

## Weather, Tyche, Narrative, and Intelligence in Thucydides

The relation of chance (tyche) to intelligence (gnome) extends as far back in Greek literature as the Homeric poems, where fate, gods, and human calculation interact with tremendous complexity, psychological subtlety, and cosmological plausibility. Thucydides' treatment of this problematic relation, which modern scholars, many following Lowell Edmunds (1975) have scrutinized at great length, draws on both Ionian natural philosophy and also the so-called Sophistic movement. In this paper I offer a new take on Thucydidean tyche/gnome relations, examining specifically Thucydides' treatment of weather phenomena and human responses thereto. I choose weather as a paradigm of tyche -- a paradigm shared not only by Greeks, but also widespread in numerous folklore traditions, and even in modern chaos theory. I will argue that the structure and content of the Thucydidean narrative, which famously is organized by the changing seasons of the year, offers a thoroughly historical and practical, rather than speculative and metaphysical, response to the chance/intelligence dichotomy that Thucydides' philosophical and rhetorical predecessors attempted to resolve more abstractly. I will focus on the Pylos narrative in some detail, and finally suggest that Thucydides' distinct historiographical method invites the reader to respond to both historical-narrative and analogous real-world political events with a kind of practical intelligence that can, at least in part, be learned from Thucydides' presentation of effective and ineffective human responses to the weather.

### Works Cited

- Anscombe, G. E. M. 1958. *Intention*. Oxford.
- Bowra, C. M. 1940. "Signs of Storm. (Archilochus, fr. 56)" *CR* 54, 3: 127-129.
- Brunt, D. 1946. "Meteorology and Weather Lore." *Folklore* 57, 2: 66-74.
- Connor, W. R. 1985. *Thucydides*. Princeton.
- Cornford, F. M. 1907. *Thucydides Mythohistoricus*. London.
- Edmunds, L. 1975. *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides*. Cambridge.
- Falkner, C. 1992. "Thucydides and the Peloponnesian Raid on Piraeus in 429 B.C." *AHB* 6, 147-155.
- Flory, S. 1988. "Thucydides' Hypotheses about the Peloponnesian War." *TAPA* 118: 43-56.
- Furley, W. D. 2006. "Thucydides and Religion." In *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, ed. Rengakos, A. and Tsakmakis, A.
- Grant, J. R. 1974. "Toward Knowing Thucydides." *Phoenix* 28, 1: 81-94.
- Hemmerdinger, B. 1948. "La division en livres de l'oeuvre de Thucydide." *REG* 61: 104-117.

- Jordan, B. 1986. *Religion in Thucydides*. *TAPA* 116, 119-147.
- Kosso, P. 1993. *Historical Evidence and Epistemic Justification: Thucydides as a Case Study*. *History and Theory* 32, 1: 1-13.
- Lesky, A. 1947. *Thalatta: Der Weg der Griechen zum Meer*. Vienna.
- Lindenlauf, A. 2003. *The sea as a place of no return in ancient Greece*. *World Archaeology* 35, 3: 416-433.
- Luginbill, R. D. 1999. *Thucydides on War and National Character*. Boulder.
- Meigs, P. 1961. *Some Geographical Factors in the Peloponnesian War*. *Geographical Review* 51, 3: 370-380.
- Parry, A. 1970. *Thucydides' Use of Abstract Language*. *Yale French Studies* 45: 3-20.
- Pearcy, L. T. 1992. *Diagnosis as Narrative in Ancient Literature*. *AJP* 113, 4: 595-616.
- Polkinghorne, D. 1988. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany.
- Saxonhouse, A. W. 1978. *Nature & Convention in Thucydides' History*. *Polity* 10, 4: 461-487.
- Shanske, D. 2007. *Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History*. New York.
- Smith, C. F. 1918. *Personification in Thucydides*. *CP* 13, 3: 241-250.
- Stahl, H. P. 2003. *Thucydides: Man's Place in History*. Swansea.
- Starr, C. H. 1989. *The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History*. New York.
- Taylor, F. K. 1979. *The Concepts of Illness, Disease, and Morbus*. Cambridge.
- Vryonis, S. (ed.) 1993. *The Greeks and the Sea*. New York.
- Westlake, H. D. 1974. *The Naval Battle at Pylos and its Consequences*. *CQ* 24, 2: 211-226.
- Wilson, J. B. 1979. *Pylos 425 B.C.: A Historical and Topographical Study of Thucydides' Account of the Campaign*. Warminster
- Wilson, J. and Beardsworth, T. 1970. *Bad Weather and the Blockade at Pylos*. *Phoenix* 24, 2: 112-118.
- Wylie, G. 1993. *Demosthenes the General - Protagonist in a Greek Tragedy?* *G&R* 40, 1: 20-30.