather it was the driving force behind a long

²³ Cf. Ps.-Xenophon, for whom “Athenian exceptionalism” seems to lead only to *aporía*: Ober (1998) ch. 1.

(twenty-seven-year) and destructive period of armed conflict between two great but very different powers. That conflict dominated Thucydides' adult life and was, of course, the subject of his written work.

Thucydides' insight about the destructive dynamism inherent in the contrast of modernity and traditionalism is expressed most bluntly in a well-known passage (1.23.6) in which Thucydides claims that the "truest cause" of the conflict was Spartan fear at the growth of Athenian power. That is to say, the Spartans came to realize the truth of the portrait of Athens presented by Thucydides' Corinthians. Moreover, they came to acknowledge the force of the Corinthian speech: Athenian modernity, if allowed to continue apace, would ultimately overwhelm all traditional forms of Greek community. Thucydides' Corinthians explain that the logic of Athenian modernity was dynamically expansive. Once that dynamic expansiveness was recognized by Sparta as potentially fatal to the continuation of Spartan society, war became inevitable. In short, Thucydides took up a static conception of "modern Athens and traditional Sparta" and developed that conception into a dynamic model capable of explaining the underlying causes of great historical events—and capable of doing so without recourse to any extrahuman forces. The reader realizes that the great war was the inevitable result of the deviation of Athens, as a sociopolitical system, from the traditional forms of Greek community and the threat that deviation represented to hyper-traditionalist Sparta.

Having grasped the dynamism of the Athens/Sparta contrast, Thucydides next came to realize that the conflict would be great, sustained, and unitary: Each side possessed substantial, if very different, resources—political, demographic, and material. Those resources would allow both sides to continue to fight despite unpleasant surprises entailing seemingly catastrophic losses, setbacks that would have forced other communities to suspend hostilities. The war therefore had the potential to extend vastly over space and time—far beyond the "single campaigning season in a border zone" that was the typical form of interpolis conflict in the "world of Tellus," and exceeding even the great mythic wars of Homeric epic. The new war was a single great conflict, fought in multiple operational theaters, and sometimes through proxies. Apparent pauses in the hostilities were not true eras of peace, but only masked an ongoing conflict. This was because the Spartans recognized and feared the consequences for themselves of Athenian modernism: As long as

Athens remained modern (thus dynamically expansionist) and Sparta remained traditional (and thus a certain victim of unchecked Athenian expansionism), there were no true grounds for peace. Thucydides' recognition of the dynamic nature of the Athens/Sparta contrast and the potential scope of the conflict is thus the source of his proleptic claim that he saw that the war would be great (1.1.1) and of his posteventum claim that the conflict was a single war that lasted 27 years (5.26).

Thucydides next came to realize that the burgeoning conflict between democratic-modernism and oligarchic-traditionalism exacerbated conflicts *within* Greek states. Thus, in spatial terms, the war was fought internally, in the form of *stasis*, as well as externally between political communities and groups of communities. The extensive "global" spatial frame of the war was therefore matched by an intensive conflict that brought war within the walls of the city, and even within the walls of the household. The conflict between modernity and traditionalism thus produced sociopolitical pathologies that proved capable of infecting and ultimately destroying *polis* communities. The fact that the dynamic conflict was contested by two opposing political systems (democracy and oligarchy) offered distinct socioeconomic groups (the rich and the poor) within a given city the opportunity to identify their particular and factional interests with much larger processes, with complex systems (in the form of the Athenian and the Spartan alliance) promoting, variously, modernity and tradition. And that tendency to identify with destabilizing external processes and systems, rather than with "the common good of the unitary local political community," meant that local interests and values quickly became unanchored from the local habits and iterated practices of the infected community.

As a result, the vocabularies in which values and interests were described were dissociated from the ordinary constraints of practice and habit. In the place of local and practice-grounded definitions, the kind of loose abstractions bandied about by the Sophists gained purchase on human calculation and action. Thus a kind of negative reflexivity was established between a sophistical and instrumentalist "political *technē*" and the dissolution of once-stable social structures. Thucydides offers Corcyra as a case study of this disintegrative process, but he underlines its generality: *stasis* born of the modern/traditional conflict afflicted communities throughout the Greek world. Participants in later *staseis*, he notes, reflexively employed knowledge of what had

occurred elsewhere in order to invent new forms of atrocity (3.82). Thus, the clash between Athenian modernity and Spartan traditionalism was implicated in the devastating collapse of what Thucydides poignantly and pointedly describes as the “ancient simplicity” (3.83).²⁴

The phenomenon of *stasis* exposed another dynamic interaction, between the sociopolitical system pertaining in a given community (and its moral and cultural underpinnings) and the demands of human nature. The analogic relationship between *polis* and soul, and thus between intracommunity conflict and pathologies of moral psychology would be fully developed by Thucydides’ younger contemporary, Plato (notably in the *Republic*). But Thucydides himself made considerable advances in understanding the ways in which intrastate conflict could reveal truths about baseline human psychology. Thucydides supposed that *stasis* undermined the social structures that ordinarily constrained people’s actions. Freed from the constraints of social structure, people tended by nature to act selfishly. That is, they sought to promote their own interests in competition with others rather than cooperating with people different from themselves on common projects. This tendency to self-aggrandizement contributed to the degeneration of existing social structure and thus of civilization itself. Self-interest could not provide an alternative “natural” structure (in the form of a libertarian utopia) because people’s selfish actions were guided by a fatally weak inductive knowledge of the complex of factors that were conducive to their actual interests. And so their actions did not consistently result in furthering their real interests. Self-interest in the absence of true knowledge cannot be judged as rational. A rapidly degenerating social system was, by definition, a highly complex human environment, in which apparently rational (but actually irrational) choices had catastrophic consequences as circumstances changed in chaotic and unpredictable ways.

Thucydides’ great case study of intracommunity conflict is the *stasis* that destroyed the once-prosperous *polis* of Corcyra. But all communities were vulnerable to the degenerative logic of human nature if and when social structure was severely disrupted: The inherent human tendency to selfishness was a factor in the chaotic behavior of Athenians at the height of the plague and in the Athenian *stasis*

²⁴ Crane 1998.

of 411. Yet the Athenian case also shows that degenerative social pathology need not be fatal: Athens retained the capacity to act cohesively as a community throughout the plague era and recovered from the revolutionary period of 411. Contrary to what some of the Sophists apparently taught their students, understanding the ultimate psychological basis of human action was not, in and of itself, adequate to allow a given agent to intervene effectively in a given social system: Thucydides' text shows that actual political behavior was much more complex and various than just "selfish human nature writ large." The simple realization that humans tend to seek their own interests was only one part of a larger sociopolitical equation.

Democracy and Power

Thucydides suggests (5.14.3) that at the outbreak of the war, the Spartans and presumably many other Greeks (2.8.4–5) expected it to be a relatively brief affair that would end in a Spartan victory. This expectation was based on extrapolating from a limited knowledge of history and political systems. They acknowledged that Athens had grown strong in the decades after the Persian Wars, yet the inherently volatile Athenian democratic system was still not considered a match for Sparta's awe-inspiring record of constitutional stability. The central Greek campaigns of the mid-fifth century had provided an apparently decisive test case: when Sparta exerted itself, Athens was ultimately forced to sue for peace. In order to explain how and why the "twenty-seven-year war" defeated the confident early expectations of experienced observers and broke the established spatial and temporal bounds of Greek interstate conflict, Thucydides needed to do much more than redescribe the self-evident surface features of Athenian modernity (speed, innovation, risk-taking, and so on). He needed to probe the underlying nature of Athenian power and its relationship to both the democratic political order and human psychology. This brings us to the core of Thucydides' project and its intellectual originality.

Thucydides' Corinthians express what is probably a standard Greek assessment when they imply that the visible manifestations of Athenian exceptionalism were simply a matter of an inherent "national character." They show no interest in probing how that character emerged

in the course of a particular national history, or how it was developed and sustained through distinctive political institutions and cultural habits. By contrast, Thucydides' text, both the analytic portions that precede the "Corinthian assessment" and the narrative that succeeds it, provides the reader with a deep and detailed explanation for the origins and vitality of an Athenian "national character" that was different from that of other Greeks, and one that was especially conducive to expansionism.

Thucydides' reader (as opposed to the Corinthians' Spartan audience) learns that the Athenians' dynamic expansionism must be understood, first, in terms of their perfection of a technology of power. In the so-called *Archaeology*, Thucydides details the conditions that limited the robustness of early Greek societies. Due to internal discord and the endemic presence of pirates, the early Greek communities were unable to accumulate the three necessary prerequisites of power. The first of these was money for investment in major capital projects. Next was secure fortification walls, capable of defeating attempts to seize capital resources. Third was a navy, by which power can be quickly projected at distance and without experiencing "distance decay," thus allowing for the extraction of resources from weaker communities. This "material triad" of money, walls, and ships was reflexively connected to knowledge of what we may call a "conceptual triad" of empire (*archē*), security (*asphaleia*), and extendable power (*dynamis*). Earlier Greek powers (e.g. Minos of Crete) had developed impressive but still rudimentary versions of this double (material/conceptual) triangle. It remained for the Athenians of the fifth century to bring the system to something like perfection. The inner workings of this remarkable technology of power are further explained for the reader in the course of Pericles' three speeches—the Funeral Oration and two speeches to the Athenian Assembly.²⁵

The perfected technology of power allowed for, perhaps even mandated, expansive growth. Conceptual knowledge allowed the material elements to be employed more effectively, and reflection upon their use produced deeper conceptual understanding. Because it was dynamically reflexive in its operations, the technology led to growth without apparent limits: Greater capital enabled infrastructural improve-

²⁵ See Ober (1998) 63–94 and Ober (2001a) for details.

ments that in turn enhanced security. This meant an increased capacity to project greater power more quickly and over greater distances. And that in turn brought in more capital. And so on—potentially, it seemed, *ad infinitum*. Although each of its material elements (money, walls, ships) was highly visible, the reflexive technology of power that drove Athenian growth was extremely difficult to understand in its fullness—Thucydides' Pericles describes it as a sort of "secret" in a speech to the Assembly (2.62). Moreover, the secret is not fully revealed even in its telling—Pericles focuses heavily on the navy/*dynamis* axes. It is unlikely that a listener who heard only the three Periclean speeches recorded by Thucydides (or similar ones) would be able to accurately grasp the complex system that linked the technology of power with imperial growth.

In a number of passages, most obviously in the Assembly debate on the Sicilian expedition, Thucydides suggests that the Athenians' own inductive knowledge of the system of power and expansion in which they participated was strictly limited.²⁶ Yet the system undoubtedly worked extremely well. It fulfilled the demands of human nature in that people's interests were served by it: The system distributed great benefits to Athenians (as individuals and as a community) in terms of psychic rewards (participation in glory, enhanced agency, satisfied curiosity) as well as material rewards. As a result, the Athenians came to place ever more trust in the system. Moreover, they were willing to take ever greater risks (individually and as a community) as a result of their growing trust. Fed by a burgeoning aggregate risk taking capacity, the system could take on new challenges, expand in new and surprising directions. Setbacks there were, but these were factored into the overall equation: The risks the Athenians took did indeed expose them to danger, but they remained calculated risks rather than simple rashness. Thucydides' Pericles alludes to the rationality of risk taking when he contrasts Athenian and Spartan forms of courage: Unlike Spartan habituation, Athenian courage was grounded in reasoned choice making.²⁷

The expansive system reflexively incorporated structure and choice: Based upon a technology of power, it quite reliably produced a

²⁶ Cf. Ober (1998) 104–20 on the Sicilian Expedition and Athenian ignorance.

²⁷ Balot (2004).

psychology of rational risk taking. That psychology in turn furthered the productivity of the system and reinforced trust in it. Athenian “national character,” which appeared to less astute observers to be a simple fact of Athenian “nature,” was explicable to Thucydides’ readers in terms of the reflexive interaction between a technology of power and human psychology.

But how did this reflexive power/trust system connect to political structure, to the democracy? Here Thucydides could build upon the work of writers like Ps.-Xenophon, but once again he made considerable advances over his predecessors. Ps.-Xenophon had recognized that there was an organic connection between Athenian sea power and democracy, but his analysis had not proceeded much beyond the thoughts that the navy provided employment for the lower class “many,” and that it lent them an enhanced sense of their own social worth. In the Funeral Oration, and related passages, Thucydides’ text goes deeper, revealing how a democratic society in which all classes regard themselves as engaged in a valuable common enterprise, one that reliably distributes rewards to each and to all, can make highly effective use of available manpower: Each and every adult male Athenian, regardless of his family wealth, was both expected and potentially able to be “useful” to his *polis* both militarily and politically.

In the course of the narrative, the political society of democratic Athens was implicitly contrasted to that, for example, of oligarchic Mytilene: In Mytilene, as soon as the lower classes were given arms (in a desperate attempt to break the Athenian siege in 427), they turned their weapons against the ruling oligarchs, thereby ending the Mytilenean capacity to resist the Athenian siege. The reader is invited to contrast the behavior of the Athenians during the same year: In the aftermath of a devastating plague, they launched the largest fleet of the war to date. They simultaneously engaged in naval operations off the Peloponnesus, stymied a Spartan-led naval expedition into the Aegean, and dispatched a large-scale land-sea operation to Mytilene, all the while keeping the rest of the empire under control. Because all Athenians regarded themselves as engaged in a common enterprise, they were capable of making full use of their plague-reduced but still considerable manpower resources. And thus they were able to turn what should have been a Spartan opportunity into a resounding Athenian victory. As Thucydides’ Pericles explains in the Funeral Oration, it was the participative and meritocratic political

culture of democracy that made this sort of national performance not only possible but predictable.²⁸

Likewise, the reader comes to understand that Athenian political culture led to individual versatility. Athens' capacity to accomplish so much did not rest solely on each Athenian being willing and able to make himself useful by deploying a particular and pre-established "skill set"—e.g. hoplite maneuvers, wall-building, or rowing a trireme. Rather, each individual Athenian was capable of taking on a variety of tasks. As Thucydides' Pericles famously pointed out, the democratic polis was a system of education and Athenians were highly educable. The Athenian regarded his own service to the state as a sort of ongoing self-education, and proved willing, eager, and capable of learning new skills under stressful conditions and in real time.²⁹

One example of this capacity is provided by the Athenian hoplites in 427, who boarded ships in Piraeus, rowed themselves to Mytilene, quickly built a wall of circumvallation, then took up arms and began the siege in earnest. Another example is provided by the Athenian rowers who landed at Pylos in 425, decided to build a fortification by hand, defended it successfully with improvised weapons, and thus set up the stunning Athenian victory on Sphacteria—a victory that (for a time) seemed to offer the Athenians a way forward to final victory in the war itself. By contrast, the Spartan hoplites on Sphacteria proved spectacularly inept at learning anything new: they waited passively on the island until the Athenians invaded with light-armed troops, then sought to fight a standard hoplite battle under impossible conditions, only to be easily defeated by the innovative tactics adopted by the Athenian commanders. Once again, the basis for the distinction between the tradition-bound Spartans and the innovative, hard-working, and self-educating Athenians, and its relationship to the political institutions and culture of democracy, had been laid out, albeit in somewhat abstract and idealizing terms, by Pericles in the Funeral Oration.

Thucydides' reader comes to understand that the modernity of Athens was the product of remarkably complex system—one that conjoined a technology of power with both a psychology and a

²⁸ Mytilenean campaign: 3.1–50. Periclean Funeral Oration and performance: Manville and Ober (2003).

²⁹ *Polis* as an education: see further Ober (2001b).

politics. The system was dynamically reflexive, but it could not and did not just run on its own. In order to perform effectively, it required a process for rational decision making, one that would reliably (although, given the Athenian propensity to experimentation, not inevitably) develop the sound policies that would allow Athenian energy and resources to be deployed in profitable enterprises.

In the context of war, developing sound policy included everything from master plans that would be spatiotemporally expansive enough to take into account many local theaters of conflict over a period of years, through effective military strategy for gaining victory in a particular theater in a given campaigning season, to tactics that would win individual battles. Pericles addresses this point in the Funeral Oration (2.40.2–3), if only briefly and elliptically. He claims that, unlike other peoples, the Athenians did not need to confront a choice between careful deliberation and bold action. They were uniquely able to conjoin deliberation with action through processes of public reasoning that allowed all to participate either at the level of proposal making or at the level of judgment. And once again, the narrative of events supports the general theory. In the descriptions of Phormio's naval operations in the Gulf of Corinth in 429, of the operations at Mytilene in 427, and of the Pylos-Sphacteria operations of 425 Thucydides' readers are offered revealing glimpses of Athenian leaders proposing bold plans based on their assessment of opportunities, risks, and available resources; audiences of citizens judging those plans; and the outcomes that resulted. The narrative of events thus illustrates how deliberative public processes were connected to actions.

Pericles' distinction between proposal making and judgment points to the importance of leadership in the democratic system. The essential structural role played by skilled and forward-looking leadership is the final element in Thucydides' analysis of the Athenian socio-political system. In a detailed assessment of Pericles' career (2.65) Thucydides reveals that Pericles was as essential element of the overall system because he was capable of intervening in the system on the basis of a true understanding of it. Moreover, Pericles had the necessary technical skills as a public speaker, combined with a deep psychological insight into how different kinds of speech could affect the moods of audiences. And so his interventions were reliably effective in gaining his chosen ends. And finally, Pericles was incorruptible: he never put his own personal interests above or in opposition to

the interests of the community as a whole. Thus, his interventions were not only effective, but genuinely and publicly beneficial.

Pericles might initially appear to be somehow “inhuman” in his unwillingness to pursue his personal advantage. But in fact, as Pericles’ three speeches themselves make clear (esp. 2.60.2–5), there was no contradiction between seeking his individual good and the good of his community. Pericles’ nature was entirely human, but his tendency to seek his own interests was framed by his political-moral insight that even (or maybe especially) under the conditions of modernity, the individual’s best interests could only be secured in the context of a powerful and flourishing community. As Athens flourished, so too did Pericles, and he acted accordingly and with complete consistency. In a sense, then, Pericles recapitulates the ethical choices of Herodotus’ Tellus: Ironically, Pericles may appear as a sterling modern exemplar of “the ancient simplicity”. The difference between Tellus and Pericles is that Pericles acts on the basis of his special theoretical and practical mastery of the workings of a highly complex system; Tellus was able to rely on his ordinary inductive knowledge of a traditional society.

During Pericles’ long period of political ascendancy, then, the Athenian system could grow in complexity without the danger of losing coherence; it developed through reflexive interaction with a particular human agent. The system was given direction through the interventions of a political leader who genuinely understood it, and who had the capacity to influence it and the conjoined rational self-interest and benevolence to seek positive change. The provision of knowledgeable, skillful, and rationally benevolent leadership was an essential part of the system’s functionality and overall reliability. Without suggesting that Pericles sought or received a cult of personality, Thucydides leads his readers to suppose that the warranted confidence of the citizens in Pericles as an individual leader was an important element in their trust in the system overall. And thus the leadership factor was a key to rational risk taking, and thus to the dynamic expansionism of the system.

It is because of Pericles’ special relationship to the system of which he was a part that Thucydides’ stated that in the era of Pericles, Athens was in name a democracy but in fact was ruled by its first citizen (2.65.9). This does not mean that Pericles was, in his own person, the sovereign authority of the state, but rather that his leadership was an indispensable structural element in the continued

successfulness of the sociopolitical system. In order for the system to work, as we have seen, there had to be both proposal making and judgment. During the era of Pericles' leadership, Thucydides' readers are led to suppose that on the most important public matters, the judgment of Athenian audiences amounted to approval of proposals that were patently trustworthy because they emanated from a man in whom the Athenians rightly placed their full confidence. And thus, the political system was genuinely educational: each citizen was in effect challenged to seek to understand why the proposal he judged best on the basis of his confidence in its author was in fact the best course of action for Athens. Rather than infantilizing the audience, Thucydides suggests, Periclean speeches and proposals helped citizens to gain a better (if inevitably only partial) understanding of how the overall system worked.³⁰

Pericles was indispensable, but he was mortal; after his death, the system lacked a vital structural element. At least some Athenians apparently realized (if not with the analytic clarity that Thucydides offered to his readers) that Periclean-type leadership was a structural necessity; after Pericles many other would-be leaders sought to take his place. Yet they all fell short in one essential way or another: either they lacked genuine understanding of the system (like Cleon), or they lacked the rational benevolence that came with a deep recognition of the congruity of individual and communal interests (like Alcibiades), or they lacked the rhetorical skills necessary to influence mass audiences (like Nicias).

With the failure of any other leader to fulfill Pericles' structural role, Thucydides says, Athens became a democracy in fact—in that the function of judgment of proposals by mass audiences took precedence over policymaking and proposal making by wise leaders. Given that popular judgment was now dominant, would-be leaders, predictably seeking to further their own interests, were led to pander to the audience. Thus the reflexivity of leadership and popular judgment took a decidedly negative turn: Rather than being systematically well educated by a true leader, the masses now systematically mis-educated their would-be leaders; the *dēmos* trained pseudo-leaders to say what the *dēmos* itself would find pleasant to hear—rather than hearing from them those proposals that would be most beneficial for

³⁰ Cf. Farrar (1988).

the community. This, then, Thucydides suggests, was democracy “in fact”—and it was no way to run the expansive system of power and politics that had brought about and must sustain a great empire.

As we have seen, Thucydides’ sociopolitical analysis suggests that when Athens took the road of modernity, Athenian performance (i.e. capacity to flourish as a *polis* and grow into an empire) became dependent upon the reflexive interaction of a technology of power with political institutions and culture, and with the impulses of human nature. Without Periclean leadership, the political side of the Athenian equation did not remain in a positively reflexive relationship with the other elements of the system. Absent the appropriate agents to give it rational direction, the system became unbalanced. Blind structures (both institutional and ideological) overweighed rational human agency. Human selfishness was uncoupled from the recognition that individual flourishing required collective efforts. Warranted trust in the system declined, and with it the capacity to take rational risks. And thus, virtually inevitably, catastrophic mistakes were made, and despite the great resources that had led Pericles to predict victory, Athens lost the war.³¹

Thucydides’ Text

The two previous sections hypothetically reconstructed the intellectual development of a project worthy of being called “the invention of political science.” That project conjoined a theoretical analysis with narrative description of events in order to explain how technologies of power, international relations, political institutions and culture, and social psychology conjoined into dynamic sociopolitical systems. The result was an elegant explanatory framework that offered a new understanding of collective behavior and the structural properties of organized communities. Thucydides did not invent each of the pieces relevant to his political science; much preliminary work had already been done by his predecessors. Thucydides’ great conceptual breakthroughs were, I have suggested, in coming to understand how the diverse elements fit together and showing how they functioned in terms of reflexively dynamic social and political systems;

³¹ On Thucydides’ criticism of democracy, see in general Ober (1998) ch. 2.

how the “modern” Athenian system came into conflict with a “traditional” Spartan system; how a uniquely large-scale and sustained interstate conflict generated social pathologies within many communities; and how the malfunctioning of democracy in the absence of Periclean leadership led modern Athens to lose the war to traditional Sparta.

But it was one thing for Thucydides to figure all this out for himself, quite another for him to explain it to others. It would obviously be chimerical to speak of an “invention” that remained inside its author’s head. In order for his new conception of collective action to matter (in terms of authorial fame or effect upon the world), it must somehow be communicated. At some point (we cannot know just when) Thucydides made the decision to communicate his ideas in the form of a written text. This was, in the context of his times, not a remarkable decision, but it was indeed a decision he had to make. His contemporary, Socrates, having developed a similarly monumental invention (i.e. moral philosophy) never wrote any of it down, communicating his ideas instead through public and private conversations.

Remarkably, Thucydides appears to have decided at some point that his invention could be communicated *entirely* through the medium of the written text. There is no ancient evidence to suggest that Thucydides ever sought or attracted students as did, variously, the early Sophists, rhetoricians, and philosophers. Nor did he ever offer or anticipate oral performances of his text, as did all poets and many prose writers including (reputedly) Herodotus. Indeed, the very clear statements in Thucydides’ methodological introduction, to the effect that his text would not be likely to offer pleasure to listeners, suggest that the text was not intended to be transmitted aurally to students or performed before audiences. Thucydides’ text is as austere “writerly” as any text surviving from antiquity. Intended as a possession for all time—and thus as having a life completely independent of its author—Thucydides’ invention would succeed or fail on the basis of the relationship between readers and text. It stood alone and could never hope for the sort of sympathetic aid that might be offered by a school of adherents or a virtuoso performance.

Having come to the decision to write a “stand-alone” text that would convey his great invention, the question was one of form: How to compose a document that would forever communicate a

deeply complex and original set of ideas to readers? The answer is, in one sense, clear enough, since we have the text and its form can be analyzed by the ordinary tools of literary analysis. But it may be worth seeking to specify just how and why the text's quite distinctive form furthered the project of communicating Thucydides' invention of political science.

First, and obviously, Thucydides chose, for the bulk of his text, the form of a strict chronological narrative of recently past events: he wrote something that was related to, if in some ways quite different from, the texts of Hellanicus and Herodotus. When compared to his predecessors' work, his historical narrative is remarkably disciplined, proceeding by summers and winters through the war era, offering relatively few substantial digressions. Next, and equally obviously, he employed the literary device (used to good effect by Herodotus) of interrupting his third-person narrative with speeches (and one long dialogue), often presented in the first person, purportedly delivered by various historical agents (individual and collective). Third, Thucydides included a number of analytic passages, in which he, as author, explains his intentions and methods and offers considered judgments upon various matters of interpretation. As every reader of Thucydides quickly comes to realize, the work produces its effects (literary and didactic) through the interplay among these several elements.

If Thucydides' invention was political science, why write a chronological narrative?³² Contemporary practice in the disciplines of political science and sociology is markedly unhistorical. Although some of the modern (in the usual sense) founders of the discipline of sociological political science (e.g. Karl Marx and Max Weber) were concerned with history and wrote about historical events, they did not write continuous historical narratives. Nor did most of Thucydides' immediate Greek predecessors or successors in the field of *politikē technē* choose to write history. If, *ex hypothesi*, Thucydides was engaged in a competitive rivalry with *politikē technē* literature, and if it is legitimate to call Thucydides' invention "political science," why did he choose to employ a chronological narrative of events (as opposed to, say, the literary forms of *politeia* or dialogue) as the primary structuring device for his text?

³² See, further, Ober (2001a).

It is not possible to answer this question in any definitive way. Although I have postulated that the invention was anterior to the choice of literary form, Thucydides may just as well have begun writing a rather conventional (Herodotean/Hellanic) history, with intentions and generic ambitions that were quite similar to those of earlier historians, but in the process came to the set of conjoined insights that I am calling “the invention of political science.” The developmental story I propose here is intended to foreground the role of sociopolitical insight in Thucydides’ project. It is neither more demonstrable nor more falsifiable than the “history first” hypothesis. As with the unanswerable question of the order in which the several conjoined insights came to Thucydides, the actual process of composition does not actually matter for my argument. The point is telling a plausible story that will illuminate the form, content, and force of the text as we have it—that is to say, a story that helps us to be better readers.

I suggested above that Thucydides’ breakthrough insights concerned dynamic systems and reflexive processes of change. And this provides an explanation for the choice of historical narrative as a literary vehicle for the presentation of his invention. Thucydides needed to show not just how the social systems with which he was concerned were constructed and how they functioned, but also what they *did*. Since what they did only became clear by tracking change over time, only a diachronic account could adequately demonstrate the relevant phenomena. In some cases (as in the Athenian technology of power) the functioning of the system produced change in the form of growth as a result of the reflexive interaction of its several parts. That growth resulted in further change, in the form of sustained interstate conflict, because the Spartans became aware of the danger to themselves of unchecked Athenian growth.

But Thucydides’ conception of political science was also predicated on a reflexive interaction between structure and human agency: As various human agents gained knowledge of the relevant social systems, their knowledge—in terms of both their own use of it and others’ capacity to learn it—became a factor in the functioning (or malfunctioning) of the system and thus of the effects it produced. So, for example, the widening interstate conflict led to civil wars within Greek communities; and knowledge of these civil conflicts was reflexively factored into the decisions of human agents and thus exacerbated the rate of social degeneration in later conflicts. Individual

Spartans learned from Sparta's early failures—as Brasidas' experimental and successful campaign in northern Greece demonstrated, as did the later Spartan naval campaigns in the Hellespontine region. For their part, the Athenians experienced what might be called entropic reflexivity in the post-Periclean era as would-be leaders were miseducated by the judging *dēmos*, and thereby provided the state with inferior proposals, which in the long run fatally degraded Athens' war-making capacity.

The explicitly analytic passages in which Thucydides addresses the reader *in propria persona*, along with the speeches given to Pericles, taught the reader the bare bones of Thucydides' conception of political science. That is, they sketched out a somewhat abstract theory of power, politics, international relations, human psychology, and collective action. The chronological narrative fleshed out the theory, by demonstrating how it worked in practice. But even more importantly, the narrative enabled Thucydides' reader to grasp the processes whereby change was produced by the dynamic interaction within and between systems over time. Thucydides' reader might well pick up some theoretical insight from the analytic passages alone. He might learn something of practical value by studying the speeches. But the true didactic force of the work required putting the analytic passages and speeches into the narrative frame, and thus coming to understand the dynamic and reflexive operation of systems that was Thucydides' great invention.

Unlike a student in (for example) Isocrates' school of rhetoric, Thucydides' reader was not presented with a series of set rules, was not expected to memorize a body of *topoi*, did not learn the mechanics of a *technē*. Rather, through a deep understanding of complex systems and their effects he became (if he were sufficiently diligent) a Thucydidean technical expert in political science. And, as such, he potentially gained the true political agency once manifested by Pericles. With Pericles-like knowledge of systems he became capable of intervening, in positive ways, in social and political structure. He became a positive reflexive element of a dynamic system.

And that, I would say, is the ultimate purpose of the text. It is meant to produce leaders with Periclean abilities. Those leaders would not be sophistic immoralists; they would not be enemies of "the ancient simplicity." Like Pericles they would embrace an ethics that was in many ways compatible with that of Solon's Tellus. But, like Pericles, they were themselves far from simple. They would choose

to act for the common good out of a deep understanding of how their own genuine interests related to collective action, of how modern and traditional social systems actually worked, and of how and why those systems changed (for good and ill) over time. Despite its austerity and its appearance of disinterestedness, Thucydidean social science is, therefore, grounded in the conviction that genuine knowledge will promote the good (insofar as the good is defined as the flourishing of individuals within a flourishing community). And as such it has somewhat unexpected connections with Socrates' and Aristotle's philosophical projects. If we feel that science and morality are incompatible within a modern disciplinary paradigm, identifying a concern for morality within Thucydidean political science may be taken as marking off the limits of Thucydides' modernism. Yet, given that modern political science departments often embrace both highly empirical and normative scholarship, the simultaneous presence in his text of the morally concerned political theorist and the analytic/empirical political scientist may, perhaps, be taken as further evidence for his modernity—or even his postmodernity.³³

In any event, the reader should not be misled, either by the originality of Thucydides' political science or by the apparent attractiveness of his ethics of political leadership, into accepting that everything in Thucydides' analysis is correct. Given its situation in a historical narrative, the correctness of Thucydides' political analysis may fairly be tested by history. As I have argued elsewhere, the successful rebuilding of Athens in the decades *after* the Peloponnesian War, by a democratic government and in the absence of anything resembling a Periclean leader, suggests that Thucydides underestimated the capacity of a real democracy to learn from its own mistakes.³⁴ If we could somehow pose it to him, would Thucydides accept that criticism? Or would he perhaps reply that this is to miss his basic point, that "systems change"? After all, post-Peloponnesian War Athens was quite different from immediately post-Periclean Athens at least in this sense: With the postwar dissemination of Thucydides' text, knowledge about dynamic and reflexive systems was available. As readers engaged with the text, they had the opportunity to become Thucydidean technical experts. Some of those

³³ Connor (1977a). Euben (1990) on Thucydides as a postmodern political theorist.

³⁴ See, further, Ober (1998) 120–21 and Ober (1996) ch. 6.

experts were, almost inevitably, reflexively involved in the evolving Athenian sociopolitical system. I am not sure that I would accept that defense—but I *am* quite sure that, even if we could summon his ghost, Thucydides would not bother to make it—after all the text itself was meant to stand on its own, as a *ktēma es aiei*.

LEADERS, CROWDS, AND THE POWER OF THE IMAGE: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN THUCYDIDES

Antonis Tsakmakis

Thucydides devotes a considerable part of the *History* to public deliberation, paying as much attention to the debates that took place before decision-making bodies as he does to the actions that resulted from the decisions taken. The speeches of the Corcyreans and the Corinthians in Book I (1.32–43) almost exceed the subsequent narrative (1.44–55) in length, while the effects of the debate on Mytilene (3.37–48) do not require more than one *OCT* page (3.49–50). Despite this, Thucydides is reluctant to imply that rhetorical artifice played a major role in the shaping of policies in the Greek political communities of his time. Speakers no doubt did their best when addressing the public, and the historian invested a great deal of effort in furnishing all the speeches he included in the *History* with τὰ δέοντα, the appropriate rhetorical apparatus for each case, including arguments, but he nevertheless believed that people's voting behavior was motivated by more complex and profound factors than the power of the spoken word (for example, he explicitly stresses that speeches did not play an essential role in Sparta's momentous decision to declare war on Athens: 1.88; cf. 1.23.6).

How, then, did large bodies, especially the assemblies of democratic cities such as Athens, make decisions? Thucydides' work presupposes a great deal of information about political communication and public opinion during the Peloponnesian War. This chapter examines the interaction between individual politicians and their public, in an attempt to show how Thucydides perceived and described the mechanics of decision making in the Greek city-states of the fifth century.

Controlling Discourse: Public Opinion, Public Speeches and Thucydides' Narrative

The reactions of the public are central to the narrative and indeed were a permanent concern for politicians and military officials. In

wartime, public opinion is sensitive to victory, defeat, and military command. Nicias enjoyed a high reputation as a successful general in the Archidamian War,¹ which explains his (belated) emergence as a major political figure in the years that followed. On the other hand, the public's disapproval of Alcibiades' behaviour, which finally led to his deposition, is aptly emphasized by Thucydides, who draws a sharp contrast with his military skills: "...κράτιστα διαθέντι τὰ τοῦ πολέμου..." ("... though he administered the war excellently...", 6.15.4).² Generals had to take into account the impact their actions would have in Athens.³ In the year 426 Demosthenes avoided returning to Athens after an unsuccessful operation in Aetolia; he stayed in the Naupactus area "fearing the anger of the Athenians" (3.98.5). Demosthenes was probably aware of incidents like the one reported in 2.70: the Athenian generals who had agreed on terms with the besieged Potidaia (winter 429) were accused by the Athenians of not having imposed harsh enough terms upon the exhausted city. In both cases criticism of the commanders seems justified, to judge by the information provided by the narrative.⁴ Moreover, the reader may recall the importance of public opinion, although it is probable that no official action or decision was taken in either case. Conversely, a decision could be suppressed altogether, when it was assumed (by Thucydides) to be wrong. Thucydides' narrative suggests that his own command as a general in Northern Greece was blameless, despite the loss of Amphipolis to Brasidas (4.103–108). Thucydides' exile is mentioned later (5.26.5, in the context of a discussion of the positive effects it had on the writing of his work), but the narrative of Book IV does not give the Athenians the opportunity to condemn Thucydides the general. The historians' version remains unchallenged.

We can discern this compositional principle of salient selections and significant omissions in the representation of public debate, too. Pericles has no rival in Thucydides' work; neither of his two deliberative speeches is paired with any opposing speech, although the

¹ See Geske (2005). Nevertheless, Nicias is never praised by Thucydides for his military skills; cf. Kallet (2001) 151–59.

² In quoting translated Thucydidean passages I have not relied on a single translation, but have profited from various translations and suggestions by commentators, sometimes modifying them slightly.

³ On the influence of soldiers over the command decisions of their generals, see Hamel (1998) 71–73.

⁴ On Demosthenes, see Stahl (1966) 130ff.; on Potidaia, see Kallet (1993) 120–23.

historian does briefly refer to the existence of divergent views (1.139.4)⁵ or to a hostile feeling toward him (2.59.3; 2.65.2–3). What is more, no other Athenian politician makes any significant appearance in the *History* until Pericles' death.⁶ By condemning every other voice to silence, Thucydides' work becomes a telling testimony to the historian's belief: ἐγένετο τε λόγῳ μὲν δημοκρατία, ἔργῳ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή ("the result was in theory democracy but in fact rule by the first man"; 2.65.9). Pericles is represented as the most successful politician in terms of control of public opinion. "The reason was that Pericles, since he was strong in both repute and intellect and was conspicuously incorruptible, held the masses on a light rein, and led them rather than let them lead him. This was because he did not have to adapt what he said in order to please his hearers, in an attempt to gain power by improper means, but his standing allowed him even to speak against them and provoke their anger" (2.65.8). In what follows, I shall try to identify the techniques that made such domination possible within the democratic system of the Greek *polis* as described in Thucydides' historical account.

1. *Controlling the Masses*

Controlling the Channels of Communication

Just as Thucydides is in control of his narrative, so the protagonists in his work need to control political processes in order to be successful. In a democratic city, the main channels of communication with the public were the political bodies, sometimes coextensive with the totality of citizens, as in the Athenian *ekklēsia*. When Pericles was confronted with the enmity of a large part of the citizenry, he avoided

⁵ This reference indirectly illustrates the effect of Pericles' rhetoric (1.140–144): after his speech, the acceptance of his views by the Athenians is complete (1.145).

⁶ There is no further mention of leadership or the assembly until Cleon's emergence in Book III. Cf. Connor (1984) 76f.: "In the first part of the book [sc. II] much attention has been paid to the process by which Athens makes major decisions concerning the war... We sense the mood of the Athenian citizenry and glimpse the assembly in action. After chapter 65 the narrative reports the major decisions but has little to say about the processes by which they were reached. The assembly disappears, and along with it, the individuals who aspired to lead it"; see also Rood (1998) 136f. On "the selection, compression, and omission to which Thucydides has subjected the speeches", cf. Hornblower (1987) 55f.

convening a meeting of the Assembly so as to minimize the effectiveness of protests (2.22.1).⁷ He did not give the masses the opportunity to become a crowd.⁸ Pericles was convinced that his rivals would be able to damage his authority if they were given a platform. When the masses believe that they had suffered (in so-called ‘after-disaster situations’), they are inclined to attach the blame to those who were supposedly responsible.⁹ Therefore, Pericles tries to buy time, avoiding negative publicity. His actions are in accordance with the cardinal rule of public relations: maximize positive and minimize negative publicity.¹⁰

On the contrary, Alcibiades’ departure for Sicily as a commander of the expedition deprives him of any possibility of keeping things under control. While he had been promised that he would not be taken to task *in absentia* for charges pending against him, no sooner had he left, than his rivals seized the opportunity and condemned him, and in so doing deprived the city of the services of the most suitable leader of the expedition (6.29; 6.61).

So, controlling procedures was the key to controlling public discourse, in so far as events could be decisively influenced. The Melian officials were afraid that the Athenian commanders might seduce the people of the island, and did not give them the chance to speak in public. Their rationale is exposed by the Athenians: ὅπως δὴ μὴ ξυνεχεῖ ῥήσει οἱ πολλοὶ ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ ἀνέλεγκτα ἐσάπαξ ἀκούσαντες ἡμῶν ἀπατηθῶσιν (‘. . . your purpose being, as it seems, that the people may not hear from us once for all, in an uninterrupted speech, arguments that are seductive and untested, and so be deceived . . .’ (5.85). Hence, the Melian leaders talked to the Athenian envoys behind closed doors: the uniqueness of the Melian Dialogue in Thucydides’ work underlines this unusual procedure. It is far from certain that the *dēmos* would have taken the same ‘proud’ stand that meant, as the Athenians made clear, and as becomes obvious to the reader *ex eventu*, certain execution of all the men and enslavement of the women and children. The majority of the victims, the people

⁷ We have no parallel evidence to endorse the reasonable suggestion (cf. 2.59.3) that Pericles was acting in his capacity as a general; on this problem, see Hamel (1998) 5–12.

⁸ According to the distinction adopted by V.J. Hunter (1988/89) 18 with n. 6 (bibliography): a crowd is a group that congregates and tends to become homogenous; the term “mass” is restricted to a group of people that is too large to congregate.

⁹ Marx – McAdam (1994) 68ff.

¹⁰ McNair (1995) 7.

of Melos, are not given a choice¹¹—but in times of war, even modern democracies usually resort to censorship.

Controlling the Content of Communication

The term ἀνέλεγκτα which the Athenian envoys used in Melos, draws our attention to a crucial issue in decision-making: control of the available information. Speaking to the inhabitants of Chalcidian cities, Brasidas makes false allegations about recent military operations in Megara (4.66–74), trying to give a misleading impression of the strength and morale of the Athenians and Spartans.¹² His audience was not in a position to verify or refute what he said to them in contrast with the readers of the *History* who are fully aware of the fact that he is lying (4.85.7; 4.108.5). Brasidas' words are explicitly called ἐπαγωγὰ (4.88.1, the term used by the Athenians in Melos) and ἐφολκά ("enticing", 4.108.5). The audiences' ignorance allows him to use the same arguments and tricks in a number of different cities (4.120.3).

Since the majority of the population did not have access to sources of information, political leaders were responsible for the dissemination of information and knowledge. Pericles never took advantage of the ignorance of his audience. His speeches informed, instructed, explained, foresaw events, and warned the public.¹³ On the contrary, Alcibiades beguiled the Athenians, filling them with false expectations, and persuaded them to attack Sicily, a remote place about which they were largely ignorant (6.1).¹⁴ The historian devotes a special

¹¹ Unlike the Athenians in Melos, Brasidas had the opportunity to address the people of the cities in Northern Greece and succeeded in persuading them to abandon their allies, largely by deception and also by threats (4.87.2–5; cf. also 4.88.1: the Acanthians were worried about the harvest). Brasidas' audiences exhibit typical mass behavior: "the cities were more impatient (ἐπήρθησαν, cf. Connor [1984] 135 with n. 68) to revolt", their men wished to be the first to revolt (4.108.3), they miscalculated the size of the Athenian force (4.108.4), were misled by wishful thinking, and repressed negative thoughts (4.108.4); Brasidas creates false expectations and stirs up irrational behavior (4.108.6); cf. also Connor (1984) 131 n. 57. In Amphipolis, too, the crowd stopped listening to the Athenian general there (4.106.2; on the omission of his name, cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.337).

¹² On the misleading elements of Brasidas' performance, see Debnar (2001) 188f., 192; Price (2001) 251–54.

¹³ Cf. 2.60.6; see Yunis (1991).

¹⁴ The Egestans, who had officially invited the Athenians to intervene in Sicily, use words explicitly labeled by Thucydides as ἐπαγωγὰ καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῆ (6.8.2). Alcibiades draws an extremely biased picture of the conditions in Sicily (6.17.2–6);

section, the *Sicilian Archaeology* (6.2–5), to the history and peoples of the island, and hence enables the reader to assess the ignorance of the Athenians.¹⁵ The reader first encounters Alcibiades when he plays a trick in order to promote a treaty with Argos and undermine Nicias' negotiations with Sparta (5.43–46). This trick involves inhibiting the flow of information to his fellow citizens: he persuaded the Spartan envoys that they should not mention to the Athenian *ekklēsia* that they had been given full authority to negotiate and agree to the terms of peace with the Athenians by assuring them that he was capable of reaching an adequate decision himself. Instead, he used the Spartans' declaration to incite the Athenians against them and reject a settlement.

On occasion, politicians had to defend the reliability of their information. Information is power and, as such, is sometimes feared: Cleon questioned the correctness of the news about the tribulations of the Athenian contingent in Pylos in order to maintain the impression that continuing the war had been advantageous for the Athenians. His posture, however, was dictated by tactical opportunism. Cleon was well aware that the Athenians would not remain in the dark for long, and so was caught in a dilemma: either new envoys should be appointed who would examine the situation, or he himself would be sent to the place with an auxiliary force. Knowing that the revelation of the truth would expose his irresponsibility, Cleon chose the latter option. As Thucydides remarks, his weakness caused laughter among the Athenians (4.27–28). Laughter signals contempt for the orator's presumed seriousness, in this case his claim to sound judgment on the news from the battlefield. The people's derision of Cleon seemed justified here. There is one other instance in the *History* in which a politician is laughed at for a similar reason, but in this case the derision is unfair. The Syracusan Hermocrates made the most of reports obtained from various sources (πολλαχόθεν, 6.32.1) that the Athenian navy was on its way to Sicily: he shrewdly called for the cooperation of all Sicilians and for serious preparations to be made for war (6.33–34). However, he was confronted with a divided Syracusan *dēmos*. Many citizens doubted the reliability of the

cf. Stahl (1973) 64ff. Contrast 6.93.1: the Spartans trusted Alcibiades "because they believed that they had been listening to the man who was most accurately informed".

¹⁵ See Stahl (1973) 70–72; Tsakmakis (1995a) 159–75.

news, while others downplayed the seriousness of the threat. Athenagoras, a demagogue, tried to slander Hermocrates saying that he was intimidating the people out of selfish motives (6.36–40). A part of the audience even tried to get the crowd to laugh at Hermocrates. It needed the intervention of a general for the debate to be concluded properly (6.41). In this scene Hermocrates, who is later praised warmly by Thucydides for his prudence and bravery (6.72), proved unable to persuade the crowd in what was certainly an emergency situation. This episode testifies to the problematic interaction between the people and Hermocrates and is illustrative of the political culture that prevailed in Syracuse at this stage.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the reader notes that it was not Hermocrates but the unnamed general who finally saved the day.

Distinguishing truth from rumor, i.e., beliefs that are unverified,¹⁷ in such situations would have been a difficult task in a world without institutionalized mass media and information technology. Thus, in such dubious cases the ultimate criterion for the people's orientation remains the effectiveness of communication between a leader and the community. This largely consists of the politician's authority and his ability to manage the masses.

Theoretical Insights into Mass Psychology

Thucydides understood how important it was for politicians to have expert knowledge about mass behavior. Unlike Cleon, who in the debate on Pylos is controlled by the crowd rather than able to control it himself, a good politician should not improvise; he must first and foremost be cognizant of the peculiarities of mass psychology. Thucydides' work investigates human behavior, in which he discerns

¹⁶ Cf. Connor (1984) 168–71.

¹⁷ Rumors that circulated via hearsay (ἄκοη) played an important role in the creation of the mass hysteria that led to the recall of Alcibiades. The Athenians' fear of *tyrannis* was reinforced by false historical assumptions; cf. Tsakmakis (1995a) 186ff. Rumors undergo change and distortion in three ways: deletion of detail ('leveling'), greater organization of material around a dominant theme ('sharpening'), and presentation of the message in ways that are consistent with preexisting individual and cultural views ('assimilation'); see Marx – McAdam (1994) 27. The Peisistratid episode is rich in detail, introduces themes and patterns of action that were forgotten in the version in circulation, and questions the simplistic association of tyranny with harshness.

more or less constant characteristics; in Thucydides' view, these stem from human nature itself.¹⁸ The historian makes explicit reference to collective behavior and crowd psychology (3.8) as distinct objects of observation.¹⁹ He tries "to identify processes that occur frequently".²⁰ Pericles again embodies the ideal in this respect. By studying collective behavior he is easily able to make informed predictions. He attempts to anticipate changes in the people's mood,²¹ to discuss them openly, and to prevent or reduce reactions by repeatedly addressing the issue and reminding his audience of his remarks throughout (1.140.1; 1.141.1; 1.144.1; 2.61.2; 2.62.1; 2.64.1). This meta-communicative, elite discourse is an attempt at rationalizing collective behavior.²² Through instruction and reasoning, Pericles tries to discourage unwelcome mass action, and to transform a crowd into a totality of responsible individuals.

Pericles' treatment of the Athenian people contrasts with the practices of his successors, who flattered the *dēmos* (2.65.10) and tried to ensure its support by stirring up its greed. Of Pericles' successors, Nicias is invariably concerned with the attitude of the Athenians, but his knowledge of the people's behavior is static and superficial; he lacks the deeper understanding of social dynamics that would enable him to successfully confront the crowd. Before the Sicilian Expedition he misjudges the possible effects of his second speech and provokes the opposite reaction to the one he intended (6.24). In the council of the generals in Sicily, he founds his proposed strategy on the fatalistic assumption that the Athenian soldiers who were pressing to return home, would later accuse their commanders of having

¹⁸ See Rechenauer (1991) 144–57.

¹⁹ The importance of this is not diminished by V.J. Hunter's remark (1988/89) that Thucydides does not have a "sociology" of the crowd, but applies the rules of individual psychology to its behavior.

²⁰ This is a very ambitious task, even for modern researchers, as it does not rely on the examination of static evidence, but requires an understanding of social dynamics; cf. Marx – McAdam (1994) 25f.

²¹ He is prepared for their reactions: 2.59.3–2.60.1; cf. 1.140.1.

²² Given that Pericles has no rival as a public speaker, his true opponent is the people: the degree of acceptance of his leadership is the only variable factor at issue; resistance to the Periclean reasoning is expressed in terms of emotion vs. reason (cf. 2.65.1: ὀργή vs. γνῶμη; 2.65.3–4: ὀργή vs. νομίζεω; Pericles' last speech, *passim*). Similarly, abandonment of Pericles' policy is portrayed as a result of moral corruption or deficiency on the part of the leaders, who exploit the emotions and passions of the masses (2.65.10).

left because they were bribed (7.48.4).²³ His fear of public opinion cripples him. By constantly referring to his difficulties in communicating with the people, he seems to be trying to exorcise the problem rather than tackle it; at the same time, he defines the problem rather too narrowly, invariably restricting his references to the Athenian people (but no doubt implying the *dēmos*). The allegedly peculiar nature of the Athenians is an obsession for Nicias—and it turns into a nightmare (6.9.3; 7.14.4; 7.48.2; 7.48.4). By demonizing the Athenians, Nicias fails to recognize that human nature is constant. This failure is probably a symptom of his aristocratic mentality, and his references to the Athenians have a contemptuous undertone; this becomes more explicit in his final address to his defeated troops, when, in a tragic manner, he contrasts his previous prosperity to his present suffering. Nicias argues that he is less deserving of it than his ordinary soldiers:²⁴ *vñv ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κινδύνῳ τοῖς φαυλοτάτοις αἰωροῦμαι* (“even I am now caught up in the same danger as the lowliest”; 7.77.2). Unlike Pericles, the aristocratic Nicias cannot show any respect to the crowd, the source of power in a democratic *politeia*. Nicias seems to ignore the fact that acknowledging and accepting the rules of political communication is a necessary condition for practical success in politics.²⁵

Communication Skills: The Right Words at the Right Time

Statesmen who aspired to control public opinion needed to know when and how they should present their ideas in front of an audience. Thucydides portrays charismatic leaders like Alcibiades and Brasidas as persuasive in all their appearances, even when they are

²³ Ironically, Nicias is executed, not least because of the Syracusans' fear that he might bribe his guards (7.86.4).

²⁴ Nicias is incapable of thinking in political terms. His political judgment is never dissociated from the narrow concern with his personal career (5.16.1; 6.9.2).

²⁵ In a similar way, Cleon does not hesitate to introduce a distinction between prudent and inferior citizens (*φαυλότεροι*, 3.37.3) in his audience (but only to dismiss the former group; cf. the remarks of Rengakos [1984] 58–63; Connor [1971] 94–96; Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.424), in order to serve his immediate purposes in the Mytilene Debate. Significantly, he continues his argumentation by denying a fundamental principle of political communication in a democracy, public dialogue, focusing on the negative effects of rhetorical persuasion; cf. Connor (1984) 82f.

deceiving their audiences. Alcibiades self-confidently claims that his ardent enthusiasm can inspire his audience and bolster his argumentation.²⁶ Cleon is quite the opposite type of person, and his interaction with the crowd was always problematic. According to the summary information the historian provides in his first introduction (3.36.6), he was “the most violent (βιαίωτατος) of the citizens and at that time by far the most successful at persuading the people (πιθανώτατος),”²⁷ but the reader is only witness to the decline of this influence (and also the rejection of unlimited violence toward enemies and revolting allies). The Mytilene Debate was a crushing personal defeat for Cleon, which Thucydides emphasizes by depicting in detail the leader’s efforts to make sure that the previous decision is upheld; he is not given the opportunity to make another direct speech in the work. In the debate on Pylos, his image as a public figure is ruined, since it becomes obvious that he tried desperately to conceal his inadequacies (cf. also 5.16.1). The most prudent citizens take their revenge on him for his contemptuous remarks in 3.37.3: “sensible men comforted themselves with the reflection that they must gain in either circumstance; either they would get rid of Cleon, which they rather hoped, or if they were disappointed in this expectation, he would subdue the Spartans for them” (4.28.5). It is worth noting that no Athenians are included in the force sent to Pylos under Cleon’s command (this is emphasized in 4.28.4), and that before the battle of Amphipolis, we not only hear that Cleon’s soldiers compared his ‘ignorance and cowardice’ with Brasidas’ ‘skill and daring’, but also that they had followed him unwillingly (5.7.2).

There are also leaders who have the right ideas but are unable to carry them through. Demosthenes and Nicias, two successful generals of the Archidamian War, provide telling examples of this, Nicias in particular.

At the beginning of Book IV the Athenians send troops to Western Greece. This is the campaign that was to end in a spectacular success at Pylos. But, although the assembly had authorized Demosthenes to use the expeditionary force as he deemed appropriate—in

²⁶ Cf. 6.17.1 (on his support for an alliance against Sparta: 5.45.3).

²⁷ Violence and persuasion are opposite terms in Greek thought; cf. Buxton (1982) 58–63. But this contradiction corresponds to a contradiction in Athenian politics at the time: persuasion characterized Athenian life in which rhetoric held sway, whereas violence was the main feature of Athenian policy toward their allies.

spite of the fact that he had not yet taken up the duties of general (4.2.4)²⁸—the generals in charge and the soldiers made fun of his suggestions. They rejected his proposal to land at Pylos, which, however, they eventually did, but only because bad weather forced them to do so (4.3.1). Having finally landed there, if only because of a quirk of fate, Demosthenes proposed that they build a wall. “The others”, notes Thucydides, “said that there were many deserted headlands in the Peloponnese if he wanted to run up a bill for the city by seizing one”. Since he could persuade neither the generals nor the soldiers, he remained there, inactive, until the soldiers tired of doing nothing and began building the fortification (4.3.3–4.4.1).

Demosthenes is portrayed as incapable of controlling an audience through persuasion, as someone who is forced to go along with the wishes of other people, unable to influence the course of events. His proposals are twice rejected, but are followed by chance, or when the time is right.

Nicias has to face even more serious communication problems. In spite of his good sense, his interventions tend to come at the wrong time, which means that he is always fighting for lost causes. He allows events to unfold, and when he then tries to intervene, it is already too late. He is never in control of the crowd—it is they who control him.²⁹ He tries to cultivate relations with Sparta, while Alcibiades has already undermined every effort in this direction and has promoted the alliance with Sparta’s enemy, Argos. His failure is described in detail, and will cause the first crack in his image as a successful general and promoter of peace (5.46.3). While others are able to turn time to their advantage, the circumstances are always against Nicias. He tries to stop the Sicilian Expedition, while those in favor of it have already prepared the ground appropriately. Nicias’ apostrophe to the *prytanis* at the end of his first speech (6.14) is tantamount to admitting his failure to persuade the people (unlike in the debates about Corcyra, 1.44.1, or Mytilene there is no chance of the first decision being revised); his second speech at the debate has precisely the opposite result to what he expected. He reinforces the crowd’s sense of security and increases their appetite for adventure (6.24).

²⁸ Cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.152.

²⁹ In the Pylos Debate he is himself prey to the dynamic that develops in the course of the discussion. In the Sicilian Expedition he was made a leader against his will (6.8.4).

Nicias may well have been right in blaming Alcibiades for excessive ambition and opportunism, when he suggested the Sicilian Expedition (6.12.2–6.13). However, it is too late to stop the expedition, and the conditions are not right for his rival to be got rid of. On the contrary, Nicias unintentionally contributes to undermining Alcibiades, although the expedition has already been decided on, with the latter to be one of its leaders. In the end, Alcibiades is removed from office, which will contribute decisively to the campaign's failure.

Avoid stasis

This brings us to a further aspect of a politician's responsibility: Plausible policy is incompatible with discord (cf. also the speech of Hermocrates in Gela, 4.59–64). Nicias' unfortunate division of the audience into groups that were supposedly favorable toward him (elderly people) or hostile (the young) gives Alcibiades the opportunity to defend the idea of unity and concord. Alcibiades conceals the enmity he in reality harbored toward Nicias and adopts a conciliatory facade. He invites Nicias to collaborate and the people to take advantage of the abilities of all concerned (6.18.6). But his words are no more than a rhetorical artifice. Unlike Pericles, Alcibiades does not have—and, more importantly, does not aspire to—the support of the citizenry as a whole. On the contrary, he relies on a certain faction of his audience, and he has even organized some groups of supporters in advance.³⁰

Cleon is a typical case of a politician who needs strife to survive. He always personalizes political conflicts, and attacks his opponents (or if there are no opponents, creates them) for his own purposes. In the Mytilene Debate, in his effort to avoid the personal defeat that the revision of the earlier decision would entail, he is ruthless toward anybody who disagrees with him. He later vehemently attacks the Spartan envoys who appeal for peace (4.22.2), because his personal ambitions are better served by the continuation of war. He insults the messengers from Pylos (4.27.3) so as to draw the Athenians'

³⁰ The narrative's credibility is reinforced by the fact that something similar occurs also in the account of Alcibiades' return in Athens (cf. Xen. *HG* 1.4.18–20).

attention away from his own responsibility for the rejection of peace negotiations. Because of his antipathy toward Nicias, he denigrates the generals and makes senseless criticisms (4.27.4–5).

The primary characteristic of public opinion is instability, and this is only reinforced by polarization.³¹ In the *Acharnians*, Aristophanes criticizes his fellow citizens for being μετὰβουλοι (“fickle”; *Ach.* 632). Pericles and other orators try to counteract this tendency by stressing how steadfast their own views are (1.140.1; 2.61.2; see also 2.13.2; cf. Cleon at 3.38.1). On the contrary, politicians who favor discord put the city in danger, because in the assembly, as in battle, order is prerequisite of success, whereas the breakdown of order leads to disaster.³² *Stasis* is to be avoided at all costs. Strife can easily harm the politician who fosters it, since once passion outweighs reason, people become uncontrollable. The psychological violence used by Alcibiades’ supporters is soon replaced by the terrorism of their rivals. And in the Mytilene Debate, Cleon’s narrow victory is transformed into a defeat. Contrast this with Pericles, who, when faced with a disquieting split in the population (2.21.3), did his best to restore the social cohesion and solidarity of the Athenians. The Funeral Oration is the corollary of this endeavour.

2. *Personal Authority*

According to Aristotle, a successful practitioner in deliberative rhetoric has to be in possession of prudence, moral integrity and the will to promote the interests of his audience: τοῦ μὲν οὖν αὐτοῦς εἶναι πιστοὺς τοὺς λέγοντας τρία ἐστὶ τὰ αἷτια· τοσαῦτα γὰρ ἐστὶ δι’ ἃ πιστεύομεν ἔξω τῶν ἀποδείξεων. ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα φρόνησις καὶ ἀρετὴ καὶ εὖνοια (“There are three things which inspire confidence in the orator’s own character—the three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character, and goodwill”; *Rh.* 1378a6–8, tr. Rhys Roberts). These qualities are also essential for politicians in Thucydides. Since Thucydides is not a logographer but a historian, the relevant information is not confined to speeches, as the philosopher required (1356a6–10), but is also found in the narrative, as well as in introductory remarks, authorial

³¹ Cf. also Zaller (1992) 53–75.

³² Cf. Pouncey (1986).

comments and summary reviews of leaders' personalities. Both *prudence* (ξύνεσις) and *moral excellence* (ἀρετή) are recurrent terms in the scarce passages in which Thucydides praises individuals. The narrative also contains a wealth of information about intentions, which can be compared with a person's publicly proclaimed opinions.

Prudence

Alongside the use of argumentative techniques,³³ correct judgment of a situation and penetrating analysis of the dynamics that influence the future are the main constituents of Thucydidean ξύνεσις. Its quintessence appears in Thucydides' eulogy for Themistocles: τῶν τε παραχρήμα δι' ἐλαχίστης βουλῆς κράτιστος γνώμων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐπὶ πλείστον τοῦ γενησομένου ἄριστος εἰκαστής· καὶ ὃ μὲν μετὰ χεῖρας ἔχοι, καὶ ἐξηγήσασθαι οἷός τε, ὧν δ' ἄπειρος εἴη, κρίναι ἱκανῶς οὐκ ἀπήλλακτο· τό τε ἄμεινον ἢ χεῖρον ἐν τῷ ἀφανεῖ ἔτι προεώρα μάλιστα— "... he was at once the best judge in those sudden crises which admit of little or of no deliberation, and the best prophet of the future, even to its most distant possibilities. An able theoretical expositor of all that came within the sphere of his practice, he was not without the power of passing an adequate judgment in matters in which he had no experience. He could also excellently divine the good and evil which lay hidden in the unseen future" (1.138.3).³⁴ Throughout the historian's account Pericles' ξύνεσις (cf. 2.34.6) becomes evident from his deeds and words (cf. also 1.140.1), and justifies the conclusion that he was λέγειν τε καὶ πράσσειν δυνατώτατος (1.139.4). Thucydides praises his πρόνοια in planning Athens' strategy for the war (2.65.5–6). Pericles includes the irrational in his calculations and entrusts as little as possible to chance. In his prewar speech he advances the Athenians' preparedness to cope with the unpredictable.³⁵

Different aspects of ξύνεσις are further manifest in the thoughts, words, and actions of various political and military leaders in

³³ Cf. Hornblower (1987) 73–110; Thomas (2000) 168–212; Kallet (this volume).

³⁴ Themistocles was the only politician in Herodotus' work who appears before the assembly and persuades the citizens to adopt his proposals (Hdt. 8.109.2–8.110.1; Themistocles' "*Feldherrnrede*", 8.83, is successful, as well).

³⁵ Thucydides' recognition of other politicians' prudence and intelligence: 2.97.6; 4.81.2; 6.54.5; 6.72.2; 8.68.1; cf. also Rood (1998a) 184 n. 8.

Thucydides' work,³⁶ but a speaker's good sense is not always appreciated. A typical form of prediction which tends to be ignored is warning—Nicias with his fears before the Sicilian Expedition exemplifies this *par excellence*. The neglect of warnings is a stock theme in literature (including Greek historiography), while modern sociology confirms that "warnings about things that individuals have no direct knowledge of or experience with may . . . be dismissed as unrealistic".³⁷

Sound judgment (or the lack of it) is also an important component of intelligence as Thucydides perceives it, even if it appears less frequently in direct speech. In the following I shall focus briefly on unwise leaders who miscalculate reality, especially the course of war, and on their handling of the crowd.

While experience (πείρα) is helpful in formulating sound predictions, the superficial drawing of historical analogies and the misuse of paradigms is a typical fallacy, very characteristic for the masses, that is also present in the minds of some politicians. Alcibiades' involvement in the Mysteries Affair erroneously led the Athenians to suspect that he was also guilty of the mutilation of the Herms (6.61.1). Similarly, unfounded convictions about the Peisistratid tyranny suggested false historical analogies, which in turn led to excessive fears of a political conspiracy and finally to the recall of Alcibiades from Sicily. Brasidas' campaign in northern Greece caused many Greeks to believe that all Spartans would behave in the same way: πρῶτος γὰρ ἐξεληθὼν καὶ δόξας εἶναι κατὰ πάντα ἀγαθὸς ἐλπίδα ἐγκατέλιπε βέβαιον ὥς καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν "for by being the first to go out, and by showing himself a good man in all respects, he left behind the lasting conviction that the others were of the same sort as well" (4.81.3).³⁸ After Pylos the self-confidence of the Athenians rises to extreme heights: everything seems possible now (οὕτῳ τῇ

³⁶ For a thorough discussion of reason in Thucydides, see Edmunds (1975). On the correspondence between thoughts, predictions, or intentions and events, see V.J. Hunter (1973a); Stahl (1973); Schneider (1974) 69–125.

³⁷ Marx – McAdam (1994) 69.

³⁸ Brasidas' assistance to Skione encouraged the Mendeans to revolt (4.123.2). The overwhelming impression of Brasidas' exploits is still appealing to the Melians (5.110). The Mytileneans also declare that they revolted with the example of the treatment of other allies by the Athenians in mind (3.10.6, 3.11.8; cf. further their appeal to the Spartans in 3.13.2, 3.13.7). The speech of the Mytileneans makes ample use of rhetorical techniques then in fashion, but this would not prevent the Lacedaemonians from finally concluding that the Mytilenaeans did not say the truth, and demanded impossible things (3.16.2; cf. also *HCT* 2.268–69 *ad* 3.13.4).

παρούση εὐτυχία χρώμενοι ἡξίουσιν σφίσι μηδὲν ἐναντιοῦσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ ἐν ἴσφ καὶ τὰ ἀπορώτερα μεγάλη τε ὁμοίως καὶ ἐνδεεστέρα παρασκευῇ κατεργάζεσθαι. αἰτία δ' ἦν ἡ παρὰ λόγον τῶν πλεόνων εὐπραγία αὐτοῖς ὑποτιθεῖσα ἰσχὺν τῆς ἐλπίδος, 4.65.4; “so extreme, in the midst of their current good fortune, was their conviction that nothing would stand in their way, that they would accomplish the practicable and the more problematic alike, whether with a great force or a weaker one. The cause was their extraordinary success in most respects, lending strength to their hopes”); in their turn, the Spartans fear that a similar disaster might befall them again (4.55.3). But while intelligent statesmen minimize the unreasonable hopes of the mass (cf. 2.65.9 on Pericles), politicians like Cleon share and amplify them. The fortuitous success in Pylos makes Cleon believe that the same strategy will guarantee further military triumphs, and therefore he opposes every peace initiative; in so doing he behaves like a gambler who is carried away by his luck and keeps on playing until he has lost everything.

Cleon exhibits a fondness for assigning paradigmatic value to certain events. Thus, to his way of thinking, the harsh punishment of the Mytileneans would be a preemptive example for would-be rebels.³⁹ However, the mere fact that he uses analogy and paradigm implies poor understanding of the historical situation and of the changes that were taking place.⁴⁰ Since the Lacedaemonians have asked for peace once before, Cleon and the Athenians expect that their policy will remain unchanged (4.21.2); for as long as a new peace proposal is delayed, the Athenians are frightened, believing that the Spartans now feel (and are) stronger (4.27.2). This approach leads

³⁹ Cf. 3.39.3: παράδειγμα δὲ αὐτοῖς οὔτε αἱ τῶν πέλας ξυμφοραὶ ἐγένοντο (“they have not learned from the example of their neighbors”), answering the Mytileneans’ claims (3.10.6, 3.11.8), but refuted by Diodotos at 3.47.3: προδειξάντων ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ζημίαν τοῖς τε ἀδικοῦσιν ὁμοίως κείσθαι καὶ τοῖς μὴ (“because you have indicated in advance that the same penalty will fall on those who are guilty and on those who are not”). The use of paradigm conforms with a rhetorical use of the past that ignores real power relations. The Plataeans remind the Spartans that they are regarded as an example of ἀνδραγαθία (3.57.1; cf. 3.59.1 on the relevant idea of one’s reputation); the Melians warn that the punishment of the Athenians in case of defeat will be an example to others (5.90).

⁴⁰ Cf. on the contrary Knemos’ and Brasidas’ cautious exhortation (2.87.1) and Phormio’s corresponding speech to the Athenians (2.89): Phormio is aware of the present difficulties and does not slip to a superficial rhetoric exploiting the preceding victory.

to a vicious circle: when, after Pylos, the Spartans once more seek peace, this peace offer increases the Athenians' self-confidence once more, and they reject it because they want even more (4.41.4).

It is evident that Thucydidean statesmen whose sensible views persuade the reader are not always successful with the masses. The composition of the work requires both intelligent leaders like Pericles and tragic warners like Nicias. Its dramatic concept also needs figures who hold right opinions but cannot immediately persuade their audience like Hermocrates in Syracuse, and reckless demagogues who find temporary support like Cleon. The interaction between leaders and crowds mirrors the adventures of reason during the war. War begins as a necessity, but continues as a preference. It is resumed from desire.

Virtue

It is not always possible to distinguish between intellectual error and moral deficiency, since sometimes they are caused by the same feebleness of mind: passion outweighs reason. Cleon's striving for new successes after Pylos is rooted in his greed, *πλεονεξία*. Earlier, *πλεονεξία* had been put forward by Thucydides as the main reason for *stasis* and all subsequent evils (3.82.8); it now proves to be the principal motive for the continuation of war. Cleon shares his ambitious character with his Spartan counterpart, Brasidas, although the latter is a charismatic leader and follows an apparently moderate course. But Brasidas also rejects peace, because he wishes to increase his fame with a further series of successful operations. As we have seen, the people of Athens were affected by their leader's greed (4.21.3; 4.27.4), despite their low opinion of his skills. On the contrary, Brasidas' military initiatives come into conflict with the cautiousness of the Spartan officials at home (4.108.7). However, as soon as the two warmongers disappear, we find the Athenians in agreement with Nicias, who seeks peace despite the fact that he is also enjoying a run of successive victories. Nicias rather wishes to "save his good fortune" with a timely cessation of conflict, allowing him to retire at the height of his reputation (5.16.1). In praising Nicias for his *aretē* rather than for his *xynesis* (7.86.5), Thucydides retrospectively legitimates an evaluation of Nicias' peace policy in moral terms. Consequently, the account of the difficult process toward peace allows the

reader to pass a moral judgment on the main protagonists. That peace was welcomed by the citizens requires no special emphasis.

Passion is the motivation of Nicias' other opponent in the *History*, Alcibiades, the most contradictory personality in Thucydides' work. Alcibiades is addicted to power, honors, and wealth. The combination of an ambitious character with extraordinary skills explains his unusual career. His (justified) self-confidence and his eagerness to impress—his Achilles' heel—leads him to ignore limits. Thucydides subsumes all manifestations of Alcibiades' egoism under the term *παρανομία*, disrespect for the law, insolence (6.15.4; 6.28.2). Deviation and exaggeration is a way of life for Alcibiades (*ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις μείζουσιν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν οὐσίαν ἐχρῆτο*; "he indulged his desires to a greater degree than his existing resources allowed", 6.15.3) and also penetrates his political vision (*οἱ γὰρ Ἕλληνες καὶ ὑπὲρ δύναμιν μείζω ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν ἐνόμισαν*; "the Greeks concluded our city to be even greater than it really is", 6.16.2). As a result, he becomes vulnerable: his public influence and his obvious private wealth causes the envy (*φθόνος*) of his opponents and the fear (*φόβος*) of ordinary citizens.

Besides envy and fear, suspicion (*ὑποψία*) undermines the influence of morally weak figures like Alcibiades or Cleon. Suspicion is an irrational reaction by people, and one that is almost impossible to cope with directly, since it is difficult to disprove rumors or worries. Thus, suspicion may easily increase in scale (cf. 6.61.4 on Alcibiades), and expand in range. The ultimate effects of moral corruption are aptly denounced by Diodotos: *ὁ γὰρ διδοὺς φανερώς τι ἀγαθὸν ἀνθυποπτεύεται ἀφανῶς πῇ πλέον ἔξειν* (3.43.3) "the one who offers something good, gets as his reward a suspicion that he will make some secret profit somewhere": the gluttony of politicians is now taken for granted. Not only this: the Athenians' gluttony led to the punishment of the generals Pythodoros, Sophocles, and Eurymedon, who had concluded operations in Sicily in the year 424 with a treaty (4.65.3). The Athenians convicted the generals for alleged bribery, but Thucydides' account silently contradicts this assumption (4.65.1–2).

Excessive prejudice against leaders is symptomatic of a society at war. The Spartan king Pleistoanax seeks peace with the Athenians because he realizes that in wartime, commanders are exposed to defamation with every adverse incident (5.17.1). The main responsibility for defamation and insult (*διαβολή*) rests, of course, with politicians. Cleon was notorious for this practice (5.16.1); both Cleon and

Athenagoras, the other demagogue who is given a voice in the *History*, deter their opponents by questioning in advance their integrity (κέρδει ἐπαιρόμενος 3.38.2).⁴¹ Thucydides' narrative leaves no doubt as to the harmful influence these demagogues have on the crowd, and the dangers their actions hold for the community.⁴²

In the world of Thucydides moral integrity is more easily denied than attested, more easily called for than displayed. Power politics, the making of war and the conduct of state affairs in such an antagonistic environment as the Greek *polis* are not areas in which virtue is regularly exercised.

Intentions

It is remarkable (but in keeping with 2.65) that most major political figures in the *History* put their personal goals above the public interest. In the previous section we saw that the belligerent commanders Cleon and Brasidas, and the peacemakers Nicias and Pleistoanax, were consistently following their own course, even though their policy was occasionally found plausible by Thucydides or approved by their cities. When Nicias reproaches Alcibiades for his personal ambition and greed,⁴³ the latter defends his behavior by claiming that it has contributed to the city's power. According to his interpretation, the new military engagement would bring important benefits to the city, while it would ensure a number of privileges for him personally. Under this view, the expedition appears to be a contract between the ambitious politician and the insatiable *dēmos*. Through their decision, the Athenians legitimate Alcibiades' claims. However, by condemning Alcibiades' behavior at a later stage, "many citizens confuse private and public considerations".⁴⁴ The discrepancy between Alcibiades' and the people's perceptions has its roots in ideology. Alcibiades propounds an old-fashioned, aristocratic model of leadership, where ancestry legitimates claims to power, a

⁴¹ See also Connor (1984) 170, with n. 30.

⁴² Inversely, excessive villainy can cause the citizens' rejection of a politician, as in the case of Hyperbolos; cf. 8.73.3.

⁴³ 6.12; on the speeches before the Sicilian Expedition, cf. Kallet (2001) 24–48.

⁴⁴ Connor (1984) 164.

view that is incompatible with democratic principles.⁴⁵ In addition, Thucydides emphasizes that the pursuit of personal profit was associated with high risk for the city of Athens in the post-Periclean period (2.65.7).

Sometimes, a speaker has to clarify his disposition toward his audience. At the very beginning of his speech at Sparta Alcibiades rebuffs doubts and prejudices he expected to exist in his audience and that might prevent them from fully appreciating his advice on the κοινά, common affairs (6.89.1). Later on, he emphasizes, to his own credit, that his main concern is not assisting the Spartans, but his present enmity with the Athenian *dēmos* (6.92.3). Pericles declares his devotion to a model of statesmanship that associates correct judgment with making this publicly known: ὁ τε γὰρ γνούς καὶ μὴ σαφῶς διδάξας ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐνεθυμήθη· ὁ τε ἔχων ἀμφοτέρω, τῇ δὲ πόλει δύνουσι, οὐκ ἂν ὁμοίως τι οἰκείως φράζοι (“A man who can determine what is needed but not give clear instruction is on the same level as one who has never had the ideas in the first place; one who has both these abilities but is not well disposed toward the city will still not be able to speak appropriately”; 2.60.6). Two speakers who, by their own admission, serve the common good of their cities, Archidamos and Diodotos, not only praise the ideal of εὐβουλία (good counsel, soundness of judgment, prudence according to *LSJ*, s.v. I.) in their addresses to their fellow citizens (1.84.3; 3.44.1), but also exemplify it with their meticulous argumentation.⁴⁶ At the conference of the Sicilians in Gela, the Syracusan Hermocrates faces a mixed audience, consisting of both enemies and friends. He thus makes a pointed appeal to sound deliberation and prudence for the sake of the common good. Εὖ βουλευέσθαι (4.59.4, 4.62.1) and σωφρονεῖν (4.60.1, 4.61.1, 4.64.4) are suggested as prerequisites for the reconciliation of all Sicilians. The orator’s own credibility and goodwill is underscored by his remark that he represents the greatest city on the island (4.59.1, 4.64.1), which is less dependent on the

⁴⁵ See on this aspect: Crane (1996) 118–26. Family ties are an important factor to explain Alcibiades’ ideas; cf. 5.43.2; 6.16.1; 6.89.4. Alcibiades persistently bases his claims on his ἀξία—a traditional notion of merit; cf. ἀξιοῦν: 6.92.2; 6.92.5; ἀνταξιοῦν: 6.16.4; ἀξιος: 6.16.1; ἀξίως: 6.16.2.

⁴⁶ One can compare the absence of argumentation in the speech of Sthenelaidas or Cleon’s aggressive attitude toward the audience.

assistance of others.⁴⁷ A fraudulent claim to εὖ βουλευέσθαι is also made by Athenagoras, the Syracusan demagogue who contests the credibility of the information about the approach of the Athenian fleet (6.36.3). But his aggressive tone undermines his claim. He attributes underhand purposes to those who disagree with his views (the verb βούλεσθαι is repeated in phrases intended to undermine the sincerity of others: 6.36.1, 6.36.2, 6.38.2, 6.38.4, 6.38.5, 6.40.1). Eventually, διαβολή becomes a sign of his own lack of integrity (cf. also 2.65.11). Aggression toward the audience is the corollary of Athenagoras' dishonest performance (6.39.2f.), a feature he shares with Cleon (3.39). Their misleading rhetoric is intended to embarrass the audience and subjugate it to the speaker. There is a qualitative difference with Pericles' constructive criticism, which tries to overcome the discord between the speaker and the audience by referring to common decisions in the past (1.140.1, 2.60.4, 2.64.1). These common decisions form a different kind of contract between the leader and the people than the one discussed previously in connection with Alcibiades. Pericles fully associates his own fate with that of the city (2.60.2–4).⁴⁸

By far the most successful at advertising his own intentions in Thucydides' work is Brasidas.⁴⁹ He revived the traditional slogan of Spartan policy, the liberation of Greece, which proved extremely attractive for the Northern Greeks. The reader, however, is never left in hesitation as to Brasidas' true agenda. His rhetoric is criticized by the historian as fallacious and self-serving, but his audiences never realized this. The unprecedented honors Brasidas enjoyed in Amphipolis substantiate the overwhelming impact of this atypical Spartan on the minds of the Greeks. Their hatred for Athens and the quest for a strong ally made it easy for Brasidas to convince them that he was different. Unreal though it may have been, the Greeks were attracted by Sparta's idealized image: a perception which was not necessarily true, but substituted reality.

⁴⁷ Cf. Landmann (1932) 23–27.

⁴⁸ Cf. also 2.64.6 with Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.340; see Rusten (1989) 197f. On the differences between Pericles and Alcibiades, cf. Price (2001) 254–63.

⁴⁹ See Debnar (2001) 172, 183–93.

3. *Image*

The primary characteristic of public image is its dependence on opinion rather than reality. It can be a substitute for knowledge,⁵⁰ and as such may well be inaccurate, or even false. In the absence of knowledge and information, rumors, images and impressions become much more effective. Images are a part of a group's common perceptions, which strengthen its solidarity.

Contrary to common belief, ancient Athens was not a face-to-face society;⁵¹ citizens did not usually know public figures personally, and consequently their public image played a decisive role in their career. The most successful politician in terms of public relations was certainly Pericles. His reelection as a general for fourteen years running was an unequalled achievement and the result of a combination of many factors. As we have seen, Thucydides highlights several of these factors, especially the fact that Pericles was above being bribed (*χρημάτων τε διαφανῶς ἀδωρότατος*, "conspicuously uncorruptible", 2.65.8). The implications of this statement are more political than they are moral. If Thucydides underscores Pericles' integrity, it is not so much because the politician was honorable but because this characteristic was conspicuous and contributed to his unprecedented acceptance by the masses. It was important for Pericles to construct his own image upon this specific idea, which he then tried to expand upon, defend and control.

When the Athenians expressed their discontent at the living conditions imposed upon them by the war, Pericles was forced to defend his policy by referring to his own image: "Yet I believe that I, the man with whom you are angry, am inferior to no one either at determining or at expounding what is needed, and in addition I am devoted to the city and am not to be bought for money" (2.60.5). Of course, superiority in the matter of money was completely irrelevant to the issue under discussion, i.e., Pericles' responsibility for the war and his defensive tactics; yet here he once again invokes this image of his, which had served as his "trademark" as a public figure.

Thucydides stresses how important it was for Pericles to prove his superiority in matters of wealth in other parts of the *History*: "While

⁵⁰ McNair (1995) 42f.

⁵¹ See Ober (1989) 31–33.

the Peloponnesians were still assembling at the Isthmus and were on the way, before they invaded Attica, Pericles, son of Xanthippus, one of the ten Athenian generals, knew that the invasion was coming, and suspected that Archidamus, with whom he had relations of hospitality, might often leave his land alone and not ravage it—either on his own initiative, wanting to do Pericles a favor, or on the orders of the Spartans, to create a ground of objection to Pericles, just as previously they had commanded the Athenians to expel the accursed on account of him. He therefore announced to the Athenians in the assembly that he had relations of hospitality with Archidamus, but this was not to be a source of harm to the city: if the enemy did not ravage his land and houses as they did those of others, he would give them up to be public property, and no suspicion should attach to him in connection with this” (2.13.1). Here, the conscious care with which Pericles highlights and protects specific aspects of his image is again evident.⁵² An image can easily be destroyed, even undeservedly. Pericles knew all about these mechanisms, as of course did his opponents. A politician’s image has a life of its own, and can be influenced by third parties.

It is worth noting that other sources confirm the importance of Pericles’ image for his career. Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles* gives us some information about Pericles’ private life, a matter Thucydides saw as falling outside of the scope of his work: ὁδὸν τε γὰρ ἐν ἄστει μίαν ἑωρᾶτο τὴν ἐπ’ ἀγορὰν καὶ τὸ βουλευτήριον πορευόμενος, κλήσεις τε δείπνων καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην ἅπασαν φιλοφροσύνην καὶ συνήθειαν ἐξέλειπεν, ὥς ἐν οἷς ἐπολιτεύσατο χρόνοις μακροῖς γενομένοις πρὸς μηδένα τῶν φίλων ἐπὶ δείπνον ἔλθειν πλὴν Εὐρυπτολέμου τοῦ ἀνεψιοῦ γαμοῦντος ἄχρι τῶν σπονδῶν παραγενόμενος εὐθὺς ἐξανέστη (“on one street only in the city was he to be seen walking—the one that took him to the market-place and the council-chamber. Invitations to dinner, and all such friendly and familiar intercourse he declined, so that during the long period that elapsed while he was at the head of the state, there was not a single friend to whose house he went to dine, except that when his kinsman Euryptolemos gave a wedding feast, he attended until the libations were made, and then straightaway

⁵² Some sources mention charges of bribery against Pericles; they are indirectly refuted in Thucydides’ *History*; cf. Will (2003) 238 with n. 52. On bribery in Athenian politics, cf. Ober (1989) 236–38.

rose up and departed"; 7.4; transl. Crane [1996] 135f.). In this example we can see traits which we identified earlier: stability and persistence in building up an image, even if this requires some time, and also the care Pericles took not to give the slightest occasion for his image to be destroyed, something that could happen in an instant.

The opinions that Thucydides has Pericles voice are in the same vein. Speaking to the Athenians during the period of diplomatic exchanges before the outbreak of the war, the general argues that the slightest retreat on their part will appear to be a sign of weakness and encourage the enemy. On the contrary, how will the Athenians break the Spartans' morale? Pericles suggests: καὶ εἰ ᾧμην πείσειν ὑμᾶς, αὐτοὺς ἂν ἐξελθόντας ἐκέλευον αὐτὰ δηῶσαι καὶ δεῖξαι Πελοποννησίοις ὅτι τούτων γε ἕνεκα οὐχ ὑπακούσεσθε ("and if I had thought that I could persuade you, I would have bid you go out and lay them waste with your own hands, and show the Peloponnesians that this at any rate will not make you submit", 1.143.5). Pericles indirectly suggests an action with a calculable cost, one which has no goal or use other than to create an impression. Image has its own reality.

Yet another source gives us the opportunity to confirm Thucydides' testimony: a fragment attributed to the sophist Protagoras, a contemporary of Pericles, found in the pseudo-Plutarchean *Consolation to Apollonius* (118e). This is again about an incident in Pericles' private life: his reaction to the death from the plague of his two sons Paralos and Xanthippos: τῶν γὰρ υἱέων νενηνίων ὄντων καὶ καλῶν, ἐν ὀκτῶ δὲ ταῖς πάσῃσιν ἡμέρῃσιν ἀποθανόντων, νεπενθέως ἀνέτλη. εὐδίας γὰρ εἶχετο ἐξ ἧς πολλὸν ὤνητο κατὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέρην εἰς εὐποτμίην καὶ ἀνωδυνίην καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖσι δόξαν. πᾶς γὰρ τίς μιν ὄρων τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πένθεα ἐρρωμένως φέροντα, μεγαλόφρονά τε καὶ ἀνδρεῖον ἐδόκει εἶναι καὶ ἑαυτοῦ κρείσσω, κάρτα εἰδὼς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν τοιοῖσδε πράγμασιν ἀμηχανίην ("For though his young and beautiful sons had died within a period of only eight days he bore it without grieving. For he maintained his tranquillity of mind, a fact that served him well every day by bringing good fortune, calming distress, and raising his reputation among the people. For at the sight of the manly way he endured his sorrows all judged him high-minded and brave and superior to themselves, knowing well their own helplessness in like circumstances"; Protagoras, fr. B 9 DK; transl. O'Brien). A slightly different version is found in Plutarch's *Life* (36.9). The biographer relates that

Pericles endured his grief for many relatives and friends who he lost to the plague, among them his son Xanthippus and his sister. But on the death of Paralos, the only legitimate son he had left, he broke down and wept bitterly for the only time in his life. There is perhaps no point in asking which of these versions is authentic; the main thing is the perception that each of them expresses. Protagoras' version seems to adapt the facts to the needs of the wider idea it serves. The author wants to portray the impact of Pericles' stance on his contemporaries. This stance strengthens people's regard for him, thanks to a psychological reaction it causes in those who observe it.

The attribution of the passage to Protagoras also indirectly confronts us with the philosophical presuppositions of such a discussion. The idea that Protagoras expresses here, i.e., that every citizen compared Pericles with himself, and evaluated him using himself as a yardstick, certainly recalls the author's gnosiological principle, according to which each person measures all things—and therefore judges others—against himself (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος). Human perception—and perhaps, by extension, human judgment—becomes a measure of knowledge. Protagoras' interest in Pericles does not simply show that the sophist saw this incident as an appropriate illustration of the correctness of his teaching, but probably reveals, conversely, the influence Protagoras had on the thinking of Pericles himself.

This is confirmed by a thought that Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles himself in the proemium of the Funeral Oration: χαλεπὸν γὰρ τὸ μετρίως εἰπεῖν ἐν ᾧ μόλις καὶ ἡ δόκησις τῆς ἀληθείας βεβαιοῦται. ὅ τε γὰρ ξυνειδῶς καὶ εὖνους ἀκροατῆς τάχ' ἂν τι ἐνδεεστέρως πρὸς ἃ βούλεται τε καὶ ἐπίσταται νομίσειε δηλοῦσθαι, ὅ τε ἄπειρος ἔστιν ἃ καὶ πλεονάζεσθαι, διὰ φθόνον, εἴ τι ὑπὲρ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἀκούοι. μέχρι γὰρ τοῦδε ἀνεκτοὶ οἱ ἐπαινοὶ εἰσι περὶ ἐτέρων λεγόμενοι, ἐς ὅσον ἂν καὶ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος οἴηται ἱκανὸς εἶναι δρᾶσαί τι ὧν ἤκουσεν. τῷ δὲ ὑπερβάλλοντι αὐτῶν φθονοῦντες ἤδη καὶ ἀπιστοῦσιν ("It is hard to speak appropriately in circumstances where even the appearance of truth can only with difficulty be confirmed. The listener who knows what has happened and is favorably disposed can easily think that the account given falls short of his wishes and knowledge, while the man lacking in experience may through jealousy think some claims exaggerated if he hears of things beyond his own capacity. Praise spoken of others is bearable up to the point

where each man believes himself capable of doing the things he hears of: anything that goes beyond that arouses envy and so disbelief"; 2.35.2). The processes described in the Funeral Oration and in the Protagorean fragment are identical. People judge the behavior of others on the basis of their beliefs about their own abilities and limitations. In both cases, the recipient of the image is the measure of evaluation. In the Protagorean fragment Pericles ensures the acceptance of other people, cultivating in them the impression that he is the best. His image persuades them of this.

From the work of Thucydides it is Protagoras' influence on Pericles more than on the historian himself that becomes apparent. The techniques that, according to Thucydides, govern the creation, maintenance, and defence of a politician's image in the eyes of the masses are in accordance with the sophist's gnosiological principles, even if they are not conscious applications of these. A passage from Pericles' last speech functions as a further parallel to the Protagorean fragment and the view that fortitude in times of adversity is interpreted as proof of one's superiority to those around him: . . . μήτε ἔνδηλοι ἔστε τοῖς παροῦσι πόνοις βαρυνόμενοι, ὥς οὔτινες πρὸς τὰς ξυμφορὰς γνώμη μὲν ἥκιστα λυποῦνται, ἔργῳ δὲ μάλιστα ἀντέχουσιν, οὗτοι καὶ πόλεων καὶ ἰδιωτῶν κράτιστοί εἰσιν ("... do not let it appear that you are weighed down by your present burdens. The best cities and the best individuals are those who in the face of disaster suffer least distress in their minds and hold out most valiantly in their actions"; 2.64.6).

Conclusion

We have seen that Pericles' public relations strategy, as described by Thucydides, was not based on improvisation but followed a specific method,⁵³ remained focused on specific goals, and above all took advantage of the theory of knowledge of that time, and indeed the most radical version of this. In Thucydides, Pericles surely found his most perspicacious observer, one who not only distinguished the mechanisms of political communication, as it was going around him, but also understood their importance. Even more, the possibilities of

⁵³ Cf. also Connor (1971) 127f.; on Nicias and his image, cf. Geske (2005) 84.

political communication offered the historian a further means of individuation and characterization of the protagonists in his work. A leader's interaction with the crowd can vary according to different criteria: from complete control to the lack of influence, from authoritative statesmanship to irresponsible populism or selfish manipulation, from public acceptance to resignation.

If R. Collingwood characterized Thucydides as the father of psychological historiography,⁵⁴ essentially foreshadowing a string of important studies that stressed this dimension of his work, newer studies, such as that of J. Ober in this volume, consider Thucydides the father of political science. As has been demonstrated in the foregoing discussion, this can be applied further in relation to Thucydides' contribution to the study of the anatomy and function of political communication.

⁵⁴ Collingwood (1961) 29.

THUCYDIDES ON DEMOCRACY AND OLIGARCHY

Kurt A. Raafflaub

Toward the end of his unfinished eighth Book that covers the oligarchy of 411/10, Thucydides offers one of few assessments in his own voice. Hoplites and moderate oligarchs had revolted against the radical core of the Four Hundred; an Athenian squadron had been defeated by a Spartan fleet; Euboea had seceded. Everything seemed lost (8.92–96). In an assembly (the first in months) the Four Hundred were deposed, and power was handed over to five thousand citizens who were defined by their ability to equip themselves as hoplites (8.97.1). In subsequent assemblies measures were enacted to draw up a new constitution. Here Thucydides states: “The initial period (of this regime) was one of the periods when the affairs of Athens were conducted best, at least in my time” (8.97.2).¹ “For it was a moderate (or harmonious) mixture (*metria . . . xynkrasis*) that took the interests of both the few and the many into account” and thus enabled the polis for the first time to recover from its miserable state of affairs (*ibid.*, my tr.).²

This statement has often been interpreted as expressing Thucydides’ political creed: a mixed constitution, blending elements of democracy and oligarchy but avoiding the extremes of both. A mix or compromise it was, and Thucydides recognized it as such, providing us with the first testimony of (as Plato, Aristotle, and especially Polybius attest) a continuing discussion of “mixed constitutions”.³ But if it was Thucydides’ preferred constitution he does not say so. Nor does he explain in more detail why he finds this particular constitution uniquely deserving of positive comment and in what ways exactly it achieved what he says it did. As Simon Hornblower suggests, perhaps “a finished version of that book would have contained a speech showing what was praiseworthy about it”.⁴ All Thucydides indicates is

¹ Andrewes’ paraphrase in *HCT* 5.339.

² Cf. Pope (1988) 28f.

³ Von Fritz (1954); Nippel (1980).

⁴ Hornblower (1987) 70.

that under this particular constitution the Athenians governed themselves exceptionally well—better, at any rate, than under earlier and later systems that one-sidedly served the interests of the few or the many, that is, narrow oligarchies or “radical” democracies.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine how Thucydides describes, analyzes, and judges both democracy and oligarchy, to what extent he pays attention to Sparta’s constitution, and what role he assigns to the nature and working of constitutions in historical causation.⁵ Thucydides’ own text and interpretation are thus our primary concern; the reader will find references to the vast modern scholarship on many of the issues discussed here in the commentaries (*HCT*; Hornblower) and in the other chapters of this volume. I begin with a few general remarks.

Principles

In his preface Polybius, the second-century BCE historian of Rome’s rise to world power, announces his intention “to discover how and under what type of constitution (*genos politeias*) the Romans succeeded . . . in bringing under their rule almost the whole of the inhabited world” (1.1.5; tr. Scott-Kilvert [1979], mod.). After the battle of Cannae, when Roman fortune reached its lowest point, Polybius writes, “through the peculiar virtues of their constitution (*politeumatos idiotēs*) and their ability to keep their heads”, they were still able eventually to defeat the Carthaginians (3.118.9). He therefore places at this very point (*ibid.* 11) a long digression that offers a theoretical discussion of the cycle of constitutions (6.3–10), analyzes Rome’s “mixed constitution” (6.11–18), describes Rome’s military organization (6.19–42), and compares Rome with other states (6.43–56). His sketch of the Roman constitution is somewhat idealized and anachronistic in its historical context⁶ but presumably close enough to reality to have explanatory value. At the beginning of this digression (6.2.3) Polybius repeats his opening statement (quoted above) and elaborates on it: “In all political situations . . . the principal factor which makes for success or failure is the form of a state’s constitution

⁵ See generally Leppin (1998).

⁶ Cornell (1991); Walbank (2002) ch. 18.

(*syntaxis politeias*): it is from this source, as if from a fountainhead, that all designs and plans of action not only originate but reach their fulfilment" (6.2.9–10; cf. 6.5–7).

Such detailed constitutional analysis "will prove of great service both to students of history and to practical statesmen in the task of reforming or drawing up other constitutions" (3.118.12). Moreover, humankind "possesses no better guide to conduct than the knowledge of the past". All historians claim "that the study of history is at once an education in the truest sense and a training for a political career" (1.1.1–2). Similar formulations recur frequently throughout the work (e.g., 3.12; 3.31–32; 12.25a).⁷

Thucydides includes in his *History* few and only short digressions (perhaps in reaction to Herodotus's propensity for them) and certainly none on constitutional analysis. Nor does he emphasize as explicitly as Polybius does the usefulness of history or the importance of constitutions in historical causation. Yet he is aware of both. His work, not fashioned primarily to please and entertain, is intended to be an "everlasting possession" (*ktēma es aiei*). History is useful because it enables those familiar with it to understand events of the past and thus to cope better with "similar events which may be expected to happen in the future" (1.22.4; tr. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.61). History does not repeat itself precisely, but patterns are likely to recur. For the infinite variety of history contains one stable element: *to anthrōpinon*, human nature or the human condition. Because this human factor remains identical (e.g., 1.84.4; 3.82.2), people will react in similar ways to similar experiences.⁸ The historian's task is that of an "anthropologist": he collects, categorizes, analyzes, and understands human behavior and is thus able to anticipate it. This is what imbues history with a certain predictive quality and educational potential. Thucydides is influenced here by medical theory; the concepts just mentioned are particularly prominent in his analyses of sociopolitical illness in the plague in Athens (2.47–53) and civil war in Corcyra (3.81–84). Nor is typical behavior limited to individuals; each community has its own distinctive character and thus acts in specific ways (1.70–71), but all react similarly to similar conditions (1.76).

⁷ Walbank (1957) 6–9; Sacks (1981) ch. 4; Eckstein (1995) 16–27.

⁸ Reinhold (1985).

Pericles' Funeral Oration, delivered at the state funeral of those fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, serves to stress the importance of a community's *politeia*. Pericles refuses to follow the traditional template of such speeches (for which Lysias, *Or.* 2, offers a good example). Indiscriminate praise easily rings hollow (2.35). Although the accomplishments of ancestors and contemporaries must be honored (36.1–3), he does not indulge in battles and the bravery of those who fought them—things well known to all. Rather, he wishes to describe “the principles (*epitēdeusis*) underlying our actions in our rise to power, and the institutions [or constitution, *politeia*] and way of life (*tropoi*) through which our empire became great” (36.4; tr. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.298). Although this resembles Polybius' statements, Thucydides formulates it not as a crucial principle of historical causation, but applies it to one polis only by sketching a portrait of Periclean Athens at the peak of its power. This portrait combines realistic sociopolitical analysis, elements of Athens' democratic ideology, and idealization on the part of the speaker and/or historian. Deliberately ambiguous, closely linked with the method chapters (below) by close echoes in thought, structure, and terminology that reverberate throughout the entire work, the Funeral Oration invites comparison, both in similarity and contrast with, and thus serves as a programmatic piece for, the *History* as a whole.⁹ Its positive tenor will be undercut immediately by the impact of the plague and dismantled systematically in the remainder of the work. Moreover, in this portrait comments on the constitution proper (*politeia*) occupy only one chapter (37); the rest deals with principles, attitudes, customs, and values. Thucydides, that is, focuses broadly on the Athenians' way of life (*politeia* in its most comprehensive sense) rather than narrowly on the democratic constitution.

While Herodotus often offers first-person statements (the historian's “I”), sharing with his public the process of source evaluation that underlies the historical narrative,¹⁰ Thucydides once formulates his methodological principles concisely (1.20–22) and then simply applies them, thus producing a dense and smooth narrative. Close echoes in thought and terminology link these method chapters with the

⁹ Grethlein (2005).

¹⁰ Dewald (1987); (2002); Lateiner (1989).

Funeral Oration and reverberate throughout the work.¹¹ Thucydides also offers a much debated explanation of the content and purpose of speeches (1.22.1, to be contrasted with *Plb.* 12.25a–b): they combine information about what was actually said with arguments that, he thinks, would or should reasonably have been used at that specific occasion. Whatever their authentic core, in their condensation and pointed focus on essentials they reflect the historian's views and serve his purposes.¹² Moreover, they are often paired to illustrate antithetical positions, and incorporate discussions of matters of principle, thus illuminating the process by which a specific decision was reached and providing crucial interpretation of the main issues underlying historical developments. Since many of these debates take place in the Athenian assembly, they are directly pertinent to Thucydides' analysis of democracy. Some of these speeches reach a level of abstraction that approximates them to set pieces. The "Melian Dialogue" (5.85–113) is an extreme example, but the Mytilenian and Sicilian debates (3.36–50; 6.8–26) too go far beyond the immediate question (of whether or not to annihilate rebellious Mytilene or launch an expedition to conquer Sicily) in revealing the problems and dynamics of democratic decision making or "imperialism", respectively.¹³

In addition, the historian uses the disastrous plague ravaging Athens and the civil war in Corcyra to analyze how sociopolitical order disintegrates under extreme pressure. Such pieces illustrate phenomena that are crucial to understanding history. Both are linked with democracy and with each other. The plague foreshadows what will happen first in Corcyra under the impact of an epidemic of political passion and civil strife, *stasis* (3.70–81), then in many other *poleis* (3.82–84), and finally in Athens itself (8.45ff., below). To dissect two other, equally crucial, political phenomena (democracy and imperialism), Thucydides chooses an ongoing process of analysis that gradually reveals their nature and the forces inherent in them. Importantly, often the same occasions serve to deal with both: democracy and imperialism are inseparably intertwined.¹⁴ Hence the collective character portrait the Corinthians draw early of the hyperactive Athenians

¹¹ Grethlein (2005).

¹² See Rengakos, this volume.

¹³ Raaffaub (2002a).

¹⁴ Raaffaub (1994).

(1.70–71), though at its place intended to shake the Spartans out of their detrimental lethargy, has significance for both phenomena and reverberates throughout the work.

We cannot therefore understand Thucydides' discussion of democracy unless we throw our net widely. He analyzes democracy in action, through its decisions and the behavior of its citizens. The same is true for oligarchy, which emerges in substantial detail only late in the *History*. We need to follow the historian on this trail—especially since on the surface he focuses narrowly on his chosen subject matter: the war between Athens and Sparta, the greatest war ever with the most profound impact on the largest number of people (1.1.1–2; 1.23.1–3). Foreign relations, power politics, and war thus dominate his analysis and narrative. Long is the list of issues that he takes for granted and touches upon only when they have a direct impact on politics and the war: these include economic, religious, and social matters as well as “constitutional practice”.¹⁵

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the digression on the *Pentekontaetia*, the fifty-year period between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars (1.89–117), that is designed to answer only one question (1.23.6; 1.89.1; 1.118): how did Athens succeed in building up so much power that Sparta began to fear it and decided for war as the only means to stop it? Domestic politics and constitutional developments enter the picture only rarely, although in this period, for example, Cimon long dominated politics but was then ousted, democracy was fully realized through a series of reforms enacted between 462 and 450 under Ephialtes' and Pericles' leadership,¹⁶ and in the 440s the long-standing rivalry between Pericles and Thucydides son of Melesias ended in the latter's ostracism and the former's long-lasting primacy.¹⁷ All we hear from Thucydides is that during the campaign of Tanagra in 458/7 some Athenians secretly negotiated with a Spartan force in Boeotia “in the hope of putting an end to democratic government”, and the Athenians attacked the Spartans in part “because they had some suspicions of the plot to overthrow the democracy” (1.107.4; 1.107.6).

¹⁵ *HCT* 1.1–25; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.10–13.

¹⁶ Raaflaub (2006).

¹⁷ Fornara – Samons (1991); Rhodes (1992).

Yet, as Lisa Kallet¹⁸ has shown in careful examinations of Thucydides' treatment of financial issues, the *History* contains a surprising amount of information; it is just not foregrounded and needs to be peeled out of its context. The same is true for other issues, including democracy. The historian offers the political and constitutional details we would generally expect (including the names of officials and generals and the interaction among institutions) only when they are directly relevant to the war.¹⁹ If we limit ourselves to the obvious and explicit, we risk overlooking essential insights. This chapter will therefore focus closely on Thucydides' text; the reader will easily be able to complement our results with those gained by different and sometimes more theoretical approaches.²⁰

Democracy

Collective character. Thucydides' Corinthians characterize the Athenians as follows:

An Athenian is always an innovator, quick to form a resolution and quick at carrying it out . . . Athenian daring will outrun its own resources; they will take risks against their better judgement, and still, in the midst of danger, remain confident . . .; they never hesitate . . ., they are always abroad, for they think that the farther they go the more they will get . . . If they win a victory, they follow it up at once, and if they suffer a defeat, they scarcely fall back at all. As for their bodies, they regard them as expendable for their city's sake . . .; but each man cultivates his own intelligence, again with a view to doing something notable for his city . . . They prefer hardship and activity to peace and quiet. In a word, they are by nature incapable of either living a quiet life themselves or of allowing anyone else to do so (1.70; tr. here and below, unless indicated otherwise, Warner [1954], often modified).

These daring and meddlesome Athenians, models of "hyperactivism" (*polypragmosynē*) and an insatiable greed for more (*pleonexia*),²¹ stand in marked contrast to the slow, cautious, risk-avoiding Spartans (Th., *ibid.*, see below). Thucydides places great emphasis on this contrast,

¹⁸ Kallet-Marx (1993); Kallet (2001).

¹⁹ Pope (1988) 290–92.

²⁰ See, e.g., Farrar (1988) ch. 5; Ober (1998) ch. 2.

²¹ Raaflaub (1994); Balot (2001).

pursues it elsewhere (not least in Pericles' speeches), and uses it to explain important decisions (such as Athens' attack on Sicily or Sparta's failure to exploit Athenian weakness, 6.9.3; 6.18.3; 8.96). A community's sociopolitical order and way of life (*politeia*), he understands, shape its character. Democracy breeds citizens who think and behave differently, and fosters social relations and policies that differ profoundly, from those of an oligarchic state. Such insights were part of a pool of ideas, influenced in part by medical and sophistic theories, that was shared among intellectuals at the time.²²

This collective character portrait explains Athenian attitudes toward both foreign policy and civic life (visible, for example, in the citizens' litigiousness).²³ In his Funeral Oration (2.36–46), Pericles elaborates on these aspects, obviously in part reacting to criticism. Three generations of Athenians have kept their community free and built the mighty empire (2.36), thus making their *polis* the most self-sufficient (2.36.3) or, as others put it, the greatest and freest of all (6.89.6; 7.69.2), but they also do know to enjoy recreation, festivals, and the goods coming to them from all over the world (2.38; cf. 2.40.1). The Athenians know to fight as well as others, and their achievements bear comparison with any, but they do it freely, not oppressed by a rigorous regimen (2.39; 2.41.3–5), and to help others, not out of self-interest (2.40.4–5). Athens is a democracy because the interests not of a few but of the majority matter, but political office is open to anybody who is able, irrespective of social status and wealth or poverty, and daily life is characterized by freedom and mutual tolerance as well as respect for office holders and the law (2.37). A citizen not involved in public life (*apragmōn*) is considered useless, but this is because the Athenians foster a citizen ideal that combines dedication to private affairs with expertise in public matters (2.40.2), individual self-sufficiency (*sōma autarkes*, 2.41.1) with a lover's commitment to the community (*erastēs tēs poleōs*, 2.43.1). In Pericles' positive portrait, the aggressive imperialists are also capable of relaxing and loving what is beautiful; the impulses of *polypragmosynē* and *pleonexia* are controlled by rational debate, civic responsibility, and commitment to the common good.

²² Thomas (2000); Raaflaub (1989) 51f.; (2002b) 153f.

²³ Todd (1993) 147–63; Christ (1998).

We Athenians, in our own persons, take our decisions on policy or submit them to proper discussions; for we do not think that there is an incompatibility between words and deeds; the worst thing is to rush into action before the consequences have been properly debated . . . [We are] capable at the same time of taking risks and of estimating them beforehand (2.40.2–3).

Much of this will increasingly prove illusionary. Despite deliberation, irrational desire and enthusiasm (*erōs* and *epithymia*) determine the decision for the Sicilian Expedition (6.24). Self-interest dominates the Mytilenian Debate (3.37–48). Possibly countering Athens' (or Pericles', Th. 2.36.3) claim, Herodotus lets Solon deny that any country or individual can be self-sufficient (1.32.8).²⁴ Indeed, under the impact of the plague (Th. 2.47–53), no *sōma*, whether strong or weak, proves *autarkes*, that is, individual self-sufficiency, like respect for laws and the gods, evaporates (2.51.3), and the human animal, bereft of socialization, reveals its true nature.

The same happens as a consequence of a different disease, civil strife (*stasis*),²⁵ as is visible first in Corcyra (3.69–84). Under oligarchic or democratic pretenses, factions attack and destroy each other. “Democrats” massacre their enemies, accusing them of conspiracy to overthrow democracy but in reality acting out of hatred or other personal motives (3.81.4–5). Later, this becomes a general pattern, “convulsing practically the whole of the Hellenic world” (3.82.1). Under such conditions even the language is transformed, values and family ties disintegrate, and political interest groups take over (3.82.3–7). *Archē* (love of power), *pleonexia* (greed), *philotimia* (personal ambition), and a propensity for strife and violence (*philonikein*) are the main motives. Self-interest prevails. Political catchwords—political equality of the masses vs. aristocratic moderation—prove mere ideology (3.82.8). Again, human nature shows its true face:

In the various cities these revolutions were the cause of many calamities—as happens and always will happen while human nature is what it is . . . In times of peace and prosperity cities and individuals alike follow higher standards . . . But war is a stern teacher . . . With the ordinary conventions of civilized life thrown into confusion, human nature, always ready to offend even where laws exist, showed itself proudly in

²⁴ Raafflaub (2004) 184–87.

²⁵ Price (2001).

its true colours, as something incapable of controlling passion, insubordinate to the idea of justice, the enemy to anything superior to itself (3.82.3; 3.84.2).

Athens was lucky to be affected by this disease only much later, in 411.

We return to the Funeral Oration. If controlled, subordinated to the common good, and funneled into rational communal action, Thucydides seems to say, Athens' collective character traits are able to contribute uniquely to the *polis*' greatness. Yet, as we shall see, when uncontrolled, manipulated to serve individual ambition, and whipped into frenzied mass enthusiasm for unrealistic goals, they become the source of communal self-destruction.²⁶ Pericles, a unifier, succeeds in containing them, due to his own superior character and skills. His successors fail to do so, even foster these traits, and become divisive (2.65).

Thucydides' assessment of democracy thus is twofold. One aspect concerns the people who pass decisions in the assembly and are ultimately responsible for policies—even if they refuse to acknowledge this responsibility (3.43.4–5; 8.1.1). In fact, Thucydides attributes the vast majority of political actions to the collectivity of citizens rather than individual leaders.²⁷ The other concerns the leaders who compete in persuading the people to accept their contrasting proposals and often enough are then put in charge of executing them—gaining praise, material benefits, and increased influence for success, and blame, loss of influence, and punishment if they fail.

The dēmos: The first decision the *dēmos* makes in the *History* seals a treaty with Corcyra (1.31–45). The debate is highlighted by antithetical speeches delivered by envoys from Corcyra and Corinth. It takes the *dēmos* two days (or two attempts?) to reach a final decision. Whether or not this was necessary in the case of alliances,²⁸ it entails a change of opinion (1.44.1).

The next major decision concerns the war against the Peloponnesians. As if to underline Pericles' status as the "first man" (2.65.9), Thucydides treats his first intervention in the *History* (like his last

²⁶ Samons (2004).

²⁷ Pope (1988) 277–82.

²⁸ Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.86.

one) as a major policy speech (1.140–44; 2.60–64), leaving it unopposed. “Many speakers came forward and opinions were expressed on both sides . . . Among the speakers was Pericles . . ., the first man of his time among the Athenians and the most powerful both in action and debate. His advice was as follows . . . The Athenians considered that his advice was best and voted as he had asked them to vote” (1.139.4; 1.145.1).

Two years later, demoralized by devastating Spartan invasions and the plague’s horrors, the Athenians mutiny even against Pericles: hopeless and angry, they blame him for the war and “hold him responsible for all the misfortunes which had overtaken them” (2.59.2–3). Anticipating this reaction (2.59.3), he responds with a tough but encouraging speech (60–64, below) and succeeds reasonably well in restoring their morale (2.59.3; 2.65.1).

So far as public policy was concerned, they accepted his arguments . . . ; yet as private individuals they still felt the weight of their misfortunes . . . In fact, the ill feeling of all against Pericles . . . was not satisfied until they had condemned him to pay a fine. Not long afterwards, however, as is the way with crowds, they re-elected him to the generalship and put all their affairs into his hands (2.65.1–4).

Unlike several alleged trials of Pericles’ associates, his own fall, fine, and reinstatement cannot be doubted.²⁹ He died soon thereafter. Thucydides attributes the vicissitudes of his last year to typical mob fickleness and goes on to offer, in a summary assessment of his long career and in stark contrast to his successors, his own insights on how the *dēmos* needs to be treated in order to make democracy work. Since Pericles’ career mostly preceded the outbreak of the war and the *History*’s starting point, this assessment also serves as a programmatic preview: the thesis presented here will be confirmed in a series of case studies as the war unfolds. The masses, the historian emphasizes, need to be held down, but in a respectful manner typical of freemen (*eleutherōs*).³⁰ They must be led firmly and not be flattered. If necessary, their collective sentiment must be contradicted; their arrogance and overconfidence must be balanced vigorously by stressing the dangers involved and arousing fear, their unreasonable fear by restoring their optimism and courage (2.65.8–9, below).

²⁹ Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.341; Raaffaub (2000).

³⁰ Cf. *HCT* 2.192; Edmunds – Martin (1977); Parry (1989).

Thucydides elaborates on some of these issues in the Mytilenian Debate. Because it follows upon the first case of an allied revolt and its suppression during the war, he analyzes it in great detail, from motives, outbreak, and failure (3.1–18; 3.25–28) to the Athenians' deliberations about the punishment of the defeated rebels (3.36–50). The debate on this issue (deterrence vs. generosity, both based entirely on expediency) is less important here than the light it sheds on the process of democratic decision making and popular responsibility. Anger initially motivates the Assembly to decide for annihilating Mytilene by killing the men and enslaving the women and children (3.36.1–3). Doubts about the unprecedented harshness of the punishment cause a sudden change of opinion (3.36.4–5). In a second assembly, an intense debate is dominated by Cleon, who exhibits an exceptionally forceful and persuasive style of leadership (3.36.6), and Diodotus (3.41), otherwise unknown, who will win, though barely (3.49.1), and save the majority of the Mytilenians, though by a hair (3.49.4).

Again, therefore, Thucydides highlights a change of opinion and a wrenching debate in a second assembly. Cleon's opening statement, that democracy is incapable of ruling an empire (3.37.1), unleashes a more general critique. The *dēmos*, ruled by emotions rather than rational evaluation of facts, is prone to changing decisions and policies (3.37.3). A community is better off with bad laws that are observed than good laws that are constantly being altered. "Good unsophisticated commonsense is more useful than immoral cleverness, and the more simple sort generally make better citizens than people shrewder than themselves" (3.37.4 [transl. Hornblower], remarkably close to Ps.-Xen. *Ath.* 1.4–9). Leaders should not engage in competitions for cleverness nor give advice in which they do not believe themselves (*ibid.*). Politicians who mislead the people by their elaborate speeches are likely to be overconfident or bribed (3.38.2). But the people deserve blame for permitting such competitive displays:

The possibility of future actions you judge from the skill of their advocates, and for what has already been done . . . you rely on the words of clever critics. What you are best at is being deceived by the novelty of an argument and refusing to go along with one which has been tried and tested . . . Each man would like most of all to be able to speak himself . . . You praise sharp remarks even before they are made; and you are eager to forehear what is said, but slow to foresee the results that will follow from it . . . In short, you are overcome by the

pleasure of listening, and you sit here looking more like spectators of the sophists than decision-makers for the city (3.38.4–7; tr. Rhodes [1994a]).

Although fickle, supporters claim, the masses are the best judges of politics (Hdt. 3.80.6; Th. 6.39.1). That they are connoisseurs of novelty in speech and argument is new here and entails both criticism and compliment: they confuse form with substance and are thus easily led astray by persuasive speech, but through frequent exposure they know and appreciate the art of rhetoric—Aristophanes' Praxagora confirms this with a twist (*Ec.* 243–44). Contrary to Cleon's polemic, I would expect that such familiarity covered matters of substance as well, at least in the wide range of frequent issues. Yet the punishment of a rebellious ally, although not unique, was no ordinary business.

By contrast, Diodotus reaffirms Pericles' principle: careful deliberation, without haste and anger, is essential (3.42.1–2). Allegations of bribery make it impossible for politicians to lose with dignity, preventing even honest ones from speaking up (3.42.3–4). When lack of success is not punished with disgrace, politicians will be less tempted to use flattery and speak against their own conviction (3.42.5–6). As matters stand, speakers who have good advice to offer must no less tell lies in order to be believed than those who advocate some monstrous measure (3.43.1–3).

We speakers should claim to think further ahead than you who consider what is immediately in front of you, especially since we who give the advice can be called to account but you who listen cannot. If the man who persuades and the man who follows were damaged equally, you would judge more sensibly (43.4–5; tr. Rhodes [1994a] mod.).

We are reminded of the Athenians' reaction to the news about the Sicilian disaster: "For a long time people would not believe it . . . And when they did recognize the facts, they turned against the public speakers who had been in favour of the expedition, as though they themselves had not voted for it" (8.1.1). Overall, then, both speakers confront the fact that in political reality, esp. under the pressure of war, the ideal described by Pericles does not work.

Cleon, defeated in this political battle, prevails in the next, with ominous consequences. The debates about the Pylian campaign and Sparta's peace offer in 425/4 reveal more fully the weaknesses of democratic decision making. Confronted with a choice between

moderation with peace (4.17–20) and greed (*pleonexia*) with more war, the Athenians, true to their collective character, embrace Cleon's hawkish policy (4.21–22), and even more so after Cleon's unexpected success (4.41.3–4).

Moreover, the Assembly makes an important strategic decision in a state of emotional excitement and without rational debate, entrusting leadership in a major campaign to a man without military credentials. Cleon causes a confrontation with Nicias by unfounded personal attacks and a wild boast about his own ability to end the campaign successfully (4.27.3–5). Supported by shouts in the Assembly, Nicias urges him to live up to his words (4.28.1). As Cleon tries to back out, Nicias offers him his own command. "As a crowd is apt to do, the more Cleon tried to evade the voyage and withdraw what he had said, the more they encouraged Nicias to hand over the command and shouted out to Cleon that he should sail. So, since he no longer had any way of escaping from what he had said, Cleon undertook the voyage" (4.28.3–4; tr. Rhodes). This time things turn out well, but in 415 the Athenians make an even more consequential decision in a similar state of heated emotion and enthusiasm, and this decision will end in disaster.

Athens' Sicilian ambitions had a long prehistory. A first expedition in 427–24 was charged, under thinly veiled pretexts, with taking control of matters on the island (3.86, 115). Surprisingly, confronted with outside interference, the Sicilian Greeks settled their differences (4.58–65). Lacking reasons for further intervention, the Athenian fleet returned. Nevertheless, the generals were punished; allegedly, "they had been bribed to leave Sicily when it was in their power to have taken control of the island" (4.65.3). In formulations recalling the Athenian character portrait, Thucydides comments:

Such was the effect on the Athenians of their present good fortune that they thought that nothing could go wrong with them; that the possible and the difficult were alike attainable, whether the forces employed were large or wholly inadequate. It was their surprising success in most directions which caused this state of mind and suggested to them that their strength was equal with their hopes (4.65.4).

In the spring of 415, the Athenians decided to send a large expeditionary force to Sicily. Its charge was to support Athens' allies against their enemies and generally to advance Athenian interests (6.8.2). In Thucydides' opinion, the goal was conquest (6.6.1; cf. 6.8.4), although the Athenians acted without sufficient knowledge of

Sicily and the magnitude of their undertaking (6.1.1; 6.6.1) and were misinformed about allied resources (6.8.2).

A first assembly votes for the expedition and appoints three generals, including Nicias and Alcibiades. A second assembly, convened to determine the necessary resources, hears Nicias' appeal to reconsider the decision, Alcibiades' plea to uphold it, and Nicias' last effort to prompt a change of opinion by asking for vastly increased resources. Nicias explicitly mentions the Athenian collective character (*tropoi*): "I know that no speech of mine could be powerful enough to alter your characters, and it would be useless to advise you to safeguard what you have and not to risk what is yours already for doubtful prospects in the future" (6.9.3). Still, Nicias attempts to raise awareness of the difficulties involved, to avoid a rushed decision and rethink the entire matter carefully, and to control emotions. Inactivity (*apragmosynē*) is better in this case than interventionism (*polypragmosynē*), far-sightedness (*pronoia*) better than enthusiasm and desire for more (*epithymia* and *pleonexia*). Significantly, he appeals to the older citizens not "to be brow-beaten or be frightened of being called a coward if you do not vote for war. Do not . . . indulge in hopeless passions (*erōs*) for what is not there" (6.13.1). Yet this is exactly what happens:

The Athenians . . . became more enthusiastic . . . than ever . . . There was a passion (*erōs*) for the enterprise which affected everyone alike . . . The result of this excessive enthusiasm of the majority [or perhaps "the excessive desire for more", *dia tēn agan tōn pleonōn epithymian*] was that those who actually were opposed to the expedition were afraid of being thought unpatriotic if they voted against it, and therefore kept quiet (6.24).

Thus *erōs* and *pleonexia* prevail: the Athenians once again live up to their character, especially since Alcibiades urges them on, skillfully manipulating precisely these well-known tendencies:

We cannot calculate . . . exactly how much empire we want to have. The fact is that we have reached a stage where we are forced to plan new conquests and forced to hold on to what we have got, because there is a danger that we ourselves may fall under the power of others unless others are in our power. And you cannot look upon this idea of a quiet life in quite the same way as others do—not, that is, unless you are going to change your whole way of living (*ta epitedeumata*) and make it like theirs is (6.18.3).

Character disposition and perceived political necessity thus combine to propel the Athenians further on a track of imperialism. Neither

the dangers involved nor the massive military resources needed to overcome these, assessed thoroughly by Nicias (6.19.2–23), can dampen their enthusiasm and passion (6.24–26).

These same Athenians also react emotionally to religious scandals perpetrated apparently by young aristocrats, interpreting them “as an omen for the expedition, and at the same time as evidence of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the democracy” (6.27.3; 6.28.2; 6.60.1). The whole affair is blown out of proportion by political rivalries and distrust of Alcibiades (6.28.2) and, according to Thucydides, mishandled atrociously in an atmosphere of general suspicion and witch hunt directed against elite circles (6.53; 6.60).³¹

The leaders: In Pericles Thucydides portrays an ideal democratic statesman. He is most powerful both in action and speech (1.139.4), recalling the heroic ideal of being both a speaker of words and doer of deeds (e.g., *Iliad* 9.443). The traditional Greek concept of leadership combined political and military competence; Cleon is among the first who, at least initially, was only *rhētōr*, politician.³² Thucydides summarizes Pericles’ leadership as follows: He had led the city

modestly and so had preserved it safely, and under his guidance it had risen to its greatest height . . . Since he was strong in both repute and intellect and conspicuously incorruptible, Pericles held the masses on a light rein, and led them rather than let them lead him. This was because he did not say anything to please them in an effort to acquire power by improper means, but he was able even to speak against them and provoke their anger because he possessed power due to his prestige. Whenever he saw that they were arrogant and undeservedly confident, he would speak to strike terror into them; and when he saw them unreasonably afraid he would restore their confidence once more (2.65.5, 8–9; transl. Rhodes [1988], Rusten [1989], mod.).

Thucydides’ style is dense and complex, his portrait of Pericles certainly idealized.³³ Yet the passage conveys his catalogue of a good democratic leader’s qualities: moderation, intelligence, foresight and thorough knowledge, personal distinction and charisma, absolute integrity, respectful firmness in dealing with the *dēmos*, lack of excessive ambition and thus independence that makes it possible to contradict popular sentiment, courage even to provoke anger, disdain

³¹ *HCT* 4.264–90; Furley (1996).

³² Hansen (1999) 268–77; Ober (1989) esp. pt. III.

³³ Badian (1993) ch. 4; Schubert (1994) 11–16; see also Podlecki (1998).

of flattery, and psychagogic skills to balance extreme popular emotions. Thucydides' Nicias demonstrates some of these qualities but lacks Pericles' charisma and rhetorical skills—both abundant in his opponent, Alcibiades, who in turn lacks integrity and moderation. Pericles' success is founded precisely in his possession of wisdom and charisma (the “whole package”), while the mistaken decision about Sicily is rooted in the clash of two leaders who each possess only half of it—and in such clashes typically charisma prevails over wisdom.

Pericles nominally leads in a democracy but in fact rules Athens as the “first man” (2.65.9). Thucydides attributes the Athenian failures in the war entirely to the motives and policies of Pericles' successors. They violate his cautious war strategy that is based on moderation and discipline, scatter Athens' resources, are driven by individual ambition and greed, and seek personal honor and advantage rather than the common good, implicating the whole community in their failure (2.65.7). Much the same motives (honor and advantage, but also fear) lie behind Athens' collective imperialist impetus (1.75.3; 1.76.2), but what the community as a whole does keeps it united, while the pursuit of the same goals by individuals divides it. Thucydides sees here the main problem: “The leaders who followed Pericles were more on a level with one another, and as each strove to become first they tended to abandon affairs to the people to gratify their whims” (2.65.10). In an imperial city, this inevitably resulted in political mistakes, worst among them the Sicilian Expedition (2.65.11). Trying to harm each other in their struggle for political supremacy, the politicians failed to stand united in supporting this campaign (2.65.11). Yet, despite increasing odds, the Athenians could have prevailed in the war. “They did not give in until they stumbled over themselves in their internal disputes and in that way came to ruin” (2.65.12).

In an effort to bring out the bare essentials, Thucydides probably exaggerates this contrast. But he substantiates his view carefully as the war progresses and increasingly momentous decisions need to be made. A debate within the debate about Mytilene (see previous section) focuses on the impact of popular attitudes on democratic leadership. Among a *dēmos* that pays more attention to rhetorical brilliance than political substance and is susceptible to deceit, politicians in their ruthless competition scatter accusations of bribery, promote grandiose schemes, flatter the people, speak against their own conviction, and say whatever it takes to prevail (3.37–38; 3.42–43).

The first occasion when these conditions result in a bad policy decision concerns the Pylos campaign. An Athenian general's daring strategy has trapped a strong enemy force and thereby prompted Sparta to open peace negotiations (4.1–16). Sparta offers "peace, alliance, friendly and neighborly relations" in exchange for the trapped men (4.19.1). Pericles' war strategy was designed to convince Sparta of the futility of the war;³⁴ in his plan, a peace on the *status quo ante* was equivalent to a victory for Athens. Not so Cleon. True, he has the courage to contradict and chastise the *dēmos* (3.37), but here he supports the Athenians' desire "to win still more" (*pleonexia*) and their arrogance and overconfidence, making them believe that while they have the men trapped they can conclude peace whenever they want (4.21.2). His furious polemics cause negotiations to fail because the Spartans are certain that the Athenians will not "accept their proposals in a reasonable spirit" (4.22).

In a bizarre episode, Cleon, fearing loss of popularity because of his role in thwarting the negotiations, takes the offensive and maneuvers himself into a position in which he cannot avoid taking command at Pylos himself (4.27–28, above). Against any reasonable expectation, he brings the campaign to a successful end, returns to Athens in triumph and reaches an even higher level of influence (4.29–39). As a result, the Athenians, now "aiming at even greater things", decline renewed Spartan peace efforts (4.41.3–4). Peace, in fact, will become possible only after Cleon's death. Athens will survive the first ten years of war exhausted but essentially unharmed. In the last part of the war, no longer covered by Thucydides, the self-serving intransigence of another warmongering demagogue, Cleophon, will squander more opportunities for peace and cause the defeat and almost the annihilation of Athens.

The Sicilian Debate contrasts two leaders with radically different styles. One is Nicias, formerly Cleon's opponent, the architect of the peace treaty of 421, a moderate politician. He has been elected against his wishes to the command of the expedition and considers it a serious mistake (6.8.4). Like Pericles, he does not seek power for the wrong reasons and dares to contradict popular sentiment: "Just as in the past I have never spoken against my convictions in order

³⁴ Kagan (2003) 60–63.

to gain honour, so I shall not do it now, but shall tell you what I think is for the best" (6.9.2). His advice (6.10–11) follows Pericles' conservative war strategy. He warns the Assembly not to rush in adopting the plans of self-serving, overambitious, young hotheads (12.2) and appeals to the older citizens to think rationally and prevent the community from exposing itself to very serious danger (13.1–14).

His opponent is Alcibiades, young, charming, brilliant, and motivated by the desire not only to beat his rival Nicias and defend himself against personal attacks, but also to gain wealth and honor by conquering Sicily and Carthage (cf. 6.90.2–3), and so to support his extravagances and passions. Although he is supremely talented and has a successful public record, his personality, excessive ambition, and flamboyant lifestyle cause tensions that, in Thucydides' view, contribute decisively to Athens' downfall. "For most people became frightened at a quality in him which was beyond the normal and showed itself both in the lawlessness of his private life and habits and in the spirit in which he acted on all occasions. They thought that he was aiming at tyranny and so turned against him" (6.15). In sharp contrast to Pericles and to recent trends among demagogues,³⁵ Alcibiades tries to combine aristocratic ostentation (6.16) and democratic leadership and thus becomes divisive and vulnerable. His alleged involvement in religious scandals that raise fears of an oligarchic conspiracy (6.27–28; 6.53; 6.60) offers his enemies an opportunity: they soon have him recalled from his command in Sicily and thus prompt his defection to Sparta (6.29; 6.53; 6.61).

In opposing Nicias' rational assessment of the enemy and appeal to caution, Alcibiades denigrates the Sicilians and their fighting power; ignoring the experience of an earlier expedition (4.58–65, mentioned above), he presents them as divided and incapable of uniting for joint action; with superficial arguments he rejects warnings about the dangers at the home front (6.17). Most of all, he plays with all the registers of the Athenians' collective character (6.18, above). As a result, the Athenians become "much more eager than before to make the expedition", and Nicias fails even in his last ditch attempt to deter them.

³⁵ Connor (1971).

Result: Thucydides' analysis is consistent. The Athenian collective character, sketched by the enemy (1.70), asserts itself ever more detrimentally the longer the war lasts and the larger it gets. The idealized picture of the Athenian citizen-community in Pericles' Funeral Oration, brutally undermined by the plague's impact, increasingly reveals itself as an illusion or ideological construct. Inclined toward *polypragmosynē* and *pleonexia*, the Athenians are easily manipulated by ambitious demagogues who fiercely compete for the top spot. In this atmosphere, reason, caution, and moderation fall victims to emotion, irrational decisions and mass hysteria. The *dēmos*, fickle and prone to overreacting to successes, failures, and threats, whether real or perceived, follows the leaders' competitions with rapt fascination, reacting to them with enthusiasm as an arbiter in a battle of strong minds rather than the governing body of an imperial *polis*. Abandoning responsibility for decisions to the leaders, the *dēmos* ultimately proves not only, as Cleon maintains, incapable of governing an empire by pursuing steady policies, but incapable of governing at all (cf. E. *Supp.* 417–18; Hdt. 3.81.2).

Pericles himself, cast as an ideal statesman, turns out to be a rare exception. None of his successors possesses the combination of leadership qualities that secures for him long-lasting predominance; those who seem to follow his precepts may score an occasional victory (as Diodotus does) but, lacking his charisma and power of persuasion (as Nicias does), they lose against populist demagogues with overpowering personalities (like Cleon) or unique mass appeal (like Alcibiades), who aggressively pursue self-serving imperialist agendas. Even if it is exaggerated, Thucydides' summary assessment (2.65) is amply confirmed by later events.

This assessment leads to a paradoxical conclusion (65.9): democracy functions well when it is only nominal (*logōi*), that is, when the ruling *dēmos* in fact (*ergōi*) yields rule (*archē*) to a dominant leader (the first man, *prōtos anēr*). This conclusion is based on the historian's understanding of a fundamental contradiction: democracy needs strong leadership in order to pursue sound and consistent policies and keep the people in check but, because of its obsession with equality, it does not easily tolerate strong leadership. Pericles succeeds in reconciling this contradiction (as we learn from other sources that pay attention to aspects omitted by Thucydides) because he avoids ostentation, keeps a low profile, and, despite his predominance, acts as if

he were an equal among equals (e.g., Plu. *Per.* 7).³⁶ Alcibiades, although endowed with the same rare ability to control the masses (8.86.5), fails in mastering this challenge precisely because he loves ostentation, keeps a high profile, and, like many young aristocrats in his time,³⁷ explicitly refuses to accept democratic egalitarianism (Th. 6.15–16).

Criticism and Opposition

To repeat, Thucydides's picture is probably drawn too heavily in black and white. Yet it was shared by the contemporaries whose voices we still hear.³⁸ I mention but a few examples. Herodotus' *Histories* ends before democracy was fully realized. Yet the Athenian *dēmos*' characterization follows a consistent pattern. Although they enjoy the reputation of being the smartest among the Greeks (1.60.3) and are indeed smart enough to accept Themistocles' interpretation of the wooden wall oracle (7.141–143), they are fooled twice by Peisistratus' tricks (1.59.4–1.60). Aristagoras of Miletus, promising whatever it takes, finds it easier to persuade 30,000 Athenians than one Spartan to embark on a far-flung expedition with dubious prospects (5.97). Despite embracing the principle of general *isēgoria* (equality of speech, 5.78), the Athenians stone to death an outspoken dissenter (9.4–5). In *Knights*, Aristophanes mercilessly parodies the demagogues' ruthless competition for Old Man Demos' favor; if Demos is revealed at the end as a smart manipulator himself, who uses the demagogues to his own advantage, this is necessary to balance the unfavorable picture of stupid gullibility but adds other negative character traits: self-centered expediency, lust for power, and unchecked exploitation of others. Other plays (esp. *Wasps* and *Lysistrata*) offer no less devastating criticism of both leaders and *dēmos*. Euripides inserts telling vignettes in several plays, sketching the characters typically speaking and prevailing in an assembly (*Or.* 884–945) or condemning the spineless demagogues who cater to the whims of the masses (e.g., *Hec.* 130–33, 254–57).

³⁶ Connor (1971) 119–28.

³⁷ Ostwald (1986) 229–50.

³⁸ Roberts (1994); Ober (1998).

In the constitutional debates that Herodotus (3.80–82) and Euripides (*Supp.* 403–41) insert into their works, reflecting intense discussions among contemporaries about democracy's virtues and vices,³⁹ the supporters of democracy stress institutional safeguards and values (freedom and equality) but fail to counter sharp attacks on the average citizen's lack of personal qualifications.

The masses are a feckless lot—nowhere will you find more ignorance or irresponsibility or violence . . . A king does at least act consciously and deliberately; but the mob does not. Indeed how should it, when it has never been taught what is right and proper, and has no knowledge of its own about such things? The masses handle affairs without thought; all they can do is to rush blindly into politics like a river in flood (Hdt. 3.81.1–2; transl. de Sélincourt – Marincola [1996]; cf. E. *Supp.* 410–25).

Explaining why democracy, in his view a despicable political system, is so firmly established in Athens that under present conditions one cannot realistically hope to overthrow it, an anonymous critic of democracy, often called “The Old Oligarch”, draws a stark contrast. Democracy's sole purpose and justification is the preservation of the freedom, power, and material interests of the *dēmos*—just as oligarchy necessarily serves only the interests of the elite and results in the “enslavement” of the lower classes (Ps.-Xen. *Ath.* 1.1–9; 3.11).⁴⁰ In democracy the poor, low, base, uneducated, incapable, and unfit rule, while in oligarchy power is reserved for the good, noble, educated, capable, and rich. Democracy, epitomizing “bad order” (*kakonomia*), inevitably conflicts with aristocratic “good order” (*eunomia*). Participation in government (control of power) therefore is an indispensable condition for maintaining the *dēmos*' freedom. Yet, based on their pervasive qualitative superiority that enables them alone to govern “well”, the oligarchs claim an exclusive right to rule. Ultimately, life in a democratic *polis* is incompatible with aristocratic self-understanding. Hence participation in democratic politics requires thorough justification (*ibid.* 2.20).

This is precisely what Thucydides' Alcibiades does after his defection to Sparta. Although invited by the Spartans (6.88.9), he understandably expects them to be suspicious of him (6.89.1–3). Although

³⁹ Raaflaub (1989).

⁴⁰ Spahn (1986).

democracy is “patent madness” (cf. Ps.-Xen. *Ath.* 1.9), he says, his family’s leadership originated in opposition to tyranny, which they shared with democracy, leadership in Athens was not possible against democracy, moderate leaders were needed against those who pushed the masses in harmful directions, and constitutional change seemed unsafe during the war (6.89.4–6). “But we were leaders of the State as a whole, and our principles were that we should all join together in preserving the system which had been handed down to us under which the city was greatest and freest” (6.89.6).

Success in leading Athens to greatness was one of the strongest arguments in support of democracy (Hdt. 5.78) and difficult to contest as long as success lasted. The setbacks in the latter part of the Peloponnesian War deprived democracy of this crucial source of legitimation and made it vulnerable. Democracy’s claim to be integrative (already emphasized, e.g., in *A. Supp.* 366–69; 483–85; 601; 609; 964) and to offer full citizenship to all who were free and descended of citizens (that is, not to require additional qualifications for active citizenship) remained contested. Just as opponents countered democracy’s concepts of numerical equality and elementary freedom with more narrowly defined ones (proportional equality, socially qualified freedom),⁴¹ so, based on long-standing social prejudices,⁴² they challenged democracy’s interpretation of *dēmos* and *dēmokratia* as (rule by) the entire people and denounced it as (rule by) the lower classes, the rabble.

Thucydides lets a Syracusan demagogue, Athenagoras, take up some of these issues. In a debate about the threat of an Athenian invasion (6.32.3–6.41), he accuses his opponents of spreading panic in order to serve their own interests, gain extraordinary power, and even establish an oligarchy (6.38.1–4). He refutes the would-be oligarchs’ criticism of democracy, directly addressing the “younger ones”, ringleaders in such opposition (6.38.5). They want to replace democratic age restrictions with more flexible regulations rewarding the competence and energy of the best and wealthiest; they refuse to accept general equality and the undefined democratic notion of “sameness” (6.38.5; 6.39.2). “They say that democracy is neither an intelligent nor a balanced or fair system, and that those who have

⁴¹ Harvey (1965); Raaflaub (2004) 243–47.

⁴² Donlan (1999) 225–36.

the money are also the best in ruling best" (6.39.1). The democrats' perspective is different. Apart from the fact that oligarchs share the dangers but keep all the benefits (6.39.2),

first, what is called "people" means the whole, everyone, oligarchy only a part. Next, the rich are the best guardians of property, while the wise give the best advice, but for hearing and then judging the people (*hoi polloi*) are the best. Finally, in a democracy these, individually and collectively, have an equal (or fair) share (*isomoirin*, 6.39.1, transl. Steven Lattimore [1998], mod.).

The praise of the *polloi* as the best judges between competing proposals and thus the best decision makers reminds us of the theory of "cumulative qualification" elaborated by Aristotle (*Pol.* 1281a40ff.)⁴³ but already alluded to by Herodotus ("in the many is all", 3.80.6). Only democracy thus represents all citizens, utilizes all their talents and abilities (cf. *Th.* 2.37.2), and protects the freedom, interests, and well-being of all. Athenagoras typically uses *dēmos* here to designate the totality of citizens (6.39.1). Elsewhere, Thucydides lets a Spartan general formulate the dilemma this creates for opponents of democracy. Trying to convince Athenian allies that their defection to Sparta will have no impact on their constitution, he says: "I have not come to side with factions, nor is it my practice to bring a dubious freedom, as I would if I disregarded ancestral institutions and enslaved the majority to the few or the minority to everyone" (4.86.4). As the Old Oligarch confirms (*Ath.* 1.8–9), the democratic masses feared oligarchy because it subjected ("enslaved") them to a minority; the oligarchic opponents of democracy, paradoxically, were not enslaved by the majority but by all: the prevailing will of the majority became theirs without being theirs. They could only rule if they excluded the masses from political participation.

With all this in mind, we now turn to Thucydides' portrait of oligarchy.

Oligarchy

As a result of the Sicilian disaster, Sparta's renewed war effort, and Persia's open support of Sparta, the Athenians found themselves

⁴³ Cf. de Romilly (1975) 66–71.

under great military and financial strain. They took emergency measures to prevent the worst (8.1.2–3) and, “now that they were terrified, as the *dēmos* typically does it, they were ready to put everything in order” (8.1.4; cf. 2.65.4; 4.28.3; 6.63.2 for similar comments on the volatile and short-sighted behavior of the masses).

In 411, after further deterioration of Athens’ fortunes and an extended period of agitation, leaders of an oligarchic movement that had begun among officers in the fleet stationed at Samos convinced the Assembly to suspend democracy (8.47–70). The citizens approved of this radical proposal only because an oligarchic terror campaign had intimidated them (8.54.4 8.65.2; 8.66), because they believed that constitutional change would secure the return of Alcibiades, who boasted close connections with the Persian satrap and promised vital Persian support (8.47.2; 8.48.1–2; 8.53.1; 8.56; Arist. *Ath.* 29.1), because they thought that the decision could be reversed at any time (8.48.3; 8.53.3; 8.54.1), and because the crucial assembly was held outside of Athens (8.67.2), which probably reduced attendance. In other words, under halfway normal conditions, even in a deep crisis, oligarchy would still not have found enough support to prevail. Despite politically astute leadership, Thucydides comments, “it was no easy matter about 100 years after the expulsion of the tyrants to deprive the Athenian people of its liberty—a people not only unused to subjection itself, but, for more than half of this time, accustomed to exercise power over others” (8.68.4). Nor did the Spartan king Agis, whom the oligarchs approached with a peace proposal, believe “that the people would give up their ancient liberty so quickly” (8.71.1).

Democracy was replaced by an oligarchy that nominally comprised 5000 full citizens but in fact was limited to the “Four Hundred” who constituted the new council (8.65.4; 8.67.3; 8.72.1). Their regime lost the support of the fleet at Samos even before it was firmly established (8.73–77; 8.81–82). It was based on violence (8.70.2) and lasted only a few months⁴⁴ before it was replaced by a more moderate oligarchy of “Five Thousand” (89–98).⁴⁵ After Alcibiades’ return and victory at Cyzicus, democracy was restored in 410.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Lehmann (1973), (1997); Ostwald (1986) 344–95; Munn (2000) ch. 5; Hefner (2001); (2003).

⁴⁵ Ostwald (1986) 395–411; Harris (1990); Bleckmann (1998) 358–86.

⁴⁶ Ostwald (1986) 412ff.; Bleckmann (1998) 387–442.

Because of disagreements in the few extant sources (esp. Th. 8.45ff.; Arist. *Ath.* 29–33), the precise sequence of events and the successive constitutions are much debated.⁴⁷ Moreover, our best source, Thucydides' eighth Book, is incomplete: most conspicuously, it lacks speeches and thus the author's primary tool of political analysis and explanation. Even if scattered remarks permit inferences about the goals, ideological claims, and debates of the oligarchs, these are not scrutinized closely, as are those of democracy elsewhere; a brief section in an earlier speech by the Syracusan Athenagoras (6.38.5–39.1, discussed above) remains a precious exception. Worse, Thucydides did not live to write about the restoration of democracy in an even more radicalized form, its horrendous mistakes in squandering peace opportunities and marginalizing large segments of the citizen body that had been "implicated" in the oligarchy, its defeat in 404 and the shortlived but even narrower and more brutal oligarchy of the "Thirty".⁴⁸ Finally, as Aristotle's systematic analysis shows,⁴⁹ oligarchy was no more a uniform phenomenon than democracy was.⁵⁰ Thucydides never shows us its "normal" face.⁵¹ In Book VIII and in the "pathology of civil war" on Corcyra (3.69–85, esp. 82–84), he illuminates a mask contorted in an acute confrontation with democracy and in the extreme situation of *stasis*, civil war. Yet this shaped his thoughts about oligarchy.

Out of favor in Sparta and precariously agitating against both sides at the court of the Persian satrap (8.45–46), Alcibiades informs the "most influential" and "best" Athenians in Samos that he will consider returning to Athens only under an oligarchy, not under the "wicked system" (*ponēria*) of democracy (8.47.2). Although normally even in democracy the elite, holding all positions of leadership, profits most (8.48.6), at this point some of them believe to suffer intolerably from the war, and initiate efforts to gain power (8.48.1; cf. 8.63.4). They represent oligarchy as a reasonable government of order and moderation (*sōphrosynē*, 8.53.3, 8.64.4–5),⁵² thus contrasting it with democracy as a "bad" or "wicked" system (cf. Ps.-Xen. *Ath.* 1.8),

⁴⁷ *HCT* 5.93ff., esp. 184ff.; Rhodes (1981) 362ff.

⁴⁸ Ostwald (1986) ch. 9; Munn (2000) 205–44; Krentz (1982); (1995).

⁴⁹ Dolezal (1974); Robinson (1997) 35–44; see also Ober (1998) ch. 6.

⁵⁰ Whibley (1896); Ostwald (2000).

⁵¹ See, e.g., Larsen (1955); Donlan (1999) 113–53.

⁵² North (1966).

dominated by “crazy” people who have control neither over themselves nor politics (*ibid.* 1.9; cf. Th. 6.89.6, above). Oligarchy reserves power for those who contribute most with their bodies and money, that is, the wealthy horsemen and the hoplites (8.65.3; cf. Arist. *Ath.* 29.5), as opposed to the poor who man the ships (Ps.-Xen. *Ath.* 1.2). Pay for military service remains intact, that for political functions is, with few exceptions, abolished (Th. 8.65.4; Arist. *Ath.* 29.5). The oligarchs’ true goal is to monopolize power (Th. 8.48.1; 8.66.1; 8.70.1), which they then protect by every possible means, including terror (8.48.6; 8.65.2; 8.66.2ff.; 8.70.2; 8.74.2–3). The larger body of 5000 full citizens is never activated, not even defined by a list, and thus a mere façade, intended to disguise the exclusiveness of the Four Hundred (8.66.1; 8.72.1; 8.92.11). Accordingly, both the army at Samos under Alcibiades’ leadership (8.86.6) and the moderate oligarchs in Athens (8.89.2) demand that the 5000 be involved in government and the *politeia* be based on broader equality. Moreover, competitive ambition and lust for power divide even the oligarchic core group:

It was for motives of personal ambition that most of them were following the line that is most disastrous to oligarchies when they take over from democracies. For no sooner is the change made than every single man, not content with being the equal of others, regards himself as greatly superior to everyone else (8.89.3).

Finally, certain aspects of the oligarchs’ exercise of power reflect features typical of tyranny (8.66.2ff.; 8.74.3); this associates their regime with the one domestic enemy against whom, with very few exceptions, all Athenians feel united.⁵³

Since the prospect of Persian aid was presumed to depend upon constitutional change, the oligarchs argued, with some justification, that the issue of survival should have priority over constitutional quibbling (8.53.3) and that the rule of the few had been established “in order to preserve the state as a whole” (8.72.1; cf. 8.86.3). Although initially the oligarchs were determined to pursue victory in the war as well, “since the hardships to be incurred were not so much for the sake of other people as for themselves” (8.63.4; a similar argument is applied to democracy in Hdt. 5.78), they soon sought peace with Sparta (8.70.2; 8.71.1; 8.71.3). These efforts failed (8.86.3;

⁵³ Raafflaub (2003).

8.89.2) but had the effect of extending the domestic conflict into the sphere of foreign policy. While the democrats insisted on continuing the war (8.75.2; 8.89.1), the radical oligarchs advocated peace and, as their situation became desperate, were willing even to betray their city to the enemy, as long as this helped them save their power or at least their lives (8.89.2; 8.90.1–2, 3ff.; 8.91.1–2; 8.92.1–3).

Seven years later the Thirty based their regime on Spartan support. In 411 the moderate oligarchs eventually refused to follow the extremists' lead in this respect, but the latter's attitude, combined with their reliance on terror, discredited the entire oligarchic movement. Conversely, the events of 411/10 added credibility to democracy's claim to be the guarantor of the *polis*' internal and external freedom.

Under dramatic circumstances, the Four Hundred were deposed after only four months in power (Th. 8.92–98). Power was handed over to the Five Thousand. This is where Thucydides inserts his assessment of the relative success and quality of this regime (8.97.2), mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

*Sparta*⁵⁴

Thucydides' comment on the excessive ambition and infighting typical of oligarchies is explicitly restricted to those that "take over from democracies" (8.89.3, above). One might expect, then, that he would find positive things to say about Sparta's constitution. After all, already the seventh-century "Great Rhetra" gave to the *damos* of land owning hoplites the power to pass final decisions in assembly but controlled this *damos* by endowing a thirty-member council of elders (*gerousia*), into which the kings were subsumed, with initiative and veto (Tyr. 4 West; Plu. *Lyc.* 6).⁵⁵ The introduction of ephors added further control, both over the assembly and the kings.⁵⁶ Moreover, both Herodotus (1.65–66) and Thucydides (1.18) credit early reforms with having enabled Sparta to enjoy long-term *eunomia* and stability. Yet Thucydides' comment here is remarkably peremptory—and such *eunomia* not only helps Sparta avoid tyranny but also to put tyranny

⁵⁴ Cf. also Cartledge and Debnar, this volume.

⁵⁵ Meier (1998); Cartledge (2001) 29–34 with bibliography.

⁵⁶ Richer (1998).

down elsewhere and thus “to interfere in the affairs of other states”, that is, to do exactly what Athens was criticized for (1.18–19). In fact, mirroring Athenian practice with democracy, the Spartans impose oligarchies in their sphere of influence (1.19; 5.81–82). Nor is it clear why such stability, even if combined with good order and moderation (1.6.4), enabled Sparta to become the most powerful state in Greece. Although here too the historian links a community’s *politeia* with its political fortune, he offers for Sparta nothing remotely comparable in detail to Pericles’ Funeral Oration or the sketch of Athens’ rise to power in the *Pentekontaetia*. No less remarkably, Thucydides rarely expresses a favorable opinion of Spartan politics, policies, and individuals; his observation that the Spartans were almost unique in maintaining *sōphrosynē* when they prospered (8.24.2) remains exceptional. In fact, no less than in the case of Athens, occasional positive judgments are more than balanced by a long series of critical remarks.⁵⁷ Similarly, his analysis of how Sparta realized its program of “liberating the Hellenes”, launched at the beginning of the war with resounding approval throughout Greece (2.8), is no less devastating than that of Athens’ claim to be the true liberator of Greece. Athenian designs to dominate all of Hellas are matched toward the end of the war by similar ambitions of Sparta (8.2); even if the historian here talks of hegemony rather than imperial rule, the reader knows that this is precisely what soon resulted from such hegemony. In both cases, Thucydides, again to some extent anticipated by Herodotus, dissects ideology and de-ideologizes history, coldly exposing the dirt the makers of history try to hide under the rugs.⁵⁸ At any rate, his work contains very few echoes of the enthusiasm shared among some Athenian aristocrats for things Spartan.

No less than that of the Athenians, the collective character portrait the Corinthians sketch of the Spartans in 1.70–71 holds great potential for trenching historical interpretation. Although not even aware of it—let alone able to understand its significance—the Spartans are the polar opposite of the Athenians: they like to keep things as they are, never develop new ideas, and usually stop short of their goals. They do not fulfill their potential, mistrust their judgment, are pessimists. They hang back, stay home, do not put at risk what they have. Their whole way of life is out of date. In short, “when

⁵⁷ Cloché (1943).

⁵⁸ Strasburger (1955; 1958); Raaflaub (2004) ch. 5.

a city can live in peace and quiet, no doubt the old-established ways are best: but when one is constantly being faced by new problems, one has also to be capable of approaching them in an original way" (1.71.3). The battle exhortations Thucydides gives to Peloponnesian navy commanders and the Athenian admiral Phormio before a naval battle in 429/28 (2.87–89) further illustrate important contrasting characteristics. True, the historian refers to this characterization of Sparta at various later occasions (e.g., 8.96.5) but it is a puzzling shortcoming of his work that he does not follow it up with a careful analysis of Sparta's internal political dynamics, its decision making processes, and the interaction between leaders and *dēmos*.

True again, he does describe the initial decision for war in 432 in some detail (1.66–88),⁵⁹ illuminating relations between king, ephor, and Assembly. The first to respond to the Corinthians' appeal to arms, however, are the Athenian ambassadors who happen to be in Sparta at the time (1.72–78). Their main point is that the Spartans would have acted just like the Athenians did if they had not withdrawn from the pursuit of the war against the Persians. Having arranged things on the Peloponnese to suit their needs, and compelled by the same motives, especially fear and self-interest, they would inevitably have become an imperial power and engendered their subjects' hatred too (1.76.1; 1.77.6). In the Melian Dialogue the Athenians will stress a similar line of argument: "The Spartans are most conspicuous for believing that what they like doing is honourable and what suits their interests is just" (5.105.4). In fact, the pursuit of self-interest, in Thucydides' view, is the most pervasive maxim in Sparta's policies (1.76.2; 3.68).

At the meeting in 432, one of the Spartan kings, Archidamus, known for "both intelligence and moderation", tries to stem the tide toward war (1.79.2–85). What he says interacts with the Corinthians' oration and Pericles' first speech. It combines, on the Spartan side, elements typical of Pericles' Funeral Oration (an idealized, though defensive, portrait of communal virtues and values) and Nicias' speeches in the Sicilian Debate (an appeal to the older citizens to refrain from a hasty decision for an unpredictable war "that will so profoundly affect the lives of men and their fortunes, the fates of cities and their national honour", 1.80.1, 85.1). Slow and cautious,

⁵⁹ Rawson (1969) 20–24.

in a city that has an unparalleled record of freedom and glory, is equal to wise and sensible (*sōphrosynē emphrōn*, 1.84.2).

We are the only people who do not become arrogant when we are successful, and who in times of stress are less likely to give in than others. We are not carried away by the pleasure of hearing ourselves praised when people are urging us toward dangers that seem to us unnecessary . . . Because of our well-ordered life we are both brave in war and wise in council. Brave, because self-control is based upon a sense of honor, and honor is based on courage. And we are wise because we are not so highly educated as to look down upon our laws and customs, and are too rigorously trained in self-control to disobey them (1.84.2–3).

Although I cannot show this here in detail, these statements too reverberate throughout the work, though less markedly than in the case of Athens. They too will prove illusionary—as the Athenian ambassadors indicate already before the king’s speech: “It is a fact that when one of you goes abroad he follows neither his own rules nor those of the rest of Hellas” (1.77.6). In fact, both Herodotus and Thucydides emphasize the Spartans’ susceptibility to corruption and the hollowness of their claim to be rigidly law-abiding.⁶⁰ The contrast with Athens is stark but Archidamus also says, “we are taught that there is not a great deal of difference between the way we think and the way others think” (1.84.3). That is, when it comes to war, the differences will fade. Perhaps this offers a clue: despite all differences, Sparta and Athens are not so dissimilar. The Athenians have said it from the beginning, and the war will prove them correct.⁶¹

Sthenelaidas, an ephor, responds: there is nothing good about long and sophisticated speeches; the facts are clear: only one honorable decision is possible (1.86). By a vast majority, the Spartans agree with his view and vote for war (1.87). Violating the arbitration clause in the Thirty Years’ Peace, this decision is flawed, as Archidamus points out (1.85.2) and Thucydides himself emphasizes (7.18). No other carefully developed debate, no antithetical speeches follow this one. Yet we have to assume, and occasional hints confirm it, that there must have been speeches and contrasting views. Why did Thucydides not illuminate them at crucial junctures? Why does he let only the Corinthians speak at the second meeting of the allies in

⁶⁰ Millender (2002b).

⁶¹ Raafflaub (2004) 193–202.

Sparta (1.120–24), only Alcibiades when the decision is made to send assistance to Syracuse and resume hostilities in the mainland (6.88–93)? Archidamus and later Brasidas⁶² are singled out as comparatively good speakers. Did the historian, knowing that the Spartans generally were reluctant to engage in long, sophisticated, or even theoretical speeches (1.84.3), consciously refrain from attributing something to them that did not fit their character? The Spartans tended to remove outsiders before they entered deliberations in assembly (1.79.1; 2.39.1); did such preference for secrecy prevent Thucydides from receiving sufficient information? Or was he not sufficiently interested?

Although, on the basis of the preceding brief analysis one would expect it to have been more negative than positive, his real opinion about the constitution and political or social system of Sparta remains enigmatic. Contrary to his opening statement that he wants to describe the war between Peloponnesians and Athenians (1.1.1), his focus is the war the *Athenians* fought against the Peloponnesians. His thinking about constitutions, too, is dominated by an Athenian perspective.

Conclusion

“Modern readings have placed Thucydides all around the political map”.⁶³ It seems certain, though, that Thucydides’ personal preference did not include radical oligarchy and the type of democracy that prevailed in Athens during most of his life time: extreme, irrational, and violent regimes met with his strong disapproval. Brasidas’ statement to the Acanthians seems symptomatic: “I do not think that I should be giving you real freedom if I were . . . to enslave either the majority (*to pleon*) to the few (*tois oligois*) or the minority (*to elasson*) to all (*tois pasi*). This would be even worse than to be ruled by foreigners” (4.86.4–5).⁶⁴ Even if it may not be permissible to equate statements by Thucydides’ speakers with his own views, it must be significant that the tenor of the speeches he attributes to others and of the historian’s narrative and statements form a coherent whole. What seems to emerge is that *dēmokratia* as rule by the entire *dēmos* could not but fail ultimately because of the fickleness of the masses,

⁶² Cloché (1943) 83f.

⁶³ Ober (1998) 52 n. 1 with bibliography.

⁶⁴ Raaflaub (2004) 225f.

their vulnerability to demagogic rhetoric, and their propensity for emotional reactions and irrational decisions. True, this judgment is based mostly on the aggravated experiences of extended war time conditions. Under exceptional circumstances, Thucydides might concede, democracy could work reasonably well. As he demonstrates with the example of Pericles (2.65), paralleled to some extent by his Syracusan counterpart, Hermocrates (6.72.2),⁶⁵ the chances are best when democracy is tamed by a powerful personality with a strong will, exceptional integrity, and outstanding leadership skills—and during long periods of peace or at most intermittent, non-threatening warfare (2.65.5). But this is at best a mitigating consideration. Remarkably, the entire *History* contains only two passages that offer really positive comments about democracy. Of one of these Hornblower says,⁶⁶ it “may say something for Thucydides’ view of democracy that the best theoretical defence of it is put into the mouth, not of Pericles, but of the far from admirable Syracusan demagogue Athenagoras” (6.39–40). Pericles’ own statements, in the Funeral Oration, are defensive and ideologically exaggerated, and prove illusionary in the rest of the work (2.37–43).

Oligarchy in turn was likely to turn into oppressive tyranny because of the ruthless selfishness and ambition of those dominating it. Yet, as we saw, Thucydides’ devastating portrait of the Athenian (and Corcyrean) oligarchy offers only one part of the picture. As he generalizes from the case of Corcyra, this portrait applied to most oligarchies emerging during the war and out of confrontation with democracy. His comments on Sparta’s stable *eunomia* and *sōphrosynē* suggest that his judgement on long-term oligarchies might have been different. But Spartan leadership and politics too were corrupted by the long war. Still, it would seem a logical conclusion that Thucydides would have preferred a moderate, broadly based, and thoroughly integrated oligarchy—which, as Aristotle’s discussion of the widely differing forms of both oligarchy and democracy shows, would have been very similar to a very moderate democracy. Such a system, realized all too briefly by the Five Thousand in Athens, would indeed respect the interests of the few and the many (although not of all citizens) and be able to preserve domestic harmony and stability.

⁶⁵ Westlake (1969) ch. 12; Hinrichs (1981).

⁶⁶ Hornblower (1987) 68–69.

We must not forget that Thucydides was writing about a war which, “as a stern teacher” (3.82.3), tends to distort behavior and relationships. One of its major victims was leadership—in both democracy and oligarchy. Offering ever new opportunities to gain glory, power, and wealth, it gave free rein to personal ambition, fostered uninhibited rivalry, and advanced corruption. In two extreme cases, Alcibiades, until his endictment in 415 an eminent leader in democracy, and Phrynichus, one of the hawks among the Four Hundred, were both willing to help the enemy destroy their country when things no longer went their way. Thucydides lets Alcibiades say in Sparta:

I claim that none of you should think the worse of me if, in spite of my previous reputation for loving my country, I now join in vigorously with her bitterest enemies in attacking her; nor should you suspect my argument on the grounds that it derives simply from the strong feelings of an exile . . . The Athens I love is not the one which is wronging me now, but that one in which I used to have secure enjoyment of my rights as a citizen. The country that I am attacking does not seem to me to be mine any longer (6.92.2–4).

Phrynichus, vigorously opposed to Alcibiades’ recall and afraid of retaliation when he failed to prevail, provided the enemy with vital information that might have resulted in the Athenian fleet’s destruction at Samos (8.50–51). He pleaded “that his own action, in plotting against a personal enemy even at the cost of his country’s interests, should be understood” and “that, since his life was in danger . . ., no one could now blame him for doing this or anything else to escape being destroyed by his greatest enemies” (8.50.2; 8.50.5). True, these incidents happened at the height of war and civil strife when, as Thucydides explains in analyzing the *stasis* in Corcyra, the intensity of feelings and partisanship as well as the availability of outside support disastrously distorted normal political actions and reactions (3.82.1; 3.82.8). Yet, as Polybius points out (6.2.5–7) and Thucydides in his comments on human nature in the same context (3.84.2–3) seems to confirm, it is precisely the extreme challenges that reveal the true quality of a person or a constitution. Both radical democracy and radical oligarchy failed this test.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ I thank David Yates for invaluable assistance in preparing this chapter.

PART TWO

THE ART OF THUCYDIDES

OBJECTIVITY AND AUTHORITY: THUCYDIDES' HISTORICAL METHOD

Tim Rood

A vivid vignette in Thucydides' narrative of the fourth year of the Peloponnesian War describes how the Spartans get news to the besieged city of Mytilene:

Towards the close of the same winter, Salaithos, a Spartan, was sent out in a trireme from Sparta to Mytilene. Going by sea to Pyrrha, and from there overland, he passed along the bed of a torrent, where the line of circumvallation was penetrable, and thus entered unperceived into Mytilene. He told the magistrates that Attica would certainly be invaded, that the forty ships destined to relieve them would arrive, and that he had been sent out to announce this and to superintend matters generally. The Mytilenaians upon this took courage, and were less disposed towards the idea of negotiating with the Athenians. And the winter ended.¹

With two emphatic historic presents (ἐκπέμπεται, “is sent out”; ἐσέρχεται, “enters”), Thucydides traces the detail of Salaithos' journey to Mytilene. He perhaps even arouses some admiration for the cunning of this Spartan, who manages to slip into a besieged city through enemy lines. The winter ends with a slight uplift for the Mytilenaians—a brief burst of hope marked by the imperfect tenses on which the narrative closes (ἐθάρσουν, “took courage”; ἦσσαν εἶχον τὴν γνώμην, “were less disposed”).

The skill with which Thucydides enters into the doomed position of the Mytilenaians makes it easy for readers to brush aside a number of awkward questions. Thucydides does not reveal the source (or sources) of his account of Salaithos' escapade. Nor does he hint at any uncertainty about the accuracy of his account. Readers simply have to accept or reject what Thucydides says—and most readers have been tempted to accept what he says. As Simon Goldhill has recently written, “the most persuasive rhetorical device in Thucydides'

¹ 3.25. Translations are either my own or adapted from Crawley. Some material in this chapter is taken or adapted from Rood (2004): I am grateful for the editors' permission.

armoury of narrative techniques is the direct expression of uncontested and enumerated fact”.² Indeed, Thucydides’ armoury of techniques can seem persuasive even when readers are able to see how his expression of uncontested fact serves a wider purpose. In the case of Salaithos’ exciting entry into Mytilene, the drama derives even more force from the reader’s knowledge—or at least suspicion—of the doom that awaits the Mytilenaians. The hopes aroused by Salaithos’ arrival will all too soon be thwarted by the Spartans’ ineptitude at sea.

The rhetorical persuasiveness of the gripping Salaithos episode cannot be taken in isolation. It depends in part for its effect on the sense of trustworthiness that has built up in the preceding narrative. Thucydides’ narratorial authority is cumulative. As W.R. Connor noted in an essay published in 1985, it is “the narrative discourse of Thucydides itself” that “establishes the authority of the writer and persuades us to listen with respect, if not total assent”. Reader and author are “not colleagues, but performer and audience, the writer who knows how to produce a polished work and the audience who appreciates its craftsmanship and reacts to its quality.”³

It is not only in the last two or three decades that scholars have been alive to the way Thucydides achieves a sense of reliability by his mode of self-presentation. Similar to Connor’s analogy of the craftsman producing a polished work is the analogy with drama expressed by J.B. Bury in 1909. Bury was alive to the “inescapable subjectivity” of the historian, a subjectivity that Thucydides has “concealed” by his “dramatic method”: “The persons who play leading parts in the public affairs which he relates reveal their characters and personalities, so far as is required, by their actions and speeches. The author, like a dramatist, remains in the background”.⁴ A.W. Gomme, in his Sather lectures published in 1954, preferred an analogy from architecture and other visual arts: Thucydides was “determined to do all the work himself and to present only the finished product to the public, as the artist does. Wren showed St. Paul’s Cathedral to the world, not his plans for it; so does the painter his pictures, so did Pheidias his sculpture”.⁵

² Goldhill (2002) 43.

³ Connor (1985) 5f.

⁴ Bury (1909) 108.

⁵ Gomme (1954) 119.

The difference between older and more recent responses to Thucydides' narratorial persona is largely one of attitude. G.F. Abbott, writing in 1925, was aware that Thucydides' "reputation for trustworthiness rests chiefly upon the impression produced by his manner of writing": "He does not try to heighten a situation or to wring out of an incident more than it really contains. Such self-denial is so rare that the writer who can practise it will always reap his reward in the instinctive confidence with which he will inspire his readers". Abbott was glad to succumb to the power of the Thucydidean mode of history writing: he could even claim that Thucydides' "very omissions constitute a guarantee of good faith".⁶ Recent writers have tended to be more questioning of Thucydides' apparently objective stance. What Abbott saw in personal terms as Thucydides' "self-denial" is precisely what is viewed by Goldhill as an "armoury of narrative techniques", a "persuasive rhetorical device". Similarly Josiah Ober sees Thucydides' "objectivity" as a "rhetorical stance . . . that offered him a needed point d'appui for his critical project"—that is, for his position as a political thinker and critic of democracy.⁷

It is easy enough to dismiss Abbott's admiration for Thucydides' self-denial as naive and to reject the claim that his reticent narratorial stance necessarily inspires confidence. Indeed, Thucydides' direct statements of historical facts can themselves be broken down and analyzed in terms of a range of different narrative techniques: selectivity of detail, variation of narrative speed and order (the shift between scenic and summary treatment, for instance, or the use of flashbacks and flashforwards), the use of different perspectives, and different modes of representing thoughts and speeches. There is no space here to analyze in detail how Thucydides builds up a sense of narratorial authority within the narrative proper. We will rather be concerned with passages where Thucydides overtly breaks the flow of the narrative—whether it is to make an explicit methodological statement, to express doubt and uncertainty, or even to announce his own status as writer.

⁶ Abbott (1925) 36.

⁷ Ober (1998) 58 n. 2.

Authorship and Authority

At the end of the Salamis episode there is a sudden break in the narrative's polished surface. The figure of the author bursts into the story: "And the winter ended, and with this winter ended the fourth year of this war which Thucydides wrote up". Thucydides has suddenly shifted from the position within Mytilene to his own activity as writer—to his own crafting of the story of the war. The same shift is found at the end of most years of the war, when Thucydides mentions his own activity as writer with the same phrase ("this war which Thucydides wrote up").

Thucydides' regular allusions to himself as writer are the most obvious way in which he breaks the stream of factual narrative. Why does he set his seal on the events of different years in this way? It has sometimes been thought that he is setting the seal on sections of the narrative that would have been published as separate books.⁸ But the narrative allotted to each year of the war is too short for separate books—and Thucydides does not in any case mention himself at the end of the narrative of every war-year (there is no such year-end for the first year of the war, for the eighth year, where Thucydides himself has appeared as character in his narrative, or for the years of the uneasy peace).⁹

The way Thucydides alludes to himself at the end of most war-years recalls the opening sentence of his work: "Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote up the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians, telling how they made war on each other". Although he does not repeat his self-identification as an Athenian in his year-end formula, Thucydides does in the later passages use the same verb, *ξυνέγραψε* ("wrote up").¹⁰ But whereas at the start of the narrative he is describing his activity as writer, in the later passages he is not so much mentioning his activity as writer for its own sake as reminding his readers that it is his activity as writer that defines the war (he could

⁸ See Hemmerdinger (1948).

⁹ Lack of self-reference: 2.47.1; 4.116.3; 5.39.3; 5.51.2; 5.56.5; 5.81.2; 5.83.4. Don Fowler once suggested to me that the lack of self-reference at the end of the first war-year could be connected with the democratic ethos of civic anonymity reflected in Pericles' Funeral Oration, which ends immediately before the year-end.

¹⁰ On this verb, see Hornblower (1987) 8 with n. 2; it is used in the middle of drafting at 5.35.3; 5.41.4; 8.67.1, 2. Translations such as "wrote the history of" (Warner) are anachronistic: Thucydides did not conceive of himself as a "historian". See also Bakker, this vol. For a detailed treatment of the opening, see Loraux (1986b).

easily have written “with this winter ended the fourth year of the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians”).¹¹ Indeed, he is even asserting that the war corresponds to his own account of it: he does not say “the war which Thucydides wrote up” but “*this* war (τῷ πολέμῳ . . . τῷδε) which Thucydides wrote up”. The demonstrative “this” stresses the presentness of the work, and, as Lowell Edmunds has noted, “by emphasizing the presentness of his work, which is the result of its being written and thus ever-present, Thucydides can make his work not only represent the Peloponnesian War but even become its equation”.¹²

While Thucydides’ self-allusion in his opening sentence does not align his narrative of the Peloponnesian War with the war itself as explicitly as his later allusions to his own authorship, the opening sentence does boost Thucydides’ own authority as writer. It is not that he is making any claim about his own fame: whereas later he refers to “the two most brilliant Greek men of their day” as “Themistocles the Athenian” and “Pausanias the Spartan” (1.138.6), he does not call himself Thucydides “the Athenian” but “an Athenian”. He is simply revealing his home city—much as he reveals Salaithos’ home city by calling him “a Spartan”. But the fact that he is an Athenian is still important. It shows that he was one of the protagonists in “the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians”—and so suggests that he had access to reliable information about the war.

The formulation “the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians” itself reflects Thucydides’ attempt to build up an image of himself as an impartial narrator. We call the war Thucydides described (and in a sense “invented”)¹³ the “Peloponnesian War” because we rely on Thucydides for most of our knowledge of it and because Thucydides himself was an Athenian. Thucydides carefully avoids any such partisanship. His neutral formulation mirrors, perhaps, Herodotus’ claim at the start of his work: to preserve for posterity “great and wonderful deeds, some performed by Greeks, some by barbarians”.¹⁴

¹¹ Cf. also the formulation at 2.1: “here begins the war of the Athenians and the Peloponnesians and the allies of the two sides”.

¹² Edmunds (1993) 844.

¹³ Todd (1996), suggesting that Thucydides’ view of a single 27-year war arose in part from his methodological insistence on the difficulty of writing noncontemporary history—and from the fact that he was himself sufficiently old to start gathering information at the start of the war.

¹⁴ Thucydides was aware of the problem of how to name wars: within the work,

Thucydides again refers to himself as “an Athenian” in the so-called “second preface”, placed at the end of the Archidamian War and before the years of the uneasy peace. Here he makes it explicit that he was on the losing side by saying that “the same Thucydides, an Athenian” wrote up to the point when “the Spartans and their allies put an end to the rule of the Athenians” (5.26.1). The narrator’s identification as an Athenian seems here to acquire some poignancy. But Thucydides soon seeks to dispel any suspicion that his account of his home city’s ruin may be marred by bias. It is here that he first reveals that he was in exile for much of the war—and so in an excellent position to gain information from both sides, and not least the Peloponnesians (5.26.5).

Thucydides’ allusion to his nationality at the start of his *History* does not merely boost his authority by establishing his close link with “the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians”. Thucydides was also aligning himself with two important prose predecessors: the geographer and mythographer Hecataeus and the historian Herodotus. The opening words of Hecataeus’ work were “Hecataeus, a Milesian, says thus” (*FGrHist* 1 F 1a), while the opening words of Herodotus’ *Histories* were “This is the display of the enquiry of Herodotus, a Halicarnassan” (in the Greek, the author’s name and nationality are the first two words, as in Hecataeus and Thucydides).¹⁵ Reference to the writer’s home city establishes that the intended audience of the work is not local, but panhellenic. The local Syracusan historian Antiochus, by contrast, is said by Dionysius of Halicarnassus to have started his history with the words “Antiochus, son of Xenophanes, wrote up this . . .”. (ξυνέγραψε, the same word Thucydides uses in his opening sentence: *FGrHist* 555 F 2). At the same time, it is telling that Thucydides (like Antiochus) used a past tense for his opening verb and made himself the subject of that verb. Contrast the present tense found in Hecataeus (μυθεῖται, “says”) and the genitive case found in Herodotus (“of Herodotus, a Halicarnassan”). Thucydides stresses that his act of writing is itself something that is now past. His act of writing is the first action recorded in the work. He is not pre-

the war is described as the “Attic war” from the perspective of Peloponnesians (5.28.2; 5.31.3; 5.31.5).

¹⁵ On the way ancient historians allude to themselves in their proems, see Marincola (1997) 371–75; and for a detailed comparative reading of the prefaces of Herodotus and Thucydides, see Moles (1993).

senting a current story—a story that might be moulded by the demands of the present—but a finished product.

Like Antiochus, Thucydides does reveal his father's name, but he only does so much later in his work. It is when he first appears as a character that he mentions his patronymic: "Thucydides, the son of Olorus, who wrote up this" (ὃς τὰδε ξυνέγραψε, 4.104.4). His patronymic, it seems, is relevant to his persona as agent, as Athenian general, and not to his persona as author, as Athenian historian. And the fact that he also gives the patronymics of most other important characters—and of several less important characters—on their first (or their first significant) appearance in the work¹⁶ suggests that he describes his own ill-fated generalship with the same detachment that he uses of other characters. At the same time, he makes a methodological point when he introduces "Thucydides, the son of Olorus" as a character in his work. His phrase "who wrote up this (τὰδε)" is more immediate than, say, "who wrote up this war (τόνδε τὸν πόλεμον)", and this immediacy implies that his role as a general in the Thraceward area gave him particularly good knowledge of Brasidas' campaign in the north.

Thucydides also reveals some personal information about himself in the context of his generalship in the Thraceward area. He mentions that he was an important person in that area—or at least that he was perceived as such by Brasidas: "Brasidas learnt that Thucydides possessed the right of working the gold mines in that part of Thrace and so had great influence with the inhabitants of the mainland" (4.105.1). Here the perception of another character conveys information that adds to the authority of the narrator—while also highlighting the paradox that Thucydides' apparent advantages in fact worked against him: his influence in the area prompted Brasidas to take especial steps to counteract it.

The only other information Thucydides reveals about what happened to him in the war also has a methodological aspect. Thucydides' famous account of the sufferings inflicted on the human body by the plague at Athens is preceded by the statement that he himself suffered from the illness and saw others who suffered (2.48.3). And at the end of the *Archaeology*, in his explicit discussion of how he wrote his speeches and narrative, he says that he himself heard some of the

¹⁶ Cf. Hornblower (1994b) 161–62, and, more broadly on Thucydides' use of patronymics, Griffith (1961).

speeches delivered in the war and was present at some of the events (1.22.1–2).

It is Thucydides' statement about his own experiences at the very start of the war that boosts his narratorial authority most strongly. After his statement that he wrote up the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians, he explains when he started his work:

Ἀρξάμενος εὐθὺς καθισταμένου καὶ ἐλπίσας μέγαν τε ἔσεσθαι καὶ ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων, τεκμαιρόμενος ὅτι ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμφοτέρωι παρασκευῇ τε πάσῃ καὶ τὸ ἄλλο Ἑλληνικὸν ὄρων ξυνιστάμενον πρὸς ἑκατέρους, τὸ μὲν εὐθύς, τὸ δὲ καὶ διανοοῦμενον.

He began when it was first breaking out, expecting that the war would be great and the most worth recording of those that had happened before; he took as evidence the fact that both sides were entering into it at their peak, with total preparedness, and he saw that the rest of the Hellenic world was taking a stand with one of the two sides, part of it straightaway, while part of it was still deliberating (1.1.1).

Thucydides brings out at once that he was a contemporary of the events he describes: he began when the war was first breaking out. He then shows how important it is for historians to live through the events they describe by demonstrating the difficulty of discovering the truth about the past. But what boosts his personal authority most is the claim that he realized at the start of the war that it would be a great war. He explains that he reached this insight by observing the power of the two protagonists, and then adds: "For this disturbance was the greatest that had happened to the Hellenes and to a considerable part of the barbarians, and, so to speak, to the greatest part of humankind" (1.1.2). It is debated whether this greatest "disturbance" (κίνησις) covers the twenty-seven-year Peloponnesian War itself, the period between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, or both that intermediate period and the Peloponnesian War.¹⁷ If the greatest disturbance is the period leading up to the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides is explaining why he thought that that war would be important. But if the greatest disturbance is the Peloponnesian War itself, Thucydides is at once confirming that his expectation that the war would be important was justified by events. And this overt confirmation of his expectation at the start of the war would stand in contrast with the fate of many characters later in the *History* whose

¹⁷ See Hornblower, *Comm. ad loc.* for a discussion of the problem.

hopes and expectations are reported—and soon frustrated.¹⁸ He would be claiming for himself a special foresight—the type of foresight he admires in politicians, and in two Athenian politicians in particular, Themistocles and Pericles (1.138.3; 2.65.5; 13).

The Pursuit of Truth

Thucydides substantiates his claim that “this was the greatest disturbance” by reviewing earlier events in the historical sketch known as the *Archaeology*. He introduces that sketch with a statement on the difficulty of discovering what happened in the past: “As for what happened before this and still further in the past, it was impossible to discover that clearly owing to the length of time; but from the evidence which I can trust after looking back as long as one can, I think that they were not great either in warfare or in any other respect” (1.1.3). He then proceeds to surmount the difficulties of discovering the truth about the distant past with a virtuoso display of reasoning. His arguments about the development of early Greece are based on his interpretation of the general Greek mythographic tradition and of some more specific sources—“the old poets” (1.5.2), Homer in particular (1.3.3; 1.9.4; 1.10.3, where he makes allowance for poetic exaggeration), and “those Peloponnesians who have been the recipients of the most credible tradition” (1.9.2). He also uses what we would call archaeological evidence (1.8.1—burial remains on Delos that were dug up during the Peloponnesian War) and inference from the present (he argues that a “primitive” way of life that was once widespread is now localised in non- or semi-Greek areas: 1.5.2; 1.6.2; 1.6.6). The result is a persuasive account of the gradual development of the conditions under which strong states—and naval powers in particular—were able to emerge.

Thucydides’ *Archaeology* does not just seek to prove the relative insignificance of earlier wars. It also, as Connor has noted, functions in part as “the demonstration of his historical method”—a method that is then “for much of the work . . . out of sight”, but that still lends authority to the narrative of the Peloponnesian War: “If Thucydides’

¹⁸ Cf. Rood (1998a), index, *s.vv.* “hope” and “perceptions, mistaken”. For the significance of the aorist participle ἐλπίσας, as opposed to the more common present ἐλπίζων, see Bakker (1997) 48–51, esp. 50 n. 84.

powerful engine can extract such a compelling interpretation of the remote past, *a fortiori* it should be able to attain important results in interpreting and analyzing the recent past”.¹⁹

Thucydides’ authority is further established by the way he frames his demonstration of his historical method. He starts with the impressively forthright claim that previous events were not great (οὐ μέγала, 1.1.3), but later refines this claim by conceding that the Persian Wars were the greatest of earlier events (μέγιστον, 1.23.1). By making this concession, he also exempts himself from the human tendency to admire ancient wars (like the Trojan War, presumably) more than recent ones (except wars that are still current: 1.21.2). Thucydides also refines his initial claim that “it was impossible to discover clearly” what happened in the past. That strong claim makes more impressive the reconstruction that he does offer. By the end of the account, however, the claim of impossibility is replaced by talk of hardness: “Such is how I discovered early times to be, though it is hard to trust all the inferences” (1.20.1: χαλεπὰ ὄντα παντὶ ἐξῆς τεκμηρίῳ πιστεῦσαι).²⁰ Thucydides still does not state that he has discovered “clearly” (σαφῶς) what happened in the past, but he does at least say that his conclusions are adequate given the antiquity of the events he has treated (1.21.1).

