

# Thucydides: *Peloponnesian War*

## Book 1.1–23

Adapted 2023 by the Kosmos Society Team  
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From the translation by Richard Crawley  
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[1.1.1] Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, beginning [*arkhein*] 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 deduction [*tekmairesthai*] was not without its grounds. The preparedness [*paraskeuē*] of both the combatants were in every department at its peak; and he could see the rest of the Hellenes taking sides in the quarrel; those who delayed doing so at once having it in contemplation. [1.1.2] 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. [1.1.3] For though the events of remote antiquity [*palaios*], and even those that more immediately precede the war, were incapable of [*adunatos*], from lapse of time, being clearly [*saphēs*] ascertained [*heuriskein*], yet the evidences [*tekmērion*] which an inquiry carried [*skopeîn*] as far back as was practicable leads me to trust [*pisteuein*], all point to the conclusion [*nomizein*] that there was nothing on a great scale, either in war or other matters.

[1.2.1] For instance, it is evident [*phainesthai*] that the country now called Hellas had in ancient times no constant [*bebaios*] population [*oikeîn*]; on the contrary, migrations were of frequent occurrence, each group readily abandoning its home when they were threatened by superior numbers. [1.2.2] Without commerce, without freedom of communication either by land or sea [*thalassa*], cultivating [*nemein*] no more of their territory than the exigencies of life required, destitute of possessions [*khrēmata*], never planting their land (for it was uncertain [*adēlos*] when an invader might not come and take it all away, and when he did come there were no walls [*ateikhistos*] to prevent it), thinking [*hēgeîsthai*] that they could control [*epikrateîn*] the necessities of daily sustenance at one place as well as another, they cared little for shifting their habitation, and, consequently neither built large cities nor attained to any other form of preparedness [*paraskeuē*]. [1.2.3] The richest soils were always most subject to this change of inhabitants [*oikētōr*]; such as the district now called Thessaly, Boeotia, most of the Peloponnesians, Arcadia excepted, and the most fertile [*kratistos*] parts of the rest of Hellas. [1.2.4] The goodness of the land favored the power [*dunamis*] of particular individuals, and thus created factions [*stasis*] which proved a fertile source of ruin. It also invited invasion. [1.2.5] Accordingly Attica, from the poverty of its soil enjoying from a very remote period freedom from faction, never changed its inhabitants [*oikeîn*]. [1.2.6] And here is a not insignificant example of my assertion [*logos*], that the migrations [*metoikia*] were the cause of there

being no corresponding growth in other parts. The most powerful [*dunatos*] victims of war or faction [*stasis*] from the rest of Hellas took refuge with the Athenians as a safe [*bebaios*] retreat; and becoming citizens right from antiquity [*palaios*], 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 [*apoikia*] to Ionia.

[1.3.1] There is also another circumstance that contributes not a little to illustrating [*dēloûn*] the weakness of ancient times [*palaios*]. Before the Trojan war there is no indication [*phainesthai*] of any common action in Hellas, [1.3.2] nor, it seems [*dokein*] to me, of the universal prevalence of the name; on the contrary, before the time of Hellēn, son of Deucalion, no such title existed, but the country went by the names of the different peoples, in particular of the Pelasgian. It was not till Hellēn and his sons grew strong in Phthiotis, 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 [*dunasthai*] prevail completely. [1.3.3] Homer provides the best proof [*tekmērioûn*] of this. 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 Achaans. He does not even use the term barbarian, it seems [*dokein*] to me because the Hellenes had not yet been marked off from the rest of the world by one distinctive name. [1.3.4] 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 lack of strength and the absence of mutual connections from displaying any collective action.

Indeed, they could not unite for this expedition till they had gained increased familiarity with the sea [*thalassa*]. [1.4.1] And the earliest [*palaios*] person known to us by tradition [*akoē*] as having established [*ktâsthai*] a navy is Minos. He made himself master [*krateîn*] of what is now called the Hellenic sea [*thalassa*], and ruled [*arkhein*] over the Cyclades, in most of which he was the first coloniser [*oikistēs*], expelling the Carians and appointing his own sons as governors [*hēgemōn*]; and thus did what he could [*dunasthai*] to put down piracy in those seas [*thalassa*], a necessary step to secure the revenues for his own use.

