



NAXOS
AudioBooks

NON-
FICTION

Thucydides

THE HISTORY OF THE
PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Read by **Neville Jason**

1	Book 1 – Chapter 1	6:02
2	1.7 For in early times the Hellenes and the barbarians...	6:00
3	1.13 As time went on and Eurystheus did not return, Atreus...	5:43
4	1.18 Even after the Trojan War, Hellas was still engaged...	5:44
5	1.23 Various, too, were the obstacles which the national...	4:49
6	1.29 On the whole, however, the conclusions I have drawn...	5:01
7	Chapter 2: Immediate Causes of the War	1:58
8	Chapter 3: Congress of the Peloponnesian Confederacy...	4:39
9	3.7 'We are at last assembled. It has not been easy to assemble...'	5:11
10	3.12 'Such is Athens, your antagonist. And yet, Spartans...'	5:58
11	3.17 'Such, then, was the result of the matter, and it was...'	4:56
12	3.23 'We imagine that our moderation would be best demonstrated...'	5:53
13	3.31 'Confidence might possibly be felt in our superiority in...'	5:54
14	3.38 'In practice we always base our preparations against...'	5:11
15	Chapter 4: From the end of the Persian to the beginning...	2:25
16	Chapter 5: Second Congress at Sparta – Preparations for War...	5:32
17	5.7 'To apply these rules to ourselves, if we are now kindling...'	5:40
18	5.12 'Your position, therefore, from whatever quarter...'	4:47
19	5.16 Speech of Pericles to the Athenians on the conduct...	4:58
20	5.21 'The great wish of some is to avenge themselves on...'	4:39

21	5.26 Dismissing all thought of our land and houses, we must...	4:15
22	Book 2 – Chapter 6: Beginning of the Peloponnesian War	5:00
23	6.6 He accordingly took the precaution of announcing to...	5:55
24	6.11 He, meanwhile, seeing anger and infatuation just now...	5:37
25	6.17 ‘For it is hard to speak properly upon a subject where...’	5:05
26	6.23 ‘If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ...’	5:40
27	6.28 ‘Indeed if I have dwelt at some length upon the character...’	4:19
28	6.32 ‘These take as your model and, judging happiness to be...’	4:31
29	Chapter 7: Second Year of the War – The Plague of Athens...	3:34
30	7.5 Externally the body was not very hot to the touch...	3:21
31	7.9 By far the most terrible feature in the malady was the...	5:55
32	7.15 During the whole time that the Peloponnesians were in...	5:41
33	7.20 ‘If you shrink before the exertions which the war makes...’	5:06
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35	7.27 For as long as he was at the head of the state during the...	3:51
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38	9.8 Speech of the Mytilenean ambassadors requesting help...	5:56
39	9.12 ‘Such, Spartans and allies, are the grounds and the...’	5:26
40	9.17 If, at the time that this fleet was at sea, Athens had...	5:46

41	9.22 'The most alarming feature in the case is the constant...'	5:24
42	9.27 'Our mistake has been to distinguish the Mytileneans...'	4:56
43	9.33 Speech of Diodotus on Mytilene, in response to Cleon	5:37
44	9.38 'Now of course communities have enacted the penalty of...'	4:39
45	9.43 'Only consider what a blunder you would commit in doing...'	4:50
46	Chapter 10: Fifth Year of the War – Trial and Execution of...	4:55
47	10.4 To your short question, whether we have done...	5:39
48	10.9 'To such a depth of misfortune have we fallen that...'	6:10
49	10.15 The speech of the Thebans	5:06
50	10.20 'Meanwhile, after thus plainly showing that it was not...'	4:55
51	10.24 'Such, Spartans, are the facts. We have gone...'	5:05
52	Civil war in Corcyra	5:56
53	10.35 Oaths of reconciliation, being only proffered...	5:54
54	Chapter 11: Sixth Year of the War – Campaigns...	0:23
55	Chapter 12: Seventh Year of the War – Occupation of Pylos...	5:31
56	10.52 To apply this to ourselves: if peace was ever desirable.	3:45
57	10.55 Their arrival at once put an end to the armistice at...	2:56
58	Chapter 13: Seventh and Eighth Years of the War...	5:14
59	Chapter 14: Eighth and Ninth Years of the War...	4:12
60	10.64 'Some of you may hang back because they have private...'	4:51