The sense of Thucydides’ mastery over the complexities of historical research is reinforced by overt criticism of how other people treat the past. First he alleges that people are prone simply to accept what they are told. He condemns the way they accept traditions even about their own country “without putting them to the test” (1.20.1), and gives examples of false beliefs about Athenian history and Spartan constitutional practice: “So little pains do most people take in searching for truth (ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀληθείας) that they turn to what is at hand” (1.20.3). He then implicitly defines his own methods against two other types of writer: poets and λογογράφοι (“chroniclers”).²¹ First he repeats his earlier charge that poets embellish events

¹⁹ Connor (1985) 7. It should be stressed, though, that in one sense the historical method Thucydides uses in the *Archaeology* is precisely not the method he uses in his narrative of the (contemporaneous) Peloponnesian War.

²⁰ Cf. Plant (1999) 65. But note that there is no actual contradiction: the claim of hardness at 1.20.1 relates strictly to how trustworthy the inferences drawn from unreliable evidence are.

²¹ Λογογράφος is similar to λογοποιός, used of Aesop and Hecataeus by Herodotus (2.134.3; 2.143.1; 5.36.2; 5.125). Thucydides himself does not use that noun, but

(ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον κοσμοῦντες, 1.21.1, cf. 10.3),²² and by using the verb ὑμνεῖν of their poetic activity he suggests that their embellishment is driven by encomiastic purposes (cf. Pericles' use of the verb at 2.42.2—and also his description of Homer as a “praiser”, 2.41.4). As for λογογράφοι, he claims that they are more concerned with pleasing the ear than with truth, and that most of their stories have “won through” to the status of “the fabulous” (τὸ μυθῶδες) in the course of time and “cannot be refuted” (ἀνεξέλεγκτα).²³

Thucydides' later description of his own work draws an implicit contrast with the works of the λογογράφοι: “the non-fabulous character (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες) of the events will perhaps seem rather unpleasant (ἀτερπέστερον) to the ear; it will be enough if my work is judged useful by those who want to have a clear picture of the past and of the similar things which will happen again at some time, the human condition being what it is; it is a possession for all time rather than a competition piece for immediate listening” (1.22.4). Thucydides here rejects the fabulous character of the works of the λογογράφοι and their preference for pleasure over truth. At the same time, he slightly qualifies his earlier rejection of pleasure: his work will only *seem* rather lacking in pleasure.²⁴

A strong contrast has been made between the ways in which Herodotus and Thucydides conceive of historical research. Herodotus, it has been claimed, “does not automatically dismiss earlier investigators as mere amateurs or assume the privileged perspective of a professional researcher”, while Thucydides “has little tolerance for amateurs and suggests that his method of inquiry is anything but common”.²⁵ It has even been thought that Thucydides regarded Herodotus as an amateur and that the criticism of earlier writers is

cf. Athenagoras' argument that those people who say that the Athenians could have decided to invade Sicily “invent stories that are neither true nor ever could be” (6.38.1, οὔτε ὄντα οὔτε ἂν γενόμενα λογοποιοῦσιν)—a phrase that seems to anticipate Aristotle's distinction (*Poetics* 1451a36–38) between what happened (the domain of history) and what could happen (the domain of poetry).

²² Thucydides implicitly sides with Gorgias' claim (*Hel.* 1) that truth is an adornment (κόσμος) for words.

²³ For the word cf. Brasidas' claim that the barbarian mode of fighting (standing and shouting in great hordes while waving their spears about, but not facing up to a determined charge) “affords no test of courage” (ἀνεξέλεγκτον καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον ἔχει, 4.126.5).

²⁴ Tacitus understood this when he echoed Thucydides' words in his digression on the apparently boring events under the principate (*Annals* 4.32).

²⁵ Christ (1994) 199.

directed against him in particular.²⁶ The contrast between the two historians has perhaps been overstated (Herodotus' technique of drawing inferences about the past is often strikingly similar to Thucydides').²⁷ It is more profitable to approach Thucydides' remarks on the pursuit of truth from the standpoint of forensic rhetoric. When he criticizes people for accepting information "without putting it to the test" (ἀβασανίστως), he alludes to a familiar rhetorical challenge—the βάσανος (and the word Thucydides uses is itself attested in Antiphon 1.13).²⁸

The fifth-century rhetorical milieu also helps to explain why Thucydides focuses on oral sources when he describes how he gathered the information contained in his narrative:

Καὶ ὅσα μὲν λόγῳ εἶπον ἕκαστοι ἢ μέλλοντες πολεμήσειν ἢ ἐν αὐτῷ ἤδη ὄντες, χαλεπὸν τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν τῶν λεχθέντων διαμνημονεῦσαι ἢν ἐμοί τε ὦν αὐτὸς ἦκουσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοθεν ποθεν ἐμοὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν· ὥς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἐμοὶ ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστα εἰπεῖν, ἐχομένῳ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται. τὰ δ' ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος πυνθανόμενος ἠξίωσα γράφειν, οὐδ' ὥς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει, ἀλλ' οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρῆν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβεῖα περὶ ἐκάστου ἐπεξεληθὼν. ἐπιπόνως δὲ ἠυρίσκετο, διότι οἱ παρόντες τοῖς ἔργοις ἐκάστοις οὐ ταῦτα περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔλεγον, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐκατέρων τις εὐνοίας ἢ μνήμης ἔχοι.

As for the speeches made either on the verge of war or during the war itself, some I heard myself, informants from various places told me of others, but in all cases it was hard to recall accurately what was said; I have written them more or less as I thought the speakers would have said what was required about each situation, keeping as close as possible to the overall intention of what was actually said. As for the actions of the war, I thought fit to write them not from what I learnt from any chance person nor as it seemed to me, but after going through as precisely as possible both the events I was present at myself and those I learnt from others. The process of discovery was full of trouble because the stories told about each event by those present were not the same, but swayed by memory or partiality for one of the two sides (1.22.1–3).

One reason why Thucydides does not discuss other sorts of source like written documents is that he does not think they have any use for contemporary history: when he does include written treaties in

²⁶ E.g., Gabba (1981) 50; contrast Malitz (1982) 268 n. 61; Tsakmakis (1995b).

²⁷ Raaflaub (2002b).

²⁸ Cf. Plant (1999).

his narrative of the war, he includes them as part of the war itself, not as sources for the war. His description of his method implies that he was writing for an audience used to weighing up competing oral testimonies, and not as a modern historian weighing up a wide variety of different sorts of source. He was seeking to produce an account that transcended the partial narratives typical of the courtroom.

Thucydides says little about how he went about the task of analyzing conflicting claims from eyewitnesses. His “rhetorical aim”, it has been said, “is to establish the difficulties more than to announce the solution”.²⁹ One reason for this reticence may be the function of his statement on method. It is not a self-contained section on methodology. Rather, it follows his claim that “this war” will show those who look at the facts themselves (αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα) that it was greater than any before it. The ἔργα are then divided into the speeches (ὅσα μὲν λόγῳ εἶπον) and the facts (τὰ δ’ ἔργα τῶν παραχθέντων), and the lesser accuracy claimed for the speeches is a foil to the greater accuracy claimed for the narrative of events.³⁰

It is still true that readers are left with a sense of difficulties piled on difficulties—as the problem of finding out the truth about the past is replaced with the problem of finding out the truth about the present. But it would be facile to regard Thucydides’ stress on difficulties as mere rhetoric. The problems he analyzes are part of what it is to be human (compare the difficulties acknowledged by the Homeric narrator: “it is hard for me to tell of this, as if I were a god”, *Il.* 12.176—though strictly the problem here is producing a narrative of a complex battle, not finding out the actual information). More striking than Thucydides’ stress on difficulties is the fact that he lays so little stress on these difficulties in the narrative proper—when the Thucydidean narrator does assume a persona not unlike the divine omniscience of the novelist.

The way Thucydides presents the task of discovering what happened in the war implies that he was seeking to achieve the sort of

²⁹ Pires (1998) 111.

³⁰ There is no space here for a proper discussion of what Thucydides claims for his speeches—perhaps the most discussed passage in the whole of his work. The distinction between the treatment of the speeches and the narrative perhaps underlies Abbott’s comment that “although Thucydides had never heard the words ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’, he understood the distinction tolerably well” (1925) 32. See the brief discussion with references at Rood (1998a) 46–48, adding Tsakmakis (1998).

control over his narrative that an ideal statesman would achieve in political life. His ultimate model of stability is Pericles, who insists that he stays the same, that he always keeps to the same policy while others are moulded by events (1.140.1; 2.61.1).³¹ The priority Thucydides gives to truth over pleasure also aligns him with Pericles, who (unlike his successors) did not speak to please the people, but led them (2.65.8–10). At the same time, Thucydides' desire to see his work as "a possession for all time" rather than "a competition piece" (ἀγώνισμα) for the moment removes his work from the destructive play of competition and short-term ambition that he saw at work in cities like Corcyra that were torn apart by civil war during the Peloponnesian War (3.82–3, where there are several ἀγών- words).

Thucydides' methodological remarks on the pursuit of truth are strengthened in the course of the work itself by his repeated stress on the role played by ignorance in human affairs. The lies Brasidas tells Athens' allies in the north prove all too seductive: they soon count the cost of their overreliance on Sparta (4.108.4–6—stress is given by an authorial generalization and a proleptic comment on how the allies were mistaken). The Athenians themselves invade Sicily even though they know little about the island (6.1.2): here the extent of their ignorance is emphasized by a narratorial account of the colonization of Sicily. And when the Athenians do pursue the truth in earnest they do so at the most inopportune moment possible—and in an inept way: after the profanation of the Mysteries and the mutilation of the Herms they make an "investigation" (ζήτησιν) and "instead of scrutinising the informers, in their suspicious temper they welcomed all indifferently, arresting and imprisoning the best citizens upon the evidence of rascals, and preferring to test the matter thoroughly (βασανίσαι) sooner than to let an accused person of good character pass unquestioned (ἀνέλεγκτον), owing to the rascality of the informer" (6.53.2: note the echoes of 1.20–21).³²

³¹ The closest parallel to the actual phrasing of "the stories told about each event by those present were not the same" (οὐ ταῦτά περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔλεγον) at 1.22.3 is the Plataean argument that decision-makers should not be swayed by immediate self-interest: "one should always be seen to decide the same cases in the same way" (ταῦτά περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν, 3.56.7). Cf. the same phrase at Isoc. 2.18; and similar phrases at Antiphon 5.50; 5.14; 6.2 (of the need for laws to be impartial).

³² On the role of knowledge within the work, see esp. Ober (1998) 52–121—though he perhaps overestimates the extent to which Thucydides' work is a critique of specifically democratic knowledge and deliberation: the constraints Thucydides

Thucydides' authoritarian stance and his criticism of the masses have often been seen as antidemocratic. Thucydides, it has been said, "obscured his lessons from the mass of the readers as the price of making them available to the few".³³ And it has even been claimed that he was producing a work that would be "an education for exiles, transients, and the otherwise politically alienated": "Thucydides says specifically that he expects his work to yield less *τέρψις* 'bliss of communal ceremony' because it is not *μυθῶδες* 'mythlike' . . . In an uncivic spirit he calls his work a *κτῆμα* 'private possession' . . . Consequently the power of prose myth, which in Herodotus defines the polis and illuminates its triumph, is in Thucydides appropriated by an ersatz-unshared power from knowledge of events, deposited to private accounts and thus purloined from the use of the whole polis".³⁴ Such a claim is rather hyperbolic: there is no reason to gloss the pleasure that Thucydides (to some extent) rejects as a specifically communal pleasure or to claim that he views his work as a specifically private possession. Indeed, when Thucydides appeals to "those who want to have a clear picture of the past" (*ὅσοι δὲ βουλῆσονται . . . σκοπεῖν*) as his ideal readers, he echoes a phrase found on Athenian inscriptions. His own text, he implies, is like an inscription available for public consultation—and the voluntary nature of this participation is a key aspect of democratic ideology.³⁵

For all that, Thucydides does strongly direct readers' interpretation of what they see. He makes allowances, for instance, for possible human negligence by providing an explicit account of the causes of the war, "so that no one should have to seek (*ζητῆσαι*) into how so great a war befell the Greeks" (1.23.5; cf. *ζήτησις* at 1.20.3). Such overt guidance is, however, the exception rather than the rule: readers even have to negotiate their way through the competing claims made by the speakers within the text, since "no single speech, not even any of those of Pericles, has ultimate authority; all compete in the reader's mind for interpretative potential".³⁶ But behind all the

(like Herodotus before him) sees on human decision making are not confined to democracies.

³³ Yunis (2003) 212.

³⁴ Wickersham and Pozzi (1991) 7, referring to Nagy (1990) 167–69.

³⁵ Moles (1999); cf. Cole (1991) 105: "the text of Thucydides is a document available for consultation any time a model for words . . . is required".

³⁶ Yunis (2003) 204.

competing voices in the narrative there does lurk a controlling presence—the power that has interpreted events and shaped the narrative, the power of the Thucydidean narrator.

The Thucydidean Narrator

At the start of his work, when Thucydides turns to elaborate his thesis of the greatness of the Peloponnesian War, his stress on the difficulty of discovering what happened in the past is accompanied by a shift in his narratorial role: “As for what happened before this and still further in the past, it was impossible to discover that clearly owing to the length of time; but from the evidence which I can trust after looking back as long as one can, I think that they were not great either in warfare or in any other respect” (1.1.3). With this sentence, Thucydides moves from the third-person statement at the start of his work (“Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote up the war . . .”), via a series of participles joined to that subject (“beginning”, ἀρξάμενος; “expecting”, ἐλπίσας; “taking as evidence”, τεκμαιρόμενος) and the impersonal statement “it was impossible” (ἀδύνατα ἦν), to two first-person forms: first a pronoun with participle (σκοποῦντί μοι), then a first-person verb (“I think”, νομίζω). He establishes a separation between two personae that is maintained in the rest of the work: the persona of Thucydides the author, who is referred to with third-person forms, and the persona of the first-person Thucydidean narrator. (A third persona, as we have seen, appears later in the work: “Thucydides the son of Olorus”, that is, Thucydides the character.)

A number of first-person forms are found in Thucydides’ reconstruction of past history in the *Archaeology*. These forms are found when Thucydides adduces evidence or draws conclusions from the evidence he has adduced. After arguing, for instance, that the instability of life and the common migrations in early times prevented the development of strong powers, he goes on: “This fact too shows me (δηλοῖ . . . μοι) not least the weakness of ancient times: before the Trojan War there is no indication of any common action in Hellas, nor indeed, it seems to me (δοκεῖ . . . μοι), of the universal prevalence of the name; on the contrary, before the time of Hellen, son of Deucalion, no such appellation existed” (1.3.1–2; cf. 1.3.3; 1.9.1; 1.9.3; 1.10.4). Another first-person form is found in the fascinating passage where Thucydides speculates not about the past, as in the

rest of the *Archaeology*, but about how powerful Sparta and Athens would seem in the future if the cities were abandoned (1.10.2: οἶμαι, “I think”). There are also three first-person plural forms in a formulaic superlative phrase (“Minos is the oldest of those men we know of by hearsay, ὧν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν”), 1.4; cf. 1.13.4; 1.18.1) that is found already in Herodotus.

Thucydides’ reconstruction of past history aims to prove that the Peloponnesian War is the greatest war ever. At the end of the *Archaeology* he brazenly acknowledges that men tend to regard current wars as the greatest (while typically complicating the claim by stating that men marvel at ancient wars when their own wars are over). That is, he attempts to extricate himself from the charge that his own claim about the greatness of the Peloponnesian War is historically determined—an attempt that has been seen as “scandalous”.³⁷ The way Thucydides repeats that brazen claim has seemed equally scandalous: “this war will show those who look at it from the facts themselves that it was greater than previous ones” (1.21.2).

One reason Thucydides’ claim about the greatness of the war has seemed scandalous is that it is “this war” itself that will offer proof of its own greatness. It is as if “the third-person narrator of the opening sentence yields to a new speaker, the war itself”³⁸—as if it is the war itself that is the speaker of the impersonal, factual type of narration found, for instance, in the Salaitos episode. Yet immediately after yielding to this new speaker Thucydides uses first-person forms to state that he was present at some of the speeches and events he describes (1.22.1–2): he even makes the strong claim that “I saw fit to write” (ἡξίωσα γράφειν) not as he learnt details from chance acquaintances nor “as it seemed to me” (ὥς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει),³⁹ but only after thorough investigations (1.22.2). And perhaps he does not even yield to the war as speaker in the first place. “This war” (οὗτος ὁ πόλεμος—note that the more immediate ὅδε is not used) implies the war that Thucydides is going to narrate—an account that can be looked at (note σκοποῦσι, “those who look at it”), and that itself starts “the war begins at this point” (2.1). And when he writes that this war will “show” (δηλώσει) its own greatness, he uses a verb, δηλοῦν, commonly used, as here, in contexts where recipi-

³⁷ Hedrick (1993) 29.

³⁸ Connor (1984) 29; cf. Kurke (2000) 150.

³⁹ On this phrase, see Marincola (1989).

ents' response to what is shown is at issue (1.73.1; 2.48.3), and of letters or inscriptions (1.129.1; 1.134.4; 1.137.4; 7.10; 7.16.1).⁴⁰ He is foregrounding the role of his readers in interpreting the events of the war—and claiming that they will be able to see from the events themselves that the Peloponnesian War is the greatest ever. His presumption lies not in claiming that the war is a speaker, but in claiming that his narration of this war represents the facts themselves—and that is why he at once proceeds to state how he gathered information about the speeches and actions of the war (see above).

Even if Thucydides had been claiming that the war itself was a speaker, that claim would soon have been belied by the narrative. Just as Thucydides' activity as writer is underlined, as we have seen, by the year-end formulae, so too his activity as narrator is underlined by the use of first-person forms.

First-person narratorial forms are both more common and more diverse than the formulaic third-person statements of Thucydides' authorship found at the end of most war-years. Thucydides uses first-person forms to refer back to earlier passages (5.1.1; 6.94.1), to explain why he has included a section (1.23.5; 1.97.2), to introduce a new section (2.48.3; 3.90.1; 5.26.6) or announce what a new section will prove (2.48.3; 6.54.1), and to express an inability to say something (3.113.6; 5.68.2; 6.2.1). He also uses them "for statements of opinion, reasoning, inference, autopsy, and methodology, that is, anything that affected the history *qua* history".⁴¹ Methodological instances of the first person are particularly interesting because they show how Thucydides separates his role as agent (where third-person forms are used) from his role as enquirer. He uses first-person forms, for instance, to state that his exile helped him to gather information from the Peloponnesian side (5.26.5, and cf. 1.22.1–2 for his broader methodological statement). More complex is his statement about the plague at Athens: "I will show the symptoms, I who myself fell ill and myself saw others suffering" (αὐτὸς τε νοσήσας καὶ αὐτὸς ἰδὼν ἄλλους πάσχοντας, 2.48.3). David Gribble has claimed that here "the first person refers to the narrator as an actual agent in the narrative" (he contrasts the use of third persons in 4.104).⁴² But the passage is methodological. The use of participles (rather than main verbs)

⁴⁰ On this verb, see Allison (1997a) 145–46; 229.

⁴¹ Marincola (1997) 184 n. 52.

⁴² Gribble (1998) 48 n. 46.

for the illness and for the claim of autopsy suggests that the passage is primarily explaining why Thucydides is able to give such a good description of the plague. Besides these occurrences, first-person forms are used to limit the chronological scope of narratorial judgments (7.86.5; 8.24.4; 8.68.2; 8.97.2; also 7.87.5; 8.41.2, where the first-person plural is used, as in the three instances in the *Archaeology* cited above) or foreground their subjectivity (1.23.6; 2.17.2; 3.89.5, three contentious statements of causation, and 7.87.5), to speculate about the future (2.54.3; cf. 1.10.2), to mark uncertainty about characters' motivation (1.93.7; 8.56.3; 8.87.4) or even (apparently) about a fact (8.64.5), to mark a story as one handed down by tradition (2.102.6: another first-person plural), and for reasoning in "digressions" dealing with past history such as the account of the fall of the Peisistratid tyranny at Athens (6.55.3; cf. the examples from the *Archaeology* cited above).

Thucydides' first-person appearances, though more frequent than instances of the third person, are still scarce enough to have prompted claims that his story appears to tell itself. But Thucydides' overt narratorial appearances do show that the narrative of the war cannot be taken as in any sense iconic—that is, as an exact representation of the war itself. Indeed, Thucydides at one point explicitly states that he has only narrated the most important events (3.90.1—the claim applies only to his rather bitty account of the first Athenian expedition to Sicily). And these overt appearances are not the only way in which Thucydides' role as narrator is felt. The iterative presentation of the Athenian invasions of the Megarid, for instance, is another sign that the narrative is not iconic: Thucydides narrates once invasions that happened several times (2.31.3). His guiding role is also underlined by techniques such as "if not" situations and "presentation through negation"; by small temporal shifts as well as by the larger temporal and intellectual range of passages where Thucydides analyzes Athens' defeat (2.65), civil war (3.82–83), or the Athenians' complex dealings with Alcibiades (6.15.2–4); by other explicit judgments (about characters, for instance, before they make speeches [1.139.4; 3.36.6]); and by generalizations about human nature (4.108.4) or "what a crowd tends to do" (2.65.4; 4.28.3; 6.63.2; 8.1.4).⁴³

⁴³ See Hornblower (1994b) 148–60; Gribble (1998); Rood (1998a), index, *s.v.* "narrator" on narrative interventions in Thucydides; also, on counterfactual statements, Flory (1988); Rood (1998a) 278–80.

Expressions of uncertainty further undermine claims that Thucydides' story tells itself. Thucydides fails to express himself with full confidence more often than is sometimes realized (and notably when he is discussing Spartan or Persian actions and motives: 2.18.5; 2.20.1; 2.57.1; 3.79.3; 5.54.1; 5.65.3; 8.46.5; 8.50.3; 8.94.2). He also sometimes blurs numerals (e.g., "two or three times" at 2.4.2; cf. 3.76.1; 4.38.3; 5.10.9; 6.101.6; 7.79.6; 8.74.2).

Particularly striking are Thucydides' expressions of uncertainty when he treats spatially distant peoples and temporally distant events. He often reports only what is "said" or "thought" about peoples on the fringes of the Greek world (2.81.8; 3.94.5) and about events that we would regard as myth or legend (2.102.5; 3.96.1; 4.24.5; 6.2.1). Or does the fact that Thucydides qualifies his reports in this way necessarily indicate uncertainty? H.D. Westlake has argued that the use of λέγεται, "is said", in Thucydides does at times indicate uncertainty or even skepticism, but that at other times it marks simply Thucydides' repetition of a tradition or even his use of a written source. But Westlake's attempt to distinguish between passages is rather arbitrary. Uncertainty is certainly an issue on the rare occasions when Thucydides reports only what "is said" in the narrative of the Peloponnesian War itself, since those passages stand out against the great mass of statements that are not qualified in any way. But when he uses λέγεται in a narrative of the past, Thucydides is establishing a contract between storyteller and audience ("there is a story . . .") in which the reliability of the tradition is not the main issue. At the same time, the qualification suggests that reliability *could* be an issue. This more hesitant treatment of spatially and temporally distant events bolsters the reliability of the rest of the narrative.⁴⁴ Thucydides' occasional stress on the difficulty of gaining information also creates a sense that he can be trusted. While he notes in the *Archaeology* poets' tendency to exaggerate (1.10.3; 1.21.1), in the narrative proper he notes that it is a human tendency to exaggerate the numbers of one's own side (5.68.2, on the difficulty of calculating the size of the Spartan army; cf. Alcibiades at 6.17.5). And he uses the night battle at Epipolai to make a point about the difficulty of getting accurate information even from participants: "By

⁴⁴ On λέγεται, see in general Westlake (1977b); also Luraghi (1991) 42 n. 2 on the reliability question; Edmunds (1990) 7 with 18 n. 18, on the source issue (arguing for use of non-poetic oral tradition).

day certainly the combatants have a clearer notion, though even then by no means of all that takes place, no one knowing much of anything that does not go on in his own immediate neighborhood; but in a night engagement (and this was the only one that occurred between great armies during the war) how could anyone know anything for certain?" (7.44.1—one of only two rhetorical questions in Thucydides' work).⁴⁵ The point about the difficulty of getting information even by day evidently applies to all the other engagements in the war. That difficulty is brought out here as foil to the even greater difficulty of knowing what is happening at night. And the emphasis given by this methodological elaboration to the night battle of Epipolai itself reinforces Thucydides' presentation of the disruption and suffering caused by the Peloponnesian War.

While Thucydides brings out in general terms the difficulties faced by participants in the war, he does not substantiate those difficulties by specifying the specific source (or sources) he has used in different sections of his narrative. Whereas Herodotus often states what his informants told him, Thucydides only reveals the different stories that his sources told him about an event in the Peloponnesian War once—in his account of the Plataian massacre of Theban prisoners in 431 BC: "this is what the Thebans say, and they say that the Plataians swore an oath; the Plataians do not agree that they promised to give the men back at once, but only if after discussion they came to some agreement, and they deny that they swore an oath" (2.5.6; the nearest parallels are 1.138.4 and 1.138.6, from an excursus about the past). This passage is in fact very close to a common Herodotean method of citing sources: like Herodotus, Thucydides here names as his source not individual eyewitnesses, but peoples ("the Thebans" and "the Plataians"); he reports not what they *said*, but what they *say*, that is, what they still say at the time of narration; and he does not judge which side is right. And Thucydides' similarity to Herodotus' technique suggests that it is in fact anachronistic to think of this passage as a "source-citation" at all. As Nino Luraghi in particular has brought out, Herodotus does not, like modern historians, cite sources to prove the veracity of a claim.⁴⁶ For many of his statements, Herodotus gives no source at all. It is when he is giving alternative accounts that he tends to cite what, for instance, "the Spartans" or

⁴⁵ Hornblower (1994b) 149 (the other one is at 8.96.2).

⁴⁶ Luraghi (2001b).

“the Samians” say. There is an implied commentary in Herodotus on the invention of tradition—on the way in which societies shape the past in a self-serving way.

Like Herodotus’ citation of variants, Thucydides’ citation of what “the Thebans” and “the Plataians” say points to the continuing political importance of stories about the past—at a time when Plataia itself had been destroyed by the Spartans to gratify the Thebans (note how the Plataian story is explicitly cast as a response to the Thebans). At the same time, Thucydides’ refusal to decide between the two accounts itself emphasizes the hostility of Plataia and Thebes. The dispute also prepares for the complexities of the Plataian Debate (3.52–68), where the difficulties of moral judgment about the past are a major theme. And one of the messages of the Plataian Debate, that perceived self-interest drives out considerations based on past behavior, may itself explain why the political use of stories about the past is not going to be a major theme of Thucydides’ history.

Why did Thucydides include this one discrepancy, and no others, even though they too may have contained (or even been) important facts? Like other expressions of uncertainty, Thucydides’ reporting of the Plataian and Theban versions could be regarded as a cynical ploy to instil belief in the rest of his narrative. Thucydides, it seems, has it both ways: both the apparent certainty of most of his narrative, and his occasional uncertainty, increase our impression of his authority. Or is it rather scholars who have it both ways in their fixation with how Thucydides creates a sense of narratorial authority?

Variants and expressions of uncertainty can have distinctive effects of their own. Phrases such as “two or three times” tend to appear in vivid sections of narrative like the nighttime attack on Plataia (2.4.2). When the Thucydidean narrator reports what “is said” (λέγεται) to have happened in a place in the distant past, he exploits the mythical aura of that place—of the strait between Italy and Sicily, say, “the so-called Charybdis past which Odysseus is said to have sailed” (4.24.5). And it is no accident that the dispute between the Plataians and Thebans over what happened at Plataia comes right at the start of the war. Thucydides nods, in the symbolically rich Plataian setting, towards a Herodotean manner of writing history—a style which he then moves away from.

Variations in narratorial authority may impart a distinctive tone to sections of the narrative. In the runup to the battle of Mantinea during the uneasy peace, for instance, Thucydides speculates on why

the Spartan king Agis decided at one point to lead his army back: “whether because of the shout, or because it seemed good to him too, for another or the same reason” (5.65.3). The alternative “either . . . or”, unique in Thucydides, gives a touch of Herodotean colouring to the account of the uneasy peace (cf., e.g., Hdt. 1.19.2). There are other Herodotean touches in this section of the narrative: the shout itself that may have influenced Agis (“he intended to cure bad with bad”, 5.65.2—a phrase used at Hdt. 3.53.4), the self-consciousness about measuring the size of the Spartan army (5.68.3). Like the earlier invocation of the famous Battle of the Champions (5.41.2—see Hdt. 1.82), these Herodotean touches impart an old-world feel to the account of Peloponnesian wranglings in Book V.⁴⁷

Expressions of uncertainty are used to slightly different effect in Thucydides’ account of the Ionian War in Book VIII. It is here that Thucydides has to interpret the motivation of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes, and his presentation brings out the difficulty of assessing Tissaphernes’ motives. At first it seems that Tissaphernes’ policy is entirely moulded by Alcibiades’ advice, but then Thucydides begins to suggest a more complicated picture—and to foreground his personal speculations. First Tissaphernes “seems to me” to have wanted the same goal as Alcibiades (8.56.3), and then nothing at all is heard of Alcibiades when Thucydides speculates at length as to why Tissaphernes failed to bring the Phoenician fleet into the war (8.87). At the same time Alcibiades is presented as exaggerating his own hold on Tissaphernes. Thucydides’ speculation increases as Alcibiades’ influence declines. It is not, perhaps, that Thucydides thought he had more secure information for the earlier stages (whether or not that information came from Alcibiades himself, as some have supposed). Rather, the increasing uncertainty about Tissaphernes’ aims is dramatic: Thucydides slightly undermines the impression of Alcibiades’ influence established in the earlier stages of the narrative.

Thucydides again expresses uncertainty in Book VIII in his account of the civil war at Athens. Here it is the motivation of the Spartan admiral Agesandridas as he approaches Athens that is at stake: “perhaps by agreement he was lingering around Epidaurus and that area, and it is in any case likely that he was waiting there in response to the Athenians’ current dissension, through hope that he might arrive

⁴⁷ Rood (1998a) 106 with n. 100.

opportune" (8.94.2). Here the effect seems to be to recreate something of the atmosphere in Athens at this time of extreme crisis.

Thucydides' expressions of uncertainty cannot be reduced to tools for persuading readers of his reliability and objectivity. Even to talk of the "objectivity" of the rest of Thucydides' narrative—and to view that "objectivity" as a rhetorical stance designed to persuade readers of his own infallibility—is anachronistic. In those parts of his work where his narratorial persona is covert, he is following in the footsteps of Homer, and also, to a lesser extent, of Herodotus, whose first-person interventions become much less frequent the closer he gets in space and time to his own time.⁴⁸ And his reason for this covert narratorial stance is often that he was aiming at vividness—a vividness that would convey something of the suffering caused by the Peloponnesian War.⁴⁹ To interfere too often in his own person, to say who (if anyone) told him that their bodies shook as they watched the final sea battle at Syracuse (7.71.3), would have been to spoil some of his greatest effects.

This tragic Thucydides may seem more attractive than the cynical Thucydides ruthlessly imposing his judgment on readers, or even than the older image of Thucydides the detached scientist applying Hippocratic methods to history.⁵⁰ Yet conjuring up this tragic Thucydides is not in itself a sufficient response to Thucydides' narrative manner. It is not just that there are many passages of detached narrative where the story appears to tell itself that have no tragic effect. It is also that the narrator does occasionally intervene at the end of vivid narratives to make 'pathos statements'⁵¹ about the scale of suffering—statements that recall the summaries found in tragic messenger speeches (e.g., 7.30.3: "Mykalessos experienced a calamity, for its extent, as lamentable as any that happened in the war"). So too overt statements of uncertainty can have strongly tragic effects. Of the defeat of the Amprakiotas, Thucydides comments that "this was by far the greatest disaster that befell any one Hellenic city in an equal number of days during this war"—and adds that "I have

⁴⁸ Thucydides himself even showed an interest in Homer's self-allusion in the *Hymn to Apollo* (3.104.5)—as if conscious of the rareness of any such personal details in Homer.

⁴⁹ Cf. Rood (1999) 166; Kurke (2000) 151–52; and more broadly Walker (1993).

⁵⁰ The image presented by Cochrane (1929) 3.

⁵¹ Immerwahr (1985) 447; cf. Lateiner (1977).

not set down the number of the dead, because the amount stated seems so out of proportion to the size of the city as to be incredible" (3.113.6).

I began with the tension between the admiration for the way Thucydides constructs his narrative authority found in some earlier scholars and the more recent tendency to view his striving for "objectivity" with suspicion. We are left with a tension in the way that Thucydides himself constructed his narratorial authority: a tension between reticent detachment and passionate engagement, between the democratic impulse to let readers make what they will of the narrative and the rigid sense of authority that pervades the narrative. The tensions in modern responses to Thucydides' narratorial persona and in Thucydides' own construction of that persona both reflect the fact that that persona is not a single entity, but itself formed by his armory of narratorial techniques. And at a deeper level these tensions suggest that Thucydides' different personae are not an aesthetic creation for their own sake, but subordinate to his innovative and ambitious goal of writing a history that does not just tell readers something about the Peloponnesian War, but also tells them something about similar wars that will occur in the future.

INTERACTION OF SPEECH AND NARRATIVE IN THUCYDIDES

James V. Morrison

This chapter examines the interaction between speech and narrative in Thucydides' *History*.¹ This interaction is dynamic, in part due to the tension between what is said and what happens. The narrative may confirm what is said in speech, provide an illustration of a general idea, or correct what is claimed by making clear how inaccurate a statement or prediction has been. Speech-narrative interaction is dynamic in another sense: one section of speech may reflect, anticipate, or be at variance with *several* different sections of narrative.² To track such connections requires active engagement on the reader's part. Two approaches to speech-narrative interaction will be suggested: the first is based on the alignment of speech and narrative, the second examines the substance of speech-narrative connections. I begin with a few preliminary remarks on Thucydides' use of speech and narrative and the scope of this analysis.

First, Thucydides has followed the practice of poetic narrative and early historiography by presenting both speech and narrative. He has innovated, however, regarding speeches, by adapting the models of rhetoric so prevalent in late fifth-century Greece, especially in Athens. That is, the alternation of speech and narrative is familiar from the works of Homer and Herodotus, yet Thucydides has employed the sorts of deliberative, forensic, and epideictic speeches that politicians, courtroom speakers, and professional teachers (that is, sophists) were crafting and performing in Thucydides' own lifetime.³

¹ Many studies have focused on *either* speech or narrative, but not both. Exceptions include Kitto (1966); Stahl (1966); (1973); Macleod (1983c); Connor (1984). As Stahl (1973) 66 remarks: "only the *combination* of speech and course of events can give us the full impact of Thucydides' judgment—or of his condemnation".

² Of course, we might also discuss speech-speech interaction and narrative-narrative interaction (see Rengakos [1996]), but this chapter will be limited to speech and narrative.

³ For the variety of speeches in Thucydides, see W.C. West (1973), which includes indirect speech, treaties, and letters. On Homer and Thucydides, see Rood (1998b; bibliography at notes 1 and 3). On the importance of Herodotus for Thucydides,

Second, Thucydides explicitly distinguishes between speech and narrative in his section on method: καὶ ὅσα μὲν λόγῳ εἶπον . . . τὰ δ' ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων ("and as much as they said in argument . . . the actions of what was accomplished . . .", 1.22.1–2). Thucydides rhetorically prepares his readers to be thinking in terms of what people said on the one side and what they did on the other. This announcement is significantly placed immediately before the first episode in the *History* with speeches (1.24–55). It should be noted that while speech and narrative are both tied to the historical past—what was actually accomplished or said—speech has a somewhat different status than narrative. Thucydides' presentation of speech is based on both what others said and what needed to be said (1.22.1); his narrative, Thucydides claims, is as accurate as possible (ὅσον δυνατόν ἀκριβείᾳ, 1.22.2). Although there's much complexity to Thucydides' narrative, for our purposes, speech does not have the same authoritative status as narrative.⁴

Third, one way of thinking about speech and narrative is in terms of tasks facing the reader. Thucydides has structured his history in such a way as to invite and challenge his reader to become a participant in the project of historical analysis, using speech and narrative as a means to engage the reader. I have previously argued that the best model for the engaged reader is found in Thucydides' description of historians and statesmen who have the capacity to see likenesses, extrapolate from present evidence and circumstances, and

see Hornblower (1992b) and *Comm.* 2.19–38; 122–145; Scanlon (1994). On rhetorical models, see Hudson-Williams (1948); Macleod (1983c) 68–87; 103–122; Newman (1988); Rusten (1989) 9–11; Plant (1999).

⁴ Plant (1999) 70 remarks that for narrative "Thucydides deliberately excludes the sort of subjective input he admits for the speeches, and so contrasts the two methods"; cf. Pires (1998) 109. In spite of Thucydides' clear distinction between speech and narrative, certain paradoxes threaten a collapse of this distinction. Speech itself may be considered an action (*ergon*); alternatively, the *History* itself is entirely made up of words; see Parry (1981) 7–10; Loraux (1986b); Edmunds (1993). Gorgias argued (seriously or not) that language and thought are not commensurable with reality; see Hedrick (1993) 24. The narrative is tremendously complex, presenting action, indirect discourse, people's thoughts and feelings, and authorial comments. We should at least distinguish between an account of something that happened ("The Athenians sent twenty ships") from authorial judgments regarding what is "worth telling" (1.1.1; 1.14.2; 3.90.1; 5.74.1), the horrendous nature of events (7.30.3; 7.87.5–6), individuals and human nature (2.65.4–13; 3.36; 3.81.5; 3.82.2; 5.70; 6.103.4), and Thucydides' "hypotheses" (1.10.2; 4.106.4; 8.87.4); see Flory (1988); Rood (1998) 278–282; and more generally Gribble (1998). This is to say nothing of the various narrative techniques that Thucydides employs: see Rengakos and Rood in this volume.

either look to the past or foresee the probable course of events. Because Thucydides only rarely tells us *in explicit terms* to compare two episodes or to notice whether a particular sequence of events confirms or corrects an earlier prediction, the reader must step in to juxtapose and compare what is argued for in speech with what actually happens in narrative.⁵

This leads to a fourth point concerning the use of phrases such as “speech-narrative interaction”. How *do* speech and narrative interact? What do such interactions consist of? The phrases “interaction”, “connection”, “correspondence”, “significant reminiscence”, and so on refer to *any time speech may reasonably and valuably be juxtaposed with a narrative passage (or passages)*.⁶ Sometimes speech-narrative interaction may be based on something fairly obvious, such as the same event or theme appearing in both speech and narrative. Because Thucydides addresses tyranny, the revolt of Samos, and Pericles’ strategy, for example, in both speech and narrative—and does so, I think, deliberately—this functions as an invitation to the reader to juxtapose argument with narrative description. But these phrases will have different meanings in different situations. Sometimes a “connection” refers to the narrative confirming or reinforcing what is said in a speech; sometimes an “interaction” reveals the disparity between what is said and what is done.

⁵ See Morrison (1999) 98–100. Themistocles is called “finest at forecasting” (ἀρι-στος εἰκαστής, 1.138.3; on Pericles’ abilities, see 2.65.5; 2.65.13; cf. 2.64.6). Historians also engage in this process, but may make mistakes (1.9.4; 1.10.2). Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.33 translates *eikazein* as “form our conjectures”. Gomme, *HCT* 1.111 offers “imaginative inference and interpretation or reconstruction of the past”. I am not convinced that Thucydides’ “audience” is necessarily someone who is reading. In spite of Thucydides’ difficult style, R. Thomas (1992) 104 cautions that “his complex, antithetical style is closely akin to that of the contemporary Sophists, for example Antiphon and Gorgias, and they certainly set great store by performance and recitation”. For a possible scenario of one person reading Thucydides’ work aloud to a group of auditors, see Morrison (2004); cf. the interesting theory in P. Arnold (1992) 47.

⁶ Macleod (1983a) 146 discusses the literary technique of echo and “significant reminiscence” which “draws attention to causes and motives as well as pointing up ironies;” cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.16 on “deliberate cross-references”. Kitto (1966) says that Thucydides expects his readers to see the parallels for themselves (285) and must seize on the significance of such “to and fro” references (349). See also Connor (1984) 12; Farrar (1988) 136. P. Arnold (1992) 57 comments that Thucydides “places his readers on guard and challenges us to integrate, as he himself has, the λόγοι and ἔργα. Although we stand as rational and objective judges of arguments in the debates, the active, intellectual involvement demanded by the style of Thucydidean speeches requires us to become more participants in and less passive witnesses of not only the debates, but also the historian’s analysis of the war”.

Many wonderful books and articles have been written about these fascinating connections. Indeed, if the history of Thucydidean scholarship teaches us anything, it is that not all readers of Thucydides make all the same connections, catch all the same echoes, or find the linking of the same two sections to be persuasive. A legitimate question arises regarding authorial intention: did Thucydides have a particular echo or correspondence in mind? When should we view him as deliberately setting up an echo or connection? In most cases he undoubtedly was following a conscious plan, but even if Thucydides was not consciously thinking of two similarities or contrasts as linked, nevertheless one of his goals is to have the reader actively pursuing such similarities and disparities.⁷ I would not claim that each reader constructs the meaning of Thucydides' text anew—Thucydides guides us in deliberate fashion, as will be argued below—but the text is open-ended to the extent that Thucydides has set the task for the reader to look for similar, complementary, and contrasting situations, to compare speech and narrative, to test predictions against the subsequent course of action, and to extrapolate from maxim to particular.⁸

Fifth, the basic unit of Thucydides' history is the episode. An episode may be defined by its single focus upon an event or conflict with a fixed set of participants. Episodes, of course, may vary in length from quick narrative summaries to detailed descriptions of events in combination with speeches. I recognize that determining when episodes begin or end in some cases may be problematic, but Thucydides' general practice is to create continuity and set clear boundaries for each conflict. That is, we may reasonably view 1.24–1.55 as a single episode even though two battles take place in different contexts while the speeches occur in Athens. At the beginning of this episode, Thucydides presents a *headline*: "Epidamnus is a city" (1.24.1). Elsewhere, Thucydides indicates a change in focus—and the start of a new episode—with temporal phrases such as "At

⁷ On 1.22.4 offering instructions to readers, see Morrison (1999) 100.

⁸ Against this view of Thucydides' *History* as an open-ended text see, e.g., Pelling (2000) 83, who contrasts Thucydides with Herodotus: "Where Herodotus opens questions up, Thucydides' tendency is to close them down, to impose a single 'monologic' view imperiously on his readers. His causal questions have answers, and he cares that his audience should get them right". I find myself more in sympathy with the approach of Connor (1984); note the caution in Rhodes (1998b); for the difficulties surrounding the question of a deliberate allusion and cross-reference, see Hinds (1998) 17–51.

the same time . . .”, “At the start of summer . . .”, “In the next year . . .”, and so on. Similarly, a *conclusion* announces the close of this episode: “This was the first cause of the war for the Corinthians against the Athenians, that they fought a sea battle with the Corcyreans against them while under treaty” (1.55.2). Other conclusions refer to either subject or time: “These are the things which happened during the plague”, “These things happened in this way concerning Lesbos”, “The summer ended”, etc. (2.54.5; 3.50.3; 2.92.7; cf. 4.41.4; 7.87.5–6).⁹

Having said all this, we turn to the sixth and final point: the scope of this chapter. Without any claim to comprehensiveness, my analysis will focus on representative examples of the various types of interaction between the narrative and *set speeches in direct discourse*, rather than short exchanges, indirect discourse, or the citation of documents, such as treaties, inscriptions, or letters.¹⁰ Two approaches to speech-narrative interaction will be employed: first, exploring *how* speech and narrative are juxtaposed and aligned by analyzing the patterns employed by Thucydides which suggest that sections of speech and narrative should be explored in conjunction; second, analyzing *what* the interactions consist of—the substance of the connections linking speech and narrative.

Speech and Narrative: Structural Patterns

Thucydides aligns speech and narrative within episodes and between contiguous episodes in different ways in order to guide the reader's experience. The simplest situation occurs when speech and narrative have the same focus, that is, they are linked within the same episode.

⁹ Connor (1984) 92 n. 30 calls concluding statements “rounding off” formulas. On *headline* and *conclusion* see de Jong (2002) 250–60. Not every shift in focus means the end of an episode. 3.2–3.19 appears to be a single episode concerning Mytilene's revolt, yet at 3.7 the focus shifts when Phormio goes to Naupactus; note also 4.3–23 with the “interruption” at 4.7. Contrast these relatively focused sections, however, with the staccato treatment of Sicily in the latter half of Book III (3.86; 3.88; 3.90; 3.103; 3.115–16).

¹⁰ The analysis pursued here may well apply to documents and epigraphical quotations. Connor (1984) 146 notes: “the effect of the documents, then, is ironic for they emphasize the discrepancy between professions of enduring stability and the rapidly shifting reality of events”. See also Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.116–19.

Nested Speeches. The most straightforward alignment of speech and narrative is the “nested speech”. We begin by considering structure and key components. In a *nested speech*, a short narrative section, the “preamble”, immediately precedes the speech (or speeches) and a short narrative section, the “postscript”, follows the speech or set of speeches.¹¹ We might abbreviate this configuration: [S] for “preamble-speech-postscript”, or, if there is more than one speech, [S][S] or [S][S][S][S].

In the *preamble*, any or all of the following components may appear:

1. General context for the speech (or speeches).
2. Reference to other speeches previously given (1.67.4; 1.79.2; 4.58) or to the procedure used for selecting speakers (1.67.3; 2.34.6).¹²
3. Introduction of the speaker, which may include (a) a brief characterization of the speaker and/or (b) the speaker’s motivation or goal.¹³
4. Speech introduction: “he spoke in such words (*toiade* or *hōde*)”, or some brief indication that the speech follows.

Then Thucydides presents the *speech* itself.

Finally, any or all of the following components may appear in the *postscript*:

5. Speech closing (“so he spoke”, for example).
6. Reaction to the speech: either a vote, action, or a second speech.¹⁴
7. Motivation or rationale for such a response.¹⁵

¹¹ The use of the terms *preamble* and *postscript*—and much of this section—is indebted to Westlake (1973), though I do not agree with his conclusions about the composition question, based on what he regards as “imperfect integration” between speech and narrative (100–105).

¹² Here and below I refer only to representative examples.

¹³ When an individual is introduced prior to his first speech, Thucydides commonly offers a characterization (1.79.2; 1.139.4; 3.36.6; 4.58; 6.15; 6.35.2; cf. 4.21.3); see Griffith (1961). When a “city” (or unnamed group of citizens) makes an address, Thucydides is more likely to indicate their motivation (1.72; cf. individuals’ motivations at 2.59.3; 6.19.2; 6.75.4; 7.60.5; 7.76).

¹⁴ The reaction may be stated simply: “they accepted the argument” (προσδεξάμενοι τοὺς λόγους, 3.15.1) or “[Teutiaplos] didn’t persuade Alkidas” (οὐκ ἐπειθε τὸν Ἀλκίδα, 3.31.1).

¹⁵ For motivation, see 3.68.4; 6.93.1; for rationale, see 3.68.1. Westlake (1973) 95 comments that 6.88.1–2 is an exceptional *postscript*, since the audience is persuaded by neither argument; he also finds Thucydides “devot[ing] more attention

When there is more than one speech, a “narrative bridge” appears between speeches, which acts as both *postscript* to the preceding speech and *preamble* to the next speech (3.60).

All speeches in Thucydides follow this pattern to a greater or lesser extent. Pericles’ first speech is a *nested speech*, containing *preamble* (1.139), the *speech* itself (1.140–144), and *postscript* (1.145). The *preamble* presents (1) the general context of diplomatic activity including complaints against Athens, leading to an Athenian assembly (1.139.1–3). Thucydides mentions the fact that (2) other Athenians have spoken on both sides of the issue, either to go to war or to rescind the Megarian decree. Then Thucydides focuses on (3) the speaker, Pericles, who is introduced as “the son of Xanthippos” with a brief characterization: “Pericles was the first man in Athens at that time; he was most capable in speech and action (λέγειν τε καὶ πράσσειν δυνατώτατος)”. There follows (4) the speech introduction: “he gave the following advice (παρήνει τοιάδε)” (1.139.4).

Paragraphs 1.140–144 present Pericles’ *speech*.

After Pericles’ words, the *postscript* contains (5) the speech closing: “Pericles spoke such words (ὁ μὲν Περικλῆς τοιαῦτα εἶπεν)” and (6) the Athenians’ reaction to his speech: they voted as he bid them. We are also given (7) their reasoning: “they believed that he gave them the best advice”. Subsequent action based on Pericles’ argument is then outlined: the Athenians conveyed to the Spartans their willingness to submit their disputes to arbitration, but this offer met with no success (1.145).

So much for the structure of this episode: it’s a simple alternation of narrative, then speech, and finally narrative—all within a single episode. A major task for the reader concerns “local” analysis, examining how the *speech* Pericles gives interacts with the narrative frame of *preamble* and *postscript* that immediately surrounds it.¹⁶ How well does the *preamble* suit the *speech* that follows? Does it anticipate the argument in any way? Is the speech effective in promoting the motivation of the speaker? Is the character of the speaker evident in the sort of speech given? What links are there between *speech* and *postscript*? Does the audience accept the argument? Is the resulting action in line with, influenced by, or independent of the argument made?

to procedure” than motivation in 1.87–88. Note that within this “narrative” postscript, there is direct discourse (Sthenelaidas’ instructions at 1.87.2).

¹⁶ On local, distant, and extratextual analysis, see Morrison (1999) 98 n. 16.

It should be noted that the speech Pericles gives is not fully anticipated by the preamble. Thucydides' reference to previous speakers in the preamble anticipates two recommended courses of action: to go to war or to rescind the decree (1.139.4). In a sense, Pericles speaks in favor of the first, though he phrases it in terms of not yielding to Spartan demands, and instead going to arbitration (1.140–1.141.1; 1.144.2). He also outlines his strategy for war, explaining why—and how—the Athenians will be victorious (1.141.2–1.144.1), though the *preamble* does not anticipate this. We are told explicitly that the audience is persuaded by Pericles' advice and—very briefly—their reasoning is given: they believed his was the best advice.

Postscripts may present decisions that are at odds with—or blatantly ignore—the arguments expressed in the preceding speech, indicating a sharp “disconnect” between argument and action. For example, in the Plataean debate (3.53–67), the Plataean and Theban speakers make moral appeals, based on guilt and innocence, justice and injustice, and so on. Yet these arguments appear to be irrelevant to the Spartans' response. Thucydides gives only a single reason in the *postscript* for the Spartans' execution of the Plataeans: the Spartans “believed that the Thebans were useful” (νομίζοντες . . . ὠφελίμους, 3.68.4).¹⁷ No word of justice, right and wrong, or the laws of the Greeks is mentioned. In this instance, by pointedly indicating the Spartans' actual motivations after the speeches, Thucydides highlights the “disconnect” between the rhetoric of justice found in the speeches and the decision the Spartans made, based on expediency.¹⁸

Pericles' first speech is what we might call an *isolated nested speech*. It stands alone, for the narrative sections before and after the preamble and postscript do not have the same focus.¹⁹ Other examples

¹⁷ On the “courtroom” language in the Plataean Debate see 3.54; 3.56.1; 3.63; 3.64.4, and discussion in Darbo-Peschanski (1987) and Macleod (1983b) 103–122, who calls “this trial . . . a travesty of legal forms” (105). *Ophelimous* appears to echo the Plataeans' worry at 3.56.4.

¹⁸ Note also that the Spartans ask the same question after these speeches as before (3.52.4, 3.68.1). Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.446 remarks: “the Spartans simply repeat their original question *as if the speeches had never been delivered at all*”. Cf. the *postscript* at 1.88; Parry (1981) 128 comments: “Thucydides himself points out that the Spartans' decision was not so much the consequence of their allies' persuasion . . . as of their own fear of the Athenians' growing power”; “the conference ends by decrying λόγος altogether” (138). For the combination of argument and threat see 4.88.1, discussed by Westlake (1973) 93.

¹⁹ For connections between Pericles' first speech and the preceding excursus on Pausanias and Themistocles see Rood (1998a) 138.

of *isolated nested speeches* are the Corinthians' speech (1.118–1.126.1), Pericles' other two speeches (2.34–2.47.1; 2.59–2.65.2), and Alcibiades' speech to the Spartans (6.88.7–6.93.3; cf. also 4.58–4.65.1). Isolated nested speeches may comprise two (3.52–68; 6.75.3–6.88.2), three (6.8–26; 6.32.3–6.42), or four speeches (1.66–88), again with brief intervening *narrative bridge* sections between the speeches containing elements of postscript and preamble.

In *nested speeches* Thucydides employs a relatively simple alignment of speech and narrative, which presents a complex task of analysis for the reader. Nevertheless, by this disposition of material showing motivation, argument, and response—sometimes in line with the argument, sometimes at variance with the claims articulated—Thucydides demonstrates to his reader the possible links of speech and narrative in this *local* setting.

Speech Integrated with Narrative. Nested speeches may also fit into longer episodes in which extensive narrative of the same focus precedes and follows the nested speech. I call this type of episode “speech integrated with narrative”. This follows the pattern N[S]N (narrative-nested speech-narrative) or various expansions of this pattern: N[S][S]N, e.g.—in some sense, this is an expansion of the nested speech. Unlike an isolated nested speech, in these episodes the narrative preceding and following the nested speech (or speeches) may be of comparable or greater length than the speeches.²⁰

The first example of an episode of *speech integrated with narrative* in Thucydides' *History* is the conflict over Epidamnus (1.24–55). In terms of participants, the initial focus is on Epidamnus, Corcyra, and Corinth. This episode begins with an extensive *narrative section*, providing background on the civil war in Epidamnus that leads to conflict. After negotiations between Corcyra and Corinth fail, the Corcyreans are victorious at the sea battle of Leucimme (1.24–30). The *nested speeches* of the Corcyreans and Corinthians follow, including *preamble*, two *speeches*, and *postscript* (1.31–44). Finally a second extensive narrative section (1.45–55) rounds off this episode in which Thucydides recounts the events at the battle of Sybota.

Let's first analyze the *nested speeches*. The *preamble* (1.31) comprises a double pattern, explaining the goals of each side. (1A) After their

²⁰ The distinction between *isolated nested speeches* and *speeches integrated with narrative* may at times appear artificial. Scholars might reasonably differ in assigning certain sections of the *History* to one category or another.

defeat, the Corinthians begin an ambitious shipbuilding project; the Corcyreans learn of this and, out of fear, take action by going to Athens (3A) with the goal of seeking an alliance. (1B) The Corinthians learn of the Corcyreans' diplomatic overture and react by sending their own ambassadors (3B) with their own motivation: to prevent such an alliance. (4) In the speech introduction to this first set of speeches in the *History*, no individual is specified: "the Corcyreans spoke as follows (καὶ οἱ μὲν Κερκυραῖοι ἔλεξαν τοιαύδε)".

In the first *speech* (1.32–1.36.3), the Corcyreans seek an alliance with Athens based on several arguments. They claim that such an alliance would not break the Athenians' treaty with Sparta, and—since war will come—the Corcyrean navy will add to Athens' strength on the sea.

At 1.36.4 there is a brief *narrative bridge* section with (5) a speech closing for the Corcyreans and (4) a speech introduction for the Corinthians (again no individual is specified): "And the Corinthians after them [spoke] as follows (*toiade*)".

In the second *speech* (1.37–43), the Corinthians argue against an Athenian alliance with Corcyra. War, they maintain, may not come (1.42.2). In addition, the Corinthians have helped Athens in the past (1.40.5; 1.41.2; 1.43). Most important perhaps is their claim that an alliance between Athens and Corcyra would break the thirty-year treaty (1.40.2–4).

Of particular interest is the *postscript* including (5) a speech closing and (6) the Athenians' reaction: they hold two assemblies, each reaching a different result (1.44). The first Athenian assembly, accepting the arguments of the Corinthians, votes *not* to receive the Corcyreans as allies; the second assembly resolves to establish only a defensive alliance. Apparently, the Athenians were initially influenced by the Corinthians' argument (Thucydides does not present this Athenian debate). Regarding the second vote, Thucydides introduces both the action itself and the Athenians' rationale: they voted to make a defensive alliance with Corcyra, because (7) they believed that war with the Peloponnesians would take place, the Corcyrean navy would be useful, and Corcyra was strategically located (καλῶς . . . κεῖσθαι) on the trade route to Italy and Sicily (1.44.2–3).

This *postscript* has particular relevance to our exploration of speech-narrative correspondence. In explicitly noting the decisive reasons for the Athenians' second choice, Thucydides makes clear that these factors coincide with three points made by the Corcyreans in their

speech: war would come (1.33.3); their navy would be useful (1.33.2; 1.36); and Corcyra was on an important trade route (1.36.2). This first episode with speeches offers an example of how speech can influence action, as Thucydides emphasizes Athenian motivation (in the *postscript*) with deliberate echoes of the arguments made in the Corcyreans' *speech*. The very proximity of *postscript* and *speech* allows the reader easily to juxtapose argument and coincident motivation.²¹

So much for a sketch of speech-narrative interaction between preamble, postscript, and the two speeches for this early episode. To state an obvious point, both preamble and postscript serve as transition sections, preparing the reader for Thucydides' historical account to move from narrative to speech and then back to narrative. By such signposting, Thucydides very deliberately shows he is shifting from narrative to speech and speech to narrative.

The next level of analysis—still *local*, that is, within this episode—is to explore connections between the longer narrative sections with the nested speeches. The narrative accounts (1.24–30; 1.45–55) may correspond to—or deviate from—what is said in speech. For example, the speeches refer to past events: the narrative has made clear that the founding of Epidamnus was a joint venture of Corinth and Corcyra (1.24.2), yet in their speech the Corinthians surprisingly claim that Epidamnus is their colony (Ἐπίδαμνον ἡμετέραν οὖσαν, 1.38.5)! Also the Corcyreans' argument that influences Athens' decision to make an alliance leads in a fairly direct way to Athenian involvement at the battle of Sybota. As Parry says, "The almost immediate consequence of these speeches is the joining by Athenian ships in a naval engagement between the Corcyreans and the Corinthians".²² In the first narrative section, the Athenians are not in any way involved in the dispute over Epidamnus, but speech is the means of bringing them into the conflict.

The third level of speech-narrative analysis (beyond the *nested speech* and the surrounding narrative sections) concerns "distant" analysis: how this episode connects with speech and narrative in other episodes. In this case, even after bringing the episode to a clear *conclusion*

²¹ Of course, there's more at work here influencing the Athenians, for Thucydides also mentions their desire for the Corcyreans and Corinthians to do damage to one another (1.44.2). Remarkably, the idea of a defensive alliance—the Athenians' ultimate decision—is nowhere mentioned in either the Corcyrean or Corinthian arguments; see Morrison (1999) 110f.

²² Parry (1981) 125.

(1.55.2), by later narrative references Thucydides explicitly links the Corcyrean conflict with the outbreak of war (1.118.1; 1.146; cf. 1.23.6; 1.68.4).²³

Let me note some tendencies in Thucydides' employment of *nested speeches*—both isolated and those integrated with narrative. First, almost exactly half of all speeches are found in the pattern of *isolated nested speeches* (12 of 25 nested speeches—including speech-pairs, speech-triplets, and so on). That is, aside from the *preamble* and *post-script*, almost half of Thucydides' sets of speeches focus on conflicts different from the immediately surrounding narrative.²⁴ Thucydides' decision to position so many speeches in such "isolation" has the effect of encouraging the reader to seek links between these speeches and events of the war recounted elsewhere in the *History*.

For those episodes of *speech integrated with narrative*, a majority (10 of 13 cases) concern battle scenes: generally the speeches appear just before men march to battle or board ships.²⁵ It appears that the context of battle offers a convenient opportunity for integrating speech with the surrounding narrative. In part, this may be because military addresses follow the basic pattern of a *parainesis*: urgent address, quick recapitulation of the situation, and a call to action, which leads to either success or failure in the execution of such commands.²⁶ Assembly speeches often anticipate the vote or action to follow; similarly, military exhortations preceding battle set the context, indicate the significance of what is to follow, and anticipate the sort of action (and outcome) that may take place in the coming battle.

²³ The Corcyrean conflict also has many *implicit* connections to the rest of Thucydides' work; see Morrison (1999) 111–21.

²⁴ Even if set speeches were considered separately (ignoring paired speeches, e.g.), *isolated nested speeches* still make up half of all speeches (19 of 38). The Melian Dialogue follows the same basic structure but is rendered in dialogue form, without *narrative bridges* (5.87–111). Cf. also the attempt to negotiate at 2.71–74 and—in indirect discourse—at 4.97.2–4.99.

²⁵ 2.10–2.23.1; 2.80–92; 4.8–23; 4.81–88; 4.89–4.101.2; 4.120–132; 5.6–13; 6.63–71; 7.56–72; 7.73–86. The only episodes of the *speech integrated with narrative* type in which speech is not immediately linked to imminent battle are 1.24–55 (though this leads to the battle of Sybota), and the conflict with Mytilene (speeches at 3.9–14; 3.30; 3.37–40; 3.42–48). Debate on the historicity of battle exhortations continues; see Hansen (1993); (1998); Pritchett (1994) 27–109.

²⁶ For example, Demosthenes' speech at Sphacteria accurately anticipates the actions to follow. He calls upon his troops to stand their ground (4.10.3; 4.10.5): this command is carried out in narrative at 4.12.2. Demosthenes then predicts that only a few Spartan ships might approach at one time (4.10.3); this is confirmed in the narrative at 4.11.3.

Contiguous Episodes. Alternation of speech and narrative is also found when episodes are juxtaposed. That is, two contiguous episodes—not sharing a single focus—may be linked by similar theme or deliberate contrast. We think of Pericles' Funeral Oration (2.34–2.47.1) followed by the narrative description of the plague (2.47.3–2.54). Most readers view this juxtaposition as deliberate. Thucydides uses Pericles' speech and the plague narrative to present contrasting views of Athens: an idealization of Athens at its best set against a grisly, realistic description of Athens at its lowest point. Although no authorial comment explicitly asks us to compare the Funeral Oration to the plague, we note verbal and thematic echoes that highlight the opposition.²⁷ Thucydides' goals are accomplished not by speech alone or simple narrative, but by a combination of the two. The devices of juxtaposition, verbal and thematic echoes—and “selective omission” of other possible episodes—suggest that the reader should read Pericles' speech and the following narrative in conjunction.

Interwoven Episodes. A more intricate pattern—at a larger scale of presentation but also based on contiguous episodes—is the “interweaving” of two or more episodes, such as Thucydides' presentation of the Mytilenian revolt and the events concerning Plataea in Book III. First, Thucydides presents an episode of *speech integrated with narrative* concerning Mytilene (N[S]N: 3.2–19); there follows a narrative account of the escape of 212 Plataeans (N: 3.20–24); then Mytilene's surrender leads to the Athenian debate (N[S]N[S][S]N: 3.25–50); finally, Plataea's surrender brings on the debate (*nested speeches*) before the Spartan “judges” ([S][S]: 3.52–68).

In his presentation, Thucydides links and contrasts the cities of Mytilene and Plataea in a number of ways. Both cities are put under siege and later surrender. In one case, an Athenian ally, Mytilene, revolts: as an island, no help reaches it from Sparta (a land power). In the other case, an Athenian ally is loyal but landlocked, so that no help from Athens (a sea power) reaches it.²⁸ Thucydides might

²⁷ Pericles' emphasis on Athenians' respect for the law (2.37.3) contrasts with the lawlessness recounted in the plague narrative (2.53.1). Also the idea of “self-sufficiency” (*autarkeia*) applies to the city (2.36.3) and an individual's body (2.41.1) in Pericles' speech, yet such self-sufficiency is unattainable during the plague (2.51.3). Connor (1984) 64 remarks: “The two episodes thus constitute one of Thucydides' dramatic juxtapositions; their effect is as much derived from the contrast between the two situations as from the individual components”; see also Macleod (1983a) 149–53.

²⁸ Note that surrender in both cases results from lack of food (*sitos*—3.20.1, 3.26.4) and lack of hope (*elpis*, 3.20.1; 3.32.3). See the discussion of parallels in Macleod

have presented these conflicts in several ways—the Corcyrean conflict occurred over many months, but was presented without interruption. Alternation of the two episodes (with a reminder of Plataea at 3.36.1) reveals a conscious pattern designed to contrast the situations in a readily accessible way for the reader.²⁹

Thus far we have analyzed how Thucydides aligns speech and narrative in nested speeches, speech integrated with narrative in a single episode, and contiguous and interwoven episodes. Speech-narrative interaction is made apparent by means of structural alignment, as the sections of speech and narrative lie close to one another: the interaction is local and readily apprehended. Thucydides uses juxtaposition, contiguity, and alternation to lead his reader to view speech and narrative as linked and in many cases complementary to one another.

Speech and Narrative: Substantive Connections

Our analysis now turns to a second approach, which considers speech-narrative interaction by examining the connections themselves. In a sense, this has already been suggested above for nested speeches and other alignments: we have found correspondences and disparities based on events, predictions, arguments, and so on. Let us pursue this more systematically. Speech and narrative may be linked by the same event, a similar situation (or a significantly reversed situation), shared diction, the development of a theme, or a shared (or complementary) argument. It makes sense to begin with specific events and then explore more abstract themes and general principles. We no longer need to limit our examination to *local* alignments: connections may now link passages from episodes found anywhere in the *History*.

(1983c) 242–46 and Connor (1984) 91–93. It is possible to see the rationale of Diodotus' argument (expediency "trumps" justice in foreign policy, 3.44) as supporting the Spartans' decision concerning the Plataeans (3.68.4).

²⁹ At one level, the Plataean debate may be thought of as a set of nested speeches, which becomes a component in the larger pattern of interwoven episodes; see Rood (1998a) 120f. Another example of *interwoven episodes* can be found in Books VI and VII where several strands—Athenian, Syracusan, and Spartan—are introduced in turn. On the weaving metaphor for historical narrative, see Polybius 1.4 and 3.32.2, discussed in Walbank (1975). De Jong (2001a) 589f. describes the technique of interweaving episodes in Homeric epic as an "interlacing technique".

Events, Predictions, and Strategy. Thucydides often presents events in the narrative—either briefly or in extended fashion—and then those same events are later referred to, interpreted, or “spun” in speech. For example, the first significant event of the war narrative—the Theban invasion of Plataea—is initially introduced in narrative (2.2–6). After the surrender of Plataea in 427, the same event—the invasion in the spring of 431—is also examined in the speeches by the Plataeans and Thebans (3.53–67).

In speech, the Plataeans claim that the Thebans entered while the two cities were under treaty and during a religious festival. They also maintain that they killed no one contrary to the law (3.56). The Thebans, on the other hand, accuse the Plataeans of three crimes (*adikias*): violating the agreement (made in the middle of the night), putting Thebans to death, and their false promise regarding prisoners-of-war (3.65–66). Confronting the two conflicting accounts in speech, the reader is in a position to test these claims against Thucydides’ narrative account. In the narrative at 2.2.1–3, we learned that the Thebans entered the city of Plataea with arms. They were invited, yet Thucydides noted the nefarious motives on the part of those pro-Theban Plataeans who invited them (personal power, murder of political opponents, 2.2.2). Thucydides also remarks that the Thebans expected war would come and thought it easier to take the city during peacetime (in fact, no guards were posted, 2.2.3).

The reader’s task is difficult for several reasons. The narrative—as often—presents a complex, nuanced treatment of what transpired, while the speeches argue for black-or-white versions. In addition, some facts are only mentioned in speech, so they can’t be checked against the narrative account (e.g., the reference to the religious festival, 3.56.2).³⁰ Nevertheless, by tracing out the complex process of interpreting events in speech, Thucydides shows the trajectory that led to irrevocable action: the execution of the remaining Plataeans.

In varying degrees of specificity, speeches also anticipate later events by means of predictions, warnings, and proposed strategy. An obvious task for the reader is to evaluate the accuracy of such predictions by testing them against the subsequent course of events recounted in narrative. Predictions may be relatively short range in terms of time (and length of narrative). For example, in the Melian

³⁰ Especially difficult for the reader—and exceptional—is the fact that Thucydides presents two conflicting *narrative* accounts without resolution (2.5.5–6).

Dialogue, the Athenians accurately foretell Spartan caution, anticipating it in speech at 5.105.3–4 (cf. 5.107; 5.109); Spartan reluctance to retaliate is then noted in the narrative at 5.115.2.³¹

Predictions may also concern events more distant in time (and removed by a great length of narrative). In his speeches regarding the proposed Sicilian Expedition (6.9–14, 6.20–23), Nicias makes various predictions and warnings that the narrative of the following two years confirms. He anticipates the danger of dividing Athenian power, the difficulty of rule in Sicily (6.10–11), the risk that Sicilian cities may join together, the likely need for reinforcements, and the precarious isolation of an Athenian force in a distant, hostile locale (6.20–21). As Stahl remarks: “What a sad triumph for Nicias to find the analysis he gave at Athens so thoroughly justified by the later course of events, even to the point which he had hoped to avoid, viz., that he would have to ask for reinforcements”.³²

Predictions are not necessarily wholly accurate or inaccurate; they may be only partially correct. During the first Peloponnesian invasion of Attica, Archidamus predicts that when the Athenians see their

³¹ The Athenians’ prediction at 5.105 presumably derives from an assessment of past Spartan action (and inaction), so the prediction looks back to preceding narrative (and events) for its validity as well as forward for its confirmation. The Mytilenians’ claim of Athenian weakness (3.13.3–4) is seen to be false in the narrative at 3.16.2; see Westlake (1973) 96. As Macleod (1983c) 70 observes: “a complex pattern of verbal and conceptual echoes between speech and narrative helps [Thucydides] trace the path from proposal to event. This relation of words to deeds is at the heart of Thucydides’ thinking”.

A difficult question arises concerning practical matters. To test the accuracy of statements made in speeches against what is recounted in the narrative, would Thucydides have expected his reader to return to the text of that earlier passage in a different scroll, or does he expect his audience to rely upon memory? It has been argued that only a reader could appreciate such correspondences. Crane (1996) 7 insists that Thucydides “created a work designed primarily for—indeed, only fully comprehensible by—the reflective reader;” yet see Rhodes (1998b) unpaginated: “with Thucydides we are not yet far from an oral culture in which cross-referencing is difficult and when possible is avoided”. In many instances analyzed below, however, Thucydides uses memorable phrases, striking metaphors, or recurrent polarities—Athenians-as-islanders, Athens the tyrant-city, land and sea, the opposition of Athenian and Spartan character—which provide Thucydides’ audience (whether reader or auditor) with touchstones that offer coherence and unity for the *History*.

³² Stahl (1973) 68. See this article for his general discussion of prediction and result, e.g., comparing 6.20 to 7.55 (74f.); he calls Nicias a “Cassandra-like figure” (73; cf. his comment on Alcibiades’ inaccurate claims, 72). Long-range predictions also concern the length of the war (1.81.6; 1.141.5). Archidamus wrongly speculates that the Athenians will yield with their land still undamaged (1.82.3), yet realizes his mistake at 2.12.4.

crops and houses destroyed, they will become angry, desire to defend Attica, and come out to meet them in battle (2.11.6–7). The subsequent narrative proves this prediction to be accurate with respect to the emotions provoked (anger and desire to fight), but in spite of the Acharnians' passion, the Athenians do not venture out, in obedience to Pericles' strategy (2.20–23).³³ In this case we might speak of a partial correspondence between prediction and later event.

In Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War, anticipating the future to a large degree concerns the proposed military strategies of Athens and Sparta. Pericles' strategy contains several components: the Athenians must give up the Attic countryside and refuse to challenge the Spartan and allied infantry; they must maintain control of the sea (1.142–143); and they should not add to their empire during wartime (1.144.1). If they maintain such a strategy, they may "last out" the war.³⁴

The reader may explore subsequent narrative accounts to determine the degree to which the Athenians act upon Pericles' strategy. As the Peloponnesian forces prepare to invade, the Athenians move from the Attic countryside within the city walls, and resist the inclination to send an army to defend Attica (2.13–14; 2.17–23). Here we find correspondence between proposed strategy (in speech) and action (in narrative). In addition, we may ask longer range questions, such as how effective—and far-sighted—was Pericles' strategy in the long term?³⁵ Readers must evaluate the success of this overall strategy in light of later events.

On the other side, Spartan strategy is presented in speech, again with various features: the invasion of Attica (1.71.4; 1.125.2), the likelihood that Athens' subject allies would revolt (1.122.1), the advisability of a fortification in Attic territory (*epiteichismos*—1.122.1; cf. 1.142; 6.91.6–7; 7.27.2–7.28), and the ease with which the Spartans and their allies might learn naval expertise (1.80.4; 1.121.3–4). Again such proposals and anticipations must be checked against enactment and overall success.

³³ See Rusten (1989) 112f.

³⁴ On "lasting out" or "surviving" the war (*periesesthai*, 1.144.1), see Cawkwell (1997) 43–45.

³⁵ In an authorial comment, Thucydides praises Pericles' prescience (2.65.13). Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.226, remarks that "the actual strategy pursued was not quite as passive as Pericles is made to recommend".

Some features of the Peloponnesian strategy are controversial. For example, Archidamus is concerned about the Athenians' superior experience on sea:

We are opposing men, who possess land far away and in addition are extremely experienced on the sea and are well-supplied with everything else: private and public money, ships, horses, and weapons (1.80.3).

Subsequent events prove Archidamus' concerns to be well founded. As Stadter comments: "Sparta votes for the Peloponnesian War, and is soon in for surprise, encountering realities which King Archidamus had analyzed to them before".³⁶

Of course, the situation is not static. Each side modifies its strategy as the war unfolds. Pericles' idea was to keep the land and sea arenas separate so that the Athenian army would not face the Spartan infantry, but in several years the war moves away from such "non-engagement". Rood argues that by 425 "with Pylos, too, the war moves away from being a story of nonengagement between land power and sea power . . . it has taken a new turn, the unexpectedness of which exposes human limitations as much in the despondent Spartans as in the buoyant Athenians".³⁷

Themes, Metaphors, and Maxims. So far we have examined arguments found in speeches regarding the interpretation and prediction of events set against narrative accounts. Now we turn to more abstract themes and principles that appear in both speech and narrative. First, we note that various ideas are treated thematically: they are introduced early and then are developed throughout the *History*. For example, Thucydides explores the dichotomy of land and sea. This is introduced in the *Archaeology* narrative: in the past, there was no commerce and little mixing of one group with another by land or sea (οὔτε κατὰ γῆν οὔτε διὰ θαλάσσης, 1.2.2). Later Thucydides deduces that Agamemnon, who is a "mainlander" (*ēpeirōtēs*, 1.9.4), must have had a navy, for he controlled many islands.³⁸ The theme of land

³⁶ Stadter (1993) 77. On Spartan strategy, see Brunt (1993).

³⁷ Rood (1998a) 57. On the reversal of land and sea, see 4.12.3; 4.14.3. Regarding arbitration and the ultimate responsibility for the Archidamian War, see Pericles' speech (1.140.2; 1.144.2) and Spartan retrospective opinion in narrative at 7.18.2.

³⁸ Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.8 considers the importance of sea power to be one of the two theses Thucydides attempts to establish in the *Archaeology*, remarking that the first expression of land and sea (1.2.2) "is surely programmatic" and anticipates the "great programmatic importance for the wartime narrative which is to come"

and sea is also developed in speech. Archidamus is very explicit on the two realms, as he contrasts the Peloponnesian force—with few ships and little experience in sailing—with the Athenians, who are expert sailors (1.80–81). The coming war in some sense will pit “mainlanders against sea-people (ἡπειρώτας πρὸς θαλασσίους)” (1.83.2).³⁹

At the end of Book I, Pericles’ strategy—expressed in his first speech—is based largely upon the land and sea dichotomy. Pericles asserts that their opponents are “farmers and not seamen (γεωργοὶ καὶ οὐ θαλάσσιοι)” (1.142.7); if the Spartans attack Athens by land, Athens will attack them by sea (1.143.4). Athenian war strategy is perhaps best captured by the model of the Athenians thinking of themselves as islanders, as Pericles advises:

For the power of the sea is great. And consider: for if we were islanders (νησιῶται), who would be less liable to attack (ἀληπτότεροι)? And now we must hold as closely as possible to this plan: to give up land and dwellings, to guard the sea and the city, and above all do not fight against the more numerous Peloponnesians even if we are angered by them (1.143.5).

The model itself is based on an idealization: if the Athenians were islanders, that is, if Athens were an island, they could rely wholly on their navy. As Parry puts it: “The Athenians do not merely use sea power to build their realm; they become almost entirely identified with sea power; they ‘become nautical.’”⁴⁰ The idea of Athenians-as-islanders encapsulates Athens’ military strategy against Sparta and her allies in an *easily memorable template*. Thucydides places this model in Pericles’ first speech immediately before the war narrative begins. With this in mind, the reader is now in a position to test Pericles’ proposed strategy against the events of the war itself.⁴¹

(1.55). See also Momigliano (1942). For the “obsolescence” of the land-sea dichotomy as the war grinds on, see Flory (1993).

³⁹ The first mention of the land-sea dichotomy in speech occurs at 1.35.5. The Corinthians attempt to break down the land-sea dichotomy by arguing that both coastal and inland cities have common goals (1.120.2).

⁴⁰ Parry (1972) 60. On the Athenians-as-islanders, see “The Old Oligarch” 2.14–16; Gomme, *HCT* 1.461; de Romilly (1963) 116; Wickersham (1994) 66. Spence (1990) 106 believes that 1.143.4–5 “represents an oversimplification of Pericles’ ultimate strategy”. Connor (1984) 51 notes the danger: “Athens is not an island and will find it difficult to pretend to be one”.

⁴¹ Note Pericles’ warning against Athenian mistakes (1.144.1) and authorial comments at 2.65.7; 2.65.12.

The theme of land and sea is developed in both speech and narrative in Books II–VIII. This recurrent theme makes the reader sensitive to dominance on the sea, naval superiority, and each side's capability to wage land battles. Of course, there are many themes in Thucydides' work: the unexpected, word and deed, chance and intelligence, the stronger dominating the weaker, and so on. Some themes are initially introduced in narrative, some in speech, but—as major themes—they are treated in both.⁴² Thucydides invites the reader to explore such themes by testing speech against narrative.

A fascinating example of thematic development occurs with Thucydides' treatment of tyranny, an unusual type of speech-narrative interaction. In the *Archaeology*, Thucydides' description of actual tyrants begins with Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, who “on the strength of his navy brought other islands under his control” (1.13.6). Archaic tyranny is more generally associated with a lack of joint ventures (1.15.2–1.17); we also hear of Spartan opposition to tyranny (1.18.1).⁴³ This initial account of tyranny is found in the narrative, presented in the historian's voice, and examines actual tyrants.

Yet in speech we encounter a different type of tyranny: the idea that Athens is a kind of “tyrant-city”. This formulation, found only in speech (five times), is introduced initially at the Peloponnesian Congress where the Corinthians twice label Athens a tyrant-city.⁴⁴

We are allowing the establishment of a tyrant-city (τύραννον . . . πόλιν), yet we believe that monarchy in a single city should be put down. (1.122.3)

⁴² For example, the “unexpected” occurs in speech at 1.42.2; 1.78; 1.140; 1.141.5; 2.11.4; 2.61.3; 2.64.1, and explicitly in the narrative at 2.85.2; 2.91.4; 2.93.3; 4.103.5; 4.106.1. Rood (1998a) 39 comments: “Pylos was for Thucydides above all a tale of the unexpected: landsmen were cut off on an island, Spartan hoplites were at the mercy of Athenian light-armed troops—but what was most unexpected was that Spartans surrendered”. See also Raubitschek (1973) 46f. On word and deed, see Parry (1981); on chance and intelligence, see Edmunds (1975). Phrases also connect speech and narrative: for example, “they reach for more” (τοῦ πλείονος ὀρέγονται), see 4.17.4 (speech); 4.21.2; 4.41.4; 4.92.2 (narrative); cf. 6.10.5; 6.83.1, discussed by Rood (1998a) 39–43.

⁴³ On tyranny in narrative, see also Pausanias (1.95.3), Alcibiades (6.15.4; cf. 6.60.1; 6.89.1), the Peisistratids (1.20; 6.53–59), and Sicilian tyranny (6.4–6.5; cf. 1.14.2; 2.30). Tuplin (1985) offers a valuable survey of references to tyrants in Thucydides and other literature from the classical period.

⁴⁴ On the tyrant-city, see V.J. Hunter (1973b); Connor (1977b); Raafaub (1979); (2003); Tuplin (1985); Barcelò (1990); McGrew (1993).

At the close of their speech, the Corinthians reassert the risk Athens poses to all Greeks. War against Athens, they argue, is in the common interest of all. Only by going to war now will they enjoy future security, calling Athens *tyrannos polis* a second time (1.124).

The Corinthians are opponents of Athens and use this striking metaphor to incite their allies to war, yet interestingly three Athenian speakers—Pericles, Cleon, and Euphemus—also describe Athens' empire as a tyranny (2.63.2; 3.37.2; 6.85.1). Thus readers confront not only the juxtaposition of narrative and speech, but also the contrast between actual and metaphorical tyrannies.

Obvious similarities and correspondences have been noted between Thucydides' narrative description of archaic tyrants and the fifth-century Athenian empire. Shared traits include sea power, exaction of tribute, and control of previously autonomous cities.⁴⁵ Yet the contrasts are equally striking: actual tyrants are characterized as "looking no further than the personal interests of individual well-being and the enrichment of their households", they seek "maximum security". In avoiding risk, they accomplish "nothing impressive" (οὐδέν . . . ἔργον ἀξιόλογον—1.17). These features, of course, sharply contrast with the Athenian empire's *polypragmosynē*, daring and wide ranging adventures, and enduring monuments.⁴⁶

While Thucydides has chosen to return repeatedly to both imperial and individual tyranny in various contexts—in both speech and narrative—he never offers his own definitive judgment. If Thucydides' presentation raises the question—was Athens' empire like a tyranny?—the answer is at best a qualified "yes", for, as noted above, not every aspect of the "tyranny" of the Athenian empire agrees with the qualities of historical tyrants.⁴⁷ Indeed, it could be said that Thucydides

⁴⁵ Scanlon (1987) 291 remarks that "as the narrative proceeds, we recognize that other typical characteristics of historical tyrants, especially violence and arrogance, do apply" to Athens.

⁴⁶ Fifth-century imperial Athens personified risk, sacrifice, and boldness: on risk, see the Athenians' description of themselves in speech at 1.73–74; on sacrifice, see 1.74.2; cf. 1.70.3; 1.75.4–1.76.1. In the narrative of the *Pentecontaetia*, Stadter (1993) 59 finds confirmation: "Thucydides' staccato account forces the reader to note again and again Athens' resolve and acceptance of risk in mounting individual and multiple operations", and concludes: "In Thucydides' narrative, the *Pentecontaetia* is dominated by a strong, aggressive, and ceaselessly active Athens" (48). On *polypragmosynē*, see 2.39–40.

⁴⁷ Scanlon (1987) 301 concludes: "The dynamics are identical at the level of individual and state so that the tyrant-state is not a mere metaphor but the macrocosmic phenomenon corresponding to the microcosm of historical tyrants". Connor

has included *sufficient* detail in his narrative about actual tyrants to make it clear that there is no comprehensive one-to-one correspondence between metaphorical and actual tyranny. Commenting on these significant contrasts, Connor concludes that Thucydides' account "seems to discourage an unqualified acceptance of the parallelism between tyrannies and the Athenian empire... The contrasts are striking ones, and quite likely to be deliberate".⁴⁸ By introducing the "Athens-as-tyrant-city" model in speech rather than narrative, Thucydides has moved the interpretive onus to the reader, who must determine in what respects and to what degree this and other such comparisons are valid and appropriate.⁴⁹

Another type of substantive link between speech and narrative—at a more abstract level—is remarked upon by Dover: "Most of [Thucydides'] speakers make extensive use of generalizations about the behavior of states and mankind to explain, predict or justify recommendations".⁵⁰ Armies and navies are sent, negotiations are made, the issues of war and peace are determined by arguments based, in part, on generalizations about human motivation and behavior. Such *gnomai* (or maxims) are founding overwhelmingly in speech.⁵¹ Among these proverbial utterances, I would distinguish between maxims and universal principles. I label as "maxims" those proverbial statements,

(1977b) 106, however, finds "Thucydides is disassociating himself from this facile characterization of Athens as a new form of tyranny". Tuplin (1985) 366 notes the relative rarity of the tyrant-as-city metaphor and finds slavery to be a more "natural" metaphor for imperial authority.

⁴⁸ Connor (1977b) 105f.

⁴⁹ See Macleod (1983c) 69. Another example of the literal vs. the metaphorical in narrative and speech—deserving of further exploration—is the theme of slavery. For enslaved individuals, see 1.55.1; 1.98; 1.101.2; 1.103.1; 1.139.2; 2.78.4; 3.73, e.g. On one city "enslaving" another, see 1.69.1; 1.121.5; 1.122.2; 1.124.3; 2.71.2–3; 3.10.3–4; 3.13.6; 3.58.5; 3.64.3, e.g. (in narrative, cf. 1.8.3; 1.98.4; 3.70.3; 3.71.1). On 1.98.1–2, Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.150 notes "an important distinction in terminology: Eion and Skyros were "enslaved", ἠνδραπόδισαν, in the literal sense that their inhabitants were individually sold into slavery; Naxos was "enslaved", ἐδουλώθη, in the different (it would be wrong to say "figurative") sense that she was deprived of her political liberty". Generally *andrapodizō* and its cognates designate slavery of individuals (2.68.7; 3.28.1; 3.36.2; 5.3.4; 5.32.1; but cf. 6.62.3), while *douleia*/*douleuein*/*douloō* refer to the enslaving of a *polis* (1.8.3; 1.121.5; 5.9.9, etc., but cf. 1.101.2; 5.23.3; 7.85.4). Here, though, the distinction is not strictly maintained between speech and narrative: the metaphorical use of slavery (imposed or threatened either by the Persians or the Athenians) appears in both speech and narrative.

⁵⁰ Dover, *HCT* 5.396; cf. 436. Kitto (1966) 343–44 remarks that "some of his [Thucydides'] generalizations have a general rather than an immediate relevance".

⁵¹ C. Meister (1955) 13 notes that of the approximately 200 *gnomai* (maxims) in Thucydides, only 12 appear in the narrative.

drawn from experience or common sense, which describe general modes of behavior or serve as rules of conduct (often introduced with *gar* or *te*). Universal principles also articulate general rules of behavior but include a reference to something that happens “at all times”, “in all situations”, or “for all people” (signaled by *aiei* or a form of *pant-*).

For example, in the Corcyrean Debate, the Corinthians attempt to dissuade the Athenians from accepting the Corcyreans as allies by arguing that the Athenians will set a precedent for interference in others’ internal affairs. Key to the debate is whether war is imminent. The Corinthians assert: “For advantage follows the one who makes the fewest errors of judgement (τό τε γὰρ ξυμφέρον ἐν ᾧ ἂν τις ἐλάχιστα ἀμαρτάνῃ μάλιστα ἔπεται)” (1.42.2). It’s hard to argue with such an obvious statement: of course, we think, advantage results from avoiding mistakes. Whereas the Corcyreans attempted to instill fear in the Athenians that war would come, the Corinthians argue that war is not certain. The implication here is that it would be advantageous to Athens not to miscalculate (ἐλάχιστα ἀμαρτάνῃ) by assuming that war is coming.

But the maxim itself—expressed in speech—is more abstract and has to do with the general connection between miscalculation and advantage.⁵² Of course, any maxim must first be examined in its specific context: does the principle apply to this particular argument? Is anticipating the war a miscalculation?⁵³ But to the extent that a more general assertion is expressed, Thucydides promotes applying this maxim upon a broader field of play. Does this maxim illuminate other situations elsewhere in the *History*? Might the relationship between mistake and advantage have some sort of general validity that helps explain later events? Because of maxims’ potential to operate with respect to multiple situations, the reader faces a challenging set of tasks.⁵⁴

⁵² An adage such as that found at 1.42.2 most likely originated with reference to the wise individual: “He who errs least gains the most”, or something of the sort. What Thucydides has done apparently is to transfer this maxim to an international context with relevance to the city of Athens and its potential intervention into what the Corinthians claim is their own affair.

⁵³ Thucydides, of course, influences how his readers react to this argument, for he has already announced the coming of war several times in authorial statements, especially “the Athenians forced the Spartans to war (ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν)” (1.23.6).

⁵⁴ C. Meister (1955) 50–90 outlines three levels of application for the maxim:

Universal principles differ from *maxims* only by the extent of their application. At the first Peloponnesian Congress, e.g., the Athenians describe how they acquired their empire, emphasizing that they have done nothing remarkable or contrary to human nature by accepting the empire when it was offered (οὐδ' ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρωπείου τρόπου, 1.76.2). One universal principle appears to explain their actions: "But always it has been established that the weaker is held down by the stronger (ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καθεστῶτος τὸν ἥσσω ὑπὸ τοῦ δυνατωτέρου κατείργεσθαι)" (1.76.2). This is not a moral argument; the Athenians' assertion concerns power. In this context, Athens, a city, is stronger than the other cities in the Aegean. Yet as Andrewes argues, "The Athenians' statement at Sparta goes far beyond any topical need to answer the Corinthians or advise the Spartans".⁵⁵ That is, this formulation has potentially broader application: the Athenians say that it has *always* been the case that the weaker is subject to the stronger. Their assertion implies that this principle explains past events and presumably will continue to operate in human society.⁵⁶ While arguments concerning past events and predictions about the future seek specific confirmation (or correction) in the narrative, maxims and universal principles—because they are stated so abstractly—find potential instantiation or contradiction in several arenas of the *History*.

within the passage, the maxim must be tested with respect to the specific argument that it supports; it may be gauged with respect to the speech as a whole; and the reader may apply the maxim to other situations found elsewhere in the *History*. See also Hammond (1973).

⁵⁵ Andrewes (1960) 5–6. Gomme, *HCT* 2.236 cites Democritus fr. 267: "Rule belongs by nature to the stronger (φύσει τὸ ἄρχειν οἰκίῳ τῷ κρείσσονι)". Both Archidamus and Pericles employ universal principles (2.11.7; 2.64.3, e.g.). Macleod (1983c) 94 n. 27 observes: "Characteristically Thucydides makes out of the rhetorical commonplace a historical theme". Many maxims and universal principles appear in the Mytilenian Debate (3.38.1; 3.39.5; 3.40.1; 3.40.3; 3.40.6; 3.42.3; 3.45.3; 3.45.5; 3.45.6). Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.436 cites Knox's observation that while the gods are frequently mentioned by speakers in Thucydides, this is not true of Pericles, Cleon, Diodotus, or Alcibiades, and comments: "These four are perhaps represented as more interested in generalizing, as here [3.45.3], at a purely human level".

⁵⁶ Maxims are stated so generally that they could easily apply to conflicts both between cities and between individuals. On the recurring leit-motiv of "both cities and individuals"—often a variation on the phrase καὶ πόλις καὶ ἰδιώτης, which appears seven times in speech (and once in narrative, 3.82.2), see Morrison (1994). For comments on human nature in speech, see 1.76.2; 3.39.5; 3.45.3; 4.61.5; 5.105.2; in narrative, see 1.22.4; 3.82.2; discussed in Topitsch (1943–47) and Price (2001) 27f. Further work on maxims in Thucydides might be carried out along the lines of Lardinois (1997), which applies modern paroemiology (emphasizing social and linguistic contexts) to Homeric *gnomai*.

Character. In addition to arguments based on events, themes, and abstract principles, Thucydides explores the topic of character—both of individuals and of cities. In addition to brief, explicit character sketches, Thucydides reveals character more suggestively by both speech and narrative. For example, Thucydides' assertions about Alcibiades' character (5.43.2; 6.15) may be tested by examining both what Alcibiades says and how he acts.⁵⁷

Thucydides also explores the fascinating question of the character of cities. The fullest, most memorable contrast between Athenian and Spartan character appears in the Corinthians' speech at the first Peloponnesian Congress. The Corinthians' rhetorical goal is to persuade the Spartans to go to war. For Thucydides' readers, however, this polarized picture offers a stark contrast of Athenians as innovative, adventurous, and quick to act, against the conservative Spartans who move slowly and prefer to stay at home (1.70–71).⁵⁸ This defining of Athenian and Spartan character, articulated in speech, is not presented as authoritative, yet it provides a useful model for readers to probe. By placing the Corinthian speech early in the *History*, Thucydides puts his reader in a position to critically examine the words and behavior of leaders, speakers, and cities of both sides, to test the degree to which the Corinthians' words prove accurate.

Confirmation or disparity must be sought in the narrative, and—not surprisingly—we find both, whether looking, say, at the Spartans as a unified community or at individual Spartans who illustrate “Spartan” traits. For example, confirmation in the narrative is found with regard to Spartan “delay and hesitancy” when Archidamus delays before invading Attica and Alcidas takes his time cruising around the eastern Aegean.⁵⁹ Yet we also encounter Spartan individuals who

⁵⁷ On characterization in preambles, see Griffith (1961). On authorial judgements elsewhere in narrative, see 1.138.3; 2.65.5–13; 5.43.2–3. Even the *style* of speaking may reveal character; see Tompkins (1972); (1993); Rood (1998a) 43.

⁵⁸ Cf. 1.123.1. Note the authorial comment on Spartans and Athenians at 8.96.5 (cf. 1.118.2.; 4.55.2); discussed by Rood (1998a) 43–46 and Price (2001) 148–51. Debnar (2001) charts Sparta's evolution based on speeches.

⁵⁹ On Spartan hesitancy in speech, see *mellētas* (1.70.4); in narrative, see *scholaiotēs* (2.18.3), *scholaioi* (3.29.1), and *husterēkei* (3.31.2); cf. Lateiner (1975) and Rood (1998a) 44. Archidamus redefines delay as prudence (1.84.1) and rejects the idea that all individuals in a city have a single, monolithic character (1.84.4). On the Athenian side, scholars have examined Alcibiades and Nicias as potentially positive and negative exemplars of “typically” Athenian character in terms of actions, argument, and behavior.

work against this stereotype. Brasidas is quick, decisive, and innovative: he comes up with the idea of dragging ships across the Corinthian Isthmus in order to attack the island of Salamis (2.93–94). And of course, his actions at Amphipolis were quick and unexpected (4.102–108). Much that is fascinating in Thucydides' work—stark polarities, striking metaphors, bold assertions about national character—is found in speech. The reader is invited to test those assessments against events recounted in the narrative.⁶⁰

Conclusion

I have suggested two broad approaches for analyzing speech-narrative interaction. The first concerns Thucydides' alignment of speech and narrative in terms of alternation and juxtaposition. Thucydides' presentation of speech and narrative within an episode or between contiguous episodes suggests correspondences and disparities with clear echoes, anticipations, and corrections. The narrative may also demonstrate that what is said often bears little relation to decisions made immediately after such arguments.

A second approach explores the different types of speech-narrative interaction, allowing us to consider more distant echoes, reverberations, and significant reminiscences between distant sections of speech and narrative. I've proposed distinguishing between specific events on the one hand and more abstract themes and general principles on the other.

This chapter has in no way been an exhaustive treatment of the multi-faceted topic of speech and narrative in Thucydides. There are certainly other productive ways of exploring this topic. My hope is that the suggestions made here not only evoke valuable past studies, but also stimulate further work along these lines. At times,

⁶⁰ Second-order issues, concerning methodology, evidence, clarity, and proof, also appear in both speech and narrative. For example, in the Corcyrean-Corinthian Debate (1.33–43), terms familiar to readers from the *Archaeology* (expressed in the narrative in Thucydides' own voice) appear in the speeches. As Ober (1993) 90 puts it, "The speakers thus claim to do just what Thucydides claims his history will do—teach about interest and power and offer an understanding of past events and the probable course of the future". See also Morrison (1999) 115–18. Another second-order topic concerns the relative merits of oral versus written evidence: see Nicias' letter from Sicily and his motivation (esp. 7.8.2), discussed in Morrison (2004).

Thucydides pronounces in an authoritative manner, but he also has a talent for inviting his reader to join in the pursuit of a clearer understanding of a very complex past. In order to attain that understanding, we must examine both speech and narrative, what is said and what is done, with careful and imaginative analysis.

THUCYDIDES' NARRATIVE: THE EPIC AND HERODOTEAN HERITAGE

Antonios Rengakos

In Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, two important features of the historian's narrative art point to the double legacy of the Homeric epic and Herodotus' *Histories* in this work. The first of these features is the use of the third kind of narration mentioned by Plato in a famous passage (*Rep.* 392c–394b), namely the mixed narrative form that combines plain narration (ἀπλὴ διήγησις) with μίμησις, the reproduction of direct speech. The second is the so-called “internal focalization” (in Genette's terms), namely the insight into the thoughts and emotions of different individuals that Thucydides offers his readers by means of the constant, almost excessive, use of verbs of “internal processes”, which describe the knowledge, thoughts, and intentions of the individuals. As is well known, direct speech and the description and explicit mention of internal processes are major constituents both of the Homeric epic and of Herodotus' work.¹

For Thucydides, this lign of descent and the adoption of these key features of his historiographical narrative are neither self-evident nor unconscious.² As is well known, Thucydides thematizes only one of them, the use of direct speech, in the famous methodological chapter (1.22), in an impossible balancing act between subjectivity (ὥς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἐμοὶ ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ' εἰπεῖν) and objectivity (ἐχομένῳ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων). These words do little to alleviate the discomfort produced by the irreconcilable discrepancy between the claim to objectivity in the second part of the sentence and the actual reporting of speeches in the work. For multiple reasons the speeches cannot be authentic, at least not in the form in which they are presented.

¹ Schwinge (1991).

² The following discussion owes much to the work of Strasburger (1972), who demonstrated Homer's influence on both the literary form and the content of ancient historiography. See also the important contribution of Fornara (1983) 30ff.

There are several indications that the adoption of Homeric and Herodotean techniques was a conscious choice on the part of the historian. First of all, Homer's presence is virtually ubiquitous in the important programmatic first part of the work (the so-called *Archaeology* and the methodological chapters): suffice to mention the qualified recognition of the epic poet as "historian" of the Trojan War, or the proud claim that he, Thucydides, has chosen a more important subject than Homer's (or Herodotus') (1.1.1; 1.10.3 and 1.23.1f.); obvious is also the major influence of the epic model on various parts of Thucydides' work (e.g., the characterization of Brasidas, or the entire narrative of the Sicilian Expedition). Similarly clear and long-acknowledged is the presence of Herodotus in Thucydides' work, both as a target of criticism and as a model for emulation.³

It was not only the "father of historiography" who adopted the epic-Homeric narrative mode but also his successor, Thucydides, and all subsequent ancient historians. Christian Meier sums up the significance of this development as follows:⁴ the main achievement of Herodotus (and certainly also of Thucydides) is that he "[meant to] integrate plans, actions and events extending over longer stretches of the narrative in a coherent whole" (336); in other words, he sought to understand "events and their antecedents by mentally *reconstructing* them" (384) (emphasis added). Both sentences aptly describe the Homeric narrative mode in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Similarly, the distinguishing mark of Greek historiography from Herodotus onward is that it "conceived of, tried to understand, narrated, and published the narrative of, long-term developments as multi-subjective event history" (327).

The difference between the narrative mode of Herodotus and Thucydides and that of previous quasi-historical narratives also indicates that Thucydides consciously adopted the Homeric (and Herodotean) narrative mode. The work of Herodotus' and Thucydides' predecessors and contemporaries, e.g., Hecataeus or Hellanicus, to name but the most significant among them, either lacks or features only partially and embryonically the fundamental components of a historical narrative⁵ and especially those which are also the consti-

³ Pelling (1991); Hornblower (1992b); *Comm.* 2.19ff.; Rood (1999); Rogkoti, this volume.

⁴ Chr. Meier (1983). The article is an important contribution in the study of the rise of Greek historiography as a whole.

⁵ For the works that Thucydides must have known, including those of the older "logographers", see Corcella, this volume; see also Fowler (1996), who unfortunately

tutents of Homeric epic, namely the presentation of events and actions as a meaningful whole, the reconstruction of the various stages of their development, and multisubjectivity. These “logographers” are heirs to the tradition of “scientific” epic in the manner of Hesiod, favor the succinct reporting of information, and thus offer no coherent wider historical narrative.⁶

Thucydides explicitly rejects the narrative mode of the “logographers” in the one passage where he mentions Hellanicus of Lesbos by name. At 1.97.2 Hellanicus’ treatment of the *Pentekontaetia* is condemned as having been done *βραχέως* “in a very brief manner”; the adverb undoubtedly reflects the annalistic style of this “historiographical” tradition, which favors the succinct reporting of the largest possible amount of information.⁷

The issue of Thucydidean narrative is very broad and cannot be treated in full here. In the following I shall concentrate on a number of aspects of Thucydides’ narrative technique, in particular from the perspective of their relation to the Homeric and Herodotean antecedent. I shall first discuss the features mentioned at the beginning, the direct speeches and the internal focalization (I) and then attempt to shed some more light on Thucydides’ narrative art by means of a more detailed treatment of the structure of the work as a whole (II), the presentation of time (III), “epic suspense” (IV) and narrative patterning (V).⁸

I

Modern historiographical theory and praxis consider both a *diēgēsis*, consisting of direct speech and simple narration, and the “inner

does not touch on the issue of narrative mode. A caveat is perhaps in order here: the paucity of extant fragments, especially quotations, makes every attempt at determining the narrative mode of Thucydides’ predecessors and contemporaries a highly speculative exercise; e.g. one should not reach any conclusions on the basis of indirect testimonies such as Hellanicus *FGHist* 4 F 31. Nevertheless, it should also be mentioned that the use of direct speeches may be deduced from Hecataeus *FGHist* 1 F 30, although they must have been rare, as Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 38) attests.

⁶ Jacoby (1912) 2683 and 2734.

⁷ For this view, see also Schwinge (1996) 317f.

⁸ I shall deliberately avoid discussing two important aspects of Thucydidean narrative, namely the role of the narrator and the various focalization techniques used. For recent exhaustive discussions of these issues, see Gribble (1998); Rood (1998a), (2004), and this vol.

perspective”, to be particularly problematic. In modern narratological theory both these features serve as prominent “signposts of fictionality” that clearly indicate the status of a *fictional* narrator;⁹ both have exercised modern Thucydidean scholarship since its beginnings—largely unjustifiably, taking into account the tradition to which Thucydides as narrator belongs, and which was sketched above, or more generally the function of fictional means in the representation of history.

I shall begin with internal focalization and briefly discuss its place in pre-Thucydidean narrative works. The Homeric epics use the “inner perspective” freely, although because of the high percentage of direct speech¹⁰ the ubiquity of the technique is not so apparent.¹¹ The percentage of words describing inner processes in the Homeric epics is certainly high.¹² Herodotus introduces the description of these processes into historiography¹³ and turns them into a prominent narrative technique—one need only look at the rich collection of material in Montgomery.¹⁴ Herodotus also frequently indicates that he *deduces* these processes (3.146.1: hatred [δοκέω]; 7.173.4: fear [δοκέειν μοι]; 238.2: Xerxes’ anger [τεκμήρια]; 8.30.2: hatred [συμβαλλόμενος εὔρισκω]), but the vast majority are reported without such specification.

In an important work on Thucydides, Schneider¹⁵ demonstrated that the reported emotions, thoughts, and intentions of individuals cannot be taken as authentic but that the historian deduces motives from facts. Schneider also takes credit for showing that this recon-

⁹ The most important works are: Hamburger (1994) 72ff.; Genette (1991) 65ff. (“Récit fictionnel, récit factuel”), esp. 75ff.; Cohn (1999) 109ff.: “Signposts of Fictionality: A Narratological Perspective”, esp. 119: “. . . what history cannot be or do: it cannot present past events through the eyes of a historical figure present on the scene, but only through the eyes of the (forever backward-looking) historian-narrator”. Cf. also Stanzel (1995) 113–23; de Jong *et al.* (2004) 8f.; Hermann *et al.* (2005) *s.v.* “Fiction, Theories of” (D. Gorman); Wolf Schmid (2005) 39ff.

¹⁰ “Character-speech”: 45% according to de Jong (2004) X.

¹¹ Bassett (2003) 102ff.; de Jong (2004) 122: “the secondarily focalized passages of the *Iliad* are short and in comparison to direct speech far less frequent: character-text is clearly the preferred mode of presentation of the words and thereby of the thoughts/emotions of characters”. See also de Jong (1994) on Homer, and on ancient epic in general, Kullmann (2002).

¹² Schwinge (1991) 14f.

¹³ They appear as acknowledged historiographical technique in D.H. *Ant. Rom.* 5.56.1 and Lucian (*Hist. Conscr.* 49); cf. Avenarius (1956) 142ff.; Fornara (1983) 43ff.; 70ff.; 147ff.

¹⁴ Montgomery (1965) 1–44; cf. Hornblower (1987) 80.

¹⁵ Schneider (1974).

struction of motives from events is an important historiographical technique that makes "events or actions understandable, plausible, accessible to experience" for the readers of the work. Thucydides' method of reconstructing inner processes is largely similar to the principles of the reporting of direct speech set out in the methodological chapter: in both cases thoughts are constructed according to patterns, either on the basis of fragmentary and inaccurate reports of the actual speeches (direct speech) or on the basis of the actual sequence of events and the interests of the historical agents at the time (inferred motivation).

Schneider's theory of the fictional character of the various forms of inferred motivation in Thucydides has become the scholarly *communis opinio*, although Anglo-Saxon positivism is still searching for ways to exculpate the historian from the charge of "poeticizing" motivation. However, it is clearly meaningless to speculate as to whether or not Thucydides discussed objectives, emotions, or expectations with his *History's* characters in person (or through an intermediary; with Alcidas but not with Phormio, with Demosthenes during the Archidamian War but not during the Sicilian Expedition, not with Cleon, etc.).¹⁶ At the same time, it is of course clear that *some* pieces of information might very well be "genuine", i.e., that they might have been obtained through personal inquiry,¹⁷ although we can neither know nor find out which. It is enough to understand that Thucydides uses this method as a major component of his narrative.

The authenticity of the speeches has been discussed *ad nauseam* and will not occupy me for long here. In the first place, it is clear that we cannot know for certain what Thucydides sought to achieve with the speeches because of the ultimately unclear relationship between the claim to objectivity and the concessions to subjectivity in the methodological chapter. Secondly, there are several compelling reasons to conclude that the directly quoted speeches included in the work cannot be authentic.¹⁸ Their degree of fictionality may of

¹⁶ For this approach, see Westlake (1989b). Hornblower also goes too far on occasion: *Comm.* 2.335 (*ad* 4.105.1: Brasidas and Thucydides talked at some time between 424 and 422, and the "artful speaker" Brasidas "flattered our historian a little" by suggesting that his wealth and influence in Thrace was in part the reason for the swift attack on Amphipolis.

¹⁷ Hornblower (1987) 81; Rood (1998a) 20; 49. Seeck (1978) is an important paper on methodology. On internal focalization, see also Stahl, this volume.

¹⁸ For the arguments supporting the fictionality of the speeches, see the detailed discussion of Hornblower (1987) 55ff., who neither espouses nor manages to refute

course vary throughout. In any case, Thucydides' hand in them involves their content, the occasion of their delivery, and the manner in which they are brought to bear on one another by means of short-range associations or long-range cross-references (*Nah*—or *Fernbeziehungen*).

So, two of the main features of Thucydidean narrative are, to put it cautiously, *fictional* to a substantial degree, and in this sense direct borrowings from Homer (and Herodotus). This conclusion is less suprising than it might at first appear if one takes into account what modern historiographical theory repeatedly stresses,¹⁹ that fictionality and factuality are consistently intertwined²⁰ in historical discourse, that “fictionalization is always at work in historical experience because the factual *What* of a historical event is always determined by the aspectual *When* of its perception or reconstruction and also by the *How* of its representation and interpretation”,²¹ and that “fiction makes the ways of viewing history accessible to experience”.²²

II. *The Structure of the Work*

The structure of Books II–VIII of Thucydides' work, i.e. the narrative of the war, is strictly annalistic in form: the historical material is divided into seasonal segments, i.e. in summer and winter, which in their turn are often subdivided into smaller portions through references to beginning, middle, and end. A standard formula is used throughout to indicate each war year: “these were the events of winter and so ended the second, third, etc. year of the war”. This method is undoubtedly a Thucydidean innovation, inspired by the conditions of Greek warfare (i.e. also by Thucydides' personal war experience) and the historian's desire to provide a more precise dating of the events (5.20.2f.; 26.1ff.). The *chronological* function of the Thucydidean model may owe something to Herodotus' similar chrono-

them in a definitive manner: the cross-references (*Fernbeziehungen*) between speeches (Hornblower, *op. cit.* 59f.), their degree of linguistic complexity (62ff.), or the foreshadowing of a distant future are unmistakable signs of their fictionality.

¹⁹ In this context it suffices to mention the names of R. Barthes and H. White; cf. also Mommsen (1984).

²⁰ Koselleck (1979) esp. 280–82. On the ancient theory of fictionality in historiography, esp. in Cicero, see Fornara (1983) 134ff.

²¹ Jauß (1982) 325f.

²² Stierle (1979) 98.

logical indications in the *Histories*.²³ The *structural* role of the divisions into summer, winter, and year of the war may be associated with the Herodotean passages that describe the successive occupations and liberations of Ionia (1.92.1; 1.169.2; 5.28; 6.32; 9.104) or with the indications of dawn and nightfall that frame the narration of battles in the Homeric epic.

Within this annalistic framework the narration unfolds mostly in a linear fashion. However, this linearity is disrupted by means of various techniques. As has been demonstrated by modern Thucydidean scholarship, these techniques foster meaning and unity (and are no longer considered to be suitable points for applying the "Analytical" lever) and include anachronies of all types (see III below) and also a manifold narrative patterning (see V below).

Only Book I is not structured in this strictly annalistic-linear fashion but features a complex structure that lacks chronological divisions. In order to corroborate his suggestion in the *Archaeology* that the Peloponnesian War surpassed all previous confrontations in its significance, Thucydides first reviews the earliest periods of Greek history, from pre-Trojan War times up to the Persian Wars. The narration of the prehistory of the Peloponnesian War begins with the *aitiai*, the mutual "charges" of the opponents, i.e. the events in Corcyra and Potidaia, and extends to the meeting of the Peloponnesian allies in Sparta (435–432 BC). There then follows the extensive flashback of the *Pentekontaetia* (89–118) where Thucydides suggests that the Peloponnesian War broke out because Sparta feared a further increase in Athenian power. Finally he picks up the thread of the immediate prehistory of the war again and from 2.1 onward narrates the events in (almost) chronological order, as he himself indicates: γέγραπται δὲ ἐξῆς ὡς ἕκαστα ἐγίγνετο κατὰ θέρος καὶ χειμῶνα (2.1.1) "events have been described in chronological order, as each occurred, in a narrative arranged by summers and winters" (transl. Hornblower). The basic structure of Book I, with its repeated temporal-aetiological regression, is similar to the Iliadic prooemium, as analyzed by Genette,²⁴ and, to a more limited extent, to the introduction of Herodotus' *Histories* (1.1.1–1.5).

²³ See the passages collected by Luschkat (1970) 1133.

²⁴ Genette (1972) 30.

III. *The Shaping of Time*

a. *Anachronies in the Work of Thucydides*

The linearity of the narrative in Books II–VIII is particularly evident at the macrostructural level, especially when compared with the intricate, almost chaotic structure of time in Herodotus' work, aptly characterized by Roland Barthes as "histoire en zigzags ou en dents de scie".²⁵ As a historical work, Thucydides' *History* shares with Herodotus' *Histories* the beginning *ab ovo*, which differs significantly from the Homeric *in-medias-res* technique.

Among the most important interruptions in the progression of narrative time are eleven anachronies. There are seven longer flashbacks: the *Archaeology* (1.2–19); the *Pentekontaetia* (1.89–118); the three digressions about Cylon (1.126), Pausanias (1.128–135), and Themistocles (1.136–138); the Sicilian archaeology (6.2–5); and the excursus about the murder of the tyrants (6.54–59). There are also four flash-forwards: the famous so-called obituary of Pericles (2.65); the characterization of Brasidas (4.81); the so-called second prooemium (5.26), and the characterization of Alcibiades (6.15.3ff.).

Irrespective of their particular rhetorical-argumentative function in their immediate contexts,²⁶ the flashbacks, especially the most extensive ones, i.e. the *Archaeology* and the *Pentekontaetia*, enlarge the temporal frame of the work so that it appears to encompass Greek history in its entirety. This narrative technique is no innovation: the scope of Herodotus' narrative is also not limited to the narrowly defined subject matter of his work, the war between Greeks and Barbarians (which began with Croesus' attack on the Greeks of Asia Minor [1.5.3]), but encompasses both the recent and the more distant past of all the major nations of the then-known world. The temporal frame of both Homeric epics is similarly all-encompassing: using a

²⁵ Marincola (2001) 65 speaks of "narrative anarchy"; see also 28: "the *Histories* are in a way linear, and the forward movement is constantly stopped or redirected by a series of excurses, flashbacks, flash-forwards, changes of venue, narrative pauses, and descriptive passages large and small". De Jong (2001b) and (2002) 253f. calls it "anachronical structure".

²⁶ For detailed discussion, see Tsakmakis (1995a), who highlights the importance of the Homeric mythological digressions: in their function (rhetorical-paradigmatic) and manner of literary presentation (adaptation of the digression to the objectives of the narrative context) they may be viewed as precursors of the Thucydidean "episodes" of the past.

variety of techniques the *Iliad* gives the impression of narrating the entire Trojan War, and the *Odyssey* encompasses the *nostoi* of all Achaean leaders, including that of Odysseus, beginning with the departure of the fleet from Troy.²⁷

All the flash-forwards in the *History* concern Athens' defeat in 404 and are found at strategically important points in the narrative. In 2.65 (Pericles' "obituary") the Athenians reluctantly endorse Pericles' policy (which guaranteed success) for the last time. In 4.81 Brasidas is presented as the first, short-lived embodiment of the energetic Spartan policy that will lead to Athens' downfall years later in the Deceleian war. The so-called second prooemium is inserted at the beginning of the break in the twenty-seven year war. This break was brought about by the Peace of Nicias and was only to last for a few years. Finally, the characterization of Alcibiades (6.15.3ff.) is placed before the most important failure for which Athens itself was responsible in the war, the Sicilian Expedition.

The absence of major external prolepses to the time after the war is due to thematic and biographic factors: Thucydides writes the history of his own time and probably died shortly after the end of the war. By contrast, both the Homeric epics and Herodotus make abundant use of external prolepses. Herodotus in particular makes numerous indirect allusions to developments in Greece subsequent to the Persian Wars. These allusions provide another important level of meaning on which Persia functions as a foil for Athens.²⁸

At the microstructural level there are a great many more anachronies, which Simon Hornblower and Tim Rood have both studied under the rubric "narrative displacement"²⁹ ("the subsequent or preliminary mention of events, especially at the place where their actual effect appears").³⁰ For Hornblower this is a narrative technique by means of which a historical (in contrast to a fictional) work "lessens the impact of an irreducible event or fact", whereas a novelist "generally uses displacement to highlight or emphasize an item". Rood aptly points out that, on the contrary, "delay heightens the impact of events by placing the reader in the position of contemporaries . . . or by holding them back until they are most relevant".³¹

²⁷ On the various techniques used to enlarge the temporal frame of the Homeric epics, see Rengakos (2006).

²⁸ For relevant literature, see Marincola (2001) 25 n. 23.

²⁹ Hornblower (1994b) 139ff.; Rood (1998a), esp. 109ff. ("Temporal Manipulation").

³⁰ Erbse (1989) 43.

³¹ Cf. also Rood's (1998a) 219ff. refutation of Hornblower's theory (*Comm.* 1.84

A classic example is the ruse of the Egestaeans, who promised riches to the Athenian envoys and thus persuaded Athens to go ahead with the Sicilian Expedition. The plot and its unveiling are described at a much later point, when the Athenian expeditionary force decided to use the promised resources (6.46.3f.): “now can the finally enlightened reader measure the dismay that descended on the army with the revelation of the truth . . . Thucydides takes care to uphold the ruse for as long as the Athenians operate under its influence”.³²

The same also holds for the account of the letter that Nicias sent to the Athenian assembly from Syracuse: the content of the letter is reported in direct speech when it is read before the assembly (7.10–15) and not at the time of its composition (7.8.2): “the reader in a way watches the leader act at an important moment and can, by comparing his reactions with the contents of the letter, reach a clear conclusion about the importance of the decisions that are now being taken in Athens”.³³

b. *Synchronicity*

The annalistic structure of the work and the complexity of the war operations, which as κίνησις μεγίστη often involved several fronts, brought Thucydides up against the main problem for every complex narrative: that of presenting simultaneous events. The technique for doing this was already known about in the Homeric epics and in Herodotus’ *Histories*,³⁴ but Thucydides applies it with great rigor, something for which critics both ancient and modern have taken him to task.³⁵ The historiographical objectives that he pursued with the consistent application of this technique—to be sketched next—have only recently been acknowledged.

and [1994b] 143ff.) that certain important events of the 430s (e.g., the Corinthians’ successful attempt to dissuade Sparta from waging war against Athens after the Samian revolt of 440) are reported with delay in order “to lessen the feeling of Athenian aggression”; see also Stahl, this volume.

³² Erbse (1989) 43f.

³³ Erbse (1989) 45, who also suggests the Herodotean model (1.123.3ff.); cf. Rood (1998a) 28f. with n. 12. For other anachronies at the microstructural level, see Rood (1998a) Index *ss.vv.* analepsis, prolepsis; cf. Andrewes, *HCT* 5.366f.

³⁴ Rengakos (1995) and (2006).

³⁵ On the ancient critique (D.H. *Th.*, Luc. *Hist. conscr.*, D.S. etc.), see Avenarius (1956) 119ff.; Fornara (1983) 43ff.; 70ff.; 147ff.; Rood (1998a) 109; 111 with nn. 7 and 8.

The Thucydidean technique is based on the so-called “desultory method”, which had already been used by Homer. In short, the poet describes action A until it reaches a stable state, then puts it aside and starts describing action B. When the latter itself reaches a stable state, he returns to A and so forth. As is well known, synchronicity permeates the macrostructure of the Homeric epic, especially the *Odyssey*. The two strands of the epic, the so-called “Telemachy” and the adventures of Odysseus, are repeatedly suspended and become repeatedly interlocked again and again. Herodotus uses this method systematically in the so-called Xerxes *logos*. In the last three Books of his *Histories* he set himself the task of vividly describing the operations of the Persian army and the response of the Greeks to these as simultaneous actions. Like Homer, he switches the focus of his narration between the two adversaries. In 7.1–137 we follow the advance of Xerxes’ forces until they reach Therme in Macedonia. Chapters 138–178 provide information on the preparations that the Greeks are making in the meantime. Successive sections describe the battles at Thermopylae (chs. 179–239) and Artemision (8.1–25). Like Homer in the *Odyssey*, Herodotus also gradually decreases the size of the passages that narrate each strand of the story in order to emphasise how the two sides get nearer and nearer to each other until they finally meet in the decisive sea battle at Salamis. The frequent switching from the Persian to the Greek side and vice versa clarifies the close interdependence between the actions of the two sides and allows the reader to experience the reactions of the adversaries directly.

Gomme and de Romilly were the first to study this technique in Thucydides’ work and to point out the deeper significance of this way of presenting simultaneous events.³⁶ Gomme analyzed the constant switching of the narrative in Book IV between the expedition of the Athenians against Boeotia and Brasidas’ campaign in Northern Greece—this may be called “the interlace technique”, a concept borrowed from Homeric scholarship.³⁷ In chapters 66–74, which recount the Athenians’ unfortunate Megarian expedition, we hear in passing

³⁶ Gomme (1954) 127ff.; de Romilly (1956) 56ff.; see also Kitto (1966) 284. Roscher (1842) 372 had already pointed this out in essence: “So much is clear, that a closer connection with the truth is sought by means of the chronological order”; cf. also Schwinge (1996) 300ff.

³⁷ De Jong (2001a) XIV; 589f.

that Brasidas is making preparations in Sicyon and Corinth for an expedition against Thrace (70.1). Brasidas sends word to the Boeotians and rushes to help Megara. After the city has come under the control of the oligarchic faction and is thus secured against capture by the Athenians, Brasidas returns to his preparations for the expedition against Thrace (74.1). In ch. 75 we hear of Antandrus' capture by the Athenians and of Lamachus' operations in the Pontus—an indirect reminder of the many theatres of operation in which Athens sought to make her presence felt. The account of Athens' Boeotian expedition begins with chapters 76–77, starting with a survey of its resources and a description of the expected results as well as of the concrete preparations made under the generals Hipparchus and Demosthenes. In chapters 78 to 88 we accompany Brasidas on his march through Thessaly to Northern Greece and follow his first military operations against Arrabaeus and later Acanthus. In ch. 89 we return to the Athenian expedition in Boeotia (i.e. Thucydides picks up the thread of the narrative interrupted at ch. 77), which ends in a heavy defeat for the Athenians at Delium. Shortly before the end of this section we hear of the defeat of Demosthenes in Sicyon (101.3–4) and of the death of Sitalces, the king of the Odrysians, who had been friendly to the Athenians—pieces of information that at first glance seem irrelevant, but serve to round off the general picture of Athenian setbacks after Sphacteria (cf. ch. 108). After ch. 102 the focus of the narrative shifts back to Brasidas' operations in Northern Greece.

The primary purpose of this interlace technique is to allow the reader to interpret the events—its role in determining the chronology is only secondary. The fact that we hear of Brasidas' various operations when the Athenians learn of them too enables us to assess the significance of the Athenians' fatal miscalculations: they should have devoted their energy to the north rather than Boeotia, and could have stopped Brasidas' march through Thessaly with a fraction of the forces engaged in Delium.³⁸

The interlace technique is employed even in the brief account in the *Pentekontaetia* excursus of Book I. The expedition of the Athenians to Egypt (1.104 and 1.109–110) is narrated in parallel with the siege

³⁸ There is an excellent analysis of the two sections of Book IV in Babut (1981) 434ff., who follows Gomme (1954) 134ff. and Kitto (1966) 284; see also Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.228 and 2.256 (*ad* 4.78.1).

of Aegina (1.105.1–2), Myronides' victory over the Corinthians (105.3–106.2), the building of the Long Walls in Athens (107.1), the Tanagra campaign (107.2–108.1), the battle of Oenophyta (108.2–3), and the *periplous* of Tolmides (108.5). It is again clear that this technique is not merely chosen to provide a more precise chronological framework, as has often been argued—in fact the chronology remains no less obscure than in other parts of the *Pentekontaetia*. Rather, the technique is consciously employed in order to impress upon the reader the “explosive” energy of the Athenians during the fifty years preceding the Peloponnesian War.³⁹ The perceptibly accelerated tempo of the narrative in the second part of the *Pentekontaetia* (98–118) also serves to suggest that the *polypragmosynē* of Athens, the cause of Sparta's fear of increasing Athenian power (the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις of the Peloponnesian War), is turning into a growing threat.

c. *Book VIII*

A word is in order here about Book VIII. From antiquity onward, this book has been considered unfinished both externally and internally, a mere sketch with minimal elaboration.⁴⁰ It is true that it differs from the other books in that the narration is atomized, broken down into a multitude of places, agents, and breathless, inconsequential actions, and it is also certainly true that this is because Thucydides had to come to grips with the great fragmentation of war operations themselves. Not only does the number of the theatres of operations increase substantially (as is fairly common in the work as a whole), but the number of the main players also doubles or rather triples: there are now three great powers (Athens, Sparta, Persia), and none of these is presented as a single agent. Instead, the actions of various individuals and groups within these powers needed to be reported. On the Athenian side, there are radical and moderate oligarchs and democrats, and Alcibiades as an individual player. On another side, there are the Spartan commanders active in Ionia and the Spartan administration at home. Even Persia is represented both by Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus. Moreover, the expected action or outcome often fails to occur: “the story-line was no longer linear and teleological, nor did the expected actions

³⁹ Von Fritz (1976) 1.613.

⁴⁰ See most recently Hornblower (1987) 143; cf. von Fritz (1967) 1.757ff.

materialize: the Sicilians did not join forces with the Spartans, nor did the Spartans press fully their advantage . . .".⁴¹ This is "a narrative of the deferment of expected resolution".⁴²

Several features of Book VIII are indicative of its peculiar nature: the absence of direct speeches, contradictory judgments about the oligarchic regime of 411, the large number of problematic passages,⁴³ etc.⁴⁴ To these may be added two analepses in 8.45.1 and 63.3, which are introduced by a similar, otherwise uncommon formula (ἐν δὲ τούτῳ καὶ ἔτι πρότερον and ὑπὸ γὰρ τούτων τὸν χρόνον καὶ ἔτι πρότερον) and whose scope remains unspecified. Both analepses have no parallel in Thucydides' work. Nowhere else does the historian retell in detail the events of a period already treated, and nowhere else in the previous books is there a "parallel" report of the same events.⁴⁵ Extensive internal analepses are not found in Homer either, but Herodotus in Book VII goes quite a long way back in narrated time. In ch. 145.2ff. he starts his account of the first defensive measures taken by the Greeks against Xerxes although the council of the Greek allies mentioned at this point actually took place almost a year (autumn of 481 BC) prior to the time that the consecutive narrative of Xerxes' advance has reached (7.130: Xerxes in Therme, beginning of August 480 BC).

IV. *Suspense*

The interlace technique, used in the presentation of simultaneous events, indirectly allows the reader to form an opinion about the narrated events. Equally revealing about Thucydides' use of this technique is de Romilly's analysis of the section in Book VI that describes

⁴¹ Marincola (2001) 66.

⁴² Rood (1998a) 262.

⁴³ For a complete list see *HCT* 5.369ff.

⁴⁴ On Book VIII see Delebecque (1965); Connor (1984) 210–30; Erbse (1989) 1–82; Rood (1998a) 252–84.

⁴⁵ A cursory glance at the examples of Erbse (1989) 52ff., shows that all are very precise and that the narrated time is at no point gone over again from a different point of view and from so far back, as is especially the case with 8.45ff. Rood's attempt (1998a) 264ff. to explain away the analepsis of 8.45ff. is unconvincing. A much more limited analepsis is noted by Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.403: 4.129.2 again takes up the period narrated at 4.122.4ff. Time interrupted at 4.128 is picked up again at 4.132.

Gylippus' sailing to Sicily in the summer of 414 and the simultaneous attempts of the Athenians to blockade Syracuse (6.93–7.2).⁴⁶ Thucydides' emphasis on the near-success of the Athenian blockade supports his famous general assessment of the Sicilian expedition at 2.65.11 (ἡμαρτήθη καὶ ὁ ἐς Σικελίαν πλοῦς, ὃς οὐ τοσοῦτον γνώμησ' ἀμάρτημα ἦν πρὸς οὓς ἐπῆσαν . . .). The section is also a shining example of Thucydides' masterly use of narrative retardation, which can help us understand how "suspense" is generated in the work.

But what does "suspense" signify in a work of ancient narrative literature, especially a historical one? In order to awaken and sustain the interest of their audience, Homer and the ancient historians make use of what may be termed "epic suspense". The epic poet constantly strives to generate and sustain suspense, especially anticipatory suspense as to the way in which the action will unfold—so-called "*Spannung auf das Wie*". "*Spannung auf das Was*", i.e. suspense as to how the narrative will end, commonly used in the modern novel, is foreign to the epic since the conclusion of the story is fixed in the tradition. The same holds *mutatis mutandis* in the case of historical works, since these too deal with events whose sequence and outcome are known in advance. The two Homeric epics achieve suspense *inter alia* by retardation, a technique that Herodotus employs extensively in the last three Books of the *Histories*, in the so-called Xerxes *logos*.⁴⁷

Let us now examine the end of Book VI and the first part of the beginning of Book VII of Thucydides' *History* from the point of view

⁴⁶ De Romilly (1956) 56ff.; see also Delebecque (1965) 27; Connor (1984) 185ff.; Rood (1998a) 171ff.; Gribble (1999) 189ff. For another excellent detailed analysis, see Stahl (2003) 210ff. The same technique is employed in several sections of Thucydides' work. The account of the sailing of the Athenian fleet to Sicily alternates with that of the reactions in Syracuse (6.30ff.; de Romilly [1956] 60f.). In the same way, the narrative of the sailing of the relief fleet under Demosthenes alternates with that of the Syracusan successes (7.20ff.; de Romilly [1956] 59f.), and the description of the revolt of Mytilene and siege by the Athenians with that of Sparta's inefficient countermeasures (beginning of Book III), etc. However, the dramatic quality the narration takes on at the end of Book VI and beginning of VII is unparalleled and is clearly to be attributed to Thucydides' more general belief that the Sicilian Expedition marked the turning point in the Peloponnesian War.

⁴⁷ Cf. Rengakos (2006); see also the important remarks of Fornara (1971) 73: "His [Herodotus'] procedure is not substantially different from that of the tragedians. The basics were known, the end result was predictable. What mattered was the presentation of the detail in such a way as to keep the audience involved and make the pattern explicable. This is the essence of Herodotus' art and the key to his technique".

of narrative retardation. The Spartan strand of the narrative begins with Gylippus' preparations for departure for Sicily (6.93.1–4). This is immediately followed by the description of a request for money and cavalry that the Athenian generals sent to the Assembly and the usual formula for the end of the seventeenth year of the war (94.5). Straight afterward and with the beginning of the next war period, the Athenian strand of the narrative starts up. We are first told about some insignificant operations undertaken by the Athenians against Syracuse (94), and events in Lacedaemon and Boeotia (95). Finally (96ff.) Thucydides continues with the narrative about the skirmishes before Syracuse and the construction of the Athenian blockading wall and Syracusan counterwall,⁴⁸ up to the point at which Athenian success seems to be guaranteed (103.2) and the desperate Syracusans initiate contact with Nicias (103.3). The narrative then switches back to the Spartan strand (104.1): Gylippus is near the island of Leucas and, since the reports from Sicily seem to indicate that Syracuse has been completely blockaded, he despairs of saving Sicily and resolves to secure southern Italy. He sails to Tarentum and from there sends envoys to request help from Thourioi (104.2). When no help materializes, he attempts to sail away from Tarentum but is driven back there by a north wind—the tempo of the narrative here is unbearably slow, because the reader knows that the situation in Syracuse is on a knife edge; every day counts. Gylippus hauls the storm-damaged ships ashore for repairs, while Nicias, who has been informed of his approach, is unimpressed by the number of ships (he considers the force “primarily equipped for pirate voyages”) and pays little attention to them (104.3). After a parenthetical chapter about Athenian incursions in Laconia that lead to a “conspicuous” violation of the truce between Athens and Sparta (105), we accompany Gylippus on his voyage to Locri (7.1.1). There the Spartans discover that the blockade of Syracuse is not yet complete and deliberate over “whether . . . to take the all-out risk of sailing in or . . . sail to Himera first, pick up the Himeraeans themselves and any other forces they could enlist, and come by land” (transl. Lattimore). Four ships that have been sent out by Nicias have not yet arrived at Rhegium, and the Spartans arrive at Himera after calling at the ports of Rhegium and Messene. Here Gylippus assembles his army and sets out for

⁴⁸ Connor (1984) 186 aptly speaks of a “race of the walls”.

Syracuse; in the meantime "Gongylos, one of the Corinthian commanders, reached Syracuse, just ahead of Gylippus, and he found them on the point of holding an assembly about putting an end to the war" (2.1). This is the first high point in the arc of suspense. The assembled Syracusans take courage and march out in full force to meet Gylippus, the two armies joining together and attacking the Athenian wall (7.2.3). The narrative tempo continues to accelerate perceptibly as we near the resolution of the suspense: "It happened that he came at that decisive moment when the double wall to the Great Harbour, seven or eight stades, had already been completed by the Athenians, except for a short part at the sea (they were still constructing this), and along the rest of the circuit toward Trogilus on the other shore, stones had already been set down for the major portion, and it had been left with some parts half-finished and others wholly finished". Thucydides' conclusion: "Syracuse came within this degree of danger" (7.2.4). As has been correctly observed,⁴⁹ the narrative of the historian is reminiscent of the epic *Beinahe-Episoden*.

Another technique Thucydides uses to sustain the audience's interest is the step-by-step clarification of courses of action. This is most evident in the Pylus episode, analyzed by Connor:⁵⁰ "in the opening chapters of the fourth Book . . . the reader is gradually led from a very casual, almost disdainful, attitude toward the operation to an increasing awareness of the details of Demosthenes' plan and to an intensifying concentration on its potential and significance. Sicily, Corcyra, and other operations fade into the background; the narrative becomes more vivid and dramatic; we recognize one of the most significant campaigns in the war". The same technique is used in part in the account of Brasidas' Thracian expedition: only at 4.81 do the previous passing references to the expedition of the Spartan general (4.70.1; 4.71.2; 4.78 etc.) become more precise, as the reader learns of the specific goals that Sparta hopes will be achieved with Brasidas' mission to Northern Greece. The similarity with the Homeric technique of step-by-step clarification of what lies ahead ("stückweise Enthüllung des Kommenden"), studied by Wolfgang Schadewaldt,⁵¹ is evident.

⁴⁹ Rood (1998a) 173.

⁵⁰ Connor (1984) 110ff.

⁵¹ Schadewaldt (1966) 112f.

V. *Narrative Patterning*

Narrative patterning, which stems from the “almost architectonic quality of Thucydides’ mind”,⁵² is a multifaceted narrative method employed to generate meaning. Along with the technique of temporal presentation discussed above, it belongs to Thucydides’ characteristic method of indirect interpretation, or what Karl Reinhardt has called “what is not said” (das “Nicht-Gesagte”), which “extends so palpably, so perceptibly into the work, that one finds oneself again and again forced to supplement what is said with what is not said” (“so zum Greifen dicht, so spürbar in das Werk hineinreichte, so daß man sich immer wieder gezwungen sieht, das, was gesagt wird, aus dem Nicht-Gesagten zu ergänzen”).⁵³ Narrative patterning may be divided into several different categories: integration of speech and narrative, juxtaposition, cross-referencing or foreshadowing, and anticipation.

a. *Integration of Speech and Narrative*⁵⁴

The most common form of narrative patterning is the interaction of *logoi* and *erga* that permeates the entire work.⁵⁵ It is closely related to internal focalization in that both techniques are based on the extrapolation of motives from events (in the case of speeches, from motives that are thought of as explicitly mentioned and in the case of the inner perspective, from implicit ones). *Logoi* and *erga* “form a closely-knit unity”, are interrelated, as “they parallel and reinforce each other”: individual speeches or groups of speeches foreshadow subsequent individual developments or entire periods (examples are the speeches of Archidamus or Phormio in 2.11 and 2.89 or the trio of speeches before the Sicilian expedition) and, conversely, the *logoi* are subsequently confirmed, partially or fully, by the actual *erga*.

⁵² V.J. Hunter (1973a) 183.

⁵³ Reinhardt (1966) 202; cf. also Strasburger (1966) 73: “his (i.e. Thucydides’) skilled technique of making, without explicit words, historical interpretations apparent through literary composition”.

⁵⁴ Cf. also Morrison, this vol.

⁵⁵ De Romilly (1956); V.J. Hunter (1973a).

b. *Juxtaposition*

At the level of the composition of the work, narrative patterning is manifested through juxtaposition that “compels the reader to interpret single incidents in the light of others to which they are closely related”.⁵⁶ Juxtaposition of this kind primarily serves to create dramatic irony, which mainly stresses the contrast between plan and execution, the relationship between project and reality—a basic component of Thucydides’ tragic view of history, as Stahl (2003) in particular has shown.

The most famous example is certainly the direct juxtaposition of the Melian Dialogue and the Sicilian Expedition. The “paratactical” connection of the two Athenian enterprises is characteristic: “After a certain amount of treachery in their midst, the Melians surrendered to the Athenians to be dealt with as they wished. They killed all the grown men they captured, enslaved the women and children, and settled the place themselves by sending out five hundred colonists later. During the same winter, the Athenians wanted to sail to Sicily again, with a larger armament than the one under Laches and Eurymedon, and subjugate it, if possible, most of them unaware of the size of the island and the number of its inhabitants, both Hellenic and barbarian, and that they would be taking on a war just about as great as the one against the Peloponnesians” (5.116.4–6.1.1, transl. Lattimore). The abrupt transition serves to present Melos as an introduction to the Sicilian catastrophe (and the concomitant final catastrophe of 404). With the tragic irony strengthened by verbal echoing, the events in Sicily completely undermine the main principles of Athenian action, which were proudly and self-confidently proclaimed in the dialogue.

To give some other examples of this kind of juxtaposition: there is a relationship of thesis and antithesis between the Funeral Oration and the detailed account of the plague which directly follows it, between the image of the intact state and its disintegration. A similar irony is observed in the accounts of the Mytilenaeon and the Plataean episodes in Book III. Athens, the πόλις τῶραννος, finds the way to moderation and political prudence, if only in the second assembly about the fate of the Mytilenaeans, while Sparta, the liberator of Greece, stages a “kangaroo trial” and condemns to death

⁵⁶ Marincola (2001) 69.

the Plataeans who have surrendered. Finally, Book IV is largely structured around the antithetical juxtaposition of Athenian victory and Spartan defeat in Sphacteria and the reversal of this in Boeotia and Northern Greece.⁵⁷

c. *Cross-references and Anticipation*

Narrative patterning also serves to link distant parts of the work: “what is remarkable about Thucydides’ work is the way in which discrete and separate episodes are given unity by structural and thematic links with the other parts of the history: this is one of the important ways in which Thucydides is able to move beyond individual facts in order to bring out underlying patterns”.⁵⁸

These cross-references are most striking in the cases where two speeches delivered at different places are juxtaposed, partially or entirely, as speech and counter-speech. Well-known examples are Pericles’ first speech before the Athenian assembly, the largest part of which (1.141.2–144.1) corresponds to a section of the speech delivered by the Corinthians during a conference of the Peloponnesian League in Sparta (1.121–122.1), and certain speeches by commanders delivered at approximately the same time to different audiences. For instance, Phormio’s speech before the sea battle at Naupactus (2.89) is an answer to the previously recounted speech by the Peloponnesian commanders, delivered at the same time but on the opposite side of the Corinthian Gulf (2.87). This group also includes the account of a speech by Brasidas (4.11.4), which is an answer to Demosthenes’ brief address (4.10), the speech of the Athenian Hippocrates before the battle of Delium (4.95), which features extensive parallels with the previous speech of the Boeotian Pagondas (4.92), the speech of Brasidas in 5.9, which corresponds noticeably to the description of Cleon’s intentions in 5.7, and the speech of Gylippus and the Syracusan commanders (7.66–68) before the decisive battle in the port of Syracuse, which is an answer to the previous speech by Nicias (7.61–64).⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Babut (1981); Connor (1984) 126ff.

⁵⁸ Marincola (2001) 69; cf. also Rawlings (1981) 52: “careful juxtaposition is the most subtle aspect of Thucydides’ art of composition”.

⁵⁹ This feature of several Thucydidean speeches clearly indicates that they are not “authentic”. Neither “bad security” or “low confidentiality” on the part of the

In the narrative part of the work similar cross-references mainly serve the purposes of anticipation. Even larger sections seem to be connected with one another. In the first part of Book VI, the beginning of the Sicilian Expedition, the structure, principal motives and roles of some main players are largely similar to those in Book I, before the outbreak of the Archidamian War. In both cases there is an introductory "archaeology", which deals with the concept of power; in both the decision to go to war is taken in lengthy public debates; in both there are supporters and warners; and in both the historian underscores the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις behind the mere pretexts.⁶⁰ On a smaller scale, the digressions about Themistocles and Pausanias point to Pericles and Alcibiades but undoubtedly also to Lysander; the wily but luckless Corinthian Aristaeus, the main opponent of the Athenians in one of the war's preliminaries, the Potidaia affair, prefigures Brasidas; the inert Spartan Alcidas and the Mytilenean revolt in Book III are the opposite of the dynamic Alcibiades and the Chian revolt in Book VIII; the Athenian disaster in Sicily is very similar to the Spartan defeat at Pylus, as Thucydides himself points out (7.71.7); the proud departure of the Athenian fleet at the beginning of Book VI contrasts with the tragic annihilation of the Athenian army at the end of Book VII, etc.⁶¹

This Thucydidean technique of compositional or thematic correspondences also goes back to Homer and Hesiod and, in its various manifestations, constitutes an important means of generating unity, indispensable in extensive narratives. Both in the Homeric epics and in Herodotus' *Histories*, themes, motifs, scenes, and individuals correspond or contrast with each other, often over long stretches of the narrative, as has been shown mainly by the "unitarian" strand of Homeric and Herodotean scholarship. I shall mention one example from Herodotus; the motif of the repetition of two wars, known from Thucydides (Book I–Book VI), is also found in his work, *mutatis mutandis*. The Scythian *logos* in Book IV functions to a great extent as a detailed anticipation of the Persian attack on Greece: both parts

Greeks nor similarities with modern politicians (Hornblower [1987] 59) support the speeches' "authenticity": even in our age of mass media, in which the whole world is a live audience, when has anyone ever seen a politician respond publicly to his opponents in such detail as does Pericles to the Corinthians?

⁶⁰ V.J. Hunter (1973a) 179ff.; Rawlings (1981) 58ff.

⁶¹ Rood (1998a) 5ff.; 199 n. 74.

share a multitude of very characteristic motifs (warning figures, similar portrayal of the Scythians and the Greeks, even an implicit distinction between true and proximate cause, revenge and expansion).

To sum up, Thucydides received his narrative education at the school of the Homeric epics, particularly as far as main components of his narrative art are concerned. In this he largely followed the example of Herodotus. In some aspects of the Thucydidean narrative one can detect a pronounced distancing from the latter and a return to the more traditional Homeric practice: the narrative voice becomes more impersonal (like Homer and unlike Herodotus, Thucydides the narrator steps forward only occasionally), purely descriptive passages (an essential feature of Herodotus' *Histories*) become rarer, the mimetic character of the narrative becomes more conspicuous with the consistent use of inner focalization and the regular introduction of direct speeches (which are found rather sporadically in Herodotus and are much shorter), the active participation of the reader in the development of the narrative is promoted and, finally, the "emplotment" is much more clearly oriented toward the goal and end of the narrative.

NARRATIVE UNITY AND CONSISTENCY OF THOUGHT: COMPOSITION OF EVENT SEQUENCES IN THUCYDIDES

Hans-Peter Stahl

Thucydides' narrative tends to demonstrate unforeseen, destabilizing effects originating from seemingly minor, even inconspicuous, beginnings. The *Vorgeschichte* leading up to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (and the War is the historian's chosen topic, according to the work's opening sentence) starts in remote Epidamnus at the north-western outskirts of Greece—so remote is Epidamnus that the historian first has to describe its location on the map for his readers. The development that results in the (limited) armistice of 423/2 BC (and ultimately in what today is termed the "Peace of Nicias") originates from the Athenians' occupation and fortification of an uninhabited hilltop on the west coast of the Peloponnesus—so inconspicuous is the spot that the Athenian generals in charge refuse to get involved and joke about wasting the city's money . . .

This much said, one can already formulate two complementary aspects of Thucydides as a narrator (and thinker). One is his capacity of synoptic analysis, combining the presentation of long-range processes with inquiry into the trigger value of seemingly unimportant events. The other is the distinction between surface phenomena and a developing historical undercurrent. Both aspects together help us understand the reasoning and perspicacity the author bestows upon establishing and approaching his subject matter.

I. (*Un-*)Blocking the Road to War

Reviewing the first prewar section, which narrates the first of two prewar action sequences (1.24.1–1.55.2; 1.56.1–1.66), will offer an apposite introduction to Thucydides' narrative art. Preceding this section, an outline of early Greek history (the so-called *Archaeology*, 1.1.3–1.21.1), with emphasis on sea power in the Mediterranean, provides a negative foil for the greatness of the Peloponnesian War;

it is followed by two programmatic chapters: one (1.22) on method, distinguishing the greater reliability of the factual narrative from the speeches contained in the work (the speeches are necessarily less accurately reported and less objective); the other (1.23) on the suffering the war caused Hellas ("Hellas" is the author's term for what today is called Greece). This chapter also adds the distinction between, on the one hand, the underlying "truest" (but at the time least mentioned) cause of the war (ἡ ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις), viz., Sparta's fear of Athens' growing power, and, on the other hand, the openly raised accusations (αἰτίαι) and disagreements (διαφοραί). To prevent his reader from vainly searching for the surface origins of the great war, Thucydides precedes (προύγραψα πρῶτον, 1.23.5) the war itself by a description of those trigger factors.

So the two prewar sections should be seen as one track of a dual track concept. The first section begins at 1.24.1 with the above-cited geographical description, which provides the reader with some necessary information: "Epidamnus is a city one encounters on the right when sailing into the Ionian Gulf [here = the Adriatic Sea]. In the neighborhood, there live non-Greek Taulantians, an Illyrian ethnic group". The reader is truly taken to the periphery of Greece.

The next piece of information indicates the seeds of a potential conflict inherent in the city's political setup. Epidamnus was settled by the Corcyreans, but the founder (and also a few settlers) came from Corinth, the mother city of Corcyra. There could be a latent problem of differing loyalties among the citizenry as well as of differing claims made from outside on the citizens' loyalties.

Though becoming rich and powerful, Epidamnus was later worn down by inner strife, and also by a war with the neighboring non-Greeks. In the years before the Peloponnesian War, a social war broke out in Epidamnus itself: the *dēmos* (ὁ δῆμος) drove out the (rich and) powerful (τοὺς δυνατοὺς). The latter allied themselves with the area's non-Greeks and gave those in the city a hard time. So the people sent an embassy for help to the mother city. But though the emissaries sat down as suppliants in the shrine of Hera, the Corcyreans flatly dismissed them.

Following the advice of the oracle at Delphi, the people of Epidamnus next turn for help to their mother city's mother city, and, pointing to their Corinthian founder, formally make their city over to Corinth as its own colony (τὴν ἀποικίαν, 1.25.2). The Corinthians are only too happy to oblige, with justice on their side (κατὰ . . . τὸ

δίκαιον, 1.25.3), believing that Epidamnus is as much their own foundation as the Corcyreans'. "At the same time, however" (ἅμα δέ),—and here we encounter another Thucydidean distinction, viz. between publicly stated and underlying motivation—they are "also" (καί) motivated by hatred of the Corcyreans, μίσει τῶν Κερκυραίων. And this motive turns out to be the truly "motivating" one: whereas the argument of justice could be stated by one concept (τὸ δίκαιον), the accusations (ἐγκλήματα, 1.26.1) they have been nursing against their daughter city fill ten lines. Among them are lack of respect paid to the mother city at public occasions; contempt shown on the basis of the daughter's enormous wealth and greater power; even bragging about their huge naval power (the Corcyreans have 120 triremes) and deriving it (not from their Corinthian descent but) from the mythical sailing nation of the Phaeacians (famous for Odysseus' visit in Homer's epic) who once inhabited the island of Corcyra—an "ideological" independence not befitting a colony. With these charges raised—charges which to an uninvolved bystander may appear very much like sour grapes—the Corinthians "gladly" (ἄσμενοι, 1.26.1) send the requested help to Epidamnus, bidding anyone to join in as a colonist and providing garrison troops of their own as well as of the Leucadians and Ambraciots. However, from fear of the Corcyrean navy they send the force *on foot* as far as their colony of Apollonia (less than fifty miles south of Epidamnus), over a considerable distance of about three hundred miles from Corinth as the crow flies.

What may be surprising for the Greek reader here is that the heterogeneous configuration of the Epidamnian population has not been a factor on the level of the local strife. Thucydides will again and again have cause to emphasize the untraditional phenomenon that the importance of tribal origins is waning in light of power interests, down to the breach of kinship ties in the alliances of the final battle for Syracuse (7.57.1–7.59.1). But the heterogeneity does play out on the next higher level.

With their expedition, the Corinthians have taken the first step of a developing escalation. It is a salient characteristic of Thucydidean narrative that it continuously provides insight into the perspectives and emotions of either party involved in an event sequence. The Corcyreans, though earlier showing themselves disinterested in the fate of their colony, react "angrily" (ἐχάλεπαινον, 1.26.3) to the Corinthian expedition. Their anger is not perhaps caused by the strengthened condition of the hard-pressed Epidamnians in the city, but

precisely by the political measures that Corinth has taken: "As soon as the Corcyreans perceived that the settlers and the garrison had arrived in Epidamnus and that the colony had been turned over to the Corinthians, they reacted with anger".

Settlers, garrison, colony: the three issues emphasized in the preceding narrative now form the motivation for the Corcyrean reaction. As the Corinthians felt underappreciated by their daughter city, so now the daughter city is rankled by what it feels is an interference in its sovereign affairs. The Corcyreans *immediately* (no time out here either for rational deliberation) send twenty-five ships (and another fleet later), demanding the reinstatement of the refugees (the exiled party of the powerful) as well as the withdrawal of the Corinthian garrison and the new settlers. And as the Corinthians had put forth a publicly acceptable justification for their expedition (Epidamnus' founder had come from Corinth), so the Corcyreans too by now have a well-sounding public reason for their belated interest in the affairs of their daughter city: the exiled party of Epidamnus had sent to Corcyra and requested to be restored to their city, invoking the ties of kinship and the tombs of their ancestors. (Arguments of traditional sanctity, we recall, in Thucydides' observation hardly carry any weight as long as no issues of power and prestige are involved. This may well be the reason why the narrator relegates the exiles' embassy to a parenthesis [1.26.3] whose function is to explain how the Corcyreans came to demand the exiles' restoration to their home city.)

So the social war of Epidamnus between the well-off and the less privileged has on the next higher level awakened a so-far dormant conflict between colonizing city and colony. The first hostile action by a second-level power occurs when the Corcyreans, because their ultimatum is not met, lay siege to Epidamnus. With them are the exiled Epidamnians—and the Illyrian non-Greeks of the area.

News of the siege induces the Corinthians for their part to prepare a second (and this time, a *naval*) expedition by gathering large land forces (the numbers given in our manuscripts mention 2,000 or 3,000 hoplites of their own) and a sizeable fleet of (ultimately) 75 ships. What adds political weight to the military preparations (and must add fuel to the flames of the Corcyreans' anger) is their continued insistence on owning the prerogative in matters concerning Epidamnus: they proclaim that they are going to lead a formal settlement to Epidamnus, and they invite anybody who wants to par-

ticipate to come along. Persons at present unwilling to sail are offered the opportunity to register their participation in the colonization project by making a down payment in Corinthian currency.

An armed conflict between Corinth and Corcyra appears unavoidable, and does turn out to be unavoidable. Nevertheless, Thucydides, in a way typical of his narrative concept, at this point places a *fermata*: he reports on an unsuccessful conference in Corinth (1.28.1–5). The Corcyreans, when becoming aware of the Corinthian preparations, send ambassadors (who are joined by others from Sicyon and even from Sparta) to Corinth, once more demanding withdrawal of the settlers and the garrison, “since they (scil., the Corinthians) had no share in Epidamnus”, ὥς οὐ μετὸν αὐτοῖς Ἐπιδάμνου (1.28.1). Though the demands are the same as before (perhaps softened somewhat by the subjective ὥς), the Corcyreans show themselves ready to submit the question of whose colony Epidamnus rightfully is to international arbitration. And they warn against waging war. Failing this, they too would be forced to look for new friends not of their original choosing. The Corinthians answer by demanding withdrawal of the Corcyreans and the non-Greeks from Epidamnus (i.e., an end of the siege), and the Corcyreans declare themselves willing to do that if the Corinthians withdraw their garrison and settlers. They even propose a truce under the status quo until a decision through arbitration has been reached. The Corinthians “did not listen to any of these suggestions”, οὐδὲν τούτων ὑπήκουον (1.29.1), “but as soon as their ships were manned and the allies were there, they sent a herald ahead beforehand to *declare war on the Corcyreans*”, and took off with 75 ships and 2,000 (or 3,000) hoplites for Epidamnus to make war against the Corcyreans (1.29.1).

It is clear that in the historian’s eyes the Corinthians had not the slightest inclination to give in, and that the Corcyreans for their part sought the conference only when they got worried as soon as they learned (ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐπύθοντο οἱ Κερκυραῖοι, 1.28.1) of the massive Corinthian preparations. Why would Thucydides wish to present to his reader the non-event of a failed peace conference? Obviously, here was a last, but missed chance, before the movement toward the great war that is his subject would spiral up to the next level. The *fermata* of the conference gives the reader, too, a pause to contemplate the state of affairs and its possibilities (or non-possibilities). The future final step in the escalation, lurking threateningly in the background, is artfully hinted at, on the one hand, by mention of

the Spartan supporters present in the Corcyrean embassy and, on the other hand, by the Corcyreans' veiled threat that they, pushed by their opponents' inclination to use force (ἐκείνων βιαζομένων, 1.28.3), might be looking for friends outside the Peloponnesian League (i.e., in Athens). With the departure of this second, naval expedition of the Corinthians, the tracks are openly set for confrontation at sea (the reader remembers that the first Corinthian force went by land "from fear of the Corcyreans, lest they might be prevented by them when crossing over by sea" 1.26.2).

When the fleet has reached Actium at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, the Corcyreans, while at the same time manning their ships, send, as in wartime, a herald and forbid the Corinthians to advance against them. But the herald brings back "nothing peaceful" (οὐδὲν εἰρηναῖον, 1.29.4), and the ensuing battle (near the Corcyrean cape of Leucimne, 435 BC) results in a clear victory of 80 Corcyrean over the 75 ships of their enemy. On the same day, the remaining 40 ships of the Corcyreans, deployed in the siege of Epidamnus, see the surrender of that city. After the Corinthian fleet returns home the Corcyreans rule the sea and harass the allies of Corinth, especially Leucas, their colony (i.e., Corcyra's "sister" city). During the (next?) summer, Corinth stations forces (the city's third expedition by now) at Actium and Cheimerion (perhaps 30 miles north of Actium) to protect her allies in the area, while the Corcyreans anchor opposite them at Leucimne. No encounter having taken place, both fleets return home for winter.

All the time, for two years after the battle of Leucimne, the Corinthians passionately (ὀργῇ φέροντες, 1.31.1) prepare a fourth, even larger campaign, building a greater fleet and this time hiring oarsmen from all over Greece. The vast buildup scares the Corcyreans, and, unallied as they are (they have so far joined neither the Peloponnesian nor the Attic League), they make good on their veiled threat uttered at the conference at Corinth (1.28.3) and turn to Athens for help. Their move activates the Corinthians' diplomacy: they too send an embassy to Athens, wishing to prevent Athens from hindering them to settle the war according to their wishes (1.31.3).

This, of course, gives the escalation screw another turn in so far as for the first time a power of the third level (the leading power of one of the two Greek Leagues) is being directly invoked. Thucydides marks this critical junction by another *fermata*. In accordance with the greater risk entailed here, he no longer reports the negotiations

merely in indirect discourse as he did when the Corcyreans lodged their protest at Corinth (1.28), but now presents an antilogy of the two parties' speeches before the Athenian Assembly. This is a good example of his narrative concept: speeches can grow out of the narrative and in a way even are an integral part of it by accenting a pause in the action sequence before a new step occurs. Or, in other words, the antilogy of the two speeches, advocating opposing courses of action, here occurs at a point in the historical development where the pendulum may swing to either side, speeding up the movement toward the great war or delaying (and perhaps even preventing) it. The decision is up to the Athenian Assembly.

Since in the present volume the relation of speeches and narrative is the subject of a special chapter,¹ I shall deal here with speeches mainly under the viewpoint of the narrative. The Corcyrean speakers (1.32.1–1.36.3) attribute their earlier unaffiliated status to a mistake in thinking (δόξης . . . ἀμαρτία, 1.32.5), but are quick to point out that their request for an alliance in itself carries an invaluable advantage for Athens: it consists in the large navy they can bring into the alliance (as a matter of fact, the largest navy in Greece after the Athenians' own, ναυτικόν τε κεκτήμεθα πλὴν τοῦ παρ' ὑμῖν πλεῖστον, 1.33.1). Advantage for Athens, they confidently explain, has to be the most important collateral aspect inherent in their request for help, μάλιστα . . . ὥς καὶ ξύμφορα δέονται (1.32.1).

What this means in narratological terms is that the author imposes a new perspective on the events he has so far recorded. In order to attain their goal, the Corcyreans endeavor to put themselves in the shoes of the Athenians (in a way, this is an indirect focalization), to make the idea of an alliance palatable to them. Earlier, the participants in the regional conflict might under their own perspective have looked beyond their spheres toward Athens and Sparta (1.28.1; 1.28.3). Now, Athens' judgment of the situation is being invoked and involved. The question, of course, will be whether the Athenians will recognize their own interest in the Corcyreans' (or not perhaps rather in the Corinthians') suggestions. At any rate, by reporting how the speakers address the Athenian view, Thucydides here exposes his reader to a new angle of looking at what the reader has learned so far. The narrative technique of achieving higher complexity and making it transparent by introducing a new dimension may be illustrated

¹ Cf. Morrison, this vol.

by comparing Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*. In the sequence of the first three novels (*Justine—Balthazar—Mountolive*) the second throws new light on the events narrated in the first, and the third volume does the same again. In the 1957 prefatory note to *Balthazar*, Durrell expresses regret that modern literature offers no unities. Therefore he uses three overlapping spatial levels (and, borrowing from relativity theory, offers a temporary sequence in the fourth volume, *Clea*).

By introducing Athenian thinking on the preceding development as a new dimension, Thucydides not only broadens his reader's horizon: the higher complexity also contributes a unifying effect, not only by affording the reader to view in synopsis a larger number of focalizations, but also by allowing to bring the other track of the two-track development addressed earlier (i.e., Sparta's fear of Athens' growing power) into focus, at least obliquely. Thucydides has the Corcyreans, when elaborating on the advantage they claim to bring into the prospective alliance, allude to that "truest cause" of the war which he had said (1.23.6) was least spoken of openly: "But as to the war in which we certainly would be useful, if someone among you believes it will not occur, he is mistaken in his judgment and does not perceive that the Spartans, *motivated by fear of you*, tend toward war, and that the Corinthians, who have influence with them, are both hostile to you and attempt to seize us first now, as a step on their way to attacking you" etc. (1.33.3). The reader will consider Athens' response also in terms of the Athenian perspective on Sparta as head of the Peloponnesian League.

Apart from dismissing potential legal problems (Athenian acceptance of the Corcyrean request would not violate the peace treaty of 446; a colony should be on an equal footing with the mother city, the colonists ought not be her slaves [δοῦλοι, 1.34.1]; the Corinthians' refusal [cf. 1.28.1–5] to settle matters by arbitration), the Corcyreans endeavor to remove any doubts from the Athenians' minds that they will now be considering not so much about Corcyra but about *Athens herself*, οὐ περὶ τῆς Κερκύρας νῦν τὸ πλεόν ἢ καὶ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν, and that the great war is "coming and almost here", τὸν μέλλοντα καὶ ὅσον οὐ παρόντα πόλεμον (1.36.1). Accordingly, they operate with tangible advantages that they are able to offer Athens for the war: their island's location on the route to and from Italy and Sicily (allowing the cutting off of supplies for the Peloponnesians from there and affording the Athenians open sailing out west); an

alliance with the second largest fleet in Greece, which would guarantee Athens' superiority over Corinth, the third naval power, whereas in case of a Corcyrean defeat at the hands of Corinth Athens would have to face two hostile navies (1.36.2–3). By superimposing the perspective of Athens' presumed foreign-policy concerns, Thucydides has widened his preceding narrative of regional events into the prelude to the Peloponnesian War. Worth noting is not only his acuity in logically stringing together what to another viewer might seem to be discrete events, but also his ability to evoke an atmosphere of rising tension.

Following the Corcyreans' speech, which is so visibly oriented by the viewpoint of advantage (τὸ ξυμφέρον, as Thucydides likes to call it, availing himself of contemporary sophistic usage), the Corinthians (1.37.1–1.43.4) may be expected to find themselves in a difficult position when basing their argument for Athenian non-intervention on justice (τὸ δίκαιον, in contemporary language), although, of course, they too have their eyes on their advantage, i.e., to have their hands free in their war with Corcyra (1.31.3).

However, before coming to this point, they feel they have to discredit the Corcyreans. They charge the Corcyreans with the accusation that their unallied status does not derive from their alleged moderation (see the Corcyreans' claim of σωφροσύνη at 1.32.4), but from a desire to have no witnesses for the crimes they commit in their isolated geographical area (1.37.2–4; this is hardly a verifiable assertion); they could have displayed moral excellence by granting and accepting legal procedure (1.37.5. The reader who recalls the Corcyreans' proposals of international arbitration at 1.28.2 and 1.28.5 will begin to look with distrust on the Corinthians' argumentation). When they later, at 1.39.1–2, grudgingly admit that the Corcyreans in the case at hand did suggest arbitration, they wipe away the Corcyreans' proposal as having been made *post factum*, where "reality" is represented by the underlying Corinthian claim of ownership: arbitration, they say, would have been in order *before* the Corcyreans laid siege to Epidamnus (1.39.2); they suppress the fact that the siege was undertaken in reaction to the Corinthians placing settlers and a garrison in the city. The Corinthians further assert that, when Epidamnus ("which is ours", ἡμετέραν οὔσαν) was being harmed, the Corcyreans "laid no claim to it" (οὐ προσεποιούντο), but "when we came to help they seized it by force and are still holding it" (1.38.5). Rightly Classen-Steup point out here that in truth the Corcyreans

only refused to support the *dēmos* of Epidamnus, so that to say “they laid no claim to it” is misleading. And the Corinthians’ claim that Epidamnus “is ours” is even more specious since Thucydides in the narrative has stated that it was the Corcyreans who colonized the city (though with a founder from Corinth, 1.24.2). Their claim that Corcyra alone of their colonies has shown disrespect whereas the others have shown love is not only “impossible now to prove or disprove”,² but specious because the alleged love of the other colonies for their mother city cannot count as sufficient proof to build a case for *justifying* Corinthian intervention in Epidamnus.

It has been necessary to go into some of the Corinthians’ opening arguments not only to show the speakers’ lack of veracity and the speciousness of their reasoning. Above all, the example provided by these chapters is apt to reveal the unity of speech narrative and narrative of events in the historian’s work. Only both together add up to the full picture. Perhaps one should also say that these chapters demonstrate how the interpreter of a speech may for a correct reading depend on the factual narrative (which, after all, the historian provides in his own name). The present case is especially illuminating since the Corinthians display the limited perspective of people dominated by emotion (their hatred for Corcyra had already been stated by Thucydides at 1.25.3; complaints resulting from their hurt pride and prestige were listed in the following sentences and surface again in the speech itself at 1.38.2 and 1.38.5). Apart from the fact that the reader can verify Corinthian untruths from the preceding narrative, another feature of Thucydides’ literary technique has also come to light here: almost like a dramatist, he can communicate with his reader over the heads of his speaking characters.

In the body of their speech (1.40.2–1.43.4) the Corinthians argue (again speciously) that the treaty of 446 would not allow either side to accept a new ally who came with the intent of harming the other side; that accepting Corcyra would mean that Athens break the treaty and become Corinth’s enemy; that Athens is morally obliged to requite Corinth’s one-time votes in favor of not interfering with Athens’ dealings with Samos and Aigina. They claim to have enough rightful reasons (*δικαιώματα* . . . *ικανά*, 1.41.1) on their side according to Greek laws, and their listeners should not dismiss the argu-

² Hornblower, *Comm. ad* 1.38.3.

ments of right (δίκαια) in favor of those of advantage (ξύμφορα, 1.42.1). The question of a future war [in which the advantages mentioned by their opponents would materialize and count], they maintain, lies still in the dark, and it is not worthwhile, with an eye on this, to incur the Corinthians' clear enmity now. On the contrary, by favoring the Corinthian side, Athens may contribute to lessening existing tensions (so because of the Megarians) between herself and Corinth.

Clearly, the Athenians find themselves (as does the reader) at what I like to call a "hinge of history", and their projection of the future (i.e., the determination whether war is certain or avoidable) will guide their course of action (with the question still open whether their decision results in what they actually wish). The importance of the Athenian decision for Thucydides' subject matter, the great war, explains and justifies the greater literary expenditure of two speeches in direct discourse as compared with his report on the first lower level conference (the one at Corinth) which he presented in indirect discourse.

And the critical character of the decision is further enhanced by the fact that the Athenians themselves show a degree of indecision: they have to go through two assemblies on consecutive days to make up their minds. Why would Thucydides at all report on the first assembly whose outcome is, as far as the factual course of history is concerned, insignificant since its result is overthrown in the next meeting? The reason is likely to be the same one we found when asking why he at all reported on the unsuccessful conference at Corinth: there are two outcomes possible, and either would lead to a different course of history. In the present case, hindsight will show the futility of what may look like smart human planning; so the dismissed, pro-Corinthian, alternative gains the value of, at the least, a delay en route to the war—a missed opportunity. One must not forget that the Corinthians' pressing goal is to keep the Athenians from interfering in their ongoing war with Corcyra (1.31.3).

In view of the crisis point reached here, it is worth looking at Thucydides' detailed description. "When the Athenians had listened to both sides, they—even twice there was held an assembly—in the earlier one *nonetheless* accepted the arguments of the Corinthians, but on the following day they changed their minds, with the result not to conclude a full alliance (ξυμμαχίαν) with the Corcyreans . . . but they concluded a defensive alliance (ἐπιμαχίαν) . . ." (1.44.1).

The two words I have printed in italics contain a comment by the writer. “*Even twice*” (καὶ δῖς) may point to something unexpected or unusual. Whereas Gomme and Hornblower (“They held two assemblies”) do not comment on καί, Classen-Steup, comparing 3.87.2 (in its earlier onslaught, the plague stayed around “even two years”, καὶ δύο ἔτη), view καὶ δῖς as signifying the serious character of the deliberations (*den Ernst der Beratung zu bezeichnen*). Perhaps one might think less of the difficulty the Athenians had in making up their minds, than of the author’s astonishment that, in view of the preceding speeches as well as of the Athenians’ final decision (and its underlying reasoning), it took them two days and two assemblies to reach it. (Hanson’s opinion, reported by Hornblower *ad locum*, that the kind of decree discussed here required two sessions, is hardly supported by the text: the circumstance that “*even two*” assemblies took place, seems to exclude that a second assembly was obligatory.)

The second word I italicized, “*nonetheless*” (οὐχ ἥσσον), is not as unambiguous as my translation indicates. If one accepts Liddell and Scott’s “just as much” (or “not a whit less”, *s.v.*, III), one has to understand that on the first day the Athenians accepted the arguments of the Corinthians “just as much” (as) or “not a whit less” (scil., than those of the Corcyreans; add ἡ τῶν Κερκυραίων to Thucydides’ text),—which makes little sense in view of the opposing arguments presented in the speeches of the two sides; for how can an assembly accept “A” just as much as “not-A”? (And a split decision would not square with the next day’s *change* of mind). Classen-Steup, insisting on a *litotes*, render by “especially” (*ganz besonders*), pointing as parallels to passages such as 1.8.1, 2.52.1, and others. This allows one to think of a pro-Corinthian majority on the first day and makes a good contrast with the second day’s assembly, in which the Athenians “changed their minds”.

On the other hand, the meaning “nonetheless” (*nihilominus*),³ assumed

³ Since the meaning “nonetheless” for οὐχ ἥσσον is relatively rare, I give the following example from Hegesandros (quoted by Athenaeus, 8.334f.) about fish migrating up the Olynthiac river to Lake Bolbe: though the river is here hardly ankle-deep, *nonetheless* (οὐχ ἥσσον) the fish come in such great quantity, that the inhabitants of the area have all the fish they need.

Closely related is the use of οὐδὲν ἥσσον. In Plato’s *Phaedo*, Simmias almost remembers and is almost convinced by Cebes’ explanation of the Theory of Recollection, but says to Socrates: “However, I would *nonetheless* like to hear now how *you* proceeded to explain it”, οὐδὲν μὲντ’ ἄν ἤττον ἀκούοιμι νῦν πῇ σὺ ἐπεχείρησας λέγειν, 73b9–73b10.

in my translation, would provide an alternative that goes well with a degree of astonishment communicated by the narrator about the fact that the Athenians needed “even” two assemblies for their anti-Corinthian and seemingly pro-Corcyrean decision. After all, he had made it clear by several means, especially by contradictions between the Corinthians’ presentation and his own narrative, that the Corinthians’ argumentation concerning Corcyra was not trustworthy. So it would not seem unreasonable to expect that the Athenians might already in their first assembly have expressed distrust in matters of their own relationship with Corinth, especially about the prospect dangled before them that a rejection of Corcyra’s request could result in a reduction of existing tensions between Corinth and Athens, and that the threat of war between them was not imminent (1.42.2). However, on the first day (whether it came to a formal decree or not) a majority of Athenians apparently saw their interests better taken care of by the prospect of less strained relations with Corinth. The reader may be sure that such was the first day’s motivation, because, even after their change of mind, the second decision was predicated upon avoidance of a military conflict with Corinth (though hindsight will show that the risk was raised). The meaning “nonetheless”, then, would emphasize the fact, surprising to the narrator, that “in spite of the vagueness of the pro-Corinthian prospect” and, also (a point I shall come back to below), “in spite of the manifest advantages of the pro-Corcyrean alternative” the Athenians first were inclined to favor Corinth.

This takes us to the qualified Athenian decision to enter upon an alliance with Corcyra, but to make this a defensive one. A full alliance would have obliged Athens to cooperate in a Corcyrean attack on Corinth—a clear breach of the 446 peace treaty between Athens and the Peloponnesian League—whereas the defensive alliance required either party only to help the other in case of an attack on Corcyra or on Athens (or either one’s allies), 1.44.1. The reasoning behind this limited commitment is that the Athenians want to have their cake and eat it, viz. seize their strategic advantage without triggering hostilities with Corinth: “For to them the war with the Peloponnesians seemed to come anyway, and they did not want to give up Corcyra, with its huge fleet, to the Corinthians, but as much as possible make them crush each other, in order that they themselves (scil., the Athenians) might, if it should become necessary, enter the war against the Corinthians and the other naval powers when those would be

in a weakened condition" (1.44.2; "the other" pro-Corinthian naval powers are mainly the allies of Corinth mentioned earlier, at 1.27.2, as Classen-Steup rightly state).

Thus the Corcyrean request is accepted not exactly for the hands-on benefit the Corcyreans suggested ("allied with us, you can fight the Corinthians with your fleet enlarged by ours", 1.36.3; cf. 1.33.2), but with the fiendish design to let the new allies continue to suffer at the hands of Corinth and her allies in a war of mutual attrition—a war that, while allowing Corcyra not much more than survival in its altercation with Corinth, above all would guarantee Athens a relative bystander's situation so she could look on and preserve her status as the strongest maritime power without involving herself in a major naval conflict. The Athenians' own understanding of their strategic advantage turns out to be very different from what the Corcyreans thought it would be when they, at the time of their request for an alliance, tried to put themselves in the shoes of the Athenians in order to secure for themselves a positive Athenian reaction.

So Thucydides has added still another perspective, which throws new light from still another viewing angle on the situation as he has so far presented it to his reader. (In terms of Durrell's sequence, he has now superimposed the dimension of *Mountolive* in addition to that of *Balthazar*). The question arises how the clever Athenians will fare in this deadly chess game of foreseeing and forecasting one's opponents' reactions. One thing can already be said with certainty: Thucydides' concept of history is as much concerned with the workings of the human mind in uncertain circumstances as with the facts of down-to-earth warfare presented in the narrative sections.

An additional point should be observed here. Athens not only wishes, under the (meanwhile accepted) premise that the great war will be coming anyway, to preserve her superiority at sea unimpaired. She also has an eye on her imperialistic interests. The second major advantage the Corcyreans claim to offer (1.36.2) is their favorable geographical location for traffic to and from Italy and Sicily (still in our own day the ferry from Brindisi crosses over to Corfu [Corcyra]), from where another ferry takes the traveler to Igoumenitsa on the coast of ancient Epirus). This advantage is expressly listed as an additional reason (ἄμα δέ, 1.44.3) for Athens' pro-Corcyrean decision. Here the reader remembers that the Corcyreans have characterized their location on the one hand as good for interdicting supplies

going from Italy and Sicily to the Peloponnesians and, on the other hand, as good for sailing from Greece over to Sicily and Italy. That the latter alternative is aimed at the Athenians (though they are not mentioned by name as are the Peloponnesians but only by “from here”, ἐνθένδε), is enhanced by the preceding οἰκειοῦταί τε καὶ πολεμοῦνται (1.36.1).

With the end of the complex Chapter 1.44, the critical decision relating to escalation level II has been taken, and the point has come where the multifaceted buildup of planning and preparation is to meet the test of reality. The unity of Thucydidean composition comes into full view in the reader’s experience that every following move of the parties involved is informed (and is to be measured) by the intellectual network of clues and relations laid out by the author before.

Athens sends ten ships to Corcyra with orders to fight with the Corinthians only in case of an attack on Corcyra or its territories. “But they gave these orders for the sake of not breaking the peace treaty” [of 446, with the Peloponnesian League]: προεῖπον δὲ ταῦτα τοῦ μὴ λύειν ἔνεκα τὰς σπονδὰς (1.45.3). Obviously, this is a critical issue for the reader to watch in the coming events, if the author repeats it so briefly after, in 1.44.1, detailing Athenian reasoning on this point.

The Corinthians, their two-year preparations completed, sail out on their fourth expedition against Corcyra with a fleet of 150 ships (twice as many as last time), of which ninety are their own. The fleet anchors at the promontory of Cheimerion, north of Actium, and the army pitches camp there. Though he has mentioned the place before (1.30.3) in the context of a Corinthian guard force that was stationed there, Thucydides only now (1.46.4) provides a detailed description of the geography. The reason is, of course, to give his reader a better picture in time for the imminent naval operations. He uses a similar procedure elsewhere. We learn about how the Athenian emissaries in Sicily were duped only at the point when the expedition corps has arrived and finds out that the promised money is not there (6.46.1–5).

The Corcyreans man 110 ships which camp on one of the Sybota islands. With them are the ten Athenian ships. Their foot soldiers are at Cape Leucimne on Corcyra. On the day of fighting, their battle order consists of three segments, with the Athenians added to their right wing segment. The Corinthians give their right wing to

the Megarian and Ambraciot ships, have the other allies occupy the middle, and themselves take the left wing, opposite the Corcyrean right wing and the Athenians.

The battle itself is noteworthy for its antiquated way of fighting, more like a land battle on the decks of interlocking ships, with none of the later battle technique with its run-through maneuvers (διέκπλοι, 1.49.3). The Athenian ships show themselves wherever the Corcyreans are in trouble, and by merely turning up scare the enemy; but their commanders do not join the battle, “worrying about the orders of the Athenians”, δεδιότες οἱ στρατηγοὶ τὴν πρόρρησιν τῶν Ἀθηναίων (1.49.4). So far, then, things run according to plan for the Athenians. Why mention this non-event (and for the *third* time cite the Athenian precautionary clausula!), if not—as in tragedy—to alert the reader to the next step, which will be another trigger along the road to the great catastrophe, i.e., the war?

First, twenty ships of the Corcyrean left wing defeat the right wing of the Corinthian formation (where the Megarian and Ambraciot ships are) and, upon scattering and driving their opponents ashore, destroy and plunder their tents.

Next, the Corcyreans, having anyway started out with only 120 ships against their enemies’ 150, now—we observe the approaching climax—lack the help of the twenty that have gone ashore in pursuit of the enemy’s right wing. And the Corinthians, on their left wing (here they do the fighting themselves, αὐτοί, 1.49.6), are greatly victorious over the Corcyrean right wing. The critical phase is quickly approaching, and the narrator, as is his practice in such situations,⁴ turns to greater detail: “But the Athenians, seeing the Corcyreans under pressure, came to help already more openly, *though at first holding back so as not to attack anyone*” (1.49.7). Thucydides intersperses a tiny pause in the action before fixing the moment that will shatter the unstable Athenian construct of “peace with advantage”.

“But when the rout was coming about clearly, and the Corinthians were pressing on, at that point now everybody clung to fighting and no distinction was any longer made, but things came to such a degree of emergency that Corinthians and Athenians attacked each other” (1.49.7).

⁴ On Thucydides’ use of literary detail in depicting crisis situations, see especially Stahl (2003) Chapter 10, on *Literary Detail and Historical Crisis Point*.

What follows is basically aftermath. The naval battle of Sybota (433 BC) was so far the greatest among Greeks (150+120+10 ships). Upon securing their dead and their wrecked ships, the Corinthians sail out again and are met by the Corcyreans (together with the Athenians), “who were in fear they might try to land on their soil” (1.50.4). But the appearance on the horizon of twenty ships makes the Corinthians, who take them to be the advance group of a larger force, withdraw. These twenty ships were sent out later by the Athenians who feared “precisely what happened” (ὅπερ ἐγένετο, 1.50.5), that the Corcyreans might be defeated, and that the ten ships sent out earlier might not be enough to help them.

Does the Athenian intervention in the battle constitute the *casus belli* that Athens wanted to avoid? The Corinthians *in loco* are afraid it does (but not so the Athenians!). When on the next day the Corcyreans with their still maneuverable ships, together with the thirty Athenian, sail over to Sybota, the Corinthians take up fighting order opposite them but do not move forward. With many prisoners aboard and no chance of repairing their ships in the uninhabited area, they are intent on making it home, but are “afraid that the Athenians, believing the treaty is broken (νομίσαντες λελύσθαι τὰς σπονδὰς) because they got into close combat, will not let them sail off” (1.52.3).

So they put a few men into a tiny boat and send them over “without a herald’s staff”, ἄνευ κηρυκείου (1.53.1) as a sign that, in their opinion, Athens and Corinth are *not* in a state of war; but—at this critical junction the historian again introduces direct discourse—they for their part accuse the Athenians of having committed an act of injustice by starting war and breaking the peace treaty: ἀδικεῖτε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, πολέμου ἄρχοντες καὶ σπονδὰς λύοντες. A nice try (and another fascinating Thucydidean detail): thinking the other side may sense a treaty violation, one hurries to put the guilt in their shoes.

The men in the tiny boat even proffer something like “if you won’t let us sail against Corcyra or elsewhere, and if you break the treaty, seize us here first”. The Corcyreans who hear this would like nothing more than to do exactly that and kill the men, but the Athenians insist: “We neither start war . . . nor do we break the treaty”: the Corinthians are assured of free sailing except against Corcyra.

So far the local dispute in the battle area over (potential or actual) peace treaty violations. It is followed by some partly ridiculous claims.

Before leaving for home, the Corinthians set up a trophy as a sign of their victory over the Corcyrean fleet (they sank about seventy ships, salvaged most shipwrecks and bodies, and are holding more than 1,000 prisoners). The Corcyreans set up a trophy for having destroyed about 30 enemy ships, for having (after the Athenians' arrival; 1.54.2) picked up the wrecked ships and bodies in their own area, and because the Corinthians withdrew when the twenty fresh Athenian ships arrived and, also, did not accept battle on the next morning.

"So either side claimed victory", οὕτω μὲν ἑκάτεροι νικᾶν ἡξίουσιν (1.55.1)—a rather ironic sentence, in view of its contradictory content. One thing seems to have worked out: the Athenian wish to weaken both sides in mutual attrition (1.44.2). "So, on the one hand (μὲν), Corcyra survived in its war with the Corinthians, and the ships of the Athenians withdrew from there". This, too, could be read as a success of the Athenian "peace with advantage" formula (1.44.2), were it not for the fact that, "on the other hand (δὲ), this became in the Corinthians' eyes *the first accusation* against the Athenians for the war, because they had fought with them at sea on the side of the Corcyreans during the time of the peace treaty" (1.55.2).