[1.5.1] For in early times the Hellenes and the barbarians of the mainland [*ēpeiros*] next to the sea [*parathalassios*], and islands, as they began [*arkhein*] more to cross by ship against each other, were tempted to turn pirates, under the conduct of the most powerful [from *dunatos*] of the men who were leading [*hēgeîsthai*]; the motives being to serve their own cupidity and to support the needy. They would fall upon towns unprotected by walls [*ateikhistos*], and settled [*oikeîn*] village by village, and would plunder them; indeed, this came to be the main source of their livelihood, no disgrace being yet attached to such an achievement [*ergon*], but even some glory. [1.5.2] This is illustrated [*dēloûn*] by the honor with which some of the inhabitants of the interior still regard a successful marauder, and by the question we find the poets of ancient times

[*palaios*] everywhere representing the people as asking of voyagers— 'Are they pirates?' — as if those who are asked the question would have no idea of disclaiming the occupation [*ergon*], or the inquirers of reproaching them for it. [1.5.3] They also plundered each other on land [*ēpeiros*]. And even at the present day many parts of Hellas are still inhabited [*nemein*] in the old [*palaios*] fashion [*tropos*], the Ozolian Locrians for instance, the Aetolians, the Acarnanians, and that region of the interior; and the custom of carrying arms is still kept up among these in the interior, from the old [*palaios*] piratical habits. [1.6.1] The whole of Hellas used once to carry arms, their settlements [*oikēsis*] being unprotected, and their access to each other was unsafe [*asphalēs*]; indeed, to wear arms was as much a part of everyday life [*diaita*] with them as with the barbarians. [1.6.2] And the fact that the people in these parts of Hellas are still living [*nemein*] in the old way points to a time when the same mode of life [*daitēma*] was once equally common to all. [1.6.3] The Athenians were the first to lay aside their weapons, and to adopt an easier and more luxurious mode of life [*diaita*]; indeed, it is only lately that their rich old men left off the luxury of wearing undergarments of linen, and fastening a knot of their hair with a tie of golden grasshoppers, a fashion which spread to their Ionian kindred. and long prevailed among the old men there. [1.6.4] On the contrary a modest style of dressing, more in conformity with the modern way [*tropos*], was first adopted by the Lacedaemonians, the wealthier [from *ktâsthai*] doing their best to adopt more or less the same way of life [*iso-daitos*] to that of the common people. [1.6.5] They also set the example of contending naked, publicly stripping and anointing themselves with oil in their gymnastic exercises. Formerly, even in the Olympic contests, the athletes who contended wore belts across their middles; and it is but a few years since that the practice ceased. To this day among some of the barbarians, especially in Asia, when prizes for boxing and wrestling are offered, belts are worn by the combatants. [1.6.6] And there are many other points in which a likeness might be shown between the life [from *daitâsthai*] of the Hellenic world of ancient times [*palaios*] and the barbarian of to-day. [1.7.1] With respect to their towns founded [*oikizein*] most recently, later on, at an era of increased facilities of navigation and greater wealth [*khrēmata*], we find the shores becoming the site of walled [*teikhos*] towns, and the isthmuses being occupied for the purposes of commerce, and defence against neighbors [*prosoikos*]. But the old [*palaios*] towns, on account of the great prevalence of piracy, were founded [*oikizein*] away from the sea [*thalassa*], whether on the islands or inland [*ēpeiros*], and to this day still remain inland foundations [*anoikizein*]. For the pirates used to plunder one another, and even those who were not seafaring [*thalassios*] but lived [*oikeîn*] close to the coast. [1.8.1] The islanders, too, were great pirates. These islanders were Carians and Phoenicians, for they colonised [*oikeîn*] most of the islands, as was proved by the following fact. During the purification of Delos by Athens in this war all the graves in the island were dug up, and Carians were found [*phainesthai*] in more than half: they were identified by the style of the fighting gear buried with them, and by the method of interment, which was the same way [*tropos*] as the Carians still follow. [1.8.2] But as soon as Minos had formed his navy, facilities for navigation

