

Thucydides and Social Processes: Beyond Tragedy

Alexandros Koutsoukis

Not only are timing and sequencing important in determining political outcomes, but peoples' beliefs about timing and sequencing (perhaps learned from scholars) are part of the story.

(Jervis 2000, 100)

It is perhaps strange to begin an essay on Thucydides with a quote from a political scientist, but Thucydides has long been considered a father figure of the discipline of International Relations (IR) and of political realism, through his work the *History of the Peloponnesian War* or the *History*. The idea of the big fish that eats the small one is a familiar realist trope and seemingly echoed in Thucydides' notorious Melian Dialogue in which the big fish, Athens, devours the small fish, the island-state of Melos, despite the latter's moral indignation and warnings about some future form of retribution. Interpreting this dialogue has been the hill on which realists and constructivists have died to advocate the primacy of material power over morality and vice versa in international politics. Were the Melians naïve or were the Athenians arrogant, and thus beginning to commit the sin of imperial overextension, which led to their invasion of the big island of Sicily, and the eventual reversal in their fortunes of war? Expanding one's period of analysis—to include or exclude Sicily, when considering the Melian Dialogue—has led scholars to see Thucydides as a political realist or as a tragedian of epic proportions echoing the significance of morality that realists downplay. The way political scientists study events, singularly or interconnectedly, therefore, is central to how we choose to narrate history, the lessons we learn from it, and the way we interpret Thucydides.

The Peloponnesian War, according to Thucydides who lived through it, was the most important war in Hellenic history. The great powers of the Greek city-state international society, Athens and Sparta, were at the peak of their power and fought over hegemony in the Greek world. The conflict eroded moral restraints, particularly at times of crisis, and with it unscrupulous violent behaviour became more permissible. Neutrals could afford less and less to remain neutrals, and the war outlasted the initial contemporary predictions. This war shaped the future of the Hellenic international system, eventually leading to its collapse. It set the ground for the rise of Macedon and Alexander the Great by weakening both Sparta—the winner—and Athens—the defeated party—as well as their allies.

This fateful war, almost three-decades-long (431-404 BC), is often used to extract lessons for the present. During the English Civil War Hobbes drew upon it to characterise his state of nature, having himself translated it from the Greek in 1628. More recently, during the Cold War, the US and USSR were seen as the new Athens and Sparta (Lebow and Strauss 1991). Later, it was the Korean War (McCann and Barry S. Strauss 2000) that was discussed through the prism of the Peloponnesian War. More immediately, Thucydides was used to delve into the possibilities of a future Sino-American conflict (Allison 2017).

Despite these parallels, the goal of this essay is slightly different. It does not intend to offer the definitive event from the *History* as the key that unlocks the puzzle of current events. It aims to help us get such comparisons right. It, thus, expands on a unique Thucydidean way of writing history, which is processual, and challenges simplistic de-contextualised comparisons between different events across space and time. Thucydides is not amenable to the comparison between seemingly similar events because he does not write an event-centric history, but a history in which the sequences of events play a role, and also —as this chapter argues— the social processes, that are the result of longer-term sequences of events and the gradual transformations of the social and emotional worlds of the people involved. Social processes often defy the limited time frames of simplistic event comparisons and require a more holistic reading of the *History*.

This processual reading is novel for Thucydidean scholars in the discipline of International Relations (IR). Thucydides in IR has tended to reflect the primary concerns of realists or constructivists. Realists have emphasised the importance of national interest and anarchy or the differential growth of power among great powers in the *History* (Waltz 1979, 186; Gilpin 1984, 1988). Constructivists have challenged this view by pointing out the importance of legitimacy and morality in the *History* as well as the role of chance events —like uncertain decisions— in the outcomes of the *History* (Johnson Bagby 1994; Welch 2003). These are the familiar IR concerns with the topics of fear *versus* justice or chance *versus* determinism at their epicentre. Processual thinkers have more fully incorporated in their analyses the centrality in the *History* of social processes, such as modernisation (Lebow 2003), state-building (Jaffe 2017), decision-making (Kouskouvelis 2018), and civilising processes (Linklater 2016). These processes structure the possibilities of change in politics and war.

This chapter focuses on the military campaign of Sparta in the North of Greece, whose successes depended on a combination of public diplomacy, swift military decisions, a robust strategic vision and the beliefs of the smaller city-states. Thucydides, unlike recent thinkers (Bosworth 1993; Burns 2011), does not offer easy assessments, comparisons, and conclusions for that sequence of events. His assessments are ambiguous, and he seems to be doing so by design. Successes and failures, properly contextualised in three of the *History*'s key social processes —civilisation, war, civil war— defy our tendency for easy attribution of praise and blame. This viewpoint aims more fully to appreciate *History*'s unique “ability to convey the generic without falsifying the unique” (Finley 1942, 67). It allows us to get closer to Thucydides' perspective in order to draw lessons from *History* about the conditions under which past failures can become future successes by focusing on whether or when a leader could tweak the direction or the momentum of these processes to pursue success or prevent disaster; to get to victory or avert defeat; to achieve collaboration or avoid dissent.

Thucydides' revelation of both the generic and the unique exhibits a view of history that is distinctive not only for the discipline of IR at large (Kouskouvelis 2018, 58), but even for interdisciplinary efforts that try to combine IR with other masters of thought on politics and war such as Machiavelli and Clausewitz. Machiavelli, interested in minimising the dangers to the authority of the prince, advised that “there is only one thing more dangerous than being hated, and that is being despised” (Coker 2010a), and anticipated the birth of the Italian nation in his last chapters of *The Prince*, and the change this would bring to the regional balance of power (Machiavelli 2003). Clausewitz argued that “real war” can develop in time in the direction of the ideal of “absolute war”, and included emotions in his trinitarian description of the nature of war, which he saw as the interplay of three fundamental elements: reason, passion and chance. For the Prussian general, “the ineradicable complexity of

emotions correlates with the changing culture of societies, and the increasing number of actors”, which is central to his distinction between the nature and character of war (Hughes and Koutsoukis 2019). These arguments about emotions and culture notwithstanding, Thucydides went beyond Machiavelli and Clausewitz. He had deeper insights into our emotional worlds and the monsters that war creates in all of us (Coker 2017, 154). It is these insights about who we are and who we become due to war and politics, as they are interweaved in social processes of variable time frames, that the *History* illuminates, and the Spartan general Brasidas grasped acutely and reaped the benefits of in Northern Greece.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Firstly, it demonstrates the problem of event-centric comparisons, such as this between Melos and Brasidas’ campaign, if detached from social processes. Secondly, it engages with Thucydides’ ambiguous assessment of Brasidas to demonstrate the different time frames Thucydides uses in his narrative, that a processual perspective helps illuminate. Thirdly, it argues for a processual reading of the *History* that is different from the alternative dominant processual reading of it as tragedy. Fourthly, it develops this processual reading by unpacking the processes of civilisation, war, and civil war. Fifthly, it demonstrates how these processes provide a good reading of the campaign of Brasidas in Greece that reconciles the seemingly contradictory elements of Thucydides’ assessment of Brasidas. It concludes that decontextualised comparisons simplify events, misunderstand the challenges of strategy, and ignore key ways in which power politics can develop dynamically.

