

Wiley Blackwell Handbooks to Classical Reception

A HANDBOOK TO THE
RECEPTION OF
THUCYDIDES

EDITED BY CHRISTINE LEE AND NEVILLE MORLEY



WILEY Blackwell

A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides

Wiley Blackwell Handbooks to Classical Reception

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A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides

Edited by

Christine Lee and Neville Morley

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Introduction

Reading Thucydides

Christine Lee and Neville Morley

Over the last two decades, Thucydides has been one of the most frequently cited thinkers in debates about Western foreign policy and military intervention, especially in the United States. Irving Kristol, *éminence grise* of American neoconservatism, referred to Thucydides' history as "the favourite neoconservative text on foreign affairs." The question of the connection between Thucydides and neoconservative thought is perhaps most forcefully raised by the career of the ancient historian Donald Kagan: father of one of the cofounders of the Project for a New American Century, a signatory of the original declaration along with such figures as Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz, and author, with his other son, of the wake-up call, *While America Sleeps*. Kagan has devoted almost his entire academic career to Thucydides, and his more popular works, including *Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy* and *Thucydides: The Reinvention of History*, reveal that his reading of American politics and his reading of Thucydides are mutually inextricable. The continued relevance of Thucydides is likewise undeniable for Victor Davis Hanson, another prominent public figure associated with the neoconservative milieu. Hanson has not only returned repeatedly to Thucydides in his accounts of the importance of warfare in the triumph of the West but also invokes him regularly in his journalistic writing, most notably in the series of columns in *National Review* in the aftermath of 9/11 emphasizing the need for a swift, firm response against America's enemies (Hanson 2002). At the other end of the spectrum of conservative thought, no profile of Colin Powell is complete without reference to the (spurious) quotation that hung on his office wall as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – "Of all manifestations of power, restraint impresses men most" – supposedly a legacy of the place of Thucydides in the curriculum at military training establishments like West Point and the Naval War College (where the

History was introduced in the 1970s in part as a means of wargaming the Cold War without reopening the wounds of Vietnam).

Yet Thucydides is not merely a puppet for the right, and more recent developments, including the limited success of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have not led to the rejection of Thucydides as a source of political wisdom. On the contrary, rival schools of thought on global politics have reinforced their critique of the neo-conservative project by offering their own readings of Thucydides' work; arguing, for example, that the central message of the *History* is not that great states have the capacity to direct affairs and define reality in their own terms and interests but that such imperialistic hubris tends to lead to disaster (the Melian Dialogue is, after all, followed shortly afterwards by the Sicilian expedition), or that all foreign policy decisions need to be made on a rational, realistic basis rather than relying on excessive optimism or other emotions. Just as the end of the Cold War, in which Thucydides had been read as the key text for understanding a bipolar world, led not to the abandonment of the text but to its reinterpretation as a crucial text for understanding a multi-polar, anarchic world, so the failure of a foreign policy sanctioned by Thucydides has led not to the abandonment of the text but to its re-appropriation and redeployment in new contexts for new purposes. General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff since 2011, invokes Thucydides in order to support a policy toward Iran of diplomatic engagement rather than aggression, on the basis that all states are rational and driven by fear, honor, and interest (<http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/03/01/435346/dempsey-iran-rational-actor/>). On the other side of the world, Chinese Premier Xi Jinping acknowledges the risk of the "Thucydides trap," the idea that an established power and a rising power are liable to push one another into war (<http://bergruen.org/topics/a-conversation-with-president-xi-at-big-s-understanding-china-conference>).

It is easy to dismiss the Thucydides of the American neoconservatives and the proliferation of references in journalism and foreign policy discussions as the product of a naive, partial, and entirely dehistoricized reading of the text – or, more likely, to judge from the limited range of reference of most of these, of a few isolated passages like the Melian Dialogue. However, this misses the point: the idea of Thucydides, however far removed it may be from a complex reality, has continuing power and currency, shaping ideas about how the modern world should be run and serving to legitimize them. This is by no means a new phenomenon; readers of Thucydides have been recognizing their own times and situations in his account since his work was reintroduced into Western Europe in the fifteenth century, and he played a prominent role in debates about inter-state relations even before Thomas Hobbes – generally dismissive of the wisdom of the ancients, but devoted translator of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Hoekstra 2012). Moreover, study of the history of his reception makes it clear that Thucydides the International Relations Theorist is not the only version with the power to influence debates; Thucydides the Political Theorist has been a significant figure in the analysis of the

workings of democracy and demagoguery and the ideas and ideals of citizenship, and Thucydides the Model Historian, the exemplar of critical practice or the purveyor of methodological precepts, dominated the development of “history as science” under Leopold von Ranke and others in the nineteenth century.

The perspective changes significantly over time: as each of these conceptions, developed within different disciplinary and national traditions, influences the others; as the valuation of Thucydides relative to potential rivals like Tacitus or Herodotus changes; as scholarship develops knowledge of the text and its context; and as conceptions of the relationship between ancient and modern are transformed by the experiences of modernization (cf. Morley 2009). Thucydides lost his exemplary status around the beginning of the nineteenth century – it ceased to be plausible to cite him as an expert on the evils of paper money, as a Prussian official once did (Koselleck 2004: 26) – but, far from being neglected as a result, he came instead to be seen as offering universal insights and precepts that transcended his time. However, even at a given moment the idea of Thucydides was never simple or straightforward; he could equally well be cited as a democrat or an anti-democrat, an activist or a quietist, a realist or an idealist, the archetypal scientific historian or the exemplary practitioner of rhetoric and historical art. Surveying this history, one is struck equally by the variety of readings of Thucydides and their often contradictory nature, and by the widespread conviction, despite these contradictions, that he is an author and thinker with important things to say to the present.

Thucydides’ influence over the centuries has certainly been less pervasive and unavoidable than that of Plato and Aristotle in the field of philosophy or literary authors like Homer and Vergil; at different times, he has been eclipsed by other ancient rivals (Plutarch, for example, or Tacitus). However, his influence has been far more important than one might assume from the almost complete lack of scholarship on the subject. Thucydides’ work was not read by everyone, but it was read by a select group of important thinkers at critical moments in the development of political theory, historiography, and international relations. His place in the wider culture is equally circumscribed, but at critical moments, at times of war (see for example John Barton’s *The War that Never Ends*, originally performed in the 1960s in response to Vietnam and revived in 1991 for the first Gulf War) or national crisis (the Gettysburg addresses, the aftermath of 9/11), he becomes suddenly prominent, a text for difficult times. Moreover, consideration of the reception of Thucydides illuminates more general issues in the study of the reception of classical texts, highlighting the multiplicity of possible interpretations of antiquity and ancient authors in response to changing circumstances, and the continuing (and often surprising) power of classical authorities in the modern world.

Remarkably, the history of the reception of Thucydides since antiquity has only recently begun to be studied in depth, and the coverage of different aspects remains partial. Detailed studies within the field of classical studies, looking at the narrative and rhetorical structures of Thucydides’ work, its relation to contemporary science, and its place in the development of historiography, are largely unknown

to those working on relevant material in other disciplines; conversely, debates on the place of Thucydides' ideas in the development of international relations or political theory are ignored by the vast majority of classicists. The two existing collections in this field (Fromentin, Gotteland, and Payen 2010; Harloe and Morley 2012) offer detailed studies of the reception of Thucydides by individual authors or within quite specific contexts, but their coverage of the entire field is limited, and above all there is only limited engagement between different disciplines. This *Handbook* aims to offer a more comprehensive overview of the whole range and variety of its subject, emphasizing the connections and debates between different traditions of reading and interpreting Thucydides, and highlighting the underlying issues in understanding his influence.

Part I: Scholarship, Criticism, and Education

This opening section considers the “conditions of knowledge” of Thucydides, the ways in which this complex text, written in a language which was fully comprehensible only to a few (even after it had been translated, one might say), was made available to a broader audience, and the ways in which this process of transmission and dissemination shaped readers' interpretations. Fromentin and Gotteland survey the reception of Thucydides in classical antiquity (a subject which is covered more extensively in Fromentin, Gotteland, and Payen 2010). In this period, the reputation of Thucydides as an important but problematic historiographic model was established, in a way which – as shown by Pade in her survey of Renaissance scholarship – shaped the expectations of those who first studied and translated the *History*. Thucydides was perceived from an early date as a “useful” text, above all – as Iglesias-Zoido shows in his account of Renaissance anthologies of the speeches contained in the *History* – as a model for rhetoric and political discourse. The practice of excerpting Thucydides and presenting him to a more general audience in an abridged form, tailored to specific (often educational) purposes, has a long history.

The other three chapters in this section focus on more recent scholarship, and its implications for contemporary understanding. Rusten offers a revealing account of the debates about the nature of the text and whether or not it was ever finished that dominated philological discussions through much of the twentieth century; these are not of purely academic interest, but raise important questions about any attempt at extracting messages or lessons from the work. Schelske embarks on the enormous task of considering the place of Thucydides in education at school and university – the main way in which most readers before the mid-twentieth century would have first encountered his work – by focusing on two case studies of writers who are known to have had some significant connection with the *History*. Finally, Greenwood considers the vital issue of the translation of Thucydides' often difficult and ambiguous Greek; the different strategies which modern translators have

used to convey its sense, significance, and literary qualities; and the consequences of different approaches for their readers' image and understanding of Thucydides and his work.

Part II: Thucydides the Historian

Thucydides is commonly understood and read as a historian. However, the precise meaning of this label is invariably open to question: Thucydides may, at different periods and in different contexts, be read as a typical classical historian, as a historian who somehow anticipated modern scientific historiography and may indeed even have developed it further than contemporary historians, as the originator of historiography as a discipline or as a betrayer of history, practicing it with a bad conscience because he really wanted to pursue a different project. Moreover, most of these characterizations can be understood in both positive and negative terms – the rhetorical nature of Thucydides' account, which from a modern perspective sits uneasily with his supposedly modern critical approach, could equally well be taken as grounds for dismissing him as a suitable model or for rethinking the attitude of historiography toward its literary nature.

Three chapters consider the more positive estimations of Thucydides' contribution to the development of historiography: Murari Pires (on the Renaissance and early modern period), Lianeri and Meister (focusing on the nineteenth century in Britain and Germany, respectively) all explore the idea of Thucydides as a model for the historian's practice and duty, and even as the exemplar of the characterization of the historian as a *hero* or a *genius*. This tradition, especially in the nineteenth century, tended to see Thucydides as *sui generis*, pursuing a historiographical project that was quite different from the mainstream of classical historiography, the better to claim it as a forerunner of contemporary practices; O'Gorman shows how, in the early centuries of Thucydidean reception, he was more likely to be read through and/or in comparison with other ancient "contemporaries." Payen considers his reception in France in terms of its relative absence, or at least underdevelopment, compared with Germany or Britain; a series of writers did turn to him as a source of inspiration or subject for debate, but he never acquired the same totemic status. Finally, Hesk considers the decline of that status in the twentieth century, with the progressive questioning of Thucydides' credentials as a modern historian – or even as a historian at all.

Part III: Thucydides the Political Theorist

Thomas Hobbes offered a widely cited characterization of Thucydides as "the most politic historiographer that ever writ." While historians have tended to understand this in terms of Thucydides' interest as a historian in the political affairs of ancient Greece, another tradition of interpretation has seen him as a

political theorist who happened to present his analysis in the form of a history, or at any rate as a thinker whose ideas on the workings of politics have a wider significance than just serving to explain the historical events described in his work. The first three chapters in this section discuss three different interpretations of Thucydides as a source of political wisdom and understanding. Sullivan focuses on the central figure of Thomas Hobbes, whose role in shaping the later reception of Thucydides in political theory – through his translation, his introductory remarks on the *History*, and its obvious influence on his own thought – has been enormous; Hobbes' individual take on the work is highlighted by comparing his reception with those of a number of other political thinkers in this period. Earley considers the Abbé de Mably, a figure who is far less significant for modern political thought (and thus tends to be ignored) but who was in his time widely read in both France and Britain; his conviction that important political lessons could be learnt from history chimes with Thucydides' own claims for the usefulness of his work. Finally, Jaffe offers an account of the importance of Thucydides for Leo Strauss, the particularities of his interpretation – and the importance of Strauss' influence as a teacher in establishing Thucydides' present position in American political discourse.

The other three chapters are concerned as much with the issues involved in reading Thucydides as a political theorist, and the implications of his ideas, as with the ways they have been read in the past. Zumbrunnen draws on the ideas of realism and constructivism that have dominated recent debates in international relations (see below) in order to interpret Thucydides' understanding of democracy, arguing that his political thought transcends such restrictive categories. Mara concentrates on the key issue of democratic citizenship and deliberation, moving from the supposed idealization of Pericles (implying Thucydidean distrust of democracy, as Hobbes believed) to the speech of Diodotus in the Mytilenean Debate. Lee analyzes the ways that various contemporary theorists have made use of Thucydides as a text for thinking about democratic politics, from Strauss' seminal reading of it as an antidemocratic text to later interpretations more attuned to the possibilities for democratic success.

Part IV: Thucydides the Strategist

As discussed above, Thucydides most commonly appears in contemporary discussions, outside the field of classical studies, in relation to the fields of global politics and international relations; these are the areas in which the study of his reception and influence is farthest advanced, at least in terms of the volume of material published on the subject. Thucydides is seen as a foundational text of the discipline, part of the canon of great thinkers with whose ideas contemporary theorists continue to engage – although, as Keene explores in his discussion of the history of this field of study, this seems surprising, given that the most prominent founders of international relations actually had little to say about Thucydides, and it was rather some

writers who are now largely ignored who played the most significant role in establishing him within the discipline. O'Driscoll's chapter offers a different contrast between past and present: Thucydides is now scarcely mentioned in debates about Just War theory, because he is seen solely in terms of his appropriation by realist thought, despite his importance for pioneering figures in this field like Grotius and Gentili.

The theme of realism looms large, as Johnson discusses: Thucydides has most often been claimed as some sort of realist – although this interpretation is in some ways problematic and rests on a particular approach to reading his work, and at best he is probably not the sort of realist he is generally assumed to be. Ruback goes still further in his critique of contemporary international relations readings and appropriations: he argues that Thucydides' role in the discipline must be understood above all as a means of legitimizing current practices, and indeed of constituting international relations as a discipline at all. Finally, Stradis' chapter engages with another dimension of Thucydides' influence on modern thinking about global politics, his introduction into the curriculum of the US Naval War College in the early 1970s as a means of helping officers develop their understanding of strategy and international relations, and their skills in critical thought and debate, in place of the older technical focus of military education.

Part V: Thucydidean Themes

Thucydides' modern influence has not been confined to these three strands; particular sections of his work have been received in other contexts, as King and Brown show in their account of the way that his description of the plague at Athens has been interpreted by modern medical writers, and Rood discusses with respect to his "proto-anthropological" account of the early development of Greece. Hardwick and Workman discuss different aspects of the reception of Thucydides in broader theoretical terms, cutting across disciplines: the former explores the relationship between the concepts that are seen to organize Thucydides' own thought and those that are deployed in his reception, while the latter considers the way his project has been interpreted in terms of conceptions of "science" and "tragedy" – arguing that it clearly transcends such one-sided claims and polarized categories. Sawyer studies the way that Thucydides has been cited in modern political rhetoric, establishing a clear contrast between the United States and United Kingdom that can be traced back to differences between their educational systems and their political cultures.

Part VI: Thucydidean Reflections

At least some readers of Thucydides have found it a life-changing experience, one that has shaped their view of the world; for these, he is a writer who can sustain a lifetime of engagement and debate. Part VI therefore includes four shorter

reflections from scholars who have spent much time reading and thinking about Thucydides and his work. These are not straightforward encomia – if anything, they raise more questions about the problems of interpreting Thucydides or identifying “lessons” that may be applied to the present than many of the supposedly more academic readings that are discussed in the rest of the volume – but they highlight the potential for Thucydides to continue to stimulate new ideas and to reward careful, engaged reading.

Prospects

Even a volume of this size cannot hope to be comprehensive; for some topics, most obviously the place of Thucydides within modern international relations theory, the literature is already so substantial that it formed the basis for one edited collection (Gustafson 2000), and there has been no let-up in the rate of publications in the subsequent fifteen years. Our hope is that this collection offers a good guide to the main strands of reception and the main issues of debate in the different fields where Thucydides is or has been a significant point of reference, with discussion of the most important contributions and interpretations, and that it has at least started a proper exploration of the complex relationships between these different fields and their various conceptions of Thucydides and his work.

A much more serious problem than a failure to cover every intricacy of the tradition in historiography or political theory is the patchiness of our coverage. The scope of this project has in a number of cases been limited by our ability to find people working on relevant themes, or amenable to turning their attention to Thucydides in the context of their work on related (sometimes only very loosely related) topics; we are especially grateful to those contributors (King and Brown, for example, and Schelske) who were willing to venture into largely unknown territory so that an important aspect of this subject would not be neglected. Although these chapters are by no means merely a summary of existing scholarship – even when they are dealing with relatively well-established fields of enquiry, all our authors offer original interpretations and arguments – the volume does undoubtedly reflect the current state of research on Thucydidean reception, insofar as we were in some cases simply unable to find contributors to cover particular topics which, it became clear, were potentially just as important as those topics which were already extensively discussed in the literature. We hope that this volume will be a starting point for future research, not only by providing an introduction to the main traditions of Thucydideanism but also by highlighting some of the major gaps.

If the history of the reception of Thucydides sometimes appears to consist of a limited number of milestones separated by long periods of emptiness – his rediscovery in Europe in the Renaissance, Hobbes, nineteenth-century “scientific”

history and post-World War II international relations, above all in the United States – then this is at least as much a consequence of the interests of contemporary scholars (not least in developing the foundational myths of their disciplines) as it is of the actual pattern of his reception, whether judged in terms of volume or significance. It is increasingly clear that there is far more going on in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than has hitherto been noticed (Scott 2009, and Payen and Earley in this volume offer some preliminary studies in this period). Still more striking is the lack of attention given to the first half of the twentieth century, precisely the period when Thucydides ceased to be a significant author for mainstream theories of historiography and instead crossed the Atlantic to become an influence in theories of global politics; Keene in this volume identifies the role of some hitherto-neglected figures in the early history of international relations in the transmission of Thucydides in this period, and there is clearly much more to be said about the impact of World War I and its aftermath on readings of Thucydides, including references to him in wartime propaganda and his use on war memorials. That raises the broader issue of Thucydides' place in the history of war, strategy, and tactics, from mentions of him in the writing of John Dee in the sixteenth century (mentioned in passing in Scott 2011) to the present. Stradis' chapter on the role of Thucydides in the new curriculum of the Naval War College in the 1970s barely scratches the surface of this topic, but we hope it will spark an interest in more sustained work in this area. The place of Thucydides in nonacademic contexts, meanwhile, remains almost entirely neglected.

This is not to say that we consider the debates within more familiar fields like historiography and international relations to be concluded or moribund; on the contrary, as we hope this volume demonstrates, they continue to be extremely lively, but it is also clear that they need to move forward and above all to start talking more consistently to one another. There is no doubt that historiographical receptions of Thucydides have shaped political ones, and vice versa, and that in many cases writers on different sides of national and disciplinary divides are engaged with similar issues from different perspectives: the nature of "science" and "social science," the relevance of the past for understanding the present, the roles of rhetoric, interpretation, and authority within the human sciences, the very identity of different disciplines. What is needed now is genuine dialogue and debate, based on learning each other's languages and taken-for-granted assumptions, not least as a means of holding one's own up for scrutiny. As Ruback suggests in his chapter, "Thucydides seems familiar because we've made him into us"; proper consideration of the Thucydideses of other disciplines – with the recognition that, however unnatural and implausible they may appear to us as historians or us as political theorists, they are believed in with equal conviction and equal plausibility – can help unsettle our preconceptions and restore the equally important sense of unfamiliarity in engaging with a text from the classical past with the potential to speak to the present.

Guide to Further Reading

Several edited collections on Thucydides include chapters on different aspects of his reception: Rengakos and Tsakmakis (2006) and Rusten (2009). Harloe and Morley (2012) is the first volume in English dedicated to this topic, offering a range of specialist studies; for readers of French, Fromentin, Gotteland, and Payen (2010) focuses on Thucydides' reception in France. There are now two monographs that focus on the reception of Thucydides in historiography, Meister (2013, in German) and Morley (2014). Gustafson (2000) offers an introduction to the tradition in international relations.

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Part I

Scholarship, Criticism,
and Education

Thucydides' Ancient Reputation

Valérie Fromentin and Sophie Gotteland

All attempts at describing the reception of Thucydides in the ancient world and assessing his influence come up against two major difficulties.

The first lies in the documentation that is available to us. The destruction of the greater part of ancient literature, and the too often fragmentary state of those works that do survive, lead us to run the risk, which is often met with in this kind of investigation, of overinterpreting the sparse data which we have, and hence overvaluing what has survived of the Thucydidean heritage. This risk is all the greater as witnesses from antiquity are not overly communicative: most of the time authors of antiquity do not cite their sources or refer back to their models; they do not necessarily see themselves as part of an intellectual tradition, and so explicit references to Thucydides are less common than one might have expected. Studying the historian's reception often comes down to flushing out a "hidden presence." The second major difficulty lies in the unique position which Thucydides has occupied for more than two centuries in the landscape of classical studies as a "monument" of Western thought and as constituting part of the famous "Greek miracle." The reconstructed picture which we have of ancient literature and of its development and its genres, constitutes an inhibiting framework from which it is difficult to escape, especially in the case of Thucydides to whom the dominant tradition has attributed the merit of having "invented" rational, scientific, and objective history, or – to borrow the phrasing of title of a famous work by Arnaldo Momigliano – of having laid "the classical foundations of modern historiography."

It is nonetheless the case that the presence of Thucydides, which at some times is diffuse, at others explicit, is apparent throughout antiquity. While we cannot pretend to give here an exhaustive inventory of borrowings from his work, nor a complete assessment of the influence which he exercised on Greco-Roman historiography and on other literary genres, the following presentation is deliberately organized around a

number of key moments and focused on certain writers, who represent, for us, the main forms taken by Thucydides' survival in the ancient world.

For the purposes of this presentation, it is convenient from the outset to distinguish two points in Thucydides' reception which are not necessarily either successive or independent of one another. The moment which appears to come first chronologically is when posterity's interest in Thucydides focused chiefly on the historical content of *The Peloponnesian War* and on what we can already refer to as its "documentary value." This interest is manifested by two kinds of historians.

There are first of all those who present themselves – or who were considered from the outset – as his followers. Xenophon has a unique position in this tradition, which he inaugurated. Thucydides having died (around 395 BCE?) before he was able to bring his narrative of the Peloponnesian War to its conclusion, Xenophon, whose *Hellenica* begins exactly where Thucydides stops (411 BCE), was seen in antiquity as *having completed* the work of Thucydides (perhaps using notes which he had left), before writing a *sequel* (up until 362 BCE). It seems moreover that the first two books of the *Hellenica* (covering the years 411–403) circulated under the names of both historians, and, in the era of Cicero at least, we have proof of the existence of supposedly "complete" editions of the work of Thucydides (i.e., including the beginning of the *Hellenica*), with a division into books different from that which has come down to us (Canfora 2006: 731–5). However, even if one may reasonably suppose that Xenophon (whose opinion on the matter is nowhere recorded) had in effect intended to finish and continue the work of Thucydides, he has never been considered by either ancients or moderns as an imitator of the historian, in that his historiographical choices, his methods and his style are clearly different. The same goes for all the historians of the fourth century BC whose works – regrettably preserved only in a fragmentary state – pass for or present themselves as sequels to *The Peloponnesian War*: Theopompus of Chios, for example, whose *Hellenics* "completed" Thucydides' history (Diodorus of Sicily, *Bibliotheca Historica* 14.84.7; Marcellinus, *Vita Thucydidis* 45), telling "the end of the Peloponnesian War" from the battle of Cynossema in 411 BCE up to the fall of Cnidus in 394 BCE (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Epistula Ad Pompeium Geminum* c. 6.2), had a marked taste for fabulous anecdotes and digressions (Theon, *Progymnasmata* 4; Photios, *Bibliotheca* 176), making him less like Thucydides than like Herodotus, whose work he had taken over (perhaps at the beginning of his *Philippica*) and which he aspired to excel (Nicolai 2006: 706–7). These authors from the beginning of the Hellenistic era belong above all in the tradition of *historia continua*: each continues the work of another, avoiding overlapping, but *continuation* does not imply *imitation*. These successors are often very critical of their predecessors, like the mysterious Cratippos, a young contemporary of Thucydides whose work covered the period 411–393 BCE at least (Schepens 2001): he prepared a list of Thucydides' "omissions" in Book 8 to demonstrate not only the unfinished aspect of the history but also its inconsistency – the end of the work, in his view, did not issue from "the same literary choices, and

not in the same vein of composition" as the beginning (Dion. Hal., *Thucydides* 16.2–4). At this date the "Thucydidean model" is clearly not yet formed: consideration of historiography, which is restricted in the sources we have to a few passages from Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle, is limited to defining history in terms of its content and not its methods, and to examining only superficially its relation to rhetoric – "historiography" appears as timid and embryonic (Nicolai 2006: 698).

The second class of historian is *in theory* made up of those who used *The Peloponnesian War* as a source. "In theory" because this category, artificially inflated in the nineteenth century by the works of Quellenforschung (source investigation) which erected hypothesis upon hypothesis to try to explain the origins of historiographical texts, tends nowadays to void itself of content and to become virtual. If it is in fact likely that several post-Thucydidean historians – especially authors of the vast syntheses called "universal histories" (*koinai historiai*) – exploited material in *The Peloponnesian War*, there are only a few among them who, like Diodorus of Sicily, actually mention Thucydides among the sources they have consulted. There are at least two reasons for this silence. The first, already mentioned, is that ancient writers were not accustomed to citing their sources. The second is historical and geopolitical: the conquests of Alexander the Great and then the rise of the Roman Empire shifted the classical world's center of gravity first eastwards and then westwards, and at the same time fixed the interest of historians on new subjects. In this new context, where history played itself out and was written on a global scale, the work of Thucydides, which relates to micro-history and tells of an inglorious episode in Athens' history, must have appeared to be merely a marginal witness to an era which had completely disappeared.

The second moment in the reception of Thucydides in antiquity is when his *presence* becomes an *influence*, when his history moved from being a work of *reference* to being a *model* worthy of *imitation*. Such a transformation was only possible because the work had ceased to be considered only in terms of its subject matter (which was open to being reused), and had become the object of critical analysis of the choices (methodological, ideological, and aesthetic) which governed its composition. This shift, which seems to have been initiated by "history practitioners" such as Polybius, was rapidly passed on and developed by those whom for convenience we shall call the "rhetors," a generic term taking in professors of eloquence as well as theoreticians of literature and specialists in language and style: it resulted in the construction of a double "Thucydidean model," historiographical and literary.

The role played by Thucydides in the development of ancient historiography was the subject of much debate during the twentieth century, largely dominated by the opinions of Eduard Schwartz, Felix Jacoby, and Arnaldo Momigliano (Schepens 2010). According to them, Thucydides succeeded in convincing the Greeks of the superiority of "Zeitsgeschichte" – that is to say, contemporary history focused on political and military events – over all other historiographical genres (universal history, regional history, genealogy, chronography, *archaiologia*, biography). More recently, this view

has been countered by those who, like Guido Schepens, believe that the dominant position attributed to Thucydides in the development of antique historiography is based on an illusion deriving from the state of the documentation that we have. The fact that the only Greek histories which survived the destruction of ancient literature in any coherent (if not complete) form belong to “grand” political and military history (Polybius, Cassius Dionysius, Appian) has given rise to a belief in the notion of a “Thucydidean mainstream.” However, recent research on “fragmentary history” (i.e., on historiographical works which have been lost or preserved only in a fragmentary state, collected by Felix Jacoby in his *Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*) has revealed the extraordinary vitality of the historiographical genre in the Hellenistic era, its amazing capacity to adapt to new circumstances, and the great variety of forms it took. Furthermore the attitude of, for instance, Polybius, who presents himself as the heir to the Thucydidean tradition, is a long way from reflecting, as was once thought, any dominant tendency: while he may himself have been convinced of the superiority of contemporary political and military history, he recognized the right to exist of several kinds of historiography (Schepens 2010: 128–9). Aware of going against the stream, on several occasions he feels the need to justify his decision to write a “pragmatic” history (Polybius, *Histories* IX.1 ff).

The example of Polybius should not, however, lead one to think that post-Thucydidean historiography had largely turned its back on Thucydides. On the contrary, the limited success of “Zeitgeschichte” as a historiographical genre did not inhibit the widespread diffusion of what quickly became the main “message” of Thucydides, namely his methodological discourse (*Thuc.* 1.20–2). His conception of history and of the historian’s role, which can be summarized, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus did (*Thuc.* 7–8), as an absolute demand for *truth*, had a “potential universality” that could transcend the differences between all the forms of history. In fact the great Thucydidean principles (rejection of myth, critical scrutiny of facts, search for causes, exactness, impartiality, a wish to be useful now and in the future) rapidly became commonplaces (*topoi*), “recycled” in historians’ prefaces throughout antiquity. This initial conceptualization of Thucydides, who was now elevated into the “high priest of truth” (Dion. Hal., *Thuc.* 8.1), may have originated in peripatetic philosophy (Canfora 2006: 747), but we can see it clearly manifested in the sometimes virulent critiques that ancient historians directed at each other, sometimes across the centuries. Denunciation of “ignoramus,” “liars,” “flatterers,” or “calumniators”, whether directed at individuals (as in Polybius’ famous accusation against Timaeus of Sicily in his *Histories* Book 11) or more generally (Flavius Josephus denigrates the entire profession in *Contra Appionem*), is voiced in the name of Thucydidean dogma, *but always without explicit reference to Thucydides*, which seems to prove that the historian’s methodological principles very rapidly fell into the “public domain” and became part of the common culture of all the learned. In authors who are not writing history themselves or whose proposals are mainly theoretical, explicit reference to Thucydides is almost always coupled with reference to another “father of history,” Herodotus. Comparison

between the two historians can at times appear almost a caricature, as in Plutarch's pamphlet *De Malignitate Herodoti*, where Herodotus is the incarnation of the archetype of "bad" historians and serves as the antithesis to Thucydides. In contrast, in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 5–6) the figure of Herodotus is not systematically contrasted with that of Thucydides, but is analyzed in a "developmental" perspective: for Dionysius, who sees a continuous progress in the history of historiography, Herodotus is a milestone, a necessary staging-post, between the *archaism* of authors of local history such as Hecataeus of Miletus (who are presented as compilers of oral and written tradition, only concerned with being exhaustive and lacking any spirit of criticism) and the *modernity* of Thucydides, consisting in his rigor and rationality.

In the Latin tradition, on the other hand, and especially in Cicero – the first Roman theorist of history and a practitioner of it himself – reference to Thucydides is strikingly restrained, or even absent. In fact Thucydides is never cited as a model, nor is his methodology invoked or commented upon, even though certain passages (*de Oratore* 2.62–3) exhibit undeniable similarities between the Ciceronian and the Thucydidean conceptions of history: the primacy of truth, the choice of contemporary history, the enquiry into causes (Binot 2010). In point of fact, what interests Cicero in Thucydides is the *writer* more than the *historian*, the *style* more than the *substance*, the *form* more than the *content*. This essentially rhetorical approach is explained by the fact that Cicero, in conformity with the Isocratic and Aristotelian tradition, associates the genre of history with the display of eloquence (it is thus *epideictic*). It is also driven by the polemics that around 47–6 BCE divided Cicero and Brutus, leader of a new generation of orators, on the subject of political eloquence in Rome (Cicero, *Orator Ad Brutum*); this quarrel gave a central place to the figure of Thucydides, whose "Attic simplicity" was invoked and held up as a model by the new guard. Irritated by the extravagances of these "devotees of Thucydides," Cicero replied that it was absurd to want to take a representative of the epideictic genre as a model for eloquence in the forum, while on the other hand the style of Thucydides alone did not constitute Atticism!

The example of Cicero allows us to stress an essential point: the emergence and construction of the other facet – rhetorical and literary – of the Thucydidean model are inseparable from the succession of Atticizing fashions which marked the intellectual history of the Greco-Roman world between the first century BCE and the third century CE. It is important to understand that this infatuation with Thucydides mainly concerned the "oratorical parts" of his history (*dēmōgoriai*), that is to say, the language that he attaches to figures in his narrative, and these discourses, although for the greater part fictional, were nevertheless considered by the "Atticists" to be *living* witness to the eloquence of action of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, just like the judicial or political speeches of Lysias or Demosthenes. This is the reason why these writers were held up by teachers of rhetoric as models to be *imitated* by their pupils aspiring to a political career, as much as by those (often the same ones) who foresaw themselves writing history. This apprenticeship, which envisaged the

memorizing and reciting of complete passages from *The Peloponnesian War*, gradually transformed Thucydides into a source of outstanding examples making up part of the baggage of all learned people (Bompaire 1976), as seen in the *Progymnasmata* (“preparatory exercises”) of Aelius Theon, where Thucydides features high on the list of authors from whom the teacher of rhetoric will draw examples for his pupils to learn by heart (Spengel 1854–6: 66.23ff = Patillon and Bolognesi 1997: 10ff). This is also the case with the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonios, which presents Thucydides as the “historian par excellence” (*syngrapheus*: Patillon 2008: XII.1), to the extent that a “eulogy of Thucydides” is proposed as a subject in the passage devoted to this exercise (VIII.4–9). In these technical treatises Thucydides is celebrated above all for the qualities of his narration and for his descriptions. Thus the account of the confrontation between the Plataeans and the Thebans in Book 2 of *The Peloponnesian War* is analyzed by Aelius Theon as a model of verisimilitude and propriety (Spengel 1854–6: 84.19–85.28 = Patillon and Bolognesi 1997: 46–8). He uses the same episode to illustrate various different modes of utterance (affirmative, interrogative, jussive), subjecting the beginning of the account of the Thebans’ night attack on the Plataeans (Spengel 1854–6: 87.21ff = Patillon and Bolognesi 1997: 50ff) to a series of rewritings. Finally, Thucydides is regularly cited as an example for his descriptions of battles on land, at sea, and at night (Aphthonios: Patillon 2008: XII.2; Aelius Theon: Spengel 1854–6: 118.25–2, 119.3–5 = Patillon and Bolognesi 1997: 67–8; Ps.-Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata*: Patillon 2008: X.3).

More precisely, Thucydides has an important place in the great debate about *stylistic forms* which runs throughout antiquity, from the *Rhetoric for Herennius* up to Photios, by way of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the pseudo-Demetrius of Phaleron and the treatise on the *Sublime* of the pseudo-Longinus. This discussion, in which subjectivity plays a considerable role (since it involves assessing the effects of discourse on a listener), developed diverse systems for the classification and ranking of styles, and gave rise, notably in the case of Thucydides, to differing and even opposite characterizations – “elevated,” “sublime,” “rough,” or “Gorgianic.” In fact the rhetoricians often reproached the historian for his lack of “clarity.” Theon himself, while recognizing in Thucydides a historian of the most accomplished kind, capable of covering all kinds of history, identifies obscure and abstruse features in his work beside others that are sublime and brilliant (Patillon and Bolognesi 1997: 104–5) and advises tackling him last, after Herodotus, Theopompus, Xenophon, Philistos, and Ephorus. Indeed, if Hermogenes in his *Stylistic Categories* classes Thucydides among those who exemplify the “noble style” and offers him as a model of the panegyric style in prose, he acknowledges that he is at times “rough and difficult and quite obscure” in his expression; he also observes that the arrangement of words is often “exceedingly discordant” and he deplores a certain “harshness” (Raab 1969: 408–11). But if the roughness and austerity of Thucydides’ style make it difficult to use him as a oratorical model, the same characteristics conversely make him a good philosophical model: rhetoricians praise the scientific exactitude and the ethical rigor of this unornamented style that is above all concerned with searching out the truth (Chiron 2010).

One cannot sufficiently stress this *scholarly* aspect of the reception of Thucydides, which enables us to detect a *continuum* through antiquity and up to the Byzantine era. For instance, it has been shown that down the centuries two famous episodes from *The Peloponnesian War*, the siege of Plataea (2.75–8) and the “plague” of 430 BCE (2.47–54), formed part of the standard repertoire of all the *pepaideumēnoi* (educated readers). Byzantine historiography supplies many “plague narratives” where “linguistic” imitation of the Thucydidean model (literal quotation of whole phrases, lexical borrowing) is accompanied by a distancing from that very model, which is adapted, updated, even contradicted, to give a better account of the epidemic event being narrated, whose nature – origins and symptoms – are often very different those of the Athenian *loimos* of the fifth century BCE (the “plague” of Constantinople of 524 CE, described by Procopius of Caesarea in Book II of his *Bellum Persicum*; the “Syrian plague” of the end of the sixth century described by Evagrius in Book IV of his *History of the Church*: Reinsch 2006). The omnipresence of Thucydides in the memory of the educated is a fact which one must bear in mind whenever one finds a literal borrowing (quotation, lexical echo, syntactical figure) from Thucydides in a text: these “imitations” may arise just as much from involuntary recollections, the fruit of a common culture, and a long impregnation, as from the conscious and deliberate work of authors who choose to be inspired by the Thucydidean model.

That said, the question of the direct or indirect, voluntary or involuntary, nature of references to Thucydides arises as early as the fourth century BCE in respect of authors who were more or less contemporary with the historian, and for whom we cannot invoke the “rhetorical tradition” because quite simply it did not yet exist. Two examples, Demosthenes and Isocrates, illustrate this problem. Their temporal and intellectual closeness to Thucydides has long fostered the idea that the two orators not only had a direct and close acquaintance with his work but also wanted to imitate him, at the level of ideas as well as of style. This longstanding view belongs as much to the influence of works in the later rhetorical tradition which quickly set about recognizing “stylistic relationships” between the authors as it does to factual reality (Fromentin 2010). The case of Demosthenes is an example of this practice. From antiquity onwards critics believed they could detect an affiliation between the historian and the orator (Pernot 2006a: 220–4): an anecdote recounted by Lucian of Samosata (*Adversus indoctum et libros multos ementem* 4) claims that Demosthenes copied out eight times by hand from *The Peloponnesian War*, and a note by the rhetor Choricios of Gaza in the sixth century CE, offering Thucydides as the “rhetorical spring from which Demosthenes often drank” (Foerster and Richtsteig 1929: 32.2), translates into a striking image the stylistic influence which Dionysius of Halicarnassus had already worked on analyzing at length centuries earlier. In fact in his short work *Thucydides* Demosthenes is presented as “the only orator who had sought to rival Thucydides on many points” (*Thuc.* 53.1). He claims that it was from the historian that Demosthenes had borrowed many of the essential characteristics of his style (speed, density, vehemence,

mordancy, and harshness) as well as a virtuosity needed to stir the feelings (*Thuc.* 53–5; cf. *Demosthenes* 9–10, *Ad Pomp. Gem.* c. 3.20). Following these witnesses, modern criticism has sought to discover echoes of *The Peloponnesian War* behind certain formulas or arguments of Demosthenes (Canfora 1992: 11–41; Hornblower 1995: 52; Yunis 1996: 240–1, 256–7, 268–77). For instance, when Demosthenes defines the role of the orator in the city and suggests as a principle that one should prefer proposals which would be topical, and when he lucidly analyzes relationships between Greek cities in terms of right or might, what flows from his pen seems to be the very words of Thucydides (Gotteland 2010). However, even if these similarities reveal a real affinity, a true intellectual closeness between the two men, it is perhaps sensible in some cases to see not a direct and deliberate borrowing by one from the other but the two authors reaching a similar position on themes that were widely discussed at the time and shared with many other contemporaries.

This analysis is broadly applicable to Isocrates too, even if with him *imitatio Thucydidis* is more thematic than stylistic. There are numerous echoes of *The Peloponnesian War* in Isocrates' political discourses, where the analysis of regimes, the relationships between Greek and the pan-Hellenic aspirations of Athens all seem to be drawn from the Thucydidean well, both in general reflections (*gnōmai*) and detailed explanations. As with Demosthenes, however, there is nothing that allows one to say with certainty that the orator took the historian for his model deliberately and directly; it is better to acknowledge "Thucydides' real but diffuse influence in shaping Isocrates' culture" (Nouhaud 1982: 117), and not to underestimate the importance of sundry intermediaries who certainly contributed to feed the orator's thinking on matters such as Athenian imperialism and the crisis in democratic values which were widely debated at the time (Luschnat 1970: coll. 1276–80; Nicolai 2004: 83–7).

The double "modeling" (construction of a historiographical model and a literary model) which we have tried to describe has doubtless helped in distinguishing the two aspects of Thucydides' identity (historian and writer), which each had its own life. Furthermore, throughout the imperial period and into the Byzantine era his work was used in various ways, usually independent from one another: allusion to his methods, recycling of historical "matter," resumption of his narrative framework and psychological analyses, stylistic pastiche, and more or less literal quotations, de- or re-contextualized.

It will be sufficient here to give some examples of equally rich literary fortunes by opening this brief survey with the figure of Plutarch. To begin with, the variety and extent of Plutarch's work, composed as it is of two distinct components, the *Lives* and the *Moralia*, make the question of Thucydides' influence rather delicate. However, by schematizing a little, one can assert that Plutarch used the historian in two ways. He used him firstly as one source among others for the history of Athens in the fifth century, especially in the lives of Pericles, Nicias, and Alcibiades. Plutarch knew Thucydides well, but let himself be inspired freely by him, not

hesitating to rework information to adapt it for the specific perspective – more psychological than historical – of his biographical project (Romilly 1988), and perhaps also because he was looking to supply his own analysis of the actions and motives of his different protagonists, an analysis which is at times finer and more nuanced than that of Thucydides (Pelling 2002).

This use of Thucydides as a historian takes another, and rather unexpected, form in the shape of Plutarch's great admiration for his style, clearly shown for example in the preface to the *Life of Nicias*. There Plutarch affirms directly that, unlike Timaeus, he is not seeking to rival Thucydides stylistically, because the historian had reached a form of perfection in this realm that made him "inimitable" (1.1, 4): his style is varied (*poikilōtatos*), excels in the representation of human passions (*pathētikōtatos*), and has an outstanding mimetic quality, *ēnargeia* (*enargestatos*), which breathes such "life" into the things described that the reader believes he has them "before his eyes." The *Life of Fabius Maximus*, highlighting Thucydides' taste for maxims, sentiments of general or universal bearing, rounds off this eulogy of the historian's style (1.8). Ultimately it is somewhat surprising to find in Plutarch's work few "literary" quotations from Thucydides, while there are frequent borrowings from writers like Homer or Euripides. One can nevertheless emphasize that from this point of view Thucydides receives privileged treatment, different from historians like Herodotus, Timaeus, or Philistos, whose literary talents Plutarch clearly did not esteem enough to use them as anything other than sources of information (Titchener 1995).

It is necessary to examine the position of Lucian in this account of Thucydides' reception as he is the only ancient author whose historiographical treatise has survived. This rather brief text called *How to Write History* has suffered a mixed reputation for a long time. It is presented by Lucian as a work arising from particular circumstances, written during the Parthian Wars of the second century CE with the aim of giving methodological advice to those of his contemporaries who were inspired by real events to throw themselves into a literary genre whose rules they did not know (4, 14). Not fully understanding the author's project, some critics condemned the work for failing to develop any originality or true depth of thought on the subject. According to them the treatise presents no more than an array of hackneyed rules and commonplaces imitated from the schools of rhetoric of the era (Finley 1975: 11). From this perspective, references in the work to Thucydides can be nothing more than another measure of the weight of the "rhetorical culture" (15, 18, 19, 26). The interest of the work lies essentially in the panoramic view it gives us of historiographical production in the second century CE, and in the gallery of satirical portraits of historians who would mostly be otherwise unknown to us.

In recent years, however, a new focus on the links between rhetoric and history has excited renewed interest in the treatise, which is no longer considered a simple work arising from circumstances but a polemical text taking a stand on the debate about historiography in the second century, condemning the excesses of a genre become rotten with sycophancy, the praise of courtiers, and the blisters of an all-conquering rhetoric

(Zecchini 1983; Pernot 2006b; Trédé 2010). From this perspective, the position of Thucydides is central because the accounts commented on in this work are here “assessed in terms of the great figure of Thucydides” (Trédé 2010: 193). He is cited directly as someone to be imitated, and is always present in the work as an implicit historiographical model, even if other historians, notably Herodotus and Xenophon, are invoked beside him (2, 19, 39, 42, 54). In this work, which begins with critical observations (7–33) before continuing with a collection of precepts (34–62), Thucydides serves as much to stigmatize the errors of Lucian’s contemporaries (15, 19, 26) as to establish the rules of a worthy historical narrative (42). Seeking the audience’s approval, the taste for irrelevant eulogia, poetic elaborations, excessive Attic purism, long descriptions, overemphatic prologues, and crude factual and geographic errors, all of these contravene the methodological principles laid down by Lucian, in which we can easily recognize the Thucydidean model: the need for the true historian to write for posterity (the *ktēma es aiei*, which is asserted four times in the text, 5, 42, 61, 63), seeking out the truth, founded on a personal investigation and analysis of observed facts, independence, and freedom of mind (39, 41, 63). Even so, Lucian is not inspired by the Thucydidean model alone: his *technē historikē* is also influenced by post-Thucydidean historiography (Hellenistic and imperial), and in particular by Polybius (Georgiadou and Larmour 1994: 1450–78). Besides, if Lucian castigates the excesses of the historiography of his own times he does not completely exclude the *ekphraseis* and the *muthōdēs*, the metaphors imported from the realm of iconography and poetic expression, as long as they are used in moderation and the work does not darken into “historical tragedy.” Lucian’s *technē*, developed in a literary context characterized by the omnipresence of rhetoric, the fruit of the long evolution of the historical genre, is not therefore a simple repetition of the principles of Thucydides; it bears witness nonetheless to the central place occupied by the historian in the second century CE as a historiographical model. This impression is confirmed by Lucian’s *True Histories*, which tackle the historical genre from another angle, parody and pastiche: when the narrator announces that he is going to narrate things which he has “neither seen, nor lived, nor learnt from another” and that “the readers must not believe any of it at all” (*True Histories* A.4) he is doing nothing other than taking the antithesis of the Thucydidean position.

Thucydides’ influence on the Greek historian Cassius Dio, author of an ambitious *History of Rome* in eighty books, has long been established. The judgment of the Byzantine Photios, establishing Thucydides as the almost exclusive model for the Severan historian (*Bibliotheca* 71), especially for the discursive parts (“In the *dēmēgoriai* he imitates and excels Thucydides, except that he looks more to be clear”) for a long time influenced the critical view, which was focused on establishing the evidence for this *imitatio Thucydidis* in the *History of Rome*: lexical and stylistic borrowings, taking of freely adapted quotations, insertion of long passages in a direct manner (often presented in antilogy, a form dear to Thucydides), reuse of explanatory or narrative schemas (Litsch 1893; Kyhnitzsch 1894; Millar 1964; Lintott 1997; Bertrand 2010). Some contexts seem to favor these borrowings: it has been shown that battle narratives in particular are the site of such encounters, the narrative of military operations

being at times modeled on confrontations described by Thucydides. It is true that it would be dangerous to limit Cassius Dio's literary models to the single figure of Thucydides. And yet even when some critics have sought to emphasize the influence of other historians, such as Herodotus (Lachenaud 2003) or Xenophon (Lucarini 2003), or the importance of rhetoric in the work of Cassius Dio, it is no less true that the Thucydidean model has a crucial place in the construction of Dio's narrative. If it allows him to demonstrate his command of literary culture and to enroll himself in a historiographical tradition that was undeniably popular at the time, it also helped to clarify his political analysis and to construct his *History of Rome*.

Thucydides seems therefore to constitute, even in the third century CE, a historiographical model that was inspiring to historians and in whose terms we can study and interpret literary works (particularly historical narratives) which first saw the light of day in this era. It is in fact perhaps not so much the historians themselves who feel the need to construct their narratives within the formal framework established by Thucydides – or to distinguish themselves by not doing so – as their readers and commentators who, from the outset, seek out the traces or absence of the historian in their works, since it is impossible to read or assess a historical narrative without calling up the ghost of Thucydides. Thus Thucydides rapidly became and remained throughout antiquity a tutelary figure who, even outside the single genre of historiography, besides other things deeply informed the thinking and the creative processes of Greek and Latin authors. Equally he very quickly came to influence critics' interpretation of these works. The difficulties which any investigation of the reception of Thucydides runs into are essentially of two sorts. On the one hand it is relatively easy to list the "Thucydidisms" in an author, but often much trickier to explain the reasons for these borrowings and their objectives: why and with what aim does a writer from antiquity choose to quote Thucydides, *usually without naming him*, or to imitate him, *usually without saying so*? On the other hand one must take care not to overvalue a presence which was abundantly commented upon and exploited from the outset (at times to the detriment of other more discreet and less illustrious influences), and doubtless thus contributing to the construction of a distorted image of Thucydides' reception, remote from what were the real importance and practical impact of his work.

Guide to Further Reading

Two recent works include many different chapters addressing the question of Thucydides' reception in antiquity: Rengakos and Tsakmakis (2006) treats this theme in its third part; Fromentin, Gotteland, and Payen (2010) is largely devoted to many aspects of the reception of Thucydides in antiquity. Other important discussions in English are Hornblower (1995) on Greek receptions of Thucydides, Pelling (2002) on Plutarch, and Samotta (2012) on the Roman reception of Thucydides and Herodotus.

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The Renaissance

Scholarship, Criticism, and Education

Marianne Pade

Background: Byzantium and Medieval Italy

Thucydides had been widely read and used by Greek scholars and writers during the Byzantine period, and he is frequently mentioned or quoted directly (Krumbacher 1897; Moravcsik 1958; Pade 2003: 109–11). As late as the fifteenth century, Byzantine historians used him as a model; Michael Critobulus of Imbros, for instance, in his pro-Turkish history of the years 1451–67, wrote in heavily archaizing Greek, copying from Thucydides whole sentences, the use of speeches, and the chronological scheme.

Thucydides' status as undisputed historical authority and model will have been important for his reception in the Latin West when larger numbers of Byzantine scholars began to come to Italy, with the impending threat from the Ottoman Turks and after the fall of Constantinople. However, during the Middle Ages Thucydides had been known in Western Europe only through the writers of ancient Rome, notably through references to him and discussions of his style in Cicero, Seneca the Elder, and Aulus Gellius. (Quintilian, who also mentions Thucydides in his *Institutio oratoria*, was not known in Italy before the fifteenth century.)

Scholarship: Early Interest

The earliest indication we have of any interest in Thucydides' work outside the cultural orbit of Byzantium is a late fourteenth-century anonymous version in Aragonese of thirty-eight speeches from the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The translation was made at the request of Juan Fernández de Heredia, Grand Master

of Rhodes, who also commissioned Aragonese translations of other classical texts, including Plutarch's *Lives* (Pade 2007: 76–80; see further Iglesias-Zoido in this volume). Heredia used these translations in various historical works, and we find Thucydides quoted in his *Crónica troyana*. It seems probable that the Aragonese translator of the Thucydidean speeches worked from an intermediary version in demotic Greek compiled for Heredia by the Greek scholar Dimitri Calodiqui between 1384 and 1396. The translation is preserved in Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, cod. 10801 (López Molina 1960: 56–146; Luttrell 1960: 401–7; Álvarez 1985: 99–109).

We know that Heredia's Aragonese version of Plutarch's *Lives* was brought to Italy at the request of the Florentine chancellor and humanist Coluccio Saluti. There it was translated into Italian and enjoyed a considerable popularity for a number of years (Pade 2007: 80–7). We have no indication that anything similar happened with the version of Thucydides' speeches, but it is conceivable that Heredia's enterprise may have been instrumental in creating an early awareness of the *History* in humanist circles. The fact that it took more than fifty years before a new translation of any part of the work appeared may well be due to the difficulties of Thucydides' Greek. If nothing else, Heredia's translation may be said to herald one specific aspect in Renaissance interest in Thucydides, namely the focus on the speeches.

However that may be, we have evidence that Thucydides himself was being read early in the fifteenth century when interest in Greek studies began to gain momentum in Italy. Around 1400 the Istrian humanist Pier Paolo Vergerio, a student of the celebrated Greek teacher Manuel Chrysoloras, comments on his studies: "I read a lot of Plutarch as well as some Thucydides; I am not sure if he is the more elegant writer of the two, but as a historian he certainly seems to me to have more weight" (Vergerio 1934: no.85). Vergerio's letter is evidence of an attention to Thucydides' Greek style which we shall encounter again.

Leonardo Bruni, another student of Chrysoloras, imitated Thucydides in several of his works. Apparently he considered translating the *History* at an early date (see below). Later he exploited Pericles' funeral oration as a source of *topoi* for his own 1427 speech for Nanni degli Strozzi (Bruni 1966; Cochrane 1981: 19; Fryde 1983: 26; Roberts 1987: 27) and he used Thucydides as a model for his *History of the Florentine People* in 1442 (Cochrane 1981: 3). His admiration for the *History* is evident also from a letter to Francesco Barbaro (1443) regarding Procopius, on whom Bruni based his *De bello Italico adversus Gothos* (The Italian War against the Goths). According to Bruni, Procopius is

... clumsy and an enemy of eloquence, especially in the speeches, although he wants to imitate Thucydides. But he is as far removed from the latter's grandeur as Thersites differs from Achilles in beauty and excellence. (Griggio 1986: 50)

Other fifteenth-century humanists who regarded Thucydides as a model include Poggio Bracciolini, who planned to write the history of Venice and imitate

Xenophon and Thucydides (Cochrane 1981: 29), and Bernardo Giustinian, who did write a history of Venice in a somewhat Thucydidean manner (Cochrane 1981: 80; King 1986: 381–3). Earlier scholarship doubted that Thucydides influenced Niccolò Machiavelli, as there are very few actual references in his works (Sandys 1908: 89). More recently, however, students of Machiavelli have seen an overall indebtedness to Thucydides' views on history in his works and many direct borrowings (Klee 1990: 68–72, 76–8).

Only a very limited number of people in the West were actually able to read Thucydides in the original Greek at this time; intermediary sources for a growing knowledge about the *History* were the many Latin translations of other Greek historians and biographers who had quoted the work. Early examples of this are found in the Latin translations of Plutarch's lives of *Demosthenes* by Leonardo Bruni from 1412 (16.1 and 13.6), of *Cato Maior* by Francesco Barbaro from 1416 (2.5), of *Cimon* by Leonardo Giustinian also from 1416 (4.2 and 4.4), and of *Themistocles*, by Guarino Veronese, from 1417 (25.2) (Pade 2007: 152–4, 191–211). References twice removed are not uncommon either; in his *De re uxoria* of 1416, Francesco Barbaro quotes Thucydides from Plutarch's *De mulierum uirtutibus* without, however, naming his source (Barbaro 1952: 124).

Scholarship: Translations

We thus have clear indications of a continuous interest in Thucydides' work from the end of the fourteenth century onwards. Even so, more than fifty years passed before the work was translated again after the partial late fourteenth-century translation into Aragonese. This was a period characterized by a growing interest in Greek studies in Italy and by a veritable boom in the production of Latin translations of Greek works. However, the fact that it took so long before anyone attempted a translation of the *History* need not surprise us. There was during the first half of the fifteenth century a marked tendency to translate only works of moderate length. And even if historiography, including biography, was among the most popular genres, together with political and moral philosophy, on the whole works dealing with Roman history attracted more attention. Moreover, Thucydides' elliptic style and complicated syntax probably deterred many would-be translators. By comparison, Xenophon's more straightforward prose brought him many admirers – and made him more accessible (Marsh 1992).

In the preface to his c.1406 Latin translation of Aristotle's *Analytica posteriora*, the Florentine Roberto de' Rossi mentions his intention to translate Thucydides (Valentinelli 1871: 32; Manetti 1951: 52–4). About the same time it appears that Niccolò Niccoli had tried to persuade Bruni to translate Thucydides:

I like what you write about the book [i.e. the *History*] ... But that you should ask me to translate it, I beg you, my Niccolò: how come you are so eager for that, yes, that

you have this insatiable hunger and don't in the least take into account my job and my work? Are you not aware how great an undertaking it would be to do it? Even if I were free from my duties at the Curia, rather than translate Greek history I would direct my interest and efforts towards philosophy or another genre, where I can improve myself. (Luiso 1980: 42; Klee 1990, 57–8)

However, Bruni did on this occasion borrow a copy of the *History* from his friend Pietro Miani and later had to apologize for not having returned it (Bruni 1928: 108, 200–1; Luiso 1980: 38).

The first person to take on the arduous task of producing a complete translation of the *History* was the Roman humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407–57), one of the most brilliant intellectuals of the fifteenth century. After many years spent at the court of Alfonso of Aragon at Naples, Valla had only recently returned to Rome when his new employer, Pope Nicholas V, commissioned a Latin translation of Thucydides from him. Deeply worried not only about the political threat, but also about the cultural losses caused by the expansion of the Ottoman Turks, Nicholas planned to have the whole of classical Greek literature translated into Latin. He did not succeed, but the Vatican Library still preserves presentation copies of many of the works he did get translated, among them the celebrated *Vaticanus latinus* 1801 containing Valla's translation of Thucydides.

By the spring of 1448, Valla was about to begin work on the translation, but, as he explains in a letter to his young follower Niccolò Perott, “I don't have the time for it as I am busy finishing the *Annotations against Antonio da Rho*. I need to go through them again critically so as to be ready for translating Thucydides” (Valla 1984: ep. 43). When Valla began on the translation he had been well acquainted with the work for many years; he refers to it in a number of his earlier works, such as *Repastinatio dialectice*, vol. I, 1.18.10; *Gesta Ferdinandi*, proemium 1; *Antidotum in Facium* 2.1.31, 3.2.20, and 3.5.12. Even so, the difficulties of Thucydides' text, particularly the speeches, caused him grave problems, as he told his good friend, the Greek scholar Giovanni Tortelli, in a letter of October 1448:

Now Thucydides keeps me busy, not least in the speeches, and I have none to help me. Our Lord Bessarion is not here, I dare not try Rinuccio [Aretino] who may not be equal to what I am asking or unwilling to engage with the difficulties of the phrases. Since George of Trapezunt is grumpy and probably not that well-disposed towards me, I should not like to consult him. Apart from them there isn't anyone. I decided to go to Lord Bessarion who is at Laurentum, which they now call Netunno. I have translated the first book and part of the second. It would be a great help if you were here. (Valla 1984: ep. 44)

Later, in the preface to the translation, Valla mentions that it was Bessarion who suggested to the pope that he commission the Latin Thucydides from Valla.

The translation was finished only in 1452, according to the autograph postscript of the presentation copy, where Valla claims to have revised the copy and sanctions

it as the *archetypus* of his translation (Alberti 1985; Pade 2003: 121–2). In the dedication Valla compares Nicholas to a Roman emperor – who had given Valla a province which had proved especially arduous, namely Thucydides: “As if we were your prefects, tribunes, generals, you ordered those of us who know both languages to conquer all of Greece for you, as far as it was in our might, that is, to translate Greek works for you into Latin.” He had used the military imagery before, in the preface to the *Elegantiae*, where he compared the Roman Empire to the Latin language in a similar way.

At the end of the letter Valla tries to describe Thucydides’ characteristics as a historian and as a writer:

For among Greek historians Thucydides is like porphyry compared to other marbles or gold compared to metal in general. He possesses such dignity, such force, such credibility without blemish – which is most important in a historian – that readers never doubt the truth of his reports.

Valla goes on to quote the ancient critics on the style of Thucydides compared to other ancient historians:

Together with Herodotus, he is unquestionably the first among Greek historians, as Sallust and Livy are among ours. Cicero has said as much, and Quintilian: “If we turn to history, we shall find a number of distinguished writers; but there are two who must undoubtedly be set far above all their rivals: ... Thucydides is compact in texture, terse and ever eager to press forward ...; he excels in vigour ... speeches ... and the expression of the stronger emotions” [*Inst.* 10.1.73].

Having described Thucydides’ style in the original, Valla told the pope that he would be content if the historian maintained these qualities in his translation:

Now you know, Highest Pontiff, how Thucydides is in Greek. If you will come to the conclusion that translated by me he preserves the same dignity, I shall forget all my labor. (MS Vat. lat. 1801; partial edition in Pade 2003: 121–2)

I believe that Valla’s preface reveals him as an exponent of contemporary humanist theory of translation. As I have argued elsewhere, the skilful transformation not only of words and phrases, but also of style and literary form into the idioms of the target culture formed a very important characteristic of humanist translation (Pade 2008, 2011). The most eloquent exposé of this is found in Leonardo Bruni’s treatise *De interpretatione recta* (On correct translation), and during the fifteenth century we increasingly see that in the attempt to render the style of the Greek originals, the translator would not only use classical Latin idioms and syntax, he would also imitate a Latin text written in the same genre as the Greek original. In Valla’s case we find that he occasionally rendered Thucydides in Sallustian phrases, since Sallust was known as an imitator of Thucydides on many levels. Actually

Valla's version sometimes owes more to the Latin historian than to the Greek (Pade 1984, 1985, 1990, 2000, 2010). Both in the presentation copy in the Vatican and in a number of other early manuscripts containing the translation we find marginal annotations by Valla which reflect on this aspect of his translation method. He once translated Thucydides' φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι (it usually happens) with the Grecism *uulgus amat fieri* (3.42.1), and in the margin he explained "*uulgus amat fieri* is an expression of Thucydides which Sallust used imitating him." Quintilian, a writer whom Valla admired greatly, notices the same thing in his rhetorical handbook, in a passage which Valla had annotated (*Inst.* 9.3.17). Valla also discusses his translation of the expression ὅσον οὐ by *tantum non* (nearly, almost) in several notes – for instance, "*tantum non* means almost ... Many Latin writers have imitated this Greek expression" – thus again showing how he strove to render Thucydides in a style and language sanctioned by classical usage (Pade 1995, 2000). Whether he succeeded has been discussed by generations of scholars and editors of his work, but in spite of sometimes very harsh criticism, the translation remained in use, although revised several times, until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Immediately after its completion, Valla's translation, in its original form, enjoyed a wide manuscript diffusion which continued into the sixteenth century (Pade 1992, 2000, 2003, 2011). However, all the printed editions contain a more or less thorough revision of Valla's text. Bartholomaeus Parthenius, for example, editor of the *editio princeps* (c.1483), stated that the manuscript copy or copies to which he had access were so corrupt that he had employed a Greek manuscript to assist him in determining the correct Latin readings. Even so, he claims to have rendered Valla's text fully and accurately (for evidence to the contrary, Westgate 1936). Though subsequent editors almost invariably claimed to have corrected the text of the translation against Greek manuscripts, their interventions were generally minor; Valla's text was subject to very thorough revision on four occasions, namely in 1561, 1564, 1588, and 1594, when Thomas Naogeorg, Henri Estienne, and Francesco Porto respectively produced their own new versions of it. This shows on the one hand that Valla's work did not live up to the expectations of later generations of readers and scholars. It also shows that in spite of this, his translation was not easily supplanted, perhaps because very few would after all have the courage and linguistic capacity to undertake a new one.

As was pointed out by Westgate in 1936, the true text of Valla's translation has thus never been printed. This will eventually be remedied under the *aegis* of the national edition of Valla's complete works, directed by Mariangela Regoliosi, but until then the lack of a trustworthy edition of his text continues to be deplored by scholars, as it has been ever since Westgate's article appeared. The interest in Valla's text has less to do with an admiration for his style than with the status it achieved after Friederich Poppo's claim, in his 1825 edition of Thucydides, that Valla's text is *codicis instar*, that it has the same value in the textual tradition of the *Histories* as a Greek manuscript, because of the date it was composed. Scholars have subsequently tried to identify Valla's Greek manuscript(s), but to no avail. There

is, however, no doubt that his translation preserves some extremely interesting readings which are not found in the preserved medieval Greek manuscripts (Ferlauto 1979).

After Valla, by far the larger part of the published translations was partial, as we shall see, and most of them thematic, concentrating on specific aspects of Thucydides' work and not necessarily on the historical information it contains. Of non-thematic translations only four Latin ones of the entire *History* appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and two of these are revisions of an existing translation; there are a number of vernacular versions, especially of Valla's translation, and some versions of longer passages. A number of the Latin translations are accompanied by commentaries which I shall discuss below.

One of the scholars whose work does indicate an interest in the *History* as a historical source is the Venetian Marcantonio Coccio Sabellico. In 1498 he made a summary of the work and translated some of the speeches in his universal history, the *Enneades sive Rhapsodia historiarum*, published in Venice, which starts at the Creation and ends in 1504. The translations from Thucydides are found in *Enneades* III, where Sabellico treats the Peloponnesian War, using Thucydides as his sole source. His rendering owes a lot to Valla's translation. Sabellico's work was popular and it was reprinted at least eight times between 1508 and 1560.

The first complete Latin translation after Valla's was that of the German scholar Vitus Winsheim, published in Wittenberg in 1569 accompanied by a Latin commentary. Like most of Winsheim's other printed works, both the translation and the commentary are the products of his university lectures. Winsheim was a close collaborator of the reformer Philip Melanchthon, and I shall return to his work in my discussion of university teaching on Thucydides below. As is evident from the preface to the translation, Winsheim's ambitions were very different from Valla's. He hoped that his endeavors would result in an "easy" Thucydides which would facilitate its study by the young. Earlier translations, like Valla's, were in his opinion not very helpful, and so he had made a translation whose goal was to be simple and straightforward.

Almost thirty years later, the Austrian baron Georg A. Enenkel published his Latin translation of and commentary on the *History* (Tübingen, 1596). In his letter to the reader Enenkel explains that he did not intend his translation merely as an aid to the understanding of the Greek text. Such translations, he says, aim at removing the difficulties of Thucydides' language. What he had wanted to do was to express the thoughts and intentions of the historian without adding to the meaning or rendering too unfaithfully the original wording. The model for Enenkel's Latin style in the translation is Livy, but he often refers to other *auctores* to justify his choice of a particular expression. In his letter to the reader, Enenkel moreover explains that in the commentary 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 historical matters, such as political institutions, but he also analyzes the speeches, beginning with an *argumentum* and explaining the *divisio*, *propositiones* etc., with frequent moral comments.

Scholarship: Editions

Textual scholarship on Thucydides began in Italy half a century after the first Latin translation was published. Although a relatively large number of Greek manuscripts of the *History* seems to have been circulating in Italy during the fifteenth century (Fryde 1983: 24–5), they contain little evidence that Italian readers attempted work on the text itself. This changed when Aldo Manuzio prepared the *editio princeps* of the Greek text which was published in Venice in 1502. A year later he issued a separate edition of the Greek scholia. From Aldo's letter of dedication to the Venetian patrician Daniele Rainier we learn that Aldo as a rule had at least three manuscripts of a text when he prepared an edition of it (Botfield 1861: 265).

In Germany, Melanchthon had affordable editions of Greek texts produced for university students, but neither these nor Vitus Winsheim's 1561 edition of the first four books of the *History* offer evidence of a more critical engagement with the text. This happened in the sixteenth century, not least with Henri Estienne's (Henricus Stephanus) monumental editions. In the first one, Estienne published the text of Thucydides, surrounded by Greek scholia (Geneva, 1564). A distinctive use of punctuation and marks of parenthesis, which he explains in the letter to the reader, enabled Estienne to correct and clarify several passages in the Greek text of the *History*, and to a large extent his readings were followed by later editors. Also included is a Latin version which, he claims, is that of Valla with corrections by himself. It is true that the Latin text closely resembles Valla's translation in the edition published by Josse Bade (Paris, 1513), but Estienne's corrections, which take the form of marginal notes, are often the direct result of his critical work on the Greek text.

Nearly twenty-five years later, in 1588, Estienne published a much acclaimed new edition of Thucydides. He had revised the Greek text once more and further corrected Valla's translation, now printed in parallel columns with the corresponding Greek text, while the Greek scholia, also revised, are placed at the foot of the page. He also annotated both text and Greek scholia of the first two books. The commentary is mainly concerned with philological questions and may be seen as a corollary to his edition of the Greek text; matters of content are rarely discussed. In the preface Estienne explains that he had stopped annotating the text because he was waiting for some materials which would help his work – Greek manuscripts, one presumes. In the 1588 edition Estienne moreover included his own *Proparasceue* to the reading of Greek scholia, an extremely valuable explanation of the special vocabulary and technical terminology used by the scholiasts; Marcellinus' *Vita Thucydidis* translated into Latin by Isaac Casaubon; Job Veratius' résumés of the speeches, and David Chytraeus' chronology and résumés of each of the eight books (see below). Estienne's edition is thus an example of a general tendency to publish a sort of companion together with the texts itself.

Estienne's Greek text, and his and Francesco Porto's revision of Valla's Latin translation, were later the basis of the important edition of John Hudson (Oxford,

1696). J. Wasse and C.A. Duker revised Hudson's edition and Valla's translation once more in 1731, and the text of the 1731 edition was the basis of the following editions: 1759, Glasgow; 1785, Vienna; 1788 and 1789, Zweibrücken; 1790–1804, Leipzig; 1804, Edinburgh; and 1809, 1815, and 1821, Oxford.

Criticism: The Rhetorical Model

In an article published some years ago, on “Thucydides’ Renaissance Readers” (Pade 2006), I argued that the *History* does not conform easily to Renaissance expectations of historiography: Thucydides is not primarily a moral writer, and the *History* may only with difficulty be seen as *magistra vitae* (governess of life: Cic. *De orat.* 2.36.), as a depository of moral examples that could guide the practical behavior of the reader – or be used by him to adorn his own writing, having been carefully copied for such a purpose into a commonplace book. Renaissance readers wanted to learn *from* the classics rather than *about* them; so it was as a model of style that Thucydides was read and imitated long before scholarly explanation of his text began.

In the following discussion I shall modify this viewpoint. There is of course no doubt that Thucydides *was* imitated as a model of style, or that the *History* may only with difficulty be condensed into a series of moral examples. On the other hand, if one looks more closely at the way the speeches were imitated and studied, one finds a sincere preoccupation, not just with rhetorical form, but also with argument. Thucydides’ speeches are seen as models of thought as much as models of form, and here, I believe, we may detect a very deep influence on Western political thought.

In this connection, it is perhaps significant that the first testimony of a revival of interest in Thucydides in Western Europe is the Aragonese translation commissioned in the 1380s by Juan Fernández de Heredia of the speeches. Heredia’s translation admittedly had limited impact, at least as far as we know. On the other hand, the first recorded instance of a conscious use of Thucydides as a model certainly did shape humanist political thought. Leonardo Bruni modeled his funeral oration for the Florentine general and noble, Nanni degli Strozzi (†1427) on Pericles’ oration for the fallen Athenians in Book 2 of the *History*. Like Thucydides, Bruni used the oration to praise the political system and the cultural life of the city for which the soldiers had given their lives, rather than the soldiers themselves. In 1428, when Bruni finished the oration, he had become chancellor of Florence and he used the structure and arguments of Thucydides’ speech to produce a refined piece of propaganda for the republican constitution of the city he worked for (Bruni 1996; Cochrane 1981: 19; Fryde 1983: 26; Roberts 1987: 27).

Bruni’s speech may represent one of the most elegant examples of imitation of Thucydides’ rhetoric in Italy, but it is by no means the only one, and testimonies of special interest in the speeches abound. I have already mentioned Marcantonio

Sabellico's use of the speeches in his *Enneades* (1498). In the 1540s another politician, Giovanni della Casa, translated a number of speeches from the *History*. Della Casa is best known today as the author of *Il Galateo*, a treatise on good manners, but he was also a poet and had a successful career as a papal diplomat. We now possess his translations of most of the speeches of Books 1–3 (seventeen in all) and the description of the plague in Athens from Book 2, but the editor of his Latin works, Piero Vettori, believed that he had translated more. Lorenzo Campana has suggested that Casa translated Thucydides as a rhetorical exercise with a view to preparing himself for his official speeches, such as 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 points to the strong Thucydidean influence in Casa's political letters (Campana 1908: 443).

In fact, in a fragment of a funeral oration (perhaps composed in Venice after the defeat suffered in 1538 against the Turks in the naval battle of Prevesa), Casa alludes to Pericles' oration in Book 2 of the *History*, acknowledging that he (Casa) had been inspired by the ancient Athenian custom. He recalls that Rome, too, had learned from Athens and explains how the Athenians once a year 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. Consequently the fame of those who had died for Athens was still not extinct, thanks to the genius of Thucydides, Plato, and Demosthenes (Casa 1707: 262–4; the oration is also preserved in Vat.lat. 14825).

Venice is again connected with a political reading of Thucydides' speeches in the volume published by the patrician Antonio Zeno in 1569. The small book contains his very full commentary on one of the speeches of Pericles in Book 1 (1.140–4), which he had also translated into Latin, and on the speech of Lepidus from Sallust's *Histories*. In the prefatory letter, Zeno relates how he worked on the translation and commentary while he was studying science at Padua and Bologna, and, after his return to Venice, he decided to publish it for the benefit of his country. He has chosen these two speeches from the large corpus available because they were political speeches and rhetorically excellent, written by writers from different states, who nonetheless treated the material in a similar way; they would be of interest to persons who took part in the public affairs of the city (i.e., the likes of Zeno himself who belonged to the leading classes of society), and they contain "most weighty counsel on war," which the Venetians may well need. In the preface (1569: 9–30), 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; he also tries to synthesize, as "that which is a grave fault when one speaks, is most laudable when one writes" (*ibid.*: 13) – here, as often elsewhere, referring to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3.1.7 [1404a]). In the following chapters Zeno describes Pericles as an orator and statesman, explaining how

Pericles' speech was suited to the circumstances, that is the political situation and his audience, the popular assembly.

North of the Alps Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), the German reformer also called *praeceptor Germaniae* (the teacher of Germany), commissioned an edition of the Greek text of Diodotus' speech from Book 3 in 1520 for students' use, and the speeches from Book 1 were printed separately in Paris in 1531. Melanchthon's interest in Thucydides' rhetoric manifested itself in a number of publications. For his students at Wittenberg he translated thirty-four speeches from the *History*, which were later printed in 1562 by his son-in-law Kaspar Peucer. In the dedicatory preface, addressed to the imperial vice-chancellor Georg Sigismund Seld, Peucer quotes passages from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cicero, and Quintilian on the style of Thucydides, with a particular focus on the orations, and says that wise men believed that Thucydides had wanted to depict not the clash of arms but the war between justice and injustice, between wisdom and false reasoning. Peucer thinks that a man, like Seld, who partakes in public affairs, is more capable of appreciating the content of the speeches. During Melanchthon's lifetime only his Latin version of the civil war in Corcyra was printed; it was included in the editions of his *Dialecticae praeceptiones* (first published at Leipzig in 1540), and once published separately, together with the Greek text (Wittenberg, 1550). Like his translations of the speeches, his version of the chapters on the civil wars shows his preoccupations with Thucydides' arguments.

Also in Wittenberg, Joachim Camerarius, who had edited Thucydides with some Greek scholia in 1540, published a Latin translation of the proem of the *History*, the short oration of the Spartan ephor Sthenelaides, and Pericles' funeral oration. The translations are accompanied by copious commentaries and an introduction to the whole work, where Camerarius, among other things, analyzes the style and language of Thucydides. The last two chapters in the volume contain a commentary on 2.48–54 (the description of the plague), and Camerarius discusses Lucretius' imitation of this passage, making also a hexameter translation of the part (primarily 2.53) which has no equivalent in *De rerum natura* (Wittenberg, 1565). The year after, Willem Canter published his Latin translation of Pericles' funeral oration, with other rhetorical texts (Basel, 1566). Further evidence of Canter's interest in Thucydides may be seen in his *Novarum lectionum libri octo* (1571), where he suggested some emendations of 7.15 and 8.6.

Henri Estienne not only published the most important sixteenth-century editions of the Greek text of the *History*, he was also the editor of a monumental collection of speeches from Thucydides and other Greek and Latin historians (Herodotus, Xenophon, Polybius, Arrian, Sallust, Livy, Curtius etc.) (Geneva, 1570). The text of the speeches was accompanied by *argumenta*, short résumés, by Iob Veratius, Latin translations, mostly taken from previously published translations, such as that of Valla, and an analytical index, also compiled by Veratius. Veratius' *argumenta* are testimony to the ongoing endeavor to facilitate the practical imitation of Thucydides' speeches. They are not just a summary of

the contents; they also present the general situation in which the speeches were delivered – to make it clear when the individual speech could provide the sixteenth-century reader with useful *topoi* – and comment regularly on the rhetorical genre. Moreover, Veratius compiled an index in which all the speeches in Estienne's *Conciones* were divided according to genus: *deliberativum*, *iudiciale*, and *demonstrativum*. This index is often mentioned as one of the crowning glories of the edition. The whole edition was a practical rhetorical manual, intended for the use of politicians, lawyers, and anyone with an interest in the *ars persuadendi*.

As we have seen, both Giovanni della Casa and Joachim Camerarius published separate translations of Thucydides' description of the plague in Athens (2.47–54), but the most extensive publication on these chapters is Fabio Paolino's commentary from 1603 which was accompanied by a Latin translation (Venice, 1603). The Latin text is not far removed from that of Valla's translation and seems closest to the version in the 1594 edition revised by Henri Estienne and Francesco Porto. As we have it now, Paolino's commentary was taken down by a student in the form of lecture notes. The editors had planned an edition of Galen's commentary on these chapters, but as it turned out to be lost, they resolved to publish Paolino's lectures on the same subject. Paolino taught medicine at the Scuola di San Marco, and the commentary is decidedly medical in character.

Education: Thucydides in the University

We have little evidence of how and where Thucydides was taught in the fifteenth century; we are much better informed about his position in the curriculum of German universities in the sixteenth century, especially at Wittenberg where Melanchthon taught. We have evidence of Melanchthon's interest in Thucydides over a very long period of time. Shortly after his arrival at Wittenberg in 1518, he had an office or a small room reserved which was to be furnished with Greek texts so that the students had convenient access to editions of Greek authors. The printer was Melchior Lotther the Younger, who in 1520 printed the volume *Ex Thucydide. Oratio quaedam contra leges*. We have preserved announcements of Melanchthon's lectures on Thucydides from 1530 and until the 1550s, and we know that on October 31, 1553 he gave the introductory lecture to a course on Thucydides.

Johannes Caselius, who had studied at Wittenberg in the years 1551–3, wrote that as a young man he had heard Melanchthon lecture on Thucydides and learned from his own mouth how important the Greek author was to him:

I heard Philip Melanchthon lecture on Thucydides as a young man, and I heard him say so often how we should value him that there could be no doubt how much Melanchthon did so himself. We also have some of his work on the *Histories* ... Let us heed Melanchthon who always cultivated the ancients and especially Thucydides. (Caselius 1576: 28–30)

Melanchthon used Thucydides in various ways. In 1542 he introduced his manual on dialectics, the *Dialecticae praeceptiones* (Lipsiae: Nicolaus Wolrab), with a Latin translation of Thucydides' chapters on the civil war in Corcyra (3.81.4–84.2). The manual was very popular, and together with this text his translation of the chapters from Thucydides was reprinted numerous times. I have mentioned his translation of the speeches, also meant for university students. In the preface to the edition Peucer recalls that the translations were originally made for students: it was Melanchthon's habit when lecturing on a difficult Greek author to provide his students with a rough translation which simply rendered the overall meaning of the text, thus making it easier for beginners to follow. Such translations were not painstakingly accurate, nor did they convey the stylistic beauty of the Greek text (the early *Descriptio seditionis* reads much better). Though Peucer could not exclude the possibility of some factual errors, he did not know of any better translation.

We get a fascinating glimpse of Melanchthon's teaching from a sixteenth-century miscellany now in Hamburg (Cod. philol. 166; Pade 1996). It contains notes from an introductory lecture delivered on October 31, 1553 by Melanchthon for a course on Thucydides, and also a Latin paraphrase and commentary, covering Books 1–3, taken down from lectures over a period of time. We cannot be absolutely sure that the commentary was actually composed by Melanchthon, but we may attribute it with reasonable certainty to his scholarly circle. The notes are written in a hasty and unsystematic fashion; occasionally the writer slips into German. They contain observations on chronology and the reading of history as well as a list of the *notabilia* of Book 1 followed by a summary of the book. Much of the information taken down from the introductory lecture is found also in Melanchthon's edition of the *Chronicon Carionis*, a work serving as the general basis for his lectures on history.

Melanchthon's influence is again seen in the work of his pupil and collaborator, Vitus Winsheim (1501–70). He used Melanchthon's translations of the speeches for his 1569 translation of the *History*, together with his teacher's translations of the encomium of Themistocles from Book 1, and the description of the civil war in Corcyra. Winsheim's edited work on Thucydides is the result of his university lectures. When he published the Greek text of the first four books at Wittenberg in 1561, he had already begun the translation; in the dedication to Paolo Prætorio, the teacher of Sigmund, archbishop of Magdeburg and son of the elector Joachim II of Brandenburg, he describes his plans to produce an accessible Latin version of Thucydides for the benefit of the young. He would convey the contents of the text and not necessarily its intricate style, which many readers found difficult. Winsheim notes that Valla's translation was often no easier than the original.

In the 1569 edition, dedicated to Duke Augustus of Saxony, Winsheim repeats that he undertook the work to facilitate the studies of the young and that his goal was to be simple and straightforward. He explains how he has incorporated, with minor corrections, all the translations of his teacher Philip Melanchthon. In his commentary, too, Winsheim frequently refers to Melanchthon, always with great

reverence. The work 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*. Actually the notes comprising the *Prolegomena* in the Hamburg manuscript mentioned above exhibit many verbal similarities with Winsheim's *Prolegomena*, and we cannot exclude a very close collaboration between Melanchthon and Winsheim, to the point where it is difficult to decide the provenance of specific pieces of information.

David Chytraeus (1531–1600) was another pupil of Melanchthon's. His *Chronologia Herodoti et Thucydidis* contains various *accessus* which are the printed versions of inaugural lectures to his courses on Thucydides at the university of Rostock. The *Chronologia* was first published in 1562 at Rostock and often reprinted, with additional material. Chytraeus here correlates the events described by the two Greek historians with important events in the Bible and the history of, among other countries, Persia and Egypt. As already mentioned, the section of the *Chronologia* concerning the *Historiae* and the *argumenta* from the *accessus* of Book 1 appeared separately in a number of editions containing the Greek text of the *History*.

Yet another scholar, whose publications were based on teaching material, was Francesco Porto (1511–81). He taught at Modena 1536–46 and was at Ferrara 1546–54, but had to leave Italy because of his Calvinist sympathies. His translation of and commentary on the *History* were published at Frankfurt by his son Emilio in 1594, and reprinted twice already in the same year. Apart from the printed edition, we possess Porto's commentary on Book 1 in the form of manuscript notes taken down at lectures held at Ferrara in 1548 by Alessandro Sardi (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Est. lat. 100 [alpha P.9.2]). Francesco's Latin translation is based on Valla's, but is thoroughly revised. Porto's commentary is preceded by an *accessus* and followed by an appendix. His method resembles that of other commentators; difficult passages are frequently explained by lengthy paraphrases and he also comments on points of style and on *realia*.

Conclusion

This survey of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century scholarship on Thucydides, including his place in the university curriculum of the period, has revealed two separate tendencies. One is the cultural and linguistic Latinization, or Romanization, of Thucydides, the attempt to adapt his work and draw it into the Latin cultural orbit. The other is the ongoing process of appropriation, of making his work available to the Western public both in original and in translation, and by means of an ever-growing apparatus of commentaries, *accessus*, *argumenta*, chronological tables, and so forth. Lorenzo Valla's translation is in a way representative of both tendencies. He did make Thucydides available for a Western public, for the first time ever, but his distinctive method of translation produced a text which in many

passages made Thucydides more Roman than Greek. In this respect he resembles scholars like Leonardo Bruni, Antonio Zeno, or Giovanni della Casa who all attempted to use Thucydides' rhetoric and argumentation in a contemporary Latin context. Whereas the process of adaptation and imitation of Thucydides started almost with the reintroduction of Greek studies in Italy around 1400, critical and exegetical work on the *History* only began nearly a century later and was to a large extent undertaken by scholars north of the Alps.

Note

- 1 Naogeorg's version is now Basel, Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität A lambda II 20. It was prepared for publication by the printer Johannes Oporinus, but the edition never appeared. See Pade 2003: 126–7.

Guide to Further Reading

For a general introduction to the historiography of this period, see Cochrane (1981), Fryde (1983), and Grafton (2007). For a more detailed account of the history of translations, scholarship and the educational uses of Thucydides, see Klee (1990), Pade (2003 and 2006).

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The Speeches of Thucydides and the Renaissance Anthologies

J. Carlos Iglesias-Zoido

Introduction

The Renaissance bears witness to a process of selection and reproduction of speeches taken from the work of classical historians, which experienced a remarkable level of development between the late fourteenth and the late sixteenth centuries. Over the course of this period, speeches became more than just a prominent element within the text of the complete works of ancient historians, and instead became the protagonists of ever more elaborate, complex anthologies that circulated independently, taking on a life of their own completely unrelated to their works of reference. This publishing phenomenon resulted in these collections of *dēmēgoriai* or *conciones* becoming genuine bestsellers during the Renaissance (Iglesias-Zoido and Pineda forthcoming). This chapter seeks to use the speeches of Thucydides as a case study for analyzing the development of this genre, identifying a series of evolutionary stages between the late fourteenth century (the *Thucydides* of Heredia) and the late sixteenth century (the *Orationes* of Melchior Junius). Throughout this evolution, several different means of selection and arrangement of the speeches of Thucydides can be observed, depending on the aims and interests of the *excerptores*, who highlight certain speeches by the Attic historian to the detriment of others and thus provide an overview of the preferences of the contemporary readership.

History and Speeches in the Renaissance

After centuries of oblivion, in which history according to Thucydides was known solely through references or echoes in the works of Latin authors such as Sallust (Smalley 1971), his work was rediscovered during the Renaissance (cf. Pade 2003,

2006). Above all because of heightened interest on the part of the Byzantine scholars who had arrived in Italy, from the early fifteenth century texts of the historian's work gradually began to circulate (cf. Lafaye 2005: 359). Initially, they did so in Greek, with the manuscripts that brought the words of the Greek historian to the avid *Quattrocento* humanists constituting invaluable treasure (Bolgar 1973: 492). Some years later, owing to papal intervention, these were joined by a Latin version by Lorenzo Valla, considered a benchmark until the end of the following century (cf. Ferlauto 1979; Alberti 1985; Pade 1985, 2000; 2008; Maurer 1999; Chambers 2008). Successive translations into the foremost languages of Europe, published over the course of the sixteenth century, brought the historian's text to an increasingly wide audience with highly varied interests (Iglesias-Zoido 2011: 158–76). The arrival of the printing press lent definitive support to the process. For the first time in Western history, the work of Thucydides was now made available to a broad spectrum of individuals (Burke 2000: 149–76). Moreover, thanks to the translations, for the first time his works could be appreciated by people who were unable to understand Greek and who did not have an adequate command of Latin. Consequently, it is possible to understand why the Renaissance was one of the most fruitful epochs in Thucydides' reception (Klee 1990). His influence would leave its mark in historical writings and in the fields of rhetoric and thought (cf. Struever 1970; Cochrane 1981; Fryde 1983: 85–115).

Nonetheless, the respect and veneration accorded to Thucydides' work on the part of humanists did not automatically result in the historian becoming the most widely read during this period. Authors such as Burke (1966) have cast doubt on whether his *History* had ever been popular reading. The reason for this comparison is due to the proverbial obscurity of the text (similarly conveyed in certain translations that often did not entirely make it clear what the author wanted to say) and the fact that the *History* did not easily support a moralistic reading (rather, his stark realism was known to shock several readers). It is patently clear that readers of the time showed more of a liking for the work of authors such as Plutarch: such works provided information on key figures in history, and moral teachings could be gleaned from their writings (Pade 2007).

Thus, we are faced with a paradox: the substantial prestige that Thucydides acquired during this epoch does not appear to derive primarily from the reading of the complete text of a dark, unfathomable *History*. In this respect, the epigram Henri Estienne wrote and incorporated at the end of the second preface (*Letter of dedication to Joachim Camerarius*) to his 1588 edition of the *History* is highly relevant. By means of this epigram, in which Thucydides' *History* is addressed to its potential reader (f. 3v), Estienne speaks about what an individual in the late sixteenth century could expect from reading the work. If the reader is looking for "highly embellished untruths of events" (*muthon poludaila pseudea*), if the reader delights at hearing "dulcet voices" (*malakois phtēngoi*), or if the reader is averse to a "concise" (*suntomon*) style "that is seemingly novel" and

bears a “twofold intelligence” (*dischuneton*), then it is best to not approach the work. However, if the reader seeks an “entirely truthful (*panalethēos*) history” with a “concise” style, then this work is an absolute must. The rhetorical terminology used by Estienne illustrates the inherent complexity of Thucydides’ text: impenetrable for those who prefer reading a more entertaining, prose-style account albeit imbued with falsehoods. Instead, Thucydides provides an account of a war which is replete with truths, although to find these truths the reader is taken on the narrow, unapproachable path formed by the complex, concise style adopted. Only a few should dare venture along this path; most will steer clear. Accordingly, Estienne provides us with one of the keys to understanding how Thucydides had built up such prestige at this time: due to his elitism. Only an elite individual is able to adopt the glamorous flair of reading the work in Greek after negotiating the virtually unsurpassable hurdle of its style. The various translations sought to make this task easier and open the path up to a wider spectrum of individuals so they could reap the benefits of reading this work (Iglesias-Zoido 2011: 168–76).

But what in actual fact were these benefits? This is where another of the keys to Thucydides’ legacy during the Renaissance lies. The *History* unquestionably laid down a framework of the events which took place during the Peloponnesian War, and reflected the actions of noteworthy figures such as Pericles and Nicias. However, there were other means of gaining access to this information; for instance, Plutarch’s *Lives* were much more accessible, and provided all the information any learned individual could require. This is not to mention the many encyclopedias and reference works that were highly popular at the time (Grafton 1997: 317). What, then, did Thucydides offer? What was it that distinguished his work from those of other renowned ancient historians? Beyond doubt, Thucydides’ work stood out on account of the inclusion of the speeches made by the great statesmen of the Golden Age in Athens, enabling readers to gain access to the words spoken by Pericles, Nicias, and Alcibiades. This feature, which was highly esteemed in antiquity and the Byzantine period, was also warmly welcomed during the Renaissance. Indeed, during a cultural period dominated by rhetoric and the imitation of classical models, it can be said that these speeches formed the driving force that prompted Thucydides’ work to be read. That is to say, the speeches were the main benefit that the *History* afforded to Renaissance readers. They are highlighted in all the translated texts, and indices were added to make them easier to find. It would not take long for the next step to be taken: shortly thereafter, humanists saw the benefits of extracting the speeches from the *History* and publishing them independently. Estienne, Thucydides’ editor, had already done this in 1570 by publishing an anthology of historiographical *conciones*. The success of this process of excerption and its development over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are decisive for understanding a fundamental aspect of how the work was received.

The Fourteenth Century: Heredia's *Thucydides*

The starting point for this tradition can be found at a very early juncture, with the first partial translation of Thucydides' work into a vernacular language in the West, produced in the late fourteenth century. This was a translation of the speeches from the *History*, prepared at the behest of the Great Master Juan Fernández de Heredia (1310–96). Heredia was an influential figure in the court of King Pedro IV of Aragon. A man of his time, he incorporated a culture of both arms and arts during a lifetime marked by two historical events which shaped his work as a humanist (Luttrell 1960, 2010). One was the Aragonese intervention in the eastern Mediterranean, which formed the backdrop for his military exploits and where he was held captive by the Turks between 1379 and 1382. His involvement in this conflict led him to be appointed the Grand Master of Rhodes, where he gained a first-hand acquaintance with Byzantine culture and the work of Greek historians. The other major event in his life was the so-called Western Schism within the Catholic Church at the end of the century, in which he sided with the antipope Clement VII and went to join him at Avignon in 1383, remaining there until his death in 1396. It was during this time that Heredia embarked on his major cultural contribution, bringing together a *scriptorium*, a group of scholars tasked with compiling historical texts and translating a selection of Greek and Latin historians into Aragonese. Heredia was responsible for choosing the works to be translated and for selecting the editions and the lines that were used in these compilations. The works chosen included Plutarch's *Lives* and the speeches from Thucydides' *History*.

Thucydides by Heredia (BNM Ms. 10.801), as it is called today, is a selection of speeches comprising thirty-seven separate sections which, by and large, correspond to individual speeches (although in section 29, two consecutive speeches have been joined: 6.36–40 and 6.41); in most cases the contextual material that links the speeches to the narrative of the *History* is also preserved. The largest part of the corpus is formed by the speeches of political deliberation that are found throughout Thucydides' account, along with speeches before battles, Pericles' famous funeral oration (section 8) and the Judgment of the Plataeans (15 and 16). In addition to this, there are two speeches (Thuc. 2.13 and 6.72) which were presented in indirect speech in the original and transformed into direct speech in Heredia's compilation.

There is general consensus among critics with regard to the process of translation (Álvarez Rodríguez 2007: xxvii–xxxi). This involved several stages: firstly, the original text was rendered from classical Greek into modern Greek by one Demetrio Calodiqui, a Greek lawyer from Salonica who worked for Heredia; secondly, this "updated" text was translated into Aragonese by an individual in Heredia's circle between 1384 and 1396. By all accounts, this must have been bishop Nicholas of Adrianopolis (Aetolia). This Dominican, who had been interpreter to the Byzantine emperor John V Palaiologos during his voyage to Rome in 1369, had considerable

influence in the court of the Avignon pope, where he resided between 1380 and 1384. According to Álvarez Rodríguez (1988), there may even have been an intermediate version in Italian between the demotic Greek and Aragonese versions, which left traces in the translations Nicholas produced.

This compilation raises a key question for understanding the legacy of Thucydides at this historic juncture: why were only the speeches translated rather than the entire history? To date, critics have suggested two likely reasons. Firstly, a straightforward antiquarian purpose: Heredia would have ordered the translation of the speeches in order to gain a record of the words of some of the most important heroes described by Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives* (Weiss 1953). Secondly, it has been proposed that the purpose may have been rhetorical, whereby this anthology was intended to serve as a practical model for oratory (Cacho Blecua 1997). On the basis of this latter suggestion, scholars have speculated on the possible use of anthologies of speeches such as this in the courts of Aragon, where, as Johnston (1992) has shown, there was a spectacular flowering of rhetoric during the fourteenth century. The fact that the second part of the BNM 10.801 manuscript contains another selection of 147 speeches taken from Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Troiana* (ff. 71–194), apparently prepared in the same *scriptorium*, supports the idea that the purpose of such collections may have been rhetorical (Sanz Julián 2012).

The idea of a rhetorical purpose raises a second, more complex question: was this translation carried out using the complete work of Thucydides, or on the basis of a pre-existing selection of the speeches? The very nature of the selection and the characteristics of the codex in which it was preserved make it plausible that the translation was based on an existing anthology of Byzantine origin (Iglesias-Zoido 2005). Firstly, the collection does not bring together all the speeches of Thucydides, which might have been more likely if the translator had been drawing on a copy of the complete work. The manuscript begins with the speech given by the Athenian ambassadors to Sparta (1.73–8); in other words, the first three speeches in Thucydides' work are missing from this selection, the speeches of the Corcyraean and the Corinthian ambassadors (1.32–6, 37–43) before the Athens assembly, and the speech given by the Corinthian ambassadors in Sparta (1.68–71). There is no obvious logical reason to leave out these initial speeches, as they are emblematic of the discourse of ambassadors. In addition, the absence of 1.68–71 is particularly striking because the first speech in the Heredia selection, that of the Athenian ambassadors in Sparta, constitutes a response to its arguments. It does not make sense for this important debate to have been included only in part, given its prominent position at the start of Thucydides' work, when the remaining debates from the *History* have been preserved in their entirety. The easiest way of explaining this omission is to resort to the notion that, owing to random factors in textual transmission, the translator followed a selection process in which the first few pages of the *History* were lost. However, other speeches are also missing from the anthology, such as that given by several Peloponnesian generals (2.87); in Thucydides' *History* this is directly linked to the speech given by Phormio (2.89)

to the Athenian troops, which does appear in section 10 of the Heredia manuscript. In fact, the narrative link of this section indicates (f. 2r) that this speech was the second of a pair, preceded by a speech given by the leaders of the Athenians' adversaries. The omission of the first speech seems inexplicable if a copy of the complete works was being used.

Secondly, the speeches lack the customary signatures which clearly identify the speaker in each case while graphically delimiting the text in a direct style. Compared with the tradition in historiographical works from the Middle Ages, wherein speeches have a header identifying the *oratio*, the text of many of the speeches in the Heredia compilation begins directly without any introductory indications. There is a justification for this absence insofar as the preservation of the passages linking these speeches together in the narration might carry out this identifying function. Nonetheless, there are numerous cases where these links are not actually included. For instance, the first speech in the manuscript (f. 1r) begins promptly in direct style. There is no *incipit* for the work as a whole, nor is there a specific signature providing contextual information for the speech. This absence is so striking that the copyist left several blank lines in order subsequently to add a signature before each of the speeches in this selection, either of his own accord or following orders from a superior. The same applies to speeches such as number 4 (Thuc. 1.120–4), 6 (2.11), 12 (3.30), 30 (6.68), and the final speech, 37 (7.77). In all these cases no information is provided about the speaker, and it is only the initial vocative utterances that make it possible to identify the audience to whom the speech is addressed. The fact that these signatures were not calligraphed, which for a deluxe copy such as this is clearly not due to a blunder, shows that the arrangement of the text was highly uncommon compared to the regular process applied by Heredia in his *scriptorium*. Considering that the work of Thucydides was at this stage unknown in the West and that there was no Latin translation, this arrangement, providing such scant information about the speeches, makes them at the very least of little subsequent use as a historical document. If the translator had been given access to the complete work, no doubt he would have taken greater care in addressing this aspect.

Thirdly, these aspects are even more remarkable if we compare the translation of the speeches from Thucydides with the second part of the manuscript, also from the Avignon *scriptorium* and copied around 1393, which preserves the Aragonese translations of an anthology of speeches from the *Historia Troiana* written by the Italian jurist Guido delle Colonne (1210–80). This second text is a selection of 147 speeches, organized within the framework of a kind of summary of the original Latin work. The final page of the manuscript expressly mentions the aims of this selection:

... because our aim here is not to fully address said history; hence, we have taken out the foundations and aspects of essence therein so that the sense of the orations, propositions and military speeches cannot only be more understandable to those

who read them, but rather so that any individual may have an overview of the history so that it will go down better in memory. (f. 194r)

In this case, it is clear that the compendium was prepared conscientiously from a familiar work from which the “foundations and aspects of essence” have been “taken out” and, above all, attention has been paid to the “sense of the orations, propositions and speeches in it.” Indeed, when compared to the text of Thucydides, the noteworthy aspect of this translation is that the speeches can be read taking into account the narrative framework linking them together.

In view of this information, are we merely to accept that the first translator of *Thucydides* prepared a selection of speeches based on a complete manuscript of the *History* or, contrariwise, is the translation into Aragonese a text prepared from a pre-existing anthology, implying that it would have been circulating during the Byzantine era independently from the complete works? The former option also assumes that a manuscript of Thucydides must have been present in Avignon in the late fourteenth century. The origins of this project may well lie in Heredia’s stay in Rhodes between 1379 and 1382, at which point he would have already been conceiving some of the work that would be carried out in the Avignon *scriptorium*, but there is no evidence that he brought a manuscript of Thucydides back with him, and no other proof that such a manuscript existed in the West at this time. The second option seems far more likely.

In addition to the characteristics mentioned above, there is another rhetorical aspect that seems important: the two speeches (2.13 and 6.72) that were originally written in indirect speech and have been reworked in direct style. Why was this change made? Is it likely that the translators would have made this change, especially given the prevalent conceptions of translation during the late fourteenth century? Scholars of Heredia’s translations consider that these versions were typical of their era; in other words, a literal, word-for-word rendition of the original, rather than a conveyance of the meaning or *ad sensum*. If medieval translation customs persisted throughout the fifteenth century, meaning that humanist translations were imbued with obscure interpretations on account of their adaptation to this model of *interpretatio*, it would have been surprising for the translator to have altered these two speeches (Botley 2004: 110–14). It is more logical to assume that this procedure, which was relatively common in the Byzantine context, took place earlier than the work in the *scriptorium*. In fact, in the *Thucydides* text of Heredia we find several resemblances to the procedures followed by Byzantine *excerptores*: there are often no headers identifying the speeches, and the prior and subsequent links to the speeches tend to be modified to provide a context that is comprehensible for a new readership.

Based on this information it can be concluded that Heredia’s *Thucydides*, the most ancient anthology of speeches from Thucydides found in the West, is not the result of a selection process based on an in-depth reading of the original work of the Athenian historian by Heredia or his people; rather, it is the translation of

an existing anthology of speeches with a Byzantine origin. It constitutes a genuine bridge between the ancient and the modern tradition. The fact that Heredia considered it more useful to have this selection of speeches translated rather than the complete *History* constitutes a major precedent for what would become a trend followed throughout Europe in the following century: anthologies of speeches of major classical historians and their use as rhetorical exercises.

Anthologies of Thucydidean Speeches in the Fifteenth Century

Indeed, from the early fifteenth century onwards, once the manuscripts of classical Greek authors reached Italy from Byzantium, there were many anthologies of speeches as the natural result of the reading process of manuscripts of the complete works of historians such as Thucydides (Botley 2004: 5–7). In these *Quattrocento* anthologies we can see a clear intent to extract systematically all direct speeches from the text. Unlike in the case of Heredia's compilation, where only deliberative, legal, and epideictic speeches given by leading figures are included, these anthologies opted to collect every example of direct speech – orations, letters, or mere dialogue – through a desire to compile all the words uttered by men of the classical period. We can consider two examples of this initial phase: an anthology of Thucydides preserved with the codex *Neapolitanus* III-B-8, copied during the first third of the fifteenth century, and a compilation prepared by the humanist Lapo da Castiglionchio around the year 1430, which includes speeches from other Greek authors.

The codex *Neapolitanus* III-B-8 provides us with a good example of the form and purpose of these early Renaissance anthologies. It is an important manuscript on account of its original source and of the codex of Thucydides which served as its reference, because both belonged to the rich collection of Greek manuscripts from the Palazzo Farnese, which housed several copies of Byzantine origin dating from between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries (Formentin 2008). This collection comprises a manuscript – III-B-10 – of Byzantine origin (late fourteenth century), containing a remarkable version of the complete text of the work of Thucydides (Cyrillo 1832, II: 510–11). Moreover, the arrangement of both manuscripts on the same shelf (III B) in the original collection reveals that these are supplementary texts in the same library: one provided the complete work of the historian, the other a selection for rhetorical purposes including forty speeches, letters, and dialogues taken directly from the work of Thucydides, ranging from the speech of the Corcyraeans from Book 1 to the military speech by Nicias from Book 7. Accordingly, at this juncture there was clearly a desire to prepare a text compiling a large body of speeches in direct style, perfectly identified with a *titulus*, the rhetorical content of which is glossed with countless annotations. It is important to highlight that his eagerness to compile examples of direct speech led the author to include dialogues as well, such as the Melian Dialogue from Book 5, a problematic

text from an ideological perspective which would disappear from all subsequent anthologies on account of its exposure of brazen political realism.

In Lapo de Castiglionchio's anthology, the rhetorical orientation is even more clearly illustrated, as are the reading procedures applied by the humanists. Lapo studied Greek under F. Fidelfo, and had connections with Bruni, Alberti, and other early humanists. Like many others, his short life was dedicated to searching for patrons among the highest ecclesiastical echelons (Celenza 1999). As a result of this system of patronage, he studied the classics intensely and translated several works by Plutarch into Latin while demonstrating heightened interest in Greek historiography (Celenza 1997). Manuscripts in his handwriting include *Urbinas Graecus* 131, which belonged to the library of Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (Stornajolo 1895: 235–6). This is a selection of the deliberative *conciones* of Thucydides which also includes two speeches by Lysias, one judicial (*Defence of Eratosthenes*) and the other epideictic (*Epitaph*), along with six short speeches in direct style taken from Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus* (23.2–4, 33.3–4, 33.5–6, 35.1–2, 36.1–3, 36.4.); the humanist translated all these into Latin, and the work is preserved with the codex *Vat. Lat.* 918. This compilation does not seek to cover the whole of Thucydides' work; instead it is limited to the speeches found in the first four books of the *History*, thirty in total. The codex provides significant information on the process of production, which was undoubtedly carried out using a complete text of Thucydides' work (one of the first manuscripts of which had been brought to Italy by Lapo's Greek teacher, Francesco Fidelfo, in 1427). This selection seeks to be exhaustive in compiling all examples of direct speech in these four books, including letters and dialogues, on the basis of a systematic reading of the text. This is revealed by the existence of certain errors, for instance when Lapo overlooks the military speech by Archidamus at the start of Book 2 (2.11) and has to incorporate it into his compilation further on, with a series of clarifying notes in the margin to specify the precise point where this speech should have figured in his selection. Some of Lapo's notes echo annotations in the margin of the Byzantine manuscript he was following. This shows that Lapo's primary concern was to prepare an anthology that was true to the original order of the source work. Further, it is clear that he intended to incorporate these *conciones* within a miscellaneous codex with a patently rhetorical focus, offering different kinds of speeches belonging to all three oratory genres (hence the inclusion of the speeches of Lysias), as a source for humanist lessons in rhetoric.

In contrast to Heredia's compilation, anthologies such as these were clearly produced through careful reading of Thucydides' original text. They were conceived as ancillary instruments to codices which brought together the complete works of Greek historians in their original language and the ensuing translations into Latin. As was the case with Valla's translation of Thucydides in 1452, these translations provided a reading guide to the speeches, letters, and dialogues through their marginal annotations (Pade 1985: 281–91). These notes in themselves bear witness to the great interest aroused by the *conciones* of Thucydides during the fifteenth century.

Thucydides and the *Conciones* of the Early Sixteenth Century

From the early sixteenth century onwards, through the impact of the printing press, new kinds of anthologies of historiographical speeches with a rhetorical or teaching purpose were being published in France, Italy, and Germany, either in Greek or translated into Latin; increasingly they took on a life of their own, quite independent from the works from which they were compiled.

One example of a Greek compilation is the *Thukydidou Demegoriai* published in Paris in 1531. This is a selection from the Greek text of the *History* comprising the *conciones* of Book 1, and is one of the first selections to be published independently from the rest of the work. Its proximity to the publication date of Claude de Seyssel's French translation of Thucydides in 1527 (cf. Boone 2000) provides a clue to the reasons behind its existence: gaining access to the Greek text of the revered speeches of Thucydides without the need to refer to the complete work. Likewise, the physical characteristics of the publication (as a freestanding edition) and its short length (a mere thirty-four pages) also shows that the anthology was intended for teaching (providing students with the *conciones* from the beginning of Thucydides' work) and that it might end up forming part of a larger set. Despite this clear tendency toward specialization, it is notable that the very existence of this new type of anthology shows that booksellers and printers were aware of potential audiences for publications on such topics which did not call for huge levels of investment and could be sold at an affordable price. Indeed, the work includes no introduction whatsoever and the various speeches only have a brief header in Greek.

The orientation of these kinds of anthologies toward didactic and rhetorical uses is emphasized by those produced during the first half of the sixteenth century by such prominent authors as Melanchthon (1497–1560) in Germany and Giovanni Della Casa (1503–56) in Italy. Both compilations involve translations into Latin of the speeches of Thucydides, revealing differing interests and practical applications. The translation by Melanchthon (Pade 2003: 131–5), which was only published after his death, is part of a selection of rhetorical texts he prepared while a lecturer at the University of Wittenberg, where he is known to have taught courses on Thucydides. It provides a selection of most of the speeches from the *History* which, as with Lapo's compilation, is accompanied by further examples of classical oratory (in this case Demosthenes). The selection by the Italian cleric Giovanni Della Casa was based on translations he produced during the 1540s, which did not see the light of day until 1564 as part of his *Latina Monimenta* (Florence 1564). Here, the reader is offered the Latin text for seventeen speeches extracted from the first three books of the *History*, up to the debate between Cleon and Diodotus. It has been suggested that the author may have translated these speeches as a rhetorical exercise with the intention of using them as models for compiling his own official speeches (Pade 2003: 136–44).

It is evident that these authors, who moved in university and scholarly circles, clearly saw the usefulness of these kinds of selections as models for rhetorical

composition; this reveals the way that historiographical speeches were increasingly understood as elements that could circulate independently from the source work. This was a process in which a Greek author, Thucydides, and a Latin author, Livy, acted as the facilitators, and their success laid the foundations for a new type of compilation in response to a perceived demand from their contemporary readership.

Thucydides in the New Anthologies of the Late Sixteenth Century

This laid the foundations for the triumph of a third type of anthology of historiographical speeches during the second half of the sixteenth century, which went one step further and had rather more ambitious aims. These were the encyclopedic anthologies whose authors sought to offer a comprehensive compilation of the speeches of specific historians and all the foremost speeches of ancient historiography, translated into Latin or vernacular languages such as Italian and French, in a single work. Logically, this process meant that ancient examples were supplemented with the most significant speeches in subsequent historians.

In this new context, Thucydides continued to hold a privileged position. This is exemplified by the role he played in the first of these anthologies, *Orationi Militari*, by the Dominican Remigio Nannini (1518–81), which began with the speeches of Thucydides and then a selection of speeches taken from historiographical works ranging from antiquity to the Renaissance. Such was the success of this work from the Florentine polymath (poet, theologian, philosopher, and translator of classics such as Nepos and Ammianus Marcellinus) that it was released in two editions within a few years of one another (1557 and 1560) and a further edition later in the century (Cherchi 1998), not least as a result of its inclusion in the teaching programs of the Jesuits. Cooperation with the Venetian printer Gabriele Giolito de'Ferrari, who was greatly interested in preparing a *collana* dedicated to the classical historians (Nuovo and Coppens 2005), was vitally important. Nannini's work was part of an ambitious project that sought to make the key authors of classical historiography and the foremost champions of modern history available to the Italian public. The edition of 1557, which comprised 740 pages largely devoted to ancient historians, was expanded in 1560 to more than 1000 pages through the addition of a selection of *conciones* from modern historians such as Aemilius Paulus and Ascanio Centorio. This major enterprise was completed in the following year with the publication of *Orationi in materia civile e criminale* (Venice 1561), focused on useful speeches for lawyers.

Because of the size and nature of works such as *Orationi militari*, Nannini and his publisher needed to include instruments to improve readability. Accordingly, at the start of the work there are four large tables to help readers locate specific speeches and passages. There is a table listing seventeen different topics, a table of judgments and *epiphonema* summarizing the text of important sections of speeches

(these are also printed in the margins of the text at the relevant points), a table of speeches organized into three categories (political, embassy, and military) which clearly relate to a system of classification already championed by Polybius (12.25) for historiography, and, finally, a table of historians with thirty-eight entries. The work is divided into three parts: Greek historians up to Plutarch; Latin historians from Livy to Ammianus; and a series of authors from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries beginning with Leonardo Bruni and finishing with Ascanio Centorio. Thucydides' speeches (which are, significantly, placed before those of Herodotus) come at the very beginning of this encyclopedic survey from ancient Greece to the Renaissance.

It is also striking that the speeches of these historians are arranged in a new textual fashion that transforms them into units that could be studied independently. The speeches of Thucydides, which have the honor of heading up the selection, allow us to illustrate this new manner of presentation and to see how it developed between 1557 and 1560. In the 1557 edition, each speech is clearly identified with a title, providing a series of important details for its potential rhetorical and imitative reutilization: speaker (ambassadors), fatherland (Corcyra), topic (alliance). This is followed by the *Argomento* of the speech, providing detailed information: the background to the case (how the Corcyraeans reached this situation), the aims of the speech (seeing they were at a disadvantage, their aim was to form an alliance with the Athenians), and the specific context within the historiographical narrative (having obtained a hearing in the Assembly, one of them explains the desire of those who have sent them as follows). The speech is then reproduced, clearly set apart; in this case, taken with virtually no amendments from the Italian translation prepared by F. Strozzi in 1545. In the 1560 edition, Nannini also considered it necessary to include a section on the *Efetto* of the speech, in which interesting information is provided on its outcome and other moralizing, political, or rhetorical reflections are added for the benefit of readers.

Judging from the presentation of Thucydides' speeches in Nannini's work, 1560 constituted a key moment in the development of this genre. The greater attention paid to the context of the speeches, their original setting, the rhetorical organization of the topic, and, finally, the effects it had on its audience all reflected a process in which the speeches were patently being considered independently from their original context. Unquestionably, the choice of language played a major role in this process: the reader was no longer faced with the Greek text or a Latin version, but instead a translation into Italian intended to reach a much broader audience. In Nannini's selection we are, above all, witnessing the definitive triumph of the Attic historian: Thucydides' speeches occupy the privileged spot at the head of the selection, ignoring the chronological order and the preference that critics since antiquity had had for Herodotus; and it could not have been otherwise. In an anthology like this with a clear rhetorical purpose, the foremost position had to be reserved for the speeches of Thucydides. We cannot explain the change of order in any way other than as a strategic calculation made by the editors, experienced individuals

focused on profit, who considered that the public would be more interested in the speeches of Thucydides than those of Herodotus.

The huge success of this volume had an influence on other scholarly anthologies that were being published in Latin on the speeches of Sallust and Livy. It is understandable, then, that Henri Estienne (1528–98), one of the foremost Renaissance editors of the text of Thucydides, published *Conciones sive Orationes ex Graecis Latinisque historicis excerptae* in 1570. This was a selection of Greek and Latin historiographical speeches with accurate translations into Latin, correcting earlier versions that had been attacked by critics, such as Valla's translation of Thucydides. Estienne's arrangement directly reflects that employed by Nannini: the historians are divided into two major blocks (Greek and Latin), the speeches are arranged chronologically and include *argumenta* by J. Veratius. The volume was carefully organized with detailed indices, making it possible to classify military speeches according to rhetorical genre and geographical context. In short, it was an anthology that combined scholarliness and practical utility, as it could be used as a model of eloquence by nobles and military men. In fact Estienne had no hesitation in presenting this work as the most appropriate oratory manual for generals, noblemen, and princes:

"Do you believe that eloquence can be learnt on the basis of these speeches?", someone might say. I personally consider that not only can eloquence be learnt on the basis of them, but also that it should be; especially eloquence that is not intended to be employed in the courts, but instead in encampments and pretoriums, and in royal palaces; let it not remain in the shade, let it flourish among the army, amidst the dust, the cries, the fields and in battle; a martial eloquence rather than a forensic one which, all in all, is more suited to the knight in shining armor, if you will allow the expression, than the average peasant. (sig. IVr)

However, the ascent of the vernacular languages was already unstoppable. In 1573 François de Belleforest (1530–83), a translator who had adapted into French the works of popular Italian authors such as M. Bandello (Simonin 1992), published a French version of another publishing success story: *Orationi militari* by Remigio Nannini. This adaptation was entitled *Harangues militaires* (Hester 2003), and with an eye to a Gallic audience it included military speeches given by contemporary French commanders. One section, for example, was dedicated to the Duke of Guise, a popular figure in France in the mid-sixteenth century whose speeches had been extensively published in previous years (Iglesias-Zoido 2003). Belleforest reproduced the entire structure (tables, summaries of arguments and of effects) of Nannini's volume. Its success was of such magnitude that the work was reprinted in 1588 and 1595 (with the addition of a collection of political counsels), showing the extent to which historiographical speeches were becoming an independent entity with their own models and audiences.

All that was now lacking was an anthology that combined the best of each of these models and went one step further in organizing the speeches differently. This was achieved by Melchior Junius (1545–1604), lecturer in eloquence at the

University of Strasbourg, in his *Orationes*, published in 1586. This volume is a bilingual compilation in which Greek authors are translated into Latin; the speeches no longer appear in chronological order according to their author, but are arranged in a manner that put into practice the categories reflected in the tables and indices of previous collections. The introduction clearly emphasizes notions of genre: it claims to be continuing the tradition of Perion, Lorch, and Stephanus, and above all states its intention to offer a fresh form of organization. Accordingly, there is no attempt at exhaustiveness, and the speeches are not arranged in chronological order, nor is there any distinction between Greek and Roman authors. Rather, the volume is organized around the three genres of rhetoric (deliberative, legal, and epideictic), and within each of these categories speeches are grouped on the basis of the specific part of a speech to which they relate (*deliberatio*, *petitio*, *adhortatio*, *dehortatio*, etc.). This desire to organize the selection of speeches in a manner that would be most useful from a rhetorical point of view is particularly striking. It constitutes a clear breakthrough, illustrating contemporary preferences. When it comes to the speeches of Thucydides, which stand out owing to their *prudential*, *gravitatem*, *vehementiam* (f. A4r.), it is clear that those that are more valuable from a rhetorical standpoint have been selected. There are only eleven speeches, which come from the first part of the work: in particular, from the first book (six speeches: the two from the first debate in Athens and the four from the debate in Sparta), the second (Pericles' *epitaphios*), and the third (the debate between Cleon and Diodotus). The selection clearly illustrates which of Thucydides' speeches were considered most profitable from a teaching viewpoint.

Conclusions

The success of these selective anthologies, and the expansion of this publishing genre during the seventeenth century, reveal the level of interest during the Renaissance in the speeches of ancient historians and, specifically, in the *conciones* in the work of Thucydides. At the start of this process one can imagine a range of reasons for compiling the speeches of Thucydides, including an antiquarian purpose (gathering the words of the great orators of the Athenian past in parallel to the events of Plutarch's *Lives*) and a rhetorical purpose (the *conciones* as a model for contemporary oratory). By the end of the sixteenth century, it is clear that these volumes had an explicit educational and rhetorical purpose. The *conciones* were considered useful rhetorical models in a humanistic process of *imitatio*; therefore the eagerness for exhaustivity that had characterized early fifteenth-century selections was abandoned and authors such as Junius opted for a selection of exemplary speeches. This in itself is particularly useful in showing which of Thucydides' speeches were most valued in this period and, in short, what the preferences of the readership were throughout the Renaissance. These anthologies provide valuable

testimony to the paths taken in the reception of Thucydides during the Renaissance, and they irrefutably demonstrate that the speeches constituted the most highly valued aspect of his *History* in this period.

Guide to Further Reading

A general analysis of the Thucydidean speeches and the reception of the *History* is the central theme of Iglesias-Zoido (2011). The theme of selections of historiographical speeches during the Renaissance is analyzed in depth in the forthcoming collection edited by Iglesias-Zoido and Pineda. More generally on Thucydides' reception in the Renaissance, see Klee (1990), Pade (2003, 2006) and Murari Pires (2007). On Heredia, see Luttrell (1960, 2010), and Iglesias-Zoido (2005, 2008).

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Appendix: Sources

Fourteenth Century

Juan Fernández de Heredia, *Tucidides* (BNM 10801) (ff. 1r–69v)

Fifteenth Century

Thucydidis Conciones (Neapolitanus III-B-8). (ff. 1r–35v).

Thucydidis Conciones ex historia Atheniensium et Peloponesiorum (L. da Castiglionchio) *Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus* 131 (c.1430; ff. 1r–73r).

First Half of the Sixteenth Century

Thukydidou Demegoriai. Paris: 1531.

Orationes ex historia Thucydidis, et insigniores aliquot Demosthenis et aliorum oratorum graecorum conversae in latinum sermonem a Philippo Melanthon, editae a Casparo Peucero. Wittenberg: 1562.

Ioannis Casae Latina Monumenta. Florence: 1564 ("Plures orationes Thucydidis conversae ab eodem," pp. 146–200).

Second Half of the Sixteenth Century

Orationi Militari raccolte per M. Remigio, da tutti gli historici greci e latini, antichi e moderni; con gli argomenti che dichiarono l'occasioni, per le quali elle furono fatte, doue sommariamente si toccano l'historie, dal medesimo con diligenza corrette & tardote. Venice: 1557 (2nd edition 1560).

Conciones sive Orationes ex Graecis Latinisque historicis excerptae. Quae ex Graecis excerptae sunt, interpretationem Latinam adiunctam habent, nonnullae novam, aliae iam antea vulgatam, sed nunc demum plerisque in locis recognitam. Geneva: 1570.

Harangues militaires, et concions des princes, capitaines, ambassadeurs, et autres manians tant la guerre que les affaires d'estat, recueillies de plusieurs graves auteurs grecs, latins et autres, et faictes françoises. Paris: 1573.

Orationes aliquot ex Herodoti, Thucydidis, Xenophontis: Livii itidem Caesaris, & Salustii historiis in usum Academiae Argentinenensis collectae, a Melchiore Iunio Witebergensi. Strasbourg: 1586.

Carving Up Thucydides

The Rise and Demise of “Analysis,” and its Legacy

Jeffrey S. Rusten

For almost a century (1846–1936), the study of Thucydides by scholars (especially in Germany) descended down a rabbit hole of reconstructing the phases of the composition of his history, and identifying the layer of each different section. By a misleading analogy with Homeric studies, this movement came to be called “analysis.” Today, this approach has not only been completely cast aside, but has undergone something like a *damnatio memoriae*, or perhaps more accurately a quarantine: reviews of Thucydidean reception-history give it a wide berth, as if fearing another outbreak which might infect a new generation of scholarly inquiry.¹

I revisit it here not only to describe the arguments of analysis and how they came to be refuted, but also to argue, first, that despite the abandonment of its principle many of its preoccupations are still pursued today under updated labels; second, that the victorious post-analysts have stopped short of addressing the undeniable fact about Thucydides’ work – its incompleteness – that started this way of thinking about Thucydides’ text in the first place.

This essay is not a doxography of individual scholars, nor a timeline of arguments; it attempts to proceed not personally and chronologically, but thematically and logically, to keep focus on the substantive issues in Thucydides, with minimal discussion of particular scholars.

An Unfinished Work (Book 8)

In late summer of 411 BCE the satrap Tissaphernes is alarmed by reports of hostile action taken against his troops by the Peloponnesians, his former clients:

When Tissaphernes heard, in addition to events at Miletus and Cnidus (for there too his guards had been expelled) also about this action by the Peloponnesians, he realized

that they had very bad feelings towards him, and worried they would do him still further damage; he was also angry at the prospect that Pharnabazus, despite sponsoring them for less time and at lesser expense, would achieve some greater success in the campaign against the Athenians. He decided to travel to the Hellespont to see them, to complain of events at Antandros and dispel as eloquently as possible their bad feelings both about the Phoenician ships and the other things. He arrived first at Ephesus, and conducted a sacrifice to Artemis. (Thuc. 8.108.3–109.1)

Thus ends, in the middle of a story and the middle of a journey (perhaps even in the middle of a sentence, so Hornblower 2008 *ad loc.*), the preserved history of Thucydides.

There are several examples in modern music and literature of great unfinished works: Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, symphonies of Schubert and Mahler, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *The Mysterious Stranger*, *The Last Tycoon*. Sometimes these are completed by others. In ancient literature I know of only two: Virgil's *Aeneid* and Thucydides' history. The former is commonly believed to have been edited to its current closure after his death. The latter has no such conclusion, breaking off abruptly with Tissaphernes' intermediate stop at Ephesus on his way to the Hellespont, seven years before the date that Thucydides himself (5.26, quoted below) indicates will be his stopping point. Also in contrast to the *Aeneid*, a continuation was supplied by three successors, Xenophon (whose work survives, and continues beyond the end of the war), Theopompus, and (if the report can be trusted) Cratippus. There is no indication that any of them had access to drafts, notes, or any other material that Thucydides left behind.

The ancient biographies attribute the incompleteness to Thucydides' death; other sources speculate on Thucydides' murder, though they do not mention it as a cause for his incomplete history. The absurd discussion of his possible murder in 410 by the ancient scholar Didymus (*apud* Marcellinus 32, forgetting that Thucydides refers several times to the war's end) is possibly conditioned by a careless recollection of the end of Book 8 in 411. Marcellinus and the anonymous author of the *Life of Thucydides* also felt compelled to deny charges that Book 8 had been written by someone else:

43. Some say that the eighth book is spurious, not written by Thucydides but, according to some, by his own daughter, and according to others by Xenophon. To these we answer that, as regards the daughter's authorship, it is obviously out of the question, for it was not in female nature to imitate such excellence and skill; furthermore, if she had possessed any such talent, she would not have endeavored to pass unnoticed, nor would have produced the eighth book only, but left many other writings in display of her personal character. As for Xenophon, the style itself nearly cries out that he could not be the author, for there is a great distance between the high and the low; and certainly not Theopompus either, as some have judged. 44. Some others – and in fact the most accomplished – think that the book belongs to Thucydides, only that it is written sketchily and without ornament, and is full of summarized

events which could have been adorned and amplified. I would add further that its style is somewhat more feeble, in as much as he seems to have composed it in bad health. For when the body is ill the intellect tends to relax also a bit, since body and intellect are almost in mutual sympathy. 45. He died after the Peloponnesian war in Thrace, while he was writing the events of the twenty-first year; the war took up twenty-seven, and the events of the remaining six were filled up by Theopompus and Xenophon, who appended to them his *Hellenica*. (Marcellinus, *Life of Thucydides* 43–5; translated by Jorge Garcia-Lopez)

After completing the eighth history (i.e., book) he died of illness; for those who say that the eighth book is not by Thucydides, but another writer, are mistaken. (*Anonymous Life* 8 (9))

Like Marcellinus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus judged the preserved part of Book 8 substandard as well, and maliciously implies this was caused by simple laziness, or perhaps failing powers:

... the history does not conclude with the proper chapters. For though the war lasted twenty-seven years and though the author lived till the conclusion, he brought his history down only to the twenty-second year, extending his eighth book only to the naval battle at Cynossema, and that too after having stated in advance in the proem that he would embrace all the events of the war... (*On Thucydides* 12, translated by Pritchett 1975; cf. *Letter to Pompey* 3)

There are many other portions throughout the whole history that one may find either to have been worked out with the most consummate elaboration and that admit of neither addition nor subtraction, or else to have been carelessly skimmed over and to present not the slightest suggestion of that former skill, and this is especially true of his harangues and dialogues and other pieces of oratory. In his anxiety for these, he seems to have left his history incomplete. (*ibid.*: 16)

This and other criticisms of Book 8 will, as we shall see, be expanded by modern analysts into a more comprehensive indictment of the work's incompleteness.

A Two-Stage Work

The 1846 essay by F.W. Ullrich is considered the first shot fired by the modern analysts, although it is usually overlooked today that his assumed stages of composition were much simpler than those of later advocates, and designed only to solve a single problem. Ullrich put forward the bold argument that the incompleteness of Thucydides' work began much earlier than Book 8. In 5.26, after describing the so-called "Peace of Nicias" between Athens and Sparta, Thucydides immediately continues:

These actions also, how each occurred, the same Thucydides of Athens has written in order, by summers and winters, up until the Lacedaemonians and their allies finally

ended the empire of the Athenians and finally occupied the long walls and the Piraeus. The war had lasted twenty seven-years up to this point. (Anyone who decides not to consider the agreement in the middle as wartime will not make a correct judgment; an observer of its actual parts will discover the implausibility of categorizing as peace a period when they neither gave back nor received back everything they had agreed upon, and beyond this there were offenses by both sides in the battles at Mantinea and Epidauros and elsewhere, Athens' allies in Thrace were being no less hostile, and the Boeotians were observing a ten-day truce.) (5.26.1–2)

Ullrich's first principle is that Thucydides' insistence on the unity of the twenty-seven years is a self-contradiction: nowhere in Book 1 did he specify the duration of the "war between the Peloponnesians and Athenians," which is particularly noticeable since he three times (1.13.3–4, 1.18.1) actually dates events by the end of the war whose endpoint he has not yet indicated. Nor can he have expected his readers to know the end date without being told, since we can see that contemporary sources like Isocrates, Plato, and the orators split the war into smaller units, especially the first ten years. Therefore, Thucydides must himself have believed while writing Books 1–4 that the war was actually over after the ten years, when a peace treaty was signed. 5.26 represents a *second stage of composition*, after he realized that the war ended not in 421, but 404. The first four books on the other hand had been written before the resumption of total war after the Sicilian expedition.

But Ullrich had to deal with an important loose end: an obvious objection to the above argument is the famous passage, 2.65, which references the Sicilian expedition and Athenian politics well after the peace of 421. He therefore had to assume that Thucydides made *some* revisions to his first stage of composition to account for later events, but not a complete rewrite; he also provided examples of passages in Books 1–4 that he believed could *only* have been written *before* 421, because they were not true later (e.g., 3.26 on the most harmful Peloponnesian invasion compared with 7.27, or 4.48 on the last stasis in Corcyra compared with Diodorus 13.48). This notion of "early" and "late" passages will loom much larger in the final phase of analysis.

Ullrich's theory of multiple stages was assailed by those who thought he had gone too far (Meyer 1899); but the most energetic response was by those who felt he had not gone far enough in postulating only two main stages, pre- and post-421.

A Multistage Work

Ullrich had divided the history into a part that was complete but (mostly) unrevised after 421, and a part that represented Thucydides' latest thinking but was not complete.

It was objected, however, that included in this "incomplete" section is the Sicilian expedition of Books 6–7, which contains some of Thucydides' most compelling narrative and memorable speeches (especially if the Melian Dialogue is considered not as the end of Book 5, but the beginning of 6). In fact, Books 6–7 lavish approximately 34,500 words on just two years of war, whereas in Book 5 five years of war are

covered in approximately 13,000 words, and Book 8 covers two extremely eventful years in 17,500 words (see the table in Luschnat 1970: 1117–18). Furthermore, to the absence of direct speeches noted as a defect in Book 8 above was now added verbatim citations of documents (8.18, 37, and 58.5), and both of these were characteristic of Book 5 also (documents at 4. 118–19, 5. 18–19, 23–4, 47, 77, and 79, Kirchoff 1895). Finally Book 8 suffered a dislocation in the narrative at 8.45.1, where the same events were revisited from a different perspective (Holzapfel 1893).

Thus Books 6–7 were not unrevised; rather, it was now considered that Thucydides changed his mind *twice*: having written his original war (431–421), he next completed a separate, independent account of the Sicilian expedition itself (Cwiklinski 1873); finally, he attempted to bridge the first composition with the second in Book 5, and was attempting to bring the whole forward toward 404 in Book 8 when he died. His second preface therefore belongs to the third stage, as does his insertion of verbatim documents and his failure to supply direct speeches.

At this point it might seem that the most complex possible reconstruction had been achieved; but the hunt for “late” and “early” passages was now to take a direction independent of Ullrich’s hypothesis.

An Author in Turmoil, and His Posthumous Editor

In 1919 Eduard Schwartz revived an earlier idea of his own and Wilamowitz (which the latter had since abandoned; Schwartz 1886, Wilamowitz 1908, with Chambers 2000) that Thucydides was not in control of his final manuscript himself, but it was put together by an editor – that a Thucydides so proud of his style and narrative writing would have inserted verbatim documents in his own work was for Schwartz unthinkable. Furthermore, this editor was assumed to have often misunderstood his materials, and so arranged them in ways Thucydides might not have intended.

For Schwartz (Bleckmann 2010), there are indeed stages of composition, but one can identify them only in individual sections, not anything longer. The differences are not matters of revision, but a fundamental and radical change in Thucydides’ attitude toward the war he had chosen to narrate. This change reflects his collapse after the Athenian defeat, when he was a broken old man. His original enthusiasm for Pericles and the empire had not abated even in defeat, but he now was appalled by Spartan hypocrisy and enraged by the new generation of Athenians who viewed the entire war and Pericles’ aspirations to Athenian greatness as a mistake from the start. He decided to rewrite his original work. Indeed, Schwartz thinks that by the end of his life, Thucydides was as much concerned with dismantling his original work as he was in correcting it. The criterion for distinguishing this final stage from the original one is not a theory of composition, since the entire text is an editor’s patchwork of snippets from different stages of its author’s intellectual biography.

Book 1 already provided Schwartz with clear evidence of this radical change in Thucydides’ thoughts about the causes of the war. For his Thucydides, the original

causes had been Athenian expansionism and Corinthian anger at Spartan inaction – expressed in Book 1 by the speeches of the Corinthians (1.68–71) and Archidamus (1.80–5). But in his postwar frame of mind Thucydides saw instead the causes as Spartan fear and the Athens–Sparta antithesis, between a state based on idealistic rationalism versus one of corrupt and lazy selfishness. To the second stage belong the speeches of the Athenians (1.73–8) and Sthenelaidas (1.86) at Sparta (the inept editor did not replace the original ones with these, but kept all four). Some of the other sections he thinks were written by Thucydides in his postwar temper are Pericles’ last speech (2.60–4) and the Melian Dialogue (5.84–114).

On the other hand, in dealing with Books 6 and 7 Schwartz unexpectedly parted company with most contemporary analysts in arguing that they were always meant to be integrated with Books 5 and 8. And in the preface to Book 1 he found a surprising example of the editor’s ineptitude: for Schwartz, by the “greatest kinesis” (1.1) Thucydides had originally meant the Trojan War!

Schwartz’s book, despite its excesses (or perhaps because of them), provoked admiration and sympathy. For a historian believed to be so controlling of his readers, it was perhaps inevitable that he could only be challenged radically: Thucydides’ individual statements of certainty are in fact confessions of doubt, and not only does he fail to control the sharp-eyed analyst reader, but he himself becomes a tragic figure, unable to stabilize his own judgment, constantly rethinking and revising it. Some reviewers noted the date of publication and drew a parallel between the assumption of Thucydides’ postwar disillusionment and Schwartz’s own feelings at the end of World War I, in which he lost two sons and, after the treaty of Versailles, was forced to leave Strasbourg before it was returned to France (Bleckmann 2010: 545). Schwartz himself vigorously denied this parallel, saying that he had in fact written the book mostly before the war. But considering how vividly Schwartz himself had constructed a Thucydidean intellectual biography to match his writings, the observation was perhaps poetic justice.

Schwartz found no real adherents, but he shifted the interest of the last analyst studies (Pohlenz 1919–20, Schadewaldt 1929) to the first book which, unconnected with the subsequent narrative, offering many different kinds of content combined in a confusing way, offers to the analyst critic an *embarras des richesses*. Was the so-called “archaeology” (1.2–19, analyzing previous wars to compare their scope with this one), early or late? Were his statements on methods and causes (1.20–3) his final thoughts, or early projections that did not hold up in later practice?

But the end of this whole line of inquiry was to be sudden.

The Unitarians Strike Back

In contrast to the gradual and diverse development of Analysis, the Unitarian (perhaps more accurately “anti-analyst”) movement began when individual scholars from Germany (Patzer 1937), the United States (Finley 1940), and France

(Romilly 1963 [1947]), independently of each other but at roughly the same time, came to the same conclusion: The concept of “early passages” in Thucydides, in Schwartz’s sense of methodologies and historical interpretations that Thucydides later abandoned, was a mistake. While they accepted the notion that the significant sections of Book 1, as well as the speeches of Pericles, the Melian Dialogue, and others represented Thucydides’ mature thoughts on the war after its conclusion, they argued that no supposedly “early views” of the author could be placed against them; claims for “early passages” involved trivial and natural leftovers from the composition process, while the “late” ones were major conclusions and quantitative judgments. An “early” Thucydides simply could not be isolated in his work. This led to the conclusion that the date of the entire work must be largely after 404. (Refuting Ullrich’s objection to the omission of the war date until 5.26 was at this point scarcely thought necessary, but would have been easy by pointing out Thucydides’ penchant for delaying information about his own biography [plague, exile] until the right moment, or by asking why his supposed revisions could not have included this one.)

This attack went largely unchallenged, so that the best a proponent of Analysis could write was this:

So it remains absolutely legitimate to seek early and late elements, but the target of the search has changed since Ullrich; seeing that the work was in fact published incomplete after 404, our task is not to look for late elements in the early sections, but exactly the opposite, to seek early elements in a work that is late. In doing so one must ponder how much these early passages influence their contexts, but overall we will have to keep our limits modest ones and so return to the method of Ullrich, who basically relied on concrete single observations and in so doing retained the necessary precision. (Herter 1968: vii)

But even this call for a reduced analysis went unanswered on these terms. Instead, the focus now shifted definitively to close contextual analysis of the text, in an effort to draw out its continuities and development of key themes of imperialism, military, and political decision making, as well as specialized topics.

Reclaiming Books 5–8

It was still assumed, however, that Book 8 might have been in an unrevised state at Thucydides’ death, and the rejection of the two-stage theory of composition did not offer any explanation of the formal disparities in Books 5 and 8 noted above – the first Unitarians did not address this problem. Charged with commentary on precisely Books 5–8, the authors of the conclusion of Gomme’s *Historical Commentary on Thucydides* (Andrewes 1981; Dover 1981) attempted to reconsider the multistage theory of composition with new arguments.

They were answered by three works which argued strongly for the deliberateness and completeness of the composition of Books 5 and 8: Connor (1984), Rood (1998), and Hornblower (2008). Invoking reader-reception theory (eschewing intellectual biography and moving through the text progressively book by book, with equal attention and respect for Books 5 and 8) or narratology (shifts and dislocations can serve important narrative functions); the result was a recognition that Books 5 and 8 use documents and indirect speeches because they depict fundamentally different parts of the war, and the reasons for their use are different in each of the two books.

In Book 5, the quoted peace treaties are ironic, because each attempts to improve or replace the one before. As Thucydides tells us (5.26), the circumstances (allies still belligerent) were against making peace (compare *Iliad* 3–4, and Livy 9 on the Caudine Forks negotiations). The treaties in Book 5 stand in for speeches; there was no profound discussion during this period, simply mechanical reliance on treaties although the war had not been settled.

In Book 8, the successive drafts of agreements between Sparta and the Persians reveal that Sparta is content to allow the Greeks of Asia Minor to be enslaved in order to obtain money to defeat Athens; they also comically reflect the Spartans' miscommunications with the Persians. On the other hand, the indirect speeches in Book 8 are in fact masterpieces, allowing subtle presentation of the complex secret plans of many different leaders (especially Phrynichus and Alcibiades) at a dangerous time of internal political factional conflict.

Reading Thucydides Today

The separatist position, even in the moderate form represented by Andrewes, is to be rejected. (Hornblower 2008: 1)

The foundation of Analysis had been to suspect anything that was not completely homogeneous with Books 1–4, which contain a mixture of speeches, paradigmatic episodes, and analytic excurses. These new Unitarian studies, however, did not attempt to show that Thucydides' methods remained unchanged throughout his work, and if anything they confirmed that they *did* change for different kinds of narrative; but the changed sections were in themselves worth study, dealing with new phases of narrative in deliberately new ways – not, in other words, failed products requiring the external excuse of incompleteness. Consistent with his year-by-year organization, thematic connections, and repetitions both close and at a distance is a willingness to innovate in form as he proceeds throughout his story. In this sense, Thucydides' work is a unity.

If, as some sympathetic students of it have claimed, Analysts may be said to have “deepened” our understanding of Thucydides, they have done so mainly by provoking sophisticated readings of Thucydidean patterns of thought and narrative

by their opponents. That does not mean that Thucydidean studies have now returned to the “classicizing” view of which Schwartz complained, nor that they have reached any sort of consensus. Even without Analysis, people debate more energetically than ever Thucydides’ ultimate judgments on the causes of the war (or war in general), and especially whether one can find in him any trace of traditional moral values in the face of the pervasive realism of the Athenian speeches. Their tools now are narratological and literary ones, like contextual close readings, juxtapositions, distant connections of key words, omissions, and ultimately its relation to literary and intellectual productions during the war and shortly after it (Rusten 2009: 14–17).

Just as Analysis had become the sole arena in which to discuss any aspect of Thucydides, so Unitarianism has insisted that it is the only frame acceptable for approaching the same problems. But readings that are progressive (i.e., insist on moving through the text sequentially) and reject external explanations can be as productive of controversy as Analysis. There are still Unitarians who write Thucydides’ intellectual biography, as there are those who find fault with the information he has given (or omitted) from his text.

An Unfinished Work?

By and large Unitarians have implicitly returned to the view (Meyer 1899: 406), that Book 8 is complete as far as we have it; very few (reviewed by Rood 1998: 282–3) are willing to go so far as to suggest, like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that the breakoff was an intentional one. Rather they seem bound to the “dying hand” theory, of which a statement like “Thucydides is one of the only three classical Greek historians whose work we possess in full” (Dover 1981: 430) reveals its acceptance. The suddenness and apparent meaninglessness of the gap might indeed suggest the sudden death of its author at this point. But the information Thucydides gives us himself works against this, because he consistently speaks as if he had completed his work, using the aorist and perfect tenses. This begins with his very first sentence:

Thucydides of Athens composed the war the Peloponnesians and Athenians fought against each other. He started to work as soon as it broke out, since he foresaw it would be important, and most noteworthy of all before it. This deduction was based on the peak of every aspect of preparedness reached by both entrants, and the observation that the remaining Greek peoples were joining one side or the other, either from its outbreak or planning it later (1.1).

As has been seen before (Rusten forthcoming), the time and character of each successive action described here moves us in reverse chronological order, ending with the observation that triggered Thucydides’ decision to undertake writing the war,

and beginning with the moment of the work's completion (ξυνέγραψε). Thucydides' other tense for his writing is the even more strongly marked perfect, of completed action. This we find in the formulae at year end throughout the work, either in the form γέγραφε or γέγραπται. Edmunds (1993) shows that while Thucydides creates a "here and now" of authorial judgments (as well as a "next" of reader responses in the future), he portrays his work itself (the war) always as a completed thing – already in the first sentence of his work. If we look again at the second preface, he not only indicates that he knows the end of the war, but also that he has completed his writing of it to that very end:

These actions also, how each occurred, the same Thucydides of Athens has written in order, by summers and winters, up until the Lacedaemonians and their allies finally ended the empire of the Athenians and finally occupied the long walls and the Piraeus. The war had lasted twenty seven years up to this point. (5.26.1)

Is this just a *façon de parler*, an authorial convention in which the historian claims the completion of what in fact is still to be written? Herodotus does no such thing, consistently using the present or future for the making of his work still to come (Powell 1938: 71 s.v. γράφω 4); the preface of Hecataeus' *Genealogies* (FGrHist 1 F 1, quoted by Demetrius *On Style* 12) twice uses the present (μυθεῖται, γράφω). The analysts Schwartz and Canfora saw the problem, but used it as evidence that an editor must have interpolated this sentence. But others who have discussed the sentence have concluded that Thucydides MUST not have meant this the way it sounds – at most, it indicates a firm resolution to continue his work to the end that was not fulfilled (Classen, followed by Rawlings 1981: 216; Hornblower 2008 *ad loc.*). Surely we can't have at one and the same time Thucydides telling us he finished his work, and the work being today unfinished, can we? Or is there perhaps another possibility?

Among the unfinished works I adduced at the outset is Bach's *Art of the Fugue*. On a manuscript page of that work Bach's son Carl Philip Emanuel Bach, who was not in Leipzig when his father died, wrote: "While working on this fugue, in which the name BACH appears in the countersubject, the author died" (Wolff 1991: 423 n. 2). But Wolff showed that the manuscript scrap supposedly containing a fragment of the last piece in the *Art of the Fugue* is not evidence of the "dying hand" his son assumed. There were three sections of the final fugue in manuscript, and a transition to a fourth; the continuation is lost today, except for a manuscript that breaks off after two lines; here C.P.E. Bach wrote his note, and it was assumed that it belonged to a different work that Bach had left unfinished (cf. his separate report that "His last illness prevented him, according to his draft, from bringing the next-to-last fugue to completion and working out the last one ...": Wolff 1991: 262) Wolff noted that the supposed "dying hand" was a scrap of music paper unlike the three others in format, and only partially used because of defective printing of the third to the last staff; it was in fact a scrap to be inserted in the fourth part, and *it could never have been written unless the fourth part were complete*. Therefore the fourth part *did* exist, but was not looked for

because the break-off text had led to the false assumption that it was unfinished; the scrap was considered to represent an entirely different piece.

The parallel is obviously not exact, but we have (i) an author's death before publication; (ii) a fragment that is misinterpreted to mean the composition is unfinished, and caused by his death; (iii) other, later manuscript pages that did exist either were not located or perhaps ignored. Now after Bach's death there were reports by others that he had in fact sketched the end of the *Art of the Fugue* (Wolff 1991: 261–2); for Thucydides we have no such reports, we have better: his explicit statement that he finished his work, in 5.26. It is therefore incumbent on us to believe both the explicit statement of Thucydides that he completed his work, and the evidence of our own eyes about its breaking off, by positing that the completed manuscript was separated, perhaps after his death, at 8.109, and that the second part of it, covering seven years of war, by the standards of Book 8 perhaps 3–4 books, existed but, in the words of Wolff on Bach's fourth part, "as a result of most unfortunate and unknown circumstances ... became lost" (1991: 263).

This proposal for Thucydides has in fact been made several times before, though it has never gained wide notice, perhaps because its authors felt the need to provide a rather complicated and detailed explanation for its loss (Prentice 1930; Adcock 1963). I would prefer to go no further than the careful but forceful formulation (in connection with the statement *confeci* by Aulus Hirtius) by Olivier:

It is a signature of authenticity for the new part of his work up until the final catastrophe. Since we are far from having the end of the war, we infer from it that Thucydides didn't write it, and so on. That is simply unacceptable. We don't possess it, and we can't say anything more. The circumstances of its disappearance or non-publication have escaped us ... To seek anything else is to impose on him our wish or hypothesis rather than to attend to his affirmation ... I insist that someone show me an irrefutable passage where a serious ancient writer has willingly (and Thucydides here cites precise dates and events) evaded the truth. One may believe that one has done something or forget that one has not, and write that one has said something earlier mistakenly; one cannot say, about a work being published, that one has written something one has not, finished something that one has only sketched. (1963: 239 n. 3)

If we accept the probability that the end of Thucydides' history was in fact complete, but separated from the rest at his death and lost, what is the difference? Don't an ending that is irretrievably lost and one that was never written amount to the same thing? Not really; the assumption of completeness in itself is a step forward in three ways:

- It is a natural culmination of the entire Unitarian tendency to view the preserved work—including Book 8—as complete, an approach that is difficult to reconcile with a sudden, premature, and unexpected stop by its author.

- It frees us from the interpretative contortions required to explain Thucydides' own repeated statements of completeness, in particular 5.26.
- If we start from the assumption that Thucydides did in fact write the last six years of the war, and this section was related to forward-looking authorial comments in the preserved work, we can review these comments, in particular 2.65 with the prominence it gives Cyrus, for clues to the lost sequel. (Rawlings (1981) is an attempt to do this on a structural basis, as is Hamilton (1997) and Bleckmann (1998: 317–37) on a historical one; Hornblower (2008: 406) touches on it as well.) We can also study the continuators (even if there is no evidence that they had any idea what Thucydides had in fact written for 410–404), especially Xenophon, with a more eager eye to detecting differences and possible similarities to the lost account.

That is still just speculation, but it is speculation that seems much more worth engaging in than the Analyst enterprise.

Note

- 1 For comments and criticisms I am indebted to Hunter R. Rawlings III, and to lively and challenging questions from an audience of faculty and students at Fordham University, Lincoln Center, in April 2014. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Greek, French, or German are my own. By “Books 1–4” I mean 1–5.24; by “Book 5” I mean 5.25–83; by “Books 6–7” I mean 5.84–8.1.

Guide to Further Reading

Rusten (2009) offers an overview of the current camps of Thucydidean interpretation. The most stimulating general accounts of Thucydides' work, its structure and its themes are de Romilly (2012, with an introduction by Rawlings and Rusten) and Connor (1984). On Thucydides' construction of narrative see Rood (1998), and the discussions of specific passages considered above in Hornblower (1996, see esp. 107–22 and 2008, see esp. 1–4, 32–6, 883–6).

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Thucydides as an Educational Text

Oliver Schelske

Thucydides' *History* is one of the most important educational texts of all time. By "educational" I mean a text which is read in the process of education and for the purpose of progressing toward learnedness. In this respect the term has a certain affinity to school contexts. On the other hand, I would also call a text "educational" when someone in possession of a certain learnedness would be expected to know it, such as the plays of Shakespeare or Goethe's *Faust*. In this regard the label is not limited to any specific institutional context. Furthermore, I consider an educational text to be a kind of literature which is of everlasting importance for its recipients by virtue of its relevance to their personal way of thinking and their work (whatever this may be). In what follows I shall analyze the importance of the work of Thucydides in terms of these connotations of "educational."

My focus is on two important individuals from the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth: Max Weber and Sir Winston Churchill. They are both interesting examples of how the reception of Thucydides may and indeed did function; sometimes obviously, sometimes rather covertly. Thus we have two national contexts (German and English) as well as two different realms of work, namely the worlds of scholarship and politics. Furthermore, each of these men became acquainted with Thucydides in different ways and at different times of life. In terms of methodology, however, I do not intend to make a simple comparison (since Weber and Churchill represent too dissimilar examples of the reception of Thucydides), but rather a diptych consisting of two independent parts that complement one another.

Max Weber (1864–1920)

Max Weber is commonly regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern social science. Yet he is also relevant for other disciplines. You could even say (cf. Hennis 2003: 7) that there are as many disciplines that proclaim him to be their founding father (or at least to be of major importance for them) as there were cities in antiquity that claimed to be the home town of Homer. Historical studies must be mentioned here, alongside sociology, economics, law, political science, and social psychology (cf. Nippel 1993, 2001). Within ancient history, some prominent scholars even claim there can be no doubt “that he [Weber] has done as much for the understanding of Greco-Roman antiquity as only a few others” (Meier 1988: 11; cf. Heuß 1965, esp. 531).

