

THE LANDMARK

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# THUCYDIDES

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO  
THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

A Newly Revised Edition of the Richard Crawley Translation  
with Maps, Annotations, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Index

Edited by Robert B. Strassler

With an Introduction by Victor Davis Hanson

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# INTRODUCTION

## I. Life

### i.

“Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the history of the war” is the first pronouncement of *The Peloponnesian War* (1.1.1). Unfortunately, the merest glimpses of our author’s life follow this promising initial revelation of his name, nationality, and calling. Only at a very few unexpected places in his chronicle does Thucydides disclose somewhat more about himself. He announces, for example, that he once suffered from the great plague that struck Athens between 430 and 427 (2.48.3),<sup>a</sup> the scourge that killed Pericles and thousands of his fellow Athenians (3.87.3).

Once more Thucydides, in the third person, matter-of-factly enters his own narrative during the account of the successful Spartan attack on the northern Greek city of Amphipolis (424). He tells us that:

“The general, who had come from Athens to defend the place, sent to the other commander in Thrace, Thucydides son of Olorus, the author of this history, who was at the isle of Thasos, a Parian colony, half a day’s sail from Amphipolis.” (4.104.4)

His father’s name, “Olorus,” is probably Thracian and royal, suggesting both a foreign and a wealthy pedigree. Thucydides confirms that standing and prestige when he explains that he was called to Amphipolis precisely because “he possessed the right of working the gold mines in that part of Thrace, and thus had great influence with the inhabitants of the mainland” (4.105.1).

For his failure to save Amphipolis from the shrewd Spartan general Brasidas Thucydides bore the full brunt of Athenian popular indignation:

“It was also my fate to be an exile from my country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis; and being present with both parties, and more especially with the Peloponnesians by reason of my exile, I had leisure to observe affairs more closely” (5.26.5).

I.i.a All dates in this edition are B.C. Numbers in parentheses refer to the book, chapter, and section number in Thucydides’ text.

## Key to Map Symbols

### Area of greater detail

### Cultural features

- settlements
- ⚓ fortified place
- ⚓ temple
- ⚓ battle site
- ✕ miscellaneous place
- ⚓ anchorage
- == road
- ▬ walls
-  urbanized area (larger scale)
- ⚓ regional boundary or extent (approximate)



### Natural features

-  mountain; mountain range
-  cliff
-  river
-  area of water in Classical period (approximate)
-  marsh

## Calendar of the Peloponnesian War

Thucydides' Date of the War	Modern Date	Season	Location by Book and Chapter
1st year	431	End of summer	2.33
1st year	431/0	End of winter	2.47
2nd year	430	End of summer	2.69
2nd year	430/29	End of winter	2.70
3rd year	429	End of summer	2.93
3rd year	429/8	End of winter	2.103
4th year	428	End of summer	3.19
4th year	428/7	End of winter	3.25
5th year	427	End of summer	3.87
5th year	427/6	End of winter	3.88
6th year	426	End of summer	3.103
6th year	426/5	End of winter	3.116
7th year	425	End of summer	4.50
7th year	425/4	End of winter	4.51
8th year	424	End of summer	4.88
8th year	424/3	End of winter	4.116
9th year	423	End of summer	4.133
9th year	423/2	End of winter	4.135
10th year	422	End of summer	5.12
10th year	422/1	End of winter	5.25
11th year	421	End of summer	5.36
11th year	421/0	End of winter	5.39
12th year	420	End of summer	5.51
12th year	420/19	End of winter	5.51
13th year	419	End of summer	5.55
13th year	419/8	End of winter	5.56
14th year	418	End of summer	5.76
14th year	418/7	End of winter	5.81
15th year	417	End of summer	5.82
15th year	417/6	End of winter	5.83
16th year	416	End of summer	5.115
16th year	416/5	End of winter	6.7
17th year	415	End of summer	6.62
17th year	415/4	End of winter	6.93
18th year	414	End of summer	7.9
18th year	414/3	End of winter	7.19
19th year	413	End of summer	8.1
19th year	413/2	End of winter	8.6
20th year	412	End of summer	8.29
20th year	412/1	End of winter	8.60
21st year	411	End of summer	8.109



