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THUCYDIDES' RE-EVALUATION OF THE PAST

(A new interpretation)

The past in its broader aspect is not dead and static. In all kinds of existence it is alive in the human mind. It exists in many different ways. Each one lives in the grip of it according to the knowledge he has acquired for this. That applies not only for the common man but also for the professional historian, who is tied down to the past. He holds to views which are deeply intertwined with the basic assumptions of his age.

The historians draw their vital energy from the past and they paint and judge it influenced by interests of their own. The observer has the tendency to survey facts from his stand point, which is in a certain place and time. Each one establishes his own picture of the past, which impresses itself upon one's mind. Even here there exists a dialectic relationship between the observer and the object and nobody knows how the future may affect and relive the past, which, on the other hand, often surprises us with its new performances.

So the past depends a great deal upon its observers. Re-evaluation of the past occurs by each person and deeper by each historian.

Let us examine in which way Thucydides, an eminent historian, worked to achieve a remarkable re-evaluation of the past. We orient ourselves to the part of Greek history before the year 478 b. C. not taking into account the whole affair of the Peisistratidae (but just the polemical part).

Thuc.'s re-examination of this part of the Hellenic history is given mainly in the preface of his work (I, 1-23). In this section which is considered as a superb sample of historical survey, the historian re-evaluates the past and, according to all scholars, modifies a great deal the existing picture in the Greek world. He tries to change this picture and the evaluation of the past offered by the poetry and the prose writers.

The epic poetry and tragedy and the early Greek Historiography as well had appraised Troica and Medica as the greatest events of the past. Thuc. is regarded as rebellious because he depreciates these events and considers them inferior to the PW. All the researchers agree that the wars of the past are classified, according to their greatness and importance, as follows:

1. Peloponnesian war (PW)
2. Persian wars
3. Trojan war

But is really this classification Thucydidean? Does it derive, in the form given above, from the text of the historian?

In the beginning of his work, in this part in which each historian declares his subject and provides his identity card, Thuc. elevates his war by comparing it with previous ones and finding it superior.

Thuc. is distinguished from other historians through his theme. His greatness is tested in a considerable degree upon the importance of his subject. Thus, instead of explaining his own quality and his magnitude, he speaks about the greatness of his subject. His magnitude is proved indirectly. In his preface a comparison of wars takes place and superiority of the PW is connected with the superiority of the author. That war of course happened, is a fact, but it is presented by Thuc. in a specific way. His intelligence has constructed it in such a way that the later historians accept his entire presentation. Some of them simply offer supplementary elements. The differences between the scholars (started already in antiquity) are related to the way they approach and interpret his work.

In his preface Thuc. reconsiders a period of the past starting before the Trojan capture and ending with the repelling of the Persians. In this long space (of almost a thousand years) glitter Troica and Medica as they are praised by the epic and tragic muse (and by the father of history Herodotus) respectively. So glittering had Thuc. found them in the period of the sophistic movement, the age of the great critics and revisors. He proceeded in reassessment of them and for this reason has been considered rebellious. But to what extent was his reassessment and reappraisal of the past rebellious? Which is the degree of his revolutionary way? Has he estimated rightly?

I focus my interpretation on the word πόλεμος (war) which actually is the subject of Thuc.'s history. War occupies his main narration and the speeches as well and leaves no place for cultural issues (as is the case with Herodotus). It may appear strange, however, that scholarship did not examine Thuc. as a theoretician of the war (as πολέμολόγος) but only in a very superficial way. He has simply been examined as a general and a knower of the effects the war has upon human soul. But nobody, as far as I know, has sought his theory on war. This may

be the reason that the great authority on war in the 19c. K. Clausewitz does not use or mention Thuc. and his counterpart in the 20c. R. Aron simply touches him in some points. If Thuc. had been examined as πολυμολόγος, the modern theory of war would be better elaborated.