What about the other way round – how relevant was antiquity for Weber? And was Thucydides of any discernible relevance for him? The first question can easily be answered: Weber was interested in ancient studies professionally as well as privately (Meier 1988; Love 1991).¹ In 1919, the year before his death, he gave his famous speech on “scholarship as a vocation” (“Wissenschaft als Beruf”), and concluded it with the Socratic expression that everybody can serve scholarship best if he has found the daemon that guides him, and if he submits to that daemon in order to fulfill the major task of scholarship: to bring about truth. Such a Platonic metaphor is typical of Weber, as he repeatedly relied upon ancient forms of argumentation and ancient examples. These are more or less inherent to his way of thinking. But what about Thucydides? In scholarly debates – whether about Weber himself or on other topics – there is a tendency to assume a certain familiarity between Weber and Thucydides, sometimes expressed implicitly, sometimes explicitly (Breiner 1996: 4; Hennis 2003). The whole range of assertions can be found, but how can we measure such a familiarity precisely? And what exactly does familiarity mean? Is it that there are structural parallels regarding certain assumptions and points of view shared by Thucydides and Weber? Or does familiarity imply that Thucydides was of serious, that is, “productive” importance for Weber, for example in terms of developing a personal scientific style and methodology or even concerning specific insights into social structures and developments (Hennis 2003: 11)?

Those who study the influences on Weber and his scholarly oeuvre – not only Thucydides, to whom Weber refers explicitly about a dozen times in his published work – face a serious problem. This is the difficulty of determining to what extent a particular work matters for Weber, since he generally does not mention explicitly the one to which he is referring and usually does not provide his readers with quotations. Thus it has been argued convincingly that it is insufficient to count how often he mentions certain names as an indication for the relevance of a person or a work for him (Sukale 2002: 17). There are only two ways out of this dilemma for our study: (1) To conclude from the essence or the content of this or that passage in Weber that Thucydides is in the background even though he is not explicitly

mentioned, or (2) to analyze Weber's intellectual milieu and to reconstruct how, when, and where he wrote his works in order to get precise information about possible interactions. The first approach has serious issues: correlations must not be misinterpreted as (necessary) interdependencies between his own work and Thucydides – that is to say, we have to be aware of the possibility of mediation, for example, by way of Weber's wide reading or through personal contacts and discussions. It is well known that Weber used secondary literature quite intensively (above all Eduard Meyer's monumental work on ancient history); another example would be Wilhelm Roscher's book on Thucydides (see below), where Weber's knowledge of it is not – at least a priori – to be confused with acquaintance with Thucydides himself. Therefore, if we choose this path, we cannot get beyond the observation that there are certain parallels between Weber's and Thucydides' ways of thinking (which would be the current state of research), until we have established a direct relation between Thucydides and Weber. Thus this first option may be set aside for the moment, though we shall come back to Weber's work later. The second approach seems more promising, provided that we can reconstruct the circumstances under which Weber produced his work by virtue of external data, for example, official notes and/or documents or personal letters. This admittedly implies the danger of focusing on the author in a rather biographical manner; yet in the complicated case of Weber this seems not only inevitable but also potentially fruitful.

Various sources imply the relevance of Thucydides for Weber and his personal development, even though hitherto they have not been discussed in a satisfactory manner. Weber attended the Charlottenburger Gymnasium (now in Berlin), where he passed his Abitur in 1882; from official school documents we know that Weber read Thucydides as one of the major authors in "Prima," that is, the final class at school (which, incidentally, Weber took twice). He then studied history, law, and economics at the universities of Heidelberg, Berlin, and Göttingen, and from their old prospectuses we can assess the degree to which Thucydides was important, especially in the field of ancient history when Weber was a student. Finally, from the marginal notes which Weber made in his own copy, we know for certain that he worked in detail on Wilhelm Roscher's 1842 book on Thucydides, and when he did so. In this context, then, we may ask if and to what degree Weber worked directly with Thucydides (Hennis 2003; Morley 2012: 133). Clearly we cannot establish the many-faceted importance of Thucydides for Weber in a satisfying way based on such information alone, but a thorough examination of these documents will at least provide any further research with a solid grounding.

Any discussion of the last of these three sources, Weber's notes on Roscher's *Thukydides*, has to begin from Wilhelm Hennis' study of Weber's private copy. In this copy there are various passages marked or annotated by Weber himself which prove his intensive reading (Hennis 2003: 24). Hennis dates this activity to the beginning of Weber's second working period, from 1903–9, when he was especially concerned about methodological questions; this followed his mental collapse in 1898, which had made it impossible for him to continue his work as a professor (he

finally lost his chair of political economy at Heidelberg in 1903). According to his own comments, Weber had already read Roscher's book at school, but now, according to Hennis, this reading not only prompted Weber to write on Roscher (as part of a pair of essays that coupled him with another political economist, Karl Knies, published in 1903), but was of much greater importance; this is the period when he also published the first parts of his great work on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in which – again according to Hennis – he describes and analyzes the complete and total revolution of the social order through the rise of capitalism just as Thucydides had done for the crisis of his own time (Hennis 2003: 49–50). If the *Protestant Ethic* can, as Hennis suggests, be seen as Weber's *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the implication is that Thucydides (especially through Weber's early acquaintance with him, picking up a thread from his youth) had an enormous impact on his personal and scholarly development.

However, despite the attractiveness of such a thesis, one point needs further investigation: Does the fact that Weber was involved with Roscher's book on Thucydides several times in his life (the first time as a school pupil, then again in adulthood) necessarily mean that he had also read Thucydides himself? This is important since some readers of Weber have expressed concern that his profound knowledge of antiquity derives not so much from ancient texts themselves, but mainly from secondary literature (Meier 1988: 11). To address this problem, it will be helpful to consider the official school documents from the year when Weber passed his Abitur.

Weber attended the Charlottenburger Gymnasium from 1872 to 1882. We have detailed information on what every individual teacher taught in this period, and which students attended which school, since Prussian schools were obliged to record those things scrupulously. In 1881/2, when Weber was in the highest class, Thucydides was part of the prescribed curriculum. According to the relevant annual report ("Jahresbericht"), parts of the first book were read for six hours a week. Weber, therefore, read Thucydides with a focus on the first book, which implies that the chapters on methodology as well as the so-called archaeology will have been of central relevance. This fact alone is not without interest, but we can go further and consider the possible impact that a reading of Thucydides may have had on Weber. Was it a mere "reading," that is, translating the text without any content-based discussion? It will be useful to have a look at the contemporary literature on how specific subjects ought to be taught at school and why they should be. In other words, what was the actual aim of reading Thucydides in the opinion of the school officials of that time?

In Prussian schools Thucydides was to be read in "Prima," the highest class (Kohl 1905: 725). One would read an impressive portion of the first book as well as of Books 6 and 7, covering the Sicilian expedition. What were the educational and didactic aims of this? Many at this time were concerned that Thucydides might be too demanding for a school text (Weißenfels 1906: 307), but such doubts were usually wiped away by arguing that Thucydides was too important to be removed

from the curriculum. He was read in succession to Herodotus, as a contrasting paradigm of a “modern, pragmatic, self-reflecting historiographer” (Dettweiler 1898: 52). His educational value was seen in different aspects of his work: (1) the subject (the Peloponnesian War) being regarded as important; (2) its chronological structure, considered apt for continuous reading; (3) the historical content being grouped around important characters (implying clarity as well as exemplarity); and (4) the historian’s task as worked out in detail (*ibid.*). Thucydides was thus important because students could learn from him how vital it was to recognize truth – especially when forced to read him in the Greek original. Furthermore, reading Thucydides would strengthen a sense of personal responsibility because he explained all things by their natural (i.e., comprehensible) causes (*ibid.*: 53; cf. Meier 1988: 15–16). We may suppose that this argument had a certain impact on young Weber, the later inventor of “interpretative sociology.” Furthermore, what makes Thucydides especially fascinating according to the Prussian school officials is his “clear and critical thinking” (Kohl 1905: 725). Students should gain “historical insight” from Thucydides; he “pretty much reveals everything that has come into being in varying guises, in different times, and among different peoples” (Weißenfels 1906: 307). He is considered a “school for those who want to live with political consciousness in the confusing bustle of a modern state” (*ibid.*).

In sum, the main educational purpose of reading Thucydides at school was the great practical benefit that was expected as a result. Methodology, that is, rational explanations of historical developments, and a clear elaboration of the sociocultural foundations of all human life were obviously the perspectives from which Thucydides was interpreted. Further, teachers tried to establish connections between the ancient text and the contemporary surroundings of the late nineteenth century. An unexpected insight into the complexity of the school lessons is provided by a letter written by Weber, dated December 13, 1885, to his younger brother Alfred who was still in school at that time (Marianne Weber 1936: 193–7). In this the elder brother replies to a request by the younger one to help him with an essay he had to write. The topic of the essay is not explicitly mentioned, but we can assume that it is on Greek history, or more precisely on the history of Asia Minor. What is striking is the focus that Weber warmly recommends to his brother: Alfred should write about the social and administrative structures, he should mention the wealth and prosperity of the region, and above all he should concentrate on administrative and economic aspects. Leaving aside that the elder brother might have tried to impress the younger, such a letter seems to suggest that these are the aspects that mattered most at school – given the fact that the letter was written by someone who had graduated only a couple of years before. This shows that not only grammatical questions were important.

In the light of what we have established about Weber’s first acquaintance with Thucydides at school and about the atmosphere in which this contact took place, we may now concentrate on his time at university. After he passed his Abitur in 1882, he pursued studies in Heidelberg from autumn 1882 until summer 1884; in

the summer of 1884 he did his military service in Strasbourg, and then continued to study in Berlin from 1884 to 1885 (including attending the lectures of Theodor Mommsen). In 1885/6 he completed his academic studies in Göttingen (where he had Wilamowitz as his neighbor) (Marianne Weber 1936: 183). What part did Thucydides play during this time? It is much more difficult to ascertain precisely what Weber studied during this period than it was in respect to his time at school. So far the only decisive means by which we can get information on his activities – with whom he studied, which lectures he attended etc. – are his so-called “youth-letters,” which were selectively edited and published by his later wife Marianne in 1936. Once all of his remaining letters from the 1880s and 1890s have been published over the next few years (in the course of the monumental complete edition of his works), we shall gain a more comprehensive understanding of his interests as a student. What can be considered at present is the intellectual milieu of his studies, by means of the old prospectuses. Even if it cannot be proved that Weber attended this or that class at university, we can find out which topics or subjects were taught in various disciplines, and may discern certain trends.

Thucydides was regularly read and discussed; his name appears more often than that of any other ancient historian in the lists of courses and lectures offered by university lecturers. To give some examples: in 1883/4, when Weber was still studying at Heidelberg, they offered a seminar and/or a lecture on Thucydides Books 1 and 2; the same goes for Berlin in 1884/5. Obviously, this does not necessarily mean that Weber attended these classes during his relatively short period of study; but what can be seen easily is that in one of the disciplines Weber studied Thucydides was one of the main subjects of discussion. Thus the Athenian historian should be seen as one of the most important figures in Weber’s intellectual environment, the more so if we take into consideration his personal background: his sister married the son of the great ancient historian Theodor Mommsen, whose daughter had married Wilamowitz, still one of the best known classical scholars today.

This discussion has brought us to a point that has not previously been reached within the scholarship on Weber. That there is some kind of relation between him and Thucydides has been stated more than once; however, there has not been any agreement on whether Weber had read Thucydides (in the original) at all. Consideration of the general educational context should have definitively silenced these doubts so that we may finally return to the work of Weber itself. After all, the search for Weber’s contacts with Thucydides would be pointless if there were no clear indications of Weber’s appraisal of Thucydides in his own words. Most obviously, he explicitly mentions Thucydides in the preface to his collected essays on socio-religious matters (*Religionssoziologie*), which includes the *Protestant Ethic*. Weber argues here that science and scholarship in their proper sense form a distinctive feature of Western culture. He explains this by giving various examples: as Babylonian astronomy lacked mathematical grounding (developed only by the Greeks), as among religions only Christianity gave rise to a systematic theology (being heavily influenced by Hellenic thought), as Indian science lacked a certain

rational element (introduced into the field of science only in Renaissance times), so any non-Western tradition of historiography – such as the highly developed Chinese one – would lack the “Thucydidean Pragma” (Max Weber 1921, I: 1–2). This shows that for Weber Thucydides is indeed the symbol, the embodiment of Western historiography. This remarkable statement clearly illustrates the importance that Weber attributes to Thucydides.

Starting from these few explicit remarks about Thucydides, and encouraged by the previous results of this discussion, we are now entitled to ask whether there are further points in Weber’s work where Thucydides can be assumed to be relevant. Indeed, it is now apparent that Weber has probably incorporated the thought of Thucydides in far more passages than merely those in which he quotes him. Let us, then, consider his famous essay on the social causes of the end of ancient civilization (1896). In this essay Weber identifies three essential aspects which were, in his opinion, responsible for that massive cultural change in late antiquity: (1) lack of money (mainly to support the Roman army); (2) the fact that urban residence in maritime, that is, Mediterranean, regions was eventually abandoned in favor of vast properties in the hinterland (with a remarkable focus on the contrast between maritime and rural regions); (3) not wholly separable from the first point is a third one: in late antiquity there was an undeniable shortage of slaves. This deficiency resulted from the fact that since the beginning of the second century the Roman empire had abandoned its former policies of expansion, which had always guaranteed the slave supply. This was a major problem since the ancient economy was largely based on production by nonfree individuals. Through this analysis, Weber broke new ground in order to interpret cultural as well as political developments (Meier 1988: 15–16). He set aside traditional patterns of explanation such as the Germanic migrations, the moral decline of the Roman upper classes, and the barbarization of the Roman army. Instead, his focus is on deeper developments which are not discernible at first sight. Nevertheless, we should not fail to notice that this innovative approach in fact picks up on a much older mode of argumentation, to be found in the “archaeology” of the first book of Thucydides.

The expression “lack of money,” in Greek *achrēmata*, is especially striking. This expression occurs about one hundred times in Greek literature. In most cases it is used by rather obscure rhetoricians or explained in scholia, without any further textual discussion. It is, however, also used by some ancient historians, where it is closely integrated into specific contexts: Flavius Josephus, Dionysus of Halicarnassus, Diodorus Siculus, Philo of Alexandria, Plutarch, and Thucydides. If we take also into consideration the context, it is obvious that this term is mostly used to describe specific situations (often in the case of war or battles) (e.g., Plutarch *Fab. Max.* 2.4; *Alcibiades* 35.4; Philo, *De gigant.* 29.4; Dionys v. Hal., *Ant.* 7.24.44; Flavius Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 16.149). But it is only Thucydides (1.11) who incorporates *achrēmata* into a wider analysis (to prove that the Trojan War was not so important as the Peloponnesian War), and who at the same time presents an analysis of economic correlations and contexts *in nuce* (cf. Schwartz 1886: 203–22, 1919: 168–79;

Alonso-Núñez 2000: 23–6, esp. 23 n. 10). This is exactly where Weber follows Thucydides. This fact (that the Thucydidean form of argumentation or methodology in the Archaeology is relevant to Weber's own) is even more obvious because Thucydides, like Weber, emphasizes the sharp contrast between coastal areas and the "hinterland" (cf. Thuc. 1.5, 7, 8, 15). Even Weber's third argument for the decline of classical civilization – the shortage of slaves – is found in Thucydides (1.2: there were no slaves in early times). So, the three social conditions that Weber uses to explain the decline of ancient civilization were also mentioned by Thucydides as indications of pre-civilized time; a remarkable correlation.

In sum, we still may not be able to prove the importance of Thucydides for Weber in terms of a single quotation, but we can now discern how Weber has adapted forms of argumentation from Thucydides for his own purposes. Our analysis has made clear that statements like the one about the "Thucydidean pragma" in the preface to his socio-religious essays are not at all random utterances, and that there is no need to assume that Weber was dependent on secondary literature for his profound knowledge of Thucydides and his methodology. On the contrary, we may assume that Thucydides was of substantial scientific importance for Weber, especially in his early years, and probably remained so until his early death in 1920.

Winston Churchill (1874–1965)

With Sir Winston Churchill, in contrast to Weber, it makes sense to start chronologically at the end, with the preface to his memoirs of World War II. If we read this alongside the proem of Thucydides and especially his so-called second proem in 5.26, we might feel as if we were breathing ancient air. There are several motifs that clearly reveal how Churchill wrote the history of the war that he himself had experienced with a profound knowledge and a deeply internalized reception of Thucydides (cf. Rahe 1997). To make this point clear I give the complete text of the preface. The relevant phrases are underlined, and annotated with square brackets:

I must regard these volumes as a continuation of the story of the First World War which I set out in "The World Crisis", "The Eastern Front", and "The Aftermath". Together, if the present work is completed, they will cover an account of another Thirty Years War [1].

I have followed, as in previous volumes, the method of Defoe's "Memoirs of a Cavalier", as far as I am able, in which the author hangs the chronicle and discussion of great military and political events upon the thread of the personal experiences [2] of an individual. I am perhaps the only man who has passed through both the two supreme cataclysms of recorded history [1] in high executive office. Whereas however in the First World War I filled responsible but subordinate posts, I was in this second struggle with Germany for more than five years the head of His Majesty's Government [2]. I write therefore from a different standpoint and with more authority than was possible in my earlier books. [...]

I do not describe it as history, for that belongs to another generation. But I claim with confidence that it is a contribution to history which will be of service to the future [3]. These thirty years of action and advocacy comprise and express my life-effort, and I am content to be judged upon them. [...] It must not be supposed that I expect everybody to agree with what I say, still less that I only write what will be popular [4]. I give my testimony according to the lights I follow. Every possible care has been taken to verify the facts [5]; but much is constantly coming to light from the disclosure of captured documents or other revelations which may present a new aspect to the conclusions which have drawn. This is why it is important to rely upon authentic contemporary records [6] and the expressions of opinion set down when all was obscure. (Churchill 1948)

The following motifs are notable: (1) Churchill interprets World Wars I and II as one unit (cf. Thuc. 5.26). (2) He emphasizes his personal experience and participation in the war (cf. Thuc. 5.26). (3) The work seeks to function as a service to the future (cf. Thuc. 1.22). (4) The author is not concerned with public taste or approval (cf. Thuc. 1.22). (5) The necessity of verifying facts is explicitly stressed (cf. Thuc. 1.21 f.). (6) He underlines the importance of contemporary sources (cf. Thuc. 1.21 f.; 5.26).

Given these parallels, we might read Churchill's history of World War II as a modern counterpart to Thucydides; it seems that Churchill intended to transfer the work of the Athenian historian into his own time, or at least wanted to evoke Thucydides and his work. Certainly the specific features listed above as (2)–(4) do not need any further comment regarding their allusive character. However, since Churchill explicitly mentions Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier* as a model for his own narrative, it is also clear that Thucydides is not the only writer to whom he is alluding. It is obvious, too, that by speaking of a second Thirty Years War he is clearly alluding to the one from 1618–48. Yet by distinguishing between two different wars that ought to be seen as one, and speaking of two cataclysms, he clearly goes beyond the Thirty Years War; rather, this perception of two wars as a single conflict points to the Peloponnesian War. Furthermore, when Churchill mentions Defoe in relation to his principle of composition, we have to acknowledge that Thucydides was not a suitable pattern for a case "in which the author hangs the chronicle and discussion of great military and political events upon the thread of the personal experiences of an individual." The last two arguments (the need to verify facts and the importance of sources) should be seen as rather obvious allusions to Thucydides. It is indeed strange that a modern historian should feel compelled to stress these features of his own work in 1948, after a century's development in historiography. Who among his readers would not expect Churchill to have done his research seriously? Thus, alongside the fact that Churchill stressed its practical value, the work itself appears as a serious work full of erudition. Churchill introduces the literary tradition of the genre into his own work of historiography.

It is now time to ask where this obvious connection between Churchill and Thucydides has its roots. Does it result – as in the case of Weber – from an early

acquaintance with Thucydides, at school or university? This is hard to prove. Churchill, of course, learned Latin and Greek at school, but given the state of our information it is difficult to know for certain what pupils were reading in class. Furthermore, Churchill's view of the classics as a young man was at best ambivalent:

And when in after years my schoolfellows who had won prizes and distinction for writing such beautiful Latin poetry and pithy Greek epigrams had to come down again to common English, to earn their living or make their way, I did not feel myself at any disadvantage. Naturally I am biased in favour of boys learning English. I would make them all learn English: and then I would let the clever ones learn Latin as an honour, and Greek as a treat. (W. Churchill 1930: 17 = R. Churchill 1966: 129)

In his biography of his father, his son Randolph suggests time and again that the young Churchill was not very interested or able in classics; while at St George's School Ascot, "his classical composition was described as 'very feeble', his translation as 'good', his grammar as 'improving'" (R. Churchill 1966: 50). Churchill's description of his interests when he moved to Brunswick School near Brighton includes French, history and lots of poetry, as well as riding and swimming, but no Latin or Greek (W. Churchill 1930: 13 = R. Churchill 1966: 60), and he claimed that after twelve years at school in Greek he only knew the alphabet (W. Churchill 1930: 13). This should not be taken at face value, since we know that he occasionally got very good marks in these subjects: "though in his second and third terms he was respectively 29th out of 29 and 30th out of 30 for conduct, in his third term he was also 1st in Classics" (R. Churchill 1966: 67). It does appear, however, that Churchill was thoroughly dissatisfied with the form in which classics was then taught at school rather than discontented with ancient literature itself – as he remarked, "perhaps if I had been introduced to the ancients through their history and customs, instead of through their grammar and syntax, I might have had a better record" (1930: 13) – and the evidence we have on the way that the subject was taught in English public schools in this period seems to support his complaint (see Vandiver 2010: 38; Stray 1998: 59, 185–9; Shrosbree 1988: 28–31, albeit referring to an earlier period).

This impression is reinforced by Churchill's account of his youth and period of military service from 1874 to 1904. He tells us that during his stay in India he spent a lot of time enthusiastically reading various classical authors; the *Politics* of Plato and Aristotle are explicitly mentioned (1930: 112). Unfortunately we cannot reconstruct a complete list of authors that Churchill was reading in these years. One interesting piece of evidence is a letter to Churchill dated September 28, 1896 from Dr. Welldon, his old headmaster at Harrow, encouraging him "to take up some study," with an explicit reference to Latin and Greek: Hobbes, too, says Welldon, had learned Greek only in his old age, but then he translated Thucydides.² Did Churchill take this advice, and what does it tell us about the question of whether

Churchill had read Thucydides at school? Revealingly, at the same time that he expressed his deep interest in ancient as well as modern texts (especially historiography) he also regretted the fact that he had never been introduced to these texts by a professional scholar:

I now began for the first time to envy those young cubs at the university who had fine scholars to tell them what was what; professors who had devoted their lives to mastering and focusing ideas in every branch of learning; who were eager to distribute the treatment they had gathered before they were overtaken by the night. (1930: 113)

Thus we may conclude that Thucydides (at least in the original Greek) did not play an essential part during Churchill's time at school; but it seems reasonable to assume that Churchill was interested in Thucydides already as a young man and soldier given his enthusiasm for history and historiography (cf. Clarke 1959: 54; Vandiver 2010: 40).

We know for certain sure that some years later Thucydides began to play an increasingly important role for Churchill and his professional, that is to say political, environment. In September 1913, Churchill (then First Lord of the Admiralty) was on a cruise through the Mediterranean, together with his secretary, Eddie Marsh. Prime Minister H.H. Asquith, a great scholar of the classics, was also on board the Admiralty's yacht. Marsh noted that he "brushed up on his Thucydides for the occasion [of a visit to Sicily] and also that Asquith and Churchill held forth about the Peloponnesian War."³ We are, unfortunately, unable to tell from this anecdote whether Churchill was already then in possession of a profound knowledge of Thucydides. However, this occasion could have prompted Churchill to develop the interest in Thucydides that he verifiably had some years later, again in the context of activities in the Mediterranean. This was the occasion of his leaving the cabinet in May 1915 (at the age of forty-one). This was the result of the disastrous battle at Gallipoli near the Dardanelles two months earlier: Churchill had to resign as First Lord of the Admiralty, since he had campaigned for a strong military engagement.

On November 17, when Churchill was about to leave for Flanders in order to serve as an officer at the front, he received a present from David Lloyd George, then Minister for Munitions, who was to succeed Asquith as Prime Minister the next year. This present was a pocket edition of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Now, the mere fact that he was given an edition of Thucydides seems to be significant. How often does one receive an edition of Thucydides as a gift? Should we conclude that Churchill had no such edition before he received this one from Lloyd George? According to the inventory of Churchill's private library, no edition of Thucydides was present at the time when Churchill inherited the library from his father.⁴ As in the case of his readings in India, we thus cannot prove that Churchill had read Thucydides privately. It is, however, reasonable to assume that he was not given a copy of Thucydides in order to call his attention to the great historian (as if

he would not have known him himself), but more likely because he had expressed some kind of interest, or even because he and Lloyd George had once talked about Thucydides (perhaps in the context of military history?).

This assumption is supported by the fact that on November 14, 1915, three days before he got the two-volume edition from Lloyd George, Churchill had received a letter from James Louis Garvin, then editor of the *Observer*. Garvin wrote that Charles Prestwich Scott, then editor of the *Guardian*, wished to see Churchill before he left for the continent: Scott would have a present for him, a two-volume pocket edition of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. We may ask ourselves if this is the same present that was to be given to Churchill three days later by Lloyd George, but this seems rather unlikely: Garvin had attacked Lloyd George in his newspaper several times, and in any case he explicitly mentions his fellow editor as the donor. It is much more likely that Churchill was already widely known, or believed, to have a strong interest in Thucydides. Indeed, we have another letter from the same year, dated March 26, written by one Reginald Coupland. Until 1914 Coupland had held the position of lecturer in ancient history at Trinity College Oxford, but he changed his field of interest and turned toward the history of the British empire. Along with this letter, Coupland sent Churchill a two-volume edition of Thucydides with a commentary by his old tutor. In other words, Churchill had already received one copy of Thucydides, presumably as a result of his own interest, before he was given another two copies in November!

In March 1915, as has been mentioned already, the Dardanelles campaign had resulted in more than 250,000 victims on both sides. Thus there was an important naval battle taking place in the northern Aegean located at the exact theater of war where 2500 years ago another great war had been fought: the Peloponnesian War. This makes the following sequence of events plausible: at the end of 1914 and during the first months of the following year Churchill was closely involved in what was happening in the northern Aegean; he himself had recommended a strong military engagement by the Commonwealth. On February 19 and then again on March 18 the British, French, and Allied Forces started their massive attack, which was successful at first but then became a disaster. On March 26, eight days after the battle, Coupland sent the copy of Thucydides to Churchill. Was that merely by chance? Or had Churchill asked Coupland for his help? In the archives there is no initial letter from Churchill to Coupland. It seems, however, out of the question that Churchill was closely engaged with Thucydides before 1915. It is also obvious that this concern with the record of the Peloponnesian War was not limited to private reading since the letters mentioned are strong indications that Thucydides was a topic of conversation within the political circles around Churchill.

And yet, Churchill's relation to Thucydides was not merely receptive. It is especially intriguing that he himself was time and again seen in the context of Thucydides or even compared to him. T.E. Lawrence, for example, said of Churchill's work on World War I, *The World's Crisis*: "I suppose he realizes that he's the only high person since Thucydides and Clarendon who has put his generation

imaginatively in his debt" (Letter of June 10, 1927; Garnett 1939). Oliver Locker-Lampson, a political supporter of Churchill, was even more explicit: "No greater writer of the English language exists today. Mr Churchill is our modern Macaulay; or rather today's Thucydides" (R. Churchill 1981: 368). Churchill was repeatedly compared to Thucydides by his contemporaries; whether as his reader, or as his modern reincarnation. We can assume that Churchill himself was not unaware of that appreciation; in fact – especially with his own publications – he began to feel a certain expectation from his readership. In this light, let us return to his preface of his history of World War II. If we consider the specific situation of Churchill playing an active role during the war (and this means World Wars I and II), and if we also take into account that he may have progressively felt certain parallels between his own career and that of his ancient forerunner, the General Thucydides, it is most natural to conclude that he not only recognized those correlations, but that he also incorporated them – very elegantly – into his work (as demonstrated above). But how far did such an awareness of parallels go? Did it have any effect on his work on the history of World War II besides the preface? In other words, do we have to regard the allusions to Thucydides in the preface as a single, sophisticated play, or can we detect deeper traces of the Athenian historian?

Such an enquiry is naturally limited by the diversity of content. Stronger parallels regarding the material are impossible per se. An examination of the first volume is nonetheless illuminating. In this volume Churchill deals with the events before the actual war began. He explains the fundamental, underlying developments: In order to understand the outbreak of the war, it was necessary to know the reasons which stood behind it. The first chapter is revealing since Churchill here gives some thought to the important decisions which were made by the Allies after World War I (pity for Germany and consequential financial credits; a wrong assessment of the German mentality; the problem of Austria-Hungary being disintegrated, etc.). The climax of this analysis of the time between the two wars is the end of the chapter revealingly titled by Churchill: "Failure to Keep Germany Disarmed the Cause". By making the cause for the war the conclusion of this prelude to the history of the war, he starts – as does Thucydides in 1.23 ff. – with the actual historical narrative. Furthermore, he explicitly mentions the barbarity and brutality of World War II, which exceeds anything that had happened before:

In the Second World War every bond between man and man was to perish. Crimes were committed by the Germans under the Hitlerite domination to which they allowed themselves to be subjected, which find no equal in scale and wickedness with any that have darkened the human record. [...] We have at length emerged from a scene of material ruin and moral havoc the like of which had never darkened the imagination of former centuries. (1948: 14)

This, too, should be read in comparison with Thucydides' archaeology (in which Thucydides proves that the Peloponnesian War was the greatest war by comparing

it with earlier wars like the Trojan War), and his account of Corcyra, in which he speaks about the mental and moral changes brought about by the war: There was no previous war in which so many people died and in which people were desensitized to violence in such a short time. So Churchill displays his indebtedness to his ancient forerunner who (like himself) both actively participated in the war as later wrote about it, already in his preface and in the first chapter (the archaeology) of his history of World War II. And it is not at all an overstatement to conclude that Churchill – in the words of Lawrence of Arabia – was not only perceived as a modern Thucydides, but that he himself accepted this role for himself.

Notes

- 1 Above all there is (i) Weber's Habilitation (1891) on Roman agricultural history and its relevance for public and private law (*Die römische Agrargeschichte in ihrer Bedeutung für das Staats- und Privatrecht*), printed in Tübingen in 1896: (ii) his encyclopedia article on agricultural developments in antiquity, which appeared in 1909 in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*; (iii) his essay on the city; (iv) the lecture on social causes for the end of ancient culture (delivered and edited in 1896).
- 2 This was a completely erroneous statement, as Randolph noted: "Mr. Weldon's advice may have been sound, but his memory faulty. Thomas Hobbes had learned Greek at the age of six; and though it is true that he was eighty-six when he completed a translation of Homer, he was still under forty when he translated Thucydides. Churchill knew nothing of this" (1966: 323).
- 3 I owe this anecdote to Richard M. Langworth.
- 4 According to the house manager at Chartwell House today there are three copies of Thucydides in the library, but we do not know when exactly they were added to the collection.

Guide to Further Reading

The theme of Thucydides in modern education has yet to be studied in any depth, but Kipf (1999) offers an interesting account of the place of Herodotus in school curricula; Clarke (1959) surveys classical education in Britain up to 1900, and Stray (1998) offers a detailed study of developments in the same country between 1830 and 1960. On Weber and Thucydides; see Hennis (2003). Radkau (2009) offers a more general intellectual biography.

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On Translating Thucydides

Emily Greenwood

At present, so far as English versions are concerned, the field, for all practical purposes, is occupied solely by the portly pedantry of Bloomfield, the grotesque likeness of Hobbes, the hideous fidelity of Dale, and the vagrant slipshod paraphrase of Crawley.

(Wilkins 1873: xiii)

Although the overwhelming majority of Thucydides' modern readers encounter him in translation, Thucydidean scholarship remains largely silent on this topic. Since scholarship tends to be written for experts and aspiring experts, it is often assumed that readers will have access to the Greek text of Thucydides; and yet none of Thucydides' contemporary readers read his *History* in ancient Greek, in the sense that we usually attach to "reading." Instead they translate him with varying degrees of difficulty and with the aid of different scholarly aids, from the dictionary to the academic monograph. Consequently, the challenges of translation underlie and inform all close scholarship on Thucydides, ranging from questions about the implications of the tense structure in a particular passage, to how to construe the erotic metaphors that crop up at notable junctures in the text (Bakker 1997; Ludwig 2002; Wohl 2002). Whatever else these questions are about, they are, first and foremost, questions about translation. Given that translation is the degree-zero for all Thucydidean receptions from ancient Rome to the present, and arguably many ancient Greek receptions of Thucydides as well, the neglect of this topic is a curious oversight (cf. Gillespie 2011: 1).

For the vast majority of Thucydides' contemporary readers, insofar as Thucydides is Thucydides in translation, any reception is mediated by a prior reception on the part of the translator, a Valla, a Crawley, a de Romilly, or a Lattimore. In fact, as I shall argue in below, previous translations lurk beneath

the surface of the later translations. Translation is reception in the sense that the translator interprets an author in light of several different contexts: cultural, historical, literary, academic/scholarly, and in conscious engagement with existing translations.

My purpose in this chapter is to explain the importance of translation for the study of Thucydides and to tease out the role that translation has played and continues to play in the reception of Thucydides. This chapter is descriptive rather than prescriptive – it analyzes existing translations and documents trends rather than attempting to say how Thucydides should be translated. Instead, I aim to offer a systematic discussion of what is at stake in Thucydidean translation and to establish guidelines for the serious academic study of translations of Thucydides. The study of Thucydidean translation is open-ended: more translations exist, in multiple languages, than can be summarized in the scope of this article – to my knowledge, the complete Greek text of Thucydides has been translated into neo-Latin, French, German, English, Italian, Spanish, Danish, modern Greek, Russian, and Japanese – and new translations will emerge in the future. For the methodological discussion of Thucydidean translation I have chosen to compare fourteen sample translations in two mainstream languages, English and French, spanning the period 1629–2009, from Thomas Hobbes’ translation to Jeremy Mynott’s English translation for the series “Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought” (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2).

Studying Translations

At present the study of translations of Thucydides has mostly been confined to academic reviews of published translations (e.g., Carroll 1999; Willett 1999; Hornblower 2000; Edmunds 2007; and Rood 2007). These reviews typically employ the following criteria for evaluating new translations:

- they compare the new translation to existing translations (comparative merit);
- they summarize the translator’s success in rendering Thucydides’ meaning and style in the target language (translational equivalence);
- they comment on the philological accuracy of the translation, whether or not key phrases, sentences, or passages are missing, and on what has been omitted or added in translation;
- they record ancillary material such as introductory essays, footnotes, appendices, maps, bibliography;
- they discuss the suitability of the translation for different target culture constituencies (e.g., as an aid to translation, as commentary, as a readable source for history or international relations courses, as a work for the reader’s pleasure);
- typically they also express their preference for the idiom of a particular translator.

However, there is no formal set of rules for translating Greek and Roman authors into modern languages, nor is there a fixed system for describing and evaluating translations once they are produced. In the past two decades there has been a marked increase in scholarship theorizing the translation of classical texts,¹ but there is little evidence that this scholarship has had much influence on the evaluation of translations, still less on the practice of translators of ancient Greek and Roman texts. For a more developed system for describing and evaluating translations we need to turn to the branch of translation studies known as descriptive translation studies (DTS), pioneered by the Israeli scholar Gideon Toury (2012). Descriptive translation studies is concerned with studying and comparing the translation(al) behavior of individual translators in order to identify trends within a given translation culture and, in turn, to identify the norms at work within this culture. The focus on norms is related, in turn, to a broader interest in the place of translated literature and the norms that govern it within a given literary system. Drawing on Toury's analysis of the role of norms in shaping translation behavior, we can begin to formulate a set of protocols for describing and analyzing translations of Thucydides.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 illustrate the first methodological step in describing Thucydidean translations. In studying any given translation certain basic contextual information is essential: the translator (column 1), the date of first publication (2), the number of volumes (3), whether or not the edition contains a parallel Greek text (4) the Greek edition on which the translation is based, if known (5), the publisher (column 6), whether or not the translation is accompanied by any meta-commentary on the translation in the form of a translator's preface, *vel sim.* (column 7), details of any scholarly collaboration, for example, if a Thucydidean scholar has contributed an Introduction or notes (8), and whether or not the translation has been revised (column 9). This is a rudimentary table that assembles basic data: additional columns could be added to include information such as works on which the translator has relied (where cited), sales figures, and reviews. The information in the fifth column – the Greek edition used – may seem pedantic, but it is both a practical and conceptual consideration. We cannot evaluate the accuracy or adequacy of a particular translation of Thucydides unless we know which Greek edition(s) of Thucydides the translator used. As Armin Paul Frank notes,

[T]he act of translation also makes the particular version under translation into the particular source text; no other version should be called "source text" in the case in question, and it is a common error to employ the term "source text" to all versions of what is usually but misleadingly called the "original." (2004: 791)

Modern editions do not vary considerably, but they do vary nonetheless. When comparing translations of Thucydides over a period of centuries there will obviously be greater divergence between the different source texts used. In the following tables I have attempted to situate individual translators within a

Table 6.1 Sample translations of Thucydides into English

<i>Translator</i>	<i>Date of first publication</i>	<i>Parallel Greek text?</i>		<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Translator's note</i>	<i>Scholar collaborator</i>	<i>Revised editions</i>
		<i>Vols.</i>	<i>text?</i>				
Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)	1629	1		Hen. Seile	In “To His Readers”		1959 (Grene) ^j
William Smith (1711–87)	1753	2		John Watts	In “Preface”		Multiple (1781, 1805, 1812 ...) Multiple ⁱⁱⁱ
Richard Crawley (1840–93)	1874 ⁱⁱ	1		Longmans, Green, & Co.	In “Preface” (pp. vii–x)		
Benjamin Jowett (1817–93)	1881	2		Clarendon Press	Yes	W.H. Forbes ^{iv}	Revised 1901; reissued in a single volume in 1998 by Prometheus Books
Forster Smith (1852–1931)	1919–23	4	Yes	Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library)	Remarks in Introduction		
Rex Warner (1905–86)	1954	1		Penguin	Yes, in “Introduction” (pp. 9–10)	Introduction by M.I. Finley added in revised edition (1972)	1972
Steven Lattimore	1998	1		Hackett	Yes (pp. xix–xxi)		Corrections introduced in second printing ^v

Walter Blanco	1998	1	Norton	Yes (p. xi)	J. Tolbert Roberts
Martin Hammond	2009	1	Oxford World Classics	Remarks in Preface	P.J. Rhodes
Jeremy Mynott	2013	1	Oxford Classical Texts, eds. Jones and Powell, 1942	Section on "Translation and Interpretation" in the Introduction (pp. xxxiv–xxxviii) ^{vi}	Numerous scholars thanked (pp. xii–xiv)

ⁱReprinted while Hobbes was alive in 1634, 1648, and 1676. The most accessible edition is now the Chicago University Press 1989 edition: *The Peloponnesian War: Thucydides, The Complete Hobbes Translation*, with notes and a new introduction by David Grene.

ⁱⁱCrawley's translation of Book 1 of the *History* was published separately in 1866; in the Preface to the completed translation, Crawley comments on the lack of success with which the earlier translation met, "nobody took the least notice of my labours, and I had not even the satisfaction of hearing them abused" (1874: vii).

ⁱⁱⁱRevised and/or updated editions of Crawley's Thucydides in the twentieth century and twenty-first centuries (up to 2006):

J.M. Dent & Sons "Temple Classics" series (1903), Crawley's translation revised by R.C. Feetham. **Modern Library (1934)**, Crawley's translation with an Introduction by Joseph Gavorse. **1951 Modern Library** edition with an Introduction by John H. Finley Jr.; revised by T.E. Wick for a **1982 Modern Library** edition for which Wick also wrote an Introduction. **Everyman Edition (1993)**, Crawley's translation with Introduction by W.R. Connor. **Landmark Edition (1996)**, with Crawley's translation revised by Robert Strassler, who is also the editor of the volume and author of the notes. **Wordsworth Classics (1997)**, with an Introduction by Lorna Hardwick. **Dover Publications (2004)** – an unabridged republication of the 1910 edition published by J.M. Dent & Sons. **Barnes and Noble Classics (2006)**, Crawley's translation revised by Donald Lateiner, who contributed an Introduction and notes.

^{iv}Forbes did not contribute any material to Jowett's translation in his own right, but Jowett names him as "his unwearied and disinterested fellow-laborer in a long and necessarily tedious work" and acknowledges the contribution of Forbes' scholarship to the accuracy of the translation (1881, Vol. 1: vi).

^vCorrections included restoring omitted passages and phrases and correcting garbled names. Errors present in the first printing are noted in Willett 1999: 144–45 (n.24), and Hornblower 2000.

^{vi}Mynott has also published a separate article in *Arion* entitled "Translating Thucydides" = Mynott (2013b).

Table 6.2 Sample translations of Thucydides into French

<i>Translator</i>	<i>Date of first publication</i>	<i>Vols.</i>	<i>Parallel Greek text?</i>	<i>Greek edition used (where known)</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Translator's note</i>	<i>Revised editions</i>
Levesque	1795 ²	4	no	Ducker, 1731	Gail et Aubin	Remarks on translation in Preface, pp. i–vii	
Didot	1833		yes	Own edition, based on Bekker	Firmin Didot Frères	Remarks on translation pp. xxxvi–xliii	
Bétant	1863	1	no	Own edition	Hachette et Cie	No	
de Romilly, Weil, and Bodin ³	1953–72	6	yes	Own edition with apparatus criticus, based on Hude's 2-vol. Teubner edition and checked against Oxford Classical Texts edition	Belles Lettres (Budé series)	No; vol. 1 has brief notes on use of Bodin's notes (pp. lviii–lix)	Reissue of the Budé translations as a single volume in 1990 (Éditions Laffont), without the Greek text

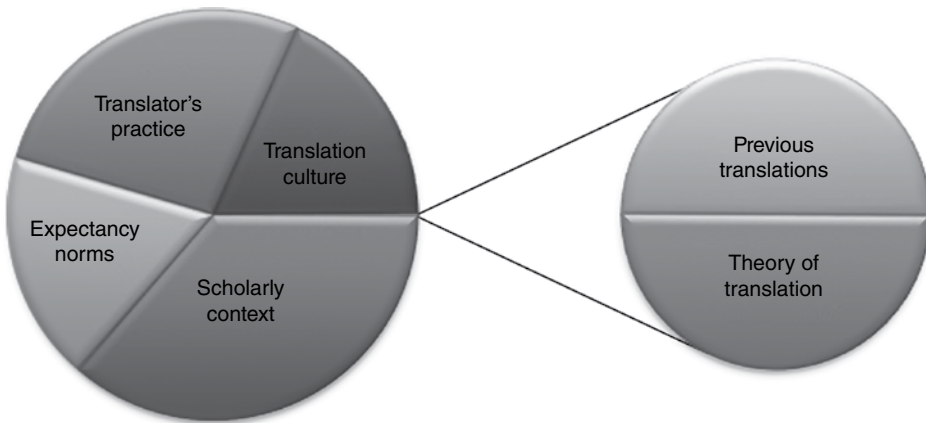


Figure 6.1 Diagram illustrating the study of norms in translation of Thucydides

tradition of translating Thucydides and to establish basic information about the content of and context for each translation.

The next step is to consider the norms at work in the individual translations chosen for study. The diagram in Figure 6.1 offers one possible model for approaching the study of norms in (Thucydidean) translations.

I have suggested four main norm areas at work in any given Thucydidean translation, with the “translation culture” subdivided into (a) previous translations and (b) theories of translation. There is considerable overlap between these norm areas. For example, expectancy norms, which might include the house style of a publisher and the translation conventions of a particular series (e.g., Penguin Classics) or the vision of a particular editor, could also be considered part of the “translation culture.” I have chosen to separate them because, in this model, “expectancy norms” refers to the expectations and demands of particular institutions that play a role in the production of the translation.

The first norm area, scholarly context, refers to the role that classical scholarship plays in informing and shaping the translation. For an ancient Greek author such as Thucydides, whose Greek is notoriously difficult, scholarly aids are a *sine qua non*, but translators represent the role of scholarship in the translation process in different ways. Classical scholarship is a shifting category, which becomes increasingly professionalized from the late eighteenth century onwards. The “scholarly context” for Valla’s translation of Thucydides in fifteenth-century Florence was obviously very different in nature from the scholarly context of William Smith’s translation of Thucydides into English in 1753, or Jowett’s Victorian translation of 1881. In his introduction Jowett comments in some depth about the state of scholarship on Thucydides and on Thomas Arnold’s three-volume critical edition of Thucydides (1830–5), in particular. Among recent translators Walter Blanco acknowledges his debt to commentators – he cites Andrews, Dover, Gomme, Hornblower, and Lamberton (Blanco 1998: xi), but perhaps the clearest illustration of the importance

of the scholarly context for translation is Lattimore's 1998 translation for Hackett. Lattimore's footnotes variously supplement the translation and supply the reader with information that clarifies the sense of a passage, and discuss interpretative debates. Lattimore cites scholarly publications frequently and is present in the text as both translator and scholar-commentator. The alternative is for the translator to collaborate with an established academic who has published on the author in question: examples include the collaboration between Walter Blanco and Jennifer Roberts (Norton Classical Editions), and Martin Hammond and P.J. Rhodes (Oxford World Classics).

The second norm area, the translator's practice or translation behavior, describes the minutiae of translation. Study of this norm might include research into the translator's working library, such as the dictionaries, commentaries, lexica, search engines, and scholarly works that he or she used as tools for the translation – with the proviso that digital research technologies are much harder to track than traditional library research. Even with conventional print-based research, once the occasion for translation has passed, it is hard to reconstruct which books the translator might have gathered around him or herself. Where available, translators' diaries and interviews with translators can be used to reconstruct translational behavior.⁴ The inclusion of a meta-commentary on the translation, in the form of a translator's preface or note is clearly helpful for determining the translator's awareness of certain norms of translation, but the overtly self-conscious nature of the genre means that there is a tendency to present an ideal translatorly self, which may or may not represent one's practice as a translator accurately. Furthermore, such prefaces are typically very brief, omitting the daily realia of what goes into producing a translation. Publications that document the minutiae of translation are rare, and even where these exist it is still necessary to do an independent study of the translator's practice and behavior.

Although translators' prefaces are not necessarily a reliable guide to how a translator has translated, they are important sources for understanding which normative values a given translator privileges (accuracy? readability? functional equivalence?). Translation behavior is both an internal norm and an external norm: it is an internal norm in the sense that the consistency and coherence of a translator's methodology within a given translation constitute a normative force in their own right (cf. Frank 2004: 818). At the same time, the behavior of a translator is also conditioned and constantly modulated by external conventions – the so-called "translation culture," which is the next norm area on my list. Any attempt to study translational behavior is complicated, not just by the fact that translators do not necessarily cross-examine why it is that they approach the translation of a text in a particular way, but also by the role played by the unconscious in the translation process. Here we can turn to William Weaver's essay on "The Translation Process," in which he offers a detailed, running commentary on his own translation of a paragraph from an Italian story. Reflecting on his methodology, Weaver remarks, "I need hardly say that the description that follows is partial, perhaps even somewhat misleading, because I have tried

to make conscious and logical something that is, most of the time, unconscious, instinctive" (1989: 117). Responding to Weaver, Venuti has distinguished between the translator's "unconscious" and his or her "preconscious" – "the translator's knowledge of the foreign and translating languages, but also what Gideon Toury (1995) would call the cultural and social norms that shape the translating process, especially the translating traditions, conventions, and practices that currently prevail in the receiving culture" (Venuti 2002: 237; for Toury 1995 see Toury 2012).

This brings me to the third norm, the translation culture, which I subdivide – somewhat artificially – into the influence of previous translations, on the one hand, and theories of translation, on the other hand. Translators' notes and prefaces are an important, preliminary source for identifying the positive and negative influence of predecessors who have translated the same work. Similarly, the terminology used in translators' notes and prefaces also offers insights into the theories of translation that have impressed the translator in question. Obvious examples include the use of terms such as "accuracy," "fidelity," "authenticity," and "equivalence." The translation culture can be studied both synchronically and diachronically. Commenting on English nineteenth-century literary translations, Matthew Reynolds (2006) notes that the norms of "fidelity" and "accuracy" prevail in reviews of translations published in journals in this period. But one can equally tell a diachronic narrative about values such as "fidelity," beginning with translation discourse in ancient Rome. Further-reaching insights into the effect of a translation culture on a given translation of *Thucydides* will come from close analysis of passages of the translation in relation to the corresponding passages in the source text, in an attempt to infer what values and theory of translation have guided the translator. In addition, systematic comparison between carefully selected passages from the target text and translations of the same passages in previous translations, will give a more objective demonstration of influence within the translation culture.

Finally, the fourth norm area, expectancy norms, is a source of potential tension with the preceding norm areas. As I use it here, "expectancy norms" is closely related to "translation culture," but distinct from it insofar as the expectations involved may be entirely extraneous to the practice and theory of translation. Examples might include trends in publishing, marketing, sociology (the position of the translator and his or her institutional affiliation), canonization (e.g., the "classic" status of the work in question), and shifts in educational syllabuses. In the context of the latter, Donald Carne-Ross has argued convincingly, in relation to Richmond Lattimore's translations of Homer, that the spread of world literature surveys and Greek literature surveys in translation at American universities shaped a new kind of translation of classical texts (Carne-Ross 2010: 149).

Depending on the historical and cultural context for the translation, expectancy norms might also include dedications to patrons, as well as more general dedications to royals, statesmen, or members of the papacy (Bétant's translation is dedicated to the memory of Joannis Capodistrias (1776–1831), the first head of Independent Greece, for whom Bétant had once worked as a diplomatic secretary). William

Smith's 1753 translation bears a dedication to "His Royal Highness Prince of Wales" (later George III), on the justification that,

The History of Thucydides hath been studiously read and admired by the greatest Princes, and may therefore presume to lay some claim to the Protection of your Royal Highness. Great Britain, of all the States now existing in the world, most nearly resembleth what Athens was at the time when the War, which is the Subject of it, broke out in Greece.

Sometimes prefaces will single out specific institutions that designate the primary target audience. The Preface to Henry Musgrave Wilkins' *Speeches from Thucydides* states the translator's purpose as, "the modest aim of aiding, so far as lay in his power, the candidates for classical honours at our universities and colleges," with specific reference to the "Honour Schools" of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, and "the Oxford standard of translation" (Wilkins 1873: xi–xii).

When it comes to broader normative influences such as gender, which reflect prevailing biases in society at large, it is not easy to separate gender bias within a specific target society from the operations of gender in Thucydides' own text. For example, when we read in Rex Warner's note to his translation of Thucydides, that among the virtues of Hobbes' translation are that, "he, above all men, had an intellect equipped to understand and enjoy the greatness of his original; nor is there anything in his style that is not exact, masculine, and emphatic" (1954: 9), should we take the criterion of masculine style as a reflection of Warner's own values and the prevailing gender bias of 1950s Britain, as a defense of Hobbes against the supposed effeminacy of the art of translation, or as a reflection of Thucydides' ideologically masculine work?⁵ Arguably all three factors are involved. It is notable that there are no women among Thucydides' English language translators. In the history of translating Thucydides Jacqueline de Romilly is a notable and eminent exception, but historically the tradition of translating Thucydides is still overwhelmingly male.

What Difference does Translation Make?

In the translator's note to his 1998 translation of Thucydides' *History*, Steven Lattimore defines the translator's primary responsibility in the following terms: "The translator's fundamental responsibility, at least in dealing with a prose work of nonfiction, is to give the reader the most accurate information possible *about what is in the text*" (1998: xix; my emphasis). This apparently straightforward statement of methodology belies the considerable debate in scholarship about "what is in the text." In classical reception studies, scholars are now very familiar with the argument that meaning is determined at the point of reception, but the majority of Thucydidean scholarship conducted in Classics departments, while rightly focused on the source text and the source culture, is less amenable to studying its own role in the creation

of “what is in the text.” Scholarship on Thucydides does not provide a neutral interpretative framework for the translator of Thucydides. Instead, a translator’s conception of the source text is shaped by prevailing assumptions in scholarship about the interpretation of the source text and its author, which are prone to change.⁶ A recurring theme in translators’ prefaces is the realization that developments in scholarship on Thucydides, as well in classical scholarship in general, call for fresh translations. In his translator’s preface Jowett appears vexed by the ephemerality of scholarship and the transience of philology, raising instead the possibility of the progress of philology leading to the idea of a fixed interpretation of the text:

It may be asked whether, as philology progresses and words are understood to have a fixed meaning – not “that which we bring to them,” but that which is contained in them – the art of interpretation must be always going on, like the labour of the Danaides, pouring into a sieve knowledge which is perpetually flowing out, and in every generation requiring to be replenished. ... Such a perennial stream of interpretation tends to discredit itself. (1881, I: xviii)

Contrary to Jowett’s wistful vision of the progress of philology, an inevitable consequence of such progress is that new discussions and approaches invariably occlude prior knowledge. Even with their more discursive format, commentaries cannot take every interpretative possibility into account. With translations, which are generally less free to discourse around the text,⁷ the constraints on interpretation are all the more acute. If things are not there in the translation, they have little chance of coming to readers’ attention. For readers whose sole access to Thucydides is via translation, the translator effectively controls the parameters of what Thucydides can mean. The reader’s interpretation is preconditioned by the translator, who has made a prior judgment about “what is in the text.” Writing about the common slippage between translation and interpretation, Axel Bühler has suggested that we move away from the trivial and unreflexive explanation that “every translation is an interpretation,” and has instead proposed an analysis of the particular kinds of interpreting activities constituted by translating activities (Bühler 2002: 56–8). Bühler’s outline of the interpretative cast of translating activities is useful for thinking about the work that has gone into determining what Thucydides means during the translation process (*ibid.*: 72):

1. The identification of the communicative intention of the source text.
2. The identification of his or her thoughts.
3. The identification of conventional meanings of elements of the source language.
4. The adaptation of the source text for groups of speakers in the target language.

Given Thucydides’ own methodological interest in the difficulty of his subject matter and his self-fashioning as an author who is not writing an accessible or easy text, the translator’s role in potentially making Thucydides more accessible than

he ever intended to be, is of particular interest. As Jeremy Mynott asks in the Introduction to his recent translation of Thucydides, “Does the translator have an obligation to reproduce difficult Greek in difficult English to convey the same effects and produce the same reaction?” (2013a: xxxv–vi). By way of illustrating the difference that translation makes, I offer a discussion of a verbal motif in Book 1, chapters 20–22, of Thucydides’ *History* in the sample translations – featured in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 above.

Thucydides informs his readers that his *History* eschews considerations of ease and enjoyability. In the section of the work referred to as the *Archaeology* (1.2–20), he pits his version of events against the tendency for people to accept received accounts of the past without subjecting them to due cross-examination (1.20.1). This is a version, in English, of what Thucydides wrote, taking the Oxford Classical Text (OCT) Greek edition of the *History* as my source text (Jones and Powell 1942):

οἱ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι τὰς ἀκοὰς τῶν προγεγεννημένων, καὶ ἣν ἐπιχώρια σφίσιν ἦ, ὁμοίως ἀβασανίστως παρ’ ἀλλήλων δέχονται.

Hoi gar anthrōpoi tas akoas tōn progegenēmenōn, kai ēn epikhōria sphisin ē, homoiōs abasanistōs par’ allēlōn dekhontai.

For it is the case that people accept information on hearsay from each other about past occurrences, even if these were local events for them, without extracting the truth.

I call this a version, rather than a translation, evoking the Latin verb *vertere* (to turn), a common term for translation in Roman authors. “Version” signals the provisionality of translation, as witnessed by the fact that there are multiple English Thucydideses by different translators. At the same time, it is a version that is as accurate as possible, to the best of my ability and knowledge.

The subtle three-letter explanatory particle *gar* (the second word in the Greek passage cited above), typically translated as “for,” has to convey an argumentative charge here, hence the more expansive phrase “for it is the case that.” It is not obvious how to translate *tas akoas*, which I have rendered as “information on [from] hearsay.” The noun *akoē* is strongly reminiscent of Herodotus, who uses it frequently to describe the oral reports from which he derives information both about the past and about other countries and their cultures. But the most striking feature of Thucydides’ language in this sentence is the rare adverb *abasanistōs*, which occurs only twice in extant Greek literature from the classical period. The root of this word is the noun *basanos*, which can mean a touchstone used to test the authenticity of metals through rubbing, as well as the process of torture. The same adverb is used by orator Antiphon (1.13) to refer to slaves who have not been tortured (the standard way of obtaining evidence from slaves in Athenian legal proceedings). The sample English translations render this adverb: “without examination” (Hobbes); “without subjecting them to the test of sedate examination” (Smith); “without applying any critical test whatever” (Crawley); “men do not discriminate” (Jowett); “neglecting to test them just the

same” (Forster Smith); “in an uncritical way” (Warner); “with a uniform lack of examination” (Lattimore); “people ... unquestioningly acceptance” (Blanco); “show the same uncritical acceptance” (Hammond); and “accept quite uncritically” (Mynott). Three of the four French translators whom I consulted rendered *abasanistōs* as “sans examen” (Levesque, Didot, de Romilly), while Bétant translates it as “sans vérifier.”

If the translator dilutes this metaphor, as all of the translations cited above do, then the metaphorical tone of this section of narrative is obscured. In Thucydides’ Greek, the physical force implied by the adverb *abasanistōs* at 1.20.1 (without extracting, wringing out), is reinforced by the adjective ἀταλαίπωρος (*atalaipōros*) “devoid of exertion” at 1.20.3.⁸ In the Greek text the fact that both parts of speech are privative means that there is formal repetition as well as thematic repetition. Of all the translations that I have consulted, Richard Crawley translates this adjective most judiciously with the phrase “so little pains,” conveying the Thucydidean theme of the search for the truth as a physical exertion (echoed in Forster Smith’s “so averse to taking pains”). Thucydides’ subsequent use of the adverb ἐπιπόνως (*epipōns*) “toilsomely” at 1.22.3 should leave us in no doubt about the importance of this motif – the sheer effort involved in establishing what happened in the past.

The participle *epixelthōn* (from *epexerkhomai*), at 1.22.2, immediately prior to the adverb *epipōns*, which starts the next sentence, is also relevant here. Among its range of meanings, the verb *epexerkhomai* can denote embarking on military action (*LSJ* s.v. I.1), prosecution and pursuing a matter in a legal trial (*LSJ* s.v. I.2), and examining something fully (*LSJ* s.v. II.3) (see Morrison 2006: 27–8, who translates the participle *epixelthōn* as “I went after,” in order to convey the combative military and legal overtones). The sample English translations that I have consulted translate it as “I had made particular enquiry” (Hobbes); “I have been able to collect” (Smith), “I made the most careful and particular enquiry” (Jowett), “being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests” (Crawley, altering the grammar somewhat); “I have checked” (Warner); “examining” (Lattimore); “going over” (Blanco); “pursuing” (Hammond); and “I investigated” (Mynott). Of these, Blanco and Hammond felicitously convey the combined sense of movement and action, and intellectual examination.

This motif (*abasanistōs*, *atalaipōros*, *epixelthōn* and *epipōns* – see Table 6.3), spread across forty-one lines of Greek in the OCT edition, demonstrates the importance of translating larger sense units and not just single sentences, although the question of how to divide up sense units and what the patterns are is not an easy one (see Dewald 2005). Thematic translation is one criterion that can be used to evaluate the reliability of a translation, in terms of its ability to reproduce patterns of meaning that are present in the Greek text of Thucydides in the target language version. John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte express this well when they comment that “Translators cannot approach the text from a linear point of view; they must be present simultaneously at various points of a text” (Bigueneet and Schulte 1989: xii). If we apply this criterion to the translations in question, all the

Table 6.3 Translations of the sequence *abasanistōs* (1.20.1), *atalaipōros* (1.20.3), *epexelthōn* (1.22.2), and *epiponōs* (1.22.3)

(a) Sample English language translations from the period 1629–2009

HOBBS:	without examination ... impatient of labour ... I had made particular enquiry ... it was hard
SMITH:	without subjecting them to the test of sedate examination ... so easy a task ... I have been able to collect ... a work of no little difficulty
CRAWLEY:	without applying any critical test whatever ... so little pains ... being always tried [by the most severe and detailed tests] ... have cost me some labour
JOWETT:	men do not discriminate so little trouble do men take ... I made [the most careful and particular] enquiry ... the task was a laborious one
FORSTER SMITH:	neglecting to test them just the same ... so averse to taking pains ... investigating ... the endeavor to ascertain these facts was a laborious task
WARNER:	in an uncritical way ... will not take trouble ... I have checked ... not easy to discover
LATTIMORE:	with a uniform lack of examination ... devoid of effort ... examining ... involved great effort
BLANCO:	people unquestioningly accept ... expend very little effort ... going over ... I have found this task to be extremely arduous
HAMMOND:	all men show the same uncritical acceptance ... how little trouble most people take ... pursuing... it was laborious research
MYNOTT:	people accept quite uncritically ... so little trouble ... I investigated ... this was a laborious process of research

(b) Sample French language translations from the period 1795–1953

LEVESQUE:	sans examen ... sont indolents ... j'ai fait des informations ... ces recherches étaient pénibles
DIDOT:	sans examen ... sont indolents ... en apportant [la plus grande exactitude] ... il était difficile de trouver la vérité
BÉTANT:	sans jamais les vérifier, ... se montrent insouciantes ... je m'étais procuré [des renseignements précis] ... j'avais de la peine
DE ROMILLY:	Car les gens, s'agit-il même de leur pays, n'en acceptent pas moins sans examen ... telle est la négligence ... j'ai enquêté ... j'avais, d'ailleurs, de la peine à les établir

translators convey Thucydides' contempt for the shoddiness with which the majority of people investigate the past, but none of the translations sampled here consistently bring out the motif of struggle and physical exertion that is present in all four segments of text. Furthermore, all of the translators reduce the sense of the adverb *abasanistōs* to a purely intellectual failing (lack of examination, test, critical test, discrimination, etc.), when the primary sense in the Greek is of physical pressure applied, metaphorically, to a mental process.

Why does this matter? This metaphor is vital for Thucydides' presentation of his credentials as a historian and for the construction of his persona. By emphasizing the fact that he has taken great pains he reassures readers that his analysis of events can be trusted and by introducing a physical metaphor for the pursuit of history,

arguably Thucydides aligns his two different personae Thucydides the historian and Thucydides the general, or at the very least presents us with a model for historical inquiry as a rigorous, quasi-physical pursuit. Not to replicate these metaphors in translation is to omit the communicative intention of a crucial passage in which Thucydides offers us an account of his conception of his work and its value.

In addition to the preceding sketch of challenges that confront the translator of Thucydides, we should also add irony and neologism. In the case of irony, we can distinguish between structural irony and verbal irony. Interpretations of the meaning and purpose of the *History* rely on studying its structure, including the organization of the narrative units and the role that irony plays in alerting us to patterns in the text. The structural basis for Thucydidean interpretation is elegantly explained by Carolyn Dewald in her study of the narrative structure of the *History* (2005). Structural patterns and ironies are less contingent upon the vagaries of individual translations. In the case of “ironic juxtaposition” (Dewald 2005: 6), for example, providing the translator does not omit any sections of the narrative, the fact that two dissonant episodes are being juxtaposed will be readily apparent to readers of the translation.

By contrast, the transfer of verbal ironies from the source text to the target text depends wholly on the translator’s interpretation and skill. One common form of verbal irony in Thucydides is the repetition of a verbal theme in radically different circumstances in order to highlight a reversal of fortune. A good example is the use of the adjective *lampros* (brilliant, splendid) and the cognate noun *lamprotēs* (brilliance, splendor) in the narrative of the Sicilian expedition in Books 6–7. Thucydides uses repetition of this verbal theme to underscore the ironic contrast between the ostentatious splendor with which the Athenian expedition set sail to Sicily in the summer of 415 BCE, confident of victory, and the utter defeat of this expedition in the winter of 413 BCE. At 6.31.6, Thucydides gives us an image of the expedition leaving the Piraeus, focalized through the eyes of the crowds who were there to witness its departure, and uses the phrase ὄψεως λαμπρότητι (*opseōs lamprotēti* — “brilliance of its appearance”). At 7.75.6, as the Athenians and their allies attempt to retreat across Sicily on land, Thucydides explains that the Athenians’ sense of desolation was exacerbated by the sheer contrast between their initial brilliant showing ἀπὸ οἷας λαμπρότητος (*apo hoias lamprotētos* — lit. “from what (initial) brilliance”) and boastfulness, and the humiliation to which they had been reduced in the end. The same stem is then repeated at the conclusion of this larger, two-book narrative unit. At 7.87.5, Thucydides remarks that this military campaign was λαμπρότατος (*lamprotatos* — “most brilliant”) for the victors (the Syracusans and Spartans and their allies), marking the shift in fortunes by transferring this attribute from the Athenians at the beginning of the Sicilian narrative to their enemies at the end of the narrative. In translation, the question arises as to whether the translator (a) is aware of this verbal theme across a large section of text and (b) what significance he or she attaches to it, if any. The answer to both (a) and (b) will likely involve the translator’s awareness of Thucydidean scholarship. If translator *x* is aware of

the repetition and thinks that it constitutes significant verbal irony, he or she must then find a way of translating this stem into English consistently, so that the verbal irony will be reproduced in the target text and accessible to the reader upon close reading. Steven Lattimore does this skillfully, translating the sequence *opseōs lamprotēti ... apo hoias lamprotētos ... lamprotatos* as: “splendor to look upon” ... “from such splendor” ... “most splendid” (Lattimore 1998).

The judgment about whether verbal irony is present or not, its significance, and how best to convey it will vary from translator to translator and scholar to scholar. It is impossible to propose systematic rules for features of the language of the source text that often rely upon the judgment of different interpretive communities. Conversely, the approach that translators adopt to neologisms in Thucydides tends to be more consistent and closely influenced by translational norms, specifically the translation culture (both what previous translators have done and what theories and methodologies prevail) and the expectancy norms of the target culture – the broader literary system within which the translator is writing – and the publisher who has commissioned the translation. But at the same time, the translation of source text neologisms also has the potential to bring different translational norms into conflict: prevailing translational theory might incline toward source-oriented foreignization, respecting the “difference” of the source text and attempting to represent this difference in the target language. According to this foreignizing norm, source text neologisms should be rendered by neologisms in the target language or, at the very least, by forms of expression that are unfamiliar. But adherence to this norm may run counter to a publisher’s target-oriented guidelines that privilege readability and naturalized target language prose (cf. Delabastita 2004). One of the hallmarks of Thucydides’ neologistic style is his tendency to form abstract nouns from neuter adjectives: at one point in the Melian Dialogue (5.105.3-4), the Athenian representatives tell the Melians that they consider them blessed in their “inexperience of evil” (*to apeirokakon*), but do not envy their “lack of sense” (*to aphron*). These nouns formed from neuter adjectives are almost clinical in their abstraction and ideally this stark, analytical tone should be carried over in translation. Consulting four of the sample English translations, the translators have neutralized these expressions, losing the particularity of Thucydides’ style. Hobbes has “innocent minds” and “folly,” Crawley has “simplicity” and “folly,” Lattimore translates as “naivety” and “folly,” Hammond as “innocence” and “folly.”

In addition to adjectival substantives on their own, Thucydides also employs adjectival substantives with dependent genitives to create larger sense units (Rusten 1989: 22–3). Hence, at 2.59.3, Thucydides prefaces a speech by Pericles – the last speech that Pericles gives in the *History* – with the comment that Pericles wished “to encourage [his audience] and, by deflecting the influence of anger on their judgment, to put them in a gentler and more fearless state”.⁹ Although idiomatic, the translation that I offer here is hardly elegant English. However, it is only a poor approximation to the style of Thucydides’ Greek: the phrase that I translate as “the influence of anger on their judgment” is more literally “the angered part of their

judgment” (τὸ ὀργιζόμενον τῆς γνώμης— *to orgizomenon tēs gnōmēs*), but as contemporary English prose this sounds labored. Over and above the decision about how to translate a single instance of abstraction involving an adjectival substantive, the translator of Thucydides will have to decide whether or not to attempt to reproduce this element of Thucydides’ style consistently, throughout the translation. If so, they will need to invent a recognizable linguistic unit in the target text, so that readers can detect when abstraction is present.

Retranslation

All translations have a shelf-life *qua* translations. Of the English translations surveyed here, only Hobbes and Smith are irretrievably dated from the perspective of the twenty-first century. Although intelligible to contemporary readers, Hobbes’ phrase “impatient of labour,” meaning intolerant of labor, is now archaic; while Smith’s use of the adjective “sedate” in the phrase “sedate examination,” where the adjective has the sense “of the intellect, and intellectual operations,” is altogether obsolete. However, translations do not need to be read in their entirety in order to continue to exert an influence on readers. Many translations live on in subsequent translations through the phenomenon of “retranslation,” where translators derive inspiration from and recycle language from previous translations of the same source text. Since translations of source texts that are identified as “classics” tend to stand in a highly self-conscious relay, in which each translator is acutely aware of the translational tradition into which they are stepping (cf. Gillespie 2011: 11), the degree of retranslation is even higher than for source texts that are not marked as “classic” works. The cumulative inscription of successive translations leads to compound retranslation in which translator *x* translating Thucydides into English in the twenty-first century might draw on phrases from a well-regarded translation from the twentieth century without realizing that some of these phrases were themselves retranslated from earlier translations. However, if a translator is in the habit of consulting all of the authoritative prior translations then the compounded retranslation need not be unconscious.

This process is described by Rex Warner in the “Translator’s Note” to his translation of Thucydides for Penguin Classics. Among his predecessors, Warner names Hobbes and Crawley as exemplary translators of Thucydides and explains that sometimes, when taking cues from Crawley, he often found that Crawley had taken his cue from Hobbes in turn (1954: 9–10):

I know that often, after cudgeling my brains to find a phrase that would be, not better than one of Crawley’s phrases, but at least adequate, I have referred to Hobbes and found that Crawley himself must have been in the same dilemma, since he has taken over for himself the words of the great seventeenth-century philosopher. On such occasions I have usually followed his lead, and I have taken something from

him, too, in the knowledge that he would probably wish me to do so, just as my own ambitions would be gratified if some future translator were to see fit to employ some words or phrases of my own.

Warner's remarks imply a reciprocal model of translational traditions in which entering into dialogue with previous translators ensures one's own place in the ongoing conversation with the source text – here Thucydides – in which translators are interlocutors.¹⁰ Contrast Warner's frank acknowledgment of borrowing from Crawley/Hobbes with Jowett's more oblique formulation of his debt to the prior translations of Crawley and, to a lesser extent, Wilkins (1870/1873). Writing of himself in the third person, Jowett states:

The translator has had the advantage of being anticipated by Mr. Crawley, late Fellow of Worcester College, and in part by Mr. Wilkins, Fellow of Merton College. He has not refrained from consulting their translations in several passages, and desires to express his gratitude for the assistance which he has received from them. He has also occasionally referred to the clear and elegant French translation of Bétant. (1881: viii)

Jowett's reference to Bétant's translation also alerts us to the importance of considering interlingual debts when comparing translations (similarly, in the Introduction to his French translation, Didot (1833: xxv) cites the English language translations of Hobbes and Smith). It is not sufficient to examine English language translations of Thucydides, or French translations of Thucydides in isolation from authoritative translations of Thucydides into other major European languages. Elsewhere I have suggested that French translations were an important resource for Venizelos' translation of Thucydides into modern Greek, and that traces of French translations are discernible in Venizelos' phrasing (Greenwood 2012: 170–1).

Retranslation arguably exerts a strong normative and conservative influence on translations of Thucydides, particularly across target-language texts within the same language. The potential is for the English language Thucydides to crystallize around one or two canonical translations – those of Hobbes and Crawley, with additional accretions from successive translations. This argument would seem to be borne out by the extensive reprinting of Crawley's 1874 translation, with and without revisions. However, Lattimore's bold, foreignizing translation, which attempts to bring readers to Thucydides' austere and demanding style, shows that considerable innovation exists as well. It is notable that Lattimore chose to resist the trend for target language readability – criticized by Venuti¹¹ and others. On this subject Lattimore observes,

My priority has been fidelity, and although I have not always been entirely literal in reproducing Greek syntax or idiom, I have tended to be most literal where I feel that Thucydides is at his most distinctive and idiosyncratic; in particular, I have resisted

subdividing his unusually – and intentionally – long sentences. [...] As for readability, I can only hope that my approach has not been counterproductive, that I have not at times made Thucydides appear less readable than he actually is. (1998: xix–xx)¹²

One final observation about retranslation: it is important to distinguish between retranslation, as I employ the term here, and indirect translation, where a target language text in another language becomes the source text for a new translation. In the case of Thucydides, the classic example here is the use of Lorenzo Valla's neo-Latin translation of Thucydides (1452) as the source text for the first vernacular translation of Thucydides – Claude de Seyssel's French translation (1527) – an indirect translation – which in turn furnished the source text for the first “translation” of Thucydides into English by Thomas Nicolls in 1550 (on Valla, Pade 2003: 120–8).

Translating a War Narrative

I have already considered the difference that translation makes in terms of the ability of the translators to tease out verbal themes that spanned two chapters of Book 1 of the *History*. In conclusion I want to repeat this question in relation to a famous passage of Thucydides and to consider what work translation does in constructing, as opposed to simply relaying, a text and an author for new readers. The case study that I have chosen is Thucydides 7.84–85.1 – the slaughter of part of the retreating Athenian and allied forces at the Assinarus river, that took place in the summer of 413 BCE. In his commentary on this passage, Simon Hornblower describes it as “one of the most appallingly memorable chapters in Thucydides” (2008: 733), but what this appalling memorableness consists of is a complicated question, particularly if we rely on the vagaries of translation. It is notable that Hornblower uses an emotional response to this passage in contemporary literature to demonstrate its affective potential, citing a scene from the novel *The Green Knight* by Iris Murdoch where a character cries as she reads this passage, in the Loeb translation by Forster Smith.

Let us study the scene in Thucydides first. I cite the Greek text as per the Oxford Classical Text edition of 1942.

Νικίας δ' ἐπειδὴ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο ἤγε τὴν στρατιάν· οἱ δὲ Συπακόσιοι καὶ ξύμμαχοι προσέκειντο τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον πανταχόθεν βάλλοντές τε καὶ κατακοντίζοντες· καὶ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἠπείγοντο πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσινάρον ποταμόν, ἅμα μὲν βιαζόμενοι ὑπὸ τῆς πανταχόθεν προσβολῆς ἰπέων τε πολλῶν καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου ὄχλου, οἴομενοι ῥᾶόν τι σφίσιν ἔσεσθαι, ἣν διαβῶσι τὸν ποταμόν, ἅμα δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας καὶ τοῦ πιεῖν ἐπιθυμία. ὥς δὲ γίνονται ἐπ' αὐτῷ, ἐσπίπτουσιν οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ ἔτι, ἀλλὰ πᾶς τέ τις διάβῃναι αὐτοὺς πρῶτος βουλόμενος καὶ οἱ πολέμιοι ἐπικείμενοι χαλεπὴν ἤδη τὴν διάβασιν ἐποίουν· ἄθροοι γὰρ

ἀναγκαζόμενοι χωρεῖν ἐπέπιπτόν τε ἀλλήλοις καὶ κατεπάτουν, περὶ τε τοῖς δορατίοις καὶ σκεύεσιν οἱ μὲν εὐθὺς διεφθείροντο, οἱ δὲ ἐμπαλασσόμενοι κατέρρεον. ἐς τὰ ἐπὶ θάτερα τὰ τοῦ παταμοῦ παραστάντες οἱ Συρακόσιοι (ἦν δὲ κπημῶδες) ἔβαλλον ἄνωθεν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους, πίνοντάς τε τοὺς πολλοὺς ἄσμένους καὶ ἐν κοίλῳ ὄντι τῷ ποταμῷ ἐν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ταπασσομένους. οἳ τε Πελοποννήσιοι ἐπικαταβάντες τοὺς ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ μάλιστα ἔσφαζον. καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ εὐθὺς διέφθαρτο, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἥσοον ἐπίνετό τε ὁμοῦ τῷ πηλῷ ἠματωμένον καὶ περιμάχητον ἦν τοῖς πολλοῖς. τέλος δὲ νεκρῶν τε πολλῶν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοις ἤδη κειμένων ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ καὶ διεφθαρμένου τοῦ στρατεύματος τοῦ μὲν κατὰ τὸν ποταμόν, τοῦ δὲ καὶ, εἴ τι διασφύγοι, ὑπὸ τῶν ἱππέων, Νικίας Γυλίππῳ ἑαυτὸν παραδίδωσι, πιστεύσας μᾶλλον αὐτῷ ἢ τοῖς Συρακοσίοις· καὶ ἑαυτῷ μὲν ζῆρῃσθαι ἐκέλευεν ἐκείνόν τε καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους ὅτι βούλονται, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους στρατιώτας παύσασθαι φονεῦοντας.

Here is Lattimore's translation of this passage (1998: 405):

When the day came, Nikias led the army on. The Syracusans and their allies pursued closely in the same way, hurling missiles and shooting down javelins from all sides. And the Athenians pressed on toward the Assinaros river, partly because, pressured on all sides by the assaults of both numerous cavalry and the ordinary soldiers, they thought that it would be somewhat easier for them if they crossed the river, partly out of fatigue and in their craving to drink. When they came to it, they plunged in, no longer in any order but each of them wanting to be the first across, and the enemy closing in now made the crossing difficult; because they were forced to move packed together, they fell and trampled one another, and from contact with both spears and equipment some were killed instantly while others got entangled and pulled under. Standing along the other bank of the river, which was steep, the Syracusans hurled missiles down at the Athenians as they were drinking thirstily in most cases and jostling each other in the shallow part of the river. And the Peloponnesians descended and did the most butchery when they were in the river. The water immediately turned foul but was not only drunk just as much when full of blood along with the mud but fought over by most of them.

Finally, by the time many corpses were lying on one another in the river, and the army had been slaughtered, part of it by the river and part of it, if there were any escapes, by the cavalry as well, Nikias surrendered to Gylippos, since he trusted him more than the Syracusans; he told him to do as he pleased with him but stop the massacre of the rest of the soldiers.

This is a decisive point in the narrative. The fortunes of the Athenians in Sicily have been in marked decline since their defeat at Epipolae (7.45), and any hopes of capturing Syracuse and gaining control over the island have vanished after the loss of the naval battle in the harbor at Syracuse, narrated at 7.70–1. However, even though prospects for the Athenians and their allies are extremely bleak, they still hope to retreat across Sicily and find a passage home. They march along the

coastline of Sicily to the south of Syracuse for eight days, fighting skirmishes with Syracusan forces, who attempt to block their progress. On the sixth day the two Athenian generals become separated, and half of the army under the command of the general Demosthenes are overtaken by Syracusan and Peloponnesian forces. Demosthenes fights for a day and then surrenders (7.82), unbeknown to Nicias. This leaves Nicias and the remainder of the army exposed with the Syracusan army in pursuit. At the beginning of 7.84 the forces led by Nicias are still trying to retreat. By the end of this chapter any such hopes have been completely crushed, the forces are decimated and Nicias has surrendered (7.85.1). At 7.85.4, Thucydides remarks that this was the most extensive slaughter (πλεῖστος φόνος) and second to none in the Sicilian War.

The paragraph starts with Nicias in control and displaying initiative, Νικίας ... ἦγε (“When day broke Nicias led the army on” – 7.84.1), and its conclusion is Nicias handing himself over to Gylippus in surrender (Νικίας Γυλίπῳ ἑαυτὸν παραδίδωσι – 7.85.1). At this pivotal point in the narrative, it is particularly important that translators pay attention to the verbal structure of the narrative: how exactly does Thucydides narrate the final unraveling of the Athenians? Drawing on the work of Burton Raffel, Steven Willett (1999) has rightly identified syntactical structure as a crucial test for weighing up a translator’s ability to convey the style and essence of the source text.¹³ In analyzing translations of this passage, I have singled out just one aspect of the syntactical structure of the source text, namely the translation of verbs.

In Table 6.4 I have represented the verbs assigned to the different human agents in this passage (Nicias, the Syracusans and their allies, the Peloponnesians, and the Athenians), noting the distribution of active and passive verbs and highlighting the fact that several of the active verbs are verbs of self-destruction and stumbling. I have also noted the passive verbs assigned to the water, which is pulled into the action, reflecting the destruction in its midst.

It is notable that we start with two active clauses: Nicias leading the army out and the Syracusans and their allies responding by bearing down on the Athenians, hurling missiles and shooting javelins. Consequently, in the next sentence the Athenians are harried and are depicted in the passive. For the remainder of this passage the Athenians are (a) the subject of passive verbs, or (b) active verbs which convey stumbling or self-destruction (columns 3 and 4) – with the exception of two verbs in the middle voice. One of these verbs (οἰόμενοι) is pessimistic: Thucydides uses participial motivation to convey the thinking of the Athenians in attempting to cross the river (the participle οἰόμενοι, “thinking” governs a conditional clause ῥᾶόν τι σφίσιν ἔσεσθαι, ἣν διαβῶσι τὸν ποταμόν – “that things would be somewhat easier for them, if they could get across the river”).¹⁵ By contrast, the Syracusans and their allies are the subject of two attacking verbs (one active, one middle: προσέκειντο and ἐπεκείμενοι), three verbs of hurling missiles or casting weapons, and two neutral verbs. Fighting alongside the Syracusans, the Peloponnesians are the subject of two active verbs, including

Table 6.4 Active and passive verbs in 7.84.1–7.85.1

Subject	Active verbs	Active self-destruction	Active falling/stumbling	Middle	Passive
Nicias	ἦγε, (ἐαυτὸν) παραδίδοσι, πιστεύσας βάλλοντες, κατακοντίζοντες, ἐποίου, ¹⁴ παραστάντες, ἐβαλλον.				
Syracusans & their allies				προσέκειντο, ἐπεκείμενοι	
Peloponnesians Athenians	ἐπικαταβάντες, ἔσφαζον. διαβῶσι, γίνονται, πᾶς τις βουλόμενος	ἐποίουν, ἐπέπτυν (ἀλλήλους), κατεπάπτυν (ἀλλήλους)	ἐσπίπτουσιν, κατέρρεον.	οἴμενοι, ἠπείγοντο	βιάζόμενοι, ἀναγκάζ όμενοι, διεφθείροντο, ἐμπαλασσόμενοι, ταρασσομένους
Water					διέφθαρτο, ἐπίνετο, ἠμαρτωμένον, περιμάχητον ἦν

the verb that punctuates the action and literally delivers the death blow to the Athenians: ἔσφαζον – “slaughtered,” “butchered.”

Lattimore succeeds in preserving the balance of active and passive verbs in the source text. In the first sentence of his translation Nicias and the Syracusans and their allies are active subjects, and at the start of the second sentence the Athenians are still pressing on, but with hints of passivity creeping in – they are βιάζόμενοι, “forced,” “pressured.” In contrast, in his translation of the first sentence, Crawley chose to reallocate the active verbs of which the Syracusans and their allies are the subject as passive verbs with the Athenians as subject: “pressed, as before, by the Syracusans and their allies, pelted from every side by their missiles, and struck down by their javelins” (1874: 540). In Crawley’s translation Athenian passivity is established at the outset and there is no progressive unraveling of their position.

The second sentence in the Greek is a compound complex sentence consisting of fifty words and comprising five clauses, one main clause and four subordinate. Both Crawley and Lattimore stick very close to this syntactical structure: Crawley has a single sentence of fifty words, also comprising five clauses, while Lattimore has fifty-one words and five clauses. Hammond splits up Thucydides’ long, complex sentence into two sentences, the first of which comprises a single clause and thirteen words, and the second of which comprises three clauses and forty-six words. In this second sentence Hammond collapses the passive participle βιάζόμενοι into an abstract thought: “they thought that if they could only cross the river they would have some relief from the constant pressure of attacks on all sides by the large number of enemy cavalry and the mass of light troops” (2009: 412). This translation makes the Athenians seem more in control than they are in the Greek, where the point is that Athenians are thinking οἰόμενοι (“poorly” – see above) while being pressured, βιάζόμενοι – the two present participles balance each other.

Syntactical structure aside, ideally the translator will also reproduce linguistic repetition in this passage, conveying the fact that Thucydides uses the verb διαφθείρω (“destroy”) three times, twice of the Athenians in the passive, and once of the river water, again in the passive. When applied to the river water, translators tend to translate this verb as “was corrupted” (Hobbes), “spoiled” (Crawley), “became foul” (Jowett), “became foul” (Warner), “turned foul” (Lattimore), “became fouled” (Blanco), “turned foul” (Hammond), which are expressive turns of phrase, but lose the fact that the description of the river water being instantly destroyed (εὐθὺς διέφθαρτο), recalls the statement that “some [of the Athenians] were destroyed instantly” (εὐθὺς διέφθειροντο) after falling into the river and being crushed by their fellow soldiers and skewered on their own weapons. On consideration, the idiomatic “turned foul” works better in the target language prose, but there is a loss. In the Greek the repetition of the verb διαφθείρω helps to underscore the motif of a tide of destruction. The fact that the water is also destroyed lends a hint of pathetic fallacy to the scene, as it becomes an object of contention, with the Athenians fighting each other to drink it. The detail of the Athenians, in the depression (κοίλῳ) of the river, with the Syracusans hurling missiles at them from above (ἄνωθεν) and the Peloponnesians

coming down after them (ἐπικαταβάντες), uses their depressed physical position to underscore the bathos of the scene: this is what a glorious expedition, unprecedented in its scale, has been reduced to. Thucydides will use the same adjective to describe the abject position of the survivors, who are imprisoned in the Syracusan quarries: ἐν κοίλῳ χωρίῳ ὄντας (7.87.1).

Thucydides further emphasizes the Athenians' abjection by using a verb usually used of butchering animals – *sphazdō* – to describe their killing. The same verb is also used for the killing of their generals, Nicias and Demosthenes (*apesphaxan*, from *aposphazdō*) at 7.86.2. The Athenians' expedition to Sicily has brought them here, to die as cattle, to quote Wilfred Owen.¹⁶ The desperation of the scene is compounded by the Athenians fighting over water, which is mixed with their own blood and the mud, and contributes in large part to Hornblower's description of this passage as "appallingly memorable." The Greek itself is turbid, with the relevant details mixed in together – I have underlined the crucial image: καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ εὐθὺς διέφθαρτο, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἥσοον ἐπίνετο το όμοῦ τῷ πηλῷ ἡματωμένον καὶ περιμάχητον ἦν τοῖς πολλοῖς. Lattimore captures this picture well, sticking closely to the syntax of the Greek: "The water immediately turned foul but was not only drunk just as much **when full of blood along with the mud** but fought over by most of them." Blanco opts for explicification, writing the shocking and graphic effect of this description into his translation: "though it quickly became fouled, the Athenians nonetheless fought among themselves to gulp the muddy water clotted with blood" (1998: 307). "Gulp the muddy water clotted with blood" is striking and unforgettable, with the corporeal metaphor of the river-water clotting, but Thucydides' Greek is not so explicit; instead he allows readers to visualize the horrid details of this scene for themselves.

The restraint in Thucydides' account of this disaster is apparent when we compare what he actually wrote to Peter Green's reconstruction of this scene in *Armada From Athens*, in the mode of historical fiction: "But now the stream-bed had been churned into a mess of blood and filth, and the dead lay piled in heaps, skewered with arrows, skulls egg-smashed by rocks, the torrent foaming round them in a horrible pinkish froth" (1970: 336). Green's primary source for this reconstruction is Thucydides, but this is Thucydides replayed in full technicolor with gruesome special effects.

In conclusion I want to consider how mediating contexts influence our translation of Thucydides. In the previous paragraph, in trying to convey the horror of the slaughter of the Athenians and their allies at the river Assinarus, I had recourse to the poetry of World War I, evoking the first line of Wilfred Owen's famous sonnet, "Anthem for Doomed Youth": "What passing-bells for those who die as cattle?" (Owen 1983: 99). This allusive strategy, evoking a war and tragedy closer to home and to our own times to provoke a greater affective response, is not dissimilar from Hornblower's use of the scene in Iris Murdoch's *The Green Knight* where Sefton cries when reading a translation of the slaughter of the Athenians at the Assinarus river. Both strategies prompt the question, what are we translating

when we translate Thucydides – a text, an idea, a history, scenes of warfare in the popular imagination of the translator and the target audience, or all of the above? Following the work of Even-Zohar and Toury, we need to be alert to the position of any given translation of Thucydides within a larger corpus of translated literature, which itself belongs to an even larger “literary polysystem” in the target culture. We should expect translations to reflect this larger polysystem, to which they also contribute, and to draw on different elements of this system in order to render Thucydides in the target language and culture. Depending on whether the translator translates Thucydides primarily as an historical source text, as a “classic” work, or both, the Thucydides who emerges from the translation will vary considerably (cf. the Introduction to Lianeri and Zajko 2008).

Conclusion

This chapter has offered an outline of Thucydidean translation studies and has suggested a tentative methodological framework for future research. The case studies have been drawn, primarily, from English translations of Thucydides, but the questions raised are transferable to other target languages. It has barely touched on the adaptation of Thucydides, which is a developing area of research. A good example of the dialogic interpretative possibilities opened up by adaptation is Neville Morley’s recent study not just of an image and idea of Thucydides, but also a received idea of Thucydidean style in a work by the Austrian writer Peter Handke, raising fresh questions about the intersection between translation and adaptation (Morley 2012). Another fruitful area of research, responding to work on the figure of the translator, is to consider metaphorical translation within Thucydides’ *History*, perhaps starting with Thucydides’ Athenian identity at the beginning of the work (he restates his Athenian identity at 5.26.1) and his declaration, at 5.26.5, that he was party to the affairs of both sides. Thucydides’ self-positioning between the two sides and his apparent translation between different Greek perspectives suggests that the intermediary and intercultural figure of the translator might be helpful for conceiving of the role of the historian in Thucydides’ work.¹⁷

Notes

- 1 Representative studies include Radice and Reynolds 1987; Hardwick 2000; Lianeri and Zajko 2008; and Carne-Ross 2010. Volumes 1–4 of the *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* all include chapters on the translation of Classical authors.
- 2 In his preface, Levesque reviews the three prior translations of Thucydides into French: that of Claude de Seyssel, Bishop of Marseilles (1527), translated from Lorenzo Valla’s neo-Latin translation of Thucydides, that of Louis Jonsaud d’Usez (published in Geneva in 1610), and the 1662 translation of Perrot d’Ablancourt.

- 3 The authorship and date of publication of the different volumes of the Budé Thucydides is as follows: Vol. 1 (Bk. 1), Greek text edited and translated by de Romilly (1953; rev. 1958); Vol. 2 (Bk. 2), de Romilly; Vol. 3 (Bk. 3), Weil with de Romilly (1967); Vol. 4 (Bks. 4–5) de Romilly (1967); Vol. 5 (Bks. 6–7), Bodin and de Romilly (1955); Vol. 6 (Bk. 8) Weil with de Romilly (1972).
- 4 For an example of a commentary on the translation process, see Weaver (1989) commenting on his method in translating a paragraph from the Italian author Carlo Emilio Gadda. Chapters 11 and 12 of Toury (2012) offer a systematic, theoretical study of the challenges involved in reconstructing the translation process.
- 5 For the gendering of translation activity, see Chamberlain (1998). On Thucydides' masculinism, see the discussion on Thucydidean gender exclusions in Crane (1996: 75–110).
- 6 See Toury (2012: 6), "the very extent to which features of a source text are retained in a particular translation thereof, or even regarded as requiring attention in the first place [...] is also determined on the target side, and according to its concerns."
- 7 As noted above, Lattimore's Hackett translation makes generous use of footnotes to discourse around the text, but this is not the norm. Although there is an established convention for publishing series to supplement classical translations with scholarly notes, in the case of Thucydides these notes tend to focus on social, cultural, and historical references in the text, rather than the language of the text and how the text means (see, Finley's notes to Warner 1972, and Rhodes' notes to Hammond 2009). Another model is that of the Norton Critical Editions: Blanco's translation of Thucydides is prefaced by a scholarly introduction by Jennifer Tolbert Roberts and supplemented by extracts from Greek literature and a diverse spectrum of scholarly literature.
- 8 "Impatient of labour" (Hobbes); "so easy a task" (Smith); "so little pains" (Crawley); "so little trouble" (Jowett); "so averse to taking pains" (Forster Smith); "will not take trouble" (Warner); "devoid of effort" (Lattimore); "most people expend very little effort" (Blanco); "how little trouble most people take" (Hammond); "so little trouble" (Mynott). The French translations have: "sont indolents" (Levesque, Didot), "se montrent insouciantes" (Bétant), and "telle est la négligence" (de Romilly).
- 9 Of existing English translations, Crawley (1874) does the best job of balancing the structure of Thucydides' sentence with fluency in English: "with the double object of restoring confidence and of leading them from these angry feelings to a calmer and more hopeful state of mind."
- 10 For an instance of translators of Thucydides as actual interlocutors, see Mynott (2013a: xiii) on his conversations with Martin Hammond (their translations of Thucydides appeared four years apart – Hammond's first). Mynott comments on the irony that they were both working on translations of Thucydides in rural Suffolk, five miles apart.
- 11 Venuti (1998) has advocated an "ethics of difference" in translation, in which translators should strive to preserve the foreignness of their source text, even while they inevitably domesticate it through translation. Lattimore preserves the foreignness of Thucydides' style, but does not attempt to reproduce Thucydides' linguistic innovativeness in English.
- 12 Lattimore 1998: xix–xx. Blanco espouses a diametrically opposed approach: "I have tried to make a translation of Thucydides' famously difficult text that would be accessible to

students and general readers. To do so, I have relaxed the compressed, often crabbed, syntax of the speeches and have adapted a relatively colloquial vocabulary for them and for the narrative as a whole. I offer no apologies. A strict rendering of Thucydides' speeches would make them seem as artificial to modern readers as Sidney's *Arcadia* or Lyly's *Euphues*" (1998: xi). This last remark raises the question of how "artificial" parts of Thucydides may have seemed to his ancient Greek readers.

- 13 Willett 1999: 126: "The premise is that an author's prose style is inseparable from his syntax and that a translator who fails to reproduce the substance of the syntactical structure and rhythm of the text travesties the author. While many other linguistic factors go into the quality of a translation, including semantic meaning, lexicon, and rhetoric, the precision with which a translator tracks the syntax of the original is the best single indicator of what we can expect in the translation." Willett credits this approach to Raffel 1994.
- 14 The third person plural imperfect verb ἐποίουν "they made" has a dual subject: "the fact that every single [Athenian] man wanted to be first to cross himself" and "the enemy bearing down on them" made (ἐποίουν) the crossing of the river difficult. This does not come across in Lattimore's translation. Lattimore translates the verb with the enemy as the sole subject: "and the enemy closing in now made the crossing difficult". Hammond (2009: 412) has an elegant solution: "and with every man trying to get across first and the enemy hard on them they had a difficult time of it."
- 15 On participial motivation in Thucydides see Lang (2011: 1–16; originally published in 1995). Supplementing Lang's discussion, Bakker (1997: 49–50) notes that in Thucydides, with "present participial clauses of verbs of thinking and opinion, we frequently find 'subjective' elements such as *rhaidiōs* 'easily' or *rhâion* 'more easily' ... Thoughts represented in this way turn out almost always to be miscalculations, and so participial *nomizantes* clauses are frequently used ironically." At n.83 (p. 50), Bakker cites οἰόμενοι [ῥᾷδόν ἔσεσθαι] in this passage as an example of this phenomenon.
- 16 It is not only the verb *sphazdō*, "to butcher" that puts me in mind of the trench warfare in World War I; the description of the Athenians reduced to drinking the fouled river water also calls to mind the description of British forces reduced to drinking from puddles at Arras in 1917, due to a shortage of clean water at the front (Harrison 2010: 131), with ensuing dysentery.
- 17 Thucydides is not usually thought of under the sign of translation. Conversely, Herodotus has been identified as the originator of translation theory in the West (Robinson 2002). See Harrison (1998) for an analysis of Herodotus' use and representation of foreign languages.

Guide to Further Reading

Munday (2012) offers an excellent introduction to the practice and theory of translation and covers the majority of the theorists of translation mentioned in this chapter. For a robust and impassioned theoretical discussion of the position of the translator and the status of translated literature, see Venuti (1995). Venuti (1998) is an important, provocative discussion of the ideological forces that shape translational norms.

For an introduction to the practice and theory of translation history – the kind of study offered in this chapter – see Pym (1998). For the translation of classical texts and the relationship between Classics and translation, see Lianeri and Zajko (2008), and Carne-Ross (2010). Turning to the study of Thucydidean translations, Pade (2003) is a lucid and authoritative discussion of medieval and Renaissance translations of Thucydides. There is an incisive analysis of recent Thucydidean translations in Willett (1999), while Mynott (2013b) reflects on the challenges of “translating Thucydides” based on his recent experience translating Thucydides for the series “Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought.”

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Part II

Thucydides the Historian

Thucydides and His “Contemporaries”

Ellen O’Gorman

Introduction

The histories that we read have been written in worlds that are not only different but even in some ways incommensurable, and yet they have been accommodated to a single intellectual community. What illustrates the coherence of the Western tradition and canon of historical writing is above all the conventions of language shared by those who more or less deliberately followed the lead of Herodotus, Thucydides, and their epigones and critics. Even in our foreshortened, postmodern world not all traditional meanings are lost in translation ... So we return to the works themselves – not, however, the works merely as conceived by authors in the remote and inaccessible specificity of their minds but also the works as they were “published,” sent out into the world, studied, translated, summarized, read, and misread by generations of readers, critics, and imitators and thereby introduced to new scenes and contexts and so – following the shift of perspective suggested by reception theory and reception history – new meanings. (Kelley 1998: 6)

The reception of Thucydides needs to be put in the context of the reception of the ancient historians more generally, for these are his “contemporaries” in the intellectual community evoked by Donald Kelley. Granted, there are differences in the way that individual historians are read throughout the ages: we might think of Herodotus as the “father of lies” (Momigliano 1947), or of “red Tacitus” standing for absolute monarchy and “black Tacitus” representing republicanism (Gajda 2009). But looking at the reception of several ancient historians in relation to each other enables us to identify significant trends in the way readers of a specific era think about antiquity and about the practice of history. It is also the case that evaluative judgments about the historians are often made in the mode of comparison; we miss an important part of the picture if we look at one historian in isolation, as

if he were not set in the company of other historians. Throughout this essay, therefore, I will pursue some of the consequences of considering Thucydides in relation to his contemporaries in the first generation of his reception in Western Europe, the fifteenth century.

I have chosen this period for a number of reasons. First, this was the century of the most intense discovery and rediscovery of the texts of antiquity. It therefore provides a distinctive snapshot of a moment in the reception of the ancient historians, which gives us a sense of what those historians were valued for at that time. This is especially the case with the newly discovered texts, mainly Greek, as we see how their assimilation into Renaissance culture is effected through a complex of responses: to antiquity; to medieval receptions of antiquity; and to perceptions of Byzantine canons of classical texts. (I will focus exclusively on the first of these.) The fifteenth century is also distinctive because of the Latinity of its reception; by the beginning of the sixteenth century vernacular translations were increasing, as were editions of Greek texts in the original language. Looking at the fifteenth century affords us a sharper picture of the way in which Greek antiquity was received through Latin antiquity, which brings into perspective how this has continued to be the predominant – though more muted – mode of reception in subsequent centuries. Latin is the precursor to Greek for most individual and cultural encounters with antiquity, and the consequences of this for our reception of ancient Greece need to be acknowledged. As Richard Armstrong has observed of Roman poetic responses to Greek epic, “the full realization of the Latin tradition’s literary project in terms of *explicit* translation effectively came only later in those vernacular languages that had fully absorbed the tutelary influence of Latin as a kind of literary superego” (Armstrong 2008: 197). Latin seems to disappear from early modern and modern receptions of the ancient historians, but nevertheless it leaves its mark on how they are understood.

The reception of the ancient Greek historians in the West tends to be told in the same sort of teleological account as the reception of ancient Greece more generally: a narrative in which Western readers gradually attain “proper” understanding of Greek literature. Such an account as that of Carlo Dionisotti plots a development from the medieval inheritance of “a Roman, Imperial and Christian map of Greece” (Dionisotti 1992: 100) to a more enlightened position, not yet attained in the Renaissance, from which Greece could be seen for “what it was”: “an independent and alien world” (ibid.: 125). This sort of teleological view directs critical analyses of reception, which are aimed at distinguishing “correct” from “incorrect,” or “derivative” from “creative” readings. N.G. Wilson, for instance, in his overview of the dissemination of Greek texts in the Renaissance (1992), assesses translations on the basis of their accuracy, without considering what any translation, accurate or inaccurate, has to tell us about the terms on which the work was being received (cf. Greenwood in this volume).

In the second section of this essay, therefore, I provide a brief account of the dramatic expansion of the classical canon around the fifteenth century. The

interest in particular periods of (usually Roman) history, and the focus on the use of history as a source of *exempla*, can be seen to direct the choice of texts for translation, commentary, and dissemination. Thus we can see that the reception of the ancient historians in many instances preceded the encounter with “the text itself,” and sometimes determined whether such an encounter would take place.

In the third section I look at some of the “conventions of language” which Renaissance readers of historiography appropriated from ancient critical writings, especially those conventions related to questions of style and of trustworthiness. Here I emphasize the comparative and dialogic modes in which historians are assessed, demonstrating how the reception of an individual historian is bound up with and articulated through the discourses of the “partner” or “rival” historians.

In the final section I turn in more detail to issues of translation, to consider ways in which Valla’s translation of Thucydides (1452) sets up the Roman historians as important predecessors to and models for the Latin Thucydides. Rather than seeing this as a mediated vision of the Greek historian which has been subsequently transcended, I argue that this Latin translation is what constitutes Thucydides as a classic in the West. Traces of this important reception (which is regarded in the world of textual scholarship as the equivalent to an early manuscript of the Greek text – cf. Hornblower 2010: 305) continue to determine ways in which we read Thucydides today.

Recharging the Canon

Not all the Roman historians maintained a continuous tradition of reception in the medieval West. Sallust’s historical monographs on the Roman wars with Jugurtha, king of Numidia, and on the conspiracy of Catiline, as well as the excerpted speeches from his lost *Histories*, were read throughout the Middle Ages (Smalley 1971), and only declined in popularity during the mid-seventeenth century (Burke 1966). The first and third decades of Livy also had a strong tradition, on the foundation of Rome and the war with Hannibal; together with Florus, the imperial biographies of Suetonius, and the collection of historical *exempla* of Valerius Maximus, this constituted the canon of historical and related writings from antiquity. Julius Caesar’s commentaries on the Gallic and civil wars survived, but the latter were not attributed to Caesar until the fifteenth century. The focus on individual historical figures in Sallust’s monographs and in the biographies, as well as the prominence of characters such as Brutus Liberator and Camillus, Hannibal and Scipio Africanus in Livy Books 1–10 and 21–30, encouraged a continuation of the exemplary approach to history which shaped these classical texts. Many of these exemplary figures – and the “vigorous debate” about the value of exemplarity (Hampton 1990; Burke 2011: 54) – would also play important roles in thinking about political constitutions and the role of the citizen (Baron 1966: 121–66; Skinner 1978: 84–112).

In the fourteenth century, Petrarch had systematically collected what manuscripts of Livy he could, accomplishing a personal edition of the first, third, and fourth decades which is nearly equivalent to what we have today (Books 41–5 emerged in 1527) (Billanovich 1951). Cicero’s letters, discovered in the same generation, compelled Renaissance readers to revisit his political philosophy in the light of what they now learnt about his political activity. Ammianus Marcellinus’ history of the later Roman empire was discovered by Poggio Bracciolini in 1455, and initially was of primary interest for its information about the city of Rome. But the major re-emergence from classical antiquity was the work of Tacitus, whose *Histories* of the civil war and the rise of the Flavians was found in 1362, together with the final third of his *Annals* of the Julio-Claudian emperors. A manuscript of the first third of the *Annals*, covering the reign of Tiberius, was acquired in the early sixteenth century (Martin 2009; Murgia 2012). Tacitus’ descriptions of tyrannical emperors, and their effects upon the political behavior of their subjects, became the defining feature of his work from the mid-sixteenth century, and appear in traditions of both monarchical and anti-monarchical works (Weinbrot 1993; Gajda 2009). In addition, his monograph on Germany, discovered around 1425, played a distinctive role in both German and Italian articulations of nationalist and religious identity (Schellhase 1976; Kelley 1993; Krebs 2011).

As noted in the introductory section, interest in ancient Greek historical texts was fueled for the most part by the existing discourse which centered on Roman and Italian antiquity. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Pier Paolo Vergerio’s influential treatise on education bemoaned the loss of Greek in the West, and outlined the consequences of this loss for Roman historical knowledge:

It has reached the point where we require knowledge and confirmation of Roman history from Greek authors. For most of such works which we have, either limited in scope or absolutely unknown, in Greece are found widely disseminated: although Greek language itself, which was at one time very familiar, practically native to our ancestors, has almost perished even among the Greeks themselves: with us, indeed, Greek has completely died out, unless a few individuals, who in this age take pains to learn Greek, can summon it from its tomb, back into the light. But I return to history, the loss of which is the more grievous, as its knowledge is more useful and more pleasurable. (Vergerio, *de ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis*; my translation; cf. Kallendorf 2002)

Given this concern for Roman historical knowledge, and its educational value, it is hardly surprising that the biographies of Plutarch were among the earliest texts to be translated. His Roman lives presented another angle on historical characters made familiar by the Latin authors: the first two lives to be translated were Brutus the tyrannicide and Cicero in 1400/1401 (Wilson 1992; Pade 2007: 113–21). Polybius’ history of the growth of the Roman empire was attractive for similar reasons: Leonardo Bruni saw Polybius’ account of the first Punic War as a supplement to the missing part of Livy’s work, and translated the Greek historian’s work into Livian Latin in his own *de Bello Punico* of 1422 (Momigliano 1974; Ianziti 2006/7, 2012). The

first five books of Polybius were translated in 1454 (Reynolds 1954); Book 6, which presents a lengthy analysis of the Roman constitution, and therefore came to play a significant role in political thought, seems to have been disseminated in the sixteenth century (Burke 1966: 144). Other Greek historical writers who treated republican and early imperial Roman history, such as Appian, Cassius Dio, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, seem to have been available by the mid-fifteenth century (Kibre 1946; Woodward 1943; Rundle 2001); Diodorus Siculus may have been in circulation in Florence as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century (Robathan 1932). Herodian’s history of the later Roman empire, which was popular in the Byzantine empire, was translated by Politian in 1487 (Fryde 1983: 107–13).

The canon of Greek historians, therefore, looked quite different to what it does today; the primacy of Plutarch throughout this period can be attributed not only to a still predominantly exemplary approach to the past – which favors biographical material – and to the familiarity of his Roman lives, but also to his wide-ranging philosophical, moral, and literary writing, which chimed with the ideals of the *studia humanitatis*. The earliest Plutarchan translation, in Avignon in 1372, was his treatise on the control of anger (Pade 2007: 73), but a recurring favorite throughout the fifteenth century was the treatise on education (believed at the time to be by Plutarch).

Of the Greek historians who treated Greek history, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon were familiar names in the West thanks to the critical discourses of Cicero and of the recently acquired Quintilian (see next section). Guarino translated the first seventy-one chapters of Herodotus’ first book in 1415 (Looney 2012), but Valla’s translation of 1457, unpublished in his lifetime, enjoyed a vigorous afterlife of publication well into the sixteenth century. There was also a vernacular translation produced around the same time by Boiardo. Valla’s translation of Thucydides, like his Herodotus, was of considerable importance (Pade 2006). Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* was translated in 1446 by Poggio; together with texts on Alexander the Great, Xenophon’s account provided ancient *exempla* for thinking about the education of the statesman and the ruler (Kajanto 1994), a concern we have already seen rehearsed in Vergerio’s treatise.

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Aldine Press was turning out editions of Greek historians in the original Greek, and interest in and knowledge about the Greek language began to be more widely exhibited. But most of the Greek material, as this brief overview has shown, treated Roman matters, so that the exemplary and political engagement with antiquity throughout the fifteenth century was dominated by Rome and Roman figures.

Utility, Style, and *Fides*

In both the self-assessment of the ancient historians and their ancient critical receptions, the terms of the debate about history circulated around issues of utility, style, and truth. While the historians saw value in the specific events they recorded

(Herodotus 1.1.1) and imposed upon themselves a duty to record the particularity of the past (Tacitus *Annales* 16.16), the usefulness of the historical past for the reader was grounded in ideas of universality, whether because of the repeatability of events (Thuc. 1.22.4), or through their transformation into *exempla* (Livy *Preface* 10). The concept of history as a *magistra vitae* emerged from this tradition; given its centrality to most of the issues covered in this volume, I will confine myself here to merely noting its importance (Burke 2011; Grethlein 2011).

Style, from the perspective of most modern historians, would appear to be the most superficial aspect of historical narrative, but in antiquity it was the feature which distinguished *historia* as a high genre of writing from other methods of recording the past. The individual style of particular historians was characterized in terms of sweetness, gentleness, harshness, and forcefulness. Two points arising from the judgment of style are important for considering the reception of the ancient historians: first, implicit in consideration of style was its association with political outlook; secondly, discussion of the style of individual historians in the critical literature of antiquity which shaped the reception of the historians in subsequent centuries was almost invariably in the mode of comparison. It is worth expanding on this second point.

In 1416 Poggio Bracciolini discovered the complete text of Quintilian’s first-century *Institutio Oratoria*, “filthy with dust and decay,” in the monastery at St. Gall (Sandys 1909: 27). This work, in mutilated form, had had some influence on the teaching of eloquence in the Middle Ages; now its tenth book received much wider circulation, in which the following assessment could be found of the greatest Greek historians:

Many have written excellent histories, but there is no doubt that two historians are far preferable to the rest. Of these two, their different qualities result in almost equal praise. Thucydides is dense and concise and always pressing on his own prose, while Herodotus is pleasant and clear and fluent: the former is better in excited emotion, the latter in relaxation; Thucydides excels in debate, Herodotus in conversation; Thucydides in the force of his prose, Herodotus in the delightfulness of his. (Quintilian *Inst.* 10.73, my translation)

Quintilian goes on to assess the “lesser” Greek historians in similar comparative terms: Philistus, for instance, is “an imitator of Thucydides, and while he is much weaker, he is at times more lucid than Thucydides” (10.74). When he turns to the Roman historians the same comprehensive, quasi-synchronic understanding of the tradition is in evidence:

But history is not conceded to the Greeks. I would have no fear in pitting Sallust against Thucydides, nor would Herodotus disdain Livy as his equal ... (10.101)

Assessments of Thucydides and Herodotus, appearing also in Cicero’s *de Oratore* (2.93) and *Brutus* (29), shaped Western readers’ expectations about the Greek historians before their texts were available, or even readable. Individual historians,

moreover, were characterized by their place within the tradition, that is, by their relationships with their peers. The tradition is represented almost as atemporal; in place of references to predecessors and successors, such as one would find in a modern critical work on historiography, Quintilian and Cicero speak of comparison and competition, with only the trope of "imitation" signaling the progression of time. When Quintilian introduces the parallels between Roman and Greek historians, quoted above, he evokes a gladiatorial combat, with Sallust and Thucydides pitted against each other, and Quintilian himself as the onlooker with a stake in the game; next, he imagines Herodotus' reaction to being compared with Livy, so that Quintilian's assessment of Livy's style merges with Herodotus' imagined judgment of his Roman counterpart. In this way, temporal distances are collapsed; the critical overview of the historians situates them synchronically and agonistically, and this has fundamental consequences for their reception.

Sallust and Livy became more than just the contemporaries of Thucydides and Herodotus; in important ways they became the Greek historians' predecessors. Quintilian's assessment of Sallust's narrative with its "immortal speed" and "crowds of epigrams" (*immortalem velocitatem... sentiis creber* 10.102) echoed Cicero's assessment of Thucydides' writings as "crowded with epigrams" (*crebri sentiis* (*Brutus* 29) cf. Quintilian 10.73). Such assessments confirmed for the first generation of Thucydides' Western European readers that they were expected to understand the Greek text in terms of the better known Roman one. Sallust provided the preconditions for reading and appreciating Thucydides. This is instantiated in Valla's Latin translation of Thucydides, when he employs Sallustian Latin to render the Greek (Pade 1985: 289–92); we could say that Valla thereby translates Thucydides "back into" the Latin through which he has, implicitly, been received. There will be more to say on this point in the final section of this essay.

The final important criterion on which the ancient historians were judged was that of truthfulness/trustworthiness. This may seem an obvious criterion, but the precise terms with which it was articulated formed an important part of the reception of each ancient historian. The combined term "truthfulness/trustworthiness" attempts to convey both objective and subjective connotations of the Latin *fides*, which denotes both the writer's relation to truth and the attitude of trust which readers build up in relation to the writer as a result of reading his text. The two spheres which threaten the *fides* of an ancient historical text are, on the one side, the realm of myth, wonder-tale, and fiction (often associated with distant times and places) and, on the other side, partisan writing, flattery, and invective (associated with pressing contemporary political circumstance). The fifteenth-century reader would encounter the tension between historical *fides* and myth in the preface to Livy's *History*, where he draws a distinction between "poetic legends" (*poeticis fabulis*) and "the eternal memorialisation of deeds" (*rerum gestarum monumentis*) while at the same time defending the inclusion of legendary material from antiquity in his narrative (Livy, Pref. 6; Marincola 1997: 123–4). The same term – *fabula* – is used by Cicero when speaking of the element of myth and wonder-tale in the histories of

Herodotus: “Indeed, the laws of history pertain to truth, and those of poetry to pleasure: nonetheless, even in Herodotus the father of history, and in Theopompos, there are many myths” (Cic. *de Legibus* 1.5.5). Here again *fabula* is seen as a defensible element in historical narrative but also somehow to be distinguished from *historia*. Thus Herodotus and Livy are once more brought together as authors who can be read and judged on the same terms.

When Cicero used the term *fabula*, moreover, he almost certainly had in mind the Greek term *muthos* which, like *fabula*, has an etymological connection to a verb of speaking, and complex relationships of overlap and contrast with truth, rationality, and the written record. The earliest and most influential reception of Herodotus is Thucydides’ rejection of the type of historical narrative which incorporates elements of the mythical and thereby conveys pleasure to the audience (Thuc. 1.22.4; Marincola 1997: 117–19). When Valla comes to translate this statement, and renders *muthodes* as *fabulose*, it may seem to be the “natural” choice of word, but its obvious appropriateness has been determined in advance by the critical discourses of Cicero and Livy.

The “miraculous” element in Herodotus’ history encompassed exotic tales of far-away lands, a genre of writing which acquired a new association to truth and knowledge with the discovery of the Americas at the end of the fifteenth century (Grafton 1992: 35–58; Lamy 2012). The *fides* of the ancient historian was reaffirmed by the newest of contemporary discoveries, and in the generation following there was engendered a sense of the past as substantially different from the present and therefore subject to different criteria of truth (Payen 2012). This perspective informs Henri Estienne’s 1566 *Apologia pro Herodoto*, published in France as a preface to Valla’s Herodotus translation: while the New World discoveries opened up a gulf between ancient and modern perspectives on historical truth, the terms of the ongoing debate about Thucydides and his contemporaries continued to be dictated by the ancient texts.

A prominent ancient interlocutor is Plutarch, whose works, as we have seen, were among the earliest to be circulated and translated in fifteenth-century Italy (Weiss 1977; Manfredini 1987). His essay “On the Malice of Herodotus” attacks the historian for outright lies (*pseude*); however, this work is too often assimilated in later scholarship to the debate on myth and the miraculous in the *Histories*. Plutarch in fact mentions myth just once in his critique of Herodotus, and then only as a *suitable* subject for the digression in history; his primary concern is with the other enemy of truth – invective and *parti-pris*:

For the digressions and asides of history are allowed particularly for myths and antiquarian discourses, and occasionally for panegyric: but he who appends to his account slanders and words of blame, seems to incur the curse of the tragedian on the “collector of mortal calamities.” (Plut. *de Herod.* 855d)

This is the probable context for Mattias Palmieri’s assessment of Herodotus’ veracity, written about a century before Estienne’s *Apologia*. In the prologue to

his (unpublished) translation of the *Histories*, Palmieri praises the diligence of Herodotus in investigating even the tiniest details and in undertaking extensive travel in the pursuit of knowledge: here Herodotus' Egyptian and Scythian narratives stand not for the miraculous element but for research methodology. But the truth of Herodotus is guaranteed by his avoidance of partisanship, and here Palmieri implicitly refutes Plutarch's attack. For both these critics, then, the mythical element of Herodotean history is not an issue. Palmieri's response to Plutarch, moreover, describes the political pressures upon an historian's *fides* in terms which recall the problems experienced by imperial Roman writers:

For many men of outstanding genius have not so much come to writing as been led to it by partisan zeal, and they have highlighted and hidden many facts out of political desire; others, courting the favour (*gratia*) of princes, have striven to eulogize the deeds of these rulers with the height of rhetoric at their disposal. (Latin text in Pagliaroli 2012: 41; my translation)

Palmieri may well have read the preface to Tacitus' *Histories* (see above), which speaks of the demise of great literary genius because of the desire for flattery (*Hist.* 1.1.1), but the tension between *gratia* and truth is a commonplace of Roman imperial prose, and can be traced back to the discourse of judicial impartiality in Cicero's lawcourt speeches.

As we have already observed, it is Thucydides' reception of Herodotus as *fabulosus* which initiates the debate, and which performs the function, in Thucydides' text, of underwriting his own *fides*. Valla's assessment of Thucydidean style, as we have already seen, is voiced through the quotations from Cicero and Quintilian. The ancient assessments of Thucydidean prose as forceful and unadorned also underpin Valla's view of his *fides*, but here Valla departs from the familiar metaphors:

For Thucydides is, compared to other Greek historians, like porphyry compared to other marbles, or gold to other metals. He is so weighty, he has such force, and such trustworthiness without – so to speak – any alloy, which is especially so in his history, so that readers have no doubt that these things they read were true. (Latin text in Chambers 2001: 2–3; my translation)

Valla's metaphor for the historian's *fides* here is the conclusion of a more extensive figure, where Valla as the translator is like an explorer sent by Pope Nicholas V to besiege a city: "For you have charged me with the assault on eight towns [sc. the eight books of Thucydides], set on the highest rocky mountains (*saxeis montibus*).” Valla quickly explicates this in relation to the difficulty of the historian: "For by all accounts Thucydides is lofty and rocky (*arduus saxeusque*), in the speeches and elsewhere.” Valla's struggles with the Greek text, and his lonely search for meaning, seem like "digging earthworks, or in the deepest stone quarries or scooping out veins of gold hidden in the bowels of a mountain ... And so, if by these earthworks I have captured the cities, if I have cut out these nuggets of porphyry, if I have dug

up this gold, as I hope, it is doubtless cause for me to rejoice...” Thus when Valla turns to the praise of Thucydides, he extends the metaphor which conjoins the historian’s intrinsic value to the efforts of the translator. Thucydides’ *fides*, moreover, depends upon his unadorned style – it is gold without the alloy – as well as upon the conviction of his reader.

Valla points up his use of a Latinized Greek word for alloy – *scoria* – whose metaphorical use would be familiar not from classical texts but from the Vulgate and its commentators, such as Isaiah 1.22: “your silver is turned into alloy and your wine is mixed with water” (*scoria* is more commonly used in relation to silver than to gold). But Valla may also have a more strictly Attic purity in mind: the silver of the mines at Laurium. The geographer Strabo, writing in the Augustan era, discusses the riches and former riches of the Attic region, bringing together silver, marble, and honey:

Near the city are most excellent quarries of marble, the Hymettian and Pentelic. Hymettus also produces the best honey. The silver mines in Attica were originally valuable, but now they have failed. Moreover, those who worked them, when the mining yielded only meager returns, melted again the old refuse, or dross (*skoria*), and were still able to extract from it pure silver, since the workmen of earlier times had been unskillful in heating the ore in furnaces.” (Strabo 9.1.23, trans. Jones 1924)

It is not certain that Valla would have read Strabo; his translation of Thucydides was completed a few years before Guarino produced his translation of the first ten books of the *Geography* (Fryde 1983: 55–82). Therefore we cannot succumb to the temptation to elaborate on the figure here of the contemporary workman “reheating” the old dross to regain the pure silver of the past, apposite as it may be for the idea of translating ancient texts. Valla would certainly, however, have been aware of the wealth of marble and silver in Attica, and here he imaginatively associates the purity of metal with the unadorned style of the historian; just as the coinage of Athens was creditworthy, so the pure prose of Thucydides gained the credence of the reader.

Thucydides’ *sine scoria fides*, then, derives from ancient critical debates about the interrelation of style and trustworthiness. But Valla’s choice of metaphor also takes Christianized notions of purity as a point of departure back to a newly conceived classical past. Attic purity – of style or of silver – is now a resource to be mined, and to be recovered for the glory of a revitalized Latin language.

Translation and Reception

Greek literature returned to the West in translation, usually first into Latin and later into the vernacular. As I have already observed, the Latinity of these translations has often been overlooked in teleological accounts of the reception of the Greek

historians. In such accounts, the Latin translation is merely a stage in the development toward an independent and unmediated – or a more politically attuned – access to the Greek text. Understanding of the Greek text in a Latin translation is therefore represented as partial and unsatisfactory: such representations are found in Renaissance texts as expressions of frustration at the unattainability of Greek language (as in Vergerio's lament, quoted above).

In modern scholarship the Latinity of the translation has often been seen as, at best, a superficial element of the text and, at worst, an encumbrance to both translator and reader. These contemporary interpretations are based on the assumption that Latin was as dead then as it is (presumably) now (against which see Farrell 2001), and, moreover, that at no time was it the language of serious theoretical and political reflection. This is further based on a deep rooted conviction that Roman political discourse was predominantly practical, that Roman historians therefore lacked the theoretical dimension found in their Greek predecessors, and that, as a consequence, Renaissance readers were hampered by their tendency to read Greek historians from a Roman perspective. Against this, recent scholarship has drawn attention to the ways in which such convictions were formed and set by developing academic disciplines (Celenza 2004; Hammer 2008), and has begun to recuperate Roman political thought as a serious strand in both antiquity and the history of ideas (Hammer 2008; Kapust 2011). It is also important to bear in mind that Latin was the language of thought for writers and translators of this period (Moss 2004; Waquet 2001). Latin translations of the Greek historians should therefore not be read as inert approximations of the original, but as a dynamic appropriation and interpretation of both the Greek text and the totality of Latin texts which constituted the linguistic field from which the translator drew (Botley 2004).

By paying attention to the dynamism of these processes, we take note of the ways in which, as Laurence Venuti puts it, "translation functions as one cultural practice through which a foreign text attains the status of a classic" (Venuti 2008: 27). The choice of language throughout the translation of the Greek historians brings with it formal, cultural, and ideological connotations which not only sponsor the Greek text's entry into Latinate culture, but enrich both the translated text and the receiving culture. Hence, Venuti concludes, "translating is doing, since it brings into existence a text which did not previously exist in either the foreign or the receiving language" (ibid.: 35).

In the case of Valla's translation of Thucydides, for instance, Marianne Pade has already demonstrated how the language and syntactical structure of Sallust's prose are adopted by Valla, partly in response to the tradition that Sallust was an imitator of Thucydides. It is a mistake to see this as an impoverished choice: Sallust's language, political vision, and his canonical status are mobilized as the framework for reading and *valuing* Thucydides' work. In Venuti's terms, Sallustian historiography serves as the "thematic interpretant" through which Valla inscribes an interpretation of Thucydides in the process of translation. Pade draws attention to passages in the *History* which have inspired Sallust's creative imitation, such as the account

of stasis at Corcyra, and points to how Valla “translated in a Sallustian style without actually borrowing from Sallust” (Pade 1985: 291).

... consuetis rerum vocabulis in excusationem immutatis. Temeritas enim fortitudo amicorum studiosa vocabatur, considerata cunctatio honesta formido, modestia ignaviae velamentum. In omnibus solertia, in omnibus segnitie, praeceptis indignatio virilitati ascribebatur, tuto consultare excusata tergiversatio erat.

...with the customary names of things changed for the purpose of justification. For rashness was given the name of courage arising from devotion towards friends, thoughtful delay was called simple fearfulness, moderation was a cloak for cowardice. Cleverness in all matters was inertia in every way, uncontrolled anger was regarded as manliness, to plan for safety was an excuse for hesitation. (Valla’s rendition of Thuc. 3.82.4; my translation)

Here we see formal interpretants deployed – density of abstract nouns, antitheses, and rapidity achieved by omitting conjunctions – which convey a particular mode of political thought, and a historical vision of irrevocable decline, which operates in counterpoint to the Thucydidean pattern of recurring events. For Valla to write Thucydides in Sallustian style was a creative act of Latinity and of political thinking.

Yet Valla’s creativity in this instance repays further investigation, for the language he uses in this passage on stasis is not Sallustian, but is predominantly and distinctively Tacitean. While *temeritas* (for *tolma*) is a common enough word across the historians generally, its density is considerably greater in the work of Tacitus (about twice the frequency of Livy’s usage). *Cunctatio* (for *melleis*) is about three times more common in Tacitus than in Livy; *formido* (*deilia*) and *segnitia* (*argon*) are Tacitean but not Livian (only Vergil uses the archaizing *segnities* preferred here by Valla). Strikingly, *velamentum* (for *euprepes*) in the transferred sense of verbal dissimulation – a concept ubiquitous in Tacitus’ narratives – is quite rare; Valla most probably draws it from Quintilian, but it is used once by Tacitus in the later part of the *Annals*.

More significantly, even, many of these terms appear in antithetical constructions in Tacitus’ account of the civil wars of AD 69, and especially in the first episode of his *Histories*, the successful military coup led by Salvius Otho to overthrow the aged emperor M. Servius Galba. The oppositions of youth and age, luxury and parsimony, shape Tacitus’ narrative of this conflict, as Otho appeals to a Neronian and Galba harks back to a Republican past. The merits or pitfalls of anticipating (*temeritas*) or of waiting upon outcomes (*cunctatio*/*segnitia*) are advocated by different interested parties, even as events overtake them. So Otho decides upon the coup after a soliloquy in which he concludes that “there is no need for delay (*cunctatio*) when passivity is more damaging than audacity (*temeritas*)” (1.21.2). When Galba learns of the coup and hesitates to act, exasperated counselors such as Cornelius Laco exhort him to act now, and quite openly upbraid his inactivity: “Otho would now be getting frightened, wasting away the hours and learning to

imitate the emperor with his delaying (*cunctatio*) and inertia (*segnitia*)" (1.33.1). But Galba's hesitation is overwhelmed by Otho's initiative, and after he is butchered in the Forum, Tacitus delivers his obituary: "his nobility of birth and the fearfulness of the times served as a cover, so that his characteristic inertia was given the name of wisdom" (*quod segnitia erat, sapientia vocaretur*) (1.49.4).

In this narrative we see precisely the terms and themes represented in the Corcyra excursus: boldness and hesitation in negative and positive senses, and above all the awareness that words pervert and cloak rather than reveal true meanings, that representations are driven by delusion and factional interest. On the one hand this is the account of a specific historical event in which Valla sees the working out of Thucydidean ideas. His translation, therefore, draws our attention to the Thucydideanism of Tacitus. On the other hand, Tacitus' account represents not just a practical instantiation of Thucydidean theory, but a work of political thought in its own right. The multiple dissimulated and misunderstood truths in Tacitean narrative confront the reader with a kaleidoscopic maze of political double dealing, through which history provides only partial guidance. Even in the final dictum on Galba, the return to the Thucydidean syntax of single falsehood and single truth – what was *called* wisdom was *actually* inertia – there is a suspicion that only hindsight, not critical judgment, has enabled Tacitus to draw this conclusion. The "correct" judgments made in the course of events are by Otho (the dissolute symbolic heir of Nero) and by Laco, introduced by Tacitus as a man of exceptional cowardice and inertia (*Hist.* 1.6.1). There is, therefore, a mismatch between the character of the historical agent and their insight into the language of moral qualities. And Otho's later career exhibits some uncharacteristic actions which further complicate the business of judging whether and when terms of moral value have been misapplied. Valla's use of a Tacitean model to translate Thucydides, therefore, draws our attention to the elaboration of Thucydidean theory into Tacitean theory, where appearance takes on a more prominent and multilayered role. And something of that later elaboration inheres in the translated Thucydides.

For Valla and his contemporaries, as we have seen, Tacitus' *Histories* and the second half of his *Annals* were newly discovered texts. The distinctive Tacitean style had been noted but not widely adopted into contemporary Latinity. Valla was innovative in claiming Tacitus as an exemplar of good style; and he cited Tacitus to defend his own Latinity in the *Antidotum ad Facium* of 1447 (Campanelli 1994: 88 n.51 claims this as the first recourse to Tacitus of this sort). If Sallust as "thematic interpretant" provides the sense of the enduring classic in this translation, Tacitus' presence may signal the continued association of ancient Latin texts with the excitement of new discoveries.

The Valla translation should be considered, moreover, as an early instance of not only the reception of Thucydides but also the reception of Tacitus. If so, it would constitute another early instance of the political use of Tacitus, to set alongside Bruni's evocation of the same part of the work – *Histories* I – in his *History of the Florentine People* (Schellhase 1976). Above all, what this example demonstrates is the

necessity to move away from considering the reception of each individual ancient historian in isolation. Thucydides and his contemporaries – Herodotus, Livy, Sallust, Tacitus, and others – have been received and passed on in a tradition of debate and comparison which transcends differences of chronology in favor of truth, style, and utility as the fundamentals of historical writing.

Guide to Further Reading

Hammer (2008) and Kapust (2011) offer provocative case studies on how political thought in the Roman historians was engaged by political writers from the early modern to the modern period. Schellhase (1976) is still the standard work which covers all aspects of Tacitus in Renaissance political thought, but Gajda (2009) presents a compelling and shorter account. The essays in Lianeri (2011) are essential reading for the theoretical issues involved in the reception of historiography.

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The Thucydidean *Clio* between Machiavelli and Hobbes

Francisco Murari Pires

Translated by Laurence Lawrence and Neville Morley

Prologue: The Challenges of (the Rhetoric of) Method and the (Heroic) Figuration of the Historian

Ever since its origins with Herodotus and Thucydides, one of the dilemmas in the writing of history has been confronted by all historians: *true stories versus lies*, neutrality against partiality. Because all histories are related with some consciousness of the public to whom they are addressed, how can a historian develop narrative modes so that his readers recognize his impartiality and thus the objective truth of his history? What virtues would be asked of him in relation to the precepts and narrative exigencies which consecrate the *authority* of his historiographical *persona*?

The apprehension of the unambiguous factual truth in history, Thucydides says, is *difficult* work. It demands a powerful investment of intelligence in order to resolve the *aporia* that is intrinsic to its success, for, in pursuing this end, the historian is confronted by the irreconcilable dialectic of the conflicting stories told by those who have participated in events and then reported on them. It assumes a human subject gifted with a superior spirit, distinguished through his full maturity and the experience which his reason allows him to exploit, in order to discern the truth hidden within this dialectic of information. A process that is difficult, *painful*, requiring *immense efforts*, which narrows down to a single path leading precisely to the truth of the event. A route of historical knowledge appropriate to a personal destiny that is *heroic*, marked by the excellence (*arete*) of an exceptional spirit, the privilege of an individual whose name places a seal on his work through its first

declarative terms: Thucydides of Athens (on the heroism of the historian, see Loraux 1986: 155; Crane 1996: 36; Murari Pires 1999: 286–91, 2003a and 2010a).

This is similar to what Lucian gives us to understand when he enumerates the virtues required by those who aspire to write excellent history:

This, then, is my idea of the historian: fearless, incorruptible, free, a believer in frankness and veracity ... making no concession to hate or friendship, not sparing anyone through pity, shame or timidity, an impartial judge, well disposed to all ... a stranger in his books and a man without a polis, independent, not under any king, not paying attention to this or that opinion but stating what happened. (*How to Write History* 41)

To be a historian requires the creation of a *persona* provided with such an array of exceptional virtues, thanks to the absolute mastery of passions, sentiments (and resentments), and (dis)affections, that it presupposes an individual whose position in the world could only be described as “inexistential,” for he claims not to belong anywhere, that is to say he is *a-polis*, without a polis, a situation which tends to detach him from the world of humans, “like a beast or a god” as Aristotle would say. This is an ideal, then, which describes a *persona* that is more or less divine, to the extent that his attributes are conceived and defined in terms of the negation of the modes inherent to the human. On the horizon of the historicity of ancient thought, the category of the *heroic* makes possible this (con)fusion of the human and the divine, making such a *persona* for the ideal historian intelligible (Murari Pires 2011).

So, the heroic figuration which could characterize the dignity of the historiographical modality formulated by Thucydides maintains affinities with the excellence of the discursive art which in Homer is conceptualized as *Nestor*. Above all in the episode of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, the figure of the venerable adviser acts in a judicial manner in order to discern the correct decision which will resolve the dialectic of conflicting (un)reasons. Through what is represented in the scene on the shield of Achilles, the figure of the counselor has the value of a *histor* (see Sauge 1991: 101–13). From the perspective of the epic heritage of history, the historian represents the heroism of a narrative intelligence corresponding to the *aretē* that distinguishes Nestor: a mode of action that judges different versions of events in such a way as to establish the unambiguousness of the narrative by means of mastering the duality of the partial accounts which they have memorized (Murari Pires 2007).

The Thucydidean *Clio*

Cesare Ripa (*Iconologia*, 1603) defined the figure of *Clio* through the combination of three elements: a laurel wreath on her head; a trumpet in her right hand; and a book in her left. For the latter attribute, he specifies that the book is that of

Thucydides, whose name is written on the cover. To justify this onomastic privilege, he says simply: because Thucydides, *renowned historian*.

Around the same time, La Popelinière (*L'Histoire des Histoires*, 1599) gives Thucydides the title *Prince de l'Histoire*. Earlier, Jean Bodin (*Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, 1565) had proclaimed that it was not Herodotus but Thucydides who should be named "the true father of history." Subsequently Thomas Hobbes (*Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre*, 1629) said of him: "the most politic historiographer that ever writ." Through these proclamations of excellence, whereby the name of Thucydides became emblematic of the writing of history, the *persona* of the historian is judged in terms of rivalries with his ancient peers (cf. O'Gorman in this volume). One of these rivalries, which runs from La Popelinière to Hobbes, assumes an *agōn* with Tacitus, or more precisely with Tacitism, that avatar of Machiavellianism of the end of the sixteenth century. With another rivalry, this time between Thucydides and Herodotus, we trace a path back from La Popelinière to Bodin, and from him, adding Polybius to the *agōn*, to Machiavelli. But at the time of Machiavelli, already over a century before, as early as Leonardo Bruni, the figure of Clio wore the face of Livy, having at the same time incorporated the spirit of Cicero. In the course of this journey among the Moderns who propose to decide which of the ancient historians will triumph, the identity of historical knowledge passes from the domain of rhetorical art to that of political science.

Niccolò Machiavelli, the *Odyssean* Historian

Throughout the twentieth century we can see a tendency to associate the names of Thucydides and Machiavelli as if they were twins where the memory of one almost automatically makes us aware of the other (on Machiavelli, see Sasso 1988–97, 1993; Dotti 1979, 2003; Ferroni 2003; Inglese 2006; Landi 2008; Viroli 1998, 2000). Within the framework of these associations between the texts of Machiavelli and Thucydides (see Murari Pires 2008: 59–84, 2009: 201–30, 2010b), modern analysts attempt through exegetical acuity to decide on the accuracy or inaccuracy of the Machiavellian reproduction of Thucydidean elements. Almost all of them agree in highlighting the imprecisions, mistakes, shortcuts, deficiencies, and even distortions in the way in which Machiavelli apprehends Thucydides. Thereafter, these critiques concentrate on uncovering any reasons which could have affected Machiavelli's (mis)understanding of Thucydides; perhaps he was citing him from memory, perhaps he did not know him directly but only through other texts or other authors; or, worse still, perhaps he was using him solely as a means of argument for his own political theses. These scholarly attempts are doubly problematic, however skillful their mastery of textual exegesis. Firstly, because of their equivocal historicization, for they evaluate Machiavelli's historical thought and method according to the critical rules which were developed at the end of the nineteenth century and became generally accepted

in the twentieth, thus suggesting that Machiavelli should have known the text of Thucydides from the perspective of an expertise that we ourselves have only developed recently. Secondly, because they conceal an awareness of the pertinence and relevance of his somewhat ambiguous analysis, for two reasons: on the one hand, because their work results in controversies rather than conclusions, and on the other hand, because they justify the value of such an exegetical critique as a process aimed at making the historical object in question more intelligible, and so they conclude quite independently as if this exegetical method is an end in itself.

Through the concatenation of these arguments, thanks to which the dialogues which Machiavelli would be expected to have had with Thucydides are taken for granted, one engages in hermeneutic intrigues whereby one makes the implications of reading one text through another reverberate, thereby embedding the reciprocal echoes of their corresponding thoughts. Thus, through this hermeneutic game, modern consciousness makes manifest the Thucydidean contribution to the Machiavellian theories, provided that, at the same time, the strategy also operates in the opposite direction, allowing us henceforth to understand that in the propositions of Thucydides the “destiny” of modern political thought is already prefigured. A kind of tautological teleology (and vice versa) through which on the one hand Thucydidean (dis)inheritance of Machiavelli is suggested, and on the other hand the Machiavellian anathemas of Thucydides are stigmatized.

As we move away from any claim to wish to characterize either the Thucydidean genealogy of Machiavelli or the corresponding Machiavellian teleology of Thucydides, the hermeneutic approach proposed below aims to confront whichever resonances of ancient historiographical figurations are susceptible to being recognized in the *Florentine Histories* of Machiavelli (Murari Pires 2010b).

When Machiavelli composed his *Istorie Fiorentini* (1520–5) at the request of the Medicis (Cardinal Giulio, later Pope Clement VII), he was faced with the historiographical challenge of persuading the reader of the impartiality of his narrative, since any accusation to the contrary could ruin his reputation in the field. Through the rhetorical thread that he weaves into his history, Machiavelli seeks to persuade his reader of the veracity of his account, which is rendered suspect from the beginning because of the patronal ties involved in his task. He turned the dilemma of such a judgment back onto the reading public who would come to appreciate his history. He suggests that they too, his readers, would find themselves put into the same position of passing judgments that were controversial because of their personal positions. This is what he implies in one of his declarations to the Pope, explaining that, as his readers and their reasons (or unreasons) for (dis)approbation were equally enveloped in the times that he describes, they make their judgment according to the (dis)satisfaction of their personal expectations: are they hoping to find in these histories truths, even if they are offensive, or do they prefer lies, so long as they are flattering (Machiavelli 1962: 66–7)?

In the dedicatory letter through which he presented the *Istorie Fiorentini* to the Medici Pope, Machiavelli defended himself preemptively against possible accusations of a lack of civic sense, because he had not unmasked the ambitions of those princes which would be concealed under a blanket of histories full of eulogies. Around the same time as he wrote this work, Machiavelli revealed, in a letter to his friend Francesco Guicciardini, the means by which he had put his forethought and prudence into action: “For a time now I never say what I believe, nor do I ever believe what I say, and if it sometimes occurs to me that I speak the truth, I hide it among so many lies that it is hard to detect” (Machiavelli 1984: 522).

Through this ambiguous game in which Machiavelli speaks and retracts, affirms and sets at a distance his thoughts, and in which furthermore when he indicates a truth it is not recognizable amidst the lies which surround it, the figuration of the historian weaves a rhetorical veil which, blurring the records of the evidence that might lead to his denunciation, ensures that any eventual recriminatory attacks against his person are confounded. The belief and certainty to be able to discern between truth and lies remain in the domain specific to the one who holds *the power of speech which tells history*, for he keeps the consciousness of this truth (or of this lie) hidden by the *secret* of a decision and a (dis)simulated wish, thanks to which the historian maintains the lack of definition of his personal position.

Machiavelli, when he evokes the *personal* manner with which he writes his histories, puts to work a truly *cunning* skill in writing, for woven into his work is a concealed game of truth and lies together. His art as a historian, therefore, is equivalent to what Hesiod’s *Theogony* claims to be the *divine power represented by the Muses*, and the *Odyssey* claims to be the *heroic excellence represented by Odysseus*.

Jean Bodin, “The True Father of History”

For Jean Bodin it was entirely perplexing that Cicero had named Herodotus the “father of history” (Cambiano 2010: 658–61; Murari Pires 2012a, 2012b). It was a dubious honor because it contradicted his own definition of history as truthful narration, since Herodotus was distinguished for telling fables that were as agreeable and marvelous as they were false and deceitful (Bodin 1969: 55–6). Against this bastard appreciation of history by men who enjoyed listening to lies, Bodin opposed the pure, truthful taste for history, associated with the pleasure which men have in knowing and understanding the reality of what they do or suffer, which presupposes true histories (ibid.: 11–12).

Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides did not allow himself to be fooled by the mythical fables that appealed to the poets, like those that sang of the (illusory) perfections of the Golden Age. He was fully conscious of what the early period of Greece had really been like, full of “savagery and ferocity.” Thus it is Thucydides who is “the true father of history” (ibid.: 298).

Bodin characterizes Thucydides' historiographical excellence by setting up a whole complex of virtuous figurations: his privileged social position, marked by his wealth as much as his royal ancestry; his experience, and his corresponding knowledge of public life; his zeal and diligence in establishing the veracity of the events narrated in his history; and above all the elevated perspective of his historiographical judgments (Couzinet 1996a: 285), so that he did not compromise his perception by the detours of partial versions.

That Thucydides did not narrate the facts under the influence of any national prejudice was (in)directly signaled by the declarations of the Athenians themselves, who complained that he had tended to favor the Lacedaemonians in his account. That he had not distorted his account further through digressions of a personal nature was signaled by the impartiality with which he had sung Pericles' praises, the same politician who had condemned him to exile. So, Bodin concluded, "who would not have confidence in his history?" (1969: 56).

The elements of historical information which Bodin uses to construct his argument to prove the historiographical excellence of Thucydides could all be found in the ancient compilations that told the *Life of Thucydides*. By (re)configuring these in his appreciation, Bodin always paints a virtuous portrait of Thucydides by talking of his impeccable impartiality.

That Bodin's configurations concerning the historiographical art of Thucydides adjust the historical data to conform with the image of his impartiality can be seen in the selections that he made for this purpose, omitting things that told against it. For example, Marcellinus expressly names Cleon as the politician responsible for Thucydides' exile. This is the explanation, says the ancient biographer, for the contempt with which the historian distorted the Athenian demagogue by characterizing him as a madman. If the role of the author of the political ruin of Thucydides is attributed to Cleon, this gives rise to an accusation that speaks of the partiality of the historian, enraged against his personal enemy. Bodin, on the contrary, by assuming that Pericles was responsible – although Thucydides made it clear in his history that by the time of his exile Pericles was already dead – favors the positive perception of the historian.

It is quite probable that Bodin's error, as well as that of his ancient source, comes from a confusion between Thucydides the historian, son of Oloros, and Thucydides the politician, son of Melesias, the true adversary of Pericles, defeated in the dispute over the use of the treasury of the Delian League and sent into exile as a consequence.

Whatever the reason for Bodin's failure of historical knowledge here, the resultant idea of the impartiality of Thucydides fully conforms to the valorization of the historian figured as a judge, precisely the conceptual framework according to which the French theoreticians formulated their propositions, both on the writing of history and on the normalization of jurisprudence, in the context of the wars of religion in France in the second half of the sixteenth century. In order to advance the conception of history beyond the limits that were set on the historian by the

rules of rhetorical art, which made him a kind of lawyer, the historian-jurists aimed to draw upon the historical understanding of a major authority because of his capacity to apprehend the truth of facts accurately, as a result of observing them from an elevated perspective, above the contentions of the warring parties. One could therefore characterize Bodin's conception of historiographical excellence as a parallel to the figuration of expertise in judgment that distinguishes the modality of the hero named Nestor by Homer: the *histor* who resolves the disagreements of the two conflicting parties. (cf. Lestringant, Rieu, and Tarrete 2000: 295; Melani 2006: 171, 193–200).

La Popelinière: The Historian between Pandora and the Muses

The identification of the *historiographical modernity* of La Popelinière seems to generate impressions of an intriguing *extemporaneity*, for recent suggested readings (Yardeni 1964: 112) imply theses which project him *out of his time*. Thus his modern epistemologic contribution was only recognized at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Commentators then try to define which aspect of modernity began with La Popelinière. If Gabriel Monod exalts his modernity according to the scientificity adopted as part of the republican outlook of the *Révue Historique* (Monod 1876: 5–38; Delacroix, Dosse, and Garcia 1999: 63–7), Alfred de Chateigner does the same, but according to the parameters of the Catholic and monarchist perspective of the *Révue de Bretagne et de Vendée* (Chateigner 1858, no. 6: 510–21; no. 7: 73–80). If George Sypher salutes in La Popelinière the birth of modern historiography in close harmony with Baconian scientific epistemology (Sypher 1963: 353), George Huppert emphasizes above all the historiographical consciousness of subjectivity whereby La Popelinière already anticipated the main outlines of the historicist paradigm, although this was snuffed out almost immediately afterwards in the eighteenth century by the consecration of the paradigm of science and Cartesian rationality (Huppert 1973: 173). If Donald Kelley affirms that the premonitory vision in La Popelinière of a “professionalization” of the historian was nothing but “a noble dream” that resulted rather in a “provoking and badly written treatise, brimming with opinions and half-baked ideas” (Kelley 1997: 777–8, 781–2), Claude-Gilbert Dubois appreciates in La Popelinière the precocious intervention of a sociological perspective, but not without also recalling the outlines of a project marked by historical scientificity stamped with the attributes of an imaginary vision, a kind of audacious utopia which calls above all for virtualities (Dubois 1977: 124–5, 127, 152).

Echoing our previous discussions, we will aim to understand La Popelinière's historiographical propositions, and especially his praise for Thucydides, in terms of the conceptions of ancient authors, distancing ourselves from their modernizing perspectives (cf. Murari Pires 1998: 6–12; 1999: 235–72; 2003a: 127–48; 2003b: 73–94; 2007: 85–165, 201–48).

That the name of Herodotus was traditionally obliterated to the benefit of that of Thucydides does not seem to constitute a major enigma. Because the primacy of the truth was taken to be the mark of the true historian, Herodotus was stigmatized, for he was also seen as the *father of lies*. An age-old stigma, quite openly stated, and repeated in the sixteenth century by Erasmus (1908: 71–2), Juan Luis Vives (Hartog 1999: 307; Boudou 2000: 437) and Bodin (1969: 55–6). Even if Henri Estienne came to Herodotus' defense, La Popelinière denigrated him anew, saying of him: he is not the "father of history", as Cicero proclaimed him, but rather Pliny's "prince of lies" (1989, I: 136).

So, the "prince of history" is, "for the beauty of his language and the truth of his narration," Thucydides. Deprived of the *truth* which gives order to any discourse on the subject of human things, history, before Thucydides, was a "body without a soul." Between Herodotus and Thucydides, history took a decisive step, because from then on it constitutes "the acquisition of a possession for ever," a "treasury" of teachings for the "advantageous instruction of posterity." According to his own conception of "*histoire accomplie*," La Popelinière established on the basis of the Thucydidean idea of the *ktēma es aiei* the reasons whereby he identified the exceptional value of this history, which, through the return of the "same vicissitudes," actualizing in the present the images of the past, both exemplary ones and those to be condemned, proposes lessons of "wise prudence" allowing the reader better to face up to them. Thus, La Popelinière concluded, "Thucydides is, and always will be, a notable example for all worthy historians" (1989, I: 143, 148; II: 34–5, 38–9, 41).

But however well established the historiographical exemplarity of Thucydides may be, it would not be sufficient, La Popelinière warned, for anyone who aspires to the supreme ideal of *histoire accomplie*. This is an even more elevated ideal because it suggests the image of a "complete historian," full of gifts and virtues thanks to which "the duties of the office" are accomplished. To be a *historian* presupposes, besides "a correct instruction given by an excellent education and indispensable experience of the things of the world," that one should be an individual "endowed with a rare and happy temperament, equally generous, learned, eloquent and judicious by nature." This implies that one would have as a character trait "a good and noble heart, free from all servile obligation which might distract him, however slightly, from his duty, to the detriment of the truth." The figure of the *homme de bien* defined therefore the *natural condition which is particularly suited to historiography* (1989, II: 135–6).

Through these virtues, and because, pure and free from all passion, he follows the path of truth without any detour, the historian preserves knowledge of the actions of men in this world. On the one hand, the gaze of history contemplates the past, by making use of a memory of human things "however dead they may be, represented as living to our eyes" (*ibid.*, II: 141–2). On the other hand, the gaze of history allows us to discern the future: through the knowledge that it gives us of the logic that connects events to one another, history gives men of a wise

disposition a certain capacity for foresight which allows them to choose judiciously which actions should be taken according to the science of known actions. It is through this virtuous diligence that the historian affirms his *excellence* in this world, for through his practice of history he does the work of the *demiurge*, inscribing in time the human *ktēma es aiei* that aspires to the eternal (ibid., II: 141–5).

The *temperament* which is appropriate for such a historian, capable of following the “correct path of the duty of veracity,” not susceptible to the deviations to which “passions, prebends, appearances and other perils” might lead if he was subject to their effects, presupposes equilibrium, in correct proportions, of bodily humors and the affections of the soul which are linked to the harmonization of the capacities of “imagination, memory and understanding.” This is the configuration of humors in strict equilibrium which defines the *proper historiographical temperament* (Ibid., II: 167, 137, 128, 174–5).

However exemplary the *historiographical persona* of Thucydides may be, the thesis which La Popelinière defends makes no concession: neither a *perfect historian* nor, as a consequence, a *histoire accomplie*, free from every error or weakness betraying an imperfection, “has ever existed, neither among the Ancients, nor among the Moderns.” Thucydides himself was not one. Since antiquity “his cracks and his imperfections” had been revealed. Passionate impulses had seized hold of him and caused him to create a narrative of events that conformed to his personal affections: defending the memory of his master, Antiphon, and conversely badmouthing Cleon, his “enemy,” whom he called “mad” and “stupid” (1989, I: 144–5; II: 19, 61–2).