1. Decontextualised Comparisons: Melos and Acanthus

Misrecognising the role of social processes in the *History* matters for understanding events and for comparing them with other events. Bosworth (1993) has combined the two issues in an evocative illustration of what is problematic in historical comparisons and foreign policy evaluations decontextualised from social processes in Thucydides’ *History*.

Bosworth (1993) argues that the Athenians in Melos were characterised by a humanitarian spirit because they warned the Melians before slaughtering them, and faults the Spartans for not behaving accordingly in the northern Greek city-state of Acanthus. The Athenians, he argues, gave the Melians an honest choice: surrender or die. In contrast, he sees the Spartan general in Northern Greece, Brasidas, as lacking both in virtue (Burns 2011) and in the Athenian humanitarian spirit because he exaggerated representations of his power to the city-states that followed him, and which later led to their destruction, abandonment or return to the Athenian Empire. For Bosworth the fate of Melos and of Northern Greek city-states are two parallel stories. Indeed, they appear to be so because, when decontextualised, these stories are similar. They are stories about weak states with false hopes suffering perilous consequences.

In both cases, Melos and Acanthus, the fault lies with the small states. Melos miscalculated and so did the Northern Greek city-states. What is ignored are the processes involved in Brasidas’ successes, which makes this comparison simplistic and too great-power centric; that is, it favours the perspective of the powerful Athenians as is often the case with realist accounts of the Melian Dialogue too. This is also reflected in the old, catchy and erroneous translation of the Melian Dialogue by Richard Crawley when he writes: “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (Thucydides 2020/1910, 5.89)¹.

To appreciate the great-power-centrism of the above comparison, and the value of the processual reading of the *History* consider for a moment the absence of the most long-term social context, civilisation —perceived as a process— when trying to interpret the Melian Dialogue. Realists see the attack of Athens on Melos as a practical strategic decision and constructivists as evidence of the moral deterioration of Athens, which leads to hubris and the invasion of Sicily. In each case, the moral context is ignored or only acknowledged partially. Realists argue about whether the decision was a mistake or a worthwhile calculated risk gone wrong (Novo and Parker 2020; cf. Koutsoukis 2022). Constructivists focus on the hubris of Athens that is too confident and commits itself to an impossible task; the conquest of the island of Sicily —itself bigger than the entire Peloponnese— amidst the biggest war in Hellenic history (Johnson Bagby 1994, 147). Realism tends to reduce morality to what is expedient, and constructivism tends to elevate morality in relation to what the destructiveness of the war permits (Kokaz 2001). The distance between the two viewpoints matters as it creates room for foreign policy choices, but it still misses out further room for choice by not acknowledging the processual context of Thucydides that permeates all of *History*.

The disagreement between realists and constructivists takes for granted two things that the notion of civilisation as a process challenges: 1) methodologically: the centrality of social processes instead of state-centrism (whether in the form of the primacy of the national interest or of domestic politics); and 2) ontologically: the significance of the international and regional context: civilisation and intercommunal ties.

For example, the destructiveness of war and the deterioration of civilisation may sometimes be linked linearly; that is, go hand in hand. This is something both realists and constructivists can agree on though they may see different degrees of freedom for different foreign policy choices. The relationship between war and civilisation, however, may be impacted by stigmatisation efforts of one state against another as has been demonstrated by other processual interpretations of Thucydides from historiography and IR (Price 2001; Linklater 2016).

Still, at other times, the relationship between war and civilisation may move in a different direction such as when self-restraint and civilisational morality towards some states may serve the purpose of victory against the main great power adversary. Decentring our explanations from state-centrism and incorporating the role of the international context as it manifests itself in civilisational changes and intercommunal relationships can help us add another layer of analysis, avoid great-power-centrism, and get closer to Thucydides' perspective. This is crucial if we want to get our comparisons right.

Indeed, in both the way we understand the event of the Athenian attack on Melos and the comparison between Melos and Acanthus, the limitations in both the analysis of the first and in the comparison between the two have a common source. They do not challenge the linear link between war and civilisation: more war equals less civilisation.

What Brasidas achieved and convinced the northern Greeks who followed him was that he would uphold the standards of Greek civilisation—something that Acanthus in particular also set as a term of surrendering (4.88). This made his self-proclaimed restraint on violence to weaker allies more convincing. In fact, Thucydides informs us that Brasidas was able to achieve a long-lasting pro-Spartan reputation for this reason (4.81). This was possible because Brasidas' discourse relied on pan-Hellenic norms of respect and autonomy (4.87), followed civilisational practices, such as oath-keeping, and convinced states of his ability to protect them. In addition, he accelerated the civil war in the Athenian empire and quelled the

propensity for civil war in the various northern Greek city-states. Rather than taking these internal divisions for granted, he tried to shape them. In addition, he was sensitive to issues of time and momentum rather than just of culture or domestic politics. He did not manage all of the above in one go, with one move, speech or battle, but sequentially through multiple speeches, battles, and proclamations. There was a political plan of unity—a political blueprint as Hornblower calls it (1996, 49)—underpinning his military strategy. Small city-states also helped once they became convinced of Brasidas' honesty. They showed commitment to this new balance of power in domestic and international politics by devoting symbolic resources, which contributed to their domestic stability and to the long-lasting repercussions of Brasidas' strategy. The combination of the above set in motion a broad political realignment, increased the power of Brasidas, and helped him intensify the war between Athens and Sparta. So, civilisation, civil war, and war seen as fluctuating processes dependent and shaped by intercommunal ties provide a richer explanation of Brasidas' legacy.

In contrast, if we examine these changes in a decontextualised manner, they are reducible to flimsy changes resulting from unreasonable miscalculations, persuasive oratory, and "Spartan roguery... a worthy match for the Athenians on Melos" (Allison 1997, 177). More fully contextualised, though, they reflect the ability of Brasidas to influence not just individual states but social processes that are central in Thucydides' *History*, and create new power and new foreign policy options along the way.

