WEATHER, CHANCE AND THE UNPREDICTABLE
IN THUCYDIDES

By

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Abstract

Thucydides the Athenian wrote his History of the Peloponnesian War, the famed conflict between Athens and Sparta of 431-404 BCE, in the belief that this period was the most worth writing about. He hoped that his composition would become a "possession for all time". He prided himself on his accuracy and thoroughness of research and reporting. His history is didactic and paradigmatic, and in it he makes use of a number of themes, from which he hoped that those who would read his work could understand clearly how events happened and be able to realize how events will be repeated in much the same ways.

One such theme is the influence of chance and the unpredictable on the war. Chance was portrayed by Thucydides as a force which has the ability to alter the orderly and logical course of events. One aspect of chance and the unpredictable is the element of weather. This thesis examines the element of weather as an example of the unpredictable and as a manifestation of chance. The following questions arise: How does Thucydides perceive weather as an element of chance and the unpredictable? Does he consider weather to be a force in the war, having the ability to affect the course of events by hindering or preventing campaigns, or aiding or leading to campaigns? Is there a pattern to the human reaction to such events?

The original Greek text of Thucydides was integral in attempting to answer these questions. The CD-ROM Thesaurus Graecae Linguae was a great help in conducting word searches through Thucydides' material to isolate passages relating to chance, the unpredictable and weather. It became evident that two sections were required; one on the speeches recounted in the work, and one on the actual events. There were five major episodes which demonstrated the effect of weather and the unpredictable on the war; the affair at Pylos, the
exploits of Brasidas, Phormio's battles at Naupactus, Plataea, and the events of Book Eight. With focus on the relevant material in Thucydides' text, other ancient authors and modern scholarship, the material took the form of two major sections, with the second divided into the five episodes.

Thucydides' speeches, examined in Chapter I, establish his view of chance and the unpredictable. Chapter II examines the applications of this view through the above events, in which weather was a factor. Throughout, Thucydides' commentary on the reaction to these events is noted.

The following conclusions were formed: weather is an element of the unpredictable and chance when it is not spread over a prolonged period of time. Weather was seen to hinder, prevent, aid and effect campaigns. It is clear that Thucydides believed that the human reaction to such events tended to follow a patter, which was generally predictable. Weather, chance and the unpredictable fit into Thucydides' method of presenting material in such a manner so as to enable his readers to make reasonable calculations on how events took place, and how they may happen again.
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**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>YCS</td>
<td>Yale Classical Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>G&amp;R</td>
<td>Greece &amp; Rome</td>
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Introduction

Thucydides the Athenian wrote his History of the war between Athens and the Peloponnesians in the belief that this period was the most worth writing about, more so than any preceding time. He composed it hoping that it would become a possession for all time: a κτῆμα ἐξ αἰεί (1.22.4). His aspiration has not failed, as his history is one of the foremost sources of information for the world of fifth century BCE Greece. This account of the Peloponnesian War has survived, though incomplete, to be read by modern and ancient scholars of Greek antiquities, and many more. Thucydides prided himself on his accuracy and thoroughness in writing the history. His commentary and analysis of the events described are invaluable to scholars of today, in the fields of history, political science, sociology and countless others.

Of his own writing, Thucydides says the following: "It will be enough for me, however, if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or another and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future" (1.22.4). Certainly his words are judged useful; going beyond Thucydides' facts, scholars have been able to extrapolate precious information which, if it had all been explicitly included, would have made the History far too voluminous to be readable. Thucydides claims to have used "only the plainest evidence" (1.21.1). From this evidence we are able to uncover so much more information than is set forth outright, both about the occurrences of the war, and about our historian himself.

Woven into this "plainest evidence" are a number of underlying themes, indicative of the matters most important to Thucydides' designs. His method of

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1All dates in this paper are BCE.
presentation includes a connection between speeches and actions. The speeches are frequently didactic, and the events are often paradigmatic, and both can serve to accentuate and advance the development of his themes.

The involvement of τύχη, simply "chance" or "fortune" and roughly the equivalent of the Latin fortuna, and of τὸ παράλογον or ὁ παράλογος, the element of the unpredictable or incalculable, is a theme to which Thucydides devoted a great deal of attention. The events in his History are presented with the complete absence of any religious or divine element. Anything beyond human and natural designation falls into the domain of τύχη and τὸ παράλογον.

The ancient Greek conception of τύχη is a matter of some difficulty. Its definition and form changed through time, influenced by various disciplines of thought and literature. It could be vengeant or benevolent and highly personal, or irrational and wholly impersonal. At times τύχη was brought about by the gods, as in Pindar's Pythian 8.53, Herodotus 1.126, and Euripides' Medea 671, and at times entirely separate from the gods, as seen in Sophocles' Electra 48, and in Euripides' Ion 1368ff. Euripides' so-called tyche-plays strongly depict τύχη as a force acting in a completely different sphere from the gods; in the Ion Apollo's plans are altered by chance, in the form of Creusa's passion, a factor which he had not taken into account. Its relationship to the gods was in question as far back as Homer; in the Odyssey 1.32-4, Zeus complains that mortals blame the gods for factors which are out of their control. By the time of Menander, τύχη was the dominating force in New Comedy.

Throughout time, τύχη was perceived as an agent working beyond human control. It was sometimes described as being blind, as in Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus 977 and Polybius 2.49.7.8. In poetry and drama it could be personified; it became "Fortune the Saviour" in Pindar's Olympian 12.2, and in
Aeschylus' Agamemnon 664. By Hellenistic times, πτυχή appeared in the form of a goddess, with cult followings; Pausanias mentions a statue of Fortune of the Syrians on the Orontes in 6.2.7.

As a force, πτυχή coupled with necessity was integral for the doctrines of the atomists. On a similar level, it was a guiding force of Heraclitus' universe, and a century later, in the mid-fifth century, Empedocles claimed that all things operate on the whim of chance (fr. 103). Plato said that nature and chance create the most beautiful things (Laws 889a), and Aristotle claimed that things are generated by chance in much the same way as things are created by nature (Metaphysics 1032a).

As in poetry, drama and philosophy, πτυχή was an important yet changing aspect for historians. Herodotus believed that human affairs were guided by divine forces according to a predestined pattern, and so chance was created by the gods. By the second century, the historian Polybius paid notable attention to πτυχή, treating it in a sometimes contradictory fashion. Like Thucydides, he believed that human affairs, for the most part, were calculable, but there was a limit, beyond which was the domain of chance. On the other hand, he was influenced by his times, which had seen great reversals of fortune, following the collapse of the Persian Empire, the swift spread and equally quick disintegration of Alexander's empire, and the great changes that attended the Hellenistic states. The events that Polybius attributed to πτυχή were those which were beyond human control, and had no rational causes. This view of πτυχή comes directly from Thucydides.

Thucydides was diligent and deliberate in his choice of words. The contextual meanings of these words and their underlying connotations can
sometimes be lost in translation. It is clear that Thucydides perceived τύχη as a "force", as can be seen from his commentary\(^2\) and from numerous speeches.\(^3\) To him, it was an incalculable force with an ability to affect the normal course of events, and to encumber prognostic thought. It could bring great success, or crushing defeat. Finley aptly notes that, "Thucydides ... did not think life illogical but, on the contrary, rested his whole work on the assumption that it follows and will follow orderly courses."\(^4\) Thucydides defined τύχη in his work in relation to rationality and calculation. Influenced by the sophists, he was a product of his time; he abandoned the Herodotean religious connotations, and rejected any idea of τύχη as a metaphysical being, which would permeate the conception of τύχη by the time of Polybius. Chance was the force that alters the orderly and logical course of events.

Τὸ παράλογον is an aspect of τύχη. It is abundantly clear that Thucydides realized that unpredictable and incalculable events permeated, and always will permeate history. He stresses this through various speeches, as we will see in chapter one, and through his narrative of certain events, as we will see in Chapter II. Often the two terms are used synonymously; but the main difference is that τὸ παράλογον is an event or issue, whereas τύχη is the force behind the event.

Involved in his theme concerning the role played by chance and the unpredictable in war is the human reaction to it. In his introduction to the work, he makes the comment that history has the potential to repeat itself because of human nature. He evidently believed that human nature provides patterns of

\(^2\)For example, 5.75.3; bad luck had caused the Spartan spirit to decline.

\(^3\)For example, Nicias' speech of 6.11.5; the connection between the events at Pylos and Syracuse is a creation by Thucydides -- the Athenians' good luck at Pylos pushed them to undertake the expedition to Sicily.

\(^4\)Finley, 313
reaction to events; this is certainly the case when events are affected by τύχη and τὸ παράλογον. He traces the responses of people and states when events have been positively and negatively influenced by chance, and by the end of the work he shows how human reaction can be predicted.

A variety of occurrences in the History fall under the category of chance and the unpredictable. About the period of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides says, "Wide areas, for instance, were affected by violent earthquakes; there were more frequent eclipses of the sun than had ever been recorded before; in various parts of the country there were extensive droughts followed by famine; and there was the plague which did more harm and destroyed more life than almost any other single factor" (1.23.3). All of these are examples of τὸ παράλογον. One example of τὸ παράλογον which is worthy of note, as it plays various roles throughout the History, is the element of weather.

This paper will examine the element of weather as an example of τὸ παράλογον, and as an "agent" and "manifestation" of τύχη. As we discover when and how it is such, we will see how Thucydides notes the pattern of human reaction. The following questions will be discussed: Is weather indeed perceived by Thucydides as an element of τὸ παράλογον and a "medium" of τύχη? Does Thucydides consider weather to be a "force" in the war, having the ability to affect the course of events, by hindering or preventing campaigns, or aiding or leading to campaigns? Is there a pattern to the human reaction to such events? Chapter I will attempt to establish Thucydides' view of chance and the unpredictable through the speeches recounted in his History. Chapter II will examine the applications of this view through a number of events, specifically ones in which weather was a factor. These events have been separated into five sections; the Pylos campaign, two exploits of Brasidas, the sea battles of Phormio at Naupactus, events surrounding the siege of Plataea, and finally
episodes taken from the eighth book of Thucydides. Throughout, Thucydides' commentary on the reaction to these events, when applicable, will be noted.

A brief word on the text of Thucydides may be in order: I have used the Oxford text and book and chapter notation. For the sake of convenient reference, I have used Warner's English translation for passages cited unless otherwise noted.
Chapter I

THE SPEECHES

Before plunging into the actual ἔργα in which the element of chance and the unpredictable play a part, it will be useful to examine the nature of this subject as portrayed by Thucydides and to lay the foundations for further discussion. Perhaps the best method to explore our author's conception of τὸ χάρις and τὸ παράλογον is to probe into the cases where he presents his own views - the speeches. In his account of the Peloponnesian War, he claims to have used "only the plainest evidence and to have reached conclusions which are reasonably accurate" (1.21.1). He emphasizes his use of bare facts, and his History is highly pragmatic reporting. He does, however, contrast his method of presenting speeches with his reporting of factual events in a neat μὲν... δὲ construction. 1.22.1 begins "Καὶ δὲ σα μὲν λόγῳ...", in direct apposition to the beginning of 22.2: "Τὰ δὲ ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων..." The λόγοι in Thucydides have been a subject of many studies, and are exceedingly characteristic of the historian's own thoughts. In the pool of speeches presented in the History, the reflection of the composer's designs and methods is ever present.

He himself writes,

"In this history I have made use of set speeches some of which were delivered just before and others during the war. I have found it difficult to remember the precise words used in the speeches which I listened to myself and my various informants have experienced the same difficulty; so my general method has been, while keeping as closely as possible to the general sense of the words that were actually used, to make the speakers say what, in my opinion, was called for in each situation" (1.22.1).

Some important speeches will not be discussed in this chapter; they are reserved for the discussion of events to which they pertain. (Most notably, the Spartan envoy at Athens after Pylos, the Peloponnesian exhortation after the first encounter off Naupactus.)
Even the original Greek of the passage is ambiguous, and a subject of some debate. If he kept to the general sense of the actual words spoken, that does not exclusively reflect what was "called for" in each situation, and conversely, if he made the speakers say τὰ δὲ οὖν τὰ (in his own opinion), that may not at all be the general sense of the actual words. It may well be that his method swayed in one direction for one speech, and in the other direction for another. As Finley bluntly states, "he has given himself a good deal of latitude."  

At any rate, Thucydides freely admits that the speeches are largely his own words. The inclusion of τὰ δὲ οὖν τὰ is particularly telling of this fact. Some modern scholars believe that to suppose that Thucydides meant τὰ δὲ οὖν τὰ to include any of his personal sentiments undermines the integrity of our author; but if little information was available about a certain vital speech, how could his disposition and his own personal relevancies not creep in? Surely his statements referring to his differing method of treating speech and deed create room to allow for this. While sceptical of the extent to which Thucydides fabricated some of his speeches, even Gomme admits, "... once he had ascertained that there was a debate about Mytilene, in which Kleon spoke for severity, another about Syracuse, in which Alkibiades was for the expedition, Nikias against, which was simple enough, he could have gone on to compose his own speeches."  

He then goes on to make this concession: "The words, the style, that is the literary quality (as opposed to the historical content) must be his own and to that extent he was substituting his own personality for that of the speaker."  

In light of speeches such as Hermocrates' at Gela in 424 (4.59-64),

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6 Finley, 95
7 HCT i, 140
8 HCT i, 141
Kagan is perhaps excessive in maintaining, "We cannot allow the possibility that a speech is invented in any important way without destroying the credibility of Thucydides."\textsuperscript{10} Finley takes a more moderate approach, saying, "if his speeches could not have the merit of exact truth, they would at least have the merit of clarifying the main reasons for events."\textsuperscript{11}

Thucydides certainly could not have been present at some of the speeches, and he certainly did attend others. This much he tells us. As for the content of the ones he attended, he apologizes for his understandably imperfect memory, and substitutes his own words and phrases. His informants had the same deficiencies, and Thucydides was forced to compose these reported speeches himself, using the guidelines set by the reports. The liberties he took with these guidelines is unclear from the passage quoted above (1.22.1), and in these instances, we may have particularly Thucydidean thought.

It is not, then, surprising to find the incorporation of some of his themes in these λόγοι penned by Thucydides. Similar, and sometimes diametrically opposed views of key topics can be found in speeches attributed to a variety of speakers. Some, when presented by a figure respected by the historian, will bolster Thucydides' convictions by emphasizing the importance of a certain topic. Pericles is a prime example of this type of individual. Others may contradict a theme to cause the reader to recognize potential folly or foolishness when delivered by speakers held in contempt by the historian, such as Cleon. Marshall says that Cleon, in the Mytilenean Debate of 427, "uses arguments

\textsuperscript{9}See discussion below, pp. 14-15
\textsuperscript{10}Kagan (1975), 77
\textsuperscript{11}Finley, 99-100
which verge on the ridiculous and seem unacceptable in the eyes of Thucydides."

The issue of chance and the unpredictable is such a theme. Thucydides undoubtedly perceived this as τὰ δὲοντα in speeches by numerous individuals. We cannot be sure whether or not it was a required inclusion in the minds of each and every speaker whom our author makes refer to it. But, however one prefers to interpret τὰ δὲοντα, the unpredictable element in war was indeed "called for" in many λόγοι. It is also not abundantly clear whether it was always "called for" in the context of the speech itself, or for the development and reiteration of the theme in the whole work; its repeated appearance tends to support the latter, but that does not naturally exclude the former. A moderate and calculating man would surely take into account such a factor while pondering an upcoming or newly begun war. Many of the speeches which include this element take place when one side is entering upon warfare. While not every statesman or general would feel the need to caution his people about such a factor, some most definitely would. Thucydides must have felt that this was τὰ δὲοντα both for these speeches and for the entire work.

The first mention of the incalculable element in war comes early, before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. At the "Spartan Debate" of 432, an embassy of Athenians happened (ἔτυχε 1.72.1) to be present concerning a matter other than discussions of war. In their counter to the Corinthian speech, as a post script to justifying Athens' position, they ask the Spartans to consider all that war entails. They supply the following warning: "Think, too, of the great part that is played by the unpredictable in war (τοῦ δὲ πολέμου τὸν παράλογον) ... The longer a war lasts, the more things tend to depend on accidents (ἐς
Neither can you see into them: we have to abide their outcome in the dark" (1.78.1-3). Both key words are encapsulated within two sentences. The precedent has been set by Thucydides for the development of his theme.

The Spartan king Archidamus takes the stage following this admonition. This is his first appearance in the History, and Thucydides gives a brief characterization of the man:  "ἀνὴρ καὶ ἔννεπτὸς δοκῶν εἶναι καὶ σῶφρων" (1.79.2). Thucydides' description of him as a man reputed to be intelligent and moderate alerts the reader to mark his words. This is the sort of statesman Thucydides uses to represent his own thought. He too cautions his people about the incalculability of war. In 84.3 he praises Spartan wisdom, and stresses the teaching that "... it is impossible to calculate accurately events that are determined by chance (τὰς προσπιτούσας τύχας)." His caveat goes unheeded, but, according to Macleod, "The speeches which fail or are plainly mistaken are, in the work as we have it, no less instructive than those which succeed or seem to be right." Even though this speech did not persuade the Spartans to take their time, its wisdom is still emphasized by Thucydides. Harding suggests that Archidamus used the wrong topics at the wrong time to explain the reason for the failure of his cautionary words. Whether or not this was an appropriate set of arguments for the mood of the assembly, Thucydides himself felt it to be τὰ δὲόντα, hence its inclusion in the speech. It is highly unlikely that our historian was present at this debate. Archidamus may or may not have drawn attention to this detail, but to Thucydides it would be "called for" by an intelligent and moderate man.

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13 Macleod, 146
14 Harding, 33
These warnings to the Spartans, even before the outbreak of the war, also forewarn the reader that unpredictable events will take place in the following narrative, and chance will be a player.

A man of equal standing with Archidamus in manifesting his state's values is Pericles. After the Spartan ultimatum, he advises the Athenians on the war issue, and makes this statement in his opening words: "There is often no more logic in the course of events than there is in the plans of men, and this is why we usually blame our luck (τὴν τὺχην) when things happen in ways that we did not expect (παρὰ λόγον)" (1.140.1). For a third time in the opening book of the History, the unpredictability of war is mentioned. Here is an admission that such an element exists, which will be echoed later in the Funeral Oration: "They (parents of the dead) are well aware that they have grown up in a world where there are many changes and chances" (2.44.1). Pericles' reaction to the ultimatum, then, is to issue a warning not to allow turns of chance to be demoralizing.