In the beginning of his work (I, 1, 1) Thuc. declares that he ξυνέγραψε τον πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐπολέμησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἀρξάμενος εὐθύς καθισταμένου καὶ ἐλπίσας μέγαν τε ἔσεσθαι καὶ ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων, τεκμαιρόμενος ὅτι ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτόν ἀμφοτέροι παρασκευῇ τῇ πάσῃ καὶ τό ἄλλο Ἑλληνικόν ὁρῶν ξυνιστάμενον πρὸς ἑκατέρους, τό μὲν εὐθύς, τό δὲ καὶ διανοοῦμενον. It is worthy of attention, I believe, the fact that Thuc. speaks about πόλεμος and ἐπολέμησαν using both the noun and the verb in an excessive and superfluous way. This of course may be considered an annoyance especially at the beginning of his work, about which each writer (recall Plato) cares mostly. The same feeling derives from the beginning of his second book (II, 1): Ἀρχεται δὲ ὁ πόλεμος... ἐν ᾧ ... ξυνεχῶς ἐπολέμουν. And here repetition: πόλεμος, ἐπολέμουν. He must have a special reason. I believe that Thuc. emphasizes war by saying πόλεμος and ἐπολέμησαν above any other happenings called generally as ἔργα.

The distinction made here will help enormously to understand certain passages, in which the events are considered either as πόλεμοι or as ἔργα. This distinction is observed in the terminology of the first book which is different in the preface (1, 23) and the other part of it. This, in addition to other reasons,¹ leads us to believe that the composition of these two parts took place in different time.

Thuc. declares persistently that he wrote πόλεμον and that he went on with his work because he had foreseen that this war will become μέγας καὶ ἀξιολογώτατος τῶν προγεγενημένων. So at the beginning of the war, εὐθύς καθισταμένου. Thuc. was aware of its importance, that it will be μέγας. But already at the beginning was Thuc. convinced that the war will be not only μέγας but also μείζων τῶν γεγενημένων? (I, 21, 2). I believe that the comparison was made in the historian's mind rather at the end of the 27 years old war. From the very beginning he understood that this war would be a great one and at the end (when he wrote the preface, as I believe) he has been assured that his predictions were rather superseded and so κίνησις αὕτη μεγίστη τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐγένετο καὶ μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ὡς δὲ εἶπεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων (I, 1, 2).

Oddly enough the scholars are not dealing primarily with the very part which contains the historians view about the superiority of his war. For what reason the keen historian and we would say ἄριστος εἰκαστής τῶν μελλόντων (as Themistocles) predicted that the war would be μέγας and certainly became κίνησις μεγίστη? Why the war did become the greatest? What is the proof of Thuc? The historian presents the proof of his prediction which came out entirely (and rather was superseded) by one only phrase: ἀκμάζοντες τε ἦσαν (or ἦσαν) ἐς αὐτόν ἀμφοτέροι. Let us condense it: ἐπολέμησαν ἀκμάζοντες.

The historian based his prediction about the magnitude of the war on the situation of the opponents and on the fact that the rest of the Greeks had already taken either side of the belligerents or were ready to do so. In the great propensity of the belligerents which pushed them to use all their power to the war and in the readiness for war of the others, their tension to join the two leading powers, we find the reason of the wars greatness. The tension of the others may be due to the strength of the two opponents. At war the strong are attracting, the weak are joining. In peace neutrality and independence are either respected or tolerated. So the word ὄρων is connected with ἀκμάζοντες which in this way carries the main gravity. The fact that the strong opponents entered the war with propensity incomparable and continued it in the same way (or more) is the reason that the war became μέγας... ἀξιολογώτατος... κίνησις μεγίστη.

No matter how we accept the word ἦσαν, ἦσαν (as past either of εἰμί or ἔρχομαι) the ἀκμή of the belligerents was the main cause of the war and this ἀκμή appears to be persistent all over the war (if we prefer ἦσαν; cf II, 8, 1 ἔρρωντο ἐς τόν πόλεμον). Thuc. considers mainly the psychological tension and its persistence. They were high in all the war. He does not emphasize that the opponents in the PW ἤκμαζον omni bellico apparatu, meant generally as great numbers of human and material things, because in this way Thuc. would betray himself, since the known numbers of the belligerents in the Troica and Medica, which he had not challenged, were greater than his numbers of the PW. The scholars by translating the word ἀκμάζοντες simply as at the height of their power and preparedness, meant as numbers, and finding that they are lower than those given for Troica and Medica are unable to explain the attitude of Thuc.; does he deny and contradict himself? At this point everybody blames him.²

We should however regard not only his given numbers in certain

events of the actual warfare but also those in the internal revolutions which are unknown. The polemical and destructive earthquake (PW) was great, deep, general and long.