The word αἰτία, "accusation" (it also contains nuances translatable by "occasion" and "subjective reason"), rounds out the first of the two prewar sections, i.e., the one we have been dealing with here. Thucydides returns to the distinction he made at 1.23.5 and 1.23.6 between the truest (but at the time least mentioned) cause of the war (i.e., Sparta's fear of Athens' growing power) and the openly pronounced "accusations" (αἱ . . . ἐξ τὸ φανερόν λεγόμεναι αἰτίαι). The resumption of the reference term ("the first accusation") provides unambiguous closure to the first of the two opening sections. But it also indicates that the Athenian plan of a limited engagement has failed: the clash in the battle of Sybota does constitute, for the other party, a peace treaty violation and, so, amounts to a first step to "the" war (1.55.2) that is the historians' chosen subject matter.

In view of the limited space available for the present chapter, the section on Corcyra may suffice as my first specimen illustrating the unity of Thucydidean literary design which comprises both narrative and speeches as integral parts. A few words, however, are necessary to point out what lies ahead. The Corinthians plan revenge, and Athens tries to anticipate and prevent acts flowing from their hostility. The next bone of contention between them is the city of

Poteidaia on Chalkidice. The city is a tributary ally of Athens, but its inhabitants are Corinthian colonists. A third major player in the area is the Macedonian King Perdikkas, so that here is another situation waiting to flare up. When Poteidaia defects from the Athenian League, Athens lays siege to the city: the second action sequence, making up the second prewar section (1.56.1–1.66), is complete. “For the Athenians and Peloponnesians these accusations (αἰτίαι) against each other had occurred beforehand” (i.e., before the outbreak of the war, 1.66): the Athenian siege of Poteidaia and the Corinthian instigation of Poteidaia’s defection from Athens.

When the Corinthians now turn to Sparta, the other superpower is being involved and, so, escalation level III has been reached. Sparta, the head of the Peloponnesian League, will, though listening to the accusations raised by members of the League, above all have to decide for herself whether or not the *casus belli* has come to pass. According to the utmost importance of the imminent decision (here is another hinge of history), Thucydides reports on the positions laid out before the Spartan Assembly no longer in indirect discourse (as in the case of the unsuccessful conference at Corinth) or by means of merely two speeches (as when the Athenian Assembly deliberated on support of either Corinth or Corcyra), but in a tetralogy⁵ of speeches given by Corinthians, Athenians, the Spartan King Archidamos, and the Spartan ephor Sthenelaidas: the second and third warning against going to war, the first and fourth fervently advocating war. The crescendo expressed alone by the number of speeches at each crisis point (points where the tracks for the future course of events may be set either way) is in itself testimony to the thought Thucydides bestows upon organizing his narrative in a coherent and consistent presentation of historical processes. (Nevertheless, the superb unity of the design has more than once been misunderstood as containing dissonant pieces conceived at different times of writing).

But when Sparta indeed decides that Athens has broken the peace treaty, it is not that the accusations of the League members have tipped the scales, but that the long hidden undercurrent has surfaced. The reader recalls that Thucydides announced he would first

⁵ For a coherent reading of the four speeches (which have often been taken to lack unity of composition), see Stahl (2003) 41–55.

give a history of the disputes and accusations that led up to the war, but that the “truest cause” was Sparta’s fear of Athens’ growing power (1.23.5–1.23.6). Accordingly, he follows the history of the trigger events and the accompanying conferences with another history: that of the growth of Athenian power over the preceding fifty or so years (the so-called *Pentekontaetia*, 1.89.1–1.117.3). Logically speaking, this section (often somewhat misleadingly labeled an “excursus”) provides the deeper reason (or “the truest cause”) of the Spartan decision, and therefore is, following mention of Sparta’s fear, appended and introduced by the logical particle “for” (γάρ, 1.89.1).⁶

II. *From War to (Uncertain) Peace*

Thucydides’ narrative more than once demonstrates how unforeseen effects of great historical importance originate from inconspicuous beginnings. Factors that at the time of their occurrence appear minor and unremarkable may trigger far-reaching developments or even redirect a course of events that so far has appeared bound for a clear and certain outcome. In tracking the details of such processes, the narrative exhibits more than merely a literary technique: it deals with the essential problem of the unpredictable and also, as the Athenians’ backfiring calculation toward Corcyra and Corinth has shown, with the difficulty incurred by human planning in the face of a complex political environment that often renders the field of action rationally impenetrable.

In the opening section I mentioned both the development that leads to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War and the counter-movement that results in the (intermediate) “Peace of Nicias”. In the limited space available here, at least the first segment of this counter-movement should receive detailed attention, whereas a summary must suffice for the rest.

In the spring of the year 424 BC the Athenians send out a fleet of forty ships under the generals Eurymedon and Sophocles (4.2.2). They are given a triple assignment:

⁶ On the logical function of the particle γάρ in similar contexts, see Stahl (2003) 2; 6; 11 n. 8; 181f.; 184.

- (A) Their main and most important destination is Sicily, where they are to join their advance detail of a few boats, which had been sent ahead in the preceding year under the third general of the campaign, Pythodoros, in the hope that their presence would bring about a faster end to the war in Sicily (3.115.5).
- (B) Along the way, they are to stop at Corcyra and provide military assistance to the democrats inside the city, because they are hard pressed by the exiled oligarchs, who have moved back from the mainland over to the island and have occupied a position on Mount Istone. (One of the most gruesome massacres of the whole war had taken place in the preceding year in Corcyra, committed by the democratic faction against the oligarchs, 3.80.1–3.81.5). There is considerable urgency to this part of their mission because the Peloponnesians have already sent out sixty ships to assist the oligarchs, and in the city there is a great famine (4.2.3).
- (C) In the third place, Demosthenes, a former general and now a private person, is at his request given permission to use the force “around the Peloponnese” (4.2.4). (After a disastrous campaign in Aitolia, the general did not dare to return home. Only an ensuing victory over Ambracia, which caused unspeakable sorrow to the small nation,⁷ allowed him to come back to Athens).⁸

I have outlined the expedition schedule in full because it reveals Athens’ priorities as well as the anticipated progress in the planned course of events. Goal (A) clearly ranks over goal (B), and (C) is more in the way of granting a former commander some minor undertaking(s) while passing along the Peloponnesian coastline. Demosthenes himself, it turns out, has a well-defined (but limited) objective in mind, with no inkling whatsoever that his enterprise will turn into the greatest military surprise for Greece in the whole war (4.40.1): about 120 Spartan elite troops (4.38.5) will be captured alive. Thucydides describes the impression on Greece of their surrender to Demosthenes (and to Cleon) as a negative counter-piece to their ancestors’ heroic deaths at Thermopylai where they were fighting against the invading Persians (4.36.3). And this is only the immediate (military) shock. The political ramifications for war and peace lie still further ahead.

⁷ See Stahl (2001) 92–95, on the sorrows of the Ambracian people.

⁸ Demosthenes is a rare figure in Thucydides insofar as he learns from his mistakes. However, the last application of his “learning” will also be his undoing. See Stahl (2003) 129–31; 139; 155 n. 46. On Demosthenes’ tactics, see Roisman (1993) *passim*.

When sailing off the Spartan coast (which for Thucydides includes the Messenians' territory on the West coast of the Peloponnese), the Athenian generals receive a report that the sixty Peloponnesian ships are *already* (ἤδη, 4.3.1) at Corcyra. The temporal particle emphasizes a serious risk: they may arrive too late to save the city. Accordingly, the generals press on to reach goal (B). "But Demosthenes" (ὁ δὲ Δημοσθένης) bids them *first* (πρῶτον) make a landing at Pylos and execute "what is necessary" there and only then continue the voyage to Corcyra. While the generals are still raising objections (it is a rare case that Thucydides reports on a conversation), "by chance" a storm arises and forces the fleet to land—at Pylos.

This account has been the object of an everlasting debate with Thucydidean scholars, among them Cornford, who in 1907 saw here a new principle introduced, *Chance* (Fortune, Τύχη, as a personified agent in history), which rendered the occupation of Pylos "THE MOST CASUAL THING IN THE WORLD"⁹ and Connor, who flatly states: "To a historian's eye the implausibilities in this account are obvious".¹⁰ I shall not join the debate here but analyze the account for its essential factors and see whether or not the author has achieved his usual high degree of narrative unity and consistency of thought.

Since the occurrence of storms is in antiquity—outside divine causation, of which Thucydides is not a believer—a matter of chance for humans, the information that this particular storm occurred *by chance*, κατὰ τύχην (4.3.1), must have accentual value and emphasize that the whole development, which was to culminate in the Peace of Nicias, at its outset depended on an incalculable factor that annulled human resistance against the development's inception.

Once on shore, Demosthenes demands that the place be fortified: this is the purpose (he says)¹¹ for which he has come along. And he states his reasons for choosing this place: it is rich in timber and

⁹ Cornford (1907) 88.

¹⁰ Connor (1984) 109.

¹¹ I accept the reading ξυνεπλεῦσαι at 4.3.2. I do not see a difficulty in the fact that Demosthenes only now reveals his plan and its details (we saw a similar technique used by Thucydides at 1.46.4 and at 6.46.1–5: why should he have described Demosthenes' plan earlier if Demosthenes himself revealed details only now when action was required?). To read ξυνέπλευσε, making this sentence Thucydides' own pronouncement, and then blaming him for delaying critical information, amounts to circular reasoning.

stones, naturally strong, uninhabited, and so is the surrounding area far and wide (4.3.2). The generals' response is rather sarcastic: there are many uninhabited hilltops in the Peloponnesus, if, by occupying them, he wants to waste the city's money.

But to Demosthenes this place seems different, "with a harbor close by, and the Messenians being originally at home here, and, by speaking the same (Doric) dialect as the Spartans, certainly able to do immense damage when setting out from here, and at the same time going to be reliable guardians of the place" (4.3.3). A lot of reasons ('and . . . and . . . and') indeed, among them one especially that has helped Demosthenes in an earlier campaign: the use of soldiers speaking the same dialect as the enemy for a surprise attack (cf. Δωρίδα . . . γλῶσσαν ἰέντας, 3.112.4). Obviously, Demosthenes' plan does *not* mean a waste of Athenian financial resources, but on the contrary he intends to save the city expenses by having the place, after fortification, held by the "reliable" Messenians (who are always hostile to the Spartans): after an initial expense, a self-sustaining thorn in the side of Sparta.

On the reader, one of Demosthenes' arguments especially is not lost as it is on the generals. This concerns the usefulness for Athenian interests of the Messenians who originally were at home in this area. For Demosthenes is a specialist on Messenian affairs (which the generals obviously are not). It was, as the reader knows, the Messenians of Naupactos (an important Athenian naval base on the north shore of the Corinthian Gulf) who persuaded Demosthenes to undertake his disastrous campaign against Aitolia (3.94.3), and it was at Messenian Naupactos that he chose to stay when he did not dare to return to Athens after his defeat (3.98.5). And when the Aitolians, under Spartan leadership, started a revenge campaign against Naupactos, it was Demosthenes who organized help by bringing a relief force from Acarnania on ships. He saved the city almost in the last minute (3.102.3–4). So the attentive reader of Book III is (unlike the generals) in a position to see that Demosthenes is well qualified to express the expectation that the Messenians will be reliable allies as future guardians of Pylos. Since in this chapter I cannot go into a detailed account of the later ramifications, I only point out here already that Thucydides will in his own name confirm Demosthenes' expectations about the Messenians, by himself *verbatim* repeating and, so, confirming, Demosthenes' words about the immense damage caused the Spartans by their homophonous enemies at Pylos (compare 4.3.3 and 4.41.2).

Demosthenes' limited objective will in the end indeed be achieved. It is what his enterprise engenders *beyond* his own goal that harbors the unforeseeable.

The generals won't listen to his reasons, but Demosthenes keeps talking (the imperfect tense ἔπειθε at 4.3.4 is durative in meaning): next he turns to the soldiers, later even to the trireme squadron commanders. Unsuccessful at every step, he in the end *keeps quiet* (ἡσύχαζε again is durative, i.e., he has given up on his plan), "until an impulse befell the soldiers themselves—they had leisure on their hands because of the impossibility of sailing—¹² to distribute themselves around the area and fortify the place" (4.3.4). Minute literary detail—always an indicator that a point of special interest to this author has been reached—is dedicated to the way the soldiers overcome the difficulties they now face: for lack of stoneworking iron tools, they pick stones as they come and fit them together; having no vessels for clay, they bend forward, clasp their hands together on their backs, and carry the clay in the hollow thus formed. "In sum, they pressed on in every way to beat the Spartans by having the most vulnerable spots finished before they would come to help" (4.4.3). The account reads like a "lesson" on the unpredictability of human nature: when asked to do the work, the soldiers decline, but later on *boredom* leads them to do without orders from their higher-ups (this is the meaning of αὐτοῖς τοῖς στρατιώταις at 4.4.1) what they refused to do earlier.

At this point it is worth taking a step back to look at the breath-taking scenario: the development that will ultimately lead to peace between the leading powers initially depends on the localized plan of a former general who is now a private man; though his plan is workable, it is nevertheless rejected at the outset by those in command; it is rejected again when a possibility for enacting it is offered by a storm-forced landing. When the plan seems to have expired, a whim of the commoners, born of boredom, gives it new life, leading to its realization.

Considering the importance ascribed by the historian to the recurrent characteristics of *human nature* (see, for instance, his bleak assessment at 3.82.2), its interaction here with *chance* is apt to illustrate

¹² No doubt Classen-Steup are right in placing the comma before (and not after) the words ὑπὸ ἀπλοίας, which are for the sake of emphasis placed in front of the μέχρι clause.

that uncertainty of human control over events which Thucydides has made into a leading category of his work.

There is room here to deal with the inconspicuous beginnings only of this second large-scale movement mentioned in my introduction, the one leading from war to peace. But I hope to have shown that it is especially these far-from-plan-conforming beginnings that are of so great interest to the historian. The synoptic unity of narrative design reveals a disjointed course of history. A few further accents of this narrative, which offers a total of five reversals of fortune, should at least be indicated.¹³

Within only six days the soldiers finish the landside parts and the “most necessary” (4.5.2; cf. 4.3.1) work. Then Demosthenes is left behind with five ships at his disposal, while the remaining (ca. 35) ships “hurry on” with their “voyage to Corcyra and Sicily” (4.5.2; in the same words the generals earlier tried to “hurry on to Corcyra” at 4.3.1), i.e., it appears that the pursuit of goals (A) and (B) is now reinstated.

But the Spartan army under King Agis, quickly reacting to the news, cuts its annual invasion of Attica short (an unexpected relief for Athens, resulting largely from Demosthenes’ enterprise) and as quickly as possible gathers near Pylos. The sixty Peloponnesian ships are called back from Corcyra to Pylos, and Demosthenes, too, sends out two of his five ships to call the Corcyra-bound Athenian fleet back to Pylos: goal (C) has unexpectedly overtaken the long-range planning of (B) and (A), or, in other words, the strategic tail is wagging the dog. The narrator’s reminder of the long-range goals (A) and (B), recently refocused and for now abandoned, serves to drive home the unexpected course of events.

Fearing the arrival of the Athenian fleet, the Spartans want to prevent it from finding a landing site, and, so, place a force of their elite troops on the island (Sphacteria) that lies in front of the only natural harbor in the area, just south of Pylos. (The island will later develop into a deadly trap for most of their men). Athenian naval intervention thus prevented, the Spartans see the probability (*κατὰ τὸ εἰκός*, 4.8.8) of easily conquering a flimsily built and sparsely manned fort.

¹³ For a review of the complete Pylos episode and its political ramifications, see Stahl (2003) 138–53.

Demosthenes, instead of having Messenians harass Spartan land, himself faces an unforeseen squeeze from land and sea, and designs (again plan meets counterplan) an emergency plan (helped by the chancy—ἔτυχον (4.9.1)—and timely arrival of some Messenian pirates): he places his weaker forces on the landside fortification, but himself with sixty hoplites *leaves* his fort's weakly constructed seaside wall (the Athenians *never expected* an attack from the sea, οὔτε γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἐλπίζοντές ποτε ναυσὶ κρατήσεσθαι οὐκ ἰσχυρὸν ἐτείχιζον, 4.9.3), and places himself directly on the waterfront to prevent the enemy from gaining a foothold on the shore. In his harangue, Thucydides has him tell the soldiers to be “unthinkingly optimistic” (ἀπερισκέπτως εὐελπῖς, 4.10.1) about the danger: a situation of necessity like this one does not allow “rational calculation” (λογισμόν, 4.10.1).

It is clear that for Demosthenes, on the limited level of his personal project, things have gone awfully awry, even if in the end (4.41.2) his regional goal will be achieved. This is an important point in the Thucydidean long-range view of event sequences. In Books VI and VII, the failure of Athens' Sicilian Expedition seems to confirm the well-founded warnings of general Nicias (and to refute the speculative projections of his colleague Alcibiades as well as of the blind Athenian *dēmos*). But the detail of the Thucydidean narrative repeatedly emphasizes that such a straight-line view of history is mistaken, for between the armada's departure from Athens and its final defeat in Sicily are a number of occasions where *chance* or *human nature* bring about an unforeseen, even unpredictable reversal, which each time amounts to a radical change in the course of the campaign.¹⁴ So Demosthenes' unexpected experience is consistent with the overall pattern resulting for the reader of the work.

And the same is true for the Spartans who against their expectation can neither take Demosthenes' fort from the landside nor carry out a successful attack from the sea. When they finally are sending for siege machines, the Athenian fleet arrives and—to summarize the large picture—manages to cut off the Spartan elite troops on the island and later on even takes many survivors prisoner. Sparta reacts with a peace offer, and twice Athens refuses, each time thinking to gain more while holding the prisoners as a pawn. And twice

¹⁴ For details on the reversals in the Sicilian Expedition, see Stahl (2003) Chapter 10.

Athens must see its advantage crumble, until she, too, finds peace an attractive option.

Clearly, the unforeseen outcome of operation (C) overshadows everything else. What then of (A) and (B)? It is a characteristic of Thucydides' narrative that he keeps reminding his reader of the original framework. For the original framework can supply the underlying measurement by which to gauge the disjointedness of the factual course of events. As Demosthenes' plan eventually (4.41.2)—after what kind of a detour!—leads to the consequences he had originally envisaged, so the Athenian generals (after the Spartan prisoners have been taken off from Pylos to Athens) do stop by at Corcyra on their way to Sicily (4.46.1) and execute assignment (B).

But the way in which the assignment is carried out again ruptures the preconceived mold. For the "military assistance", which the generals provide for the hard-pressed democrats inside the city, results in silent support for a treacherous scheme to kill all the oligarchs once they have been taken prisoner. Again Corcyra turns into a paradigm of an unbelievably cruel massacre, and Thucydides dedicates the most minute detail to describing by which means the men were put to death or tried to commit suicide, and how in the end the corpses were thrown crosswise (φορμηδόν, 4.48.4) on carts and disposed of outside the town. To the horror of the narrative contributes not in the least the fact that Eurymedon and Sophocles allow the massacre to happen because of their obvious desire not to let anyone else, while they themselves have to move on to Sicily and goal (A), earn the honor of delivering the prisoners alive to Athens (4.47.2).¹⁵

Again, the new perspective added here far exceeds the preconceived framework. The suffering, which lasts into the night (ἐπεγένετο γὰρ νύξ τῷ παθήματι, 4.48.3), is representative of a core aspect of Thucydides' work, which he lists in a programmatic passage (as mentioned earlier): in this war sufferings (παθήματα, 1.23.1) affected Greece as none in an equal time space, among them exile and *murder* (φόνος, 1.23.2), both in the war itself and *connected to inner strife*. The concluding remark about Corcyra that in this way the civil war ended, "for there was nothing left worth mentioning of the one party" (i.e.,

¹⁵ The fact that Thucydides openly adds to his report the generals' callous motive and their responsibility for the massacre is detrimental to attempts to attribute to him a pro-Athenian bias.

of the oligarchs, 4.48.5), raises the sorrows of outlying Corcyra to an overarching level of historical insight.

And goal (A)? The original schedule is being recalled when “the Athenians sailed off [scil., from Corcyra] to Sicily, *for which they had first set out*, and they fought the war together with the allies over there” (4.48.6). Here, too, an additional perspective is superimposing itself. When the three generals, after joining the general Sicilian peace agreement (brokered by the Syracusan statesman Hermocrates), return home to Athens, they are punished with exile or a fine for presumably having allowed themselves to be bribed over there, instead of bringing Sicily under Athenian control (!). Thucydides comments that the Athenians, influenced by their present string of good luck (τῇ παρούσῃ εὐτυχίᾳ, 4.65.4; i.e., ever since the Pylos victory), thought nothing should get in their way, whether they used sufficient or insufficient means for achieving their goal: “The cause was their unexpected success in the majority of undertakings, which gave them the strength of their expectation (4.65.4)”. So the Athenians, without realizing it in their flush of victory, display a behavior that for the historian is worth recording as one of his examples of human nature carried away by an irrational hope, which is founded on incalculable (παρὰ λόγον, 4.65.4) variables. His most famous and most striking example are the councilors of small Melos, who found their hope of overcoming mighty Athens on the workings of chance, τὰς τύχας (5.102).

III. *On Analyzing Thucydidean Narrative*

This chapter has offered its reader two opposing strands of event sequences, each interwoven with its own contradictory tendencies. Together they may serve as an introductory example of the multifaceted range and compositional consistency characteristic of Thucydidean narrative. The unforeseeable workings of *human nature* on the one hand and of *chance* on the other, as well as their complicating (and, of course, likewise unpredictable) interplay, constitute for Thucydides the subject matter of history, among whose vagaries he certainly counts also the emotionally charged and (often vainly) plotting “set pieces” of the great speeches. Hardly can one agree that in the latter ones Thucydides “tries to impose a kind of orderliness onto human affairs that is quite foreign to the dumb, intractable disor-

der of real life".¹⁶ The intractability of human affairs, both to the scheming mind (splendidly revealed especially in the speeches) and to man-in-action (predominantly depicted in the narrative), is a major point in the author's message, made transparent by the constant irruption of disorder into the schemes by which men seek to control their political environment.

In recent years, under the strong influence of Genette (most recently 1990), narratology has been applied also to the analysis of Greek historiography, notably by Hornblower (1994b) and Rood (1998a). Both scholars do pay tribute to the results of more traditional methodology:¹⁷ "Throughout earlier scholarship, narratology's concerns have been anticipated even though its terms have not been used".¹⁸

I have continued to analyze Thucydides' narrative in "jargon-free" terms here in the belief that the foregoing quotation may perhaps be taken with a grain of salt insofar as narratology concentrates on literary techniques and devices, while "earlier" approaches may be open to wider ranges of investigation. My own chapter here is more directed at the overall architecture of event sequences or units of composition, and it understands Thucydides' synoptic narrative as a vehicle of thought. Narratology, as introduced to Classics by de Jong's dissertation (co-directed by the narratologist M. Bal) on the *Iliad*, and defined by her as "the theory that deals with *the general* principles underlying narrative texts",¹⁹ represents a formalistic approach, which occasionally reminds its reader of an algebraical treatise. (The question may be left aside here whether "*the general* principles" may not introduce a *petitio principii* that *a priori* restricts access to the individuality of literary works and partakes in the contemporary illusion about an unlimited promise of mathematization). It is worth noting that de Jong considers "the questions of interpretation" as of "'local' interest": they "do not pertain to the interpretation of the *Iliad* as a whole".²⁰

De Jong may have become influential for Thucydidean scholarship especially because of her claim of unseating "the time-honored

¹⁶ Robinson (1985) 23.

¹⁷ Hornblower (1994b) 136: "... particularly notable, as straightforward *jargon-free* analysis, are two books by Stahl [1966] and de Romilly [1956]" (my italics and additions in brackets).

¹⁸ Rood (1998a) 17. See also n. 47 on the same page.

¹⁹ de Jong (2004) X (my italics).

²⁰ de Jong (2004) 222.

dogma of Homeric *objectivity*²¹ as well as because of her topic of *Narrators and Focalizers*. Both issues had surfaced in Thucydidean scholarship under the question of attributed motivation: how does Thucydides so often (pretend to) know what his characters in a given situation think, believe, fear, etc.? Hunter and Schneider, the former with a strong general conclusion (“... Thucydides was surely the least objective of historians”),²² by uttering their doubts about Thucydides’ objectivity, address (in the words of Hornblower) “some issues which narratologists have subsequently treated, though under newer and more technical names”.²³ Though Westlake had submitted some hard evidence critiquing such doubts about the historian’s depiction of motives (“Thucydides was neither dishonest nor guilty of indulging in mere guesswork”),²⁴ the tendency found further support from Hunter’s teacher, M. Lang, who investigated what she calls “participial motivation”.²⁵

One can easily see that narratology could become an instrument for investigating (and questioning) the historian’s veracity rather than a tool of neutral literary analysis. An example from the first major development discussed in this chapter may demonstrate my point: on the evening following the great battle of Sybota, there unex-

²¹ de Jong (2004) 221 (my italics).

²² V.J. Hunter (1973a) 184; see also Schneider (1974) 65f.; 136.

²³ Hornblower (1994b) 136. When Connor presented an emotionally engaged “post-modernist Thucydides”, he too relied heavily on Hunter (though with strong reservations), and he called Stahl (1966) a “stimulus” for the new development, (1977) 289. It should be noted that Stahl had not participated in impugning Thucydides’ objectivity. Upon citing Stahl’s later essay (1973) and its immanent interpretation, Connor (1977) 298, envisages in Thucydides “the fusion of an historian of *integrity* with an artist of profound intensity” (my italics). The contents of the chapter presented here still speak in favor of Thucydides’ integrity.

²⁴ Westlake (1989b) 220.

²⁵ Lang (1995) lists all cases where an individual’s motivation (fear, knowledge, perception, thought, hope, etc.) is announced by a participle such as “fearing”, “hoping”, etc. In the cases of Brasidas and Nicias, for example, she doubts “the likelihood of Thucydides having knowledge of either man’s motivation” (1995) 50, citing for Brasidas (a) that he was “Thucydides’ chief opponent” at Amphipolis and (b) that general Thucydides should have been (but was not) “able to read an opponent’s mind”. *Ad* 3.36.6 she remarks that “the idea of Cleon confiding his thoughts and plans to Thucydides seems absurd” (the absurdity apparently being based on Thucydides being “openly hostile while forthrightly censuring him”). It seems that Lang tends to put too much weight on direct personal contacts between Thucydides and the men whose motivations he describes (“... if Thucydides ... managed to meet with Nicias ...”), underestimating the possibilities provided by questioning eyewitnesses (cf. also Th. 1.22.3).

pectedly appear twenty Athenian ships on the horizon, “which the Athenians had sent out as helpers later than the ten, fearing (precisely what happened) that the Corcyreans might be defeated and that their ten ships would be too few to be of help” (1.50.5).

Hornblower,²⁶ much in the wake of Badian (1993), finds here “manipulation of narrative to suit a political thesis”. Using “narrative displacement” as resembling “what Bal and Genette call anachrony (or even achrony), i.e., chronological deviation”,²⁷ Hornblower chastises Thucydides for revealing only at this point in the narrative that the Athenians “had in fact trebled their commitment to Corcyra”.²⁸ Stating that “there are things we are not told”, Hornblower points to “the suppression of the third debate”, i.e., a debate that must have taken place at Athens before sending out the additional twenty ships, and he finds support here for Badian’s thesis: “Thucydides systematically understated Athenian aggressiveness in the runup to the war”.

However, the unpreoccupied reader will hardly see fit to verify here (and I am speaking only of the case under discussion) *Athenian aggressiveness* (or “the belligerency of their psychology”): the additional twenty ships were sent *as helpers* (βοηθοὺς) because the original ten ships might be (*too*) *few to help* (ὀλίγοι ἀμύνειν, 1.50.5), and the Athenians “*feared* (precisely what happened) that the Corcyreans might *be defeated*”. To ask, “were their [scil. the Athenians] actions likely to lead to a breach of the peace?” is a misleading question because those twenty ships did not amount to a change in the *defensive* character of the alliance (ἐπιμαχίαν, 1.44.1): the *intent* had not changed at all, only the concept of the means (i.e., the number of ships) necessary for preventing a (for Athens, unwelcome) serious defeat of Corcyra. Besides, the arrival of the additional twenty Athenian ships belongs (as shown earlier in this chapter) to the *aftermath* of the battle of Sybota: *it did not change anything in “the first accusation* the Corinthians raised against the Athenians” (αἰτία δὲ αὕτη πρώτη ἐγένετο τοῦ πολέμου

²⁶ For the quotations on this and the following pages (with one exception noted), see Hornblower (1994b) 140–43.

²⁷ Hornblower (1994b) 139.

²⁸ I have earlier pointed out three occasions (1.46.4; 4.3.2; 6.46.1–5) where the historian delays information, reserving it for the point where it influences the action. Hornblower himself (1994b) 143 n. 37, allows for the possibility that “displacing” material may give it “greater explanatory power”, but thinks the case of 1.50 goes beyond this.

τοῖς Κορινθίοις ἐς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους, 1.55.2), viz., “that they [scil., the Athenians] had at the side of the Corcyreans fought at sea with them [scil., the Corinthians] during the time of the peace treaty”.

The use of narratology and its jargon has led Hornblower to stating a “dislocation” (at 1.50.5) as well as to assuming a deliberate gap in Thucydides’ report (one of the historian’s alleged “malign anachronies”). “He thus leaves artfully undisturbed the impression, clearly stated at 1.44–45, that the behaviour of the Athenians had been scrupulous throughout, i.e. they had been anxious not to break the Thirty Years Peace”. The insinuation of bias, contained in leaving an earlier impression “artfully undisturbed” though the truth would require its complete revision, amounts to a serious (and not text-conforming) indictment in the eyes of this interpreter, who cannot find a change from a defensive to an aggressive psychology in the sending out of reinforcements for the same original purpose.

The modern scholar may occasionally postulate a completeness of data (e.g., demand a report on an inferred “third debate”) that lies outside the perspective(s) that the ancient historian has ascertained in establishing the train of events. It is still worth considering Meyer’s (1899) reminder that, as far as selection of material to be incorporated is concerned, “the historian has the right to insist that he be judged in this point no differently from an artist”.²⁹ As the previously given quotation from de Jong shows, narratology is perhaps too narrowly focused on questions of interpretation that are “‘of local’ interest”.³⁰

The interpretation of the prewar narrative offered in the present chapter has traced a unified composition that reveals a coherent and verifiable thought structure, so that one feels encouraged to challenge narratological analysis here with a counter-question: why should Thucydides have reported a third debate (“a debate totally unrecorded

²⁹ “Der Historiker hat das Recht zu fordern, daß er in diesem Punkte nicht anders beurtheilt wird als der Künstler”, E. Meyer (1899) 2.286.

³⁰ A similar fragmentation of literary contexts is found in other areas of our field. I only point to the jargon of “closure” as applied to the end of Vergil’s *Aeneid*: without regard for the overall composition (or plot line), some contemporary scholars use the term “closure” in construing a meaning of the final scene (where Aeneas kills Turnus) more in line with their *subjective* comfort level: see R.F. Thomas’ “*uneasiness* with Aeneas’ final act” (2001, 290, my emphasis; cf. 292), or Johnson’s (amplifying) assertion of “a *general dissatisfaction or uneasiness* with this famous closure” (Johnson [1976], 115, with apparent disdain “for those who are *content* to read the poem as an ethical melodrama”; emphasis added).

by Thucydides”)³¹ if it changed neither the import of the decision taken in the second assembly nor the ensuing course of events? From a literary perspective, such an account would have produced a fragmentation of the teleological economy and destroyed the consistency of the train of thought that Thucydides was entrusting to his narrative.

In case Hornblower is thinking of another set of speeches from the “totally unrecorded debate” the historian ought to have included, we have earlier explained location and function of the oral utterances as integral parts of the narrative: the crescendo in the presentation of the exchanges at three conferences—indirect discourse; two speeches; four speeches—marks an escalation of three crisis points in the historical development,—points of obvious interest to the author, where history could have taken a different turn but did not. Obviously, this condition is not applicable to the ‘missing’ debate. It would apply only if the inferred debate had brought about a reversal from a defensive to an aggressive policy—which to infer from the debate’s alleged suppression would amount to circular reasoning. Before censuring the ancient historian for “suppressing” evidence (“the suppression of the third debate”), one should in each case establish the overarching viewpoint (and the importance to it of the “missing link”) which he has deemed appropriate to guide his reader through multi-faceted historical reality.

It turns out that the jargon of narratology does not protect its practitioner against misreading a passage. As far as an alleged pro-Athenian bias is concerned, it should not be forgotten that Thucydides reveals the fiendish motive underlying the Athenian decision to accept the Corcyrean request for an alliance (1.44.2). One may also wish to recall from earlier in this chapter how Thucydides goes out of his way to make sure that his reader understands the responsibility of the Athenian generals (as well as their callous motive) for one of the worst massacres of the war (4.47.2). In the earlier massacre at Corcyra, too, the presence of an Athenian general for seven days (3.81.4) provides the gruesome background for the mass murder,—as does the (evenhandedly reported) cowardly withdrawal of the Spartan protective squadron (3.80.2–3.81.1). This evenhandedness in reporting on the culprits of human suffering can provide the reader with a valid clue to the substance of the universal (and nonpartisan)

³¹ Hornblower (1994b) 141.

message Thucydides hopes to transmit when, in his program chapter, he speaks of ascertaining “clarity both of what happened and of what at some time again will be—*according to the human condition*”³²—such and similar” (1.22.4).

This condition is consistently summoned by the author’s narrative art. There are the miscalculations of their advantage by both Corcyreans and Athenians on the road to war as well as, in the surprising development toward peace, the vagaries of chance and human nature, playing havoc with well laid out schedules. Such (and similar) event sequences offer varying aspects of the human condition. To the historian’s surveying eye, the variations are unified in the recurrent instability of the unforeseen that marks the crisis points so minutely detailed in his narrative concept.

³² On the comprehensive meaning of τὸ ἀνθρώπινον at 1.22.4 see Stahl (2003) 28–30.

THUCYDIDES' WORKSHOP OF HISTORY AND UTILITY OUTSIDE THE TEXT

Lisa Kallet

Introduction

Thucydides' famous sentence about the utility of his work to those future readers who "will want to examine carefully the clearness"¹ (1.22.4) is one of the most frequently discussed in the entire *History*. Justly so, since programmatic statements like this are precious pieces of evidence of the historian's approach to the very meaning and value of examining (and, implicitly, writing) his *History*. It has presented something of a puzzle because the notion of utility is accompanied by the reader's difficulty in grasping its meaning in combination with a view of human nature that has a fundamental bleakness to it, a pessimism about the capacity of mankind to extricate itself from an ultimately self-destructive cycle of power and war—in short, for one to extricate himself from humanness.²

Thucydides' statement on the utility of history does not, in my view, lend itself to any aim of improvement in one's world as a

¹ This odd translation is intended to reflect Thucydides' fondness for substantivizing neuter adjectives. For English something like "the clear truth" is preferable, and this will be used here. I thank Jack Kroll for his valuable comments on an earlier draft.

² His formulation is, "It shall be sufficient if those who wish to examine carefully the clear truth of past events and of those that will happen again in such or similar ways, because of the human condition, judge my work useful" (ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αὔθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίων ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἀρκούντως ἔξει). He elaborates on his views about human nature specifically as it is manifest during peace and war in his analysis of *stasis* and human nature (3.82). The bibliography on this sentence is enormous, much of it focused on whether the usefulness is of a purely intellectual kind and Thucydides' view of the future is pessimistic, or whether Thucydides believed that his history would could be useful, e.g., for statesmen of the future so as to avoid mistakes of the past. For the view of the historian's pessimism Stahl (1966) is fundamental (see pp. 14–19 for earlier views); in contrast see de Romilly (1958); (1965); see also, with references to earlier scholarship, Fornara (1983) 106; Nicolai (1995) 13–26; Bakker, this vol.

result of reading the work, nor training for a politician.³ This need not, however, mean that the utility envisioned lacks practical application, if we consider what he contemplates his readers doing with his text. His view of utility shows that the work is didactic, so in this respect the relationship between text and reader is that of teacher and student. Yet revelation of truth is neither the approach taken nor the goal, for the learning envisioned is not passive: as Harvey Yunis points out, “the didactic payoff offered by Thucydides’ text requires the reader to interpret the text critically”.⁴

Critical interpretation itself implies and requires the reader’s active engagement in working to glean meaning in the text by navigating an impressive array of narrative strategies in the *History*, not to mention the syntactical minefields Thucydides plants along the way. Famously, or infamously, Thucydides rarely tells his reader outright what to think. Rather, he uses techniques of, for example, comparison and contrast, intertextuality, and above all, an implicit method, compelling the reader to test, query, assess the role of factors like chance, leadership, form of political organization, a *polis*’ resources, all of which suggest that understanding the “clear truth” and its connection to utility are going to demand considerable effort.⁵ But to what end, so that readers can do what?

Scholarship on Thucydides as a historian to be read has tended to focus mostly on the engagement between reader and text within the space of the text.⁶ Clearly this is the essential first goal, the *sine qua non* of understanding history as Thucydides sees it. Yet as has always been clear, because it forms such a crucial part of Thucydides’

³ Cf. Polybius 1.1, in which training for a statesman is explicitly stated as a goal of history.

⁴ Yunis (2003) 200f. See also Iser’s comments ([1974] xii–xiii) on the actively engaged reader, which, though applied to fiction, involve similar activities of interactive learning and discovery about one’s own contemporary world through reading about another’s.

⁵ On Thucydides’ aim, through the use of speeches, of instructing the reader on the larger themes of his work (e.g., power, war, etc.) so as to reveal the patterns of history, see Yunis (2003). The argument that I shall develop here will suggest that the work does not so much “elucidate” (203) as provide models and test cases so that the reader can elucidate.

⁶ Connor (1984); Loraux (1986b); Edmunds (1993); Crane (1996); Rood (1998a); Moles (1999); Morrison (1999), (2000); Yunis (2003); Dewald (2005); Bakker, this vol. What readers Thucydides had in mind from the standpoint of ethnicity and temporal proximity is a different but important issue; see Lamb (1914) 19–22; Ridley (1981), both concluding that the *History* is written in such a way as to be comprehensible to and directed for the edification of Greeks generally at the very least.

statement on utility, understanding the text is merely the means to an end, namely, the understanding of events other than the Peloponnesian War that, in accordance with the human condition, "will happen in such or similar ways".⁷ The "end" of his *History*, then, understanding events outside his text, is an inextricable part of utility as well as of the particular methods he uses in his text to promote understanding.

"Helping the reader" is not a phrase commonly uttered in the same breath as the name Thucydides. Yet, I would like here to explore the possibility that Thucydides writes his *History* in such a way as to help would-be historians of the future, that he presents the "clear truth" about the Peloponnesian War for readers "to inspect carefully" (σκοπεῖν) as a first step to thinking outside, to becoming themselves practitioners of history.⁸ This entails identification of methods that, in addition to their fundamental role in understanding Thucydides' *History*, especially encourage application outside the text. If this is possible, recognition of the larger purpose to which such techniques are put should help considerably to illuminate the broader methodological and pedagogical function of the *History* and the reason for Thucydides' insistence on hard work on the reader's part. For Thucydides' "apprentices", regardless of how intelligent, would not necessarily have gained the necessary tools of research. If it can be demonstrated, however, that the historian is showing the reader *how* to engage in the critical inquiry and discovery that comprise

⁷ Rood (1998a) 286, e.g., comments that "Thucydides does not just try to make the past comprehensible by the way he tells his story, he also tries to make the future comprehensible by the broader categories to which he appeals". Thucydides' statement on utility, however, is considerably broader, since it encompasses any event, whether past, present, or future, that is not part of the story of the Peloponnesian War and its immediate causal and broader historical factors. Much of Rood's investigation steers the reader to this larger end, and complements much of this study. Crane (1996) 7 makes the point stressing the written aspect: "Thucydides . . . chose to write about things that would be useful (*ōphelima*) to later readers. For a topic to retain its future usefulness, however, it must lend itself to representation in written prose, because the text must stand by itself and, as much as possible, contain its own evidence".

⁸ Though Thucydides speaks of "examining carefully the clear truth of events of the past" as well as of "those that will have happened", it does not appear that he thinks "the clear truth" is observable for his own ancient history, for which he makes more qualified claims in 1.21.1; see Parmeggiani (2003) regarding the *Archaeology* as discovery about the past "without truth", with exhaustive citations of earlier bibliography. For the *History* as practice-based, see also Morrison (2000).

historical investigation, then that larger function of the work, how to think about other events, becomes more manifest.

Indeed one can go so far as to say that Thucydides' programmatic statement in 1.22.4 obliges him to enter into a contract with the reader to help not just to learn, but how to learn on other occasions.⁹ Moreover, since history does not, in his view, repeat itself—events will bear similarities—the reader must understand both points of contact and difference in order to attain historical understanding (and to explain it). In what follows I would like to consider some ways in which this historian belies his reputation as a writer who only as an exception provides guidance,¹⁰ and who hides his research behind a narrative posing as the seamless truth through the use of the slippery third person and absence of bringing source conflicts to the reader's attention.¹¹ In fact, he does let the reader into his "workshop". His *History* in this respect becomes a very practice-based text, not a mere intellectually abstruse display. A full examination, however, of Thucydides' methods of helping the reader especially to think outside the *History* would require a book. What follows is a preliminary, exploratory, and highly selective discussion of several categories that are suggestive of this ultimate goal.¹² Such categories are: 1) the realm of difficulty; 2) isolating particular and general, concrete and abstract; 3) comparison within the text; 4) the value of conjecturing and arguments from probability.¹³

⁹ Thucydides' training is essential, since history, for him, is above all the result of the mind's ability to construct a narrative about the world "by paying attention to the real data from the past that confront him" (Dewald [2006] 182); these are the basis for selection, omission, juxtapositions and comparisons. The "clear truth", then, is what is in the mind and perhaps only truly useful if written in a historical sequence. On the role of the intellect in Thucydides' view of the historical process, see Parry (1981) 102.

¹⁰ Rood, this volume.

¹¹ See Connor (1977a) for a discussion of the shift toward the view contested here; see also V.J. Hunter (1973a); Parry (1972); Marincola (2001) 73–76. Thucydides makes an explicit methodological statement about the problem of divergent viewpoints in 1.22.3, and in a rare passage he relates different opinions and then states his own in 8.87 (why the Persian satrap Tissaphernes did not bring the Phoenician fleet to Aspendos).

¹² The choices of what to focus on are admittedly arbitrary, but they are useful in this exploratory context in isolating some of the kinds of methodological strategies that Thucydides employs and in suggesting directions for further investigation.

¹³ I should note, though, that topics treated under a given category will often fit or overlap with other categories.

*Επιπόνως ηύρίσκετο: The Difficulty of History**The Methods Chapters*

The cardinal rule of thumb for a practicing historian, in Thucydides' view, is, first, to acknowledge the inherent difficulty of the art, and, second, therefore to be patient and painstaking.¹⁴ Thucydides makes an explicit statement about his own difficulties investigating the distant past ("I discovered ancient events to be such, though it was impossible to trust every piece of evidence as I went through them": τὰ μὲν οὖν παλαιὰ τοιαῦτα ἦν, χαλεπὰ ὄντα παντὶ ἐξῆς τεκμηρίῳ πιστεῦσαι)¹⁵ but insists that the results of his investigations and tests of evidence will be both superior to those of poets and logographers, and dealt with "sufficiently, given their antiquity" (ὥς παλαιὰ εἶναι ἀποχρόντως, 1.21.2). He contrasts his efforts and results also with those of "the many", whose "search for truth" proceeds "without effort", and who "turn themselves rather to what is ready at hand" (οὕτως ἀταλαίπωρος τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἐτοῖμα μᾶλλον τρέπονται, 1.20.3). Likewise, he notes that with speeches and events exact reproduction was "impossible" (χαλεπὸν τὴν ἀκριβείαν, 1.22.1), but he assures us that he has adopted as precise a method as possible (ὅσον δυνατόν ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἐκάστου ἐπεξελθὼν, 1.22.2). Even an accurate reconstruction of events, moreover, was difficult since even this "was discovered laboriously" (ἐπιπόνως . . . ηύρίσκετο, 1.22.3).¹⁶

¹⁴ On difficulty as part of historians' statements about their projects, see Marincola (1997) 148–58. He comments on Thucydides that the historian "limits himself to saying that it was a 'toilsome' task to discover the truth of conflicting accounts" (148) and also refers to 1.20.1, Thucydides' statement on the difficulty of determining the truth of earlier events (148, n. 91), but he does not address other allusions to difficulty peppering the work.

¹⁵ This is a difficult sentence because of the flexibility of definition and meaning of a number of key words. Χαλεπὸν can mean "difficult" or "impossible", τεκμήριον can mean "piece of evidence" or "inference", and the meaning of ἐξῆς is unclear. Does the sentence allude to his drawing inferences upon inferences in a logical order? This is close to what I think he is saying, since in the *Archaeology*, in general, he is demonstrating his command of inference-drawing.

¹⁶ The subject of the verb ηύρίσκετο, "discovered", is not entirely clear. Parry (1981) 103, in writing about Thucydides' statement about the difficulty of writing history, rightly notes that when speaking about the lack of agreement among sources for an event, Thucydides refers to "accounts that agree with each other", not with a reality, and continues, "The implication is that whatever is known about an event is largely a creation of language".

It is important to appreciate, as A.J. Woodman has noted with reference to 1.22.2, Thucydides' allusions to difficulty in writing about events, that the "emphasis is entirely upon the difficulty of the process rather than on the results achieved (the imperfect tense of ἡρρίσκετο contrasts strikingly with the perfect ἡρρίσθαι at 21.1)".¹⁷ It is precisely the historian's interest in the process by which he arrives at deductions, determines meaning, and engages in painstaking research, that is so suggestive of the aim of helping the reader to undertake this kind of research himself.

The Peisistratids in Books I and VI

Acceptance of difficulty as an essential prerequisite for both historian and would-be historian is also a point addressed specifically but with fuller training in how to proceed in one's research in Thucydides' discussions of the Peisistratid tyranny, as he shows how he himself goes about ferreting out the truth. Both patience and attention to precision in one's approach are demanded; indeed, as he makes clear, discovering the truth involves an extent of research beyond most people's willingness or capability.¹⁸ Yet, in implicitly chastising Athenians for failing to know the truth of their own traditions about the past, taking as an example the Peisistratid tyrants, he himself provides no explicit assistance in this passage that takes the form, here is *how* I determined that Hippias was tyrant but not Hipparchus, when the latter was slain. Here we have Thucydides as omniscient. Later on, however, in a variety of ways, Thucydides does in fact open windows onto historical investigation, from the standpoint of both internal agents and external reader.

In Book VI, Thucydides returns to the Peisistratids. The placement of information, digressions, and the like is deliberate and is one way of guiding the reader toward both interpretation of an event, and of instructing him in how to do history. Thus the *Archaeology* showcases Thucydides' inferential acumen in dealing with traditions from the distant past and lays out examples of method. Thereby he establishes his credentials through a display of his own deductive powers; but arguably this does not provide much nuts-and-bolts help

¹⁷ Woodman (1988) 16.

¹⁸ See 1.20.1 (quoted and discussed above), Thucydides' statement with reference to himself about difficulty.

for the reader, with the important exception of his frequent use of arguments of probability (on which see below).

What function does the discussion of the Peisistratid tyranny in Book VI serve? Dover's answer was none, except to illustrate Thucydides', like other historians', penchant for correcting errors even where they serve no purpose.¹⁹ On the contrary, the digression serves to highlight the dangers in public life of ignorance and misconception, and even more so, investigative carelessness, and to connect present with past by a comparative illustration.²⁰ These are signal lessons for a historian wishing to engage in historical reconstruction and interpretation. The placement of this digression about an event in late sixth-century Athens links it to a crucial period in Athens' late fifth-century history, namely the beginning of the Sicilian Expedition in 415 and popular fears about Alcibiades' tyrannical ambitions.²¹ Its specific context is the alleged role of Alcibiades in two sacrilegious affairs shortly before the expedition (the mutilation of the Herms and the mock celebration of the Mysteries, 6.27–28); Thucydides charges the Athenians with impatience and receptiveness to all informants and a failure to take the time to investigate the truth when faced with charges laid against him by his political enemies (6.53). The ultimate result was Alcibiades' defection, first to Sparta, then to Persia; his loss to the city, Thucydides comments earlier (6.15), was what chiefly ruined the state.²² The narrative of the beginning stage of the expedition is then linked, via Alcibiades' recall to meet charges against him, with Athenian behavior in 415 causally related to their misconceptions about the end of the Peisistratid tyranny. The narrative thread, then, is popular attitudes toward Alcibiades and ultimate loss to the state from his defection (6.15), his recall to answer charges that were hastened uncritically and unmethodically, popular misconceptions about an earlier tyranny, and,

¹⁹ Dover, *HCT*, 4.329.

²⁰ As Stahl (1966) 1–11 finely elucidates. See also, e.g., Connor (1984) 176–80; Tsakmakis (1995a) 176–225; Vickers (1995).

²¹ 6.15. Thucydides uses the verb φοβέω to describe the people's fear, a verb that, like its nominal form, can have an irrational connotation, especially when it is concerned with future expectations; for a small but representative sample from both narrative and speeches, see, e.g. (both nouns and verbs), 2.87.4; 3.42.4; 3.79.3; 4.10.4; 6.11.5; 6.13.1; 6.91.6.

²² It is of no significance here whether he is referring to the Sicilian Expedition or to Athens' larger fate in the war with Sparta, for the point, taken with the digression farther on, underscores the importance of proper investigation, deduction, and interpretation.

finally, instruction in how correctly to understand the past, and implicitly, thereby, the present.²³

Unlike the earlier passage on the Peisistratids in Book I, in which no guidance is given to the reader, in the context of the larger digression in Book VI, Thucydides finally gives an explicit demonstration of how to draw inferences about the past, in this case, from epigraphy.²⁴ He quotes the inscription on the Altar to the Twelve Gods set up by Peisistratus, son of Hippias and grandson of his namesake the tyrant, in the Agora and another in the precinct of Apollo, noting that the Athenians later lengthened the altar and obliterated the lettering, but that the letters in the Pythian precinct, while not in perfect condition (ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι), could still be made out (6.54).²⁵

Why supply this information, and why indicate that the letters were worn? The explicit reference to the inscription has an important methodological purpose, to instruct and guide the reader specifically on how to draw inferences from the historical record, whether it is tradition, or, in this case, documentary evidence. Moreover Thucydides also discriminates between kinds of evidence, in Book I and then again in Book VI. He refers to ἀκοή, “tradition”, and then provides a critique of it through what is written, but, even more important, despite the worn letters, could be clear (δῆλον). The inference itself takes several steps and forms, deductions from two monuments, and the historian’s common sense. That Peisistratus (the younger) refers to himself as son of Hippias leads Thucydides, in conjunction with the pillar set up in commemoration of the tyrannicides, in which no children of the Peisistratid sons are listed except for five of Hippias, to infer that Hippias was the eldest son of Peisistratus the tyrant (on the common-sense grounds that the eldest would have married first)

²³ Popular misconceptions about Sicily are damningly highlighted through correction by Thucydides in his long list of the history of settlement on the island (6.1–5), underscoring ethnic diversity and suggestive likewise about size, that sets the methodological tone for Books VI–VII. See also Rawlings (1981) 65–67; Tsakmakis (1995a) 167–75 on its function in relation to the present and its methodological relationship to the *Archaeology* in Book I.

²⁴ He puts his methodological approach on display in many ways, including arguments from likelihood, and associates ἀκρίβεια with his own method (see, e.g., 6.55); see Lang (1954).

²⁵ See Lavelle (1989) on the problem meshing Thucydides’ adjective to describe the worn letters with preserved fragments of the inscription on which letters are clearly legible. My concern is with the pedagogical training at issue with its lessons about difficulty, patience, and thoroughness through Thucydides’ reference to the letters’ condition.

and therefore that he would have been the natural candidate for successor to Peisistratus upon his death. A further comment is made on the basis of common sense: if Hipparchus, not Hippias, had been tyrant, then Hippias would not have moved without incident to the position of tyrant, and any violent succession would have been part of the historical record.

Whether Thucydides' deductions and common-sense arguments are correct is irrelevant in the context of this discussion.²⁶ Rather, what is important to appreciate is the methodological exercise in which he explicitly and fully engages and, most of all, to consider the possibility that he is doing so not primarily because he wants to show how much more intelligent he is than "the many" (though this implicit rhetorical claim comes through loud and clear). Instead, his ultimate aim, especially combined with other kinds of methodological approaches, is to help the reader understand how to use evidence to reconstruct history. Moreover, it is crucial to provide this training here, rather than in Book I, because the need to illustrate the consequences of failure to ascertain the truth to the best extent possible, and to reiterate implicitly that the recovery of the past is a difficult enterprise comes precisely at this narrative juncture. For faulty reasoning about the Peisistratids made Athenians in 415 react uncritically to the present attacks against Alcibiades.

Once again it is valuable to return to Thucydides' methodological statement in 1.22.4 about the utility of history: if his work is to be useful for understanding other events as well as the Peloponnesian War *and* if he insists on the difficulty inherent in such a project, then *a priori* he has to train the reader. The first step is providing an example of how he himself engages in research. In the case of the Peisistratid digression, he reveals all the necessary steps of investigation, examination, and deduction in one integral context, as he explicitly works through a problem of reconstruction, analysis, deduction and shows how to discriminate among types of evidence.

Thucydides' statements about difficulty and his explicit and implicit illustrations concerning it, serve to demonstrate a point arguably even more essential outside the text than within it.²⁷ His emphasis

²⁶ For detailed discussion of methods, substance, and aim, see Lang (1954); Dover, *HCT* 4.317–29, and also above, n. 20.

²⁷ Another category of difficulty that I can only note here concerns battles, e.g., the difficulty of determining the body count of the Spartans after the battle of

on difficulty also clarifies the kind of reader he has in mind. As G. Crane notes, his readership was “restricted to the most clever or the most determined”, the last of the two categories being the most critical.²⁸ Thucydides demands that his readers who want not only to understand his text, but also to take the training he provides to practice history themselves to be relentless, even dogged, detectives, painstakingly searching for τὸ σαφές.²⁹

The Particular/Concrete and the General/Abstract In and Outside the Text

The above discussion shows Thucydides offering lessons in deductions based on careful investigation, examination of evidence, common sense deductions, and with an awareness of difficulty, all tied to utility directed outside the text through understanding his own. The emphasis on difficulty is essential to drive home to his reader before the account of the war begins (thus the importance of sections like using material remains, 1.10, to be examined below, and the difficulty of determining the truth about traditions handed down, of writing speeches, and of learning about events, 1.20–22). Another category equally directed toward the pedagogical training needed to become an historian of other events is the relationship between particular and general (or concrete and abstract). This training must consist, initially, of lessons on determining what is a particular, or rather what particular circumstances or events, verbal expressions, and the like, are historiographically useful ones; and in turn, which are not.

In short, it is necessary for Thucydides to open his workshop if the reader is to see not just what Thucydides has selected as historiographically worthy, but how and why he judged something to be so. It is important to keep in mind that a historical narrative is a coherent story because of choices the writer makes of which episodes and events to include and to treat as more or less significant; to a large extent the historian makes an event, by which I mean isolates something and gives it a beginning, middle, and end, and groups it

Mantineia (5.74) or the difficulty of learning precisely about the night battle at Epipolai (7.44).

²⁸ Crane (1996) 2.

²⁹ Crane (1996) 36 notes that Thucydides’ fondness for the verb ἐπεξέρχομαι, “go out after” (1.22.2, with reference to his own researching skills and twenty-four other times), “captures this picture of the driven researcher”.

causally and chronologically with others to make the narrative cohere. It is essential, that is, to remember that "the war" is Thucydides' war. As he puts it in his first sentence, "Thucydides the Athenian composed the war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians" (1.1.1).³⁰

Moreover, only when the particulars are combined with the general or abstract is comparison and contrast possible, which is the very project that Thucydides addresses in his statement on utility in which he refers to events that will bear similarities to one another *κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον* ("in accordance with humanness", 1.22.4). This statement immediately raises the question, how will the reader grasp the similarities, as well as the differences, since the occurrences will not be identical?

The use of both abstract and concrete vocabulary is an especially valuable approach through which Thucydides helps the reader to apply the historical understanding gained from examining his work (and that arguably best instructs his reader in the historical method developed in the work) to events outside it.³¹ The concrete elucidates meaning solely for a particular historical context; the abstract in turn reveals what in the particular has a significance invaluable for application to other events, that is, it is the essential generalizing tool. Thucydides needs to show how particulars relate to the larger picture, and how to discern whether a particular event or something surrounding it has larger significance; for not all events will have general lessons to impart or broader significance. How is the reader to know? I would like to examine three very different kinds of cases: first, the causes and origins of the Peloponnesian War; the treatment of money and power; and statements in the account of the plague.

The Particular/Concrete: the Events that Precipitated the Peloponnesian War

"As to why they broke the treaty, I will write first about the causes and disputes, so that no one (need) ever seek the origin of such a great war waged by the Greeks. For the truest explanation, but most obscurely articulated, is that the Athenians, growing great and instilling

³⁰ See especially Loraux (1986b); Edmunds (1993); Bakker, this vol.

³¹ On Thucydides' use of abstract vocabulary, see the important study of Allison (1997a). For thoughtful and provocative analyses of how historians compose their accounts and create meaning, see, e.g., White (1981); Mink (1987).

fear in the Lacedaemonians, compelled them to go to war. The causes expressed in the open, however, on either side, because of which they broke the treaty and went to war, are the following” (1.23.5–6).

In this famous statement, Thucydides explicitly contrasts the particular or concrete, and the general or abstract on two explanatory levels. The first accounts for the immediate “causes and disputes” that explain the origin of the war; the second, “the truest explanation”, for why the war broke out at all. In seeking to explain events, a historian must invariably select from perhaps many possible precursors: what seems to be most significant, what less, what seems to be a broader, long-term cause vs. a more immediate cause. I shall explore here how Thucydides shows the reader 1) the basis on which he isolates the particular—the “causes and disputes” that explain the outbreak of war, but which have no broader universal application—from the general, embodied in the “truest explanation”; and 2) how he selected the particulars that he did, given other possible candidates, in short, how his methodology is embedded in the narrative, but nevertheless not obscure to the careful reader, and thereby how he teaches lessons about determining causes.

The particulars he chooses are two: 1) a conflict between Corinth and Corcyra that began with *stasis* in Epidamnos, a colony of Corcyra, but whose founder was Corinthian, and was a conflict that drew in the Athenians when they made an alliance with Corcyra and ended up participating in a naval battle against Corinth. This in turn led the Corinthians to charge that the Athenians had violated a non-aggression clause in the peace concluded with Sparta in 446; and 2) the revolt of Poteidaia, a Corinthian colony within the Athenian *archē* and to which Corinth lent assistance out of revenge for Athens’ role in the Corcyrean-Corinthian war.

One conspicuous feature of his account is the disparity in length of treatment between the two particulars singled out.³² Rood suggests that the greater attention given to the Corcyrean-Corinthian dispute from its outset³³ stems from its evocation of the “truest explanation”, or, rather, from Thucydides’ decision to make it evoke and

³² The Corinthian-Corcyrean narrative takes up 18.5 *OCT* pages (1.24–55) in contrast to 5 for Poteidaia.

³³ Consider the leisurely start of the narrative: “Epidamnos is a polis on the right as one sails into the Ionian Gulf” (1.24.1).

connect to the “truest explanation”.³⁴ For in describing its beginnings, he highlights the broader themes of power and fear, thereby recalling the larger Athenian-Spartan conflict on the horizon.

I would like to suggest another set of strategies employed both to isolate events and disputes as particulars and to link particular to general as teaching tools for the reader learning how to be a historian. Viewed from one angle, the Corinthian-Corcyrean conflict stands on its own as a self-contained *logos* (1.24–30), but with an ambivalent narrative flavor: the reader knows its importance to the coming war to come simply from its position in the narrative right after Thucydides announces that he will relate the “causes and disputes” (1.23.6). Yet at the same time it comprises its own *logos* with distinct narrative subsections within it, thus inviting the reader, before being informed, to think about what specifically in it has larger significance.³⁵

The narrative operates on two instructional levels that allow the reader to understand how Thucydides the historian is thinking about causes. The first aims to explain how and why this dispute could not be considered a “truest explanation”; the second explains the reason for emphasizing the Corinthian-Corcyrean dispute over other possibilities. On the first point, the conflict between Corinth and Corcyra was a purely local one into which Athens was drawn through its acceptance of an alliance with Corcyra and its participation in a naval battle against Corinth; *a priori*, it was insufficient as “the truest explanation” for why war broke out between Athens and Sparta, which implicitly had to involve both directly. Second, Thucydides reinforces the conclusion through a pivotal passage (1.44) in which he represents Athenian thinking after the Corinthian and Corcyrean

³⁴ Rood (1998a) 210–13.

³⁵ The first part concerns the growing conflict between Corcyra and Corinth (24–30). It is marked off as a narrative unit by a transitional chapter (31) that transfers the story to Athens: both Corcyreans and Corinthians arrive to seek an alliance with the city. In the next unit they each make speeches (32–43), and it in turn is followed by a chapter relating the Athenians' views about the solicitations (44). Thucydides notes that, after hearing the speeches at one assembly they inclined toward Corinth, but in a subsequent meeting they decided to make a defensive alliance with Corcyra: “for they thought that the war (ὁ πόλεμος) with the Lacedaemonians would come” (44.2). The final unit (45–55) relates the preparations culminating in a naval battle between Corinth and Corcyra off Sybota, the Corcyreans supported by an Athenian squadron (55), which Thucydides marks off with the statement, “this was the first cause (αἰτία πρώτη) of the war for the Corinthians with respect to the Athenians, because they, along with the Corcyreans, fought a naval battle against themselves in a time of treaty” (55.2).

speeches, in which he states that their decision about whom to ally with was swayed by their expectation that “the war with the Peloponnesians would come”. Two separate historical contexts are present in the narrative: one, the Corcyrean and Corinthian conflict, and the other, the Athenian view that they might in future be at war with the Spartans.³⁶ By highlighting Athenian thinking as *parallel* to the Corinthian-Corcyrean conflict, but not caused by it, and in fact itself serving a causal function, Thucydides demonstrates that the Corinthian-Corcyrean conflict could not have been *the* real cause of the war; for the Athenians’ state of mind is represented as something distinct and its origins unclear but implied to be some prior indefinite point before the local Corinthian-Corcyrean conflict. If so, the revolt of Poteidaia, coming on the heels of the other conflict, could not be any more a “truest explanation” of the Peloponnesian War.

The second pedagogical step is to demonstrate reasons for his choices. One method of accomplishing this is by situating other possible candidates in the text and to make it clear that they are so, so as to provide an exercise for the reader: he can think about why these possibilities might not qualify. I suggest that Thucydides’ mention of two other parties, equally aggrieved in their own way as the Corinthians, the Aiginetans and Megarians, functions to help the reader, through comparison and contrast (however unfair, since the Corinthians are the ones to have narrative space and a voice), analyze what made Thucydides select other causes and disputes.

In chapter 66, Thucydides reinforces his privileging Corinth as the chief party in the “causes and disputes”, then in 1.67, the Corinthians summon the Peloponnesian allies and bring them to Sparta to support their own complaints. Thucydides notes that the Aiginetans were among those pressing the hardest for war, having been deprived of their autonomy by Athens. Also the Megarians spoke “with a lengthy list” of grievances, especially their exclusion from the markets of Athens and the empire. Furthermore, the Spartans used as an ultimatum (but really a pretext) rescinding the decree of exclusion in the diplomatic interchange before war (1.139).

Why were these two cities, about whose significant grievances and advocacy of war Thucydides lets the reader know, not accorded a

³⁶ The separation is reinforced in the narrative by the Athenians’ initial preference for the Corinthians, allies of Sparta.

causal status as Corinth's? All had grievances against Athens; one critical point of contrast, however, is that the Athenians were linked with a private dispute between two outside parties (Corinth and Corcyra) in such a way as in turn to connect it directly to the larger war with Sparta (through his statement that the Athenians formed an alliance with Corcyra because of their expectation of imminent war with Sparta, the causal point of contact in the narrative, 1.44.2). Moreover, only the Corinthians could make a case that Athens' participation in the naval battle violated the terms of the peace treaty. Finally, although Thucydides notes that the complaints of the allies had a minor role in persuading the Spartans to vote to go to war (1.88), he weights Corinth most heavily simply by virtue of giving the Corinthians alone a speech.

Thus, Thucydides' lessons in the concrete "causes and disputes" comprise four important elements: 1) how to select and isolate the most significant concrete causal factors explaining the immediate circumstances that would lead to war from a larger pool of possibilities, which to be sure he makes clear are not irrelevant; 2) how he clarifies both their difference from the "truest cause", which is something involving a longer process, and thus their purely local, immediate importance in understanding the causes of the Peloponnesian War but not larger generalizing significance; 3) how he links them to the "truest cause"; and 4) how he links them to the Peloponnesian War.

The General: 1.23.6: the Alēthestatē Prophasis

The sentence in which Thucydides lays out the "truest explanation" (ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις) in contrast to the "causes and disputes" that led to the dissolution of the peace between Athens and Sparta neatly blends both abstract and concrete language. The "Athenians" and "Lacedaemonians" are concrete (and particular) agents of growth, change, and decision; the players in past and future could be different. Yet what they are engaged in and affect or are affected by is expressed with abstract vocabulary: "growing great", "fear", "compelled", culminating in the conspicuous phrase ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν, "to the making of war". Indeed, while Thucydides is fond of verbs, and the prepositional articular infinitival phrase here is partly mandated by the infinitive ἀναγκᾶσαι, "to compel", it may also be the case that he expresses the result of the concretes and abstracts as more abstract

than “the war” (τὸν πόλεμον), which would be addressing specifically the particular war that broke out in 431 BC, in order to elevate it to the realm of the general: abstract processes like power in process and the state of fear that it produces in interested observers, will necessitate interstate violence.³⁷

The conclusion that readers would be instructed to draw is that the general conditions embodied in this sentence—“growing great, instilling fear, causing constraints that lead to violence”—will be those to which they must be alert in observing other events. Yet those abstract factors do not themselves simply lie in a vague or nebulous state. They, too, as in the case of the concrete “causes and disputes”, must be linked to concrete factors that help explain how they constitute phenomena that can be used to extrapolate from in other circumstances. Indeed, Thucydides returns to the “truest explanation” following the narrative of the “causes and disputes”, marking it off from the latter and making a transition by commenting, “The Lacedaemonians voted . . . to declare war, not so much because of being persuaded by their allies as much as because they feared the growing power of Athens . . .” (1.88). The reader expects a narrative concerned with process in which the particulars will relate to the abstract “truest explanation”, concerning the growth of power, which occupies the place of primacy in the “truest explanation”. What Thucydides means by referring to the abstraction of growing power in 1.23.6 is defined in concrete terms in the so-called *Pentekontaetia* (1.89–117, the account of the roughly fifty years between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars).

The Particular and the General: The Uses of Money in the Pentekontaetia and Beyond

As we have seen, Thucydides establishes a connection between concrete and abstract already in 1.23.6 by combining “the Athenians”—the concrete—with the abstract notion of a process “growing great” (Ἀθηναίους μεγάλους γιγνομένους). Then, in the *Pentekontaetia*, he lays out the particulars at work in the Athenians’ growth of power and its underlying reasons. They involve the interplay of power, money

³⁷ Cf. 1.44.2, where he does refer to “the war” because there it is important to emphasize its concreteness. In 1.56.1 however, he echoes the prepositional articular infinitive phrase, to stress process rather than single act.

and profit, and, implicitly, human nature, and are programmatic, as the intersection of these themes informs much of the *History*.³⁸ For Thucydides, power, whether in the form of *hēgemonia* or *archē*, is or becomes an economic and financial as much as, if not more than, a political relationship. One aim of the *Pentekontaetia* is to establish the intimate connection between money and the Athenians' exploitation of the Delian League from its inception. For them, its utility derived from its instrumental role in channeling the wealth of the Aegean to Athens, much of it directly through tribute. The question here, however, is specifically how does Thucydides help readers to understand its anatomy, mechanisms, and development in such a way as to make it historically comprehensible with respect to the fifth-century BC Athenian *archē*—that is, the concrete—and generically meaningful for all time, so that future readers will be able to apply the learning to another historical context?

A starting point is a general statement in the *Archaeology* on relative power groups aligning themselves in an unequal relationship, the consequence of a general increase in wealth: “the weaker, desiring gains [or “profits”], submitted to the enslavement by the stronger, while the more powerful, since they had built up an accumulation of wealth, gained for themselves the weaker cities as subjects”. (ἐφιέμενοι γὰρ τῶν κερδῶν οἱ τε ἥσσους ὑπέμενον τὴν τῶν κρείσσωνων δουλείαν, οἱ τε δυνατώτεροι περιουσίας ἔχοντες προσεποιοῦντο ὑπηκόους τὰς ἐλάσσους πόλεις, 1.8.3). This statement, cast in generalizing terms, serves a larger function of helping the reader understand the connection between wealth and power and collaboration for profit that is broadly applicable. Then he demonstrates its validity and applicability in the case of the Athenians and their allies in the period from the origins of the Delian League to the outset of the Peloponnesian War. In this section the reader is given a lesson in what particulars are significant for demonstrating the general case.

Thucydides' discussion of the League's formation has seemed seriously deficient to commentators who expect references to a “constitution”, oaths, procedure, and the like. When one remembers, however, that the function of the *Pentekontaetia*, at least as far as the reader knows at this point, is to explain the emergence and augmentation of Athenian power, and that the historian has already established

³⁸ See Kallet-Marx (1993); Kallet (2001).

the money-power link in the *Archaeology*, the focus his discussion takes is obvious and necessary. Indeed his condensed account of features and terms of the League focuses on and around money, making it the key particular that allows generalization. Thucydides notes that upon taking over the command of the Greek alliance, the Athenians exacted tribute (φόρος) as well as demanding ship contributions. He tells us that the term for tribute was the one always used, that the treasury was on Delos, that the board of treasurers, the Hellenotamiai, was Athenian, and that the first assessment was 460 talents (1.96.1). Further on he relates the process by which Athens' power was augmented as practically all allies increasingly became tributary (1.99).

Moreover, this lesson in the basis and growth of Athens' power functions to demonstrate Athenian opportunism, to be linked to the statement in 1.8.3,³⁹ and is an interpretation Thucydides encourages and emphasizes when he calls the justification for tribute a "cloak", or "pretext" (πρόσχημα).⁴⁰ Their extraction of tribute allowed them to accumulate money, which increased their strength and made the allies dependent subjects (in varying degrees).⁴¹ Thus money and military power are intimately linked, in ways that make the applicability of the connection clear.⁴²

Through the particular case of the Athenians, Thucydides demonstrates the money-power linkage, while at the same time casts the role of money in terms that are generalizing, especially when he gives it a significant role in the course of the war. The centrality of the theme of money to his larger subject of war and power opens the door to explorations of its effects in combination with other fac-

³⁹ Thucydides stresses that Athens' allies voluntarily handed over the command of the League to the Athenians because of their hatred of the Spartan commander Pausanias (1.95.1, 96.1). That they expected profit from the alliance necessitates an inference drawn both from 1.8.3 and the link between the *Pentekontaetia* and the end of Herodotus' *Histories* where he recounts the siege of Sestos by Athenians and Greeks in the Hellenic League (except for the *hēgemōn* Sparta) and the extraordinarily lucrative results (9.114–118). See Kallet-Marx (1993) 52–54.

⁴⁰ The interplay of *logos* and *ergon*, i.e., the relationship between what people say and the result, is of obvious importance here. This theme is central to Thucydides' historical analysis; see Parry (1981).

⁴¹ That Thucydides himself or in the mouth of speakers routinely calls the allies who pay tribute "subjects" makes the point and the comparison with 1.8.3 clear (e.g., 1.77.2; 1.77.5; 1.117.3; 2.41.3; 2.63.3; 4.108.3; 7.28.4).

⁴² See Kallet-Marx (1993) for the argument that such a point, so obvious now, was new in Thucydides' day and thus needed to be explained, argued, and, above all, demonstrated. I would add here that its demonstration is also crucial for extending its applicability beyond the text.

tors: leadership, emotions, greed and gain, and social breakdown and *stasis*, all of which lend themselves to universal applicability through the historian's view of human nature, whether he is focusing on individuals or a collective.⁴³ Examining these connections lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but we can still ask the important question, what is the value of situating the subject of money in these various combinations and contexts, and specifically for the reader not simply to examine "the clear truth" in the *History*, but also to be equipped to apply the understanding to events other than the Peloponnesian War? I suggest that it is precisely by providing the reader with a plentitude of contexts in which to examine money in interaction with individuals and the collective, Thucydides supplies the reader with an abundance of inferential opportunities, the better to apply to other contexts outside the text, as well as to understand his historical interpretation that money and individuals' use of and attitudes toward it, played a considerable role in Athens' downfall.

The Plague: 2.48–55

From a methodological standpoint, Thucydides' account of the plague, so detailed and descriptive, provides the best testimony of the historian's aim to help the reader learn to apply what is in the text to the world outside it, precisely because he is explicit about it. In 2.48.3, after noting the plague's sudden appearance in Athens, first in the Peiraeus and then in the city, he comments, "let either doctor or layman address its likely origins and the causes (*τὰς αἰτίας*) of so great a change he thinks are adequate to have the power for

⁴³ For example, in speeches, Thucydides demonstrates the role of individuals in shaping an identity that is focused on monetary acquisition and expenditure, and implicitly how that formula can lead to greed and a sense that accumulating money is a necessity of Athenian existence. Pericles' Athenians in the Funeral Oration actively try to escape poverty if they are in it, they spend money if they have it, they import luxury and basic goods from anywhere they choose, and they are the best citizens when they receive tangible rewards, not a mere laurel wreath (2.38.2; 2.40.1; 2.46.1.). One consequence of the plague, whose description immediately follows the Funeral Oration, is a breakdown of economic order as individuals seize the property of others and live, i.e., spend, for the moment (2.53). (I plan to discuss these connections more fully elsewhere). Money is blended with passions, explicitly (6.24) and implicitly (2.43.1), fueled by or in speeches (e.g., Alcibiades', 6.18.3; cf. 7.28, where the Athenians' insatiable behavior is linked with the need for more money). It features in his accounts of *stasis* (3.81; 8.48.2–3) and it lures the Athenians into grave danger through gullibility caused by greed or necessity (6.8.1 with 6.46).

changing” (λεγέτω μὲν οὖν περὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς ἕκαστος γινώσκει καὶ ἱατρὸς καὶ ἰδιώτης, ἀφ’ ὅτου εἰκὸς ἦν γενέσθαι αὐτό, καὶ τὰς αἰτίας ἄστινας νομίζει τοσαύτης μεταβολῆς ἱκανὰς εἶναι δύνάμιν ἐς τὸ μεταστῆσαι σχεῖν),⁴⁴ a formulation that emphasizes both the element of the change, substantively and as a process of the disease, and its force. Why, however, does he not concern himself with the issue of origins and causes, both central aspects of his work as a whole?⁴⁵ Note that Thucydides does not say, “I am unable to say”, but rather, “let someone else say”, which suggests that his interests in the plague lie elsewhere, not that he lacked that capacity, if he had wanted, to investigate the source and cause, and relate them in his work.⁴⁶

Thucydides’ particular interest in writing an account of the plague emerges explicitly in what follows: “I will, however, describe what kind of thing it was and the symptoms, on the basis of which anyone looking carefully, if it should ever attack again, from having foreknowledge, would not be ignorant (ἐγὼ δὲ οἶόν τε ἐρίγνετο λέξω, καὶ ἀφ’ ὧν ἂν τις σκοπῶν, εἴ ποτε καὶ αὖθις ἐπιέσσοι, μάλιστ’ ἂν ἔχοι τι προειδὼς μὴ ἀγνοεῖν, ταῦτα δηλώσω, 2.48.3). E. Bakker rightly emphasizes the importance of the participle σκοπῶν in his work, with its strong evocation of 1.22.4, which inscribes the verb with primary historiographical significance for Thucydides; “looking carefully” is the act that produces understanding for the reader of the present as well as the past.⁴⁷ While this is true, it is important to extend the scope of the verb from the standpoint of process and investigation, and not simply *an* act of “looking carefully”. It looks beyond the text, as in 1.22.4, where the verb is applied specifically to events other than that of the Peloponnesian War.⁴⁸ In the case of the plague, the “looking carefully” applies also implicitly to the hermeneutic acts that others in the future must perform. Not only understanding but determining how to understand something at another time and place

⁴⁴ Rusten (1989) 182 notes the pleonasm in the last part of this sentence, with the virtual synonyms ἱκανὰς σχεῖν and δύνάμιν, and in turn ἐς τὸ μεταστῆσαι and μεταβολῆς. The theme of change is strong in both the plague description (see also 2.53) and in the analysis of *stasis* (3.82), emblematic of the larger change from the physically and metaphorically healthy *polis*.

⁴⁵ As he does most notably, in 1.23.5f., see above, pp. 345f.

⁴⁶ Bakker, this volume, notes (p. 119, n. 27) the irrelevance of causes for Thucydides here.

⁴⁷ Bakker, this volume (p. 117).

⁴⁸ For the notion of design, see Bakker, this volume.

require training and instruction through reading Thucydides' *History*, whether it is war, *stasis* or disease.

Just as important a feature and essential for readers to apply outside the text is Thucydides' explicit statement that he will relate "the kind of thing" (οἶον) it was. This formulation reinforces the point explicitly made that he wants those in the future to be able to recognize a similar disease within a category of illness through his description. It especially stands out as part of his pedagogical program because he himself contracted it, as he comments, and observed others suffering from it; presumably, therefore, he could have described what it actually was, rather than the "kind of" thing it was.⁴⁹ When we recall Thucydides' view that history will yield "such or similar" events or phenomena (1.22.4), that is, making clear that later events or phenomena may resemble but never replicate, the significance of his methodological approach emerges fully.⁵⁰

It is also significant that Thucydides explicitly provides the reader with the criterion that he has selected as a basis for inclusion or exclusion of symptoms so that the reader knows "what kind of" thing for which to be on the lookout. In 2.51, after describing the physical symptoms, he sums up as follows: "Thus, then, the sickness, leaving aside many other features of its singularity, was, in general, such in form" (τὸ μὲν οὖν νόσημα, πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα παραλιπόντι ἀτοπίας, ὡς ἐκάστω ἐτύγχανέ τι διαφερόντως ἑτέρῳ πρὸς ἕτερον γιγνόμενον, τοιοῦτον ἦν ἐπὶ πάν τὴν ἰδέαν). This statement reveals that, for him, "looking carefully" at a phenomenon himself, the selection process determining relevance is based on an assessment of which particulars are especially significant (in contrast to πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα) in allowing understanding of the general—the kinds of features, in short, that will be useful for recognition of another disease.⁵¹ In the future, because he has noted explicitly the key criterion of selection that is surely part of but also must precede full understanding of τὸ σαφές, "the clear truth", those using his work to make sense of and understand their

⁴⁹ See Stroud (1987) for a discussion of the sentence, rightly critical of Repgen (1987), who ignores the οἶον and argues that Thucydides' claim influenced Ranke's famous phrase *wie es eigentlich gewesen* ("how it actually was").

⁵⁰ It also helps to understand his frequent use of words like οἶον and τοιοῦτον throughout the *History*.

⁵¹ These, presumably, would be common features shared by the majority of the infected, as Lesley Dean-Jones points out to me. The term ἀτοπία reinforces this.

own world, or that of the past, will have a guideline for elimination.

More than a simple invitation to “look closely” at the symptoms Thucydides chooses to describe this particular disease, the help extends to guidance in the criteria employed in the selection of symptoms that will be usable for generalization. Why this is vitally important goes beyond medical understanding or advances (Thucydides claims no such thing here) to examination of the effects of “this kind” (τοιοῦτον) of disease on individuals, in the same way that the analysis of *stasis* in Book III is above all concerned with the effects of that kind of violence on individuals. In other words, if a community is afflicted by a disease like that which afflicted the Athenians, the effects on individuals and their society will be thus. Just so, if *stasis* rends a community, then the effect on individuals and their society will be thus.

Comparison and Contrast

The approach of comparison and contrast relates closely to (and somewhat overlaps with) the previous category and constitutes a further way in which Thucydides helps his readers think about historical events and their proper interpretation, and the how-to of history.⁵² If we return yet again to his sentence on the utility of history, given, in accordance with the human condition, the similarity of historical events, and if Thucydides is bound to help his readers see how events are similar but not identical, then he needs to provide training in examining and understanding similarity and difference. He does this internally in the work (earlier and later events, comparisons of individuals, or views) and intertextually, through layering the texts of earlier writers within the text, both of which strategies allow the

⁵² As Allison notes (1997a) 134, “a distinction based on *difference between* is articulated when two things are compared; yet what is in fact perceived is some one or more *common grounds* between them on which the difference is founded. The perception is succeeded by the actual using of the comparative *terms* to establish the *degrees of difference* or *sameness*”. She develops this point farther on: “by means of comparison [Thucydides] goes beyond a simple setting out of two elements in isolation because comparative constructions allow him to abstract some quality or basic idea the two elements share, but which does not exist as an essential part of either element independently, e.g., size, time, etc.” (147). See Rusten (1989) 24f., on Thucydides’ fondness for “x more than y” and similar constructions.

reader to contrast (difference) as well as to compare (similarity), thus demonstrating how the methodological statement on utility bears out.⁵³ Here I will focus on internal comparison.

The Size of the Athenian Navy in Relation to Expense

1. Rarely is comparison explicit; one example, however, occurs in Book III. After relating the Athenians' show of naval force to disabuse the Peloponnesians of any weakness because of the plague and revolt of Lesbos (3.16), Thucydides compares the size of the fleet then (427, 250 ships) to that at the beginning of the war, with which it is claimed to be roughly similar (3.17).⁵⁴ The comparison is then made within the chapter itself, with figures supplied and the expense emphasized. As he comments, "it was maintaining a fleet of this size that first, along with the expenditures at Poteidaia, exhausted the revenues", and concludes, "this first wasted away their money". The function of the comparison of fleet size at a time of strength and one of perceived weakness is, I have suggested, to show continuing strength, but also the implications of continuing expense on the financial health of the city. This passage foreshadows the downfall of the Athenian navy; but how is this explicit comparison useful for broader application? It is the first instance in the work, which has been dominated by examples of great and powerful navies in their day, and most recently, Athens', emphasized by the analysis of Athens' growth in naval power and its connection to expense in the *Pentekontaetia* (1.99), that the ambivalence of imposing naval strength is presented to the reader. The lesson is pithy and powerful: when considering the size of navies, it is essential always to assess them in terms of projected financial capability to sustain them. Thus this lesson becomes one of broad applicability.

2. A similar example occurs in 6.31, though one that in this case refers explicitly back to earlier passages in the narrative. Commenting on the size of the fleet that was about to sail to Sicily, Thucydides notes (6.31.2) that it was the same in number as that which Pericles

⁵³ Narrative patterning of other texts, especially Homer and Herodotus, is equally important, but for reasons of space cannot be treated here. See, e.g., Frangoulidis (1993); Allison (1997b); Rood (1999); Kallet (2001) 85–120; Rogkoti, this volume.

⁵⁴ For full analysis of this passage, including discussion of its authenticity, which some scholars have questioned, see Kallet-Marx (1993) 130–34.

took to Epidauros and then Hagnon to Poteidaia in summer 430 (2.57–58). In this case, partly because we have the earlier accounts to compare with that of 6.31, and partly because the comparison has a complexity absent in the one contained in 3.17, Thucydides gives the reader more interpretive training. But with what goal? Both of the previous two expeditions were unsuccessful, against single cities.⁵⁵ The inference that the reader is being challenged to make is that size matters: the fleet that sailed against Sicily was either too small or inadequately supplied for its greater needs in Sicily (see also below, no. 3, for variants). This helps the reader inside the text, as providing a kind of foreshadowing of doom, but it also encourages the reader to think about comparative size when assessing the causes of success or failure of other naval expeditions and to do so in relation to expense.

3. A different kind of comparison within the text is especially interesting in the way in which it shows the practitioner-historian at work, and his method of deduction as a tool for comparison and understanding, thus providing an example for the reader of how to do the same thing in other cases. It concerns the Trojan War and the Sicilian Expedition. In his section in the *Archaeology* on the Trojan expedition Thucydides does something rather unusual for him, and therefore obviously significant for understanding his methods: he makes a counterfactual argument about the reasons for the Trojan War's small size (as he also argues somewhat infamously in 1.10),⁵⁶ as well as its ten-year duration (1.10.5–1.11).⁵⁷ The explanation was not, he comments, "a shortage of men as much as a shortage of money. For because of insufficient sustenance, they brought a smaller army [i.e., than they might have], thinking that they could acquire what they needed from the land while at war; but when, having arrived, they prevailed in battle (as they must have, for otherwise they would not have been able to construct fortifications around their

⁵⁵ Both, however, were also doubtless complicated by the effects of plague, in Pericles' case, and by the spread of the disease in that of Hagnon's expedition.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Gomme, *HCT* 1.114.

⁵⁷ He makes counterfactuals elsewhere; the unusual aspect of this example is that it is produced for an event of ancient history, though he has a "must have been" deduction about the size of Agamemnon's navy (1.9.4). This is of a different kind from that in the passage quoted above, but likewise useful for the would-be practitioner that he, I am suggesting, imagines will read his work. See Flory (1988) on Thucydides' use of counterfactuals.

camp), they appear not even from that point to have used all their strength; rather they turned to farming the Chersonese and to plundering because of their insufficient supplies . . . Whereas if they had come with a surplus of money (or sustenance) and, having drawn together their entire force, had waged war continuously, without resorting to pillaging and farming, they would easily have prevailed in battle and been victorious”.

Virginia Hunter sees Thucydides' thinking about the problems the Athenians faced in the Sicilian expedition as the explanation for his bold approach in 1.11, with its problem of resources, failure to produce an initial victory, and dividing of the forces.⁵⁸ Perhaps most revealing are the parallels in the two episodes between size and financing (or supplying) in both accounts. First, Thucydides notes that the expedition to Sicily was not the largest, and compares it to two earlier expeditions (6.31.1–2; see also below) but it cost the most (6.31.1–2; see also no. 2, above), a comment that, in juxtaposition with the subsequent narrative that stresses Athens' acute need for resources following their inability to procure them on the spot (6.46), serves to criticize them for their spending choices. That the previous expeditions with which he compares that to Sicily were directed merely at single cities, suggests that the Athenians could have brought more, both of men and money. Alternatively, he encourages the reader to think about whether a moderate contingent could have been successful if bolstered with more money to be spent on the campaign itself, rather than on its preparation.

Regardless of how wanting or anachronistic the methodological display of his talents in the Trojan War analysis would be regarded today as proper historiographical method, it is explicitly revealing of how one event enables one to draw conclusions and interpret another that is viewed as similar. For that is precisely the point of 1.22.4: Thucydides' work is intended to be useful to readers who want to grasp “the clear truth” about similar events. That is to say, he is providing, in his work, an illustration, one of many, of how the historian should proceed.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ V.J. Hunter (1973a) 165; (1982) 41–42.

⁵⁹ If Zadorojnyi's (1998) argument that Thucydides' Nicias resembles Agamemnon holds, then the comparison and approach become even more interesting.

Analytic and Emotive Optics: 1.10, 6.31

The visual, ὄψις—"sight", "appearance", "visual sign"—occupies a special methodological place in Thucydides' work,⁶⁰ constituting a kind of evidence the historian regards as tricky as it is important, and implicitly reinforces the difficulty of the historiographical project. In commenting on the small size of Mycenae and warning the reader not to use that to disbelieve the size of the fleet that sailed to Troy, Thucydides raises the larger issue of the relationship between the size of monuments and power (δύναμις). Using the ruins of both Sparta and Athens in the event of an hypothesized abandonment and destruction, he notes that Sparta's power would be underestimated because of the lack of expensive buildings and temples (and the arrangement of the community into villages), whereas Athens, on this basis, would have been "conjectured" to have had twice its power "from the manifest appearance of the city" (εἰκόζεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς φανερώς ὄψεως τῆς πόλεως ἢ ἔστιν, 10.2). He continues, "therefore, it is not reasonable to disbelieve [the power of Mycenae], nor even should one examine closely the outward appearances of cities rather than their power" (οὐκ οὐκ ἀπιστεῖν εἰκός, οὐδὲ τὰς ὄψεις τῶν πόλεων μᾶλλον σκοπεῖν ἢ τὰς δυνάμεις, 1.10.3).

In this passage, words involving close observation or examination (σκοπεῖν),⁶¹ visual signs (ὄψις), power (δύναμις), and believing or trusting (πιστεύειν), or the negative (ἀπιστεῖν) provide crucial insight into the methodological approach Thucydides himself takes, one that implies difficulty, in this case, discerning the superficial (ὄψις) from what lies beneath the surface.⁶² Thucydides' role here, however, is explicitly pedagogical as well through his admonitory call to the reader to apply a critical attitude toward interpreting visual signs.⁶³ Thucydides' intrusion into a narrative about Agamemnon and the

⁶⁰ On the nature of its abstractness see Allison (1997a) 113. On sight and interpretation in Thucydides see also Kallet (2001) 21–23 (with other bibliography), 48–52; 55–58; see also 60 with n. 129 on the similarities between appearance and calculation or reason in Thucydides and the Hippocratic *Prognostics*.

⁶¹ That he uses a verb itself of seeing (σκοπεῖν) emphasizes the interpretative problem: vision is in fact a crucial factor in assessing reality, but it is essential to know how to understand what one is looking at and how to interpret it.

⁶² The underlying reality, in this case power (δύναμις), is equivalent to the "clear picture" of 1.22.4, τὸ σαφές.

⁶³ The polemical tone implies that most people did tend to confuse or in fact equate impressive monuments with power.

Trojan War in order to make an instructive point provides a fine example of one way in which he is helping the reader to think outside the text, for he is clearly establishing a principle applicable to all cases, facilitated by the movement from concrete to abstract. He supplies the concrete (if imagined) illustration in the case of Athens and Sparta in order to support a concrete statement about Mycenae's power in relation to appearance. Then, however, the language becomes abstract in a formulation of probability (εἰκός), with the abstract terms ὅψις and δύναιμι.⁶⁴ This announces a guideline for the reader, a lesson imparted by an instructor, and is helpful in its explicitness in that Thucydides has shown the reader how and how not to make deductions from a particular example, the respective power of Athens and Sparta. Arguably, however, it does not go far enough by itself in providing more specific guidance for the reader, especially given the difficulty of doing history upon which Thucydides insists. For example, what about cases in which the visual context differs from that of a city's monuments and size?

Thucydides' implicit method is suggestive in this regard, for narrative episodes with no authorial intervention but connected to earlier passages that provide explicit instruction are themselves a form of exercise in a workbook whose aim is to give practice in how to do history, without Thucydides' explicit handholding. Instead he invites the reader to try his hand at the kind of analysis the historian himself earlier performs. For there are events, or scenes, that he constructs through a highly visual, narrative mode, and leaves untouched and unanalyzed in the explicit way that appears in 1.10 but that show internal agents interpreting the visual in their world and allow the reader to determine whether those agents are getting it right.

One opportunity appears in Book VI, in the narrative of the assembling and departure of the naval expedition to Sicily.⁶⁵ In this "exercise", Thucydides presents the reader with both an extraordinarily vivid and detailed description of the fleet and the spectators' reaction to its impressive, opulent appearance, a reaction that shows his contemporaries submitting to the same kind of false or mistaken analysis implied for those inferring the power of Sparta and Athens

⁶⁴ On -σις nouns see Allison (1997a) 122–30.

⁶⁵ Kallet (2001) 480–66, though examined from a different perspective; also Morrison (2000) 145, for the later parts of the work as a "test" for the reader.

from visual remains of the city. For although those witnessing the spectacle of the ships clustered at the Peiraeus had differing reactions depending on their relationship to those about to embark on the expedition, “because of the size of each part that they saw, they cheered up at the sight” (διὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἐκάστων ὧν ἐώρων, τῇ ὄψει ἀνεθάρσυν, 6.31.1); thus Thucydides has injected a strong emotional component into the act of seeing and the response it produces. Yet the vocabulary and representation of the spectators’ experience clearly evoke the warning signs of misinterpretation expressed in Book I concerning inferences about power from the size of a city.⁶⁶ There are close parallels between 1.10 and 6.31. In the passage examined above, on observers’ deductions from archaeology, Thucydides notes that people might underestimate the extensive power of Sparta because of the lack of expensive buildings (κατασκευαῖς πολυτελέσι, 1.10.2). The reference to Athens that follows, namely, that on that basis Athens’ power would be conjectured as twice as great as it actually was, then, shows the false criterion, summed up by the word ὄψις, operating in Athens’ case as well.

Thus when in 6.31 Thucydides uses vocabulary of sight in combination with that of expensiveness, but here in connection with the fleet, when he comments that it was “the most expensive and prettiest” (πολυτελεστάτη δὴ καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτη), the effect is striking, indeed, even damning. That so much money was lavished on the way the fleet looked, rather than on its size or fighting capability, shows that the Athenians have simply moved the notion of the “pretty city” from land to sea, their ships now a movable *polis*.⁶⁷ Yet, as the historian represents it, it was an appearance (ὄψις) that sailed to Sicily, not actual power (δύναμις). Thucydides’ technique here, therefore, is not explicit in the way that it was in Book I, but through strategies of evocation and mirroring, with slight variations in the context in order to show contrast as well as comparison and the idea of similarity but not equivalence, he provides help to the reader, but also affords him the chance to draw the conclusions himself. In this case

⁶⁶ The structural similarities between Books I and VI—both preludes to a crucial historical event, the Peloponnesian War as a whole, and the Sicilian Expedition within it—enhance the mirroring and are reinforced by linguistic parallels (e.g., most strikingly, ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις, 1.23.6; 6.6.1); see Rawlings (1981) 58–125 for the structural comparisons.

⁶⁷ This is an inference by extension from the discussion of its impressive-looking monuments in 1.10.

Thucydides has helped to steer the reader to the proper conclusion: appearance can be deceiving and one has to examine the actual power, something that would not be evident until the expedition reached Sicily and engaged in warfare. Such training is essential for an observer of other events.

The Historiographer's Tools: Eikos Arguments

Verbs like εικάζειν, δοκέω, τεκμηριόω ("to conjecture" or "compare", "to seem", "to provide evidence") and the like, emphasize the processes by which an historian conducts his research, how he judges, conjectures, what he finds useful to assess as historically significant evidence (whatever his qualifications about its value). In this final section I shall focus on Thucydides' concern to show the reader how to conjecture and to make an argument based on probability or reasonableness, explicitly significant for application outside the text.

The Conjecturer

Summing up the extraordinary intellectual talents of Themistocles (1.138.3), a man "worthy to marvel at" (ἄξιτος θαυμάσαι) more than any other, Thucydides refers to him as an individual with a "native genius" (οἰκεία ξυνέσει) who was the "best conjecturer" (ἄριστος εἰκαστής) of the "most distant point in the future".⁶⁸ That Thucydides placed an especially high premium on this particular intellectual skill can be appreciated not only from this comment, but also from his assertion of his own predictive power in the first sentence of the *History* when he notes his expectation that the war between Athens and Sparta "would be great and worthier of recording than any previous conflict, inferring this from the level of preparedness on both sides (1.1.1).⁶⁹ *A priori*, in order for his work to be useful to future readers in understanding a world outside the text, Thucydides must provide training in the *technē* of conjecturing and drawing inferences,⁷⁰

⁶⁸ See also his comments about Pericles' foreknowledge (2.65.6; 2.65.13).

⁶⁹ See the important discussion of J.H. Finley (1967) 9; 18; 34f.; 51 on aspects of Thucydides' method and its relation to Euripides, sophists and Hippocratic writers; see also Hornblower (1987) 100–109 on Thucydides' use of evidence generally.

⁷⁰ Although he may imply in Themistocles' case that all his intellectual prowess

the tools of which are evidence, inference, and signs (μαρτυρία, τεκμήρια, σημεῖα) but also the historian's own common sense.⁷¹ He provides such instruction at numerous points in the narrative, both in how to develop this skill successfully and (often sneeringly) how to make poor or simpleminded conjectures.⁷²

An important example pertaining to conjecturing of a negative nature, because it is attached to the term τὸ σαφές and embedded in the account of Thucydides' condemnation of the Athenians in their investigation of the charges against Alcibiades (discussed above), comes at a point when Thucydides describes the fear and suspicion that resulted from improper investigation of the facts, leading to a belief that those in charge of the affair concerned with the Mysteries were intending an oligarchic or monarchical conspiracy (6.60.1). He refers to an informant who named the ringleaders, but notes that whether his revelation was true or not (τὸ σαφές) "was conjectured" (εἰκάζεται) by the Athenians. This is a damning example of the acute danger of a failure to investigate the truth, and the useless conjecturing that resulted because of that. The negative example is as applicable to events outside the text as positive ones because showing what not to do provides guidance and training as crucial to the reader who will use his work to observe and interpret other events as examples of successful conjecturing.

Arguably most important methodologically and pedagogically is an example from Book VIII in which Thucydides reveals the criterion that induces him to explain and conjecture. It concerns Alcibiades' advice to Tissaphernes about the best way to wear out both the Athenians and Spartans and allow the Persian King to regain his possessions on the coast of Asia Minor (8.45). At the end of describing Alcibiades' plan, Thucydides states that Tissaphernes approved of it, "at least so far as can be conjectured from his actions" (8.45.5).

was innate, nevertheless, like a sophist teaching *aretē*, he must offer instruction in conjecturing.

⁷¹ This last, of course, would be rejected as utterly inappropriate as a methodological approach in modern historiography.

⁷² For how implicitly to do it well, e.g., 1.9.4; for mistaken conjecturing, see e.g., 1.10.2 and 6.31.4 (on appearance and power); and for simple-minded conjecturing, e.g., 2.54.5 (on the interpretation of the oracle that was conjectured to conform to the plague). Differently, cf. 5.65.5, on the Argives' astonishment at the Spartans' seeming retreat at the outset of the battle of Mantinea and failure immediately to arrive at an explanation; also the size of the army at the battle, not given, but with information for the reader to conjecture (see also 1.10).

This comment is brief, but telling, because it provides an explicit lesson in how one goes about deducing motives, in this case, from resulting action.

Eikós: What is Reasonable or Probable

Appeals to what is reasonable or probable, or to what can be expected to occur, are, as is often noted, a common occurrence in ancient historiography.⁷³ Words like εἰκός, εἰκότως, εἰκαστής, εἰκάζειν pepper Thucydides' work, occurring in speeches and narrative, and applied both to Thucydides' historiographical activity as well as placed in the mouths of agents in the work.⁷⁴ The use of εἰκός in Thucydides, as in other historical authors, has been discussed from the standpoint of the historian's criterion for accepting or rejecting conflicting accounts.⁷⁵ Thucydides uses εἰκός in this sense rarely, for the simple reason that his assessment of sources is conducted behind the scenes.⁷⁶

⁷³ See Marincola's useful summary (1997: 282–83). The phrase ὥς εἰκός is normally understood to mean “as was natural” as well, e.g., Westlake (1969) 154, with earlier bibliography. The range of meanings in Thucydides is wide (see Bétant [1847] 1.295f., though one might take issue with some definitions), encompassing “fitting”, “likely”, “probable”, “reasonable”, and it is not clear that even the phrase always means “as was natural”. As methodological aids for the future reader to apply outside the text, “natural” is useful in illustrating Thucydides' view of human nature, “probable” for demonstrating deductions. In 1.4.1, in discussing Minos, Thucydides notes that the probable reason that Minos eradicated piracy from the sea as well as he could was to ensure that revenue came instead to him. Westlake (1969) 156f. translates the εἰκός argument here as “naturally”, but I would disagree partly because of the deductive nature of the *Archaeology* generally, but also because the elimination of piracy is a fact (i.e., since Minos' thalassocracy and colonization of the islands are premised on the elimination of piracy); Thucydides' additional argument is that he very likely intended to increase his maritime revenues. It may be that arguments against “as was probable” in 1.4 stem from the view that if so, Thucydides would be conveying doubt. On the contrary, it demonstrates his self-confident abilities as a deducer, based on, in this case, his observations of his world.

⁷⁴ I shall focus on a few examples of its function in the narrative. It might be fruitful to explore the use of εἰκός/εἰκάζειν terms in speeches in contrast to Thucydides' own uses; for example, does the presence of the term in a particular speech have significance, both in terms of the result of a speaker's arguments or proposals and Thucydides' implicit view of a speaker, if it can be deduced?

⁷⁵ See e.g., Marincola (1999) 282; see also Woodman (1988) on Thucydides' use of the term, explicitly or implied, in cases where “the evidence was conflicting or doubtful” (26; see also 24).

⁷⁶ Interestingly, in the one instance (8.87, on Tissaphernes; see above, n. 8) in which he does allow the reader to enter his “workshop” or thinking process, and in a very Herodotean way, offering competing views followed by his own position, he does not use the term εἰκός in support, but rather in justifying his own view

Yet even in his one methodological statement demonstrating his awareness of the problem of conflicting sources (1.22.3), alluded to above,⁷⁷ he does not follow it up by noting the criteria employed in evaluating accounts. Certainly it is justified to accept that the principle of probability underlies the entire work. Indeed, in commenting on Thucydides' explicit, but also implicit, concern with τὸ εἰκός—what is probable or reasonable, or can be expected to occur—Woodman observes that the historian's "own narrative has seemed true and reliable to scholars precisely because he was successful in making it vivid and probable—in a word, realistic".⁷⁸

It may be significant, however, that on the narrative level Thucydides tends to use εἰκός/εἰκάζειν forms not as an explicit criterion in determining probability in his pre-narrative assessment (hidden from the reader) of conflicting accounts, but rather in making his own deductions, as he shows the process of his own thinking in arriving at a conclusion or in making an argument. Especially notable examples come from the *Archaeology*, which is unsurprising given that this section of the work places on display his method in dealing with the past.⁷⁹ It features perhaps most prominently in the passage examined above on the Trojan War and Thucydides' warning about drawing inferences about the actual military power of a city from its appearance (1.10.1–3), which is preceded by his analysis and discussion of Agamemnon's power, and followed by his argument, using Homer, on the size of the Greek fleet (10.4–5). In this large section, εἰκός/εἰκάζειν terms punctuate the analysis five times (1.9.4; 1.10.2; 1.10.3 [twice]; 1.10.4), bolstered by other methodological vocabulary, "it seems" or "it seems to me" (ἐδόκει, μοι ἐδόκει, 1.9.1; 1.9.3; 1.10.1; 1.10.4), "I think" (οἶμαι, 1.10.2), "it" or "they manifestly"

he uses the comparative of σαφές, "the clearer" explanation, which recalls 1.22.4. Woodman (1988) 24–28 argues that for Thucydides τὸ σαφές is equivalent to probability. I would agree in general, but it is striking that the specific word choice in a rare instance in which he shows himself in deductive action directly evokes 1.22.4; cf. also 1.95.5 in which the phrase ἐδόκει σαφέστατον occurs in connection with Pausanias' medism.

⁷⁷ P. 339, n. 16.

⁷⁸ Woodman (1988) 28. He follows up this statement by concluding "but the circumstantial detail and the magisterial assurance are both equally misleading", a conclusion with which I disagree, especially as a blanket statement.

⁷⁹ I am especially open to the charge of arbitrary selection in singling out εἰκός arguments in this section of the work, since so many other important methodological terms appear with such frequency; but as mentioned at the outset, this preliminary exploration is necessarily selective rather than exhaustive.

(φαίνομαι, 1.9.4; 1.10.2; 1.10.3; 1.10.5), “to believe” or “disbelieve” (πιστεύειν, ἀπιστεῖν, 1.10.1; 1.10.3; cf. ἀπιστία, 1.10.2), to examine carefully (σκοπεῖν, 1.10.3; 1.10.5), “to take as evidence” (τεκμηριῶσαι, 1.9.4), “accurate indicator” (ἀκριβὲς σημεῖον, 1.10.1), “the most accurate (versions)” (τὰ σαφέστατα, 1.9.2).

Conclusion

The deductive lessons that Thucydides provides through the use of εἰκός/εικάζειν terms as well as other methodological vocabulary stand out because of their explicitness, in contrast to some other methods explored above of an implicit nature. They are especially useful from the standpoint of his obligation to the reader to provide instruction in how to do history, for those cases in which he is explicitly focused on the process of conjecturing, of arguing for probability, as well as of discovering, are precisely the points in the narrative where the reader receives training through critically observing Thucydides' efforts; they are essential tools of the trade.⁸⁰ That he makes his methodological lessons explicit through the use of εἰκός/εικάζειν formulations, moreover, tells us that these are cases in which he believes lessons are especially necessary and explicit guidance most essential. To set forth only results would fail the reader. It is useful to return to the charge that Thucydides is a concealer by trade. Of course there are many seamless parts to the work; but these too may be seen as lessons, the result of the kind of meticulous investigation, critical inquiry and deductive engagement that he abundantly provides throughout the work, both explicitly and implicitly. Furthermore, to claim that his aim is to conceal renders absurd the statement on utility with which this chapter has been concerned, for, ultimately, it is concerned with nothing other than instruction to the historians of posterity.⁸¹ To be sure, it is a *tour de force* of Thucydides' intellectual

⁸⁰ Knox (1998) 128 refers to Thucydides' use of the word εἰπεῖν “to describe the result of his historical method—the discovery of the past”; but the historian also uses it to illuminate process, for example when he says, with reference to the *erga* of the war, ἐπιτόνως . . . ἡδύρσκετο (1.22.3), with the notion of difficulty reinforcing that of process reflected by the use of the imperfect.

⁸¹ At the same time, the subtext of 1.22.4, namely, that his work and his alone will stand as the exemplum for all future histories, in turn implies, perhaps, that none of the practitioners of history will be able to surpass his own work.

acumen applied to the understanding of real events. But I hope to have shown that accompanying it is a genuine, serious pedagogical undertaking that aims to train future historians through approaches that demand patience and determination, but substantial practical instruction along the way.

THEATERS OF WAR: THUCYDIDEAN TOPOGRAPHY

Peter Funke – Matthias Haake

“Topography, geography and ethnography occupy only a small place in Thucydides’ work.” So begins Friedrich Sieveking’s study of the geographical data in Thucydides’ *History*, still the most detailed of its kind.¹ Although at first sight this claim may be surprising, it is true, and highlights the difficulties we encounter when trying to evaluate the place of geography and topography in Thucydides. But although a really systematic analysis is not possible, because of the disparate and very sketchy character of the geographical and topographical information given in the *History*, the issue nevertheless seems worth exploring, because the specific correlation between geography and history contributes to the character of Thucydides’ work and forms its particular character—above all in comparison with other works by ancient historians. Before turning to the main issue, we shall take a quick look at Strabo and Polybius; this will help to put Thucydides’ *History* into perspective as far as geography is concerned.

1. *Ancient Historians and Geography—Strabo’s View*

At the beginning of his *Geography*, written in the first century BC, Strabo states that

The science of Geography, which I now propose to investigate, is, I think, quite as much as any other science, a concern of the philosopher; and the correctness of my view is clear for many reasons. In the first place, those who in earliest times ventured to treat the subject were, in their way, philosophers—Homer, Anaximander of Miletus, and Anaximander’s fellow-citizen Hecataeus—just as Eratosthenes has already said; philosophers, too, were Democritus, Eudoxus, Dicaearchus,

¹ Sieveking (1964) 73. Sieveking’s article derives from his dissertation, submitted at the University of Hamburg in 1957. There have been many studies on specific geographical problems in Thucydides, but no overall assessment of Thucydidean geography; this task obviously cannot be undertaken here.

Ephorus, with several others of their times; and further, their successors—Eratosthenes, Polybius, and Poseidonius—were philosophers. In the second place, wide learning, which alone makes it possible to undertake a work on geography, is possessed solely by the man who has investigated things both human and divine—knowledge of which, they say, constitutes philosophy.²

Thus, closely following Eratosthenes,³ he develops an idea of geography which, being based on the scientific ideas of his time, went beyond our present notion of the subject. “Things both human and divine” were to be examined and therefore the study of geography—like all science—was the province of philosophers. Strabo not only subsumes geography under philosophy but also posits a close relationship between geography and historiography under the umbrella of philosophy, explicitly stressing the relation between his lost historical work *Historika Hypomnēmata*⁴ and his *Geography*, both of which have the same aim. His *Geography* “should be generally useful—useful alike to the statesman and to the public at large—as was my work on *History*.”⁵ And he also says: “And so, after I had written my *Historika Hypomnēmata*, which have been useful, I suppose, for moral and political philosophy, I determined to write the present treatise also; for this work itself is based on the same plan, and is addressed to the same class of readers, and particularly to men of exalted stations in life.”⁶

Strabo’s idea that there is a close symbiosis between geography and historiography relied on the scientific traditions of the Hellenistic period,⁷ but its roots go back to the beginnings of Ionian natural science and even to the Homeric epic.⁸ This heritage is well illustrated by the catalogue of names contained in the introductory section of the *Geography* which we quoted at the beginning of this essay.

² Str. 1.1.1. (All translations of Strabo are taken from H.L. Jones’ “Strabo” in the Loeb Classical Library).

³ On Eratosthenes’ geography and *Geographica*, see Geus (2002) 260–88.

⁴ The few fragments of Strabo’s *Historika Hypomnēmata* were collected by Felix Jacoby under *FGrHist* 91 Strabon von Amaseia F 1–19. On this, see recently Engels (1999) 70–73 and 76–85 and also Dueck (2000) 69–75.

⁵ Str. 1.1.22.

⁶ Str. 1.1.23.

⁷ On Strabo and his relationship to his predecessors (e.g., Ephorus, Polybius, Poseidonius, and Diodorus), see Engels (1999) 127–216.

⁸ On the relationship between geography and historiography, see the detailed discussion by Clarke (1999) 1–76.

The fact that Homer appears there as the geography's "first inventor" (*prōtos heuretēs*)⁹ is not surprising, since Strabo was one of the many admirers of Homeric geography: Homer's epics—especially the Catalogue of Ships—were generally considered to be an authoritative source of information about geographical matters;¹⁰ the geographical authority of the other writers is also beyond question.

However, it is noticeable that Thucydides' name is absent both from the catalogue of names we mentioned above and from the prolegomena that take up the major part of the first two books of the *Geography*, in which Strabo deals exhaustively with earlier historians and their attitude toward geography. Thucydides also plays a rather minor role for Strabo in the rest of the latter's work: Strabo cites him on nine occasions¹¹ and quotes him as the source of a geographical detail just twice.¹² This meager collection, which throws significant light upon Thucydides' work, serves to emphasize that Strabo's idea of a close relationship between geography and historiography (an idea whose history he traces) does not apply equally to all historical works. The significance and function that historians explicitly or implicitly assigned to geography varies greatly.¹³

2. *Writing History and the Importance of Geography—the Polybian Perspective*

Strabo's idea of a close relationship between geography and historiography goes back directly to Polybius; the geographer placed himself explicitly in the Polybian tradition.¹⁴ Strabo was able to use Polybius

⁹ Str. 1.1.2.

¹⁰ On Strabo and Homer, see, e.g., Clarke (1999), especially 248–49, Engels (1999), 115–20 and Dueck (2000) 31–40; cf. also Funke (1991) and Prontera (1993). Thucydides (1.9.3; 1.10.4; 2.41.4; 3.104.4–6) also frequently cites Homer; however, he keeps his distance from the poet (1.9.3; 2.41.4); Sieveking's claim (1964) that "Thucydides does not doubt the authority of Homer" (179) needs to be qualified.

¹¹ Str. 7.7.7; 8.1.2; 8.4.2; 8.6.6; 8.6.15; 8.6.17; 10.2.26; 13.1.39 and 14.2.28.

¹² Str. 8.4.2: position of Pylos; Str. 8.6.17: position of Thyreai; cf. the thirty-plus Herodotean quotations giving geographical information, if we limit ourselves to fifth century sources used by Strabo; on Strabo and Herodotus, see Engels (1999) 121–27.

¹³ On Thucydides' *History* and its reception in the fourth century and Hellenistic period, see Hornblower (1995b).

¹⁴ Cf. Dubois (1891); see also Engels (1999) 145–65.

as a model, because he included in his work extensive methodological reflections about the role of geography in historiography.¹⁵ The basis and point of departure for Polybius' geographical considerations is his tripartition of pragmatic historiography (*pragmatikē historia*):¹⁶ “(. . .) the first being the industrious study of memoirs and other documents and a comparison of their contents; the second, the survey of cities, places, rivers, lakes, and in general all the peculiar features of land and sea and the distances of one place from another; and the third being the review of political events (. . .).”¹⁷

Polybius is not talking about geography in its wider sense here, but aims to describe “the actual situation of places” and to mention “actual distances”; this is “the most essential thing in *chorographia*”.¹⁸ It is significant that Polybius speaks not of geography but of chronography; he is primarily interested in topography in the strict sense of the word. The fragmentary Book 34 must have been similar in content, being exclusively dedicated to geographical questions; Strabo called it a “topography of the continents”.¹⁹

Topography is given a key role by Polybius, becoming an important element for the understanding of his historical remarks. In battle descriptions in particular, Polybius regards detailed and accurate topographical data as absolutely necessary: “For seeing that in the majority of land and sea battles in a war defeat is due to difference of position, and since we all wish to know not so much what happened as how it happened, we must by no means neglect to illustrate by local descriptions events of any sort, and least of all those of a war.”²⁰

Polybius' work contains many examples of such topographically-colored interpretational models,²¹ intended not only to improve under-

¹⁵ Plb. 3.36–3.38; 3.57–3.59 and 12.25d–12.25e; cf. Walbank (1957) 367–71; 393–95; also Walbank (1967) 388–93; see also the brief remarks of Prontera (1984) 207–10. On Polybius' geography, see Pédech (1964) 515–97, and Clarke (1999) 77–128.

¹⁶ On the term *pragmatikē historia* in Polybius, see Walbank (1957) 8 n. 6. See also Petzold (1969) 3–20, and Walbank (1972) 66–96.

¹⁷ Plb. 12.25e1–12.25e2. (All translations of Polybius are taken from W.R. Paton's “Polybius” in The Loeb Classical Library).

¹⁸ Plb. 34.1.4–6 = Strab. 10.3.5; cf. Walbank (1979) 572–73.

¹⁹ Str. 8.1.1. On Polybius' Book 34, see Pédech (1956) and Walbank (1972) 122–28.

²⁰ Plb. 5.21.6–5.21.7; cf. Walbank (1957) 565–67. Here Polybius is repeating an idea first expressed in 3.36–38.

²¹ Cf. Pédech (1964) 548–55.

standing, but indirectly to draw the reader's attention to the author's expertise. Since Polybius was completely committed to the style of *pragmatikē historia*, he refrained from using topographical information to enhance the dramatic impact of his descriptions of military actions, contenting himself with neutrally-used topographical data, which he integrated skillfully into the account as a whole.

Francesco Prontera coined the term "strategic geography"²²—although "strategic topography" might be more appropriate—to describe the special function of geographical or topographical references in Polybius' argumentative arsenal. Since the *History* contains comparable information, although there is much less of it, the question arises whether they had a similar function in Thucydides' work.

3. *Thucydides and His Method—Marginalizing Geography*

Although an examination of Thucydides' work yields a fair number of geographical and topographical indications, the question is not as easy to answer as it is in Polybius' *Histories*.²³ Unlike Polybius, Thucydides gives no opinion about geography and topography as objects of historiography either in his chapter on methodology or elsewhere. He does not explicitly develop theoretical ideas about the function of such information and its role in historical understanding, and yet frequently makes use of it (particularly in the *Archaeology*) as a basis for generalizing explanations—consider, for example, his description of the Greek coastal settlements, whose history he explains in geographical terms: only in recent times (i.e., when seamanship has been developed) have people begun to found cities in coastal areas, previously building them inland for fear of pirates.²⁴ Thucydides also makes use of geographical arguments in concrete cases; for example, "wealthy Corinth", as ancient poets had been accustomed to call it, is said to owe its wealth to its geographical position.²⁵

These cases show that Thucydides was not interested in geography for its own sake, and also that he was not trying to display his geographical knowledge; for him, the value of geographical and

²² Prontera (1984) 207 n. 40.

²³ Cf. the catalogue by Sieveking (1964) 154–76.

²⁴ Th. 1.7; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.28–29.

²⁵ Th. 1.13.5; see Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.45–46. With "wealthy Corinth", Thucydides is repeating a formula already attested in Homer (*Il.* 2.570) and Pindar (*Ol.* 13.4).

topographical information lay in its explanatory function. And yet this purely functionalistic view, propagated by Friedrich Sieveking,²⁶ cannot be the whole story; the *History* contains some geographical and topographical details that cannot be explained away as functional, but rather must be viewed as elements of the narrative.²⁷

In spite of this, it must be admitted that, due to the main subject of Thucydides' work, the majority of the passages in question contain topographical information relating to expeditions and battlefields, this information forming part of the scenery against which Thucydides describes the Peloponnesian War. In what follows, we shall try to define their exact role in this scenery, with a view to evaluating the function of geography and topography in the *History*. As mentioned at the outset, we shall proceed on a case-by-case basis, since the disparity of the material makes a systematic analysis impossible.

4. *Relating a Battle—the Landscape as Stage*

Topographical and geographical information may be integrated into the historical description of war operations in various ways and for different reasons. If a historian does not exclude the topography of a war from his work *a priori*, there are two different ways in which he can integrate it into the action.²⁸

One option is to present the reader with a neutral description of the geographical facts, alongside other details such as the number of troops. He can use topographical information in explaining the battle action, as Polybius does. This type of description is characteristic of military histories of European armies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Alternatively, the historian can integrate the landscape into the narration as the "stage" for the war, or an individual battle, without implying that topographical factors had any causative role in the events. Topography and geography thus become tools with which the historian can reinforce the pathos of the description.

²⁶ Sieveking (1964).

²⁷ This has recently been pointed out by Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.182, who mentions Charybdis (Th. 4.24.5); see also Ridley (1981) 37 n. 47.

²⁸ On battle descriptions in the work of ancient historians, see the detailed remarks of Pritchett (1985) 44–93.

Even if these two approaches are not always easily distinguishable and may be combined, they represent two distinct functions which must be kept in mind as we now proceed to analyze the integration of topographical data into Thucydides' narrative. Our analysis will be based on various battle descriptions.

4.1. *Demosthenes in Aitolia: Campaigning in a Barbarous Mountain Area*²⁹

In the summer of 426, the Messenians of Naupaktos asked the Athenian general Demosthenes to attack their enemies the Aitolians. The Messenians had assured Demosthenes that the conditions for such an attack were extremely favorable, and made out that the expedition would be an easy one. They claimed that while the Aitolians were indeed numerous and warlike, they lived in scattered unfortified villages and were not heavily armed, and that consequently their land would be easy to conquer.³⁰ Because Demosthenes hoped that with military intervention in Aitolia he would be able to decisively reinforce Athenian power in Central Greece, he took the Messenians' advice and began a campaign against Aitolia, setting off from Locrian Oineon with a large army. After conquering Potidania, Crokylaion and Teichion in the first three days,³¹ he was soon able to capture Aigion.³² But after this successful start, the Athenians' luck deserted them: the inhabitants of Aigion, who had fled to the high ground nearby, started to attack the Athenian troops, helped by the Aitolians who had rushed to their aid. In the battle against the heavily-armed Athenians, the Aitolians were helped by the lightness of their own weapons. They made repeated attacks from the heights, retreating as soon as the Athenians and their allies started to counter-attack.³³ Eventually the Athenians were forced to flee, entering completely unknown terrain in which many were slaughtered. The majority of them were killed in a wood which was set on fire by the Aitolians as soon as they took refuge there: "Then every manner of flight was essayed and every manner of destruction

²⁹ Th. 3.94–3.98; see Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.508–514. On Demosthenes' Aitolian campaign, cf. also Pritchett (1991) 47–82 and Roisman (1993) 23–32.

³⁰ Th. 3.94.4; cf. also Funke (1987) and (1997).

³¹ On Potidania, Crokylaion, Teichion, and Aigion, see Freitag—Funke—Moustakis (2004) 381–82.

³² Th. 3.96.2.

³³ Th. 3.97.2–3.98.1; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.513–514.

befell the army of the Athenians.”³⁴ Thucydides concludes his narrative by mentioning the number of Athenian casualties and describing the army’s retreat to Athens via Naupactos.³⁵

The neutral, distanced style in which Thucydides describes the Athenian catastrophe is impressive; equally striking is the way in which he avoids dramatization of any kind. Information about the natural environment in Aigion is kept to a bare minimum, despite the fact that this environment has contributed to the Athenians’ defeat.

This style goes hand in hand with the extremely vague topographical details which Thucydides gives. Nothing is said about the routes taken by the troops. Information about the route taken by the Athenians from Oineon to Aigion can only be gleaned from the plans of attack that the Messenians send to Demosthenes; from this we learn that the Athenians pass consecutively through the land of the Apodots, the land of the Ophions, and the land of the Eurytians.³⁶ Thucydides gives no clue as to where exactly these Aitolian tribes lived, though readers at the time must have known as little about them as we do; nor does he provide any precise information about Potidania, Crocylaion, and Teichion, the places that fell into Athenian hands during the first days of the campaign. All we hear is that Aigion is situated on a hill, some eighty stades from the sea.³⁷ The paucity of this data may partly be due to the fact that geographical information on that remote part of Greece was not available to Thucydides; however, the structure of the narrative reveals that he had little interest in defining the geographical and topographical context.

4.2. *Fighting on a Rocky Island: Thucydides and Pylos*³⁸

In the summer of 425, the Athenians sent a fleet of forty ships to Sicily. Demosthenes, one of the commanders of the fleet, despite not

³⁴ Th. 3.98.3.

³⁵ Th. 3.98.4–3.98.5. On the Athenian casualties in Aigion, see Rubincam (1991) 183–84 and 195.

³⁶ Th. 3.94.5. On the Aitolian tribes, cf. Funke (1997).

³⁷ Th. 3.97.2.

³⁸ Th. 4.2.–4.23; 4.26–41; see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.149–180 and 184–97. We shall only discuss the first part of the conflict. The most detailed study of the battle of Pylos is still Wilson (1979). Cf. also Howie (2005) 216–30.

having been in office since the defeat in Aigition, asked the Athenians to use the ships against the Peloponnese on their way to Sicily, should the opportunity arise.³⁹ While navigating around the Peloponnese, Demosthenes tried to persuade the other commanders that they should land and “do there what was to be done, and then continue their voyage”⁴⁰—though Thucydides does not actually tell us (at this stage) what it was that had to be done. Demosthenes was unable to find support for his plan, but the Athenians nevertheless ended up landing at Pylos when the fleet was driven there by a storm.⁴¹ Demosthenes then took his chance to execute his initial plan, and immediately asked for the place to be fortified.

At this point in the narrative, Thucydides provides us with concrete geographical and topographical information about Pylos.⁴² However, he does not give this information in the course of a description of the place but integrates it into his account of the quarrel which took place between Demosthenes and the other commanders over the former’s plan. In the course of a debate about the pros and cons of this plan, the reader is gradually informed about the topography of Pylos.⁴³ The information remains very sparse and the reader is able to form only a vague picture of Pylos, whose position on the Messenian coast is defined solely with respect to Sparta (a distance of 400 stades away).⁴⁴ We are then told that the place lent itself to fortification because of the abundance of trees and stones there, and that Pylos also had the advantage of a good harbor.⁴⁵

Although Demosthenes was initially unable to persuade the Athenians to go along with his plan, the soldiers suddenly began fortifying the place: “And in every way they made haste that they might complete the fortification of the most vulnerable points before the Lacedaemonians came out against them; for the greater part of the place was so strong by nature that it had no need of a wall.”⁴⁶ Here the

³⁹ On Demosthenes’ role in the battle of Pylos, see Roisman (1993) 33–41.

⁴⁰ Th. 4.3.1.

⁴¹ Th. 4.3.1; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.152.

⁴² On the topography of Pylos and Sphacteria, see Pritchett (1965a) 6–29.

⁴³ Th. 4.3.2–4.3.3. On the name Koryphasion, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.154–155. There has been lively debate about Thucydides’ estimation of the distance between Pylos and Sparta (400 stades); see Hornblower (1994a) 26 and Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.154 with further literature.

⁴⁴ Th. 4.3.2; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.154.

⁴⁵ Th. 4.3.2; see Ridley (1981) 40.

⁴⁶ Th. 4.4.3; cf. Furley (1990) 178–79.

reader is indirectly informed about another topographical detail: the place was protected naturally and so no walls were required. The Athenians “in six days completed the wall on the side toward the land and at such points as most needed it.” Demosthenes could then be left with the crews of five ships to defend Pylos against the Spartans, while the rest of the fleet continued on its mission to Sicily via Corcyra.⁴⁷

The Spartans planned to attack Pylos by both land and sea; they did all they could to gain a swift victory, before the Athenians could get help from their fleet, which was returning from Zakynthos. For tactical reasons it was very important for the Spartans to blockade both entrances to the port.⁴⁸ Here Thucydides provides us with some further topographical details about the port, information without which the reader would be unable to follow the military action. Although the island of Sphacteria, situated at the entrance of the port, was a very important strategic feature of Pylos and should therefore have been mentioned before, Thucydides makes no reference to it until it becomes absolutely essential to the narrative. With quick phrases he sketches the position of the island, which “stretches along the mainland, lying quite close to it, and thus makes the harbor safe and the entrances to it narrow;” then elaborates: “(. . .) on one side, opposite the Athenian fortifications and Pylos, there is only room for two ships to path through, on the other side, next to the other part of the mainland, there is room for eight or nine.”⁴⁹ The reader also learns that Sphacteria is an uninhabited island and no more than 15 stades long.⁵⁰

Thucydides describes the topography of Sphacteria in a completely different way than that of Pylos. While he reveals the topographical details of the latter in a gradual, quasi-dialogical manner, when it comes to Sphacteria he conveys all the necessary information by means of a short yet dense digression. On the whole, this mode of presentation provides all the salient topographical characteristics of Sphacteria, and Thucydides leaves us in no doubt that the topographical nature of the place played an important role in the mili-

⁴⁷ Th. 4.5.2; on Demosthenes' stay in Pylos, see Wilson (1979) 65.

⁴⁸ Th. 4.8.5; see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.158–159 on Sparta's strategy.

⁴⁹ Th. 4.8.6. Hornblower offers an analysis of Thucydides' geographical data in this passage, *Comm.* 2.159–160.

⁵⁰ On this indication, see Rubincam's (2001) detailed discussion with further literature.

tary events which took place in the area.⁵¹ He lets Demosthenes say that the Athenians will have the topographical conditions of Pylos as their allies, if only they can hold out against the attacking Spartans.⁵² Time and again in his description of the battles the historian points out the difficulties that both the Athenians and the Spartans faced due to the topography of the island (shortage of drinking water, no arable land or firewood, etc.). However, these aspects are not stressed or used as an additional element of dramatization; they remain fixed features of the backdrop against which the battle takes place.

This also applies to the topographical data. The narrative of the events in Pylos seems to confirm our findings with respect to the account of Demosthenes' campaign in Aitolia: Thucydides' topographical notes enable the reader to follow the narrative, but they are not enough to paint a full picture of a place or an environment. Indications such as his telling us that the battle was fought "at the very edge of the sea",⁵³ are too vague to convey a definite image of the battlefield. By all accounts this was not Thucydides' aim. He contented himself with giving just those geographical and topographical data that were necessary to understand the events, aiming to categorize a place typologically rather than to give it topographical concreteness.

4.3. *Thucydides on the March of Brasidas: Embedding War in Landscape*⁵⁴

Let us now briefly discuss a Spartan military operation whose description by Thucydides is important in the present context.

In 424 Brasidas had received orders to lead an army by land from Corinth to Thrace to help the Macedonian king Perdikkas and the Chalcidian cities who had revolted from Athens.⁵⁵ Before setting off, Brasidas was involved in the battle of Megara, which was under threat from the Athenians. Note, incidentally, that Thucydides'

⁵¹ Cf. the important remarks of Furley (1990) 178–81. See also Casevitz (1999) 65.

⁵² Th. 4.10.3. On Demosthenes' speech in Th. 4.10, see Leimbach (1985) 56–63 and Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.162–164.

⁵³ Th. 4.11.1.

⁵⁴ Th. 4.70–4.74 and 4.78–4.81. On these passages, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.238–244 and 255–73. Cf. also Howie (2005) 231–260.

⁵⁵ Th. 4.70.1 and 4.74.1.

description of the battles before Megara and Nisaia⁵⁶ confirms what we have seen in the examples discussed above: Thucydides again provides few topographical details, hardly enough for even an expert reader to locate where the troops were deployed. In this case too, the topographical context remains vague and is relegated to the background when the historian describes the military action.

Unsurprisingly the same is true of Thucydides' description of Brasidas' forced march to Thrace.⁵⁷ Although the march itself represented a major military achievement, the troops covering a long distance in a very few days, Thucydides pays very little attention to it. Nothing is said about the route between the starting point, Corinth, and Heracleia Trachinia in Central Greece, and for the rest of the march he merely mentions a few resting points, without giving any geographical or topographical information about the land which the Spartans crossed.⁵⁸ Only the political aspects of the march seem to be of interest to Thucydides: the negotiations about the crossing of Thessaly are reported in detail and thus form the core of the narrative,⁵⁹ while topographical aspects are left aside.

4.4. *Thucydides and the Setting of a Catastrophe: The Athenians in Sicily*⁶⁰

In the year 415, the Athenians optimistically sent a powerful fleet to Sicily. Although they claimed that they were merely rushing to the aid of their allies, it was evident that their real aim was to bring Sicily under their control, something Thucydides makes absolutely clear from the outset of his narrative. In the very first sentence of the Sicilian chapter⁶¹ he stresses that the Athenians had nothing in mind but the subjugation of the entire island, and he expresses this view again⁶² after he has presented his *Archaeology* of Sicily in a long digression.⁶³ Thucydides' aim with this *Archaeology* was to emphasize

⁵⁶ Th. 4.73.1–4.73.4; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.241–244.

⁵⁷ Th. 4.78.1–4.79.1.

⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Thucydides through his narrative illustrates the enormous speed of Brasidas' march through Thessaly; s. esp. Th. 4.78.5.

⁵⁹ Th. 4.78.2–4.78.5.

⁶⁰ The description of the war in Sicily forms the greater part of Books 6 and 7; s. *HCT* 4.197–198.

⁶¹ Th. 6.1.1.

⁶² Th. 6.6.1.

⁶³ Th. 6.1.2–6.5. On Sicily (and Southern Italy) in Thucydides, s. Rutter (1986), Tsakmakis (1995a) 157–75, and Zahrt, this vol.

the magnitude of the island and its large number of inhabitants, because the Athenians had underestimated these and were unaware that “they would be taking on a war just about as great as the one against the Peloponnesians”.⁶⁴

At this point more than any other, it would have been appropriate for Thucydides to mention geographical and topographical factors in support of his arguments, especially in view of the Athenians’ ignorance of the geographical and demographical realities of Sicily which he himself points out.⁶⁵ And yet the introduction to the Sicilian narrative contains only one sentence about the island, describing its size—it is described in terms of the time a ship needs to circumnavigate it (almost eight days)—and giving the distance to the mainland (20 stades).⁶⁶ There follows a historical digression on the colonization of the island from the earliest times, in which Thucydides refrains from giving any geographical information. He ends this section by stating: “so many Hellenic and barbarian peoples occupy Sicily, and against a place of this size the Athenians were bent on campaigning”.⁶⁷ Here Thucydides’ characteristic reticence about giving geographical information becomes pronounced.

The absence of geographical and topographical information pertaining to the Athenians’ Sicilian Expedition correlates with the absence of such data about Sicily itself. Thucydides describes no other part of the Peloponnesian War in so detailed a manner as he does the Sicilian Expedition between 415 and 413; there is no shortage of detailed scenes in his narrative, no lack of accurate descriptions of battles and skirmishes on land or at sea. So, here too the neglect of geographical and topographical aspects must be seen as a significant feature of the *History*. The reader, who in Thucydides’ own words lacks adequate information about Sicily, is supplied with a large number of place names, yet these toponyms are not integrated into a larger geographical context. This is particularly apparent in the vivid description of the bitter fighting in front of Syracuse: the description of the topography is too rudimentary to evoke an image of the battleground or enable us to properly understand the military tactics. The spatial context remains vague, in that when Thucydides does give an indication of the distances between various places, this

⁶⁴ Th. 6.1.1.

⁶⁵ Th. 6.1.1; cf. *HCT* 4.197.

⁶⁶ Th. 6.1.2; cf. *HCT* 4.197–98.

⁶⁷ Th. 6.6.1.

does no more than facilitate the creation of a relationship; it does not create a concrete idea of space—and we cannot but be confirmed in our impression that Thucydides has not even tried to do this.⁶⁸

5. *Theatres of War—Not Thucydides' Concern*

To sum up so far, we have attempted to define the role of geography and topography in the *History*, investigating the function of landscape and space as constituents of Thucydides' historiographical staging of the Peloponnesian War. We have proceeded in a backwards fashion, first examining the ideas of Strabo and then Polybius about the relationship between geography and historiography and then looking at four concrete examples from Thucydides. The result of our inquiry turns out to be rather disappointing, in that although Thucydides recounts the events of the Peloponnesian War in all their many and varied locations, topographical or geographical information plays an astonishingly small part in the narrative, and is not amenable to a definitive or systematic analysis. Thucydides' treatment of topography and geography is too bitty and changeable for any tendency to be discerned, all the more so as he proffers no relevant methodological thoughts at any point in the work.

Although simple enough to describe, these findings are not easy to explain. The theory that Thucydides' work did not undergo final revision or that the historian did not have access to geographical sources are not convincing. It would be wrong to infer from the (lack of) geographical information in the *History* that the geographical knowledge of his time was rudimentary; sufficient knowledge and relevant works did exist, and Thucydides was able to use these when he deemed it necessary, an example being his description of the geological transformations at the Acheloos delta. There is no doubt that Thucydides is addressing himself to analogous remarks by Herodotus here.⁶⁹ The almost total absence of topographical and geographical data, limited in the majority of cases to place names and distances, cannot be explained in terms of their function alone. Thucydides'

⁶⁸ On the topography of Syracuse and its surroundings in relation to the Athenian siege, see in detail *HCT* 4.466–84.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Hdt.* 2.10; *Th.* 2.102.2–2.102.4; cf. Sieveking (1964) 170; Funke (1991) 183.

complex handling of topography and geography defies a monocausal explanation. Although in many cases Friedrich Sieveking's remark is true, i.e., Thucydides integrates geographical information in his narrative only where it has a function—the generalization does not stand up to closer scrutiny.⁷⁰ There are too many cases in which Thucydides remains silent about the topographical aspects of an expedition or battlefield; and where he does give a topographical description, it is often not sufficient for the reader to form a concrete idea of the spatial conditions.

There are passages of geographical content—albeit not many of them—which, in view of their detailed, descriptive character, do not seem to have had the sole function of furthering the narrative.⁷¹ The exact localization of the landing place of the Corinthian fleet at Cheimerion in Epirus—perhaps an immediate borrowing from Hecataeus⁷²—or the description of the Acheloos delta⁷³ are obvious examples of this, as are the detailed geographical and ethnographical description of the kingdom of the Odrysians,⁷⁴ and the detailed description of Amphipolis and Eion.⁷⁵ In the case of the latter battles, Thucydides' own participation as a general may explain the detailed geographical description, but in the other cases there is no apparent reason for the relatively unimportant details he offers; and there may not always be a reason, other than a certain garrulity on the part of Thucydides in spite of his stylistic and argumentative austerity. Whatever the explanation, these examples show that Thucydides was able to create vivid images of spatial conditions despite the fact that this was not a necessary element of his historiography.

What we are left with is a certain vagueness, though with a pronounced tendency toward marginalizing geography and topography. Thucydides seems to limit himself to what is absolutely necessary for events to be understood, any geographical and topographical indication that goes beyond this being sporadic and seemingly rather accidental; no methodologically grounded system is discernable. Even against this poor background, Thucydides is able to give a vivid

⁷⁰ Sieveking (1964); Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.68 criticizes Sieveking's view.

⁷¹ See above p. 373 with n. 23.

⁷² Th. 1.46.4; s. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.91.

⁷³ Th. 2.102.2–2.102.4; cf. above. p. 382 with n. 69.

⁷⁴ Th. 2.96.1–2.97.6; s. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.372–373.

⁷⁵ Th. 4.102.3–4.102.4 and Th. 4.108.1. On Amphipolis' and Eion's topography s. Pritchett (1965b) 30–45; Pritchett (1980b) 347–70; Lazaridis (1993).

description of the battlefields of the Peloponnesian War. In his descriptions of the horrors of the plague in Athens,⁷⁶ the brutality of civil strife in Corcyra,⁷⁷ and the misery of the Athenian prisoners in the quarries of Syracuse,⁷⁸ geographical and topographical details are absent; and even in descriptions of battles, the information he gives allows only for a rather approximate orientation. Thucydides did not aim to describe the spatial conditions in detail. It was enough for him to depict the places of action and their main characteristics and to present them to the reader in a typological manner, thus creating the background against which to stage his account of the Peloponnesian War—the *megistē kinēsis*.

Theaters of war were very much Thucydides' concern. Even though the dramatist made use of such a sparse geographical backdrop, he succeeded in describing a crucial part of world history in a remarkably eloquent way.

⁷⁶ Th. 2.47–2.54; cf. Sonnabend (2004) 91–94 with further bibliography.

⁷⁷ Th. 3.69–3.85; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.466–490.

⁷⁸ Th. 7.87.1–7.87.4; cf. *HCT* 4.464.

WARFARE

Peter Hunt

The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps an infinite, number of hexagonal galleries . . .¹

Jorge Luis Borges

Compared to war all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance.²

General George S. Patton Jr.

Introduction

This chapter will explore an aspect of Thucydides that is not particularly profound, but was certainly important to him and to his contemporaries: the intelligent conduct of warfare.³ It would be foolish to claim any great originality for such a line of inquiry. I hope merely to provide a reminder of what readers of Thucydides already know, but sometimes forget, and to complement the view of Thucydides as a possible heir to epic and tragedy, a skilled and innovative author, and a child of the age of the Sophists.⁴ Thucydides was all these, but he was also a general with an abiding interest and, one is tempted to say, delight in the practice of war.

In a well-known passage, Thucydides upbraids the Greeks for their credulity. One of the examples he gives concerns the organization of the Spartan army: “[The rest of the Greeks believe] also that the

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, “The Library of Babel” in: *Ficciones* (1962) 79.

² Reported in Farago (1963) 486. See also his statement reported in Nye (1993) 158: “Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can engage . . . It brings out all that is best; it removes all that is base.”

³ For brief introductions to the warfare depicted in Thucydides, see Gomme, *HCT* 1.10–24, and the more recent guides, Hanson (1996) and Hirschfeld (1996). Sabin, van Wees, and Whitby (2007) provides recent scholarly treatments of most aspects of Greek Warfare.

⁴ See the chapters by R. Thomas and A. Corcella in this volume for recent treatments with bibliography.

Spartans have a company of troops called ‘Pitanate’. Such a company has never existed.”⁵ Moses Finley comments that “it is hard to imagine that there was a ‘general belief’ or even general interest in whether or not the Spartans called one company ‘Pitanate’ . . .”⁶ Finley assumes that Thucydides was here primarily concerned with correcting what he considered false information in Herodotus. This argument is emblematic of much recent Thucydidean scholarship.⁷ Such scholarship treats Thucydides as an author and intellectual and, therefore, in this case focuses on his relation with his predecessor. It must be admitted that rivalry with Herodotus may have motivated Thucydides’ correction, but even the most cursory investigation shows an abiding Greek interest in the organization of armies from Homer’s Catalogue of Ships down through Herodotus to Thucydides himself and beyond.⁸ We may ignore the enumeration of the contingents from different cities as a somewhat different case from that of the Pitane company. But Thucydides often gives the names of special units in armies when there is no question of reaction to Herodotus:

Once the fighting began, the Mantinean right broke through the Spartan Sciritae and the Brasidians . . . the thousand picked troops of the Argives . . . where King Agis himself was with the 300 troops called “the knights”, they fell upon the older men of the Argives and what are called the “five companies” . . .⁹

In this short passage alone, we find references to three subsections of the Spartan army and three of the Argive army. In the preliminaries to the battle, Thucydides also enumerates the regiments, companies, and platoons of the Spartan army as a way to calculate their

⁵ 1.20.3. (translation Warner modified). It may be that we should translate “the Spartan kings have a company . . .” (Kelly [1981] 32); cf. Hdt. 9.53.2–3; 9.57.1. On the issue of whether Herodotus or Thucydides is correct, see Kelly (1981); Cartledge (2002b) 218–19; Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.57–58.

⁶ Finley (1972) 15.

⁷ In this respect Thucydidean scholarship must be sharply distinguished from military history, whose practitioners do not consider Thucydides’ history a subject in itself, but rather a rich and reliable mine of information.

⁸ E.g., *Il.* 2.484–877; Hdt. 7.55; 7.60–87.

⁹ 5.72.3–4. It may be that we should translate “the older men, those who are called the Five Companies,” in which case, we have only two named groups within the Argive army—comprising six units (Gomme, *HCT* 4.121). The “Five Companies” were probably geographically based units of the Argive army (*ibid.* 4.121–23).

numbers.¹⁰ Thucydides manifestly cared about such things and expected his readers to as well.

It is not merely anachronism, but a particular scholarly and intellectual predilection that has led Finley astray. Officers in the military and many veterans are often familiar with numerous units and their histories.¹¹ It may well be that such officers, concerned not only with unit names, numbers, and histories, but also with all the tricks, tactics, and technologies of war, may be closer in outlook to Thucydides and his intended readers during a generation of intense warfare than are his bookish interpreters, this author included. To understand Thucydides fully we may sometimes need to take on the military perspective of Patton—if not his enthusiasm—and to resist the tendency to regard the universe as a library, as in Borges' story.

Patton's statement, admittedly hyperbolic today, would not have raised hackles in fifth-century Greece. A well-known tabulation reveals that Athens was at war two out of every three years and never enjoyed a decade of peace in the classical period.¹² The long and hard-fought Peloponnesian War, in particular, eventually required military service of most adult males from every social class at Athens—and participation was probably also high in other Greek states.¹³ Almost all facets of the Greeks' culture—athletics, epic, tragedy, comedy, philosophy, history, and sculpture—reflected the large role war played in their lives.¹⁴ So, too, was war central to Thucydides' life story. Before his exile for his failure to prevent the capture of Amphipolis, he was an elected general of the Athenians. His assignment in the area toward Thrace was probably due in part to his influence there;¹⁵ it was also a military post, one that placed him against the greatest threat to Athenian power in the later years of

¹⁰ 5.68.3. The Greek words used are λόχοι, πεντηκοστίες, ἐνωμοτίαι. Cf. X. *Lac.* 11.4–6. On the obscurities in understanding Spartan military organization, see Lazenby (1985) 5–20 and Anderson (1970) 225–51.

¹¹ E.g., Moore and Galloway (1992) xviii, 17, 20, 27–28. See Keegan (1993) 12–15 and Hanson (1989) 117–25 on modern and ancient unit cohesion and identity. The Pitanate Lochos was probably most famous as the unit of Amompharetos, who, in Herodotus' account, "voted his pebble against running from the foreigners" at the Battle of Plataea (Hdt. 9.55.2).

¹² Garlan (1975) 15.

¹³ See Strauss (1986) 179–82 for casualties among the hoplites and thetes at Athens. Athenian hoplites probably saw less service and suffered less than the poor in the navy—or the very rich who served as trierarchs or in the cavalry.

¹⁴ See Raaflaub (1998) for a concise and persuasive treatment.

¹⁵ 4.105.1.

the Archidamian War, the expedition of Brasidas. It will be the argument of this chapter that, to judge from his history, Thucydides wrote for readers equally military in their interests and experience. His intended audience seems not to have tired of or to have become disillusioned with the topic of warfare, but remained fascinated by tactics, weaponry, the names of units and generals, and the numbers of ships and soldiers.¹⁶ They wanted to understand why battles, great and small, ended the way they did. Thus, the detailed and analytical history of military campaigns is a major part of Thucydides' work—and of the historians who followed him.

Modern scholars are aware of this focus—it is blazingly obvious—but they tend to interpret his account of the conduct of the war, of the good and bad decisions, military technology, and tactics, as merely a means to some other end, an end more intellectually reputable. For example, John Marincola makes the following explicit claim:

[W]ar and imperialism are about much more than themselves, and it is *through* them that Thucydides examines other issues, not least the importance of power, wealth, preparedness, judgment, chance or the unexpected, the individual in his community, and the interrelation of speech and action.¹⁷

An example of this approach is the way that Thucydides' detailed accounts of military operations are sometimes interpreted as aimed primarily at establishing his authority as an objective and comprehensive reporter. According to this line of reasoning, his seeming detachment and concern to report the facts—sometimes, it seems, all the facts—allow Thucydides subtly to impose his views on readers lulled into complacency by his air of authority.¹⁸ One need not object to these lines of inquiry to want to pause and consider his military history for itself before rushing on to some other end that it may serve.¹⁹ For, more than occasionally, the concrete details that Thucydides recounts—the reasoning behind a change of camps, a new design for trireme prows, the advantages of light troops in rough

¹⁶ Contra G. Murray (1944).

¹⁷ Marincola (2001) 86.

¹⁸ V.J. Hunter (1973a) and Connor (1984) 7 both invoke parallels with news reporters, seemingly objective but with a hidden agenda; cf. the approach of Loraux (1986b).

¹⁹ As Simon Hornblower points out in a different context, "After all, we know that Thucydides was a soldier; we do not know that he was a doctor" (Hornblower [1987] 40).

terrain—resist subordination to any other agenda, political or literary, besides an interest in the conduct of war.

Accuracy and Detail

We almost never have another account of the military operations Thucydides describes. This makes it hard to evaluate his accuracy with much certainty, but three oblique approaches are possible.²⁰ Is Thucydides' account internally consistent? Can his account be reconciled with the topography of the battlefield? Does Thucydides' account depend on eyewitness reports for everything, or did he add probable, or merely dramatic, details to fill out his account?

Thucydides' battle descriptions are coherent. It is possible to draw a map showing the different contingents as the battle progresses.²¹ Units do not disappear; they do not interact with enemy formations that are not contiguous. Thus, Thucydides' battle descriptions do pass the test of basic coherence. This is not a foregone conclusion. An entirely fictional battle narrative could be internally consistent, but Homer's battles, for example, would not pass such a test: most notoriously, the way the Achaeans are deployed at the beginning of a battle is entirely ignored in the subsequent narrative.²² In several notable cases, Herodotus' battle descriptions do not seem to include all the units that he earlier placed at the scene.²³ Thucydides does not seem to commit these sorts of errors.

Reading Thucydides' description of a battle against the modern topography of its location provides a second and more demanding test of Thucydides' accuracy. Although some slips can be detected, intensive investigations, especially by W.K. Pritchett, reveal that Thucydides' battle descriptions are rarely at odds with the terrain.²⁴

²⁰ See the classic treatment of Whatley (1964).

²¹ E.g., Lazenby (1985) 125–34.

²² Van Wees (1997) 669f.

²³ See, for example, Gomme (1952) on the missing cavalry and other problems with reconstructing the battle and campaign of Marathon. I have elsewhere considered why Herodotus places 35,000 Helots at the battle of Plataea but does not describe their activity (Hunt [1997]).

²⁴ See the chapter by Funke and Haake, this vol. Sphacteria: Wilson (1979) 100–123; Pritchett (1965a); Gomme, *HCT* 3.482–88; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.150 (for more bibliography). His description of the bay behind Sphacteria seems to be Thucydides' worst gaffe (4.8.5 with Wilson [1979] 73–84; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.159f.;

This consistency probably bespeaks the careful integration of detailed eyewitness accounts, autopsy of the battle site, and, I suspect, the use of maps—be they as simple as drawings in the sand—either by Thucydides or his informants. These two criteria do not yield proof of his accuracy; they do go some ways to explaining scholars' tendency to regard his work as one of the most dependable sources available for classical Greek military history.²⁵

A third approach to evaluating Thucydides' battle descriptions is to consider his possible sources of information. If it can be shown that Thucydides could not have known the details of a battle's course, then his narrative represents, at best, his inferences about what probably happened rather than a synthesis of the reports of eyewitnesses. G.M. Paul makes this argument most directly: since hoplite generals knew little of what happened in a battle, Thucydides could not either.²⁶ So, in Paul's view, Thucydides added material to recreate the atmosphere of a battle and to serve his literary goals.²⁷ Paul's argument rightly notes that Thucydides may emphasize the importance of one battle rather than another by stating general truths about battles in that place rather than another. Nevertheless, two objections to a more general theory of Thucydidean additions must be registered.

First, a hoplite general during a battle probably had little knowledge of what was going on. But didn't Greek soldiers and officers discuss their battles afterward? I suspect that few generals—or even common soldiers—could have avoided hearing many individual accounts of battles. For example, after the battle of Mantinea, the Athenian contingent was joined by further reinforcements from Athens, who were no doubt eager to hear what had happened. Together they built part of a wall around Epidaurus before returning home.²⁸ During that whole time, soldiers and officers would have camped

and most recently Dyson [2002]). Delium: Pritchett (1969a) 34; (1980a); earlier criticisms focused not on inaccuracy, but on lack of detail; e.g., Gomme, *HCT* 3.567. Mantinea: Pritchett (1969b) 68–70; cf. *HCT* 4.94–102. Amphipolis: Pritchett (1965b) and (1980b); cf. Gomme, *HCT* 3.648: "Thucydides, of course, knew the place well, and so gives this and other details; but he has rather forgotten his readers."

²⁵ E.g., Hornblower (1987) 201.

²⁶ Paul (1987) 308f.

²⁷ Paul (1987) 310–12. See Woodman (1988) 1–70 for a highly influential exposition of the rhetorical approach to Thucydides. See Rhodes (1994c) for some important criticisms of this method.

²⁸ 5.75.5–6.

out and eaten meals together with time enough to share their recent experiences and to judge the sections of the army and their commanders.²⁹ Even back at Athens, military experiences were a frequent topic of conversation.³⁰ Unlike Herodotus, who would have had to seek out eyewitnesses or depend on second-hand accounts of battles of the previous generation, Thucydides could hardly have avoided hearing directly from participants: Greece was full of them and there is no reason to think they were reticent.³¹

Second, as Paul acknowledges, Thucydides' descriptions of battles are never long; comparisons with the information available to modern military historians is therefore rather deceptive.³² Modern historians may devote hundreds of pages to a single battle; Thucydides' accounts are all under five *OCT* pages.³³ We are far from, for example, a battle description in an early book of Livy, which might be as long as Thucydides' and based on little more than the rhetorical elaboration of a location and an outcome—if even those were preserved accurately over the intervening centuries.³⁴ Thucydides was a contemporary, a general, and easily possessed of enough detail to fill five pages. In most cases I suspect Thucydides' accounts are a distillation of a large number of eyewitness accounts, which were more likely to have been long-winded than brief—although limited, as he admits, by partiality or lapses of memory.³⁵ Thus, Thucydides' shaping of his narrative is much more likely to have consisted in the selection of material to report rather than in the addition of details that were merely probable.

²⁹ E.g., X. *HG* 1.2.15.

³⁰ E.g., Pl. *Smp.* 219e; 220d–221b; cf. *La.* 181b; X. *Smp.* 2.11–14; 4.9; 5.3; Thphr. *Char.* 8.4–8.

³¹ Although Stroud (1994) is mainly concerned to suggest that Thucydides resided in Corinth, his account of Thucydides' many sources of firsthand information is persuasive (301–304). This aspect of his article is accepted by Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.21.

³² As also in Whatley (1964) 121.

³³ I do not count the pre-battle speeches, which also never exceed five *OCT* pages in total. For example, Sphacteria: 4.31–38, almost five pages; Delium: 4.96, one page; Amphipolis: 5.7–8; 5.10.1–5.11, about three pages; final sea battle at Syracuse: 7.69–71, about four pages.

³⁴ See Oakley (1997) 94–104 for a balanced recent discussion. Livy is less extravagant than Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

³⁵ 1.22.2–3; cf. 7.44.1. In contrast to his admissions of these difficulties, Thucydides never hints that he had trouble finding eyewitnesses.

The Soldier's Experience

Paul argues that Thucydides makes up for his lack of command information by recreating the atmosphere of a battle with descriptions of the activities and experiences of the soldiers present. He argues that such descriptions served literary rather than historical goals, but there is a more charitable way to view them.³⁶ Thucydides may not have possessed the precise information to present a detailed narrative from the commander's perspective with the exact details of orders given and of units' movements, the sort of account we associate with traditional military history. But what Paul considers to be filler, the concrete details about the actual fighting, is an equally legitimate goal of the historian of war.

In his influential book *The Face of Battle*, John Keegan contrasts the battle accounts of Thucydides and Caesar. He argues that Thucydides shows a concrete and plausible interest in the environment and reactions of soldiers in battle, whereas Caesar's account represents the soldiers as the passive tools of a commander and hence displays the weaknesses of traditional military history, namely a general vagueness and the patriotic slant and metaphors that obscure the actual experience of battle.³⁷ Much military history retreats from the bloody and banal details of soldiers' experience of battle to a distant view of units performing metaphorical cuts, blows, or stands at their commanders' behest. Such a view is useful when it enables historians to understand the outcome of a battle better than any of the participants with their limited perspectives did. But accounts that adopt only the commander's view are necessarily false to the soldiers' experience of the battle and may miss the small-scale, concrete advantages that led to victory or defeat.

Whether Keegan's judgment of Caesar is justified or not, Thucydides well deserves his praise. Thucydides does not neglect the general's perspective since he describes the basic disposition of forces and the success of wings or center. But he was keenly aware that the outcome of battles often depends upon how soldiers acted in their specific, concrete situations. Consider his observations about fighting at night: soldiers, especially in a large army in enemy territory with the enemy nearby, can panic; they can be confused and scared by

³⁶ Paul (1987) 309.

³⁷ Keegan (1976) 63–70; cf. Lendon (1999).

an unfamiliar paeon in their rear; and their aim can be good or bad, depending upon which side is carrying torches—a disadvantage in some circumstances.³⁸ Thucydides also notes twice that rowers can find it hard to hear orders in the din of battle.³⁹ Most famously, it is from Thucydides alone that we hear that a formation of hoplites tends to move to the right as it advances, the result of each soldier trying to protect his unarmed right side behind his neighbor's shield.⁴⁰ All these details are valuable for understanding the experience of Greek warfare. I, for one, would not trade them for a more exact enumeration of the position and movements of, for example, the tribal units of the Athenian army at Delium.

This focus on the common soldier's experience and actions may at first seem democratic or populist—as modern parallels such as Studs Terkel's *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two*, Stephen Hynes's *The Soldiers' Story*, or Paul Fussell's *Wartime* might suggest.⁴¹ But Thucydides occasionally reveals the prejudices of his class: he says that the one hundred twenty Athenian hoplites who died with Demosthenes in Aetolia were the best men who died in the war. In contrast, the eighteen ships whose entire crews, numbering about three thousand six hundred men, were killed by the Syracusans during a single one of the battles in their harbor receive no such eulogy.⁴² Thucydides' view is probably still elitist and, as we shall see below, often that of a general. But a smart and open-minded general is as interested in whether his troops are able to get their fuel and water easily and whether they have to wear their armor all the time, as he is in the disposition of units before battle.⁴³

Thucydides' attention to whether soldiers or sailors could or could not hear their orders may seem unspeakably banal to a modern scholar interested in *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* or *Chance and*

³⁸ Th. 7.80.3; 7.44.6; 3.23.4.

³⁹ 2.84.3; 7.70.6

⁴⁰ 5.71.1. Note that Thucydides describes this tendency here because it was relevant to the course of this particular battle.

⁴¹ This tendency is most pronounced in Terkel (1984), since his is an oral history, and Fussell (1990), which draws on personal experience and a variety of other sources. Hynes (1997) 31f. admits that most war memoirs are written by middle-class soldiers.

⁴² 3.98.4; 7.53.3. Strauss (2000) makes a slightly stronger contrast than I do (Hunt [1998] 123–26) between Thucydides' high regard for naval power and his low esteem for their crews. See Pritchard (1998) and Hunt (2007) for the general question of the prestige of the different branches of the military in Athens.

⁴³ 7.4.6; 2.81.8.

Intelligence in Thucydides—to name just two complex and profound modern studies.⁴⁴ But attention to such concrete details is one of the things that sets Thucydides' account well above most military history. Twenty-four hundred years later, Thucydides could be invoked by Keegan—justly in my opinion—as a model of what military history should be.

The Analysis of Military Decisions

Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant have argued persuasively that “cunning intelligence” was highly valued in classical Greece.⁴⁵ This rapidity of thought, ability to draw inferences from shifting and uncertain data, and to apply the right parallels to understanding a situation characterized the effective general among others.⁴⁶ Disparaged by Plato and, to a lesser extent, Aristotle, such intelligence certainly does not grab the attention of modern scholars. Thucydides, however, was not only an intellectual but also a former general. He focuses throughout his work on the command decisions that determined the course of the war. The same dynamic between planning and acting that scholars notice on a large scale when, for example, Pericles' predictions about the whole course of the war are either met or disappointed, permeates his military narratives. Thucydides is almost never content simply to tell us what happened. He is constantly analyzing military decisions, constantly giving us the rationale behind them.

In some cases, Thucydides presents his analysis in the form of a speech attributed to a general or advisor.⁴⁷ Occasionally, these speeches are addressed to the other commanders;⁴⁸ more often they are

⁴⁴ De Romilly (1956); Edmunds (1975).

⁴⁵ Detienne and Vernant (1978) 308; 315–16.

⁴⁶ Detienne and Vernant (1978) 308; 324 on, e.g., Aen. Tact. 11.10; 24.11 and Pl. *Lg.* 961e–962a.

⁴⁷ Although his assembly speeches usually treat issues of foreign policy such as the making of alliances, peace treaties, or war, several advocate strategies for waging war, e.g., 1.141.2–144.1; 6.33–34; 6.89–92. I believe Greek generals were expected to and typically did make speeches to their armies; the length of the speeches directly before battles would have varied according to the time available and the dispersion of the troops. See Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.82 and Pritchett (2002) 1–80 contra Hansen (1993); (1998).

⁴⁸ Th. 6.46.5–6.50.1 and 3.29.2–3.31.2 are conspicuous examples of this. Other

addressed to the troops. But one suspects that such harangues are also aimed at Thucydides' reader—as are all of Thucydides' speeches. Their predictions and analysis inform the following narrative; the narrative reveals success or failure, the reasons for it, and thus provides the touchstone against which the decisions and tactics described in a general's speech can be evaluated.

Even when we descend to the strictly narrative accounts of campaigns—which constitute the bulk of his history—Thucydides does not give a neutral catalogue of facts. His history is permeated with analyses of options and choices and evaluations of their effectiveness. Sometimes Thucydides simply mentions that a particular expedition occurred; more often he states what a state or general hoped to accomplish by the endeavor.⁴⁹ He notes the smart or stupid choice of camp or fortification.⁵⁰ He analyzes the choice to seek or decline battle and then describes the reasoning behind the tactical decisions leading up to and during land or sea battles.⁵¹ He details reasons to retreat or not and describes the successful or unsuccessful management of a withdrawal.⁵²

Sometimes these descriptions are simple and straightforward:

Pasitелidas was afraid that the ships might reach the city and find it undefended, and that, with the fortification also taken, he would be trapped, so he abandoned the fortifications and took his troops back at the double into the city.⁵³

Or even more briefly: Pagondas “quickly got his army on the move and led them forward, since it was already late in the day.”⁵⁴ But, his analyses, even of single tactical decisions, can be complex. For example, Thucydides gives two specific and one general consideration that motivated Nicias to move the Athenian base of operations outside Syracuse to Plemmyrium; he gives four reasons—if we include

cases are much briefer, in some cases consisting merely of the mention of advice not taken.

⁴⁹ 2.32; 2.69.1; 3.51.1–2; 4.3.3; 4.76.5; 8.12.1–2; 8.44.1; cf. 2.20.

⁵⁰ E.g., 5.6.3; 7.4.4–7.

⁵¹ Decision to fight: e.g. 4.57.2; 4.73.1–4 (cf. 4.74; 4.85.7). Tactical decisions: e.g., 1.62.3–5; 3.105.2–4; 3.107.3; 4.29.3–4.30.2; 4.93.2–3; 4.96.5; 5.6.3; 5.7.2; 5.8.1–4; 5.10.2–5; 5.71; sea: 2.83.5; 2.84.2; 2.86.5–6; 2.90.1–4; 7.70.1.

⁵² Decision to retreat: 7.47–49. Tactics used during retreats: 1.63.1; 3.108.3; 4.125.2–3; 4.127.2–128.2; 7.78.1–2; 7.80; 7.81.3–4.

⁵³ 5.3.1.

⁵⁴ Th. 4.93.1.

the Syracusan countermeasures—why this move, in fact, led to the deterioration of the Athenian forces.⁵⁵ This seemingly small decision had momentous consequences; Thucydides wants to be sure that his reader understands Nicias' reasoning as well as its failure.

In sum, Thucydides' history provides a varied and comprehensive analysis of good and bad decisions in war. This practice introduces a significant degree of subjectivity into the whole of his work.⁵⁶ Did the factor or factors that Thucydides identifies, either in speeches or more directly in his narrative, really determine the course of a battle or campaign? In many cases, the reasons for a given outcome or decision was probably a matter of some dispute: for example, losers typically emphasized contingent factors while winners would chalk up success or failure to intrinsic superiority.⁵⁷ Thucydides' analysis inevitably involved choices, authorial decisions he made for the sake of exploring effective military command.

Counterfactuals

One prominent aspect of Thucydides' military history is his use of counterfactuals: he often implies, mentions, or details the advantages, drawbacks, and probable results of courses of actions that were not, in fact, taken.⁵⁸ He presents, with varying degrees of vividness and detail, unreal battles, campaigns, and even wars, as alternatives to what actually happened. These did not actually take place for a variety of reasons: sometimes an enemy took countermeasures;⁵⁹ sometimes an ally refused to go along with a plan;⁶⁰ and, most often, a commander gave orders that took him and his army along one path and excluded an alternative.⁶¹ Thus, Thucydides' presentation and evaluation of these might-have-beens play a large role in his explo-

⁵⁵ Th. 7.4.4–6.

⁵⁶ See, for example, V.J. Hunter (1973a).

⁵⁷ E.g., 2.85.2; 2.87; 4.40.2; 5.75.3.

⁵⁸ See Hornblower (1994b) 158 for a discussion of the literary effect of this type of expression. Dover (1988b) also treats "might-have-beens" in Thucydides, largely as revealing the distortions of which Thucydides was capable.

⁵⁹ 5.52.2; 5.56.5; cf. 5.75.4.

⁶⁰ 2.2.4; 3.113.6; 8.32; 8.87.4. Mixed motives are also possible 3.94–3.95.1.

⁶¹ Some counterfactuals are hard to categorize either in terms of the reason they didn't take place (1.101.2; 4.8.5–9; cf. 4.13.4) or in terms of Thucydides' judgment of them (8.87.4).

ration of the wisdom of different decisions and the merits of different commanders.

In some cases, Thucydides states in his own voice, or strongly implies by his narrative, that a different decision would have had a better result for one side or another.⁶² In other cases, Thucydides is more circumspect and attributes the judgment of counterfactuals to somebody else.⁶³ We can guess at Thucydides' opinion in some of these cases, but the virtues of some unfulfilled plans are hard to evaluate: Hermocrates' advice that the Syracusans should contest the Athenians' passage over to Sicily would seem to fall into this category.⁶⁴ In at least one case, Thucydides gives a comprehensive evaluation of a counterfactual, including both his own and the participants' judgments about what could have been. In 418 a battle between the Peloponnesian League and the Argives near Nemea was narrowly averted when the commanders of both sides made a truce. Thucydides here describes how both the Argive soldiers and Sparta's allies thought that they had been deprived of a certain victory and blamed their commanders. He also makes it clear whose judgment he approves: "in fact, the Argives were hemmed in on all sides" and the Spartan force with its allies "looked as though it could hold its own not only against the Argive League but against another such League in addition."⁶⁵

Two counterfactuals are central to the development of Thucydides' whole history. Thucydides evaluates Athens' grand strategy and the consequent course of the war in terms of a counterfactual: if the Athenians had followed the strategic advice of Pericles, they would easily have won the war.⁶⁶ This famous claim reveals, first of all, Thucydides' well-known esteem for Pericles' military judgment. It also involves a confident appraisal of a course of action not taken, a judgment on a grander and hence more speculative scale than most of the cases we have been examining. But Thucydides finds

⁶² E.g., 1.11.1; 2.94.1; 3.77.2; 3.79.2–3; 3.29.1–3.31.2 (cf. 3.33.3); 3.95.3; 3.97.2 (cf. 3.98 and 3.112.6–7); 4.104.2 (cf. 4.105.2–106.3); 7.42.3; 8.86.4; cf. 8.82.2; 8.96.4.

⁶³ E.g., 2.18.3–5; 5.65.2–3.

⁶⁴ 6.34.4–8. Compare the opposing views of *HCT* 4.299 and Cogan (1981) 102f., 281 n. 25. So, too, the priorities behind Astyochus' decision not to raise the siege of Chios are described but not evaluated (8.41.1).

⁶⁵ 5.59.3; 5.60.3.

⁶⁶ 2.65.12–13; cf. 7.28.3; 7.42.2. Pericles' strategy is presented in his speech at 1.141.2–144.1.

evidence for Pericles' foresight in Athenian endurance and perseverance more than by showing how Athens could have positively defeated Sparta. As a result, the question of what exactly Pericles' strategy entailed and excluded and whether it could have led to victory continues to exercise both Thucydidean scholars and military historians.⁶⁷

Another pivotal counterfactual concerns Thucydides' own activity. He describes his thinking and actions upon hearing of Brasidas' move against Amphipolis.⁶⁸ His quick reaction almost saved it:

In this way the city [Amphipolis] was surrendered and late on the same day Thucydides with his ships sailed into Eion. As for Amphipolis, Brasidas had just taken it, and he was within a night of taking Eion too. If the ships had not arrived so quickly to relieve it, it would have been in his hands by dawn.⁶⁹

Thucydides' emphasis on his speed and the fact that he almost arrived at Amphipolis in time are the closest he comes to a defense of his conduct as a general, the probable grounds of his banishment from Athens.⁷⁰ In addition, his energy and its positive consequence is implied by a second counterfactual: what might have happened to Eion had he hesitated.

This apologia leads us to a further observation: although a counterfactual need only provide a touchstone for judging a decision, in many cases it provides a cue for Thucydides to evaluate a commander's overall quality. For example, Thucydides praises Phrynichus' caution and refusal to go along with his colleagues' demand to fight the Peloponnesians at sea and then concludes "it was not on this occasion alone that Phrynichus showed intelligence, but in every other position of trust which he occupied."⁷¹ Themistocles was possessed of an ability to predict the future, which Thucydides praises

⁶⁷ See Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.341 on Th. 2.65.5 and Kallet – Marx (1993) 184–206 for contrary evaluations of Thucydides' account of Athenian resources and its ability to win the war. See Holladay (1978) for a clear and thorough treatment of Pericles' strategy.

⁶⁸ 4.104.5; see also Dover (1988b) 81–82.

⁶⁹ 4.106.3–4.

⁷⁰ 5.26.5.

⁷¹ 8.27.1–5. See also the condemnation of the Peloponnesians' intelligence and energy at 8.96.4–5. In contrast, the counterfactual evaluations of decisions of Demosthenes (3.95.3; 3.97.2; cf. 3.98; 3.112.6–7), Brasidas (4.104.2; cf. 3.79.2–3), and Alcibiades (8.86.4; cf. 8.82.2) do not reflect Thucydides' overall judgment of these commanders.

in terms that imply the weighing of different courses of action: "He was particularly remarkable at looking into the future and seeing there the hidden possibilities for good or evil."⁷² So Thucydides sees the accurate evaluation of alternatives as an important quality for commanders—and also for the historian and his reader who wish to appraise them.

In his introduction to *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*, Niall Ferguson explains the connection between the consideration of counterfactuals and practical intelligence:

[T]he business of imagining such counterfactuals is a vital part of the way in which we learn. Because decisions about the future are—usually—based on weighing up the potential consequences of alternative courses of action, it makes sense to compare the actual outcomes of what we did in the past with the conceivable outcomes of what we might have done.⁷³

Given this pervasive pattern of thought, it is perhaps belaboring the obvious to stress that commanders, who particularly needed to be able to judge the consequences of different courses of action, were conspicuous among those who might have benefited from Thucydides' explorations of counterfactuals in his military narratives; for they especially needed to "understand clearly the events which happened in the past, and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future."⁷⁴

A final implication of Thucydidean counterfactuals should be considered. I believe that Thucydides' frequent consideration of what could have been gives his whole history, and especially his military narratives, a greater sense of the possibilities that lay open than some of his interpreters acknowledge. In addition to the counterfactuals, both large and small, that we have already considered, Thucydides sometimes produces this sense of an undetermined future by relating how close an event came to turning out differently: "Syracuse had thus been in very great danger indeed."⁷⁵

⁷² 1.138.3.

⁷³ Ferguson (1997) 2; cf. 90.

⁷⁴ 1.22.4. On Thucydides' conception of the usefulness of history, which is not always so optimistic, see Connor (1984) 242–45 on 1.22.4; 2.48.3; 3.82.2.

⁷⁵ 7.2.1; 7.2.4; see also 3.49.4; 4.106.3–4; 5.3.3. The overarching counterfactual, "Athens could have won the war," gives extra force to these more narrow ones: "Amphipolis could have been saved," and "Syracuse could have fallen." These

I do not want to overstate my case; Thucydides' "truest explanation" of the war, for example, smacks of inevitability.⁷⁶ More important, he was addressing readers who knew the outcome of the war.⁷⁷ But other aspects of his history, in particular his use of counterfactuals, undermine readings of Thucydides as exclusively deterministic. Instead of the inevitability associated with tragedy or epic—often emphasized in Thucydidean scholarship of the last decades—Thucydides' military narratives often present us with a world and course of history that is profoundly undetermined.⁷⁸ A general's energy, his bad timing or intelligent planning, a pilot's trick or a different trireme design could have changed the course of history.

Ferguson argues at length against a host of deterministic theories of history: some of these may trace their origins back to Thucydides himself.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Thucydides' frequent emphasis on alternatives to the actual course of events and his particular focus on those alternatives that were in the minds of participants makes Thucydides an intellectual ancestor not only of the secular determinism of the post-enlightenment period, but also of Ferguson's "chaotic history." Such a history refuses to subordinate with the pernicious favoritism of hindsight all other possibilities to what actually happened. For as surely as Thucydides argues for the inevitability of war, does he emphasize how often the course of the war could have turned out otherwise.

passages are not, however, one-sided: Connor (1984) 187 points out that Thucydides' statement that Syracuse was out of danger after the arrival of Gongylus marks a change in his tone from one focusing on the possibility of victory for Athens to an ironic one, since only with hindsight could Syracuse be said to be safe with a large and hitherto successful Athenian army outside its walls.

⁷⁶ 1.23.6.

⁷⁷ Connor (1984) 34 and *passim*. Treating Thucydides as a coherent text, written after the war has proved a fruitful postulate for Connor and others, but important contrary evidence remains. See, for example, *HCT* 5.361–83.

⁷⁸ Earlier in the twentieth century, scholars emphasized tragic parallels to Thucydides' history, e.g., Cornford (1907), Finley (1967), but, in part due to the criticism of Macleod (1983a), his epic antecedents are now receiving more attention, e.g., Allison (1997b), Rengakos, this vol.; cf. Ferguson (1997) 67: "To write history according to the conventions of a novel or play is therefore to impose a new kind of determinism on the past: the teleology of the traditional narrative form."

⁷⁹ Ferguson (1997) 20–62.

The New Warfare

The rules of good military practice implied by Thucydides' judgments, analyses, and counterfactuals occasionally seem too obvious for their illustration to have constituted any significant portion of the historian's goal. Did anybody not know that lookouts, scouts, and good communications are crucial; that hoplites by themselves are vulnerable; that night attacks can devastate an enemy but carry high risks; that cities should never let their guard down regardless of how unlikely they think an attack is.⁸⁰ But these apparently obvious principles—much like the observation that war is unpredictable—may be most clear in retrospect; some precepts were repeatedly forgotten both in Thucydides' and subsequent ages. For example, one concrete and specific lesson—and its disregard—would have been more prominent had Thucydides finished his history and treated the destruction of the Athenian navy at Aegospotami: several incidents in the narrative show the vulnerability of beached ships to surprise attack especially if the men have to go far to get their food.⁸¹

So these specific and precautionary rules should not be dismissed too quickly. When Thucydides aspires to a greater degree of generality he mainly focuses on energy and intelligence—with a stress on innovation—as the mark of successful military action. Not only in his narrative, as we have seen, but in the generalizations of several speakers, a similar lesson appears:

Success goes to the man who sees more clearly when the enemy is making mistakes like this and who, making the most of his own forces, does not attack on obvious and recognized lines, but in the way that best suits the actual situations. And it is by these unorthodox methods that one wins the greatest glory; they completely deceive the enemy, and are of the greatest possible service to one's own side.⁸²

In addition to “unorthodox methods,” both sides attempted ambushes and surprise attacks throughout the war.⁸³ Several of these were of

⁸⁰ Contrast the night-time attacks 3.112.2–8 and 7.43.2–7.44. See below for intelligence and communication, hoplites, and cities' precautions.

⁸¹ See 7.39–41; 8.10.4, and esp. 8.95.3–7. The two main accounts of Aegospotami, however different in other respects, share this feature (X. *HG* 2.1.21–28; D.S. 13.106).

⁸² 5.9.4–5; cf. 3.30.4 and 6.91.6. These statements are not undermined by the narrative and in two cases are confirmed.

⁸³ 2.2.1–3; 2.81.5–6; 2.93–94; 3.90.2–3; 3.107.3–108.1; 3.112.1; 4.36; 4.72.2; 5.75.4; 5.115.4; 6.97.2; 7.29.3–4; 7.32.2; 8.20.1; 8.23.3.

pivotal importance to campaigns.⁸⁴ Surprise attacks no less than conventional battles required the nice discrimination of costs and benefits in situations where certainty was impossible. The career of Demosthenes—his successes against the Ambraciots and at Pylos, the disaster on Epipolae—neatly illustrates the risks and the potential benefits of bold and unexpected attacks, but on the whole it is the decisive and innovative that come off best in Thucydides.⁸⁵

These rules, both precautionary and bold, share one important feature that can be too easily forgotten. They do not come out of a world of battles dominated by hoplite infantry and fought in traditional and limited ways, a world in which the most complicated thing a army had to do was form up in an unbroken line of battle across a Greek plain—not that this was that easy in practice or always accomplished.⁸⁶ It may well be that the Greek warfare of the Archaic and early Classical Period was never quite as rule-bound and simple as later writers sometimes claimed.⁸⁷ What we know for sure is that, by the Peloponnesian War, warfare had become recognizably modern, that is, a matter of strategy, of tactics, of different types of troops, and of innovations aimed to improve the chance of winning. It is Thucydides' interest in and ambivalent attitude toward the warfare of his age that provides our last subject.

Thucydides is often viewed as being profoundly pessimistic. His subject is a destructive war, whose horror he is capable of depicting with great vividness.⁸⁸ This war was not only destructive of lives and property, but, in Thucydides' view, of values also: the conflict between Athens and Sparta sparked the civil wars that caused "a general deterioration of character throughout the Greek world";⁸⁹ the admirable Athens of the Funeral Oration lost its moral compass in the plague;⁹⁰ the leadership of Pericles was superseded by the

⁸⁴ 3.112.2–8; 4.96.5; 7.23.1; 7.43.2–44.8.

⁸⁵ See Roisman (1993) esp. 72–73.

⁸⁶ See Connor (1988); Hanson (1989); (1991) on the Archaic and early Classical hoplite "contest." See Ober (1991), (1994b) and Hanson (1999) 321–49 for the breakdown of hoplite warfare.

⁸⁷ See Holladay (1982); Krentz (1997); (2000); (2002); van Wees (1995) esp. 162–65; (2000) for some important criticisms—on different grounds and of different degrees of severity—of an over-schematic model of the pure hoplite contest, its time period, and its decline.

⁸⁸ E.g., 1.23.2–3; 7.29.4–5; 7.84.3–5; 7.87.1–3.

⁸⁹ 3.82.1; 3.83.1.

⁹⁰ 2.53.

demagoguery of his successors.⁹¹ In the sphere of military practices, too, Thucydides may seem to depict a moral decline: war had gone from being a matter of bravery to being determined by a city's wealth.⁹² In addition, the types of men upon whom the fate of cities depended had taken a change for the worse—at least in the eyes of the elite. In Athens in particular, the role of the steadfast hoplite was overshadowed by that of the “naval mob”—as Thucydides once describes it—which even included slave rowers.⁹³ Even on land, the hoplite—and recall that they were hoplites whom Thucydides described as the best men killed in the war⁹⁴—and the elite cavalryman were joined by, and occasionally defeated by, other types of troops, men drawn from the cities' poor or from the borders of the Greek world. These latter fought as peltasts (light-armed troops armed with javelins), archers, and slingers. Instead of contingents of hoplites, independent farmers fighting for their cities, Thucydides describes, in Sicily for example, massive armies whose motives were as motley as their origins.⁹⁵

The picture of Thucydides as the sad narrator of decline and of the tragedy of war certainly reflects an important stream in his history. We must also acknowledge two other aspects of his work: first, his role as a commemorator of military glory, a glory as likely to come from the quality of a general's mind as from his personal bravery; second, that it is the greater complexity of late fifth-century warfare that gives Thucydides' military history its interest. Thucydides does not reluctantly and briefly describe the aspects of warfare that went beyond the hoplite battle; he describes them in great detail and, one might almost say, with relish.

To begin with, despite the decay of traditional military practices, the glory and prestige associated with military success continued strong. The defeat of the Athenian expedition brought honor to Syracuse and was “to the victors the most brilliant of successes” in the “greatest action that we know of in Hellenic history.”⁹⁶ The battle

⁹¹ 2.65.7–12.

⁹² Crane (1998) 148–71, and Kallet(-Marx) (1993), (2001) provide recent explorations of this theme in Thucydides.

⁹³ See note 42 above. On slave rowers, see Graham (1992), (1998), Hunt (1998) 83–101, and Hunt (2001); cf. Welwei (1974) 65–104.

⁹⁴ 3.98.4.

⁹⁵ Although his evidence comes from the fourth century, Anderson (1970) 111–64 presents an excellent picture of the interaction of these different types of troops.

⁹⁶ 7.57–7.59.1; 7.66.1; 7.87.5–6.

of Mantinea regained for Sparta its good reputation after the surrender at Sphacteria.⁹⁷ The importance of military performance to the prestige and power of states continued to be high. But the varied campaigns of the Peloponnesian War, far more than traditional hoplite battles, opened up a great field of opportunity for individual achievement and glory, especially for the use of intelligence in warfare. The glory that individuals could gain by military command was unmatched: no speaker, no merely political leader, could hope to attain the prestige that Miltiades, Themistocles or Cimon earned with their victories over Persia. In the Peloponnesian War, Brasidas was accorded hero cult upon his death, and Lysander may have received divine honors while alive.⁹⁸ Thucydides, for his part, depicts or alludes to this preeminent brand of glory in the cases, for example, of Phormio, Demosthenes, Brasidas, and Gylippus.⁹⁹ Thucydides' own greatest admiration is reserved for Themistocles and Pericles, both of whom were famous for their generalship as well as their strategic vision.¹⁰⁰ He also notes the energy, bravery, or cunning of numerous commanders during the Peloponnesian War.¹⁰¹ Thucydides' lists of generals and minor commanders, often interpreted as a sign of obsession with detail or an attempt to establish authority for his account, may well bespeak a concern that officers, men such as himself, get their due credit—even if only for the fact of command.¹⁰²

Indeed, even minor characters are acknowledged for their clever ideas: "Ariston, the son of Pyrrhichus, a Corinthian and the best steersman in the Syracusan fleet", is given credit for a stratagem that helped the Syracusans in one of their naval battles against the Athenians in the Great Harbor.¹⁰³ In traditional hoplite battles, even

⁹⁷ 4.40; 5.75.3.