BOOK ONE

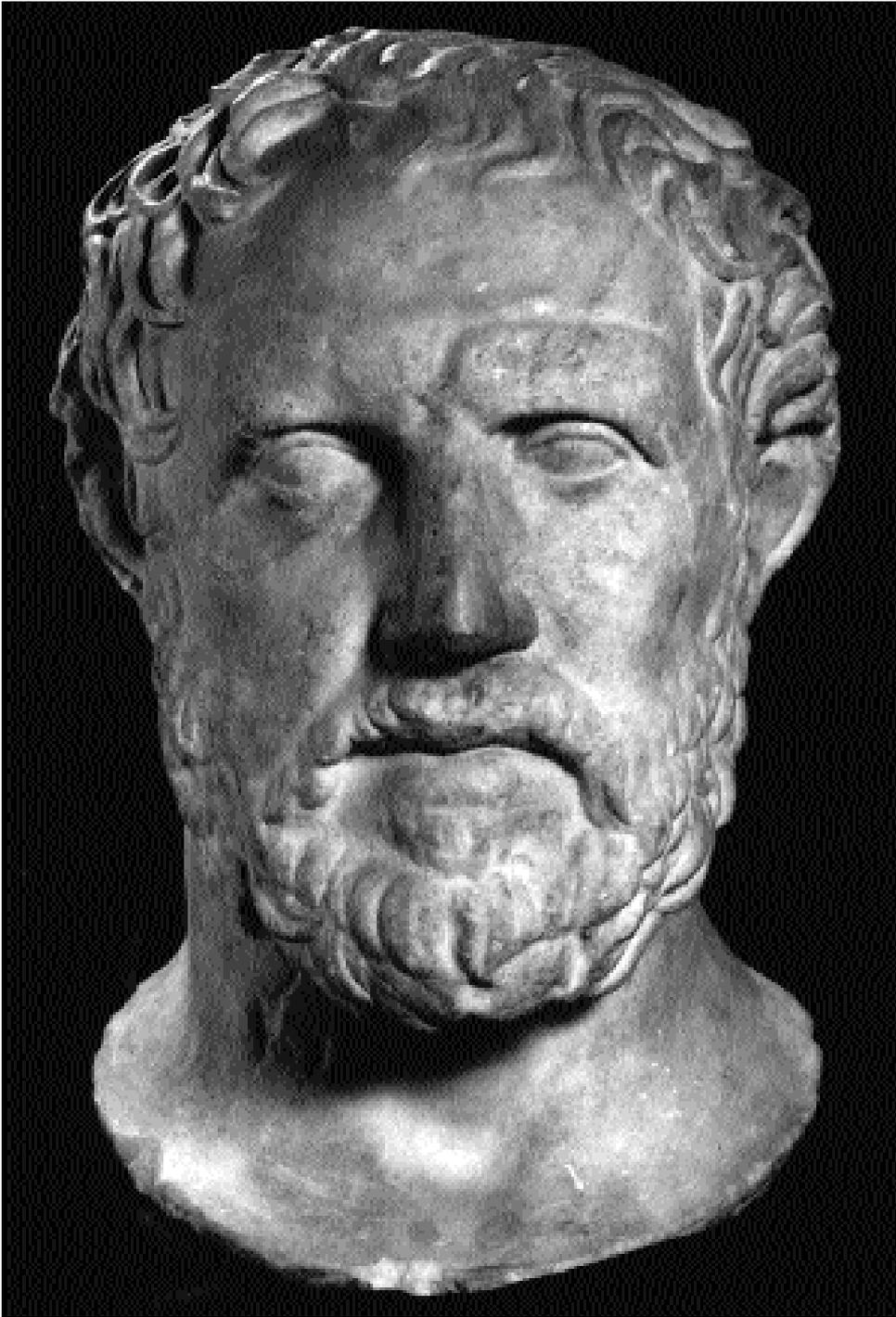


ILLUSTRATION 1.1 BUST OF THUCYDIDES.