But the scholars not only fail to take into account the psychological element, the propensity and determination of the belligerents, but they also miss the cardinal point, as I believe; they fail to raise the question: were the two powers of the PW equal or different? This is the fundamental question.

It is as the scholars were obliged to agree that the opponents were equal. But does the word ἀκμάζοντες allow this meaning? In other words; is the strength of the Peloponnesians and Athenians an element enough to justify the importance and magnitude of the war? To make it more clear; if a superpower fights against a small one will it be a great war just if both are prosperous? If two animals, a lion and a lamb, both at the peak of their development, collide, will that struggle be great? this obvious fact has been overlooked. The ἀκμή of the belligerents has not been examined in relationship to each other. Is this an omission of Thuc.? Oughtn't he to tell us that the A or B was superior or that both were equal? or that he was unable to estimate their dynamic? The superiority of the one over the other predicts for the stronger the outcome of the struggle. The equality of the opponents on the other hand prejudices great fight and this is well known today even to the laymen; in sports we see that the greater the difference in dynamic between the opponents the less the interest of the game for the public. The best example does not provide soccer, as R. Aron believes,³ but rather volley ball and tennis. In both these games, the equality of the opponents prolongs the game (sometimes for many hours) whereas in soccer and basket ball we have *tempus clausum* and in these the score indicates their dynamic. I believe that Thuc. did not compare the opponents because the word πόλεμος (etymologically relative to πόλος, πόλωσις... polarization) includes in itself the meaning of equality. So equality is not to be sought in ἀκμάζειν but in πόλεμος.

If the opponents are aware of their equal strength (balance of power, of forces, of terror) and avoid the clash, the peace is preserved, because of the ἀντίπαλον δέος (Thuc. III, 11, 2): *mutui metus aequalitas*. The opponents contain themselves δέει τε τό πλέον ἢ φίλια (ibid. 12, 1). If one or the other hand of the opponents, as Thuc. again teaches, comes to the conclusion that the balance is shifted to his advantage then he attacks the other who does not take his precautions.

We have accepted that Thuc. considered superfloous to inform us about the relative strength of the belligerents because the word πόλεμος presupposes the equality of the opponents. But is it true for Thuc. and for all the Greek historians the general opinion of A. Momigliano that «they found themselves lacking in comparable tools when wars came up for a post-mortem»?⁴ I don't think that this is true in regard to Thuc. at least. A number of proper comparisons of political and military preparations and powers of the belligerent are often found in his work (eg. I, 10, 3. 11, 1. 14, 1. 18, 2).

Thuc., as is commonly said, compares his war with the two major events in the Greek world up to his date, Troica and Medica, and assures the superiority of the PW which he ξυνέγραψε. The scholars were suppressed with the stability of the method, which they took for granted that Thuc. had followed, and stuck to the opinion that here the historian with the proper comparison found out the superiority of the PW; he compared this war with the most important wars of the past.

My objections have to do not so much with the case if Thuc. made comparison but rather if the historian in his preface thought of Troica and Medica as great and important wars.

It seems to me that the historian not only minimizes the two famous events of the past, Troica and Medica, but he tends to discard and consider them (and this the entirely new point) not as wars but just as facts.

In the first case Thuc. speaks of a military expedition of the Greeks, who ἐπὶ Τροίαν ἐστράτευσαν (I, 8, 4). But such an expedition, if there is not resistance resulting in war, leads to a quick victory. It is known that Agamemnon made this expedition οὐ χάριτι τό πλεον ἢ φόβῳ ξυναγαγών. Thus, although the given numbers were higher than in the PW, the whole power was ἐνδεεστέρα (even ἐπὶ τό μειζον decorated). Why? The reason is that the strength of their will was weak. The co-operation of the other Greeks depended on the power of Agamemnon and not on their free will.