2. Thucydides' Ambiguous Assessment of Brasidas' Military Campaign in Northern Greece

The personality and agency of Brasidas looms in Sparta's northern Greek campaign due to its effects, but also because of Thucydides' seemingly negative assessment of the Spartan general. Accordingly, this campaign has often been ignored by the discipline of IR or judged negatively by historiographers (Bosworth 1993; Burns 2011). On one hand, after the surrendering of the strategic city of Amphipolis to Brasidas, Thucydides criticises the Spartan general because his words that inspired the Northern Greek city-states to rebel from Athens were untrue:

They drew confidence too from the recent blow inflicted on the Athenians by the Boeotians, and from Brasidas' enticing (but untrue) claim. (4.108)

On the other hand, at the beginning of Brasidas' campaign, Thucydides remarks that his conduct was honourable and that his reputation lasted long after his military campaign:

And in the later stages of the war, after the Sicilian affair, the honourable conduct and intelligence shown by Brasidas at this time—directly experienced by some, heard of and believed in by others—played a major part in creating enthusiasm for the Spartans among the Athenian allies. He was the first Spartan sent out to them, he established a reputation for decency in all his dealings, and left in them a firm expectation that the others too were of similar character. (4.81)

The first evaluation of Brasidas may appear to be final as it comes later in the narrative (4.108). However, it is the first Thucydidean judgement (4.81) that extends to a later time frame as it refers to influence and reputations that extend beyond the end of the expedition. The two assessments rather than contradictory should be seen as complementary: one

focusing on the particular military results of the campaign and the other on the long-term political results of the strategy.

It is important to note here that the connection between war and politics is central in classic thinkers of war, especially Clausewitz, but also in Thucydides (Coker 2017, chapter 6; Wheatland 2020, 6). It is thus critical to appreciate both the military dimension of strategy and its political dimension. In particular, what Thucydides achieves with his ambiguous assessment of Brasidas is to highlight the impact of strategy at different time frames. Scholars have previously argued that Thucydides' ability to describe events from multiple viewpoints serves the purpose of making us wonder about the nature of truth and how history is most truthfully told (Greenwood 2005). Similarly, we should also consider that Thucydides' effort to provide us with multiple time frames serves to make us wonder about what the true or full repercussions of strategy are, and, hence, how history is most truthfully told.

Therefore, we need a different way to appreciate Thucydides' ambiguous assessment of Brasidas. There is a way that does not reduce the *History* to decontextualised comparisons of events (Bosworth 1993) or to assessments in which the short-term perspective eclipses the long-term perspective (Burns 2011) and thus undermines efforts to account for both the unique and the generic. To develop this viewpoint, we now turn to an account of the processual dimension of the *History* to help us read Thucydides' Brasidas in the final section. We begin by explaining why we choose to diverge from the more dominant quasi-processual view of the *History* as tragedy.

3. The Processual Context: Beyond Tragedy

The social context of the Peloponnesian War is often described in insufficiently processual terms as that of the fall of Hellenic civilisation. It has now become a familiar picture to depict Thucydides' *History* as a history of the rise and fall of civilisation or as a tragedy (Lebow 2003). Particular examples of military cruelty, such as the fate of the Plataeans or the Melians (3.68; 5.116), are abundant in the *History* and support this case. The centrality of the art of tragedy in ancient Greek culture, and the Athenian story being told as the tragedy of a state committing the sin of hubris and thus meeting with disaster even though it was initially expected to be victorious support this viewpoint (Coker 2010b, chapter 5). The capacity of human beings "to fall prey to irrational emotions and false hope" and thus acting foolishly is present in the *History* and contributes to this understanding (Porter 2022). This tragic view of politics is compatible with the aforementioned linear view between war and civilisation both in constructivism and in realism (Gilpin 1988, 602). Despite their different premises, these perspectives reflect the same narrative: history as tragedy.

Yet, Thucydides is rather ambivalent in his historical narrative. The reading of the *History* as a tragedy is "not purely Thucydidean, but a hybrid of Thucydides and modern opinions, predilections and preoccupations." (Price 2001, 362) Certain consequential figures succeed in or fail to turn the tide of events such as Hermocrates at Gela or Brasidas in Northern Greece (4.59-4.64; 4.78-5.10). Certain crucial incidents affect the direction of historical developments such as a string of surrenderings in the Spartan campaign in Northern Greece or the battle of Mantinea (4.78-5.10; 5.63-5.81). Certain key factors are continuously in flux even though at times appear to be static such as the meaning of Hellas or who counts as Hellene. We observe the transformation of 'Hellas' in the section called *Archaeology* (1.1-1.19) in Book 1, but also during the Peloponnesian War as in the trial of the Plataeans (3.65).

The fluctuation of the agency of all these factors is described in ways that open up space for reconciliation, unification and unity or for a reversal in processes of disunity and disintegration whether in domestic politics or international politics. They do not reveal a history primed for tragedy or one that is centred on contingency (cf: Welch 2003). They reveal how the history of power politics is shaped by the results of sequences of events and processes that may bring about civilisational, regional or allied (dis)unity.

This ambiguity in Thucydides is reduced in tragic accounts of the *History*. For example, Porter (2022) and Lebow (2003) recognise the importance of prudence from a classical realist or realist-constructivist perspective. They also recognise the multivocality and multi-causality of Thucydides and that war coarsens emotions. Yet, this does not give *History* enough air to breathe (Lawson 2006, 415). It gives it a certain tragic telos (Suganami 2008, 349). This realist or constructivist view of *History* is similar to the progression-of-pessimism narrative attributed to Thucydides, and Doyle (1990) has been insightful in his critique of this argument for being too deterministic.

According to Doyle, internal strife is the cause of Athenian defeat: the victory of private factions over public life (2.65). Yet, they result not only from war but also from the plague, the rise of demagogues in Athens, or in cases like Corcyra, civil war. These issues, Doyle argues, “make a state of war in domestic politics” (Doyle 1990, 234), highlighting Thucydides’ comments about the plague in Athens and the civil war in Corcyra in which “[e]thical restraint dissolved as trust and even language changed their meanings” (Doyle 1990, 234; 2.82).

What is at stake is the social bonds among people who share a common identification that opens up space for ethical choices. Even the Athenian empire, Doyle continues, provides a kind of connectivity between city-states in which the possibility of justice and thus of ethical choices in international politics are increased (Doyle 1990, 235). Therefore, issues that affect the (dis)unity and ethics within and across states have significant causal gravity and, therefore, challenge the linear link between war and civilisation. Yet, Doyle neither recognises nor explores the role of the pan-Hellenic identity and that of social processes or sequences of events. This omits another level of analysis and a key modality of making sense of the *History*.

4. The Processual Context: Civilisation, Civil War, War

To appreciate the civilisational level of analysis as a key social process that affects the possibilities of change by being dynamic; that is, not having a fixed relationship with states and people and not having a linear relationship with war—as often portrayed in IR whether as a tragic view of reality or as a progression of pessimism—we need to start by examining Thucydides’ analysis in the *Archaeology*. The *Archaeology* is crucial as it has been convincingly argued that it is programmatic. It provides key themes and concepts of the *History* (Hornblower 1991, 8). We will then ascertain the centrality of the processual modality of contextualisation in Thucydides by examining the manifestation of civilisation and its fluctuation throughout the *History*.

