1.1-23: Preface

Motivation for this history (1)

(1.1.1) Thucydides of Athens composed the war the Peloponnesians and Athenians fought against each other. He started as soon as it broke out, since he foresaw it would be important and more noteworthy than all before it, a deduction based on the highest level of every aspect of preparedness reached by both sides, and the observation that the remaining Greek peoples were joining one side or the other from its outbreak or planning to later.

(1.1.2) And this was in fact the largest mobilization by Greeks as well as a considerable number of non-Greeks,[1] extending over virtually the entire population. (1.1.3) Preceding ones, including those of the more distant past, although impossible to determine clearly after so much time, were probably not important either as wars or anything else.

Determining the past by means of deductions (1.3-21)

This belief is based on my study as far back as possible, and the deductions[2] I thought were plausible.

Earliest Greece: displacement, violence and insecurity (except for Athens)

(1.2.1) Long ago, what is now called Greece probably did not have a stable population. In the earliest stage there was migrations, since any one group was quick to abandon its own land when attacked by any

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[1] *Barbaroi*, used by T. both in the neutral sense of "non-Greek" and in the pejorative sense of "backwards" (in the latter case translated as "barbarian").

[2] The following 20 chapters survey Greek pre-history (much of it mythical) to demonstrate the shortcomings of previous mobilizations. They are conventionally called the "Archaeology", although T. never uses that word, he himself characterizes them as the "deductions" after his method of analysis.

group that was larger. (1.2.2) There was no trade, nor even safe communication with each other, by land or along the sea; each group used its territory merely for subsistence; they did not even plant crops, uncertain when an attack by others-- there were no walls –would carry them off. Imagining that they could secure the food they needed day-to-day in any territory, they were quick to flee elsewhere. As a result, no people became powerful, either in large cities or other forms of enterprise.

(1.2.3) The lands of the highest quality, what is now called Thessaly and Boeotia, most of the Peloponnese except for Arcadia, and the best of the remainder, exchanged their populations especially frequently. (1.2.4) The richness of the land brought power to some, but these were wiped out by the resulting class conflicts, or they were more frequent targets of plots by rival tribes. (1.2.5) Attica on the other hand, because of its barrenness remained free from factions since the most distant past, and had a stable, unchanging population. (1.2.6) The clearest proof is that its population was, unlike the rest of Greece, increased by migrations; powerful men exiled from the rest of Greece by invasion or factional conflict retired to Athens as a safe haven, and by becoming citizens made its population still larger from the earliest period, resulting in colonies' being sent to Ionia later when Attica became too crowded.

Absence of joint action by the Greeks before the Trojan war

(1.3.1) I think Greece's past weakness is demonstrated especially by the fact that, prior to the Trojan war, Greece[3] probably did not unite in any common venture. (1.3.2) As a whole it did not, in my opinion, even bear that name yet. The appellation did not exist at all before the time of Hellen, son of Deucalion, when it was particularly the Pelasgians who

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[3] Greece is originally "Hellas" and Greeks "Hellenes," T. deduces political and military domination from the place-name (cf. Pelops 1.9.2).

spread their name most widely among the various tribes. But once Hellen and his children gained power in Phthiotis[4] and were invited to come to the aid of other cities, regular contact increased the Hellenic designation among individual groups, and it was not long before it prevailed universally. (1.3.3) Homer provides the best evidence: despite living much later than the Trojan war, he has nonetheless never so named as a group either them or any others except the army of Achilles from Phthiotis who were actually the first *Hellenes*; rather his poem calls them Danaans or Argives or Achaeans. Homer has not used the name "barbarians" for non-Greeks yet either because, in my opinion, the Greeks had not yet been distinguished in opposition to them under a single name.   (1.3.4) Taken as individuals, then, the Greeks, either in the sense of different cities which spoke the same language or all those later so named, because of their powerlessness and lack of communication did nothing as a group before the Trojan war.

Extensive seafaring in Greece already before the Trojan war, with digressions on the thalassocracy of Minos, early pirates, and dress as evidence for social development.

But by the time they undertook the Trojan campaign, the Greeks were already making increased use of the sea. (1.4.1) Of those known to us from oral traditions, Minos[5] is the oldest to have acquired a fleet and controlled most of what is now called the Greek sea. He drove out the Carians and ruled the Cycladic islands, and was the original colonizer of most of them, establishing his sons as their rulers.