For the Persian Wars (as we know them) the historian mentions the ἐν Μαραθῶνι μάχην just as a name and immediately says that δεκάτῳ ἔτει μετ' αὐτήν ὁ θάρβαρος τῷ μεγάλῳ στόλῳ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα δουλωσόμενος ἦλθεν (I, 18, 1). The Ξέρξου στρατεία was rather a sudden raid than a regular war.

For Thuc. Troica and Medica are simply ἔργα and ἔργα in his vocabulary are rather operations and warlike actions, happenings and not

wars. The meaning of ἔργον is very elastic and goes from the greatest event to the smallest one. It means every human action and achievement but the meaning of ἔργον as important war operation (gewichtige Handlung, according to H. Erbse,⁵ accomplishment, according to Connor⁶) is the most common. So ἔργα have something (and very important) to do with war but they are not wars (primarily at least).

Thuc. distinguishes in his preface πόλεμος and ἔργον and writes for instance Πόλεμος Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων but Τρωϊκά, Μηδικά (sc. ἔργα). He doesn't say Τρωϊκός and Μηδικοί (or Περσικοί) πόλεμοι. He gives the impression that he is seeking to give the two famous events of the past in a synoptic way and to minimize their value. He spares the appellation of war not for these events but only for the PW and some other ones. It is really striking that whereas he avoids the word πόλεμος for the two famous events of the past, he uses the same word in a superfluous way about the PW. The strict vocabulary is obvious in the preface which must have been written after a painful experience of the war. The events of this war made him see eg. the ἔργον of Herodotus as less important than he had seen it at the beginning of the war. Then he could say in a part of his work, written rather at the beginning of the war or during the first half of it. Μηδικός πόλεμος (I, 90, 1 and 95. 97, cf. I, 98, 3 where is mentioned πρὸς Καρυστίους πόλεμος of the Athenians). In the above case Thuc. is likely to adopt the common opinion of the people who knew Medica as war. In his preface however which is written rather after 404 and probably in the last written part of his work Thuc. himself comes to the stage and expresses his own opinions. This part might have been written as a separate paper to advertise his own achievement, his own συγγραφή, which he was going to finish.

But Thuc. did not save the use of the πόλεμος only for the PW in his preface. Somewhere he says roughly, οἱ πολέμῳ ἢ στάσει ἐκπίπτοντες (I, 2, 6) and that οἱ ἀστυγείτονες ἐπολέμουν (I, 15, 2) or the Ionians against Cyrus (I, 13, 6). However in two cases of his preface Thuc. mentions concrete and separate πολέμους, as the Lelantine, the πάλαι ποτὲ γεγόμενον πόλεμον Χαλκιδέων καὶ Ἑρετριῶν (I, 15, 3) and another one between Aeginetans and Athenians (we can call it Σαρωνικός Πόλεμος).

Why were these two conflicts mainly (of course in addition to the PW) named wars and not the events in Troy and those against the Persians? I believe that Thuc.'s criteria for his characterisation was the

equal power of the belligerents; since the mutual fear did not contain them (because the expectations would have been great) they came to clash and even became poles to attract others. The equal strength made the war expand and gave to it πολέμου μήκος.

In Lelantine war which took place about 700 b. C. Thuc. mentioned in a simple but very exclusive way that τό ἄλλο Ἑλληνικόν ἐς ξυμμαχίαν ἐκατέρων διέστη (I, 15, 3). The Lelantine war divided Greece (as the PW) and the Greek cities went either to Chalcidians or Eretrians. All indications point out that this war was spread over a considerable time.⁷

For the war between Aiginetans and Athenians which preceded the Ξέρξου στρατεία we know more than about the Lelantine. This war lasted 25 years almost the same μήκος as the PW. Thuc. primarily concerned with the fact that at the end of this war (ὁψέ...) Athens became a nautical power.

The elements which we underlined in the two wars mentioned before, with other words the equality of the opponents and their attractive power (as we can say) which both secure a prolonged war, a protracted and uninterrupted extension of it, Thuc. cannot find in the Troica and Medica.