Perhaps this looks ahead to the plague, which caused "... quick and abrupt ... changes of fortune" (2.53.1). Pericles refers to it: "You took my advice when you were still untouched by misfortune, and repented of your action when things went badly with you" (2.61.2). In 61.3 he characterizes the effect of τὸ παράλογον: "When things happen suddenly, unexpectedly, and against all calculation, it takes the heart out of a man." He goes on to say that, "In fact, out of everything else this has been the only case of something happening which we did not anticipate" (2.64.2). His initial warning of 1.140 has come into effect -- the παράλογος did occur, and people blamed their luck. As Allison points out, παράλογοι, such as the plague, are indeed derived from τὐχη.\(^{15}\) Not only is a

\(^{15}\)Allison, 66
reaction to the unpredictable described, but, in addition, the relationship between the unpredictable and chance has been elucidated by Pericles to the Athenians and to Thucydides' readers.

Pericles is a man Thucydides holds in high regard, describing him as "λέγειν τε καὶ πράσειν δυνατώτατος" (1.139.4). He devotes a lengthy eulogy to the man of power in both speech and action, and praises his policy in 2.65. In sections 6-7 of 2.65 he emphasizes the wisdom of Pericles' words: "... after his death his foresight with regard to the war became even more evident." Like the σώφρων Archidamus, Pericles' pre-war warnings about τὸ παράλογον are meant to caution the reader about upcoming events.

Thucydides, as a strategos, almost certainly was present at this occasion (1.40-44). If he had difficulty remembering the exact words of Pericles, in this instance he would be in a far better position to compose the speech "keeping as closely as possible to the general sense" (1.22) than in the case of Archidamus. He has Pericles say that "... on this occasion I must give you exactly the same advice as I have given in the past ..." (1.140.1), and later Thucydides says that, "Pericles used his usual arguments ..." (2.13) to bolster the confidence of the Athenians. The statesman must have been fairly consistent in policy, allowing Thucydides to make him say both what was "called for" in the context of the work and in accordance with Pericles' character.

There is one more warning before open hostilities commence between Sparta and Athens. It comes from Archidamus again, at an assembly that Thucydides, as an Athenian soldier, most definitely did not attend. Just before the first invasion of Attica, Archidamus addresses the generals, high officials and other influential people of the allies (2.11-12). He calls for vigilance and preparedness from every soldier, as "... there is much that is unpredictable in war." (2.11.4) The word used here is ἀδικεία, generally "uncertain" or "unclear", 
but in the context it cannot be otherwise than a rewording of Thucydides' theme, and an echo of the king's warning in 1.78. If Thucydides did not ever meet the man, he must have been informed of his nature, possible even by Pericles, of whom Archidamus "happened to be a friend" (2.13.1). With the information the historian gathered about the Spartan king's methods and manners, he may well be accurate in reporting this sort of speech; but for Thucydides, at least, there was a need to repeat this factor in the guise of Archidamus, on the very brink of war.

The other mentions of the unpredictable element of war come after the eruption of conflict between Athens and Sparta. In Book Four the Sicilians hold a debate concerning making peace with Athens (425/4). One of the speakers, and the most influential, was Hermocrates the Syracusan. For Thucydides, this statesman was to the Syracusans as Pericles was to the Athenians, and Archidamus was to the Spartans. In 6.72.2 he is described as, "in every way a remarkably intelligent man." In his speech (4.59-64), he proposes to unite Sicily and make peace with Athens. One of the arguments he sets forth to discourage aggression reads: "I do not think it right ... to imagine that I can command fortune (ἐρχομεν τῆς τύχης), which is out of my control, in the same way as I can be the master of my own designs" (4.64.1-2). At this point while "considering the dangers of the future" (4.64.1), Hermocrates is not willing to risk facing the unpredictable. His words prevail.

Gomme has a considerable amount to say about this speech, and accedes to the general consensus that Thucydides composed it himself.\(^{16}\) He suggests that Thucydides used the benefit of hindsight to draft it, wondering why such importance would be placed on this Sicilian congress unless it looked

\(^{16}\)HCT iii, 520
ahead to further events in Sicily. Thus, Thucydides used his judgement of the type of man Hermocrates was to present the arguments he "would have made". The wisdom of the speech is noted by Orwin, who maintains that only Diodotus' speech (3.42-48) rivals it.\(^{17}\)

As the situation in Sicily unfolds, however, Hermocrates' mind changes with regard to risk-taking -- but his judgement of fortune remains constant. Hostilities have commenced between Syracuse and Athens when he makes another speech (6.76-80), to the Camarinaeans in 415/4. He encourages them to run a risk and break from the Athenians. He cautions them to consider what may happen if they decide to side with the Athenians in order to weaken Syracuse. Some of what may happen is unknown: "One cannot regulate fortune (\(\tau\eta \, \tau\upsilon\chi\eta\) to fit in with what one has decided one wants to happen" (6.78.2-3). That the factor of fortune is out of one's control is a direct echo of his sentiments of 424. One can no more regulate or control fortune than one can predict the unpredictable.

Gomme does not find it difficult to believe that Thucydides made inquiries about the speech of 424 and composed it after the events of 415.\(^{18}\) Naturally, the content would be less accurate even than other speeches Thucydides did not attend but received information about soon after. Gomme believes that this hypothesis is substantiated by the phrase \(\tau\omega\iota\iota\upsilon\upsilon\tau\omega\upsilon\, \delta\eta\, \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\, \epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\nu\nu\) (4.58) in place of the more precise \(\tau\omega\iota\iota\delta\upsigma\, \epsilon\iota\lambda\epsilon\xi\epsilon\nu\nu\) (e.g. Archidamus:1.79.2, Pericles: 2.59.5). It follows, then, that some of the content of the two speeches would be similar, as indeed it is; to name a few, themes of Sicilian unity, the rivalry between Dorians and Ionians, and unpredictability are common to both.

\(^{17}\) Orwin, 163  
\(^{18}\) HCT iii, 521
Another figure used by Thucydides to accentuate his theme is Nicias, one of the more complex characters in the History. He was intelligent, eloquent, yet prone to procrastination and excessive caution. He was well respected by Thucydides who calls him, "a man who, of all the Hellenes in my time, least deserved to come to so miserable an end, since the whole of his life had been devoted to the study and the practice of virtue" (7.86.5). However, he is most often described as ἐὔτυχις. Up to the "Peace of Nicias", Thucydides says he was, "... still untouched by misfortune" (5.16.1), Alcibiades notes his "reputation for being lucky" (6.17.1), and soon before his defeat and death Nicias himself says: "... nor, I think, can anyone be considered to have been more blessed by fortune than I have been in my private life and in other respects" (7.77.2). As a pious man, Nicias falls under the following category described by Aristotle: "Some hold that fortune is a genuine cause of things, but one that has a something divine and mysterious about it, that makes it inscrutable to the human intelligence."19 Following Thucydides' account, Plutarch makes the following observation which explains in part the reason for this reputation: "He was careful to attribute his success, not to any skill or courage of his own, but to fortune."20

In an effort, perhaps, to explain the cautious and procrastinating side of Nicias, and indeed his pacifism, Thucydides uses the general's attitude concerning fortune as the motivator for the "Peace of Nicias". Preservation of his ἐὔτυχία was a high priority; Thucydides says that Nicias wished διασώσασθαι τὴν ἐὔτυχίαν, and that the agency to achieve this was peace: τὸ δὲ ἀκίνδυνον τὴν εἰρήνην παρέχειν (5.16.1). With a view towards a cessation of

19Aristotle, Physics, 196b 5-6
20Plutarch, Life of Nikias, VI
hostilities and maintaining his reputation, "... he thought that these ends were to be achieved by avoiding all risks and by trusting oneself as little as possible to fortune (ἐλάχιστα τύχη αὐτὸν παραδίδωσι)" (5.16.1). In his reluctance to embark on the Sicilian expedition, his policy is restated. He echoes Thucydides' narrative words: "Knowing that we shall have need of much good counsel and more good fortune (a hard thing to be sure of, since we are but men), I wish to leave as little as possible to fortune (ἐλάχιστα τῇ τύχῃ παραδοῦς ἐμαυτόν) before I sail" (6.23.3). The rhetorical emphasis by repetition may be ominous foreshadowing by Thucydides -- in 5.16 it precedes peace and preservation, whereas in 6.23 it escorts Athens into the disaster in Sicily, and her downfall. I prefer a simpler explanation; Thucydides is merely presenting Nicias according to his character and convention.

Even though he had a reputation for luck, Nicias knew that fortune never stays long in the same place -- a common Greek axiom. Aristotle, decades later, wrote: "Again prosperity (ἡ εὐτυχία) is reasonably considered unstable. For chance (ἡ τύχη) is unstable. For nothing that comes from chance can be forever or for a long time."21 Perhaps Nicias took to heart the views of Solon on chance and prosperity, as portrayed by Herodotus (1.33). Thucydides was certainly versed in Herodotus' History; this is especially evident in 1.20, where he "corrects" his predecessor. Where Solon is the teacher and Croesus is the heedless "pupil" in Herodotus, Nicias is the teacher and the Athenian δημοσίας the student in Thucydides. Croesus' δημοσία was destroyed with the death of his son; Athens' εὐτυχία was destroyed in the failure of the Sicilian expedition. Thucydides does away with the divine aspect and the "romantic element" (1.22.4), but the warning and the moral remains the same. Nicias may be a

21 Aristotle, Physics, 197a 30-32
prosperous and lucky man, but safeguards must be taken to preserve his eὐτυχία.

Nicias takes part in the 415 debate over the launching of the Sicilian expedition. He warns the Athenians about reaction to τύχη. Like Thucydides, he believes that this campaign is folly. It is a marked departure from Pericles' policy: "For Pericles had said that Athens would be victorious if she bided her time and took care of her navy, if she avoided trying to add to the empire during the course of the war, and if she did nothing to risk the safety of the city itself" (2.65.7). Nicias considers it useless to advise the Athenians, "not to risk what is yours already for doubtful prospects (περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν) in the future" (6.9.3), as he knows their nature. In his speech (6.9-14), he attempts to prove that the time (καιρὸς) is wrong, and that their ambitions are formidable and will not easily be accomplished.

The reason for the Athenians' excessive confidence is surmised by Nicias in 6.11.5: "Your successes against them (Sparta), coming so unexpectedly (τὸ παρὰ γνώμην) compared with what you feared at first, have now made you despise them and set your hearts on the conquest of Sicily." This must be a reference to the Pylos and Sphacteria affair, now ten years gone, in spite of more recent losses at Delium (424/3), in Thrace when Amphipolis was lost to Brasidas in the same year, and especially Mantinea (418/7). Hunter is justified in explaining this as Thucydides' method of linking the Athenian success at Pylos and their greatest defeat at Syracuse.22

Thucydides makes his readers privy to this link via Nicias, even though the Sicilian expedition is still forthcoming. Nicias goes on: "But one's enemy's (mis)fortunes (τὰς τύχας) are insufficient grounds for self-satisfaction; one can

22 Hunter, 81
only feel real confidence when one has mastered his designs" (6.11.6). Once again, Nicias' statements recall Pericles, who had said the following about confidence:

"Confidence, out of a mixture of ignorance and good luck (εὐτυχοῦσ), can be felt even by cowards ... And when the chances on both sides are equal (τῆς ὁμοίας τύχης), it is intelligence that confirms courage -- the intelligence that makes one able to look down on one's opponent, and which proceeds not by hoping for the best (a method only valuable in desperate situations), but by estimating what the facts are, and thus obtaining a clearer vision of what to expect." (2.62.4-5)

This passage also concurs with Nicias' concerns about preparation for the expedition (6.9.1 ff., 23.3).

The mood of confidence, however, is strong enough to lead the Athenians to embark upon the Sicilian enterprise. As events unfold over the campaign, the state of affairs for the Athenians in Sicily becomes desperate, especially after the defeat at Epipolae and at sea in 413 at the hands of the Syracusans and Gylippus. It is at this juncture that Nicias refers again to the unpredictable. He makes an exhortation to his troops, "... seeing that the soldiers were out of heart because of having been defeated so thoroughly and so unexpectedly (παρὰ τὸ εἰςωθὸς) at sea" (7.60.5). He appeals to them to use their knowledge as seasoned soldiers: "You Athenians here, who have already had experience of many wars, and you allies of ours who have constantly fought at our side, must remember that there is an unpredictable element in warfare (τῶν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις παραλόγων) and, in the hope that we, too, may have fortune (τῷ τῆς τύχης) with us, you must be prepared to go into battle again ..." (7.61.3). He admits the fact of war that is unexpected and against calculation, but appeals to his men not to give up on fortune. Only now, in dire straits, does Nicias turn to "hoping for the best". Only now, ἐν τῷ ἀπόρῳ (2.62.5), as Pericles suggested, is there call to trust blindly in fortune. Pericles' disdain for fortune is evident as
well in his reply to the "Spartan Ultimatum" of 432-1, when he says that the Athenians' success against the Medes was due \( \gamma ν \omega μ \eta \ τε \ πλέον \ η \ \tau υχη \) (1.144.4). Nicias has been forced to forsake his "motto" of 5.16.1 (in Thucydides' narrative), and its repetition in 6.23.3 (in Nicias' speech) -- he still hopes for luck, but now is driven to entrust himself to \( \tau υχη \).

In the counterpart to this speech, Thucydides confirms the reversal of fortunes. He records Gylippus as informing his men that the Athenians' "... sufferings have been so overwhelming that they have been forced by the hopelessness of their present position into a state of desperation where, trusting in luck (\( \tau υχη ζ \)) more than in good management, they will take their chance" (7.67.4). He goes on to describe the Athenians as "betrayed by their own fortune (\( \tau υχη η \n \)". (7.68.1) Gylippus may indeed have uttered such sentiments, but by now it is no surprise that Thucydides makes such an inclusion in this speech that is paralleled to that of Nicias.

The defeat of the Athenian armada in the Harbour of Syracuse ensues. The wretchedness of their predicament is now complete. During the retreat, Nicias delivers one final speech (7.77). As the leader of the Athenians, it is his duty to encourage and comfort them to the bitter end. He devotes half of his final words in the History to hope and fortune. As quoted above (p. 14), he reminds his men of his reputation for luck; but now he suffers equal perils as the rest (7.77.2). He retains his hope for the future, partly because of the reverence he showed to the gods, and partly because his "... enemies have had good fortune enough (ικανά γάρ τοίς τε πολεμίοις ηυτύχηται), and ... by this time we have been sufficiently punished" (7.77.3). He knows that fortune does not stay

\[ ^{23} \text{Though, Hermocrates (6.33.6) calls their success } \piαρά λόγον, \text{ here more appropriately interpreted from the context of his speech as } "a \text{ matter of accident" rather than } "\text{ contrary to reason".} \]
in the same place for a long time. Such are the desperate words of encouragement he employs.

Thucydides says that Nicias' object was to lighten the discouragement of the army "with its hopes so totally eclipsed," and he "went along the ranks and then did the best he could to encourage and to comfort them" (7.76.1). The urgency of his language, and the desperation of this speech has rightly been noticed by Edmunds.24 Within one sentence (7.77.2), Thucydides includes the particles τοι, δή and ποι. Edmunds notes that τοι and ποι are used only three times in Thucydides' work, and reflect the intense strain and emotion in the speaker. Regarding ποι, Denniston says, "the tone of uncertainty, whether real or assumed, is ill adapted to the precision of history, or to the assertiveness of oratory."25 Nicias' words are words of extreme desperation, leaving him with the last resort of trusting in fortune rather than in ἰδοπαρακεφή, as noticed by Gylippus (7.67.4) and contrary to his own policy of 6.23.3. The forced changes in Nicias' attitude to fortune, as his predicaments change is expanded by Edmunds: "The paradoxical character of Nicias' thought also appears in his statement that 'we are now more worthy of pity than of envy' (7.77.4)."26

Nicias' desperate words bring to mind some statements of the famed Melian Dialogue of 416/5. Connor notes this: "Many of the themes of the Melian Dialogue continue into the account of the invasion of Sicily, and Athens ultimately comes very much to resemble Melos, forced to rely on hope, chance, and speculation about the gods."27

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25 Denniston, 491
26 Edmunds, 139
27 Connor, 155
utter annihilation in the face of the mighty Athenian empire, yet they make these bold remarks:

"Yet we know that in war fortune (τὰς τύχας) sometimes makes the odds more level than could be expected from the difference in numbers of the two sides. And if we surrender, then all our hope is lost at once, whereas, so long as we remain in action, there is still a hope that we may yet stand upright." (5.102)

Their last resort is to hope for fortune. This is met with a scornful and sarcastic retort by the Athenians: 'Ελπὶς δὲ κινδύνῳ παραμύθιον οὖσα -- "Hope, that comforter in danger!" (5.103.1). With the Sicilian fiasco yet to happen, the Athenians consider "hoping for the best" a futile approach. Παραμύθιον means: "an assuagement, abatement", but also "an address, exhortation". It surely was both for Nicias.

The final conclusions of both sides sum up their respective faiths in luck. The Melians decide the following: "We put our trust in the fortune (τυχῆ) that the gods will send and which has saved us up to now, and in the help of men -- that is, of the Spartans," (5.112.2), to which the Athenians reply: "As you have staked most on and trusted most in Spartans, luck (τυχῆ), and hopes (ελπίς), so in all these you will find yourselves most completely deluded" (5.113). In light of their dangerous yet defiant position, the Melians feel they have no choice but to trust in not only the Spartans, but in luck itself. The Athenians, themselves still in extreme power, believe that hope for luck is a false comfort. The results are disastrous for the Melians. They are forced into unconditional surrender, all the men of age are executed, and the women and children sold into slavery.

The results of the Sicilian expedition for the Athenians speak for themselves.

As a point of summary, one isolated episode serves well to reflect Thucydides' views on the nature of Fortune: the Mytilenian Debate of 427

28LSJ, 600
(3.36.4-49.1). Cleon, described by Thucydides as βιατότατος τῶν πολιτῶν (3.36.6), was held in great contempt by our historian. He condemns him for demagogy (ἀνήρ δημαγωγός 29, 4.21.3) as well as violence, despises his boastfulness as mad (μανιῶδης, 4.39.3), and celebrates his death as cowardly (6.10.9).