61	Chapter 15: Tenth Year of the War – Death of Cleon and Brasidas	4:08
62	10.71 The Athenians and Spartans and their...	4:58
63	10.71 Chapter 16: Feeling against Sparta in Peloponnese...	2:58
64	10.74 I lived through the whole of it, being of an age to comprehend...	3:28
65	Chapter 17: Sixteenth Year of the War –The Melian Conference...	5:05
66	10.84 Athenians. The end of our empire, if end it should...	5:30
67	10.97 Melians. You may be sure that we are as well aware...	4:31
68	10.104 Athenians. Some diversion of the kind you speak...	6:08
69	Book 6 – Chapter 18: Seventeenth Year of the War...	5:34
70	18.5 ‘Again, some of the most powerful states have never yet...’	5:02
71	18.9 ‘When I see such persons now sitting here at the side...’	5:41
72	18.14 ‘What I know is that persons of this kind and all...’	5:30
73	18.19 ‘Be convinced, then, that we shall augment our power...’	5:21
74	18.24 ‘I think, therefore, that we ought to take great numbers...’	4:45
75	18.28 Upon hearing this the Athenians at once voted that...	4:02
76	Chapter 19: Seventeenth Year of the War – Parties at Syracuse...	0:15
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80	Chapter 23: Nineteenth Year of the War – Battles in the Great Harbour...	5:50

81	23.7 After this the Syracusans set up a trophy for the sea-fight...	6:53
82	23.11 The engagement of the rest was more of a voluntary nature.	5:36
83	23.15 They thus succeeded in manning about one hundred...	5:56
84	23.20 After this address Nicias at once gave orders to man...	5:34
85	23.24 After the above address to the soldiers on their side...	5:34
86	23.29 Meanwhile the two armies on shore, while victory hung...	5:43
87	23.34 Dejection and self-condemnation were also rife among them.	5:58
88	23.41 On that day they advanced about four miles and a half...	5:36
89	23.46 On the other hand, Demosthenes was, generally speaking...	5:18
90	23.51 At last, when many dead now lay piled one upon another...	5:20
91	Book 8 – Chapter 24: Nineteenth and Twentieth Years...	2:28
92	Editor's epilogue	2:51

Total time: 7:17:10

Thucydides

(c.460–c.395 BC)

THE HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

The History of the Peloponnesian War marks a decisive point in our traditions of telling stories about the past, so much so that Thucydides has often been heralded (by David Hume, among others) as the first real historian. His distinctively modern voice has exercised an important influence on a wide range of Western intellectuals, from Machiavelli and Hobbes to contemporary thinkers like Robert Kaplan.

His importance stems from at least three major innovations. First, Thucydides insists that historical narratives must rest on empirical evidence which has been verified, rather than on fables or ancient stories. He is especially contemptuous of earlier accounts of the past which incorporate legends, folk tales, and traditional myths (part of this empirical grounding is his attempt to provide an accurate chronology of events, not the

easiest thing to do, given that there was no accurate universal calendar and no model to emulate). Secondly, he repeatedly stresses that historical events on a national level are driven by questions of power (economic and military) and fear. Hence, locating the causes of historical events in divine plans or oracles, as Homer and Herodotus routinely do, is absurd. And third, the root cause of historical events is human nature itself, which is characterised by two overriding and ineradicable forces: a desire for power and a fear of other people's power. His analytical method is thus thoroughly secular and reductive: to understand history, we must understand how human beings behaved and why, and that means we must attend to the realities of power and fear.

This position does not necessarily make Thucydides a cynic. His work

presents a very pessimistic tragic vision, not merely of the civil war among the Greek city states (which lasted from 413 to 404 BC), but also of the future course of human history. Since human nature drives historical events, and since human nature does not change, the events he is describing will happen again. Hence, in his most famous sentence he can confidently claim:

But those who want to look into the truth of what was done in the past – which, given the human condition, will recur in the future, either in the same fashion or nearly so – those readers will find this History valuable enough

This is an assertion which has turned out to be all too prescient, given that Thucydides's vision is frequently invoked to illuminate any number of modern wars (from Vietnam to Iraq).

However, the power of Thucydides's account arises not just from his vision of history, but also from his style. His work is, like so many Greek works, intensely dramatic, highlighting the human

speeches and debates before crucial (and frequently disastrous) events. These keep alive before us his central claim that basic human emotions drive historical events and bring immediacy to the narrative (he defends his practice of making up speeches which he did not hear by saying he checked with people who were there and has presented the details of what they said). He also organises events so as to emphasise the grinding ironies of civil war (for example, the graphic description of the horrific plague in Athens comes immediately after the speech in which Pericles pays tribute to the finest qualities of the city, and the long account of the Sicilian Expedition, the height of Athenian imperial folly, follows closely on account of events at Melos, where Athenian self-centred cruelty is most obviously on display). And he pays particular attention to the ways in which traditional restraints are totally ineffectual when war fully unleashes human passions (his remarks on the language of traditional morality are especially telling). Indeed, an important theme running through the book is the way in which war, and particularly civil

war, creates conditions in which what is most worthwhile in human life is placed inexorably in jeopardy, because in warfare the most selfish and brutal elements of human life inevitable become the ruling principles. Moreover, as many people have noted, the entire narrative is structured very much like a dramatic tragedy, with the growth of Athenian power at the start leading to an unchecked desire for power and a self-defeating and self-serving arrogance, and culminating in the final event of the Sicilian Expedition, with the few remnants of the proud, impressive, and ambitious Athenian force dying in a quarry.