There is a clear distinction here between the human and the divine. Men are characterized above all by the fragility of their understanding, by their uncertain sensory perceptions, by the mutability, confusion and variety of their opinions which relate above all to appearances, not reality. “Errors” are an intrinsic part of the works of men, and they can at best aspire only “to fail less.” God alone, “sovereign and absolute power, pure light and water, ultimate cause of everything, is the spiritual source of wisdom which flows eternally” (ibid., I: 13–14).

The esteem which is accorded to human knowledge does not, however, disappear wholly before the divine omniscience. In *L’Idée de l’Histoire Accomplie* are (pre)figured the arguments which were to support the cause of the Moderns in their future quarrel with the Ancients, for they can not only profit from the knowledge which their predecessors have left them, but can moreover surpass them by bringing to light what they had ignored. In the journey of history, the Moderns had gone further than the Ancients. The latter must not be employed as a brake, paralyzing the Moderns. They, on the contrary, take the Ancients as the “spur” to an agonistic rivalry, in a development through which the efforts and faults of their predecessors would be corrected by those who followed them. This is the “generous combat” thanks to which human works progress. La Popelinière says this quite literally, using a formula which corresponds to that of the “good fight” of Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. *Perfection* is a divine prerogative. What appertains to men

is the path that leads them toward it, a never-to-be-completed task that consists of minimizing errors, for “there is no man, however favored he may be by nature or blessed by the experience of overcoming troubles, who is exempt from faults, in his words or actions.” In history the (im)potence of the human spirit is played out, whereby the new *Pan-dora*, now historiographical, a kind of combination of every gift and every virtue, is conceived above all as a glimpse of the end rather than as a disposition of principle (ibid., I: 12–13, 18–19).

To these reasons why neither the Ancients nor the Moderns achieved the ideal of *histoire accomplie* (this is precisely the title of the third book of *L’Idée de l’Histoire Accomplie*: II, 147), La Popelinière adds another which, although it does not contradict those already discussed, does give rise to a certain perplexity: “From these qualities which we look for in the historian is lacking only a correct will which would give us a sufficient power to attain them.” For “the true and principle reason for the fault does not need to be sought outside the historian himself” (Ibid., II: 147, 171).

La Popelinière thus lays bare the wound that cuts into the *corpus* of historiography, precisely because it corrupts the *soul* of the historian. Given that “the substance, the nature and the principle object of history” consist in “representing the simple and candid truth,” there has never been “a single historian who could overcome his passions and convince his spirit not to tell what he knew, naked and frankly” (again, this calls to mind Lucian’s strictures). Such a historian, “lover of the truth,” presupposes a being endowed with an “extraordinary” destiny from a human point of view, gifted with the “rare grace of a divine design,” which would give him a complexion and a temperament suited to develop a firm and rigid natural goodness, not timorous, who would never fear to express in every case everything that seems to him good, bad, truthful, false, virtuous, vicious, excellent and vile.” The reason why “none” of the historians has been “able to stay the course... which consists in honoring the truth as a duty, is not that none of them could, but that none of them wished to or dared.” So one could not “blame for the lack of a fully-achieved history anything but the corruption of our wills” (Ibid., II: 171–2, 173–4, 178).

However, La Popelinière asks himself, can “something more suitable than to wish for what is beautiful and commendable ever exist? What is *easier* than to write what one *desires*, which is to make manifest and make known, in his lifetime as after his death? What body of work would be more *agreeable*, more worthy of being loved and taken up by all kinds of people than a good history?” (ibid., II: 178).

But such a confluence of *being able* and *wishing to*, this *facility to expel the lie and speak the truth through an act decided upon as a pure manifestation of the will*, is the prerogative that the Hesiodic *Theogony* proclaims as the distinctive attribute of the *divine word of the Muses*. A similar convergence of *being able* and *wishing to* in the narration of events is also the virtue that the *Odyssey* (XIX.203) represents as a characteristic of the heroic figure named Odysseus in his guise as skillful raconteur.

Lorenzo Valla says that the art of writing history is much more difficult and delicate when the historian is enveloped by the events which he describes in his work, for he finds himself implicated, which makes his position suspect (2002: 78). A historian of the first order would be one where one could not say, on reading his account, which side he came from.

La Popelinière experienced something similar; his history of France fell victim to the diatribes of his contemporaries, who saw in it a web of partial and compromising affirmations. It is above all in the letter that he wrote to Théodore de Bèze (January 15, 1581) that the historian laid out the basis on which he considered the rectitude of his work to be founded, obedient to a legitimate historiographical principle: to maintain *neutrality and indifference* in the treatment of “the designs and actions of the two parties in contention.” The source of the error which affected histories was the outpouring of passions in the exposition of events, for it aroused suspicions and thus the lack of credibility that led to the account being rejected. This was the historiographical ill which had to be exorcized. Once he has given his diagnosis, La Popelinière proposes the remedy which will permit history, through its composition, to follow the path of truth correctly: by removing every passionate impulse. Through a neutral narration, the historian expects to be able to establish the conviction of his veracity which makes of his account an authoritative history (Sypher 1961: 262, 329, 332).

However, the efficacy of the persuasion to which this manner of rhetoric aspires ends up by stumbling over an objection which consists precisely in questioning the result which it claims to obtain. When he replies (March 29, 1581) to the letter which the historian sent him, Théodore de Bèze responds to the argument of impartiality which La Popelinière had affirmed with an appreciation which, paradoxically, jeopardizes it. Commenting on the historian’s account of the massacre at Vassy, Bèze sees in the stripping out of passions for the sake of purity of fact precisely the opposite result: this event is so *amaigri* [thinned out], so disembodied by the historian of all factual substance, precisely occluding the circumstances which had led to it, that the perception of the injustice of the act, however “exorbitant and lamentable,” appears empty. The representation of the reality of a fact demanded on the contrary a dense, emphatic exposition, in such a way that a true conformity with all that had happened permits a well-founded judgment (*ibid.*: 264).

The question which Bèze raises about La Popelinière’s idea of the historian’s impartiality points to a contradiction: does a narrative full of passion necessarily efface the apprehension of the facts, as if they could not exist independently of it? Does the narration of an event, because it is associated with the expression of a specific perspective, never correspond to the reality of the historical fact? If an exposition full of the compromises of passion ruins the truth through excess, is its total suppression not equally injurious through lack? By what narrative procedure can one attain the appropriate (im)partiality of the historiographical account by refining the expression of the *pure and simple* factual truth? Should it exclude the

pretended objectification of fact by the historian or suspend the ethic of his subjective judgment? Although the posture of not taking sides is advisable, can the historian set free his apprehension of the weaknesses of a subjective view, thus coming rather to dissimulate the truth and thus violating the epistemological principle that is the foundation of his activity? (ibid.: 264–5).

Closely linked to the argument which recommends that the historian should neutralize the interference of the passions through impartiality, another concern adopted by La Popelinière allowed him, he says, to bring the neutrality of his account to the forefront. In order to achieve the factual veracity of his account independently from any social identification or any other element that could discredit him, he says that he had declared in his *History* neither his name, nor his party, nor his condition of life, let alone his country or his religion, desirous of better confirming the conviction of his veracity (ibid.: 268–70). Through the erasure of the name that would permit the identification of the historian and his social position, La Popelinière conceals the narrative figuration of his historiographical *persona*.

However, compromising personal indications were still evident, inscribed in the dedication of the work to the queen (Catherine de Médicis) and the king (Henry III). The contagion of (dis)favors and personal enmities thus exposed enveloped the work in a fog of suspicion, especially among the Huguenots, the author's co-religionists, who did not hold back from criticizing a history paid for by Catholic agents (ibid.: 262).

This body of evidence, betraying the networks which attached the historian to individuals in his history, which thus gave rise to suspicion of the judgments pronounced on them and of the impartiality of the historian and the neutrality of his *History*, was precisely what Machiavelli had attempted, in the composition of his *Istorie Fiorentini*, to conceal by means of a rhetorical method of *Odyssean* origin. Behind the presentation of the objectified historical fact one detects the figure of the historian who reifies it. We would thus have a historiographical proposition that is precisely the inverse of that which Thucydides claimed for himself as the foundation of his method (Murari Pires 2003a: 148).

Toward Hobbes

When, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, the sons of Boccalini asked the Venetian Senate for permission to reprint the commentaries on Tacitus that their father had composed, their request was declined. According to the commentaries of the reporter Donato Morosini, any association with the work of Boccalini was not in the least to be recommended: “Machiavelli and others, destroyers of all political virtue” were nothing more or less than “offshoots, branches of Tacitus” (Benoist 1936: 47–8). This was the Senate's argument, concerned about preserving the good republican ethos of the city (Brown 1939: 112).

A similar dichotomy within the circles of the Venetian leaders, opposing the republican virtuosity preserved in Thucydides and the despotic vice disseminated by Tacitus, can be seen in the correspondence in which one of them, Domenico Molin, exhorted his erudite companions to direct their studies according to the better purposes of humanist civics. In a letter dated August 19, 1622, he addressed himself to the Dutch classicist Jan van Meurs, exhorting him to translate Thucydides, a suitable antidote against the venoms of Tacitism. He tells him also that someone who cultivated the values of antiquity without sparing the effort to celebrate its monuments would be able to focus even more on reviving among the Moderns the spirit of liberty which, coming out of Athens, would be expected to spread throughout the world. All those who love “sweet liberty” should show their gratitude to Thucydides, the tutor who preserved this jewel in his history (Bouwsma 1968: 237).

But the modern step from Tacitus to Thucydides, demanded by the civic aspirations of Venice, came at the same period to be posed not among the Flemish but in an exemplary manner in old Albion, by Thomas Hobbes, who translated Thucydides in an effective manner in 1628. However, the virtues for which he recommended henceforth the model of the *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* deviated immediately from the paths of republicanism that the Venetian patricians held in such high esteem (Murari Pires 2007: 69–81).

Epilogue: The Figurations of Historiographical Excellence of the Historian between Hero and Genius

As we have just argued with respect to the figure of the Thucydidean Clio, the conception of the historian proposed by Jean Bodin and La Popelinière in representing him as a judge set above the conflicting parties is defined in opposition to a conception which makes an advocate of him, who in contrast argues the case of the truth of one of the parties (cf. Séguier-Leblanc 2003: 114–29), as is the case with Henri Estienne and Théodore de Bèze. One could then contrast Bodin’s condemnation of the reputation of Herodotus in his *Methodus* in the name of the first conception with the defense of Herodotus put forward by Henri Estienne in his *Apologia* in the name of the second conception; or the justification of his own history of the French civil wars offered by La Popelinière in his letter to Bèze in the name of the first with the persistent accusation leveled against him in the latter’s response in the name of the second.

Through the rhetorical games which would figure the *heroism of the historian* (whether as Odysseus or Nestor) one would come to situate the projection of historiographical excellence within a horizon of ideas which appears to presume an idea through reference to the figurative links between the *human* and the *divine* so that *the combination of will and power* can configure the (im)possibility of resolving the dilemmas surrounding the writing of history. The echoes of the established

dialogues between Ancients and Moderns would then make this equation of historiographical excellence figured by a Thucydidean Clio oscillate between its apprehension through the ancient concept of the *hero* and through the modern concept, only just developing, of the *genius* (Wittkower 1968; Wittkower and Wittkower 1969; Brann 2002).

With this latter concept already consolidated by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the troublesome character of this question came to disturb the thinking of both Leopold von Ranke and Barthold Georg Niebuhr. Appropriately, it is with Niebuhr, and also with Ranke, that the glory of Thucydides is reborn. So the Moderns, giving themselves the task of founding historical science, erected Thucydides as a supreme model, projecting onto him a kind of apotheosis: *the immortal Thucydides*, as Niebuhr said (1852a, II: 105), *before whom I kneel*, as Ranke admitted (1890: 26–31; Wines 1981: 4; Ranke 1973: 329). And, for Ranke, Thucydides, like Homer for epic or Plato for philosophy, could certainly be glorified as “the genius” of (the writing of) history, which, through him, attained perfection (Ranke 1975: 256–7; 1986: 232). Niebuhr remarked in a similar vein: “The first real and true historian, according to our notion, was Thucydides; as he is the most perfect historian among all that have written, so he is at the same time the first: he is the Homer of the historians” (1852b, I: 211). Further: “the Peloponnesian War ... is the most immortal of all wars, because it is described by the greatest of all historians that ever lived” (*ibid.*, II: 54).

Guide to Further Reading

For a general introduction to history and historiography in the early modern period, see Grafton (2007). The development of ideas on historiography in France is surveyed by Kelley (1970) and Dubois (1977); Jean Bodin’s ideas are explored in Couzinet (1996b). On the reception of Thucydides in this period, see Cambiano (2010 – on Italy and France) and Murari Pires (2007).

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The Reception of Thucydides in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century France

Pascal Payen

Neither Voltaire (1694–1778) nor Fustel de Coulanges (1830–89) paid any great attention to the work of Thucydides, but does this necessarily imply that the voice of the author of *La guerre du Péloponnèse* remained unheard in the Age of Enlightenment and its historical writing? And because we know that the public, and the curricula in the Jesuit colleges, both favored Rome over Greece, what became of him in the historiographical and intellectual context of the French Revolution? For the thinkers of the Revolution, knowledge of Antiquity came above all from reading Plutarch, whose *Vies parallèles* had been highly successful since Amyot's French translation in 1559. André Dacier's version (1721–34), dedicated to the young Louis XV, updated the language and thus enhanced the work's accessibility, and Abbé Ricard's translation in 1798 testifies to the vitality and permanence of Plutarch's heroic models and political reflections. Given this context, what role remained for Thucydides, and how did he navigate the – unfavorable – Renaissance and then the era of absolutism? All the historian from Athens and the examples of the ancient Greek cities had to offer modern French readers was a set of counter-examples, in a France whose monarchy was undergoing consolidation during Louis XIV's long reign (1661–1715).

The Limits to this Lack of Awareness of Thucydides

As was the case for all ancient historians, Thucydides' high point came between 1450 and 1600. The increasing numbers of scholarly translations and editions published in this period are the means by which his course can be charted in France and even more so in humanist Europe. And then, in the seventeenth century, began a steady decline, rounded off with the defeat of the Ancients,

defenders of the wisdom of the Greeks, in the famous “Quarrel” that pitted them against the Moderns (c. 1689–1714).

Four translations of Thucydides were available to the French public during this period via teaching in the *collèges*. The first was Lorenzo Valla’s Latin translation from around 1448–52, printed in 1483, and published in Paris in 1513. This was the version used by Claude de Seyssel (c. 1450–1520), whose knowledge of Greek was deeply flawed, to produce the first French translation (1514), published in 1527. Conversely, the overly literal translation by Jean-Louis Jausaud d’Usez, published in Leyde, in 1600, was soon forgotten, although Pierre-Charles Lévesque, author of the first genuine French translation of Thucydides in 1795, nonetheless mentioned it, stressing that Jausaud “knew Greek, but not his own language” (Lévesque 1795: xxxvii). The “Belle Infidèle” version by Nicolas Perrot d’Ablancourt from 1662 (Zuber 1972: 83–5) comes in for strong criticism for its omissions and discrepancies, to the point where Lévesque writes in his preface that: “in my opinion Seyssel, with all his faults, presents Thucydides with, if anything, fewer shortcomings, and his contradictions misrepresent their author less, than all d’Ablancourt’s omissions and presumptions” (Lévesque 1795: xxxviii).

The available editions of the Greek text were of a higher standard than the translations. Alde Manuce had published Thucydides’ work in its original language in Venice in 1502, the same year as an edition of Herodotus, and this edition then served as the basis for all subsequent publications during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, up until the work of John Hudson at Oxford in 1696. In France, only the Henri Estienne edition (1564), complete with scholia, is comparable. The enhanced 1588 edition has a two-column *in-folio*, one giving Valla’s Latin translation with marginal corrections, the notes on the Greek text, and the scholia for Books 1 and 2. It is, with the Aldine edition, the second reference text in France and Europe.

At the end of the seventeenth century, and in keeping with Cicero’s judgment in the *De Oratore* (II.56), Thucydides was defined by d’Ablancourt, in the preface to his translation, as a historian, master of eloquence:

Because if Cicero is to be believed, he has overtaken all others in eloquence, *Thucydides, omnes discendi [sic: dicendi] artificio mea sententia facile vicit [...]* And it is an eloquence consonant with his subject, where he speaks only of great Politicians and great Captains whose character he perfectly personifies. Thus it is not surprising that Demosthenes copied it out eight times, in an effort to become more familiar with it. However, it is not from eloquence that he derives his main embellishment but History, already heralded in childhood by publicly weeping over accounts by Herodotus. And he is thus the model upon which all Antiquity has been based, and especially Tacitus, who could be termed the Latins’ Thucydides, as he is the Grecian Tacitus [...] Both have majesty and grandeur, with urgent speech full of meaning, tinted with a certain obscurity through neglect of the terms and ways of ordinary speaking, in order to heighten their style, which thus becomes virile and vigorous, mirroring their strong and profound thoughts. (Perrot d’Ablancourt 1662: 197–8)

The perfection of public speaking founded on an ideal of clarity and simplicity also defines a cultural model, where the style conveys the truth. History is not yet primarily thought of in terms of knowledge; truth does not derive solely from knowledge. The theoretical texts devoted to Thucydides in the second half of the seventeenth century converge on this point. Père Rapin, in his *Comparaison de Thucydide et de Tite-Live* (1681) restricts himself to “the examination of the elocution.” Thucydides’ style conveys a moral: “His serious, grave, austere character in his image, gives him a style that is noble, virile, vigorous, full of meaning,” reiterates Rapin in his *Instructions pour l’histoire* (1677). Nonetheless, although admired, Thucydides remained largely unknown in France at the end of the seventeenth century (Morineau 1988: 427–31). The austerity and obscurity of his style distanced him from certain readers, whereas others considered that this very obscurity, notably in the speeches, suggested an “abundance of meaning.” The historical knowledge contained in the *History* continued to be concealed under the embellishments of its rhetoric. The dominant conception of history was that of the *historia ornata* and of the *historia magistra vitae* (Cicero *Or.* II.36); there exists a moral beauty of history whose function is neither the transmission of knowledge nor a search for the truth but the capacity to lift up the soul in the presence of this edifying display. This context, specific in part to Thucydides, provides an explanation for why he is far from assuming a dominant role in the historiographical field; further, there are two other, broader phenomena, concerning the status of Antiquity at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The first derived from the depletion of, and the crisis in, French humanist culture. Teaching in and of Latin came under attack (Waquet 1997: 17ff, 101ff, 183–4), and that of Greek had been in decline since the second half of the sixteenth century. Scholarship, one of the foundations of humanist culture, was in a state of crisis due to the departure abroad – notably to Holland – of 200,000 protestants, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had guaranteed religious tolerance, in 1685. Scholarly works on Grecian historians, already thin on the ground, become even rarer (Burke 1966; Morineau 1988: 330–58, 421–455; Grell 1993: 133–42, 1995: 301–24, *passim*). In France, overwhelming primacy was given to the Latin historians: Sallust was the most widely published and translated, ahead of Valerius Maximus, Caesar, Quintus Curtius, Tacitus, and Livy. Between 1670 and 1730, no Greek historian was published in his mother tongue in France. The list of those translated is restricted to Polybius, Diodorus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch. The imbalance becomes more pronounced, to the detriment of the Greeks, in the seventeenth century. Not a single translation of Herodotus was published between Du Ryer’s unsatisfactory attempt (1645), and the work of Pierre-Henri Larcher (1786) (Payen 2001: 17–18, 21–3); and likewise for Thucydides, between that of Nicolas Perrot d’Ablancourt (1662) and the remarkable translation by Pierre-Charles Lévesque (1795). In the meantime, during the Quarrel between the Ancients and Moderns, the historians, like other ancient authors, could only become part of the “Modern” field of literature if they

were adapted in the “Belles Infidèles” tradition, rather than being properly translated. Xenophon’s *Hellenica* was almost unknown; only the prolific Perrot d’Ablancourt’s (1662) translation exists, slotted in after that of Thucydides. This can be explained by the fact that it was the *Anabasis* and still more the *Cyropaedia* that were considered to be historical works. The first Greek author in the hierarchy of ancient historians, Flavius Josephus, appears in the eleventh and twelfth positions, ahead of Plutarch, Xenophon for the *Cyropaedia*, Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, and Diodorus. If all genres of ancient literature are considered, historians are relegated even further down, below Cicero and the poets Virgil, Ovid, and Horace.

Knowledge of Thucydides depended also on a second context, concerning the situation of the Greeks and Greek history at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. At the end of the Quarrel, the Moderns had prevailed over the Ancients, with whom the scholars had sided. Indeed, the latter were alone in studying and being associated with the Greeks. This fact helped to discredit the Greek people, in comparison to whom Romans were considered to be “Moderns.” In a wider European context, the eighteenth-century historiography dedicated to Greece developed some decades later than its Roman equivalent, and did not benefit from an exacting criticism to rival that of the works of Louis de Beaufort (Raskolnikoff 1992) or Edward Gibbon (Momigliano 1954). When Rollin began writing his *Histoire ancienne*, at the end of the 1720s, he had only the first volume of Temple Stanyan’s work from 1707, *The Grecian History from the origin of Greece to the death of Philip of Macedon* (London, 2 vols., 1707 and 1739), to draw upon. This may be significant, since for Stanyan the Grecian experience was first and foremost political, involving the key issue of freedom. Given Charles Rollin’s difficult personal situation after 1713, when his Jansenist principles led to him losing public office, such a perspective on ancient Greece may have fallen on especially receptive ears. Rollin clearly states his view in the *Traité des études*:

Anyone aspiring to the reputation of scholar will have to travel, so to speak, for a long time, in Greece ... If one wishes to return to the very origins, all knowledge can be drawn from there. (Rollin 1726–8, III: 191–2)

Right from the introduction to the fifth book of his *Histoire ancienne*, where he embarks on Greek history, Rollin clearly comes out in favor of Greece, and explains:

Of all the countries in Antiquity, there are but few as famous as Greece, nor which provide such precious monuments and such illuminating facts to history. Seen from whatever angle, whether the glory of taking up arms, the wisdom of the laws, the study of sciences and arts, everything is taken to a high degree of perfection; and we could say that concerning all these, Greece has in some way become the school for mankind. (1731–8, V.2: 188)

Where does Thucydides fit into this project?

Thucydides, Rollin, and Athens

Between 1730 and 1738 Charles Rollin published a historical work in thirteen volumes entitled *Histoire ancienne des Égyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Mèdes et des Perses, des Macédoniens et des Grecs*. A clarification, in the form of a definition which is included in the *Traité des études* and to which we will return, states that what is meant by this list is “all ancient history apart from that of Rome.”

The audacity of this undertaking, as Rollin noted in the preface, stems from the fact that for almost the first time, in France at least, a project had been conceived to write “an ongoing story of antiquity” (1731–8, I: 41), focused in particular on ancient Greece, using ancient authors and above all Greek historians. It is from these authors that Rollin will draw “that which appears [to him] to be the most interesting in terms of facts and the most instructive – in terms of comments – to inform the debate” (*ibid.*). To confer on Greek historians the status of exemplars in this bipolar perspective – “facts” and “comments” – was a novel approach in ancient history, in contrast to established practices and assumptions since the end of what is customarily known as erudite humanism. Rollin’s reliance on this corpus, both ostentatiously elevating its members as authorities (they are listed twice as vital sources for his work) and increasing the number of notes and citations from the Greek texts, was a striking innovation that left him open to criticism. It is associated with the figure of Thucydides.

When historians addressed the fifth century BCE, where exactly did Thucydides stand in the analysis, compared with Plutarch’s prestigious *Lives*? Is it certain that he was “the prime victim of the Enlightenment” (Grell 1993: 137), and that “overall, a clearly favourable [for him] general climate of opinion ... will not appear on the horizon before the second part of the eighteenth century” (Momigliano 1992: 57), or that “Thucydides [was] an author much neglected by the 1789 generation in favour of Plutarch” (Vidal-Naquet 1990: 230)? The problem needs to be tackled by applying a finer timescale to Thucydides’ reception, especially for the two decades after the Quarrel and before Rousseau: between Rome and Sparta, in Rollin’s era, which is also the time of Montesquieu (Vidal-Naquet 2000: 232; Cambiano 2003: 314, 332, 346; Guelfucci 2006).

The second problem concerns the nature of the experience and of the history of Athens, championed by Rollin using Thucydides and the other sources that he takes into account, above all Plutarch and Diodorus of Sicily. What is the value of Athenian history, in the face of early republican Rome, fatherland of arms and righteousness, or Sparta, model of participation and political freedom? Did Rollin start from the premise of Athens as a city of the arts and commerce, a city of entrepreneurial freedom, an idea which will triumphantly dominate the historiography of the nineteenth century (Loraux and Vidal-Naquet 1990)? He was certainly not alone in pondering these problems. In 1734, at the same time as the volumes of his *Histoire ancienne* appeared, Jean-François Melon, John Law’s

secretary, published an *Essai politique sur le commerce*, which attracted much attention. And such a backdrop provides fertile grounds for making a close examination of Thucydides' place in Rollin's historical work on ancient Greece.

In the eighteenth century there were three persistent obstacles to a proper understanding of Thucydides' work. The first was a belief in the continuity of humanist history, Ciceronian in inspiration and intended to instruct and edify the reader: history is *magistra vitae* and provider of *exempla*. This model is one of Rollin's conceptual frameworks for history as the "messenger from the past" (*nuntia vetustatis*: Cicero, *Or.* II.36) throughout the general preface of the *Histoire ancienne*, and it had already appeared in his *Traité des études*, notably in an important theoretical passage, the foreword to Book 5, entitled "On the use of History":

It is not by chance that History has always been seen as the light of ages, the custodian of events, truth's faithful witness, the fount of good counsel and prudence, the rule of conduct and manners. Bereft of this, enclosed within the limits of the century and the country where we live, held tightly within the narrow circle of our own particular knowledge and thoughts, we remain in a sort of childhood, outsiders to the rest of the universe, and deeply ignorant of all that has come before us and all that surrounds us. What is this small number of years making up the longest life? ... Nonetheless, our knowledge is confined to this imperceptible point if we do not call upon the study of history, which opens and divulges all centuries and all countries; which introduces us to all the great men in Antiquity; displaying all their activities, all their ventures, all their virtues, all their shortcomings; and which, by the wise words they provide us, or that they provoke us to utter, rapidly afford us pre-emptive cautiousness, far superior to the lessons of the most resourceful masters. ... We can say that History is mankind's common school house. (1726–8, III.5: 6, 8, 11)

But such an approach, which subordinates political maxims and knowledge to moral values, is completely out of step with Thucydides' thinking. The "possession for ever," the *ktēma es aiei* (1.22.4) that he constructs in and by his work, is not a matter of morality; it emerges from "clear" knowledge, by contemplating the precise details (*to saphes skopein*) that the reader acquires from the past. The reader can use the latter "usefully" to "find" (*heurein*), that is "to understand" events to come (*tōn mellontōn*) (1.1.2, 1.22.4). The historian provides neither models nor a moral framework, but intellectual tools to understand human nature, when *political* action leads to war.

The second obstacle to reading Thucydides derives from the question of political models. The Roman state has far more resemblances to modern monarchies than the Greek cities; and, insofar as Greek examples are considered, the Sparta of Lycurgus is the touchstone, whose precepts such as the submission of all to the law have a timeless quality and are considered consonant with a criticism of absolutism by such writers as Fenelon (1651–1715). Before Rollin, Thucydides' Athens did not interest historians or political thinkers; after him, Sparta would have admirers as influential as Rousseau, Mably, and Jaucourt. In Rousseau's *Discours sur les sciences*

et les arts (1750), Lacedaemon is the paradigm of the peoples who have been able to escape from the depravity caused by the sciences and the arts:

O Sparta! How you eternally shame a vain doctrine! While the vices led along by the fine arts were introduced together with them in Athens, while a tyrant there collected with so much care the works of the prince of poets, you were chasing the arts and the artists, the sciences and the learned men from your walls. (Rousseau 1750: 12)

Mably's model of the great statesman, the Athenian Phocion – in the *Entretiens*, published in 1763 – needs to use Lycurgus' example to develop his political principles. Jaucourt composes the long "Lacedaemon" article in the *Encyclopédie*, which retains all the features of the myth as forged by Rousseau; Athens receives only a highly critical article, drafted by Turpin at a late stage, in the 1776 *Supplément*, wherein Thucydides' city serves as a counter model to Lycurgus' Sparta. Following the victories in the Persian Wars, "the Athenians, won over by their affluence, let themselves fall into presumptuous self confidence ... [Athens] lowered its defences, and Sparta, held back by the equity of their laws, had sufficient discretion not to dare punish them for this" (Turpin 1776: 674).

The third obstacle distancing Thucydides from an audience at this time comes from our knowledge of the two cities. Sparta, as portrayed in Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus*, appeared as a mythical model belonging to an imaginary antiquity. Conversely, Thucydides' image of Athens seemed too historical, too enshrined in time's changing fortunes, too complex: resolutely focused on progress in the *Archaeology*; powerful and expansionist in the Pentecontaetia; sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated in war; torn between irreconcilable policies, embodied by Pericles, Cleon, Nicias, Alcibiades. Therefore it seemed better to forgo Thucydides and, if anyone wished to speculate on politics from an Athenian viewpoint, turn, like Mably, to the *Life of Phocion*.

Compared to Sparta, so timeless that it could be denuded of historical yardsticks and become merely a hypothesis to ponder on, as it was for Rousseau, Athens was thus available for historical analysis; the phases of this allow us to retrace some of the stages of reception, and of Thucydides' reappearance in the eighteenth century. The first of these can be found in Rollin's *Histoire ancienne*.

Thucydides appears in three places. First of all he is on the two lists that define the work. The first, between the "General Preface" and the "Foreword," enumerates the "main Grecian authors cited in the text of *Histoire ancienne*," plus the edition that Rollin used for each: Thucydides is in second place behind Herodotus. The other list concerns the twenty descriptions making up the section entitled "Grecian historians," of Book 27: Thucydides has his own discussion, after Herodotus, under a special heading entitled "Comparison between Herodotus and Thucydides." It is in this section of about fifty pages (Rollin 1731–8, IX.27: 209–53), where Rollin shows a special preference for Polybius and Plutarch, that he examines the contribution, not only in literary terms, of Greek historians to the content

of history. Contrary to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, he praises Thucydides for “having sacrificed his homeland’s glory for the love of the truth,” which “is certainly the first and paramount quality of the historian” (Rollin 1731–8, IX.27: 217), according to the tradition of “true history” (Thuc. 1.20.3, 1.21.1, 1.22.1; Cicero *Or.* II.36; Lucian, *How to Write History* 42; Rollin 1726–8, III. 5: 6). Thucydides is then mentioned in Books 7 and 8, devoted to the continuing history of the fifth century. Lastly, he appears in a more general way, in the long analytical section of Book 10, interrupting the chronological account of Greek history, notably with his discussion of the juxtaposition of the “government of Sparta” and the “government of Athens.”

It needs to be emphasized how far Rollin seems to have had an exceptional knowledge of the Greek language, something increasingly rare in the seventeenth century, but typical of those who had passed through the Jansenist monastery of Port-Royal. According to Jean-Baptiste Cr  vier (1693–1765), Rollin’s disciple, friend, and legatee, the latter, on the spur of the moment, sometimes took pleasure in writing down the theology lessons, dictated in Latin, in Greek, and he conversed in the language with Boivin le Jeune, his colleague at the Coll  ge de France, in preparation for their thesis defense. The editors of Rollin’s *Opuscules* state that he read the texts of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Diodorus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch in the original (Rollin 1731, I.7: 26–7), which is confirmed by the list of editions he had at his disposal. Thus he appears very early on, as one of the rare scholars of his time able to undertake a history on the basis of a lengthy personal acquaintance with the texts, combined with ongoing reflection on history and education. This was the subject of a fuller treatment in the *Traite des etudes*. Here, Rollin offers a lengthy draft (Rollin 1726–8, III: 211–362) of what a course of study on the history of the Ancients should contain, develops a comprehensive account of “[the] use and [the] necessity for a study of the Greek language,” and formulates a precise program of teaching methods.

What are Rollin’s methods of working and ways of thinking, as seen through the use he makes of Thucydides? First of all, the notes and references reveal that he did not consider him as an author in a class of his own. In Books 7 and 8, devoted to fifth-century Athens after the Persian Wars, Thucydides appears alongside Plutarch and Diodorus, in an order that varies according to the main source material Rollin is using. The footnotes offer some indication of their relative importance: eighty-eight (42%) refer to Plutarch, sixty-seven (32%) to Thucydides, and fifty-three (25%) to Diodorus.

The different ways of “borrowing” from Thucydides or of reformulating his words comprise the quote, the translation, the summary or the paraphrase, or otherwise a simple reference noted, or ellipse indicated: having reported the massacre of the Plataeans following Thucydides’ account in Book 3, Rollin writes in the first person: “I omit several special events from the following campaigns that repeatedly happened in the same fashion, the Lacedaemonians regularly undertook annual destructive incursions into the Attica, and the Athenians in the Peloponnese,

apart from a few attacks on strongholds by both of them" (1731–8, III.7: 128), which means that he ignores the *stasis* at Corcyra. Likewise when he comes to the period covered by Book 5, including the Melian Dialogue: "I will not mention several insignificant events, in order to be able to move on to the most important of all, which is the Athenians' expedition to Sicily" (ibid.: 158). When Rollin compares the accounts of Thucydides and of Plutarch, more often the former contributes a version that is less dramatic and less didactic. For example, with the death of Themistocles, he first sets out Plutarch's version, that of suicide by swallowing bull's blood or poison; but then states that he considers "more likely" the death from illness favored by the historian, and admits that he sides with Thucydides' feelings, a historian he qualifies here as "wise" (ibid.: 16–17). This art of writing history thus tends to show that Rollin has his Thucydides right in front of him, and moreover the complete Thucydides rather than the reading notes that he or Crévier would have prepared. This seems to be demonstrated by a long note (ibid.: 16–17) where Rollin returns to the causes of the "Megarian decree:"

Plutarch says [*Vie de Périclès*, 30.4] that some argued that it was Pericles who had decreed vengeance for Aspasia's particular wrong, from whom the Megarians kidnapped two courtesans; and he cites Aristophanes' verses, which, in a comedy entitled *The Acharnians* [v. 524–527], reproach Pericles in this vein. But Thucydides, a contemporary author, and one who was well aware of all that was happening in Athens, never mentions a word about this kidnapping; and he is more credible than a poet who lives by backbiting and satire.

This note puts the reader in the historian Rollin's study. The truth is on Thucydides' side, not that of Aristophanes and Plutarch; and Rollin is able to home in on an absence in Thucydides' account – "[Thucydides] never mentions a word about this kidnapping" – only because he obviously has the text right in front of him.

From the quote to the ellipse, Rollin reads and fashions a different Thucydides for himself, no longer the master of virtue and eloquence in the traditional image held by Perrot d'Ablancourt and Rapin (Grell 1995: 984–5), but one of truth and accuracy, a Thucydides restored to his true self and to the epistemology that he develops in the chapters following the *Archaeology*. Rollin works as a compiler, and indeed very little as a critical historian, similar for example to his contemporary Louis de Beaufort in his study of the first centuries of the Roman republic. However, his "compilation" is underpinned by a number of authors, who are constantly compared with, reconciled with, and measured against each other. Thus for almost every phrase he is forced to make a choice, retaining the author deemed to be closest to the "truth" and a rigorous "accuracy," hence the most Thucydidean from a Ciceronian point of view "To search above all for the truth" is the first rule that constitutes "history's very soul" (Rollin 1726–8, III: 192–6); "The truth [...] must be the very roots of history" (1731–8, IX.27: 217). In this way the author of the *History* found himself reinstated to a position that he had ceased to occupy in humanist historiography. From this perspective, the *History* reads like a history of

the conflict between Athens and Sparta, rather than a series of portraits of famous men. After Rollin's work, Thucydides' contribution to understanding of the fifth century forced readers to completely change their way of looking at the period, or at least to see events through fresh eyes, thus encouraging attempts at reconciliation between the history of talented individuals and the history of cities. Rollin contributed to raising awareness and recognition of the work of Thucydides and the city of Athens, via a work which, in its recording of history, retains for the most part the characteristics of a compilation that was faithful to humanist traditions.

The *Histoire ancienne* became a reference work as soon as it was published, and was quickly followed by a translation into German (1739), then into English in 1759 and Italian in 1792. Rollin's work was read by Montesquieu, by Voltaire, by Frederick II of Prussia, and by Rousseau, for his *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*.

Thucydides, Voltaire, and the *Encyclopédie*

Voltaire wanted to be a historian of his time, although he seems rarely to have read Thucydides, the main ancient Greek point of reference for such an enterprise (Mat-Hasquin 1981: 225–6). Nevertheless, he did have a copy of Perrot d'Ablancourt's translation, which he read and annotated, albeit sparingly (Bouvier 2010: 702–3). For Voltaire, the historian must be a witness to his own time. Hence in his article entitled "History" in the *Encyclopédie* he rejects dealing with periods that necessitate consultation of archives, as being "the dark labyrinth of the middle ages," and asks that for antiquity we abide by what historians recount (Voltaire 1765: 221, 223); he cites only Herodotus and Thucydides as being among the first reliable Greek historians. His brief judgment on Thucydides belittles the importance of the Greek contribution as much as possible: the meager territory concerned, the overwhelming domination of the "civil war:"

Thucydides, Herodotus' successor, restricts himself to giving us details of the *history* of the Peloponnesian war, a country that is no bigger than a French or German province, but which has produced individuals of all kinds worthy of an imperishable reputation: and, as if the civil war, that most horrible of all scourges, brought new fire and energy to the human spirit, it is now that all the arts flourish in Greece. And it is thus that they began to improve, and then also in Caesar's Rome, in other civil wars, and that they are reborn again in our XVth and XVIth century of the Common Era, in the midst of the problems in Italy. (ibid.: 222–3)

This means that Voltaire is not looking for models from the Ancients, even negative ones, to become the Thucydides of his time. He is not interested in the Greeks *per se*, but in the energy brought to light by Thucydides, which led a city like Athens to produce great statesmen and flourishing arts. Thucydides appeared throughout the correspondence Voltaire maintained for over forty years with Frederick II of Prussia – but often evoked by the monarch, starting in 1736, in alexandrines – "Ah,

new, glorious Thucydides / Bedeck yourself in the laurels of history” – and concluding in the prose of funeral eulogies in 1778 at the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts – in Voltaire’s writings “we could be reading Thucydides” (Bouvier 2010: 694–5). It is clear that Voltaire did not know Thucydides very well – to the point of attributing to him authorship of a historical account starting with Xerxes in the article “Of Diodorus of Sicily and of Herodotus” in *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie* – but he considered him to be an authority (Payen 2007: 183–7, 189–92) that must be matched, a name rather than an identifiable work, glimpsed in Perrot d’Ablancourt’s unsatisfactory, abridged, and already outdated version.

Pierre-Charles Lévesque’s Translation (1795) between Revolution and “Liberal” Greece

The rebirth of Thucydides in France occurred when Pierre-Charles Lévesque published his translation in 1795, during the revolutionary period. After the events of Thermidor (July 1794) and the Terror, ancient Greece became a new historical conception in the Institut de France, which had been created in 1795, and its focus on the moral and political sciences. Lévesque, who had already published a history of Russia (1781) and of France in the fourteenth century (1788), set himself the task of making the greatest number of ancient texts and historico-philological knowledge available to the greatest number of persons. The long preface to his translation defines the main features of this new Thucydides with clarity and nuance, eloquent testimony that the Athenian historian was very far from being an unknown quantity.

For Lévesque, Thucydides is “the historian who, from among all others, merits the greatest confidence” (1811: xx). However, the reason is for the most part political: in a country where all citizens can aspire one day to play some part in government, Thucydides is the historian who is turned to and studied the most.

A highly knowledgeable member of the English parliament remarked that there was no question dealt with in its chambers upon which Thucydides’ light could not be brought to bear. Surpassing even Tacitus, he is the historian of political issues, because he offers peoples’ conflicts to the people, whereas Tacitus is restricted to portraying the Prince’s policies concerning his courtiers, and those of the courtiers among themselves and then back to the Prince. Charles the Fifth, the cleverest politician of his time, studied Thucydides in Seyssel’s French translation, and took this book everywhere with him, even into battle, just as Alexander always had his Homer with him in the throes of conquests. (Lévesque 1795: xxvii–xxviii)

Lévesque shows that preference is given to the Athens of arts and business, rather than the lawmakers’ imaginary Greece and the egalitarian ideas of Sparta, which are grouped and summarized in an article entitled “Lacedaemon” contributed by Jaucourt to the *Encyclopédie* (1765). “The Revolution is thus interposed, coming

between Greece and the historian” (Loraux and Vidal-Naquet 1990: 194). But how did Thucydides come to be the foundation for a new model, that of the liberal and thermidorian bourgeoisie? Lévesque explains this in his preface. In accordance with the humanist tradition, and making the obvious comparison with Herodotus, everything is embodied in, and derives from, Thucydides’ style. The father of history is “a majestic river which, ever full, never clamorous, flows peacefully and unimpeded,” because he knows how to incorporate secondary episodes into his account, amplifying them all the while. Conversely Thucydides, “far from wishing to shine and please by the abundance of style, ... thinks only of cramping it; and sometimes even becomes obscure, being too miserly with his words.” The reader is thus obliged to make a concerted effort of reflection: “since he gave his writing a lot of thought, one must do likewise when reading it” (Lévesque 1795: xvi–xvii). Thucydides’ characteristic rhetoric best illustrates this concentration of expression: “he compressed his style and even the greatest concision was still not enough” (ibid.: xxiii). The characteristics of his style are thus directly derived from the two main virtues of Lévesque’s Thucydides: at one and the same time he is a “deep thinker” and the historian of political issues. In short, because he “endeavors to give his readers more content than merely words” (ibid.: xvii), he becomes, in the steps of and even surpassing Rollin, a source of history, an object of knowledge. Thucydides is thus poised to enter into the century of history – and of historians.

However, in this period shortly after the Revolution, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Europe had undergone several transformations which also affected the status of ancient historians and, in the light of the eminent place he had been accorded in these discussions, reflected on Thucydides. France itself did not remain unaffected.

The first of these transformations is linked to the context of the Napoleonic wars. When Prussia was invaded following the defeat at Jena (1806), the rebuilding of the university system, considered to be a priority by the highest Prussian authorities, was placed in the hands of the antiquity specialists: Wilhelm von Humboldt, Niebuhr, Wolf. The neo-humanist spirit driving the creators of the new German university was founded on a universalism of reason opposed to ancient corporatism, above all the nobility, and to the new Napoleonic utilitarianism. The universities created in this movement – the first was in Berlin, in 1810 – were no longer *Länder* universities, tied to particular regions or cities, but “German” ones in the widest sense. The “sciences” which were taught there also had this universal value. Seen through its university system, Prussia appeared a “state of reason liberated from all particularism” (Nipperdey 1992: 204ff).

In the following years, the methods of studying antiquity were renewed at every level through contact with the resources of philology and history; they became institutionalized and acquired great standing within German society. From the outset, these methods were designed to contribute to Prussia’s recovery following the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, and as such they were seen as an instrument that can and must contribute to reflection on present political

problems. The science of antiquity (*Altertumswissenschaft*) thus became the benchmark academic field for the universities of Europe.

The main scholarly consequence of these upheavals was that the ancient historians were removed from the domain of the fine arts – unlike in the traditional French system. Their work no longer belonged in the domain of fiction, along with poetry, novels, and drama. From now on they were considered as historical sources with the same status as any other documents. Their inherent value derived from the information they provide for the analysis of the nature and development of states. This assessment is closely tied both to the national and universal dimension at which the history written by the Moderns aimed, but also, by mirroring and exchanges, to that which can be drawn from the Ancients. In his third book, for example, Thucydides makes us understand the scourge of civil division and disputes (*stasis*) in Corcyra, and he describes, in the second, the symptoms of the “war” (*polemos*) in an Athens ailing under the “pestilence” (2.47–58); however, in all these cases, “on account of human character” (1.22.4) he is in fact speaking for all, or almost all, cities and all men.

Nevertheless, the confidence accorded to the ancient historian is no longer blind. Indeed, unlike Rollin’s determination to “quote the very words,” it is clear that an ancient historian cannot make himself once and for all a “guarantor for the facts that [the modern historian] puts forward” (Rollin 1731–8, IX.27: 209). Although Thucydides claims to devote himself entirely to “searching for the truth,” and although tradition would place him on a pedestal as the originator and master of “true history,” the historian’s testimony should nonetheless be subjected to critical analysis.

At a different level, another shift occurred affecting the potential for ancient historians to contribute to the building of historical science. This was the development of a “science of antiquity” fitting perfectly with what a “science of history” should be. In this chapter of the “European dimension” of the history of historiography being written in the Prussian universities, under the admiring gaze of other universities, especially the French, Thucydides occupied a unique place: offering neither preaching nor discourse on method, but both at the same time, a revered source and reference.

In the 1820s, when the cornerstones of *Altertumswissenschaft* were being laid, French historiography had still not abandoned the tradition of putting ancient historians in the domain of the fine arts, as Pierre Daunou’s course of lectures at the Collège de France from 1819 to 1830 bears witness:

Among the original relationships, there are those whose character and beauty of form place them among the great productions of the art of writing; such are the works of Thucydides on the Peloponnesian war, of Xenophon on the expedition of Cyrus the Younger, Caesar’s commentaries, the story of the conspiracy of Catiline by Sallust, and those of Tacitus’ books covering events during his life. (Daunou 1842, VII: xxx)

It is nonetheless not a question of considering that the prose of historical works must by definition be a work of art, nor of making an amalgam of historiography and fine arts. By listing the “original relationships,” Daunou seeks to stress the superiority of the historical accounts in which, because the author himself has been active in, or at least an observer of, the events – the principle of *autopsy* – there is a perfect match between the contents and the style, between the facts and the words.

Thus we can see that the tradition associated with Thucydides’ work is not set in stone, and that the Athenian historian has moved on into the nineteenth century, laden somewhat with interpretations embodying some of the potential founding values of the great historiographical choices of this period.

The Reception of Thucydides in Nineteenth-Century France, between Grote and Duruy

Thucydides’ reception in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century was marked by three main influences: the German scientific tradition, which saw in him the model of the historian enamored by the search for truth, accuracy, and impartiality; the French heritage that continued to position Thucydides in the field of literature; and the English influence which, via Grote’s *History of Greece* (1794–1871), invented a political Athens on the liberal model, a city where people freely produce, circulate, and exchange.

French historians encountered the German contribution only after the war of 1870–1. In the first half of the century it was English historiography that influenced the reading of Thucydides and, in tandem, the image of Athens, which became the main city of reference in place of Sparta. The reception and influence of Thucydides were linked to the way that George Grote used him to build his new Athens. Grote, a member of the “radical philosophers” group, disciples of David Ricardo, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham (Momigliano 1952), was a fervent admirer of the democracy of the Greek cities and of their parliamentarianism, which he equated with that of England, based on his own experience over the decade between 1831 and 1841. The fact remains that, if Thucydides is indeed the main source for building the image of a democratic Athens, the self-same Athenian historian also revealed himself to be very critical of the manner in which Athens imposed its domination within the Delian league. We know that he saw the continuing rise in power of Athens between 478 and 431 as “the very real cause” (1.23.6) of Spartan fears and thus of the conflict which began in 431. Athens’ behavior during the Peloponnesian War, toward its allies as much as toward its enemies, often illustrated with cynicism and realism the justice of the powerful. Against this historiographical background, Athens’ modern partisans prefer to put their trust in Grote’s analysis rather than Thucydides’ criticism. It was the same for Victor Duruy (1811–94). A disciple of Michelet, whose lessons he attended at the École Normale Supérieure, Duruy was a liberal who voted against the plebiscites organized by Napoléon III in 1851–2.

Thereafter, however, he rallied to the empire and more importantly to the emperor in person, becoming a member of the commission responsible for helping him draft his *Histoire de Jules César* (1860), and later when he was called upon to be “Minister of Public Instruction” from 1863 to 1869.

The *Histoire grecque* published by Duruy in 1851 drew heavily on the volumes of Grote’s *History of Greece* published between 1846 and 1856, and in the preface he talks of the “century of Pericles, the golden age of the human mind” (Duruy 1851: xii). With respect to Thucydides’ account, Duruy accuses him of sometimes dwelling too much on the wrongdoings of Athens, in particular its exercise of the right to use force (Pontier 2010: 642–3), and he prefers to emphasize the idea of “bourgeois Athens” (Loraux and Vidal-Naquet 1990), the roots of which can be traced back over the previous century, to Rollin, Melon, Turgot, and the liberal Thermidorians.

At the same time, in the years 1850–60, the tradition of formal and literary study was maintained in France. Abel-François Villemain (1790–1870) drafted the rubric for a competitive examination proposed by the Académie française in 1858 which began thus: “Study on the historical and oratory genius of Thucydides: expound upon the characteristics of its composition and style by analyses, and by faithful and expressive translations” (Pontier 2010: 644). Jules Girard (1825–1902), a member of the recently founded (1846) French School of Athens, came out top in this examination and published an *Essai sur Thucydides* soon after (1860), which offered a literary and rhetorical vision, including studies of the speeches, the narrative and the descriptions, the style and the composition from a formal perspective. Thucydides is portrayed as a remarkably strong, rational mind, although this does not lead on to a clear appreciation of the historian’s vision. An enemy of the excesses of democracy as well as oligarchy, Thucydides seems to keep his vision of historical events within strict bounds (Pontier 2010: 644–5).

Thucydides and Positive History

In 1876, Gabriel Monod (1844–1912) founded the *Revue historique*. This was the way in which the French historian and academic responded to defeat in 1871 at the hands of the Prussians. In the aftermath of the German withdrawal, the French answered the latter’s school of history and its “impossible model” (Charle 1994: 20–131) with a history conceived as a positive science. Up until this point, explained Monod, “it is Germany who has made the greatest contribution to the historical studies this century. ... no other [country] can boast of having made such scientific progress,” and in particular this is due to the “the strong organisation within its universities.” Higher education has embraced “the free and secular spirit and retained the country’s rigorous intellectual direction” (Monod 1876: 27–8). German historical science had established the famous “seminars,” fostering exchanges, debates, emulation, group work, and teacher/student relations. And within this frame of reference, it had not taken a modern historian as a model, but an ancient

one: Thucydides. No paradox here. For German scholars in the years following the rebuilding of the university in Berlin, “Thucydides is the Athenian historian from the time of Pericles” (Roscher 1842: x), thirsting for truth (Thuc. 1.22.1), for this higher form of rigor and accuracy, *akribeia* (Thuc. 1.22.1, 3), and for impartiality. And perhaps even more, he appeared as the founder of a resolutely political, contemporary history throwing light on the issues at stake today.

Thucydides’ place in the establishment of history as a science, initially within the Prussian university and then throughout the whole of Europe, was forced on the French at the very moment when they were placing part of the responsibility for the defeat of 1871 at the door of the embedded inferiority of their own university structures, designed to train the nation’s elite. Thucydides the scientific historian reached France in the late nineteenth century, via Germany, but not just through Germany alone; Taine and Renan had also been strong mediators, while others, somewhat rarer, such as Fustel de Coulanges, had “never either vaunted Germany nor waved the banner of emulation” (Hartog 1988: 67–8). Indeed, in Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos’ *Introduction aux études historiques*, (1898), the bible of positive history, Thucydides is not discussed in any detail, but the principles of historical knowledge set out therein are based on the rules stated in the introduction to the *History*: direct knowledge of the facts by actual observation or indirectly “using signs – *tekmērion*, according to Thucydides (1.1.2; 1.20.1) – which have been retained” and “which we call *documents*” (Langlois and Seignobos 1898: 66–7).

The fact remains that the dominant tradition in France at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth continued to owe much to studies rooted in old conceptions of composition and style: philologico-historical learning had still not fully mastered the field of ancient historiography. In Alfred and Maurice Croiset’s monumental *Histoire de la littérature grecque* (1887–99), the long chapter devoted to Thucydides ends with a twenty-five page section headed “Thucydides the writer,” including two paragraphs covering “composition” and “style.” Alfred Croiset’s final words attempt to achieve a balance between different aspects and to address the belatedness of Thucydidean studies in France: Among historians, writers, and politicians, there is a broad consensus in recognition of his book, which is not only the oldest model, but also one of the most accomplished concerning a history which is, in the very fullest sense, at one and the same time, “a work of science and a work of art” (Croiset and Croiset 1896: 172).

Guide to Further Reading

The reception of ancient historians has, over the last twenty years, become an important field of research going beyond classical studies. It is also of interest to historians of culture notably post Renaissance, and all historians interested in the development of their discipline. For France, the most important general works are those of Chantal Grell (1993, 1995). The most searching analyses are from Pierre

Vidal-Naquet, for example “La formation de l’Athènes bourgeoise” (1990: 161–209) and “La place de la Grèce dans l’imaginaire des hommes de la Révolution” (ibid.: 211–35); the context of the French Revolution is dealt with in “La démocratie athénienne en 1788” (2000: 198–218). On the reception of Thucydides in particular, the most recent studies can be found in a publication bringing together the proceedings of three international symposia: Fromentin, Gotteland, and Payen, eds. (2010), especially the third part on his modern reception.

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On Historical Time and Method

Thucydides' Contemporary History in Nineteenth-Century Britain

Alexandra Lianeri

It was not until the second part of the eighteenth century ... that the general climate of opinion began to change to the definite advantage of Thucydides. ... Then the Romantic movement elevated Thucydides to the position which he still occupies and made him the model philosophic historian, who combines accurate examination of details with a deep imaginative understanding of the workings of the human mind.

Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Herodotean and the Thucydidean Tradition" (1990)

Thucydides and the Quest for Historical Science

If there was one archetypal ancient voice in the writings of those fighting for the autonomy of the science of history in the nineteenth century, this was the voice of Thucydides. At the same time, if there was one ancient historian who could render this autonomy paradoxical, based on a genealogy that unified opposites, this was also Thucydides. Arnaldo Momigliano's statement about the Romantic elevation of Thucydides to a paradigmatic position, quoted above, depends on whom we cast as Romantic historian (Ziolkowski 2004); and the names he evokes often stand beyond a strictly defined Romantic school. Yet Momigliano rightly points to the late eighteenth and especially the nineteenth century as the time of the historian Thucydides. There was a "nineteenth-century cult for Thucydides," as he notes, which "we have inherited" (Momigliano 1990: 50). How was this condition articulated as the specific product of its time? What brought Thucydides to the center of historiographical debates in a period that also proclaimed the scientific status of historical discourse, first in Germany, and then across Europe, in Britain, and the United States of America (Stuchtey and Wende 2000)?

The nineteenth-century cult for Thucydides was closely linked to the new science of history, to the efforts to liberate history from an idea of moral philosophy by example (associated with both theology and jurisprudence: Beiser 2011: 70–1), but also from its subjection to the timelessness of classical texts (see Morley 2014 for an overview of the complex constitution of Thucydides as “the historian’s historian”). From the perspective of historical science, however, the engagement with Thucydides implied a certain paradox. Thucydides focused on contemporary history. Without excluding the past, the mode of investigation he pursued against the background of previous memorializing genres (Grethlein 2010) sought to record for future generations the grand events of the present. Moreover, modern appeals to Thucydides in the field of historical science exalted specifically his notions and premises that were associated with contemporary history. By contrast, the very idea of history as science, with its own methods and evaluative standards, and pursued for its own sake, presupposed the restriction of its object to the realm of the past. The focus on the past sustained an historicist method – with all its variations – founded on the critical examination of sources and aiming first to account truthfully and objectively for historical particulars; and secondly, to derive generalizations and historical laws from those particulars only *a posteriori* or inductively (as opposed to the *a priori* or deductive procedures of the philosophical method or religion that derived historical laws from the power of reason or a divine plan about the world) (Beiser 2011: 74). It was the temporal distance which made it possible for historians to assume their detachment from the period under consideration and the objective status of their narrative in contrast with the status of the original narratives: the historical sources under critique. What was the position of Thucydides in the horizon line of this critical science? In what ways – if any – could Thucydides’ enquiry into his present contribute to modern historical thought what Momigliano attributes to his modern reception: the understanding of his text as a philosophic history, that is, a discourse combining the strict examination of different accounts of facts with an understanding of the forces – be it the human mind, as he says, or others – that bring these facts together in the course of time?

This essay engages with these questions by studying the role of Thucydides in debates about the science of history in nineteenth-century Britain. It examines how Thucydides became a key reference for historians reflecting on the implications of historicism and appropriating the German historiographical tradition from Barthold Georg Niebuhr and Leopold von Ranke to Wilhelm Roscher and Eduard Meyer (Murari Pires 2006; Murray 2010; Muhlack 2011; Morley 2012). This encounter implied that Thucydides was put at the heart of displacements and reconstructions that moved history beyond the timelessness of ancient classics and constructed a link between historicization and Hellenism. The historiographical discourse on Thucydides will be studied on the basis of a threefold structure. After a first introductory part focusing on Thucydides’ contradictory position in the field of modern historicist thought, a second part will study Thucydides’ role in shaping the Liberal Anglican idea of history as formulated by Thomas Arnold

(1795–1842) through his pioneering engagement with German scholarship and Vico. The third part of the essay will first discuss evocations of Thucydides in the new critical approaches to Greek history by Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875) and George Grote (1794–1871) exploring the ways in which Greek history was associated with a specific sense of time and politics that was associated with the modern age. The essay will then turn to Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92), whose engagement with Thucydides endorsed Arnold's quest for critical method, but who also advocated the modernity of Polybius against Thucydides in the context of a new vision of world history.

These historians deployed Thucydides to formulate two premises of historical science: (i) a quest for critique presupposing the detachment of the historian from temporal boundaries and entailing an idea of history as a confrontation with (erroneous) discourse; and (ii) the configuration of historical laws that brought together, in a unified and unifying temporal horizon, Greek and modern European history and historiography. These premises entailed the dissociation of historical discourse from the field of time, first as a timeless critical perspective on the past, and second as a movement outside the narration of events and a vision of world history underwritten by historical laws. The detachment from time expressed at once a historicist orientation toward the past and a focus on the present linked to a political vision. There was therefore a nexus between temporalization, historicization, and politicization within which Thucydides highlighted the contradictions of the new historical science: between the quest for locating sources in the field of time and the timelessness of critical historical discourse; between the focus on the past and the supposition of laws that link past and present; between the autonomization of history and its subjection to philosophical speculation on historical laws and political science. It was Thucydides' contemporary history that made evident the tensions of the nexus that defined the new idea of scientific history. Considered as a model for a past-oriented historiography Thucydides problematized the truth value of any historical discourse *qua* discourse which was produced within time and was to be superseded by another. In doing so, it articulated the seeds of the coming crisis of historicism and historical science by defining history writing as a moment in an incessant and incessantly shifting succession of narratives.

Translating Time and Method: Thomas Arnold's Thucydides

How could Thucydides' vision of contemporary history echo within a paradigm that defined the *métier d'historien* in terms of a radical disjunction between the object of history – the past reflected in the words of historical actors, including historians – and the context to which the narrator belonged – the present?

We can begin to grasp the complexities of this encounter and the conflicts it involved, if we listen to Thomas Arnold's comparative reflections on ancient and modern history and historiography. In his inaugural lecture as Professor of Modern

History at Oxford in 1841, Arnold proclaims the importance of ancient historians to move to a crucial difference between ancient and modern historical models: “a large distinction ... grounded upon an essential difference in their nature” (1845: 22). He approaches this difference on the basis of an understanding of history as “the biography of a political society or commonwealth” (*ibid.*: 5). He describes ancient historiography, which ends with “the fall of the western empire,” as “the biography of the living,” that is, as contemporary history writing, while everything beyond this point, he says, “is but the biography of the dead” (*ibid.*: 23), that is, history writing that is focused on the past.

Contemporary history writing, the biography of the living, is then criticized as a distinct source of information which cannot attain the status of model historiography due to its lack of critical perspective. The approach of contemporary historians, Arnold writes, “cannot avoid giving us some correct and valuable impressions of its times” as well as its author’s “own mind with its peculiar leanings, his own language with its peculiar style and forms of words.” However, “beyond this and for historical facts, properly so called, the value of a contemporary historian is often greatly overrated. No man sees the whole of his own times,” while interests and passions, excessive involvement or absence of involvement in political society, all intervene in ways that make contemporary history “of very little value; full of idle reports and unexamined stories, giving the first obvious view of things” (*ibid.*: 290). So with regard to appraising a work of history, Arnold concludes, we should not ask whether it was written by a contemporary or even a participant in the events, but by someone who could engage with the task on the basis of sources that we can verify as true to the facts and trustworthy. The model historian is then someone who

would never attempt to write a history if he had no means of writing it truly; and therefore, although distant in time or place, or both, from the events which he described, yet we may be satisfied that he had sources of good information at his command, or else that he would never have written at all. (*ibid.*: 297–8)

The position of the historian in relation to the events he narrates is apparently superseded by our assessment of his sources; a contention that prioritizes past-oriented research, as Arnold already stated the impossibility for the contemporary historian to acquire command of the sources for his period.

While the comparison privileges modern historiography, Arnold’s account of the method for appraising the sources brings ancient historians – and Thucydides in particular – back to the scene. In his concluding lecture on modern history, Arnold discusses the criteria for historical credibility. He identifies an intellectual revolution in the present ascertaining the autonomy of history as a field of knowledge about the past. “The power of connecting ourselves with the past,” he writes, is made possible “only through knowledge which we must call historical” (*ibid.*: 282). Yet in delimiting this field, it was Thucydides that initiated the

revolution in the constitution of historical method. Arnold's criteria for historical credibility appropriate and, indeed, translate well-known Thucydidean concepts and premises. His definition of history in opposition to fictional narratives which aim to amuse but are careless of fact (ibid.: 284–5) translates Thucydides' positioning of his work against legendary traditions as well as his famous description of it as a possession of all time, rather than a story seeking to amuse. Arnold's quest for a critique of sources and his emphasis on the need to suspect witnesses' testimonies as the language of those who may fail to recollect, who may be deceived or may endeavor to deceive (ibid.: 283, 288–9) goes back to Thucydides, who, in 1.22, questions the role of autopsy because eyewitnesses' reports vary according to their tendency to privilege one side or another or according to their recollection. In his edition of Thucydides, Arnold credits the ancient historian with the modern principle of suspicion, which is described as applied to events of the Greek past (1830–5, I: 26).

So is Thucydides' temporal focus on the present simply effaced as the incidental outcome of his method? Is Arnold's claim that Thucydides' contemporary history does not share the problems of partiality associated with the genre due to the fact that it was written precisely with the aim of scrutinizing available sources? This is at least implied by the fact that Arnold's elaborate critique of contemporary history never mentions Thucydides as an example (1845: 101). However, it does not exhaust Arnold's dense and complex relation with the ancient historian. The reduction of Thucydides' temporal orientation to questions of method also became part of a dual claim through which Arnold brought together ancient and modern European history and historiography. This involved a return to Thucydides to proclaim a certain detachment of historical discourse from the field of time, first in the form of a timeless critical perspective, and second through a movement outside historical narrative that provided a vision of world history developing according to atemporal historical laws.

Arnold's *Lectures* conclude his list of criteria of historical credibility by identifying their founding principle, which he explicitly associates with Thucydides: "an earnest craving after truth, and utter impatience not of falsehood merely but of error." This formulation, he notes, differs from mere absence of dishonesty or partiality. While many minds would prefer truth from falsehood, and will repeat a story fairly, impatience of error implies suffering to know that truth exists undiscovered if no one points it out to them, unlike those who rest easily satisfied with truth's counterfeit. As he says, this is a Thucydidean principle:

This is the ἀταλαιπωρία πρὸς τὴν ζήτησιν τῆς ἀληθείας of which Thucydides complains so truly, and which, far more than active dishonesty, is the source of most of the error that prevails in the world. (1845: 294)

Historical truth is then founded on qualities that "are intellectual as well as moral, and are as incompatible with great feebleness of mind as they are with dishonesty"

(ibid.: 297). So besides the rigorousness of method and the reliability of sources stands a moral imperative: the willingness to resist erroneous statements and laboriously search for the truth. But this is also an imperative centered on language. The discovery of historical truth is not only the result of method. It involves, much more profoundly, a new definition of historical knowledge as grounded in the language of opposition to erroneous discourse. It is this definition, the consideration of history writing as ultimately identified with language, which detaches the nineteenth-century historian from the field of time and sustains his objectivity. According to this viewpoint, history writing is not a first-order encounter with events (as only contemporary history can claim to be based on such an encounter, at least partly); rather it is a second-order confrontation with discourse. As Arnold puts it envisioning history as a comparison of narratives, we need “to suspect with probability, where an historian’s narrative is untrustworthy. And where it seems to be so, we should compare it with some other narrative” (ibid.: 302–3). Through this comparison the historian is thus lifted above the social world and beyond time-specific affiliations that affect his judgment.

Thucydides’ legacy is then described as twofold: the ability “to suspect error on the one hand, and to appreciate truth on the other” (ibid.: 297). But the order is not insignificant: the appreciation of truth follows from the suspicion and intolerance of error (ibid.: 297). The abstract noun ἀταλαιπωρία, quoted in Greek without an indication of tense or subject, and matched with a phrase indicating intention and pointing to the subjectless search for the truth of history (πρὸς τὴν ζήτησιν τῆς ἀληθείας), defines a realm outside time in which historians define their field. In Arnold’s negation of ἀταλαιπωρία demarcations of tense and subject fade away. As a consequence, divisions of time fade away: historians attain truth by excluding themselves from the condition that makes them suspicious of other discourses, the consideration of historical truth and its narrator within time. Through an innocuous appeal to Thucydides’ critical method, Arnold declares the historian’s detachment from tense, subjectivity, and, most of all, time.

From this perspective, when it comes to Thucydides’ description of his history in 1.22 not as the outcome of quick acceptance of the speech of contemporaries, but the product of an enquiry intended to become a possession for all time, Arnold speaks of a historian who “had spared no pains to arrive at the truth; being more desirous to instruct posterity than to amuse his contemporaries” (1830–5, I: 28). The idea of instructing posterity, however, puts into new use Thucydides’ constitution of a rift between his words and the words of his time. As Emily Greenwood suggests, Thucydides practices distancing from his context by positing an ironic gap between himself as a writer and his contemporaries on the grounds that he sees more, knows more, and understands more than they do. Still, the way this gap points to posterity does not entail a movement outside time, but emphasizes a mode of historical writing set in the context of different occasions and contexts of reception (Greenwood 2006: 16–17). By contrast, for Arnold, the

task of instructing posterity presupposes a timeless historical discourse, whose narrator stands outside the nexus of his time.

Such a contention, however, is in tension with Arnold's definition of contemporary history writing, whose detachment from his time, as he noted, can be neither perfect nor complete. Arnold is himself painfully aware of this tension which he partly acknowledges when he states the inadequacy of all history due to its status as contemporary history. All history is contemporary insofar as a proper understanding of the past involves the identification of laws that relate it to the historical knowledge of the present. This means that history, he writes, "does not seem to be sufficient to the right understanding of itself; its laws, which, as it seems, ought to be established from its facts, appear even with a full knowledge of the facts before us, to be yet infinitely disputable" (1845: 304–5).

In order to understand these laws it is not sufficient for the historian to be detached from the time of events. What is further needed is a movement outside historical narrative as such, a movement that subjects history to political philosophy or science. Dispute over historical laws ends, according to Arnold, in the field of political science:

The laws of history, in other words, the laws of political science using "political" in the most exalted sense of the term, as expressing the highest πολιτική of the Greek philosophers, may be deduced, or, if you will, may be confirmed from it with perfect certainty, with a certainty equal to that of the most undoubted truths of morals. (ibid.: 305)

So in a crucial move Arnold declares that it is the study of Thucydides as political thinker, rather than historian, that brings about the revolution in historical science:

He who has studied Thucydides and Tacitus; and has added to them, as so many of us have done, a familiar acquaintance with Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero, has already heard the masters of political wisdom, and will have derived from them some general rules to assist him to making his way through the thicket of modern history. (ibid.: 184)

Historical truth is founded on laws that create a link between historicization and (philosophical) temporalization by reducing events to meanings ordered in the course of time. Arnold creates a second story, which is parallel to the critical narrative of events: a story wherein historical truth lies underneath the events, beyond narrating what happened; it lies in the temporality which underlies the surface story of events and comes to light as the laws of historical-political science.

While evoking Thucydides' political wisdom for defining these laws, their consideration as the essence of historical truth was a distinctly modern move owing much to Arnold's engagement with Vico. According to this move, Thucydides is read on the basis of a philosophical approach to historical unity, to

ancient and modern history taken as a whole. As Arnold wrote in relation to his Thucydides edition:

I will at least hope that these volumes may encourage a spirit of research into history, and may in some measure assist in directing it; that they may contribute to the conviction that history is to be studied as a whole, and according to its philosophical divisions, not such as are merely geographical and chronological. (1830–5, III: xxii)

This idea of unity justifies the specific usefulness of Thucydides for Arnold's own age creating a new relation between historicization and Hellenism. Thucydides is no longer posited as a universal paradigm, but is still set within the special relation between Greek antiquity and European modernity as parallel periods of history and history writing.

What made both of these periods "modern," for Arnold, is to be understood as a political rather than a historical condition. It was the complexity produced from the participation in political society of an increasing number of individuals and social classes. As he contends, "the writers of the early and middle ages belonged to a period in which the active elements were fewer, and the views generally prevalent were therefore fewer also." The simplicity of the society accounts for differences in the writing of history:

[T]he history of the early ages is simple; that of later times is complicated. In the former the active elements were kings, popes, bishops, lords, and knights, with exceptions here and there of remarkable individuals; but generally speaking the other elements of society were passive. In later times, on the other hand, other orders of men have been taking their part actively; and the number of these appears to be continually increasing. (1845: 93–4)

The historical discourse of Thucydides becomes relevant to the age of an advancing democracy, as Alexis de Tocqueville put it in the same year that the last volume of Arnold's Thucydides appeared. Arnold creates a nexus between historicization, temporalization, and politics, which we shall see repeated in engagements with Thucydides throughout the century. Within this nexus, the detached view of the past becomes acutely relevant to interpretations of the present. Thucydides' critique of the *apragmōn* Athenian, for example, enables Arnold to account historically for contemporary *apragmosynē* and those "who, being themselves well off, and having all their own desires contented, do not trouble themselves about the evils which they do not feel" (1845: 240–1). Likewise, the conflict between Athens and Sparta makes possible an interpretation about "the feelings with which the popular and antipopular parties respectively regarded the great French war" (ibid.: 257).

Such statements must not be reduced to a continuing presence of exemplary historiography as they are interwoven into the tensions of Arnold's concept of historical science. The engagement with Thucydides sustains this concept but also highlights its contradictions as derived from the conjunction of past-oriented

history and the search for historical laws associated with the present. These contradictions were manifested in the nexus, constructed by Arnold, of the distinct premises of historical science: historicization, which stated Thucydides' historical positioning and, at the same time, his association with the principles of modern historiography; temporalization, which linked a pronounced temporal focus on the past to the laws of history that sustained the temporal unity of antiquity and modernity; and politicization which underlined the privileged relation between Thucydides' time and modern European politics. Through this nexus, critical historical science gave rise to a new concept of truth. It was a truth that involved the reduction of history writing to an oppositional discourse, a language whose disinterestedness was safeguarded by its position beyond its time and social world. But this truth also involved a second detachment, that is, the movement of the historian outside the narrative of events and into the laws of political science – in other words, a detachment that undermined the autonomy that the new historical science sought to establish.

The Time of Narrative and the Thought of Historical Time

Thirlwall's, Grote's, and Freeman's encounters with Thucydides further elaborated on the concept of historical truth that Arnold formulated. It was truth as critique which conveys more than the credibility of sources, the accuracy of reports, and the method of historians; truth as realized in the detachment of the historian from the places and times of narrative in order to return to them and essentialize them through the timelessness of laws originating outside the field of history. Still, an engagement with the theory of history was peculiar to Arnold and, as we shall see, to Freeman. Neither of the other two major historians of Greece, Thirlwall and Grote, attempted an extended discussion of Thucydides' method or, for that matter, any comprehensive discussion of historical method at all.

The Time of Historical Discourse: Thucydides in Thirlwall's *History of Greece*

Thirlwall approached Thucydides as a historian only with regard to his exile, which he considered to be the basis of his historiographical achievement:

It was to the liberty which he acquired by his exclusion from public duties that he owed the opportunities he enjoyed of collecting the materials of his history from the best sources, and of obtaining access to persons and places which during the war could not have been visited by an Athenian who had not lost his country. (1835, I: 269)

This was so despite the fact that Thirlwall's history (8 vols., 1835–44) was profoundly influenced by German historicism and was credited as the first application

of the new critical methods to the study of Greek history in Europe ([Stowell] 1845: 130). While he rarely discusses it theoretically, Thirlwall deploys the new critical method throughout his narrative. In this context references to Thucydides abound. Moreover, Thirlwall recognizes Thucydides as an interlocutor and a fellow critical historian when he deplores the lack of material for the early periods of Greek history about which the rich poetical tradition is not “fit for the use of the historian” (1845, I: 141). Thirlwall relies on Thucydides and shares his suspicion (e.g., *ibid.*: 4, 37, 41) when he narrates only those legends “which appear more worthy of notice, either from their celebrity, or for the light they throw on the general character of the period, or their connection, real or supposed, to subsequent historical events” (*ibid.*: 141). However, like Arnold, he also criticizes Thucydides’ acceptance of certain legendary stories, such as the story of Hellen as the founder of the Hellenic race (*ibid.*: 91–2).

Thucydides becomes a key source when it comes to his contemporary events. Here Thirlwall praises his critical judgment and notes how it constitutes itself adequate historical evidence (1845, II: 73). In the course of his narrative, Thirlwall operationalizes Arnold’s theoretical claim about Thucydides’ detachment from his time and reposit him within a timeless historical discourse. This is first achieved by separating Thucydides’ voice as historian from the voice of historical actors – a move that extends to the dual status of Thucydides in his history as participant in the war and the writer of it. The division is discursively articulated by means of a systematic shift from past to present tense. While using the past throughout his narrative, Thirlwall deploys the present tense when he elaborates on contemporary debates about Greek history, among which he casts the view of Thucydides. For example, when he refers to critics of Pericles, he writes:

But through this charge has been adopted by a modern writer of great authority [Boeckh], we are unable to discover any grounds more solid than the assertions of the enemies of Pericles ... which *are* contradicted by the great contemporary historian, Thucydides, in the most emphatic language with which it *was* possible to declare his unsullied integrity. (1846, III: 51; my emphasis)

The use of the present when Thirlwall casts Thucydides as a modern historian is opposed to the deployment of past tense in references to other ancient writers. For instance when Thirlwall discusses Aeschylus he observes how his drama was not confined to a simple theme of his time, but “he *connected* it [his dramatic work] ... with the earliest struggles between Europe and Asia” (1846, III: 37; my emphasis).

The shift from past to present tense also presents Thucydides as Thirlwall’s interlocutor in the case of Pericles’ Funeral Oration, wherein it is noted that what Thucydides “puts into [Pericles’] mouth may be pretty safely considered as representing the substance of the one really pronounced, with more than the historian’s usual fidelity” (1846, III: 95–6). As a consequence Thirlwall’s extensive account of the Funeral Oration is a translation, cast in the third person, of the original text (*ibid.*: 96)

(insofar as we acknowledge that here, as in all cases of translation, there is no mere transfer, but interpretation of the source text). In this, as in other orations quoted by Thirlwall at length, Thucydides' status as contemporary historian vanishes, giving its place to the present space of critical historical discourse. Thucydides talks for his time but is not subjected to it: his critical voice stands beyond the partisanship and alliances, the passions, benefits, and afflictions of an age.

We may further observe that the change of tenses has more profound implications than merely bringing Thucydides to join nineteenth-century historians. The tense of this speech, as opposed to the past tense of narrative, corresponds to the two "time-frames" or "time frames" of critical historiography. On the one hand there is the past tense corresponding to the course of events and locating them firmly within the past; while on the other there is the present tense of a discourse confirming, modifying, empowering, or rejecting the status of these events as well as the texts and discourses of the past through which they come down to future historians. So the use of the present valorizes critical historical discourse by constituting the time of historical thought in its development, from Thucydides to the nineteenth century, as centered on, but also separated from, the time of events and the time of narrative.

Political Temporalities and the Thought of Time: Grote's Thucydides

Grote's monumental *History of Greece* (12 vols., 1845–56) has been described by Moses Finley as "the first major modern work on the subject (and one of the greatest ever written)" (Demetriou 2004: xvi). For Momigliano, the modernity of the work lay in Grote's enquiry into the relations between Greek democracy and intellectual progress (1994: 20–1). We may begin to approach this modernity by observing that Grote was the first historian of Greece to be directly compared with Thucydides, whether to recognize his historiographical brilliance or to vilify him. A review of his history in the *Quarterly Review* stated that no other writer "with the sole exception of Thucydides, penetrates more deeply into the inward life of a people and analyses more carefully the political, social and moral significance of each event" ([Smith] 1856: 65). On the other side of the spectrum, Richard Shilleto's 1851 *Thucydides or Grote?* proposed to "rescue Thucydides" from Grote's "unwarranted aspersions" and "unwarranted interpretations" (1851: 2); yet he did so by verbalizing an alternative that put the modern historian on a par with Thucydides (Stray 1997).

Grote's entrance into debates about the science of history was multifold, involving a critical dialogue with Niebuhr and Arnold, but also the influence of utilitarianism and historical positivism. It has been noted, however, that theoretical reflection was not among Grote's strongest predilections, and distinctions between oppositional schools, positions, or theories are frequently, if not systematically,

blurred. When it comes to his history of Greece, there is no “pure” theory of history underlying his narrative, but rather a mixed, and typically nonverbalized, set of perspectives and modes of enquiry.

However, the question that runs through his historical work and unifies it is about the nature and limits of the object studied as well as the implications of the historical method used to construe it in one way or another. It is this question that brings Grote to confront Thucydides in a way that distinguishes him from his predecessors, in that he links inextricably narratives of time with the thought of historical time. In describing the role of the *Iliad* in early Greek conceptions of the past he noted:

And those portions of the *Iliad* which, to our view, divest it so much of the semblance of matter of fact – the repetition of superhuman agency and miracles – these phenomena were not only thoroughly consonant to their general belief as to the past, but were by far the most impressive and predominant of the whole. ... So great is the contrast between the tone of mind of a primitive Homeric audience, and the preface of Thucydides. (1843: 158–9)

The mental horizon of the primitive Homeric audience differs from the mental horizon of Thucydides’ audience. As a consequence, the thought of history and thus the thought of time changes in different ages. Thinking about time is no longer the exclusive property of historians; it is rather the audiences, the historical state of a population changing within time that determines shifts in the thought of time. While the link between temporalization and the mental state of a historical period was already present in Arnold (for instance in his comparison between antiquity and the Middle Ages), it was Grote that put it forth as a relation between distinct approaches to time and the state of a people within time.

Grote elaborates on the dual shift that took place in antiquity when he compares the state of historical thought between early Greece and the time of Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Thucydides:

But, though the legendary productions of Greece during her earliest ages acted not only upon the emotions of the people as works of art, but upon their belief as supposed histories, this point of view was by no means continuously maintained. Three distinct causes were in operation to alter it during the 300 years which separate the first recorded Olympiad from the century of Hecataeus, Herodotus and Thucydides. (1843: 160)

The first cause of change was the diffusion and modification of the legends of different peoples in different areas of Greece and beyond, as well as the increase in travel and therefore communication among traditions. These two factors implied that the historian’s act of uniting these traditions would reveal discrepancies. Hence, Hecataeus in 500 BCE said that “the fables of the Greeks are many and ridiculous”; yet due to the conditions of the period he was not yet tainted with

skepticism and continued to recount certain mythical narratives. Secondly, after this period, the internal governments of Greece experienced violent change, and the moral and social ideas assumed a more just cast suited to a progressive community. This meant that “many of the ancient legends came to be entirely at variance with this altered tone of public feeling,” and thus “the idea of an inspired authority was passing away from the superior minds”: hence, “Thucydides, in his preface, justly criticises, the cool simplicity with which the Homeric heroes both put and answer questions.” A third cause was attributed to the historian’s *métier*: “between the century of Homer and that of Thucydides, the habit grew up of recording and connecting positive and present facts, and of determining authentic chronology” (1843: 160–1).

Grote envisions a nexus between temporalization, historicization, and politicization, within which shifts toward the democratic polis play a key role in directing the thought of time and the historical. He identifies steps in political, social, and cultural development which correspond to specific periods, within which time is created conceptually through every single step that moves Greek society from one time frame to another. Thucydides, according to Grote, writes within a new and distinct political time that enables him to conceptualize a new historical temporality, acting in turn to account for contemporary society and politics. Not once does Grote abandon this synthesis of temporalities, the time of historical narrative and the time of historical thought, by separating Greek poleis and politics from the categories of time and history. The strength of his work, and perhaps also its evoked modernity, owes much to the uninterrupted identification and analysis of the dual move of historicization and politicization, a hypothesis that may be seen as positing the conditions of the conception of historical time.

Within this nexus, Grote’s consideration of Thucydides in his history accommodates both endorsement and critique. In his preface to the second edition of the first two volumes, Grote speaks of Thucydides’ critical impartiality as enquirer “into matter of fact, and as free from local feeling” (1851: ix). Later on, he confesses that “no man feels more powerfully than I do the merits of Thucydides as an historian, or the value of the example which he set in multiplying critical inquiries respecting matters recent and verifiable” (ibid.: 549). However, he goes on, no historian can move beyond his age and even the “the ablest judge or advocate, in investigating specific facts, can proceed no further than he finds witnesses having the means of knowledge and willing more or less to tell truth.” So with regard to facts prior to 776 BCE, Thucydides had nothing except the legendary poets:

Instead of wondering that he shared the general faith in such delusive guides – we ought rather to give him credit for the reserve with which he qualified that faith, and for the sound idea of historical possibility to which he held fast as the limit of his confidence. But it is impossible to consider Thucydides as a *satisfactory guarantee* (Gewährsmann) for matters of fact which he derives only from such sources. (ibid.: 549)

On account of this rejection of Thucydides' credibility and the lack of additional sources, Grote devoted the first two volumes of his history to what he called "Legendary Greece," as opposed to the proper time of Greek history, whose narration began in the period of the first Olympiad.

This timeline must not be understood as simply the outcome of a methodological choice according to the credibility of sources; for Grote's methodological concerns were not confined to the question of the credibility of sources alone. His conception of historical method was itself productive of temporalities within which time was far more than a frame of historical developments. Time was itself a qualitative category. Its movements could become progressive or primitive, positive or strange, moral or immoral. The time of Greek history did not therefore posit a merely chronological limit; it structured the Greek past in terms of politically significant inclusions and exclusions. Grote's periodization, which excluded early Greece, but also Alexander, under whose rule Greece was considered to have "ceased to exist" (1846–56, XII: 71), maintained as its object a time frame that could serve as the inaugural moment for modern European genealogies. Grote linked Greek and modern European historiography through distinct, but also parallel, steps in the process of intellectual and political development. Homeric Greece was set alongside medieval Europe (*ibid.*, II: 149). By contrast, Thucydides' time was taken to represent "the progressive spirit of Greece, serving as herald and stimulus to the like spirit of Europe." It was this appraisal that also legitimized Europe's intellectual and political domination through its opposition to "the stationary mind of Asia, occasionally roused by some splendid individual, but never appropriating to itself new social ideas or powers, either for war or for peace" (*ibid.*, V: 323–4; on Grote's colonial discourse, see Vasunia 2013: 36–50).

The Progress and Fragility of History Writing: Freeman's Thucydides

The nexus between temporalization, historicization, and politicization was reconfigured by Freeman both in his theoretical works and in the first volume of his *History of Federal Government* (1863), focused on Greek history. A self-confessed student and successor of Thomas Arnold in Oxford (Freeman 1886: 6), Freeman found in Thucydides a model for navigating contemporary debates about historical science. As he wrote in his Lectures delivered upon his nomination as Regius Professor in 1884:

I suppose that of all the books present written, Thucydides, in his own text, is the best suited for this particular purpose, the purpose of teaching what history really is. (*ibid.*: 171–2)

This was not a conventional attribution of authority. Freeman followed Arnold in considering Thucydides as a thinker in modern historiography. He praised Cambridge University for allowing its students to take Thucydides side by side modern historians “in the interest of sound learning” and encouraged his Oxford colleagues to follow this example (*ibid.*: 22). Moreover, it was Thucydides specifically, of all Greek historians, who occupied a special place in Freeman’s genealogies. As he notes, in the previous centuries “men seem hardly to have grasped the fact that Thucydides was a writer altogether different in kind from Diodôros and Plutarch.” This was the result of the “delusion, not unnatural in the days of the Renaissance, of thinking that the ‘ancients’ were another species of men, altogether apart from ourselves,” while also assuming that “these ‘ancients’ lived all at the same time” (*ibid.*: 218).

The contemporary relevance of Thucydides was based on a temporality that affirmed Arnold’s pronouncement of the unity between ancient and modern history. In his inaugural, Freeman provocatively professed the very title of a Professor of Modern History to be a “fetter” and declared his acceptance of only one definition of “modern” history:

We may well agree to draw a line between “ancient” and “modern”, if we hold our “modern” period to begin with the first beginnings of the recorded history of Aryan Europe, whether we place those beginnings at the first Olympiad or carry them back to any earlier time. There alone can we find a real starting-point; a line drawn at any later time is a mere artificial and unnatural break. (*ibid.*: 28-9)

Through a gesture of cultural imperialism, this statement brings together different strands in the movement of history: on the one hand, political history as “the beginning of our political being,” and on the other, intellectual history, as “the beginning of tongues kindred to our own, tongues which still happily form the groundwork of our studies” (*ibid.*: 29).

As in all imperialist genealogies, there is a silent, yet definitive, slippage from a European to a universal narrative, from Greece in its historical and temporal specificity to Greece as the inauguration of a paradigmatic European history setting the standards for configuring and temporalizing world history. For Freeman this narrative was “the long history of the civilized man, which stretches on in one unbroken tale from the union of the towns of Attica to the last measure of progress in England or in Germany” (1874: 38), subsequently to disperse across the world. In the course of this history, he writes, the Aryan nations stand above the others. Yet within this context,

the Greek, the Roman and the Teuton, each in his own turn, stands out above the other nations of the Aryan family. Each in his turn has reached the highest stage alike of power and civilization that was to be had in his own age, and each has handed on his own store to be further enriched by successors who were at once conquerors and disciples. (1874: 38–9)

It is within this narrative of progress and conquest that sources for Greek and Roman history, “the records of Athenian archons and Roman consuls,” were described by Freeman “as essentially parts of the same tale as the records of Venetian doges and English kings,” and were contrasted with “the recovered records of the Accadian, the Assyrian, and the Hittite,” which are helpful “to the true historian” only “as anthropology, as palaeontology, as geology” (1886: 29).

The temporality of this narrative maintains, but also qualifies, Arnold’s, Thirlwall’s, and Grote’s link between historical time and the thought of time by considering the Greece of Polybius, Greece within and under Rome, as the ultimate stage in the course of development linking ancient and modern societies. This scheme begins with a critique of Grote’s depreciation of “the Greece of Polybios” as articulated “from a purely Athenian point of view” (1863: 227 n.1). In Freeman’s account, Thucydides offers the inaugural moment of a timeline that culminates in Polybius’ experience and writing of a time that was parallel to modern history and temporality. As Freeman points out in his *History*,

“the Greece of Polybios”, has nothing like the life and richness and freshness of that earlier state of things which we may call the Greece of Thucydides. The one still enjoyed the native freedom of youth; the other at best clung to the recovered freedom of old age. (ibid.: 223)

This difference corresponded to distinct modes of writing history and historical time. So Freeman compares Thucydides with Polybius:

Thucydides never went out of the immediate Greek world; but for his fortunate exile, he might never have gone out of the dominions of Athens; his reading was necessarily small; he spoke only one language; he knew only one form of political and civilized life. (ibid.: 226)

By contrast, Polybius, “is like a writer of our own times; with far less an inborn genius, he possessed a mass of acquired knowledge of which Thucydides could never have dreamed”. He had access to many sources, had read many books and seen many lands; he had conversed with men of many nations living in different states of society and different governments; and had himself a wider political experience than any historian before him (ibid.: 226).

The comparative nexus between historical time and the thought of time also had a distinct political dimension. So the time of Thucydides was

the history of a time when Greece was its own world, and when town autonomy was the only form of political life known within that world. Beyond the limits of Hellas, all mankind were barbarians; they were to be ruled over or to be used as mere instruments ... but they were never to be admitted as the real political equals of the meanest man of Hellenic blood. (ibid.: 223)

Within the limits of Hellas, political struggle took place between democracies and oligarchies, but in either case the "independent city-commonwealth was the one ruling political idea." By contrast, the Greece of Polybius opens up a much wider scene wherein "Greece is no longer the whole world," even though Greek language, art, and civilization conquered both the East and the Italian conquerors themselves to form an age "when the world's destiny was fixed forever, when the degree of fate was finally pronounced that for all time, Rome should be the political, and Greece the intellectual, mistress of mankind" (*ibid.*: 224). Within this political framework Thucydides conceives the inaugural model for writing history; yet it is Polybius that offers the key link not only between ancient and modern historiography, but also between antiquity and world history. Had Polybius "written only the history of his own times," like Thucydides, or "only the history of times before his own," like modern writers, "in neither case could he have reached to that clear oecumenical view which makes him the teacher of all time" (1886: 164).

Still, with regard to his appraisal of Thucydides, Freeman's construction of temporalities, his scheme of unified development of historical time and the thought of time, was ruptured at its inaugural moment. As he confessed, "we ought not to forget that Thucydides himself was not to his contemporaries all that he is to us." This was not merely because "no age can look on men of its own age as it looks on men of a past age." It was also because of the essential fragility of Thucydides' mode of enquiry as well as all other modes of history writing. As a contemporary historian, Freeman explains, Thucydides belongs to the class of writers that we may call "original authorities": historians who kept "a record of things which they had themselves seen and heard" and to whom "we have no appeal, except to other writers of the same class." It is this class of historians "who have handed down to us a narrative of some considerable part of the world's history" (1886: 160, 168, 169). Yet this act of handing down, of transmitting records from one period to another, and from one generation of historians to another, changes both the object and the meaning of historiography. What contemporary history was, it is no longer: "A writer of contemporary history in times like ours comes much nearer to the position of a writer of past history than a writer of contemporary history did in earlier times" (*ibid.*: 261). Changes of historical perspective produce rifts in the understanding of what contemporary history is. The historiographical art of critique also makes original authorities a historical discourse to be superseded by others. As Freeman notes quoting with approval the comments on contemporary history of the essayist Mark Pattison:

Such history, almost more than any other branch of literature, varies with the age that produces it. Contemporary history never dies; Thucydides and Clarendon are immortal; but, on the other hand, no reputation is so fleeting as that of the "standard" historian of his day. (Pattison, cited by Freeman 1886: 266)

In his dual status, as original authority and past historian, Thucydides is both immortal and ephemeral; paradigmatic for all time and subjected to the shifts and transformations associated with historically specific temporalities.

Then, in a striking move, Freeman identifies the fleeting fate of Thucydides with the fate of history writing as such. Quoting Pattison again, he notes:

A review of the historical literature of any nation will discover an endless series of decay and reproduction. The fate of the historian is like those of the dynasties he writes of; they spring up and flourish, and bear rule and seem established for ever; but time goes on, their strength passes away, and at last some young and vigorous usurper comes and pushes them from their throne. (Pattison, cited by Freeman 1886: 266)

The unity of history that was thought to begin with Thucydides is but the story of one epoch that will be succeeded by another. In the incessant succession of historians, even the progressive story of the science of history is challenged. Change in the modes of historiography is not the product of advancement, but of shifts in the way of looking at things, of historiographical perspective. "It is not because new facts are continually accumulating, because criticism is growing more rigid, or even because style varies," Freeman writes. Historians are unequally praised or forgotten in different periods "because ideas change, the whole mode and manner of looking at things alters with every age; and so every generation requires facts to be recast in its own mould, demands that the history of its forefathers be rewritten from its own point of view" (1886: 266).

Freeman's final contention returns to Thucydides to discern the historicity of critical history and its time. In doing so it illustrates the density and tensions of nineteenth-century British and wider European approaches to Thucydides as an historian; but it also indicates the relativization of the claims of historical science, also observed, from different perspectives, by students of antiquity and Thucydides such as Theodor Mommsen, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. In the background of ongoing debates about the science of history conducted by these writers, Thucydides' voice on contemporary history resonated at once with self-certainty and self-doubt. It was a voice whose gravity promised that a *Hilfswissenschaft* might grow into a science in its own right, if not the supreme faculty of the human sciences. The reading of Thucydides as a philosophic historian, as Momigliano discerned, confirms Hans-Georg Gadamer's statement that "it seems to be a fundamental trait of nineteenth-century philosophical consciousness that it is no longer conceivable apart from historical consciousness" (1976: 104). The construction of Thucydides as a philosophic historian focusing as much on the particularity as on the unity of historical time can be read as signifying the expansion of historiography to include philosophy of history and ultimately historicize philosophical consciousness.

But this opening of the historical field also implied that Thucydides' voice articulated the tension between philosophy and history in the form of conflicts and

contradictions in the new science of history: between the principle of suspicion and the need to assume a position from which to advance critique; between the critique of the sources and the implied relativization of one's discourse; between the focus on the particular and the aspiration of historical science to formulate historical laws that transcend both past and present; between evocations of accuracy in reporting the facts and relocation of these facts within narrative time; between historiography's focus on past realities and its shaping as discourse articulated against other discourses; and finally between a past-oriented temporality and the engagement with Thucydides' contemporary writing in terms that bring together past, present, and future time through a political vision of world history.

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Guide to Further Reading

Clear introductions to the development of ideas on the Greek past in Grethlein (2010), Ceserani (2011) and Vlassopoulos (2011); Beiser (2011) surveys the emergence of the German historicist tradition, while Tucker (2004) offers a more general discussion of important issues in the philosophy of historiography. On the development of the discipline of ancient history in nineteenth-century England, see Murray (1997) and Beard (2001). Specifically on the place of Thucydides in this tradition, see Murari Pires (2006), Muhlack (2011) and Morley (2014). On Grote, see Momigliano (1994).

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Thucydides in Nineteenth-Century Germany

Historicization and Glorification

Klaus Meister

Translated by Neville Morley

In his recent article “Historicising the Classics: How Nineteenth-Century German Historiography Changed the Perspective on Historical Tradition” (2012), Johannes Süßmann put forward the view that in nineteenth-century Germany a historicization of antiquity took place, leading to a new view of classical authors which among other things produced a “radical change in attitudes towards Thucydides.” Süßmann bases this thesis solely on the judgment of Friedrich Schlegel, and develops his argument as follows: Schlegel refers to Thucydides’ work as a “masterpiece of representation” (“ein Kunstwerk der Darstellung”), and goes on:

The characteristics of his method of composing history consist, first, in the interweaving of political speeches, framed in a manner at once clear and elaborate, which introduce us into the secret motives and councils by which the political events of the period were governed, enable us to survey every particular incident exactly from the point of view in which it was regarded by each of the most opposite parties, and lay open the most hidden wiles of contending statesmen, with an acumen superior to what was ever exerted by the craftiest of them all; secondly, in an almost poetical, minute, energetic, and lively representation of battles, and those other external incidents which occupy but too great a space in the history of human affairs; and lastly, in the accumulation of all those highest excellencies of style, which can be embodied in the richest, most ornamented, and most energetic prose. (Schlegel 1961: 30)

In contrast, Schlegel comments on the Moderns as follows:

With us modern Europeans the case is widely different: our attempts toward imitation of the Greek historians have been in general lamentably unsuccessful. The relations of society among us are totally of another sort from what they

were in the republics of antiquity, and oratory exerts no longer over mankind that imperative and often destructive influence which it formerly possessed. Above all, such is the effect of that immense storehouse of facts which we have it in our power to review in the collected history of the world, that we have lost all taste for minute and poetical descriptions of battles, sieges, and other external incidents; we desire instead of these, short and precise sketches which carry us without any circumlocution to the point in view, and explain in simple narrative, events as they really happened, with the true causes which brought them about. (1961: 30)

According to Schlegel, ancient historiography in general tended “more towards poetry and art than towards philosophical understanding of the different epochs and world-developments with scientific completeness, which is where the efforts of the moderns are directed” (1961: 39, trans. Süßmann). Elsewhere he remarks still more concisely: “In modern times, the tendency of history is to be and to become a *science*, whereas for the ancients it was an *art*” (1995: 302, no. 70; trans. Süßmann).

This difference is certainly real; likewise Süßmann’s remark that the historical studies of the nineteenth century, in the course of the historicization of antiquity, increasingly separated themselves from ancient models and achieved greater autonomy. Modern scholars offer different explanations of this development, which took place above all in the second half of the century. Arnaldo Momigliano looked to the development of new historical disciplines like anthropology, cultural history, and economic and social history, and engagements with the dialectic of Marx and Hegel (Momigliano 1984: 28). Francisco Murari Pires alludes to further causes:

The advances in the institutional character of the historical discipline, now more strictly structured as 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 narrative – dissociated it from the former ancient model. (2006: 830)

In addition we may note the stricter modern definition of “science,” the improved organization of research and knowledge, the increased significance of ancillary sciences and the emergence of interdisciplinary cooperation.

Symptomatic of this change is the fact that Leopold von Ranke originally felt himself to be a successor of Thucydides, but later talked in terms of a different kind of historiography. Thus he remarked on September 26, 1854, in the second of his *Lectures Given Before King Maximilian II of Bavaria in Berchtesgaden*:

No one, as I have said, can have the pretension to be a greater historian than Thucydides, but I do have the pretension to achieve something different in historiography from the ancients; because our history flows deeper than theirs, because we seek to discern other powers in history, in a word, because we seek to grasp history as a unity. (1899: 21)

Ranke thus had a far broader conception of history than Thucydides. Critically, however – and the citation shows this unmistakably – despite this difference he considered Thucydides the greatest historian of all time.

This glorification of the ancient historian is characteristic of the entire nineteenth century, and indeed continued to the middle of the twentieth, as Murari Pires emphasizes:

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 history: 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 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. Thus Thucydides was seen as a “modern, scientific historian.” (2006: 811)

Ulrich Muhlack likewise identifies “the historicization of human thought, the relativization of historical knowledge, the scientization to the greatest possible extent of history” (2003: 9–10) as characteristic of the nineteenth century, and discerns the necessary historical conditions for this development in the formidable dynamics of the French Revolution and subsequent political and social struggles. In a recent, seminal article on “Herodotus and Thucydides in the View of Nineteenth-Century German Historians,” he analyzes the phenomenon of the historicization of the two ancient historians in the nineteenth century and refers to the exemplary character of ancient historians for the modern era, in a similar way to Johann Christian Gatterer, two and a half centuries earlier, in whose view every modern historian “must first study and imitate the good models of the ancients, whereupon however he can dare something of his own with confidence” (Gatterer 1990: 621).

Ancient historiography functioned, at least to some degree, as a kind of midwife of modern historical science. The analysis of ancient historiography becomes a learning exercise, because it makes it clear that the transition from normative to historical judgement could not be taken for granted but involved a long-drawn-out process of transformation, in which the old and the new appeared for some time less in radical opposition than in the most varied combinations. (Muhlack 2011: 180)

Muhlack sees the chief difference between ancient and modern historiography in similar terms to Schlegel, that for the Moderns “it was thus a matter not of art but of knowledge, of historical thought and history as science” (ibid.: 186). He elucidates the transition from normative to historical judgment through the judgments of countless authors, including Heeren, Gervinus, Creuzer, Niebuhr, Roscher, and Ranke, on Herodotus and Thucydides.

Already in 1803, in his book *Die historische Kunst der Griechen*, Georg Friedrich Creuzer had seen the fundamental difference between ancient and modern in “the development, absolutely opposed to the Greek, of modern scientific culture” (1803: 255). Accordingly he remarked on Thucydidean critique in comparison to the modern:

Even if one or another of the historians of the ancients, above all Thucydides, possessed a critical spirit to a great degree, nevertheless the truly critical method, understood as an enterprise founded on the historical ancillary sciences and driven by explicitly conceived scientific laws, is exclusively the possession of the moderns. (ibid.: 259)

This conclusion did not prevent him from praising the “new method of historical criticism” in Thucydides, namely:

That poets and logographers, in brief all the previous institutions of knowledge of antiquity, were discarded as unreliable, and the attempt was made to build solely on factual data, on still accessible and consequently still verifiable facts and occurrences, and thereby to place oneself in direct contact with antiquity. (ibid.: 264)

Furthermore, Creuzer felt the greatest admiration for “the historical art” of Thucydides, and praised among other things his “poetic strength,” the “grandeur of his thought,” “the absolutely serious orientation of his spirit,” and “the greatness and beyond any doubt loftiness of his language” (ibid.: 272, 285, 285–6). Schlegel’s judgment was not in principle any different, as the citation above shows; he too emphasized the differences between Thucydidean and modern historiography, and expressed himself in the most positive terms concerning the ancient historian. This appears not least in his remark that “Thucydides has, in the composition of his work, remained unsurpassed by later writers” (1961: 37).

Thus in many different respects the connection between “modern” historical science and “ancient” historical art can be seen in countless German historians in the nineteenth century, as Muhlack shows through the examples of the various authors mentioned above, who despite the rise of historicism emphasize the exemplarity and normative nature of Thucydides. Normative and historical judgment coincided in the final analysis in the case of Ranke, who identified Herodotus and Thucydides as the “two founders of all historical science and art” (1921: 37). Muhlack rightly emphasizes that “the debate amongst German historians of the 19th century over Herodotus and Thucydides thus came to its logical conclusion” (2011: 209).

Nevertheless, the conclusion which Süßmann draws from Schlegel’s judgment – “We can conclude from this that Thucydides for Schlegel does not represent the peak of historiography, not even of Greek historiography” (2012: 90–1) – is unfounded. He misses the point when he speaks of a radical change of attitude towards Thucydides in the nineteenth century. The following discussion will show

rather that Thucydides, during the emergence and development of German historical science in the nineteenth century, despite all the moves toward historicization, received a still more emphatically positive assessment than had previously been the case. He was time and again described as a narrator of the highest artistic rank, as founder of scientific historiography, as unattainable methodological model, and as the greatest historian of all time.

I shall first discuss the “German Thucydideans”, namely Niebuhr, Ranke, Roscher, and Meyer (whose career extended well into the twentieth century), and then consider other authors of the nineteenth century and their reception of Thucydides, Gervinus, Droysen, Burckhardt, and Nietzsche. Since all these authors remark in great detail on Thucydides, it seems best to present their judgments mainly through quotations, because these, rather than paraphrases, guarantee the authenticity of their statements.

Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831) was one of the founding fathers of modern historical science in Germany. His admiration for Thucydides went so far that he “placed [him] among the saints” alongside Ranke. This expression of esteem appears in the two-volume *Vorträge über Alte Geschichte* (1847), and relates especially to the following aspects:

- (1) Thucydides as the first genuine and most complete historian. Niebuhr’s overall judgment is virtually programmatic: “The first genuine historian according to our conception is Thucydides; as he is the most complete historian among all that have ever written, so he is at the same time the first; he is the Homer of historians” (1847, I: 205). He offers a similar view later: “The Peloponnesian War is the most immortal of all wars, because it found the greatest historian of all those who have ever lived” (*ibid.*, II: 42).
- (2) “Historical reliability and lifelike representation.” On this quality, also praised by authors like Plutarch, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Niebuhr remarks: “Thucydides attained the highest level of achievement possible in historiography, as much in terms of the specified historical reliability as of the lifelike representation” (*ibid.*, II: 42).
- (3) Credibility and impartiality of Thucydides. Niebuhr presents the credibility and impartiality of Thucydides with special emphasis. With regard to the changed relationship between Athens and its allies (Thuc. 1.99) he stresses: “Thucydides, in whose beautiful, admirable soul impartiality shines so brightly, says, quite rightly, that the transformation of the relationship of the alliance is to be ascribed to its own indolence” (*ibid.*, I: 441). He comments on the murder of the Helots by the Spartans in 424 BCE (Thuc. 4.80) thus: “If there is any truthful witness in the whole of human history, it is Thucydides, whose words one can rely upon unconditionally, who says nothing of which he is not absolutely convinced, and is incapable of saying anything untrue about friend or foe alike” (*ibid.*, I: 95).

- (4) Quality and function of the speeches. In Thucydides' speeches Niebuhr sees "the greatest mastery of historical art" put into effect. He supports this statement as follows:

Judgements on reason and irrationality, injustice or justice, are to be found as always in the speeches of Thucydides. This is part of his marvellous art, that through these speeches he relieves us of any further questions. He presents to us the comfortable condition of all the personages who are involved in the action; we see how the people come to their decisions, we see them in the condition in which they are before they reach a decision, and see what they thought about it. (ibid., I: 48)

- (5) The Eighth Book. Finally Niebuhr criticizes the view put forward since antiquity that the eighth book of the work has only an abstract character and was written not by Thucydides but by Theopompus (ibid., II: 42–3). Niebuhr regards this idea as "unfathomably incorrect" and believes that the book "was written by him, just as certainly as the first seven, and in exactly the form it was supposed to be." This is a remarkable attempt at revaluing the final book, and it is interesting to observe that the most recent research comes to similar conclusions; scholars now speak of a conscious style of narration, fitted to the underlying material, and indeed Erbse describes Book 8 as a "masterpiece" (1989: 66; cf. Connor 1984: 210–30; Rood 1998: 252–84; Dewald 2005: 151–2; Rusten in this volume).

Just as Thucydides is seen as the founder of scientific historiography in antiquity, so **Leopold von Ranke** (1795–1886) is regarded as the chief initiator of modern historiography in Germany. This parallel alone implies a spiritual kinship. Ranke himself avowed that, along with Luther and Niebuhr, Thucydides had had the greatest influence on him. Already as a student in the Gymnasium in Schulpforta he had learnt to treasure his work. In his *Autobiographischen Diktaten* he highlights the fact that during his studies in Leipzig he read Thucydides closely and excerpted his political lessons. He remarks further that Thucydides is "a powerful and great spirit, to whom I bowed" (1867–90, LIII: 330). Ranke's doctoral dissertation, submitted in 1817 but since lost – we do not even know the title – was also on Thucydides; further, Thucydides stood at the heart of the lesson plans on Greek history which he produced as a young schoolteacher in Frankfurt an der Oder. On September 26, 1854 he explained before the Bavarian king Maximilian II, "Thus Thucydides, for example, who actually invented historiography, has remained in his manner unsurpassable" (1899: 20). He is for Ranke "the father of all true history." Ranke repeated this judgment time and again to his students in the following years. Even at the end of his life he described him as a "jewel of historiography."

The high valuation which Ranke ascribed to Thucydides should now be described in detail, beginning with a negative statement. Ranke's best-known maxim is not in

fact a citation of Thucydides. In the introduction to his *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker 1494-1535* of 1824 appears the following remark:

People have ascribed to history the office of judging the past and teaching contemporaries for the benefit of the future. The present work does not undertake such high tasks. It wants simply to say [in the second edition of 1874 we find “show” rather than “say”] how it actually was. (1867–90, XXXIII/XXXIV: vii)

In an essay with the title “Bloß sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen,” Konrad Repgen remarks: “I conjecture that Ranke’s phrase of 1824 has been for over a century in our discipline the most cited maxim on methodology” (1982: 439). Leonard Krieger calls it “the most famous statement in all historiography” (1977: 4). As for the source of the quotation, Repgen’s view is that “Ranke here cites Thucydides. Apparently no one has previously noticed this.” The basis for this opinion: in the course of his description of the Plague, Thucydides remarks ἐγὼ δὲ οἷον ἐγένετο λέξω (2.48.3). Repgen translates this phrase in a way analogous to Ranke’s dictum: “I simply want to say, how it actually was.”

In reality, however, this translation, which was adopted by, among others, Reinhard Koselleck (2003: 43 n.15), Wilfried Nippel (2008: 222), and Ulrich Muhlack (2011: 206), is inaccurate, as R.S. Stroud has shown in a reply to Repgen. In his article “‘Wie es eigentlich gewesen’ and Thucydides 2.48.3” (1987), Stroud repudiates Repgen’s translation on the following grounds: firstly, the Greek οἷον does not mean “how” but “what kind of thing” and relates to the previous αὐτὸ, meaning the plague. Secondly, there is in the Greek no equivalent of Ranke’s “eigentlich.” The correct version of the Thucydides line is therefore: “I will say, what kind of thing it was.”

Stroud’s critique is correct, but at the same time Ranke’s remark does contain a conspicuous analogy to Thucydides. The formulation “wie es eigentlich gewesen” correlates in its content quite closely to the concerns of Thucydides; as is well known, he considers “the search for truth” (1.21.1) as the goal of any historical work. In a similar manner Ranke in the introduction to his major works elevated the need for objective and truth-focused presentation. The Ranke citation, however, contains not only this analogy, but also a clear distancing from Thucydides; unlike him (cf. 1.22.4), Ranke expressly declines “to teach contemporaries for the benefit of the future.”

Until the Enlightenment, this Thucydidean topos, especially in Cicero’s formulation as *historia vitae magistra* (“history the teacher of life”) (*de Orat.* 2.9.36), enjoyed unconditional acceptance (Koselleck 1989). However, when history came to be conceived in terms of progress and ongoing development, the past could no longer supply any valid insights for the future. Understanding history in terms of development meant recognizing the uniqueness of historical phenomena, the fact that they would not be repeated and could not be brought back to life. Accordingly one could not conceive of any situation, event, or problem from earlier times which would possess an exemplary character for the present. This conception comes to be

accepted around the beginning of the nineteenth century as a consequence of progressive historicization “within the horizon of a history become modern” (so Koselleck). G.W.F. Hegel was the first to contradict the traditional conception:

One refers rulers, statesmen and peoples to the lessons of the experience of history. However, what experience and history teach is this, that peoples and governments have never learnt anything from history, nor have they ever acted in accordance with the lessons which could be drawn from it. (1955: 17)

Alexis de Tocqueville thought similarly: “The past no longer explains the future, our spirit walks in shadow” (1951: 336). Jacob Burckhardt wrote in his *Weltgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen*, “we want through experience to become not so much clever for some other time as wise for all time” (1929: 7). Johann Gustav Droysen also shared this view, as we will see below. Hegel, de Tocqueville, Burckhardt, and Droysen accordingly doubted that one could address historical questions through the examination of analogous problems in the past. If this were possible, then history would indeed make us “clever for some other time.” In the same tradition, Ranke declined to see history as a reservoir of lessons for the future.

I will now attempt to depict Ranke’s attitude toward Thucydides in detail. His comments in the second section of the first part of his *Weltgeschichte* (1886) are especially illuminating in this regard. Here he initially develops a comparison between the life and work of Herodotus and Thucydides, and then picks out the following aspects of Thucydidean historiography:

- (1) The role of human nature. On this subject, Ranke remarks:

The true advance made by Thucydides may lie in the fact that he sees the motive force of history in the moral character of human nature. One will not have to make use of the points which he shoe-horns into his speeches; for these are formed after the character of whoever he introduces as a speaker. But sometimes he lets himself be heard as an observer of human affairs: human nature works in such a way; it is ruled by its passions; it is suspicious of righteousness and cannot bear anything superior above it. (1886: 46–7)

Ranke here enunciates a basic insight of Thucydides.

- (2) The sobriety of the presentation. When it comes to the narrative structure of Thucydides, Ranke focuses not so much on its liveliness and clarity (as for example Hobbes and Niebuhr had done) as on the objectivity and sobriety of the depiction: “In the narrative Thucydides aims at the tone of a simple chronicle; it creates the impression of trustworthiness and at the same time of understanding” (ibid.: 48).
- (3) Chronological meticulousness. Unlike critics since Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ranke defends Thucydides’ chronological arrangement: “The narrative of Thucydides is annalistic throughout; precise chronology lies especially close to his heart” (ibid.).

- (4) The depiction of battles. Ranke's judgment on the battle of Mantinea holds true for all the battles narrated by Thucydides: "The description of the battle is unsurpassable, above all in its details" (ibid.: 49).
- (5) The speeches. On the function of the speeches, Ranke correctly remarks: "Also in the deliberations which preceded the Sicilian expedition, Thucydides was not so much bent on bringing to light the personal motives which led to the decision, as the reasons which lay in the matter itself" (ibid.: 50).
- (6) The general tendency of the work. The following statement of Ranke is still valid today: "It is true that Thucydides' attention is predominantly directed towards Athens; but his excellence lies in the fact that he has also developed a clear conception of their opponents, which he develops in the speeches" (ibid.: 51).

Thucydides' significance for German historical science of the nineteenth century was revealed above all by the third "German Thucydidean," namely **Wilhelm Roscher** (1817–94), the founder of the older school of historical political economy in Germany (see Muhlack 2011: 195–7; Morley 2012). His polemical early work *Leben, Werk und Zeitalter des Thukydides* (1842) was dedicated to Ranke and Heinrich Ritter. This monograph was admired by Droysen (1977, I: 153), consulted by Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Weber (Hennis 2003; Morley 2012: 131–8), praised by Wilhelm Schmid (1948: 219) and described by Wolfgang Schädewaldt as "still today the best general account of Thucydides" (1982: 234). The following aspects are at the center of this account.

- (1) The goal of the work. Roscher emphatically insisted on the political orientation of Thucydidean historiography and on the advantages which historians and statesmen could derive from it: "But Thucydides himself regarded his work as political; he wrote for historians and statesmen. In this respect he conceals endless treasures, which will scarcely be suspected by the simple philologist" (1842: ix).
- (2) The potential lessons from reading Thucydides. More than any other researcher, Roscher refers to the practical effects which the reading of the work is intended to produce:

To spare no effort, and to consider one's work at best only half done when one has gathered the material for it. Never, neither in the longest book nor the smallest words, to wish to appear more than one is. Finally, to value fame and freedom highly, the fatherland higher still, but the truth above all. *If someone's reading of Thucydides has not given new life to these resolutions, then, however many grammatical rules or historical facts he may have learnt from it, he has read Thucydides in vain.* (ibid.: x)

- (3) The outstanding qualities of the work. Roscher identifies the special qualities of Thucydides' work and ascribes them to the disposition of the author: "His clarity and depth of observation, his impartial judgement, his greatness

of mind, his purity and strength of form – the talent for all of these must be innate; it can be developed, but never learnt” (ibid.: x).

- (4) Thucydides as a scientific historian. This assessment is one of Roscher’s central concerns, anticipating the view of Eduard Meyer. He admires above all Thucydides’ historical methods, and remarks, with regard to the *Archaeology*, “Thucydides was not only the first but the only Greek historian who, avoiding both unquestioning belief in the sagas and unquestioning doubt, knew how to use the secure elements from them for historical ends” (ibid.: 139). Especially noteworthy, according to Roscher, are the maxims set out in the “methodology chapter” (1.22) which apply to the presentation of contemporary history.
- (5) Thucydides as a scientific artist. Roscher regards Thucydides, however, not only as a scientific historian but also as a scientific artist: it is these two aspects in combination that constitute the modern historian. The basis for this judgment on Thucydides is a distinction between the historical artisan and the artist. On the first, Roscher remarks: “What the sources have to say, he passes reliably on to us; but never anything further or deeper. He knows only how to work with details; that alone attracts him; the best part of history remains eternally hidden from him” (ibid.: 11–12).

The historical artisan thus remains on the surface of things, whereas the historical artist penetrates into the depths, for he always discusses “the psychological motives, that is to say the thoughts, decisions and feelings, of the leading individuals and their supporters, which underlie the external facts” (ibid.: 144–5). As will be seen shortly, we find in Droysen a similar differentiation with regard to the task of the true historian.

- (6) The speeches of Thucydides. As corroboration for his conception Roscher looks above all to the speeches, which he judges in a similar manner to Eduard Meyer: “We must see Thucydides’ speeches as the most elegant means whereby he traces back the external facts to their intellectual motives. No one has understood to a higher degree the art of thinking with and feeling with each of his characters” (ibid.: 154). Roscher later compares the shallow rhetoric of Livy with the profound speeches of Thucydides (ibid.: 174).
- (7) The “apotheosis” of Thucydides. Roscher’s admiration for Thucydides reaches its culmination at the end of his *Prolegomena* in a kind of apotheosis: “In the course of these observations we have reached, without noticing it, the door which will open to us the temple of the Thucydidean spirit. A poignant moment! We take off our shoes, because it is holy ground onto which we want to step” (ibid.: 78). No other ancient or modern historian enjoys anything like such a reverent appraisal.
- (8) The significance of Thucydides for modern political economy. In his *Ansichten der Volkswirtschaft aus den geschichtlichen Standpunkte* Roscher remarks as follows on “The relationship between political economy and classical antiquity”: “The great majority of modern political economists

have the most limited opinion of the value of their ancient predecessors" (1861: 5). He himself rejects this judgment by citing Thucydides:

I bring forward first and foremost the august name of Thucydides, and recognize with reverent gratitude that even in economic matters I have not learnt from any modern more than I learnt from him. Thucydides reveals himself throughout as being as great an expert on the economic affairs of his time as on the political and military. (ibid.: 7–9)

In the foreword to his textbook *Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie. Ein Hand- und Lesebuch für Geschäftsmänner und Studierende*, Roscher highlights Thucydides as the historian "whom I especially honour as my teacher" (1854: 24). Roscher is the first to argue for the significance of Thucydides in relation to economics, an aspect which has only recently received appropriate attention (cf. Spahn 1984; Kallet-Marx 1993; Kallet 2001; Descat 2010).

As the fourth and last German Thucydidean, **Eduard Meyer** (1855–1930) comments in the greatest depth and detail on Thucydides' historiography in general and on the speeches in particular. I will set out the most important aspects of his evaluation through passages from his *Geschichte des Altertums*, the second volume of his *Forschungen zur Alten Geschichte*, and the essay on "Thukydides und die Entstehung der wissenschaftlichen Geschichts-schreibung."

- (1) Thucydides, "the first and greatest master of historiography." Meyer's overall appraisal echoes in some respects the views of the earlier German Thucydideans, especially where the objectivity of Thucydides is concerned, but it is in other respects original, because Meyer at the same time draws out the theme of the subjectivity of the critical researcher: "The ideal objectivity of the historical style, as achieved by the first and greatest master of historiography who is known in world history, has the subjective moment of critical research as its necessary precondition" (1965: 251).
- (2) Thucydides as the founder of contemporary history. The following idea is found throughout the reception history of Thucydides: "With the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War we arrive at the period of the beginning of the writing of contemporary history. This is an invention of Thucydides" (ibid.: 247).
- (3) Thucydides as the initiator of historical criticism and scientific historiography. On this topic Meyer remarks:

For the task of establishing the course of contemporary events, of ascertaining from the reports of those involved how they really took place and progressed, Thucydides not only developed the basic principles of criticism of contradictory reports, but in the closest connection with this also an insight into the determining factors of all historical life. Historical critique is based on these two moments together, through which historiography is raised to a science. (ibid.: 247; cf. 255)

Meyer thus spells out, even more conclusively than Niebuhr, why Thucydides is to be considered the founder of scientific historiography.

- (4) The liveliness and graphic quality of the presentation. Meyer refers to the clarity of Thucydidean descriptions, a theme that has been emphasized time and again since antiquity: "He seeks throughout to present the events which he narrates immediately to the reader, to let them have an effect on him as if he himself experienced them directly, not through the medium of the historian's presentation" (*ibid.*: 248). The relation of Thucydides to the events, Meyer goes on, is not "like a real participant in them" but "like an ideal contemporary," "who surveys all their interconnections forwards and backwards. Thus the historian and his personality step as far back as possible" (*ibid.*).
- (5) The effect and suggestiveness of the representation. With his remark on the suggestive effect of the presentation, Meyer anticipates an idea which plays a central role in the most recent Thucydides research:

He does not in general express his own judgement, he apparently leaves the reader free to judge, but precisely in this manner he steers it ever more certainly and pushes it in a specific direction. In reality he leaves the reader no other choice: he must judge as Thucydides wishes him to. In every word that he writes, in the way in which he organises and narrates events, in what he communicates and what he passes over, his judgement is already incorporated. (1899: 386).

- (6) The choice of events. The following remark strikingly emphasizes the priorities of Thucydides' work in terms of content:

When it comes to the question of what is historically significant and so must be considered in the historical narrative, Thucydides has very sharply delineated opinions, to which he holds fast. Only what is necessary for understanding the history of the war or illustrates the situation in a distinctive manner merits mention; only at key moments and turning-points is it appropriate to narrate the course of events in full and to go into detail. (1965: 251–2)

- (7) The role of individuals. Meyer also accentuates the role of individuals in Thucydides with unprecedented sharpness:

The only one who has a claim to be considered as a historically significant factor in the account and praised is he who independently through his own individuality intervened in history in contradistinction to the masses, whether he led them on their path or struggled with them and finally was overcome. (*ibid.*: 253)

- (8) The speeches. According to Meyer, Thucydides' speeches are of central importance (1965: 249–51; 1899: 379ff). No other modern researcher brings out their significance so insistently. Firstly, the speeches as "lifeblood" of the work:

The speeches actually constitute the lifeblood of his work and are at the same time the high point of his, and, I can only keep repeating this, of all historical art. They are the means that have made it possible for the historian, in the narration as in the analysis of situations and motives, to withdraw behind the facts, to allow the reader to experience events himself and to leave to him an independent judgement. (1899: 380)

Secondly, the speeches are seen as the mirror of an ideal reality. Concerning their content, Meyer remarks: "No speech in Thucydides relates to the ephemeral, but only to the ideal reality; none of them are speeches as they were actually delivered, but 'how they could have been given according to the present situation'" (ibid.: 385). In developing this analysis, Meyer takes as an example the speech of Archidamus on the occasion of the negotiations in Sparta in 432, and emphasizes that the Spartan king "spoke against an immediate and irrevocable declaration of war. Thucydides could certainly not know anything more about his speech" (ibid.: 382). The detail of the argumentation and line of thought are Thucydides' invention.

Thirdly, Meyer considers the significance and function of the speeches. On this, he offers a similar view to Roscher:

The decisive motives for a critical resolution, the forces which govern the situation and lead to this resolution, the general conditions which rest upon the political and cultural situation, the essence and character of the states and peoples contending with one another – in short, everything that a later and any modern historian would present in expository and critical remarks which frame the narrative and above all in an detailed introduction over the nature of the state and over the general forces which precipitated and dominated the conflict – all this Thucydides presents to the reader in the speeches. (1965: 249–50)

- (9) Thucydidean chronology. As Niebuhr had done, Meyer defends Thucydides' synchronic approach to narration: "The events are narrated strictly synchronically, when the war plays out at the same time in different locations; the principle of division comes from the natural year, divided between summer and winter, not the arbitrary year of political officers or the fluctuating calendars of individual states" (ibid.: 248–9).

In the nineteenth century it was not only the "German Thucydideans" who felt a great admiration for Thucydides; that was true also for other German historians

and writers, who will now be discussed (Murari Pires 2006; Muhlack 2011). Their judgments, too, will mainly be presented through citations.

Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805–71) addressed himself between 1830 and 1835 to a commentary on Thucydides' work, and inspired Roscher to write his monograph. Roscher, who during his studies in Göttingen between 1835 and 1837 regarded Friedrich Christian Dahlmann and Gervinus as his teachers, later sent a copy of his book to the latter, asking him to review it. In the accompanying letter of September 3, 1842 he wrote: "The main part of the work deals with the man whom you have always described in lectures and writings as the highest model for all historiography" (*Heidelberger Handschriften* 2528). In fact Gervinus had from the start of his career concerned himself with Thucydides, and in many respects anticipated the evaluations of present-day research (Gervinus 1838: 115; Meister 2013: 170–1, 194–7). This is true above all for the Thucydidean method of the foundation of an exact science (cf. Fritz 1978: 23–49), pragmatic generalizations in relation to the scope for historical reconstruction (Hesse 1979), and the secular theory of the state first developed by Thucydides (Volkman-Schluck 1974). Gervinus took the trouble to establish the superiority of Thucydides over Herodotus (1838: 93–115) and to declare him the model for modern historical science. Like Hobbes, he saw in him "the archetype of a political historian" (Muhlack 2011: 194). If we take the investigations of Christian Meier (1978) as a basis, the period of the Greek Enlightenment represented by Thucydides is characterized by the following factors: the fundamental change of social identity toward *isonomia* and bourgeois democracy; the awareness of possibility ["Können-Bewußtsein"] comparable to modern ideas of progress; and the capacity for political planning demonstrated by Pericles. This period brought forth a historian in the form of Thucydides, whom Gervinus especially treasured because he lived in a similar time of radical change and was gripped by a similar revolutionary spirit.

Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–84) is the next to be considered. In his posthumously published two-volume work *Historik*, he studied Thucydides in detail and emphasized in particular the following aspects of his historiography:

- (1) Thucydides, "the greatest historian of all time." In the context of his "heuristics" Droysen deals among other things with the memoirs and recollections of great individuals (1977: 67–97). He remarks: "Closely related to this memoir literature is when distinguished men write the history of their time from their own standpoint... At the head of this line stands the greatest historian of all time, Thucydides" (*ibid.*: 96). This evaluation is still more remarkable if we keep in mind that Droysen, as we will see, on some points judges Thucydides in a thoroughly critical manner.
- (2) The strict objectivity of Thucydides. Shortly thereafter Droysen highlights the strict objectivity of Thucydides, in a similar way to Eduard Meyer: "Certainly

it is by no means always the case that this kind of [contemporary] transmission of information is of the high and strict kind that distinguishes Thucydides" (ibid.: 97).

- (3) Thucydides as the prototype of the political historian. The following judgment recalls Thomas Hobbes' remark about Thucydides being "the most politic historiographer that ever writ." Droysen emphasizes that historiography in Athens' heyday "was limited to political history, which with Thucydides certainly achieved a never repeated model of representation" (ibid.: 46).
- (4) Thucydides as profound interpreter. In a letter of March 20, 1857 to W.A. Arendt, Droysen writes:

We in Germany have, through the Rankean school and the Pertzians [those working on the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*], got grumpily bogged down in so-called criticism, whose entire enterprise consists of deciding whether one poor devil of a chronicler has transcribed something from another. A wisdom just as great as if philology were to spin out its thin life in making conjectures! It has already led to some head-shaking that I have happily remarked that the duty of the historian is understanding or, if you will, interpretation. But I hope that this thought is a very fruitful one, as this is what since Thucydides every decent historian ought to be doing, on this account and only on this account; the higher, let alone the lower, criticism are a means to this end. (2007: 442)

Droysen here identifies Thucydides as the model of a "decent historian;" this is for him defined by the fact that he does not limit himself to the "higher," to say nothing of the "lower" criticism, but constantly strives toward a deeper understanding of things. Droysen's conclusions on this point are close to those of Roscher.

- (5) Thucydides as historian of crises and catastrophes. Droysen, like Jacob Burckhardt, regards Thucydides as the outstanding representative of the history of crisis and catastrophe. On this theme he compares Herodotus and Thucydides and gives the latter a clear advantage:

Quite properly paradigmatic for this form are the two earliest Greek historians. This is the case because dramatic art simply tingled in the fingers of the Greeks. Herodotus pulled his conception together in this way; clearly he lacked the mental sharpness to capture it in its fundamental traits... The catastrophic conception is scarcely grasped in the last books. Thucydides' progress is immeasurable. He grasps his task strictly and clearly, he takes the great reality of the struggle of the chief powers of Greece, he develops the power relationships of both and shows how in the end it had to come to a conflict. What stands out here from his plan is exemplary, above all in the conception of catastrophic development. (1977: 247)

- (6) Criticism of the thesis of the repetition of historical events. Droysen distances himself from the Thucydidean conception that historical events “recur in more or less the same form,” and remarks:

That history repeats itself and that one can learn from it, is true only for questions of current transactions, for etiquette and conventional things, for all things that are repeatable. But precisely the great and important things with which history is most concerned do not repeat themselves, only the everyday; however many descriptions of battles someone reads, in any specific case he would still not be able to direct a battle as a result. (ibid: 250)

A little later he returns to the example of battles, and notes:

It will for a military officer hold the greatest interest to see in the history of war how great generals conducted themselves in specific cases, how they delivered their battles; he has the different possibilities, to think through the moment of danger in itself, and to combine it with the means, he feels himself in the middle of the action, he lives through it. The profit that he draws from this is not that he knows by what rules he must for his part conduct himself, but the understanding of what he has lived through in spirit, the mental exercise he has experienced. (ibid.: 251)

This conception is similar to that of Burckhardt, whereby knowledge of history makes one “wise for all time.”

- (7) Criticism of the partisanship of Thucydides. While the authors discussed so far without exception eulogize the impartiality of Thucydides, in Droysen we find certain reservations, especially with regard to the portrayal of Cleon, who is characterized by Thucydides as a corrupt and violent demagogue in contrast to the idealized figure of Pericles. Droysen, however, plays down the difference between the two politicians and reaches conclusions which go well beyond the conventional views of his time and in essence remain valid today (cf. Connor 1971). Droysen speaks in a letter to Friedrich Georg Welcker of June 24, 1837 of Thucydides’ clear party position, such that he conducted himself “like a respectable Tory” (2007: 124). In the *Historik*, too, we find an attack on the credibility of Thucydides in general: “we have achieved a critical view of Thucydides’ conception” (1977: 155). The underlying reason for this skeptical attitude certainly lies in the fact that Droysen did not share the postulate of objectivity formulated by ancient and modern authors, as the following remark shows:

The historian can never write without some partiality; not bland disinterestedness, seeking truth in the middle. The truth oscillates between the extremes, or more accurately, it cancels itself out, in order to develop new oppositions in new progress. (2007: quotes 194, 196).

What is valid is the “Solonian saying: whoever has no party is without honor.”

We find another extremely positive evaluation of Thucydides in the third volume of **Jacob Burckhardt** (1818–97)’s *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*.

- (1) Thucydides’ love of truth and objectivity. On this topic Burckhardt emphatically states:

Thucydides knows that this war is the greatest event in human history, and has resolved to depict it with absolute *love of truth*, explicitly not according to naked feeling (ὥς ἔμοι δοκεῖ), but by getting to the bottom of things with an iron objectivity. (1957: 412–13)

- (2) Thucydides as a historian of crisis. Like Droysen, Burckhardt regards Thucydides as a historian of crisis beholden to the truth, who not only describes facts and events but constantly seeks to penetrate into the depths: “In this way, then, he has done the world the great service of showing how far a crisis can be truthfully depicted” (ibid.: 413).
- (3) The “subsumption of events or phenomena under general observations” (ibid.: 414). Burckhardt takes as his example for this characteristic of Thucydides his reconstruction of early Greek history, and clearly means by the phrase that he combines a mass of very different kinds of clues, signs, and evidence into a conclusive general picture. As a result Burckhardt also regards him as “father of cultural-historical judgement.”
- (4) The speeches. Burckhardt remarks that Thucydides had individuals speak “above all in a way appropriate to their situation,” and goes on: “The attitudes which led to actions are expressed by Thucydides above all in the speeches which he places in the mouths of the people involved” (ibid.: 413–14). What is new here is the observation that “the people speak and act completely in character.”
- (5) A prophetic statement. In Burckhardt’s *Weltgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen* of 1905 we find an almost prophetic dictum:

The sources, however, especially those which stem from great men, are inexhaustible, so that anyone must read again for themselves the books that have been exploited a thousand times, because they show a particular face to every reader and every century and also to every stage of life of an individual. It could be the case that there lies in Thucydides, for example, a fact of the utmost importance which will first be noticed in a hundred years’ time. (1929: 15)

This remark may indeed explain the vast afterlife of Thucydides, for every generation asks new questions of his work and draws new answers from it.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) is the last in this series of German admirers of Thucydides in the nineteenth century (Ottmann 1987: 220–6; Zumbrunnen 2002). Like countless thinkers before and after, he was especially impressed by Thucydides' anthropology and his realism. In his *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* (1888) we find illuminating remarks on the theme "What I owe to the Ancients." Here he offers a negative judgment on Plato, while praising Thucydides:

My recuperation, my predilection, my *cure* from all Platonism was Thucydides every time. Thucydides and, perhaps, Machiavelli's Prince are my close kindred because of their absolute determination to pre-judge nothing and to see reason in *reality*; not in "reason", still less in "morality" ... Nothing cures us more thoroughly of the wretched habit of the Greeks of glossing things over in the ideal, a habit which the "classically educated" youth carries with him into life as the reward for his gymnasium training, than Thucydides. One must turn him over line by line and read his unspoken thoughts as clearly as his words; there is scarcely another thinker with so many hidden thoughts. In him the *Sophist-Culture*, I mean the *Realist-Culture*, reaches its fullest expression: this invaluable movement in the middle of the morality- and idealism-swindle of the Socratic school that was then breaking out everywhere. Greek philosophy as the *décadence* of the Greek instinct; Thucydides as the great summation, the final epiphany of that strong, strict, hard factuality that lay in the instinct of the earlier Greeks. *Courage* in the face of reality is what finally distinguishes such natures as Thucydides and Plato: Plato is a coward before reality – hence he flees into the Ideal. Thucydides has a grip on *himself* – hence he also keeps a grip on things. (1988: 156)

This eulogy contains two hitherto scarcely noticed points. Firstly, Nietzsche rejects the (even today, frequently encountered) idealization of ancient Greece and advocates instead a realistic view, suited to Thucydides; secondly, he emphasizes his "hidden thoughts." What is meant here is the fact that Thucydides ostensibly lets things speak for themselves, but subliminally lets his personal judgment unmistakably ring out alongside.

Guide to Further Reading

Meister (2013) offers a detailed account of the evaluation of Thucydides by the "German Thucydideans" and other German writers in the nineteenth century, in the context of a broader account of Thucydides' reception as a historical model from antiquity to the present. The topic has previously been discussed only in shorter articles: Murari Pires (2006) discusses Niebuhr, Ranke, Roscher, and Meyer; Muhlack (2011) and Süßmann (2012), as discussed above, consider the impact of historicism on Thucydides' reputation; Morley (2012) offers a more detailed account of Roscher. Morley (2014) includes various of these authors in his wide-ranging essay on Thucydides and the modern idea of history.

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Thucydides in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Jon Hesk

Introduction

Colin Powell had the following quotation framed in his Pentagon office during the first Gulf War: “Of all manifestations of power, restraint impresses men most.” This epigram was attributed to Thucydides, and Powell was very fond of quoting it in public contexts (Woodward 2003: 153). But there is no trace of it in the *History*. Journalists criticized Powell for this apparent fabrication and compared it to his presentation of nonexistent weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to the United Nations. Classical scholars nuanced the issue by arguing that the quotation could be a paraphrase of some Thucydidean oratory: Nicias’ speech at 6.11 or Archidamus’ at 1.79–85 were proposed (Rood 2004; Sharlin 2004). However, another classicist has recently discovered that Powell’s pseudo-quote comes from a popular anthology of quotations, and its misattribution has a long and complex genealogy (Morley 2013).

It is important that experts in ancient Greek and Thucydidean scholarship are out there to expose or deter the legitimization of military and international diplomatic doctrines via spurious or misleadingly oversimplified items of *Thucydideana*. One political scientist reveals that the teaching of Thucydides to international relations (IR) students often boils down to the prescribed reading of “the Melian dialogue, extracted from the rest of the text” (Lebow 2012: 208). This highly selective approach serves an agenda in which the *History* becomes a primer for many modern-day “realists” (see Johnson in this volume). Lebow’s own careful attention to context, narrative progression, and the complex “layering” in Thucydides’ text is self-confessedly indebted to a landmark study of the *History* by the classicist and ancient historian Robert Connor (Connor 1984; Lebow 2003). The first aim of this chapter, then, is to outline some key developments in classical scholarship on Thucydides over the last 100 or so years in the hope that they

encourage nonclassicists to see that Thucydides cannot be properly understood or appropriated without some recourse to that scholarship.

But it is naive and arrogant to suppose that classical scholars are themselves independent and objective interpreters of Thucydides who are unaffected by ideology or certain unexamined assumptions. Indeed, a more reflexive turn in the humanities has led some to historicize their own and their predecessors' views of Thucydides' aims and methods (e.g., Connor 1984: 1–19). The fact that our interpretations are molded by current events and ideologies means that the latest and most persuasive research on Thucydides will likely seem rather “quaint and erroneous” in fifty years' time (Hornblower 2011: 1). Even within the disciplines of classics and ancient history, there has never been much consensus on Thucydides' trustworthiness, historical usefulness, or the nature of his project. If anything, there are more competing visions of Thucydides now than there were 100 years ago. My second aim is to consider the implications of this proliferation for Thucydides' appropriation beyond the fields of classics and ancient history.

These recent and diverse interpretations of Thucydides have often been the product of dialogue or argument with other academic disciplines which have developed their own useful and productive perspectives on the *History*. My third aim, therefore, is to show that when classics and ancient history and other disciplines listen to each other, some of the freshest perspectives on the *History* emerge. In my final section, we will see that cross-disciplinary dialogue even allows Thucydides a continuing, productive role in theoretical controversies concerning the nature of historical narrative and the proper limits of historical method.

I cannot hope to treat all of the different disciplinary responses to Thucydides in one chapter. Some of them are in any case given extensive treatment elsewhere in this volume. Nor is it possible to summarize *all* the classical scholarship on Thucydides over the past 100 or so years (for a summary, see Rusten 2009). Instead, I will focus on just a few key trends and their value for all who wish to engage with Thucydides.

Tragedy, Science, and History

During the nineteenth century, many historians and classicists had come to regard Thucydides as the archetypal “scientific historian” and a model for how history should be written (Murari Pires 2006: 811–30; Muhlack 2011; Morley 2014). There were important and significant exceptions, however. Friedrich Schlegel viewed Thucydides and Herodotus as leaning “more towards poetry and art than towards philosophical understanding of the different epochs and world-developments with scientific completeness, which is where the efforts of the moderns are directed” (Schlegel 1961: 39, trans. Süßmann 2012: 91; see also Meister in this volume). It is also important to realize that the appeal to Thucydides as a model of “scientific historiography” varied considerably in emphasis. Ranke's Thucydides embodied the primacy

of “the truth about events exactly as they came to pass” (Ranke 1885: 311). But for Wilhelm Roscher, Thucydides is the first example of how historiography should be “art and science, in perfect combination” (Morley 2012: 130; Roscher 1842). It is also the case that modern historiographical thinking had started to disassociate itself from ancient models from the 1860s onwards (Momigliano 1984: 13–36). But when the German philologist Felix Jacoby sketched the development of Greek historiography in 1909, Thucydides represented a high point and model against which all other Greek and Roman historiographers were to be measured (Jacoby 1909).

Given this background, the publication of F.M. Cornford’s *Thucydides Mythistoricus* in 1907 seems “of the moment” to the extent that it built upon the idea that Thucydides might be a partial and subjective “artist”:

Even his vigilant precaution allowed a certain traditional mode of thought, characteristic of the Athenian mind, to shape the mass of fact which was to have been shapeless, so that the work of science came to be the work of art. And, since this mode of thought had, as we shall see, grown without a break out of a mythological conception of the world of human acts and passions, which is the world of history, I have given him the epithet *Mythistoricus*. (Cornford 1907: ix)

It is easy to forget that this characterization of Thucydides as fundamentally “unscientific” comes in the first book solely devoted to Thucydides in English (aside from commentaries and translations). I have found no direct evidence that Cornford was influenced by a sympathetic reading of Roscher or Schlegel or through a direct and unsympathetic reaction to Ranke. But it is very likely that he was so influenced. His preface and footnotes show that Cornford had read a lot of German-language scholarship.

The distinctive way in which Cornford explained the *History*’s status as mythopoetic art also stemmed from his close association with the classical scholars Jane Ellen Harrison and Gilbert Murray (Beard 2000; Stray 2007). These so-called “ritualists” were applying insights commensurate with the emerging disciplines of folklore studies, sociology, anthropology, and psychology to elucidate Greek myth’s secondary relationship to Greek ritual (Ackerman 2002). The influence of anthropology and the rise of both the social sciences and Darwinism are very much in evidence in the book.

Cornford was taking a Greek author whom many still claimed was “modern” in his application of “reason” and self-directed objectivity and was arguing that his work was in fact in the grip of “primitive” structures of thought. In a letter to Gilbert Murray, Cornford makes a telling remark about a drafted section which he had sent to the Oxford scholar for comment: “I must make out that Thucydides is really primitive, and Herodotus has to pay for it” (BL MSS. Add. 58427.9–10, January 13, 1907). Fourteen years later Cornford admitted that *Thucydides Mythistoricus* was a “provocative” title and claimed that he “did not mean to challenge Thucydides’ claim to be perhaps the most trustworthy of historians” (1950: 1–2).

Part I of Cornford's book deals with the causes of the Peloponnesian War and (hence) Thucydides' status as a historian. Cornford argues that Thucydides did not give Athens or Sparta a sufficient motive for fighting and concludes that Thucydides was at a loss to understand what the motive could be. He then supplies a lengthy analysis of what he regards as the real, purely *economic* causes of the war. For Cornford, the reason why these "real" causes of the war are not in the *History* is because Thucydides was incapable of acknowledging and pursuing underlying social and economic conditions and abstract laws. He claims that Thucydides draws no distinction between *aitiai* (causes) and *prophaseis* (pretexts). Thucydides' idea of historical causation is that all human events are either caused by the gods or caused by human psychology (the hopes, fears, desires, and character traits of individuals and city-states). He just does not possess the modern scientific mindset required for the establishment of what Cornford calls a "universal causal nexus" (1907: xiv).

Cornford is clearly judging Thucydides' powers of analysis by comparison with an early twentieth-century preoccupation with economic and social history. And yet he is lukewarm about the what he calls "bloodless and inhuman" mechanical abstractions of Darwinian biology, modern history, economics, and sociology. What he likes about Thucydides is not just the humanity and spirit of his account but "his marvellous sense of the limits of certain knowledge" (ibid.: 73).

In Part II of the book, Cornford argues that Thucydides' narrative is largely shaped by Aeschylean tragic forms and a view of human nature which is essentially the same as that depicted in Greek Tragedy. Despite Thucydides' famous claim to have removed *to muthōdes* from his account, he could not prevent the texture and structure of his work being imbued with mytho-tragic patterns. Cornford calls this process of inevitable shaping in the narrative "infiguration"; it is fatal to Thucydides' avowed intention to represent events without distortion or bias (ibid.: 134). External forces and passions such as *Tuchē* (Chance), *Elpis* (Hope), *Erōs* (Desire), *Apatē* (Deception), and *Peithō* (Temptation) really exist and intervene to shape events and the actions of individuals. Thucydides makes *Elpis* a dangerous, tempting passion for Athens and it is incarnate in Cleon. Cleon acts as *Peithō* or *Apatē* to Athens when she has been "intoxicated" by *Tuchē* at Pylos (ibid.: 153–7). Alcibiades is incarnate of *Erōs* ("the tyrant passion"). Cornford "the ritualist" is very apparent when he traces *Elpis* and *Erōs* to "invading daemons" originally worshipped in cult (ibid.: 221–43).

As Thom Workman discusses in this volume, Cornford's book attracted more criticism than praise in reviews and subsequent publications (Anonymous 1907; Postgate 1907; Shorey 1907; Perrin 1908). Many defended Thucydides' account of the war's motives and causes, not to mention his "dramatic" exegesis, as perfectly commensurate with a more "scientific" twentieth-century approach (see generally Horsley 2008). In time, scholars would show that Thucydides was aware of a conceptual distinction between "antecedent conditions," "alleged causes," and "necessary causes" (e.g., Rawlings 1975). Ironically, Cornford's *own* view of the "real" causes of the

Peloponnesian War was undoubtedly “an anachronistically modernizing thesis” (Hornblower 1996b: 1520). Cornford admitted as much in a letter to the historian and journalist J.L. Hammond as early as 1921: “I wrote on Thucydides under the effect of the Boer war, having been a pro-Boer and seeing some resemblance between Balfour and Pericles, & Cleon and Chamberlain” (Gerson 2004: 175). In a lecture from the same year he conceded that the Boer War had led him to overstress the financial aspect of imperialism. “Since 1914,” he continued, “Thucydides’ moral interpretation of history has seemed more profound” (Cornford 1950: 3). Cornford now realized that one’s own present concerns can color one’s interpretation of Thucydides even when one is expressly *denying* that Thucydides is “our contemporary.”

Cornford’s ready admission that *Thucydides Mythistoricus* contained “presentist” distortions is unsurprising when we consider the book’s fundamental assumption that “in every age the common interpretation of the world of things is controlled by some scheme of unchallenged and unsuspected presupposition” (1907: viii). While Cornford never explicitly discusses the consequences of this analysis for historiography in general, his remarks are highly suggestive:

It was impossible for Dante to know that his scheme of redemption would appear improbable when astronomy should cease to be geocentric. It is impossible for us to tell how pervasively our own view of the world is coloured by Darwinian biology and by the categories of the mechanical and physical sciences. (1907: viii)

Cornford’s crucial insistence on the tragic texture of the *History* was taken up – albeit in very different ways and without any “ritualist” baggage – by a number of Thucydidean scholars. J.H. Finley argued that Thucydides’ prose style and ideas betrayed the influence of Euripides (Finley 1938). Colin Macleod was to make a compelling argument that Thucydides narrated the Athenians’ success at Pylos and the disaster in Sicily in accordance with tragic patterns of explanation (Macleod 1983). For Macleod, these patterns are part and parcel of Thucydides’ exposure to the tragic elements which can be found in Homer and Herodotus. They are also entirely compatible with Thucydides’ historiographical aim to highlight causes and motives, not to mention his interest in the fact that the Peloponnesian War was richer in “sufferings” (*pathēmata*) than any other period (I.23).

Hans-Peter Stahl offered a rather different interpretation of Thucydides’ “tragic” structures and themes (Stahl 2003, orig. 1966). For Stahl, it was the events and facts of the Peloponnesian War themselves which had tragic qualities. Thucydides recognized what those facts symbolized rather than squeezing them into a preformed tragic template. Furthermore – and there are real echoes of Cornford here – the tragic dimension of Thucydides’ narrative consists in the fact that men’s best laid and rationally derived plans are thwarted by good and bad fortune, unexpected events, and counter-moves, and even uncontrollable human passions. To say that Thucydides’ *History* is “tragic” in Stahl’s sense is to deny its “utilitarian teleology” and “predictive scope” (Murari Pires 2006: 832).

Stahl's book was an explicit reaction against earlier reassertions of Thucydides' "scientificity." In 1929 Charles Cochrane had published *Thucydides and the Science of History*. This book launches a full scale reinterpretation of Thucydides as "an exact parallel to the attempts of modern scientific historians to apply evolutionary canons of interpretation derived from Darwinian science" (Cochrane 1929: 3). Cochrane even attacks scholars who had disputed Cornford's overall thesis but had agreed that the Greek historians could never match the scientific character of historical study achieved in the nineteenth century. By contrast, Cochrane argued that Thucydides' methodology was an application of contemporary atomist philosophy and Hippocratic-medical investigative science to his own subject. The influence of these two discourses of knowledge on Thucydides' text is now widely acknowledged (e.g., Hornblower 2009). But none would now subscribe to Cochrane's overarching thesis. His concluding pages reveal the extent to which his interpretation was informed by much wider debates about the nature and ends of history writing which were raging in the 1920s. In them, he pits Thucydides' "physical determinism" against both the failings of Marxist-materialist history and idealist approaches. Thucydides represents a third way in scientific history which must be revived in order to bring together its "scattered limbs" (Cochrane 1929: 176). Cochrane's particular vision here is redolent of that of the philosopher R.G. Collingwood, although, as we will see in my final section, Collingwood was no fan of Thucydides. Cochrane's Thucydides bears a particularly close resemblance to Collingwood's portrait of the detective-like scientific historian in *The Idea of History* (1961 [orig. 1946]: 266–82).

Just as Hippocratic medics derived diagnoses and cures from observing the course of a human illness and its symptoms, Cochrane's Thucydides used observation of the war's *pathēmata* to create a diagnostic handbook designed for politicians to cure an ailing *polis*. Other studies of the mid-twentieth century were less extreme in their assertion of Thucydides' sophistic-cum-Socratic rationalism and scientificity, and have perhaps been even more influential both within and outside classical scholarship as a result (e.g., Finley 1942; de Romilly 1956, 1963 [orig. 1947]). But there is still little consensus on how we are to interpret Thucydides' stylistic and conceptual debt to the "enlightenment" of the second half of the fifth century BCE. For many, Thucydides is essentially a historian in the Herodotean mold but with scientific and sophistic-rhetorical inflections which make him a historiographical innovator. For others, Thucydides is much more radical and groundbreaking than this. A fascinating example of an ancient historian who sits in the latter camp is Josiah Ober.

Ober points out that Thucydides did not describe his text as *historiai* ("enquiries") as Herodotus did and was unlikely to have felt constrained by generic rules implicit in the work of his predecessors (Ober 2006: 131). He argues that the *History* developed a new approach which "amounted to nothing less than the invention of a new discipline, political and social science" (ibid.: 132). Indeed, Thucydides intended his work to be a kind of "political systems users' manual" (ibid.: 132). But what is

striking about this characterization of Thucydides is the specific move it makes in order to avoid a charge of anachronism. Despite certain salient differences, argues Ober, the technologically sophisticated and imperially powerful Athens of Thucydides' day conformed in many ways to current sociological definitions of societal "modernity." Thucydides sought both to explicate the "modern" sociopolitical structures which his text describes and to effect changes to them. For the *History* embodies, and thereby teaches, the techniques which will allow his readers to grasp and reflexively influence those structures as experts. Ober sums up these innovative, "political scientific" aspects as follows:

Thucydides' great conceptual breakthroughs were, I have suggested, in coming to understand 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. (ibid.: 153–4)

Ober is himself a political scientist as well as an ancient historian. He argues that Thucydides underestimated the ability of the radical democracy to successfully rebuild Athens after the Peloponnesian War, especially in the absence of a Periclean-style leader. But he also hints that the understanding which "technical experts" gained from Thucydides' text may itself have contributed to the successful evolution of Athens' sociopolitical system in the fourth century (ibid.: 158–9). Whether this characterization of Thucydides will gain wide acceptance remains to be seen. But it is noteworthy that this fresh exposition of why Thucydides seems so much "our contemporary" is very much the product of a fruitful dialogue between the two disciplines which Ober straddles.