Thucydides' portrayal of Cleon may not be altogether fair or without bias 30, but it is his treatment in the History which concerns our topic. Thucydides records his speech condoning and urging severe punishment of Mytilene for the revolt of 428/7. Cleon refers to Mytilene's "crime", ironically saying, "The fact is that when great prosperity (εὐπραγία) comes suddenly and unexpectedly to a state, it usually breeds arrogance (ὑπαριν)" (3.39.4), not realizing that this statement could refer to himself and to Athens as well. In the context of the speech it is a puzzling inclusion -- the Mytileneans have not benefited from any sudden good fortune at all. Gomme suggests it is a "... case of love of generalization making its way into a speech." 31 Thucydides did include it, undoubtedly as a matter of importance (it is echoed by Diodotus in 45.4), and it must point to Cleon's career as well as Athens' folly in undertaking the Sicilian Expedition. 32 Cleon goes so far as to attempt to curtail any attempt at a speech of opposition (3.38) and warns the δημοκτ to not to be swayed by clever arguments (doubtless more irony on Thucydides' part), or by pity (40.3).

29 As Westlake (8) states, this word "has not yet become a term of disparagement", but πιθανότατος (3.36.6) gives it the colouring of the modern connotations.
30 For example, Diodorus Siculus presents a different, noble death of Cleon (12.74.2).
31 HCT ii, 307
32 Hunter, 79
An ἀντιλογία, however, is presented. A figure not elsewhere mentioned replies to Cleon. Diodotus' raison d'etre in the History almost seems to be as a foil for Cleon. Cornford suggests, "...Diodotus' speech contains the motive and the moral of the whole of Cleon's career as Thucydides has chosen to present it."\(^{33}\) In contrast to the aggressive and brash Cleon, Diodotus employs moderation and restraint. His advice and reasoning are sound, and he reverses the popular sentiment of the previous day. He describes a neat combination of forces of which to be wary: "Hope (ἥ τε ἐλπίς) and desire (ὁ ἐρως) persist throughout and cause the greatest calamities - one (ὁ μὲν) leading and the other (ἡ δὲ) following, one (ὁ μὲν) conceiving the enterprise, and the other (ἡ δὲ) suggesting that it will be successful - invisible factors, but more powerful than the terrors that are obvious to our eyes" (3.45.5). The original Greek is more clear: Desire causes one to hatch a plot, and Hope follows and hints at an easy means of achieving good fortune (ἡ ἐρωτική τῆς τύχης). To substantiate this, he further characterizes fortune: "Then too, the idea that fortune (ἡ τύχη) will be on one's side plays as big a part as anything else in creating a mood of over-confidence; for sometimes she does come unexpectedly (ἀδοκήτως) to one's aid, and so she tempts men to run risks for which they are inadequately prepared" (3.45.6). This piece of wisdom is integral to Thucydides' theme of chance and the unpredictable. Fortune is a fickle bed-fellow which can cause feelings of invincibility, and spurs one on to tackling impossible enterprises, such as the Sicilian Expedition. We will return to this reaction to unexpected turns of fortune after discussion of the Pylos affair (Chapter II, section i).

The remaining speeches which concern the topic of chance and the unpredictable will be discussed in the following chapters in the context of the

\(^{33}\)Cornford, 124
events they attend. That this topic was a major focus for Thucydides is evident from the discussion of the λόγοι alone, even without the substantiating ἐργα.

The History is certainly a thematic narrative; Hunter goes so far as to say, "Thucydides' 'facts' cannot be considered in isolation from the schema or pattern which informs them. 'Truth' then is not just the erga but the erga (and the logoi too) as they conform to a coherent and meaningful pattern."³⁴ No one theme is unique to either speech or action, but incorporated into both. Finley says this about Thucydides' speeches: "Because they embody arguments of a fundamental character, they may be expected to play an organic, even an interrelated, part in the work as a whole."³⁵ The events permit paradigms; the speeches supply a platform for Thucydides to express himself in more or less his own words. They are the prime medium to convey certain themes as τὰ δεινὸντα.

Let us, then, sum up Thucydides' theoretical view of the element of τύχη and τὸ παράλογον as presented in the terms of oratory. First, at the "Spartan Debate" of 432 the Athenian envoy introduces the element of the unpredictable in war (1.78.1). Archidamus stresses the fact that events determined by chance cannot be calculated (1.84.3); he repeats the truth that there is a prevalent unpredictability in war (2.11.4). Pericles says that logic in events is tenuous, and that "luck" is the scapegoat (1.140.1); the world is full of changes and chance (2.44.1); people react negatively to unpredictable events (2.61.3). Hermocrates is consistent in affirming that fortune cannot be controlled by man (4.64.2, 6.78.2-3). Nicias is interested in retaining elusive εὐτυχία (6.23.3); people become over-confident when fortune is on their side (6.11.5, also Diodotus' speech 3.45.6); he repeats the existence of the unpredictable in war,

³⁴Hunter, 177
³⁵Finley, 100
and in desperation must resort to hoping for change of fortune (7.61.3, 77.3, also Melian Dialogue). Thus, in theory, Thucydides has shown that chance and the unpredictable are a part of warfare and cannot be regulated, they can cause extreme moods of despair and dissent or elation and over-confidence depending on circumstance, and a state or individual's faith in chance and the unpredictable changes depending on prosperous or perilous states of affairs.

So much for theory. In the following chapters, events which demonstrate Thucydides' perspective will be discussed, with a focus on weather as a major component of chance and the unpredictable. Just as speeches are often didactic in Thucydides, his portrayal of deeds is often paradigmatic. Pericles himself realized the importance of connecting the two: "I shall deal with all this (referring to Spartan strategy and Athenian mistakes) on another occasion when words and action (λόγω ἁμα τοῖς ἔργοις) will go together" (1.144.2). As Hunter points out throughout her book, λόγοι and ἔργα go hand in hand in Thucydides' History, and these statements proffered in the speeches will be illustrated in action.
Chapter II

THE EVENTS

Thucydides' methods and designs for presenting the speeches of his History were discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter; in contrast, his aims and technique of describing the events must be examined briefly. The μέν ... δέ construction of 1.22.1-236 clearly marks his different treatment of the two modes of narration. He is far more explicit in laying out his format for presenting the events than he is regarding the speeches. In 1.22.2 he notes his penchant for cross-reference and says, "Either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible. Not that even so the truth was easy to discover: different eye-witnesses give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories."

His efforts to present only the truth are evident in the next statement, where he says, "And it may well be that my history will seem less easy to read because of the absence in it of a romantic element." He rarely explicitly states his own opinion (as in 1.9.3: μοι δοκεῖ). He will not succumb to poetic license, as he criticizes "facts" quoted by earlier literary figures: "It is questionable whether we can have complete confidence in Homer's figures, which, since he was a poet, were probably exaggerated" (1.10.3). He censures Herodotus in 1.20 for inaccuracy, and proceeds to praise his own History as superior to any other: "It is better evidence than that of the poets, who exaggerate the importance of their themes, or of the prose chroniclers, who are less interested in telling the truth than in catching the attention of their public, whose authorities...

36See Chapter I, p. 7
cannot be checked, and whose subject-matter, owing to the passage of time, is mostly lost in the unreliable streams of mythology" (1.21.1). He again condemns the accuracy of the poets, and finds fault with the goals and methods of the logographers.

In his account of the Pentacontaetia Thucydides makes another reference to the inadequacy of other works. While giving reasons for this digression from his main narrative, he makes the following remark: "The only one of them (previous writers) who has touched upon this period is Hellanicus, in his Attic History, but he has not given much space to the subject and he is inaccurate in his dates" (1.97.2) Even though Thucydides' account of the period between 479 and 435 is also ἑνδεικτική ταί τοῖς χρόνοις οὐκ ἀκριβῶς, and uncharacteristic of the rest of his work, he feels it necessary to distance himself from his rivals. He persuasively and repeatedly states that "using the plainest evidence", and by cross-reference, he has presented the most accurate of accounts -- an expose which is meant to be "judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future" (1.22.4).

The reference to the future, and the following label of his history as a κτήμα ἐς αἰει, is as important for the analysis of Thucydides' facts as his explicit statements about his method of reporting the ἔργα. An integral factor in presenting facts as paradigmatic evidence for historical patterns and traits of human reaction is the development of themes. As discussed in the previous chapter, Thucydides' History contains a variety of themes. He certainly does not mean to apply to himself his criticism of the poets for thematic exaggeration -- he undoubtedly believed that he was presenting evidence that was thematic because human nature itself created these themes, not that they were created
by himself as literary devices. Nevertheless, the themes are present in the
*History* because Thucydides chose to present them, and chose his method of
setting them forth.

At this juncture, what concerns us is Thucydides' use of the facts to
exhibit his themes. He was, to some extent, choosy about the material he
presented. Rood notes two types of "silences" where Thucydides has been
selective in the information proffered: ellipses, such as the Megarian decree,
which is mentioned only in speeches\(^37\), but never in the factual reporting, and
omissions, such as the so-called Peace of Kallias and the 425 raising of the
tribute, only evident in other sources.\(^38\) Thucydides' use of material was
deliberate -- are we to believe that such a fastidious and careful historian would
*forget* to include the Megarian decree? Thucydides' silences are a curious
matter, and the subject of many studies, but are relevant to our topic only to the
extent that, if deliberate, they support the view that Thucydides was selective
and methodical in his presentation of events. For all his efforts to establish his
factual reporting as accurate and lacking in a "romantic element", his treatment
of the εργα certainly fits into his scheme of thematic presentation.

The element of the "unpredictable" is one theme that appears in the εργα
as well as in the λόγοι. Thucydides' presentation of this element includes some
manipulation of the facts -- not misrepresentation *per se*, but sometimes a
deliberate inclination toward presenting the facts to accomplish a particular end.
To accentuate the importance of this theme, and to make his words useful to
those who want to understand how the events happened and how the patterns
may reoccur, his material had to be presented in a certain light. The following

\(^{37}\)1.67.4, 1.139.1, 1.140.3-4, 1.144.2.
\(^{38}\)Rood, 10
sections will discuss episodes in which the element of the unpredictable plays a part, with specific references to climate and weather as a "medium" of the unpredictable. I have chosen not to follow Thucydides' chronological narrative for these sections, but to begin with the account of the events at Pylos and Sphacteria, as it is paradigmatic and didactic in nature, and effectively demonstrates Thucydides' perception of our topic. As it has applications to the rest of the *History*, it also has bearing on the subsequent sections of this paper.
i) Pylos (4.3 - 4.41)

The most notable of all the instances in which weather, τύχη and τὸ παράλογον play a part, intertwined and overlapping, is the affair at Pylos and Sphacteria of 425. All are a factor in this episode, and the narrative order and language emphasize their involvement. It has been exhaustively studied and written about by ancient and modern scholars, and is one of the most well known sections of Thucydides' History. It is often perceived as the turning point of the Archidamian War, and one of the most influential occurrences of the entire Peloponnesian War. Concerning the result, Thucydides says, "This event caused much more surprise among the Hellenes than anything else that happened in the war" (4.40.1), and Kagan says, "The events at Pylos completely changed the outlook of the war." Rhodos notes Thucydides' specific attention devoted to this passage, referring to it as "one of the exciting episodes which Thucydides picks out for a detailed and vivid narrative", as opposed to his regular reporting: "... Thucydides' narrative manner is commonly thought of as matter-of-fact."

Many find parallels between the Athenian success at Pylos, the height of Athenian power and confidence in the war, and the defeat at Syracuse, the depths of Athenian despair and weakness which was a major catalyst toward her ultimate demise. After the Athenian defeat in the harbour of Syracuse, and essentially the destruction of her expedition to Sicily, the correlation between the two episodes is summed up: "They were now in much the same state as that into which they had forced their enemies at Pylos" (7.71.7) Thucydides himself stresses the magnitude of importance of each of these events, and the

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40 Rhodes, 208
41 Ibid., 3
corresponding yet paradoxical features cannot be overlooked. There can be no doubt that Thucydides considered the episode at Pylos to be one of great significance.

In the spring of 425, Attica was subjected to the annual invasion of the Spartans, under the king Agis. Athens, with her citizens settled within the city walls, maintained Pericles’ war policy outlined in 431, at the outbreak of the war: "They were not to go out and offer battle, but were to come inside the city and guard it. Their navy, in which their strength lay, was to be brought to the highest state of efficiency" (2.13.2). While making no effort to face the Peloponnnesians in Attica, their offensive was geared toward maritime activity. Two strategoi, Eurymedon and Sophocles, were dispatched with forty ships to Sicily, where the Athenians were ostensibly involved in aiding the Ionian Leontini in its struggles with the Syracusans, though Thucydides says the real reason was to gain control of any grain trade that might make its way to the Peloponnese, and to assess any possibilities of annexing Sicily into their empire (3.86.4). As the two generals made their way to Sicily, they were to assist the Corcyraeans in their struggles with raiding exiles. Sixty Peloponnesian ships had been sent to aid the exiled party.

The Athenian general Demosthenes, though holding no official position at this time, was granted use of this fleet for whatever he wished on the voyage round the Peloponnese, as he had requested. During this circumnavigation, news arrived that the Peloponnesian ships had already arrived at Corcyra, and the two generals in official command wished to press on to aid the Corcyraeans, but Demosthenes wanted to put in at Pylos, to "do what was necessary" before

42I have made an emendation to Warner's translation of πράξαντας ἃ δεῖ ("to carry out his plan" p. 266), as it inaccurately anticipates what is to follow, and does not reflect Thucydides' slant.
sailing on (4.3.1). Thucydides has not yet told us what Demosthenes had in mind, but we are led to believe that it must entail repairs for ships, and preparation for any encounter with the Peloponnesian ships. Eurymedon and Sophocles objected, but the Athenian fleet was forced to put in there because a storm blew up by chance (κατὰ τὸ χαίρει). Only now does Thucydides tell us what Demosthenes' designs on Pylos were: he immediately proposed that the place be fortified, which was the very reason for having joined Eurymedon and Sophocles (4.3.2). While the other generals perceived this action as fruitless, Demosthenes noted the availability of building materials, its naturally strong defensive position, a nearby harbour, and the fact that it was in the vicinity of the Messenians, whom Demosthenes believed would be capable of doing a fair amount of damage to the Spartans and could act as a garrison. All in all, Demosthenes believed that Pylos was a very suitable place for an outpost in hostile territory. He could not, however, convince the generals or the army to establish a base there.

The inclement weather continued, apparently resulting in boredom among the troops. An impulse (ὀρμή) seized them to build fortifications, even though they had no appropriate tools. Nor was this done at a leisurely pace; they hurried to finish the work before the Spartans could arrive and attack. This is a strange turn of events for an expedition bound for Corcyra and Sicily with no intentions of remaining at Pylos. They spent six days of intense labour fortifying Pylos "on the side facing the land and in the other most necessary parts" (4.5.2). Eurymedon and Sophocles then re-embarked for Corcyra, leaving behind Demosthenes with five ships as a garrison. Thus, a small base was established, but with an insufficient guard to resist any decent attack.

Meanwhile, the Spartans happened (ἐτυχοῦ) to be holding a festival, and did not take the news of the capture of Pylos seriously. While the festival seems
to have been important enough to prevent any forces from being sent to storm Pylos, apparently it in no way hindered the annual invasion of Attica. However, when Agis and the Peloponnesians in Attica heard of the occupation, they withdrew without delay, considering the matter to be critical. Troops were immediately sent to Pylos, and the sixty Peloponnesian ships were recalled from Corcyra and met the land forces at Pylos, having escaped the notice of the Athenian fleet.

Incidentally, the Athenian fleet was then only at Zacynthus — no more than seventy miles (just over 115 kilometres) from Pylos. Demosthenes sent messengers there to instruct the fleet to return to Pylos. According to Wilson, to fit into the time-scheme, the Athenian fleet must have waited at Zacynthus for a minimum of five days, more likely around seven. The distance of seventy miles, he goes on to say, would normally be covered in two or three days, barring any bad weather — but the Spartan fleet arrived at Pylos without any storms or adverse winds. No doubt not only Demosthenes (4.8.3), but the other Athenian generals were anticipating the arrival of the Spartan ships. This would explain why the Peloponnesians had to take an evasive route, by dragging their ships over the isthmus of Leucas (4.8.2), as the Athenians were on the lookout for them.

Eurymedon and Sophocles sailed to Pylos with all speed. The Spartans, already at Pylos, expected to take the place with ease. A plan was formed to block up the entrances of the harbour to prevent the Athenian fleet from taking position there upon arrival. Some hoplites were placed on the island of Sphacteria to eliminate any landing places for the Athenians, and so that they would not have to fight a sea battle while they stormed the fortifications.

43 Wilson, 67
Demosthenes, however, had received a boost. A Messenian privateer and a light vessel had happened (ἐνυξον) to arrive bearing arms and forty hoplites. It must be remembered that in the previous year, Demosthenes had been aided by Messenians at Acarnania. He posted his men for defense, and took a strong force to the place where he thought the Spartans would try to make their landing. The Spartans attacked at that very place, and were warded off. At this point, Thucydides emphasizes a paradox (4.12.3), where the navally superior Athenians fought a land battle on Spartan land against the Spartans, the supreme land power fighting from their ships against their own shores. He refers to this alteration with the following words: ἐς τοῦτό τε περιέστη ἡ τύχη ἡώστε ...

The attacks continued for two days, and on the third, the Athenian fleet arrived, with reinforcements from Naupactus and four Chiot ships. Finding no place to land, as the Spartans had arranged, they withdrew to the island of Prote for the night. Strangely, the Peloponnesians made no effort to block off the harbour, and prepared to fight a sea battle the next day in that very harbour. In the ensuing battle at sea, the Spartans were routed, and again Thucydides draws attention to a reversal of the regular methods of fighting of both sides (4.14.3).

The result was grim for the Spartans. Four hundred and twenty\textsuperscript{44} Lacedaimonian hoplites were trapped on the island of Sphacteria, closely guarded by the Athenian navy. Ambassadors were sent to Athens to conclude an armistice at Pylos, and an end to the war.