But let us see Troica and Medica clearer. Those who went to Troy (and τροφῆς ἀπορία did not go all οἱ δυνάμενοι) did not all fight against the Trojans. Since they succeeded in walling τῷ στρατοπέδῳ they cultivated the Chersonese and robbed the area because of food scarcity. So the Trojans αὐτῶν διεσπαρμένων τὰ δέκα ἔτη ἀντείχον βίῃ, τοῖς αἰεὶ ὑπολοιπομένοις ἀντίπαλοι ὄντες (I, 11, 1).

Thuc. reducing the importance of the ten years war against the Trojans which is really a long period of time says that in the clashes took part only the ones who were not cultivating the land or not robbing. The Trojans resisted for 10 years because they in each moment had to fight against a few of the Greeks.

The meaning we derive from Thuc.'s text is that the Greeks undertook the expedition without supplies and οὐ χάριτι τό πλέον ἢ φόβῳ. Hence they could not make a continuous blockade in order to achieve a quick submission of the Trojans. Agamemnon has not the ability to attract others; he took as many as he could by force. The Greeks did not follow him willingly.

Compare now this unwillingness of the Greeks during the Τρωικά and the way Thuc. speaks about the PW at which πᾶν τό Ἑλληνικόν

ἐκινήθη (III, 82, 1). He saw the whole Greek world, as we have said, ξυνιστάμενον πρὸς ἑκατέρους (I, 1, 1).

In the case of the Μηδικὸν indeed μέγας κίνδυνος threatened Greece but according to the historian the operation δυοῖν, ναυμαχίαι καὶ πεζομαχίαι, ταχεῖαν τὴν κρίσιν ἔσχεν (I, 23, 1)⁸ Thuc. does not say anything about the signifacance of the Greek victory which was much more important as the powers of the opponents were extremely different and won the much fewer. He avoids mentioning any numbers of the belligerents. Thuc. emphasizes only the fact that the conflict ταχεῖαν τὴν κρίσιν ἔσχεν. The Μηδικὸν was short whereas the PW has μῆκος μέγα. And something very important; in the decade of the Τρωικά Thuc. sees great relaxation and shortage of military actions and in the decade of the Μηδικά, from Marathon to Salamis, a total emptiness. He misses the continuity, the uninterruptedness; absent is the καταστάντες ξυνεχῶς ἐπολέμουν of the PW. In brief we could say that the two decades (Troica, Medica) have in common that something happened at the beginning and at the end of them. This was all. In the two decades of Τρωικά and Μηδικά Thuc. sees a great break and gap. Military action was indeed the expedition against Troy, as far as the forces landed and consolidated an ἔρυσμα. But what happened afterwards and in a period of ten years? They did not continue the first action to fill all the decade with similar ones. These actions could permit with their ξυνεχῶς to be called the entire activity of the decade as war. Pay attention how simply Thuc. says what we said in extenso: εἰ ξυνεχῶς τὸν πόλεμον διέφερον which means if they continue the war without interruption; διαφέρειν τὸν πόλεμον means brings, draws, carries the war through all the distance and without any void. This did not happen in the Τρωικά.

In the Μηδικά on the other hand are included the ἐν Μαραθῶνι μάχη (490 b. C.) and the events of 480/79 b. C. And here as well is a gap of ten years and even a complete one. War action is the battle of Marathon and whatever happened after 10 years with which the whole operation ταχεῖαν τὴν κρίσιν ἔσχεν. The two decades of Troica and Medica have only starting and ending points:

Troica	Medica
(1194)...	490...
3 –	9
2 –	8
1 –	7
90 –	6
9 –	5
8 –	4
7 –	3
6 –	2
5 –	1
1184 ...	480/79...

So according to Thuc. Τρωικά and Μηδικά are not wars. The historian is careful in his vocabulary and terms. But what happens with his translators? An example: Rex Warner translates πόλεμος as war. But he also translates ἔργον as war in I, 23, 1: τῶν δέ πρότερον ἔργων μέγιστον ἐπράχθη τό Μηδικόν: «The greatest war in the past was the Persian War». And he is using twice in his translation the word war (a third usage of war is in the first part of his own name: Warner). So the most known perhaps translation of Thuc. (excellent generally) eternalizes the mistake for those who base on the translation and only occasionally cast a glance at the original work.