Thanks to cross-disciplinarity, then, Thucydidean classical scholarship in the early twenty-first century has been treated to its first provocative account of Thucydides' "modernity" and "scientificity." But the twentieth century began with Cornford's radical account of Thucydides' mytho-tragic "primitiveness" – an account which was itself the product of a sympathetic dialogue between classics and the nascent disciplines of anthropology and psychology. We can claim that Cornford's extreme account had a liberating and productive effect on Thucydidean studies even though its key arguments were roundly rejected. Extreme accounts of Thucydides' "scientificity" have been similarly beneficial in the other direction.

Evidence, Authority, and Narrative

The question of Thucydides' reliability and utility as a source for understanding the Athenian empire and the Peloponnesian Wars becomes increasingly vexed as we move through the classical scholarship of the last century. For example, Wade-Gery

argued that Thucydides' reluctance to face up to the failure of Pericles' plans for an offensive war had skewed his entire account (Wade-Gery 1949). Newly published evidence in the form of inscriptions and archaeology from the 1930s onwards also led to a denting of Thucydides' reputation for reliability and completeness. On the basis of (sometimes overconfident) reconstructions of the Athenian tribute lists, for example, some scholars identified instances where Thucydides' financial information was untrustworthy and incomplete. But there was also "a worrying mid-twentieth century tendency" to force Thucydides and imperial epigraphic data into agreement through textual emendations and ingenious suppositions (Hornblower 1996a: 99). These days, scholars question the assumption that inscriptional data from tribute records and Thucydides' accounts of subject states' political behavior require reconciliation in the first place. Such behavior need not have always been a function of increases or decreases of the tribute demanded (Hornblower 1996a: 6–11, 94–107; Smarczyk 2006: 515–22).

A notable example of this more nuanced approach to Thucydides and the epigraphic record can be found in the work of Lisa Kallet. Where Gomme's landmark historical commentary pointed to Thucydides' failure to mention the tribute reassessment of 425 as a strange and worrying omission, Kallet argues that this measure was largely ineffective; its omission is therefore entirely consistent with Thucydides' principles of selection when it comes to discussing financial measures (Kallet-Marx 1993: 164–70). Indeed Kallet's overall thesis is that Thucydides' *History* stresses the interplay of power, money and profit and human nature as the engine of the events it narrates.

The current tendency among ancient historians, then, is to see Thucydides as a crucial witness to, and analyst of, the Peloponnesian Wars. But most would accept that Thucydides is biased (although the nature and extent of his bias is debated). And all would say that he is highly selective (although the *History's* incompleteness fuels ongoing debate about whether any unified design and purpose accounts for the selections). And yet it is clear that inscriptions and material culture related to the relevant period are not straightforwardly transparent items of "evidence" either. They can be highly problematic if used in isolation or with too naive a faith in our ability to reconstruct from fragmentary parts to an accurate whole when it comes to questions of content, function, significance, and dating. Whether they like it or not – and this is very much the underlying message which I derive from Hornblower's recent commentaries – archaeologists and ancient historians need Thucydides. The difficulty and paucity of the other available evidence makes it impossible to dispense with his testimony entirely.

The current feeling that Thucydides is historically useful in this qualified sense is partly informed by recent research into the "hows" and "whys" of Thucydidean selectivity and self-authorization. Three cross-disciplinary developments since World War II have aided and abetted this recent concern to elucidate the ways in which Thucydides "shaped" his account in order to make it authoritative, distinctive, and pertinent both to his contemporary readership and those of later periods

right down to the present day (Greenwood 2006: 11–14). Academic criticism of prose fiction stimulated two approaches which focus on the way in which audiences are active in the creation of narrative texts' meanings: reader-response theory and narratology (e.g., Iser 1974; Genette 1983). The third development – in some ways reminiscent of Cornford's notion of "infiguration" – was the "postmodern" claim that historical narrative shares many of the formal properties of rhetoric and storytelling. For example, Hayden White argued that all narrative historiography from the nineteenth century onwards is realized via "modes of emplotment" which are associated with particular dramatic or narrative genres of fiction (e.g., White 1973, 1984).

Robert Connor's sequential reading of Thucydides explicitly acknowledges its debt to Iser (Connor 1984: 17). He argues that Thucydides' text is shaped in such a way as to challenge readers' initial reactions and interpretations as they move through the text's key moments of transformation. At the level of ideas, initial observations about war and power are subverted or qualified by new applications, ironies, or paradoxical results. For example, when Hermocrates addresses the Sicilian delegates at Gela he effectively repeats the familiar Athenian approach to power – that the big and strong can justifiably dominate the small and weak (4.61.5). But he reframes it as "a principle, that properly understood and applied, can lead to alliance, mutual assistance and resistance to aggression" (1984: 247). For Connor, then, Thucydides' *History* cannot be boiled down to reductive formulations such as "advocacy of Periclean rationalism" or "tragic pessimism." Rather, its utility consists in its banishment of complacency and certainty in the reader about the workings of power and war.

Studies by Tim Rood (1998) and Simon Hornblower (1996a, 2011: 59–99) explicitly – but not slavishly – adopt the critical tools of narratology. And Carolyn Dewald's work on narrative style and structure in Thucydides constitutes a fruitful synthesis of narratological approaches with stylometric and formalist methods which have been embedded in classical scholarship for decades (Dewald 2005). Although they differ on many points, these scholars have greatly enhanced classicists' understanding of the sophisticated mechanisms by which Thucydides makes his account and explanations convincing and coherent.

To take just one example, Rood analyzes the manipulations of narrative pace and order, the use of verbal echoes, flash-backs and flash-forwards, the selective use of speeches and "focalization" which constitute Thucydides' narrative of the Athenian success at Pylos and its immediate aftermath in Book 4 (Rood 1998: 24–57). He shows how these techniques have four main effects. First, they show that Thucydides does not present events at Pylos as the product of good fortune or chance to the extent that most commentators have assumed. Second, they allow the reader to recreate the intense feelings of confusion and hardship experienced by the combatants; we should remember that Thucydides claims that the war outstripped all others in terms of the suffering it caused (1.23.1–3). Third, they direct the reader's attention toward immediate and more distant ends: the surprising and momentous

Spartan surrender on Sphacteria (4.38–9), Spartan victory at Mantinea (5.63–75) and even the Athenians' naval defeat in the harbor at Syracuse (7.69–71).

Fourth and finally, these narrative techniques are crucial constituents of the multilayered and complex explanation of the nature and course of the war which Thucydides develops across the entire work. For example, the Spartans' confident expectations and plans at Pylos are dwelt upon in great detail so that we can appreciate the way in which they nearly work and yet are confounded by their incomplete execution. This contributes to Thucydides' overarching notion that the restrictions on human perception and perspective are a significant factor in how events play out. But it is also part and parcel of a wider strand of explanation in Thucydides: initial Athenian success and the shock of Spartan failure interact with these two sides' national characteristics (and pan-Greek perceptions of them) and thereby activate the overconfident, self-destructive dynamism of Athenian imperial power (Rood 1998: 285–93).

Hayden White's influence on Thucydidean scholarship within classics and ancient history is much less direct and pervasive because his accounts focus on historical thought and historiography in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, White's work has challenged all historians to re-evaluate narrative history's claims to truth and authority in the light of its formal kinship to rhetoric and fiction. That challenge has clearly been an indirect stimulus to two very current and often overlapping concentrations in Thucydidean studies.

First, there is scholarship which stems from the realization that Thucydides was supremely successful in constructing his intellectual authority and making his work endure in its relevance and appeal in ways which his own work predicts. This scholarship effectively isolates the complex mixture of innovative and traditional modes of prose discourse and analysis which make Thucydides' text so authoritative and persuasive both within and beyond its original context of reception (e.g., Crane 1996, 1998; Moles 1999; Greenwood 2006; Rood 2006). The other area of interest has been to revisit and deepen our understanding of the extent to which Thucydides' account is made compelling and affecting through its intertextual relationship with other fictional or mythic-historical narratives of war and contest. Scholars have recently argued that Thucydides' Peloponnesian War is rendered compelling and significant through analogies and contrasts with the content and form of Homeric epic (Hornblower 1996a: 38–61; Rengakos 2006), Aeschylus' *Persians* and Herodotus' account of the Persian Wars (Pelling 1991; Rood 2009), Sophoclean tragedy (Greenwood 2006: 83–108), Pindar's victory odes (Hornblower 2004) and even Old Comedy (Rusten 2006). Not all of these posited intertextual relationships will stand the test of time. But a more developed understanding of the ways in which Thucydides' account can seem so dispassionate, objective, and distanced from the tropes of rhetoric, myth, and poetry and yet be working its seductive magic through a selective and subtle engagement with those very tropes is an important legacy of the dialogue between Thucydidean scholarship in Classics and "theory" from other disciplines.

However, this legacy is not welcomed or accepted by all. The eminent ancient historian Donald Kagan has recently rejected the picture of Thucydides as “a purely literary genius, free from the trammels of historical objectivity, that too many recent scholars have claimed him to be” (2009: 223). For Kagan, even Thucydides’ speeches are essentially accurate representations of what was really said. For sure, Kagan has always argued that the *History* is flawed and biased in its appraisal of the “whys” and “hows” of the Peloponnesian conflict. But he has also maintained that Thucydides offers modern policymakers useful insights into the reasons why nations go to war in any age. As a consequence, he has been credited with making Thucydides “the favorite neoconservative text on foreign affairs” (Kristol 2003).

Kagan’s claims to Thucydides’ utility and currency require a certain style of reading which is often at odds with those I have summarized in this section. Consider the Athenians’ appeal to political realism (“honor/prestige (*timē*), fear (*deos*), and self-interest (*ōphelia*)”) as a means of justifying their imperial dominion at 1.76.2. Kagan reads this as an extension of the historian’s own analytical voice: “Thucydides found that people go to war out of ‘honor, fear and interest’” (Kagan 1995: 8). By contrast, as we have seen, more “literary,” “narratological,” and “rhetorical” interpretations would usually insist on maintaining a difference between the Athenians’ rhetoric of self-justification in particular contexts and Thucydides’ overarching designs and explanations. They would also question whether the Athenians ever actually used these words in the first place.

So, the classicist’s reading of Thucydides as primarily a “literary” text has significant implications for other ways of reading him. And this is especially true of interpretations which ground Thucydides’ usefulness for the present and future in his status as a reasonably reliable and authoritative witness-cum-historiographer of a past conflict. As such, the more “literary” readings risk marginalization because they are easily interpreted as maintaining the unpalatable view that Thucydides’ text is *completely* unreliable and self-aggrandizing. This is a pity, because Thucydides’ utility or salience for present concerns is often implicit in the “literary” readings too. Take Tim Rood’s analysis of Thucydidean explanation and narrative design which I discussed above. Rood’s Thucydides actually offers us an all-too-plausible (but not self-evident or trite) picture of the complexity of the causal interactions and feedback mechanisms which drive and shape the course of an inter-state conflict. This complex picture confounds the drawing of easy “lessons” or “warnings” for the “here and now.” For me, however, it is precisely in questioning the ease with which the “historiographic” Thucydides can be deemed “useful” that the “literary” Thucydides attains his contemporary utility.

No Thanks, Apologies, and Thanks

Thucydides sometimes crops up in theoretical debates about the nature and norms of historical inquiry or the recalling and recording of the past: What is history? What *should* it be? What are its uses and limitations? These theoretical questions

are a concern to a number of different disciplines and subdisciplines beyond the most obvious ones (archaeology and history). Philosophy and anthropology have been particularly interested in them in the last seventy years. In this section I want to show how Thucydides has proved “good to think with” in three significant investigations of the nature and limits of history and historical narrative.

In the mid-twentieth-century work of the idealist philosopher and practicing archaeologist R.G. Collingwood, Thucydides is a pseudo-historian with “anti-historical motives” (Collingwood 1961: 30). For Collingwood, who had himself studied Classics at Oxford, Greek thought had an “anti-historical tendency” because it held that one can only have true knowledge of objects which are unchanging. This so-called “substantialism” meant that “history ought to be impossible” for the Greeks (*ibid.*: 29, 42–3). Herodotus’ achievement is all the more impressive to Collingwood as a result. He twins Herodotus with Socrates because both generated knowledge through the skilful questioning of eye-witnesses and interlocutors. Collingwood’s Herodotus is chiefly interested in “historical events themselves,” he is “scientific” and his style “easy, spontaneous, and convincing.” Thucydides is by contrast “harsh, artificial, repellent” (*ibid.*: 29). Collingwood despises Thucydides because he does not “narrate facts for the sake of narrating facts” but in order to affirm “psychological laws.” A psychological law is not an event or even a complex of events, it is an immutable rule which governs the relations between events. This “anti-historical” substantialism means that Thucydides is not Herodotus’ true successor. Collingwood is particularly outraged by the monochrome style and questionable veracity of Thucydides’ speeches. The Melian Dialogue is “not history but Thucydidean comments upon the acts of the speakers, Thucydidean reconstructions of their motives and intentions” (*ibid.*: 30).

Thucydides is a foil to Collingwood’s own “idea of history” as a scientific mode of investigation. The condemnation of his “psychologism” and made-up speeches particularly serves to lend definition to Collingwood’s own controversial notion of history as “re-enactment of past experience.” If the historian must use historical evidence in order to re-enact the thoughts and experience of historical actors, this is not the same as the sort of semi-creative exercise which Thucydides admits to at 1.22. It is also important to stress that Collingwood regards all “Greco-Roman Historiography” after Thucydides as similarly handicapped by “substantialism.” He thus goes against the grain of a prevalent perception in the mid-twentieth century that Thucydides was a more “scientific” historian than Herodotus.

One should not make too much of Collingwood’s direct impact on Thucydidean studies. His view that Thucydides largely invents the motives and intentions of his actors has certainly been shared by some classicists (Hunter 1973; Schneider 1974). But others have argued persuasively for a more nuanced picture in which Thucydides did sometimes have direct access to certain leaders’ reports as to why they did or said this or that (Hornblower 1987: 75–81). Virginia Hunter’s classic account of “mass psychology” in Thucydides begins with the explicit assumption that Collingwood was at least right to see him as interested in the “rules of human

behaviour" (1986: 412). Collingwood also seems to anticipate the recent rehabilitation of Herodotus as a pioneer to be judged by his own era's conceptions and uses of the past, memorialization, and ethnography (Dewald and Marincola 2006). However, this rehabilitation has not really led to a concomitant denigration of Thucydides' qualities so much as a questioning of the view that he is quite as exceptional as was once supposed: "it is very hard, and is getting harder by the year, to identify an admirable feature of Thucydides which is *not present in Herodotus also*, though it may wear a different aspect, or be concealed" (Hornblower 2011: 10). On the other hand, Collingwood was surely onto something in his characterization of the differences between the two historians. As Gregory Crane has shown through systematic and statistical comparison, Thucydides saturates his narrative with unobtrusive (and subtly authoritative) attributions of motivation and intention where Herodotus is much more sparing (1996: 38–50).

Collingwood also helps us to pause for thought when we approach the question of how far, and in what way, Thucydides is the archetype of modern historiography. Arnaldo Momigliano was surely right to dismiss Collingwood's notion (also found in Niebhur and Hegel) that the Greek mind was unhistorical: Herodotus' and Thucydides' "critical attitude" toward the recording of events defined an aspect of historiographical method which "we have inherited" (Momigliano 1990: 30). But Collingwood casts doubt on Momigliano's suggestion that Thucydides' "pure" and "ordinary" history is a direct ancestor to the evidence-based political and military historiography of our own time. As one eminent French ancient historian put it, "Thucydides is not a colleague" (Loraux 1980: 55).

If Collingwood regarded the *History* as something that is not really history at all, Marshall Sahlins at least allows Thucydides the label of "historian" (2004: 16). His book is called *Apologies to Thucydides. Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa*. Sahlins, an eminent Chicago School anthropologist, uses a critique of Thucydides as a means of defining and advocating what he calls "anthropological historiography." His first central argument is that historical events are organized (although not determined) by the cultural order in which they occur. His second is that historical agency has to be characterized by a complex interplay of individual and collective actions where the particularities of cultural affiliation and institutions must nuance any simple ascriptions of agency of the kind which Sahlins finds to be typical of Thucydides.

Sahlins charges Thucydides with being the inventor of "rational history" based on an assumption that human nature is universal and all-determining:

The list of cultural practices and institutions that are in one way or another subject to human nature in Thucydides, whether overcome by it, or dependent on it for their own characteristics, is quite impressive. It includes kinship, friendship, ethnic affiliation, empire, and traditional social institutions in general; law, morality, honor, treatises, and justice in general; the gods, sacredness, and religion in general; and not least, language, the meaning of words in general. All of these are nothing in comparison to human

desires, either in the sense that self-interest will subvert them – as in the Corcyraean revolution and the Athenian plague – or in the sense that self-interest is the real reason for their existence – as in the pursuit of gain and power that made the Athenian empire or, more specifically, led to the destruction of the Melians. Note, then, the remarkable explanatory power of Thucydides' invocations of human nature. The argument will account both for order and disorder, for structure and anomie, for the construction of culture and for its deconstruction. An enviable, no-lose debating stance, still found in reductionist anthropologies of human nature, the procedure explains everything and its opposite. (2004: 122)

For Sahlins, Thucydides' preference for explaining things by reference to a universal "human nature" has had a pernicious and pervasive influence upon Western historiography and social thought. Indeed, Thucydides is symptomatic of everything that is wrong with Western history writing with its "misleading seductiveness" of commonsense causal accounts and its disregard for "culture" and anthropology (ibid.: 16–17).

In order to illustrate the deficiencies of this "universalizing" tendency in comparison with his own "anthropological historiography," Sahlins compares the Peloponnesian War with the Polynesian War which took place between two Fijian kingdoms, Bau and Rewa, between 1834 and 1855. (Sahlins is an expert on the anthropology and history of Polynesia but was stimulated into this approach by co-teaching a course with the classicist James Redfield). Bau is the "Athens" of the two kingdoms because of the means by which it exercised maritime hegemony via trade, taxation, and intimidation over other states. Despite their small size, both Athens and Bau achieve imperial domination via display and ritual – "a politics of demonstration in place of administration" (Sahlins 2004: 7). Rewa is analogous to Sparta, not just because it is more densely populated and agriculturally fertile but because its inward-looking polity developed in counterpoint to the extrovert display-based society of Bau. Sahlins' historiographical point is that one kingdom's cultural order and its military, political, and economic actions should not be considered in isolation, as independent developments: "the differences between Bau and Rewa are systematically and historically related" (ibid.: 65). Sahlins argues that Bau and Rewa coevolved as polities into cultural and political inversions of each other. Sahlins' next move is to argue that the political, cultural, and attitudinal differences between Athens and Sparta attested by Thucydides and other sources can also be attributed to this process of "schismogenic" opposition. And this means that we can write a meaningful history of (say) classical Sparta only by considering the relation between its cultural order and that of Athens.

Sahlins goes on to provide a cogent analysis of the perceived role of individual agency in the baseball championships of 1939 and 1951. He also discusses the case of a young Cuban boy who was rescued from a capsized boat off the coast of Florida when he and his mother were attempting to enter the United States in 1999. In both examples, argues Sahlins, individual characters become prominent and famous historical actors due to the fraught, controversial, or momentous events they take part in. But this does not necessarily mean that their agency has

determined or steered those events. Rather, they are “conjunctural agents” who are made by a situation. Sociologically speaking they are not “systematic agents” (like Napoleon or Hitler) who really do sometimes write the script of history. Sahlins’ point here is that a whole range of contingencies and chance factors have a large role to play in determining which events are perceived to have been caused by the action of specific individuals and which not. But he is also arguing that history consists of an interaction between pure-chance contingency on the one hand and sociocultural forms on the other. There can be no history without culture and vice versa. This itself is a polemical point for an anthropologist to make, given that many anthropologists now reject the notion of “culture” as a dangerously occluding and essentialist distortion (Hornblower and Stewart 2005: 275).

On the one hand, Thucydides is Sahlins’ villain because his account misses out “the whole set of mediating institutions and values involved in the constitution of historical agency” and is thus the perfect illustration of all that is wrong with a “historiography without anthropology” (Sahlins 2004: 123). Indeed, it does seem as if Sahlins is seeking to demolish Thucydides and what he represents in order to set *himself* up as a new, improved Thucydides with added cultural anthropology. After all, he offers alternative explanations for the Peloponnesian War rather than being content to illustrate the comparative richness of his historical explanations via the Polynesian case study. On the other hand, Sahlins is clear that Thucydides is helpful precisely because he is ultimately unable to ignore historically significant *cultural* differences (ibid.: 121).

Sahlins’ book contains many imperfections, mischaracterizations, and arguable claims from the perspective of the Thucydidean scholar, the theorist of historical agency, and the anthropologist. But most agree that its engagement with Thucydides is fruitful. As a Thucydides scholar and an anthropologist point out in a jointly authored review article, Sahlins’ recognition that Thucydides does in fact countenance certain differences between Spartans and Athenians is very significant because it becomes impossible that “he really held to a universally applicable set of beliefs about human nature” (Hornblower and Stewart 2005: 276). This is a graphic illustration of the way in which Thucydides’ text provides a basis for fruitful dialogue within and between different disciplines concerning the engines of historical change, causation, and conflict. But it also serves to show how Thucydides’ complexity is best served by cross-disciplinary debate and assessment.

My final example of the role that Thucydides can play in the theory of history also points to the gains of cross-disciplinarity. In an article published in the journal *History and Theory* the classicist Jonas Grethlein engages with the work of a number of scholars who appeal to the concept of “experience” and its immediacy on the part of historical actors (Grethlein 2010). Some of this work constitutes a “New Romanticism” in which our desire to directly feel and experience the past as an “immediate present” is acknowledged and pursued via the rejection of narrative form and its perceived association with a discredited claims that history is didactic (e.g., Gumbrecht 1997; Ankersmit 2005). Grethlein also engages with more

longstanding critiques of the “teleological” view of history. Where most historians view it as their function to capitalize on their hindsight, Raymond Aron and Michael Bernstein criticized this retrospective facet of history writing for its tendency to bestow an appearance of inevitability on events and outcomes (Aron 1938; Bernstein 1994). Aron argued that historians should do more to recover the uncertainty about the future which historical agents themselves have experienced.

Grethlein points out that narrative and experience have a more complex relationship than some of these “New Romanticists” imply. For example, we can be made as ignorant as the characters of a novel about what will happen next and we can be made to experience the same emotions as them, albeit in an “as-if” mode. Retrospective historical narration cannot quite match these alignments because the reader usually knows more than the historical agents do about their future and the connections between events. However, Grethlein argues, historical narration can and should get closer to making its readers realize the “openness of the future” and “presentness” which was experienced by its actors (Grethlein 2010: 324). Thucydides is Grethlein’s main example of how this can work and his analysis is indebted to the narratological approaches discussed in my previous section. For example, the Athenian arguments for and against the expedition (6.9–23) and the corresponding Syracusan debate (6.33–41) are presented without authorial comment or foreshadowing of the disaster to come: “Thucydides’ readers can follow the action more or less from the perspective of a contemporary living in 415 BCE” (Grethlein 2010: 325).

Grethlein argues that Thucydides’ speeches and focalizations of historical characters’ thoughts are fictive reconstructions and they thereby constitute what one narrative theorist has called “side-shadowings” (Morson 1994). They may not be literally true or accurate representations of what was actually said or thought but they do “re-create the presentness of the past and thereby take on a referential function at a second level” (Grethlein 2010: 328). In other words, Thucydides’ difficult statement at 1.22.1 to the effect that his speeches are reconstructions is an acknowledgment that they are strictly fictional. And yet the fictionalization is subjected to a critical method so that the readers experience the openness of the past through the speeches’ recreation of what (say) it was like to be sat in an assembly at Syracuse listening to different politicians’ opinions about the likelihood of an Athenian attack and how to respond. Moments where Thucydides highlights what might have happened rather than what did happen also underline the openness of the past (e.g., Thuc. 7.2.1–4).

The use of fictional reconstruction or “counter-factual” speculation as a historical method is very controversial. Grethlein does not say that Thucydides is a *model* or *solution* for modern historians who are seeking to unlock the “experiential” potential of narrative ‘without abandoning the methodological standards that distinguish historiography from the historical novel’ (Grethlein 2010: 335). But he does show that Thucydides has real relevance and application to experimental forms of history writing and debates about their legitimacy.

Cross-disciplinarity is clearly helping us to better understand the complexity of Thucydides and the problems that attend interpretations and applications of his work. It is particularly fascinating that dialogue between disciplines is pinpointing those aspects of Thucydides which speak to current arguments about what history writing should look like. Thucydides may not strictly be a “colleague” but he can sometimes come close to being one of those colleagues from another discipline who forces us to question the unspoken assumptions which we mistakenly thought s/he shared with us. We gain fresh and exciting ideas from Thucydides if we learn to appreciate his rather different disciplinary norms.

Guide to Further Reading

Important discussions of recent approaches to Thucydides by classicists drawing on theories from other disciplines include Greenwood (2006), Grethlein (2010), and Rusten (2009), especially Rusten’s introduction. Ober (2006) represents a fascinating account of how the paradigms of modern political science might illuminate Thucydides’ aims and immediate effect. Murari Pires (2006) sets twentieth-century scholarship on Thucydides against the background of nineteenth-century ideas; Horsley (2008) discusses the genesis, reception, and legacy of Cornford’s work; Hornblower and Stewart (2005) offer an insightful cross-disciplinary critique of Sahlins.

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Part III

Thucydides the Political Theorist

Hobbes and His Contemporaries

James Jan Sullivan

As turbulent as the politics of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, so was the period fertile for political literature. The great waxing and waning of Spanish power, both in Europe and the new world, dominated the history of the period and inspired a whole literature on monarchical rule and imperial administration. Meanwhile, the struggle of various Italian city-states, both with each other and against Spain, forced consideration of how to resist that same dominant empire and whether it was wise to do so in the first place. Nearly contemporaneously, the wars for Dutch independence, also waged against Spanish dominance, raised questions about whether rule by a prince or by republican form of government was best, both in general and for a small, mercantile, and long-besieged state. At the same time, France and England were settling questions of dynastic succession, national religion, royal absolutism, and their respective roles vis-à-vis Spain.

The political theorists of this era, including Justus Lipsius and Hugo Grotius, but above all Thomas Hobbes, would make substantial use of the work of Thucydides to make sense of (and try to affect) their turbulent times. Through his *Leviathan*, composed in the heat of the English Civil War, Hobbes would influence much later Western political philosophy, especially in his vision of a social contract arising out of the exigencies of a feral state of nature. In his use of Thucydides, Hobbes would also profoundly shape the subsequent reception and influence of the man he called “the most politic historiographer that ever writ” (1629: xxii).

In this chapter, I will argue that his reading of Thucydides was one of the central influences on the development of Hobbes’ political thought. In the first part, I trace how some of Hobbes’ predecessors and contemporaries used (or did not use) Thucydides, why the philosopher particularly gravitated to the historian, and how Hobbes, encountering some similar political themes (tyranny and tyrannicide,

rhetoric, and meaning of words) in both Thucydides and Tacitus, was more convinced by the presentation of those themes in the former. Hobbes' Thucydidean turn is itself important, because Tacitus had generally been considered the most important ancient writer on politics in the preceding centuries. I next delineate the philosopher's reception of the historian, arguing first of all through an exploration of his shifting attitude to Thucydidean historiography that this is dialogic, that he embraces, rejects, and amends the Greek historian's take on various topics. I then discuss to what extent Hobbes embraced and rejected what he took to be Thucydides' opinions on rhetoric, political emotions in a civil society, and the form of government best suited for an empire. Finally, I consider how another contemporary of Hobbes, James Harrington, adapted Thucydides to make somewhat different points about republican commonwealths. That discussion can, I hope, help to delineate, by contrast, Hobbes' idiosyncratic, but highly influential, reading of Thucydides.

Thucydides from the Later Renaissance to Hobbes

The reading of ancient histories influenced the development of early modern political thinking from its infancy, beginning with Leonardo Bruni and Niccolò Machiavelli. But the earliest political writers rarely consulted Thucydides. Rather, the biographies of Plutarch and Livy's history of Rome were more influential to Bruni, Machiavelli, Montaigne, and others (see generally Tuck 1993).

As political writing ("politique") evolved, however, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political authors abandoned what they came to see as the moralizing or anecdotal outlook of Plutarch and the annalistic historiography of Livy (the *res gestae*), and came to prefer the denser, analytical histories of Sallust and, eventually above all, the work of Tacitus. The vogue for "politique" ancient histories provoked such an interest in the latter author that a school of early political theory developed, which came to be called "Tacitism." But this development of political history took less notice of Thucydides, and that relative neglect continued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Isaac Casaubon, for example, who showed a great enthusiasm for the "philosophical" mode of history, issued a translation in 1609 of the Greek historian that he felt was typical of that philosophical mode: Polybius.

Although he was less prominent than other ancient historians, Thucydides was not unknown, and some of Hobbes' contemporaries show signs of his slow infiltration into the Tacitus-dominated worldview of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century political thought. Justus Lipsius' (1547–1606) *Politiorum sive Civilis Doctrinae libri sex*, or simply *Politica*, published first in 1589 and translated into English in 1594, had a broad influence in Hobbes' early years. Despite its occasional use of Thucydides and an approving mention of the historian in the *Notae* attached to the end of the text, the *Politica* is still a thoroughly Tacitist work. Quotations from Tacitus constitute 21% (528 in number) of the total in the work

(Waszink 2004: 149). Lipsius' argument is consistent with "middle Tacitist" thinking (Tuck 1993): the prince must seek peace, both internally and externally, by whatever means necessary; all the while niceties such as constitutional form, religious scruple, justice, and morality should be sacrificed to that overriding aim. The *Politica* is, in form, avowedly a *cento* (on which see further Waszink 2004: 49–80); it is structured as a series of quotations, organized and connected by Lipsius to make his argument. The text thus constitutes a kind of hybrid of Renaissance collections of moralizing quotations on the one hand, and on the other, of later philosophical writings, which made use of ancient quotation to highlight, rather than make, their arguments.

Nevertheless, Lipsius' use of Thucydides, and his praise of Thucydides in his *Notae* along the same lines in which he praises Tacitus and Sallust, is suggestive. Indeed, what Lipsius says of Thucydides in his *Notae* bears repeating for the influence it may well have had on Hobbes (who himself quotes this portion of Lipsius' work): "In his language everywhere he is brief and serious; he is dense with notions, and healthy judgment; everywhere does he secretly instruct [the reader], guiding [his] actions and life" (Waszink 2004: 732). Compare the judgment in Hobbes' *Essay on the Life and History of Thucydides* appended to his translation: "the narration itself doth secretly instruct the reader, and more effectually than can possibly be done by precept" (Hobbes 1989: 577).

Lipsius' actual use of Thucydides is a mixed bag; he quotes him anachronistically, and without regard for context, in support of a neo-stoic argument at *Politica* I.4.3 (=Thucydides 2.64.2); and is numb to Cleon's irony at *Politica* III.4.5 (=3.37.3); but then he is conscious of the argument being made in the source when he quotes both sides of the Mytilenean Debate on the (non-) virtue of clemency at *Politica* II.13.1 (=3.45.3) and II.13.3 (=3.40.3), or when he condemns the masses' judgment of political leaders at *Politica* IV.5.13 (=3.82.4). In sum, we have to conclude that Lipsius' use of Thucydides was decidedly secondary to his use of Tacitus. The latter animates Lipsius' argument; the former embellishes it.

Nevertheless, as Hobbes came of age, Tacitism was evolving, both on the continent and in England, and especially among the young humanist's intimate circle, which was connected in several ways to Venice. Hobbes himself traveled to Venice, mixing with the humanists (and scientists) there; he worked as a translator for Francis Bacon, whose writings show a special affinity with the apologist for Venetian republicanism, Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623) (Bouwsmma 1968). Hobbes came to function as an all-round secretary to the English courtier William Cavendish, eventually to become the first Earl of Devonshire (1552–1626); in addition to his tutoring duties (of Cavendish's son, the eventual second earl), he translated letters from Sarpi's intellectual heir Fulgenzio Micanzio (1570–1654) to the first earl on political and philosophical matters.

These connections are relevant because Venice was also home to those Italians who argued for the special importance of Thucydides. Speaking, in all likelihood, of the specifically Venetian vogue for Thucydides, Hobbes writes in the note to

readers opening his translation that, “[Thucydides] was exceedingly esteemed of the Italians” (1629: xxii). The Venetians proposed Thucydides as an alternative to Tacitus (and the despotism that Lipsius used him to advocate) for a number of reasons: Thucydides’ Athens was a seafaring, imperial polity; it defined its political system in deliberate contrast to monarchy or despotism; and Thucydides was deemed to have written realistic advice to republics about how to survive the depredations of despotic powers. Indeed, Domenico Molino, an associate of the Sarpi–Macanzio circle, urged the Dutchman Johannes Meurs (1579–1639) to put out a scholarly edition of Thucydides as a republican rejoinder to the authoritarian political theories coalescing around Tacitus (Bouwtsma 1968: 237; on the republican use of Thucydides more generally, Hoekstra 2012: 29–35).

Meurs would not, as it turned out, take up Molino’s suggestion, but he and his eventually more prominent friend and regular correspondent, Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), did begin to work out a political theory more amenable to the Dutch and Venetian republics. To do this, they used the historical evidence of imperial (and democratic) Athens. Grotius readily admitted that the political system of Athens was more dominated by the masses than the Dutch provinces were (or ought to be), but he pressed the parallel because of the seafaring, commercial, and imperial character of fifth-century BCE Athens (for more on Grotius see Hoekstra 2012 *passim* and O’Driscoll in this volume).

Thus Hobbes’ interest in Thucydides did not develop in a vacuum; the young Hobbes was connected, via his Cavendish duties, with a continental milieu in which there was a growing interest in Thucydides. He writes of his special predilection for the Greek historian in his verse autobiography; he notes that during his stay at Chatsworth he read English, Greek, and Latin historians, but that “Thucydides pleased me beyond all others” (VA line 84 = 1994: lvi; for details on Hobbes’ humanistic studies at the Cavendish library see Hamilton 1978 and Skinner 2002: 38–65).

Shortly thereafter in the same *vita*, Hobbes explains why he gravitated to Thucydides: “He says Democracy’s a foolish thing, / than a republic wiser is one king” (VA lines 86–7 = 1994: lvi). This is broadly in accord with what he had said in his essay *On the Life and History of Thucydides*: “For his opinion touching the government of the state, it is manifest that [Thucydides] least of all liked the democracy ... but more he commendeth it, both when Peisistratus reigned, (saving that it was an usurped power), and when in the beginning of this war it was democratical in name, but in effect monarchical under Pericles” (Hobbes 1989: 572–3). The idea that Thucydides thought it wiser to have a king than a republic is probably projection on Hobbes’ part, but the broader point remains that in Thucydides, Hobbes felt that he had found a corrective to the tendency among ancient authors to sympathize with republics. As for Peisistratus, we will discuss below Hobbes’ take on ancient tyrants.

It is also notable that Hobbes keenly feels Thucydides’ closeness to the pre-Socratic movement and is aware of how the semi-empirical methodology of those

philosophers informed his history: "He overtasked not himself by undertaking an history of things done long before his own time" (ibid.: 576). On a related topic, Hobbes notes Thucydides' philosophical and scientific interests: "For in philosophy, he was the scholar ... of Anaxagoras; whose opinions, being a strain above the apprehension of the vulgar, procured him the estimation of an atheist" (ibid.: 570). Hobbes himself would later be accused of atheism; he may have seen in Thucydides a kindred spirit on religious matters. Hobbes would in later years defend himself from the charge of atheism by saying that he was not too addicted to ecstatic fervor, but still embraced traditional morality as a kind of social glue. His defense of Thucydides against the charge of atheism could very well be used for himself: "So that in his writings our author appeareth to be, on the one side not superstitious, on the other side not an atheist" (ibid.: 571).

Jeffrey Collins has argued that Hobbes procured his reputation as an "atheist" as much for his ecclesiological as for his theological opinions. That ecclesiology stated, in short, that church governance, even of such clearly religious matters as excommunication and scriptural interpretation, should be unambiguously subordinate to secular authority. Collins attributes this ecclesiological doctrine to a marriage of the humanist fascination with ancient civil religion and a typically protestant political theory emphasizing sovereign control of the church (2005: 11–57). While other ancient authorities were better sources for ancient religious practice, Thucydides' attitude toward religion is closest to Hobbes' skepticism.

To summarize: from the Renaissance to Hobbes' day, Thucydides' history had had a small influence on political thought compared with the works of Tacitus, Livy and Plutarch. The special and sustained attention shown to Thucydides by Hobbes was thus unusual, though we note that Thucydides was read with some enthusiasm in Venetian and some Dutch republican circles, with which Hobbes had some connection. Hobbes' subsequent reading and use of Thucydides to support a philosophical program that must be called authoritarian and/or monarchical is thus particularly original and surprising.

Before we discuss that, however, we will briefly touch on Hobbes' work on Tacitus and, in so doing, show how the influence of Thucydides informs his take on Tacitus and on important political topics such as tyranny and tyrannicide.

Hobbes on Thucydides and Tacitus

Recently, scholars have argued that Hobbes was the author of three short tracts contained within an anonymously published volume entitled *Horae Subsecivae*, and in particular of one called *A Discourse Upon the Beginning of Tacitus* (Hobbes 1995). Given that the work has always been associated with his pupil Cavendish, Hobbes' influence on the work had never been in doubt, but now that the commentary is more strongly identified as his, we can examine how Hobbes' early interest in Tacitus may be related to his (surely contemporaneous) early engagement with

Thucydides. Below we read Hobbes on Tacitus and Hobbes on Thucydides side by side on an important shared topic: tyranny and tyrannicide. In so doing, we aim to show how we might be able to understand why Hobbes gravitated to Thucydides instead of Tacitus.

Hobbes' *Discourse* takes the form of a commentary on Tacitus' *Annales* (on the first four paragraphs only). Commenting on the end of the monarchy, Hobbes unambiguously condemns the expulsion of the Roman kings, "I shall never think otherwise of [the deposition of Tarquin the Proud] than thus: '*Prosperum et felix scelus virtus vocatur*' [A successful and happy crime is called a virtue]" (1995: 33). He also reveals a generally exculpatory viewpoint on the crimes of rulers, when he says of the Tarquinian outrages: "For it was but a private wrong, and the fact not of the King, but the King's son, that Lucretia was ravished. ... So that, it is not the government, but the abuse that makes the alteration [revolution] be termed Liberty" (*ibid.*).

There is compelling reason to read this passage side by side with Hobbes' take on Thucydides' narrative on both the rule and overthrow of the Peisistratids. Here is Hobbes' translation of Thucydides' favorable précis of the era of Peisistratid tyrannical rule at Athens: "And to say the truth, these tyrants held virtue and wisdom in great account for a long time, ... adorned the city, managed their wars, and administered their religion worthily" (1629: 408). Of the crime that most Athenians seem (wrongly) to have associated with the ending of the tyranny, Hobbes translates Thucydides: "For the fact[deed] of Aristogeiton and Harmodius was undertaken upon an accident of love ... Thus was the enterprise first undertaken upon a quarrel of love" (*ibid.*: 408, 411).

There is a notable similarity between the case of Tarquin, in which a son of the king raped Lucretia, and that of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, in which the brother of the reigning tyrant attempts to seduce the lover of the citizen, and, repulsed, disgraces his sister. In both cases, Hobbes is able to minimize the wrongdoing ascribed to the king or tyrant as a "private wrong" or "an accident of love," and one, moreover, not even committed by the ruler himself. Whether Hobbes was reading Thucydides against Tacitus in his *Discourse* is impossible to say. What we can venture to say, perhaps, is that Hobbes found Thucydides' subtle instruction on the relationship of rulers and ruled more convincing than Tacitus'.

Indeed, in his later work, Hobbes would further develop his Thucydidean, and anti-Tacitean, take on tyranny and tyrannicide. In *De Cive*, he delivers a blistering condemnation of the ancient veneration for tyrannicides:

The third seditious doctrine sprung from the same root, is that *tyrannicide is licit*. In fact certain Theologians in our own day and all the Sophists of the past—*Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch* and the rest of the champions of Anarchy in Greece and Rome—have supposed that it is not only licit, but deserves the highest praise. By the word *tyrants* they mean not only Monarchs but all who exercise sovereign power in any kind of commonwealth: at Athens not only *Pisistratus* who ruled alone, but

also the Thirty men who later held power together, were spoken of individually as *Tyrants*. ... One may easily see how dangerous this belief is to commonwealths, and particularly to *Monarchies*, by recognizing that it exposes any *King*, good or bad, to the risk of being condemned by the judgment, and murdered by the hand, of one solitary assassin. (1998: XII.3, see also 1994: II.29.14)

Hobbes notably leaves Thucydides (and, it must be said, Tacitus) out of his register of the “Sophists of the past ... champions of Anarchy,” in all likelihood because it was Thucydides who exposed the dangerous randomness of the crime of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, thus confirming the impression Hobbes had formed earlier, during his reading of Tacitus, that the killing of sovereigns, “good or bad,” was a nothing but a “crime called virtuous because of its happy outcome.”

Hobbes’ critique of Tacitus exhibits an early version of what would become an important topic: the proper meaning of words (e.g., a crime *is called* virtuous; a monarch *is called* a tyrant, etc.). Later Hobbes would insist that words have a proper meaning, and that the straightforward application of language was in some way important to the functioning of societies, both the most basic and the most complex. But as we shall see, Hobbes’ position on rhetoric and the stability of sign to what is signified would change throughout his life, as he would grow more or less comfortable with the euphemistic, rhetorical, or metaphorical use of language.

Interestingly, in this early close reading of Tacitus, Hobbes is unusually explicit in *endorsing* the deceptive use of language. Commenting on Augustus’ subtle exercise of authority, Hobbes asserts that a new ruler ought to engage in dissimulation: “For it is not wisdom for one that is to convert a free state into a Monarchy, to take away all the show of their liberty at one blow, and on a sudden make them feel servitude” (1998: 45). In this connection, Hobbes also praises Augustus’ use of traditional titles (1995: 43–4), instead of asserting his power more openly. This idea, of princely deception as a basis for the formation of civil state, though looming large in his reading of Augustan statecraft in Tacitus, would seem to be at odds with later Hobbesian critiques of rhetoric. But as we shall see below, Hobbes’ take on rhetoric is problematic in a number of ways.

Hobbes on Thucydidean Historiography

There is ample evidence to suppose that Hobbes’ close reading of Thucydides deeply affected his own thinking on a number of important points, and we have discussed some of these above. As we will show in this section of the chapter, Hobbes’ reading of Thucydides can be characterized by alternating bouts of appropriation and rejection. We investigate this topic by analyzing Hobbes’ take on Thucydidean historiography.

Hobbes’ career was marked by a turn away from the *studia humanitatis* of which his reading of Thucydides would have been a part (see Skinner 2002: 66–86, esp.

74–9). Hobbes' embrace of empirical science must be viewed with some skepticism itself, as perhaps a rhetorical pose, with which the philosopher sought to clothe his tendentious opinions in the mantle of scientific objectivity; we will return to that critical view below. For now it is enough to say that, in explaining his turn toward the natural sciences, Hobbes continues to engage with Thucydidean themes, only now in a more critical and challenging way. One crucial topic, on which Hobbes would take first a skeptical view of (what he took to be) Thucydides' opinion and later would repudiate it outright, was the utility of history, *especially* for the task of constructing a social science or a science of man.

To assess how Hobbes came to challenge Thucydides' own vision of the utility of history, I examine closely his take on Thucydides' statement of historical purpose at 1.22.4. There the historian writes that "It shall be enough for me that they judge this history useful, who wish to know the clear truth of what happened and what will likely happen again at some point, and in some like manner, given the nature of man." The seeds of Hobbes' challenge to this Thucydidean theme exist as early as his translation of the text, where he renders the passage: "But he that desires to look into the truth of things done and which (according to the condition of humanity) may be done again, or at least their like, he shall find enough herein to make him think it profitable" (1629: 14). Thucydides is arguing that there is a utility in understanding past events, because they may well recur in some similar form in the future. But Hobbes, by translating with the mild asseveration "*or at least their like*" (for *kai paraplēsiōn esesthai*), focuses particularly on the uncertain form of the future. Meanwhile, the enigmatic phrase about "human nature" (*kata to anthrōpinon*), which one could interpret as a Thucydidean basis of a social science, he relegates to a parenthesis, perhaps out of a desire not to allow into historical writing the kind of systematic knowledge of human social life he wishes to locate elsewhere.

Compare the beginning of the civil war passage in Book 3, where Thucydides expresses a similar idea, but with the reservation about future manifestations expanded upon (at 3.81.2): "Because of the civil wars, there fell upon the polities many hardships, such as are happening and will forever happen, as long as the nature of man is the same, though rather milder or different in form, in accordance with the specific nature of each occurrence." Hobbes renders the passage thus: "And many and heinous things happened in the cities through this sedition, which though they have been before and shall be ever as long as human nature is the same, yet they are more calm and of different kinds according to the several conjunctures" (1629: 204). Note that Hobbes subordinates grammatically the phrase "they have been before and ever shall be," in order to foreground the "yet they are calm and of different kinds according to the several conjunctures."

These differences of emphasis are subtle; however, they became more pronounced in the middle part of Hobbes' career, when he concluded that history was not a teacher of truth in the exact sense demanded by his newly embraced conception of science. "This taking of signs from experience, is that wherein men do ordinarily think, the difference stands between man and man in wisdom But

this is an error. ... Experience concludeth nothing universally. ... we cannot from experience conclude, that any thing is to be called just or unjust, true or false, nor any proposition universal whatsoever" (1969: I.IV.10–11). This was a strong, though not complete, turn away from the purpose of history as described in the note *To The Readers* prefacing his translation of the Peloponnesian War, where he claimed that "the principal and proper work of history being to instruct and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providentially towards the future" (1629: xxi).

These two conceptions are perhaps reconcilable with reference to Hobbes' semi-technical "prudence." Reading history, according to Hobbes in both texts, allows the readers to "bear themselves prudently;" and "prudence is nothing else but conjecture from experience" (1969: I.IV.10), even though "experience concludeth nothing universally." Still "they shall conjecture best, that have the most experience" (*ibid.*: I.IV.10). Thus history teaches prudence, which is the best kind of conjectural knowledge, but is not true, or universal, knowledge. A similar, but softened exposition occurs in *Leviathan* I.III.9–10, V.19–22.

Compelling as Thucydidean exactitude (*akribēia*) was to Hobbes, and despite the sameness of human nature, the scientific philosopher would not bestow upon Thucydides' historical prudence the title of "true, or universal knowledge." His refusal is based upon the variability of future events: one may conjecture, and even conjecture prudently (based on historical knowledge, i.e., experience), but one may not know for certain what the future contains. As early as his translation of the Peloponnesian War, Hobbes was skeptical of how reliable a foreknowledge of future events one could gain by studying past events. He would thus seek, in his middle period, to delimit the utility of knowledge derived from past experience, and to provide a way to go beyond that knowledge via scientific reasoning. As we will explore more in subsequent sections, Hobbes would moderate his ardent embrace of scientific method and return to Thucydides as valuable source for the understanding of political passions.

In assessing the overall nature of the reception of Thucydides by Hobbes, we argue that it must be understood as a relationship of both inspiration and challenge. Hobbes agreed with many of Thucydides' opinions and prejudices (on democracy, on religion and superstition, etc.). On the other hand, he spent much of his intellectual prime trying to transcend the limitations of historical prudence, although he remained deeply engaged with such fundamentally Thucydidean themes as how easily societal bonds can break down, the role of public rhetoric in such breakdowns, the role of political emotions, and how to (re)build a dissension-rent polity once it has suffered from civil war.

For this reason especially, delineating Hobbes' reception of Thucydides requires our going beyond passages in which Thucydides and/or ancient Athens are specifically discussed. We must acknowledge that a large part of Hobbes' engagement with Thucydides' history is dialogic, responding to some arguments and challenging others.

Rhetoric

As we have noted, Hobbes' critique of rhetoric was inconsistent and perhaps disingenuous. In this section we aim to expand upon this and investigate more deeply his engagement with Thucydides' use and critique of rhetoric, itself difficult to pin down, and how it evolved over the course of his career. As with other aspects of his reception of Thucydides, Hobbes' take on rhetoric builds up, rejects, develops, and modifies Thucydides' critique.

In Book 3 of his history, Thucydides writes of how civil bonds broke down in faction-torn Corcyra, and later all of Greece. He describes how war, a harsh teacher (*biaios didaskalos*), provided the opportunity for aristocratic and democratic factions to intensify their competition by inviting in either Athens or Sparta on their respective sides (3.82.1, 3). As a result, words changed their meanings (3.82.4), familial bonds were subordinated to factional interest (3.82.6), the overthrow of existing laws became the object of the party interests (3.82.6), oaths were increasingly disregarded (3.82.7); in sum, the laws, and even the traditional inter-*poleis* customs common in the Greek world (oaths, family bonds), broke down in a savage competition for power. Thucydides is unambiguous about what was to blame: "The greed and ambition for rule was the cause of all these things" (3.82.8).

Out of all of these ills, however, it was the first symptom, the changing meaning of words, which seemed especially to catch the attention of Thucydides' sixteenth- and seventeenth-century readers:

The accustomed reckoning of words was adapted to the needs of the moment. Thoughtless daring was reckoned comradely courage; considered delay, cowardly excuse-making; prudence, the mask of the unmanly; an intelligence into the whole of a matter, an inability to act on any matter. Frantic violence was raised to the office of a citizen and the forming of plots became well-intended self defense. (3.82.4)

Besides the grotesquely compelling vision of a total inversion of values, readers were attracted to this passage in part because it seemed to indict in particular a specific rhetorical technique with which many would have been familiar from their rhetorical training, namely *paradiastole*, or the technique of moral redescription. Quentin Skinner has written compellingly on the influence of *paradiastole*, and the disquiet it caused (Skinner 1996: 138–80; 2002: 87–141). Indeed, by the end of the sixteenth century in England, rhetorical handbooks that had, in earlier editions, listed *paradiastole* neutrally had come to call it a technique "for the better maintenance of wickednesse" which "opposeth the truth by false tearmes and wrong names, as in calling dronkennesse good fellowship, insatiable avarice good husbandrie, craft and deceit wisdom and pollicie" (quoted in Skinner 1996: 179).

There is every reason to suppose that Hobbes was familiar from his Chatsworth days with the theoretical and practical handbooks of rhetoric, both classical and contemporary, that proliferated in England at this time. Indeed, Hobbes was

responsible for a Latin crib on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which was likely used in the course of his tutoring duties. He also shows a talent for the use of rhetorical techniques; part of his essay *On the Life and History of Thucydides* takes the form of an epideictic speech in praise of the history, with a kind of playful forensic speech "in defense" of Thucydides against the charges made by the ancient literary critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In it, Hobbes includes an *exordium*, *narratio*, *divisio*, *distributio*, *confirmatio*, *confutatio*, and *peroration*; he uses *loci communes* and the whole armory of rhetorical tropes. It is important to remember, when we consider Hobbes' rejection of rhetoric, how capable the philosopher could be in his employment of it. We shall see him, even at the height of his anti-rhetorical zeal, using the pose of austere objectivity derived from scientific discourse to rhetorically strengthen his own (avowedly anti-rhetorical!) case.

Despite his obvious familiarity with rhetoric and rhetorical technique, Hobbes shared the revulsion of many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century readers at the abuses that rhetoric made possible and the danger to the polity posed by its unscrupulous use. In the 1630s through the 1640s, roughly the era of *The Elements of the Law* and *De Cive* (see Skinner 2002: 66–86), Hobbes is at the zenith of his anti-rhetoric phase:

The task of eloquence is to make the *Good* and the *bad*, the *useful* and the *useless*, the *Honourable* and the *dishonourable* appear greater or less than they really are, and to make the *unjust* appear *Just*, as may seem to suit the speaker's purpose. For this is what persuasion is; and however much reasoning they put into it, they do not begin from true principles but from [gr.] *endoxois*, i.e. from commonly accepted opinions, which are for the most part usually false, and they do not try to make their discourse correspond to the nature of things but to the passion of men's hearts. ... This is not the fault of the *man* but of *Eloquence* itself, whose end (as all masters of Rhetoric point out) is not truth (except by accident) but victory; and its task is not to teach but to persuade. (1998: X.11)

Despite his much avowed turn away from classical learning, it is possible even in this passage to see, firstly, that Hobbes continues to use rhetorical figures, even in his critique of rhetoric, and secondly, that Hobbes is both influenced by and challenging Thucydides. He echoes Thucydides' condemnation of rhetorical redeescription, the making good seem bad, the just unjust and so on. It is a theme that he reverts to repeatedly in *The Elements of the Law* and *De Cive*. Beyond this, he virtually quotes Thucydides when he contends at the end of the *De Cive* passage just quoted that rhetoric seeks not the truth, but victory. The juxtaposition of truth and victory recalls Thucydides 1.22.4, one of the most memorable sentences in the history; there the historian says that his work was "composed less to win a prize of the moment, but rather to be an everlasting possession." Thus, in *De Cive*, we see one of the highest expressions of Thucydides' fidelity to the truth turned against rhetoric by Hobbes. It is worth noting, however, that even when his *thinking*

about rhetoric is most critical of its role in politics, Hobbes' use of rhetoric is never entirely absent.

When Hobbes moderates his anti-humanism in *Leviathan*, a similar dynamic is at work. Speaking once more of rhetorical redescription, Hobbes writes: "The names of such things as affect us ... because all men be not alike affected by the same thing, nor the same man at all times, are in the common discourses of men of *inconstant* signification" (1994: I.4.24). He continues: "for what one man calleth *wisdom*, what another calleth *fear*; and one *cruelty*, what another *justice*; one *prodigality*, what another *magnanimity*; and one *gravity*, what another *stupidity*, &c" (ibid.: I.4.24). The confusion of the values of wisdom and fear comes directly from Thucydides 3.82.4, which is significant, because the pairing was not a common one used in classical or Renaissance discussions of *paradiastole* (Skinner 1996: 340; although cf. Skinner 2002: 121). Additionally, Hobbes is once again willing to use rhetorical style openly in his own writing, as the *asyndeton* (linking of clauses without conjunctions) and other figures evident in the *Leviathan* passage above make clear.

Just as with his conception of historical knowledge, so in dealing with rhetoric and the changing values of words, Hobbes seeks to improve upon and go beyond Thucydidean judgments. At 3.82.4 in his history, Thucydides had lamented that words were changing their values. Here is where Hobbes chooses to challenge Thucydides. Hobbes not only condemns the changing of the customary values of words, but also the starting from "commonly accepted opinions" in the first place: "however much reasoning they put into it, they do not begin from true principles but from *endoxois*, i.e. from commonly accepted opinions" (1995: X. 11). Speaking of rhetoric elsewhere in *De Cive*, he criticizes rhetoric for "fashion[ing] speech ... from received opinions of whatever kind" (ibid.: XII.12). Indeed, Aristotle introduces error into his philosophy, according to Hobbes, because he accepts commonplace definitions, such as "man is a political animal" (ibid.: I.2) and "power as liberty" (ibid.: X.8), that Hobbes asserts are false to begin with. The same idea is present in the *Elements of the Law*, where Hobbes, contrasting rhetoricians with seekers of the truth, says that the former, "derive what they would have to be believed, from somewhat believed already" (1969: II.8.14).

Continuing the process of building upon and going beyond Thucydides, Hobbes contends that the user of rhetoric is as much the problem as the art itself. This is true even in the earlier *De Cive*, where Hobbes makes his strongest distinction between good eloquence (logic) and bad eloquence (rhetoric): "one is a lucid and elegant exponent of thoughts and conceptions, which arises partly from observations of things and partly from an understanding of words taken in their proper meanings as defined. The other *eloquence* is an agitator of passions (e.g. *hope*, *fear*, *anger*, *pity*), and arises out of a metaphorical use of words, adapted to the passions" (1995: XII.12). The concern with "words taken in their proper meanings as defined" is clearly in keeping with the Thucydidean theme.

Hobbes adds an important consideration in the immediately prior section, where he discusses one of the causes of sedition:

Hope of winning must be included among the seditious passions. For men can be as steeped as may be in opinions inimical to peace and civil government; they can be hurt and exasperated by injuries and insults from those in authority; but if they have little *hope of winning*, no sedition will follow. (1995: XII.11)

Hobbes' contention is that civil war can be blamed as much on the possibility of attaining power through a revolution as on rhetoric. In *The Elements of the Law* the ill effects of ambition are dealt with more thoroughly: "Thirdly, the other sort of discontent that troubleth the mind of them ... ariseth only from a sense of want of that power, and that honor and testimony thereof, which they think is due them" (1969: II.8.3).

This earliest formulation in the *Elements* is in fact the closest to Thucydides' civil discord digression at 3.82, where he sums up his presentation by saying that "greed and ambition for rule was the cause of all these things" (3.82.8). Hobbes progressively drops this consideration in the successive versions of his chapter on the dissolution of commonwealths (which appear in the *Elements*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan*), but so does he progressively minimize the culpability of rhetoric *per se*. Indeed, by the time of *Leviathan*, Hobbes limits his critique of rhetoric to an aside about flattery in his discussion of the danger of charismatic popular leaders (1994: II.29.20). By this time, Hobbes is more concerned with issues such as the division of sovereignty, and the power of the church, which are more remote from Thucydides. Thus, Hobbes follows Thucydides in admitting that eloquence can be both good and bad and that the lust for power is often the primary cause for sedition, and bad rhetoric only the means. Where Hobbes differs from Thucydides is in supposing that there is a way to secure the proper use of good eloquence to the benefit of the polity.

Taking Hobbes' intellectual career as a whole shows a man conflicted about the role of rhetoric in a well-ordered commonwealth. As Skinner (1996) has shown, Hobbes strove in his middle, "scientific" period to avoid, in his own writing, the rhetorical embellishments that he indulged in during the composition of his most humanist production, the translation of Thucydides' history. The results were products of jarring austerity, *De Cive* and the informally circulated *Elements of the Law*. But even this austerity must be admitted to be a rhetorical pose with a force of its own, one to which Hobbes could not have been insensitive. Eventually Hobbes reintroduced overtly rhetorical elements in composing *Leviathan* and allowed rhetoric back into the fold of the civil, if not natural, sciences, where it is deemed to be "power, because it is seeming prudence" (1994: I.9.9, I.10.12, see also IV.Conclusion.1).

Similarly, Thucydides exhibits a notable ambivalence about rhetoric; he condemns the demagogues who abuse it, he mocks rhetorical prize-winning in his assertion that his history is meant to be an everlasting possession, and rhetorical

flourishes are conspicuously absent from his narrative (a stylistic pose, like that of Hobbes in his austere period, with an important force of its own). Then there are the speeches, written by Thucydides in a highly ornate style (most of the time), and which dramatize forcefully some of the most important political issues considered by the history. Finally, there is the problem of his unalloyed admiration for Pericles, whose control over the Athenian democracy was exercised through his speech-making abilities: “whenever he perceived [the Athenians] in some way overly aggressive beyond measure, he would speak and set them to caution; conversely, he would recover them to their vigor, if they were unreasonably terrified” (2.65.9).

It would be too much to suggest that Hobbes meant to replicate this ambivalence, but it is probably right to say that he spent his intellectual career (in particular the early stages of it) in part considering some of the issues connected to rhetoric, which he first encountered and considered in a serious way when reading Thucydides.

Hobbes and Harrington on Thucydidean Fear and the State of Nature

Closely related to the subject of rhetoric, in both Hobbes and Thucydides, was the topic of political passions, especially fear. Above I discussed Thucydides’ description of Pericles’ method of controlling the masses at 2.65.9. The Greek of the first part of this is “*legōn kateplēssen epi to phobeisthai*,” literally, “he speaking, struck them toward fear.” Hobbes, discussing the trouble with rhetoric, says, “[rhetoric] is an agitator of the passions (e.g. *hope, fear, anger, pity*)” (1995: XII.12). Perhaps Hobbes’ most profound engagement with Thucydides consists in his reading of political passions.

Even apart from its connection to rhetoric, fear plays a considerable role in Thucydides’ history, motivating the Spartans to initiate the Peloponnesian War (1.23.6). Together with the related passions of ambition (=honor) and greed (=profit), fear is supposed to have propelled the Athenians to the acquisition of their empire in the first place (1.75.3, 1.76.2) (see Slomp 2000). Fear, ambition, and greed are also all present in the Corcyra passage on civil war, as we saw above. Hermocrates appeals to fear to persuade the Syracusans to prepare for the Athenian expedition against Sicily (6.33.5, 34.9). Finally, Thucydides blames the manipulation of political passions, especially fear, for the downfall of Athens (2.65).

Consider two relevant and nearly juxtaposed passages in detail. In the fifth and sixth books of the history, the Athenians and Spartans are in a state of peace, albeit an uneasy and suspicious peace. However, Alcibiades is able to goad the Athenians not just back to war, but into the most reckless possible extension of war, the Sicilian Expedition, by manipulating the political passion of fear:

If all were to keep quiet ... we should make but few new conquests, and should imperil those we have already won. Men do not rest content with parrying the

attacks of a superior, but often strike the first blow to prevent the attack being made. Moreover, we cannot fix the exact point at which our empire must stop; we have reached a position in which we must not be content with retaining what we have but must scheme to extend it for, if we cease to rule others, we shall be in danger of being ruled ourselves. ... In short, my conviction is that a city not inactive by nature could not choose a quicker way to ruin itself than by suddenly adopting such a policy, and that the safest rule of life is to take one's character and institutions for better and for worse, and to live up to them as closely as one can. (6.18.2–3, 6.18.7)

The speech is a devastatingly effective, and ruinous, piece of rhetoric. By making the Athenians afraid of seeming afraid, Alcibiades launches the greatest expedition of the war, but also the effort that would doom Athens and consign its empire to ruin.

On the other hand, consider the speech of Hemocrates, a Syracusan politician who wishes to warn his city to prepare for Athens' attack. Many in the city disbelieve the reports that Athens is sending an armada. Hermocrates counsels taking the threat seriously and not underrating their soon-to-be-enemy: "It would be best that you be convinced to [take aggressive action], but if not, at least make ready for war as fast as possible and conclude that disdain for an assailant is shown in action, but in the present circumstance, it is best to act as if the danger were here, because we determine that preparation arising from fear is the securest course" (6.34.9). In this case, the use of fear is salutary, guided by foresight (*pronoia*).

Fear thus has both a gloomily destructive and potentially positive role in Thucydides. It leads to wars and is manipulated by demagogues for their own glorification, to the detriment of the polity, but it can also restrain an overconfident citizenry (2.65.9) or encourage preparation for an uncertain future. In the language of Platonic scholarship, Thucydidean fear is an "*aporetic*" theme: nothing in the history offers a way to restrain the ill effects or encourage the positive effects resulting from the deployment of political fear.

Hobbes' reading of Thucydides departs from the historian most dramatically here. He follows Thucydides to some degree, agreeing especially that fear is destructive in the hands of demagogues. In this respect, his critique of fear is an extension of his critique of rhetoric. But he challenges and transcends the Thucydidean depiction of political fear, firstly by reevaluating the historian's take on certain fear-driven actions, and secondly by putting fear at the center of his system of political psychology.

On the first point, Hobbes highlights certain ambiguities in Thucydides' evaluation of Athens' empire. Although the empire is morally ambiguous at best, it also represents a significant civic accomplishment. The empire had provided material surplus to Athens and increased its power dramatically, which are the evaluative criteria of historical significance in Thucydides' *Archaeology* (1.1–1.22). It also corresponds to what Hobbes, in a passage strongly redolent of the archaeology, calls "living commodiously" (1994: I.13.14, cf. I.13.9). Looked at from this perspective,

rather than as a symptom of democratic excess, the fear that built the empire, as depicted by Thucydides, was far more positive. Thus, although generally political fear can lead to destruction in Thucydides, Hobbes focuses far more on its positive efficacy, when allied to reason (=good eloquence).

Picking up on this possible positive side of fear, Hobbes attempts to solve the central political problem posed by the overarching narrative in Thucydides' history. Given that allied to reason fear could be beneficial (see Johnston 1986: 56–60), Hobbes moves to make it not just a beneficial, but the fundamental, part of the process of state formation. This is the famous argument of Hobbes that the fear of death in the state of nature will motivate atomized individuals to seek the security of the commonwealth.

In his first step, Hobbes relies closely on Thucydides' *Archaeology* to imagine his state of nature. Compare Hobbes to Thucydides (and cf. Rood in this volume):

In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently, no culture of the earth, no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 1994: I.13.9)

For as there is no commerce, neither do they mix with each other freely, by land or sea; but each take care of their own affairs so far as to sustain themselves, neither amassing any wealth nor planting the earth with crops; this because it is uncertain when some other man falling upon him (there being no defense walls) would steal away his harvest; instead, thinking, in any place, to master only what sustenance was necessary for each day, and no more, they changed their place of habitation without difficulty, and for this reason grew strong neither in greatness of cities, nor in other provision. (Thuc. 1.2.2)

Next, Hobbes performs an important sleight of hand, transforming Thucydides by extending his terms “war” and “peace.” Thucydides' history is the history of one specific war. We have outlined above how fear functions during wartime, both between polities, and in the section regarding civil war, within polities. Hobbes' trick is to define every moment of pre-social existence as war: “during the time that men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in a condition which is called war, and such a war as is of every man against every man” (1994: I.13.8). In what is a virtual quotation of Thucydides, Hobbes continues his metaphorical extension of interstate psychology to the condition of pre-social man: “in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel: first competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory” (ibid.: I.13.6, see Thucydides 1.75.3 and 1.76.2).

Finally, Hobbes locates the impulse for exiting the state of nature in the passions, principally fear: “The passions that incline men to peace are fear of

death, desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement" (1994: I.13.14). By uniting fear and reason, Hobbes shows how the covenant of the commonwealth comes about.

Thus we can see how, by appropriating, challenging, and seeking to transcend Thucydides, Hobbes developed his distinctive view of the genesis of human society. As it happens, this view of how a society was constructed would lead Hobbes to various other positions, on authority and obedience, on the indivisibility of sovereignty, and on the obligations of a ruler to his subjects, that go far beyond anything in Thucydides. But a foundation of Hobbesian theory lies in a modified Thucydidean view of human pre-social psychology.

A later contemporary of Hobbes, James Harrington (1611–77), responded to *Leviathan* with a work of his own entitled *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656). Although this work is of a generally different character than Hobbes', being both republican in its constitutional commitments and taking the form of an imaginative utopia, it nevertheless addresses itself to Thucydides in ways that owe something to the Renaissance republican tradition and to Hobbes.

Picking up on the Machiavellian theme of the armed citizenry as the driving power of the republican polity, Harrington develops an imaginative history of property as the basis for arming citizens. He proposes a model commonwealth ("Oceana") based on orders dividing the population up in a multitude of ways, governing itself by assemblies, with certain restrictions. In an important passage, Harrington writes:

... the commonwealths of Greece were all shaken or ruined by the intemperance of the *comitia*, or assemblies of people ... Nor shall any commonwealth where the people in their political capacity is talkative ever see half the days ..., but being carried away by vainglorious men ... swim down the sink; as did Athens, the most prating of these dames, when that same ranting fellow Alcibiades fell on demagoguing for the Sicilian war. (1977: 267–8)

The suspicion of rhetoric is, if anything, more acute in the republican writer Harrington, who has to find a place for communication in the functioning of his commonwealth.

Harrington would refer to Thucydides more directly when he discusses how to curb the excesses of assemblies. The answer is in limiting the numbers:

Which caused Thucydides, when he saw [the Athenians], through the purchase of their misery, become so much wiser as to reduce their *comitia* or assemblies unto five thousand, to say, in his eighth book; "and now (at least in my time) the Athenians seem to have ordered the state aright; consisting of a moderate temper both of the few (by which he means the senate of the bean) and of the many, of the five thousand." (ibid.: 279)

Harrington here may well be responding to Hobbes' notion that Thucydides was a monarchist.

As one modern scholar puts it: "for Harrington, as for Thucydides and Hobbes, free of restraint the human political personality was passionate. Thucydides had illustrated the consequences of this problem. Hobbes' solution had been to build political security upon passionate fear. Harrington's, was, however, to politically neutralize the effect of the passions altogether and call the resulting security virtue" (Scott 2009: 429).

Conclusion

Hobbes' authoritarian political theory, with its copiously elaborated sociology of power and legitimation, is thoroughly Thucydidean. Just as republican and monarchist writers in Renaissance Italy and elsewhere used Tacitus for their own ends, so writers, both before and after Hobbes, have used Thucydides' history both to criticize and lionize Athenian democracy (see Urbinati 2012). By adapting Thucydidean political themes to the articulation of his ultimately authoritarian political science, Hobbes would profoundly influence later political readings of the Greek historian, marking Thucydides as a critic of the Athenian constitution and of democratic political culture. Although the later reception of Thucydides, by J.S. Mill, George Grote, and others, would attempt to resuscitate the pro-democratic Thucydides, it would be doing so against the influential interpretation of Hobbes.

Hobbes' idiosyncratic response to Thucydidean themes nevertheless brought the ideas of the history into the mainstream of political thought. As a result of Hobbes' reception of Thucydides, the seventeenth-century critique of rhetoric was deepened. Philosophers also began to consider the role of political passions, and followed multiple iterations of the contract theory of commonwealth formation. These themes had their roots in Hobbes' reading of Thucydides' important meditations on civil war and his picture of pre-social man in the archaeology.

Guide to Further Reading

Still the best introduction to the ideas and intellectual history leading up to Hobbes' time is Richard Tuck's *Philosophy and Government 1572–1651* (1993). Interested readers can pursue multiple subtopics within the broader picture by consulting Tuck's bibliography, but of particular importance are Bouwsma (1968), Haitisma-Mulier (1980) and Pocock (1975).

Hobbes' intellectual history is discussed in detail in the earlier chapters of Skinner (2002), which comprises altered and updated versions of a lifetime of work on Hobbes. Hobbes' attitude toward religion is a topic of some controversy:

see Martinich (2003), Skinner (1996) and Collins (2005). Skinner (1996) remains the most thoroughly argued introduction to Hobbes' changing relationship to classical rhetoric, but see also Johnston (1986). For the reception of Thucydides in the period of the English Civil War, see Scott (2009), while Slomp (2000) explains much about the philosopher's use of Thucydides' portrait of human political passions.

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“L’historien des politiques”

Universalism and Contextualism in the Abbé de Mably’s Reception of Thucydides

Ben Earley

My Relation, because quite clear of fable, may prove less delightful to the ears. But it will afford sufficient scope to those who love a sincere account of past transactions, of such as in the ordinary vicissitude of human affairs may fully occur, at least be resembled again. I give it to the public as an EVERLASTING POSSESSION, and not as a contentious instrument of temporary applause.

William Smith (1752: 19)

So claimed Thucydides in his famous “methodology” chapter. As a statement of the hoped-for reception of his text this is, at least for modern readers, a problematic passage. No indication is given as to whether readers are meant to believe that Thucydides’ work is in some sense universal or if it will only prove useful when similar historical circumstances recur. Frustratingly, Thucydides does not elaborate on whether such circumstances might happen frequently, at regular intervals, or rarely over decades or even centuries. Precisely when, the reader might ask, will it prove profitable to read the *History of the Peloponnesian War*?

The central thesis of this chapter is that the Abbé de Mably’s solution to this problem was to read Thucydides’ thought as universal. Mably assumed that the human condition (κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον: lit. according to the human thing) described in the *History* represented a universal description of the influence of the passions on political life. Therefore Thucydides’ work was directly relevant to the political situation of eighteenth-century Europe. Whilst it would be easy to dismiss this view as anachronistic, this chapter will argue that Mably saw Thucydides’ political views as explaining human passions as anterior to specific contexts that could then be applied to defined historical periods, thereby explaining the causes of events. To prove this he contextualized the Thucydidean account of human passion in his account of Greek history beyond the Peloponnesian War; that is to

say, he attempted to test Thucydides' depiction of human passion in an extended historical period from c. 500 to 323 BCE.

Mably was an extremely influential and popular historian and philosopher throughout most of the eighteenth century (Kent Wright 1997: 1–21). Born in Grenoble in 1709, throughout his long life he produced an extraordinary number of histories and political works. Mably was most famous in the twentieth century for his thoughts on the equalization of property rights (Rose 1984: 113–13), although he is now better known for his highly distinctive version of republicanism (Kent Wright 1997: 200). Many of his works were reprinted numerous times during his lifetime and were translated into English and German. By the time of his death in 1785 he had firmly established himself in opposition to modern commercial society and the ideas of the *philosophes*. In 1819 Benjamin Constant compared the liberty of the ancients and the moderns, and singled out Mably as the prime source of the Jacobin idolization of the ancients (Constant 1988: 318–20). Given the popularity of Mably's works both in his lifetime and during the French Revolution, his reading of antiquity is important as it represents a significant voice in the early modern reception of Thucydides.

This chapter will consider Mably's reception of Thucydides in three sections. In the first section it will explore in greater depth Mably's views on the universal nature of Thucydides' political thought. In the second section it will examine how Mably applied this political thought to his larger account of the history of Greece. Finally it will argue through an examination of Mably's 1763 work *Entretiens de Phocion* that he explored how, far from being applicable only to Greece, Thucydides' thought was relevant to modern Europe.

Universalism and Contextualism in Readings of Thucydides

It was during the eighteenth century that philosophers and historians first became aware of the vast differences between their world and that of ancient Greece. Reinhart Koselleck (2004) reminds us it was at this time that the study of the past shifted from a focus on the past and the emulation of antiquity to a focus on modernity and the potential of the future. Among readers of Thucydides, this shift in thought brought renewed attention to his comments in 1.22. Increased awareness of historical temporality forced thinkers to ask in what ways Thucydides' thought could be useful or applicable to modern circumstances.

Kostas Vlassopoulos has considered the temporalities in which modern histories of ancient Greece were produced at this time. He suggests four possibilities (Vlassopoulos 2010: 341–60). Distantiation is the view that antiquity and modernity form two distinct wholes, placing emphasis on the great distances between them. Alterity also views antiquity and modernity as distinct wholes but finds relevance in this distinction, which reveals customs, practices, and even patterns of historical behavior that might be of value. Proximity collapses the gap between

antiquity and modernity: antiquity is relevant precisely because the ancients and moderns share common ground in politics, morality, and ethics. Finally, immanency argued that the culture of Greece had not disappeared but remained a living tradition in the mountains and peoples of the Hellenic peninsular.

These four categories are intended to explain the temporalities in which histories of Greece were written. Drawing on Vlassopoulos' categories I would argue that three dominant temporalities emerged in readings of Thucydides in this period. The first saw the value of his thought as rooted in the coincidence between the events he described and contemporary historical circumstances. These circumstances included fear of democracy and popular government, the rise of maritime empire, and the threat posed by revolution to stable governments. This view is found for example in William Smith's 1752 translation of Thucydides, where the *History of the Peloponnesian War* is seen as specifically pertinent because of the perceived similarities between the maritime empires of Britain and France (Smith 1752: unnumbered dedication).

The second positioned Thucydides in a progressive history of historiography. In this schema Thucydides' work was often viewed as foundational. His abilities as an historian were considered superior to those of Herodotus and many other ancient writers, but inferior to the methodologies available to eighteenth-century scholars. This tradition might view Thucydides as largely irrelevant to modern political thought. The German critic Augustus Schlözer commented that:

Has Thucydides described the Peloponnesian War with a kind of superiority? Suppose Mably condescended to describe again this unimportant civil war, which was no Thirty Years German or Livonian war. He would be equipped with all the higher political knowledge which has accumulated in the intervening two millennia but which the insignificant Greeks had not yet discovered; and he could bring to bear a wealth of historical facts concerning that war which were unknown to its first though contemporary historiographer ... That man Thucydides, people would say, wrote tolerably well for his own age, which had little general or historical learning and a poor political education; Mably, however, wrote very well for his own age, with its incomparably greater demands upon the historian. (Schlözer 1979: 42)

I believe that in this quotation Schlözer betrays a deep misunderstanding of Mably's work and his engagement with Thucydides. In *De la manière d'écrire l'histoire* Mably had claimed that a general history of Greece written in the style of Thucydides would be too severe and too long. Thucydides' art extended only so far as describing the Peloponnesian War (Mably 1783: 293). What, Mably believed, Thucydides offered eighteenth-century readers was not a superior historiographical model but a case study in how different passions could arise in different peoples and the political effects that these would produce as they came into conflict. This Mably inserted into the eighteenth-century narrative of rise and fall; Thucydides thus offered a means through which the very different passions and circumstances of modern Europe could be thought about and problematized.

Schlözer's critique of Mably proceeds upon different lines. He claims that Mably is claiming Thucydidean historiography (rather than his general thought) as superior to the methodologies employed by eighteenth-century historians. In doing so Schlözer positions Thucydides as a foundational figure in the history of historiography that culminates in Mably, who becomes representative of the superior state of eighteenth-century knowledge.

The third tradition saw Thucydides' thought as universally applicable. It argued that Thucydides' text revealed to readers something fundamental about the human condition that was universally applicable, as long as readers had the tools to understand the true meaning of the text. This reading assumed that Thucydides provided political and philosophical thought that explained something fundamental about the human condition. This view is found in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's treatise on education, *Émile*:

Thucydides, in my opinion, is the best model for historians: he relates facts without judging of them; but he omits no circumstance which may serve to direct the judgment of his reader. He presents every object to our sight; and so far from interposing his authority, he carefully conceals himself from us: we do not seem to read events, but actually to see them. Unfortunately, his constant subject is war, and a recital of battles is, of all things, the least instructive. (Rousseau 1762, II: 209)

Rousseau does not elaborate upon this claim; nor does he explain how a reader might approach Thucydides in order to understand this "philosophy." Instead he laments the fact that the *History* describes only war and battle, thus making it next to useless in political education (Scott 2006).

Mably concurred with Rousseau that Thucydides provided "philosophical" thought. However, he saw more in the *History* than a simple military account:

The majority of Readers perceive in Thucydides, in Livy, in Sallust and in Tacitus only a heap of facts, each clinging to the other. They peruse the works of these Authors but with a moderate degree of satisfaction, because they do not see any of those brilliant rays which catch the observation of enlightened Readers. As to myself, I am charmed when an Historian, awakening, by lively strokes, the meditating powers of my mind, compels me frequently to desist awhile from the perusal of his work; and then it is that I shut the book, that I think with admiration upon some fine and favourite passage, that I employ a full half hour in reflections, and that I return with fresh pleasure to the book which is the source of them. (Mably 1783: 190–1)

Mably praised Thucydides as the one historian whom princes and their ministers should read once a year (Mably 1783: 130; Momigliano 1990: 49). The *History* provided excellent material for the education of France and Europe's future leaders; not because Thucydides provided examples to be emulated but because through his examination of the effect of human passions on political life a deeper understanding of contemporary events was possible (Mably 1783: 43).

The implications of this reading are illuminated by Mably’s 1776 work *De l’étude de la politique*, in which he offers a comprehensive course in political thought to a young acquaintance. Central to this educational program is the reading of the ancient historians alongside modern philosophical histories – including Mably’s own histories of Greece and Rome (Mably 1795, XIII: 153–4). However, these recommendations are accompanied by a warning. The study of history will be useless or even harmful if not accompanied with knowledge of the “laws of nature” and the “origin, development, and progress of the passions” (ibid.: 155). Even with this knowledge it is a tricky business to understand the effect of the passions upon a society, because each had a unique geographical location, historical situation, and character. Following Montesquieu, Mably believed that it was not possible simply to transpose, for example, the Spartan constitution into Athens or Thebes because these polities and their situations were different (Mably 1769: 19–22). Where Sparta had plentiful farmland Athens looked to the sea for its sustenance; where Sparta was cautious Athens was always looking for its next foreign project. This recalls strongly the contrast between the characters of Athens and Sparta found in Thucydides (1.70; 8.96.5). It also has profound implications for Mably studies, because it means that whilst he fetishized the Spartan constitution he did not believe it was a cure for all of Greece’s (and Europe’s) ills.

And we ourselves [the Athenians], who have to do with a barren and ungrateful soil, are we to take the inhabitants of the fertile Laconia for our models in politics? The wants of society varying according to times and places and new circumstances or a revolution often throwing a people into a total difference from itself, should not the principal attention of politics be to vary its principles and measures most suitably to such vicissitudes? (Mably 1769: 20)

For Mably, therefore, for history to be politically useful it must reveal fundamental truths about human nature. The harvesting of constitutional examples is not enough because variations in time and geography render such information useless in a new situation. The goal of politics remains the “happiness” of the citizens of a polity, but the constitutional methods by which this was to be achieved must change from state to state.

The idea that Thucydides explained human passions is not unique to Mably. Hobbes saw in Thucydides an account of the human passions and their effect upon political society (see Sullivan in this volume). Hobbes’ translation has Thucydides say that “the truest cause of the quarrel [the Peloponnesian War], though least in speech, I conceive to be the growth of Athenian power; which putting the Lacedaemonians into fear necessitated the war” (Hobbes 1989: 14–15, rendering 1.23). This is a theme picked up throughout the *History*, where states’ motivations are characterized as prompted by the emotions of fear (φόβος, δέος), ambition (φιλοτιμία), greed (πλεονεξία), and the urge to transcend legal and ethical rules (ἀμαρτάνειν) (Meineke 2003). These passions direct the actions of the Spartans and the Athenians, problematizing the view that it was their constitutions that

determined their stability. In Hobbes' *Leviathan*, the three emotions that urge men to war become "competition," diffidence," and "glory." "The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation" (Hobbes 1996: 88). Mably's great innovation was to explain not only what these passions were but to use Thucydides' account as an interpretive tool to consider how they operated in the history of Greece. Through this process of contextualization Mably hoped to demonstrate the universality of Thucydides' thought in understanding the political forces at play in contemporary Europe.

The novelty of this achievement can be assessed if we compare Mably's conception of Thucydidean political thought to that of Pierre-Charles L  vesque, Thucydides' only eighteenth-century French translator (cf. Payen in this volume). L  vesque intended his translation, published in 1795 during the French Revolution, to open up Thucydides' political thought. In the preface he claims that Thucydides is the most political historian, that he is the one historian whom every citizen of a free state should read, and that scarcely a matter passes before the British parliament without some illumination being found in Thucydides (L  vesque 1795: xvii). From these claims L  vesque is suggesting that Thucydidean political thought is universal in that it explains fundamental truths about human nature: what was true for fifth-century Greece holds true for contemporary Britain and France. Indeed Thucydides is not simply a source of political thought but also of advice; L  vesque is claiming that Thucydides provides practical information to free French citizens and British parliamentarians alike. However, there is a problem. When L  vesque considers precisely why it is that Thucydides is so useful he turns to contextual rather than universal arguments. Consider the following quotation:

He is the historian of politics, more so than Tacitus, because he offers the political action of people against people, whilst Tacitus has only the occasion to depict the political action of a prince against his courtiers, the courtiers amongst themselves and against their prince. (ibid.: xvii)

Despite this claim L  vesque can only point to contextualized times in which these historians prove useful. Tacitus who wrote under the Roman Empire offers useful knowledge to those who live under monarchies, Thucydides to those who live under a "free" constitution (ibid.: xxvii). In this analysis Thucydides becomes most useful under a republic or during times of revolution and political violence when free constitutions are being formed. L  vesque notes that he worked on the translation during the Jacobin terror in France (ibid.: vi–vii), and this point was not lost on his readers. In a contemporary review of his work it was noted that:

Thucydides wrote his history during an unhappy time for Athens, his *patrie*. Hobbes translated him into English under the protectorate of Cromwell, and citizen L  vesque has worked ... under the tyranny of Robespierre. We recall that Machiavelli made his remarks on the same work whilst his country was burdened with civil

disorder. We conclude that Thucydides is a writer that must be meditated upon in times of Revolution and in states that are forming themselves into republics during times of outrages and civil convulsions. (*Magasin Encyclopédique* 1796: 377)

For Lévesque’s readers it is clear that the usefulness of Thucydides’ political thought is dependant on a similarity in circumstance between different historical situations. In the next section I will argue that Mably had succeeded where Lévesque later failed in arguing for the universal nature of Thucydides’ thought. He did this by taking Thucydides’ thoughts on human passions and applying them to the history of Greece. This demonstrated the universality of Thucydides’ political thought in a defined historical period.

Thucydides and Mably

In this section I will argue that Mably avoided the contextual trap into which Lévesque’s reading of Thucydides fell, by using the depiction of the human passions in the *History* to construct a narrative of Greek history that explained universal truths about the human condition. Specifically he drew on Thucydides to describe how Sparta, Athens, and Thebes constantly waged war for the hegemony of Greece throughout the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. This constant conflict resulted in the weakening of Greece, making it an easy target for first Macedonian and later Roman invasions. However, the key point was that the passions that drove the Greek states provided an account of the passions that still drive states in the modern world. In that sense Thucydides’ history offers universal truths (Mably 1783: 43).

Mably viewed Greek history through the eighteenth-century meta-narrative of decline and fall. His *Observations* describe how Greek society formed out of nomadic groups in the distant past. After a series of conflicts and interstate anarchy, a golden age was then inaugurated in which Greece was at peace under the federal leadership first of the Amphictyonic council and then Sparta (Book 1). This situation was shattered by the Persian Wars, which allowed Athens as Greece’s main naval power to lead the fight to free the Aegean and Ionian Greeks. Sparta subsequently fought Athens in the Peloponnesian War to regain the hegemony of Greece. In the fourth century Sparta was in turn ousted by Thebes (Book 2). Two centuries of almost constant conflict took their toll, allowing Philip of Macedon to easily conquer a disunited Greece. After Philip’s conquest Greece lost many of its liberties and remained under the Macedonian and subsequently the Roman yoke for the rest of classical history (Books 3 and 4).

Thucydides’ depiction of human passions drove Mably’s account of the *longue durée* of Greek history into conflict with his idealization of Sparta. Mably believed that the Spartan constitution and *agoge* represented an ideal form of government. This view conflicted with the depiction of Sparta in Thucydides as a state that was

governed by base human passion. It is now generally accepted that Mably's larger intellectual project was that of a classical republican (Kent Wright 1997). Although he lived in absolutist France, Mably was concerned about the increase in trade and commerce, which he linked to an increase in luxury and a threat to French politics and military power. Mably believed that the rise of luxury could be countered by a return to "ancient" virtues (Baker 1981; Hampson 2002). This project was communicated to a wide readership through the publication of philosophical histories of Greece, Rome and France, philosophical dialogues on political and social topics, and occasional polemical writings. In his intellectual biography of the author, Johnson Kent Wright has described how as a young man Mably was initially a royalist who received approbation from the *philosophes* (Kent Wright 1997: 39–64; Israel 2011: 616). However, by the 1750s he had already repudiated his earlier work, his monarchism, and his links with the *philosophes*. He now became committed to the republican idealization of the constitutions of Sparta and Rome. In his mature thought Mably became increasingly influenced by the Polybian and Machiavellian notion of a "balanced" constitution that maintained the equilibrium between the monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic forms of government. He hoped that, just like the English had managed in 1688, the French might transform their political life through a bloodless "managed" revolution (Hammersley 2004: 86–98).

For Kent Wright, Mably was "an authentic republican thinker, a French heir to Machiavelli and to Harrington" (1997: 200). From this classical republicanism sprang Mably's interest in and idealization of the Spartan constitution (Mason 2012: 78–9; Winston 2012: 123–4). This is undoubtedly correct. Ian Macgregor Morris has added nuance to this argument by claiming that Mably's vision of the Spartan government was a mixed constitution weighted toward democracy (Macgregor Morris 2004). That is not to say Mably approved of the "unbalanced" democracy of Athens. Rather he favored a system in which sovereignty is devolved onto the citizen body but legislation is designed by a "senate," whilst the kings retain their military and executive role. This is a key facet of Mably's classical republican thought: he believed that the equilibrium of the Spartan constitution united opposing social forces under the common good and ensured the preservation of liberty in a way that no other state could manage (Winston 2012: 124–5).

Mably's preference for the Spartan constitution does not fit easily with his wider narrative of Greek history. This is something which these recent studies tend to miss; they situate his account of Sparta in broader intellectual movements of the enlightenment *philosophes* and the classical republicans, but ignore his reading of the ancient sources and the place of Sparta in the history of ancient Greece as a whole. It is undeniable that, in abstract terms, Sparta provided an important constitutional model for Mably; however, we have already seen how he advises against simply taking ancient constitutions and assuming they have universal applicability. Mably's historical narrative sought above all to explain not only how the Greek republics – including Sparta – had fallen but also what had caused their fall. Why did the Greeks (and mankind in general) desire to dominate others, and why was

this corrupting to political society? Whereas Plutarch’s lives of Solon and Lycurgus had provided the basis for Mably’s account of the Athenian and Spartan constitutional structures (Dockès-Lallemont 1996: 232), for this historical question the answer was found in Thucydides. It was human passion that was the motor of Greek history and the source of its decline (Mably 1783: 155–6). It is in accounts of the human passions that history becomes politically useful, and here Thucydides becomes crucial because he focused on Sparta’s passions and resultant political actions, rather than on its constitution in the abstract.

The key issue was that different passions affected different states. Talking about the Persian annexation of Greek lands in the Aegean, Mably wrote that:

From the birth of time, the predominant Power has sought to swallow up every other; because Ambition, a Passion in its nature incapable of enjoyment is never satisfied; since prosperity itself inflaming it, becomes the motive and the instrument of new success. (1784: 30)

However, the Athenians, who succeeded the Persians in dominating the Aegean Sea, were driven by restlessness and daring. These are the same passions that Thucydides attributes to the Athenians in his comparisons between Athens and Sparta (1.70; 8.9; Mably 1784: 68ff). Before the Persian Wars, Mably believed, there had been little intercourse between the Greeks and their colonies overseas, separated as they were by the Aegean and Mediterranean seas. After the battle of Salamis the Athenian navy rendered these distances negligible. As Athens increasingly gained the upper hand against the Persians, the temptation to abuse the empire for money became too great. This process was accelerated by the natural propensity of the Athenians to select leaders such as Pericles who would indulge their desire for state handouts and theatrical performances (*ibid.*: 84ff). These leaders were driven by ambition to remain at the top of Athenian politics and would pander to the citizen assembly even if that meant pursuing the wrong course politically.

Sparta on the other hand was driven by baser passions: fear and jealousy. Mably claims that:

Lacedaemon might have avoided the fall with which she was threatened, if she had suffered herself to be conducted by her true interests; but the pride of the Athenians had inflamed her with indignation, and she consulted but her passions. (*ibid.*: 70)

This quotation is taken directly from Thucydides. It draws a distinction between the immediate political causes of the Peloponnesian War and the longer term issues at stake. The long-term issue was Spartan fear of the growth of Athenian power (1.23.6). From this Mably drew the conclusion that despite the strength of the Spartan constitution human passion still led Sparta onto the wrong course politically, leading ultimately to its ruin. However, he is also building upon the Thucydidean account. The Spartans are not just fearful of the rise of Athenian

power but also jealous of their own lost status. Mably did not see this as a quick process: Spartan jealousy and fear stretched all the way back to the battle of Salamis but did not ultimately ruin Sparta until the 370s BCE. Thucydides was the historian who explained how these passions worked and the effect that they had on political life – holding out the possibility that such an account might have wider application, as a lesson or as a warning.

This tension is acknowledged by Mably when he wrote in his *De la manière d'écrire l'histoire* that:

For my part, I well know that whilst I read, the other day, the History by Thucydides, I thought that I perceived, amidst the just relation of the wild and foolish passions of the Greeks, the portraiture of those which agitate the present states of Europe, and which will cast us into wretched servitude, as they enslaved the Grecian Republics, if, at some future period, another Philip of Macedon should rise against us. (1783: 43)

The tragedy of this Thucydidean view of Greek history was that no state had come close to uniting the Greeks within a federative structure as a means of limiting the effects of such passions. Sparta had come closest before the Persian Wars:

Lycurgus, whose wisdom and abilities can never be sufficiently admired, was the man who first understood how much it concerns a state that would secure itself from the insults of its neighbours, to make the laws of that eternal union which nature has established between all mankind ... His beneficent republic, now no longer making any use of its forces, but to protect weakness, and maintain the rights of justice, soon gained the esteem, friendship, and respect of all Greece, to which these sentiments gave a new taste for virtue. (1769: 140)

The difficulty was Sparta had proved unequal to the task. It was corrupted first by jealousy of Athens and, after the Peloponnesian War, the lust for gold and power. The implications of the inability of the Spartan constitution to properly constrain human passion were sobering for Mably because he hoped that Europe would form a federal system with its own territory, government, and capital city. As Michael Sonenscher has described, Mably believed that this system was a real and attainable goal for Europe (Sonenscher 2009: 246ff). The various parts of this federal system would be provinces rather than nation-states. The government would be formed from a republican constitution reinforced by a shared system of moral values and a universal agrarian system. Sonenscher has pointed out that one problem Mably envisaged in the creation of this system was the lack of a “magistrate” who could enforce law between European nations as a basis for this system. However, we might identify a further difficulty, on the basis of Thucydides. The Spartan constitution had failed to constrain human passions in its actions on the international stage, undermining its leadership of a federative Greece. How then could any European state with an imperfect constitution hope to succeed where Sparta had failed? The problem for Mably, having read Thucydides, is that no state

appeared to have discovered how to constrain human passion. Sparta could no longer be viewed as a perfect example.

Thucydides and Virtue in the *Entretiens de Phocion*

In order to understand how human passions affected all societies we must now turn to Mably’s political thought. One of his most interesting and popular political works is the *Entretiens de Phocion* (1763), which won a prize from the Patriotic Society of Berne. This work purports to be a translation of a Greek manuscript discovered at Monte Casino that records a conversation between the Athenian statesman Phocion, a philosopher Nicocles, and a young nobleman Aristias. The dialogue focuses on the relationship between morality and politics through an examination of how laws can channel human passions into virtues. Kent Wright has argued that the work is paradigmatic of Mably’s republicanism because of its emphasis on virtue in political life and Phocion’s recourse to a mixed constitution (Kent Wright 1997: 65). He further points out that one of the central tensions in the dialogue is that between human passion and reason, with Mably using Greek history to critique the enlightenment idea that reason could and should constrain passion.

I will build upon Kent Wright’s arguments to claim that the *Entretiens* is a reply to the political problem Mably found in his reading of Thucydides. Specifically, Mably turned to Thucydides to understand how the passions affect civil society and how they might be constrained. Although the *Entretiens* takes place in fourth-century Greece, it is clear that Mably intended through this philosophical dialogue to engage with what he considered to be a universal problem of civil society. This was recognized by at least one contemporary reviewer, in the *Journal Encyclopedique*, who noted that there is much in the work of interest to modern politics (1763, February 15: 5). The substance of the similarity between Greece and Europe in Mably’s account worked on two levels. First there is the universal nature of human passion and its effect on civil society. Second there is the similarity in situation between the states of ancient Greece and modern nation-states of Europe. Greece was composed of a series of states dominated by Athens, Sparta, and Thebes. These three states continually vied for absolute hegemony, and were driven by fear, luxury, and jealousy of both state and trade. These passions had brought about the decline and fall of the Greek world and if left unchecked would do the same for the modern.

The idea of jealousy requires some unpacking. In 1754 David Hume had condemned the spirit of “jealous emulation” that he declared had destroyed the Greek world (1994: 155, 158). Mably knew from Thucydides that Sparta had been jealous of Athenian power, and he assumed that in the fourth century Athens and Thebes had in turn been jealous of Spartan hegemony. This jealousy appeared to both Hume and Mably like the jealousy that was driving the wars of the eighteenth century. The two superpowers of Britain and France were continually at war in an

effort to control the lucrative trade with the Americas and to assert some kind of hegemony over the states of Europe. It is against this background that Sonenscher has argued for the immense popularity of Fénelon's *Telemachus*, a work that demonstrated to the French "how to promote trade and prevent war" and thereby secure France's place in a peaceful international system (Sonenscher 2005: 275–7). Mably was pursuing similar goals in the *Entretiens de Phocion*. The difference is that for Mably the fundamental problem is the Thucydidean account of human passion that will always create jealousy and fear in interstate relations.

Phocion is not a well-known figure today. He was an Athenian statesman and general who lived at the end of the fourth century BCE, when Philip of Macedon was threatening Athens and the rest of Greece. While the orator Demosthenes was urging the Athenians to counter the threat posed by Philip, Phocion was fearful of his country's virtues and therefore its ability to wage war. He therefore counseled his citizens to acquiesce to Philip's demands, including the handing over of Demosthenes after the Greek defeat at Chaeronea. As Andrew Bayliss has shown, this inactivity and lack of military glory did not hurt Phocion's reputation in the eighteenth century when he became popular as an example of a virtuous politician (Bayliss 2011: 32). Oddly it was Phocion's inaction that appears to have brought him this cultural cachet; Mably notes that Phocion had advised against a ruinous war even though conflict would likely have placed him in a leading position in Athens as a commander of troops. Phocion's political view was that Athens needed something like a Lycurgan revolution (although not Spartan laws) to jolt Athens out of its decline and reinstate virtue at the heart of political life. Ultimately, his virtue and wisdom were not recognized by the Athenians, and he was executed at the instigation of the demagogue Agonides. This ignominious end was seen as comparable to the fate of Socrates by many eighteenth-century observers (Bayliss 2011: 29).

The action of the *Entretiens* takes place during Athens' twilight years, before it has been subjugated by Macedonia but when the process of decline is well underway. In the preface Mably repeats his "Thucydidean" narrative of the decline of the Greek world found in the *Observations*. Again we find that the passions take central place. In a footnote these passions are linked directly to Thucydides:

In the negotiations which preceded the Peloponnesian war, Athens made no secret of its real sentiments, Thucydides book i. chap. 4. [sic] Makes its ambassadors to say, "The strongest have always been the masters. It is not we that are the authors of this regulation; it is founded in nature itself." Strange politicks! And still stranger is it, that a state should dare to avow such. (1769: 221)

The Athenians use such specious reasoning in the Melian Dialogue because they are driven by their passions to dominate others. This narrative of decline and fall, laid out in the preface, is reinforced throughout the text by various historical footnotes. It recalled to French minds the parallels with their contemporary world and the recent disasters that had befallen France and its foreign policy. Kent Wright has even

suggested that Phocion’s interlocutor Aristias might be a stand-in for the Marquis de Châtelux, a future *philosophe* and political thinker (1992: 397–8; 1997: 81–2).

The book opens with Aristias and Phocion discussing how the decline of Athenian virtue and power might be arrested. Aristias launches the opening salvo by praising the enormous wealth and commerce of the Athenians. The quotation is worth considering at length:

I cannot conceive how it is that things go so wrong with us; for Athens, far from being rude and ignorant, has every thing that can make it the first republic in the world: it is the universal emporium; merchandize of all kinds copiously flows in upon us from all parts; our opulence, our genius, and industry draw hither the choicest commodities of all countries. From us arts and sciences receive the noblest improvements; philosophy has meliorated our manners, and we have learned to make the virtues gentle, social, and amiable. At the call of glory how readily we start from pleasure; and in the talent of enjoying the advantages of society we particularly excel. Vanity apart, are our neighbours to be named on the same day with us? (1769: 10)

In a footnote (ibid.: 222), Mably admits that this encomium is drawn from Pericles’ funeral speech; indeed, even without the footnote any attentive reader familiar with Thucydides could not have failed to make the connection. The points Aristias makes are similar to those made by Pericles to the extent that the above quotation could almost be taken as a summary of sections of the oration. Yet Phocion, speaking for Mably, does not accept these arguments. All Athens had achieved was to pander to the passions of avarice and ambition, which in turn had led Athens to dominate its neighbors and thereby started Greece on the path to decline. Passions, he continues, must be governed by reason:

Have you [Aristias] endeavoured to divest yourself of your prepossessions, that you may consult only genuine reason, and by its help attain to a knowledge of nature’s general view concerning us? In a word, have you endeavoured to distinguish our real wants from those to which we ourselves have rise; from those artificial wants which perhaps are the sources of all our misfortunes... (ibid.: 15–16)

In this exchange, Mably was offering readers a radical interpretation of Thucydides. In his narrative Thucydides had painted a picture of the passions that drove the Athenians and had brought them an empire, wealth, and commerce. At first sight this might appear a confirmation of the belief held by certain contemporary philosophers that unbridled passion will eventually lead to a positive outcome, that society could be self-regulating. Passions, it was argued, were the key driving force behind individual and collective behavior. In the *Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume claimed that: “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (1739, II: 248). Yet as we have seen, in Mably’s vision of Athenian history unbridled passion leads only to the decline and fall of Athens and Greece.

It is important, however, to delineate the limitations of this interpretation. Mably's Thucydides has laid out the causes not only of specific historical events but also of the decline and fall of states. He further provides the historical meta-narrative through which those causes can be understood. Thucydides does not offer any solutions; he merely identifies the problem. The solution Mably proposes is that the passions must be tempered, by:

... the continual refinement of morals. In bestowing the stress of its attention on the virtues which are the most necessary to society, its principal aim should be to take the most effectual measures for hindering the passions from gaining the victory in that perpetual conflict which our reason is condemned to maintain against them. Its scope, in a word is to keep the passions under strict subjection; and, by thus strengthening the sovereignty of reason, to give a superior activity to the virtues. (ibid.: 46)

This balance between the passions and reason can only be achieved through constitutional reform. In the *Entretiens*, Phocion recognizes the need for a "Lycurgan" revolution but acknowledges that it is not as simple as importing foreign laws. Clearly influenced by Montesquieu's thoughts on the links between national character and geographical and historical situation, Phocion explains that the different landscape, resources, and characters of the Spartans, Athenians, Corinthians, and Thebans means that each polis requires tailored laws in order to flourish (ibid.: 11, 19–21). One could not simply transpose Spartan laws into Athens because Sparta is an agrarian society where Athens looks to the sea for its sustenance. Athens' laws must be organic to itself. The remaining three-quarters of the dialogue is taken up with the problem of how Athens can develop its own solution to the problem of the passions.

Ultimately Mably's thought is circular. He recognizes the extent to which the passions corrupted the balanced constitution of Sparta, but the only remedy he can find to constrain these pernicious passions is a balanced constitution. Nevertheless, my aim in this paper is not to judge the efficacy of Mably's political thought but to demonstrate the depth of his engagement with Thucydides. Mably argued cogently that a universalizing reading of Thucydides was possible, by focusing on his depiction of human passion, and sought to demonstrate its relevance to all civil societies in his historical accounts. In this respect I believe Mably was one of the most perceptive readers of Thucydides in the eighteenth century.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate the importance of Thucydides in Mably's thought. This in turn has added nuance to our understanding of Mably's attitude toward Sparta as both an abstract constitutional model and as a polis in Greek history. We have seen how despite Mably's idealization of Sparta he was prepared to

view its actions in Greek history through a “Thucydidean lens.” That is to say, he was willing to critique Sparta’s actions in order to maintain his analysis of history, even when that conflicted with his earlier lionization of the Spartan constitution.

The deeper point is that Mably read in Thucydides a universal account of human passions. Far from being anachronistic, this reading problematized the practice of taking easy lessons from history. Despite Mably’s praise of the ancient constitutions he never believed that one could simply transpose them into eighteenth-century Europe. Rather he saw Thucydides as recognizing fundamental truths about humanity that could then be recognized in and reapplied to different historical periods. These would allow the historian to understand the fundamental causes of events, but cautioned against using history simply as an exemplary narrative. In Mably’s reading of Thucydides it was not enough simply to emulate the Spartan constitution and hope that it would prove a panacea for all Europe’s ills. The Spartan constitution both belonged to a specific historical and geographical situation and also, despite its many good features, had proved unequal to the task of constraining human passion over the long term.

From Mably’s account of Greek history it can be asserted that he was a creative and perceptive critic and reader of Thucydides. Where Rousseau had claimed that Thucydides’ thought approached philosophy Mably attempted to show how one might understand that thought in practice. He did not resort to contextualism like L  vesque or viewing Thucydides as part of a narrative of progress as in the work of Schl  zer; rather, Mably attempted to show how Thucydidean thought might operate both anterior to and within history. For that reason his reception of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* represents an important topic for the study of both Thucydides’ modern influence and the thought of Mably.

Guide to Further Reading

The most complete intellectual biography of Mably remains Kent Wright (1997). On the political and intellectual contexts in which Mably wrote see Sonenscher (2008) and (2009). For an overview of the reception of Thucydides in eighteenth-century France see Grell (2010), and for a more theoretical approach to understanding ideas about ancient Greece in this period, Vlassopoulos (2010).

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The Straussian Thucydides

Seth N. Jaffe

Introduction

For most, the primary association of the label “Straussian” is American neoconservatism. Academically, Straussian scholars are famous (or infamous) for their controversial interpretations of Plato, particularly their claims about Platonic esotericism. As students of Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, they are less well known. Yet Straussian interpretations of the *History* are rich and surprisingly close to the now dominant approaches of classicists and historiographers, allowing for a more fruitful dialogue between Straussian and non-Straussian scholars of Thucydides than is perhaps possible between Straussian and non-Straussian scholars of Plato. In broad terms, the Straussians maintain that the *History* evinces a deeply comprehensive character and that it advances a coherent political philosophical teaching, that it is much more than a historical record.

In this chapter, however, Straussianism will be presented primarily as an interpretive approach to old books rather than as a series of claims about the (presumptive) truths that these books contain. The Straussians do find “truths” in Thucydides’ *History*, some of which will be discussed below, but the approach itself is based upon a philosophical position, the assumptions of which can be drawn out and developed. These stand as a challenge to many contemporary readings of ancient texts, and they comprise one element of Leo Strauss’ critique of modern thought. For Leo Strauss, if he is anything, is a critic of modernity, and of the modern historical consciousness. Strauss’ lengthy and involved study of the Greek “historian” Thucydides in *The City and Man* (1964), which is the touchstone for all Straussian readings of the *History*, brings these issues into especially sharp focus.¹

The claim decisively informing all Straussian interpretations of the *History* is that Thucydides is a thinker who writes for all time, as opposed to a fifth-century Greek

ensnared in his historical moment in ways of which we are aware but of which he was not. Thucydides himself expressly claims that he is writing for the future, that his work is a “possession for all time” (1.22.4). The Straussians take him literally at his word (Orwin 1994: 11). More precisely, they argue that to interpret him properly requires that one keep this Thucydidean aim firmly in mind. To state the matter provocatively, Leo Strauss’ hermeneutic is anti-history, if the historical approach entails the very rejection of the possibility of trans-historical truths about politics.

This chapter outlines Strauss’ approach to Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and then sketches the common threads linking Strauss’ writings on Thucydides with those of his greatest student on the *History*, Clifford Orwin, whose *The Humanity of Thucydides* (1994) expands upon Strauss’ account in *The City and Man*. It concludes, more speculatively, with an attempt to locate Strauss’ interest in Thucydides within his overall critique of modern thought.

Leo Strauss, Sphinx Without a Secret or Philosopher of Secrets?

Prior to discussing his approach to Thucydides, a thumbnail sketch of Leo Strauss will prove useful. Leo Strauss (1899–1973) was a German Jewish émigré who found an intellectual home in the United States, as did many Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. He spent ten years at the New School for Social Research in New York City but primarily made a name for himself at the University of Chicago, where he trained a number of devoted students. Strauss, perhaps more than any other political philosopher in the twentieth century, founded a school, which persists today, and whose members populate certain political science departments in North America.

Since his death in 1973, Strauss has increasingly become a lightning rod, loved by some, hated by many. This is due, at least in part, to the tumultuous career of Allan Bloom, who popularized and expanded upon elements of Strauss’ thought in *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), a book which played a major role in the culture wars in North America. Bloom also educated many of the most prominent of today’s Straussians. The most polarizing element of Strauss’ intellectual legacy is his claim that certain past thinkers wrote esoterically, which is to say that they masked their true teaching from all but a few readers. These thinkers were elitist, in other words, and so skeptical of the possibility of popular enlightenment, skeptical of the salutary political effect of philosophical inquiry and of philosophical knowledge. One of Strauss’ central claims is that modern scholars have lost the art of reading ancient philosophical texts, which he claims to have recovered and transmitted to his students.

For Myles Burnyeat, writing in the *New York Review of Books* in 1986, Strauss was – and this was the title of his essay – a “Sphinx without a Secret,” who demanded that his students abandon their own intellectual judgment. “I submit in all seriousness,” Burnyeat wrote, “that surrender of the critical intellect is the price of initiation into the world of Leo Strauss’ ideas” (Burnyeat 1986: 31). The occasion of

Burnyeat's piece was a review of Strauss' posthumously published *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (1985c), which contains an enigmatic collection of late essays, including one on the gods in Thucydides' *History*. For Burnyeat, Strauss' students parroted the master's (improbable) interpretations of old books, especially Plato.

For Strauss' supporters, no less ardent in their admiration than his detractors in their hostility, Strauss was solitary defender of the philosophic life in an age uniquely inhospitable to it. Perhaps Strauss' most accomplished student of the ancients, the late Seth Benardete (1930–2001), a professor of classics at New York University, wrote in his memorial speech for Strauss that “Leo Strauss was a philosopher. He hid this fact as much as he showed it by being a transhistorical historian of philosophy.” Benardete went further: “he [Strauss] approached the ancients without the blinkers of modern classical scholarship ... for he knew that such scholarship had taken from the start the side of the moderns” (Benardete 2012: 375). The figure of the philosopher plays an important role in Straussian thought, and, it is important to note, refers only to truly great minds. Putting aside the passions of his supporters and detractors, when you have a Cambridge Companion to your name, as Strauss does as of 2009, you have clearly entered the mainstream. For good or ill, Leo Strauss is now an accepted, if still controversial figure within the cannon of twentieth-century political thought.

History vs. Philosophy

It was asserted above that Leo Strauss's hermeneutic is anti-history. What does that mean? One of Strauss' central preoccupations is the relationship between history and philosophy. It will be useful to situate Strauss' study of Thucydides within his broader critique of positivism and historicism, the great bugbears of Strauss and his followers. Given limitations of space and time, the following can be no more than schematic.

Whereas the positivists are interested in facts as distinct from values, the latter of which do not admit of empirical proof, the historicist knows that there are only values, while values themselves are relative. Positivism and historicism are reverse mirror images of one another. For the positivists, there are facts, for the historicist values. Historicism, for Strauss, emanates from cultural relativism. Indeed, it is a species of cultural relativism, one that ultimately overcomes positivism itself. Once we unmask the purportedly objective perspective of the social scientist (or indeed of the political philosopher), revealing his human, all too human commitments, we are left with perspectivalism. If the values of a thinker are relative to their culture, we are left with ideologies. With the triumph of historicism, the history of thought itself, through the transfiguring touch of historicism, becomes the history of ideologies (Strauss 1964: 2). By becoming historicized or relativized, philosophy itself collapses into history.

Following this historical perspective with regard to our subject, Thucydides, we arrive at a “post-modernist” Thucydides – as W.R. Connor provocatively

suggested in a 1977 article – one who has fashioned an artistic, literary retelling of the great war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians. On readings of this kind, the enterprise of historical writing is understood as a kind of making: Thucydides has constructed *his* Peloponnesian War. This is the case because there are no “facts” uncolored by interpretation. There is only interpretation, all of the way down. Needless to say, there is no one true interpretation of the Peloponnesian War. Despite this, as we will soon discuss, there are interesting similarities between Connor’s approach to Thucydides and that of Leo Strauss and Clifford Orwin.

To frame the wider issue differently, modern scholars are aware that they are caged by their linguistic horizons, or by their contemporary cultural preoccupations, which are relative, or even by their individual preoccupations, which are subjective. And they think the same was true of thinkers of the past, whereas past thinkers, for their part, were wholly unaware of this important fact. In this way, the modern scholar reads the past thinker against the grain of that thinker’s original intention, particularly if the thinker in question believed himself to have actually transcended his historical moment. The modern scholar is, quite simply, wiser than the past author in this crucial respect. There are of course variations on these views, stronger and weaker articulations of them, as well as hybrid positions, and the intention is not to make straw men of them. What the approaches have in common is the assumption that it is difference and not similarity that characterizes human life across different epochs.

Consequently, in order to avoid an unwitting parochialism, modern scholars engage in witting ones, which is to say that they put their parochialisms on the table (and are offended when others do not). And, again, by assuming that philosophy in the sense of trans-historical truth is impossible, not just improbable, the modern scholar comprehends the writings of past thinkers as necessarily historical, as the more or less sophisticated expression of the individual and of the age.

For Strauss, historicism constitutes the crisis of a distinctly modern reason, as distinct from classical political rationalism. In his view, classical political rationalism was free from the negative political and philosophical effects of what now sometimes goes by the name of anti-foundationalism. In this vein, Strauss writes, “modern political philosophy presupposes Nature as understood by modern natural science and History as understood by the modern historical awareness” (1964: 1). Neither can ground a non-contingent conception of the human good, and so modern political philosophy itself cannot do so either. This has negative political as well as philosophical consequences. In the context of Strauss’ anti-communism, it means that the United States is no longer sure of the universal purpose implied in its founding, weakening it in the face of its enemy, the Soviet Union, a new Eastern despotism (*ibid.*: 2–3). With regard to its philosophical consequences, dogmatic relativism is the enemy of philosophy properly understood.

To make the interpretive issue clearer, if one were to inquire of contemporary classical historians or historiographers, do you actually believe Thucydides captures

the eternal contours of all war through his recreation of a particular fifth-century Greek war? Few would agree. If one were to follow up by asking, are you open to the possibility that a past writer could offer up a *definitive* political philosophy (of whatever color or stripe)? Again, few would assent. And indeed perhaps no such account is possible. But should we be so quick to dismiss the bare possibility?

The Straussian Interpretive Approach

If such a trans-historical account were possible, even if improbable, what manner of reading would be required to discern a teaching of this sort in the work of an ancient author? For Strauss, such a discovery would require reading the thinker as that “thinker understood themselves” (Strauss 1959: 67), or following as closely as possible to the indications of the thinker as to how they themselves wished to be read. Crucially, it requires actively participating in the thought of their book, thinking in a primary way through the issues and questions raised, and all of this without presuming to understand more than the author in question. It requires, in other words, a willingness to believe that the past thinker is (perhaps) wiser than the modern scholar. It requires a temporary bracketing off of one’s own judgment and a temporary acceptance of the authority of the view under discussion, at least for the purpose of careful exegesis.

To engage Thucydides’ *History* in a primary way, for example, assuredly must involve thinking through what we might call the power–political position. One version of this view is expressed by the Athenians ambassadors in the infamous Melian Dialogue, where the Athenians try to persuade the Melians to submit to superior Athenian force, lest their city be destroyed (5.84–5.113). The Melians maintain that the Athenian attack is unjust, which nourishes their hopes that they will be able to resist the powerful Athenians. When the Athenians eventually capture Melos, they destroy it (5.116). The sympathy of the reader lies, presumably, with the Melians. But to participate in the dialogue fully, one must entertain the odious possibility that the Athenians at Melos are in fact correct about the relationship between might and right, and that the pitiable Melians are wrong. This does not mean that the Athenians are actually right, or that the Melians are wrong, or that either view represents the position of Thucydides himself. It is to suggest that Thucydides wishes his readers to think carefully about the opposing positions.

The troublesome question remains: if it is possible for an ancient thinker to be wiser than the modern scholar about some essential feature of politics (as opposed to those features of politics which are always contingent), how would one approach whatever book in order to access the author’s views? And to evaluate the correctness of a position presupposes that one has first articulated the position fairly and fully. Evaluation of an ancient view absolutely requires the prior act of interpretation. With regard to Thucydides, we can reformulate the matter as follows: to assess

whether Thucydides is right about the nature of war requires understanding Thucydides' views on the nature of war.

With these points in mind, let us turn to the major pillars of the Straussian interpretation of the *History*. Here, there is a harmony between the view that has dominated scholarship in classics in recent years, which is to say unitarianism, and the approach of the Straussians. Unitarianism has today supplanted the so-called *Thukydidesfrage* of an earlier generation. The *Thukydidesfrage*, which so occupied Thucydides scholarship during the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries, especially German scholarship, involved the claim that we have do not have a single Thucydides but many Thucydideses, depending upon when a given portion of the text was composed. In terms of that debate, it was Finley (1942) and de Romilly (1963) who put the most important nails in the coffin of the compositionists (see Rusten in this volume).

In the context of Thucydides scholarship, we might call the Straussians extreme unitarians. To give a sense of how extreme their unitarianism is, Strauss suggests in a footnote to *The City and Man* that Thucydides may have intended to end his *History* abruptly in the middle of 411 BCE, with the peculiar sentence with which it ends, with Tissaphernes offering up a sacrifice to Artemis at Ephesus (1964: 227 n. 39).

As noted above, the Straussian Thucydides also has something in common with Connor's approach in his 1977 article and in his important book, *Thucydides* (1984). As Clifford Orwin writes in the introduction to *The Humanity of Thucydides*:

Meeting the separatists on their own ground, [Connor] has focused on the many perplexities in Thucydides' work: the shifts of perspective, the glaring omissions, the repetitions with a difference, the withholding or postponement of important facts, the fostering of expectations that are not met, the odd anecdotes and seeming digressions. According to Connor, these supposed blemishes are aspects of the works perfection. Far from detracting from its unity, they evince the supreme artfulness of the means by which Thucydides achieves it. (1994: 6)

This point will be discussed more fully below, but, by Straussian lights, a seeming contradiction in the *History*, an apparent digression, which the reader can't initially make head or tails of, likely reflects his or her lack of understanding more than any infelicity on the part of the author.

Overall, Straussians believe in something called logographic necessity, especially with regard to the interpretation of Plato. The term itself is drawn from Plato's dialogue, the *Phaedrus* (264b). But the general approach also characterizes their interpretations of many other thinkers, including Thucydides. What is logographic necessity? It means, essentially, that the details really matter, that virtually every word has been selected by the author with care (Strauss 1958: 121). But what today we might deny to the Bible – that each word is reflective of a perfect and divine intention – we might more readily grant to Plato, whose dialogues do fit together so tightly.

But what of the “historian,” Thucydides? Here, the Straussians deploy a similar approach. They see him not as an historian in any contemporary sense, given his interest in revealing the universal through the particular, but rather as a philosophic historian. Strauss writes that Thucydides’ “work is meant to be a possession for all times, whereas the works of the scientific historians do not seriously claim to be ‘definitive’” (Strauss 1964: 142). And that Thucydides is, in truth, “a philosophic historian” (ibid.: 236).

The Straussians also subscribe to the belief that great thinkers are aware of the implications of their thought. Now, this assumption, along with the others, can lead to interpretive mischief, but the argument itself is not foolish, even if the results do not always admit of the kind of proof usually demanded of contemporary scholarship. A given Platonic dialogue, for example, may end in an *aporia*, a puzzle or an apparent lack of apparent resolution. Does this mean Plato has no answer to the guiding question of the dialogue? Perhaps, but it could also mean that he intends his astute reader to solve the perplexity based upon the arguments and indications contained in the dialogue. This would mean Plato intends his reader to engage in philosophy, to carefully think through the arguments. More broadly, it also suggests that one cannot understand a position without understanding the reasons for holding the position. In other words, a true understanding of Plato’s view, whatever that might be, cannot take the form of the mere assertion that Plato believed X or Y. It requires a grasp of the arguments that convinced Plato of the truth of X or of Y.

A Thucydidean example, drawn from the celebrated Mytilenean Debate, will prove illuminating. At Athens, the Athenian Diodotus makes an argument from expediency as to why the Athenians should spare the Mytilenean *demos* the execution that had been resolved upon during the previous meeting of the assembly (3.41–3.48). Diodotus’ speech is paired with that of Cleon, who advocates for the harsher punishment (3.36.6). Diodotus’ argument from expediency is presumably consistent with the moral sympathies of the reader (as well as those of the Athenians themselves): from the facts provided, the Mytilenean *demos* appears less responsible for the revolt of their city, and, they also contributed to the handing of it over to the Athenians. Consequently, they do not merit such harsh punishment. Indeed, this was the reason there was even a second debate in the first place: an Athenian change of heart (3.36.4).

Through Diodotus’ speech, Thucydides encourages his readers to think about expediency (or advantage) as the proper guide for political action. Readers will presumably be sympathetic to the argument, precisely because justice too counsels relative gentleness toward the Mytileneans. It is an important feature of Clifford Orwin’s contribution to our understanding of Diodotus’ speech that Orwin discovers that at every stage of Diodotus’ argument from expediency there is an implicit but nonetheless real appeal to justice (1994: 151–4).

Through Diodotus’ speech, Thucydides encourages his readers to entertain a strong argument about the priority of advantage, which, in some future

circumstance, *might* counsel an action inconsistent with justice. Is the reader perhaps hereby encouraged to embrace self-regarding behavior, to become sympathetic to advantage as *the* proper guide for political life through the sweetener of Diodotus' alignment of this argument with the moral sentiments of the reader? If so, this would represent a realist education of some kind: Thucydides as training aspiring statesmen to pursue the national interest, or reason of state, above all else.

The question is not whether this example makes good sense of Thucydides' text or not, but rather how we would test a hypothesis of this sort. Does Thucydides intend us to think through the logic of his unfolding episodes? It seems so, particularly in his set-pieces and in many of the speeches. Now, a scholar can assert Thucydides does this in the way suggested above, with particular reference to the Mytilenean Debate, and another can rejoin, "perhaps" or "perhaps not." But what would constitute proof? What would command the assent of the scholarly community? Or is this simply the kind of claim that will never garner scholarly consensus? Perhaps the only solution is to point to the text of the *History*, to make a claim, and to argue about it with other interested parties. These issues matter because the Straussians often engage in interpretive claims of these sorts, while such interpretations frequently drive non-Straussians wild. At the same time, the interpretive assumption itself – that thinkers wish their readers to think through the logics of their books – is not an outlandish one.

These points are especially pertinent because Leo Strauss and Clifford Orwin believe Thucydides himself subscribes to a sophisticated version of the Athenian position of nature and necessity. It is this which constitutes Thucydidean wisdom, and which is inseparable from the humanity of Thucydides. Moreover, both maintain that it is only by thinking through the arguments of Thucydidean speakers – in relation to Thucydides' own authorial statements and his narrative of the deeds of the war – that the reader can approach the wisdom and humanity of Thucydides himself. On these readings, Thucydides is not offering the reader bromides about might or right, but instead educating her by encouraging her to think through the central claims of his book. A vicarious war, the *History*, becomes the mimetic surrogate for that violent teacher which educated Thucydides himself (3.82.2).

There is a related interpretive point, bound up with the issue of thinking through the arguments of a work, which often gets inappropriately folded into claims about Straussian esotericism. This is the question of who is capable of understanding an argument, of whether knowledge can actually ever be truly democratic. If someone cannot understand theoretical physics, to use an unrelated example, this does not mean that theoretical physics is esoteric. It may mean that the person in question lacks the capacity or the inclination to understand it. If some have better philosophical minds and stronger philosophical inclinations than others, they will presumably grasp more of whatever Plato intends than those who are not equally gifted or equally inclined. Wisdom (or knowledge) is therefore *necessarily* elitist in some respect, if not perhaps in every one. Some have it, some do not, and people have various capacities and inclinations for acquiring disparate kinds of knowledge.

This raises a problem, which it will be useful to state as forcefully as possible: what if the *History* can only be understood fully by a human being of Thucydidean intelligence? And if one is inclined to think, as the Straussians do, that great minds are genuinely great, which is to say superior to the vast majority of even their most astute readers, then what implications does this have for interpreting a work of such genius?

In practice, the Straussian approach can risk the too ready acceptance of the authority of the philosopher, insofar as their view can be recovered from the text. But simply because a great mind thinks X or Y does not necessarily make it true. To go further, the approach can lead to the too ready acceptance of the authority of Strauss' interpretation of the thought of whatever past thinker. It is this that accounts for something of what Burnyeat identifies in his polemic against the Straussians: their acceptance of Strauss' own lines of argument. This is a danger built into the approach, but whether it is a fatal one or not is a different question. Respect for philosophical greatness is one thing, but the attempt to philosophize requires the rejection of authority, except for the authority of the arguments themselves.

If we draw the above threads together, six interpretive pillars of the Straussian Thucydides emerge. First, the Straussians are extreme unitarians. Second, they believe that, although difficult, it is possible to gain access to the wisdom of Thucydides himself (i.e., first, that Thucydides intends to communicate a teaching, and, second, that this teaching is epistemologically available to modern readers.) Third, the Thucydidean view must be accessed by participating in the work, which involves attending to Thucydides' narrative indications, and which also includes thinking about the sequencing of episodes, themes, and arguments, and sometimes even of key terms and their cognates.

Fourth and related, the Straussians engage in internal readings of the *History*. For classicists, these types of readings resemble historiographical or literary readings (and sometimes narratological ones). Straussian scholars invariably look for textual logic to explain a problematic feature of the text rather than seeking answers outside of the text itself. Strauss himself furnishes one example of this. In the below passage, he is quoting from A.W. Gomme's important English language commentary on the *History*:

When Thucydides fails to mention "the doubling or trebling of the tribute [of Athens' allies] in 425" – "The most notable omission in the narrative" from the view of the modern historian – this may well be due to the fact that for Thucydides and for the cities, the payment of tribute as such, i.e., impairment of freedom, was much more important than the amount of the tribute; what is most important for the city is its freedom, the freedom endangered by the tyrant city Athens ... (1964: 153–4).²

Here, Strauss defends Thucydides against the sin of historical omission by claiming that the author's view is more astute than that of the modern historian, and he does

this by attending to the logic of the text itself. Thucydides judges economic matters less important than political ones, and if he is right, then the problem is not with Thucydides' account but rather with the modern historian's assumption about the relative importance of economic forces. Whether Strauss is right about this point or not, the quotation reveals something typical of the approach. The Straussians characteristically explain a feature of a text, not by reference to historical context – how Thucydides might be engaging a fifth-century debate, for example – but instead by locating it within the unfolding logic of the text itself.

To turn to the fifth interpretive presupposition, apparent discrepancies or puzzles in the *History* are to be understood as pointing toward some deeper authorial intention, as Connor's work also suggests. Puzzles are (likely) intended to act as stimulus to the reader's understanding. Once again, the generally appropriate attitude toward reading a "great book," the *History*, for example, is to think that an interpretive confusion (likely) has more to do with one's own lack of understanding than with the overall coherence or intelligibility of the Thucydidean position itself.

Sixth and finally, the Straussians claim to be open to the possibility that the Thucydidean teaching may be true, full stop. Thucydides *may* have captured the essential nature of war through his vivid depiction of the Peloponnesian War. This is perhaps the most controversial of their claims, and the one that sounds strangest to modern ears. And perhaps here Burnyeat again has a point about authority. Straussians move quickly from the claim that X is the Platonic or the Thucydidean position to the belief that X is (actually) true. They do not often engage in independent philosophical proofs of these claims, substituting, at times, exegesis for argument. The exegesis, of course, is often the revelation of the argument of a significant philosophic thinker, but this does not always meet the primary issue.

These six points could be expanded upon in various ways, but they should suffice to provide a general understanding of the interpretive approach of Leo Strauss and his followers to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Having sketched elements of the approach, it is now possible to turn to the question of the relationship between the wisdom and the humanity of Thucydides, and then to conclude with a final reflection on the place of his study of Thucydides within Strauss' critique of modernity.

The Humanity of Thucydides

What is the relation between the power-political position and humanity? For Leo Strauss, but most of all for Clifford Orwin, it is the speech of Diodotus that explains how the harsh Athenian position on nature and necessity leads to humanity, or to a kind of sympathy for the aspirations and plight of the weak as well as for the folly of the strong. Ultimately, it is wisdom that produces humanity. The final chapter of Orwin's book is devoted to untangling this relationship on the basis of his

earlier interpretation of the *History*'s key episodes. Crucially, the political surrogate for the gentle moderation of wisdom – its political reflection, as it were – is piety. Piety keeps human beings within limits, which approximate those set by nature itself. But piety itself can lead to the transgression of natural limits, which is to say to error and folly. And so Orwin's culminating discussion involves an involved comparison between piety and Thucydidean wisdom, which represents a purified comparison between the Athenian claims about necessity and the Spartan claims about justice and piety that intertwine throughout the *History*.

For the purposes of illustration, a negative example of the relationship between the power-political and the humane may prove illuminating. On Clifford Orwin's reading of the Melian Dialogue, the destruction of Melos, the slaughter of the men and the selling of the women and children into slavery, is not a necessary consequence of the harsh view expounded by the Athenian ambassadors at Melos, but instead a failure to live up to its demands (1994: 117). This is the case because the Athenian actions smack of anger, of retributive justice. Athens appears to be punishing Melos for resisting. Thucydides would also seem to intend the reader to compare the fate of Melos with that of Mytilene, where a similar punishment was proposed but ultimately rescinded because of Diodotus' humane intervention. It is not clear why Diodotus' arguments should not apply with equal (or indeed greater) force to the situation of Melos (*ibid.*: 112). In this context, one must also note that what it may be reasonable to threaten, the destruction of the city, it may not be reasonable to carry out.

But what is the standard for judging an act reasonable? The standard of the reasonable here is not justice but advantage. Gratuitous harm is harm beyond what the pursuit of advantage recommends. Now, one's advantage may require harming others, but harm beyond what the Athenian advantage requires is entirely unjustified by light of the Athenians' own argument about necessity and advantage. It serves no purpose. Yet communities, to say nothing of individuals, rarely see what their advantage requires. And they rarely act dispassionately and astutely in pursuing it. These are tragic but ineradicable features of political life.

According to Clifford Orwin, it is anger that usually generates gratuitous harm. Anger, for its part, involves the longing for vengeance. The hot-headed pursuit of justice is distinct from the cool calculation of interest. But one component of justice among political communities is always retributive justice: wrongdoers should be punished. If justice in the *History* is occasionally the refuge of the weak, then it is also the self-justification of the strong, who, in response to a perceived harm or slight, impose their will, invariably disproportionately. It is no accident that those characters in Thucydides' *History* who speak so passionately about justice are usually the most violent. We might think of the Spartan Sthenelaidas, who angrily advocates for war in Book 1 (1.86–7); or the Athenian Cleon, in the Mytilenean Debate, whom Thucydides himself calls the most violent man in Athens and the most persuasive with the *demos* (3.36.6); or the vindictive Thebans, who speak vengefully against the captured Plataeans in the *History*'s third book (3.61–7). The

list might go on. The overweening desire to punish is one frightening manifestation of the powerful human concern for justice.

According to Orwin's Diodotus, however, all human beings, strong and weak alike, are susceptible to transgression, to the passions that blind, and to those characteristic errors that forever arise from the pursuit of advantage (1994: 156). As the plague at Athens reveals, every human being suffers from the radical unprotectedness of the body. Neither strength nor weakness nor wisdom nor ignorance nor virtue nor vice affords any protection (2.47.4 with 2.51.2–5). As Thucydides' narrative and commentary on the revolution at Corcyra reveals, few are spared, certainly not the moderate or the wise, in the frightening breakdown of a leading city (3.82.8); while, as Hermocrates argues at Gela, all would seem to be susceptible to the ineradicable role played by fortune or chance (4.62.4). There are, of course, better and worse laid plans, but the best laid plans can always go awry. Fortune forever plays in that space between intention and outcome.

Since all suffer from the compulsions that constitute "the human thing" (1.22.4), from the external pressures of the human circumstance as they meet the inner ones of human nature, there exist bonds of sympathy between the wise and the unwise and between the strong and the weak. In 1.23.3, Thucydides asserts that the Peloponnesian War is great, not because war is a stage upon which to win glory or renown but because of the terrible suffering that attended it. And he emphasizes suffering on the large scale – the ruination of the Athenian force in Sicily, for example (7.87.6) – but also suffering writ small. Thucydides' lament on the fate of tiny Mycalessus, destroyed by Thracian mercenaries, renders that terrible event almost equivalent to the loss of the massive Athenian armada (7.29.2–5). At the beginning of the war, Pericles proudly proclaims that Athens is the school of Hellas (2.41.1). By the end of the war, Athens is complicit in the slaughter of a boys' school in Hellas, at Mycalessus (7.29.5) (Strauss 1964: 156–7; Orwin 1994: 135–6).

On this reading, the fragility of political life is a vital component of the Thucydidean teaching. The relevant question is the extent to which human beings can be sheltered from necessity. The adherents of necessity in the *History* often suggest that there is little to no shelter available, although power provides some. Moreover, that which exists is temporary, dependent upon a capricious chance and, to a small extent, upon human action. The partisans of justice and piety, by contrast, suggest that the gods shelter human beings, at least to some extent, in certain proscribed places, at certain proscribed times, and in certain proscribed ways. Again, Thucydides, for the Straussians, is a partisan of some variation of this position on nature and necessity, some higher synthesis, perhaps, of the views of Diodotus and Hermocrates, who look down on the human spectacle from an almost Olympian height (Orwin 1994: 142, 162).

But wisdom affords little inoculation against the vicissitudes of fortune or of politics. The wise man, however, understands the sufferings of the unwise because he has suffered from them too. And, crucially, Thucydides himself has sympathetically recreated the lived horizon of his many diverse characters, even that of the

Athenian he is most thought to have personally despised, Cleon. But this does not mean that wisdom has no influence in the world of politics, although it may have less than we might wish. Wisdom can educate the statesman, who requires knowledge of human nature above all, which must of course be deftly applied to the particulars of whatever time and place (Orwin 1994: 4). Diodotus saves the Mytileneans, if barely – the vote was close and the second ship might have arrived too late to stay the original order – while a shrewder general than Nikias might have saved the Athenian expeditionary force in Sicily.

Leadership then matters, but it does so less than it might appear. The most spectacular individuals in the *History* are primarily Athenian, but Athens loses the war because it descends into civil strife (2.65.12). The political is the eggshell of the cultural, we might say anachronistically, because domestic politics represents a kind of artifice erected to shelter human beings from necessity. But war brings necessity home, breaking over and upon political communities. This is one meaning of Thucydides' sobering presentation of the horrors of civil war at Corcra in the *History's* third book.

And no matter how true this Athenian position about nature and necessity may be, it proves, in practice, to be dangerously corrosive of domestic politics, of the common good. It undermines that trust upon which every domestic political order depends. The justification of the pursuit of private interest, even if the city itself is at bottom merely an interest bargain, eventually undermines the pursuit of any common good. It is Sparta's piety and attendant respect for law, as well as her fear of a Helot slave revolt (4.80.3) – bulwarks of her common good – that inoculate the Spartan regime against civil strife.

For Leo Strauss and Clifford Orwin, the humanity of Thucydides is, in the final analysis, not distinct from his wisdom about the human condition. Because human beings remain the same, the essential contours of political life remain the same. Contrary to the view of contemporary historians, similarity is in fact more fundamental than difference. This wisdom, Thucydidean wisdom, is the very same wisdom that the *History* encourages the reader to acquire for himself by thinking through the episodes of the book, by participating in the *History* as a reader engaged in the questions that the work itself raises. Thucydides' recreation of human nature under the pressures of war not only reflects Thucydides' own humanity but also educates the reader, while, at the same time, gentling his attitude toward those afflicted by the harshness of the human condition. The teaching moreover prepares the reader to face that condition unflinchingly. War is a violent teacher, but it also can educate away the violence of the spirit.

Having lived vicariously through the errors of human beings, and by helping his readers to recognize the human sources of these errors in themselves, Thucydides allows his readers to sympathize with the plight of the human animal without pitying it. All of this is the result of the "realistic" insight about the human animal and the human condition. Clifford Orwin powerfully writes that Diodotus "announces a more terrible truth than that human beings are evil; namely that they are not"

(1994: 203). Man is a transgressing creature. His errors compound his own suffering as well as of those of others. Such is one vision of the teaching of Thucydides.

Conclusion

Having sketched elements of the Straussian Thucydides, it is now possible to step back and to situate Strauss' interest in Thucydides within his critique of modernity. Leo Strauss claims that he wishes to reopen the so-called quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, to revivify classical political rationalism, and by so doing to address himself to the crisis of our times, the crisis of the contemporary West. Consequently, something more can be said about his interpretation of Thucydides in this grander context, in the context of philosophical epic, which so inspires his followers and annoys his detractors.

Strauss is intensely interested in what might be called the pre-philosophical political, the political as it appears, naively, as it were, in actual political life. This is the case because he believes that genuine philosophy necessarily emerges from pre-philosophical opinion. In the same way that the Platonic Socrates begins with the opinion of his interlocutors as the proper grist for the dialectical mill, Strauss thinks it imperative to regain the horizon of the political, untainted by the conceptual innovations of modern science, which are themselves the fruit of distinctly modern thought. Modern thought somehow obscures the bright thread that runs from pre-philosophic opinion to philosophic thought.

In other words, it is the political that is the proper road to the metaphysical, because we must start, as we always start, from questions that are first for us, which are questions about how we should live, questions about the good, which manifest themselves politically. In other words, our initial answers to the question of the good life invariably come from outside of us, from the social and political worlds in which we find ourselves. These conventional opinions – or what we nowadays call culture – are not knowledge, but for Strauss (and perhaps for the Socratics as well) they point toward it. Opinion, including common sense, is not fundamentally estranged from knowledge.

Consequently, Strauss engages in a philosophical archaeology to recover the pre-philosophical political, the political which became the basis for Socratic thought in the fifth century in Athens. He does all of this in order to recover the original character of classical political rationalism, which has been effaced by modern assumptions. This explains in part why Strauss is especially focused on the religious dimensions of Thucydides' *History*, in Thucydides' record of omens, his depiction of divine (or natural) phenomena, as well as his scrutiny of what we might today call the political psychology of religion (Strauss 1985a: 89–104).

Whereas for Herodotus, Thucydides' great predecessor who wrote of the Persian Wars, the stories of the mythical or divine represent a major strand in his *Histories*, and the naturalistic explanation of events a more muted or subordinate

strand. These major and minor strands are reversed in Thucydides' *History*. The major is the naturalistic explanation of events, while the quieter, subordinate one includes the references to the mythical or the divine and to omens. The rival theologies of the Athenians and Melians nonetheless disclose something of their vastly different visions of the cosmos and chaos, which unfold from the positions of the Athenian envoys to Melos on necessity and the Melian oligarchs on justice and piety, respectively. And, it must be stressed, this represents an actual dialogue between the positions, a common exploration, a conversation, even if one framed by the disconcerting presence of the Athenian invading force. It is the human, expressed in speech through the political, which represents the meeting point of the divine and the natural, the common root from whence the fuller articulation of politics and first principles emerge.

The final lines of Strauss' long chapter on Thucydides in *The City and Man* are enigmatic. It is worth quoting them in full:

For what is "first for us" is not the philosophical understanding of the city but that understanding which is inherent in the city as such, in the prephilosophic city, according to which the city sees itself as subject and subservient to the divine in the ordinary understanding of the divine or looks up to it. Only by beginning at this point will we be open to the full impact of the all-important question which is coeval with philosophy although the philosophers do not frequently pronounce it—the question *quid sit deus?* [What would God be?]. (1964: 241)

In Leo Strauss' view, Thucydides addresses himself to this question: to the question of the character of first principles, which can only unfold from the unstinting and scrupulous examination of the political horizon. Are these principles those that the Greek learned about from the poets, especially Homer, which is to say the Olympian gods, or are they instead pre-Socratic ones, rooted in some conception of natural necessity?

To end on a provocative and speculative note, one could perhaps say that Strauss understands himself to be modifying Heideggerean phenomenology in a way that parallels the Socratic critique of the Sophists. Whereas Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), whom many consider the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century, preeminently explores the metaphysical question of being phenomenologically – an exploration which itself represents a deepening of his teacher, Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) philosophical project – Strauss attempts to recreate the Socratic turn, to explore (or to map out) the political phenomenologically. He turns to human and political questions, but to do this he feels himself compelled to engage in intellectual archaeology, for he must return to that moment when the human and political questions were not obscured by modern philosophy, or by an enlightenment which has now become merely dogmatic, and as such is no longer an enlightenment at all.

It is for these reasons that Strauss turns, tentatively, as he writes at the beginning of *The City and Man*, “with unqualified willingness to learn, toward the political thought of classical antiquity ... compelled to do so by the crisis of our time, the crisis of the West” (1964: 1). In Thucydides, he believes that he has found a clearer mapping out of the political – the political as such, and not merely the politics of the dead Greeks – than is to be found in the writings or other authors, ancient or modern. He has recovered the original starting point for Platonic political thought and the proper starting place for resurrecting classical political rationalism as an alternative to modern rationalism, of which the contemporary view of history forms a part.

Notes

- 1 Strauss’ writings on Thucydides include *The City and Man* (1964) chapter, “On Thucydides’ War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians” (139–241) as well as an enigmatic late essay, “Preliminary Observations on the Gods in Thucydides’ Work” (1985a), but also a posthumously published lecture, “Thucydides and the Meaning of Political History” (Strauss 1989a: 72–102). There is an as yet unpublished transcript of a course he taught on the *History* at the University of Chicago in 1962, roughly contemporaneous with *The City and Man*. There is also an audiotape of a Thucydides seminar which Strauss taught at St. Johns College, Annapolis in 1972–3, which is available on the website of the Leo Strauss Center of the University of Chicago (<http://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/course/thucydides-1972-73-st-john%E2%80%99s-college-annapolis>). The seminar presumably took place during the time Strauss was working on “Preliminary Observations on the Gods in Thucydides Work,” which originally appeared in *Interpretation* in 1974.
- 2 To give another example, Thucydides appears to present the Megarian decree as a mere pretext for the war, despite the testimony of other ancient authors, for example, Aristophanes. Orwin has an appendix discussing the decree, but only, primarily, to argue that it was in fact a pretext (Orwin 1994: 215–16).

Guide to Further Reading

For a telegraphic lecture by Strauss on the *History*, see “Thucydides and the Meaning of Political History” (1989a). Bolotin (1986) and Pangle and Ahrens Dorf (2002) offer helpful introductions for the student. Beyond Orwin (1994), valuable Straussian monographs include Forde (1989), Johnson (1993), and Palmer (1992). There has been a glut of books on Strauss in recent years: Pangle (2006), Smith (2007), and Zuckert and Zuckert (2008, 2014) offer sympathetic accounts. For Strauss on Heidegger, see “An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism” (1989b); the article “Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy” (1985b) furnishes an interesting account of Husserl’s influence on Strauss. Velkley (2011) provides a provocative examination of the Strauss–Heidegger relationship.

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Realism, Constructivism, and Democracy in the *History*

John Zumbrennen

Introduction

Among political theorists, Thucydides' *History* has often been cited as evidence for the claim that ancient Athens, despite its central place in the history of democracy, produced no great democratic theorist. David Held, for instance, writes that "it is a remarkable fact that there is no major ancient Greek democratic theorist whose writings and ideas we can turn to for details and justification of the classical democratic *polis*" (1996: 13). Here Thucydides is lumped in with the playwrights, Aristotle and, especially, Plato. None of these great artists and thinkers, so the argument goes, offers a sympathetic elaboration of democratic possibilities. Each no doubt can be cast as offering a theory of democracy and its pathologies. But none can be called a democrat and so none can be a democratic theorist as we use the term today.

To be sure, this traditional way of reading the Greek philosophers and poets seems increasingly simplistic. A growing body of literature in both political theory and classics aims to recover Greek texts as resources for thinking about democracy. (Two collections of essays have played an important role in encouraging this reconsideration: Euben, Wallach, and Ober 1994 and Ober and Hedrick 1996. Other examples include Euben 1990 and 1994; Saxonhouse 1996; Monoson 2000; Salkever 2006; Zumbrennen 2008, 2012.) In doing so, this work also challenges the idea of democratic theory as coextensive with the celebration of democracy. In the case of the *History*, for example, the fact that Thucydides seems to tell us that he favors a moderate oligarchy over democracy (8.97) need not keep us from finding in his work ideas for improving democracy. We can perhaps even stop struggling to refashion his comments into something less than a clear critique of Athenian democratic politics.

Still, attempts to draw on the *History* for thinking about democracy have always faced another barrier. Beyond Thucydides' purported hostility to democracy lies the supposed fact that he is, as Clifford Orwin puts it, "little known as a theorist of domestic politics" (1994: 172). The historian is instead, we are told, concerned chiefly with relations between cities, with how Athens and Sparta come to blows, with how the Athenians built an empire, and with the fate of the smaller cities of Greece as the war dragged on. From this point of view, Thucydides' reporting of speeches and debates in the Athenian assembly – the very aspect of the *History* upon which political theorists tend to focus – is valuable only insofar as it sheds light upon Athens' actions in Greece.

This reading of Thucydides as little concerned with domestic politics, democratic or otherwise, intertwines with his reputation as a central figure in the study of international relations. It dovetails in particular with Thucydides' supposed role as a founding figure of realism in that field (Ahrens Dorf 1997; Johnson 1993 and in this volume). If realism takes each and every state as a "unit of action" ultimately pursuing its self-interest regardless of the noise of domestic politics; and if Thucydides is, indeed, the "father" of realism; then Thucydides, too, must ultimately find little of interest within cities. Athens and Sparta will, as states must, act according to their interest (following Keohane 1986).

This, of course, is a caricature of both Thucydides and realism. It is, though, a caricature with some real significance, in no small part for the reaction it provokes. Every bit as interested in claiming Thucydides as their own, political theorists tend to read the *History* against the grain of realism. If bare interest drives the action of states, they ask, then why all the talk of justice – in the Mytilene Debate, for example, or the Melian Dialogue? Indeed, if domestic politics does not matter, if relations between city-states are driven either by human nature or by the structure of the international arena, then why does the *History* include speeches at all? Could the author who proclaims that he has eschewed adorning his work for the pleasure of his audience (1.22) actually have included the speeches as mere window dressing? For the political theorist, the answer to this final question is clearly no. The speeches are there for a reason. Thucydides must, *contra* realism, be concerned with the pursuit of justice and with the role of speech in that pursuit.

As all this suggests, a central point of contention between realist students of the *History* in international relations and political theorists has been the role of the speeches – and of speech more generally – in Thucydides' account. No doubt this means that many political theorists welcome the emergence in the field of international relations of, in Richard Ned Lebow's words, "Thucydides the constructivist." On the simplest level, constructivism asserts that shared understandings of ideas and ideals matter as much in international politics as material concerns given by human nature or shaped by international anarchy. In reading the *History* we must, then, in particular attend to the ideas and ideals of justice that are of such manifest concern to Thucydides' Greeks. Furthermore, whereas the interests that realists emphasize require little attention to speech – they are common to all states and so their effects can be seen reflected in patterns of state behavior – ideas and ideals are

reflected in or constructed through speech. A constructivist reading of the *History*, then, will of necessity attend to the role of both justice and speech in its pages.

We might from this starting point assume that a constructivist approach to the *History* would also lead to a more complex and interesting understanding of the place of democratic politics in its pages. I take democratic politics in Thucydides to involve elite speakers competing for political influence before a *demos* that, though it remains silent, retains the ultimate power of deciding what the city will do; thus, when Thucydides shows us moments of democratic politics, he does so most obviously by taking us to the Athenian assembly and recording speeches (see more fully Zumbrennen 2008). In those speeches, prominent Athenians make claims about justice and other norms and about how those norms intertwine with the pursuit of interests. Precisely by directing our attention to these complex moments of discourse, we might assume that constructivism would enhance appreciation of Thucydides as a theorist of “domestic politics” in general and democracy in particular.

My purpose in this essay is to call that assumption into question, or at least to suggest that it does not always hold true. I begin by highlighting a longstanding way of reading the *History* that, while in accord with common ways of thinking about constructivism, leads in fact to a rather stultified reading of democratic politics. I have in mind here the frequent turn to notions of collective character and especially Athenian character. Readings of character’s role in the *History*, I argue, fit well with the constructivist emphasis on identity or ideals or norms; but those readings often tend toward a kind of determinism that is familiar from realist approaches and that denies the import of domestic politics understood as the way in which cities, and especially democratic Athens, come to act in the *History*. Having thus suggested that one sort of constructivism need not open up new possibilities for our thinking about democratic possibilities in the *History*, I turn to a sort of constructivist reading that suggests instead a kind of radical agency in its pages. I thus explore Friedrich Nietzsche’s account of Thucydides’ “realism,” which, it turns out, shows considerable similarity to today’s radical or post-modern constructivism. This kind of constructivist reading does in fact suggest a more fruitful way of reading the *History* as a resource for thinking about democracy. Having suggested that constructivism may or may not lead to a greater appreciation of democratic politics in the *History*, I turn to think about how different versions of realism and constructivism bear upon how we understand the place of Pericles in Thucydides’ account of Athenian democratic politics. I close by considering the *History*’s unique blend of realism and constructivism and how it relates to recent announcements of the emergence of “realist constructivism” or “constructivist realism.”

Constructivism and Collective Character in the *History*

Perhaps constructivism’s most basic challenge to realism is its insistence that ideas and ideals matter as much as material interests (or, put differently, that material interests are themselves a set of shared ideas or understandings). In part,

this amounts to holding out hope for some sort of international cooperation, inspired, say, by notions of justice or human rights, as an alternative to the perennial struggle for power. In part, too, it counters realism's claim that all states are motivated by a common human interest in power with the idea that the particular collective identity of a state matters in shaping its actions in the international realm. In this section, I highlight Thucydides' own interest in such matters of collective identity. That interest suggests the openness of the *History* to a constructivist reading. At the same time, the common readings of character's role in the *History* tend, much like common realist readings, to downplay the significance of domestic politics.

Thucydides does not, of course, use the contemporary language of identity; but the broadly analogous idea of "character" plays a central role in the *History* (Zumbrunnen 2002). In Book 1, Thucydides records a "conference" held at Sparta to determine whether or not the Peloponnesians ought to go to war with Athens. Corinthian speakers rise to warn the Spartans of the enemies they face; in doing so, they present a famous and elaborate comparison of the war's antagonists. The Athenians, they say, are always "ready to act," "always abroad," "definitely innovators and quick to form their plans and carry out whatever action they resolve" (1.70). By contrast, the Spartans are "delayers," "the most homebound of all," seeking only "to preserve the status quo" (1.70). This characterological contrast, the Corinthians argue, will shape the war and its outcome. The Spartans must attend to "what sort of opponents [they] will have in the Athenians." If they do not see "how greatly, let us say totally" the Athenians differ from them, the Spartans are bound to meet defeat at the hands of a more daring enemy.