To begin with, what it means to be Greek and who counts as real Greek rather than as a ‘barbarian’ are gradually developed and come to life from Greek pre-history till the time of the Peloponnesian War. The rise of ‘Greekness’ suppresses ‘barbarous’ behaviours and

impulses (Orwin 1994, 135) though not straightforwardly. Greeks are characterised by common customs, but not all of them have attained this level of development (1.6). They do get their name from Hellene, but they were initially based on different tribes and genealogies (1.3). They build up their power and pacify their societies, while obtaining this intercommunal or civilisational identity. The more power they amass, the greater deeds they can achieve. The more they control the seas, develop their economies and fortify their cities, the more robust their city-states become (1.2). They join the war against Troy and Persia and they achieve great deeds in the name of Hellas (1.3, 1.23). The great achievements reinforce this common civilisational identity, and yet this sense of belonging allows for the creation of clear demarcation lines inside and outside the Greek world by separating real Greeks from ‘barbarians’ or Greeks who have betrayed their kin by collaborating with the Persians (3.62). Thucydides notes:

it seems to me, that there had not yet evolved any equivalent generic term for the Greeks. However that may be, these various peoples who came to be called Hellenes—either individually..., or, later, collectively undertook no combined action before the Trojan War. But they could only make this joint expedition because by now they had acquired greater experience of the sea. (1.3)

The sense of disunity between Greeks during the Peloponnesian War goes hand in hand with the disintegration of this common identification or sense of we-feeling or we-identity (Linklater 2016, 10). This diminishing sense of we-ness is affected by war, civil war, power, and state-transformation processes mediated by decision-making processes (Kouskouvelis 2018). They all shape conceptions of kinship or we-feeling, proclivities or moral restraints toward violence (Linklater 2016, 32-33, 52), and foreign policy decisions. Issues that appear programmatically in the *Archaeology* or develop during the Peloponnesian War.

War, who runs a violent school, loosens up ethical self-restraints against violence (3.82, 4.76). Civil wars also undermine morality domestically, but also across cities as political fractions seek out great power alliances, which during the Peloponnesian War become available, commit atrocities, and see the war accordingly in increasingly ideological terms as a fight for survival between democrats and oligarchs as in the case of the paradigmatic civil war in Corcyra (3.65; 3.82-3.84; Cogan 1981; Linklater 2016, 51). “Civil wars brought every form of depravity to the Greek world” (3.83), yet their severity fluctuated “as dictated by each new permutation of circumstances” (3.82).

These remarks by Thucydides depict, firstly, a narrative that focuses both on the particular (the state of civil strife in Corcyra) and the generic (the state of civil strife in Hellas). Secondly, the reversal of the Hellenic civilisation process as social, ethical, legal or religious restraints on violence (Linklater 2016, 31-32, 49; van Wees 2001), and the associated we-identity or bonds of patriotism that the Greeks built are being undermined.

This is particularly important given the socially constructed multi-layered bonds of the Greeks. Loyalties and bonds of kinship were being developed along colonial or ethnic, cultural, civic or pan-Hellenic lines (Fragoulaki 2013). “[T]his inclusive view of kinship”, Fragoulaki continues, “permits a ‘more flexible and mobile, but also more precise’ exploration of the complex phenomenon of intercommunal relationships and their representations” (Fragoulaki 2013, 10).

Unlike realists who privilege the role of power at the expense of ethnic connection or kinship (Porter 2022), there is a different way of understanding kinship, than the quote below seems to indicate:

They had come to share either in the conquest of the country or in its rescue, but their particular alignment was not determined by any justifying cause or kindred loyalty so much as by purely contingent factors of self-interest or compulsion. (7.57)

Re-shaping bonds of kinship—civilisational, regional or local—can actually be seen to influence both interests and power.

At the Conference at Gela, where the various cities deliberate about whether they would forge a common front against the Athenians by bandwagoning with the mighty Syracusans, kinship is publicly under negotiation. Hermocrates, the Syracusan general, speaks at the Conference and says:

They [the Athenians] are the greatest power in Greece; they are here with just a few ships at present to observe our mistakes; they are using the apparent legitimacy of “alliance” to turn our ingrained enmities to their covert advantage. If we start internal wars and call in their support [they will] attempt to bring all Sicily under their control. (4.60)

Hermocrates links alliance and kinship more dynamically than realists appreciate. He uses a discourse in which intercommunal ties at various levels of analysis (city, Sicily, Dorians vs. Ionians) can be allayed or suffer from disunity or civil strife. Fragoulaki (2013, 8-9) notes: “internal dissension is a political phenomenon that closely interacts with intercommunal *xyngeneia* [kinship], as a factor that either alienates a city from its colonial and racial *xyngeneis*, that is, its ‘natural’ allies, or brings it closer to them” (emphasis in original). The essence of Hermocrates’ arguments is developmental.

Hermocrates, one of the key statesmen in the *History*, demonstrates linkages between communal ties, intercommunal ties, civil war, and alliances and their dynamic interactions. Thucydides’ remarks about the civil war in Corcyra and its generalisability across Greece also link civil war, alliances, kinship ties and their dynamic interactions in the course of a social process: stasis. Thucydides’ arguments about the civilising process in the *Archaeology* are also historically determined emphasising social developments and generalisability (Rood 2006, 240-41; Hornblower 1991, 10; Romilly 2012, 145, 172; Finley in Rawlings III 2010, 257). It is the embeddedness of the pan-Hellenic conflict in the Hellenic civilising process, which helps develop the power of the Greeks, that makes us grasp why this war was the greatest of all.

The civilising process as an account of the broad facts is the key finding: it is important, it is generalisable and it is not undermined if Thucydides got some details wrong (1.21). This process consists of both material and ideational dimensions: the development of states and the embeddedness of a common sense of we-ness. It is built around socially constructed bonds of intercommunal ties at multiple levels of analysis, which are negotiated in public decision-making processes (Cogan 1981), that challenge the traditional “inside/outside” dichotomy (Monoson and Lauriaux 1998, 293) between domestic and international politics. The processual dimension of the *History* is an integral part of key passages in the *History* and helps us understand the dynamics of international relations.