Thucydides,<sup>1a</sup> an Athenian, wrote the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, beginning at the moment that it broke out, and believing that it would be a great war, and more worthy of relation than any that had preceded it. This belief was not without its grounds. The preparations of both the combatants were in every department in the last state of perfection; and he could see the rest of the Hellenic race taking sides in the quarrel; those who delayed doing so at once having it in contemplation. [2] Indeed this was the greatest movement yet known in history, not only of the Hellenes, but of a large part of the barbarian world—I had almost said of mankind. [3] For though the events of remote antiquity, and even those that more immediately precede the war, could not from lapse of time be clearly ascertained, yet the evidences which an inquiry carried as far back as was practicable lead me to trust, all point to the conclusion that there was nothing on a greater scale, either in war or in other matters.

For instance, it is evident that the country now called Hellas had in ancient times no settled population; on the contrary, migrations were of frequent occurrence, the several tribes readily abandoning their homes under the pressure of superior numbers. [2] Without commerce, without freedom of communication either by land or sea, cultivating no more of their territory than the necessities of life required, destitute of capital, never planting their land (for they could not tell when an invader might not come and take it all away, and when he did come they had no walls to stop him), thinking that the necessities of daily sustenance could be supplied at one place as well as another, they cared little about shifting their habitation, and consequently neither built large cities nor attained to any other form of

### 1.1

#### ATHENS

Thucydides explains why he decided to write his history.

### 1.2

#### The Archaeology<sup>1a</sup>

#### HELLAS

Thucydides offers an anthropological analysis of primitive life, noting that Attica's poor soil led to overcrowding and the establishment of colonies.

1.1.1a See the Introduction (sec. I) for a discussion of what is known about the life of Thucydides the historian.

1.2.1a "The Archaeology" is the term commonly used for the opening chapters of

Book 1 (2–23) in which Thucydides seeks to contrast the greatness of the Peloponnesian War with the pettiness of previous history.

greatness. [3] The richest soils were always most subject to this change of masters; such as the district now called Thessaly,<sup>3a</sup> Boeotia,<sup>3b</sup> most of the Peloponnesus<sup>3c</sup> (Arcadia excepted),<sup>3d</sup> and the most fertile parts of the rest of Hellas. [4] The goodness of the land favored the enrichment of particular individuals, and thus created faction which proved a fertile source of ruin. It also invited invasion. [5] Accordingly Attica,<sup>5a</sup> from the poverty of its soil enjoying from a very remote period freedom from faction, [6] never changed its inhabitants. And here is no minor example of my assertion that the migrations were the cause of there being no correspondent growth in other parts. The most powerful victims of war or faction from the rest of Hellas took refuge with the Athenians as a safe retreat; and at an early period, becoming naturalized, swelled the already large population of the city to such a height that Attica became at last too small to hold them, and they had to send out colonies to Ionia.<sup>6a</sup>

## 1.3

## HELLAS

Long ago, men in Hellas did not call themselves Hellenes, as proved by Homer's account of the Trojan war.

There is also another circumstance that contributes not a little to my conviction of the weakness of ancient times. Before the Trojan war<sup>1a</sup> there is no indication of any common action in Hellas, [2] nor indeed of the universal prevalence of the name; on the contrary, before the time of Hellen son of Deucalion, no such name existed, but the country went by the names of the different tribes, in particular of the Pelasgian. It was not till Hellen and his sons grew strong in Phthiotis,<sup>2a</sup> and were invited as allies into the other cities, that one by one they gradually acquired from the connection the name of Hellenes; though a long time elapsed before that name could fasten itself upon all. [3] The best proof of this is furnished by Homer. Born long after the Trojan war, he nowhere calls all of them by that name, nor indeed any of them except the followers of Achilles from Phthiotis, who were the original Hellenes: in his poems they are called Danaans, Argives, and Achaeans. He does not even use the term barbarian, probably because the Hellenes had not yet been marked off from the rest of the world by one distinctive name. [4] It appears therefore that the several Hellenic communities, comprising not only those who first acquired the name, city by city, as they came to understand each other, but also those who assumed it afterwards as the name of the whole people, were before the Trojan war prevented by their want of strength and the absence of mutual intercourse from displaying any collective action.

Indeed, they could not unite for this expedition till they had gained increased familiarity with the sea.

And the first person known to us by tradition as having established a navy is Minos.<sup>1a</sup> He made himself master of what is now called the Hellenic

## 1.4

## CRETE

Minos is said to have been the first king to rule by sea power.