Work in both classics and political theory has long emphasized the centrality of this matter of collective civic character in the *History*. Lowell Edmunds describes the contrast between Athens and Sparta as "programmatically" and as providing the "terms and concepts" that enable both Thucydides and the actors of the *History* themselves to "understand events" (Edmunds 1975: 89–90; see also J.H. Finley 1941: 121; Kagan 1974: 358; Pouncey 1980: 778). From a variety of directions, other scholars have argued that the peculiarities of the Athenian character help to explain Athens' fate. Peter Euben (1990) considers the "corruption" of Athenian collective identity over the course of the war. Steven Forde argues that Athenian character embodies a kind of "liberation" that in the end reveals itself as the "corrosive incubus" of an "individualism" that "destroys the city" (1986: 443, 442). Over a century ago, F.M. Cornford (1907) read the *History* as a tragedy, his argument resting in part on the idea that tragic flaws lurk in the Athenian character. More recently, W.R. Connor (1984) marks the enduring appeal of the characterological contrast, noting that some saw Athens–Sparta mapping on to US–USSR during the Cold War.

We can easily enough see how this matter of collective character might inspire a challenge to strict realist readings of the *History*. Laurie Johnson (1993) has suggested that because "character" works poorly as a social scientific concept, its

centrality in the *History* ought to frustrate most realist analyses. More specifically here, the Corinthian speech suggests the importance of particular collective identities to the understanding of the behavior of particular city-states. The Athenians and Spartans act in systematically different ways. If we want to explain – and, for the Spartans, predict – Athenian action, we having to understand the peculiar daring that lies near the heart of the Athenian character. Perhaps all cities are on some level driven by “fear, honor and interest.” This apparently “realist” fact, though, is overwhelmed by the real differences in how the rivals understand and act upon those basic human motivations.

Still, if a focus on character in the *History* can move us away from realism, it need not do so. No less a realist than Hans Morgenthau drew upon the notion of character – Russian, English, American (1966: 122–32). Beyond this, and more important for my purposes here, character can easily enough be fitted into the kind of social scientific reading of the *History* that political theorists often decry in realist appropriations. This is not to say that realism and social science are coextensive, merely that political theorists often enough tend to lump the two together and criticize the result. William Bluhm thus found in the *History* a “causal theory of empire,” thereby making the work relevant for “today’s behavioral science.” Central to that theory of empire was character as a key independent variable (Bluhm 1962: 32). Bluhm’s argument prefigures in Thucydidean scholarship the possibility of a seemingly constructivist emphasis on identity reduced to the provision of the “idea” or “identity” variable – and so prefigures the possibility, diagnosed by some international relations scholars, that constructivism can easily be co-opted, its more radical possibilities domesticated. Rather than challenging the dominance of a social scientific realism, the constructivist emphasis on identity or character winds up being nothing more than a helpful supplement to it (see e.g., Hynek and Teti 2010).

We cannot avoid noting that Thucydides near the *History*’s end seemingly provides support for this treatment of collective character as a kind of empirical referent rather than itself a subject of political discourse, constructed in and through relations among states. In 8.96, he seems to confirm the Corinthians’ claims about Athens and Sparta and indeed to treat character as an independent variable central to explaining the war:

... the Lacedaemonians proved the most convenient of all people for the Athenians to be at war with. For as the farthest from them in character (*tropos*) – the one people being quick, the other slow; the one enterprising, the other timid – they were obliging in general and particularly in the case of a naval power. The Syracusans demonstrated this; for because they were the most similar to the Athenians in character, they also fought the best against them.

Here the Athenian and Spartan characters are fixed at the outset of the war and help to explain what happens. As the Corinthians predict, the Spartans prove ill-equipped to deal with opponents like the Athenians. The restless Athenian

character no doubt helps explain why the Athenians go to Sicily in the first place. That they meet a foe similar to themselves in the Syracusans helps to explain the disastrous outcome of that expedition and, one supposes, Athens' ultimate defeat.

At first glance, then, the matter of character suggests how a constructivist focus on norms or identities can feed back into a particular social scientific reading of the *History*. Most significantly for my purposes, this way of thinking about character aids and abets realism in downplaying the significance of domestic politics, especially the politics of democratic Athens. If the Corinthians' account of the collective identities of the protagonists is correct, as Thucydides in 8.96 says it is; and if those identities remain constant throughout the war and so largely explain its course; then the twists and turns of Athenian politics seem to matter much less. We surely here move away from the kind of stereotypical realist reading that denies significant differences among interest-pursuing states. Athens and Sparta differ at the very least in how they characteristically understand and pursue their interests. We have nonetheless in essence replaced interest with identity as a variable that explains the cities' actions. Athens' identity is perhaps intertwined with its democratic politics but it is fixed. The variation of identity as an independent variable is between states, not within states. Democratic politics may express a city's identity, but cannot change it. Identity thus matters more than democratic politics in explaining what happens to Athens.

All this in a way simply brings us back to the question political theorists have so often posed to realist and social scientific readings of the *History*: why the speeches? In particular, if Thucydides means to offer collective character or identity as a fixed variable that explains the course of the war, why not say so at the outset rather than waiting until 8.96? Why, to borrow from Connor, does Thucydides "restrain" himself, allowing the Corinthians to draw the initial contrast between Athens and Sparta (1984: 41)? I will eventually argue that the answer has to do with the *History*'s ability to incorporate multiple perspectives on actors and actions in its pages. To prepare the way for that argument, though, I turn to the more radical constructivist reading of the *History* offered by Friedrich Nietzsche.

Nietzsche and Thucydidean Realism

Realist appropriations of the *History* often lump Thucydides with other famous realists, notably Machiavelli and Hobbes. In this section, I consider a rather more surprising instance of this claim – in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche (Zumbrunnen 2002). Unlike the treatment of character as an independent variable explaining action, Nietzsche's reading suggests that constructivist understandings of the *History* may indeed check the tendency of realist accounts to undermine the significance of domestic and especially democratic politics. At the same time, Nietzsche complicates any clear-cut contemporary distinction between realism and constructivism in the *History*.

In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche calls Thucydides his “recreation ... from all Platonism” (1990: 117–18). In the same passage, he links Thucydides with Machiavelli, referring to their shared and “unconditional will not to deceive themselves” about reality. In contrast to this clear-eyed realism, Plato’s idealism is “morally infected” by the Platonic conception of the good. It is a “higher swindle” born of cowardice, to which Nietzsche contrasts Thucydides’ “courage in the face of reality.” Like Machiavelli, Thucydides squarely and unflinchingly faces reality, refuses to “flee” to the comfort of the ideal, and tells it like it is.

What, then, is this “reality” which Thucydides so squarely faces? In *Human, all too Human*, Nietzsche points to the Melian Dialogue. In an aphorism titled “the origins of justice,” Nietzsche writes:

Justice (fairness) has its origins among people of approximately equal power, as Thucydides correctly understood (in the terrible dialogues of the Athenian and Melian ambassadors). (1995: 70)

At first glance, the view Nietzsche attributes to Thucydides seems to fit well with the basic realist notion that ideals like justice take a backseat to the realities of power. The clear-eyed realist knows that justice only enters the conversation when equal powers confront one another.

That said, there appears to be a gap between Nietzsche’s characterization of Thucydides’ insight and the language of the Melian Dialogue itself. Nietzsche seems to have in mind the following admonition issued by the Athenian envoys to the Melians:

We presume that you aim at accomplishing what is possible in accordance with the real thoughts of both of us, since you know as well as we do that what is just is arrived at [*krinetai*] only when the necessity on both sides is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, while the weak yield what they must. (5.89)

In general, the envoys make the same broad realist point that Nietzsche attributes to Thucydides: justice only comes into play when there is no power imbalance to decide matters. The gap between Nietzsche and the envoys appears in the word *krinetai*. As both Jacqueline de Romilly and Clifford Orwin (1994: 70) point out, *krinetai* does not mean “originates,” as Nietzsche would have it. De Romilly concludes that “what Nietzsche should have said was ‘is valid’ or ‘is applied’” (1963: 300 n.1).

The difference here is more than mere semantics. If we take the envoys’ words as pointing toward an understanding of justice as “valid” or “applied” only in particular situations, then justice exists as an idea or ideal independent of those situations. This, we might say, accords in a loose way with what we commonly think of as realism. Justice exists independent of power relations. States will normally deploy what power they have in pursuit of their interests. When this pursuit is checked by a balance of power, the parties involved may turn to what they will

then call ideas of justice, though justice here serves simply as a label for a *modus vivendi* brought about by the stalemate of equal power. If, on the other hand, we take Thucydides as seeing that justice “originates” only in particular situations, then justice has no existence independent of those situations. Rather than waiting in the wings for the right moment, justice comes into being only when two parties of equal power confront one another. For Nietzsche, that is, Thucydides is a sort of constructivist, believing not that justice is irrelevant to the struggle for power but that it is itself a subject of that struggle.

From this point of view, we might say that when Nietzsche attributes a certain sort of realism to Thucydides, he means – to borrow a recent coinage – a constructivist realism or a realist constructivism. This broad conclusion finds confirmation of a sort in Nietzsche’s claim in *Twilight of the Idols* that “Sophist culture, by which I mean *realist culture*, attains in [Thucydides] its perfect expression” (1990: 18). In arguing that Thucydides is a constructivist, Lebow rightly has reference to the sophists’ concern with the origins and malleability of human *nomoi* (2001: 457–60). The case for Thucydides’ constructivism for Lebow rests in part on his sharing this concern. Nietzsche would seem to be making a similar point, but uses the language of realism. For Nietzsche, that is, Thucydides is a realist precisely because he appreciates the insights of the sophists. In the context of Melos, this means appreciating that justice is a changeable subject of human struggles for power.

Nietzsche further hints at the sort of realism he has in mind in the section of *Human, all too Human* immediately following his reference to the Melian Dialogue:

Of the right of the weaker. If someone submits under certain conditions to someone stronger, as for example a besieged city does, the reciprocal condition is that he can destroy himself, burn the city, and thus cause a great loss to the stronger. Hence a sort of equivalence arises here, on the basis of which rights can be stipulated. The enemy gains an advantage from one’s own preservation. (1995: 71)

Here it appears that not only justice but also the equality of power from which justice originates is subject to negotiation and renegotiation. Notably, Thucydides has the Athenians offer to the Melians precisely this sort of renegotiation of power and rights:

MELIANS: “And how could it prove as advantageous for us to become slaves, as it is for you to have dominion?”

ATHENIANS: “Because it would be to your advantage to submit before suffering the most horrible fate, and we should gain by not destroying you.” (5.92–3)

The Athenians here implicitly recognize that from a certain perspective the Melians have more power than it seems. They might be valuable to the Athenians, and in this potential value lies power. They might use that power to counterbalance the military might of the Athenians and so “stipulate” their “right” to survive.

The Melians cling to the hope of Spartan or divine intervention and so do not seize the potential power they seem to have. But from Thucydides' point of view as Nietzsche reads it, that potential power does in fact exist. This suggests, in turn, that neither the Athenians nor the Melians are as fully constrained by the "reality" that the strong do what they can while the weak suffer what they must. At the very least, what counts as strong and weak is not given in any particular situation. It is a matter of negotiation. Power relations, that is, do not exist independently from their construction and reconstruction in and through words and actions. Put differently, finding not simply determinative realism but a kind of realist-constructivism in Thucydides opens greater space in the history for politics to matter.

Realism, Constructivism, and Periclean Politics

I began this essay by highlighting an apparent basic affinity between, on the one hand, a constructivist approach to the *History* that would, *contra* realism, emphasize the role of speech, norms, ideals, and identities in its pages and, on the other hand, the possibility that the *History* has more of interest to say about "domestic politics" than realism allows. Particularly for those interested, as I am, in recovering the *History* as a resource democratic theory, the constructivist turn seems promising. The previous two sections, though, have called this promise into question. It turns out that a longstanding, familiar and broadly constructivist way of reading the *History*, focused upon the collective character, may itself dovetail with the stereotypical realist idea that cities are "units of action."

Against this backdrop, Nietzsche offers another possibility. Though he locates in Thucydides something he calls realism, it is a sophistic realism or perhaps a constructivist realism. The "terrible reality" revealed at Melos is that what we take as reality is in fact subject to negotiation, to construction (and so deconstruction and reconstruction) through speech. This sort of sophistic or constructivist realism makes speech more than a means for the expression of underlying and constant interests or identities. Speech shapes not only identity but, too, those aspects of the political world – power, interest – that realists take as fixed by either human nature or the structure of the international arena.

Nietzsche develops this argument only briefly. In this section, I begin to consider the possibility that we might read domestic politics – or, more precisely, Athenian democratic politics – in the *History* in a way inspired by Nietzsche's diagnosis of Thucydides' sophistic realism. Nietzsche's reading reclaims speech on the international level as more than a mere instrument for the expression of interests or identity. We might expect, then, an analogous reading of politics within the city similarly to recover Thucydides' account of a democratic politics that works in and through speech, not simply as recording the inevitable working out of civic interests and identities, but as constructive of those interests and identities. In the confines of this essay, I approach this task by focusing on Pericles, who Nietzsche calls

the “statesman” of Sophist or realist culture. I first consider what becomes of Pericles’ role in the *History* if we adopt either a strident (and caricatured) realist view or the kind of constructivism that works as a mere supplement to social scientific realism. I then turn to more nuanced realist and constructivist ways of reading Pericles’ place in Athens. These latter approaches begin to converge on a realist constructivism or constructivist realism that owes something to Nietzsche and that promises to recover the *History* as a central text for democratic theory.

Let us first, then, consider Pericles from the most strident realist point of view. Here the city is unified by its interests and acts accordingly. Those interests are exogenous to the domestic politics of the city, given to it either by human nature or by the city’s location in an arena of competing cities. Realists can easily enough find evidence for Thucydides’ acceptance of these claims in Book 1, with its description of the rise of Athenian imperial power and the seeming inevitability of the conflict with Sparta, along with its apparent assertion that human nature makes fear, honor, and interest the inevitable motivators of human action. If we accept these claims in their most literal (or extreme) form, then strictly speaking Pericles does not matter, nor does any other particular leader. The city as a unit of action will act as human nature or international structure demands, and particular political actors are mere instruments or agents of its action.

It is difficult to find such a reading of Pericles in the literature, no doubt because his prominent presence in the *History* makes it hard to argue that he does not matter to Thucydides. There is, of course, the famous eulogy at 2.65, which depicts Pericles as a pivotal figure in Athens. Then, too, Thucydides records no less than three Periclean speeches, drawing further attention to them by recording only Pericles’ speeches and no responses to them. This vocal Periclean presence perhaps suggests that a constructivist approach might be better for understanding Pericles’ significance. This would seem especially to be the case for the Funeral Oration, in which Pericles’ lays out his vision of the character – collective identity if we prefer – of the Athenians. Early in the speech, he claims to “set forth by what sort of training we have come to our present position, and with what political institutions [*politaeia*] and as the result of what manner of life [*tropos*] our empire became great” (2.36; Forster Smith trans.). Steven Forde calls what follows in the Funeral Oration “the most famous discussion of Athenian character” (1986: 434). That discussion is by and large substantively similar to the account of the Athenians given by the Corinthians in Book 1 and seemingly confirmed by Thucydides himself at 8.96.

We might then read the Funeral Oration as pointing to a kind of constructivist reading of the *History*. We might further think that this sort of constructivist reading makes space for a more complicated understanding of Athenian democratic politics, especially given that the Funeral Oration shows us an Athenian leader speaking to an Athenian audience. Along these lines, Per Jansson (1997) turns to the Funeral Oration as part of a broader effort to locate “identity defining practices” in the *History* and thereby to understand how collective identities are “created and maintained.”

Interestingly, though, Jansson describes the Funeral Oration's discussion of Athenian character as an "explicit act of self-identification" (1997: 159). Though I should not want to push this as a critique of Jansson's reading in particular, this framing of the Funeral Oration again suggests how constructivist readings can, as discussed above, in fact serve to bracket off politics as struggle or conflict or disagreement. There is an Athenian self, which is of some importance to understanding Athenian action. The Funeral Oration – like the Corinthian speech and Thucydides' own authorial comments – serves to identify that self for the reader. To overstate the point for effect: both Pericles himself and the domestic politics in which he plays such a central part are reduced, again, to the rather unproblematic revelation of a more or less fixed Athenian character as an important independent variable.

No careful reader of the *History*, of course, could or would want to dismiss Pericles so easily. A constructivist approach may well lead to the treatment of collective character as something that varies across cities (Athenian character is distinct from Spartan character) but is fixed within the city, working either outside or beneath its politics. We have seen, though, that Nietzsche finds in Thucydides another perspective, one in which what counts as real is subject to political negotiation. What might it mean to apply that Nietzschean reading to Pericles?

A first step along these lines is to think of the Funeral Oration not as a moment in which Athens through Pericles identifies itself but, instead, as a moment in which Pericles proffers an understanding of the Athens' collective identity meant to persuade the Athenians. The speech itself indicates that Pericles means through his words to move his assembled fellow citizens to a particular course of action: to love the city and to turn to the war with renewed purpose. Pericles aims, that is, to use his account of who the Athenians are to get them to act as he thinks they should. Given the authorial perspective of 8.96 and its broad-brush endorsement of the Athenians as "quick," we might argue that the Funeral Oration reveals to the Athenians who they *really* are. But from the more immediate perspective of Pericles and his audience in the moment, who the Athenians really are is a question for political rhetoric, not a fixed point prior to politics.

A more nuanced reading of constructivist possibilities in the *History* thus locates in its pages a play of sometimes rival perspectives. From the vantage point of the historian as it emerges in passages like 8.96, character or identity appears fixed. From the vantage point of the political actor, which emerges when we consider either how Pericles chooses his words or how those words seem to play in Athens, character or identity appears as potentially changeable through speech. Importantly, we might say something similar about a more complex and nuanced reading of realist possibilities in the *History*.

If a particularly (and, again, overdrawn) realism sees Pericles as irrelevant in the face of the city's inevitable pursuit of its interests, a more complex and nuanced realism takes him as a statesman among statesman – we might compare this to Donnelly's discussion of a "strong" but not "radical" realism that "allows modest

space for politically salient ‘non-realist’ concerns” and tends to “present realism as a positive theory of international politics or statesmanship” (2000: 12). As Pericles himself has it in 2.60, he sees clearly what has to be done and is able to explain it to the *demos* persuasively. What is more, he is an honest patriot who always has the interest of Athens as his goal. This is the Pericles who counsels a defensive strategy at the outset of the war. And this is the Pericles who, Thucydides tells us, could calm the Athenians when they were too elated or buck them up when they were discouraged. This is Pericles, in other words, as the realist statesman, using democratic politics as a way to guide an often wayward Athens (back) toward the pursuit of its real interests.

At some point, this rendering of Pericles as an always-at-work realist statesman becomes broadly compatible with a constructivist rendering of Pericles as trying to shape Athenian collective identity. Pericles as, in Nietzsche’s words, the statesman of sophist or realist culture might be seen as attempting (repeatedly – in all three of his speeches in the *History*) to recall Athens not simply to the sort of interests it shares with all similarly situated states, but also to what he takes to be (or at least describes for his purpose as) its proper identity. “Accept my account of who we are,” he seems to proclaim, “and this will guide your pursuit of interests on the international stage.” This is, in a sense, the essence of his appeal in the Funeral Oration and the final speech. In his first speech, counseling a defensive strategy, we might see him as aiming to call forth or shape or create particular aspects of the Athenian character, while de-emphasizing, pushing down, others – most notably, Athenian aggressiveness, restlessness, daring.

Along these lines, and moving beyond Pericles, we might understand the later struggles of would-be Athenian statesmen in similar terms. Cleon and Diodotus, like good realists, try to appeal to Athenian interests; but these appeals intertwine with claims about justice and how such a “norm” fits into the Athenian way of acting in the world. Likewise Nicias and Alcibiades take the daring of the Athenians as inextricable from the question of what Athenian interests are at stake in Sicily. All of these political actors speak as if they are both realists and constructivists, as if their task is at once both to pursue the interests of the city and to activate – and so to shape – its character.

As I have already suggested, this way of thinking about rhetoric, deliberation, and democratic decision making in the *History* points toward a host of difficult and so interesting interpretive questions. Should we see Pericles, Alcibiades, and the rest as appealing to a preexisting character or working to shape that character? To take again the paradigmatic example, ought we to see Pericles in the Funeral Oration as simply drawing upon a pre-existing Athenian identity, rhetorically deploying it to bring Athens back to its proper interest? Or, by contrast, should we see him as engaged in the construction of that identity, the crafting of Athenian character by trying to offer an authoritative description of it?

The best – if perhaps not fully satisfying answer to these questions – is probably “it depends.” It depends upon the perspective we take. From the perspective of

8.96, Athenian character is fixed. Leaders “use” it well or use it poorly. From the immediate perspective of the political actor, character is a resource in the struggle to win and keep influence with the *demos* and so something to be drawn upon and simultaneously shaped by rhetoric. It is, again, hard to imagine that Thucydides’ Pericles does not see himself as not only drawing upon but also helping to craft the self-understanding of Athens.

This play of perspectives in the *History* points back toward Nietzsche’s fondness for Thucydides. It also perhaps points us beyond the realist–constructivist debate. We might, for example, think simultaneously in realist and constructivist terms about Pericles. As he tries to build and maintain his relationship with the Athenian people, he is at once a would-be realist statesman trying to guide Athens toward its interests and a participant in the construction of those interests as an aspect of the broader Athenian identity. In a way, realism versus constructivism is only the issue if we distance ourselves from the perspective of the political actor and adopt the perspective of the detached observer. If we do that, then we turn to passages like 8.96 and treat identity as a sort of intervening variable between the interests that drive all humans and the particular form of a city’s action.

Thucydides, though, will not let us take this comparatively easy route. Before we get to 8.96, we re-experience the war from the point of view of the actor. From that point of view, domestic politics matter as the site where the interests that realists emphasize and the identities that constructivists emphasize come together in complex ways as cities try to decide what to do. In Thucydides’ democratic Athens, this occurs as political elites employ rhetoric in an effort to win the support of the *demos*. The rhetoric of would-be statesmen like Pericles claims to locate the city’s interests while working in the context of the city not as abstract unit of action, but as a particularistic entity with a particular collective identity. That identity may or may not be malleable at any particular moment but will always in one way or another impact the pursuit of interest.

Conclusion: Realist Constructivism, Constructivist Realism

My conclusion, then, is that whether we take Thucydides as a realist or constructivist is of less importance than we might first think. From both the perspective of the political actor in the *History* and the perspective of its author as historian, realism and constructivism coexist. Nietzsche was on to something when he described the “culture” Thucydides reflects as both realist and Sophist – as open-eyed about the play of power in this world and as seeing that political actors construct what is real as they struggle over just what counts as power or justice or character.

As I have already mentioned, over the last decade, some scholars of international relations theory have moved to where Nietzsche long ago went, toward a sort of “realist constructivism” or “constructivist realism.” In 2003, J. Samuel

Barkin argued that realist and constructivist international relations theorists tend to talk past one another due to rampant mutual misidentification. Realism is often falsely equated with materialism, when its true focus is power, in all its forms. Constructivism, on the other hand, is often confused with idealism which is in turn often confused with liberalism. In fact, Barkin contends, at its core constructivism focuses on the social construction of reality, with some constructivists arguing “that an identifiable reality exists out there and can be accessed through empirical research” while others hold “that we can never know for sure if what we observe really exists independently of our observation of it and, therefore, no true reality exists for empirical research to find” (2003: 326–7). On either (proper) understanding of constructivism, a realist constructivism is possible. As we have seen, Nietzsche in a broadly similar way appears to have found in Thucydides a combination of a realist focus on power and a (“postmodern”) constructivist rejection of an independent, empirically observable reality.

Barkin’s article led to a forum in *International Studies Review* in which various scholars argued about the contours of a possible realist constructivism and, indeed, over whether “constructivist realism” might be a better label (Jackson 2004). In a review of Barkin’s later book, *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, Daniel Nexon argued that these sorts of arguments may be symptomatic of a moment of “postparadigmism” in international relations. In such a moment, arguments between constructivism and realism lose traction, giving way to “puzzle-driven research” or “analytical eclecticism” (Nexon 2011: 903, 905). We might say that Thucydides himself is “post-” or perhaps “pre-” paradigmatic. Revisiting Lebow’s statement that “movements establish genealogies to legitimate themselves,” we might also say that Thucydides as purported ancestor consistently disrupts both constructivist and realist genealogies.

On the reading I advance here, the *History* in particular disrupts attempts to co-opt its constructivist and realist impulses into a paradigm of social scientific determinism. My own realist–constructivist or constructivist–realist Thucydides instead prefigures the “radical” or “postmodern” character of constructivism and so reopens domestic politics in general and democratic politics in particular as a site of contingent (and so irreducible) contestation of ideas and ideals, interests and power. In this way, Thucydides as the founding figure of international relations might provide leverage for a response to what Hynek and Teti describe as constructivism being “drawn gradually closer to its mainstream Neo-utilitarian counterpart” thus “effectively purg[ing] constructivism of its early critical potential” (2010: 193).

To the extent that Thucydides maintains a “critical” or “postmodern” potential of the sort Hynek and Teti wish to maintain, that potential lies in the *History*’s refusal to grant the detached perspective of the observer priority over the immediate perspective of the political actor. Put differently, the *History* seems to insist, as a fully radical constructivism does, that the observer is always at work, just like the political actor, in constructing reality – and not simply passively

observing it. I have here insisted on the importance of the perspective of the political actor in the *History*. When we attend to that perspective, we can see the importance to Thucydides of democratic politics as the struggle by leaders and citizens to navigate through rhetoric a world in which power and ideas, interests and ideals are all uncertain, if certainly meaningful.

Here we might recall W.R. Connor's announcement of a "postmodern" Thucydides, one who creates a work of competing and shifting perspectives that leads the reader to re-experience the war. This for Connor helps to explain why Thucydides can and must "retain his distance and remain taciturn" on, for example, the matter of Athenian character (1984: 41). For the historian to define the reality of the war from the outset would deprive the reader of its full experience. And yet Thucydides only remains taciturn for so long, eventually moving to a different mode of analysis, challenging the reader to consider this perspective of the detached and objective observer. On the one hand, insofar as this perspective is only momentarily adopted, it accords with the shifting perspectives that we might expect from a postmodern Thucydides. On the other hand, the presence of this clear authorial voice in the *History* reaffirms Thucydides' resistance to any attempt to claim him as one's own.

Guide to Further Reading

Donnelly (2000) offers a broad overview of realist approaches to international relations. Barkin (2003) reviews various constructivist approaches and their relationship to realism. Both Johnson (1993) and Ahrens Dorf (1997) consider and critique realist readings of the *History*, while Lebow (2001) and Zumbrennen (2002a) find constructivist elements in the work. Though not constructivist, Orwin (1994) provides a nuanced treatment of issues of justice in Thucydides. Connor (1984) argues for a "postmodern" Thucydides and, in the process, offers an excellent and careful reading of the *History* as a whole. On Thucydides and democracy, see Saxonhouse (1996) and Zumbrennen (2008).

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Thucydides and the Problem of Citizenship

Gerald Mara

Thucydides and Modern Dilemmas of Citizenship

Receptions of Thucydides among political scientists and political theorists always seem cued by prior senses of contemporary problems and questions. Hobbes' praise of Thucydides' "most politic" historiography parallels a Hobbesian state of nature narrative wherein "men's miseries do better instruct than their good success" (1989: 579). Raymond Aron's recourse to Thucydides enriches his assessment of the prospects for war and peace in the nuclear age (2003: 140–9). Victor Davis Hanson includes Thucydides among the "glum ancients" who would have not been at all surprised by the September, 2001 attacks on the United States (2002: xv). Joseph H. Lane Jr. employs a series of readings of Thucydides to comment critically on US foreign policy in Iraq and Afghanistan (2005: 52–90). Considering how the *History* might inform current assessments of the problem of citizenship should therefore begin by appreciating the current significance of that question. In a variety of regions, ranging from Eastern Europe to Latin America, South Africa, and the Middle East, formerly authoritarian regimes have given way to promised democratic transformations. Outcomes have been widely mixed, but all have involved, in different ways, controversies over citizenship. Growing fluidity across national borders and the intensifying challenges of immigration have also rendered the designation "citizen" controversial in established democracies. In some contexts, citizenship is seen as a right (perhaps the right to have rights) and the principal concern is access. Yet to be an active citizen also means to be endowed with power, implying both the assumption of responsibility and the capacity to inflict harm.

Democratic political theory's treatment of citizenship is appropriately complex. Both variants of Western liberalism, drawing alternately on Locke and Kant and

converging in the work of John Rawls (1999: 10; 2005: 99 ff, 231 ff), often treat constitutional citizenship as a predictable, often passive, practice within a politics distributing goods and burdens in a context of stable pluralism. Yet this perspective is challenged, first by proponents of communitarianism (Benjamin Barber's strong democracy, 2003) and then by those who interpret democratic politics more agonistically (William Connolly's gentle wars: 1995). Within these formulations, citizenship is seen as a more active and less predictable form of practice capable of challenging and reinventing political roles. Yet while this framework may appreciate processes of energetic political change more than the language of liberalism, it also leaves open the question of how democratic theory might critically judge different exercises of political energy.

The ancient Greeks' contributions to these conversations is controversial. For social theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and Mark Warren, the practices of the classical Greek *poleis* were marked by too many exclusions and too much ethical homogeneity to offer practical resources for those grappling with the politics of modernity and postmodernity. The theories of classical political philosophy seem elitist statements aiming to replace, not strengthen democracy (Habermas 1990: 201). Other readings have been more positive, however. Hannah Arendt interpreted Greek practice as offering a model of political creativity not bound to the bygone *polis* (1958: 176–7, 186–8, 220, 247, 325). Critics who read Arendt simply as a reverent antiquarian – cf. Habermas 1977 – are surely wrong; see Tsao 2002. Recent historical explorations of Athenian political institutions and culture have shown more continuities with modern and postmodern democratic experiences than critics have recognized (Farenga 2006: 547–8; Ober 2008: 26, 270, 279; Balot 2009: 271–300). Important critical textual work in political theory has argued that the philosophical resources of Plato and Aristotle can inform thinking about democratic practice in illuminating ways (Euben 1990, 1997; Salkever 1990, 2009a; Saxonhouse 1996, 2006; Mara 1997, 2002, 2008; Monoson 2000; Frank, 2005; Markovits 2008). Ryan Balot thus comments that the practices and texts of democratic Athens constitute a “looking glass in the reflection of which we can reinvent ourselves as democratic citizens” (2010: 88).

Can Thucydides also be a resource for reflections on democratic citizenship? For some, the prospects are limited. There is a lingering sense that his insights are mainly those of a prescient if unsystematic international relations theorist (Waltz 1959: 159; Morgenthau 1985: 10, 40). Insofar as he engages domestic politics, his conceptual framework seems focused, first of all, on the analysis of power, seeing through surface activities of citizenship to discover the power relations at their core (Crane 1996: 72). Moreover, a large portion of the *History*'s political narrative pointedly emphasizes civic disintegration, condensed in the commentary on the sickening political violence in Corcyra (3.82.2). Jonathan Price (2001: 11–19) suggests that the theme of political *stasis* guides the *History* as a whole (see also Macleod 1983: 121–2). Finally, insofar as Thucydides offers any model of political excellence, it is within his praise of the Athenian statesman Pericles whose leadership is displayed by controlling democratic citizens.

In this chapter, I argue that Thucydides' contributions to our current thinking about democratic citizenship are, impressions to the contrary notwithstanding, both substantial and provocative. We should reconsider the apparent reasons for thinking otherwise. His examination of inter-*poleis* conflict is executed with a continuing eye toward the influence of "domestic politics" (Orwin 1994: 172–92). Ongoing Athenian considerations of how the city should interpret and respond to political challenges intersect with internal and contested understandings of the regime's character. While he clearly emphasizes that power is central to politics, his treatments are unsettling rather than reductive. His tracing of the causes and consequences of civic collapse implies a parallel vision of a civic health being eroded. Finally, the Thucydidean assessment of Pericles could be read as identifying the problematics as well as the contributions of his leadership.

My proposal is to read Thucydides from what might be (cautiously) called an Aristotelian perspective. Two broad connections are posited. First, Thucydides' engagement with politics does not eclipse or deny Aristotle's vision of human beings as political animals who engage questions about justice through *logos* (*Politics* 1.2). Instead, the *History* examines how such practices can function under conditions of severe regime stress. Second, far from being the reductive social theorist who is alternately praised (Kagan) or criticized (Crane) for his resolutions, Thucydides speaks in a voice that is tentative and provocative. Like Aristotle's *Politics*, the *History* is continuous with and subject to the same vulnerabilities as the politics that it examines. However, the *History* does not simply anticipate the *Politics*, for it complicates the Aristotelian assessment of citizenship as well. In particular, Thucydides offers a vision of civic practice accompanied by fundamental risks of failure, understood not simply as the frustration of strategic objectives, but as the horrible misdirection of good intentions within conditions of political change. For all of this, Thucydides' representation of political life is not simply tragic, for the *History* paradoxically engages in a political education of which its author would seem to despair.

Pericles as Exemplary Citizen?

Why search for a Thucydidean model of citizenship beyond that offered by Pericles' example of civic excellence and public devotion? (Cf. Zimmern 1961: 199; Edmunds 1975: 193, 211; Parry 1981: 188; Farrar 1988: 163; Euben 1990: 191; Manville 1990: 14; Yunis 1996: 79–80.) There is, after all, the glowing epitaph on Pericles' career, focusing particularly on how he influenced the city's decisions through his speaking. His leadership stands in sharp contrast to the demagogic opportunism of those who followed:

Whenever he perceived that [the people] were arrogantly bold against what the times warranted, he confounded them into fearfulness by his speaking, and again,

when they were irrationally afraid, he restored them to confidence. And what was said to be a democracy was in fact a rule by the first man (*prōtos anēr*). Those who came later, in contrast, since they were much more like one another and each was extending himself to become first, [they] gave over the affairs [of the city] to the pleasure of the *dēmos*. (Thuc. 2.65. 9–10, after Lattimore 1998 and Smith 1962)

For many, this assessment is iconic for the valorization of Periclean citizenship. Cynthia Farrar (1988: 159–65) sees Thucydides' representation of Pericles as contributing to the origins of democratic theory, particularly exhibited in Pericles' efforts to encourage a thoughtfulness (*gnomē*) that resists passion or anger (*orgē*). Donald Kagan seconds "Thucydides' conviction that the course of the war was affected by talents of Pericles, which included foresight, patriotism and uncorruptability" (2009: 16). Yet the larger narrative of the *History* as well as features of the encomium itself must complicate ways in which we interpret Thucydides' judgment. As an instrument of the *archē* of the *prōtos anēr*, Pericles' *logos* is not democratic. His three direct speeches are monologues with no significant opposition or critical interrogation represented. When he implicitly recognizes dissenting views, he dismisses or marginalizes them. Those who would challenge Pericles' vision of political activity as the best path to honor are rejected not simply as inactive (the *apragmones*) but as useless (*achreia*) (2.40). Though he is praised for his speaking, his rhetoric subordinates speech to action (Mara 2008: 23–6). Athens' influence as an education to Greece (*tēs Hellados paideusin*) is said to be no mere boast in words (*ou logōn*) but the truth as revealed by the very fact of the city's power (*hē ergōn estin alētheia autē hē dynamis tēs poleōs*) (2.41). The Funeral Oration celebrates Athens' support of philosophy but it is a philosophy that refuses to be soft (2.40), where softness might emerge as political uselessness or as a critique rather than an appreciation of power. From this perspective, the excellence of the citizen is found not so much in the thoughtful contributions to the city's good embraced by democratic theory but in manly deeds capable of achieving the greatest fame. Close to the end of the Funeral Oration, Pericles affirms that "the whole earth is the tomb of conspicuous men (*andrōn epiphanōn*)" (2.43). The contrasting advice to women is that they meet the standard of excellence set for them by their nature if they avoid conspicuousness of any sort (2.45).

The *History* has sometimes been read as a valorization of such claims, an extended Periclean narrative of its own (Kagan 2009). Even those with less enthusiasm for the Periclean ethic, for example Gregory Crane (1996: 75) and Victoria Wohl (2002: 31, 57–61), see Thucydides' representation of Periclean leadership as fully supportive. Critiques of Pericles' androcentrism and imperialism are also critiques of Thucydides. However, there are also contraindications and the receptions that detect a Thucydidean critique of Periclean politics are perhaps more instructive (Strauss 1964: 193–4; Orwin 1994: 25–8; Monoson and Loriaux 1998: 285–97; Balot 2001: 148–9; Morrison 2006: 148–9). Several commentators have noted how the Plague narrative (which immediately follows the

Funeral Oration) undercuts Pericles' rhetoric at various levels (Strauss 1964: 194–5; Orwin 1994: 174). Pericles' embrace of conspicuous achievements extending across space and time is offset by the Plague's devastating reminder that senses of nobility develop within fragile cultural horizons. The marginalization of women presumes an understanding of nature (*physis*) as hierarchical and stable, while the course of the plague shows it as disruptive (2.50–3). The praise of Athens as having achieved the “greatest name” through the waging of multiple wars in Pericles' last speech (2.64) offers what Simon Hornblower (2008: 269) calls a “seed” whose fruit is the pressure imposed by the simultaneous wars with Lacedaemon and Sicily (7.27).

Perhaps most significantly, there are important continuities between the characterization of Pericles' influence and the subsequent deterioration of political leadership. The competition for personal influence among the next generation of politicians bespeaks a disappearance of citizenship that has in some ways been reinforced by Pericles' success in establishing himself as *prōtos anēr* (see Morrison 2006: 148–9. Smith's translation, “foremost citizen,” is misleading). Though he was able to energize or moderate the *demos* he did not contribute to a sustainable political culture. While these complications do not amount to a Thucydidean deconstruction of Pericles' stature, they do problematize the character and nature of political leadership and suggest that Periclean practice does not resolve the question of what it means to be a good citizen. As an alternative, I wish to examine a place in the *History* where good citizenship is thematized in more provocative ways, the speech of the otherwise unknown citizen Diodotus in the Mytilene debate in Book 3.

Diodotus and Democratic Speech

Diodotus' place within the *History* is itself a matter of ongoing controversy. Perhaps because of his limited appearance (nine chapters within Book 3) and obscure identity, he is sometimes treated as marginal. Yet Leo Strauss asserts that “Diodotus' speech reveals more of Thucydides himself than does any other speech” (1964: 231). For those appreciating Diodotus' significance, substantive assessments vary. Peter Euben (1990: 182) and Josiah Ober (1998: 102–3) interpret his contribution to the Mytilene debate as anti-democratic at its core. Arlene Saxonhouse, on the other hand, calls him “the first democratic theorist of antiquity” (1996: 75). James Boyd White (1984: 75) and Laurie Johnson (1993: 107–10, 135) see his insistence that Athens pay regard only to its interests as setting the stage for the brutality exhibited against Melos. Yet Clifford Orwin (1984: 324) and Joseph Lane (2005: 81) interpret his speech as encouraging the Athenians to draw upon what is best in themselves, to synthesize strength with decency. In what follows I build upon the more recuperative judgments to both extend and complicate a certain Aristotelian reception of Thucydides.

The meaning of good citizenship is one explicit focus of the debate on Mytilene. Athens must decide how to respond to the suppressed rebellion of a subject city that has in some respects been a partner (1.19; 3.10). Resolving this immediate dilemma is significant for Athens' future practices, for it must determine how to deal with defections from its *archē* in the future. Two successive assemblies are called. Of the first, we learn only the outcome: "Out of anger [the Athenians] resolved to kill ... all of the adult males and to enslave the children and the women" (3.36). The next day, however, brings a change in thinking, a sense "that the determination to destroy a whole city instead of simply the guilty was a greatly savage one ... [and] a greater part of the citizens (*pleon tēn politēn*) wished to deliberate again" (3.36). The second assembly does so. A number of opinions on both sides are expressed but Thucydides offers only two as direct speeches, the demagogue Cleon's insistence that severity be sustained and Diodotus' appeal for greater moderation. Their impacts are nonetheless decisive. Cleon's incendiary rhetoric erodes much of what now seems lukewarm support for moderation, and eventually the resolution urged by Diodotus only narrowly prevails (3.39).

Both speeches also critically examine democracy as a context for political speech. Cleon urges reaffirmation of harshness by appealing to the anger and fear experienced when the rebellion was discovered (3.38, 40). The appropriate response is a retaliatory justice that disregards that which Aristotle says makes human beings political. Far from being a civic resource, *logos* should be distrusted as deceptive manipulation or frivolous distraction. Democracies are incapable of ruling (*archein*) others (3.37) because their political talk replaces clear factual recognitions with blurred imagistic fascinations; the assembly has been "overcome by the pleasures of hearing and [acts] more like gazers on the performances of sophists than like those who deliberate about [the well being of] the city" (3.38). In arguing that the Athenians should not be deceived by any trust in speech (*logō pistēn*) (3.40), Cleon surely relies on the manipulative speech that he condemns. Yet insofar as he is successful, he delegitimizes any effort to reconsider the first decision as trivializing exhibitionism. Diodotus' case for moderation toward Mytilene demands that he offer a defense both of the reconsideration and of thoughtful political speech.

Within his appeal, Diodotus expressly identifies the character or practice of a good citizen (*agathos politēs*), a term that Cleon does not use;¹ he ties this practice to the capacity to employ *logos* well, influencing the city not "by intimidating one's opponents but by a speaking (*legonta*) on fair (equal) terms (*apo tou isou*) that makes the better [course] apparent" (3.42). The focus on deliberation initially suggests strategic calculations, reinforced when Diodotus urges attention only to Athens' advantage, discounting any worries over justice (3.44). The core of his case is that moderation toward Mytilene is in Athens' practical interest (3.47). However, Diodotus' noting (3.42) that deliberative *logos* must engage the "greatest things" (*ta megista*) clearly directs it toward considerations of purpose. When he counsels a posture toward the subject cities that relies on continuous surveillance (3.46) he invites the assembly to reconsider the empire's basic goods of power, wealth, and

honor. Though the language is allusive and indeterminate, these aspects of empire stand against Pericles' celebration of Athens' name in eternal memory (2.64) and Cleon's crass satisfaction (3.39) with material rewards. That Diodotus is serious about questions of purpose means that he cannot make his case without also delving more deeply into the problem of human motivation, offering a broadly anthropological explanation for why human beings err, replacing Cleon's *adikia* with *hamartia* (3.44). His answer points to persisting passions. "Hope and *erōs* are everywhere ... and being unseen they prevail over visible terrors" (3.44). Diodotus' greatest things thus include the deepest questions about the human things (*tēs anthrōpeias*) and he cannot engage in good citizenship without practicing what seems like political philosophy.

In focusing on the importance of deliberation for good citizenship Diodotus represents *logos* as a communicative practice whose influence is achieved by persuading equal conversation partners. While this statement may at first blush resemble Habermas' appeal to "the forceless force of the stronger argument" (1993: 49–50; 1996: 108), the psychological dynamics presumed by Diodotus are richer and more problematic. By insisting on the need for thoughtful judgment, Diodotus seems to reject passionate emotion as the most reliable guide to action in favor of the alternative of deliberation (*bouleuesthai*). When Diodotus reminds the assembly of the overwhelming power of the passions, he seems to condemn emotion as the enemy of *logos*. Yet the ubiquity of hope and *erōs* reflect the persisting reality of active emotion within all dimensions of human life. By calling some outcomes of this influence errors (*hamartiai*), he gestures toward a possible correctness in the arrangement of rational and emotional human capacities. The communicative dimensions of Diodotus' civic practice therefore recognize rather than simply oppose the emotions. Diodotus can speak for an alternative policy toward Mytilene not only because Athens' institutions allow the assembly to rethink decisions (Saxonhouse 2006), but also because of the broad emotional reaction against the savage cruelty of the first decision. Close to the end of his speech, Cleon warns the assembly of three errors that impede the exercise of imperial rule: pity; the pleasure of speeches; and moderate reasonableness (*epieikeia*) (3.40). These warnings are both prescient and ironic. Like Cleon, Diodotus distinguishes between healthy and destructive emotions, yet while Cleon employs a standard set by *orgē*, Diodotus appeals to a *logos* needing emotional partners, a broad initial sense of pity, and an attraction to speeches reflecting not a passion for amusement but an anxiety for the clarity needed for better practice. The outcome at which Diodotus aims is *epieikeia*, a reasonableness which also implies a kind of gentleness.

Because healthy forms of communicative *logos* require appropriate institutions, Diodotus must also interrogate the ways in which the Athenian assembly's practices facilitate or frustrate possibilities for deliberation. The assembly's practices are deficient not because they encourage frivolous displays but because they foster a paralyzing mistrust (3.42–3) (cf. Mara 2008: 99–100). Because demagogues such as Cleon

can orchestrate savage outcomes through their rhetoric, he shockingly confesses that even the most public spirited *logos* must manipulate the audience's passionate attachments; any persuasive argument, whether proposing the best or the most terrible things, must lie to secure trust (*pseusamenon piston genesthai*) (3.43).

The consequences of this admission are multiple. Listeners are cautioned against any swift judgment about the explicit argument. The appeal to advantage may not be all there is and the justice that is discounted may only be Cleon's retaliation. (That Diodotus' argument also involves an appeal to justice has been argued by Strauss 1964: 233; Orwin 1994: 152–3; Saxonhouse 2006: 160–3; Mara 2008: 169–72.) Deeper consideration of the case may demand reflection on what interest and justice involve. This strategy might well be assailed (as it is by Ober and Euben) as a further subversion of good citizenship, for deceptive speech exacerbates institutional distortions. Yet by informing his audience that he may deceive, he encourages attention to both the hidden proposals (moderation is not only prudent but also just, and the goods of the empire need to be seriously rethought) and the potential dangers (injecting still more deception into the city's political talk) within his argument. For all of this, the persistence of anger and fear continue to influence both Diodotus' proposals and the eventual outcome. Though the strict conclusions of his argument about the causes of human error (3.45) imply a complete absence of punishable guilt, his rhetoric responds to the partisan context of the debate by designating Mytilene's oligarchs as guilty and its *demos* as innocent (3.47). Though he calls for a determination of the oligarchs' punishment under conditions of quietness (*kath hēpsychian*) (3.48), the power of anger is not permanently muted and the assembly condemns them quickly under the motion of Cleon (3.49).

In identifying the task facing the *agathos politēs*, Diodotus articulates the standards for judging his own performance. A strict accounting would find him falling far short of his goal of influencing the city in a better direction by speaking well on equitable terms. However, this failure is traceable not to his own "cryptic mendacity" (Ober 1998: 102–3), but to the political and psychological barriers against the possibility of deliberation, even as deliberation and judgment are demanded by "the greatest things." Yet by embracing a standard of a deliberative excellence aiming at the better public choice (3.48), Diodotus refuses to abandon the possibilities of good citizenship, simply. We need eventually to consider whether that commitment is enough.

Political Speech's Vulnerabilities

Though ambiguities surround Diodotus' practice, the importance of his question about the place of *logos* within democratic citizenship is reinforced by two instances in the *History* where thoughtful speech is absent. Both occur when the democracy seems threatened; the narratives of these events can be intriguingly juxtaposed.

The first threat, narrated in Book 6, is occasioned by the mutilations of the Hermae prior to the sailing of the Sicilian expedition. The vandalism was “thought to have been done for the sake of a conspiracy (*sunōmosia*) aiming to accomplish a revolution (*neōterōn*) and the overthrow of the democracy” (6.27). Whether real or imagined, this prospect is met by severe political repressions (6.60). The second very real threat occupies much of Book 8 and it succeeds for a time in “depriving the Athenian *dēmos* of its freedom” (8.68), replacing the democratic regime with the oligarchy of the four hundred (8.67).

The two narratives are thematically connected on a number of levels, but what is particularly noteworthy here is the fate of political *logos*. The first case involves not a restriction but an expansion of political speech, for one of the assembly’s responses to the mutilations is to vote that “whoever wished, if he knew of any other impiety that had occurred, he could inform without fear, be he resident, foreigner or slave” (6.27). In one way, this is a radical expansion of the space for political speech since the decision eliminates differences even between citizens and slaves; Thucydides does not use the word *politēs* in his account. What emerges, however, is not civic speech but a cacophony of accusations that erode the city’s capacity to make thoughtful judgments and foster escalating suspicion and violence (6.60).

In the narrative of the oligarchic conspiracy’s success in Book 8 we encounter a political pathology that stands precisely opposite to cacophonous speech. Here, the *demos* is not vocal but silent (Zumbrunnen 2008: 27–44), cowed by the oligarchs’ creation of a political atmosphere of pervasive mistrust (*apistian*). At the onset of the conspiracy, though “the *dēmos* and the council (*boulē*) chosen by the bean [i.e. selected by lot] continued to meet, they deliberated nothing (*ebouleuon de ouden*) not selected by the conspirators ... and no one of the others spoke against them because of fear and because it was seen that the conspiracy was substantial ... the *dēmos* kept quiet” (8. 66). This restriction of political speech is mirrored in the narrative, for the only direct speech of book eight (8.53) forecloses further direct speeches.

At one level, the outcomes for citizenship in the two narratives differ strikingly. In the first, democratic citizenship ceases to be an exclusive or restrictive category; in the second, it is no longer a meaningful one. There are, however, two important convergences. First, both narratives represent the disappearance of the civic function of deliberation, in the one due to cacophony, in the other to silencing. In both cases, this disappearance is fostered by the erosion or abuse of institutions, and both accounts thereby attest to the importance of effectively functioning institutions in enabling citizen deliberation.

Neither narrative remains exclusively at the institutional level, however, and the second convergence is more deeply psychological. In both Books 6 and 8, institutions that should enable deliberation fail because of the destructive presence of a cultural emotion, not the anger on which Cleon relies but a fearfulness whose expressions differ dramatically in contour but whose effects on civic

practice are equally destructive. The narrative in Book 6 contextualizes the prosecutions that follow the mutilations by critically examining the Athenian image of the tyrannicides (6.54–9). Earlier (in 1.20), Thucydides had corrected the erroneous belief that the daring act of Harmodius and Aristogeiton destroyed the tyranny, for it was the tyrant Hippias' brother who was killed and the tyranny became more violent as a result. In the fuller examination, Thucydides indicates that the Athenians knew that the tyranny was put down not by "Harmodius and themselves but by the Spartans," yet they responded to that awareness with fear and violence, implicitly paralleling the tyrant's response to his brother's murder. In this context, fear is especially destructive because it is empowered. By contrast, the narrative in Book 8 traces the inability of the *demos* to resist the tyranny of the four hundred to a pervasive fear preventing civic assertion and collective action: "no one spoke against [the four hundred] out of fear (*dediōs*) ... thinking the conspiracy to be greater than it was, they were weakened in their judgments and unable to discover reality because of the size of the city and their ignorance of one another" (8.66). It would be mistaken in my view to read Thucydides' converging assessments of the dangers of civic fear as a judgment about particular psychological afflictions of democracies. What are offered instead are narratives of parallel hazards, empowered fear and disabling fear, that need to be recognized and resisted if the deliberative work of the good citizen is to be undertaken. To this extent, narratives representing the impotence of political speech also point to the good citizen's need for the active emotional resource of courage, particularly when political cultural conditions threaten to create forms of fearfulness overwhelming critical deliberation.

Regime Identity and Civic Access as Problems of Justice

But even if the *History* offers some prospect for appreciating the need for and the threats to deliberative good citizenship, that deliberation would not seem to include any serious concern for justice (Macleod 1983: 81, 118–22). Because Thucydides offers no express commentary on the comparative justice or injustice of different regime forms and concentrates instead on the dynamics of power or interest, he seems to dismiss justice as a consideration informing political interaction. This conclusion emerges in the Mytilene debate as well, for Cleon eventually replaces outrage over alleged injustices (the Athenians need to remember that their empire is a tyranny: 3.37) with advice concerning advantage (3.40), and Diodotus insists on dispensing with questions of justice at the outset (3.44). Likewise, when changes in Athens' regime identity and civic membership occur in Book 8, there is no express representation of deliberations over justice. Though grounded in the ambitions of the oligarchs, constricting political authority is justified to the *demos* as the condition for securing Persian aid. In this context, questions about the justice of regime forms and templates for civic membership are obscured

in light of complex concerns for security. The conspirator Peisander's prepared speech making a case for regime change insists that "In our deliberations [we must] take less heed of the regime and more of safety" (8.53).

Yet though they are influenced heavily by immediate political or psychological pressures, questions about regime identity and civic membership in the *History* are not simply disconnected from questions about justice. To the extent that the problematics of justice are retained, they are acknowledged as concerns needing the attention of citizens.

We see the continued importance of justice within political debates over regime identity in the two direct speeches that are ascribed to "the Athenians," the first in Book 1, occurring at Sparta, the second in Book 5, on Melos. Though each statement seems to address only relations between cities, they cannot be disentangled from concerns over how justice should function internally. Each speech offers a perspective on the relationship between power and justice, but the formulations are notably different. In Book 1, the Athenians respond to the widespread accusations of aggression leveled against them by claiming credit for behaving more justly than their superiority in military power would warrant. They allow their allies to relate to them under conditions of equality (*apo tou isou*) (1.77) and respect for an equality not set by quantities of power is just. "All are worthy of praise when in yielding to the instinct of human nature to rule over others, they are more just (*dikaioteroi*) than their power dictates" (1.76). Yet while this justice works to the advantage not of the stronger but of the weaker, its practice effectively depends upon the generosity and thus the whim of the stronger. Praiseworthy justice presumes regimes strong enough to be generous. Thucydides notes that the purpose of this speech is to show the extraordinary power of Athens (1.72). At the same time, by claiming to merit praise for a kind of justice not reducible to power, the Athenians valorize a standard that can turn back on the power that enables it.

In Book 5, as the Athenian envoys try to argue Melos into submission, they offer a different vision of the relation between justice and power. In this exchange, hardly a dialogue, between two cities dramatically unequal in power, justice is excluded as irrelevant, "for just things are only decided through human speech [when directed by] equal compulsions – *isēs anankēs* – [consequently] the powerful do what they can, while the weak give way to them" (5.89). Justice is relevant only when quantities of military power offset one another and equality means only a quantitative equivalence of forces. This justice depends upon rather than limits the presence of material power.

Read in a way that takes the linear order of the narrative as decisive, the second statement may show how the understanding of justice offered by the first deteriorates over the course of the war (the readings of Pouncey 1980: 15; Johnson 1993: 130; and Ober 1998: 104 – those who see more continuity include Connor 1984: 150-53; White 1984: 76-7; and Palmer 1992: 62). However, interpreting the speeches and narratives of the *History* as continuous commentaries on one another (Saxonhouse 2006: 149-51; Mara 2009: 120-1) complicates the relationship between the two theorizations. If Book

1's Athenians acknowledge a justice that can limit the power that enables it, the statements in Book 5 might be interpreted as showing the disintegrating outcomes of making justice dependent on power. That reading is deepened by the fragility of the power that is disclosed by the envoys' speech. The Athenians' explanation of the move on Melos eventually admits that the Athenians are not strong enough to withstand a reputation for weakness and that they are as bound as they are empowered by their empire (5. 91), revealing what Aron incisively calls the "servitudes of power" (2003: 137). To the degree that power is neither transparent nor decisive, its application cannot settle its relationship to justice; both the content and the connection of the two ideas remain problems for civic practice.

The same retention of a concern for justice informs Diodotus' speech. While initially insisting that Athens disregard justice in favor of advantage, the trajectory of his speech not only implies the previously noted argument for moderation based on justice but also claims explicitly that this resolution would allow the Athenians to avoid injustice (3.47). To the extent that Diodotus introduces a concern for a justice different from Cleon's retaliatory anger, it is perhaps one compatible with a democratic equality before the law, represented by the Athenians of Book 1 as the advantage of the weaker. Both the Athenians of Book 1 and Diodotus may anticipate Aristotle's admonition to imperial democracies in *Politics* 7.2 that draws on the justice internal to democratic political culture to identify the potential for both justice and injustice between cities. Diodotus' characterization of the discursive practices of the good citizen underscores equality in language (*apo tou isou*) recalling Athenian language at Sparta. Though Cleon appeals to the same principle in the same terms (3.37.4), he does so in a context that suggests an equality of passivity in the face of the law (Cleon's characterization of the previous day's agreement) rather than one of interactive deliberation. By contrast, Diodotus' reliance on this internal template to identify the interactive practices of good citizenship would make the Athenian practice of justice alleged in Book 1 dependent on conditions other than power. By the same token, the envoys' claim in Book 5 that justice holds only between those equal in power would undercut commitments to domestic political equality in favor of strategic self-assertion. The affirmation on Melos is followed not only by the Sicilian defeat but also by a subversion of the democracy orchestrated by the powerful.

The citizen's need to consider justice is thus implicit in the narrative of the oligarchic subversion in Book 8. Oligarchy is represented as thoroughly destroying possibilities for citizenship and therefore as manifestly unjust. The oligarchs do not act out of an urge to reconfigure political membership or authority for the city's good; whatever public proposals are offered, the conspiracy's origins lie in the ambitions of its members (8.68) that in turn undercut cohesiveness within the oligarchy itself (8.89). The oligarchs' claims to liberate the subject cities from the tyranny of the Athenian *demos* are thus exposed as hollow (8.64). Oligarchy's alternative to democratic rule is therefore not a "moderate aristocracy" (*aristokratias sōphronos*) as pretended in Corcyra (3.82), but a complete undercutting of civic

trust and speech and the spawning of an atmosphere of fear through the continued, though vague, threat of violence.

Both oligarchy and democracy seem deficient in light of Thucydides' assessment of the regime of the five thousand which followed the removal of the four hundred, a moderate (*metria*) blending of the few and the many, said to be the best governed Athenian regime in Thucydides' lifetime (8.97). The representation of this regime is far from straightforward, however, for its historical duration is very short (cf. *Ath Pol* 41) and its first decision is to recall an Alcibiades whose citizenship has long been in doubt (cf. Forde 1989; Palmer 1992; Farenga 2006). For these reasons, Thucydides' evaluation might be read less as a decisive verdict on regime forms and more as the recognition of the importance of questions that are continually in need of attention. His concern is not with Athens' power, its efficiency or influence, but rather with the quality of its practice, here identified as *metria* or measure, a standard that points to an equality not set by quantities of power.

The Hazards and Instabilities of Citizenship

Insofar as the *History* represents the need for a deliberative attention to justice by good citizens under conditions of regime stress, it anticipates and intersects constructively with Aristotle's treatment of citizenship in the *Politics*. There are, of course, numerous and perhaps fundamental differences between the perspectives offered by Thucydides and Aristotle, perhaps especially in their very different treatments of nature (Thuc. 3.82; *Politics* 1.2). Yet if what I have suggested is plausible, we may see them as being constructive partners in a serious classical conversation about citizenship. As part of this conversation, Thucydides also introduces complications that theorizations of citizenship, including Aristotle's, must engage.

Perhaps the most important of these points to the inevitable risks of civic practice. These are not simply risks of pragmatic failure but the courting of what might be cautiously called moral failures, where action choices that are necessary and even generous in one context have very different consequences elsewhere. I have noted that Diodotus' insistence that Athens pay attention only to advantage seems to return in the Melian Dialogue when the Athenian envoys dismiss any appeal to justice in favor of a calculation of interest. While a focus on advantage plays a vital role in Diodotus' rescue of the Mytilene *demos* from Athens' rage, Melos meets the same fate as that determined initially for Mytilene and does so for reasons validated by Diodotus' pragmatic paradigm (cf. White 1984: 75 and Johnson 1993: 107–10, 135).

The *History* gives no sense of the tone of the assembly's actual decision on Melos. Insofar as we are cued by the envoys' statements, the substance and rhetoric should mirror Diodotus' insistence that interest be the only guide to policy. Yet any continuity is complicated by the significant differences in outcome. The statements

preceding Melos' destruction are part of Diodotus' case for moderation. Moreover as John Zumbrennen reminds us (2008: 153–5), it is not obvious that the Melian decision implies calculation; the Melians' call for prudent restraint (5.98, 102) is summarily dismissed in the face of Athens' anxiety over its imperial reputation (5.91, 95, 97). The destruction of Melos may be traceable not to ruthless calculation but to empowered fear.

Yet such insights do not so much exonerate as clarify Diodotus' responsibility for Melos. Deployed in circumstances that are both fluid and yet somehow unsurprising, his political counsel reflects the risks undertaken within any exercise of civic practice where questions are weighty and consequences severe. In Terence Ball's words, "the assembly must act and act now if [some Mytilene] lives are to be spared" (1986: 628). By being forced to make wrenching choices with distant and unintended consequences, citizenship must always be conscious of the hazards of its practices and wary of the ultimate outcomes of its decisions.

Citizenship, Democracy, Reception

Read from this perspective, the *History* represents how deliberative citizenship is continuously challenged by passionate attachments embedded in networks of power under conditions that are turbulently unsettled. Not without reason does Ball comment that "the structure of Thucydides' *History* is less scientific than tragic" (1986: 628). Yet neither author nor text simply surrenders to tragic recognition, and the vision of citizenship that they provide is not entirely devoid of promise. In this respect, the writing of Thucydides and the political speaking of Diodotus seem parallel (Mara 2008: 246–52). While the express content of what they say discourages prospects for human educability, their practices (or speech acts) aim at an education supportive of the task of political deliberation.

As a resource for our own reflections, the classical perspective in general and the *History* in particular encourage a critical posture that can help us interrogate our own pragmatic commitments and intellectual categories. Thucydides' representation of the dilemmas of citizenship resonates within our own condition where internal debates over the criteria for civic membership and the responses to external challenges are framed by a blend of prideful confidence in the achievements of democratic society and a stress-driven anxiety that can too easily be expressed as empowered fear. Returning to formulations in current political theory that engage citizenship's dimensions and problematics, Thucydides intersects with all without fully embracing any. He implicitly challenges the adequacy of liberal or represented citizenship, not as a thinness that is insufficiently appreciative of the ethical demands of the *polis* but as an inattentiveness to the uncertainties and risks of politics. By showing that Pericles' call for citizens to "pay regard to the city and become its lovers" is itself a rhetorical exercise in support of a contested vision of the good, Thucydides represents how committed membership within an affective

community can compromise the critical distance needed by Diodotus' good citizen. And in spite of its focus on the conflictual character of politics, the *History's* alternative is not a valorized agonistic democracy that makes performance or contestation central (cf. Arendt 1958: 220; Connolly 1995: xix; Mouffe 2000: 101–3). If the work of the *agathos politēs* is, as Diodotus implies, to contribute to deliberations over civic purpose under conditions of equal discourse, the Thucydidean treatment of citizenship seems surprisingly compatible with the views of our deliberative democratic contemporaries (Habermas 1990: 103, 1996: 414; Warren 1992: 8–23, 1994: 153, 2001: 53; Estlund 1997: 173–204; Benhabib 2004: 13). Yet by positioning Diodotus' praise of deliberative citizenship within a context that requires the subversion of discursive truthfulness for the achievement of *epieikeia*, Thucydides also represents how difficult, paradoxical, and damaging the practice of deliberative citizenship might be. Thucydides may anticipate Aristotle's insight that *logos* makes human beings political, but he also underscores the stresses and distortions that politics throws in the way of *logos*.

Questions whether Thucydides' political thought can be appropriated as a resource for engaging the dilemmas of democratic citizenship will clearly persist. On the basis of many passages in the *History*, it is not surprising that he is often read as a critic of democracy (Ober 1998: 57, 119–20; Kagan 2009: 225; Lee in this volume). Yet the structure of the text suggests something different, for his book can also be interpreted as a series of interactive speeches, the direct and indirect *logoi* of the characters, the narrative of the war's deeds (*erga*) as accessed through the words of others (1.22), and the sometimes explicit, sometimes underlying, *logoi* of Thucydides himself. Within the *History* all are given a hearing yet none escape critical examination, paralleling the discursive practices and challenges of democracy (Saxonhouse 2006: 149–51; Mara 2009: 120–1). Some readings interpret the Thucydidean *logos* as offering only one valid last word, striving to replace democratic discourse by the discoveries of rigorous human science or the achievements of privileged political wisdom (cf. the alternative readings of Romilly 1963; Strauss 1964: 229–30; Bruell 1974: 17; Orwin 1994: 204–5; and Crane 1996). Yet this assessment is challenged by ongoing receptions of a shared but problematic text, a series of readings, re-readings and counter-readings that resembles at least some of politics.

In calling his *History* a possession forever, Thucydides presumes a certain response, and the text's worth as this possession depends upon its being received appropriately and used well. The reception of Thucydides is not simply a sequence of historical readings of a rich text, but a continuing challenge that Thucydides attempts to influence but cannot predictably control. Any claims to permanent last words on his part are, like the speech of Diodotus, complicated by the risks involved and by the uncertain and varied receptions elicited. Consequently, there is no Thucydidean political theory of citizenship or of political life, generally, if what we mean by theory is the construction of a conclusive intellectual framework executed from a vantage point extending beyond politics itself. Though the *History* is offered as a possession

forever, Thucydides' concern is not with the best regime abstracted or as such, but the best as bounded within his own time and space. His political thought emerges more generally as an activity that is critically distant yet pragmatically engaged and thus as a practice continuous with citizenship.

Note

- 1 Smith translates 3.37.3, as "simpler people for the most part make better citizens than the more shrewd." But *epi to pleon ameinon oikousi tas poleis* might be more literally rendered as "for the most part run their cities better." More importantly, Cleon's rhetoric divides the Athenians into the *phauloteroi* (the more ordinary) and the *xunetōōteroi* (the more clever) rather than connecting them as citizens.

Guide to Further Reading

The importance of Thucydides as a resource for thinking about citizenship is closely tied to debates about his treatment of democracy, whether he should be read mainly as an opponent who endorses more aristocratic alternatives (Yunis 1996; Ober 1998; Kagan 2009) or as a constructive critic seeking to provide resources for democratic thinking (Farrar 1988; Euben 1990; Saxonhouse 1996, 2006). Much of this work centers around his assessment of the leadership of Pericles. The controversial but important work of Leo Strauss (1964) raises fundamental questions about the relation between Thucydides' project and both political philosophy particularly and philosophy generally. The examination of these questions has been continued, deepened, and nuanced by (among others) Stephen Forde (1989), Michael Palmer (1992), and Clifford Orwin (1994).

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Thucydides and Democratic Horizons

Christine Lee

Introduction

When it comes to understanding politics, Thucydides has been an influential figure in modern Western thought. Readers turn again and again to the *History* for insights into the “fundamental and permanent questions of political life,” despite profound disagreement on what these questions are and, even more essentially, what constitutes politics (Palmer 1992: 6). Among the myriad political conversations in which Thucydides is a persistent interlocutor, one of the most salient involves the appraisal of democracy. Up until the nineteenth century, the *History* had long been considered an antidemocratic text, proof of the ignorance of the masses, the dangers of demagoguery, and the constitutional instabilities of direct democracy (Saxonhouse 1996; Roberts 1997). Hobbes’ seminal judgment that Thucydides “least of all liked ... democracy” is exemplary (Schlatter 1945: 359). While John Stuart Mill and George Grote demonstrated that Athenian democracy could fuel modern democratic aspirations, contemporary political readers tend to align with Hobbes (Cartledge 1994; Potter 2012). For Thucydides is, more often than not, invoked as an authority on democratic dysfunction.

At the same time, we can register an ongoing shift. A number of contemporary scholars have turned to Thucydides as a “democratic theorist” or, more tepidly, a “theorist of democracy” (Zumbrunnen 2008: 12). These readers share a conviction that the *History* has something to teach us about democracy’s strengths as much as its limitations. Skillfully and creatively appropriated, Thucydides can reaffirm democratic principles and fortify democratic practices. This evolution from primarily antidemocratic readings to democratic engagements attests to the *History*’s resilience and its flexibility as a textual and civic resource. Of course, the persistence of Thucydidean interpretation is itself significant. The strange prominence of

ancient Greece in the landscape of contemporary political thought betrays the uncertainty and ambivalence still surrounding democracy in the post-Cold War world. For all that the world-defining conflict appears to have settled, the turn to thinkers like Thucydides highlights the questions that linger: What *are* the foundations and purposes of democracy? What does democratic citizenship entail? What is the role of leadership or public speech in democracy? How does democracy function in practice? What forces imperil democracy, and what might a commitment to democracy, in turn, imperil? What is the relationship between democracy and imperialism? And finally, how does democracy fare as both a political good and a human one?

Against the backdrop of these questions, this chapter considers how prominent political theorists from the twentieth century onwards have appropriated Thucydides as a resource for thinking about democratic politics. I focus on writings in the American context, where the debate on democracy has been most salient and sophisticated, and on two strands of interpretations. I begin with a critical reconstruction of Leo Strauss' seminal reading of the *History*, drawing upon subsequent works that endorse and build upon its appraisal of democracy, especially those of Clifford Orwin, Steven Forde, and Michael Palmer. Second, I survey a number of thinkers who see the *History* as more amenable to democratic prospects, primarily through its demonstration of particular sources of democratic advantage. Here I reflect on Josiah Ober's epistemic democracy, in which democratic knowledge conduces to power and efficacy, as well as Arlene Saxonhouse's account of democracy's deliberative practices and institutionalized capacity for change. I also draw on the work of Peter Euben, Cynthia Farrar, James Boyd White, Gerald Mara, and John Zumbrennen to consider the democratic quality of Thucydides' speech, which encompasses his conspicuous silence.¹ While each and every one of these readings enriches our understanding of politics and deserves to be considered carefully on its own terms, my main objective here is to foreground two things: their understanding of the *History*'s substantive teaching on democracy, on the one hand, and the relationship between Thucydides' inquiry and democratic politics, on the other. I conclude by making some general observations about these readings, including how their shared virtues and shortcomings direct us forward in using Thucydides to expand our democratic horizons.

Straussian Dialectics: A Diagnosis of Democracy's Defects in Three Moves

Leo Strauss' reading of Thucydides is arguably one of the most influential political readings of the twentieth century. Its influence on later readings – including those that markedly diverge from its politics – is an important reminder that interpretations of the *History* are indebted to established traditions of reading as much as the text itself. This is my primary reason for concentrating on Straussian readings

when there are scholarly works that speak more directly to what Thucydides thinks about democracy (cf. McGregor 1956; Fliess 1959; Ober 1998; Raaflaub 2006).

There are at least three additional reasons Straussian readings merit greater attention. First, there is a case to be made that these readings, with their impressive exegetical command, offer the most systematic and nuanced appropriation of the *History* on behalf of the most compelling account of realist politics. Given the dominance of the realist tradition and the constitutive place of Thucydides in it, any proponent or critic of either must engage with Strauss' methodical interpretation rather than the more straightforward appropriations of self-identified realists (Johnson Bagby 1994; Ahrendorf 1997; Welch 2003; Monten 2006). Second, because of their commitment to careful textual exegesis, Straussian readings engender systematic arguments about democratic politics that far exceed the caricatures of democracy found throughout the reception history of Thucydides. This is true despite the fact that their central preoccupation is often something other than the explicit appraisal of democracy, which brings me to my final point. Readings of the *History* have implications for democracy even when the main arguments seem far removed, as they might, for instance, in questions about the most important causal variables in politics or what genre the *History* belongs to. By fleshing out the political judgments in Straussian readings, I hope to demonstrate the need to clarify the democratic entailments that accompany all readings of Thucydides.

I want to begin by illuminating how Strauss' reading of Thucydides contains systematic and significant judgments about democratic politics. To reconstruct these arguments, I use Strauss' exegesis in *The City and Man* as a scaffold, bringing in subsequent Straussian readings when relevant (cf. Jaffe in this volume). Strauss focuses on the antithesis between Athens and Sparta as representative regimes and embodied principles of politics. Very perfunctorily, we might phrase this as a politics of glory versus a politics of pious moderation or, more succinctly, compulsion versus justice. Strauss' argument about Athens and Sparta can be envisioned as three moves in a dialectical process. Each stage, I argue, contains a critical view of democracy. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve into the explicit arguments about Athens and Sparta. Instead, I focus on their democratic entailments, that is, the shifting account of democracy that accompanies each step in the dialectical process. My aim is to show how Straussian readings entail a series of judgments that challenge democracy's fundamental presuppositions and practices. Substantively and methodologically, these readings paint a portrait of the congenital defects of democratic institutions and culture.

Thucydides' most discernible political judgment, Strauss tells us, is that Sparta is better than Athens. This inference is made on the basis of Thucydides' praise for Spartan moderation and prosperity in the *Archaeology*. It is also suggested by what Thucydides says and doesn't say about Athens, including his regard for the rule of the five thousand as the best in his lifetime; his arguably deliberate refusal to attribute the virtue of moderation (*sōphrosynē*) to Pericles; and his characterization of

Periclean Athens as the precarious rule of the first man (*prōtos anēr*) rather than a sound regime rooted in civic virtue. To the extent that the Periclean regime is not democratic, Strauss asserts that it “saved democracy from itself” by way of an ethereal sort of leadership. To the extent that Pericles is “inseparable from [and] belongs to the Athenian democracy,” his rule demonstrates the “unsolid character of its foundation” (1978: 152–3). Either way, the appraisal of democracy is unfavorable. Insofar as Athens represents democracy, it proves its inferiority. Thucydides’ explicit judgments and obvious omissions are only strengthened by the architecture of the text, especially the oft-noted juxtapositions between the Funeral Oration and the Plague, and the Melian Dialogue and the Sicilian expedition. These narrative choices arguably constitute a lamentation of democratic immoderation.

However, the assessment that Thucydides prefers moderate and pious Sparta to the pathologically immoderate and volatile democratic Athens turns out to be provisional and partial. Strauss goes on to argue that Thucydides validates the truth of the Athenian thesis on the “compulsory power of interest” (1978: 184; cf. Forde 1992: 376; Palmer 1992: 376; Orwin 1994: 86; Ahrens Dorf 1997: 250). Thucydides also demonstrates the hypocrisy of Spartan moderation and unveils the illusion of piety in two senses. It is rooted in necessity, as evidenced by how the Helots constrain Spartan imperialism. And if taken too seriously, piety leads to disaster, as evidenced by both the fate of Melos and Nicias’ failed leadership in the Sicilian expedition. In effect, Thucydides reveals the superiority of the noble, mild, and generously frank Athenians vis-à-vis the hypocritical and petty Spartans. Of course, this praise is qualified, for Athens – despite its noble strivings – ends up losing the war. Yet, as Strauss puts it, Thucydides’ initial favoring of Sparta over Athens morphs into something like Spartan comedy and Athenian tragedy, in which the incandescent – even if sick – nobility of Athens spotlights the base inferiority of Sparta (1978: 216–26).

While this step of the dialectic reverses the judgment on Athens and Sparta, it does not exonerate democracy; it only entails a different diagnosis of what’s wrong with it. Although Strauss’ reading of the *History* becomes progressively less critical of Athens, it sustains a critical view of democracy. There are serious defects in democracy; they are simply less obvious and more complex than immoderate appetites or imperial predilections. Athenagoras’ speech offers a preview of what’s wrong with democracy (Strauss 1978: 168–9; Orwin 1994: 185–6). But it is Straussian readings of Thucydides’ digression on the myth of the tyrannicides; its contextual intersection with the story of Alcibiades and the Sicilian expedition; and the connections of both with the *History*’s named elites that give rise to a systematic critique of democracy (cf. Strauss 1978: 196–205; Forde 1989: 33–6, 95, 119–120, 142–9; Palmer 1992: 79–110; Orwin 1994: 123–6). It turns out there are three problems with democracy that entail the irrationality of democratic judgment.

First is the problem of democratic knowledge. Thucydides’ account of the tyrannicide myth demonstrates democratic ignorance on many levels, not least of which is the lack of self-knowledge about the origins of Athenian democracy. The

demos also misapprehends the essentially private motivations driving the tyrannicide, as well as its ultimately irrational effect of replacing good rule with oppressive rule. To celebrate the tyrannicide is to mistake private desire for public devotion; it is to be taken in by professions of the common good and to miss the fact that the “private” rule of the tyrants benefited the people, while the rash action of the “purely private” lovers did not (Forde 1989: 36). Significantly, the *demos* misunderstands what is conducive to the public welfare because it conflates democratic rule with the common good. Conversely, whether with regard to Hippias, Themistocles, or Alcibiades, the *demos* is blind to the public benefits stemming from the private ambition of virtuous individuals – virtuous in the Machiavellian rather than Aristotelian sense. In short, democracy misunderstands the true relationship between private and public interest.

In addition to faulting democratic understanding, Straussian readings identify defects in democratic character, namely the envy of natural excellence. Forde notes how the tyrannicides capture the “essence of the Athenian democracy and character,” namely its “characteristic attitude” of “unjustified and harmful jealousy toward its greatest leaders” (1989: 34–5). Palmer, too, notes how Thucydides’ digression highlights the conspirators’ distrust and “vengeful rage,” how it is preceded and followed by the affair of the Hermae where the “suspicious temper” of the Athenians leads them to persecute a number of its “outstanding citizens in order to calm demotic apprehensions” (1992: 82, 87). Strauss and Orwin likewise lament the Athenian treatment of its best men in this incident and consider it an atrocity with no Spartan parallel (Strauss 1978: 213–17; Orwin 1994: 76).

If ignorance and resentment fuel demotic tyranny against elites, something less noxious further perverts democratic judgment: the many’s need for piety (Orwin 1994: 122). Although piety is an important cohesive force in Straussian accounts of political community, it is nonetheless double-edged. It is the Athenian *demos*’ need for piety, which leads it to recall Alcibiades and entrust the fate of the Sicilian expedition to Nicias. In addition to inflaming pre-existing tendencies to divisiveness and distrust, the need for piety arises out of and contributes to a disabled rationality. It substitutes unfounded hopes and fears for considered judgments about what conduces to political success and the proper grounds of authority, that is, who should exercise authority and on what basis.

These flaws collectively incapacitate democratic judgment and facilitate Athens’ tragic fate. Crucially, the democratic failure is not a failure to live up to its ideals, or simply the triumph of private ambition over public-spiritedness. From the Straussian perspective, Thucydides reveals a paradoxical truth: democratic ignorance about what conduces to the common good, the *demos*’ characteristic envy and distrust of elites, and its inconvenient bouts of piety lead to a kind of democratic tyranny. It is the *demos* that compels the excessive private ambition underwriting treason and tyranny. Put more generously, the *demos* fuels the legitimate self-regard and self-assertion of elites, which nevertheless destroys the common good. This is the reality revealed by Hippias, Themistocles, Nicias,

Demosthenes, Phrynichus, and, most importantly, Alcibiades. In this light, Thucydides' criticism of private interest in 2.65 turns out to be a critique of the demotic rather than oligarchic or tyrannical element. Strauss reminds us that Thucydides "presents ... a galaxy of outstanding Athenians" (1978: 213). The narrative of the *History*, in forging a unified and contextual view of these elites, suggests that democratic irrationality, rather than private ambition as such, poses the greatest danger to political community.

The final stage of the Straussian dialectic leads to the restoration of Athens and Sparta in thought. Despite the Athenian tragedy, Strauss reminds us that "Athens does not go down" (1978: 227). The *History* ends with Athens on the rebound, and her restoration entails both the return of Alcibiades and the oligarchic coup against democracy. Here, Strauss intimates that the public interest may require curbing democracy. Yet the fact that Alcibiades ultimately betrays the self-defeating excess of unrestrained political ambition (Forde 1989: 208–9) reaffirms the value of Sparta or, more precisely, the pious moderation that prevents it from descending into stasis (Orwin 1994: 183–4). What does the restoration of Athens and Sparta mean exactly for democracy? Ultimately, the Straussian dialectic arrives at two criteria for appraising regimes, each reflected in the proverbial peak of Athens and Sparta as representative *politeiai*. Together they issue a mixed review of democracy.² At their highest, Athens and Sparta each contain a kernel of truth. While Athens' noble politics proves chimerical, democratic Athens does indeed reach a peak, not in Periclean Athens, but in Thucydides' *History*. The culmination of Athens is Thucydidean wisdom, and the mouthpiece for this wisdom in the *History* is Diodotus (Strauss 1978: 231; cf. Lane 2005; Mara 2008). Without doing justice to either Strauss' or Orwin's more elaborate reading of the Mytilenean Debate, let me simply make a few points about their endorsement of Diodotus' deception and its underlying assumptions about democracy (Strauss 1978: 231–6; Orwin 1994: 142–62, 2000).

The case for deception in deliberative politics affirms earlier contentions about democratic knowledge and character. Strauss takes Diodotus and Cleon as converging in their diagnosis of "the problem of democracy," namely, the *demos*' lack of judgment that necessitates trust in speakers, but the lack of rational criteria to distinguish the trustworthy (1978: 232–3). This diagnosis presupposes that the unwise need wisdom but cannot recognize it, for political knowledge, rather than being discursively constituted, is a kind of expertise. Those who lack this expertise must resort to irrational considerations of trust rather than reasoned adjudication of arguments. In addition to unequal wisdom, Diodotus underscores the problem of envy and suspicion of private gain. This tendency in the democratic character compounds the problem of judgment, widening the chasm between trust and reason. Deficiencies in knowledge and character thus drive the deliberative pathologies that necessitate deception and the political use of piety.

While it is certainly the case that democratic judgment is a perennial challenge, it becomes something of an oxymoron in Strauss' and Orwin's reading of the

Mytilenean Debate. For the debate establishes more than Diodotus' supposed humanity. It also establishes why democracy demands deception and thus the subversion of its own foundational commitments. The antidemocratic tenor of the Straussian reading of Mytilene is clear in three respects. First, Cleon and Diodotus are used to establish the character of an incorrigibly distrustful and irrational *demos*, all the while eliding the dangers that might render distrust both rational and an ethos especially befitting of the democratic character (cf. Euben 2003: 70). In overlooking the problem of private ambition, this reading of the Mytilenean Debate begs the question. It presumes that demotic distrust is a corollary of obvious ignorance and irrational envy rather than a prophylaxis against the corrosion of shared power, or as Thucydides suggests an environmental response conditioned by defeat and hardship rather than an attribute particular to any regime (e.g., at 6.103 or 8.38).

Once we distinguish between rational distrust and irrational paranoia, it becomes obvious why motives, interests, and the character of speakers – all of which frame and constitute the quality of counsel – must matter a great deal. The animus against private gain not only reflects a legitimate concern that speakers who prove vulnerable to expedience will privilege their private interests above the public good when the two diverge. It also registers Diodotus' observations about how motives and drives condition one's appraisal of facts, probabilities, and the relevant domain of considerations. If motivations and commitments invariably shape, however intricately, a speaker's diagnosis, counsel, and desired political outcomes, it would surely be irrational not to interrogate them. In their blanket condemnation of distrust, the Straussian readings are blind to what may in fact be brilliant democratic judgment. Cleon and Diodotus ostensibly collaborate in another way, forging a natural hierarchy with respect to both political knowledge and political standing. Orwin's reading, which seems to accept rather than challenge Cleon's distinction between leaders and followers, speakers and listeners, politicians and people, reaffirms their naturalness (2000: 101–2). Nowhere does he suggest that instead of permanent distinctions, these might be provisional roles, capacities that all democratic citizens ought to be fluent in as they endeavor to rule and be ruled, speak and listen in turns. Diodotus conspires in naturalizing these distinctions insofar as he tacitly faults unequal wisdom for the impossibility of a deliberative politics marked by rectitude and rationality (Strauss 1978: 232–5; Orwin 2000: 107).

Many commentators have called attention to Diodotus' contribution to the debasement of political discourse and his troubled relationship with democracy (e.g., White 1985; Euben 1990; Ober 1998; Lane 2005). The Straussian Diodotus poses a serious challenge to the democratic principles of equality and frank speech by which deliberative activity stands or falls. To the extent that Diodotus' speech works primarily on the basis of manipulation rather than reason, he gives up on the task of educating judgment. He also forecloses the possibility of realizing his own ideal of a rational politics, in which political action is rooted in thoughtful and truly self-determining collective deliberation. To return to Strauss' final step in the

dialectic, if the good of democratic Athens is constituted in part by Thucydidean thought, if it culminates in the peak of Diodotean wisdom, then democracy's highest insight is that of its own insufficiency. For Thucydides, read through the Straussian Diodotus, suggests the limits of rational deliberation, the futility of cultivating judgment, and therefore the hollow hopes of democratic participation.

But the image is not all gloomy for democracy. The highest truth of Sparta, in alerting us to the wisdom of moderation, leads to a normative realism. Accordingly, the goals of the city are, as Strauss puts it, "stability, freedom from both foreign domination and tyranny, and prosperity" (1989: 99). If this is the case, then Thucydides may offer us grounds for a limited defense of democracy in his rendering of Athens. Strauss suggests this by way of invoking Thucydidean necessity: "Athens was compelled to become a democracy" by virtue of the battle of Salamis and the need for a powerful navy (1978: 238). That is, the survival of the city called for the labor power of the *thetes* and hence their political empowerment. Beyond this utilitarian defense of democratization, democratic aspirations hold no pride of place in the *History*. Democracy is not self-justifying, and there is no best regime as such. As Orwin writes, Thucydides seems to align with the characters in the *History* that favor "unity at home and empire and freedom vis-à-vis other cities" (1994: 185). If cohesion and regime performance are what matter, then moderation, piety, and prudent statesmanship are the necessary virtues. The city aims higher at its own risk. Assuming the problems of democratic knowledge and character are congenital, democratizing aspirations are bound to miss the mark, perhaps in ways destructive of the common good. Even if challenges to rational deliberation proved less formidable, Straussian claims about the unnaturalness and hence fragility of political community imply the necessity of foreclosing fundamental questions, constraining deliberative activity, and blunting the force of a city's critical self-interrogation (cf. Forde 1989: 173). There is not much hope here for democratic judgment or reflective citizenship. The only hope is for statesmen to learn from Thucydides how best to preserve the political community on which democracy depends.

Thucydides, the Democratic Theorist?

If Straussian readings of Thucydides emphasize the democratic defects that threaten political stability, other political theorists see Thucydides as offering a more generous account of democracy's merits and potential for political success. Josiah Ober and Arlene Saxonhouse both find in the *History* a case for democracy's epistemic virtues. While Ober primarily considers Thucydides an elite critic of democracy (Ober 1998), his most recent reading of Thucydides is as a "theorist of democratic advantage" (Ober 2010). Thucydides' narrative, Ober insists, shows how democratic ideology and institutions conduce to social cooperation. Likewise, it illuminates how the democratic organization of knowledge and skill generates extraordinary power. Although Ober's explanandum, strictly speaking, is Athenian

military performance during the Archidamian War, his broader argument is that democracy's epistemic practices engender state power and superior regime performance (Ober 2008). Ober's work is an admirable response to elite critics who see centralization and hierarchy as necessary for organizational success. In emphasizing shared knowledge and horizontal linkages, he reminds us not to conflate knowledge with expertise, or power with leadership.

Saxonhouse, too, finds in Thucydides a case for democracy's epistemic advantages, although one focused on deliberative activity and the testing of truth claims rather than efficiency and power. For Saxonhouse, the *History* portrays the difficulties of deliberation in assemblies that diverge sharply from Habermas' ideal speech situation (2004: 60). It also reveals how deliberative knowledge, like all knowledge, is characterized by epistemological uncertainty. This very uncertainty, paradoxically, justifies deliberative democracy. While Ober's reading of Thucydides is informed by organizational and rational choice theory, much of Saxonhouse's account seems redolent of John Stuart Mill's arguments for free speech or Karl Popper's understanding of scientific activity and the open society. For this Thucydides strikes a modern chord in suggesting the provisional and fallible nature of all conjectures and therefore the necessity of sustained deliberation, in which participants critically confront, test, and reconsider claims that everyone knows to be biased (Saxonhouse 2004: 65, 84; 1996: 60).

"Diodotus is the real democratic theorist of Thucydides' history" insofar as he makes the case for respecting debate and disagreement. In so doing, he honors the work of deliberative assemblies and their capacity for revision (Saxonhouse 1996: 61, 77–8). If the Mytilenean Debate shows the significant benefits of revision and reconsideration, the Sicilian debate shows how such attempts founder when the Athenian *demos* fails to critically interrogate favorable reports from Egesta, neglecting to ask who stands to gain by espousing them.³ The recall of Alcibiades and the descent into violence, Saxonhouse argues, is what happens when competing claims are not directly confronted and vetted in the assembly (2004: 69–71).

Saxonhouse, Mara, and Zumbrunnen all direct our attention to a more profound and ethereal dimension of deliberative reconsideration, namely how it opens up the question of ends and collective purposes. Thucydides not only deepens our understanding of obstacles to deliberation, but also its potential and untapped virtues. In the Mytilenean Debate, Cleon and Diodotus argue about means to be sure, but as Zumbrunnen and Mara note, this moment of deliberative action also concerns what kind of city Athens is and will be, its collective purposes, and "manner of acting in the world" (Zumbrunnen 2008: 68). Mara sees Diodotus' speech-act as a civic practice that enacts the kind of thoughtful rationality democracy requires. But if Diodotus offers us democratic hopes, these hopes lie in a demanding vision, in which the work of deliberation is coterminous with collective inquiry into human goods. For Diodotus alerts us to the critical and teleological demands of citizenship, suggesting that the central civic task is the rational investigation of the city's ends (Mara 2008: 57–9). Diodotus, in himself, is no simple

testament to democratic possibility. But his speech suggests how democracy must conceive of itself and its domain of relevant concerns if it is to flourish.

Without denying Thucydides' critical vision of democracy, recent readings have thus recovered insights in the *History* friendly to democratic principles and practices. They have done so not only in their readings of the *History's* speeches, but more significantly in their understanding of Thucydides' activity and its relationship to democratic politics. Readers approach the *History* as more than an adumbration of democracy's problems and virtues. They see Thucydides' *logos* itself as a democratic resource, one that epitomizes a kind of inquiry analogous to – and educative of – democratic thought and practice. For Saxonhouse, Thucydides' critical activity as a historian, which involves the careful sifting of biased and self-interested *logos*, enacts and provides a model for deliberative activity (2004: 59–60; 2006: 149). Mara, likewise, characterizes Thucydides' *logos* as “discursive and interactive” rather than “conclusive and directive”; as such, it exemplifies a kind of inquiry appropriate for democracy (2009: 120). For Peter Euben and Cynthia Farrar, Thucydides' *History* arises out of and enacts a response to the problems of political and democratic life, one that is meant to sharpen understanding, judgment, and moral reflection (Euben 1977: 50–6; Farrar 1988: 126, 136–7). Thucydides' *History* is in crucial ways homologous to democratic Athens, a textual agora that contains and is constituted by the “dialogic polyphony” of deliberative speeches and decisions (Euben 2010: 175). Euben's tragic reading of the *History* and Farrar's historical one remind us that Thucydides' text is democratic in a more straightforward sense: its intended audience consists of “active political participants,” all of whom are called to and assumed capable of “assess[ing] and interpret[ing]” the connection between themselves and the communities that help constitute them as a prelude to collective political action (Farrar 1988: 275).

All of these readings spotlight the defining attributes of Thucydidean *logos* that are compatible with, if not performative of, Athenian democracy. What is striking is not the emphasis on speech and reason but the insistence on the ways in which Thucydidean practice exhibits a democratic sensibility, one that presumes and abets political equality and participation. With its emphasis on the discursive or the polyphonous, these readings depart from Strauss' rendering of the *History*, which foregrounds Thucydides' conspicuous silence, an attribute that risks being anti-democratic in tone if not in substance. Strauss' reading is admittedly dialectical. It, too, emphasizes how Thucydides privileges practical politics, focalizing through the *History's* myriad political actors. There is, nevertheless, a transcendent view of “final knowledge” – that of Diodotus and Thucydides himself (Strauss 1989: 84; cf. Palmer 1992: 63; Orwin 1994: 162). Thucydides reveals the nature of human and political life to the wise, to the great statesman who must apprehend the limits of political possibility, including the limits of democratic politics (Strauss 1959: 14–15, 1989: 94; Forde 1989: 175; Orwin 1994: 4–5). The Straussian belief that the *History* instructs the keen reader silently, revealing its “elliptical” judgments obliquely and contextually, “between the lines, between the words and deeds” draws upon the

authoritative observations of Hobbes and Nietzsche, who proclaimed Thucydides' covert wisdom to be visible only by indirection (Strauss 1978: 237, 1989: 97; cf. Strauss 1978: 151–3, 1989: 85, 91, 93–4; for invocations of Hobbes, see Strauss 1978: 144, 218–19; Forde 1989: 3; Palmer 1992: 5–6; Orwin 1994: 3–4). If Thucydides, the great statesman, and the wise reader all share in a sort of private knowledge, it is the truth of two things: the nature of necessity and the necessity of compulsion in sustaining common life, on the one hand, and the ineradicable fissures in democratic community and the weakness of deliberative practices, on the other. Thucydidean reticence, in view of the fragility of political community and the necessity of a politics of deception and piety, is thus deeply political; for it willfully refuses to puncture the city's tenuous self-understanding.

Yet despite the acknowledgment of the *History's* many voices, and despite the ostensibly salutary orientation of Thucydidean esotericism, the Straussian view of the *History's* speech is deeply inhospitable to democratic sensibilities. If Euben and White are right that every text, theory, and way of reading reveals itself as a politics, constituting certain subjectivities and relationships, then we ought to ask of both the *History* and its interpreters: Who can participate? Who is solicited or unwanted as a reader? How does the text imagine its audience, and how does it invite prospective readers to engage? What is the relationship the text establishes with the reader, and how does it offer an experience that imparts certain values, dispositions, and attitudes (Euben 1988: xi–xii; White 1985: 3–23, 275–85)? Such reflections encourage us to consider whether Straussian readings embody a conception of authority, knowledge, argument, and aesthetic contrary to its best political intentions of sustaining liberal democracy.

Of course, Euben and Zumbrennen remind us that the delicate dance between Thucydidean artistry and reticence is not necessarily symptomatic of a politics antithetical to democracy. For we might think of Thucydidean reticence as precisely the forbearance required to sustain the dialogic richness of the text (Euben 2010: 185–7). Perhaps it is Thucydides' silence that, by forcing his readers to confront the difficulties of making sense of a world in stasis, “empower[s them] to join in the collective construction of meaning” (Euben 1990: 18). In lieu of an authoritative interpretation or the privileging of one elite voice, readers must submit their own considered judgments, interrogating and weighing the claims of various speakers. Thucydidean silence thereby facilitates the critical engagement constitutive of democratic citizenship. Rather than indicating a pious politics or aristocratic esotericism, authorial reticence is what makes the *History* a useful civic resource and potential democratic text (Zumbrennen 2008: 124, 191). These democratic engagements remind us that judgments about democracy go beyond any account of the *History's* substantive teaching. Democratic entailments are also reflected in the construal of Thucydides' speech-act, the meaning and significance of his silence, as well as the hermeneutics and sensibilities elicited by the text.

The most sophisticated readings of the democratic dimensions of Thucydidean inquiry intimate that the realization of the democratic promise unleashes the very

forces that threaten its achievements. The apex of democratic power is at once a monument to magnificence and a warning of corruption. Euben's tragic insight unveils a disturbing truth, namely that the promise of democratic Athens is simultaneously the threat of brutality and suffering (1977: 36–7).⁴ While more optimistic readings initially shy away from this morally and politically problematic ambivalence, they eventually strike a darker chord. The most conspicuous observation to be made about readings that use Thucydides to construct a case for democratic advantage is how they ultimately reverse course. Perhaps it says something about the *History* or the power of its anti-democratic reception that most readers end up conceding a sort of inevitable democratic corruption that necessitates a solution beyond democracy. Saxonhouse ultimately concedes the failure of frank speech in the Mytilenean, Sicilian, and Syracusan debates (2006: 151–78). Diodotus has to resort to deception to get the Athenians to act humanely. Hermocrates' honest speech also fails to persuade the Syracusans to take the Athenian threat seriously. In the Sicilian debate, Alcibiades outwits Nicias because he understands something about Athenian character. Saxonhouse's invocation of character implies something about the Athenians that prevents them from hewing to the ethos of testing and falsification rational deliberation requires. Her conclusion that frank speech (*parrhēsia*) is destructive if released from the power of shameful reverence (*aidos*) brings us back to Straussian piety (2006: 210–14).

Both Saxonhouse and Mara, who pin much of their democratic hopes on Diodotus, end up sounding a discouraging note about the prospects for achieving the conditions necessary for deliberative democracy (Saxonhouse 1996: 86, 2006: 210; Mara 2008: 124).⁵ Democracy requires Diodotus, and Diodotus is, as his name indicates, a gift from Zeus, who ostensibly “recognizes that parrhesia is the practice not of democracies, but only of utopias” (Saxonhouse 2006: 210; cf. Saxonhouse 1996: 86; Orwin 2000: 107; Mara 2008: 123). Despite the fact that Saxonhouse's and Mara's readings of Thucydides depart from Strauss in their primary emphases, their reading of Diodotus as a cipher for democracy's necessary failure to fulfill its own foundational promise builds upon Strauss' appraisal of the human roots of democratic dysfunction. This bleak conclusion sees democracy as foundering on two problems central to Strauss' original reading of Thucydides: the disjunction between private and public interest, and the irrationalities that undercut democratic judgment. Democratic integrity, it seems, requires an external force to generate social cohesion, something akin to civil religion. But if this is the solution which Diodotus represents, then it comes at the expense of – and by way of subverting – the principles of equality and free speech and the meaningful practice of deliberative decision making.

Farrar ends up with a similar diagnosis of irrational democratic judgment, though she turns to a more mundane solution: Periclean leadership. Despite Farrar's enthusiastic claims about Thucydides' democratic sensibilities, her accounts of Thucydides and Pericles turn out to be only dubiously democratic. The interpretive upshot is conspicuously authoritarian for a democratic text: the

History shows the need for “civic self-control,” reinvigorated judgment (*gnomē*) to restrain passion (*orgē*), in short the Periclean rule of reason (1988: 156–8). Farrar notes but is unperturbed by the fact that Pericles “ruled” over the citizens by “substitut[ing] his judgment for theirs.” She never questions the anti-democratic view of political knowledge implicit in Pericles’ claims to know what is required (*ta deonta*). Farrar praises collective judgment, but seems to conclude that it is Thucydidean and Periclean judgment that is needed, that rare kind of judgment invulnerable to “the pressures of circumstance” (ibid.: 190). Just as Pericles exercised “power to control the responses of the Athenians,” Thucydides controls our interpretation of the *History*, guiding us to civic virtue (ibid.: 164, 188). Farrar observes that “equality in the sense of the absence of a guiding gnome was, in Thucydides’ view, no virtue”; “Men need not just to understand and imagine; they need to be led” (ibid.: 186, 189).

While Zumbrunnen calls on democrats to look beyond leadership, he too ends up in a dark place. Zumbrunnen never compromises on democracy’s virtues or its meaning, but his reading implicitly acknowledges the *History*’s limited democratic horizons. For Zumbrunnen’s silent *demos* exerts only a negative power. The masses have only one tool to resist elite domination at their disposal, and that is the feeble hope that their undecipherable muteness precludes co-optation. Thucydides’ text proves to be barren ground for robust democratic visions. At best, the *demos* retains the power to disrupt, or more accurately the capacity for disruption suggested by a certain kind of salutary silence (2008: 12, 61, 189–90).

Between Zumbrunnen’s chastened embrace of democratic apparitions and Ober’s unwavering faith in democratic power, Farrar, Saxonhouse, and Mara lead us, in diverse ways, outside of democracy. They converge in the judgment that democracy contains the seeds of its own undoing, variously reaffirming the Straussian understanding of political knowledge, democratic character, and human motivation that render democratic politics so volatile. Democracy’s unfolding, these readings conclude, must be restrained, whether by leadership, shameful reverence, or a classical rationalism that presupposes the need for virtue.

The *History*’s More Forgiving and Demanding Vision of Democracy

Without offering a systematic appraisal of such a disparate collection of readings, I want to highlight some of their shared virtues and shortcomings, which have implications for how we ought to read Thucydides. Collectively, these readings remind us that Thucydides is not as decisive about democracy as Hobbes made it seem. The *History*’s insights into democracy are often paradoxical and ambivalent, and as such ought to deepen our questions rather than solidify our prejudices. Readings that attempt to engage Thucydides as a theorist of democracy have done much to contest the notion that the *History* offers a clear-cut indictment of direct democracy

or the related view that its *only* civic function is to teach elites how to govern better. While such readings aspire to bring greater balance to our understanding of Thucydides and democracy, most of them avoid any undue romanticism. They acknowledge that democratic practices and institutions do not confer immunity from the risks endemic to political activity. Nor do they suffice as a response to the complex problem of judgment central to communal flourishing. At the same time, such readings show that we can and should read the *History's* undeniably critical insights about democracy in service of democracy's moral and political integrity.

For all their virtues, these readings also share a few limitations. First, despite the fact that most of them engage with Thucydides primarily as a political thinker, they are insufficiently attentive to a crucial category of politics: power. Many readers adopt a truncated view of power and politics, without considering how the politics of the *History* converge with the politics of reading, or the complex relations between the speech of Thucydides, his characters, and the *History's* interpreters. Straussian readings seem particularly problematic in this regard. At various points, these readings acknowledge the constitutive aspects of political speech and the rhetorical aims of speakers (Strauss 1978: 163–74). Nevertheless, by positing a distinction between the *History's* political speeches and Thucydides' "true speech," a distinction blurred by their own exegesis, Straussian readings elide the full dimensions of rhetorical power (ibid.: 166). Their own insights into the politics of speech problematize their reading of Thucydides as uncovering the "permanent" and "sempiternal" truths of human nature and politics (ibid.: 235–6). Their own account of the *History* calls into question the naturalization of claims about human motivations and inequalities, not to mention categorical assertions about things like knowledge and wisdom, interest and rationality, and the common good.

Epistemic arguments about democracy founder on a similar problem insofar as epistemology leads us to substitute a concern for truth with that of politics. Political action may hinge on truth and falsehood. But to conceive of deliberative activity as fundamentally about uncovering objective realities or testing factual claims risks distorting politics. The *History's* speeches suggest that the essence of political activity lies in constructing and contesting political subjectivities, visions of the good, and coherent narratives that compel this or that political action. This suggests that we must appreciate the constitutive aspects of politics as *the* exercise of power that most demands our attention.

An insufficiently critical and comprehensive view of power has at least three consequences for our thinking about democracy. First, it leads to an unnecessarily pessimistic view of democratic politics. For it leads one to attribute the problems of politics – or human nature – to problems specific to democracy. If politics is about constructing and contesting narratives rather than revealing truths, then its risks and failures are a problem of politics in general rather than an intrinsic problem of democracy. Indeed, insofar as the sources of pathology lie in human nature or political activity, constraining democracy may exacerbate rather than ameliorate outcomes. The discursive and constitutive dimensions of power do, of

course, have implications for democracy. Most significantly, it alerts us to power's ephemeral and elusive quality. A careful reading of the *History* warns us *not* to take power at face value, and encourages us to consider the ways in which it might threaten democratic integrity. Thucydides denies the reconciliation of democracy and power, contra those democratic theorists who, like Pericles, too easily celebrate democracy's power or those who, like Diodotus, would calculate democracy's worth *in terms of* its ability to sustain power. The *History*, in marking Athens' moral complicities and missteps, certainly militates against any democratic self-congratulation. It also suggests the danger of a utilitarian rather than substantive defense of democracy. We would do well to note the thread that connects Diodotus' argument about expedience to the brutal triumph of usefulness at Plataea, to the instrumental logic governing Pisander's case for regime change in Book 8 (8.53). The privileging of power, defined in utilitarian terms, justifies the commodification of democracy. For the point at which utility terminates is when democracy is merely one resource to be traded in for another. Finally, if the characters in the *History* who diagnose political reality and prescribe political action are invariably engaged in politics, then the claims made on the basis of reading Thucydides – including those about democratic knowledge or character – are also implicated in politics. To neglect how such claims constitute an exercise of power, one that shapes the reality within which we are called to act, is to miss how readings of Thucydides themselves may disempower democratic possibility. In short, it is only by appreciating the discursive dimensions of power that we can adequately reflect on the politics of our own hermeneutics.

In addition to deepening our engagement with power in all of its manifestations, the *History* calls us to another paradoxical insight on democracy that extant readings seem to overlook. I agree with the consensus of most readers that democracy requires categories of thought and practices outside of itself – indeed outside of the exigency of politics – to flourish. Nevertheless, there is a systematic case to be made that one of Thucydides' critiques of democracy is that it is not participatory enough. Thoughtful care and reverence are, indeed, crucial for political community. But perhaps the *History* also suggests that the very posture of being spoken for lends itself to thoughtlessness and irreverence, to an ethos of practiced irresponsibility that dooms any leadership, Periclean or otherwise. Zumbrunnen's acquiescence to silence, or the more constructive turn to leadership, reverence, and piety seem to condone precisely the passivity Thucydides and his speakers problematize at various points in the *History*. The notable passivity that is mostly overshadowed by democratic excess, or perhaps the passivity that licenses that very excess. The passivity of listeners and spectators that make them quick to blame speakers and leaders. The passivity that allows them to forget and deny their own implication in collective decisions. We see this in the backlash against Pericles, who is "made responsible" (2.21) and faulted by the Athenians for being "the author of the war and the cause of all their misfortunes" (2.59). We see it again after the disaster at Sicily, when Thucydides reports how the Athenians became

“angry with the orators who had joined in promoting the expedition, just as if they had not themselves voted it” (8.1).

Such unjustified outrage suggests that Cleon and Diodotus both get something right despite their respective failings. The Athenians do turn themselves into spectators; and in rendering themselves an audience to be wooed by displays of verbal jousting and dazzling feats of rhetorical acrobatics, they transform themselves into inert matter to be impressed upon. If Cleon diagnoses a wayward and novelty-seeking *demos* flippant about paramount public concerns (3.38), Diodotus indicates that the reason for this lack of seriousness lies in the differential responsibility between the *demos* and its advisors, between those who actively propose and counsel, and those who only listen and vote (3.43). It is the latter who risk being habituated into the permanent role of passive spectator. Here Diodotus alerts us to the irony of Pericles’ earlier critique of the alleged private passivity at Sparta so detrimental to the common cause. The fissure between listeners and speakers, no matter how ostensibly democratic the assembly, and the kind of passivity it inculcates, would seem to make Pericles’ comments an apt indictment of Athens: “each fancies that no harm will come of his neglect, that it is the business of somebody else to look after this or that for him; and so, by the same notion being entertained by all separately, the common cause imperceptibly decays” (1.141). Diodotus suggests that the problem is not one of nature, but rather one of bad faith, that if those who listened suffered equally, good judgment would be forthcoming. Pericles, too, had already suggested as much in the Funeral Oration. His assertion that “never can a fair or just policy be expected of the citizen who does not, like his fellows, bring to the decision the interests and apprehensions of a father” (2.44) indicates the necessary connection between sound judgment and serious stakes; he highlights the danger of divorcing decisions and actions from the concrete experience of their consequences. For those who risk nothing cannot suffer loss, and without something of value held hostage to fate, cannot make the discernments necessary to honor and protect those things, whether they be particular bodies or a particular body politic. Diodotus and Pericles intimate the risk of suffering, or sense of investment, required to motivate responsible reflection and active participation.⁶ Thucydides, alternatively, suggests the ways in which the orators conspire against such investment, how they are complicit in encouraging passivity and the abdication of thoughtfulness, how elites shield the *demos* and alleviate it from the burdens of inquiry, diagnosis, argument, and judgment. Pericles, Cleon, Alcibiades, and Athenagoras are all guilty of quelling deliberation and denigrating critical self-reflection. In these moments, they demonstrate how even the most committed democrats can undermine the characteristic orientation of active ownership, or the conviction that each and every one is answerable for his or her judgments, required to make democracy work.

If the virtue of thoughtful care that Diodotus considers a necessary salve to democracy’s self-inflicted wounds cannot be cultivated through passive listening, then this lends new poignancy to the fact that so many readers – regardless of their

political persuasions – treat Thucydides’ text as the occasion for active engagement (cf. Connor 1984: 17–18; Orwin 1994: 12; Euben 2010: 185). Contemporary political theorists demonstrate how reading Thucydides can challenge and chasten. It can educate our judgment, cultivate moral reflection, and better attune us to democracy’s threats and promises. But it can only do this by calling upon the reader to a kind of attentive craftsmanship. The reader must engage in the arduous task of threading together speeches and deeds, patiently unstitching and re-stitching, in the hopes of weaving a meaningful pattern out of the disparate and untidy phenomena of politics. While Thucydides calls his reader to inhabit the perspectives of his actors, the *History* is not a book for spectators. It is simply too complex to countenance any passivity. Thucydides demands active participation in a way that democracy must as well if it is to flourish. If there is any democratic advantage to be had from the *History*, it can only be consummated by consenting to that demand.

Notes

- 1 One might quibble with the distinction given that Saxonhouse and Mara are also profoundly indebted to Strauss. The distinction is best thought of as provisional and contestable. I make it purposefully on the basis not of each thinker’s overarching commitments, but how each appropriates Thucydides and whether his or her reading primarily affirms or challenges basic democratic commitments and practices. The third section of this chapter calls the distinction into question.
- 2 To be clear, I extrapolate only what Strauss’ exegesis of Thucydides suggests about democracy. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to make any claims about Strauss’ broader judgments about democracy, the analysis here is consistent with his limited defense of Athenian democracy for being relatively favorable to the survival philosophy and philosophic education in Strauss (1991: 205 and 1978: 131–2). While Galston (2009) offers a nuanced account of Strauss’ “qualified embrace of liberal democracy,” it is worth reflecting on the kind of liberal democracy Strauss espouses and what the politics implicit in his reading of the ancients, including Thucydides, mean for political equality, a culture of political participation, democratic epistemology, and the judgments and actions of a democratic citizenry.
- 3 Elsewhere, Saxonhouse gives a less sanguine view of distrust in deliberative contexts, one more in line with Strauss (1978) and Orwin (1994). See Saxonhouse (2006: 167), where suspicion hinders deliberation and necessitates Diodotean deception.
- 4 Elsewhere, Euben contends that the democratic power of Thucydides’ text lies in its ability to provide a canvas for a paradigmatic portrait of the nature of politics and the human condition. The fact that this portrait is one of suffering and destruction vitiates the moral claims for democracy, calling into question Nietzsche’s romanticized and transformational vision of Athens, which would – even if for a moment – elide the horror of death and destruction. Cf. Euben 2010: 173–5.
- 5 Harvey Mansfield’s 1998 review of Saxonhouse betrays the anti-democratic implications of the Straussian Diodotus. He argues that if Diodotus is the product of Thucydides’ imagination, “then Athens was not merely a democracy in speech and

one-man rule in deed, as Thucydides said of Pericles' domination, but one-man rule – by Thucydides – in speech also. Democratic deliberation is assisted, completed, and even replaced by wise speech. Here is a lesson for admirers of 'public reason' who think that wisdom can be made to exude from democracy" (1998: 450).

- 6 I don't want to oversimplify. Thucydides also suggests that suffering cuts the other way, that it engenders irresolution and leads the Athenians to see themselves as separate from the architect of their suffering (2.60). Differential suffering is also a source of faction and treason (8.48).

Guide to Further Reading

Leo Strauss' three major pieces on Thucydides are the final chapter of *The City and Man* (1978), the essay reprinted as Strauss (1989), and "Preliminary Observations on the Gods in Thucydides' Work," in Pangle's (ed.) *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (1983). See also Jaffe's chapter in this volume. Book-length treatments of Thucydides most influenced by Strauss include Orwin (1994), Forde (1989), Palmer (1992), Saxonhouse (1996), and Mara (2008). Exemplary non-Straussian works that treat Thucydides as a critic of democracy include Ober (1998), Fliess (1959), and McGregor (1956). Two forums that debate the contemporary stakes and relevance of Athenian democracy include "The 2500th Anniversary of Democracy: Lessons of Athenian Democracy," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* 26.3 (September 1993) and "The Uses of Classical History for Contemporary Themes: A Forum," in *Historically Speaking* (January/February 2005).

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Part IV

Thucydides the Strategist

The Reception of Thucydides in the History of International Relations

Edward Keene

Introduction

It is a commonplace that Thucydides occupies a prominent position within the academic discipline of international relations today. He is one of a very small group of writers from before the twentieth century whose works, or at least extracts thereof, regularly appear on reading lists for undergraduate and graduate courses; who command attention as worthy subjects for interpretive analysis in the leading scholarly journals in the field; and who are customarily invoked as the ancestral fathers of currently fashionable theories. The only others who could be placed within the same category are Machiavelli, Grotius, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant. Even among them, Thucydides has a claim to be considered as pre-eminent. About fifty years ago, Martin Wight, one of the most influential historians of “international theory,” asserted that “while the acknowledged classics of political study are the political philosophers, the only counterpart in the study of international relations is Thucydides” (1960), and that is a view with which several commentators would still agree. In comparison with other authors from antiquity, Thucydides stands yet more clearly alone in having “earned himself a niche in conventional scholarship on International Relations.” There is of course some discussion of Plato and Aristotle in the field, and one catches the odd fleeting glimpse of Herodotus, Polybius, or Cicero, but nothing that begins to compare with the voluminous literature on Thucydides (Brown, Nardin, and Rengger 2002: 20).¹

Perhaps one should not question this state of affairs too closely. Students of international relations are so seldom encouraged to read texts from the past that one would hardly want to jeopardize the status of the happy few that have found a secure place within the mainstream. Nevertheless, and without wishing

to suggest that it is in any way undeserved, I want to ask how and why Thucydides has come to enjoy such prominence, bearing in mind that other classical authors have not been so fortunate. While Wight's remark shows that Thucydides has always been highly regarded, his special status was assured when a group of highly influential scholars in US academia, such as Robert Keohane, Kenneth Waltz, and Robert Gilpin, identified him as a paramount realist thinker in the late 1970s and 1980s (Johnson Bagby 1994: 131–6, 2000: 21–2). This was a pivotal moment in the development of the academic study of international relations, when ideas about realism and neo-realism were beginning to crystallize in a form that remains important today, and so it was an excellent opportunity to establish a canon of key thinkers about international relations. There are several possible reasons why they chose Thucydides to assume such an important role, and I will not have time to go into them all in detail here; he had, for example, already been established in an important position within the canon of great books in Western civilization, and was also associated with a “scientific” approach to the study of history and politics that his modern interpreters in international relations found methodologically congenial. The point I will concentrate on is that, while Thucydides had not previously been seen as such a classic authority on international relations – in part because of different ways of thinking about the central questions that the subject involved – there was a substantial literary tradition that saw his history as *the* classic book on war, and many people turned to it when they found themselves embroiled in what they took to be similar moments of general crisis and conflict.

I will highlight one in particular: Arnold Toynbee. Toynbee certainly did not produce international relations’ “Thucydides complex” single-handedly, but his place within the reception history is a significant one because he was an important, but by no means solitary (we might also note his father-in-law, Gilbert Murray; see Murray 1953 and Wilson 2011), bridging-point between classical scholarship and the study of international relations in the interwar period, another crucial formative stage in the development of international relations as an academic discipline (Thompson 1956; Brewin 1995; Navari 2000). Toynbee was an extraordinarily prolific and influential writer on world politics during the interwar period and World War II, when he beat E.H. Carr to the position as director of the government’s Foreign Press and Research Service; however, his influence in general declined after the war, and Carr is now recalled as a much more significant voice on international relations from that period. Nevertheless, through his influence on theorists like Wight, Halle, Kenneth Thompson, and Gilpin, Toynbee did retain significance at least for how Thucydides is read (and used) in international relations theory.

Thucydides as the Father of Realism

Has Thucydides always been recognized as one of the classic authorities on international politics? Certainly, many have constructed an account of his influence on theories of international relations that goes back at least to Thomas Hobbes’

translation of the *History*, or to David Hume's famous essay on the balance of power. Some have tried to push the reception story back yet further. Lowell Gustafson, for example, claims that "Guicciardini reintroduced the West to Thucydides after a thousand years" and that Machiavelli "read Thucydides and commented on some of his stories," although he concedes that "the Florentine preferred Livy" (Gustafson 2000: 4). Gustafson provides no source for this claim, but it seems very likely that it is drawn from Torbjørn Knusten's *A History of International Relations Theory* (1992: 32–3), where much the same points are made in similar language. Knusten gives no source for the claim about Guicciardini, and for Machiavelli, his only reference (I presume – since the title is cited differently by Knutsen) is to Peter Bondanella's brief work on *Machiavelli and the Art of Renaissance History* (1973). Admittedly, there is little in the reference to Hobbes with which one can quibble, and this is undoubtedly an important example of how far Thucydides' influence extends, but these references can give a false impression of a very longstanding, centuries-old belief in the centrality of Thucydides to thought about international relations.

Let us, for example, look a bit more closely at Hume's essay. He complained there that:

The reason, why it is supposed, that the ancients were entirely ignorant of the balance of power, seems to be drawn from the ROMAN history more than the GRECIAN; and as the transactions of the former are generally more familiar to us, we have thence formed all our conclusions. (Hume 1985: 335)

Hume goes on to give a number of examples from Roman history of what international relations theorists today would probably describe as "bandwagoning" rather than balancing, and then comments that "The only prince we meet with in the ROMAN history, who seems to have understood the balance of power, is HIERO king of SYRACUSE" (ibid.: 337). Even so, this does not deflect him from his desired conclusion that "the maxim of preserving the balance of power is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning, that it is impossible it could altogether have escaped antiquity" (ibid.). The point I want to highlight here is not that Hume was invoking Thucydides as a proto-realist, which I accept is an important part of the reception story, but rather that he was aware that Roman history was better known to his readers than Greek, suggesting that to the extent that the ancient world did shape contemporary perceptions of international politics in this period, lessons were more likely to be drawn from Roman than Greek experiences.

Moreover, it is profoundly odd to credit Guicciardini with "reintroducing" Thucydides to the West, as Gustafson does, since Lorenzo Valla had produced his famous Latin translation in the mid-fifteenth century (1448–52), a few decades before Guicciardini was born (in 1483). Meanwhile, on Machiavelli, Marianne Pade comments that "there are relatively few actual references [to Thucydides] in his works," and "the general consensus still seems to be that the Florentine political writer was never strongly influenced by [Thucydides]" (2006: 793). As Pade

shows, Thucydides did have readers among humanist scholars, often in Southern Germany as well as Italy, but they do not fit nearly so neatly into a realist tradition that is conventionally grounded in the emergence of balance of power and reason of state thinking during the Italian renaissance. In fact, what is most striking about Guicciardini in particular is his rather skeptical attitude toward the value of ancient history, and he cautions (probably taking a jab at Machiavelli here), "How wrong it is to cite the Romans at every turn" (Guicciardini 1965: 69). Note that he mentions the Romans here: when Guicciardini does cite ancients, it is nearly always Roman authors, particularly Tacitus (cf. Schellhase 1976). Where Guicciardini might be expected to cite Thucydides, for example when he observes that "the weakest always gets it in the neck," he refers not to any ancient source, but rather to contemporary sources he picked up during his diplomatic career (1965: 77–8). As Gustafson notes, Machiavelli did indeed prefer Livy, but as I shall discuss later, that has not led to any noticeable efforts among international relations scholars to construct a new account of the classical roots of modern realism framed in terms of Livy or, say, Tacitus; it certainly is not a thread picked up in Gustafson's own work, which reinforces the Thucydidean focus at every turn. Guicciardini's low evaluation of the utility of ancient history is a theme that recurs frequently throughout much of the modern historical writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, suggesting that there is little scope here to see Thucydides as a paramount influence on international relations theorizing during this period. He does not appear to have been required reading in the "political academies" that were beginning to be established in the eighteenth century for the professional education of diplomats; they were encouraged to read Cicero, "but there is no mistaking where [the Academy] stood in the 'battle of the 'ancients' and the 'moderns' in which the 'moderns' ... had already proved largely victorious" (Keens-Soper 1972; quote from 344). Much the same is true for the regius professorships in modern history established in England shortly afterwards.

If we move ahead to the twentieth century as possibly more fertile ground, and examine some of the texts from that period that were trying to give a sense of the historical development of international relations theory, often looking back to ancient origins as they did so, it is striking that Thucydides did not then cut so large a figure as he has since become. In large part this is because during the 1920s, a period often taken as the origins of international relations as an academic discipline, scholarly discourse was primarily concentrated on the establishment and workings of the League of Nations as a vehicle for world peace, and Thucydides played little role in this discussion. An early collection of essays on the topic that made a conscious effort to draw on historical precedents for the League selected from the ancient world the expansionary Hellenism of Alexander the Great and Roman imperialism as "salient passages from the point of view of efforts deliberately made to organize the civilized world as one" (Marvin 1921: 11; the essay on Hellenism was co-authored by Toynbee). In what is perhaps the epitome of popular utopian attitudes to the historical progress of international

organization, H.G. Wells' *The Outline of History*, we are told that "Planless and murderous squabbles are still planless and murderous squabbles even though Thucydides tells the story," and that "in a short history of mankind, all this century and more of dissension between the days of Salamis and Plataea and the rise of King Philip shrinks to a little, almost inaudible clash of disputation, to a mere note upon the swift passing of opportunity for nations as for men" (Wells 1921: 292).

This relative lack of interest in Thucydides was not simply the product of blind utopian faith. One of the first textbooks that attempted to set out a general, reasonably objective, history of international relations theory, Frank M. Russell's *Theories of International Relations* (1936), buried a very brief discussion of Thucydides (60–4) within a much more extensive analysis of ancient Chinese, Indian, Greek, and Roman thought; Thucydides, indeed, received less attention here than Confucianism as a classical source of ideas about international politics. To take a yet more pointed example, in a key early statement of modern realist theory, the historian turned international relations professor E.H. Carr barely mentioned Thucydides, described Machiavelli as "the first important political realist," and argued that the "thesis that 'justice is the right of the stronger' ... never represented anything more than the protest of an uninfluential minority" in the Hellenic world (1946: 63).

The Turn to Thucydides

Nevertheless, since at least the mid-1990s, international relations theory has seen the emergence of what David Welch calls a "cottage industry" devoted to "identifying 'realist misreadings' of Thucydides" (2003: 307). This observation neatly captures two phases in the growing interest in Thucydides among international relations scholars: Welch is referring to a recent wave of critical re-readings of Thucydides, but these make sense only within the context of an earlier phase of Thucydidean analysis among international relations theorists in the United States, roughly originating during the late 1970s and early 1980s, that identified him with a "realist tradition" of thought. This notion of Thucydides as the original exemplar of realism was set in stone by some of the leading figures in international relations theory during that period, including Waltz, Keohane, Joseph Nye, Michael Doyle, and Robert Gilpin.²

This was not an inevitable move. As we have seen, some of the most prominent earlier realists such as Carr (for whom Gilpin, at least, had tremendous respect, identifying him as one of the "three great realist writers" along with Thucydides and Machiavelli; 1984: 291) had earlier almost brushed Thucydides aside in preference for other historical touchstones. So why did Thucydides come to appear to these later scholars as such an important thinker? What influences were at work on them that led them to see the *History of the Peloponnesian War*

as the Ur-text of realism? As I said in the introduction, there are several reasons why these thinkers made so much of the importance of Thucydides, including the prominence that was beginning to be attached to him in other relevant fields of academic inquiry, and his scientific reputation. Another is that Thucydides could be used to illustrate what they saw as a fundamental underlying continuity in international relations. Gilpin, for example, suspected that “if somehow Thucydides were placed in our midst, he would (following an appropriate short course in geography, economics, and modern technology) have little trouble in understanding the power struggle of our age” (1981: 211). For Waltz, “the famous case of Hobbes experiencing the contemporaneity of Thucydides” was a key piece of evidence that:

The relations that prevail internationally seldom shift rapidly in type or in quality. They are marked instead by dismaying persistence, a persistence that one must expect so long as none of the competing units is able to convert the anarchic international realm into a hierarchic one. (1979: 66)

As well as Hobbes, the other main example Waltz gave of the contemporaneity of Thucydides was Louis Halle, who realized his relevance even to “the era of nuclear weapons and superpowers” (*ibid.*). The point, in short, is that even though technology may undergo fantastic changes, the underlying political dynamics of international relations remain essentially the same. This was an important element of the case that these thinkers were trying to construct for the scientific credentials of their realist theory, which they understood in terms of the development of law-like generalizations about the international system. Their reading of Thucydides’s *History* was, in a sense, an especially juicy cherry to be picked.

A further reason for these authors’ invocation of Thucydides was a claim about the nature of international political dynamics, and specifically that the fundamental continuity was expressed through the persistence of power politics and the logic of the balance of power. Here, Carr notwithstanding, they were drawing on an established view of Thucydides in the work of earlier scholars such as Hans Morgenthau, Raymond Aron, and Martin Wight, and so we can take a step deeper into the reception history of Thucydides in international relations, back into the early post-World War II period. Although Morgenthau was very frequently cited by scholars such as Gilpin and Nye to this effect, and he did indeed look back to Thucydides as an exponent of power politics, such references are actually quite sparing, less glowing than Wight’s, and convey a sense of a realist tradition that contains some unexpected partners for Thucydides, most of whom appear to have quietly disappeared from standard accounts of this school of thought: Lord Salisbury and George Washington; Tolstoy and John of Salisbury; Richelieu, Hamilton, and Disraeli (Morgenthau 1946: 42, 2006: 38). In this respect, Morgenthau’s work might actually be cited as evidence for my earlier claim that Thucydides was *not* put on a pedestal until relatively recently. For Wight, on the other hand, possibly

borrowing from Georg Schwarzenberger, Thucydides was the author of “one of the supreme books on power politics” (1986: 24; cf. Schwarzenberger 1964: 16). Raymond Aron (2003) similarly placed Thucydides in an exceptionally prominent position within the realist tradition, although less with the goal of establishing fundamental continuities in the logic of international politics, and more in terms of exploring quite specific patterns of polarity and their implications. Although references to Hobbes and Hume are by no means entirely absent from these discussions of Thucydides’ role as the original author on power politics, they are often refracted through different sources, as we will now see.

Experiencing the Contemporaneity of Thucydides

Another early Cold War realist, now less prominent in the history of the field than Morgenthau, Wight, and Aron, but whom we saw earlier mentioned by Waltz as an important connection to Thucydides, was Louis J. Halle (see Connor 1984: 3n; Johnson Bagby 2000: 21; Tritle 2006: 127–40). Halle’s initial discussion of Thucydides was a short paper that originally appeared in the *Department of State Bulletin* in 1952. There are several interesting features about his argument here. As with the later works of Gilpin and Waltz, Halle was a firm believer in the contemporaneity of Thucydides, but for him this was not so much a support for a claim about the fundamentally unchanging nature of international relations. Rather, Halle claimed that Thucydides “has been gaining steadily in the quality of contemporaneity,” which he imagined through a series of stages: in 1914, “with the demise of the Victorian era;” then in 1939; and finally “[t]he present, in which our country finds herself like Athens after the Persian wars, called upon to assume the leadership of the free world, brings him virtually to our side” (1955a: 262). This clearly shows a conscious awareness that Halle’s was the latest in a series of attempts to identify parallels between Thucydides and the present situation. Some are mentioned directly in Halle’s paper, such as a 1939 essay in the *Saturday Review of Literature* by the journalist and broadcaster Elmer Davis; and Edith Hamilton’s *The Greek Way* (1993), originally published in 1930, which made a strong parallel between World War I and the Peloponnesian War. From Halle, then we begin to turn toward a different kind of invocation of Thucydides, no longer as a part of a self-consciously “realist” tradition of thought, but more in terms of the experience of his contemporaneity, and how that experience had evolved over time.

Davis and Hamilton are but a couple – and by no means the best known – examples of a substantial literature that connects Thucydides to international relations in this way. “Warfare,” as Gregory Crane says, “especially its unpredictable course and unexpected consequences, has often spurred interest in Thucydides” (1998: 1; cf. Lord 1945; Caclamanos 1943). Of course, one could say that this is a reason why the other great realists mentioned above, such as Hobbes, found Thucydides so powerful, and indeed Crane does mention Morgenthau in this context. But he

adds others who would less commonly appear in an account of the evolution of the realist tradition: the American nineteenth-century classicist Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, Francis Cornford and his *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, Louis Lord, and George C. Marshall. All of these appear elsewhere as scholars who are seen as having played a role in the reception of Thucydides within international relations: Marshall's address to an alumni luncheon at Princeton in 1947 is quite often cited (e.g., Wight 1986: 24; Lebow and Strauss 1991: 2), but the others such as Gildersleeve and Lord do feature in the story as well (Gustafson 2000).

One may question the role played by some of the more marginal figures in this story. Gildersleeve, for example, is something of an odd choice for the purpose to which he is often put. Both Crane and Gustafson seem to present him as providing a link between the Peloponnesian and the American Civil Wars, and hence the enduring relevance of Thucydides. To be sure, Gildersleeve does draw out a number of parallels, but the overwhelming thrust of his essay is to warn about the dangers of overdoing such comparisons. Right at the beginning he advises that "Historical parallel bars are usually set up for exhibiting feats of mental agility. The mental agility is often moral suppleness, and nobody expects a critical examination of the parallelism itself;" and he then goes on to point out that "there are general resemblances between any two wars," and that "situations may recur, sayings may recur, but no characters come back" (1897: 330, 336; cf. Thibaudet 1922: 246). Indeed, while Gildersleeve is certainly capable himself of some impressive feats of "mental agility," what is striking about him is how alive he is to the dangers of abuse that lie in making this kind of "Thucydides-for-our-times" parallels, a point that is seldom picked up in recent attempts to use him to illustrate the historical extension of the Thucydidean motif in thought about war (e.g., Gustafson 2000: 4–5). The whole genre received a rather stern warning that "the easily-rewarded search for modern parallels ... entails a certain danger of overemphasizing [Thucydides's] modernity" (Wassermann 1957: 101; cf. Gomme 1947: 53–4).

These are only Anglo-American examples, but Ernst Badian points out that "the identification of Prussia with ancient Athens ... had been traditional in Germany since the eighteenth century," and Waltz noted the importance of Werner Jaeger's work in this regard in the course of his own invocation of Thucydides (Badian 1993: 126; Waltz 1979: 127). It is striking that Jaeger actually promotes Thucydides above Herodotus as a political historian in part on the grounds that, while Herodotus's account of the Persian War "saw the problem as a question of war-guilt," Thucydides' version of the origins of the Peloponnesian War "posed the problem in an entirely new way," looking beyond disputes about war guilt to see "that the true cause was the incessantly growing power of Athens, which threatened Sparta" (Jaeger 1939: 389). The link here to the historical debates within Germany about the question of war guilt in the case of World War I is hard to miss. Meanwhile, in France, Aron drew quite heavily on the work of Albert Thibaudet, who had provided yet another statement of the parallels between World War I and the Peloponnesian War (Thibaudet 1922; cf. Roupnel 1915).

Not all parallels were inspired by immediate experience of war. It is noteworthy that Halle's account suggests that Thucydides was seen by Victorian authors as less relevant to their times, and that there was a "change in the significance of Thucydides that was produced in 1914" (1955a: 264). He cites Thomas Arnold at this point, rather going against the grain of his argument, since this is clearly a case of a Victorian admirer of Thucydides, and one of the important contributions that Arnold made in his edition of Thucydides' *History* was to make the case for his contemporaneity. "The state of Greece from Pericles to Alexander," Arnold argued, "affords a political lesson perhaps more applicable to our own times, if taken all together, than any other portion of history which can be named anterior to the eighteenth century" (Arnold 1858a: 396). The grounds on which Arnold was basing this claim were different from the straightforward parallel between two wars drawn by authors after 1914. Rather, Arnold's case rested on a different way of conceptualizing of the ancient-modern relationship, viewing it as an aspect of the lifecycle of a civilization: "there is in fact an ancient and a modern period in the history of every people:"

The largest portion of that history which we commonly call ancient is practically modern, as it describes society analogous to that in which it now is; while, on the other hand, much of what is called modern history is practically ancient, as it relates to a state of things which has passed away. Thucydides and Xenophon, the orators of Athens, and the philosophers, speak a wisdom more applicable to us politically than the wisdom of even our own countrymen who lived in the middle ages; and their position, both intellectual and political, more nearly resembled our own. (1858b: 108–9)

Thucydides' history now served a purpose quite different from how he came to be seen by later international relations theorists, as the first to realize the inevitability of power politics in an anarchic international system. For Arnold, his work offered a warning of how the happy progress of civilization might be arrested "having happily overlived the critical season of the transition from youth to manhood, what we should now most dread are accidents, or constitutional disease produced by external violence: that is, that the great enemy of society in its present stage is war" (ibid.: 109). Thucydides' great book on war was, in effect, a warning of the only real danger that threatened Western civilization: self-destruction through war.

The fact that Arnold was one of the sources for Halle's idea of Thucydides' contemporaneity is, I think, important, because Halle's work was inflected with a similar sense of a civilization under threat: "Victoria presided over a world of self-assurance, security and care – like the world in which Thucydides had his childhood. As he records the disintegration of his world we see more vividly what is happening to our own" (1955a: 262). In a brief introduction written for the first edition of Halle's work, Dean Acheson argued that the key focus of Halle's thought was "the challenge to our civilization itself," and that the book was an inquiry into

“the state of health and vigour of the civilization which has transcended Europe, the West, Christendom, and embraces the whole nonbarbaric world.” This, indeed was a key element of Halle’s account of “the world as it is,” where he insisted that it was a world not only of nation-states but also of civilizations; that it was “a dynamic world, a world of challenge and response;” in which “success itself is the parent of failure, as it tends to produce a relaxation of effort and discipline” (1955b: 17, 30–9).

As some of that phraseology, such as “challenge and response,” might indicate, one of the key influences on Halle’s experience of the contemporaneity of Thucydides was Arnold Toynbee; these are key themes in his monumental *A Study of History* (1935), especially the first two volumes. Toynbee appears to have largely dropped out of the discussion of the classical roots of international thought by the time that Thucydides was being firmly installed as the first realist theorist of international relations in the late 1970s. He does not appear to have directly influenced Keohane, Nye, Doyle, or Waltz in this regard, although Gilpin drew on him quite extensively, but not always in ways that suggest a connection refracted through their shared appreciation of Thucydides.³ However, it is very clear that both Wight and Aron saw him as an important part of the story: Aron highlighted Toynbee alongside Thibaudet as the principal commentators who had linked the Thucydidean past to the grim present of the early twentieth century (2003: 145). Wight worked with Toynbee at the Royal Institute of International Affairs while Toynbee was engaged in producing his *Surveys of International Affairs* (which attracted Carr’s ire), and was a prominent interlocutor while Toynbee was producing his mammoth *Study of History*. Halle quoted extensively from an essay of Toynbee’s where he recalled his sense in 1914 that “[t]he experience that we were having in our world now had been experienced by Thucydides in his world already” (Toynbee 1948: 7–8; Halle 1955: 264). Halle’s idea of 1914 as a turning point when there was a “change in the significance of Thucydides” also betrays Toynbeeian influence (it could hardly have come from Arnold, after all). Toynbee had anticipated the idea that Halle later picked up that the Victorians had had a sense of “living outside history altogether ... secure against being engulfed in that ever-rolling stream in which Time had borne all his less privileged sons away” (1948: 6). Certain “batches of Western middle-class people” had, he said, witnessed the end of history over the course of the nineteenth century, only for Prussian militarists in 1914 “deliberately tearing open again history’s insecurely closed book,” and so plunging Western civilization once again into the world of Thucydides (*ibid.*: 17).

Toynbee’s significance is that he went beyond simply experiencing the contemporaneity of Thucydides at a time of war and crisis, in the way that, say Louis Lord did. Toynbee did not merely set up “historical parallel bars” to point out similarities between the two situations; nor did he look to the *History* for specific lessons in strategy as a great sea power confronted a great land power, or to embellish a particular ideological view of World War I

(cf. Caclamanos 1943). His encounter with Thucydides inspired a much larger question of world history as a comparative study of the rise and fall of civilizations: "Thucydides' world and my world had now proved to be philosophically contemporary. And, if this were the true relation between the Graeco-Roman and the Western civilizations, might not the relations between all the civilizations known to us turn out to be the same?" (1948: 8). Thus, *A Study of History*, which was capacious enough both to furnish Halle with source material for his preoccupations about the survival prospects of American civilization – with Thucydides as the constant warning of how easily imperialist aggrandizement might bring war and degeneracy – and to help promote the idea of a law-like tendency toward power balancing in state systems and a sense of the dynamics of change resulting from hegemonic war and alterations in the distribution of power, themes that were picked up by Gilpin and became central to contemporary American realism.

Concluding Remarks

The reception of Thucydides in the academic discipline of international relations may be depicted in terms of a three-stage process. First, with some antecedents but growing particularly strong after 1914, there was a common practice in several countries of drawing out historical parallels between World Wars I and II and the Peloponnesian War. This may have been inspired by the same motives that Hobbes gave for his interest in Thucydides: "the principal and proper work of history being to instruct and enable men by the knowledge of actions past to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future" (1989: xxi). It may also have been, as Karl Marx suggested was the case for the French revolutionaries, an attempt to indulge the "self-deceptions" that allowed them "to keep their passion up to the height of a great historic tragedy:" "they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past, assume their names, their battle cries, their costumes to enact a new historic scene in such time-honoured disguise and with such borrowed language" (Marx 2008: 1–2). Toynbee's realization of Thucydides' contemporaneity in 1914 was a part of this larger movement of reminiscence, but he carried it forward and gave it greater future significance by mining Thucydides for more generalizable theoretical lessons; the idea was not merely to compare two great wars, but to derive inferences about the lifecycle of Western civilization, and of civilizations more broadly. Toynbee's scheme for these was, as Kenneth Thompson saw, rooted in his model of Hellenistic civilization, and specifically revolved around "the moment of moral failure and breakdown [that] came in 431 B.C. with the Peloponnesian War" (1955: 295). He had a story of the decline and fall of one civilization, which he used as the interpretive lens for all the rest.

The second stage in the process was the incorporation of these insights into the realist literature that was taking root in the United States after 1945, and which culminated in the enthronement of Thucydides as the father of realism by the end of the 1970s, anointed by the dominant American scholars in the field. This was not simply the result of the influence of Toynbee's grand historical scheme, although particularly through Wight and Halle it did have effects on the evolution of international political thought in both Britain and America. Halle especially picked up on Toynbee's idea of civilizational decline, interpreting the challenge for American foreign policy in the early Cold War in terms of whether civilization might survive; Thucydides appeared here as a guide both practical and moral, with the sense of contemporaneity that Toynbee had felt only reinforced. Others picked up on the power-political side of Toynbee's analysis, using its grand historical comparisons to underpin a notion of the theory of the balance of power as a kind of nomological science of international relations. One can see this influence working through scholars in the United States such as Thompson, or Martin Wight in some of his more "comparative historical" moods.

Finally, the third stage is more or less where we are now: with a deeply entrenched idea of Thucydides as the first realist "theorist" of international relations that is ritually handed on to undergraduates; but also with a burgeoning advanced critical literature on the "abuses" of Thucydides' own work that is implied in this reading, and offering alternative visions, for example, of Thucydides the constructivist (e.g., Lebow 2001, and see Zumbrunnen in this volume). The critical literature, for all its undoubtedly penetrating insight into the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, does not, however, seriously challenge the grip that Thucydides still exerts on the historical imagination of international relations. On the contrary, it suggests that the Thucydidean focus is all-important, in the sense that a reframing of Thucydides' work might lead to a transformation of international relations theory. Thucydides remains the foundation stone.

To conclude, I return to the point I made at the beginning, that the interpretation, and now reinterpretation, of Thucydides has eclipsed other classical historians. This may, in part, be a legacy from Toynbee, because not only did he attach such significance to the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, but, at least in the work that had the greatest influence on international relations scholarship, he had a peculiar fixation with the Greek historical experience at the expense of the Roman. As J.F. Leddy noted in a review of *A Study of History*:

The references to or citations from Livy are perfunctory, no surprise in view of Toynbee's comparative neglect of the Roman Republic, but it is curious that he is similarly casual about Tacitus, quoting him little and then generally from his minor works, selecting his longest quotation from the *Annals* on a point of Spartan history! (1957)

Toynbee's Thucydides represents a distinctive way of using history in the study of international relations, and a very specific, in some ways blinkered, view of the important questions to be asked about the relationship between the ancient and modern worlds. To see what is at stake here, let us note the irony that one of the major influences on Toynbee's masterwork, Oswald Spengler, offered a quite different view of that relationship, suggesting that the modern West had passed from being a culture to becoming a civilization, for which "the parallel is to be found not in Pericles's Athens but in Cæsar's Rome" (Spengler 1926, I: 40). It is intriguing to reflect on how the focus on Thucydides has been associated with certain ideas about how to understand the challenges we face in thinking about international relations: the moral decline of Western civilization and, especially, about the inevitability of power balancing and conflict in a state system. A focus on other classical historians, and periods other than the Peloponnesian wars, might have informed alternative kinds of speculation, just as we saw the interwar "utopians" drawing on Hellenism and Roman imperialism to inform their visions of international organization, or Spengler offering remarkable insights into globalization and the purely materialistic nature of the modern West from his analysis of Roman history. Or we might read Herodotus to illuminate the significance of the implications of cultural pluralism; Caesar on counter-insurgency operations; Livy on how states rise to greatness; Tacitus on the politics and morality of *raison d'état*. Thucydides need not be our only contemporary.

Appendix. Citations in Leading International Relations Journals

Table 19.1 Thucydides and the early modern canon

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Thucydides</i>	<i>Machiavelli</i>	<i>Grotius</i>	<i>Hobbes</i>	<i>Rousseau</i>	<i>Kant</i>
<i>European Journal of International Relations</i> (since 1995)	29	30	24	41	23	60
<i>International Organization</i> (since 1947)	31	24	33	24	29	55
<i>International Security</i> (1976-2006)	52	46	7	24	20	61
<i>International Studies Quarterly</i> (1967-2006)	73	62	35	59	57	102
<i>Millennium</i> (since 1971)	25	33	28	57	15	90
<i>Review of International Studies</i> (since 1975)	77	103	104	161	77	208
Total references	287	298	231	366	221	576

Table 19.2 Thucydides and other classical authors

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Thucydides</i>	<i>Herodotus</i>	<i>Plato</i>	<i>Aristotle</i>	<i>Cicero</i>	<i>Livy</i>	<i>Tacitus</i>
<i>European Journal of International Relations</i> (since 1995)	29	3	13	23	6	1	1
<i>International Organization</i> (since 1947)	31	1	9	21	2	1	1
<i>International Security</i> (1976-2006)	52	1	11	12	2	0	1
<i>International Studies Quarterly</i> (1967-2006)	73	3	21	29	5	4	1
<i>Millennium</i> (since 1971)	25	2	22	39	8	6	4
<i>Review of International Studies</i> (since 1975)	77	3	51	75	14	5	3
Total references	287	13	127	199	37	17	11

Number of articles that cite the author at least once.

Guide to Further Reading

A good, relatively recent, starting point for work on Thucydides in international relations is Gustafson (ed., 2000), especially the essay there by Johnson Bagby; see also Johnson Bagby (1994), which provides a very good critical analysis of the key literature to that point. A good example of a core realist perspective on Thucydides is Gilpin (1984). The *Review of International Studies* is a valuable source for more recent scholarship on Thucydides in international relations: see articles there by Bedford and Workman (2001), Kokaz (2001), Welch (2003), and Dolgert (2012). To pursue some of the themes from the present chapter about the importance of the early twentieth century in the reception story, there is an excellent set of essays in Long and Wilson (1995), and for a more up-to-date analysis see Wilson (2011).

Notes

- 1 Plato and Aristotle get some coverage in Thompson (1994); for a more wide-ranging discussion, that pays unusual, but deserved, attention to Cicero, see Boucher (1998). See also Rengger (1995), Hardt and Negri (2000), and, more heavily indebted than the above to Thucydides, Lebow (2008). There is still remarkably little on Herodotus and international relations, but see the recent essay by Harrison (2009). Measured again in terms of journal citations, Thucydides has an immense predominance over other classical historians; among all classical authorities, only Plato and Aristotle come close.

- 2 In a 2009 survey of the international relations discipline, all of these scholars featured in the top twenty of “scholars whose work has had the greatest influence on the field of IR in the past 20 years” (Jordan et al. 2009: 43). I date this back to the late 1970s and 1980s because the key works where this interpretation of Thucydides is advanced are Keohane and Nye (1977), Waltz (1979), and Gilpin (1981). Doyle’s essay “Thucydidean Realism” (1990) is a somewhat later addition, and clearly takes the realist reading of Thucydides as already established, referring to the earlier writings by Keohane and Nye to justify the claim.
- 3 Gilpin (1981) discusses him mainly in the context of the shifting locus of power and hegemonic war; the latter, of course, has considerable relevance to Gilpin’s use of Thucydides, but I am not aware of a real direct connection in Gilpin’s work. This may be because of Carr’s success: as Stanley Hoffmann notes, Carr established his social science of international relations “in reaction against another historian, whose normative approach Carr deemed illusory – Toynbee” (1987: 5). See also Thompson (1956). Keohane does not seem to mention Toynbee in his autobiographical essay (1989: 1–32).

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Thucydides and the Just War Tradition

Unlikely Bedfellows?

Cian O'Driscoll

Introduction

Thucydides and the just war tradition may appear, at first glance, as unlikely bedfellows. Thucydides is certainly not a name that one frequently encounters in seminars on the just war tradition. Nor is it a name that crops up too often in the standard textbooks on that subject. Indeed, the mere notion that Thucydides and the just war tradition stand in any kind of substantive relation to one another is liable to be curtly dismissed by many contemporary scholars of the tradition. This is interesting in its own right, as well as loaded with implications for how we understand both the just war tradition and the position of Thucydides relative to it. This chapter seeks both to tease out these implications, and to examine the providence of the positions from which they derive.

It will contend that, although Thucydides is usually either ignored outright by contemporary scholars of the just war tradition, or depicted as an archetypal realist, the yin to the just war tradition's yang, the actuality is much more subtle and complex. In particular, the proclivity of many recent scholars to cast Thucydides exclusively in opposition to the just war tradition is presented as a relatively recent conceit. Engagement with select primary texts demonstrates that Thucydides actually boasts a long and involved history with respect to the just war tradition, as evidenced by the substantive role he plays in the writings of Alberico Gentili, Hugo Grotius, and Emer de Vattel. Moreover, the pronounced cold shoulder that Thucydides has received from scholars of the just war tradition in recent years has arguably had a detrimental effect on Western thinking on warfare insofar as it has exaggerated the difference between realist and just war tenets and obscured their points of overlap and connection.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, I consider the principal approaches to conceiving of the relation between Thucydides and the just war as reflected in the contemporary literature on the just war tradition. Here we find three different images of Thucydides. I treat the tendency to posit a simplified reading of Thucydides, based largely on his account of the Melian Dialogue, as the antithesis of the just war tradition, and then consider the relatively few contemporary just war texts that engage Thucydides as a moralist whose penetrative treatment of the Peloponnesian War (and indeed war more generally) speaks in an oblique but powerful way to many of the challenges that confront present-day theorists. I then bring this survey of the contemporary literature on just war to a close by canvassing that body of work that ignores Thucydides altogether. The second part nudges the chapter onto new terrain by exploring which if any of the contemporary “images” surveyed in the first part correspond to the role played by Thucydides in classical articulations of the just war doctrine. It will be shown that elements of all three images are evident in the historical literature, though arguably constituted in a more sophisticated form. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a set of reflections upon the implications of the just war tradition’s seemingly growing estrangement from Thucydides and all that he supposedly stands for.

The Just War Tradition

The just war tradition is arguably the predominant moral language through which we address questions pertaining to the rights and wrongs of the use of force in international society. Boasting a lineage that is typically traced to the sunset of the Roman Empire, it furnishes us with a set of concepts, principles, and analytical devices for making sense of the moral–legal questions that war raises. Contemporary accounts of the tradition organize it around two independent but related poles of inquiry, the *jus ad bellum*, which speaks to the conditions under which the recourse to war might be justified, and the *jus in bello*, which treats the issue of how war might be conducted in a just manner once commenced. Although scholars disagree over which principles should take priority within these poles of inquiry, and how they relate to one another, a certain amount of consensus endures regarding the principles themselves. Few scholars challenge the view that the *jus ad bellum* requires us to think in terms of “just cause,” “proper authority,” “right intent,” and “last resort,” while most agree that the *jus in bello* directs us to questions relating to “discrimination,” “proportionality,” and “double-effect.”. These categories have been covered extensively in the literature, so there is, I hope, no need to elaborate further on them here. Instead, I wish to draw attention to the fact that, when set out in these terms, the just war tradition may appear abstract and bloodless, removed from the rough and tumble of real-world international politics. This is both regrettable and misleading.

In actuality, the just war tradition is central to the practice of international relations. Its influence is evident in the legal codes that govern how modern militaries perform their duties, and it has featured prominently in the rhetoric surrounding the war on terror and the recent military actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Most recently, President Barack Obama reaffirmed its significance in his December 2009 Nobel Peace Prize address, when he stated the centrality of just war precepts to US foreign policy, and called on the international community to “think in new ways about the notion of just war and the imperatives of a just peace.” He enjoined his audience to face “the hard truth that we will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes. There will be times when nations – acting individually or in concert – will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified” (Obama 2009).

The sense of tempered idealism, and the reluctant acceptance of the element of force in human political life articulated by President Obama, expresses the central concerns and continuing fascination of the just war tradition. From Augustine’s mordant observations regarding humanity’s incapacity to wield power justly to the celebrated *The Rights of War and Peace* of Hugo Grotius, the just war tradition manifests, on the one hand, a tragic resignation to the necessity of war in this fallen world, and, on the other hand, a determination to restrict its destructiveness. It reflects an enduring effort to sustain the idea that, even when he finds himself in the trenches, man occupies a moral world. As such, the tradition should not be misconstrued as a simple *techné* or set of guidelines stipulating what is permissible in war. Rather, it comprises a tradition of political theory that invites us to think about war on a philosophical register. It challenges us to peer beyond the possibility of a narrowly defined “ethics of war,” toward a broader engagement with the nature of rules and responsibilities, and rights and duties, as they relate to the violent edge of world politics. Underpinning this is a sustained inquiry into the relation between the use of force in international life and political authority, understood as a practice. The question then arises: where does Thucydides fit in all of this? Or does he fit at all?