The civilising process as context that fluctuates is a complex process. It has been approached from a variety of partial perspectives. It has been described as a story of a technology of power that the Athenians had mastered (Ober 2006, 146). It has been interpreted as a state of peace and rest associated with a modernisation process (Lebow 2003, 148-49, 155). The emergent civilisational sense of we-ness has been described as an imagined community (Fragoulaki 2013, 7) or a unified normative space (Monoson and Loriaux 1998, 293). Its development has been seen in terms of state-building and national character building (Jaffe 2017). All of these angles are true and indicate the complexity of a phenomenon that is best described as an ‘expansion-regression’ process (Hunter 1982) or as an integration-disintegration process. Understood in this way we can strike a better balance between the particular and the generic by emphasising both the multidimensionality of the process, and Thucydides’ emphasis on the broad facts of his account.

The *History*’s context is illuminated in these terms by Linklater. He sees “the decline of we-feeling and the changing we-I balance between Hellas and the polis... [embedded into] an investigation [of] ‘integration–disintegration tensions’” (Linklater 2016, 25). “Those points”, he continues, “stress the need for a more complex analysis of the tensions between civilizing and decivilizing processes—and between integrative and disintegrative tendencies—in the Hellenic states-system” (Linklater 2016, 18).

Linklater offers a reading that “breaks with the one-dimensional image of the high tolerance of inter-societal violence”, that realist analyses that echo the Athenian discourse in the Melian Dialogue often perpetuate (Linklater 2016, 18). He reveals the “shifting relationships between violence and civilization in classical antiquity” and the possibility this created for the Greeks to learn collectively how to coexist more peacefully (Linklater 2016, 18).

Though their humanistic learning remained limited (Linklater 2016, 54), this does not make the civilising process a thin veneer (Hanson 2020) or a ‘realist’ victim of war, but, instead, a parallel process that is being reversed gradually but not inexorably. The civilised veneer can be stripped away (Linklater 2016, 51), but its degree of thinness depends on the degree of its development and regression. Unravelling does not equal constant thinness. Changes over time are of the essence as they are dynamically shaped by a sense of kinship, that is negotiable and institutionalised in the course of time through parallel processes of state-building as described in the *Archaeology* with the expansion of the city-state.

The linear relationship between war and civilisation can now be seen as complex based on the construction of the narrative of the *History* rather than based on a principled humanist spirit (cf. Porter 2022). Social processes in the *History* link states and people across time. Their full impact cannot be simplified by reducing historical comparisons or analyses to the limited time-frame of the singular event, as this would ignore the time-frame of social processes that have already created cumulative change that shapes the possibilities of change and the chances of success of strategies that emphasise different power resources such as power or influence due to moral conduct. A battle between interpretations that focus on either power or morality, as IR paradigms have done, should make one wonder how the processual context is being integrated in these analyses. In essence, the factors that directly shape events have their impact shaped by a stream of interrelated social processes in the course of their reproduction. We now turn to Brasidas to examine his efforts in Northern Greece from a processual perspective.

5. Brasidas' Military Campaign in Processual Context

One of the leaders of the Peloponnesian War who is presented as great is Hermocrates, but another one who is depicted in similar, if not more heroic, terms is Brasidas. They are both characterised by intelligence and courage. Brasidas at “Sparta had a reputation for getting things done”, and since being sent abroad, he “impressed the cities with his reasonable and moderate approach” (4.81) and “established a reputation of decency” (6. 81). Similarly, Hermocrates is “a man of unsurpassed intelligence... and exemplary courage in war” (6.72). Even though Thucydides presents Brasidas as a hero (Hornblower 1996, 39), modern scholars have focused on the criticisms of Thucydides and Brasidas’ failures and compared him negatively vis-à-vis Hermocrates. These criticisms become more effective, if we do not contextualise Brasidas in social processes: civilising process, war, civil war in Northern Greek cities, and civil war in the Athenian Empire. Such are the processes which Hermocrates also faced but managed more effectively: civilising process, war, civil war in Sicilian cities, and civil war in the island of Sicily among Sicilians. Focussing on these processes helps demonstrate Brasidas’ strategic perceptiveness, and explain his long-term impact and the generalisable take away from his achievements and his situation.

Critics such as Bosworth (1993) describe Brasidas as having a problematic character, being dishonest and deluding those who believed in him with the city-state of Scione being the paradigmatic case, which, once captured by the Athenians, they “killed the grown men [and] enslaved the children and women” (5.32). Burns (2011) argues that Brasidas had self-interested motives aiming at his “success and reputation” (5.16), overreaching, and ultimately oppressing the cities he liberated from Athens by appointing Spartan governors (4.132). Burns (2011) from an Aristotelian perspective argues that the pursuit of the good is best achieved through truthfulness and that Brasidas was lying to the cities as well as to himself that he could change Spartan policy to support him much more in Northern Greece. As Lebow (2005) argues, persuasion is effective when based on honesty and justice as it can then maintain or repair a sense of community. Other scholars may be more sympathetic and focus on the Spartan rational cost-raising strategy and the goal of dissolving the Athenian Empire by “either encouraging defection or aiding revolts of the Athenian allies (Platias and Koliopoulos 2006, 157), but do not engage with the role of social processes, and thus simplify the complex tasks Brasidas faced and tried to manage.

But Brasidas was neither naïve nor can claims about him being an outsider to Spartan politics be so easily supported. Recent scholarship has helped rehabilitate the strategic brilliance of Brasidas without concealing the limitations of his strategy. Hornblower, has highlighted the power of religious oaths that Brasidas was able to extort and bind the Spartan authorities in order to pursue a foreign policy of liberation towards the Northern Greek city-states (Hornblower 1996, 47-48; 4.86). So, his liberation manifesto cannot be presumed to be propaganda. Wheatland (2020, 2) further emphasises that “Brasidas has the correct virtues for his station, but that the full extent of his virtue cannot be, and is not supposed to be, measured by Thucydides’ readers because his role in domestic affairs is never shown.” For Wheatland (2020) and Koutsoukis (2017) Brasidas possesses emotional intelligence, which he effectively applies to the service of both generalship and statesmanship. Koutsoukis (2017) also evaluates positively Brasidas’ generalship and potential for influence in the domestic politics of Sparta by focusing on the other Spartan efforts to support Brasidas. Moreover, Brasidas was not so un-Spartan, even though Thucydides presents him with the characteristic Athenian qualities of oratory and of an activist foreign policy. He was made of the stuff of great Spartan generals such as Archidamus (wise action), Sthenelaidas (emotive speeches)

and Astyochus (winning over allies). He “possesses many of the same traits as these paradigmatic Spartans, but he wields them effectively, whereas the others are hampered by them” (Sears 2020, 187).

In addition, his deception and his combination of coercion with persuasion should not lead to *a priori* scathing treatments of his character. Wheatland (2020, 4) rightly argues that moderation or measuredness is used prudentially by Brasidas as it

allows for greater flexibility in foreign relations by attracting potential enemies and making them open to persuasion. Measuredness... may be necessary when dealing with foreign powers. As a general acting with sole authority far away from his city, Brasidas must balance the tools of diplomacy in a prudential manner.