Thucydides lived through the war, in which he was an Athenian general (until sent into exile as a scapegoat for a defeat), and witnessed first-hand its effect on traditional Greek culture. Hence, we can see his account as trying to lay a more rational, empirical groundwork for understanding the past. His *History* is part of that concerted effort (which included Socrates, Euripides, and later, Plato) to reorient Greek thinking away from old myths and traditional stories (which had

failed to hold Greek culture together) and to promote a new and more rational language for discussing old concerns. If he did not live to complete his *History*, he left us one of the greatest, most brilliant and influential works from our classical traditions.

Notes by Ian Johnston



Neville Jason trained at RADA where he was awarded the diction prize by Sir John Gielgud. His first appearance in the theatre was in Peter Brook's production of *Titus Andronicus* starring Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. He is a former member of the Old Vic Company, the English Stage Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Birmingham Repertory Company. Roles include John Worthing in *The Importance of Being Ernest*, Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Robert Browning in *Robert and Elizabeth*.

He is a trained singer and has appeared in numerous musicals including *The Great Waltz*, *1776*, *Ambassador*, *Lock Up Your Daughters*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Irma La Douce*, *Robert and Elizabeth* and *Mutiny*.

Television appearances include *Maigret*, *Dr Who* (The Androids of Tara), *Hamlet* (Horatio), *Crime and Punishment* (Zamyatov), *Emergency Ward Ten*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, *When the Boat Comes In*, *Angels*, *Minder*, *Dempsey and Makepeace*, *The Richest Woman in the World*, *The Dancing Years*, *The Magic Barrel* and *Windmill Near a Frontier*. Films include *From Russia with Love* and *The Message*. He has been a member of the BBC Radio Drama Company three times, and may be heard in radio plays, documentaries and arts programmes. For Naxos AudioBooks his readings include Vasari's *Lives of the Great Artists*, *Freud*, *War and Peace*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Once and Future King*, *War and Peace* and *The Castle of Otranto*; he plays Antonio in *The Tempest*, and has directed productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

As a director he was awarded Talkies awards for *Great Expectations* and *Poets of the Great War*. As a reader he won AudioFile Earphone awards for *The Captive*, *Time Regained*, *The Once and Future King* and *War and Peace* (Best Audiobooks of the Year 2007 and 2009).

Credits

This recording uses the 19th-century translation by Richard Crawley, abridged and updated by Ian Johnston. There have been some minor changes to names in certain cases, observing more contemporary usage.

Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London

Produced by Roy McMillan

Edited and mastered by Malcolm Blackmoor

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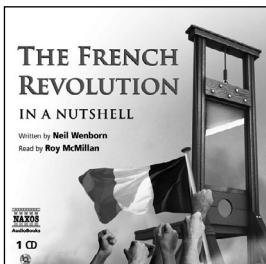
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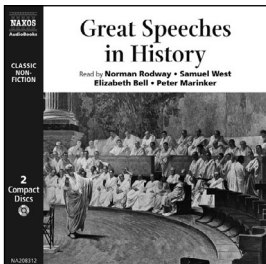
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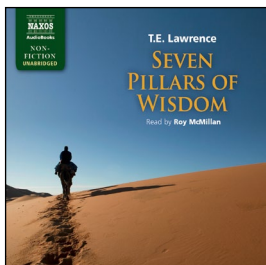
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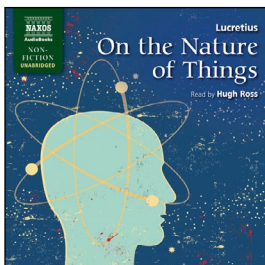
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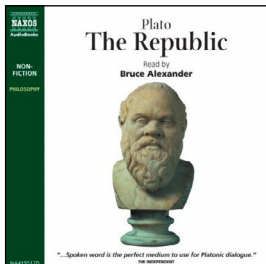
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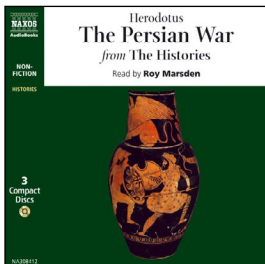
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Thucydides

THE HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Read by **Neville Jason**

Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* is one of the most famous, influential, and moving works of genuine history in our traditions. His brilliant account of the civil war among the Greeks redefined how we should analyse the past, driving a permanent wedge between accounts based on myth and folk traditions and those based on empirical investigation and a rational enquiry into human motives. The work is also a profoundly tragic illumination, not merely of the self-destructive events of the civil war, but also of the future course of human history.



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