The first image: Thucydides versus just war

Let us begin with the treatment Thucydides receives at the hands of Michael Walzer, the foremost just war theorist of contemporary times, in his landmark text, *Just and Unjust Wars* (1992). Walzer introduces Thucydides in the very first chapter of this book, entitled “Against Realism.” Realism is presented as “a general account of war as a realm of necessity and duress, the purpose of which is to make discourse about particular cases appear to be idle chatter, a mask of noise with which we conceal, even from ourselves, the awful truth” (1992: 4). The awful truth, being, of course, that war is necessarily and fundamentally a brutish endeavor driven by power and interests rather than moral sentiment or considerations of justice. If we wish to gain a deeper appreciation of this awful truth, Walzer suggests, we would be well advised to look to its “source” and “most

compelling" expression, the writings of Thucydides and Thomas Hobbes (ibid.). Staying true to his own counsel, Walzer devotes an entire section of the first chapter to a discussion of the Melian Dialogue, which he refers to as one of the high points of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War and "the climax of his realism" (ibid.: 5). There is perhaps no need to recapitulate Walzer's summary of the dialogue, save to say that he adheres closely to the original text.

The gloss Walzer attaches to it is, however, worthy of attention. Walzer notes two possible interpretations of the Melian Dialogue, and indeed of Thucydides more generally. The first is derived from F.M. Cornford's *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (1907). It supposes that the Dialogue, and the text as a whole, captures something of the moral decay of Athens that accompanied the Peloponnesian War. Afflicted by "imperial decadence," the Athenian generals and the *polis* they represent are seen to "embody a certain loss of ethical balance, of restraint, and moderation" (ibid.: 7). The *History of the Peloponnesian War*, on this view, "is a tragedy and Athens itself is the tragic hero" (ibid.). The second interpretation, which Walzer favors, is the Hobbesian reading – or at least the Hobbesian reading as construed by Walzer. According to this perspective, the severe and highhanded behavior of the Athenian generals at Melos should not be taken as evidence of the gathering depravity of their polity, but rather as an indication of their fitness for the task that confronts them. By telling it like it is to the Melians, the generals display the disposition and qualities that a state, if it is to survive in a violent world, requires of its military. Citing Werner Jaeger (1939), Walzer contends that what Thucydides is actually seeking to convey here is the inner meaning of war, namely, that it forms a realm of its own, driven only by necessity and separate and distinct from the spheres of law, morality, and society. Whether or not this is the most faithful or sensitive reading of Thucydides, Walzer concludes, it is certainly the one favored by Hobbes, and, moreover, it is the one "with which we must come to grips" (ibid.: 7).

The Hobbesian reading of Thucydides is the one we must contend with, Walzer claims, because it is the strongest articulation of realist political thought available. It captures very concisely the profundity of the challenge posed by realism to those who would prefer to talk about international affairs in terms of the right and the good rather than interest and power. The example of the generals is invoked because it demonstrates the epiphenomenal character of so-called moral talk. Discourses that turn on questions of justice and other normative principles are exposed as a function of the power relations that prevail at any given time between states, and little more than this. Viewed in this light, the Athenian generals should be lauded for their perspicacity instead of scorned for their meanness. They correctly recognized the vacuous nature of appeals to morality and pursued a policy of brutal honesty in their dealings with the Melians. And in doing so, they revealed the ultimate futility and meaninglessness of moral talk: "If we must act in accordance with our interests, driven by fears of one another, then talk about justice cannot possibly be anything more than talk" (ibid.: 10).

Walzer, as one might expect, is not fully satisfied by Thucydides' account of the Melian Dialogue, or the realist logic it encapsulates. He complains that it obscures the vital "moral and strategic questions" that the Athenians must surely have debated prior to the expedition to Melos. "Would the destruction of Melos really reduce Athenian risks? Are there alternative policies? What are the likely costs of this one? Would it be right? What would other people think of Athens if it were carried out?" (ibid.: 8). These are all important considerations, he seems to say, and they indicate the limitations of the generals' realism. Pointing out that Thucydides' Athenian generals were exceedingly careful to couch their demands in the language of necessity rather than legitimacy, he suggests that this was a deliberate strategy. Walzer's strong implication (King 2012: 7) is that the Athenian generals refuse to engage in moral discourse because they know they will lose: regardless of their assertions that the language of necessity is more appropriate to warfare, the generals are well aware that arguments framed in that idiom will be less compelling than the ethical appeals advanced by the Melians, to which they will have nothing to say. The broader point that follows from this, and which is indicated by the generals' own economy of expression, is that Thucydidean realism is culpable of willful perversity insofar as it ignores the salience of moral talk to conflict in international affairs. In light of this, Walzer proposes just war theory as a counter to realism. He lauds it as a superior alternative that acknowledges, rather than retreats from, the role that moral talk necessarily plays in the way we think about and conduct statecraft.

Key here is the dual move by which Walzer first sets the just war tradition (just war theory, in his terms) in opposition to realism, and second, deploys Thucydides as a proxy for the best that realism has to offer. This would be mildly interesting, but perhaps not all that arresting, if we could catalogue this maneuver as *sui generis* or unique to Walzer. Yet this is not the case. The relation that Walzer drew between realism, Thucydides, and the just war tradition has since been adopted and repeated by numerous scholars working within the field of just war studies, to the extent that it is now stock. Brian Orend (2006: 224–8), C.A.J. Coady (2008: 52–8), David Fisher (2011: 11–16), and Jean Bethke Elshtain (2012: 123), to name but four, have all endorsed the trope wherein the just war tradition is defined by its opposition to realism, which in turn is epitomized by Thucydides' Melian Dialogue. Naturally, each scholar adapts or refines the trope slightly. Fisher, for instance, cites a number of different passages from Thucydides in order to correct for Walzer's over-reliance on the Melian Dialogue. In so doing, he emphasizes the unity of Thucydides' realism: "Thucydides' realism is consistent throughout his *History*. It is a thoroughgoing realism applying not just to all stages of war but to international relations generally ... This is not a doctrine that Might is Right. It is rather the view that Right is irrelevant. Might is what everywhere prevails" (2011: 16). Meanwhile, Orend offers the Melian Dialogue as "a frank expression of realism" (2006: 224), but then seeks to distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive variants of realist thought. Elshtain simply states that "the just war position carves out territory that puts it at odds with hardcore-realpolitik of the sort embodied in the infamous Melian Dialogue in Thucydides" (2012: 123). Minor

variations notwithstanding, a pattern is discernible across these various texts. Each posits Thucydides as an exemplar of the realist tradition, which is in turn introduced as a foil against which to define the just war tradition.

This motif – let us call it the “rival traditions” approach – is no doubt useful for pedagogical purposes, but it has implications, first, for how we understand the relation between the just war tradition and realism, and second, for how just war scholars engage with Thucydides. Let us consider these claims in turn. The first is that the rival traditions approach amplifies the distinction drawn between the just war and realist traditions, establishing them as “alternatives” to one another (Orend 2006: 223). This framing or typology, frequently expanded to include a third tradition, pacifism, has achieved such a high level of currency in recent years – it features in a number of core primers on the ethics of war, including Coates (1996) and Christopher (2000) – that it may fairly be deemed ubiquitous. As an aside, it is interesting to note that it resembles the approach to international relations theory favored by the English School, wherein three traditions of thought are identified – the Hobbesian tradition, which prominently incorporates insights from Thucydides; the Grotian or rationalist tradition, after the seventeenth-century Dutch jurist; and the Kantian or revolutionist tradition which seeks to advance an emancipationist agenda – which roughly correspond to realism, just war, and pacifism. Leaving the English School aside (we will return to Grotius later), however, and returning to the main line of our inquiry, the rival traditions approach has arguably resulted in the hardening of the border between realist, just war, and pacifist approaches to the ethics of war. This is perceptible in the profusion of articles published in recent years that seek to remind scholars of the linkages and overlaps between all three traditions (for example, Paskins 2007); the fact that such articles are deemed necessary speaks volumes.

The second implication concerns how just war theorists engage with Thucydides. It is the simple point that treating Thucydides exclusively as an avatar of realism on the one hand misrepresents the depth and register of his thought and, on the other, marginalizes him with respect to the just war tradition. In the first instance, it effaces the complexity of his thought by reducing it to a rather truncated and decontextualized reading of the Melian Dialogue. And second, as the embodiment of realism, he is cast in no uncertain terms as the Other of the just war tradition, a clear expression of the negative value against which it is defined. This is a shame because, in addition to offering a penetrating analysis of the relation between democracy, imperialism, and militarism, his writings are a rich source of material on the norms and laws that governed warfare in classical Greece.

The second image: Thucydides the moralist

There are a few exceptional texts that refuse to pension Thucydides off as a beyond-the-pale realist, and instead attempt to treat him within the same frame as the mainstream accounts of just war. The prime example in this respect is the

compendium entitled *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, edited by Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (2006). As the most accessible and only truly exhaustive anthology of the just war tradition available today, this collection carries a lot of clout. It is interesting, then, to note that it not only treats Thucydides, it also repudiates the pattern, established by Walzer, whereby he is identified as a realist and accorded as a marker for an alternative approach “against which the ‘just war’ view must always contend and be compared” (2006: x).

Thucydides is actually the first historical thinker the reader encounters in the collection compiled by Reichberg et al. The editors hail him as “the first author within the Western tradition to address seriously the relation between ethics and war,” and devote fourteen pages (of six hundred and ninety), that is, one chapter (of fifty-eight), to his writings (ibid.: 3–17). Plato and Aristotle are the only other representatives of the Greek world. In terms of content, the editors present a series of excerpts from Book 1, wherein the Spartans and their allies aired their grievances against Athens and asserted their grounds for war; Book 3, wherein the debate regarding the fate of the Mytileneans occurs; and of course Book 5, which presents the Melian Dialogue. The question then arises: why do the editors – who, as we have already noted, step away from Walzer’s lead on the matter – include Thucydides? Their answer to this is refreshingly straightforward. They contend that, although Thucydides does not offer us much in the way of a systematic examination of when it is right to go to war, he “writes about the most famous armed conflict of his time in a way that brings the moral questions about war to the fore, directly and indirectly” (ibid.: 3). Furthermore, “if we want to look for a work that starkly portrays the moral issues that confront us in warfare, we need look no further than” the *History* (ibid.). It speaks across the centuries to the moral issues that confront us today, or so the editors assert. Beyond this, they also seem to make a case for Thucydides as a moralist who is always alert to the fact that every argument has at least two sides. They argue: “His habit of giving us both sides of the story through opposing speeches, and his underlying lament about the futility of much of the fighting, conveys a very real sense of moral engagement” (ibid.). And it is on this basis, they conclude, that Thucydides should be treated alongside just war theorists, rather than caricatured as peddling a rudimentary strain of realism.

There are other minor texts that treat Thucydides alongside and in relation to the historical just war tradition. Doyné Dawson draws extensively on Thucydides in his excellent 1996 monograph, *The Origins of Western Warfare: Militarism and Morality in the Ancient World*. This is perhaps the only book that systematically examines the transition that occurred between the ancient Greek and Roman ways of war and the emergence of the just war tradition in the fourth century CE. Elsewhere, Josiah Ober (1996) and Gregory Raymond (2010) have written thoughtful essays that set out the ethics of war as understood and practiced by the ancient Greeks. Thucydides features heavily in both accounts. However, he is invoked

primarily as a source of information about Greek customs and practices rather than as a thinker whose ideas are worthwhile in their own right. Nevertheless, Dawson, Ober, and Raymond, alongside Reichberg, Syse, and Begby, cut against the grain of most contemporary scholarship on the just war tradition by daring to include Thucydides within their frame of reference at all. It remains to be seen whether other scholars will follow their lead.

The third image: Thucydides who?

So far we have discussed Walzer's disdain for realism and eagerness to associate Thucydides with it, and the proclivity of many contemporary just war scholars to follow suit. We have also examined those texts, fewer in number, which contend that, though Thucydides is frequently overlooked or treated as a pariah by scholars of the just war tradition, he is actually a valuable source for anyone interested in the connections between ethics and war. Yet this overlooks a further, perhaps even more prevalent, pattern in the contemporary just war literature regarding Thucydides. This is the tendency to ignore Thucydides altogether. There are a great number of recent publications on the just war tradition that omit any reference whatsoever to Thucydides. One will spend many fruitless hours searching the glossaries of texts by Oliver O'Donovan, William V. O'Brien, Jeff MacMahan, and others, for any entry corresponding to Thucydides. For example, though Hobbes and Clausewitz are present and correct, I can find no substantive mention of Thucydides in James Turner Johnson's magisterial histories of the tradition (1975, 1981). Nor is he in evidence in Jonathan Barnes' seminal essay, "The Just War" (1982). One could expand this list, but that would perhaps labor the point needlessly.

These omissions are surely worthy of investigation. What explains them? Going with the bastardized reading of Ockham's razor, one might say that the simplest (and therefore best) explanation is that just war theorists feel Thucydides has nothing of substance to say on matters of morality and war. Presumably this is because Thucydides stakes out what Elshtain refers to as a severe *realpolitik* agenda that not only ignores but also negates the possibility of just war analysis. If this view is taken seriously, there is indeed no good reason for just war theorists to engage with Thucydides. However, the arguments put forward by Reichberg, Syse, and Begby, Dawson, Ober, and Raymond, as well as the tragic reading of Thucydides proffered by Cornford and those who follow him, suggests that Thucydides' claims to speak to just war concerns should not be dismissed out of hand. At the very least, one might contend, Thucydides supplies a rich store of evidence regarding the norms and laws that both constituted and constrained the practice of warfare in fourth-century Athens – a community whose struggles to reconcile the demands of democracy and imperialism have been imputed by some as foreshadowing the challenges that the United States confronts today. More substantively, one could argue that Thucydides actually provides rich and instructive guidance with respect to an array of moral issues pertaining to the use of force. This is most evident in respect

of the matter of anticipatory war, but Thucydides also speaks meaningfully to the proper treatment of prisoners and those seeking sanctuary, and a host of other topics. Intriguingly, a number of scholars writing about just war in the early modern period – most notably Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius – were mindful of Thucydides' prescience on such issues. We will return to this momentarily.

In the meantime, there is a further possible reason for the neglect of Thucydides by the majority of just war scholars that we should consider. This is the factor that Thucydides predates the just war tradition, as it is conventionally understood. Consequently, Thucydides is frequently perceived as falling outside the just war canon, properly conceived. Most accounts of the just war tradition trace its origins back no further than the sunset years of the Roman Empire and more specifically the political theology of Saint Augustine. While it is true that some scholars doff their caps to the prior writings of Aristotle and Cicero, in most cases these are cited merely as a preface to the teachings of Augustine and the early Christian fathers. After which, the standard narrative of the historical development of the tradition emphasizes the contribution rendered by canon lawyers and theologians in the Middle Ages, before moving on to the neo-scholastics and legal theorists of the early modern period, and eventually the rights theorists of the twentieth century. This potted history is discrete insofar as it is set apart from otherwise overlapping traditions, chiefly the realist and pacifist traditions mentioned earlier. And the originary story with which it commences is arguably so firmly embedded, so stock in the literature, that it is almost beyond refutation or even challenge. But perhaps most importantly for our purposes, it not only endows the tradition with a Christian identity, it also establishes for it a narrative history that excludes almost by fiat the contribution of Thucydides and any other figures writing in advance of the fourth century CE.

From Contemporary to Classical: Which Image, What Just War?

Our observations thus far would seem to lead to the conclusion that the contemporary literature on the just war tradition reflects three distinct approaches to Thucydides, or "images" as I have termed them. The first approach establishes Thucydides as the foil or antithesis against which we define the just war tradition. The second approach posits Thucydides as a moralist of great historical significance whose clinical reflections on the relation between ethics and war contemporary scholars of the just war tradition have too often ignored but would do well to heed. Finally, the third approach simply ignores Thucydides, as if to say that his writings have no bearing whatsoever on the just war tradition. Switching our attention from the contemporary to the classical, do any of these images correspond to the role played by Thucydides in seminal historical articulations of the just war doctrine? This section will work through them in reverse order. The aim, ultimately, is to ascertain which if any of the three images has the most purchase *vis-à-vis* the classical tradition, with a particular focus on the question of

whether the Walzerian conception of Thucydides as the nemesis of the just war tradition is merely a modern conceit or reflective of a deeper historical trope.

The third image

Insofar as Thucydides garners no references whatsoever in the majority of the just war tradition's seminal texts, a plausible argument can be constructed to the effect that the historical record appears to bear closely on the third image. Saint Augustine, for instance, does not engage with Thucydides in *The City of God Against the Pagans* (1998). Nor does Thucydides feature elsewhere in his writings, whether in his letters or pamphlets (2001). We may attribute this to Augustine's preference for Latin texts over their Greek counterparts; he records in the *Confessions* (1992: 15, 17) that he did not enjoy Greek at school and had no aptitude for it. Nevertheless, it is possible that he encountered Thucydides, possibly in a Latin translation, but almost certainly via the interpolation of Cicero, whom he cited extensively. Saint Thomas Aquinas does not refer to Thucydides either, whether in his magisterial *Summa Theologiae* (2002) or other writings on war (1988). Rather predictably, Thomas' most illustrious successor, and the foremost figure we associate with the Salamanca or Scholastic School, Francisco de Vitoria, ignores Thucydides too (1991). More surprisingly, Thucydides name does not appear in the eighteenth-century text, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*, by Samuel Pufendorf (1991). It is tempting to surmise on the basis of this cursory survey that the major thinkers that we associate with the just war tradition all overlooked Thucydides.

Yet this is not all there is to the story. Thucydides does feature, albeit to varying degrees, in certain seminal texts associated with the tradition. Most notably, Emer de Vattel (2008: 420) uses him sparingly, while Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius both cite Thucydides extensively in their landmark publications. The manner by which these latter early modern legal theorists refer to Thucydides is instructive. They invoke Thucydides in a style that sometimes appears to correspond to the second image – that Thucydides is a moralist of historical significance whom just war theorists should engage – and other times the first image – namely, that Thucydides should be regarded as the antithesis of just war ideals. Let us treat these observations in turn. I should be quite clear, however, that my intention in engaging Gentili and Grotius is not to offer a systematic account of their approach to just war thinking. My purpose here is more modest: it is to map or trace their encounters with Thucydides. I leave the question of the deep context of these encounters to more able scholars.

The second image

Gentili and Grotius engage Thucydides more robustly than has hitherto been acknowledged by scholars of the just war tradition. Gentili (1552–1608) was an Italian jurist and professor of civil law at Oxford. His writings, though later

overshadowed by Grotius' efforts, have since been acknowledged as foundational to the development of international law (Haggenmacher 1990). In his most famous text, *De Iure Belli Libri Tres* (1933), he makes twenty-five references to Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War. These references appear across all three books of the text, and speak to a wide variety of subjects, from the definition of war, to the virtue of defending the subjects of another against their sovereign, to the proper treatment of suppliants. By contrast, Vitoria receives only seven references, Gratian and Francisco Suarez none, and Aquinas eight. Augustine warrants seventy references. For his part, Hugo Grotius requires little introduction, save to mention that he is widely credited as the intellectual founder of modern international law and – relevant to our purposes – a benchmark figure in the development of the just war tradition. He also cited Thucydides frequently. There are ninety-five references to Thucydides in the recent Liberty Fund edition of *The Rights of War and Peace* (2005). Beyond the comparative abundance of footnotes, the nature of Gentili's and Grotius' usage of Thucydides is intriguing. Three principal usages recur.

First, both authors endorse select concepts propounded by Thucydides as useful and adopt them in their own writings. This is most apparent with respect to the typology of treaties elaborated by Thucydides. Gentili discusses the typology in Book 3 of *De Iure Belli* (1933: 388) and incorporates it into his own discourse. Looking beyond particular cases to more general precepts, Gentili invokes the Melian Dialogue when endorsing what he believes is Thucydides' belief in the primacy of power in respect of political relations between communities:

We must also consider the condition of the contestants. For when their forms of government are at variance and cannot be united, it will not be unjust for victors to change that of the conquered to one which they believe better suited to themselves. It is right that the weaker should submit to the more powerful, when they cannot stand together. It is a natural and just rule for the weaker to obey the stronger and for the conquered to submit to what they would have imposed if they themselves had been victorious. (ibid.: 337)

Lest anyone is left in any doubt as to the provenance of this maxim, Gentili cites Thucydides in the notes. The eagle-eyed will have noted, however, how this passage, though obviously derivative of Thucydides, incorporates the idiom of justice within its fold – a move that runs contrary to the Athenian generals' efforts to excise such talk from the realm of statecraft.

Turning to Grotius, he too commends numerous among Thucydides' pronouncements, including the same typology of treaties that Gentili endorsed: Grotius approved it as "very much to the present purpose" (2005: 836). On a more general note, he devotes an entire chapter to the subject of "Moderation Concerning Killing Men" and couches the discussion almost entirely in principles inferred from Thucydides. First, he examines the idea, which he attributes to Thucydides, that necessity may excuse, if not justify, certain acts committed

against enemy troops (*ibid.*: 1429). Following this, he cites the Athenians' revocation of the Mytilenean Decree to buttress his contention that armed forces should make an effort to discriminate between the instigators of the enemy's war and those members of the general population who were unwittingly dragged into the conflict; the former, naturally, are more liable than the latter. "And the Athenians (as Thucydides relates) repented of their Decree against the Mytileneans: 'That they should destroy the whole City, rather than the principal authors of the revolt'" (*ibid.*: 1449). And finally, Grotius quotes Thucydides in support of the maxim that those who surrender on fair terms should be granted clemency: "You received us unto mercy, who voluntarily and with hands listed up, craved a surrender. And it is the custom of the Greeks not to put such to death" (*ibid.*). There is a real sense, then, that both Gentili and Grotius adopt and endorse a range of specific and general tenets that they extrapolate or cull from Thucydides' history. In this respect, their engagement with Thucydides is little different from their engagement with other historical figures who were (and still are) more readily associated with the just war tradition.

Second, both authors plunder Thucydides for historical cases or examples that either support their argument or attest to the existence of a particular norm or law. For example, Grotius deploys a quote from Thucydides – in this case, a line of speech attributed to the Plataeans: "We have deservedly punished them, for by a law that universally prevails, we may without any crime be revenged on an enemy who first assaults us" – to buttress his contention that vengeance is permissible by the Law of Nations (*ibid.*: 967). Elsewhere he invokes Thucydides to shore up his assertion that it is often in a state's interest to decline a war, even though there may be good grounds for one. "Consider before you enter into it," he paraphrases Thucydides, "what unexpected incidents there are in war" (*ibid.*: 1140). On the other hand, once a state has resorted to warfare, Grotius appeals to the example set by Brasidas – and reported by Thucydides – in order to press the case that states should not shy away from making use of ruses and stratagems (a subject that had greatly exercised the canon lawyers who wrote about war in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries) (*ibid.*: 1196).

Similarly, Gentili appeals to Thucydides' account of the Plataeans to support his claim that it is legitimate for a state to wage war in order to vindicate its rights in cases where those rights have been infringed by another:

Now an expedient cause for making war will be the right of taking vengeance for a wrong which one has suffered. And it is expedient, since one who does not take vengeance for a wrong invites another wrong ... Now this is a just cause, since our own rights have been interfered with, which we ought not to allow to be infringed. Everyone is justified in maintaining his rights. There is a natural impulse which prompts self-protection and the right to avenge oneself. A law common to all mortals is that of punishing those who seize our property, says Demosthenes, and the Plataeans make the same statement in Thucydides. (1933: 83)

Once again, we might note that Gentili marries the language of justice and just war (in this case, “just cause”) to Thucydidean sentiments. More straightforwardly, he also cites Thucydides in support of his claim that suppliants should be held sacrosanct (*ibid.*: 248). In each of these cases, the authors’ point is not so much to echo and reaffirm an argument made by Thucydides. Rather, it is to deploy or exploit an example supplied by Thucydides to support the author’s own argument. Thucydides, it seems, is both consulted and posited as a source of authority on a wide range of matters pertaining to the moral economy of war.

Finally, both authors engage in substantive reflection upon certain claims rendered by Thucydides. Grotius, most obviously, draws inspiration from Thucydides’ account of Pericles’ Funeral Oration, and quotes it both approvingly and at length. He remarks upon “that remarkable saying of Pericles in Thucydides”:

I esteem it better, even for private men, that the state in general flourish though they themselves do not thrive in it, than that they should flourish in their affairs, and the publick suffer. For let a Man’s private affairs be never so prosperous, yet his country be lost, he must perish with it. On the contrary, if the state flourish, a man in bad circumstances may mend his condition. Since then the state can relieve private persons in their misfortunes, but private persons cannot do the same thing in regard of the state; ought not everyone to concur in defending it, instead of acting like you, who, being overwhelmed with your domestick losses, abandon the care of the publick safety (2005: 346).

It is perhaps interesting to note how, in Grotius’ hands, Thucydides’ Periclean moment resonates strongly with an Augustinian ethic of responsibility. For his part, Gentili (as we noted earlier) nods respectfully toward Thucydides’ acclamation of the primacy of material power to the conception of justice that applies in relations between states. And both Gentili and Grotius engage substantively with Thucydides on the subject of anticipatory defense. Fortuitously, the manner by which both Gentili and Grotius engage Thucydides on this topic leads us back to where we began, namely, Walzer’s framing of Thucydides as the counter to just war logic.

The first image

Is, then, the Walzerian image of Thucydides as a foil to the just war tradition, the yin to its yang, merely a modern conceit? That is, is it just a recent invention – yet another contribution made by Walzer – that bears no relation to the role Thucydides played in the seminal texts of the classical just war tradition? Arguably not: if one peers closely enough, there are grounds for supposing that this view is partial or even misleading. These grounds are most evident in respect of Gentili’s and Grotius’ treatment of the right of states to anticipatory defense.

Gentili's best-known reference to Thucydides occurs in the context of his discussion of "defence on the grounds of expediency" (1933: 62–4). Here he quotes from Thucydides and endorses the right of the Mytileneans to take precipitate action against the Athenians whom the former perceived as potentially menacing them:

Yet the reply of the people of Mytilene to the Athenians was reasonable: "If we seem to any one unjust, because we revolted first, without waiting until we knew clearly whether they would do us any harm, such a man does not consider well; for if we had been equally strong, so that we could have plotted against them in turn and could have delayed with safety, then his words would be just. But since they always have the opportunity of doing harm, we ought to have the privilege of anticipating our defence". What then are we to ask of men like Bartolus and Baldus; or on whose bald names are we to rely? Are we not to value more highly the defence of a most famous state, nay, the opinion of Thucydides, an eminent and wise man; an opinion confirmed by reason? (ibid.: 62)

The reader will note that this passage achieves three significant ends. First, it makes the case for a far-reaching right to anticipatory war, consistent with the author's interpretation of Thucydides' position. Second, it establishes the ascendancy of Thucydides as a "decisive" source of authority ahead of putative rivals such as Bartolus and Baldus, and also Cicero whom Gentili earlier cited as an opponent of a far-reaching right to anticipatory defense. And third, by setting the scholastics of Gentili's own day – Bartolus and Baldus – against Thucydides, this passage foreshadows the direct opposition between Thucydides the realist and the just war tradition that we earlier traced in the writings of Walzer.

Leaving Gentili aside in favor of moving onto Grotius, he followed Gentili's lead in at least two respects. Of the ninety-five references in *The Rights of War and Peace* to Thucydides, the most prominent is essentially a disavowal of the Greek historian's perspective on the relation between right and interest. On only the second page of the text, Grotius aligns his study of the Law of Nations directly contra the position attributed by Thucydides to the Athenians, namely that the strong take what they can while the weak endure what they must. As Grotius puts it:

And indeed this work is the more necessary since we find some, both in this and in former ages, so far despising this sort of right, as if it were nothing but an empty name. The saying of Euphemis in Thucydides is almost in everyone's mouth, To a king or sovereign city, nothing is unjust that is profitable. Not unlike to which is this, that amongst the Great the stronger is the juster side; and, that no state can be governed without injustice. Besides, the disputes that happen between nations or princes, are commonly decided at the point of a sword. Now it is only the opinion of the vulgar, that war is a stranger to all justice, but many sayings uttered by men of wisdom and learning, give strength to such an opinion. And indeed, nothing is more frequent than the mentioning of right and arms, as opposite to one another. (2005: 76–7)

Grotius' aim, he informs his readers, is to debunk this view, and to prove that, without going so far as Erasmus, one may still talk about right and war in the same breath. Here, then, once again, we encounter the view that Thucydides' proper place in moral discussion of war is as the foil against which we define the just war position. The key difference here is that, where Gentili appeared to side with Thucydides in opposition to scholastic just war thought, Grotius throws his lot in with Vitoria and his successors. Nevertheless, what is striking here is how Grotius, along with Gentili, foreshadows Walzer by identifying (and arguably promoting) a clear rupture between Thucydidean realism and just war thought.

Conclusion

Where does this leave us? To recap, the pertinent contemporary literature on just war reflects three distinct approaches to the relation between Thucydides and the tradition. The first approach, which has been very influential, supposes that Thucydides, exemplified by the Athenian generals at Melos, is the arch-realist, and, as such, stands against everything that is representative of the just war tradition. The second approach, which contends that Thucydides is a historically significant moralist to whom just war theorists should pay more attention, is very much a minority pursuit with very few adherents. The final approach, the default setting in the literature, neglects Thucydides on the grounds that he has little to offer scholars of the just war tradition.

Having thus surveyed the principal approaches to Thucydides in contemporary just war thought, we then switched attention to its classical forebears. In so doing, we discovered that the relation between Thucydides and this canon of thought is surprisingly complex. It was demonstrated that a majority of the seminal texts of the just war tradition overlook Thucydides, but certain select texts – those by Gentili, Grotius (and also, to lesser extent, Vattel) – cite and engage his writings. Where these texts are concerned, we found that at particular points they did advance the notion that Thucydides can be set against and in opposition to the ideals of the just war tradition. But we also discovered that these passages were not reflective of the treatment afforded to Thucydides across these texts, when viewed as a whole. Indeed, to read the entirety of the relation between Thucydides and the just war tradition solely through these passages would exclude much that is important. Principally, it would lead the reader to underestimate the level of contact between Thucydides and the authors of these passages. And it would distract the same reader from the actuality that these passages should not be viewed as independent or standalone statements, but should rather be interpreted within the broader context of the authors' extended and occasionally wholehearted engagement with Thucydides. Gentili and Grotius, for instance, both occasionally set Thucydides in opposition to the just war tradition, but they also looked to Thucydides a source of historical cases and examples that could be cited to order,

and as a moralist whose arguments, point of view, and conceptual apparatus were worthy of scrutiny and indeed of scholarly disputation.

There are three principal conclusions to draw from this. The first is that elements of both continuity and change are evident in respect of how the classical and contemporary literatures on just war treat Thucydides. There is continuity in respect of the fact that, in both literatures, Thucydides is overlooked by the majority of writers but addressed by a select few. And there is change insofar as scholars like Walzer and Fisher frame Thucydides exclusively and emphatically as the counter to just war ideals, while earlier just war thinkers – most notably Gentili and Grotius – present this as a part but not the whole of the story – one thread in a richer tapestry. One might like to say that a degree of nuance has been lost somewhere along the way, and that, as a result, Thucydides' estrangement from the just war tradition has been rendered all the more decisive. The second conclusion follows directly from this point, and speaks to its implications for how we think about realism and the just war tradition in general terms. At stake here is the hardening, or even closing, of the border between the realist and just war traditions. Though the distinctions we draw between these traditions may be useful as a typological device, they do us a disservice when they are reified and made excessively rigid and impermeable. This impedes creative exchange and cross-fertilization of precisely the kind exemplified by the works of Gentili and Grotius. (Indeed, one could argue that the enduring attraction of Gentili's and Grotius' writings is a function of the way they tempered their endorsement of just war principles by recourse to the harsh verities of Thucydides.) And last but not least, it does a disservice to the writings of Thucydides, which are far more elegant, far more sophisticated, and far more open-textured than many contemporary just war theorists are prepared to acknowledge.

Guide to Further Reading

As this chapter has hopefully demonstrated, there is not a great deal of literature on Thucydides in relation to the just war tradition. The most useful text is undoubtedly Reichberg, Syse, and Begby (2006). Not only does this anthology set excerpts from Thucydides alongside passages from the major and minor texts of the just war tradition, it also provides a very fine gloss on the relation of the former to the latter. For a more involved analysis, the reader would also be well advised to consult Tuck (2001), a very fine if somewhat challenging book that clarifies the relation between Thucydides, Gentili, Grotius, and Hobbes. More generally, Raymond's (2010) essay on the Greco-Roman roots of the just war tradition is a useful reference point. Sherman (2005) is a lucid and enjoyable discussion of the stoic ethic and how it informs the modern military mind, but its relation to Thucydides and the just war tradition is tangential at best. Should one wish to read further on the history of the just war tradition, the works of James Turner Johnson

(1975, 1981, 1999), Frederick Russell (1975), and Alex Bellamy (2006) are especially good. And of course it almost goes without saying that any scholar looking to learn more about just war theory must read Walzer's work, in particular 1992 and 2004.

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Thucydides the Realist?

Laurie M. Johnson

The Conventional Reception of Thucydides

In the discipline of international relations, scholars try to supply an explanation for why states behave as they do, and particularly, why they go to war. The realist school of thought is prominent within the larger discipline of international relations. Realists in general believe that states are often driven by forces larger than them and beyond their control. However, there are different types of realists. The two most prominent schools of thought within realism are structural or neo-realism, and classical realism. Both types of realists tend to claim the ancient historian Thucydides as their own.

Structural or neo-realists such as Kenneth Waltz (1979) have focused purely on the anarchical structure of international relations. They argue that because there is no overarching power (like a world government or imperial power) to keep states under control, every state must act as if it were under threat. Rational actions taken to survive result in what Herz called the “security dilemma” (1950). Each state tries to defend itself by doing such things as building up forces and balancing power, creating an inherently hostile environment. Kauppi and Viotti find in Thucydides’ work the hallmarks of realism: the state as the “principal” and “unitary actor,” and the assumption of “rationality.” They do point out, however, that Thucydides also shows the limits of rationality and includes other levels of analysis (1992: 50–63).

Realists of a more classical nature tend not to seek a purely scientific “elegant” theory, and are more open to the contributions of political philosophy and history (Morgenthau 1955). Like Martin Wight, they recognize that “international politics is the realm of recurrence and repetition” and so is not compatible with progressive theory like international law or peace theory

either (1960: 43). While still emphasizing that anarchy itself is a major reason for war, classical realists tend to delve more into what is behind the danger inherent in anarchy, namely human nature. In their view, human beings are driven by compulsions like fear and the desire for power, and this is why anarchy is a “state of war” at the international level, why there can be no world government, why states seek to increase their security, and why their attempts to achieve security often lead to conflict. Pangle and Ahrensdoerf call Thucydides a classical realist: “Indeed, insofar as ‘realism’ means the attempt to understand political life by focusing on the actual behavior of political communities rather than on how they ought to behave, Thucydides would seem to be the classic of realism” (1999: 13).

Both structural and classical realists tend to see cultural differences among countries as less relevant factors, overridden by the influence of international anarchy, universal survival motives, and relative power. They see factors such as ideology and leadership (including the political rhetoric of leaders) as less relevant too, because greater, more compelling forces are at work. Cultural and ideological differences and political rhetoric are seen by many realists more as justifications for actions already determined by these larger forces. When the great international theorist Hans Morgenthau mentioned Thucydides in his classic *Politics Among Nations*, even he did so to demonstrate that “international politics is of necessity power politics” (2006: 38).

Both structural and classical realists have appropriated the ancient Greek historian Thucydides as a “founder” of their positions, and with good reason. The structural realists emphasize Thucydides’ statement that the Peloponnesian War got started because Athens’ growing power forced Sparta to declare war: “The real cause, however, I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta, made war inevitable” (1.23.6). Structural realists see the Peloponnesian War as a great example of what happens when a bipolar balance of power is thrown out of balance. They think Thucydides would see the state the way they do, as the “principal” and “unitary actor,” with the assumption that it will react rationally to survive (Kauppi and Viotti 1992: 50–63). One such realist goes so far as to say that Thucydides’ *History* presents us with “the general law of dynamics of international relations,” which has everything to do with shifting state power.

Classical realists, on the other hand, focus on the repeated references in the *History* to the motivations of “fear, honor, and interest” that various Athenians and even non-Athenian speakers make when explaining their actions. The Athenians first put forth their ultra-realist “thesis” at the Spartan War Conference in an attempt to dissuade Sparta from declaring war. There they famously say, “the nature of the case first compelled us to advance our empire to its present height; fear being our principal motive, though honor and interest afterwards came in” (1.75.3). Later, in their dialogue with the defenseless Melians whom they

eventually slaughter, the Athenians use an even harsher version of their thesis in an attempt to obtain the Melians' quick surrender:

When you speak of the favor of the gods we may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods, or practice among themselves. Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist forever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do. (5.105.2)

Chittick and Freyberg-Inan put a different twist on the attempt to see realism in Thucydides by applying the Athenian categories of fear, honor, and interest, and relating them to "three corresponding goals, security, prosperity, and community," which they can then explore using their knowledge of international relations theory. They find that "the motives of fear, 'profit', and social recognition all need to be taken into account as independent psychological driving forces behind foreign policy decisions" (2001: 89–90).

Though structural and classical realists may have some disagreements, all realists would see in the Athenians' statement a reflection of their own theoretical position that the actions of states are largely determined by compelling forces, first among them the survival instinct, either of states or of individuals. Yet, over the years, a growing body of scholarship has objected to the realist adoption of Thucydides as their founding figure.

Alternative Readings

Some authors in recent years have found that there is more going on in the *History* than many realists have seen, and point out that his work is more multidimensional than realists think (see Dobski 2010). In *Thucydides, Hobbes, and the Interpretation of Realism*, I suggested that ultra-realism is often treated in the *History* as political rhetoric, usually but not exclusively Athenian rhetoric (1993). The Athenians' "thesis," put forward at the Spartan War Conference, could certainly be seen not as expressing a reality of international affairs but simply aggressive rhetoric, used by the ambassadors to intimidate their rivals into backing down. The same could be said for the Athenians' similarly aggressive statements at Melos. There, the Athenians attribute cosmic relevance to realism – God and Nature both operate according to its rules, and anyone who refuses to acknowledge this will be punished by both. This certainly could be seen more as intimidating rhetoric than as a statement of objective reality, especially considering that in the end (notwithstanding their destruction of Melos), the Athenians failed to succeed.

Another strong theme in the *History* which realists tend to downplay or ignore is Thucydides' emphasis on national character for shaping foreign policy. He does say that it was fear of Athens' growing power that caused Sparta to declare war. But he also relates why, after the Persian War, Athens' power continued to grow, and why Sparta allowed this growth without opposing it. Through his lengthy description of the years leading up to the war, we can see that the cultures of the two states were important causal factors. Athens is described as inherently aggressive and innovative in nature, while Sparta is reticent, prone to inertia, willing to retreat from responsibility, and so forth (1.89.2–3; 1.91.4; 1.95.1–3). Thucydides points out how the differences in the national characters of Sparta and Athens affected their international influence and how much revenue they were able to collect. While Sparta concentrated on domestic business, Athens relentlessly pursued international power, including the absolute dependency of its allies (1.19). Without Thucydides' explanation for how the Spartan and Athenian "personalities" differed, it would not be possible to understand why the balance of power looked the way it did at the beginning of the war.

Yet another layer in Thucydides' *History* is his emphasis on individual human beings' characters and personalities in decision making. The traditionalism of the Spartan King Archidamus, the brilliant boldness of Pericles, the Athenian-like nature of Pausanias, the superstition of Nicias, and the arrogance of Alcibiades – Thucydides identifies each of these as important reasons why particular decisions were made at crucial points during the war. He attributes to the declining quality of Athenian leaders the changes in Athenian foreign policy which eventually led to Athens' defeat. Pericles, for instance, was known for his integrity, and "was enabled to exercise an independent control over the multitude – in short to lead them instead of being led by them" (2.65.8). But after Pericles died, Athenian leaders were "more on a level with one another, and each grasping at supremacy, they ended by committing even the conduct of state affairs to the whims of the multitude" (2.65.10–11). Clearly, Thucydides does not completely follow suit with modern realists when they overlook the influence of individual character or personality in their attempts to build a simple and elegant theory.

While realists tend to try to put morality to one side when making recommendations or assessing international affairs, Thucydides integrates his own moral judgments into his analysis. For example, he says of the Thracians who massacred the Mycalessans that they were "like the bloodiest of the barbarians" (7.29.4), and he depicts them as cowardly. Such pronouncements would not typically be indulged in by realist international relations scholars today. He reminds his readers of the standards of decency widely held by the Greeks, "those general laws to which all alike can look for salvation in adversity," which should be allowed to "subsist against the day of danger when their aid may be required" (3.84.3). He warns that those who commit war crimes think they will get away with them, but by ignoring common standards of decency, they create a world in which they themselves are likely to suffer the same treatment. In making these kinds of

statements, Thucydides simply goes beyond what most realists are comfortable with as they pursue scientific, scholarly objectivity.

Another aspect of Thucydides' *History* that is often ignored by his realist admirers is the importance of ideology in Greece during the Peloponnesian War (Johnson Bagby 2011: 110–39). Many of us think of ideology as a purely modern phenomenon that came about only with mass communications and mass psychology. But even early in the *History*, we can see ideology in the pride of Pericles at his first Funeral Oration. He spends most of the speech praising the greatness of democratic Athens, indicating that this city has a particular way of viewing itself, which he uses as a source of great pride and motivation. He assumes that his listeners will not be offended by the suggestion that their sons and brothers died for something much better than themselves, an idea, a way of life. Love of country should be so strong, in Pericles' view, that the families of the dead should look forward to bearing more children to serve the state (2.44.3)! The themes of submission and unity that Pericles puts forth are highly ideological, and his Funeral Oration comes at the beginning of the war. However, at this point Pericles' view could be seen as representing a natural patriotism in a time of war. Later, though, Thucydides describes how ideological thinking intensified, moving in unhealthy and destructive directions that more resembled modern ideological conflicts. I will give a couple of examples below.

First, in Thucydides' account of the debate at Plataean, the terms "Medizing" and "Atticizing" are used by the Thebans in their diatribe against the Plataeans, whom they would later slaughter (3.62.1). "Atticizing" was the ideological crime of joining the side of Athens and desiring democracy. The Thebans say that the Plataeans, by allying with Athens, are "traitors to their nationality." The Plataeans point to their past, claiming that they are on the ideological high ground because they were the only Boeotians who did not "Medize" during the Persian War. As we know, after hearing the arguments of the contending sides, the Spartans asked a simple question – whether the Plataeans had done them any good lately, and on the basis of the obvious answer, turned against them. Realists draw the lesson from the Spartan decision that the ideological dispute between the Plataeans and Thebans did not really matter, that the accusations of "Medizing" and "Atticizing" were mere rhetoric. But not necessarily – the Spartans' actions are fully consistent with the ideological concerns expressed by the Thebans. Their only question at that point was, on what ideological side was Plataea at the moment?

Second, Thucydides also deals with the ideological accusations of the Corcyraean revolution, which follows the Plataean debate. The Corcyraeans had voted to remain allies of Athens but to be "friends" of the Peloponnesians too (3.70.2–4). As with the Plataeans, however, neutrality was not a viable position. Soon, rigid ideological parties formed in Corcyra, and the democrats and the oligarchs turned to extreme violence. Citizens "engaged in butchering those of their fellow-citizens whom they regarded as their enemies: and although the crime imputed was that of attempting to put down the democracy, some were slain also

for private hatred, others by their debtors because of the moneys owed to them” (3.81.4). Thucydides tells us that many in the civil war took the opportunity to use ideological quarrels as an excuse for what were really acts of revenge, and a realist might argue that his comment diminishes the ideological dimension of the conflict. But just because some people took advantage of this opportunity for personal reasons does not mean that the overall conflict was not ideological in nature. There is no other good reason for the Greeks in this battle to ignore long-standing religious beliefs and customs, such as the respect due to suppliants at temples, or loyalty to family, other than the type of extreme hatred produced by ideological zeal. Peter Ahrensdorf connects this ideological hatred, so contrary to the realist view of power politics, to the desire to overcome death through ideological attachment: “Their awareness of their mortality awakened or intensified in them a longing to escape the ills attendant upon their mortal nature and hence a longing for immortality” (2000: 588).

Clearly, Thucydides understood the significant role that political ideology can play in creating, perpetuating and intensifying conflict. His explanation of the disorder caused by ideological warfare continues in his account of the flipping between democracy and oligarchy that crippled Athens near the end of the war and had a great part to play in its eventual defeat. We can conclude that Thucydides thought that ideology could be an important factor in international developments, and this runs counter to the realist tendency to discount the power of ideology in favor of relative physical power.

With all of this evidence that Thucydides is doing much more in the *History* than just describing the ineluctable workings of the security dilemma, it has been tempting for some to say that Thucydides is not a realist at all, and to re-classify him in one of our newer categories as a constructivist. Many types of constructivism have emerged in international theory, from realist to postmodern (Checkel 2004; Jackson et al. 2004). But despite their variations, all constructivists have one thing in common: they believe that international events are caused not by unavoidable aspects of either human nature or the anarchical structure of international relations, but rather by historical, social, and political variables – that is, they think international events are largely created by human choice, not by forces beyond human control. “Most (possibly all) self-described constructivists would agree that the defining feature of this approach is a focus on the social construction of international politics. Constructivists see the facts of international politics as not reflective of an objective, material reality but an intersubjective, or social, reality” (Barkin 2003: 326).

Richard Ned Lebow has made the case that Thucydides was the *father* of constructivism, not realism. “His work shows not only how language and convention establish identities and enable power to be translated into influence but also how the exercise of power can undermine language and convention” (2001: 547). Thucydides teaches us that when an imperial country begins to exercise its power tyrannically, its people lose the ability to deliberate. Then, they cannot negotiate

effectively, or use the usual norms and forms of diplomacy. This is what makes difficult matters insoluble. Lebow argues that this is what happened when Athens launched its war against the Sicilians while still engaged with Sparta. As we know, their decision to fight another war eventually led to their disastrous defeat on both fronts (ibid.: 548).

As I have detailed above, Thucydides models a multidimensional approach for us, one involving insights about the structure of international relations and the importance of relative power, but not stopping there. Instead, his treatment gives us a way of not only understanding the ultimate causes of conflict but of understanding any particular conflict or potential conflict in a way that is arguably much more useful to policy makers. The Thucydidean scholar would, like the constructivists, incorporate history, culture, politics, and moral impact into his/her analysis, yielding conclusions that would be more accessible and useful, not only within but outside of academia. So, perhaps Thucydides would be better off in the constructivist camp, but does he really need to choose one camp over the other?

Typically, constructivists present their theories as alternatives to realism, and yet, as Barkin points out, constructivism is only incompatible with a rigid structural realism. Classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau have been known to argue that world politics are not rational, that while larger forces are at work, they do not obviate the need for prudent choices in foreign policy, that morality matters, and that knowledge of historical context is crucial to understanding international events. Classical realism may, then, be compatible with the new school of constructivism (2003: 332). Barkin's point is that many such realists, not so bent on a narrow view of theory or science, would agree that other factors like leadership, culture, history, and rhetoric do indeed matter. "The realist constructivism would look at the way in which power structures affect patterns of normative change in international relations and, conversely, the way in which a particular set of norms affect power structures" (ibid.: 337).

Jonathan Monten also makes an argument that opens the door for the compatibility of realism and constructivism. He points out that Thucydides shows us that human beings make choices that instigate international events, but the structure of international relations at any given time does constrain their choices, or rewards some choices while punishing others (2006). Thomas Heilke points out that "the practical wisdom of either realism or neorealism must, by its nature, be communicated not merely through axioms, but also through narrative, and that an example and justification of the latter kind of communication may be found in Thucydides' realism as it is revealed in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*" (2004: 121).

More and more it seems that international relations scholars, like the constructivists, are realizing that to do their best work, they may have to discard theoretical "elegance," that they may have to combine approaches, that perhaps elegant theory building has to give way to an attempt to truly understand events in a useful way. It is with this goal in mind that Thucydides can be most helpful, because he did not set out to develop a theory but to create something useful to future readers.

He wanted to explain what led to the greatest war he knew about, and why that war unfolded as it did. Through studying this war, he hoped that people would recognize similar situations in the future and, perhaps, know better what to do and what to avoid. In other words, he hoped that his readers would learn and grow in wisdom from his work, and perhaps in this way, some of them could make at least marginally better decisions than some of the leaders he describes in the *History*. As William Desmond notes, “the *History* is from this vantage point a skeptical and pessimistic work, which above power and confident ambition advocates circumspection and self-doubt as the best stance toward a dangerous, dimly understood reality. Fear of failure is the beginning of wisdom” (2006: 360).

A Different Type of Realist

We have just seen that even some constructivists want to make realism compatible with their point of view, thus keeping Thucydides in their camp. In doing so, they make it clear that Thucydides does not easily fit contemporary definitions of realism. So, if in some ways, Thucydides does not fit our expectations of an international relations realist, why do we keep coming back to questions such as why Thucydides is a realist, or what kind of realist he is, or if he is a realist at all? There are several reasons, all of which resonate with an older and perhaps more commonsense definition of realism, one that we find developed through time in political philosophy.

First, there is a tragic teaching in Thucydides’ *History* which, even though it goes against the strict understanding of realism today, is one of those aspects of his work that leaves us with the general impression that he is, at the very least, not an idealist. The tragic view of Thucydides shows just how unlike today’s structural realists Thucydides is, and yet why some constructivists sense that his thought is compatible with a different type of realism. As Lebow points out, Thucydides’ Athens is living out a familiar tragic pattern. “The cyclical pattern he has in mind is not just about the growth and decline of empires but, more generally, how success spawns excessive ambition, overconfidence, and self-destructive behavior” (2001: 551). Bedford and Workman put it this way: “The Peloponnesian War must be studied on its own terms. Thucydides did not think in the manner of twentieth century Realists. Rather, the Peloponnesian War was written as a tragedy. Its integrated intellectual structure developed the story of Athenian excess and its subsequent fall” (2001: 52).

As we know, the Athenians claimed early in the war, and at several other crucial points, that fear, honor, and interest were compelling motivations for the defense and expansion of their empire. However, when comparing their words to their deeds, and when examining the speeches that instigated Athenian action, we find that honor and glory – and the *choice* to seek them, not compulsion of any kind – were the strongest motivations for Athens at pivotal points in the *History*.

The Corinthians at the Spartan War Conference describe quite well Athens' motivations. They say the Athenians were not compelled by fear or interest, but that they desired glory. They also point out how the Athenians took advantage of Sparta's slow and conservative character (1.70.1–9). Pericles' Funeral Oration appealed to Athenian glory in a way that was almost unseemly. In his third speech, Pericles reminded the citizens that their empire was a tyranny which they could not safely let go. Instead, he asked them to persevere in their pursuit of glory: "Make your decision, therefore, for glory then and honor now" (2.64.3; 2.64.6). As the *History* unfolds, Thucydides points out that the character of Athenian leaders intensified this theme of national glory and made it more dangerous. After Pericles died, he writes, no other leader was able to control Athenian ambition in the same way. Individuals' desire for glory became the focal point, and demagogues drove the people's desire for collective glory:

With his successors it was different. More on a level with one another, and each grasping at supremacy, they ended by committing even the conduct of the state affairs to the whims of the multitude. This, as might have been expected in a great and sovereign state, produced a host of blunders, and amongst them was the Sicilian expedition; though this failed not so much through a miscalculation of the power against of those against whom it was sent, as through a fault in the senders (2.65.10–11)

Men like Cleon and Alcibiades replaced Pericles, and Thucydides does not make their naked desire for power look acceptable or admirable. Diodotus does a good job of describing what motivates men like Cleon: "Hope also and greed, the one leading and the other following, the one conceiving the attempt, the other suggesting the facility of succeeding, cause the widest ruin, and, although invisible agents, are far stronger than the dangers that are seen" (3.45.5). The Athenians' "grasping" nature, their desire for an endless glory, is exposed by Thucydides as their tragic flaw. It leads them to turn down, with the urging of Cleon, the most promising peace offer they ever received from the Spartans – obtained by the unexpected opportunity to trap Spartan forces on the island of Sphacteria (4.21.1–2). It leads directly to the popular appeal of Alcibiades, the most self-glorifying leader in the *History*. More level-headed generals had decided that since Hermocrates had managed to unify the Sicilians, the Athenians had better leave them alone. But the Athenian people did not want to hear about their limitations. Alcibiades invited the people to absorb themselves not so much in the glory of their country as in his personal grandeur. They chose to adopt his recommendations, anticipating the great force they would send off on what they thought would be an easy conquest. What they found, of course, was that the Sicilians, united and highly motivated to cooperate, were more than a match for the thinly supplied Athenians. In this way, love of glory led Athens into a conflict with other democracies, a fatal mistake.

This reading of Thucydides' *History* as a tragedy, the unfolding of key events caused not by international structure or human nature, but by the Athenians'

decision at key points to value glory above all else, does not reflect pure realism in international relations. Instead it puts the focus on values, and it also again raises questions about the influence of individual and national character. The Athenians' culture was grasping and glory-seeking, and these can be seen as moral dispositions, and thus as matters of choice and potential moral condemnation. Structural realists tend to downplay or rule out morality when assessing international situations. But, from another angle, to ignore moral issues is not true realism, but the opposite, since moral issues are significant for real people making decisions that affect international relations. Bedford and Workman remark:

Thucydides' lament for the eclipse of reasoned moderation in the conduct of nations is at odds, therefore, with the Realist understanding of reasonable state conduct. Indeed, Realist formulations that so easily lend themselves to excessive state policy would fall necessarily under the rubric of Thucydides' remonstrations. (2001: 54)

Thucydides shows us an Athens that was once truly heroic, caring deeply about its reputation, willing to risk everything not just for itself but for all of Greece. But as the Athenians gained power and empire, they changed. They began to treat their allies less like allies and more like subjects. They sunk into luxury, vice, and arrogance. And, most importantly, through their own intemperate actions they awoke the sleeping giant, Sparta. They began to see themselves as on top simply because of their military power and their willingness to use it. The lesson we learn from this story is that "Overpowering desire takes possession of states both weak and strong, blinds them to the dangers, and sets them on ruinous courses" (Forde 2004: 185). Louis Halle also thought that Thucydides wanted his readers to learn what happens when a great state fails morally. "The tragedy of Athens, as Thucydides saw it, lay in her inability to live up to the moral responsibility that had come to her as a result of her moral excellence. She had achieved, by sheer character, the prosperity that corrupts character" (1955: 266).

In addition to the tragic reading of the *History*, there are more reasons why Thucydides gives us the impression that he is a realist, despite his lack of conformity to contemporary scholarly standards. His writing gives us a rather overwhelming impression of *gravitas*, of realism in the most practical sense of showing us the real world. Noting that most people do not try hard to find the truth, he warns his readers of the "absence of romance" in his book, which he thinks will make it more useful than works that came before it (1.22.4). His writing exudes a pessimistic, or one might say, a conservative outlook, as opposed to an optimistic or idealistic perspective. Conservatives, at least classical conservatives, do not think that we can change the world through better understanding, education, or rationality. They think we can learn from experience and we can learn from books, but any project to radically change the course of human development is doomed. This is a form of realism, the pessimism that Thucydides consistently reflects in his work, and this is one reason why we have an unshakeable feeling that Thucydides is a realist.

Along with the “absence of romance” in Thucydides, we see realism in his rejection of any mythological or other-worldly explanation for events. Thucydides does not try to inject great cosmic meaning into human activities. His eyes are wide open and he tries to look only at the facts. Some authors have considered this a defect in Thucydides. Simon Hornblower has proven that Thucydides’ perspective did not take all motivations and events into account, and that Thucydides was dismissive of religious motivations in particular, undervaluing them even when he mentions them in his narrative. As Hornblower puts it, the “religious silences of Thucydides,” the things he does not mention or chooses not to emphasize, speak volumes about his attitude toward religious motives and causes (1992: 170).

More recently, Stefan Dolgert has applied Hornblower’s observation of Thucydides’ anti-religious bias to how realists have used Thucydides to perpetuate a misunderstanding of events in the Peloponnesian War. He contends that “we need to treat Thucydides as an unreliable or hostile witness in religious matters,” and he proceeds to remind us of the many times that Thucydides’ own narrative disproves his tendency to dismiss religious motives as irrelevant (2012: 672). He gives many examples, but one is “the actions of the general Nicias at Syracuse in 413 which led, in part, to the destruction of the entire Athenian expedition to Sicily” (ibid.: 673). One can sense Thucydides’ disdain for superstition in his comments on the eclipse of the moon that stopped Nicias from retreating from Sicily until it was too late. “Most of the Athenians, deeply impressed by this occurrence, now urged the generals to wait; and Nicias, who was somewhat over addicted to divination and practices of that kind, refused from that moment even to take the question of departure into consideration, until they had waited the thrice nine days prescribed by the soothsayers” (7.50.4).

In addition to this and many other instances in which Thucydides gives us a stated religious motivation and then diminishes its seriousness, he disparages the reputation of the great authority Homer by calling into question the greatness of the Trojan War. He uses Homer’s own description of the Greek naval forces to show how primitive they were. While “we may safely conclude that the armament in question surpassed all before it, just as it fell short of modern efforts ... we can here also accept the testimony of Homer’s poems in which, without allowing for the exaggeration which a poet would feel himself licensed to employ, we can see that it was far from equaling ours” (1.10.3). When dealing with Homer’s account, he ignores the role of the gods, focusing only on the material and human aspects of the war. No doubt he has Homer and Herodotus in mind when he writes:

On the whole, however, the conclusions I have drawn from the proofs quoted may, I believe, safely be relied upon. Assuredly they will not be disturbed either by the verses of a poet displaying the exaggeration of his craft, or by the compositions of the chroniclers that are attractive at truth’s expense; the subjects they treat of being out of the reach of evidence, and time having robbed most of them of historical value by enthroning them in the region of legend. Turning from these, we can rest

satisfied with having proceeded upon the clearest data, and having arrived at conclusions as exact as can be expected in matters of such antiquity. (1.21.1–2)

Another way in which Thucydides seems realistic is in his willingness to provide commonsense moral commentary. It can be argued that Thucydides is *more* realistic than at least structural realists specifically because he takes moral issues seriously as factors in decision making, in how countries react, and in the success or failure of foreign policies. The Athenians at Melos express the “Athenian thesis” in its starkest form, and yet Thucydides clearly wants us to see their response to the defenseless Melians as wrong. “Thucydides understands Athenian behaviour at Melos as pathological, and the crude exercise of power it represents as something to be shunned, not emulated” (Lebow and Kelly 2001: 593). Yes, the Melians might be foolish for not accepting the reality of their situation. But the Athenian decision not to allow them to appeal to the gods, to compromise, to appeal to the formerly more moderate and generous Athenian nature, is a mistake. Thucydides places his account of the Sicilian expedition directly after his description of the massacre at Melos, leaving little doubt that the two are connected. The fanatical attitude on display in their confrontation with Melos is also the attitude of the Athenian people as they listen to Alcibiades and launch their most foolhardy move. Nancy Kokaz notes Thucydides’ treatment of these matters:

Most importantly, he places moral judgment at the heart of political decision-making and action by insisting on the importance of proper use for the practice of excellence. Thus, he develops a distinctively normative theory of world politics, one that emerges from practice but goes beyond it ... It also involves feeling serious distress in the face of never-ending human suffering, and being a relentless advocate of moderation and practical wisdom in the practice of politics. (2001: 29)

Because moral judgment, or lack thereof, can have a profound impact on the outcome of conflicts, dealing with it openly and honestly seems realistic.

Finally, Thucydides’ status as a historian may also be a reason why he impresses us as a realist. The very enterprise of a good historian, to record events as accurately as possible – which means with full understanding of what really happened, not just the creation of logs and transcripts – forces upon the writer and his readers a type of realism. They cannot escape the reality of events by retreating into idealistic thinking. Likewise, they cannot escape into abstract theory as an easy substitute for a full understanding of those aspects of events that do not neatly fit into their pre-existing expectations. Thus, Thucydides’ attention to multiple variables, both those that are measurable and those that are not, may strike his reader as entirely realistic. As a historian, Thucydides thinks that we can draw generalized lessons from his recounting of events. He also gives us the impression that he is a realist because he speaks not only of change but of

timeless things. Although the Peloponnesian War was, according to him the “greatest movement” up to his time and therefore contained many changes for the various participants in it, he reminds us that his work will be an “aid to the understanding of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it” (1.22.4). Understanding that human nature only admits of a certain range of possibilities and that human beings often make the same mistakes over and over again, is again a conservative outlook and constitutes a type of realism.

Conclusion

A few years ago, David Welch wrote an article entitled “Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides.” While that might seem like an immediately discouraging title, his article raised some important questions about how many political scientists, particularly scholars of international relations, have used Thucydides. “We should stop trying to bend him to our will by making him speak to debates about which he would understand little and care even less,” Welch wrote (2003: 302). It is true that for years, actually decades, international relations scholars have gone back to Thucydides as the “founder” of realism, or just the “father” of international theory. It is also true that there have been many attempts by scholars to fit the ancient Greek historian into other theoretical categories, to capture him for this or that school of thought. The latest of these theoretical categories is constructivism, but the most ink has been spilled explaining why Thucydides is a realist, and what kind. But should we give up on Thucydides because we sometimes misunderstand him, or because we are sometimes tempted to use him as an authority for what is basically our own point of view?

From another vantage point, it is refreshing that there is a “cottage industry” (Welch 2003: 307) that has sprung up to correct earlier realist interpretations of Thucydides. At a time when the parochial view seems like the only thing that matters, a time in which many think that the only valid path to knowledge of international affairs involves statistics and abstract modeling, to see a large number of scholars still hashing out ancient history and trying to grapple with one of the greatest authors of all time is not only refreshing, it gives hope for the future of our discipline. I would suggest that we need more investigations of how Thucydides’ thought fits with both classical realism and constructivism, because this enterprise will help us to think about how we should analyze foreign policy and war today. International relations scholars should continue to come back to Thucydides, not because they need some ancient authority to legitimize their own field, but because his *History* provides them with categories and ways of thinking that do seem still worth learning, and indeed, are “a possession for all time.”

Guide to Further Reading

There are many books and articles of value on the particular topic of Thucydides and realism, but among the best is Gustafson (ed. 2000), a collection of chapters by experts in the field of Thucydides studies, exploring Thucydides' application for international relations theory. Ahrens Dorf (1997) makes the case for a more complex Thucydides whose work provides a critique of contemporary realism; Monten (2006) provides a good defense of Thucydides as a structural realist. My book *Thucydides, Hobbes, and the Interpretation of Realism* (Johnson 1993) is a comparison of Thucydides and Hobbes, and a discussion about how both thinkers are used in international relations realist theory; see also Johnson Bagby (1994). More broadly on the intersection of political philosophy and international relations, Pangle and Ahrens Dorf (1999), which covers ancient and modern political thinkers and applies their thought to a variety of approaches in international relations theory, and including a fine chapter on Thucydides. Clinton (ed. 2007) provides chapters covering the intersection between classical realist thinkers and contemporary international theory; Frankel (ed. 1996) provides chapters that explain and make relevant political philosophers and classical international relations thinkers.

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Thucydides Our Father, Thucydides Our Shibboleth

The History of the Peloponnesian War as a Marker of Contemporary International Relations Theory

Timothy J. Ruback

By now, being an international relations (IR) scholar writing about Thucydides must feel a little like being a comedian set to play Carnegie Hall armed with jokes about airline food and mothers-in-law. One has to be very self-aware of one's performance, and one has to have very good material. Even then, the audience may have a hard time shaking the suspicion that they've heard it all before. Accordingly, we might expect such performances to be rare. Yet the familiarity of the performance does not dissuade scholars from returning to the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Rarely do six months go by without another interpretation appearing in the journals where IR scholars publish. Given the variety of global events that could serve as subjects for analysis, that a millennia-old war commands such attention is astounding. IR scholars are working to ensure Thucydides' promise that his work remains a possession for all time. We do so with our regular interpretations of his work. And we do so with countless offhand invocations of his name.

By paying careful attention to how IR scholars cite Thucydides, I seek to show the ways in which IR subjects itself to the normalizing practices of disciplinary power – I mean power in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault 1978: 93). These practices constrain the perceived limits of IR, making these arbitrary limits seem natural, and thereby diminishing the range of inquiry that takes place within the discipline. They serve to authorize the now-familiar voice of the academic theorist as the primary legitimate voice that can contribute to the analysis of global political life; indeed, this common voice may be the most important would-be centering device within academic international relations (see further Ruback 2008: 194–216).

Specifically, for a discipline that has often debated whether it has a center, it seems as if Thucydides has been made to serve as an ersatz center. And when a theoretical approach makes a move toward centrality in the discipline, we usually see a concomitant claim by a practitioner of the theory, suggesting that the roots of the theory can be traced back to Thucydides.

To develop this argument, I will rely upon four concepts. They are the “Thucydides Function,” the “Law,” the “Thucydides Industry,” and the “discipline to come.” The “Thucydides Function” describes the practices that would attempt to establish an otherwise-absent common ground for the discipline. It addresses a double production: the production of a sovereign Thucydides who can serve as a substitute for an absent center, and the production of a sovereign subjectivity from which the would-be theorist can recognize and uphold Thucydides as a center (as well as recognize others who do the same). In this way, the willingness to insist upon Thucydides’ centrality and authority offers both a membership effect (including those who are inclined to repeat this gesture – and excluding those who do not – from the discipline) and a continuity effect (effacing the historicity – the present day practices that shape “history” – of modern IR theories). Moreover, this function insists upon the centrality of a center from which the limits of the discipline can be marked. It is the desire for a centered academic discipline that animates the Thucydides Function. And the practices that constitute the Thucydides Function are borne of the “Law,” which offers a specific rationale for the (re)production of disciplinary centers: the center may be arbitrary, but its arbitrariness does not make it any less necessary. We cannot do without it. To understand this, I must next explain the Law.

The “Law” is a concept taken from the work of Jacques Derrida. Although the logic of the Law has had many names in Derrida’s writing, the basic point is unchanged. It refers to the law behind and before any rule that would organize, include or exclude. Basically, the Law refers to the insistence that law is obeyed. It is a law without positive content, able to take any structured form, insisting only upon its capacity for rule. The Law cultivates coherence by privileging identity over difference, closure over indeterminacy, and structure over play. When I say that a discursive field replicates the language and logic of the Law, I mean that the disciplinary power at work in that field insists upon self-identical, stable, and coherent modes of representation for all participants in the field. Would-be IR theories, if called upon, must be able to replicate a language and logic of the Law if they are to be considered part of the discipline. Theories that do not assert their own sovereign identity and their stable foundations are either rendered as immature contributions to be disciplined by the Law, or regarded suspiciously as a potential threat to the discipline. Consequently, would-be theorists regularly recite citations to Thucydides, both to reactivate the importance of the center and to display their mastery of the center. In so doing, these practices show both a fealty to the Law and a willingness to continue to obey the rules that it dictates. I call the discursive space in which these practices are reiterated the “Thucydides Industry.”

I coin the term “Thucydides Industry” to describe the collective set of citations, interpretations, invocations, and deferences to Thucydides, found in IR scholarship, that enact the Thucydides Function. The Thucydides Industry is the site in which the discursive practices of power involved in the claiming of Thucydides’ name takes place. When I refer to the Thucydides Industry, then, I am not addressing any one article but the body of Thucydides’ interpretations and citations in its totality. This is an important distinction: it is possible that any one interpretation of Thucydides may deviate from the performative effects of the Thucydides Industry that I describe. Moreover, these effects are aggregate effects in which no single interpretation can be understood to wield decisive disciplinary power. As such, the discourse of the Thucydides Industry is better typified by the processes that animate it, and by the work that it does, than by the individual authors that contribute to it. The Thucydides Industry, therefore, is best understood as the disciplinary location in which the Thucydides Function takes place.

The “discipline to come” derives from Derrida’s concept of the “to come,” most thoroughly elaborated in the context of his term “democracy to come.”¹ The discipline to come is a concept that carries a promise of a future presence. The discipline may seem incomplete or fragmented at this time, but by invoking a “discipline to come” we imagine a promised future discipline (toward which we are progressing, through obedience to the Law) which would have a clear center and limits, and a univocal coherent identity. The fulfillment of this promise as the discipline to come is something that IR theorists desire. Although the end is unattainable, it is perpetually immanent in our continued yearning for its arrival. This desire activates and reactivates the disciplinary practices of the Thucydides Function. The discipline-to-come, although deferred to the future, helps to shape IR today.²

Each of these concepts highlights the disciplinary importance of the sovereign voice of the IR theorist. This is the subject position that the IR theorists adopt *vis-à-vis* the objects of their interpretation. It refers to the insistence on an absolute foundation of truth and meaning. This insistence, which has long been a fundamental disposition of IR theorists, is one that Richard Ashley has named “the heroic practice” (1988: 230). This disposition posits the fixity, the unity, and the extra-historical, extra-political nature of the subjects that around which it organizes itself. And its power depends upon the replication of this attitude by other scholars. The very ambiguity and indeterminacy of their subject-matter permits the reiteration of this sovereign disposition, time after time, theoretical location after theoretical location. After all, if these objects of analysis were capable of being fully and finally represented in any one theoretical interpretation, their relevance as objects for reiterated interpretations would cease. Then, the subject in question could no longer serve as the site of an economy of power where the heroic practice could work.

All this revolves around the willing capacity for IR scholars to pronounce Thucydides’ name in their analyses of global politics, to the point in which “Thucydides” has become IR’s very own shibboleth: a word not spoken because of its inherent referent, but instead voiced as proof of belonging. The literal meaning of

the word is irrelevant; what is crucial is one's ability to speak it convincingly, to make it one's own.³ A sign of membership, the word parses the border between those who belong and those who remain outside the order. And while Thucydides serves as more than a simple watchword, our use of his name as shibboleth is remarkable.

A certain facility in speaking the name "Thucydides" can serve to demonstrate one's membership position within academic IR. For example, in 2001, Richard Ned Lebow published an article entitled "Thucydides the Constructivist." Therein, Lebow argued that Thucydides ought properly to be considered as the first constructivist because of his focus on the relationship between reason, convention, and nature, and the effects that these associations have on international order. As historians of political thought would point out, this is a scholarly anachronism (cf. Skinner 1988: 35–7). Thucydides preceded many of the concepts constructivism espouses. Yes, one might observe that some insights offered by Thucydides in the *History* are consistent with what has become the linguistic constructivist position, which "examines how language shapes identities and conventions in terms of which interests are defined" (Lebow 2001: 558). Yet, Lebow is not making this less-controversial claim. He is doing no less than claiming Thucydides' parentage for IR's constructivists: "Thucydides is undeniably a constructivist and may have been the original practitioner of the thicker linguistic version" (ibid.).

Overall, the article serves as an intervention into the discourse of IR theory, as evidenced by the opening line, "Movements establish genealogies to legitimize themselves" (ibid.: 547). This introductory phrase casts the article as a disciplinary act in itself. The irony, which cannot be lost upon any reader, is that while Lebow recognizes that historical–genealogical claims serve an inherently *political* function within the discipline, he nevertheless continues throughout his argument to try to make natural the constructivists' claim upon Thucydides. For this to work most successfully, the reader must *forget* the political act involved (and specifically announced) in such a claim. This is one of the reasons why the article is so interesting. Apart from providing a plausible and compelling constructivist reading of Thucydides, Lebow's announcement of his intentions could potentially serve to undercut his own political objectives by calling undue attention to the disciplinary consequences of his argument. After all, illusions explained often fail to compel the imagination. It is to his credit that the article remains so compelling, giving his acknowledgment in the opening of his disciplinary gambit.

Lebow makes this claim at the moment that constructivism is steadily gaining acceptance within the mainstream of IR theory: the lauding of Alex Wendt's (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics* in a roundtable meeting of the 2000 ISA; the inclusion of a certain constructivism as the still-scientific outcome of the post-positivist challenge; the increasing frequency with which we find constructivist dissertations, articles, conference panels, and additions to graduate syllabi and undergraduate textbooks. To cast a sociological eye on the discipline, it looks like constructivism has gained ground (Waeber 1998: 26). And now Lebow has claimed Thucydides for constructivism. In doing so, Lebow does not perform

some intermediate step in the progression of constructivism; instead this constructivist Thucydides-claiming is a self-coronation, a demonstration that constructivism is already a worthy participant in IR. By offering forth a constructivist Thucydides, Lebow performs a crowning gesture, announcing the presence of constructivism as a fully formed theory of international politics.

This crowning gesture further distinguishes the self-coronated as a theory that, having shown itself capable of wresting Thucydides' legacy, belongs to the center (not the margins) of IR theory. Lebow's utterance of the name "Thucydides" did not insist that this constructivist interpretation be recognized as the singular proper reading of Thucydides. Instead, Lebow seeks only to pronounce "Thucydides" in a way that others in the field would find familiar, in which they would recognize their own pronunciation of the word, on behalf of other theories.

When Lebow claims Thucydides on behalf of constructivism, he does not close off the multiplicity of possible Thucydides' interpretations. Should he have done so, he could not have analyzed Thucydides in order to "recapture the language of classical realism and the discourse it sustains" in a later book (Lebow 2003: 39). Rather, his pronunciation works to *include* constructivist theories at the center of the discourse. Lebow offers a performance that works to offer a strong claim on Thucydides' legacy for the constructivists, but in doing so, must be careful not to close off the possibility that others might do the same. It is of no more use to wrest Thucydides' legacy fully and finally for one's self than it is to be able to pronounce a shibboleth properly in a context where no one else is able to frame a pronunciation of the word. This paradoxical logic typifies the Thucydides Function.

The Thucydides Function leads a community of scholars to treat Thucydides as an authority, as a possible logical center (among centers) of the discipline. This is done by holding Thucydides as a watchword – a theorist who ought to be reckoned with, should one wish to be a participant in IR's discourse. These theorists articulate visions of Thucydides' text that reflect back upon their own theories. In doing so, the theorists imbue Thucydides with an authority that they reflect onto themselves. And the more forcefully they are able to claim Thucydides' legacy, the more effectively they come to hold pride of place within the discourse of IR theory. The theorist's interpretive position must be a strong claim that would ultimately leave room for other strong claims – all reinforcing the necessity of the claim for entry into the discourse. This is different from gatekeeping. Citing Thucydides in any one instance does not cause an argument to join the charmed circle of IR any more than failing to cite him would render the argument contained in an article illegitimate. Rather, the Thucydides Function first produces a ground from which we can treat Thucydides as a point of origin, which would then be shared with others who would theorize about global political life.⁴ All this suggests that it is time that we started looking at Thucydides in a different way. Rather than uncovering what Thucydides might have meant in writing the *History*, we should ask what these contesting claims for Thucydides might tell us about IR – that is, about those who would seek a stable historical ground to theoretical claims about global political life.

Consider some of the notable claims to Thucydides' legacy. Morgenthau's (1948) passing references and Waltz's (1959) more direct address to Thucydides effectively kick start the dominant classical realist IR interpretation of Thucydides. Later, Waltz (1979) and Gilpin (1984) claim Thucydides for structural realism. Most recently, Lebow claimed Thucydides for constructivism. This is to say nothing of the literature that traffics in largely invented histories of the discipline. There is a thriving genre of volumes that describe international relations as a singular, well-bounded, unchanging subject of study; one that may have become more sophisticated over the years, but also one that has not changed in scope or focus in over 2000 years (e.g., Lebow and Strauss 1991; Frankel 1996; Doyle 1997; Boucher 1998; Gustafson 2000; and Brown et al. 2002). Many of the texts in this genre focus heavily on Thucydides. Frankel's *Roots of Realism* devotes significantly more space to Thucydides than any other thinker. Gustafson's *Thucydides' Theory of International Relations: A Lasting Possession* never quite leaves antiquity behind. Even the more balanced and wide-ranging accounts almost always begin with Thucydides. Such texts are variations on a similarly mythologized past. And while these repeated variations provide a rejoinder to Martin Wight's (1966: 18) speculation about whether a tradition of international theory exists, they do not provide an accurate intellectual history of the development of the field. Rather, these mythological beginnings "transmitted from the ancient past to the present are legitimating mechanisms that are often employed to validate present claims of knowledge" (Long and Schmidt 2005: 8).

The history of the discipline lurks in its history of these Thucydides readings and each of these readings, real and imagined alike, is itself a historically contingent practice. Of course, the contingency of this practice is not a deeply hidden secret (cf. Welch 2003 – who does not, however, address the disciplinary consequences of these abuses). In one sense, I am exposing that which everyone already knows, but attempts to repress so that Thucydides can be made to fulfill the function of a substitute for an absent foundational object. Therefore, it is not enough to expose the contingency of this practice. One must also explain how such a practice is made to work when it will return to the same irony: that the performance of naming and locating an origin – the desire *for* an origin – ultimately announces the impossibility of the origin.

For IR theorists, the *History* is performatively made to serve as an already-present point of origin to which all subsequent theoretical moves can refer. Furthermore, once having fixed an ancient historically situated origin that is made to seem solid, theorists can derive assumptions about the state, about sovereignty, about anarchy, and relegate their assumptions to pre-theoretical status. That is, they are ontological givens about the world, only to be explained by theory, and not concepts to be re-examined, questioned, or theorized in their own right. Assuming the place of a desired origin for academic IR is the key role of the Thucydides Function.

Although no one interpretation of Thucydides can be said to provide the basis for a discipline, the logic of the Thucydides Function suggests that any future

unified discipline, would surely be one that Thucydides would recognize and affirm. Thus, the void Thucydides is made to fill is one brought about by the “discipline to come,” an impossibility that has present consequences, or what Derrida calls the “impossible possible” (Borradori 2003: 120).⁵ As such, the disciplinary move made in the Thucydides Function is one that appeals both to an imagined past as well as an imagined future.

What does it mean to herald a “discipline to come”? Something “to come” contains an element of continual progress and refinement. A singular, authoritative discipline may not exist presently, but it *promises to be* perfectible, in the future. This future promise of a unified discipline has consequences for how we behave presently. These consequences are not only manifest in the pursuit of the ideal, but they are also manifest in the diffusion and diversity of those present-day institutions, not precisely related or reducible to one another, that may make claims to the discipline. The discipline to come may never arrive. Yet this permanent deferral does not prevent the “to come” from shaping the present. Indeed, the “to come” must already have effects in the present:

[T]his idea, like that of international law, is never simply given, that its status is not even that of a regulative idea in the Kantian sense, but rather something that remains to be thought and *to come* [*à venir*]: not something that is certain to happen tomorrow, not the democracy (national or international, state or trans-state) of the *future*, but a democracy that must have the structure of a promise – *and thus the memory of that which carries the future, the to-come, here and now.* (Derrida 1992: 78)

Derrida speaks of the “to come” as a promise. This is significant because a promise is a performative act that references the future, and has consequences for the present. A promise may be deferred endlessly. But the promise exists in the present, even if its referent does not.

Endlessly deferred from the present, the “to come” is *impossible*; it promises a univocity of meaning that can *never* be realized. It is the plurality of voices, promising the “to come” and claiming its name in different forms, that produces that which is “to come” in its present, contingent form. This holds true for each concept that Derrida has considered under the rubric of the “impossible possible”: democracy, forgiveness, friendship, hospitality, justice, and sovereignty (Derrida 2002: 234). In these cases, the plurality of invocations of a name produces the referent. At the same time, because the name relies upon these varied performances, it never quite manifests as a complete embodiment of the name (ibid: 234–5).

To understand how the “impossible possible” can be said to exist at all, Derrida focuses on its sites of production. In doing so, he turns his attention to the university. For Derrida, the role of the professor is crucially important:

The discourse of profession is always, in one way or another, a free profession of faith; in its pledge of responsibility, it exceeds pure techno-scientific knowledge. To profess is to pledge oneself ... [W]hat matters here is the promise, this pledge of

responsibility, which is reducible to neither theory nor practice. To profess consists always in a performative speech act, even if the knowledge, the object, the content of what one professes, of what one teaches or practices, remains on the order of the theoretical or constative ... [T]he act of professing is a performative speech act, and because the event that it is or produces depends only on this linguistic promise, its proximity to the ["to-come"] ... will always be formidable. (ibid.: 215)

Two themes are worth addressing here: (i) the religiosity of the performance and (ii) the responsibility inherent in what is "to come." For Derrida, professing any vision of democracy is an act of faith, a promise to provide a representation (however imperfect) of "pure" democracy. It is therefore to be beholden and responsible to the future of the democracy to-come. Elsewhere, Derrida notes the religious overtones of such a performance, stating:

Whether the promise promises this or that, whether it be fulfilled or not, or whether it be unfulfillable [*sic*], there is necessarily some promise, and therefore some historicity as future-to-come. It is what we are nicknaming the messianic without the messianism. (1994:73)

Ultimately, Derrida locates interpretation as the crucial productive exercise, suggesting that interpretation both brings about the "pure" concept and announces its impossibility: "*the* performative does not exist: there are various performatives" (2004: 100). These overlapping performances/interpretations necessarily presuppose a discipline. Derrida writes:

[T]he interpretation of a theorem ... calls for the politics of a community of interpreters gathered around this text, and at the same time of a global society, a civil society with or without a State, a veritable regime enabling the inscription of that community. I will go further: every text, every element of a corpus reproduces or bequeaths, in a prescriptive or normative mode, one or several injunctions: come together according to this or that rule, this or that scenography, this or that topography of minds and bodies, form this or that type of institution so as to read me and write about me, organize this or that type of exchange and hierarchy to interpret me, evaluate me, preserve me, translate me, inherit from me, make me live on ... Or *inversely: if you interpret me ... you will have to assume one or another institutional form.* (ibid.: 101, emphasis added)

The structure of the university unites individual interpreters, all of whom are active participants in creating the community to which they are responsible. This community is presupposed and promised, rather than readily apparent. But the presupposition and the promise bring about a community, as if it were *the* promised community. In such a fashion, the always inaccessible promise nevertheless shapes the present. This same dynamic holds for the "discipline to come." IR is organized around repeated interpretations and evaluations of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

From this turn to Derrida, it is clear that the university is a site for the production and reproduction of the “to come.” The university is a powerful source of the promised “to come” and the urgency of the injunction that follows. I focus on the context of the university because I want to highlight that this same urgent dynamic can be found in the manner in which IR scholars pursue, describe, and enact the discipline “international relations.” The university is the site in which the Thucydides Industry takes place.

Two points about the Thucydides Industry are worth reiterating. First, it brings to light the authority – and the authoritativeness – of Thucydides by insisting upon his relevance as an author to be interpreted. Second, it authorizes versions of Thucydides by privileging and canonizing some elements of the text while marginalizing others. Various performances profess singular interpretations of the text, visions of Thucydides that take one or another authoritative form (Ruback forthcoming). These multiple readings of the *History* are not reducible to one another. The Thucydides Industry is not toiling in order to uncover a single best interpretation. Instead, it is given over to reproducing and calling forth a certain spirit of Thucydides, made manifest in several forms, around which a discipline can form.

Against this background, we can better understand the “discipline to come.” To describe IR as a “discipline to come” would imply the following ten things:

1. That IR scholars cannot point to any univocal, uncontestable definition of what the discipline is; that IR presently has no center, and that its limits are also far from clear.
2. That, therefore, the very idea of a discipline – a community of scholars united under this or that theory, this or that ethical imperative, this or that empirical focus, this or that methodological approach – is in doubt.
3. That, despite this doubt, IR scholars speak, congregate, and write *as if* they were members of a fully constituted discipline.
4. That when these IR scholars turn to Thucydides’ *History*, they do so in the name of modern theory and a community of modern theorists who would act as if they were part of an academic discipline.
5. That these interpretations of Thucydides, therefore, *promise* an idea of a “discipline to come” that would have a clear center and limits, a univocal discipline to which these interpreters have professed their responsibility and their commitment.
6. That the multiplicity of Thucydides’ interpretations has the effect of calling together these scholars in some institutional form that can provisionally be called a discipline.
7. That the discipline, in this present, contingent form, carries the structure of a promise – of the “to come” – in the present.
8. That this promise of the “discipline to come” announces its own impossibility at the moment it comes together; that only the cacophonous plurality

of Thucydides' interpretations unites the discipline in the present, and that univocality cannot emerge out of such a polyvocality.

9. That this impossibility is effaced by the turn to Thucydides. This effacement is a simultaneous deferral to the past and to the future. It is a deferral to the past insofar as each performative presupposition of the discipline rests itself on Thucydides' ancient text. Hence the discipline, however contingent it may seem in the present, shares a common historical root. It is a deferral to the future insofar as the profession of a discipline organized around Thucydides promises a "discipline to come." We may not yet know what the contours of that discipline might be. Nonetheless, we can affirm that it would surely represent a political world which Thucydides would have recognized.
10. That, consequently, all would-be practitioners of IR theory should be able – if called upon – to demonstrate a connection between their own work and Thucydides' text. They should adopt the sovereign voice that they (and others in the discipline) have ascribed to him.

These points all follow from the idea of the "discipline to come." The recognition that we cannot point to any univocal definition to the discipline causes anxiety. This anxiety is met with a group of scholars acting *as if* they were members of a discipline. Interpretations and reinterpretations of Thucydides are crucial performances within which IR scholars summon forth communities of theorists, insist upon paradigms, research programs, or research traditions, and thereby enact the discipline. References to Thucydides will come to ground communities of interpreters, and make connections where they may not otherwise exist.

Many IR scholars place their faith in Thucydides as an authoritative source. Much like Derrida notes a messianic overtone to the "to come" – a recognition of difference that could be united through appeal to a distant universality – so too do IR scholars adopt a religious disposition in their treatment of Thucydides. Our modern theories are but incomplete translations of the original. But this spark of the original in the modern translations serves to connect each contingent form to one another, while promising a common ground in which the contingencies and differences of the modern theories would be nullified.

In the remaining pages, I will show how the Thucydides Function reproduces this dynamic of the discipline to come by reviewing texts that insist on a return to Thucydides to answer or establish the primacy of anarchy in IR's analyses of global political life. But before I do that, I will highlight the religiosity shown in the turn to Thucydides. In order to do so, I now turn to a reading of Michael Doyle's *Ways of War and Peace*, to show how Doyle structures realism around Thucydides' legacy.

Doyle begins by noting that critics of realism have taken two paths. Some have run roughshod over real and serious differences between varieties of realism. Others have pointed out that realism seems a curious farrago of fragmented, irreconcilable positions. Doyle counters these arguments by describing how realists are essentially united in their historical bases, but differ in their modern theoretical

interpretations (Doyle 1997: 42–3). He suggests that there are four varieties of realism, three of which (fundamentalist, constitutionalist, and structuralist) are modern interpretations derived from the fourth version, complex realism. Complex realism has had only one practitioner, Thucydides (ibid.: 44). Thus, for Doyle:

[T]o think like a realist is to think as the philosophical historian Thucydides first thought ... Realism does hark back to Thucydides, but he is not a Structuralist, a Fundamentalist, or a Constitutionalist. Each strand of Realism can trace some of its crucial elements to Thucydides' *History*. But only Complex Realism follows his methods and lessons. (ibid.: 48–50)

For Doyle modern variants of realism are partial representations of Thucydides' ideas. Fundamentalist realists, who root political conflict, competition, and the struggle for power in human nature, capture some key element of Thucydides' focus on individual decisions and capacities in explaining war. However, they do not capture the distinction that Thucydides draws between human interaction within states and across states (ibid.: 65–6). Structural realists capture Thucydides at his most parsimonious, but fail to note that power relations could not, for Thucydides, have forced war without the underlying human forces of fear and honor (ibid.: 73). Constitutional realists, who insist on using domestic structures to explain foreign policies, also claim Thucydides. While domestic institutions may have affected decisions for war in the *History*, there does not seem to be enough variation in domestic structures to explain the range of policies adopted by all the central and peripheral states Thucydides describes (ibid.: 77).

So, if these modern variants of realism fail to represent Thucydides' extraordinarily complex theory similarly, or accurately, then how is it that these theories can claim affinity with Thucydides or with each other? For Doyle, part of the answer lies within what is *not* done as a response to this inquiry. Doyle does not interrogate the assumption that Thucydides is the source of realist theory, even though the varieties of realism he describes do not accurately capture Thucydides' thought.

Nevertheless, he insists on a continuity, if not a unity, of realist thought (ibid.: 50). Unity is still "to come" but each variant can recognize itself in the *History*, and is left with an injunction about what they must do: "To borrow Thucydides' judgments in order to support their conclusions, they will need to put their conclusions in his contexts, both domestic and international" (ibid.: 94). The turn to the *History* promises a rationale for doing so, and thereby insists upon a return to Thucydides in which we put our conclusions in his context. Only then can modern realists be said to have done as Thucydides had done. Only then does Doyle speak of realists-without-adjectives: not structural realists, not constitutional realists, but simply realists (ibid.: 80). This reconciliation of realisms still "to come" is but one example of the act of faith involved in describing an IR discipline, or even any "-ism" within the discipline.

At this point, I have argued that the organization of the discipline can be understood through Derrida's notion of the "to come." And I have provided an example of

how one scholar places Thucydides in relationship to the discipline in order to show the imperative of the “discipline to come” retroactively justifies the assumption that we must begin with Thucydides. The willingness to begin with Thucydides often takes the hallmarks of an act of faith. Taking Thucydides as a foundational assumption promises to supplement other concepts around which we can frame a discipline. Questions about the fitness of these concepts are answered by an appeal to Thucydides’ authority, and the use of Thucydides is an interpretive fiat that makes these concepts seem more stable than they are. And although scholars return to the Thucydides Function to ground many of the concepts that shape the discipline – among them method, metatheory, and author-position – I want to address one directly: anarchy.

Locating a definition of anarchy in Thucydides – one that compels and constrains, and thereby implies regularized behavior – is a key element to instantiating a science of international politics. Arnold Wolfers summarized the early twentieth-century turn toward the science of politics through an assessment of the history of IR theory:

Even if it had been realized that past thinkers on the subject had been anything but inarticulate about what they considered to be the actual workings of the state system, their observations and generalizations on this aspect of the subject probably would have been discounted because of their lack of scientific methodology. (1962: 234)

Wolfers suggests that a foundation based on scientific methodology has emerged as an alternative standard for the field.

In an earlier essay, Wolfers notes that one way to develop a science of politics is to assume a universe that engenders law-like behaviors. One such enabling assumption is anarchy. Wolfers notes:

If it is true that the anarchical multi-state system creates a condition of constant danger to national core possessions – specifically to national survival – and, at the same time, provides frequent opportunity for new acquisitions, the actors can be said to act under external compulsion rather than in accordance with their preferences. (ibid.: 13)

Wolfers is not convinced that this assumption can compel uniform state reactions whenever anything less than national survival is at stake (ibid.: 15). Yet, as Peter Ahrens Dorf remarks, in his interpretation of anarchy in the *History*, the logic of anarchy supersedes moral claims (1997: 238). Ahrens Dorf avers that:

[I]t is not surprising that contemporary realists feel no need to argue for their claim that international politics is anarchic; for them it is an article of “faith.” There is, however, something deeply problematic about basing an ostensibly rational teaching on unproven assumptions, or faith, especially when that teaching loudly claims by its very name to reveal the true nature of the “real” world. (ibid.: 239–40)

In order to ground anarchy in necessity, and thereby provide a common assumption around which a science of politics can be organized, many other scholars have turned to Thucydides. The typical move is the one exemplified by Kenneth Thompson who suggests that the universality of reason derives the Athenian position in the Melian Dialogue (1960: 150). Should Thucydides – the first “scientific” historian – have derived structural necessities from anarchy, then anarchy is upheld as more than just an unproven assumption. It is also a deeply historical motivating factor. To be done with anarchy is to be done with international politics. As Hedley Bull observed:

Whether by a social contract among the nations or by conquest, whether gradually or at once, whether by frontal assault on national sovereignty or a silent undermining of its foundations, the problem of international relations, if it is soluable at all, is taken to be in the last analysis the problem of bringing international relations to an end. (1966: 36)

By establishing a science of politics around anarchy, one is also organizing the discipline around a future “to come.” One consequence of this logic is that, as long as IR has a subject of study worthy of the name, it also has anarchy as an organizational principle.

So, how do IR scholars ground anarchy, and the behavior it requires, in the *History*? One way they have done so is already clear. They invoke its author. Some simply announce that this conception of anarchy surely owes its derivation to Thucydides. Yet, there have been more sophisticated and nuanced readings of Thucydides on anarchy. Clifford Brown provides a thorough reading of the derivation of anarchy from the *History*, concluding:

The similar concepts of success, the shared concepts of competition, fear and glory, the use of the words assurance, subdual, and anticipation in key passages of the translation, and especially the similar use of equality – all suggest that Thucydides was ... the source of a cogent demonstration of how anarchy is “rationally” derived. (1987: 62)

This reading is shared by Steven Forde, who sees Thucydides’ realism as “rest[ing] on an analysis of the role of ‘necessity’: ethical duties are suspended by the necessities states confront in international affairs” (1992: 373). The argument for necessity turns around the sense of *compulsion* that Thucydides describes. Thucydides describes Sparta as the aggressor, but explains its turn to war by suggesting that the demands of anarchy justify its actions (*ibid.*: 374).

At the same time, Forde shows that Thucydides locates this compulsion in human nature – a heady cocktail of fear, honor, and self-interest. He assesses the argument for maintaining empire by stating:

The Athenian argument on behalf of their imperialism appeals to necessities rooted both in the structure of international politics and in human nature. Before the war,

they maintain that the circumstances compelled them toward imperialism, “primarily through fear, then honor, and finally self-interest” (1.75). “Fear” is the only one of these clearly linked to the structural “security dilemma” of international politics ... Fear rooted in self-preservation is also the least controversial compulsion on which to base a realist argument against justice in international politics ... Fear or the security dilemma is never advanced in Thucydides as an adequate explanation of imperialism in and of itself ... Yet this is the proposition that Thucydides’ *History* as a whole supports. A general law of the expansion of power, driven by honor and self-interest as well as fear, makes for a much more virulent realism than one based simply on fear or the structural security dilemma. It makes the possibility of any common good in international politics much more remote. (ibid.: 375–6)

Here, Forde is acknowledging that scientific realism is a much more limited perspective than Thucydides’ own. But in so doing, he points out that anarchy is a key to the security dilemma in Thucydides’ explanation as well as elsewhere. And this logic, suspicious as Forde may be of it, leads to scientific analysis of international politics. Chief among them is that states must obey the imperative of power, “stated as a law of political behavior: no state with sufficient power will ever resist the impulse to rule its weaker neighbors” (ibid.). In such a way, a science of politics, fashioned after the necessities of the anarchical system, provides a platform for a “discipline” to emerge in Thucydides’ wake. Whether this narrative is to be championed, or lamented, it tends to link Thucydides to an unbroken tradition of realist political thought.

While this interpretation is powerful, some have begun to question its validity, suggesting that this derivation of anarchy is a misinterpretation of Thucydides’ explanation of the Peloponnesian War. The best, most careful counter-prescription to this reading has been offered by Ned Lebow, who has made assessments of Thucydides a regular aspect of his research agenda. In 1996 Lebow argued that, although Thucydides’ thesis about the truest cause of war seems to forward an explanation based on the necessary consequences of anarchy, his subsequent narrative contradicts this thesis (1996: 232). Notably, Lebow considers that the facts of the narrative belie the claim that Sparta had been frightened by growth in Athenian power. First, he contends, in the fifteen years immediately prior to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta had been reluctant to listen to exhortations from allies in favor of attacking Athens; furthermore Athens, prior to the Corcyran Alliance at the outbreak of the war, had done little during that timespan to expand or consolidate its power. Thus, Lebow suggests, “Athens had done little to alarm Sparta” (ibid.: 235). Fear, as a proximate cause, does not seem to exist in the narrative.

The motivating role of fear, under anarchy, can lead to war. But, as Lebow contends, the Spartans do not act as if they are afraid of Athenian power. As he points out:

Spartan estimates of Athenian power undercut Thucydides’ argument in 1:23. They indicate that lack of respect for Athenian power, and not fear of it, was a principal

incentive for war. The war party's gross underestimation of Athenian capability and resolve made them willing to come to the aid of Corinth. (ibid.: 240)

Lebow concludes from his analysis that there is an unresolvable tension in the *History*, and that both international structure and domestic structure are indeterminate for Thucydides.

But IR scholars, on the whole, too rarely tarry with Thucydides' unresolvable tensions.⁶ Both Thucydides and anarchy (with its motivational demands) have functioned to establish a modern scientific "discipline." The sovereign voice of the analyst, primarily concerned with anarchy, is cast upon Thucydides to be reflected back upon us. No wonder we find him so familiar. *We have made him into us*. Too often, IR scholars have run roughshod over Thucydides' contradictions and ambiguities. We have contorted him in our interpretations so that – irrespective of what we might claim he really meant – he necessarily speaks in the register of the sovereign voice. Finding validation in that voice, we triumphantly center our discipline around an interpretive subject position we have ascribed to Thucydides.

This argument should be troubling to IR scholars. After all, shouldn't IR scholars, who are undoubtedly interested in unbiased methods of political inquiry, be interested in the ways that their own writing can skew their own scholarship and can participate in the narrowing of what can count as the substance of legitimate IR inquiry? Shouldn't we be interested in the cumulative disciplining effect of their narrative voices, made manifest in the discourse of IR theory? Shouldn't we worry about an approach to rich historical texts that leads us to accept and exonerate thinking about anarchy that is largely divorced from moral considerations? And shouldn't we be interested in alternative approaches that people working in other fields (as well as outside academia) have developed to address the serious business of global political life?

To be clear, I am not proposing that we who study international relations jettison all readings of Thucydides that would replicate the Thucydides Function.⁷ Nor am I suggesting that we are all hopelessly bound by it.⁸ Rather, I have sought to show how strategies of citations work to impose and affect a set of powerful assumptions about how IR discourse ought to organize its scholarship into a discipline. Irrespective of what we write, when we theorize about global political life, as long as we pronounce it in the register of the sovereign voice, in accordance with the Law, Thucydides is our father. And he is our shibboleth.

Notes

- 1 The spatiotemporal dynamic between my "discipline to come" and Derrida's "democracy to come" is similar, although there is a significant difference between the two concepts. For Derrida, the promise of a "democracy to come" entails the

celebration of difference, with respect for the “singularity of the Other” (Derrida 1997: §16). In contrast, the “discipline to come” is a disciplining concept. Rather than embracing the polyvocality that comes with respecting the other, the discipline to come desires a univocality: other theories and perspectives are only respected to the extent to which they replicate the interpretive dispositions of the Thucydides Function. The democracy to come celebrates play, indeterminacy, and ambiguity. The discipline to come would cast these things beyond the pale, in the name of disciplinary unity.

- 2 While there are some who would go about the business of studying the empirical stuff of global political life, untroubled by disciplinary boundaries or theoretical battles, the discourse surrounding academic IR (particularly IR theory) is one that betrays anxieties about its own disciplinary origins, and some scholars like Morton Kaplan (1961) have written about whether IR should be a discipline at all. The compulsion to organize the history of IR theory into a series of “great debates” (see George 1989; Lapid 1989) also betrays this anxiety. I contend that the issue of disciplinary boundaries is a critically compelling one for many who study international politics, and that Thucydides’ shroud provides a way of navigating the waters of this problem. While I believe that the issue of disciplinary origins is quite acute in IR, I do not mean to suggest that it is uniquely so. I will leave it to the readers to determine whether the practices of the Thucydides Function resonate with the disciplinary politics of their own field.
- 3 “Shibboleth, this word I have called Hebrew, is found, as you know, in a whole family of languages: Phoenician, Judeo-Aramaic, Syrian. It is traversed by a multiplicity of meanings: river, stream, ear of grain, olive-twigg. But beyond these meanings, it has acquired the value of a password. It was used during or after war, at the crossing of a border under watch. The word mattered less for its meaning than for the way in which it was pronounced. The relation to the meaning or to the thing was suspended, neutralized bracketed” (Derrida 1994: 24).
- 4 Here, it is worth tarrying with two points in order to make clear the limits of the “Thucydides Function.” First, this is not a gatekeeping argument. Citing Thucydides in any one instance does not “cause” an argument to join the charmed circle of mainstream IR any more than the failure to cite him in any one article would render the argument contained therein illegitimate. While I do not doubt that it is possible that a single scholar may be motivated to interpret Thucydides in order to garner credibility for his or her own approach, I have never suggested that the act of interpreting or citing Thucydides is a sufficient way to do so. The legitimating strategy I have described only works at the discursive level. Second, I am not suggesting that Thucydides is uniquely important to IR theory as a would-be source or as a desired center. The processes of power at work in the Thucydides Function – processes that both limit and legitimate the voices of IR theory – are not limited to Thucydides’ shroud alone. We can see the same legitimizing practices at work in the way IR scholars make claims about the legacies of many other scholars, including Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant, to name only a few. However, because of the ubiquity of Thucydides’ claims and because of the presumption of privilege, borne of age, which so often comes with interpretations of the *History*, Thucydides serves as a remarkable example of these centering practices. Thucydides’ citations are well suited for the task of describing the disciplinary politics of academic lineage. However,

they are not the only discursive space where one could find these productive practices at work. In short, the function of the Thucydides Function is more important than Thucydides' shroud itself.

- 5 Derrida uses "to come," to signify the impossible – that which must remain theoretical or performative, but never fully exists. What Derrida is stressing in this concept is: (a) a focus on the present-day demands of the future ideal, while insisting on the permanent future-ness of the ideal, and (b) a focus on the performativity of the announcement itself, over that which is promised.
- 6 Ironically, some of the authors I engage in this essay are among IR's most careful readers of the *History*. Forde's (1989) reading pushes toward recapturing a tragic moral tension within Thucydides and realism alike. Lebow's many readings, especially when stacked against one another, offer a range of complementary interpretations that do not, on the whole, resolve the ambiguities of the text. Rather, those that have the least use for his tensions are those that tend to invoke his name in casual support of some theoretical claim without ever returning to his text. For more on these invoking readers, see Ruback (forthcoming).
- 7 I say this for two reasons. First, I do not believe that such a thing would be possible. Even if a center is only made possible through some performative function, even if it has no substance absent these practices, we cannot (as Derrida says) do without it (Derrida 1978: 281). The concept is indispensable. But, even without jettisoning the concept of a center, we can be more aware of our own complicity in establishing and seeming to "naturalize" this center. And, therefore, we can be suspicious of moves that would discredit alternative approaches in the name of the discipline. Second, what we might retain from the discipline to come is, perhaps, the recognition that in our study of global political life, we should continue to strive to do "better." This too would mean that we must necessarily examine our own political and theoretical assumptions, and explore how they shape our own work.
- 8 After all, there are doubtlessly already those who continue to work and write, untroubled by the demands of the discipline to come. In short, this essay suggests that we listen to a multiplicity of voices on the subject of global politics – to remain open, in short, to those who would write like Keohane (1990) suggest without excluding voices like Weber's (1994) dissenting vision of IR analysis.

Guide to Further Reading

Some of the great many books that offer a history of international relations stretching back to Thucydides include Lebow and Strauss (1991), Frankel (1996), Doyle (1997), Boucher (1998), Gustafson (2000), and Brown et al. (2003). For a contrasting view that details the history of the discipline as it developed, see Schmidt (1998). That text, combined with David Welch's (2003) review of the abuse of Thucydides in IR, shows that the intellectual development of IR may have less to do with Thucydides than many would presume. My argument about the relationship between Thucydides and the discipline follows, in part, from Derrida's notion of the "to come" (*à venir*), which is introduced in its most accessible form in Derrida (1994) and then most fully elaborated in Derrida (2005).

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Thucydides in the Staff College

Andreas Stradis

Introduction

History and war have had a checkered relationship: historians have tended to keep military history at arm's length, just as military men have tended to do the same with history. To take the case of the former, when beginning his career at King's College London and establishing the new Department of War Studies there, the modern historian Michael Howard recalls his colleagues in the Department of Classics regarding him with "amazement and amusement" when he asked them who were the major current authorities on warfare in classical antiquity. "Any historian of the classical era, they explained kindly, had to be an authority on warfare: war was what the classical era was all about." Wishing to avoid further humiliation from his medievalist colleagues, he refrained from putting the same question to them (Howard 2006: 14–15). The anecdote reveals the tendency of modern history artificially to stratify itself into specialist subfields, but most especially the tendency to sever itself from *military* history altogether. Professor Howard concluded that this rift was the unhappy and unhelpful result of an unfavorable reputation: the field of military history was either too focused on operational details, or it bordered on the sensationalist, whether in the form of interminable reassessments of the same rousing battles or of the mythical quality of regimental histories (*ibid.*: 14). War Studies at King's was designed to return military history to a more central position in the historical discipline by reuniting it with the wide range of other subfields that classicists and medievalists naturally considered so germane to the study of warfare. And the sure-fire way to demonstrate its importance was to re-emphasize its centrality to the intellectual touchstone of Western civilization. The classics were the perfect vehicle to promote Trotsky's apocryphal view that though you may not be very interested in war, it is

certainly very interested in you. Put differently, in order to be an historian at all, Howard believed that to a certain extent one had to be an historian of war.

But it is the second relationship – between military men and the study of history – that forms the crux of this chapter. Specifically, it addresses the question of why Thucydides, despite centering his historical account primarily on war and having a towering presence in related fields such as international relations, claimed no formal attention from the professional military education (PME) system until 1972. In order to do so, one must first look back at this broader question of why history (and the liberal arts in general) was omitted from the PME system for so long. The military is a conservative institution the world over, often fiercely proud of its traditions, necessarily obedient to the rank structure, and highly disciplined in the interpretation and carrying out of orders (see Abrahamsson 1971). History as a subject has proven troublesome ground for the military: it naturally begs questions, which military orders do not. This paradox brings us to an important distinction between *types* of history, as noted by Howard. The “official,” institutional, regimental, and other histories that militaries produce and consume are a far cry from the kind of academic endeavor being undertaken at the institutions of higher PME today. The former are part of the fabric of unit pride and loyalty that are so integral to the coherence of the military; they are beyond question and necessarily sit outside of any academic definition of the discipline. This explains why a systematic “education” in history was avoided, with “training” being favored instead, focusing on the strictly technical skills necessary for the fulfillment of military duties. As will be seen, this division between education and training polarized opinions on PME from its earliest years until well into the twentieth century. For some, liberal education still has the dangerous capacity to “infect” the military with “relativism and soft nihilism” (Yarbrough 2004: 218).

The story of Thucydides’ entry into PME is therefore a long and delicate one, beginning with the “missionary aspect” of history among the aristocratic, hereditary officer class (Masland and Radway 1957: 211), moving toward a new professional consciousness in the nineteenth century with the growth of technical schools for artillerists and engineers, and finally seeing the broadening of this technical schooling into more general education. It was only once militaries recognized the need for such education in the face of the increasingly complex and uncertain conditions of warfare that Thucydides’ text was able to enter the fold.

The Origins of Professional Military Education

PME came into being in the early nineteenth century as a result of the increasingly technical skill set demanded of the military officer.¹ The vast armies of the *levée en masse* era, coupled with the potent new force of concentrated artillery, required highly skilled gunnery officers, logisticians, and engineers to supply and maneuver unprecedented numbers of troops. This change was a grudging response to the

necessities of technological progress rather than a natural result of general military culture, which was for the large part highly conservative and anti-intellectual. The legacy of what Alan J. Guy calls the “era of proprietary command” meant that the majority of officers expected absolute obedience as a consequence of their natural right to command (1994: 94). This consciousness of belonging to the officer class bred an inherent mistrust of the self-taught leader, since the necessary qualities were often deemed to be incommunicable and innate, much as they had been perceived since the feudal era.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the principle of proprietary command was weakened among the monarchies of the *ancien régime* on the continent. Effective command, in both the civilian and military spheres, could not rely on rank alone, it seemed; faith from subordinates was required, which could only be generated from perceptible competence in their superiors. The old adage of “learning by doing” now not only risked the lives of men in the hands of inexperienced officers, but also the valuable, delicate, and complicated new swathe of *matériel* that was filtering into modern fighting forces as a result of the industrialization of warfare. Thus the first breath of life was given to the sense of *professional* identity of the military officer, an identity that had now begun to go significantly beyond that of social class, corps, or regiment. In England, for example, after a series of Royal Commissions, all potential officers were required to attend the academies, universal entry requirements and examination criteria were set, and the commissioning process began to be streamed according to performance; even officers of the Cavalry and Guards were “confronted” by two examinations, though ultimately subject “to a final revision by the Adjutant-General,” presumably to avoid cases of embarrassment to the sons of prominent families (Royal Commission 1869: 7ff; Smyth 1961: 249ff). The year 1802 was in many ways foundational for PME, when the *École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr*, the US Military Academy at West Point, and the Royal Military College were all founded. However, old attitudes persisted; almost a century later, even something as patently instructive and innocuous as war-gaming received the strong disapprobation of officers such as Captain James Chester (1893). For him, this new-fangled invention was part and parcel of a worrying new disease that was affecting the US Army, namely the intellectualization of a sacred vocation, the qualities for which could not be “taught” in any theoretical way.

In Europe, any expansion of the scope of this educational system beyond strictly technical skill sets necessarily implied a challenge to the view that noble birth was the main criterion for military command. In the United States, founded on Jefferson’s notion of a “natural aristocracy of talent and virtue” (Yarbrough 2004: 210–11), the challenge to proprietary command was less of an obstacle, making for a more permissive educational environment but giving rise to different tensions. Jefferson, who was well informed about European military education as a result of his period as Minister to France between 1784 and 1789, advocated the establishment of the military academy *despite* his mistrust of a professional, educated (and

potentially entitled and politically ambitious) officer corps (Samet 2004: 121; Watson 2004). The academy was to be focused on technical matters, pointedly avoiding broader intellectual pursuits; American PME was from the beginning dedicated to meritocracy as a guard against the creation of a new aristocratic military class, yet this also brought with it an implied association between military education and oligarchic tendencies.

Tensions between the practical *training* of officers and their more general *education* persisted, and there was no consensus on the proper nature of PME even a century and a half later (Reardon 1990). In 1937, for example, the Superintendent of the US Naval Academy at Annapolis contended that “success or failure in battle with the fleet is in no way dependent upon a knowledge of biology, geology, ethics, social science, the literature of foreign languages, or the fine arts” (Masland and Radway 1957: 92–3). In contrast, his counterpart at the US Military Academy at West Point, William D. Connor, subscribed to the MacArthurite thesis that officers had to be rounded, well-educated leaders, most especially in the era in which warfare took the pattern of nations in arms (Ambrose 1966: 285). Under his auspices, Professor Herman Beukema, a political scientist by training, implemented subjects such as geography, international relations, and economics, and arranged for prestigious guest lecturers like the classicist and international relations scholar Sir Alfred Zimmern. (Zimmern later praised the cadets’ grounding in engineering and mathematics as “the best antidote to the vagueness and sentimentalism that has been such an obstacle to the study of [international politics] during the last twenty years”; USMA 1949: 55–6). And yet, as Ambrose points out in his history of West Point, the ingrained old martial values made such broadenings of officer education unpopular with the more traditionally minded. The Thucydidean story is one not only of propitious changes to the way that war was conducted, but also of the individual efforts of a series of determined reformers.

Once this long view of the development of PME is taken, the absence of “the greatest writer” on warfare and affairs of state becomes a little more intelligible: the military has not long considered itself as a profession, let alone an educated profession. It was not until 1972 that his *History of the Peloponnesian War* found its way into any formal curriculum. This first took place at the US Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, during the presidency of (then) Rear Admiral Stansfield Turner at the suggestion of one of his faculty staff, Professor Emerson. Though a localized decision by a few individuals, it was one that would have been unthinkable in the nineteenth century, and was predicated upon wider changes in civil and military society. The “Turner Revolution,” as it became known, was wider than Thucydides alone, and encompassed a wholesale shift in emphasis at the Naval War College. A new, tripartite curriculum was introduced, with strategy and policy as one of its three pillars (the other two being the traditional subjects coming under management and tactics). Thucydides was placed at the helm of this new curriculum, as the exemplary text that best expressed the interplay between

strategy and policy, the exigencies of chance and uncertainty in warfare, as well as giving an insight into the timeless principles of war, all of which Turner hoped to instill into his students.

From Training to Education

This section seeks to explain the pedagogical shift in institutions of PME, from their technically oriented beginnings to the broader, increasingly liberal arts focus of the later twentieth century. This can be understood primarily as a shift from “training” to “education,” from the stricter and more prescriptive teaching of how to act in predefined situations to the teaching of intellectual approaches to problems. The advantage of training is its guarantee of precision and consistency, but clearly no list of scenarios and contingencies can ever be exhaustive, nor can any commander reasonably find the time among operational duties to attend every training course. Education, on the other hand, imparts not *what* to think but *how* to go about formulating thought.

In the nineteenth century, between the aristocratic traditionalists and the new breed of technical experts, certain military thinkers took a cue from Napoleon and began to attempt to tease out and systematize the general principles of warfare. In particular, warfare came to be seen not as a separate sphere of endeavor, but as part of the same continuum as politics and diplomacy. Somewhere between war as the sacred, dark, and ultimately esoteric art, and the precise, mathematical science, the sense of its historical nature emerged. Napoleon had urged his officers to “peruse again and again the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene, and Frederick,” so that their “genius [may] be enlightened and improved by this study” (1862: 157). Carl von Clausewitz, the great early nineteenth-century theorist of war, eventual head of the Prussian *Kriegsakademie* and personal tutor to the Crown Prince, identified this enduring “nature” of war behind its ever-changing “character” from epoch to epoch (Clausewitz 1832, esp. 484–545; Aron 1983; Howard 1983). The roots of Prussia’s revolution in PME ranged back to the humiliating defeats it suffered at the hands of Napoleon. The two founders of the new Prussian *Kriegsakademie*, Gerhard von Scharnhorst and Eduard von Peucker, recognized that “strategy,” in the sense of “using battles to win war,” now had to receive systematic treatment and full attention; they realized that “high command [had] ceased to be primarily a question of leading troops in the field” (Van Creveld 1990: 99). They founded their *Kriegsakademie* with a strong intellectual foundation: written entrance exams; an accelerated promotion ladder; an emphasis on research; and an expert teaching faculty were all features of the new school. The highest levels of strategy, which may be termed “grand strategy,” defined by Van Creveld as the point where “military, political, economic, and social affairs merge,” were still not broached at the Prussian institution (*ibid.*: 34), but the need for nontechnical education had been recognized.

In the United States, Denis Hart Mahan urged the teaching of history as an integral part of imparting general truths about warfare, in the midst of the very technical curriculum set out at West Point. His seminal text, *Out-Post* (1862), began with the Greeks and traced the evolution of warfare through to Napoleon. It sought to redress what Mahan saw as an imbalance in officer education: with the proliferation of new technologies and consequently of professional military schools, “professional soldiers [had] abandon[ed] the spirit of the organization and tactics of the early Greeks and Romans, so admirably adapted to call into play the mental and physical energies of man” (1862: 7–9). Mahan apotheosized Napoleon because of his refusal to lose sight of the intangible, psychological aspects of warfare, despite his rigorous technical training and his unparalleled attention to the smallest tactical detail. Simply by looking to history, Mahan had taken PME one step in the direction of Thucydides.

This is not to suggest that Mahan began an inexorable march toward the discovery of Thucydides as the *true* master of war. Mahan makes no direct reference to Thucydides in his work, but he does not single out any one particular ancient Greek either. The source of persuasive power in his study is from his use of “the Greeks,” showing the depth of the veneration accorded to the Hellenic world in the United States. *Out-Post* reflects a particularly ancient Greek faith in the power of education to produce virtuous behavior; Mahan is suspicious of man’s ability to act correctly as a matter of habit, and believes in the power of education as a corrective instrument. Mahan’s work and the philosophy it represented took hold at West Point, becoming the standard text until long after his distinguished tenure came to an end in 1871, showing that the PME system was shifting from a strictly technical orientation. The idea was taking hold that education could not only minimize the damage caused during wars, but also avoid the repetition of past conflicts altogether. *Out-Post* signaled the beginning of a new culture of international political conservatism in the US military, in contrast to the conspicuous political neutrality it had touted in the early nineteenth century. It also signaled the beginning of a new intellectual curiosity that extended to the past “as an aid to understanding” the present and the future.

Clamors for change to the educational system reached their zenith after 1870. Many progressive thinkers, long suspicious of the reliance on “native” talent in military commanders, had their views confirmed by the lightning victory of Prussia over France, especially as von Moltke famously ascribed his victory to his study of Clausewitz’s *Vom Kriege* (after the Bible and Homer, of course) (Howard 1983: 62ff; Hartmann 2002: 61). “Friction” or the “fog of war,” as Clausewitz termed the incalculable elements of conflict (such as enemy strategy, morale, luck, climate), had wrong-footed the French to such an extent that their defeat could not be attributed to differences in men or *matériel* alone (Nolte 1884: 526–7). Prussia’s exemplary General Staff, logistical rail network, and Von Moltke’s strategic brilliance in playing to the superior gunnery of his forces all combined to produce a victory that outstripped the expectations warranted by the physical disparity with

the French. The “thinking man” had won by a margin that confounded the simple calculus of force strength; it thus fell to the rest of the world’s militaries to adapt or risk similar humiliating defeats.

A spate of new institutions of higher PME were established in the wake of the Franco–Prussian War. In America, the US Navy proved a step ahead of the other services, establishing its Naval War College at Newport in 1884; it was not until 1903 that the US Army War College was established in Washington, DC, operating as part of the newly established American General Staff. The founding principle of the college was expressed by the then Secretary of War, Elihu Root: it was to be a place “not to promote war but preserve peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression” (cited on the AWC website, www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/). The Prussian General Staff’s Teutonic efficiency drew attention, as did the production line that had led to the creation of such an exemplary officer corps, but even at this juncture the American PME system still labored under a legacy of the country’s embattled origins: a desire for differentiation from Europe. As the use of history permeated through the military schools, it was suffused with nationalistic fervor, such that it became *de rigueur* to search for purely “American” examples to illustrate principles of warfare. The so-called “applicatory method,” developed by the US Army, sought to forge a new American frame of reference for officers and became widespread throughout the PME system (Reardon 1990: 35). Rather than using examples such as the campaigns of the Duke of Marlborough, military thinkers sought non-European equivalents, and this trend continued well into the twentieth century (*ibid.*: 89ff). This preoccupation with the homeland obscured the possibility of mining the Hellenic world for examples, so that while Latin and Greek did in fact feature as part of the general education of cadets at the military academies, the emphasis at this low level was on the provision of a rounded knowledge base, so as to produce among officers “an interest in their profession of a higher order than that which has hitherto existed, and a corresponding desire to qualify themselves for higher command” (Congress 1873: 12, 19). At the higher levels of the war colleges, there was no need to provide rounded, school-like education, so Latin and Greek evaporated and the applicatory method focused on the American nation.

Thucydides and the Cold War

The emergence of Thucydides as a key text in PME was above all a product of the first part of the “short twentieth century” from 1914 to 1989. The “life situation” of this period, to borrow Karl Mannheim’s phrase (1979: 108), was such that it drew an increasing number of comparisons with the classical Greek world. The ubiquity of conflict, especially in the form of proxy wars resulting from the underlying bipolar confrontation of the US and USSR, made the link to Athens and Sparta a common one (Forde 1989; Lane 2005). This was no longer conceived as a

general parallelism to the ancient world or “the Greeks,” as it had been for Mahan in *Out-Post*; rather, from the reflections of an individual soldier on the eve of battle in Vietnam (cf. Pappas 2000: 221ff), to those of a British field marshal surveying the short twentieth century in retrospect (Bagnall 2004), the specter of a specifically Thucydidean tragedy loomed. The imperatives of the international system, given such notoriety by a number of prominent realist theorists during the Cold War, replicated the Periclean consciousness of unavoidable courses of political action; freedom of choice was minimized as a consequence of the psychological dominance of “structure” (e.g., Morgenthau 1993).

The belief in significant parallelism with the fifth century BCE extended to the highest reaches of the US political and military elite. As early as 1947, General George C. Marshall posed the question of “whether a man can think with full wisdom and with deep convictions regarding certain of the basic issues today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the fall of Athens” (Connor 1984: 3). The reference is not expanded upon, but one may infer that these “basic issues” had to do with the opposition of two powerful blocs or superpowers in the power vacuum left in the wake of the defeat of a common enemy (Persia/Germany). Like Athens, the United States was a rising power that found itself thrust into a new position of global pre-eminence, whereas the USSR was an established old world power that had long enjoyed considerable sway on the Eurasian landmass. Another central aspect of Thucydides’ account must have resonated with the geopolitical discourse of the twentieth century, namely the fact that the two pre-eminent powers were asymmetrically opposed in terms of their military capabilities. Like Sparta, Russia’s land-based capabilities were feared, whereas the United States could boast of a naval dominance akin to that of Athens after the battle of Salamis. This asymmetry set the stage for a protracted struggle much as it had done at the start of the Archidamian War in 431 BCE, so that by 1972, as Admiral Turner, by then president of the Naval War College, remarked, “the story of the Athenian government’s attempt to conduct an ever more expensive, protracted, overseas war in the face of political disaffection at home had broad similarities to the United States in Vietnam” (Hattendorf et al. 1984: 285). It seems likely that the linking of the Sicilian expedition and Vietnam at the Naval War College in the early 1970s stemmed from a reading of the “situation” immediately preceding those conflicts; they were both occasioned by the radical rebalancing of power after the World and Persian Wars respectively. And for a growing coterie of US political leaders and international relations theorists, Thucydides had already formed part of their hermeneutics (e.g., Halle 1984: 15).

This does raise the question of why Thucydides did not make similar inroads into the American PME system from the beginning of the Cold War, given that the applicatory method had finally petered out along with the strong nationalism of the nineteenth century (Ambrose 1966: 65). The influence of the Prussian system did not bring about the level of intellectual freedom one might have expected by the end of World War II. While civilian schools such as Harvard followed the

pattern of the Prussian elective principle in the structuring of their courses and curricula (ibid.: 66–7, 87), PME was still not entirely comfortable with dissociating itself from its scientific and technical basis. This had been the case in the nineteenth century, when Dennis Hart Mahan's material on the nature of war featured as part of his *engineering* course, renamed "Engineering and the Science of War" in 1843 (ibid.: 100). Military education in the 1940s and 1950s came to be dominated by the "scientific" approach of behaviorism, with its focus on systems analysis and game theory. In the hopeful years immediately after World War II, an algorithmic, dehumanized understanding of warfare emerged, which promised an end to warfare through reducing it to precise formulae that could statistically play out the odds before forces had to engage in action (Galison 1994: 231). This became known as the "cybernetic vision," and as long as the unfolding of the Cold War remained predictable and stable in terms of US foreign policy, it went unchallenged.

One event served to highlight the fragility of the fundamental tenets of this approach. The Vietnam War brought out the parallels to Thucydides' era in a less positive way for the United States, since it represented nothing short of the *failure* of prediction in international affairs as the war dragged on and resisted control. For the world's foremost superpower, the foreign policy imperatives of the 1950s began to seem sour and unnecessary the longer they remained elusive in Vietnam; even within the military, the advocates of "proactive" foreign policy and the thinking that inspired it were increasingly resented (e.g., Gavin 1958: 257ff). By the time of his tenure at Newport, Admiral Turner was able to assert with confidence that a war as seemingly distant and irrelevant as the Peloponnesian War was in fact highly relevant to a generation of officers that had been trained and served in the wake of the behaviorist revolution (Whitla 1974: 49).

Strategic Failure: Vietnam as the New Sicily

More than any other conflict, Vietnam brought home the essentially contestable nature of foreign policy to military officers. Turner was but one example of disaffection in the high ranks, which spread across all of the services, right up to Marine Corps Commandants and as early as the 1960s (Shoup 1969: 51–6). For many, the "Newtonian" approach of game theory had patently failed in Vietnam, as had the "rational right and wrong answers" associated with the heavily structural, deterministic basis of certain strands of realist international relations theory (Turner 2000: 27). Furthermore, the traditional separation of domestic and foreign politics was coming under pressure from both directions. Not only did the Vietnam War illustrate that even the smallest tactical decisions on the ground could have strategic and even political repercussions, it became evident that major military and strategic decisions could now come under the domestic scrutiny of the general public at home, such as the "strategic bombing" campaigns or the policy of deforestation with the use of chemicals such as Agent Orange. The unprecedented

interplay between the foreign and domestic spheres thrust a volatile and incalculable element into the cogs of the rationalist approach.

By 1972, it was generally accepted that the traditional, strictly kinetic means of achieving military success were no longer to be relied upon. The United States had appeared to win every battle it fought against the Vietnamese forces, yet it lost the war in the final reckoning. There was a sense in which the problem had not been with the victories at the tactical and theater levels (hence the “stab-in-the-back” view held by many high-ranking military officers: Buzzanco 1996) but with the failure to convert these into political success, both at home and in Vietnam. Thus it seemed natural for officers to turn their minds to the consideration of the linkages between means (money, men, and *materiel*), ways (the employment of these resources in strategic plans), and ends (the grand strategic and political goals driving the endeavor). However, the Western tradition of subjecting the military to civilian oversight meant that the fluid interplay of strategy’s three components (ends, ways, and means) was artificially disjointed for the protection of society from the risk of martial rule. Setting the “ends” was traditionally the preserve of the civilian government, with the balance of means and ways of achieving those aims left to the military professionals. Inverting this hierarchy, the argument goes, means that the clear-sightedness of policy is compromised and things like national security tend to become construed so as to suit the institutional interests of the military rather than those of the state (Halperin 1974: 121). However, allowing too much civilian input into strategic decisions could risk the parochial interests of the government poisoning a sound and flexible approach; with Vietnam, considerations such as domestic face saving, poor staying power, and increasing (US) casualty aversion were just some examples of how the military was bound by the political climate at home.

Tensions ran highest at the top. Increased civilian involvement in the prosecution of the war came to its peak during the tenure of the longest-serving Secretary of State, Robert McNamara, whose reputation had been forged as one of the “whiz kids” who rebuilt Ford in the aftermath of World War II (Radin 2000: 133–54). Under McNamara, these “whizzes” began applying calculations and techniques derived from Harvard Business School to the strategic calculus of the war, a technique of “policy analysis” that became its own distinct professional field with a ruthless rationalism that drew upon the Machiavellian tradition (Ibid.: 11ff; see also Davis 1967: 232–9, 245; Shapley 1993: 104). Not only did Thucydides represent a fundamentally different approach to the cold mathematization of warfare, his text also deals with a comparable drive to centralize military command. Above all, it is the striking self-consciousness with respect to the making of history that both Athens and the United States displayed that made Thucydides so pertinent a choice at Newport. “Even in the early stages of intervention, military and political leaders – with an eye toward history – were considering ways to avoid responsibility for any shortcomings in the American effort” (Buzzanco 1996: 20). The Pentagon’s Systems Analysis (SA) division had been established by McNamara, with Alain Enthoven at its head, and was designed to supersede military decision making over

budgeting for *materiel* and procurement. Its new “rational” approach was seen as an implicit indictment of the military itself. As early as October 1966 McNamara was very pessimistic about the outcome of the war, particularly the “spectre of apparently endless escalation of U.S. deployments” conjured up by the army (Ibid.: 266). As General Palmer remarked on the escalation dilemma: “To be sure, political considerations left military commanders no choice other than attritional warfare, but that does not alter the hard truth that the United States was strategically bankrupt in Vietnam in 1966” (Davidson 1991: 354). In both Vietnam and Sicily, the response of the military to the politically set “end” of winning what ought to have been recognized as an unwinnable war was to try to inflate the required “means” by bullishly refusing to accept any other “way” of approach than tactical victory on the battlefield. In other words, the military response was to disagree in a partial manner, still on the systems analysts’ own terms, by increasing the requirement of means, when in fact the ends of the war ought to have been disputed.

In Vietnam, the consciousness of this strategic bankruptcy coupled with an inability to take issue with the strategic ends set by the government caused officers consistently to press President Johnson to declare a national emergency between 1965 and 1966, ignoring the practical impossibility of doing this: “Rather than devise strategy based on such political realities, however, U.S. officers kept urging the president to approve the stronger measures that he had repeatedly rejected” (Buzzanco 1996: 231). (Given that the entirety of Thucydides’ text came to be studied at the US Naval War College, one might imagine a comparison being made with the Sicilian expedition: Nicias, in the full knowledge that the underlying political situation made such a venture dangerous, initially made a deliberate overestimate of the number of forces he would require and then accepted numerous reinforcements for a campaign he clearly mistrusted from the outset.) Though the Joint Chiefs of Staff were concerned about General Westmoreland’s “unreasonable” high demands, these were eventually met due to the fact that the single strategic “end” of crushing Vietnamese resistance remained so unshakeable (Westmoreland 1965). Equally troubling was the bankruptcy of the regime that the United States was trying to underpin, something that General DePuy noted in a J-3 meeting on Plans and Force Requirements in late 1965: “The thing that’s going to keep U.S. troops in Vietnam for a long, long time is the fact that the government ... is really bankrupt” (Buzzanco 1996: 233). Not only this, but the number of People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) forces in South Vietnam had been chronically underestimated; their strength had risen from 6,000 to 71,000 over the summer of 1965, while the guerrilla forces increased to 110,000 (Shapley 1993: 355ff). Caught between the Scylla of political restraints on further escalation and the Charybdis of an attritional strategy grinding to a halt, Johnson sought approbation of his policy from those willing to give it. As Adam Yarmolinsky, one of the defense secretary’s aides, put it in 1971, the president was not interested in the advice proffered to him as much as its accordance with his own views (Yarmolinsky 1971: 32). Such strategic inflexibility clearly troubled Turner, as his reflections in

his *Oral History* showed, wherein he made specific reference to the single-mindedness of the Athenians' solitary effort in Sicily under the guise of supporting the beleaguered Leontini (Hattendorf et al. 1984: 285). The polarization of strategy and politics brought the fifth and the twentieth centuries together as never before.

Ironically, the main problem for an institution of higher PME wishing to formalize the teaching of strategy at this time was precisely this politicization of strategy making. The Clausewitzian dictum that war is the extension of politics was further contorted with the creation of a politically appointed senior military staff position: the war well and truly began to suffuse rather than be guided by high politics at home. The introduction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chair fundamentally altered the conduct of military affairs in Vietnam, heavily politicizing the formation of military strategy in Indochina through the backchannel links between Washington and Saigon. Buzzanco goes so far as to state that "civil-military affairs, rather than battlefield conditions, were a principal factor driving the war" (1996: 258). Messages sent from the domestic political milieu in Washington often prompted preemptory requests for troops or proposals for changing policy from the military leaders in Vietnam, such that the conduct of the war could be characterized as a series of maneuvers designed to relieve or anticipate the domestic political pressures in the United States. One may compare the way in which this theme is explored in Thucydides, with the generals fearing for the reception of their actions back in Athens, with the ever-present danger of ostracism or even execution should their strategies not deliver in a timely manner. Both Pericles and Alcibiades are good figures of comparison in the sense that they straddled political and military office, and despite the fact that they may be presented to us as "alternatives" by Thucydides, ultimately show the extreme difficulty of juggling these dual duties due the ambivalence with which each is treated. To civilian scholars of political science, the comparison may seem one of many possibilities, and insignificant as a result, however, it is important not to overlook the specific value of these Thucydidean parallels.

Not only was there an unrivalled level of safety in making comparisons with the fifth century BCE rather than with more recent history (Turner chose not to study any historical events after 1945), the parallels were felt to be all the stronger due to a sense of kinship with the ancient civilization as leader of the "free world." As Halle had written in the Appendix to his 1955 book *Civilization and Foreign Policy*:

The present, in which our country finds herself, like Athens after the Persian Wars, called upon to assume the leadership of the free world, brings [Thucydides] virtually to our side. ... You will be surprised to discover how his meaning has been heightened by the events of our day, how the history that he wrote has become altogether more vivid and poignant. (Halle 1955: 262; generally, 261–77)

At the Naval War College, Thucydides would form part of the unassailable intellectual ammunition that the new breed of officer could use to assess and respond to the demands of the civilian leadership.

Beneath the broad geopolitical resonances, the Vietnam War facilitated Turner's changes to the curriculum at Newport in terms of pure expediency. A strategy- and policy-making vacuum of sorts had been left in the wake of the failures of Vietnam. "Civilian strategists" were clearly on the back foot, leaving the door open for the navy to establish a new level of influence; furthermore, a failure to grasp the opportunity could even lead to further devolution of power to civilian authority. Secondly, this vacuum centered on credibility and respect, two key aspects of professionalism, and required a body of expert knowledge that would maintain the navy's independence (Nihart 1973). In other words, the military and political spheres could no longer be kept artificially at arm's length, and it was Turner's express intention to create a course that would "acquaint students with the technical, operational, environmental, legal, and political elements that directly affect a tactical commander's decisions" (Turner 1973b: 44). Thucydides therefore became instrumental to the navy's first foray into the realm of strategy and policy as a *key component* in the development of its officers. Finally, Turner suggests that the frontiers of knowledge may be "pushed," which, taken in the context of strategy and policy (as opposed to technical fields, which move with technological innovation), implies a certain amount of positivism that is not locked in to the cold futility of classical realism. Rather than being a dark and unruly art condemned to recur indefinitely, Turner's commitment to the program he instituted at the Naval War College signaled a belief that war – both in terms of conduct and avoidance, the two sides of strategy and policy – could be studied with a normative end in sight. At Newport, Thucydides embodied this attitude of conservative foreign policy and political challenge.

This atmosphere of competition between the military and the civilian policy makers was one of the corollaries of the failure of the Vietnam strategy. The fact that Thucydides' authority was already recognized, so to speak, by an established body of professional civilian academics in the field of international relations must have made him *more* rather than less attractive to Admiral Turner. In documenting the "use and abuse" of Thucydides by international relations theorists, Laurie M. Johnson Bagby's article raises in any reader's mind the question of why recourse to Thucydides is necessary at all in a field so rich with more recent (and arguably more pertinent) historical parallels, while demonstrating the ways in which prominent international relations scholars sometimes shoehorn Thucydides into their own ontological interpretation of the international system (Johnson Bagby 1994; cf. Keohane 1986: 7ff). Behind this figurative push to make Thucydides "fit" is invariably an expectation of some form of return. Scholars may trade off the philhellenic tradition that stirred such pan-European sympathy for the Greeks in 1821, or the tradition of reading Thucydides' *History* as proto-Hobbesian political theory. In either case, the usefulness – and implied truthfulness – of the *History* is remarkably unchallenged by scholars. The contribution of this inherited or "extrinsic" authority of Thucydides must not be overlooked in Admiral Turner's decision to incorporate the text at Newport, even if there were numerous "intrinsic" qualities that recommended the text for study. Put another way, the general authority of Thucydides

may be felt due to the highly detailed work of influential scholars – international relations being the case in point – without the specifics being universally grasped. Ancient status cuts both ways: a reputation may precede, but as will be shown, laconic snippets of wisdom have a habit of becoming dislocated from the text and standing in as representative of Thucydides the Athenian.

Turner's Turn to Thucydides

At the heart of Stansfield Turner's reforms to the curriculum of the Naval War College was an instrumental approach that emphasized intelligent decision making at every level of command, and so focused on developing the "reasoning capacity and analysis of the elements of choice" (Hattendorf et al. 1984: 289). In this vein, the new Mission Statement of the Naval War College read: "The Mission of the Naval War College is to enhance the professional capabilities of its students to make sound decisions in both command and management positions" (Turner 1974: i). The means to this end, Turner's report continued, were as follows:

A challenging academic environment, encompassing a program of intensive study requirements, guidance in individual research, and opportunities to probe into problems in sufficient depth to understand the complexities of the factors relevant to decisions. The total course – comprising strategy, management, and tactics – is directed toward expansion of logical *reasoning capacity* and *analysis of the elements of choice*, rather than familiarization with factual material. Through the fulfillment of these objectives, its graduating students, both military and civilian, will have acquired the vital intellectual tools required to make them effective leaders in any environment where their future career may lead them.

As Turner noted in his foreword to the January/February 1973 of the *Naval War College Review*, his new curriculum relied less on lectures and more on seminars which would "stimulate dialogs between students and faculty, students and visiting lecturers, and students and students" (1973a: 1). Students were given substantial texts to read in full (about 1,000 pages per week, Turner announced to new students in his 1972 Convocation address: 1972: 3), without any prior direction on how they should interpret them (in contrast to the way that selected extracts of writers like Thucydides or Machiavelli were presented in university courses on international relations, pre-packaged as exemplars of realism); they then discussed their reactions to these texts in depth and detail. The first of these "challenges" on the reading list was Thucydides; the seminars were supplemented by guest lectures from Bernard Knox, the first of which was reprinted in the same issue of the *Review* (3–15), that emphasized the complexity of Thucydides' view of the relationship between politics and power, going beyond polarized views of modern theorists.

Why Thucydides? Turner made it clear that the focus on the past was not about chronology but on its "relevancy and application to today and tomorrow"

(1972: 4); Thucydides came first not because he was the earliest of a list of canonical authors but because of his contemporaneity:

What could be more related to today than a war in which a democratic nation sent an expedition overseas to fight on foreign soil and then found that there was little support for this at home? Or a war in which a seapower was in opposition to a nation that was basically a landpower? Are there not lessons still to be learned here? (ibid.)

Thucydides was the only author mentioned by name, let alone discussed, in Turner's Convocation Address, which emphasizes his significance. He came, as we have discussed, with an inherited authority as a prescient analyst of international affairs whose ideas were still applicable in the present. Moreover, the fact that this was a text from the past allowed painful and divisive issues to be discussed by the students in a productive manner. "To get them in a room," Turner once remarked of his students, "and try to dispassionately talk about whether we should or should not have been in Vietnam and what were the strategic implications of a sea power going into prolonged engagement overseas would have been impossible. Yet they talked about Vietnam when they talked about the Peloponnesian Wars, and they understood" (Hattendorf et al. 1984: 285).

Moreover, Thucydides' text was complex and even ambiguous; it was useful precisely because it did not offer a simple answer or set of precepts, but set out situations and problems that were simultaneously unfamiliar and familiar that the students could explore at length. This was the experience that many of them came to prize so highly, that this unfamiliar, apparently irrelevant work of ancient history should prove to be so up to date and productive. Ironically, the very success of this innovation, and the enthusiasm of students for what they had experienced, led to a belief in the significance of Thucydides himself. Turner had emphasized that "course content is secondary. It is the development of habits of thinking that counts" (1972: 7) – Thucydides worked for his purposes above all because his text was sufficiently complex and sufficiently unfamiliar. The idea that reading Thucydides *qua* Thucydides is *the* most productive way of developing high-level strategic sense, however, has become widely disseminated, and the practice has been adopted by other war colleges (cf. Rawlings in this volume). Officers now apply to the Naval War College expressly for the opportunity to read Thucydides, which goes entirely against the original conception of Turner's curriculum while serving to entrench Thucydides' own authority in military and strategic circles.

Thucydides Beyond the Naval War College

This chapter has attempted to show that the unusual position of Thucydides at the Naval War College was not only a product of the unusually equivocal treatment of war in his *History*, but also of the exigencies generated by the Vietnam War.

However, looking outward from Newport and forward in time, Thucydides' reception in PME and indeed the wider defense sector has been far from even, despite the unwavering veneration that has continued to the present day. As recently as 2010, the US House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services opened its report on PME two decades after the Goldwater–Nichols Act (1986) and the Skelton Panel (1989) (both of which marked a watershed in PME in the United States by criticizing the lack of strategic or “joint” education) with an alleged quotation from Thucydides. “The society that separates its scholars from its warriors,” the report proclaims in italic script, “will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools.”² Despite the misquotation – or perhaps all the more because of it – the widespread veneration for Thucydides as an original source of military thought in the United States is confirmed. And yet that veneration is not entirely blind, since it goes beyond the mere “name” of Thucydides, and is in fact directed at his actual position both as a “thinker” and as a “fighter,” the writer of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* and an Athenian *stratēgos*. The misquotation may be said to correctly capture an important aspect of Thucydides the man, despite its incorrectness. The dichotomy of “foolish warriors” and “cowardly thinkers” also implies a consciousness of two divergent views of history, with the former group representative of those who see only the particularity of each event (not heeding the past), and the latter group representative of those who see each event as a new iteration of an established pattern (subordinating the particular). As has already been suggested, these two competing attitudes toward the past caused divisions over the place of military history in American PME from its early days, with “practical” soldiers favoring “learning things by doing things” on the one hand, and “theoreticians” favoring new pedagogical tools such as the Prussian *Kriegsspiel* on the other. The approach to Thucydides that crystallized at Newport, however, though recognizing the particular in each historical event, also recognized that a deep appreciation of its constituent facts could teach universally applicable ways of thinking. What recurred in history was not a series of principles of war, but a set of issues that required constant rethinking.

Thus we can see that the elements of the Peloponnesian War that surfaced in modern usage altered over time; by the time Admiral Turner was implementing the new strategy and policy course at Newport, Thucydides' significance had altered considerably from that which he had had for Marshall immediately after World War II. In the words of Gary Wills writing for the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*: “The classics are not some sort of magic wand that touches and transmutes us”; rather, “we revive them only when we rethink them as a way of rethinking ourselves” (Meckler 2006: 177). In 1972, as Vietnam drew to an ignominious close, the focus became the complex Thucydidean presentation of the political and military decision-making processes, rather than the structural imperatives forced upon governments in bipolar international systems. Newer iterations of realism within the international relations discourse have also adapted Thucydides, with Platias and Koliopoulos for instance finding ample support for the playing out

of proto-*Machtpolitik* of this sort in Thucydides (2010: 121ff), citing for instance the automatic Athenian attempt to maximize its power in Sicily through Phaeax (V.4) and the ruthless Argive maneuvering in order to profit from the “variance” between Athens and Sparta (V.40). Their appendices list a very comprehensive collection of crucial international relations “key concepts” that are rooted in passages from Thucydides. Though Thucydides’ meaning alters with historical circumstance and the particular motives or intellectual persuasion of his readers, an unwavering desire to yoke his authority to the present is the unifying thread.

Vietnam forced the world to witness the failures of promising technological developments, which had once glimmered with the potential to replace the unwieldy human element in warfare with servomechanical theory and systems analysis. The subsequent diminution of what Barbara Ehrenreich calls the “glory and romance” of war, as perceptions of the practice moved away from mysterious art form to technical science, now seemed premature (Ehrenreich 1997: 228). Granted, the officer in the age of cybernetics and behaviorist theory had to be technically proficient, not least because the weapon systems themselves were unprecedentedly complex. Yet running contrary to this technocratic culture of war were the increasing demands placed on the post-Vietnam militaries in general, particularly that of the United States. Cybernetics had proffered the idea that human intentionality did not differ from the self-regulation of machines, echoing the hard-edged logic of mutually assured destruction (MAD) in the Cold War. The Thucydidean emphasis on the chance and vagaries of war had little relevance to a military convinced of its predictability and of its potential to be controlled. But such was the impact of the unraveling of these new methodologies in Vietnam, that by 1972 it seemed as if Thucydides was being interpreted by a distinctly new culture within the American PME system. Writing about the United States’ military just after Vietnam, Loren Baritz claimed that war is a product of culture, and an expression of “the way a culture thinks of itself and the world” (Baritz 1985). Thus, like the dramatic build-up to the moment of Oedipal *anagnorisis*, the narrative of the discovery of Thucydides in American PME reflects the changes in national and military self-perception over the course of the twentieth century.

Notes

- 1 This is what Corelli Barnett calls “the cult of the practical man” (1986: 210). One of the earliest reports of the Council of Military Education in Britain wrote that “nothing should be required from candidates [for a commission] but those studies which may be considered nearly equally valuable in every walk of life ... It has not been thought expedient to require from candidates any knowledge of strictly professional subjects... [further education will] facilitate the acquisition of such knowledge ...”. First Report of the Council of Military Education, “On Examinations for Direct Appointments,” Part I (War Office, July 29, 1857), 3. For the establishment of the Royal Military Academies at Woolwich and Sandhurst, see Clayton (2007: esp. 48–91); Smyth (1961,

- esp. 80ff.), and Thomas (1961). On the establishment of West Point, see Ambrose (1966) and Forman (1950).
- 2 US Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, *Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater–Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel* (House Armed Services Committee Print 111–4, April 2010: vii).

Guide to Further Reading

For general accounts of the development of modern professional military education, see Abrahamsson (1971), Masland and Radway (1957), Van Creveld (1990); on the history of American PME establishments, see Ambrose (1966), Hattendorf, Simpson, and Wadleigh (1984), and McDonald (2004). The place of Thucydides in this tradition has not hitherto been considered.

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Part V

Thucydidean Themes

Thucydides and the Plague

Helen King and Jo Brown

Introduction

Thucydides' description of the plague that hit Athens in 431/430 BCE (2.47–55) has long been a focus for scholars trying to analyze his approach to history; it has played a key role in both ancient and modern receptions of his work. From at least the mid-nineteenth century, it also formed an example of good practice for physicians to emulate. The 2012 conference in Bristol that formed part of the project that gave rise to this volume was called “Thucydides our Contemporary?” This title, except in the provocative question mark, picked up the classical scholar Felix Wassermann's title for his 1961 article in *Midwest Quarterly*. Wassermann hailed Thucydides for his “unique modernity,” claiming that his intention that his work would survive as a “possession for all time” “has come true”; it has never lost its value for anyone “concerned with the understanding and the handling of public affairs” (1961: 286, 285). Many recent physicians reading the plague account have also needed no question mark. The authority afforded Thucydides by classicists and by traditional historiography makes him “one of us” for them too and, as we shall show in this chapter, the description of the plague holds a special place in their hearts. We are focusing here on medical responses to the plague narrative from the English-speaking world, although of course this passage has also had an impact in the literature of other languages: most notably, Camus' *La Peste*. While this chapter will look primarily at scholarly receptions, we have also chosen here to concentrate on the transformation of the plague narrative into verse, and we will end by considering the role of the plague in a key nineteenth-century medical debate.

For medical professionals, however, Thucydides has not always been a contemporary; particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, physicians could distance themselves from him, focusing on how modern medicine had moved on, enabling us to see what he could not. While they would never “venture to question ... the peculiar talents of Thucydides for observation,” the authors of an 1804 discussion of Thucydides’ plague in the American medical journal, *The Medical Repository*, stated that the historian cannot “be supposed to have examined this subject with philosophical precision” (Anon. 1804: 19). Thucydides’ relation to events was “that of an historian [rather] than of a physician” or, to put it another way, he “was no physician, tho’ a very famous historian” (ibid.: 23; Mackenzie 1764: 71). He did make mistakes; he says that people died suddenly, but in fact a person “cannot die of the plague (such as it appears among us) instantaneously, or in a few hours, or even the same day, that he receives the infection” (Mackenzie 1764: 70–1). Much hangs on that “such as it appears among us,” written from the perspective of someone who had “lived in this plaguy country” (Turkey) for nearly thirty years (Mackenzie 1764: 69); is Thucydides’ plague our plague? We shall return to the identification of the plague of Athens below. But even a medical mistake could never damage Thucydides’ own reputation; after all, how could he have been expected to do better? As *The Medical Repository* noted, he wrote at a time when medicine “had scarcely disencumbered herself of her swaddling clothes” (Anon. 1804: 19). While Thucydides reported the contemporary view that the plague “began ... in the parts of Ethiopia above Egypt” (2.48.1), our author argued that this plague had derived from local causes such as overcrowding and diet (Anon. 1804: 30–1). However, even if the historian was incorrect in his account of causation, Thucydides could still convey a message for the nineteenth-century “contemporary” doctor:

If local causes originated a pestilence in Athens, local causes may generate a Yellow Fever in Philadelphia and New-York ... let us be more solicitous in the inspection of our houses, yards, streets and docks, than of cottons and woollens, of vessels from the West-Indies, and ships from the Mediterranean. (ibid.: 32)

Despite the modern doctor’s claimed ability to perform a retrospective diagnosis of the plague, and to see Thucydides’ errors, the Athenian situation still carries a dire warning, and it is not about diseases coming from afar, but rather about those dangers nearer home.

Some very recent valuations of Thucydides’ description offer a striking contrast. In a peculiar twist, the historian’s account of the plague is seen not only as “shed[ding] light on the origin of a specific scientific genre – the medical case history” (Alford 1998: 361) but also as showing “apparent clairvoyance” (Dan 1987: 1095) in that it “enabled twentieth-century epidemiologists to establish a diagnosis of the illness (influenza plus toxic shock syndrome), predict its return, and validate their diagnosis during a 1987 [sic] flu epidemic” (Alford 1998: 361). This comment by Elisabeth

Alford, an English literature specialist working on communication skills who has an interest in scientific writing and who is familiar with the classical languages, refers to a 1987 editorial for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* by Bruce Dan. Here Dan, the American physician responsible for establishing the link between toxic shock syndrome and the use of tampons treated with substances that affected the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus*, noted that a mere three months after the publication in 1985 of an article by the epidemiologist Alexander D. Langmuir, which had offered the dual flu/toxic shock diagnosis and labeled it “Thucydides syndrome,” six patients in Minnesota with influenza died from toxic shock (Dan 1987 cited by Alford 1998: 362–3). In the age of the “impact agenda,” Langmuir’s prescient suggestion of this dual infection would clearly count as “changing lives.”

However, Thucydides’ plague narrative has not only been claimed by medicine, as record or as prophecy. Consistent with a tradition in which he is not scientist but artist, it has also found a place in poetry. In this chapter, we will begin with some aspects of nineteenth-century and later responses to the account of the plague; Thucydides as role model, the description as art or as science, attempts at retrospective diagnosis, and the relationship between classical studies and medicine in approaching the plague through language or through the categories of later medicine. We will then examine in more detail two examples of the reception of the plague passage. In the process, we will discuss the links between the craft of the physician and that of the historian, as each creates a narrative from the raw material of their observations.