Though, positively-inclined, Wheatland here is reproducing the “inside/outside” dualism. One way to reframe Wheatland’s argument is in terms of a struggle for the most prudential pursuit of Spartan interests.

Brasidas strives for a prudential balance between the demands for increased Spartan influence by inspiring and mobilising the Northern Greeks, and the necessity to do so quickly to maintain the momentum that he needs to garner advantages for Sparta. In addition, this degree of measuredness allows Brasidas to promote civil peace in most of the city-states he liberates from the Athenian Empire (Wheatland 2020, 4-5). Now contrast this with the Athenians in Melos or in Sicily in Book 6, where the Athenian general Ephemus, like Pericles (2.63) and Cleon (3.37) previously, presents Athens unashamedly as a tyrant city: ‘For a tyrant or an imperial city nothing advantageous is inconsistent, and the only bond is reliability: in every case the circumstances determine enemy or friend.’ (6.85) Had Brasidas acted like an Athenian, his mission would be jeopardised, and would reduce the Spartan self-interest to only the second and narrower version of it. Brasidas’ brilliance, ability and struggle emanates from his pursuit of this uneasy balance.

Brasidas is in effect combining diplomacy with war and demonstrates the attributes of a general-statesman. He reveals the fruitfulness of combining war with politics and that war and politics are not separate but interweaved. Brasidas had a vision of war, to destroy the Athenian Empire in pursuit of Spartan victory, combined with a political vision of pursuing the Greek civilisational ideal of liberation. Brasidas embodies “that vital Churchillian truth: politics and strategy are one” (Wheatland 2020, 6), and that Clausewitzian notion that different views of politics in war can lead to the pursuit of different types of war: a) war as the politics of society, b) war as a struggle for survival, c) and war as policy (Herberg-Rothe, 2007, pp. 153-156). Brasidas combined the latter two. He pursued a war as a policy in Northern Greece to those who were reluctant to surrender, and war as a struggle of survival to destroy the Athenian Empire. As Thucydides notes, after the death of Brasidas, the Athenian Nicias bid for a policy of peace denouncing the politics of chance and risk —attributable to Brasidas and his Athenian nemesis, general Cleon—believing that “lack of risk came with peace.” (5.16) Different types of politics and understandings of the complexity of the political, social and strategic context lead two different generals to two different policies.

Hornblower (1996) articulates the political dimension of Brasidas’ strategy in his commentary about Brasidas’ speeches in Northern Greece. Thucydides only mentions the first speech of Brasidas delivered at the city of Acanthus. The rest of the speeches follow the Acanthus blueprint like a good politician would do. Hornblower calls this the periodically adjusted manifesto. He also adds that this is an “innovation, and one not used again for any

character other than and after Brasidas.” (Hornblower 1996, 49) This demonstrates the unique treatment of Brasidas by Thucydides and the uniqueness of Brasidas’ political shrewdness.

The social context of Northern Greece was city-states subjugated to the Athenian Empire, nominally allies, split between pro-Athenian and pro-Spartan factions with the tendency for civil war, a degree of dissatisfaction with the Athenian Empire, a Spartan underexplored reputation as the liberator of Hellas from past tyrants, shared Hellenic civilisational ideals of morality, religiosity and liberation, and fear of violence. These can be summarised in the following processes: civilising process, war, civil war, and civil war in the Athenian Empire.

Starting from the latter, Brasidas accelerated the disintegration of the Athenian Empire by fomenting a civil war in its ranks among its allies. Thucydides has throughout the *History* contrasted hegemony to *arche* (illegitimate hegemony) (Lebow and Kelly 2001), and in Northern Greece he demonstrates how the problems of *arche*, subjugation of Greeks to Greeks, which is “worse than foreign rule” and with no “pretence to decency” (4.86), can lead to regression and moral breakdown of the city-state that is at the highest point of civilisation to that time through a process of disintegration (Hunter 1982, 160-61).

Brasidas, through his mixed strategy of persuasion and coercion toward Athenian allied cities, was able to release or accelerate the sense of dissatisfaction toward Athens and appease, moderate or reduce the pro-Athenian elements. The Athenian Empire was not bereft of appeal, especially to pro-democratic and pro-Athenian populations. The degree of dissatisfaction varied though and was pliable. In Acanthus, for instance, the citizens “debated long, with much said on either side, and then took a secret vote” (4.88) before surrendering and allying with Brasidas. Thucydides informs us that citizens were “[i]nfluenced both by the seduction of Brasidas’ offer [to liberate them, liberate Greece, and not change their regime] and by fear for their crop” (4.88).

“Not long afterwards Stagirus too, a colony of Andros, joined the revolt” (4.88); a remark strategically placed in the same paragraph where Thucydides refers to the Acanthian decision to surrender. Thucydides also clearly mentions the possible role of kinship in Stagirus’ decision. Both Stagirus and Acanthus (4.84) were colonies of Andros.

Crucially, Stagirus’ rebellion “established momentum for the Spartan cause,” momentum that started growing with the Acanthian decision (Kagan 2005, 173). Thereafter, Argilus declared its rebellion against Athens. Amphipolis, a major city, subsequently fell. Immediately after the crucial surrender of Amphipolis more city-states followed: Myrcinus, Galespus, Oesyne and most of the cities of the Acte peninsula in Northern Greece. Among those cities Torone was another eminent example. Scione and Mende, smaller cities, also joined Sparta against Athens.

When the cities subject to Athens heard of his taking of Amphipolis, of the offer he had made, and of the mild disposition of the man himself, they were more than ever excited by the prospect of revolt, and began secret negotiations with him, inviting him to come and help them, each of them keen to be the first to defect. (4.108)

This sequence of events created military and political momentum and accelerated a process of disintegration of the Athenian *arche*, and an intensification of the war toward Athens that Brasidas favoured instead of compromise.

A key strategic idea of Brasidas was to pursue a policy of civil peace and attach it to his pro-Spartan and anti-Athenian international political vision. He notes in his speech in Acanthus:

And if any of you have personal fears which make you wary that I might hand over the city to one group or another, you can trust me absolutely in this... That would be worse than foreign rule, and for us Spartans, so far from gratitude for our efforts and an enhanced reputation, the result would be a blackening of our name. We would be manifestly bringing on ourselves the very same charges which are the basis of our continued war against the Athenians. (4.86)

This was crucial as other instances of surrendering in the Peloponnesian War had been precipitated by or had led to regime change, civil war or exile (Price 2001). Brasidas was thus able to pacify or revert the tendency toward civil strife and use it as an accelerator of Spartan influence and anti-Athenian sentiment.

His strategy did not end there, but his political manifesto included references to the sense of Greek-ness and the Greek ideal of liberty.

