

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THUCYDIDES

Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is one of the earliest and most influential works in the Western historiographical tradition. It provides an unfinished account of the war between Athens and her allies and Sparta and her allies that lasted from 431 to 404 BCE and is a masterpiece of narrative art and of political analysis. The twenty chapters in this *Companion* offer a wide range of perspectives on different aspects of the text, its interpretation and its significance. The nature of the text is explored in detail, and problems of Thucydides' historical and literary methodology are examined. Other chapters analyse the ways in which Thucydides' work illuminates, or complicates, our understanding of key historical questions for this period, above all those relating to the nature and conduct of war, politics and empire. Finally, the book also explores the continuing legacy of Thucydides, from antiquity to the present day.

POLLY A. LOW is a professor in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham University. Her publications include *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece* (2007) and (as editor) *The Athenian Empire* (2008).

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-107-10705-2 — The Cambridge Companion to Thucydides
Edited by Polly Low
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
COMPANIONS TO
LITERATURE

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
THUCYDIDES

EDITED BY
POLLY A. LOW
Durham University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-107-10705-2 — The Cambridge Companion to Thucydides
 Edited by Polly Low
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
 a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107107052

DOI: 10.1017/9781316227442

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
 of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place
 without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Low, Polly, editor.

TITLE: The Cambridge companion to Thucydides / edited by Polly Low, University of Durham.

OTHER TITLES: Cambridge companions to literature.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press,
 2023. | Series: Cambridge companions to literature | Includes bibliographical
 references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2022030709 (print) | LCCN 2022030710 (ebook) | ISBN 9781107107052
 (hardback) | ISBN 9781107514607 (paperback) | ISBN 9781316227442 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Thucydides. | Thucydides—Themes, motives. | Thucydides—Influence. |
 Greece—History—Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.—Historiography.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC DF229.T6 C345 2023 (print) | LCC DF229.T6 (ebook) |
 DDC 938/.05—dc23/eng/20220712

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022030709>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022030710>

ISBN 978-1-107-10705-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-51460-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
 or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication
 and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
 accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-107-10705-2 — The Cambridge Companion to Thucydides
Edited by Polly Low
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To the memory of P. J. Rhodes

CONTENTS

	<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>page</i> xi
	<i>Preface</i>	xv
	<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xvii
I	Introduction POLLY A. LOW	I
	PART I CONTEXT AND METHODS	
2	Establishing a New Genre: Thucydides and Non-historiographic Memory JONAS GRETHLEIN	17
3	Thucydidean Self-Presentation TOM BEASLEY	31
4	Thucydides’ Use of Evidence and Sources P. J. RHODES	50
5	Rhetorical History: Speeches in Thucydides EMILY GREENWOOD	63
6	Prolegomena to the Peloponnesian War: Thucydides Book 1 JEFFREY S. RUSTEN	77
7	Time and Foresight in Thucydides ROSARIA VIGNOLO MUNSON	89
8	Labouring for Truth in Thucydides ELIZABETH IRWIN	110
		vii

CONTENTS

PART II THEMES AND CONTENT

9	Thucydides and War	129
	JASON CROWLEY	
10	Thucydides on Empire and Imperialism	143
	POLLY A. LOW	
11	Ethnicity in Thucydides	160
	MARIA FRAGOULAKI	
12	Thucydides and Leadership	177
	SARAH BROWN FERRARIO	
13	Thucydides on Democracy and Other Regimes	198
	RYAN K. BALOT	
14	Justice and Morality in Thucydides	215
	PAUL WOODRUFF	

PART III AFTER THUCYDIDES

15	Thucydides in Greek and Roman Historiography	233
	LUKE V. PITCHER	
16	Thucydides in Byzantium	249
	SCOTT KENNEDY AND ANTHONY KALDELLIS	
17	Thucydides in the Renaissance and Reformation	265
	KINCH HOEKSTRA	
18	Narratives of Thucydides and the 19th-Century Discipline of (Ancient) History	282
	ALEXANDRA LIANERI	
19	‘What Really Happened’: Varieties of Realism in Thucydides’ <i>History</i>	301
	JOEL ALDEN SCHLOSSER	

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-107-10705-2 — The Cambridge Companion to Thucydides
Edited by Polly Low
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CONTENTS

20	Translating Thucydides	317
	JEREMY MYNOTT	
	<i>Bibliography</i>	331
	<i>Index Locorum</i>	365
	<i>Subject Index</i>	373

CONTRIBUTORS

RYAN K. BALOT is Professor of Political Science and Classics at the University of Toronto. He is the author of *Greed and Injustice in Classical Athens* (2001), *Greek Political Thought* (2006) and *Courage in the Democratic Polis: Ideology and Critique in Classical Athens* (2014). He edited *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought* (2009) and is co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides* (2017).

TOM BEASLEY's Yale PhD (2013) was a study of Thucydidean self-definition. He now works in the public humanities in Seattle, Washington.

