

Contents

<i>Prefaces</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Further Reading</i>	<i>xlvi</i>
<i>Works Cited</i>	<i>xlvii</i>
<i>Maps</i>	<i>l</i>

BOOK 1

Early History, Method, and the Cause of War	1
Thucydides's Preface [1.1]	1
The Archaeology [1.2–20]	2
On Historical Method [1.20–22]	12
Origins of the War	14
Thucydides's Explanation for the War [1.23]	14
Conflict of Corcyra with Corinth	15
Speech of the Corcyreans [1.32–36]	15
Speech of the Corinthians [1.37–43]	19
Debate at Sparta [1.66–88]	23
The Case for Making War on Athens (432 BCE) [1.66–67]	23
Speech of the Corinthians [1.68–72]	25
Speech of the Athenians [1.73–79]	29
Speech of Archidamus [1.80–85]	34
Speech of Sthenelaïdas [1.86–88]	37
The Fifty Years' History [1.96–97]	39
Pericles's War Speech [1.140–46]	41

BOOK 2

The First Year of the War	47
The Attack on Plataea [2.2–6]	47
Preparations: Alliances and Preliminary Speeches [2.7–17]	51
Early Operations [2.18–23]	57
Pericles's Funeral Oration [2.34–46]	60
The Plague: Human Nature in Crisis [2.47–54]	68
Military Operations of 430 [2.55–58]	73
Pericles's Last Speech [2. 59–64]	74
Thucydides's Judgment of Pericles [2.65]	78

Further Events of 430/429 [2.66–70]	81
The Siege of Plataea [2.71–78]	82
Athenian Naval Victories at Naupactus [2.83–92, 103]	87

BOOK 3

Rebellion, Civil War, and Human Nature	95
The Revolt of Lesbos (Mytilene, 428 BCE) [3.2–19]	95
Ambassadors from Mytilene Speak at Olympia [3.8–15]	98
The Siege of Mytilene [3.16–19]	103
Breakout from Plataea (428/427 BCE) [3.20–24]	105
Defeat of Mytilene (427 BCE) [3.25–28]	108
The Mytilenean Debate (427 BCE) [3.35–52]	110
Speech of Cleon [3.37–41]	112
Speech of Diodotus [3.42–51]	116
The Fate of Plataea (427 BCE) [3.51–68]	121
Speech of the Plataeans [3.53–60]	122
Speech of the Thebans [3.61–68]	127
Human Nature Adapts to Civil War	133
Civil War on Corcyra (427 BCE) [3.70–81]	133
Moral Breakdown in Civil War: Human Nature in a Crisis [3.82–84]	139
The End of the Civil War (425 BCE) [4.47.3–48]	144

BOOK 4

Both Sides Suffer Defeats	147
Defeat of Spartans at Pylos and Other Events of 425/424 BCE [Summary]	147
A Speech to Unite the Greeks on Sicily, Summer 424 BCE [4.59–65]	148
Brasidas's Campaigns against Athens [Summary]	152
Brasidas's Speech at Acanthus (424 BCE) [4.84–86]	153
Defeat of Athenians at Delium (424/423 BCE) [4.96]	156
Athenian Loss of Amphipolis (424/423 and 422 BCE) [Summary]	157
Athenian Massacre at Scione (423/422 BCE) [Summary]	157
Defeat of Athenians at Amphipolis (422 BCE) [Summary]	158

BOOK 5

Peace and War	159
The Peace of Nicias (421 BCE) [5.15–17]	159
The Second Preface [5.26]	161
The Failure of the Peace of Nicias [Summary]	162

Power Beats Justice at Melos (416 BCE) [5.84]	163
The Melian Dialogue [5.85–116]	163

BOOK 6

Launching the Sicilian Expedition	173
Sicilian Antiquities [Summary of 6.2–6]	174
Debate at Athens [6.8–26]	174
Speech of Nicias [6.9–15]	175
Speech of Alcibiades [6.16–19]	180
Second Speech of Nicias [6.20–26]	183
The Expedition Sails (415 BCE) [Summary of 6.27–105]	186
Debate at Syracuse [6.39]	187
Arrival of the Athenians [Summary]	188
Digression on the Tyranny in Athens [6.54]	189
The Athenians at Syracuse [83.4]	190
Alcibiades's Escape [6.89.3, 92.2]	191