by ships became easier, as he colonised [*katoikizein*] most of the islands, and thus expelled the malefactors. [1.8.3] The populations by the sea [*thalassa*] now began to apply themselves more closely to the acquisition [*ktēsis*] of wealth [*khrēmata*], and their life [from *oikeîn*] became safer [*bebaios*]; some even began to build themselves walls [*teikhos*] on the strength of becoming richer [*plousios*]. For the love of gain would reconcile the weaker to the dominion of the stronger [*dunatos*], and the possession of surpluses enabled the more powerful [*hupēkoos*] to reduce the smaller towns to subjection. [1.8.4] And it was at a somewhat later stage of this development that they went on the expedition against Troy.

[1.9.1] What enabled Agamemnon to raise the armament, it seems [*dokeîn*] to me, was more his superiority in strength [*dunamis*] than the oaths of Tyndareus, which bound Helen's suitors to follow him. [1.9.2] Indeed, the account given by those Peloponnesians who have been the recipients of the most coherent [*saphēs*] tradition is this. First of all Pelops, arriving among a needy population from Asia with vast wealth [*khrēmata*], acquired such power [*dunamis*] that, stranger though he was, the country was called after him; and this power fortune saw fit materially to increase in the hands of his descendants. Eurystheus had been killed in Attica by the Heraclids. Atreus was his mother's brother; and to the hands of his relative [*oikeîos*], (who happened to have fled his father on account of the death of Chrysippus), Eurystheus, when he set out on his expedition, had entrusted Mycenae and the government [*arkhē*]. As time went on and Eurystheus did not return, Atreus complied with the wishes of the Mycenaeans, who were influenced by fear of the Heraclids,— besides, his power [*dunatos*] seemed considerable, and he had not neglected to court the favor of the populace,— and began to rule [*arkhein*] Mycenae and the rest of the dominions of Eurystheus. And so the power of the descendants of Pelops came to be greater than that of the descendants of Perseus.

[1.9.3] To all this Agamemnon succeeded. He had also a navy far stronger than his contemporaries, so that, it seems [*dokeîn*] to me, fear was quite as strong an element as love in the formation of the allied expedition. [1.9.4] The strength of his navy is shown [*phainesthai*] by the fact that his own was the largest contingent, and that of the Arcadians was furnished by him; this at least is what Homer reveals [*dēloûn*], if his testimony is deemed [*tekmērioûn*] sufficient. Besides, in his account of the transmission of the scepter, he calls him 'Of many an isle, and of all Argos king.' Now Agamemnon's was a mainland [from *ēpeiros*] power; and he could not have been master [*krateîn*] of any except the adjacent [*perioikis*] islands (and these would not be many), but through the possession of a fleet.

And from this expedition we may infer the character of earlier enterprises.

[1.10.1] Now Mycenae may have been a small place, and many of the towns of that age may seem [*dokeîn*] to be comparatively insignificant, but no exact observer would therefore feel justified in rejecting [*apisteîn*] the account [*logos*] given by the poets and by tradition of the size of the force.

[1.10.2] For I suppose if Lacedaemon were to become desolate, and the temples and the foundations of the public buildings were left, that as time went on there

