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College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Building
Communities Seed corn fund 2022/23, Cardiff University

A cross-disciplinary collaboration

Tuesday 4 July 2023, 11:30-16:00, John Percival Building, Room 3.46

**Tweeting the War: Herodotus, Thucydides, and war in Ukraine on
social media**

SHARE (Ancient history) / ENCAP (Language and Communication)



Maria Fragoulaki, PI,
Ancient history, SHARE

The Team



Tereza Spilioti, Co-I, Language
and Communication, ENCAP



Lucovico Runco, RA,
Ancient history, SHARE



Aurora Goodwin, Language
and Communication, ENCAP



Respondents

Dr Roel Konijnendijk (Ancient History, Oxford)

Dr Argyro Kantara (Language and Communication, ENCAP)

Dr Sean Roberts (Language and Communication, ENCAP)

Ms Viorica Budu (Security, Crime and Intelligence Innovation
Institute, Cardiff)

Dr Maria Kyriakidou (School of Journalism, Media and Culture /
JOMEC, Cardiff)

Dr Michael Munnik (Social Science, Media and Religion, SHARE)

Dr James Ryan (Modern European (Russian) history, SHARE)

Professor Neville Morley (Classics and Ancient History, Exeter)

Professor Laurence Totelin (Ancient history, SHARE)



The project

Herodotus and Thucydides on tweets on war in Ukraine

Life cycle: October 2022-July 2023



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Russia launches Ukraine invasion

We hear from a Ukrainian member of Parliament, a Russian member of the Parliament or Duma with President Putin's United Russia party and BBC correspondents in different parts of Ukraine.

50 minutes



The event

- Present the project, questions, methods, findings
- Engage more experts (across disciplines)
- Explore potential
- Extend collaboration networks



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Questions - Work-in-progress

- How do Herodotus and Thucydides shape public discourse on social media in relation to a current crisis/war?
- Why and how are ancient wars relevant to current wars?
- How are the ancient historical narratives used / transformed / re(embedded) in the digital fragmented space of twitter?





Term: The War 'a violent teacher', Thuc. 3.82.2

Anglophone tweets on war in Ukraine

'War' as a
general concept
dynamic, evolving phenomenon

Thucydides' synchronic perspective:

starting writing immediately after the outbreak of the war 'reckoning that this would be a major war and more momentous than any previous conflict' (1.1.1)

Hunter, V. *Thucydides, the Artful Reporter*, 1973





Thucydides c. 460s-400 BCE

History of the Peloponnesian War (431 – 404 BCE)

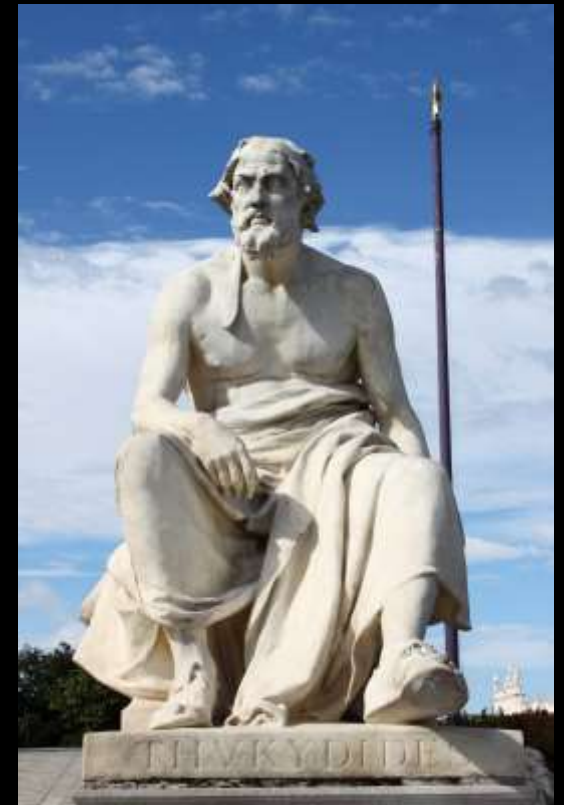
War among the Greeks

Athens (naval empire and democracy)

Sparta (oligarchy, introvert)