⁹⁸ 5.11.1 on Brasidas; see Fredricksmeyer (1981) 151f. on Lysander's cult.

⁹⁹ Phormio: 3.7.1; Demosthenes: 3.114.1; Brasidas: 5.11.1; Gylippus 7.86.2–3. Thucydides' presentation of the Athenian soldiers' esteem for Brasidas is probably mainly indicative of his own attitude (5.7.1).

¹⁰⁰ 1.138.3; 2.65.5–9. Archelaus, king of Macedonia, is praised for his rule, including making straight roads and military reforms (2.100.2). It seems that Antiphon alone, of the men whose intelligence Thucydides lauds, never exercised his wits in war (8.68.1–2).

¹⁰¹ E.g., 4.11.2; 6.72.2; 5.7.2. Thucydides' evaluation of Demosthenes is ambivalent (Roisman [1993] 11–21).

¹⁰² It is hard to open a page of Patton (1947) without seeing the names of units and commanders; in an appendix, Patton lists all the staff officers and units under his command (420–25). See also Moore (1992) *passim* and 20–25.

¹⁰³ 7.39.2–40.3. In other places too, Thucydides narrates suggestions by minor characters, e.g., 3.29.2–3.31.2; 5.59.5.

the general, a prominent member of the city's elite, took his place as an equal in the front rank of the hoplite phalanx.¹⁰⁴ Here Thucydides singles out a steersman, a technical professional and not even a ship's captain, as the best among the hundred or so steersmen of the Syracusan fleet and as responsible, in part, for a victory in which seven Athenian ships were sunk and many disabled.¹⁰⁵ The individual glory that was overshadowed by communal pride of the hoplite phalanx reasserted itself in the display of intelligence that—along with personal courage—brought glory in the complex warfare of the late fifth century. Archilochus may have preferred a simple captain who solidly stands his ground, and Tyrtaeus may praise unflinching bravery in hand-to-hand combat; but Thucydides glorifies a much more complex brand of military virtue, one that was in no way the diametrical opposite of the intellectual, but rather embodied the application of intelligence to the most important thing in his world, the conduct of war.¹⁰⁶ Although the advance of military sophistication came at the cost of traditional values, for Thucydides, a former general and a military historian, war provided as much if not more scope for greatness, now that it had become a sphere for the exercise of cunning as well as bravery. Thucydides' constant and often detailed descriptions of technological innovations, clever ruses, surprise attacks, and the complex and urgent balancing involved in command decisions bespeak a fascination with the "cunning intelligence" required by the new war. It was an exciting time to be a general—or even to be a former general turned historian.

To begin with, the conduct of war had been complicated by the need to make the best use of a variety of different types of troops.¹⁰⁷ Far from concentrating on the deeds of hoplites alone, Thucydides emphasized the effectiveness of other troops, their tactics, and the ways these can complement the forte of hoplites, the hand-to-hand struggle on open ground. His descriptions repeatedly reveal his view that a fully functional army will include javelin throwers, archers,

¹⁰⁴ See Hanson (1989) 107–116 on hoplite generals and Wheeler (1991) on the developing role of commanders.

¹⁰⁵ 7.41.4. In fact, no other individuals are mentioned in the account of this battle, after Nicias' preparations are described at 7.38.2–3.

¹⁰⁶ Archilochus 114 W.; e.g., Tyrtaeus 11, 12 W.

¹⁰⁷ See Anderson (1970); Holladay (1982); Hanson (2000); Hunt (2007) for the developing mix of and interactions between different types of troops; Best (1969) and Lippelt (1910) on light-armed infantry; Gaebel (2002) and Spence (1993) on cavalry; Pritchett (1971–91) 5.1–67 on slingers.

and cavalry. For example, in his invasion of Aetolia, Demosthenes' army is described as deficient in light-armed javelin-throwers.¹⁰⁸ In another case, the reinforcements under Demosthenes, who joined the original expedition against Syracuse and whose arrival caused great dismay among the Syracusans and their allies, consisted not only of ships and hoplites but also of "a great force of javelin-throwers both from Hellas and from outside, and slingers and archers and everything else that could be required."¹⁰⁹

These mixed forces enjoyed their main advantages on the campaigns that led up to or followed a battle. Cavalry could prevent enemies from performing functions, such as ravaging, that required them to break formation.¹¹⁰ Both cavalry and light-armed troops in general were deadly against a retreating enemy.¹¹¹ Even the lowly slinger was effective at harassing hoplites on campaign and forcing them to wear their armor all the time—and, one imagines, were really bad news for the unarmed hoplite attendants.¹¹² Cavalry were very useful in set battles too: the Athenian cavalry proved decisive in fighting the Corinthians near the Isthmus.¹¹³ The Athenians suffered from this same vulnerability in Sicily, despite Nicias' warnings beforehand and their constant attempts to bolster their cavalry.¹¹⁴ A crucial factor in several battles in Sicily was whether the Syracusans were able to deploy and make use of their superiority in cavalry, something that depended in part on the skill of the commander.¹¹⁵

The vulnerability of unescorted hoplites, a lesson that seems only to have been learned slowly and incompletely, is repeatedly emphasized in Thucydides' narrative. For example, even after defeating the enemy's hoplites, a body of Athenian hoplites in Chalcidice was eventually routed by javelin throwers and cavalry:

Whenever the Athenians charged, their enemies gave way, and as soon as the Athenians began to retire, they fell upon them again and shot

¹⁰⁸ 3.95.3; 3.97.2; cf. 4.55.1–2.

¹⁰⁹ 7.42.1.

¹¹⁰ 3.1.2; 6.98.3; 7.4.6; cf. 2.100.5.

¹¹¹ 7.44.8; 3.112.6. See 4.125.2–4.127.2 on how an exemplary commander, Brasidas, manages a retreat.

¹¹² 2.81.8.

¹¹³ 4.44.1.

¹¹⁴ Nicias 6.20.4–6.21.1 (cf. 6.37.1). Attempts to strengthen cavalry: 6.88.6; 6.94.4; 6.98.1.

¹¹⁵ 7.5.2 (Gylippus also failed to use his javelin throwers effectively). See also 7.6.2–3; 6.66.1.

at them with their javelins. The Chalcidian cavalry also kept riding up and charging whenever they saw their chance. Indeed, they were largely responsible for causing a panic among the Athenians who were routed and then pursued for a considerable distance.¹¹⁶

The Peloponnesian War was a decisive period in the transition in Greek military practice away from dependence mainly on the hoplite; this change demanded and allowed the increasing strategic and tactical sophistication that Thucydides documents.

So, too, the growing importance of naval warfare made war into a matter of resources and experience rather than simple courage.¹¹⁷ This was something that only the obtuse Spartans, whose fleet had been defeated once and was about to suffer a second defeat at the hands of a smaller Athenian force, could fail to understand.¹¹⁸ Naval warfare involved complex tactics as did the new warfare on land; technology was also an issue. Thucydides details both aspects of naval warfare with great care. His descriptions of naval tactics are well known and need not detain us.¹¹⁹ His interest in naval technology introduces another dimension to our picture of his fascination with and enthusiasm for all things military. It is rather difficult to attribute his descriptions of crossbeams, decks, and lead “dolphins” to anything more intellectually fashionable today.

First of all, Thucydides is interested in methods of shipbuilding. He knows of and names a shipmaker Ameinocles, who lived three hundred years earlier;¹²⁰ he narrates the development of triremes from longboats and fifty-oar ships, noting that it was only since the Persian Wars that triremes had full decks.¹²¹ In addition, the naval

¹¹⁶ 2.79.5–7; 3.98.2–3 (cf. 4.30.1). At Pylos, a mixed force of hoplites and light-armed enjoys a decisive advantage over the unsupported Spartan hoplites (4.32–34). Cf. the Thracian tactics against cavalry at 7.30.2.

¹¹⁷ Thucydides' emphasis on naval power and financial resources, as is well known, begins already in his *Archaeology* (e.g., Minos 1.4; Agamemnon 1.9.3–4; Corinth 1.13.2–5; Ionians and Polycrates 1.13.6; generalization 1.15.1) and is a major theme throughout the whole *History*.

¹¹⁸ 2.85.1–2; cf. 1.142.6–9.

¹¹⁹ See esp. 1.49.1–7; 2.83.2–2.84.4; 2.90–92; 4.13.3–4.14.1; 7.22–23; 7.34; 7.37–41; 7.52–53; 7.70.1–71.6. Two chapters in Morrison, Coates, and Rankov (2000) 50–93 cover the tactics of Greek naval battles. About half of this treatment (62–84) is devoted to the battles described by Thucydides.

¹²⁰ 1.13.3.

¹²¹ 1.14.1; 1.14.3; cf. 2.56.2. Such technical and banal details as the repair and maintenance of triremes do not escape his purview, even in cases where such repair or lack thereof had no important consequences: 1.29.3; 2.94.3, 7.12.2–4; 7.38.2; 8.107.1.

warfare at close quarters in the Great Harbor of Syracuse led to a variety of other technical innovations, most prominent of which were naval defenses including fixed merchant ships equipped with lead “dolphins” on the end of a spars, which could be dropped through the deck and hull of any ship that came too close.¹²²

Thucydides’ most extensive treatment of the technology of naval warfare concerns the Corinthian tactic of bolstering the prows of triremes. This gave them—and later the Syracusans—the ability to disable Athenian triremes by attacking head on rather than attempting to maneuver into position to ram the side or rear of an enemy’s ship. Thucydides narrates the first use of this new type of trireme near Naupactus.¹²³ He describes its adoption by the Syracusans in a detailed technical passage that takes up a full page in the *OCT*.¹²⁴ He narrates its initial success in the Great Harbor of Syracuse.¹²⁵ Then, the Athenian counter measures and Syracusan counter-counter measures are depicted both directly and in the speeches of Nicias and Gylippus respectively.¹²⁶ It would be a malapropism to speak of the “theme” of stronger prows; Thucydides’ focus and persistent attention is nonetheless evident.

Both sides in the Peloponnesian War devoted a great deal of energy to the capture of walled cities and forts. Thucydides describes many such attempts and their varied results.¹²⁷ Most conspicuous were the attempts to breach the walls of Plataea and the resourceful and energetic counter measures that prevented it, both of which are narrated at length.¹²⁸ In the case of siege warfare too, Thucydides pays particular attention to the technology used: for example, an early flame thrower earns a detailed description and does, in fact, prove the key to the Theban recapture of Delium.¹²⁹ Conversely, the

¹²² 7.38.2–3 and 7.41.2–3 with *HCT* 4.418; cf. 4.25.4. See also 7.25.5–8 (underwater stakes) and 7.53.4 (a fire ship).

¹²³ 7.34.5; see *HCT* 4.415 and, more recently, Morrison, Coates, and Rankov (2000) 165–67.

¹²⁴ 7.36.2–5 contains 25 lines in the *OCT*. Thucydides then continues for 11 more lines about the difficulties of the Athenian position, an issue relevant to the use of the Corinthian prows.

¹²⁵ 7.40.5.

¹²⁶ 7.60.4; 7.62; 7.65; 7.67.2–3. This struggle also involved the tactical innovation, or throwback—cf. 1.49.1—of having javelin throwers on deck and on small boats (7.40.5). Cf. 7.59.3 and 4.8.5–7 for blocking up harbors entirely.

¹²⁷ 2.58.1–2; 3.51.3; 4.115.2–116.2; 5.56.5; 7.43.1; 8.100.5.

¹²⁸ 2.75–78.

¹²⁹ 4.100. The scaling of the siege walls during the breakout from Plataea the next year is also described in detail (3.20–24); cf. also 1.109.4; 6.100.1.

construction, repair, and proper defense of walls was also important.¹³⁰ Thucydides sometimes mentions that the building of walls, for defensive or siege purposes, was accomplished by dividing up the work between contingents. This practice reveals a competitive urge that is occasionally explicit: "Though the others gave it up, the Athenians quickly completed the part assigned to them . . .".¹³¹ A similar pride is implicit in Thucydides' descriptions of the walls of Athens and the Piraeus, conceived of by Themistocles, one of his heroes:

There was room for two wagons to pass each other with their stones for the building, and the space in between the outer surfaces was not filled in with rubble or clay; instead large blocks of stone were cut and fitted together, with clamps of iron and lead on the outside.¹³²

Thucydides describes a world in which masonry, however unheroic, played a crucial role, a role he does not slight.¹³³ Indeed, although the naval battles in Syracuse's Great Harbor—and the attack on Epipolae—receive Thucydides' most detailed attention, the trajectory of Athenian success in Sicily can also be traced in the wall building of the two sides. The Athenians' speed and efficiency in building fortifications "dismayed" the Syracusans—a striking description. When Gylippus arrived at Syracuse, the Athenians had almost completed their encircling wall and "Syracuse had thus been in very great danger indeed"; when the Syracusans pushed their counterwall past them, "the Athenians, even if they were victorious in battle, had been deprived for the future of all chance of investing the city."¹³⁴

In a war in which intelligent command decisions played such an important role, a recurring issue was the information available to each side. The acquisition of accurate information about the activities both of the enemy and of distant contingents on one's own side was one key task of competent general.¹³⁵ Accordingly, the care and

¹³⁰ 2.2.3; 3.2.2; 3.102.4; 4.4; 7.4.2–3; 7.29.3, as well as the examples below.

¹³¹ 5.75.5–6. See also 2.78.1; 4.69.2.

¹³² 1.93.5–6.

¹³³ His description extends down to the details of how the Athenians fortified Pylos without having iron tools to shape stones or hods to carry mortar (4.4.2).

¹³⁴ 6.98.2; 7.2.4; 7.6.4. On building walls and forts in the campaign against Syracuse, see also 6.88.6; 6.96.1; 6.97.5; 6.99.2–3; 6.100.3; 6.102; 6.103.1; 6.104.1; 7.4.2–3; 7.5.1; 7.6.1; 7.43.1.

¹³⁵ See Russell (1999) on the general topic. Losada (1972) 136–40 (Appendix 1) lists thirty-three selected cases of the use of military intelligence in Thucydides to which could be added the following: 3.3.3; 3.3.5; 3.91.4; 4.8.3; 4.111; 7.25.1–2; 8.14.1; 8.39.3; 8.42.2; 8.103.2 *inter alia*.

diligence of scouts and the necessity for commanders to send them out is also stressed in a variety of incidents.

Thucydides seems also to have been fascinated by sundry clever and inventive ideas devised by commanders.¹³⁶ For example, he describes Brasidas' precautions against an encounter with the Athenian navy:

One of his triremes went in front and he himself followed some way behind in a small boat, his idea being that, if he fell in with a boat bigger than his own small craft, the trireme would be there to protect him, and if another trireme of equal strength were to appear, it would in all probability leave the small boat alone and attack the larger one, thus making it possible for him to get through safely.¹³⁷

It turns out that Brasidas did not run into any Athenian ships and his trick was thus of little historical significance; his thinking, however, displayed the "cunning intelligence" upon which Thucydides placed a high value, and so he relates it.

Such tricks occasionally involved bad faith.¹³⁸ The Athenians themselves hoped to attack Mytilene during a religious festival, which they hoped would draw its population outside the walls.¹³⁹ Such immoral trickery plays an even greater role when Thucydides has occasion to describe *stasis*, civil war, or just simple treachery, and its interaction with the course of the Peloponnesian War.¹⁴⁰ In a number of cases, he describes in detail the diabolical cunning of the different parties involved. For example, the attempted betrayal of Megara to the Athenians involved an elaborate charade in which a phony raiding party with a boat habitually had the gates opened for them during the night. Later the conspirators covered themselves in olive oil to recognize each other and be recognized by the Athenians.¹⁴¹ This is one tale of many, sprinkled throughout Thucydides' narrative. When taken together they make him as much a forefather of the unsavory and starkly unprofound Aeneias Tacticus, with his unwhole-

¹³⁶ On trickery in Greek warfare, see Wheeler (1988), Mataranga (1999), and Krentz (2000).

¹³⁷ 4.120.2; see also 5.65.4; 6.102.2; 6.64–65; 7.73.3–74.1; 7.80.

¹³⁸ 2.33.3; 3.34.3–4; 8.50–51; 8.98.3–4; 8.108.4.

¹³⁹ 3.3.3. Compare the advice of Aen. Tact. 10.4 and 17.1 (see also 4.8; 17.1).

¹⁴⁰ E.g., 3.70–84; 4.49; 4.66–68; 4.130.3–7; 5.3.5; 5.116.3; 6.74.1; 7.48.2; see Losada (1972) for a full treatment.

¹⁴¹ 4.67.3; 4.68.5. See also the stratagems related at 3.70.1; 3.109.2; 4.74.3–4; 4.110.2–4.113.1; 4.135.1; 5.80.3 (cf. Aen. Tact. 17.1); 5.82.2; 6.56.2; 6.58; 8.69; 8.90.4–5 (cf. 8.92.1).

some and suspicious interest in the clever ruses of traitors, as an heir of the tragic or epic sensibility.¹⁴²

Military History and the Athenian Elite

We can surmise from Thucydides' text what we might already have guessed from the history of the late fifth century, that Thucydides' intended readers were fascinated by military decision making and effectiveness. His text—with, for example, its consideration of counterfactuals—places readers in the position of generals. If we consider what sort of reader Thucydides invokes with his text, we must picture a man—of course—who enjoyed reliving and critically examining military decisions, whether or not he was likely to actually make such decisions himself. This appeal of such a history does not derive only from the importance of war to fifth-century Athens; military command, real or imagined, also possessed an elitist attraction.

Let me explain. So far, we have focused on a continuity in Thucydides' *History*: his analysis of military decision making that extended from Pericles' and Archidamus' speeches about the course of the whole war to the smallest tactical choices. There is, however, a significant difference between these two extremes in terms of the agents involved. The deliberative speeches described by Thucydides were addressed to a sovereign assembly, whether at Sparta, Athens, Syracuse, or Camarina, which made the final determination of what to do. Military decisions, on the other hand, were made by generals—and often by a single general.¹⁴³ The στρατηγία, the generalship, was a necessary holdover of the oligarchic principle of election—as opposed to the more democratic selection by lot—and manifestly attracted the most ambitious men in the state.¹⁴⁴ Although military

¹⁴² With the exception of Aen. Tact. 2.3–6 from Th. 2.2–6 and the wording of Aen. Tact. 38.2 from Th. 5.9.8, Thucydides was not one of Aeneias' major sources (Whitehead [1990] 38; see also 180, 201). Losada (1972) 135 argues that fifth-century betrayals anticipate the fourth-century cases that are sometimes presented as symptoms of the *polis*' decline; just as surely Thucydides' fascination with these foreshadows that of Aeneias.

¹⁴³ Almost always, we are told or can assume that such decisions were made by a contingent's commander, but in special circumstances decision making and thought can be attributed to the whole group, e.g., "the Plataeans" in 2.3.4.

¹⁴⁴ Arist. *Pol.* 4.9 (1294b7); 6.2 (1317b20–21); cf. 4.14 (1298a20–27). The prestige of military command in the fifth century is most clearly illustrated by the fact

discipline was lax by modern standards, generals did have the authority to command—and to punish.¹⁴⁵

The highest ambition of some Athenians could be satirized as wanting to pass more decrees than anybody else.¹⁴⁶ Such men would have read Thucydides' assembly speeches with particular attention—either for practical benefit or indulging in a fantasy. Others might have aspired to military command.¹⁴⁷ In particular, it must have been an exhilarating experience for a rich Athenian, forced to be deferential in the courts, accorded no respect on the streets, perhaps studying with a sophist to learn to persuade his inferiors in the assembly, to be given the right to command—which he might have regarded as a lost birthright—and to be judged based on the concrete criteria of success. It was a rare felicity that Pericles, himself a successful general, could lead the people rather than being led by them.¹⁴⁸ It was the nadir of democratic encroachment when fear of trial at Athens affected the decisions of Nicias in Sicily—or a general such as Thucydides was banished.¹⁴⁹ More typically, each of ten generals enjoyed the right of commanding, whereas even the political eminence of Pericles depended largely on his ability to persuade.¹⁵⁰ The appeal of command itself and of a military history such as that of Thucydides was not merely an outgrowth of a bellicose age. I suspect that generals and their decisions had in Athens a particular appeal to the elite.

that thirteen of the fourteen most prominent Athenian leaders of the period held the office of general (Hamel [1995] 30).

¹⁴⁵ See Anderson (1970) 40, 47, 91, 99 and Pritchett (1971–91) 2.243–45 on the relatively egalitarian relations between men and officers. For some examples of disciplinary actions, see Arist. *Ath.* 61.2, D. 50.51, Lys. 13.65 [67] and the threat in X. *HG* 1.1.15. The necessary hierarchy of military command explains the striking phenomenon that the same expression, “to do what was ordered,” could be used both of enduring undeserved subjection akin to slavery and of obediently performing one's military duty to the state (D. 54.44; D. 5.24).

¹⁴⁶ Ar. *Nu.* 431–32.

¹⁴⁷ Note Xenophon's description of the prominent men at a non-philosophical symposium as “generals and cavalry-commanders, and office seekers.” (X. *Smp.* 1.4).

¹⁴⁸ 2.65.8.

¹⁴⁹ 7.48.3–4.

¹⁵⁰ Hamel (1998) emphasizes how specific assembly instructions to generals could be, but generals still enjoyed a relatively wide scope for initiative, command, and consequent responsibility.

Conclusion

Insofar as people no longer fight with spears, defend city walls, or use fire signals, Thucydides' descriptions of why battles, raids, campaigns, or sieges were won or lost have to a great extent lost their relevance. Some general principles of military strategy may still hold, but the more detailed and specific his account is, the less it can serve any didactic purpose. Modern statesmen could and did argue that a familiarity with Thucydides was crucial for understanding the Cold War; this claim might have been more or less plausible depending on its specific content.¹⁵¹ A lieutenant in Vietnam or in Iraq who, having read Thucydides' account of Mantinea, began to worry that his line might shift to the right, would be quickly and correctly judged to be overdue for some R&R. Other aspects of Thucydides' work, especially his conceptions of interstate and internal politics, the limits of human foresight and the goals of history, have a more enduring value and probably deserve more attention.¹⁵² The risk, of course, is that we may end up with an unbalanced picture of Thucydides through our focus on those aspects of his work that remain relevant to our age. Thucydides' world was indeed a very different one from ours, one in which the smartest, richest, and most ambitious people were not professors, screenwriters, or captains of industry, but trierarchs, generals, or cavalry commanders—a world in which there was, for a generation—twenty-seven years to be more precise, no subject more important than the intelligent conduct of war in all its gritty details.

¹⁵¹ See examples in Connor (1984) 3. Comparisons of the U.S. attack on Iraq and the Sicilian Expedition provide more recent examples, e.g., at <http://www.spectacle.org/0203/brenner.html>.

¹⁵² See Welch (2003) on Thucydides' impact on the discipline of International Relations, an influence whose historical significance may well dwarf all his other legacies.

THUCYDIDES AND RELIGION

William D. Furley

As many have noted, the gods are conspicuous by their absence in Thucydides. This must constitute a deliberate policy on the part of the historian, as no other literary genre of the period dispenses with the gods in the same way. Apart from poetry (e.g., tragedy), which is peopled by speaking and acting gods, prose genres, too, openly refer to divine intervention in human affairs. This is true of Herodotus,¹ true of fifth-century forensic oratory. Why this reticence about the gods in Thucydides? Was it because he was, in the words of an ancient commentator, “godless to a degree” (ἄθεος ἡρέμα)?² Or could it be that his refusal to speculate on divine will and agency was a token of respect for a sphere of knowledge surpassing human comprehension? Both positions are, *prima facie*, tenable. The first would suggest a historian who, in the wake of the sophistic enlightenment, omitted religion as an irrelevant, outmoded view of the world and human life; the second might see in Thucydides a representative of that “ancient simplicity”³ that recognized an inseparable divide between men and gods, and, while recognizing the superiority of the divine, concentrated on the human as the only sphere accessible to rational analysis. In fact a large part of previous literature on the question of “Thucydides and Religion” is concerned with this question of the personal piety/belief, or lack of it, in the author himself.⁴ I believe this approach is doomed to failure ultimately as there is simply no way of knowing whether Thucydides himself believed in the gods or

¹ See now Mikalson (2002).

² Antyllos *ap.* Marcellinum *Vit. Thuc.* 22.

³ To quote the subtitle of Williams (1998).

⁴ For a history of views on this question from the nineteenth through the twentieth century see Marinatos-Kopff (1978) 1–39 and (abbreviated) Marinatos (1981b) 1–16. In broad outline Marinatos traces the development from a nineteenth-century conviction that Thucydides was pious to an early twentieth-century view that he was a rationalist through-and-through. Her attribution of the source of this latter position to Meuss (1892) is a little misleading as Meuss assumes an “agnostic” position on Thucydides’ personal beliefs; what he does is go through the relevant passages in the *History* to show that none proves Thucydides’ belief in the gods.

not; his reticence is total on this point. Although some have tried to deduce a modicum (or more) of personal belief in traditional religion from isolated remarks in the *History*,⁵ it is my belief that not one extant passage is sufficient to acquit, or condemn, the historian of the charge of atheism in our sense (denial of the existence of gods).⁶ But while Thucydides refuses to speculate on whether a god helped the Athenians or the Spartans at a certain juncture of the war, he took a keen interest in how actors on the historical stage interpreted what were commonly taken as divine signs, and how they viewed their own actions and positions with respect to divine goodwill. For Thucydides, contemporary religion is one aspect—a vital one—of the societies he wishes to depict at war.⁷ He refrains utterly from passing judgement on whether the gods favored one side or the other; but he records with accuracy how both sides sought to exploit the factor of divine favor in their own interests.⁸ As we shall see, Thucydides is primarily interested in religion—and by that I mean the world of the gods—as a key element in the psychology of the warring parties. Where people at the time were prone to read religious significance into “signs” in heaven or on earth, Thucydides is determined to undermine any confidence in the possibility of reading gods’ minds from physical evidence. Where historical characters make reference in their speeches to the gods, Thucydides reads these remarks as evidence of the psychological state of the speaker or his

⁵ Esp. Marinatos (1981b), Oost (1975); the response of Dover (1988c) to Marinatos is fascinating; on the strength of the “plague oracles” he confirms her opinion that Thucydides’ choice of words reflects a belief “in the existence of some superhuman power . . . which could . . . communicate foreknowledge to humans” (69), but, in view of Thucydides’ sarcastic remark about prophetic utterances in 5.26.3f., believes the historian’s belief had *changed* in the course of the intervening years. It does not seem to me that the “plague oracles” reveal anything like “belief” in traditional religion in Thucydides (see below).

⁶ Let us not forget that “atheism”, being *atheos*, meant something quite different to fifth-century Athenians: it meant challenging accepted belief or practice in recognized cults. See Winiarczyk (1990) and (1992). In Winiarczyk’s catalogue of atheists (1984) only the Marcellinus passage is cited for Thucydides.

⁷ For quite a full catalogue of passages in which religion plays a part, see Jordan (1986). The remark of Crane (1996) 164, “no author of the classical period expresses less interest in religion than does Thucydides” seems to me wrong; one must distinguish between reticence about theodicy, i.e., the author’s judgement upon divine intervention in human affairs, and religion itself seen as a social phenomenon.

⁸ Flashar (1969) 31: “Die religiöse Dimension im Werk des Thukydides ist also unüberhörbar, aber Thukydides hält ein göttliches Einwirken von den das Geschehen auslösenden Kräften in seiner Darstellung fern”.

audience. Whether Thucydides believed in the Olympian gods himself or not, he certainly believed that others' belief in them affected their actions; and it was those actions and the motivation behind them that he sought to elucidate in his *History*.

1. *Thucydides' Religious Polemicism*

Right at the beginning of the *History*, when comparing the magnitude of his present subject, the Peloponnesian War, with that other greatest "upheaval", the Trojan War, Thucydides indicates his skepticism about the alleged "sacred" motivation of the latter (1.9). Helen's suitors had sworn to Tyndareos to avenge her future husband if anyone did him wrong and abducted Helen. Thus the Trojan War, according to myth, was conducted under the sanction of divine oath; the suitors were morally bound to aid Menelaos and his brother Agamemnon in their campaign against Paris and Troy by the gods who oversaw their oath. Thucydides, however, comments that he thinks it was more Agamemnon's great military power which induced the other lords to join the expedition, not their moral compunctions (δυνάμει προύχων καὶ οὐ τοσοῦτον τοῖς Τυνδάρεω ὄρκοις). He recognizes the dictates of "power politics", not religious sanction. A few chapters later in the so-called "Methodenkapitel", Thucydides explains his attitude. Men, he says, do not try very hard to ascertain the pure and unadulterated truth; all too readily they accept untried and unsupported opinion. He, Thucydides, in his investigation of Greece's prehistory, has tried to tease plausible truth from inadequate evidence; he has stripped the past of the exaggerated aura that poetic accounts have given it; in short he has 'demythologized' the past by applying the critique of pure reason. Needless to say, these remarks about the factual value of the *Archaeology* are programmatic; if reasonable plausibility about the distant past can be gained by these methods, how much greater the claim of the coming *History* to objective truth when the sources are so immeasurably superior to those available to Thucydides for the *Archaeology*.

Let us take a little-discussed passage early in the *History* to illustrate this demythologizing policy of Thucydides (2.29). In the first summer of the war the Athenians attempted to win over Sitalkes, King of Thrace, to their side. Sitalkes, Thucydides explains, was the son of Teres, king of Thrace before him, who had founded the

Thracian kingdom.⁹ Then, utterly surprisingly, Thucydides says “this Teres has nothing to do with the Tereus who married Prokne of Athens; nor did they come from the same Thrace”. Thucydides explains that the mythical Tereus lived in Daulia in Phokis (previously Thracian territory) and the women’s heinous crime against Itys (in myth) took place there; that is the reason, he says, why many poets call the nightingale “Daulias”; moreover Pandion (Prokne’s father) is more likely (εἰκός) to have made a marriage alliance with a neighbor than with a Thracian living many days’ journey away. Then, to conclude his line of reasoning, Thucydides plays his trump card: Teres of Thrace did not even have the same name as Tereus (sc. of myth). Why this extraordinary polemic? Who claimed that the historical strategem of the Athenians with Sitalkes had anything to do with the Attic myth of Prokne and Tereus? Some commentators suggest that the historian Hellanikos is Thucydides’ butt here,¹⁰ but I suspect the combination of myth with history that Thucydides takes issue with was one of those stories in the public domain that Thucydides feels compelled to refute. “People” obviously compared the Athenian alliance with Sitalkes, son of Teres, with a previous, mythical alliance of Athens with his “namesake” Tereus.¹¹ The myth ended in a tragic bloodbath; as a paradigm it was hardly encouraging for the Athenian alliance with Sitalkes of Thrace. I suspect that the author(s) of the comparison sought to use myth as a deterrent in the contemporary political sphere. Thucydides wishes to point out the absurdity of the comparison.¹²

This example concerns myth, not religion directly. We come closer to an engagement by the historian with contemporary theology in the case of two oracles that provoked intensive discussion in Athens, again in the first year of the war.¹³ Now oracles were held to be

⁹ Cf. Höck (1891) 76–117 (esp. 78 n. 2).

¹⁰ E.g., Hornblower, *Comm.*, *ad loc.* Rhodes (1988a) *ad loc.* suspects tragedy as the reference, but tragedy does not usually make overt reference to contemporary affairs.

¹¹ Cf. Höck (1891) 78 n. 1, who points out that the Thracian dynasty was also aware of this (pseudo-)genealogy: X. *An.* 7.2.31 (speech of Seuthes II).

¹² Further examples of Thucydides’ attitude to myth and mythical figures come in 2.102.5–6, where the myth of Alcmeon’s matricide is used to support his description of the silting up of the Echinades islands by the Acheloos River; and in 6.2.1 he mentions Sicilian tradition about the Cyclopes and Laistrygonians but dismisses this as unverifiable; “poets” are responsible for it.

¹³ Cf. Marinatos (1981b) 47–55 and (1981a); Oost (1975) 188f.; Mikalson (1984); Demont (1990).

messages from god; true, they were relayed to the general public by mortal middlemen (or -women), but an oracle, particularly from Delphi, commanded respect as originating from divinity. Thucydides records that the first year of the war, which brought Athens not only invasion by the Peloponnesians but also a fiendish epidemic of plague, recalled to the minds particularly of the older generation an old oracle to the effect that “Doric war will come and, with it, plague” (2.54.2).¹⁴ An argument ensued, apparently, whether the oracle had actually said “plague” (λοιμός) or “famine” (λιμός), but “the view prevailed, naturally enough in view of the circumstances, that plague had been sung. For men adjusted their memory to their suffering”.¹⁵ If these scathing words were not enough to cast doubt on the efficacy of the oracle, Thucydides goes one step further: “In my opinion, if another war happened in the future accompanied by famine, then people will quite likely sing [sc. the oracle] accordingly” (2.54.3). Thucydides makes it quite clear that the “divine message” here is negotiable; it may have relative, not absolute, truth.

The second case is closely related. Because the first invasion of Attica led to the evacuation of rural Attica and overcrowding in the *polis*, a normally uninhabited sacred area of Athens known as the Pelargikon came to be filled with temporary accommodation.¹⁶ No lesser authority than Delphi itself had forbidden such secular usage of the land; Thucydides quotes the Delphic injunction as the second half of a hexameter: “better the Pelargikon empty” (2.17.1). He quotes the oracle in connection with this questionable occupation of the land, but a subsequent remark makes it clear that the Athenian public became acutely conscious of their disregard of the oracle when misfortune (in the form of plague and invasion by the Peloponnesians) befell them; he mentions the Athenians’ guilty conscience in this connection only to refute it: “It seems to me, however, that the oracle turned out in the opposite way to that commonly assumed. For the disasters did not befall the city because of the unlawful occupation

¹⁴ A scholion (*ad* 2.54.1) says the oracle came from Delphi (ἐκ πυθοχρήστου στίχου), and quotes (as a parallel?) *Il.* 1.61: εἰ δὴ ὁμοῦ πόλεμός τε δαμῶ καὶ λοιμός Ἀχαιούς, “if war and plague together overpower the Achaeans”.

¹⁵ The last expression chimes with one in E. *Hipp.* 701: πρὸς τὰς τύχας γὰρ τὰς φρένας κεκτήμεθα, “our thoughts are matched to our life-situations”.

¹⁶ A scholion on the passage (*ad* 2.27) says of the Pelargikon: “Pelasgians who had occupied this area plotted against the Athenians; having driven them out again, the Athenians took a holy oath (κατηράσαντο) not to occupy this area”; cf. Rhodes (1988a) *ad loc.*; R. Parker (1983) 164 and n. 115.

[sc. of the Pelargikon], but rather the necessity of the occupation resulted from the war; without actually mentioning the war, the oracle anticipated that it would not be occupied in a good cause" (2.17.2). In other words, Thucydides is questioning the commonly held view at the time, that the Athenians incurred guilt by camping on sacred land, a guilt that *led* to their subsequent sufferings, in favor of a rationalistic interpretation of the Delphic *mot* according to which it merely *foresaw* that it would be an evil day when the Pelargikon came, by force of circumstances, to be occupied.

This passage has been a focus of attention in discussion of Thucydides' own religious views.¹⁷ On the one hand he shows his usual impatience with popular interpretations of oracles and is quick to supply his own, intellectual, interpretation; on the other hand he attributes "foreknowledge" to the oracle (τὸ μαντεῖον προῆδει). Unless one resorts to emendation of the crucial word "know beforehand",¹⁸ one is apparently forced to the conclusion that Thucydides accredits a religious authority with foreknowledge, a power restricted to gods. But the case is not proven. Thucydides here only says "the oracle" knew beforehand, not the god (Apollo); and "knew beforehand" can be interpreted (as I have done) as "anticipate", which falls considerably short of the mantic inspiration normally attributed to Delphi.¹⁹ Moreover, this anticipation, or prediction of the future is nothing so special; it was within the powers of the human intellect to predict that it would be an evil day for Athens when the Pelargikon had to be occupied (because there was no more space). As a penetrating recent treatment of the passage puts it: "the god appears no wiser than the author and the vindication of his wisdom is due to Thucydides' wisdom".²⁰

As Meuss ([1892] 231) pointed out long ago, oracles are "Menschenwerk" in Thucydides' view. However much we debate the precise

¹⁷ Dover (1988c) 67–69; Oost (1975) 188.

¹⁸ E.g., προῆδε by Cobet, "sang beforehand".

¹⁹ Cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.270; *contra* Marinatos (1981b) 50.

²⁰ Orwin (1994) 89; on p. 88 he writes: "Thucydides vindicates the oracle but at the cost of failing to vindicate the power and even the justice of the gods. He claims that the oracle foresaw that it would be an evil day when the Athenians flouted the prohibition, that is, that they would do so only under the greatest duress. In denying that the calamities that followed the transgression comprised a punishment for it, he clears the gods of the imputation of punishing the Athenians for unwilling offenses, yet he also implicitly denies the gods the will or power to shelter the blameless from disaster."

wording of Thucydides' reporting of oracles and their apparent accuracy, we will not have pinned down Thucydides' own conviction about the god purportedly behind them. In discussing oracles and prophecies, Thucydides is consistently and exclusively engaged in analyzing, and, where called for, refuting, human interpretation of divine will. His most crushing comment comes in the so-called "second prologue" of the *History* (5.26), when he discusses the duration of the war. By careful reckoning he calculates that the war from beginning to end lasted twenty-seven years, then comments: "that was the only thing which turned out true for those basing their claims on oracles".²¹ Some have argued that this statement leaves room for a degree of validity in oracles; at least one came true.²² But the phrasing of the sentence hardly supports this affirmative interpretation. Rather, Thucydides seems to be saying: the correctness of this prediction was the exception that proved the rule of the general unreliability of oracular predictions. Similarly, the view that Thucydides in this and similar passages reveals a "scientific" interest in the veracity of oracles hardly seems true to me.²³ His attitude is not that of the disinterested inquirer, but rather that of one of the "less deceived".²⁴

2. *Thucydides and Natural Science*

Where Thucydides undoubtedly does show a scientist's interest in phenomena commonly regarded (then) as manifestations of divine power, is in natural science.²⁵ It must be remembered that violent or unusual occurrences in nature—thunderstorms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, eclipses and the like—were attributed to divinity in the ancient world. A god must be behind such uncanny events, as they surpassed human understanding. However, as is well known, a

²¹ For a discussion of the force of *ισχυρισσάμενοις* here, see Thorburn Jr. (1999) 439–44.

²² Oost (1975) 191.

²³ Oost (1975) 193–96.

²⁴ To quote a phrase from Philip Larkin. Other examples of Thucydides' tendency to "debunk" religion: in 5.70 he says the Spartans marched into battle to *aulos* accompaniment not "for the god's sake" but to keep in step (Hornblower [1992a] 170); he plays down a feature (wearing only one shoe) of the Plataians' exodus from Plataia which may have had ritual significance (Edmunds [1984]).

²⁵ Marinatos (1981b) 17–30.

generation of φυσικοί contemporary with Thucydides had begun to make inroads into this field of divine awe.²⁶ Anaxagoras had declared Helios nothing more than glowing ore; he had succeeded in predicting an eclipse of the sun, showing a command of the mathematical calculation required. Thucydides shows himself a child of his generation here.²⁷ At 3.89 (year 426/5) he records that the Peloponnesians under Archidamos had been deterred from invading Attica by numerous earthquakes—interpreted as an unfavorable divine sign (from Poseidon, master of the Isthmos). Thucydides goes on to report tidal waves in this connection that swamped parts of Euboia and Opuntian Locri, drowning those who failed to escape in time to the uplands. He appends a scientific explanation: the tidal waves were caused by seismic activity on the ocean floor (3.89.5). When we compare this with Euripides' scene in the *Hippolytos* in which a tidal wave driven by Poseidon disgorges a bull-monster on land that proceeds to run down the hapless Hippolytos, we see the huge gulf between the mythic imagination drawing on the phenomenon of tsunami and the reflective scientist.

The (as we say) superstitious interpretation of natural phenomena current in antiquity depends on the conviction that nature, manipulated by unseen powers (gods), is responding to, or guiding, human behavior: the gods "communicate" their favor or disfavor to humans through the language of natural signs. Curiously, one passage in Thucydides suggests the historian's basic acceptance of this view. In summarizing the magnitude of his subject, the Peloponnesian War, he says that not only was the human suffering caused by the war immense, but there occurred also over its duration such an intensity of natural disasters such as earthquakes, eclipses, droughts and, above all, plague, that "earlier stories about such occurrences, reported by hearsay but rarely confirmed by experience, suddenly seemed credible" (1.23.3: τὰ τε πρότερον ἀκοῇ μὲν λεγόμενα, ἔργῳ δὲ σπανιώτερον

²⁶ Note the episode at Syracuse in 415 BC when, in the first battle between the Athenians and the Syracusans, a sudden violent thunderstorm upsets the inexperienced Syracusans more than the battle-hardened Athenians, who "put the storm down to the time of year", a hint that the Syracusans saw it as something more than normal (6.70.1). In the following year, it was the Athenians' turn to believe that severe storms were another element "sent" to plague them (7.79.3).

²⁷ Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 22, quoting Antyllos, says Anaxagoras was Thucydides' teacher.

βεβαιούμενα οὐκ ἄπιστα κατέστη). Thucydides appears to be saying that the natural world, too, was in turmoil in conjunction with this greatest κίνησις ("upheaval") in the human sphere. If the underlying reasoning was that the natural disasters were somehow *connected* to the war by that *συνπάθεια* of the elements to human suffering common in later Hellenistic historiography or Senecan tragedy, then the historian would be admitting a most uncharacteristic thing, an uncanny link between man and nature.²⁸ But does the wording of this passage admit such an interpretation? True, he emphasizes the great disasters that happened with unprecedented frequency and intensity during the war, but their relevance in context is more to the increased suffering they caused to the affected populations than to their significance as tokens of 'cosmic' disorder.²⁹ The last such disaster he mentions is the plague, and, when later describing the plague in Athens, he makes clear his reluctance to perceive any religious significance behind it.³⁰ Marinatos³¹ makes the good point that the present passage answers to a similar one in Herodotus (6.98) in which the latter cites an earthquake on Delos presaging generations of suffering to come in the Persian Wars; perhaps the force of authorial *aemulatio* was sufficient here to make Thucydides include *his* list of freak events to trump that of Herodotus.³²

²⁸ Cf. Marinatos (1981b) 18–28; Rhodes (1988a) 13: "Exceptionally, at the end of his introduction on the greatness of the Peloponnesian War, he is tempted to see significance in the earthquakes, eclipses, famines and diseases which accompanied it".

²⁹ Cf. Lateiner (1977) 44.

³⁰ See above for Thucydides' skepticism about the two "plague oracles"; on the plague itself he admits himself baffled as to its causes (2.48.3); some of his remarks show him feeling his way toward a rational explanation of the phenomenon of contagion: 2.48.1 (transmission of the disease geographically); 2.54.5 (link between plague and dense population).

³¹ (1981b) 21–22.

³² Otherwise her analysis of this and related passages tends towards cautious acceptance of a Thucydides in line with traditional belief about earthquakes, etc.: "When the above points are considered together, a pattern emerges which is not in total harmony with the idea that Thucydides was a scientist who rejected all forms of religion as superstition. The evidence suggests that his main concern was to show the *exceptional* character of the events he was describing, not to categorize them scientifically, and that he used traditional religious thought as we find it in Pindar and Herodotus in the service of his scientific history" (25).

3. *Thucydides and the Psychology of Religion*

Where religion plays more than a peripheral role in Thucydides' discourse is in his consideration of the psychological implications of religious factors during the war on both sides.³³ Here the description and discussion is lengthy and detailed, clearly reflecting a conviction on Thucydides' part that religious attitudes were a crucial factor in collective and individual war morale. For this is what interested Thucydides in writing his history: he wished to analyze the *reasons* why the two sides went to war, how they argued its rights and wrongs in its course and why they spoke and acted as they did. Thucydides' history is, above all, a psychological analysis of the historical course of events; he is interested by the intellectual vision of leading individuals such as Pericles or Brasidas, and by the emotions of the masses that responded to, and constrained, their leaders' voices. The "human thing", as one recent book on Thucydides terms it,³⁴ takes first place in the writer's focus. And clearly Thucydides believed, to judge from his statement about the timeless validity of his work, that an accurate assessment of how men's minds had "ticked" during the Peloponnesian War would prove valuable to future generations in different, but comparable, situations. The case here surely does not need to be argued. One has only to read the opening chapters on the "accusations and grounds" (αἰτίαι καὶ προφάσεις) that led to the Peloponnesians' declaration of war on Athens to take the point. Thucydides sees history unfolding not according to the will of individuals, or owing to economic or political constraints, but through what one might call psychological momentum. The "truest reason" for the conflict turns out, according to Thucydides, to be the growing resentment among Peloponnesian states of Athens' tyrannical stance toward its subjects/allies. Situations lead to feelings and, when these reach certain proportions, to decisions and action. It is not surprising then that religion plays a significant part in Thucydides' history in this sense; and modern-day historians of religion are grateful for the—admittedly sparse—information Thucydides conveys about religious institutions and events within this limited focus of his psychological interest.³⁵

³³ Cf. Solmsen (1975) chs. 5 & 6; Jordan (1986) 132.

³⁴ Cogan (1981).

³⁵ Cf. V.J. Hunter (1986); Görgemanns (1977).

Let us first take a forced march through the psycho-religious landscape of Thucydides' history, before returning and considering some conspicuous features at greater leisure.³⁶ (1) The initial "tiff" between Corcyra and Corinth over the allegiance of Epidamnus to its mother city (directly Corcyra, indirectly Corinth) depends on the religious ties of colony to metropolis going back to the founding father of Epidamnus, a member of Heracles' clan. Sacrifices and games held in Corinth annually commemorated these genealogical links, thus binding political allegiances to cult institutions (1.24–25). (2) The jockeying for advantage between Sparta and Athens before the war started had a religious axis in the attempts to mutually discredit the opponent's religious purity. The Spartans accused Pericles, an Alcmaeonid, of still being polluted from the Cylonian conspiracy generations earlier; in retaliation the Athenians pointed to the religious pollution the Spartans had incurred in the demise of Pausanias (1.126.2–1.128). (3) The evacuation of rural Attica during the first years of the Archidamian War in accordance with Pericles' war strategy led to distress among the population at being parted from their rural cults, which they had only recently repaired after the Persian invasion (2.14–16). (4) The devastating plague from 431–426 bc caused religious despair among the Athenians as no god responded to their prayers and supplications for relief; and the dire straits in which they found themselves led to impious and immoral behaviour (as nothing seemed to matter any more as they would soon be dead), and to disregard of rites such as proper burial (2.47.3–2.54). (5) Civil war in cities such as Corcyra led to a similar loosening of morals and piety in the bloody free-for-all caused by party in-fighting (3.81–82). (6) In 426 bc the Athenians took radical measures to purify the holy island of Delos and to reorganize the religious festival and games there (3.104; cf. 5.1). (7) In a number of scenes of war the Athenians showed conspicuous disregard for the correct conduct demanded by traditional piety; at, e.g., Delion (4.98–99) and Melos (5.104–105) Athenian speakers use language that makes a mockery of conventional piety; their language partly reflects "sophistic" training, partly the arrogance of imperial power. (8) At the Peace of Nicias the terms

³⁶ For conspicuous omissions in Thucydides' treatment of religious matters, see Hornblower (1992a), mainly on the omission by Thucydides of all references to the Delphic Amphictyony; Edmunds (1984); Crane (1996) 163–208, on Thucydides' downplaying of the importance of the pan-Hellenic shrines, esp. Delphi.

of peace included regulations guaranteeing free access to the pan-Hellenic cult centres, and the autonomy of Delphi; the phrasing suggests that wartime had restricted the access of some states to these cults (5.18.1). (9) The Spartans were debarred by the Eleans from participating in the Olympic Games of 420 BC because they had attacked Elean territory during the Olympian truce; after negotiations, the Eleans tell the Spartans to mount the altar of Olympian Zeus during the Olympian festival and announce before the assembled Greeks that they will make amends for their offense; the Spartans refuse and sacrifice at home (5.49–50). (10) When the Athenians decided in the second phase of the war to invade Sicily, a group within Athens vandalized all the statues of Hermes in the city in one night, causing a religious uproar and a witch hunt for the culprits; the events led to the fall from grace of no less a figure than Alcibiades, one of the generals leading the Sicilian expedition (6.27–29; 6.53–61); when the *demos* later considered recalling him from exile, the move was opposed by priests of the Eleusinian cult (8.53.2). (11) When faced with defeat at Syracuse the Athenian general Nicias took a bad decision about the timing of his retreat because of religious scruples caused by an eclipse of the moon (7.50.3–4); later, retreating in disarray through Sicilian hinterland, he admitted to his troops that their expedition had been “ill-starred” owing to an offense to a god from the beginning; quite possibly the vandalization of the Hermes statues in Athens is meant (7.77). (12) When news of the Sicilian disaster reached Athens, the populace was furious not only with the orators who had advocated sending the force, but with the seers and oracle-peddlers who had held out religious hopes for success (8.1.1).

3.1. *The Religious Attitudes of the Warring Parties*

Many of the above individual episodes may be subsumed under the general heading of “religious anxiety”. The phenomenon was fundamental to Greek religion; in life’s precarious struggle with the natural and human environment, the outcome of any endeavor is uncertain, disaster lurks round every corner. While human planning and intelligence is the only rational tool available to people, and often proves fallible, anxiety about the unseen powers that in fact seem to decide outcomes is rife. Within Greek religion we see this anxiety translate into a number of measures designed to ascertain

divine will, influence it and maintain good relations. Let one central paradigm suffice: the anxiety of the Achaeans camped outside Troy when struck by plague translated into mantic endeavors to find the cause of the disaster followed by propitiatory rites.³⁷ Thucydides' people at the end of the "enlightened" fifth century are still susceptible to religious anxiety. Whilst Thucydides, as we have seen, refuses to comment on the reality (or lack of it) of the perceived divine threat, he realizes that this psychological factor in warfare could be decisive.³⁸

3.1.1. *Spartan Scruples* . . .

Quite late in the war, when Athens at home was weakened by the absence of most of its forces in Sicily and Alcibiades was advising the Spartans, Thucydides comments on the improved morale of the Spartans at this juncture. On the one hand he mentions strategic factors—the fact that Athens would now have to fight on two fronts—but equal weight is given to what we would call the "moral advantage". Now the Spartans thought that, by launching the Sicilian Expedition, the Athenians had broken the terms of the Peace of Nicias first. These considerations lent them *ῥώμη*, "confidence" perhaps, to pursue the war in Attica. Thucydides compares this with their morale during the Archidamian War; they felt, he says, that "in the previous war the breach (*παράνομημα*) had been more on their own side, when the Thebans invaded Plataia despite the peace, and because, although the terms of the peace treaty had stipulated non-aggression if the other party agreed to submit to arbitration, they had not accepted the Athenian offer of arbitration. For this reason they felt their setbacks in the war had been understandable (*εἰκότως*)" (7.18.2). As Dover,³⁹ says, this reasoning by the Spartans is only explicable in terms of the divine sanction provided by treaties.⁴⁰

³⁷ *Iliad* Bk. 1.

³⁸ I cannot resist mentioning the recent expiation by Fiji Islanders of their cannibalism of the missionary Thomas Baker in the year 1867; they felt their community had become accursed through the act, and atoned a century and a half later with expiatory rites and sacrifices.

³⁹ (1973) 42.

⁴⁰ For the gods invoked in the oaths sworn at the signing of the Thirty Years Peace, see 1.71.5; cf. 1.78.4. Note Xenophon's recognition of the importance of religious confidence in warfare (*An.* 3.1.42): "Not numbers or strength leads to victory in battle but rather which side marches into battle with greater mental confidence in the gods' support . . .".

The Spartans in particular show sensitivity to the question of divine backing (or the withdrawal of it) in war.⁴¹ Before committing themselves to a campaign they conducted elaborate rites (διαβατήρια, “excursion rites”) to make sure god was with them,⁴² and obeyed adverse signs such as earthquakes when they were marching out as if these were divine traffic signals.⁴³ The slow and deliberate march into battle to the accompaniment of ritual music also reflects their desire to adhere to tradition to ensure victory.⁴⁴ Several Spartan generals are shown to be sensitive to the question of divine anger when they make war. Before besieging Plataia, Archidamos prays to the local gods and heroes: “Gods and heroes who hold Plataia, be my witness that invasion of this country is not unjust as these men have abandoned their oaths first, nor will our actions, if we do anything, be unjust” (2.74.2). And when Plataia is finally razed, Archidamos makes of the city’s smoking ruins an *ἀνάθημα*, “offering”, to Hera, no doubt in the hope of thereby avoiding her vengeful anger (3.68.3). Similarly Brasidas on several occasions bows to the gods of cities he is intent on capturing, swearing his innocence.⁴⁵ In his speech to the Acanthians (4.87.2) he swears by “the local gods and heroes” that he has come with the benign purpose of freeing them from Athenian bondage and will only subjugate their city if he cannot persuade them by words. In 4.116.2 he devotes thirty *mnai* to Athena in Torone after taking the promontory thanks to an accident among the defending Athenians; in 5.10.2, he sacrifices to Athena in Amphipolis before joining battle with Cleon. In these and similar passages Thucydides is not, in my opinion, pointing to a moral, namely that the Spartan generals owed their successes to pious observance of ritual; on the contrary, if there is any “message” intended, irony may be nearer the mark (what comfort was it to the Plataians that Hera was so richly rewarded for their slaughter? Nor did Brasidas’ sacrifice at Amphipolis avail him.). What Thucydides draws attention to is the

⁴¹ Cf. E.W. Robinson (1992). Note Th.1.103.2: the Spartans spared Ithome because of a Delphic injunction to spare the suppliant of Zeus Ithometes.

⁴² E.g., in 419 BC the *diabatēria* did not produce the desired result, and the Spartans broke off their campaign (5.54.2; cf. 5.53.3 and Lys. 12.59). On divination in warfare cf. R. Parker (1985) 307–8.

⁴³ E.g., 1.101.2; 3.89.1; 8.6.5.

⁴⁴ 5.69.2–5.70.1; Thucydides denies that the music had religious significance (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔνεκα), but it clearly had.

⁴⁵ Cf. Crane (1996) 187.

“mindset” of the Spartan generals; securing divine favour was important for their military confidence.⁴⁶

In view of this it is not surprising to see the Spartans at the outset of the war taking pains to ascertain their religious status and to outmaneuver their adversaries in this respect. Having decided that the Athenians had broken the peace treaty by their actions in Corcyra and Potidaia and were therefore “in the wrong” (*ἀδικεῖν*), they sent to Delphi to ask Apollo his opinion on the coming war: “he answered, it is said, that the victory would be theirs if they made war in full strength, and he promised to assist them whether invoked to do so or not”.⁴⁷ In the passage mentioned above in which the plague in Athens reminded older Athenians of the Delphic prophecy of “war accompanied by plague/famine”, Thucydides adds that some Athenians were also aware of this oracle given to the Spartans promising Apollo’s support (2.54.4: “and those in the know recalled the oracle of the Spartans . . .”). We can speculate on the complex processes which led to this expression of Apollo’s will to the Spartans through the Delphic priesthood, but the fact remains that the Spartans sought such support, received it, and passed on the news to the Athenians.

The further maneuver by the Spartans before war broke out was the attempt to impute religious pollution to Pericles as a descendant of the Alkmaionidai who had wrongfully killed members of Cylon’s conspiracy. The term used was “pollution of the god” (*ἄγος τῆς θεοῦ*, sc. Athena, 1.126.2; cf. 1.127.1). Thucydides analyzes the Spartans’ thinking in making this accusation as follows: “The Spartans exhorted [sc. the Athenians] to remove this source of pollution, ostensibly to give the gods their due, but knowing full well that Pericles was involved in this [sc. pollution] on his mother’s side and thinking that if he was removed, the situation in Athens would be more likely to swing their way. Not that they went so far as to hope he would suffer this fate; it was more to blacken his name in the city as”—now comes an ambiguous expression—“the coming war would be

⁴⁶ Further examples: Sparta applies for Delphic sanction before the founding of Herakleia in Trachis (3.92.5); the wrangle in 420 bc between the Eleans and Spartans, over the latter’s alleged contravention of Olympic law during their operations at Lepreon, shows the Spartans’ determination not to appear to be in contravention of sacred law (5.49–50).

⁴⁷ 1.118.3; cf. 1.123.2.

perceived to be partly his fault.”⁴⁸ We note the Spartans’ subtle game of casting religious aspersions on the opponent: a pointless gambit if mentalities at the time were not susceptible to the creeping anxiety about religious guilt.⁴⁹

3.1.2. . . . and Athenian Sophistry

We have been looking at things from a Spartan perspective and seen how they endeavored to secure the religious advantage on the eve of war. Now let us turn to the Athenian side. Thucydides allows Pericles ample room in the Funeral Oration to expand on his vision of Athens’ greatness. This rhetorical tour-de-force lingers in the reader’s memory (and doubtless in the memory of Athenians at the time) as the whole painful course of the Peloponnesian War unfolds. No need here to rehearse Pericles’ remarks in any detail; the important point for our present purpose is the remarkable lack of references in Pericles’ speech to the religion of Athens.⁵⁰ The Athenians listened to this speech with the new temples of the Acropolis and Propylaia gleaming in the background. Cult, myth, and religion were certainly not on the wane in public Athens of the time. Yet Pericles refers only to the “pleasant holidays” from strenuous work (ἀναπαύλας) that the festivals of the gods afford the Athenians;⁵¹ in an earlier speech, the monumental chryselephantine statue of Athena Parthenos turns, in his mouth, into a fallback resource of capital (2.13.5). Further, Pericles emphasizes the “independence” (αὐτάρκεια) of Athens; why, it is not even dependent on produce from the land; it can survive on the tribute and imports arriving via the Piraeus. Athens, Pericles says, is the cultural spearhead (translating παιδεία, lit. “edu-

⁴⁸ ὥς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐκείνου ξυμφορὰν τὸ μέρος ἔσται ὁ πόλεμος: meaning either (1) if the Athenians did not expel Pericles, the Spartans would be justified in attacking them to avenge the gods; (2) the coming war would be “partly a result of his misfortune” in the sense that the gods would punish Pericles’ city for the unexpiated crime. As it turned out, the Athenians did turn against Pericles when plague and occupation of Attica put them under severe pressure.

⁴⁹ The Athenians in fact responded in kind: you, they told the Spartans, are equally polluted by the unlawful killing of Pausanias; 1.128.1.

⁵⁰ Cf. Orwin (1994) 19–20; Edmunds (1975) 76–88; Flashar (1969) 20; 31ff.

⁵¹ 2.38.1; cf. Flashar (1969) 31–33; Orwin (1994) 20: “He thus considers these sacrifices frankly from the standpoint of human utility and pronounces them secondary, just as, in the only explicit reference to a deity to occur in his speeches, he considers the cult image of Athena Parthenos as a resource of gold for expenditures of war”.

cation", thus) of Greece. Combining his omission of the gods and his emphasis of Athens' incredible achievements, we receive an impression of Athens' great confidence in itself at this juncture, a confidence based on human achievement and endeavor rather than the fortune that gods grant (and withhold).

Many have commented on the irony of Thucydides' narrative following the Funeral Speech. Plague arrives and afflicts Athens while its rural assets are being ravaged by the Spartans. We have already seen how doubts arose in Athenians' minds whether the plague might not be god's punishment of them. Oracles predicting such disasters were recalled to mind; the unlawful squatting in Poseidon's precinct at the Pelargikon caused religious anxiety, as Delphi had once advised against just this (above). A recent treatment of Athenian religious history during the Peloponnesian War sees in the experience of the plague in the early years of the Archidamian War *the* traumatic experience *par excellence* for Athens, undermining utterly the Athenians' confidence in their religious status and leading to a series of measures in the sequel to try to restore their relations with the gods.⁵² Rubel uses sources outside Thucydides to support his thesis that Athens was "a city in panic" following the plague, whose origin the common people attributed to Apollo.⁵³ Excavation of the agora provides evidence of a revival of interest in the Leokorion, a shrine in honor of the daughters of Leos;⁵⁴ Rubel supports the redating of a statue of Apollo Alexikakos mentioned by Pausanias (1.3.4) to coincide with the plague in 430. And he confirms the suggestion in antiquity and modern scholarship that the Athenians' radical purification of Delos in 426 (and subsequently) might constitute a response to (a) their perceived ill-favor with Apollo Pythios (at Delphi) and (b) to the drastic evidence the plague appeared to provide that Apollo (generally) was against them.⁵⁵ It has to be said, however, that Thucydides himself does little to point up a connection between plague in Athens and corresponding corrective measures taken by the Athenians.⁵⁶ What he does report is a loss of public confidence in Pericles as advocate of the policies which—in part at least—had

⁵² Rubel (2000); cf. Mikalson (1984).

⁵³ For a similar view, cf. Thomson (1981).

⁵⁴ Sacrificed to Apollo on a mythical occasion in the past to ward off plague.

⁵⁵ 3.104; cf. Furley (1996) 80f. with n. 30.

⁵⁶ What Rubel (2000) 129f., refers to as "das Schweigen des Thukydides".

led to their dire predicament (2.59).⁵⁷ And Pericles himself, in his speech of self-defense, is forced to admit that the plague is a “super-natural” affliction (δαίμόνια, 2.64.2) which the Athenians must bear by force of necessity.

According to Thucydides, the Athenians’ more immediate response to the desperate situation caused by the plague was not (*pace* Rubel) to intensify their religious devotions, but to abandon them altogether as futile. He paints a picture of moral anarchy in which people indulged their inclinations without regard for divine or civil sanction as “on the one hand they saw that piety or lack thereof made no difference, as all were dying equally, and, on the other, they did not think they would live to face trial for crimes”.⁵⁸ We might reconcile this apparent discrepancy by distinguishing the *immediate* effects of affliction on the Athenian mentality—despair leading to the abandonment of sacred and civil law—from the longer-term effects of the shock to the Athenians’ confidence. Once the worst of the plague had passed, one might surmise, the Athenians tried to mend their relations with the gods in the hope of avoiding further troubles. The purification of Delos may be construed as such an attempt to restore relations with Apollo Delios. In all events, whether we believe (with Thucydides) that the plague led to an *undermining* of religious propriety, or (with Rubel) that, following the plague, the Athenians became hypersensitive to perceived offenses to cult and undertook various measures to avoid further offenses to the gods, we may assume that the plague shook Athenian confidence in their self-sufficiency and invulnerability to the bone.⁵⁹ I assume the mood in Athens after the plague was an uneasy mix of attitudes. On the one hand the “enlightened” attitude championed by Pericles and the sophists will, in some circles, have died hard; on the other the general populace will have seen that even their best minds were powerless against higher forces; and what lay behind these higher powers if not angry gods?

⁵⁷ Note the mention in 2.21.3 of the activity of oracle-mongers in Athens when the Peloponnesians were razing their land.

⁵⁸ 2.53.4; cf. 52.3 and 47.4; compare the comparable moral anarchy, including religious awe, which set in during acute *stasis* in Corcyra: 3.82 esp. 6: “and they pledged their oaths of allegiance less by the gods than by joint crime;” see Crane (1996) 191–94.

⁵⁹ Many take the plague in Sophocles’ *OT* as a reflection of the dire mood in Athens when plague-struck.

I believe we can trace this “uneasy mix” in operation at various subsequent key points in the *History*. In 425 BC the Athenians invaded Boeotia and established a fortified stronghold in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delion.⁶⁰ They were defeated in an ensuing battle, but still held the position at Delion. When they petitioned the victorious Boeotians for permission to retrieve their dead (according to traditional Greek wartime custom), the Boeotians retorted that they had no right to ask this concession as they had breached common Hellenic νόμος by using Apollo’s sanctuary as a fort and turning consecrated ground to secular purpose; moreover, they had desecrated holy well-water. The Athenians respond with a speech that impresses by its sophistry and manifest falsity.⁶¹ They claim not to be the aggressors, as the capture of Delion was a “defensive” measure (not true); Greek law, they say, states that whoever rules a land, either for a short or long time, also has jurisdiction over the temples (not applicable: the Athenians have not captured Boeotia); the drawing of water in the temple was a necessity forced upon them, not an act of hybris; besides, acts performed under the pressure of war or adversity are likely to be forgiven by god: are not altars the refuge for inadvertent miscreants? (wrong: the Athenian capture and fortification of Delion was not “inadvertent” in any sense); lawlessness, they go on, is a term applicable not to those not *forced* to be wicked, not for those “who take a risk in the face of adversity”; who is guilty of the greater impiety—the Boeotians who want to trade bodies for temples, or the Athenians who refuse to accept what is their due anyway (sc. their war dead) by bartering with temples? (4.98–99). As Orwin (1994) points out, it is the appeal to necessity that particularly grates; true, the use of the water for drinking, etc. was forced on the Athenians *once they had chosen* that site to occupy; but the choice was theirs, not forced upon them.

The subjugation of divine authority to necessity, expediency, is a theme that emerges in the Athenian envoys’ remarks at Melos, nine years later, too. An Athenian task force has been sent to subjugate Melos, a small Aegean island settled originally by Spartans, which defies Athenian rule. For some reason (almost like a cat playing with

⁶⁰ On the episode, see Marinatos (1981b) 37ff.; Crane (1996) 194–96; Orwin (1994) 90–96.

⁶¹ For detailed analysis, see Orwin (1994) 90–96; for earlier treatments, see Marinatos-Kopff (1978) 127–32.

a mouse) the Athenians give the Melians a chance to defend themselves in debate. Among other arguments, the Melians express confidence in the moral rectitude of their position, backed by the gods who frown on tyrannical aggressors: “we trust in the fortune which comes from the divine, that we will not be defeated, as we stand against you as pious men against the unjust” (5.104). The Athenians retort: “We don’t think that we’ll be at a disadvantage as far as divine backing goes either. For we neither claim nor undertake anything which goes beyond human understanding of the divine and human dealings with his own kind. For we believe that divinity by repute, and humanity obviously, everywhere rules what it controls by a necessity of nature. We neither made this law, nor are we the first to apply it . . .” (5.105.1). Again we sense the Athenians’ contemptuous dismissal of the Melians’ claim to the moral backing that comes from divinity.⁶² The upshot of their answer is: we do not fear divine retribution for our actions, for, according to human belief, gods behave no better [sc. than we are about to]. They talk of “human belief about the divine” (ἀνθρωπιείας τῶν ἐς τὸ θεῖον νομίσεως), not the gods themselves; they say men only hold “opinions” (δόξῃ) about how gods behave, not secure knowledge; finally they suggest the gods too, like humans, obey the supreme law of “natural necessity” (φύσεως ἀναγκαίως). These aspects of their argumentation clearly reflect the influence of their teachers in rhetoric at Athens, the sophists. The suggestion that knowledge about the gods eludes human intelligence accords with Protagorean agnosticism; the teaching that φύσις imposes a “necessity” on human (and divine) behavior inevitably recalls the position of Kallikles in Plato’s *Gorgias*. But the conclusion that we should draw from this observation is not so much that Thucydides himself shared the beliefs of a Protagoras, but rather that he chose to depict Athenian speakers on a number of occasions as trained in sophistic debate on all levels, including the theological. Where their Doric opponents use traditional concepts to delineate right and wrong as sanctioned by the gods, the Athenians use “man as the measure” of gods, too, thus replacing the absolute values of divine justice with a relativist interpretation of morality to suit the moment (i.e., the interest of the Athenian speaker).⁶³

⁶² The force of the particle τοῖνυν might be cumbrously rendered “that goodwill of the gods *you refer to*”, indicating that the Athenians do not set much store by it.

⁶³ Cf. Orwin (1994) 106: “they [sc. the Athenian envoys at Melos] reinterpret

These debates show the wrangle between opponents for what we call the “moral high ground”, what the ancients saw as religious integrity, a thread we have traced in Thucydides’ narrative from the first to the fifth Book. The psychological motor behind these duels of words is the fear of incurring divine displeasure, resulting in bad luck in battle or other misfortunes. We have seen how the pinnacle of Periclean achievement and pride was abruptly terminated by an unexpected twist of fortune. Many have pointed to a similar cadence with respect to the Melian episode. Here the Athenians mercilessly destroy a small community, ignoring its appeals to the gods who protect the innocent against the wrongdoer; but soon it will be the Athenians’ turn in Sicily.⁶⁴ From arrogant oppressor, their main force will be persecuted to extinction in the Sicilian hinterlands. Was Thucydides pointing up a moral? Was he constructing a history analogous to tragedy which shows a fall from greatness as a result of *hamartia*, an error in thinking?⁶⁵ The case is not proven, but I feel that the emotional power behind Thucydides’ *History*, which so many sense, derives indeed from the historian’s exploration of his characters’ mentality as they face decisions and crisis; and this closely allies his history with the highest forms of literary art.⁶⁶

3.2. *The Sicilian Expedition*

Failure in Sicily broke Athens’ military strength; Thucydides reports that the news of the abject defeat plunged Athens into gloom and

the accounts of the divine in light of their novel understanding of the human. We cannot stress too much that the ‘anthropology’ of the envoys colors their ‘theology’. What they have heard about the anthropomorphic gods happens to jibe with what they know about men”. Thucydides’ sophistic training has, of course, long been noted, by, e.g., Meuss (1892) 232–33, and already in antiquity: Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 22, where Anaxagoras and Antiphon are mentioned as teachers of Thucydides.

⁶⁴ A possibility mooted by the Melians themselves in the debate: 5.90.

⁶⁵ A.W.H. Adkins, reviewing Solmsen (1975) in *Phoenix* 31 (1977) 262–65, writes (264): “Again, *hybris*, divinely-caused motivation and divinely-engineered disaster are all entirely or almost entirely absent from Thucydides; but to what extent does the old *structure* of thought remain when the overt references to deity have been removed? Thucydides chooses to juxtapose the Melian Dialogue with the Sicilian Expedition. Herodotus would have used the concept of *hybris* in explanation of the sequence of events thus set side by side. Thucydides does not; but what (if anything) did Thucydides mean his readers to infer from the arrangement of his narrative?” cf. Lloyd-Jones (1983) 142; Strasburger (1958) 39 and n. 2; Flashar (1969) 54, “hintergründige Tragödie”.

⁶⁶ Cf. Kitto (1966); Lateiner (1977) 43.

despair; from that point on, one feels—although the *History* is not finished—it is only a matter of time before Athens falls. Thucydides includes the dimension of religious psychology in this section of his narrative, too.⁶⁷ The famous crime of the mutilation of the Hermes-statues coincides with the eve of the expedition. Thucydides describes how the vandalism to these cult statues caused “extreme consternation” (μειζόνως ἐλάβανον, 5.27.3) in Athens; a public inquiry was ordered, rewards were offered to informants, many arrests were made; fear spread that the crime was a sign of revolution in the offing.⁶⁸ Moreover, when informants came forward, they reported another crime: people, among them Alcibiades, had been conducting private initiation ceremonies in hybristic imitation of the Eleusinian Mysteries. As we know, the charge of profaning the Eleusinian Mysteries eventually led to the leader’s recall from Sicily for trial; he escaped on the way back, and defected to Sparta, where he gave sensitive information to the enemy. One sees a “domino effect” here: the mutilation of the Herms on the eve of the Sicilian Expedition led to information about the profanation of the Mysteries; this led to Alcibiades’ recall from Sicily, which, in turn, must have been instrumental, if not decisive, in the Athenians’ failure in Sicily. Rubel⁶⁹ sees in the witch hunt that followed the impieties of 415 further evidence of his thesis that Athens had become a “city in fear”. However, it was decided to send the Sicilian Expedition before the crimes had been fully investigated, lest time be lost. The departure, as Thucydides describes it, made a show of religious propriety. Prayers and libations were conducted communally throughout the force, with the entire population of Attica present to sing the paian (6.32.1–2). After Alcibiades’ recall the command passed to Nicias, known for his religious scrupulousness and his skepticism about the expedition’s prospects. A famous episode at Syracuse highlights this attitude. Faced by defeat, it was time for the Athenians to cut their losses and retreat. However, an eclipse of the moon convinced Nicias, after consulting the experts,⁷⁰ that they should delay “thrice nine” days—with fatal consequences (7.50.4). Thucydides comments: “Nicias was indeed too susceptible to prophecy and such like”, which some have interpreted as evi-

⁶⁷ See C.A. Powell (1979).

⁶⁸ On the whole complex, see Furley (1996).

⁶⁹ (2000) ch. 5.

⁷⁰ Note one Stilbides named by Plu. *Nic.* 23.7 and Ar. *Pax* 1032.

dence that Thucydides thought there was a “right” degree of trust in prophecy, but that Nicias overstepped that.⁷¹ I take it as another of Thucydides’ psychological observations: Nicias’ character was more-than-average given to faith in mantic utterances.

Then it was—briefly—the Syracusans’ turn to be delayed by a religious event. Following victory in a naval battle in the Great Harbor of Syracuse, Thucydides reports that the heavy drinking occasioned by a festival of Heracles delayed the Syracusans in their pursuit of the fleeing Athenian force (7.73.2). Deprived of their fleet, it was left to the surviving Athenians to attempt flight through inland Sicily. This demoralized and pathetic retreat overland matches in drama Tolstoy’s description of the retreat of Napoleon’s forces in *War and Peace*. Thucydides has Nicias, himself suffering from nephritis, attempt to comfort the exhausted and despairing troops with reference to that elusive factor in war: divine favor. I too, says Nicias, am suffering as much as the worst of you, although I have been second to none in devotions to the gods. If the sending of our expedition stirred wrath in any god (εἴ τῳ θεῶν ἐπιφθονοὶ ἐστρατεύσαμεν), we have already been punished sufficiently. Others have attacked states in the past and, in doing human deeds, have suffered tolerably. Therefore we have every reason to hope that the gods will treat us kindlier (for it is pity we deserve from them more than envious resentment) . . . (7.77.3). Nicias’ reference to the possibility that the expedition was “ill-starred” is ambiguous. One might take it as referring back to that bad omen (οἰωνός, 6.27.3) that marked the fleet’s departure in Athens, the mutilation of the Herms. On the other hand, Nicias goes on to say that “others have attacked other cities”, not causing undue divine wrath, so he seems to refer rather to the fact of sending the Sicilian Expedition, not to specific religious factors accompanying it. The tone of Nicias’ remarks here is that of a man on his knees in despair; when compared with Pericles’ cheerful remarks at the beginning of the war about the “holidays” that gods’ festivals afford, the cash value of their statues, and the Athenians’ ability to withstand any onslaught by their own resources, we see how far Thucydides’ narrative has taken the Athenians down a descending slope of confidence in themselves and their gods. The point is driven home when news of the Sicilian disaster reaches

⁷¹ E.g., Oost (1975) 192–93.

Athens; part of the people's anger and resentment was directed against the seers and prophets who had encouraged them to invade Sicily (8.1.1). The remark shows—what Thucydides had omitted at the time—that popular resort to prophecy had been a factor in deciding in favor of sending the expedition. Now public reaction, confronting defeat, turned against the earlier source of confidence. We may conclude that Thucydides, whilst remaining silent on the gods themselves, lends his narrative psychological depth in consistently charting the religious mood of his characters as they succeed or fail.

INDIVIDUALS IN THUCYDIDES

David Gribble

Thucydides' treatment of individuals must have been one of the aspects of his work that most struck his contemporaries. The *History* opens (1.1–21) with a reinterpretation of early history based on sea power and finance, in which the famous individuals of the past are portrayed as stages in the development of financial sophistication—their role, as heroes or tyrants, to determine events and generate history, subsidiary to larger historical patterns.¹ The account of the origins of the war begins not with individuals, but with a city—Epidamnos, and we have to wait until Archidamos (1.79) to meet an individual of any note. The words and actions of individual actors in the account of the outbreak of the war are explicitly subjugated to a wider causal structure, Spartan fear of Athenian power (1.23.6; 1.88), which in turn is linked to the economic development sketched in the *Archaeologia*, and to facets of “human nature”—honor, fear and advantage. In the face of such wider historical patterns, individuals may seem powerless.

There is contrast too with Herodotus here, who opens his work by locating the origin of the Greek-Persian conflicts in a series of “tit-for-tat” actions by individuals, so that the origins of public conflict are seen in private actions. In general, personal motivations of individuals play a dominant role in Herodotus.² In Thucydides the avoidance of a Herodotean treatment of individuals looks like a facet of that austere avoidance of elements that may make the experience of history more pleasurable, but trivialize it—to *mythōdes* (1.22.4).

Not that there is any shortage of individuals in Thucydides—what Westlake calls “the host of nonentities whose names Thucydides so punctiliously preserves as leaders of unimportant missions”.³ Indeed,

¹ Cf. Kallet-Marx (1993) 33f.

² Hdt 1.1–6. On individual retribution as a causative pattern in Herodotus, see Gould (1989) ch. 4.

³ Westlake (1968) 43. According to Griffith (1961) 21 Thucydides mentions “about 530 persons, of whom 496 are men, 22 are heroes, seven are gods, and six are women”.

such “catalogic” exactitude seems itself to emphasise the avoidance of a “mythical” treatment. So what is it then that defines this typically Thucydidean treatment of individuals? Three things, perhaps.

The first is the avoidance of personal or private detail.⁴ Information supplied about individuals is normally rigorously restricted to their public role, and we learn nothing about their families, their private circumstances, nor (generally) their personal disputes, or indeed anything that goes beyond their role as directors of military action or of their cities’ counsel. Not that there was any lack of this sort of personal material available to Thucydides, as is clear from comedy, or from the fragments of writers like Stesimbrotus of Thasos.⁵ When we compare Plutarch’s depiction of Pericles with that of Thucydides⁶ it seems clear we are dealing with a deliberate policy of exclusion of this sort of material.

The second is the failure to develop the full story of individuals.⁷ Each person fulfills their historical role and then disappears, with only the briefest of indications, if any, of their story before they enter the *History*, and often nothing about their subsequent fate. In general, we *do* hear about the deaths of important individuals, but where this occurs outside the context of the main events of the *History*, we may not even get this—Archidamos is a prime example, and Pericles, whose death we are told of only obliquely (2.65.6).

Third and last, the absence of moralizing in the depiction of individuals is surely another symptom of Thucydides’ refusal to develop the individual in his own right. Not that there is no moral element to the depiction of individuals and the narratorial comment on them—Cleon’s “violence”, for example (3.36.6) or the qualities that Pericles attributes to himself in his last speech (2.60.5)—it is just that, once again, these qualities are linked to the individuals’ political or military performance. We are not allowed to experience individuals’ moral lives, to engage with them by approving or condemning their conduct, except to the extent that it relates to their effectiveness as historical actors. To see how different it could have been, we only have to think of Theopompus.⁸

⁴ Bruns (1896) 9ff., who talks of “Stilgesetze”. Cf. also Hornblower (1987) 14—Thucydides excludes the “personal and emotional background” provided by Herodotus.

⁵ See, e.g., Stadter (1989) lxiiff.

⁶ Cf. Pelling (1992) 27.

⁷ Bruns (1896) 1–23, esp. 9.

⁸ See Connor (1968) 13, noting the complete absence of Thucydidean restraint in personal matters.

Nor do we experience that sense of the “moral structure” to an individual’s story that we find in Herodotus, notably in a Croesus or a Xerxes or the sense of structure that is typical of tragedy. There is simply not enough of individuals’ stories to develop that.

These important differences between Thucydides and other authors, particularly Herodotus, in the treatment of individuals, look like a sign of a *deliberate* exclusion of the personal, the private, the individual’s life outside the city, a generic decision, tied to Thucydides’ attempt to create a military-political historiography founded on non-personal causation—cities and armies and money, not people. Just as the narrator as directing voice, an individual with opinion and character, is deliberately “effaced” from the narrative,⁹ so is the private activity, private character and personal story of the individual characters.

Isolating “rules” like these helps to illustrate the novelty of Thucydides’ approach. But one can already, perhaps, start to think of some exceptions and qualifications. Not all individuals are treated in the same way. Nor do these presentational rules necessarily imply anything about the causational role of individuals: they go to the sphere of action of individuals rather than their importance. The relatively limited role of individuals in the account of the causes of the war is not necessarily typical of the whole work. Indeed, Westlake, in his book on individuals in Thucydides, argued that it was possible to distinguish the treatment of individuals in the “first half” of the *History* (roughly up to the Peace of Nicias) from that in the “second half”.¹⁰ Certainly, the treatment of individuals does not appear to be the same at every point in the work, and an analysis of individuals in Thucydides has to take account of this, whatever one may think of Westlake’s own explanation for it.

Individuals in the Late Fifth Century

One of the reasons for the difference between Herodotus’ individuals and Thucydides’ is the different sort of history they are writing. For the vast majority of his material, Herodotus relied on oral traditions of one sort or another—for the most part stories about

⁹ Loraux (1986b); Gribble (1998).

¹⁰ Westlake (1968), enthusiastically adopted by Hornblower (1987) 145f., as part of a discussion of the role of individuals in Thucydides’ causation.

individuals or famous houses—leaving him little choice but to write an individual-centered history. Such traditions are also typically shot through with a causal structure that sees event in terms of the relationship between individuals and fate, or individuals and the divine, structures that infuse Herodotus' own work.¹¹ Thucydides, writing contemporary history and relying on either autopsy or firsthand reports, was not bound into the themes and structures of oral history, or himself interested in non-human patterning.¹² When he comes to describe the period before the main time frame of the *History*, Thucydides too may adopt a more "Herodotean" individual-centred style, as in the digressions on Pausanias and Themistocles and Cylon (1.126–138), or on the Athenian tyrants in 6.53–59 (the fact that each of these is an excursus also helps to explain the breach of the normal "generic" rules). Of course, one of the points of the tyrants digression is that it was not the individuals Harmodios and Aristogeiton who overthrew the tyrants but the Spartans—for political and not personal reasons. An example, then, of a Thucydidean approach to Herodotean material, but it is significant that to reach this conclusion Thucydides is forced to reject oral tradition for less exciting, but more "accurate" inscriptional evidence (6.54–55).

The period and the events about which Thucydides was writing were themselves characterized by a more restricted, or "embedded" role for the individual than the archaic Greek and eastern world described by Herodotus.¹³ In Thucydides' day the leading cities enjoyed strong and confident polities that were able, for the most part, to restrain the extra-civic power of leading individuals who had in the archaic period dominated the city's affairs, through their independent control of resources both inside and outside the city, and of extra-civic networks of friends and contacts.¹⁴ Political stability meant that powerful individuals were less likely to be forced out of the city by *stasis*, to become the enemies of the city, attempting to return to power by force. The danger posed to the city by prominent individuals, and their capacity to determine the city's affairs,

¹¹ T. Harrison (2003) 241ff. on Herodotus' historical—or "metahistorical"—understanding.

¹² Whether his treatment of individuals is entirely freed from the sort of "patterning" that characterizes Herodotus has been questioned, notably by Cornford (1907), esp. on Alcibiades: 188–200.

¹³ Forrest (1979) 313.

¹⁴ Berve (1949).

had receded in Thucydides' day—that is why the paranoia of the Athenians that Alcibiades was aiming at tyranny seemed so strange, so in need of an explanation, that Thucydides felt compelled to explain it by means of a digression about the archaic past (6.53).

The curtailing of individual, extra-civic sources of influence and status was a deliberate policy by the city, reflected in civic ideology. In Athens, the threat posed by powerful individuals, or by destabilizing strife between individuals was countered by the institution of ostracism. In public presentations, the naming of individuals whose status might threaten that of the city was banned by custom from civic events like the Funeral Oration,¹⁵ and also in art and sculpture.¹⁶ The city tried, as best it could, to curtail the *private* influence of great individuals, for example in the Athenian law withholding citizenship from the children of marriages between Athenians and foreigners,¹⁷ and the increasing concentration on civic liturgies as a way of harnessing individual wealth displays within the city, as distinct from private largesse or spending at pan-Hellenic athletic festivals. In Sparta, too, an episode like the erasing by the city of the inscription Pausanias had inscribed on the tripod following Plataea (1.132.2–3), illustrates the exercise of control by the city over a powerful individual who had tried to put his own name where that of his city's (or of the Greeks') rightly belonged.

However, even by the end of the fifth century, the Periclean heyday of civic control of individuals and private influence was under threat. Party strife in Athens led to the exile of the powerful Alcibiades, who turned his personal resources against the city, and then to the revolution of the 5000 and 400. The *polis*—Sparta, and now (following the Sicilian disaster) Athens too—was unable to provide the resources to support its generals in the field, like Alcibiades or Lysander. It was increasingly hard for the city to control its powerful individuals, operating far away, and with increasingly little supervision. Events came increasingly to be determined by the personal intrigues of powerful individuals, and for the first time, the conduct of the war came to be decisively affected by outright *stasis* in a leading city. These developments are reflected in the far more important role played by individuals in Thucydides Book VIII.

¹⁵ Cf. R. Thomas (1989) 205–20.

¹⁶ Cf. Aeschin. 3.186 on the *Stoa Poikilē*.

¹⁷ Plu. *Per.* 37, with Stadter (1989) *ad loc.* See, in general, Humphreys (1983) 26f.

This kind of role for individuals is also foreseen by the digressions on Pausanias and Themistocles in Book I. These digressions look back—the behaviour of Pausanias helps explain why Sparta relinquished leadership of the Greeks to Athens. It shows how the Spartan system, and individual Spartans, are quite unsuited to the management of high status leadership positions abroad. This is important in the context of Book I (it supports the suggestions of the Athenians [1.77] and Archidamos [1.80] that the Spartans will find it no easier on this occasion than in the 470s to conduct the type of war required to defeat Athens), and it is programmatic for the later narrative, especially, perhaps, for the post-411 narrative that was never written. As for Themistocles, his extraordinary personal qualities and his decisive personal intervention are depicted as to a large extent responsible for the Athenian defeat of the Persians and for the fortification of Athens after the Persian Wars (1.74; 1.91), the two events that laid the foundations of the Athenian empire. A very different sort of individual from Pausanias, then (his individual, characteristically Athenian, genius, helping to create rather than undermine the city's leadership position), but also very similar to Pausanias in the fate he suffered,¹⁸ and suggestive, too, of the potentially calamitous effects of the struggle between individual and city in Athens that will be so important later on. When Thucydides ends this digression: "So ended the stories of Pausanias the Spartan and Themistocles the Athenian, the most famous men of their time in Greece", this suggests his desire to act as continuator of Herodotus' work by telling to the end the story of individuals who had figured so prominently in his narrative, but also perhaps to highlight the fates of the most famous individuals of the previous generation, with a view to the events that will unfold in the *History*.

However much Periclean Athens may have reigned in the power of individual great men, these episodes remind us of the awe that the individual was capable of exciting on a personal level in the ancient world, and the intense fear and hostility he was capable of generating on a political level.

¹⁸ Cf. Hornblower (1987) 26; 33; Marincola (2001) 70f. and the works cited there.

The "Individual"

Before we proceed further, it may be helpful at this stage to say a little more about what we mean by the "individual". Pausanias, Themistocles, and Pericles are all clearly "prominent figures" in the *History* (the sense of the term as it is used, e.g., in Westlake's *Individuals in Thucydides*). But are they also "individuals"? The term comes with a great deal of cultural baggage through long use in the context of modern Western society. It suggests a sphere, within society, yet separate to it, for personal freedom or self-expression, where the member of society can also be, and feel himself, distinct from that society.

It is worth questioning whether such a term can be usefully applied at all to Greek society (and by extension to Greek historiography) with its concentration on the integration of the citizen within the city, and its relative lack of interest in a sphere of independent self-expression and differentiation.¹⁹ Did Thucydides recognize the concept of the individual—did he have a word for "individual"?

I think that we can talk about the "individual" in Thucydides in this sense. The whole analysis of a figure like Pausanias revolves around his relationship to the city—his unwillingness or inability to restrict himself in his behavior and his way of thinking about himself is a sign of his status as, and vision of himself as, an individual. To understand a Pausanias, or later, an Alcibiades, we need to think in terms of the (failed) relationship between the citizen and the city.

The concept of a sphere, proper to a person outside his capacity as a citizen, at least in the sense of a *private* sphere, is also well developed in Thucydides. For this area, the word ἴδιος is used, meaning "personal to one's self, one's own" (e.g., personal property as distinct from others' property or that of the state), and then by extension, "personal, private" (as distinct from, e.g., a professional, or, in particular, a civic role). The word ἰδιώτης thus means a person acting in his private capacity, as distinct from his role, in particular, as a citizen. So for example, in the description of *stasis* in the Greek cities, war teaches cruelty, but "in peace both cities and individuals (αἱ τε πόλεις καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται) are actuated by higher motives" (3.82.2). Again, in the Mytilenean Debate, Diodotos argues (3.45.3) that not even the death penalty is capable of dissuading people from doing

¹⁹ Gill (1995) 43–45. On the individual in Greek society, see also Vernant (1989).

wrong, since “everyone is inclined by nature to do wrong, both at a private and public level” (ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ—we might translate “both individuals and cities”). And when Pericles in Book II urges the Athenians not to send further embassies to the Spartans (2.64.6), he says “those who are least afflicted in their judgements by misfortune, and most demonstrate resistance in their actions, are the strongest, both amongst cities and individuals” (καὶ πόλεων καὶ ἰδιωτῶν).²⁰

If “individual” is the best translation in these cases, it is clear that we are dealing with a quite restricted sense of the term, referring to a bare distinction between a person’s civic and private roles. Significantly, there is a suggestion of negative association too, of a narrow and selfish focus on private goods (especially private wealth) at the expense of the city. This type of individual is more a citizen acting temporarily outside his civic role, with the suggestion even that he is forgetful of his proper civic role. There is no “emancipation” here from the city (as implied by the use of the term “individual” in recent Western tradition), nor any sign that this is desired.

Nor do figures like Pausanias or Alcibiades embody such an “emancipation”. They are not “developed” individuals, free to build their talents and construct themselves to their own pattern. The point is rather simply an excess of power, status, and self-esteem. Nor are they individuals in the sense of possessing a particular mix of qualities that distinguish them from others, making them “unique”. They are “Einzelmenschen” rather than “Individuen”.²¹ They too are pursuing a “private” non-civic (in this case anti-civic) agenda, rather than offering any alternative to it. This suggests that, though there is a terminological way of describing competing civic and personal goals, there is no escape in this terminology from the ideological commitment to the city. The realm of the “individual” is restricted to a form of competition with the city.

What about individuation? There is nothing very individuated about a figure like Pausanias. He stands out from others because of an excess of power and status, not because of any precise mix of personal traits. The qualities attributed to Pericles too are so firmly concentrated on his civic role that we do not get a sense of what kind of person he was, as an “individual”.

²⁰ Also 1.124.1; 1.82.6; 1.143.3; 2.8.4; 5.41.2; 4.87.6. Cf. Gomme, *HCT* on 2.65.7 and Hornblower (1987) 178f.

²¹ Cf. Berve (1949).

We could imagine a history in which only “assertive” “public” individuals were prominent, of which we could still say that individuals played an important role. However, for many, a real interest in the individual will mean a sense of how individuals differ from one another. The presence of such “individuated” figures suggests the presence of that sense of the contingent in history, of that essential particularity of event, which (in addition to providing understanding through a proper account of causation) it is arguably the role of historiography, particularly narrative historiography, to create.

Narrative Technique

We have talked about a number of ways in which individuals can be important in historiography (as “assertive” individuals, as “individuated” individuals). In a narrative history, they are also a part of the narrative structure, and their deployment is closely tied to narrative technique.²² A discussion of individuals in Thucydides cannot ignore this aspect.

This is most evident perhaps when it comes to the question of “voice” (who speaks?). Thucydidean historiography is centered on speech, and in particular the constant, complex comparison of speech and action, plan and reality. This use of speech is clearly an aspect of narrative technique, and one that is closely related both to the role of the individual in the real conditions of the late fifth century (reflecting the role of speech in inspiring action, and the foundation of individual reputation on the giving of effective advice), and also to the literary origins of Thucydidean historiography. But it does not necessarily imply an important historical role for the people who give the speeches—otherwise we would have to posit an important role for Teutiaplos the Elean, whose only role in the *History* is to give a short speech to Alcidas exposing the poverty of the latter’s imagination in Book III (29.2), or for that matter for Diodotos who opposes Cleon in the Mytilenean Debate (3.41). Such figures are the vehicles for contextualized ideas and points of view. Nevertheless, speeches such as these, delivered by people with no real position

²² On narrative technique and narratology in Thucydides, see Rood (1998a) and Rengakos, this vol.

and who do not recur elsewhere in the *History*, are rare. More typically the identity of the speaker is important too, so that, e.g., the speech discouraging immediate action in the first debate at Sparta in Book I is crucially delivered by Archidamos, one of the kings, “a man with a reputation for intelligence and virtue” (1.79.2), and the man who will go on to lead the invasion of Attica, which he tries to persuade the Spartans against in this speech. The analysis he puts forward is one that is to be set against the other speeches in the book, and with the unfolding events, but it also relates to and helps us to understand the role of the individual Archidamos in those events. In this sense, Thucydides’ speech-centered narrative methodology clearly encourages a form of concentration on the individual. If we could imagine the ideas in Archidamos’ speech presented by the narrator, the effect would have been very different. Where speeches contain attacks on, and defenses by, an individual (as in the Mytilenean or Sicilian Debates), the individual himself becomes a theme of the “rhetorical dialogue” of the *History*.

There is also the question of “focalization” (who sees?; through whose eyes is the action depicted?). The depiction of action as filtered through the thoughts and perceptions of one of the actors is an important and very characteristic technique in Thucydides, in the form of “attribution of motivation”, often in the form of “participially expressed motivation” (thinking, wishing, seeing).²³ Focalizers are very often also speakers, and often focalization relates actions to speeches—e.g., the focalization through Archidamos in the invasion of Attica at the beginning of Book II (18–21), which is closely tied to his speech against such an invasion in Book I, and to his short speech to the troops setting out his strategy for the invasion (2.11–12).

In historiography, there is another important question when it comes to the role of individuals—namely selection, the question of who is allowed to appear so as to speak or focalize (or even act) in the first place, or which episodes are recorded. Thucydides’ rigorous selectivity of episode (or looked at in another way, his “omissions”) is particularly evident when it comes to individuals. So, for example, there is no real account of the opposition to Pericles, or of the ostracism of Hyperbolos, or of the Athenian “demagogues” apart from Cleon, or the opposition to Alcibiades apart from Nicias.

²³ Westlake (1989b); Lang (1995).

Despite the number of nonentities commanding unimportant expeditions, and despite the absence of individuals' "full stories", the narrative does tend to concentrate on a few key individuals, around whom speech, focalization, and description of action cluster. Such figures may function as "actors of focus", the use of an individual, through speech and focalization, to structure events.²⁴ So, for example, the close description of the naval battles in the Corinthian Gulf in the second half of Book II develop the origins of Athenian naval superiority, and the speeches, thoughts and actions of Phormio are the key narrative method for doing so. Contrast the focalizations through Cleon before the battle of Amphipolis in Book V (10), emphasising Cleon's lack of control and false appreciation of affairs, in contrast to Brasidas. In this latter case, the role of individuals is more decisive. The focalisations tell us about the actors themselves (whose relative capabilities will effectively determine the outcome of the battle) rather than wider causes.

A key aspect of selection is the number of individuals who speak, act, or focalize. In the account of the origins of the war in Book I, we only have one Athenian, Pericles, even though we are explicitly told that many other speeches were given at the time (1.139.4), and this is a pattern that continues up until Pericles' death. This is very suggestive of Pericles' role, and of Athenian politics, or at least of how Thucydides wanted to depict them. On the Spartan side in the account of the origins of the war, on the other hand, we have two speeches, Archidamos and Sthenelaidas, as well as the Corinthians and Athenians (1.67–87). And when it comes to the launch of the Sicilian Expedition (the "origin" of the second phase of the war), again, we have two speakers, Alcibiades and Nicias (6.6–24), a division in speech and focalization that will be typical of the whole narrative of the Sicilian campaign. Where a single actor of focus suggests the influence of a strong controlling individual, multiple actors may imply policy division and perhaps individuation—thus the straightforward and "laconic" Sthenelaidas proposes immediate action to support the allies (1.86), while the more experienced, cautious, and "intelligent" (ξυμεινός) Archidamos points out the long-term difficulties of such a war (1.80).

²⁴ Cf. Connor's term "commander narrative" (1984): e.g., 119f.; 233f. In Gribble (1999) 194–204, I argue that Alcibiades functions as actor of focus in some parts of the narrative.

A particular example of the use of multiple actors of focus is the conference of generals, a set of speeches in indirect speech, on a scale suited to a campaign narrative. Rare in the initial Books—the first real example is the difference of opinion between Demosthenes and the other Athenian generals at Pylos at the beginning of Book IV (3–4)—they are associated with descriptions of Athenian action, and with key moments in the campaign narrative—the decision to fortify Pylos, or to withdraw the Athenian force from Miletos (8.27; here, only Phrynichos speaks). In particular, they characterize the Athenian campaign in Sicily: the conference of the generals in 6.47–49 suggests the lack of clarity over the expedition's aims and the wide scope for individual leaders to give it aim and direction. On the arrival of Demosthenes in 7.42, there is no conference with Nicias (let alone Eurymedon), but merely the well-known focalization through Demosthenes with its criticisms of Nicias' conduct—the initiative is with Demosthenes. Then in 7.47 there is the calamitous conference that fails to bring about the departure of the expedition. In the brief council in 7.72, the generals this time agree to attempt once more to force a way out by sea, but by this stage the refusal of the men to obey exposes the powerlessness of the individual leaders.

The relative degree of individual involvement in events (whether or not to name an individual as the author of action or speech—"Nicias", rather than "the Athenian generals") is itself an aspect of narrative technique. An interesting example of this type of control of the individual register is the Melian Dialogue (5.85–114), where the abstract generality of the argument is reinforced by the anonymity of the participants in the debate, suggesting the way the Melians are in the grip of impersonal forces beyond their control. Denied names or individual identity in the narrative, they are also largely denied a voice by the Athenian restriction of the debate to expediency arguments. The sense of anonymity, of a lack of individuality presages their eventual fate, complete annihilation by the Athenians (5.116).

Devices like focalization clusters and conferences "open up" the action to reveal the role of individuals in directing, or attempting or failing to direct it. A device that exposes the role of individuals even more clearly is what may be called the "decisive intervention"—the description of a series of events in such a way that the expected consequence is suddenly overturned by the intervention of an individual—for example the arrival of Gylippos in Syracuse (7.2), pre-

sented as a turning point in the Sicilian War.²⁵ Prior to this, Gylippos' exact movements had been tracked from Leukas to Sicily, including his attempt to renew his guest-friendship at Thurii, and the storm and refitting of his ships (6.104), before arriving with Syracuse on the point of being completely invested. The race against time enhances the impact of his eventual arrival. Gylippos is a man of energy, who will organize the defense of Syracuse, and his arrival is decisive.

It was Alcibiades who had told the Spartans to "send a Spartiate man" (6.91.4) like Gylippos, and his speech at Sparta is seen as crucial in galvanizing the Spartans into action before it is too late, by intervening at Syracuse, and by fortifying Deceleia, both of which the Spartans (eventually) do, and both of which are depicted as crucial actions (7.2; 7.19). Alcibiades' crucial advice is also preceded by a similar "tracking" of his movements (6.61; 6.88). This description keeps the focus on Alcibiades—his advice is going to be crucial—and establishes a direct link between his deposition, his advice to the Spartans, and in turn, the arrival of Gylippos at the beginning of the following summer. Such descriptions are contrary to Thucydides' normal practice of only describing those actions of individuals that directly relate to the main action, and therefore they stand out. Alcibiades provides a similar role in galvanizing the Spartans at the beginning of Book VIII, and here too, his movements are closely tracked (8.12; 8.14; 8.17; 8.26.3).

Reputations

For Herodotus, as for his predecessors in epic, one of the stated aims of writing was to preserve the "deeds of men" from being extinguished (Hdt. 1.1). For Thucydides, writing contemporary history, that is not perhaps such an important consideration. The emphasis is more on understanding actions than on preserving them from obliteration. Nevertheless, Thucydides often points out that actions were the greatest in achievement or suffering (including the war itself, which was ἀξιολογώτατος, 1.1). Tim Rood has recently pointed to verbal parallels between the language of Herodotus and Thucydides

²⁵ Kern (1989).

and contemporary poetry memorializing the deeds of cities and individuals.²⁶ Even more relevant, perhaps, are other contemporary genres of individual reputation, such as published speeches and “pamphlets” and also comedy. It is possible to trace the main features of Thucydides’ portrait of Pericles, Cleon, and, above all, Nicias in their depiction in comedy.²⁷ Similarly, one can trace the relationship between the published speeches in defense of, or attacking Alcibiades, and his depiction in Thucydides.²⁸ The historian was surely aware of his power to transmit a particular image of an individual to posterity (and his ability to damn an individual to obscurity by omitting him altogether, like the “wretched” Hyperbolos, 8.73.3), but also of the danger of being drawn into partisan debates about particular figures.

The reputations of Thucydides’ actors were often hotly contested at the time he was writing, and such controversies inevitably formed the background to the depiction of individuals. Phrynichos, for example, after his murder was blamed as the leader of the hardliners in the 400. Thucydides does not take an explicit stance on that issue—he does, however, explicitly defend the action of Phrynichos in withdrawing from Miletos before the arrival of the allied fleet under Therimenes in Book VIII. After setting out the reasons for this decision (not to risk a naval defeat for Athens at this crucial point), the narrator comments (8.27.5):

Phrynichos seemed, later rather more than at the time, not just in this matter, but also in all the other affairs in which he was involved, to have shown no lack of intelligence.²⁹

The softening use of *δοκεῖν* (“seemed”) to suggest that the analysis may be that of others (together with the introduction of the praise-worthy quality through a litotes) is typical, as is also perhaps the vagueness of the references (it is not stated when his cleverness was

²⁶ Rood (1998b), esp. 4.4, on Simonides’ poems on Salamis, Artemisium, and Plataea. We know Simonides mentioned Pausanias in the Plataea poem (P. Oxy. 3965, l. 13; cf. West [1993] 7), and Rood discusses whether he may have mentioned Themistocles in the Salamis poem. On Herodotus and Thucydides, see also Rogkotsis, this vol.

²⁷ Pericles’ dominant “Olympian” position: 2.65.8–9; Ar. *Ach.* 530; Cratin. fr. 71; 111; 240; 241 K.-A. Cleon: 5.16.1 and Ar. *Eq.* 801ff. Nicias: superstition (7.50.4; 7.77; Ar. *E.* 30–3), fearfulness (e.g. 7.48.3–4; Ar. *Eq.* 16–18; Ar. *Av.* 640), pessimism (7.11–15; Ar. *Eq.* 34; 111–12)—see further Sommerstein (1980) 46f.

²⁸ Gribble (1999) 189–93.

²⁹ The explicit narratorial analysis of an individual anticipates the analysis of the 411 revolutionaries later in the book.

recognized, by whom, or in which other affairs it was demonstrated).³⁰ The positive narratorial appraisal is introduced carefully, almost apologetically. Even in what is clearly an intervention on behalf of Phrynichos' reputation (prepared for by the earlier narrative) there is an attempt to preserve a kind of narratorial neutrality.

This might sound like the final word on Phrynichos, yet his intrigues with Alcibiades and his membership of the hardliners among the 400 are still to come, and these will cast him in a far more unfavorable light. The comment arises out of its context and, though it steers reader reaction, must be weighed against material that is still to come. Narratorial interventions like this do not present us with Thucydides' final view,³¹ and (with the possible exception of Hyperbolos) there are few individuals in the narrative whose analysis one could reduce to a single-line judgment.³² That is partly because the *History* is a long work, in which the role of individuals is constantly developing, but it is also a function of the constant comparison in the depiction of individuals between speech and speech, speech and action, present, past and future, which is inherent in the work. In this world few, if any, individuals have a monopoly on the truth.

Athenian Individuals

In the *History*, it is above all the Athenian individuals who are the most controversial, whose depiction is the most complex and who seem to explain so much.

It is Athenian individuals who are the focus of opening years of the war—not, however, in the sense of prominent figures, but of the individual Athenian citizens. The focus on the Athenian individual in the first years of the war is natural, since the strategic focus at this point of the work is the Spartan strategy of invasion of Attica, the aim of which is to damage the personal belongings of Athenians,

³⁰ For δοκεῖν in judgments on individuals cf. 1.79.2 (Archidamos); 8.86.4 (Alcibiades). Vagueness: 2.65; 6.15.3–4; 8.86.4. For the controversial nature of this narratorial opinion about Phrynichos, and Phrynichos' eventual fate, see *HCT* on 8.27.5.

³¹ Connor (1984) 15–19; 233–40; Gribble (1998) 56f.

³² These comments apply equally to the character introductions in Thucydides, of which, according to Griffith (1961), there are 24. Such introductions seem to mark the formal entry into the *History* of a character, the point from which he will play a significant role (note “delayed” entries like that of Brasidas, 4.81.1).

and so either bring them to terms, or else to a battle that the Spartans expect to win (2.20). Either eventuality would be to the disadvantage of the city as a whole, and the challenge for the “individual” Athenian is to withstand the loss of his private possessions (τὰ ἴδια), or resist the temptation to defend them, for the greater good of the city. The account concentrates on the suffering and losses of each individual Athenian (2.14–17; 2.21).

This is a type of “individual” not normally prominent in discussions of individuals in Thucydides, yet it is an important, and particularly characteristic element of the *History*. I mean the attempt (reminiscent of contemporary journalism) to convey the feeling of what it was like for individuals to experience the events described: suffering under the plague (2.50–53), reacting to the charismatic Alcibiades (6.15.4; 6.24), watching the great battle in the harbor at Syracuse (7.71), or before the retreat from Syracuse (7.75); and also a sense of the tragedy, the personal fate, of individuals not historically important in themselves, like the victims at Mycalessos (7.29.5). This “individual’s-eye view” of events is a crucial element of that empathetic “understanding” of human events which Thucydides’ work aims to provide.

On the basis of what we have heard about the Athenians in Book I, this is a challenge we might expect them to be equal to. The very foundation of Athenian success against Persia, and therefore the source both of Greek safety and the Athenian empire, was the Athenians being prepared to abandon their land to the Persians, and carry on the fight, deprived of their personal possessions, and indeed their very city, from their ships (1.73.4–5). The Corinthians see individual suffering in the civic cause as a hallmark of the Athenians (1.70.6):

They treat their bodies as though they were not their own in the city’s service, but their minds as something they must take personal care to cultivate in order to achieve something on its behalf.

It is above all in the *Epitaphios* that the concept of the Athenian individual is developed. Here, public and private are complementary areas: The political life of an Athenian is free and open, just as his political life is (2.37). The city is equipped not just for war, but also for splendid civic festivals and private recreation—both city and private houses are beautifully adorned (2.38). Each person develops himself in his private capacity so as to be more useful to the city,

and interest in private affairs goes hand in hand in direct involvement in state affairs (2.40). Once again, the contrast is with the Spartans, whose demand for a rigorous submission of private life to the city produces a nation of unimaginative hoplite-farmers (2.39). In the Athens of Thucydides' Pericles, there is no need for Spartan-style repression of the individual by the city. One of the central points of the speech is that all this individual activity—private wealth, private interests, personal intelligence—can be developed without a negative effect on the civic good.

We are dealing here with a concept of the individual, albeit that the individual is developed predominantly in the service of the city ("on its behalf", as the Corinthians put it). For Pericles,

the city as a whole is the education of Greece, and each man individually [*καθ' ἑκάστων*] here more than anywhere develops his person to be self-reliant across a wide variety of activity, with grace, and with adaptability (2.41.1).

Yet this individual is developed within and for, the city, so that when it comes to the ultimate sacrifice he is ready to lay down his life in battle, rather than "weakening because he wanted to go on enjoying his wealth" (2.42.4). The noble death of the Funeral Speech is the ultimate proof that the Athenian individual is developed subject to, and for, the city.

The Athenians do, of course, withstand the destruction of their personal property, but only after considerable struggle on an individual basis (2.65.2), particularly in the plague which directly follows the *Epitaphios*, where necessity and personal emergency drive the Athenian individual back to behavior of the most selfish and anti-social sort (2.53). And in the end, they do send embassies to Sparta to discuss peace (2.59).

Pericles

To the extent that the Athenians are able to hold out, this is presented as largely due to the influence of Pericles, who is the articulator of the vision of Athens and the relationship between city and individual. He is also the one who makes the Athenians see the need not to let the city be held to ransom for the sake of private possessions:

Considering that a city is capable of supporting private misfortunes, whereas each individual [εἰς ἕκαστος] is not capable of supporting those of the city, how could it not be vital for everyone to go to its defence? But you are doing just the opposite: overwhelmed by your misfortunes at home, you are neglecting the common safety (2.60.4).

Pericles' gesture in offering to make his private estates "public" (2.13.1) encapsulates these principles, demonstrating both his willingness to sacrifice his personal belongings in the public cause (in this vein, he even contemplates, or affects to contemplate, encouraging the Athenians to lay waste their property themselves—1.143.5), and the *submission* of private interests (his guest friendship with Archidamos) to the public good. Pericles is deposed and fined, and this is reported (2.65.3), but by systematically suppressing all details of this opposition in the narrative, and above all, by denying voice and focalization to others (except to the individual Athenians themselves) Thucydides creates the impression of a leader who rises above not just personal interests, but even personal disputes. And above personal or biographical detail too—we get little idea of what Pericles was like as a person—even his death is not directly reported. We do not need to know, and that is the point.

After his death, things were different. The Athenians:

pursued policies which were totally opposed to his advice, and even in areas which apparently had no connection with the war they practised politics in pursuit of their own personal ambitions [ιδίας φιλοτιμίας] and desire for personal profit [ἴδια κέρδη], with bad consequences both for themselves and for the allies. When these policies succeeded, they brought prestige and advantage more to private individuals [ιδιώταις], but when they failed resulted in harm to the city in its war effort (2.65.7).

Note the gradual shift of the third-person plural subject from referring to the Athenians in general to Athenian leaders.³³ Leaders and led are accomplices in a disastrous privileging of the private above the public, the individual above the common good, the opposite of what Pericles had argued for and himself in his political life represented. Unlike Pericles, who is presented as above personal disputes, his successors, less politically supreme, were forced to compete with each other for the top position, leading to many mistakes including

³³ Cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.342.

the Sicilian Expedition. Such political competition contributed to the failure of the expedition after its launch:

Because of their personal disputes [ιδίας διαβολάς] concerning the leadership of the *dēmos*, they both made the situation in the expedition lose its edge, and between them brought confusion into the city's affairs for the first time (2.65.11).

We have come a long way in such a passage from the general causative structures of Book I, but perhaps this is only to be expected. The larger-scale causal structures with which the *History* commences are filled out by more specific, “individual” strands as the work progresses, and as attention shifts to the breakdown of ordered systems along “individualist” lines (e.g., the plague in Athens, or the Corcyrean *stasis*). These more specific strands do not negate the wider ones. Indeed, a convincing system of causation in historiography needs to provide a sense of explanation both at the wider and at the more specific level.

More than this, however, a development of this kind actually seems to be required by the way causation has been developed so far. If money—the control of resources and economic sophistication characteristic of Athens—is the source of power, and the Athenian state and individual is so much more enterprising, daring and well equipped than those of Sparta, we need a causal strand capable of explaining why Athens *lost* the war,³⁴ and now (at the moment where the Athenians, contrary to expectations at the start of the war, sue for peace because of their personal misfortunes) is the right time to introduce it.

Given the Sicilian Expedition, the fact that this strand is founded on “Athenian mistakes”³⁵ is perhaps not surprising. More surprising, perhaps, is the central role played here by Athenian individuals, and Athenian individualism (the particular brand of “selfish individualism” sketched in 2.65). But this too arises naturally out of the first half of Book II, where the aggressive “private” individualism of the Athenians is only held in check—channelled in a civic direction—by the actions and rhetoric of an individual who had, exceptionally, put himself above the personal and private. There is symmetry here—

³⁴ As Pericles himself points out (2.13.2), it is not just financial resources, but also *gnōmē*, which are necessary for success in war—Kallet (2001) ch. 4.

³⁵ Mistakes such as Pericles predicted: 1.144.1 and cf. 1.69.5.

the Athenians' weakness turns out to be a version of what has hitherto been depicted as their greatest strength. Later, we will see these strands in action, in the political irresponsibility of Athenian leaders in proposing (or even in Nicias' case, opposing) the expedition and the Athenians individually in pursuing it, a leader-led failure that culminates in the deposition of the expedition's key leader, leaving it in the hands of a person who did not want to lead it in the first place.

That also helps explain why Athenian rather than Spartan individuals figure so largely in the work, and Athenian rather than Spartan internal disputes, and what is more (and this goes back to the theory of Westlake), why there is much more both about individuals and disputes in the latter "half" of the work.³⁶ Though the tendency can be traced to the period after the death of Pericles, in the Pylos and Mytilene Debates³⁷ (these too depict "selfish" behavior in Athenian political life), it is most pronounced in the account of the Sicilian Expedition.

Book V

Modes of explanation centered on individuals are also characteristic of Book V, particularly in the lengthy account (5.16.1) of the role of individuals and personal motivations in bringing about peace—the removal of Brasidas and Cleon, with their personal stake in war, and the influence of Nicias and Pleistoanax in furthering the peace (discussed further below). While in the account of the origins of the war general causes were explicitly preferred to what was said at the time by individuals (or perhaps rather, what was done and said merely reflected such general causes), the account of its *end* is traced, in this passage, to individuals. But of course, the Peace of Nicias is not really the end of the war—that is Thucydides' point (5.26), and it is precisely the underlying cause—Spartan fear of Athenian power

³⁶ Kallet (2001) 288f., and chs. 1 and 4.

³⁷ Demonstrated, e.g., in Nicias' abandonment of his command and Cleon's "mad" promise (4.27–8); or Cleon's depiction of the Athenians as motivated by a selfish desire to prove themselves clever in a debate (3.37), and the personal charges he makes against his opponents (whose harmful effect is noted by Diodotos, 3.41–42). The Mytilenean Debate is as much about the quality of Athenian political life as it is about the policy with regard to Mytilene.

(such as the fears of an Athenian domination of Sicily and Italy aroused by Alcibiades in his speech at Sparta)—that will cause the war to reignite.

The strong causal role given to individuals in 5.16 looks untypical, but it is characteristic of the tendency of individuals to determine the agenda throughout Book V, through personal intrigues carried out for personal reasons, often without the sanction of their cities. The most notable example, on the Athenian side, is Alcibiades, the description (5.43) of whose personal motivations for urging the Argive alliance recalls that of the personal motivations of the leaders in 5.16, but also, e.g., the behavior of the Spartan ephors Cleoboulos and Xenares. They, like Alcibiades, hijack the city's policy for personal ends by private intrigue (5.36). Agis, too, together with the Argives Thrasylos and Alciphron, agree a truce without the endorsement of the city during the Mantinea campaign (5.59.4–5.60.6). If neither this agreement nor the Peace of Nicias itself hold, that is perhaps because civic policy based on the temporary individual motivations of those enjoying influence is inherently unstable—individual causation is not “deep” causation.

*Nicias*³⁸

Nicias' motivation for seeking the peace that bears his name is that:

... he had enjoyed more success than any of his contemporaries on his campaigns ... he wanted, before anything bad happened to him and in the enjoyment of his reputation, to preserve his good fortune, and for the present to see to it that both he and the citizens were relieved from their toils (πόνων), and for the future to leave behind him a name that he had never brought disaster on the city, thinking that this would come about from the avoidance of risk, and from exposing himself as little as possible to fortune, and that peace would allow the avoidance of risk (5.16.1).

Hardly very “Athenian”, with its echoes of the *πόνοι* that Athenians so willingly shouldered to build their empire (1.70.8–9; 2.36.2; 2.63.1), and its un-Athenian abhorrence of risk. It is also not the sort of mind-set required by the Periclean statesman, since, although linked

³⁸ On Thucydides' presentation of Nicias, see Rood (1998a) ch. 8.

to concern for the citizens, it is primarily his own reputation and good fortune that Nicias is anxious to preserve—"private" ends then, and certainly lacking the breadth of the Periclean vision of Athens. Above all, of course, the passage is heavy with irony, in the context of our knowledge of Nicias' eventual fate.

This would already be enough to show that Nicias was the wrong leader for the Sicilian Expedition, that quintessential demonstration of Athenian daring to the point of overstretching. When it comes to the Sicilian Debate itself, Nicias' opposition to the expedition is founded on the proposition that it is right for an individual to take care of himself and his property (6.9.2). Though less obviously intrusive than Alcibiades, Nicias' private life (in the sense of the *εὐτυχία* that motivates his political conduct) is important too.³⁹ He is also unable to convey his cautious message to his adventure-seeking Athenian audience, and what is more he explicitly recognizes this in his speech (6.9.3). This fatalistic resignation to his lot as general of an ungovernable and to him incomprehensible people helps lead him to enhance the risk to the city by pushing for an increase in the expedition's size—an irresponsibility which we have already seen demonstrated in his handing over his command to Cleon in the Pylos debate.⁴⁰ The ability of a man fundamentally averse to risk repeatedly to put his city at risk through misjudgment of his fellow citizens and his own political irresponsibility is a pattern we will see repeated, most crucially in his refusal to lead away the Sicilian Expedition after the failure of the attack on Epipolae, through fear of the Athenians, and fear of his own inability to convince them (7.47.4; cf. 7.14).

Nicias' political character is flawed, and flawed on the pattern established at 2.65 since, in the last resort, he puts the personal above the civic—even if this is not quite the sort of leadership failure we might have expected when reading 2.65. They are also "characteristic" flaws—Nicias' is an individuated portrait. The main reason for this is that the traits he demonstrates are—unlike those Periclean traits (patriotism, imperviousness to bribes and so on)—*personal* qualities. If we want to understand why Nicias opposed the expedition, why he (at least in some respects) commanded it deficiently, and

³⁹ Cf. 7.77.2—*εὐτυχία κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον βίον*; cf. Kallet (2001) 32.

⁴⁰ Kallet (2001) 152.

why he failed to lead it back in time (here another personal trait, his superstition, is also crucial, 7.50.4), and so in turn, why the expedition failed and the Athenians lost the war, we need to know all this. Nicias demonstrates a falling-off from the statesmanlike example of Pericles. The individuation we can perceive in his depiction is itself a sign of the illegitimate intrusion of the personal into the civic sphere.⁴¹

Nevertheless, Nicias (who is never expressly criticized in the narrative, unless in the analysis of his strategy in 7.42) is essentially right about the merit of undertaking the Sicilian Expedition in Book VI, and is generally presented as (though the wrong general for the job) a competent military leader. By the end of Book VII, the presentation (reinforced by extensive focalization through Nicias—above all in the direct speech report of his letter, 7.8–16) of Nicias' weariness with the command, and his lack of empathetic understanding with those he commands, turns subtly from developing the analysis of the failure of the expedition, to developing a kind of tragic role for Nicias.⁴² From being the passive opponent of the expedition, the thorn in its side, he becomes its true leader and the symbol of its tragic failure. By the end, his inability to come up with any original rhetoric (7.69.2), or indeed any strategic ideas, no longer matters. As he prepares to lead the Athenians away from Syracuse, stripped of his former *εὐτυχία* (7.77.2), he is at last merged with and able to empathize in speech with the Athenians (to whom his devotion at the end is evident). His individual tragedy becomes emblematic of the tragedy of the many Athenian individuals on the expedition whose story cannot be told. The reference to *εὐτυχία* of course picks up 5.16, and this suggests that Nicias' transformation into a tragic figure had been envisaged, as it were, all along. Nicias' account of his own pursuit of virtue in his life (7.77.2) is confirmed by the narrator at his death (7.86.5). If personal virtue is a quality in Nicias that has not been mentioned until now, that is surely because it has not been relevant until now. Not a particularly useful quality when it comes to giving effective speeches or organizing military campaigns, Nicias' "conventional" personal virtue becomes very relevant in the context of his own tragic end and that of the expedition. Like

⁴¹ Pelling (1990) 259–61.

⁴² Pelling (1992) 27–29; Rood (1998a) 198.

speeches containing only platitudes, Nicias' personal virtue is perhaps something that in the *History*, one can only imagine being mentioned in the context of a tragic description of this magnitude. In terms of mediating his reputation, the final account of his virtue may also be significant, in the light of the disfavor into which his reputation apparently fell after the disaster.⁴³

Nicias then, in a limited way, is an exception to the principles (avoidance of private detail, personal story, and "tragic" moral patterning) that I suggested at the outset for Thucydides' depiction of individuals.

Alcibiades

Like Nicias, Alcibiades' policy in relation to the Peace of Nicias, is presented as driven by a personal motivation (5.43)—personal pique at being snubbed by the Spartans (though the narrator is careful to point out that he really did believe that the alliance with Argos was the best policy for Athens). In the Sicilian Debate (6.15), his motivation for supporting the expedition is to enhance, rather than like Nicias, to preserve, his own reputation, but, worse than that, it also arises out of his personal opposition to Nicias, and a desire to recover his shattered expenses following his participation in the 416 Olympics. This is a charge made by Nicias (6.12.1), but confirmed by the narrator, who adds:

Later this [Alcibiades' alarming and excessive desires and expenditure] was one of the main causes of the downfall of the Athenian state. For the many, fearing the magnitude both of the *παρανομία* he displayed with respect to his own body in his lifestyle, and of the spirit with which he performed every single thing he got involved in, came to believe that he desired tyranny, and became his enemies (*πολέμιοι*—"declared war on him"), and even though on a public level (*δημοσίῳ*) his conduct of military affairs was excellent, aggrieved on a private level (*ιδίῳ*) with the way he conducted himself, and handing over the affairs of the city to others, before long they brought down the city. (6.15.3–5).

This remarkable identification of Alcibiades' personal finances, private lifestyle, and personal morality as one of the causes of Athens'

⁴³ Gomme, *HCT* 5.463.

failure (whether the Sicilian disaster, or Aegospotamoi, or both—after all the Athenians did depose Alcibiades twice from the crucial command) takes the analysis of the defeat of Athens in terms of “private” failing initiated in 2.65 to a new level. The private sphere, the individual, is allocated a direct causal importance. In this passage, as in 2.65, the grammar emphasizes the sharing of the responsibility for disaster between leader and led. Certainly, it is the failings in Alcibiades’ private life that is the subject of καθεῖλεν τὴν πόλιν (“brought down the city”), but in the next sentence it is the deposition of him by the Athenians (the subject of ἔσφηλαν τὴν πόλιν) that is blamed for bringing about the disaster. Indeed, in the later narrative, it is the Athenians’ exaggerated fear of tyranny that is presented as leading to the Herms and Mysteries witch hunt and the recall of Alcibiades (6.53), a paranoia that needs to be explained by a digression (6.54–59) on the Peisistratid tyranny (which, as it happens, reveals that the tyranny was mild and the assassination of Hippias the result of a private vendetta). The paranoia was certainly blown up by Alcibiades’ opponents in order to wrest the leadership of the demos from him, but Alcibiades’ lifestyle and undemocratic *παράνομία* gave the charges credibility (6.28–29; 6.61.1).

Moreover, Alcibiades justifies his personal extravagance by an account of the role of the individual within the city (6.16) that challenges, by subtly altering, the vision of Pericles’ Funeral Speech.⁴⁴ Alcibiades’ activity as an individual is clearly conducted for his own benefit, with advantage to the city seen as a welcome side effect (6.16.2). In Alcibiades’ account of himself as a “great” individual in the city, the *integration* of individual endeavor within the city that characterized the Periclean individual is lost, replaced by individualism and egoism. The way in which Athenian individualist behaviors can harm, rather than benefit, the city, suppressed in the Funeral Speech, is clear here.

Alcibiades’ alarming excess of selfish individualism, and the dominant role played by private behavioral modes in his public career, was harmful to the Athenian public cause in two ways. On the one hand, his unbounded personal ambition and excessive private expenditure was instrumental in bringing about the risky expedition in the first place. On the other, these private excesses led to fears of his

⁴⁴ Macleod (1983c) 75.

designs, which led to him being removed from its command. We have already seen how this crucially undermined the expedition, as it led to Alcibiades' defection and decisive advice to the Spartans, and left the unsuitable and unwilling Nicias in sole command. As in the case of Nicias (though in a very different way, as Alcibiades is a master at projecting the Athenians' vision of themselves), there is a breakdown of the relationship between leader and led—indeed, a kind of war breaks out between Alcibiades and the Athenians.

The private detail introduced in Alcibiades' case is exceptional—not just details about his personal expenditure, but also his sexual life, and as with Nicias, a sense of his personal character also emerges—ambitious, vain, egotistical, uncommitted to any cause except his own. These individuated traits undermine political performance—as Pelling put it, individuation is closely linked to “individualism”.⁴⁵ The intrusion of “private” personality into public affairs is perceived as undesirable or deplorable.

In the limited sense that it seeks reasons for events in the better or worse conduct of people, this is a “moral” strand of evaluation (certainly it is moral in a way that a causal scheme like the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις is not) but we only have to consider the rigorous circumspection with which Alcibiades' *paranomía* (or for that matter Nicias' ἀρετή) is treated to see how limited that sense is. Alcibiades is not the subject of moral condemnation. The failure is above all a political one.

The deposition, or rather depositions, of Alcibiades are especially important, as Alcibiades is presented as a person of potential real ability, even if, in the surviving narrative of the *History*, he only has the chance to display his abilities in self-presentation, intrigue, and rhetorical tactics. The point (presumably—with a *History* ending in 411 we have to speculate) of 6.15 is not just that the expedition was damaged by the removal of its sponsor and his replacement with the half-hearted Nicias, but also (at least partly) that it was the weaker for the lack of Alcibiades' talents.

⁴⁵ Pelling (1990) 259–61.

*Spartan Individuals*⁴⁶

Since, for the reasons I have set out above, when it comes to the reasons for the outcome of the war, “Athens explains”⁴⁷ (and in particular Athenian individuals), there is far less development of Spartan individuals, or attention paid to Spartan internal politics in the *History*.

If few Spartan individuals play an important role, that is partly because of those aspects of the Spartan national character that are dwelt on so much in Book I and confirmed in the narrative:⁴⁸ hyper-cautious slowness, a reactive rather than proactive policy that constantly relies on others to articulate and incite action. From individuals, the Spartan system encourages conformity and obedience (cf. 2.39.2). Of course it also produces the ἀνδρεία that is the individual Spartan’s greatest strength, and the Spartan lack of “individualism” is also a source of political and policy stability so lacking in the Athenians (cf. 8.24.4).

Sparta’s antiquated system does not, as the Athenians put it in Book I, mix well with the ways of others, and when individual Spartans do go abroad, like Pausanias they “obey neither their own laws nor those of others” (1.77.7). The behavior to be expected from Spartans is either an ineffective conformity, or a disastrous paranomic individualism, or so it would seem from Book I. The challenge laid down for the Spartans—to devise a way of waging war on a city completely different in character and far more advanced than itself (1.71.1; 1.80–81)—is also a challenge to produce leaders capable of matching the Athenians in daring, and in particular of demonstrating the charisma and persuasiveness necessary to precipitate the “liberation” of Athens’ allies. It will take an “Athenian” type of character to defeat the Athenians, and that may be why, paradoxically, Alcibiades is one of the most effective Spartan leaders in the *History*.⁴⁹

As the *History* progresses, we have ample evidence of the unadventurous and unimaginative Spartan individual, particularly in the admirals—Cnemos and Alcidas, and later Astyochos, all of whose failures to achieve results lead to the appointment of “advisers” to

⁴⁶ See also Cartledge and Debnar, this vol., pp. 581ff.

⁴⁷ Pelling (1991) 83.

⁴⁸ E.g., 1.69–71; 8.96.5; cf. 2.94.1.

⁴⁹ Apart from his crucial advice about Syracuse and Deceleia (6.88–93), he orchestrates the opening of the Spartan front in Ionia (see esp. 8.12).

support them.⁵⁰ They fail not just in strategy, but also in the propaganda war—Alcidas puts to death the Athenian allies he captures (3.32.1–2). That makes Brasidas all the more surprising, a figure who is not just δραστήριος, capable of independent decisive action (4.81.1), but also sensitive in an un-Spartan way when it comes to using persuasion rather than force (4.81.2; 4.84.2). His importance as an individual is underlined by the way his story is deliberately “set up” by a number of “decisive interventions” and other suggestive passages in the early books—his swift action to save Methone (2.25.2), his passionate attempts to save Pylos (4.11–12), his appointment as adviser to both Cnemos and Alcidas, and his action to save Megara 4.70–73.⁵¹

This setting up of Brasidas’ story, and the concentration of narrative attention on him in the narration of his *aristeia*,⁵² is extraordinary. Brasidas in his campaigns in Thrace was not just a very successful military leader: the extraordinary honors that were accorded him after his death, and the charismatic individual status he enjoyed even while alive,⁵³ single him out from others in the *History*. Nevertheless, Brasidas’ campaigns are set firmly in the context of the story of the revolt of Athens’ allies, in particular unprepared revolt, based on an underestimation of Athenian power and endurance (4.108.2–3). His influence is limited by the jealous Spartans at home, who see the Athenian allies as pawns in an exchange of cities at the end of the war (4.81.2; 4.108.7), and by the real power of Athens to recover the cities he has led by clever rhetoric and overblown promises to revolt (4.108.4). This is especially true of Scione, whose citizens had granted Brasidas golden crowns and “athletic” treatment, but whose ill-advised revolt led to terrible consequences (4.122.6).

Brasidas’ very extraordinariness underlines the failure of other Spartan commanders (like Brasidas’ own lieutenant Polydamidas, whose violence contributes to the loss of Mende, 4.130.4). Brasidas helped the subsequent Spartan war effort by inducing other allies to revolt in the belief that “the others” were like him (4.81: Brasidas’

⁵⁰ 2.85; 3.69; 8.39.2.

⁵¹ Thus he is typically presented as recovering, or attempting to recover, disastrous situations.

⁵² Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.38–61, in support of Howie (1992).

⁵³ As when he is presented with crowns and garlands in Scione, and greeted “as though he were an athlete” (4.121.1 with Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.50; 2.380–5). The account of his death and funeral (5.10.11–5.11) are also unprecedented in the *History*.

importance as an individual is partly as a model of a Spartan). However, as we know, they were not.

Brasidas' programmatic status for the future Spartan war effort suggests that the theme of Spartan individuals would have been developed further in a post-book VIII narrative, especially perhaps in the figure of Lysander. If subsequent narrative had focused on how the Spartans, collectively and in their individual leaders, had developed the capability to wage a distant naval war (which they are presented as inherently unsuited to since the time of Pausanias), that might have proved a thematic strand capable of explaining how the Spartans were capable of winning the war, as well as the Athenians at losing it.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Alcibiades and Brasidas are two figures who more than any others in the *History* (except perhaps Themistocles) are presented as capable, through personal decisive action, of influencing events. Yet the influence of both is firmly contextualised in wider thematics: in the case of Brasidas, the enduring power of Athens and the limitations of Spartans in a war against Athens; and in Alcibiades' case, the very relationship between Athenian leader and Athenian led, which he himself helps to undermine. (Alcibiades, in particular, typically fails to achieve the results he intends, and the hollowness of the claims in his self-presentation is often exposed in narrative and speech.) Such limitations are perhaps due to a lack of that understanding of the wider patterns underlying events, and the patience to attempt to control them, that a Pericles, or even an Archidamos displays, so that they are able to influence events, but not, in the end, history.

For the most part, this analysis has upheld the rules for the Thucydidean presentation of individuals suggested at the outset. The individual, in the sense of a figure characterized by private detail and a moral life, with his own "story", is removed from history. Instead, we find a more "focused" individual whose scope of action is limited by the rigorous political/military concentration, by Thucydides' thematics, and by the highly selective version of events presented in

⁵⁴ Cf. Marincola (2001) 92.

the *History*. There are exceptions, which we have considered, especially Nicias and Alcibiades; but even here private or moral elements are strictly confined to the extent that (in the historian's judgment) they impact on historical event. Even the tragic end of Nicias, which, I have argued, displays an interest in the personal fate of an individual not elsewhere demonstrated in the *History*, is closely tied to his "emblematic" role in the tragic end of the expedition. This treatment of individuals is an essential element of Thucydides' characteristic style, and of his invention of "impersonal" political/military historiography.

Nevertheless, I have also tried to show that "the individual", and a discourse about the role of the individual in the city, is a central focus of the *History*. The complex and defective relationship between the individual Athenians and their leaders, and the individual Athenian and the city, is the key causal strand in the analysis of the failure of Athens in the war. "Individual" in a limited sense, certainly, since (as I have argued) what is at stake is the relationship between personal interest and advantage and civic good. In this limited concept of the individual, individual behavior is very much *individualist* or egoistical behavior, typically with a tendency to harm the city. In the civic context, individuation too—private character—is associated with the intrusion of the private into the civic sphere.

The ability of the *History* to provide us with satisfying patterns of general explanation, and at the same time a sense of the genuine particularity of event, including the ability of individuals, through decisive action, or for that matter through failure, to influence event, help to make it satisfying as historiography. Part of this is a new "documentary" sense of the experience of the individual in events, history as events experienced by feeling, suffering individuals. In terms of the literary pleasure of the work, we may feel that such elements go some way to compensate for Thucydides' removal of personal story from history.

THUCYDIDES AND POWER POLITICS

Lawrence A. Tritle

In the final year of the Second World War, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt observed that “in the future world the misuse of power as implied in the term ‘power politics’ must not be the controlling factor in international relations”.¹ In a 1992 campaign speech, aspiring President Bill Clinton stated similar sentiments when he declared “in a world where freedom, not tyranny is on the march, the cynical calculus of pure power politics simply does not compute”.² While both politicians appear to understand what the term “power politics” means, something a number of students of history and political science might share, its nuances are such that it would pay to consider just what this term means before examining its use by Thucydides and how it plays a part in his *History* and thought.³

Political scientist John Mearsheimer in his important study *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* argues that power is nothing more than the specific assets or material resources available to a state. These would include military resources certainly, but other forms of power such as wealth would also constitute an important factor in the ingredients of power. Other political scientists,—for example, Robert Dahl—who study the nature of power take a different position, arguing that power can only be seen in the outcomes of disputes when a state has exercised control or influence over others.⁴ Success then demonstrates power. These definitions suggest a rather neutral meaning to the concept of power, a view that A.G. Woodhead also

¹ Cited in Mearsheimer (2001) 23.

² Cited in Mearsheimer (2001) 23.

³ Readers should note the 1970 study of A.G. Woodhead, who discussed this topic in book-length form. While Woodhead’s work remains useful today, I have tried to introduce to the discussion ideas and views of political scientists as to the nature of power politics, and some explanation for Thucydides’ abiding interest in it.

⁴ Dahl (1957) 202f.

expressed (see discussion below).⁵ Government scholar R.N. Lebow, however, adds an ominous nuance when he notes that “when interests are constructed outside the language of justice they will be equated with power and encourage policies of aggrandizement”.⁶ This ethical consideration, the degree to which right and wrong figure in politics and power, adds a subtle factor, one that provides a bridge between the discussions of power and its use in Thucydides and for us in the twenty-first century.

This definition of power politics—Franklin Roosevelt’s misuse of power and Lebow’s power applied unjustly—will, in addition to Mearsheimer’s emphasis on material resources, help elaborate the role of power and power politics that appear in the pages of Thucydides. There can in fact be little doubt that power—what it was, how it was used, and its consequences—held an attraction to Thucydides. This is evident quickly in a glance at the vocabulary Thucydides used to compose his *History*. In addition to numerous uses of the verb *kratein*, to rule, conquer, or prevail over, there are also repeated instances of the noun *kratos*, power, rule, or sovereignty, as well as the adjective *kratistos*, strongest, mightiest, or best.⁷ The frequency with which these various forms of “power” appear in Thucydides reveals, as scholars such as E. Bickermann and Kurt Raaflaub have noted, his interest in power relationships as opposed to legal ones.⁸ This later observation also serves as a reminder to the observation made by Lebow cited above that justice and power do not mix well, and that when the former is absent, “policies of aggrandizement” will be encouraged.

The Use of Military Power

In the conduct of international politics in both the ancient and modern worlds, the primary demonstration of power is provided by what its wealth and military forces are able to do. In the Peloponnesian

⁵ Woodhead (1970) 10–12, at 12: “Of course people sought power; of course they kept their grip on it, or tried their best to do so, when they had it. This was a natural phenomenon, and a neutral phenomenon, neither good nor bad. *And it still is*” (italics supplied).

⁶ Lebow (2003) 122.

⁷ Bétant (1847) 2.77–79.

⁸ Raaflaub (2004) 151.

War and the *History* of that war provided by Thucydides, the clearest expression of military power is to be seen in the great expedition launched by the Athenians against the island of Sicily and particularly the *polis* of Syracuse. Over the course of some eighteen months, the Athenians sent out two different expeditionary forces, one in relief and aid to the first, that consisted of nearly two hundred ships and nearly ten thousand men, of whom some four thousand were Athenian. By 413 BC this great “Armada” as it was once called by Peter Green (1970), was a great failure. As Thucydides states, never had there been such a great event in Greek history, “the most splendid for those who won and the most wretched for those who were ruined” (7.87.5).⁹

Yet while the military force assembled by the Athenians was truly impressive, for us as readers and for those who saw it sail off, the military resources and the wealth behind it were ineffectually used and accomplished nothing. The Sicilian Expedition in fact illustrates one of the arguments made by John Mearsheimer as to the nature of military power: namely that land powers, states that are able to field the biggest army, will dominate the battlefield and so win wars.¹⁰ In the case of the Athenian invasion of Sicily two factors conspired to make defeat nearly all but certain: 1) the relatively great distance between Athens and Sicily, or what Mearsheimer calls the “stopping power” of water¹¹ and 2) the ability of the leaders and people of Syracuse to field a larger *land* force than that which the Athenians were able to send.

Just as Syracusan land power defeated the Athenians in Sicily, so did Spartan land power defeat the Athenians at home. This was achieved in various ways and at various places. At Mantinea in 418 BC, an allied Athenian-Argive army fought the Spartans and their allies in what Thucydides labeled “the greatest among the Hellenes in a very long time, involving the most important cities” (5.74.1). This victory ensured that the diplomatic revolution of the preceding three years, in which Athens allied with Argos, which in turn briefly allied with Corinth, while several smaller communities broke with Sparta and allied with Corinth as well, all came to an end. Land-based military power, then, effectively determined the outcome of

⁹ The translation of Lattimore (1998) is used throughout, unless noted otherwise.

¹⁰ Mearsheimer (2001) 84.

¹¹ (2001) 83.

new balance of power (re)arrangements that followed the Peace of Nicias of 421.

Sparta's land-based military power also proved decisive in bringing victory to Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. This was achieved in various ways, but perhaps most significantly in the building of a permanent base at Deceleia in Attica. Here in 413 the Spartan king Agis II arrived with land forces that remained in place through the winter months and so were able to control the countryside surrounding Athens. This led to food shortages in Athens and finally collapse when a Spartan fleet established a naval blockade of the Peiraeus, thereby cutting off Athens from overseas food sources.

Before leaving this discussion of the nature of military force, it would be useful as well as important to review the idea argued by A.G. Woodhead that "power" has a neutral value and is not corrupting.¹² While it is perhaps true that power can be used for good as well as bad, the argument that power is neutral in its scope would seem to deny the realities intrinsic to its very application. Additionally, there are compelling reasons to think that a certain arrogance goes hand in hand with power and its use. Examples of this may be found in modern American history and politics. During the Vietnam War, Senator J. William Fulbright published a book in 1964 entitled *The Arrogance of Power*, which examined the decisions and attitudes of American policy makers as they devised the measures that got the United States bogged down in Vietnam.

A Thucydidean example of this same sense of arrogance may be found in Pericles' speech to the Athenians (1.140ff.) in which he claims the Spartans are unable to take to the sea and challenge the Athenians there. In fact Thucydides, who lived to the war's end, knew that exactly this had happened, much to Athens' regret. While the example reveals the use of irony in his *History*, the statement also expresses the same sort of arrogance that contributed to the undoing of the United States in Vietnam—that the poor and dull-witted Peloponnesians would be unable to duplicate Athenian skills and flair for innovation. While political scientists such as Mearsheimer appear to share with Woodhead in the belief that power is neutral, I would argue that both are mistaken. Woodhead's objections notwithstanding, Lord Acton's dictum that "power tends to corrupt and

¹² See above n. 1; suggested by Woodhead (1970) 14.

absolute power corrupts absolutely” is valid.¹³ Power should not be regarded as neutral nor its application, whether on those who exercise it or those who suffer it.

To exercise power, whether in the military situations just related or the political events to be discussed below, usually means to force others to do something they would otherwise not do. In this use of force there is a powerful self-destructive and corrupting nature that injures all who experience it. This is expressed in near poetical language by Simone Weil in her essay, “The *Iliad* or the Poem of Force”.¹⁴ She notes that force transforms human beings in a twofold manner simultaneously, that “it petrifies the souls of those who undergo it and those who ply it”. She adds that “battles are not determined among men who calculate, devise, take resolutions and act on them but among men stripped of these abilities, transformed, fallen to the level either of purely passive inert matter or of the blind forces of sheer impetus”.¹⁵ There can be little doubt that Weil is also correct in seeing those who wield force as doing so thoughtlessly, in a hopeless way “that impels the soldier to devastate, the crushing of the enslaved and the defeated, the massacres, all these things make up a picture of unrelieved horror. Force is its [i.e., battle’s, violence’s] sole hero” (*ibid.*, 62).

The “Horror” of which Weil speaks, echoed by Francis Ford Coppola’s Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*, finds its echo in the pages of Thucydides. Two incidents bring this out with remarkable clarity. In 414 BC a group of Thracian mercenaries arrived in Athens too late to sail with the relief expedition to Sicily. Determined to get their money’s worth from these troops, the Athenians sent them home, under the direction of their own general Diitrephes, and with instructions to do as much harm to the enemy as possible (7.29.1). Diitrephes led these troops in an early morning assault on the near defenseless town of Mycalessos and inflicted one of the more brutal massacres of the entire war. Thucydides relates not once but twice

¹³ Woodhead (1970) 14 and 183 n. 24, cites scholarly investigation into Acton’s statement claiming *inter alia* that “power does not necessarily lead to corruption or to ennoblement” and that many factors determine the outcome of the application of power. But this investigation ignores the intrinsic and real forces of power that lead to the sort of corruption Acton alluded to. See the discussion that follows.

¹⁴ Many editions have been published since the essay was first written in 1940/41 in *Cahiers du Sud*. The edition used here is that of Holoka (2003).

¹⁵ Holoka (2003) 61.

how the Thracians killed every living creature in the town, women and children certainly, and plundered the temples and shrines as well. This horrific incident had its counterparts elsewhere, including the Athenian siege of Melos, which was finally suppressed as the expedition to Sicily sailed in 415 bc.¹⁶ In closing his account of the siege, he notes the name of the Athenian general commanding: Philocrates, son of Demeas, or “Lover of power, son of the people” (5.116.3). This is one of the few places in the *History* where Thucydides provides a patronymic, and its appearance here is suggestive of a certain editorializing on his part.

Thucydides’ account of the Athenian-led Thracian massacre at Mycalessos, his detail preserving the name of the Athenian commander at Melos, suggest that he recognized what Simone Weil saw in the corrupting nature of power and force: that it transformed both those who exercised it and those who suffered it; that such actions are not reached in a rational way, but are rather the product of numbing force that leaves horror and gloom in its wake.

The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War

The second or “Great” Peloponnesian War of 431–404 broke out following a series of disputes between Corcyra and Corinth that then dragged in Athens and Sparta, and their respective allies.¹⁷ Here I am not concerned to discuss these events per se, but rather as they reflect certain issues involving the use of power: namely, the problem of international anarchy and the accompanying security dilemma as expressions of the misuse of power, and the nature of land power versus sea power.

That war was commonplace in the ancient Greek world is surely an understatement. Around the year 500 bc the Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated that “war is the father of all things” (22 B 53 DK), which clearly reflects its presence and impact upon Greek society. The near-continuous state of war among the Greek states reveals

¹⁶ Thucydides notes (7.30.3) that the fate of Mycalessos was as unfortunate as any that happened in the war, which suggests that he cites it that it might serve as an example of all the horrors that occurred.

¹⁷ For discussion of the terminology “First” (and “Second”) Peloponnesian War(s), see D.M. Lewis (1997) 9, who adds that he was unable to establish the origins of the terms. The “First” War, as he notes, was largely an Athenian and Corinthian affair.

the anarchic political conditions that prevailed and how they were solved simply by going to war. While many may have seen this as a bitter fact of life, at least one, the historian Herodotus, thought it so much stupidity. In his *Histories* written in the third quarter of the fifth century BC, he claims that “no one is stupid enough to prefer war to peace; in peace sons bury their fathers and in war fathers bury their sons” (1.87). He follows this sentiment up with an analysis of the Greek “art” of war ascribed to the Persian commander Mardonios, a cousin of king Xerxes. Trying to convince Xerxes that a conquest of Greece would pose few problems, Mardonios says:

From all I hear, the Greeks usually wage war in an extremely stupid fashion, because they’re ignorant and incompetent. When they declare war on another they seek out the best, most level piece of land and that’s where they go and fight. The upshot is that the victors leave the battlefield with massive losses, not to mention the losers, who are completely wiped out (Hdt. 7.9, tr. Waterfield [1998]).

While Herodotus may be exceptional in taking the view on war that he did, his comments reveal again the extent to which international anarchy prevailed in the Greek world, a force answered nearly always by war. The problem of security and preserving it, then, would have been uppermost in the minds of most Greeks, as would have been the fear and lack of trust that would have accompanied these issues.

Perhaps unknowingly Thucydides preserves for us in his account of the outbreak of war this climate of fear and suspicion. In the abortive negotiation efforts that preceded the war, there occur several perplexing demands made by both Athenians and Spartans of the other. In one place the Athenians answered a Spartan call for repeal of the Megarian Decree by demanding that the Spartans stop their traditional expulsion of foreigners from their land (1.144.2). In several passages both the Corinthians and Spartans refer to the “cleverness” of the Athenians, and how they were always planning and scheming to get the better of everyone else (see, e.g., 1.84.3; 2.40.2).¹⁸ In another place Athenians and Spartans engaged in a rather strange exchange of demand and counter-demands over the curses that had years before been placed on the Athenian Cylon and Spartan Pausanias (1.126–138). And finally, in the speech of an anonymous Athenian at Corinth (1.75.4), reference is made to how Athenians and Spartans were no longer friends but regarded each other with “suspicion and contention”.

¹⁸ See also Raaflaub (1994) 105f.

It is difficult to understand exactly how these incidents might have been connected with the events of 433/31 when Athens, Corinth, and Corcyra became mired in their bitter struggle that brought in a reluctant Sparta. Thucydides does not explain what the linkage to the political events was. What is clear, however, is that all four charges reflect on the climate of fear and the lack of trust that prevailed at this time as the Greek states found themselves unable to find an alternative to war, or an answer to solving the dilemma of security amid a scene of international anarchy.¹⁹

Thucydides' account of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War reveals these issues and dilemmas. Even a casual reader can not help but notice the efforts of the Spartans to avoid war. On at least four occasions Spartan embassies approached the Athenians looking for some solution that would avoid hostilities.²⁰ These overtures the Athenians, encouraged by Pericles, rebuffed. Perhaps the most determined of these was the second in which the Spartan ambassadors attempted to bring up the most critical issues of dispute, namely that over the Megarian Decree and Potidaia. While Thucydides does not provide telling comment, Plutarch does. When Pericles told the Spartan envoy Polyalces that the Megarian Decree could not be repealed as there was a law against that too, Polyalces responded, "Well, turn it to the wall! There's no law against that is there?"²¹

Just as Pericles put off the Spartan envoys with diplomatic technicalities, he also resorted to diplomatic ploys surely intended to frustrate any peaceful solution to the crisis between the two states. This is best seen in Pericles' claim that the Spartans refused to arbitrate the dispute as the Thirty Years Truce of 446/5 stated (Th. 1.140.2).²²

¹⁹ See also Th. 1.75.4 and the reference by an unknown Athenian speaker to Spartan suspicions of Athenian actions in the years preceding the outbreak of war in 431 BC.

²⁰ Badian (1993) 154 notes, after Th. 1.139.1, that there were "many" such embassies, though Thucydides only comments on those discussed here.

²¹ Told in Plu. *Per.* 30.1, though disputed by Stadter (1989) 274. But see Lewis (1977) 49 n. 157, who refers to nineteenth-century scholars, e.g., Rennie, Starkie, van Leeuwen, who first made the observation and accept the authenticity of Polyalces' remark, as I do here.

²² Th. 1.23.4 refers to both Athens and Sparta breaking the Truce (passed over without comment by Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.64). Other references to the Truce: Th. 1.115.1; 2.2.1; 7.18.2. Commenting on the last reference cited, Dover, *HCT* 4.394, argues that the Spartan embassies were designed to provoke refusal. This seems overly cynical and downplays the little that can be learned of the Spartan peace efforts. Note also Badian (1993) 125–62 (esp. 143–44) who argues that Thucydides misrepresents Spartan "plotting and deviousness."

The problem here, as Pericles surely realized then and as statesmen and politicians do today, is what Mearsheimer calls the “911” problem²³—that there is no centralized authority to which threatened states can turn for help. This simply increases the fear factor among states that provides reason not to trust others and so be prepared to go to war when crisis erupts.²⁴ Who in Greece in 432/1 could possibly arbitrate the dispute between Athens and Sparta? Neutral Argos? The Spartans had crushed Argos in 494, and the hate between the two communities was palpable. In western Greece Corcyra was the largest non-aligned state, but now Corcyra was party to the very dispute at issue. There were also the smaller non-aligned communities of Achaia and Aitolia, but these lacked political sophistication as well as the authority (and power!) to enforce any potential solution.²⁵ The arbitration issue, then, must be seen as a diplomatic technicality that the Athenians seized upon to delay and put off Spartan peace overtures, all the while appearing as the injured party set upon by the ‘evil’ Spartans.

In 431 Sparta was with little doubt the greatest land power in Greece. The training of the Spartan soldier was unparalleled in the Greek world, though the prowess of Spartan arms might be a bit exaggerated: the skill with which Athenian citizen-soldiers dismantled a Persian army at Marathon in 490, the ingenuity that some Athenian commanders, e.g., Demosthenes, demonstrated in the field as at Sphacteria (425), show that the Greek soldier’s military talents were many. What could not be doubted in 431 or today is that the Spartan soldier was brave—and not only that, but willing to sell his life dearly. Often tactical blunders by Spartan commanders—as seen on Sphacteria island and later at Mantinea in 418—were retrieved by the courage and steadfastness of the Spartan soldier. With the resources of their allies as well as their own forces, the Spartans at the outbreak of the war were able to field the largest field army in Greece.

None of this would have been lost on the Athenians, especially their ambitious and determined leader Pericles. Pericles surely knew

²³ So-called after the common emergency number in the United States to summon police, fire, or medical services.

²⁴ Mearsheimer (2001) 32f.

²⁵ Syracuse, the dominant state in Greek Sicily, might be considered an alternative. Yet Syracuse had been founded by Corinth, and the two states maintained the ties appropriate to mother city and colony, which would have made Syracusan mediation unacceptable to Athens.

of the courage and skill of the individual Spartan soldier and of the threat that even a poorly led Spartan army might pose to Athens. For these reasons Pericles conceived a strategy for fighting the Spartans that he was able to persuade his fellow Athenians to adopt: to fight the Spartans at sea, to hit them where they were not, meanwhile defending Athens by turning the city and its port into a massive fortress. This strategy has been much discussed and scholars have both supported and defended the choice made by Pericles and the Athenians to yield the countryside to Sparta and avoid a direct fight with its powerful army. But it may be possible to comment further on this debate, particularly from the standpoint of power and power politics.

The strategy that Pericles sought to employ against Sparta in 431, and which the Athenians followed after his death in 429, may serve as an example of what John Mearsheimer refers to as “offensive realism”.²⁶ The “offensive realist”, like Pericles I would argue, perceives the world around, as argued above, as a world in anarchy in which the goal is survival and where using power is the means to achieve that goal. The offensive realist differs from the “defensive realist” who perceives the world as lacking in opportunities for power and who seeks to maintain the balance of power, to maintain the status quo. There can be little doubt that collectively, the Spartan leadership in 431 revealed an attitude that showed them to be “defensive realists,” as it was only the threats of an angry and aggrieved Corinth that pushed them to take action against Athens. As Mearsheimer observes:²⁷

offensive realists, on the other hand, believe that status quo powers are rarely found in world politics, because the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs. A state’s ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system.

The naval strategy conceived by Pericles and executed by the Athenians, then, illustrates the view of the “offensive realist” who conceives of the world order propelled by the quest for opportunities to seize opportunities when and where they present themselves. While

²⁶ Mearsheimer (2001) 21; 86; 114–25.

²⁷ Mearsheimer (2001) 21.

the Athenians might not be blamed for starting the Peloponnesian War, they surely may be blamed for not doing enough to stop it.²⁸ What caused them to act this way was the desire for more power—power that would come at the expense of their rivals, particularly Corinth, which stood to lose significantly in the Adriatic region as a result of Athenian and Corcyraean cooperation. Sparta, however, would also lose power as its strongest ally, Corinth, would now be reduced in material resources and wealth, which would effect its ability to support the Spartan led Peloponnesian League. Could Pericles and other Athenians have recognized this? Surely the answer to this must be yes, as otherwise the intransigence of Athenian policy becomes difficult to understand.

Finally, is it possible to make a judgment on the Periclean strategy? Pericles and those who followed him made several miscalculations. They underestimated first the “stopping power” of water. As Mearsheimer notes, naval forces carrying out amphibious operations are not able to inflict enough damage on an opponent to make them hurt. This may be seen in the Athenian operations against the Spartans in the Peloponnese. While the Athenians won a spectacular victory over an isolated detachment of Spartans on Sphacteria island, little real harm was done to Spartan agriculture or society, the latter in the guise of thousands of helots fleeing their masters for the protection of Athenian arms. Mearsheimer refers to the British naval strategist Julian Corbett, who noted that since men live on land and not water, “great issues between nations at war have always been decided—except in the rarest cases—either by what your army can do against your enemy’s territory . . . or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do”.²⁹ As noted above, the Athenian failure in Sicily and the ability of the Spartan army to occupy and hold Athenian territory at Deceleia, which moreover enabled the Spartan fleet to blockade Athens, demonstrate all too clearly the correctness of this view.

²⁸ See Badian (1993) 125, who notes the debate over responsibility for starting the war, so much like that after the end of World War I.

²⁹ Cited in Mearsheimer (2001) 86.

Civil War in Corcyra

A bitter and ultimately unresolvable conflict between Corinth and Corcyra helped propel the Greek world into war in 431 BC. Early in the war a series of naval fights led to the capture of a number of Corcyraeans imprisoned in Corinth, where their captors managed to win their friendship and sympathies. These men, conservative or oligarchic in their political views, the Corinthians returned home (after payment of a ransom) and within a short time executed a *coup d'état* that resulted in the first of a series of political revolutions that would rock the Greek world during this time of "total" war.³⁰ Thucydides reveals not only the vicious nature of these political uprisings, but also the brutal form they took.

In his analysis of the civil war in Corcyra, Thucydides brings out two principal ideas: one is how the violence of war leads those who have been experienced in its ways to commit atrocity;³¹ second, he shows the extent to which those who desire power will go. This can be seen first in his statement that during the civil war every form of death was seen. Fathers killed sons, and while he does not say so explicitly, his statement here argues strongly that sons too killed their fathers; men were dragged from temples and shrines where they had sought sanctuary and then killed, while others were simply walled up in such places allowed to die (3.81.5).

Behind this great bloodletting was, as Woodhead notes, the quest for power.³² In this instance it was political power that was at stake, as the Corcyraeans released by the Corinthians aimed at eliminating the democratic and pro-Athenian leadership of Peithias and replacing it with their own oligarchic and pro-Corinthian regime. In the turmoil and bloodshed that followed there was a total breakdown of civil society, of which the above noted murders are only a few examples. Not only were traditional mores ignored, but also any sense of law and justice, what might also be called "due process", as those bent on seizing power would allow no impediment to stand in their way. This again calls to mind Lebow's argument that what

³⁰ For the background, see Th. 3.70–81. S. Lattimore (1998) 168 n., argues that it was the first rather than "among the first".

³¹ Th. 3.82.2. This subject is beyond the scope of this discussion, but see Tritle (2000) 128–31.

³² Woodhead (1970) 21.

is done outside the language of justice equates to the use of power, which leads to greater and more extravagant expressions of power and excess.³³ Thucydides relates how all this was to be seen in the inversion of language that emerged from the political struggle, where old norms of conduct were seen as the acts of a coward or simpleton, and new norms of political violence were seen as those of the bold, clever, and perceptive.³⁴

Woodhead argues that these displays were the product of envy and rivalry, which Thucydides expresses in the word *phthonos*, and enmity or *echthos*.³⁵ But what causes these passions to emerge in the first place? Woodhead offers no suggestion. In fact, what Thucydides has related has emerged out of the horror of war. He makes plain that the “excesses” that we associate with the civil war in Corcyra are the product of the violence of war—that this becomes a “teacher” of men and leads them to further atrocity (3.82.2).

This may sound like so much circular reasoning, but those who have not experienced war’s violence—who do not know how war can and will change your very character—will not be able to understand or recognize the process at work.³⁶ But it is clear that the Greeks at this time did, though they had little comprehension of the underlying causes. In his *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias refers to the traumatic experiences of men confronted by the violence of battle, and how even if they survive they “have fallen victim to useless labor and dread diseases and hardly curable madnesses”.³⁷ These responses are but the other side of the coin to Thucydides’ picture of the civil war in Corcyra. In some cases, as those Gorgias alludes to, war’s violence has destroyed the ability of men to function in society at all. Others, however, as those Corcyraeans who overthrew their own community and brought about revolution, war has instilled in them a sense of *echthos* or enmity: what we in the post-Vietnam war world know as “payback”, where vengeance at any cost becomes the norm. Woodhead’s notion of *phthonos*, envy or rivalry, emerges from the

³³ See again Lebow (2003) 122 and the discussion above.

³⁴ See in particular Th. 3.82. The passage, both its translation and meaning, are both complex and highly debated. See, e.g., J. Wilson (1982a) 18–20; Loraux (1986a) 103–24; Tritle (2000) 128–31.

³⁵ Woodhead (1970) 21.

³⁶ This topic is well beyond the scope of the present essay, but see, e.g., Shay (1995) and Tritle (2000) for discussion.

³⁷ Gorg. 82 B 11, 16–17 DK (tr. G. Kennedy, in Sprague [1972] 53–54).

same environment of violence and refers to an extreme sense of competition, but one in which the stakes are high—literally a matter of life and death. But underlying all this is the experience of war's violence, which has created these forces in the minds of men and drives them to extremes in their quest for power and vengeance.

The Revolt of Mytilene

After nearly a yearlong struggle, the Athenians finally suppressed the revolt of the island state of Mytilene and several sympathetic neighboring towns in spring 427 BC. Embittered and vengeful, the Athenians enacted a harsh penalty upon the citizens of Mytilene, a once dutiful ally—men of military age were to be executed and everyone else enslaved. In a well-known part of the *History*, Thucydides gives the purported speeches of Cleon and Diodotos in which the issue of democracy's ability—or inability—to rule an empire is discussed, along with representative sophistic ideas, most notably perhaps self-interest and expediency.³⁸ While there is no direct evidence, it is unlikely that only they spoke; Thucydides uses them, however, as vehicles to explore certain ideas regarding the nature of power politics. These include the notion of institutional power as evident in the democratic debate that took place in the Athenian assembly on this occasion, that sometimes there was a conflict between the exercise of power and the justice of power, and the idea that power is not static but dynamic.³⁹

Cleon and Diodotos debated the fate of the Mytilenaeans before the assembly of their fellow citizens. While they spoke in an effort to persuade the Athenians to adopt a course of action each saw proper, it was for a decision of the assembly they competed. This is, as Woodhead notes, an example of institutional power that is no less important to understand than the roles of prominent individuals such as Cleon, Pericles, or later Alcibiades.⁴⁰ Just as in the case

³⁸ Th. 3.37–49. For discussions of this debate, see, e.g., Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.420–39. The question of the authenticity of these speeches is not a relevant factor in this analysis. Others in this volume will discuss the speeches in Thucydides (see Morrison), but here I take it that the speeches reflect ideas current at the end of the fifth century and ideas certainly explored by Thucydides.

³⁹ See, e.g., Woodhead (1970) 7; 13–16, who notes these issues.

⁴⁰ Woodhead (1970) 7f.

of world events in the modern era, popular political institutions influence events no less than individuals. It is in this context perhaps that the remarks Thucydides makes through his two principal figures here about the nature of the Athenian democracy are made. Cleon hardly began his speech condemning the Mytilenaeans—and those Athenians who favored reopening discussion when it had been solved by popular vote the day before—when he attacked the nature of democracy, arguing that it was incapable of ruling others (3.37.1). This attack Diodotos answered at the beginning of his speech, arguing that the greatest obstacles to good counsel were haste and anger, as well as speakers who chose to intimidate their opposition (3.42.1–2). Cleon's speech, however, expands the attack on democracy by comparing its deliberative functions to the theater, where fine words and fancy speeches are the only things admired, while the actual events that affect the lives and futures of the Athenians are ignored as also sound advice (3.38.2–4).

In these speeches Thucydides reveals a dimension to the nature of power and power politics that is entirely new: the role of society in determining matters of policy that affect not only themselves but others. As Cleon and Diodotos debate, it is as much for the minds of the Athenians as it is for the lives of the Mytilenaeans; it is as much for determining the course of the Athenian Empire as it is the life or death of Mytilene. In this context it is interesting to observe that in the end the Athenians rejected the harsh, even brutal, policy recommended by Cleon and supported the only slightly milder recommendation of Diodotos. While not much in itself, this decision suggests that, at least on this occasion, a majority of Athenians realized that vindictive acts of suppression were not just shortsighted, but actually counterproductive.

While Cleon's concern is with the exercise of power, he is yet aware that justice and a sense of right conduct is also at issue. The Mytilenaeans, he tells the Athenians, should be punished as their crime deserves, that all are equally guilty, both those who instigated the revolt and those who changed their minds later and opened the city to Athenian forces.⁴¹ At the end of his speech Cleon returned to this point: "Punish them now as they deserve and show the other

⁴¹ Th. 3.39.6. Here Cleon argues against any special consideration for those Mytilenaeans who helped the Athenians by turning against the ruling elite and opening the gates allowing the Athenians to take the city; see Th. 3.27–28.

allies by a clear example that death will be the penalty for anyone who revolts" (3.40.7).

This harsh definition of justice finds its answer in the words of Diodotos, who makes perhaps the earliest attack on the death penalty, arguing that men will always be driven by such factors as poverty, abundance, and human passion in taking risks or in breaking the law (3.45).⁴² Because of this, Diodotos argues that the Athenians must look at what is best or useful for themselves and act accordingly. In this Diodotos rebuts Cleon's claim that punishing the Mytilenaeans is both just and expedient, arguing that such a policy is impossible. The Athenians were neither the first nor the last to discover the problems and dangers of ruling others. Other empires and occupiers have been confronted with revolts and acts of defiance and have made decisions that differ little from those of the Athenians in 427 BC.

In his closing remarks to the Athenians, Cleon told them, paradoxically, that it was both just and expedient to punish the Mytileneans, and that if they did not they were condemning themselves.⁴³ Why? Because if the Mytilenaeans were right to revolt, then the Athenians were wrong in ruling them. Cleon went on to say that if the Athenians voted not to punish their former allies, they should give up their empire so that they could live in peace. Thucydides developed this idea in several places before exploring the argument in detail in his account of the revolt of Mytilene. In a speech in Sparta before the war broke out, an anonymous Athenian speaker boldly stated that the Athenians had acquired their empire not by force but because the Spartans had handed it to them. He even claimed that "it no longer seemed safe to risk letting it go when we were detested by most, some had already revolted and been reduced, and you were by then not our friends as you once were but a source of suspicion and contention, and allies who left us would have gone over to you".⁴⁴ Two years later and amid a decline in Athenian morale owing to losses incurred in battle and to the plague, Pericles confronted the Athenians with the grim reality that "you cannot abdicate from it [i.e., empire], even if someone fearful under the immediate

⁴² Noted also by Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.435.

⁴³ The term originates (as far as I know) with Solmsen (1975) 38f.

⁴⁴ Th. 1.75.4. The speaker is unknown, but the speech is, as Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.117 notes, a lucid while harsh exploration of the philosophy of imperialism.

circumstances makes this upright display in his political indifference; for you now hold it like a tyranny that seems unjust to acquire but dangerous to let go" (2.63.2).

As Woodhead notes, this points up the problem of power as well as its intrinsic nature and the inherent dangers in wielding it.⁴⁵ Power is not static but in fact possesses its own dynamic, which in effect induces in a powerful or imperial state an inclination to act with force and arrogance (*ibid.*, 47). While a number of examples of this might be cited, it is the Athenian subjection of the island state of Melos and the ill-fated attempt to conquer Sicily that reveal these factors most clearly.

The Melian Dialogue

In 415 BC Athens moved to tighten its grip on the Empire and to demonstrate that it would brook no opposition to its power and dignity, whether real or imagined.⁴⁶ Its target in this instance was the small island *polis* of Melos which, while an old Spartan colony, had mostly remained neutral in the ongoing struggle. In perhaps the most famous part of his *History*, Thucydides relates the Melian Dialogue, purportedly a discussion between the Athenian commanders and the leaders of Melos over the fate of this small community. While the Dialogue is surely a Thucydidean construct, it may well preserve some information reported to Thucydides by both Athenian and (possibly) Melian sources, of what the two parties said to each other.⁴⁷ In this passage, Lebow's analysis of power as that which is applied unjustly resounds through the statements made by the Athenians.

From the beginning of their statements, the Athenians make clear that the very survival of the Melians is at stake, and this is tied in to the sophistic idea of self-interest: that it is in the interest of the Athenians to persuade the Melians to acquiesce peacefully and without

⁴⁵ (1970) 13.

⁴⁶ *HCT* 4.189 refers to Aristophanes' humor over the sufferings of both the Melians and the Megarians as a result of Athenian power and that "from this [it would not] seem that the Athenians felt any remorse" [i.e., for their actions]. But this ignores the nature of wartime comedy and farce, which, as veteran and author Paul Fussell notes, are not only "humorous" but more appropriate forms to express the tragedy of war; see Fussell (1975) 203f. for discussion.

⁴⁷ Analysis of the Dialogue itself exceeds my aims here. For discussion, see Andrewes, *HCT* 4.182–88.

a fight, as it is in the self-interest of the Melians, quite simply, to survive (5.87–88, 92–95). But Thucydides develops also at the discussion's onset that what the two sides are discussing are issues of power. The Athenians state candidly that they will not resort to "fine words" and "unconvincing speech" (5.89.1). These, as Woodhead suggests, are typical reactions of those confronted by the powerful man or state, who "will cover their own enmity and envy by saying that they stand for justice, equality before the law, peace, humanity, [and] morality itself".⁴⁸

Rather the Athenians declare their intent to be an unadorned discussion and definition of power and justice. Justice, they declare, is a matter to be decided by forces or powers that are equal in strength—when this is not the case, as clearly between Athens and Melos, it is simply a matter of raw power, that the strong impose and the weak accept.⁴⁹ This passage, which has an echo in 5.101 where Thucydides refers to an "evenly" matched contest, illustrates perhaps perfectly Lebow's argument that power is that which is applied unjustly. What is also revealed in these passages is the argument also noted above that the essence of power is the extent of military force that can be brought to bear, and the wealth that backs it up. As the Athenians make abundantly clear, they possess superior might, which the Melians can not hope to match, and which the Spartans, themselves inclined to do that which is useful to themselves, will not strengthen (5.89; 5.101; 5.106–110).

Power is that which is decided by opposing, and in the eyes of the Athenians, equal force(s) (5.89). But does it not also happen, the Melians suggest, that sometimes the "underdog" wins? The Melians note that sometimes the fortune of war swings to those who are smaller in number and less in strength, and in this they find hope (5.102). The Athenians quash this argument, noting that "hope" is the comfort of those in danger, who find additional solace in prophecy and oracles and in doing so only hasten their own destruction (5.103).

Thucydides' analysis of power is based on observations of not only what happened at Melos but also from similar events that occurred

⁴⁸ Woodhead (1970) 21.

⁴⁹ Th. 5.89. Readers of Plato will recognize the similar sentiment expressed by Callicles, which suggests that there is a sophistic influence at work here. See Solmsen (1975) 48; 118.

throughout the entire course of the war.⁵⁰ During this time he saw that the failure of diplomacy, as in the events of 433–431 and the breakdown of the Peace of Nicias, forced the Greek states to resolve their differences by resort to raw military power. Sometimes inspired generalship, as seen in Brasidas' campaigns in Macedonia, or the superior soldiership of the Spartans at Mantinea (who redeemed Agis' botched orders with their blood), decided the issue. On other occasions the ostensibly powerful lost: the "unbeatable" Spartans surrendering at Sphacteria, the mighty Athenian expedition completely destroyed in Sicily, are just the best examples of this. But how is Thucydides' fascination with power to be explained? Why does he compose a literary fiction such as the Melian Dialogue that explores in such blunt fashion the nature of power and empire? He does not give us the answers to these questions, and we are left only to surmise his reasons for the harsh language and ideas. It would not be the first or last time, however, that such cynical *Realpolitik* would come from a disappointed soldier and politician, who at the end of his life and career comes to realize that military force is man's preferred solution to conflict resolution.⁵¹

The Sicilian Expedition

In the summer of 415 BC a massive military force—more than one hundred warships and no fewer than five thousand Athenian and allied soldiers plus a large number of mercenaries—sailed to Sicily under the joint command Alcibiades, Lamachos, and Nicias. Their goal was a simple one, at least seemingly: to conquer the island and bring it under Athenian dominion. If there is one episode in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War that expresses the manifold dimensions of power and power politics, it is this and so deserves attention here.⁵²

⁵⁰ See Th. 5.91.1, and its reference to the potential end of the Athenian Empire, and *HCT* 4.166f. for discussion.

⁵¹ It has long been observed that cynicism is the hallmark of the veteran combat soldier, which Thucydides certainly was. See Tritle (2000) 128–36, and for another example, Duncan and Klooster (2002), and the (US) Civil War time writings of Ambrose Bierce.

⁵² Space precludes full treatment of Athenian efforts to intervene in the island, but see Th. 3.90; 3.103; 4.2.2; 4.24–25; 4.58–4.65.2, which recount activities there

The Greeks of Sicily had attempted to solve their disputes in a congress held at Gela in 424, but within a few years that agreement broke down. As Syracuse, the strongest city on the island, moved to consolidate its power, the neighboring and nervous communities of Egesta and Leontini made new overtures to the Athenians for help.⁵³ This led to extensive debate in Athens in which Thucydides explores ideas of power and power politics, and what the course of empire should be.

The debate that Thucydides relates was fiercely contested and shows just how heated the exchanges of words and ideas could be in the Athenian Assembly. The debate also illustrates Woodhead's observation on the nature of "institutional power" and how the Athenian Assembly may be seen as an instrument of power.⁵⁴ Although Thucydides' account alludes to the participation of various speakers (including one unnamed Athenian who challenges Nicias to take action), the debate that Thucydides gives us revolves around Alcibiades and Nicias, the two leading political figures of the day. Nicias, known for his luck and caution, had negotiated the Peace that took his name and was unenthusiastic about the planned invasion of Sicily. In the debate he did everything he could to derail it, as well as give the Athenians opportunity to replace him as one of its commanders. On the other side was Alcibiades, heir to the family of Pericles and known about town for his extravagant ways, but also for the recently concluded alliance with Argos, an agreement that if Thucydides is read carefully, failed to deliver all that Alcibiades either hoped for or bragged about. Thucydides adds to the contrast between the two, noting not only an age difference (which embodies an idea of old versus new as well) but also a sense of caution and foreboding versus a spirit of adventure bordering on recklessness.

In his first speech on the proposed expedition (6.8.4–6.14), Nicias argued that the Athenians were entering into a conflict that did not concern them, that they were being swayed by foreigners begging

to the Congress of Gela (424 BC) which led to the temporary withdrawal of Athens from Sicilian affairs until 416/15 BC.

⁵³ Th. 6.1.1; 6.1–26 relate the Egestaian plea for aid; Th. 6.46.3–5 and D.S. 12.83.3 tell the amusing story of how the normally clever Athenians were deceived by the Egestaians, who assembled all their silver plate and then shared it with those entertaining the visiting Athenians who came to believe that the town possessed great wealth!

⁵⁴ Woodhead (1970) 7.

for help, who would say anything to get the Athenians do their fighting. Dispatch of even the moderate-sized force then being debated also struck him as shortsighted in view of the precarious situation closer to home. The recent Peace was hardly stable. Sparta had accepted it only to achieve the release of those men captured at Sphacteria and now surely planned ways to trip up the Athenians. Nicias pointed out to the Athenians that they might be able to maintain their rule if they prevailed over their enemies. But Sicily, so far away, was a different situation, and maintaining rule over such a faraway place would be much more difficult.

Nicias made the interesting argument that sometimes a power was all the greater because it remained at a distance, allowing its reputation to intimidate would-be enemies. A failed attack, or even a partially successful one where reinforcements had to be brought in, could have severe repercussions, as enemies would imagine the feared power to be a paper tiger and would join others in attacking it (6.11.4). It was better, Nicias suggested, to let people think you were powerful and so remain feared and awed, than to show them otherwise. What Nicias argued to the Athenians then was a policy of restraint, to keep what they possessed and not to exceed their grasp. His argument here is of interest as it echoes points made by the Athenians in the Melian Dialogue, particularly the explanation for their demands on the Melians: that they must act so as to make others aware of their power (5.92–95).

The restraint and caution proposed by Nicias found its opposite in Alcibiades. In his counterspeech he told the Athenians that they had nothing to fear in Sicily: that the many cities there were disorganized from extensive internal unrest and were lacking in military strength (6.17.2–3). Syracuse, the island's great power, was so hated that once the Athenians showed up, it would face a general rising of the island's native population, which would rally to the Athenian cause. With even fewer resources than what they now possessed, their fathers, Alcibiades claims, had achieved even greater success against the Persians, and so now they should not hesitate to act. Empire over all the Greeks—from those in Sicily to those at home—was the prospect, and the very least that they would achieve was the elimination of the power and arrogance of Syracuse.

In making this bold and extravagant claim, Alcibiades also talked about empire. He argued that the Athenians had an obligation to aid the Egestaians, whom the Athenians had made an ally in order

to defend themselves against attack closer to home. Alliances such as these contributed to the empire the Athenians now ruled, but more to the point, an energetic response to an ally in need was crucial to keeping that empire. Empires survive, he said, because when they see danger coming, they strike rather than wait for it to arrive. A “moderate” sized empire, or “just enough” empire is not a reality. Instead empires must grow and expand if they are to survive. For this reason, he told the Athenians, an aggressive policy was needed not only toward Sicily, but also in suppressing any defections or challenges to Athenian imperial power. Unless you change your ways, he told them, others will rule you if you do not rule them (6.18.3). It will be clear that in this speech, Thucydides makes observations on the nature of power and empire that he has touched previously: the idea that power is not static and that letting it go is a dangerous thing. This point Pericles and Cleon had both made on various occasions, and now Alcibiades makes it anew (see discussion above).

Alcibiades’ speech was electric. The pleas of the Egestaians and Leontinians only reinforced what he said and fixed the resolve of the Athenians to embark on the expedition. Nicias made one final effort to stop what he clearly regarded as folly (6.20–23). He attempted to frighten the Athenians by telling them that great military forces awaited them in Sicily and so they must increase their own accordingly. An anonymous Athenian challenged him to state what his needs were there and then, and when these were approved he had no option but to accede to popular opinion. Thucydides also paints a scene of general contentment in Athens at what had been decided. Older Athenians thought with some satisfaction the places that would now be added to the empire. Younger men looked forward to traveling to a far-off place and the exciting experiences they would have—an enthusiasm that finds counterparts in all eras of history, in virtually every army ever assembled. Poorer Athenians, the men who would row the fleet of ships now assembling, looked at the expedition as a means of making a living wage, both now and later as a result of the empire that would be made greater.

The picture that Thucydides creates here of democratic and imperial Athens is clearly that, as noted by Woodhead, of a “manifestation of power in action”.⁵⁵ It points to the notion of power, as

⁵⁵ Woodhead (1970) 7.

Mearsheimer observed at the beginning of this discussion, as consisting of the wealth and military forces of a state. Also revealed is the nature of “institutional power” and how a people, in this instance the Athenians, have decided in a formal, organized political organ of state to use their wealth and military power to acquire still more wealth and thereby more power. Power is not static: as Thucydides makes clear, use it or lose it.

The Topicality of Thucydides Today

Does Thucydides still matter in the early years of the twenty-first century? In a 2003 conference held at Brown University, “War, Peace, and Reconciliation in the Ancient World”, scholars representing classics, history, and political science examined the issues addressed above.⁵⁶ At a concluding session, political scientist P. Terrence Hopmann observed that the world today still struggles with the problems that brought war to the ancient Greeks. Despite the efforts of organizations such as the United Nations, the international community remains all too anarchic: beset by issues of balance of power, building coalitions, fears of the security dilemma, and overcoming the human tendency to regard “Others” as just that. As in the ancient Greek world, difficulties in finding ways to arbitrate disputes rather than fight them out on the battlefield remain constant. The circumstances that led the United States in spring 2003 to invade Iraq serve as a salutary example of these issues.⁵⁷ These are issues, then, that Thucydides the Realist saw in the final third of the fifth century BC and which we in the early years of the twenty-first century can see all too clearly as well.

⁵⁶ Organized by Kurt Raaflaub and the Program in Ancient Studies and sponsored by various foundations.

⁵⁷ See also Doyle (1997) 27.

PART THREE

WIE ES EIGENTLICH GEWESEN?

THUCYDIDES AND EPIGRAPHY

Bernhard Smarczyk

The topic “Thucydides and Epigraphy” has several facets: one is the historian’s use of inscriptions in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* and their place in his historiographical working process; another is the relation between Thucydides’ narration, reconstruction, and interpretation of history, and the epigraphical sources we now have for the events of fifth-century and earlier Greek history that Thucydides describes.

Both these issues are related to the problem of the reliability of the author and the criteria for checking this. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with all of the aspects and issues involved, so I shall focus here on a few central points.

The “Epigraphical Culture” of Athens in Thucydides’ Time

When Thucydides, born around 460 BC, was growing up, the number of inscriptions of the Athenian citizenry and its subdivisions was beginning to increase considerably as a result of the inner dynamics of Athenian democracy.¹ Inscriptions were placed in the public space of the city, on the Acropolis, in the Agora, at different sanctuaries around Athens and Attica, some of them in more than one location at a time.² Laws and decrees, which the Assembly passed in cooperation with the *Boulē* of Five Hundred, sacred laws and sacrificial calendars, accounts and inventories, reports of building commissions, grants of proxeny, honorary decrees, public funerary *stélai* and other lists were just some of the many types of inscription that led to a growing degree of publicity and transparency in many political activities. To these were added decrees on Athens’ relations with the *poleis* of the Delian League, the well-known tribute lists and

¹ Cf., e.g., Hedrick (1999) 429, esp. figs. 1–2.

