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The Greek historian Thucydides is often held up as an exemplar of objective historiography. In particular, his account of the plague which tore through Athens during the Peloponnesian War stands out as a piece of writing significant for its precise, objective language. However, the account still goes beyond the mere chronicle of events and is therefore subject to problems facing the objectivity of any historical narrative. Within Thucydides' text there exist not only inherent literary elements, but a pervasive critical lens and epistemology which make characterizing the account of the plague as an objective historical narrative problematic. While these elements arguably compromise Thucydides' objectivity in his historical narrative, they contribute to a different and perhaps altogether more comprehensive understanding of the plague than either a pure mimesis or literary narrative could hope to communicate.

Thucydides account of the plague has contributed to the development of contemporary medical writing. With creating a narrative that is characteristically objective within a medical context, concern must be placed almost

exclusively on communication of the observed facts, eschewing literary tropes and political or philosophical agendas. Some scholars, such as E.M. Craik, have questioned the degree to which the influence of prevailing Hippocratic theories of physiology affected the narrative form of the plague. Craik asserts that prevailing theory of "physiological flux" did in fact influence Thucydides' narrative. He believes that Thucydides writes not necessarily to endorse Hippocratic medical theories of flux-which would compromise his objectivity if it was a treatise and endorsement of physiological flux-, but as a common sense world view useful for objectively comparing his observations concerning the effects of the plague with an accepted objective standard (Craik 103).

Despite the likelihood Thucydides used physiological flux as a matter of fact, the implications of this methodology are important. As Craik notes, the epistemological approach of bodily flux in describing the plague is central in Thucydides:

In Thucydides' account of the plague, the verbs καταβαίνειν and επικατεναι, with the explicit άνωθεν άρξαμενον show that the plague makes its way down through the body in the classic fashion of flux; and the verbs στηριζειν and ιδρυσθαι

clearly indicate the classic problem of fixation at the trouble spots. (105)

Much attention has been paid to the epistemological structure of Hippocratic bodily flux and how much of it was known and utilized by Thucydides. However, Craik neglects, as well as other scholars, that Hippocratic medicine contained treatise not only on how to practice medicine, but also concerning how and why discussion of medicine should be conducted. While Craik concludes that Thucydides had his own "take" on the epistemology of bodily flux, he "did not intend to make an original contribution to the medical debate" (108). This acknowledges that Thucydides' veracity, in regards to whether he wrote the plague as an endorsement of Hippocratic medical theory, is not in danger. But the effects of Hippocratic doctrine on Thucydides conceivably extend beyond just epistemology.

In Hippocratic doctrine, the practice of medicine is referred to as Τεχνη, or "art." Accordingly, this art is practiced by pursuing medical discovery through "principle and method" (Hippocrates *Anc. Med.* II). The Τεχνη of practicing medicine begins with the natural and rejects a *priori* postulates which are not generated from factual observations. But the art through which these seminal

and cumulative observations are made is not intelligible to the "laymen" of society. In Hippocratic doctrine, the onus of making the art of medicine intelligible is on the practitioners of said art. In the same passage,

Hippocrates asserts:

It is particularly necessary, in my opinion, for one who discusses this art to discuss things familiar to ordinary folk. For the subject of inquiry and discussion is simply and solely the sufferings of these same ordinary folk...If you miss being understood by laymen, and fail to put your hearts into their condition, you will miss reality. (*Anc. Med.* II)

Hippocrates puts forth a comprehensive philosophy for medical discussion, not just an epistemology for describing the nature of human constitutions. In this passage, the nature of the medical writer's audience is addressed. By acknowledging that medical discussion should be written with the "laymen" as the intended audience, both syntax and vocabulary are certainly going to be affected. Not only is medical discussion to be tailored to the "laymen" in language and syntax, but in order to discuss "reality" the practitioner of *Τεχνη* must also sympathize with position of the patient. Hippocrates not only prescribes who the

discussion of the audience should be, but also a critical lens in which to discover the "reality" of a disease or ailment.

Within Hippocrates' treatise on Τεχνη, there seems to be conflicting impulses: the desire to reflect "reality" objectively while tailoring the dialogue to an audience who may or may not be able to understand the objective complications of "reality," and the imperative to incorporate *pathos* into an objective discussion of "reality." If Thucydides so clearly and demonstrably aware and adopting of the epistemological structures of Hippocratic medical texts, then he reasonably could have adopted Hippocratic understanding of medical discussion in his account as well. Often, it seems as if this is the case.

Thucydides uses different nouns and verb phrases to refer directly to the plague. One of those words is **Νόσος**, which means sickness, disease, or plague. This word is translated as "pestilence" in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (476 "and become an intolerable and perpetual pestilence to afflict the land); translated as "madness" Euripides' *Orestes* (227); and "sickness" in *Hippolytus* (270). It also occurs in the *Iliad* (13:669 "and the long pain of bidding mortal *illness*") and the *Odyssey* (11:198 "nor did any

disease come upon me, such as oftenest through grievous wasting takes the spirit from the limbs"). This word was very common and was used to describe disease in a physical and mental capacity in both prose and poetry in fifth century writers as well as Homer, where Thucydides sees himself "as the inheritor of the tradition of epic narrative" (Moles 91). This form is frequently employed in Hippocrates' medical texts and is used to clinical effect in Thucydides' description of the plagues epidemiology: "They had not been many days in Attica before the plague first broke out among the Athenians"; "The plague originated, so they say, in Ethiopia in upper Egypt, and from there spread to Egypt itself" (2.47). Of all the nouns signifying "disease, plague, sickness" in Ancient Greek, νοσος is the most common. In the context of the Hippocratic prerogative of medical practitioners, this word would fit the rubric of being accessible to the "laymen." Its precedence in Greek drama and commonality in Homeric epic, coupled with it being the noun of choice in Hippocrates' Epidemics, makes this an ideal word for discussing Τεχνη if the "laymen" are the intended audience.