would be a strong disposition with posterity to refuse to accept [*apistia*] her fame [*kleos*] as a true exponent of her power [*dunamis*]. And yet they occupy [*nemein*] two-fifths of Peloponnese and lead [*hēgeísthai*] the whole, not to speak of their numerous allies without. Still, as the city is neither consolidated [*sunokizein*] nor adorned with magnificent temples and public edifices, but settled [*oikizein*] in villages in the old [*palaios*] way [*tropos*] of Hellas, it would appear [*phainesthai*] inadequate. Whereas, if Athens were to suffer the same misfortune, I suppose that any inference from the appearance presented to the eye would make her power [*dunamis*] to have been twice as great as it is. [1.10.3] We have therefore no right to be sceptical [*apisteîn*], nor to content ourselves with inspecting [*skopeîn*] a town to the exclusion of a consideration of its power [*dunamis*]; but we may safely conclude [*nomizein*] that the armament in question surpassed all before it; as it fell short of modern efforts; if we can here also accept [*pisteuein*] the testimony of Homer's poems, in which, without allowing for the exaggeration which a poet would feel himself licensed to employ, we can see that it was far from equalling ours. [1.10.4] He has represented it as consisting of twelve hundred vessels; the Boeotian complement of each ship being a hundred and twenty men, that of the ships of Philoctetes fifty. By this, it seems [*dokeîn*] to me, he meant to convey [*dēloûn*] the maximum and the minimum complement: at any rate he does not specify the amount of any others in his catalogue of the ships. That they were all rowers as well as warriors is revealed [*dēloûn*] from his account of the ships of Philoctetes, in which all the men at the oar are bowmen. Now it is improbable that many supernumeraries sailed if we except the kings and high officers; especially as they had to cross the open sea with munitions of war, in ships, moreover, that had no decks, but were equipped [*paraskeuazein*] in the old [*palaios*] piratical way [*tropos*]. [1.10.5] So that if we consider [*skopeîn*] the average of the largest and smallest ships, the number of those who sailed will appear [*phainesthai*] inconsiderable, representing, as they did, the whole force of Hellas.

[1.11.1] And this was due not so much to scarcity of men as of wealth. Lack of food made the invaders reduce the numbers of the army to a point at which it might live on the country during the prosecution of the war. Even after they prevailed [*krateîn*] in battle on their arrival— and it is clear [*dēlos*] they did, or the naval camp could never have been fortified [*teikhizein*] — it is clear [*phainesthai*] that their whole force [*dunamis*] had not been employed; on the contrary, they seem to have turned to farming of the Chersonese and to piracy from lack of food. This was what really enabled the Trojans to keep the field for ten years against them; the dispersion of the enemy making them always a match for the detachment left behind. [1.11.2] If they had brought plenty of supplies with them, and had persevered in the war without scattering for piracy and agriculture, they would have easily prevailed [*krateîn*] in battle against the Trojans; since they could hold their own against them with the division on service. In short, if they had stuck to the siege, the capture of Troy would have cost them less time and less trouble. But as lack of wealth proved the weakness of earlier expeditions, so from the same cause even the one in question, more renowned than its predecessors, nevertheless the things that happened may be

revealed [*dēloûn*] to be inferior in their achievements [*erga*] to their reputation [*phēmē*] and the account [*logos*] that currently prevails under the influence of the poets.

[1.12.1] Even after the Trojan war Hellas was still engaged in migrating and settling [*katoikizein*], and thus could not attain to the quiet which must precede growth. [1.12.2] The late return of the Hellenes from Ilion caused many revolutions, and factions [*stasis*] ensued almost everywhere; and it was the citizens thus driven into exile who founded the cities. [1.12.3] Sixty years after the capture of Ilion the modern Boeotians were driven out of Arne by the Thessalians, and settled [*oikizein*] in the present Boeotia, the former Cadmeis; though there was a division of them there before, some of whom joined the expedition to Ilion. Twenty years later the Dorians and the Heraclids became masters of Peloponnese; [1.12.4] so that much had to be done and many years had to elapse before Hellas could attain to a durable [*bebaios*] tranquillity undisturbed by migrations, and could begin to send out colonies [*apoikia*], as Athens colonized [*oikeîn*] in Ionia and most of the islands, and the Peloponnesians in most of Italy and Sicily and some places in the rest of Hellas. All these places were founded subsequently to the war with Troy.