² See Liddel (2003) 79–93 on the publication places of Attic decrees.

rules and procedures of tribute assessment and collection (among other things) when the Athenian democracy began to tighten and systematize its grip on the *poleis* within its Aegean thalassocracy.³ The demands on these areas could only be satisfied because political and administrative processes already existed to a great extent in writing in Athens. At the same time these demands had a further impact on the significance of writing, which corresponded to its various functions for the administration of the great *polis* of the Athenians and of their empire.

In this context, there was an increasing consciousness of the importance of inscriptional recording and publication—by private individuals, sanctuaries, demes, tribes, or the *polis*—as a means of saving information from oblivion, misinterpretation or deliberate falsification. Moreover, recording something in writing was seen as a reliable method of preserving memories and obligations, and consequently the products of such recording were regarded as authoritative. This meant that there was (for example) an increasing demand for presenting interstate agreements and treaty stipulations to the public by putting them on stone *stēlai*. Physical representation of this kind should achieve a higher degree of reliability than oaths and their periodical renewal alone. By the fifth century, reference was already being made to treaties, laws, and other written documents in the context of public speeches in the Assembly, the Council, and the law courts of the people, where speakers often went back to texts in inscriptional form⁴ because these were considered authoritative. For this and similar reasons, the prestige of writing increased notably in the second half of the century. This corresponds to the fact that the Athenians saw the minute recording of payments, inventories, and administrative files as a means of controlling their magistrates. Besides this, they regarded their written laws as a defence of democracy because they ensured equal opportunities for justice for rich and poor,⁵ a perception that was strengthened by the increasing insecurity of the *dēmos* due to the Peloponnesian War and the oligarchic revolution of 411.

³ Cf. esp. Pébarthe (2000) 58–63.

⁴ On the quotation of documents and especially inscriptions in the context of the working of the Athenian Assembly and Council, cf. S. Lewis (1992) 12–18, and Sickinger (1999) 174f.; 177.

⁵ E. *Supp.* 433–37.

So Thucydides was a product of his time—a time in which the significance of inscriptional recording was increasing immensely in accordance with the growing civic functions of writing within Athenian democracy, and in which the Athenians acquired a particular “epigraphical habit”, which was not developed in this particular form in other *poleis*, even those with a similar political system.⁶

Thucydides and Inscriptions: What the Historian Does Not Tell Us

Against this cultural background it was only natural that Thucydides should have recognized the potential usefulness of inscriptions when he started to work as a historian; yet he could not lay claim to originality in this respect. Herodotus, with whose *Histories* Thucydides compared his own work in terms of critical distance, had already made use of epigraphical evidence, as had the somewhat older Hellanikos of Lesbos and possibly even Akusilaos of Argos in his *Genealogies*. Many other Greek historians such as Ephorus or Polybius were to follow these predecessors and Thucydides when they utilized inscriptions for historical and antiquarian purposes.⁷

These authors shared a general readiness to take account of epigraphical testimonies, which they knew about from personal experience, from copies belonging to other people or from literary works, but differed widely in their willingness to disclose and interpret inscriptions in detail. The *στηλοκόπας* (*glutton for stēlai*) Polemon of Ilion (*FGrHist* 369), who traveled widely to copy inscriptions, was certainly an exception to the rule of widespread indifference of Greek historians to documentary sources in general.⁸

Thucydides too shows no great enthusiasm for inscriptions and their analysis. Considering the multitude of inscriptions—both in Athens and in other Greek cities—which were historically relevant for the period between 479/8 and 404 BC with which he primarily dealt, it is *prima facie* astonishing that the Athenian utilized them on such relatively few occasions, where he either mentioned inscriptions explicitly or where their use could be assumed to a considerable degree.

⁶ Cf. the hints of Crane (1996) 18–21, and Hedrick (1999) *passim*.

⁷ Cf., e.g., Higbie (1999).

⁸ Noted by M.I. Finley (1983) 208.

However, to refer frequently to inscriptions or quote them more exhaustively would have required either a complete change in the character of his *History* or the publication of a second volume in which the relevant sources were compiled, and both possibilities were out of the question because of Thucydides' literary ambitions and his conception of the duties of a historian. This is quite apparent in the first Book of his *History*, where Thucydides made an extensive attempt to give a coherent explanation of the causes and outbreak of the conflict with his discussion of the prehistory of the Peloponnesian War. He knew that his complex interpretation of the correlations involved would conflict with certain other contemporary attempts at an explanation and must therefore have been all the more aware that a special degree of accuracy was required. However, to refer explicitly to documentary sources or to quote from these did not seem to him to be an appropriate way to demonstrate the reliability of his account. He did not present the terms of the peace of 446/5 to his readers on the basis of an inscriptional text—which was accessible to the public in Athens—but rather left it to them to infer the actual clauses of the treaty from his *Pentekontaetia* excursus and his draft of the controversial political discussions that accompanied the buildup to the outbreak of the war. The same applies to the Megarian Decree, which seems to have been more important to the quarrels in the second half of 432 about the interpretation of the treaty of 446/5, as Thucydides himself conceded.⁹

Such omissions are unacceptable from a modern point of view, and there are some indications that Thucydides inappropriately minimized the significance of such treaties and decisions by failing either to give a summary or to quote them. This approach is not due to a lack of knowledge or investigation on his part but rather to his conception of himself as a historian: a crucial part of his method was that he did not see it as his task to present sources in such a detailed way. Still less was it his intention to provide his readers with elaborate comments on individual terms of decrees or treaties. It is therefore the case that for all the documents he mentioned, paraphrased, or quoted in more or less detail, Thucydides "writes not a commentary on the documents, but history".¹⁰

⁹ Peace of 446/5: 1.23.4; 1.35.1–2; 1.40.2; 1.78.4; 1.87.6; 1.115.1; 1.140.2; 1.145; 4.21.3; 7.18.2; Megarian Decree: 1.139.1.

¹⁰ E. Meyer (1899) 286.—Thucydides used neither the text of the Thirty Years

Since he had decided to communicate to his readers the results of his considerations but not to indicate the sources of his knowledge, be these his own experiences, investigations, conversations, speeches, or the reports of contemporaries, literary works, inscriptions, or other documentary sources,¹¹ he also refrained in many cases from referring briefly to significant inscriptions that he had checked and exploited.

Thucydides was equally silent about inscriptions in his reflections on methodology. His famous methodological chapter (1.22), clearly not a comprehensive statement of his principles, offers no thoughts about his selection criteria either for the relevant λόγοι or ἔργα or for the sources he used for them. Nor are there any hints as to the method with which he dealt with literary sources and documentary material in general or with inscriptions in particular. Thucydides focuses here on the problems of assessing oral information and the reports of contemporaries who were involved in the events to a greater or lesser extent. Thucydides did not reveal their names or give the sources of his knowledge (autopsy of inscriptions, his own copies of archival texts, copies belonging to informants etc.) for the relatively small number of documentary testimonies that he explicitly used. This is part of his “silence on his own sources”.¹² Concerning these documents the reader is therefore dependent upon

- the claim of the author in 1.21–22 to have inquired into historical events and facts with painstaking accuracy, i.e., he conscientiously examined the empirical data he was able to obtain with regard to their reliability, and
- the obvious implication that Thucydides also claims the same meticulousness with respect to the documents he used.

It makes no difference whether he received information orally or otherwise: Thucydides provided no insights into the process by which he worked: finding appropriate sources, weighing one up against

Peace nor that of the Peace of Nicias to comment upon and criticize the different consequences that Athenians and Lacedaimonians drew from them. Partly responsible for this attitude was his refusal to look at the outbreak and further course of the war in terms of Greek international law.

¹¹ Cf. Gomme, *HCT* 1.28f.

¹² Gomme, *HCT* 1.28.

another, interpreting them and transforming them into a narrative. Being thoroughly convinced of his own analytical acumen, Thucydides only provided his readers with the results of his examination and criticism of sources.

Partly because of this approach, some scholars have assumed that the insertion of complete documents, which were also partly published as inscriptions (especially at the end of Book IV and in Book V), must be taken as an indication of the internal incompleteness of his work. It has been argued that these verbatim quotations would have been eliminated in a final revision. Even after a lengthy debate, however, no compelling arguments have been produced in favor of this hypothesis.¹³

Whether or not one shares the opinion that Thucydides would have replaced these documents in his final revision with summaries or a brief reference to the treaties and decrees in question, and that the “survival” of the documents is due to the publisher of his *History*, who left this raw material where he found it, the present condition of Books IV and V leads us to the following conclusions concerning the parts of his work which most scholars accept as finished:

- Thucydides inserted a multitude of detailed documentary texts such as inscriptions into earlier drafts, which he incorporated in later versions in different ways.
- The assimilation of such documents was so considerable that the basis of his knowledge cannot be deduced from the present text.

On the one hand, this means that it is not possible to decide if, say, his more or less detailed references to treaties or decrees and their contents are based on his own examination of an inscription, on his inspection of a copy in an archive, on copies or summaries of informants, or on the common knowledge of their main points. On the

¹³ This theory that the documents in Books IV and V are evidence for the internal incompleteness of Thucydides' work has evoked contradictory responses, as is well known. The topic cannot be properly addressed in the present paper, so some pointers to the wide-ranging literature will have to suffice; cf. esp. C. Meyer (1955); Andrewes, *HCT* 5.374ff.; 383; Connor (1984) 144–47; 254; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.89–93; 107–22; Müller (1997); Rood (1998a) 83–108. Hornblower and Rood in particular have recently made a strong case that these documents are to be regarded as planned elements of the *History*.

other hand, it is difficult to tell to what extent Thucydides obtained his information from inscriptions because of his working method. Of course, the development of Athens' "epigraphical culture" means that we have to reckon on a large number of inscriptional sources being hidden within his narrative.¹⁴ In any case, the predominant attitude toward the accuracy of documents in Thucydides' time meant that it would not have been necessary for him to search the archives of *poleis* and temples in order to guarantee the accuracy of a text he was quoting, since even an abridged version engraved on a stone could be considered an authentic official document¹⁵ and therefore sufficient for his purposes.

These considerations raise some central issues:

- the identification of the epigraphical sources Thucydides used
- his criteria for using inscriptions
- the form and function of the utilization of these inscriptions.

Thucydides' Use of Inscriptions

Collections of historical documents, very popular among modern scholars, do not seem to have existed in ancient times before the third century BC.¹⁶ They were based either on inscriptional texts or on official recordings, which were kept in temples, public buildings or public archives.¹⁷ Later historians drew upon the relevant collections to different degrees, but if they wanted to refer to inscriptions they generally preferred using such compilations to taking the trouble to carry out an autopsy of the original *stēlai*.

Thucydides could not pursue his research in such a comfortable way. Apart from inscriptions, which were referred to or quoted in

¹⁴ Characteristically, it is not even possible to prove that Thucydides knew of the monumental tribute *stēlai* on the Acropolis, let alone used them as a source of information. After all, the inscriptions erected in honor of the fallen Athenians are mentioned in 2.43.3. Kolbe (1937) 252f. suggested that Thucydides examined the geographical names of the various theaters of war in the casualty list for each year in order to find out the duration of Athenian military campaigns during the Fifty Years. But this is no more than one of several possible answers to the question of how he came by some of the chronological notes in his *Pentekontaetia* excursus.

¹⁵ Cf. Klaffenbach (1960); Osborne (1999) 349; 352; Rhodes (2001) 136ff.

¹⁶ Cf. Higbie (1999).

¹⁷ Cf. Boegehold (1972); Sickinger (1994) and (1999).

older literary works, he depended on his own initiative. If he wanted to exploit epigraphical sources he had to rely on his own personal investigation of the inscriptions at the relevant sites or on the reports of others. It was crucial for him to get hold of reliable transcripts if he wanted to incorporate verbatim quotations or detailed paraphrases into his text. He had no immediate personal access to the public documents integrated into Book IV and V, because of his exile. In this case, as in many others, it is impossible to be sure if he knew these texts from the transcriptions of informants or copied them himself from the *stēlai* or from the archive after the Peloponnesian War ended. Even in the case of the few passages in which he mentioned inscriptions explicitly, it is difficult to determine which of these methods he used. Strictly speaking, one has to agree with C. Higbie that "... nothing in his account must be understood to mean that he saw the stones himself".¹⁸ Thucydides' well-known reticence about naming his sources is responsible for this uncertainty and adds to the probably misleading impression that he made very limited use of epigraphical evidence. One only needs to think of the many official documents which Thucydides presented in the brief form of an *Urkundenregist*,¹⁹ he probably knew many of them from inscriptions in which these texts were completely or partially recorded.

A survey of the sporadic references to, or quotations of, inscriptions in the *History* illustrates these difficulties and the peculiarities of Thucydides' use of epigraphical texts.

These are already evident in the first Book, which is almost unanimously considered to belong to the finished parts of the narrative. Although Thucydides knew of many relevant documents attesting to the rise of Athens during the Fifty Years—a process accompanied by the development of a specific "imperial epigraphy"—the historian did not base his *Pentekontaetia* excursus on inscriptional texts, as far as one can tell.²⁰ The gravestones mentioned in 1.93.2 were not

¹⁸ Higbie (1999) 59.

¹⁹ Thucydides wrote down what he saw as the most important points of several interstate agreements, public decrees, or documents in the form of concise notes (Meyer's *Urkundenregisten*); these are more seamlessly integrated into his narrative than the agreements quoted in detail in Books IV, V, and VIII. On the passages where the use and incorporation of such documents can be supposed, see C. Meyer (1955) 11f.; Luschnat (1970) 1123; Sickinger (1999) 253 n. 74; Müller (1997) 143–69.

²⁰ On his principal options, cf. Gomme, *HCT* 1.365–389.

of interest to him because of their epitaphs but because they constituted evidence of the haste with which the Athenians had reconstructed the city walls after their return (479), using all available materials; therefore they are only relevant in terms of Thucydides' use of archaeological evidence.

Thucydides first quotes an inscription in the excursus about Pausanias, namely the arrogant epigram that the Spartan regent had probably inscribed on the base of the "Serpent Column" and the golden tripod at Delphi, which had been the Hellenic League's votive offering on the occasion of their victory over the Persians (1.132.1–3). He goes on to mention the erasure of the inscription, which he attributes to the Spartans, and its replacement with the names of the *poleis* that had fought against the barbarians and made the dedication. He could not have checked the two lines of the original inscription since they were either erased immediately in 479 or after Pausanias' death from starvation. But the epigram glorifying Pausanias remained in people's memory because it had achieved a high degree of Panhellenic publicity in Delphi, and above all because it had created something of a sensation. At first the Spartans or possibly the Delphic ἀμφικτύονες took offense at the self-glorification of the Agiad and had it erased,²¹ and even after this the epigram continued to be discussed, serving as an illustration of Pausanias' un-Spartan way of life when he was under investigation by the ephors. But Thucydides did not use the epigram as evidence against Pausanias in his own name, but rather as part of his account of Spartan investigations and the accumulation of the incriminating evidence that led to his downfall. The quotation of the epigram added another vivid element to the unusually detailed and dramatic narrative that characterizes the whole Pausanias excursus.²²

In these chapters Thucydides also mentioned an inscription on two *stelai* that stood on the grave of the Agiad at the entrance of the sacred precinct of Athena Chalkioikos in Sparta (1.134.4), where the Spartans had been commanded by the Delphic oracle to move the tomb. However, Thucydides gave no indication as to whether or not the *stelai* were also erected on the orders of the oracle, or whether or not they belonged to the decoration of the grave it had commanded.

²¹ Cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.218f.

²² Cf. Tsakmakis (1995a) 132–39.

His reference to the inscription served to locate the grave in the *προτεμένισμα* of Athena's temple and at the same time prove that the Spartans had indeed moved it immediately to the place where Pausanias had died, in front of the *τέμενος* of the goddess in accordance with Apollo's orders.

In the second Book, in his Funeral Oration (2.43.3), Pericles talks about the commemorative function of inscriptions and *stēlai*. Pericles regarded the material aspects of commemoration and tradition (inscriptions and graves—he was thinking of the casualty lists that partially bore grave epigrams and were erected at the public funerals of the war dead), which were locally limited in their effect, as inferior to the more far-reaching preservation of glory in the memory of men. This view is similar to other skeptical statements of the fifth century concerning the value of literacy and written records.²³ Yet Pericles, or rather Thucydides, does not on principle deny the importance of literacy for the keeping of memories; he simply points out that its range is more limited: its effect is confined to home, whereas abroad, beyond Athens, the glorious dead can only live on in people's memories, which are passed on orally.

In the third Book the Plataeans remind their Spartan "judges" of their meritorious role in the war against Xerxes and the fact that their names were recorded on the monument of the Hellenic League at Delphi (3.57.2). Thucydides' Plataean *λόγος* is therefore an early example of the reference to inscriptions in the context of political debates. In this case it promoted a familiar pattern of argumentation: the stressing of historical merit as a basis for claiming gratitude and clemency. In the further account of the war in Books III and IV there are several references to public documents, especially treaties;²⁴ but a detailed quotation, deviating from the method to make a brief reference to the contents or summarize them, is not found before the end of Book IV.

Here Thucydides dealt with the 423 armistice between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, presenting the agreement of the

²³ Cf. Harris (1989) 90f.

²⁴ Cf. e.g. 3.28.1 (*StV* 170); 3.52.1–3 (*StV* 171); 3.75.1 (*StV* 172); 3.86.1–3 (*StV* 173); 3.114.4 (*StV* 175); 4.15.2–16.3 (*StV* 176); 4.46.1–47.1 (*StV* 177); 4.54.2 and 57.4 (*StV* 178); 4.58.1 and 65.1 (*StV* 179); 4.69.3–4 (*StV* 180); 4.88 (*StV* 181); 4.105.2 (*StV* 182).

contracting parties to his readers by embedding documentary material in 4.118.1–4.119.2. Since the armistice, being just a step to definite peace, was only to be valid for one year, the Athenian decree, which recommended that the Peloponnesian proposals be accepted (4.118.1–14), probably included no provision concerning the epigraphical publication of the treaty; the Peloponnesians presumably also did without. The patronymics of the Athenian signatories in the final protocol are also a deviation from the usual form of Attic treaty inscriptions and force us to conclude that 4.118.1–4.119.2 does not come from a *stēle*.²⁵ Thucydides' text seems to be based on a copy of the official document written on papyrus or some other perishable material and archived.

The fifth Book quotes in detail a number of treaties that were of great importance for the changing lines of coalition and confrontation after 421/0. They were caused by the quarrels about the interpretation and the fulfilment of the peace provisions stipulated in this year.

The first of these documents was the famous Peace of Nicias (5.18–19). Thucydides quoted its provisions according to a copy that either he or somebody else had made of the records of the treaty in the archive of the Council or in the Athens public archive, or alternatively on the Athenian stone *stēle* before or after 404.²⁶ He knew the five places where the inscriptional records of the treaty were to be published (5.18.10), which was carried out probably only in Delphi, Amyklai, and Athens. The historian probably had access to Delphi during his exile, and yet the Attic dialect of the document indicates that he used one of the two Athenian records.

The Athenian inscription of the treaty, which Thucydides called the Laconian *stēle*, came into focus in the winter of 419/8, when Alcibiades was able to push through an additional provision, which was added at the bottom of the pillar and stated that the Lacedaemonians had not kept their oaths, meaning that they had contravened the terms of the treaty or had even broken it (5.56.3). This

²⁵ Cf. Kirchhoff (1895) 22; Gomme, *HCT* 3.606.

²⁶ Sickinger (1999) 88; 225 n. 134; 253 n. 73 observed that the Thucydidean texts of the armistice agreement of 423 and of the Peace of Nicias each precisely specify the days from which the agreement was to come into force. Since such dates are otherwise missing in Athenian treaty inscriptions, he concludes that Thucydides must have consulted archival material in these cases.

spectacular act, while not amounting to a total annulment of the Peace of Nicias since the *stēle* on the Acropolis was not destroyed, was nevertheless a step toward the resumption of open warfare and at the same time represented a gain in prestige for Alcibiades at the expense of his opponent Nicias. Consequently the inscription was the talk of the town for a certain period of time, and there is no need to assume that Thucydides himself actually saw the stone; it is sufficient to suppose that he was informed about the event and possibly even received the verbatim text of the supplement.

The defensive alliance between Athens and Sparta, sworn at the beginning of the summer of 421 BC (5.23.1–5.24.1 = *StV* 189), created a sensation, especially among the Peloponnesians. However, it is not known for sure when Thucydides received the text of the treaty and integrated this into his brief report on the complications which immediately followed the conclusion of the Peace of Nicias, and whether this text was copied from one of the inscriptions put up in several places or from the archival document in Athens. It can only be taken for granted that Thucydides was informed about the locations of the *stēlai* at Amyklai and Athens (5.23.5).

He then deals with the alliance that the Athenians formed with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis in the summer of 420. Their quadruple *συμμαχία* has also been conserved in one of its inscriptional versions and therefore allows for a direct comparison between an epigraphical evidence and a document handed down by the historian.²⁷ Keeping in mind that in Thucydides' time exact "to the letter" correspondence did not matter, the comparison confirms the accuracy of the historian, in the judgment of a renowned epigrapher such as M.N. Tod.²⁸ This result is all the more important since the text in 5.47 may come from one of the inscriptions in which the treaty was displayed in Athens, Argos, Mantinea, and Olympia (47.8) rather than from an Athenian archive copy.²⁹

²⁷ Th. 5.47; *IG* I³ 83; cf. *StV* 193; Welwei (1996).

²⁸ Tod (1932) 26.

²⁹ Cf. Kirchhoff's arguments: (1895) 101f. The translation of Lorenzo Valla supports the conclusion that at least some of the discrepancies between Thucydides' text and the inscription were due to the deterioration of the former in the course of its transmission (as Kirchhoff [1895] 99–102 assumed; cf. Ferlauto [1979] 20f.; D.M. Lewis [1980]). On the other hand, Clark (1999), regards some of the discrepancies as evidence that Thucydides copied his text in 420 from the *stēle* in Olympia, whose wording must have diverged from the text used for the inscription in Athens.

Thucydides' detailed quotation of the armistice of 423 and of the documents in Book V already discussed has often been ascribed to the incompleteness of this part of the *History* (see above). However, their incorporation can also be interpreted as an intentional component of his account and narrative conception in that they were meant to serve as a substitute for a more detailed description of the events: the exact recording of detailed provisions, ratifying procedures, oaths, and names in the documents, quoted *in extenso* in Books IV and V, made it possible to highlight the discrepancy between the intended peace and stability that were apparently to be secured by various minute provisions for a long period of time, and what really happened: the disregarding of agreements after a short time, of new coalitions and numerous oaths to consolidate them, and indeed the renewed outbreak of the war after a few years. The quoted documents performed the literary function of conveying Thucydides' opinion to the reader more effectively than could any commentary by the author himself: the years of uneasy peace were no hiatus but rather a continuation of the mistrust and quarrelling between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians; the permanently changing agreements and alliances and their violations also defined these years as an integral part of the war.³⁰

In the sixth Book Thucydides mentioned two dedicatory inscriptions by Peisistratos, son of Hippias (54.6–7), which were engraved at two altars he had dedicated to commemorate his term of office as ἄρχων ἐπώνυμος in 522/1. One of these altars was in the Agora and dedicated to the Twelve Gods; the inscription was later obliterated by building activities. The second was dedicated to Apollo Pythios. Thucydides quoted the metrical text which was engraved there: "Peisistratos the son of Hippias set up this commemoration of his archonship in the sacred precinct of Apollo Pythios". The letters on the marble fragments of the inscription, discovered close to the Ilissos, are still clear and legible to this day,³¹ so Thucydides' remark that the inscription in the Pythion sanctuary could only be read "in faint letters" (ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι) probably refers to the fact that the color

³⁰ See esp. Rood (1998a) 83–108, and Connor (1984) 146f.; and cf. n. 13.

³¹ *IG* I³ 948 = *ML* 11; cf. Lavelle (1989).—The controversy about the date of the epigram and altar (see, e.g., Arnush [1995]; Aloni [2000]) is largely irrelevant to Thucydides' use of the inscription as a source for Peisistratid rule.

(mostly red or blue) often used by Greek masons to fill deeply cut letters had faded.

This epigraphical observation comes from the famous digression on the Peisistratidai and the end of their tyranny, in which Thucydides wanted to demonstrate how powerfully the people of Athens were seduced by erroneous beliefs about their past. He also intended to underline the fact that the fatal and irrational fear of an overthrow of democracy by tyranny after the religious sacrileges of 415, which led to Alcibiades being recalled from Sicily, stemmed from a poor knowledge of Athens' past, specifically to mistaken ideas about the rule and fall of the Peisistratidai.³²

Inscriptions are used more than once in this digression. The cited epigram bore out Thucydides' explanation of a ruling technique that had been used during the Peisistratid period: the tyrants had left the Athenian constitution untouched but had seen to it that supporters or members of the family, such as the son of Hippias, were appointed as archons. Thucydides' remarks on the condition of the inscription of the younger Peisistratos emphasized the energy and meticulousness with which he tried to disclose documentary evidence relating to an earlier period of Athenian history which at that time was the subject of some controversy.

Second, he mentioned (without quoting) an inscription on the Acropolis, possibly a bronze *stēle*, which reminded people of the atrocities of the tyrants and outlawed the Peisistratid family. Under the general heading of the "*adikia* of the tyrants", all living and dead members of their clan were listed in order to outlaw both them and their descendants. This resolution, which Thucydides had probably scrutinised personally (see 6.55.1f.: *γέγραπται*), had either been passed immediately after the expulsion of Hippias or after Marathon. Although already dead, Peisistratos was also mentioned, and after him Hippias, who was the only one of Peisistratos' legitimate sons whose children were named. The *stēle* therefore constituted good proof of Thucydides' opinion that Hippias was the eldest son, since in all likelihood (*εἰκός*) the eldest son had been the first to marry and have children first. That Hippias was listed immediately after his father was another valuable observation. It likewise supported the conclusion which was

³² On the intention behind Thucydides' argumentation in 6.54–59, cf. Tsakmakis (1996).

drawn from the whole debate where Thucydides made use of documents and circumstantial evidence rather like a forensic expert in a court of law:³³ Hippias was the firstborn (legitimate) son and therefore took over the rule from his father, whereas Hipparchos, killed by the “tyrannicides”, was only of minor significance.³⁴

The inscriptional evidence and conclusions deduced from this were connected in 6.55 with another source for the historical facts that the author wanted to establish. At the beginning of the chapter Thucydides insisted that he had heard “a more accurate information than others”, which means that he was referring to ἀκοή. Whether this allegedly superior knowledge was based on a special *Familienüberlieferung* is an open question; in any case it was grounded in oral tradition. What is more significant is that Thucydides did not content himself with stressing the authority of his superior knowledge in an extraordinary personal remark, but tried to provide independent proof by means of scientific argumentation. This proof came from the analysis of inscriptions and could therefore more easily be verified than the authority of the ἀκοή to which he referred. In view of his methodological statement at the end of the *Archaeology* (1.20.1) concerning his contemporaries’ uncritical way of dealing with oral traditions and the problems of exploiting these to reconstruct the more distant past, he must have felt compelled to produce proof based on documentary evidence (6.55.1). He would not have wished to burden his readers with having to accept unverified information gained from oral tradition (which he criticized as the usual approach to the recounting of historical events), and therefore interlinked such information—reliable though he believed it to be—with evidence based partly on inscriptions and partly on logical deductions grounded in probability.

The third inscription in the Peisistratidai excursus was an epigram at Lampsacus for Hippias’ daughter Archedice.³⁵ Thucydides considered this to be documentary evidence for a marriage alliance between the Peisistratidai and Hippoclos, the tyrant of Lampsacus, which was

³³ On the rhetorical form of the passage, see Tsakmakis (1995a) 199f.; Siewert (1985) discusses some similarities between Thucydides’ language and methods of *Quellenforschung* and the terminology and patterns of argumentation of Athenian forensic rhetoric.

³⁴ 6.55.1ff.; cf. Lavelle (1984); Wankel (1984).

³⁵ 6.59.3; cf. Lavelle (1986).

astonishing considering the old conflicts between the Hellespontine city and the Athenians, and therefore substantiated another of his arguments all the better: Hippias had increased the severity of his rule after the assassination of Hipparchos and had initiated the alliance because he felt insecure at home and wanted to provide himself with some support abroad. It should help to safeguard the Peisistratid domination in Sigeion and at the same time be a means of communication with the Persians and Darius I, who held Hippoclos and his son in high esteem. It was these considerations alone that had led Hippias to the idea of marrying his daughter to the Lampsacene. This was all the more striking as in the epigram, which immediately followed Thucydides' explanation, Hippias was called the "most illustrious man in Hellas in his time". Why Thucydides should have quoted the epigram rather than simply referring to the marriage connection is not easy to explain. It is also uncertain from where he knew the text; possibilities include a visit to the Hellespont and the work of the local Lampsacene historian Charon (*FGrHist* 262) on his native town.³⁶ However, its insertion suggests that Thucydides regarded the marriage alliance as a relatively little-known fact, the knowledge of which might bring about a better understanding of the Peisistratid rule, and therefore decided to present the epitaph in support of his argumentation.

The whole digression shows Thucydides handling inscriptions in a scientific way. He exploited them for hints and proof and linked them with insights deduced from other sources to form a compelling chain of evidence. Oral traditions and documentary testimonies complement one another and are used "synergetically" in a series of arguments, illustrating the intensity of Thucydides' search for the truth as well as his brilliant handling of sources of differing form and value. His efforts in the excursus at the same time exemplify the tasks of a historian described in 1.20–21: the laborious and methodically careful search for the truth based on a critical assessment of the sources.

³⁶ Cf. Jacoby (1949) 164; Dover, *HCT* 4.324. According to Dover (*loc. cit.* 321f.) Thucydides' excursus was directed against the *Atthis* of Hellanikos; see also Hornblower (1987) 84; Kinzl (1973) 506f., and Tsakmakis (1995a) 222f., on the other hand, regard Herodotus' chapters on the Peisistratidai as the main target of Thucydides' *Gegendarstellung* and of his epigraphical research.

The survey above paints a rather disparate picture concerning Thucydides' use of inscriptions, which ranges from mere reference to precise quotation and painstaking incorporation into the argumentation. It includes a number of different points:

- Firstly we must stress Thucydides' willingness in principal to consider inscriptions and documents as a means of obtaining and securing information, and to use them in his reconstruction and description of the past.
- The historian used or referred to inscriptions exemplifying different types of epigraphical material (grave inscriptions and epigrams, dedications, decrees, and treaties). As the epigrams in 6.54.7 and 6.59.3 show, he obviously felt that the quotation of verse inscriptions did not compromise the stylistic unity of his work or violate a specific "stylistic law" which would have been valid in his time.
- His use of inscriptions was unsystematic in nature, however.³⁷ Obviously he did not consider it part of his task as a historian to analyze specific categories of inscriptions with a view to checking the statements and evaluations of politicians and military commanders or his own interpretations. It therefore did not occur to him to check, for example, Pericles' claim about the financial superiority of Athens over its enemies by inspecting the accounts of the treasurers of Athena or to examine the decline of Athenian demographic and military power with the help of the casualty lists.
- It cannot strictly be decided if Thucydides knew of the inscriptions he mentions from his own experience—i.e., if he met the requirement of autopsy—or if he used copies of informants or got to know their contents roughly from oral reports alone. The absence of hints as to the origins of his knowledge does not mean that his own investigations or the copies of his informants were insufficient; but he did not feel the need to tell his readers precisely how reliable his knowledge of the sources was, any more than he did with respect to oral reports.³⁸ Passages 5.47 and 6.54.7, the only ones

³⁷ It makes no difference whether one accepts that Thucydides had inquired into the Attic casualty lists (see n. 14), or follows the assumption of Stroud (1994) 282f.; 285, that he read the names of the Aitolian envoys and of their fathers in 3.100 on an inscription in Corinth.

³⁸ In this point his approach corresponds to that of Herodotus; cf. St. West (1985) 281; 289.

that can be compared with surviving inscriptions, indicate the high accuracy of Thucydides or his informants in copying inscriptions and documents respectively.

- Thucydides used inscriptions both for contemporary history and for the more distant past. In analyzing contemporary history, however, he seems to have relied much more on the oral accounts of eyewitnesses and participants, since he could weigh up the quality of one such account against another, an approach that had a very limited application when dealing with contradictory traditions about earlier events. In the latter case, documentary material that might be helpful would have been all the more welcome, and it is therefore not surprising that his exploitation of inscriptions is most evident in 6.54–59, where he examined an earlier period of Athenian history. In this excursus Thucydides really worked as a documentary historian, drawing precise conclusions from inscriptional material. All in all, though, a high degree of selectivity in the use of inscriptions must be noted in his dealing with earlier Greek history. While the chapters on the Peisistratidai made repeated reference to inscriptions, the *Archaeology* in particular is remarkable for its total neglect of epigraphical evidence. Even though Thucydides recognized the varying reliability of different sources of evidence about contemporary history and events prior to his lifetime, and therefore stressed the difference between the reports of eyewitnesses and hearsay (1.73.2), he did not attempt any extensive examination of epigraphical sources for earlier periods.
- Neither in 1.22 nor in other parts of his work do we find general statements about the different sources Thucydides used. It is therefore doubtful that he considered the systematic value of inscriptions as a specific type of source, or he developed valid methodological rules for the assessment of inscriptions or documentary sources in general. He certainly knew that prejudice or partiality could influence inscriptional texts in the same way it could information from eyewitnesses or literary works and therefore limit their objectivity—a problem with his sources to which he had specifically referred in his methodological reflections.³⁹ Thucydides therefore

³⁹ 1.22.3. There is undoubtedly a certain affinity between speeches and documents in Thucydides (see Luschkat [1970] 1126f.; 1130f.; Müller [1997] 112–29). The documents are also based on spoken words, for example on the transformation of

considered inscriptions to be objects of critical research just like any other type of source.

- In a way essentially similar to, but more extensive than, his predecessor Herodotus, Thucydides used inscriptions as evidence for his argumentation and accounts rather than simply as additional, decorative elements in his work. His use of inscriptions was not confined to merely confirming certain facts or opinions; Thucydides integrated them into the course of his historical analysis and argumentation because he recognized their potential value in exploring the past. So on the one hand, he used inscriptions in the Peisistratidai excursus to draw historical conclusions in support of a declared hypothesis; on the other, he included complete documents in Books IV and V without explaining them, probably wanting to use them as a foil whereby his readers would be able to realize the fragility and failure of the Peace of Nicias for themselves. In general he used inscriptions with a higher degree of sophistication than Herodotus and incorporated them more effectively into the course of his argumentation.
- Whether he quoted documents extensively (as in IV and V) or just referred to selected parts of them—several clauses of the Thirty Years' Peace (in Book I), for example—obviously depended on decisions that he took on a case-by-case basis according to content and literary form. Familiar with the standards of documentary accuracy in his time, his readers would not have considered it falsification if Thucydides did not quote the documents in question completely or verbatim, and this may have contributed to his decision in many cases to confine himself to a concise but correct summary of their contents, which was more important for a full understanding of historical events than a literal and formal correspondence to the original text.
- Thucydides' ideal was not a modern positivistic historiography, which demands comprehensive collection and analysis of the sources

proposals, developed in political debates, into treaty clauses. However, with the help of inscriptions or archival texts, their reproduction achieved a higher degree of precision than was possible for the λόγοι, upon which Thucydides imposed his well-known restrictions in 1.22.1. The fact that Thucydides used definite pronouns when he introduced and concluded inserted documents but indefinite pronouns for the speeches (observed by D.M. Lewis [1992c] 4f.; see 4.117.3; 119.3; 5.17.2; 20.1), strongly suggests that the historian was well aware of this difference.

by the scholar. Because when it came to source material or information he focused on the questioning of contemporary participants or observers, and because he had chosen a contemporary topic, he did not classify literary texts and written documents as the most important sources for his work but ranked them second after eyewitness reports or oral traditions. In this respect his reservations about the written remains of the past resemble those of Herodotus. Furthermore, the rigid criteria of selection and relevance that he used to extract occurrences and correlations from the entirety of historical events did not permit him to analyze inscriptions simply because they were impressive or because they gratified interests in historical or other curiosities.

In different places Thucydides underlined the limitations and distortions of the memory, which stores information about the remoter past but also about the more distant past. Consequently, inscriptions and other written documents were obvious instruments for correction and verification, and the historian was generally well aware that analyzing them could help to rectify inappropriate conceptions of historical events (see 6.54–59). And yet he did not systematically exploit epigraphical sources for earlier Greek history or for the years between 479 and 404 BC in order to counterbalance biased reports or traditions concerning the activities, motives, and purposes of individuals, groups, or states—although in his methodological considerations he did stress that these problems could only be solved by the historian's meticulous checking of information (1.22.4). The efforts that were necessary to record such texts accurately may have led him to dispense with this procedure occasionally, especially in the case of inscriptions, which Thucydides would not easily have been able to check, either because they were situated outside Athens or because he had no access to them due to his exile. However, these considerations do not adequately explain his reserve in terms of epigraphical sources in general.

Thucydides' confidence in his intellectual ability to scrutinize the differing reports of his contemporaries and get to the "true historical chain of events" was presumably more decisive. Due to this conviction, which is perceptible throughout the whole of his work, he lacked the impetus to examine inscriptions or documents as a way of acquiring knowledge, which he could then use to systematically examine oral reports, personal observations and his own objectivity.

This is why one cannot infer any strict rules of the historian for deciding which inscriptions he referred to, how comprehensively he presented them, and how he integrated them into his historical research.⁴⁰ In other words, he exploited inscriptions and their potential to produce documentary evidence only occasionally, as the opportunity arose.

The terminology and formulae developed as a result of the “epigraphical culture” of Athens during his lifetime probably had a more subtle influence on his *History*. In this context we refer primarily to the numerous inscriptions and texts generally that were produced due to the demands of the administration of the Delian League within the framework of the democratic constitution of Athens. They presented a model for a (seemingly) objective and impartial account of historical facts and contexts, something that Thucydides wanted to achieve.⁴¹ However, a closer examination of this aspect of the relation between his historiography and the *Inscriptiones Atticae* must be left for future research.

*Thucydides' Narrative and Epigraphical Sources for Earlier and
Contemporaneous Events in Greek History*

Thucydides' reliability as a historian can also be examined at another level. In particular, primary sources, unbiased by his point of view, enable us to check his accuracy and credibility. Here the following question arises: what is the relation between the surviving inscriptions

⁴⁰ Apart from the Peace of 446/5 and the Megarian Decree, there are several other official documents of considerable significance for parts of the war to which Thucydides attached great significance. Nevertheless, he neither quoted them nor gave a more detailed summary. The list compiled by Shrimpton (1997) 129ff. with n. 88 makes it clear that Thucydides also proceeded very selectively in this regard. However, it is not possible to determine his selection criteria precisely. In spite of C. Meyer's (1955) efforts, the criterion of the “historical relevance” of the treaties or decrees in question does not explain why Thucydides presented some of them in comprehensive form, e.g., the armistice of 423, the Peace of Nicias or (especially problematic for Meyer's interpretation) the largely inconsequential files in 5.77 and 79 (*StV* 194), while others, some of them apparently of no lesser relevance, are referred to with just a few words (or as *Urkundenregesten*).

⁴¹ On this see esp. Crane (1996) 8f.; 21f. He also refers to the influence exerted by the “cold facts of administrative documents” on Thucydides' selection criteria for his account.

of historical significance concerning the *Pentekontaetia* and Peloponnesian War and Thucydides' own account, reconstruction, and evaluation of the events?

The majority of these inscriptions complement his account, simply because epigraphical evidence generally includes many aspects of ancient life that were simply taken for granted in the literary sources. These additions are of varying importance. Very often they deal with pieces of information: many details, facts, names, places, military operations, financial procedures etc. are referred to that are of interest to us but that Thucydides obviously considered too unimportant to mention. Treaties, decrees, and also the numerous reports and accounts of Athenian magistrates and commissions employ the precise terminology of offices, functions and procedures, whereas Thucydides, in common with many other ancient historians, favored a language without technical and legal terms for stylistic reasons and also did not elaborate on the political and administrative processes behind the texts in question.

It is only from inscriptions that we glean further information about the tributes of the members of the Delian League, about the number of allies or the changing amounts of tribute payments. Only with their help can we grasp the complex procedure of tribute assessments, or the keeping back of a sixtieth part of the φόροι as a share for the treasury of Athena and the role of the latter as the patron goddess of the League from 454/3, which this share reflected. The same applies to the establishing of tribute districts and the assignment of the allies to them.

Regulations for rebellious *poleis* that were subjugated again are usually only given in rough draft form in Thucydides' account. For example, he described the treatment of Euboea in 446/5 in a single sentence (1.114.3), stressing the difference between the treatment of Hestiaia and the other states of the island. Whereas the Hestiaians were expelled and their land occupied by Athenian colonists, the Athenians came to contractual agreements with the other Euboeans—at first on the basis of capitulation treaties. The price these cities had to pay for not being destroyed was strict subjugation to the will of the ruling Athenians. It is only thanks to one of the best preserved fifth-century Attic inscriptions on which the Chalkis Decree is preserved (*IG* I³40 = *ML* 52) that we can really appreciate what this meant to them. Although the *stèle* contains only part of the prescriptions which Chalkis had to obey if it wanted to avoid more

severe sanctions, the preserved provisions give us numerous insights into the practical aspects of Athenian domination: the Athenian and Chalkidian institutions involved, regular procedures, the obligation of the Chalkidians to comply with the orders of the Athenian *dēmos* and to remain loyal politically as well as militarily, the renewed recognition of the obligation to pay φόρος, the affirmation of the agreements by oath, to name but a few. These valuable pieces of information give us, for example, a concrete idea of the intensity of the Athenians' will to rule, and we gain a better understanding of the massive violation of autonomy which the allies blamed the Athenians for. Of course, Thucydides did mention such features of the Delian League, but this was very often in general terms. Their elucidation was only achieved with the help of epigraphical evidence, which perfectly supplements the sketchy literary report in the case of the Chalkis Decree.⁴²

The inscription also focuses on an aspect of Athenian domination that Thucydides never mentioned, namely one of the general rules that applied to the allies: trials in a court of law of an allied *polis* that might lead to a verdict of exile, death, or loss of citizen rights had to be transferred to the people's court in Athens. This "Athenian Judicial Law", based on a decree of the *dēmos*, was part of the Athenians' general "imperial legislation" that applied to all non-autonomous member states, as did the famous Coinage or Standards Decree (*IG* I³ 1453), which imposed the use of Attic coins, weights, and measures. Both documents bring into focus a legislative feature of Athenian governance that was disregarded by Thucydides.

There are many further examples of inscriptions and groups of inscriptions of comparable value that we could mention;⁴³ however, there is not space here to deal with all of the sources in question. The important point is that most of them provide information and insights about things that "Thucydides takes for granted".⁴⁴

⁴² Revolts by other Athenian allies are also known about in more detail thanks to inscriptions; this is true even for the Samian revolt, although Thucydides described this in more detail than other insurrections during the *Pentekontaetia* (1.115.2–1.117); see *IG* I³ 48; cf. further on Mytilene (427) Th. 3.50, and *IG* I³ 66.

⁴³ Cf., e.g., Gomme, *HCT* 1.30–35 and especially Kallet-Marx (1993) 107 on the relation between the first Kallias Decree and Th. 2.13.3–5.

⁴⁴ See Gomme's first chapter in the introduction to *HCT* 1 (1–24). Together with the second chapter ("Thucydides' self-imposed limitations"), it embraces the entirety of "What Thucydides does not tell us" (*ibid.*, 1.1).

A different level concerning the relation between his narrative and inscriptions can be illustrated, e.g., by some ὄστρακα (potsherds) against the Athenian Hyperbolus, which give the name of his father. These constitute evidence for Thucydides' bias against the demagogue, because in contrast to his usual practice he withheld Hyperbolus' patronymic—which he doubtless knew—the first and only time he mentioned him (8.73.3).⁴⁵

Wartime inscriptions concerning religious matters are valuable in another way. They demonstrate the intensity of traditional and new cults and generally of the worship of gods by Thucydides' contemporaries, and also represent the *Religionspolitik* of the Athenians in their empire.⁴⁶ So they testify to a powerful "Religious Dimension to the Peloponnesian War".⁴⁷ Yet Thucydides ignored or put aside these aspects of the war, as well as the popular religion of his time, to such an extent that it seems legitimate to reproach him for disregarding a significant element of historical reality. Ultimately this was due to his excessively narrow selection criteria and to his notions about the driving forces of history.

As the last example shows, epigraphical material can help us to supplement Thucydides' account as well as to examine it and the limited perspective of its author. In fact, these two functions of inscriptions merge; they are not fully distinct from one another. The stones make it possible—at least to a certain degree—to check the accuracy of the *History* in terms of concrete facts, completeness, balance, focuses of interest, and so on.

Thanks to the *stèle* of the quadruple alliance of 420 mentioned above, we are able to evaluate how accurately Thucydides (or one of his informants) copied the text of the treaty and integrated it into 5.47. Because of their fuller texts, the inscriptional versions of alliances and other treaties, which Thucydides himself only refers to or summarizes, sometimes allow for a better understanding of the situation in which they were concluded and of the intentions of the contracting parties. The Attic inscriptions, concerning the relations of Athens to the *poleis* of the Delian League—from tribute lists, decrees for different allies and casualty lists to the stones which testify to the

⁴⁵ See Wankel (1974) 88–92.

⁴⁶ Cf. Smarczyk (1990) *passim*.

⁴⁷ Hornblower (1992a).

public and private landed property of the Athenians in the territories of the allies—enable us to check Thucydides' draft of the Athenian hegemony. Among other things, these inscriptions highlight the benefits that poorer as well as upper-class Athenians gained from their thalassocracy—apart from tributes, fines or war indemnities—and which contributed considerably to the consensus among the citizens about the handling of the allies. At the same time they confirm the brutal frankness of the language that the Athenians in Thucydides' *History* used to articulate their command and rule over the allies.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in spite of his fundamental interest in Athens' immense accumulation of power, the historian totally disregarded the symbolic aspect of the "imperial inscriptions" (i.e., tribute lists etc.)—which were difficult to read in parts owing to their monumental size—which simultaneously helped to impose the rule of Athens and were also intended to represent it visually and intimidate the members of the League.

The instances in which inscriptions result in a correction of Thucydides' narrative are rare and disparate. In 1.51.4 he named Andocides son of Leogoras as the second of the Athenian commanders (the first was Glaucon) sent with a reinforcement squadron to Corcyra. However, in an account of the treasurers of Athena which undoubtedly refers to the same expedition, the payments are registered for the same squadron under the command of three generals, and Andocides is not among them.⁴⁹ This discrepancy has given rise to various explanations, ranging from the omission of a passage during the transmission of the Thucydidean text to the assumption that Andocides had only accompanied the three στρατηγοί to accomplish a special diplomatic mission, without being member of the board of generals himself. But the simplest explanation would be that Thucydides confused Andocides Leogorou with Dracontides Leogorou. If this is the case, then the treasurers' inscription has enabled us to correct a factual error on the part of the historian. In other cases the personal names he mentioned prove to be reliable when compared against epigraphical sources, underscoring the "general accuracy" of his work.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Cf. Schuller (1974) 120ff. with n. 233.

⁴⁹ *IG* I³ 364 = *ML* 61, ll. 19ff.: Glaucon, Metagenes, and Dracontides (or Dracon).—Cf. Gomme, *HCT* 1.188f.; D.M. Lewis (1953) 152f.; Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.95.

⁵⁰ Noted by Hornblower (2000c); cf. also *Comm.* 1.101–107.

The Laconian marble *stèle* IG V,1 1 has sometimes been put forward as a correction to a tendentious distortion in Thucydides' account. The inscription registers (among others) two contributions by the Melians to the Spartan war fund, which were mainly dated to the first half of the Archidamian War, before 426, the year of the first Athenian attack on Melos. These contributions were considered to be signs of a pro-Spartan partisanship on the part of the Melians, something that contradicted Thucydides' presentation of the island as a neutral state in the year 416. This led to the assumption that the historian omitted to mention the payments, and the Melian alliance with Sparta that these implied, in order to emphasize the contrast between the ruling *polis*, Athens, on the one hand and Melos, an example of a somewhat old-fashioned Greek autonomy and freedom, on the other. Consequently, the argument goes, this inscriptional evidence would "convict" Thucydides of suppressing historical facts for the sake of a higher literary purpose. However, proponents of this view overlooked the fact that according to the standards of that time, such contributions were compatible with Melos being neutral and in no way entailed or required an alliance with the Lacedaemonians.⁵¹ Therefore the Laconian inscription is valuable in that it *supplements* Thucydides' account rather than corrects it.

The so-called assessment of Cleon, known from the first decree of Thoudippos and an extensive assessment list, is probably a similar case.⁵² Here it is difficult to explain why the historian failed to mention the new taxation despite the fact that it led to a considerable increase in the figures assessed and moreover took place before he was exiled. In his *Archaeology* he had examined the accumulation of wealth as an important factor and indication of power in Greek history before 480/79. He also had Pericles stress the importance of Athens' financial superiority with respect to Sparta and the Peloponnesian League. Considering these interests it seems all the more surprising that Thucydides should have ignored the reassessment of 425/4, and many scholars have been of the opinion of Gomme, who saw this as "the strangest of all omissions in Thucydides".⁵³ Apparently he had passed over a crucial step in the development of

⁵¹ See Smarczyk (1999) for discussion of the inscription.

⁵² IG I³ 79 = *ML* 69.

⁵³ Gomme, *HCT* 3.500.

the Athenian Empire and also of Athenian finance, indispensable for the understanding of the course of events during the war. Here the epigraphical evidence would seem to prove Thucydides guilty of a grave error. However, Lisa Kallet-Marx⁵⁴ has given important arguments against this point of view: for one thing Thucydides did not deal with any other taxation than the first one of Aristides, and besides, the assessment of 425/4 had been largely ineffective. Its omission would therefore seem to have been consistent with Thucydides' principles concerning the matters he considered worth narrating. "Cleon's assessment" can thus be classified as another document that helps us supplement or perhaps deepen Thucydides' account rather than correct or disprove it.

The reassessment of 425/4 illustrates another important point—in common with other inscriptions—which is that contemporaneous documents and inscriptions only occasionally allow for a genuine comparison with Thucydides' narrative. Often the aspects of historical events upon which they focus differ from those treated by the historian, so that there are some points of contact with his version, but no direct examination, verification or refutation is possible.⁵⁵ It is difficult to appreciate the value of the very concrete but sometimes rather limited information provided by these sources when compared against Thucydides' weighty descriptions and evaluations, which are often of a more general and abstract character. It is therefore rather a tricky business to define the relation between Thucydides and the (preserved) inscriptional output of his times. This difficulty emerges if we try to correct or refute his account with the help of epigraphical Evidence but also if we want to bring them in harmony with one another.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Kallet-Marx (1993) 164–70; 192ff.; cf. Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.7; 2.95f.

⁵⁵ On this problem, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.6f.; 11f.; 94, especially on the relation between the epigraphical sources for the history of the Delian League and Thucydides' narrative; the correlation between the account of the ransoming of Rhoiteion in 4.52.2 and the listing of this *polis* in *IG* I³ 71, and 77, and also the (supposed) relation between the "money-collecting ships" in 4.50.1 and 75.1 and *IG* I³ 71, were discussed by Kallet-Marx (1993) 155–59, and 160–64; cf. also Kallet (2001) 183f.; 192–95 on the relation of *IG* I³ 60 and 93 to Thucydides on the Melian campaign of 416, and on the Athenian decision-making process with respect to the Sicilian Expedition (415); also uncertain is the correlation between 1.57.6 and *IG* I³ 365, l. 5.

⁵⁶ This is illustrated by Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.6f.

Where there is a chance of direct comparison, however, A.W. Gomme's verdict on Thucydides' narrative, namely that "contemporary official documents nearly everywhere confirm it", seems by and large to be justified to the present day.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Gomme, *HCT* 1.29.

THUCYDIDES AND ATHENIAN HISTORY¹

P.J. Rhodes

Thucydides the totally dispassionate, scientific historian has been superseded in the *communis opinio* by Thucydides the engaged Athenian and the artful reporter. He mentions his father's name, Oloros, and his interests in Thrace (4.104.4–4.105.1), from which we may infer that he was related to Miltiades, who married the daughter of a Thracian called Oloros. Thucydides the son of Melesias, who succeeded Miltiades' son Cimon as the leading opponent of Pericles, was connected with that family by marriage; and it is possible that that Thucydides was a grandfather and Miltiades was a great-grandfather of Thucydides the historian. Thucydides reports in a matter-of-fact section of narrative that he was an Athenian general in 424/3 and did not return from Thasos in time to prevent Amphipolis from going over to the Spartan Brasidas, but was in time to keep Eïon in Athenian hands (4.105–106); as a result of that he was exiled, returning to Athens under the amnesty of 404 (5.26.5); it is often and plausibly thought, but is not attested, that the man responsible for his exile was Cleon. He tells us that, when exiled from Athens, he was able to visit states and talk to men on the Peloponnesian side (5.26.5). Before 424/3 he was presumably in Athens and fighting for Athens (his election as general is likely to be due to creditable military service as well as to his having Thracian connections at a time when they might be useful). We thus have an aristocratic Athenian, from a strongly anti-Periclean background, who nevertheless became an admirer of Pericles and of the Athenian democracy and the Athenian empire as led by Pericles (but not of post-Periclean democracy or of unrestrained imperial ambitions); a man who served as an Athenian general but whose generalship led to his exile: he was undoubtedly an engaged Athenian.

¹ I thank Prof. S. Hornblower for reading a draft, and for suggesting improvements which I have gratefully made.

This chapter will concentrate on passages in which Thucydides focuses directly on Athens; but there are many passages focused primarily on other states where he has Athens in mind. The Corinthians in their first speech at Sparta (1.68–71), in order to reproach the Spartans for their slowness, contrast that with Athens' energy: it is here that we find the notorious characterization of the Athenians that "their nature is neither to have peace themselves nor to allow the rest of mankind to have it" (1.70.9). Fear of Athenian ambition motivated the Trachinians when they invoked the help of Sparta in 426 (3.92.2), the north-western Greeks when they made a treaty of neutrality in 426/5 (3.114.2–3 with 3.113.2), and the Sicilian Greeks when they agreed to forswear intervention from outside in 424 (4.60–61). The Syracusan Athenagoras has a significant name (though I hesitate to reject him as an invention) and is described similarly to Cleon as "a champion of the *dēmos* and at that time most able to persuade the many" (6.35.2: for Cleon see below): after misjudging the Athenians' ambitions, he, like Pericles in the Funeral Speech (2.37: cf. below), gives a defence of democracy which is less egalitarian than the Athenian reality (6.36–40: democracy 6.39). In 7.55.2 and again in 8.96.5 (in the latter passage once more contrasting Spartan slowness) Thucydides claims, not entirely fairly, that the Syracusans, who were democratic and powerful, were the enemies most similar in character (*homoiotropoi*) and therefore the most formidable to the Athenians.

We may suspect that in many places there are unsignposted allusions to Athens. For instance, in the general comments on the collapse of standards and the polarization of pro-Athenian democrats and pro-Spartan oligarchs attached to the civil war in Corcyra (3.82–83), the social-political associations known as *hetaireiai* (3.82.5–6) are more likely to have been found in the large city of Athens (cf. 8.48.3; 8.54.4 [*xynōmosiai*, "conspiracies"]; 8.65.2) than in the small Corcyra.

* * *

In Books I–II there are a few brief allusions to early Athens. In the opening chapters of Book I, Thucydides writes that because of its poor soil [in fact, by Greek standards it was neither exceptionally fertile nor exceptionally infertile] Attica was not competed over but for a very long time was occupied by the same people (1.2.5: the

less extreme version of the Athenians' belief in their autochthony); and, not entirely compatible with that, that it served as a refuge for those driven out of other parts of Greece and became so populous that [in the Dark Age] it sent out settlers to the Aegean islands and western Asia Minor (1.2.6; 1.12.4). More striking is the account of ancient Athens and Attica which Thucydides gives in connection with the Athenians' migration inside the fortified area of Athens and Peiraieus when the Peloponnesians invaded Attica at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War: until the time of Theseus, Attica was divided into separate *poleis* with their own institutions, which conferred together only in emergencies; Theseus accomplished a political synoecism, but the Athenians continued to live dispersed throughout Attica until the beginning of the Peloponnesian War; the original city of Athens was the Acropolis, still called *polis*, and the area to the south, where the oldest temples were situated (2.15–16: better, in fact, the south-east; and there was also early occupation to the north-west). Here, as with his treatment of the Trojan War (1.9–11), he believes that legends about the remote past can serve as a basis for history if they are approached in a suitably rational spirit. The rebuilding of the city's walls after the Persian sack and the development of the Peiraieus as Athens' harbour are mentioned in connection with Themistocles (cf. below); the building of the original pair of long walls is among the items included in the account of the *Pentekontaetia* (1.107.1; 1.108.3; cf. the long walls built for Megara, 1.103.4; but Thucydides does not mention the slightly later "middle" wall); and in his introduction he contrasts the impressiveness of Athens as a city with the unimpressiveness of Sparta, and warns that this is not a reliable guide to their power (1.10.2).

From Athens in the historical period but before his own lifetime, Thucydides deals with three particular episodes in Book I, and returns to deal with one in greater detail in Book VI.

The attempt of Cylon to make himself tyrant of Athens, in the 630s or 620s, and the killing of his supporters when they thought they had an assurance that their lives would be spared, are mentioned as background to the Spartans' use in 432/1 of the curse on the Alcmaionid family in an attempt to undermine the position of Pericles in Athens (1.126.3–12). There are other accounts in Hdt. 5.71 (likewise to explain the curse), [Arist.] *Ath.* 1 (end only preserved), Plu. *Sol.* 12.1–9 (apparently giving the version whose end survives in [Arist.] *Ath.*) and schol. Ar. *Eq.* 445 (three versions). At

first sight, Thucydides' narrative is straightforward. Students of his attitude to religion will notice that, when Cylon consulted the Delphic oracle, "the god responded" ἀνεῖλεν ὁ θεός, § 4), and the response was ambiguous in referring to "the greatest festival of Zeus" without specifying whether that was the Olympic festival or the Athenian festival of the Diasia (with the implication that Cylon may have failed because he misinterpreted the oracle: §§ 4–6); and that Thucydides omits the story (told by Plu. § 1, schol. § a) that Cylon's supporters, to maintain their hold on divine protection, attached a thread to the statue of Athena and unwound it as they were taken away, and were killed after the thread had broken.

In fact, Thucydides' account is controversial, on more than one point. In his version, Cylon opted for the Olympian festival, and when the citizens rallied behind the authorities they came "from the fields" (ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν, §§ 5–7); but it is possible that there was an alternative version, and that it underlay Herodotus' account, in which Cylon opted for the Diasia, and the citizens came "from Agrai" ἐκ τῶν Ἀγρῶν), where they were celebrating the festival.² Thucydides claims that Cylon and his brother escaped after the failure of the *coup* (§ 10; cf. schol. §§ b, c); but Herodotus, Plutarch, and schol. § a imply that Cylon was among those killed.

Another disagreement is more important. In Thucydides' account (§ 8) the mass of the citizens grew weary of the siege, "entrusting to the nine archons the guard and full authority to settle the matter as they judged best; for at that time most of the city's business was conducted by the nine archons" (ἐπιτρέψαντες τοῖς ἐννέα ἄρχουσι τὴν τε φυλακὴν καὶ τὸ πᾶν αὐτοκράτορσι διαθεῖναι ἢ ἂν ἄριστα διαγιγνώσκουσιν· τότε δὲ τὰ πολλὰ τῶν πολιτικῶν οἱ ἐννέα ἄρχοντες ἔπρασσον)—and he does not identify the archons but says simply in 1.127.1 that Pericles was subject to the curse through his mother. What he says looks like a rejoinder to Herodotus' statement (§ 2) that "these men were removed by the *prytaneis tōn naukrarōn*, who at that time administered Athens, to be subject to a penalty short of death; but the Alcmaionids are accused of having killed them" (τούτους ἀνιστᾶσι μὲν οἱ πρυτάνεις τῶν ναυκράρων, οἳ περ ἔνεμον τότε τὰς Ἀθήνας, ὑπεγγύους πλὴν θανάτου· φονεῦσαι δὲ αὐτοὺς αἰτίη ἔχει Ἀλκμεωνίδας). It is left to Plutarch (§ 1) to explain how the Alcmaionids fell under the curse:

² Jameson (1965) 167–72.

the eponymous archon was the Alcmaionid Megacles. Although Thucydides' emphasis on the importance of the archons looks like a contradiction of Herodotus, it appears that both, in different ways, were trying to minimize the guilt of the Alcmaionids. Herodotus, who believed that the Alcmaionids were great opponents of tyranny and could not have been in touch with the Persians in 490 (6.121–124; cf. 6.115), accepted a diversion of responsibility from the archons to the mysterious *prytaneis tōn naukrarōn*; Thucydides, whose own family had intermarried with the Alcmaionids in the fifth century, as a writer who could not let error go unexposed insisted on the responsibility of the archons, but of all nine and without naming Megacles or the Alcmaionids (he does name the Alcmaionids only to give them credit for the ending of the Peisistratid tyranny: 6.59.1).

Formally, the justification for Thucydides' including an account of this episode is the Spartans' invocation of the curse in 432/1; but that did not require such a detailed account. For literary aspects of the whole section treating Cylon—Pausanias—Themistocles, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.202–3; and cf. below on Themistocles.

On the overthrow of the Peisistratid tyranny we find Thucydides again exposing error, this time very belligerently, and agreeing with Herodotus against what he calls the belief of “the mass of the Athenians”, Ἀθηναίων . . . τὸ πλῆθος (1.20.2). He gives a brief account (which is compatible with the longer, but without the longer is not fully intelligible) in 1.20.2, to instantiate his claim that people accept traditions too uncritically; and a detailed account in 6.53.3–6.59, again insisting that the Athenians do not know the truth about their own history (6.54.1), but arising from the fact that the religious scandals of 415 prompted fears that Alcibiades might attempt to make himself tyrant with Spartan support (6.53.3; 6.61.1–2; and cf. earlier 6.15.4). On the principal facts it seems clear that Herodotus and Thucydides were right: Hippias was the eldest son of Peisistratos and Hipparchos was his younger brother; Hipparchos was killed at the Great Panathenaia of 514/3; Hippias continued ruling until he was expelled in 511/0. The expulsion of Hippias was due to the Spartans, and to the pressure exerted on them through the Delphic oracle by the Alcmaionids; but many Athenians in the fifth century did not want to be grateful to the Spartans and the Alcmaionids, and it therefore suited them to emphasise the killing of Hipparchos (whose killers, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, had soon been honoured as tyrannicides) rather than the expulsion of Hippias. This alternative

version was already current when Herodotus wrote (in 6.123 he insists polemically that it is the Alcmaionids rather than Harmodios and Aristogeiton who deserve the credit for the ending of the tyranny): it may well have been adopted by Hellanicus, and was maintained by some fourth-century writers (Pl. *Smp.* 182c5–7; D.S. 10.17 [from Ephorus]; a compromise in [Pl.] *Hipparch.* 228b4–229d7).

But Thucydides fights too hard, and not entirely successfully. He claims that Hippias as Peisistratos' eldest son was the ruling tyrant, so that Hipparchos when he was killed was not tyrant (6.54.2; 6.55; 1.20.2); that Hipparchos was killed not for political but for personal reasons (he and Aristogeiton both loved Harmodios but Harmodios accepted Aristogeiton's love, and Hipparchos out of spite insulted Harmodios' sister: 6.54.2–4; 6.56.1). He claims also that the regime had been mild until Hipparchos was killed, so that there should have been no political reasons for opposing it, but it became oppressive afterwards (6.54.5–7; 6.59.2), whereas in the alternative version Peisistratos was mild but his sons were not ([Arist.] *Ath.* 16. 7; D.S. 10.17.1; Idom. *FGrHist* 338 F 3)—though all who knew that the tyranny continued after the murder of Hipparchos agreed that it became harsher then. He claims that Harmodios and Aristogeiton chose to act at the Panathenaia because the citizens carried arms in the procession, and that after Hipparchos had been killed Hippias disarmed the citizens (6.56.2; 6.58), whereas in the alternative version the citizens had been disarmed by Peisistratos and did not under the tyranny carry arms in the procession ([Arist.] *Ath.* 15.4–5; 18.4, explicitly rejecting Thucydides' version but without naming him). He locates Hippias in the Kerameikos and Hipparchos in the Leokoreion, and is not clear on the starting point of the procession (6.57.1–3; 1.20.2), but another version located Hipparchos in the Leokoreion to dispatch the procession and Hippias on the Acropolis to receive it ([Arist.] *Ath.* 18.3): perhaps the only authentic tradition concerned Hipparchos' location. In making Hippias the sole ruler, Thucydides perhaps mistakes the nature of a family tyranny, and it may be better to think of a joint rule but with Hippias playing the leading part (we read of a joint rule in [Arist.] *Ath.* 17.3; D.S. 10.17.1). The personal motive of Harmodios and Aristogeiton may be accepted, but Thucydides himself undermines his insistence that it was the sole motive, when he implies that the original target was Hippias, and writes that there were fellow-conspirators, though few for safety's sake, and they hoped that when they had struck the first blow the

other Athenians would join in asserting their freedom (6.56.2–6.57.3; 1.20.2). Hippias is represented in 6.55.2 as a harsh ruler who for that reason easily survived his brother's murder, but in 6.57.2 as an approachable ruler (in 6.54.5 there is a problem either in the text or in Thucydides' logic).

Herodotus in 5.55–61 concentrates on the background of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, as immigrant Gephyraioi, but in 5.62–65 gives a detailed account of the expulsion of Hippias, which Thucydides does not repeat. Thucydides will have learned from him that Hipparchos was brother of "Hippias the tyrant" (Hdt. 5.55; Th. 6.55.1–3 claims superior oral information and produces arguments to confirm that Hippias was Peisistratos' eldest son and was tyrant); that the tyranny became harsher after Hipparchos' murder, until Hippias was expelled after four years (Hdt. 5.55; 5.62.2; cf. 6.123.2; fourth year Th. 6.59.4); and that it was the Alcmaionids rather than Harmodios and Aristogeiton who liberated Athens (Hdt. 6.123; Alcmaionids mentioned Th. 6.59.4). Thucydides' is the earliest detailed account that we have of the events of 514. We can be certain that Herodotus and Thucydides are right on the main points, but we cannot be certain that Thucydides is right on every detail on which he disagrees with others.

A major concern of Thucydides is to correct the errors of others, and that is a sufficient explanation of his short treatment in 1.20.2; but why does he return to this episode in 6.53.3–6.59, and in so much detail? The polemical nature of the account makes it clear that correcting error is one of his motives, and for Dover that seemed sufficient; he reconstructs Thucydides' train of thought as:

Beware, men of Athens, of the would-be tyrant; for nothing is easier than to give yourselves into the hands of a tyrant, but nothing harder than to escape him again. Why, not even the tyrannicides...³

That does not seem quite right, either as a reconstruction or as an explanation. Connor detects a subtle resemblance between what happened in 514 and what happened in 415: the action of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, like the great Sicilian Expedition, was an example of *erōs*, passion (6.54.1–3; 6.57.3; 6.59.1 ~ 6.24.3), which inspired misdirected *tolma*, boldness (6.54.1; 6.59.1 ~ 6.31.6; 6.33.4), leading

³ Dover, *HCT* 4.325–9 at 329.

immediately to increasing repression, but eventually to the flight of Hippias and of Alcibiades.⁴ The linguistic parallel is undeniable—the only other context in which Thucydides mentions *erōs* is in Diodotos' speech in the Mytilene Debate (3.45.5, with the more frequent *tolma* 3.45.4; Pericles in his Funeral Speech calls on the Athenians to be *erastai*, "lovers", of the *polis*)—but there is a great conceptual difference between the "mere" personal *erōs* which inspired Harmodios and Aristogeiton and the public *erōs* for the Sicilian Expedition which Thucydides sees as a form of mass hysteria. I suggest that contemporary fear of Alcibiades (6.61.1–4; cf. 6.28.2) led Thucydides to think of the Peisistratid tyranny, and contemporary fear of Spartan intervention (6.61.2) led him to think of the Spartan intervention, not in the setting up but in the putting down of the tyranny (opening and closing a ring, 6.53.3; 6.59.4); and then, because of his desire to correct error and because the episode in which Sparta was involved had been dealt with adequately by Herodotus, he focused not on that episode but on the killing of Hipparchos. As we shall see again in the case of Themistocles, Thucydides was a writer who could be carried away by an *erōs* of his own.

Thucydides' account of Cylon and the killing of his supporters is included in order to explain a curse invoked by the Spartans in the diplomatic exchanges of 432/1 (cf. above); his account of the end of Pausanias' career is included in order to explain one of the curses invoked in turn by the Athenians (1.128–1.135.1). There is no comparable justification for the account of the end of Themistocles' career that follows (1.135.2–1.138.5): it begins with the observation that the Spartans' investigation of the medism of Pausanias uncovered evidence that Themistocles had shared in his guilt, and they denounced him to Athens (1.135.2); and the section is rounded off with the remark, "thus ended the affair of Pausanias the Spartan and Themistocles the Athenian, who were the most distinguished of the Greeks of their time" (1.138.6).

Thucydides has mentioned earlier Themistocles' shipbuilding program, in the course of his account of the development of warfare and of naval power in Greece (1.14.3), and his dealings with Sparta over the rebuilding of Athens' walls after the Persian sack and his development of the Peiraieus, at the beginning of his account of the

⁴ Connor (1984) 178–9.

growth of Athens' power during the *Pentekontaetia* (1.89.3–1.93). Here he takes up the story from the Spartans' denunciation of him, adding in parenthesis (1.135.3) that he had been ostracized and was living in Argos and visiting other places in the Peloponnese. Themistocles fled, first to Corcyra, then to king Admetos of the Molossoi, then across northern Greece to Pydna, and from there across the Aegean to Ephesos. He was originally traveling *incognito*, but when the ship came near to Naxos while the Athenians were besieging it, he disclosed his identity to the ship's captain. He sent a letter (which Thucydides quotes: 1.137.4) to, and after learning Persian visited, Artaxerxes, who had recently succeeded Xerxes as Persian King; Artaxerxes granted him Magnesia (on Maiander) for his bread, Lampsakos for his wine, and Myous for his sauce. Two alternative versions of his death are given; there is a memorial to him in the agora of Magnesia; his family says that his bones were secretly taken back to and buried in Attica. He is singled out for high praise, in terms which foreshadow Thucydides' praise of Pericles (1.138.3: cf. below).

This time Thucydides' is the earliest account that we know of. It has been suggested that he is drawing on and/or reacting to an earlier written account;⁵ but there is no point on which he is obviously rejecting an alternative version except Themistocles' death: "He ended his life through illness; but some say (λέγουσι δέ τινες) that in fact he deliberately took poison and killed himself, thinking that he could not fulfil his promises to the King" (1.138.4). The King's reaction to him is qualified by "as it is said" (ὡς λέγεται, 1.138.1); information on the return of his bones to Attica is explicitly attributed (1.138.5), and other parts of the story may in fact be due to his family.

A legend quickly grew up around Themistocles, and alternative versions of parts of the story are found in later texts. In particular, Plutarch, while claiming to follow Thucydides, took Themistocles from Pydna probably past the siege of Thasos and certainly to Kyme (Plu. *Them.* 25.2–26.1): I have suggested that, while Thasos is chronologically easier than Naxos, we are dealing not with a correct version and an incorrect version but with two rival embroideries on the fact that when crossing the Aegean he had to take care not to fall

⁵ References are given by Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.211.

into the hands of the Athenians. Plutarch then reports that Charon of Lampsacus agreed with Thucydides that the King to whom Themistocles made his approach was Artaxerxes (whose succession we can date to August 465); but Ephorus and other writers made the King Xerxes, whom Themistocles had done so much to defeat in 480 (Plu. *Them.* 27.1–2). Here, whatever we make of the letter, which is partly quoted and partly summarized (Th. 1.137.4), there must be a correct version and an incorrect one: not only is the Artaxerxes version that of the earliest writers, but it is hard to see why that should have been invented if the dramatically more effective Xerxes version were correct, so Thucydides' Artaxerxes version should be the correct one.⁶ According to Pausanias (1.1.2), the Athenians annulled their condemnation of Themistocles, his family brought back his bones and his tomb could be seen at the Peiraieus: here it is possible that Thucydides was correct when he wrote, and that the annulment and the honourable tomb came later.

The end of Themistocles matches the end of Pausanias, but Thucydides does not indicate what he had done after 479/8 or how he came to be ostracized. (Modern scholarship writes of his being anti-Spartan, while Cimon was pro-Spartan and commanded in the early campaigns of the Delian League; his ostracism will have been a victory for Cimon; when the government of Athens became an issue, in the 460s, men associated with Themistocles, including Pericles, were on the pro-democratic side, and Cimon was on the anti-democratic, but by then Themistocles was no longer in Athens.) The Athenians condemned him for medism; ironically, though he certainly medised after his condemnation, we have no good evidence that he had medised before.

The story of Themistocles is an exciting story; it and the story of Pausanias make a good pair, a suitable pair to foreshadow the war between Athens and Sparta, and minimally attached to Thucydides' main narrative by the curse resulting from Pausanias' death. The connections by which Cylon, Pausanias, and Themistocles are linked to one another and to the main narrative are discussed by Hornblower.⁷ To some extent Thucydides has been carried away by the desire to tell exciting stories—more in Herodotus' manner than his own usual

⁶ Rhodes (1970) 393–94.

⁷ Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.202–3; 211–12.

manner—and the stories were perhaps worked up first and fitted into Book I later. Except that Themistocles did well for himself when forced into exile, what is said about him here does not justify the praise in 1.138.3 of his ability to decide in crises, to predict the future, to expound (ἐξηγήσασθαι) his plans, and to improvise what was necessary (αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τὰ δέοντα); there is in fact more justification for that judgment in the earlier sections, on his shipbuilding programme, his development of the Peiraeus, and his opposition to Sparta. However, there is another link to the Peloponnesian War in that Thucydides praises in similar terms Themistocles and Pericles. In 1.139.4, immediately after this section, Pericles is described as “the first of the Athenians at that time, most able to speak and to act”; in a speech in 2.60.5 Pericles claims, in language close to that used of Themistocles, to be “second to none at perceiving what is necessary and explaining this” (οὐδενὸς ἴσσω . . . γῶναί τε τὰ δέοντα καὶ ἐρμηνεύσαι ταῦτα); and in his final comment on Pericles, Thucydides says that “when he had died, his foresight with regard to the war was perceived even more” (ἐπειδὴ ἀπέθανεν, ἐπὶ πλέον ἔτι ἐγνώσθη ἡ πρόνοια αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον).⁸ Themistocles is thus presented as a forerunner of Pericles, immediately before the point at which Pericles makes his first appearance in the main narrative.⁹

Cylon, then, is mentioned to explain the propaganda of 432/1 and to enable Thucydides to correct error; the overthrow of the Peisistratid tyranny is mentioned in Book I to correct error, and in Book VI to correct error and because the events of 415 led Thucydides to think of it. Themistocles’ shipbuilding programme has its place in the account of developments in Greek warfare before 480; his involvement with Athens’ walls and with the Peiraeus begins the account of the growth of Athens’ power; and his downfall arises out of the more directly relevant downfall of Pausanias but gives Thucydides the opportunity to present him as a precursor of Pericles.

⁸ It has been noticed that Pericles is not directly credited with *xynesis*, intelligence, with which Thucydides does credit Themistocles and various others (but in 1.140.1 in his first speech Pericles refers to *xynesis*, and in 2.34.6–8 the Funeral Oration is to be delivered by a man who is *mē axynetos* and Pericles is chosen). For references to Thucydides and to modern discussions, see Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.124–5.

⁹ Previously Pericles has been mentioned as a commander in campaigns of the *Pentekontaetia* (1.111.2; 1.114.1; 1.114.3; 1.116.1; 1.116.3; 1.117.2) and as the man on account of whom the Spartans raised the matter of the Alcmaeonid curse (1.127.1: cf. above).

* * *

Once the war has begun, there are three points at which Thucydides concentrates directly on Athenian topics—the passages on the funeral of the war-dead, the plague, and Pericles' last speech in Book II; the religious scandals of 415 in Book VI; and the revolutions of 411 in Book VIII—but there are a number of places where some light is shed on Athenian matters, though not as many, and not as much light, as readers might wish.

Athens' debate on the appeals from Corcyra and Corinth in 433 is remarkable for what Thucydides does not tell us. The Athenians devoted two days to the matter, hearing the appeals on the first and voting on the second (this was perhaps common practice for a major decision: cf. the debate on the Peace of Philocrates with Philip of Macedon in 346). The Athenians inclined toward the Corinthians on the first day, but on the second day they changed their minds and made a limited, defensive alliance with the Corcyreans, which (so they convinced themselves) they could do without breaking their Thirty Years' Peace with the Peloponnesians (1.44). But the Athenians were not a unanimous body: how many of them changed their minds? and which of them? and why? What was Pericles' position on the matter? How are we to interpret the appearance of Lakedaimonios, son of Pericles' opponent Cimon, among the generals sent to Corcyra (1.44.2)? Probably Thucydides was in Athens at the time, and could have answered those questions, but chose not to do so. My guess is that a small majority on one side turned into a small majority on the other; that Pericles was in favor of supporting Corcyra (cf. *Plu. Per.* 29.1); that Lakedaimonios was not, and his inclusion among the commanders reflects his support in the assembly (contr. *Plu. Per.* 29.1–2);¹⁰ and that Thucydides did not wish to say anything that would detract from his picture of the Athenians as united under Pericles' leadership (cf. *Th.* 2.65.5–10).

That view, of Athens prospering under what was “in theory democracy but in fact the rule of the first man” (2.65.9), I have argued represents wishful thinking by Thucydides: not only was Pericles in fact challenged by other politicians, but the working of Athens' political system was such that no politician, however popular, could enjoy

¹⁰ Cf. Rhodes (2000) 473.

the kind of supremacy which Thucydides attributes to Pericles.¹¹ In terms of formal power, he had to be reelected as general year after year, and could be deposed during the year (D.S. 12.45.4; Plu. *Per.* 35.3–5: Th. 2.65.3 mentions only a fine); and as general he was one of ten equals and had little civilian power (though Th. 2.22.1, 2.59.3 suggests that during the Peloponnesian War the generals were involved in decisions about the summoning of assemblies). Of Thucydides' comments on the volatility of assemblies (2.65.4; 4.28.3; 6.63.2; 8.1.4) the first is made in connection with the reelection of Pericles after his deposition. The contrast between Pericles firmly leading the people and the rival politicians after his death competing for the people's favor is at best exaggerated.

Among other glimpses of Athens' politics and procedures we may notice the debate on Mytilene in 427, which resulted in a modification of the decision taken the previous day: Cleon is decried as "the most violent of the citizens and at that time the one who was most able to persuade the people" (3.36.6), and he begins a clever speech by questioning the fitness of a democracy to rule an empire, and criticizing clever speakers and the assembly's responses to them (3.37–38). In the debates on Pylos and Sphacteria in 425 the word *demagōgos* is used of Cleon (a term perhaps recently coined to denote politicians like him: cf. Ar. *Eq.* 191), and we are again told that he was "the most able to persuade the masses" (4.21.3); when he criticizes the generals, and particularly Nicias, Nicias invites Cleon to take over his command, and Cleon is apparently alarmed at the prospect but is appointed by the assembly (4.27.3–4.28.5): although Thucydides probably exaggerates the part played by chance in the Athenians' success, Cleon probably did not expect and certainly could not have been confident that he would be given that command. The question of reconsidering a decision of the assembly arises again in connection with the debate on the Sicilian Expedition in 415: Nicias urges the presiding *prytanis* not to be afraid to put the question again, since "to break the laws in the presence of so many witnesses would not be culpable" (6.14)—we have no other evidence to indicate whether there was a law forbidding that, or, if there was, whether it had already existed in 427 but Thucydides did not see fit to

¹¹ Cf. Rhodes (2000).

mention it at that point; but probably there was not a formal law forbidding the reconsideration of a recent decision of the assembly.¹² Athens' last ostracism is not mentioned in its place,¹³ perhaps because it failed to resolve the opposition between Nicias and Alcibiades. Its victim, the demagogue Hyperbolos, is mentioned on the occasion of his murder in 411 (8.73.3): neither author gives an explanation, but both Thucydides and Aristophanes regarded him as particularly despicable (cf., e.g., *Ar. Eq.* 1304; *Pax* 679–92; also *Pl. Com. fr.* 202 K.-A. *ap. Plu. Nic.* 11.6). When the expedition reaches Sicily and discovers that it is not as welcome as it had hoped and that Egesta cannot provide as much money as it had promised, the formal equality of the generals is shown by their discussion of policy (6.46–6.50.1).

On Athens' resources, particularly financial, L. Kallet has disposed of allegations that Thucydides did not consider this an important subject¹⁴—the growth of wealth is one of the themes of the opening chapters of Book I (e.g., 1.2.2; 1.7)—but it remains true that the kind of detail given in 2.13 in a summary of a speech by Pericles is not given elsewhere. Speeches in Book I allude in general terms to Athens' financial superiority (Archidamus, 1.80.3–4; Pericles, 1.141.2–1.142.1; a Corinthian attempt to play down the importance of finance 1.121.2–5). The apparently too high figure of 600 talents for the Delian League's tribute in 431 (2.13.3) is matched by an apparently too high figure of 460 talents at the League's beginning (1.96.2), both perhaps derived from optimistic assessment lists. In 431 the Athenians set aside 1,000 talents and—Thucydides states but it is harder to believe—their 100 best triremes, to be used only if Athens were attacked by sea (2.24); we hear no more of the 100 triremes, but in 412, after the failure in Sicily, the Athenians used the 1,000 talents although Athens was not yet being attacked by sea (8.15.1).

The siege of Poteidaia, from 432 to 430/29, was particularly expensive, costing 2,000 talents (2.70.2). In 428/7 Thucydides notes a shortage of money for the siege of Mytilene, the “first” *eisphora* of 200 talents (the implications of “first” are disputed),¹⁵ and the send-

¹² Cf. Dover, *HCT* 4.239–40.

¹³ Whatever that place is: I have argued for 415 in Rhodes (1994b) 86–91.

¹⁴ See Kallet-Marx (1993); Kallet (2001).

¹⁵ See J.G. Griffith (1977).

ing of ships to raise money from the allies (3.19); and he also mentions ships sent to raise money in 430/29 and 425/4 (2.69.1; 4.50.1). These seem to correspond to crucial points in Athens' financial history: there were reassessments of the tribute in 430, probably in 428, and certainly in 425 (though Thucydides does not mention them, and his references are probably to special levies or pressure on nominal members which did not pay habitually rather than to regular tribute); from the inscription of the *logistai* it appears that it was about 429/8 that the Athenians realized that they were using up their reserve at an alarming rate and could not continue to do so (*ML* 72 = *IG* i³ 369, with table *ML* p. 217), and the decree ordering the assessment of 425 stated explicitly that the tribute had become too little (*ML* 69 = *IG* i³ 71 tr. Fornara 136. 16–17).

Nothing is said directly about the rebuilding of Athens' reserves after the Peace of Nicias in 421; when the Athenians decided on the Sicilian Expedition of 415 they were led to believe that Egesta would cover the whole cost (6.6.2–3); a fragmentary inscription possibly but not necessarily refers to the setting aside of a sum of 3,000 talents (*ML* 78 = *IG* i³ 93 tr. Fornara 146, frs. *d+g*); when it was revealed that Egesta had deceived the Athenians and could provide only 30 talents in addition to the 60 paid in advance (6.8.1; 6.46), the campaign was not abandoned, and in 413 the Athenians were able to send substantial reinforcements. Financial hardship is mentioned again in 413, when the Spartans occupied Dekeleia while the Athenians were heavily involved in Sicily: the Athenians replaced the tribute of the Delian League with a 5 per cent tax on seaborne trade; "for their expenses were not the same as before but had become much greater, in proportion as the war was greater, and their revenues were being destroyed" (7.27–7.29.1). After the failure of the Sicilian Expedition, there was a shortage of ships in the dockyards and money in the treasury, but the Athenians decided to press on, to build more ships and to acquire more money, and in the city's affairs "to be prudent with a view to economy" (8.1.2–3); from 412 Sparta obtained Persia's help in fighting Athens; Thucydides mentions the hope that if Athens changed from democracy to oligarchy Persian help could be diverted from Sparta to Athens (8.47.2–8.48.3; 8.49; 8.53; cf. the democratic Athenians at Samos, 8.76.7; 8.82); and he mentions the abolition of civilian stipends by the oligarchs of 411, but without emphasising the fact that one motive for changing to oligarchy was a desire to save money (8.65.3; 8.67.3; 8.97.1).

Thucydides is also one of our most important sources on the population of Athens. In 431 there were 13,000 hoplites in the field army and 16,000 on guard duty, the latter comprising the oldest and youngest age groups and those metics who were hoplites; there were 1,200 cavalry, of whom 200 were mounted archers (2.13.6–8, with Ar. *Eq.* 225). The “youngest” will have been those aged eighteen and nineteen; the “oldest” perhaps those aged forty to fifty-nine rather than fifty to fifty-nine. There were at least 3,000 metic hoplites, since that number served in the first invasion of the Megarid (2.31.2), and almost certainly more than 6,000 in all. In 424/3, after the plague had killed about a third of the population (4,400 hoplites of the field army and 300 cavalry: 3.87.3), a full but perhaps not fully effective levy of citizen hoplites numbered 7,000 (4.90.1 with 4.93.3 and 4.94.1). If there were at least as many *thētes* as hoplites, the number of adult male citizens in 431 may have been as high as 60,000 (and the number of citizens, their wives, and their children as high as 240,000).¹⁶ As for slaves, Thucydides reports that, as a result of Sparta’s occupation of Dekeleia in 413, “more than 20,000 had deserted,”¹⁷ and of these the majority were craftsmen” (7.27.5): that number will have included, but will not have been limited to, slaves working in the silver mines of Laureion, which at that time will have been abandoned (cf. Alcibiades’ speech in Sparta, 6.91.7). This does not take us very far toward estimating the total number of slaves in Attica before then, but it suggests that we should be looking for a figure of the order of 100,000–200,000, rather than either 50,000 or 500,000.

There is a series of passages concerned with Athens’ interest in the island of Delos and its sanctuary of Apollo. When the Delian League was founded, “Delos was their treasury, and the meetings were held in the sanctuary” (1.96.2)—but apart from using the imperfect tense Thucydides says nothing to indicate that the treasury was transferred to Athens in 454/3, and that meetings of the allies were (probably) discontinued. In winter 426/5, in response to an oracle, the Athenians “purified” Delos: Peisistratos had done this in the sixth

¹⁶ Rhodes (1988) 271–77. Hansen (1988) 14–28, arrives at the same conclusion by a different route; but earlier estimates have been 45,000 or fewer citizens. According to the manuscripts of 2.20.4 Athens’ largest deme, Acharnai, provided 3,000 hoplites, but that figure is far too high.

¹⁷ Within a few months: Dover (1965) 20–1.

century for the area that could be seen from the sanctuary (subsequently Polycrates of Samos had controlled Delos: 1.13.6); now the Athenians removed all the bodies buried on the island, and prescribed that in future no one was to give birth or die there; and they instituted the quadrennial festival of the Delia, representing it as the revival of an old Ionian festival (3.104; cf. 1.8.1). In 422 they went further and expelled the living Delians (5.1): the fact that Atramyttium, where the Persians allowed them to settle, was a city on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor which remained outside the Athenian empire is not stressed; this expulsion, mentioned on the first page of vol. ii of the *OCT*, is mentioned again on the last, when a misdeed of the Persian Arsaces reminds Thucydides that earlier he had treacherously killed some of the Delian exiles. In 421 the Athenians reinstated the surviving exiles—in response to the Delphic oracle (5.32.1): religious considerations must have played an important part in the debate in the Athenian assembly, and so (whatever he himself may have thought of it) Thucydides mentions the oracle.

Interesting light is shed on Athens by a couple of casual remarks. In 431, when they learned of the Theban attack on Plataia, the Athenians “immediately arrested as many of the Boiotians as there were in Attica” (2.6.2), a statement which implies that their information on visiting foreigners was such that they could do this without difficulty. In 425/4 the Athenians captured a Persian envoy on his way to Sparta and “had his letters translated from Assyrian writing” [probably Aramaic] (4.50.1–2): having these letters translated seems to have been something else which they could do without difficulty.

The first point at which Thucydides focuses directly on Athens is the funeral in winter 431/0 of the Athenians killed in the first year of the Peloponnesian War (2.34–46).¹⁸ Before giving a version of Pericles’ speech, Thucydides in 2.34 distances himself from contemporary Athenians to give an account (which they would not need) of the institution. His description of it as a “traditional institution” (*patrios nomos*) has been found frustratingly unspecific: if, as is likely, it is older than the occasion *ca.* 464 claimed by Paus. 1.29.4 as the first, Marathon (Th. 2.34.5) was not the only exception. Thucydides

¹⁸ In fact those who died in that year will not have been many and will not have died gloriously: Rhodes (1988) 227; Bosworth (2000) 5–6.

mentions the lying-in-state, the procession, the burial [of the ashes] in the Kerameikos, and the oration by a man “chosen by the *polis*”: our evidence reveals a variety of practices across the Greek world, but the oration seems to have been peculiar to Athens.¹⁹ In stressing merit rather than rotation (2.37.1), Pericles’ speech paints a picture of the Athenian democracy less egalitarian than the current reality. Festivals are mentioned as a source of enjoyment for the citizens, not worship for the gods (2.38.1). Other claims made are that Athens’ sea power enables it to import goods from the whole earth (2.38.2); the Athenians unlike the Spartans lead a relaxed life, but are none the worse for it (2.39); they are [puzzlingly] “lovers of beauty without extravagance and of wisdom without softness” (2.40.1);²⁰ poverty is a spur to self-improvement, and the Athenians believe in a policy of active involvement both for individuals and for the city (2.40). The speech ends with a message to the families of the dead (2.44–45), which has been found remarkably bleak by modern readers; and a reference to the upbringing of their orphans at public expense, a practice attributed to Solon by D.L. 1.55 but said to have been introduced first in fifth-century Miletus by Arist. *Pol.* 2.1268a8–11. Shortly after the account of the plague (below), we have Pericles’ last speech in Thucydides (2.60–64), delivered when the Athenians were demoralized and he was under attack: he protests that he is constant while the Athenians are not, he insists on his ability to perceive what policies are needed and to explain them, and on his own devotion to the city and incorruptibility (2.60.5–6), he regards the plague as something that could not have been predicted (2.61.3), and he defends his policy for the empire and the war.

Almost immediately after the Funeral Oration, Thucydides deals with the plague which afflicted Athens from 430 to 427/6 (2.47.3–2.54; cf. 2.58.2–3; 3.87). After discussing its alleged origin, he sets out to give an account of what it was like, in order to warn future generations, since he “both suffered from the disease [him]self and saw other victims of it” (2.48.3). He proceeds from an account of the symptoms, through the reactions of those who were diseased and those who were not, and the ways in which the dead were disposed

¹⁹ So, at any rate, the Athenians claimed: D. 20.141. For a survey of practices, see Pritchett (1985) 94–259, esp. 249–51.

²⁰ I.e. neither like the Spartans nor like the Persians? See Kallet (2003) 131–34.

of, to the moral decline, when “no fear of the gods or law of men had any restraining power, since . . . no one expected to live long enough to have to pay the penalty for his misdeeds” (2.53.4), and the interpretation of oracles.

In Pericles’ speeches and the plague we have a contrast, which Thucydides surely intended, between the ideals for Athens of his hero, with their emphasis on the importance of rational prediction of developments and expounding of policy, and on unselfish sacrifice for and devotion to the long-term interests of the city, and the reality of a city in which about a third of the population died not fighting gloriously but from a horrible disease, which could not have been predicted and for which there was no rational treatment (on the latter point, see 2.47.4; 2.51.2), and in which people who had no faith in the future selfishly pursued their individual, short-term interests. Pericles himself died from the plague (*Plu. Per.* 38.1–2), and that increases the appropriateness of this use of the plague to contrast the Periclean Athens which might have been with the non-Periclean Athens which came into being. We need not doubt that Pericles did deliver the Funeral Oration in 431/0 (or, I believe, that Thucydides does reproduce the kind of thing that Pericles actually said), or that Athens was afflicted by a plague that killed about a third of the population. That is not incompatible with the fact that they provided Thucydides with the opportunity to explore themes in which he was particularly interested (for the failure of moral standards to prevail in difficult circumstances compare his comments on the paradigmatic civil war in Corcyra, 3.82–83). The detailed account of the symptoms, and of the behaviour of the Athenians in the face of the disease, is remarkable: if Thucydides was not directly imitating contemporary medical writers,²¹ he was at least indebted to them to the extent that, if they had not existed, it would probably not have occurred to him to give that account. Beyond that, the plague was a traumatic experience, through which Thucydides himself lived and about which he had detailed knowledge; and one of his characteristics as a writer is that he liked purveying interesting details of which he had knowledge (cf. the detailed passages on Plataia, not very important for the history of the war, but close to and involved with

²¹ See Parry (1969).

Athens as well as useful for teaching lessons: 2.2–6; 2.71–78; 3.20–24; 3.52–68).

In connection with the dispatch of the Sicilian Expedition in 415, Thucydides writes of the mutilation of the Herms, and other religious scandals exposed at the same time. Shortly before the expedition was due to depart, in a single night most of the Herms in the city (there is a note on these for non-Athenian readers) had their faces cut about.²² This was taken seriously: it was thought to be an omen for the expedition, and also to be a sign of a conspiracy against the democracy. Appeals for information yielded nothing about this incident, but about earlier damage to statues by drunken young men, and mock celebrations of the Eleusinian Mysteries involving Alcibiades. Alcibiades wanted to stand trial immediately, but his enemies thought that in those circumstances he would too easily secure acquittal; so it was agreed that he should sail with the expedition, but be recalled for trial later (6.27–29). Thucydides resumes the story at the point when Alcibiades and others were recalled for trial: the Athenians had continued their enquiries and had arrested very good citizens on the accusations of wretched persons, “thinking it more useful that they should investigate the matter and find out than that on account of an informer’s wretchedness an accused man who appeared to be good should escape unexamined” (6.53.1–2). Thucydides then remarks that memory of the overthrow of the Peisistratid tyranny made the people fearful and suspicious (6.53.3), and he gives the digression on the end of the tyranny which we have looked at above (6.54–59). He then repeats that the Athenians believed that all the misdeeds resulted from “an oligarchic and tyrannical conspiracy” (6.60.1). A worsening sequence of arrests was ended when one prisoner [in fact, Andocides] was persuaded to give information about the Herms, “whether true or not: for both are conjectured, and nobody has been able either then or since to give a clear account of who did the deed”. His information was accepted, and those whom he named were tried: “it was uncertain whether those who suffered had been punished unjustly, but the rest of the city in the circumstances was conspicuously relieved”. The accusations against Alcibiades in connection with the Mysteries were then pressed, and it was judged that

²² The *phallos* would to modern minds be a more obvious target, and cf. Ar. *Lys.* 1094, but see Dover, *HCT* 4.288–9.

that offence “was committed by him as part of the same plan of conspiracy against the democracy”, in collusion with the Spartans—and so he was recalled from Sicily but escaped [eventually to the Spartans] and was condemned in absence (6.60–61).

Here we have religious offences committed when the Athenians were in an emotional state before dispatching a large and controversial expedition, which Thucydides will have seen as a flagrant departure from Pericles’ policies (cf. 1.144.1; 2.65.7—but that is not his ground of complaint in 2.65.11). They were taken seriously and perceived as politically significant, as earlier religious offences had not been.²³ Thucydides was not himself in Athens, and his account will not necessarily be correct in every detail (e.g. that no information about the Herms was received until after the departure of the expedition: 6.28.1 with Dover, *HCT* 4.271–4). There are several striking features in his account. He emphasizes the fear of a plot against the democracy: that there was a plot at this time to overthrow the democracy is unlikely, that there was a plot to prevent the expedition, and the alarm that it created was then exploited by Alcibiades’ enemies, is more likely; but we should presumably accept Thucydides’ report of fears for the democracy, and conclude that the democratic stability reluctantly praised by the Old Oligarch, probably in the 420s, was wearing thin. Thucydides comments on the willingness of the Athenians to suspect good citizens on the accusations of bad informers: this probably combines a social and a moral judgment; among the accused were upper-class men whom he considered estimable, while among the informers were lower-class men whom he considered despicable. He insists that the Athenians were glad to have arrived at a result and to have closed the matter, but nobody could be sure whether they had arrived at the right result. Books VI–VII show the Athenians succumbing to misguided ambition²⁴ and failing disastrously: the treatment of this episode contributes to that impression by showing the Athenians tense and suspicious, inclined to distrust good citizens and trust bad, and satisfied simply to arrive at a result regardless of whether it was the correct result.

²³ We have further evidence for the affair, in speeches by Andocides and an opponent delivered when his enemies reopened the question in 400 (And. 1; Lys. 6), and in the “Attic *stēlai*”, recording the sales of the property confiscated from those found guilty (*IG* i³ 421–30).

²⁴ Cf. above, pp. 529–30, on their *erās*.

In Book VIII Alcibiades attempted to return to Athens, and the democracy actually was overthrown. The story begins in 8.45,²⁵ where Thucydides tracks back to remark that Alcibiades was no longer trusted by the Spartans and had gone to the court of the satrap Tissaphernes; in 8.47.1–8.48.3 we read that he was interested in returning to Athens, and suggested to prominent men in the Athenian fleet at Samos that he wished to return to an oligarchic rather than a democratic Athens and that he could deliver the support of Tissaphernes. A subplot is supplied by Phrynichos' distrust of Alcibiades and attempt to reveal his disloyalty to the Spartans (8.48.4–7; 8.50–51).

The story of the oligarchy is interwoven with the rest of Thucydides' narrative. In the winter of 412/1 Alcibiades worked on Tissaphernes (8.52); Peisandros and others went from Samos to Athens and returned (8.49; 8.53–54); they then attempted unsuccessfully to negotiate with Tissaphernes (8.56)—after which Thucydides reports the last of three treaties between the Spartans and the Persians (8.57–59). In the summer of 411 the Athenian oligarchs at Samos tried to engineer a change to oligarchy throughout the Athenian empire (8.63.3–8.65.1). Peisandros returned to Athens, and the régime of the Four Hundred was brought into being (8.65–70); a first approach to the Spartans to end the war was made (8.71). Relations between Athens and the fleet at Samos were complicated by the fact that the Athenians at Samos reverted to democracy about the time when the Four Hundred came to power in Athens: they continued to hope for Persian support against Sparta, and were joined by Alcibiades, who dissuaded them from sailing back to Athens and abandoning the Aegean to Sparta (8.72–77; 8.81–82; 8.86). In Athens a split opened between moderates and extremists; a further attempt to make peace with Sparta broke down; anxiety was caused by the oligarchs' building of a fort at Ætioneia and by the appearance of a Spartan naval squadron; after a mutiny among the soldiers building the fort, the Four Hundred offered negotiations on the broadening of the constitution; but the approach of the Spartan ships provoked a greater crisis, and the

²⁵ The appointment in 413 of the *probouloi* is mentioned in 8.1.3 without emphasis or explanation of how they were fitted into the normal constitutional machinery; Thucydides does not (8.67.1), as [Arist.] *Ath.* 29.2 does, mention their involvement in the setting-up of the oligarchy. The account of the oligarchy in [Arist.] *Ath.* 29–33 is derived partly from Thucydides, partly from a source which had access to documents produced by the oligarchs.

Spartans won a naval battle in the Euripos (8.89–96). After that an *ad hoc* assembly deposed the Four Hundred and instituted the régime of the Five Thousand, which Thucydides praises, and several of the extremists fled to the Spartans: “In this way . . . the oligarchy and the dissension in Athens ended”, ἡ ἐν ταῖς Ἀθήναις ὀλιγαρχία καὶ στάσις ἐπαύσατο (8.87–98).

As in 415, Thucydides was in exile and dependent on informants. He had detailed information on the course of events both in Athens and in Samos; he had detailed information on Alcibiades, but was prepared to endorse Phrynichos’ criticism of him (8.48.4 with Andrewes, *HCT* 5.108–9). At various points he claims to distinguish between men’s professed and their true objectives (8.66.1; 8.89.2–3; 8.90.3–8.91.3). He was prepared to praise individual oligarchs (Phrynichos “not unintelligent” 8.27.5, Antiphon 8.68.2, Theramenes 8.68.4—followed by the general remark that the oligarchs were “intelligent”, quoted below) and the intermediate régime of the Five Thousand (8.97.2);²⁶ and the democrat Chaireas took a false report of the oligarchs’ iniquities back to Samos (8.74.3); but the overall impression given by his account is that the oligarchs were talented but selfish men who, while professing a desire for a better constitution and a more successful prosecution of the war against Sparta, were most desirous of power for themselves and for the sake of that were prepared to abandon the war and the empire (8.91.3).²⁷

So, as the work of many intelligent men, the deed not surprisingly succeeded, great though it was: for it was a hard thing for the Athenian people in about the hundredth year after the overthrow of the tyranny to be deprived of freedom. (8.68.4)²⁸

—but in fact Thucydides’ narrative does not show the democrats in a good light: they did not put up any effective opposition to the imposition of the oligarchy.²⁹

²⁶ On what Thucydides meant by his praise of that régime, see Andrewes, *HCT* 5.331–9; Connor (1984) 228 with n. 34: like Connor, I am more impressed than Andrewes by the difficulty of supposing that Thucydides was praising “the first phase” of the régime.

²⁷ Cf. Connor (1984) 224–7. The “moderates” are not exempted: 8.89.2–3.

²⁸ I thank Prof. A.J. Woodman for discussion of this passage.

²⁹ Cf. Taylor (2002).

* * *

Overall, Thucydides' major references to earlier Athenian history arise out of the narrative and are included because he wishes to correct the errors of others, in the cases of Cylon and the overthrow of the tyranny; the account of Themistocles arises out of the more directly relevant account of Pausanias, but gives Thucydides the opportunity to focus on a man whom he sees as prefiguring Pericles. In his account of the Peloponnesian War, the public funeral at the end of the first year and Pericles' response to his attackers in the second are used for a presentation of the Periclean ideal for Athens, and the plague which is treated between the two speeches contrasts with the reality of unforeseeable misfortune and the collapse of moral standards. The later episodes add to the picture of Athens' going wrong without a Pericles to lead it. In 415 the Athenians, hysterically enthusiastic for the misguided Sicilian Expedition, were led in a crisis to persecute good men on the evidence of bad. In 411 able men behaved selfishly, and the democrats failed to resist them. Because of the accident of the text's ending where it does, Thucydides' last remarks on Athens are positive—the intermediate régime conducted affairs well, and the oligarchy and dissension were ended—but he would surely have found more to criticize in the conduct of the restored democracy that brought Athens to final defeat (cf. 2.65.10–12, where, complaining of the competition of politicians for popular favour after Pericles' death, he attributes the disaster in Sicily to accusations over the leadership of the people and a failure to take appropriate decisions in support of the expedition, and Athens' final defeat in the war to internal disputes). For Thucydides, Athens needed the leadership of a Pericles.

THUCYDIDES AND COMEDY

Jeffrey Rusten

The topic announced in the title of this essay might seem more of an opposition than a pairing. Not only is Thucydides the historian of a war, but he rejects entertainment value (1.22.4: τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες . . . ἀτερπέστερον φανείται), and thus does not traffic in anecdote (as noted by Reinhardt [1966] 194), even largely ignoring the (potentially comic) internal politics of Athens (de Romilly [1977]). Thus the scope for humor in his work is very limited.

There are, however, several ways in which Old Comedy and Thucydides can obviously illuminate each other: for certain individuals, certain events, political institutions, and periods of the war, the evidence of Thucydides and that of Old Comedy provide interesting complementarities which historians have put to very different uses.¹ Finally, study of the war and its historical period that Thucydides made into a classic seems to have played a crucial role in the transmission, indeed the very survival of Old Comedy itself.

I. *Thucydides and Humor?*

Hayden White ([1973] 47) suggests that all historiography is inherently ironic, and one might identify as grimly humorous such trickery as the lethal literalism of Paches that dupes Hippias of Arcadia (3.34.3), the “good advice” given by Alcibiades to the Spartan ambassadors (5.43–5), the Egestaeans’ “entertainment” of the visiting Athenians (6.46), or the Plataeans’ undermining of the Spartan siege-ramp (2.75–6). There is also the ironic understatement of 3.32.2 (to Alcidas, “he was not doing a good job of freeing Greece” by killing innocent prisoners), or the tragicomic self-delusion of Nicias at 5.16.1 (by making a peace treaty he could best secure his good luck and future reputation). The grimmest possible humor of all might be the

¹ Chapters 7, 8, and 11 of Pelling (2000) offer a recent review of the question for Thucydides and Aristophanes in particular.

competition to steal another's funeral pyre at the worst crisis of death from the plague (2.52.4, reminiscent of the dueling crucifixion-processions in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*).

But in the cases above, any humor is more likely to proceed from our own shock or recognition than from anything Thucydides does to provoke it.² Unlike his predecessors Hecataeus (*FGrHist* 1 F 1: 'Εκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὥς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσὶν) and Herodotus (5.36: Γελῶ δὲ ὁρέων γῆς περιόδους γράψαντας πολλοὺς ἤδη καὶ οὐδένα νόον ἔχοντως) Thucydides never presents himself to us laughing,³ and only two times does he ascribe laughter to others, in both cases to the *dēmos*, once of Athens (at Cleon) once of Syracuse (at Hermocrates).⁴ The only laugh (or smile) ascribed to Thucydides is by the commentators on the uncharacteristically clear style of 1.126–27, often taken to refer to a Herodotean parody.⁵

II. Old Comedy and Politicians in the Early Peloponnesian War

Even if Thucydides largely eschewed humor in his treatment of the Peloponnesian War, there was no absence of it on the contemporary stage.

Already in the 440s there seem to have been two new directions in comedy: the first is ascribed to Crates by Aristotle, who is said (*Poetics* 1449a32–49b9 = *PCG*, Crates test. 5) to have pioneered in using Sicilian-style continuous plots, and also to have departed from the “lampoon form”, meaning attacks on individuals; presumably his great success *Beasts* and *Neighbors*, in which he introduced drunks on stage (*PCG*, Crates test. 2a), were relatively nonpolitical. A step in

² The one exception seems to be Thucydides' depiction of Cleon, which is examined in parallel with Aristophanes' below.

³ As noted by Darbo-Peschanski (2000) 210. For humor in Herodotus, see Dewald (2006), and in historiography in general Strasburger (1961).

⁴ 4.28.5: “The Athenians [called an ὄχλος] had an attack of laughter at his silliness” (τοῖς δὲ Ἀθηναίοις ἐνέπεσε μὲν τι καὶ γέλωτος τῇ κουφολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ, as Cleon was manoeuvred into accepting the command for Pylos); and 6.35: “some tried to turn the thing into a joke” (ἄλλοι δέ . . . ἐς γέλωτα ἔτρεπον τὸ πρᾶγμα, of the warning that Athens was sailing against Syracuse).

⁵ Schol. ABFGMc2: <ίστέον> ὅτι τοῦ διηγήματος τοῦ κατὰ τὸν Κύλωνα τὴν σαφήνειάν τινες θαυμάσαντες εἶπον ὅτι λέων ἐγέλασεν ἐνταῦθα, λέγοντες περὶ Θουκυδίδου. Johannes Siculus' commentary on Hermogenes (Walz, *Rhetores Graeci* VII, 504) substitutes ὑπεμειδίασεν ὁ λέων. On the possible meaning of the comment, see Patterson (1993).

the same direction, according to Prolegomena III Koster (*PCG*, Pherecrates test. 2) in the 430s seems the comedy of his half-name-sake Pherecrates, whose preserved fragments highlight prostitutes, food, with little politics.

But other early authors of comedy, Teleclides, Cratinus and Hermippus, were strongly political: by the 440s, comedy was introduced into the Lenaea festival, which Aristophanes later tells us (*Acharnians* 502–6, of 425 BC) was better suited for politics because of the absence of foreign visitors during the winter, and it is a plausible conjecture of Russo (1994) 19, that the Lenaea was from the start a more “political” venue.⁶ Let us then survey these other comic authors, with particular attention to the growing Athenian empire and impending war, and to Thucydides’ major characters Pericles, Cleon, and Alcibiades.

For Teleclides, even though none of his preserved titles is overtly political, mockery of Pericles is well represented (fr. 17; 45; 47). Pericles is also a target of Hermippus, who wrote iambic verse as well as comedy, and attacked Aspasia in court (*PCG*, Hermippus test. 2). Hermippus greeted the opening of the Pericles-inspired Peloponnesian War in 431 with an attack on his cowardly defensive strategy (fr. 47) in a play entitled *Fates*. Cratinus on the same occasion went even further, in the highly innovative *Dionysalexander*, disguising the cowardly god of the festival as Paris, and implying (*PCG*, Cratinus *Dionysalexander* test. 1.45) that he stood for Pericles. In the closing years of the 430s Cratinus also seems to have mocked the introduction of new religious cults, of Bendis in his *Thracian Women*, and of Nemesis in the play of the same name, with criticism of Pericles along the way (fr. 73; 118).

At the outset of the next decade (presupposing Pericles’ temporary removal from power in 430 [Th. 2.65.3–4] or his death in 429), Cratinus’ previous identification of Pericles with Zeus (fr. 258–59)⁷ culminated in his *Plutuses*; an important papyrus (fr. 171) depicts the chorus, supporters of Plutus (God of Wealth) banished since the time

⁶ Crates had no victories at the Lenaea, and it is possible that he almost never competed; but Cratinus did compete even late in life, and won three times, and Teleclides won five times.

⁷ Note that here and elsewhere Cratinus does not so much seem to have represented Pericles on stage pretending to be Zeus, as showing Zeus in a comedy doing things that recalled Pericles.

of Cronus, now returned “since the tyrannical rule [is over] and the people are in power”—this can only mean the fall of Zeus/Pericles—to bring to account those who have grown rich unjustly. (The play thus prefigures in different ways Eupolis’ *Demes* and Aristophanes’ *Plutus*.) Later that decade Hermippus inserted into *Porters* (fr. 63) an ironic mock-epic catalogue of the cities allied or trading with Athens and their products.

The 420s were to prove the greatest decade in Athenian comedy with the arrival of the seventeen-year-old Eupolis with *Prospaltians* in 429, the young Aristophanes in 427, and their interaction with the veteran Cratinus.⁸ The largest arena of their rivalry, mockery of each other, does not concern us here,⁹ but they still had plenty of scope for mockery of politicians. At the Dionysia of 426, Aristophanes’ *Babylonians* (plot obscure) was both a success (possibly a first prize) and a scandal, since its message may have been the deception of the *dēmos* by foreign ambassadors and the degradation of the *dēmos* in allied cities. As a result Aristophanes is reported to have been charged by Cleon with slandering the people and public officials before foreigners, as well as being an alien (*PCG*, Aristophanes *Babylonians* test. iii–v). He won another first prize at the Lenaea of 425 for *Acharnians*, combining an anti-war plot with a personal feud against Cleon (woven into the main character’s speeches *Acharnians* 4–8, 377–82, 502–3 as well as the *parabasis* 659–60), and (also mouthed by the main character) a parody of Euripides, especially his *Telephus* of 438 BC.

Aristophanes’ bravado reached a high point in *Knights* (424), the first play definitely known solely under his own name. The entire plot is a insulting portrait of Cleon in the guise of a criminal house-slave; the *parabasis* contains, under a pretence of sympathy, an attack on the miserable Cratinus (526–36). Once again it won at the Lenaea.

In 422, Cratinus seems to have died, at a very great age (*PCG*, Cratinus test. 3), after a great final success with a nonpolitical play, *Wine-Flask*. That summer, the death of his satirical target Cleon (Th. 5.10) seems to have caused Aristophanes to give up on the “demagogue” play¹⁰ he had invented, at the very moment when Eupolis

⁸ From the *hypotheses* of *Acharnians* through *Peace*, and the *parabases* of *Knights*, *Wasps* and the revised *Clouds*, we are excellently informed about the competitions 427–421. But see Rusten (2006) for some necessary revisions.

⁹ See Biles (2002); Ruffell (2002); Storey (2003).

¹⁰ Sommerstein (2000).

was appropriating it himself for an attack on Hyperbolus, *Maricas*, for the Lenaea of 421. As in *Knights*, the target was presented under a foreign pseudonym. The papyrus commentary (*PCG*, Eupolis *Maricas* fr. 192) reveals that he too was a slave with a master, and that there was a divided chorus of rich men and poor men. Left behind, an exasperated Aristophanes, in the *parabasis* of the second edition of *Clouds* (551–59 = *Maricas* test. I, perhaps of 418; cf. Aristophanes *Anagyros* fr. 58), complains that this is mere imitation of his *Knights* and vents his disappointment that the audience wants to hear again and again about Hyperbolus.

Cratinus' *bête noire* had been anything to do with Pericles (including his wife and the war), Aristophanes' was the war itself and Cleon, though he followed Cratinus in satirizing Pericles even after his death (*Acharnians* 530–34; *Peace* 605–11). But Eupolis, coming into his own after the death of Cratinus and the eclipse of Aristophanes after 421, seems to mock not the war itself but the excesses of its soldiers (*Taxiarchoi* [cf. Aristophanes *Peace* 1167–75], *Non-soldiers* or *Effeminate*), not the empire but the allies (*Cities*); when it comes to politicians, he not only turns to the next generation of demagogues with Hyperbolus (*Maricas*), but does two things no comedian before or after seems to have dared: first, he mounts a sustained comic attack on the popular and dangerous Alcibiades in *Baptai*, evidently parodying the outlandish foreign cult of Cotyto. There are few fragments, but the testimonia, and the demonstrably false legend that Alcibiades murdered the poet, attest to the play's intensity. (The poet also mentions in passing [*PCG*, Eupolis *Baptai* fr. 89] that he had written *Knights* himself and given it to Aristophanes!)

Secondly, Eupolis praises the leadership of Pericles. Sometime after 418 his best-known play, *Demes*, borrowed from Cratinus' *Cheirons* the theme of resurrecting Solon, joined by Miltiades, Aristides, and, surprisingly, Pericles.¹¹ They are brought back to Athens by a certain Pyronides, and interact with present-day degenerates (part of a scene between Aristides and a sychophant is preserved). From this play comes the often-quoted praise of Pericles' public speaking (fr. 102).

¹¹ See Braun (2000).

III. *Comic and Historical Evidence Compared*

How do these treatments mesh with Thucydides? On Pericles,¹² they abundantly document several sides of what Thucydides calls the fickle attitude of the *dēmos* toward him (2.59.1: ἡλλοίωοντο τὰς γνώμας; 2.65.4: ὅπερ φιλεῖ ὄμιλος ποιεῖν).¹³ Those who called him a coward for his defensive strategy at the war's opening (Th. 2.21.3) are represented by Cratinus' *Dionysalexander* and Hermippus' *Fates* fr. 47; those who later called him a warmonger for persisting in war after the onset of the plague (Th. 2.59.1–2; 2.63.2) are represented by Dicaeopolis/Telephus in *Acharnians*; those who attacked him for making the Megarian decree the war's cause (Th. 1.139.1; 1.140.4–5) are given a voice in *Acharnians*¹⁴ and *Peace*. Hermippus fr. 63 undermines the idealism of Pericles' Funeral Oration by attacking the Athenian empire and its luxury. And when Pericles warns the Athenians that their empire is a tyranny, he is embracing the term Cratinus applied to Pericles/Zeus himself in *Plutus* (fr. 171). Yet the last word in comedy belongs to Eupolis, whose virtual canonization of Pericles in *Demes* seem to endorse Thucydides' final estimate of him in 2.65 (though Plato will revisit the question in *Gorgias* 515b6ff.)

For Cleon the comparison is solely between the historian and Aristophanes: making allowances for the different genre of historiography, the demagogue is trashed with as almost as much relish by Thucydides as by Aristophanes,¹⁵ indeed there is no attempt to

¹² For a more speculative approach to Pericles' treatment in comedy, see Vickers (1997).

¹³ Thucydides makes both Pericles and Cleon criticize the *dēmos*, and Aristophanes' *Knights* certainly portrays it as either ridiculous (396) or sinister (1125–50) until its final transformation (1321ff.). Thus "Xenophon the Orator", (better known as the Old Oligarch) in *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.18 is wrong to state that it was illegal to mock the *dēmos*. For a portrait of Demos by the painter Parrhasios (X. *Mem.* 3.10.1) and its possible influence on comic masks, see Rumpf (1951) 7–8.

¹⁴ Despite being staged in 425, *Acharnians*' depiction of public attitudes to Spartan invasion corresponds amazingly closely with Thucydides' account of the war's first year, even to the point of the "land as our hostage" (cf. Archidamus in Th. 1.82.4 with *Acharnians* 326–27) and the prediction of the *Acharnians*' change of mind by Archidamus (2.20.4), which is what happens to the chorus in Aristophanes' agon. See Rusten (1989) 124–30 and Pelling (2000) ch. 9.

¹⁵ Note the ascription to Cleon of discreditable motives at 4.28.2 (cowardice), public ridicule of him and the malicious hope that his mission at Pylos might fail (4.28.5), and then at Amphipolis his soldiers' hatred of him (5.7.2), and his cowardice when attacked (5.10–19).

indicate why anyone might support Cleon, despite the fact that the majority of the *dēmos* clearly did so. In Aristophanes' case the motivation is avowedly personal, and in Thucydides' it is plausibly so. But an even more interesting correspondence is that for both authors, Cleon remains for all time the paradigm of the demagogue: Unlike Eupolis and Platon, both Thucydides (8.73) and Aristophanes (*Clouds* 551–59) refuse to resurrect the category with Hyperbolus after Cleon has been disposed of.¹⁶

Of Alcibiades, Libanius (fr. 50 β 2, vol. XI p. 644.5 Förster) claims, "What play does not contain him, which Eupolis or Aristophanes? Comedy made its reputation on him, and yet even the comic poets grew weary of writing his deeds" (*PCG*, Eupolis test. 32). Yet despite being, after Cleon's death, the most notorious Athenian for the entire rest of the war, Alcibiades' appearance in comedy is confined to just one extended attack, *Baptai* whose plot is uncertain but whose intensity can be judged from the (false) stories of the target's murder of the poet.¹⁷ Apart from this one instance, why is Alcibiades otherwise less a comic target than, say, Hyperbolus or Peisander?¹⁸ Similarly Alcibiades in Thucydides is a vivid figure, but in some ways portrayed so positively that scholars have suspected he is one of Thucydides' sources,¹⁹ and the historian does indeed take pains to say that it was not primarily Alcibiades' personal excesses, but the *dēmos*' suspicion of them and consequent recourse to other leaders, that ruined Athens (6.15.4). As late as Aristophanes' *Frogs*, a play that aims at Athenian unity in its second *parabasis*, the possible return of Alcibiades is alluded to at the close (1422–32).

It is worth noting in this connection that, of the names charged in connection with Alcibiades' parody of the Eleusinian mysteries in 415 (Andocides *On the Mysteries* 1.13.15; Th. 6.28; Plu. *Alc.* 19), three—Aristomenes, Archippus and Cephisodorus—belong to comic poets. It seems likely they were exiled with him, though all seem to have produced comedies again after the end of the war in

¹⁶ See Sommerstein (2000).

¹⁷ The story was repeated by Duris of Samos (*FGHist* 76 F 73) and refuted by Eratosthenes, according to Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 6.1.18 = *PCG*, Eupolis test. 3.

¹⁸ Apart from *Baptai*, Alcibiades is mentioned (mostly for sexual escapades) in Aristophanes fr. 205 (from *Banquetters*, on a rare word); 244; Eupolis fr. 171 (from *Toadies*); fr. 385; Pherecrates 164; Adespota 123; Archippus 48 (his son).

¹⁹ Brunt (1952); Westlake (1968).

403 (note especially the section of the “Roman Fasti” = *PCG*, Aristomenes test. 5, attesting plays by him in 439, 435, 394, and 390).

IV. *The Decline of Political Comedy after 411*

Eupolis’ career was clearly cut short—7 victories out of only 14 or 17 plays suggest a brief blaze of glory—and the report that he died in a naval engagement in the Hellespont (*PCG*, Eupolis test. 1), unlike that of his “murder” by Alcibiades (test. 3) seems plausible; perhaps it was at Kynossema in 411.²⁰

The 410s also saw the relative eclipse of Aristophanes; he survived, and avoided exile, but in a twenty-five year career after 422 his victories were limited to *Frogs* (405) and *Cocalus* (387), and one other unknown play. Perhaps, as Sommerstein²¹ suggests, he ceased writing for a time.

Two comic writers, Phrynichus and Platon (sometimes called “Plato comicus”) now emerged from the shadows. The former seems especially interested in music and poetry in *Connus*, *Muses* (second to *Frogs* at the Lenaea of 405), and *Tragic Actors*,²² and his *Loner* (third at the Dionysia of 414) might have presented comedy’s first misanthrope.

More is known of Platon, who follows in the tradition of demagogue plays after *Knights*: *Cleophon* was third at the Lenaea of 405, but *Hyperbolus* must predate 416, and *Peisander* must predate 411 and could be as early as 422.²³ But these name-titles alone do not prove that Platon’s political satire was especially bold—he was working within a well-established genre, and he was also a leader in the trend back to mythological plots, rationalized and updated with contemporary elements in the later style of middle comedy.

After Phrynichus and Platon, neither an immense success, the major Prolegomena²⁴ deem no poet of Old Comedy worthy of mention. Who else could have won the many victories still unassigned in the final three decades of Old Comedy, ca. 420–390? The vic-

²⁰ Th. 8.104–8. It may be confirmed by the appearance of an “Eupolis” in an undated inscription listing war casualties (*IG* I 3rd ed. 1190.52, but the name is not rare, with eight references in Kirchner-Louffer [1966]). No known reference in his plays demands a date after 411.

²¹ (1984) 314.

²² Harvey (2000) 117 n. 17.

²³ Sommerstein (2000) 439–41.

²⁴ Koster (1975).

tors' lists give us a large group of at least eleven active poets who defeated Aristophanes at the Lenaea and Dionysia in the next thirty years, about whose work we know next to nothing—possibly it was not even preserved at the time. At most we can guess from the suggestive titles what kinds of plays might have been produced; they seem to have continued the themes that had been developed already (even Aristophanes' titles fall into the same categories): By far the largest category is paratragedy (especially Euripidean) and myth; other types include plays named after an individual (other than a politician, such as an actor, prostitute or musician), or groups implying a social satire (*Farmers*, *Revellers*, *Cottabus-players*) as well as festival comedies like *Thesmophoriazusae* and fantasies (animals or monsters). Among the few possibly political titles are only Aristophanes' *Merchant Ships*, *Islands*, and Theopompus' *Peace*, and *Women soldiers*.²⁵

Thus we may suspect that the drastically diminishing returns of a comparison between Thucydides' last three Books and any comedies or fragments can be traced to an increasing depoliticization of comic plots after the Sicilian Expedition. Of course, comedy would naturally tend to avoid traumatic events like the Sicilian Expedition or the revolutions of 411 at Athens (as it had avoided the plague), and titles alone are not necessarily indicative of content, as Aristophanes' *Clouds*, *Wasps*, or *Frogs* should remind us. But even in *Frogs*, the political content is far more cautiously framed and tentatively presented than in plays of the 420s.

V. *The History of Athens and the Survival of Old Comedy*

"Among comedies, Old Comedy is unsuitable for men drinking... we would need a scholar explaining the details for each one— who Laispodias is in Eupolis, who is Cinesias in Platon, who is Lampon in Cratinus, and every *komōidoumenos*; our banquet would turn into a schoolroom . . ." (Plu. *Table Talk* 7.8 711f.).

If comedy was trending against political plots already by 411, why did the older plays, open to these objections by Plutarch, survive? That they did is clear from the fact that not only texts but commentaries of Aristophanes and Eupolis were still circulating in the

²⁵ Full lists are planned for inclusion in the introduction of Rusten et al. (forthcoming), "A Short History of Athenian Comedy".

second century CE,²⁶ and that by the Middle Ages, when copyists, scholars, and teachers were saving only the best, there were fully-annotated texts of *Clouds*, *Frogs* and *Plutus* to place, for obvious literary and moralizing reasons, into the school curriculum.

Probably the greatest danger to the survival of Cratinus, Aristophanes and Eupolis came in the century after their deaths: we have no evidence that any Old Comedy was ever reperformed after its authors' death at the Dionysia or Lenaea in Athens (or anywhere else).²⁷ In this age, although Middle and then New Comedians frequently received such revivals,²⁸ Dover has suggested that of Aristophanes' plays, perhaps very few manuscripts survived at that time to reach Alexandria.²⁹ Why then did Alexandrian scholars like Callimachus, Eratosthenes, and especially Aristophanes of Byzantium devote such abundant energy to elucidating Old Comedy in particular³⁰ (even while, as in the case of Aristophanes of Byzantium, they pointedly preferred Menander)?

The little evidence we have suggests that in this crucial moment it was *historical* interest in Old Comedy that kept its texts alive. Two fourth-century dialogues, Plato's *Protagoras* and Xenophon's *Symposium*, clearly take their respective historical frames from the *Toadies* and

²⁶ Papyrus commentaries on Eupolis' *Maricas* (PCG fr. 192), *Prospaltians* (259), *Commanders* (268); on an uncertain play of Aristophanes PCG fr. 590–91.

²⁷ I am not of course forgetting that plays might have been reperformed during their authors' lifetimes in various venues, or that sons might stage plays written by their fathers, both of which are attested for Aristophanes. One guise in which Old Comedy was very popular in the fourth century was the vase painting of southern Italy. But the assumption that the vases from Italy showing comic scenes demonstrate that Old Comedies must have been reperformed there is in my view quite mistaken; for the arguments see the introduction to Rusten et al. (forthcoming).

²⁸ The comic reperformances begin at the Dionysia in 340 (Rusten et al. [forthcoming] ch. 3 Nr. 46), and the known instances—all of Middle or New Comedy—are Anaxandrides' *Treasure* in 311 (Nr. 96D), Philemon (96E either 262 or 258, 96F, date unknown), Menander (96E either 262 or 258, 96G ca. 195–93, 96J, 167), Simylus (?96H ca. 188–85), Posidippus (96I 183 and 181, 96K 154), Diphilus (96E).

²⁹ Dover, (1993) 86–7, pointing to the ancient commentary on Aristophanes (fr. 590.10–15) that notes the end of a line was not preserved; see also Dover (1988d) 223–65. Indeed, at the same time that he was canonizing the texts of old tragedy, the politician Lycurgus ([Plu.] *Lives of the Ten Orators* 841) was trying to revitalize contemporary comedy by starting a contest at the Anthesteria.

³⁰ Nesselrath (1990) 172–97. Note especially the tradition of annotation that led to the *komōidomenoi* (Sommerstein [1996]; Steinhausen [1910]), as well as scholarship on comic vocabulary (still in Galen, who in the second century CE was still writing (*On His Own Writings* 17) *The everyday vocabulary of Eupolis in three books; The everyday vocabulary of Aristophanes in five books; The everyday vocabulary of Cratinus in two books*, as well as *Examples of words unique to comedy* and *On whether old comedy is useful reading for educated men*.

Autolycus of Eupolis; Ephorus cites Aristophanes and Eupolis (*FGrHist* 70 F 196), Duris of Samos (even though he is wrong) notes the story about Eupolis and Alcibiades (*FGrHist* 76 F 73); and amidst the many writers of this age who survive only in fragments it seems likely that Theopompus,³¹ Aristotle (fr. 575), the Peripatetic biographers and many others sought out Old Comedy as a source. Eventually the same Plutarch who dismisses the value of Old Comedy above (even more strongly in *Comparison Between Aristophanes and Menander*³² will use the comic fragments frequently for historical material in his biographies (most of the fragments cited on Pericles above are from Plutarch's *Life*).

Thus Old Comedy owes just as much to Thucydides as he may owe to it, since it is doubtless largely due to the power of Thucydides' *History*—such that not only Xenophon, but also Theopompus and Cratippus felt the need to undertake its continuation—that the events of Athens in its greatest and most terrible age became a permanent object of study, and the terrain of a dispute over the past that would occupy thinkers for centuries to come.

*Appendix: Secure Dates Connected to Comedy 440–405 BC*³³

- 446–441: First comedies at Lenaea.
- 440: Callias 4th (Roman *fasti*; Callias test. 4).
- 439: Dionysia: Aristomenes (Roman *fasti*; Aristomenes test. 5.4).
- 437: Lenaea? Callias 4th with *Satyr*s (Roman *fasti*; Callias test. 4).
- 437: Victory of Pherecrates (Suda; Pherecrates test. 2).
- 436–428: First Lenaeian victory of Phrynichus.
- 435–427: First Lenaeian victory of Myrtilus.
- 435 Dionysia: Hermippus 1st (*IG* II² 2318).
- 435 (festival and placement unknown): Aristomenes (Roman *fasti*; Aristomenes test. 5.3).
- 434 Dionysia?: Callias 3rd with *Cyclopes* (Roman *fasti*; t. 4).
- Lenaea?: Callias 5th (Roman *fasti*; Callias test. 4).
- 432 Dionysia: Canthar]us 1st (*IG* II² 2318).
- 431: Callias 4th (Roman *fasti*; Callias test. 4).
- 429: Eupolis of Athens: he was *didaskalos* in the archonship of

³¹ Connor (1968) 102–3.

³² See R.L. Hunter (2000).

³³ For chronological bibliography and discussion, see Rusten (2006).

- Apollodorus (429 BC), when Phrynichus was also . . . (*Prolegomena on Comedy* III.32 p. 9 Koster; probably *Prosphaltians*).
- 429–426: First Lenaeon victory of Eupolis.
- 427 (festival not known): Aristophanes' *Banqueters*, 2nd prize, through Callistratus (*Banqueters* test. 2–3).
- 426–5 Dionysia: Aristophanes' first victory at the Dionysia (with *Babylonians* if 426, with an unknown title if 425).³⁴
- 426 Dionysia: Aristophanes, *Babylonians* (*Babylonians* test. iii).
- 425 Lenaea: Aristophanes, *Acharnians* won, Cratinus was 2nd with *Storm-tossed*. Eupolis 3rd with *New Moons* (Hypothesis I to Aristophanes, *Acharnians*).
- 425 or 424 Dionysia: Eupolis' first victory at Dionysia (title unknown; Storey [2003] 63–65).
- 424 Lenaea: Hypothesis A5 to Aristophanes *Knights*: Cratinus won 2nd prize with *Satyr*s. Aristomenes 3rd with *Wood-Carriers* (NB: Roman *fasti* = Aristomenes test. 5.5 call this play the *Sheath-carriers*).
- 423: Dionysia: Hypothesis A6 to Aristophanes, *Clouds*: Cratinus won with *Wine-flask*, Ameipsias (2nd?) with *Connus*.
- 422 Lenaea: *Wasps* and *Proagon*? (see *Proagon* test.) Philonides 1st with *Proagon*, Aristophanes 2nd with *Wasps*, Leucon 3rd with *Ambassadors*.
- 422 Dionysia: Cantha]rus won (*IG* II² 2318.115 = Cantharus test. 2).
- 421 Dionysia: Hypothesis *Peace* (Eupolis 1st with *Toadies*, Aristophanes 2nd with *Peace*, Leucon 3rd with *Phrateres*; Hermon victorious as actor).
- 421: Eupolis' *Maricas* (Eupolis test. 13b), Lenaea.³⁵
- 420: Eupolis' *Autolycus* "taught through" Demostratus (*Autolycus* test. i).
- 420 Lenaea: Pherecrates' *Savages* (*Savages* test. i).
- 414 Lenaea: Aristophanes *Amphiaraus* (*Birds* hypothesis II).
- 414 Dionysia: 1st Ameipsias, *Revellers*; 2nd Aristophanes, *Birds*; 3rd Phrynichus, *Loner* (*Birds* hypothesis I).
- 411: Hypothesis I *Lysistrata*. It was taught in the archonship of Callias who was *archon* after Cleocritus (411). It was released through Callistratus.
- 409: Lysippus with *Nuts to You* (Roman *fasti*; Lysippus test. 3).
- 408: Aristophanes' first *Wealth* (*Wealth* I test. iii).
- 405 Lenaea: It was taught through Philonides at the Lenaea when Callias was *archon* after Antigenes. He was 1st; Phrynichus 2nd with *Muses*; Platon 3rd with *Cleophon* (*Frogs* Hypothesis I).

³⁴ Storey (2003) 63–65.

³⁵ See *PCG* V p. 400.

SPARTA AND THE SPARTANS IN THUCYDIDES

Paul Cartledge and Paula Debnar

I. *Introduction*

The subject of this chapter is simply huge, almost coextensive with the *History* as such, and has of course been broached many times in various ways.¹ It is, however, a subject well worth revisiting given the radical change in the external geopolitical situation and the no less radical intellectual movement that has swept the arts and humanities generally in the last couple of decades, often known for short as the “linguistic” or “literary turn”. *How* a historian says what he says can now seem to matter quite as much as *what* he says, in ways that would have been pretty much unthinkable to de Ste. Croix in 1972 (the year of the publication of *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, in which Thucydides is still served up as a—uniquely, perhaps—“scientific” historian), but by no means unthinkable in 1984, the date of Connor’s pioneering *Thucydides*.²

So we shall begin by discussing the “objectivity question” as far as it affects Thucydides’ attitudes to and presentation of Sparta and Spartans. Is his treatment of the Spartans balanced? Is it too balanced, too neatly cast in terms of a familiar Greek mode of thinking, namely binary polarization? Next we shall ask what kinds of things Thucydides tells us about the Spartans, commenting briefly on his terminology. Following Thucydides’ own methodological distinction (1.22), we shall treat separately narrative and speech. Our discussion of narrative will focus on the tensions between accuracy and literary presentation, in particular in Thucydides’ imputation of

¹ On Thucydides and Sparta generally: Ollier (1933–1943); Cloché (1943); Tigerstedt (1965).

² On Connor’s reader-response approach, see Dewald (2001) 139. Seven years earlier Connor had published “A Post Modernist Thucydides?” (1977a), but see already Dover (1973) and V.J. Hunter (1973a). On Thucydides and narrative, see Hornblower (1994b); Rood (1998a); Dewald (2005); and the earlier works by Stahl (1966); (2003); de Romilly (1956).

motives to Spartans. As we review Spartan speech in the *History* we shall again take up the question of Spartan character. Then, after a brief discussion of Thucydides' presentation of individual Spartans in light of the incompleteness of the *History*, we shall conclude by asking how far, if at all, Thucydides was an exponent of the Spartan "mirage".

II. *Objectivity*

All historians, according to one school of thought, are the more or less obedient servants of their own points of view; all write more or less contemporary history. Thucydides wrote contemporary history in the most literal sense; he would barely credit with historicity or worthiness of historical record any event or process to which he had not some kind of personal access, whether direct or (via interviews with reliable eyewitness participants) indirect. He was not, for this reason among several others, "a colleague" (to quote Loraux [1980]). He was, however, an Athenian, as he announces in the first words of the *History*. But if his ethnic portends bias, the rest of the proem promises a more balanced perspective. Thucydides wrote not the "Peloponnesian" or "Spartan" War (as it was likely to have been called by the Athenians and their allies), but "the war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians" (1.1.1).³

Thucydides, if read charitably, would seem to have struggled more than most to achieve a nonpartisan, multi- or at least bi-focal perspective.⁴ That, surely, is one of the points of the Second Preface (esp. 5.26.5), and we are indeed prepared to go along with Goldhill's judgment that "Thucydides' history is largely written from a position of exile",⁵ so long as one does not read Thucydides as a desperately embittered exile, flailing away at the Athens he had lost and at all things and people Athenian. For example, we find it hard to accept or even take seriously the claim of the author of an ancient biography that Thucydides "apparently on account of his exile did

³ From a Peloponnesian perspective the conflict is called the "Attic War" at 5.28.2; 5.31.3; 5.31.5.

⁴ See Marincola (1997) 158–74 on impartiality as a historian's source of authority.

⁵ Goldhill (2000) 16.

much to curry favor with the Spartans and accuse the Athenians of tyranny and graspingness . . . he exalted the victories of the Spartans in his narrative, and magnified the disasters of the Athenians, such as that in Sicily” (*Anon. Vita* 4). It is at any rate amusing, and perhaps instructive, to find even some of today’s most august and austere historians of Thucydides and his subject claiming the exact opposite, for example, as regards “war-guilt”. According to Badian (1993), he wrote to exonerate Athens. Others have seen him as a recovered Periclean imperialist.⁶ A more subtle viewpoint might see him as—still—a different sort of Periclean avatar: one who, like his Pericles (according to his obituary notice) “kept the *dēmos* [read: Thucydides’ intended audience] in check in a liberal sort of way” (2.65.8).

The Athenian/Spartan contrast is presented early on in the so-called *Archaeology*, but could it be just a little too neat to be credible? After all, Thucydides’ ubiquitous *logos/ergon* antithesis (word/deed, theory/practice) is not always straightforward,⁷ and the Athenian/Spartan antithesis should probably be treated with equal caution.⁸ For one thing, it frequently appears in speeches, most boldly—and tendentiously—articulated by the Corinthians in Sparta before the outbreak of war (1.70).⁹ Some of what the Corinthians say—to wit, that the Spartans are dilatory—is, at least in part, borne out by the narrative and affirmed by Thucydides *in propria persona* (8.96.5). But partway through the Corinthians’ comparison of Athenians and Spartans, the Spartans disappear and the audience must infer the speakers’ criticism. So when they say that the Athenians “use their bodies on behalf of the city as if they belonged to others” (1.70.6), their audience is expected to understand that the Spartans do something less honorable and altruistic. Yet the reaction to the surrender of 292 Lacedaemonians, including 120 Spartiates, on Sphacteria (“This, of all the events of the war, most surprised the Greek world”, 4.40.1) suggests that when the Corinthians delivered their speech

⁶ (Orwin [1994]).

⁷ E.g., on *logoi* as the complement of *erga*, see Tsakmakis (1998); in general see Parry (1981).

⁸ On national character, see Luginbill (1999). See Flower and Marincola (2002); Georges (1994) 129f. for the binary trope already in Herodotus. On politics, see Fliess (1966); Gustafson (2000). For polar comparison as a mode of Greek thought, including Thucydides’, see Cartledge (2002a).

⁹ Gundert (1968); Price (2001) 147–51; Rood (1998a) 43–46.

seven years earlier, few Greeks (Thucydides included) would have believed that a Spartan was reluctant to die for his city.

Nor was Thucydides himself wedded to an essentialist view of national character. Speakers in the *History* put natural differences (particularly between Dorians and Ionians)¹⁰ to good rhetorical use, but Thucydides also allows the opposite view to be heard. To an audience of Spartiates King Archidamus asserts that men are much alike, differing more in their ways of life than in their natures. Even the Corinthians advise the Spartans to adapt their behavior to changing circumstances: by asking the Spartans to abandon their slowness they in effect urge them to become more like the Athenians. Later in the *History* Thucydides observes that Athenians and Syracusans are *ομοιότροποι* ("like in ways"), whereas the Spartans and Athenians are not (7.55.2). Yet the Syracusans were Corinthian colonists, that is, Dorians. Indeed, Thucydides' claim that events much like those he has recorded will happen again given *τὸ ἀνθρώπινον* (1.22.4)¹¹ shows that the historian stood with the king on this question.

Moreover, according to Thucydides, some Athenians (Nicias *imprimis*) were more "Spartan" to begin with; some Spartans (*imprimis* Brasidas) more "Athenian".¹² Even a more conventional Spartan like King Agis II knew how to put on some speed when he had to (4.6.1). Both Spartans and Athenians are forced to adjust to changing circumstances, and Debnar (2001) has recently argued that over the course of the history Spartans become more Athenian in their use of and receptiveness to more subtle speech. So Thucydides may be right that the Spartans were the most convenient opponents for the Athenians; yet they eventually defeated the Athenians and did so in large part through the brilliant ruthlessness of the Spartan Lysander, in command of a Peloponnesian fleet funded by Persian gold. War, as Thucydides observes, is a violent teacher—as well as a teacher of violence (3.82.2).

¹⁰ E. Will (1956); Alty (1982); J.M. Hall (1997).

¹¹ For *τὸ ἀνθρώπινον* read "the human condition", a factor including but broader than "human nature", see Stahl (2003) 28–30.

¹² Edmunds (1975); Pelling (1997).

III. *Information and Terminology*

Thucydides does not tell us all we want to know about the Spartans, but neither is he encyclopedic when it comes to other Greeks, even the Athenians for that matter.¹³ Yet he does tell us quite a lot, including some rather remarkable “facts” about Sparta and Spartans that are either not otherwise attested or not in the same startling way. In one of the last of his introductory chapters, where he is establishing his own credentials—literally, his belief-worthiness—he has a sideswipe at unnamed writers (Herodotus is a likely target) who believe there ever was such a thing as a “Pitanate *lokhos*” at Sparta, or that the two Spartan kings each had two votes within the Spartan decision-making *Gerousia* (Senate, 1.20.3). The point is twofold: to reveal the ignorance or lack of due care about such institutional details on the part of most of his predecessors, and to show that he, Thucydides, can find out the truth even about the pre-Peloponnesian War past, if and when he wants to—except that, typically, he does not in fact want to. The present or near-present is all in all for his purposes.

His claim to have been able to unearth details about the *Gerousia* is striking. Meetings of this elite council of elders were unlikely to have been open to all Spartiates, let alone outsiders. As usual Thucydides does not reveal his sources, but the tone of his polemic is forceful; *he* was confident that his information was reliable.¹⁴ And that, after all, is not such a bad thing, since we are indebted to Thucydides for much of what we know about Sparta’s system of governance—of their alliance as well as of their own *polis* and territory. Likewise for a key institutional detail: that the Spartans regularly voted in assembly by shouting and not by ballot (see below).

In Book I, for example, we detect the Spartans’ vulnerability to pressure from their allies. It is the Corinthians, not the Spartans, who bring Peloponnesian allies to Sparta to complain about the Athenians—which they do, most strenuously, in informal gatherings. In response, the Spartans convene their “usual assembly” (1.67.3). Whatever the meaning of “usual” here,¹⁵ we have a picture of Spartans

¹³ Ridley (1981).

¹⁴ See Dewald (1999) and Darbo-Peschanski (1998) on Thucydides’ authoritative voice; see also Marincola (1997) 8–10; 182–84; 226f.

¹⁵ Gomme, *HCT* (*ad loc.*), “a regular meeting of the Spartan apella”, does not

willing—though far from eager—to listen to members of their own alliance as well as to Athenian envoys and perhaps others.¹⁶ In this sense, the Peloponnesian League was more democratic than the alliance led by democratic Athens, in which the Athenians, by the time of war's outbreak, unilaterally made decisions. On the other hand, Thucydides makes no reference to a speech by a Spartan at the open meeting. Given the Spartans' desire to present a united front to outsiders, there is good reason to believe that none in fact would have spoken.¹⁷

The assembly meeting restricted to Spartans, which follows close on the heels of the open meeting, raises as many questions as it answers. Thucydides says, "The opinions of most were tending [ἔφερον] toward the same thing, namely that the Athenians were now in the wrong and that they must go to war in haste" (1.79.2). How did they gauge this tendency? Did the Spartans take a yea/nay poll? Was consensus inferred by a magistrate from opinions expressed in speeches (terse though they might have been)? Thucydides does not say.¹⁸ Nor does he say who was permitted to speak in this assembly, although he may offer a hint: his usual practice when selecting one or two speeches from among many is to note that others spoke; here he refers only to the speeches by the king and ephor.¹⁹

Nonetheless, we do learn that the ephor (presumably eponymous) could put a question to the vote, which in this assembly meant a vote by shouting, and that if he thought the outcome indecisive he could call for a vote by division (1.87). Plutarch in his *Life of Lycurgus*, probably drawing on the otherwise lost Aristotelian *Politeia of the Spartans*, gives a quite elaborate description of voting by the assembled Spartan

help. "Regular", like "usual", could mean that the assembly would have been held even if the allies had not been present, or that the Spartans followed their usual procedures, although the assembly was precipitated by the appearance of their allies. Besides, the Spartan assembly was called ἐκκλησία, whereas *apella* meant a festival of Apollo.

¹⁶ They may have invited "any of the allies and anyone else who . . ." or "anyone of the allies who also . . ." (1.67.3). On the textual problem, see Gomme, *HCT* (*ad loc.*) and Hornblower, *Comm. ad loc.*

¹⁷ Debnar (2001) 36f.

¹⁸ Forrest (1967) posits two assemblies with a conference of the *Gerousia* in between. On Spartan government, see also Cartledge (2001a); de Ste. Croix (1972) 124–51; Andrewes (1966).

¹⁹ On speakers in Spartan assemblies: de Ste. Croix (1972) 127–31; Cartledge (1987) 129f.

citizen body for the election of members of the *Gerousia*: that too was done by shouting and not by ballot, so perhaps we might be encouraged to take Thucydides' statement at 1.87 in the most general sense, at least so far as voting by the whole Spartan citizenry was concerned. And that would indeed be a capital fact, about Spartan (antidemocratic) political theory as well as political practice.²⁰

Equally capital, in fact quite literally so, is the notorious passage at 4.80 where he describes the doing to death of some 2000 Helots, Sparta's permanent and indigenous servile labor force. After being apparently granted their personal liberation for services to Sparta rendered in wartime, they vanished and "no one ever learned by what means each of them died" (4.80.4). The massacre took place at a time when the Spartans were especially anxious about the restiveness and threat from the subject Helot population—or populations, if we distinguish the Messenian and the Laconian Helots.²¹ There are scholars who are inclined to believe that the whole episode is fiction,²² and that Thucydides was gulled into believing it. Most, however, believe there must be some fire to justify that much richly detailed smoke. Cartledge has sought to defend and explicate that position.²³ If he is right, Thucydides chose to describe this episode as a paradigmatic illustration of the general nature of relations between the Spartans and the Helots, and thereby of both the Spartans' collective mentality and the condition in which they were called upon to wage a constant internal war at the same time as any occasional external war. Indeed, this interpretation helps clear up another puzzling passage in Thucydides, 1.118.2, where he says the Spartans were habitually and generally "slow to war unless they felt themselves to be in a situation of compulsion". When not fighting an external war was reasonably considered worse—that is, less advantageous or secure—than fighting one, then the Spartans would not be slow to act—despite the permanent Helot threat from within.

We have already mentioned a possible distinction between Messenian and Laconian Helots. Thucydides' terminology points to another.

²⁰ On voting by shouting, see Bringmann (1980); Flaig (1993); Lendon (2001); de Ste. Croix (1972) 348f.

²¹ Thucydides is vague about when the incident took place (in narratological terms, "achrony"; Hornblower, *Comm. ad* 4.80.4). On possible dates for the event, see D. Harvey (2004) 201; 206f.; Jordan (1990); Hamilton (1987).

²² E.g., Talbert (1989); Whitby (1994); Paradiso (2004).

²³ Cartledge (2001c) 127–30; see also D. Harvey (2004).

From the perspective of the Athenians in the *History*, Helots are “Messenians”, while for Thucydides’ Spartans they are just “Helots”, a practice that may suggest, as Figueira (1999) argues, that as early as the fifth century the Athenians encouraged Helot resistance by cultivating a sense of Messenian identity. Elsewhere Thucydides is similarly exact in his terminology; for example, he refers to (in order to dismiss) the “Pitanate *lokhos*” and, with the exception of the Pausanias excursus, he uses “Spartiates” precisely to mean full citizens of Sparta.

Episodes involving Helots have a way of bringing the obscured political fissures within Sparta into bolder outline, although they also raise stubborn questions about sources. The well-known excursus on the regent Pausanias in Book I is the subject of an immense amount of recent work.²⁴ Certain linguistic peculiarities—for instance, only here is *Spartiatai* used to mean the Spartan state—are among the various reasons advanced for supposing that Thucydides was here relying on a written source rather than oral testimony.²⁵ Perhaps so, but that is of secondary importance to us. What matters is the confidence with which he felt able to ascertain and state a key fact about Pausanias. At 1.132.4 the Spartan authorities are said to have learned that Pausanias was engaged in dealings with the Helots. To which Thucydides adds: καὶ ἦν δὲ οὕτως—“and that was indeed the fact of the matter”. How could he possibly have known that?—for it would have happened, if it happened at all, before Thucydides was born. Is it not just the sort of smear that the Spartan authorities would have been keen to tar Pausanias with in order to ease the difficult task of—in effect—murdering not only a member of the protected royal houses, but also the man who had led the Greeks to victory over the Persians at Plataea? That is certainly arguable and not implausible. But just suppose Thucydides did have access to good Helot—or ex-Helot (e.g., Naupactus Messenian)—sources. These are deep and murky waters.

Conflicting responses to the Athenians’ fortification of Pylos (called “Coryphasium” by the Spartans, as Thucydides carefully notes) also

²⁴ Blamire (1970); Bradford (1994); Fornara (1966); Giorgini (2004); Konishi (1970); Lang (1967b); Lazenby (1975); Lippold (1965); Nafissi (2004a); (2004b); Podlecki (1976); Rhodes (1970); Schieber (1980); Stewart (1966); Tsakmakis (1995a) 132–37; Westlake (1977c).

²⁵ Westlake (1977c).

point to differing views about the seriousness of the Helot threat. At first the Spartans in the city trivialized the Athenians' move. Not so King Agis, who immediately returned from the invasion of Attica because both he and the Lacedaemonians with him thought the matter "hit close to home [*οἰκεῖον*]" (4.6.1). Thucydides adds that bad weather and a shortage of food contributed to the decision, but the Helots of Messenia were likely to have been Agis' primary concern.

Not long after the debacle at Pylos, the Spartans dispatched Brasidas to Thrace with 1700 hoplites (4.78.1); however, his possession of virtually a private army, one that included 700 Helots (4.80.5), ended up not sitting so well after all with the Spartans at home. So much, at least, can be inferred from their initial refusal to send reinforcements. One of the reasons for the refusal, Thucydides says, was the jealousy of powerful men back in Sparta (4.108.7). The Spartans later changed their minds. Although the reinforcements were stopped in Thessaly, the commanders made it through to Thrace and brought with them "contrary to custom, some of the younger men to take command of the cities" (4.132.3). Thucydides explains that the Spartans wanted these young men to rule the cities, rather than "men who happened to be at hand" (*τοῖς ἐντυχούσιν*). They may have been thinking of Brasidas' assignment of Polydamidas to Torone (see section V). Lack of confidence in—more likely outright suspicion of—Brasidas and his men can also be inferred from the Spartans' sending these commanders to "oversee the Spartans' affairs".

Not all tensions within Sparta arose directly from concerns about the Helots.²⁶ There seems to have been a faction, perhaps loyal to Archidamus, that was not eager to try to regain sole hegemony of the Greeks. At the very least they were opposed to this war. Conversely, when the ephors who negotiated the Peace of 421 ended their terms of office, some of their successors actively worked against the treaty. The Spartans are also said to have disenfranchised the prisoners from Sphacteria recently returned from Athens because they feared their revolutionary tendency—only to reverse their decision soon afterward (5.34.2). Whether the change of policy was in response to pressure from the powerful families to which some of these prisoners belonged (5.15.1), or to shrinking Spartan manpower (or both)

²⁶ Hamilton (1987).

is impossible to say. Book VIII reveals Agis making policy that conflicts with the decisions of the Spartans at home, while Alcibiades, working for the Spartans, encourages the ephor Endius to compete with King Agis for honor.²⁷

Thucydides, of course, was not infallible. Few modern scholars, for example, would accept his claim at 1.18.1 that for over 400 years the Spartans had used the same πολιτεία (“form of government” or “social organization”; see section VII). Although he gained better access to Spartan sources after going into exile, this did not help him one jot when it came to asking Spartans one of the most uncomfortable questions they had to face, about citizen numbers—their loss as casualties, their shrinkage as a wider, social as well as purely military phenomenon. Hence Thucydides’ plaintive lament at 5.68.2 about τὸ κρυπτόν τῆς πολιτείας, which could mean the secrecy either of “the state” or of the Spartan “way of life” more generally.²⁸ Silence and secrecy are strong cultural markers in Thucydides and elsewhere.²⁹ At any rate, his Spartan sources (whoever they may have been) were unwilling to tell Thucydides point blank how many men they had lost at the Battle of Mantinea in 418.

He was thwarted as well when trying to determine the size of Lacedaemonian forces before the battle. Gomme (*ad* 5.68.3) imagines him asking Spartans to confirm his estimates of troops and receiving in response silence and a shrug.³⁰ Had Thucydides’ informants been more forthcoming and had he understood that the μόρα instead of the λόχος was the largest unit of Sparta’s army (5.68.3)³¹—here Xenophon is the more reliable source—his calculation of Lacedaemonian (that is, Spartiate plus Perioikic) forces at Mantinea most likely would have doubled.

There are, of course, many passages where we wish Thucydides had told us more, and it is rarely possible to discern when reticence stems from an editorial choice, when from Spartan secrecy, and

²⁷ See also the bickering between Pedaritus and Astyochoch (8.32–33). On Spartan competitiveness, see Hodkinson (1983); Lendon (1997).

²⁸ Edmunds (1993) 835 n. 18; 840.

²⁹ Cf. 8.65.2–3: secrecy in which opponents of the 400 were killed; 66.1–2: silence of δῆμος; cf. Montiglio (2000) 116.

³⁰ Thucydides may have viewed these troops, as he probably did the forces assembled for Argos (5.60.3); Stroud (1994) 289–92.

³¹ Lazenby (1985) esp. 41–44.

when simply from lack of interest in questions that absorb modern readers. Just how extensive, for example, were the Spartans' connections abroad and how did they establish them?³² We do learn a few things; for example, Archidamus was the ξένος of Pericles (2.13.1), as was Alcibiades of the Spartan Endius. "Alcibiades", in fact, was a Spartan name—and the name of Endius' father (8.6.3).³³ We also learn the names of Brasidas' Pharsalian friends (τοὺς ἐπιτηδείους, 4.78.1) who escorted him across Thessaly. The Spartan Lichas was πρόξενος to Argos (5.76.3); he most likely had friends in Boeotia as well (see section VI).³⁴

Many other questions linger. Who, for example, was the Laconian (Spartan?) Meleas, and why was *he* sent with the Theban Hermaeondas to Mytilene before the revolt (3.5.2)?³⁵ We are given some pretty remarkable details about the conflict at Pylos: the dust from the recent fire on Sphacteria impeded visibility; the Spartans wore caps, not helmets; the commander kept his men on half-rations (a tribute to Spartan training?). Most surprising, Hippagretas, second in command, was left for dead but in fact survived (4.38.1). Yet Thucydides does not explain fully why the Spartan authorities sent to Pylos concluded immediately that the situation was so utterly hopeless that they had to sue for peace. He may not have known. A more general question, which for the most part goes unanswered until Book VIII, is how the Spartans financed the war.³⁶ In short, although many omissions concerning Sparta have to do with their social system³⁷—and we would certainly like to know more about the Helots, *Neodamōdeis*, and *Perioikoi*³⁸—there are plenty of gaps about political and military aspects of Sparta as well.

³² On the importance of such connections for cities as well as individuals, see Mitchell (1997).

³³ Members of Alcibiades' family were once πρόξενοι of the Spartans (5.43.2).

³⁴ Hornblower (2004) 278–81 (with Lewis) suggests that Lichas' family had connections in Cyrene, as well as in Thasos; see also Hornblower (2000c).

³⁵ Cawkwell (1975) 56 and n. 10.

³⁶ There may be hints about the earlier years (e.g., 1.121.3; 2.7.2; 4.52.2); see Kallet-Marx (1993) 89–91; 155–59. On the last phase of the war see Kallet (2001) 227–84.

³⁷ Cf. Ridley (1981).

³⁸ See Cartledge (2002b) 138–68 with further reading.

IV. *Narrative: Motives and Sources*

To discuss the narrative involving Spartans would be to discuss most of the *History*. Here we shall limit ourselves to two related questions that affect our appraisal of the historical credibility of the narrative, which has recently come under some heavy fire.³⁹ First, is there evidence to suggest that Thucydides relied on informants rather than (or in addition to) his own deductions when imputing motives and thoughts to Spartans?⁴⁰ Second, can we identify passages where it is likely that he had *Spartan* sources for such motives and thoughts?

We should begin by saying that if motives are to be viewed as part of the narrative (τὰ δ' ἔργα τῶν παρχθέντων, 1.22.2), the onus is on skeptics to show that Thucydides clearly reported them “as they seemed to him”—which is what Thucydides explicitly says he did *not* do. On the other hand, if they are *logoi*—after all, they are often introduced with verbs (or participles) of thinking, and they create the impression that readers are listening in as actors “talk to themselves” about the best course of action and their goals—Thucydides still claims that in reporting speech he “adhered as closely as possible to the whole sense of *what was actually said*” (1.22.1). According to his statement of method, then, neither *logoi* nor *erga* are whole-sale fiction. The following illustrations are intended to show that skeptics face a difficult task.

The first comes from Thucydides’ account of the first Peloponnesian invasion. The narrative, slowed down by the accumulation of details, imitates the slowness of the Peloponnesians’ mobilization and march.⁴¹ At each critical point the reader pauses along with Archidamus and his army. We even hear the envoy Melesippus’ fateful pronouncement, with its Homeric echoes, as he is escorted back over the Attic border: “This day will be the beginning of great ills for the Greeks” (2.12.3). We are introduced once again to Archidamus— this time formally (with patronymic) to mark the importance of his entering

³⁹ E.g., V.J. Hunter (1973a); Woodman (1988); Badian (1993) 125–62. Contra, Rhodes (1994c); Brock (1991).

⁴⁰ On inferred motivations: V.J. Hunter (1973a); Schneider (1974); Westlake (1989b). Rood (1998a) 49 concedes that although Thucydides may sometimes deduce motives from events, this does not preclude his having consulted sources; see also Rengakos and Stahl, this volume.

⁴¹ On narrative speed, see Rood (1998a) 35–36; Rengakos, this volume.

Athenian territory.⁴² Thucydides could have obtained details about the League's movements from several different sources, although it seems reasonable to assume that he had witnesses from among the Peloponnesians, if not the Spartans.

But we also learn something more interesting. Thucydides says that Archidamus was harshly criticized for loitering (especially at Oenoe), that he had earlier gained a reputation for "softness" toward Athens, and that there were complaints about his delays at the Isthmus as well (2.18.2–3). As this passage unfolds, Thucydides shifts from unnamed critics (possibly Spartans) to the Peloponnesians (possibly allies and *Perioikoi*), who were angry because they thought they could have caught the residents of Attica outside the city walls had it not been for Archidamus' delay (2.18.4–5). Thucydides refrains from endorsing this criticism. Instead he reports an explanation he heard (ὡς λέγεται) for the king's actions: Archidamus wanted to see whether by turning the screw just a little tighter he could pressure the Athenians to relent (2.18.5).

As Westlake (1977b) has shown, Thucydides use of "as is said" or "it is said" does not always imply doubt.⁴³ Is this the case here, or does the phrase suggest that we should reject the report? After all, it appears to contradict what Archidamus is made to say to his commanders at the Isthmus, and this speech, in turn, seems at odds with the advice he gives the Spartans in Book I. Pelling (1991) sees conflicting strands in Archidamus' plan, although both parts of the plan make sense. Archidamus is hopeful that he can pressure the Athenians to relent, but he also thinks he might draw them into battle, and the delay required for the former makes it less likely that he can succeed in the latter. On the other hand, de Romilly (1962) argues that Archidamus' plans change at different stages of the march.⁴⁴ And one of them almost worked. Once the Athenians (especially their young men) saw their land being ravaged, they wanted to fight—a move that was prevented only by Pericles' refusal to call an assembly. It is true that Thucydides could have inferred that

⁴² G.T. Griffith (1961).

⁴³ Westlake does not put 2.18 and 20 in this category, but he thinks that Thucydides found the reported expectations reasonable.

⁴⁴ Related to these stages may be what Munn (2002) refers to as three "hypothetical" or "notional" boundaries of Attica; see also Bloedow (1983); Westlake (1968) 125–31; *contra*, V.J. Hunter (1973a) 11–21.

Archidamus, an intelligent man and a presumably well-informed ξένοϛ of Pericles, would have tried to elicit just this reaction from the Athenians. Yet there is no reason to believe the *report* to be a product of Thucydides' imagination.

As is clear both from Archidamus' speech to his commanders and from the criticism he received, the king did not share the details of his plans. And that is not unusual for a Spartan, as we shall see. So how could Thucydides have learned of Archidamus' intentions? By the time Thucydides went into exile (424/3) Archidamus was already dead (3.89.1). Did he discuss the king's plans with a Spartan who had campaigned with him⁴⁵—perhaps talk to his son Agis? It would certainly be to the advantage of the then reigning king to present his father's actions in the most favorable light. It is also possible that Thucydides forgot his own warnings about biased sources (1.22.3) and was taken in by Agis. If so, then his report of Archidamus' motives is inaccurate—but it is not invented, or at least not invented by Thucydides.

When inclined to reject what he heard, Thucydides was not afraid to make his doubts known. In Book II, for example, Peloponnesian sailors under the command of Cnemus and Brasidas crossed from the Crisaean to the Saronic Gulf, each carrying his oar, cushion, and rowlock thong. Megarian ships awaited the crews in the port of Nisaea. But instead of heading for the Piraeus, as was supposedly planned, they attacked the Athenian fort on Salamis. Thucydides adds, "Some wind is said (λέγεται) to have prevented them" (2.93.4). A contrary wind certainly sounds like an excuse offered by someone involved in the attack.⁴⁶ The word "some" (τις), on the other hand, introduces a skeptical note, which Thucydides soon strengthens. He adds that when the Athenians learned of the approach of the Peloponnesians, they thought that the enemy was about to enter the harbor. Here he intervenes *in propria persona*: "Which might easily have happened, if [the Peloponnesians] had not hesitated, since no wind would have prevented them" (2.94.1). Yet Thucydides does *not*

⁴⁵ Similarly, Westlake (1968) 128; however, compare Westlake (1977b) 353 n. 19. D.M. Lewis (1977) 47 n. 148 observes that "Thucydides considered himself remarkably well-informed about Archidamus' thinking", but he does not speculate on sources.

⁴⁶ *Contra*, Falkner (1992) and Badian (1999), who is skeptical about most of what Thucydides reports.

cast doubt on another report, that the Peloponnesians were afraid to go farther than Salamis because they discovered that the ships were leaky (2.94.3). This information, too, is likely to have come from the Peloponnesians, perhaps even from one of the Spartan commanders. At least, it is not an excuse that Thucydides is likely to have inferred.

Our third illustration, from Brasidas' campaign in the Thraceward region in Books IV and V, shows that when Thucydides did not have good evidence or reliable sources—or his sources refused to talk—he could refrain from drawing inferences. Both what Brasidas did and why he did it fascinated Thucydides, as it does readers, who often find themselves inside Brasidas' mind.⁴⁷ To mention one example, Thucydides relates in detail the reasoning behind Brasidas' complicated stratagem before the battle of Amphipolis.⁴⁸ But there is also a paradox here: despite all we learn about him, Brasidas is one of the most enigmatic characters in the *History*. One of the reasons he remains so mysterious is that when we eavesdrop on Brasidas' thoughts, they are thoughts concerning military action, not political goals.⁴⁹

It is impossible, in fact, to extrapolate from Thucydides' narrative a clear picture of either Brasidas' or the Spartans' ultimate aims in this region—goals Thucydides could have inferred from Brasidas' progressive campaign as its implications gradually dawned on Athenians.⁵⁰ Consequently, it is equally difficult to judge Brasidas' character.⁵¹ At the outset of the expedition the Spartans are said to have wanted to divert the Athenians from their attacks upon the Peloponnese and rid themselves of some Helots (4.80.1–2). But when the Spartans and Athenians decided to call a truce (summer of 423), the Spartans' primary goals were to end the war and retrieve the prisoners taken on Sphacteria (4.117.1–2). Brasidas himself is said to have wanted the war to continue for personal glory (5.16.1), although this does not preclude more ambitious aims. Rhamphias and other

⁴⁷ Lang (1995); see also Westlake (1989b) and Rood (1998a) 69–77.

⁴⁸ Boegehold (1979); Bodin (1935).

⁴⁹ See Lang (1995) 58–65 for a list of the kinds of actions in the *History* for which participial expressions provide motives.

⁵⁰ Spartan strategy: Brunt (1993).

⁵¹ Compare the judgments by Badian (1999) (the most negative); Boëldieu-Trevet (1997) (positive); Daverio Rocchi (1985); Debnar (2001) 173–200 (also negative); Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.38–61; Prandi (2004); Wylie (1992).

Spartans heading out for Amphipolis with reinforcements turned back, in part because they learned that Brasidas was dead and concluded that they were incapable of effecting his plans (5.13.1). In other words, they seem to have known what his plans were—clearly *not* merely to end the war and bring back their prisoners. Their response also suggests that, under other circumstances, they might have tried to follow through with these plans. But that is all we learn.

Given the details Thucydides provides about Brasidas' tactics, he may very well have spoken with Clearchidas or other men who fought alongside this extraordinary Spartan.⁵² But if his informants knew about Brasidas' political aims, they never let on—and Thucydides did not impute motives to him that they would not reveal.

V. *Spartan Speech*

We have already touched upon Thucydides' principles for reporting speech. Space does not allow further detailed discussion;⁵³ suffice it to say that we accept Thucydides' claim to have based his *logoi* on "what was actually said". We also realize that while speeches are not completely made up, neither are they verbatim reports, and that individual speeches may be closer to one or the other of these limits. Nonetheless, in our view, no Spartan speech is indisputably anachronistic or lacking in verisimilitude.⁵⁴

Some narrative passages, in fact, seem to corroborate what is said by a Spartan in a speech.⁵⁵ In Book IV Brasidas tells the Acanthians that even though Athenian forces at Nisaea were superior in number, they backed down against the very forces he has with him in Thrace. Readers who are aware of what happened at Nisaea know that Brasidas is lying, and Thucydides explicitly confirms his readers' judgments (4.108.5; cf. 4.85.7). The variations in the speeches

⁵² Most likely not with Brasidas himself; Westlake (1980); cf. Tuplin (1990).

⁵³ Recent discussions include Badian (1992); Debnar (2001) 14–20; Hedrick (1993); Tsakmakis (1998); J. Wilson (1982b).

⁵⁴ On Spartan speech in general, see Wassermann (1964); Francis (1991–1993).

⁵⁵ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.47–48 (with Lewis). See also the Acanthians' demand that Brasidas repeat the Spartans' oaths concerning autonomy (4.86.1; 4.88.1); Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.86; Badian (1999).

that Brasidas delivers to different audiences at Acanthus, Torone, and Scione—what Hornblower calls his “periodically adjusted manifesto”⁵⁶—further strengthen the impression that, as promised, Thucydides adhered as closely as possible to the whole sense of what Brasidas really said. If we are correct that Thucydides’ report of speech is historically based, then speech as well as narrative in the *History* can offer a window onto the Spartans’ world, small and cloudy though that window may be. If we are wrong, at the very least we can see what a contemporary Athenian thought was a plausible view of Spartan character and practices.

Among Athenians Spartans had a reputation for “thinking one thing and saying another” (Hdt. 9.54), and Brasidas seems to confirm this stereotype. Thucydides says that he was “not an incapable speaker, for a Spartan” (4.84.2)—meaning, presumably, that he was a very good speaker indeed. But, as we have seen, he also exposes him as a liar.⁵⁷ Bradford (1994), for one, thinks that in general Thucydides embraced this Athenian commonplace concerning Spartan mendacity.⁵⁸ To support this view he adduces, among other incidents, the Spartans’ insincere reaction to the rebuilding of Athens’ walls (1.92), their failure to give the true reason for dismissing the Athenians from Ithome (1.102), and their willingness to lie to the Athenian assembly (5.45). He may be right. But while Thucydides’ Spartans are certainly more secretive, they are no more deceitful than the Athenians. Themistocles wins the prize for deceit in the story of the rebuilding of Athens’ walls. As for the envoys in Book V, the author of their scheme was Alcibiades—and he, in turn, deceived the Spartan ambassadors.⁵⁹ In Book VIII, the most intrigue-filled book in the *History*, double-dealing is a sport played by all sides.

Spartan speech, renowned before Thucydides for its brevity and pith, was an important vehicle for an idealized image of the Spartans.⁶⁰ Apophthegms, in fact, were a Spartan specialty. Herodotus relates

⁵⁶ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.86–89.

⁵⁷ Moreover, Brasidas deceives the Thessalians (4.78.4–5) and apparently his fellow Spartans (4.122.3). Thucydides also exposes the Egestaeans as liars (6.8.2). On Thucydides’ narratorial interventions, see Gribble (1998).

⁵⁸ On Spartan mendacity and deceit: A. Powell (1989); Cloché (1943).

⁵⁹ See also 3.34.3 and 4.23.1. However, Hornblower (1994b) 148 thinks that Thucydides’ narrative “tricks” downplay Athenian duplicity.

⁶⁰ Francis (1991–1993) 200.

several (e.g., 3.46, 7.226), and even Thucydides, far stingier with anecdotes, offers one (perhaps two). In response to an Athenian ally (an Ionian?) who asked “whether those who died [on Sphacteria] were noble and good, the Spartan [prisoner] replied that the ‘spindle’ (meaning the arrow) would be worth much if it recognized good men” (4.40.2).⁶¹

Thucydides, however, was well aware that the power of Spartan brachylogy extended farther than the bite of the apophthegm. The Plataeans who surrender to the Spartans in Book III feel its full force. The five Spartan judges sent to decide their fate merely ask each prisoner “if they had done any good for the Lacedaemonians and their allies in the current war” (3.52.4).⁶² The two Plataeans granted permission to speak spend much rhetorical energy trying to unpack this brief question—to no avail.⁶³ As Thucydides knew, the Spartans were not enemies of rhetoric; they merely developed their own effective brand of it.

Three exchanges involving the Spartan navarch Alcidas suggest that Spartan brachylogy could be taken to an extreme. Both to a Boeotian ally (3.31.1), who urged him to make a night assault on Mytilene, and to Brasidas, who advised him to attack Corcyra (3.79.3), he appears to have replied with silence.⁶⁴ Again, no verbal reply when the Samians complain about Alcidas’ harsh treatment of Ionians. It is, of course, dangerous to rely on arguments from silence, especially about silence. But these episodes do point to how much advice Spartan commanders in the *History* have to listen to—from fellow Spartans and from their allies. Only *future* allies (the Corcyraeans) address the Athenian assembly. We never hear of the Athenians in the *History* listening to their actual allies—even in their own defense. In contrast, the Spartans listen to their own allies and Athens’ too.

Nor are Thucydides’ Spartans always terse. In Book IV the envoys sent to negotiate peace with the Athenians deliver a corrective lesson: Spartans only refrain from lengthy speech when few words

⁶¹ See also 5.65.2, which nicely conveys the message that in Sparta even kings listen to their elders.

⁶² Cf. Harvey (2004) on the similar question that may have been posed to the Helots (4.80.3).

⁶³ Debnar (2001) 126–30. On the Plataean debate, see also Badian (1993) 109–23; Cagnetta (1984); Macleod (1983b); Price (2001) 103–26.

⁶⁴ On Spartan silence, see David (1999); on Alcidas, see Roisman (1987).

suffice (4.17.2).⁶⁵ Of course, Spartans in the *History* do not always agree about just how many words are necessary. King Archidamus, whose arguments against immediate war are concise and compelling, seems almost long-winded in comparison to the ephor Sthenelaïdas. Yet the king is no less “Spartan” in his speech than the ephor. He is blunt about the League’s lack of preparations; he controls the emotional tenor of his speech; he emphasizes the need for words to conform to facts and deeds—in this case, for military threat to be matched by preparations.⁶⁶

In addition to Spartan political and military speeches and the unusual mode of voting by shout, the rich fund of Spartan speech in the *History* includes a dialogue (2.71–73), a prayer (2.74.2), proclamations by heralds (e.g., 4.114.1), diplomatic exchanges (e.g., 1.139.1; 4.17–20), letters (e.g., 1.128.6–7; 8.33.3), and treaties (e.g., 5.18; 5.23). Space permits discussion of only a few of these.

Despite their reputation for being sparing with words, the Spartans in the *History* are active on the diplomatic front, another detail that supports Thucydides’ claim that they were “not quick to enter into wars unless compelled” (1.118.2).⁶⁷ Immediately before the outbreak of war, the Spartans send a series of envoys to Athens with their demands, although Thucydides says these were designed less to avoid war than to give themselves the best pretext for it (1.126.1).⁶⁸ They may also have been intended to buy some time, since the Spartans lacked preparations for an immediate attack (1.125.2). Still, Thucydides underscores the importance of their final demand by both naming the members of the delegation and reporting their message in direct speech: “The Spartans want there to be peace, and there would be, were you to leave the Hellenes autonomous” (1.139.3)—a properly laconic expression of the lengthier assertions made by Sthenelaïdas and the Corinthians: Sparta should speak for all Hellenes.

⁶⁵ On the Spartans’ speech, see Cogan (1981) 73–75; Crane (1998) 187–92; Debnar (2001) 147–67; de Romilly (1963) 172–79; Rood (1998a) 39–43; Westlake (1974).

⁶⁶ On the speeches by Archidamus and Sthenelaïdas, see Allison (1984); Bloedow (1981); (1983); (1987); Crane (1998) 197–221; Debnar (2001) 59–76; Tompkins (1993); Wassermann (1953); (1964).

⁶⁷ On Spartan diplomacy in general, see Cartledge (2001b).

⁶⁸ Lacedaemonian and Sicyonian envoys also accompanied the Corcyreans to Corinth (1.28.1). Thucydides does not say why (or report any speech); presumably they seconded a request to submit the quarrel over Epidamnus to arbitration.

In Books IV and V and again in VIII, Sparta's diplomatic voice resurfaces in truces and treaties.⁶⁹ The terms of the truce of 423 appear to have been composed by the Spartans.⁷⁰ The Peace of 421 contains a chorus of voices, those of Athenians, Spartans, and Sparta's allies (5.18)—another detail pointing to the different structures of the two alliances. The Spartans and Athenians later form a separate treaty of alliance (5.23), marking a change in Sparta's relationship to its allies and raising the allies' fears that Sparta had plans to subjugate the Peloponnese (5.27.2). The truce and alliance between Sparta and Argos include dialectal forms (5.77; 5.79), and elsewhere Thucydides points to the role played by the Doric dialect on the military and political front.⁷¹ All of Sparta's agreements would have been formalized with oaths, and record of some, if not all, would have been displayed publicly in religious sanctuaries (5.19.10; 5.23.4).⁷² Treaties in Thucydides, which appear to be recorded verbatim, are especially valuable since the epigraphic record for Sparta is so thin (as is true for most Greek *poleis* other than Athens).⁷³

The treaty that the Spartans negotiate (and twice renegotiate) with the Persians in Book VIII reveals a curious diplomatic trait: Spartans changed their minds a lot—a characteristic more often associated in the *History* with the Athenian *dēmos*. A similar impression is conveyed by a letter sent to the Spartans from the Persian king and intercepted by the Athenians. The letter said, among other things, that “The King did not know what they wanted, for although many envoys had come to him, none of them said the same thing” (4.50.2).

Diplomatic vacillation could be taken as evidence of yet another flaw in Spartan character. But as is often the case, Thucydides also provides glimpses of practical factors that explain human behavior. Sparta's board of ephors was at times divided. Even when it was not, because ephors held office only for a year, a change in officials

⁶⁹ On treaties involving Spartans, see Millender (2001) 130–32.

⁷⁰ Hornblower, *Comm. ad* 4.117.3. See also the truce called at Pylos (4.16).

⁷¹ E.g., 3.112.4 (Ambracia), 4.41.2 (Pylos), and 7.44.6 (Epipolae).

⁷² On the possibility of a Spartan archive of some sort, see Millender (2001) esp. 127–32.

⁷³ Millender (2001) 139–40 (with Fitzhardinge) suggests that, given the poor quality of marble in the Peloponnese and the high quality of Laconian bronze work, some documents may very well have been inscribed on bronze. The “Spartan War Fund” (*IG* V.1.1) and the recently discovered treaty with the Erxadieis are on stone; Cartledge (1976).

could easily lead to a reversal of policy—as it did in the winter of 421/20 when Cleobulus and Xenares, opponents of the Peace of 421, took office (5.36.1). Given the length of time it must have taken to send a letter to the Persian king, it is easy to understand why Artaxerxes was confused.⁷⁴ Given also the vulnerability of Spartan kings to prosecution and exile, it is a wonder that Sparta had any kind of foreign policy at all.⁷⁵

Thucydides' Spartans, as it turns out, exchange a surprising number of letters—surprising, that is, for men who had a reputation for being illiterate. After revisiting the evidence, Millender (2001) concludes that Spartan literacy extended beyond the elite and that the charge of illiteracy was part of an Athenian strategy of “barbarizing” the Spartans.⁷⁶ Of course, if the Spartans found it convenient to project the image of simplicity—or even stupidity, as Powell (1989) suggests—they had little to gain by correcting the Athenians' mistake. Thucydides, on the other hand, seems to have resisted this stereotype. Spartan commanders in the *History* communicate by letter to one another and back to Sparta (8.33.3; 8.39.2; 8.45.1). Athenians, too, send letters (1.137.3–4; 7.8.2; 8.51.1), but the impression persists that in Thucydides, particularly in Book VIII, Spartan commanders communicate with their superiors at home more often than do their Athenian counterparts. Thucydides' picture of Spartan communications is consonant with the tight control that the Spartans at home exerted—or tried to exert—over their commanders in the field.⁷⁷ The historian was also aware that Spartan theories about the proper relationship of commanders in the field to officials at home did not always translate into practice. Thucydides draws attention, for example, to Agis' unusual powers while at Decelea (8.5.3).

Letters also play an important role in stories of Spartan intrigue. The Spartan commander Astyochus receives a letter from the Athenian general Phrynichus, only to share it with Phrynichus' enemy Alcibiades

⁷⁴ According to Herodotus (5.52–54) the trip from Ephesus to Susa took about three months on the old royal road; Fornara (1966) 264. Add to this a voyage by ship from Ephesus to Eion (where Artaphernes was apprehended) and from Eion to Sparta (by ship?) and almost half an ephorship has expired.

⁷⁵ See Lewis (1977) 43–49 and de Ste. Croix (1972) 151–66.

⁷⁶ Esp. 143–49. On Spartan literacy, see also Cartledge (2001b) and Boring (1979).

⁷⁷ They send out eleven Spartiate advisers to keep an eye on Astyochus (8.39.2). Agis is accompanied by ten at Mantinea (5.63.4). See also Hodkinson (1983).

and the Persian Tissaphernes.⁷⁸ In the detailed story of the downfall of the regent Pausanias, a private letter read by a messenger (to be put to death upon delivery) betrays Pausanias' traitorous negotiations with Xerxes—and suggests that Pausanias himself was thought to have written the letter.⁷⁹ Thucydides also mentions that when Pausanias was in the Troad, he received from the ephors a σκυτάλη (1.131.1), a Spartan device for conveying letters.⁸⁰

The speech of Spartan military commanders in Thucydides can be as harsh as their actions.⁸¹ When Brasidas, Timocrates, and Lycophron are sent to advise Cnemus after the Peloponnesians' naval defeat in the Corinthian gulf, their speech to the Peloponnesian sailors reflects the anger of the Spartans who sent them out, as well as their (mistaken) conviction that cowardice was the cause of the earlier loss: "Indeed, if anyone thinks to [act basely], he will be punished as he deserves" (2.87.9).⁸² Astyochus threatens the soldiers who demand their pay (8.84.1–3)—and has to retreat to an altar to avoid their response (on Lichas see section VI). Polydamidas, the Spartan commander assigned to Mende by Brasidas—if Polydamidas was, in fact, Spartan⁸³—appears to forgo words altogether. When an outspoken citizen of Mende balks at going into battle against the Athenians, Polydamidas responds (apparently without comment) by roughing him up (4.130.4). Thanks to their tough education—and perhaps their treatment of Helots⁸⁴—the Spartans themselves may have been accustomed to the use of harsh words and equally harsh physical treatment. But the Athenian envoys in Sparta appear to have been right: Spartan customs did not travel well (1.77.6).

