RECENT RESEARCH ON THUCYDIDES

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Thucydidean scholarship can seem rather like the Hydra. The sheer quantity of literature has long been daunting. That literature, like its subject, is often austere; it remains multilingual; it is increasingly scattered across journals and edited volumes. But most Hydra-like of all is its *multi-disciplinarity.* Thucydidean scholarship spans literature, history, philosophy, political science, international relations and more – which, on the one hand, reflects something of the text itself, but, on the other, poses more or less unique challenges for the student. I will focus on scholarship from the last fifteen years or so (and will hardly scratch the surface of that); but that story of fragmentation really goes back half a century, at least, despite intermittent attempts at counteracting it. That fragmentation continues to yield a rich variety of approaches and indeed questions: some of these we are at the start of reckoning with, others are very old and now appearing in new forms. But the deepest questions remain those that reach across disciplinary divides – above all: what do we really want from Thucydides' text?

Since the final volume of S. Hornblower's masterly commentary, there has been a proliferation of introductory resources and reference works.[1] For the complete novice, there is now a volume in the 'Very Short Introduction' series.[2] On top of the old Brill Companion, which remains valuable, we now have a wide-ranging Oxford Handbook and a more focused Cambridge Companion.[3] In English alone, there are new, student-oriented commentaries to Books 1, 3, 6 and 7.[4] 'Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics' commentaries on Books 1 and 4 are in preparation. Three major new English translations have been published[5] – one very recently – as well as a translated selection of speeches.[6] There is a

[1]S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* (1991–2008) (cf. *CR* 42 [1992], 279–81; *CR* 49 [1999], 18–20; *CR* 61 [2011], 396–9).

[2]J.T. Roberts, *Thucydides: A Very Short Introduction* (2024) (cf. *CR* 75 [2025]).

[3]A. Rengakos and A. Tsakmakis (edd.), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (2006) (cf. *CR* 58 [2008], 365–7); R. Balot, S. Forsdyke and E. Foster (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides* (2017) (cf. *CR* 68 [2018], 349–51); P. Low (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thucydides* (2023) (cf. *CR* 74 [2024], 57–9).

[4]P.J. Rhodes, *Thucydides, History, Book I: With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (2014), to add to his earlier commentaries on Books 2–5.24 in the same series; R. Bruzzone, *Commentary on Thucydides, Book 3* (2025); M. Taylor, *Thucydides's Melian Dialogue and Sicilian Expedition: A Student Commentary* (2019), which also includes the Melian Dialogue; C.B.R. Pelling, *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War Book VI* (2022); C.B.R. Pelling, *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War Book VII* (2022).

[5]M. Hammond, *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War. A New Translation* (2009); J. Mynott, *Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* (2013) (cf. *CR* 64 [2014], 374–6); R. Waterfield, *Thucydides: The History of the Peloponnesian War* (2025).

[6]J. Hanink, *Thucydides. How to Think about War: An Ancient Guide to Foreign Policy* (2019) (*CR* 72 [2022], 439–40).

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growing online lexicon to Thucydides.[7] There are various podcasts and blogs that thoughtfully explore Thucydides' work and its reception; it has been the subject of new dramatisations and even gamification.[8] One area that has seen less change is the text: G.B. Alberti's edition is still the most up to date, with much the best *apparatus criticus*, but the Oxford Classical Text remains more easily accessible and widely used.[9]

Some valuable, old resources are much more readily available than they were. We now have the first part of a new edition of the scholia.[10] There is now a photographic reproduction of the most important manuscript of Valla's 1452 Latin translation, which differs considerably from later, printed editions.[11] A critical edition of Thomas Hobbes' 1629 English translation is in progress, with a specimen – Hobbes' translation of the plague narrative – recently published.[12] Several useful nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German commentaries are now freely available online. Seminal literary analyses by H.-P. Stahl and J. de Romilly have been translated into English[13], while the 'Oxford Readings in Classical Studies' volume contains a particularly rich array of pieces, many translated for the first time.[14] Such resources deserve continued attention and use. Some of the most stimulating, recent collections of essays in the field have arisen from fresh reflections on older scholarship.[15]