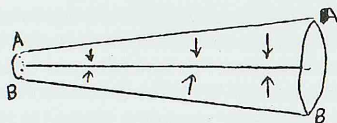
From the above we come to the conclusion that Thuc., following the principle that different things cannot be compared, does not compare the Troica and Medica to the PW but to other wars of the Greek past.

But which are the other wars; Those were just a few as the Lelantine and the war between Aiginetans and Athenians (the Saronic) which were more than less naval wars.

In the ναυτικά τῶν Ἑλλήνων insists especially Thuc. because they bring strength. The declaration of the historian is absolute: κατά γῆν δέ πόλεμος... οὐδεὶς ξυνέστη (I, 15, 2). After this indication of the historian how can we accept that the Troica, which happened on land, were war? Those events acquired φήμην and λόγον through the poets but if we examine the facts they revealed ὑποδεέστερα ὄντα τῆς φήμης καὶ τοῦ νῦν περὶ αὐτῶν διὰ τοῦς ποιητάς λόγου κατεσχηκότος (I, 11, 2).

From Thuc.'s indication that κατά γῆν δέ πόλεμος, ὅθεν τις καὶ δύναμις παρεγένετο, οὐδεὶς ξυνέστη is revealed that addition of

power is considered as a characteristic of war. Actually wars (according to R. Smoke)⁹ «have the potential of widening in geographic scope and involving additional nations (sometimes called horizontal escalation) or of becoming more intense in the tempo of events and the violence of weapons employed (vertical escalation)». War, I believe, is like a truncated cone:



In this cone the belligerents are A and B who, while fighting, increase their power.

Briefly in each war are according to Thuc. indispensable the following:

1. Pretension for extension and intensity of emotions, power and military preparedness.
2. Equality of the opponents in such a way that nobody can be able to predict the outcome of the conflict (although each one expects the victory).
3. Uninterruptedness.
4. Increase of power of the belligerents.
5. Durability and destructiveness.

These elements are present according to Thuc. in the PW, the Peloponnesian War, the War between Argives and Athenians, the War of Ionians and Cyrus (II) and in some conflicts between ἀστυγείτονες (I, 15, 2). Τρωικά and Μηδικά are not wars although they have something of war, indeed some very important event of it. They can be called quasi-wars.

It is very hard to find which war (after the exclusion of the Τρωικά and Μηδικά) comes second and third because the evidence is limited. Even Thuc. does not elaborate on this point. He is satisfied with his declaration and argumentation that the PW was major.

In the sentence ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων the PW is

the first part of the comparison. Which is the meaning of the προγεγενημένων, the second part of the comparison? Is it masculine or neuter? Προγεγενημένοι (sc. πόλεμοι) or προγεγενημένα (sc. all the events of the past taken collectively)? I am inclining to the first (πόλεμοι) because it is the subject of the historian. (cf. μείζων γεγενημένος αὐτῶν, I, 21, 2). But does προγεγενημένοι mean each one of the previous wars or all of them taken collectively? Since the genitive προγεγενημένων, in the text, stays alone without any definition I am going to accept the second possibility because Thuc. does not write ἀξιολογώτατος or μείζων ενός ἐκάστου τῶν προγεγενημένων but simply τῶν προγεγενημένων; Cf. Isocr. Pax 134 μιᾷ μὲν ἐκάστης τῶν πόλεων κρείττους ἐσμέν, ἀπασῶν δ' ἥττους. So Thuc. in the age of the Sophists (esp. of Protagoras), regarding wars (as all things) as measurable and comparable, puts on the one scale his war (the PW) and on the other all the wars of the past taken together and finds out that the PW outweighs in significance all the others.

I believe that Thuc. rebels more than it is generally thought but even so with good reason. He emphasizes the persistence and durability of tension, he penetrates into the soul and spirit of the belligerents. He is the historian of the polemical psychology. Erbse has actually observed that the historian can «den Leser immer erneut schockieren und zum Nachdenken zwingen».¹⁰ But he had not observed that Thuc. challenges more profoundly.