1.2.3a Thessaly: Map 1.3, AX.

1.2.3b Boeotia: Map 1.3, AX.

1.2.3c Peloponnesus: Map 1.3, BX.

1.2.3d Arcadia: Map 1.3, BX.

1.2.5a Attica: Map 1.3, BX.

1.2.6a Ionia: Map 1.3, AY. See Appendix H, Dialects and Ethnic Groups, §4–5, 7–8, for information on the Ionians and the colonization of Ionia.

1.3.1a Troy, site of the Trojan war: Map 1.3, AY.

1.3.2a Phthiotis: Map 1.3, AX.

1.4.1a Minos is the probably mythical ruler of Minoan, a legendary seafaring culture based on the island of Crete; see Map 1.3, BY.

# EPILOGUE

§1. Thucydides' narrative breaks off in the middle of the year 411, although he returned to Athens from exile after the war ended in 404 (5.26.5) and the last years of the war clearly did leave their mark on his final revisions of the text (e.g., 2.65, 2.100, 4.81, 6.15). Unfortunately, we lack what might have been his accounts of both Athens' partial military recovery—marked by her two great naval victories at Cyzicus<sup>1a</sup> (410) and Arginousae<sup>1b</sup> (406)—and her final defeat at Aegospotami<sup>1c</sup> (405) where, assisted by obtuse and perhaps inexperienced Athenian commanders,<sup>1d</sup> the Spartan admiral Lysander employed stealth and superior tactical skill to capture—on the beach—almost the entire Athenian fleet in the Hellespont.<sup>1c</sup> After that disaster, the Athenians had no means left with which to prevent Lysander from blockading their city, starving her of the grain from the Black Sea region<sup>1f</sup> on which she largely depended, and ultimately forcing her to sue for peace. Victorious Sparta, after initially contemplating the total destruction of her defeated adversary, finally decided that Athens would be allowed to continue to exist as a city, but demanded the surrender of what remained of her fleet, the demolition of the walls of Piraeus<sup>1g</sup> and the Long Walls, and the granting of complete freedom to the former subject cities of what had been the Athenian Empire. Now supreme in Greece, Sparta thus reduced Athens to a state of isolation, weakness, and dependency which must have been dreadful indeed to the writer of Pericles' Funeral Oration.

§2. In his obituary of Pericles (2.65), which Thucydides wrote after the end of the war, he acknowledged the vital role of the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger in maintaining Sparta.<sup>2a</sup> Yet he says little in the body of his text about the rising importance of Persia in Greek affairs. In truth, although the Persian governor at Sardis,<sup>2b</sup> Tissaphernes, never did honor his promises to provide a fleet to assist Sparta, his meager financial support, along with that of Pharnabazus in the Hellespont, did permit Sparta to challenge Athens in the Aegean and to bring about the revolt of many Asian Greek cities from Athenian allegiance. It was Cyrus the Younger,

1a Cyzicus: Epilogue Map, AY.

1b Arginousae Islands: Epilogue Map, AY.

1c Aegospotami: Epilogue Map, AY.

1d Now in command because most of the generals responsible for the victory at Arginousae had been exiled or executed in a postbattle fit of fratricidal, if not suicidal, political antagonism reminiscent of what

took place at Corcyra in 427 (3.69).

1e Hellespont: Epilogue Map, AY.

1f Black Sea: Epilogue Map, locator .

1g Piraeus: Epilogue Map, BX.

2a See 2.65.12.

2b Sardis: Epilogue Map, BY.