Literary studies of Thucydides have particularly flourished in recent years. Prompted especially by narratological works from the 1990s and 2000s[16], approaches to Thucydides' text exploring narrative structures, literary themes and the experience of the reader have become widespread – perhaps dominant – among Classicists. This work remains in the long tradition of the likes of Stahl and de Romilly; but it has become at once more theoretical and more mainstream. A. Tsakmakis and M. Tamiolaki (edd.), *Thucydides between History and Literature* (2013) is emblematic: although framed as a rapprochement between historical

[7]https://lexeis.org/thucydides/.

[8]For an overview, see recently N. Morley, 'Remaking Thucydides', *BICS* advance article (2025).

[9]G.B. Alberti (ed.), *Thucydides Historiae* (1972–2000) (cf. *CR* 44 [1994], 399–400; *CR* 52 [2002], 238–40); H.S. Jones (ed.), rev. J.E. Powell, *Thucydides, Historiae* (1942) (cf. *CR* 57 [1943], 14–15).

[10]A. Kleinlogel and K. Alpers, *Scholia Graeca in Thucydidem: Scholia vetustiora et Lexicon Thucydideum Patmense* (2019).

[11]M. Chambers, *Valla's Translation of Thucydides in Vat. Lat. 1801 with the Reproduction of the Codex* (2008) (cf. *CR* 60 [2010], 305).

[12]K. Hoekstra and L. Iori, 'Thomas Hobbes's Translation of "The Plague of Athens" (Thuc. 2.47.2–54): A First Critical Edition', *Histos* 16 (2022), 166–213.

[13]H.-P. Stahl, *Thucydides: Man's Place in History* (2003, first published 1966) (cf. *CR* 58 [2008], 47–8); J. de Romilly (trans. E.T. Rawlings), *The Mind of Thucydides* (2012, first published 1956) (cf. *CR* 64 [2014], 44–6).

[14]J.S. Rusten (ed.), *Thucydides* (2009). Note also J. Marincola (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography* (2011) (cf. *CR* 64 [2014], 175–9).

[15]N. Luraghi (ed.), 'Geoffrey de Ste. Croix and the Peloponnesian War', *Polis* 41.1, Special Issue (2024); D.M. Pritchard (ed.), *The Athenian Funeral Oration: After Nicole Loraux* (2024) (cf. *CR* 76 [2026]).

[16]Notably T. Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (1998) and C. Dewald, *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (2005) (cf. *CR* 58 [2008], 42–5) – although the latter is based on a 1975 dissertation.

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and literary approaches, the essays focus largely on Thucydides' narrative craft.[17] J. Grethlein's studies of experientiality have proven particularly influential.[18] M. Lang pursues a strictly narratological approach[19], along with the entries on Thucydides in the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* series. More widely, one effect of this literary turn has been to put Thucydides' narrative techniques into closer dialogue with other ancient historiography, especially within edited volumes.[20] Another has been the re-appraisal of specific figures or themes within his text, such as Pericles[21], ethnicity[22], sea power[23], and irony[24] – books on the last two both published in the new *THOUKYDIDEA: Studies in Thucydides* series.

This literary turn has reshaped the way in which some old questions are approached. Take the speeches. There has been some very substantial work on Thucydides' speeches, which continue to attract a great deal of attention.[25] But by and large, there has been waning interest in the problems posed by the *Methodenkapitel* – which are, in no small part, historical problems – and growing interest in narratologically minded topics, such as the role of indirect speech[26], or politically oriented questions, such as the theme of free speech.[27] It is not that the old questions are resolved. Rather, 'speech' in Thucydides has

[17]Similarly G. Rechenauer and V. Pothou (edd.), *Thucydides – a Violent Teacher? History and its Representations* (2011).