To improve the flow of revenue to him, Minos must have done his best to suppress piracy by sea. (1.5.1) Piracy had been taken up in ancient

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[4] A small region in Thessaly.
[5] Mythical king of Crete best known for his daughter's half-bull son the Minotaur and the labyrinth where Athenian youths were forced to be killed, eventually ended by the hero Theseus. T. deduces from the myth his naval power and his ability to enforce tribute from his subjects.

times, after the Greeks and barbarians in the islands and the coastal regions of the mainland had begun to make the crossing back and forth by ship. Under the leadership of the more capable, seeking subsistence for the powerless as well as profit for themselves, pirates attacked and plundered unwalled cities and clusters of villages. This was their most common livelihood, an activity which in those days brought not shame, but rather a sort of glory, (1.5.2) as demonstrated not only by some inland peoples for whom the fine profession is a distinction even today, but also by ancient poets putting to incoming travelers everywhere alike the question whether they are pirates[6] – implying that those being asked would not disavow the profession, and those concerned to know would not condemn it.

(1.5.3) There was piracy inland also; still today many areas of Greece, Ozolian Locris, Aetolia, Acarnania and the mainland in that direction are inhabited in the ancient lifestyle, and the custom of carrying weapons among these interior peoples is a survival of ancient piracy; (1.6.1) all Greece used to carry weapons because of the absence of barriers around their settlements and the lack of safe communication with each other, and it was their custom to live with weapons like the barbarians. (1.6.2) The way of life in those parts of Greece today is evidence that similar customs were once universal.

(1.6.3) The Athenians were the very first to give up their weapons, live in a more relaxed way, and start living more luxuriously; such was their softness that it was only recently that older affluent Athenians stopped wearing linen tunics and tying up their hair in a bun with a fastener of golden cicadas, which led to this dress becoming very fashionable among older Ionians also because of their kinship with Athens.

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[6] Homer, *Odyssey* 3.73-6, 9.252-5, *Hymn to Apollo* 452-5.

(1.6.4) It was the Spartans on the other hand who first wore clothing that was simple and approaching the style today, just as in other ways the wealthier among them adopted a lifestyle identical with the masses. (1.6.5) They were the first to exercise nude, and to strip and rub themselves with oil in public when they exercised. Long ago athletes in the Olympic Games also used to compete wearing loincloths to cover their genitals, and it is not been many years since that custom was discontinued. Even today some non-Greeks, especially in Asia, hold boxing and wrestling competitions in which they engage wearing loincloths. (1.6.6) In many other areas also it could be demonstrated that ancient Greek peoples lived in a manner similar to today's non-Greeks.

(1.7.1) The cities founded more recently, when sailing had already become more widespread and there was more surplus wealth, were built with walls, right on the coasts, or else they blocked an isthmus with trade in mind, and to dominate their neighbors. The cities that were ancient on the other hand, when pirates flourished, robbing each other and anyone else in the non-coastal lowlands, had been founded away from the sea, whether they were on the islands or the mainland, and these remain inland populations today.

(1.8.1) The island populations were pirates as well, evidently Carians and Phoenicians, because these had settled most of the islands. There is proof: when Delos was purified by the Athenians during this war and all the graves of the dead on the island were removed, more than half were revealed to be Carians, recognized by the armor outfits buried with them and the burial method they still use.

(1.8.2) But once the navy of Minos was established, communication by sea increased; after he expelled from the islands the criminals, he colonized most of them, (1.8.3) and the coastal dwellers of the mainland, because they were becoming more affluent as a

consequence, became a more secure population. Some of them even, since they were more wealthy than they had been before, started to build encircling walls. In their common desire for gain, the weaker tolerated enslavement to the stronger, and the more powerful used their surplus to make smaller cities their subjects.

(1.8.4) And so, by the time they undertook the Trojan campaign, the Greeks were already far advanced in their use of the sea.

Comparison of the Trojan War and all previous expeditions

(1.9.1) Agamemnon collected his expedition not so much as the leader of suitors constrained by oaths to Tyndareus[7] in my opinion, but as the preeminently powerful man in Greece at that time; (1.9.2) and collectors of the clearest Peloponnesian traditions from past generations say that it was Pelops who first acquired power with the vast wealth that he brought from Asia to a poor population and, though an immigrant, secured the naming of the land after himself.

Later his offspring were even more fortunate: Eurystheus was killed in Attica by the descendants of Heracles,[8] but his mother's brother was Atreus, and he (it happened he had been banished by his father because of the death of Chrysippus) had been named by Eurystheus regent of Mycenae and his empire, as next of kin; when Eurystheus did not return, Atreus, with the Mycenaeans' support—they feared the descendants of Heracles and thought him powerful, and he had cultivated the Mycenaean masses and all Eurystheus' subjects—

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[7] The father of Helen, who extracted from the suitors of his daughter an oath to defend his choice (Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* fr. 196.204).