Although not as common in poetry or in Greek writing overall, Θερμη is another piece of Hippocratic specific vocabulary. It is used numerous times in the *Epidemics*

(*Epid: 7* "But those fevers which were altogether continuous and never intermitted"). Thucydides' use of this particularly Hippocratic medical term lends medical authority to Thucydides' account of the plague. Hippocrates uses this term often in describing specific case subjects, where Thucydides applies it more broadly to the Athenians in general. Thucydides uses it in his catalogue of descriptions: "people in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent *heats* in the head" (2.49). The "heats in the head" is certainly consistent with bodily flux, and usage of the word itself is rare outside of Hippocrates. However, the modifier attached to this very medical word is problematic. The phrase occurs in the Greek as **θέρμαι ισχυραὶ**. The modifier **ισχυραὶ** means *strong, or mighty*. In the translation above **ισχυραὶ** is written as "violent." However, this is Thucydides' second term for nearly the same meaning, the first being **Δύναμις**. Precisely, **Δύναμις** means *power or might*, and especially in Homer it concerns bodily strength. **Δύναμις** occurs in Homer's *Iliad* in book 13 line 787: "We will follow with thee eagerly, nor, methinks, shall we be anywise wanting in valor, so far as we have *strength*." Homer employs this word usually to describe the power or strength in relation to human subjects. Thucydides uses it in reference to the effects of the

plague. Rex Warner translates the passage as follows: "As to the question of how it could first have come about or what causes can be found adequate to explain its *powerful effect* on nature, I must leave that to be considered by other writers" (2.48). Certainly, Warner's translation of the word, "powerful effect," does not communicate the sense of epic struggle the word connotes. In Hippocratic doctrine there is no precedent for either *ισχυραὶ* or *Δύναμις* in modification of either *Θερμη* or *Νόσος*.

The absence of these two words in Hippocrates and their interchangeability in Thucydides is conspicuous. Their absence in Hippocrates might suggest that Thucydides was employing these modifiers to facilitate understanding of the *Τεχνη* for the "laymen." However, the use of synonyms in most if not all contexts is patently literary. If objective communicability of a message was Thucydides' concern, then choosing one of these modifiers and using it consistently would have been more appropriate. Instead, he has used the literary trope of employing synonyms to break up the monotony that comes with repeated use of one word or the other. He goes beyond the need to merely reflect reality in the Hippocratic sense, but establishes a literary element that threatens an objective historiography.

The object of debate in historiography is frequently the narrative structures that make up histories. One major contributor to this debate has been Hayden White. White's attitude toward historical narratives is straightforward: "They most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences" (White 82).

Thucydides' account of the plague has many elements characteristic of objective medical and scientific writing. His description of the specific symptoms of the plague has exceptionally tight diction: "People in perfect health suddenly began to have burning feelings in the head; their eyes became red and inflamed; inside their mouths there was bleeding from the throat and tongue, and the breath became unnatural and unpleasant," (Thucydides 125). The language in this passage has no extraneous information, intrusive sentimentality, or philosophical abstraction about the symptoms or the nature of the plague itself. What Thucydides creates is a very objective and chronologically ordered description of the plague availing little opportunity for any kind of literary analysis because of its lack of historical fiction making. The entire section devoted to the description of the symptoms

reads very similarly without any sort of digressive or discursive language characteristic of abstract discussion. This section resembles the scientific counterpart of historical narratives which White contends is not characteristic of historical narratives, but is characteristic of the epistemology in Hippocratic theory of physiological flux.

At the end of his description of the symptoms, Thucydides begins to introduce discursive language: "Words indeed fail one when one tries to give a general picture of this disease; and as for the sufferings of individuals, they seemed almost beyond the capacity of human nature to endure," (125). Here Thucydides moves from an objective scientific form of writing to one that is more abstract. This passage introduces the limitations of language and even speculation on human nature itself. As Thucydides acknowledges that not even words are sufficient to describe the plague and its affects, he has essentially given up the claim to an objectivity many historians would presume to have access to. The discursive language moves the description of the symptoms from what is initially a pure chronicle, into the realm of historical narrative: a "verbal fiction." The description of the symptoms Thucydides provides is a clinical response to the

occurrence of the plague and contributes greatly to Thucydides' explanation. But while the discursive strategy employed at the end of the description contributes to his explanation as well, it contributes in a way altogether different from the description of the symptoms. It describes the suffering in a way the clinical description cannot. Suffering itself is not quantifiable, and due to its inherently abstract nature often requires metaphor and simile to be made intelligible. The suffering of the Athenians during the plague actually occurred, but the means through which that suffering is communicated is an inherently literary process. For Thucydides, there exist no metaphors or similes that adequately represent the suffering of the Athenians, and the tropism of discursive language is characteristic of narrative creation. In this passage, Thucydides' account becomes more of a constructed verbal fiction than a scientific text. However, the *pathos* elicited from this language is substantial, more so than if Thucydides than just the relation of facts. When looked at as a whole, this passage is an exemplar of Hippocratic doctrine: a commitment to reality in regards to relating observations, but also sympathizing with the sufferers of the plague.

An important aspect in any historical narrative construction is diction. A historian typically avoids poetic and lyrical diction to maintain an objective relationship between the simple chronicle of events and the historical model from which the narrative is constructed. When poetic diction is employed to narrate a chronicle, the narrative takes on a distinctively literary hue as opposed to an objective historical one. In Thucydides' preface to his account of the plague, some of his diction indicates more of a concern with constructing a literary narrative than an objective historiography. In his description about the distribution of the affected areas in Lemnos, Thucydides uses the verb "ἐγκατασκηψαι" to indicate the action of the "νόσος," meaning sickness¹, on the afflicted Greeks. Rex Warner's translation ignores the literary aspect that the Greek verb lends to the noun: "Previously attacks of the plague had been reported from many other places in the neighborhood of Lemnos," (123). According to the Liddell-Scott and Jones lexicon, the verb can mean *to fall upon* like lightening, or *to break out among*². Nowhere in Warner's translation is there acknowledgement of this verb and its implications for the characterization of the

¹ νόσος: sickness, disease, malady. Liddell-Scott Jones Greek-English Lexicon.