[18]Esp. J. Grethlein, 'Experientiality and "Narrative Reference", with thanks to Thucydides', *History and Theory* 49 (2010), 315–35 and *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography. Futures Past from Herodotus to Augustine* (2013), ch. 2 (cf. *CR* 65 [2015], 343–5).

[19]M. Lang (edd. J.S. Rusten and R. Hamilton), *Thucydidean Narrative and Discourse* (2011).

[20]E.g. E. Foster and D. Lateiner (edd.), *Thucydides and Herodotus* (2012) (cf. *CR* 64 [2014], 371–4); J. Grethlein and C. Krebs (edd.), *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography. The 'Plupast' from Herodotus to Appian* (2012); A. Lianeri (ed.), *Knowing Future Time in and through Greek Historiography* (2016).

[21]E. Foster, *Thucydides, Pericles, and Periclean Imperialism* (2010) (cf. *CR* 62 [2012], 53–6) and M. Taylor, *Thucydides, Pericles, and the Idea of Athens in the Peloponnesian War* (2010) (cf. *CR* 62 [2012], 385–7).

[22]M. Fragoulaki, *Kinship in Thucydides: Intercommunal Ties and Historical Narrative* (2013) (cf. *CR* 65 [2015], 42–4).

[23]H. Kopp, *Das Meer als Versprechen: Bedeutung und Funktion von Seeherrschaft bei Thukydides* (2017).

[24]C. Voß, *Ironie und Urteil. Ironische Historiographie und die Entdeckung des Politischen bei Thukydides* (2024).

[25]E.g. C. Scardino, *Gestaltung und Funktion der Reden bei Herodot und Thukydides* (2007).

[26]E.g., in the volumes noted above, see C. Scardino, 'Indirect discourse in Herodotus and Thucydides', in: Foster and Lateiner (2012), pp. 67–96 and P. Debnar, 'Blurring the Boundaries of Speech: Thucydides and Indirect Discourse', in: A. Tsakmakis and M. Tamiolaki (2013), pp. 271–85.

[27]See E. Greenwood, 'Making Words Count: Freedom of Speech and Narrative in Thucydides', in: I. Sluiter and R. Rosen (edd.), *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity* (2004), pp. 175–95 (cf. *CR* 59 [2009], 85–8) and A. Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (2006), ch. 7.

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become a broader subject.[28] Similarly, take the documents. For a long time, Thucydides' inclusion of inscriptions and, occasionally, letters has been seen as important for understanding his historical method, debating the composition of his work, even for editing his text. While historical reflection on the documents has continued[29], discussion of their role in the narrative has increased.[30] Even before the rise of narratology it had long been argued that these documents had a literary role by those seeking to defend the unity of the text – but that was still to approach them with a basically historicist question. Now, as with so much else in Thucydides, those starting questions are often literary.

But what of Thucydides as a historian? It is now fashionable to dismiss the history/literature divide – articulated most famously by K. Dover and N. Loraux[31] – as something of a false dichotomy. But that is a little too quick. As S. Gartland and R. Osborne have recently stressed, this literary turn – together with Thucydides' popularity among IR scholars – has undoubtedly shifted attention towards the author, away from his subject.[32] Moreover, Thucydides' stock as a historical source is under scrutiny. Narrative histories of the period, inevitably, remain heavily dependent on his account.[33] But S. Gartland and R. Osborne's *Reassessing the Peloponnesian War* (2025) sets out to 'rewrite' Thucydides' account – which is to be dependent on it in a different way, but in a way with which many will sympathise. It is not so much that Thucydides tells it wrong: recently, for instance, he has come out quite well in P. Debnar and A. Powell (edd.), *Thucydides and Sparta* (2021) and L. Lazar, *Athenian Power in the Fifth Century BC* (2024), on Sparta and the Athenian Empire respectively.[34] It is more that Thucydides is telling us the wrong things: precious little, for instance, on the Persians[35], on women[36], and on much else besides.[37]

On one level, that is not a new concern. Every generation of fifth-century Greek historians have worried about what Thucydides is not mentioning (the Megarian Decree, the

[28]See recently T. Rood, 'Thucydides', in: M. de Bakker and I.J.F. de Jong (edd.), *Speech in Ancient Greek Literature* (2022), pp. 223–45.