JASON CROWLEY is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at Manchester Metropolitan University. His main research interest is the psychology of combat, particularly the close-quarters close-order combat favoured by the classical Greeks. His first book, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite: The Culture of Combat at Classical Athens*, which applies modern theories of combat motivation to the ancient world, was published in 2012, and subsequent publications have explored both the human experience of war and the effects war has on those who survive that experience.

SARAH BROWN FERRARIO is Associate Professor of Greek and Latin at the Catholic University of America. She is a specialist in Greek history, literature and politics, especially of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. She is the author of *Historical Agency and the 'Great Man' in Classical Greece* (2014) and most recently of several chapters on the context and reception of tragedy and on the historical works of Xenophon. Her current research centres upon the rhetoric of leadership and democracy.

MARIA FRAGOULAKI is Senior Lecturer in Ancient Greek History at Cardiff University. Her research interests are ancient Greek historiography, especially Thucydides and Herodotus, kinship and international relations in antiquity, memory and performance studies. She is the author of *Kinship in Thucydides: Intercommunal Ties and Historical Narrative* (2013) and a co-editor of *Shaping*

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Memory in Ancient Greece: Poetry, Historiography, and Epigraphy (2020). She is working on a monograph on Thucydides and Homer and co-editing a volume entitled *Doing Things with Thucydides: Politics, Education, Performance*.

EMILY GREENWOOD is Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature at Harvard University. She is the author of *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (2006) and *Afro-Greeks: Dialogues between Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Classics in the Twentieth Century* (2010). She has guest edited a two-volume special issue of the *American Journal of Philology* entitled *Diversifying Classical Philology* (issues 143.2 and 143.4) and has co-edited *Reading Herodotus: A Study of the Logoi in Book 5 of Herodotus' Histories* (with Elizabeth Irwin, 2007) and *Homer in the Twentieth Century: Between World Literature and the Western Canon* (with Barbara Graziosi, 2007).

JONAS GRETHLEIN is Professor of Greek at Heidelberg University. His books include *The Greeks and Their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (2010), *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: Futures Past from Herodotus to Augustine* (2013), *Aesthetic Experiences and Classical Antiquity: The Significance of Form in Narratives and Pictures* (2017) and *The Ancient Aesthetics of Deception: The Ethics of Enchantment from Gorgias to Heliodorus* (2021).

KINCH HOEKSTRA is Chancellor's Professor of Political Science and Law and Affiliated Professor of Classics and Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. His current projects include *The Thucydidean Renaissance*, based on his Carlyle Lectures, and co-editing Hobbes's translation of Thucydides for the *Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes*.

ELIZABETH IRWIN has co-edited three books on Herodotus (most recently with Tom Harrison, *Interpreting Herodotus*) and authored numerous articles on Herodotus, Thucydides and 5th-century BCE Athenian imperialism. Her most recent work and current projects deal with a range of topics relevant to the late 5th century BCE, such as the intertextuality and relative chronology of the extant histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, religion in Thucydides, the engagement of Athenian drama with its historical and political contexts and the deployment of medical discourse in the political and ethical debates of late 5th-century BCE Athens.

ANTHONY KALDELLIS is Professor of Classics at the University of Chicago. He has written extensively on many aspects of Byzantine history, culture and literature, including on the transmission and reception of the classical tradition among the Byzantine historians. His most recent books include *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power at New Rome* (2015) and *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (2019).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

SCOTT KENNEDY is an assistant professor in the Program in Civilizations, Cultures, and Ideas at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. He wrote his dissertation on the reception of Thucydides in the rhetorical tradition. He is interested in how classical texts were read and adapted by later readers and has published contributions on the afterlife of classical texts in late antiquity and Byzantium. He is currently at work on a monograph on how Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War were remembered from antiquity to Byzantium.

ALEXANDRA LIANERI is an assistant professor in the classics department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She is co-editor (with V. Zajko) of *Translation and the Classic* (2008) and editor of *The Western Time of Ancient History* (2011) and *Knowing Future Time in and through Greek Historiography* (2016). Her forthcoming books are *A Democracy of the Past: Translating Dēmokratia in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, *Edinburgh Critical History of Greek and Roman Philosophy* (co-edited with G. Cambiano) and the *Blackwell Companion to the Translation of Greek and Roman Epic* (co-edited with R. Armstrong).

POLLY A. LOW is a professor in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham University. Her interests focus on the political history of the Greek world, particularly relations between states. Her publications include *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece* (2007) and (as editor) *The Athenian Empire* (2008).

ROSARIA VIGNOLO MUNSON is the J. Archer and Helen C. Turner Professor of Classics at Swarthmore College. She is the author of *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (2001), *Black Doves Speak: Herodotus and the Language of Barbarians* (2005) and several articles on Herodotus and Thucydides. She has edited *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Herodotus* (2013). She has co-edited (with Carolyn Dewald) a commentary on Herodotus Book 1 for the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series (2022).