Year/ Season	Attica-Euboea-Boeotia	Peloponnesus Megarid, Cephallenia, Zacynthus, Melos
<b>BOOK ONE</b>		
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<b>The Archaeology</b>		
<b>435</b>		<b>1.24–29</b> Epidamnian affair. A Corinthian fleet is defeated by the Corcyraeans off Leukimme.
		<b>1.30</b> Corcyraeans raid Leucas and Cyllene. Corinth establishes bases at Actium and Thesprotis.
<b>433</b>	<b>1.31–45</b> Speeches by Corcyraeans (1.32) and Corinthians (1.37).  <b>1.45</b> Athens makes a defensive alliance with Corcyra, sends 10 ships to the island.  <b>1.50–51</b> Athenian ships at the battle of Sybota prevent a Corcyraean rout. <b>1.56</b> Suspicious of Potidaea, Athens prepares to send a fleet but is delayed by Potidaean envoys.	<b>1.31</b> Corinth prepares for more war with Corcyra; sends envoys to Athens to rebut the Corcyraeans.  <b>1.37–43</b> Speech of the Corinthians at Athens.  <b>1.46–55</b> Corinthian victory at Sybota. Corinthians take Anactorium.  <b>1.58</b> Sparta promises to support a Potidaean revolt by invading Attica.
<b>432</b>	<b>1.59–65</b> The arriving Athenians find Potidaea already in revolt. They besiege the city.	<b>1.60</b> Corinthian volunteers go to Potidaea.  <b>1.68</b> Speech of the Corinthians. <b>1.73</b> Speech of the Athenians. <b>1.80</b> Speech of Archidamus for caution and delay. <b>1.86</b> Speech of Sthenelaidas. <b>1.87</b> The Spartans vote for war.
<b>479–31</b> Pentecontaetia		
<b>479–78</b> Pentecontaetia	<b>1.89</b> The Persians retreat; Athens rebuilds, and sends a fleet to the Hellespont. <b>1.90–92</b> Themistocles tricks the Spartans while Athens builds walls. <b>1.93</b> He fortifies the Piraeus.	<b>1.94</b> Pausanias leads an expedition against Cyprus and Byzantium.
<b>478–77</b> Pentecontaetia	<b>1.95</b> The allies select Athens to lead; Sparta accepts this choice.  <b>1.96</b> Delian league formed under Athenian leadership.	<b>1.95</b> Pausanias returns to Sparta; the allies choose Athens to lead them and Sparta accepts this choice.
<b>476–67</b> Pentecontaetia	<b>1.98</b> The Delian League takes military actions against Scyros, Eion, Carystus, and Naxos.	
<b>467–65?</b> Pentecontaetia	<b>1.100–101</b> Persians defeated. Rebellion of Thasos put down. Athens' attempt to colonize Amphipolis fails.	
<b>466–61</b> Pentecontaetia	<b>1.101–2</b> Athens sends troops to help Sparta defeat a Helot revolt. Sparta sends them home.	<b>1.101–2</b> An earthquake prevents Sparta from aiding Thasos and triggers a Helot revolt. Sparta requests, receives, and then rejects Athenian help. Athens renounces her alliance with Sparta.

# APPENDIX E

## The Persians in Thucydides

§1. When Cyrus the Great overthrew the kingdom of the Medes in 550 B.C. he changed what had been a Median empire into a Persian one. Since both Medes and Persians came from the same region—Iran—and Median nobles continued to be powerful within the empire of the Persians, Greeks often used the terms “Mede” or “Medes” interchangeably with “Persian” or “Persians.” Those Greeks who took the Persian side in any conflicts were said to have “Medized” or to be guilty of “Medism.”

§2. Cyrus and his successors vigorously expanded their empire until, under Darius I, who ruled from 521 to 486 B.C., Persian dominion reached from Thrace in southeastern Europe to parts of India, and from southern Egypt to the Caucasus.<sup>2a</sup> Contemporary Greeks referred to the Persian ruler simply as “the King,” there being no doubt about which monarch was thus signified. To govern so vast an empire, the King’s authority had to be delegated to governors (called *satraps*) of provinces (*satrapies*) who, in turn, exercised power through subordinate officials or local dynasts. The system worked well when provincial governors, who were usually monitored by agents of the King, were loyal to him, but when central authority was weak, or when problems occurred in the royal succession, they could be tempted to act independently or even to revolt. Satrapies were linked by imperial highways and a royal messenger post whose speed and efficiency amazed the contemporary world. Trade was facilitated by common official languages and a universal Persian gold currency. To a Greek of the fifth century, even a sophisticated one whose worldview was not entirely limited to the borders and neighbors of his *polis* (city-state), Persia seemed immense in size, in wealth, and in power. It was largely through contact with Persia that the Greeks became acquainted with the accumulated knowledge of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and even India, so that it is not an accident that most of the first Greek philosophers, poets, and historians came from the cities of Asia Minor that had fallen under Lydian and later Persian rule. But to the Persians, the Greeks must have seemed a troublesome, if peripheral, set of hardly civilized peoples with strange customs and enough military prowess to be

E2a Egypt, Caucasus: Appendix E Map, locator; Thrace: Appendix E Map, AY.