[29]E.g. R. Lane Fox, 'Thucydides and Documentary History', *CQ* 60 (2010), 11–29; M. Faraguana, 'Documents, Public Information and the Historian: Perspectives on Fifth-Century Athens', *Historika* 7 (2017), 23–52.

[30]E.g. E. Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (2006) (cf. *CR* 58 [2008], 42–5), ch. 4; B. Allgaier, *Embedded inscriptions in Herodotus and Thucydides* (2022).

[31]K. Dover, 'Thucydides "as History" and "as Literature"', in: J. Rusten (2009), pp. 44–59 (first published 1983) and N. Loraux, 'Thucydides is Not a Colleague', in: J. Marincola (2011), pp. 1–39 (first published 1980).

[32]S. Gartland and R. Osborne (edd.), *Reassessing the Peloponnesian War* (2025), pp. 8–9.

[33]See esp. J.E. Lendon, *Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins* (2010) (cf. *CR* 62 [2012], 217–19) – with a thoughtful appendix on Thucydides as a source – and J.T. Roberts, *The Plague of War: Athens, Sparta, and the Struggle for Ancient Greece* (2017).

[34]Though the most prominent recent biography of Pericles, V. Azoulay (trans. J. Lloyd), *Pericles of Athens* (2014), is notably cautious.

[35]E.g. N. Luraghi, 'Reading Herodotus during the Archidamian War', *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 118.1 (2018), 11–44.

[36]E.g. K.E. Shannon-Henderson, 'Women in Thucydides: Absence and Inferiority', in: T. Tsakiropoulou-Summers and K. Kitsi-Mitakou (edd.), *Women and the Ideology of Political Exclusion: From Classical Antiquity to the Modern Era* (2019), pp. 89–103.

[37]See esp. K. Vlassopoulos, 'An Entangled History of the Peloponnesian War', in: Gartland and Osborne (2025), pp. 15–41.

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Peace of Callias, the Athenian *boulē*, Aspasia, religion . . .). One of the great attractions of narratology was that it could positively account for (some of) these apparent omissions: as artistry rather than artifice. But this concern is starting to take a different shape. Rather than asking Thucydidean questions and worrying that Thucydides is pulling the wool over our eyes, the more pressing concern now (not least in classrooms) is that those of Thucydides are simply the wrong eyes – especially for the history of marginalised groups. As interest moves to the *experience* of the Peloponnesian War – in line, again, with the literary approaches outlined above – there has been important work on Thucydides' own experience, even trauma, and its effect on the narrative.[38] But, as Gartland and Osborne, for instance, bluntly put it: 'How many people were enslaved, brutalised and killed in the gold mines of the northern Aegean, owned by Thucydides (which presumably funded the time and resources necessary for the composition of the work)? And how might this affect the way we view and interpret the war?'[39] This is not simply a question of historical accuracy, but also of historical *justice*.

It used to be the case that the study of Thucydides' apparent omissions and contradictions came to a head in the 'Thucydidean Question': the question of his work's composition. This question is quite unfashionable in Anglophone scholarship. J.S. Rusten has usefully charted the ebb and flow of the debate between Unitarians and Separatists, in which narratological readings moved the tide near-decisively in the former's favour.[40] But to some extent, this is another debate more abandoned than resolved, for the basic problem underpinning it remains: exactly when (and indeed where) was our text written? Some stimulating work has asked how it might read in a post-404 BCE context, and we are probably limited to such hypotheticals.[41] But as the Separatists of the twentieth century knew well, our answers will have knock-on effects for how we view Thucydides' historical context, audience and aims.