I am here for the liberation of the Greeks... I cannot allow you to frustrate the Greeks' emancipation from slavery... Think carefully, then, and take up the challenge to win first place in starting the liberation of the Greeks, to your everlasting fame. (4.86-87)

As Brasidas' campaign developed momentum, these ideals inspired more hope and became more believable and inspiring. The intercommunal ties of Hellenic kinship and the ideals of moderation toward fellow Greeks were reinforcing each other. Of course, Athens was being depicted as an un-Greek power that was enslaving Greeks and was, thus, excluded. This was a familiar modality of Greek civilisation; stigmatisation of those who are being portrayed as not real Greeks (Linklater 2016; Price 2001). For the rest of the Greeks aligning with Sparta and sticking to their ideals, though, the sense of Greek-ness was proceeding together with an intra-city and inter-city sense of moderation toward violence. The civilising process depicted in the *Archaeology* was experiencing a growth spurt.

The civilising process as described in the *Archaeology* also consists of the essential unplanned process of state-building over the course of centuries. Similarly, Brasidas influenced the direction of state-formation in some Northern Greek city-states without planning it. The result was the development of symbolic politics in the domestic politics of cities like Amphipolis, Acanthus and Scione which were binding the domestic authorities squarely to Sparta, were reinforcing their domestic authority, and were institutionalising the legacy of Brasidas that Thucydides mentions lasted even "after the Sicilian affair" (4.81). The Acanthians dedicated a treasury at Delphi with the following inscription: "Brasidas and the Acanthians [sc. dedicated this treasury] from [sc. the spoils of] the Athenians" (Hornblower 1996, 285). The Scionians welcomed Brasidas with a ritualised honorific welcome as if he was a hero or victor in the games (4.121) and the Amphipolitans changed the origins story of their city and institutionalised a cult of Brasidas as a hero and as the founder of their city (5.11). Fragoulaki, sees in these ritualised behaviours "the transformative power of rituals of intercommunal kinship" and "these communities' negotiation and definition of ethnic identities" (Fragoulaki 2013, 19). These rituals were central in the Greeks' efforts for the maintenance, or transformation, of their states. The transformation of states and of a sense of Greek-ness are woven together both in the *Archaeology* and in Brasidas' campaign. All these processes represent the dynamic social context that Brasidas found himself in and tried to influence by accelerating, quelling or inspiring parts of it.

To some extent the contrasting accounts of Brasidas will persist as authors interpret differently the balance or the right balance between reason and passion, Brasidas' insider/outsider status, Brasidas' persuasion and deception, Brasidas' selfish and enlightened motivations, and Brasidas' mobilisation potential. However, a better appreciation of the processual context should be able to help reduce the distance between the two opposing assessments.

Conclusion

In the international political theory of war the view of history as tragedy is widespread given the catastrophic results of conflict. Machiavelli emphasises fear at the expense of bonds of love, if the Prince wishes to maintain his power. For Hobbes fear is the passion to be reckoned with in both pursuing war, and seeking a resolution to it. For Clausewitz war oscillates between real war and the tragedy of absolute war, and even though he does place emotions at the heart of war, his analysis is limited. The incorporation of the Thucydidean international political theory of war in IR has also perpetuated this view of history.

Thucydides, often appropriated by realists, appears to display a tragic view of history. Fusions of realism with constructivism have also stressed tragedy whereas other versions of constructivism have overemphasised contingency. A perspective that revolves around the deep contingencies of history embedded not in tragedy, but in social processes, and which can be distilled from Thucydides' *History*, has been largely neglected and yet it is important.

By focusing on the processual context of the *History*, this chapter offered an analysis of the processual perspective of Thucydides and a more balanced reading of the significance of Brasidas. It offered a solution to the problem of Thucydides' ambiguous assessment of Brasidas and Brasidas' long-lasting positive reputation across the Greek world by engaging with the strategic opportunities and challenges that a description of the thick processual context reveals.

By explaining the limitations of the comparisons between Brasidas and Melos, this chapter challenges simplistic event-centric or decontextualised comparisons. Horizontal comparisons anchored on the similarity of outcomes flatten the thick historical context and empty history of its meaning and its developmental potential. It is this thick historical context that needs to be understood to grasp the dynamics of politics, and produce more refined comparisons.

By reading *History* more didactically rather than tragically, this chapter contributes to the international political theory of war that sees war and politics as intertwined (Coker 2017). Understanding the thick processual context and its complex adaptations is crucial for prudential grand strategy and strategic diplomacy (see also, Prantl 2022).

By focusing on Brasidas' ability to mobilise and inspire the Northern Greeks, and to generate momentum and impact on the civilising process to influence the war between Athens and Sparta, this chapter challenges more static perspectives of international politics. It lends support, instead, to relational and processual perspectives that focus on modalities of relations (Jackson and Nexon 2019). In particular, it contributes to the civilisational lens of Andrew Linklater (2016) by illuminating a variety of social processes and their centrality in the chances of agents to gradually shape power, identity and intercommunal ties at various levels of analysis. It also encourages a view of great power politics in which weak states do not vanish due to great-power centrism (Koutsoukis 2017), and instead the politics of collective

mobilisation and the struggle for influence among political communities lie at the heart of power politics (Nexon and Goddard 2017). Further work on characters like Brasidas in history, similar sequences of events in the *History*, and the impact of the interweaving of social processes in the *History* and in history at large could help develop this research orientation.

In conclusion, it is very easy to reduce the *History of the Peloponnesian War* into ahistorical dichotomies, such as war vs. civilisation, power vs. morality or great powers vs. small powers, that then feed into comparisons between events. Such an insufficiently contextualised and event-centric view of the *History* ignores the more complex socio-historical processes and struggles for Hellenic we-identifications.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank David Boucher, Andrew Linklater, Alex Mack, and David Sullivan for reviewing the manuscript and offering advice and suggestions. All mistakes are my own.

Notes

¹ All other translated quotations are from (Thucydides 2009).

References

- Allison, Graham. 2017. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Allison, June W. 1997. *Word and Concept in Thucydides*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press.
- Bagby, Laurie M. Johnson. 1994. The Use and Abuse of Thucydides in International Relations. *International Organization* 48 (1): 131–53.
- Bosworth, A. B. 1993. The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113: 30–44. [doi:10.2307/632396](https://doi.org/10.2307/632396).
- Burns, T. 2011. The Virtue of Thucydides' Brasidas. *The Journal of Politics* 73 (2): 508–23. [doi:10.1017/S0022381611000065](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611000065).
- Coker, Christopher. 2010a. 'The Conflict in Afghanistan'. Online resource. British Politics and Policy at LSE. Blog post from London School of Economics & Political Science. 20 April 2010. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/>.
- . 2010b. *Barbarous Philosophers: Reflections on the Nature of War from Heraclitus to Heisenberg*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2017. *Rebooting Clausewitz: 'On War' in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.