Thuc. tries a radical re-evaluation of the Hellenic past. He elevates his own project, his own field as the great school of breaking the code of all the forces of human nature as they are revealed by the most efficient teacher, the war, the βίαιος διδάσκαλος (the violent school-master, III, 82, 8).

But although Thuc. in warfare terminology degrades the Troica and Medica, even more than the scholars believe, his estimation is right and seems not so shocking, if we take into consideration his theory of war. Troica and Medica are great events, μεγάλα καὶ θωμαστά, but not wars. Thuc. emphasizes the degree of the willingness and tension of the belligerents, their equality and as consequences of them the durability and destructiveness.

Thuc. himself was aware of the power of the poets who ἐπὶ τό μείζον κοσμοῦσι (I, 21, 1) and according to Plato (Min. 320e) μέγα δύνανται εἰς δόξαν. So the Troica and Medica are still and for ever beaming.

Thuc. anticipates the recent view of the modern theoreticians of war who consider the equality of opponents, the «equilibrium of forces», as a factor to maintain peace or observe the consequences which such an equality of power will have if a war, for different reasons, breaks out.

Thuc. knew, as I believe, the fact that πόλεμος is polarization and that its poles (exactly as in nature) are equal in strenght and that (something which has not been observed at all) the words πόλος, πόλωσις, are etymologically of the same root.

The magnitude of the PW (which may have become major through Thuc.' s pen and is established as measure even for later wars up to our century such as the I and II World Wars) results from the crossation of ἀκμάζοντες in Greece and is revealed as an expanding propensity of equal belligerents. The combination of these factors secured to it long and uninterrupted duration and made it in many aspects ἀξιολογώτατον.

NOTES

1. Other and more important reasons are the general advertising tone of this section and passages like I, 13, 3, where are events dated» ἐς τὴν τελευταίαν τοῦδε τοῦ πολέμου (cf. I, 18, 1), which means rather the whole war than the first decade of it.
2. A. W. Gomme, *Essays in Greek History and Literature*, Oxford 1937, p. 116.
3. Raymond Aron, *Peace and War, A Theory of International Relations* (transl. from French by R. Howard and A. Baker Fox), N. York-Washington 1967, p. 8.
4. Arnaldo Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography*, London 1966, p. 121.
5. H. Erbse, *Über das Proömion des Thukydideischen Geschichtswerkes*, Rh. Mus. 113, 1970, p. 66.
6. W.R. Connor, *Thucydides*, Princeton 1984, p. 31.
7. J. V. A. Fine, *The Ancient Greeks*, Cambridge Mass. 1983. p. 71, 78, 117.
8. Έμμ. Μικρογιαννάκης, *Θουκυδίδεια*, Athens 1991, p. 64.
9. R. Smoke, *War controlling Escalation*, London 1977, p. VIII.
10. H. Erbse, op. c. p. 69

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Εμμ. Μικρογιαννάκης,
Θουκυδίδης: Επαναξιολόγηση του παρελθόντος

“Ολοι οί μελετητές του Θουκυδίδη δέχονται ότι ο μέγας ιστορικός, αξιολογώντας τό μέγεθος τών μεγάλων πολέμων του παρελθόντος και συγκρίνοντας αυτούς πρός τόν Π.Π., θεωρεί πιό μεγάλο από όλους τον Π.Π. καί κατόπιν τά Μηδικά καί Τρωϊκά. Πράγματι όμως αυτό προκύπτει από τη μελέτη του έργου του;

Στην εργασία αυτή υποστηρίζεται ότι στό Προοίμιό του (I, 1-23), πού αποτελεί χωριστή ένότητα στό έργο του καί φαίνεται ότι έγράφη μετά το 404 καί ύστερα από τό υπόλοιπο έργο του, ο ιστορικός δέχεται μάλλον ότι τά Τρωϊκά καί τά Μηδικά ήσαν μεγάλα καί αξιόλογα «έργα», ίσως όσο τά παρουσιάζει ή ποίηση. Οί μελετητές του όμως περιέρχονται σέ άμηχανία όταν τόν βλέπουν νά κάνει λεπτομερείς ύπολογισμούς π.χ. γιά τόν αριθμό τών πλοίων πού έπλευσαν στην Τροία καί να βρίσκει αριθμούς πού πρόδηλα μειονεκτούν τών αντίστοιχων του Π.Π. Είναι τόσο άφελής ο Θουκυδίδης νά δίνει βαρύτητα σέ μεγέθη πρός τά όποια συγκρίνει τό ίδιο του έργο; Θά περίμενε κανείς νά τά μειώνει, γιά νά φαίνονται ύπεροχώτερα τά ιστορούμενά του.