Our understanding of Thucydides' literary context, by contrast, has been much enriched. Building on work such as C.B.R. Pelling, *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (2000), we have seen significant progress in understanding Thucydides' relationship with lyric[42], tragedy[43], comedy[44], and even art[45]. J. Grethlein, *The Greeks and their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (2010) sets Thucydides in the context of different, literary approaches to memory; E. Barker, *Entering the Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography and Tragedy* (2009) does something similar for dissent.

[38]E.g. N. Morley, 'Thucydides and the Historiography of Trauma', *Ktèma* 42 (2017), 195–206.

[39]Gartland and Osborne (2025), p. 9.

[40]J.S. Rusten, 'Carving up Thucydides: the Rise and Demise of "Analysis", and its Legacy', in: C. Lee and N. Morley (edd.), *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides* (2015), pp. 61–74.

[41]E.g. J. Ober, 'Historical Legacies: Moral Authority and the Useable Past', in: *Athenian Legacies: Essays on the Politics of Going On Together* (2005), pp. 43–68 (cf. *CR* 56 [2006], 404–5).

[42]Esp. S. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar: Historical Narrative and the World of Epinikian Poetry* (2004).

[43]E.g. E. Visvardi, *Emotion in Action: Thucydides and the Tragic Chorus* (2015).

[44]E.g. several essays in E. Baragwanath and E. Foster (edd.), *Clio and Thalia. Attic Comedy and Historiography*, *Histos* Supplement 6 (2017).

[45]E.g. V. Azoulay (trans. J. Lloyd), *The Tyrant-Slayers of Ancient Athens: A Tale of Two Statues* (2017) (cf. *CR* 68 [2018], 607–8).

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P. Ponchon, *Thucydide philosophe: la raison tragique dans l'histoire* (2017), while ranging widely, locates Thucydides especially among the sophists and Presocratics.[46] T. Joho, *Style and Necessity in Thucydides* (2022) is something of a hybrid: on the one hand, a detailed study of Thucydides' style(s); on the other, a sustained discussion of Thucydides' approach to a specific philosophical problem (free will and necessity) in the context of Homer, tragedy and the Hippocratic corpus.

Philosophical interest in Thucydides is slowly rising – or, perhaps better, widening. Thucydides' epistemology[47] and ethics[48] continue to puzzle historiographers. Rich passages such as the *stasis* digression and the Melian Dialogue continue to intrigue. But there has been a notable growth in scholarship putting his work in dialogue with Plato's. Some of this scholarship has explored connections.[49] Others have focused on pure comparison.[50] This comparison can be traced back to Nietzsche – as so much in Thucydidean interpretation can – whose approach has been subject to particularly thoughtful reflection from R. Geuss.[51] Contemporary political philosophers still find Thucydides good to think with – notably G. Agamben.[52] The big question that remains is how far, as the title of Ponchon's *Thucydide philosophe: la raison tragique dans l'histoire* (2017) suggests (another book much concerned with Plato), Thucydides can be productively treated as a philosopher in his own right.

Work on Thucydides among political scientists, meanwhile, continues at industrial scale. Large monographs on topics as varied as silence[53], freedom[54], the outbreak of war[55],

[46]In some ways similar, but more philosophically oriented, is D. Shanske, *Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History* (2007) (cf. *CR* 58 [2008], 45–7).

[47]E.g. H.R. Rawlings III, 'Thucydidean Epistemology: Between Philosophy and History', *RhM* 153 (2010), 247–90.

[48]E.g. L. Hau, *Moral History from Herodotus to Diodorus Siculus* (2016), ch. 5 (cf. *CR* 67 [2017], 337–9).