[8] The death of Eurystheus is told in Euripides' tragedy *Heracleidae* and other sources; the complex machinations of dynastic overthrow have been embellished by T. himself in this extremely condensed and complex account.

inherited the kingdom, and the descendants of Perseus were eclipsed by those of Pelops.[9]

(1.9.3) Agamemnon, in my opinion, having inherited all this and with a navy more powerful than others besides, relied not on gratitude to assemble the expedition, but fear. (1.9.4) He himself obviously went with the most ships, and provided some to the Arcadians, as Homer (assuming one may make deductions from him) has shown. Further, in the description of the transmission of the scepter (*Iliad* 2.98-108) he says that he "is lord of many islands, and of all Argos." As a mainlander he would not have ruled any islands beyond those few nearby unless he also had a navy.

We must use this expedition to estimate the scale of those before it. (10.1) Now it would be wrong to doubt, merely because Mycenae was small or if some city of those days now seems insignificant, that the expedition was as great as the poets' narrative and its prevailing reputation. (10.2) I believe that if the Lacedaemonians' city were to be emptied of its people, but its temples and the foundations of its construction were left behind, after the passage of much time, many in years to come would be unconvinced that its power had matched its fame. (And yet they occupy two fifths of the Peloponnese, and are leaders of all of it as well as many external allies; but because it was never made a single city with expensive temples and buildings but a settlement of villages in the old Greek manner, it would appear to have been inferior.) But if the same thing happened to Athens, I believe the estimate of its power from the city's manifest appearance would be double the truth. (1.10.3) Therefore it makes no sense to be unconvinced or to study the appearances of cities rather than their powers, but to believe that this force was the greatest of any before

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[9] After the Trojan War the descendants of Pelops (Agamemnon) will be replaced by the descendants of Heracles and the Dorians (ancestors of the present day Peloponnesians), 1.12.2.

it—though it falls short of those today, if on this point also we are to be convinced by the poetry of Homer.

It is probable that as a poet he would have embellished and exaggerated it, but even so it seems to have been quite small. (1.10.4) He has written that out of 1200 ships those of the Boeotians had 120 men each, those of Philoctetes 50. In my opinion, he is showing the largest and smallest crews, since there is no mention in the *Catalogue of Ships* of the size of any other ships. (He has shown, by depicting all the men at the oars as archers, that on Philoctetes' ships they were rowers for themselves as well as fighters. And it makes no sense for many extra personnel to sail with them apart from the king and the highest office-holders, especially since they were going to cross a sea with military equipment and did not even have ships that were decked, but outfitted more pirate-style in the old-fashioned way.) (1.10.5) If one contemplates an average between the largest and the small ships it becomes clear that those who went were not many, considering they were sent jointly from all of Greece.

(1.11.1) The reason was not so much a lack of manpower as a lack of money. Because of inadequate provisioning they not only led too small a force to live off the land while fighting, but even when they had won a victory after landing (because otherwise they would not have built the fortification for their camp)[10] they obviously were unable to use their full fighting strength, but took up farming in the Chersonnese and piracy because of inadequate provisioning. This enabled the Trojans to put up a stronger resistance for ten years while they were dispersed, since they were a match for the Greeks remaining at any one time.

(1.11.2) If the Greeks had come with surplus provisions and conducted the war full-time as an army, without resorting to piracy and farming, they would easily have taken the city by winning an open battle (even

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[10] T.'s statement is a famous problem for scholars, since In *Iliad* 7.382-482 this fortification was built only in the tenth year of the war, as the result not of a victory but a military setback.

in their scattered state they could hold off the divided groups of the enemy), or else by blockading it with a siege they could have conquered Troy with even less time and trouble.

Inadequate wealth was the key to the weakness of Greece before and during the Trojan war, and even later its effects were felt.

Instead, lack of money led to the weakness of previous expeditions and this one too, though the greatest of any before it, is shown by its execution to have been inferior to its legend and the reputation that now prevails about it because of the poets, (1.12.1) and even after the Trojan War Greece continued to undergo migrations and resettlements which prevented it from becoming stable or expanding.

After the Trojan War

(1.12.2) The departure of the Greeks from Troy, because it was delayed so long, caused many revolutions, and there were extensive civil wars in the cities, which led to banishments and the founding of new cities. (1.12.3) In the 60th year after the fall of Troy the Boeotians were expelled from Arne by the Thessalians, and settled in what was earlier the land of Cadmus, but now called Boeotia (although there had been a few Boeotians there earlier of whom some had sailed to Troy). In the 80th year Dorians, along with the descendants of Heracles, took over the Peloponnese.

(1.12.4) When Greece had at last reached a stable peace and was no longer subject to population movements it sent out colonies. The Athenians settled Ionia and most of the islands, the Peloponnesians most of Italy and Sicily and some of the rest of Greece. All these were founded later than the Trojan War.