\textsuperscript{44}Thucydides' numbers are not exact: in 4.8.9 he says the number is 420; in 4.38.5 the number is 440.
Before continuing with the events at Pylos, let us examine the material presented by Thucydides thus far. This affair, which results in the most influential aspect of the Archidamian War, begins as an aside to the potentially major expedition to Corcyra and Sicily. It is conveyed in a manner quite unlike the bulk of Thucydides' matter of the rest of the work. His divergence from his regular form is noted by Hunter: "Here, though one might expect Thucydides to employ his usual method of spelling out purposes to anticipate the erga so that his reader might better understand how they happened and why, he does no such thing." He with-holds information and is vague in explanation. The impression created by this account, according to Hunter, is "not anticipation, but reaction. The reader is like the generals; he does not know what is going on. Purposes are not spelled out in advance but dragged in after the fact or as they seem to come to Demosthenes." There are numerous problems in this narrative: would Demosthenes really have with-held his objective so long? Why does Thucydides not explain why the Athenian fleet held position at Zacynthus? While they advanced against the sixty Spartan ships at Corcyra, why would Eurymedon and Sophocles leave five ships of their forty in a "waste of Athenian money" (4.3.3)? These are just a few of the many questions that our thorough and áκριβης author leaves unanswered.

The entire passage is slanted toward emphasizing the involvement of chance. Cornford makes the following statement: "That impression is that the occupation of Pylos -- the first step to the most decisive success achieved by Athens in this war -- was the most casual thing in the world." He goes on to say that, "there is hardly a sentence in the whole story which is not so turned

45 Hunter, 61
46 Hunter, 63
47 Cornford, 88
and so disposed as to make us feel that design counted for nothing and luck for everything."\textsuperscript{48} Rhodes concurs: "At various points in his account of this episode Thucydides suggests, to a greater extent than the reader may be inclined to believe, that what happened was not so much the result of good planning as a fortunate accident for Athens."\textsuperscript{49} Hand-in-hand with τῷ χρίτῃ comes τὸ παράλογον; the passage "describes a complete paralogos suffered by the Peloponnesians,"\textsuperscript{50} and Thucydides himself creates two instances of it (4.12.3, 14.3). Thucydides chose to present the material in such a way as to emphasize the role of chance and the unpredictable in this passage, even if it meant downplaying other factors, such as intelligence and strength on the part of the Athenians, and mistakes and poor planning on the part of the Spartans. The discrepancies of this account are attributable to Thucydides' efforts to present this episode as a series of fortuitous and incalculable events.

Eurymedon and Sophocles, the official commanders of the expedition to Corcyra and Sicily, were opposed to putting in at Pylos, and presumably would have carried on if not for a "twist of fate". Thucydides says that "a storm happened to get up" (4.3.1: κατὰ τῷ χρίτῃ χείμων ἐπιγενόμενος), forcing the fleet to make a landing. We are led to believe that save for this one freak occurrence, the affair at Pylos would never have happened, and Demosthenes' plans (of which we are still in the dark) would have gone unfulfilled at this point. The situation in Corcyra required the presence of the Athenian navy; the combination of the exiled party and Peloponnesian reinforcement threatened Athens' influence in this strategic location. From Thucydides' narrative it appears that Demosthenes had not informed anyone of his reasons for wanting

\textsuperscript{48} Cornford, 90
\textsuperscript{49} Rhodes, 208
\textsuperscript{50} Hunter, 61
to put in at Pylos. It is suggested that the Athenian _demos_ had no idea what he was planning, for Thucydides vaguely states "the Athenians allowed him, at his own request, to make what use he liked of this fleet of theirs on its way round the Peloponnese" (4.2.4). Before the storm, all Thucydides says is that Demosthenes wanted to land at Pylos to do "what had to be done" (4.3.1).

And so, by chance, the storm happened to blow up, and the Athenians put in at Pylos. Only after landing does Demosthenes reveal to the other commanders (and to Thucydides' readers) what his intentions had been. Once again, the unpredictable weather allows the following course of events. Even though neither the generals nor the army were convinced by Demosthenes to create a base at Pylos, their stay was prolonged by a continuing spell of bad weather (\(\alpha \tau \iota \lambda \omega \alpha \), 4.4.1). Having spare time on their hands, on a whim or impulse, the soldiers began to fortify the place. The word \(\ddot{o}r\mu\eta\) implies no premeditation or planning. Rhodes proposes that "Thucydides may wish to suggest, but readers may not wish to believe, that the impulse owed nothing to Demosthenes."\(^{51}\) Thucydides presents the building of the fortifications, which lasted six days, as a means of passing time during the bad weather, not as the result of any command. In support of this activity being unplanned, Thucydides makes it clear that there were no tools for fortification building, but to undermine this he also says that "most of the place was itself a natural stronghold and did not require any fortifying" (4.4.3). As it turns out, tools were not essential. The reference to their haste in completing the job before any Spartan arrival does suggest the existence of a plan. The combination of Demosthenes' plans which were laid out by Thucydides in 4.3, and the circumstances surrounding the actual building do make \(\ddot{o}r\mu\eta\) seem suspect.

\(^{51}\) Rhodes, 210
Up to this point, the events leading up to Pylos are portrayed by Thucydides as elements of chance: the landing forced by the storm, the delay forced by weather unsuitable for sailing, and the fortifications built on a whim. The storm was indeed κατά τύχην, but the use of the time allowed by the delay was anything but a matter of chance. Nevertheless, Thucydides presents all of this as accidental, even though it seems to be progressing in accordance with Demosthenes' plans.

When the Spartans hear of the capture of Pylos, they happen to be celebrating a festival. Thucydides uses the imperfect ἔτυχον, a common verb implying coincidental action. Gomme says, "τυχάνειν does not necessarily mean that an event was accidental, but that it was contemporaneous. 'The Spartans were at that time holding a festival': the most that is meant is that Demosthenes had not timed the arrival at Pylos in order to coincide with it."52 Certainly at this point in the narrative, that is the only logical definition -- any more is a stretch. Cornford calls Thucydides' choice of words here, "A singularly happy improvisation on the part of Fortune."53 This can be an accurate statement, but only with the benefit of hindsight. To a first-time reader or listener, Gomme's general definition is appropriate. Not that Cornford's statement carries no significance this early; he notices that "the note of accident is clearly sounded at the outset in κατά τύχην (not ἔτυχε) and below in ὀρμὴ ἐνέπεσε. Later the fainter suggestion of ἔτυχον suffices to sustain it"54 (my italics).

As all the other instances of the word's root reoccur as the passage progresses, however, it becomes more notable. Allison says, "Thucydides

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52 HCT iii, 488
53 Cornford, 88-9
54 Ibid. 88, n. 2
refuses to conform to the tendency in prose that emerged from the last quarter of
the fifth century, by which repetition was avoided except for the rare instances
when poetic or rhetorical ends were best served by some eloquent repeating."

In conjunction with the references to τῆς, the additional use of τυγχάνειν,
reoccurring in 4.9.1 and 13.4 is not so much "eloquent repeating", but designed
to create an unconscious, or even semi-conscious emphasis for the reader.

The Spartans in Sparta show little reaction. King Agis and the Spartans
in Attica, however, withdraw immediately, considering the occupation of Pylos to
be "a threat to their vital interests" (4.6.1). Thucydides does not stop there in
recounting reasons for the withdrawal, though: πολλαχοθέν ευνέβη
ἀναχωρήσαν τε θάνατον αὐτῶν ... (4.6.2). There was a shortage of food for the
invading army because the crops were not yet ripe, and the weather was
unseasonably rainy and stormy. Hunter drips with sarcasm: "What kind of army
takes the field knowing full well the corn is still unripe and yet fails to take along
sufficient supplies? And what a boon to Athens, if mere bad weather can stop
the annual invasion", and then makes her valid point: "Thucydides seems intent
on multiplying fortuitous circumstances which combined to bring the Spartans
home." Thucydides seems to belittle the effect of the capture of Pylos by
offering extra reasons for the departure from Attica.

If we are to take these additional motives at face value, the following
conclusions arise. Firstly, the Spartans' planning was poor in not seeing to
adequate provisions to last until the grain ripened. Faulty judgement will reoccur
in the battle in the harbour when they commit the tactical error of not blockading
the entrances. Thucydides stresses an apparent, uncharacteristic lack of

55 Allison, 35-6
56 Hunter, 64
common sense on the part of the Spartans over this short period of time.

Secondly, an incalculable occurrence forced the earliest withdrawal ever from Attica: stormy weather. Thucydides certainly presents χειμών τε ἐπίγενόμενος μείζων παρὰ τὴν καθεστηκώσαν ὄροιν as an element of the unpredictable. Unseasonable weather was not taken into account by the Peloponnesians. Thucydides draws attention to a Spartan mistake, and a chance event as reasons for pulling out of Attica.

Then, in 4.8.1, the Spartans immediately send relief to Pylos, from all over the Peloponnesian, and the fleet is recalled from Corcyra -- quite a departure from ἐν ὀλίγωπίς ἐποιοῦσα (4.5.1).

The next "chance" event mentioned by Thucydides is the arrival of the two Messenian ships, οἱ ἐπιγενόμενοι (4.9.1). Demosthenes' men were armed only because the Messenians happened to show up, bearing arms. The use of the verb τυγχάνειν may now be seen to carry implications of chance. No mention is made by Thucydides of any reason why these two ships with forty hoplites and arms happened to be in the area. But, Thucydides has said that Demosthenes had included the possibility of the Messenians being an asset against the Spartans in his original plans, particularly because they spoke the same dialect as the Spartans (4.3.3). In addition, in his campaign of the previous year, Demosthenes had tricked the Ambraciots: "They ... were in fact inclined to believe that Demosthenes' men were their own countrymen; for Demosthenes had purposely put the Messenians in front with instructions to speak to them in the Doric dialect, so as to disarm the suspicion of the sentries" (3.112.4). Demosthenes had had many close dealings with the Messenians in this campaign, using their advice in 3.94.3 and 97.1, and winning a joint victory over Eurylochus in 3.108.1.
The fact that some Messenians now, when Demosthenes at Pylos is in need of arms and men, happen to show up must be more than coincidental. In his discussion of τυγχάνειν, Gomme says, "that the Messenians had arrived by arrangement with Demosthenes is obvious, ... but to arrive at exactly the expected time was to some extent fortuitous and fortunate." He notes the weight implied in the verb, and Thucydides certainly intended this occurrence to seem "fortuitous and fortunate". But was it really? As Cornford wonders, "must we not conjecture that Eurymedon, not daring to leave more than five ships behind, since the Peloponnesian fleet would almost certainly be recalled south and meet him, sent an urgent message to Naupactus, describing the position of Demosthenes and telling the Messenians to send a fast ship with such reinforcements and spare arms as they could produce without a moment's delay?"

Gomme does notice this, but says only, "It remains notable that Thucydides does not say that an immediate message had been sent to Naupaktos to send Messenians to Pylos." The Messenians were exiles from the area nearby Pylos who had been established at Naupactus by the Athenians in 459. This was undoubtedly a premeditated move, with impeccable timing involved.

The repetition of τυγχάνειν reaches its full potential of supplying more than a casual definition of contemporaneous action when yet another occurrence aids the Athenians. The Spartans neglect their plan to block the entrances of the harbour: καὶ οἱ μὲν οὗτε ἀντανήγουντο οὔτε ἀ διενοθήσαν, φάρσαί τοὺς ἔσπλους, ἔτυχον ποιήσαντες ... (4.13.4). This "fortunate" blunder (for Athens),

57 HCT iii, 488
58 Cornford, 93
59 HCT iii, 445
60 It is quite possible that the entire idea of occupying Pylos was introduced to Demosthenes by the Messenians.
results in the defeat of the Peloponnesian ships, and about 420 hoplites being stranded on Sphacteria.

In this rout of the Spartans, Thucydides produces his second paralogical observation, and in this makes a significant remark: \( \text{ὅτι οἱ Ἄθηναιοι κρατοῦντες καὶ βουλόμενοι τῇ παροῦσῃ τύχῃ ως ἔπὶ πλεῖστον ἐπεξελθεῖν ἀπὸ νεῶν ἐπεξόμαχοντο (4.14.3-4).} \) In this instance, he equates victory with fortune. \( Τύχη \) is often translated as "success" when it refers to the Athenians at Pylos, as does Warner, but the full impact of the original Greek is lost. Thucydides describes the Athenians' success at Pylos in these terms throughout: 4.17.4 (ἐὐτυχίαν) and 4.17.5 (ἐὐτυχίας) through Spartan speakers; and in his own words: 7.18.2 (δυστυχεῖν - Sparta still remembers Pylos), 5.7.3 (ἐὐτυχίας - Cleon thinks of his "success" at Pylos), and about Sphacteria in 4.55.3 (τὰ τῆς τύχης πολλὰ) and 5.75.3 (τύχη). These references to Cleon and Sphacteria lead us into the second half of the Pylos affair.

To recapitulate the first half, we have seen that Thucydides has organized his account so as to emphasize the role of the unpredictable. The fact remains, however, that the only real chance event so far was the storm that forced the landing at Pylos. Without this, none of the events would have unfolded as they did. Perhaps this chance climatic phenomenon is the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις.\(^{61}\)

After the defeat in the harbour and the isolation of the Spartiates on Sphacteria, Sparta sues for an armistice. Their ambassadors make a speech, and warn the Athenians about fortune and the unpredictable in war. This speech has been strategically placed by Thucydides between two passages which contain a strong thematic element of chance. We are meant to mark well the words of the Spartan representatives. They first characterize Athens'
situation as \( \varepsilon \upsilon \tau \upsilon \chi \zeta \sigma \nu \), and advise them to "quit while they are ahead": "Thus you will avoid the mistake so often made by those who meet with some extraordinary piece of good luck and then go on pressing forward in the hope of more still, because of the very unexpectedness of their first success (\( \acute{a} \delta \omega \kappa \eta \tau \omega \varsigma \varepsilon \upsilon \tau \upsilon \chi \zeta \sigma \sigma \alpha \iota \))" (4.17.4). This, as Thucydides demonstrates from Cleon's actions through to the Syracusan fiasco, is just what Athens does.

The following caveat is then supplied: "It is not reasonable ... for you to think that because of your present strength and your recent acquisitions, fortune (\( \tau \upsilon \chi \zeta \varsigma \varsigma \) also will always be on your side" (4.18.3). To believe that would not be "true wisdom". They continue to say, "as for war, ... its course is governed by the total chances (\( \tau \upsilon \chi \zeta \alpha \iota \)) in operation and can never be restricted to the conditions that one or other of the two sides would like to see permanently fixed" (4.18.4). These warnings are reminiscent of Diodotus' speech in the debate over Mytilene (3.45.6, see p. 24), and anticipate Hermocrates' statement about regulating fortune (6.78.2-3, see p. 15). Truly wise people, "by avoiding the over-confidence which may spring from a success in war, are less likely to make mistakes and are most anxious, if they can, to come to terms during the period of their own good fortune (\( \varepsilon \nu \tau \omega \delta \varepsilon \upsilon \tau \upsilon \chi \zeta \varepsilon \nu \))" (4.18.4).

Their speech is skewed towards encouraging peace, but the warning reflects Thucydides' beliefs on fortune, and the perils of the unwise reaction of overconfidence. They sum up this portion of their speech by viewing the Pylos affair in the light that Thucydides portrays it: if Athens rejects peace, and later suffers a defeat, "it would be thought that even your present successes (\( \kappa \rho \alpha \tau \eta \sigma \sigma \alpha \iota \)) were merely due to luck (\( \tau \upsilon \chi \zeta \zeta \))" (4.18.5).\(^{62}\)

\(^{62}\)See 4.14.3-4, discussed above (p. 43)
They look ahead to the possibility of continued hostility at Pylos, and look to the outcome, where, "either, by some stroke of luck (παρατύχοντος), the men should manage to force an escape, or else be subdued by your blockade and fall still further into your power" (4.19.1). From this point of view, salvation for the Spartans stranded on the island is in the hands of fate, but not so for an Athenian success. As we will see, this is not how the affair unfolds in Thucydides' narration.

Cleon succeeded in causing the Spartan request for peace to be unfulfilled, and the siege of Sphacteria continued. Weather came into play in this blockade: the fleet was unable to anchor on the sea-ward side of the island when it was windy (4.23.2). Food and water was difficult to procure for both sides. Peloponnesian helots brought in food for the hoplites by taking advantage of the wind, letting it blow them in towards the island and escape the notice of the triremes, the same wind which kept the Athenians from anchoring on the side facing the open sea. Any attempts in decent weather, however, were intercepted (4.26.7). The Athenians began to fear that the blockade might have to be called off, as winter was approaching; even in the summer Pylos supplied insufficient means of sustenance (4.27.1). In addition, the ability of the helots to reach the hoplites on the island in windy weather caused the Athenians to believe that the Spartans would escape during a period of such bad weather. Thucydides says that they began to regret that they had not accepted the peace terms proposed by Sparta.

Cleon, then, had to defend himself for having encouraged the Athenians to reject the peace offer. An animated and famous assembly took place, resulting in Cleon's assignment to sail to Pylos, and his "irresponsible" (4.28.5) and "mad" (4.39.3) promise to either capture the Spartans, or kill them, within twenty days. Thucydides presents Cleon's actions as being unplanned and the
result being unwanted, but the details suggest otherwise: he already had some Lemnians, Imbrians, peltasts from Aenus and 400 archers available.

At Pylos, Demosthenes' soldiers were suffering. Thucydides indulges in another paradoxical statement, saying that they were "finding themselves more the besieged than the besiegers" (4.29.2). The attitude leaned towards conflict; the soldiers were eager to fight, and Demosthenes was more confident because of a fire which had happened on the island. He had been deterred by the forest on the island -- he recalled the Aetolian disaster (3.97-8) when he lost a great many men caught in a forest (who, incidentally, were destroyed by a fire). The wind carried the fire over the island, clearing it, and enabled Demosthenes to assess the situation on the island.

Cleon arrived, and the two led an attack on Sphacteria. The light armed Athenian and allied troops forced the Spartans, hindered by clouds of dust and ash, back into their fort. With Messenian help, the Spartans were flushed out, and surrendered. According to Thucydides, 292 hoplites were taken to Athens, out of which 120 were Spartiates. Out of all the events of the war, in Thucydides' estimation, this action was emphatically the most παρά γνώμην (4.40.1).