JEREMY MYNOTT published an edition and translation of *Thucydides* (2013) in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought series. He is an emeritus fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge.

LUKE V. PITCHER is a fellow and tutor in Classics at Somerville College, Oxford. He has written numerous articles on the Greek historians from Polybius to Herodian and contributed several entries to *Brill's New Jacoby*.

[†]P. J. RHODES was Professor of Ancient History and subsequently an honorary professor and emeritus professor at Durham University. He worked particularly on Greek political history (both the formal structures and the behaviour of individuals within those structures) and on the literary and epigraphic sources for

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Greek history; *inter alia* he edited Thucydides I–V.24 and wrote the notes for the Oxford World’s Classics translation of Thucydides.

JEFFREY S. RUSTEN is Professor of Classics at Cornell University. His recent book-length publications include (for the Loeb Classical Library) *Philostratus, Heroicus, Gymnasticus, Discourses 1 and 2* (2014) and *The Birth of Comedy: Texts, Documents and Art from Athenian Comic Competitions, 486–280 BCE* (2011). His commentary on Thucydides Book 1 for the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series is in preparation.

JOEL ALDEN SCHLOSSER is Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science at Bryn Mawr College, where he teaches political theory. He has published articles and chapters on topics ranging from ancient figures such as Thucydides, Herodotus and Euripides to contemporary writers such as James Baldwin, Don DeLillo, Joan Didion and Claudia Rankine. He is the author of *What Would Socrates Do?* (2014) and *Herodotus in the Anthropocene* (2020).

PAUL WOODRUFF teaches philosophy and classics at The University of Texas at Austin. His main interest has been in making the ethical thinking of the ancient Greeks accessible to modern readers. He has translated a number of Platonic dialogues. He has translated and introduced all of Sophocles’ surviving plays with Pete Meineck. He has also produced an abridged translation of Thucydides’ *History* with connecting material and notes (2nd edition, 2021). His philosophical works include books on the virtues of reverence and justice, as well as one on the philosophy of theatre. His latest project is a book on practical virtue, building on a Socratic approach to the subject.

PREFACE

Thucydides' *History* is not the most obviously companionable of texts. Already in antiquity it was criticized (by Dionysius of Halicarnassus) for the bleakness of its subject matter. In more recent times, no one to my knowledge has ever chosen to take it with them to the BBC's Desert Island (Herodotus' *Histories*, on the other hand, have twice made it into a cast-away's luggage).

However, the very difficulty of the work is one of the reasons for this *Companion's* existence. One of the main goals of this volume (like others in this series) is to offer an accessible guide to Thucydides and his writing. Another key objective is to show why, in spite of its difficulty, this is a text worth grappling with, and also why it has remained so important to such a wide range of readers. The chapters in this book, therefore, deal not only with the way(s) in which Thucydides' work illuminates (and sometimes complicates) our understanding of his own time, but also with the various ways in which his text has influenced later writers, historians, theorists and others. This volume certainly does not claim to be comprehensive, but if it succeeds in giving a sense of the complexity, the importance and indeed the fascination of Thucydides, then it will have fulfilled its purpose.

I have incurred many debts in bringing this volume to completion. Students and colleagues, first at the University of Manchester and more recently at Durham University, have patiently endured my ongoing Thucydidean fixations. Parts of the work were undertaken at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and at the British School at Athens, both exceptionally supportive research environments. Daniel Tompkins, Peter Liddel and Christy Constantakopoulou have all (knowingly or unknowingly) generously helped me to clarify my thinking on various key problems. At Cambridge University Press, Michael Sharp and Katie Idle have offered careful and patient guidance, as too did the Press's anonymous readers. Pam Scholefield prepared the indexes with impeccable speed and skill. Naturally I am deeply indebted to all who agreed to contribute to this volume, but

PREFACE

I should single out two people in particular. Geoffrey Hawthorn enthusiastically offered to share his perspective on the experience of reading Thucydides as a political theorist, but he died before he was able to complete his chapter. P. J. Rhodes died very shortly after the volume was submitted to the Press, and although it is a pleasure and an honour that his work is included in this book, it is a great sadness that he will not see the final version in print. This volume is dedicated to his memory.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of ancient authors and texts follow the conventions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, and those of academic journals follow the conventions of *L'Année philologique*.

In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

- C. Delphes*: *Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes* (Paris, 1977–).
 IGI³: D. M. Lewis, L. Jefferey and E. Erxleben, *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Vol. 1: *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno anteriores*, 3rd edition (Berlin, 1981–98).
 K-A: R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (PCG), vol. 5 (Berlin, 1986).
 ML: R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions, to the End of the Fifth Century BC*, revised edition (Oxford, 1988).
 OR: R. G. Osborne and P. J. Rhodes, *Greek Historical Inscriptions, 478–404 BC* (Oxford, 2017).
 RO: P. J. Rhodes and R. G. Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions, 404–323 BC* (Oxford, 2003).