“Our Exact Historian”: Thucydides as Role Model

In contrast to today (cf. Morgan 1994: 197 n.1), Thucydides would have been a familiar writer for almost all physicians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Latin and Greek were part of their school education or their preclinical training; not because knowledge of these languages would help them understand medical terminology, but because classical culture was part of the shared background of the elite, university graduates who “found the truth in the rich treasures of ancient Greek and Latin writings” (Bonner 1995: 33). Even those lower down the medical hierarchy were expected to be familiar with the key classical authors. While elite physicians would have been privately educated, the more typical eighteenth-century physician would have won a scholarship to a local grammar school, where he would have learned Latin, and some Greek (Loudon 1986: 35). Even in the second half of the nineteenth century, the physician George Paget – highly influential in establishing a clinical school at Cambridge in 1883 as well as being, in 1855, the last physician to be elected President of the Cambridge Philosophical Society – insisted that “all physicians should be educated in Greek and Latin, as well as in the study of classical literature” (Bonner 1995: 104, 117).

This familiarity led to a willingness to read the plague narrative as equivalent to a contemporary description. Some mid-nineteenth-century writers often took Thucydides as being so reliable that he could not possibly have missed any details; for example, in 1832 the society physician and President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Henry Hallford, read to a meeting of its members a paper in which his friend John Ireland, the Dean of Westminster, argued that “The invariable characteristics of the modern plague seem to have been absent in the Athenian malady; for it is not possible that if the glandular tumors and carbuncles which distinguish true plague were present, that they would have been omitted by our exact historian” (Ireland 1832: 919). Nobody explains how we can judge the “accuracy” or “exactness” of Thucydides, given that he is the only contemporary source for the plague; presumably from his valuation as a model historian by nineteenth-century scholars.

A similar attitude can be detected in later authors. For example, in 1942, Logan Clendening, who became a physician in 1907 and was Professor of Clinical Medicine and Professor of Medical History at Kansas, included Thucydides’ account of the plague in his *Source Book of Medical History* (Major 1945). He invited his readers:

As you study it, ask yourself the question, “How would I describe an epidemic that was new and strange and struck my own city? What facts would I record and in what order?” Then notice how completely Thucydides covers the ground. (Clendening 1942: 27)

Here, the physician-reader is expected to identify with Thucydides; our contemporary, indeed. The assumption seems to be that the reader would, like Thucydides, be willing and able coolly to observe and note down the symptoms of the disease, even in the midst of such distress and misery. Other reactions, such as flight, or even the provision of medical care for the sick, do not feature. The historian, like the physician, looks on the condemned with an eye to the future; his purpose is to “describe what it was like and set down the symptoms so that [it can] be recognised, if it ever breaks out again” (2.48.3). This “outlook towards the future” recalls Thucydides 1.22.2–4 (Gomme 1956: 148).

The conviction that Thucydides must in essence be accurate because it was in his nature to be accurate is thus not confined to the nineteenth century. As E. Watson Williams, an ear, nose, and throat surgeon who wrote on the plague for *Greece & Rome*, put it: whatever our suspicions as to whether there are omissions or errors in the plague narrative, “we ought to accept [Thucydides’] description of the incidence and of the social and economic effects of the Sickness” (1957: 98). (Note that Williams uses “the Sickness” as a less limiting translation of Thucydides’ *hē nosos*, as “plague” may suggest “bubonic” to modern readers.) As for the other details of the description, for Williams Thucydides’ “clear statements” on the condition being spread from person to person rule out conditions such as ergotism (one of many proposed retrodiagnoses) (ibid.: 99). Thucydides must also have understood contagion, Williams argues, as “to suggest that anyone as intelligent as

Thucydides could not during four years verify his observation that people ‘caught’ the Sickness from actual sufferers is merely stultifying” (ibid.).

It was not only Thucydides’ supposedly accurate descriptions that medical readers admired: structure; a resistance to imposing inappropriate theories; and clarity also feature in their praise of the plague passage. While the authors in *The Medical Repository* needed to change the order of symptoms to make the passage “convey a connected exhibition of the disease,” in the 1990s it seemed that: “The organization is so clear that the text would need little rearrangement to fit the conventional formats of articles in twentieth-century medical journals” (Anon. 1804: 23; Alford 1998: 366). In 1857, Charles Collier (MD, FRS, and classicist) produced *The History of the Plague of Athens ... with remarks explanatory of its pathology* and commented on Thucydides’ “precision of method with closeness of detail”; avoiding “every allusion to medical or other dogmata,” he had produced “a model of symptomatology.” Reviewing Collier, the *British Medical Journal* commented that Thucydides’ account “is, as the production of a non-medical writer, remarkable for its clearness and accuracy” as he “wrote from personal observation” (Anon. 1858: 71). Even if not “one of us,” Thucydides is as near to “our” way of writing as it is possible to be. Collier’s comments suggest that physicians focus on the plague narrative as an accurate record of the symptoms, leaving it to future readers to provide diagnostic explanations: Thucydides supplies the raw material, but never usurps the role of the physician in producing the diagnosis, and/or the cure.

Thucydides’ literary merits and moral dimensions have also been admired. In 1894 Thucydides was hailed as “more akin in mood and method to modern historians” than David Hume, with the description of the plague the most modern part of all, not least because of “his generalisations on its effect upon human conduct and character” (Anon. 1894: 4). In the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* for 1903, the physician and medical historian Charles Greene Cumston rated the description of the plague in Thucydides as “one of the most beautiful pages of antique medicine” (1903: 10). This valuation implicitly places Thucydides above Hippocrates or Galen, the historian’s accuracy matched only by his narrative’s beauty, or perhaps the beauty arising from the accuracy. After all, how could a description of a horrific and seemingly indomitable plague be seen as “beautiful”? Is it beautiful for the modern doctor, as he is able to analyze the description and retrospectively diagnose the Athenians? If the modern doctor cannot reproduce the beauty of Attic Greek descriptions, he can offer the Athenians what they desperately needed but would never receive – a cure.

Between Art and Science

Are beauty and truth necessarily opposed? Over its history, medicine itself has veered between stressing its scientific credentials and emphasizing its value as an art. Today, the availability of hi-tech tests and interventions and the concept of

“evidence-based medicine” suggest a narrowly empirical and scientific approach: but the new discipline of medical humanities and an interest in “narrative medicine” encourage a greater interest in the “art” side of the divide. The standard position today has become one of trying to bridge the gap, arguing that “the art and science of medicine are inseparable, part of a common culture. Knowing is an art; science requires personal participation in knowledge” (Saunders 2000: 18). In a review for the medical journal *The Lancet* of a book by the social scientist Kathryn Montgomery, Danielle Ofri – a physician and writer who also edits a literary review – pointed out that making a clinical judgment is based not on possession of all the facts, but on assessing those facts which are readily available (2006: 807–8, reviewing Montgomery 2005; cf. Alford 1998: 372). This inevitably involves some degree of personal choice. There can be no “science, in the true Newtonian sense” because human beings are individuals and do not all respond in the same way to the same situation (Ofri 2006: 807). Whereas the rules of physics are absolute, those of medicine can only remain “rough guidelines.” Medicine, Ofri concludes with Montgomery, is neither science nor art, but *practice* (ibid.).

As with medicine, opinions on whether Thucydides’ history is science or art have shifted over time, and responses to the plague of Athens replicate these wider debates. Today, any discussion of Thucydides as a historian will take into account twentieth-century writers such as the great French historian Jacqueline de Romilly who challenged the once-standard opposition between Herodotus as “father of lies” and Thucydides as “father of history.” Her *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* (1956) argued for Thucydides’ work as carefully constructed and composed, intentionally selective rather than comprehensive, with the result best regarded as art rather than science. However, it was not until the 1970s that this approach was fully accepted. Until then, what dominated was what the historian W.R. Connor called “[t]he older and more familiar Thucydides, the scientist, rationalist, the pupil of the Sophists and the Hippocratics,” cool, detached, and objective: the “Cold War” Thucydides (1977: 289, 290). As Connor’s survey itself demonstrates, however, “Thucydides the artist is no new discovery” (ibid.: 290); before the work of de Romilly and, in Germany, H.-P. Stahl, there was already an appreciation that the power of Thucydides’ work went beyond factual reporting. John Grant noted the long line of critics extending from Dionysius of Halicarnassus to Thomas Macaulay who were “impressed by Thucydides’ artistic power” and argued that those who consider that Thucydides was unaware of this aspect of his own work are mistaken; “Thucydides loves to tell a story” (1974: 81–2, 87).

Most notable, perhaps, in this tradition of Thucydides as artist is Francis M. Cornford’s *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (1907), which argued that his work as a whole should be understood as a tragedy in the Aeschylean mold. Whatever Thucydides’ original intentions, Cornford argued, he discovered as he wrote that “you cannot collect facts, like so many pebbles, without your own personality and the common mind of your age and country having something to say to the choice and arrangement of the collection” (1907: viii; and see Hesk and Workman in this volume).

Cornford, an ancient philosopher, was interested in Thucydides as part of a wider concern with tacit knowledge, the concepts and ways of thinking that are never addressed explicitly. He did not deny that Thucydides was what he termed “trustworthy,” but argued that he was “something better than trustworthy ... he is a great artist” (ibid.: vii). Thucydides, like medicine, may not be entirely “scientific” but it is in the “artistic” dimension that his greatness – and medicine’s power – is supposed to reside.

The plague plays an important role in debates about how Thucydides wrote history. Introducing the 1978 reissue of Marchant’s 1891 commentary on Book 2, the ancient historian Thomas Wiedemann described the plague section as an “emotionally-charged rhetorical set piece” (1978: xxix). Ancient readers clearly appreciated the power of this narrative; imitators included Lucretius, *On the nature of things* 6.1138–1286; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.523–613; Lucian, *De historiae conscribendi* 15; and Procopius, *Persian Wars* 2.22. Looking at the place of this long section on the plague within the work as a whole, it immediately follows the Funeral Oration’s evocation of a glorious Athens – an education to the rest of Greece – and shows that same city disrupted by an appalling disease; the striking contrast is “hardly fortuitous” (Longrigg 1980: 210). Again, this is not a recent observation. The Greek historian A.W. Gomme remarked on what he called the “deep contrast between the sunlit description of Athens in the Funeral Speech and this of the sufferings and demoralization of the very next summer” but insisted that this did not mean the events had not taken place in this order in real life (1956: 161; cf. Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 42–3 on the question of whether the Funeral Oration and the plague are juxtaposed intentionally). In a note to his 1753 translation, William Smith, later to be Dean of Chester, noted that the plague description formed a deliberate contrast to the Funeral Oration’s “very exalted idea of the Athenian state,” and that putting the two together gave the account “a most agreeable variety” (1851: 160). He was clear that the account was given “as an historian and not as a physician”; however, as a historian, Thucydides “always composed with the spirit of a poet” (ibid.). Thucydides thus can be seen to navigate identities – historian/physician/poet – which morph into each other in varying degrees, depending upon the critic’s evaluation.

The plague thus shows us how the *History* as a whole is constructed as literature, challenging any narrow view of ancient historiography in which Herodotus is “story,” Thucydides “science.” It draws attention to Thucydides’ careful arrangement of material, and the presence of key themes throughout his work. While James Longrigg, a historian of ancient medicine, attacked those who see the passage as “a purely literary invention for historiographical purposes” (1980: 210), the artistic effect of its position within the *History* as a whole should be taken into account.

So too should the literary aspects of the plague section itself; the exhaustive list of symptoms arranged in head-to-foot order may not be simple reporting, but something more complicated. The very detail has been read as evidence of

reliability as a historical account, but alternatively as demonstrating Thucydides' artfulness. Cornford suggested that it is treated in such detail firstly because Thucydides has a reliable first-hand source for it – himself, as someone who suffered from it and also watched its progress in other people (cf. Salway and Dell 1955: 62) – and secondly because it is explicitly intended “for the instruction of physicians,” the detailed information allowing them to recognize it if it should ever happen again (Cornford 1907: 56, 100). Thucydides presents the head-to-foot ordering as coinciding with the day-by-day movement of the disease through the body, so the symptoms affecting the head are followed chronologically by those of the chest and stomach, with comments on a different way of ordering the mass of symptoms – external versus internal – placed next, before the further movement of the disease down to the bowels and then to the extremities.

Thucydides insists on the head as the “first” place to be affected; but does this reflect experience, or owe more to an attempt to make sense of a confusing set of symptoms? The latter suggestion was made by Thomas Morgan, a physician who wrote a PhD on the plague, who saw this as the obvious method used by a “neophyte modern medical student when first presented with a complicated diagnostic problem” (1994: 204). It has certainly had a disproportionate effect on attempts to identify the plague, as taking literally what may have been simply an ordering principle chosen by Thucydides has meant medical readers excluding certain – or even all – diagnoses. For example, discussing the rash, Cunha – a specialist in infectious diseases – notes that the movement from the head to the feet “is highly characteristic of measles” and also rules out conditions such as typhus (the rash affects the trunk) or hemorrhagic smallpox (the rash begins in the groin or thighs) (Cunha 2004: 33). Morgan commented that “the occurrence of symptoms in the head-to-toe sequence described by Thucydides is not characteristic of any known disease” (1994: 204). But he did not take this as evidence that there was no plague, but instead as demonstrating how “the literary emphasis Thucydides displays has interfered with exact reporting of the medical facts” (ibid.: 201). Those qualities long admired in Thucydides – his clarity and structure – here become obstacles to appreciating his accuracy.

Autopsy and Retrospective Diagnosis

While those in, or influenced by, classics consider literary aspects important, many twentieth-century scientists and physicians writing about the plague have seen Thucydides' work as an entirely transparent account of the symptoms and the effects. Typical would be John F.D. Shrewsbury, Professor of Bacteriology at the University of Birmingham from 1937 to 1963, and author of *A History of the Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (1970). In 1950 he wrote a piece for the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, stating that “[t]here has never been, to my knowledge, any doubt expressed about the accuracy of Thucydides' description of the pestilence, or about his assessment of its effects upon his fellow-citizens. He suffered from it

himself" (1950: 2). Again, we see the trope of Thucydides' assertion of personal experience as the guarantee of accuracy. It is a very specific type of personal experience; while his fellow Athenians are vomiting every kind of bile to which physicians have given a name, throwing off their clothes so that they can jump into rainwater tanks, and suffering from ulcerative diarrhea, we are to imagine Thucydides writing down his symptoms and those of others. Yet, as David Morens and Robert Littman (a physician and a classicist writing together) noted, following Longrigg's comments on the tendency to regard one's own symptoms "as the norm" (Longrigg 1980: 209), "He might, for example, have stressed features he experienced, while de-emphasizing others he did not" (Morens and Littman 1992: 281; see also Williams 1957: 98).

The long list of symptoms invites retrospective diagnosis. This is, of course, entirely consistent with Thucydides leaving it to future generations to identify what he described (Ireland 1832: 3). Yet the sheer range of the symptoms across body systems makes it difficult (Salway and Dell 1955: 62). Morens and Littman surveyed retrospective diagnoses to 1992, calculating that there had been "At least 29 different disease theories ... advanced by hundreds of scholars" (1992: 271). These includes malaria, bubonic plague, scarlet fever, cerebro-spinal fever, typhus (MacArthur 1958), syphilis, smallpox encountering a virgin population, yellow fever, ergotism (Salway and Dell 1955), dengue, Rift Valley fever, measles, anthrax, glanders (Eby and Evjen 1962), leptospirosis or tularemia (Wylie and Stubbs 1983), and subsequently Ebola virus (Scarow 1988), and toxic shock syndrome (Langmuir et al. 1985). In all of these, as Holladay and Poole (another classics/medicine partnership) perceptively noted, to achieve the "diagnosis" "some awkward discrepancies have been swept under the carpet" (1979: 286).

The feelings of helplessness before disease that Thucydides' account evokes were occasionally acknowledged by the physicians who studied him. In 1857 Collier claimed that "epidemics are still armed with a power which too often baffles the resources of the medical art," as in the days of Hippocrates; he noted that his contemporaries knew little more about epidemics than did Thucydides' Athenians (1857: 38). Despite our distance from Thucydides in the twenty-first century, we still live in fear of a new pandemic, and the plague passage continues to be invoked. Most recently, it was mentioned in the context of avian flu: Thucydides said that the birds and animals that normally eat human flesh either avoided the corpses of the victims of the plague of Athens or, if they fed on them, died, and he comments on "a remarkable disappearance of birds of prey" (2.50.2). Over ten years ago, it was SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome): in a letter to *The Lancet* a group of physicians argued that SARS and the plague of Athens derived from microbial material falling to earth from the stratosphere (Wickramasinghe et al. 2003: 1832). Such attempts at retrospective diagnosis may perhaps be experienced as a retrospective discovery, with "new" conditions such as SARS or avian flu becoming, if not any less frightening, at least historical and thus less novel. Athens, after all, ultimately survived its plague. Even if no attempt is

made at a one-for-one correspondence, the plague of Athens can reflect human response to diseases such as AIDS. In a 1988 article on AIDS in the *Denver University Law Review* Peter Rosen, Professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of Colorado, opened with two short extracts from Thucydides as an introduction to the “fear, hysteria, gloom, and panic” caused by AIDS (Rosen 1988: 117).

Should we abandon all attempts to play the retrospective diagnosis game? Among classical scholars writing on the plague, Holladay and Poole were rare in considering the larger question of what counts as a disease, concluding that “since the name of a disease is a code-word for a lengthy message whose detailed content is changing continuously, it follows that such a name is of limited applicability outside the time and place to which it belongs.” So, “[w]hen an ancient historian asks a physician to diagnose the Athenian Plague what he is really asking is: ‘Guess what you would call it if you could travel in a time-machine to Athens in 430 B.C., and carry out any observations you would like to make’” (Holladay and Poole 1979: 283). There is a general problem that, as disease categories change, any “diagnosis” changes too. In addition, here “the signs, symptoms, and features of the epidemic disease do not add up,” so any “diagnosis” must rely on emphasizing some symptoms, discounting others; but which parts of the description should be disregarded (Morens and Littman 1992: 280)?

For example, take Thucydides’ claim for the novelty of the plague. Privileging this comment, Shrewsbury argued that it explained why a historian not otherwise interested in medicine chose to devote so much space to this one (1950: 3). Following Shrewsbury, the classicist D.L. Page identified the plague as measles in a population not previously exposed to it, citing the effect of this disease on Fiji in 1875, and saying that “I do not see how further progress can be made until the medical scientist informs us (if he can) in what respects (if any) the obvious resemblance is misleading” (Shrewsbury 1950: 16–19; Page 1953: 111; on the problems with the Fiji analogy, Holladay and Poole 1979: 290). But while foregrounding novelty favors some diagnoses, others discount Thucydides’ claim; Sir William MacArthur, who wrote on several different epidemic diseases from the past, commented “Thucydides’ quoted statement that the disease was new, means nothing. Epidemic maladies that recurred after some long interval were commonly supposed to be ‘new’” (MacArthur 1958: 243).

Page’s comment on retrospective diagnosis perhaps still sums up the issues best:

Of numerous suggested identifications none has found general approval; and it is doubtful whether any opinion is more prevalent today than that the problem is insoluble. The classical scholar is handicapped by his ignorance of medical science; his medical colleague has often been led astray by translations deficient in exactitude if not disfigured by error. (1953: 97)

More recently, Simon Hornblower concluded that “[t]he identification of the disease ... is an insoluble problem” (1991: 316). Among contemporary ancient

historians, it would seem, the identity of Thucydides' plague is not of utmost importance to their narratives of Athenian society or politics. Modern medical writers, however, as seen in the recent suggestions of SARS and avian flu, are more inclined to seek a solution to Thucydides' riddle, utilizing past symptoms to explain those causing distress in the present.

Translating the Plague

Page's comments introduce one of the most difficult aspects of reading the plague account: the problem of translation. In an article applying an epidemiological approach to the condition, Morens and Littman noted the difficulties of translating Thucydides' Greek into English medical terminology (Morens and Littman 1992: 278). Many articles on the plague of Athens are jointly authored, and Salway and Dell insisted that "it is clear that the inquiry can hardly be effective without co-operation between classical and medical men" (Salway and Dell 1955: 62). But such optimism about the benefits of collaboration may be misplaced. Vocabulary and syntax are often difficult to understand in this passage; as the ancient historian Moses Finley noted, Thucydides in general has a "complicated, crabbed style, neither pleasant nor easy to read" (1968: 44), and is often considerably more accessible in translation.

Much hinges on the translation of words which may be "medical terminology" or – because specialized medical terminology was not a feature of the fifth century BCE – may represent a language common to the Hippocratic writers as well as to lay people such as Thucydides. Page looked at the vocabulary used for body parts, including the adjectives used for medical situations, and the verbs common to Thucydides and the Hippocratic treatises (1953: 100–6). He argued that Thucydides "required a special vocabulary" for his plague description, employing more than forty words that are not used anywhere else in the *History* (ibid.: 97); however, as there is nothing else in his work that describes the body in such detail, that is hardly surprising.

Milman Parry, however, better known as a scholar of ancient Greek poetry and oral composition, saw no debt to medical treatises, and argued that the "vocabulary of the description of the Plague is not entirely, is not even largely, technical" (1969: 113). For example, take the term *haimatōdē*, used for the throat and tongue of the sufferer; is this "bloody," thus suggesting a hemorrhagic condition, or less dramatically and less technically "blood-red" (Longrigg 2000: 214)? In 2.49.5, are *helkē* sores, or buboes (Hooker 1958)? What is the precise relationship between the "ineffectual retching" (or "hiccups") and the spasms in 2.49.4 (Alford 1998: 374)? *Phlyktainai*, used of the rash in 2.49.4, is a very broad term used in everyday language for "spots on a loaf of bread, lesions on the hands of rowers" as well as burns and blisters in Hippocratic texts; yet, as Morens and Littman observe, "The theories suggesting smallpox, syphilis, and typhus ... are built around connection

of such terms ... to modern terms for medical conditions” (Morens and Littman 1992: 279; see also Holladay and Poole 1979: 291 on modern attempts to make the Greek word fit the very different skin eruptions found in a wide range of known conditions).

More recent scholarship suggests that, while there are similarities between Hippocratic vocabulary and that of Thucydides, this does not mean one influenced the other, so claims of a Thucydidean debt to the Hippocratics appear “greatly exaggerated” (Rusten 1989: 179). For example, Thucydides, ever the artist, uses a range of words for death, whereas the Hippocratics – “telegraphic, terse and spare” in their choice of verbs – almost always use a form of *thnēskō* (Morgan 1994: 201). On the other hand, sometimes Thucydides uses a term with “an almost exclusively medical usage,” such as *thermai* at 2.49.2 (Thomas 2006: 97).

Thucydides and the Hippocratics

This brings us to a broader question; what is the relationship between Thucydides and the Hippocratic writers more generally? J.H. Finley’s 1947 commentary referred to Thucydides “describing the symptoms of the disease in the Hippocratic manner”; here he explicitly followed the historian Charles Norris Cochrane, who saw Thucydides as a “scientist” inspired by Hippocratic medicine (J.H. Finley 1947: 158; Cochrane 1929). Elizabeth Craik, a scholar of Greek tragedy before moving to work on ancient medicine, concluded that Thucydides “may have read quite widely in medical texts” and that he had “an extensive medical knowledge” but was “adapt[ing] the ideas of contemporary medicine to serve his own literary and historiographical ends” (2001: 107). She asks:

Does Thucydides tailor his narrative to fit the fabric of known medical theory, or even to prove the theory correct? ... Or does Thucydides simply use medical knowledge to amplify and confirm data of his own observation and experience, in order to describe the progress of the disease as clearly and accurately as he can? (ibid.: 102)

Thucydides can even be seen as far more “scientific” (despite not being a physician) than the Hippocratics. Does his reference to “every kind of bile for which the physicians have a name” show that Thucydides was “familiar with those names” (Page 1953: 99), or does it reveal contempt for doctors and their unhelpful labels? The ancient historian Rosalind Thomas has argued that, in his comments on contagion, “Thucydides was producing his own medical theory, and probably in rivalry with the doctors” (2006: 103). This is not how the comments on the disease spreading are usually understood; more commonly, scholars note that Thucydides observed contagion but without any theory as to how it took place (e.g., Mitchell-Boyask 2008: 87).

Of the Hippocratic treatises, *Epidemics* is most often linked to the plague description, for example by Page, who noted that both open with the general description of the conditions at the time the disease appeared, name “critical days” (the days on which the physician should expect a “crisis”), and show more interest in prognosis than diagnosis (1953: 98). Moses Finley too claimed that Thucydides’ plague section “is so clinically precise and so technical in its language, that only the Hippocratic books on epidemics provide an adequate parallel” (1968: 49). Earlier writers on plague tried to tie *Epidemics* to Thucydides even more closely; for example, “it is generally agreed, that the period of the Athenian plague coincides in time with the first year of the epidemics of Hippocrates” (Hancock 1821: 114). However, Rosalind Thomas has pointed out that more recent scholarship on the *Epidemics* shows that they are not as straightforwardly empirical as was once thought; even the decision as to what to include in a case history is evidence of prior theory (2006: 93–4).

In one thread of the ancient sources, found in the “pseudepigrapha” (a late part of the Hippocratic corpus) and elsewhere, Hippocrates cured the plague of Athens (Pinault 1986: 52–75). Pliny describes Hippocrates predicting that a plague would come from Illyria and sending his pupils to help the Greek cities; later he comments that Hippocrates lit fires to halt epidemics caused by a solar eclipse (Pliny, *Natural History* 7.37, 36.69; Pinault 1992: 36, 45). Plutarch later mentioned another doctor, Acron, who lit a fire in Athens “during the great plague” and helped many sufferers (Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 383c–d; Pinault 1992: 48). The idea that fire altered the air and thus cured the plague persisted to the seventeenth century (ibid.: 58–9). Galen mentions only four historians, of whom Thucydides alone is praised “as an accurate and honest observer, whose comments on humanity are appropriately moral” (Nutton 1990: 251). Thucydides was Galen’s “pet prose author” (Nutton 2009: 25) and, although his treatise on Thucydides’ description of the plague remains lost (Kudlien 1971), some comments remain; according to Galen, Thucydides regarded hot air as the cause and Hippocrates’ cure involved burning “the sweetest garlands and flowers” with “the richest of sweet-scented unguents” (Galen, *De febrium differentiis* 1.6 (K VII 290); Galen, *Theriac to Piso* 16 (K XIV 281); Pinault 1992: 54, 56). Characterized by von Staden as working “to establish himself as the supreme interpreter of Hippocrates” (2009: 134), Galen commented that “Thucydides was no doctor, and so, inevitably, in his description of the plague of Athens, he missed much that a well-trained physician like Hippocrates would have seen” (K VII 850; Nutton 1990: 252, 2009: 26).

Challenges to this story of Hippocrates curing the plague were made from the eighteenth century onwards. In 1734, the classicist and physician Francis Clifton observed that Hippocrates did *not* discuss the plague of Athens, and argued against Prideaux and others who claimed that “Hippocrates was in Athens all the while this distemper rag’d there” (Clifton 1734: xii; the school book, Button 1757: 180, states that Hippocrates was living in Athens during the plague). In 1753 Smith noted that none of the references to Hippocrates curing the plague in the

pseudepigrapha specifically involved Athens, while Thucydides did not mention Hippocrates at all, let alone describing him as having had any success. Following Daniel Le Clerc's eighteenth-century history of medicine, Smith therefore rejected this part of the pseudepigrapha as "certainly spurious," not least because the letters have the plague beginning in Europe, whereas in all ages, "All plagues and infectious distempers have had their rise in Africa" as, he wrote, the physician and Fellow of the Royal Society Richard Mead had proved (Smith 1753: 160; Mead 1720; Zuckerman 2004).

The fascination of a great physician living at the same time as a great disease was hard to resist. As we mentioned above, in 1832 Sir Henry Hallford read to the Royal College of Physicians a paper on "the Plague at Athens, and of *whether Hippocrates was present*" [our italics], by John Ireland (National Archives, Halford mss II, DG24/990/2 – the author was unable to deliver this paper in person due to gout). In 1880, in an article in the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, the condition described in Thucydides was labeled specifically "the oriental plague"; here, the story of Hippocrates' fires was repeated, although not wholly endorsed (Potter 1880: 606; see p. 607, where the use of "is said to" maintains some distance). Even in the early twentieth century, the desire to place the father of medicine at the scene still remained intense; for example, Cumston argued that Hippocrates may have chosen not to mention it because he was out of Athens at the time so could not give an eyewitness account, or "what is more probable, is that that part of his works where he treats of the plague has not been handed down to us" (Cumston 1903: 5). If in doubt, one can always appeal to a lost treatise. However, Albert Buck said that Hippocrates "appeared not to have witnessed it" (1917: 98); Ralph Major believed "[h]ad Hippocrates described the plague, we would be in no doubt as to its identity" (1954: 137). Perhaps Hippocrates is better served by not having been present; after all, Thucydides reported that medicine was unable to help the sick (2.51.1–3). To be counted among the number of useless doctors would surely have damaged the prestige of the father of medicine.

Talking Plague in the Seventeenth Century

In the seventeenth century, while medical writers continued to debate the relationship between Hippocrates and Thucydides, the plague of Athens became a topic for poetry, both because of its emotional pull and because it could act as a metaphor for other social ills. In 1659, Thomas Sprat (1635–1713), educated at Oxford and later to become the Bishop of Rochester, best known now as the author of the first history of the Royal Society, wrote *The Plague of Athens, which happened in the second year of the Peloponnesian War. First described in Greek by Thucydides; Then in Latin by Lucretius. Now attempted in English, by Tho. Sprat* (London, 1709). Although by modern standards Sprat is a "poor poet" (Harrison 1954: 79), he was much praised in his own time. This "Pindaric" ode of over 700 lines, complete with bold

figurative language and lengthy digressions and “metrical and stanzaic irregularity” (Anselment 1996: 6), went into seven editions and was widely reprinted in anthologies of verse. Although in some ways Daniel Defoe’s prose work of fiction *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), itself influenced by Thucydides (Rubincam 2004: 198–204), replaced Sprat’s poem (Anselment 1996: 20), Sprat also featured in a 1743 collection, *The Plague* (London), alongside Thomas Creech’s poetic translation of Lucretius, “An account of the plague of Athens ... from the Latin of Lucretius” (Budd 2011: 131–8 reproduces Creech). In addition to those of Sprat and Creech, another poem on this theme survives from 1866, a mere fifty-four lines long, and opening with a reference to the *Iliad*, adding a layer of religious causation absent from Thucydides by seeing the cause of the plague of Athens as being the arrows of Apollo (Anon., 1866):

Soon loudly through the vaulted sky there rang
The dire portending silver bow-string’s twang.

Other poems on Greece featured the plague; for example, Haygarth’s *Greece, a Poem* (1814) which personifies “Pestilence” who comes from “the unhealthy south” (line 431). These poetic renditions of Thucydides show how writers outside medicine found the theme of the devastating and socially destructive plague appealing, and how very flexible Thucydides’ account proved as ideas about disease causation shifted over time.

Although the reprints of Sprat may owe a lot to the effect of the Great Plague of London in 1665, his poem – first published in the year that Cromwell’s Protectorate ended – is now seen as having a primarily political purpose; as a commentary on the English Civil War, with which Sprat had grown up, with the “plague” being England’s sin of disobedience (Morgan 2004), or the violence suffered in that war, or even Cromwell himself. It makes sense to think about the plague in the context of internal factional strife, the Greek *stasis*; indeed, in both ancient poets and political writers, *stasis* was also associated with disease (Kalimtzis 2000). Thucydides’ analysis of the failure of Athens to win the war against Sparta was that Athens was internally divided by faction, and Thomas Hobbes would go on to argue in his *Behemoth* (1680) that the teaching of classical political theory, using writers including Thucydides, was the “ultimate cause” of the English Civil War (Schlatter 1945: 359).

Unlike medical writers on the plague of Athens, Sprat chooses “to mute the clinical realities of disease”; he “leaves much to the imagination” (Anselment 1996: 14). He concentrates on the artistic aspects of Thucydides, claiming that Thucydides’ prose account of the plague is “*more* a Poem” (Sprat 1709: 2; our italics) than the much later account in the Latin poet Lucretius, in that it is so very well expressed. Here the emphasis on Thucydides as eyewitness receives a poetic rather than an objective scientific spin; because Thucydides had the advantage of “having been present on the place, and assaulted by the disease himself,” “the shapes of the misery” were “still remaining in his mind, which must needs make a great

impression on his Pen and Fancie" (ibid.). Sprat appears to be arguing that the ability to write a good account of the plague is linked to theories such as maternal imagination (Bondeson 1997); like the pregnant woman who influences the physical characteristics of her unborn child by her thoughts, Thucydides has an image of the misery caused by the plague in his mind, and then recreates that misery on paper. In turn, in a literary version of "infection," that image is spread to his readers.

What does this imply for Sprat's own poem? If the plague is, in some sense, the Civil War, then Sprat was (in the words of Thucydides as translated by Thomas Hobbes) "sick of it myself, and seen others sick of the same" (2.48.3). While Thucydides' stated motive in describing the plague was "to discover the same if it come again" (2.48.3), Sprat may therefore have written *his* poem in order to avoid a repeat of the English Civil War.

Sprat opens with Hobbes' 1629 English translation of the Thucydides on the plague from *Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre*. His own poem then follows, often relying more on Lucretius than on Thucydides, for example in the shift from an opening section on the uncertainties of human life, to the specific example of the plague (Anselment 1996: 8). Sprat's main image of disease is that of the siege:

Huge Troops of Maladies without,
(A grim, a meagre, and a dreadful rout)
Some formal Sieges make,
And with sure slowness do our Bodies take;
Some with quick violence storm the Town,
And all in a moment down:... (1709, lines 18–23)

This was a powerful image in the English Civil War; Sprat arrived to study in Oxford less than a decade after the siege of that city. While Thucydides did not use this imagery, the plague hit while the Spartan troops were laying waste to the countryside around the city, forcing the country-dwellers to move into the city for protection. The situation of Athens in 431 BCE was, basically, a siege, except that the city's walls extended to the Piraeus port, so access to supplies by sea was not cut off.

There are several other points at which one can see the English Civil War lying behind this poem. Sprat offers a somewhat hyperbolic account of how a body which is already frail is also attacked "from without" by

A dangerous and destructful War,
From Heaven, from Earth, from Sea, from Air,
We like the Roman Empire should decay,
And our own force would melt away
By the intestine jar [i.e. internal discord]
Of Elephants, which on each other prey,
The Cesars and the Pompeys which within we bear; ...
Sometimes the Gothish and the barbarous rage
Of Plague and Pestilence, attend Man's age... (lines 48–54, 57–58)

Here Sprat refers directly to the civil wars of the late Roman Republic in which Caesar fought Pompey for control of the state, perhaps also picking up the story that the Indian and the African elephant are enemies. Both Caesar and Pompey used elephants when they staged Games as part of their quest for political power, while Pompey was the first Roman to display harnessed elephants in a triumphal procession (Pliny, *NH* 8.2). In 54 BCE, according to Plutarch, Pompey staged an elephant fight in the Games to dedicate his theater: “a most terrifying spectacle” (*Life of Pompey* 52.4). However, the elephant reference here manages also to evoke an external threat, Hannibal’s attack on Rome and, in particular, the events of 218 BCE, when Hannibal crossed the Alps with thirty-seven elephants and defeated the Romans. There is another reference to elephants toward the end of the poem, where Sprat says that the Romans were initially terrified by Hannibal’s elephants but, when they learned about them, they found ways to oppose them (lines 647–50). Here, the elephants themselves are the plague, and knowledge is power. Elephants may be an element taken from Book 6 of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (61–5 CE), where they represent impenetrability. Furthermore, in this extraordinarily rich passage, the Punic War and Civil War images are followed by the reference to the Goths and barbarians, thus also evoking the fall of Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Sprat sees the Roman Civil War as an image for the internal discord of our bodies, and the fall of the Roman Empire as an image for the further decay our bodies endure as a result of old age.

Sprat ostentatiously litters his poem with classical references not taken from Thucydides or Lucretius. For example, Athens’ protector, the goddess Athena/Minerva, tries in vain to persuade Zeus/Jupiter to avert the evil that has struck her city (line 217). Describing the reluctance of birds to eat the flesh of the dead, he takes advantage of a chance to display his knowledge that her bird is the owl:

The very Owls at Athens are
But seldom seen and rare
The Owls depart in open day,
Rather than in infected ivy more to stay. (lines 414–7)

While he uses terms like “infected,” these should not be read in the modern sense of the term. Here, as in much early modern writing, infection simply means the power of a small substance to affect a much larger area, picking up the original Latin sense of *infectio* as dyeing or staining (Temkin 1977: 457; Nutton 2000). While Creech regards “different Air” – air moving from one country to another – as the cause of the plague of Athens (1743: 9, lines 27–9), Sprat more commonly mentions fire (lines 76, 271, 365, 566–71, 611). He accounts for epidemic disease – always a problem in a humoral medical system – by referring to the Greek myth of the Fates who cut the thread of a person’s life:

The Sisters now quite wearied
In cutting single Thread,
Began at once to part whole Looms (lines 461–4)

As the English literature specialist Raymond Anselment has pointed out, the range of symptoms of the plague of Athens enabled Sprat's readers to identify with it through many conditions with which they were familiar. For example, "The inward heat and outward coolness" would make them think of bubonic plague, while "bleeding in the mouth and nose" would make them think of smallpox. The plague of Athens thus appears as "a composite of their worst fears" (1996: 12, 13).

In keeping with the interest in the plague as poem, Sprat adds specific "characters" to his story: "Here lies a mother and her child..." and "There Parents hugg'd their children last, / Here parting Lovers last embrac'd" (lines 424–5). The mother and child section is echoed in Haygarth's 1814 poem where "Th'affrighted mother" catches sight of "Pestilence" as he blows disease and death on the people of Athens:

... and closer to her breast
Her infant clasp'd; in vain – her infant fell
Dead from her void embrace.... (lines 441–3)

In the 1866 poem on the plague of Athens, despite its date in the midst of the rise of germ theory, a bit of whimsy is added about a maiden "more pious than the rest" going against the grain of self-interest and panic to cradle her sick lover's head in her lap. Such additions pick up – and develop – Lucretius' shift to "the suffering of the individual" (Anselment 1996: 14). In the 1916 translation of William Emery Leonard:

O often and often couldst thou have seen
On lifeless children lifeless parents prone,
Or offspring on their fathers', mothers' corpse
Yielding the life (*De rerum natura* 6.1252–55).

Jowett and Nightingale

At the time when germ theory was finally defeating earlier understandings of disease causation, a translation of Thucydides appeared which has had enormous influence on the modern world; the 1881 translation of Benjamin Jowett (1817–93), the commentator on Plato, theologian, and Anglican priest who rose to become Master of Balliol. It was used in 1942 for Logan Clendening's *Source Book of Medical History*; by Shrewsbury in 1950 "because I have been informed on good authority that it is generally accepted as an accurate rendering of the Greek" (1950: 3); and in 1954 the physician Sir William MacArthur commented "when lecturing on this disease, I often quote Jowett's translation for the enlightenment of my class" (1954: 171).

Jowett was a very close friend of Florence Nightingale; he may even have proposed marriage to her (McDonald 2001: 24). They met four years after her return from the Crimea, when he was asked by Arthur Clough to read her “Suggestions for Thought to the Searchers After Truth Among the Artizans of England”; Clough did not reveal the author’s identity, but Jowett was impressed by the work’s argument that public health provision was a religious act (Quinn and Prest 1987: xiii). From 1862, he visited her weekly to give her holy communion (Quinn and Prest 1987: xviii; McDonald 2001: 162, 258), and she advised him on his Plato translation (McDonald 2001: 8). While there is surprisingly little modern discussion of Florence Nightingale’s medical ideas, she did not support germ theory; instead, as a sanitarian, she rejected contagion as “morally random,” and as a primitive theory which made nursing impossible because nobody would wish to nurse the sick if there were a risk of catching the illness (Rosenberg 1992: 91–2, 95 n.10, 104; Pelling 1992; Ackerknecht 1948: 564 linked contagionism to “the acceptance of the (contagionist) Jewish Old Testament as a holy book in Christianity”). Ackerknecht has outlined the complexities of the nineteenth-century struggles between contagionists and anticontagionists in the era of germ theory; this was not a linear story, but one in which inadequate theories could exist alongside effective practices (1948: 593).

Jowett and Nightingale’s correspondence includes discussions of the Contagious Diseases Act, sanitation and public health, but also of Thucydides (McDonald 2005: 446, 460. Balliol College vol. I, 32). Jowett wrote to her in 1871 that he was “doing nothing but a little gentle correction of Thucydides” (Quinn and Prest 1987: 218 [Letter 268]), and a few months later he wrote:

I think you once said D___ Thucydides; there I don’t agree with you. I believe that it is quite worth while, and not to me a work of very great labour, to put the best and noblest history which was ever written into a permanent English form – discussing the questions which arise out of it or about it and which have not been properly discussed. (Quinn and Prest 1987: 224 [Letter 279].)

He mentioned his work on this project on several other occasions. The letters also mention the proofs of his Thucydides translation (Balliol College IV, 346, 490); he presented Nightingale with a copy of the translation once it was published and, in the accompanying letter, singled out the long section starting with the “Funeral Speech of Pericles,” and continuing with the plague, as one of three passages he wanted to draw to her attention (Balliol College VI, 509).

The juxtaposition of Jowett and Nightingale shows how the plague of Athens could be used by both germ theorists and sanitarians. In Jowett’s translation, “infection” is used in a very post-germ theory sense: “Appalling too was the rapidity with which men caught the infection; dying like sheep if they attended on one another; and this was the principle cause of mortality” (Thuc. 2.51.4–5; Clendening 1942: 30). In her “Notes on Nursing”, first published in 1859, Nightingale had made it clear that she was opposed to “what, in ordinary language, is called ‘Infection’”

because it leads to the attendants taking more care of themselves than of the patient (Nightingale 1860: 32–3). Famously, for her diseases were not “separate entities, which *must* exist, like cats and dogs” (ibid.: 32n). She wrote, “I have seen, for instance, with a little overcrowding, continued fever grow up; and with a little more, typhoid fever; and with a little more, typhus, and all in the same ward or hut” (ibid.: 33n). Nightingale relies on her senses; she has seen this, so it cannot be denied (Rosenberg 1992: 93). Overcrowding is, of course, also a feature of Thucydides’ plague narrative; people arriving in the city from the countryside had to live in temporary accommodation; in Jowett, “stifling huts.” Sprat too talks in general terms about death and crowding – “Death in the most frequented places lives/ Most tribute from the crowd receives” (1709: lines 162–3) – but does not say that this crowding actually *caused* the spread of disease.

Nightingale’s exasperated “D____ Thucydides!” was, we would suggest, not because she thought Jowett should be spending his time on a different ancient author, or on the realities of public health provision, but because Thucydides’ account of the plague was a pawn in the game played between sanitarians and germ theorists. For Jowett, people “caught” the plague of Athens: for Nightingale, diseases are not “caught.”

Conclusion

Perceived progress in medicine is only ever an epidemic away from being undermined. The story of Jowett and Nightingale shows clearly how Thucydides’ account of the plague remained a vibrant document into the modern period, the property of all sides in debates on disease causation. As “our contemporary,” Thucydides spoke to everyone; sometimes he was seen as primitive, sometimes as prescient, but always as relevant. His “possession for all time,” recorded for the benefit of posterity, provided the symptom report of the ideal patient for future diagnosis. The various retrospective diagnoses of the Athenian plague could assert the superiority of “our” knowledge of disease but, at the same time, they highlight the limits of progress since Thucydides’ day; if, after 2000 years, doctors are still arguing about the identity of Thucydides’ plague, how much progress can medical science claim?

The attitude of the medical profession toward Thucydides our contemporary cannot, however, be separated from the valuation of Thucydides by traditional classical scholarship. Even where he was judged inadequate on medical grounds, he remained a representative of the classical Athens with which nineteenth-century historians felt kinship. As such, he was praised as a model of observation – clear, accurate, and well structured – and also used as a model of how to write a moral, and even beautiful, account of disease. One consequence of this, from classical antiquity to the modern period, was the transformation of the plague narrative into poetry.

Our reflections on the plague in Thucydides have shown how history, like medicine, selects in the process of narrating, and shapes its raw material, imposing form on the shapeless mass of events. While apparently merely reporting, both are trying to find the best explanation, the cause hiding beneath the superficial manifestations. The long history of the interaction between these two disciplines in discussing the plague is, therefore, not surprising. However, the story of the reception of the plague also shows the generation of “bad history”; in particular, because it occurs at the time of the birth of medicine, during the lifetime of its “Father” Hippocrates, both physicians and historians have wanted to bring the two elements of plague and great physician together. These various receptions of the plague have, paradoxically, led to the focus being taken off the aspect which Thucydides himself saw as central; the social breakdown caused by the plague (see Slack 1988: 440 on early modern outbreaks of plague).

Guide to Further Reading

On the plague in its ancient context, see Mitchell-Boyask (2008). There is as yet no general work published on its reception, or the reception of ancient medicine. Among more general introductions, Turner (1981) explores the use Victorian scholars made of Athenian historiography in the discussion of contemporary political issues, with their implicit beliefs that Athenian and British political histories were comparable. Demetriou surveys texts on Athenian democracy from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth, arguing that the discussions “had a formative effect upon historical inquiry in terms of interpretation” (1996: 281). More recently, Vance (2007) provides an overview of Victorian attitudes toward the classics, including Greek and Roman historiography.

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The Reception of Thucydides’ *Archaeology*

Tim Rood

The *Archaeology* is the name generally given to the account of the early history of Greece with which Thucydides opens his work (1.2–19). It is not a historical summary as such, but an account with a rhetorical purpose restricted to this setting: it is designed to prove Thucydides’ thesis that the Peloponnesian War was greater than any earlier war (1.1.2). In one sense, then, it is fair to claim that “Thucydides’ *Archaeology* had no successors” (Cole 1990: 146). All the same, the intellectual ambition of Thucydides’ historical reconstruction has won it many admirers, and both its methodology and its vision of early Greece have had a profound influence on later attempts to reconstruct not just early Greece but also “primitive” human life more generally.

It will be helpful to start this discussion of the reception of the *Archaeology* with some explanation of the term “Archaeology” itself. This term is applied by modern scholars at times to all of Thucydides’ introductory material (1.1–23), including his methodological discussion of how he composed his history; at times only to his investigation of the earlier history of Greece (1.2–19). But there is no evidence that Thucydides himself used the term in either sense. The current usage seems to date from the mid-nineteenth century: the earliest example I have come across in any language is William Mure’s use of “Archaeologia” in his multi-volume history of Greek literature (1850–7, V: 105). It might seem tempting to connect this use of the term with the sense of “archaeology” as the study of the material remains of the past, which came into wider use slightly earlier in the nineteenth century (the word had been used in English in the sense of “antiquities” since the seventeenth century): in constructing his argument about the development of power in Greece, Thucydides does at one point draw on the contents of tombs on Delos dug up by the Athenians in the early stages of the Peloponnesian War. But Mure in fact states that the term derives from an ancient commentator on Thucydides. The passage

he had in mind is preserved as a scholion (marginal comment) on 1.12: "he divided the *archaiologia* ('antiquities') into three parts, before the Trojan War, the Trojan War itself, and what followed it." This passage does not, however, support Mure's claim that ancient commentators used "Archaeology" as a title for the whole section: it is simply a comment on the articulation of time within the early stages of Thucydides' account.

As a term for "antiquities," the Greek word *archaiologia* had good ancient pedigree, stretching back probably to Thucydides' own lifetime. A good idea of its scope is given by a passage in Plato's *Hippias Major* describing the sophist Hippias' visits to Sparta: "They are very fond of hearing about the genealogies of heroes and men, Socrates, and the foundations of cities in ancient times and, in short, about antiquity (*archaiologia*) in general" (285d6–e1, trans. Jowett). "Archaiologia" is also attested in antiquity as a term for a portion of a work (the first book of Jason of Argos' *On Greece* is said to have been an "archaiologia") or as a book title (notable surviving examples are the *Roman Antiquities* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the *Jewish Antiquities* by Josephus; a lost example is Eustochius' *Cappadocian Antiquities*). In all these instances, "archaiologia" is used for a general narrative of ancient history, not for a historical argument like Thucydides'. This usage was also adopted in scholarly English from the seventeenth century onwards: thus the journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London, which first appeared in 1770, was entitled *Archaeologia*, and the same word appears in the title of similar journals produced by other antiquarian societies in the nineteenth century.

The adoption of the terms "Archaeology" or "Archaeologia" for Thucydides' opening section may well reflect a significant shift in the understanding of his work. These terms seem to have a scientific aura that panders to an image of Thucydidean rationality. But this shift has always been a contested one. In particular, the modern application of the word to the study of material remains has made many scholars uncomfortable with applying it to Thucydides' opening section. It is often qualified as "the 'so-called' *Archaeology*" or placed in quotation marks, presumably because Thucydides' reconstruction of the past is not actually based on much digging. And yet more recently W.R. Connor has suggested that a further shift of meaning – "Foucault's use of 'Archaeology' to mean 'the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought'" – "comes much closer to making the term appropriate for this section," given that it is "an anatomy of power based on a view of man's nature" (1984: 26). Thucydides, that is to say, digs deep into the strata of the human past, unearthing a history that embraces shifting mentalities as well as continuities in the exercise of power.

Thucydides' argument itself begins with an account of the early state of Greece, defined primarily through the absence of a number of features that emerged later – walls, agriculture, security, safe travel by land and sea (see below for Hobbes' translation of this section). Thucydides goes on to argue that the Greeks as a whole performed no great common deed before the Trojan War, which also saw them make much greater use of the sea. He then turns back to Minos as the first man to

acquire naval power and attempt to eliminate piracy. The claim that brigandage was common at that time by land as well as sea leads to an account of how the practice of carrying arms came to be abandoned. Thucydides then returns to the early development of naval power and argues for the continuing weakness of Greece even at the time of the Trojan War. Following his extended dismissal of the greatness of this one early war, he argues for a period of greater instability in Greece after the end of the war, leading both to the increasing dispersal of Greek settlers and also to a gradual increase in power as the Greeks took more and more to the sea; the growth in power that was facilitated by naval prowess is then contrasted with the much more limited development of power that resulted from land warfare against neighbors. Next Thucydides brings in further factors that limited the development of Greek power: external pressures (Persia) and politics (tyrants set on self-preservation). The final stage in Thucydides' account is the resistance to Xerxes' invasion and its aftermath. This resistance is highlighted as the first great communal Greek action, but it is also marked by a split between Sparta's land-based and Athens' sea-based power – a division that reinforced itself after the Greek victory and culminated in the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians and their respective allies.

The brief sketches I have given of the argument of the *Archaeology* and of the term itself suggest some of the advantages of digging into the reception of this section of Thucydides' work. Exploring different approaches to Thucydides' reconstruction of the past exposes us to different ways of configuring both his interpretation of the historical process and his understanding of his historical project; these approaches in turn reveal much about changes in the modern understanding of history and the uses of the past. At the same time, the *Archaeology* itself serves as a warning that all reconstructions of the past are the products of particular modes of historical understanding and told for particular rhetorical purposes.

The scope of the *Archaeology's* influence has been so great that, within the scope of this chapter, it will be possible only to sketch some of the most important strands. I will start by considering the *Archaeology* as a literary artifact, analyzing how Thomas Hobbes' comments on this section in the preface to his translation of Thucydides engage with the rhetorical focus of ancient Thucydidean critics. My second (and longest) section will consider the *Archaeology* as a history of Greece: I will explore how it has been used as a source both of historical evidence and of methodology by a number of historians from Sir Walter Raleigh to George Grote. I will close by briefly treating the *Archaeology* as a "history of civilization" (Hunter 1982: 17), that is, by examining how it has been exploited in various modern accounts of savagery and civility, including travel narratives, conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment, and political philosophy (Hobbes again). My analysis as a whole will speak to two key oppositions in the reception of Thucydides: the oppositions of history and literature and of the general and the particular.

The *Archaeology* as Literature

Modern scholars frequently stress the rhetorical function and texture of the *Archaeology*. Thomas Wiedemann (1990: 291) suggests that it is “constructed just like a forensic speech”; that is to say, it is a piece of writing promoting a particular case that draws on the argumentative techniques used in the law courts. Connor too adduces similarities to forensic rhetoric, while also seeing Thucydides’ “rejection of conventionality and sentimentality” as an affirmation of his “authority and reliability,” bringing “enlightened author and sophisticated audience” into rapport (1984: 27). As well as its literary effect in its own right, scholars also stress its links to the rest of Thucydides’ work: Hornblower sees the introduction of “key concepts or emotive phrases from the later books” – the oppositions of Athens and Sparta and of sea and land, for example – as “programmatic” (1991: 8).

Literary approaches to the *Archaeology* are by no means a recent development. In the essay “On the Life and History of Thucydides” prefaced to his 1629 translation, Thomas Hobbes treated this section under the heading of “disposition” (one aspect of “elocution”): “in his first book ... he hath, by way of exordium, derived the state of Greece from the cradle to the vigorous stature it then was at when he began to write: and next, declared the causes ... In the rest, in which he handleth the war itself, he followeth distinctly and purely the order of time throughout ...” (1989: 576). Hobbes here separates the *Archaeology* from the account of causes in the rest of Book 1, and both together from the season-by-season narrative of the war in Books 2–8. His reason for making this precise division becomes clear later in the essay, when he defends Thucydides from the criticisms of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote a treatise on Thucydides in the first century BCE. Dionysius, he notes, had been particularly critical of the method of Thucydides’ first book, “in that he deriveth Greece from the infancy thereof to his own time,” and then set down the quarrels over Corcyra and Potidaea before the account of the true cause of the war. Hobbes then offers a response to Dionysius:

For the mentioning of the ancient state of Greece, he doth it briefly, insisting no longer upon it than is necessary for the well understanding of the following history. For without some general notions of these first times, many places of the history are the less easy to be understood; as depending upon the knowledge of the original of several cities and customs, which could not be at all inserted into the history itself, but must be either supposed to be foreknown by the reader, or else be delivered to him in the beginning as a necessary preface. (1989: 582)

The rhetorical focus of Hobbes’ discussion is clear from his language. He is concerned to defend the length of Thucydides’ account and to relate the inclusion of information to the needs of Thucydides’ projected readers. Dionysius, by contrast, had criticized the length of the account: “The introduction contains so many elaborate arguments to prove his proposition, that it has become a sort of history

on its own.” He complained most of all about the inclusion of apparently incidental details: “Why was it necessary to mention the luxury enjoyed by Athenians in early times: how they plaited up their hair into top-knots and wore gold cicadas on their heads?” He also suggested that “the introduction would have been most effective if he had made the concluding section follow directly upon the introductory section, omitting the whole of the middle section” (*Thuc.* 19–20, trans. Usher). That is, Dionysius wished that Thucydides had moved straight from his opening section (1.1) to his summary (1.23), omitting the whole of the *Archaeology* proper. Thucydides’ account of the historical development of Greece was also ignored by Lucian in his treatise *On Writing History* when he proposed that a historian should try to ensure the audience’s attention by demonstrating that “his subject will be important ... or useful,” and went on to claim that “prologues of this sort have been used by the best historians ... by Thucydides who ... expected that that ‘war would be a great and most noteworthy one and greater than any previous ones’, ‘for in the event great disasters did occur in it’” (*Hist. Conscr.* 53–4, trans. Macleod). Though overtly praising Thucydides, Lucian here presents him as having written the introduction that Dionysius wanted, as he leaps from the first sentence of Thucydides’ work to the summary of the sufferings of Greece. Hobbes, by contrast, argues that that section has both an appropriate length and the proper rhetorical function of supplying knowledge required for the understanding of the main narrative.

Hobbes’ rhetorical slant is particularly apparent from the terms he uses for (what modern scholars call) the *Archaeology*: “exordium,” “preface.” I noted above that the title “Archaeology” came into use in the second half of the nineteenth century. Before that, this section had been described in terms that emphasized its rhetorical function: “preface,” for example, was used in the first half of the nineteenth century by Thomas Arnold (1830–5, I: 1) in his edition of Thucydides and by George Grote in his *History of Greece* (1904, II: 20 n.), while “introduction” was used in the eighteenth century by Lord Bolingbroke in his *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (1791: 307) and by John Gillies, one of Grote’s forerunners as a historian of Greece (1790, I: 3 n.3). The rhetorical tenor of these words picks up the only ancient term attested for this section, *prooimion* (“proem”), which was used repeatedly by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his writings on Thucydides and also by Porphyry in the third century CE in the title of a (lost) commentary on this section.

Even though he adheres to rhetorical terminology, Hobbes offers a strangely lackluster defense of Thucydides’ practice. Or perhaps it is the very conventionality of the rhetorical approach that is the problem. The *Archaeology* does not offer the sort of formal introductions to major cities, with details of their origins, that Hobbes suggests. The terms of Hobbes’ defense of Thucydides are much more applicable to the additional textual apparatus that he himself provided – as he remarked in his preface “To the Readers”: “for the difficulty arising from the ignorance of places, I thought it not so insuperable, but that with convenient

pictures of the countries it might be removed." He noted with some pride that he had himself drawn a map of Greece, "and to shew you that I have not played the mountebank in it ... I have joined with the map an index, that pointeth to the authors which will justify me" (1989: xxiii–xxiv). This index stretched for some thirteen pages in the first edition, including details such as: "*Anticyra*, a City of *Phocis* upon the Seaside, next after *Crissa* towards *Boeotia*. *Strab. lib. 9*. Also a City of the *Melians* upon the river *Spercheios*. *Idem*" – even though neither of these cities appears in Thucydides (and only the first was on Hobbes' map). Together with his maps, Hobbes' long index offered (or even surpassed) the sort of preparation that he claims for the *Archaeology*.

Hobbes also seems to ignore the sort of thematic preparation on which modern scholars like Hornblower focus. But it may be fairer to say that he supplements that himself through pictorial means rather than commenting on it directly. His frontispiece shows in the center Thucydides starting to unroll his *ktêma es aei* ("everlasting possession"), and to left and right panels with visions of the physical cities of Sparta and Athens at the top, the Spartan and Athenian leaders Archidamus and Pericles below (leaning against a sort of Doric column and a softer Ionic column respectively), "the best" and "the many" below them, and finally land and naval forces at the bottom. These images are of course appropriate for the war as a whole, but they also pick up themes that Thucydides foregrounds in the *Archaeology*: Sparta vs. Athens, hard vs. moderate customs, political stability vs. political instability, land vs. sea.

The rhetorical framework of Hobbes' defense of the *Archaeology* is questioned and supplemented not just by his maps, indexes, and frontispiece, but also by the further paratextual apparatus of his marginal comments: "A Digression, touching the Piracie & Robberies of old time; with other Notes of Saulvagenesse [savageneſſe]"; "Robbing had in honour"; "Continuall wearing of Armour in fashion"; "The *Athenians* grew first civill" (1629: 4). Though accompanied by some more mundane-seeming material, these headings highlight, as we shall see, the elements of Thucydides' account that would be of particular interest to historians of Greece, to theorists of the development of human society, and also to political philosophers like Hobbes himself.

The *Archaeology* and Greek History

While generally acknowledging that the *Archaeology* forms a powerful rhetorical prelude to Thucydides' work, modern critics have been divided about its value as a model of historical scholarship. Arnaldo Momigliano suggested that the method employed in this section "seems to us so good that we wonder why Thucydides used it only in his preface" (1990: 43) – before answering his own question by noting that Thucydides regarded different methods as appropriate for past and present. Moses Finley, by contrast, wrote in a well-known essay on "Myth, Memory

and History” that Thucydides’ actual archaeological arguments reveal “a gross ignorance and misunderstanding of the past on several points of major significance” – namely the collapse of Mycenaean society and the date of geometric pottery. The *Archaeology* as a whole Finley sees as “a sweeping theory ... derived from prolonged meditation about the world in which Thucydides lived, not from a study of history,” or again as “a general sociological theory, a theory about power and progress” (1986: 18–19). Other scholars, too, have seen the *Archaeology* as unhistorical in its retrojection to early Greece of the conditions of the fifth century BCE, with Minos’ centralizing use of naval power modeled on the contemporary Athenian empire (Irwin 2007).

In this section my concern will not be to assess the methodological qualities of the *Archaeology* in their own right but rather to explore how a number of historians from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries (in particular, Raleigh and Grote) made use of the *Archaeology* in their own reconstructions of early Greece. One point of interest in looking at historians in this period is that it allows for an overview of the development of a self-consciously “modern” and rigorous approach to the study of the past that offers suggestive parallels to Thucydides’ own goals in the *Archaeology*. Given the scope of the topic, I will restrict myself here to discussion of the reception of Thucydides’ reconstruction of the Trojan War; it will be helpful to start with a longer sketch of this portion of his argument.

Thucydides presents the Trojan War as occurring at a time when the inhabitants of Greece (who were not yet known by the single label “Hellenes”) were beginning to build fleets and create surpluses of wealth. He sets the prelude to the war in the context of this broader historical viewpoint by arguing that Agamemnon was able to gather the fleet that sailed to Troy not so much through the oaths extracted by Tyndareus from Helen’s suitors but through fear of his naval power. That Greece as a whole was still weak the time of the war is nonetheless shown by two arguments based on Thucydides’ reading of epic. Firstly, he proposes that the total number of participants was not that great given that they came from across the whole of Greece. Their number, Thucydides argues, can be calculated from the Homeric catalog of ships: noting that the catalog offers figures for the numbers of sailors on each ship for only two contingents, he infers that Homer was indicating the smallest and largest numbers and that the overall number of sailors can be estimated using the average of these two numbers. Thucydides then finds further evidence of the weak state of Greece in the fact that the war lasted for ten years because part of the army always had to be used for farming and raiding. Besides offering a reconstruction of aspects of the war that demonstrate Greek weakness, Thucydides also uses Homer as evidence for early customs: in support of the claim that piracy brought glory rather than shame in early times, he argues that “further illustration is given by some of the mainlanders even now, who take successful piracy as a compliment, and by the ancient poets: the regular question put to all who arrive by sea is ‘Are you pirates?’, with no expectation of denial by the questioned or criticism from the questioner” (1.5.2, trans. Hammond). Thucydides

here combines inference from epic poetry with a comparative anthropology that sees the customs in some parts of the Greek and non-Greek world as survivals from Homeric times.

In assessing Thucydides' view of the Trojan War, modern scholars regularly comment on his failure to question the existence of figures such as Agamemnon or the historicity of the war itself. That is, just as Thucydides casts his narrative of the development of Greece as a move from a state of absence, they suggest that Thucydides lacked the critical faculties underlying modern understandings of myth. One of the first historians to separate his own intellectual position from Thucydides' in this way was George Grote in his *History of Greece* (1846–56). Grote's *History* is best known nowadays for its anti-Thucydidean defense of "demagogues" such as Cleon and for its anti-Platonic defense of the sophists. In his first two volumes (published together in 1846), Grote also engaged in an innovative way with Greek myth. The first volume began with "Legendary Greece," divided into legends concerning the gods, heroes, and men. The detailed narrative of the legends closed with a long chapter on the "Legend of Troy." This chapter was followed by a long assessment of the "Grecian Mythes, as Understood, Felt, and Interpreted by the Greeks Themselves" (Ch. 16). After some discussion of chronology, Grote's treatment of "Legendary Greece" concluded with a chapter on the "State of Society and Manners as Exhibited in Grecian Legend" and an account of the genesis of the Homeric poems themselves.

Thucydides' *Archaeology* assumed a growing importance in Grote's account as he moved from the legends themselves to discuss how the Greeks conceived their myths and what their myths suggest about early society. In his account of the Trojan legend, Grote uses the *Archaeology* both as evidence for the existence of the story of the suitors' oaths (1904, I: 264 n. 3) and in a clever argument for the hold of some elements of the poetic tradition: despite his awareness of poetic exaggeration, Thucydides did not question the basic tradition about the length of the war (1904, I: 271). That argument prepares for the role Thucydides will play in Grote's more focused account of Greek attitudes to myth. Grote here places Thucydides in the context of the Greeks' development of a historical sense, noting that in his case "the qualities necessary to the historiographer, in their application to recent events, have been developed with a degree of perfection never since surpassed" (1904, I: 330–1). The crucial qualification "recent events" opens the way for Grote's open criticism of Thucydides' failure to question the historicity of Greek legend: he notes, in particular, that the account of the Trojan War offered in the *Archaeology* is "a mere extract and distillation from [the epic poets'] incredibilities" (1904, I: 363). This dismissal went against the grain of the widespread contemporary admiration of Thucydides, and Grote felt compelled to respond in later editions to charges by a German reviewer that he had not allowed Thucydides sufficient authority in dealing with Greek legend: "No man feels more powerfully than I do the merits of Thucydides as an historian, or the value of the example which he set in multiplying critical inquiries respecting matters recent and verifiable" (1904, I: 365 n.1). Once

again Grote used a qualifying phrase (here “recent and verifiable”) to highlight both his own departure from Thucydidean methodology and the grounds for his general skepticism about Greek legend.

It is in his discussion of Homeric society that Grote offers his most sympathetic appreciation of the *Archaeology*. In noting that “the picture given by Thucydides, of these very early and unrecorded times, can only be taken as conjectural” (1904, II: 47), Grote was once more stressing the unverifiability of Thucydides’ account. But he was also aligning the *Archaeology* with the conjectural approach adopted by historians of the Scottish Enlightenment such as Adam Ferguson (see below) and by precursors such as the Neapolitan thinker Giambattista Vico, whose *New Science* makes repeated use of the *Archaeology* in its reconstruction of the heroic age (both Ferguson and Vico are approvingly cited by Grote in his first volume for their attempts to use Greek legends to reveal the mentality of the mythopoeic age (1904, I: 318 n.1, 403 n.2)). Grote also contrasts Thucydides with another key eighteenth-century thinker when he notes that some ancient conceptions of early humankind show “the same fancies so eloquently set forth by Rousseau in the last century,” but that “a far more sagacious criticism pervades the preface of Thucydides” (1904, II: 20 n.2). As for Grote’s own reconstruction of Homeric society, that is informed by the same conjectural spirit found in Thucydides. Just as Thucydides argues for the survival of Homeric customs among barbarians and in some marginal areas of Greece, so too Grote fleshes out his depiction of the heroic age with contemporary ethnographic data. He also appeals to the same Homeric passages as Thucydides to argue for the prevalence of piracy (1904, II: 30–1) and applies Thucydides’ model of primitivism to the same remote areas of the Greek world (e.g., 1904, II: 48, 216 on Aetolia).

How does Grote’s use of the *Archaeology* compare with earlier historians? Vidal-Naquet and Loraux have noted that one of Grote’s goals was “to establish a radical separation between the time of myth and the time of history, tackling a problem that the entire Age of Enlightenment had confronted but not managed to resolve” (1995: 4). As with his positive presentation of Athenian democracy, Grote was not an absolute innovator, but rather taking further an approach to myth that had been partly anticipated by earlier historians such as Connop Thirlwall (author of an eight-volume *History of Greece* published between 1835 and 1844) and more importantly inspired by the skepticism about early Roman traditions in B.G. Niebuhr’s *History of Rome*, which had been promoted in Britain by Thirlwall’s translation (Murray 2010).

Grote’s separation of myth and history was accompanied by the separation of sacred from secular history and of oriental from Greek history. Earlier historians such as John Gast (1793, I: 2) had tried to integrate a model of the development of Greece based in some ways on the *Archaeology* with the view (derived from the Book of Genesis) that the Greeks were descended from one of Noah’s children. They had also respected the authority of ancient traditions that Greece had been settled in early times by Phoenicians and Egyptians (e.g., Gast 1793, I: 3, 17; cf.

Bernal 1991). Grote's methodology dispatched those traditions into the domain of legend and so supported both Thucydides' own narrowly Greek focus in the *Archaeology* (Thucydides does note Pelops' arrival in the Peloponnese from Asia (1.9.2), but not the traditions of Phoenician and Egyptian settlement) and the increasingly racial focus on Greek exceptionalism in the nineteenth century.

In relation to Thucydides, Grote was also distinctive in the sharpness with which he distinguished between the *Archaeology* as evidence for how Greeks thought and the *Archaeology* as evidence for early history. The popular eighteenth-century French historian Charles Rollin, by contrast, drew in his account of the Trojan War on Thucydides' argument about the number of Achaean ships at Troy without mentioning Thucydides himself – though he did cite Thucydides expressly for the view that the ships had no decks (1829, IV: 90). That is to say, Rollin made no overt distinction between the preserved material of Greek legend and an inference drawn by Thucydides. Similarly Temple Stanyan in his *Grecian History* repeatedly drew on Thucydides without citing him; at one point, he moves straight from Thucydidean arguments about the Achaeans' ship numbers and supply problems to a straightforwardly legendary narrative of their initial mistaken arrival in Mysia and of the events leading up to the death of Palamedes (1751, I: 48). In general, most eighteenth-century accounts of the Trojan War seem to merit the criticism that Vidal-Naquet applied to J.J. Barthélemy's account of the war's origins in the opening book of his famous fictional travelogue, *The Travels of Anacharsis the Younger in Greece* (1787): "the critical level ... is dramatically lower than in Thucydides' 'archaeology' ... [Barthélemy] was incapable of using [Thucydides] when it came to reflecting upon the past as opposed to simply recounting what the sources said" (1995: 10–11).

There is a danger, however, of painting too one-sided a picture of historians before Grote (Macgregor Morris 2008). Grote was certainly not the first historian to follow Thucydides' *Archaeology* by drawing on both Homeric poetry and comparative ethnography as evidence for the customs of early times. Both types of argument can be found in the histories of Greece written by William Mitford and John Gillies in the closing decades of the eighteenth century: both writers picked up Thucydides' analysis of attitudes to piracy, with Mitford noting that robbery was still held in honor in Sicily and Arabia and had been until recently in Ireland and Scotland (Gillies 1790, I: 17–18; Mitford 1829, I: 18–19); and while Gillies did not actually name Thucydides in adducing accounts of North America by Charlevoix and Lafitau as well as Tacitus' account of Germany (1790, I: 78, cf. 88; 51–2) in his account of Homeric manners, it is suggestive that he cited approvingly the approach to myth in "the extraordinary work" of Vico, who had referred to Thucydides' analysis of barbarism as a "golden passage" (Gillies 1790, I: 58 n.: unusually early evidence for the Neapolitan writer's influence; Vico 1999: 286). Interest in Thucydides' approach to Homeric customs was also spread by the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns toward the end of the seventeenth and the start of eighteenth centuries – that is, the dispute over whether epic heroes such as

Achilles provided an appropriate ethical model for modern readers. The *Archaeology* played an important role at this time in encouraging a historicizing approach: it was cited, for example, in the discussion of Homeric morality in the introduction (mainly written by Thomas Parnell) to the first volume (1715) of Alexander Pope's translation of the *Iliad* (1967: 72); extensively used by Thomas Blackwell in his *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), a groundbreaking attempt to understand the historical conditions that made the (in Blackwell's view, unique) achievements of Homer possible; and praised by Robert Wood in his influential *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1775: 182–3) in defense of the historical value of Homer. This historicizing interest in the study of Homeric customs (fed by the growing literature of travel, including Wood's account of his journeys in Asia Minor and Arabia) was an important stimulus for the development of the modern historiography of ancient Greece.

That even earlier historians could engage in a complex way with Thucydides' *Archaeology* can be shown by consideration of Sir Walter Raleigh's large-scale and unfinished *History of the World*, first published posthumously in 1628. An interesting comparison between Thucydides and Raleigh was drawn by Matthew Arnold in his 1857 inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford, entitled "On the Modern Element in Literature." To illustrate "the supreme characteristic of a highly developed, a modern age – the manifestation of a critical spirit," Arnold turned to "one or two passages of the masterly introduction which Thucydides ... has prefixed to his history." After paraphrasing Thucydides' account of the Trojan War, and some of his concluding methodological remarks, Arnold comments on his "modern language": "it is the language of a thoughtful philosophic man of our own days; it is the language of Burke or Niebuhr assigning the true aim of history." He then turned "for a contrast to a historian of the Elizabethan age," Raleigh-like Thucydides, "a man of action." After citing Raleigh's discussion of the geographical location of Paradise, Arnold asks: "Which is the ancient here, and which the modern? Which uses the language of an intelligent man of our own day?" (1914: 461–3).

It is telling that it was Raleigh's sacred history that Arnold used to illustrate his relative antiquity – and Raleigh's chronologically oriented interweaving of biblical and classical legend was indeed far removed from the narrower Thucydidean mode of historical writing promoted by Grote. If Arnold had turned to Raleigh's account of the Trojan War, however, he might have offered a more nuanced view of his achievement. At times, Raleigh does seem less critical than Thucydides: in assessing how Agamemnon was able to gather his expeditionary force (1829, II: 450), for instance, he runs the suitors' oaths alongside Agamemnon's power rather than subordinating the one to the other, as Thucydides had done. But in other respects Raleigh can be read as applying a Thucydidean style of reasoning to the past. After introducing the Trojan War in Thucydidean style as "the first enterprise that was undertaken by general consent of all Greece" (1829, II: 447), he raises the question of the causes of Paris' rape of Helen. He first cites Herodotus for the view that Paris' rape was the culmination of a series of

inter-continental rapes (Io, Europa, Medea), and then turns to Thucydides to support his rejection of this view:

Thucydides, a writer of unquestionable sincerity, maketh it plain, that the name of barbarians was not used at all in Homer's time, which was long after the war of Troy; and that the Greeks themselves were not then called all by one name Hellenes, as afterwards. So that it were unreasonable to think, that they should have sought revenge upon all nations as barbarous, for the injury received by one... (1829, II: 449)

Raleigh offers here an intelligent application of Thucydides' critical method; his argument is weakened only by the fact that he attributes the tit-for-tat account of the causes not to "learned Persians," as Herodotus had done, but to Herodotus himself (Herodotus arguably implies the same critique of these Persians that Raleigh makes of Herodotus (Rood 2010)).

Raleigh makes further sophisticated use of the *Archaeology* when he proposes his own account of the reason for Paris' actions:

I think that Paris had no regard either to the rape of Europa, Medea, or Hesione; but was merely incited by Venus, that is, by his lust, to do that which in those days was very common. For not only Greeks from barbarians, and barbarians from Greeks, as Herodotus discoursed, but all people were accustomed to steal women and cattle, if they could by strong hand or power get them ... And these practices, as it appears in Thucydides, were so common, that none durst inhabit near unto the sea for fear of piracy, which was accounted a trade of life no less lawful than merchandise. (1829, II: 450)

Here Raleigh is not simply using Thucydides as a historical source or applying reasoning based on Thucydides, but advancing a specific historical argument from Thucydides' general account of Homeric customs. Later, too, he makes a similar move by using Thucydides' argument about the average number of sailors on each ship to calculate the size of Aeneas' force when he sailed to found Rome (1829, II: 705). One can of course object that this move is unwarranted – but it is still an attempt to apply criteria of historical plausibility to legendary material.

It seems, then, that Matthew Arnold's view of Raleigh's relative chronological backwardness in relation to Thucydides is in some ways too simple. It is not just that Raleigh is more "modern" than Arnold suggests: one could equally claim that Thucydides is much less so. Grote, after all, could claim to be advancing criteria of verifiability more rigorous than those used by Thucydides or by his own predecessors. Arnold preferred to follow the schema of his father Thomas, who argued for the contemporary relevance of Thucydides in the famous appendix on "The Social Progress of States" to his 1830 commentary on Thucydides, where he introduced to English readers Vico's theories of the lifecycles of civilizations (Potter 2012: 108). At any rate, what these conflicting readings suggest above all is that any historian's turn to the *Archaeology*, however sincere their intellectual commitment to the

methodological complexities involved in the recovery of the past, is in some sense an exercise in self-definition against Thucydides' classic status. At the same time, the schema of historical development supplied by Thucydides in the *Archaeology* also provided a boost to the intellectual status of Greek history: William Young cited Thucydides' developmental model (1.6.6) to support his claim that his outline of early history in his *History of Athens* was "in a certain degree applicable to the first population, and to the ruder commencements of every nation, as well as of Greece ... with some little variation from local circumstances, the history of the beginnings of one people, is the history of the beginnings of all" (1786: 303–4). The *Archaeology*, that is to say, could offer insight not just into the history of Greece but into the history of civilization *tout court*.

The *Archaeology* and Savagery

The *Archaeology*'s important contribution to the Enlightenment discourse of civilization can be illustrated in a variety of genres, including travel narrative. A particularly striking example can be found in a long appendix on "Savages" in the French philosopher C.-F. Volney's 1803 *View of the Climate and Soil of the United States of America*. After a long account of his various experiences among the native Americans, Volney claims that he had been "struck with the analogy ... between the savages of North America and the so much vaunted nations of Greece and Italy":

In the Greeks of Homer, particularly in those of his Iliad, I find the customs, discourse, and manners of the Iroquois, Delawares, and Miamis. The tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides paint to me almost literally the sentiments of the *red men* respecting necessity, fatality, the miseries of human life, and the rigour of blind destiny. But the piece most remarkable for the variety and combination of features of resemblance is the beginning of the history of Thucydides, in which he summarily retraces the habits and way of life of the Greeks, before and after the Trojan war, up to the age in which he wrote. (1804: 469–70)

Volney proceeds to offer a number of excerpts from Lévesque's translation (1804: 470–3; I cite here from W. Smith's version, which was used in the English translation of Volney). He gives a long extract from 1.2, on the instability of early Greece (including Thucydides' explanation of why Attica's poor soil kept it from the disruptions that affected the rest of Greece and so paradoxically promoted its prosperity). He also cites Thucydides' account (1.6.1–3) of how "the custom of wearing weapons once prevailed all over Greece, as their houses had no manner of defence, as travelling was full of hazard, and their whole lives were passed in armour, like barbarians," including the model of survivalism ("A proof of this is the continuance still in some parts of Greece of those manners, which were once with uniformity general to all") and Athenian exceptionalism ("The Athenians were the first,

who discontinued the custom of wearing their swords, and who passed from the dissolute life into more polite and elegant manners"). Thucydides' model of survivalism is particularly useful for Volney as it openly expresses the idea of differentiation from customs that were once uniform – an idea that Volney can easily transfer to his experience of the native Americans.

The surprising point about Volney's citations from the *Archaeology* is that many of them do not in fact relate to Thucydides' picture of early Greece. Volney quotes, for instance, Thucydides' account of present-day Sparta as "not closely built, the temples and public edifices by no means sumptuous, and the houses detached from one another, after the old mode of Greece." He also cites the methodological sections 1.20 and 1.22 extensively, even though their relevance to his argument is not at all clear. And at the end he jumps beyond Thucydides' introduction proper to include a short extract from later in Book 1, where Thucydides describes the Corcyraeans killing prisoners they had taken in a sea battle (1.30.1). Volney concludes that "there is not a single line that is inapplicable to the savages of America, if we except what concerns Attica, the occasional causes of the civilization of which were too remarkable for me to omit them" (1804: 474). Volney, that is to say, turns the discourse of primitivism against the Greeks of Thucydides' own time, while seeing Thucydides' own home city as special (Vidal-Naquet and Loraux 1995: 98).

Volney's application of Thucydides' developmental model can be paralleled in travel narratives set in other regions. His discussion of the survival of brigandage in northwestern parts of the Greek world was cited by nineteenth-century travelers to the same areas (Hughes 1830: 396; Mure 1842: 2) to emphasize that the custom continued even now. Indeed, the "primitive" behavior that Thucydides had restricted to the margins of the Greek world could now be found throughout Greece (Hartley 1833: 92), particularly after notorious events such as the 1870 murder of some British tourists kidnapped on a visit to Marathon (Anon. 1870: 8–9; [Goudas?] n.d.: 4, cited by Herzfeld 1982: 68). As in Volney's work, exploitation of Thucydides' account of early Greece was combined in these works with some questioning of the civilized standards of fifth-century Greeks.

The Thucydidean model on which travelers such as Volney drew had been much more fully elaborated during the Scottish Enlightenment. Thucydides' presentation of early Greece fed into the universalizing materialist perspective in works such as Lord Kames' *Historical Law-Tracts* – though Kames imports some distinctly modern theoretical concerns (the pastoral stage, property) when he cites Thucydides to show that "while men led the life of shepherds, there was no relation formed betwixt them and land, in any manner so distinct as to obtain the name of Property" (1761: 95). Thucydides' reading of the *Odyssey* as evidence for the acceptability of piracy was particularly popular: it was borrowed, for instance, by Adam Smith in his 1762–3 lectures on Jurisprudence at the University of Glasgow (1978: 224). Thucydides' importance can more broadly be seen in Adam Ferguson's important *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767). In the second part

of his work, "Of the History of Rude Nations," Ferguson appeals to Thucydides to support a basic methodological move: "Thucydides, notwithstanding the prejudice of his country against the name of Barbarian, understood that it was in the customs of barbarous nations he was to study the more ancient manners of Greece" (1966: 80). He then draws on Thucydides implicitly in his account of pillaging in the Homeric age (1966: 98–9) and of the code of honor among robbers (1966: 154–5). Later, Ferguson's inclusion of an imaginary time-traveler to Greece builds on Thucydides' analysis (1.5–6) of changing attitudes to athletic nudity and arms-carrying: "They throw all off, and appear like so many naked cannibals, when they go to violent sports and exercises ... They fortunately went always unarmed; and to wear a sword in time of peace, was among them the mark of a barbarian" (1966: 197–8; cf. also his discussion "Of Luxury" at 1966: 246–7). Through this reflective use of Thucydides, Scottish Enlightenment thinkers were important sources of inspiration for the reconstruction of early Greece in historians like Gillies, himself based in Edinburgh, and beyond that, as we have seen, Grote.

Enlightenment philosophers had other sources besides Thucydides both for their reconstruction of early human life and for their methodology. Ferguson, for instance, cites Vitruvius' observation that the early forms of architecture can be found in a Scythian cottage (1966: 167). Lucretius' account of human development in Book 5 of the *De Rerum Natura* (which itself probably drew on the *Archaeology* (Smith 1964)) was also an important inspiration. Scottish historians were also inspired by the contemporary interest in Homeric society and its Highland counterpart. But Thucydides maintained his status as an important methodological source that also lent authority to modern writers: the *Archaeology's* depiction of piracy as honorable in Homeric times was cited, for instance, in a note in an early poetic rendition of James Macpherson's Ossianic material ([Hole] 1772: 171 n.).

In their use of Thucydides' account of early Greece Enlightenment thinkers had also been anticipated by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political philosophers and theorists of history. Jean Bodin, for instance, cited the *Archaeology* in his attack on the idea of the Golden Age in his influential *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1945: 298). Together with other sixteenth-century thinkers such as Gentili, Bodin also used Thucydides in his contributions to debate on international law and the justification of warfare: the *Archaeology's* presentation of the unstable state of early Greece was often used to justify imperial expansion (Hoekstra 2012: 28).

The *Archaeology* has often been thought to lie behind one of the most famous passages of early modern political thought – the depiction "Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind" in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. To press home the advantages of obedience to authority, Hobbes fleshes out his account of "a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man" with a run of negatives ("there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain ...") and the conclusion that "the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short." (2012, II: 192). To what extent Hobbes was drawing on Thucydides here is, however,

unclear. He does go on to apply the Thucydidean idea of the survival of early customs in remote areas when he suggests that “the savage people in many places of *America* ... live at this day in that brutish manner” (2012, II: 194) – but this is by no means an exclusively Thucydidean idea. And like the Enlightenment philosophers, he had other ancient sources: the idea of early human life as brutish, for instance, is found in Lucretius and Diodorus (a writer Hobbes admired) but not in Thucydides. At any rate, clearer echoes of the *Archaeology* can be found in two passages in *Leviathan* where Hobbes discusses the perception of piracy as honorable in early times (2012, II: 142, 254–6; the first passage explicitly refers to the Greeks, while in the second a reference to “the histories of ancient Greece” was added in Hobbes’ later Latin version). Here Hobbes’ appeal to the past, by showing that “honor” is a shifting concept and yet always inseparable from power, promotes obedience as the best way of containing its potentially disruptive force.

In my first section, I considered how the rhetorical force of the *Archaeology* has been discussed by critics since antiquity, not least Hobbes himself. I then moved on from treating the *Archaeology* as literature to considering how it has been read as history at two different levels: as a particular history of Greece and a general history of civilization. I have stressed at the same time the rhetorical power of invoking the name of Thucydides or of applying his intellectual insights even when his name is not invoked. An even greater rhetorical power is exercised by Hobbes’ use of Thucydides in *Leviathan*: he makes readers experience the horrors of a lawless existence, just as Thucydides (in Plutarch’s famous phrase, quoted in the preface of Hobbes’ translation (1989: xxii)) made “his auditor a spectator.” But Hobbes also seems to show himself an acute reader of Thucydides’ historical analysis when he imagines “what manner of life there would be, where there were no common Power to feare” by evoking “the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to generate into, in a civil Warre” (2012, II: 194). Or is it rather the spirit of Hobbes himself that is felt when modern scholars suggest that Thucydides saw the spread of civil war as marking the undoing of human civilization (Macleod 1983: 123–39)? Whatever the scope of Hobbes’ direct influence, one reason for the *Archaeology*’s continuing power in the twenty-first century is that it can be read not merely as an argument for the climactic greatness of the Peloponnesian War, but as an essential step in Thucydides’ demonstration that part of that greatness lay in the return of savagery.

Guide to Further Reading

Good introductions to the *Archaeology* itself are de Romilly (2012), Hunter (1982: 17–49), and Foster (2010: 8–43). Pritchett (1975) is a useful guide to ancient criticism of Thucydides. Moore, Macgregor Morris, and Bayliss (2008) and Lianeri (2011) include good essays on the development of Greek historiography; for the German influence on Grote, see Muhlack (1983). Meek (1976) offers a helpful

discussion of Enlightenment theories of human development; Berry (2001) focuses specifically on the Scottish Enlightenment. On Hobbes' translation of the *Archaeology*, see Warren (2009); on the possible echoes in *Leviathan*, Klosko and Rice (1985).

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Thucydidean Concepts

Lorna Hardwick

On February 12, 2006, a Sunday afternoon, an audience of some five hundred people gathered in London, packing the Novello Theatre in Aldwych to capacity. Some spectators were classicists; some were political scientists; some came because of their interest in current affairs and political debates. All were united in their expectation that a rehearsed reading of extracts from the work of the Athenian historian Thucydides and from other sources from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE would bring an illuminating critical focus to current concerns about the implications of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This had been perpetrated by a US-led coalition that included the United Kingdom as a prominent ally. The devastating consequences in terms of loss of civilian life and social instability were still raging. The performed reading was organized by the dramaturg and theater director John Barton in collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

This new enterprise created a text that was spoken and published under the title *The War That Still Goes On* (Barton 2006). The subtitle was: "Adapted from Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian Wars and Plato's Dialogue with Alcibiades." The published text contained no introduction or commentary. There were no printed stage directions, but sections had numbered headings such as "Prologue," "1. Pericles addresses the Athenian Assembly," "2. Corcyra and Corinth." Most of these were identifiable as references to particular episodes in Thucydides. The event on February 12, 2006 was the only performance. The cast, which included leading theater figures, had been assembled on an *ad hoc* basis in the midst of other commitments and had rehearsed only that weekend. They were casually dressed as if for rehearsal and sat in a semi-circle on stacking chairs, with the exception of Clive Francis (Thucydides) who had a desk at the side of the stage, setting him apart as a narrator/commentator figure. The performance ran for

approximately one hour and forty-five minutes. It was followed by a panel discussion, chaired by the broadcaster Jon Snow. The panelists included two academics – a specialist on the Middle East and Iran, Professor Haleh Afshar, and an ancient historian, Professor Paul Cartledge. The other panel members were a lawyer, Helena Kennedy QC, and a broadcaster/critic/academic, Professor Germaine Greer. The discussion also included a further reading by Cartledge of extracts from Ulysses' speech in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (3.145ff). The extract was used to foreground the variety of temporalities and idioms (history/myth/satire/parody) that could contribute to performance and to critical debate. The audience was thus prompted to think about the influence of modes of performance and their relationship to understanding and to critical thinking.

The panel discussion that followed ranged over contemporary issues of politics and power relations on the basis that the performed reading that the spectators had just seen and heard could provide insights, both by virtue of its aesthetic practice and by virtue of its content. In this way performative and deliberative aspects of the reception of Thucydides were intertwined. Although both Thucydides' *History* and Platonic dialogues are known to the modern world primarily as printed texts, both have affinities in genre and in historical context with performance. Scholars consider that Thucydides' text, or at least parts of it, might have been recited or read aloud (Hornblower 1991, commentary on 1.22) and extensive analysis has been made of its affinities with tragedy (see most recently Barker 2009 with extensive bibliography). Moreover, the dramatic and theatrical aspects of Plato's dialogues and the philosophical debate of the time are now prominent in research (Emlyn-Jones 2008). So far as the theatricality of the 2006 event and its capacity to "show" as well as "tell" is concerned, there are interesting paradoxes at work. The term "theater" is constantly in use to frame the field of war, with its associated outcomes of victory and defeat. Yet associations with performance also carry warnings about the reductionism involved in attributing a narrowly didactic function to Greek drama (or to its Thucydidean relative):

If you want your Greek tragedy to be politically didactic for its original Athenian audience, you have to accept that its "lessons" – if indeed they can be so simplistically described – took the form of open-ended social and ethical problems rather than pat solutions. This is to accept a more complex model in which tragedy confronts, questions (and only very occasionally affirms) the social, moral, political and ideological discourses of its audience. (Hesk 2007: 75)

Performance also implies epistemologies that are different from those that might hold sway in philosophy or in historical writing. The theatrical and deliberative impact of Barton's selection and juxtaposition of Thucydidean elements was based on the director's understanding of Thucydides' own comments on the relationships between past, present, and future. It was also informed by Barton's analysis of the political implications of the invasion of Iraq. The approach was, as so often

with receptions of Thucydides, highly selective. Analysis of Barton's text highlights the disturbances to temporal and interpretative categories that are involved in recombination. The focus in this essay on the reception of Thucydides' concepts recognizes the performative as well as the philosophical expectations that are involved in giving the historian a voice in modern society and its political debates. How speech acts achieve a performative effect in contexts beyond those of the original rhetoric is something to which Thucydides himself drew attention through his representation of Cleon's argument in the Mytilene debate (3.38). Modern receptions that use performance contexts therefore open themselves to investigation of the agency of the spectators in creating meaning and to critique of the transformations they enact, as well as to the practices of selection that directors employ. An implied statement of confidence in the capacity of performances of Thucydides to stimulate debate has made Thucydides the historian of choice in international crises of the last thirty years. Anticipating Barton's 2006 initiative (which elaborated his earlier work), turning to Thucydides at times of national and international crisis had been evident in Anglophone public media at the time of the first Gulf War (a televised dramatization of the Melian Dialogue). The public performance of Barton's collage shifted the vehicle from wide public dissemination through television to the more intimate setting of a self-selected theater audience.

At a surface level the use of modern idiom was exploited to trigger audience reaction. The degree and intensity of audience response was striking. At particular points, for instance in the opening address by the Pericles figure (scene 1) and in the "Melian Debate" (*sic*, scene 9), there were gasps from the audience, which contained many people whose primary academic and/or social interests were in politics rather than ancient history and who were probably not previously familiar in any detail with Thucydides' text. In timing and tone these gasps covered a spectrum of responses from initial astonishment, bordering on incredulity, to loudly vocalized assent (occasionally reminiscent of the fervor of a Pentecostal religious meeting, although on this occasion the reverence was for contemporary liberal criticism of the Iraq war; at least this demonstrated that it is not only neo-conservatives who appropriate Thucydides). Certainly I found myself, saying to previously unknown neighbors sitting alongside and in front of me, "Yes, he really did write like that." But once that first almost smug sense of triumph had passed, I wanted to add "well, a bit like that ... and other things as well." The gap between my two responses highlights the difference between welcoming the recognition that Thucydides can help us address our contemporary condition (a kind of "erotics of the discipline," to allude out of context to Sally Humphreys' phrase (Humphreys 2004) and an acute sense that this reading did not satisfy all the conditions for what Habermas has characterized as the spectator's membership of a universal community in which the capacity for collective deliberation is not limited by the particularity of an individual scene or speech or by grounding its interpretation in a particular context (see Kottman 2008: 18, 150). My sense was that if the

aspirations set out in Thucydides 1.22 and the proven capacity of the historian's text to promote deliberation across boundaries of time, place, and language were to be communicated, then it would be necessary both to offer something more than locally activated correspondences and to avoid the filtering out of historical and contextual differences.

More recently, in 2013, the deliberative association between "performing" Thucydides and exploring how the possibilities of trans-historical dialogue are communicated and developed formed the basis of an event "Might is Right? Ancient and Modern Debates" in which arts academics in Bristol came together with colleagues in politics and modern history for a discussion provoked by their responses to an enactment of a short (less than fifteen minutes) exchange based on Thucydides' Melian Dialogue. The performance, scripted by Neville Morley, cast four male drama students (dressed in business suits), facing each other in pairs across a table. It began with a recording, similar to a modern newscast, confirming the meeting between representatives from Athens and Melos. The exchanges were sharp (like *stichomythia*) but the body language and movements of the two sides differed. The Athenians stayed seated; the Melians paced about, using strong gestures (Fitzgerald 2013, private communication). The discussion that followed considered the scripting and acting aspects as well as the issues. The adaptor (Morley) explained that he had used profanity as a way of transferring aspects of the Greek text into a modern idiom that spectators would recognize and with which they could identify. Recurrent themes in the discussion included the extent to which Thucydides is distorted by modern "cherry-picking" of episodes, concepts, and phrases (translation of which is complicated by the difficulty of Thucydides' Greek) and awareness that his authority is sometimes invoked for comments that are not in his text (Fitzgerald 2013).

What, then, can be extracted from these performance-based versions of Thucydides? The most obvious is the continued demonstration of the belief that Thucydides is "good to think with." However, "thinking with Thucydides" produces a double bind. Either there is a positivist hope that somehow "what Thucydides wrote" can be uncovered (and then used to illuminate the present, which is possible if and only if some kind of essentialist notion of the "human condition" is accepted), or there is a recognition that presenting Thucydides in modern mode assimilates his text to modern concerns and ways of looking at the world. In addition, there is the realization, implicit in performance of any kind, that the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators, although ephemeral, can generate some kind of transformative process (Fischer-Lichte 2010). The notion of transformation can apply both to the perspectives of the spectators and to what is done with Thucydides' text. Awareness of such processes is both implicit and explicit in Thucydides – for example, in his representation of the debates in the Athenian Assembly and elsewhere. The performative (although not necessarily theater-based) *logoi* of Thucydides' text and its receptions can

bridge the gap between the shaping perspectives of “world view” and of “lived experience.” This combination of literal and metaphorical performativity then requires from the scholar attention to the effects of discontinuities in modes of production and their cultural distinctiveness (Jameson 1983). This kind of dual consciousness does, of course, complicate easy assumptions about the applicability of concepts that are “cherry-picked” from Thucydides and applied to modern situations. Once the relationships between concepts and events in Thucydides are probed, challenge to modern attempts to post simplistic equivalences is intensified; a holistic approach carries within it the capacity to resist appropriation.

One of the most frequently asked questions about research into the reception of classical texts is to what extent, and how, it negotiates a balance between, on the one hand, its impetus in the “present,” that is the text and context in which the reception takes place, and on the other hand the “classical past,” that is the text and context in which the source text was generated. This question underlies much of my discussion here but the issue is brought into a sharper and even more contentious focus when the ancient text in question purports to narrate, describe, and analyze events that took place at a defined time and place and thus requires methods that analyze and situate it in terms of criteria that differ from those developed for handling (for example) drama, with its mythical subject matter and ephemerality of performance, or poetry, with its appeal to the imagination and emotions as well as to the cultural horizons of its generation and rewriting. All these genres nevertheless raise questions about the multiple agencies that generate and sustain communication – human, lexical, formal. The concepts formulated and deployed by Thucydides in his text form the skeleton to subsequent receptions of his work in a variety of contexts but they, too, depend on agency for their transmission and recontextualization. The reception of Thucydides challenges rigid distinctions between “legacies” and “refractions” that have imbued studies by modern historians of the after effects of war (see for example Reynolds 2013).

In the case of Thucydides, the challenges of analyzing the connections and agencies involved in the reception of ancient historiography are increased because of the ways in which his account of the internal and external conflicts, power relations, and social behaviors that he perceived as crucial in the relationships between the Greek *poleis* in the fifth century BCE has been exploited. This exploitation sometimes involves trying to validate claims about the conceptual and moral frameworks relevant to the development and exercise of civic and imperial power and of international relations in subsequent societies, right up to and including the present day. For example, Thucydides has been foundational in the development of international relations scholarship (Forde 2012; Lebow 2012). His narrative, and the concepts that frame and direct it, has been used in conceptualizing the Cold War, including the reinterpretation and reapplication of the internal and external politics of the conflict between Athenians and Spartans and their respective allies in terms of the rhetoric

of “Hawks and Doves” (Fliess 1966). Thucydides has also been exploited in various shades of “neoconservative” positioning, especially in the United States (Harloe and Morley 2012). Lectures on Thucydides’ *History* and reading of prescribed extracts still form part of the syllabus in some military training colleges (cf. Stradis in this volume), and sometimes this has been enthusiastically promoted by classicists – Eugenia Kiesling described in a 2009 BBC Radio 3 lecture on her role at West Point how Bernard Knox urged that Thucydides be included in the syllabus. A common factor to most of these responses to Thucydides (both to the text itself and the views about the text that have coalesced into the “idea of Thucydides”) is the tendency to seek out and emphasize similarities rather than differences between past and present. This often entails a focus on structures rather than processes, tends toward essentialism and marginalizes the historical specificity of the activities and behaviors of the past (Low 2007: 19). Analysis and critique of the reception of Thucydides’ concepts therefore has the considerable challenge of developing methods that can assess the effects of specificity (ancient and modern) on the rationales that are used to describe and justify their trans-historical importance.

Historiography, Reception, and Credibility

The reception of Thucydides is complicated by the sometimes paradoxical relationship between the expectations brought to bear on historiographical writing and the uses to which it may be put. Historiographical writing is expected to relate to “events” which may in some sense be thought to have happened. In this it differs from mythography and from creative writing (poetry, drama, fiction) although it may share some stylistic aspects (imagery, metaphor, narrative). The truth function of historiography is rooted in examples taken from lived experience in the material world, although it may use literary and rhetorical means to communicate and interpret this, with the result that there may be a mismatch between the strategy of the historian and the expectations of the reader. This can be described as an “ontological” problem:

What distinguishes historical texts from fiction is the reader’s assumption that they relate “what actually happened”... readers of historical texts ... tend to identify author and narrator and to suppose an “ontological connection” between the discourse and the events it signifies. (Rood 1998: 10)

In the case of Thucydides the ontological problem is further complicated in two respects, both of which have implications for readers’ and users’ hopes and desires for the *History of the Peloponnesian War* to illuminate not just the events among Athenians and Spartans in the fifth century BCE but also subsequent events in human history. Analysts drawing on Heidegger have called this the “ontological difference,” a term that points up the difference between, on the one hand, *ways of*

being (a term that covers both the world views involved and those who uncover and communicate them) and, on the other hand, the *inhabitants of those worlds*, the “actors” in place and time (Shanske 2007: 188). One of the aims of this chapter is to probe the extent to which Thucydides’ deployment of concepts may act as a bridge across that difference and to suggest that receptions of Thucydides that disrupt his network of concepts also disrupt the possibility of dialogue between world view and lived experience (and thus also impede possibilities of changing either). The hope that his *History* provides trans-historical illumination was to some extent triggered by Thucydides’ discussion in 1.22 concerning how his work might be of use in the future, a discussion that has been interpreted in various ways, most of which have in common some kind of hypothesis about the relationship between Thucydides’ work and the situations of humans in subsequent societies. The hopes/expectations placed on Thucydides sometimes involve assumptions that there is some kind of essentialism in human nature. There may also be a somewhat circular expectation that the kinds of situation described by Thucydides will recur at other times and places, to be categorized and interpreted through his lens – which is in effect the lens attributed to him by his modern interpreters.

Such expectations add a further “philosophical” dimension (cf. Lianeri in this volume). There is expectation not simply of “ontological connections” between Thucydides’ handling of events and discourse but also of epistemological connections between the concepts in his work and ways of using these when looking at subsequent events. It is the concepts that bring different (and potentially mutually alien) events and processes together in the minds of readers and users and which are thought to provide transferable knowledge about how the world works. Thus reception of the concepts, the explanatory *logoi* in Thucydides, turns them into performative speech acts, intended to make something happen and enable it to be categorized. This raises questions about what readers think they know as a result of encountering Thucydidean concepts and how this “knowledge” is constituted, and what use is to be made of it. Such expectations are evident even in the considerable variety of ways in which Thucydides’ utility has been interpreted – from Bodin’s 1566 use of Thucydides as a source of factual information (see Muhlack 2011 for discussion of Bodin’s *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*), to the scholar Bernard Knox’s lectures to the US Naval War College Strategy and Policy course in which he claimed that Thucydides was the source of universal lessons about the nature of power in international affairs (discussed by Kiesling, BBC Radio 3, 2010, and see the case studies in Harloe and Morley 2012).

Although he is presenting a narrative history of the war between the Athenians and the Spartans, the analysis that gives force to the aspirations Thucydides sets out in 1.22 relies on the dynamic interaction between the specific episodes and the conceptual formulations of their nature and importance. The episodes that he selects for analysis (and dramatization) are not unique; his selection depends on his judgment that they are paradigmatic for the Peloponnesian War and for how it may be perceived in the future. So *logos* and *ergon* are not just formal stylistic

features of Thucydides' presentation of particular episodes but are also embedded in his thinking, not as mutually exclusive opposites but as mutually dependent concepts (Parry 1981).

The conflicts between the Greek *poleis* have not (yet) moved from the field of "history" to that of "myth," even though a significant strand in scholarship aligns Pericles' vision of Athens with the creation of a new "myth" (Loraux 1986). However, interpretation of Thucydides' text moves beyond simple models of chronological narrative. Recent scholarship has suggested illuminating ways of using the multifaceted frames of "time" to accommodate the relationship between the specific, the synoptic, and the trans-historical in Thucydides' writing. Formulations range from discussion of the compatibility between the "logical" and "historical" to exploration of the notion of simultaneity as the underlying shaping element to the structure of Thucydides' work as a whole:

In "real" historical time it is impossible to take in everything at once, even within a single theatre of war In Thucydides' narrative the temporal equivalent of a panoramic view is simultaneity – being able to comprehend a sequence of events all at once: to see the present in the light of the past, the past in the light of the present, the future in the light of the past, and the future in light of the present. (Greenwood 2006: 42)

An illustration of the structural basis to the trans-historical simultaneity identified by Greenwood would be Thucydides' imaging of iconic episodes as paradigms for a multiplicity of instances of an activity. For instance, the siege of Melos provides the "set-piece" of the Melian Dialogue's portrayal of the underlying arguments on both sides, but the events themselves are related to other instances of the unfettered exercise of power, such as the Athenian-encouraged massacre at Mycalessos (Thuc. 7.29.1) in which Thracian mercenaries killed all the inhabitants of the town (Tritle 2006: 473–4).

Synoptic approaches, both in Thucydides' technique and in subsequent analysis of his work, maintain it as a paradigm of how the historical past may be situated in relationship to the public present and to the future. Furthermore, the often-cited claim by Thucydides that his history might be a *ktēma es aei* was associated by him, not with literary qualities but with a reference to the relationship between particular events and how they were perceived in the light of broader patterns, perceptions of which in turn shaped interpretation of the specifics.

The absence of romance 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 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. (Thucydides 1.22, trans. R. Crawley)

In commenting on this passage Euben asks a pertinent question about who Thucydides envisaged as being the possessors of his work:

His audience, he tells us, will be anyone who finds the *History* useful (*ophelimos*, 1.22.4) in tracking and managing the course of events whose unfolding patterns in the future will imitate those of the past. But who are they likely to be? Will they, like the author himself, be the ones who find space and opportunity for reflection in the midst of an otherwise onerous and enforced exile? Or will the anticipated audience be one of statesmen, citizens, or *anyone who cares for politics as the text constitutes and dramatizes it?* (Euben 2010: 170; my emphasis)

The wider question of how and by whom Thucydides is perceived as providing help to “explain” subsequent events also involves re-examination of the relationship between narrative and the other aspects of writing history. In scholarship, the most frequently addressed aspects are the relationship between speeches and narrative and the selection of episodes or events that mark crucial turning points or act as paradigmatic emblems. In Barton’s theater event the techniques of excerpting, collage, and performance used to communicate these were crucial. However, as the examples I shall discuss will show, it is the conceptual framework that turns narrative into paradigmatic commentary. Subsequent readers do not think that the precise details of the war between Athenians and Spartans will be replicated. They do think (or assume) that the concepts that Thucydides used as the basis for endowing his choice of episodes with lasting significance can be used to connect fifth-century ways of looking at the world with their own.

Readers and scholars of Thucydides can vary in their choice of the most significant concepts in his work. In fact, the selection can sometimes seem more capricious than the selection of key episodes for discussion and performance (the consensus about “plums” among the episodes provides an almost canonical perspective on the text). For example, Matthew Christ in his study *The Limits of Altruism in Democratic Athens* (2012) indexes a number of transliterated Greek terms. These include: *agon*, *aristeia*, *boethei* (and cognates), *charis*, *demos*, *epitaphios*, *hubris*, *kairos*, *kerdos*, *kindunos*, *patris*, *philanthropia*, *philia*, *philotimia*, *polis*, *xenia*. Some of these indicate concepts central to Thucydides’ work. Christ’s chapter “Helping Others in Athenian Interstate Relations” provides a useful antidote to uncritical acceptance of the “might is right” reading of Thucydides and identifies *xenia* and *philia* as key concepts. The collection of essays on *War Democracy and Culture in Classical Athens* edited by David Pritchard (2010) includes in its index *aiskhune*, *aidos*, *andreia*, *arête*, *dunamis*, *epitaphios logos*, *kindynos*, *sophrosyne*. Both of these indices assist readers who want to compare Thucydides’ use of particular words and concepts with usage in other authors, but they make no claims to be comprehensive.

In studies that specifically address Thucydides, the tally is sometimes surprisingly small. For example, Crane’s influential study, *The Ancient Simplicity* (1998), has entries for *arête* and *erga* but not for *eros*. Mara’s *The Civic Conversations of*

Thucydides and Plato (2008) does list *eros* but not *philia*. Foster's *Thucydides, Pericles and Periclean Imperialism* (2010) has neither of these but does include *pleonexia*. Hunter's *Thucydides: The Artful Reporter* is more focused, as might be expected from the title, and indexes seventy-one Greek terms in all, including *aitia*, *aletheia*, *ananke* (also indexed under "necessity"), *dunamis*, *pleonexia*, *sophrosune*, *tolma*, *tuche* (Hunter 1973: 200–2). The reason, of course, is that each of these scholars is focusing on a particular set of questions, for which an indication of the wider network of concepts in Thucydides is considered a lower priority. The fullest and most helpful list is in *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Rengakos and Tsakmakis 2006) which has an Index of Names and Selected Technical Terms and an Index of Selected Greek (and transliterated) Terms. This is given seven densely filled pages (904–11) and does include *anankaia* which is missing from some of the others; interestingly there is no entry for *philia*, although *philotimia* is noted. There is also an Index Locorum for Thucydides and one for other authors. However, even this excellent volume does not specifically map comparisons between Thucydidean concepts and those in other sources so that his adaptation or distinctive use can be gauged.

Analysis of the reception of "concepts," whether in Thucydides or in intellectual history more generally, also raises particular problems about the relationship between a concept and its hinterland – not just the context in which it was developed but also about its relationship with other concepts both laterally and from linear perspectives. Claims for the validity of conceptual continuity can embrace human emotions such as "fear," "greed," "ambition," and also institutionalized concepts, such as "power," "alliances," "empire," "democracy," "freedom," in which terms that have been drawn from Thucydides are reconstituted and then projected back into his text and contexts to provide quasi trans-historical reassurance. In an essay entitled "Thucydides and the Invention of Political Science," Josiah Ober draws attention to ways in which the mutation from historiography to political science involves a disjunction between infrastructure and conceptualization. He describes how "the vocabularies in which values and interests were described were dissociated from the ordinary constraints of practice and habit" (2006: 143). However, when the relationship between narrative and conceptual networks in Thucydides is examined it becomes clear that the concepts seized on so eagerly by later interpreters derive their dynamism from their synchronic role in bringing together multiple occurrences of events and actions that form part of the text as a whole. They are thus deeply rooted in the practices and judgments of the fifth century BCE and provide a critical perspective on any tendency to remove from their formal and historical context concepts such as *demos* or *arche*, to reconstitute them as "the people" or "empire" and then project back on to Thucydides' text assumptions that have developed subsequently, perhaps generated and partly informed by readings of Thucydides but also mediated through other lenses (for example, from seventeenth-century England, see Scott 2009). As well as being alert to such "accretions" and transformations, it is also necessary to be on the watch for

Trojan horses (subliminal carrying over with the Thucydidean terms of aspects of their infrastructure and associated networks, which are potentially liable to reactivation).

This emphasis on connectivities and agency brings the discussion into the sphere of classical reception theory and practice and how it can interact with and enhance the work of Thucydides scholars. The sphere of “reception” can open up several different ways of approaching Thucydides. It could cover his reception of earlier texts and ideas (i.e., selection, evaluation, reworking, and using them as a springboard for the development of his own approach); it certainly raises questions about intertextuality and dialogue with near contemporaries such as Herodotus, dramatists, sophists, and philosophers. It can incorporate analysis of reception of Thucydides within antiquity as well as of subsequent mediations and receptions. Examples can vary from selective appropriation to engagement with his work as a whole and each of them sends out its distinctive signals and tendrils, which in turn figure overtly or covertly in modern readers’ analysis. So even when the main lens is on how a subsequent reader or analyst engages with Thucydides, the process is hardly ever unmediated. This suggests that, for reception scholars, there is always an underlying palimpsestic model to the analysis rather than an “hour-glass” model (in which the engagement is directly between the ante-text and the new text with little or no attention to the mediations that have acted as agents of transmission and adaptation in between).

However, it may well be the case that readers and listeners are unaware of the palimpsest and of what has been inscribed and effaced. The first part of this chapter added to the ontological and epistemological problems a further set of issues that I roughly described as performative; they focus our attention on ways in which Thucydides’ concepts are activated in contexts very different from those of his own work and on how the agencies involved (including Thucydides’ text and the modern communicators) shape in their turn the effects on new constituencies of readers, listeners, thinkers, and users. This brings into the equation the thinking subjects, who have internalized concepts from Thucydides, embedding them in their own discourse and purposes. In the terminology of classical reception studies, these active agents may be appropriators (transferring selected aspects of Thucydides “in” to their own concerns), conversationalists (speaking and listening in an attentive way), or people who are in “dialogue” (with Thucydides and with one other), a relationship that has elements of analysis and critique. Both “conversation” and “dialogue” approaches imply that the text of Thucydides still has “force” and might resist appropriation or an unsuitable relocation in another sphere. They also imply a degree of shared knowledge among the interlocutors (Hardwick 2014). It is not the aim of this chapter to make judgments between these approaches in terms of their validity in reception studies, but I do suggest that Thucydides’ reception provides distinctive examples of each and thus contributes both to study of Thucydides and to reception studies more widely.

My probe of the indices to a selection of major works on Thucydides suggested two things about how his work has been approached in modern scholarship. Firstly, the number of key Greek terms potentially available for discussion is large. Many of these are abstract nouns or derivatives, including neuter adjectives or participles used with the definite article (Rhodes 2009: xlii). Secondly, authors of these works of scholarship are not always in agreement about which are the most important. This is in one sense breathtakingly obvious, given that their frameworks of inquiry are different, but in another sense it alerts us to the effects of selectivity – if the total network of concepts in Thucydides is large, then choosing to enter the network at a particular point may obscure the larger pattern. That is why I have emphasized the value of working toward a “thick” analysis of what happens when Thucydides’ concepts are transplanted into new ground, especially in situations where ways of thinking differ significantly from those of the fifth century BCE. However, Thucydides’ use of language and his way of thinking are not univocal. In his exploration of ways of reading Thucydides, James Morrison has argued that Thucydides’ approach is “interactive,” that he “invites the reader to juxtapose one argument with another, compare speeches and narrative and text maxims against a particular episode” (Morrison 2006: 3). Morrison suggests that this adds a “dialogic quality” to Thucydides’ work, a quality that is found not only in the paired speeches that respond to one another but also in the questions raised by a narrative that “encourages the reader to pursue multiple lines of possible action and consequences” (ibid.: 3). To actualize this dialogue Morrison also adds in the reader’s own experiences and insights. This might be said to privilege reader response theory and the reception approach. However, I would argue that this is only one facet of the process. The reader is responding to a dialectical structure in the formal arrangement of the work itself which is sometimes in a productive tension with the apparently assured judgments made by the historian about – for example – the causes of war and of military and political decisions. The interactive role of the reader is signaled by Thucydides himself in two pertinent authorial interventions. The first is in his comments in 1.22 that he has written the speeches as reconstructions of what the occasion demanded, not as verbatim reports. This immediately puts his judgments about causation, reasoning, and rationales for action into the mix. The second is his comment in the account of the *stasis* at Corcyra (3.82–3) that words changed their meaning:

So then civil war spread among the cities, and those who came to it later took lessons, it seems, from the precedents and progressed to new and far greater extremes in the ingenuity of their machinations and the atrocity of their reprisals. They reversed the usual evaluative force of words to suit their own assessment of actions. Thus reckless daring was considered bravery for the cause; far-sighted caution was simply a plausible face of cowardice; restraint was a cover for lack of courage; an intelligent view of the general whole was inertia in all specifics; and impulsive haste was enlisted among the manly virtues, while full consideration in the light of possible dangers was a specious excuse for backsliding. (trans. Hammond 2009)

The passage (in spite of all the difficulties of interpretation) has provided a trope for discussions of the effects of civic and inter-state violence. Thucydides' formulation of the issue is often interpreted as pointing to the political manipulation of language. However, it can also allow the notion of "semantic stretch," an extension or adaptation of meaning that can be a long process or be a sign of the urgency of communication to particular audiences at times of crisis (Lloyd 2012: 72–92). Such hermeneutic ambivalence is evident in a recent study, Kate McLoughlin's *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (2011). McLoughlin has, astonishingly, only one reference to Thucydides and that is in a footnote. The reference is to a character in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* who says "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice ... the things that were glorious had no glory ... There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity ... Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages" (McLoughlin 2011: 135 n.3). Such, too, were the effects of the *stasis* in Corcyra. However, there is also an epistemological point to be made. Thucydides himself sometimes seems uncertain of the relationship between the different levels of causation analysis that he introduces. It is as though he is wittingly or unwittingly drawing to our attention the fact that he himself is an agent in the process of constructing his history. His categorization is especially problematic when he writes of different strata in the causal chain and how they figure in the explanation and justifications put forward for policies and actions. A case in point is the ambivalence in the use of *aitia* as "cause" and *prophasis*, which has been variously interpreted and translated as "underlying cause" and "pretext" (Lloyd 1996: 94, which also draws on medical usage). Furley takes *aitiai* and *prophaseis* together as "accusations and grounds" and uses Thucydides' formulation of "truest reason" (*alethestate prophasis*) as an indication of the historian's understanding of psychological momentum – "situations lead to feelings and, when these reach certain proportions, to decisions and actions" (Furley 2006: 424). Rood points out that Thucydides' formulation implies that the *aitiai* are less true but not that they are spurious. The important aspect of the *prophaseis* is that they are "least apparent in speech" (Rood 1998: 208–9). Whether this was because they were actively repressed or because they were too deep seated to be immediately grasped and communicated in rhetoric is not clear. In 1.118.1 Thucydides appears to use *prophaseis* to indicate superficial causes, but significantly this is in a narrative passage that does not give any indication of what was said and in what circumstances, so the extent to which he is focalizing is not certain.

The nexus between psychological momentum, rhetoric, and deep-seated analysis recurs in the clusters of concepts that are deployed to account for war, both through the voices of the participants and in the historian's analysis. In 1.75–7, Thucydides identifies these as fear, desire to preserve prestige and reputation, and self-interest/greed. A similar cluster is used by Herodotus in his account of the disputes among the Athenian leaders before the battle of Marathon. Like

subsequent historians and rhetoricians, Herodotus was writing both with the advantage of hindsight and with the disadvantage of contemporary pressures. Herodotus' account reveals a situation in which the struggle against the Persians was complicated by conflicts among the Greeks in general and among the Athenians in particular. His writing was probably also shaped by the ensuing competition for credit following the eventual defeat of the Persians. In 6.109 Herodotus set out the speech of the Athenian general Miltiades to Callimachus (the war archon who had a vote additional to those of the generals in deciding strategy; in the event, Callimachus' vote was decisive in the decision to fight). According to Herodotus, Miltiades' rhetoric appealed to freedom (versus slavery), to honor (to be enhanced by a glorious reputation in the future), and desire for Athenian pre-eminence among the Greek *poleis*. This formulation has strong affinities with Thucydides' analyses of the motives for political action. In Thucydides 1.75–7, fear, desire for prestige, and greed in the pursuit of interests are signaled out as prime movers. These also underlie the apology for *arche* put forward by Pericles in his final speech (2.65). The extent to which Herodotus' account was a response to mid-fifth-century perspectives and the extent to which Thucydides' analysis of the causes of the war between the Greeks was shaped by the dynamics of the relations between the Greeks in the Persian wars is a matter for debate, both in terms of fifth-century history and in terms of the temporal inversions of historiography (Raafaub 2004: 63). The interdependency of concepts such as fear, honor, and greed may signal an initial phase in inscription into cultural and political memory, initially within antiquity but then subsequently carried forward into subsequent receptions, taking with it its infrastructure of the patterns of analysis and categorization embedded in the ante-texts (Hardwick 2013).

Different concepts come into reckoning when the context is primarily one of social cohesion. An iconic example occurs in the Periclean *Epitaphios* which, like other examples of the genre, carries the freight of social memory both within antiquity and subsequently. Attention to its context and the key terms used by Pericles (2.34–46) reveals the specific dynamics of the historical situation in Periclean Athens and the concepts, psychological and institutional, that were deployed to address those issues. The *Epitaphios* was a significant genre in the Greek world and comparisons with reconstructions or fragments and other extant examples show that in Thucydides Pericles is being depicted as turning the emphasis away from remote ancestors or semi-mythical genealogy and toward civic unity (Ziolkowski 1981; Loraux 1986). The *Epitaphios* is a major “set-piece” in Book 2 of the *History* (placed just before the account of the social and material devastations caused by the plague).

In Barton's *The War That Still Goes On*, extracts from the *Epitaphios* were repositioned. The opening sequence in Barton's script moved straight from a statement by Thucydides of the importance of his work (based on 1.22) to scene 1: *Pericles Addresses the Athenian Assembly*. This introduced material from the *Epitaphios*. In Thucydides 2.34–46 the occasion was the civic funeral for all those killed in the

first year of the war with Sparta and this follows a narrative of the suffering and disruption that resulted from the evacuation of the countryside and its occupation by Spartan troops. Barton's repositioning and truncation of the excerpt removes the problematic subtext. Barton selected those aspects of the speech that stressed how the Athenian empire was a development of the freedom won by their ancestors (i.e., from Persian invasion); how active participation in politics was a defining characteristic of the city; and how the empire was a fount of culture as well as economic acquisitions. Furthermore, "our superiority over other states derives from our democratic form of government" (Barton 2006: 8–9). Barton's audience responded with amusement to references to Pericles' exhortation to "fall in love with her" (sc. Athens; Barton 2006: 1) as a play on modern idiom. Because Barton provided no context for the *Epitaphios* as a whole, the significance of the *eros*-related language used in Thucydides to describe the emotional and perhaps irrational aspects of the citizen community's patriotism was repressed. *Eros* and its associations are in strong contrast with the *philos*-related language used by Thucydides to describe the approach to the *polis* of Pericles and his associates, with its implications of alliances and mutual obligation (Crane 1998). Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles a succession of comments on the Athenians' "love for what is beautiful/noble" and on their emotional attachment to the power won by the city. There is much debate on what precisely are the main objects of their feelings (power, place, community) but that does not obscure the main point about the passionate nature of their relationship with the city (Hornblower 1991, ad loc.; Loraux 1986). Thucydides picks up this erotic vocabulary at other points in his *History*. Later in Book 2, Pericles refers to himself as a "lover" of the *polis* (2.60). This is echoed by Alcibiades in 6.92, so there seems to be a demagogic trope, drawn on when Thucydides describes the enthusiasm felt by the Athenians for the expedition to Sicily – "All were smitten with a passionate desire to sail" (6.24, trans. Hammond). The ironic resonances with Clytemnestra's diction in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 341ff. when she refers to the passionate desire, the *eros*, of the army have been pointed out by many commentators.

The focus in the *Epitaphios* on the relationship between the community and the city also diverts attention from the controversy surrounding Pericles' policy in the first year of the war. The civic funeral replaced individual family funerals, which could be a focus for discontent and for socially divisive displays of aristocratic wealth. It is worth remembering that many of the dead at this stage of the war were cavalry, troops who were drawn from the better-off citizens who were opposed to Pericles' policy of evacuating the countryside (Hardwick 1993). The use of *eros* language rather than *philia* language indicates an appeal to communal devotion rather than to the networks of the leaders (who in any case had links with the ruling groups in Sparta; Pericles himself was a guest-friend of the Spartan leader). Appeals to the community as a whole also override detailed attention being given to the dead, whose fate is subsumed in the general commitment to the *polis*. This is a characteristic of Athenian politics in the last part of the fifth century,

when civil conflict was set aside in favor of the rhetoric of reconciliation (Shear 2011: 286–312). It is also a feature of subsequent societies that are trying to recover from internal trauma (*ibid.*: 1–18).

In terms of the content and tone of the *Epitaphios* as a document of cohesive aspiration there is a significant comparison to be made from the history of the United States. Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, often cited as one of the defining statements of the ideals of American democracy, was delivered on November 19, 1863 during the American Civil War (or the war between the states) at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. The cemetery is situated on the site of the battle, which took place in July of 1863 (see further Wills 1992). Lincoln's short address was not the main speech of the ceremony. Some attempts have been made to assimilate it into the *epitaphios* tradition (discussed by Roberts 2012) and its purpose and tone does resonate with the Thucydidean *epitaphios* in the way in which it uses the occasion of a public funeral to bridge divisions in a divided nation. However, the more obvious Thucydidean echoes are in the opening speech, made by Edward Everett, President of Harvard and a leader of the Greek revival in nineteenth-century America. Everett's speech, which lasted two hours, referred in detail to what he called "the Athenian example." He spoke about the context and idealizing spirit of Pericles' speech, stressing the battle of Marathon as a benchmark of Athenian identity, describing the battle against the Persians as a battle against barbarism and invoking the precedent of Marathon in burying the dead where they fell. His speech culminated in an appeal for solidarity among the Union states. Everett went significantly further than Pericles in defining the qualities of the dead against those of their opponents, and his speech differs from that of Pericles in the extended analogy with Marathon. In fact, the lack of attention to Marathon in Pericles' speech is striking; it would probably have been inauspicious to remind his audience of a period of Hellenic unity, when Athens and Spartans had stood together against Persians. Pericles differentiates between Athenians and Spartans in terms of cultural and constitutional practices and achievements; the language of devotion to the *polis* is supported throughout by allusions to Athenian exceptionalism (including autochthony).

The use of *eros*-related rather than *philia*-related language in the *Epitaphios* and other occasions of public rhetoric illuminates one side of the internal cohesion/external relations coin. It thus links into the thread in Thucydides that is concerned with the relationship between *stasis* and *polemos*. Thucydides used the concepts and associations of *philia* and *eros* (and related words) to represent different kinds of relationship with the *polis*, based partly on class and also on constitutional dynamics. This important subtext about internal relations has sometimes been repressed in appropriations of Thucydides into the rhetorics of war studies and international diplomacy. The interfaces between internal strife (or fear of it) and external war have been studied by ancient historians (notably Gehrke 1985; Rood 1998; Price 2001; Shear 2011) but rarely figure in the attempts to assimilate to modern situations Thucydides' treatment of the volatility of the

demos, or of the psychology of the crowd. Barton's collage of fifth-century BCE sources omitted any reference to the oligarchic revolutions in Athens that accompanied the last stage of the Peloponnesian War and the defeat of the Athenians. Praise of the Athenians' commitment to the "export" of democracy is rarely accompanied by awareness of how they allied with sympathetic factions in other *poleis* and so fostered *stasis* as an instrument of war and a means toward extension of the *arche*.

Thucydides' deeply embedded networks of concepts illuminate and problematize the iconic episodes so beloved of his modern "receivers." Comparison between the clusters and the interlocking networks of concepts through which he explores the infrastructures of motivation, causation, and performativity within his *History* and the effects of the selectivity brought to bear on them by subsequent appropriators provides a critical window on both. Sensitivity to Thucydides' synoptic method challenges and revises assumptions about how and in what respects his writing may be read trans-historically. In that sense, it is the dialectical structure of Thucydides' deployment of concepts in his work that fosters communication across time, place, and language, including challenge to easy appropriations.

Guide to Further Reading

Rengakos and Tsakmakis (eds. 2006) contains helpful documentation, a bibliography, and a range of essays on aspects of reception. For analysis of Thucydides' conceptual approach, style, and structure, Hunter (1973), Parry (1987 – especially on *logos* and *ergon*), Crane (1998) and Greenwood (2006) provide influential approaches. Barker (2009) compares Thucydides' concepts with other fifth-century BCE Greek texts. For intellectual history and the modern reception of Thucydides, the best starting point is Harloe and Morley (eds. 2012). For the relationship between Thucydides and the reception of historiography, Rood (1998); for the transition from historiography to political science, Ober (2006); for interaction between Thucydides and his readers, ancient and modern, see Euben (2010) and Morrison (2006).

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Thucydides, Science, and Late Modern Philosophy

Thom Workman

Introduction

Thucydides endures – the study of the *History* has “never been as intense, as widespread, or as influential as it is in our time” (Kagan 2009: 1). One might reasonably presume that there would be an interpretive consensus about a text so widely regarded as “a possession forever,” and it is thus striking that radically polarized paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation persisted throughout much of the twentieth century. At the dominant interpretive pole there has been the identification of Thucydides as an archetypical scientific historian whose factual accounting of the Peloponnesian War eschewed opinion and judgment in favor of an exposition about the blunt truths of political history. At the other pole is the claim that the *History* bears all the familiar markers of an Aeschylean tragedy, and that it censures an overweening Athenian empire. Thucydidean interpretation often posited the austere scientist at one end and the artful critic of Athens at the other. W.P. Wallace summarized things up well when he observed that “some consider him the most objective of historians, others the most subjective” (Wallace 1964: 251).

It is noteworthy that the character of Thucydidean interpretation is congenial to the underlying philosophical orientation of our times in two specific ways. First, the counterposed interpretive paradigms around Thucydides – leading commentators to often regard him as either the “most objective” or “most subjective” of historians – accords effortlessly with the penchant we late moderns display for the radical categorical segregation of paired notions such as fact/value, normative/descriptive and so forth. We are especially prone to construing intellectual idioms or schools of thought in wholly deflationary or one-sided manners; theoretical

boasts such as “all history is material” or “all knowledge is cultural” are all too common. Thucydidean interpretation – the creative tragically minded commentator versus the unsparing scientific observer – is cradled by these contemporary intellectual habits. Secondly, both the tragic and scientific paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation draw upon an understanding of science inspired by positivism, logical empiricism, and Weberian “value-free” science, that is, an understanding of science as the marshalling of bare facts free from transcendental clutter. These interpretive tendencies embrace the anti-transcendental spirit of the post-Nietzschean age by eschewing metaphysical claims and repudiating ethical judgment when it comes to the tasks of science. This positivist notion of science, however, came under philosophical fire decades ago. Accordingly, restorative readings of the *History* must confront this narrow notion of science that sits at the intellectual center of both the tragic and scientific paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation. As scholars confront this circumscribed notion of science an entirely different Thucydides may be seen – a proto-sociologist with the attitude of what we would now call a “scientific realist.” Commentators may then approach the *History* as the product of a gifted intellectual who creatively absorbed various strands of a diversified culture to produce an analytically robust and decisively critical commentary. This effort will help to preserve the eternal Thucydides whose recounting of the great war between Athens and Sparta speaks to any age riven by immoderation, excess, and empire.

Thucydides, Tragedy, and Science

The development of polarized interpretive paradigms began to congeal with the publication of *Thucydides Mythistoricus* by Francis Cornford in 1907 (cf. Hesk in this volume). Cornford argued that Thucydides may have set about to chronicle and catalogue the events of the war with an “austere fidelity to the truth,” but that plan gave way to a principle of design that is never rendered explicit but which is discernible and effective in any event. This powerful narrative construction, indeed, makes the reader feel that “History herself had spoken” (Cornford 1907: 81). In its broadest form the *History* conforms to an Aeschylean tragedy complete with overweening ambition and pride, climactic drama, catastrophe and a reversal of fortune. Cornford argued that Thucydides uses “infiguration” to achieve this artistic effect, that is, he molded events and persons into archetypal mythic forms, and that he did so with such deftness that the story of the Peloponnesian War “escaped from time into eternity” (ibid.: 130). Through infiguration the events and figures of the war were “moulded and remoulded” into an “art form” (ibid.: 131) in the Aeschylean tradition. Thucydides may have harbored a personal grudge for Cleon, but events like the Melian affair or the Sicilian expedition and politicians like Cleon or Alcibiades assume indispensable tragic functions in the overall narrative of the war. A Western policy, for example, had continued to develop throughout

the Archidamian phase of the war, but in Thucydides' recounting the Sicilian expedition suddenly drops in as the decisive moment of overweening ambition. Thus the shape of the narrative reflects everything Thucydides had "learnt from Aeschylus" (ibid.: x).

Early responses to Cornford's thesis were fairly critical. One review argued that he had "written a most brilliant essay, but cannot be said to have penetrated below the surface of his subject" (Anon. 1907: 107). Another suggested that Cornford's claim that Thucydides poorly grasped the general importance of Athen's western policy, a basic premise of Cornford's overall argument that constituted the first half of *Mythistoricus*, was simply in error (Perrin 1908: 315–16). A review in *The Classical Quarterly* in the fall of 1907 stressed the need to respect the scientific rationalism of Thucydides despite his clear "charm" as a writer, especially since modern scientific history often appears as a steady "diet of pulverized and deodorized facts, flavoured with distilled statistics" (Postgate 1907: 318). An unease with Cornford's thesis was clear from the outset, especially insofar as it interrupted the general estimation of Thucydides as a scientist. Cornford had expressly offered his reading as a counter to the nineteenth-century tendency to appropriate Thucydides as a scientific historian. He challenged this appropriation by arguing that the notion of causality is so neglected in Book 1 that it would be better "to say that there is hardly a word about causes from beginning to end" (1907: 59). A concern with mere motives was as satisfying to Thucydides as it was to all other ancient historians: "The exclusive concentration of the ancient historians on the motives and characters of men and of states is the key to the divergence we notice between their histories and ours" (ibid.: 65). Cornford contended that science had not sufficiently developed by Thucydides' day to permit him to embrace its principles and methods irrespective of his intentions: "Nowhere but in a few men of [Thucydides'] generation," he wrote, "shall we find so much independence of thought combined with such destitute poverty in the apparatus and machinery of thinking" (ibid.: 73).

By 1929, Charles Cochrane had responded to Cornford with the publication of *Thucydides and the Science of History*. Cochrane's basic thesis was that the ancient historian embraced the new spirit of science in the manner of the Hippocratics, and that Thucydides' account of the war thus resembles those to which we have become accustomed in modern historical analysis. Cochrane's point of departure was his assertion that the natural sciences, particularly biology and medicine, "had succeeded in extricating itself from the coils of cosmology" (1929: 3), and that this development had supplied enough analytical guidance for the historian as he embarked on his study of the war. From the atomists Thucydides could draw upon a concern with the "concrete particulars of the phenomenal world" as opposed to the "abstract universals of thought" (ibid.: 5), embrace the possibility of phenomenal things arising immanently in accordance with their intrinsic natures, incorporate a doctrine of causality drawn directly from Leucippus, and be generally convinced that certain knowledge was limited to scientific knowledge. And

Thucydides could draw upon the rational empiricism of the Hippocratics including careful observation, classification, inferential reasoning and explanation, and even prediction. The intellectual foundations established by the atomists and the methodological examples furnished by the Hippocratics gave Thucydides enough to couple the basic facts of the war with an intelligent appreciation of their significance, and that, Cochrane held, “is science” (ibid.: 9). Indeed, Cochrane contended that Thucydides’ originality has often been overdrawn insofar as a scientific tradition had already taken hold by the time he embarked on his study: “In the fifth century B.C., at least in the one department of medicine, genuine science had emerged among the Greeks; and the power and originality of Thucydides lies in his having attempted to adapt the principles and methods of that science to the study of society” (ibid.: 15).

The particulars of Cochrane’s thesis are important. It may have been Thucydides’ intention to offer a science of war, but this goal was displaced by his desire to grasp the divisive forces that had forced a long, drawn-out war upon the Hellenic world. As he tried to account for the war Thucydides’ naturalism and his commitment to rational empiricism impelled him “to bring *all human action* within the realm of natural causes” (ibid.: 17). Cochrane argued that the ancient historian discovered that the divisiveness that undermined *nomos* and pitted Greeks against Greeks could be traced back to a fixed human nature, and more generally to the manner in which humanity interacts with the natural world. Herodotus is Cochrane’s foil when explaining Thucydides: “There are those (and Herodotus ... was of the number) to whom mankind appears to be the plaything of the gods, so that for them the fortunes and misfortunes of men lie in the hands of Fate or Providence, and are utterly beyond human control” (ibid.: 106). Thucydides does not succumb to such a “supernatural canon of interpretation” (ibid.: 107), but rather reveals how the human interests, interests rooted in human nature, encourage the development of conventions (*nomos*) to best safeguard them. Cochrane argues that the state, for example, is regarded by Thucydides as a straightforward attempt to reconcile divergent interests by forging a set of common interests. The laws of the *polis* and the laws between the *poleis* are similarly assumed to be nothing more than an institutional clothing of individual and state interests. In this sense *nomos* has a utilitarian or pragmatic character. The *History* is a scientific study of the decay of *nomos* in the face of stasis, plague, and war. Thucydides’ concern centered around those forces that brought unalloyed human interests rooted in human nature out into the political open. The Melian dialogue, far from being a poignant illustration of an overweening Athenian empire on the verge of sailing into disaster in Sicily, rather illustrates Thucydides’ sense that Athenian generals failed to appreciate the “real significance of law” in human affairs (ibid.: 114). Throughout his study Cochrane presses the theme that Thucydides’ scientific sensibility, applied with “great tenacity” throughout the *History*, primarily concerns itself “with nothing but interests and the power to maintain them” (ibid.: 126).

The tragic and scientific paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation congealed with Cochrane's interventions in 1929. Over the ensuing decades scholars would draw upon these paradigms to make sense of the *History*. A.W. Gomme's early review argued that Cochrane's initial claim, contra Cornford, that Thucydides "was scientifically minded" was "doubtless true" (1930: 123), and the scholarly community came to concur: "Cornford maintained that Thucydides was first and foremost a tragedian, but few have agreed with him; the as-it-were opposite thesis, that Thucydides was primarily a scientist, in an almost modern sense of that word, has won far wider support" (Wallace 1964: 256–7). Some commentators were nevertheless drawn to the general claim that Thucydides fell far short of the standards of scientific history, and thereby embraced the spirit of Cornford without necessarily embracing the specificities of the classicists' arguments. For example, one of the leading monographs on historical inquiry in the twentieth century, E.H. Carr's *What is History?*, argued that in the 200 years following Montesquieu historical inquiry had been "busily engaged in an attempt to organize the past experience of mankind by discovering the causes of historical events and the laws which governed them" (1964: 88). This tendency could be traced back to antiquity where Herodotus had sought, in his study of the Persians and the Greeks, "to give the cause of their fighting one another" (ibid.: 87). Citing only Cornford's *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, Carr argued that Thucydides had a remarkably poor understanding of historical causality, and boldly claimed that Herodotus had "found few disciples in the ancient world" (ibid.: 109). Only a few years earlier, however, another of the twentieth century's most noteworthy commentaries on the nature of historical inquiry, *The Idea of History* by R.G. Collingwood, had indicted Thucydides for being so preoccupied with the search for causes and laws that he had quashed the historical spirit. Collingwood went as far as to accuse Thucydides' of having a "bad conscience," that the ancient historian, unduly concerned about pleasing his scientific peers, sought only abstract causes and eternal laws. Collingwood referred only to Cochrane's *Thucydides and the Science of History* when he argued that Herodotus was much truer to the spirit of historical inquiry: "I think that every one who knows both authors will agree with me when I say that what chiefly interests Herodotus is the events themselves; what chiefly interests Thucydides is the laws according to why they happen ... Thucydides is not the successor of Herodotus in historical thought but the man in whom the historical thought of Herodotus was overlaid and smothered beneath anti-historical motives" (1946: 30).

Collingwood's claim that Thucydides was so scientifically minded that he feigned to do history contrasts sharply with Carr's idea that Thucydides so utterly ignored the matter of historical causation that the appellation scientist is a complete misnomer. Collingwood's sense of the scientific Thucydides, as observed above, became the hegemonic interpretive claim for most of the twentieth century. So dominant was the scientific reading of Thucydides in the decades following Cochrane's thesis that when new interpretations began to appear during the 1970s W.R. Connor could summarize them as a challenge to the hegemonic Thucydides-as-scientist

view: "A little over a decade ago a new Thucydides began to emerge. The older and more familiar Thucydides, the scientist, the rationalist, the pupil of the Sophists and the Hippocratics who had grasped and applied the principles of scientific method with such success that his work constitutes a standard of presentation is still to be seen, most commonly in the company of scholars of the older generation" (1977: 289). Conner observed that among younger classicists a quite different picture of Thucydides was emerging. "The self-effacing scientific historian," Conner wrote, "whose principal characteristic was cool detachment and whose ultimate goal was 'objectivity,' has been replaced by a passionate and engagé writer whose 'pent-up intensity of feeling and of thought' seem to some writers 'almost alarming'" (ibid.). In speaking of one of the newer contributions to Thucydidean scholarship, Virginia Hunter's *Thucydides: The Artful Reporter*, Conner observed that much of the argument was "almost precisely the view of Cornford set forth almost seventy years ago" (ibid.: 293). Other studies, with the same polarized paradigms in mind, sometimes called for a blending of the two interpretive extremes. John R. Grant, for example, argued that Thucydides' artistic qualities must be seen as complementary, and sometimes even antagonistic to, his scientific efforts: "In all this I have simply been arguing that the artistic component in Thucydides' nature was very strong, and while it usually, and brilliantly, collaborated with the scientific, it remained independent and sometimes even worked against the scientific, and that Thucydides' artistic achievement is fully equal to his scientific or intellectual" (1974: 90).

Certainly not all Thucydidean commentary was guided by these polarized paradigms of interpretation (e.g., Finley 1967). It is, nevertheless, the common tendency to assess Thucydides through the sharply counterposed paradigms of tragedy and science, often leading to an identification of him as the "most objective" or "most subjective" of historians, that must be considered directly. What exacts an accounting is the ease with which we bear these opposed paradigms in mind, and the ease once again with which some scholars claim that the *History* accords with one or another of these antithetical archetypes. It is helpful at this point in the history of Thucydidean interpretation to problematize the paradigms of tragedy and science themselves.

Thucydidean Interpretation and the Late Modern Intellectual Milieu

The polarized or radically antithetical paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation are congenial to the intellectual milieu of late modernity. We late moderns, however, scarcely notice our contemporary habits of mind, and are prone to overlooking the influence they have on our reading of texts. At the outset of his landmark *The Order of Things* Michel Foucault inadvertently teased out the essence of our peculiar intellectual idiom. As he perused an ancient Chinese encyclopedia he laughed aloud at its zoological taxonomy which included such classifications as

animals “belonging to the Emperor” and animals “that from a long way off look like flies” (1970: xv). His amusement, however, gave way to feelings of unease as he began to dwell upon the diversity of “orders” and reflect upon vexing questions about their respective foundations. Foucault’s *corpus*, indeed, can be read as an exploration of his unease about the nature of knowledge and the ultimate ground of the scientific method and its purported “discoveries.” In the late modern era we have tended to respond to such questions by aggressively denying extra-human knowledge grounds *per se*. The essayist Nietzsche gave this late modern manner of thought an aggressive twist with his philosophical *perspectivism* – the denial of a transcendent ground for knowledge – and his *nihilism* – the denial of a transcendent ground for ethics. The Nietzschean deposit influenced the outlooks of Heidegger, Quine, and Wittgenstein, and then shaped the philosophies of another generation of high-profile commentators including Derrida and Lyotard. In varying ways such thinkers participated in Nietzsche’s intellectual “revolt” against transcendental boasts in any form, and they were so influential that by the latter part of the twentieth century Hannah Arendt could speak of the “modern deaths” of God, metaphysics, and philosophy (1971: 11). Over the decades the sensible desire to historicize knowledge has typically given way to the tendency *only* to see historical and cultural determinations in intellectual life. To put this development dramatically, the nineteenth-century “death of God” has been followed noticeably by the end of all manner of things in the twentieth century. The predominant view over the last century is that intellectual life should no longer seek its Archimedean fulcrum, refuse to accept the illusion of a “God’s eye view,” in no way anticipate a “final” convergence of analytical discourse, and basically cast aspersions on metaphysical surrogates like Reason, Nature, method, or Human Nature.

First congruence: Polarized paradigms of interpretation

Two specific intellectual features of the late modern intellectual idiom germane to our discussion can be teased out and discussed. The first is its tendency to hold paired categories of thought and being rigidly apart from each other. Commonplace categorical counterpositions like fact/value, quantity/quality, real/ideal, descriptive/normative, and so forth, are radically polarized and rendered absolutely antithetical. The British empiricists, especially Hume, famously postulated and explored several such categorical pairings, but in the late modern era they are no longer problematized. These radical categorical polarizations now function like a Kantian “synthetic a priori” to structure and guide intellectual reflection. Hard and fast distinctions, such as the antithetical counterpositioning of fact and value, have become the “received wisdom” among interlocutors in the post-Nietzschean age. Late modernity, therewith, has become prone to irreducible assertions and one-sided theoretical boasts. We fail, for example, to take notice of the sheer intellectual exertion required to assert that “all science is value free” or “all history is material” – claims that require the vigilant and steadfast separation of categorical

pairings like fact/value or ideal/material respectively. In the late modern era, the survey of the world from one vantage point or another elides into the wholesale deflation of the world to one vantage point or another.

The antithetical paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation draw upon the radical polarizations of categories like fact/value or normative/descriptive in order to be meaningful. Only an intellectual culture inclined to believe that any intellectual endeavor could be wholly value-laden and normative or, alternatively, absolutely factual and resolutely descriptive could then be content to see merit in the congealed paradigms of tragedy and science that have been so influential in the interpretation of the *History*. The refraction of the *History* through this paradigmatic prism has led several commentators to reduce it to a “mostly all this” or “mainly all that” sort of text. As this happens the tragic sensibilities present in the work have been parlayed into the irreducible claim that the *History* is *largely* a tragedy and little else, just as the scientific elements of the work, with much greater frequency, get reduced to the assertion that the *History* is *largely* a work of science and little else. Such one-sided claims reveal much about the late modern cast of mind and far less about the fifth-century historian.

The cradling influence of our late modern habits of mind helps to explain why such one-sided claims about Thucydides have endured despite straightforward objections to such claims. It is noteworthy, for example, that the arguments of both Cornford and Cochrane are structurally similar, and accordingly suffer from the same failure of overdrawing one aspect of fifth-century culture and asserting its singular influence on Thucydides as he composed his work. Cornford argued that the cultural ubiquity of the tragic idiom of the fifth century thoroughly shaped Thucydides’ writing:

In every age the common interpretation of the world of things is controlled by some scheme of unchallenged and unsuspected presupposition, and the mind of any individual, however little he may think himself to be in sympathy with his contemporaries, is not an insulted compartment, but more like a pool in one continuous medium—the circumambient atmosphere of his place and time. (1907: viii)

Indeed, for Cornford, this osmotic process is central to the idea of *Mythistoria*, that is, to the idea that the tragic idiom of the classical age would necessarily guide the organization and presentation of facts as Thucydides wrote: “By *Mythistoria* I mean history cast in a mould of conception, whether artistic or philosophic, which, long before the work was even contemplated, was already inwrought into the very structure of the author’s mind” (ibid.). Cochrane similarly argues that the scientific milieu of the atomists and the Hippocratics provided the decisive intellectual background that shaped Thucydides’ study. Atomistic thought provided an “atmosphere” that became “vital” to the development of both the biological and sociological human sciences. The essentials of Hippocratic science “were unquestionably floating about the Hellenic world” (1929: 14) when Thucydides

undertook his masterful study, and his direct contact with the Thrace-ward regions led him to adopt their principles and methods (*ibid.*: 15–16).

Drawing attention to parallels between some parts of the *History* on the one side and specific intellectual trends of the fifth century on the other, however, in no way justifies the claim that such trends were singularly or overwhelmingly influential. Both tendencies underestimate the sheer intellectual richness of an age responsible for the inauguration of almost every department of human thought. The high classical period was an effervescent age of ideas with a plethora of contradictory ideational currents and overlapping literary trends. It was a remarkably creative and intellectually radical age. With pre-Socratic natural philosophy the “entire mythological scaffolding was now removed almost at one stroke” (Gomperz 1943: 162). The pre-Socratics replaced this polytheistic mythology with a self-sufficient monism, and in various ways arrived at a universal first principle to which all change and diversity could be referred. The medical writers had begun to insert diseases into a natural etiological nexus, and they would forever change the way humanity regarded its relationship with the external world. Even the daemons that gave rise to disease or epilepsy had been naturalized. The anthropocentric sophists were affirming a more earthly ground of human culture and convention. Tragedy offset these trends to an extent but also displayed a keen sense of cosmic orderliness and boundedness. Old comedy offered sustained social criticism. The logographic tradition and the work of Herodotus broke new ground in the presentation of other cultures and of the past. And lastly, by the late fifth century the seeds of a philosophy proper – of a speculative tradition with a transcendent ground – had undoubtedly been planted. These intellectual inroads were formidable. Everywhere olden ways of thinking were in decay; a new spirit of speculation and science was on its meteoric rise. We do poorly to impose the shape of our intellectual sensibilities upon the intellectual currents of antiquity, especially since so little written work has found its way to us. It is, quite frankly, bold to assert that any particular intellectual current would have been so singularly influential on a sprawling intellectual like Thucydides. The mere presence of intellectual parallels does not mean decisive intellectual influence.

Insofar as the exponents of the scientific reading of Thucydides claim that he applied the naturalistic paradigm of science to the study of the war with great deliberation – that he self-consciously deployed the Hippocratic model – it lessens exposure to the above objection regarding the sheer intellectual richness of the age. But an even more serious criticism then arises. Although the pre-Socratics worked with an *implicit* model of the natural world with a universal nexus of causes, it must be stressed that this understanding had not been rendered fully *explicit* in the sense in which the logical implications of the theory had been expressly extended to all facts and occasions of the natural (or social) world. Expressed less formally, ideas of causality were in their infancy. The world of Thucydides was, at best, in the process of asserting a universal nexus of causes where proximate effects are as regulated and determined as more distant ones. The Hippocratics, for example, had largely (but not completely) eschewed the

notion of supernatural or divine agency by beginning a discussion about epidemiological etiologies, discussions that regard the natural world in terms of universal causal principles (Lloyd 1979: 10–58). But these beginnings were a long way from arriving at the more thoroughgoing seventeenth-century mechanistic materialism postulating that everything either “is” or “is not,” and either moves or is at rest according to fixed natural laws. Several civilizations would decline and fall before the scientific journey would land at the more familiar causal landmarks of the early modern era. Nor had a model of science been rendered fully explicit in the sense that the completed model of science was subjected to sustained consideration and scrutiny as a coherent methodology. The fledgling sciences were more like intellectual trends rather than a self-conscious school of thought. The demarcation and elaboration of the epistemological tasks of science had not developed and matured. A philosophy of science – a *metascience* as we might incline to put it nowadays – was scarcely under way. Accordingly, we should expect to encounter a fragmented scientific approach in the *History*, glimpses of scientific habits now and then, especially with respect to empirical observation and a more reflective sensitivity to recurrent social patterns. But the fledgling nature of the age itself makes it unlikely that Thucydides would have self-consciously applied a naturalistic model of science to his sweeping study of the war between Athens and Sparta.

Second congruence: Anti-transcendental orientations and value-free science

Thucydidean interpretation is congruous with twentieth-century intellectual predilections in an even blunter way. The second distinguishing feature of the late modern outlook is its thoroughgoing repudiation of any transcendental aspects of thought and being – a derivative attitude that requires a fairly strict line to be drawn between immanent and transcendent aspects of thought and being in the first place. It is important, however, to stress that this repudiation of transcendent ideas has taken two forms. In its most aggressive form there is the wholesale rejection of all metaphysical claims, an ontological repudiation of any orderliness in nature and the corresponding epistemological claim that all intellectual activity including philosophy, science, and art is the product of human creativity. The “postmodern” intellectual turn of the last thirty years, always shadowed by Nietzsche, systematically weeded out any transcendental vestiges in epistemology and ethics. When Richard Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* appeared in the late 1970s it merely completed the aggressive turn toward ontological anti-essentialism, epistemological anti-representationalism, and cultural relativism essayed in earnest by Nietzsche. Accordingly, all ethical claims are contingent upon the evolving standards set by different human communities – there can be no other appeal. It helps to contrast this severe anti-transcendental outlook with ancient sensibilities. In late modernity we witness the apparent gravitation toward the Protagorean notion that “man is the measure of all things” to be sure, but we go much further

by eradicating both “the man” and “the thing,” that is, by eradicating the very idea that neither reality nor human beings have an essence.