Let us consider the evidence of this resolution to the Pylos episode. In the preparations for his involvement, Cleon is portrayed by Thucydides as "flying by the seat of his pants". Our author's efforts to recount the events as unguided except by chance continues. And once again, a "fluke" leads to the ultimate victory for Athens. Thucydides says, "It happened, however, that one of the soldiers who, because of the lack of space, were forced to put in to the extreme

63 Another parallel with later events in Syracuse is evident: in Nicias' letter, he says "we, who thought we were the besiegers, have become in fact the besieged" (7.11.4).
points of the island and have their meals there with patrols set to prevent them being surprised, accidentally (ἄκουντος) set fire to a part of the wood. The wind then got up, and nearly the whole of the wood was unintentionally (ἐλατεία) burnt down" (4.30.2). The two Greek words indicated accentuate the accidental nature of the fire and its aftermath. Beyond a doubt, Thucydides tells us that the wood was cleared by mistake. Thus Demosthenes was able to appraise the numbers of the Spartans, and judge appropriate landing places.

After such a lengthy discussion of Demosthenes' apprehensions about the forest on Sphacteria (29.2-30.1), however, one must wonder that he did not come up with the idea of setting fire to the wood himself. He had a number of concerns: there were no paths, and so the enemy could attack from unseen positions; he could not determine their numbers, or observe any mistakes they might make; their small force would by now know the country better that his larger, more easily consternated force. He also thought of the Aetolian disaster. There, the enemy had set fire to the forest and destroyed a large number of his men -- not an event he would easily forget. With these anxieties, and the tactic used against him still fresh in his memory (for a good general learns from his mistakes, as does Gylippus in 7.5.3), would he not have conceived of the idea of setting the fire himself? Phormio, in 429/8 had used the wind in his calculations that enabled him to defeat a numerically superior force (see section iii); why would Demosthenes not have set fire on the wind-ward side of the island to incinerate all his apprehensions? Of course this is merely conjecture, but perhaps not unfounded.

The fact remains that Thucydides emphasizes the fire and the stoking wind as a purely accidental cause for the clearing of the island, allowing

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64HCT iii (438) wonders if he had been dismissed from office as a result of this.
Demosthenes and Cleon to achieve their famous and influential feat. The capture of the Spartiates came as a great surprise to all the Hellenes. The element of luck in the episode was apparently noticed by the Spartan prisoners. Reacting to an insult hurled by an Athenian captor, one prisoner remarked that, "spindles (by which he meant arrows) would be worth a great deal if they could pick out brave men from cowards" (4.40.2). The effect of his statement is not immediately apparent to non-Greeks, but would not be lost on Thucydides' audience, and to the Athenian to whom the remark was directed: as Edmunds notes, "to be killed by a missile is to be killed by tyche." Aristotle makes this connection: "Fortune (τυχή) is also a cause of those goods which are beyond calculation (παρὰ λόγον): for instance ... the arrow hit one who stood by and not the man aimed at." Thucydides elucidates the soldier's retort: it was "intended to show that the ones who had died were simply the ones who came in the way of the stones and the arrows" (4.40.2).

For all his efforts to stress the role of chance throughout this episode, we have seen that there are only two real instances of fortune aiding the Athenians. The first is the storm which allowed Demosthenes to occupy Pylos. The second is the accidental fire and the wind which caused it to spread over the island. All speculation aside, we may indeed be justified in accepting Thucydides' stand that it was a mistake. Without the wind, the fire may well have burned itself out, causing little damage. The two genuine instances of chance and the unpredictable governing the events of this portion of the History are firmly dependent upon the weather. Whatever Thucydides' motives were for emphasizing the role of chance in this episode, these two examples were

65Edmunds, 108
66Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric, 1362a 6-10
67Rhodes (208) conveniently covers the various possible motives and cites
indeed instrumental in leading to the outcome. It is apparent that Thucydides was looking for a passage in which to emphasize this theme, and these two significant instances provided such an opportunity. He arranged the narrative to fit in: Hunter remarks, "On the one side is error, (the Peloponnesians), on the other, a total lack of plan, (Demosthenes). What better place for \textit{tyche} to play a role? If there is an element of chance even when men formulate a policy based on careful calculation and foresight, how could it fail to be a most active force when both are lacking?"\textsuperscript{68}

One of the leading theories regarding Thucydides' motive for stressing the involvement of chance and the unpredictable in this passage is that it looks ahead to the events at Syracuse. Finley notes this: "The marvel of Thucydides' achievement in the Sicilian books is to have fused the sense of pattern and the sense of accident into a terrible and lifelike unity."\textsuperscript{69} It is interesting to note that chance plays little part in the Syracusan enterprise, except in speeches (by the leading figures of Nicias, Hermocrates and Gylippus).

The lesson here is in reaction to unexpected success. The Spartan speech (4.17-20) before the capture of Sphacteria has already begun the lesson: be wary of pressing for more out of over-confidence. Thucydides says that Athens committed this error, incited by Cleon: "The Athenians, however, aimed at winning still more" (4.21.2-3), and the capture of the Spartiates resulted. They did not stop there though; at the end of the narrative about Pylos, Thucydides says, "The Athenians, however, were aiming at gaining still more ... This completes the account of what happened at Pylos" (4.41.4). Finley observes the import placed on this attitude by Thucydides: "Cleon had roused

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{68}Hunter, 70 \\
\textsuperscript{69}Finley, 204
\end{flushright}
the people to visions of grandeur, and Athens was committed to a war of expansion. Thucydides notes the fact in the ominous phrase, which is to recur again and again in one form or another from now on through the Sicilian narrative, "they strove for more," πλέονος ὡρέγοντο."\(\text{70}\) A "war of expansion" was something that Pericles strongly warned against, a policy with which Thucydides concurred: "For Pericles had said that Athens would be victorious if she bided her time and took care of her navy, if she avoided trying to add to the empire during the course of the war, and if she did nothing to risk the safety of the city itself. But his successors did the exact opposite ... such policies, when successful (Pylos), only brought credit and advantage to individuals, and when they failed (Sicily), the whole war potential of the state was impaired" (2.65.7).\(\text{71}\) With all the warnings about over-confidence due to good fortune, the element so emphatically stressed as being the guiding force in this episode, Thucydides' closing statements are ominous.

Soon after, Thucydides tells us of the continuing reactions of both sides. His statements about the human reaction to this theme are paradigmatic and didactic, designed to be "judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events ... which (human nature being what it is), will at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future" (1.22.4).

The Pylos affair was a serious blow for Sparta, and resulted in low spirits. The Athenian successes continued, and they captured the island of Cythera. Of the Spartan reaction, Thucydides says, "What they feared was that there might be a revolution against the government after the great and unexpected (ἀνελπίστου) disaster at Sphacteria, with Pylos and Cythera now in enemy

\(\text{70}\)Finley, 195
\(\text{71}\)Also 1.144.1 in Pericles' reply to the Spartan ultimatum of 431/2.
hands" (4.55.1). They were even compelled to change their customary mode of military conduct.

Thucydides continues:

"Then, too, they were very greatly disheartened by the many unpredictable (παρά λόγον) blows of fortune (τὸ τῆς τύχης πολλά) which had fallen upon them in such a short time, and they were constantly afraid that some other disaster might overtake them (αὐτοῖς περιτύχη) like the one at Sphacteria. For this reason they lacked confidence when they went into battle; they had had no previous experience of misfortune, and so their morale collapsed and they thought that whatever step they took would prove to be a mistake" (4.55.3-4).

The unexpected and unlucky turn of events surrounding Pylos utterly reduced the Spartans' previously resolute courage and confidence.72 King Archidamus was no longer living to restate his words about the facts of war, from 1.84.3 and 2.11.4 (see Chapter I, pp. 11, 13-14).

The demoralizing effect continued, according to Thucydides, through to 418-7, and the battle of Mantinea. After the victory, Thucydides reports, "So by this one action they did away with all the reproaches that had been leveled against them by the Hellenes at this time, whether for cowardice, because of the disaster in the island, or for incompetence and lack of resolution on other occasions" (5.75.3). Thucydides says that the "label" of cowardice came from the affair at Sphacteria (for indeed they lost confidence and morale), and in all likelihood the charge of incompetence and lack of resolution was a result of this demoralization. After Mantinea, however, the Spartans' regained composure: "It was now thought that, though they might have been cast down by fortune

72 The Athenians would later exhibit similar demoralization after losing a battle at sea to the Syracusans: οἱ μὲν Ἀθηναῖοι ἐν πάντι δὴ ἀθυμίας ἦσαν καὶ ὁ παράλογος αὐτοῖς μέγας ἦν, πολὺ δὲ μείζων ἦτα τῆς στρατείας ὁ μετάμελος (7.55.1).
(τυχη), they were still in their own selves the same as they always had been" (5.75.3). They now base their outlook on the far more reliable element of γνωμη rather than τυχη.73

This does not mean that the Spartans erased the Pylos-Sphacteria affair from memory; in part reminding his readers of the connection he draws between Pylos and Syracuse, and in part re-emphasizing the profound effect it had in the minds of the Spartans, Thucydides says "They ... thought that there was some justice in the misfortunes (δυστυχειν) they had suffered and took to heart the disaster of Pylos and their other defeats" (7.18.2). The year is 414/3, over a decade (and three books) after the occupation of Pylos, yet this is the one named disaster. It is true that the Athenians were still conducting raids from Pylos,74 but its capture is still referred to in terms of τυχη.

The Spartans suffered a serious blow to their confidence and morale as a result of the occupation of Pylos, emphatically described by Thucydides as a result of τυχη and an example of το παραλογον, and continued to remember it long after. The Athenian reaction was the complete opposite. As we have seen, confidence was so high that they were eager to "push for more" (4.21.2, 41.4). After their victory at Pylos, and some following successes, their confidence, indeed their over-confidence (ἐπιρεσθαι, from the Spartans' warning of 4.18.4), led to excessive self-aggrandizement: "Such was the effect on the Athenians of their present good fortune (ευτυχια) that they thought that nothing could go wrong with them" (4.65.4). This is in direct contrast to the Spartan reaction of

73 For discussion of a γνωμη-τυχη antithesis in Thucydides see Cornford (108), and Edmunds (91, 96-7).
74 It is interesting to note that the Athenians eventually lost Pylos in 409-8 because their fleet could not weather Cape Malea (see Xenophon Hellenica, 1.2.18).
4.55. Thucydides continues, "The possible and the difficult were alike attainable, whether the forces employed were large or wholly inadequate. It was their surprising (παρὰ λόγον) success in most directions which caused this state of mind and suggested to them that their strength was equal with their hopes."

One must recall Diodotus' statements about ἐλπίς and τύχη from the previous book (3.45.5-6, see Chapter I, p. 24). He warned the Athenians about ἐπαφεσθαί, being conceited or proud, and had said, "so long as the insolence (ὑβρεῖ) and pride of wealth nourish their ambitions, and in the other accidents (ξυντυχίαι) of life they are continually dominated by some incurable master passion or another, so long will their impulses continue to drive them into danger" (3.45.4). The Athenians' present mood is bordering on ὑβρίς, and will lead them into undertaking an impossible enterprise, the Sicilian Expedition. Their downfall after hubristic thought, so persuasively warned against by Thucydides, is summed up at the Athenian defeat in the Great Harbour at Syracuse, when he equates the Athenian position in Sicily to that of the Spartans at Pylos, and says that their only hope of salvation was if τὰ παρὰ λόγον γίνηται (7.71.7).

The pattern of good fortune leading to ὑβρίς and resulting in downfall, was, in varying forms, a common element of Greek thought. Thucydides uses this format to illustrate Athens' actions from Pylos through to Sicily. The pattern, writ small, is also manifested in Cleon. Cleon, who encouraged the Athenian sentiment to "press for more", is representative of this fault of over-confidence. He had won the credit for the capture of the Spartan hoplites at Sphacteria. As a prominent general, he was given the assignment to attempt to retake Amphipolis, after Thucydides' failure. Thucydides claims to know what Cleon was thinking throughout this episode, and makes the following observation: "He
was in the same confident frame of mind that he had been in at Pylos, where his success (εὐτυχίας) had convinced him of his intelligence" (5.7.3). Thucydides makes it clear that it was not intelligence, but good fortune that enabled him to claim his victory. In the ensuing battle against Brasidas, Cleon died ingloriously in a rout. His over-confidence clouded his ability to assess properly his predicament, and he made a fatal mistake.

With the warnings about chance and the unpredictable element in war from the speeches, Thucydides' presentation of the Pylos affair advances his theme. Coupled with the eventual result at Syracuse, this episode is a lesson on the effects of τύχη, and human reaction. There are two solid instances of chance, both dependent upon the weather, being the original storm and the accidental fire. In these examples, weather is the "medium" of τύχη, which is unpredictable. Placed between the two sections of the story comes the significant speech of the Spartan delegation (4.17-21) which serves to foster Thucydides' warnings about response to unexpected good fortune. To intensify the element of the unpredictable, Thucydides draws attention to three superfluous or perhaps self-indulgent paradoxes in 4.12.3, 4.14.3 and 4.29.2. Apart from the two real chance events, Thucydides has portrayed this episode with a striking emphasis on the role of fortune. Perhaps the most glaring instance of his manipulation of facts to enhance this prominence is the "chance" arrival of the Messenians. One of Rood's "silences" is undoubtedly at play here (see p. 29). It is clear that Thucydides has made this into a didactic episode, designed for those who want to understand the pattern of events and reaction according to human nature.
ii) Two exploits of Brasidas: Piraeus (2.93 - 2.94), Amphipolis (4.102 - 4.106)

A short section must be devoted to two short episodes of the History because of parallels to the Pylos affair, one four years before, and one the year after. At the end of the summer of 429/8, before the dispersal of the Peloponnesian fleet, the Spartan generals Brasidas and Cnemus decided to attempt to take the Athenian port Piraeus. They had been told by the Megarians that it had been left unguarded, so sure were the Athenians of their naval primacy. The Peloponnesian soldiers carried their supplies over the isthmus from Corinth to Megara and launched forty ships which happened to be (ἐτυξοῦν) at Nisaea (2.93.2). They did not, however, make their attack: Thucydides says that they were frightened, and that "some say" that something about the wind held them back (2.93.4). Instead they attacked Salamis. The alarm was raised at Athens, and panic ensued. But on the next day the Athenians stationed a full guard at Piraeus, and sailed to Salamis, only to find the Peloponnesians already gone. The outcome of this action was that Salamis was overrun and lost prisoners and plunder, and that Athens took steps to ensure that Piraeus was better guarded in the future. The results were minor, but the implications could have been disastrous for Athens had the plan been carried out to its objective. Piraeus had been left unguarded by the Athenians, and Thucydides says that it could have been taken: "indeed they (the Peloponnesians) could easily have done so if they had managed to overcome their apprehensions" (2.94.1).

Thucydides says that the main reason that the Peloponnesians abandoned their plan was that they were frightened of the danger involved (2.93.4, 2.94.1). In 2.94.3, concerning the withdrawal from Salamis, he says that they were also dismayed at the poor condition of their ships, an excuse which
Westlake says, "he evidently does not accept as adequate." He dismisses the other possible reason without saying why he does not accept it. In 2.93.4 he says as an aside, καὶ τις καὶ ἄνεμος αὐτοὺς λέγεται κωλύσαι, but in 2.94.2 he rejects this as hearsay: οὐκ ἄν ἄνεμος ἐκώλυσεν. The wind direction, or perhaps strength, deterred them from making their attack, according to some, but Thucydides does not believe it. This complies with his method of checking the reports, which may be biased toward one side or the other, or be the result imperfect memories (1.22.2). He did does not accept this report. But why, in this instance, would he bother to include that statement, and reject it without giving a reason?

He refers to the reason provided by some, that the wind caused the aversion of the attack, with the word λέγεται. He could not have been present at the discussion about calling off the attack, and so any reason must have been reported to him. He uses the same word in other references to decisions made by Spartan commanders: in 2.18.5 (ὡς λέγεται) of Archidamus' delay during the siege of Oenoe in 431, from reports from Spartan soldiers, which Thucydides accepts; and in 2.20.1 (λέγεται) of Archidamus' policy concerning Acharnae in the same year, which Thucydides states was his policy in 2.20.5. As for the unfulfilled attack on Piraeus, he states what was reported, and what he really believes, but in no way backs up his assertions.

The main reason given by Thucydides for the abandonment of the plan was fear, presumably of the soldiers. The commander Brasidas, whom Thucydides admired, was daring and imaginative, and for him to have called off the attack out of trepidation is not at all in accordance with his actions in the rest of the work. Westlake says of this plan: "It contains all the ingredients later

75Westlake, 141
associated with the projects of Brasidas, and the reader may feel, and is perhaps intended to feel, that, if Brasidas had been in sole command, it would have achieved much greater success." He considers the possibility that Cnemus was responsible for forsaking the endeavour, though Thucydides does not state it. It must be noted that in 3.79.3 Alcidas overruled Brasidas' urging to boldly attack Corcyra, and this is reported by Thucydides. Concerning the charge of fear, Kagan says, "Thucydides may be too hard on the Spartans", but continues, "Perhaps, on the other hand, Brasidas was outvoted by his more cautious colleagues." Still, Thucydides gives no word of this.

If Cnemus was responsible for abandoning the plan, did he feel that a struggle with the wind would impede the speed of the surprise attack? A daring move such as this would require speed and surprise. Adverse winds, then, would certainly be cause for reconsideration, if not fear of the danger involved. But Thucydides does not accept this, and says that the wind would not have stopped them. As to the statement that the ships were letting in water, they were serviceable enough for the Peloponnesians to conduct their raid on Salamis. Perhaps, if the wind had been favourable, the Peloponnesians would have had the confidence to overlook the condition of their ships, and take and keep Piraeus. A resolution of the questions that arise from this episode cannot be put forward.

What can be determined, however, is that Thucydides was not yet utilizing his theme of chance as he soon would in the discussion about Pylos, even though the opportunity was given; there were indeed reports (from λέγεται) that a potentially calamitous action was called off due to unforeseen forces of

76Westlake, 141
77Kagan (1974), 116
weather. Certain elements are in common with the Pylos affair; a plan was
launched to take a base deep in enemy territory, and this was at the proposal of
an ally. The marked difference is that, according to a report that Thucydides
rejects, in one instance weather prevented an occupation, and in the other,
weather caused an occupation, a factor emphatically stressed by our historian.