⁷⁸ Westlake (1956).

⁷⁹ Millender (2001) 142–43.

⁸⁰ T. Kelly (1985) convincingly demonstrates that σκυτάλαι were not cryptographic devices, but (probably) sticks of some kind around which the Spartans wrapped letters written (openly) on leather or papyrus.

⁸¹ Actions: 2.67; 3.32; 3.93; 5.83. On Spartan violence, see Cloché (1943); Hornblower (2000b); Price (2001) 210–17.

⁸² Pritchett ([1994] 55) points out that offers of reward and threats of punishment are unusual *topoi* in generals' speeches.

⁸³ Thucydides provides no ethnic for Polydamidas. Poralla-Bradford (1985) no. 626 identifies him as a Lacedaemonian; he could have been one of the Peloponnesian mercenaries among Brasidas' 1700 forces. No Spartans, aside from Brasidas, are said to have taken part in the initial expedition, and the Spartans with Ischagoras (e.g., Clearidas and Pasitelidas) do not arrive until after Mende returns to Athenian control (4.132.3).

⁸⁴ Hornblower (2000b).

VI. *Individuals and the Incompleteness of the History*

The absence of an account by Thucydides of the final years of war, together with the likelihood that he may have intended to revise further some parts of the *History*,⁸⁵ weighs heavily on students of the Spartans. Much like Athens' allies, who had little chance to assess Spartan character before Brasidas was sent to the North, our best chance to witness individual Spartans in action arises after the Spartans expand their activities to Sicily and Decelea, and finally to Ionia and the Hellespontine region. Some of these Spartans seem to be cut from Brasidas' cloth, but none is presented in nearly as much depth.

Gylippus, son of Cleandridas, sent by the Spartans to help the Syracusans, is described by Westlake as "a worthy successor to Brasidas".⁸⁶ We should perhaps remind ourselves, as does Hornblower (*Comm.* 2.59), "we cannot keep reduplicating Brasidas-types indefinitely or we will end with *Brasidas* as the conventional Spartan". Nonetheless, there are similarities. He successfully raised forces from all over Sicily, and his surprise (sometime diversionary) attacks (e.g., 7.22–23; 7.37) should earn him a place beside Brasidas as one of the more inventive commanders of the war. Gylippus also seems to have avoided the violent behavior displayed by other Spartans sent abroad. Rather than fault the Syracusans for an initial defeat, he takes the blame upon himself (7.5.3), and he opposes the Syracusans' demand to execute Nicias and Demosthenes. Here Thucydides supplies Gylippus with a motive: he thought it would be "a noble feat to add to his other accomplishments to convey the opposing generals back to the Lacedaemonians" (7.86.2). Harsh as this motive sounds to modern ears, it does not preclude his having also been inclined toward moderation and mercy. Thucydides adds, "Demosthenes was the Spartans' greatest enemy because of what happened on the island and in Pylos, while for the same reasons Nicias was their best friend" (7.86.3). In fact, the Spartans were well disposed (προσφιλεῖς) toward him because of his work toward peace and the return of their prisoners (7.86.4).

⁸⁵ Rood (1998a) 251–84 has recently argued that Book VIII is less "unfinished" than many scholars believe. See, e.g., "Indications of Incompleteness" in *HCT* 5.361–83.

⁸⁶ Westlake (1968) 277–89; on Cleandridas, another "successor" (literally so), see Westlake (1980).

Whether the focalizer here is the narrator or Gylippus—or both⁸⁷—it does not sound as if Thucydides believed that Gylippus intended to drag Nicias, or even Demosthenes, back to Sparta in chains. Nonetheless, we are left with a very different impression of Gylippus than we are of Brasidas.

An account by Thucydides of the war down to Athens' surrender in 404 might have given us a fuller picture of Gylippus, or at least helped us to understand why the historian seems to undervalue him.⁸⁸ According to Diodorus Siculus (13.106), following the battle of Aegospotami (405), he was caught having skimmed 300 (of 1500) talents from the sacks of silver that Lysander had sent with him to take to Sparta. Like his father Cleandridas, Gylippus was condemned to death and ended his life in exile.⁸⁹ It is impossible to say whether this later incident—if such an incident occurred and Thucydides knew about it—colored Thucydides' earlier treatment of Gylippus.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, it is strange that, given his remarkable success, Gylippus disappears from the *History* immediately following the Athenians' surrender in Sicily.

Downright striking is the contrast between the relatively full picture we have of King Archidamus II and the sketchiness of Thucydides' characterization of his son Agis II, who reigned during all but the first four years of the Peloponnesian War. Which is not to say that Agis is absent from the *History*. He wins an important (although costly) victory at Mantinea (5.64–74), and is responsible for establishing an outpost at Decelea (7.19.1), from which “the Athenians were done great harm” (7.27.4). Agis also seems to have understood better than most Spartans the importance of levying money (8.3.1),⁹¹ and his permanent position at Decelea allowed him to act with considerable independence (8.5.3).

⁸⁷ On ambiguous focalization in Thucydides, see Hornblower (1994b) 134–35. According to D.S. 13.28–32, Gylippus favored their execution. See also *HCT ad* 7.86.2.

⁸⁸ As Griffith (1961) observes, Thucydides fails to provide introductory remarks for Gylippus and only two other important Spartans, Agis, and Sthenelaïdas.

⁸⁹ Poralla-Bradford (1985) nos. 196 and 420. Cf. D.S. 13.106 and Plu. *Per.* 22.

⁹⁰ According to Plutarch (*Nic.* 19), the historian Timaeus claimed that the Syracusans quickly became fed up with Gylippus' greed and harshness, while Philistus, who witnessed the events in Sicily, viewed him favorably and thought him responsible for the Syracusans' victory.

⁹¹ Kallet (2001) 238–42.

We do catch a few glimpses of Agis' character, particularly in Book V. As a Spartan king, Agis was also a priest, and the Spartans in general were known for their piety (Hdt. 5.63; 9.7).⁹² It is not surprising, then, to see Agis turn back from an invasion because of unpropitious border-crossing sacrifices, a type of sacrifice that seems to have been peculiar to Spartans (5.54.1–2).⁹³ We later learn that Agis, like his father (2.72), knew how to balance the demands of religion and expedience. When the Corinthians refused to send forces out during their celebration of the Isthmia, Agis offered to lead the campaign in the Corinthians' stead (8.9). Cooper (1978) has argued that the phrase *κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ δόξαν* (5.65.3) is a quotation of Agis and that it may be an attempt to characterize the king, "most of whose thoughts may well have been tantamount to barked commands" (39). But this is a far cry from the speeches that the historian attributes to Archidamus.⁹⁴ For the most part, Thucydides' Agis remains remote. One wonders, for example, how Thucydides would have explained (if he could) the enmity between Agis and Alcibiades.⁹⁵

The Spartan Lichas makes a briefer appearance on Thucydides' stage, yet his character—that of a traditional Spartan—is more distinctly limned. Thucydides' interest in Lichas prompts Griffith (1961) to wonder whether Lichas and Thucydides were acquaintances, possibly friends, and Rawlings,⁹⁶ speculates that if Thucydides had revised Book VIII, he would have included a speech by Lichas (in *oratio recta*) complaining about the Spartan-Persian treaties. More recently, Hornblower (2004) has situated Lichas and Thucydides within the aristocratic world inhabited by Pindar. Son of the Olympic victor Arcesilaus, Lichas himself won a chariot-race at Olympia in 420, despite the Spartans' having been barred from the festival. Thucydides says that Lichas earned blows from the officials when he revealed his presence and took credit for the victory of Boeotian horses (5.50.4). Lichas' arrogance—not unlike that which the Spartan envoys to

⁹² On Spartan religiosity, see Goodman and Holladay (1986); Hodkinson (1983); R. Parker (1989).

⁹³ R. Parker (1989) 155–56. Agis may also have led two other attempted crossings (5.55.3; 5.116.1).

⁹⁴ Thucydides' Agis does not express motivation (by means of participles) as often as do other characters, but he does so more often than Archidamus; Lang (1995) 57.

⁹⁵ 8.12.2; 8.45.1. According to Plutarch Alcibiades was believed to have seduced Agis' wife (*Alc.* 23; *Ages.* 3). For a very different explanation see Westlake (1938).

⁹⁶ (1981) 204–7.

Athens have trouble suppressing⁹⁷—surfaces again in Ionia. Sent out as an adviser to Astyochus, he rejects treaties with the Persians that give to the Greeks of Ionia Persian rule in place of freedom (8.43.3)—a noble enough sentiment from the Greek perspective, but one bound to infuriate the Persian Tissaphernes. At the same time, he instructs the Milesians to submit to Tissaphernes, at least for the duration of the war. For this advice he earns the Milesians' rage and refusal to bury him in Miletus when he succumbs to an illness soon afterwards (8.84.5).⁹⁸

Then there is Lysander. Although he never appears in Thucydides' *History* as it has come down to us, his shadow looms large, especially over Book VIII. One can only assume that, had Thucydides lived to complete his work, had he in his final published version factored in the Persians more adequately, and had he paid due attention to enduring Spartan diplomatic skills as well as to their surprising newfound ability to adapt to the exigencies of naval warfare in the closing phases of the Atheno-Peloponnesian War, then Lysander would have achieved in Thucydides the prominence he is accorded by, for example, Plutarch, who devotes a whole *Life* to him, even though strictly biographical details are decidedly thin on the ground.⁹⁹

VII. *Thucydides and/in the Spartan "Mirage"*

François Ollier (1933–1943) coined the term *mirage spartiate* to convey the notion that the history of ancient Sparta has come down through the ages refracted and reflected by a cloudy prism of distorting ideology. Tigerstedt (1965) and others (especially Rawson [1969], and more recently, e.g., Flower [2002], an essay in a collective work whose very title indicates the contemporary scholar's desperate yearning to get somehow "beyond the mirage") have developed that notion both in general and in particular. With regard to the particular, emphasis has been laid especially on the role of Athenians and Athens in the mirage's creation and mutation, to the

⁹⁷ Debnar (2001) 152–55.

⁹⁸ Other Spartans in Book VIII whom we would like to know more about from Thucydides include Astyochus (Falkner [1999]; Westlake [1956]) and Pedaritus (Ducat [2002]).

⁹⁹ See generally on the sources for Lysander Bommelaer (1981).

extent indeed that Sahlins¹⁰⁰ has aptly evoked the concept of “complementary schismogenesis” to account for it: Sparta’s projected image, that is, was the reflex “double”, or antithesis, of a (no doubt sometimes equally distorted) image of Athens.¹⁰¹

That mirage-making process can certainly be detected in Thucydides’ surviving account. As pointed out above, not only does he draw some of his individual characters (Brasidas and Nicias above all) in such a way as to exploit the Athenian-Spartan contrast of “national” character, but he also makes some of his speakers (especially the Corinthians in their two speeches in Book I, first to an Athenian, then to a Peloponnesian audience) engage in similar broadbrush characterological antitheses. In other ways Thucydides shows signs of being a victim of the mirage, rather than its conscious manipulator. For example, right at the outset, in the *Archaeology*, he “buys” the myth—as we today might pejoratively describe it—that from a Year Zero (some time about 800 BC in our terms; in Thucydides’ “a little more than 400 years before the end of this war”) Sparta had possessed and indeed been blessed with just the one, unchanging *πολιτεία* (1.18.1). This was in origin a myth propagated by the Spartans themselves, tied up with their political founding charter myth of an omniscient, all-wise lawgiver called Lycurgus (attested already in Herodotus [1.65] and given full-blown expression in Plutarch’s supposed *Life*). Thucydides, however, does not actually mention Lycurgus by name, either here or elsewhere, which might be interpreted as a sign of a skeptical suspension of judgment as to his historicity, except that his confidently numerate judgment about Sparta’s political stability reveals a failure to attend even to changes in Spartan government and society observable within his own lifetime.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to classify him (as did Ollier) as in any useful sense a “laconizer”, similar to either of those two very different but comparably laconophile associates and pupils of Socrates, Critias and Xenophon. For another even more famous usage of the term *πολιτεία* in connection with Sparta shows that Thucydides did at least try strenuously to penetrate the surface of Spartan propaganda. As we have seen, in writing up his account of the Battle of Mantinea in 418, an encounter to which he explicitly attributed a vital significance, he admits he could not ascertain the

¹⁰⁰ (2004) 74–75, cf. 48–49.

¹⁰¹ See Millender (2001); (2002a); (2002b).

number of casualties on the Spartan side because of Spartan secrecy (5.68.2). The Spartans were indeed monumentally secretive; this trait went with their mendacity¹⁰² and their laconic speech or total silence.¹⁰³ But the increasing dearth of adult Spartiate military manpower (ὀλιγοανθρωπία) that had already begun to afflict Sparta, as Thucydides elsewhere reveals (e.g., 1.132.5),¹⁰⁴ was surely a further incentive to keep such “statistics” away from the all too acutely inquiring eyes of a researcher such as Thucydides.

Yet on another, and one would have supposed no less sensitive, occasion, and in connection with an even more sensitive topic than shrinking Spartiate manpower, Thucydides did interestingly convince himself that he had managed to get behind the Spartans’ defenses, up to a significant point. Sparta’s relations with her Helots had been notoriously bad at least since the great earthquake of *ca.* 464, which occasioned a massive revolt, chiefly of Messenian Helots. This is one of the few topics to which Thucydides did something like justice in his abbreviated and choppy *Pentekontaetia* excursus (1.101–3). And in Book IV, in a context closely linked to the extraordinary *démarche* of the Spartans’ surrender on the islet of Sphacteria off the Messenian coast, Thucydides relates as a proven—or at least provable—fact the massacre by the Spartans of about 2000 putatively liberated Helots. The only aspect of the affair over which he—admittedly with some rhetorical overkill—records a doubt concerns the precise manner in which each Helot was callously “disappeared” (4.80.5). Whether or not Thucydides was taken in by his anti-Spartan informants,¹⁰⁵ the relation of the story—and the editorializing—is hardly a mark of a fervent pro-Spartan sympathizer.

Likewise, it surely was not, nor intended to be, flattering to a Spartan ego to have Athenian speakers on more than one occasion (1.77.6; 5.105.4) observe that Spartans were exceptionally “un-Hellenic” in their behavior toward other Greeks, including—especially—their allies and alleged kinsmen, and then to have those generalizing—both prejudiced and potentially wildly exaggerated—claims fully borne out in empirically demonstrated and carefully recorded practices of violently brutal and selfish insensitivity.¹⁰⁶ And the same can be said

¹⁰² Francis (1991–1993), David (1999).

¹⁰³ Cartledge (2002b) 265.

¹⁰⁴ See n. 23.

¹⁰⁵ Powell (1989).

¹⁰⁶ Hornblower (2000b).

for his backhanded compliments to the Spartan whose career had done most indirectly to damage his own, namely Brasidas. For Brasidas was both super-intelligent and allegedly “the first Spartan sent abroad to leave behind him the settled expectation that the rest were as morally admirable as he” (4.81.3)—an expectation that was of course systematically and painfully falsified. And by stating that Brasidas was “not an incapable speaker for a Spartan” (4.84.2), Thucydides meant not merely that he could string sentences together in a notably unlaconic way but also that his unusually potent rhetoric was found persuasive. It notably persuaded key Athenian allies to desert to the Spartan side, and remain there, Amphipolis not least among them, the Amphipolis that Thucydides, himself, was seriously responsible for losing. In sum, Thucydides both was and was not party to propagating a version of the mirage, but far more importantly the latter rather than the former, even if in part for purely personal reasons.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Westlake (1989b).

MACEDONIA AND THRACE IN THUCYDIDES

Michael Zahrnt

Thucydides' interest in Macedonia and Thrace may have stemmed from his personal connections with the area, but this was certainly not the only reason for him to write in such great detail about events in the northern Aegean. The Archidamian War was primarily sparked off by the Athenians' difficulties with their allies on the Chalcidic Peninsula and their problematic relations with the Macedonian king Perdikkas, which had unexpected and far-reaching consequences. The situation in the areas of the Chalcidic Peninsula and lower Strymon prompted an armistice in 423; war was resumed by the Athenians, who wanted to subdue their rebellious Thracian allies, but was again interrupted following an indecisive battle outside the walls of Amphipolis. At the end of this period, the Peace of Nicias took Athenian interests in this area into special consideration.

This chapter will be less concerned with military and diplomatic events than with the (sometimes very sketchy) information that Thucydides provides about the history of the area on the northern shore of the Aegean. This region comprised Macedonia (the area ruled by the Macedonian king) and Thrace, a geographical area with indigenous tribes living in the interior and Greek cities on the coast. Both Thucydides and contemporaneous Athenian inscriptions used the name "Thrace" for the whole of the area to the east of the Macedonian kingdom, from the Greek and non-Greek cities of the Chalcidic Peninsula and the Athenian colony Amphipolis on the lower Strymon up to the west coast of the Black Sea.¹ Although these regions bordered on one another, we shall discuss them separately, beginning with Macedonia—the only area whose previous history was outlined by Thucydides.

¹ Cf. Zahrnt (1997) and (2002).

Macedonia

In the winter of 429/8, the Odrysian king Sitalkes attacked Macedonia; Thucydides adds to his account of these events a digression in which he outlines the rise and expansion of the kingdom of Macedonia up to his own time.² Combining this report with information from other literary sources, archaeological evidence (from Vergina in particular) and the geography of the region, we can piece together the following sketch of developments from the middle of the seventh century to the first part of the fifth: the origins of the Macedonians are obscure, but we know that they initially settled south of the river Haliakmon and north of the Pierian Mountains around Aigeai (Vergina), which was to remain their capital until the beginning of the fourth century. The Macedonians soon began to expand, initially conquering the region around the Thermaic Gulf, from the mouth of the Peneios to what is now Thessaloniki: Pieria, Bottiaia, and the area on both sides of the lower Axios. They then moved inland, adding Eordaia and Almopia, west and northwest of the coastal plain respectively, while to the east they annexed Anthemus (the plain southeast of Thessaloniki), the area around Lake Koroneia and Lake Bolbe (Mygdonia), and Krestonia and Bisaltia to the north of this plain (between Axios and Strymon). Their final acquisitions were the different districts of Upper Macedonia (along the Haliakmon and in the plain northwest of Eordaia): Lynkos, Elimeia, and others which “though in alliance with the Macedonians of the coastal areas and subject to them, have kings of their own” (2.99.2). This is a very peculiar definition: how can a people be allied with another and simultaneously subject to them? Perhaps it was Thucydides’ way of expressing the invariably unstable and strained relations between the Macedonian kings in the plain (Lower Macedonia) and the rulers in Upper Macedonia.

Macedonia is next referred to when Thucydides describes Themistocles reaching “Pydna (which was in the kingdom) of Alexander” (1.137.1) in the course of his flight from the Peloponnese. Alexander’s successor, Perdikkas II, ascended the throne *ca.* 450; we first hear of

² 2.99; cf. Zahnt (1984); partly diverging dating in Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou (1992) 15ff.

him in 433, when he had become hostile to the Athenians, previously having been their friend and ally (1.57.2).

The Athenians had formed alliances with Perdikkas' brother Philippos, who had a "principality" (ἀρχή) in eastern Macedonia, bordered to the west by the Axios (cf. 2.100.3), and with Derdas (1.57.3), the ruler of Elimeia, one of the semi-independent districts of Upper Macedonia. This was typical of the internal situation in Macedonia during the time before Philip II, in which the kings not only had to deal with the rulers of the Upper Macedonian tribes striving for independence, but also with the enmity of members of their own family striving for power. The external enemies of the Macedonian kings often made the most of these internal difficulties; this was the way in which the Athenians' alliance with Derdas and Philippos was forged, and the Athenians resolved to send thirty ships and one thousand hoplites against Macedonia (57.6). The relatively modest size of the Athenian force allows us to assess the military strength of Perdikkas who, in view of the imminent danger, had already begun to negotiate with Sparta and Corinth and at the same time had made overtures to both the Chalcidians of Thrace and the Bottiaians, encouraging them to break away from Athens and become his allies (57.4f.). This was to become a special feature of Perdikkas' foreign policy during the Peloponnesian War: he sought alliances with his enemies' enemies and changed sides whenever this seemed to be expedient. This policy was quite successful on the whole, and he managed to keep his kingdom intact, eventually handing it over to his son and successor Archelaos.³

But all this still lay in the future. In the winter of 433/2 Perdikkas needed to make preparations for the attacks of the Athenians and their Macedonian allies. And so, when the Chalcidians revolted from Athens in spring 432, he persuaded them to abandon their cities on the coast and settle inland at Olynthos, and at the same time he gave them part of his own territory of Mygdonia around Lake Bolbe.⁴ Although Thucydides only mentions the Chalcidians, there is inscriptional evidence that the Bottiaians also received some land south of Lake Bolbe.⁵ From these offers, it is clear that the plain around the

³ On Perdikkas, cf. Hammond-Griffith (1979) 115ff.; Borza (1990) 132ff.

⁴ 1.58.2; cf. Zahrt (1971) 49ff.

⁵ Cf. Hatzopoulos-Loukopoulou (1992) 71ff.

two lakes north of the Chalcidic Peninsula was still part of Macedonia; Philippos' ἀρχή must have been located north of this plain. In the meantime, the Athenian troops had arrived in the north, and, finding Poteidaia, the Bottiaians and the Chalcidians already in revolt, decided to turn their attention to Macedonia and to wage war alongside Philippos and the brothers of Derdas, who had invaded Macedonia from the interior (1.59.2). The Athenians consequently attacked the coastal towns, took Therme and besieged Pydna (1.61.2). Perdikkas was under pressure on several fronts when the Corinthians sent reinforcements to Poteidaia, and the Athenian generals decided to turn against the revolting cities of the Chalcidic Peninsula; they concluded an agreement and an alliance with Perdikkas and withdrew from Macedonia.⁶ Perdikkas had hardly managed to get rid of them when he changed sides and sent his cavalry to support the Poteidaiaians (1.62.2). In the ensuing battle north of Poteidaia there were Macedonian horsemen fighting on both sides (1.62.3f.; 1.63.2). Within a short time Perdikkas had shown extraordinary mobility: initially a friend and ally of the Athenians, he had become their enemy; under military pressure, he had then concluded an agreement and alliance with them, only to change sides yet again. In the next eighteen years this was to happen several times.

The first reversal occurred in 431 when a certain Nymphodoros of Abdera brought about a reconciliation between the Athenians and the Macedonian king and persuaded the former to restore Therme to Perdikkas (2.29.6). Although Thucydides adds that Perdikkas immediately joined forces with the Athenians and took the field against the Chalcidians, we do not hear of him when the Athenians besieged and took Poteidaia (2.58; 2.70), nor in the battle against the Bottiaians and Chalcidians near Spartolos (2.79). Instead of honoring his alliance, in summer 429 Perdikkas sent one thousand Macedonians to Akarnania to support the Lacedaemonians (2.80.6), unbeknownst to the Athenians. Antiochos, king of the Orestai, had also sent soldiers (§ 6), but he was not bound by treaty to the Athenians. The Athenians must have learned of Perdikkas' behavior, and when the Odrysian king Sitalkes

⁶ 1.61.3. The text of § 4 is undoubtedly corrupt, but it is certain that the Athenian troops would have had to pass Beroia when they marched from Pydna to the Chalcidic Peninsula; on the western extent of the Thermaic Gulf in classical times, cf. Zahrt (1984) 334ff.

invaded Macedonia in winter 429/8, he was accompanied by Athenian envoys and by Hagnon, the founder of Amphipolis (4.102.3; cf. 5.11.1), who had been sent against Poteidaia in 430 (2.58); this time Hagnon was to command the Athenian troops, which were expected but failed to arrive (2.95.3; cf. 2.101.1). Sitalkes took with him Amyntas, the son of Perdikkas' brother Philippos (who had probably died in the meantime), with the intention of making him king of the Macedonians. Once again Perdikkas was in danger of losing his kingdom, but the invasion came to nothing. The Thracian troops entered Macedonia from the north and invaded the ἀρχή that had belonged to Philippos, but were unable to take all the towns in this area. They then marched into central Macedonia but did not get further than Pella and Kyrrhos; instead they invaded the eastern part of the kingdom and ravaged Mygdonia, Krestonia, and Anthemus.⁷ In his account of the Thracian invasion, Thucydides gives us information about the Macedonian army (2.100.5): the infantry was unable to put up any opposition, but the cavalry, reinforced by horsemen from the allies in the interior, attacked the Thracian army wherever they chose. Eventually, Sitalkes began negotiations with Perdikkas and left Macedonia thirty days later.

Once again, Perdikkas had maintained his reign, albeit mainly with the help of his allies in the interior, i.e., the districts of Upper Macedonia. Amyntas, son of Philippos, and Derdas of Elimeia do not appear again in the sources; in the following years the Athenians were occupied elsewhere and did not concern themselves with Perdikkas. For more than four years Thucydides makes no mention of Macedonia or its king. By 424, however, things had changed. As a result of recent successes by the Athenians, Perdikkas was fearful because of his longstanding differences with them, although not as yet openly hostile towards them. In cooperation with the Chalcidians, he asked the Lacedaemonians to send an army to the north, his main goal being to acquire military assistance against Arrhabaios, the ruler of Lynkos (4.79.1f.). Under the command of Brasidas, a Peloponnesian army of 1,700 hoplites marched to the north and arrived at Dion, a small town in Macedonia at the foot of Mount Olympos.⁸ Perdikkas immediately took this army, together with his

⁷ 2.100.1–4; cf. the map in Hammond-Griffith (1979) 128.

⁸ 4.78. Presumably they arrived at Dion because the Thessalians had blocked

own forces, and marched against Lynkos. However, when they arrived at the pass leading into Lynkos, Brasidas, who had not been sent to help Perdikkas subdue his enemies and enlarge his kingdom but to find new allies for the war against the Athenians, arranged a meeting with Arrhabaios—against the wishes of Perdikkas, listened to his arguments, and withdrew his army without invading Lynkos. Perdikkas was aggrieved by this and reduced his contributions to the maintenance of the Peloponnesian army from half to a third (4.83). The fact that he did not stop the payments completely may be due to the fact that the arrangement that Brasidas had brought about was not entirely disadvantageous to him; but we can do no more than speculate about this.

In the weeks that followed, Brasidas was operating in the Chalcidic Peninsula and, there is no mention of the Macedonian king in the text. But when Brasidas captured Amphipolis, Perdikkas reappeared on the scene, not only to congratulate the Spartan commander but also to ensure that he got a share in his success (4.107.3). The cities of the Chalcidic Peninsula had always been outside Macedonian control, whereas, after the retreat of the Persian forces in 479, the Macedonian king Alexandros I had extended the eastern frontier of his kingdom to the lower Strymon (only to lose part of this newly won territory to the Athenians and to Thracian tribes). But Perdikkas' hopes were in vain, for he did not gain any direct advantage from Brasidas' successes in the Strymon basin. Brasidas continued to win over Athenian allies in this area until an armistice between Sparta and Athens was agreed upon in the spring of 423.

During the truce Brasidas and Perdikkas again marched to Lynkos against Arrhabaios. We are not told how the Macedonian king managed to persuade the Spartan commander to attack the very man with whom he had negotiated the year before, but we are given some ambiguous and much-discussed information concerning the composition of the Macedonian army and the ethnicity of the Macedonians (4.124.1): according to Thucydides, Perdikkas "led the forces of the Macedonians, over whom he held sway, and a body of Hellenic hoplites who lived among them". He also commanded Macedonian

the passage through the Tempe gorge, so that the Peloponnesian troops had to take the route through Perrhaibia and cross the mountain chain either north of Lower Olympus or via the Petra Pass.

horsemen, “and there was also a great multitude of barbarians”. It appears that Thucydides thought in terms of three categories: Greeks who lived in Perdikkas’ kingdom and provided hoplites (their number is unknown), Macedonians who served as cavalry, and the remainder of Perdikkas’ subjects, who at first sight seem to be identical with the “great multitude of barbarians”. Did Thucydides really think that the Macedonians were barbarians, though? Simon Hornblower is right when he says that “in the present passage . . . Thucydides meant to suggest that the Macedonians were intermediate between Greeks and (utter) barbarians, and that Thucydides did not operate with an undifferentiated concept ‘barbarian’.”⁹ At any rate, Thucydides’ formulations here (and elsewhere) do not help to answer the much-discussed question of whether the Macedonians were Greeks. They were, but apparently not in the view of Thucydides.

When Perdikkas and Brasidas invaded Lynkos they found the forces of Arrhabaios waiting for them. In the ensuing battle, won by the Macedonians, the Lynkestians employed hoplites (4.124.2f.), which the Macedonians proper did not have—at least, none are specifically referred to by Thucydides. Perdikkas then wanted to advance against the villages of Arrhabaios, but Brasidas was anxious to get back to his allies on the Chalcidic Peninsula (4.124.4). There were apparently villages in Lynkos but no towns, and given that hoplites tend to be associated with *poleis*, it is highly surprising that there should have been Lynkestian hoplites; nevertheless, we have to accept this. When the Illyrians whom Perdikkas had hired as mercenaries betrayed him and went over to Arrhabaios, the two commanders agreed that it would be best to retreat. However, since they were at odds with one another, their encampments were some distance apart. During the night “the Macedonians and the mass of the barbarians” panicked and fled, forcing the king to go with them without informing Brasidas (4.125.1). At dawn Brasidas’ troops found themselves deserted and exposed to the attacks of the Lynkestians and the Illyrians, yet managed to get back safely to Macedonia (4.125.2–4.128.4). From then on, Perdikkas regarded Brasidas as his enemy and tried to get rid of him, although, as Thucydides pointed out, it would have been in his interest to use Brasidas against the Athenians (4.128.5). Instead, in 423/2 he (once again) concluded an alliance with the Athenians

⁹ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.391f.; cf. also Rhodes (1998a) 306.

(4.132.1) and, with the help of his Thessalian friends, prevented the passage of a Spartan army through Thessaly (4.132.2).

Whether the fragments of a treaty of friendship and alliance between Perdikkas and the Athenians (*IG I³ 89*) belong to this alliance is still controversial; there were many opportunities for such a treaty to have been recorded on stone. However, there are fragments of another treaty between Athens and several Bottiaian cities, headed by Kalindoia, which is usually dated to 422 (*IG I³ 76*). Kalindoia and the other two cities whose names are preserved on the stone are known to be located in the plain south of Lake Bolbe, whereas Spartolos, the most important Bottiaian city, appears to be missing. Perdikkas seems to have brought about an agreement between the Athenians and the Bottiaians who had been settled in his kingdom since 432, but at the same time betrayed his former Bottiaian allies on the Chalcidic Peninsula. No further activity by Perdikkas is recorded in this area: when war resumed in 422 and Cleon sent envoys to Perdikkas with a request to join him with an army—this was in accordance with the terms of alliance (5.6.2)—we do not hear of any assistance being given by the Macedonian king. Nor is he mentioned in connection with the Peace of Nicias and the events in the north which immediately followed its conclusion.

Perdikkas next makes an appearance in the winter of 418/7, when he was persuaded to join the alliance between Sparta and Argos; he did not desert the Athenians at once, though (5.80.2). The alliance concluded with them in 423/2 seems to have lasted for about five years. In the meantime, however, he changed sides again: he did not assist the Athenians in their expedition against the Chalcidians in Thrace and against Amphipolis. In retaliation, in the winter of 417/6, the Athenians blockaded Macedonia from the sea, invoking the oaths that Perdikkas had exchanged with the Argives and Lacedaemonians (5.83.4). This was not to be Perdikkas' last change of sides. In the winter of 416/5 the Athenians sent by sea to Methone a cavalry force of their own and the Macedonian exiles living in Athens, and ravaged Perdikkas' territory (6.7.3). Then in 414 the king joined the Athenian general Euctemon in his expedition against Amphipolis (7.9); but we do not know how this renewal of relations came about. This is the last time the volatile ruler is mentioned by Thucydides: he died soon after this campaign and left his kingdom to his son Archelaos, whom Thucydides praises for having built "fortresses in Macedonia, cut straight roads, and in general orga-

nized his country for war by providing cavalry, arms and other equipment, beyond anything achieved by all the eight kings who had preceded him" (2.100.2)¹⁰ (trans. C.F. Smith). When Thucydides wrote this appraisal, he was perhaps unaware that he would never say a word about the death of Perdikkas and the succession of his son. We shall never know whether, had he lived longer and completed his *History*, he would have inserted an obituary of Perdikkas, whom he apparently admired to a certain extent.

*The Chalcidic Peninsula*¹¹

In antiquity the name Chalkidike referred solely to the territory of the Thracian Chalcidians, namely Sithonia and its hinterland, which included the cities of (from west to east) Olynthos, Mekyberna, Sermylia, Gale, Torone, Sarte, Singos, Piloros, Stolos, and Assera.¹² The whole region south of Lake Bolbe and Lake Koroneia was inhabited by people of very different origin—Greek colonists on the coast and non-Greeks both on the coast and in the interior—and should be called the Chalcidic Peninsula. The most important cities in Thucydides' work, besides those of the Chalcidians, were Spartolos, the capital of the Bottiaians (who had been expelled by the Macedonians and arrived in about 600 BC), the Corinthian colony Poteidaia on the isthmus of the Pallene, the Eretrian colony Mende in the center of the same peninsula, Skione to the east of Mende and of uncertain origin, the indigenous Dion on the northeast coast of the Akte (Athos), and the Andrian colonies of Sane, Akanthos, and Stagira in the east. When Thucydides mentions a Greek colony for the first time, he generally gives the name of its mother city,¹³ even in the case of Skione, which claimed to be a colony of the Peloponnesian Pellene (4.120.1). But in the case of the Chalcidians, he never makes any reference to a mother city, even though in antiquity the Chalcidians

¹⁰ For quotations from the *History* the translation of C.F. Smith (*The Loeb Classical Library*) is used throughout this paper.

¹¹ For bibliography, see Zahrnt (1971); Psoma (2001).

¹² See map I in Zahrnt (1971).

¹³ Poteidaia: 1.56.2; Mende: 4.123.1; Sane: 4.109.3; Akanthos: 4.84.1; Stagira: 4.88.4.

were said to have come from the island of Euboia, and modern research has proved that there was a close linguistic and religious connection between the Euboian Chalcidians and those in Thrace.¹⁴ Perhaps Thucydides did not accord colonial status to the cities of the Thracian Chalcidians because none had an *oikistes* (i.e., the founder of the colony, worshipped as a hero after his death). This in turn may be explained by the fact that in the case of the Chalcidians, the usual relationship between colony and mother city did not exist, because the Euboian Chalcidians had come north and settled on Sithonia some time before there were *poleis* in Greece, which normally sent out the colonists and also appointed an *oikistes*. In any case, by the end of the sixth century the Chalcidians had split up into *poleis*, although some bond still existed between them, as the negotiations before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War show.

In order to understand the events on the Chalcidic Peninsula that ultimately led to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, we need to combine the information provided by Thucydides with the evidence of the Athenian Tribute Lists. In the years leading up to the Peloponnesian War, all communities of the Chalcidic Peninsula, Greek and non-Greek, were members of the Athenian Empire and some had seen an enormous increase in their tribute in the mid-430s, in particular Poteidaia, whose tribute rose from six to fifteen talents.¹⁵ It is therefore not surprising that in 433 the Athenians “were afraid that the Poteidaians, persuaded by Perdikkas and the Corinthians, might revolt and induce the rest of the allies in Thrace to revolt with them”. They therefore ordered the Poteidaians to pull down their fortifications on the side of Pallene, send hostages to Athens, and break off relations with their mother city (1.56.2). At the same time, Perdikkas made overtures to the Chalcidians and Bottiaians, urging them to revolt simultaneously (1.57.5). The Athenians became aware of this, and wishing to avert the revolt of these cities, ordered the commanders of the fleet which was to sail against Perdikkas the following spring “to take hostages from the Poteidaicans, to pull down their fortifications, and also to keep a watch on the neighbouring towns and prevent them from revolting” (1.57.6).

¹⁴ Cf. Hatzopoulos (1988) 40ff.; Knoepfler (1990).

¹⁵ Cf. the lists in Zahrnt (1971) 34ff.; 51.

During the following winter the Poteidaians negotiated with Athens but obtained no satisfactory result, while the Lacedaemonians promised to invade Attica if the Athenians attacked Poteidaia. The Poteidaians took this promise as an incitement and revolted together with the Chalcidians and the Bottiaians (1.58.1), before the Athenian ships had arrived in the north (1.59.1). After the revolt Perdikkas persuaded the Chalcidians to pull down and abandon their cities on the coast and settle inland at Olynthos, building a single strong city there. He also gave them part of his own territory in Mygdonia around Lake Bolbe, which they would be allowed to cultivate for the duration of the war with the Athenians (1.58.2); inscriptional evidence cited above (n. 5) shows that Bottiaians had also moved into the interior. While these Bottiaians appear later on in the treaty concluded with the Athenians in 422 (*IG* I³ 76), the Chalcidians who settled south of Lake Bolbe and founded a city called Apollonia are not mentioned again by Thucydides. By contrast, the Chalcidians who gave up their cities on the coast and moved to Olynthos were to play a prominent part in the Archidamian War, as we shall see.

When the Athenian troops arrived in the north in the spring of 432 and found Poteidaia and the other cities already in revolt, they decided to turn their attention to Macedonia.¹⁶ But once the Corinthians had sent two thousand soldiers to Poteidaia and reinforcements had arrived from Athens, the Athenians left Macedonia, marched against the revolting cities, and arrived at a place near Poteidaia, where the Poteidaians and Peloponnesians were waiting for them, encamped to the north of the city. Meanwhile the Chalcidians and the other allies from outside the isthmus were stationed at Olynthos but did not see any action, since the Athenians gained a quick victory in the battle that ensued. After this, the Athenians received reinforcements and besieged Poteidaia while their troops laid waste Chalkidike and Bottike, despite the assistance of the Corinthian commander Aristeus (1.60–65).

¹⁶ 1.59. Thucydides speaks only of "Poteidaia and the other cities". The Athenian Tribute Lists allow us to assess the extent of the revolt, which covered more than two thirds of the Chalcidic Peninsula and meant a loss of about thirty-five talents for the Athenians; cf. the list on p. 51 and map II in Zahrtnt (1971). Almost the same amount again was at stake if the revolt spread to the rest of the Chalcidic Peninsula, so it is quite natural that the Athenians should have made every effort to win back their revolting allies.

Against the background of Athenian support for the Corcyreans, the events in the north had further aggravated the tensions between the Athenians and the Corinthians, and accelerated the outbreak of the Archidamian War, whose first and last years saw a great deal of fighting on the Chalcidic Peninsula. The siege of Poteidaia continued for more than two years: in the summer of 431 three thousand Athenian hoplites were stationed in the area (2.31.2); in the following summer the Athenians sent yet more troops against Poteidaia and against the Chalcidians in Thrace (2.58). The Poteidaians finally capitulated the following winter, the Athenians already having spent two thousand talents on the siege. They were permitted to leave the city under a truce and went to Chalkidike or wherever else they could find a place to go. Shortly afterward, the Athenians sent settlers of their own to Poteidaia and colonized it (2.70). Using it as a base, the Athenians marched against the Chalcidians and Bottiaians with two thousand hoplites and two hundred cavalry in the summer of 429. They arrived at the town of Spartolos in Bottike, which they hoped would be handed over to them by a faction inside the town with whom they were negotiating; however, the Chalcidians had sent troops to support the Bottiaians and in the battle which ensued, the Athenians were defeated and driven back to Poteidaia (2.79). Following this defeat the Athenians temporarily abandoned the war against these former allies, letting others continue with it. They had already tried to make the Odrysian king Sitalkes their ally in the summer of 431, desiring his help in subduing the revolts in Thrace (2.29.4f.). But the king did not come until the winter of 429/8: after his invasion of Perdikkas' kingdom he sent off part of his army to attack the Chalcidians and Bottiaians, and forcing them to retreat behind their fortifications, ravaged their lands. After eight days, however, he returned home with his army (2.95; 101.1; 6).

We hear no more about the Chalcidic Peninsula until summer 425, when an Athenian general, Simonides, collected troops from the garrisons in Thrace and the allies in that area and captured the otherwise unknown Thracian town of Eion, a colony of the Mendaiaans and hostile to Athens. But he was driven out by the Chalcidians and Bottiaians, losing many soldiers in the process (4.7). It is not known why Thucydides reported this relatively unimportant event and yet said nothing about the Athenian successes that can be inferred from inscriptional evidence: by autumn 425 the Athenians must have won back several places on Sithonia and reduced the area controlled

by the Chalcidians.¹⁷ It is therefore not surprising that the Chalcidians, in conjunction with Perdikkas, asked the Lacedaemonians to send an army to the north; according to Thucydides both were alarmed by the success of the Athenians (namely in Pylos and Kythera), and the Chalcidians in particular believed that the Athenians would attack them first, while the neighboring cities that had not yet revolted nevertheless secretly took part in inviting the Peloponnesians to intervene (4.79.2). After his quarrel with Perdikkas and return from Lynkos, Brasidas marched with his own forces along with a number of Chalcidians against Akanthos, which he was able to induce to revolt from the Athenians; not long afterward Stagira, which lay to the north of Akanthos, joined in the revolt (4.84–88). But Brasidas' main target was the Athenian colony Amphipolis, which he had to attack by land since he had no fleet. He first brought the east coast of the Chalcidic Peninsula under his control, marching against Amphipolis the next winter. He set out from the otherwise unknown Arnai in Chalkidike (4.104.1), winning over Argilos on the way (4.103.4). On his return from the lower Strymon, he attacked the cities of the Akte (Athos), most of which surrendered to him. Only Sane and Dion resisted, so he stayed there with his army and devastated their territory (4.109). Up until this point, Brasidas had mainly operated in the interests of the Spartans and, with the exception of Akanthos, his gains on the Chalcidic Peninsula were relatively unspectacular. But now he marched against Chalcidian Torone, which had paid the Athenians twelve talents annually in the first years of the Archidamian War and which the Chalcidians had a strong interest in controlling—although Thucydides' account of events does not give the impression that the citizens of Torone had been longing for an opportunity to join the Chalcidic state. With the help of a handful of conspirators, headed by an Olynthian, Brasidas captured the city (4.110–116), but instead of handing it over to the Chalcidians, he appointed a Spartan as its governor (4.132.3).

In the spring of 423 the Lacedaemonians and Athenians concluded a one-year armistice; the Athenians were alarmed by Brasidas' success in Thrace, while the Lacedaemonians hoped that the Athenians might eventually be willing to end the war (4.117). Before the armistice

¹⁷ Cf. Zahmt (1971) 63ff.

became known on the Chalcidic Peninsula, the Skionians in Pallene went over to Brasidas (4.120f.). When Brasidas refused to give up Skione, the Athenians passed a vote to destroy the place and to put its citizens to death (4.122). But while preparations were still being made for the campaign, Mende also revolted from the Athenians (4.123). While Mende was won back easily (4.129f.), Skione resisted and had to be besieged (4.131). As in Torone, the conspirators who brought about the revolt in Mende were few in number, but in Skione the majority of the population supported the revolt and consequently backed the resistance against the Athenians. After the armistice expired in spring 422, Cleon persuaded the Athenians to let him sail with a large force against the cities of Thrace (5.2.1), subsequently managing to win back Torone and sending 700 prisoners—Toronaïans, Peloponnesians and Chalcidians—to Athens. After the conclusion of the treaty of Nicias, the Peloponnesians were set free and the others ransomed by the Olynthians (5.2.2–5.3.4). Thucydides tells us that Cleon sailed to Eion on the Strymon after the capture of Torone and undertook an unsuccessful attack on Stagira (5.6.1); yet this cannot have been the whole story. The text of the Peace of Nicias, which will be examined below, presupposes additional territorial gains by the Athenians, either by Cleon or some unknown predecessor. Since Cleon had been responsible for Thucydides' exile, the historian's silence is understandable, albeit not pardonable.

The deaths of the war's two main protagonists, Cleon and Brasidas, who were both killed in a skirmish outside the walls of Amphipolis, opened the way for the Peace of Nicias (concluded in 421).¹⁸ Here we shall be interested only in the terms that pertained to the Chalcidic Peninsula and the adjoining area. The crucial section is § 5, which is quoted in full with the emendation suggested by J. Steup and accepted by A.W. Gomme:¹⁹ "The Lacedaemonians and their allies shall restore Amphipolis to the Athenians". Not surprisingly, this section of the treaty begins with the demand the Athenians cared most about. "In the case of cities delivered by the Lacedaemonians to the Athenians, their inhabitants shall be allowed to go away wherever

¹⁸ 5.18f.; on the terms concerning the Chalcidic Peninsula and their interpretation, cf. Zahrnt (1971) 66ff.

¹⁹ Gomme, *HCT* 3.666; cf. Zahrnt (1971) 67ff.

they wish, having their own possession". These cities, which had already been surrendered to the Athenians, certainly included Mende (cf. 4.129f.), Galepsos (cf. 5.6.1), and the cities in the Akte, which must also have been won back by Cleon, although Thucydides does not say this (cf. 5.35.1, where Thyssos is described as an Athenian ally). "The following cities shall be autonomous, as long as they pay the tribute that was fixed in the time of Aristides. And it shall not be lawful for the Athenians and their allies, after the ratification of the treaty, to bear arms against the cities to their hurt, as long as they pay the tribute. These cities are Argilos, Stagira, Akanthos, Stolos, Olynthos, Spartolos. These cities shall be allies neither of the Lacedaemonians nor of the Athenians; but if the Athenians can persuade these cities, it shall be lawful for the Athenians to make them, with their own free will and consent, allies to themselves". The position of these six cities is most unusual, if not outright contradictory, and must have been the result of the negotiations between Athens and Sparta: they were returned as taxpayers to Athens, but the Spartans could at least pretend to have secured their autonomy, even if they were no longer allowed to keep them as allies. Argilos, Stagira, and Akanthos had gone over to Brasidas and now had to be given up by the Spartans; Olynthos was the center of the Chalcidic state, which was not recognized by the Athenians and therefore not mentioned in the treaty; Spartolos was the most important of the Bottiaian cities, some of which had already concluded a treaty with the Athenians; and Stolos was a city of the Chalcidians, not previously mentioned by Thucydides, which had joined the revolt of 432 and whose autonomy would weaken the Chalcidian state. This weakening of the Chalcidians was the principal goal of the Athenians, as the next clause clearly shows:²⁰ "The Mekybernaians and Galaiaians and Singians shall dwell in their own towns on the same terms as the Olynthians." Mekyberna, Singos and Gale were three of the Chalcidic cities on the coast that had been abandoned in 432 and whose population had moved to Olynthos. They had been won back by the Athenians, but the inhabitants had not returned. The restoration of these three cities would also weaken the Chalcidic state. The same intent can be discerned in § 8: "As to Skione, Torone, Sermylia,

²⁰ § 6; on the necessary emendation of Σαναίους to Γαλαίους, cf. Zahrt (1971) 69 with n. 52.

or any other city which the Athenians hold, the Athenians shall determine about these and the other cities as they may think best", Torone had already been won back by Cleon (5.2f.), while Skione was under siege and likely to capitulate soon (cf. 5.32.1). The reference to Sermylia in this context is extremely surprising: it had definitely been in revolt during the first years of the Archidamian War but must have been subdued; once again Thucydides omits mentioning Athenian successes in the north.²¹ Looking at a map of the Chalcidic Peninsula, it is plain to see what the Athenians wanted to achieve: two Chalcidic cities were already in their hands and had to remain so (Sermylia, Torone), three others needed to be restored (Mekyberna, Singos, Gale), and two were to be autonomous (Olynthos, Stolos). If the terms of the treaty were implemented, the Chalcidic state would be restricted to the plain around Olynthos.²² In other words, the main aim of the Peace of Nicias was the dissolution of the Chalcidic state.

But what exactly was this Chalcidic state, and why did it represent such a threat to the Athenians? Thucydides does not give a satisfactory description, but in the first four Books there is enough information for us to get an idea of its character. The territory was called Chalkidike and covered the area of the rebelling Chalcidic cities,²³ and the state's center was Olynthos. In terms of foreign affairs, the Chalcidians acted as a unity, concluding treaties (1.58.1), sending embassies (4.79.2; 4.81.1; 4.83.3), agitating against Athens in other cities (4.84.4; 4.103.3), and appointing a *proxenos* (4.78.1). Their constitution seems to have been oligarchic; at any rate, in Akanthos (4.84.2), Torone (4.110.2), and Mende (4.123.2) it was the oligarchs who cooperated with the Chalcidians and betrayed their cities to them. The hoplites of the Chalcidians are mentioned only once, when they suffered a defeat (2.79). We hear more about cavalry and light troops and their successes (2.79; 4.123.4; 5.6.4; 5.10.9f.). All of these forces were referred to as "troops of the Chalcidians" or simply "Chalcidians" (cf. also 1.62.3; 4.7; 4.84.1; 4.124.1). The Chalcidians acted as an integrated whole both politically and militarily. During the first years of the war their strike power seems to

²¹ On the history of Sermylia during these years, cf. Zahrnt (1971) 225f.

²² Cf. map III in Zahrnt (1971).

²³ 1.65.2; 2.70.4; 2.101.5; 4.79.1; 4.103.1.

have grown, and they were able to inflict a defeat on the Athenian army (2.79). However, far from their territory increasing, quite the reverse happened: as we have already seen, the Chalcidians must have lost places to the Athenians, even in the neighborhood of their center Olynthos (Mekyberna, Sermylia, Singos). The Athenian successes (not mentioned by Thucydides) severely reduced the Chalcidic state's territory, a situation that was reinforced by the terms of the Peace of Nicias.

Did the Athenians manage to keep the Chalcidic state weakened and win back other allies on the Chalcidic Peninsula who had revolted either before or during the war? Thucydides is not very informative, but the few hints he does give are highly revealing. Since it had fallen by lot to the Lacedaemonians to begin restoring the positions they held, Spartan envoys arrived in the north and ordered the cities "to accept the treaty, as it had been prescribed for each"; but the cities refused, as they thought the terms unfavorable to them (5.21.1f.). Thucydides does not tell us how many states refused to comply, but in the introduction to the second part of his work, he says that in the years of "the suspicious truce", which followed the first ten-years' war, the allies in Thrace were no less hostile to the Athenians than they had been before (5.26.2). The truth of this statement is borne out by the following events: when the Spartans summoned the Corinthians to accept the treaty with the Athenians, the Corinthians replied that they could not abandon their allies in Thrace, to whom they had sworn an oath at the time when they had first revolted together with the Poteidaians, and later (5.30.2f.). This may have been a pretext: the Corinthians did not want to oppose the Spartans openly and instead had recourse to the gods; but it does at least prove that the Chalcidians and (southern) Bottiaians were still at war. While the Bottiaians are not mentioned again by Thucydides, the Chalcidians remained active and, in the summer of 421, concluded an alliance with the Corinthians and the Argives (5.31.6). There were others on the Chalcidic Peninsula who also showed no consideration for Athenian wishes: the same summer the Dians took Thyssos, a city on the Akte that was allied with the Athenians, according to Thucydides.²⁴ The last reference to the Dians

²⁴ 5.35.1. On the location of Dion and Thyssos as well as on these events, cf. Zahrnt (1971) 182ff.; 189ff.

had been in the account of their successful resistance to Brasidas (4.109.4); since they are not mentioned in the Peace of Nicias, they must still have been members of the Athenian Empire in 421. Evidently even the Athenians' own allies did not always act in their best interests; when it came to their enemies, still less could be expected: in the course of the winter of 421/0 the Olynthians captured Mekyberna, a town garrisoned by the Athenians, with a sudden attack (5.39.1). Here Thucydides speaks of the Olynthians rather than the Chalcidians because Mekyberna was the harbor of Olynthos; however, the Chalcidic state continued to exist and took an active part in the negotiations of these years.

In the winter of 421/0 Thucydides mentions Thracian envoys, who must have been Chalcidians. Their task was to consult with the Boeotarchs, the Corinthians, and the Megarians, but these negotiations came to nothing (5.38.1; 5.38.4). The Chalcidians were not involved in the events leading up to the battle of Mantinea (418 BC), but the following winter the Lacedaemonians and Argives sent envoys to the cities in Thrace and to Perdikkas, and the Lacedaemonians renewed their old oaths with the Chalcidians and swore new ones (5.80.2). Sparta had probably been allied with the Chalcidians (and with the Bottiaians) since the beginning of the Archidamian War, and these alliances had certainly been renewed by Brasidas. Both the capture of Mekyberna and the renewal of the alliance with the Spartans constituted infringements of the terms of the Peace of Nicias, but it seems that in the years immediately following the treaty's conclusion, the Athenians did not concern themselves with whether it was actually adhered to. This negligence cost them another ally in the summer of 417 when the Dians, who had already taken the neighboring city of Thyssos, revolted and went over to the Chalcidians (5.82.1). Only then did the Athenians react, deciding to send an army against the Chalcidians and against Amphipolis; but as the Macedonian king Perdikkas once again defected, the expedition came to nothing (5.83.4). The next mention of the Chalcidians is in connection with the winter of 416/15, when the Spartans asked them to join Perdikkas in his war against the Athenians; but since they were observing with the Athenians a truce which had to be renewed every ten days, they refused to help him (6.7.4). Some months later Nicias complained that the Chalcidians in Thrace were still unsubdued after so many years of revolt from Athens (6.10.5). This is the last reference to the Chalcidians in Thucydides, and by

the time they reappear in sources in the first years of the fourth century, the Chalcidic state, which in 421 had been confined to Olynthos and its surroundings, had developed into a respectable federal state comprising the whole of Chalkidike. The beginnings of this development can be traced in the text of Thucydides.

Amphipolis and its Surroundings

In both strategic and economic terms, the exit of the Strymon basin was the most important place on the Aegean coast of Thrace, coveted by both the Athenians and the Macedonians—and of course defended by the Thracians. In 476 the Athenians and their allies captured Eion, the Persian fort on the mouth of the Strymon (1.98.1), but Thucydides makes no mention of any early attempt to found a colony in this area. This did not happen until 465, when the Athenians sent ten thousand colonists (Athenians and their allies) to the river Strymon to colonize a place that was then called Ennea Hodoi and later Amphipolis (1.100.3). The colonists managed to gain possession of Ennea Hodoi, inhabited at that time by Edonians, but when they advanced into the interior of Thrace they were destroyed by the united forces of the Thracians at Drabeskos; this defeat was apparently the end of the colony. It was only in 437/6 that the Athenians at last managed to found Amphipolis. Curiously enough, Thucydides does not speak of the foundation of the colony in the context of the *Pentekontaetia* but only in the historical sketch at the beginning of his account of Brasidas' capture of Amphipolis (4.102–108). Such a chapter introducing a single city is unparalleled in Thucydides' work and goes to show how significant the place was. According to Thucydides, the Milesian Aristagoras had tried to colonize the area when he was in flight from the Persian king Dareios, but had been beaten back by the Edonians (4.102.2). Thirty-two years later the Athenians suffered a similar disaster when ten thousand settlers were destroyed by the Thracians at Drabeskos; this time not only the Athenian expeditionary force but the entire colony is said to have been destroyed. Twenty-nine years later, the Athenian Hagnon succeeded in driving out the Edonians and settled the place, calling it Amphipolis "because, as the Strymon flows round it on both sides, he cut off the site by a long wall running from one point of the river to another, and so established a city which was conspicuous both seaward and landward"

(§ 3). In actual fact the Strymon flows on three sides, north, west, and south of the conspicuous hill which rises ca. 140 m. above the river and upon which the colony was founded. To the north of this hill, the river Strymon once formed an extensive lake (cf. 4.108.1), which was only drained in the 1930s. As a result, the city of Amphipolis controlled not only the single crossing of the river and the routes from west to east (and vice versa),²⁵ but also access to the interior with its immense supply of timber—so important for the Athenian navy—and its gold and silver mines. Amphipolis was an Athenian colony, not an ordinary member of the Athenian Empire, and did not pay tribute; the same was true of Eion, the port of Amphipolis. In his account of the loss of the city to Brasidas, Thucydides stresses how useful it was to the Athenians “for the importation of timber for shipbuilding and for the revenue it produced” (4.108.1). Having this base also helped the Athenians put pressure on their Thracian allies, most obviously in the case of the Chalcidic Peninsula where, in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, both the number of tribute-paying members of the Athenian Empire and the total amount of the tribute were augmented (cf. n. 14). Perhaps the Athenian presence at Amphipolis was also the reason why the revolt of 432 did not spread to the east coast of the Chalcidic Peninsula, and why the cities east of the Strymon did not revolt at all.

In view of the importance of Amphipolis and the Strymon river-crossing, it is not surprising that Brasidas marched against the city in the winter of 424/3, having secured the Andrian colonies of Akanthos and Stagira on the east coast of the Chalcidic Peninsula. Once again, the details of the military operations will be of less concern to us here than the information Thucydides provides about the history of the area around the lower Strymon. Brasidas was supported in his operation by the Argilians, Andrian colonists who lived to the west of the Strymon and must have lost part of their territory when Amphipolis was founded; at least we are told that they were secret enemies of the city. The Argilians had already negotiated with their countrymen who lived in Amphipolis and arranged for the surrender of the city. The Argilians resident in Amphipolis

²⁵ In winter 425/4 a Persian envoy was captured in Eion, the harbor of Amphipolis, on his way from the King to Lacedaemon (4.50.1).

were not the only inhabitants of the city who were willing to betray it to Brasidas; some of these potential traitors were won over by Perdikkas, others by the Chalcidians (4.103.3f.). When Brasidas arrived at Argilos, the Argilians received him into their city, revolted from the Athenians, and helped Brasidas cross the Strymon and seize all the territory outside the walls of Amphipolis (4.103.4f.). However, the majority of the Amphipolitans were still opposed to a surrender and sent to Thucydides, who was one of the Athenian generals in Thrace and—at this time—in Thasos (104.4). In order to preempt his arrival, Brasidas offered the Amphipolitans moderate terms, making a proclamation to the effect that all those who wanted to remain in the city could do so, retaining possession of their own property and enjoying full equality, while those who wished could leave the city within five days, taking their property with them (4.105.2). Since only a minority of the citizens were Athenians, these conditions were easily accepted; the Athenians were in fact glad to be able to leave the city because they had more to fear than the other citizens and did not believe that relief from this danger was imminent; the rest of the people did not anticipate suffering any harm or loss of civil rights. And so the Amphipolitans capitulated, Brasidas was received on the terms of his proclamation, and the inhabitants of Athenian origin left the city. Thucydides arrived the next morning and could do no more than secure Eion (4.106.1–4.107.2). While the harbor remained in the hands of the Athenians, Brasidas put matters in order at Amphipolis and even gained more allies: the Edonian town of Myrkinos, which lay in the interior (and has yet to be located), came over to him, the coastal towns of Galepsos and Oisyme doing the same not long afterward (4.107.3). Galepsos was a member of the Athenian Empire and made use of Brasidas' presence, but Oisyme seems to have been part of the Thasian *peraia*. So Thucydides was right when he said that after the capture of Amphipolis the Athenians feared that their allies would revolt (4.108.1).

For the time being, the Athenians had to accept their losses in the lower Strymon basin, but in 422 Cleon was sent to the north, and after some success on the Chalcidic Peninsula he sailed to Eion and made the harbor his base (5.2f.; 5.6.1). After a failed attack upon Stagira, he took Galepsos before marching against Amphipolis—and lost his life in a skirmish outside the city walls (5.6–11). Since Brasidas was also killed in the same incident, both sides were more inclined toward peace. Amphipolis was singled out for special mention

in the text of the Peace of Nicias due to its importance and because of the Athenians' special interest in its recovery: "the Lacedaemonians and their allies shall restore Amphipolis to the Athenians" (5.18.5). So the Lacedaemonians sent envoys to Thrace to instruct Clearidas, the governor of Amphipolis, to give the city to the Athenians, and to order the other cities to accept the terms of the treaty as prescribed for each of them (5.21.1). However, Clearidas refused to hand over Amphipolis to the Athenians, saying that he was unable to give it up against the will of the Chalcidians, and going to Sparta himself, with the envoys of the city, to see if the agreement might still be changed. Eventually he was ordered to surrender Amphipolis, if possible, and in any event to remove all the Peloponnesians who were there (5.21). This he did, and in 5.34.1 Thucydides tells us of the return of the troops that Clearidas had brought home after the treaty was made. Very soon both parties to the Peace of Nicias began to suspect one another of noncompliance, owing to their failure to surrender the places specified in the treaty (5.35.2f.). When the Athenians complained that Amphipolis had not been returned to them, the Lacedaemonians claimed that they were not in control of the place and therefore could not deliver it up (§ 5). The next year Nicias himself went to Sparta and urged the Lacedaemonians to restore Amphipolis to the Athenians (5.46.2); this time Thucydides does not record the Lacedaemonians' answer. In the years that followed, the Athenians became increasingly involved in other parts of the Greek world; only in 414 do we hear of an effort to win back Amphipolis when, at the end of the summer, the Athenian general Euction made an expedition against the city in cooperation with Perdikkas and a large force of Thracians, but failed to capture it (5.7.9). The Athenians never won it back, and the "War over Amphipolis", which they had started in 369 BC, was one of the reasons for their eventual decline in the fourth century.

Thrace east of the Strymon

According to Herodotus, the Thracians were the greatest people in the world, with the exception of Indians. Had they been united and had only one ruler, he maintained, they would have been invincible, by far the mightiest nation (5.3.1). In actual fact there was no Thracian nation as such, in that "Thracian" was the collective term

for the non-Greek population in the area between the north coast of the Aegean, the Danube, the west coast of the Black Sea, and the river Axios. The term "Thrace" was used to describe this same area.

Apart from Thucydides' suggestion that the Greeks at Troy had resorted to farming in the Chersonese (1.11.1), the earliest information he gives in connection with Thrace concerns the years of the Persian Wars: the Milesian Aristagoras tried to colonize a place in the valley of the lower Strymon, but was beaten back by the Edonians (4.102.2); after the final defeat of Xerxes' fleet at Mykale, the Greeks took Sestos on the Thracian Chersonese (1.89) and in the next year, Byzantion (1.94.2); after his recall and the foundation of the so-called Delian League, the Spartan Pausanias stayed in this area for some years (1.128–131). At around the same time, the Athenians and their allies expelled the Persians from Thrace and brought the Greek cities on the coast of the northern Aegean into their league.²⁶ It was not long before they faced their first problem with their new allies, when in 465 the Thasians revolted after a quarrel about the trading posts and mines on the Thracian mainland opposite (1.102.2). The Athenians may have wanted to exploit the mines themselves and to transform the Thasian towns on the mainland into tribute-paying members of their league. After two years the Thasians were forced to capitulate, pull down their fortifications, deliver their ships, pay tribute, and give up both the mainland and the mines (1.101.3); the Thasian colonies of Neapolis and Galepsos became members of the Athenian Confederacy. About twenty-five years later the Byzantines joined the Samian revolt, but after some time were forced to come to terms and agree to be subjects as before (1.115.5; 117.3).

All of this information concerns Greek colonies on the coast of Thrace. The first reference to the *native* Thracians is in connection with the first year of the Archidamian War, when Nymphodoros of Abdera, brother-in-law of the Thracian king Sitalkes, brought about an alliance between the Athenians and the king, who promised to help them subdue Perdikkas and their Thracian allies who were in revolt (2.29); on this occasion, Sitalkes' son Sadokos became an

²⁶ Th. 1.98.1 mentions only the capture of Eion, but Hdt. 7.106 says that the Greeks expelled all Persian commanders in Thrace and the Hellespont.

Athenian citizen.²⁷ Thucydides' description of the episode highlights some important information about the Thracian kingdom of the Odrysians and their founder, Sitalkes' father Teres. Teres was the first king to attain great power among the Odrysians and extended the kingdom to cover much of Thrace (§ 2f.). In the following summer of 430, Sitalkes and his son Sadokos demonstrated their loyalty to the Athenians by arresting and delivering a group of Peloponnesian envoys who were on their way to the Persian King and had tried to bring the Odrysians over to the Spartan side (2.67).

In the winter of 429/8 Sitalkes made an expedition against Perdikkas and the Chalcidians both in order to fulfil a promise he had made to the Athenians and to exact fulfilment of another promise that Perdikkas had made to him, the details of which we know nothing about. The Thracian ruler took with him Amyntas, the son of Perdikkas' brother Philippos, with a view to making him king of the Macedonians (2.95). Although this invasion was only marginally relevant to the history of the Peloponnesian War and achieved no lasting success, Thucydides not only supplied a detailed report but also inserted a substantial digression on Sitalkes' kingdom, its size, the king's sources of revenue and the army (2.96–98). Apparently Thucydides knew a great deal about the Thracians, information he may have collected during the years of his exile and thought worth recording. His enumeration and description of the tribes which supplied troops for Sitalkes' campaign against Macedonia is the most detailed account we have of the extent of the Thracian realm in the fifth century.²⁸ Thucydides begins with the Odrysian homelands, without specifying their whereabouts, although they must have been located around the middle course of the River Maritsa (Hebros), which not only gave the Odrysians an economic and strategic advantage, but also access to the Thracian interior and to the coast to the east and south. Next Thucydides speaks of the Thracians living between Haimos (now Balkan), Rhodope, and the sea (both the Euxenos Pontos and the Propontis) and of the Getai and other tribes between the Istros (Danube) and Haimos (96.1). In addition to these different Thracians living chiefly in the plains of what is now Bulgaria

²⁷ On "the founding rulers of the Odrysian kingdom, Teres and Sitalkes", cf. recently Archibald (1994) 444ff.

²⁸ Cf. Archibald (1994), map 14 on p. 446.

and Greek and Turkish Thrace, Sitalkes summoned the independent Thracians who lived in the mountains, most of them inhabitants of Rhodope (§ 2) in what is now southwestern Bulgaria. From here, Thucydides moves to present-day western Bulgaria, mentioning the Agrianians and other Paionian tribes who were under Sitalkes' sway, the river Strymon having been the western boundary of his empire (§ 3). The Paionians west of the river were independent but seem to have been the target of an earlier expedition of Sitalkes'; on that occasion he had even constructed a road, cutting a path through the forest.²⁹ To the northwest, the boundary was formed by the tribes who lived north of Mount Skombros (now Vitoša south of Sofia), east of the river Oskios (Isker), and south of the independent Triballoi (§ 4). The Triballoi were to become the target of another expedition in 424, during which Sitalkes was defeated in battle and killed; after his death his nephew Seuthes became king of the Odrysians and of the rest of Sitalkes' Thracian realm (4.101.5).

Thucydides could not have expected his readers to be familiar with all the tribes he mentioned and so goes on to give a detailed description of the extent of the Odrysian empire, which

had a coastline reaching from Abdera to the mouth of the Danube/Istros. The voyage along the coast, going by the shortest route and with a following wind all the way, takes a merchant ship four days and four nights; by land a man travelling fast and by the shortest route can get from Abdera to the Danube in eleven days. So much for the length of the coastline. As for its extent into the interior, a man travelling fast would take thirteen days to go from Byzantium to the Laeaeans and the Strymon, which is the part that lies farthest inland (2.97.1f.).

Thucydides' assessment of four days' and four nights' journey by ship (from Abdera to the Istros) is pretty accurate, although he seems to have underestimated the strong currents in the Hellespont and the Bosporos. On the other hand, it would be impossible to walk from Abdera to the Istros in just eleven days (Thucydides moreover seems to have ignored the mountain ranges), let alone from Byzantium to the Strymon in thirteen days. Even Thucydides had no exact idea of the interior of Thrace, although he apparently visited the country, to judge from his detailed knowledge of certain aspects of Thracian life: how else could he have known about the revenue—both in

²⁹ 2.108.1; cf. Archelaos, the other road-building king in Thucydides: 2.100.2.

tribute and gifts—of the Thracian king Seuthes, who succeeded his uncle in 424 (2.97.3)? According to Thucydides, the Odrysian kingdom was the greatest between the Ionian Gulf and the Euxeinus Pontos, in terms of revenue and general prosperity. As far as strength and the size of its army were concerned, though, he does not compare it with any of the kingdoms of the Balkan Peninsula but with the Skythians (§ 5).

After this digression, Thucydides describes the march of Sitalkes' army through the interior of Thrace to the north of Macedonia and the invasion along the Axios (2.98–99). During this march many of the independent Thracians joined him without being summoned, so that the whole number of troops was said to have risen to no fewer than one hundred and fifty thousand, of whom about a third were cavalry. Despite their numerical superiority the Thracians did not get any further into Macedonia than Pella and Kyrros, instead ravaging the eastern parts of the kingdom and the adjacent areas of the Bottiaians and the Chalcidians, frightening both the Greeks living to the south of Macedonia and the independent Thracians east of the lower Strymon. However, the Thracian army did not have sufficient food supplies and was suffering from cold, so Sitalkes returned home after just thirty days, taking the advice of his nephew Seuthes, who himself had been bribed by Perdikkas (2.100f.).

The Thracian threat—in as much as it had ever existed—had disappeared, and was not to reappear during the remainder of the Peloponnesian War. From now on we hear only of individual tribes or of Thracian mercenaries fighting on both sides. Peltasts from Ainos were much sought-after and served both at Pylos (4.28.4) and in Sicily (7.57.5). The Athenians employed Thracian mercenaries against both Mende and Skione (4.129.2), and against Amphipolis (5.6.2); here Thracians served also under Brasidas' command (5.6.4; 5.10.9). Finally we hear of Thracian peltasts who came to Athens in 413 but were sent back, bringing about a bloodbath in Boeotian Mykalessos on their return journey (7.27.1f.; 7.29f.). In Book VIII, Thucydides speaks several times of events at the Hellespont, at Byzantium, and on Thasos, but these events were part of the war between the Greek alliances and do not offer any further insight into the history of the Thracians. Virtually nothing is known of Seuthes' later years, and the Thracians do not reappear in our historiographical sources until Xenophon's *Anabasis* and *Hellenica*.

THUCYDIDES AND THE ARGIVES¹

Simon Hornblower

Introduction: Beyond Athens and Sparta

Thucydides is often held responsible for a certain thematic narrowing in the writing of history, from the hospitable ethnographic sweep of Herodotus to the more limited subject-matter of war and politics. There is much truth in this (though there is hardly one of Thucydides' eight books that does not have well-informed material, sometimes presented in self-consciously ethnographic mode, about the Thracians with whom he was personally familiar.² But Thucydides was perhaps responsible for another sort of narrowing as well, namely a lopsided preoccupation with just two states, Athens and Sparta.³ Again this must be qualified: the Spartans are not very prominent in the Sicilian Books VI and VII, except for one individual Spartan, Gylippos, and for a speech made at Sparta by another individual, the Athenian Alcibiades. Nevertheless a tendency to see the Peloponnesian War as a two-power contest is discernible early on in his work. The opening sentence of the first Book speaks of "the war between the Peloponnesians and Athenians", but by chapter 18 the polarization is sharper and simpler: the Athenians are now presentationally opposed to the Spartans, one *polis* to another. The shift is effected in part by the land-sea antithesis, so prominent in ancient literature and not least in Thucydides (see already 1.2.2): the one power, he says (1.18.2), was strong by land, the other by sea, and so the Greeks after the Persian Wars aligned themselves with either the Athenians or the Lakedaimonians.⁴ In this way we hardly notice that in the famous

¹ I am very grateful to Peter Rhodes for reading and improving a draft of this chapter.

² See Zahrnt, this volume.

³ See Rhodes and Cartledge-Debnar, this volume. The poetry of Pindar, by contrast, opens a window on to the Greek world away from Athens and Sparta. See Hornblower (2004), esp. ch. 5, for an attempt to exploit this evidence.

⁴ This cleverly introduces another determining principle of categorization, not

“causation” paragraph (1.23.6) it is the Spartans, not the Peloponnesians at large, who are said to fear the Athenians and be forced to war as a consequence. This essentially two-power view helps to explain a feature that some have found puzzling: the historian’s reluctance to say more than he does about the Persians and their money. Though there is much about the Persians in Book VIII, and though the importance and eventual decisiveness of this factor is conceded in a passage that must be one of the latest to be written (2.65.12, explicitly looking forward to the final Athenian defeat), it is less prominent than might have been expected in the post-421 narrative (particularly in Book V, where the revolt of Amorges probably “belonged” in the narrative sense). Half a century ago, before “analyst” views of Thucydides had gone right out of fashion, this anomaly could be explained by reference to the unfinished character of Thucydides’ *History*, especially in Books V and VIII. But the unitarian wind has been blowing strongly now for many years, and such explanations are at a discount.⁵ Oswyn Murray, noting that Thucydides “systematically ignores the significance of Persia—the war is a war of Greek states”, goes on to pose the good question: “would [Thucydides] ever have faced the fact that ultimately it was Persian gold which defeated the Athenians?”⁶

Lopsidedness and preoccupation with Athens and Sparta characterizes much modern scholarship as well as Thucydides. To some extent this has been put right in recent years. It had long been noted that pressure exerted by the Corinthians on the Spartans complicates the simple two-power formulation about the war’s origins alluded to above, though Andrewes once argued that Thucydides fell out of love with this Corinthian motif over time, in favor of the more absolute formulation we have already met. Pelling notes the composition problem in this connexion but concludes that “our method-

just geographical like “Peloponnesos” but according to sets of allies; cf. 2.1.1 for the beginning of the “war between the Athenians and Peloponnesians *and their respective allies*”. This, what we may call the “tug-of-war” (rather than “two-power”) conception, allows in the non-Peloponnesian allies of the Spartans such as Boeotians (or rather some of them); 2.9.2. I here avoid talking of the “Peloponnesian League” because this is a modern expression and perhaps notion.

⁵ The analyst case was ably made by Andrewes (1961). Rood (1998a) 154 will have none of it: “Andrewes’ case is suspect both on historical and literary grounds”.

⁶ O. Murray (1986) 195. For Thucydides and Persia, see Wiesehöfer, this volume.

ology must still be to begin by addressing the text as we have it”.⁷ Be all that as it may, there is no denying the strongly Corinthian slant of the narrative decision to explore the outbreak of war *via* lengthy treatment of episodes involving two Corinthian colonies, Corcyra and Potidaia (rather than, say, the stated alternatives, Megara or Aigina: 1.67.2–3). Corinthian pressure on the Spartans continues well into the war narrative (at 2.80.2 and 3, the Spartans are “persuaded” by the eagerness of the Corinthians to take an initiative; cf. 6.88.10 for something similar, four whole books, and a decade and a half later). All this called for an examination of Corinth on its own terms. Now we have Salmon’s full-length monograph on “wealthy Corinth”, and Stroud’s detailed study of examination of “Thucydides and Corinth”, arguing that Thucydides’ Corinthian information was especially full and good, and explicable by visits or even residence there during his exile after 424.⁸ This “Corinthian hypothesis” is intriguing, although if Stroud is right it is curious that Thucydides does so little to bring out the real nature of Corinthian ambitions in the First Peloponnesian War, and in particular Corinthian rivalry with the Argives in that period.⁹

So, of states other than Athens and Sparta, Corinth has been well discussed. Other states or parts of the Greek and non-Greek world are covered in the present volume, and I have written about Thucydides and Boeotia elsewhere.¹⁰ Thucydides’ treatment of Megara and the Megarians deserves separate treatment, which might start from David Lewis’ remark that Thucydides “was not all that interested in Megara and may not be a reliable guide”.¹¹ But I wish, picking up the rivalry theme mentioned at the end of the preceding paragraph, to concentrate on Thucydides’ treatment of the Argives.¹²

⁷ Andrewes (1959); Pelling (2000) 93; he there concedes the incompleteness of Thucydides’ *History*, but his n. 22 startlingly throws a doubt even on this by hinting that the closure of the work as we have it imitates that of Herodotus. This is unitarianism with a vengeance. Flory (1993) makes a slightly different point when he suggests that Thucydides abandoned his work in despair, rather than actually leaving it unfinished.

⁸ Salmon (1984); Stroud (1994).

⁹ See for all this D.M. Lewis (1997) 9–21 (orig. 1981). Thucydides (for whose attitude to this sort of thing see Hornblower [1992a]) could hardly be expected to go into the competition between Corinthians and Argives for control of the Nemean games (Lewis brilliantly reconstructs this), but the struggle went much wider than that.

¹⁰ Hornblower (1995a).

¹¹ D.M. Lewis (1992b) 388.

¹² Not “Thucydides and Argos” for reasons given at Hornblower (2002) xii–xiv.

Thucydides and Argive Individuals

There is a nice symmetry between Thucydides' presentation of the Corinthians and Argives: if the Corinthians were—as we have seen—instrumental in bringing about the Archidamian War of 431–421 the Argives were, in a very different way, instrumental in ending it. By 421 the Spartans were anxious for peace, and one reason for this was that “the [or “their”, αὐτοῖς] thirty years peace” between the Spartans and Argives was about to run out and they did not want to fight the Athenians and Argives simultaneously (5.14.4). “*The*” thirty years peace? Thucydides uses the definite article, but he has nowhere told us of this peace of 451 BC.¹³ This silence makes very eloquently the point that Thucydides is, outside the years 421–415, as parsimonious with Argive information as he is prodigal with Corinthian. Given the focus of the *Pentekontaetia* narrative in Book I, it is not too surprising that it does not feature there at the point where Thucydides was discussing the 450s. It would, however, have been helpful in the early part of Book V to have some information about Argive politics in the years leading up to this point. Thus it seems to have been assumed by all parties at the time, including Thucydides, that once the thirty-year peace of 451 runs out, the Argives will automatically want to fight the Spartans, but this cannot—surely—have been the unconditional wish of every Argive. I discuss below some individual Spartan sympathizers there (and cf. 5.76.2 on the anti-democratic movement at Argos in 418 after the battle of Mantinea, specifically noting, though without giving personal details, that there were supporters, ἐπιτήδαιοι, of Sparta at Argos *even before this time*, πρότερον; see also 76.3 for “the men who were acting for the Spartans”).¹⁴ Thucydides says firmly, and to our eyes disparagingly, that the Argives joined the Athenians on the Sicilian Expedition out of hostility toward the Spartans and out of self-interest, rather than because of their alliance, sc. with the Athenians (7.57.9). The long chapter from which this sentence comes is a virtuosic effort from the literary point of view—Thucydides plays on

In the present chapter I expand on Thucydidean suggestions very briefly made at Hornblower (2002) 76f. In ch. 7 of that book (completely new in the 2002 edition) I sketch and discuss Argive history in the fifth and fourth centuries generally and do not intend to repeat that here.

¹³ See Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.460, note on the passage.

¹⁴ On this chapter see further below.

every conceivable variation of the colonising theme—but some of the generalizations are historically on the crude side. The sweeping and cynical generalization about Argive motives is surely a libel on at least some of those who crossed the Adriatic with Nikias and ended up dying there with him.¹⁵

Let us start with individuals. Stroud can point to an impressive total of Corinthian names and patronymics in Thucydides. By contrast there are just three named Argives in Thucydides' account of the Ten-year "Archidamian" War (431–421), one man and two women—an unexpected ratio for this least female-friendly of historians. For all three acts of naming we can, as it happens, offer an explanation in terms of Thucydides' relationship to a literary predecessor. The man is Pollis,¹⁶ who in 430 BC joined a six-man Peloponnesian deputation (the others were Aristeus the well-known Corinthian, three Spartans, and a Tegean, all duly named) that was intercepted on its way to the Persian king to ask for money (2.67). Thucydides specifies that Pollis was there in a private capacity, *ιδίᾳ*. The Six were executed by the Athenians without trial, "although they had things they wished to say" (§ 4); Thucydides' language is restrained, but may indicate moral disquiet at these summary executions. Herodotus had mentioned this same discreditable episode in a proleptic passage (7.137), but he specified only "Aristeus son of Adeimantos, a Corinthian man" as having accompanied what he vaguely calls "the messengers sent by the Spartans to Asia". Herodotus saw this as the working out of divine justice; Thucydides naturally does not. But there may be another and smaller-scale correction of Herodotus: Pollis the Argive was not sent by the Spartans, as Herodotus could be taken to imply; he went on his own initiative (*ιδίᾳ* here means "as a private individual" rather than as a formal representative of the Argive state; cf. 5.60.1, which is a clearer formulation of this negative idea. But Pollis was certainly not "sent by the Spartans", as Herodotus had put it).

¹⁵ See below p. 621 for the casualty list recording them.

¹⁶ The name is unremarkable; there is a scattering in each of the four published volumes of *LGPV* including several from Athens itself (vol. II), where the Argive Pollis met his end. The best known is vol. IIIA no. 9, the Spartan navarch who bought Plato out of slavery. Of the Argive Pollis, Mitsos (1952) 147 says that he was "clearly an oligarch", *προφανῶς ὀλιγαρχικός*, but this goes slightly beyond the evidence.

The second named Argive is Chrysis, the priestess of the Heraion who had been in office for forty-eight years when the war began in 431 (2.2.1) but who burnt it down in 424 (4.133.2). In fear of the Argives she fled to Phleious, and the Argives then appointed our third Argive, Phaennis, “as the law prescribes” (§ 3). Thucydides adds very punctiliously that Chrysis had been in office for eight years of this war and half of the ninth. Why all the chronological specificity? Here too there may be a literary motive. Hellanicus of Lesbos wrote a wide-ranging work on the priestesses of Argos in at least three books (*FGrHist* 4 F 74–84), and Thucydides’ unexpectedly full material about these two priestesses surely relates to this treatise in some polemical way. But we cannot say exactly how, because Hellanicus, unlike Herodotus, survives only in fragments, and none of them are about Chrysis or Phaennis. (For Thucydidean polemic against another treatise of Hellanicus, the *Attikē Xyngraphē*, see 1.97.2, and for criticism of chronological systems by incumbents, of the “Priestesses” type, see 5.20. Note that by giving the “year of this war” in which Chrysis fled, Thucydides now fixes her by his own summer-and-winter system, having fixed her in Hellanican style in Book II).

The situation improves when we move out of the period of Argive neutrality. In fact the position suddenly reverses itself (see below for what I mean by this). Book V is full of diplomacy and fighting involving the Argives, and we might hope to meet some named Argive individuals, and we do: two men, Eustrophos and Aison,¹⁷ who the Argives hope will be congenial to the Spartans (5.40.3); and then two more shortly afterward, who on their own initiative (we are reminded of Pollis in 430) offer arbitration to the Spartan king Agis and manage to deflect for the moment the clash between the Argive and Spartan armies. They are Thrasyllus or Thrasylos,¹⁸ “one of the

¹⁷ The names are unremarkable onomastically.

¹⁸ The manuscripts have both spellings. The majority reading is with double *lambda*, but M (in the British Library) and E (Palatinus; in Heidelberg) have single *lambda* at ch. 59; by ch. 60 the fickle London manuscript changes its mind so that only E has the single *lambda*. Alberti’s apparatus prints both forms of the name paraproxytone (Θράσυλλος, Θράσυλος), but *LGPV* IIIA p. 212 prefers the single *lambda* spelling and accents the name Θρασύλος, like Αἰσχύλος. For such trisyllabic proper names in -ίλος and -ύλος as paroxytone, see Chandler (1881) 78 par. 280. The Athenian Thrasy(l)los is also variously spelled in modern editions, e.g., at 8.100.1, where Alberti has the double *lambda* whereas OCT has Θράσυλος [*sic*: wrong accent].

five generals", and Alciphron, the *proxenos* of the Spartans (5.59.5). Thrasylos incurred the anger of his own army for this and was nearly stoned by them "in the Ravine, where they [habitually] decide cases that arise out of a campaign, before they enter the city" (5.60.6; we shall return to this episode below). It is noticeable that, like Pollis, most or all of these men have leanings towards Sparta. The Spartan counterpart of Alciphron is Lichas son of Arcesilas, *proxenos* of the Argives (5.76.3; see below). After Book V and the Peace of Nicias period, the Argives play an active role throughout Books VI–VIII, but there are no more names. It is possible that a casualty list (*SEG* 29.361) makes good the Thucydidean deficiency, if, as has been suggested, it records the Argive dead in the Sicilian Expedition.¹⁹ There are no patronymics (only names of phratries),²⁰ but casualty lists do not normally give patronymics anywhere.²¹ It may be asked, what kind of naming am I looking for in the very ample 415–411 narrative? The kind of thing I miss is incidental mentions like that of Skirphondas the Theban Boeotarch who was killed at Mycalessos (7.30.3), or Anaxandros the Theban who is sent to a command on Lesbos in 411 (8.100.3).

So that is all the Argive names we are given by Thucydides: seven names, made up of five men and two women, with no patronymics²² in sight—a relatively meager haul. Contrast the twenty-five named Corinthians and thirteen patronymics,²³ or the clutches of Boeotians (names and patronymics) in Books II–IV (2.2.1–2; 3.20.1; 4.91). The only section where the ratios are reversed is in the Peace of Nicias period (5. 24–116), where although there is plenty about the diplomatic manoeuvres of Boeotarchs and Corinthians as well as Argives, there are no named individuals from these places to match the Argives Aison, Eutrophos, Thrasylos and Alciphron. We could add,

¹⁹ Clairmont (1983) 235f., cf. *SEG* 33.293.

²⁰ Contrast *ML* 35, the casualty list at Athens for the Argive dead of the battle of Tanagra (457), an inscription that uses the four tribes.

²¹ Cf. *IG* 7.1888: Boeotian Thespiai; and much Athenian evidence.

²² Argives in the classical period were normally identified by name, patronymic, and phratry: for references to recent discussions, see *SEG* 34.295.

²³ Figures from Stroud (1994) 269 noting that this is a higher percentage of patronymics even than the percentage for Athenians. The Corinthian-Argive discrepancy remains marked even if we discount for the Corinthians' prominence in the Archidamian War and their active role in Books VI and VII as founders of Syracuse.

to the Argive total in Thucydides as a whole, king Agamemnon, “ruler of the islands and all Argos” (1.9.4, quoting *Iliad* 2.108, where however the majestic word “Argos” has its usual Homeric ambiguity, “Greece” as well as the Peloponnesian city). But that still makes only eight Argives, with, at a pinch, just one patronymic, Atreus the father of Agamemnon, who is also, I suppose, a sort of Argive (1.9.2). What is the explanation for the parsimony with Argives? Thucydides fails even more completely with Aigina—not a single named Aiginetan anywhere²⁴—but there is an easy explanation for this: the island was repopulated with Athenian settlers at the beginning of the war (2.27), and its independent history came to an end for the time being. No similar explanation is available for the Argives, except that they were out of the actual fighting from 431–421; but this need not (see above) have precluded some discussion by Thucydides of the state of opinion there. And Argos was surely as accessible to Thucydides in his exile as was Corinth (at 5.26.5 he asserts personal familiarity with the Peloponnese generally, not just Corinth. See further below for the question of knowledge or ignorance). Thucydides seems almost resolutely to refuse to name Argive individuals even when he mentions their participation in some episode or other. We have already noted Thucydides’ comments on the political situation at Argos straight after the battle of Mantinea. This whole chapter (5.76), set in Argos and concerned with Argive politics, is notable for the way it names a prominent Spartan, Lichas, and a prominent Athenian, Alcibiades, but leaves the key Argive players anonymous. It is not surprising that the contemptuously described Argive assassin of the Athenian Phrynichus in 411 is left without a name (8.92.2: Ἀργεῖος ἄνθρωπος). But the envoys who arrive with the Athenian state ship, the *Paralos*, a few chapters earlier (86.9) are of higher status, and we might have hoped to be told who they were.

Ignorance?

Did Thucydides simply not know much about Argos and the Argives? I examine this possibility in the present section. Or did his reluc-

²⁴ Contrast the many named Aiginetans in Herodotus and Pindar with some prosopographical overlap between the two authors. See Hornblower (2006).

tance to provide personal detail flow from dislike of some sort? That will be the subject of the next section, "Contempt?"

We have seen that he had opportunities to visit Argos after 424. More important, there is plenty of evidence that he knows really quite a lot about Argive institutions. I pass rapidly through these, under three overlapping categories: socio-political, military, and religious.

There is, as we have seen, no shortage of political material, including specification of factions (76). "The Argive democracy" is called just that (5.30.6; cf. 29.1 and 44.1), one of a group of passages that form an unusual acknowledgment in Thucydides that constitutional issues mattered in Greek states.²⁵ The mention of the five Argive *lochoi* or squadrons (5.72.4, see below) is a small detail that may hint at a Cleisthenic-style mid-century reorganization of the Argive citizen body into five local groupings alongside the old four-tribe gentilicial scheme.²⁶ Again, we can hardly complain that Thucydides has kept us in the dark about Argive diplomacy when it is the subject of his only two dialect treaties (5.77 and 79). Finally, he knows that the whole Argive population, *πανδημεί*, women and slaves included, joined in the building of the long walls of Argos (5.82.6). No doubt this (literally) constructive and participatory female activity²⁷ was commoner in Greek warfare than our literary sources allow us to see (cf. 1.90.3, the wall-building at Athens organized by Themistocles, and perhaps *SEG* 47.410: Messene). But here, at any rate, we have some collective Argive women to place alongside the named priestesses we have already met.

As for more conventional military coverage, Thucydides, in his account of the Battle of Mantinea, feels no need to apologize for the difficulty of getting at the truth about the Argives. (Contrast 5.68.1 for the initial Spartan numbers and 5.74.3 for the Spartan dead). He knows that the Argives had five generals (5.59.5) and five squadrons (for this number five see above) and one thousand picked

²⁵ Rhodes (1993) 44 n. 7.

²⁶ See Andrewes' excellent long note on the passage in *HCT*. This (neither the Thucydides passage nor Andrewes' discussion of it) does not seem to be taken account of in Piérart (1997), a superb study that in other respects offers the best account of Argive fifth-century social and political structures, based on new epigraphic finds.

²⁷ Not quite the same as, for instance, disruptive behavior such as hurling tiles from rooftops. On women in warfare, see Hornblower (2007).

men (5.67.2).²⁸ And as we have seen, he knows of the practice of holding courts-martial “in the Ravine”, though it looks as if the troops in 418 started to stone Thrasylos there, apparently without any kind of judicial process (5.60.6; note the follow-up: “he survived by fleeing to an altar. But they nevertheless confiscated his property”). Stoning is the paradigm of the undisciplined collective act,²⁹ so I suggest that there is a distinction here between the attempted stoning and the subsequent confiscation, which by contrast *was* a legally valid act). In which case the mention of the Ravine is more than just a topographical indicator but is barbed, a reminder of the military discipline that was being violated. We shall have more to say about Argive indiscipline. He knows that the Argives, after a minor incursion, sold some Spartan booty for not less than 25 talents (6.95; the precision is remarkable). Finally, at the level of grand strategy, Thucydides well perceives the reasons for the importance of the Argives’ enemy Epidaurus (5.53).³⁰

Argive religion, taking religion to include both myth and colonial relationships (which were certainly conceived by Greeks in religious terms), is rewardingly covered by Thucydides. He knows (or is he quoting Hellanicus here?) of the customary procedure for replacing an absconded priestess (above p. 620). He is remarkably well informed about the cult of Apollo Pythaeus at Asine and the politico-religious issues involved (5.53).³¹ He reports fully the Argive manipulation of the religious calendar (5.54, an episode that in some respects antic-

²⁸ On the possible relation between this thousand and that at 5.81.2, see Hornblower (2002) 85 and n. 31, with references. At Tanagra in 457 there were also one thousand Argives: 1.107.5.

²⁹ Hornblower (2000b) 73. For the sequence “attempted stoning-fleeing to an altar” cf. 8.84.3. But it also has a mythical prototype. The Lesser Ajax angered the Greeks by his rape of Cassandra, so they tried to stone him, but he fled to Athena’s altar; see M. West (2003) 144–45 from the *Ilioupersis* of Arktinos of Miletos; cf. also E. *Ion* 1222–24 and 1255 (Kreousa). For the attempted stoning of a general, cf. also E. *IA* 1349–51 (Achilles).

³⁰ But Cawkwell (1975) 69 correctly notes that this explanation is inapplicable before the expiry of the Argive-Spartan treaty in 421. For Thucydides’ uncharacteristic strategic forthcomingness at 5.53 see *HCT* 4.72

³¹ See the exemplary study of Barrett (1954), elucidating Thucydides by reference to Bacchylides and conversely. The religious word *βοράμια*, which should not be emended, reminds us by its technicality of how much Thucydides “takes for granted” in this area (to use Gomme’s expression, see the introduction to *HCT* vol. 1).

ipates their behavior in 388 BC, as reported by the more conventionally religious Xenophon (*HG* 4.7.2).

Argos the colonizing metropolis is not as prominent in Thucydides as in Pindar,³² but it is there all the same, most obviously at the point where he explains that the policy of Perdikkas king of Macedon was affected by what the Argives were doing “because he himself was ancestrally from Argos” (5.80.3; this and 2.99.3 recall and perhaps reprise Hdt. 5.22 and 8.137ff.). Less often noticed is a glancing description, in the “Catalogue of Allies” before Syracuse, of the Rhodians as Ἀργεῖοι γένος, “Argives by descent” (7.57.6). These two words allude economically to the myth of Rhodian origins which was so magnificently elaborated in Pindar’s *Olympian* 7.³³

Above all Thucydides brings out well the mythical basis for Argive claims to hegemony. The very early mention of Agamemnon’s Argos (see above for this Homeric quotation) may, like much in the *Archaeology*, be programmatic. It prepares us for the Argive ambition after 421 to exercise leadership over Peloponnesos (5.28.2).³⁴ this is then explicitly framed in terms of “ancient hegemony” in the fine chapter describing the form taken by the encouragement offered by the Argive generals on the eve of the battle of Mantinea (5.69.1 and 2).

Contempt?

It seems clear that mere ignorance will not do as an explanation of Thucydides’ relative silence about Argive individuals. Let us try another approach. I have suggested elsewhere³⁵ that it was because Thucydides did not admire the Argives that he juxtaposes the Argive army’s treatment of Thrasylos—a near-lynching—with the more disciplined Spartan army’s treatment of their king Agis on the same occasion (5.60.5–6 and 63.2–4; for the rough handling of Thrasylos, see above p. 621). The Spartans wait until they get home and do

³² Hornblower (2004) 206 and n. 312.

³³ See Dover’s note in *HCT ad loc.* and Hornblower (2004) 132 and n. 7; 206 n. 312.

³⁴ For the fuller version in Diodorus/Ephorus (12.75.5–6), see Hornblower (2002) 78f.

³⁵ Hornblower (2000b) 74 and (2002) 76.

things properly; the Argives go out of control in a way we have discussed already. There is a further subtle contrast between the Argives (and others) and the Spartans in another chapter we have already looked at: the Argives were cheered up before the Battle of Mantinea by speeches about their ancient hegemony; the Spartans knew that experience and previous achievement is what matters, not fine oratory (5.69.1 and 2). But this cannot be pressed as specially anti-Argive because the Mantineians and Athenians need hortatory speeches too. More directly anti-Argive is the following chapter (5.70) where the Argives are said to advance *ἐντόνως καὶ ὀργῇ*, “eagerly and impetuously” (Smith in the Loeb tr.), “with great violence and fury” (Warner), lit. “violently and in passion”. The first adverb is a rarish word, found here only in Thucydides in either adverbial or adjectival form. By contrast the Spartans march slowly and to the sound of pipes, so as to keep in step. Colonel Thucydides³⁶ rarely makes his military judgments explicit, preferring to let the narrative speak for itself, but the implied comparison here is surely to the advantage of the Spartans. In the battle the one thousand picked Argives do well (5.72.3), but their main army is defeated and the day is smashingly won by the Spartans. A similar picture of Argive indiscipline is painted in Book VIII where the Argives confront some Milesians in the year 411 (8.25). They despise them as being Ionians, but this is shown in the event to be badly misplaced arrogance.³⁷ A couple of chapters later, we learn that the Argives are furious about this reverse and so scuttle off home from Samos (8.27.6, οἱ Ἀργεῖοι κατὰ τάχος καὶ πρὸς ὀργὴν τῆς ξυμφορᾶς ἀπέπλευσαν ἐκ τῆς Σάμου ἐπ’ οἴκου). Again, no explicit comment, but this we may guess that Thucydides thought this craven and contemptible behavior. The most explicit criticism of the Argives comes, however, back in Book V. It brings together our military and mythical or sentimental categories. The Argives suggest to the Spartans a treaty that will contain a fall-back clause providing in some circumstances for a reenactment of the archaic Battle of the Champions (5.41.2; cf. Hdt. 1.82. Thucydides’ way of referring here to the archaic past is “as once before”, ὥσπερ καὶ πρότερόν ποτε). The Spartans, we are told, considered this proposal μωρία,

³⁶ O. Murray (1986) 195.

³⁷ Good discussion of this episode in Alty (1982) 3. “Arrogantly” is Alty’s word.

“folly” but agreed to it because they were keen to secure Argive friendship at any price. The main focalizers for the word “folly” are certainly the Spartans, but one may suspect that Thucydides agreed. The Argives seem—even in the eyes of the Spartans, who hardly personify modernity—to be so many fossils, childishy obsessed with past and mythical greatness.

Conclusion

I have tried in this chapter to identify and explain an unevenness in Thucydides’ treatment of the Argives. He knows plenty, but except in the period 421–415 he has been sparing of the kind of personal detail he supplies for comparable states. If I may intrude a personal note, I added an entirely new chapter on Argos when in 2002 I rewrote a textbook history of classical Greece³⁸ because I had become convinced, in the twenty years since the first edition, that Argos deserved the same degree of attention as Corinth and Boeotia (not to mention Athens and Sparta). I suspected that I had been originally misled by Thucydides’ distribution of attention into believing that Argos mattered less than it did. Just because the Argives were precluded from certain kinds of action for three decades, by a bilateral treaty with the Spartans entered into in 451, this was not an excuse for ignoring them. The explanation of Thucydides’ treatment that I have offered in the present chapter is in terms of his own attitudes. An obvious riposte is to say that Thucydides was always at the mercy of his information, that his coverage of most issues is patchy and selective, and that it is therefore futile to try to detect and explain patterns in his coverage. There is probably something in this. For example, I think that if he had known the name of the Boeotian hipparch, a high-status position, who is mentioned *honoris causa* as having been killed at Megara in 424 (4.72.4), he would have told us it. But I hope I have shown that a thread—impatience with Argive backward-lookingness and indiscipline—runs through the Argive episodes he recounts. Non-naming is one way of indicating contempt

³⁸ See n. 12.

or disapproval. We have seen that in the case of the Argive assassin of Phrynichus, but we cannot be sure that the historian knew this fellow's name. There are clearer examples: "one of the prisoners" (6.60.2) is usually thought to be the orator Andocides, whom Thucydides had surely talked to, but with whose version of the Athenian events of 415 he was "evidently . . . not satisfied".³⁹ I suggest that Thucydides may consciously or unconsciously have allowed his negative feelings about the Argives to keep them in onomastic obscurity for much of his narrative.

³⁹ Dover, *HCT* 4.337.

SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY IN THUCYDIDES

Michael Zahrnt

Sicily and southern Italy lay beyond the horizons of Greek historians. Thucydides was only interested in this region when the Athenians were there—just three times during the Peloponnesian War. In this chapter, however, I shall not be concerned with the aims of the Athenians or with Thucydides' assessment of their intentions or prospects of success, so much as with the information his work gives us about the history of the western Greeks and their cities. At the beginning of Book VI, Thucydides puts the following characterization into the mouth of Alcibiades:

As to the voyage to Sicily, do not change your minds on the ground that you are going against a formidable power. For it is only with a mixed rabble that the cities there are populous, and changes and accessions in the body of their citizens are easy . . . And it is not likely that a rabble of this kind would either listen to counsel with one mind or turn to action with a common purpose; but quickly, if anything were said to please them, they would each for himself come over to our side, especially if they are in a state of revolution as we hear . . . Such, then is the situation in Sicily, to judge from what I learn by report, and it is likely to be still more easy to deal with—for we shall have many barbarians, who from hatred of the Syracusans will join us in attacking them; and matters here will be no actual hindrance, if you are rightly advised (6.17.2–6).¹

Thucydides himself shares this assessment, as he makes clear in his characterization of Pericles and in his documentation of the mistakes of his successors:

And from this, since it happened in a great and imperial state, there resulted many blunders, especially the Sicilian expedition, which was not so much an error of judgment, when we consider the enemy they went against, as of management (2.65.11).

¹ For quotations from the *History*, the translation of C.F. Smith (*The Loeb Classical Library*) is used throughout this paper.

The internal disunity in the Greek cities of Sicily, the tensions between them, and the hatred the Sicels felt for the Syracusans were facts that, at the end of the fifth century, Athenian politicians could turn to their own advantage, and which historians could take as a basis for their expositions.

The conditions Alcibiades describes were a legacy from the time of the first tyranny in Sicily and southern Italy and the years following its overthrow. However, the roots of the situation can be traced to the arrival of Greek colonists in the West, their expansion along the coasts and into the interior, and their clashes with the indigenous tribes. This is where Thucydides' account starts, and it is here that we too must begin.

At the beginning of Book VI, Thucydides speaks of the various inhabitants of Sicily and the colonization of the island by Greeks of various origins. There has been a great deal of discussion about the source of this report,² but it is generally acknowledged that Thucydides' foundation dates are reliable.³ The Sicani (6.2.2) are mentioned only once during the course of the war (6.62.3); the territory of the Elymians (3) is virtually identical with the city of Egesta and the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Eryx (6.46.3). The Sicels (4f.) were to play a very important role in the war. The information about the Phoenicians and their settlements all around Sicily (6) is surely erroneous: they arrived on the island at about the same time as the Greeks and settled only in the northwest. In 6.3–5 there follows a description of the Greek colonization of Sicily; Thucydides does not confine himself to listing the first foundations but also speaks of later ones and of the fates of individual cities; these in many cases were connected with the tyrants, who appeared in several cities at the end of the archaic period.⁴

The first of these tyrants to be mentioned is Hippocrates of Gela, who conquered the Chalcidian colonies on the eastern coast of Sicily, Leontinoi, Catane, Naxos, Kallipolis, and Zankle, and appointed subtyrants in at least some of these cities.⁵ Shortly before the con-

² Cf. Dover (1953), who convincingly suggests Antiochus of Syracuse. On the "Sicilian Archaeology" and its function within the work, cf. Tsakmakis (1995a) 159–75.

³ Cf. Coldstream (1977) 233ff.; Graham (1982) 83ff.

⁴ On the tyrants of the Western Greeks, cf. also 1.14.2; 1.18.1, and the outline of Asheri (1988b) 757ff.; (1992) 147ff.

⁵ Hdt. 7.154.1f. mentions only Leontinoi, Naxos, Kallipolis, and Zankle, but given its location Catane must have been subjugated too.

quest of Zankle, the Zankleans had invited the Ionians to take part in the foundation of a colony on the northern coast of Sicily. After the defeat at Lade the Samian aristocrats accepted this invitation and sailed to the west (Hdt. 6.22). In the meantime Hippocrates captured Zankle and installed a certain Skythes there, and in 494 Anaxilas established himself as tyrant of Rhegion. When the Samians arrived there, he induced them to attack Zankle while Skythes and the Zankleans were away laying siege to a Sicel town. Hippocrates was forced to hand over Zankle to the Samians but was able to make slaves of the Zankleans, who were of no further use to him (Hdt. 6.23; Th. 6.4.5). Not long afterward he marched against Syracuse and won a battle at the river Heloros; an agreement was concluded whereby the Syracusans ceded the territory of Camarina to him and their prisoners were returned (Hdt. 7.154.3).

Hippocrates was the first Sicilian to achieve hegemony over large parts of the island, and he was very soon emulated. Around the year 490, Anaxilas conquered Zankle, expelled the Samians, colonized the city with a very mixed population, and renamed it Messene, which later became Messina.⁶ In Gela meanwhile, Hippocrates had died and the Deinomenid Gelon had seized power (Hdt. 7.155.1). Soon afterward he contacted Theron, who had set up a tyranny in neighboring Akragas, and together the rulers strove to expand their power. Sometime before 480 Theron captured Himera, a colony jointly founded by the Zankleans and Syracusans (Th. 6.5.1), and drove out the tyrant Terillos (Hdt. 7.165), while Gelon set about extending the territory in the east of Sicily, which he had taken over from Hippocrates. In around 485 he seized Syracuse and made it his new capital, moving half the population of Gela and all of the inhabitants of Camarina to the city. He also transferred the landowning oligarchs of Megara Hyblaea to Syracuse, thus incorporating the city's territory into his own, and sold the common people into slavery (Hdt. 7.156; Th. 6.5.3; 6.94.1). The population of Syracuse was thus drastically increased and of extremely mixed descent; in addition Gelon eventually enfranchised his mercenaries, who allegedly numbered ten thousand (D.S. 11.72.3).

Gelon died in 478, after which the tyrannies of the island went into decline. When the Himeraeans began to feel oppressed and

⁶ Th. 6.4.6; Paus. 4.23.5ff.; differently Hdt. 7.164.1; on the evidence of the coins, cf. E.S.G. Robinson (1946).

asked Gelon's successor Hieron for help, the tyrant betrayed them and handed them over to Theron for revenge. The slaughter Theron brought about at Himera made it necessary for the depleted population to be supplemented by the settling of Dorians, among others (D.S. 11.48.6ff.; 11.49.3f.). There were different motives behind Hieron's resettlement policy: being only the guardian of Gelon's son (who was still a minor), and feeling that his rule in Syracuse was unstable, he needed a place of refuge. In or around 485 he transferred the inhabitants of Naxos and Catane to Leontinoi and integrated them into the population of the city. The suppression of the Ionian element on the island, which had started with Hippocrates' enslavement of the Zankleans, was now nearly complete: with the exception of a residual population in Himera and Messana, Ionians were only to be found in Leontinoi. Naxos remained uninhabited, while the territory of Catane was enlarged with land taken from the Sicels. Ten thousand settlers, half of them summoned from the Peloponnese, half of them transferred from Syracuse, were given domicile and land in the new foundation, which was named Aetna (D.S. 11.49.1f.).

The final years of the tyrannies and subsequent decades are not so thoroughly documented by Thucydides: he writes only of the refoundation of Camarina by the Geloans (6.5.3). However, Diodorus supplements this information, making it possible to comprehend the course of events to some extent. Furthermore, P.Oxy. 665 (= *FGrHist* 577 F 1) contains part of an index of a Sicilian history; the details given in this text concern the time immediately following the end of the tyranny and provide a large amount of information not found in Diodorus. The fragment indicates that additional fighting occurred, not only between Greek cities, but also against mercenaries, and that Greek cities were active in providing assistance for one another. To judge from this fragment, there must have been more instability throughout Sicily after the end of the tyranny than the text of Diodorus would lead us to believe—although even his report hardly gives the impression of a peaceful period.

Theron's death and the resulting downfall of the Akragantine tyranny also brought about the independence of Himera, albeit without any change in the composition of its population.⁷ Five years later

⁷ D.S. 11.53.1–5; on the "Fall of the Tyrannies" generally, cf. Asheri (1992) 154ff.

the sons of Anaxilas became rulers of Rhegion and Messana, and, in Syracuse, Thrasybulos succeeded his brother Hieron (D.S. 11.66). After a rule of just eleven months, he was expelled and found refuge in Locroi, which had been bound to the Deinomenids since Hieron's time (D.S. 11.67f.). With the overthrow of the Deinomenids, the empire created by Hippocrates, Gelon and Hieron in the east of the island disintegrated: Gela and Leontinoi became independent and the ruler of Aetna was isolated. At the same time, the Geloans who had been moved to Syracuse or their descendants must have returned to their city; only Megara was not restored. However, this did not spell peace in Syracuse: clashes erupted between citizens and mercenaries, the old town was occupied then besieged by the Syracusans and all supplies were cut off. Consequently the mercenaries' connections with Aetna were severed. The fighting seems to have lasted for more than a year, until the mercenaries were overcome; their eventual fate is unknown (D.S. 11.72f.; 11.76,1f.). Under the leadership of Duketios, the Sicels, whom Hieron had deprived of part of their territory to found Aetna, rose against this last stronghold of the tyranny, joined by the Syracusans. The Aetnaeans were forced to flee from their city but found a new home on the slopes of Mt. Aetna at Inessa, which was renamed Aetna. Catane and Naxos were restored, and the old Chalcidian inhabitants returned from Leontinoi (D.S. 11.76.3). At about the same time, the sons of Anaxilas were expelled, the political union between Rhegion and Messana was dissolved, and the city of Camarina was resettled by the Geloans (D.S. 11.76.5). This became a new center of conflict, since the Syracusans were laying claim to their colony Camarina. There were also apparently tensions in Messana—or at least a revival of the Ionian population; the old city name of Zankle reappeared on coins for a time.

Forty years of tyranny had had a severe impact on the Greek cities of Sicily, which had to a large extent regained their independence or been restored. The annulment and foundation of cities and the movement of citizens had resulted in the creation of heterogeneous populations and a climate of rootlessness. Another legacy of the tyranny was the strain that various border problems and territorial claims put upon relations between cities. As far as its foreign policy was concerned, democratic Syracuse pursued the same aims as the Deinomenids. In common with their former tyrants, the Syracusans aspired to a hegemony directed at the eastern part of the island; in the second half of the fifth century these Syracusan

ambitions were to lead to numerous clashes, which the Athenians were eventually dragged into. But for the time being the Syracusans had other problems.

Among those who had returned to their homes after the end of the tyranny were the Sicels, who had served as mercenaries for the tyrants. The dissolution of the Deinomenid empire had also increased the number of independent Sicel communities. In Duketios the Sicels now found a leader who had already led the successful campaign against Aetna and won back the territory which Hieron had seized. Within a short time Duketios compelled numerous Sicel communities to recognize his rule and created a considerable empire in eastern Sicily, finally becoming strong enough even to attack Greek cities. His first victim was Aetna (Inessa), whose capture obliterated the last remnant of Deinomenid rule. But the Syracusans and Akragantines joined forces against him, and he surrendered to the Syracusans (D.S. 11.91f.). His empire disintegrated, the southern part soon falling into the hands of the Syracusans while the northern part regained its independence.⁸

The *entente* between Syracuse and Akragas lasted just a few years before war broke out, prompting other Greek cities to ally themselves with one or the other (D.S. 12.8). In a battle at the river Himeras, the Akragantine coalition was defeated, and the Akragantines had to sue for peace. The attempt to prevent Syracuse from regaining its power had failed. For the year 442/1 Diodorus characterizes the situation on the island as follows:

Affairs likewise in Sicily also were in a peaceful state, since . . . the Greek cities of Sicily had voluntarily conceded the hegemony to the Syracusans, and the Akragantines, after their defeat at the river Himeras, had come to terms with the Syracusans (12.26.3).

In the meantime the Syracusans had conquered nearly the whole of the territory of the southern Sicels and had once again completed their empire in the southeast of the island (and in the hinterland of the Chalcidian colonies). As a result of these successes they apparently increased their troops and imposed heavier tributes upon the Sicels, who were now subject to them. "This they were doing with the intention of subduing all Sicily little by little" (D.S. 12.30.1). One

⁸ On the "Sicel Movement" and its fate, cf. Asheri (1992) 161ff.

would have expected the first victims of this expansion to be Camarina on the one hand, and the Chalcidian cities in the north of Syracuse, Leontinoi, Catane, and Naxos, on the other. But it is not until 427 that we hear of a war between Syracuse and Leontinoi, the latter of which was supported by Camarina, Catane, Naxos, and Rhegion (Th. 3.86). Until this moment, none of the Greek cities which could have been regarded as targets of Syracusan expansion had lost its independence. It might be assumed that a great power must have foiled the Syracusan plans, yet such a power did not exist in Sicily or in southern Italy—only on the Greek mainland. And this brings us to Athens and the Athenian Empire.

From the 440s onward, Athenian diplomatic activity in the West was more intense than many scholars admit. In 444/3 the Athenians founded a colony upon the ruins of Sybaris and settled Greeks of different origin in this new city (Thurioi); Athens was to be regarded as its mother city (D.S. 12.10f.). However, the Athenians were not content merely to have founded a colony, but also found allies in the area who could protect it. In exchange for this, the Athenians guaranteed the allies protection from their neighbors. We know of two treaties with Rhegion and Leontinoi that were renewed in 443/2; they may have originally been concluded at the time of the foundation of Thurioi.⁹ Other treaties are furthermore alluded to by Thucydides. In 427 the allies of the Leontines, who had come to Athens, referred to an earlier alliance and to the fact that they were Ionians (3.86.3); this reference to an earlier alliance may mean that other Chalcidian cities had also concluded treaties with Athens. Similarly there may have been relations between Athens and the Sicels in the north of Sicily. In 414 King Archonides, who had been known in this area since the time of Duketios, is referred to as a friend of the Athenians (7.1.4). The following year the Athenians renewed an old alliance of friendship with Artas, chieftain of the Iapygians in southern Italy, and received soldiers and ships from Metapontion in accordance with the terms of their alliance (7.33.4f.). None of these relations can be dated with certainty, but it is possible that all of them were intended to protect Thurioi and contain the aggression of the Syracusans and their friends in southern Italy,

⁹ *ML* 63f.; cf. D.M. Lewis (1976) 225; in greater detail Wick (1976).

Taras and Locroi. Finally, the Corcyreans speak of Athenian interests in Italy and Sicily (1.36.2; cf. 1.44.3).

The Spartans also had friends in this area, and at the beginning of the Archidamian War they ordered them to build ships (2.7.2); but nothing seems to have happened, nor is there mention of any help being given to the Athenians' enemies.¹⁰ On the other hand, the Syracusans reverted to their former policy and began threatening their Chalcidian neighbours. The latter were allied with Rhegion and Camarina, while the Syracusans had alliances with the other Dorian cities of the island and with the Locrians (3.86.2). The enmity between Syracuse and Camarina was historical; in the past there had also been clashes between Rhegion and Locroi, which was supported by Syracuse. By 427 war had broken out, and the Chalcidian cities were under heavy pressure. They turned to the Athenians, who resolved to send twenty ships under the command of Laches and Charoiades,

professedly on the ground of their relationship, but really because they wished to prevent the importation of grain into the Peloponnesus, and also to make a preliminary test whether the affairs of Sicily could be brought under their own control (3.86.3f.).

The first may have been the official—and technically indisputable—reason, but the second is also comprehensible: as long as the Peloponnesians were importing grain from the west, they could remain in Attica and cause even more destruction. However, because it is doubtful that the Athenians would have had much hope of gaining a foothold in Sicily at that time, it will be as well to defer the problem of their motives and concentrate on the course of their actions. Unfortunately the sources are not much use: Thucydides' account is incoherent, short, and definitely incomplete; D.S. 12.53f. puts all the events into one year, providing no additional information (with the exception of a short section on Gorgias), and Just. 4.3.4–7 is no use at all. A papyrus fragment from an unknown historical work, possibly by Philistus, supplies some details not in Thucydides, but the date is controversial.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. Moxon (1980).

¹¹ *FGrHist* 577 F 2; on the dating of these events to 426, cf. recently Bosworth (1992).

The Athenians established themselves at Rhegion (3.86.5); the same winter they and the Rhegians made an expedition against the islands of Aiolos, which were allied with the Syracusans (3.88). In the summer of 426 there was further activity, but unfortunately Thucydides omits mentioning all but the most important facts and even suppresses events that are reported in the papyrus, namely operations by the Athenian generals north and south of Syracuse, the death of Charoiades, and an attack on Locroi.

Some time later the Athenians captured Mylai, whereupon the Messanians also submitted (3.90). The Athenians now had a base for their operations in Sicily, but before moving on into the island they undertook another successful raid into the territory of the Locrians (3.99). In Sicily, time was on their side: many Sicels, who had been unwilling subjects and allies of the Syracusans, had revolted and gone over to the Athenians. In the winter of 426/5, together with these Sicels and their Greek allies, the Athenians attacked Inessa, which lay on the southwestern slopes of Aetna and whose acropolis was held by the Syracusans. The attack was in vain, however: the Athenians were forced back, and during their retreat the Syracusans managed to inflict a number of casualties upon the Athenian allies (3.103.1f.); thus the attempt to force an entry into the Syracusan sphere of control and remove the threat to the Chalcidian cities had failed. The location of Inessa clearly shows the size of the territory still under Syracusan control. After this setback, the Athenians' priorities were to protect their position on the straits and support the Rhegians. They undertook another successful raid into Locrian territory (3.103.3), made a landing in the territory of Himera, supported from the interior by the Sicels, and once more attacked the islands of Aiolos (3.115.1).

In the meantime the Sicilian allies had sent to Athens to request reinforcements. The Syracusans were in control of their territory and were now putting together a fleet against the few ships that kept them off the sea. The Athenians therefore manned forty ships, believing that this would hasten the end of the war in Sicily (3.115.3f.). One of the generals was sent ahead with a few ships and took over the command; at the end of the winter he also tried to distinguish himself against the Locrians but was defeated (3.115.5f.).

The enemies of the Athenians began to act before the reinforcements arrived. At the beginning of the summer of 425 the Syracusans and Locrians sailed to Messina and occupied the city, having been

invited by the inhabitants. It is known that Zankle/Messana had frequently changed hands and received new sections of population. Thucydides gives the following main reasons for the seizure of Messana: the Syracusans thought that it would be a good base from which to attack Sicily and feared that the Athenians might come back at some point in the future with a larger force. The Locrians' motive was their hostility toward the Rhegians, whom they hoped to attack from two sides. Rhegion itself was also in turmoil, and a number of Rhegians who were living in exile among the Locrians urged them to invade Rhegian territory and ravage the country. The Locrian land forces soon withdrew, but their ships continued to guard Messana; they even manned more ships, which were to be stationed at Messana and carry on the war from there (4.1).

The Athenian fleet had not yet arrived, and so the Syracusans and Locrians were once again able to take the initiative. The Syracusans and their allies collected their ships and continued the war from Messana, while the Locrians invaded the Rhegian territory. Their aim was to expel the Athenians from Rhegion and capture their second base on the strait, but this plan failed and the Locrians withdrew. However, the Syracusan ships did enjoy some success, and the Athenians' maritime superiority was lost. Even worse, the Athenians were nervous about the durability of their alliances. Upon learning that Camarina was going to be betrayed to the Syracusans by a pro-Syracusan faction, the Athenian fleet sailed there. The Messanians now had an opportunity to attack Naxos, but were beaten back with the help of the Sicels. Taking advantage of the fact that the Messanians had suffered heavy casualties, the Leontines and their allies attacked Messana, together with the Athenians, who had returned from Camarina. But the attack failed, costing the Leontines many lives. The Athenians withdrew to Rhegion, perhaps to await the arrival of their reinforcements, leaving the Sicilian Greeks to continue fighting among themselves. Since Thucydides confines himself to recounting the actions of the Athenians, nothing is known about these events (4.24ff.).

When the new ships eventually arrived at the end of the summer of 425, it was too late in the year for any activity. Although Thucydides maintains that the Athenians proceeded to carry on the war in conjunction with their allies on the island (4.48.6), he supplies no details about the end of 425, nor about 424. However, Timaeus says that the new Athenian general had to urge the cities to pursue their war

against the Syracusans, and that the Geloans, who were suffering as a result of the war, sent to Camarina begging for a truce.¹² The impression given is that the Athenian reinforcements did not see any action. According to Timaeus, the Geloans had suffered from the war, but Thucydides does not even mention this city, which had certainly sided with the Syracusans. This again demonstrates that his account of the fighting on the island was only partial. Representatives from the Greek cities of Sicily met in Gela and held a conference (4.58). They agreed to end the war on the basis of the *status quo*, except that the Camarinaeans were to have Morgantina on payment of a stated sum of money to the Syracusans (4.65.1). Apparently the Camarinaeans had had some success in the interior, and this was now acknowledged in the treaty.

Thucydides' account of the peace conference contains a lengthy speech by the Syracusan Hermocrates¹³ that clearly shows that the primary motive of the Greek cities for the conclusion of peace was not the fact that they were war-weary but rather the presence of a large Athenian fleet and the fear that the Athenians might set up a hegemony in Sicily rather than protecting their western allies. Hermocrates did not believe that the present fleet was capable of doing this, but feared that if the war went on and the Sicilian Greeks continued to undermine each other, the Athenians might at some point in the future come with a larger fleet and try to subjugate the whole of Sicily; hence his plea for Siceliot unity and against interference from abroad.

After the terms of the peace had been negotiated, the allies of the Athenians summoned the Athenian generals and told them that they proposed to make peace and that the treaty would also include them (4.65.2). It is clear that the Chalcidians longed for peace but at the same time were reluctant to relinquish their ties with the Athenians, whose help they might need in the future. At this moment, Chalcidian independence from Syracuse was achieved. When the Athenian generals assented to the allies' proposal, they proceeded to make the agreement and the Athenian fleet left Sicily.

In his speech, Hermocrates urges the delegates to reconcile not only the cities with one other, but also their people, alluding to the

¹² *FGHist* 566 F 22 = Plb. 12.25k.3.

¹³ 4.59–64; on the personality of Hermocrates, cf. Westlake (1969).

same internal instability which Alcibiades would speak of nearly ten years later. Between 427 and 424 this instability worked to the disadvantage of the Athenians: Messana was lost at the instigation of people in the city, the Rhegians were torn apart by internal strife and struggled to ward off the Locrians. The Camarinaeans were also unreliable allies. It is natural that the Athenian allies should have preferred peace to the continuation of a war in which they had to live with the fear of fifth columns in their cities.

The aims of the Athenians in Sicily have been the object of much speculation in the literature.¹⁴ The main Athenian military base was at Rhegion, and much of the fighting took place in the vicinity of this city. One of the first targets was Messana, which together with Rhegion controlled the strait. The repeated attacks on Locroi show that the Athenians were primarily concerned with securing their position in and around Rhegion, and that they took—or rather had to take—the interests of the Rhegians into account. The attacks on the islands of Aiolos are similarly understandable, since complete control of the strait was feasible only if they were subjugated. So control of the strait was the first aim of the Athenians, and this was accomplished after they had won over the Messanians; with Messana they also gained a base for their subsequent operations in Sicily. The Syracusans also recognized the importance of the sea passage and regarded Messana as a base for launching attacks. Consequently, the Syracusan and Locrian counteroffensive began in the strait.

In general, the strategy of the Athenians seems to have been rather improvisational; all—or at least most—of their operations were conducted with the objective of supporting their allies and damaging their enemies whenever the opportunity arose. Laches pursued this policy, and not without results, although his successor was less fortunate. Apparently the Athenian generals saw it as their role to foster opposition toward Syracuse and the other Dorian cities, and to prevent them from dominating their Siceliot and Italiot neighbours. There was always the possibility that cities in this region might assist the Peloponnesians, and therefore their opponents on both sides of the strait needed to be strengthened and the sphere of Syracusan control restricted. This at least is the impression created by Thucydides'

¹⁴ Cf. Westlake (1960); Kagan (1974) 181ff.; 188ff.; Holladay (1978); Wick (1979).

account. Against this background it is not difficult to understand the position of the Athenian generals with regard to the peace agreement—if they really considered it to be their task to guarantee the safety of the Athenian allies in Sicily and, as mentioned above, when reinforcements were sent, to bring the war in Sicily to an end sooner. With the peace treaty negotiated in Gela—albeit without the Athenians—both goals were achieved, and the Camarinacans even received some additional territory. The Athenian generals were able to return home from Sicily in the certain knowledge that they had done their job properly. Even if they had not believed this, it was in any case impossible for them to stay any longer or undertake any operations without a base on the island. Nevertheless, after their return to Athens the generals were accused “on the charge that when it had been in their power to subdue Sicily they had been bribed to withdraw from it” (4.65.3). Thucydides attributes this to the Athenians’ euphoria in the wake of the successes they had been enjoying and a conviction on their part that anything was achievable (4.65.4). But when he implies that the Athenians had already been cherishing similar hopes when they dispatched the first twenty ships (3.86.4), he is either speaking of the dreams of a handful of imperialists or has extrapolated the intentions of 427 from the accusations of 424. It was the misfortune of the generals who were sent to Sicily at the beginning of 425 and condemned in the summer of 424 that they had left the Athens of the *Acharnians* and returned to the Athens of the *Knights*.

In summer 422 the Athenians tried to intervene in Sicily once again. The peace concluded in 424 had not lasted long. After the agreement the Leontines had enrolled many new citizens, as was natural in the wake of the losses they had suffered in the attack on Messana. Now the *dēmos* wanted to redistribute the land. When the governing classes realized this, they called in the Syracusans and drove the *dēmos* out, then settling at Syracuse on the condition that they would have citizenship. Thus the Syracusans eventually acquired the territory of Leontinoi, typically enough not by aggression but as a result of internal strife in the city whose opposition to Syracuse had triggered off the first Athenian expedition. These events are indicative of the internal weakness of the Chalcidian cities, itself unquestionably a legacy of the repeated population shifts in the first half of the century. Some of the Leontines later became dissatisfied, left Syracuse and occupied Phocaeae, a part of Leontinoi, and also

Briccinniae, a stronghold in Leontine territory. Most of the members of the *dēmos* returned and carried on the war from their strongholds (5.4.1–4). On hearing of this, the Athenians sent Phaiax with two ships to Sicily to persuade their own allies—and the other Siceliots if possible—to make a joint attack on the Syracusans, who were continually extending their power, and to save the *dēmos* of Leontinoi. Apparently the Athenians were only able to send two ships, having mobilized the rest for the decisive encounter in Thrace. In Camarina and Akragas the Athenian embassy met with success, not surprisingly in view of the former relationship between these cities and Syracuse. But in Gela, which had sided with the Syracusans in the previous war, the Athenians failed; as a result of this, they did not go on to the other states, believing that they would be unable to persuade them. They returned through the territory of the Sicels to Catane and sailed home (5.4.5f.).

On his voyage to and from Sicily, Phaiax negotiated with certain cities in Italy and also met some Locrians who had moved to Messana and then been expelled (here, as in the case of Leontinoi, Thucydides records incidents which happened subsequent to the peace of Gela). In the summer of 425, the Syracusans and Locrians had taken Messana with the help of partisans in the city. Apparently the latter felt in need of reinforcement and called in some Locrians who moved to Messana, and brought the city into the hands of the Locrians for a time, until they were expelled. We do not know whether these events had any repercussions for the relationship between Messana and Athens, but we do hear of an agreement between Phaiax and the Locrians. The latter had not originally wanted to join the common peace in Sicily but were now under pressure due to the war with their colonies Hipponion and Medma, and therefore had no choice but to submit to the Athenian terms (5.5.2f.).

The diplomatic mission of 422 is usually regarded as a failure, and indeed the Athenians did not succeed in weakening the Syracusans. On the other hand, as far as it is possible to tell, the situation of the Athenian allies in Sicily did not decisively deteriorate during the years that followed, except that the Leontines, who had returned, were driven out again some time later. Due to this latter situation, the restoration of Leontinoi was among the aims of the great Sicilian Expedition of the Athenians in 415–413. This expedition was partly a consequence of the diplomatic mission in 422. After the Athenians

had shown an interest in Sicily, even in the final stage of the Archidamian War, the enemies of Syracuse also felt that they could count on their assistance in the future as well. And indeed such a request for help triggered off the third, the largest and consequently the most serious expedition, the account of which fills two books in Thucydides.¹⁵ This great Sicilian Expedition shows plainly what a radical democracy could and could not do, yet this is not relevant to the present discussion. Here we are again interested in what information Thucydides' account provides in terms of the situation in and around Sicily.

In the west of Sicily war had broken out between the Egestans and the Selinuntians. The Selinuntians had made allies of the Syracusans and were putting heavy pressure on the Egestans. The latter turned to Athens, where, according to Thucydides, their envoys used the following arguments:

If the Syracusans should go unpunished for depopulating Leontinoi, and by destroying those of their allies that were still left should get the whole of Sicily under their power, there was danger that some time, lending aid with a great force, both as Dorians to Dorians on account of kinship, and at the same time as colonists to the Peloponnesians that had sent them out, they might help to pull down the power of the Athenians. It would be wise, therefore, with their allies that were still left, to oppose the Syracusans, especially as the Egestans would furnish money sufficient for the war.

The Athenians therefore sent envoys to Egesta to check whether the Egestans were really able to pay (6.6.2–3). In spring 415 the envoys returned along with an Egestan delegation, bringing sixty talents of silver; both spoke of large amounts of money in the temples and in the treasury, whereupon the Athenians voted to send to Sicily sixty ships with the generals Alcibiades, Nicias and Lamachos,

to aid the Egestans against the Selinuntians, and also to join in restoring Leontinoi, in case they should have any success in the war; and further to settle all other matters in Sicily as they might deem best for the Athenians (6.8.1f.).

Initially the expedition was to be on a modest scale; the Athenians had sent sixty ships to Sicily ten years previously and at that time a peace had been concluded that was not entirely disadvantageous

¹⁵ Literature: Kagan (1981) 157ff.; Andrewes (1992a) 446ff.

for the Athenian allies. However, they now sent a force about three times as large as this, and this was partly why the expedition failed. On the one hand, in contrast with its stated aim, the forces were so large that even former friends were intimidated; on the other, they could not easily be withdrawn without serious loss of prestige, although this latter course of action had suggested itself from the outset. After more than two years, the expedition ended in catastrophe.

The Siceliots were completely unprepared for war, and when reports of the imminent attack reached Syracuse, it was a long time before they were taken seriously. The Athenian fleet was already at Corcyra by the time an assembly was summoned in Syracuse to discuss the rumors, which were coming from many quarters. Thucydides gives a detailed report.¹⁶ The first speaker mentioned is Hermocrates, who came forward and said that he had reliable information that a large Athenian fleet was sailing toward Sicily,

on the pretext of an alliance with the Egestans and the restoration of the Leontines, but in truth with a covetous desire for Sicily, and above all for our city, thinking that once in possession of it they would easily get possession of the rest also (6.33.2).

This in itself should not necessarily frighten the Syracusans: the size of the Athenian forces alone would compel the other Siceliots to unite, and disposed them favorably toward an alliance with the Syracusans. Thucydides' Hermocrates reckons on an effect similar to that created ten years previously by the strengthening of the Athenian fleet. The bulk of his speech deals with the measures that needed to be taken immediately to protect the city: envoys must be dispatched to the Sicels, to the rest of Sicily, and to Italy, even to the Carthaginians. As is usually the case with the speeches, we can assume that Thucydides has incorporated his own ideas, so it makes little difference whether Hermocrates really recommended sending to the Carthaginians for help or not; it was Thucydides who regarded the Carthaginians as a power that could be applied to for assistance, like the cities of Sicily and Italy. In any case, Thucydides did not consider them to be arch enemies of the Greeks, nor in particular of the Siceliots—and Thucydides was a contemporary, who had witnessed the wars in Sicily at the end of the fifth century.

¹⁶ 6.32.3–6.41. According to 7.55.2 there were democracies in the Sicilian cities; on the democracy in Syracuse, cf. recently E.W. Robinson (2000).

Only a few people believed what Hermocrates had to say. The final speaker was a certain Athenagoras, a popular leader who had great influence with the people at that time, according to Thucydides. He denounced the whole affair as an obvious maneuver by the oligarchs. The rumors about the imminent attack were being circulated in order to frighten the masses and so make it possible for them to dominate the city. The speech that Thucydides has Athenagoras make is not a direct answer to Hermocrates' speech; it seems rather that the historian wanted to draw attention to certain features of the Syracusan constitution that would remind the reader of the Athenian democracy, as, for example, when he has Athenagoras maintain that the judgment of the people is infallible. Ten years later this mistaken belief was to cost the Athenians their empire—and the Syracusans their freedom. But Athenagoras could do no more than polemicize, since one of the generals stood up and categorically declared the end of the debate, announced the next measures, and disbanded the assembly.

In the meantime the Athenians crossed over from Corcyra and experienced their first disappointment: none of the Italian cities allowed them inside their walls or provided them with a market, though they did provide them with water and allow them to anchor their ships—with the exception of Taras, the Spartan colony, and Locroi, the traditional ally of the Syracusans. The Athenians had not expected anything else from these cities, but the reaction of their old ally Rhegion came as an unpleasant surprise. In contrast with ten years previously, the city totally rejected the Athenians: they were not admitted within the walls but had to pitch camp outside of the town, where a market was provided for them. The Rhegians did not accept the argument that as Chalcidians they should help the Leontines, who were also Chalcidians, but said that they would remain neutral and do whatever the rest of the Italiots decided (6.43.1–6.44.3; 6.46.2). In truth the Italiots did not have any body for common discussion and decision making; the cities had already decided separately upon their relationships with the Athenian expeditionary fleet, so the answer of the Rhegians was no more than a polite refusal. It is clear that the size of the Athenian fleet frightened them, since it was much larger than the officially stated aim would have necessitated. In 424 the presence of sixty Athenian ships had induced them to conclude peace; now more than twice that number had come, and there were also land forces. But there may have been yet another reason for

their refusal. In 427 the Leontines and their allies had called upon the Athenians, who had chosen Rhegion as their base. Leontinoi no longer existed, so assisting the Leontines would mean war with the Syracusans, and in such a war the Rhegians would again have the Locrians on their backs. Given this, the neutrality of the Rhegians is hardly surprising.

So the Syracusans energetically set about making the necessary preparations, sending guards to some Sicel cities and envoys to others (6.45). This distinction is characteristic of the relations between the Syracusans and the Sicels: subjects had to be kept down, but others were courted.¹⁷ Evidently the Syracusans had realized that the Athenian expedition was aimed primarily at the greatest city of the island and that assisting the Egestans was merely a pretext.

Indeed the Athenians very soon lost interest in the Egestans once it became clear that they could not pay more than thirty talents—the second major disappointment of the expedition following the refusal of the Rhegians. The Athenian generals took counsel on the situation and decided to look for allies, beginning with the Messanians, who refused to enter into any alliance, then sailing on to Naxos, where the Naxians received them inside their city. They then approached the Cataneans, who, however, refused to receive them, since there were people in the city who favored the Syracusan cause (6.50.1–3). The Athenian fleet continued on towards Syracuse, with ten ships being sent ahead into the Great Harbor, where the commanders proclaimed

that the Athenians had come to reinstate the Leontines in their own country on the ground of alliance and kinship; any Leontines therefore who were in Syracuse should come over without fear to the Athenians as friends and benefactors (6.50.4f.).

This proclamation amounted to an ultimatum to the Syracusans, and from then on they were at war with the Athenians. On their way back, the Athenians were able to take Catane by surprise after the pro-Syracusan partisans had fled (6.51). Finally, the Athenians experienced a further disappointment with a former ally. After hav-

¹⁷ In a similar way Hermocrates had spoken of Sicels, whose allegiance had to be confirmed, and of others with whom friendship and alliance should be made (6.34.1). Alcibiades also advised trying to detach some of the Sicels from the Syracusans and make friends of others (6.48).

ing been called to Camarina by a pro-Athenian, anti-Syracusan group, they turned up with their entire force but could not induce the Camarinaeans to join them (6.52).

If one looks at the initial activities of the Athenians, it becomes clear that there was no actual opposition to Syracuse on the island that could be mobilized. Even Chalcidian (and therefore Ionian) cities, namely Rhegion and initially Catane, refused to join; so did Camarina, the traditional enemy of the Syracusans, which had only the subjugated Sicels to fear. Alcibiades in particular needed to be successful since he had been accused in Athens of profanation of the mysteries. However, when he returned to Catane he found an Athenian galley waiting to take him and others to Athens; but he and his companions were able to escape in Thurioi, and some time later he reached the Peloponnesus.

After Alcibiades was recalled, the remaining generals set off with the whole army into the west of Sicily. They sailed along the coast to Himera, where the people refused to receive them. West of Panormos they took the Sicanian town of Hyccara and gave it to the Egestans, who had assisted them with their cavalry; the inhabitants were enslaved and shipped to Catane. Nicias went on to Egesta and received thirty talents, while the war between Egesta and Selinus seems to have come to an end. In the end, the Athenians had no other option but to send round to their allies among the Sicels asking them to supply troops. They themselves attacked Hybla Geleatis, about fifteen kilometers west-northwest of Catane, but failed to capture it (6.62; cf. 6.63.2).

The Syracusans had not only made preparations but were also supported by troops, particularly from Selinus and to a lesser extent from Gela and Camarina (6.65.1; 6.67.2). Nicias realized that he would eventually have to attack Syracuse. He managed to bring his troops, comprising Sicels and others, into a favourable position near Syracuse and to defeat a numerically superior enemy. Nevertheless, not having cavalry he could not contemplate besieging Syracuse, and so the Athenians returned to Catane and sent to Athens for money and horsemen. They believed that after their success other Sicilian cities would join them (6.64–71), and sailed to Messana in the hope that the city would be betrayed to them. However, Alcibiades had informed the friends of the Syracusans in Messana of the plot and had also betrayed the friends of the Athenians there, who were quickly eliminated. Once again the Athenians had been unsuccessful (6.74).

The Athenian withdrawal gave the Syracusans time to organize their defense. Hermocrates was again the driving force and was able to induce the assembly to reduce the number of generals from fifteen to three, to give them full powers, and to release them from the obligation to consult the assembly. These measures curtailed Syracusan democracy considerably but seemed to be the right decision in the crisis at hand. In any case, the Syracusans resolved to do what Hermocrates had proposed and elected him general, along with two others (6.72f.).

Meanwhile the Athenians embarked on another diplomatic offensive in Camarina, hoping to win the city over. The Syracusans immediately sent a counter-embassy, being particularly skeptical about the willingness of the Camarinaeans to help them. It was true that the Camarinaeans felt uncomfortable, fearing on the one hand that the Athenians might seize control of Sicily, and on the other that the Syracusans might achieve victory without them and take revenge; they had so far contributed a few horsemen and were willing to continue to assist the Syracusans in the future, albeit in as modest a way as possible. In effect, they pointed out that they had treaties with both sides and declared their neutrality (6.75.3–6.88.2).

The Athenians were more successful in their negotiations with the Sicels. Some of those who were Syracusan subjects and lived nearer the plains had revolted; but the Sicels of the interior, who had always been independent, sided almost exclusively with the Athenians, supplying the army with grain and in some cases also money. The Athenians attacked those who did not come over but only forced some of them to join them, since the Syracusans had sent garrisons for their relief (6.88.3–5). The Athenians also saw fit to send a trireme to Carthage on a goodwill mission, hoping that they might be able to get some help. They sent to Tyrrhenia too, as some of the cities there had voluntarily offered to join them in the war (6.88.6). The Carthaginians apparently did not respond, or at least Thucydides does not record any reaction. The Tyrrhenians on the other hand were inveterate enemies of the Syracusans and easier to mobilize, and they assisted the Athenians until 413.¹⁸

In the spring of 414 the Athenians marched against the Sikel town of Centoripa and brought it over by agreement. Returning to Catane,

¹⁸ In 413 Tyrrhenians repulsed an attack on the Athenian camp (7.53.2; cf. 7.54).

they burnt the grain belonging to Inessa and Hybla (6.94.3). The names of these cities are revealing: we have just heard of the Sicels of the plain who were under Syracusan control, and the Sicels of the interior who had in their vast majority sided with the Athenians. Centoripa was a town in the interior that had not yet joined the Athenians; perhaps the territory of the Sicels who had joined them was farther to the north and to the west. Here lay Herbita, the seat of Archonides, friend of the Athenians, whereas on the western slopes of Aetna lay Inessa and Hybla, two Sicel towns that were still siding with the Syracusans, voluntarily or not. Their complete isolation had not been achieved during this winter, either militarily or diplomatically.

By this time money and horsemen had arrived from Athens, and the attack on Syracuse could begin. The Athenians managed to land on the coast north of Epipolai and to safeguard this area of high ground, which rises north and west of the town and dominates the whole of the surrounding area. With the help of the allied Sicels, Catane, Naxos, and Egesta it was possible to increase the cavalry to 650 horsemen (6.98.1). The siege of Syracuse that followed is described by Thucydides, but it is not necessary to discuss these events here, particularly since many of the topographical details are controversial. Within a short time the circumvallation of Syracuse was almost complete. Note was being taken of the new situation everywhere: provisions were arriving for the Athenian army from all parts of Italy, Sicels who had thus far kept their distance now turned up as allies, and the Tyrrhenians sent three ships (6.103.2). The Syracusans no longer thought they could resist. Hermocrates and his colleagues were replaced by three other generals who were apparently true democrats, and the Syracusans started talking about an agreement among themselves and with Nicias; the capitulation of Syracuse seemed to be imminent (6.103.3f.).

In the meantime the Spartan Gylippos arrived with four ships at Himera after an adventurous journey. He persuaded the Himeraeans to join him in the war and to provide arms for the crews of his ships, and also sent a request to the Selinuntians to mobilize all their forces. Troops were also promised by the Geloans and some of the Sicels, who were now far more willing to join him due to the recent death of Archonides, who had had considerable influence in the area and had been a friend of the Athenians (7.1). Gylippos set off for Syracuse with some three thousand men and managed to get into

the city shortly before it was completely walled off. His arrival drastically altered the situation: on land he soon took the initiative from Nicias, and when eventually the Syracusans resorted to naval warfare, the Athenians were lost.

Again the new situation was noted everywhere. Straight after his first successes, Gylippos set out to collect military and naval forces from elsewhere in Sicily and to win over those cities that were either not zealously supporting the Syracusans or had kept out of the war altogether (7.7.2; cf. 7.12.1). Nicias wrote to the Athenians urging them either to recall the expedition or to send another army and more money. The first ten ships sailed that winter carrying 120 talents, with the bulk of the force to follow in the spring: sixty-five ships and several thousand hoplites. The Peloponnesians and Boeotians also sent soldiers to Sicily.

These troops did not depart until the beginning of spring 413. In the meantime the situation of the Athenians at Syracuse continued to deteriorate. Gylippos had met with success in some of the Sicilian cities and returned to Syracuse with reinforcements (7.21.1). He was eagerly assisted by Hermocrates, who had regained his former influence, and both of them encouraged the Syracusans to challenge the Athenians by sea. Within a short time they succeeded in seizing control of the sea from the Athenians and besieging their forces in their camp. Once again the Syracusans sent envoys to the Sicilian cities, to report on their successes and ask for additional support (7.25.9). The envoys managed to raise another body of troops and were on the point of bringing them to Syracuse, when Nicias sent word to the Sicel allies in the interior instructing them not to let them pass. Here Thucydides names Alikyai and Centoripa, which lay on a route through the middle of the island. The troops had to go this way because the Akragantines had remained neutral and would not allow them to pass through their territory. One thousand five hundred men, probably mainly from Selinus and Himera, made it through alive. The links with the other cities of the south coast were not threatened, however, and troops soon arrived from the Geloans and Camarinaeans, who were now willing to lend the Syracusans forceful support (7.32–7.33.2). Apart from Akragas, only Messana was neutral. Naxos and Catane sided with the Athenians (7.14.2; 7.57.11). Hermocrates' prophecy was fulfilled, so to speak, although one has to ask whether it was not simply opportunism that led the majority of the Siceliots to take the Syracusans' side following the unam-

biguous change in the situation.¹⁹ The more distant Italiot cities from Rhegion to Croton did not support either side, nor did the Tarentines, although two years earlier Locroi and Taras in particular had shown their enmity toward the Athenians.²⁰ However, when the Athenian generals Demosthenes and Eurymedon reached the Iapygian promontory in midsummer 413, they succeeded in renewing an old alliance of friendship with Artas, chieftain of the Iapygians, and enlisted one hundred and fifty Iapygian javelin men. They also persuaded the Metapontines, in accordance with the terms of their alliance, to send with them three hundred javelin throwers and two triremes. Finally the Thurians, who had recently expelled their anti-Athenian faction, were induced to join them in the campaign with seven hundred hoplites and three hundred javelin throwers. Here the friendly reception ended, though; the Athenians were expelled from the territory of Croton, while at Locroi they did not even manage to berth their ships (7.33.3–6; 7.35).

In the meantime the fighting in the Great Harbor continued to the advantage of the Syracusans, but the arrival of the Athenian reinforcements came as a great shock. Demosthenes wanted to make the most of the Syracusans' consternation in order to destroy their fortifications on Epipolai and complete the circumvallation of Syracuse. A night attack on the plateau ended in a severe defeat for the Athenian troops. Demosthenes was then convinced that they should sail home at once, but Nicias, both fearing the reaction of the Athenians and viewing the situation in a less pessimistic light than Demosthenes, said that "there was still a party in Syracuse that favored submitting to the Athenians" and that "it was secretly sending proposals to him and urging him not to withdraw".²¹

¹⁹ Cf. also Hermocrates' speech at Camarina (6.76–80), in which he mentions the possibility that other cities might be afraid of Syracuse (6.78.2), and, near the end, even threatens the Camarinaeans with Syracusan revenge if they should be victorious without their neighbors' support (7.80.4f.).

²⁰ In winter 415/4 Syracusan envoys had tried in vain to persuade the Italiots "not to tolerate the conduct of the Athenians" (6.88.7); Gylippos also failed to win over the Thurians (6.104.2). On the other hand, provisions arrived for the Athenian army from all quarters of Italy (6.103.2) in 414; in the following winter Nicias speaks of "regions in Italy which supply us with food" (7.14.3), and some months later the Syracusans were able to burn some timber in the territory of Caulonia that was lying there ready for the Athenians to use for shipbuilding (7.25.2).

²¹ 7.48.2; cf. 7.49.1 and 7.73.3 on those who regularly reported all that went on in Syracuse to Nicias.

However, Gylippos had now arrived with the additional troops he had collected in the Sicilian cities (7.46; 7.50.1). He also brought with him some Peloponnesian hoplites who had sailed in the spring but been driven off course toward Libya (7.50.2). They had arrived at Selinus via Neapolis, a trading settlement east of Cap Bon. Evidently the Carthaginians had allowed them to march through their territory and once again missed the opportunity to support the Athenians against the Syracusans.²² In the face of these reinforcements, as well as the worsening state of health among the Athenian forces, Nicias at last gave up his resistance and had agreed that orders be given to secretly withdraw, when an eclipse of the moon (on 27 August) caused panic among the troops and prevented them from departing. This hesitation led to the utter destruction of the whole expeditionary force.

The Syracusans not only gained another victory in the Great Harbor but even succeeded in blocking its entrance, cutting off all supplies and making it impossible for the Athenians to escape. The Athenians tried to break through, but in vain; they also tried and failed to escape on foot to the Sicels in the interior. The sections of the army that were under the command of Demosthenes and Nicias were forced to surrender, although a few soldiers managed to escape and eventually found refuge in Catane. The prisoners, still more than seven thousand in number, were brought to Syracuse and thrown into the quarries; Nicias and Demosthenes were executed.

Officially the Athenians had gone to Sicily to support the Egestans and Leontines, but it had soon become clear that the size of their expeditionary force permitted them to pursue further-reaching aims that could ultimately lead to the conquest of the whole island. This possibility raised doubts even among former allies of the Athenians, so that in Sicily, apart from Egesta, only Naxos and (after the flight of the Syracusan partisans) Catane supported them. In addition, many Sicels understandably had an interest in the humiliation of the Syracusans.²³ As far as Italy was concerned, the only support came

²² This conduct of the Carthaginians is inconsistent with the widespread assumption that they were the archenemies of the Sicilian Greeks; at least neither Hermocrates nor Nicias had any inhibitions about seeking their help against their Greek enemies.

²³ Even shortly before the final catastrophe, the majority still sided with the Athenians (7.57.11), and conversely the fleeing Athenians hoped to reach the territory of Sicels (7.77.6; 7.80.5).

from the Thurians and Metapontians, who, as Thucydides says, had both been reduced to such dire straits by party crises at this time that they could not have acted otherwise (7.57.11). Soldiers were also sent by the Tyrrhenians, who were on hostile terms with the Syracusans, and by the Iapygians. The Syracusans for their part were supported by Camarina, Gela, Selinus and Himera (but not immediately and certainly not wholeheartedly) and by some of the Sicels (cf. 7.58.1–4). In actual fact both Hermocrates and Athenagoras counted on some feeling of solidarity in the Sicilian cities (6.33.4f.; 6.37.2), whereas Lamachos wanted to prevent this by immediately attacking Syracuse (6.49.4); but in reality, only the successes following Gylippos' arrival made the Siceliots support the Syracusans more energetically. Nicias notes in his letter to the Athenians that now "all Sicily is united" (7.15.1).

In this war we again notice the conflict between Dorian and Ionian colonies on the one hand and the rivalry between Syracuse and Akragas on the other. However, the partisanship was not always unanimous and in the interest of all citizens. We have already seen that the Cataneans only sided with the Athenians after the flight of the pro-Syracusans (6.50.3; 6.51.2). But even then there were still Syracusan partisans in Catane, or at least this appeared to be the case (6.64.2f.), while at the same time Syracusan exiles accompanied the Athenians (6.64.1). And at Messana, where internal dissensions had already existed during the Archidamian War, different groups were agitating; but here the pro-Athenian elements were eliminated before they could do any damage (6.74.1). At Camarina it was initially the pro-Athenians who seemed to assert themselves, and only in 413 was decisive support given to the Syracusans. In the same year it seemed for a short while that the Akragantines might side with the Syracusans, but before the Syracusan general arrived, the members of the pro-Syracusan party had been expelled (7.46; 7.50.1).

It is not surprising that there were disagreements in the cities. The population of Catane was almost exclusively Ionian, and that of Messana at least partially. In the past, both cities had largely been opposed to Syracuse. The same is true of the Dorian cities Camarina and Akragas; the former had concluded an alliance with the Athenians during the Archidamian War, while the latter had been won over by Phaiax in 422. Nevertheless, the Akragantines remained neutral, not giving any active support to the Athenians. What is astonishing is

that even after the severe defeat of the Athenians in the nighttime attack on the plateau, there were still people in Syracuse who were willing to betray the city to the Athenians and were constantly sending proposals to them covertly and urging them not to withdraw (7.48.2; cf. 7.49.1). The hopes Nicias pinned on this fifth column prevented him from agreeing to Demosthenes' demand for immediate departure. The following incidents show that these Syracusan partisans of the Athenians did not owe their existence to wishful thinking on Nicias' part: when, after the final severe defeat of the Athenians in the Great Harbor, Hermocrates wanted to prevent their immediate flight, he sent certain friends of his with some horsemen to the Athenian camp; they pretended to be friends of the Athenians and were believed when they said that the Syracusans were guarding all roads and when they advised Nicias not to depart the same night (7.73.3–7.74.1). In actual fact this delay brought about the final catastrophe of the expeditionary force. After his capture Nicias was executed at the instigation of those very Syracusans who had negotiated with him and now feared that they would be discovered (7.86.4).

Following the victory over the Athenians Hermocrates became the most influential man in Syracuse. He had already played an important role in bringing about the peace of Gela and thus putting an end to the first Athenian attempt to win more influence in Sicily. Ten years later, up until the arrival of Gylippos, and later in cooperation with him, he had directed the defense of Syracuse, and it was mainly thanks to him that the Syracusans had also dared to challenge the Athenians by sea. After their defeat he urged the Syracusans to send a fleet to the East to contribute to the overthrow of the Athenians, and as early as the winter of 413/2 the Spartans were able to count on the support of their Sicilian allies (8.2.3). In the summer of 412 twenty Syracusan and two Selinuntian ships arrived at Miletos and subsequently took part in the fighting (8.26.1; 8.28.2; 8.84.4; 8.96.5). The next winter the Thurians also sent ten ships (8.35.1; cf. 8.61.2; 8.84.2). Finally, in the summer of 411, contingents from Taras and Locroi arrived (8.91.1).

The warfare in the Aegean was no longer part of the history of Sicily and South Italy, and we need not follow the course of events. Hermocrates only remained in command for about two years, being exiled in 410 by the new, more radical democracy in Syracuse. In 408 he returned to Sicily and set in motion a development that

before long led to serious clashes with the Carthaginians on the island and also to the rise of the tyrant Dionysios in Syracuse. Unfortunately, since Thucydides' work breaks off in 411, we shall never know what he thought about this period of Hermocrates' activities.

“... KEEPING THE TWO SIDES EQUAL”: THUCYDIDES, THE PERSIANS AND THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR¹

Josef Wiesehöfer

In grateful memory of Peter Herrmann (1927–2002)

I. *Introduction*

The attitude of the Persian Great King Darius II and his western satraps toward the two Greek sets of allies was crucial to the outcome of the Peloponnesian War. Only Achaemenid support for the Spartans, initially in reaction to Athenian help for the rebel Amorges and later due to Athenian successes after 410 BC, finally decided the war in favor of the Lacedaemonians and their allies. The fact that this Persian assistance for the enemies of Athens did not become one of Thucydides' central topics, and that the Persian sections of his work on the whole even turn out to be rather modest, might partly be explained by the author's preconceptions. However, this does not explain why Thucydides mentions certain events in the history of Persian-Greek relations yet keeps quiet about others.

This contribution has three aims: first, to establish and describe the role Thucydides assigns to the Persians before and during the Peloponnesian War; second, to examine the historian's view of the Persians, not least in comparison with those of his literary contemporaries; and finally, this work will address the issue of Thucydides as a transmitter of Iranian names and Achaemenid institutions.

II. *Thucydides and the Persian Wars*

Thucydides does not waste many words on the conflicts between the Greek *poleis* and the Great Kings: the only mention of the political

¹ I thank B. Smarczyk (Cologne) for his valuable suggestions, and M. Brosius (Newcastle) for checking my English text.

ambitions of Cyrus and Cambyses is in connection with the development of Greek naval forces and the end of the Ionian display of power (1.13.6; 1.14.2; 1.16.1). Even the Greek campaigns of Darius I and his son Xerxes are touched upon rather casually (1.18.1f.; 1.23.1; 2.34.5) or in the context of the consultation at Sparta in 432/1 bc in order to explain the failures of Sparta (addresses of the Corinthians and the Athenians) or the merits of Athens (speech of the Athenians) (1.69.5; 1.73.2–74.4).² Th. 1.23.1 makes it particularly clear that the historian understated the significance of the Persian Wars in order to emphasize still further the great importance of the Peloponnesian War.

III. *Thucydides, the Persians and the Pentekontaetia*

Thucydides begins the history of events proper with the departure of the Persians from Hellas (479 bc). In twenty-nine chapters (1.89–118) he gives an account of many—but not all—of the highlights of the period between 479 and 431 bc, thereby explaining the actual cause of the Peloponnesian War: the rise of Athens (as *hēgemōn* and later master of the Delian League)³ and the resulting fears of the Spartans. It comes as no surprise that the measures taken by Athens and her allies against the Persian king and his Greek followers are also mentioned in this connection.⁴ The historian gives a particu-

² However, the speech of the Corinthians contains the surprising statement that “the barbarian” failed because of his own inadequacies (1.69.5); this was surely an allusion to Athenian references to their special achievements in the Persian Wars. In the same passage the Athenians, with their reference to their privileged position at Marathon, insinuate that the campaign of Datis and Artaphernes had not merely targeted Athens (and Eretria; 1.73.4). It was from their alleged fight for the whole of Hellas that the Athenian right to govern the Delian League derived. Thucydides here refers to the Athenian view of the Persian Wars.

³ The historian (also) stresses the change from an Athenian hegemony to rule by Athens (1.96.1, 97.2), which he says had been exercised increasingly in the course of the *Pentekontaetia* (1.118.1) and had finally been regarded as tyranny within the Delian League (2.63.1f.). However, in his opinion a new phase of Athenian policy had already begun with the subjection of the Naxians (1.96); accordingly, he does not assign a new quality to the relations between the Athenians and their allies after 449 bc.

⁴ Thus he mentions the announced intention (*proschēma*) of the federation (“to compensate themselves for their losses, by ravaging the Persian king’s territory”: 1.96.1), the conquest of Eion (1.98.1) and the victory of the federation at the river

larly detailed account of the failed Athenian commitment in Egypt (1.109–110).

The fact that Thucydides does not mention a Persian-Athenian treaty or informal agreement as conclusion to the aggressive phase of Athenian foreign policy (“Peace of Callias”) either in 1.112 or elsewhere has been taken as proof that no such agreement existed; however, other passages in the work (e.g., 8.56.4, 58.2) seem almost to presuppose such an agreement, and Ephorus-Diodorus indeed testify to one (12.4).⁵ And there are other occasions upon which it becomes clear that our author is quite well informed about diplomatic contacts between the Persians and the Greeks and the procedures involved: he mentions the negotiations between Pausanias and Artabazus (1.129.1) and between Themistocles and Artaxerxes I (1.137.3), as well as a planned Spartan and Athenian request for Persian assistance before the actual outbreak of inter-Greek hostilities in 431 BC (1.82.1; 2.7.1).⁶

IV. *Thucydides, the Persians and the Peloponnesian War*

It is unclear whether the agreement with Athens (449 BC) was influenced on the Persian side by the expectation that both Greek alliances might compete with and undermine one another in the future;⁷ however, it is certain that it did not prevent the Persians from exerting further influence on Greek politics (mostly by means of cash payments).⁸ The idea that the Persians (like the Athenians—

Eurymedon (1.100.1), and later the support of the satrap Pissuthnes for the rebellious Samians (1.115.3–5).

⁵ For discussion, see D.M. Lewis (1992a) 121–27; Badian (1993) ch. 1; Meister (1997) 152–64 and Welwei (1999) 107 (with nn. 117–21).

⁶ The fact that the Spartans made heavy weather of revising their Persian policy at that time, not least because of the formally continuing state of war with Persia (D.M. Lewis [1977] 62), becomes apparent in the words Thucydides puts into the mouth of the Spartan king Archidamus (1.82.1): “. . . because the odium of such an accession [Hellenic or barbarian help, J.W.] to all who like us are the objects of the designs of the Athenians is taken away by the law of self-preservation . . .”. Cooperation with Persia went against the Spartan war objective of liberation for all (subjected) Greek *poleis* (Th. 1.124.3; 2.8.4; 3.32.2 etc.; cf. D.M. Lewis [1977] 65f.).

⁷ Strassler (1998) 600.

⁸ As early as the expulsion of the Athenians from Egypt (454 BC), Artaxerxes I is said to have contacted Sparta by means of the Persian envoy Megabazus (Megabyxus),

see below) sought suitable opportunities to extend their zones of influence in western Asia Minor, despite the “Peace of Callias”, is borne out by Pisuthnes’ support for the rebellious Samians (Th. 1.115.4) and the Persian encroachment on Colophon (Th. 3.34).⁹ However, in the absence of further information it is impossible to know whether the satraps were acting on their own behalf on these occasions or in consultation with the Great King. Ultimately, this policy paid off, when Athens and Sparta decided it was necessary to find new allies in order to control one another. In 2.67.1 Thucydides refers to a Peloponnesian mission to Artaxerxes that took place in the summer of 430. The delegation was to apply for financial or military support, but they were turned over to the Athenians by Sadocus, the son of Sitalces, and later killed without any trial. In 4.50 Thucydides mentions further Peloponnesian contacts with Persia, the messages of which Artaxerxes could not, however, make out. A short time later, an Athenian diplomatic mission is said to have been frustrated by the death of the Great King¹⁰ (4.50.3).¹¹

However, it was only with Athens’ support for the rebel Amorges (413 bc) that Persia became a crucial factor in the internal Greek conflicts,¹² although it is possible that the Athenians had already

in order “to bribe the Peloponnesians to invade Attica and so draw off the Athenians from Egypt” (Th. 1.109.1f.). Cf. Eddy (1973) 245 (with his important reference to *ML* 40, where the Persian empire is portrayed as a place of refuge for exiled enemies of Athens—in this case from Erythrae). In this connection, Blamire (1989) (*ad Plu. Cim.* 10.9) also mentions the exiled Persian Rhosaces at Athens; from the fact that this man became the target of sycophants, Blamire concludes that the Persian was suspected of espionage on behalf of Artaxerxes. On exiled Persians at Athens cf. Bähler (1998) 101–14.

⁹ Hornblower, *Comm.* 1.415–16.

¹⁰ According to Babylonian documents, which are not contradicted by Th. 4.50.3, Artaxerxes I died in the 41st year of his reign, and his son Darius (II) Ochus succeeded to the throne between 24 December, 424 and 13 February, 423 bc (Stolper [1983]; Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.207f.). For the succession controversy in Persia after the death of Artaxerxes I, cf. the summary in Briant (2002) 588–91; 977f.

¹¹ Thucydides is generally selective as far as diplomatic initiatives are concerned. This applies to internal Greek relations, and presumably also to contact between the Greeks and Persians.

¹² On the lack of reference to the Persians between 4.50 and 8.5.4 and the possible reasons for this, cf. Andrewes (1961); Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.423. The only exception is 5.1, where it is said that numerous Delians, who were expelled by the Athenians, settled at Atramyttium, a place assigned to them by the satrap Pharnaces (Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.423f.).

cooperated with Amorges' father.¹³ The continual Athenian-Persian mutual encroachments would then have run parallel to the diplomatic contacts, only ending in a major confrontation when the Athenian disaster on Sicily enabled the Peloponnesians to put into practice their (allegedly long-held) plans for an energetic naval war in the Aegean Sea. Despite all this, the Persian question plays no role in Thucydides' work between chapter 4.50 and Book VIII (i.e., the war years 425 to 412 BC). It is not at all clear why the historian does not mention either the renewal of the "Peace of Callias" by Darius II (424/3 BC)¹⁴ or the Athenian support for Amorges (and for Pissuthnes),¹⁵ which annulled the agreements between Persia and Athens. Attempts to explain this silence in terms of the history of the work alone¹⁶ are unconvincing.¹⁷ One possible explanation¹⁸ is that Thucydides was highly influenced by his concepts of a bipolar power system in Hellas and an Athenian-Spartan dualism. We cannot rule out the possibility that he wanted to create a kind of retrospective outline of the developments since 431 BC, when the appearance of Cyrus the Younger had added a new dimension to Persian assistance for the Peloponnesians. On the other hand, his remarks in 2.65 do not suggest that he ever appropriately assessed the role of the Persians, without whose financial support Peloponnesian naval operations would probably have ended after the battle of Arginusae. This is all the more surprising given the fact that Thucydides does not generally underestimate the historical relevance of money.

Thucydides devotes a great deal of space to the rivalry between Tissaphernes in Sardis and Pharnabazus in Dascylium, both of whom were pursuing an alliance with Sparta at the same time (412 BC): Both are said to have been intent upon weakening the Athenians in

¹³ Hornblower, *Comm.* 2.163.

¹⁴ And. 3.29; on this agreement cf. Lewis (1992b) 422 n. 132. Westlake's assessment of the Athenian policy toward Amorges and the Great King (1977a) does not seem convincing to me.

¹⁵ And. 3.29; this support can indirectly be deduced from Th. 8.54.3 too, but the reasons for the Athenian commitment remain unmentioned (and unknown to us); cf. D.M. Lewis (1977) 86.

¹⁶ Andrewes (1961) 7f.

¹⁷ Cf., e.g., Erbse (1989) 64f.; 95; Cawkwell (1997) 15f. However, it is understandable that Greek affairs became less important for the new Great King (and for Thucydides) in view of the rebellions following Darius' accession to the throne (D.M. Lewis [1977] 78–82).

¹⁸ B. Smarczyk *per litteras*.

order to enforce the tribute payment that the Great King demanded of Greek cities in the Persian provinces but was being hindered by the Athenians (8.5.5, 8.6.1). Tissaphernes supposedly expected Spartan assistance in quashing the rebellion of Amorges in Caria at the same time (8.5.5).¹⁹ Even though Tissaphernes in particular is portrayed by Thucydides as a proactive character,²⁰ it is clear that both the Persian approach to Sparta and the intention to reimpose tributes on the cities of western Asia Minor were the result of an order from the Great King (8.4.5), which itself was a reaction to the Athenian breach of contract;²¹ but the satrap may well have had substantial leeway in carrying both of these orders out.

Although Thucydides is not explicit about why relations between Sparta and Persia turned out to be more difficult than expected, despite Lacedaemonian assistance with the capture of Amorges and the shared hostility toward Athens, it is nevertheless possible to deduce the reasons from his account. In the first place, Tissaphernes and Darius were not inclined to support the Spartans unconditionally; Persian action was always guided by what was in the best interests of the empire, as is shown by the arguments about the three treaty drafts of the years 412 and 411 bc (8.18; 8.37; 8.58)²² and the supply of ships and money (8.29; 8.45.2–6; 8.78; 8.80.1; 8.83.3). In the second place, the rivalry between the satraps of Dascylium and Sardis (8.6.1; 8.99; 8.109.1), inherent in the Achaemenid system of administration, together with the insufficient military and (probably) financial resources of the Persian commanders in the west,²³ impeded Achae-

¹⁹ D.M. Lewis (1977) 85 rightly assumes that the policy of the Great King in the following years was determined by his desire to take vengeance on Athens.

²⁰ D.M. Lewis (1977) 87 and Westlake (1985) 167 stress Tissaphernes' initiative (and that of Pharnabazus) during the rapprochement between Sparta and Persia.

²¹ Cf. Cawkwell (1997) 48.

²² On the agreements cf. D.M. Lewis (1977) 90–107; Lévy (1983). The fact that Tissaphernes was completely in line with the Great King in this respect becomes clear in 8.43.4 (cf. Cawkwell [1997] 46–49; Th. 8.29.1 describes the modalities of political consultations between satrap and ruler). When Lichas alleges that the Persians are going to lay claim to northern and central Greece with the help of the two first agreements (8.43.3f.), it is reasonable to assume that he might have sought to win support in Sparta in this way; with the clause “whatever country or cities the King has, or the King’s ancestors had, shall be the King’s” (cf. 8.18.1; 8.37.2), the Persians were surely not referring to the Greek mainland. By explicitly defining Asia as the Great King’s realm in the third treaty (8.58.2), they were trying to counter misrepresentations like that of Lichas.

²³ These deficiencies, caused by the Great King’s economizing (Th. 8.45.6; 8.87.5;

menid reaction to the Athenian provocation.²⁴ The fact that a political party in Sparta preferred co-operation with Pharnabazus (8.6.2; cf. 8.39.1) compounded matters for Tissaphernes in the initial stages of Persian-Spartan collaboration.²⁵

Even though punishment of the Athenians and the subsequent recovery of lost territories was apparently the highest priority for both Tissaphernes and Darius, they had no intention of exclusively and unconditionally backing the Spartans. At the same time, both may have been disconcerted by the Spartans' slogan of "liberty and autonomy"²⁶ and by their concrete strategy. In this regard, attention has correctly been drawn to how profoundly Thucydides' account of the discussions between the satrap and Alcibiades (8.45f.) was shaped by the conflicts over Cnidus—Lichas' protest against the first two agreements with Persia, and Tissaphernes' anger at Spartan behaviour (8.43.2–4). While in reality the Persian-Spartan disagreements preceded these conversations and Tissaphernes was the creator of the noncommittal policy towards Sparta, Thucydides' work may give the impression that Alcibiades could prudently have foreseen the Spartan provocations over Cnidus and mentioned these to the satrap.²⁷ Although it seems that Thucydides was fully aware of the fact that the Persian decisively influenced the negotiations both with the Spartans and with the Athenians (cf., e.g., 8.46.5; 8.81.2), "his" Tissaphernes is on the whole rather a "driven" and moody politician, who acts out of fear of Sparta and only occasionally follows Alcibiades' advice with confidence (8.46.5; cf. 8.56.2f.). However, the "mood swings" (*orgai*: Th. 8.83.3) about which only the Spartans complain represent a balanced power policy which, in view of the goals of Persian policy and its military and financial limitations, was

8.109.1; cf. *Hell.Oxy.* 19.2; the Great King had probably hoped to use the tributes of the recovered *poleis* to finance the anti-Athenian measures) and by Achaemenid military organization, with its division between a standing army and an imperial levy, meant that both Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus were dependent on local Spartan support.

²⁴ Briant (2002) 593–99, 978–80 (with the older literature).

²⁵ On the Spartans' use of that rivalry, cf. also X. *HG* 1.1.31f.

²⁶ Cf. Smarczyk (1986) 62 n. 77.

²⁷ Erbse (1989) 38f. It is therefore not surprising that in Thucydides, the satrap of Sardis was from the winter of 412/411 BC onward quite intent on checking the offers of Alcibiades, who had just changed sides again (8.45.1), for an Athenian-Persian cooperation.

wary of any decisive preference for one of the two Greek alliances.²⁸ It is not Alcibiades but Tissaphernes who at that time decides on possible new Athenian foreign policy objectives.²⁹ Alcibiades' suggestion to the satrap, reported by Thucydides, that he should play one Greek power off against the other and thus weaken them both,³⁰ rather than backing just one side (8.46), is of course intended to lead eventually to Persian support for Athens and, most importantly, to the honorable return of the exile to his hometown (cf. 8.47f.).³¹ It is not clear whether Alcibiades' additional advice to seek Athenian cooperation in the long term (8.46.3)³² ever made much impression on Tissaphernes.

The Athenian successes of 410–407 BC were probably the main reason for Darius II's abandonment of this policy in favor of clear military and financial support for Sparta.³³ After the war Thucydides

²⁸ In the runup to the third contract with Sparta, Thucydides also implies that the Persian pursued this kind of policy (shown by *logismos* and *pronoia*) (8.57.2: *ebouleto epanisoun tous Hellēnas pros allelous*).

²⁹ This is borne out by the fact that the Athenian aristocrat never fulfilled his promise—made both to the oligarchs at Athens (8.47.2; cf. 8.53.3) and to the democrats of the fleet in Samos (8.81.2f.)—to form an alliance with the Persian king. Alcibiades and Pisander's argument on the first occasion, namely that an oligarchic regime at Athens would be more acceptable to the Great King and Tissaphernes than a democratic system, was surely no more than a means to an end. Both should have known that Persian foreign policy toward Athens was not determined by the political system of the city, but exclusively by its activities in the eastern Aegean. Westlake (1985) attempts to ascribe the favorable (political *logismos* and political *pronoia*) and unfavorable (arrogance, provocative behavior etc.) sides of Thucydides' Tissaphernes to the historian's use of different sources, but this idea seems unconvincing to me.

³⁰ Thucydides uses the term *tribein* here (8.46.4).

³¹ Cf. D.M. Lewis (1977) 98. Erbse (1989) 75–92 argues against Alcibiades as a source of information for Thucydides (for instance in 8.45f.) and is in favor of the constancy of the historian's view of Alcibiades.

³² Cf. Seager-Tuplin (1980) on the distinction between mainland Greeks (and the Greeks of the islands) and the Greeks of Asia, apparent here for the first time.

³³ In 408 BC, Athens seems still to have been interacting with Tissaphernes (*IG* I³ 113). It is not clear whether the Spartan legation under Boeotius played the role it had assigned to itself in the case of the Persian about-face (X. *HG* 1.4.1). Tuplin (1987) argues against a new treaty between Sparta and the Great King (against D.M. Lewis [1977] 124ff., who postulates a contract that provided for autonomous but simultaneously tributary Greek cities). Darius may also have hoped to ease the fraternal strife among the King's sons by sending Cyrus to the western front. Cawkwell (1997) 49, with particular reference to Plu. *Lys.* 9.2, does not believe there was any change of Persian foreign policy; instead, he explains the substantial Persian support for Sparta solely in terms of Cyrus' intention to get Spartan help for his fight for the throne after a Lacedaemonian victory over Athens.

mentioned this reorientation of Persian western policy (2.65.12). Whether he would have found a word of praise for the far-sightedness of Tissaphernes' policy and his absolute loyalty to the King if he had also experienced the ambitions of Cyrus the Younger and Spartan hegemony—both of which were increasingly disadvantageous for Persia—we shall never know.

V. *Thucydides' View of the Persians*

Recent research has shown that there was no consistent view of the Persians or barbarians in fifth-century Athens; diverse, multifaceted images of Persia and the Persians existed both in literature and in art, which in turn were dependent on the intention of the relevant author, artist, or client and influenced by rules of genre and public discourses, and which partly also reflected the respective status of Graeco-Persian (i.e., mostly Athenian-Persian) relations. However, it has also emerged that Athenian aristocrats of the 430s and 420s made use of status markers from the Persian "counter-world" (dress, for example) to gain an advantage in the egalitarian society of their hometown.³⁴

It is not accidental that Thucydides' work plays only a minor role in Achaemenid scholarship: the author and his characters rarely give opinions *in rebus Persicis*. Detailed reports are only found in connection with a) the special characteristics of Persian kingship and governmental practice, and b) the Persian-oriental concept of luxury and its display. Frequently, however, these Persian customs and institutions merely serve as a background for Thucydides' descriptions of his characters and their completely different behavior and institutions. Thus Thucydides' Thebans draw a contrast between the egoistic and lawless policy of their own political leaders during the Persian Wars and the policy of the Persian kings, whom Thebes understandably wanted to support at that time (3.62). Likewise,

³⁴ On the fifth-century Greek view of the barbarians/Persians, see Schmal (1995); Lüth (1997); Gehrke (2000): general discussion; Thomas (2000) 75–101; Rollinger (2004): on the "Persian discourse" at Athens, Hall (1989); Georges (1994); Tuplin (1996) 132–77; Hutzfeldt (1999); Bichler (2000) *passim* (for literature); Raeck (1981); Castriota (1992); M.C. Miller (1997); Bähler (1998); Hölscher (1998) and (2000); Cohen (2000): for art.

Thucydides' Athenians think it very important to establish that their treatment of the allies is much more lenient than Persian rule in the past (1.77). Thucydides himself is more reserved in his judgment: for example, it seems reasonable to assume that the historian saw Persian governmental practice as more flexible than that of Athens, since he regards Alcibiades' (and Pisander's) statement that Persian support for Athens would require an oligarchic revolution in the city as a clever political move (8.48.1; 8.53.3). Popular barbarian stereotypes and clichés—for example, that even Persian aristocrats had slave status—are absent from Thucydides' work. Pericles' criticism of the public display of wealth (2.40) and the description of Pausanias' "orientalisation" (1.130) certainly allude to the sumptuous life (and probably the pride) of the Great Kings;³⁵ on the other hand, their excessive returning of gifts³⁶ is positively contrasted with the acquisitiveness of the Thracian kings and nobles (2.97).

VI. *Persian Names and Institutions in Thucydides*

About two decades ago it was observed that Thucydides' rendering of Persian names and his references to Persian institutions are highly reliable.³⁷ Nevertheless, I would like briefly to recapitulate three of Schmitt's observations of 1983: For him, it is astonishing that Thucydides fails to mention the Achaemenid origin of the Persian kings and (like Herodotus) indeed the term *satrapēs*.³⁸ As far as Xerxes' letter to Pausanias (1.129.3) is concerned, there still is some dispute; however, it should be assumed to be authentic, as long as there are no convincing arguments against it.³⁹ The *Assyria grammata* of the letter of the Persian envoy Artaphernes (4.50.1; 4.50.3), imprisoned by the Athenians, surely refer to Aramaic characters, even if this term had first and foremost the more general meaning of "oriental writing".⁴⁰

³⁵ The latter is the attempt to counter the reproach of the enemies of Athens that the city, as ruler over other Greeks, had become the successor to the Persians (cf. Th. 6.76.3f., 6.82.3, etc.).

³⁶ Wiesehofer (2001) 607f.

³⁷ Schmitt (1983).

³⁸ On the Achaemenid satrap and his tasks and also on the Greek terms for this office, cf. Klinkott (2005).

³⁹ Cf. Schmitt (1983) 71f.; Gauger (2000) 263f., 374 (with literature), with whose argumentation I agree.

⁴⁰ Nylander (1968) esp. 122; D.M. Lewis (1977) 2f. and n. 3.

VI. *Conclusions*

The Persians are of only secondary importance in Thucydides' *History*, both because of the historian's concentration on the dualism between Athens and Sparta and because of his insufficient assessment of the political role of their eastern neighbours, even in retrospect. Therefore, the Persian Wars and their ideological evaluation by the Greek states (not the least in the debates about the Attic *archē*) are more important than an exact account of the relations between the Greek *poleis* and their mighty neighbor in the east. On the other hand, Thucydides' fairly objective description of the history of Graeco-Persian relations and the customs and institutions of Persia is noteworthy (not least in comparison with that of his literary contemporaries and epigones): Thucydides' Tissaphernes bears little relation to the devious Tissaphernes of Xenophon, and indeed bears comparison with many a Greek statesman. This cannot be due merely to the fact that Thucydides left the period of a renewed clear opposition between Athens and the Great King out of consideration in his work: the same restraint and relative balance can also be observed in his description of the Persian Wars and of the time up to the "Peace of Callias". Despite all this, the son of Olorus provides very little information for the historian with a special interest in Achaemenid affairs.

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: SOURCES OTHER THAN THUCYDIDES

Martin Hose

Two studies are of fundamental importance for any collection and analysis of the parallel tradition to the work of Thucydides: Georg Busolt's *Greek History*, whose third volume contains a synopsis of the sources for the history of the fifth century, and A.W. Gomme's chapter "Sources other than Thucydides" in the introduction to his monumental commentary (*HCT* 1.29–83). I shall rely on both of these works throughout this contribution; no recent survey is similarly comprehensive.

There exists a parallel tradition in the case of the following topics in Thucydides' text:

- a) the Peloponnesian War, 431 to 411
- b) the events preceding the war, 478 to 431—the so-called *Pentekontaetia* (1.23–145)
 - i. the conflict between Corcyra and Corinth
 - ii. the conflict over Potidaia
 - iii. the rise of Athens after the Persian Wars
 - iv. the fate of the two military leaders, Pausanias and Themistocles¹
- c) the history of Sicily (6.1–6)
- d) the assassination of Pisistratus' son Hipparchus (6.54–59).

Each of these topics deserves at least one article to itself, but my watchword here is brevity.

1

In presenting the parallel tradition, one cannot avoid the pitfalls of *Quellen-Analyse*; I therefore begin with a synopsis of the extant texts

¹ It is not necessary to discuss whether Thucydides uses a written source here, as Westlake (1977c) assumes.

that can be ranged alongside 'Thucydides' work. Authors and texts are listed in chronological order:

1. Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, produced in 425:² This play shows the general mood in Athens during the Archidamian War, and the effects of the Megarian Decree (729ff.). In the famous "speech on the chopping block" by Dicaeopolis (497–556), an analysis of the causes of the war is offered, beginning with a series of abductions of women (presumably alluding to Hdt. 1.1–5) but then turning to the more prominent issue of Pericles' personal motives (530ff.).

2. Aristophanes, *Knights* (424) and *Wasps*³ (422): Both plays construct a very negative image of Cleon and thus shed light on Thucydides 3.36.6 (the Mytilene Debate) and 4.21.3.

3. Aristophanes, *Peace*⁴ (421): This comedy reflects the strongly diminished interest in a continuation of the war, particularly after the deaths of Cleon and Brasidas at Amphipolis (268–70; 281–82; Th. 5.16); this led to the peace treaty of 421.

4. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*⁵ (411): This play illustrates the situation of Athens after the defeat in Sicily, especially the acute lack of financial resources, the sharp internal tensions, and the institution of the *probouloi*. Also mentioned are the events that induced the Athenians to set out for Sicily (390–97; Th. 6.8.1–2)⁶ and the worries about the fleet at Samos (313; Th. 8.38.5).

5. Two speeches of Andocides, *De mysteriis* (delivered in 400) and *De redivitu* (between 410 and 405):⁷ Both speeches, but especially *De myst.*, provide information about the mutilation of the Herms and the subsequent prosecutions (Th. 6.27–8; 6.53).

6. Plato, *Menexenus* (written after 386):⁸ In the passage dealing with deeds worthy of praise, this fictitious *logos epitaphios* runs through fifth-century history and the wars fought by Athens. The Persian Wars (239c7–242a1) conclude with the naval battle at the Eurymedon

² Cf. Olson (2002) xxxi–xxxix.