² ἐγκατασκηπτῶ: *to fall upon*, like lightening; of epidemics, *to break out among*. (Liddell-Scott)

disease. In fact, Warner leaves out the verb altogether and instead uses the noun "attacks." Certainly, within the context the verb is found the appropriate translation in the aorist infinitive of the verb is "had broken out among," but it is impossible to ignore the alternative meaning and the connotation it lends to the disease. The significance of the lightning is difficult to weigh precisely, but the metaphor of the plague coming down upon the Greeks with the suddenness of a lightning bolt is clearly literary. This alternate translation of the verb establishes a characterization of the disease that goes beyond a simple medical or historical description and dramatizes it in way that is particularly literary as opposed to objective and scientific.

In general, the word *ιατρικός* is used in specifically medical contexts, *meaning surgery or medicine.*

Another interesting choice of diction in the beginning part of the plague is his choice for the verb "to die." The common verb used for dying in Thucydides' era was *ἀποθνήσκω*, (Morgan 201). However, while describing the morality rate among the *ἰατροί*³, he elects to use the verb *θνήσκω*. This form is the older and more poetic form of the verb "to die," (Morgan 201). In translation, the passage

³ *ἰατροί*: *one who heals, a mediciner, physician or surgeon.* (Liddell-Scott)

reads as follows: "In fact, mortality among the doctors was the highest of all, since they came more frequently in contact with the sick," (123). Warner again substitutes the verb for a noun with "mortality." This translation alleviates the difficulties a poetic form of "to die" represents in an objective historical record. Describing the exorbitant number of deaths among physicians as a mortality rate is more clinical than using a poetic form of "to die," but a clinical translation of this passage is not what the Greek suggests. By using the older, poetic form of **Θνήσκω** Thucydides dramatizes the deaths of the physicians. One possible implication of generating a poetic element around the deaths of the physicians is the evocation of an emotive response in concern to the plague, an altogether inappropriate function in an objective history. Using poetic diction conceivably serves to develop a *pathos* for the position of the physicians, but also suggests a concern with maintaining a sense of the epic within the narrative of the plague, and, as already noted, Thucydides considered himself an inheritor of the Homeric tradition of epic narrative.

A strictly medical description of the plague would not seek to dramatize the plight of the physicians as Thucydides attempts with his poetic diction, but remain

concerned with relating the deaths of the physicians as events unto themselves instead of contributing extraneous poetic diction not inherent to the events, unless of course the *pathos* that Hippocratic doctrine advocates was being utilized. By using the poetic form "θνήσκω," Thucydides is deliberately eschewing the premise of pure scientific objectivity within his historical narrative in order to communicate the more elusive, literary part of history, which is the subjective human experience.

Thucydides uses other literary tropes in his account of the plague, and, as already discussed, the avoidance of repetition of vocabulary is an inherently literary preoccupation. Along with θνήσκω, Thucydides uses the verbs ἀπολλυμί and διαφθείρώ. All three of these verbs can be alternately translated in many ways: to perish utterly; to destroy utterly; to ruin; to die; etc. Thucydides uses these three verbs interchangeably in his account of the plague. One possible reason for the variance in his diction could be because one verb might be a more precise and appropriate choice in a certain context. For example, the poetic form of θνήσκω and Thucydides' use of it for the description of the high rate of mortality among the physicians is a better choice than either ἀπολλυμί or διαφθείρώ if his aim is to generate a literary aspect to the

physicians elevated number of deaths. However, later in his account Thucydides uses the other two verbs for what seem to be reasons which have little to do with the precision of vocabulary and its ability to objectively describe specific instances during the plague. One passage in particular demonstrates this: "For when people were afraid to visit the sick, then they died with no one to look after them; indeed, there were many houses in which all the inhabitants perished through lack of any attention," (Warner 125). In this one sentence, two different verbs are used to describe the dying of victims during the plague. The first verb Thucydides uses to indicate the deaths of the sick in this sentence is the verb *ἀπολλυμί*, and the second verb Thucydides employs is *διαφθείρώ*. Both of these can be translated similarly and in fact share some of the same meanings, such as to die, to destroy utterly, and to ruin. In Warner's translation, these two verbs are translated as "they died" and "perished." The context of this sentence does not indicate that the specific events themselves require the usage of each particular verb. By virtue of sharing identical translations, the verbs are equally appropriate for any number of contexts. This suggests that Thucydides does not use these verbs because of their precise nature and his

concern with fashioning an accurate depiction of the plague, but rather to avoid excessive word repetition. This is a distinctively literary concern that Thucydides has in his historical narrative and it does little to demonstrate the prerogative of creating an objective historical account of the plague, nor does it cohere with Hippocratic doctrine. The use of multiple verbs which share identical translations is essentially the result of a preoccupation with aesthetics.

Thucydides' account of the plague contains many particularly literary characteristics. A difficult question then follows: To what degree do these obvious literary elements compromise Thucydides' objectivity and the consequent veracity of his description of the plague? Hayden White is explicit in his description of what makes a competent historian:

One of the marks of a good professional historian is the consistency with which he reminds his readers of the purely provisional nature of events, agents, and agencies found in the always incomplete historical record. (White 82).

While Thucydides is not drawing on a far-removed historical record to reconstruct his narrative of the plague—since he was personally afflicted with the disease itself and drew

his description from personal experience—he still consciously reminds his readers that his description is not comprehensive and definitive in any way. There are two such moments in his narrative and the first appears early: “I myself shall merely describe what it was like, and set down the symptoms...I had the disease and saw others suffering from it,” (2.28). In this passage Thucydides acknowledges his ignorance of the disease’s genesis, and declares that he is unable to adequately describe the mechanism of the disease. He reminds the reader his intent is to relate his experience and leave speculation about the exact nature of the disease up to “other writers, with or without medical experience,” (2.48). Thucydides is conscious that his narrative is provisional and his own lack of knowledge circumscribes what he is capable of doing within the narrative.