BOOK 7

Athenian Catastrophe in Sicily	195
Sparta Joins the War [Summary]	195
Night Battle for Epipolae [7.42–46]	196
The Athenians Delay Their Departure [7.47–56]	200
Forces on Both Sides [Summary of 7.57–59]	205
Preparations for the Battle in the Great Harbor [Summary of 7.59–68]	206
Battle in the Great Harbor, September 9, 413 BCE [7.69–74]	207
The Athenians Retreat and Are Destroyed [7.75–87, 8.1]	211
Nicias's Exhortation [7.77]	212
The Bitter End [7.78–87, 8.1]	213

BOOK 8

Aftermath of the Sicilian Expedition [8.1, Summary]	221
Oligarchy in Athens and the Empire [8.48.5–6, 8.64.5, 8.68.4]	222
Collapse of the Oligarchy [8.89.3]	224
The Five Thousand [8.97]	225
After Thucydides Breaks Off: The Last Phase of the War [Summary]	226
<i>Dates</i>	229
<i>Glossary</i>	231
<i>Index</i>	239

Preface to the First Edition

The aim of this book is to make the best known parts of Thucydides's *History* available to readers who are not scholars and do not want to get lost in the intricacies of Greek history or geography. Here is the basic narrative of the Peloponnesian War down to the Athenian disaster in Sicily. Here too are the famous speeches and debates, along with the vivid set-piece descriptions of the plague and the civil war, and the gripping stories of the fall of Plataea and the loss of the Sicilian expedition. All this is not enough, of course. If you like Thucydides you will want to read the entire book for its artful construction and for the many fine passages I have had to omit. Thucydides keeps his authorial voice quiet in the *History*, and the best way to detect his strategy is in the structure of the work. In these selections, then, I have done my best to indicate the shape of the surroundings for each passage.

I first knew Thucydides mainly as a source for Greek history, and a particularly difficult one at that. He not only left frequent seductive traps for the unwary scholar, but he littered his pages with obstacles in the form of long speeches in the hardest Greek prose I had ever seen. It was only after I began teaching him in philosophy classes (at the suggestion of my colleague Joe Horn) that I began to see what a brilliant mind was at work in his *History*. Then I recalled what I had learned from wonderful teachers—the dazzling lectures of G. E. M. de Ste. Croix; and the warm tutorials of T. F. R. G. Braun, to whom this book is respectfully dedicated. I would like to say that they are not to blame for any errors I may have made, but I cannot deny that they have influenced my work deeply. I should mention one other teacher: “War is a violent teacher,” writes Thucydides, personifying an abstraction as he so often does, meaning that men at war take on the violent qualities of war itself. My own small experience in this area supports his conclusion. On the positive side, however, I am also coming to see that military experience has allowed me to appreciate the power of Thucydides's descriptions as I never could before.

My translation is an unashamed betrayal of Thucydides: where the Greek is obscure, I have tried to be clear. In this I have concentrated on the abstract concepts that pepper the text—justice, power, human nature, and fear. At the same time I have tried to bring into English the toughness of the original, which has been obscured by

the flabby but accurate translations now in use. My work began out of a love affair with Hobbes's translation for its simplicity and directness, and much of Hobbes remains.

Dates are always BCE (Before the Common Era). Proper names, technical terms, and Greek words are explained in the Glossary. References to Thucydides's text are in boldface when they guide the reader to passages included in this volume. References to notes in commentaries are by last name of author. Summaries and introductory sections are in *italics*; the translation is in roman.

In correcting my translation I am indebted to Mark Gifford, Michael Gagarin, David Dean-Jones, and various anonymous readers for the publisher. To these, many thanks. I must also thank Peter Green for helpful conversations about Thucydides, and confess one special debt: the title of this volume was proposed by Mark Gifford.