[49]With the *Laws*: C. Farrar, 'Putting History in its Place: Plato, Thucydides, and the Athenian *Politeia*', in: V. Harte and M. Lane (edd.), *Politeia in Greek and Roman Philosophy* (2013), pp. 32–56. With the *Republic*: E. Greenwood, 'Pericles' Utopia: a Reading of Thucydides and Plato' and M. Lane, 'How to Turn History into Scenario: Plato's *Republic* Book 8 on the Role of Political Office in Constitutional Change', in: D. Allen, P. Christesen and P. Millett (edd.), *How to Do Things with History: New Approaches to Ancient Greece* (2018), pp. 55–80 and 81–108. With the *Menexenus*: M. Zelcer, 'Reading the *Menexenus* intertextually' and N. Pappas, 'Improvisatory Rhetoric in the *Menexenus*', in: H. Parker and J.M. Robitzsch (edd.), *Speeches for the Dead: Essays on Plato's* Menexenus (2018), pp. 29–49 and 71–89.

[50]E.g. G. Mara, *The Civic Conversations of Thucydides and Plato: Classical Political Philosophy and the Limits of Democracy* (2008) (cf. *CR* 60 [2010], 32–4); J.T. Hogan, *The Tragedy of the Athenian Ideal in Thucydides and Plato* (2020).

[51]'Thucydides, Nietzsche, and Williams', in: *Outside Ethics* (2005), pp. 219–33 (see also D. Polansky, 'Nietzsche on Thucydidean Realism', *The Review of Politics* 77 (2015), 425–48).

[52]G. Agamben (trans. N. Heron), *Stasis: Civil War as a Paradigm* (2015) – heavily influenced by Loraux on *stasis*.

[53]J.G. Zumbrunnen, *Silence and Democracy: Athenian Politics in Thucydides' History* (2008).

[54]M.P. Nichols, *Thucydides and the Pursuit of Freedom* (2015).

[55]S.N. Jaffe, *Thucydides on the Outbreak of War: Character and Contest* (2017).

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and international law[56] appear near annually, along with readings of the whole text seeking to unpack its political wisdom[57]. It can be hard for Classicists to gauge the methodological background to such works. The shadow of Leo Strauss still looms large.[58] There have been some recent efforts at collaboration between political scientists and Classicists[59], but not many, and they have often been geared towards reception. Then there is International Relations. D. Welch, famously, told IR theorists to stop writing about Thucydides.[60] They did not. Much of this scholarship continues to debate the ongoing use of Thucydides among (neo-)realists (the most influential critique is still probably N. Lebow's, from a constructivist perspective).[61] But it has been dwarfed since the mid-2010s by G. Allison's infamous 'Thucydides Trap' and the barrage of responses it elicited.[62] Classicists, for the most part, have kept their distance. There has been greatly increased reflection within the discipline on *why* Thucydides is so susceptible to (mis)quotation and appropriation[63] – just as some political scientists, while others continue to parachute Thucydides into all manner of contemporary crises, have become quite critical about such parallels.[64] But there is room for more dialogue between the two groups. J. Ober's work, especially, in the 1990s and 2000s was much concerned with stimulating it – and reasonably so.[65] Many of the difficult, unresolved questions which remain about Thucydides' text are ones that these various politically minded readings – even Allison's – share with literary scholarship in particular: the nature of Thucydides' commitment to 'realism', the roles of his speeches, the ways in which his narrative instructs the reader, the extent of his authorial judgements – and above all, how far his text fulfils its apparent promise of timelessness.

One area where different scholarly groups have congregated is the reception of Thucydides, which has exploded in popularity – though for somewhat disparate reasons. We now have several large volumes that pursue, to varying degrees, an encyclopaedic

[56]I. Kareklas, *Thucydides on International Law and Political Theory* (2020).

[57]Notably G. Hawthorn, *Thucydides on Politics: Back to the Present* (2014) (cf. *CR* 65 [2015], 40–2).

[58]On which see S.N. Jaffe, 'The Straussian Thucydides', in: Lee and Morley (2015), pp. 278–95.