[1.13.1] But as Hellas became more powerful [*dunatos*] and acquired [*ktēsis*] more wealth [*khrēmata*] than before, since the revenues increased, tyrannies were widely established in the cities,— the old form of government being hereditary monarchy with definite prerogatives,— and Hellas began to fit out fleets and apply herself more closely to the sea [*thalassa*]. [1.13.2] It is said that the Corinthians were the first to approach the current method [*tropos*] of naval architecture, and that Corinth was the first place in Hellas where triremes were built; [1.13.3] and clearly [*phainesthai*] Ameinokles, a Corinthian shipwright, made four ships for the Samians. Dating from the end of this war, it is nearly three hundred years ago that Ameinokles went to Samos. [1.13.4] Again, the earliest [*palaios*] sea-fight in history was between the Corinthians and Corcyreans; this was about two hundred and sixty years ago, dating from the same time. [1.13.5] The Corinthians, because they settled [*oikeîn*] their city on the Isthmus, had always had a commercial emporium; as formerly the Hellenes within and outside the Peloponnese had dealings with one another more by land through Corinthian territory than by sea [*thalassa*]. Consequently the Corinthians were strong [*dunatos*] through their resources [*khrēmata*], as is shown by the epithet 'wealthy' bestowed by the ancient [*palaios*] poets on the place, and this enabled them, when seafaring became more common, to procure [*ktâsthai*] her navy and put down piracy; and as they could provide a market for both branches of the trade, and with their large income of money [*khrēmata*] they acquired a powerful [*dunatos*] city. [1.13.6] Subsequently the Ionians had a great navy in the reign of Cyrus, the first king of the Persians, and of his son Cambyses, and while they were at war with Cyrus, they controlled [*krateîn*] their own sea [*thalassa*] for a while. Polycrates also, the tyrant of Samos, had a powerful navy in the reign of Cambyses with which he made subject [*hupēkoos*] many of the islands, and among them Rhenea, which he consecrated to the Delian Apollo.

About this time also the Phocaeans, while they were founding [*oikizein*] Marseilles, defeated the Carthaginians in a seafight.

[1.14.1] These were the most powerful [*dunatos*] navies. And even these, although so many generations had elapsed since the Trojan war, were clearly [*phainesthai*] still fitted out principally with fifty-oared ships and long-boats, and were furnished with few triremes among their ranks. [1.14.2] Indeed it was only shortly before the Persian war and the death of Darius the successor of Cambyses, that the Sicilian tyrants and the Corcyraeans acquired any large number of triremes. For after these there were no navies of any account in Hellas till the expedition of Xerxes; [1.14.3] Aegina, Athens, and others may have possessed [*ktâsthai*] a few vessels, but they were principally fifty-oared. It was quite at the end of this period that the war with Aegina and the prospect of the barbarian invasion enabled Themistocles to persuade the Athenians to build the fleet with which they fought at Salamis; and even these vessels did not have decks across the whole ship.

[1.15.1] The navies, then, of the Hellenes both in the oldest times [*palaios*] and later, were what I have described. All their insignificance did not prevent their being an element of the greatest power to those who cultivated them, alike in revenue [*khrēmata*] and in control [*arkhē*] of others. They were the means by which the islands were reached and subdued, those of the smallest area falling the easiest prey. [1.15.2] Wars by land did not occur, at least none by which power [*dunamis*] was acquired; there were the usual border contests, the Hellenes did not go forth on foreign campaigns far from their own land for the subjugation of others. There was no union of subject [*hupēkoos*] cities round a great state, no spontaneous combination of equals for allied expeditions; what fighting there was consisted merely of local warfare between rival neighbors.

[1.15.3] The nearest approach to a coalition took place in the old war between Chalcis and Eretria; this was a quarrel in which the rest of the Hellas did to some extent take sides.

[1.16.1] Different Hellenes were met by obstacles from different sources preventing them from growing. The power of the Ionians was advancing rapidly, when it came into collision with Persia, under King Cyrus, who, after having dethroned Croesus and overrun everything between the river Halys and the sea [*thalassa*], did not stop until he had enslaved the cities of the mainland [*ēpeiros*]; the islands being subdued [*krateîn*] later by Darius and the Phoenician navy.