Πιστεύω ότι ο Θουκυδίδης κάνει διάκριση «πολέμου» καί «έργου». Δέχεται ότι «έργα» καί μάλιστα μεγάλα είναι τα Τρωϊκά καί τά Μηδικά. Δεν είναι όμως πόλεμοι. Διότι πόλεμος κατά τόν Θουκυδίδη (πού δέν δίνει τόν όρισμό του πολέμου –ίσως τόν προϋποθέτει γνωστό – αλλά βγαίνει από τό κείμενό του) είναι σειρά μαχών καί έπιχειρήσεων χωρίς διακοπή καί πτώση του πολεμικού πυρετού. Οί μάχες του πολέμου χωρίζονται βεβαίως από χρονικά διαστήματα προετοιμασιών αλλά αποτελούν όλόκληρα αύξανόμενου πάθους (μέχρι την κορύφωση). Στόν πόλεμο γιά νά υπάρχει ένταση πάθους καί διάρκεια («μήκος») πρέπει οί αντίπαλοι νά είναι ίσοσθενείς. Ίσοδύναμοι αντίπαλοι, αν συγκρουσθούν, πολεμούν επί μακρόν, ενώ ή σαφής ύπεροχή του ενός οδηγεί σέ «ταχείαν κρίσιν». Στόν όλο χρόνο πού καλύπτει ο πόλεμος ύπάρχει πυκνότητα έπιχειρήσεων καί αδιάπτωτο πάθος. Δέν παρουσιάζονται μεγάλα κενά καί μάλιστα έντυπωσιακά. Ίδού διατί πιστεύω ότι ο Θουκυδίδης επιμένει νά δείξει ότι τά Τρωϊκά καί τά Μηδικά είναι δεκα-

ετη διαστήματα πού έχουν μόνον αρχή καί τέλος. Κάτι ἔγινε στό πρῶτο ἔτος πού ἔφθασε ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων στήν Τροία καί οἱ Ἀχαιοί ὀχυρώθηκαν. Ἔπειτα; «Ἀπορία τροφῆς» ἐστράφησαν οἱ περισσότεροι στην ληστεία καί τήν καλλιέργεια τῆς γῆς. Κατά τό δέκατον ἔτος ὕστερα ἀπό συντονισμένη ἐπιχείρηση ἔγινε ἐπιτέλους ἡ ἄλωση τῆς Τροίας. Κάτι ἔγινε (καί μεγάλο) στόν Μαραθῶνα (τό 490) καί «δεκάτῳ ἔτει» κατόπιν φθάσαμε στά γεγονότα τοῦ 480 καί 479. Καί στίς δύο περιπτώσεις ὑπάρχει ἓνα τεράστιο κενό. Σέ κάθε περίπτωση μιά δεκαετία χωρίς γεγονότα ἀνοίγει καί κλείνει μέ σύντομες (χρονικά) ἐπιχειρήσεις.

Γεγονότα μέ διάρκεια καί πυκνότητα ἐπιχειρήσεων πρός τά ὁποῖα, ὅπως πιστεύω, συγκρίνει ὁ Θεουκυδίδης τόν Π.Π. εἶναι τά μεταξύ Χαλκιδέων καί Ἑρετριέων ὡς καί μεταξύ Ἀθηναίων καί Αἰγινητῶν (Ληλάντιος καί Αἰγινητικός πόλεμος ἀντίστοιχα).

Ἡ ἐργασία αὐτή διευρυνόμενη ἴσως θά ἀποτελέσει πλήν ἄλλων συμβολή στήν ὅλη θεωρία περί τοῦ πολέμου.