[59]Notably C. Thauer and C. Wendt (edd.), *Thucydides and Political Order: Concepts of Order and the History of the Peloponnesian War* (2016) and *Thucydides and Political Order: Lessons of Governance and the History of the Peloponnesian War* (2016).

[60]D. Welch, 'Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides', *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003), 301–19.

[61]See esp. N. Lebow, 'Thucydides the Constructivist', *American Political Science Review* 95 (2001), 547–60, developed in *The Tragic Vision of Politics* (2003), *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (2008) and *Ethics and International Relations: A Tragic Perspective* (2020).

[62]See esp. G. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (2017).

[63]E.g. N. Morley, 'Thucydides Quote Unquote', *Arion* 20.3 (2013), 9–36.

[64]E.g. J.P. Euben, 'Thucydides in Baghdad', in: J.P. Euben and K. Bassi (edd.), *When Worlds Elide: Classics, Politics, Culture* (2010), pp. 161–84.

[65]Esp. J. Ober, 'Thucydides Theôrêtikos/Thucydides Histôr: Realist Theory and the Challenge of History', in: Rusten (2009), pp. 434–78 (first published 2001). Note more recently J. Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason* (2022), ch. 5 (cf. *CR* 73 [2023], 675–7).

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approach.[66] The twentieth- and twenty-first-century reception of Thucydides has attracted particular attention, largely because of his importance in political science.[67] Thucydides' influence on the development of modern historiography remains of great interest.[68] As I write, there is a considerable amount of work in progress on Thucydides' global reception and colonial appropriation. But Thucydides' ancient reception has also drawn interest: in the Hellenistic period[69], but also within Roman literature, where the intricacies of Thucydidean echoes by authors such as Sallust and Tacitus[70], Dionysius and Appian[71], and even Lucretius[72] are increasingly appreciated. Even scholarship on the Byzantine reception of Thucydides is increasingly lively – and, as with many of these other sub-fields, alive not simply to questions about the works or contexts in which Thucydides was received, but also to those about how Thucydides' work seems to embrace the possibility of future readers.[73]

In the last few years that quality of Thucydides' text has been felt most keenly in his plague narrative (2.47–54). The *stasis* excursus (3.82–3), too, has seemed eerily familiar to many – predictably so, since these two digressions have long been the parts of his work most often read this way, and (or maybe because) they are the parts where Thucydides explicitly returns (2.48.3; 3.82.2) to his initial claim about the future value of his work (1.22.4). But the events of 2020 propelled the plague narrative to new prominence. The previous decade had seen the continuation of stimulating, literary readings of the account, along with the usual stream of speculation about which disease Thucydides was describing.[74] Little appreciated, still, is the irony that on the one specific point where

[66]V. Fromentin, S. Gotteland and P. Payen (edd.), *Ombres de Thucydide. La réception de l'historien depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au début du XX^e siècle* (2010); K. Harloe and N. Morley (edd.), *Thucydides and the Modern World: Reception, Reinterpretation, and Influence from the Renaissance to the Present* (2012); K. Meister, *Thukydides als Vorbild der Historiker: Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (2013); C. Lee and N. Morley (edd.), *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides* (2015); J. North and P. Mack (edd.), *The Afterlife of Herodotus and Thucydides* (2019).

[67]E.g. L. Iori and I. Matijašic (edd.), *Thucydides in the 'Age of Extremes' and Beyond. Academia and Politics* (*History of Classical Scholarship* Suppl. Vol. 5: 2022).

[68]Notably N. Morley, *Thucydides and the Idea of History* (2014) (cf. *CR* 65 [2015], 347–9).

[69]E.g. G. Parmegianni (ed.), *Between Thucydides and Polybius: The Golden Age of Greek Historiography* (2014); N. Kurpios, *The Reception of Thucydides in the Theory and Practice of Hellenistic Historiography* (2021).

[70]E.g. L. Spielberg, 'Language, *Stasis* and the Role of the Historian in Thucydides, Sallust and Tacitus', *AJPh* 138 (2017), 331–73.