Ended in Athens' defeat

Speeches (& narrative) – general feature of ancient historians



Vienna, Parliament Building

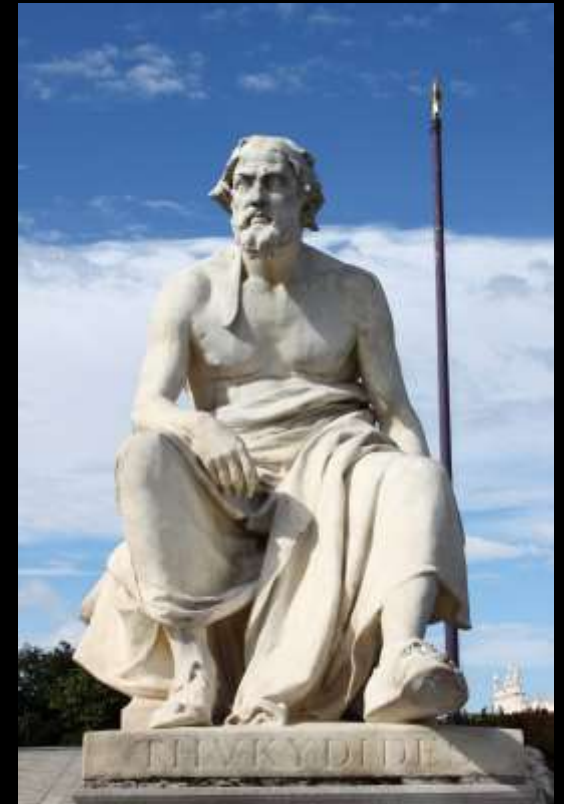


Thucydides c. 460s-400 BCE

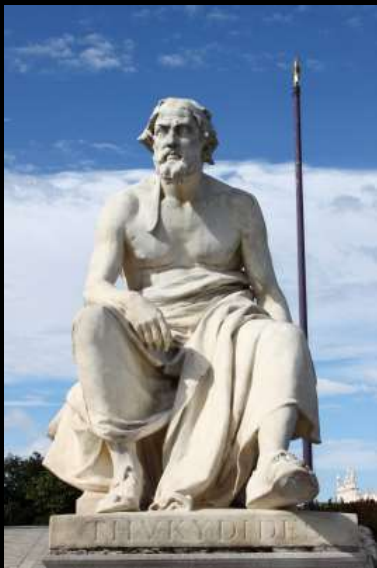
Father of 'scientific' history (methodology)

Foundational / influential:

- political philosophy (Thomas Hobbes' translation, 1629)
- historical science / positivism
 - 'before him I kneel' Leopold von Ranke
 - 'the immortal Thucydides' Barthold Georg Niebuhr
- political realism / IR (Melian Dialogue, 5.85–116)
- Funeral Oration 2.35-46 – Pericles / democracy (*Gettysburg Address*, Lincoln)



Vienna, Parliament Building

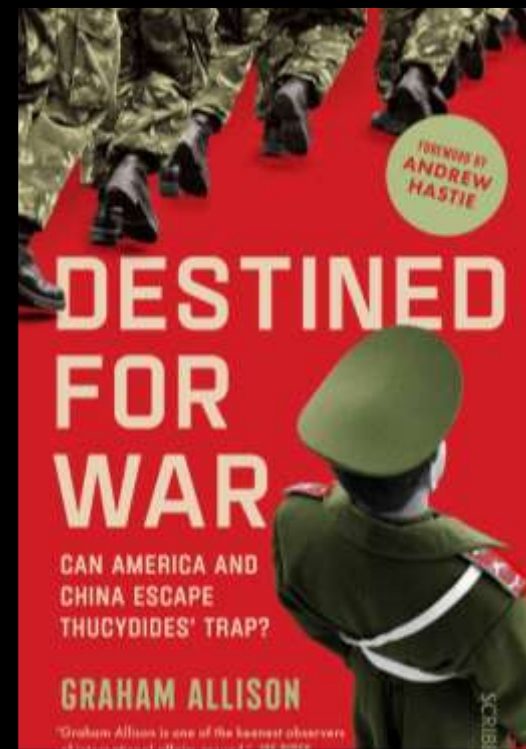
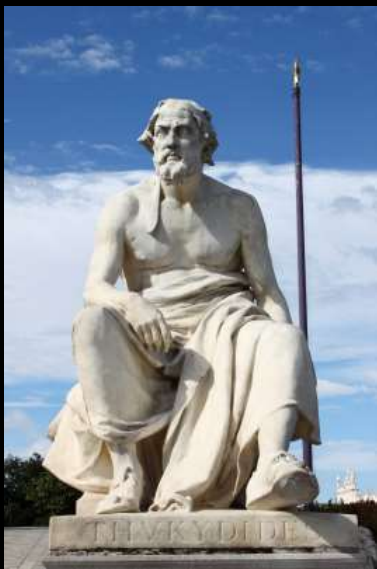