The less severe anti-transcendental outlook insists on repudiating the notion of divine will and cosmic measure in both the natural world and, of course, in human affairs, but retains the idea of a knowable and orderly natural world. Descartes’ dualistic assumption of a knowable mechanical universe existing alongside a God whose inscrutable purposes are to be left alone has withered; only the immanent press of universal laws are held to govern the universe. Insofar as metaphysics hints at transcendental measure and philosophy at transcendental perspective they are both rejected. From an epistemological standpoint this rejection avoids lapsing into Pyrrhonian skepticism by asserting that the antecedent world is knowable through experience even though it is utterly bereft of meaning; the leading methodological questions boiled down to finding the balance between rationalism and empiricism. Comtean positivism rejected metaphysics as superfluous while the later logical empiricism of the Vienna Circle rejected metaphysics as utterly meaningless, and both tended to regard philosophy, as Wittgenstein asserted in the *Tractatus*, as nothing more than an “activity” providing a “logical clarification of thought.” This intellectual atmosphere cradled an understanding of science as the limning of reality and the coherent presentation of blind propositions and laws that “correspond” to an external natural and social world. And such a science, as Max Weber famously contended, must strive to be *wertfrei* or “value-free.” In the realm of sociological analysis this attitude translates into a search for the *laws* of society free from cosmological figments and ethical fancies. Again, it helps to compare this attitude with ancient sensibilities. The scientifically sustaining notion of the *kosmos* as orderly continues to find traction, but the notion that it might be beautiful or intrinsically meaningful or good has passed. And gone too is the ancient supposition about the *metaxic* condition of humanity, the sense of our flawed *inbetweenness* appearing as a sort of existential suspension between the earthly and the divine.

It is this less severe repudiation of the transcendent elements of thought and being, particularly the tendency to regard science as Weberian *wertfrei* science, that has guided Thucydidean interpretation. Such was Cornford’s notion of science when he argued that Thucydides failed to marshal objectively the facts of the war but rather gave “shape to the mass of facts which was to have been shapeless” through the culturally inherited idiom of tragedy. In this way “the work of science came to be a work of art” (1907: ix). In the same way Cochrane drew a sharp contrast between scientific conceptions on one side and the outlooks associated with religion and philosophy on the other, and he stressed that science eschews metaphysical assumptions and philosophic judgment:

Philosophy may continue her vain attempt to storm the bastions of heaven; but positive science, like warfare, proceeds by the method of limited objectives; and indeed scores her greatest advances at those moments in human history when religious and philosophic doubt are most acute. (1929: 2)

The first principle of the scientific method, Cochrane stresses, is to never confuse “the ‘is’ with the ‘ought’” and therewith disguise “what is really philosophy in the gown of science” (ibid.: 32). Philosophy and science are to be radically opposed: “Thus, absolute ‘justice’ is properly speaking a philosophic conception,” Cochrane wrote, “with which science has no concern, for the only value which science admits is the survival value, and therefore its only standards are those of welfare and power” (ibid.: 176). In this usage the notion of value is attached only to the barest facts of the natural world.

More generally, Cochrane argued that later historians, lacking the scientific tenacity of Thucydides, erroneously imported metaphysical assumptions. He argued that Gibbon, for example, interpolated the “principle of decline” into historical analysis of the fall of Rome much in the same way that Herodotus imported the principle of “Nemesis” into the defeat of the Persians. The historian of the war between Athens and Sparta never succumbs to these metaphysical temptations and thus it is “vain to look in Thucydides for any positive statement of his beliefs” (ibid.: 169). Cochrane argued that it was only by the early nineteenth century that things began to change, particularly with the influence of historians like Barthold Niebuhr, but he added that the modern scientific temper does not really improve upon Thucydides:

... in the hands of its greatest modern exponents, scientific history had made a determined effort to shake itself free from “myth” – that which is not susceptible of observation and verification – and by the most earnest search for fact, combined with generalization from these facts, it has sought to provide a reconstruction of the past according to the available evidence. *In so doing it has more or less unconsciously returned to the spirit and method of Thucydides.* (ibid.: 173; my emphasis)

It is noteworthy that Cochrane’s observations merely echo those of Nietzsche, for whom Thucydides was a “complete cure” to Platonism precisely because of the *History’s* emphasis on unvarnished reality:

Greek philosophy: the decadence of the Greek instinct. Thucydides: the great sum, the last revelation of that strong, severe, hard faculty which was instinctive with the older Hellenes. In the end, it is courage in the face of reality that distinguishes a man like Thucydides from Plato: Plato is a coward before reality, consequently he flees into the ideal ... (1954: 558)

Thucydides and Science Revisited

For decades much Thucydidean interpretation has been guided by the notion of science as the dispassionate assessment of the bare facts of history. The lexicon in Thucydidean commentary about objectivity, of dispassionate analysis, of the cold or austere commentator, and the pejorative references to Thucydides’ analytical

arbitrariness or selectivity, to astonishing factual gaps or to obvious silences, reveals a particular understanding of science as value-free. The notion of *wertfrei* science around which much Thucydidean commentary has revolved has been subjected to sustained criticism. Over the twentieth century, however, this criticism ran off in two entirely different directions. One line of thought preserved the integrity of post-Nietzschean anti-transcendental philosophy by arguing that science was a largely instrumental enterprise aimed at the pragmatic imposition of order upon (i) the chaotic natural world and (ii) a historically contingent and socially constructed society. Such science is done for the sake of coping with life and, perhaps, modestly improving things. There is no antecedent natural or social reality awaiting “discovery” by “scientists” – sometimes regarded as the arrogating “priests” of modernity who have substituted “scientific knowledge” for “religion” (cf. Rorty 1991: 35–45). In this view, science, like poetry and all other forms of human creativity, is about getting by in the world. When confronted by scientific knowledge claims it stresses the historically contingent ground of *every* paradigm and, ultimately, claims that the animating categories of philosophy itself – truth, virtue, beauty, knowledge – are little more than hifalutin’ illusions grounded in mundane constellations of social and political power. Recent and very refreshing discussions of the *History* approach the text in ways consistent with this forbidding view of science by teasing out, perhaps inadvertently, some of its primary themes. The mood of Richard Ned Lebow’s “constructivist” account of Thucydides (2001), for example, is consonant with the constructivist orientation that regards scientific discourse as coping with the enduring aspects of contingent human history. And several pieces focusing on the narrative aspects of the *History* lean upon the tendency to regard sociological discourse as a complex strategy of narration on par with poetry and the other literary arts (e.g., Rood 2006).

The alternative critique of value-free or *wertfrei* science contends that ideas like “bare fact” or “radical empiricism” or “a merely descriptive view of the world” or “analytic thought” involve rather straightforward metaphysical commitments and equally significant ontological assumptions (Whitehead 1925). It is only by pretension that scientists can claim to reject philosophy or metaphysics, or dodge Aristotle’s most basic question about “the good life.” This reformulation of the scientific project in the wake of positivism, logical empiricism, and behaviorism stresses that philosophical assumptions and ethical commitments are a necessary part of all science – natural *and* sociological (Bunge 1998, esp. 219–56). By the middle of the twentieth century. Esteemed philosopher of science Richard Rudner could argue that “the slightly juvenile conception of the coldblooded, emotionless, impersonal, passive scientist mirroring the world perfectly in the highly polished lenses of his steel rimmed glasses—this stereotype—is no longer, if it ever was, adequate” (Rudner 1953: 6). In the natural sciences there has been an exploration of the ideological and ethical assumptions underlying “truth claims” while retaining a commitment to a modest realism – a belief that there is a knowable antecedent reality awaiting discovery, despite the abundance of obstacles

and hazards along the way (e.g., Sokol 2008). Criticism in the philosophy of social science contended that developments such as behaviorism marked the low point of sociological analysis insofar as they were premised on the erroneous notion that methodologies of the social sciences must replicate those of the natural sciences. Interpretation and ethical judgment are inescapable elements of the social scientific project (Taylor 1971; Fay 1987). The spirit of this critique was captured relatively early on with Whitehead's emphatic declaration that any notion of history as "devoid of aesthetic prejudice, of history devoid of any reliance on metaphysical principles and cosmological generalization, is a figment of the imagination" (Whitehead 1961: 4).

Science is at one and the same moment empirical, analytical, and judgmental; careful scrutiny and investigation are necessarily infused with the "the age-old themes of poets and philosophers" (Finley 1972: 59). This relaxed notion of science permits us to see that the dominant question about Thucydides' status as a Hippocratic clinician, particularly the matter of his fidelity to a methodology amiable to value-free or *wertfrei* science, has been stultifying. Critiques of positivism and behavioralism over the last several decades expose the essentially flawed notion of science animating both the tragic and scientific paradigms of Thucydidean interpretation. These paradigms themselves must be retired; continuing to bear them in mind, perhaps even coming to see the *History* as a blend of the two, will tend to replicate the elementary confusions about the nature and task of science. When commentators bring such a narrow notion of science to bear on Thucydides it occludes the stunning scientific originality and depth of the *History*. For Thucydides did not invent the science of history in some narrow sense of marshaling brute data or isolating a bare human nature to identify the causal laws of the past. He rather established the tradition of small "s" sociological or socio-historical analysis – the analytical tradition that now subsumes the professional fields of History, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology and so forth – where extensive empirical observation, reflective analysis, and considered judgment coalesce. This is the tradition of sociological or socio-historical analysis that identifies human society as the object of rigorous analysis and investigation, and which then (i) considers the evolution of human institutions and practices in terms of immanent tensions and trajectories and (ii) holds those evolving institutions and practices up for ethical assessment. It is in the writings of Thucydides where we detect the origins of this manner of thinking. As the ancient Greeks shunted the will of the gods to the sidelines, his study emerged as the sociological analog to the rise of natural philosophy. In the *History* we find proto-sociological science, and we moderns accordingly feel very much at home when reading it.

Reading Thucydides, we might say, is akin to stumbling upon the primordial sociological goo. A number of rich assumptions stand out. The proem, for example, assumes that the primary dynamic of history, contra Hegel, is the dialectic between humanity and the natural world. Humanity's evolving relationship with the natural world provides a backdrop to the direct analysis of social

formations over time, and Thucydides' discussion is vaguely Malthusian in terms of its sensitivity to population pressures, and vaguely Marxian with its sensitivity to class factions and class struggle. It may be the case that the notion of class in the *History* lacks specificity and seems to oscillate between (i) the notion of class as stratification – rich and poor – and (ii) class as a relationship to productive hierarchies – direct producers, owners and entrepreneurs, landed elite – but this sensitivity nevertheless persists throughout the work. Perhaps even more importantly, Thucydides assumes, contra the claims of international relations scholars, that life within the *polis* and life between the *poleis* is seamless. The character of *inter-poleis* life is far from being fixed or permanent, and the *History* evinces the sense that the propensity for security alliances, defensive preparations, the propensity for war, and thirst for empire are contingent upon the unfolding of life within the *polis*, especially such things as *stasis*, *intra-poleis* class alliances and the character of political leadership.

And Thucydides never lets us forget that his world was being torn apart by excess and immoderation. A common staple of themes pervades the work including the folly of reckless aggression, overweening empires, and the eclipse of wise political rule. Thucydides often seems to be telling the reader that the Peloponnesian War was very *true* or *real* in the sense of a widespread set of injurious practices capable of being analyzed, but that it was also *false* in the sense that those very practices utterly failed to accord with the proper order of things. The Hellenic world convulsed by war lacked an essence constitutive of what the world ought to have been. Thucydides' treatment of the historical figures associated with the war incessantly reminds us that good leaders will be deliberative and thoughtful, and avoid rushing headlong into misadventure. Political virtue, to put this same idea differently, is interior to the drama of the soul, that is, it reflects the resolution of the existential tension at the center of human beingness in favor of our rational faculty (Reeve 1999: 439–40). Deliberation, wise rule, and reasoned moderation go hand in hand. The degradation of political rule in the Greek world, worsened by *stasis*, demagoguery, and war, lends the *History* an unmistakably tragic feel as we encounter excessive pride (*hubris*), overreaching ambition (*pleonexia*), irrational hopefulness (*elpis*), infatuation and blindness (*ate*), and then the inevitable reversal of fortune. The *History* therewith demonstrates the fragility of convention (*nomos*) as unrestrained nature (*phusis*) comes to the fore, especially through the influence of unrestrained leaders who embody the dearth of moderation and thoughtful restraint (*sophrosyne*).

Conclusion

The *History* is a commendable scientific inquiry that marks the dawn of the human sciences. Any intellectual of sobriety and moderation may see oneself as walking in the ancient historian's footsteps. Thucydides struggled to interrogate a whelming

or even overwhelming world, and he peers over our shoulders as we strive to come to analytical terms with the wars that plague our generations. And we can justifiably suppose that Thucydides would lament with us as we dwell on the folly of far-flung aggression, gasp as the parade of Cleonesque demagogues guiding world affairs, cringe at the innumerable Mycallessuses that fill our nightly news wires, or shudder at the countless Corcyraeans created by imperialist plunder.

Guide to Further Reading

The key readings of Thucydides in the twentieth century for this theme are Cornford (1907), Cochrane (1929), Collingwood (1946), Connor (1977), and Dover (1983). On changing modern ideas of science and scientific realism, see Bhaskar (2008), Fuchs (2000), and Harding (1991); on similar issues in the development of the social sciences, Bunge (1998).

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Thucydides in Modern Political Rhetoric

Elizabeth Sawyer

Today's audiences bring a much narrower set of mental references to the hall than did those of a few generations back. References to the Greek and Roman authors are almost useless, Biblical allusions are increasingly less effective, literary quotations carry ever more limited images. Motion picture and television references seem to generate the broadest recognition from the audience – but their half-lives seem barely to last through a thirteen-week season. In short, the challenge of the modern political speaker has never been greater.

With these words, the Assistant Director of the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress summarizes the modern speaker's dilemma in his introduction to *Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations*, a treasure trove of the most commonly requested but difficult to source quotations that the Library has been asked to look into on behalf of puzzled or curious politicians over the last five decades. US Congressional discourse, as well as many political speeches given by public figures outside the Senate or the House of Representatives, is packed with quotations from the types of sources mentioned above: classical, biblical, and from contemporary culture. On the other hand, as the number of people who study ancient Greece and Rome has dwindled over the last fifty years, so the utility of the classics has diminished as an effective reference point for politicians in search for a pithy and sound bite-length comment.

In fact, it might well come as a surprise to some readers that a chapter with this title even exists at all. Do today's political leaders really refer to Thucydides? What reasons might they have for choosing to quote from such a writer, and what political or rhetorical service does such a quotation provide that they cannot get by referring to someone more contemporary and very likely more familiar? This chapter investigates some of the current practices among politicians in Britain and

the United States who made quotations from Thucydides, in discussions on topics as wide-ranging as free trade, the Constitution of Europe, international relations and eulogies for public servants, and considers what value the speakers derive from quoting from this particular ancient source.

Why Quote the Classics?

That classical quotations are “almost useless” in the contemporary world might be overstating the case, given how often these quotations still appear. *Respectfully Quoted*, which concerns itself only with slightly unusual or frequently mistaken examples, contains quotations from twenty-seven Greek and Roman authors. The latest edition of *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations*, a larger source than *Respectfully Quoted* and one far more frequently harvested by congressmen and their speechwriters, still contains quotations from over one hundred classical authors, even though this is fewer than in previous editions.

Many political speakers appreciate the potency of a concise, memorable quotation for conveying the essence of a more complicated idea or historical reference. “We shall never surrender” expresses the strategy of Winston Churchill (who was also an enthusiastic reader of *Bartlett’s*) in a more direct, emotive, and compact way than an exhaustive account of British foreign policy in the summer of 1940 could do, because it invokes Churchill’s character and spirit, including his determination to galvanize the British against the threats facing them. Secondly, by choosing to make or illustrate their point through a quotation, politicians can create a rhetorical persona for themselves. Gary Morson describes how quotations, as opposed to unattributed phrases, are able to conjure particular associations, a characteristic he calls the “stickiness” of the genre (2011: 104). In such a way, a British politician using the quotation above might be aiming to associate himself in his audience’s minds with the bulldog-like qualities of resilience and patriotism which were associated with Churchill. Or, in the United States, a reference to popular culture or a sport such as baseball might demonstrate a politician’s ability to identify with the everyday working person, whereas a quotation from the Bible would characterize him as an upholder of traditional values, or a quotation from Jefferson a staunch patriot.

The associations which “stick” to a quotation are extremely culturally specific, however. This is an especially important aspect when considering how politicians use classical quotations, because the perception, and public knowledge, of the classics is considerably different in the United States compared to the United Kingdom. Since Johannes Urzidil’s 1964 *Amerika und die Antike*, there has been growing interest in and awareness of the importance of the classics to the Founding Fathers, and in the impact that the admiration they clearly displayed for the ancients had on America’s subsequent engagement with ancient Greece and Rome. The nineteenth-century American engagement with the ancient world has been

thoroughly explored in both Meyer Reinhold's and Caroline Winterer's studies, and both show how the preceding appreciation of the Founders for the classics fuelled further interest in their value and perceived usefulness. Although Thucydides was not as important a figure to the Founders in the eighteenth century as, for instance, Cicero or Polybius was, the Gettysburg Oration of 1863 by Edward Everett, given just before the now more famous Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln, shifted the focus onto Pericles. Garry Wills' *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (1992) examines the similarity in structure and content between Lincoln's address and Pericles' Funeral Oration, but the tactic of quoting directly from Pericles' speech was demonstrated that day by Everett, who in the closing paragraph of his long and explicitly classicizing speech, said:

No lapse of time, no distance of space, shall cause you to be forgotten. "The whole earth," said Pericles, as he stood over the the remains of his fellow-citizens, who had fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, "The whole earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men." All time, he might have added, is the millenium of their glory.

With such renowned precedents as these, perhaps it is not surprising that Pericles' Funeral Oration in particular, as well as the rest of Thucydides' history, has retained some traction in political rhetoric in the United States. The next section examines how these quotations are still used today in the US House of Representatives and the Senate.

US Congressional Speeches

On January 11, 1991, Senator Wyche Fowler of Georgia gave a remarkable speech to the Senate. There were four days remaining until UN Security Council Resolution 678 ran out, after which member states would be empowered to use "all necessary means," including military force, to drive the Iraqi soldiers who were currently occupying Kuwait out of the territory. Senator Fowler felt impelled, amid the heated debate surrounding the impending deadline, to recount in detail the confrontation between Nicias and Alcibiades in 415 BCE about whether to send an expedition to Sicily. Aware that his audience might not be familiar with all the details, he explained the context of the debate, and emphasized that it took place after nearly twenty years of semi-continuous conflict. Then he read long excerpts from Nicias' first speech in the Assembly, followed by Alcibiades' response with his assurances of an easy victory. Finally, he told the senators the surprising result that the Assembly "confounded Nicias' plan by approving the larger expedition, and then naming him and Alcibiades as two of the three commanders of the mission." Senator Fowler used this long extract explicitly to draw attention to the unpredictability of war, and to warn senators against casting their votes on the assumption that a war in the Middle East would be short and relatively

painless. Implicitly, he was also inviting them to reflect on their own voting behavior and responses to rhetorical appeals.

As Senator Fowler himself acknowledged, through his smiles to his fellow senators and his request that they “indulge” him with a few moments for the historical parallel, extended extracts such as these are not common in Congressional discourse. On very few occasions have extracts from Thucydides comparable in length to this been given in the US Congress, and those most notable are by Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia. Byrd, who lived from 1917 to 2010, was a member of the Senate from 1959 until his death. He was renowned for his historical parallels and often drew on his knowledge of ancient history to illustrate his political points. His oratorical style was certainly distinctive in the Senate. His use of history to shed light on contemporary politics was unequalled, and the ancient authors that he turned to most frequently were Thucydides and Cicero. For example, modeling himself on the Roman statesman, he delivered fourteen speeches in the form of historical lectures in the Senate between May and October 1993. In these “Philippics,” as he called them, he described in detail the history of the Roman Senate in order to express his opposition to the proposed “Line-Item Veto” which would give the president the power to veto individual items within appropriations bills. Byrd has also turned to Thucydides on many occasions, quoting him eleven times over the last twenty years he was in office, and mentioning his name in passing without giving a direct quotation many times more.

Yet, other than these two somewhat anomalous cases, there are over fifty other congressmen and women who have directly quoted from Thucydides at least once over the last twenty years. Thucydides and Cicero are the two most commonly cited ancient authors by far by today’s politicians: only Cicero is quoted a few times more often than Thucydides over this period, and other authors appear far less often than either Cicero or Thucydides. The following three quotations, two of which are from 2012, are typical of how quotations from Thucydides have been used in the recent past.

Quotation 1: Thucydides 2.40.3

On December 28, 2012, Jack Reed, the Democratic senator for Rhode Island, concluded his remarks in remembrance of Daniel Inouye, the Democratic senator for Hawaii who had died the previous day, with the following:

Let me just conclude with the words uttered centuries ago by Thucydides: “The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it.”

The appropriateness of this quotation for honoring Daniel Inouye, a military veteran, is obvious. But the quotation has also cropped up in Congress before. The occasion for its use, occurring six other times over the last twenty years, is highly

specific: it is always used by Democrats rather than Republicans, and, with one notable exception, it is said to honor a public servant who has died.

Each time this same translation given above is always used, and it is attributed to Thucydides, rather than Pericles, in whose mouth Thucydides placed the words. The translation in question is less well known and infrequently read among classicists today. It was written by the historian turned international relations scholar Sir Alfred Zimmern, and originally published in his 1911 book *The Greek Commonwealth*, which described the geography, politics, and economics of classical Athens, and included Zimmern's own translation of the Funeral Oration in a central section called "The Ideal of Citizenship." Sir Richard Livingstone then incorporated this translation of the Funeral Oration into his popular but heavily abridged 1943 edition of Richard Crawley's translation. Through Livingstone's edition, the work was more widely disseminated in the United States, to the extent that *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, frequently consulted by Washington speechwriters looking for suitable quotations, still uses Livingstone's edition as a default, for eleven of its thirteen quotations from Thucydides. The rhetorical force of this version far exceeds that of other translations of this passage. Its message is simple yet unexpected, and the image of the final words as the warrior marches forward very concrete, credible, and charged with emotion: the pull of the words "glory and danger" prove irresistible if loose translations for τὰ τε δεινὰ καὶ ἡδέα.

The extract was first used in more recent history in 1998 by Nita Lowey, then in 1999 by Marcy Kaptur, two powerful Democrats who served on the House Appropriations Committee together. In 2001, the quotation was picked up on by the Democrat Jack Reed, who quoted it for the first time on September 12 following the terrorist attacks on New York. Reed's keenness for this quotation has also led him to use it on an entirely different occasion altogether from that of its usual context, however. During the extended battle over health care reform which culminated in some success for Barack Obama when he signed the Health Care and Education Resolution Act into law on March 30, 2010, Senator Reed praises the president, describing his tenacity and determination in the face of vehement resistance from the Republicans, with the following words:

But he pressed on. Ultimately, it was his decision more than anyone else to try to do this that got it done. As Thucydides said: The bravest of the brave are those who, seeing both the glory and the danger, go forth to seize it. These gentlemen – particularly the President – saw the danger and the glory and refused to retreat and went forward. We have a historic victory today.

Senator Reed had last used this quotation only one week before, in remarks on the news of the death of the author, literary critic, and US Army Air Corps veteran George Panichas. If Reed was not implying that the Act signified the death-knell for Obama's career, his use of this quotation demonstrates a significant shift away from the context in which it was previously employed, and therefore demonstrates

the flexibility that a well-turned phrase can have when divorced from its original context, and shows how it can take on a new meaning.

Quotation 2: Thucydides 2.43.3

On May 15, 2012, representative Steny Hoyer included the following in his remarks of commemoration of the life of Constantine Valanos, the owner of the Capitol Hill restaurant “The Monocle”:

The ancient Greek statesman Pericles said, “What you leave behind is not what is engraved in monuments of stone but what is woven into the lives of others.” Connie Valanos leaves behind a legacy not only of a restaurant but also of the countless ways in which he made that restaurant a place where leaders come together to hash out the agreements that help make our Nation great and improve lives around the world. ... That is Connie’s lasting legacy.

It might seem at first glance strange for a restaurant owner to be remembered with a reference to Pericles, and it begs the question as to why this particular quotation, and such a loose translation at that, should be used on such an occasion. However, this quotation is not as rare in American public speech as might be expected. Just two weeks later it appeared again, in a slightly different context. Senator Ben Cardin said on May 24, 2012, in his remarks anticipating Memorial Day:

Over 2,400 years ago – in 431 BCE – Pericles paid tribute to the Athenian soldiers who had fallen in battle at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, saying: “[2.43.2] For this offering of their lives made in common by them all they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for its commemoration. [2.43.3] For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb; and in lands far from their own, where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart.”

Cardin’s recollection of the words is traditional, and recalls the same passage of Pericles’ speech quoted by Everett over one hundred years ago. Thucydides 2.43.3 has been quoted fourteen times over the last twenty years in Congress, and eight of these occasions are part of speeches such as this given in recognition of Memorial Day, the last Monday in May, when Americans remember those who have died in war by visiting graves or military cemeteries. The applicability of the quotation to the occasion needs little explanation. It offers great comfort to those remembering the dead. The references to the tomb and sepulchre, shrines and inscriptions are a reminder of the recently visited grave, but the image of the memorial on people’s hearts reassures the listeners that the dead soldier has not and will not be forgotten.

Not on this occasion, but in six other Memorial Day speeches, the Jowett (1879) translation is used. Its now archaic-sounding “sepulchre,” “inscriptions,” and “graven” serve to elevate the sentiment and segregate it from everyday speech. Even in the version above, Cardin has substituted Crawley’s “tomb” in 2.43.2 for Jowett’s “sepulchre,” consciously or unconsciously varying the language and also echoing the more frequently heard version. Whichever translation is used, however, this quotation is always put in the mouth of Pericles (as it was in Everett’s speech), not Thucydides. In eleven instances, the specific context of a public funeral is also mentioned before the speaker reads the quotation. The circumstance of the speech has attached itself to the quotation and developed as an integral element of it: it has become an important aspect of its rhetorical force that this quotation was spoken by Pericles, the leader of democratic Athens, and on the occasion of a public memorial for the dead. The reminder that this sentiment came from a funeral speech makes it even more apt for the occasion, which helps to explain why in the case of the commemorative words for Valanos, the context is removed: mentioning it would allude too closely to the upcoming Memorial Day.

Quoting this passage has become a tradition which is a part of the culture of honoring fallen soldiers. There is no requirement for the speaker to come up with an original part of the Funeral Oration. It is the very repetition of the known sentiment, recalling the 2500-year tradition of holding public funerals for war dead, that in part provides the comfort for the listeners, just as the reading of the stanza from Laurance Binyon’s “For the Fallen” is one of the rituals carried out at Remembrance Day services in Britain and Commonwealth countries:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

This passage in Britain, and the Periclean quotation in the United States, remind the listeners that they are not alone, and creates a resonance with former eulogizing speeches, thereby raising the status of the dead to that of others who have had public eulogies spoken for them in the past. The quoting of this passage, together with the image that has stuck to it of Pericles speaking a eulogy over the war dead, has become a recognizable tradition. An extract from a longer rap poem, composed by Congressman Major Owens, and performed in Congress on October 25, 2001, as a response to the terrorist attacks, highlights this:

For all the hijacked years
Cry rivers,
Feel the death chill
Iceberg of frozen

Bloody tears;
 Defiant orations of Pericles
 Must now rise
 Out of the ashes
 Jefferson's profound principles
 Will outlive the crashes....

The whole poem expresses sorrow but also hope after the horror of the terrorist attacks. That Owens need only allude to Pericles indicates that the practice of quoting from the Funeral Oration is common enough to need no further explanation. The emotions associated with Pericles' speech in this poem are resilience, determination, and patriotism: and Pericles is side by side with Jefferson in upholding the ideals of American democracy.

Given such a tradition, Hoyer's choice of Pericles' Funeral Oration for sentiments to memorialize Valanos makes complete sense: he has chosen a figure strongly associated with the ideas of American patriotism, duty, and service to democracy, which is exactly the point that he wished to make about Valanos and his restaurant, and his familiarity with the sentiment from hearing it at Memorial Day has led to his paraphrasing and shortening it on this occasion.

Quotation 3: Thucydides 2.38.2

The great majority of quotations from Thucydides (three-quarters of the instances since 1990) in the US Congress are taken from the Funeral Oration, and used in situations similar to those above, for eulogies and on days dedicated to reflection on history and celebration of democracy, such as Greek Independence Day (March 25). On a few occasions, however, words from the Funeral Oration are taken out of their context to make a totally different point. Although this happens relatively infrequently, the following example typifies how this occurs, and it has been used repeatedly for this purpose:

The greatness of our city brings it about that all the good things from all over the world flow into us, so that to us it seems just as natural to enjoy foreign goods as our own local products. (Thucydides 2.38.2, trans. Warner 1954)

Six of the seven citations of this passage since 1990 are made by one man, each time on a different occasion but on the same topic. Briefly a Democrat, Phil Gramm was the Republican senator for Texas between 1985 and 2002, and John McCain's senior economic advisor during the latter's presidential campaign in 2007–8. Gramm's primary focus is the economy, and he uses this quotation repeatedly to demonstrate the importance of imports, always following the same argument, such as on this occasion in 2002 on the subject of the Andean

Trade Preference Act which supported Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru in developing their economies:

I close with this point. It is interesting how differently we view the world today on this issue than it has been viewed historically. I go way back by quoting Pericles. When Pericles spoke in the funeral oration, and he was trying to sum up the greatness of Athens, it is interesting that the example he came down to was imports. "The luxuries of the world are as freely available in Athens as they are at those places in the world where those items are produced." The greatness of America is that people we do not even know, who do not even know us, are working to produce things to bring to our market that we can consume.

Gramm sometimes uses the Crawley or the Warner translations, and sometimes, as in this case, a paraphrase of his own invention. This is also the only quotation from Thucydides that he uses. On two counts, he is misrepresenting Pericles in this quotation. Firstly, the quality of the markets was only a minor illustration of Athens' many virtues described by Pericles. Secondly, it is clear that the meaning of 2.38 was that Athenian trade has resulted in the cultivation of the tastes of the average Athenian, given the emphasis on Athenian cultural pursuits such as sports contests and religious festivals. This appreciation of beauty and quality in objects both familiar and unfamiliar that Pericles comments exists in private individuals' houses has been replaced in Gramm's reading by an ethic of sheer consumerism. This quotation from Thucydides 2.38.2 has become twisted each time it is used in this context, in order to praise consumerism rather than cosmopolitanism.

Spurious Quotations

Thucydides is cited sufficiently regularly in the US Congress (on average three to four times a year) that quotations not from *The History of the Peloponnesian War* have also been mistakenly attributed to Thucydides or Pericles. The most well known of these misattributions is widely known to have been a favourite of Colin Powell, that "of all manifestations of power, restraint most impresses men." This was a genuine description of Thucydides' style by F.B. Jevons (1886), if not a direct translation from the *History*, but more puzzling and illuminating examples are those which have no association with Thucydides at all, such as:

There is also in the Western tradition a hallowed tenet that the triumph of aggression, which the Greek historian Thucydides aptly described in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* as the stark process of "putting people to it," may constitute a greater evil than resort to violence to vindicate an unjust wrong.

Jim Leach, Iowa's Republican senator, made this statement in a discussion of the implications of the Just War doctrine in 1991. The quotation is a mere cliché, but that it was attributed to Thucydides shows how he is considered the sort of figure who is, firstly, appropriate to quote in Congress and, secondly, who could be associated with a *realpolitik* sentiment about the use of force.

Similarly, in 2009 during a discussion about fiscal responsibility, Virginia Foxx, a Republican representative for North Carolina, opened her speech:

I have a quote that I want to use; it's from Pericles, from 430 BC. Pericles said, "Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you." And I think ... there's a lot happening that needs to be shared with the American people.

Once more, this is not even a broad translation of a sentence attributed to Pericles, but reveals the kind of sentiment which fits with the characterization of Pericles created by the other quotations attributed to him, concerning upholding democracy and serving one's country. The creation of a rhetorical persona for both Thucydides and Pericles has resulted in the attraction to their names of quotations that rightly belonged to others, and to a very specific extent: comments to do with historiography, international relations, and the nature of war are always attributed to Thucydides, while sentiments to do with democracy, eulogy, duty, and patriotism are given to Pericles, as in the example above. For instance, also in 2009, Rob Wittman, a Republican representative for Virginia, chose the following words in praise of a Marine who had been serving as a Congressional Fellow for that year:

As Thucydides once said, "The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools." Fortunately, with men like Captain Sean Welch serving in our Marine Corps, we don't have to worry about that distinction.

The quotation is from *Charles George Gordon*, a biography published in 1889 by Lieutenant-General Sir William Francis Butler, a British army officer from Ireland. This quotation often occurs in US military circles, particularly those connected to the US Marine Corps. It may be that Thucydides was considered a more appropriate source for this quotation than a nineteenth-century British officer, given how important the classical author is in military education in the United States and how regularly he is quoted in Congress.

To sum up this brief survey of Thucydidean quotations in US politics, the speakers quoting Thucydides, whether they are staying true to the spirit of the original or not, adopt two particular strategies: adaptation, and repetition. Firstly, they adapt a quotation in order to make it as rhetorically effective as possible, making use of resonances with other suitable ideas and abbreviating when effective, but also making changes as necessary in order to make the quotation – or its

speaker – fit their argument best. Using a classical quotation is not necessarily about sounding authoritative: it can also be about creating a rhetorical persona, or performing a role as part of an important civic tradition, such as is the case of the recollection of the context of the Funeral Oration together with its quotation on the occasion of Memorial Day and in eulogies. Misquotations and alterations to the tradition can also be very revealing, especially about the intentions of the speaker and their perception of their audience.

Secondly, quotation practices are highly specific: speakers do not often use just any quotation that they have heard that seems vaguely related to the subject, but often use one that has been used before on a similar occasion and is from a recognized and apt source. These types of quotation are self-perpetuating; they have come into existence as a result of simply being used, and are then repeated in order to evoke the previous occasion. In this way a quotation evolves, since its rhetorical power is tested and its form adjusted until it is most memorable, and then repetition of it further cements it into its context. This also means that quotations can develop lives of their own; despite the Library of Congress' warning, the sheer existence of classical quotations having been made in the past on specific occasions may be the most important criteria for their survival into the future. Therefore, the importance of cultural factors in creating, strengthening, and adapting these traditions, becomes clear from this first examination of the US Congress, and so I will now turn to another political environment, that of the British parliament, to see how Thucydides fares in a completely different habitat.

Thucydides in British Politics

When compared with the frequency of Thucydidean quotations in the US Congress, the British parliament is virtually silent. Over the same time period of the last twenty years, there have been only ten instances of Thucydides' words being quoted in the House of Commons or the House of Lords, compared with over ninety in the US Congress. What is the cause of such a discrepancy, which might seem strange given the rhetorical power of quotation which the first half of this chapter illustrated? A detailed examination of the few examples that there are bring the answer out clearly.

First of all, American rhetoric has had a clear influence in British debate recently. The few examples of British politicians quoting Thucydides today fall into two clear groups: those discussing recent international politics and using Thucydidean quotations from American politics, and those concerning the 2003 Draft Preamble of the European Constitution. The first group is slightly larger, with six examples. Of these, three relate directly to September 11, 2001, and to American politics: two are the infamous Colin Powell quotation discussed earlier, and are quoted by the same person (Lord Howe of Aberavon) in order to urge caution and delay on the part of those seeking revenge for the terrorist attacks. So too is a third example

from October 2001, when Peter Kilfoyle used Archidamus' advice, "slow and cautious may be seen as wise and sensible," to echo the prudence expressed by Colin Powell's maxim.

Two earlier instances from 2000 also indicate the influence of American political discourse involving Pericles. Mr. Christopher Gill (then MP for Ludlow) used Thucydides twice in quick succession (on May 11 and November 23), each time to paint himself as a British patriot. A former member of the Conservative party and now a member of UKIP, he prefaced his criticism of the Common Agricultural Policy by saying:

I have consistently warned that it would all end in tears, and so it has. I shall end with a quotation from Pericles for my colleagues: "Remember that Prosperity can only be for the free, and that freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it."

This translation, by A.S. Way (1918), most frequently occurs in two contexts: war memorials, including ANZAC, Canadian, and American war veterans' associations, and in American neoconservative political circles where Pericles is a major figure. A reasonable inference from the fact that Gill used this quotation twice, but only in 2000, would be his awareness of the rhetoric of American neoconservatives, especially given the similarity of his own political views (he is a member of The Freedom Association, a British right-wing pressure group). At this time period American neoconservatism was experiencing a boom in its use of the figure of Pericles, thanks partly to the popular books published by Donald Kagan such as *Pericles of Athens* (1990) and *While America Sleeps* (2000).

The most recent instance of a Thucydidean quotation, however, illustrates precisely the opposite of the American practice: the reluctance of politicians to quote the classics in Britain. James Arbuthnot used Pericles' words in 2008 in the House of Commons on the subject of defense spending:

The people are to blame, too, because they have forgotten what Pericles said in the Peloponnesian war – if they ever knew. He said that one cannot have happiness without freedom, and one cannot have freedom without courage. He probably said that in some language other than English, but it is crucial and necessary for the people to remember it as they look forward to demanding that a higher proportion of our gross domestic product should go to defence.

Arbuthnot's comments are intriguing: his apparent de-emphasis of the importance of the language Pericles used indicates how he is trying to focus on the content of the quotation itself, but the concessive tone in which he refers to the language element implies that some acknowledgment of the words being a translation is necessary. This is immediately a difference from the American quotations, in which no mention is ever made of the original language of the quotation. The remaining

quotations from the British parliament, however, show that this is far more of a concern in how Thucydides is quoted in the United Kingdom.

The four final quotations are on just one topic: the doomed Draft Treaty for the Constitution of Europe, which was drawn up in July 2003 by a committee headed by the then President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The final EU Constitution Treaty was ratified by eighteen EU member states but its progress was halted when France and Holland did not ratify it in 2004 and 2005. The draft circulated in 2003 began its preamble with this quotation from Thucydides, given in Greek and then in English, using a variation on Warner's translation:

χρώμεθα γὰρ πολιτεία ... καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία κέκληται.

Our Constitution ... is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the greatest number. (Thucydides II.37)

Conscious that Europe is a continent that has brought forth civilisation; that its inhabitants, arriving in successive waves from earliest times, have gradually developed the values underlying humanism: equality of persons, freedom, respect for reason,

Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, the values of which, still present in its heritage, have embedded within the life of society the central role of the human person and his or her inviolable and inalienable rights ...

After these words, the preamble continues in such a vein before announcing the Treaty proper. The draft preamble was far from an unqualified success. The House of Commons research paper on the subject, published on September 6, 2004, describes how it was received:

The Preamble contains lofty references to the historical and cultural heritage of Europe. ... A quotation about democracy from the Greek historian and politician, Thucydides, that had headed the Convention text, was removed on the initiative of the Irish Presidency, giving rise to objections from Greece and Cyprus. ... The British Government found the draft preamble "nice". ... Andrew Duff, the Liberal Democrat MEP and Convention member, found the draft Preamble "too flowery" and possibly "erring on the side of the pretentious".

The research paper also referred to a deeply scathing review of the preamble in *The Economist*, which set out the objections of different EU countries to its content and tone by contrasting the complaints of many Roman Catholic states with those of the secular nations, in reaction to the lack of any mention of Christianity in the preamble. *The Economist's* article was no gentler on Giscard d'Estaing's use of Thucydides either, damning the quotation by saying of the Treaty that, "Like an over-ambitious student essay it starts with a quotation from

Thucydides (in the original Greek).” The unspoken opinion in both *The Economist* and the Commons research paper was that a quotation from Thucydides was unsuitable for the preamble, just as the preamble made an unsuitable opening to the Constitution, attracting the adjectives “lofty,” “over-ambitious,” “flowery,” and “pretentious.”

The response to the choice of quotation was equally negative in the British parliament. The Draft Treaty was discussed on July 9, 2003, and the first to bring up the Thucydidean quotation was George Osborne, backing up a colleague’s point that the proposed constitution could mark a decrease in individual nations’ sovereignty:

Mr George Osborne: My right hon. Friend’s point is amply demonstrated by the very first line of the draft constitution ... it is from Thucydides. It says, “Our Constitution ... is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the greatest number.” It uses the word “constitution” and talks explicitly about the “greatest number” – meaning the extension of majority voting and the elimination of the national veto.

Mr Michael Ancram: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for reminding the House of that, and I congratulate him for his swift translation of ancient Greek, which might be beyond most of the rest of us.

The first thing to notice is that, regardless of the actual content of the quotation and how it relates to the substance of the treaty and to the government’s verdict concerning it, the presence of a line from an ancient Greek author immediately elicits a comment on the education of the one referring to it. In this case, Michael Ancram’s joking response was illogical, given that the translation of the quotation was plainly visible next to the Greek text. The explanation for this could be the “membership effect,” in which specific knowledge indicates that one “belongs”; in this case, knowledge of Greek is used to denote membership of the political “elite” with a veiled reference to education in the classical languages. An extreme example of this “membership effect,” the same effect that Tim Ruback (2011) observed in quotations from Thucydides in the field of international relations theory, is offered by this quotation from the House of Lords in 1984, which uses Cicero rather than Thucydides, but to the same end:

There is a sentence of his [Cicero] which I was forced to learn by heart as a schoolboy and which I shall repeat to your Lordships. I shall not read it, because I know it by heart. It is: “Non enim possunt una in civitati multi rem ac fortunas amittere ut non pluris secum in eandem trahant calamitatem” – which, for the benefit of the Welsh, means: “When a lot of people lose a lot, they draw a lot of others into the same ditch.”

The speaker, Bishop Douglas Feaver, was known for his outrageous and opinionated comments, but in this example he gives a clear illustration, despite his apparent

irony, of the use which has been made of Latin and Greek as instruments for highlighting the difference in education and opportunity between the elites and those considered to be non-elite. This particular trait of referring to the original language as a way to demarcate the perceived elites from the perceived non-elites, sometimes hidden by a superficially jocular tone such as Ancram's or Feaver's, does not occur in the Thucydidean quotations from the US Congress at all, where quotations are never given in Greek, but always in English.

Returning to 2003, the conversation regarding the quotation in the preamble continued down a still more intriguing path. Denzil Davies, the then Labour Member for Llanelli in Wales, challenges the quotation head-on, demanding to know why it has been used:

Mr Denzil Davies: The hon. Member for Tatton [Mr. Osborne] mentioned the Greek quotation from Thucydides, which is the first sentence of the preamble to the constitution. The translation is, "Our Constitution ... is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the greatest number". I was surprised to see that quotation, and I cannot really understand why it is there. Perhaps it was to put us in awe of the erudition and learning of those who drafted the constitution or perhaps those wily Greeks slipped it in at night when nobody was looking.

He shows an immediate skepticism about the author's motivations in including the quotation, pointing directly at the perceived ostentatiousness of using it, and also, like the previous speakers, including a joke. Yet, when he does come to examine its content, it is surprising how useful the quotation actually is for pinpointing his objection to Britain's ratifying the treaty:

Mr Denzil Davies: As Members know, Thucydides was referring to the democracy and constitution of the small city-state of Athens. From my memory of my studies of ancient history, the Athenian citizen could walk down the high street with a pebble in his hand and put it in a pot, or an urn. If he got enough pebbles in enough pots, he could change the law of Athens. The British citizen cannot change the laws of the EU, however ... Finally, I have one request to make of my right hon. Friend. As we embark on these debates, could he do his best to remove Thucydides' name from the cover of the document, as he does not really deserve it?

Davies' argument that that ratification of the treaty would remove power from British citizens is vividly described through his deliberately exaggerated and oversimplified description of the average Athenian citizen's influence on politics. Yet how are we to interpret his verdict that Thucydides does not really "deserve" to be in the preamble? Should we infer that a sentiment from ancient Greece has no place on such a document, or that it would be a misrepresentation of the goal of the treaty to summarize it with Thucydides' words? The latter tallies more closely with the sense of the passage: Davies has obviously considered the meaning of the quotation, and used it to clarify his strong objection to the treaty. Any hint of the

“membership” effect of his discussing the quotation is absent: he does not refer to the original language of the quotation, and is self-deprecating about his own classical knowledge, while drawing attention to his understanding of the situation of “the man in the street” and thus bolstering his own rhetorical persona as a man of the people.

The discussion is concluded by William Hague:

Mr William Hague: It is obvious from the speeches that have been made so far that it would be advisable to remove Thucydides from the preamble to the document. The reference means a slave state to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife [Mr Menzies Campbell] and it reminds the right hon. Member for Llanelli [Mr Denzil Davies] and I that Athenian democracy was a direct democracy in which every citizen had a vote. Any document that cites Thucydides in its preamble naturally requires a referendum. If the government want to avoid that implication, they should remove the reference.

What Hague has correctly identified is that the mention of Thucydides stirs different associations in different people, and that these associations are not within the power of the author of the preamble (or a political speaker) to control completely. This exchange is an example of how closely reference to the classics is connected in British political discourse with overtones of elitism and also pomposity. It is the second of these characteristics which is brought up in April 2004 when the debate moves onto the question of a British referendum about the treaty:

Mr John Maples: The Euro-elite ... see the constitution as a huge and wonderful way of extending their influence and power at an international level. That is given away by the incredibly pompous preamble – all about democracy and including quotes from Thucydides – to the Convention. I recommend it to anyone who wants a lesson in pomposity. It says: “Our Constitution ... is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the greatest number.” Well, we are about to find out.

This sentiment recurred that September when Mr. Richard Shepherd described it as “undoubtedly grandiloquent ... [the Preamble] quotes Thucydides, no less, in both Greek and English.” Even though the quotation from Thucydides was not as high-flown as the rest of the preamble document (as the opening paragraphs above show), it is the mention of the classical author that is picked up on by the British politicians as the most pretentious element. The association of the classics – and more specifically, the classical languages – with privilege and grandiloquence in the British parliament has in fact made it a less flexible tool for politicians to use than it is in the United States, where references to the classics are not accompanied by allusions to the speaker’s education or by self-deprecating humor.

Conclusion

From this necessarily brief comparative examination, some important findings emerge. Firstly, there are far more quotations in the US Congress than the British parliament, but a higher proportion of the British examples contain implicit or explicit comment on the education of the member discussing the quotation, through mention of the original language. To what are we to attribute this difference?

One factor must be the difference in rhetorical styles of the American and British parliaments. There are fewer set-piece speeches in the House of Commons than in the House of Lords or the US Congress, and the more raucous character of the discussion makes speakers more vulnerable to any *ad hominem* attack from the opposition benches. But even outside Congress and the Houses of Parliament, which both have their own particular patterns of speech, Thucydides' words are more frequently invoked (for instance on military memorials) in the United States than in Britain. The subtle difference in the references to the Greek language is significant here, as it is a consequence of the structure of US higher education courses compared with the specialization favored in the British model. In the United States, a far higher proportion of the college-educated population is likely to have come across some of Thucydides' work, usually the Funeral Oration, as a result of distribution requirements (the necessity of studying a wide range of subjects), such as Great Books, Western civilization or even government and political science courses in which the Funeral Oration frequently appears. The materials in these courses, aimed at nonspecialists, are always in English, often in the form of textbooks of abridged sources.

By comparison, in Britain, specialization at the A-level stage (16–18 years), such that students focus on just three or four subjects, means that few young people beyond the age of sixteen who are not taking subjects such as history or humanities have the opportunity to read classic works with the support and guidance of a teacher. Therefore the proportion of the population who are familiar with at the very least the name of Thucydides is much lower in Britain: studies such as E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1987) indicate that the broad study required by almost all US colleges results in a wide base level of general knowledge, including awareness of the name of Thucydides, Pericles, and the Peloponnesian War, that in turn is reflected in public discourse. In Britain on the other hand, the fact that the majority of schools offering the classical languages are in the private sector only exacerbates the likelihood of anyone quoting the classics in parliament running the risk of appearing elitist, out of touch, or simply irrelevant.

The second finding from this material shows how important cultural considerations and tradition are in the reception of Thucydides, or the classics more generally. In the United States, quoting the classics is evocative of the Founding Fathers and therefore can sound patriotic, and to have improved one's prospects through hard work and achieving a college education or to be an autodidact (such as Robert Byrd was) is considered to be all part of the American dream. In Britain, on the

other hand, quoting the classics can sound elitist. In neither country is the classical parallel being drawn solely for its relevance to the topic under discussion, but is taking place within a nexus of other interlocking political and societal factors. For both this reason and because of quotations' inherent "stickiness," change in political rhetoric occurs more gradually than the Library of Congress' warnings might imply. Thucydidean quotations might dwindle more slowly in the United States than we fear, and might become acceptable – and illuminating – currency in the British parliament less quickly than we might like.

Guide to Further Reading

Recent studies on the importance of classical authors to the Founding Fathers include Richard (1994). Alternative approaches show that the classics were less important than other influences: Lutz (1984) is useful to show how infrequently classical authors were quoted compared to moderns, and more recently Onuf and Cole (2011) have expanded on this view. Reinhold (1984) and Winterer (2002) are very useful and detailed, and Malamud (2009) considers the same themes into the twentieth century and beyond. For the use of quotation as a literary genre, Morson (2011) is very useful on the American side, as is Finnegan (2011) on the British; on how quotation is used in practice as a communicative tool, Heath and Heath (2007) is a bestseller and a classic.

Public Records

Hansard: *Hansard* 1803–2005 can be accessed at <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>. Material after 2005 is at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/>

British parliamentary research papers are available at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/>

EU documentation is published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. The Draft Treaty of the Constitution is Notice No. 2003/C 169/01, Volume 46 (18 July, 2003)

Congressional Record: The *Record* is archived by the Library of Congress, available on the Thomas service: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php>

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Part VI

Thucydidean Reflections

Why We Need To Read Thucydides – Even When “We” Are Only A Few

Hunter R. Rawlings III

I begin with a question. Why has Thucydides been virtually unknown to the general public, but so meaningful to those few who have read him closely?

Even in ancient times many Greeks and Romans found Thucydides obscure because of the difficulty of his style. In our time I have discovered that when people introduce me to a broad audience and cite my scholarly work or interests, they often can't even pronounce the historian's name, not simply because it is difficult to pronounce, but because they have never heard of him. Unlike Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, and Euripides, Thucydides is not a household name.

On the other hand, in antiquity Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* dominated and shaped the writing of history for centuries, and became the model for Western historiography through the Renaissance. In modern times, he has had a deep influence on the thinking of elite minds like Thomas Hobbes and David Hume, John and Henry Adams, and, in the twentieth century, the poet W.H. Auden and the political and military leader George Marshall. Why does this chasm exist in Thucydides' reception between popular audience and elite reader?

Part of the answer to this question is simple: Thucydides wanted it this way. He is one of the few authors in history to state explicitly in the beginning of his work that he writes ONLY for the elite, not for the common person. Take his programmatic statement in Book 1, chapter 22. After summing up his historiographical method, Thucydides says:

For those hearing my work read aloud, the absence of charming stories will perhaps appear rather disagreeable. But for as many as will want to study the clear truth of what happened, and will happen again in similar form, given the human condition, for them to judge my work useful will be good enough. It is composed as a book to be read over time rather than as a competition piece to be read just once.

This self-conscious claim strongly signals that Thucydides writes only for serious readers willing to give time and attention to his text, and desirous of studying what his history can teach them about the events of their own time.

Why does anyone intentionally eschew a wide readership? First, as is clear from these remarks, Thucydides held a low opinion of “common readers,” those who seek pleasure, not historical understanding. For most Greeks of his time, “reading” meant listening to an author recite his work orally to a few friends on the spot. It was a passive exercise in oral and aural enjoyment, not active and engaged thinking about an intricately fashioned text designed to convey deep lessons about human conduct.

Secondly, Thucydides knew very well that by writing about a major war, he was competing with two remarkably popular predecessors, Homer and Herodotus. They had described two earlier conflicts in which Greeks defeated barbarians, respectively the Trojan War and the Persian Wars. Thucydides, on the other hand, chose to compose the history of a brutal contemporary war in which Greeks killed Greeks and brought enormous suffering upon themselves. Rather than a record of Greek victory and heroism, the *History* is testimony to man’s inhumanity to man, and a vivid portrait of the disintegration of values that hold civilization together. Thucydides did not believe that “war as tragedy” would make him popular.

Two other characteristics make Thucydides’ work appeal to a narrow, elite audience. As Paul Shorey pointed out over 100 years ago (1893), Thucydides’ history is marked by two fundamental elements: ethical positivism and intellectualism. The first is Thucydides’ belief that all our actions are governed by an overriding constant called “human nature,” comprising our basic drives and motivations. These are, in the historian’s reckoning, discoverable in history, and they are essentially selfish: fear, ambition, desire for profit and competitive advantage, expediency.

The second element, intellectualism, constitutes Thucydides’ analytical and rhetorical method of revealing those motivations by peeling off the layer of pretence and deceit that men use to hide their real motives from the world. This semantic and syntactic penetration occurs on every page, almost in every sentence of Thucydides’ text: he constantly contrasts word and deed, separates specious claim from genuine motive, distinguishes the professed rationale from the true desire. In reading Thucydides, we find ourselves immersed in a world of analysis, of logical relationships that require us to weigh evidence, to divine motives, to balance probabilities, to assign causes. As Shorey said, “the fundamental assumption of his ethical positivism is that the nature and conduct of man are strictly determined by his physical and social environment and by a few elementary appetites and desires” (1893: 66). The fundamental result of his analysis is that we, his close and engaged readers, learn to penetrate the conventions and decorous pretences man has wrapped about himself in order to conceal his core self, his true nature. In Thucydides’ view, the common man is duped by this moral drapery. The wise man is not deceived: he pierces the cover and exposes the core.

In so doing, the elite reader sees war for what it is: the disintegration of society, of popular morality, of traditional ethics, of language, finally of civilization itself. This is the meaning of war, the lesson of Thucydides. As one ancient commentator claimed, a history like that of Thucydides is “philosophy teaching by examples” (Ps.-Dionysius, *Ars Rhetorica* XI.2). It constitutes a record of patterns, paradigms of human behavior under stress. Thucydides clearly believed that good readers could learn from his history and thereby interpret what was happening in their own day since it would not be different, in kind, from what he recorded. Human nature is not pretty, and it does not change.

It is not surprising, then, that one of the first acute readers of Thucydides in modern times was Thomas Hobbes, who paid the historian the ultimate homage of translating his entire work into English. This was an extraordinary task in Hobbes’ day, given the difficulty of Thucydides’ Greek, the dearth of other translations in English, and the lack of commentaries and other such aids. Hobbes not only took on this Herculean task at a relatively young age (in his thirties), but spent years at it, and fulfilled it brilliantly when he published his work in 1629. His translation is still among the best in English and evinces a close, probing engagement with the text. Hobbes clearly valued Thucydides’ vigorous prose, sophisticated rhetoric, and deep thought. That he was proud of the product is obvious from the title Hobbes chose for his opus: “8 Books of the Peloponnesian War written by Thucydides son of Olorus interpreted with faith and diligence *immediately* out of the Greek by Thomas Hobbes” (my italics – Hobbes signaled his readers that he did not work from a Latin or French version, but from Thucydides’ own Greek).

In the afterword to his translation (“On the life and history of Thucydides”), Hobbes vigorously contests the ancient criticism that Thucydides’ Greek is “obscure”:

The obscurity that is, proceedeth from the profoundness of the sentences, containing contemplations of those human passions, which either dissembled or not commonly discoursed of, do yet carry the greatest sway with men in their public conversation For a wise man should so write ... that wise men only should be able to commend him ... In the characters of men’s humours and manners, and applying them to affairs of consequence: it is impossible not to be obscure to ordinary capacities, in what words soever a man deliver his mind. If therefore Thucydides in his orations, or in the description of a sedition, or other thing of that kind, be not easily understood; it is of those only that cannot penetrate into the nature of such things, and proceedeth not from any intricacy of expression. (1989: 584)

Here Hobbes makes the same point the historian himself did in his preface: he wrote for those few readers ambitious and attentive enough to read it with profit. It is this characteristic of the *History* that Hobbes finds congenial to his own thought. And Hobbes said so in no uncertain terms when he published his

autobiography at the age of eighty-four (1672). That work, composed in Latin verse, contains the following lines:

Sed mihi prae reliquis Thucydides placuit.
 Is Democratia ostendit mihi quam sit inepta
 Et quantum coetu plus sapit unus homo.
 Hunc ego scriptorem verti, qui diceret Anglis,
 Consultaturi rhetores ut fugerent.

But Thucydides pleased me far beyond the rest. He showed me what an inept thing democracy is, and how much more a single man knows than a crowd. I translated this author that he might tell the English they should shun the politicians they were about to consult.

The significant aspect of Thucydides' influence over Hobbes is not, then, so much that Hobbes borrowed this idea or that in writing the *Leviathan* or his other philosophical works, though one can certainly make the case that Hobbes took much from Thuc. 1.76.2, where the Athenians declare that the three essential motivations in human nature are "fear, ambition, and profit." More significant, I think, is the fact that Hobbes found Thucydides' refined rhetoric and penetrating analysis of human nature pertinent to, and productive of, his own philosophical and political program. Only a few profound minds can expose mankind's hidden passions and dissembled motives, and they must aim at a limited, elite audience. It is not surprising that Hobbes, in citing examples of Thucydidean penetrations, singles out "the description of sedition": that is a clear reference to Book 3, chapters 82–5, Thucydides' great deconstruction of the nature of civil war, in which political leaders and their followers willfully shift the relationship between words and deeds, thus altering human values for factional advantage. This was a theme close to Hobbes' heart as well as to his mind, given that he lived through the English Civil War and all its horrors. No wonder, then, that he later attributed his translation of Thucydides to his desire to warn the English about the risks inherent in trusting popular political leaders, and about the incompetence of democracy and the ignorance of the common crowd.

In the next century David Hume took up the Thucydidean mantle. In his essay "On the populousness of antient nations," first published in 1742, Hume minces no words:

The first page of Thucydides is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history. All preceding narrations are so intermixed with fable, that philosophers ought to abandon them, in a great measure, to the embellishment of poets and orators. (1889: 414)

At nearly the same time, Hume published *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding* (1748–51), in which he wrote this credo:

It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions: the

same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit: these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises, which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English: You cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. (1902: 83–4)

It is hard to believe that Hume’s fundamental claim about the constancy of human nature and the purpose of studying history does not come directly from Thucydides. From his view that human nature obeys laws, just as nature does, Hume derived other dicta, such as his famous idea that “politics can be reduced to a science.” In fact, one could point to the fundamental tenet of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy that the constancy of human nature allows for the scientific study of man in his various dimensions, social, economic, and political. Hume’s perceptions in turn had a powerful influence on James Madison as he developed the ideas that led to American Constitutional government (cf. Adair 1957). But that is too big a design for this brief essay to sketch.

Instead, I want merely to point to Hume’s telling reflection on Thucydides’ description of civil war in Book 3, the same passage to which Hobbes referred in the quotation above:

The utmost energy of the nervous style of THUCYDIDES, and the copiousness and expression of the GREEK language, seem to sink under that historian, when he attempts to describe the disorders, which arose from faction throughout all the GRECIAN commonwealths. You would imagine, that he still labours with a thought greater than he can find words to communicate. And he concludes his pathetic description with an observation, which is at once refined and solid. “In these contests,” says he, “those who were the dullest, and most stupid, and had the least foresight, commonly prevailed. For being conscious of this weakness, and dreading to be overreached by those of greater penetration, they went to work hastily, without premeditation, by the sword and poinard, and thereby got the start of their antagonists, who were forming fine schemes and projects for their destruction.” (1889: 404)

Like Hobbes, Hume singles out this analysis of revolution for special mention because it burrows beneath the surface of social and political life, distinguishes

elite and common elements of the population, and exposes the wellsprings of human behavior. And, Hume astutely remarks, this analysis depends upon Thucydides' use of language itself: it is a "nervous style," energetic and expressive, and still almost not equal to the task of conveying the deep thought it exposes. Like Hobbes again, Hume grasps the essence of Thucydidean thought: the troubled, often perverse relationship between word and deed.

In the twentieth century, it was, fittingly, a poet who saw through this Thucydidean thicket. On the very eve of World War II W.H. Auden wrote his ominous poem "September 1, 1939." He begins this way:

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Auden’s epithet for Thucydides is “exiled.” Auden was himself an exile in September 1939, having just left Great Britain for America, so this adjective helps us grasp why the poet looked to the Greek historian for understanding in that year. Auden knew that he was about to witness terrible events *as they happened*, just as Thucydides had some 2400 years before. Reading Thucydides was a *contemporary experience*, a window into one’s own time. In 1939 Auden and many others saw Europe, and for that matter, the world, disintegrating before their eyes. As Samuel Hynes (1982) has cogently said of the poetry Auden wrote in 1940, Auden was focused on the following questions: “how to think historically about present disaster,” “how to be an artist in a bad time.” The liberal Western conception of man must be wrong in fundamental ways; or, more than wrong, *dead*. This death represented the failure of an entire culture’s ideology, a subject on which Thucydides is perhaps the quintessential expert. As Hynes said, “To try to understand what has come upon us and why, may not be the most heroic of the tasks required to save civilization, but it is indispensable.”

Auden concluded, famously, that “Poetry makes nothing happen.” In the face of the atomization of society and the disintegration of tradition and the loss of community, what can the artist do? Nothing useful in the political domain, Auden believed, but something important in the intellectual realm: art makes nothing happen, but it *orders* experience, it conceptualizes and comprehends history. In his “New Year Letter” of 1940, Auden wrote: “For art had set in order sense/ And feeling and intelligence.” Auden’s description of the 1930s as “a low dishonest decade” contains a world of truth. And, as Hynes points out, Auden’s role as a poet who “saw human actions as conditioned by history, and history as the necessity that people must recognize if they are to be free” became crucial to Auden’s age in the sense that it made him a historical poet, one who interpreted events *as they were happening* to his contemporaries.

In my own case, Thucydides helped me confront a moral dilemma when I was pursuing graduate work in classics many decades ago, in the late 1960s. While I was studying Indo-European philology and Greek paleography and epigraphy, some of my friends from college were fighting in Vietnam, and others were publicly protesting the war, often to the point of being jailed for their actions. In my carrel in the Princeton library I remember feeling hopelessly misplaced, selfish, narrow-minded, and, to use the term so much in vogue in that generation, “irrelevant” to the world around me. Reading Thucydides’ intense account of a long, destructive war, and discussing it in W. Robert Connor’s lively seminar, restored to me a sense of purpose: Thucydides seemed to speak to me directly about the nature of war, the choices it imposed, the pressures it brought to bear on a democracy, the inversion of values it forced upon society, above all, the suffering it caused for all concerned. Now I had a text in front of me that demanded the closest, most engaged, personal attention, and a professor who valued not simply technical knowledge, but the meaning and import of an ancient author. Philology seemed suddenly to *matter*.

As a result, I began to understand the dissolution of American society my friends and I were witnessing every day. I even got involved: I sent a letter to the *New York Times* comparing the conflict in Vietnam with the Sicilian expedition (mercifully, it was not accepted for publication). I recall sending another, somewhat less naive letter to my hometown newspaper in Norfolk, VA. Unfortunately, at least in some respects, it *was* published: I well remember the chagrin my father felt when his classicist son's anti-government letter appeared in print for all his family and friends to see.

Now, some forty-four years later, I have a son who is an officer in the United States Marine Corps. He served in Iraq twice, in Afghanistan once, and he was deployed almost annually for ten years in one Middle Eastern country or another. I know what it is like to wince every time the telephone rings. My son has done things I never did: he has led men in war, he has tended to the wounded, he has commiserated with the families of deceased comrades.

This past year he was a student in the Marine Corps University School of Advanced Warfighting, a high-level course of study designed to help officers think critically about what they are doing militarily, politically, socially, and culturally. The first text assigned in his course was Thucydides. After decades of paying little attention to his father's scholarly passion, my son started sending me a couple of emails a day seeking advice on how to read my favorite author, and for good commentary on the text. My son studied Thucydides in a way I have not, and could not: he read it in English, not Greek, but he discussed it with colleagues who had been to war multiple times. These men had an appreciation for Thucydides' virtues that transcends the intellectual, even the ethical and the moral. For them, reading Thucydides constitutes not discovery, but *anagnorisis*, "re-cognition" of what they have already seen and done. In ancient Greek *anagnorisis* also means "reading." To know again, to recognize, to acknowledge: that is the kind of reading Thucydides enforces, intense, personal, replete with meaning. In that sense, it is useful to keep in mind that, as Thucydides well knew, nearly every one of his Greek readers had himself been on the battlefield, had fought in close ranks, and seen the scourge of war.

Thucydides, when read this way, the way he intended, is revelatory. As Lowell Edmunds (1993) has demonstrated, Thucydides created a remarkable equivalence between his text and the war. They are the same thing. The Peloponnesian War is *his* war; his text is the Peloponnesian War. But it is also every war, fought again and again, over and over again, endlessly.

To read Thucydides is to understand, at least partially, what is happening as it happens, to perceive some order amid chaos, to watch ethical conflict play out in real time, to grasp the perverted meanings of partisan slogans as they emerge, to recognize recurring patterns of behavior, of states and their political leaders alike, and to see, beneath the surface, the self-interest that actually motivates them. On the evidence of history thus far, mankind will continue to go to war, generation after generation. We will continue to find rationales for declaring war, we will

continue to listen to ambitious, patriotic politicians, we will continue to invade faraway countries, we will continue to debate the policies and politics of war, to be divided against ourselves, and we will continue to commit atrocities on and off the battlefield. For a creature of such a nature, Thucydides is strong medicine, necessary medicine. Read Thucydides, and tell a few others to read him too. It may not save civilization, but it is humbling and humanizing, and that is perhaps the most we can ask.

Guide to Further Reading

Rawlings (1981) remains an insightful and accessible introduction to scholarly debates about the composition and organization of Thucydides' history.

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Why Teach Thucydides Today? (And If We're At It, How?)

Clifford Orwin

The subject of the present volume is the reception of Thucydides. Teaching him may at first appear an instance of a different topic, his transmission. These are, however, two sides of the same coin.

In fact the most important form of Thucydides' reception in any generation is precisely his reception by students. This is true first of all with reference to the broader society. Such citizens as encounter Thucydides at all usually do so as undergraduates (and only then). Tweet what you will, the classroom remains the crucial medium for the dissemination (and reception) of Thucydides. So whatever notions of Thucydides prevail in society at large will result primarily from the collective effort of those who teach him to undergraduates.

Experience teaches that most students will remain impervious to Thucydides. He is not for everyone and certainly not for the typical undergraduate of today. Still it matters what all students who have encountered Thucydides think of him, even those who have the least occasion to think about him at all. When the study of classics hangs by a thread, we need all the help from the wider public that we can get. So we want those students no longer in touch with us (or with him) to look back on Thucydides as a noble peak worth scaling, even if they themselves were content to remain in the foothills.

Then there remains the fact that while most undergraduates will content themselves with their initial exposure to Thucydides some few will resolve to seek him out again. These obviously matter greatly. They are the ones from whom future scholars and teachers of him will emerge. And even those who wisely heed their parents' and friends' advice not to push things so imprudently far may still rally vocally (and, if they go on to succeed in other walks of life, generously) to the side of Thucydidean studies when needed.

Yet even this crucial handful of students is distinct only in retrospect from that larger number on whom Thucydides makes only a light impression. And there's no particular reason to suppose that the barriers to attracting them are any lower than those obstructing the way to their classmates. So all of us who ask ourselves the question of why teach Thucydides today must do so in anticipation of the question that our students will pose to themselves, if not necessarily to us, namely, why learn Thucydides?

We can't blame students for raising this question. Nor, unfortunately, can we give them the answer that most of them would most like to hear, namely that the study of Thucydides can reasonably be expected to deepen their pockets. Experience confirms Tocqueville's claim that democracy fosters an overriding concern with the useful, and just as inevitably predisposes toward interpreting it as the lucrative.

It's not surprising, then, that with the advance of democracy the classics have tended to retreat. They've enjoyed flurries of perceived relevance – in the Britain of Thomas Arnold, Grote and Mill due to the rising prestige of democracy and so of Athens, in the America of the 1950s due to the democratic idealism of the Great Books movement and the likening of America to Athens in its clash with the Soviet Sparta. Thinking back to my own days as a high school student in the Chicago of the 1960s, the classics were still honored in speech if less in deed. They were the dowagers of the curriculum, as irreproachable as they were gray. Why did my friends and I, children or grandchildren of immigrants, eschew current French and Spanish to pursue long dead Latin? It was all about respectability. Latin possessed it and we longed for it. In those days the classics still impressed as the foundations of Western civilization, which in turn was still regarded as a fount of good things. The classics remained in some sense authoritative for us, if more as a matter of habit than from any inner conviction.

Today, however, the watchwords of education at all levels are diversity and inclusiveness on the one hand and technological ingenuity on the other. These mandate, if not the exclusion of the classics as a stale conspiracy of dead white males, then surely their marginalization. Harold Bloom remarked a decade ago that the humanities as such would soon be as vestigial to the university as the classics were already. He thus implied the worst for our discipline: banishment to the periphery of the peripheral. (No doubt with funding to match.) There's ample recent evidence that the humanities have been in retreat, and it's doubtful that classics remains robust enough to wage a successful rearguard action on its own. Whatever our pitch for the attention of students, we're condemned to make it from a position of weakness.

Admittedly, my own situation is better than that of many teachers of Thucydides, because my primary appointment is in a political science department. The department therefore attracts many students, which in its benevolence it requires to take more than the prevalent quota of political theory courses. They must study theory at both the second and third year levels, at either or both of which they may

encounter Thucydides. And since requiring political science students to study him in Greek is obviously out of the question, this preempts the most obvious obstacle to approaching him. Teaching the classics in English: that's the clearest advantage we political scientists enjoy over the rest of you. I won't deny its many problems, or that we who practice it are parasites off you genuine philologists. Still, it fills the room, even where it is a largish one.

Let's say then that because of the favorable conditions prevailing in my department I attract several dozen students to a course featuring Thucydides. This won't spare me the necessity of making the case for him. With a few idiosyncratic exceptions drawn from students who happen to have encountered him elsewhere, their having showed up at my first lecture doesn't attest a firm commitment to study him. Indeed they remain free to drop the course, as some of them surely will.

How then to present Thucydides to today's students? The simplest and most generic answer is by establishing his "relevance." In some sense this answer is unexceptionable. Isn't this what we're always telling our students, that the thinker whom we're teaching is worth studying today in terms that are the terms of today (and therefore the terms of the students)?

Unfortunately, there are pitfalls to painting any so ancient a figure as relevant in this sense. The first is lest in our zeal we paint him as so much like ourselves as actually to diminish that relevance. Was Thucydides a "realist," as our colleagues in international relations tended to cast him until lately? Or did he rather belong to that once exotic but now quite commonplace club, the "constructivists"? Actually, it hardly matters. Whichever, we risk making Thucydides so familiar as to consign him to contempt, in the Hobbesian sense of indifference. Competent students of international relations already know what realism and constructivism entail: they don't need to learn this from Thucydides. The more used they become to assimilating Thucydides to categories with which they're already thoroughly comfortable, the less their incentive to invest the effort required to understand him.

In any case both realism and constructivism in their various current stripes are so obviously artifacts of late twentieth-century thought that it's hard to make a persuasive case for Thucydides as their exponent. At most you can claim credit for him as having anticipated them, however dimly. If what we want is an up-to-date understanding of current concepts, better to turn from Thucydides to assistant professors, whose careers depend on their up-to-dateness. There's nothing so contemporary as an assistant professor.

Similar dangers lurk in presenting Thucydides as a grab bag of case studies that leap out and grab us as manifestly applicable to our day. In 1914 students at the University of Toronto staged a public reading of the Melian Dialogue to protest Germany's violation of Belgium's neutrality. All honor to them: in retrospect this must strike us as a remarkably (even implausibly) literate expression of the passions of that day. It might therefore seem churlish to remark that Belgium was not Melos and Wilhelmine Germany not Athens, nor were the strategic situations at all parallel. Most to the point, to rally Thucydides to even the most

unexceptionable expression of political moralism abstracts from the fact that his work so relentlessly subverts the unexceptionability of moralism as such.

A more recent and more prosaic example of mining Thucydides for useful nuggets appeared in the opinion pages of the *New York Times* in the very week that I completed this essay. The occasion was President Barack Obama's then impending summit meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The author, the distinguished Harvard political scientist Graham T. Allison, warned both leaders to beware "Thucydides trap" (*sic*) (Allison 2013). Whether or not this gambit succeeded in capturing the two leaders' attention, it certainly corralled mine. If, however, I knew only as much about the column as I've just related, I would have been puzzled. Thucydides relates so many traps: which was so egregious as to merit the distinction of attaching his name to it? What emerges from his work as, so to speak, the trap of traps?

The answer, according to Professor Allison, is the "trap" that launched a thousand ships: the collision of the rising power of Athens with the established one of Sparta.

In eleven of fifteen cases since 1500 in which a rising power rivaled a ruling power, the outcome was war. Can Mr. Obama and Mr. Xi successfully defy those odds?

More than 2000 years ago, Thucydides, the Athenian general and historian, offered a brilliant insight about the cause of the Peloponnesian War when he identified not one but two variables in such cases. As he famously wrote: "It was the *rise* of Athens and the *fear* that this inspired in Sparta that made war inevitable."

Thucydides knew it was more complicated than that. But readers today should ask themselves the following: how could a peripheral clash between the cities of Corinth and Corcyra in the fifth century BCE have triggered a cascade that ended in catastrophe for both Athenians and Spartans? It is the dynamic inherent when a rising power becomes more confident, a ruling power fears losing its edge, and entangling alliances on each side drive the parties toward war.

It's gratifying when a leading public intellectual vouches for the value of studying Thucydides. And it's reassuring that Allison ascribes enough clout to him to want to enlist his help in persuading the two world leaders. Still, I feel that even this promotion of Thucydides' relevance would elicit only a shrug from most students. Having carefully charted (by Allison's own count) fifteen examples of the "Thucydides trap" since 1500, would social science still have anything to learn from the original? Is there nothing more to Thucydides' presentation of that trap than could be learned from an introductory textbook in international relations?

If the answer to the preceding questions is no, we find ourselves in an uncomfortable situation. By positing such easy parallels between cases already familiar to us and particular episodes in Thucydides, we run the risk that in our zeal to prove him relevant we will end up making him seem superfluous. This pitfall resembles that previously adduced concerning assimilating him to this or that current school of thought.

The second problem is that by treating the selected episodes out of context, this approach inevitably sacrifices the whole of the work to its parts. The way to Thucydides' vindication must be a longer and harder one. Allison himself rightly notes that "Thucydides knew that [the outbreak of the war] was more complicated than [the 'Thucydides trap']." Indeed he does, and the ultimate "relevance" of this as well as all the other episodes of the narrative will emerge only from pursuing these complexities. It isn't enough to grasp that Athens was a rising power and Sparta an established one; we also must come to see Athens as Athens and Sparta as Sparta, each of which conducted itself quite differently than the other would have done in its place. That means to come to understand the distinctive strengths and weaknesses of these two great antagonistic regimes, and their implications for Thucydides' broader teaching on the limits of human possibility (1.22.4, 3.82.2). In Thucydides as in all great writers the devil is in the complications.

Consider, by contrast, a different sense in which we might claim "relevance" for Thucydides as our contemporary. Suppose that we cast him not as sharing or prefiguring any currently fashionable position, nor as providing grist for their mills, but rather as furnishing a touchstone for them. That we present him as a worthy challenge to prevailing views (including those of our students), whose pages harbor not agreement with, but difference from – and implicitly, critique of – present opinions of the world. That he is relevant not as our sympathetic ally but as our useful antagonist.

As you've already concluded, I'm more sympathetic to this claim for Thucydides' relevance than to the previous one. For one thing, it does not patronize Thucydides, but takes him at his word – and at his measure. It recalls his declaration that he bequeathed to us a *ktema es aiei*, something useful for all time. This declaration implies a claim to what we might call permanent contemporaneity. Contemporaneity of this permanent sort, however, implies Thucydides' avoidance of contemporaneity in the usual sense of conforming to the prevalent opinions of any era (including his own). Thucydides will never be wholly alien or outdated for the same reason that he'll never be fully at home or up to date, because his thought dwells beyond intellectual fashion. He will prove relevant to our scholars of international relations not by supporting their realism or constructivism or whateverism but by challenging these, thereby suggesting a more adequate understanding of *ton anthroponon* or the permanent contours of human affairs.

Again, I'm not a classicist or an ancient historian by training (although I took many courses in those fields), but a political scientist and historian of political thought. So it is Thucydides the political thinker who is of primary interest to me and whom I present to my students. Here Thucydides' greatness lies in his unrivaled concreteness. Too often political thought, especially as practiced in universities, goes horribly astray. It becomes academic, abstract and self-referential, divorced from political life and the concerns of political actors. Against this there is no better inoculation than Thucydides. In his pages political life and political thought are joined at the hip and remain inseparable. In fact what we see in his

pages is political thought first emerging from out of political life, its give and take, its hopes and fears, its often desperate intensity. When his characters state generalities there's nothing academic about them. The speaker isn't hoping for tenure, or publication in a peer-reviewed journal. He's a citizen seeking to persuade his fellow citizens, an envoy seeking to cajole an ally or deter an enemy, a commander attempting to rally his troops in a desperate situation. His thoughts arise in a context of action and they continue to address that context. They don't float away like helium balloons, up and away into some blue sky of theory. They're matters of life and death, for the listeners and sometimes for the speakers as well. The Plataeans speak piteously for their lives; unfortunately, no one is listening. This too is a fundamental fact of political life: the power of speech has its limits. Speech in Thucydides is political speech not least because his speakers are aware of those limits.

No great issue of political life is absent from Thucydides. Freedom, empire, piety, justice, democracy, aristocracy, "the individual and society" – they're all there. But he shows us justice or democracy or empire in action, and the problems with each that only action can disclose. Because of the limits of speech in politics, actions always have the last word, and Thucydides is no less a master at recreating actions than speeches.

So I teach Thucydides because more than any other writer he brings the enduring issues of politics alive for students. No matter that the events he describes are remote from present students in space and time as well as in so many other ways. Such is his magic that these distances fall away, and the students are soon immersed in the fates of vanished cities that they had never heard of. They still may not grasp where in heck Epidamnus was, or what distinguished Dorians from Aeolians. Still, for my purposes this hardly matters. You don't have to grasp the possible strategic significance of Melos (over which even the experts disagree) to find the fatal blindness of the Melians as exasperating as the Athenian ambassadors do – and to sympathize with their longing for caring gods as these same ambassadors don't.

Let me offer one example of how this can work in the classroom. For several years of my career, now regrettably past, I was free to devise and teach a third-year undergraduate course. It was an optional rather than a required course, and its prerequisites included at least a year's experience of political philosophy or international relations, preferably both. I called the course "Might and Right Among Nations," and I constructed it as a confrontation between Thucydides and Michael Walzer. (I mean here the Walzer of *Just and Unjust Wars*, his highly influential book of 1977, since revised and updated (2006)).

Walzer was a teacher of mine long ago, whom I've always respected as a model public intellectual. In my course, however, he served as a stalking horse for Thucydides. We began by reading Walzer, then proceeded to read Thucydides in effect as a response to Walzer. There was some anachronism in this, but the books matched up well against each other. Walzer proceeds as Thucydides does by means

of exemplary episodes that he calls upon the reader to join him in assessing (the difference being that not all of Walzer's cases are drawn from the same war, are not episodes of a single greater episode). Walzer no less than Thucydides is preoccupied with the tension between might and right, especially as it manifests itself in war. Both concern themselves with hard cases, and above all with the very hardest ones. How do you negotiate between what necessity requires and justice permits?

Walzer argues that you can with due respect for necessity draw a line in defense of justice and hold it. Thucydides, by contrast, while expressing himself less directly than Walzer, and primarily through the mouths of certain of his characters, suggests the contrary. This is a case where the exception (suspending justice in deference to necessity) inevitably ends by swallowing the rule. Necessity is a slippery slope (and not just because perpetrators will tend to exaggerate the compulsion on them to act as they do – which isn't to deny that they will).

Throughout the course then we moved back and forth between the two writers, applying Walzer's terms to Thucydides' cases and Thucydides' terms to Walzer's. Walzer knew that in my staging of this argument Thucydides got the better of it, but he was always a good sport about it. (He even agreed to respond to my students' queries about his position; on Walzer's own interpretation of Thucydides, see Howse 2013.) I don't doubt that at the end of the course, as at the beginning, most of the students inclined toward Walzer's position. They also appeared to emerge from the course, however, with that respect for Thucydides that is bred only by familiarity with him, and some few at least with a resolve to continue their studies of him.

In general I've found it more effective to represent Thucydides as a critic of what students hold dearest (which means, for political science students, their scientism and their moralism) rather than as a cheerleader for it, a postmodernist before his time. This approach is also congenial to me because while stressing Thucydides' insights on a wide range of human issues, it doesn't require to commit yourself to a dogmatic interpretation of him.

It's been some years now since I've been free to teach this course but I hope to return to it in the stealthily approaching twilight of my career. In the meantime younger colleagues on whom it has devolved and who have adopted a similar approach have reported similar success. Whether it is suitable for courses on Thucydides offered under the rubric of classics or history I leave to the reader.

Guide to Further Reading

Orwin (1994) offers a rich, thought-provoking, and provocative interpretation of Thucydides from the perspective of political philosophy (see also the discussion by Jaffe in this volume); it builds on important earlier articles on specific themes such as the Mytilene debate (1984) and the *stasis* at Corcyra (1988).

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Everywhere Monuments of Good and Evil: Thucydides in the Twenty-First Century

Gregory Crane

"I'm recordin' my story for the scientists of the future. In a million years, when kids go to school, they gonna know: Once there was a Hushpuppy, and she lived with her daddy in the Bath tub." Hushpuppy in *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012)

Why should we read the historian Thucydides in the global society of the twenty-first century? In the *Histories* of Herodotus, Thucydides' predecessor, the Athenian statesman points out that a typical human life contains about 30,000 days. As I type these words, the Hathi Trust at the University of Michigan boasts that it has more than 5.5 million book titles in digital form – roughly 200 books for each day in a human life. Why should we focus any serious attention on one history composed 2500 years ago in a very complicated language no longer spoken? And even if we content ourselves with a translation from ancient Greek into a language with which we are comfortable, why should we spend time with a document written for a world that is in a real sense antediluvian, for it existed before the streams of philosophy and then the floods of transnational religions transformed the ways in which we – and probably almost everyone alive today – think?

Why History?

In exploring this question, I decided to ask more generally why we study history at all. There are, of course, many answers to this question but I think that some answers have remained surprisingly consistent and probably will remain so as long as human nature remains unchanged (again, to echo a famous conclusion that Thucydides made when he effectively invented the case study in his analysis of civil strife and collapse in Corcyra). We return to Thucydides again and again, in part

because he did much to invent history as many of us now understand it and because Thucydides' actual appeal goes beyond the rather academic, almost austere, claims that Thucydides makes for his history as an unadorned account indifferent to rhetorical appeal. Thucydides' *History* has always challenged us to compare our actions and our goals against those of his Greeks and especially of his Athenians. Even as we may aspire to the idealized vision of Pericles' Funeral Oration and to the irresistible dynamism that the Corinthians anxiously attribute to their Athenian foes, we also must ask ourselves how far we follow our democratic principles and to what extent we will appear to future generations.

To pursue the more general question of why we study history, I began exploring how departments of history at some highly selective institutions in the United States presented the question – as a faculty member in the humanities, recent chair of a small department and long-time writer of grant proposals, I felt that the web sites of history departments would provide an interesting perspective. On the one hand, such web sites must offer a safe, least-common denominator that can pass review in intellectually contentious departments. At the same time, even at self-consciously elite universities, these web sites now provide the first and most direct face to a skeptical world.

The introductions to graduate study often assume that the audience has already been converted. The Harvard Graduate History page simply begins: "The goal of the doctoral program is to train students to become both skilled scholars and conscientious teachers" (Harvard 2014a). Likewise, "The primary goal of Stanford's Department of History's graduate program is the training of scholars" (Stanford 2014a). Or again, "The Princeton graduate history program seeks to train the next generation of scholars" (Princeton 2012). Or yet again, the web page for graduate studies in history at Yale reports that "the purpose of the history program is to develop historians who possess both intellectual range and specialized competence" (Yale 2014a). These web pages can assume an audience that is not only committed to history but also desperate to become one of the few chosen for a coveted spot in these carefully branded universities. Ultimately, these programs compete on their ability to place their PhDs in academic positions.

The web pages for undergraduate programs are much more interesting because they must appeal to the uncommitted – including not only students but also the parents who may spend more than \$50,000 a year to establish their children as the academically best-branded members of society. Yale takes the historical approach to undergraduate studies in history: "History has been taught at Yale since President Thomas Clap introduced specifically historical courses in the 1760s, and the Department of History has existed since 1919, when Yale first divided its faculty into academic departments." We have been at this a long time – since before the United States asserted its independence. (Of course, if you are applying to Yale, you make such an inference automatically. Note also that this text actually opens the introduction to the department in general: Yale 2014b. The description of the undergraduate program simply lists requirements). Stanford opens with a

much more engaging statement before beginning to slog through requirements and programs: “High school history was about the answers; College history is about the questions” (Stanford 2014b).

Princeton and Harvard are even more engaging and both offer well-produced videos with the title “Why History?”. The Princeton video lets undergraduates tell their own story and is well worth watching, for it allows viewers to sense the engagement and excitement that these students developed as they immersed themselves in the study of the past (Princeton 2014). In the Harvard “Why History?” video (Harvard 2014b) – unsurprisingly – the faculty do all the talking – no students appear or express their thoughts, but the faculty do have some very interesting things to say. The video opens with two tangible – and deeply traditional – statements about why we should study history.

It begins with Michael McCormick, Francis Goelet Professor of Medieval History, enthusiastically addressing the camera:

We know each week more than we knew the preceding week about the totality of the human past – every week, what we know is increasing. It’s absolutely extraordinary.

McCormick leans forward to use body language to punctuate the verbal intensity of the reinforcing comment (the shot cuts to a second, angled camera, as if for fear that McCormick might spring into the first).

This twelve-second clip asserts the beauty of knowledge and builds on the tradition of the research university as producer of *Wissenschaft*, disciplined knowledge in the broadest sense, a tradition that the Prussian aristocrat Wilhelm von Humboldt helped establish as Napoleon threatened and occupied Berlin. Some of us carefully tiptoe around the idea that knowledge accumulates for fear of being dismissed as simple positivists. After all, knowledge is all constructed and we never know when our views will change and we will know very different things. McCormick knows all such arguments and a punchy opening for prospective students of history is not the place to introduce them.

But McCormick’s voice and body language convey another message – history is not just accumulating new knowledge, but really fascinating new knowledge, knowledge that you wouldn’t believe, knowledge that makes you jump out of your chair, knowledge that gets the groggy eighteen year old out of bed on short rest for a 9 am class. This implicit argument – an argument that a bare transcript of McCormick’s words, stripped of sound and image, cannot represent – goes back to the first book-length attempt at historical writing in the continuous tradition of Western literature. The Greek historian Herodotus opens his account of the Greeks and Persians by promising to keep alive the memory of “great and marvelous deeds” (Herodotus 1, preface). History is just plain cool and some of us will always jump at the chance to learn more and to contribute to what we know, whether as students, professionals, or members of the public.

Twenty-five seconds into the two and a half minute video, after quick sound bites from three more faculty members, the words “Why History?” appear on a dark background and the video cuts to the first relatively extensive statement – and one that stands out in the careful generalities of this and the other web sites. Maya Jasanoff, an expert on the British empire, appears and opens with the following thirty-second statement:

I think history really provides a foundation for being a citizen in a global world. You know it may sound hokey but the field of history really came of age with the nation state and it taught people to belong in a collective society. And I think that now that we live in a global society it is more than ever important for us to know something about where we come from, where we’re at, and hopefully it equips us to make better decisions about where we’re going in the future.

Jasanoff provides a straightforward answer to the question of “Why History?”: we learn how to be better citizens and to have a better world by understanding how we got here, where we are, and where we want to go. Her statement provides in my view a starting point for an answer to the question with which I began: “Why Thucydides?”

The one point that I would qualify is the assertion that “the field of history really comes of age with the nation state.” Certainly, this is true in its most literal form, for the academic study of history as we now understand it, however complex this may be, does emerge with the nation state and with technologies such as printing. The “field of history,” especially from a professor of history at an institution that trades in cultural authority, will imply to many a professionalized, even bureaucratized, practice dominated by experts. Potential students are lucky to be alive now when they can participate in the mature field of history (a maturity implicit in the phrase “came of age”), especially at an elite institution. There are good arguments for both statements. Before the nation state, most of those now in the classroom would have lived on subsistence farms or cities that depended upon refugees from the countryside to make up for those that city life had killed – many of those bright-faced students would have not lived to be eighteen, wherever their homes were situated.

But the field of history in its broadest sense – and those of us who live in a radically shifting intellectual world had best take a broad view if only to set an example for how we will be judged – has a very long history of its own and the practices upon which the field of history depends have been evolving for thousands of years. Professor Jasanoff certainly knows quite a bit about the history of history – the point is not to contradict, but to contextualize, her statement. The practices of history that evolved with the nation state become arguably even more interesting when we contemplate the continuities and contrasts with the tradition from which that industrialized history sprang.

For many of us who are students of the Greco-Roman world, Jasanoff’s statement is deeply traditional. The continuous tradition of European literature

opens with the statement characterizing the seer Calchas as one “who knew the past, the present, and the future” (Homer, *Iliad* 1.70) – the first advisor to appear in European literature realizes the ideal of historical thinking that Jasanoff suggests almost 3000 years later. When Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks, reacts against the suggestions of this historian seer, it is, as the poet elsewhere states, the beginning of many bad things for the Greeks. Calchas had divine inspiration. We must make do with our sources and our critical faculties but the goal is in some sense largely the same.

Jasanoff’s statement stands out because it assumes the existence of values other than pure intellectual excitement and getting a job. We study the past so that we can become better citizens in the present and work for a better future. A thirty-second sound bite cannot provide a model of the good life but the video producers added their own implicit commentary. As Jasanoff speaks, the video cuts from talking head to shots of her lecturing to her class. Behind Jasanoff we can see at one point a slide with several images projected behind her. On the top of the image we see the rising sun flag of Imperial Japan. Below that, we see naked, emaciated soldiers, presumably British, who had suffered brutal treatment as prisoners of war. The message that most viewers will take from this juxtaposition is clear: we become better citizens of a global society by not treating others with brutality. And the message is probably all the easier for many viewers to take in because soldiers of Anglo-America are, in this case, the victims rather than the perpetrators of brutality (and for many from Asia that the perpetrators are from the empire of Japan).

More than 2000 years ago, the Roman historian Livy opened his monumental history of Rome with a similarly programmatic statement:

What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own commonwealth what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result. (Liv. 1.preface, translation after Foster 1919)

How many of us who engage deeply with the past do not in our hearts find in such selection and judgment a major source of our interest? But like Livy – and perhaps with more risk than Livy – Jasanoff frames this implicit theater of judgment within a particular framework: we use our judgments about the past to be more effective political actors and to build a better future from what we judge to be the strengths and weaknesses of those who preceded us. Jasanoff has to defend her own position by acknowledging that others will dismiss such moral purpose – the choice of the semi-comical term “hokey” seeks to defuse the decidedly un-comical venom that such a moral stance will elicit from many academics. Livy may have lived in a time where death squads and ethnic cleansing were local and living memories but in an age of greater verbal pieties. If one were to analyze more deeply the motivations

and pleasures that students of the past, whether in academia or in society as a whole, take in the study of history, we might find a good deal more continuity than not across thousands of years of the written record.

Why Thucydides?

Anyone who wants to understand how we think about the past today would do well to reflect at length upon the continuities of historical thinking over time. While Thucydides is the primary focus here, we should always read Thucydides and his earlier contemporary together, for Thucydides surely writes with Herodotus in mind, even as he scrupulously fails to mention his name. In broad overview, Herodotus and Thucydides initiate a tension between what may be characterized as popular vs. academic historical thought. One can see this same Manichaean struggle today if we compare, in the United States, features such as *History's Mysteries* and *Modern Marvels* on the for-profit History Channel with much more self-consciously academic programming, such as the venerable *American Experience* series, from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Thucydides makes it clear that he defines his own history in part by contrasting his work to what already exists:

The absence of the marvelous (*to muthōdes*) in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful (*ōfelima*) by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid 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 to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time. (Thuc. 1.22.4, after Crawley)

For Thucydides, history can be a useful instrument – but only insofar as it strives to be a clinical account of what happened rather than to charm an audience, present or future. In contemporary terms, we might say that we have little hope to predict, or even generally forecast, the future if we allow our desire to please our audience to bias the data that we collect about the past. Thus, Thucydides offers what we might now consider to be case studies for topics such as the terrible plague at Athens:

All speculation as to its origin and its causes, if causes can be found adequate to produce so great a disturbance, I leave to other writers, whether lay or professional; for myself, I shall simply set down its nature, and explain the symptoms by which perhaps it may be recognized by the student, if it should ever break out again. This I can the better do, as I had the disease myself, and watched its operation in the case of others. (Thuc. 2.48.3, after Crawley)

Likewise, Thucydides offers his account of death squads and massacres at Corcyra as a sad model reflecting human behavior:

The sufferings which revolution entailed upon the cities were many and terrible, such as have occurred and always will occur, as long as the nature of mankind remains the same; though in a severer or milder form, and varying in their symptoms, according to the variety of the particular cases. In peace and prosperity states and individuals have better sentiments, because they do not find themselves suddenly confronted with imperious necessities; but war takes away the easy supply of daily wants, and so proves a rough master, that brings most men's characters to a level with their fortunes. (Thuc. 3.83.2, after Crawley)

Identifying the plague at Athens has been a cottage industry for years and it is not clear how much Thucydides' account of civil strife in Corcyra adds to what we can learn from more recent, and painfully well-documented, events in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Iraq, and elsewhere. No one need read Thucydides or any other ancient author for the best data to predict future events.

But if Thucydides does not provide a textbook in a narrow sense, of course, as many readers have pointed out, Thucydides does elicit an emotional response by the way in which he presents his materials (e.g., Hunter 1973; Connor 1984). This emotional connection with each new generation of readers has been essential in keeping Thucydides alive, generation after generation, within formal curricula and even, in some measure, the popular imagination. And this emotional connection provides a motive force by which we continue to make practical use of Thucydides, even if that practical use aligns only with what Thucydides himself envisioned.

Consider a particularly problematic passage in the much read Funeral Oration that Thucydides attributes to Pericles:

For Athens alone of her contemporaries is found when tested to be more powerful (*kreissōn*) than her reputation, and alone gives no occasion to her assailants to blush at the antagonist by whom they have been worsted, or to her subjects to question her title by merit to rule. Rather, we will be the object of wonder (*thaumasthēsometha*) to the present and succeeding ages, since we have not left our power without witness (*amarturon*), but have shown it by mighty proofs (*sēmeia megala*); and far from needing a Homer for our panegyrist, or other of his craft whose verses might charm for the moment only for the impression which they gave to melt at the touch of fact, we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere have left imperishable monuments of the good and the bad (*mnēmeia kakōn kai agathōn*) behind us. (Thuc. 2.41)

This bold assertion draws several threads together. First, Thucydides contrasts his work with that of his main explicit reference point – not the prose historian Herodotus but the epic poet Homer. Second, he simultaneously asserts that his

story will outdo that which Herodotus claims. Herodotus promises to tell of *thaumata*, the marvelous deeds of men. Thucydides has his Pericles boast to the present and to the future that “we are the ones who will be the object of wonder” (*thaumasthēsometha*) because our reputation is not fiction but verifiable. The Athenian courts provide the context for this assertion of truth – the Athenians do not lack witnesses (*amarturon*) and they have the legal proofs (*semeia*).

Thucydides goes on to describe what these proofs are – and the passage is not easy to interpret. The manuscripts preserve the phrase “monuments of good and evil.” Monuments is easy enough to understand in this context, for the word *mnēmeia* regularly describes physical monuments and the Athenians have left the mark of their actions throughout the Greek world.

But what do these monuments commemorate? “The good and the bad” can be passive – the good things and the bad things that happened to the Athenians. “The good and the bad” can be active – the good and bad things that the Athenians not only did but did to benefit their friends and to injure their enemies. This reading of the phrase has very strong roots in Greek culture – Plato uses the traditional idea that justice consists of helping friends and harming enemies as the starting foil for the analysis of justice that shapes the *Republic*.

This passage has disturbed more than one reader and some editors have changed the text by a single, but crucial letter: the second “k” of *kakōn* becomes “l” (*kalōn*) reversing the meaning from “evils” to “noble things”! And, indeed, the phrase *kalos kai agathos*, “noble and good” is a common expression in classical Greek. As the English commentator Marchant put it:

The [manuscript reading] *kakōn* is explained to mean “of the harm and of the good we have done.” ... But Pericles is talking of Athenian prowess, not contrasting the harm done to her enemies with the benefits conferred on her friends: nor is *agatha* “benefits” here, but “acts of valour,” which of course inflict harm on enemies. Nor is the reference to the Greek estimate of *eutuchia* [“good-fortune”], as a compound of good and ill. ... The substitution of *kakōn* for *kalōn* in this phrase, even if it made sense, would be a miserable joke. (Marchant 1891, on 2.41)

Readers such as Marchant have suggested changing the text because they find the original reading disturbing, if not scandalous. How could Thucydides have his Pericles speak of good and bad in this context?

We may never be certain how Thucydides expected his audience to understand this phrase. I would, however, suggest that the simplest and most extensive interpretation works well. If Thucydides did not intend to convey this meaning, then perhaps he should have, for the extensive interpretation of this one phrase captures much of what, I believe, has kept Thucydides compelling over the generations and what, even more importantly, can make this ancient text a powerful instrument in an increasingly global conversation across boundaries of culture and of language about the past and the future.

Thucydides remains compelling because he presents us with both the good and the bad. Pericles presents his Funeral Oration and with it a vision of a democratic society that, in large measure, resonates with the aspirations of modern democratic societies. Then the narrative shifts almost immediately to the plague – an almost apocalyptic vision of Athenian society collapsing under the biological pressures of a lethal epidemic. Then the narrative switches again and we find Pericles unbowed, defending his decisions without apology.

Each generation and each culture will react in different ways to Thucydides' Athenians. Some cultures will have applauded the determination that the Athenians show in exterminating the Melians when they could have come to a materially feasible settlement as subjects of the Athenian power but then have been dismayed at the tolerance for personal difference and the egalitarian ethos of the Funeral Oration. Anyone who has read the Funeral Oration with students will probably have experience with the shock and outrage that some students express when they encounter, at the end of the Funeral Oration, Pericles' saying that women are to be neither seen nor heard and earn their best reputations when they are unknown.

Many of those who read Thucydides do so in part because they are constantly comparing themselves to what they read. Such comparisons will obviously vary between people and cultures but such comparisons are fundamental to our ability to connect emotionally with this ancient account. What would we have done then? How would we respond now in a similar situation? We gaze backwards in time from the comfortable certainties of the present and then perhaps we wonder how those certainties, invisible to us in their self-evidence, may appall or perhaps amaze generations not yet born.

Thucydides is a historian not because he is able to present us with events just as they really took place but because, and insofar as, he refuses to give us a simple moral narrative. If history allows us to learn how to be better citizens in a global society, then we can trace that process to Thucydides and the very beginning of what we might call academic history. Thucydides begins his history with his re-analysis of the legendary past, the so-called Archaeology, a methodological showpiece in which he seeks out and rejects what he sees as rhetorically inflated encomia of past lives that he, like his later admirer Thomas Hobbes, might have termed nasty, brutish, and short. The Trojan War could not have been so great as it was. Agamemnon brought together his coalition through the threat of violence (much like his Athenian successors in Thucydides' time). The Cretan king Minos, the villain of Athenian legend, becomes the pacifier of the sea who eradicated piracy. Nor does the reader have long to wait before seeing Thucydides' skeptical eye at work: Athenians liked to boast that they were "born from the dirt" of Attica. Thucydides opens the history by conceding that Athens had not suffered the incursions that other parts of Greece had endured and thus had had a stable population – but only because the soil of Attica was poor. No one bothered Athens because the real estate wasn't worth the trouble.

History is always an essential source for any culture or nation, but the greatness of a nation or culture does not reside in its own history but in what its citizens understand and do with its history as they make decisions in the present that build the future. If the United States has claims to greatness, those claims reside in the ways that the United States has responded to both the Declaration of Independence and the genocidal Middle Passage of the slave trade. If twenty-first-century Europe, despite its economic challenges, has established a political order where wars between its states are, for now at least, unthinkable, they did so because they decided to work toward a future that was shaped by what they wished to avoid from their past. We build the future based upon those things that move us in the past, both as models to emulate and as errors to avoid. Our ability to move forward in the world depends upon the extent to which we can see both what we choose to emulate and to avoid, and the ways in which we internalize how we evaluate what we choose to emulate and to avoid.

One can argue about the details of Thucydides' account or about how he characterizes the actors in his history – is Pericles presented in too favorable a light or Cleon unfairly portrayed? One can certainly question whether speakers in Athenian political life expressed their ideas in terms of such ruthless realpolitik or whether they presented Athenian power in the self-serving paternalism of Athenians receiving suppliants in Attic tragedy. But it would be hard to deny that Thucydides relentlessly shifts the focus and provides us with data that few can rationalize into a single, simplistic narrative. Thucydides insisted on showing the good and the bad for his Athenians. He created a history that can drive our thoughts and our plans today as we seek ourselves to contribute to a global world very different from, but endlessly similar to, that which we find in Thucydides.

Guide to Further Reading

Crane (1996 and 1998) offers important readings of Thucydides' work, focusing respectively on his language and the construction of intellectual authority and on his analysis of power and "realist" thought. Crane and Tarras (2009) offer an overview of the impact of cyberinfrastructure on classical studies, and a prospectus for its future development.

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Receiving the Reception

Geoffrey Hawthorn

The difficulties in reading Thucydides are no surprise. Dionysius of Halicarnassus had said that few were able to grasp his Greek. Lorenzo Valla, presenting Pope Nicholas V with the translation that was to make the text available again to Europeans, explained that the eight books into which it had come to be divided, “these eight towns, just so that you know this, my Imperator, for perhaps you know not what sort of towns you ordered me to take, are situated in the loftiest regions, in craggy mountains, and defy missiles, battering rams, ladders, trenches and the mines of sappers” (Brown, Hankins and Kaster 2003: 122). The best of modern translations can make it easier and its modern reception easier still: indeed too much so.

This is not to say that all that has been said is deceptive. One can see why Thomas Macaulay could declare that “Thucydides is the first of historians. What is good in him is better than anything that can be found elsewhere” (2008, II: 5–11). One may have read no more than a few of the histories that have been written since the fifth century or thought hard about those one has, but one can see why John Burrow, who had, could say that almost all “except the very dullest have some characteristic weakness: some complicity, idealisation, identification; some impulse to right wrongs, to deliver a message. It is often the source of their most interesting writing” (2007: 51). But Thucydides alone “seems immune” and “unillusioned.” Nietzsche, praising what he saw as Thucydides’ “unconditional will not to be fooled and to see reason in *reality*, – *not* in ‘reason’, and even less in ‘morality’,” had said much the same (2005: 225). One can understand why David Lewis could say that his “most remarkable achievement was to transmute even military narrative into a commentary on the human condition” (1992: xiv). One can even see why Leo Strauss should have insisted that Thucydides’ deepest commitment, to the

virtue that is “first for us,” that which is “inherent in the city as such”; “natural,” “pre-philosophical,” peaceful and pre-political, “subject and subservient to the divine,” lies in what he does not write (1964: 240–1). But these reactions are all very sweeping; some rely on comparisons that the naive reader is in no position to challenge, some, like Strauss’, are strained, and none, as it stands, explains itself. And they run against many of the closer readings that do.

Jacqueline de Romilly’s were long pre-eminent. She argued that Thucydides takes the preoccupation in epic and poetry with the typical, refashions it as the probable, refines it with the antithetic methods of the sophists, and in so doing reveals both the reason in men’s motives and actions and what she described as the “subordination” of events themselves to the rational intellect (1963, 2012). Thucydides’ grasp of what John Finley called “the compulsive forces of history, his very concentration on them, as well as his characteristic (and characteristically Greek) reliance on the intellect, led him to define them so exactly as to bring them within the realm of comprehension and thus of direction, which direction in turn became to him the special task of the statesman endowed with foresight” (1942: 310). To the naive reader these are puzzling claims. Where does Thucydides define things “exactly”? Where was reason in the moves to war in the 430s, in fighting for eighteen years without a coherent strategy, in the furious internal wars in so many cities, in the attack on Melos in 416, in Athens’ ventures in Sicily in the 420s and again in 415, and in the gathering lack of steady reflection in that city, not least in the coup there in 411? It is one thing to make actions intelligible, quite another to say that they are intelligent and intelligently foreseen and to dismiss them, when upset, as prey simply to “chance.”

De Romilly and Finley took Thucydides to show how reflective protagonists could reason well in the worst of circumstances and how the reader, if he or she follows what he writes, can make a reasoned sense of events. One’s first thought can be that this is a reading that had something to do with where the two scholars had found themselves in the late 1930s and 1940s. This is not to belittle them. All of us are to a degree unknowingly susceptible to the assumptions, experiences, hopes, and expectations of our time and place. De Romilly might be thought to have been trying to keep her spirits up in a France that was to suffer defeat and the divisions of occupation, lose its empire, and find it difficult politically to recover; Finley to have been writing at what we can now see was the height of confidence in the United States; the one about what she hoped could be, the other about what was. But even if true and not belittling, this is too simple. Much of Western Europe was beginning to recover from the divisions and devastations of World War II in the 1950s, the United States was an even more evident power than it had been a decade before, and one might expect those receiving Thucydides to have been more optimistic still. Yet by the 1960s, Europeans were uneasy and Americans who deployed Thucydides to defend what they described as a “realism” about the position and proper purposes of the United States did so anxiously. Against de Romilly and Finley and others who had argued like them, Hans-Peter Stahl insisted in a still

divided Germany that Thucydides exposes “not merely the tragedy of Athens but in a much broader sense the tragedy of humanity itself: of human beings who make themselves and others into the victims of their vast plans,” defeated by emotions that defy “rational understanding and systematisation” (2003: 151–2). Adam Parry pressed a similar case in a United States committing itself to what many saw as a misguided war in Southeast Asia and dividing at home (1972, 1981). Americans reading the text in the 1960s and 1970s, explained Robert Connor, had come to confront a Thucydides who “profoundly cared” about the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians and wanted others “to share the intensity of his own reactions” (1984: 6). So much intelligent reflection, they thought, so much disaster. In a radical corner of an ebullient England before World War I, Francis Cornford had argued that Thucydides was less of an historian than a myth-making tragedian (1907). By the 1970s, he was being taken to be a serious historian with a tragic view. In a lecture in 1981 on Thucydides and tragedy, Colin Macleod was clear: “the whole history, or what remains of it, finds its culmination in book seven” (1983). There was indeed a grand narrative to be found in the text, but it was one of unreason, defeat, and despair.

It is not difficult in the twenty-first century to accept a less sanguine reading. And the end of Book 7 certainly seems final. The defeat of the Athenian expeditionary force in Sicily, says Thucydides, “was the most momentous of any in this war, indeed, in my view, of any we know reported in Greek history – for the victors the most glorious, for the vanquished the most disastrous. [The Athenians] were completely and utterly defeated. Their misery was extreme in every respect and it was, as the expression goes, a case of total annihilation” (7.87). Except that it was not. Thucydides himself goes on, and so did the Athenians. Within a few weeks, he explains, they pulled themselves together in order to impede the Peloponnesians’ determination to reduce them in the Aegean and cut their route through the Hellespont. And just before he stops writing, he can be read to suggest that despite Sicily, the Peloponnesians, a diverting coup in 411, and failing to secure support from Persia, they might soon find themselves in a position actually to win. He does not get to their ultimate defeat, but others do and explain that before that, they won battle after battle and saw no reason to agree to proposals for peace. They did make a tactical mistake in what turned out to be their final confrontation with the Peloponnesian fleet in the Hellespont in 405, but one can believe that the wider circumstances could have allowed them soon to have achieved an irreversible victory. That they did not will have dismayed them, but it can scarcely be accounted a tragedy. Thucydides’ eighth book reveals success and failure on both sides into the late summer of 411, and had he had readers who did not know what had happened in 405–404 (which he almost certainly did not) they would only have been able to guess the eventual end. It was not predetermined.

The naive reader is accordingly perplexed. Neither of the grand narratives reflects all that he or she sees in the text. Nor do the arguments that commentators have extracted from what Thucydides says about the nature of politics and the

pursuit of war throughout. Hobbes chose to concentrate on his remark that in Athens under Pericles “what was in name a democracy was in practice rule by the foremost man” (2.65.9). One can take Hobbes to have been implying in this and in what he says about the Peisistratids in the city at the end of the sixth century that Thucydides had grasped the truth that the first question for any society was order, without which nothing, including politics itself, would be possible. The self-destructive consequences of fear, the urge for honor, and the pursuit of what Thucydides has Athenians describe as interest, what Hobbes called safety, reputation and gain, could only be contained by a sovereign arbiter (Hobbes 1989: 572–3). Yet in Britain in the later nineteenth century and Europe and the United States in the second part of the twentieth, scholars were suggesting that politics itself was the answer to politics’ own first question and that the Athenians had “invented” it. Christian Meier, in response he said to the divisions in West Germany in 1968, and Cynthia Farrar, a liberal American writing in the 1980s on Thucydides’ grasp of political circumstance, argued that the *demokratia* in Athens had shown that a political entity could only sustain its integrity in continuing discussion and decision (Meier 1990; Farrar 1988: 126–91). Josiah Ober and others, accepting that it could only do so, argued that Thucydides himself denied it (Ober 1998: 52–121). Yet the naive reader cannot see that the text supports any of these conclusions to the exclusion of the others. (He or she might also in passing observe that we have no answer to the question of who invented politics or indeed quite know how to frame the question itself.) Thucydides may have admired the rule of the Peisistratids and Pericles, but he also praised the short-lived proposal for government by “the many and the few” in Athens after the end of the coup in 411 (8.97.2) and in another rare statement of political opinion in Book 8 wrote that the Spartans and Chians, which exhibited neither “monarchy,” as Hobbes called it, nor democracy, “were in fact the only people known to me who managed to be both successful and prudent at the same time” (8.24.4). Good government for him was not a function of any one kind of rule. Commentators interested in the relations between states also were reading him selectively. Success in contests with other states, the self-described “realists” took Thucydides to be saying, was itself prudent, for otherwise there would be “slavery.” Yet in 446 and again in 421 Athens and Sparta (and Argos too) had seen that peace might be possible and after the first of these occasions, had managed for fifteen years to maintain it. At the same time, Thucydides can also show that states (or those leading them) are not always prudent, even in what might be thought to be their own interest (which they may not clearly see), and that they can make a mess of what they do. And to regard him, as some have done, as the first in the West to consider questions of strategy requires one to ignore the fact that he never does.

The naive reader, in short, is left in some wonder. How can Thucydides be so confidently possessed by optimists and pessimists alike? By virtue theorists, skeptics, and cynics? By those who insist on the autonomy of reason and those who see only the rationalization of emotion? By those who believe that war is necessary

and those who see only the corollary of political failure? By those who regard politics as a noble calling and those who regard it as destructively divisive? By those who take what is said at face value and those who say that truth is revealed in what is done? By those who see a single "meaning," causal, dispositional, consequential, or associational in the text and those who have doubts? Notwithstanding the ridicule that has been heaped upon the idea in post-positivist times, could Thucydides be presenting what men say and do in the way that a doctor would describe a living body, functions, dysfunctions, warts and all? That in Leopold von Ranke's phrase he sees and reports things as they are, that as Ranke himself did not go on to say he allows readers to extract almost anything they might choose to extract?

The naive reader certainly sees that Thucydides makes no one man just one thing. He portrays Pericles as successful, clever and ruthless, stubborn and at the end all but self-destructive, a man who in his oration at the funeral of those who died in the first invasion of Attica told a palatable half-truth about Athens' politics and subverted it; Cleon as an occasionally brilliant and often persuasive speaker, tactically skilled and not without courage, even if he was outwitted at Amphipolis, a man who told an unpalatable half-truth about Athens' politics and made use of it; Nicias as a moderate and before the Sicilian campaign, a good commander (regarded by Athenians themselves as lucky), but a man who cared more about his reputation for goodness than the good itself and was weak; Demosthenes as an occasionally inspired tactician but lacking any sense of strategy; Brasidas as an effective diplomat and rhetorician, a remarkable military leader, a liar and insubordinate; Alcibiades as a supremely gifted politician and speaker and a rogue; Phyrinchos as intelligent, perceptive, shrewd, and a traitor; Perdiccas as arguably the most successful tactician and strategist in the whole story, one of the very few who dies in his own bed, and consistently unreliable. And as with individuals, so also with political entities. Thucydides presents Athenians as able to consider every possibility but so unbound by political convention and effective sanction as to allow themselves to be subverted from within; Spartans as able to manage a more effective and stable separation of powers yet disastrous in diplomacy and given to appointing commanders almost all of whom were less than competent; Athens being able to win the war but failing to do so; Sparta eventually devising a strategy to win but only able to realize it with funds from a son of the Persian king. Individuals and states had what they (or the important men within them) would themselves have acknowledged as merits and demerits and enjoyed success and failure, but no one merit or demerit was always apparent, not all their successes were intended, and neither these nor their failures were predetermined. The one truth about individuals and entities in Thucydides would appear to be that there is no one truth about any.

But if this is so, why should he so often have been read in the opposite way? Why is so much of his modern reception at variance with what (even) a naive reader sees? The obvious answer, banal but true, is that in virtue of his standing in the Western canon and the range of claims his story can support, the temptation to seek

authority in his text for a position that one already holds is indeed all but irresistible. But this does not answer the two more interesting questions. Why are the modern receptions as they are? And if one rejects the partiality in each and sees some truth in them all, does one conclude that he is the “empiricist” that almost all who have received him in the past 100 years or so have been so keen to say he is not?

The receptions that I have been considering are extreme, and there is a common disposition in them all: to a reading that is selective and exclusive, covers a large number of cases and is thus general, transcends the moment and is thus enduring; a reading which carries an exclusive, general, and enduring “meaning” and thus perhaps a “lesson.” It is the disposition to that which modernity, in its wars and politics itself extreme, has come to celebrate as “theory.” It is the continuing disposition also in the consideration of human affairs to moral judgment, for although explanatory theories and generalizations are not always derived from a moral theory or couched in its idiom, they are explanations and interpretations of things that humanly matter; and if they do not strictly imply a view of how individuals and states should act, they more often than not carry what Charles Taylor nicely described as a “value slope” in favor of one quality or outcome rather than another (1985). And the value slopes of the past one or two centuries have arguably been steeper and more opposed to each other than any in Thucydides’ Greece.

A theorist will write events to show how they unravel as the theory expects them to do, how they carry the future within them, or how those involved might have seen that they would do so, and will express his or her theory in one or other of these ways, that’s to say in foreshadowing or as literary critics might say backshadowing. Thucydides is not himself altogether immune from either kind of writing. He remarks at the start of his text in a sentence that he can only have written after the war was over that it “will prove to be greater than any of the others” (1.21.2). Toward the end of his account of the coup in Athens in 411, hinting that the truth should have been obvious to those involved at the time, he says that an oligarchy that emerges from a democracy will be destroyed by personal infighting, whereas under a democracy itself “an election is held and a person can bear [loss of power] more easily, telling himself that he was not defeated by his peers” (a claim that is not self-evidently true) (8.89.3). But his more usual habit is to write from where his subjects found themselves and what they could themselves see, as the literary critic might say to “sideshadow.” Men in his story find themselves where they do, assess that fact as they will, and act (or refuse to act) as they see fit, trying to make their futures but never being able to see what those futures would be. Like anyone observing others or reporting on them, Thucydides will have had his own views, views that will have decided him to write about what he does and not something else. Many of the events he records, for instance at Plataea, had no important consequence at all, and if he includes them to reveal the states of mind and feeling in those involved or to stimulate an association in the reader (as the narratologists take pains to show), he rarely says what this is. But he rarely intrudes, secretes no overall “meaning,” and imposes no value. It is a

powerful way of writing and has a powerful effect. One can see why Lewis could read him to be offering a commentary without comment on the complexities and contradictions of “the human condition”; how it is that apart from his unconvincing encomium of Pericles, he avoids what Burrow described as “idealisation” or “identification”; why Nietzsche should have admired his refusal to impose “reason” or intrude a “morality”; how he can be said to have no particular partial “message” to impart.

This is not, however, to invoke the sly “Thucydides the censor who stamps his judgement with the seal of objectivity . . . in the austere guise of an impartial observer,” writing *sub specie aeternitatis* (Loraux 2009: 278). That is a doubly mistaken attribution. The idea of the wholly impartial observer is an idea of ours, not that of Thucydides or any of his contemporaries; he is not trapped in our illusory contrast between the subjective and the objective. He has a “frank provisional empiricism,” as Henry James said about another, “that is more telling than any premature philosophy” (Holder 1964: 494). It is an empiricism which like any rests on experience, that’s to say his “experience,” if one may use the word, of the experience of others in politics and war. He does not pretend to see through the eye of a god or from beyond the end of time. He simply attempts as best he can to capture what it was for them to be where they were and with whom, sometimes expressed in what they said, more frequently revealed in what they did, and in the matter of their hopes and fears and otherwise unexpressed states of mind and feeling, sometimes imputed. He knows how difficult this, admitting that on the question of what men said he had often to resort to the merely probable. But he is partial to acquiring as truthful, valid, and reliable an account as he can. And although he says that others will find him to have been right, he is as frank about his own perspective and by implication therefore how he regards what he finds as he is about his ways of trying to be truthful. He is skeptical, *pace* Strauss, about the divine and claims of divination. He does not disguise his distaste for the inversion of trust and truthfulness in internal strife or for gratuitous slaughter in confrontations between states as well as within them – for Athenians stoning corralled Corinthians to death, for Thracian mercenaries (under an Athenian commander) killing everything that moved in an out-of-way town that was no part of any battle, for Syracusans leaving defeated Athenians to languish in open quarries. And he does little to hide his dislike of the extremes to which men may go, regardless of the regime they claim to represent or under which they live.

Nonetheless, the modern theorist might insist, he does say that what he writes “will have served its purpose well enough if it judged useful by those who want to have a clear view of what happened in the past and what – the human condition being what it is – can be expected to happen again some time in the future in similar or much the same ways”; that what he has set down “is composed to be a possession for all time and not just a competition piece for the moment” (1.22.4). Even if he was the first writer in the West to have had a conception of historical time, we have no firm conception of what he would have thought “all time” to be. But

we might suppose that if it was what he and we too would have regarded as a long time, he might be said to have been thinking in terms of what we call “theory”: what since the seventeenth century, the dictionary says, has been thought of as “a scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation or account of a group of facts or phenomena; a hypothesis that has been confirmed or established by observation or experiment, and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts; a statement of what are held to be the general laws, principles, or causes of something known or observed.” Yet if theories suggest an enduring truth that excludes other supposed truths and Thucydides is showing that the human condition reveals no single such truth about itself – no truth that can interestingly explain all that people feel, think, say, and do – there can be no one true and enduring theory of this condition which is his theory. Any that he is said to have had by the end of what he wrote, any “philosophy” in James’ sense of the word, will have been imposed by others.

As I have said, even those of us who would not pretend to have a “philosophy” are to an extent we cannot know susceptible to the assumptions, experiences, hopes, and expectations of our time and place. “Every now,” as Walter Benjamin said, “is the now of a particular knowability” (de la Durantaye 2009: 113–15). A text, it is almost too obvious to say, will be received differently by different people at different moments. Through that long moment we call “modernity,” from Macaulay if not indeed from Hobbes, past Nietzsche, scholars of Greek texts and other historians to social scientists, Thucydides has been received very differently indeed. And he continues to be. In so far as I can grasp my own “knowability” and how it affects my reception of the text, it is to be skeptical in the face of theories about politics and war. It is a skepticism induced by the evident ironies of failure where others have expected success and success where they have expected failure. But I do not believe (or at least, do not like to believe) that it is a view that I have simply imposed on Thucydides. It has been affected by my naive reading of the text itself, a way of receiving him that has been given its shape and sharpened by him. A reading, I could almost say, that has come from wanting to be received by him. This is not to suggest that I think that one can escape, even in one’s head, from this world into his. Even if one were to suppose that one could do so, which one cannot, and know that one had done so, which one also cannot, one would be left wondering what it would be still to be oneself. Nor is to suggest that I think that the idea of general theories about anything in human affairs is a mistake. A taste for these is not the result of some large and lasting accident of Western intellectual history, an ash-cloud of the mind that someone disposed to Nietzsche’s more extravagant claims might think had lasted from the Greek fourth century to the present. The sheer quantity of known things about people in the modern world demands inclusive categorization and generalization. It is simply and more particularly to suggest that theoretical generalities and their concomitant exclusions do not illuminate the complexities and contradictions of politics and war and in so doing traduce what is inherent in both.

This is nowhere better expressed by Thucydides himself (and rarely so well expressed by anyone else anywhere) as in the command of detail and narrative in his eighth book, which optimists and pessimists, rationalists, and anti-rationalists alike have been inclined to overlook and often even dismiss (compare Rusten in this volume). One Marcellinus, writing perhaps in the seventh century CE, had wondered whether Thucydides might not have been ill when he wrote it. De Romilly and her colleagues said it was simply too stuffed with fact. Cornford regarded it as “dull and spiritless,” a book in which Thucydides “seems to grope his way like a man without a clue” (1907: 244). Even those have not simply overlooked it have tended to assume that in its composition and style as well as ending as it does without an ending, it was incompletely considered, and the attention it has more recently been given, by Connor, Hunter Rawlings (1981), Carolyn Dewald (2005), Tim Rood (1998) and others, is that of students of classical literature, not those interested more in politics and war. It is, however, revealing. In Book 1, Thucydides shows that resources allowed for navies, that navies brought more resources, and that the combination of the two allowed power over those who had less of both. By Book 8, he is showing how even the most powerful, as he puts it, can be “caught out” in politics and war by what he calls “the unaccountable contingencies of human life” (8.24.5), the countless unforeseen and more often than not unforeseeable contingencies that are inherent in each, many of which are separately and together crucial to what happens in them and to explaining it. So too can those who receive him theoretically be.

Guide to Further Reading

Hawthorn (2014) offers a rich and thought-provoking reading of Thucydides, reflecting on his conception of political behavior and historical events.

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Part VII

Conclusion

The Idea of Thucydides in the Western Tradition

Neville Morley

Any engagement with the history of Thucydides' reception involves a confrontation with the remarkable variety of interpretations that have been offered over the last few centuries. He has been cited in support of diametrically opposed conceptions of the nature of the world and entirely contradictory theories on the nature of historiography, as the chapters in this collection clearly show. His work has been understood in quite different ways within different national and disciplinary traditions, changing significantly over time; it has been understood by different readers, often without any sense that such assumptions might require some justification, as unquestionably a pioneering exercise in political analysis or unquestionably a critical historical account in the modern manner – and it has been seen by others as, equally unquestionably, a work whose sensibility and methodology are entirely alien to modern approaches (whether in political theory or in historiography), whether for good or ill (see Morley forthcoming).

These different conceptions are based on quite different ideas about how one can or must read Thucydides; on the one hand, there are those who emphasize the complexities and ambiguities of his text and hence the need for a lengthy, detailed engagement in order to appreciate its true meaning. On the other hand, there are those who identify a single meaning or message, seeing the essence of Thucydides' significance in a limited number of essential passages like the Corcyrean *stasis* or the Melian Dialogue, with the rest of the narrative serving to contextualize and exemplify the principles developed there, or even in isolated phrases. The former readers see the latter as naive, narrow-minded and instrumentalist, reducing the glory of Thucydides to a few memorable but largely fictitious sound-bites in order to appropriate him for their dubious political agendas; the latter see the former as wishy-washy post-modern pedants and humanists, entirely missing the point of

Thucydides' drive to make sense of the world in a properly scientific manner (see further on styles of reception Lebow 2012).

The one thing which these different approaches and interpretations share is an almost universal reverence for Thucydides himself. There is little sense in any of these accounts that the variety of receptions of Thucydides might point to an issue with his work, that something so open to contradictory readings ought not to be trusted or treated as an authority. On the contrary, the fact that the readings offered by others diverge so dramatically from one's own is wholly attributable to the others' stupidity, confusion or ideological agenda. Even a writer who suggests that international relations theorists should stop reading and citing Thucydides does so in the name of a true, complex Thucydides who is being effaced by naïve, excessively modernizing readings (Welch 2003). Some combination of the text itself (as has been noted, for example by Greenwood 2006, its self-authorization strategies are particularly subtle and effective) and the traditions of its reception (since few if any modern readings can be made without some awareness of how the work has been understood) has established Thucydides as an author who must be taken seriously and whose ideas speak somehow to the present. Modern historians have, presumably because of the pervasive influence of historicism, now largely freed themselves from this assumption, but at the expense of adopting a largely mythical account of their own discipline's development that ignores pre-nineteenth century historiography almost entirely (cf. Morley 2014: 155-64). Political theorists, international relations theorists and military strategists, above all in the United States, remain spellbound, to say nothing of the numerous journalists and ordinary internet users who cite Thucydides as an authority on the workings of the world in relation to whatever the latest crisis may be (at the time of writing, the Russian annexation of Crimea has, probably temporarily, eclipsed US-China relations in this regard).

In this chapter I want to highlight one important theme in this history of reception: the extent to which, especially in recent decades, it is the name and the idea of Thucydides that carries authority, rather than his work. This is unmistakable in the instances where Thucydides has been invoked to support a claim that is simply not to be found in his text, however one reads it. We can see it in the now familiar anecdote cited by Reinhart Koselleck (2004: 26), in which Thucydides is offered to the Prussian cabinet as an expert on monetary policy; in the line, beloved of those involved in professional military education, about the separation of scholars and warriors leading to wars being fought by fools and thinking being done by cowards; or in Colin Powell's favorite quote on the importance of restraint as a manifestation of power (Morley 2013: 9-16). In part because of the difficulty in demonstrating, beyond any doubt, that an idea is *not* to be found in Thucydides, ideas that appear to be consonant with his thought can become associated with him (the same phenomenon is seen with other figures with a "strong" image in popular culture), and thus to receive legitimation and authority because they are thought to come from Thucydides. Of course, these quotations are assumed to

derive from his work, and thus to have the same status as genuine quotations from the Funeral Oration or the Melian Dialogue – but it is the pre-existing idea of Thucydides as a certain sort of writer, with a distinctive sensibility, that is employed to verify their authenticity, rather than reference to the text. The authority of such quotations – and this surely includes many uses of perfectly genuine ones – derives from an established conception of their author, and hence of the intelligence and insight that is assumed to lie behind them, not from any engagement with his actual work.

Discussions of Thucydidean reception have hitherto focused largely on what are, in modern terms, academic and semi-academic contexts; indeed, there is a strong tradition of seeing Thucydides as a writer who is entirely unsuited for a more popular audience, whose work is capable of being appreciated only by an elite (cf. Rawlings in this volume). From this perspective, modern manifestations of “Thucydideanism” – from the naming of a “timeship” in a *Star Trek* spin-off universe to the use of lines from the Funeral Oration on war memorials – appear to be at best a tertiary phenomenon, reflections of popularizations of academic readings, as the ideas of international relations specialists appear in simplified form in op-ed pieces, or Chiefs of Staff recall lessons from war college when answering questions in press conferences or congressional hearings.

However, the divide between the academic and the popular in Thucydidean reception is not so clear-cut. Even at the beginning of the story in Western Europe, in the undeniably elitist process whereby a few scholars studied, translated and interpreted this difficult Greek text for the benefit of their political masters and the students of the future, this reception was never wholly pure or unmediated. Renaissance readers came to Thucydides with some idea of what kind of a writer he was and why he mattered, derived from ancient commentators like Cicero and later Quintilian (see Pade and O’Gorman in this volume). Moreover, from the very beginning, with Heredia’s collection of speeches the first in a substantial tradition, Thucydides’ text was edited, excerpted and reworked for the express purpose of making its lessons more accessible (see Iglesias-Zoido in this volume). We have numerous examples of brief quotations from and passing references to Thucydides in works of education and political advice, such as James VI’s *Basilikon Doron*, a work which sold thousands of copies in London after his accession as James I (Doelman 1994). Generations of readers felt that they recognized their own times in Thucydides’ account, attributed this to his insight and understanding of the world, and conveyed this to a wider audience, if not yet a large popular one, who might not have the knowledge or time (or inclination) to engage with the full work but who should, it was felt, be aware of its lessons. In a similar manner, every translator represented his task as conveying to those without knowledge of Greek or Latin a work of contemporary relevance and importance, because of the wisdom and insight of its author.

It is difficult to imagine that this process of communication and influence only ever operated in one direction, from informed and scholarly readings to broader and

less nuanced popular conceptions, and that the developing idea of Thucydides as a figure of insight and authority had no influence on later readings. On the contrary, the relationship was dynamic; a general sense within European culture that Thucydides was a figure whose ideas reached beyond his own time inspired and justified renewed scholarly studies, which in turn modified (to a degree) the general conception but above all reinforced the central theme of Thucydidean authority and relevance. In other words, the ubiquity of Thucydides in contemporary academic discussions of international relations is as much a product as a source of his importance in anthologies of military quotations and the like. What has changed in recent decades is not that Thucydides has suddenly ceased to be the sole preserve of a small cadre of elite interpreters, but a broadening of the hinterland of non-academic reception that had always existed, an increase in its prominence and influence, and, perhaps, a progressive blurring of the boundaries. The scholarly interpreters of Thucydides are no longer the only ones who can lay claim to his authority; the idea of Thucydides, if not his text, has become part (if only a small part) of the common heritage of humanity, far beyond its original European domain. As Frantz Fanon has claimed, "None the less I am a man, and in this sense the Peloponnesian War is as much mine as the invention of the compass" (1967: 175).

Biographical Authority

This idea of Thucydides as a figure of wisdom and authority is constructed through two closely-related processes. The first, which commences in antiquity, explores the limited amount of biographical information that survives, in order to consider how Thucydides' life might have influenced his history and informed his understanding. The most obvious point was that he had been a participant in events, often at the highest level, rather than a mere observer; this was particularly emphasized in the case of the plague, one of the few occasions on which Thucydides spoke of himself, where the vividness of the description as well as its level of detail and accuracy is explained by the fact that it is a personal recollection. Most commentators, however, choose to stress the fact that he was an informed participant, who could thus analyze and understand events rather than merely report on them.

Both the ancient *Lives* agree on Thucydides' skill in public speaking, which naturally manifested itself in the speeches in his *History*, but commented differently on his participation in Athenian political life: Marcellinus notes that he rarely spoke in the assembly (23), while the Anonymous *Life* offers an anecdote (actually from the career of Thucydides the son of Melesias) in which he displayed much wisdom in speech in defense of one Pyrilampes, triumphing over Pericles as the prosecutor (6). The former was followed by both Thomas Hobbes and Pierre-Charles L  vesque, in order to support a conception of Thucydides' moral character as well as his suspicion of democracy: "Thucydides, that he might not be either of them

that committed or of them that suffered the evil, forbore to come into the assemblies”, remarked Hobbes (1629: xvi), while Lévesque suggested that “the vanity of shining with an ephemeral brilliance in the disputes of the assembly was beneath his great soul” (1811: 434). Other writers – when they did not simply confuse him with the son of Melesias and thus attribute to him an active political career extending over decades – were more likely to imply that Thucydides must have been experienced in politics in order to get elected general, and so could speak with “deep statesman’s experience” (e.g. Roscher 1842: 96-7; 1892: 405).

Far more weight was placed on Thucydides’ experience as a general, albeit one whose career ended in failure (something which a number of his admirers sought to explain away). In early modern ideas of historiography, such expertise was regarded as the basis for the most authoritative accounts; as Jean Bodin remarked, “What is more inept than for those who never saw the line of battle of the generals to decide upon their defeats and victories?” (1941: 8), and other 16th- and 17th-century commentators and translators emphasized Thucydides’ unimpeachable claims in this regard as grounds for elevating him above his rivals and as a clear reason why other practical men of action should read his work (e.g. Perrot d’Ablancourt 1662: i-ii, 6). Even when military experience was no longer seen as a pre-requisite for writing an authoritative history, the fact that Thucydides had such expertise is still mentioned as a significant fact. It has certainly been influential in establishing his influence within modern military circles; several 20th-century anthologies of quotations on war and strategy, written expressly for a military audience, emphasize Thucydides’ status as a general as a clear reason for taking his ideas seriously, and one includes *only* quotations from those who have served, leaving Thucydides and Caesar as the only significant representatives of ancient thought (Heinl 1966; Tsouras 1992). The perception of Thucydides’ work as more than a merely academic account of war was a factor in its adoption as a key text at the US Naval War College in 1972 (Stradis in this volume); it has certainly ensured its continuing popularity and influence within professional military education.

Marcellinus’ anecdote that Thucydides had, when young, heard Herodotus recite part of his own *History* and burst into tears before vowing to follow in his path (54) was repeated by a number of authors, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. It established historiography as Thucydides’ chosen path from the beginning (rather than, as others suggested, a reaction to later events) and perhaps served to soften his otherwise austere and forbidding character. Above all, however, it set up a clear progression, setting Herodotus up as the predecessor whose pioneering work needed to be refined, developed and completed in order to establish the true nature of historiography, rather than as a slightly older but contemporary rival (as some evidence suggests that he might actually have been; on this theme, Forster and Lateiner 2012; Morley 2014: 8-9, 36-7). Thucydides was allowed to concede the title of “Father of History” in order to lay claim to the superior position of “Father of Modern History.”

The most significant event in Thucydides' biography for his subsequent reception was his exile. This was seen to have offered him the opportunity to gather information from all sides, rather than relying solely on Athenian sources (although Marcellinus had claimed that from the very beginning of the war he had paid soldiers on all sides to report back to him on events and speeches, using his inherited wealth in the service of accurate history rather than spending it on luxurious delights (20); it is actually curious that so few modern readers make much of this anecdote, perhaps because it represents Thucydides as a privileged aristocrat rather than as everyman). More importantly, it offered him the opportunity to demonstrate his impartiality beyond any reasonable doubt: he was free to treat all sides fairly, swayed neither by loyalty toward his home city nor by prejudice against those who had orchestrated his exile – not even Cleon, according to most readers (Morley 2014: 79-91). Commentators have seen an element of heroism in this refusal to indulge his own resentments: René Rapin claimed that Thucydides was clearly more virtuous than Livy (the greatest representative of Roman historiography), because the latter was not treated badly by his countrymen and so had no need to overcome any such emotions (1681: 21-2), while Pierre Bayle spoke of “the highest pitch of glory” and the “true heroism” whereby Thucydides did justice to his greatest enemies (1734: 478).

For Arnold J. Toynbee, it was exile that made Thucydides a historian: on top of the shattering experience of war, of seeing his world fall apart into chaos and death, he had to experience banishment from a life of action into forced contemplation. An entire generation saw their lives “broken” – but Thucydides was one of those rare spirits who could remake themselves out of the wreckage, using their enforced liberation from old traditions and ways of thought to gain a true understanding of what had happened:

The dross of egotism and animus has all been refined away... We are conscious that the author's personal misfortune is genuinely of no account in the author's own eyes by comparison with the public catastrophe which has overtaken Athens and Hellas; and even the deep emotion which the consciousness of this catastrophe awakens in Thucydides' soul is so rigorously held in control that we are only made aware of its intensity now and again by the quivering tension which reveals itself, here and there, through the texture of the historian's calm and measured words. (1935: 296)

The fact that Toynbee himself evaded military service in World War I through doctors' letters declaring him unfit to serve, and eventually found a position in the Foreign Office writing official propaganda – not because he was a conscientious objector but because he was simply scared – adds an additional dimension to his promotion of Thucydides as an essential text for understanding global politics (cf. Keene in this volume). Both men came from a “broken” generation, both sought through the study of the past to make sense of world-shattering events as a guide to future action, but Toynbee must have had a constant sense of inferiority: he was no Thucydides, even if their similar experiences led them in the same direction.

The theme of exile also appears in one of the most influential receptions of Thucydides in recent years, W.H. Auden's poem *September 1, 1939*: "Exiled Thucydides knew/All that a speech can say/About Democracy..." (lines 23-5). This exile echoes Auden's own, as he sits "in one of the dives/On Fifty-Second Street/Uncertain and afraid" (1-3), trying to make sense of why the world is falling back into war; but Thucydides was clearly neither uncertain nor afraid. Moreover, while "I and the public know/What all schoolchildren learn,/Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return" (19-22), Thucydides' analysis of "The enlightenment driven away,/The habit-forming pain,/Mismanagement and grief" is far more complex and illuminating (see further Rawlings in this volume). The significance of Thucydides' exile is one of the points picked up by commentaries on the poem, in student guides and on the internet, as it has become a literature set text, for example in the English Literature B A-Level in the United Kingdom.

Auden first makes a reference in line 23 to Thucydides who was one of the first people to suggest that history should always be recorded for what it is and not for the glory of the country that record it; because of such a statement, Thucydides was exiled from his home. (<http://voices.yahoo.com/an-analysis-w-h-audens-september-1-1939-782359.html>)

The inaccuracy of the statement that Thucydides' *History* was a cause rather than a consequence of his exile is less significant than the way that this kind of account adds to his image as a historical hero, even as a martyr for the truth, and as a figure who must be taken seriously.

Disposition and Sensibility

The second strand of the "invention of Thucydides" has been the way in which an idea of his character and personality is derived from his work – a remarkably consistent idea, given how many different readings are involved – and then projected back onto it. As René Rapin claimed, "he has a taste for the truth, and a discernment of true and false, united with an exact spirit" (1677: 37). Three aspects of the text are of particular importance in this regard. The first is Thucydides' self-presentation in Book 1, which is accepted more or less at face value and found to be confirmed in the subsequent narrative: his claims in 1.1 and 1.20-2 are not treated as a statement of intent, nor even just as a description of his achievement, but as an expression of his essential character. Thucydides is thus established as the lover of truth above all things, temperamentally inclined to insist on weighing every account and questioning every statement rather than accepting anything at face value, rejecting any ambition to please or entertain (generally, Morley 2014: 35-59).

This image is confirmed and reinforced through reflections and judgments on Thucydides' style. The same terms recur again and again in scholarly commentators:

austerity, severity, harshness, difficulty, and the absence of artfulness, all of this marking a stark contrast with other ancient historians (ibid.: 103-9). This style is almost universally understood as the product of profundity and seriousness, not as an artistic or intellectual failing. “One must turn him over line by line and read his unspoken thoughts as clearly as his words,” remarked Friedrich Nietzsche; “There is scarcely another thinker with so many hidden thoughts” (1988: 156). Thucydides’ language is difficult because his thought is deep and complex, and because he has no interest in being agreeable or in indulging in trivialities; he expects his readers to make an effort. As Pierre-Charles Lévesque suggested of the *History*,

One is obliged to read it as he wrote, and since he thought a lot while writing, it is necessary to think a lot to read it, and to work with him rather than amusing oneself in listening. It can exhaust less reflective reader, and impose a difficult task even on those who are used to reflection. (1811: 438)

Thucydides declines to indulge in emotion or emotiveness in his descriptions of the horrors of war not through any failure of empathy or indifference to suffering but because of his duty to the truth. Of course he must have been affected by the events he experienced – recall Toynbee’s sense of “the quivering tension which reveals itself, here and there, through the texture of the historian’s calm and measured words” – but he exercised an iron self-discipline in suppressing his own reactions in the service of accurate reporting.

One of the most striking examples of this characterization is found not among the numerous encomia of Thucydides’ objectivity and eschewal of rhetoric in the historiographical tradition, but in Albert Camus’ *La Peste* (1947), a novel that describes an epidemic in a North African town (on Camus’ reception of classical literature in general, Archambault 1972, Richardson 2012). The narrator – revealed only at the end to be the doctor who has been involved in trying to treat those infected – is unmistakably based on Thucydides, in the regular evocations of the opening of the *History* and his self-presentation as an objective observer at both the beginning and end of the narrative.

To some, these events will seem quite natural; to others, all but incredible. But, obviously, a narrator cannot take account of these differences of outlook. His business is only to say, “This is what happened”, when he knows that it actually did happen... (1948: 4)

This chronicle is drawing to an end, and this seems to be the moment for Dr Bernard Rieux to confess that he is the narrator. But, before describing the closing scenes, he would wish anyhow to justify his undertaking and set it down than he expressly made a point of adopting the tone of an impartial observer. His profession put him in touch with a great many of our townsfolk while plague was raging, and he had opportunities of hearing their various opinions. Thus he was well placed for giving a true account of all he saw and heard. But in so doing he has tried to keep within the limits that seemed desirable. For instance, in a general way he has confined himself to describing only

such things as he was enabled to see for himself, and refrained from attributing to his fellow-sufferers thoughts that, when all is said and done, they were not bound to have... To be an honest witness, it was for him to confine himself mainly to what people did or said, and what could be gleaned from documents. Regarding his personal troubles and his long suspense, his duty was to hold his peace. (ibid.: 290)

Self-effacement, self-discipline, accuracy: these are the hallmarks of the Thucydidean historian, and Rieux's narrative of the plague holds firmly to them, representing human suffering and trauma in the calmest, most objective manner possible as the only appropriate way to describe trauma. A still more explicit imitation of Thucydidean style as the best means of describing and coming to terms with war and the other horrors of the past can be seen in the writings of the Austrian writer Peter Handke, especially his collection of short pieces *Noch einmal für Thukydides* (1997; see generally Morley 2012).

The conclusion of Camus' narrator is itself very Thucydidean:

He knew that the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never-ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts... He knew what those jubilant crowds did not know but could have learned from books: that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good. (1948: 297)

The true historian does not just record events, he understands them within a broader context, and confronts the reality of things, however unpalatable; he can learn the lessons that the past has to teach the present and future because he is willing to say what others refuse to admit. This is the third aspect of Thucydides' text that contributes to his legend: its perceived message. The key term here is of course "realism", both in the sense that it claims to engage with the world as it really is, and as a disposition that is free from illusion and wishful thinking. The most articulate and influential expression of this view is that of Friedrich Nietzsche (see also Zumbrennen in this volume):

Thucydides and, perhaps, Machiavelli's Prince are my close kindred because of their absolute determination to pre-judge nothing and to see reason in *reality*; not in "reason", still less in "morality"... Nothing cures us more thoroughly of the wretched habit of the Greeks of glossing things over in the ideal, a habit which the "classically educated" youth carries with him into life as the reward for his gymnasium training, than Thucydides... In him the Sophist Culture – I want to say rather the Realist Culture – reaches its ultimate expression: this invaluable movement within the swindle of morality and idealism of the Socratic School then breaking out everywhere. Greek philosophy as the decadence of the Greek instinct, Thucydides as the great totality, the last revelation of that strong, severe, hard realism which lay in the instinct of the older Hellenes. Courage in the face of reality is what distinguishes such natures as Thucydides and Plato: Plato is a

coward before reality – and so he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has himself under control, and so he also keeps things under control. (1988: 156)

The precise meaning of “realism” in the tradition of Thucydidean reception varies: it can denote the fact that morality, religion and even reason itself are human creations and self-delusions, or the fact that relations between individuals and states are based on power and self-interest alone, or the nightmarish absurdity of Joseph Heller’s highly Thucydidean *Catch-22*. It is perceived not just as a theory that is propounded in Thucydides’ text, but as a property of reality that is revealed in it and by it, because of the personal qualities of its author. Thucydides did not invent realism, but had the intelligence to perceive it, and the courage and self-control to admit it; he had that rare disposition which both can and will see things as they are. This is what we encounter in Auden’s poem, where Thucydides alone can see through the deceptions of political rhetoric, whether from democracies or autocracies, and in John Barton’s *The War That Still Goes On* (2006; see Hardwick in this volume), as well in the more conventional accounts of international relations theorists and journalists. A still more striking example is found in Bob Dylan’s recollections of the books he was reading in the early 1960s:

Standing in this room you could take it all for a joke. There were all types of things in here, books on typography, epigraphy, philosophy, political ideologies. The stuff that could make you bugged-eyed. Books like *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, *The Twelve Caesars*, Tacitus lectures and letters to Brutus, Pericles’ *Ideal State of Democracy*, Thucydides’ *The Athenian General* – a narrative which would give you chills. It was written four hundred years before Christ and it talks about how human nature is always the enemy of anything superior. Thucydides writes about how words in his time have changed from their ordinary meaning, how actions and opinions can be altered in the blink of an eye. It’s like nothing has changed from his time to mine ... I read some of the Albertus Magnus book ... the guy who mixed up scientific theories with theology. It was lightweight compared to Thucydides... There was a book there on Joseph Smith, the authentic American prophet who identifies himself with Enoch in the Bible and says that Adam was the first man-god. This stuff pales in comparison to Thucydides, too. (2004: 36-7)

Networks of Influence

We might wonder what exactly Dylan was reading in this Greenwich Village apartment; there is no trace of any editions of or selections from Thucydides with these titles. In other respects this is a relatively straightforward form of reception: the reader enjoys a more or less immediate encounter, not of course with Thucydides himself but with the version of him offered by a particular translator, in most cases shaped by the image of the writer offered in the paratextual material.

We can build up a picture of the image of Thucydides offered by different editions and translations as a basis for thinking about how readers with no previous experience of his work may then have received him (on translations, cf. Mynott 2013 and Greenwood in this volume). We can attempt something similar with the appearance of Thucydides in military contexts, whether the supposedly unmediated readings of those studying in the Naval War College (at least in the 1970s; see Stradis in this volume) or the use of certain quotations on special occasions, above all those commemorating veterans and the war dead.

In the past, many later admirers of Thucydides had first encountered him at school, as a key author in the classical curriculum; this was certainly the case for Auden, Camus and Handke as it was for numerous others (see Schelske on Weber and Churchill in this volume). Again, we can build up a picture of the specific passages studied, through analyzing the curriculum and identifying any textbooks, and we may be able to get some sense of the intended purpose of this study – whether the study of Thucydides was presented as an exercise in translation and linguistic analysis, or whether there was also some broader purpose such as learning the history of classical Greece or developing a wider understanding of historiography. There was clearly significant variation; some pupils worked their way through entire books (not necessarily the entire text, or in any particular order) while others encountered a selection of speeches or of classic set-pieces like the Funeral Oration or the Plague – which would create a quite different impression of the author and his work. The most extreme example is the way that undergraduates in international relations courses typically encounter only the Melian Dialogue, pre-packaged as “the original Realist theory”, but other selections for educational purposes operate in a similar manner, to present some aspects of Thucydides rather than others, and certainly teachers can play an important but unrecorded role in shaping their students’ view of this historian (or, in the international relations case, of this political theorist).

Such encounters are easier to identify and analyze than the more nebulous process whereby those without an advanced education in classical literature, ancient history or political theory nevertheless acquire knowledge of Thucydides and a sense of what he stands for. In these cases, our best hope may be to enumerate the range of possible sources of information and ideas, within a given cultural milieu at a given period – which, in the present day, increasingly implies a global (albeit predominantly English-language) context. Thucydides appears in newspapers and online opinion pieces, most often in the context of war and international relations, ultimately derived from academic discussions. He appears in books of quotations, and thence finds his way into political rhetoric (cf. Sawyer in this volume). The role of quotations from his work in games like *Rome: Total War* is probably overdetermined, drawing from ancient history, military contexts and contemporary global politics – and that role in turn enhances his reputation as the realist analyst of war. Reception in these contexts cannot be understood in terms of a simple line of influence from text to reader, or even a lineage of readers and interpreters; it is perhaps better seen in terms of networks of different readers and

readings, with some nodes more powerful and influential than others but always based on interaction and mutual influence. Academic interpretations, within such a network, are open to influence from other sources, and they are by no means the most influential. If, for example, Thucydides is starting to be read by some people in China, it will be because the Chinese are responding to the specific idea of the “Thucydides trap” propounded in a newspaper piece (see Orwin in this volume), and the general sense that Thucydides seems to be an important work for understanding the way that Americans think about the world.

Why do people turn to Thucydides – or, in the case of those who encountered him in their early education, return to him? The possible answers are as various as the different ways that Thucydides gets “used”: some look to him for confirmation of what they already know, but perhaps better expressed than they could manage (the words to commemorate those fallen in battle; a clear statement of the brutality of war; a pithy summation of the harsh reality of global politics), while others seek to unsettle conventional assumptions about the world, and to open up questions. In both cases, however, the authority of Thucydides is taken for granted: he knows that these are the iron laws of the world, or he knows that everything is contingent and open to interpretation, but he *knows*, and we know we can trust him. Thucydides is Camus’ calm, clear-eyed reporter, the self-disciplined exile of Toynbee and Auden, Nietzsche’s courageous confronter of reality, and Dylan’s heavyweight whose work will give you chills. The fact that Thucydides seems to be especially attractive, even to academics, in times of crisis and uncertainty, when the tendency to recognize our own world in the events he describes becomes almost irresistible, confirms this impression: the desire for Thucydides is the desire for someone who understands what is really going on, for the reassurance that such understanding is possible. This is the heart of the idea of Thucydides, at least in the Western tradition; other cultures may, in due course, come to make something different of him.

Further Reading

Besides the relevant chapters in this volume, there is little discussion of the reception of Thucydides outside scholarly and academic contexts. Morley 2012 discusses his place in the writings and thought of Peter Handke; Morley 2013 explores the tradition of quoting Thucydides. The blog *Sphinx* (<http://thesphinxblog.com/>) has since 2011 been collecting and commenting on examples of modern Thucydideanism, and will doubtless continue to do so.

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