As we have seen in Thucydides' treatment of Pylos, he considers weather
to be a "medium" of the unpredictable. In a similar vein, one might not be
surprised to find him close the narration about Piraeus with a statement to the
effect that Athens nearly avoided catastrophe thanks to winds that blew up κατὰ
tὰ χειμώνα. But we find no such statement, and without justifying himself,
Thucydides claims that fear was the main factor in the abandonment of this plan.
In this episode, it is much easier to accept the idea that the Peloponnesians'
plans were thwarted because of chance weather than the events of Pylos, where
we are led to believe that Demosthenes' plans would never have materialized
except for the chance storm. If not during the circumnavigation of the
Peloponnesian, at some other time he could have, with backing testimony by the
Messenians, convinced the Athenian δῆμος of the merits of occupying Pylos. In
the events surrounding Piraeus, however, all depended upon timing and its
unguarded and exposed state -- apprehensiveness of a general such as
Brasidas would be surprising, and trepidation among his troops would not cause
him to have a change of heart; after the sudden departure of his ally Perdiccas
in Thrace in 423 he exhorts his men and tells them why they ought to be brave in
the face of their perilous predicament (4.126). By not justifying his stance,
Thucydides' permits such doubt about his rejection of an understandable reason
for the termination of the enterprise in favour of a more unlikely one.

In this episode that contains potential connections to the one at Pylos,
Thucydides is unusually blunt and dismissive. This may be due to the fact that
the respective outcomes had immensely different effects on the course of the war. In another of Brasidas' exploits, Thucydides describes how Amphipolis was taken by the Spartan commander. In the year after Pylos, Brasidas was campaigning in Thrace, and marched against the Athenian colony of Amphipolis at an unconventionally late time of year. Because of stormy weather and snow, Brasidas pushed on to the city through the night in great haste. He was planning a sudden appearance — as in the Piraeus episode, and indeed throughout his Thracian campaigns, he knew the element of surprise to be an effective advantage. Just before dawn he forced his way across the bridge over the river Strymon near to the city. He did this with ease, aided by treachery among the guard, and because of the stormy weather, as well as the unexpectedness of this move. He gained control of the area surrounding Amphipolis, and Thucydides says that he could have taken the city had he not allowed his men to pillage (4.104.2). As it turned out, the city surrendered to him on the terms he offered without bloodshed. He had earlier taken Acanthus in a similar manner, as the citizens were afraid of losing that year's crop of fruit (4.84.2). The taking of Amphipolis was a great blow to Athens; it was strategically situated, and provided timber and revenue.

Thucydides says that what pushed Brasidas to make his nocturnal march that allowed him to take the Strymon bridge with ease was this: χειμών δὲ ἦν καὶ ύπενειφευ (4.103.2). Whether or not the first phrase means "it was winter", or "it was stormy", the conditions were cold and unfavourable. Nocturnal snow might have been a reason to delay his march, but as Rhodes says, "the energetic Brasidas took it as a chance to improve his chances of arriving unexpectedly."78 It is Westlake's opinion that Thucydides draws attention to "his

78 Rhodes, 286
(Brasidas') enterprising unconventionality in making his attempt on a stormy night in winter."\textsuperscript{79} We are, however, led to believe that Brasidas would have made his march through the night anyway: "He therefore made all the speed he could, as he wished to get to Amphipolis before anyone knew of his coming" (4.103.2). Like Demosthenes' plan to put in at Pylos, regardless of weather, Brasidas planned to make haste to Amphipolis, snow and cold aside.

He had marched all day from Arnae to Aulon and Bormiscus. The distance from this area to Amphipolis is another (approximately) 29 kilometres,\textsuperscript{80} a fair hike through the night after a full day's journey. Gomme says, "This makes a very notable 24 hours' march from Arnae; and it is not at all to be wondered at that both Eukles and Thucydides were taken by surprise."\textsuperscript{81} Even if Brasidas had bivouacked for the night, he could still have emerged at Amphipolis with the element of surprise. Perhaps Thucydides mentions the weather as the motivator for the unimpeded progression of Brasidas in part to excuse himself; our historian took the blame for the loss of Amphipolis, and was banished for it.

With the help of stormy weather (\textit{\textgamma\iota\epsilon\iota\mu\omicron\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma \omicron\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma} - 4.103.5), Brasidas had little difficulty in crossing the bridge over the Strymon, and his swift arrival brought about the secession of Amphipolis from Athens. Thucydides' inclusion of these two climatic influences on Brasidas' success do not, perhaps, convince us that he would not have accomplished his feat if not for inclement weather, but in the narrative, they play an important role in his unexpected arrival. We have been led to believe that Pylos would not have been occupied save for the chance storm; at Amphipolis, the element of surprise seems to be attributed to the weather conditions. But did weather cause either of these to happen? Did

\textsuperscript{79} Westlake, 153
\textsuperscript{80} Rhodes, 286-7
\textsuperscript{81} HCT iii, 575-6
the respective generals merely use the weather as an excuse to carry out their plans? It is exceedingly likely that both occurrences would have come about regardless, one way or another. In the events surrounding the capture of Amphipolis, however, Thucydides does not include the element of chance; it is governed by plans based on the circumstances, or γνώμη, whereas at Pylos it seems that plan played no part, and the events, as recounted by Thucydides, were guided by τύχη.

In these two exploits of Brasidas, we see the weather as an element of the unpredictable. In the Piraeus episode, the weather may have served as a hindering force, preventing the attack on the Athenian harbour. As we have seen in the previous section, the weather served as a motivating force, leading to the Pylos campaign, as recorded by Thucydides. Finally, in the capture of Amphipolis, the weather served as an activating force, aiding Brasidas' campaign. From these three episodes we may conclude that in Thucydides, weather, as a force of the unpredictable and an agent of chance, has the ability to hinder, aid, or effect a campaign.
Thus far, the weather has been an element of the unpredictable, an agent of chance, and an external factor influencing campaigns in one way or another. Its effects, however, are far more extensive, as this section will examine. Chance and the unpredictable have been seen as constituents affecting the course of events; in this examination, concerning the first major naval conflict of the Peloponnesian War, we will see them as reasons given, misguidedly, to explain events. It is in their nature to become possible "excuses" for occurrences that are viewed as otherwise inexplicable by one party. This episode also serves as a paradigm for further battles and reaction to them.

In the winter of 429, the Athenian commander Phormio was stationed at Naupactus, and set up a blockade of twenty ships "to prevent anyone entering or leaving Corinth and the Gulf of Crisa" (2.69.1). In the following summer, a forty-seven ship strong fleet of the Peloponnesians sailed from Corinth to bring aid to Cnemus for his attempt on the city of Stratus in Acarnania. The fleet, equipped for transport, hoped to avoid any sea battles. It tried to elude the Athenian blockade by setting out before daybreak, but was detected, and at dawn was forced to engage midway between Patrae and the opposite mainland. The Peloponnesians formed up closely in a circle, with their prows facing outwards, and with smaller craft and their most efficient war ships inside. The Athenian ships sailed in impeding, as if they were about to ram the circular formation, but held up, sailing around the Peloponnesians. A wind blew up, throwing the tightly marshaled Peloponnesian ships into disorder, with the lighter ships in the middle adding to the consternation. As they struggled to avoid collisions with their own ships, and amid the shouting which drowned out the orders of the captains and boatswains, the Athenians attacked and sunk a number of ships. The inexperienced Peloponnesians fled to Cyllene, losing twelve ships in the rout.
At Cyllene, Cnemus arrived with thirty ships to add to the fleet. Word came from Sparta instructing the fleet to prepare for another battle. The conclusion of the Spartans in Laconia, who were not in a position to accurately assess the situation, was that the loss was due to cowardice. This was, however, their first naval engagement of the war, and Thucydides says that they, "found it very difficult to understand what had happened, and so far from thinking that there was anything wrong with their own navy, concluded that the defeat was the result of cowardice, not taking into consideration the contrast between the long experience of the Athenians and the short training which their own crews had received" (2.85.2). The Peloponnesian commanders, including Cnemus and Brasidas, attributed the loss to bad luck, and "perhaps" inexperience. They encouraged the sailors to take heart, and to trust in their superior numbers. Stationed at the Achaean Rhium, they had the support of their infantry on land as well.

Phormio sent for reinforcements, and a force of twenty ships was dispatched. It stopped at Crete, however, and was held up by adverse winds and poor weather. While the Peloponnesians prepared for another battle, Phormio moved his twenty ships to Molycian Rhium, opposite from Achaea. He too exhorted his men, and encouraged them not to be afraid of the superior numbers of the enemy.

The Peloponnesians wanted to lure the Athenians into the gulf, an action Phormio had sworn not to undertake because of the confined space, and to trap the fleet. They managed to goad Phormio into doing this, however, as he was afraid that they were going to take Naupactus. The Athenian ships were caught in the trap except for eleven leading ships. Those caught in the trap were driven onto shore and put out of commission, but the eleven sailed to Naupactus, where they turned to face the pursuing Peloponnesian ships. All but one made a
clean escape, which was pursued by a Leucadian ship. A merchant-man happened (ἐτυχε - 2.91.3) to be at anchor there; the Athenian ship circled it and managed to ram and sink the Leucadian ship. This caused panic among the Peloponnesian ships which were pursuing the Athenians in no formation, and they fell into further disorder. Some ran aground, and the rest were attacked by the Athenians, now full of confidence. They captured six Peloponnesian ships, and retrieved their own which had been disabled at the beginning of this action. Both sides put up trophies, but the Peloponnesians retreated to Corinth, as the twenty Athenian ships of reinforcement were approaching.

Τύχη and τὸ παράλογον play a part in these encounters, though in different forms from the previous sections. They come into play in the terms with which either side perceived the action. The first is the involvement of the dawn wind. Phormio, according to Thucydides, expected the Peloponnesians to fall into confusion in the first engagement. "He expected that, so far from keeping their formation, like a force on land, the warships would fall foul of each other, and the smaller craft would add to the confusion: then, too, as he sailed round the Peloponnesians, he was waiting for the wind to blow from the gulf, as it usually did about dawn, and, if the wind rose, he could see that they would be in trouble at once" (2.84.2). Phormio, as an experienced captain, knew that this wind would arise, and timed his attack around this. The inexperience of the Peloponnesians in naval warfare is emphasized by Thucydides by making the contrast to land engagements, in which their primacy lay. Phormio's calculations were correct: "When the breeze did arise, the Peloponnesians were already crowded together and, having to deal both with the wind and with their own small

82 I have emended Warner’s translation (p. 178), ("When this did happen", for: ως δε το τε πνευμα κατηςεi - 2.84.3) for this clause, as the repetitive emphasis on the wind is then lost as the sentence progresses.
craft, were soon in a state of confusion" (2.84.3). In such a way, a small force defeated another over twice its size, using experience alone.

As noted above, the Spartan reaction was one of anger because they could not understand what had happened. Thucydides describes it thus: ἐδόκει γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἄλλως τε καὶ πρῶτον ναυμαχίας πειρασαμένοις πολὺς ὁ παράλογος εἶναι (2.85.2). It was a παράλογος for them to have suffered a defeat by such a numerically inferior force. These were the terms in which those at Sparta described the event.

The Peloponnesian commanders, however, viewed it differently. They had been prepared to fight on land, but said, ἔννεβη δὲ καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης οὐκ ὀλίγα ἔναντιωθήναι, and as a casual aside, καὶ ποῦ τι καὶ ἡ ἀπειρία πρῶτον ναυμαχοῦντας ἔσφηλεν (2.87.2). The main reason the Peloponnesians attributed to their defeat was that luck was against them. From Thucydides' narrative, however, it is apparent that luck played no part: Phormio knew full well that the dawn wind would blow up. The Peloponnesian commanders appealed to their soldiers not to lose heart, as, "accidents (ταῖς τύχαις) may happen to all men, but real courage never alters, and those who have it never use inexperience as an excuse for being anything else but courageous" (2.87.3). They believed that the wind was an unlucky occurrence which caused their disarray, and defeat.

Both reactions are reminiscent of Pericles' statement of 1.140.1: "... we usually blame our luck (τὴν τύχην) when things happen in ways that we did not expect (παρὰ λόγον)." From Sparta, this event seemed to be a παράλογος, and to the Peloponnesian commanders, it was due to τύχη. As Edmunds notes, "the Spartans have mistaken techne for tyche."83 With respect to the wind,

83Edmunds, 98
Thucydides uses the verbs ἠλπιζε and ἐνομιζεν to show that Phormio was carrying out a well thought out plan, acting according to γνώμη, and of the wind itself he says, εἰςθεὶ γίγνεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκ. Like any good commander, he waited for the right time to attack, the crucial καιρός. Nothing here falls under the category of chance, or the unpredictable. Athenian experience and their superior τέχνη won them the victory.

Phormio's strategy was dependent upon possibility, and educated hypothesis. He knew that the wind would most likely blow at that time, but not in all certainty. Hunter attempts to cast doubt on how the events really took place: "what were in reality Phormion's responses to the Peloponnesian defensive strategy and to their confusion, especially after the wind began to blow, the historian converted to purposes which correctly anticipate what were in fact only probabilities." She argues that since the events unfolded in such a manner, Thucydides attributed a plan to Phormio where there was none. She substantiates this by saying that Phormio could not have chosen the early movement of the Peloponnesians to coincide with the wind. The fact is, however, that the Peloponnesian fleet weighed anchor during the night to try to escape notice of the Athenians. Phormio then sailed out to meet them, and, as Thucydides says, "they were compelled to fight" (2.83.3-4). He then allayed his attack until the wind blew up, one which he expected, for indeed he had been stationed there since the winter before. Once the Peloponnesian fleet moved, Phormio then formed his plan (if he had not already anticipated an early start), and waited for the right time to deploy it. The only elements of chance in this first encounter are the ones attributed to it by the Spartans.

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84 Hunter, 45
A notable parallel to this encounter comes in Book Six, in the first Athenian battle against the Syracusans in 415. During the battle there was a thunderstorm:

"Meanwhile there were some claps of thunder and flashes of lightning with heavy rain, all of which added to the fears of the Syracusans, who were fighting their first battle and had very little familiarity with war, while in the more experienced ranks of their enemies these events were regarded merely as what might be expected at this time of the year" (6.70.1).

Experience and knowledge of climatic factors did not allow the storm to affect the resolve of the Athenians; inexperience allowed it to add to the fears of the Syracusans. Through 6.72, we see that Hermocrates, unlike the Peloponnesians of Book Two, did not attribute the loss to τύχη, but used it as a lesson. Using Phormio's first battle as setting a pattern, Hunter makes the following observation: "Thus, while Hermokrates learns from experience, the reader learns from the example of the past, from paradeigma or history." Where the Peloponnesian commanders misread the experience, a fact made clear by Thucydides, the reader can see through Hermocrates where in fact the truth lies in the events. Instead of blaming their luck, the Peloponnesians should have learned from their mistakes.

Hunter goes on to say, "Moreover, the Phormion incident not only serves as a paradeigma, ... but also establishes truths based on experience which will be significant for the future." She is not unjustified in her stance that

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85Certainly, however, confidence plays a major part; in 413, after the defeat in the Syracusan harbour, Thucydides says, "At the same time there were some claps of thunder and some rain, as often happens when it gets near autumn, and this made the Athenians still more discouraged, for the saw in all these events omens of their own destruction" (7.79.3). Experience does not help them here, even though such storms were to be expected.
86Hunter, 153
87Hunter, 60
Thucydides used Phormio's exploits as a paradigm. Pericles had said to the Athenians in 432-1:

"As for seamanship, they will find that a difficult lesson to learn. You yourselves have been studying it ever since the end of the Persian wars, and have still not entirely mastered the subject. How, then, can it be supposed that they could ever make such progress? They are farmers, not sailors, and in addition to that they shall never get a chance of practising, because we shall be blockading them with strong naval forces. Against a weak blockading force they might be prepared to take a risk, bolstering up their ignorance by the thought of their numbers ... Seamanship, just like anything else, is an art (τεχνη). It is not something that can be picked up (ὅταν τυχή) and studied in one's spare time; indeed, it allows one no spare time for anything else" (1.142.6-9).

This seems to look ahead to the events off Naupactus. For indeed, the Peloponnesians made an attempt on a weaker blockading force, confident in their numbers, and in the subsequent battle would be defeated again by the Athenian τεχνη. The ἔργα off Naupactus serve as a paradigm, exemplifying the details of Pericles' λόγος.

In the second encounter, Phormio was unable to utilize his knowledge of local weather patterns, but the inexperience of the Peloponnesians was again their undoing. The Athenian victory is not attributable to the general himself, but to the fleeing ship's taking advantage of the over-zealousness of the pursuing Leucadian ship. Thucydides says, "there happened to be (ἤτευχε) a merchant ship anchored off shore" (2.91.3). In this instance, Gomme's assertion that τυγχάνειν serves only to mean that it was contemporaneous is justified. But just as the forty ships "happened" (ἦτευχον) to be docked at Nisaea before the planned attack on Piraeus (2.93.2, see section ii, p. 53), this ship "happens" to be present. It was fortuitous for the Athenians, but the way it was utilized by the

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88 HCT iii, 488 (see section i, p. 39)
Athenians was not at all chance. About the situation of the merchant ship, de Romilly says it was, "dans la narration, une circonstance concrète, que personne ne pouvait prévoir ... Cet élément échappant à la prévision, Thucydide le présente nettement, franchement avec le verbe ΕΤΥΧΕ. Cependant tout n' est pas hasard dans l' affaire: les navires athéniens mettent à profit cette circonstance, mais sont sauvés surtout par la rapidité de leur manœuvre." Its presence was unforeseen, and Thucydides draws attention to that fact, but its utilization was purely technique. The only connection is noted by Edmunds: "The Athenian techne, as exemplified in the maneuver around the transport, showed that it could utilize τυχε, as exemplified in the coincidence of the transport's location." 

This ship was not strategically placed by Phormio in case of such an emergency, but was, luckily for the Athenians, lying at anchor, providing a pivoting mark. The Athenian ship turned and rammed the Leucadian trireme amidships and sank her. The result was disastrous for the Peloponnesians: τοῖς μὲν οὖν Πελοποννησίοις γενομένου τούτου ἀπροσδοκήτου τε καὶ παρὰ λόγου φόβος ἐμπίπτει (2.91.4). This unexpected and unlikely action caused great panic and consternation among the Peloponnesians, and the Athenians gained confidence and routed them. Though the presence of the merchant ship is described in the same terms as the arrival of the Messenians at Pylos, in this instance there can have been no prearranged plan. The Athenian ship took advantage of its fortuitous placement and the tide of battle was turned. This ended the conflict off Naupactus.