- Doyle, Michael W. 1990. Thucydidean Realism. *Review of International Studies* 16 (3): 223–37.
- Finley, John Huston. 1942. *Thucydides*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Fragoulaki, Maria. 2013. *Kinship in Thucydides: Intercommunal Ties and Historical Narrative*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gilpin, R. G. 1988. The Theory of Hegemonic War. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (4): 591–613. [doi:10.2307/204816](https://doi.org/10.2307/204816).
- Gilpin, R. G. 1984. The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism. *International Organization* 38 (2): 287–304. [doi:10.1017/S0020818300026710](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300026710).
- Goddard, S.E., and D.H. Nexon. 2016. The Dynamics of Global Power Politics: A Framework for Analysis. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1 (1): 4–18. [doi:10.1093/jogss/ogv007](https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogv007).
- Greenwood, Emily. 2005. *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*. London: Bristol Classical Press.
- Herberg-Rothe, Andreas. 2007. *Clausewitz's Puzzle: The Political Theory of War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornblower, Simon. 1991. *A Commentary on Thucydides: Volume I: Books I - III*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1996. *A Commentary on Thucydides: Volume II: Books IV-V*. 24. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, R. Gerald, and Alexandros Koutsoukis. 2019. 'Clausewitz First, and Last, and Always: War, Strategy and Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century'. *Intelligence and National Security* 34 (3): 438–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2018.1530867>.
- Hunter, Virginia J. 1982. *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jackson, P.T., and D.H. Nexon. 2019. Reclaiming the Social: Relationalism in Anglophone International Studies. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32 (5): 582–600. [doi:10.1080/09557571.2019.1567460](https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1567460).
- Jaffe, S. N. 2017. *Thucydides on the Outbreak of War: Character and Contest*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jervis, R. 2000. Timing and Interaction in Politics: A Comment on Pierson. *Studies in American Political Development* 14 (1): 93–100. [doi:10.1017/S0898588X00213023](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X00213023).
- Kagan, Donald. 2005. *The Peloponnesian War: Athens and Sparta in Savage Conflict 431–404 BC*. New edition. London: Harper Perennial.
- Kokaz, Nancy. 2001. Moderating Power: A Thucydidean Perspective. *Review of International Studies* 27 (1): 27–49.

- Kouskouvelis, Ilias. 2018. *Thucydides on Choice and Decision Making: Why War Is Not Inevitable*. Illustrated edition. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Koutsoukis, Alexandros. 2022. Restoring Thucydides: Testing Familiar Lessons and Deriving New Ones. *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 33 (3): 606–8. [doi:10.1080/09592296.2022.2113264](https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2022.2113264).
- Koutsoukis, Alexandros. 2017. ‘Challenging Victor Bias and Status Quo Bias in Realist Accounts of Surrender’. Aberystwyth: Aberystwyth University. [https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/challenging-victor-bias-and-status-quo-bias-in-realist-accounts-of-surrender\(d853556e-5b06-465a-8c08-412df06dfd7c\).html](https://pure.aber.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/challenging-victor-bias-and-status-quo-bias-in-realist-accounts-of-surrender(d853556e-5b06-465a-8c08-412df06dfd7c).html).
- Lawson, George. 2006. The Promise of Historical Sociology in International Relations. *International Studies Review* 8 (3): 397–423.
- Lebow, Richard. 2003. *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lebow, Richard Ned. 2005. Power, Persuasion and Justice. *Millennium* 33 (3): 551–81. [doi:10.1177/03058298050330031501](https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298050330031501).
- Lebow, Richard Ned, and Robert Kelly. 2001. Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States. *Review of International Studies* 27 (4): 593–609.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2016. *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. 2003. *The Prince*. London: Penguin Classics.
- McCann, David R., and Barry S. Strauss. 2000. *War and Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Korean War and the Peloponnesian War*. Armonk: Routledge.
- Monoson, S.S., and M. Loriaux. 1998. The Illusion of Power and the Disruption of Moral Norms: Thucydides’ Critique of Periclean Policy. *The American Political Science Review* 92 (2): 285–97. [doi:10.2307/2585664](https://doi.org/10.2307/2585664).
- Novo, Andrew R., and Jay M. Parker. 2020. *Restoring Thucydides: Testing Familiar Lessons and Deriving New Ones*. Amherst: Cambria Press.
- Ober, Josiah. 2006. Thucydides and the Invention of Political Science. In *Brill’s Companion to Thucydides*, eds. Antonios Tsakmakis and Antonios Rengakos, 131–59. Leiden: Brill.
- Orwin, Clifford. 1994. *The Humanity of Thucydides*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Platias, Athanassios G., and Constantinos Koliopoulos. 2006. *Thucydides on Strategy: Grand Strategies in the Peloponnesian War and Their Relevance Today*. Athens: Eurasia Publications.
- Porter, Patrick. 2022. Thucydides Was a Realist. *Engelsberg Ideas* (blog). 1 April 2022. <https://engelsbergideas.com/essays/in-defence-of-thucydides-the-realist/>.

- Prantl, J. 2022. Reuniting Strategy and Diplomacy for 21st Century Statecraft. *Contemporary Politics* 28 (1): 1–19. [doi:10.1080/13569775.2021.1961387](https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2021.1961387).
- Price, Jonathan J. 2001. *Thucydides and Internal War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rawlings, Hunter R. 2010. Thucydidean Epistemology: Between Philosophy and History. *Rheinisches Museum Für Philologie* 153 (3/4): 247–90.
- Romilly, Jacqueline de. 2012. *The Mind of Thucydides*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Rood, Tim. 2006. ‘Objectivity and Authority: Thucydides’ Historical Method’. In *Brill’s Companion to Thucydides*, edited by Antonios Tsakmakis and Antonios Rengakos, 223–49. Leiden: Brill.
- Sears, Matthew A. 2020. ‘Brasidas and the Un-Spartan Spartan’. *Classical Journal* 116 (2): 173–98. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tcj.2020.0028>.
- Suganami, Hidemi. 2008. ‘Narrative Explanation and International Relations: Back to Basics’. *Millennium* 37 (2): 327–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829808097643>.
- Thucydides. 2020/1910. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Richard Crawley. Vancouver: Royal Classics.
- Thucydides. 2009. *The Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Martin Hammond. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- Welch, David A. 2003. ‘Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides’. *Review of International Studies* 29 (3): 301–19.
- Wheatland, Casey J. 2020. ‘The General as Statesman: The Virtues of Measuredness and Daring in Thucydides’ Account of Brasidas’. *Perspectives on Political Science* 49 (2): 117–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10457097.2020.1725372>.