[71]E.g. C. Pelling, 'Learning from that Violent Schoolmaster: Thucydidean Intertextuality and some Greek Views of Roman Civil War', in: B. Breed, C. Damon and A. Rossi (edd.), *Citizens of Discord: Rome and Its Civil Wars* (2010), pp. 105–18; J.J. Price, 'Thucydidean Stasis and the Roman Empire in Appian's Interpretation of History', in: K. Welch (ed.), *Appian's Roman History* (2015), pp. 45–63.

[72]E.g. E. Foster, 'The Rhetoric of Materials: Thucydides and Lucretius', *AJPh* 130 (2009), 367–99.

[73]Thus, for instance, E. Greenwood, 'Thucydideses: Authorship, Anachrony, and Anachronism in Greek Historiography', *Classical Receptions Journal* 12 (2020), 32–45.

[74]For such literary readings, see e.g. L. Kallet, 'Thucydides, Apollo, the Plague, and the War', *AJPh* 134 (2013), 355–82; R. Bruzzone, '*Polemos*, *Pathemata*, and Plague: Thucydides' Narrative and the Tradition of Upheaval', *GRBS* 57 (2017), 882–909;

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Thucydides anticipates that his text might prove useful – the identification of the disease if it comes again – his commentators have exerted the greatest effort with the least success. Since 2020 that speculation has continued; but among Classicists attention has perhaps been shifting towards the social and epistemological features of the narrative.[75] Perhaps more significantly, the coronavirus pandemic also prompted deeply thoughtful, personal reflections by eminent scholars on the resonances of Thucydides' account.[76] As Thucydides is ever more widely (and spuriously) cited in online media, these kinds of reflections seem particularly valuable – and especially apt in the context of the plague narrative, perhaps, where Thucydides himself seems at his most human (2.48.3).

In a justly famous article, now almost 50 years old, W.R. Connor explored what he described as the 'breakdown of the old reconciliation of Thucydides the artist and Thucydides the historian'.[77] He concluded by expressing the hope that the two would be reconciled. Connor's explanation remains instructive, but his hope has proven unfounded. If anything, today's Thucydides seems fragmented further. Now, it may be that his text is such that this fragmentation is inevitable. It may equally be that such fragmentation generates more diverse, or simply better, scholarship. But if reconciliation is possible and desirable, it will first require a reckoning with what we want from Thucydides. It is too easy to say, almost fatalistically, that we each read Thucydides in the light of contemporary circumstances. Better to ask for ourselves, as R.G. Collingwood – a man famously unsympathetic to Thucydides – would have us, what such reading is ultimately for.[78]

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P. Michelakis, 'Naming the Plague in Homer, Sophocles, and Thucydides', *AJPh* 140 (2019), 381–414 – now developed in P. Michelakis, *Encounters with the Plague in Homer, Sophocles, and Thucydides* (2025).

[75]E.g. M. Bonazzi, 'Thucydides and the Politics of Plague', in: M. Nicoletti and A. Palazzo (edd.), *Epidemics and Pandemics: Philosophical Perspectives* (2024), pp. 25–36; E. Clifford, *Figuring Death in Classical Athens: Visual and Literary Explorations* (2025), ch. 5.

[76]E.g. E. Greenwood, 'Thucydides in Times of Trouble' (2020): https://yalereview.org/article/thucydides-times-trouble; W.R. Connor, 'Reading Thucydides in a Time of Pandemic' (2022): https://theamericanscholar.org/reading-thucydides-in-a-time-of-pandemic/.

[77]W.R. Connor, 'A Post Modernist Thucydides?' *CJ* 72 (1977), 289–98 (quote from p. 294), reprinted in Rusten, *Thucydides* (2009), pp. 29–43.

[78]R.G. Collingwood (ed. J. van der Dussen), *The Idea of History* (1994), p. 10.

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