A second instance where Thucydides consciously acknowledges the provisions of his own narrative has already been identified. When Thucydides writes how “words” indeed fail when one tries to give a general picture of the disease,” he uses discursive language, but does so to provide a valuable observation (125). The provision that Thucydides establishes with this description indicates that the magnitude of the plague itself defies

any sort of verbal representation, or at least beyond the ability of Thucydides to create an accurate representation of the plague. Within the text Thucydides accepts that the plague defies the model of the purely objective narrative and that certain literary tropes are necessary to communicate a broader understanding of the plague. The consistent provisions Thucydides makes allow him flexibility in his verbal reconstruction. It is a flexibility which acknowledges the impossibility of an objective historical narrative due to the inherently provisional events and people he is describing.

Since any historical account that is more substantial than just a simple chronicle of events is subject to certain literary criticism, the self-conscious and textual acknowledgment of a historical narrative's provisional objectivity becomes a validating aspect of fashioning historical narratives. When given a close reading, Thucydides' plague reveals literary tropes which are not simply problematic flaws contributing Thucydides' demerit as an objective historian. Hayden White's prerequisite for a "good professional historian" is the conscious acknowledgement of the provisional nature of events and the people that affect and are affected by those events. Thucydides makes this acknowledgement within the text and

his literary tropes become indispensable kinds of modifiers for his account rather than compromising agents of objectivity.

But Thucydides' historiography and commitment to objectivity must also be discussed in the broader context of the Peloponnesian war. Scholar David Nelson addresses the juxtaposition of Pericles' funeral oration with that of the plague. He addresses the idealized society which Pericles puts forth in his oration, particularly respect to idealization of the past and the importance of moral virtue. He writes that Pericles' oration gives "priority to the ideal of balance or harmony in the articulation of opposite qualities" (400). The subsequent plague reduces Athenian morality to naked Hedonism: "People now began to openly to venture on acts of self-indulgence which before then they used to keep dark. Thus they resolved to spend their money quickly and to spend it on pleasure, since money and life alike seemed equally ephemeral" (2.51). Nelson interprets this juxtaposition as a clear indictment of Athenian morality and society. He contends that "in juxtaposing these events, Thucydides seems to tell us that Pericles badly misjudged contemporary Athenian character by equating it with an idealized image of the past" (401).

Nelson contends that Thucydides' moral agenda is an element that reinforces objectivity:

I would point out that his focus on lawlessness, sacrilege, and the demoralization of Athenian society during the plague reflects not only his objectivity in recounting the events as they occurred, but also conveys his sense of Athenian moral decay. (401)

However, any sort of moral judgment that influences both the structure and content of a historical narrative cannot lend objectivity. Furthermore, if Thucydides is writing to an Athenian moral imperative, then the influence of Hippocratic doctrine must be abandoned in the latter parts of the account where Thucydides describes the social ramifications of the plague. Any sort of moral judgment or condemnation of the victims of the plague would not be consistent with the Hippocratic tenet calling for sympathy toward suffering.

Hayden White notes that "events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motif repetition, variation of tone and point of view, and alternative descriptive strategies" (84). In adopting Hippocratic doctrine as one of his theoretical lenses

through which he filters the various facts of the plague influence both form and content of his account. There are some elements in his account that Hippocratic theory does not account for, such as the blatant literariness in some of his diction and syntax, or the abandonment of Hippocratic doctrine late in the account. But each device suits Thucydides intentions. As an inheritor of Homeric epic, certain poetic tendencies are unavoidable, while the moralizing he engages in functions as equal parts historical narrative and treatise on Athenian morality. Each impulse toward either affects the objectivity of his account as a whole, but provides for a dynamic and multi-level reading.

Glossary

Ανοός: *without understanding, silly.* It occurs in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (987 "And are you not a child and even more *witless* than a child if you expect to learn anything from me?"); and the *Iliad* (21:441 "Fool, how *witless* is the heart thou hast!"). This word has a strong connotation of imbecility, or idiocy. Thucydides employs this term when prefacing the rest of his account of the plague. Thucydides admits the shortcomings of his account and uses this word to emphasize the acknowledgement that his account is by no means comprehensive or definitive.

Αποκρίνω: *Medic. in Pass., to be distinctly formed.* This word is used often in Hippocratic text in a medical context. Thucydides also uses this word in reference to the disease: "those who did have any illness previously *all caught the plague in the end,*" (2.49). Thucydides' use of this word is indicative of his concern with objective medical writing; to provide an objective chronicle.

Υγιής: *healthy, sound in body.* This is another widely used Hippocratic term used in medical contexts that Thucydides employs to describe the onset of the disease.

Θνησκώ: *to die; be dying.* This word occurs most often in its alternate form, ἀποθνήσκω. It is used most often in Euripides's works: *Aclestis*, *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Heracles*. It is also used in Aeschylus' *the Seven Against Thebes* and *the Persians*. It also has several Homeric usages, such as in the *Iliad* (3:101: "And for whichever of us twain death and fate are appointed, let him lie dead"), and the *Odyssey* (4:199; 5:308 "Even so would that *I had died* and met my fate that day"). This form was antiquated in Thucydides' era, and its initial use was in Homer and was considered a poetic form during the period Thucydides wrote. This is also indicated in the lack of use in the Greek medical writers. Hippocrates consistently used the word ἀποθνήσκω to describe death and dying. Thucydides uses this word in conjunction with other forms of "to die." This suggests that Thucydides consciously chose older, more poetic, and diverse forms of a single word to create a more literary piece of work.

δύναμις: *power, might, in Hom., esp. of bodily strength.* This word occurs in Homer's *Iliad* (13:787 "We will follow with thee eagerly, nor, methinks, shall we be anywise wanting in valour, so far as we have strength"). Homer employs this word usually to describe the power or strength in relation to human subjects. Thucydides uses it

in reference to the effects of the plague. Rex Warner translates the passage as "As to the question of how it could first have come about or what causes can be found adequate to explain its powerful effect on nature, I must leave that to be considered by other writers" (2.48).