³ Cf. MacDowell (1971) 1–4.

⁴ Cf. Olson (1998) xxv–xxxi.

⁵ Cf. Henderson (1987) xv–xxv.

⁶ Henderson (1987) 119.

⁷ On the issue generally, see MacDowell (1962) 1–6, Edwards (1995) 1–6, Zimmermann (2002) 192–94.

⁸ Tsitsiridis (1998) 41–52.

(214e; cf. Th. 1.100). The war against Sparta in Boiotia is treated as part of the inner-Hellenic wars⁹ (242a2–246a4), with the battle at Tanagra reported as indecisive and the battle at Oinopytha placed only three days later.¹⁰ Space is also devoted to the Archidamian War (242c2–c4) and the Sicilian-Deceleian War (242e4–243d7); the latter is treated as a separate military conflict, in contrast with the specifically Thucydidean interpretation, namely that the Peloponnesian War constituted a single event.

7. Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* (*Ath.*), written around 330:¹¹ In tracing the historical development of the Athenian constitution up to 403 (ch. 1–41), Aristotle deals with a number of areas that are also mentioned by Thucydides. For example, the *Ath.* covers the Cylon incident (ch. 1; Th. 1.126.3–12), the assassination of the tyrants (ch. 18–19; Th. 6.54–59 and 1.20.2), and the coup of the year 411 (ch. 29–33; Th. 8.48–97). In the case of this so-called oligarchic coup, there are significant differences between the two versions.¹² For example, the *Ath.* gives the number of *syngrapheis* who were to prepare the change of the constitution as 30, whereas Thucydides knows of just ten; the number of popular assemblies that were held seems to differ, as, finally, does the role played by the so-called 5000, who according to Thucydides never actually met. The differences can be partially explained by the different purposes of the two texts. The *Ath.* pursues “legalistic” interests and is concerned with the development of the constitution, whereas Thucydides describes how the coup (including the political terror that preceded it) grew out of the specific situation in the year 411. In general, however, the *Ath.* certainly drew upon Thucydides.¹³

8. Diodorus, *Bibliothēkē* (middle of the first century BC) Books XI–XIII: Diodorus gives a continuous account of Greek history that is congruent, as far as content is concerned, with Thucydides from 11.37 (battle of Mycale, 479; Th. 1.89) up to 12.42 (411; Th. 8.109).¹⁴

⁹ Scholl (1959) 46–59.

¹⁰ Cf. Th. 1.108 where Tanagra is described as a severe defeat and Oinopytha is said to have taken place two months later.

¹¹ Rhodes (1981) 51–58 (exhaustive); Chambers (1990) 82–83.

¹² See Rhodes (1981) 362–68. Hignett (1952) 356–72 and Andrewes (1992b) 471–81 offer good discussions of the intricate matters involved; the contributions of Lang (1948) and (1967a) are also instructive.

¹³ See Rhodes (1981) 15–30.

¹⁴ See Diodorus' explicit reference to the end of the Thucydidean text in 13.42.5.

Diodorus' version of the events on the Greek mainland (not Sicily)¹⁵ draws on several sources, including Thucydides, either directly or indirectly.¹⁶ (On Diodorus, see also the paragraph on Ephorus below).

9. Cornelius Nepos, *De excellentibus ducibus exterarum gentium* (second half of first century BC): The lives of Themistocles, Aristides, Pausanias, Cimon, and Alcibiades overlap with Thucydides. Nepos clearly made ample use of the earlier author.¹⁷

10. Frontinus, *Strategemata* (before 96 BC): In his list of military measures taken by a general, Frontinus gives four examples from the period covered by Thucydides, some of which are later used by Polyaeus. Frontinus also partially relies on Thucydides.¹⁸ At the same time, he has a noticeable tendency to embellish stories and events with anecdotes, which makes historical identification impossible.¹⁹

11. Plutarch, *Lives* (c. 100 AD): Plutarch's *Lives* of Themistocles, Aristides, Cimon, and Pericles give us parallel reports for the period of the *Pentekontaetia*; his *Lives* of Pericles, Nicias, and Alcibiades provide parallel information for the history of the Peloponnesian War. Plutarch draws upon a large number of sources, including Thucydides,²⁰ whom he often cites.²¹

12. Polyaeus, *Stratēgēmata* (c. 160 AD). In Book I Polyaeus reports a number of military stratagems from the wars that Thucydides describes: 1.22 (Aristogeiton), 1.30.5 and 8 (Themistocles: building of the walls, his escape), 1.34 (Cimon at the Eurymedon), 1.35 (Myronides), 1.36 (Pericles), 1.38 (Brasidas), 1.39 (Nicias), 1.40

¹⁵ Ephorus is rightly regarded as one of the most important sources; see Volquardsen (1868). Kolbe (1937) 244–45 informs us that Diodorus followed a source in which (like Ephorus) the subject matter was structured thematically.

¹⁶ See Gomme, *HCT* 1.51–52. But see also Sacks (1994) for a general discussion of Diodorus' treatment of his sources.

¹⁷ Cf., e.g., Paus. 5.4–5 and Th. 1.134.3–4. On the issue in general, see Bradley (1991) 54.

¹⁸ 1.1.10; Th. 1.90; 1.3.9; Th. 6.91.6; 2.9.7; Th. 7.73; 2.9.10; Th. 1.100; 3.2.6; Th. 6.42, 51; 4.7.17; Th. 3.34.

¹⁹ Cf. Pericles' tricks (1.5.10 = 3.9.9; similarly 1.11.10; 1.12.10; 3.9.5), the measures taken by Alcibiades to keep the guards on the Acropolis ready (3.13.1), the deceit by the Athenians that enabled them to destroy Sparta (4.7.13).

²⁰ See Pelling (2002).

²¹ Cf. *Them.* 25 (Th. 1.137); *Them.* 27 (Th. 1.137.3); *Arist.* 24 (Th. 2.13.3); *Per.* 9 (Th. 2.65); *Per.* 15–16 (Th. 2.65); *Per.* 28 (Th. 8.76.4); *Per.* 33 (Th. 1.127); *Nic.* 1 (general reference to Book VI and VII); *Nic.* 4 (Th. 7.50.14); *Nic.* 20 (Th. 7.40); *Nic.* 28 (Th. 7.86); *Alc.* 6 (Th. 6.15); *Alc.* 11 (Th. 6.16); *Alc.* 13 (Th. 8.73.3); *Alc.* 20 (Th. 6.28).

(Alcibiades), 1.41 (Archidamus), 1.42 (Gylippus), 1.43 (Hermocrates). These are based at least in part on Thucydides.²²

13. Justin, *Epitome of Trogus' Historiae Philippicae* (end of fourth century AD):²³ This short version of Trogus' world history (first century BC)²⁴ also covers the period treated by Thucydides from 2.15 (rebuilding of the Athenian walls; Th. 1.90) up to 5.4 (Mindaros' defeat, 410).

These thirteen "sources" are our main transmitters of information concerning the fifth-century events dealt with by Thucydides. One could further add minor items (esp. the scholia to Aristophanes, Lucian, and Aelius Aristides, as well as the relevant lemmata in *Suda*, and scattered information in Aristotle's *Politics* and in Pausanias).²⁵ However, these are not historical narratives in their own right and therefore do not qualify as parallel tradition.

Looking at these sources, one notices that from the fourth century there is no longer a real independent tradition. This conclusion is supported by analysis of the fragmentary authors. It is also worth noting that the degree of deviation from Thucydides is rather limited. Aristophanes, emphasizing the Megarian Decree and the role played by Pericles, gives a different account of the causes of the war; Plato does not follow Thucydides in regarding the events between 431 and 404 as a unity, something that was important for Thucydides (5.26); Aristotle's *Ath.* describes the oligarchic coup in a different way to Thucydides.

In the cases of Diodorus and Plutarch, the deviations from Thucydides are easily explained by their different goals. For Diodorus' universal history, the Peloponnesian War was but one war among many and did not serve as a paradigm; Thucydides' proof of this

²² See 1.30.5 (Th. 1.90); 1.30.8 (Th. 1.137); 1.36.1 (Th. 1.143); 1.36.2 (Th. 2.13); 1.38.3 (Th. 4.105); 1.38.4 (Th. 4.120); 1.39.1 (Th. 4.42–44); 1.39.3 (Th. 6.102.2); 1.39.4 (Th. 7.83); 1.40.4 (Th. 6.42 and 51); 1.40.5 (Th. 6.64); 1.42.2 (Th. 7.22); 1.43.2 (Th. 7.73). On the remaining books of Polyaeus, see also Melber (1885) 521–26, who tries to prove, contradicting earlier studies, that Thucydides was Polyaeus' immediate source.

²³ See Syme (1988).

²⁴ See Seel (1972).

²⁵ Compare, e.g., Th. 5.41.2 on the Argives' claims on Cynuria with Paus. 9.9.12 (where the place is called Thyrea; see Piérart [2001] 219–20). Of course Pausanias had also read Thucydides, cf., e.g., Paus. 6.19.4–5 and Th. 3.101.2; see Habicht (1985) 143.

war's uniqueness (1.1–19) did not hold true for Diodorus; Plutarch, on the other hand, was serving the demands of biography and had to use sources of a much more varied nature (esp. comedy).

2

I now move on to the lost texts that could have offered parallel tradition, in order to indicate the sources other than Thucydides from which the preserved historians and biographers might have drawn their information.

i. *Old Comedy*

Politics and public life are among the areas that Old Comedy liked to treat, and in fact *ad personam* ridicule is one of the major sources of humor in this genre. In principle, therefore, every comedy produced in fifth-century Athens²⁶ may have offered parallel tradition to Thucydides.²⁷ Focusing on the example of Pericles, Joachim Schwarze's book²⁸ shows the remarkable degree to which comedy became involved in criticizing the leading political protagonists. If Cratinus, Callias, Teleclides, Hermippus, Eupolis and Plato (*comicus*), like Aristophanes, jumped on Pericles and his politics, then something similar may be expected with regard to Cleon (cf. Aristoph. *Equ.* and *Vesp.*), Nicias, Hyperbolus (e.g., Eupolis, *Maricas*, PCG vol. 5, fr. 192–217), and Alcibiades. Clear traces of this "personalized" parallel transmission in comedy are to be found in Plutarch.

ii. *Memoir Literature of the Fifth Century*

The year 430 is a probable date²⁹ for the "Travel Memoirs" (*Epidemiai*) of Ion of Chios (*FGrHist* 392 F 4–7, prob. 9–17, 19, 22), in which

²⁶ Mensching (1964) gives a synopsis of the total number of comedies performed in Athens.

²⁷ I refrain from dealing with the problems centered around the so-called Syracosius decree, according to which personal ridicule was forbidden in the year 414 (?); see Sommerstein (1986). The question of whether parallel transmission concerning the fifth century was also possible in Middle Comedy requires special investigation; see provisionally Nesselrath (1997).

²⁸ Schwarze (1971).

²⁹ See Strasburger (1990) 342; a similar date is proposed by M. West (1985b) 71f.

the author reports character anecdotes from his meetings³⁰ with famous figures such as Sophocles (F 6), Socrates (F 9), Cimon (F 12–14), or Pericles (F 15–6). Pericles, for example, is portrayed as tactless in Ion.³¹ Presumably somewhat later,³² Stesimbrotus of Thasus wrote his treatise *On Themistocles, Thucydides, and Pericles* (FGrHist 107 F 1–11) which gave a critical treatment at least of Pericles. It is not clear whether, or to what degree, Cimon and Thucydides, son of Melesias, served as examples of positive contrasting figures, or were also presented in a negative light—perhaps because of the author's possible resentment of Athens.³³

It is striking that in both groups i and ii—and in fact more generally in literature until 420—the picture of Pericles is predominantly negative, in sharp contrast with Thucydides (2.65).

iii. *Contemporary Historians*

In addition to mythographical-genealogical works, Hellanicus of Lesbos (FGrHist 4),³⁴ perhaps born around 480, wrote books about individual Greek regions, among them an *Atthis* in two books (F 163–172). Since this *Atthis* treats events up to the year 407/6, as two fragments reveal (F 171–2), it represents a parallel tradition prior to Thucydides. Thucydides 1.97.2 explicitly refers to this *Atthis* and criticizes its chronological system, which he claims was particularly imprecise for the *Pentekontaetia*.³⁵ He also notes the briefness of Hellanicus' treatment. Hellanicus seems to have used a method of dating by archons (T 11, cf. F 171), so that Thucydides' criticism of this type of chronology elsewhere (5.20.2) may also be directed against Hellanicus.³⁶

If we assume that Hellanicus' *Atthis* also dealt with the Athenian tyranny and that his presentation found its way into Aristotle's *Ath.*, perhaps via other atthidographers, then the chronological differences

³⁰ See Jacoby, introduction to FGrHist 392, p. 193.

³¹ Strasburger (1990) 345. On the issue in general, cf. Gentili-Cerri (1988) 69–72.

³² See Schachermeyr (1974) and Tsakmakis (1995c).

³³ Schachermeyr (1974) argues for the first of these assumptions, Jacoby, in his introduction to FGrHist 107, pp. 343–44, for the second, elaborating on a hypothesis suggested by Wilamowitz.

³⁴ For the most recent summary, see K. Meister (1998); also Alpers (2003).

³⁵ See von Fritz (1967) 1.501.

³⁶ Cf. von Fritz (1967) 1.500; Lendle (1964).

between *Ath.* and Herodotus would be due ultimately to Hellanicus.³⁷ Moreover, Hellanicus' version might have prompted the emphatic correction that Thucydides makes in his account of the assassination of Hipparchus (6.54.1).³⁸

After a career as physician and diplomat at the court of the Persian king, Ctesias of Cnidus (*FGrHist* 688) wrote (probably in the 390s) a Persian history in 23 books, partly directed against Herodotus. As a historian, he has been held in very low esteem since antiquity.³⁹ As part of his *Persica* he also treats the Egyptian rebellion and the Athenian intervention (Th. 1.104: 200 ships; Ctesias F 14.36: 40 ships; Ctesias also knows that Megabyzus captured the Greek army at Byblos).

Philistus of Syracuse (*FGrHist* 556)⁴⁰ probably lived from 430 to 356.⁴¹ Plutarch tells us that he was an eyewitness to the defense of his native city organised by the Spartan Gylippus (Plu. *Nic.* 19.6 = T 2). Of the two works that are attested for Philistus, *On Sicily* and *On Dionysius*, it is the former, which treated the island's history from 424/3⁴² to 406/5 in seven books, that is relevant here. However, the fragments are few and of limited content (F 1–27); in particular they contain no clear information about the Sicilian Expedition undertaken by the Athenians (F 24–26). The question of whether a contemporary version of the events in Sicily—and one independent of Thucydides—has been lost with Philistus may perhaps be answered in the negative with the help of other testimonies about him: in his *Life of Nicias*, Plutarch refers to both Thucydides and Philistus as highly regarded witnesses whom he could not surpass. At the same time, he criticizes the attempt of Timaeus of Tauromenium to outdo them, calling it a failure and lacking in taste (*Nic.* 1). Plutarch apparently saw no fundamental difference between Thucydides and Philistus,

³⁷ See Heidbüchel (1957).

³⁸ Cf. Th. 6.54.2: Hipparchus was not the successor of Pisistratus. However, this is what the *Marmor Parium* (A 45) records, for which Jacoby (1949) 1 A. 5, 156 (cf. also *HCT* 4.321) sees Hellanicus as a source; for a different view see Tsakmakis (1995a) 223 with n. 111.

³⁹ Cf. *FGrHist* 688 T 11; see especially Jacoby (1922b) 2062.

⁴⁰ On the matter in general, see Zoepffel (1965).

⁴¹ According to *FGrHist* 556 T 9c–d.

⁴² Thus (according to Jacoby, introduction to *FGrHist* 556, p. 498) Philistus continued the work by Antiochus of Syracuse (*FGrHist* 555), who need not be considered here since he is no parallel to Thucydides (rather he complements Herodotus).

which probably also means that he failed to see much difference between their presentations and evaluations. This inference is perhaps confirmed by a testimony of Theon (*Prog.* II, 63.25 Sp. = T 14)⁴³ according to which Philistus based his whole account of the war between Syracuse and Athens on Thucydides. In addition, ancient literary criticism regarded Philistus as an *imitator Thucydidis* (Quint., *Inst. or.* 10.1.74) or even as *paene pusillus Thucydidis* (Cicero, *Ad Q. fr.* 2.11.4). We would therefore be justified in concluding that Philistus does not represent a true parallel tradition, let alone an independent tradition. He is evidence for the (early) canonization of Thucydides.

This survey of contemporaneous historians clearly confirms the conclusion reached earlier on the basis of the preserved sources: not only was there no independent tradition relating to the Peloponnesian War from the fourth century onward; there was never any such transmission at all. Thucydides' treatment of the war did not excite comprehensive criticism and did not have to compete with other contemporary accounts.

iv. *The Historians of the Fourth Century*

For Ephorus of Cyme (*FGrHist* 70), who lived from 400 to 330, writing fifth-century history meant recasting the work of previous writers without any attempt to find and explore new "primary sources".⁴⁴ Of his works, the universal history (*Historiai*) is of particular interest here. It was composed in 29 books and covered the time from early mythical history to the beginning of the Sacred War of 356, not annalistically but topically, treating related matters together (*kata genos*).⁴⁵ Books XI–XX were devoted to the Athenian and Spartan hegemony, i.e., the time between 479 and 378.⁴⁶ Barber proposes, not unreasonably, that in Book XI Ephorus might have treated the *Pentekontaetia*, in Book XII, Sicily (from 500–440), in Book XIII, the Archidamian War, in Book XIV, the Athenian expedition to Sicily, and in Book XV, the Deceleian War.⁴⁷

⁴³ Cautiously Gomme, *HCT* 1.30.

⁴⁴ This is stated pointedly in *FGrHist* 70 F 9. On the issue in general, see Schepens (1977), K. Meister (1990) 89; cf. also Polybius' criticism 12.25e (= *FGrHist* 70 T 20).

⁴⁵ Cf. *FGrHist* 70 T 11 (Diodorus 5.1.4); see Drews (1976).

⁴⁶ See Jacoby's commentary on *FGrHist* 70, p. 28.

⁴⁷ Barber (1993) 173.

On the basis of this suggestion, the following fragments can be assigned to certain books (besides the few fragments that are explicitly attested for particular books):

Book XI (*Pentekontaetia*)

F 64: Cimon pays a fine of 50 talents for his father Miltiades.⁴⁸

F 65: About Egypt, probably a digression prompted by the Inarus' rebellion.⁴⁹

F 189–191, fr. 1–5: about Themistocles' flight to Persia and Xerxes,⁵⁰ after refusing to become involved in Pausanias' plans;⁵¹ concluding evaluation of Themistocles.

F 191, fr. 6ff., 192: Cimon takes Eion and Scyros; he defeats the Persians by land and sea⁵² at the Eurymedon.

F 193: Pericles bribes the Spartan king Pleistoanax and his adviser Cleandrides to withdraw with their army from Attica.⁵³

F 194–95: Pericles employs the latest siege techniques⁵⁴ in the Samian War and takes the city in the ninth month.

Book XII (Sicily)

F 66 (island name “Tyche”)

Book XIII (Archidamian War)

F 67 (mention of the town Sceptis)

F 196:⁵⁵ Report on the causes of the war; here Pericles, feeling that

⁴⁸ Cf. Nepos, *Milt.* 7.

⁴⁹ Cf. Jacoby in his commentary *ad loc.*

⁵⁰ Alternatively, in Th. 1.137.3, Artaxerxes.

⁵¹ This corresponds to Th. 1.135.2.

⁵² Cimon's trick of a nighttime attack on the Persian army, which is only vaguely recognizable in F 191 fr. 11ff., is narrated more fully by Diodorus 11.61. It is also noted in Frontinus 4.7.45 and Polyaeus 1.34.1; according to Jacoby (commentary on F 191) both used the same sources (but not Ephorus). This detail of the double battle is missing in Th. 1.100.

⁵³ Th. 2.21.1 only mentions the attack under the command of Pleistonax in a digression (turning to the past) in his report of Archidamus' invasion. It is described in more detail by Plutarch, *Per.* 22–23; only a brief note in D.S. 13.106.10.

⁵⁴ This detail is omitted in Th. 1.116–17.

⁵⁵ I think that Jacoby (following Vogel), commentary on F 196, has plausibly identified this fragment within Diodorus' presentation of the causes of the Peloponnesian War (12.38–41.1): the content of 12.38.1–3 contrasts with 12.39ff. Since the anecdote about Alcibiades' advice to Pericles was an element of the rhetorical tradition, as Val. Max. 3.1, *ext.* 1 (cf. Plu., *Alc.* 7) shows, Diodorus could have taken this from other sources.

he is under political pressure, is assigned a crucial role, and the Megarian Decree is seen as a precipitating event.

F 197 (explanation of the expression “Archidamian War”)

F 198 (local name “Boudaron”)⁵⁶

Book XIV

Book XV (Deceleian War)

F 199: After the defeat at Cynossema, Mindarus orders a subsidiary fleet of 50 ships from Euboea; all the ships sink in a storm off Mt. Athos.⁵⁷

Besides these fragments that are explicitly attested for Ephorus, we also need to consider the issue of Diodorus’ debt to him. Since Volquardsen it has been widely believed that Diodorus relied mainly on Ephorus for the history of the Greek mainland (but not of Sicily).⁵⁸ If we analyze the text of Diodorus on the basis of this (plausible) assumption and compare it with Thucydides, it becomes clear that Diodorus/Ephorus made use of Thucydides⁵⁹ but emphasized different things; one important and long-known feature is their tendency to assign a more favorable role to Athens in their accounts of both the Peloponnesian War⁶⁰ and the *Pentekontaetia*.⁶¹

The following differences are particularly striking: in the context of the Egyptian expedition, Thucydides has the Athenian army completely decimated (1.109–110), whereas according to Diodorus,⁶² the Persian general fears their bravery and negotiates a truce (D.S. 11.77.4–5). Diodorus has the battle between Spartans and Athenians

⁵⁶ Cf. Th. 3.51.2: Boudoron; D.S. 12.49.3: Boudorion.

⁵⁷ Th. 8.107.2 does not mention a storm.

⁵⁸ See K. Meister (1967) and Holzapfel (1879).

⁵⁹ F 196 makes it clear that this is also true of the “scholar-historian” Ephorus: embedded in the account of the causes of the war there is a *parainesis* by Pericles addressing the Athenians (D.S. 12.39.5–40.5). Its argumentation corresponds so closely to the reported speech of Pericles in Th. 2.13 that it has even been thought that Diodorus used Thucydides as his immediate source (Ullrich in Holzapfel [1879] 6).

⁶⁰ Holzapfel (1879) 8: “Die Darstellung des peloponnesischen Krieges bei Ephorus zeigt unverkennbare Parteinahme für die Athener.” Cf. also Barber (1993) 185.

⁶¹ See Barber (1993) 90–97.

⁶² Kolbe (1937) 263–66 points out the difficulties (i.e., for Kolbe, the unreliable aspects) in Diodorus’ presentation.

at Tanagra end in a tie (D.S. 11.80), whereas Thucydides sees it as a severe defeat for the Athenians (Th. 1.108.1). In Thucydides (2.5) the Plataeans kill the captured Thebans, thereby breaking a truce agreement, whereas in Diodorus (12.41) they comply with the agreement and release the Thebans. When covering the military action between Cleon and Brasidas at Amphipolis, Thucydides notes a clear failure on Cleon's part (5.7 and 10), whereas Diodorus has the Athenians succumb only after losing their leader (12.74).

From this, one might conclude that Ephorus (Diodorus) generally favors Athens and the Athenians. However, it should be kept in mind that Diodorus' objective as a universal historian was clearly different from that of Thucydides. Briefly, Thucydides uses the paradigm of the Peloponnesian War in order to provide proof of the fallibility of man, who is driven by *philotimia* and *pleonexia*, and whose great plans (e.g., Pericles' military strategy or Alcibiades' interventions regarding Sicily) can either fail due to unexpected circumstances (plague, mutilation of the Herms) or turn out successfully against all odds (Cleon at Sphacteria). This view is reinforced by the acknowledgment of the human potential for moral degeneration, which is diagnosed in the accounts both of the plague (2.51) and of the *stasis* at Corcyra (3.82). In contrast with this, Ephorus "normalizes" events. In place of Thucydides' complex analysis of the causes of the war, he presents a simple causal relation whereby the war is inextricably linked with the personality of Pericles; he reduces the plague (12.45.2) and likewise the *stasis* at Corcyra (15.57) to mere events. It is therefore not surprising that he also has the Plataeans act "rationally" (see above), rather than in the way described in Thucydides. The question of whether Ephorus' general friendliness towards Athens is also representative of a common idealization of Athens in the fourth century⁶³ cannot be discussed here.

The *Hellenica* of Theopompus (*FGrHist* 115), the other great historian of the fourth century,⁶⁴ offered a continuation of Thucydides in twelve books for the years 411 to 394. Of greater interest in the

⁶³ Cf., e.g., Plato, *Menexenus*.

⁶⁴ His dates are not certain: as far as his birth is concerned, the time-spans 408–404 and 378–76 are possible; his death is likely to have occurred after that of Alexander (323); on the issue generally, see the (overly) skeptical discussion in Flower (1994) 11–17, 23–25.

present context are the digressions in his other great work, the monumental *Philippica*, the history of Philip II, published after the king's death in 336.⁶⁵ Book X was a digression devoted to the Athenian demagogues⁶⁶ and, to judge by the fragments, dealt with Themistocles (F 85–6), Cimon (F 88–9), Thucydides, son of Melesias (F 91), Pericles (F 91), Cleon (F 92–94), Hyperbolus (F 95–6) and later demagogues.⁶⁷ In another digression in Book XXV—which may have been devoted to Athenian foreign policy—Theopompus again dealt with the fifth century. In F 153 he denies that the Greeks swore an oath before the battle of Plataea or that there was a treaty between the Athenians (and Greeks?)⁶⁸ and the Persian king Darius (?). On the basis of this fragment, some have assumed that Theopompus denied the existence of the so-called Peace of Callias and is therefore the source of Callisthenes who, in a famous passage (Plu. *Cim.* 13.4 = *FGrHist* 124 F 16), questions the existence of this peace treaty.⁶⁹ On this assumption, Theopompus F 154, in which the author says that an inscription about a treaty with the barbarians was written not in Attic but in Ionic letters, would be part of the same passage, and F 155 might then suggest that Theopompus mentioned the proposal to reform the alphabet during the archonship of Euclides. From all this it has been concluded that Theopompus rejected the authenticity of the Peace of Callias because (among other reasons) it would have been anachronistic for such a treaty to be written in the Ionic alphabet. But this judgment is purely speculative, at least in part.⁷⁰ Another fragment (F 156) explicitly attests that Thucydides (1.112.5) and Theopompus both covered the Sacred War.

⁶⁵ See Flower (1994) 33 with n. 35, who rightly notes that F 330, which would imply the presence of Harpalos in Athens in the year 324, does not constitute a secure piece of evidence, since the fragment contains no hint of this treatise.

⁶⁶ Fundamental on this issue is Connor (1968).

⁶⁷ In the first half of the third century Idomeneus of Lampsacus (*FGrHist* 338) wrote a treatise *On the Demagogues in Athens* in two books. It is not possible to tell if this is based on Theopompus. As the fragments reveal, Idomeneus writes that perpetual banishment was imposed on Themistocles (F 1), that Aristides discovered suppressions of money (F 7), that Pericles killed Ephialtes out of envy (F 8), and that Cleon was a follower of Pericles (F 9). The negative portrayal of Pericles discernible here corresponds to the general tendency of Theopompus.

⁶⁸ For textual criticism, see Connor (1968) 78f.

⁶⁹ Cf. Bosworth (1990).

⁷⁰ Cf. Connor (1968) 93f., also Flower (1994) 59 n. 60: "In my view, Theopompus denied that there had been any formal peace in the 5th century between Athens and Persia . . .".

Other ideas of Theopompus' are reflected in the fragments of Book X, and fit well into the general picture that can be constructed for this historian. In his writings one can discern a strong tendency toward moralizing, resulting in black-and-white presentations and an emphasis on vice and decadence. Theopompus thus strongly disapproves of democracy as life without rules and instead favors a morally strict aristocracy or even tyranny.⁷¹ For example, he tells us that Themistocles managed to build the walls of Athens not by means of a ruse against the Spartans (Th. 1.90–92) but by bribing the Spartan ephors (F 85); that when he fled from Athens he left behind some 100 talents (F 85) and did not receive a permanent residence from the Persian king, instead having to wander through Asia Minor. With regard to Cimon, Theopompus reports that he was recalled from exile to negotiate a five-year truce in a war against Sparta (F 88). In other words this truce, which Thucydides (1.112.1) places before the expedition to Cyprus (450), in Theopompus immediately follows the battle of Tanagra (457), which implies the omission of the battle of Oinopytha.⁷² He also reports Cimon's (probably exaggerated) support of poor Athenians (F 89),⁷³ while yet another fragment (F 90) stresses Cimon's political ambition, which is deemed criminal.

Theopompus' judgment of Pericles is not quite clear; F 387 (corresponding to Th. 1.114) mentions the measures taken by him after the conquest of Euboeia.⁷⁴ With regard to Cleon, Theopompus notes his indecently bold behavior in the *ekklēsia* (F 92, partly in agreement with *Ath.* 28.3) and knows that the knights were hostile toward him (F 93–4), which matches with Aristophanes rather than Thucydides.⁷⁵ With regard to Hyperbolus, Theopompus gives him the patronymic Chremes, diverging from Thucydides, and in relation to his death is able to report—complementing Thucydides (8.73)—that after his murder his corpse was sewn into a sack and thrown into the sea (F 96).⁷⁶

⁷¹ On the issue in general, see von Fritz (1976); Flower (1994) 63–97.

⁷² See Connor (1968) 27f. and Gomme, *HCT* 1.325–29. Nepos, *Cim.* 3.2–4, adapts Theopompus' version.

⁷³ Nepos, *Cim.* 4, adapts this.

⁷⁴ See Connor (1968) 44.

⁷⁵ See Connor (1968) 50–59.

⁷⁶ See also Schol. Aristoph. *Pax* 681; Connor (1968) 62f.

In sum, Theopompus' digressions paint a picture of fifth-century history that stresses the low ambition and decadent hedonism of the protagonists. It is therefore possible to speak here of a simplification of Thucydidean psychology and anthropology. It is fair to assume that the material for his deprecatory portrayals of the demagogues derives from fifth-century pamphlets (cf., e.g., Ps.-Xenophon) and principally from comedy, but occasionally also from official documents such as inscriptions (cf. F 154).

Craterus "the Macedonian"⁷⁷ (*FGrHist* 342 T 2) cannot be called a historian in the strict sense of the word, but is worthy of consideration here because his collection of State decrees in (at least) nine books (F 5–8) provided Hellenistic and later historians and biographers with "new" material, that is, material that thitherto had not been recorded historiographically. If we assume that his collection included all Greek public decrees⁷⁸ and not only those from Athens, we would have a work analogous to the massive collections of the early Peripatetic school, e.g., the *Politeiai* and the *Didaskaliai* of Aristotle. The collection probably dates to the end of the fourth-century. Twenty-one fragments are preserved, all relating to fifth-century *psēphismata*, but they have no relevance to the text of Thucydides.⁷⁹

v. *The Atthidographers*

Around the beginning of the fourth century a local historiography emerges that is focused on Athens and Attica. It continues the historiographical genre that began with Hellanicus' treatise, called *Attikē xyngraphē* by Thucydides (1.97.2).⁸⁰ In the style of chronicles, the authors of these *Atthides xyngraphai* give synopses of the history of Athens from mythical times up to the present. Fragments of some of these local historians dealing with the history of the fifth century have come down to us.

⁷⁷ Jacoby (1922a) is fundamental.

⁷⁸ This is indicated by T 1 c ("... all *psēphismata* that were recorded in Greece ..."); for a different opinion, however, see Jacoby (1922a) 1618.

⁷⁹ Only F 13 is worth noting, stating that Craterus' collection included the wording of Callias' treaty.

⁸⁰ See in general Jacoby (1949); also Harding (1994).

First there is Androtion (*FGrHist* 324),⁸¹ whose work in eight⁸² books went down until at least 344–3 (see F 53). Androtion composed or completed his *Atthis* in Megara during his exile (T 14), after holding different offices and playing an important role in Athenian politics for about forty years. It is likely that Books II and III of his *Atthis* were devoted to the history of the fifth century.

These are the fragments that are of relevance to the present discussion.

From Book II

F 37: Androtion (unlike Theopompus) gives the patronymic of Pericles' political opponent Thucydides as Melesias.

F 38: list of the names of the 10 Athenian *stratēgoi* in the Samian War.

From Book III

F 39: the invasion of Attica by the Spartans under Archidamus⁸³ and their reverence for the sacred olive trees.⁸⁴

F 40: According to Androtion, Cleon was killed in the war in the archon year 422/1.⁸⁵

F 41: Death of the Athenian generals Laches and Nicostratus at Mantinea (as in Th. 5.74.3).

F 42: Hyperbolus' father's name was Antiphanes.

F 43: In the context of the oligarchic coup and the rule of the 400, Androtion⁸⁶ sets the number of *syngrapheis* who were to design a draft for a constitution at 30, whereas in Thucydides (8.67.1) the number is 10.

Only two fragments of the *Atthis* of Phanodemus⁸⁷ (*FGrHist* 325), who was also politically active, are relevant here. It comprised nine books and seems to have been published around 330. One fragment describes

⁸¹ Cf. Harding (1994) *passim*.

⁸² See Harding (1994) 26.

⁸³ The information about the size of the army is textually corrupt; see Harding (1994) 148–49.

⁸⁴ Th. 2.19.2 does not mention this.

⁸⁵ This corresponds to Th. 5.12.1; see Harding (1994) 151.

⁸⁶ Likewise Philochorus, *FGrHist* 328 F 136; Aristotle (*Ath.* 29.2) seems to follow both; see Harding (1994) 161, and more explicitly Andrewes, *HCT* 5.210.

⁸⁷ See K. Meister (2000a).

the size of the Persian fleet in the battle at Eurymedon as 600 ships (F 22).⁸⁸ In another fragment, Phanodemus reports (F 23) that the Athenians, on the last instructions of the general himself, concealed the death of Cimon from their troops, thus enabling them to withdraw in good order from Citium.

Among fragments of the *Atthis* of Philochorus⁸⁹ (*FGrHist* 328), there is considerably more material that runs parallel to Thucydides. This work, which was probably composed around the middle of the third century, summarized all the best earlier Attic local historiography and for this reason was more widely used than its predecessors. Of the total of 17 books, the first two were devoted to early history, Books III and IV to the fifth century, Books V and VI to the fourth century, and the remaining eleven to the third century. The author was a scholar of high quality, which made his work so important that it came to supersede all other attidography. The numerous quotations and fragments are proof of the work's prominence.

The following fragments⁹⁰ are of relevance to the present question:

- F 117: Philochorus reports that as a result of Sparta's plight in the war against the Messenians, "Athens took over the leadership". This can also be gathered from Thucydides (1.102).
- F 202: Themistocles was buried in Athens.
- F 33: The introduction of the *theorikon*.
- F 34: During the Sacred War the Athenians take Delphi from the Boiotians and give it back to the Phocians. This concurs with Thucydides (1.112.5).
- F 118: Pericles subjugates Euboia (= Th. 1.114).
- F 119: Psammetichus sends grain to Athens in 445/4.
- F 121: On Phidias' statue of Athena and the suspicions and lawsuit against him (438/7); the Megarians complain to the Spartans about the *psēphisma* that had been decided in Athens on the basis of a motion by Pericles (432/1).⁹¹ This fragment seems to indicate that Philochorus did not, like Aristophanes (*Ach.*, *Pax*) and Ephorus/

⁸⁸ Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 192, gives the number of ships as 350. It is tempting to read the figure given by Phanodemus as a patriotic exaggeration.

⁸⁹ See K. Meister (2000b).

⁹⁰ In general, see Jacoby's annotations to these fragments.

⁹¹ In his commentary on F 21, Jacoby offers a brilliant analysis of the Aristophanes scholion on which this fragment is based.

- Diodorus (see above), see Pericles' attempt to save himself as the cause of the war.
- F 36: On the building of the Propylaea in 437/6 under the supervision of Mnesicles.
- F 123: On the duration of the Archidamian War (13 years): the figure was probably already corrupt in the ancient transmission.
- F 124: Sparta's breach of a treaty with Athens: it is not clear whether Philochorus was referring to the treaty of 446/5 or the truce of 424/3. The latter would parallel Thucydides (4.122).
- F 126: Length of the reign of Perdiccas.
- F 127: Laches is replaced in Sicily by Sophocles and Pythodorus (which concurs with Th. 3.115 and 4.65.3).
- F 128: Because their fellow countrymen are cut off on the island of Sphacteria, the Spartans want to negotiate for peace in Athens; Cleon speaks against this and manages to persuade the Athenians to continue the war (which corresponds to Th. 4.16–23).⁹²
- F 129: Brasidas induces Scione to revolt from Athens (cf. Th. 4.120), even though the Athenians have previously sent 50 ships to Mende and fortified Scione (no parallel for this in Thucydides).
- F 131: On the Peace of Nicias (422/1); the Boiotians, Corinthians and Eleians oppose the peace. (Th. 5.17.2 also lists the Megarians).
- F 132: Corinth tries to restart the war and push Argos into doing the same (as in Th. 5.27).
- F 133–4: On the mutilation of the Herms: Philochorus reports that only the Herm in front of the house of Andocides remained undamaged,⁹³ and that punishments were imposed under the archon Chabrias (possibly corresponding to Th. 6.30.1 and 6.53.2 respectively).⁹⁴
- F 135: The seer Stilbides takes part in the Sicilian Expedition but unfortunately dies, so that at the crucial moment he cannot explain to Nicias that the portent of the lunar eclipse is in fact favorable for the Athenians.⁹⁵

⁹² In addition, Philochorus gives 60 as the precise number of ships that the Spartans turn over in advance.

⁹³ This detail, which is not mentioned by Thucydides, may have been taken by Philochorus from And. 1.62 or from Ephorus (if Plu. *Nic.* 13.3 goes back to him, as Jacoby suggests in his commentary *ad loc.*).

⁹⁴ It does not seem to me that Philochorus mentioned the hypothesis that the Corinthians were responsible for the mutilation (see, e.g., Plu. *Alc.* 18.7), something that is considered to be a possibility by Jacoby in his commentary *ad loc.*

⁹⁵ Th. 7.50.4 omits this detail, perhaps because the limitations of human planning

F 136: Like Androtion (F 43; see above), Philochorus places the number of *syngrapheis* in charge of designing a new constitution in 411 at 30.

F 137: After the defeat in Sicily the Athenians allow exiled citizens to return.⁹⁶

Looking at the fragments of the Atthidographers it becomes clear that, at times, they offer more details (names and numbers) than Thucydides. But there are no important differences in terms of the significance and evaluation of fifth-century history. This is especially evident in relation to the causes of the Peloponnesian War, because here Philochorus seems to distance himself from Ephorus (and Aristophanes) and aim at a greater closeness to Thucydides. An exception may be the treatment of the coup of 411, at least if one accepts the hypothesis that the difference between Thucydides and the *Athenaion Politeia* can be traced back to an atthidographic source, in this case probably Androtion.⁹⁷

vi. *Regional Histories of the Third Century*

Two historians who wrote works in the early decades of the third century are further candidates for having composed parallel versions to Thucydides. The first of these is Duris of Samos (*FGrHist* 76, probably 349 to 270), who was actually tyrant of Samos around 300 and who wrote (among other things) a local history of Samos.⁹⁸ It has been suggested that some fragments concerning fifth-century history derive from this work of local history.⁹⁹

Duris counted the Samian War as one of the causes of the Peloponnesian War (F 65). In his melodramatic fashion, he reported the maltreatment and killing of captive Samians by Pericles (F 67), an account judged implausible by Plutarch (*Per.* 28). Duris is also

are thus thrown more sharply into relief. Richard Gordon comments (*per litteras*): "But would we expect Thucydides to take a *mantis* seriously? I doubt it".

⁹⁶ Th. 8.1 does not mention such a decree, but it could be implied in 8.70.1. However, the note by Philochorus could also refer to the decree that is in fact attested by Thucydides for the year 411 (8.97.3).

⁹⁷ See Rhodes (1981) 367; for Androtion, see Jacoby (1949) 384 n. 30.

⁹⁸ See K. Meister (1990) 96–100.

⁹⁹ See Jacoby's commentary on *FGrHist* 76, F 35–71, p. 123.

said to be one of the authorities for the claim that the only undamaged Herm in 415 belonged to Andocides (F 68). F 69 is about Alcibiades in Sparta: he is supposed to have slept with the wife of king Agis, thus prompting the latter to refuse to accept the son subsequently born as his own. In revenge, the queen had everybody in the household call the child Alcibiades.

Timaeus of Tauromenion (*FGHist* 566) was a contemporary of Duris who reached old age (T 5). During exile in Athens (T 4), he wrote a history of Sicily in 38 books, covering the period between early mythical times and the death of Agathocles (289/8).

In his *Life of Nicias* (ch. 1), Plutarch characterizes Timaeus' attempt to write better than Thucydides¹⁰⁰ as vain and futile. This suggests that in his treatment of events in Sicily of 414/3, Timaeus may have been deliberately competing with Thucydides.¹⁰¹ This ambition is already apparent in F 22,¹⁰² from Book XII. Apparently Timaeus wanted to surpass the speech¹⁰³ which Thucydides has Hermocrates deliver to a convention of Sicilians in 424, proposing general peace on the island (4.59–64). Polybius (12.25–26) adduces this passage as proof of Timaeus' poor knowledge and deliberate untruthfulness. Indeed, Timaeus' version of Hermocrates' speech, as Polybius presents it, does seem redundant and full of school rhetoric.¹⁰⁴

F 23–4: According to Plutarch (*Nic.* 15), Nicias conquered the city of Hyccara at the outset of the expedition (likewise Th. 6.62.3); Lais,¹⁰⁵ who was later to become famous as a *hetaira*, was among the booty on that occasion and so arrived in the Peloponnese.¹⁰⁶ These fragments testify that Timaeus mentioned Hyccara and Lais (whose death he probably reported in a digression).

¹⁰⁰ "Timaeus . . . hoping to excel Thucydides in skill . . ." Perhaps Timaeus also explicitly criticized Thucydides, a criticism which might be the origin of the fragments F 135–6, according to which the exiled historian lived in Italy.

¹⁰¹ In addition it is possible that Timaeus was the ultimate source for the reports on the effect Gorgias had in Athens on the occasion of the Leontinian embassy, described by D.S. 12.53.2–3 (cf. Timaeus F 137) but omitted by Thucydides in his own brief account 3.86.3.

¹⁰² There is no affinity between F 21—about Gelon—and Thucydides.

¹⁰³ See Jacoby in his commentary on F 22.

¹⁰⁴ Evidently Timaeus had Hermocrates cite poetry extensively (*Il.* 5.890; 9.63–4; E. fr. 453 K., see Fuchs [1926] 177–78 with n. 2).

¹⁰⁵ See Geyer (1925).

¹⁰⁶ In Thucydides, Nicias writes to the Athenians about the buyers of the "Hyccanian slaves", 7.13.2.

F 99: Timaeus is said to have praised Alcibiades.¹⁰⁷

F 100–102: Timaeus apparently gave a much more vivid turn to a) his portrayal of Gylippus and b) his account of the execution of Nicias and Demosthenes. He contrasts Gylippus' bravery as a soldier with his greedy and pusillanimous nature, which led to his dishonorable end (F 100). Timaeus devoted more space to his account of the deaths of the Athenian generals.¹⁰⁸ Thucydides briefly states (7.86.2) the fact that they were executed against the wishes of Gylippus and says that the Syracusans' motive was the fear that Nicias might disclose the names of collaborators (86.4). Diodorus (13.19.4–13.33.1) describes a public assembly at which a demagogue, Diocles, demands the torture and execution of the generals; then Hermocrates urges clemency but is shouted down by the crowd (13.19). There follow two long speeches, one by a citizen named Nicolaus, who has lost his sons in the fighting but nevertheless asks for leniency (13.20–27), and the other by Gylippus, forcefully reiterating the demagogue's position (13.28–32). According to Jacoby, this lengthy debate between Nicolaus and Gylippus is taken from Ephorus.¹⁰⁹ We have a hint about Timaeus' version in F 101, where it is said that, while the public assembly was still in progress, Hermocrates offered Nicias and Demosthenes the option of committing suicide. This might indicate that a) Hermocrates was acting for the benefit of the Athenian generals, and b) the motion that the Athenians should be tortured before being executed was actually proposed in the public assembly with a considerable chance of success. Diodorus (13.19) would then have been offering an abbreviated version of Timaeus' account.

These "regional histories" both differ from Thucydides in that they provide certain additional details. However, the main difference lies not so much in the facts as in the embellishment of emotionally fraught scenes (Pericles' maltreatment of the Samians, the public assembly in Syracuse, the fate of the generals). Both show a noticeable

¹⁰⁷ "Aber mit F 99 ist wenig anzufangen." Jacoby, commentary on F 99–102, p. 581.

¹⁰⁸ See Jacoby's commentary on F 100–102, pp. 582–83.

¹⁰⁹ The negative portrayal of Gylippus in this version would tally with the pro-Athenian tendency of Ephorus; against this see Drews (1962), who spots ideas in Nicolaus' speech that he thinks unparalleled in Ephorus.

emphasis on dramatic elements in order to increase pathos; the main contrast with Thucydides is thus at the level of literary style.

The fragments from the great universal histories of the Hellenistic period (Timagenes, Nicolaus, Strabo) need not be considered here, since they offer no new insights.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study can be summarized as follows: 1. Thucydides was never seriously challenged historiographically. The historians who can be called his contemporaries, such as Philistus and Ctesias, already accepted his account of the Peloponnesian War as authoritative. 2. Insofar as other aspects were picked up upon in the fourth century, it was mainly Old and Middle Comedy which provided the alternative material. 3. Except in relation to the coup of 411, the Atthidographers, and Philochorus in particular, seem to have adhered to what Thucydides wrote. 4. The so-called "tragic historiography" of Duris and Timaeus, for all its competitiveness at the stylistic level, apparently did not manage to find an audience that was willing to turn away from Thucydides.¹¹⁰

As far as antiquity is concerned, Plutarch's observation at the beginning of his *Life of Nicias* therefore holds good:¹¹¹ that Thucydides presented the events, surpassing himself in his passionate forcefulness, vividness and richness in colors, in a way that defies all imitation. No one could hold a candle to him. No one even seriously tried to do so.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Most of the evidence for "parallel tradition" relates not to the history of the Peloponnesian War itself but to the account of the *Pentekontaetia*, to which Thucydides himself devoted only limited space. Cf. Schreiner (1997).

¹¹¹ *Nic.* 1.

¹¹² I am very grateful to Markus Dubischar and Richard Gordon for their valuable help in translating this article.

PART FOUR
AFTER THUCYDIDES

THUCYDIDES CONTINUED

Roberto Nicolai

1. *Did Thucydides Want to Be Continued?*

Did Thucydides want to be continued? Would he even have considered the continuation of his work a possibility? In his proem, Thucydides casts himself as a rival to Homer, particularly with respect to the *Iliad*, the model for every possible narration of a war. He calls his work a κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ and in the *Archaeology* attempts to demonstrate that all previous wars, especially the Trojan and Persian Wars, were of lesser importance than the present one.¹ Thucydides did not think that his work could be continued at the same level of perfection; however, due to his knowledge of epic poetry, a continuation in which his work would stand out as the *Iliad* does in the epic cycle would probably have seemed possible and natural to him. From this perspective, Thucydides completed the narrative of Herodotus with the *Pentekontaetia* and the Peloponnesian War; according to Luciano Canfora, this was the first step toward a new kind of cycle, which he calls the “ciclo storico”.² Nevertheless, Thucydides’ work is a monograph on a single war,³ and the narration of previous facts

¹ Nicolai (2001).

² Canfora (1971) and Canfora (1972) 88f. On the composition of the *Pentekontaetia* after the defeat of Athens, see Badian (1993): there is no evidence that Thucydides took notes on the events during the *Pentekontaetia* and “the thought of adding the excursus on those years probably did not occur to him until, revising his first book as a full preface to the war, and, after defeat and revolution, worrying about how it all came about (. . .), he found that he needed a selective sketch of that period in order to establish his thesis of Sparta’s responsibility for the war and the correctness of Pericles’ vision”. I do not agree with Legon (1997) 15f. that there are traces of research and material collected before the beginning of the Peloponnesian War in Thucydides’ work. Legon considers all the passages on the past, including the *Pentekontaetia*, to have been composed before the main narration of the war and fails to take into account the body of modern scholarship about the composition of Thucydides’ work. According to Darbo-Peschanski (1995) 26, there is a “continuité restaurée” in Thucydides, into which the Peloponnesian War fits.

³ According to Rawlings (1981) 5, Thucydides was aware of the unity of the war,

is important principally as an explanation of the sources of Athenian power (1.97.2).

A further question is whether the opposition between the genre of the *Hellenica* and monographs made any sense in the fifth century. As a matter of fact, the two genres overlap: the narration of the Peloponnesian War ended up covering a large period of Greek history in full, yet Thucydides did not feel that he had changed his plan or broken the rules of "his" genre.⁴ Only later would *Hellenica* and monographs be clearly distinguished from one another: Polybius' criticism of historical works on a limited subject shows that these had a different character and style to universal histories (Ephorus, Polybius) and the *Hellenica*. However, we must remember that some historians include monographs in larger histories (as Cicero, *Fam.* 5.12.2, reports with respect to Callisthenes, Timaeus, and Polybius himself). It is not merely a question of composition but also has to do with the means of publication.

One may speculate about whether or not Thucydides intended his work to be continued; at any rate, in order to understand what happened after Thucydides, two main issues need to be addressed:

1. Thucydides' work needed to be finished rather than continued. Apparently, however, those who undertook to finish it later decided to continue it as well. (An example of the opposite is Ephorus, whose son Demophilus simply completed his work without attempting to continue it.)
2. What is the significance of this decision? Does it imply Thucydides' authority as a model or is it a move toward the constitution of a "cycle"? (Thucydides himself had linked his work to Herodotus when he summarized the events of the *Pentekontaetia* before dealing with the Peloponnesian War).

These questions are difficult to answer: the picture we have of Greek historiography is incomplete; we also run the risk of imposing a new pattern upon this picture, influenced by sketchy reconstructions or

yet also saw it as comprising two distinct wars; the *Pentekontaetia*, which is contained within Book I and is an introduction to the first period of the war, is centered around the opposition between Athens and Sparta.

⁴ On literary genres and their laws, see Rossi (1971).

modern categories of thought. (Indeed, the Greeks initiated this process themselves when they tried to single out models and canons in their own literature.) We can, however, undertake a review of historiographers from the fourth century onward, trying to understand how influential the Thucydidean model was.

Conventionally, we refer to the period following on from the end of the Peloponnesian War as the fourth century. The Greeks already felt that this was a new and different age, one in which the events of the past could be evaluated.⁵ Seen from this perspective, I think that the problem of the “continuation” of Thucydides becomes more meaningful. Fourth-century authors who were inspired by Thucydides already considered his work to be a chapter of Greek history.

Thus they were faced with the choice of either rewriting Greek history from the beginning or starting to write the next chapter (possibly after finishing off the previous one); Ephorus chose the first option when he wrote a universal history, in the sense of a handbook of Greek history where non-Greek nations appear only when they come into contact with the Greeks. The real issue was not only the continuation of Thucydides *per se* (and this perhaps explains why he was used relatively little as a model), but the continuation of his narration of Greek history. From an educational perspective, the Peloponnesian War, and consequently Thucydides’ exemplary treatment of it, was an essential chapter in any general and systematic treatment of Greek history.

2. *How was Thucydides Continued?*

Xenophon’s *Hellenica* are the only extant continuation of Thucydides, and span the events from approximately the end of Thucydides’ narrative down to the battle of Mantinea (362). In spite of the title, which cannot be attributed to Xenophon, it is difficult to say which literary genre this work belongs to. The narration of Greek history is neither complete nor homogenous,⁶ and one might well doubt

⁵ See Musti (1989) 471.

⁶ Sordi (1950/1951) maintains that the *Hellenica* are unitary in thought and that Xenophon was under the influence of Thucydides. See more recently V. Parker (2001) on Xenophon’s omissions, which in some cases compel us to follow Ephorus/Diodorus.

whether Xenophon would have wanted to write a Greek history: the question is what kind of history or literature he composed. More than half a century ago, Gaetano De Sanctis⁷ suggested that Xenophon began to write his memoirs and in this way became a historian. The only reason he was under the influence of Thucydides was that Thucydides had been the first to narrate contemporary history on a grand scale. De Sanctis stresses the difference between Xenophon and Thucydides and considers the continuation (Books I and II) to be a preface whose role was to define where the work should begin. Even more radical is the approach of Grayson,⁸ in which the continuation of Thucydides is defined as “purely formal”;⁹ Grayson maintains that “there is no positive evidence of historical intent behind the work. Its form and subject matter amount only to a superficial indication; there are no explicit statements of intent, or of method; there is no evidence that Xenophon was concerned with a historical approach to causation or motivation”.¹⁰ Grayson stresses “the strong fictional element in an ostensible historical form; the concentration upon Xenophon’s personal interests, upon military stratagem, anecdote, and above all moral judgment; the positive advocacy of a particular way of life and attitude to politics”.¹¹ Nevertheless, the definition of the genre remains uncertain because at the beginning of the fourth century historiography did not yet have clear boundaries.¹² Grayson’s position is weakened by the unitary description of the *Hellenica* as a *paradeigma* centered around the Spartan alternative to the Athenian Empire. Within such a framework Xenophon would have developed other themes, above all Panhellenism and the Peloponnesian way of life.¹³ The unitary description is contradicted by the observation of the gap between the first part (up to 2.3.9) and the rest.¹⁴ Along the

⁷ De Sanctis (1951) 155–57. See also Schepens (1977) 113: “The *Hellenica* are somewhat like a memoir, in which Xenophon has assembled his recollections of events in which he was personally involved and of which he was more or less incidentally informed by others”.

⁸ Grayson (1975).

⁹ Grayson (1975) 33.

¹⁰ Grayson (1975) 37.

¹¹ Grayson (1975) 37f.

¹² Grayson (1975) 38.

¹³ Grayson (1975) 39.

¹⁴ Grayson (1975) 33: the continuation of Thucydides was written in the early 380s (or late 390s), the rest of the work in the 350s.

same lines, Nickel¹⁵ emphasizes the pedagogical-philosophical interest of the work and questions the labeling of it as historiography. Gray¹⁶ suggests that “one description of the content of the *Hellenica* would be the achievements of the Greeks in the period between the point where Thucydides ended to the battle of Mantinea, with special emphasis on moral achievement”. According to Gray,¹⁷ the work is unitary from the points of view of ethical and philosophical purpose and of narrative techniques.

Riedinger¹⁸ identifies various programs in Xenophon’s *Hellenica* (the continuation of Thucydides, Athenian history, Spartan history) that cannot be unified. These programs are principally determined by the author’s experiences. Riedinger further suggests that there are two dimensions to the *Hellenica*, the historical and the personal, which Xenophon attempted to join together. The personal dimension includes paradigmatic, anecdotal, and biographical intent.¹⁹ When Xenophon began his work, he would not have had a clear idea of historiography, a genre which did not have fixed rules at the beginning of the fourth century.²⁰ The lack of historiographical reflection and of distance from the facts he narrates allow us to define the *Hellenica* as “Memoirs”, not of an individual man, but of his times.²¹

Tuplin²² on the other hand believes that the *Hellenica* is a compromise between historiography and pamphleteering, which allowed Xenophon to write “Spartan Memoirs” without treating Athens and Thebes in a historiographically correct fashion. This “quasi-historiographical” form gives the work—with its strong didactic purposes—a certain look of truth. According to Tuplin,²³ the two parts of the

¹⁵ Nickel (1979) 52.

¹⁶ Gray (1989) 180.

¹⁷ Gray (1989) 12 and Gray (1991): Xenophon followed the tradition of historians continuing their predecessors; the continuation of Thucydides is like a proem to the main narration. Xenophon considered Thucydides to be Herodotus’ successor and was inspired by the *Pentekontaetia*. The idea of the continuation as a proem had already been suggested by De Sanctis (1951) 145 and 158. De Sanctis dated books 1–2 after 375, when Xenophon had already written or conceived almost the whole work. Against De Sanctis’ suggestion, see Luschkat (1970) 1268.

¹⁸ Riedinger (1991) 39.

¹⁹ Riedinger (1991) 95f.

²⁰ Riedinger (1991) 96 and 273.

²¹ Riedinger (1991) 275.

²² Tuplin (1993) 167f.

²³ Tuplin (1993) 11.

Hellenica (the boundary is 2.3.10) differ in terms of language and should be considered two different works. The lack of a preface for the second part does not prove that Xenophon intended to write a continuation of Thucydides, since the *Anabasis* also lacks a preface.²⁴ Darbo-Peschanski²⁵ interprets the lack of an ἀρχή in the *Hellenica* as a clear sign: Xenophon would only have written a continuation in order to describe an age of confusion.

Faced with such an array of different positions, and given the lack of historiographical canons and labels of any kind in the fourth century, we might justifiably say that the problem of genre is not a real one. Instead, we should consider Xenophon's literary experiments as a whole (these can be compared with those of Isocrates): the Thucydidean model did not find many followers and was misunderstood by some—either willfully or otherwise. Isocrates speaks about historiography in generic terms: historians were writers who wanted to collect deeds (*Antid.* 45: τὰς πράξεις τὰς ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις συναγαγεῖν ἐβουλήθησαν) or who talked about old facts and the wars of the Greeks (*Panath.* 1: τοὺς τὰς παλαιὰς πράξεις καὶ τοὺς πολέμους τοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς ἐξηγουμένους). Aristotle, *Rh.* 1360a 33ff. speaks of “histories written about facts” (αἱ τῶν περὶ τὰς πράξεις γραφόντων ἱστορίαι), which are useful for those making political decisions and which, along with the περίοδοι γῆς, belong to political treatises and not to rhetoric. To my mind, the stress on πράξεις recalls the Thucydidean selection of political and military matters, but it is important to underline the lack of distinctions and the generic criterion of classification: historiography deals with πράξεις, especially with wars. What is characteristic of historiography is its subject matter, not a particular research method. In this light it is not meaningful to distinguish between continuous history and monograph, or history and memoirs, or history and pamphlet.

We encounter the same problems in trying to characterize the non-historiographical works of Xenophon: he carried out various literary experiments at a time when a new literary system was emerging and some writers, especially Isocrates, were becoming aware of this.

Xenophon did not distinguish between historiographical genres: in his view the *Anabasis* may be compared with the *Hellenica*, if one pays attention to the content. The *Anabasis* displays some characteristics

²⁴ Tuplin (1993) 36.

²⁵ Darbo-Peschanski (1995) 23f.

of what we call memoirs, but to a certain extent so do the *Hellenica*. Both works are historiography in the basic sense of narration of facts.

As a confirmation of this statement, I cite the reference to the *Anabasis* in *Hellenica* 3.1.1f.: Xenophon has finished narrating the civil war at Athens (ἡ μὲν δὴ Ἀθήνησι στάσις οὕτως ἐτελεύτησεν) and is making a new narrative start marked by ἐκ δὲ τούτου. He then begins the history of Kyros and his call to the Spartans for help. But Xenophon narrates neither the battle between Kyros and his brother, nor the former's death, nor the famous march of the Greek soldiers through the Persian empire. This is a kind of praeterition with the reference to the *Anabasis*: ὥς μὲν οὖν Κῦρος στρατεύμα τε συνέλεξε καὶ τοῦτ' ἔχων ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὸν ἀδελφόν, καὶ ὥς ἡ μάχη ἐγένετο, καὶ ὥς ἀπέθανε, καὶ ὥς ἐκ τούτου ἀπεσώθησαν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐπὶ θάλατταν, Θεμιστογένει τῷ Συρακοσίῳ γέγραπται.—“As to how Kyros collected an army and with this army made the march up country against his brother, how the battle was fought, how Kyros was slain, and how after that the Greeks effected their return in safety to the sea—all this has been written by Themistogenes the Syracusan” (transl. C.L. Brownson).

This passage provides another interesting hint, implied in the succession of events as Xenophon narrates them: first we have the end of the civil war at Athens, then the history of Kyros and lastly the actions of Tissaphernes and the Spartan reaction led by Thibron. But between the end of the civil war and the dispatch of Kyros' messengers to Sparta there is a gap of a year and a half—too long for any historiographical writing that claims to cover a given period adequately (even if not as a chronicle).

It is possible to infer Xenophon's selection criteria from passages in which he clarifies his historiographical method. At 2.3.56, after quoting two famous aphorisms of Theramenes on the occasion of his capital sentence, Xenophon says: καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἄγνοω, ὅτι ταῦτα ἀποφθέγματα οὐκ ἀξιόλογα, ἐκεῖνο δὲ κρίνω τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀγαστόν, τὸ τοῦ θανάτου παρεστηκότος μήτε τὸ φρόνιμον μήτε τὸ παιγνιώδες ἀπολιπεῖν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς.—“I am not unaware of this, that these are not sayings worthy of record; still, I deem it admirable in the man that when death was close at hand, neither self-possession nor the spirit of playfulness departed from his soul” (transl. C.L. Brownson).

Xenophon admits that such ἀποφθέγματα are not ἀξιόλογα, but at the same time decides to insert such sentences into his work because of his admiration for Theramenes' nature. Here, then, human and

psychological interest prevail over the main criterion of selecting ἀξιόλογα.²⁶

After describing the armies in the battlefield of Coronea, Xenophon explains why he is going to treat the battle in detail (4.3.16): διηγέσομαι δὲ καὶ τὴν μάχην, καὶ πῶς ἐγένετο οἷα οὐκ ἄλλη τῶν γ' ἐφ' ἡμῶν—“and I will also describe the battle, and how it proved to be like no other battle of our time”.

A general selection criterion is greatness, which comes from epic poetry and is explicit in Herodotus (see the ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά in the proem) and Thucydides (in the proem: 1.1; 1.23 and *passim*). We find this criterion in *HG* 4.8.1: ἐν ᾧ δὲ πάντα ταῦτα ἐπράττετο, τὰ κατὰ θάλατταν αὖ καὶ τὰς πρὸς θαλάττῃ πόλεις γερόμενα διηγέσομαι, καὶ τῶν πράξεων τὰς μὲν ἀξιομνημονεύτους γράψω, τὰς δὲ μὴ ἀξίας λόγου παρήσω.—“I will now recount what happened by sea and in the cities on the coast while all these things were going on, and will describe such of the events as are worthy of record, while those which do not deserve mention I will pass over” (transl. C.L. Brownson).

I must underline here the identification between “worthy of record” and “worth telling”: the historian must treat, and therefore hand down to posterity, what is ἄξιον. This same criterion is applied at the beginning of Book 5 in order to justify an exception (5.1.4):

γινώσκω μὲν οὖν ὅτι ἐν τούτοις οὔτε δαπάνημα οὔτε κίνδυνον οὔτε μηχανήματα ἀξιόλογον οὐδὲν διηγούμεαι· ἀλλὰ ναὶ μὰ Δία τόδε ἄξιόν μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἀνδρὶ ἐννοεῖν, τί ποτε ποιῶν ὁ Τελευτίας οὕτω διέθηκε τοὺς ἀρχομένους. τοῦτο γὰρ ἤδη πολλῶν καὶ χρημάτων καὶ κινδύνων ἀξιολογώτατον ἀνδρὸς ἔργον ἐστίν.

Now I am aware that I am not describing in these incidents any enterprise involving money expended or danger incurred or any memorable stratagem; and yet, by Zeus, it seems to me that it is well worth a man's while to consider what sort of conduct it was that enabled Teleutias to inspire the men he commanded with such a feeling toward himself. For to attain to this is indeed the achievement of a true man, more noteworthy than the expenditure of much money and the encountering of many dangers (transl. C.L. Brownson).

A further selection criterion is exemplar value. At 5.4.1 this criterion is applied to an ethical and religious rule: πολλὰ μὲν οὖν ἂν τις ἔχοι

²⁶ See Canfora (1972) 71–86.

καὶ ἄλλα λέγειν καὶ Ἑλληνικὰ καὶ βαρβαρικά, ὥς θεοὶ οὔτε τῶν ἀσεβούντων οὔτε τῶν ἀνόσια ποιούντων ἀμελοῦσι· νῦν γε μὴν λέξω τὰ προκείμενα.—“Now one could mention many other incidents, both among Greeks and barbarians, to prove that the gods do not fail to take heed of the wicked or of those who do unrighteous things; but at present I will speak of the case which is before me” (transl. C.L. Brownson). This theme is alien to Thucydidean historiography: it seems rather to be a link with Herodotus and tragedy.

Xenophon’s opinion of Iphicrates’ ability in training troops during sailing (6.2.32) is introduced by a sort of *excusatio*: he is aware that exercises and maneuvers are usual when preparing for a sea battle, but wants to pinpoint Iphicrates’ peculiar ability in keeping the soldiers ready for battle.

οἶδα μὲν οὖν ὅτι ταῦτα πάντα, ὅταν οἴωνται ναυμαχῆσιν ἄνθρωποι, καὶ ἀσκεῖται καὶ μελετᾶται· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἐπαινῶ, ὅτι ἐπεὶ ἀφικέσθαι ταχὺ ἔδει ἔνθα τοῖς πολεμίοις ναυμαχῆσιν ὤρετο, ἤυρετο † ὅπως μῆτε διὰ τὸν πλοῦν ἀνεπιστήμονας εἶναι τῶν εἰς ναυμαχίαν μῆτε διὰ τὸ ταῦτα μελετᾶν βραδύτερον τι ἀφικέσθαι.

Now I am aware that all these matters of practice and training are customary whenever men expect to engage in a battle by sea, but that which I commend in Iphicrates is that, that when it was incumbent upon him to arrive speedily at the place where he supposed he should fight with the enemy, he discovered a way to keep his men from being either, by reason of the voyage they had made, unskilled in the tactics of fighting at sea, or, by reason of their having been trained in such tactics, any the more tardy in arriving at their destination (transl. C.L. Brownson).

Another praise of Iphicrates (ἐγὼ μὲν δὴ ταύτην τὴν στρατηγίαν τῶν Ἰφικράτους οὐχ ἥκιστα ἐπαινῶ κτλ.—“Now for my part I not only commend this campaign in particular among all the campaigns of Iphicrates, etc.”) because he wanted Chabrias and Kallistratos as commanders together with him (6.2.39) calls into question the place of praise and blame in historiography. In this case Xenophon selects an exemplar story, which is frankly praised. See also the judgment on Epameinondas in 7.5.8. We find the exemplar value of actions as a selection criterion again in 7.2.1, where there is a possible allusion to Hdt. 1.5.3 f.: ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῶν μὲν μεγάλων πόλεων, εἴ τι καλὸν ἔπραξαν, ἅπαντες οἱ συγγραφεῖς μέμνηνται· ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ, καὶ εἴ τις μικρὰ πόλις οὖσα πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἔργα διαπέπρακται, ἔτι μᾶλλον ἄξιον εἶναι ἀποφαίνειν—“for while all the historians make mention

of the large states if they had performed any noble achievement, it seems to me that if a state which is small has accomplished many noble deeds, it is even more fitting to set them forth" (transl. C.L. Brownson).

Herodotus says that we should treat great and small towns in the same way because the formerly great ones became small and *vice versa*. Xenophon states that it is right to mention not only the deeds of great towns, but also the *πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἔργα* of small ones. Here the selection criterion is an ethical one. And at the end of the story the deeds of the Phliasians are deemed noble and courageous (7.2.16): *καλὸν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο διεπράξαντο οἱ Φλειάσιοι· τὸν γὰρ Πελληνέα πρόξενον ζῶντα λαβόντες, καίπερ πάντων σπανιζόμενοι, ἀφῆκαν ἄνευ λύτρων. γενναίους μὲν δὴ καὶ ἀλκίμους πῶς οὐκ ἂν τις φαίη εἶναι τοὺς τοιαῦτα διαπραττομένους;*—"Another noble deed which the Phleisians performed was this: when they had captured a proxenus of the Pellenean, even though they were in want of everything, they let him go without a ransom. How could one help saying that men who performed such deeds were noble and valiant?" (transl. C.L. Brownson, with adaptations).

Finally the choice to end the work with the battle of Mantinea is coherent with the selection criterion adopted by Xenophon. At 7.5.12 it is god (τὸ θεῖον) who is held responsible. But he specifies that nothing can stand up to men overcome by despair. The last chapters (7.5.26f.) are a real conclusion.

Τούτων δὲ πραχθέντων τοῦναντίον ἐγγένητο οὐκ ἐνόμισαν πάντες ἄνθρωποι ἔσεσθαι. συνελλυθῆναι γὰρ σχεδὸν ἀπάσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ ἀντιτεταγμένων, οὐδεὶς ἦν ὅστις οὐκ ᾔετο, εἰ μάχη ἔσοιτο, τοὺς μὲν κρατήσαντας ἄρξιν, τοὺς δὲ κρατηθέντας ὑπηκόους ἔσεσθαι· ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὕτως ἐποίησεν ὥστε ἀμφοτέρω μὲν τροπαῖον ὡς νενικηκότεες ἐστήσαντο, τοὺς δὲ ἱσταμένους οὐδέτεροι ἐκάλουν, νεκροὺς δὲ ἀμφοτέρω μὲν ὡς νενικηκότεες ὑποσπόνδους ἀπέδοσαν, ἀμφοτέρω δὲ ὡς ἡττημένοι ὑποσπόνδους ἀπελάμβανον, νενικηκέναι δὲ φάσκοντες ἕκαστοι οὔτε χώρα οὔτε πόλει οὔτ' ἀρχῇ οὐδέτεροι οὐδὲν πλέον ἔχοντες ἐφάνησαν ἢ πρὶν τὴν μάχην γενέσθαι· ἀκρισία δὲ καὶ ταραχὴ ἔτι πλείων μετὰ τὴν μάχην ἐγένετο ἢ πρόσθεν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι. ἐμοὶ μὲν δὴ μέχρι τούτου γραφέσθω· τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἴσως ἄλλω μελήσει.

When these things had taken place, the opposite of what all men believed would happen was brought to pass. For since well-nigh all the people of Greece had come together and formed themselves in opposing lines, there was no one who did not suppose that if a battle were fought, those who proved victorious would be the rulers and those who were defeated would be their subjects; but the deity so

ordered it that both parties set up a trophy as though victorious, and neither tried to hinder those who set them up, that both gave back the dead under a truce as though victorious, and both received back their dead under a truce as though defeated, and that while each party claimed to be victorious, neither was found to be any better off, as regards either additional territory, or city, or sway, than before the battle took place; but there was even more confusion and disorder in Greece after the battle than before. Thus far be it written by me; the events after these will perhaps be the concern of another (transl. C.L. Brownson).

In the conclusion it is emphasized that god has overturned all expectations: the historian first deals with what is *παράδοξον*, according to a standard that is common in Hellenistic historiography, including Polybius' work. The contending armies have gained both victory and defeat: the hegemony of their towns has not increased, yet there is more *ἀκρίσία* and *ταραχή*. In the brilliant words of Domenico Musti,²⁷ Xenophon's great historical achievement is that "in Greece there was no longer any place for the hegemony of a single *polis*". Memorable in this regard are the *καλὰ ἔργα*, which are taken as ethical examples (the deeds of the Phliasians) or as political and military examples (the ability of Iphicrates). In this way Xenophon returns in new forms to the *κλέα ἀνδρῶν* of which Homer had sung.

The *Hellenica* lack a proem,²⁸ but they do have an end, leaving the way open for a continuation (*τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἕως ἄλλω μελήσει*): the cyclical continuation is openly suggested.

The supposed problem of the work's unity also needs to be put in perspective. In fourth-century Greece, "unity" simply was not an issue, at least not in the modern sense of the concept.²⁹ It only makes sense to talk about unity with reference to single performances of a work, to standard social features (ethical and political values, for example) or to stylistic features; it does not make sense to think in terms of publishing "projects", especially when we do not know how large prose works were published and circulated.

²⁷ Musti (1989) 560.

²⁸ Hornblower (1995b) 50 notes that Xenophon continues Thucydides without a methodological introduction and at the same time "does not *quite* continue him": the short gap is "a mild distancing device".

²⁹ On different ideas about the unity of literary works in ancient and modern times, see Rossi (2000). Cf. Dillery (1995) 11 on the lack of a main theme in Xenophon's *Hellenica*.

A totally different approach attempts to reconstruct the biographies of Thucydides and Xenophon and the fortunes of their works, from composition to publication, down to the manuscript tradition. In short, this is a critical revival of the nineteenth-century Thucydidean question. According to Canfora,³⁰ Thucydides' second preface (5.26) was the work of Xenophon, and Xenophon published Thucydides' work, using Thucydidean material to write the continuation. In the latter, according to this hypothesis, Xenophon was influenced by Thucydides and consequently a great effort has been made to underline the differences between these chapters and the rest of the *Hellenica*. A concise picture of the peculiar features of the continuation is given by Underhill.³¹ Xenophon arranges the work by campaigning seasons, an arrangement he later abandons; he does not introduce his own comments; he does not speak about sacrifices before the battles, as he does in the following books; he is more precise in supplying numbers of soldiers, ships and dead; his Attic dialect is purer and similar to that employed in *Cynegeticus*.

Against this hypothesis it has been argued that, if we leave aside the arrangement by seasons, which we also find (albeit not methodically) in the subsequent books, Xenophon is totally different from Thucydides³² and that the stylistic differences between the continuation and the rest of the work are not as great as they initially appear to be.³³ According to this position, some scholars doubt whether Xenophon intended to continue Thucydides' work or do so dutifully.³⁴ If the *Hellenica* are a completely different way of writing history,³⁵ their lack of accuracy, their omissions and their deliberate distortions need to be studied independently of the Thucydidean model and clarified within the literary strategy of the writer.³⁶

Biographical problems need to be put to one side, since attempts to reconstruct the authors' biographies invariably encounter obstacles that are difficult to overcome. One example will suffice: the refer-

³⁰ Canfora (1970a); (1970b); (1977a); (1996) XLIV–LIX; this vol.

³¹ Underhill (1900) xviif.

³² Gray (1989) 182.

³³ Andrewes, *HCT* 5.437–44; Gray (1989) 182.

³⁴ Higgins (1977) 102 remarks that both the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* and Theopompus began where Thucydides left off, but no historian finished his work at the end of the Peloponnesian War. See Dillery (1995) 9. W.P. Henry (1967) 14–54 maintains that Xenophon did not want to continue Thucydides.

³⁵ See Gray (1989) 2, quoted below, p. 709.

³⁶ An attempt is made by Lévy (1990).

ence to Thucydides' strategy at Amphipolis in 5.26 is deleted by Canfora, who is prepared to emend the text or adopt a *varia lectio*.³⁷ However, it is not possible to prove the existence of the two hypothesized lacunas, one at the beginning of the *Hellenica* and one at the end of Thucydides.³⁸ The use of Thucydidean material for the continuation is likewise very difficult to demonstrate.³⁹ The information supplied by Diogenes Laertius, 2.57 ("there is a tradition that he made Thucydides famous by publishing his history, which was unknown, and which he might have appropriated to his own use" transl. R.D. Hicks), the only source that connects Thucydides with Xenophon concerns the publishing efforts of the latter and is important as evidence for the tradition of the Thucydidean text in antiquity.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, one cannot exclude the possibility that the information may have been inspired by the Xenophontean continuation of Thucydides (Xen. *HG* 1.1.1 μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα) and the circulation of Thucydides together with the *Paraleipomena* of Xenophon: there are a good many examples of biographical details originating from the desire to connect two great writers.

If what Diogenes says about the publishing activity of Xenophon is reliable, we would expect to find traces of this activity. Ragone⁴¹ has suggested that, putting the Thucydidean material in order, Xenophon may have decided to conclude with a sort of editor's σφραγίς: the reference to Tissaphernes' sacrifice to the Ephesian Artemis.

In my opinion, the real and important contribution of this line of research is the accurate study of a very difficult issue, i.e., the ways

³⁷ Canfora (1970a) 123–26 and 144–46: μετὰ τὴν ἐς Ἀμφίπολιν στρατηγίαν, where στρατηγία is Xenophon's command during the march of the Ten Thousand; Canfora (1977a) 20–22: μετὰ τὴν ἐς τὴν ἄνω πόλιν στρατηγίαν, where ἄνω πόλις is Babylon and στρατηγία is Kyros' expedition; Canfora (1996) XLVII–LIII: μετὰ τὴν ἀμφὶ πόλιν στρατηγίαν (Athos, Lavra H 99), meaning the Athenian civil war of 404/03.

³⁸ Against a lacuna at the beginning of *Hellenica* Book I, see MacLaren (1979), with bibliography. For the hypothesis of a lacuna at the end of Thucydides' Book VIII see Underhill (1900) xvii. Krentz (1989) 15 suggests that Xenophon may have known approximately where Thucydides broke off without having read Thucydides himself.

³⁹ Underhill (1900) xxiv. On the collaboration of Thucydides and Xenophon, see Delebecque (1957) 53; Canfora (1983).

⁴⁰ W.P. Henry (1967) 54–88 and Anderson (1974) 61 consider the testimony of D.L. 2.57 to be unreliable. Dillery (1995) 9–11 is more prudent; *contra* Canfora (1970b).

⁴¹ Ragone (1996).

in which texts were published and circulated in antiquity, questioning old and deep-rooted ideas for which there is no strong evidence.

In conclusion, however, there is no doubt that Xenophon intended to continue Thucydides: he wrote a totally different historiographical work, but the starting point is the end of Thucydides.

Theopompus of Chios narrates Greek history up to 394 (battle of Cnidos: so D.S. 13.42.5 = T 13 and 14.84.7 = T 14) and competes with earlier historians. Jacoby⁴² suggested a reconstruction of his work that is generally accepted: to realize his plan for a universal history, Theopompus wrote the *Epitome* of Herodotus' work and then the *Hellenica* and the *Philippica*. According to Flower,⁴³ on the other hand, Theopompus' project was to center on specific periods (*Philippica*: 359–336) with some long digressions. Unfortunately, we are not in possession of Theopompus' work, and moreover have little knowledge about ancient modes of publication. The plan suggested by Jacoby assumes that the ancient library system was not much different from our own: books arranged one next to the other on the bookshelf. Flower's assumption fits better with the idea of Theopompus as successor to and competitor with Thucydides' monograph: Theopompus too inserted some digressions that were probably not very different from Thucydides' *Pentekontaetia*.

One of the crucial aspects of Jacoby's theory concerns the *Epitome* of Herodotus' work: according to Christ,⁴⁴ the *Epitome*—only a few fragments have survived—was a chapter of the *Philippica*, first thought of as a separate work in the imperial age. There is no internal evidence for Christ's hypothesis; it is based on the *argumentum ex silentio* (the most striking silence is that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus) as well as on the unlikelihood of such a work having been written in the age of Theopompus, and by an author who was inclined to extended rather than short narration. According to Christ, Theopompus used Herodotean material to write a chapter on Persian history and competed with Herodotus, trying to demonstrate his own superiority;

⁴² *FGrHist*, IIB, Kommentar, 354; cf. Bruce (1970) 90: when Theopompus decided to write history, he intended to write a universal history; then he changed his mind; 92: Theopompus left out ancient myths and began epitomizing Herodotus; he thus avoided comparison with Thucydides, and the *Epitome* remained an independent work. See Christ (1993) 52 n. 25 on the composition of the *Epitome* (either juvenile work or mature work, written after the *Hellenica* and before the *Philippica*).

⁴³ Flower (1994) 154–56.

⁴⁴ Christ (1993).

see F 25 from Photius (cod. 176): “speaking about himself, he shows that the best writers of former times are by far worse than the second-class writers of his own times and that this is clear from the works they have composed and left: literary culture has greatly progressed in his own times”. The comparison Theopompus suggests is not limited to historians; it concerns the whole field of literature and style. As further evidence we can quote F 381 (Str. 1.2.35), where Theopompus, in opposition to other historians, states that he inserts *mythoi* into his work and that he is able to narrate them better than Herodotus, Ctesias, Hellanicus and the authors of *Indica*.⁴⁵

Christ’s hypothesis is plausible and compels us to face the problem of the separate publication of books or chapters of great historical works; this kind of publication is well attested for Herodotus’ work, of which single λόγοι were published orally. A further problem is the unity of such works. If Christ’s hypothesis were borne out, the idea of Theopompus as a Herodotean historian would be strengthened, because of the wide range of his themes and the structure of his work.⁴⁶ According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Pomp.* 6 = T 20),⁴⁷ Theopompus’ interests included migrations, foundations, the lives of kings, psychology and θαύματα. Moreover, Theopompus is criticized by Dionysius, Theon (*Prog.* 4 = T 30) and Photius (*Bibl.* 176 = T 31) for his excessive use of παρεκβάσεις.

Yet another problem concerns the beginning of Theopompus’ narration: according to Shrimpton,⁴⁸ certain fragments suggest that Theopompus would have begun from 412 BC, a period which is narrated by Thucydides. However, I do not think that a few references to earlier events constitute evidence that Theopompus did not begin where Thucydides left off. Ancient sources (T 13 and 14 quoted above; Plb. 8.13.3 = T 19; Marcell. *Vit. Thuc.* 45 = T 15) agree on the fact that Theopompus continued Thucydides. It is not possible to know how the edition of Thucydides Theopompus used was arranged. From D.S. 14.84.7 = T 14 we know precisely where Theopompus started: the battle of Kynossema.

⁴⁵ According to Jacoby, *ad loc.* this fragment perhaps refers above all to the story of Silenus (F 74 f.); see Biraschi (1996).

⁴⁶ According to Bruce (1970) 108, Theopompus is the heir to most of the historiographical genres (mythography, ancient history, geography, ethnography), and his work is to some extent universal history, comparable with that of Ephorus.

⁴⁷ See Fornaro (1997) 248ff.: Dionysius implicitly draws attention to the comparison between Theopompus and Thucydides.

⁴⁸ Shrimpton (1991) 37f.

Theopompus is the last of Thucydides' successors: his work is based on a critical analysis of Thucydides and of the historical works written in the first half of the fourth century.⁴⁹ In terms of interests and structure, though, he is closer to Herodotus.

Cratippus is a mystery in the history of Greek literature, or, some believe, just a ghost: lately Canfora⁵⁰ supports the old hypothesis of Müller and van Leutsch according to which Cratippus was a pseudonym used by Xenophon, who also wrote the *Anabasis* under a false name. This hypothesis attempts to explain the appearance of Cratippus in Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch after the discovery of the ancient manuscripts of Thucydides preserved in the library of Apellicon of Teos. From the summary of Plutarch (*De glor. Ath.* 1, 345d) we know that Cratippus' work covered at least the period from 411 to 393 BC.⁵¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus says that he criticized Thucydides. As usual in ancient historiography, criticism presupposes comparison with the predecessor, whose work has been used and whom one claims to surpass: Thucydides was therefore the model (or one of the models) for this historian.

The author of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* continued Thucydides to at least 394.⁵² The main question was, and still is, his identity: scholars have suggested Theopompus, Cratippus, Daimachus of Plataea, Ephorus, or Androton, yet it is possible that this author cannot be identified with any known fourth-century historian.⁵³ Recent studies have thrown up new clues, identifying the Oxyrhynchus historian with Cratippus⁵⁴ and Theopompus,⁵⁵ while excluding Daimachus.⁵⁶ Less attention has been devoted to the historiographical method and

⁴⁹ If the chronology of Momigliano (1935) is correct, Theopompus finished *Hellenica* before 343 and used the published books (I–XVIII or XIX) of Ephorus' history.

⁵⁰ Canfora (1990); *contra* Schepens (1993) 175 n. 20.

⁵¹ Schepens (1993) 179–81.

⁵² Bianchetti (1992) advances arguments for composition before 374/73. Schepens (1993) 184 suggests the year 372 as *terminus ante quem*.

⁵³ Bloch (1940) 344: according to D.H. *Th.* 9, arrangement by campaigning seasons was no longer in use after Thucydides; on these grounds, the Oxyrhynchus historian cannot be identified with Ephorus and Theopompus, authors who were well known to Dionysius, or with Cratippus, who is quoted below (312f); see also Hornblower (1995b) 51. Breitenbach (1970) 423 suggests Cratippus, or that otherwise the Oxyrhynchus historian cannot be identified with any of the historians we know of.

⁵⁴ Schepens (1993) 175–82; 195f.; Schepens (2001), with full bibliography.

⁵⁵ Canfora (1990); Rebuffat (1993); Sordi (2001).

⁵⁶ Dognini (2000).

literary form of the work. The Oxyrhynchus historian has been classed as “Thucydidean” on account of the arrangement of the work by seasons and because of his selection and treatment of topics.⁵⁷ A number of scholars have also noted his aristocratic attitude where Athenian politics is concerned.⁵⁸ Another trend has been to search for traces of this historian in later authors; some have been found in Diodorus and Polyaeus, authors who would have known the Oxyrhynchus historian through Ephorus. Xenophon did not make use of him.⁵⁹

Thucydides was continued by non-Thucydidean historians. Vivienne Gray⁶⁰ has pointed out that “continuations are not obliged to be imitations of what they continue” and that we must not expect Thucydides’ successors to imitate his historiographical method. Choices in the structure of works or separate convergences in method cannot be taken as proof that his successors’ purposes were the same as his own. The point is to explain differences, not to draw a genealogical tree, searching as it were for Thucydides’ DNA in subsequent historians. In most cases, Thucydides’ successors are not Thucydidean in method, purpose or narrative choices. Xenophon, whose work is to a certain extent closer to Thucydides’ in the so-called ‘continuation’, becomes increasingly autonomous after finishing the history of the Peloponnesian War. At least one of Thucydides’ successors (Cratippus?) openly criticizes him. Although the loss of their works means that we cannot verify this, I am almost certain that some successors of Thucydides have criticized their predecessor, according to a custom we can find in every ancient historian. However, the continuations of Thucydides are always included in historical works that extend beyond Thucydides’ original plan.

It is evident from the work of Xenophon that events, together with different ideologies and different feelings, gave rise to historiographical choices that differed from those of Thucydides: we need to remember that historiography originates from history and that the former is a function of the latter. The great revolutions in ancient historiography resulted from the shock caused by great events: the Persian Wars for Herodotus, the Peloponnesian War for Thucydides,

⁵⁷ Schepens (1993) 183.

⁵⁸ Schepens (1993) *ibid.*; see Schepens (2001) for the Athenian point of view.

⁵⁹ For a synthesis, see Breitenbach (1979) 423.

⁶⁰ Gray (1989) 2.

the crisis of Spartan hegemony for Xenophon. The relative neglect of Thucydides was a result of his subject matter, perceived as “a long and destructive, but actually not recurrent inter-Greek war”.⁶¹

3. *Other non-Thucydidean Fourth-Century Historians*

Fourth-century historians did not look upon Thucydides as the sole or main model of historical writing: they differed in terms of structure, selection of topics, and interests. Many knew Thucydides’ work, and some continued it, as we have seen. Others devoted themselves to universal history or regional history, especially of the West. The Macedonian hegemony altered the historical situation, and only after Alexander’s death were long wars waged to control the Macedonian empire. With these wars the Thucydidean model returned through Hieronymus of Cardia. What follows is a synthetic sketch of other important fourth-century historians in relation to their fifth-century predecessors.

Ctesias harshly criticizes Herodotus and is quite different from Thucydides in his selection of subject matter. His historical work, *Persica* in 23 books, begins with Ninos and Semiramis (D.S. 14.46.6 = *FGHist* 688 T 9) and ends with Artaxerxes II: the starting point is the history of the Assyrian kingdom,⁶² continuing with the history of the kingdoms of the same area, Medians and Persians. It is very difficult to say anything about structure: in the Hellenistic age it is possible that Books 1–6 circulated separately (*Assyriaca* distinguished from *Persica* by Str. 14.2.5), but we cannot say whether Ctesias had two distinct works in mind.⁶³ Perhaps this was not actually an issue for him.

Henry’s⁶⁴ definition of Ctesias as the “unintentional father of the historical novel” is no more acceptable. Recent advances in research on the ancient oriental world have shown Ctesias to be more reliable.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Hornblower (1995b) 66; on this relative neglect, see p. 49: Hornblower corrects Gomme’s statement about the “nearly complete silence about Thucydides” before the first century BC (*HCT* 3.523).

⁶² Concerning the list of Assyrian kings, see Boncquet (1990).

⁶³ König (1972) 28.

⁶⁴ R. Henry (1947) 7; see also Auberger (1995a), who underlines the difference between Ctesias, Herodotus, and Thucydides (see esp. 351); cf. Auberger (1995b), on the romantic elements in Ctesias.

⁶⁵ See above all König (1972), esp. 33 about Persian βασιλικαὶ διφθέραι (D.S.

He narrates what he has heard, and demands to be believed because of the time he spent at the Persian court.⁶⁶

Photius' summaries of *Persica* and *Indica* (*Bibl.* 72) begin with the statement that Ctesias' history is almost the opposite of Herodotus' (σχεδὸν ἐν ἅπασιν ἀντικείμενα Ἡροδότῳ ἱστορῶν). What follows derives from a proem or a historiographical excursus, where Ctesias criticizes his predecessor. Ctesias defines Herodotus as ψεύστην . . . ἐν πολλοῖς and calls him λογοποιόν, then says that he was an eyewitness to most of the facts he narrates and that he himself heard what he could not see. At the end of the summary of *Indica*, Photius again tells us about the origin of Ctesias' information and adds the claim of τάληθέστατα γράφειν and a kind of praeterition: πολλὰ δὲ τούτων καὶ ἄλλα θαυμασιώτερα παραλιπεῖν διὰ τὸ μὴ δόξαι τοῖς μὴ τεθεαμένοις ἄπιστα συγγράφειν—"that he has omitted many far more marvelous things, for fear that those who had not seen them might think that his account was utterly untrustworthy" (transl. J.H. Freese).

Anaximenes' *Hellenica* begin with myths and continue as far as the battle of Mantinea; he then devotes two works to Philippos and to Alexander the Great. Like Ephorus, Anaximenes did not intend to continue previous historians. The most complete description of Anaximenes' *Hellenica* is in D.S. 15.89.3 (*FGrHist* 72 T 14): the work was in twelve books and began "with the birth of the gods and the first generation of men", ending with the battle of Mantinea and the death of Epameinondas. The work covered "practically all the doings of the Greeks and non-Greeks".

Callisthenes' *Hellenica* cover the period from the Peace of Antalcidas (386) down to 356 (the beginning of the Third Sacred War); he writes a monograph about the Sacred War and a work about the deeds of Alexander. Jacoby⁶⁷ dated the Ἀλεξάνδρου πράξεις after the *Hellenica*; he considered suggestions about the date of the monograph on the Sacred War to be hypothetical. Ancient biographers were mainly interested in Callisthenes' life and relations with Alexander,

2.32); see also Karttunen (1997). According to Lenfant (1995), Ctesias was influenced in his selection of material by his taste for the exotic and marvelous when writing the *Indica*, and his work is important for our understanding of how the categories used to describe the far East originated in Greece. Lenfant (1996) says that Ctesias' *Persica* drew on different local traditions from those found in Herodotus.

⁶⁶ Eck (1990) attempts to write the life of Ctesias with the uncertain information that exists. Dorati (1995) casts doubt on this biography, suggesting that Ctesias may have invented an autobiography in order to appear more reliable to his readers.

⁶⁷ *Kommentar* IID, 415f.; see Prandi (1985) 35.

a classic example of the uneasy relationship between men of letters and political power, which allowed them to investigate the theme of adulation. Callisthenes does not connect his work with any previous historian. We do not know whether the monograph on the Sacred War (Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.2)⁶⁸ was published as a separate work or was a chapter of the *Hellenica* that only later circulated separately.⁶⁹ This question is important in terms of defining the *Hellenica* and their relationship with the monographic form of Thucydides. According to Diodorus, 14.117.8 (cf. 16.14.4 = *FGrHist* 124 F 27), Callisthenes began “with the peace of this year between the Greeks and Artaxerxes” and “his account embraced a period of thirty years in ten books and he closed the last book of his history with the seizure of the temple of Delphi by Philomelos the Phocian” (transl. C.H. Oldfather).

What was the relationship between the *Hellenica* and the rest of Callisthenes’ works as far as aural and written publication were concerned? Our concept of the unitary and autonomous work depends on a publishing system that was still developing in the fourth century and would retain roughly the same features until the invention of printing. Callisthenes (and other historians of his time) would probably have found it natural to deal with contiguous historical ages without paying attention to the connection between them. In the fourth century, there were few literary models available: on the one hand there was epic poetry, with the great editions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (the “great poem”, in Gilbert Murray’s terms)⁷⁰ in the framework of a cycle; on the other hand, there were the works of previous historians. As far as Herodotus and Thucydides are concerned, we cannot say how their works circulated in the fourth century. Even more uncertain is the status of the lost works of Hellanicus and Damastes: we know of a large number of titles, but these may refer to books or to chapters of major works. Callisthenes wrote his *Hellenica* without a unitary subject because the period 386–356 was an age of confusion.

The only fragment of the history of the Sacred War (*FGrHist* 124 F 1) where Callisthenes discusses the causes of the First Sacred War is extremely interesting. According to a plausible suggestion by Luisa

⁶⁸ Nicolai (1992) 164–76.

⁶⁹ Prandi (1985) 70: the Third Sacred War was initially the last section of the *Hellenica*; later it was detached and became a monograph.

⁷⁰ G. Murray (1907), especially 209ff.

Prandi,⁷¹ the Third Sacred War was compared with the First, and with the Trojan War, and all these wars were thought of as having been caused by a woman. But it is possible to go somewhat further: the theme of the raped woman, which we find again in Duris (76 F 2 *apud* Ath. 560b), is the typical cause of war in epic poetry and also in Herodotus' first Book: this is a sign of continuity.

A connection with Thucydides' theory of speeches (1.22.1) has been found at 124 F 44 (δεῖ τὸν γράφειν τι πειρώμενον μὴ ἀστοχεῖν τοῦ προσώπου, ἀλλ' οἰκειῶς αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι τοὺς λόγους θεῖναι—"he who is trying to write something good has to capture the personality and to compose speeches which are appropriate to him and to the situation").⁷² Callisthenes changes Thucydides' sentence in order to underline the principle of *πρέπον* and give more importance to the orators and their characters.

Ephorus wrote a universal history that he organized κατὰ γένος.⁷³ he did not want to be a chapter of what has been called the "ciclo storico". His history begins with the return of the Herakleidai, but there are many digressions about even earlier times. Two recent studies define T 8 as the statement of a break between myth and the *spatium historicum* and consider Ephorus the heir to the method employed by Thucydides in the *Archaeology*; moreover, it has been pointed out that in F 70 Ephorus states that it is difficult to narrate τὰ παλαιά because of the time that has elapsed, and that it is preferable to avoid going into unverifiable detail about ancient times.⁷⁴ Ephorus' interest in foundations and συγγένειαι are not sufficient to prove the Thucydidean character of his work.⁷⁵ Herodotus and local historians had already taken an interest in ancient history and its connections with the present. What really distinguishes Ephorus from Thucydides' *Archaeology* is his purpose: Thucydides aims to demonstrate the major importance of the Peloponnesian War and at the same time to show that it is impossible to write reliable history about ancient times. Ephorus, on the contrary, wants to write the history

⁷¹ Prandi (1985) 66–68.

⁷² Hornblower (1995b) 54, with bibliography.

⁷³ See Vannicelli (1987).

⁷⁴ Vattuone (1998); Parmeggiani (1999); for a different view, see Canfora (1991) 7; Sunseri (1997) 157.

⁷⁵ Canfora (1977b) draws attention to the fact that Ephorus does not agree with Thucydides on the conquest of Eion and Scirus (Th. 1.98.1–4; D.S. 11.60.1f.).

of ancient times, and does so going as far back as the time of the return of the Heraclids. Ephorus' deviations from Thucydides' methodology are well explained by Schepens: 1. contemporary history in Ephorus is part of a more extensive work; 2. Ephorus treats events over a larger geographical area than Thucydides does; and 3. the political life of the Greek world in the fourth century is more complex than it was in the age of the Peloponnesian War.⁷⁶ As far as moral judgment in history is concerned, Schepens emphasizes that this was already evident in Thucydides and that it takes on an overriding importance in Ephorus.⁷⁷ One of the most striking features of Ephorus' methodology is his extensive use of documents and written sources, which enable him to go back into the past without being limited by the Thucydidean law of autopsy.⁷⁸ In any case, whatever the differences between the two, we should not forget that Thucydides is one of Ephorus' most important sources on fifth-century history.⁷⁹

The local historians of Attica also used Thucydides, but it is hard to tell in which way.⁸⁰ According to Jacoby, "one gets the impression that he [i.e., Philochorus] fully understood the work and the ideas of the latter [i.e., Thucydides]—not a common thing in antiquity".⁸¹ However, Thucydides was a source and not a historiographical model.

Philistus, held to be an imitator of Thucydides (Cic. *De or.* 2.57 = T 17b: *Thucydidem est, ut mihi videtur, imitatus*; D.H. *Imit.* 3.2 = T 16a Φίλιστος δὲ μιμητὴς ἐστὶ Θουκυδίδου ἔξω τοῦ ἤθους; *Pomp.* 4 = 16b; Quint. 10.1.74 = T 15c: *imitator Thucydidis*), wrote a history of Sicily from its beginnings (Σικελικά). The regional perspective and his interest in the West set Philistus apart from his stylistic model.⁸² Timaeus was also a historian of the West, but he must have included references to other areas. The criticism of Polybius XII concerning verisimilitude in details and invention of speeches shows that he must

⁷⁶ Schepens (1977) 112.

⁷⁷ Schepens (1977) 118.

⁷⁸ Schepens (2003).

⁷⁹ Hornblower (1995b) 57.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Androtion about Hyperbolus (*FGH Hist* 324 F 42) and Th. 8.73 with the discussion of Jacoby, IIIb Suppl., I 151, Harding (1994) 161 and Hornblower (1995b) 57f.

⁸¹ IIIb Suppl., I 230

⁸² On his "virtuoso imitation" of Thucydides' plague passage, see Hornblower (1995b) 56.

have been very different from Thucydides, with whom he disagreed on details and perhaps about Hermocrates' speech.⁸³ Plutarch's statement about his competition with Thucydides (*Nic.* 1 = *FGrHist* 566 T 18) is difficult to explain: in my opinion, Plutarch's text suggests that it mainly concerned style (ὑπερβαλεῖσθαι δεινότητι—"to surpass Thucydides in skill"; ἡ περὶ τὴν λέξιν ἄμιλλα—"rivalry in the matter of diction").

Duris of Samos began his work (Μακεδονικά, ἱστορίαι) with the death of Philip II's father (370/369: 76 T 5 *apud* D.S. 15.60.3–6) and left out the Theban hegemony, thus concentrating on the Macedonian hegemony. His choice was the opposite of Xenophon's and Anaximenes' (the battle of Mantinea as an important boundary)⁸⁴ and can be understood from the point of view of his own time. His criticism of Ephorus and Theopompus (F 1) seems to be at the level of style; nevertheless, a certain political interest cannot be excluded.

Hieronymus of Cardia was interested in contemporary history, especially in the age of Alexander's successors. At the beginning of his work there is a place for the earlier history of the Macedonian kingdom. Simon Hornblower has shown that Hieronymus fully absorbed the Thucydidean model. The points of resemblance to Thucydides are: the likely division of the narrative by campaigning seasons, the absence of gods as causal factors, the search for deeper causes, the preference for the lowest and most believable of competing statistics, and the unmistakably high quality of the narrative.⁸⁵ At the end of the fourth century and at the beginning of the Hellenistic age, then, we find a true successor to Thucydides' methodology, closer to him than either Xenophon or Theopompus.

4. *Continuation and Preservation*

Canfora⁸⁶ has collected a large number of clues with a view to demonstrating the existence of an ancient edition of Thucydides that

⁸³ Hornblower (1995b) 58.

⁸⁴ Jacoby, *Kommentar* IIC, 116.

⁸⁵ Hornblower (1995b) 59.

⁸⁶ Canfora (1970a); Canfora (1970b) and this vol.; Canfora (1977a) 35 n. 12 lists the manuscripts where the title is Ξενοφώντος Θουκυδίδου παραλειπόμενα (see also Canfora [1970a] 57). Canfora (1985a) suggests that Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Ἡϊών refers to

included Xenophon's *Paraleipomena*. Accepting Canfora's suggestion, as I do, does not force us to agree with his biography of Thucydides and with his interpretation of Th. 5.26 as having been written by Xenophon and not Thucydides.⁸⁷ However, it is highly likely that different editions circulated in the Hellenistic age (Thucydides + *Paraleipomena*; *Paraleipomena* + Xenophon's *Hellenica*) and that an edition including *Paraleipomena* was used in Rome in the first century bc. Harpocration suggested that an ancient edition of Xenophon had a book ending at 2.3.10.⁸⁸ Diodorus 12.37.2 and 13.42.5 bear witness to a nine-book edition of Thucydides including, perhaps, the Xenophontean *Paraleipomena*.

The continuity of historical subject matter was actually a way of preserving texts, avoiding their disappearance. Even if there was initially a time, probably while Thucydides was still alive, when independent portions of his work could have circulated (proem, Pericles' Funeral Oration, the Melian Dialogue),⁸⁹ later on the book market could have favoured complete editions, or ones that included the Peloponnesian War in full or, on the other hand, connected with Xenophon's works on Greek history. The real threat to the preservation of ancient historians was the epitomizing culture of the Hellenistic and Roman age and the interest of rhetoricians in compound works. Both Thucydides and Xenophon were able to avoid this hazard.

5. Polybius and the Heritage of Thucydides

Polybius makes only one fleeting mention of Thucydides, but knew his work so deeply that he tried to explain and clarify the difficult

HG 1.1.5, comparing similar cases, such as *EM*, p. 254, 8. See also Canfora (1994): from Cic. *Brut.* 29, we know that Cicero had a complete Thucydides, including the speeches of Theramenes and Kritias (see Nicolai [1996] 100: Cicero says that Thucydides *ipse tum fuit*: i.e., reading Thucydides he can know the style of his contemporaries). Moreover, according to Canfora, an ancient edition arranged by seasons was used by Caesar, who adopted the same arrangement, but an Alexandrian edition also circulated, with three war years in each book; Cornelius Nepos does not mention Xenophon when he lists the historians who have treated Alcibiades (*Alc.* 11.1).

⁸⁷ See above, p. 704f. for bibliographical references. For the arguments against this position, see Andrewes, *HCT* 5. 431–37.

⁸⁸ Canfora (1977a) 7, on the grounds of Harp. *ss.vv.* Θέογνις and πένεσται.

⁸⁹ Canfora (1977a) 32.

programmatic passage (1.22).⁹⁰ Polybius' interpretation adapts Thucydides' formulations to the new Hellenistic situation, where rhetoric and scholastic interests were prevalent. But the reference to Thucydides does not concern only the theory of historiography because the whole structure of Polybius' work is influenced by Thucydides: as far as structure is concerned, Books I–II expand Thucydides' Book I and adapt the Thucydidean arrangement to the new subject matter. Thucydides' *Archaeology*, which is part of the proem, becomes a proem about the succession of empires, whose aim is to demonstrate the major importance of the historical age that Polybius is dealing with and also the importance of the Roman empire in comparison to former empires—just as Thucydides aimed to demonstrate the major importance of the Peloponnesian War in his *Archaeology*. *Pentekontaetia* becomes προκατασκευή, with the exposition of events prior to the main subject, the age beginning with Ol. 220/217. The προκατασκευή connects Polybius' history with Timaeus'. The period treated by the προκατασκευή is forty-four years, nearly as long as the period covered by the *Pentekontaetia*. Polybius' history is arranged by years, with special devices to connect the different areas.

Polybius is a true follower of Thucydides, if only because he wants to explain and apply the programmatic passage and in particular dwells on the treatment of speeches. We know Polybius better than other Hellenistic historians, whose work can only be accessed via a few fragments; this is the case with Hieronymus of Cardia.

Through Polybius some features of Thucydides' work were able to reach Roman historiography before the Thucydidean revival of the first century BC, when Thucydides became a stylistic model for atticist rhetoricians.

6. *The Destiny of Models: Thucydides Continued and Betrayed*

“Up to Thucydides, one can tell a Whig-type story of progress toward a nineteenth-century positivist model of historiography. Within such a framework, later historians can only be treated as examples of decadence or as an attempt to revive Thucydidean standards—provided that they are treated as historians in their own right rather

⁹⁰ Nicolai (1999).

than simply as quarries from which a lump of useful information may occasionally be extracted".⁹¹

The evolutionist history of historiography became the *communis opinio* in the 20th century: it suffices to mention Felix Jacoby's famous essay *Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie und den Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente*⁹² and Arnaldo Momigliano's *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*.⁹³ But historiography as a literary genre and as a science cannot be studied like the subjects of the natural sciences: some scholars, above all Guido Schepens,⁹⁴ have shown that fourth-century historiography is detached from Thucydides and that in order to understand Greek historical writing it is not sufficient to describe "the main stream of historiography", namely the great historians treating contemporary events whose texts were preserved through the manuscript tradition.

Thucydides was not a successful model as far as historiography was concerned: the paradigmatic value of history as political science was discarded shortly afterward and fourth-century historians preferred to provide ethical paradigms than to focus exclusively on politics and war. The latter, which were Thucydides' subject matter, were selected by an austere historian like Polybius, yet most Greek historians had different purposes.⁹⁵ The arrangement of work by seasons was not successful, only being adopted by Xenophon in *HG* 1–2.3.10 and occasionally in other portions of the work; by the Oxyrhynchus historian, perhaps by Hieronymus of Cardia.⁹⁶ Other schemes were prevalent, influenced by Herodotus' written redaction. Many historians wrote universal histories (Ephorus, Anaximenes, Polybius, Diodorus) or histories centered around great figures (Theopompus' *Philippica*, Anaximenes, Callisthenes); others wrote the history of regions or areas (Ctesias, Philistus, Timaeus) and many wrote

⁹¹ Humphreys (1997) 208. Cf. Dillery (1995) 9f.: the comparison with Thucydides is based on the preconceived notion that Thucydides is the ancient historian closest to modern standards. Against the idea of a decline in ancient historiography after Thucydides, see Vattuone (1994) 4–9, who underlines the trend to write universal history and to exceed the chronological boundaries of Herodotus (three generations) and Thucydides.

⁹² Jacoby (1909).

⁹³ Momigliano (1990).

⁹⁴ Schepens (2003) and (2006).

⁹⁵ Gabba (1981).

⁹⁶ J. Hornblower (1981) 97–102.

local histories. Local history and antiquarian interests had great importance in the fourth century and in the Hellenistic age, but these genres are completely non-Thucydidean.⁹⁷ Only a few of these historians are preserved; most of them only survive in few fragments.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Th.* 9) tells us that “historians after Thucydides turned their backs on him”.⁹⁸ However, we must bear in mind the polemical context of Dionysius’ *De Thucydide* and the fact that he wanted to exclude Thucydides as a model for contemporary orators. Hornblower’s conclusion⁹⁹ is well balanced: Thucydides was used by Ephorus and by the Atthidographers, but, until the first century BC, he was neither as successful nor as popular as Herodotus. Thucydides was known almost exclusively by historians and rhetoricians. The real Thucydidean historians of the Hellenistic age were Hieronymus of Cardia and Polybius.

⁹⁷ The Atthidographers did however use Thucydides, especially his digressions: Hornblower (1995b) 57f. and above p. 714.

⁹⁸ Hornblower (1995b) 51.

⁹⁹ Hornblower (1995b), esp. 60.

THUCYDIDES IN ROME AND LATE ANTIQUITY

Luciano Canfora

1. *The Arrival of Greek Books from Macedonia*

The earliest reference we have to a Roman knowing Thucydides' work is in connection with Cato the Elder (234–149 bc), who, according to Plutarch, developed an interest in Greek culture. "When he was very old", Plutarch reports, Cato had to hand "Greek books" from which "he profited" (*Cato Maior*, 2.5). Plutarch's choice of phrase ("when he was very advanced in years") suggests the period after the Roman victory at Pydna against Perseus of Macedonia (168 bc), when Cato was working on the *Origines*.¹

Plutarch (*Cat. Ma.* 2.5) speaks of two Greek authors whom Cato drew upon during this late acquaintance with Greek literature, Thucydides and Demosthenes. He also explains Cato's purpose in reading them—"for the rhetorical parts"—and affirms that he profited "somewhat from Thucydides, but more from Demosthenes". Interestingly, Plutarch immediately explains that from then on Cato's works were "embroidered" (διαπεποίκιλται) with quotations and stories taken entirely from Greek authors, and that we even find "whole texts translated literally" (*Cat. Ma.* 2.6).

This means that, like his contemporary dramatist Terence, Cato chose to demonstrate his acceptance of this superior culture by inserting Latin translations of the parts he liked most into his own work. "For the rhetorical parts" (εἰς τὸ ῥητορικόν): it is obvious that Cato used Demosthenes in this way, and quite understandable that he would have immediately recognized Demosthenes as a useful oratorical model. However, he also took something "from Thucydides". What this means is not very clear; probably that the latter was doubly useful, in the sense that Cato used him when writing his own speeches, and also when elaborating the rhetorical parts of his own historical work. The Thucydidean influence consisted above all in the insertion

¹ Cf. also Cornelius Nepos, *Cat.* 3.2: *senex historias scribere instituit*.

of long *dēmōgoriai* (public speeches) into the narrative: this was typical of Thucydides, and Cato does it too when he inserts his orations—which were also circulating separately—into the *Origines*: he does this with the *Pro Rhodiensibus*, for example, and with the speech *In Galbam*.²

Something similar had happened with some of Demosthenes' orations: the same speech could appear both in his own corpus and as the oratorical part of a historical narrative—as was the case, for example, with the so-called *Answer to Philip's letter*, a pastiche in the style of Demosthenes which was published by Anaximenes in Book VII of the *Philippica*, but at some point (certainly long before Didymus recognized it there in the Augustan era) found its way into the Demosthenic corpus.³ In Cato's time and thereafter, this speech, thought to be by Demosthenes, was circulating amongst Roman readers in both forms simultaneously, and this could undoubtedly have played a significant role in establishing a trend. It is possible that, as well as clearly drawing upon Demosthenes, Cato may also have used some of the substantial public oratory in Thucydides as a model for his own speeches. He probably used the same reasoning that is later found frequently in Cicero's works on oratory: namely that Thucydides' work, being so full of speeches, which are moreover described as "very close"⁴ to the real orations they are intended to paraphrase, was the main source on the art of political speaking for a whole period in which, as Plato made clear in *Phaedrus* (257d), politicians did "not write"; their speeches were not written down and thus were not circulated.

The Greek books which had such a dramatic influence on the intellectual development of the ageing Cato were most probably amongst the spoils brought to Rome from the library of the king of Macedonia⁵ after Aemilius Paulus' victorious campaign. The acquisition of these books was deftly portrayed as a gift which the victorious general could not resist making to "his literature-loving sons" (as Plutarch put it); one of these sons was Scipio Aemilianus, Cato the Elder's first interlocutor in Cicero's *De senectute*, who had fought at Pydna.⁶

² Cf. Leo (1913) 284.

³ Cf. Didymus, *In Demosthenem* (P. Berol. 9780, col. XI).

⁴ Th. 1.22.1: ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης.

⁵ Plu. *Aem.* 28.11: τὰ βιβλία τοῦ βασιλέως; Isidorus, *Etymologies* 6.5.1.

⁶ Plu. *ibid.* 22.

In truth, however, it would be no exaggeration to say that after the defeat of Perseus, during the dismantling of the kingdom of Macedonia, the most cultured Roman "Philhellenes" (more specifically those who used Terence as a figurehead for their translations of Menander) looted this precious library, turning it into their "war booty". In the King's library there was undoubtedly a collection of historical works. From the time of Alexander, a train of historians had been a permanent feature of sovereigns' entourages. Amongst other things, these historians were responsible for considerable efforts to neutralize Demosthenes' propaganda, which centred around the aggressive refrain "Philip is not a Greek".⁷ Philip V, father of Perseus, had had a "special" edition of Theopompus' *Philippica* produced for the purpose of highlighting the qualities of his great ancestor (*FGrHist* 115 T 31). As for Thucydides, it should not be forgotten that he expressed admiration for Archelaus of Macedonia (2.100.2) and that, according to a theory nurtured by the Aristotelian School, he himself lived for a period of time at Archelaus' court.⁸ The collection of Greek historical works found in the King's library at Pella would certainly have included Thucydides, and it is quite plausible that the shift in Cato's views on history was linked to the arrival in Rome of these "Macedonian" books. It was the first time that such a large quantity of books had been brought to Rome.

From every point of view, the victory over Macedonia, the most important and militarily fearsome monarchy in the Eastern Mediterranean (even Hannibal had turned to the Macedonians for help after his defeat), was a historic event. In a sense it was a "substitute" for the victory over Alexander which had only failed to be achieved because Alexander had not come west, and which Livy maintained would have been a certainty.⁹ The general political climate that was created by this important event also contributed to the Romans' discovery and imitation of great Greek historiography. Their objective, not surprisingly, was to equal it.

⁷ See for example Demosthenes, *Third Philippic* 30–31.

⁸ According to Praxiphanes, quoted by Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 29–30.

⁹ Livy (9.17–19) expressed this opinion some decades later, perhaps to contradict Timagenes of Alexandria.

2. Polybius and Thucydides

One of the “consequences” of Pydna was Polybius’ *History* (200–118 bc). Brought to Rome as a hostage, Polybius matured into the historian of the great victorious power: this did not happen immediately but rather as his relationship with the liveliest political and cultural circles in the all-conquering city developed (160–150 bc). His historical work includes a thorough, sometimes harsh review of previous Greek historiography. Thucydides is explicitly referred to in a passage (8.11.3) which is very critical of Theopompus (who, it is said, had begun his *Hellenica* ἀφ’ ὧν Θουκυδίδης ἀπέλιπεν, but abandoned Greek history just as it was becoming “greater”); it is evident that, for Polybius, Thucydides had become a “classic”, whom one could not legitimately attack as an equal, whereas Theopompus (4th century bc) could be freely criticised. In fact, Thucydides was by this time a model for writers of history and Polybius duly follows him, borrowing concepts and formulas which are especially appropriate to the “historian’s craft”. In particular, the imitation of the chapter in which he explains his methodology (Th. 1.22) is so blatant (Plb. 9.1–2) that it seems incontrovertible that Thucydides’ works were amongst those that influenced Polybius.

Thucydides’ influence is also evident in the way Polybius evaluates the role of the speeches to be inserted into the narrative and their veracity:

ὥς δ’ ἂν ἐδόκουν ἐμοὶ ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ’ εἰπεῖν, ἔχομένῳ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται.

In writing the speeches—while keeping of course as close as possible to the general sense of what was actually said—I made each speaker say what in my opinion would have been appropriate for him to say in the particular circumstances. (Th. 1.22.1)

οὐ γὰρ τὰ ρηθέντα γέγραφεν, οὐδ’ ὥς ἐρρήθη κατ’ ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ προθέμενος ὥς δεῖ ρηθῆναι, πάντας ἐξαριθμεῖται τοὺς ρηθέντας λόγους καὶ τὰ παρεπόμενα τοῖς πράγμασιν οὕτως ὥς ἂν εἴ τις ἐν διατριβῇ πρὸς ὑπόθεσιν ἐπιχειροίη *** ὥσπερ ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἐαυτοῦ δυνάμεως ποιούμενος, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐξήγησιν τῶν κατ’ ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένων.

He (*i.e.* Timaeus) did not write the words that were spoken, nor did he write the substance of what was actually said, but, having decided to report what it was appropriate for each speaker to say, he narrated these speeches and what followed on from events; in the same way

that, in a school of rhetoric, a man begins speaking on a given subject to show off his talent, not to provide an account of what was actually said. (Plb. 12.25a 5)

Polybius makes punctilious use of Thucydidean terminology; it is almost as if he wishes to outdo the master. Thucydides had come to distinguish between the “superficial” and the “deep-rooted” causes of the conflict. At one point he calls the “superficial” causes αἰτίαι and “the truer [and undeclared: 1.23.5–6] reason” πρόφασις ἀληθεστάτη, yet shortly afterwards in the same book calls the “superficial” causes προφάσεις (1.118.1). Polybius, who knows those chapters well (1.3.9), aims to be more consistent: “In most authors we find total confusion on this point, because they have not understood the distinction between πρόφασις and αἰτία and between πρόφασις and ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου” (22.18.6). The reference to Thucydidean terminology is clear, if we remember that ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου occurs in the above-mentioned passage (1.118.2).

In the preface to Book IX (of which we possess only extracts), Polybius considerably develops Thucydides’ famous distinction between a reading public that loves delightful historical stories and the perhaps smaller audience which is interested in political history. Polybius is convinced that political history (κατὰ τὰς πράξεις) is superior to all other types of historiography because it is the only one whose subject matter is “constantly renewed”, while other genres (mythological, genealogical or ethnographic history) end up repeating what is already known. This is interesting in the light of his subsequent assertion that research into the distant past proved unproductive. In his introduction, Thucydides also raised doubts about the possibility of “finding out (εὑρεῖν)” about the past. Like Thucydides, Polybius introduces another distinction to the subject: his entirely political history does not have as its objective “the amusement of the readers (τέρψις)” but rather “usefulness to the sharpest minds (ὠφέλεια τῶν προσεχόντων)” (9.2.6),¹⁰ i.e. to readers knowledgeable about politics.

We do not know why, at the beginning of the ninth Book, Polybius felt the need for this proud clarification based on the antithesis τέρψις-ὠφέλεια. It seems reasonable to conjecture that in Rome, where he was writing and circulating his work, Polybius did not enjoy the

¹⁰ Προσέχων τὴν γνώμην is used by Thucydides with regard to the historian’s work (5.26.5).

same favour as other, less exclusively “political” historians. This provocative preface appears in the middle of the account of the war against Hannibal (immediately afterwards we read of the siege of Capua and the direct threat which Hannibal posed to Rome); a subject, in other words, that was particularly “action-packed” and lent itself to a narrative full of “*pathos*” and dramatic episodes. These are lacking from Polybius’ account; he even goes as far as to insert, after Cannae, a long digression (which takes up a whole book—Book VI) on the Romans’ political and military system, which according to him constituted the real, deep roots of the Roman republic, even after such a terrible defeat. Others—not necessarily only Silenus, Coelius Antipater’s source—probably concentrated on more “glamorous” details.

The idea that the political system had a direct influence on military capability, an idea which underpins Polybius’ Book VI, had already been developed in what is generally referred to as “Pericles’ Funeral Oration” (Th. 2.37–39).¹¹ Polybius’ preference for the idea of a universal “organic” (σωματοειδής) history, particularly in Book I, is also Thucydidean. His insistence on the superiority of this idea over the universal histories favoured by other historians (Ephorus is his main target), compiled without particular criteria and in which events are only extrinsically connected, is well known. His model here was also Thucydides’ narrative, since this was the story of an event—the so-called Peloponnesian War—which had not simply been a conflict between two cities, but had gone on to involve “the Greeks and a large part of the barbarian world: in short, most of mankind” (as Thucydides declares on the very first page, as proof of the great importance of his subject). This is the true forerunner of Polybius’ universal “organic” history: universal because it involves everyone around a central point, history which knots itself, as it were, around a unifying event—the event being, for Polybius, the establishment and consolidation of Roman dominion in the Mediterranean. In the same way as Thucydides’ work, originally conceived of as dealing with a single subject (the history of a war), expanded as it was written and as the raw materials multiplied, growing into a “general history”

¹¹ To be read together with 2.65, where it is asserted that the city could have held out and avoided defeat if it had not been plunged into internal crisis by the politicians who came after Pericles.

(in fact, in their *Hellenica*, both Xenophon and Theopompus carried it on), so Polybius' work began by taking as its subject the conflict between Rome and Hannibal and ended up not only expanding—the starting point was even shifted back in time¹²—but also absorbing the monographs that Polybius had devoted to single conflicts¹³ (such as the Numantia campaign).

If, centuries later, Lucian of Samosata was able to define Thucydides as the “legislator” for the historical genre,¹⁴ then it is reasonable to assert that his overwhelming influence is already evident in the choices Polybius makes; and perhaps that Polybius in his turn contributed through his own work, considered so authoritative in the Roman world, to the hegemony of the Thucydidean model.

3. *The “Athenian” Books Brought by Sulla*

Polybius became a source of inspiration for Roman writers of history in this period and was imitated by them. Coelius Antipater, once thought to be the son of a freedman, but more probably the brother of the senator “C. Coelius C. f.”, born between 170 and 150 BC and still alive after the death of Caius Gracchus (121 BC), wrote a seven-book work on the *Bellum Punicum*.¹⁵ This book, even though full of action and pathos (*exornator rerum* is Cicero's expression),¹⁶ takes Polybius as one of its main sources of information. According to one modern theory, Coelius organised his material using the years of the war as structural units: each of the first five books covers two years of the war, while Books VI and VII each cover three years.¹⁷ We can hardly fail to be reminded of the fact that Thucydides' books, at least from the time of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (but undoubtedly also before that), covered for the most part two or three years of war. To be precise:

¹² The first Punic war is included in Book I as a “preamble”, recalling Thucydides' approach in his very long first Book.

¹³ On this device of “absorption” of a monograph into a much larger general history, starting, appropriately, with Polybius, cf. Cicero, *Ad familiares* 5.12.2.

¹⁴ *Hist. conscr.* 42.

¹⁵ This is the title according to Cicero, *Orator* 230.

¹⁶ Cicero, *De oratore* 2.54.

¹⁷ Peter (1914) CCXVI.

- I: Introduction and events leading up to the conflict.
- II: 431/30; 430/29; 429/28.
- III: 428/27; 427/26; 426/25.
- IV: 425/24; 424/23; 423/22.
- V: the years from 422/21 to 417/16.
- VI: 416/15; 415/14.
- VII: 414/13; 413/12.¹⁸
- VIII: 412/11; 411/10.

It is clear that Coelius Antipater was inspired by this precedent. Equating the Peloponnesian “great war” with the war against Hannibal was an obvious thing to do, given the “emulative” spirit with which Roman writers from the second century BC onwards regarded the great Greek past. Livy also chose to present the war with Hannibal as a monograph (Books XXI–XXX) within his monumental “general history” of Rome and added to it an *ad hoc* introduction which echoes the opening of Thucydides’ work; in other words, Livy also found it legitimate to establish this connection between the two great wars. It was quite natural, then, that Coelius should have drawn inspiration from the way Thucydides organised and structured his material.

When Coelius Antipater was writing (*i.e.* in the age of the Gracchi), Thucydides’ work was clearly already arranged in the form Dionysius would encounter a century later. It is very likely that the grouping into three-year books (Books II, III and IV) was the work of Alexandrian editor-critics.¹⁹ The grouping or “rearranging” of the subsequent material was partly influenced by the presence of an almost “monographic” account of the Athenian campaign in Sicily.

At some point, however, copies of Thucydides arranged (as far as was possible) according to the original 1 year = 1 book division²⁰ came back into circulation and appeared in Rome. It is no coinci-

¹⁸ It should be pointed out that the desire to restrict Books VI–VII to the account of the campaign against Syracuse gave rise to some displacement: for example, the end of year 413/12 was placed at the beginning of Book VIII [ch. 1–6], even though this led to an absurd disruption of the syntax; cf. Wilamowitz (1908a) 578.

¹⁹ Hemmerdinger (1963). Book X of Euclid’s *Elements*, which is much longer than the previous books, does not merely present the “Definitions” (ὅροι) at the beginning, as the other books do, but also presents, in the main body of the book, ὅροι δευτέροι and ὅροι τρίτοι (III pp. 156 and 254 Heiberg).

²⁰ Cf. my “Biographical Obscurities and Problems of Composition”, this vol.

dence that in *Commentaries*, Caesar adopted precisely this criterion in his account of his own “great war”. In short, “Athenian”, pre-Alexandrian copies reappeared, old copies that had at least not been influenced by Alexandrian innovation.²¹ When did this happen?

The key event here was when Sulla, conqueror of Athens—which at the time (83 BC) was allied with Mithridates—brought to Rome the library belonging to the collector and amateur philosopher Apellicon of Teos, a library richly endowed with “old books”. Sulla took these precious books as booty and kept them for himself in his own private library, which was run by a librarian who every so often allowed trusted friends like the grammarian Tyrannion²² a glimpse of the scrolls. Sulla left his books to his son, Faustus Cornelius Sulla. In 55 BC Cicero wrote to Atticus: “I am enjoying Faustus’ library here”.²³ Subsequently, however, Faustus was obliged to sell the books on account of overwhelming debts,²⁴ after which they probably passed into the hands of learned and wealthy friends such as Cicero, who had already had access to them; indeed it is reasonable to assume that Cicero and Atticus were amongst the buyers.²⁵ There is certainly no doubt that once in circulation, these books began to exert an influence: we see this in Cicero’s own philosophical writing of the period, which paraphrases works of Aristotle as if they were new and only very recently available.²⁶

But there was other material of interest in this library: not only a unique version of the *Iliad*,²⁷ but also, as may reasonably be deduced from the caustic remarks of Lucian of Samosata at the beginning of the pamphlet *Adversus indoctum*,²⁸ precious copies of Demosthenes and Thucydides.

²¹ This did not only concern the writing of Thucydides but involved a broader papyrus roll (reflected, for example, by the prose books of post-Alexandrian authors such as Polybius and Diodorus).

²² Str. 13.1.54; Plu., *Sull.* 26.

²³ Cic., *Ad Atticum* 4.10.1.

²⁴ Plu., *Cic.* 27.6; *Apophthegmata regum et imperatorum* 205cd.

²⁵ Cicero’s reference to his preference for this particular “auction” over those resulting from the proscriptions implemented by Faustus’ father suggests that Cicero had a personal interest in the sale.

²⁶ Gigon (1959) 143–62.

²⁷ This differed from the *vulgata* in the unusual beginning of the first Book: cf. Osann (1851); Nauck (1867) 271–73.

²⁸ *Adv. ind.* 4, where, as Harmon suggests, we should read: καὶ ὅλως (instead of the impossible καλῶς) ἅπαντα ἐκείνα ὅσα ὁ Σύλλας Ἀθήνηθεν εἰς Ἱταλίαν ἐξέπεμψε. On this cf. Canfora (1994) 113–14.

The evidence provided by Lucian is highly circumstantial and may confuse matters regarding the history of Thucydides' text. "Go ahead," says Lucian to his antagonist, "and collect the books that Demosthenes wrote out in his own hand, and those books of Thucydides that Demosthenes copied out eight times: in short (καὶ ὅλως), all the books that Sulla had his men bring back from Athens to Italy". It is not possible to verify the basis for the reference, also found in Zosimus of Ascalon,²⁹ to the number of copies of Thucydides made by Demosthenes in his own hand. At least in part this is clearly a legend, perhaps deriving from the acknowledged presence of Thucydides in Demosthenes.³⁰ However, the information that Appellicon's library contained ancient "Athenian" versions of Thucydides' work can be considered reliable, regardless of whatever imaginative theories we may find regarding their provenance.³¹ And these were clearly versions uninfluenced by the Alexandrian rearrangement of Thucydides' text, especially as far as the subdivision into books was concerned.

There is no shortage of other evidence for the return into circulation of versions of Thucydides' work structured in this way (that is, arranged as the author intended). In *Apophthegmata regum et imperatorum* (207f.), Plutarch refers to an anecdote that makes sense only if Thucydides' "seventh book" contains the account of the seventh year of the war.³²

There are various indications that by the middle of the first century BC, Thucydides had again become popular in the circle of *literati* gravitating around Cicero. Lucretius, at the end of Book VI (1138–1286), and Cornelius Nepos, in the *Life of Themistocles* (9.2–4) and the *Life of Pausanias* (2.3–4), make literal translations of entire passages of Thucydides. Cicero, who paraphrases him and comments on him when writing to Atticus (10.8.7) in May 49 BC, makes extensive use of him in *Brutus* (46 BC), when he reconstructs the history of Greek oratory in the fifth century. It is therefore obvious that Thucydides was well known to this circle: Cornelius was a loyal friend of Atticus (*Vita Attici*, 19) and a great admirer of Lucretius

²⁹ *Oratores Attici*, II, 523 Müller.

³⁰ Canfora (1992) 11–14.

³¹ This is not the place to consider the question of historical data regarding the ancient versions—actually written in the author's own hand—that we read about in, for example, Pliny, *N.H.* 13.83; Aulus Gellius 11.14.7; D.L. 3.37.

³² Cf. Canfora (1970a) 36–39.

(*ibid.* 12.4), who was clearly close to both Marcus and Quintus Cicero (*Ad Quintum fratrem* 2.10.3). Also worth pointing out is Cornelius' borrowing of Thucydides' measured definition of Themistocles' far-sightedness (1.138.3: ἄριστος εἰκαστής) in order to praise Cicero's far-sightedness as a politician (*Vita Attici*, 16.4); Cicero himself comments carefully and sympathetically upon this in the aforementioned letter to Atticus of May 49 BC.

Lucretius also seems to make use of a version of Thucydides in which the account of the second year of the war is not in the first Book but in *another*; or at least he seems to have read and pondered over the second year (in which the plague is described) while being completely ignorant of everything that happened in the previous year, even those episodes that were a necessary premise for what took place subsequently. Since the facts of the first year of the war were not available to him, he was unaware that the migration of the rural population to within the "great walls" had already begun the previous year, the purpose being to avoid the Spartan raids. He therefore deduces from Thucydides, 2.52.1, ("having to move in from the country to the city further damaged them") that the movement of the rural population into the city was a result of the spread of the plague: *Nec minimam partem ex agris is maeror in urbem / confluit, languens quem contulit agricolarum / copia conveniens ex omni morbida parte* ("O not in least part from the countryside / That tribulation, which the peasantry / Sick, sick, brought thither, thronging from every quarter, / Plague-stricken mob", transl. William Ellery Leonard, 6.1259–61).

4. A "Complete" Thucydides

"Apellicon's" Thucydides had another interesting characteristic, namely that it gave a *complete* account of the Peloponnesian War. This can be deduced from various quotations, the most revealing of which is perhaps in Cicero's *Brutus*, a dialogue which is "set" in 46 BC but might have been written and circulated in 45 BC³³ (or at any rate before Caesar's death). Here, in sketching an outline of Greek oratory, Cicero identifies Athens as the place in which, from a certain moment onwards, written records were made of oratory. Previously,

³³ Cf. Canfora (1999a) 410–12.

in *De oratore* (which can be dated to 55 BC), Cicero had spoken of surviving written versions of speeches by “Pericles, Alcibiades, Thucydides”: *antiquissimi fere sunt, quorum scripta constant, Pericles atque Alcibiades et eadem aetate Thucydides* (“quite the earliest of whom we have any authentic remains, are Pericles and Alcibiades, with Thucydides of the same generation”, transl. E.W. Sutton) (2.93). He went on to point out that after those three *antiquissimi* came Critias, Theramenes and Lysias (it is no coincidence that these three names are grouped together: they were all closely connected with the civil war of 404/3, about which Lysias speaks at length in important speeches: XII, XIII, etc.). He then notes that we have a vast amount of material (*scripta*) attributed to Lysias, and that “something of Critias has been preserved”, whereas of Theramenes we merely “hear” (*audimus*)—that is, we have data about him but nothing written by him. Given Plato’s inescapable assertion (*Phaedrus* 257d) that written records of political oratory did not exist in the fifth century, it is inconceivable that Cicero could have had access to speeches (possibly forgeries) by Pericles and Alcibiades: the reference can only be to the reports of their speeches in Thucydides; for this reason he always mentions them together with Thucydides.³⁴ This means that Cicero (not incorrectly) believed Thucydides’ claim about his method (1.22), namely that he had kept as closely as possible “to what was actually said” in his reports of the speeches made by the characters in his work.

So, if Cicero maintains in *Brutus* (28–29) that Thucydides gives us an idea of the oratory of Critias and Theramenes, this means that when he was writing *Brutus*, ten years after *De oratore*, he had a “complete” Thucydides to hand, including Books I–II of Xenophon’s *Hellenica*, where we indeed find the memorable oratorical duel between Critias and Theramenes (2.3.24–49). Cicero places the key phrase at the end of a list of political orators: “The dominant style of that period can be understood from the writings of Thucydides, who was himself alive through those years”³⁵ (*Brutus*, 29). The list is organised *chronologically*, thanks to the help of Atticus’ chronographic work (*ut*

³⁴ See Jahn-Kroll (1962) 26.

³⁵ “*Quibus temporibus quod dicendi genus vigerit ex Thucydidis scriptis, qui ipse tum fuit, intellegi maxime potest*”.

ex Attici monumentis perspicere potest):³⁶ a) the archaic period, from Peisistratus to Kleisthenes; b) Themistocles, who, following the chronology established by Atticus, could be said to have belonged to a later age, and of whom—Cicero adds—“it has been established (*constat*) that he was excellent *cum prudentia tum eloquentia*”;³⁷ c) after Themistocles, Pericles, who, “as well as being richly endowed with every kind of virtue, in this field too was *laude clarissimus*” (this plainly mirrors Thucydides’ assessment of Pericles [2.65], in which Pericles is exalted not only on account of his overall superiority to all politicians who came after him but also on account of his oratory and because he was incorruptible and anti-demagogic; d) “in those times there was also Cleon *turbulentum illum quidem civem, sed tamen eloquentem*” (here the borrowing from Thucydides’ assessment of Cleon [3.36.6] is substantial: ἐς τὰ ἄλλα βιαίωτατος τῶν πολιτῶν τῷ τε δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος, “who was in general the most violent of the citizens and by far the most persuasive among the people at that time” [transl. S. Lattimore]; it is also observed, thanks to Atticus, that Cleon and Pericles were more or less exact contemporaries); e) “Alcibiades, Critias and Theramenes were contemporaries of Cleon”. After this we find the sentence: “in the period in question (*quibus temporibus*), the prevailing style of speech can be understood from the writings of Thucydides”. It is clear then that the *tempora* of which Thucydides describes the favoured forms of oratory (we do not have the works of the orators themselves) are those in which we find the politicians, all “of the same period”, listed above: from Pericles to Theramenes. Moreover, *from the moment that Themistocles is first mentioned* and described with the words of 1.138.3, *the whole text is based on Thucydides*. Since Cicero points out that no written works by Critias and Theramenes exist, it is quite natural that in attributing an oratorical style to them, he should follow the historians of their time. Significantly though,

³⁶ The correction of *Attici* to *Atticis* (suggested by Lambin and adopted by many others) is pointless.

³⁷ Here Cicero paraphrases Thucydides’ assessment of Themistocles (1.138.3), which he was fond of and wrote out and commented on in a puzzled letter to Atticus in May 49, in the very middle of the civil war (*Ad Atticum* 10.8.7): “*Qui [= Themistocles] cum fuisset, ut ait Thucydides, τῶν μὲν παρόντων δι’ ἐλαχίστης βουλῆς κράτιστος γνώμων [...], tamen incidit in eos casus quos vitasset si eum nihil fefellisset*”. In this letter Cicero disregards the second part of Thucydides’ assessment of Themistocles, which concerns his eloquence.

he does not say that this “surrogate source” for Critias and Theramenes is Xenophon (consider the fact that it is in *HG* 2.3.24–49 that Critias and Theramenes clash in a deadly oratorical duel, and that these are the only speeches of theirs found in histories written contemporaneously), *but rather Thucydides*. For Cicero, then, this part of the *Hellenica* belonged to Thucydides’ work.

Scrolls containing groups of speeches taken from Thucydides may already have been circulating in Cicero’s time. An example from the fourth century AD is P. Oxy. 1621, a collection which was similar to that of the late fourth century scholar who put together *Orationes et Epistulae*, an anthology of extracts from Sallust’s *Historiae* (Vat. Lat. 3864). The existence of such editions would provide an even better explanation for Cicero’s reference to the circulation of *scripta Periclis*. Editions of this kind, together with Thucydides’ own weighty declarations (1.22), may well have led Cicero to believe this extract from Thucydides to be substantially authentic oratory.

Confirmation of the existence of a “complete” edition comes from the same circle, namely from Cornelius Nepos’ *Life of Alcibiades*. In his list of historians who exalted Alcibiades (*Alc.* 11.1), Cornelius includes Thucydides, Theopompus and Timaeus, but not Xenophon. Now, there *is* praise of Alcibiades, “the only one” capable of winning the war, etc., in the *Hellenica* (1.4.13–20), but there is nothing at all in Thucydides (in fact the description in 6.15 is pejorative, making a connection between Alcibiades’ eccentric behaviour and the “ruin of the city”). So only a Thucydides “completed” by the *Hellenica* (1–2) can explain Cornelius’ list.

Nor should one overlook the fact that Demetrius of Magnesia, an erudite friend of (appropriately enough) Atticus and Cicero, had apparently written of the editorial link between Thucydides and Xenophon. In fact, Demetrius is in all probability the source of Diogenes Laertius’ assertion that “*although he could have appropriated Thucydides’ unpublished work for himself, it was actually Xenophon who published it in Thucydides’ name*” (2.57).³⁸ These words suggest

³⁸ One of the criteria by which Demetrius, author of a treatise entitled *On authors of the same name*, distinguished identically-named writers was an analysis of the various works written by each of them. At the end of the brief chapter on Xenophon, Diogenes actually lists seven Xenophons and gives a quick character-sketch of each: it is clear that for this part too he relies on Demetrius. Demetrius is mentioned explicitly towards the end of the list of Xenophon’s works (2.57): so, the whole list

an “editorial” scenario in which some books were circulating under both names—and, in effect, there were “complete” versions of Thucydides in circulation in the time of Atticus, Cicero and Demetrius (see what Cicero writes in *Brutus*, 29), as well as eight-book versions which broke off in the year 411 (this is clear from the treatises of Dionysius of Halicarnassus) and *Hellenica* that included, as opening books, the same books that were to be found at the end of the “complete” Thucydides.

We can conclude that the “Athenian” version of Thucydides which Apellicon had in his possession must have been the basis for the idea of Thucydides’ text that we can see was known to the circle of Atticus, Cornelius Nepos and Cicero. That Athens should have conserved its own *version* of its own literature *free from the influence of the Alexandrians* is confirmed by Galen’s anecdote (XVII 607 Kühn) about the Ptolemaic “theft” of the originals of the Athenian tragedians. And Atticus, whose historical-antiquarian knowledge in his *Liber Annalis* is lauded more than once by Cicero in *Brutus*, and who was known as Atticus precisely because he lived so long in that glorious region, would, being a great bibliophile, certainly have benefited greatly from his reading of Athenian books.

5. “*Aemulus Thucydidis Sallustius*”

Despite this reliance on Thucydides, we should not lose sight of the fact that Cicero’s basic opinion of Thucydides’ work was that it could not be considered a proper guide to oratory. Cicero is adamant about this, devoting considerable space in *Orator* (written at the same time as *Brutus*) to explaining why. In fact, he refuses even more categorically to budge from this position when taking issue with those who “claim to be so many Thucydides” (*Orator*, 32), and with the “Atticist” approach which he so proudly opposed.

By contrast, one historian (from the very next generation) who did take Thucydides as a model was Sallust, whose “Thucydidism” was widely recognised. Velleius, a historian from the age of Tiberius,

comes from Demetrius, including the final reference to Xenophon’s publication of “Thucydides’ unpublished books”. This publication is then attributed to Xenophon on account of the appearance of that reference there.

does not think twice about calling Sallust *aemulus Thucydides* (2.36.2), and Quintilian (*c.* 35–100 AD) actually spoke of Sallust and Thucydides as counterparts, or rather as complementing each other perfectly (*Inst. Or.* 10.1.101). Seneca the Elder, in a passage in *Controversiae* (9.1.13–14) actually seems to award Sallust the prize for *brevitas*,³⁹ Thucydides being pushed into second place on account of Sallust having expressed the same concept in fewer words; however, a slip leads Seneca to refer here to a passage which is not in fact from Thucydides but from Pseudo-Demosthenes (11.13). Various attempts (starting with Ernst Friedrich Poppo's "Thucydides imitatores inter Romanos") have been made to list Sallust's literal borrowings from Thucydides, but as is usual with such analyses, these have tended to be arbitrary and one-dimensional.⁴⁰ It is undoubtedly the case that Sallust, together with Caesar, was one of the first Romans to exploit Greek history as a model; he is therefore in a certain sense the pioneer of genuine "classicist" history-writing in Rome. Cicero said that, when it came to Greek authors, the previous generation had at most read Clitarchus!⁴¹

However, the most significant reference to Athenian history in Sallust's work is taken not from Thucydides-Xenophon but in all probability from Ephorus: it is the allusive re-evocation of the government of the Thirty in Athens (404–403 BC) in Caesar's speech in the Senate (*Cat.* 51).⁴² The lack of similarity between this and the version in the *Hellenica* is clear from the outset. In the *Hellenica*, the Thirty are immediately elected "by a decision of the popular assembly" (2.3.2 and 11); in Diodorus' (14.3.6–7), that is, Ephorus', account, on the other hand, and also in Aristotle (*Ath.* 34.3), it is emphasised that this government was imposed by the Spartans. This is how Sallust puts it: *Lacadaemonii devictis Atheniensibus triginta viros imposuere* ("the Lacedaemonians, after they had conquered the Athenians, set over them thirty men", transl. J.C. Rolfe) (51.28). Immediately after-

³⁹ Cicero had already expressed a similar opinion (*De oratore* 2.56); he says of Thucydides: *ita creber rerum frequentia ut verborum prope numerum sententiarum numero consequatur* ("so abounding is he in fullness of material that in the number of his ideas he well-nigh equals the number of his words").

⁴⁰ For a (non-updated) list of scholars who have dealt with this subject, from A. Schild to E. Norden and H. Patzer, see Paladini (1948) ch. 11.

⁴¹ *De leg.* 1.7.

⁴² This is compared to Sulla's regime, which was characterised by proscriptions (*Cat.* 51.28–31), the obvious aim being to criticise the proscriptions which had recently been imposed by the triumvirate. Cf. Syme (1964) 122; Canfora (1985b) 19–22.

wards Sallust mentions the citizens' approval of the repression of "malevolent citizens" by the Thirty: *populus laetari et merito dicere fieri*, "acts at which the people rejoiced and extolled their justice", (tr. John Selby Watson) (51.29). In this case too, Sallust's words correspond exactly to those of Aristotle (*Ath.* 35.3: ἐφ' οἷς ἔχαιρεν ἡ πόλις γιγνομένοις ἡγούμενοι τοῦ βελτίστου χάριν ποιεῖν αὐτούς, "the people rejoiced greatly and declared that it was well done") and of Diodorus (14.4.2: τοῖς ἐπιεικεστάτοις τῶν πολιτῶν εὐαρέσκει τὰ γιγνόμενα, "and thus far the most honourable citizens approved of their actions", transl. G.P. Goold), whereas in the *Hellenica*, 2.3.12 we read only that the people accepted this without indignation (οὐδὲν ἤχθοντο). We find a similar pattern in the definitions of the duties of the Thirty. Sallust 51.28 (*qui rem publicam eorum tractarent*) corresponds to Diodorus 14.3.7 (διοικήσοντες τὰ κοινὰ τῆς πόλεως) and to Aristotle *Ath.* 35.2 (διοικεῖν τὴν πολιτείαν), but not to *HG*, 2.3.2: οἱ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους συγγράψουσιν καθ' οὓς πολιτεύσονται ("to frame the ancient laws into a constitution under which to conduct the government"; cf. 2.3.11: αἰρεθέντες ἐφ' ᾧ τε συγγράψαι νόμους καθ' οὓς τινες πολιτεύσουσι, "although chosen, however, for the purpose of framing a constitution under which to conduct the government", transl. Carleton L. Brownson).

But Sallust relies on Ephorus for the whole of the oratorical duel between Caesar and Cato. Willy Theiler has demonstrated that the two speeches, which constitute the heart of the monograph *De Catilinae coniuratione*, are based (and at times modelled) upon the duel between Nikolaos and Philip in Diodorus Siculus (13.25–32).⁴³ The situation was analogous: a debate on whether to vote for clemency or severity in the treatment of Athenian prisoners. Ephorus (who in this case too is Diodorus' source) adds this ornamental extra to Thucydides' unsurpassable account of the Athenian campaign against Syracuse.⁴⁴ "Thucydidean" Sallust, then, preferred to take Ephorus as his source not only for the main oratorical duel between Caesar and Cato which he included in his first monograph, but also for the important reference to the Thirty in Caesar's speech. That memorable occasion had been recalled not long beforehand in a Roman political context, when in the immediate aftermath of Caesar's assassination,

⁴³ Theiler (1956) 144–55.

⁴⁴ Which Philistus had preferred to reproduce almost word for word in his account of these events.

Cicero had referred to Thrasybulus' amnesty, thus reminding people of how that civil war had finished.

Ephorus' account was probably much richer in detail than the bare description we find in the *Hellenica*: Ephorus even knows how the various political factions aligned themselves with regard to the peace imposed by the victors (although it is open to question whether or not this is the work of his imagination). The "complete" Thucydides, on the other hand, included parts that were bare outlines, in which memorable events such as the Thirty's installation in power were reduced to a few essential lines. Thucydides' account, then, was not always the preferred one. For Sallust, Thucydides is a model and source of political reflections⁴⁵ rather than a source of factual information.

Rather than extracting information from Thucydides' work, Sallust wishes to "rework" Thucydides; in this he foreshadows a fashion that will be stigmatised two centuries later by Lucian of Samosata. This is clear from the fact that in both his first and second monographs (*De Catilinae coniuratione*, *Bellum Iugurthinum*) he adopts the narrative thread—or rather the arrangement of the material—from Thucydides' first Book. The scheme involves providing an initial introduction to the "monographic" theme ("the Catiline conspiracy" in one case, and the war *quod populus Romanus cum Iugurtha rege Numidarum gessit* in the other),⁴⁶ and then, after a few brief comments, going right back in time (*supra repetere*, to use the expression Sallust was so fond of: *Cat.* 5.9; *Iug.* 5.3). In *De Catilinae coniuratione* the approach is strictly based on Thucydides. Just as Thucydides, as early as the second chapter, moves dizzyingly back in time (to the arrival of the first inhabitants in ancient Greece) after proclaiming the "greatness" of his theme, so Sallust, having announced *de Catilinae coniuratione quam verissime potero paucis absolvam* ("I shall write briefly and as truthfully as possible of the conspiracy of Catiline", transl. J.C. Rolfe, 4.3), goes back with startling rapidity to the arrival of Aeneas in Latium (6.1: *Urbem Romam sicuti ego accepi condidere atque habuere initio Troiani*, "the city of Rome, according to my understanding, was at the out-

⁴⁵ In Cato's reply to Caesar (*Cat.* 52.11) he makes use of a crucial Thucydidean conclusion (3.82.4): during a civil war political terminology changes its meaning.

⁴⁶ In each case, though, Sallust begins with a philosophical, allusive introduction which to Quintilian seemed like a foreign body (*Inst. or.* 3.8.8–9), full of quotations from Aristotle, Plato, Isocrates, etc.

set founded and inhabited by Trojans"). In the case of *Bellum Iugurthinum*, the leap back in time is not so great: he returns as far as the Second Punic War. The proportion of narrative to direct speech is Thucydidean, as is the predilection for opposing speeches (Caesar and Cato in the *De Catilinae coniuratione*, Lepidus and Philip in the first Book of *Historiae*). A further Thucydidean characteristic is the decision to attribute a different oratorical style to each of the various protagonists (for example, to the tribunes of the plebeians: *Iug.* 31, "Oratio Memmi"; *Hist.* 3.48, "Oratio Macri") while "keeping as closely as possible to the general sense of the words that were actually spoken" (to use Thucydides' own words).⁴⁷ In fact, what Sallust has Caesar say against the death penalty for the Catiline conspirators (51.20: *mortem aerumnarum requiem, non cruciatum esse; eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere*, "death is a relief from woes, not a punishment; that it puts an end to all mortal ills") corresponds to what was actually said during the debate in the Senate (Cic. *Catil.* 4.4.7).⁴⁸

Yet another Thucydidean trait is the insertion of a profoundly pessimistic assessment of the decadence of political *mores*, in the form of a digression (*Iug.* 41–42; cf. *Th.* 3.80–82). In some cases the imitation takes on the character of an out-and-out copy. In *Historiae*, for example, Sallust has Pompey send a letter to the Senate with an urgent request for more troops (2.98 Maurenbrecher = pp. 156–159 Kurfes) in the same way that, in Thucydides' seventh Book, Nicias, in a pressing letter read out to the popular assembly, asks for more troops, without which, he predicts, disaster will ensue (7.10–15).⁴⁹ It is probable that Nicias' actual letter was faithfully paraphrased (if simplified) by Thucydides; on the other hand, it is unlikely that Pompey had really made a written threat to march on Rome (2.98 Maurenbrecher),⁵⁰ as Sallust's paraphrase would seem to suggest.

Most Thucydidean of all is the decision to pass from writing on one specific subject to "general" history. Thucydides' work was from this point of view emblematic. It was the history of a war which

⁴⁷ *Th.* 1.22.1. Like Polybius and Cicero, Sallust must have paid particular attention to these words.

⁴⁸ Even if we chose to see this as a result of Cicero's rewriting of the *Fourth Catilinarian*, this would not alter the fact that Caesar really had to speak in this way.

⁴⁹ Lucian derides historians who not only insert a "plague" into their account but actually speak of symptoms which are the same as those of the plague Thucydides describes (*Hist. conscr.* 15).

⁵⁰ But perhaps here the target is Octavian.

gradually became the history of the entire Greek world (and beyond) over a period of more than thirty years,⁵¹ and which was continued by others with their own “general” histories (*Hellenica*). What is more, in a passage which was probably added later,⁵² Thucydides seems quite clearly to adopt Ἑλληνικά as the definition of his history. Sallust likewise ends up having written a general history (*Historiae*); chronologically this can be connected to the two monographs with which the historian started out, and in a certain sense it includes them, almost to the point of constituting a single, comprehensive account of a long period of recent or contemporary history. It is an experiment partly hinted at in the announcement at the beginning of *De Catilinae coniuratione*, an original “History of Rome in episodes (*carpitim*)”, a work that takes on form and definition with the passing of the years.⁵³ This is exactly what had happened to Thucydides’ work.

6. *Dionysius and Cratippus*

Dionysius repeatedly (and quite inappropriately) maintains that Thucydides *chose a very poor ending* for his work: “the final part [of his *History*] is completely wrong; in fact, even though he claims to have been a first-hand witness to the entire conflict and promises to relate it all, Thucydides stops at the Battle of Cynossema, which took place in the twenty-second⁵⁴ year. It would have been much better if he had taken his account to the end of the conflict and concluded with the momentous—and, for his readers, most welcome—return to the city of the ‘men of Phyle’, thanks to whom Athens regained its freedom” (*Letter to Pompeius Geminus*, 10);⁵⁵ “Even though the war lasted 27 years and even though he was alive for the entire period until the end of the conflict, Thucydides took his account up to the XXII year, concluding Book VIII with the Battle of Cynossema: and that in spite of his having announced in the introduction that he would deal with all the events of this war” (*De*

⁵¹ Much longer, if we take into account the background-providing digressions inserted into the first Book.

⁵² Th. 1.97.2.

⁵³ Canfora (1993) 69–70. Ausonius, *Ad nepotem* 61–63 alludes to the *conexio* between Sallust’s *Historiae* and *De Catilinae coniuratione*.

⁵⁴ Actually XXI (cf. Th. 8.104–106).

⁵⁵ Dionysius, *Opuscula* II, 235.16–236.5 U.-R.

Th. 12).⁵⁶ He never speaks of the work as being unfinished,⁵⁷ but seems to suggest a change of plan on Thucydides' part!

These repeated rebukes provide us with further confirmation of a fact mentioned above, namely that Dionysius was using an eight-book edition of Thucydides, the last book of which finished with the Battle of Cynossema (= *Th.* 8.104–106). His Thucydides *almost* tallies with the version that prevailed in late antiquity and consequently in medieval manuscripts (the oldest of which, as always, mirror the late antique editions). However, it does not tally exactly. For a start, it is clear that for Dionysius the eighth Book ended with our chapter 8.106: there were various points of view as to where the *Hellenica* actually began (Diodorus in one case attributes 24 years of the war to Thucydides, and Plutarch, *De garrulitate*, even more).⁵⁸ As has already been pointed out, for Dionysius the so-called “second introduction” (5.26) is “in the previous book” to the Melian Dialogue (*De Th.* 41 = I, 395.11–17 U.-R.); so in his Thucydides the Dialogue and the relative narrative context, that is, year XVI of the war, were entirely in Book VI, not in Book V as in our manuscripts.

The main thread, the dominant criterion running through Dionysius' thinking on Thucydides' work is *omissions*: his criticism hinges on what Thucydides *omitted*, ranging from what seems to him the most glaring case—the end of the account!—to the tiniest details, which he never tires of pointing out, and which he sometimes groups together into “categories”. Even in the course of the very strong attack he launches on the arrangement of the first Book, Dionysius manages to rebuke Thucydides for another “omission”, writing: “When he began to investigate causes he should have made it his priority to explain what he considered the real cause. The natural thing to do in fact was to begin with what came first and to report the truth before reporting erroneous theories, etc.” (*De Th.* 11 = I, 341.3–7 U.-R.). This too is an omission, then. And “Thucydides' defenders”—to whom Dionysius refers sarcastically (*De Th.* 11: τῶν ἀπολογεῖσθαι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ βουλομένων) and of whom at least one remains to us, namely the author of the anonymous “Reply to Dionysius” (P. Oxy. 853, a comment on Thucydides' Book II)—replied that he had been

⁵⁶ Dionysius, *Opuscula* I, 342.3–9 U.-R.

⁵⁷ Nor do Cicero or Pliny, *N.H.* 7.111.

⁵⁸ On this, cf. the chapter “Biographical Obscurities and Problems of Composition”, this volume.

right to opt for conciseness in relating the “real causes” since otherwise he would have ended up having to describe a series of other wars in order to tell the full story.

In his very lengthy critical discussion of Thucydides, Dionysius begins by saying that the main defect is in the arrangement of the material (beginning of ch. 9), that this “arrangement” consists of διαίρεσις (dividing the material up into parts), τάξις (the ordering of these), ἐξεργασία (the elaboration of them or working of them into shape). From chapter 13 onwards, he concentrates on this last aspect, criticising Thucydides’ “elaboration” as being deficient above all on account of “omissions” and insufficient development of the themes: “He devotes more words than he should to events deserving of only a few, and skates over (ἐπιτρέχει) subjects which deserve lengthier consideration” is his general argument (*De Th.* 13 = I, 343.6–7 U.-R.). Dionysius promises to pick out just some of the *many* examples he could quote to support his case. It is interesting to note that his examples concern both events and speeches; he rebukes Thucydides not only for having omitted important details or episodes (ch. 13–16) but also for neglecting (παραλιπεῖν)⁵⁹ “opportunities for speech”, for failing to use direct speeches where they would have been appropriate (ch. 17–18), and even for sacrificing (παραλιπών) important events to make space for a disproportionately long introduction that stretches “to 500 lines”⁶⁰ (ch. 19).

In the midst of this discussion of Thucydides’ “omissions”, like a watershed between the omissions of events and the omissions of speeches, Dionysius speaks at length and with reverence (ch. 16) about Cratippus, an author whom he defines as “the man who put together a collection of Thucydides’ omissions (τὰ παραλειφθέντα ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ συναγαγών)” (I, 349.6–7 U.-R.).⁶¹ Precisely because he is “grafted” into the argument in this way, it is clear that Cratippus—with his unusual collection—is the inspiration for the method Dionysius follows in this part of his treatise. Cratippus in fact asserted that Thucydides had left his work incomplete, “unpolished” (ἀτελεῖ)—in other words, tainted with “hurriedness” (ῥαθύμως ἐπιτετροχασμένα)—

⁵⁹ Ch. 17 = I, 349.23 U.-R.

⁶⁰ Μέχρι πεντακοσίων ἐκμηκύνει στίχων (I, 353.9 U.-R.): the reference is to 1.1–23.

⁶¹ It is with ἔγωγε, at the beginning of ch. 17, that Dionysius begins to speak in his own voice again after his account of Cratippus’ theories.

because “he had been over-preoccupied with the speeches” (ὧν προνοούμενος ἔοικεν ἀτελῇ τὴν ἱστορίαν καταλιπεῖν). So purely on the basis of the text, Cratippus claimed to know that Thucydides had become aware of the problem *in extremis* and for this reason had stopped inserting direct speech into the last part (ἐν τοῖς τελευταίοις), even though “in the eighth Book”—he added—“speeches and dialogues” were crucial to many events, both in Athens and in Ionia. In short, on the basis of the Alexandrian division into eight books, Cratippus formulated a theory about the “lack of speeches” and presented it as a decision taken by Thucydides as a result of the *inefficacy* of the speeches (of which there were too many) in the previous parts (συνέντα αὐτόν [. . .] ὀχληρὰς τοῖς ἀκούουσιν εἶναι). Dionysius was very impressed by this theory, which cleverly connected evidence from the text with biographical data, and saw in Cratippus’ *Collection of Omissions* a sort of anti-Thucydidean document.⁶² In fact, so influenced is he by this collection of παραλειφθέντα that, immediately after citing it with all due honours (ch. 16), he too begins protesting about everything that Thucydides omitted and should have omitted (ch. 17–20 = I, 349.23; 350.5; 353.8; 354.22 U.-R.).

A fragment of Cratippus conserved in Pseudo-Plutarch’s *Life of Andocides* helps us understand which “omissions” this pedant was reproaching Thucydides for.⁶³ The episode in question is that of the Hermae, to which, as we know, Thucydides devoted a long report, including a digression on Harmodius and Aristogeiton’s failed tyrannicide (6.27–29; 6.53.2–61). Thucydides’ account is certainly reticent on basic legal points. It is striking, for example, that he never mentions Andocides by name (he gets around the problem by calling him “one of those arrested”: 6.60.2); and is clearly on the side of Alcibiades, whom he portrays as the target of accusations by “enemies” (6.28.2; 6.61.1: ἐναγόντων τῶν ἐχθρῶν).⁶⁴ In his account, then, Thucydides, who knew these men personally and well, “takes sides”

⁶² Therefore Cratippus could rather be considered “a rival of Thucydides” (ὁ συνακμάσας αὐτῷ: I, 349.6 U.-R.). For a similar, unusual interpretation of συνακμάζειν cf. Canfora (1974) 133–39.

⁶³ *Vitae decem oratorum* 834c–d.

⁶⁴ This more than adequately explains the insertion of the *excursus* on the tyrants: Athens expelled its best general because of an obsessive fear of a new “tyranny” (cf. 2.65, where it is clearly stated that the Athenians’ aversion to Alcibiades’ private “tyrannical” habits “brought about the ruin of the city”).

and writes on a subject for which there were other rich sources.⁶⁵ Cratippus did not criticise him for this, however, but rather because his work omitted to mention the rumour that the Hermae had been mutilated by certain Corinthian emissaries.⁶⁶

An invaluable fragment conserved by Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 33), in the section where he reviews the more eccentric scholarly theories on Thucydides' death, indicates that Cratippus lived in Late Antiquity. In fact, in expressing his opinion on this tangled issue, Cratippus favoured the opinion of a certain Zopirus (a late-Hellenistic author), who maintained that Thucydides had died in Thrace, a theory which Marcellinus (or more probably Didymus) defined as "raving" (*ibid.*).⁶⁷ Cratippus, who was completely ignored until the advent of Dionysius and (perhaps) Didymus, and thereafter immediately forgotten, is in fact an author who "emerged" at about that time and whose erudite Συναγωγή of "Thucydidean omissions" is indicative of a certain curiosity regarding the Athenian historian's work, comparable to that evident in a contemporaneous collection by Evagoras of Lindos (a "pupil" of Timagenes of Alexandria)⁶⁸ entitled *Thucydidean Questions in Alphabetical Order* (Τὰ παρὰ Θουκυδίδῃ ζητούμενα κατὰ λέξιν: *FGHist* 619). Moreover, an author who claimed to "know" that from a certain moment onwards, Thucydides' readings had not been well-received, and that this was why the historian had stopped including speeches in his account (except when he was claiming that the eighth Book was unfinished because the speeches were missing),⁶⁹ and who had his own theories on Thucydides' much-debated burial place—such an author, Cratippus, can only have been a late antique scholar, and not one lacking in either passion or imagination.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ At least Andocides, *De mysteriis* and Lysias, *Adversus Andocidem*.

⁶⁶ On the credibility of this, cf. Wilamowitz (1893) 113 n. 7.

⁶⁷ Schwartz (1919) 25–26, n. 1 deduced the inevitable consequences of this data.

⁶⁸ Cf. Jacoby (1907) 828.

⁶⁹ The contradiction was noted by Krüger (1823) 261–63 (Krüger obviously considered the whole of ch. 16 of Dionysius' *de Th.* to be taken from Cratippus).

⁷⁰ The scholar who so impressed Dionysius should not be confused with the Κράτιππος who authored a "first-hand" *Greek History* of the years 411–394 BC, spoken of by Plutarch (*De glor. Ath.* 345d). This work obviously has nothing to do with the "collection of omissions". Von Leutsch (1874), was perhaps not wrong in identifying it as Xenophon's *HG* 1–5.1, which circulated—like *Anabasis*—under a pseudonym, well-chosen by Xenophon the horseman. Mention of this matter can be found in Canfora (1990) 94 (points 1 and 2). I will deal with it elsewhere.

7. *From Rejection by Dionysius to Canonisation*

Cratippus' short scholarly work and Evagoras of Lindos' list fit neatly into the discussion of Thucydides that developed in the first century BC and continued into the next. The "Reply to Dionysius" in the anonymous *Comment on Thucydides II*, conserved in P. Oxy. 853, is a fine illustration (and not the only one) of the nature of this discussion. The criticisms Dionysius makes of Thucydides both in *De Thucydide* and in the *Letter to Pompeius Geminus* (ch. 3) are, at least in part, found in Theon (*Progymn.* I, pp. 184–185 Walz) and in Doxopater (*Commentarium in Aphthonii progymnasmata*, II, p. 220 Walz): but both note the criticisms without agreeing with them. These pieces of information, incomplete though they are, show us that the Thucydidean model struggled to assert itself, and also that the criticism of Thucydides, focusing as it did primarily on the *fragmented nature* of his account, resulted from familiarity with a different kind of account (thematic rather than chronological), created by the Isocratean Ephorus with the narrative arrangement of his *Histories*. What was at issue here was the narration of history itself, together with its inevitable unsuitability for the actual interweaving of facts (facts being intrinsically difficult to weave together). The question of narrative itself is considered by Diodorus Siculus in Book XX, by which point he has long had to abandon Ephorus as a source: narrative is doomed to go "against nature" (παρὰ φύσιν), to μερίζειν (literally "break into pieces") events which actually happen simultaneously (20.43.7).⁷¹ This is obviously the very problem that Dionysius cited in his criticism of Thucydides. However, while Dionysius attributed the difficulty to Thucydides' use of the seasonal year to provide the framework and rhythm for his account (I, 335.20–336.12 U.-R.), the anonymous author of P. Oxy. 853 correctly points out that even if Thucydides had used the *archon* year, this would have changed nothing, and that Dionysius is therefore contradicting himself. He also adds—in defence of Thucydides—that "when the subject is unitary and the chronology does not prevent it, Thucydides' narrative is continuous" (col. III, 2–4: immediately afterwards there is a gap and it is therefore not clear what example is given, but he would seem to be speaking of the Books dealing with the campaign in Sicily).

⁷¹ Schwartz (1903) 687, and (1905) 1855, imagines Duris of Samos to be the source of this idea.

Nevertheless, Dionysius' criticism of Thucydides' narrative technique should not be allowed to overshadow an important detail: with Dionysius himself, Thucydides is already beginning to be recognized as a historian interested above all in the "truth". This idea is particularly recurrent in the first chapters of the short treatise and culminates in: "All the philosophers and all the rhetoricians, or at least the great majority of them, have paid tribute to him, recognising that to the truth—whose priestess, as it were, we wish history to be—he devoted himself whole-heartedly: he added nothing to and took nothing from his account that he should not have; he never wrote capriciously, and in fact kept his work completely free from envy and adulation, particularly in his assessments of the great protagonists" (*De Th.* 8).

This important testimony from Dionysius raises a question: whom was he referring to when he spoke of "all (or almost all) the philosophers and rhetoricians"? His testimony is confirmed by an equally clear statement by Cicero in a passage of *Orator* in which he imagines himself conversing with an Atticistic admirer of Thucydides: *Quis porro unquam Graecorum rhetorum a Thucydide quicquam duxit?* "At laudatus est ab omnibus". *Fateor, sed ita ut rerum explicator prudens, severus, gravis* ("further, who ever of Greek rhetoricians took anything from Thucydides? 'But he has been praised by all.' I admit this—but praised as an intelligent, austere, dignified recounter of events", *Orator*, 31). Cicero distinguishes between appreciation of Thucydides in the field of the art of speaking and appreciation of the "prudent" and "rigorous" historian, and clearly asserts that "everyone", thus not only "*rhetores*", recognised the historian as possessing these qualities. Here *severus* corresponds to the first part of Dionysius' evaluation ("he added nothing to and took nothing from his account that he should not have") and *prudens* to "he never wrote capriciously".⁷² There was, then, an already-established opinion about Thucydides which had been passed down to the age of Cicero and Dionysius and upon which both seem to draw.

When he referred to "the philosophers", Dionysius must have been thinking of the Aristotelian tradition; he was certainly not thinking

⁷² Aujac (1991) 148, incorrectly asserts that Dionysius was mistaken and with the benefit of hindsight attributed the pro-Thucydides consensus prevailing in his own time to previous generations.

of Plato, who deals harshly with Themistocles and Pericles in *Gorgias*, portraying the very two Athenian politicians for whom Thucydides reserved his most heartfelt praise as corrupters and demagogues.⁷³ Another indication that Aristotle wanted to distance himself from Plato on this important historiographical point too is the way in which the former expresses himself in the *Constitution of Athens* (28.1), where he includes Pericles among the ranks of the great and esteemed “leaders” and portrays his death as a watershed (“after Pericles’ death things got worse”). Aristotle’s *explicitly* expressed esteem for Thucydides is evident to us in a single surviving “fragment”, the long translation from Τεχνῶν Συναγωγή that Cicero inserted at the beginning of *Brutus* (46–47) and that culminates in praise for both Antiphon’s speech in his own defence in 411 and Thucydides’ eye-witness account of it (*ibid.* 47).⁷⁴

We know little of Theophrastus’ Περὶ ἱστορίας but it is unlikely that it did not deal with the major historians of the previous century. Thanks to Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 28–29) we know a little more about a similar work by Praxiphanes, and can deduce that in that text, which was probably in the form of dialogues, Thucydides was the “representative” of historians. This data helps us to understand Dionysius’ brief but unambiguous reference.

It would be interesting (albeit perhaps impossible) to establish whether those “philosophers” to whom Dionysius refers actually used the significant term “truth”, and if so, with what precise meaning. Interestingly, too, it is in this very passage that Dionysius expresses his concept of historiography as “priestess of truth”: this is both a formula and a “statement of intent” and would seem to allude to other philosophical reflections (it recalls Diodorus Siculus’ introduction in which historians are defined as “priests of humanity”).

Of course, “truth” is the (extremely significant) word that Thucydides himself uses to define the result of his own work in contrast to that of the historians who came before him (1.20.3).⁷⁵ Immediately afterwards he describes the effort involved in reporting “the things that were *actually* said” by the protagonists of the events he narrates, and

⁷³ Th. 1.138.3: eulogy to Themistocles; 2.65: eulogy to Pericles.

⁷⁴ *Se audiente locuples auctor scripsit Thucydides* (Aristot. fr. 137 Rose = fr. 125 Gigon). And *locuples* here means *fere id quod fide dignus*.

⁷⁵ If, as is probable, the previous allusions are to Herodotus, it is worth noting that the claim is to “truth” greater than the latter’s.

boasts of the “toil” (ἐπιπόνως) that the “careful checking of every single fact” (ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἑκάστου) required. Then, to define the fruits of his labour, he uses another term (τὸ σαφές: “absolute clarity”), which is equivalent to nothing less than “truth” (1.22).

It is from these extremely clear premises, which demonstrate the historian’s strong sense of his own worth, that the very nature of Thucydides’ writing derives: it always provides the reader with a “single truth” as the conclusive and *unambiguous* result of his research, in contrast to Herodotus’ approach which involved the consciously dubious juxtaposition of the different versions of the facts he had collected. In short, Thucydides himself was the first to make a valid contribution to the process of his own mythologisation as “priest of truth”.

“Truth” here has two meanings: truth in the sense of verifying the facts and truth in the sense of balanced judgment of the protagonists of the affair. Dionysius himself seems immediately disposed to favour the second meaning, which allows him to praise Thucydides for his ability to steer clear of both malice and adulation. He distinguishes characters whom he did not begrudge significant recognition (Themistocles⁷⁶ and Pericles) from those about whom he said “what was appropriate for each” (Demosthenes,⁷⁷ Nicias, Alcibiades). A well-articulated theory on this can be found in Marcellinus (*Vit. Thuc.* 27). Marcellinus’ thinking is inspired by the “*stratēgos*” and “exile” affair. He praises Thucydides for not having “harboured resentment towards the Athenians” and, as “a friend to the truth” (φιλαλήθης), for not having “written abusively” of Cleon⁷⁸ or even of Brasidas, “the man responsible for his misfortune”. Here Marcellinus introduces a comparison with “the majority of historians”, whom he reproaches for exactly the kind of “personal resentment” that led them to “disregard the truth” (ἥκιστα μελήσαν ἀντοῖς τῆς ἀληθείας). The first target of his criticism is Herodotus (already attacked by Plutarch in the monograph *De malignitate Herodoti*), who, “having been

⁷⁶ Th. 1.138.3 is quoted by Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 10.8.7; *Brutus* 47; Cornelius Nepos, *Them.* 10; Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 51.

⁷⁷ Modern commentators object that there is no praise of Demosthenes in Thucydides, but the reference is probably to his recognition of the fact that the plan that led to victory at Pylos was Demosthenes’, cf. Pritchett (1975) 58.

⁷⁸ As Marcellinus gathers material from various sources, we find him in § 46 claiming the opposite, namely that Cleon caused Thucydides to be exiled and that this is why Thucydides portrays him as a madman.

ill-treated by the Corinthians, took revenge by maintaining that they had fled from battle at Salamis". Then it is the turn of Timaeus (whom Polybius had also lambasted for the same reason), of Philistos, who "conducts a war of words against Dionysius II", and finally of Xenophon, on account of the end of the second Book of *Anabasis*, where he paints an offensive and destructive portrait of Meno, a friend of Plato's, motivated by malicious rivalry towards the latter.⁷⁹

Over a period of some centuries, from Dionysius' proclamation of φιλαλήθεια as a Thucydidean virtue to Marcellinus' definition in his introduction of ἀκρίβεια πραγμάτων as Thucydides' main characteristic, there were successive stages in the growth of the Thucydidean "cult". We will point out just a few, noting that the "theoretical" culmination of this development came at the end of the 2nd century AD with Lucian's pamphlet *How to Write a Work of History* (Πῶς δεῖ ἱστορίαν συγγράφειν).

Even in Josephus' *In Apionem* from the end of the first century AD, a work which aimed to denigrate the whole body of Greek history writing as mendacious or at least disputable, Thucydides receives special, albeit reluctantly expressed, praise (Josephus moreover draws systematically upon him in writing his *Bellum Iudaicum*). Josephus' provocative strategy in the pamphlet *In Apionem* involves highlighting not only the contradictions between various Greek historians but also the various disputes between them. Josephus is of course guilty of "sophistry" in the way that he portrays as accusations of lying what are often simply refutations of facts or corrections of erroneous information. The picture Josephus paints of Greek history writing is therefore rather like an immense "court of history" in which Ephorus accuses Hellanicus of "lies", Timaeus in turn makes the same accusation against Ephorus and so on until the emblematic "everyone accuses Herodotus".⁸⁰ "Even on the subject of the Persian expedition," he adds, "there is disagreement among the most famous historians about what actually happened" (and here the deliberate confusion of disagreement and accusation of lying is very clearly discernible) "and even Thucydides was accused by some of being a falsifier, even though he appears (δοκῶν) to have written the history

⁷⁹ The idea of a rivalry between Plato and Xenophon was rather widespread (Aulus Gellius 14.3; Ath. 11.504e–505b; D.L. 2.57).

⁸⁰ *Ap.* 1.3.16.

of his time in the most accurate form possible" (1.3.18). In this sentence, designed to concede as little as possible to Thucydides (notwithstanding his special status), the full ambivalence of *δοκεῖν* is evident: it indicates what "appears" to others (and therefore might not be true but merely an "opinion", *δόξα*) but also what appears to the writer: it is an expression which does not rule out the writer sharing the opinion, yet does not commit him to it.

Whom or what was Josephus thinking of when he wrote that "some" contradict Thucydides? A work like Cratippus' *Collection of Thucydides' Omissions* would certainly have been an ideal source of material for the debate.

The influence of Thucydides on Josephus was profound. It is not simply a case of someone adopting a literary model particularly well suited to a monograph on a historically significant war (or one which is considered to be historically significant by the historian relating it). One need only think of the opening (after the introductory) chapters of Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum* or of Livy's introduction to the war against Hannibal (Book XXI), or even of the introduction to Tacitus' *Historiae*. In the preface to his first Book Josephus brings together some of the main ideas from Thucydides' work and shows that he has given particularly serious thought to the pages where Thucydides reflects upon and evaluates his own writing. One obvious example is the contrast between "truth" and "entertainment" ("my work is written for lovers of the truth and not to gratify my readers",⁸¹ which clearly recalls Thucydides' contrast between "immediate public acclaim" and "enduring value", between *ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρήμα ἀκούειν* and *κτῆμα ἐς αἰετῆ*).⁸² Another example is his claim to be reporting the truth (the truth was particularly painful for Josephus, who had experienced defeat and become convinced that the conquerors were in the right, whilst remaining intent on refuting the monstrous distortions of the truth that his people had been the victims of).⁸³ But perhaps the best example is the original evaluation of the causes of defeat; it is here that we see the profound influence of Thucydides on Josephus' mind (2.65.11–13): in fact he writes (1.9–12) that the real cause of defeat was not so much Roman military superiority as

⁸¹ *Bellum Iudaicum* 1.30; I adopt H.St.J. Thackeray's effective and accurate translation (*Loeb Classical Library*).

⁸² Th. 1.22.4.

⁸³ *Bellum Iudaicum* 1.2; 1.7–8.

internal στάσις, the divisions which tore the Jews apart and for which all the blame lay with the “leaders of the people” (τύραννοι) and their “brigand-like” behaviour. This is clearly inspired by what may rightly be considered Thucydides’ final assessment of the reasons for the Athenian defeat; it culminates in a well-argued denunciation of ἴδιαι διαβολαί and of ἴδιαι διαφοραί.⁸⁴ There is no point here in going into Josephus’ many borrowings from Thucydides; it is perhaps more worthwhile to note that this aspect of his work was often underlined by those who came after him. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (died ca. 1335), paid tribute to him as φιλαλήθης παρ’ Ἑβραίοις ἱστορικὸς Ἰώσηπος (“Jewish historian, friend of the truth”): Josephus had a good reputation amongst Christians thanks especially to his famous and controversial *testimonium* on Jesus), and drew a significant parallel: Philo “looked to Plato; Josephus to Thucydides”, in particular ἐν τῷ δημηγορεῖν, that is “in the oratorical parts”.⁸⁵ Obviously these words amount to a tribute from the Byzantine historian not only to Josephus but also to Thucydides.

Mention has already been made of Plutarch and his contribution to the partial demolition of Herodotus’ credibility through the *pamphlet* on his κακοήθεια (*malignitas*).⁸⁶ Here it should be added that for Plutarch too the positive “counterpart” to Herodotus’ approach to writing history was Thucydides. Plutarch also saw Herodotus’ inclusion of the infamous “slander” of the Corinthians (who, according to an Athenian rumour, fled the scene of battle at Salamis) as one of the most serious signs of the weakness of his approach. He observes that if the Athenians had not even mentioned this misdeed (Thucydides’ account of the “Congress at Sparta”: 1.73–74), it was because the rumour was completely unfounded and should not even have been considered for inclusion.⁸⁷ Thucydides’ account is thus the “yardstick” of truth. In fact Thucydides is a paragon of balanced writing even in cases where he would have had good reason to adopt a harsh tone: he “made no explicit report (σαφῇ διήγησιν) of Cleon’s countless mistakes (ἁμαρτήματα, possibly even *crimes*)”—it is ironic

⁸⁴ Th. 2.65.11–12.

⁸⁵ *Historia Ecclesiastica* in: *PG* 145, coll. 747 (φιλαλήθης) and 801 (“Thucydidean” Josephus).

⁸⁶ To which Estienne reacted in a treatise which also deals with various other subjects.

⁸⁷ *Moralia* 87d.

that the historian is praised here for not having written a σαφής account!—"and as far as Hyperbolos was concerned, he managed to limit himself to a single word and moved on to another subject".⁸⁸ Here the reason why Thucydides *should have* had a hostile attitude towards Cleon is apparent: it was not because he personally had been damaged by Cleon's wicked behaviour but because that behaviour was *generally* deserving condemnation. Evidently Plutarch is not acquainted with the version according to which Cleon was Thucydides' *accuser* and thus the man responsible for his exile.⁸⁹

8. *Epilogue*

In a period in which the prevailing literary taste was decidedly Atticistic, Thucydides was without rivals as the writer to emulate. Lucian's proclamation that Thucydides was—if only for reasons of content and method, not style—the "legislator" for the history-writing genre (*Hist. conscr.* 42) cannot be considered a random judgment. Lucian's *pamphlet* was written around 165 BC, after the campaigns of Avidius Cassius and Lucius Verus in Armenia and Parthia. Being of Syrian origin, Lucian knew the places and events better than the court historians who had recounted these wars and was certainly not inspired by any special devotion to the idea of Roman supremacy. After lambasting the history-writing of his time as servile towards those in power and sycophantic to the point of becoming ridiculous in its imitation of Thucydides, Lucian offers a profile of the ideal historian (ch. 41): "This then is how I believe the historian should be: fearless, incorruptible, free, a friend of the truth and of free speech, one who—as the comic poet said⁹⁰—calls a spade a spade, one who is never induced out of friendship or hatred to be lenient or deny [. . .], an impartial judge [. . .], one who, when he writes, has neither fatherland nor city nor sovereign, [. . .] one who reports what actually happened (τί πέπρακται, *wie es eigentlich gewesen*)".⁹¹ According to Lucian, the "legislator" responsible for this austere code

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 855c. The "single word" to which Plutarch refers is μοχθηρόν (Th. 8.73.3).

⁸⁹ Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 46.

⁹⁰ Aristophanes, according to Tzetzes (*Historiarum Varianum Chiliades* 8.568). Modern commentators are dubious about this.

⁹¹ Ranke's famous phrase.

of conduct (“historians have neither fatherland nor sovereign”) was Thucydides (ch. 42: τοῦτο ἐνομοθέτησε). He would have been encouraged to formulate it after seeing the great success enjoyed by Herodotus, reflecting on this, and coming to the decision to renounce the prospect of spectacular “temporary success”. Once again, then, Herodotus is cited as the negative side of the coin, an example of how the historian should not be. It is also interesting to note that from the objective of “truth”—the only one that Thucydides proclaimed—Lucian deduced the rest.

