

# Tweeting the War: Herodotus, Thucydides, and War in Ukraine on Social Media

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# *My background*

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- Digital discourse analysis
- Identity performance on Twitter
- Russian disinformation context

# Who is Tweeting the War using ancient texts?: The methodology

- What kind of account is this? Private individual – (un)identifiable?, public figure, organisation
- Profession/occupation?
- Political orientation?



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📍 Cardiff, Wales 📅 Joined May 2019

192 Following 134 Followers



**BEYONCÉ** ✓  
22 Tweets

Instantly recognisable?

RENAISSANCE WORLD TOUR

**verified**

@Beyonce

shop.beyonce.com/products/ameri... 📅 Joined April 2009

9 Following 15.4M Followers



**Unpublished Media**  
14.2K Tweets

**UNPUBLISHED**

EMPOWERING  
DEMOCRATIC  
CHANGE

**Unpublished Media**  
@unpubmedia

Canada has issues... Discuss, debate, and vote on them at Unpublished.ca-- Canada's safe space for political discourse and debate...

📍 Ottawa, Canada 🌐 unpublished.ca 📅 Joined November 2011

3,452 Following 1,365 Followers

Not followed by anyone you're following

1. Over 5,000 followers/ ratio of following:followers
2. High levels of engagement?

# Who is Tweeting the War using ancient texts? : Examples of coding

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Search Terms	Date	Username	O rganisation/ P ublic F igure/ P rivate I ndividual	P rofession /Occupation	P olitical Orientatio	Notes...	Text	Quote:	Notes...
2	Herodotus + #Ukraine	18-Feb-23	unpubmedia	organisation	news (political)	unknown	focussed on Canada	“One year on, most of the world understands that [Putin is] not an evil genius — just a liar, a brute, and a war criminal.” A Year of War in #Ukraine: Putin Should Have Read Herodotus. We All Should - Bloomberg #Ukrainewar #warnews	no	
3		18-Feb-23	unpubmedia	organisation	news (political)	unknown	focussed on Canada	A Year of #War in #Ukraine: #Putin Should Have Read #Herodotus . We All Should - Bloomberg #uspoli #cdnpoli	no	

## *Who is Tweeting the war using ancient texts? : Findings*

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- Primarily private individuals who show some identifying information (n:144)
- Unidentifiable private individuals (n: 27) and organisations (n: 28)
- Public figures (n:10)
  
- Occupation: primarily unknown
- Where information is shared, mostly a) academics from various areas (e.g., psychology, European studies, science and technology, politics and international relations) b) people engaged with politics in range of capacities (e.g., political consultants, politicians, diplomats)

# *Who is Tweeting the war using ancient texts?: Political affiliation*

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- Political affiliation tends not to be shared, but where it is, those affiliated with the left and right appear evenly represented (left n:23, right n:24)
- The same themes appear across political positions e.g.,
  - Zelenskyy as King Leonidas
  - Ukrainian soldiers as the 300

## Examples:

- #Zelenskyy represents the spirit of King Leonidas I #putin is more cowardly than Xerxes I #Ukraine is our modern #Sparta #Russia is just an incompetent has been too much of a coward to kill its crazy leader (left leaning)
- Volodymyr Zelensky will be forever compared to the King Leonidas of Sparta no matter how this ends. #BidensWar #Ukraine #SpartanUp #Zelensky (right leaning)

# *Who is Tweeting the war using ancient texts?: Other observations*

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- Reference to other historical battles e.g.,
- #Ukraine: the "last stand" at #Mariupol will resonate through history just as the #Spartans at Thermopylae, just as the #Texans at the Alamo. Such heroism and the perpetual struggle for freedom. #Russia - you will forever be in a state of shame. We stand with Ukraine – always
- Not all battles yield victory, but some few inspire us still. Thermopylae. The Alamo. Wizna. The Chasseurs Ardennais. The Battle of Britain. And now #Mariupol. Whether the defenders hold out, the men and women of #Ukraine and #TheWest should be in awe of their sacrifices!

## *Links with other research*

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- Of the politically affiliated accounts, most perpetuate the same narrative (e.g., Ukrainian soldiers as brave heroes, Russia as bully), aside from one, where there appears to be an orientation to a dominant Russian disinformation narrative:
- *Thucydides trap. And the western world is trying to bring Russia to it's knees. It is another attempt at regime change like, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria. The US and Europe want to fight Russia to the last Ukranian.*



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Thank you for listening!

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