Certainly, Warner's translation does not communicate the sense of struggle the word represents.

Εγκατασκήπτω: *hurl down among or upon*, of lightning. This word is rare in all of Greek literature, occurring only three other times outside of Thucydides. Most relevantly in Aeschylus' *Persians* (513 "Yet much remains untold of the ills launched by Heaven upon the Persians). Aeschylus uses this word to illustrate the divine nature in which the Persians will be punished. The "of lightning" connotes that the subject of the verb is both of divine origin and is deliberate, fated. Thucydides employs this word to describe the initial onset of the plague, giving the plague the characteristic of a deliberate and divine occurrence.

Εισπίπτω: *fall into*, generally with a notion of violence, *rush* or *burst in*. This word occurs in Euripides' *Ion* (700 "Now in woe is she *whelmed*"), *Orestes* (1315 "It is Hermione advancing into the midst of the bloodshed. Let our clamour cease; on *she comes headlong* into the meshes of the net."); *Alcestis* (175 "Then to her bower *she rushed*; fell on the

bed"). This word is overwhelmingly used in the context of physical battle in a military sense and is often translated dramatically. Thucydides uses it describe the onset of the plague in Athens: "Suddenly falling upon Athens, it first attacked the population in Piraeus" (2.48). Clearly, Thucydides uses this word to dramatic effect and even syntactically characterizes plague as if it were the Spartans descending upon the city.

εξαπίναιος: *sudden, unexpected*

Επιπίπτω: *fall upon in hostile sense, attack, assail.* This word is found in Herodotus (7:210 "The Medes bore down upon the Hellenes and attacked"; 9:116 "Now, when the Athenians laid siege to him, he had made no preparation for it"). The use of this word has precedent within the context of military confrontation. Thucydides uses it to characterize the plague and how it descended upon Athens. Often the word is translated as "breaks out," but that translation does not communicate the aspect of a military attack.

ιατρικός: *surgery, medicine.*

ιατρος: *one who heals, physician or surgeon.* This word occurs in the Iliad (16:28 Surgeons with medicines are attending their wounds"); Euripides, *Hippolytus* (295 "doctors"); Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women* (260 "Healer").

This word is fairly common, used by both Greek dramatists Aeschylus and Euripides. It is also the word employed by Hippocrates in his medical writings. The context in which Thucydides uses this word always perceives healing as an art. Hippocrates also details healing as an art as well.

ἱερός: I. *filled with or manifesting divine power, supernatural*; II. *of earthly things, hallowed, consecrated.*

This word occurs in Euripides, *Suppliants* (935 "Will you bury him apart as a *consecrated* corpse?"), *Andromache* (1065 "With the help of Delphians in Loxias' *sacred* shrine."), *Iphigenia in Tauris* (626 "divine"); Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* (1015 "toward the *sacred* shrines of his fathers"); Homer, *Odyssey* (10:425 "so that you may see your comrades in the *sacred* halls of Circe."). Thucydides uses this relatively common adjective as a substantive for a shrine or temple to demonstrate how the plague was unresponsive to the supplications of the afflicted.

ἱκετεύω: *approach as a suppliant.* This word occurs in Euripedes' *Hecuba* (275 "As you admit, you fell in *supplication* before me"; 752 "Agamemnon, I *supplicate* you by your knees, your chin, and your prospering right hand."), *Orestes* (673 "'tis my whole family on whose behalf I am *making this appeal*"); Homer's *Odyssey* (11:530 "but he *earnestly besought* me to let him go forth from the horse").

ισχυρός: *strong, mighty, esp. of personal strength.* This is Thucydides' second term for strong or might: Δύναμις.

There is no clear precedent of this word in Hippocratic text. Thucydides applies it to the nature of the plague: "but people in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent heats in the head," (2.49). The interchangeable use of this word with Δύναμις suggests a literary concern in the epigram of symptoms that Thucydides provides.

Κραίνω: I. *accomplish, fulfil;* II. *Ordain;* III. *Medic., of bones, etc., terminate.* Euripides' *Hecuba* (219 Lady, I think you know already the intention of the army, and the vote that has been passed; still I will declare it "), *Suppliants* (375 "What will the city decide, I wonder?"); Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (369 "As he determines, so he acts"); the *Odyssey* (19:567 "Those dreams that pass through the gate of sawn ivory deceive men, bringing words that find no fulfillment.") This word is used mostly in poetic applications and the translations vary a great deal. Thucydides uses this word to describe the apex of the virulence of the plague. In describing the lifespan of the epidemic Thucydides resorts to verbiage that is more consistent with poetic devices than the concern with objectivity Hippocrates has in his *Epidemics*.

Λοιμὸς: *A plague.* The word is found in the *Iliad* (1:61 "Would mutton burned or smoking goat flesh make him lift the plague?"); Aschylus' *Persians* (715 "Came there some stroke of pestilence or strife upon the State"). This form of disease occurs more infrequently in Greek literature than νόσος, in fact it occurs only one quarter of the amount νόσος does. This Greek noun only refers the disease of body, not mind. It initially is used in Homer's *Iliad* to describe the plague that was sent among the Greeks. Thucydides uses the word interchangeably with νόσος without any sort of discrimination of context. It seems it is specifically a literary use of this word as opposed to exclusive and consistent usage of νόσος, as Hippocrates does in his *Epidemics*.

Νικᾶ́ω: *conquer, prevail* in battle, in the games, or in any contest. This verb is common, used in Euripides' *Alcestis* (1104 "Yet thy friend's victory is surely thine), *Suppliants* (1060 "victory"); Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (942 "victory"), *Libation Bearers* (890 "Let us know if we are the victors or the vanquished"); the *Iliad* (3.439 "It is true, on this occasion he-and Athena-won."). The context of this word is usually a battle, or some sort of contest. This word appears as Thucydides describes the futility of the supplicants at the temples and their petitions for a

cure from the plague. This word is as strange choice because of its clear usage in regards to contests. This word characterizes the disease specifically as a battle.