&



Daniel W. Drezner [*The good, the bad and the ugly aspects of Thucydides in the Trump administration. The White House is interested in Thucydides. Uh-oh, Washington Post – PostEverything, June 22, 2017*](#)

(Professor of international politics, Fletcher School of Law and Politics, Tufts University
Twitter user



Graham Allison, Harvard Kennedy School; advisor of secretaries of defense under Reagan, Clinton, and Obama

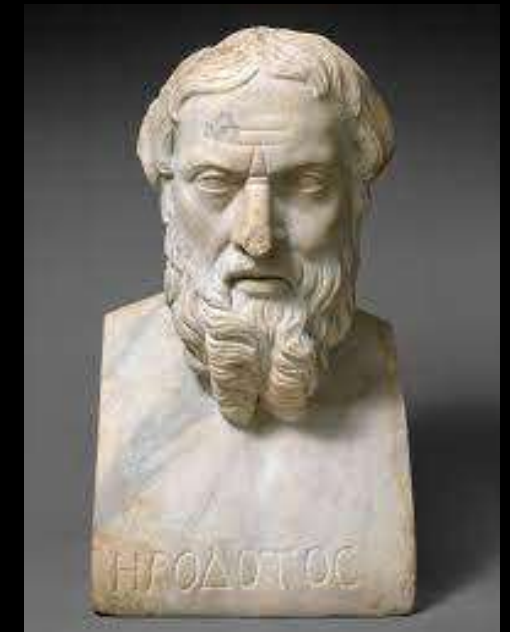
'Thucydides Trap' (2017)



Herodotus, c.480s-420s *Histories*

‘Father of history’ (Cicero)
Graeco-Persian Wars (490-479 BCE) – key theme
Ethnic stereotyping:
Greeks/West vs. Persians/East/‘barbarians’

The first ethnographer – Scythia (Ukraine)
Story- teller (myth, gods/religious explanations)

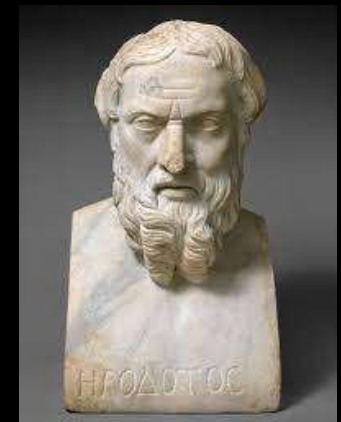
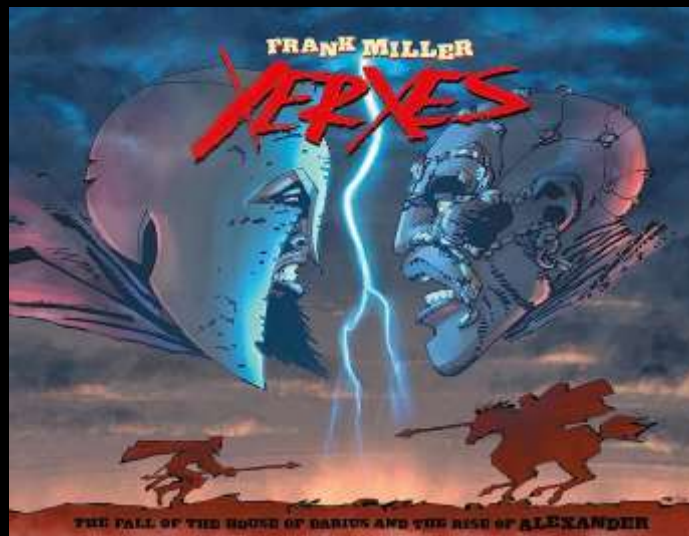