89 de Romilly, 147
90 Edmunds, 99
So, in the first engagement, the only elements of chance or the unpredictable were the ones attributed to it by the Peloponnesians: παράλογος (2.85.2), τῆς γε ξυμφορᾶς τῷ ἀποβάντι and ταῖς μὲν τύχαις (2.87.3). In the second encounter, the merchant ship luckily happened (ἐτυχε) to be in the right place at the right time. Both Peloponnesian defeats, however, were the result of inexperience. Thucydides certainly does not present the first battle as being influenced by chance -- the Spartan reference to it is meant, by Thucydides, to emphasize their inexperience. He does foreshadow the turning point of the following battle in Phormio's speech: "One cannot sail up in the proper way to make an attack by ramming, unless one has a good long view of the enemy ahead, nor can one back away at the right moment if one is hard pressed oneself; it is impossible also to sail through the enemy's line and then wheel back on him - which are the right tactics for the fleet which has the superior seamanship" (2.89.8). Phormio continues: "So you can be sure that I shall be watching out for all this as far as I can" (2.89.9). And indeed, the Athenian ship which sunk the Leucadian ship used the Athenian τέχνη of the περίπλους.

From this, Hunter says, "In a general way he does predict the unpredictable."91 Because of the outcome, she argues that Thucydides put a number of arguments into the mouth of Phormio. However, what experienced and successful general would not look to utilize the τέχνη which had always worked so well? If Phormio did predict the unpredictable, it was the unpredictable from the Peloponnesian point of view, trusting in their superior numbers and their experience in land battles. Phormio won the battles through experience; the Peloponnesians lost due to inexperience, not luck. As noted by de Romilly, the historian disregards the element of chance: "Thucydide, en

91Hunter, 53
décivant leur (the Peloponnesians') défaite, prend même soin d'en répéter la raison, et l'on retrouve alors la mention de leurs fautes et de leur désordre (ἀμαρτήματα — ἀταξίαν)."\(^{92}\) The emphasis is placed on the mistakes of the Peloponnesians and on their resultant disorder.

In these two battles off Naupactus, Thucydides downplays the element of chance and the unpredictable. The dawn wind was in no way a matter of luck, and the reaction to it can serve as a paradigm for subsequent action. Aristotle says, "We are justified in saying that luck cannot be calculated; for we can calculate only from necessary or normal sequences, and luck acts outside such."\(^{93}\) Hence, the storm off Pylos was luck, and the campaign began from such an incident, whereas the wind off Naupactus was not luck, because Phormio calculated it from "normal sequence". The use of the anchored merchant-man was a means for the Athenians to use their τέχνη. The presence of the merchant ship may have been fortuitous, and to that extent chance was involved, but to that extent only; the manner in which it was used was by no means luck -- it was a part of a highly practised Athenian technique of naval warfare. It was a παράλογος only to the inexperienced Peloponnesians. Thucydides brings τύχη and τὸ παράλογον into the fray, in the words of the Spartan and Peloponnesian commanders, to show how luck and the unpredictable can take the blame for mistakes and inexperience. What may be a παράλογος and a matter of τύχη for one, may be fully expected and ἔλπιστος for another. Concerning the speeches, Weslake says, "Thucydides doubtless had information about their real content, but he seems to have improvised rather freely through a desire to reinforce the principal lesson of his narrative, namely

\(^{92}\)de Romilly, 144
\(^{93}\)Aristotle, *Physics*, 197a 19-20
that the two battles illustrate the differences between the Athenians and Peloponnesians."⁹⁴ The episode as a whole provides a paradigmatic lesson of the value of experience and of the nature of human reaction.

⁹⁴ Weslake, 48
iv) Plataea (2.2 - 2.7, 2.71 - 2.78, 3.20 - 3.24)

As a "medium" of chance and an element of the unpredictable, the weather has demonstrated its ability to hinder, aid, and even lead to a campaign. The most notable instance of its involvement has been in the Pylos affair. The effect of weather on the course of events has, however, a much wider scope. It is heavily involved in the events surrounding the attack and siege of Plataea, and plays a major role as the story unfolds. In three separate passages of Thucydides' description of the conflict over Plataea, the effects of climate come into play. We have seen weather as an agent of chance; in the first two passages of this affair, it will operate again in this faculty. In the third, however, we will see another side of its nature, a predictable side which is in no way a "medium" of τὸχῆ.

The significance of Plataea is great; the Theban march against it was the beginning of the action which led to the end of the "Thirty Year's Treaty", and the outbreak of hostilities between Athens and the Peloponnesians. Pouncey calls it "the first unambiguous violation of the truce, which made war inevitable"\(^{95}\), though Orwin notes that it was, "before the first Spartan invasion of Attica but after the Spartan declaration of war."\(^{96}\) Weather, a force of the unpredictable, has the ability to guide and shape some of the events surrounding the Plataean episode.

In the spring of 431, a date which Thucydides takes great and uncharacteristic pains to establish, a force of three hundred Thebans with the help of a dissident party in the town, made an entry into Plataea, a Boeotian ally of Athens, in the early night.\(^{97}\) Though war was imminent, it was still peace-

\(^{95}\)Pouncey, 140  
\(^{96}\)Orwin, 36  
\(^{97}\)The time of year recorded by Thucydides is not accurate. For discussion, see
time, and the Thebans wanted to gain control of the *polis* before the eruption of conflict. They made a stand in the *agora*, and proposed that the citizens join the Boeotian League. Thucydides says that the Plataeans, "were ready enough to come to an agreement" (2.3.1). While embroiled in negotiations, however, it became apparent that the force of Thebans was not as great as had been imagined in their initial terror and in the dark of night. Through the night the Plataeans blocked off the *agora* and before dawn fell upon the Thebans.

After a resolute stand, the Thebans turned to flee. Their escape was hampered, however, by darkness and mud. Thucydides says, "it had been raining hard all night" (2.4.2). Many were caught in the mire, and most were slaughtered. The rest surrendered unconditionally.

The effect of the torrential rains had further ramifications than merely bogging down the Thebans trying to escape. An auxiliary force was traveling to Plataea, one "who should have been there in full force while it was still night, in case anything went wrong with those who were inside" (2.5.1). The distance they had to cover was just over twelve kilometres, but their calculations in timing their arrival were thrown off by the effects of the heavy rain. Thucydides says, "the rain that had fallen in the night impeded their progress, since the river Asopus was in flood and not at all easy to cross. So, marching in the rain and having had great difficulty in crossing the river, they did not arrive until the whole of the advance party had been killed or taken prisoner" (2.5.2-3). Gomme says this about their route: "As likely as not the Theban army marched first by the more important road to Athens, and branched off it south-west to Plataia. On the heavy soil of this part of Boeotia, on unmetalled tracks, it is difficult going after much rain; and there is a good deal of land on both sides of the river which is

HCT ii, p. 2.
marshy in wet weather."\(^{98}\) About the Asopus, he says, "its banks are steep and it can readily flow in a flood in wet weather, in winter and spring."\(^{99}\) The sole purpose of this auxiliary force was to assist the initial force if trouble should arise, but due to the same heavy rain which mired the Thebans trying to escape in Plataea, their track was muddied and the river was swelled into flood. They arrived at Plataea too late, and retired without doing any damage. The Plataeans put to death all their prisoners. The result of this action was war. In all likelihood, however, had Thebes succeeded in taking possession of Plataea, war would have broken out anyway.

As it turned out, Plataea remained an independent state until 427, exhausted by the Spartan siege. Had it not been for the heavy rains on that fateful night, however, Plataea likely would have fallen then, before the outbreak of the war, if indeed it is not to be considered the first action of the war. Thucydides says that even though the majority of the Plataeans wanted to remain in the Athenian alliance, at first they were ready to come to terms with the Thebans. The reason that they concluded that they should attack the Theban force was that they realized that the enemy's numbers were not as extensive as they had thought.

The numbers of the Thebans, however, were lacking because the auxiliary force was unable to arrive at Plataea in time. Even once they heard of the predicament of their trapped colleagues, they were unable to travel quickly enough. Hindered by the mud and flood, they arrived after the advance party had been defeated and imprisoned. If it had not been for the heavy rain, they would have, presumably, reached Plataea in time, for Thucydides says that they

\(^{98}\)HCT ii, 6
\(^{99}\)HCT ii, 6
should have arrived while it was still night, as must have been prearranged. The Plataean attack took place in the darkest hour of the moonless night, only just before dawn. Thucydides implies that, had they arrived before this action, the Plataean plans, based on the small numbers of the Thebans, would have been called off. The city would have surrendered itself to Thebes, probably on the terms of the proposal first accepted (2.3.1).

The course of events in this episode were highly affected by weather. Thucydides makes no mention of chance, but no mention is necessary; weather undoubtedly can be unpredictable. There was no need to state the obvious. Our historian was not concerned with the theme of chance and the unpredictable in this account -- this was the action which ignited the two sides into war. The outbreak of war itself was in no way a chance occurrence; it was imminent (2.2.3), and would have happened with or without the events at Plataea.\(^{100}\) To draw attention to chance events in this "final straw" before the war might detract from the view that war was unavoidable. The heavy rain was certainly not accounted for by the Thebans in their calculations, and was fortuitous for the Plataeans, but chance and the unpredictable were not the pressing issue in the narration of the attack; first and foremost, this was the event which pushed both sides into active hostility.

Plataea retained its autonomy, and the Athenians stationed a garrison there. Athens and Sparta with their allies prepared for conflict: "Nothing in their designs was on a small or mean scale: both sides put everything into their war effort" (2.8.1). In the same summer, the Boeotians laid waste to the land around

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\(^{100}\)Thucydides refers to the reasons and pretexts for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 1.23.6.
Plataea, but Thucydides says nothing about any hostilities against Plataea in 430.

In the summer of 429, however, the Peloponnesians under Archidamus chose to march against Plataea instead of invading Attica. Thucydides devotes a considerable amount of space (2.70-74) to deliberations and negotiations, establishing Plataea's relationship with Athens, before he recounts the attack on Plataean lands and the Spartan siege. The Peloponnesians tried various methods of storming the city, but none was successful. Thucydides says, "In fact they tried every possible scheme which would enable them to secure the place without going to the expense of a long siege" (2.77.2). They realized that no methods of orthodox warfare were going to allow them to storm the city. They began to build a wall of circumvallation, which would last until the defeat of Plataea. The last attempt on Plataea the Peloponnesians made that summer was to burn and smoke out the city. "They decided to try the effect of fire and see whether, with the aid of a wind, they could burn the city down, since it was not a very big place" (2.77.2). Similar methods would be used later in the war: as described in section i (p. 46) of this chapter, the Aetolians set fire to a wood full of Athenians (3.98.2) and it is not inconceivable that Demosthenes intentionally set fire to the island of Sphacteria; in 7.53.4, being upwind of the Athenians, the Syracusans filled an old merchant ship with bundles of pine, set fire to it, and let the wind carry it toward the Athenian ships. The combination of fire and wind was powerful, as noted by Thucydides in 3.74.2; when a fire was set in Corcyra, he imagines the damage that could have been done: "if a wind had risen and blown the flames in the direction of the other buildings, the whole city might well have been destroyed."

The Peloponnesians filled the area between their surrounding mound and the city walls with bundles of wood, and then threw into the city as much wood
as they could. Using sulphur and pitch, they created an intense and smoky fire, the magnitude of which Thucydides compares to a forest fire. Like the fire at Corcyra, he says of this conflagration, "it very nearly finished the Plataeans off ... if, as the enemy had hoped, the wind had risen and blown upon the flames, the Plataeans could not have survived" (2.77.5). The wind, however, did not rise to stoke the flames and spread the fire, though a considerable amount of damage was done. He says that it was reported, presumably by the Plataeans who eventually escaped, that a thunderstorm with heavy rain put out the fire, and saved the situation. He neither accepts nor explicitly rejects this statement, but merely records it.

And so Plataea was saved, and the siege proper began. Weather once again had played a part in its salvation; even if there was not a thunderstorm, the conditions remained calm enough for the fire not to spread extensively. In his comparison to forest fires, Thucydides believes that such fires on the mountains are caused spontaneously by branches rubbing together. He says this is ἀπὸ ταὐτομάτου (2.77.4). Τὸ αὐτόματον, as defined by Aristotle, is a broader form of chance, including elements of accident, spontaneity and nature, whereas τύχη is more specifically chance in terms of fortune or luck. He says that both "are causes that come into play incidentally." In this broad sense, these fires are kindled by "chance". This is as close to τύχη as Thucydides gets in this passage, however. When he reports that a thunderstorm (may have) happened, he does not even use τυχανεῖν, but the impersonal ξυμβαίνειν (2.77.6). But once again, there was no need for Thucydides to stress the unpredictability of the weather. The wind did not rise,

102 Aristotle, *Physics*, 197a 34.
and the fire burned itself out, or was mastered by the Plataeans. There may even have been added rainfall; no more need be said.

In the winter of 428, still besieged by the Peloponnesians and Boeotians, the Plataeans were becoming desperate. Provisions were running out, and there seemed to be no hope of salvation from Athenian help. A number of Plataeans devised a plan to break out. They built ladders long enough to reach the top of the circumvallating walls (two concentric ones had been built, one facing Plataea and the other outwards in case of an Athenian attack), and then waited for the right time to escape. They knew that on stormy and rainy nights (ὅποτε χειμῶν ἔιη νοτέρος 3.21.4), the Peloponnesians left the battlements unguarded, and kept watch only from the covered towers. On a wild night, (νύκτα χειμέριον ὑδατι καὶ ἄνεμο καὶ ἀμί ἀσέληνον 3.22.1) they slipped out of Plataea.

Through the mud, they reached a battlement of the wall undetected by the Peloponnesian guards, with any sound made "drowned by the blustering of the wind" (3.22.1), and began to scale it with their ladders. When most of them had ascended the wall, one of the Plataeans knocked loose some tiling, alerting the sentries, who raised the alarm. The guards were unable to ascertain quite what was happening because of the darkness and the storm (3.22.5). To add to the confusion of the Peloponnesians, a diversionary attack was made by the Plataeans left in the city on another section of the wall. Two hundred and twelve\(^{103}\) of the Plataeans involved in the escape managed to cross the outer ditch, which was filled with water and ice. Thucydides elaborates upon the virulence of the storm here: "Ice had formed on the surface (of the ditch), not

\(^{103}\)Most of them. Thucydides says that some turned back before breaching the wall, and one archer was captured at the outer ditch (3.24.2-3).
hard enough to walk on, but of the watery kind which comes when the wind is more in the east than in the north, and the snow which fell in the night, with the great wind which was blowing, had raised the level of the water in the ditch so much that they could only just get across with their heads out of the water” (3.23.5). This sort of detail is undoubtedly from the reports of the Plataeans who managed to escape; they made their way safely from there to Athens.

The escape was not an easy one; Thucydides says, ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ ἡ διάφευγες αὐτοῖς μᾶλλον διὰ τοῦ χειμῶνος τὸ μέγεθος (3.23.5). The καὶ is emphatic, as is the placement of τὸ μέγεθος. If it had not been for such a violent storm, Thucydides suggests that the escape would not have been successful. Indeed, it would not have taken place.

Weather can be unpredictable, and can be an element of chance when it is such. However, storms such as this in a Boeotian winter are to be expected. It was not that the storm blew up and aided the Plataeans in their escape; they planned their escape for such a time as this, and waited, patiently or impatiently, for a storm to rise. The storm did not happen to blow up on the night that the Plataeans planned to escape; they planned their escape for any night when such a storm did rise. The storm, whenever it would happen, was an integral and vital part of their calculations, and was in no way a chance occurrence. That it would happen sooner or later was inevitable, or at least highly likely; the Plataeans had enough time to bide, and were prepared for it when it came.

In as much as the storm was expected, this episode parallels that of Phormio in his first battle. The difference is that Phormio waited for the crucial καιρός, the precise moment when his attack would be the most effective. As the events unfolded, he realized that the dawn wind would be of use. In the case of the Plataeans, however, they waited for a more general time, for any night which was dark and stormy. Their entire action was based on the time when, and
whenever, the storm would blow up, whereas Phormio was about to clash with the Peloponnesian fleet anyway, and since the Peloponnesians weighed anchor before dawn, he was able to take into account the expected breeze.

The difference is minor. The fact remains that the weather was not τὸ παράλογον in either episode. The Peloponnesians viewed the dawn wind as "weather of the moment", hence their belief that luck was against them, but Phormio, having been stationed there for months, was able to use Aristotle's "normal sequence", and predict the wind. The similarity between Phormio's action and that of the Plataeans is that both used the "normal sequence" of climate in their plans, and in this capacity weather does not act as a "manifestation" of chance.

It is notable that the only mention of chance in all the events surrounding the siege and destruction of Plataea comes in the Plataeans' defense of themselves to the Spartans (3.53-59). Even then it does not refer to the Theban attack, or to their salvation from the fire; it is a warning about the unpredictability of life, similar to many sentiments discussed in the λόγοι of Chapter I. They say: "Remember, too, how incalculable the future is and how impossible it is to tell who next, however undeservedly, may be exposed to the blows of chance" (3.59.1). This rings of the words of the Melians, similarly situated in the face of destruction, and at the same time perhaps foreshadows the events of Pylos. Even in the Plataeans' speech, the word τύχη is not used, but ἀστάθμητον and τὸ τῆς ἐμφορᾶς.

Even though weather can be an element of the unpredictable, certain aspects of its very nature are certainly predictable and not a matter of chance at all, especially over a prolonged period. The Plataeans had the benefit of time, which allowed the weather to follow its usual course and logical patterns. In the first two portions of this discussion of Plataea, the effects of the weather were for
the moment, and coincidental with other actions. This exhibits the unpredictable and chance aspect of weather. In this final segment, the effect of weather encompassed a wider scope; the extended frame of time eliminated any element of coincidence, and was not a matter of the moment.\textsuperscript{104} In this instance, we see weather as predictable and not subject to chance. In the former, weather affected plans, and in the latter, it effected the plans. To summarize, weather is an element of the unpredictable only when a specific point in time is involved; over a period of time, trends and patterns can be predicted and can be expected, and apart from precise timing, it is not governed by chance, nor is it a "medium" of chance. In the events surrounding Plataea, Thucydides had no need to elaborate on the role of \( \tau \nu \chi \eta \); his theme could wait until his account of Pylos, a series of circumstances undoubtedly set aside for such discussion, whereas to draw much attention to it at Plataea, even in the first two passages, would be to state the obvious.

