THUCYDIDES BOOK I

A STUDENTS’
GRAMMATICAL
COMMENTARY

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PREFACE

For the first-time reader of Thucydides, considerable detailed guidance is needed, as I discovered some years ago when teaching Book I to seniors and graduate students. The older school commentaries, as my students found, were distressingly stingy with grammatical help. It was necessary to provide them with grammatical notes, which over the years eventually evolved into the present commentary. It reflects the practical needs of American advanced students of Greek.

My understanding of Thucydides springs from a four-by-six-inch index card scribbled out for me many years ago by W. R. Connor. At the time, we were both young instructors at the University of Michigan, and I sought his advice on how to teach Thucydides. Just as in a Picasso drawing, it was all there in a few deft strokes.

I thank my students over the years, especially Daniel Berman, Antonis Kaldellis, Amanda Kraus, Dmitri Nakassis, William Short, Josh Ward, and Timothy Allison, who have corrected typos, spotted false accents, and told me to clear up muddled explanations. I am grateful to John Lobur for his careful eye and wise critiques. My thanks also go to colleagues who have used drafts of this commentary in their own classes: Kathryn Morgan (University of California, Los Angeles), Robert Ketterer (University of Iowa), and Sara Forsdyke (University of Michigan). Further, I thank the anonymous readers of the University of Michigan Press for their excellent suggestions and corrections, and I especially thank Collin Ganio of the Press for his encouragement and professional expertise. Thanks also to Marilyn Scott for her keen eye, and to Mary Hashman my editor at the Press.
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This commentary is meant to be used with the Oxford Classical Text of Thucydides, edited by Henry Stuart Jones, and with Smyth’s Greek Grammar, which almost never fails to illuminate Thucydidean syntax. It is also meant to be used with the abridged edition of Liddell and Scott’s Greek–English Lexicon, which reliably contains nearly all of the vocabulary of book I of Thucydides. My commentary regularly refers to the unabridged lexicon of Liddell, Scott, and Jones to authenticate lexical usage.

I make no claim of elegance for the translations in my commentary. They are meant to illuminate the Greek syntax, and I have not hesitated to use clumsy “translationese” if that would best suit the purpose. Once the grammatical labyrinth is understood, the student should be urged to retranslate into smoother English prose. For elegance, I recommend the 1998 translation by Steven Lattimore.

I have employed the standard chapter numbers used by all modern editions of Thucydides. The origin of this numbering is the 1696 Oxford edition by John Hudson (1662–1719).

The following abbreviations are used for citations in this book.


OCT  H. Stuart Jones. Thucydides Historiae. Edited by Henry Stuart Jones, revised by
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