Herodotus, c.480s-420s

Comics

Frank Miller, *Xerxes: The Fall of the House of Darius and the Rise of Alexander* (2018)- prequel to the 300



The 300, Zack Snyder film, 2006 (inspired by Miller's comic 1998)





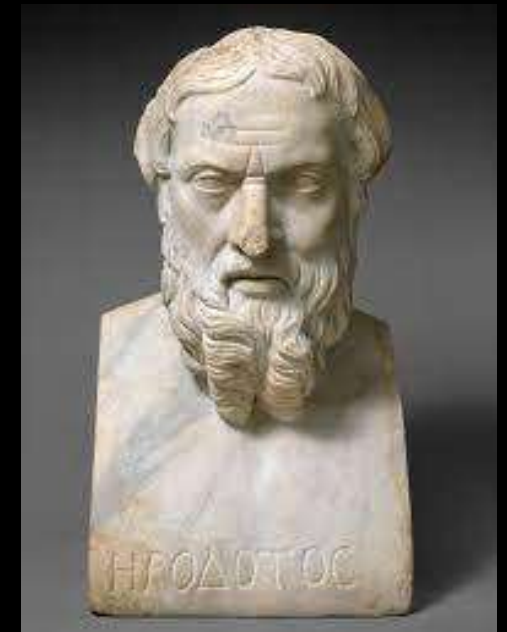
Herodotus, c.480s-420s

Battles

Marathon (490 BCE) – unexpected Greek victory (Hdt. 6.94-120)

the liberation of the #Kharkiv district of #Ukraine will be celebrated on the same day as the battle of #Marathon. the Greeks shattered the idea of the invincible Persian army, the #Ukrainian army put the "second-strongest army of the world" where it belongs: into the trash.

They [the Athenians] were the first Greeks known to charge enemy forces at a run, and the first to endure the sight of Persian dress and the men wearing it (Herodotus 6.112.3)





Herodotus, c.480s-420s

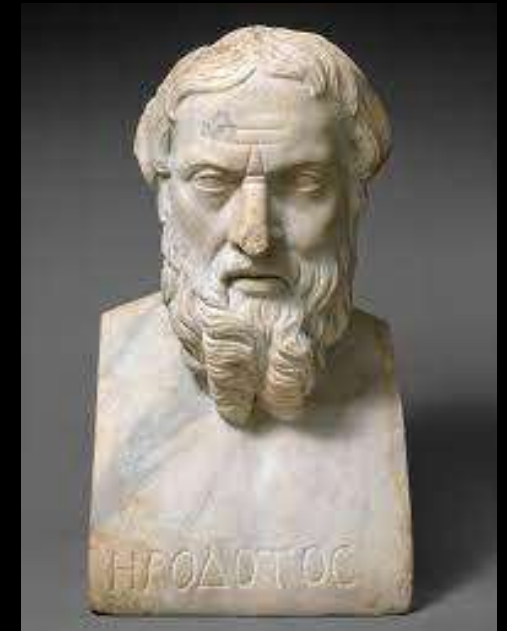
Battles – symbols, memory

Thermopylae (480 BCE) – Greek defeat, Hdt. 7.175-233

Plataea (479 BCE) – Greek victory, Hdt. 9.58-75

The Ukrainian resistance to Putin's army reminds me of the Battle of Thermopylae. If it isn't held, the Battle of Plataea could be fought with nukes. #Ukraine #History #WW3

Thank you #Ukraine from the bottom of our hearts! You are all our heroes. You are like the Sparta, Leonidas and the "300" of modern times, defending democracy from a massive Eastern autocratic invader.





← Tweet

"I don't want Ukraine's history to be a legend about 300 Spartans. I want peace."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addresses his country in the face of the Russian invasion.



4:03 PM · Mar 3, 2022

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Thanks!

Information

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