νοσέω: *to be sick, ail, whether in body or mind.*

Euripides uses this word in the context of mental illness in his play *Hippolytus* (292: "If your malady is one of those that are unmentionable, here are women to help set it to rights.") Thucydides uses this verb to describe the Athenians afflicted with plague. This word is also used by Hippocrates to describe the behavior of the disease.

Νόσος: *sickness, disease, plague.* This word is translated as "pestilence" in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (476 "and become an intolerable and perpetual pestilence to afflict the land) and translated as "madness" Euripides' *Orestes* (227), and "sickness" in *Hippolytus* (270). It also occurs in the *Iliad* (13:669 "and the long pain of biding mortal *illness*") and the *Odyssey* (11:198 "nor did any *disease* come upon me, such as oftenest through grievous wasting takes the spirit from the limbs"). This word was very common; used to describe illness in both a physical and mental capacity. This form is often used in Hippocrates' medical texts and is used to clinical effect in Thucydides *Plague*. Of all the nouns signifying "disease, plague, sickness" in Ancient Greek, νόσος is the most common.

Πάσχω: *have something done to one, suffer.* This verb occurs in Homer's *Iliad* (20:297 "But wherefore should he, a guiltless man, suffer woes vainly by reason of sorrows that are not his own?"); Euripides' *Hecuba* (252: "You have been treated by me as you admit you were treated, yet you do me no good but instead all the harm you can"). Euripides excerpt shows how the verb is used to describe someone of agency deliberately perpetrating some sort of suffering. Thucydides uses this word in 2.48, when he states "For I had the disease myself and saw others suffering from it." This word characterizes the disease as being perpetrated against the Athenians, implying that the disease was affected by some consciousness.

Τεχνη: I. *art, skill, cunning of hand;* II. *craft, cunning,* in bad sense, pl., *arts, wiles.* This is a very common word, occurring in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (249 "The art of Calchas failed not to fulfillment") and *Eumenides* (17 "With the prophet's art Zeus inspired his soul"). This is an widely used word, particularly in the context of prophesying, as illustrated by the *Eumenides* and *Calchas* passages. Hipocrates uses the word to describe the "art" of the Ιατρος: "The physician is the servant of the art," (*Epidemics XI*). Thucydides employs both of these

possibilities and outlines their relatively futility in combating the plague.

Φάρμακον: I. *drug*; II. *healing remedy, medicine*. It occurs in Homer's *Homer, Odyssey* (10:303 "'So saying, Argeiphontes gave me the *herb*, drawing it from the ground, and showed me its nature"); Euripides' *Orestes* (1497 "whether by *magic spells* or wizards' arts or heavenly theft,"). This word is often used in conjunction with either magic, art, or some other highly un-objective pursuit. The more commonly used term for "medicine" in Hippocrates is *ιατρικός*.

Φθορά: I. *destruction; ruin*; II. *Philos., passing out of existence, ceasing to be*. This is a common form, found in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (404 "him they *destroy* in his unrighteousness"); Euripides' *Helen* (766 "Why should I tell thee of the *losses* in the Aegean?"). This noun is used by Thucydides in the introduction of the plague to distinguish it as a disease so destructive that another did not exist within memory (2.47). It is also used by Aeschylus and Euripedes in dramatic speeches. It is initially used in Herodotus as a means of describing a decimated number of people on account of military entanglement. Thucydides seems to have used this word to describe the overwhelming destructiveness and virulence of the plague. Again,

possibly to emphasize its role as the worst epidemic in memory.

Θέρμη: *feverish heat*. This is another word particular to Hippocratic medical texts. It is used numerous times in his Epidemics (Epid: 7 "But those fevers which were altogether continuous and never intermitted"). Thucydides' use of this particularly Hippocratic medical term lends medical and narrative authority to Thucydides' account of the plague. Hippocrates uses this term often in describing specific case subjects, where Thucydides applies it more broadly to the Athenians in general.

Note: All translations are from the Loeb Classical Library except those from Thucydides, which have been taken from Rex Warner's translation.

Annotated Bibliography

Adcock, F.E. Thucydides and his History. London: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

This book was not especially useful. It is a rather old book and only discusses narrative in Thucydides briefly. Mostly, it covers the speeches in the History. There is one section that covered who Thucydides was and his access to specific information, what sort of biases he might have, etc. The narrative discussion focuses on what types of things would strike Thucydides as important. In other words, why did he include the things he did in relation to his personal background and the accessibility to information.

Aya, Rod. "The Third Man; or, Agency in History; or, Rationality in Revolution." History and Theory. 40.4 (2001): 143-52.

This is a terrible article that tries to create a theory of rational-choice historiography around Thucydides. The author uses Thucydides' accounts of revolution to prove this horrible theory of rational-choice historiography. I will not be using this article.

Craik, E.M. "Thucydides on the Plague: Physiology and Flux and Fixation." Classics Quarterly. 50.1 (2001). 102-108.

The prevailing medical theories at the time of Thucydides most likely influenced his writing. Hippocratic theory of physiological flux would have been the prevailing medical theory, and Thucydides would certainly be cognizant of it during the plague. It seems that Thucydides takes physiological flux as fact rather than using the plague to creating a validating document for physiological flux. Had Thucydides used the plague as an opportunity to validate physiological flux, then his objectivity would be compromised. His narrative follows the theory of physiological flux as a matter of accepted Hippocratic structure as opposed to a medical treatise. This source was extraordinarily useful because it shows how Thucydides employs Hippocratic epistemology in his account.

Daugherty, Gregory. Studies in the Structure of Thucydides' Narrative. Dissertation: Vanderbilt University, 1977.

This dissertation has one pertinent chapter. The

chapter dealing with the linearity of Thucydides' Histories is interesting. He differentiates between narrative and chronicle and asserts that Thucydides employs both. The author is concerned with the "intelligibility" that results from narrative structure and how Thucydides' uses his narrative structure to create coherence. This will probably be useful for my paper.