## GLOSSARY

**Acropolis:** the top of a city, its highest point. Typically, it was the site of temples, shrines, and public buildings. Enclosed by its own set of defensive walls, it served as the ultimate place of retreat when a city's outer walls were breached.

**Aeolians:** those Greeks who spoke the Aeolian dialect: Boeotians, Thessalians, Lesbians, and inhabitants of a small part of the adjacent coast of northern Asia Minor.

**Agora:** a Greek city's marketplace, its center for commercial, social, and political activity.

**Archon:** a magistrate at Athens, chosen by lot in the later fifth century. The nine archons were concerned with administering justice, overseeing foreign residents of Athens, adjudicating family property disputes, and carrying out a variety of other tasks. The eponymous archon gave his name to the civil year.

**Ceramicus:** the district of Athens, both inside and outside the city wall, where the potters lived and worked. It was also the site of an important and famous cemetery.

**Delphic Oracle:** a shrine to Apollo at Delphi where petitioners consulted the god as prophet. It was the most important oracular shrine in the Greek world.

**Demos:** originally, those Greeks who lived in the villages (*demes*) of the land. In Athens and other ancient Greek states the term "demos" came to mean the common people, the most numerous body of citizens of the state. They were often a political force—The People or The Many—in contrast to nobles, oligarchs, or despots. In Democratic Athens, the word also stood for the citizen body as a whole.

**Dorians:** those Greeks who spoke the Doric dialect and whose lives shared certain distinctive cultural, governmental, and religious features. They were located mainly in the southern areas of Greek settlement: Sicily, Peloponnesus, Crete, Libya, Rhodes and nearby islands.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT SOURCES

For the reader who would like to explore additional ancient sources—some more or less contemporary with Thucydides whose writings were influenced by events of the Peloponnesian War, others who wrote about the war or events immediately before or after it, or even some who lived and wrote much later than Thucydides (Plutarch, for example, worked in the second century A.D., five hundred years after Thucydides) but who wrote about the Peloponnesian War or some of its leading figures and used sources that were subsequently lost and are unavailable to us now—the following list of historians, philosophers, and playwrights may prove useful. All are available in English translation.

Andocides (c. 440–c. 390 B.C.): This is the very man whom Thucydides mentions but does not name in 6.60.2–4, who confessed to a role in the mutilation of the Hermae. In one of three extant speeches, *On the Mysteries*, he describes his imprisonment and the reasons for his decision to confess.

Antiphon (c. 480–411 B.C.): Several speeches and exercises survive. This is the man Thucydides describes as “not liked by the multitude because of his reputation for cleverness, and as being a man best able to help in the courts.” Although a leader of The Four Hundred, he did not flee to Decelea with the other extreme oligarchs when the regime fell, and remained to be tried, found guilty, and executed.

Aristophanes (c. 450–385 B.C.): The greatest of Attic comic playwrights. Eleven of his plays survive; many speak directly of the Peloponnesian War, criticize Athenian policy, and satirize all parties, particularly contemporary Athenians.

Diodorus Siculus: He wrote a world history (c. 60–30 B.C.), some parts of which are preserved in full, others lost or only fragmentary. The work is not of high quality, but it is of interest to us for its reflection of other historical writers and sources that he used and that are now lost. His section on the Peloponnesian War is complete and found in his Books 12 and 13. While he clearly relies upon Thucydides for some events, much of his account comes from others, presumably a great deal from the historian Ephorus, whose work is lost.

Euripides (c. 485–c. 406 B.C.): One of three outstanding Attic tragic playwrights

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Note that this index treats only the English translation, not the Greek text. Thus, abstractions, concepts, and images present in Thucydides' original version but absent in the translation are not cited.

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- Cyprus
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- Euxine (Black Sea)
- Italy
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- Phoenicia
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- Sicily
- Thrace
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- AX Aeolian Islands
- BX Agrigentum
- BX Camarina
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- AY Croton
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