This success leads to Thucydides’ subsequent triumphant march through late antique and Byzantine historical and rhetorical/scholastic literature: from Dio Cassius to Zosimus and Procopius,⁹² and on to Anna Comnena. After the fall of Byzantium, Michael Critobulos was to narrate the story of Mohammed II, conqueror of Constantinople, in perfectly Thucydidean Greek and with “realpolitik” devotion to the victor. This can be considered the end of an extremely long story, which began when Thucydides wrote out the first page (“das erste Blatt”) of the work which Immanuel Kant, following in David Hume’s footsteps, described as “der einzige Anfang aller wahren Geschichte”.⁹³

⁹² He adopts the Thucydidean system of dividing his account into “years of war” and his dialogue between Belisarius and the Goths is modelled on the Melian Dialogue (*De bellis* 6.6); cf. Braun (1885); see also Reinsch, this volume.

⁹³ Kant (1912) 29.

BYZANTINE ADAPTATIONS OF THUCYDIDES

Diether Roderich Reinsch

Byzantine historiography, justifiably regarded as the apogee of Byzantine literature, combines different concepts and tendencies: the description of the creation of the world and the salvation of mankind, the development of the Christian faith and the organization of the church, and contemporary history. The chronicles produced from the fourth century onwards describe the creation of the world and the salvation of mankind, while the development of Christianity is dealt with by church historians between the fourth and the end of the sixth century (with echoes in the fourteenth century). Contemporary history is concerned with periods of imperial history, in each case up to the time of the author, or deals with outstanding events such as the siege and capture of the capital or of Thessalonica. From the middle Byzantine period (i.e., from about the tenth century) onward we come across different combinations of chronicle and contemporary history, with either one or the other concept prevailing.¹ Each concept had its own corresponding readership and its own form of linguistic or stylistic representation; chronicle and church history was intended more for a general readership with an average literary education, whereas contemporary history as a rule required familiarity with a form of language and style which we have come to refer to as “atticistic”; to master this demanded a special form of education. The authors of such “atticistic” works were continuing the historiographic tradition of Greek antiquity—sometimes imparted through Byzantine intermediaries—and were quite aware of this tradition. Nicetas Choniates expressed it very well at the beginning of the thirteenth century: “the best thing, historiography, the finest invention of the Greeks” (τὸ βέλτιστον χρῆμα, τὴν ἱστορίαν, καὶ κάλλιστον εὔρημα τῶν Ἑλλήνων).²

¹ See Beck (1965); Hunger (1978) 243–56; Ljubarskij (1987).

² Niketas Choniates, *Historia* 580, 94–95 van Dieten.

Thucydides, together with Herodotus, Diodorus, Polybius, and Plutarch (to name but the most prominent), was the linguistic and conceptual model for Byzantine historical writers from the beginning to the end of the Byzantine empire, albeit with varying intensity. The prerequisite knowledge of his work is reflected both in manuscript records and in the literary opinions of Byzantine authors.

In the Byzantine era (330–1453 AD), Thucydides' text was documented for us in individual papyri up to the sixth century, and from the end of the ninth century onwards in a continuous stream of codices, with one lull in the twelfth century and pronounced peaks in the fourteenth, and above all, fifteenth century.³ There are no testimonies for the "dark centuries" between the seventh and ninth centuries, a time when the empire was facing a severe crisis in both foreign and internal policy. It is only after the majuscule manuscript tradition was transliterated into the newly developed minuscule that documentation recommenced, with, among others, the cod. Heidelberg. Palat. gr. 252 (E)⁴ and the cod. Laur. LXIX 2 (C).⁵ The latter codex from the tenth century is the still-recognizable link back to the sixth century, to the former tradition, since it contains a Latin subscription which has been identified as a quotation of a subscription to a codex which can be dated to the fifth-sixth century.⁶

Further evidence of Thucydides' presence in the literature of Byzantium⁷ can be found in Byzantine literary criticism, even when opinions about him are negative. The high esteem in which Thucydides is held in the early Byzantine period concurs with the view that prevailed in Late Antiquity,⁸ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for instance, despite all of his specific criticisms, and in accordance with general

³ See the list of manuscripts and papyri in Alberti (1972–2000) 1.IX–XXXIX; Pérez Martín (2002).

⁴ On the redating of this manuscript from the previously generally-accepted tenth–eleventh century to the end of the ninth century, see Irigoin (1977) 242–44, esp. 243 n. 2.

⁵ See Alberti (1972–2000) 1.II–XII.

⁶ See J.E. Powell (1938) 79. Cavallo (1992) 95–98 gives a graphic analysis of the subscription *Deo gratias Petrus scripsit* and convincingly argues that C was transcribed without intermediaries directly from a sixth century majuscule codex, in all probability in Constantinople. For further implications of these findings, see Luzzatto (1993) and Pernigotti (2001).

⁷ On the following, see Basilikopoulou (1992); Taragna (2000) 54; Pérez Martín (2002) 133–47.

⁸ On the development of the historiographical canon, see Nicolai (1992).

opinion, referred to Thucydides as the best of all historiographers and the most outstanding of all writers,⁹ the one who set the standard for historiographical treatises. For the Byzantine school tradition, Thucydides is “the writer” (ὁ συγγραφεύς), the historian absolute. Yet the Byzantines do not treat him uncritically as far as his clarity of style is concerned, and this is also entirely in accordance with the literary criticism of Late Antiquity.¹⁰ In fact, lack of clarity (σαφήνεια) is something his critics have consistently accused him of, especially in the middle Byzantine period. Photius does not devote a separate section to Thucydides’ work in his *Bibliotheca*, but his views on the matter of clarity are hinted at in several places, for example when he writes of Dio Cassius that he is “excellent and an emulator of Thucydides, however, with a stronger inclination toward clarity” (ἄριστος καὶ μιμητὴς Θουκυδίδου, πλὴν εἴ τι πρὸς τὸ σαφέστερον ἀφορᾷ).¹¹ For Michael Psellus, too, Thucydides remains “the writer”, even though as a historiographer Psellus expressly does not follow his example in the structure of his work¹² and more than once criticizes his style as too verbose.¹³ But the harshest, most vitriolic criticism is expressed in the twelfth century by John Tzetzes, in the dodecasyllables he wrote in his own hand in the margins of the oldest-surviving Thucydides codex (Heidelberg. Palat. gr. 255, symbol E).¹⁴ In the best known of these pasquilles,¹⁵ the last entry, which encapsulates his opinion of Thucydides, Tzetzes expresses his wish that instead of simply being banished, the historian had been thrown, along with his work, into an underground dungeon, since his dark, wooden style has hidden rather than transmitted the testimony of time.¹⁶ Thucydides’

⁹ Θουκυδίδην τὸν ἀπάντων κράτιστον τῶν ιστοριογράφων . . . κανόνα τῆς ἱστορικῆς πραγματείας . . . τὸν ἐπιφανέστατον τῶν συγγραφέων (Περὶ Θουκυδίδου 2 = V 327,1-2. 11-12. 23-24 Usener-Radermacher = VII 2,2 Aujac). For details of Dionysius’ criticism, see Taragna (2000) 33-40.

¹⁰ See Basilikopoulou (1992) 72 n. 28.

¹¹ Photios, *Bibliotheca* 1.105.31-32 Henry.

¹² *Chronographia* VI 73, 10-11 Impellizzeri μήθ’, ὡς ὁ συγγραφεὺς πεποίηκεν, εἰς τὰς τοῦ ἔτους ὥρας αὐτήν (sc. τὴν ἱστορίαν) διελόμενος (“nor have I, unlike the writer, put the description in order of the seasons”).

¹³ *Oratoria minora*, Or. 19,65 Littlewood: Θουκυδίδην μὲν ὁ λόγος εἰς ὑπερβάλλοντα ὄγκον. Further passages in Basilikopoulou (1992) 74f.

¹⁴ See Luzzatto (1999).

¹⁵ See Baldwin (1982).

¹⁶ See Luzzatto (1999) 134: ἔδει μὲν εἰς γόργυραν, ᾧ Θουκυδίδην, / τοὺς Ἀττικοὺς ῥίψαι σε σὺν τῷ βιβλίῳ, / οὐκ ὀστρακίζειν Θρακικοῖς γε τοῖς ὅροις. / οὐχ’ ἱστορῶν φαίνη γὰρ ἃ προὔβη πάλαι, / κρύπτων δὲ μᾶλλον ἃ παρῆξεν ὁ χρόνος / τῷ σῷ

language, Tzetzes maintains a few lines further on, was twisted; he wrote “distorted and twisted sentences” (λοξοσύστροφοι λόγοι). In an earlier marginal note, Tzetzes had already described Thucydides’ style as dark and wooden and Thucydides himself as someone who constructs sentences “like a joiner”.¹⁷

The criticism of Thucydides voiced by the literati of the middle Byzantine period is noticeably consistent with the finding that, during exactly that period of time, i.e., between Theophylactus Simocates (seventh century) and John Cantacuzenus (fourteenth century), there was no particular *imitatio* of Thucydides among the Byzantine historians, either in the overall structure of their works or in specific parts of them. Statements to the contrary in handbooks are without foundation. Thus, especially in earlier literature, it was incorrectly emphasized time and again that Anna Comnena had taken Thucydides in particular as a model in her *Alexiad*,¹⁸ whereas in reality, as G. Buckler pointed out in her 1929 monograph,¹⁹ Anna Comnena does not quote Thucydides either in the proem or anywhere else.²⁰ What did remain consistent throughout the whole period of Byzantine historiography in the learned language was a general linguistic character,

σκοτεινῶ καὶ ξυλῶδει τοῦ λόγου (“The people of Attica should have thrown you, Thucydides, together with your book, into the abyss instead of banishing you to Thrace. For you are obviously not reporting what happened at an earlier time, but are rather hiding through the darkness and woodenness of your speech what time has brought on”).

¹⁷ Luzzatto (1999) 32 τὸ δ’ αὖ σκοτεινὸν καὶ παράξυλον λόγου . . . τὸν ξυλουργούντα λόγους (“the darkness and woodenness of speech . . . who constructs words like a joiner”).

¹⁸ Krumbacher (1897) 276: “her models are Thucydides and Polybius”; Moravcsik (1958) 220: “Among the classical historiographers it is, above all, Thucydides who is her model”. See also Luschnat (1970) 1308; Fourlas (1980) 655: “A(nna)’s lit(erary) models were primarily Thucydides and Polybius”.

¹⁹ Buckler (1929) 205: “Curiously enough, Anna does not explicitly acknowledge any debt to Thucydides; she never quotes him or mentions him by name”.

²⁰ A phrase like *Alexiad* 3.1.4 (52) Reinsch-Kambylis ὡς . . . εὐνοίας ἢ μίσους εἶχε or 3.2.6 (57–58) R.-K. ὡς ἕκαστος εὐνοίας ἢ μίσους εἶχε (“depending on either goodwill or hatred”) is not a genuine quotation from Th. 1.22.3, ὡς ἑκατέρων τις εὐνοίας ἢ μνήμης ἔχει, but a topos developed from Thucydides; see Arrian, *An.* 7.14.2: ὡς ἕκαστος ἢ εὐνοίας πρὸς Ἡφαιστίωνα ἢ φθόνῳ εἶχε; Dio Cassius 47.9.2: ὡς πού καὶ εὐνοίας ἢ μίσους πρὸς τινα ἔχοντες ἦσαν. The same goes for the phrase προὔπτος ὁ κίνδυνος, *Alexiad* 8.1.4 (48) (“immediate threat of danger”), cf., e.g., Th. 5.99: ἐς προὔπτον κίνδυνον. It was also a common phrase, see Arr. *Ind.* 20.4; Procopius, *De bellis* 6.24.5. Anna had, of course, read Thucydides. She recalls how on his mission Themistocles kept the Spartans waiting until Athens had been refortified after the Persian invasion (Th. 1.90–91). However, she confuses Themistocles and Alcibiades, which suggests that she is referring to the story from memory.

partly influenced by Thucydides, which stemmed from the “atticism” or classicism of these authors.²¹ Thucydides had been an acknowledged linguistic model from the Second Sophistic onward,²² so it is not surprising that Byzantine historians who wrote in a classicistic style followed Thucydides’ linguistic pattern particularly closely. The long line of these authors stretches in an early sequence from Late Antiquity/Early Byzantium to the seventh century (Dexippus—Priscus—Malchus—Procopius—Agathias—Menander Protector—Evagrius—John of Epiphaneia—Theophylactus Simocates).²³ Thereafter there was no further connection with Thucydides, aside from the general classicism of the language, until Paleologean times, when authors like John Cantacuzenus, Laonicus Chalcocondyles, and Critobulus of Imbros turned increasingly toward classical Greek antiquity.

A comprehensive survey by Guyla Moravcsik gave us important insights into the nature of the Byzantine historians’ *imitatio* of the classical historiographers, in particular Thucydides. Moravcsik saw it mainly as a means of “stimulating discourse”, “enhancing the artistic effect”, and “displaying the authors’ classical education”;²⁴ he argued against the opinion, expressed repeatedly and about various authors, that because they borrowed passages from the classical authors, in particular Thucydides, the events described there either had not taken place at all or, if they had, had borne no relation to the events described by Thucydides. Moravcsik’s argument made particular reference to the capture of Naissus by the Huns in the year 441, described by Priscus, and to Procopius’ description of the bubonic plague of 542.

²¹ On this, see the very pertinent observations of Böhlig (1956) 1–17.

²² Phrynichus in Photius, *Bibliotheca* 2.118.4–8 Henry “guiding principle and law and best example of the true and purely Attic speech, he says, were Plato and Demosthenes with the circle of the nine orators, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Aischines” (εἰλικρινοῦς δὲ καὶ καθαρὸν καὶ ἀττικὸν λόγου κανόνας καὶ σταθμὰς καὶ παράδειγμά φησι ἄριστον Πλάτωνά τε καὶ Δημοσθένην μετὰ τοῦ ῥητορικοῦ τῶν ἐννέα χοροῦ, Θουκυδίδην τε καὶ Ξενοφῶντα καὶ Αἰσχίνην . . .). See also the subject index in Wilhelm Schmid (1897) 46 s.v. Thukydides. On Thucydides’ influence on the Gaza school of rhetoric, see Balász (1940); Tosi (1981).

²³ For an evaluation of this author, who continues Thucydidean practice (insertion of speeches) in the general pattern of his work, yet in many other respects heralds the middle Byzantine period (dealing with the biography of an emperor, focussing on the East, plainly recognizable Christianity, inthronization speeches as a new type of oratory), see Taragna (2000) 194–204.

²⁴ Moravcsik (1966) 369.

The debate concerning Procopius was stirred up by Brückner (1896), after casual remarks in this vein had already been made by Braun and Duwe.²⁵ Brückner reproduced all the prejudices that in his time still prevailed about Byzantium in general and Procopius in particular. In his opinion, the audience of the sixth century was “way below the intellectual level” of that of Pericles’ time, and Procopius clearly had a “Byzantine mentality”. The first point of Brückner’s undertaking was therefore to establish “that in his imitation mania Procopius not only decked himself with foreign plumes, but was tempted into telling various untruths”. He voiced the suspicion that Procopius had “more or less invented situations . . . which matched the relevant passages in Thucydides”, and that it was only “the delight in shining with Thucydidean diction” that had led him to describe the bubonic plague in Byzantium in the first place. In keeping with the then-prevailing literary taste for psychological realism, Brückner also disapproved of the fact that “Thucydidean phrases and sentences are being put into the mouths of people who will have hardly ever laid eyes on any speech of this historiographer”.

As far as Priscus and the description of the siege of Naissus are concerned, E.A. Thompson (1945) gave the verdict “that by borrowing Thucydides’ phrases Priscus has endowed the Huns with a military technique which it is quite impossible that they can have possessed”. According to Thompson, the Huns could hardly have possessed the technical know-how to undertake a siege of the kind required to capture a city like Naissus, being a tribe of horsemen from the steppes and barely out of the Stone Age.

Following on from Moravcsik’s objections, Blockley (1972) also refuted Thompson’s arguments in detail. Blockley pointed out that although the Huns did not themselves have high technical standards in, say, metalworking, they could nevertheless have made use of the knowledge of the Ostrogoths, whom they had conquered; that they must have seized war machinery in the cities they had already captured; and that it was highly unlikely that all the cities they captured had fallen into their hands as a result of treason, or through them defeating the cities’ defenders outside the city walls without any proper siege at all. Thus Blockley quite correctly proposed the fol-

²⁵ H. Braun (1886) 207 *equidem dubitare non possum, quin res ipsas depromptserit e Thucydide* and 221 *non semel Thucydidi nimis inservientem a veritate deflexisse . . . demonstravimus*. Duwe (1885) 7 *noster videtur multa ad libidinem finxisse neque rem sed verba saepe secutus est*.

lowing universal principle: "Verbal imitation by itself is no proof of historical unreliability". Baldwin (1980), who in part repeats Blockley's arguments and speaks of a mixture of "fact and fiction", adopts a conciliatory position: "The siege is not to be classified as an out-and-out fiction. But one must be wary of the details".

In the case of Procopius, Soyter (1951), following Haury (1896), refuted Brückner's views and in particular stressed the differences between the two descriptions of the epidemic, pointing out that the plague of 542 had been an intense personal experience for Procopius, and that the fact that he had described it in a historical work could hardly be attributed to literary inspiration.

In his short essay, Moravcsik (1966) drew attention to another aspect of Byzantine historiography, namely its literariness, a quality that has been accepted as a matter of course and praised in the case of classical historians like Herodotus and Thucydides, yet criticized in the case of the Byzantines. Nobody with, for example, Brückner's aesthetic judgment of realism has reproached Thucydides for the fact that, say, the Melian Dialogue was a completely "unrealistic" literary invention.²⁶ Moravcsik argued emphatically that the works of the Byzantine historians should not merely be regarded as sources, quarries for so-called historical facts, but also as literature: "The characteristic of Byzantine historiography demands that we change the one-sided viewpoint which regards the historical work as a mere source, and view the source as a literary work in its own right".²⁷ Even in cases where a historical event has been given a fictional touch, one should not necessarily doubt that the reported event actually took place. Moravcsik's student Benedicty, taking an episode recounted by Priscus and crafted in the form of a short story in imitation of Herodotus, talked in this context of the "method of historiographical novelization", defining it thus: "The method of historiographical novelization consists of the historian bringing together authentic historical facts, which, however, have nothing to do with one another, and giving them a new fictitious context within a novelistic framework".²⁸

²⁶ Although for ancient critics such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the Melian Dialogue in particular was a violation of the proper (*πρέπον*); see Taragna (2000) 39.

²⁷ The debate about the theses of Ljubarskij (1998) demonstrates that the subject is far from exhausted even in present-day Byzantine studies.

²⁸ Benedicty (1964) 8.

So a particular challenge for the Byzantine writer was to ennoble the concrete contemporary event he was describing with linguistic material taken from the work of the great historians and adapted for his own purposes; consequently, in the early and late Byzantine period, certain famous passages from Thucydides were frequently used in the accounts of Byzantine historians who likewise had to deal with sieges and epidemics, and who also clothed their analysis of military and political circumstances in the literary form of a commander's speech. Hence the frequent *imitatio* of certain passages from Thucydides, such as those describing the siege of Plataea, the epidemic in Athens, several speeches and sets of corresponding speeches.²⁹ Time and time again, individual Byzantine authors were able to find an exact match for their specific topic in the work of Thucydides.³⁰

The deeper implications of such *imitatio* have only been explored in more recent times. Initial research into Thucydidean imitation in the second half of the nineteenth century was mainly concerned with more precisely establishing the linguistic adaptations from Thucydides by Procopius, the best-known historian of Late Antiquity. Procopius (not least through the scientific work and historical novel of Felix Dahn [1865 and 1876 respectively]) had gained great popularity both within and outside the field of Byzantine studies. His *imitatio* of Thucydides was first investigated comprehensively by Braun (1885), who divided the extensive material into subjects (*Proemium, Tempus et loca, Vitae ac mores, Orationes et epistulae, Morbi, Bellum et pax, Pugnae, Obsidiones*). Braun's scientific objectives were to demonstrate how well known Thucydides was in the sixth century, to determine how *imitatio* contributed to the textual criticism of Procopius, and to confirm his authorship of the *Anecdota* by identifying the practice of Thucydidean *imitatio* there and in the *Bella*. Duwe (1885) independently presented a similar collection of material, though his is ordered into formal categories (*sententiae, locutiones, singula vocabula, syntactica, structurae*). A similarly structured study was also carried out by Franke (1914) on Agathias (*imitationes longiores, sententiae similes, dictiones vocabulaque paria ac similia, participia et adjectiva, substantiva, verba desiderativa*).

²⁹ On the possibility of such passages having been imparted via handbooks, see Cameron (1964). Against such a supposition, at least with respect to Malchus, see Cresci (1979).

³⁰ An example is John Cantacuzenus, who for his account of the popular uprising in Adrianople in 1341 referred to the chapters in Th. 3.82–83 where Thucydides had written about the *stasis* in Corcyra; see Hunger (1976).

Similar works on a number of other Byzantine authors followed, for example Rödel (1905) on Laonicus Chalcocondyles, Dräseke (1914) on John Cantacuzenus, F.J. Stein (1957) on Dexippus and Herodianus, Mastrodemetres (1961) on Critobulus of Imbros, Bornmann (1974b) on Priscus, Hunger (1976), T.S. Miller (1976) on John Cantacuzenus, Cresci (1979) on Malchus, Baldwin (1981a) on Eusebius, Cresci (1981) on Menander Protector.

But this early research was not confined to collecting material. Questions were also being raised—in a negative way, initially—as to the function of this *imitatio*, by arguing that extensive stylistic *imitatio* called into question the credibility of the imitator, or by suggesting that his account either had no factual basis at all or, at best, was based on facts whose essence had been distorted by the account. Here, again, Procopius was initially the main focus of interest.³¹

Braun and Duwe had already made this claim against him *in nuce*,³² and the controversy was argued out along the lines described above (primarily with reference to Procopius and Priscus).

However, more recent research has shown that Byzantine historians used Thucydidean *imitatio* not only to enhance their own texts stylistically but also to enhance their protagonists' standing by giving them hidden dimensions. Once again, it is primarily Procopius who is the focus of interest here. Bornmann (1974a) makes reference to Procopius' use of Thucydidean *imitatio* to further improve the positive image of Theoderic: Thucydides' Pericles becomes visible behind Theoderic, thus revealing the counterpole to Justinian and Theodora in a way that is obvious to the cognoscenti yet unassailable by the political authorities. Bornmann is similarly positive about Procopius' employment of the Thucydidean account of the siege of Plataea for his own siege of Naples, where both the historical and the human configuration of Plataea were repeated, albeit in a different form. Bornmann judges Procopius' adaptation to be *ancora un indizio di come Procopio non sia un puro stilista, o, peggio ancora, un centonatore che deriva le tessere del suo mosaico da questa o quella lettura*.

More extensive observations on Procopius' structural adaptations of Thucydidean motives and personal configurations have been contributed by Lia Raffaella Cresci (1986–87). She has shown that the

³¹ Mango (1975) reproached the whole of atticistic Byzantine literature for being unreliable on account of its general classicism.

³² See n. 25 above.

character of Totila is associated very ingeniously with the Thucydidean Pericles, and that—in an even subtler way, politically—John the Cappadocian is on the face of it judged very negatively, in keeping with the official political line, yet clandestinely acquires positive traits through the foil of the Thucydidean Themistocles. Procopius thereby passes a positive judgment on John and a negative one on Justinian. This leads Cresci to draw the following conclusion: *Nell'accostamento di Totila a Pericle e di Giovanni il Cappadoce a Temistocle si può leggere la volontà di suggerire una interpretazione degli eventi diversa da quella espressa esplicitamente, una valutazione accessibile solo a chi sappia cogliere il valore e il significato dell'imitatio.*

Cresci (1986a)³³ has shown that other passages in which Procopius adapts Thucydidean material also require such a *doppia lettura*: Read in this way, his praise for Belisarius, which incorporated Thucydidean phrases relating to Pericles, very clearly expresses a negative judgment on Justinian and the fact that he relieved Belisarius of his command. Similarly, Cresci (1981) was able to demonstrate that in the case of Menander Protector linguistic borrowing from Thucydides goes hand in hand with the adaptation of Thucydides' ideological concepts. Moreover, Cresci argues, the specific selection of Thucydidean motives for the peace oration of Petrus Patricius shows that the author made his choice based on a subtle knowledge of Thucydides' work; by no means did he simply draw on information from handbooks.³⁴

Such ingenious and cryptic adaptations of Thucydidean passages, and the ensuing implicit judgments, are not limited to the authors of the early Byzantine period. Even after the end of the Byzantine Empire, Critobulus of Imbros, in his role as Byzantine historiographer, shows himself to be particularly skillful at using sources in this way. Reinsch (1983) 48*–54*; 67*, has shown how subtly Thucydides was used by this author who, for ideological reasons, had long been reviled as a Turkophile, had (not least for that very reason) been chided for “slavishly imitating” Thucydides, and whose language as a whole is steeped in Thucydidean adaptations. Sultan Mehmed is turned into a great commander in this way, as well as through the subtext, by means of a combination of different elements from Thucydides and Arrian's *Anabasis Alexandri*.

³³ See also Cresci (1986b) 248; 270.

³⁴ Against Cameron (1964).

Mehmed's first long speech, which Critobulus has him deliver in front of his officers in the council of war (*Historiae* 1.14–16), brings together echoes of two speeches by the Thucydidean Pericles (*Epitaphius* and *Third Speech*) in its opening sequence, thus ranking Mehmed alongside Pericles from the start. At a later point in this far-reaching speech, he touches upon the achievements of his ancestors and the rapid expansion of power of the Ottomans, who in a short period of time had conquered the whole of Asia Minor and large parts of Europe. In order to characterize their fighting spirit and courage, he uses—freely adapted—the words that the Corinthian envoys used before the Assembly of the Peloponnesian League to praise the Athenians and emphasize their superiority over the slow and cautious Spartans.

The second long speech, which the Sultan delivers to his commanders and Guards (*Historiae* 1.48–51) in the military camp outside Constantinople, has a very complicated structure in terms of *imitatio*, since as well as using two of Thucydides' speeches, Critobulus also uses the content and context of the speech delivered by Arrian's Alexander the Great before the battle of Gaugamela (*An.* 3.5–8). After raising the soldiers' hopes for great spoils and immortal glory and assuring them that there will be little further resistance, Mehmed gives general rules of conduct for the impending battle. Here Critobulus makes reference to two commander's speeches in Thucydides, that of the Athenian admiral Phormion before the naval battle of Naupectus (Th. 2.89.9) and that of the Spartan Brasidas in Amphipolis. In the latter speech, Brasidas assures his soldiers that he will fight side by side with them (Th. 5.9.9–10). Before that (5.9.7) he turns to his officer Clearidas, just as Critobulus has Sultan Mehmed turn directly to his Viziers Halil and Saruca. Brasidas' address also provided Critobulus with a model for the whole section of Mehmed's speech (*Historiae* 1.51.1–5) in which he turns to his officers and gives them special instructions for the battle. Critobulus thus emphasizes Sultan Mehmed's virtues as a commander through the subtext. Both Alexander the Great and the successful Athenian General Phormion, in addition to the proverbially courageous Spartan Brasidas, lend the young Ottoman Sultan a profundity that enhances his character.

There is another passage in which Critobulus uses the Thucydidean figure of Brasidas to impart additional, albeit concealed, glory to his hero Mehmed: at the height of the decisive battle for Constantinople, Critobulus refers back to the corresponding moment in the battle

for Amphipolis. Having been wounded in battle, the Genoese condottiere Giustiniani, a key figure in the defence of Constantinople, withdrew to the ships together with his soldiers, leaving the breach in the wall by the Romanos Gate stripped of its defenders and exposed. According to Critobulus, Mehmed recognized this situation at once and encouraged his elite troops with the following words (*Historiae* 1.60.1): “*The men are running away from us. They can no longer withstand us. The wall is exposed, stripped of its defenders*” (φεύγουσιν οἱ ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς. οὐκέτι παραμένειν ἀνέχονται. γυμνὸν τῶν προμαχομένων τὸ τεῖχος). The whole scene is reminiscent of the situation before Amphipolis as described by Thucydides: when the Athenian commander Cleon made a move to disengage and his troops *exposed* their flank (τὰ γυμνά), Brasidas grasped the situation and called out to his warriors (Th. 5.10.5): *The men will not withstand us* (οἱ ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς οὐ μενοῦσιν). Critobulus’ adaptation of the Thucydidean wording underlines the similarity between the situations that the two authors are describing. Just as Brasidas’ sharp eye had spotted the crucial weakness in the enemy’s offensive, so Mehmed instantly grasped the decisive weakness of the defenders of Constantinople. The term “exposed”, which in Thucydides referred to the unprotected flank of the warriors, refers in Critobulus—responding to a different situation—to the walls of Constantinople. The quotation has been adapted to the new context.

Since Late Antiquity, the famous Thucydidean account of the siege of Plataea by the Spartans under the leadership of Archidamus (Th. 2.75–78) has been a model for historians describing comparable events. Critobulus uses it in two different contexts and modifies it accordingly. In the first case, he adapts Thucydides’ account of the Spartans’ failed attempt to conquer Plataea by fire (Th. 2.77.2–5) for his own description of how, in the same way, the Turkish admiral Baltaoğlu succeeded in capturing the fortress on the island of Prinkipos. Critobulus did not have to make many alterations to the text in this case because the techniques and materials used had not changed since the fifth century BC. However, the second case in which Critobulus drew on the Thucydidean siege of Plataea, namely the battle for the walls of Constantinople (*Historiae* 1.34), differed from the siege and the efforts of the Plataeans to resist the battering engines and stratagems of the Spartans, in that at Constantinople the artillery was modern. Critobulus therefore chose confidently from the material available and adapted what he borrowed to the altered

conditions of a siege with cannons. For example, where Thucydides (2.76.4) had written that the defenders lowered *slings* from the wall with which they *broke* the war machinery employed by the attackers (*βρόχους τε περιβάλλοντες ἀνέκλων*), and that they dropped heavy beams fastened to chains down from the wall, and that one such beam then *cut* off the spur of the battering ram (*ἀπεκαύλιζε τὸ προὔχον τῆς ἐμβολῆς*), Critobulus had to reshape this linguistic material and give a different meaning to the words in order to fit it to his own purposes. Thus we read (*Historiae* 1.34.1) that the defenders lowered *slings* to which they had tied sacks stuffed with wool and other such things in order, possibly, to *break* and *cut* (i.e., soften) the impact of the missiles (*βρόχους ἐξαρτῶντες . . . ἀνέκλων ὡς δυνατόν τὴν φορὰν τῶν λίθων καὶ ἐξεκαύλιζον*).

In keeping with good rhetorical tradition, Critobulus does not identify Thucydides as the provenance of these adapted quotations. In only one part of his work (*Historiae* 1.72.1) does he indicate that he is using a quotation, with the words “as someone said”. He uses a quotation from Thucydides’ necrologue on Themistocles (1.138.2) for his own necrologue on the Emperor Constantine XI, simultaneously linking it with an allusion (not attributed) to the necrologue on Alexander the Great in Arrian (*An.* 7.28.2). It seems that the passage from Thucydides, at least, is quoted from memory, for he confuses Themistocles with Pericles.

In the case of Critobulus we are in the fortunate position of being able to prove that he did not acquire his knowledge of Thucydides from handbooks or manuals, at least not exclusively. The Thucydides manuscript Paris. gr. 1636 was in his possession, and contains an entry written in his own hand.³⁵

The way in which very different Byzantine authors made use of a gem of Thucydidean narrative art in their own accounts of a corresponding real incident is illustrated in their treatment of the plague. In its contemporary manifestation, the bubonic plague, this disease was part of life in early and late Byzantine times.

In the sixth century the whole of the Byzantine Empire was visited by the plague in several waves,³⁶ and the disease did not die

³⁵ See Reinsch (1983) 68*–69*. Nicephorus Gregoras probably also possessed a Thucydides manuscript, Neapol. III–B–10; see Wilson (2000).

³⁶ It is difficult to judge the demographic effects; see Durliat (1989); Brandes (1989) 181–88 (and for further literature on the “Justinian” plague, p. 181 n. 1); D. Harrison (1993); Stathakopoulos (2003) 110–54.

down completely until the eighth century. After a long interval of several hundred years it surfaced again as a great catastrophe that reduced the population of Europe by about a third in 1347/48, and then kept flaring up on a smaller scale until the end of the Byzantine empire and beyond. Every educated Byzantine, from Late Antiquity until the fall of Constantinople in the fifteenth century, would immediately have associated the idea of the plague and the word λοιμός with Thucydides' famous account of the epidemic in Athens in the year 430 BC. As we can gather from Ps.-Demetrius of Phaleron, chapters 47–54 of the second Book of Thucydides' *History* were already part of the standard repertoire of higher instruction in the schools of rhetoric³⁷ in classical antiquity. Indeed, Lucian derides contemporary historical writers who "borrowed small pieces of Thucydides' big coat" from these very chapters for their own unimportant little works.³⁸ Educated Byzantines were equally familiar with Thucydides' account of the disease. In a twelfth century letter, for example, Michael Choniates, the learned bishop of Athens, assumes that the letter's recipient, the high imperial official Demetrios Tornikes, will know the respective passage from Thucydides by heart, when he writes: "Once the plague which had begun in Ethiopia befell Attica. You know which plague I mean (how could you not?) since you, I think, know the work of the writer by heart and have read it word for word".³⁹ So it is no surprise that distinct echoes of Thucydides'

³⁷ He quotes the following phrases from these chapters as examples of certain rules of rhythm: *De elocutione* 39 "An example of this is the following by Thucydides 'The evil began in Ethiopia'" (παράδειγμα δ' αὐτῶν τὸ Θουκυδίδειον τόδε· ἤρξατο δὲ τὸ κακὸν ἐξ Αἰθιοπίας); 48 "and Thucydides saying that the year, as everybody agreed, had been without disease as far as other diseases were concerned" (καὶ ὁ Θουκυδίδης . . . ἐπὶ λέγει· ὅτι τὸ μὲν δὴ ἔτος, ὡς ὁμολόγητο, ἄνιστον ἐς τὰς ἄλλας ἀσθενείας ἐτύγχανεν ὄν).

³⁸ *Hist. conscr.* 15, where Lucian addresses his reader with the following words: "What shall I tell you about the rest . . . how he let the inhabitants of Nisibis who had not supported the Romans be struck down with the plague, adopting everything from Thucydides apart from the Pelasgikon and the Long Walls where those afflicted by the plague lived? Apart from that, the plague also began in Ethiopia and it moved to Egypt, too, and into the largest part of the Great King's country and continued to thrive there" (τί ἂν σοι τὰ λοιπὰ λέγοιμι . . . οἷον Νισιβηνοῖς λοιμὸν τοῖς μὴ τὰ Ῥωμαίων αἰρουμένοις ἐπήγαγε παρὰ Θουκυδίδου χρησάμενος ὅλον ἄρδην πλὴν μόνου τοῦ Πελασγικοῦ καὶ τῶν τειχῶν τῶν μακρῶν, ἐν οἷς οἱ τότε λοιμώξαντες ὤκησαν; τὰ δ' ἄλλα καὶ ἀπὸ Αἰθιοπίας ἤρξατο, ὥστε καὶ ἐς Αἴγυπτον κατέβη καὶ ἐς βασιλείας γῆν τὴν πολλὴν καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ ἔμεινεν εὖ ποιῶν).

³⁹ Michael Choniates, *ep.* 32 (p. 45.29–31 Kolovou): ἐπέσκηψέ ποτε λοιμὸς ἐς τὴν Ἀττικὴν, ἀπ' Αἰθιοπίας ἀρξάμενος· οἶδας ὃν λέγω (πῶς γὰρ οὐ) ἀπὸ στήθους, οἶμαι, τὰ τοῦ συγγραφέως εἰδὼς καὶ διεξιὼν ἐπὶ λέξεως.

account of the Athenian epidemic appear in Byzantine historians' descriptions of the epidemics of their own time, especially since *imitatio* (μίμησις) of the ancient models generally was an essential part of the literary theory and corresponding practice of the Byzantines.⁴⁰

But what exactly does *imitatio* mean in these examples? Until recently, the word "imitation" has in many cases been coupled with the adjective "slavish",⁴¹ very often without good reason. Since educated people would have known Thucydides' texts very well, "slavishly" imitating them would not have made any sense, for doing so would hardly have enhanced the writer's reputation as an author. Closer scrutiny of the texts reveals that *imitatio* on the part of the Byzantine historical writers represented a stylistic achievement in itself and was by no means "slavish", and that *imitatio* of the model did not prevent these authors from describing their own reality in unadulterated form.

From the point of view of modern medicine, in which the definition of a disease is based on microbiological findings and not merely on symptoms,⁴² it is highly unlikely that Thucydides and the Byzantine historians of Early and Late Antiquity are describing the same disease. But regardless of exactly which disease was responsible for the great epidemic that visited Athens at the time of Pericles—whether it was smallpox, scarlet fever, ergotism, typhoid, or something else⁴³—many of the symptoms Thucydides describes also apply to the bubonic plague, which probably caused all of the epidemics of the sixth-eighth and fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. However, the physical symptoms represent only one side of the historians' subject matter. Of greater interest for both Thucydides and the Byzantine historical writers were the effects of these widespread deaths on the human soul; from this perspective it makes no difference if the diseases described by Thucydides and the Byzantines were not identical according to modern criteria.

The great plague that broke out in Constantinople in the year 542⁴⁴ is described by Procopius of Caesarea in the second Book of

⁴⁰ See the classic article by Hunger (1969–70).

⁴¹ On the case of Critobulus of Imbros, see Reinsch (1983).

⁴² See Leven (1997) 13–15 on this problem generally, 17–32; 143–44 on the plague.

⁴³ Leven (1991) gives a survey of the different diagnostic attempts of modern doctors.

⁴⁴ See P. Allen (1979).

his *Bellum Persicum*. At the beginning of his account he rejected any attempt at an immanent explanation of the origin of the disease. Since it affected all men in the same way, he believed, one had to look for its origins in God. Thucydides himself had also declined to attempt any kind of explanation for the cause of the disease he described. Procopius clearly refers to Thucydides in the following passage, saying:

Everybody may express an opinion about it as they see fit, both sophist and astrologer, I, however, shall now explain where the disease started and the way in which it carried people off.

λεγέτω μὲν οὖν ὡς πῃ ἕκαστος περὶ αὐτῶν γινώσκει καὶ σοφιστὴς καὶ μετεωρολόγος, ἐγὼ δὲ ὅθεν τε ἤρξατο ἡ νόσος ἥδε καὶ τρόπῳ δὴ ὅτῳ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διέφθειρεν, ἐρῶν ἔρχομαι.

In Thucydides it had been:

Everybody may express an opinion about it as they see fit, both physician and layman . . ., I, however, shall say how it took its course, and on the basis of which observations it can best be recognised should it once again occur.

λεγέτω μὲν οὖν περὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς ἕκαστος γινώσκει καὶ ἰατρός καὶ ἰδιώτης . . . ἐγὼ δὲ οἷόν τε ἐγένετο λέξω καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἂν τις σκοπῶν, εἴ ποτε καὶ αὐθις ἐπιπέσοι, μάλιστα ἂν ἔχοι τις προειδὼς μὴ ἀγνοεῖν.

Here Procopius imitates Thucydides linguistically, quoting him literally at times, but with significant variations and a shift in emphasis. Whereas Thucydides would not countenance any attempt by physicians or laymen to explain the physical causes of the disease, Procopius makes a stand against the nonmedical explanations put forward by rhetoricians and astrologers, thus replacing Thucydides' "physician" and "layman" with "sophist" and "astrologer". Thucydides' objective is to facilitate future diagnosis, unlike Procopius, who objects to astrologers and leaves it all to God. Thus there are linguistic adaptations here which, together with very intentional changes, have been embedded in a fresh context of new realities.

The same text provides us with another example. Referring to the symptoms of the disease, Thucydides says: "And the *inability* to find peace, and *sleeplessness* were common" (καὶ ἡ ἀπορία τοῦ μὴ ἡσυχάζειν καὶ ἡ ἀγρυπνία ἐπέκειτο διὰ παντός). Procopius adopts the two terms "inability" and "sleeplessness" and integrates them into his text, but their immediate context is totally different: "Some died immediately, due to their *inability* to take food, others were seized by the evil of

madness and suffered from *sleeplessness*" (τινὲς δέ . . . ἀπορία τροφῆς εὐθὺς ἔθνησκον, οἱ μέντοι τῷ τῆς παραφροσύνης ἀλόντες κακῷ ἀγρυπνία . . . εἶχοντο). Thucydides talks of the *stinking breath* (δυσῶδες πνεῦμα) of the sick, whereas Procopius talks of a *stench* (δυσωδία) emanating from the corpses. Thucydides says of the patient's body "*contrary to all expectations, it endured the strain*" (τὸ σῶμα . . . ἀντεῖχε παρὰ δόξαν τῇ ταλαιπωρίᾳ), whereas Procopius has the nurses in mind when he says: "they endured this duty *contrary to all expectations* . . . they were subjected to great *strain*" (τάυτη . . . τῇ ὑπουργίᾳ παρὰ δόξαν ἀντεῖχον . . . ταλαιπωρία πολλῇ εἶχοντο). Further examples of such transpositions are easily found.

In other parts of his account where he uses linguistic adaptations from Thucydides, Procopius stresses *expressis verbis* that his opinion differs from that of Thucydides and contradicts him: for example, he modifies Thucydides' statement that people had jumped into wells because of their unquenchable thirst by stressing that since most of them had jumped not into wells but into the sea, thirst could not have been the reason. Thucydides characterizes the disease he describes as extremely contagious, which is why the mortality rate was particularly high among doctors, and why other people who took care of the sick were also infected as a rule; thus they were dying like sheep (ὥσπερ τὰ πρόβατα ἔθνησκον). In sharp contrast to this, Procopius asserts that nurses did not run any particular risk in carrying out their work, and that neither doctors nor anybody else would catch the disease through having bodily contact with a sick or deceased person. But at exactly the point where Procopius expresses this opposing view, he uses Thucydides' words: neither *doctor* . . . nor *layman* (οὔτε ἰατρῷ . . . οὔτε ἰδιώτῃ).

In his overall description of the symptoms, Procopius remains totally independent, despite his linguistic borrowing from Thucydides. On the basis of the clinical symptoms described by Procopius, the diagnosis of "bubonic plague" is not in doubt; the same cannot be said of Thucydides' account.

There are two points in Procopius' account where he departs completely from his linguistic model Thucydides. Firstly, he devotes an extensive chapter to the demonic apparitions and dream visions, which, he claims, were early harbingers of the disease and responsible for passing it on to people. Not surprisingly, Procopius' view is entirely consistent with that of a sixth century historian: this was the way in which the people of this time—himself included—reacted

to the epidemic that had afflicted them. It must not be forgotten that demonology and magic played a major role in the society of Late Antiquity and had penetrated deeply into the philosophy and religion of the time. Procopius himself used these widespread beliefs in his *Anecdota* (ch. 18) as a weapon in the political fight against Justinian, who appears there as a “Prince of Demons” responsible for the suffering the plague has brought upon the people.

Procopius and Thucydides also give very different accounts of people’s behavior toward one another. The latter observed of the Athenians that they strayed into lawlessness, gave themselves over to sensual pleasures, and abandoned all ethical restraint. Procopius’ account gives a completely different picture. The corporations of the Demes (τὰ μέρη), irreconcilably locked in feuds before the outbreak of the disease, became reconciled and helped one another; faced with the threat of death, they changed their behavior, although admittedly this did not last long. As Procopius concludes in his account, no sooner had the threat subsided than people were behaving worse than before. Here we see the basic difference between the idea of the intrinsic value of human life on earth, predominant in fifth century Athens, and the fear of imminent punishment of sinners in the hereafter, which held sway in Christian Byzantium at the time of Justinian and Procopius—at least while the threat of death was acute.

The great plague epidemic that afflicted Constantinople in 542 moved off in the direction of Persia, only to get a “second wind” and return for a new attack on the city on the Bosphorus in 558. We have an account of this outbreak of the disease by Agathias (*Historiae* 5.18), who knew the work (and also, of course, the relevant chapters) of Procopius very well, as he expressly assures us in the prologue of his work. He refers indirectly to Procopius’ account by explaining that the general appearance of the disease was exactly the same as in the first outbreak, confining himself (without linguistic adaptations from Procopius, incidentally) to naming the main symptom (swelling of the lymph glands in the groin) and modifying certain details of his predecessor’s description in several places. But what is his attitude to Thucydides’ description? Averil Cameron⁴⁵ expresses surprise that nothing reminiscent of Thucydides is to be found in Agathias’ description. However, while a comparison of Agathias’ text

⁴⁵ (1970) 62.

with the description of the epidemic in Thucydides' second Book indeed reveals no special *imitatio*, if one looks at the passage in the *third* Book (ch. 87), where Thucydides gives an account of the resurgence of the disease, one finds distinct linguistic allusions. While Thucydides says that "*at no time* did it stop *completely*, but there was a kind of *truce*" (ἐκλιπούσα μὲν οὐδένα χρόνον τὸ παντάπασιν, ἐγένετο δέ τις ὅμως διοκωχή), Agathias writes, "it did *not at all* stop *completely* . . . but it moved on . . . and granted those remaining a kind of *truce*" (λήξασα μὲν ἐς τὸ παντελὲς οὐδ' ὅπωςτιοῦν . . . μεταβῶσα δὲ καὶ τοῖς λειπομένοις ἀνακωχῆς τινοῦ μεταδοῦσα). In an extremely ingenious way, Agathias alludes to the renewed outbreak of the disease in Thucydides when he himself speaks of its recurrence, while avoiding Thucydides' account of its first occurrence. Procopius had used this latter passage just a few years earlier to describe the first (from Agathias' point of view) epidemic, and therefore Agathias refrained from using that description of the disease.⁴⁶

A third outbreak of the plague at the end of the sixth century, this time in Syria, is described by Evagrius in his *History of the Church* (4.17). Evagrius knew Procopius' work very well and quotes him by name in many places. In fact, Procopius is the main source for the fourth Book of his work, and yet Evagrius does not adopt any of Procopius' linguistic patterns in his description of the plague, although he makes observations and has thoughts that are quite comparable. Thus, for example, Evagrius explains at some length that the plague fulfilled an almost predetermined program, that the disease was not especially intense at any particular time of the year, and that there was no way of predicting who it would attack. The description of the symptoms is completely independent of Thucydides. On the other hand, Evagrius is the only Byzantine historian who names Thucydides in the context of describing the plague: he informs us that in many respects the epidemic (λοιμῶδες πάθος) of his time is identical to the disease that Thucydides describes, yet in others is completely different.

⁴⁶ On another occasion, though, Agathias did not pass up the opportunity to make an obvious connection with Procopius' description of the plague. In the passage where he deals with the great earthquake of 14 December 557 (5.3–5), he gives us details of people's behavior during the catastrophe. His observations are similar to those made by Procopius about the time of the plague: after briefly turning to righteousness and piety, people returned to their former ways as soon as the threat subsided.

It is only in this passage that Evagrius imitates Thucydides by referring directly to the latter's description: with his words "and now, too, *it was said* that it *had begun in Ethiopia*" (καὶ ἤρχθαι μὲν ἐξ Αἰθιοπίας καὶ νῦν ἐλέγετο) he refers directly to Thucydides, who says, "but it first *began, it was said, in Ethiopia*" (ἤρξατο δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον, ὡς λέγεται, ἐξ Αἰθιοπίας).

Apart from this quotation, marked clearly by the words "now, too" (καὶ νῦν), there is no other reference to Thucydides. Evagrius writes entirely on the basis of his own experience, giving an account of his own sickness and the fact that his wife, many of his children and relatives, and numerous servants and acquaintances have fallen victim to different waves of the epidemic.

After Evagrius and the terrible plague of the sixth century, more than 700 years elapse before we come across another comprehensive, highly literary account of a great epidemic in Byzantium. In the interim period, only one outbreak of the plague, during the reign of Constantine V in the year 746/7, is given a somewhat more detailed treatment: Nicephorus Patriarches describes this outbreak in his Χρονικόν, and later chronicles (George Cedrenus and Michael Glycas) use this as a source for their works. No symptoms are described or named, and the cause of the disease is given as the wrath of God, who has turned against the iconoclastic emperor. In this long period during which the Byzantine Empire was relatively free of major plague epidemics, the foremost historians of the day (Michael Psellus, John Cinnamus, Anna Comnena, Nicetas Choniates, George Acropolites, George Pachymeres) tended to follow authors such as Polybius, Diodorus, and Plutarch rather than the classical models of Thucydides and Herodotus.

It is not until the fourteenth century that the opportunity arises for two authors, Nicephorus Gregoras and John Cantacuzenus, to describe a great epidemic, namely the plague that affected all of Europe in 1347–48. We possess numerous testimonies on this epidemic, both medical as well as historiographical, from various European countries. The most famous literary testimony is found in the prologue of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The relatively short description by Gregoras (16.1 = 797,17–798,17 Bonn.) does not show any *imitatio* of an earlier author, either in linguistic expression or intellectual content. Only the phrase "*it spared neither age nor rank*" (οὐδεμιᾶς οὐθ' ἡλικίας οὔτε τύχης ἐφείδετο) recalls Procopius' words: "*sparing neither species nor age*" (οὔτε φύσεώς τινος οὔτε ἡλικίας φεισάμενον). Gregoras' work generally tends to follow more of a philosophical

than a historiographical tradition; he was more interested in philosophy, theology, and the exact sciences, and his chapter on the plague stands out for its clarity and accuracy. He stresses, more clearly and precisely than any other author, the fact that animals as well as human beings died, an aspect that Thucydides also drew attention to in describing his epidemic. Moreover, unlike any other historian, classical or Byzantine, Gregoras mentions not only dogs, horses, and poultry in this context, but also rats, which, according to modern scientific findings, are the main hosts for the fleas that transmit the plague bacillus to humans.

Unlike Gregoras, who was at the opposite end of the spectrum to him politically, John Cantacuzenus makes extensive use of linguistic material from the relevant section in Thucydides for his description of the 1347 plague (4.8), found in his historical work dealing with the years 1320 to 1356. At the same time he gives a very clear picture of the epidemic that he himself experienced.⁴⁷ At both the beginning and the end of his account, Cantacuzenus informs us that even his own son Andronicus fell victim to the epidemic, and presents the disease within this very personal framework. He puts the individual points in a different order from Thucydides, shortening or extending sentences, exchanging them and in some cases altering their sense. Cantacuzenus draws upon Thucydides but does not follow him blindly. For example, he explains at the beginning of the chapter that there had not been any other diseases that year, and any that had emerged had ended up as the plague: *ἄνοσον μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἔτος παντάπασιν εἰς τὰς ἄλλας ἀσθενείας, εἰ δέ τις καὶ προὔκαμμε τι, πάντα εἰς ἐκεῖνο κατέληγε τὸ νόσημα*. The corresponding context in Thucydides has the following wording: *τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔτος, ὡς ὁμολογεῖτο ἐκ πάντων, μάλιστα δὲ ἐκεῖνο ἄνοσον ἐς τὰς ἄλλας ἀσθενείας ἐτύγγανεν ὄν, εἰ δέ τις καὶ προὔκαμνε τι, ἐς τοῦτο πάντα ἀπεκρίθη*. In Thucydides this is immediately followed by a description of the symptoms, whereas in Cantacuzenus two observations are first recorded: that the doctors could not do anything about the disease, and that it had differing clinical manifestations. Both observations are also made by Thucydides, but in totally different places.

⁴⁷ The linguistic parallels were collected by Dräseke (1914). Additional observations can be found in T.S. Miller (1976): Miller compares the symptoms as described by Cantacuzenus with the findings of modern medicine and comes to the conclusion that the linguistic borrowings of medical expressions from Thucydides have not harmed the authenticity of the account in any way. Hunger (1976) also stresses the fact that Cantacuzenus is independent of his model in his own description.

In Thucydides' account, the fact that the doctors could not treat the plague had been stressed two chapters back, while the information that the disease manifested itself in very different ways was placed right at the end of his description of the symptoms. By contrast, Cantacuzenus gives this information before his description of the symptoms, and not without reason, for, unlike Thucydides, he arranges the symptoms into different groups from the outset, according to the general clinical picture. Although he borrows some phrases from Thucydides for the description in general and for the names of the symptoms in particular, his presentation as a whole remains independent of the host author. The description of the typical symptoms of the plague, the purulent inflammation of the lymph nodes and—in the pneumonic variant—the bloody discharge, are obviously the work of someone who has seen all this at first hand. The people in Cantacuzenus' account also react quite differently to the disease from those in Thucydides': in Cantacuzenus, Christian remorse figures even more strongly than it does in Procopius, who had made the sarcastic, reproachful comment that this sentiment only lasted a short time. Cantacuzenus leaves no room for doubt that this disease has been sent by God to make people behave better (πρὸς σωφρονισμόν). With this, Cantacuzenus goes further than Procopius, who had merely pointed out that there was no cause of the epidemic other than God. Cantacuzenus' pious interpretation of the disease is introduced counterfactually with a phrase from Thucydides: the latter had explained that the fact that animals also perished was a sign of the special character of the disease: "In this *it showed especially*, that it *was something* different from the usual" (ἐν τῷδε ἐδήλωσε μάλιστα ἄλλο τι ὃν ἢ τῶν ξυντρόφων τι). Cantacuzenus uses this phrase, but puts it in a completely different context. The fact that this disease was so unusual, he says, showed that it had been sent by God in order to improve mankind. "By this *it was shown especially*, that it was not *something of the usual* . . . and natural . . . but *was something* of its own, which had been sent by God for the improvement of mankind" (ὅθεν καὶ μάλιστα ἐδεδήλωτο, οὐ τῶν συντρόφων . . . καὶ τῇ φύσει προσηκόντων . . . , ἀλλ' ἕτερον τι ὃν ὑπὸ θεοῦ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπενηγεμένον πρὸς σωφρονισμόν).

Where Thucydides merely emphasizes the uniqueness of the disease, Cantacuzenus uses the same phrase as the starting point for his theological reflections; the ex-emperor and monk imitates Thucydides' model linguistically but radically alters the sense of the whole.

Critobulus of Imbros, whose work describes the fall of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire, as well as the deeds of the conquering Sultan Mehmed Fatih, offers us an extensive description of the epidemic that afflicted Constantinople in 1467; the description comes toward the end of his account (5.17–18), between Mehmed's campaign against Skanderbeg and the siege of Kroja in Albania. Sultan Mehmed leaves part of his army behind in Kroja and learns on the march back to Constantinople that the plague has broken out there. Because of this, he spends the summer in the pure mountain air near Nikopolis and Vidin, only returning to Constantinople at the onset of winter 1467/68 when the epidemic is already on the wane. At this point the reader might expect some brief information about the disease, but Critobulus takes the opportunity to present a lengthy account, for which he has already prepared the reader many pages earlier (5.8) with the mention of bad omens and terrible apparitions: ὥφθη δὲ κατὰ τὰς αὐτὰς ἡμέρας καὶ τέρας τι ἐξαισίον . . . τοῦτο τέρας τι μέγα καὶ θεοσημεία τις ἄντικρυς ἔδοξε πᾶσιν ἐς τὸ μέλλον μεγάλα κακὰ προφοιβάζουσα, ἃ δὴ καὶ μετ' ὀλίγον ἐπηκολούθησε. He obviously intended his work to culminate with a great account of a tragic event, which could be seen as the counterpart to the tragic event at the *beginning* of his narrative, i.e., the capture and sacking of Constantinople. There are a great many linguistic adaptations from Thucydides and Procopius⁴⁸ in his description of the plague; he knew both authors very well, and in the case of Thucydides we even know of a codex that Critobulus had in his possession.⁴⁹ The structure and composition of Critobulus' description of the plague differs from that of his predecessors: while Thucydides, Procopius, and Cantacuzenus start by describing the symptoms, then move on to people's reactions to the disease, Critobulus does just the opposite, first focusing on people's reactions and then turning to the symptoms. The people in Critobulus' work behave differently from Thucydides' Athenians, who want to enjoy their lives once more; they also differ from the fellow citizens of Procopius and Cantacuzenus, who, according

⁴⁸ See the *apparatus fontium*, pp. 203.25–206.24 Reinsch.

⁴⁹ Paris. gr. 1636. The writer has been identified by D. Harlfinger as the monk Nicodemus, who probably belonged to the circle of George-Gennadius Scholarius; see Reinsch (1983) 68*–69*. We also know of a manuscript with the work of Thucydides that was in the possession of Nicephorus Gregoras: Neapolit. III-B–10 (symbol Nf); see Wilson (2000).

to the accounts in question, were moved by the epidemic to search their souls, a state that lasted for varying periods of time. By contrast, Critobulus sees only a people who have no hope and have resigned themselves to their fate: they have ceased to believe in divine providence and see themselves as being at the mercy of destiny. In his subsequent description of the symptoms, Critobulus emphatically begins with the main symptom, the swelling of the groin, which he calls τὸ σημεῖον, using a Hippocratic expression. Like Procopius before him, he identifies two groups of sick people: those who fall into a coma and those who lose their mind. The entire description is obviously based on personal observations and special medical knowledge. This in particular is no “slavish” imitation of Thucydides; on the contrary, we come across medical terms that are not used in Thucydides, and that Critobulus could not have adopted from any other historian, terms such as cerebral ventricles, pia mater and meninges, lethargy, frenzy, boiling of the blood, accelerated pulse, gangrene (κοιλίαι τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου, ὑμένες, μήνιγγες, καταφορά, φρενίτις, ἐξόπτησις τοῦ αἵματος, παλμοί, νέκρωσις).⁵⁰

For Byzantine historians, the plague was a living reality, not merely fiction as it had been for Lucretius, Vergil, and Ovid, for example. Some (Procopius, Cantacuzenus, Critobulus) treated the subject with reference to, and after careful study of, Thucydides, using linguistic adaptations and allusions. Others (Agathias, Evagrius, Anna Comnena, Nicephorus Gregoras) knew Thucydides’ work, but, for a variety of reasons, either did not use their knowledge at all or made only limited use of it. There is no question of “slavish” imitation in the case of any of these authors.

⁵⁰ See Villard (1992).

THUCYDIDES' RENAISSANCE READERS

Marianne Pade

Thucydides' *History* did not conform straightforwardly to Renaissance ideas about historiography. Although Thucydides certainly intended his readers to learn about human nature from his work, he was not primarily a moral writer and it is difficult to view the *History* as a *magistra vitae* ("governess of life", Cic. *De orat.* 2.36.), i.e., a deposit of moral examples that could guide the reader's behavior or be used to embellish his own writing, having previously been carefully copied out into a commonplace book for this very purpose. This is evident from the way the *History* was received during the Renaissance. While Thucydides was always acknowledged as one of the most masterly historians ever, the *History* did not enjoy the enormous popularity of Greek works that provided more easily-digestible moral instruction (for instance Plutarch's *Lives* or Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*), especially in the early Renaissance. Readers wanted to learn *from* the classics rather than *about* them; so Thucydides was read and imitated as a model of style long before scholarly explanation of his text began.

During the Renaissance Thucydides' readers mainly studied him in Latin, at least in Western Europe. The entire text of the *History* was translated into Latin and annotated several times, but certain parts of the work received special attention. The most celebrated and most imitated passages of Thucydides' work were the proem (1.1–1.22), the speeches, particularly Pericles' Funeral Oration (2.35–46), the description of the plague in Athens (2.47.3–2.54) and the description of the civil war in Corcyra (3.81–84).

In this chapter I shall trace the reception of Thucydides in the Latin West from the fourteenth century, when the early Italian humanists became interested in Greek literature, until the end of the sixteenth century, by which time the study of Greek was firmly established in Western universities.

Prolegomena: *Thucydides Remembered*

Although no one had had any direct knowledge of Thucydides' work for centuries, his name was familiar in fourteenth-century Western Europe from the works of a number of classical Latin writers, especially critics like Cicero and Quintilian. They had discussed his influence on Latin literature, and their remarks provided inspiration for Renaissance translators struggling with Thucydides' difficult prose. For the humanists, the proper language in which to render a classical Greek text was Latin rather than the vernacular, and preferably written in a style which matched that of the original. The ideal language was not simply classical Latin (to the extent that the translators were able to reproduce it) but in some cases the actual words of the Latin classics, especially if these in turn had imitated the style of the Greek author in question.¹ For this reason it will be useful to start by drawing attention to some of the classical Latin discussions of Thucydides' work, and to some of the ancient writers who imitated his style.²

Cicero frequently discusses Thucydides in his rhetorical works. In his *De oratore* he has the orator Antonius praise the style of the Greek writer:

The next is Thucydides, who in my opinion easily surpasses everybody else in the art of speaking. So abounding is he in fullness of material that the number of thoughts almost equals the number of words, and he is furthermore so exact and precise in his choice of words that one hardly knows whether it is the content which is rendered illustrious by the language, or the words by the thoughts (2.56).

Later, in *Brutus*, he adds that Thucydides' style was so compressed that he was sometimes difficult to understand (29). In the *De optimo genere oratorum*, Cicero emphasises the distinction between rhetoric and history: people are right to admire Thucydides' eloquence, but this has no bearing on the orator whom the dialogue attempts to define.³ In both *Brutus* and *Orator* Cicero tries to dissuade students of rhetoric from imitating Thucydides' style. He concedes that his writing is fine

¹ See Pade (2004).

² A good survey is provided by Strebel (1935) 27–41.

³ "*Thucydides enim quidam eloquentiam admirantur. Id quidem recte; sed nihil ad eum oratorem quem quaerimus*", *Opt. gen.* 15.

and dignified but argues that nothing in the *History* can be applied to the law courts or to public life. The famous speeches, he says, contain so many dark and obscure sentences as to be scarcely intelligible.⁴ He praises the speeches but denies that he would be able—or willing—to imitate them.⁵ Cicero also compares Thucydides' style with that of Herodotus, "who flows along like a peaceful stream without any rough water, whereas Thucydides moves with greater vigor, and in his description sounds, as it were, the trumpet of war."⁶ Cicero's remarks were often cited in Renaissance discussions of Thucydides, as were those of Quintilian, who calls him compact, terse and pressing, excelling in vigor, both in the speeches and when he needs to express stronger passions.⁷

There was one passage from Thucydides that enjoyed considerable prominence in Roman poetry, namely the description of the plague in Athens (2.47–52). Lucretius illustrates the causes of pestilence using a description of the plague in Athens (6.1138–1286). He follows the corresponding chapters in the *History* fairly closely,⁸ and in his turn influenced subsequent plague descriptions in Latin literature.⁹ In the sixteenth century, for example, Lucretius' imitation would inspire Joachim Camerarius to translate the part of Thucydides' description that has no equivalent in *De rerum natura* (see below) into Latin hexameters.

Among Roman prose writers, Sallust was famous for his imitation of Thucydides' style, a phenomenon observed as early as Livy.¹⁰ On a larger scale, Sallust imitates the speeches, and his use of digression is also clearly Thucydidean.¹¹ Sallust's graecisms were often

⁴ "... nihil ab eo transferri potest ad forensem usum et publicum. ipsae illae contiones multas ita habent obscuras abditasque sententias vix ut intelligantur", *Orat.* 30.

⁵ "... orationes autem, quas interposuit, ... eas ego laudare soleo: imitari neque possim si velim, nec velim fortasse si possim", *Brutus* 287.

⁶ "Alter enim sine ullis salebris quasi sedatus amnis fluit, alter incitatio fertur et de bellicis rebus canit etiam quodam modo bellicum", *Orat.* 39.

⁷ "Densus et brevis et semper instans sibi Thucydides, ... concitatus ... adfectibus melior, ... contionibus ... vi", *Inst. or.* 10.1.73.

⁸ Schroeder (1898) and Sinclair (1981).

⁹ Grimm (1965) 64. On Procopius' description of the plague, see below.

¹⁰ Reported by Seneca the Elder, *Controv.* 9.1.13f.; see also Velleius Paterculus, 2.36.2: "aemulum Thucydidis Sallustium"; Canfora, this vol. p. 735ff.

¹¹ See Perrochat (1947); Avenarius (1957); Patzer (1970); Pöschl (1970); Renihan (1976); Reddé (1980); Scanlon (1980); Büchner (1983); Pade (1985) 289ff.; and Keitel (1987).

noted, by Quintilian, for example, who comments upon the expression *vulgus amat fieri* ("such things as the people love to see done").¹² The expression is not found in Sallust's extant works, but at *Iug.* 34.1 we find *ira amat fieri*. The equivalent phrase in Thucydides is, e.g., φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι (cf. 3.41.1). This led Lorenzo Valla, who was a student of Quintilian, to render φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι with *amat fieri* in his 1452 translation.¹³

Knowledge of Thucydides was also transmitted to Renaissance readers via Greek writers of the Roman and Byzantine periods, both of whom frequently mentioned or quoted him. Some of these authors were translated into Latin and enjoyed great popularity before the first Latin translation of the *History* appeared, and they may have been instrumental in forming Latin readers' expectations of Thucydides' work. One such writer is Plutarch, who mentions Thucydides in the *Moralia*¹⁴ and uses him as a source for the biographies of Themistocles, Pericles, and Nicias.¹⁵ His *Themistocles* was first translated into Latin in 1417 by Guarino Veronese, and *Pericles* in 1436/37 by Lapo da Castiglionchio.¹⁶ Lucian recommended the use of Thucydides in his *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*. He had been a favorite in Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century, ever since Manuel Chrysoloras had used many of his shorter texts for paedagogical purposes in his 1397–1400 Florentine seminar.¹⁷ The *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* was partially paraphrased by Guarino Veronese in 1446, in the long letter he wrote on the subject to his former pupil Tobia Borghi, who held (or was about to take up) a position as historiographer at the Malatesta court in Rimini.¹⁸

A historian who applied Thucydidean models was Procopius. For example, his account of the bubonic plague in Constantinople in 542 and 543 (*De bello Persico* 2.22–23) is clearly modeled on Thucydides' description in Book II, sometimes so closely that historical accuracy

¹² "Ex graeco uero tralata vel Sallusti plurima, quale est: '[uulgus] amat fieri'", Quint., *Inst. or.* 9.3.17, English translation by Butler.

¹³ Cf. Pade (1985).

¹⁴ E.g. 56b12, 71e1, 73a1, 79f5, and elsewhere.

¹⁵ Stadter (1973) 109–23; and de Romilly (1988).

¹⁶ Giustiniani (1961); Pade (1995) 182f.; and my forthcoming *The Reception of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth-century Italy*.

¹⁷ Berti (1985); (1987a); (1987b); (1995); Bianca (2002).

¹⁸ Cf. Sabbadini (1915–19) esp. 796; cf. Marsh (1998) 2–30; see also C. Robinson (1979); Marsh (1994).

is sacrificed.¹⁹ Thus, when the Italian humanist Leonardo Bruni used Procopius extensively for his own *De bello Italico adversus Gothos* a few years before his death in 1444,²⁰ Thucydides' prose indirectly became accessible to Renaissance readers.

The Fourteenth Century

Francesco Petrarca

The mid-fourteenth century saw the first signs of an interest in Greek writers who were not part of the scholastic curriculum. This interest went beyond the information that could be gleaned from the Latin works in which these writers were discussed. We know that Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304–74), who greatly influenced the later humanists in this respect, became interested in the Greek world through classical Latin writers. He wanted to become acquainted with the orators and philosophical writers upon whom Cicero had drawn, and with Homer, who had inspired Virgil. In this respect his interest is representative of the attitude towards all matters Greek, at least among the earlier humanists: Greek language and literature were of interest primarily for the insight they gave into Latin language and literature, or as sources for Roman history.²¹

Petrarch mentions Thucydides in his *Rerum memorandarum libri*, a collection of Stoic-Epicurean *exempla* modeled on Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia*; the collection was begun in 1343 but never finished. In the section in Book 2, *De ingenio et eloquentia*, Petrarch recalls that Thucydides, a writer of history, had been a general in the Athenian army. Eventually he was driven into exile and, perhaps to console himself, occupied himself with "tragedy" (possibly meaning an elevated style of writing?). When his fellow countrymen heard about this, they recalled him, "admiring the eloquence of the man whom, as Pliny says, they had spurned as a commander".²²

¹⁹ Cameron (1966) 470f.; Bornmann (1974a); Aristotelous (1980); Cresci (1986); cf. Reinsch, this volume.

²⁰ Griffiths – Hankins – Thompson (1987) 183–84.

²¹ Weiss (1977) 170f.; Pade (2002) 18f.

²² "Thucydides scriptor historiarum populo Atheniensi prefuit, ut memorant. Tandem ab eisdem patria pulsus, forte ad exilii solamen tragedie operam dedit;

Apparently most of Petrarch's remark is derived from the relevant passage in the *Natural History*, which he also quotes directly. However, his assertion that Thucydides "occupied himself with tragedy to console himself" seems a somewhat fanciful interpretation of Pliny's words, namely that he was recalled from exile as *rerum conditor*, a writer of history. I have found nothing corresponding to Petrarch's words in any other Latin writer, and it seems likely that his source was oral; one possibility is the Greek scholar and diplomat Barlaam with whom he studied Greek (albeit without much success) at Avignon in the early 1340s.²³

Juan Fernández de Heredia

The earliest evidence of direct knowledge of Thucydides is the Aragonese translation of thirty-eight speeches from the *History* commissioned by Juan Fernández de Heredia. Born in Aragon c. 1310, Heredia became Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes in 1377 but did not actually reach the island until 1379, as he was taken prisoner on his way there. Apparently he was introduced to both Greek history and modern Greek by his captors. In 1382 he left Rhodes for Avignon, where he died in 1396.²⁴ Heredia was a patron of letters and especially interested in ancient history; he had Greek, Latin, and French histories translated into Aragonese. Apart from the speeches from Thucydides,²⁵ the translations include numer-

que cum ad aures civium suorum venisset, publico consensu revocarunt eum ab exilio, 'cuius' imperium neglexerant eius, ut ait Plinius, 'eloquentiam mirati'", Petrarch, *Rer. mem.* 2.33; "Thucydiden imperatorem Athenienses in exilium egere, rerum conditorem revocavere, eloquentiam mirati cuius virtutem damnaverant", Plin. *NH.* 7.11.

²³ Weiss (1977) 11; di Stefano (1968) 15f. The history of the teaching of Greek in early Humanism has often been related: see, e.g., Weiss (1977), esp. 3–12; 149–92; and 227–54 with earlier literature; Ricci (1952); Pertusi (1960); (1961); (1964). See also Maisano-Rollo (2002), *passim*.

²⁴ On Heredia and his translations, see López Molina (1960) 19–45; Lasso de la Vega (1961) 454–58 and 465–71; Geijerstam (1964) 13–23 (with full bibliography); Clare (1968); Weiss (1977) 210–22; Luttrell (1960); (1970), esp. pp. 335–40 where Luttrell discusses the chronology of Heredia's life and of the translations; *id.* (1972); (1987); Witt (1978); Álvarez Rodríguez (1983); Cortés Arrese (1983); Álvarez (1985); Bergua Caveró (1995) 9–14; Cacho Bleuca (1997).

²⁵ Edited in López Molina (1960) 56–146, from MS. 10801 of the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid; cf. Álvarez (1985).

ous fragments from Zonaras' *Epitome historiarum*, and 39 of Plutarch's *Lives*. His efforts were followed with great interest by both King Pedro IV of Aragon and his son Juan I (to whom Heredia was mentor), as is revealed by their correspondence. Many of the translations were incorporated into Heredia's *Grant Crónica d'Espanya* and *Grant Crónica de los Conquiridores*.²⁶

It was presumably in Rhodes that Heredia secured manuscripts of the Greek writers who interested him. We know that Plutarch's *Lives* were translated into Demotic Greek by the scribe Dimitri Calodiqui of Salonica. The Demotic versions were then translated by the Dominican Nicholas, bishop of Drenopolis, the ancient Adrianopolis of Epirus.²⁷ It seems likely that the Aragonese Thucydides was produced in the same way. Heredia's historical works remained almost completely unknown for centuries and thus cannot be said to have furthered the knowledge of Thucydides among non-Greek readers. However, his enterprise does indicate a new interest in Greek historiography outside of the cultural orbit of Byzantium—an interest that would become marked in the next generation.

The Fifteenth Century

The examples of Petrarch and Heredia show a growing interest in Greek, but among writers and scholars who had hardly any knowledge of the language itself. This changed at the end of the fourteenth century when the Byzantine diplomat Manuel Chrysoloras accepted an invitation to teach Greek at Florence. Chrysoloras' tenure in fact marked the beginning of a steady tradition of Greek studies in Italy,²⁸ and his many enthusiastic students translated numerous Greek works into Latin.

²⁶ Books 1–2 of *Grant Crónica* were edited by Regina af Geijerstam (1964) 141–258; see also Geijerstam (1960). The second part of Volume One of the *Crónica* is published and translated in Morel-Fatio (1885) as *Chronique de Morée au XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*. As Pertusi observed, the *Crónica* had no influence on later historiography; for several hundred years it lay unnoticed in the library of Osuna; cf. Pertusi (1965) 162.

²⁷ Luttrell (1960) 402 n. 9; Geijerstam (1964) 21; Álvarez Rodríguez (1983) 55–63 where traces of Greek and Latin influence in the language of the translator are also discussed. Álvarez Rodríguez proposed that Nicholas was of Italian origin and that his text was corrected by Heredia's scribes; cf. *ibid.* 108f.

²⁸ The story of how Chrysoloras was persuaded by Coluccio Salutati to come to Florence is well known. Cf. Mercati (1917) 328ff.; and *id.* (1918) 227; Cammelli

Early in the fifteenth century, as Greek studies were gaining momentum in Italy, we have evidence that Thucydides himself was being read. In 1400–1, Pier Paolo Vergerio wrote to Demetrius Chrysoloras that he had read a lot of Plutarch as well as some Thucydides. Although Vergerio was not convinced that Thucydides was the more elegant writer of the two, he was certainly the weightier.²⁹ Vergerio's remark both echoes ancient critics on Thucydides and anticipates the preoccupation of later humanists with his use as a rhetorical model. The Florentine Roberto de' Rossi translated Aristotle's *Analytica posteriora* into Latin around 1406, and in the preface writes of his intention to translate Thucydides.³⁰

Leonardo Bruni was studying the *History* at about the same time. He had borrowed a copy of Thucydides from Pietro Miani in 1407 and had to apologize for not having returned it.³¹ Shortly afterward, Bruni wrote to Niccolò Niccoli, who had tried to persuade him to translate Thucydides. Apparently the idea did not appeal to him: he did not have the time for such an undertaking, and in any case preferred to translate other kinds of works, such as philosophy.³² Bruni later used Thucydides as a model for his *History of the Florentine People* (begun in 1416).³³ More specifically, Pericles' Funeral Oration was the source for Bruni's own speech for Nanni degli Strozzi (composed in 1427–28).³⁴ In 1443, in connection with his *De bello Italico*

(1941) 1.28–42; Weiss (1958) 351f.; Witt (1983) 303–5. The official invitation to Chrysoloras of 28 March 1396, written by Salutati, was last edited by Reeve (1991) 134–36.

²⁹ "Itaque multa ex Plutarcho, quaedam etiam ex Thucydide, qui nescio an ornatior, sed certe gravior historiae auctor mihi visus est", Vergerio, ed. 1934, *ep.* 85.

³⁰ "... quin etiam Thucydidem, veritate apud Graecos nobilissimum ... aggrediemur", Valentinelli (1871) 32; Manetti (1951) 52ff.

³¹ "Thucydides tuus apud me servatur, quem ideo non remitto nunc per istos legatos, quia nondum satis illum legi", Baron (1928) 200f.; see also Gualdo Rosa (1980) 38.

³² "Quod vero ad conversionem eiusdem libri (*sc. Thucydidis*) cohortaris, obsecro te, mi Nicolae: quae tandem ista tua cupiditas est, seu potius inexplebilis vorago, ut neque occupationum neque laborum meorum ullam habeas rationem? Non tibi venit in mentem, quam multis vigiliis opus sit ad tantum opus conficiendum? Quae si iam etiam ab occupationibus rerum curialium mihi vacuae forent, tamen mallet equidem vel in philosophia vel in alia quapiam facultate, quae me facere meliorem posset, quam in transferendis Graecorum historiis meum studium et diligentiam ponere", Gualdo Rosa (1980) 42, letter of December 1407; see also Klee (1990) 57f.

³³ Cochrane (1981) 3; Hankins (2001).

³⁴ Cochrane, *ibid.* 19; Fryde (1983) 26; Roberts (1987) 27. See more recently Daub (1996).

adversus Gothos, Bruni wrote to Francesco Barbaro about Procopius, whom he described as “clumsy and an enemy of eloquence, especially in the speeches, although he wants to imitate Thucydides. But he is as far removed from his grandeur as Thersites is from Achilles in beauty and excellence”.³⁵

In 1435, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, the future Pius II, traveled to England and, in a letter to Johann Hinderbach written in Vienna in 1451, recalled how he had seen a manuscript containing an ancient historical work in the sacristy of St. Paul's Church in London sixteen years earlier. The codex was evidently fairly old. The text, which was in Latin, was attributed to Thucydides but the translator was not named; whoever he was, he had been quite skillful, since he had managed to render Thucydides in such a way that the historian appeared no less noble in Latin than he did in Greek. However, it is clear from Aeneas Silvius' subsequent summary of the work that what he saw was not in fact a translation of Thucydides. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the text, which connected modern heraldry and ancient heroes, has never been identified.³⁶

Lorenzo Valla

The first Latin translation of Thucydides was completed in 1452 by the Roman humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407–57).³⁷ So although highly regarded for his method and style, Thucydides was definitely not among the first Greek writers—or even historians—to attract the attention of humanist translators. Apart from the reasons already hinted at—the fact that the *History* is not a source for Roman history, and could not provide the moral *exempla* so popular with many Renaissance readers—the difficulties of Thucydides' language and the sheer bulk of the text must also have been daunting for translators.

Lorenzo Valla is considered one of the most brilliant minds of fifteenth-century Italy. He is famous today for his many philosophical and linguistic works (not least the *Elegantiae linguae latinae*), for

³⁵ “. . . ineptus et eloquentiae hostis, ut apparet maxime in contionibus suis, quamquam Thucydidem imitari vult. Sed tantem abest ab illius maiestate quantum Thersites forma atque virtute distat ab Achille”, Griggio (1986) 50.

³⁶ Wolkan (1918), *ep.* 5, p. 10ff.

³⁷ On Valla's life see Mancini (1891) and Trinkaus (1999).

the work in which he demonstrates that the so-called Donation of Constantine is a fraud (considered to be the first example of the application of modern historical method), and for his philological annotations to the Greek text of the New Testament, which came to prominence just before the Reformation. By the time he began work on the *History*, Valla had already completed several translations of Greek writers, among them Homer, Xenophon, and Demosthenes; later he translated Herodotus.

Valla's translation of Thucydides was commissioned by the humanist Pope Nicholas V, to whom it is dedicated, and was part of the Pope's impressive project to have the whole of Greek literature translated into Latin. Valla was ready to begin work on the translation in the spring of 1448, as he explains in a letter to his young admirer Niccolò Perotti.³⁸ By October he had translated Book I and part of Book II,³⁹ finally finishing the translation in 1452, according to the autograph postscript of the presentation copy, the Vaticanus latinus 1801. Valla claims to have revised the copy and sanctions it as the *archetypus* of his translation.⁴⁰ From references in his earlier works, we know that Valla had been acquainted with Thucydides' work for many years.⁴¹ However, the difficult aspects of the text, in particular the orations, caused him serious problems, as he confessed to Giovanni Tortelli and in the dedication to Nicholas V.⁴² Valla had hoped to consult the Greek-born Cardinal Bessarion, who unfortu-

³⁸ "et mihi id facere non vacat festinanti ad absolutionem Raudensianarum (*i.e.*, the polemic against Antonio da Rho), quas recognoscendas repurgandasque habeo ut ad Thucydidem vertendum accingar", Besomi-Regoliosi (1984), *ep.* 43.

³⁹ "Primum tamen librum transtuli et secundi partem", Besomi-Regoliosi (1984), *ep.* 44, 28 October <1448>; see also Alberti (1957) 225 n. 1.

⁴⁰ "Hunc Thucydidis codicem, qualis nullus, ut opinor, unquam apud ipsos Graecos vel scriptus vel ornatus est magnificentius, idem ego Laurentius, iussu sanctissimi domini nostri domini Nicolai divina providentia papae Quinti, recognovi cum ipso Ioanne, qui eum tam egregie scripsit. Ideoque haec meo chirographo subscripsi ut esset hic codex meae translationis archetypus unde cetera possent exemplaria emendari", Vat. lat. 1801, f. 184^r, autograph note. Cf. Manfredi (1994) 243f., no. 384.

⁴¹ E.g., *Repastinatio philosophiae et dialecticae* (The Reconstruction of Philosophy and Dialectic, 1439) vol. 1, 1.18.10; *Gesta Ferdinandi regis Aragonie* (History of King Ferdinand of Aragon, 1445–46) proemium 1; *Antidotum in Facium* (Antidote to Fazio, 1445–46) 2.1.31; 3.2.20; 3.5.12.

⁴² "Nunc me Thucydidis exercet, dumtaxat in orationibus", *ep.* 44, and "Nam omnium confessione arduus est saxeusque Thucydidis, cum ceteris in locis, tum vero in orationibus quibus octo eius referti sunt libri", dedication to Nicholas V, Vat. lat. 1801, f. 1^r.

nately was often absent from Rome, and Tortelli himself, a well known Greek scholar, but this had not been possible.⁴³

In the dedication, Valla compares Nicholas to a Roman emperor bidding his generals conquer foreign lands and add them to the Empire, i.e., translate their literature into Latin. Valla's "province", Thucydides, had proved especially arduous (in the preface to the *Elegantiae* Valla compares the Roman Empire to the Latin language in a similar way).⁴⁴ Valla also mentions in the dedication that it was Bessarion who had suggested to the pope that he commission the Latin Thucydides from him.

As soon as it was completed, Valla's translation enjoyed extensive manuscript diffusion which continued into the sixteenth century. I know of 22 manuscripts containing the entire text of Valla's translation, two lost manuscripts and one containing a fragment that seems to have come from a copy of the complete text.⁴⁵ There are also numerous printed editions; the *editio princeps* of Valla's translation appeared around 1483,⁴⁶ and the final edition, albeit several times revised, was published at Paris in 1840 and reprinted at least four times.

However, all the printed editions contain a more or less thorough revision of Valla's text; indeed, Bartholomaeus Parthenius, editor of the *editio princeps* (ca. 1483), stated that the manuscript copy or copies to which he had access were so corrupt that he needed to use a Greek manuscript to help him determine the text of the Latin translation—in spite of which difficulty he claimed to have rendered Valla's text fully and accurately.⁴⁷ This was actually far from the case, as shown by Westgate's collation of Parthenius' text with that of the presentation copy, Vat. lat. 1801, in 1936.⁴⁸ Subsequent editors based their work on the earlier editions and almost invariably

⁴³ "... nec ullius praesidio iuvor. Dominus Nicenus (*sc. Cardinal Bessarion*) abest... Constitui tamen adire dominum Nicenum, qui apud Laurentum agit, ut nunc vocant Neptuniam...; si adesses me plurimum iuvares", *esp.* 44.

⁴⁴ Cf. Pade (1984).

⁴⁵ Pade (2003) 122–25.

⁴⁶ [ca. 1483], [Treviso]: [Johannes Rubeus]. H *15511. This edition is the only incunabulum containing Valla's translation. For a list of sixteenth-century editions see Pade (2003) 125f.

⁴⁷ "Laurentiumque Thucydidis interpretem non minus integrum quam verum reddidimus" (dedicatory letter placed after Parthenius' text of the translation and addressed to Francesco Foscari).

⁴⁸ Westgate (1936) 243.

claimed to have checked the text of the translation against Greek manuscripts. Some of the revisions are so thorough that the result may even be termed a new translation.

So, as Westgate pointed out, the true text of Valla's translation has never been printed. Since he drew attention to the presentation copy, scholarly work on the translation has used this manuscript as a point of departure. However, an examination of the older manuscripts has revealed that they are in fact copies of an exemplar with a number of marginal notes that are not found in Vat. lat. 1801. Since these notes undoubtedly originate with Valla, it is likely that they were found in his own copy of the translation and that this personal copy became the exemplar for a number of manuscripts that would then occupy the same place in the textual tradition as the presentation copy.⁴⁹ A number of the notes reflect Valla's work on the commentary on Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* and other linguistic questions that are treated more fully in the *Elegantiae*.⁵⁰ Some are translations of Greek *scholia*, but on the whole Valla's notes constitute a corollary to his own Latin version rather than a commentary on the text of Thucydides.⁵¹

Over the centuries Valla's translation attracted ample scholarly attention. Soon after its completion, various editors discussed its merits, often criticizing it severely. In his *Prolegomena in Thucydidis interpretationem*, the Rostock professor Johannes Caselius offered a remarkably balanced judgment, observing that although Valla's translations of both Thucydides and Herodotus left much to be desired and had innumerable faults, there was still reason to be grateful to Valla, since he was the first who had dared undertake the task.⁵² Other critics were less charitable, as we shall see. Ever since Poppo's (1825) assertion that a translation completed in 1452 must be *codicis instar*, numerous books and articles have been written on the value of Valla's translation as a source for the Greek text.⁵³ In the past century, papyri and epigraphic material have in some instances vindicated the correctness of Valla's translation over the medieval tradition of

⁴⁹ See Pade (1992); (2000); (2003) 121.

⁵⁰ On Valla's method of interpretation here, see Regoliosi (1993).

⁵¹ See Pade (2000); see also Pintaudi-Tesi (1976) 213–18.

⁵² Caselius (1576) 26f.

⁵³ Cf. Poppo (1821–38) pars 2, vol. 1, 72; Golish (1842); Cordewener (1897); Hemmerdinger (1955); Alberti (1957); (1967); (1972–2000) l.cix–cxxii; Ferlauto (1979).

Thucydides' text.⁵⁴ In addition, a growing understanding of Renaissance methods of translation has led to a reappraisal of Valla's work, and what earlier critics interpreted as a lack of accuracy on Valla's part has often turned out to have been a deliberate choice. Like other humanist translators, Valla attempted to render Greek texts in classical Latin and in a style and idiom that matched the original. This meant that if a classical Latin author was known to have imitated the Greek writer in question, his style of Latin would be an obvious choice for the translator. In the case of translating Thucydides, the obvious Latin author to imitate was Sallust, and Valla did this extensively, sometimes to the point of quoting Sallust rather than rendering the exact meaning of Thucydides' text.⁵⁵

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Though Thucydides was by no means unknown before the appearance of Valla's translation, we encounter his name with ever-increasing frequency in the humanist writings of the second half of the fifteenth century. He is regularly mentioned in works where literary matters or historiography are discussed, for example the *De politia litteraria* (1462)⁵⁶ of the Lombard humanist Angelo Decembrio. Thucydides is quoted several times in Niccolò Perotti's encyclopedic work *Cornu copiae* (before 1480)⁵⁷ and frequently by writers like Ermolao Barbaro and Angelo Poliziano, who refers to the κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί in the preface to the *Miscellanea* (1489).⁵⁸

The *History* also suggested itself as a model for humanist historiography. Poggio Bracciolini, Valla's old antagonist, was in Venice in 1454 and planned to write the history of the city, intending to imitate Xenophon and Thucydides.⁵⁹ The Venetian patrician Bernardo Giustinian (1406–89), son of the equally well-known humanist Leonardo, set out to write a history of his native city in which he would refute the doubtful stories constructed by the medieval chroniclers. His stated model was Thucydides, to whose methodological as well as

⁵⁴ Cf. J.E. Powell (1929) 11–14 and D.M. Lewis (1980) 276–78. On the medieval tradition of Thucydides' text, see Hemmerdinger (1955) and Kleinlogel (1965).

⁵⁵ Alberti (1985); Pade (1986) (2000); (2004).

⁵⁶ Witten (2002) I.9 p. 170.

⁵⁷ E.g. Charlet (1989–2001) *epig.* 14.22.

⁵⁸ "... aeternitati (prout etiam dictum a Thucydide seruire scriptores conuenit)", Poliziano, ed. 1553 [praef., 79].

⁵⁹ Cochrane (1981) 29.

stylistic principles he tried to adhere; his work *De origine urbis Venetiarum* was published posthumously in 1493.⁶⁰

Another Venetian, Marcantonio Coccio Sabellico, made use of Thucydides in a different way.⁶¹ He published the two volumes of his *Enneades sive Rhapsodia historiarum* in 1498 and 1504 respectively. The work is a universal history, going back to the Creation and ending in 1504. In *Enneades* III, Books 5–8, Sabellico deals with the Peloponnesian War, using Thucydides as his sole source.⁶² Sabellico's narrative is for the most part a summary, but he reports the text of eleven speeches in his own Latin translation. This is clearly based on Valla, but the text has been thoroughly rephrased. By today's standards, the technique of writing history by paraphrasing or quoting long passages from classical works may seem almost tantamount to plagiarism, but in fifteenth-century Italy the procedure was common practice and by no means seen as disreputable. Earlier in the century the highly admired Leonardo Bruni had compiled a number of historical works in this way; his *First Punic War*, for instance, is primarily based on Polybius, but he used portions of a number of other writers, including Thucydides, to correct and flesh out Polybius' account.⁶³ Sabellico's *Enneades* was printed seven times separately and twice as part of his *Opera omnia*.⁶⁴

The Sixteenth Century

The *editio princeps* of the Greek text of Thucydides is also connected with Venice, which at that time was the centre of printing in Europe. A relatively large number of Greek manuscripts of the *History* seem to have circulated in Italy during the fifteenth century.⁶⁵ A similar

⁶⁰ Venice: Bernardinus Benalius, HC 9638*. Cf. Labalme (1969) 247–61; Cochrane, (1981) 80–81; King (1986), 381ff. (profiles).

⁶¹ For Sabellico's life, see *CTC* 4.347–48 and 7.232; Cochrane (1981) 83–86; Klee (1990) 67f.

⁶² Venetiis (Venice): per Bernardinum et Matheum Venetos, part 1.1498. HC* 14055.

⁶³ Cf. Reynolds (1954).

⁶⁴ Cf. Pade (2003) 129f.

⁶⁵ Fryde (1983) 24f.; cf. Dain (1933). On some Greek manuscript of Thucydides known to have been in Italy during the fifteenth century, see Vernet (1961) 95, no. 44; Regoliosi (1969) 139 n. 4; Papademetriou (1970).

preference is reflected in the first printed edition of the *History*, published in 1502 by the famous Aldo Manuzio, who also issued a separate edition of the Greek scholia just a year later. Despite the fact that printing types were developed much later for Greek than for Latin, and in 1502 relatively few Greek authors had appeared in print, I know of twelve complete or partial sixteenth-century editions of the Greek text of Thucydides.⁶⁶

Throughout the fifteenth century, the reception of Thucydides had been almost exclusively connected with Italian humanism, but from the beginning of the sixteenth this began to change, and with the spread of humanism Thucydides' readership likewise "migrated" to other parts of Europe; with a few exceptions, the most eminent students of Thucydides in the sixteenth century were non-Italians. Niccolò Machiavelli seems to have been a case in point. It has frequently been debated whether he was influenced by Thucydides. Earlier critics pointed to the fact that there are relatively few actual references in his works, and it has been argued that Machiavelli probably never read the *History*.⁶⁷ In recent years, a number of scholars have maintained that there is an overall indebtedness to Thucydides' views on history,⁶⁸ but the general consensus still seems to be that the Florentine political writer was never strongly influenced by him.

Not surprisingly, it is in southern Germany that we find the first indication of an interest in Thucydides outside Italy. Many Germans went to Italy to study at the great humanist schools, often returning home with both a knowledge of Greek and humanist Latin and a large number of books; the well-known Nuremberg humanist Willibald Pirckheimer was one of them.⁶⁹ He had studied some Greek during his 1489–95 stay in Italy, but his father put a stop to this as soon as he heard about it, and only after the latter died in 1501 did Pirckheimer feel free to continue his studies. In a letter of 10 March 1503 addressed to Konrad Celtis, he writes that he is reading Greek literature, notably Thucydides and Herodotus.⁷⁰ This letter furnishes an approximate *terminus post quem* for his translation: the Greek text of Thucydides must be the Aldine edition of 1502 (which

⁶⁶ Cf. Pade (2003) 115.

⁶⁷ Sandys (1908) 89, and, more recently Reinhardt (1966).

⁶⁸ Klee (1990) 68–72 and 76–78.

⁶⁹ See Holzberg (1981) John-Fiedler (1981); Trillitzsch (1982).

⁷⁰ Reimann-Reicke (1949–89) *esp.* 59. On his letters, see also Löfstedt (1985).

Pirckheimer owned), and readings from this printed text are recognizable in Pirckheimer's Latin version, which covers only the first 69 chapters of Book 1. Pirckheimer also owned the *editio princeps* of Valla's translation and had recourse to it for difficult words and expressions. Evidently Pirckheimer did not intend to publish his translation of Thucydides in its then state, and it is extant only in a manuscript in Nuremberg.⁷¹ The translation is of little interest in and of itself; I mention it here primarily as an indication of the development of humanist studies in Europe.

The first known Latin commentary on any part of Thucydides was compiled at about the same time as Pirckheimer was working on his translation. In a manuscript preserved in the Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität in Basle, MS. F V 24, fols. 1^r–171^v, dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century, we find an anonymous commentary on Th. 1–4.98.8.⁷² The commentary breaks off in the middle of a chapter, and was apparently part of a more comprehensive work. It is a fair copy, probably intended for publication. The commentary tends to paraphrase the text; though there are a few verbal coincidences it does not seem to rely on Valla's translation.

The first vernacular translation of the *History* was Claude de Seyssel's French rendering of Valla's Latin version, begun at some point before 1515: the first four Books are dedicated to Louis XII, whose death is thus the *terminus ante quem* for this part of Seyssel's work. The entire translation was printed in 1527 in Paris and is dedicated to Jacques Colin.⁷³ Seyssel's translation was severely criticised by Henri Estienne but was nonetheless reprinted several times. It resembles many of the other vernacular sixteenth-century translations of Thucydides in that it relies on one—or several—intermediate translations and not on the Greek text itself.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Nachlass Pirckheimer, MS. 343, s. XVI (ca. 1503), fols. 1^r–11^r; cf. Kristeller (1965–1997) 3.670b.

⁷² Kristeller (1965–1997) 5.61a, 69a; Pade (2003) 163f.

⁷³ Peter Burke reports that Badius printed 1225 copies of the 1527 edition of Seyssel's translation. The number is remarkable since at this time printing runs rarely exceeded 400 or 500 copies; see Burke (1966) 135–52.

⁷⁴ Cf. Pade (2003) 115f.

Philip Melanchthon

In 1520 the first non-Italian edition of a part of Thucydides' Greek text was published at Wittenberg, whose recently founded university was to become the most important centre of learning in Lutheran Germany. Wittenberg was the first German university at which the three ancient languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, were officially taught. Due in particular to the reforms of Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560)⁷⁵ a thorough knowledge of the classical languages was considered essential for the study of Lutheran theology.

Soon after his arrival at Wittenberg in 1518, Melanchthon had a small room set aside and furnished with original texts, to give the students easy access to editions of Greek authors. Melanchthon also persuaded the printer Melchior Lotther the Younger to leave Leipzig and come to Wittenberg, to make cheap editions of various texts, often collections of shorter pieces. Strobel, who mentions that these booklets had mostly been lost by the end of the eighteenth century, owned nine items published in 1520 and 1521. One of them, printed at Wittenberg in 1520, bore Lotther's printer's mark without his name and contained, among other works, the Greek text of the speech of Diodotus (3.42–48).⁷⁶

In his *Enneades*, Marcantonio Sabellico paraphrased Thucydides' narrative but printed the full text of the speeches he used. Melchior Lotther's edition may be another instance of a special interest in the speeches, which had already been discussed extensively by Cicero and Quintilian (see above). This focus intensified throughout the sixteenth century, particularly after the middle of the century, when a considerable number of Latin translations and commentaries appeared which dealt solely with the speeches. The tendency is more marked in the case of Latin than Greek; in addition to Lotther's edition I know of one other edition of the speeches in Greek, namely Christian Wechel's 1531 edition (Paris) of the speeches from Book I.

Lotther's booklet was produced for use in Melanchthon's university courses and we know that the latter lectured regularly on Thucydides, apparently throughout his life. Johannes Caselius, who had studied at Wittenberg from 1551 to 1553, wrote that he had

⁷⁵ For a recent biography, see Scheible (1997).

⁷⁶ Strobel (1791) 214ff., 219; Klee (1990) 134; *VD* 16: T 1129.

heard Melanchthon lecture on Thucydides as a young man and learned firsthand how important the Greek historian was to him. Melanchthon's admiration for Thucydides was also evident from the various writings he produced on the author, intended to get students and scholars thoroughly acquainted with his works. Caselius noted that some of Melanchthon's writings were still in use in universities and hoped that his readers would imitate Melanchthon, who had studied the ancients, not least Thucydides.⁷⁷

We know about Melanchthon's work on Thucydides from various sources, yet only a Latin version of the civil war in Corcyra (3.81.4–84.2) was actually printed during his lifetime, included in the editions of his *Dialecticae praeceptiones* (first published in 1542).⁷⁸ It may seem disturbing that Thucydides' famous chapters on how politics change the meaning of words should have seemed a fitting introduction to a handbook of dialectic; however, Melanchthon's *Dialectic* was very popular, and with it his translation of the chapters from Thucydides was reprinted numerous times.⁷⁹

After Melanchthon's death in 1560, his son-in-law Caspar Peucer published the *Orationes ex Historia Thucydidis . . . conuersae in Latinum sermonem a Philippo Melanthon* (Wittenberg 1562). The volume contains Melanchthon's translations of most of the speeches, of the encomium of Themistocles from Book I, and of the chapters on the civil war. From notes taken by an anonymous student during a university course on Thucydides held in 1542, we can deduce that even at that stage Melanchthon had finished at least some of the translations published by Peucer, although we do not know exactly when. The 1520 edition shows that he was interested in the speeches from an early date.

In the preface dedicated to the imperial vice-chancellor Georg Sigismund Seld, Peucer explains how he is convinced that a man who participates in public affairs—like Seld—is more capable of evaluating the content of the speeches. He adds that the translations were originally made for students: when lecturing on a difficult Greek author, Melanchthon was in the habit of providing his students with a rough translation that simply rendered the overall meaning of the

⁷⁷ Caselius (1576) 28–30.

⁷⁸ Lipsiae (Leipzig): Nicolaus Wolrab. VD 16: M 3015.

⁷⁹ See Pade (2003) 132 for later editions.

text, thus making it easier for beginners to follow. Peucer cannot exclude the possibility of some factual errors, but he knows of no substantially better translations. Melanchthon did not have time to revise them for publication, Peucer says.

A clue as to why Peucer may have been so hasty in editing his father-in-law's work is found in an inaugural lecture given in April 1562 by David Chytraeus, professor at Rostock and a former pupil of Melanchthon. Chytraeus hints that Peucer was induced to publish the work by the fact that Chytraeus himself was planning a series of lectures on Thucydides.⁸⁰ It is reasonable to assume that Chytraeus would have used Melanchthon's translations, which he could have taken down as a student in Wittenberg and, further, that Peucer would have wanted to secure his own right to their publication.

In fact Peucer had good reason to be cautious. Veit Winsheim (or Vitus Winsheim), another former pupil of Melanchthon's and one of his close collaborators, had taught rhetoric at Wittenberg from 1528 and Greek from the mid 1530s. He later published a complete Latin translation of the *History* accompanied by a full commentary (see below). As he himself acknowledges in the preface, he printed the whole of Melanchthon's translation from the *History*, interspersed with his own translation. His text largely agrees with that of Caspar Peucer's edition, but the two are not identical, and we know that Winsheim had already translated part of Thucydides before Peucer's volume appeared.

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A manuscript now in Hamburg contains notes from the *Prolegomena* to a series of lectures on Thucydides by Philip Melanchthon and an anonymous commentary on Books I–III.⁸¹ The *Prolegomena* and commentary are written in the same hand but constitute two separate parts of the manuscript; the *Prolegomena* are notes from a lecture delivered on 31 October 1553, whereas the end of Book I of the commentary is dated 14.11.1542, and the end of Book III, the year 1555. It is not quite clear whether the commentary was composed by Melanchthon himself, but we may safely attribute it to some member of his scholarly circle.

⁸⁰ Chytraeus (1563) sig. L4.

⁸¹ Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. philol. 166. For a full discussion of this commentary, see Pade (1996).

Much of the information in the *Prolegomena* that is not directly connected with the *History* is also found in Melanchthon's edition of the *Chronicon Carionis*, a work that served as a general background to his lectures on history.⁸² The anonymous commentary is either a copy or a rewrite of an existing text, which presumably contained notes from lectures. Much of the material links it with Melanchthon's collaborator Veit Winsheim, and in fact the work of the two Thucydidean scholars is intricately interwoven, to the extent that is often impossible to decide on the actual authorship; the Hamburg commentary is a good example of this. Both the notes comprising the *Prolegomena* and the commentary on Books I–III exhibit many verbal similarities with Winsheim's 1569 edition. In the Hamburg manuscript, the commentary is divided into sections, consisting of a paraphrase of the text in question and of the commentary proper. In the paragraphs on the speeches translated by Melanchthon, the paraphrases often closely resemble the latter's version, but Winsheim would later include them in his own Latin version of the entire text, acknowledging Melanchthon's authorship. So the Hamburg commentary definitely reflects the philological environment around Melanchthon at Wittenberg, although it is impossible to tell how much of its contents are due to him and how much to his collaborator.

Giovanni della Casa

The Italian diplomat and writer Giovanni della Casa (1503–1556) was attracted by the practical value of the speeches in Thucydides, both because of the political wisdom they contained and because of their value as rhetorical models. Della Casa's position and experience meant that he was certainly capable of evaluating the content of Thucydides' speeches, as Peucer had noted in his preface to Seld.

At the beginning of the 1530s, della Casa began an ecclesiastical career and in the following years pursued various commissions for the Curia in Italy. In 1544 he was appointed archbishop of Benevento but never visited his see. That same year he also became *nuncio* to Venice, where he spent the next five years. After the death of Pope

⁸² I am grateful to Inger Ekrem for making me aware of the similarities between the *Prolegomena* in the Hamburg commentary and the *Chronicon Carionis*.

Paul III in 1549, della Casa lived in semi-retirement in the Veneto and dedicated himself to literary pursuits. In 1555 Pope Paul IV appointed him Secretary of State. Della Casa is considered one of the finest Tuscan writers of the period: in addition to his work on Thucydides, his writings include the famous educational treatise *Il Galateo, ovvero De'costumi* (for Galeazzo Florimonte, after whom it was named), a number of biographies in Latin and Italian, poetry, philosophical treatises, and several orations.

In the mid-1540s della Casa translated a number of speeches from Thucydides. We now have versions of most of the speeches of Books I–III (seventeen in all) and the description of the plague in Athens.⁸³ Della Casa probably did not translate the speeches and the description of the plague at the same time. The latter is preserved in a separate manuscript (BAV, Vat. lat. 14826) and was not printed until 1707. Moreover, della Casa's Latin rendering of the description of the plague was not known to (or at least not mentioned by) Caselius, who was in Italy in 1560 and became a student and close friend of Vettori.⁸⁴ Caselius later recorded how he had seen Vettori prepare the edition of the translations for the *Latina monimenta* with the utmost diligence. In fact, according to Caselius, della Casa's translation of the speeches was held to be the best in existence at the time.⁸⁵

Lorenzo Campana suggested that della Casa translated Thucydides as a rhetorical exercise with a view to preparing himself for his official speeches, among them the famous *Orazione per la lega* (composed between September 1547 and the early months of 1548) and the *Orazione a Carlo V per la restituzione di Piacenza* (written at the end of 1549). He also pointed out the strong Thucydidean influence in della Casa's political letters.⁸⁶

In fact, in a fragment of a funeral oration, della Casa alluded to Pericles' oration in Book II, acknowledging that he was inspired by the ancient Athenian custom. He recalled that Rome also learned from Athens and explained how once a year the Athenians would honor those who had died fighting for their country with a public funeral at which the city's most brilliant orator would make a speech.

⁸³ See Pade (2003) 142 for the manuscripts of della Casa's translations.

⁸⁴ See *CTC* 2.124.

⁸⁵ Caselius (1576) 31.

⁸⁶ Campana (1908) 443f.

Consequently the fame of those who had died for Athens lived on, thanks to the genius of Thucydides, Plato and Demosthenes.⁸⁷

In Vat. lat. 14825, in which we have two quite different copies of this fragmentary funeral oration, della Casa noted some of the passages that he used, and the Thucydidean influence is marked. Casotti maintains that the speech was delivered after the 1538 defeat by the Turks in the naval battle of Prevesa, in the Gulf of Arta, where six Venetian galleys were lost.⁸⁸ This date is perhaps somewhat doubtful: from the speech it is clear that it was to be delivered at Venice, yet della Casa arrived in the city six years after the defeat of the Venetians. Furthermore, in the battle that della Casa recalls there were also non-Venetian losses, which does not seem to have been the case at Prevesa.

The translations did not appear until 1564, in the *Latina monumenta*, Pietro Vettori's posthumous edition of della Casa's Latin works. In his preface to the edition, Vettori draws attention to the exceptional difficulty of Thucydides' speeches and observes that anyone who disagrees with della Casa's Latin rendering should bear in mind that he was particularly well equipped to understand the speeches owing to his political experience, diligence and great natural gifts. Vettori doubts that he has found all of della Casa's translations, and Johannes Caselius later mentions that della Casa was believed to have translated all Thucydides' speeches, but he may simply be repeating the opinion of Vettori here. Della Casa's translation of the speeches was printed ten times, in four cases together with the translation of the description of the plague.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ "Nec vero ignarus eram pulcherrimae illius Atheniensium consuetudinis, quam prudentissima civitas, e qua Senatus Populusque ipse Romanus leges olim mutatus didicerit, servavit quam diutissime: suos enim cives, quicumque in proeliis pro re pugnantes publica fortiter cecidissent, cum publico funere ac sepultura honorabant, tum vero, qui eorum laudes ad sepulchra singulis annis memoraret, publice constituebant eum quidem potissimum, qui ingenio atque eloquentia in civitate excelleret plurimum . . . Atque eorum, qui pro unis Athenis occubuerunt, virtus et gloria et fama ne tot quidem seculis post mortua est; Thucydidis enim, Platonis, Demosthenis denique ingenio et spiritu vivit . . .", Casa, ed. 1707, 3.262–64.

⁸⁸ Casa, ed. 1707, 1.17.

⁸⁹ For a list of the editions, see Pade (2003) 142f.

Scholarship on Thucydides

The last edition of the (more or less) original version of Valla's translation appeared in Basle in 1564. This date may not be a coincidence, but rather a reflection of the new wave of scholarly interest in Thucydides which characterized the 1560s and manifested itself in both new translations and commentaries.

Vitus Winsheim

In 1561, Melanchthon's friend and collaborator Vitus Winsheim (1501–1570)⁹⁰ published the Greek text of Books I–IV at Wittenberg; in the dedication to Paolo Prætorio he described his plans for a new Latin version of the *History*. His aim was to produce an accessible version of Thucydides by conveying the contents of the text and not necessarily the intricate style of the Greek author, who many readers found very difficult. He noted that Valla's translation was often as challenging as the original. As a result, Winsheim was encouraged to produce a simple translation for the benefit of the young, especially since he had already translated part of the text. Despite his advanced years he agreed, hoping that his endeavours would result in an "easy" Thucydides.

Eight years later (1569) Winsheim dedicated his completed translation and commentary to Duke Augustus of Saxony; in the dedication, he reiterated the fact that he had undertaken the work to facilitate the studies of the young and explained that he had incorporated all the translations of his teacher Philip Melanchthon (see above), with minor corrections.

Winsheim also refers frequently to Melanchthon in his commentary, always with great veneration. The commentary is a mixture of *realia*, grammatical commentary often including paraphrases of the text and rhetorical analysis (where he uses Melanchthon's terminology), and *notabilia/moralia*. The work is preceded by a copious *accessus* entitled *Prolegomena in Thucydidem*. The translation and commentary were reedited in 1580 by his son, also named Veit Winsheim.

⁹⁰ "Winsheim, Veit", *ADB* 43.462–63; Lieboldt (1883); and Strobel (1791) 235–80.

David Chytraeus

David Chytraeus (1531–1600)⁹¹ went to Wittenberg in 1544 to study with Melancthon, by whom he was deeply influenced. After travels in Germany, Switzerland and Italy he went to Rostock, where he taught from 1550 onward. In 1561 he became *doctor theologiae* and professor. Chytraeus undertook to reorganize the university of Rostock along the lines of Wittenberg, and he clearly saw a knowledge of the classical authors as essential to the study of Lutheran theology.

Chytraeus' *Chronologia historiae Herodoti et Thucydidis* and his *accessus* to seven of the eight Books appeared at Rostock between 1562 and 1567 and enjoyed numerous reprints. In the *Chronologia*, Chytraeus correlated the events described by Herodotus and Thucydides with important events in the Bible and in the history of Persia and Egypt, among other countries. As part of the *accessus* to Book I, he also printed the short *argumenta* of all eight Books. The section of the *Chronologia* concerning the *History* and the *argumenta* appeared separately in a number of editions containing the Greek text of the *History*. In 1563 Chytraeus published his *De lectione historiarum recte instituenda et historicorum fere omnium series et argumenta* which discusses Thucydides; a large part of this discussion was incorporated into later editions of the *Chronologia*. He also used examples from Thucydides for his *Praecepta rhetoricae inventionis* (1556).⁹²

Henri Estienne

The French Calvinist Henri Estienne (Henricus Stephanus, 1528–98) was one of the most distinguished scholar-publishers in the history of printing. The Estienne family publishing house had been founded at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Paris, but in 1550 a dispute with the city's powerful faculty of theology had forced Henri's father, Robert Estienne, to leave for protestant Geneva, where his son would later succeed him. Henri Estienne's most important single publication is probably his *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* in five vol-

⁹¹ Sturz (1601); Schutz (1720–21); *ADB* 4.254–56; Glaser – Lietz-Rhein (1993); *NDB* 3.254.

⁹² For a list of the editions, see Pade (2003) 167f.

umes, but he also published a number of standard editions of Greek writers, including Thucydides. He edited both the Greek text and Valla's translation, translated some of the speeches himself, and compiled a commentary on the *History*. Quite apart from the commentaries proper, many of his prefaces and appendices to the various editions are critical essays of great relevance to the study of Thucydides.

Estienne published his first edition of Thucydides in 1564. He was able to correct and clarify several passages in the Greek text, and his readings were to a great extent followed by later editors. Along with the Greek text he printed a version of Valla's translation, which included his own corrections in the form of marginal notes; these of course reflected his work on the Greek text. The extent of Estienne's interventions is such that the resulting text owes as much to him as it does to Valla, notwithstanding the fact that his contribution is in the form of a series of marginal notes rather than a continuous text.

The edition was dedicated to Joachim Camerarius, and Estienne explained to him that it was produced with strenuous effort on his part, occupied as he was during the day with various tasks at home, in the office and elsewhere; his revision of Valla's translation had to be worked on at night and under the pressure of time.

This emphasis on the difficulties involved is developed at greater length in the letter to the reader.⁹³ As for Valla's translation, Estienne recalls his surprise that revising it turned out to be such an arduous task, since he had been convinced that Valla had consulted all the "oracles" of his day about the more obscure passages in the Greek text, and had also been led to believe that Claude de Seyssel's French translation would be helpful. But he was sorely disappointed on both counts: Valla would sometimes persist in an error of translation, sometimes translate a phrase correctly in one book and incorrectly in another. Indeed, Estienne wonders that the author of the *Elegantiae* could have expressed himself so clumsily in Latin, and finds it hard to believe that Valla completed his translation after he wrote the *Elegantiae*.

Estienne's 1588 edition of Thucydides is generally considered the best sixteenth-century edition of the text. It was dedicated to Frederick IV, Duke of Bavaria and Palatine elector. Estienne presented a revised Greek text and further corrected Valla's translation, now printed in

⁹³ Estienne (1564) sig. t.iiiiv.

parallel columns with the Greek text. The Greek scholia, also revised, were placed at the foot of the page. Accompanying Books I and II of the translation was Estienne's commentary. He was mainly concerned with philological questions, and the commentary is actually a corollary to his edition of the Greek text; there is little discussion of matters of content. Other important additions are the *Proparasceue* to the reading of Greek scholia, a still valuable exposition of the special vocabulary and technical terminology used by the scholiasts, and Latin annotations to the scholia of the first two Books. Estienne also printed David Chytraeus' *Chronologia Thucydidis*.

As Estienne tells us in the preface, he had been planning to annotate the entire text but postponed the enterprise on the basis of anonymous letters from Germany and France that led him to believe that the Greek text would be further emended, and that there existed further Greek scholia as yet not in his possession.

Joachim Camerarius

The career of Joachim Camerarius (i.e., Kammermeister, 1500–1574) resembles that of Chytraeus (see above) in many ways. He was a student and close friend of Melanchthon, became professor of Greek at the University of Tübingen, where we know he lectured on Thucydides, and from 1541 was professor of Greek at Leipzig, where he undertook the reorganisation of the university. He remained in Leipzig for the rest of his life.⁹⁴

Camerarius is considered one of the foremost German scholars of the sixteenth century. His work on Thucydides comprises the 1540 edition of the Greek text with a corpus of scholia, and a Latin translation of the proem, two speeches, and the description of the plague, accompanied by a very full commentary, published in Leipzig in 1565. Estienne had dedicated his 1564 edition of Thucydides to Camerarius, and the following year Camerarius sent Estienne his *Conversa ex Thucydidis historia quaedam in Latinum sermonem* in return.⁹⁵ The small volume comprises Camerarius' translations of Thucydides'

⁹⁴ *CTC* 2.100–101 and 7.129.

⁹⁵ The full title is *Conversa ex Thucydidis historia quaedam in Latinum sermonem, et de autore illo deque scriptis ipsius exposita nec non explicata aliqua*, 1565, Witebergae (Wittenberg): Iohannes Crato. *VD* 16: T 1132.

preface, the short oration of the Spartan Sthenelaides in Book I, and Pericles' Funeral Oration in Book II, accompanied by Camerarius' commentaries and an introduction to the whole work in which, among other things, Camerarius analyzes Thucydides' style and language. The last two chapters in the volume contain a commentary on the description of the plague (2.48–2.54); Camerarius discusses Lucretius' imitation of this passage, also providing a hexameter translation of the part that has no equivalent in *De rerum natura* (primarily *Hist.* 2.53).

Focus on the Speeches:

Willem Canter, Agostino Zeno, and Henri Estienne

The Dutch scholar Willem Canter (1542–75)⁹⁶ was the author of a volume that again shows how the rhetorical art of Thucydides attracted special attention. Canter's Latin translation of Pericles' Funeral Oration was printed at Basle in 1566, together with versions of other Greek orators.⁹⁷ In the preface Canter mentions the difficulties he encountered in translating the speech, despite the existence of earlier versions. There is further evidence of Canter's interest in Thucydides in his *Novarum lectionum libri octo* (1571), where he suggested some emendations of *Th.* 7.15 and 8.6.

Three years later Antonio Zeno, a Venetian patrician,⁹⁸ published a commentary on Pericles' first speech (*Th.* 1.140–144) with an accompanying translation.⁹⁹ The volume also contains Zeno's commentary on the speech of Lepidus from Sallust's *History*.¹⁰⁰ In the section on Thucydides, he first prints a passage of the Greek text, then the translation, and finally his copious commentary.

In the dedication to the Venetian statesman and diplomat Andrea Biagio Badoer, Zeno told of how he had worked on the translation and commentary while studying science at Padova and Bologna, and decided after returning to Venice to publish it for the benefit of his

⁹⁶ *CTC* 2.23.

⁹⁷ Basileae (Basel): Petrus Perna. *VD* 16: A 3263.

⁹⁸ Nothing is known of Zeno apart from what can be gleaned from the preface of the edition, namely that he was Venetian, lived in the sixteenth century, and belonged to a prominent family.

⁹⁹ 1569, Venetiis (Venice): apud Bologninum Zalterium. Adams (1968) Z-125.

¹⁰⁰ See Osmond and Ulery (2003) 303–5.

country. He chose the two speeches in question from the large corpus available because they were political speeches and rhetorically excellent, written by authors from different states who nonetheless treated the material in a similar way. Zeno was confident that they would be of interest to people involved in the public life of the city (i.e., people like Zeno himself, who belonged to the ruling classes). Moreover, they contained "most weighty counsel on war," which the Venetians might well need.

The preface (pp. 9–30) resembles an *accessus* in form. An important part of the first chapter discusses the value of the Thucydidean speeches as models for forensic rhetoric. Zeno is not content merely to enumerate the views of *auctores* such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Demetrius of Phaleron, Longinus and Cicero but also attempts to synthesize: "that which is a grave fault when speaking, is most praiseworthy when written,"¹⁰¹ here referring to Aristotle (*Rh.* 3.1.7 [1404a]), as he often does. In the following chapters Zeno describes Pericles as an orator and statesman and explains how his speech was adapted to the circumstances, i.e., the political situation and his audience (the popular assembly). The commentary proper is in part rhetorical, with a strong didactic note, and in part concerned with political matters, with Zeno making constant use of parallel examples.

In 1570 Henri Estienne published the most ambitious of these political-rhetorical textbooks. His *Conciones* are a collection of speeches and exhortations found in Greek and Roman historians.¹⁰² The material was aimed at politicians, lawyers, and all those who had an interest in the art of persuasion. Latin translations accompany the Greek texts. From Thucydides, Estienne printed most of the speeches, all preceded by the *argumenta* of a certain Job Veratius. The translations are either by Valla, more or less thoroughly corrected by Estienne, by Estienne himself, or by Veratius. The collection also includes translations of speeches from Herodotus (by Valla), Xenophon, Polybius, and Arrian's *Anabasis*. Latin authors are represented by speeches from the works of Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, Curtius, the *Historia Augusta*, and Ammianus Marcellinus. Veratius' *argumenta* for the Thucydidean speeches do not merely summarize the contents but

¹⁰¹ "quod in dicendo vitium esset vel maximum, id in scribendo laudatissimum esse", p. 13.

¹⁰² *Conciones sive orationes ex Graecis Latinisque historicis excerpta* [Geneva].

also present the general context in which the speeches were delivered and regularly comment upon the rhetorical genre. Veratius also compiled an index in which all the speeches in the volume were listed according to genus: *deliberativum* (legislative), *iudiciale* (judicial or forensic) and *demonstrativum* (ceremonial), and this index is often mentioned as one of the crowning glories of the edition.¹⁰³ Estienne's 1588 edition of Thucydides reprints the part of the index which pertains to Thucydides.

Francesco Porto

The 1590s saw two new complete commentaries on Thucydides and another translation. In 1594 Emilio Porto (1550–1614/15) published both the Greek text, the commentary of his father Francesco (1511–81), and the latter's thorough correction of the version of Valla's translation published by Estienne.¹⁰⁴ Although the text of Valla and Estienne is still clearly recognizable, this version differs substantially from earlier ones.¹⁰⁵ Porto was professor of Greek at the so-called Grillenzona Academy in Modena from 1536 to 1546 and at Ferrara from 1546 to 1554, and his commentary was apparently compiled for university lectures. The commentary on Book I also survives in the form of manuscript notes taken at Porto's lectures in 1548.¹⁰⁶ In the printed edition, Francesco explains difficult passages by means of lengthy paraphrases and also comments on points of style and on *realia*.

In the preface to the reader, Emilio describes how he worked on the volume at Frankenthal (in Pfalz), whither unhappy circumstances had forced him; there, without a teaching position or other paid employment, he occupied himself with Thucydides. Emilio goes on to hint at a scholarly feud with Henri Estienne involving himself and/or his father. Both Francesco and Emilio made use of Estienne's

¹⁰³ "Additus est index artificiosissimus et utilissimus quo in rhetorica causarum genera, velut in communes locos, singulae contiones rediguntur", von Almeloveen (1683) index, 45.

¹⁰⁴ 1594 2^o, *Francofurti*: apud heredes Andreae Wecheli, Claudium Marnium et Ioan. Aubrium. Adams (1968) T-668; *VD* 16: T 1125. Biography of Porto: *CTC* 2.198 and 7.116.

¹⁰⁵ For a list of the editions of Porto's translation, see Pade (2003) 150–60.

¹⁰⁶ Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Est. lat. 100 (alpha P.9.2).

work, although Emilio criticizes Estienne's translation severely, his attitude being even evident on the title-page of the edition. But despite this animosity, their joint version of Valla's translation became the basis for numerous later editions, the last of which appeared in 1884.

Georg Achatz Enenkel

In 1596 the Austrian Baron Georg Achatz Enenkel (1572/72—shortly after 1620)¹⁰⁷ published his Latin translation of all eight books of the *History* plus a commentary at Tübingen. In his letter to the reader, Enenkel recalls how Michael Ziegler, his teacher there, recommended Thucydides and Livy to him, then explaining that the existing Latin translations of Thucydides (he mentions Valla and Winsheim) were not much help to him. With constant study, however, he became so familiar with Thucydides' language that he began to work on his own version, which Ziegler encouraged him to publish.

But Enenkel did not intend his translation to be merely an aid to understanding the Greek text. Translations of this type, he says, attempt to remove the difficulties of Thucydides' language but do not expound the text, as he tried to do. He wanted to express the thoughts and intentions of the historian without either adding to the meaning or rendering the original wording too faithfully. The model for Enenkel's Latin style in the translation is Livy—whom he had learned to love together with Thucydides—but he often refers to other *auctores* to justify his choice of a particular expression.¹⁰⁸ Regarding the commentary, Enenkel explains in the letter to the reader that he is not much concerned with problems of language or textual emendations, nor with the rendering of meaning by paraphrase. Instead the emphasis is on *realia*, such as political institutions, but he also analyzes the speeches, beginning with an *argumentum* and explaining the *divisio*, *propositiones*, etc., making frequent moral comments. Enenkel notes that both the commentary proper and the various accompanying sections contain material compiled from a wide

¹⁰⁷ For a short biography of Enenkel, see Pade (2003) 162.

¹⁰⁸ See e.g. his comment on *Th.* 1.1.1 ἐλπίσας (rendered as *speransque*): “Speramus non bona solum sed universe futura. Maro lib. 4: ‘Hunc ego si potui tantum sperare dolorem’” (*Aen.* 4.419).

range of ancient authors, and he occasionally quotes the Greek scholia to Thucydides. He frequently uses and discusses the commentaries of Winsheim, Estienne, and Porto.

The edition is indeed endowed with a substantial scholarly apparatus: apart from the commentary it contained a life of Thucydides, compiled from Marcellinus, the *Suda*, Aphthonius, and Plutarch, epitomes of Books I–VIII, annotated lists of names of people and places in the *History*, arranged in alphabetical order, and a *chronographia* of the major events mentioned by Thucydides from the times of Cecrops up to the end of the Peloponnesian War. An engraved *descriptio Syracusarum* is glued in before Book I, and some copies of the 1596 edition also include a map of Greece.

Enenkel's work was printed twice,¹⁰⁹ and the epitomes of the eight books of the *History* were included in the 1696 and 1731 editions of Thucydides. Enenkel was also known as a scholar of law, and in addition to his work on Thucydides published several books on legal matters.

Fabio Paolino

The last work I would like to mention here is by an Italian scholar and is in a sense representative of the Italian sixteenth-century works I discussed earlier, in that it concentrates on a specific aspect of Thucydides' text and exploits this for its contemporary relevance, in this case to the field of medicine.

The work in question is the commentary on the description of the plague (2.47.2–2.54.5), published at Venice in 1603.¹¹⁰ The Giuntine editors explain in the letter to the reader that they had originally promised to produce not a commentary on Thucydides but rather an edition of a work by Galen, namely his commentary on Thucydides' account of the plague. However, Galen's commentary turned out to be lost and they subsequently resolved to publish Fabio Paolino's lectures on the same subject.

Fabio Paolino da Udine (ca. 1535–1605) was a man of wide and varied learning. He had studied Greek and Latin at Venice as well

¹⁰⁹ 1596, Tubingae (Tübingen): apud Georgium Gruppenbachium. Adams (1968) T-678; VD 16: T 1127; and 1614, Argentorati (Strasbourg): L. Zetznerus.

¹¹⁰ 1603, Venetiis (Venice): apud Juntas.

as philosophy, medicine, rhetoric and Arabic at Padova. He practiced medicine for a time before becoming public professor at Venice, where he taught Greek in the Scuola di S. Marco and Latin in the Collegio de'Notai.¹¹¹ His lectures on Thucydides were delivered over two successive years. In his introductory lecture Paolino mentions that at the time, the plague was devastating his native Friuli, referring to the severe attack of the plague there in 1598. When the dreaded disease afflicted Venice from 1575 to 1577, numerous books were published on the plague,¹¹² and Paolino's commentary was part of that trend. Before this he had published extensively both on classical rhetoric and poetry, and on ancient medicine.¹¹³ Paolino's vast, encyclopedic knowledge is evident in the commentary, but though other subjects are discussed, he concentrates on medical matters.

Thus the reception of Thucydides' *History* during the Renaissance both resembled and was atypical of that of other Greek historians. The sheer bulk of his work, as well as the difficulty of his style and argumentation, made the *History* less accessible than, for instance, the historical works of Xenophon or Plutarch. On the other hand, he was always acknowledged as a masterly historian and was imitated both in this capacity and as a rhetorician. The imitative reading of the *History* continued during the sixteenth century, but eventually the emphasis of the approach changed as scholarly explanation of the text began. By the end of the sixteenth century, students of Greek literature did not primarily want to learn moral and stylistic lessons *from* the classics; they also wanted to learn *about* them.

¹¹¹ On the life of Paolin, see Liruti (1780) 353–76; di Manzo (1884–87) 148f.

¹¹² Comune di Venezia (1979), 108.

¹¹³ Paolino's writings include: *De Graecis literis cum Latinis coniungendis . . . oratio* (1586); *In M. Tullii Ciceronis Dialogi de oratore librum primum scholia* (1587); *Centum fabulae ex antiquis scriptoribus acceptae et Graecis Latinisque tetrastichis senariis explicatae . . . Gabriae Graeci fabulae, Musaei Leander et Hero, Galeomyomachia incerti, Sibyllae vaticinium de iudicio Christi; Batrachomyomachia Homeri . . . Latinis versibus . . . conversa* (1587); *Hebdomades sive septem de septenario libri, habiti in unius Vergilii versus explicatione* [*Aen.* 6.646] (1589); *De viperis in trochiscorum apparatu, sive Theriaca adhibendis* (1604); *Tabulae in artem medicinalem Galeni* (printed twice with the *Opera omnia* of Johannes Argenterius [1606–1607 and 1610]). He edited a commentary on Aristotle (1591) as well as Latin translations of Avicenna (1595 and 1608) and Galen (1609 and 1625).

THUCYDIDEAN MODERNITIES: HISTORY BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ART

Francisco Murari Pires

“Each one found in the Ancients what he desired
or needed, mainly himself.”

Friedrich Schlegel¹

In the period between the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, the work of Thucydides came to be seen as an exemplary way of writing history. In his *History*, the scholarly community used to identify the principles of scientific historiography: the primacy of the truth of facts as unique, chronologically ordered events; the critical capacity structured by analytical methods of rigorous verification; the hermeneutics guided by the thesis of the immanent causality of history; the epistemology based on an ideal of objectivity; and finally, perhaps a history that aspired to formulate general laws of historical phenomena.² Thus Thucydides was seen as a “modern, scientific historian”.

1. *The “Thucydidean Germans”: the Apotheosis of Thucydides*

This modern representation of Thucydides crystallized in the nineteenth century in the works of the so-called “Thucydidean Germans”: Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Leopold von Ranke, Wilhelm Roscher, and Eduard Meyer.³ Thucydides’ reputation then underwent a kind of historiographical apotheosis, his history coming to be thought of as a unique and extraordinary work.

Niebuhr was emphatic in his judgment: “the first real and true historian, according to our notion, was Thucydides: as he is the most

¹ *Athenaeum* (1798), fr. 151.

² See Abbott (1925) for this exemplary characterization of a “modern Thucydides”; see also the critical comments of Stahl (1966) 12.

³ Mazzarino (1965–66) 3.359–70; Montepaone *et al.* (1994).

perfect historian among all that have ever written, so he is at the same time the first: he is the Homer of historians".⁴ As for the subject matter of his *History*, Niebuhr likewise proclaimed that "the Peloponnesian War . . . is the most immortal of all wars, because it is described by the greatest of all historians that ever lived".⁵ In a similar vein, Ranke stated that ". . . Thucydides, who is the real originator of historical writing, still cannot be surpassed . . . No one can . . . have a pretension to be a greater historian than Thucydides".⁶ And according to Eduard Meyer, ". . . there still exists, today as in the past, only one form of writing history and dealing with historical problems: the same as that first practiced by the Athenian Thucydides, and which he himself exemplified, with a perfection which none of his successors has hitherto managed to surpass".⁷

This judgment was restated in another essay a few years later: "I only wanted to show how Thucydides created the science of history and realized this in a work, and how this work . . . in the historical literature hitherto produced, has only rivals of his calibre, but none that surpass him".⁸

Ranke used to say that among the moderns, only Niebuhr could be compared to Thucydides and, as such, considered a model of historiographic excellence.⁹ Meyer concurred with Ranke's opinion, equally appreciating the merit of Niebuhr, through whom history had regained the principles of Thucydides' critical methodology.¹⁰ Meyer also said that Ranke himself, whose *History of the Popes* once again raised historiography to Thucydidean heights, had followed in the footsteps of Niebuhr.¹¹

Niebuhr: the Critical Philological Method

Even in the letters he wrote as a young man, Niebuhr had expressed his wistfulness at the destiny he foresaw for himself, going on to describe the figures of historian and philologist: "from the peculiar

⁴ Niebuhr (1852a) 1. 211.

⁵ Niebuhr (1852a) 2.54.

⁶ Wines (1981) 163f.

⁷ Meyer (1955) 52–53.

⁸ Meyer (1994b) 446.

⁹ Silvestre (1994) 350.

¹⁰ Silvestre (1994) 435.

¹¹ Silvestre (1994) 346; 398.

direction of my mind and talents, I believe that nature has intended me for a literary man, a historian of ancient and modern times, a statesman (. . .) and, if my name is ever to be spoken of, I shall be known as a historian and political writer, as an antiquarian and philologist".¹² Late in life, he emphatically reaffirmed that he had "ever been a philologist" and that this was how he defined his understanding of what history is: "we consider ancient history to be mainly a branch of philology, or a means of interpretation and of philological knowledge".¹³

Appreciating the acute analytical ability with which he applied his historical-philological method, Niebuhr used to say: "I dissect words as the anatomist dissects bodies".¹⁴ Yet the meticulous analysis that the historian attempts to apply to the "remains" of history attempts to retrieve the shapes and images of its *living* reality: "Oh, how would philology be cherished, if people knew the magical delight of living and moving amidst the most beautiful scenes of the past! The mere reading is the smallest part of it; the great thing is to feel familiar with Greece and Rome during their most widely different periods! I wish to write history with such vividness—so to replace vague by well-defined images, so to disentangle confused representations, that the name of a Greek of the age of Polybius and Thucydides, or that of a Roman in the times of Cato or Tacitus, should instantly call up in the mind the fundamental idea of their character."¹⁵

Historical analogy, plus the conjectural sagacity associated with divination and intuitive ability as procedures of (re)constructive imagination of the facts,¹⁶ are fundamental to the development of the method by which the historian achieves excellence in his art, filling the historical past with life. This is how Niebuhr put it in a letter to Moltke: "Music is, in general, positively disagreeable to me, because I cannot unite it in one point, and everything fragmentary oppresses my mind. Hence, also, I am no mathematician, but a historian; for, from the single features preserved, I can form a complete picture, and know where groups are wanting, and how to supply them. I think this is the case with you also, and I wish you would, like me,

¹² Niebuhr (1852b) 1.47.

¹³ Niebuhr (1852a) 1.37.

¹⁴ Mentioned by Krieger (1977) 359.

¹⁵ Niebuhr (1852b) 1.350–1.

¹⁶ Montepaone *et al.* (1994) 25–30; Momigliano (1952) 209.

apply your reflections on past events, to fix the images on the canvas, and then employ your imagination, working only with the true historical tints, to give them colouring. Take ancient history as your subject: it is an inexhaustible one, and no one would believe how much, that appears to be lost, might be restored with the clearest evidence".¹⁷

So history freed itself from the chains of "historical Pyrrhonism", the view that history was condemned never to transcend the shortcomings of its data, just as it would never escape the distortions of the facts which result from the inevitable partiality of the historian.¹⁸ With Niebuhr, the critical method developed a (re)constructive finality, which is why he is recognized as the founder of the modern critical philological method, the one who established a positive posture on dealing with documents used in the writing of history.¹⁹ Niebuhr provided history with scientific foundations, supporting a conception of methodology according to which philological analysis was acknowledged as a way of rational thinking capable of (re)constructing history as a narrative.

Reviewing the sources on the early history of ancient Greece and appreciating the accuracy of Thucydides' chronology, Niebuhr speculated on the existence of a document from which Thucydides might have drawn his data, naming it "the annalists' books". From this initial hypothesis, others followed: Niebuhr imagined the principles that had led Thucydides to his methodology of positive factual critique for circumscribing the historical reality of those times. Thus the Niebuhrian interpretation singles out in the work of Thucydides: his diligence and critical acuity, "prudent and scrupulous", in judging the "authenticity" of his (supposed) documental material; his refined perception of historical reality, which never fails, due to critical unconsciousness that does not recognize fantasies; the scrupulous seriousness of his narrative due to the balance with which, with barely veiled "skepticism", he defines the limits of historical knowledge about those primitive Greek times of which we know so little, so that his distinctive capacity for historiographic judgement is not impaired.²⁰

¹⁷ Niebuhr (1852b) 1.186.

¹⁸ Momigliano (1983) 258–72; Kelley (2003) 121.

¹⁹ Montepaone *et al.* (1994) 22.

²⁰ Niebuhr (1852a) 1.211f.

It was also the *art* of Thucydides' writing—allied with the "positive certainty of factual knowledge"—that led Niebuhr to call him "the greatest of all historians that ever lived".²¹ Thanks to the active part he played in public life, Thucydides actually experienced the events related in his *History* and was therefore able to describe them extremely vividly: "Thucydides is, as it were, present everywhere, and sees what he relates. In this respect he is unique".²²

Excellence in discursive art and just consciousness of the positive reality of events are thus correspondingly mirrored in Thucydides' work. According to Niebuhr, the tradition of pointing to the artistic inferiority of Book VIII, inherited from the ancient critics, was perverse: on the contrary, the way in which Thucydides crafted this part of his work was equally exemplary, because he portrayed events in an appropriate style, adopting a solemn, sublime tone to describe the ascent of Athens, but abandoning this in favor of a hard narrative to portray the brutal loss of the city's grandeur.²³

Thus the terms and parameters that characterize the early nineteenth century notion of positivist critique migrate from Niebuhr to Thucydides, delineating the methodological mirroring that relates their *Histories*.

Ranke: wie es eigentlich gewesen

It is said that Ranke had a two-headed herm representing the opposed figures of Thucydides and Herodotus in his study, a kind of historiographical Janus. Girolamo Imbruglia²⁴ draws attention to the emblematic significance of this antique presence in the daily life of the modern historian, since it represents the conjunction of the founding principles of his conception of history: Thucydides for critical method and Herodotus for universal history, the images of its exemplary realizations.

In one of the chapters of his *Universal History*, Ranke synthesized the justification for that projected image of exemplary duality as the foundation of "all science and art of history", recognizing that

²¹ Niebuhr (1852a) 1.54.

²² Niebuhr (1852a) 1.54.

²³ Niebuhr (1852a) 2.54f.

²⁴ Montepaone *et al.* (1994) 73f.

Herodotus and Thucydides, though “diametrically opposed” by their “situations and fortunes”, provided the complementary principles of the writing of history.²⁵ The historical circumstances in which they wrote their works indicate opposite political destinies: Herodotus was a foreigner exiled in Athens, whereas Thucydides was an Athenian in exile: for the Halicarnassian, his situation was a fortunate political integration that inspired the affable feelings envelop his *Histories*, for the Athenian, an adverse political marginalization helped extricate him from the patriotic injunctions that destroy historiographic impartiality. Hence the first opposition: whereas the foreigner felt favorably inclined toward Athens, the Athenian had good reason to observe the actions of his fellow citizens without unilateral patriotism.²⁶ In addition, the historical moments they lived through offered different catalyzing experiences that distinguish their work. Herodotus’ world was dominated by the antagonism between the Greeks and the Persians, Thucydides’ by the internal conflict between Athens and Sparta. The historiographical view of Herodotus, although centered in Athens, is historically focused on the world beyond; Thucydides, by contrast, although located outside Athens, has his historical focus turned toward the *polis*.²⁷

Herodotus’ historiographical vision opens up the perspective of universal history, both because of its informative level, in that he comprehends “all sorts of national peculiarities”, and because of its historiographical acuity, since he grasps the “historical element with which it is woven into a single whole”.²⁸ The conception of his *Histories* reflects the time he lived in, an epoch that was dominated by “the mutual relations of the East and the Grecian world. The forces on both sides had all been set in motion by that conflict, and measured against each other. On the Persian invasion of Greece, its failure, and the measures of retaliation taken by the Greeks, rested the existing condition of the world”.²⁹

The foundation of Herodotus’ historiographical excellence was “to combine [the events] with the rest of his information and to present the whole in its proper connection . . . The result was the first real

²⁵ von Ranke (1885) 305.

²⁶ von Ranke (1885) 305f.

²⁷ von Ranke (1885) 306.

²⁸ von Ranke (1885) 308.

²⁹ von Ranke (1885) 308.

history that was ever written. History could not grow up on national ground alone, for it is not till they come into contact with one another that nations become conscious of their own existence".³⁰ In short: "Not only is there an incomparable charm in the graceful simplicity with which Herodotus relates separate events, but he possesses also a sympathetic insight into the relations of universal history. His work has never been equaled, much less excelled, in the grandeur of its combinations".³¹

In Ranke's judgement, however, the *Histories* suffer from a methodological shortcoming, frustrating their historiographical realization. Herodotus examined a period that was accessible only through memories transmitted by oral traditions, meaning that the view of past events was obscured, enveloped in the mist of those ancient times. Thucydides' work led the way out of this cognitive aporia, according to Ranke: he eliminated the distance of historiographical temporality by turning his gaze to the present, in which the perception of events was immediately available.³² His historiographical work is founded on the transcription of the immediate experience of events, as a guarantee of the information and reports it contains.

Ranke saw Thucydides as embodying several methodological virtues. As a spirit of his own time, the rationality of classical Greece humanized his historiographical vision, releasing the perception of facts from the religious perspectives that still blocked Herodotus' *Histories*, impregnated as they are with sacred teleologies of a tragic nature. Thucydides dissociated history from religion, precisely because he deepened our perception of human nature with a penetrating insight which, with the unraveling of events, captured the various motives of men. In the course of exposing historical facts, Thucydides offered us a compendium of human ethics. Hence, his work met the same ethical standards as those in Ranke's own methodological definition, which maintained the absolute primacy of the "truth about events exactly as they came to pass".³³

For Ranke, the virtue of Thucydidean historiographical impartiality is rooted in an innate talent: a gift for equity that "immunizes" him against the biasing effects of circumstantial allegiances.

³⁰ von Ranke (1885) 308f.

³¹ von Ranke (1885) 309.

³² von Ranke (1885) 309.

³³ von Ranke (1885) 311f.

His *History* neither laconizes (even after his contact with the Lacedaemonians) nor detracts from Athens, in spite of the political misfortunes he suffered in the city. On the contrary, Thucydides “[does] justice to both sides. Scrupulous adhesion to the simple truth, and the confinement of his investigations to human projects, give to his history, for the short period of which it treats, a clearness of outline and a vividness of descriptive power which demand our highest admiration”.³⁴

It is this wealth of methodological virtues which, around the 1880s, permitted Ranke to recognize in the historiographical excellence of Thucydides and Herodotus the synthesis of his own epistemological prescriptions.

Ranke’s historiographical proximity to Thucydides was discernable even at the outset of his career. His graduation thesis, defended in 1817, was dedicated to an analysis of the historian, and when at the end of the 1860s he recalled those early days, he explicitly acknowledged that Thucydides had been “the first great historian” that had “profoundly impressed” him.³⁵

Looking at his first work, published in 1824 (*Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514*), we find many parallels between its Preface and the prologue of Thucydides’ *History* in terms of historiographical propositions.³⁶ Ranke began by pointing out the opposition between his own *Histories* and the ancient *topos* of the *historia magistra vitae*.³⁷ “History has had assigned to it the office of judging the past and of instructing the present for the benefit of the future ages. To such high offices the present work does not presume: it seeks only to show what actually happened [*wie es eigentlich gewesen*]”.³⁸

With this (apparently) simple and “modest” aim, he attempted to protect history from the judicatory aspirations that others have ascribed

³⁴ von Ranke (1885) 313f.

³⁵ Mentioned by Desideri (1996) 1003.

³⁶ The parallel was explored by Holborn (1972) 81–97 using somewhat different arguments from those in the present discussion.

³⁷ Discussion of the *historia magistra vitae* can be found in Koselleck (1990) 37–62 and in Hartog (1996) 101–04.

³⁸ Wines (1981) 58. The thesis of a Thucydidean origin for the famous Rankean formula, proposed by K. Reppen and accepted by M.I. Finley (1985) 48, Catarzi (1994) 126f., and Kelley (2003) 134f., was questioned by Stroud (1987). Momigliano (1987) 19 points rather to Lucian (*How to Write History* 39), whereas Burke (1990) 37 reminds us that it is a *topos* which has prevailed since the XVIth century.

to it, thereby causing it to deviate and lose its way; historical knowledge must be confined to understanding the facts, which recalls the similar apparent “modesty” of the Thucydidean teleological statement (1.22.4); Thucydides similarly placed all the value of his *History* in the knowledge of facts, only vaguely alluding to what its future uses might be. Regarding the classical heritage, Ranke’s approach, in opposing itself to the historiographical conception of the *historia magistra vitae*, updates conceptions of cognitive autonomy for the writing of history that are originally Thucydidean.³⁹

Having established the proposition that the writing of history is an exposition of facts, the first methodological step is the heuristic outline which establishes the array of documents in which the memory of the events is preserved. The imperative of the Thucydidean *autopsy* (1.22.1–3) corresponds to the Rankean heuristic, which is based on the preeminence of primary sources (“memoirs, diaries, letters, ambassadors’ reports and original accounts of eyewitnesses”).⁴⁰ The reality of historical facts stems from the immediacy of the reports: events are related by those who witnessed them.

This correspondence of heuristic principles, however, is founded on epistemological conceptions that define paradoxically opposed objects of historical temporality, ancient-Thucydidean and modern-Rankean. For Thucydides, the science of history defined the present as its subject: the concomitance between the period in which the events took place and the moment in which he *historiated* them, thus making it possible to base the given account of the facts on the pre-condition of autopsy.⁴¹

Ranke on the other hand considered historical time in terms of a disjunction between the past, i.e., the temporality of the *historiated* events, and the present, to which the narrator/historian belongs: it was this distance which made the modern science of history possible.⁴²

A collection of recorded events provides the raw data to be worked on by the critical method. This method, according to Rankean formulations, therefore constitutes a fundamental step in the reconstitution of facts, so much so that its discursive explanation becomes

³⁹ See Holborn (1970) 72; 90f.; for an understanding of the Thucydidean *klēma es aiei* as a pre-conception of the *historia magistra vitae*, see how Hartog (1996) 98; (1997) 127–37 follows the historical path from the first to the second conception.

⁴⁰ Wines (1981) 58.

⁴¹ Hartog (1982) 23–25; (1997) 128f.; Pires (1999) 256–72.

⁴² Holborn (1970) 43; Mazzarino (1965–66) 3.368.

an autonomous, parallel work: "... the method of investigation and the critical conclusions will be presented in a second volume, to be published concurrently".⁴³

This decision reveals not only the essential question of method but also an intriguing suspension of its importance for the decisive evaluation of the merits by which a historiographical work is judged. What matters now, said Ranke, is to think about the question of form: "A strict presentation of the facts, contingent and unattractive though they may be, is the highest law. A second, for me, is the development of the unity and the progress of the events (...) to grasp the general line of their development, the paths which they followed, and the ideas by which they were motivated".⁴⁴

As far as Ranke was concerned, history is the strict exposition of facts. However, this only becomes meaningful if rendered in a narrative form that reveals the idea(s) that have shaped the unique course of the events in question. "Finally, what will be said of my treatment of particulars, the essential part of the writing of history? Will it not often seem harsh, disconnected, colourless, and tiring? There exist noble models for this work, ancient and—we should not forget—modern as well. I have not tried to emulate them; theirs was another world. There is an exalted ideal toward which we can reach: the event itself in its human intelligibility, its unity, its diversity. I know how far from it I have remained. One tries, one strives, but in the end it is not attained. Let none be impatient with this! The important thing, as Jacoby says, is always how we deal with humanity as it is, explicable or inexplicable; the life of the individual, of generations, of nations; and, at times, with the hand of God above them".⁴⁵

Critics have drawn attention to the balance between "anguish" and "modesty" that permeates Ranke's rhetoric.⁴⁶ However, both anguish and modesty are ambiguous. There is anguish as the historian, facing the completed work, senses a certain defeat; this anguish derives from not entirely fulfilling the ideal that inspired the work, an ideal that is perceived, though only at the very end, as somewhat illusory, unobtainable, since the sublime is transcendent. At the

⁴³ Wines (1981) 58.

⁴⁴ Wines (1981) 58.

⁴⁵ Wines (1981) 58–59.

⁴⁶ Krieger (1977) 110; Iggers (1988) 67.

same time, however, the experience is not true anguish, which leads to discouragement and despair; in fact, even if the historian fails or does not achieve his goal, this failure does not extend to the subject matter of his history, which, on the contrary, had gained, in that our knowledge of it has been advanced.

The historian's mission requires that he endure suffering, frustration, even failure in order to uphold the values inherent in the subject matter that is *historiated* by him. By the axiology that defines the value of historiographical praxis as a human mode of knowledge construction, the evaluation of the historian, an individual, is of lesser importance than the evaluation of the subject matter of his work, and therefore of mankind, and, when perceptible, Providence, the "hand of God". This is therefore a historiographical axiology established by transferring the issue of values from the individual to the sphere of the work.

According to Ranke, the work resulting from this axiology is double: the work concerning the perception of the unity of the subject and the work concerning methodological reasoning. In Thucydides, the Prologue rhetoric causes a similar displacement of values; on the one hand, this is connected with the question of the axiology presupposed by the work (the unity of the object evaluated for its superlative grandeur: the Peloponnesian War); on the other hand, it is connected with the methodological problem, especially with what is usually called the silence, or elision, of his narrative presence as subject of the composition.

For Thucydides, as for Ranke, the question of axiology was more important than the second question regarding methodology, according to the rhetoric of his Prologue. The methodology issue was included in the reasoning of the Prologue because it was demanded by, and derived from, the axiology: it constituted an argument for the superior grandeur of the war to be presented.

The procedure of Thucydidean methodological silence⁴⁷ can be deduced from the declaration with which Thucydides concludes his exposition of his principles of reconstructing facts: "regarding the actions perpetrated in the war . . . I have grasped them painfully, because different eyewitnesses give different accounts of the same

⁴⁷ Loraux (1986b).

events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories".⁴⁸

Thucydides saying "I have grasped them painfully" may be compared with Ranke's confession about his (un)attainable ideal. Such a parallel, regarding the historian's work in terms of its ideal of perceiving the facts, opposes the Thucydidean declaration of success with the Rankean acknowledgement of failure or frustration. Such disparity of consciousness is even more intriguing in view of the fact that both historians made an equally Herculean effort in their work; in other words, it is not a case of diligence and method in Thucydides (leading to the consummated ideal) versus a lack of this, or negligence, in Ranke (leading to the frustrated ideal). The question regarding the Prologues is rather linked to Ranke's and Thucydides' differing rhetorical formulations.

The capacity to write history, as Thucydides portrays it, requires that the historian possess such excellence (*aretē*) in the art that he may be seen as some sort of heroic figure.⁴⁹ The historian produces a work that is humanly (im)possible, something that goes beyond human capacity, that surpasses his ordinary limitations: on the one hand, something divine, on the other, something proper to the human condition, since it involves so much difficulty, work and pain. This work is therefore heroic work, that ambiguous category in which the human and the divine are mixed together.⁵⁰

If one now considers Ranke's Prologue, especially in terms of the balance between "modesty" and "anguish", one notices that they are articulated with an ambiguous rhetoric. When considering Ranke's work as a work on method—a system of ordering rules and principles of critique—one has the modern antipode of ancient heroic *aretē*. Being conscious of "anguish" and practicing "modesty", Ranke firmly establishes the humanity of his work. He does not judge the historical past, since this would be an equivocal and undue judgement. If humans cannot grasp the totality and unity of events, how can they judge? The judgement of History can only be a matter for divine omniscience, not for men—historians included—with their cognitive limitations.

⁴⁸ Th. 1.22.3; see Pires (1998).

⁴⁹ Loraux (1986b) 146f. and 154f.; Pires (2003) 115.

⁵⁰ Pires (1999) 287–92; (2003) 114–15.

However, “*zeigen wie es eigentlich gewesen*” makes history possible as human praxis. This historical teleology results in the acquisition of method, which views the historiographical enterprise as a common possession, something to be cultivated and also something to be imposed on the work of all historians, indiscriminately: all follow the same rules and precepts, all reiterate the same attitudes of critique that make modern historians no longer heroic figures but a historiographical phalanx. And yet no methodological compendium, however perfect and complete, can guarantee that the historian will be able to attain excellence in the work of history, in the understanding of the unity of the “movement” of history, of the idea that shapes the meaning of the events. The distinct virtuosity of a particular author is therefore still best judged by the excellence of the completed work, when it presents moments that allow us to see “the hand of God” in history.

According to the modern Rankean conception of history, the displacement of the figure of the ancient hero leaves room for some glimpses of geniality in the historian’s work, thus pointing, in the new historical context of religious pietism,⁵¹ to the ambiguous proximity/distance that opposes the human condition with sublime divinity.

E. Meyer: the Discourses as the nerve of Thucydides’ History

Thucydides’ methodological decision to follow his own personal judgement (1.22.1–2) in (re)constructing the discourses integrated into his history aroused suspicion within modern historiographical thought, especially since he was its chosen model, a historian whose work supposedly recorded the strict reality of facts. What factual reality would this be, if it were a product of the subjective (fictional?) (re)creation of the historian?

Eduard Meyer also credited Thucydides with having been the originator of “scientific history”, maintaining that the Athenian reproduces “all its principles and conditions” in his work.⁵² The duty of history was “to recount the events as they really happened”;⁵³ however, there were some obstacles to this, in particular “conflicting evidence from the witnesses”.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See the comments of Iggers (1988) 76–80.

⁵² E. Meyer (1912) 250.

⁵³ E. Meyer (1912) 250.

⁵⁴ E. Meyer (1994b) 432.

So for Meyer, the establishment of historiographical objectivity demanded that the historian make a decision upon which “depends the acceptance or not of a given piece of information”. Thucydides, said Meyer, found the methodological solution for this problem: “that the historical events really happened is deduced from their historical effects, which we immediately perceive in the present. Thus, it also becomes possible to know the historical truth”.⁵⁵

According to Meyer, the proper understanding of the historical reality of each event presupposes that the historian resolve a particular problem of cognitive order: he must integrate into the factual narrative the dialectic of temporality.⁵⁶ This dialectic of temporality dictates the *modus operandi* to be followed by historiographical praxis.⁵⁷ Knowledge of the historical reality of the event is achieved by means of a retrospective view based on the observation of what in the present—i.e., in the future, from the perspective of the event—are the consequences of the events acknowledged and grasped by the historian.⁵⁸

And according to Meyer, this is exactly what Thucydides did, by means of the discourses he integrated in his work: “to really understand the historical process, the reader must, in a direct and immediate way, grasp the conditions surrounding a decision, the causes behind political and military actions. Every modern writer explains these things in his own way, when he himself addresses the reader and develops and justifies his own interpretation. Thucydides did exactly the opposite: the intuitive character of the factors mentioned above (the conditions surrounding a decision, etc.) was incorporated into the numerous discourses contained in the work”.⁵⁹

So for Meyer, “the discourses constitute the nerve of Thucydides’ work”, since they are “the means that enabled the historian to take a step back from the facts, both in the account of the events and in the presentation of the situations and causes, making the reader live the events for himself, thus allowing him to be the judge. This is the basis of what we call the objectivity of Thucydides”.⁶⁰

The famous ancient historian reached the pinnacle of the scientific art of history writing: “using the highest resources of a subjective

⁵⁵ E. Meyer (1994b) 433.

⁵⁶ E. Meyer (1994b) 436.

⁵⁷ E. Meyer (1994b) 439f.

⁵⁸ E. Meyer (1994b) 443–44.

⁵⁹ E. Meyer (1994b) 443–44.

⁶⁰ E. Meyer (1994a) 398.

art, he assigns to the work a level of objectivity, of immediate intuition, which no modern historian could ever reach”.⁶¹ This, in Meyer’s opinion, was why the science of history had an affinity with Art, although it still had a distinctive identity of its own.

We may understand that Thucydides structured the narrative of his *History* teleologically, configuring the exposition of events from the standpoint of the end of the war in 404 BC. Yet a doubt remains, since, when explaining why he had decided to compose his work, Thucydides himself disclosed reasons different from those concerning the dialectic of temporality, with which Meyer’s reading tries to understand the Thucydidean methodology. Thucydides, on the contrary, stated that his perception of the historical importance of the object narrated by him—the greatness of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians—was already evident at its outset, so that the writing of the war’s history followed the course of events.

The historian’s conceptions of historiographical temporality and historical relevance do not correspond exactly to those of the modern historian: the “present” that Thucydides distinguished is not equivalent to the “past” that Meyer pondered;⁶² neither does the “grandeur” of the historical fact that constituted Thucydides’ *axiologon* correspond to the notion of “effectiveness” as understood by Meyer.⁶³

To sum up: critical reason combined with intuition/divination and imagination; indirect observation of historical events built into objective factual perception through the subjective judgement of data—in short, science allied with art—constitute the foundation of the writing of history developed by the “Thucydidean Germans”, in conjunction with the epistemological program already set out by Humboldt in his 1821 lecture (*Über die Aufgabe des Geschichtsschreibers*).⁶⁴

2. Among the English

In his 1828 essay *History and Literature*, Thomas Babington Macaulay similarly framed his ideas on the fundamentals of history in terms

⁶¹ E. Meyer (1912) 250–51.

⁶² Hartog (1982) 23; Mazzarino (1965–66) 3.368; Pires (1999) 235–72.

⁶³ Pires (1999) 171–80.

⁶⁴ Iggers (1988) 60–62; (1997) 23–26; Reill (1990) 21–35; Vierhaus (1990) 61–69.

of the epistemological dialogue between science and art. He was especially interested in the similarity between history and painting as modes of portraying reality. History, as part of literature, demands the skill—as precious as it is difficult—of combining Reason with Imagination, without falling solely into the domains of one (theory) or the other (fiction). Thus, for Macaulay, these two poles become (con)fused in the writing of history, which “begins in novel and ends in essay”.⁶⁵

So history, as a mimetic art, reproduces the truth of the event: it does not invent its essential features, but equally does not portray these in minute detail. In this, said Macaulay, Thucydides was unsurpassable, mastering to perfection the art of concise composition that does not lack perspicacity, with minuteness of detail that does not lapse into prolixity: “He was a perfect master of the art of gradual diminution. (. . .) He never fails to contract and to expand it in the right place”.⁶⁶ In the eyes of Macaulay, this was the main reason for the prestige attained by his work: “it must be allowed that Thucydides has surpassed all his rivals in the art of historical narration, in the art of producing an effect on the imagination, by skilful selection and disposition, without indulging in the licence of invention”.⁶⁷

Throughout the next twenty years, Macaulay’s admiration for Thucydides only deepened. As early as 8 February 1835, he castigated himself for the boldness of an earlier opinion,⁶⁸ which he now dismissed as juvenile ardour: “A young man, whatever his genius may be, is no judge of such a writer as Thucydides. I had no high opinion of him ten years ago. I have now been reading him with a mind accustomed to historical researches and to political affairs, and I am astonished at my own former blindness, and at his greatness”.⁶⁹ Some months later, he confessed to his friend Ellis: “I do assure you that there is no prose composition in the world, not even the ‘De

⁶⁵ Stern (1973) 72f.

⁶⁶ Stern (1973) 77.

⁶⁷ Stern (1973) 78.

⁶⁸ In his essay on *Mitford’s History of Greece* of 1825 he wrote: “Thucydides, as far as he goes, is an excellent writer; yet he affords us less knowledge of the most important particulars relating to Athens than Plato or Aristophanes” (Ghosh [1997] 378).

⁶⁹ Trevelyan (1876) 1.379.

Corona', which I place so high as the seventh book of Thucydides. It is the *ne plus ultra* of human art".⁷⁰

From annotations in his volumes of classical authors plus notes in his diary, we have a record of Macaulay's enthusiasm for "the great Athenian". On 27 February 1835 he noted: "This day I finished Thucydides, after reading him with inexpressible interest and admiration. He is the greatest historian that ever lived".⁷¹ About a year later, on 30 May 1836, he reiterated the previous annotation: "I am still of the same mind".⁷² Twelve years passed, and on 25 November 1848, after a further reading, he expressed the same judgment: "I admire him more than ever. He is the great historian. The others one may hope to match: him, never".⁷³

While Macaulay's esteem for Thucydides was bound up with the old view of history as a literary genre, Thomas Arnold's interest in the historian already incorporated the critical approach of the German historians, in particular Niebuhr.⁷⁴ Arnold's judgement of the modernity of Thucydides' critical approach to the mythical traditions of the Greek past closely resembles Niebuhr's reasoning. Arnold suggested that if Rome had known a historian "as able and as inquiring as Thucydides", who had set out the principles of his historiography, "such a sketch would in all probability have rendered the immortal work of Niebuhr in great measure superfluous".⁷⁵

Updating the organicist conception of history conceived by Vico a century earlier,⁷⁶ Arnold equated contemporary England with classical Athens: equivalent stages of adult, mature civilization.⁷⁷ He described the historical frame that guided his reading of Thucydides in the following way: "the period to which the work of Thucydides refers belongs properly to modern and not to ancient history; and it is this circumstance, over and above the great ability of the historian himself, which makes it so peculiarly deserving of our study".⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Trevelyan (1876) 1.387.

⁷¹ Trevelyan (1876) 1.409.

⁷² Trevelyan (1876) 1.409.

⁷³ Trevelyan (1876) 2.215.

⁷⁴ Bentley (2000) 31.

⁷⁵ Arnold (1840–42) 3.xi.

⁷⁶ Arnold (1840–42) 1.504.

⁷⁷ "The great transition from ancient history to modern, the transition from an age of feeling to one of reflection, from a period of ignorance and credulity to one of inquiry and skepticism" (Arnold [1840–42] 3.xxi).

⁷⁸ Arnold (1840–42) 3.xx.

This was why Arnold made the rather modern claim that the study of Thucydides' *History* was valuable from a political point of view: "the history of Greece and Rome is not an idle inquiry about remote ages and forgotten institutions, but a living picture of things present, fitted not so much for the curiosity of the scholar, as for the instruction of the statesman and the citizen".⁷⁹

With his *History of Greece* (1846–1856), George Grote renewed this dialogue between parliamentary, liberal England and the historical experience of ancient democracy. Henry Mitford's work (*History of Greece*, 1784–1810) had recently cast a menacing shadow over the political landscape, characterizing the popular regime, which he denigrated as "a tyranny in the hands of people", in terms of ideas of disorder, folly, and excess. In contrast with this, Grote, attempting to democratize English politics, set himself the task of rescuing the exemplarity of the Athenian regime, as a way of demonstrating that the tradition of democratic politics was not detrimental to British institutions, but rather could help them, providing lessons that would further their progress.⁸⁰

There was not an opposition but an affinity between ancient Athens and modern England: as Turner⁸¹ comments, "through Grote's description, analysis, and argument, the Athenians became transformed into the ancient equivalent of modern Englishmen who had mastered the art of self-government and who had achieved a civilization wherein artistic excellence, positivistic thought, and individual liberty had largely, if not always perfectly, flourished".

Through the reasoning followed in his *History*, Grote thus reversed the perception that Mitford had disseminated; the flaws and vices denounced by the earlier author were portrayed as civic virtues consolidated by democracy. In particular, Grote proposed a new appreciation for the political leadership of Cleon, who, since the ancient writers, especially Thucydides and Aristophanes, had been seen as the worst kind of demagogue. In Grote's work, Cleon now appeared as "a man of the opposition, whose province it was to supervise and censure official men for their public conduct".⁸² The historiograph-

⁷⁹ Arnold (1840–42) 3.xxiv. For the development of these ideas by Matthew Arnold, Thomas Arnold's son, see the collection of his essays (*On the Classical Tradition*) as well as Turner's analytical commentaries (1981) 24–32.

⁸⁰ Turner (1981) 192–230.

⁸¹ Turner (1981) 213.

⁸² Quoted by Turner (1981) 229.

ical excellence of Thucydides was somewhat tarnished by Grote's analysis: the ancient historian had erred all the more seriously in that he had misrepresented the popular leader because of his own personal aversion toward him.

When the sixth volume of Grote's work was published in 1851, the Cambridge philologist Richard Shilleto responded with a libel entitled *Thucydides or Grote?* in which he argued against the London banker's intrusion into the academic domain.

Shilleto appointed himself as Thucydides' defender, appealing both to his impartiality as a historian and to his suitability and competence as a commander in the Amphipolis campaign. After clearing up the doubts about Thucydides' possible vindictiveness, Shilleto engaged in a dense philological exegesis, filled with grammatical criticisms of Grote's reading of Thucydides, pointing out his mistakes, distortions and abuses. Appealing to the superior authority of Oxford and Cambridge in the field of classical studies, Shilleto questioned Grote's competence to write a history of Greece.

Faced with the distortions of the modern interpreter, Shilleto restored the "purity" of the ancient Thucydidean text.

3. *Advances in the Historical Discipline*

According to Arnaldo Momigliano, it was "around 1860" that modern historiographical thinking gained "independence in relation to the classical models".⁸³ The methods and fields to which history turned (Hegelian or Marxist dialectics, cultural history, sociology and anthropology within an evolutionistic framework) took it away from the ancient model. As Momigliano says, it is significant that "Ranke may have started from Thucydides, but ultimately became himself the model of a new historiography".

The prestige of the Thucydidean model had also diminished by this time, almost disappearing in the string of manuals on methodology written in the second half of the nineteenth century".⁸⁴ According to Droysen in the late 1850s, Thucydides was still "the greatest historian of all times",⁸⁵ whilst Ernst Bernheim in 1889 mentioned him

⁸³ Momigliano (1984a) 28.

⁸⁴ Torstendahl (2003) 305–31.

⁸⁵ Droysen (1994) 196.

only as the founder of the “didactic and pragmatic” conception of history.⁸⁶ Langlois and Seignobos (1898) either referred to Thucydides as an example of an “authority” that should not be immune to criticism, or condemned his reconstitution of ancient times for not being sufficiently critical about the nonfactuality of the myths; they even synthesized the propositions of his history in terms that would be more at home in Herodotus’ *Histories* than in Thucydides.⁸⁷

The advances in the institutional character of the historical discipline, now more strictly structured as a science—the primacy of the text as document, the past-present divide in the definition of the subject, the superimposition of indirect observation upon autopsy, the strict methodological rules, the exclusion of rhetorical narrative⁸⁸—dissociated it from the former, ancient model.

4. *Science or Art: A Modern or a Post-Modern Thucydides*

In 1907 a dissonant voice sounded amidst the symphony of modern hermeneutics: Francis Cornford published his *Thucydides Mythistoricus*.

Cornford, one of the “Cambridge Ritualists”, reacted against the idea of Hellenism as the ultimate realization of rational thinking, embodied (among others) by Thucydides,⁸⁹ and took the opposite approach, stressing the mythical elements in Thucydides. Underneath the surface of Thucydides’ factual narrative, Cornford excavated a mythical and tragic conceptual substratum; thus the *History* was not associated with the modern “scientific” spirit, but rather tended to the mythical, a paradox which the provocative title of the work successfully reflected.

On Cornford’s interpretation, Thucydides was transferred from the scientific to the artistic, in particular the dramatic, domain. The focus of his work was switched from a modern futuristic point of view, imbued with scientific aspirations, to another laden with archaic, mythological background.

⁸⁶ Bernheim (1937) 10f.

⁸⁷ Langlois-Seignobos (1992) 134f.; 153; 240.

⁸⁸ Novick (1992) 21–44; Iggers (1997) 23–30; Bentley (2000) 28; 43–52; 81–92; Kelley (1998) 250; Hartog (2001) 126–59; Carbonell (1976) 295–323; 409–17; Torstendahl (2003) 305–31; Lombardo (1990) 117–33.

⁸⁹ Hartog (1982) 29f.

In 1929 Charles Cochrane turned Cornford's thesis around, once again consolidating Thucydides' reputation as a scientific historian by identifying his epistemological models: atomist philosophy (immanent causality) and Hippocratic medicine (inductive methodology). Inspired by the natural sciences of his time, Thucydides had assimilated the historian to the physician: the accurate observation of events, just like the following of the evolution of pathological phenomena, provided politicians with the diagnostic rules which offered the cure for the social body of the polis. Seen in this way, Thucydides' *History* was a kind of book of "political prescriptions".⁹⁰

In the mid-twentieth century, three critics contributed decisively to a revival in Thucydidean studies.

Jacqueline de Romilly showed more clearly Thucydides' consciousness of the scientific character of his *History* in her *Thucydide et l'Imperialisme Athénien* (1947)⁹¹ and in particular in her *Histoire et Raison chez Thucydide* (1956). In this work she rethinks the concept of the historian's objectivity: the apprehension of historical facts definitely does not necessitate the abolition of the subject for the reconstitution of events. Historical facts are acknowledged to be the product of the historian's "exceptional art", creative *par excellence*, through which he makes events intelligible. What is revealed in Thucydides is "the active and constructive role played by the historian in the making of history."⁹²

But Romilly's "art" is the art of Science, a methodical and structuring art of interpretation that exerts a creative, "lucid and clairvoyant" intelligence in order to reveal the intelligibility of the facts: "nothing guided Thucydides other than his intelligence, nothing served him as a criterion other than his reason."⁹³ If our perception of Thucydidean epistemology is thus updated so as to include the awareness of a concept of objectivity through which historical facts are appreciated as a product of the historian's thinking, the Athenian's reputation survives unscathed: Thucydides is a model of historical objectivity, as always, even if the paradigms of scientificity are novel.

⁹⁰ Stahl (1966) 13–16.

⁹¹ This work, along with John Finley Jr.'s essay (1940), took Thucydidean studies in a new direction, moving them away from "*die Thukydideische Frage*" (Rawlings [1981] 4 and 250–53; Connor [1984] 4; V.J. Hunter [1973a] 7).

⁹² de Romilly (1956) 10.

⁹³ de Romilly (1956) 12f.

Under Jacqueline de Romilly's reading, Thucydides' modernity is recast in terms of the new epistemological advances of the Human Sciences.

Hans-Peter Stahl's (1966) interpretation of Thucydides' work contested the thesis of its utilitarian teleology by reversing its implications. It had been believed that Thucydides' *History* provided a knowledge endowed with the power to direct future events. Under Stahl's reading, on the contrary, it is an inverted teleology whereby the knowledge of already-finished events retrospectively enables the ordering of the narrative. Thus the intelligibility of Thucydidean narrative is a kind of teleological etiology. So what does this teleology tell us about the modes and situations that characterize human actions? Precisely the opposite of a history with predictive scope. Men undoubtedly do make plans and deliberate rationally about their acts, in accordance with their aspirations and interests. However, the process that determines events, as it is revealed by Thucydidean narrative, is outside the control of such human planning, either because unexpected successes arise from strokes of luck or, on the contrary, adversities frustrate men's expectations, thus causing things to deviate from their expected or desired course. The dynamic of irrational factors, be they uncontrollable passions or unpredictable fortune, makes it impossible for humans to control history by means of forecasting based on reason.

Adam Parry, in his doctoral thesis (1957)⁹⁴ and some years later in two further essays (1969 and 1972),⁹⁵ understood Thucydides' *History* as an intellectual, even "contemplative" work, whose knowledge is not valuable because of its potential usefulness but rather is complete in itself. This dissociation of the epistemological aim of the *History* from its eventual application in the contingent realm of human praxis is reminiscent of the methodological neutrality practiced by the historian himself: his lack of involvement with the fate of any particular *polis* paves the way for his impartial investigation. Thus the autonomy of history corresponds to the independence of the historian.

This Thucydidean historical knowledge, Parry admitted, undoubtedly concerned the recurring modes of the human condition, and

⁹⁴ Parry (1981) 83–89; 105–20.

⁹⁵ Respectively: "The Language of Thucydides' Description of the Plague" (1969), and "Thucydides' Historical Perspective" (1972).

especially its evils, sufferings, and miseries. Such a conception may bring history closer to the perspective of the medical science contemporary with Thucydides, with the hopes of a cure with which its practice was associated. However, such knowledge of the human condition also presents itself as a tragic consciousness, equally contemporary to Thucydides and systematically staged in the Athenian theatre. Therefore, the desired effect of Thucydides' *History* would be the intellectual pleasure which derives from acquiring a deeper knowledge of human nature.⁹⁶ Under Parry's reading, the perspective of modern Thucydidean hermeneutics once again singled out the artistic perception of the work.⁹⁷

A number of critics interpreted Thucydides' *History* in a more oblique way, particularly in 1960s and 1970s America. According to W. Robert Connor, the Cold War was the starting point: the political and ideological atmosphere began to have a strong influence upon the "positivist"⁹⁸ tradition of historiographical theory, which was then prevalent among American academics. As the Cold War was construed in America, the world was once again bipolarized as it had been in the Peloponnesian War: on one side was the "free world" where democracy reigned, and on the other, the "totalitarian" powers. America and Athens were cast in the first role, the second being assigned to the Soviet Union and Sparta.⁹⁹ Following the "positivist" epistemological paradigm, Thucydides' scientificity was fully acknowledged: "the objective and dispassionate observer, carefully gathering and presenting the facts" as a means "to induce general laws".¹⁰⁰ However, crisis broke out on two fronts. The new epistemological consciousness of the writing of history, particularly guided by the collapse or the recasting of the objectivity question, had taken root academically. In this Cold War period in America, with the changing of academic fashion, the Thucydidean model fell apart. As the mirage of the ideal of objectivity dissolved, so did the

⁹⁶ Parry (1981) 106–107.

⁹⁷ See also the essays of Colin Macleod written from 1974 to 1981, edited in *The Collected Essays* (1996) 52f.; 68–70; 103; 140f. For other references, see Rawlings (1981) 4f.

⁹⁸ V.J. Hunter (1973a) 4–5. The misleading implications of this term are discussed by Carbonell (1976) 401–08; the reasons behind its use are noted by Stahl (1966) 12–15.

⁹⁹ Connor (1984) 3.

¹⁰⁰ Connor (1984) 5.

Athenian's authority, his reputation as an "objective and impartial researcher" ruined. It was now believed that the so-called "positivist" epistemology had been mistaken in supposing that Thucydides had restrained his authorial subjectivity, sacrificing it to the peremptory narration of history "*wie es eigentlich gewesen*". "A new Thucydides began to emerge",¹⁰¹ the inverse of his former image: "the perversely skilled manipulator who consciously distorts the facts and thus intentionally misleads his readers".¹⁰²

The historian's impartiality, now under suspicion, was indicted. "Thucydides was guilty", was the verdict of Mabel Lang¹⁰³ in the string of processual essays to which she subjected his narrative. Just as Thucydides had supposedly distorted our knowledge of the Peloponnesian War, so Mabel Lang employed all her sagacity to correct it, repairing the facts that he had (supposedly) got wrong. One century after Shiletto, the exegetic Thucydidean diatribe changed direction: from pro- to anti-Thucydides, now denouncing his original text for its "impurity".

In the wake of Mabel Lang came Virginia Hunter.¹⁰⁴ With superior reasoning and enlarged critical horizons, Hunter sought to unravel the author's patterns of thought, the "almost architectonic quality" with which he had woven the meaning between the events he narrated. The artistic image of Thucydides reappeared, revealing the historian's composite art in mastering many intricate resources of subtlety, used by him to induce a "subliminal persuasion" of objectivity, thus ensnaring his readers in the mails of its narrative net. Through the appreciation of his art, Thucydides' reputation was therefore restored: what had been condemned as historiographical deficiencies and weaknesses were seen as the virtues and merits of his literary art.¹⁰⁵

The "rescue" of the artist which dislocated the figure of the historian also brought to light the emotive realities of the author and the *pathos* of his *History*, perceptions which had hitherto been suffocated beneath the weight of an authorship supposedly imbued with impassive serenity, and even objective coolness, precisely because paral-

¹⁰¹ Connor (1977a) 289. See also V.J. Hunter (1973a) 7–9; Rawlings (1981) 266–68.

¹⁰² Rawlings (1981) 266.

¹⁰³ Quoted by Rawlings (1981) 267.

¹⁰⁴ Rawlings (1981) 268.

¹⁰⁵ "There is a kind of critical alchemy at work here; the base failures of the historian become the golden nobility of the artist" (Connor [1977a] 292).

ysed by the dictates of scientific paradigm. Released from the burden of “objectivity”, the figure of Thucydides comes to life: “a writer of intense and complex emotions”, with “a determination to transmit those emotions to his readers (...) one that charges language with feeling and intensity instead of emptying it of emotion and involvement”.¹⁰⁶

With the unfolding of the Cold War, which was especially grievous to Vietnam War America, the crisis deepened, now casting doubt upon, or even rendering unacceptable, the ethics of neutrality, which was impossible in any case because naive.¹⁰⁷ In parallel with this unrest, there was a shift in the focus of the reading, which now preferred to illuminate Thucydides the Moralist. The post-modern Thucydides emerged in the epistemological consciousness of the young America of the 1960s and 1970s.

Between 1950, when he had read Thucydides as a student, and 1984, when he published his first book on the historian, Connor lived through three decades of the Cold War, assimilating changes that were dictated as much by the crises that beset his generation as by the lessons that had been learnt from his re-readings of the Athenian historian—who, having himself undergone an analogous experience over the twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian War, might have projected this experience into his own *History*.¹⁰⁸

A spark from the Vietnam War, propagated in an article in the *New Yorker* (09/03/1968), ignited Connor’s epistemological crisis, reaching him at the very moment when the conflict was at its peak and causing immense anguish to the Americans. Recalling the episode fifteen years later, Connor refers to the interplay of historiographical epistemology and political ideology that took place in his mind, where the dilemmas that had originally been sparked off by a political issue became intermingled, transferred, and eventually dissolved into the epistemological sphere.

Speaking of the dilemmas of “involvement versus exemption”, “optimism versus pessimism”, and “morality versus power”, Connor’s standpoint is transferred from the person of Connor to that of Thucydides, thus merging the present living experience of the cognitive subject with the hermeneutics of the object.

¹⁰⁶ Connor (1977a) 291.

¹⁰⁷ Connor (1977a) 289; (1984) 5–7.

¹⁰⁸ Connor (1984) ix; 231–50.

What Connor says appears to apply equally to himself and his perception of the Vietnam War, to the *History* and its knowledge of the Peloponnesian War and so, extrapolating, even to Thucydides and his historiographical dilemmas. Simultaneously, Connor (re)updates his epistemological consciousness. On the one hand, he revises his memory of Meinecke's ideas on the writing of history: objectivity respects a rhetoric of authorship rather constituting a resource for inducing the persuasion of the reader. The stance of "objectivity" therefore loses its epistemological status, and is just a rhetorical, artistic procedure.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, once the interpreter's hermeneutic path is unblocked, other theoretical anchors can be adopted, primarily taken from the exponents of literary criticism (Walt Whitman and Henry James, as well as Tzvetan Todorov and Wolfgang Iser).¹¹⁰

The hermeneutic of the work overlaps with the activity of its reader, only in this way bringing about the appreciation of its communicative teleology of proposals and values. "The author makes his readers", said Henry James.¹¹¹ The best appreciation of the meaning and messages communicated by the work presupposes—and demands—the involvement of the reader, for whom a kind of reading role is reserved, through which the values induced by the text are brought to the fore.¹¹²

With the epistemological impasses sorted out, the political dilemmas of interpreter and historian may be equated, since these are now transferred to the reading of the *History* and therefore centered on the Peloponnesian War. The passions ignited by the war rise to the surface of the text: "It now became possible to give passages their full emotional force and to recognize the role of suffering in the work".¹¹³ The energy of the reading lends a renewed vigour to the text.

According to this hermeneutic strategy the so-called Thucydidean silence, which "positivist" epistemology saw as an indication and product of his exemplary historiographical "objectivity", the elimi-

¹⁰⁹ Connor (1984) 6; 17; 231–32.

¹¹⁰ Connor (1984) 4–5; 12–15; 17–19. For a questioning of this approach to Thucydides in terms of the "new school of literary criticism" in the 1960s and 1970s, see Dover (1983) and the concomitant reactions of Momigliano (1984a) against Hayden White's attempt to rhetoricize historiography.

¹¹¹ Connor (1984) 12.

¹¹² Connor (1984) 232f.

¹¹³ Connor (1984) 8; see also 232.

nation of all personalized interference in the narrative, now becomes the rhetorical locus *par excellence* of the inculcation of his values and authorial propositions, in concert with his outstanding, persuasive intelligence. The silence moulds the voice of Thucydides! The modern Thucydides of positivist heritage “à la Ranke”, now obsolete, cap-sizes, the post-modern Thucydides of literary criticism “à la Henry James” emerging in his place.

With the reader integrated into the work, the hermeneutics becomes more complex, assimilating the aims of the author with those of the reader: Connor’s experience during the Cold War reverberates with the vicissitudes of Thucydides’ experience during the Peloponnesian War. The growing perception of the phenomenon of war—marked by the appreciation of its pathetic reality and greater consciousness of its concomitant historiographical epistemology—is echoed in both historians. Thucydides started out used to evaluating facts in a way comparable to that of Pericles, as much as Connor started out immersed in the mirages of positivist reason. Experience of the *pathos* of war, in American and Vietnamese settings for one author, Athenian and Corcyrean for the other, sparked off crises for both. Fundamental to overcoming this anguish was the attainment of consciousness, epistemological and political; the nonconformist restlessness and aspirations of renewal of the young American—painfully deluded by the older generation’s values of bipolarity, of manichaeistic simplicity—were equally felt by Thucydides, himself similarly “revisionist”, even “subversive”.¹¹⁴

A decade later, Gregory Crane directed Thucydidean hermeneutics back toward science: owing to his perception of events in “general and abstract” terms, Thucydides had “anticipated the scientific analysis, as one of its forefathers”. According to the strict logic with which the narrative is structured, as “a discourse of universalizing axiomatic approach”, Thucydides’ *History* points to advances of a mathematical nature, thereby foreshadowing what would later be the geometry of Euclides and Archimedes. Born in the fifth century, Thucydides “invented a form of history”; had he been born later, Crane believes, “he might have turned instead to mathematics”.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Connor (1984) 231–50.

¹¹⁵ Crane (1996) 23.

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Terms excluded: Athens, Athenians, Greece, Greeks, Hellas, Peloponnesian War, Peloponnesians, Sparta, Spartans, Thucydides; but see the relevant sublemmata.

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