[1.17.1] Again, wherever there were tyrants, their habit of providing simply for themselves, of looking solely to their personal comfort and household [*oikos*] aggrandisement, governed [*oikeîn*] their states as cautiously [*asphaleia*] as they absolutely could [*dunasthai*], and prevented any achievement [*ergon*] worthy of note proceeding from them; though they would each have to deal with their immediate neighbors [*perioikos*]. [All this is only true of the mainland], for in Sicily, they attained the greatest power [*dunamis*]. Thus for a long time everywhere in Hellas do we find causes which make the states alike incapable of combination for great and national ends, or of any vigorous action of their own.

[1.18.1] But at last a time came when the tyrants of Athens and the far older tyrannies of the rest of Hellas were, with the exception of those in Sicily, once

and for all put down by Lacedaemon; (for this city, though after the settlement of the Dorians, its present inhabitants [*enoikeîn*], it suffered from factions for an unparalleled length of time, still at a very early period [*palaios*] obtained good laws, and was well governed, free from tyrants; it has possessed the same form of government for more than four hundred years, reckoning to the end of the late war, and has thus been able [*dunasthai*] to arrange the affairs of the other states.) Not many years after the deposition of the tyrants, the battle of Marathon was fought between the Persians and the Athenians. [1.18.2] Ten years afterwards the barbarian returned with the armada for the subjugation of Hellas. In the face of this great danger the Lacedaemonians commanded [*hēgeîsthai*] the allied Hellenes because of their superior power [*dunamis*]; and when the Persians were advancing upon them, the Athenians, having made up their minds to abandon their city, gathered up their belongings, boarded their ships, and became a naval people.

Soon after this coalition repulsed the barbarian, both the Hellenes who had revolted from the king [=Ionians] and those who had fought with the allies divided between the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians since these were the two most powerful [*dunamis*], one [=Lacedaemon] by land, and the other [=Athens] by sea.

[1.18.3] For a short time the league held together, till the Lacedaemonians and Athenians quarrelled, and made war upon each other with empire, their allies, a duel into which all the Hellenes sooner or later were drawn, though some might at first remain neutral. So that the whole period from the Persian war to this, with some peaceful intervals, was spent by each power in war, either with its rival, or with its own revolted allies, and consequently they prepared [*paraskeuazein*] themselves well in warfare, and became more practised and experienced in its dangers.

[1.19.1] The Lacedaemonians exercised leadership [*hēgeîsthai*] not by forcing their allies to make contributions but by using oligarchy [*oligarkhia*] to induce them to behave in a way favorable only to the Lacedaemonians themselves; Athens, on the contrary, had by degrees deprived hers of their ships, and imposed instead payments of money [*khreîmata*] on all except Chios and Lesbos. Both found their personal resources [*paraskeuē*] for this war separately to exceed the sum of their strength [*kratistos*] when the alliance flourished intact.

[1.20.1] The past [*palaios*] I have determined [*heuriskein*] was more or less like this, although it was difficult to be convinced [*pisteuein*] by every consecutive deduction [*tekmērion*].

The way that most people deal with traditions [*akoē*], even traditions of their own country, is to receive them all alike as they are delivered, without applying any critical test whatever. [1.20.2] The general Athenian public imagine that Hipparchos was tyrant when he fell by the hands of Harmodios and Aristogiton; not knowing that Hippias, the eldest of the sons of Pisistratos, really held power [*arkhein*], and that Hipparchos and Thessalos were his brothers; and that Harmodios and Aristogiton suspecting, on the very day, in fact at the very moment fixed on for the deed, that their accomplices had betrayed them to Hippias, did not attack him since he had been warned, but wanting to act and



take their chances before they were arrested, attacked Hipparchos as he was arranging the Panathenaic procession near the temple of the daughters of Leos, and killed him. [1.20.3]

There are many other unfounded ideas current among the rest of the Hellenes, even on matters of contemporary history which have not been obscured by time. For instance, there is the notion that the Lacedaemonian kings have two votes each, the fact being that they have only one; and that there is a company of Pitane, there being simply no such thing. Many make no effort in the investigation of truth, accepting readily the first story that comes to hand.