\textsuperscript{104}Another example of using the predictability of weather over an extended period of time comes in 1.65.1: the Corinthian Aristeus advised the Potidaeans that their only way to escape the Athenian siege was "to watch for a favourable wind and then sail away." He thought the only other way they could survive would be if "some miracle (\( \pi \alpha \rho \alpha \lambda \gamma \omicron \omicron \nu \)) happened".
v) Book Eight

As we have seen collectively from the four preceding sections, weather can be an element of the unpredictable. When the weather is an influence on the moment, specifically on an arbitrary moment, it is an agent of chance; but when it is an influence over a prolonged period of time, allowing patterns and trends to emerge, it is neither an instrument of chance nor a factor of the unpredictable. While both can play a major role in the course of history, only the first instance can be considered to be incalculable and indeterminable. Both effects of weather have been noted in the events discussed concerning Plataea. The potential of weather to be an element of τύχη and an example of τὸ παράλογον comes into play time and time again in the eighth book of Thucydides' History. Its ability suddenly to change plans and alter the course of events can be seen throughout this final chapter.

First, a few words about the nature of Book Eight are in order. Its character does not fit in satisfactorily with the rest of the work. It is almost certain that it was the last book penned by Thucydides, and his death explains its sudden end in medias res. It appears to be somewhat unedited in regard to its organization and continuity. Many scholars, both ancient and modern, have attempted to explain this phenomenon, this inconsistency so uncharacteristic of Thucydides. It is an anomaly in that it contains no speeches in oratio recta. Gomme says the following about this book: "Believing as I do that book viii represents a very early stage in his procedures of composition, I would certainly allow that speeches may have been intended for a later version of the book; and beyond that, given the importance which Thucydides evidently attributed to the speeches as a means of elucidating history, it would need some very strong
reason to suppose that he abandoned speeches at a point when there was much to elucidate."\textsuperscript{105}

It may well be that popular judgement of the final book of Thucydides is a little harsh. Finley suggests that the nature of this book is such partly because of the nature of the events it describes.\textsuperscript{106} What we have is at least a catalogue of events, and though sometimes (but by no means always) deficient in explanation, this framework describes the history of the Peloponnesian War from 413, the destruction of the Sicilian Expedition, to 411, just after the Athenian victory at Cynossema. It marks the slow disintegration of the Athenian empire, and the influence of Persia, Sparta and Alcibiades upon this. It also remarks upon the ability of Athens to recuperate and indeed fare relatively well after the fiasco at Syracuse, largely as a result of Sparta's tendency toward belated reaction. The importance of the material presented in this final book must not be overlooked in favour of attempting to explain its idiosyncrasies and noting its inadequacies.

Much of the activity in Book Eight is maritime; most of the book takes place around the Ionian islands of the Aegean. Being heavily involved at this time, the people of Chios were eyewitnesses to many of these events. As noted by Finley, Thucydides likely relied on a Chiot source for much of his material.\textsuperscript{107} Thucydides had a fair amount of admiration for the Chians: "Indeed, after the Spartans, the Chians are the only people I know of who have kept their heads in prosperity" (8.24.4). As a seafaring people, they would be naturally inclined towards noting the effects of the weather on naval activity, perhaps more so than a rather land based people like the Spartans. The number of times Thucydides

\textsuperscript{105}HCT v, 114  
\textsuperscript{106}Finley, 246  
\textsuperscript{107}From the introduction to Warner's translation, p. 11
reports the weather as affecting events in this book is worthy of note. The number of storms in Book Eight is far more than in any other book -- this may stem either from the fact that one of his main sources was a seafaring people, or from the fact that much of the book concerns maritime activity; or most likely, from both of these. These storms, though certainly storms are to be expected from time to time throughout a season, blew up randomly with unpredictable timing, and their involvement in this book is one of chance.

In the summer of 412/11, the Spartan commander Astyochus attacked Clazomenae with ten Peloponnesian and ten Chian ships. After the attack failed, he sailed away, but ran into a great wind which drove him to Phocaea and Cumae, and the rest of his ships back to the islands around Clazomenae (8.31.3). Because of the continuing winds, they were forced to remain there for eight days plundering the property of the Clazomenaeans (8.31.4). On the journey back to Chios, they ran into another storm, but the result was only one of delay (8.32.1).

Soon after, an Athenian fleet pursued three Chian ships off Arginus, but a great storm arose, allowing the Chian ships to escape, but destroying the three leading Athenian ships (8.34.1).

Just after the second Spartan treaty with the Persians was signed, as recorded by Thucydides, Therimenes, the Spartan who had brought a new fleet to Astyochus just before his attack on Clazomenae, sailed away and disappeared (8.38.1). The words ἀποτέλεσμα ἐν κέλπτι ἀφανίζεται clearly indicate that he was lost at sea, almost certainly because of rough weather.

In the winter of 411, Astyochus sailed to Syme to catch some Athenian ships there. However, his fleet was scattered as the result of rain and poor visibility (8.42.1). Because of this, the Athenian ships could only see the left wing of the Peloponnesian fleet. Believing this to be the full extent of a different
fleet, coming as reinforcement from the Peloponnese, they attacked with less than their full force of twenty ships. They managed to sink three enemy ships before being surprised by the remainder of Astyocharus’ fleet, and lost six ships as they attempted an escape. After this, the Peloponnesean fleet that the Athenians had been on the lookout for, joined Astyocharus.

In the summer of 411/10, a fleet of forty Peloponnesean ships under Pharnabazus undertook a mission to sail to Byzantium to help start a revolt. The Spartans did not want to meet the full Athenian fleet of 108 ships which was stationed at Samos, and so took to the open sea. A storm scattered the fleet, and all but ten ships were forced into Delos (8.80.3). The remaining ten reached Byzantium and accomplished the mission.

In the same summer, the Peloponnesean fleet based in the Hellespont required reinforcement, and so the ναύαρχος, Mindarus, set out with seventy-three ships from Miletus. He too ran into a storm and was forced to put in at Icarus, where he was detained by ἀπλοία for five or six days before advancing to Chios (8.99.1).

Such are the turbulent times described by Thucydides in Book Eight. Six storms are explicitly reported, and three of them struck Astyocharus. But the consequences of these storms are minor. The result of the storm off Pylos as presented by Thucydides, however, was major. That storm is described as κατὰ τύχη in any of those of Book Eight. They are referred to as follows: ἀπέπλευσεν ἀνέμω μεγάλῳ ... ἐμμείναντες διὰ τοὺς ἀνέμους (8.31.3-4); χειμασθείσων (8.32.1); χειμῶν τε μέγας ἐπιγίγνεται (8.34.1); ὡς τε καὶ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ξυννέφελα ὀντα (8.42.1); χειμασθείσαι (8.80.3); and χειμασθεῖς δὲ ἀνέμῳ ... μείνας ἐν αὐτῇ ὑπὸ ἄπλοιας (8.99.1). All are presented as straightforward occurrences. Certainly, they can be categorized as τὸ παράλογον; when Astyocharus’ fleet was scattered, and the
remainder suddenly appeared to attack the Athenians, Thucydides synonymically calls this παρά δόξαν (8.42.3). The question arises, then: why is the storm off Pylos a matter of τύχη, whereas nothing to that effect is said here?

Perhaps it is because of the magnitude of the results; the storm off Pylos was the first in a chain of events that seriously affected the course of the war, and resulted in the patterns of reaction of both sides so emphasized by Thucydides, whereas these Aegean storms changed little. Perhaps it is because Thucydides marked off the Pylos affair for advancing his theme of the unpredictable, and so it was not necessary by Book Eight. Perhaps it is a reflection of the nature of Book Eight, where the bare facts are reported with little elaboration, whereas in the fourth book Thucydides had had the leisure to embellish.

Or, perhaps it boils down to Thucydides' perception of τύχη itself. If this is the case, the first possibility outlined in the paragraph above must have some bearing. The results of Pylos were major, and those of the storms of Book Eight were minor. When something unpredictable happens, and the results are significant and influential, τύχη has come into play, for these results have affected one's εὐτυχία or one's δυστυχία. These words have to do with a certain "state"; one's "state" is affected in terms of τύχη. When something unpredictable happens, and the results are insignificant and do not change one's "state" of being or mind, it is just that; something unpredictable, τὸ παράλογον, and not a result of τύχη. For this reason, the storms of Book Eight, though a matter of chance because they were unpredictable, were perhaps not referred to as agents of τύχη because their outcomes had little bearing on the course of events and on the confidence, or lack thereof, of the parties affected. The occurrences were merely παρά δόξαν and τὸ παράλογον, as they were unexpected, and their timing largely incalculable.
Certainly the concise nature of Book Eight cannot be dismissed as a factor. But Thucydides' brevity in this book does not necessarily preclude any reference to τύχη. Even a form of τυγχάνειν easily could have taken the place of ἐπιγίγνεται (8.34.1) as a faint hint of τύχη. In that very passage, Thucydides says that the Athenian ships "met with" (ἐπιτυγχάνει) three Chian ships, but the storm did not "chance to arise", but it "came on" (ἐπιγίγνεται). However, from its isolated position, and I am sure that Gomme would concur,¹⁰⁸ this use of τυγχάνειν only marks contemporaneous action, and not the intervention of Fortune.

The last argument that these storms, though unpredictable, were not agents of τύχη, would be feasible if we were reading Aristotle's Physics; especially 197a 26-30, where he says we use τύχη, good or bad, for result affecting "good fortune" or "misfortune"; 197b 3, where he says that τύχη must always be connected to doings and farings; and 197b 7-8, where he says that inanimate things cannot accomplish anything by τύχη. This theory, however, is disproved by remembering the first storm at Plataea, where we can see that these specifications are not evident in Thucydides. Thucydides describes the heavy rains and their consequences at length, and the results certainly were not minor for the Plataeans. Their state of being was undoubtedly affected. In addition, Thucydides has explicitly said that the storm at Pylos was κατὰ τύχην.

And so the question remains -- why was the storm at Pylos a matter of τύχη, but the others are not said to be? The answer must be this simple: As I have stated at the end of the section on Plataea, it did not need to be said that the other storms were a matter of τύχη. The fact that Thucydides does not say that they were is unimportant. The exception is not in all these storms where

¹⁰⁸See section i, p. 39, and HCT iii, 488
Thucydides does not say anything about chance; the exception is when he does state the intervention of chance. And surely this is because Pylos serves to demonstrate the importance of his theme. Especially after the numerous storms of Book Eight, with the absence of τύχη, because it would be unnecessary and redundant, the mention of the Pylian storm being κατὰ τύχην, and indeed even the repeated forms of τυχιάνειν, must be seen as a highly deliberate accent on τύχη, even by the most extreme sceptic. As a matter of fact, the storm off Pylos is the only one which Thucydides refers to as being κατὰ τύχην.109 The other storms at sea recorded in his History (1.137.2, 2.25.4, 2.85.6, 3.69.1 and 7.34.6) are mentioned in concrete terms. That is not to say that they had nothing to do with chance; Thucydides must have felt that it was obvious that they were "manifestations" of τύχη. And so, by the fact that he does draw attention to it in the storm off Pylos, he is not merely stating the obvious, but setting up for the events to come.

109The only other time when Thucydides refers to a phenomenon of the weather as being κατὰ τύχην comes in 3.49.4: After the Mytilenian debate, a second trireme had to make all speed to arrive at Mytilene before the orders of the first were carried out, and Thucydides says κατὰ τύχην δὲ πνεύματος οὐδενὸς ἐναντιωθέντος, a factor which helped their progress.
Conclusion

Thucydides has indeed provided us with a κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ. His words have unquestionably been judged useful to those of us who want to understand how things happened in the past and how they may again happen through time. His inclusion of underlying themes throughout his History contributes immensely to the success of his aspiration stated in 1.22.4. His examination of the effects of τῆς τὸ παράλογον is certainly no exception. His perception of the topic and the predictable reactions to it have become apparent through careful study of the text he has provided. Through his discussion of the element of chance and accident by means of speeches, and most notably the events of the Pylos incident, by the time he narrates the events of Sicily and following, he has managed to produce an impression of a predictable pattern as a result. Near the end of his final book, consequently, the Athenian reaction to their victory at Cynossema comes as no surprise: "Up to now, because of failures in some minor actions and because of the disaster in Sicily, they had been afraid of the Peloponnesian navy; but now they got rid of their feelings of inferiority and ceased to believe that the enemy was worth anything at sea" (8.106.2). The most explicit, and by now expected, statement about their reaction comes a few lines later: "When ... the Athenians heard of this quite unlooked-for piece of good fortune (ἀνέλπιστον τὴν εὔτυχίαν), they were greatly heartened after all they had gone through ... and they came to believe that, if they did their part resolutely, final victory was still possible" (8.106.5).

Thucydides' fondness for noting the role of chance and unpredictable occurrences, in addition to the events and speeches examined in this paper, is evident in his observation of paradoxes and reversals, culminating in the seventh book, where he describes the failure of the Sicilian enterprise in these terms: "No Hellenic army had ever suffered such a reverse. They had come to
enslave others, and now they were going away frightened of being enslaved themselves; and instead of the prayers and paeans with which they had sailed out, the words to be heard now were directly contrary and boded evil as they started on their way back, sailors travelling on land, trusting in hoplites rather than in ships" (7.75.7). This is in direct and striking contrast to the launching of the expedition, recounted in detail in 6.30-32.2.

Thucydides' perception of the role of τοῦχν and το παράλογον has been noted through the λόγοι of a wide variety of individuals. This theoretical side, as we have seen, demonstrated its applications in fact, through the ἐργα discussed. From the events surrounding the affair at Pylos and Sphacteria, we have seen the role of chance and the unpredictable stressed, perhaps over-stressed, in part to demonstrate the predictability of the human reaction, and the reasons behind such enterprises as the Sicilian expedition. In this episode, weather played a large part as an agent of τοῦχν and an element of το παράλογον. In the exploits of Brasidas concerning Piraeus and Amphipolis, we have seen weather again as an unpredictable factor, affecting the course of events. The battles of Phormio at Naupactus showed how weather can be το παράλογον from one point of view, and not from another. When trends and patterns are allowed to emerge over time, the chance aspect of weather is diminished to only specific points of time. Especially from the narrative of the Plataean escape, we have seen that weather is certainly not an element of the unpredictable when "normal sequence" is provided by time and seasons. Finally, from the first two Plataean excerpts and the storms of Book Eight, we have seen that storms were seen by Thucydides as "manifestations" of τοῦχν, even when they are not referred to in such terms outright, because of comparison to the storm at Pylos.
We may now answer the questions asked on pages three and four of this paper. Weather is perceived by Thucydides as an element of τὸ παράλογον and an "agent" of τὺχη when it is weather "of the moment"; when weather over a prolonged period of time is in question, it is not. Thucydides does consider weather to have the potential to be a "force" in the war, as it had the ability to change the course of events: it hindered a campaign in the Theban attack on Plataea; it may have prevented the Peloponnesian attack on Piraeus; it aided Brasidas' sudden appearance at Amphipolis; and it is presented as having led to the Athenian occupation of Pylos. Finally, it has become clear that Thucydides believed that the human reaction to such events tended to follow a pattern, which was generally predictable. By examining the role of weather as a "medium" of chance and an element of the predictable, and the consequences of its involvement, we can see that Thucydides has been successful in attempting to show how, from his point of view, events happened and have the potential to happen again in a similar fashion.

The most notable example of the effects of the weather in the Peloponnesian War is perhaps the Battle of Arginusae of 406, after the narrative of Thucydides' has broken off. From the evidence he has presented, and from his theme of chance and the unpredictable and the resultant patterns, guidelines have been provided for one who might want to attempt to reconstruct the manner and method with which our historian would have described this battle. In fact, Xenophon does follow closely the style and method of Thucydides in his Hellenica, at least until the end of the Peloponnesian War, and describes the events of the Battle of Arginusae in much the same way as one would expect to find in Thucydides. The storm at Arginusae, its implications and reaction to it are covered in 1.6.33 through 1.7.35. After the battle, forty-seven Athenian ships were to aid the disabled vessels and their crews, but were prevented by
wind and a great storm: ἀνεμὸς καὶ χείμων διεκώλυσεν [αὐτοῦ] μέγας γενόμενος (1.6.35). Upon their return to Athens, the generals of the battle were imprisoned and charged with misconduct. In their defense, the generals said that not even the men to whom the task had been assigned should take the blame for the fact that the ships were not recovered, but, τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ χείμωνος εἶναι τὸ κολύσαν τὴν ἀναίρεσιν (1.7.6). The popular reaction was mixed; some were sympathetic with the generals, and others outraged. The proceedings of the charge and sentence were matter of debate; some believed it was unconstitutional, and others that the will of the people ought to dictate the situation. Finally, Euryptolemus spoke in defense of the generals (those apart from the two most responsible), in a very Thucydidean speech (1.7.16 - 33). He agreed that the storm fully prevented the orders of the generals, that is to recover the ships, from being fulfilled (1.7.32). He went on to say that those of the shipwrecked crews who survived, managed to do so only by chance (ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοματοῦ). He ended with these words, highly reminiscent of Thucydides, about reaction to the storm:

"Do not, then, men of Athens, in the face of your victory and your good fortune (τῆς εὐτυχίας), act like men who are beaten and unfortunate (ἀτυχοῦσιν), nor in the face of heaven's visitation, show yourselves unreasonable by giving a verdict of treachery instead of helplessness, since they found themselves unable on account of the storm to do what they had been ordered to do." (1.7.33)

He describes the storm as being out of the realm of human affairs. The reaction of the Athenian people to an act of τύχη, as Thucydides would have it, or τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀναγκαίων, as Euryptolemus put it, is noted as unreasonable; here the Athenians go beyond being demoralized -- they react in anger and howl for blood. Eight generals were condemned, and the six who were in Athens were put to death. Not surprisingly, as Euryptolemus had warned (1.7.19-28),
Xenophon notes that in time, the Athenians repented their impulsive overreaction.

Whether it be the Battle of Arginusae, or Napoleon's campaigns in Russia, weather is a factor that plays a part in any war. Its roles can be large or small, and stable or unpredictable. As it fits into one of Thucydides' most prevalent and prominent themes, that of τοῦχη and τὸ παράλογον, its importance to the work as a whole cannot be discounted and overlooked. It is examination of aspects such as this that provides insight into the mind and method of Thucydides, and, almost two and a half millennia later, allows his work to continue to be a possession for all time.
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