Dirckx, John. "Pestilence Narratives in Classical

Literature: A Study in Creative Imitation: I. Homer, Sophocles, Thucydides, and Lucretius." American Journal of Dermatology. 22.2 (2000): 197-202

This article is written by an M.D. rather than a classicist. The journal it comes from is a medical journal instead of a classical journal. Through Thucydides' particular use of language, the author tries to discern what sort of disease it was that ravaged Athens.

Gaenschalcz, Erich. "The Origins of Historiography Among the Greeks, Herodotus-Thucydides." Philosophy and History. 17.1 (1984): 34-35

This is a very short article but it addresses many interesting possibilities for approaching Thucydides.

It discusses precedents in language in Greek writers. He discusses Hesiod's move from Homeric verse to prose in order to be more precise in his language and what he wants to say.

Garcia, John. "Symbolic action in the 'Homeric Hymns': The theme of Recognition." Classical Antiquity. 21.1
2002: 5-39

This article is peripheral to my project. The article discusses symbolic structure within Homeric Hymns. Much scholarship has been done how Thucydides was both paying homage and competing with Homer. This article does not discuss Thucydides but I hope to be able to identify structures within Thucydides which are actually Homeric structures.

Jones, John. On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.

This book helps in understanding how much Aristotle will play within the paper. It concentrates on Aristotle's perception of tragedy in the *Poetics*. The author concentrates a good deal on the effects and the role of *hamartia* in tragedy.

Kitto, H.D.F. *Poiesis: Structure and Thought*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1966.

This book contains chapters on many Greek writers and historians. In Thucydides' chapter the author tries to address the criticism against Thucydides' exaggeration of the magnitude of the Peloponnesian War. He asserts that there are aspects in the selection of his material, the disposition of his material, and in his personal thought which make criticizing Thucydides' judgment in historicizing the Peloponnesian less tenable. I can use this source because he relates how these aspects affect Thucydides as a *poiesis*.

Lebow, Richard. "Thucydides the Constructivist." American Political Science Review. 95.3 (2001): 547-560.

This is an extremely interesting article that deals with the semantics of Thucydides. The author uses the Greek words *nomos*, *Musis*, *logos*, and *Ergoi* to refute the perception of Thucydides as a Realist. Rather, the author prefers to view Thucydides as a Constructivist. From what I gather, this means that Thucydides constructs history and society based on the interaction between what the words *nomos*, *Musis*, *logos*, and *ergoi* and what those words represent. This will be a helpful article.

Moles, J.L. "Truth and Untruth in Herodotus and

Thucydides." Ed. Gill, Christopher. Wiseman, T.P.
Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

This is a very pertinent article because it discusses the relationship between literature and life. This article describes why and how the historian's debate polarizes historians and literary critics. What are reasons for mistakes in the historical accounts of Herodotus and Thucydides? Error, dishonesty, or a complete misconception of histories true functions?

Morens, David. Littman, R.J. "Thucydides Syndrome"

Reconsidered: New Thoughts on the 'Plague of Athens'" American Journal of Epidemiology. 1994: 621-627.

This article is concerned only with the type of disease that afflicts the Athenians. It attempts to refute assertions that the disease was caused by a specific influenza. The author uses graphs and algebraic equations to demonstrate different incubation periods to prove that the previously dubbed "Athenian flu" should be renamed "The Thucydides Syndrome." I will not use this article very much if at all, but it does help show how most scholarship done on the Plague has been centered around the biological aspect of the plague and not so much on the historiography of it.

Morgan, Thomas. "Plague or Poetry? Thucydides on the Epidemic at Athens." Transactions of the American Philological Association.. 124.1 (1994). 197-209.

While most recent scholarship has focused on the specific cause and name of the disease, we will probably never have enough evidence to conclusively deduce what it was. We must analyze Thucydides' vocabulary and literary legacy in the fifth century in order to understand his description as objectively as possible. But, objectivity in Thucydides is problematic because the syntactical construction of many of his sentences place concern on literary effect which interferes with the reporting of the medical facts. This article was hugely helpful in providing ideas on syntax and the influence of the literary environment Thucydides would have been exposed to. While this essay is similar to what I plan on doing, he does not address the broader historian's debate as I do with Hayden White.

Nielson, Donald. "Pericles and the Plague: Civil Religion, Anomie, and Injustice in Thucydides." Sociology of Religion. 57.4 (1996): 397-407

This is could be a useful article, but it is so terribly written I have trouble reading it. It deals

with so many issues it has a hard being cohesive. The most useful aspect of this article deals with social convention and moral dissolution during the plague. At the end of the article the author does a little spiel on how Thucydides fits in with world historians in general.

Orwin, Clifford. The Humanity of Thucydides. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

This book does not really deal with narrative theory. The author mostly on Thucydides as a person and how his political, social context affected him as a historian. The author then discusses Thucydides in a Humanistic fashion. This might be useful if pursue the angle of the Plague being an attempt at catharsis.

Parry, Adam. "Thucydides' Use of Abstract Language." Yale French Studies. (1970): 3-20.

This essay focuses on abstract language in Thucydides and how he sets up abstract phrases as antitheses. He asserts that this the most prominent. He uses a lot of textual references to support his arguments. He also makes a strange conclusion that Thucydides' main concern was to create civilization through the intellect. Not sure how useful this source will be.

Pencak, William. "Thucydides as Historian and

Semiotician." History, Signing in.

New York: Peter Lang Publishing. Vol. 4 1993.

This is a very difficult read. It deals with the semiotics in Thucydides and it makes haphazard references to seminal articles in semiotics which I have not read. From what I gather, Thucydides as a historian juxtaposes images and words in order to make sense of history. I am not quite sure what is significant about this, but it seems that semiotics in general works to not have a point.

Plant, Ian. "The Influence of Forensic Oratory on Thucydides' Principle of Method." Classical Quarterly. 49.1 (1999): 62-73.

This will be an important source. It deals with difficulties in reading Thucydides in "isolation," or in other words not just as a historical text. He presents evidence that Thucydides was aware of theories of rhetoric and literature. The author also addresses issues with politics and how Thucydides' treatment of the Spartans is slanted and could perhaps compromise his famed objectivity. This aspect of the article will not be as helpful.