[1.21.1] On the whole, however, the conclusions I have drawn from the proofs [tekmērion] quoted [legein] may, I believe [nomizein], safely be relied on.

Assuredly they would most avoid being led astray by believing [pisteuein] either the lays of a poet displaying the exaggeration of his craft, or the compositions of the chroniclers [logographos] that are attractive at truth's expense; the subjects they treat of being out of the reach of evidence, and time having robbed most of them of historical [apistos] value by enthroning them in the region of legend.

Turning from these, we can rest satisfied with having proceeded [hēgeísthai] upon the clearest signs, and having arrived at conclusions [heuriskein] as exact as can be expected in matters of such antiquity [palaios]. [1.21.2] To come to this war [houtos ho polemos]; despite the known disposition of people to overrate the importance of the current [pareînai] war, and when it is over, to return to their admiration of earlier events [arkhaios], yet examining [skopeîn] the deeds [erga] themselves will show [dēloûn] that it was much greater than the wars which preceded it.

[1.22.1] With reference to the speeches [logoi] they said [legein] in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard [akouein] myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry with exactness [akribeia] the things said [legein] in one's memory, so my practice has been to make the speakers say [legein] what was in my opinion [dokeîn] more or less what was necessary [ta deonta] by the various occasions [pareînai], of course adhering as closely as possible to the general thinking [gnōmē] of what they really said [legein].

[1.22.2] And with reference to the narrative of the deeds [erga] that were done in the war, I did not permit myself to write [graphein] them from the first source that came to hand, nor relying on my own opinion [dokeîn], but rather, after following through with the greatest possible [dunatos] precision [akribeia] on every detail not only (things) at which I myself was present [pareînai], but also what others saw for me.

[1.22.3] What has been found [heuriskein] has cost me some labor because those who were present [pareînai] for the same deeds [erga] did not say [legein] the same things about them, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other.

[1.22.4] The absence of storytelling in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire to study [skopeîn] exactly [saphēs] the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall

be content. It has been written not as a competition piece to listen to [*akouein*] for a moment but as an eternal possession [*ktēma*].

[1.23.1] The Persian war, the greatest achievement [*ergon*] of past times, yet found a speedy decision in two actions by sea and two by land. This war [*houtos ho polemos*] [=Peloponnesian war] was prolonged to an immense length, and long as it was it was short without parallel for the misfortunes that it brought upon Hellas.

[1.23.2] Never had so many cities been taken and laid desolate, here by the barbarians, here by the parties contending (the old inhabitants [*oikētōr*] being sometimes removed to make room for others); never was there so much banishing and blood-shedding, now in the war itself, now in the strife of faction [verb from *stasis*]. [1.23.3] Old stories of occurrences handed down [*legein*] by tradition [*akoē*], but scantily confirmed [*bebaioûn*] by experience [*erga*], suddenly ceased to be unbelievable [*apistos*]; there were earthquakes of unparalleled extent and violence; eclipses of the sun occurred with a frequency unrecorded in previous history; there were great droughts in sundry places and consequent famines, and that most calamitous and awfully fatal visitation, the plague. All this came upon them with this war [*houtos ho polemos*], [1.23.4] which was begun [*arkhein*] by the Athenians and Peloponnesians by the dissolution of the thirty years' truce made after the conquest of Euboea.

[1.23.5] To the question why they broke the treaty, I answer by placing first an account of their accusations [*aitia*] and disputes [*diaphora*], so that no one may ever have to ask what it was which plunged the Hellenes into a war of such magnitude.

[1.23.6] The alleged reason [*prophasis*] I consider [*hēgeîsthai*] most true to be the one which was least revealed in speech [*logos*]: the growth of the power of Athens, and the fear which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable. But the mutual accusations [*aitia*] that were revealed in their speeches [*legein*], which led to the dissolution of the treaty and the breaking out of the war, were as follows.