I am also grateful to Shirley Hull, Heidi Hall, Julie Baxter, and Mary Nix for assistance in typing the manuscript, and I must thank the Cambridge University Press for their kind permission to use substantial passages that I first translated for a work they commissioned, *Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists* (1995), which I edited with Michael Gagarin. The passages include all or parts of the following sections: 1.1, 20–23, 70, 75–77; 2.35–46, 52–53, 60, 63, 65; 3.37–48, 81–84; 5.84–116; 6.18, 39, 89; 8.48, 64, 68, 89, 97.

Preface to the Second Edition

What's Special about This Expanded Volume

Here are all the great speeches and debates from the first seven books of Thucydides's great *History of the Peloponnesian War*, along with his most vivid descriptions of battles—the breakout from Plataea, night battle on Epipolae, Phormio's naval victory, and the Battle of Delium. This edition brings out Thucydides's views on war, power, and human nature, along with his explanation of the origins of the war. It also includes connecting material in order that readers may understand these passages in context.

The result is a volume that contains the essential Thucydides, while being short enough to be included in college level courses on great books. I have translated this material to bring out the ideas as clearly as possible. I explain important terms in footnotes and I cross-reference related passages. I have often replaced pronouns with proper names in the interest of clarity. Otherwise, this is as accurate as I can make it. I started with Hobbes, because he is the translator who best understood Thucydides's ideas, as they were akin to his own. But of course I had to make my version more readable and bring it up to date with recent scholarship.

Why a Second Edition

I completed the first edition of this abridged Thucydides in 1993. Since then, scholars have been active in the field. P. J. Rhodes has published three valuable commentaries, on Books 1, 3, and 4–5.24 (2014, 1994, and 1998). Only his work on Book 2 (1988) was available for me for the first edition. Hornblower's masterful commentary is in three volumes (1991, 1996, and 2008). Marchant's commentary on Book 1 (1905) was updated and reissued in 1993 and has been useful, as has the elegant commentary on the same book by Cameron (2003). A number of other fine books and articles about Thucydides have come into print since 1993.

Therefore I have reviewed with care the entire volume (Introduction and Translation) and made many revisions in view of more recent scholarship, or with a view to readability.

Newly Translated Passages

I have added translations of a number of passages, mainly to fill in Thucydides's way of accounting for war and violence:

- Corcyra Debate, 1.31–53, which sets the stage for the war and illustrates Thucydides's way of framing a debate.
- Opening of the war, 2.1–23. Important for understanding Pericles's strategy.
- Phormio's naval battle, 2.83–92. The most wonderful account of a sea battle.
- The Mytilene (Lesbos) rebellion, 3.1–16, along with 3.27, 28, and 35. Crucial for an understanding of the Athenian Empire.
- The decision to execute all the men of Mytilene, 3.36. Sets up the debate that follows.
- The civil war starts in Corcyra, 3.70–81. Introduces Thucydides's most famous discussion of values.
- The speech of Hermocrates, 4.59–65. Bears on the way Thucydides's characters understand human nature.
- The Battle of Delium, 4.96. A major land battle vividly described, the first recorded case of killing by friendly fire.
- The decision for peace 5.15–17. It is typical of Thucydides to attribute the peace to the self-interest of the leaders on both sides.

I have also expanded slightly my own summaries that fill in for passages I have not included, to make for better continuity.

Note to the Reader on Conventions

All cross-references within Thucydides's *History* are in the format 1.99, where 1 is the book number and 99 is the chapter number. Passages that are included in this translation are bold-faced. Thus **1.2** is in this volume, but 1.99 is not. Dates are all BCE (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated.

Thucydides sometimes interrupts his narrative with what I think we would print as footnotes. These passages I have put into footnotes, inside quotation marks to indicate that they are his work and not mine.

In the footnotes, the principal commentaries are cited by author's last name only: Rhodes, Dover, Hornblower, and Rusten. The relevant passage in each case will be easy to find in the commentary on the chapter in Thucydides to which the footnote belongs. Classical scholars use "ad loc." (at the location) for this.