Rood, Tim. Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

This is an extensive book covering many different aspects of Thucydides' narrative style. He does not treat the Plague of Athens exclusively in any part of the book. It addresses mostly Thucydides' narrative technique within the entire scope of Thucydides' career, not just with the Peloponnesian War. He discusses generally about history and its relation literature as well as problems about temporality and historiography.

Strauss, Leo. The City and Man. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

This book has a chapter on both Aristotle's *Poetics* and Thucydides' *History*. His discussion on the *Poetics* is rather peripheral to what I want to do with the *Poetics*. He generates a political discussion around the Aristotle as opposed to narrative theory. His treatment does not really pertain to what I want to write about either except for a part that concerns how *dike* functions in the histories.

Thorely, John. Athenian Democracy. London: Lancaster, 1996. This book is very short and covers the history of Athens from 632 B.C. to 399 B.C. It gives a very minimal account of those years and amounts to not much more than a pure chronicle. It is

a handy reference to quickly become familiarized with the context in which Thucydides wrote.

Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War. Trans. Rex Warner.

Baltimore: Penguin, 1954.

Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War. Ed. Carolus Hude.

Woodman, A.J. Rhetoric in Classical Historiography.

London: Croom Helm, 1988.

This book has a deceptive title. Initially it seemed peripheral the topic of narrative theory but it has an informative part about the plague itself. The rhetorical analysis seems to have pertinent aspects to narrative theory insofar as structure is concerned. The rest of the book deals with other historians and is not so useful.



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Evaluation of Mathew Underwood's Project on the Function of Narrative in Thucydides' Plague

The bibliography reflects some effort to examine the narrative of Thucydides from a variety of scholarly approaches. The annotations are lengthy and appropriately analytical. Occasionally they are a bit too unreserved in their criticism and many annotations retain future-tense references to ways the material might be used, comments clearly written early in the research process. Obviously the annotated bibliography needed to be reviewed and revised closer to the end of the process. Significantly missing from the bibliography is a list of writings by Hayden White which provided such important conceptual foundations for this study.

The reliance on Warner's translation of Thucydides is too heavy. Reference to a variety of translations would have enhanced this study and perhaps suggested additional commentary on Thucydidean narrative.

The glossary of important terms provides an important overview of Thucydidean vocabulary and the way it relates to other Greek authors. Some further information analysis is usually in order. For example, under the entry for *apokrino*, the reader is told that the word is used often in a medical context in Hippocratic texts, but no indication is given as to what this medical context actually was.

The paper itself combines a discussion of Thucydides' use of Hippocratic material and other contemporary medical writing with an application of some of Hayden White's theories on narrative to Thucydides' *Histories*. The result is an original study which has the potential of making a significant contribution to Thucydidean scholarship. This study definitely demonstrates the need for Classicists to apply in a more formal way modern narrative theories like White's to ancient authors like Thucydides. This paper is a first, positive step in such a direction.

I would highly recommend, Mathew, that you carefully revise a portion of this paper and submit it for the Eta Sigma Phi panel planned for CAMWS Southern Section 2004. I make this suggestion not only because I think it would advance your graduate career, but also because I sincerely believe that your background in English narrative theory positions you well to make the first steps in examining Thucydides' narrative according to White's theories. I think that you would find pursuit of such a study to be personally satisfying.



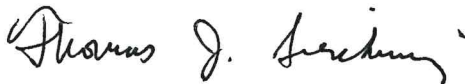
I suspect that you would recognize, as I do, that this paper represents not only a conceptual draft but also a stylistic one. I wish we had had the time and leisure to go through one or two more drafts together. Unfortunately, we do not have this luxury and this paper will have to remain, for now, at least, a work in progress.

Perhaps by now you will appreciate some of the good qualities of your paper and will have already revised your self-assessment of your work. While you suggested that this paper earned a grade of B/B+, I find it worthy of at least an A-. Based especially upon the excellent research and analysis suggested by the bibliography and the glossary, I would say that your grade on the senior project as a whole is a solid A.

I congratulate you on your excellent work not only for this project but throughout the last four years. It has been a great pleasure to introduce you to Greek and Latin and share with you some of love enthusiasm for the ancient world. I especially appreciated the enthusiasm you yourself showed for Italy after your semester in Florence and hope that your classical studies soon send you back to la bella Italia. For this reason, I enclose a copy of last year's Eta Sigma Phi Scholarship announcement in order to remind you about the opportunities such scholarships would offer you in the next few years.

I am, naturally, pleased that you have decided to pursue graduate study at Texas Tech University and I wish you all the best there and in the future. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any way I can help you.

Si vales, valeo.



Thomas J. Sienkewicz
Minnie Billings Capron Professor of Classics



Call for Papers

*for presentation at the
Classical Association of the Middle West and South
Southern Section Meeting
November 4-6, 2004
in Winston-Salem, North Carolina
at the invitation of the Wake Forest University
and in cooperation with
the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and Davidson College*

At the meeting of the Southern Section of CAMWS, Eta Sigma Phi will sponsor a panel of papers presented by *undergraduate* members of Eta Sigma Phi. Members who will be undergraduates in the fall (or who graduated in the spring of 2004) are invited to submit papers for consideration, and five or six papers will be selected for presentation.

The papers will be judged anonymously, and the students whose papers are selected for reading will receive \$100 each to help cover expenses of attending the meeting. They will also be given a one-year membership in CAMWS. Before submitting a paper, each student should ensure that he or she will be able to obtain the additional funds—either personally or through the institution, department, or chapter—to attend the meeting.

Requirements:

1. Papers should deal with some aspect of classical civilization or language. (Papers written for classes are acceptable.)
2. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 15 minutes in length, or 20 minutes if audio-visuals are part of the presentation.
3. The names of the authors should not be on the papers.
4. Each submission should contain a cover sheet with the author's name, address, phone number, e-mail address, chapter, and institution. Those who will not be at their institutions in June should also include summer information.

Deadline for receipt of papers: June 1, 2004

Send your papers to:
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