

Thucydides I (10/22)

Discussion Topics-

Page 13- reports

Page 1- war

Page 1- footnote about 3rd person

Page 41 preparing for war

Page 1- taking sides

Page 12- accurate history

Page 12- search for truth

Page 43- allies

Page 37- signs from nature (earthquakes)

Page 13- No myth, just truth

Page 48- the plague

Page 49- great lawlessness

Page 37- not being honorable

Page 50- worship or not

Page 46- states support families of soldiers

Page 41- comparing to neighbors

Page 37- fear Athens

Page 41- Athens being open society

Book subject-Could be seen as more beneficial to not be open to outsiders, but instead they were very open.

Question- What did you think about the reading? What did you think about funeral speech?

Discussion: Thought it was good, enjoyed the attempted "neutrality" of it.

-Was it really neutral?

-Not in some areas because he has a high opinion of himself and what his own opinion was.

-For example- His views on the war (page 12).

-“Greatest” doesn’t necessarily make it the absolute worst war.

Connection- Would griots be an example of first story telling?

Question- Do you think they were superstitious as a nation because they thought there was a prophecy about the war and the plague? (page 50)

-Kevin says “One man’s superstition is another mans religion.”

-Book was trying to say that mythology was important.

-pg 12 Thucydides was trying to tell people that his account was not a myth

-people seem to be moving away from religion, so he tries not to bring myth into the book.

-“no myth, just truth” from page 13

Question- What about the war itself? How was it initiated, etc?

-Plautea’s leadership wanted to betray Athens and the people wanted to stay loyal.

-Seems like war was inevitable- Athens was a power, but there was another one coming.

-When Thebian soldiers go into Athens, you know there will be some sort of conflict.

Question- What did you think about the beginning of the funeral speech being all about Athens?

-He didn't want to just focus on one person...he wanted to honor all the dead by talking about what they had died for.

Book subject- On page 49, it describes "great lawlessness."

Question- What is this "great lawlessness" described?

-Looting came because of the plague

-When leaders die, people see opportunity.

-When cloak of civility is taken away, you begin to see "real" people.

-Law becomes meaningless.

Connection- How was this trying to portray law?

-It was his critique of human nature.

-He is more trying to set a scene of the collapse of the "ultimate" lawful society into complete and total anarchy.

Topic- He described the disease that plagued the people very, very well.

-We got a good understanding of what was happening through his description.

-He talked more about what it was rather than where it came from.

-He gave first-hand report of the symptoms of the disease.

-It was helped by the fact that he had it...he could give better descriptions of it.

-Could that give his opinion much more of a bias?

-Probably did.

Question- Do you think that arrogance was another reason they lost the war?

-Could be due to the fact that they were outnumbered.

-Used plague as a big reason.

-He still makes no mention of the gods' plaguing them.

-Goes back to what we talked about earlier- separation of myth and truth.

Question/Connection- Doesn't it seem like he is trying to falsify the gods? Like they don't control anything?

-He is trying to make it historical, so he is trying to keep his own opinions out of things.

-Also trying to say that "myths" have become very much embellished, and so his is a story that is truth without any embellishment.

Connection- If you think about what Pericles says about Athens, is this is the same city after it has been plunged into anarchy?

-Maybe this shows the "true colors" of Athens.

-Shows how bad circumstances can change everything (page 46).

Question- Could any city have handled the plague better than Athens?

-Yes, but no. they did a poor job of handling the plague. Some of it was controllable, some of it was not.

-But there would be no city that would be completely impervious to the plague.

Connection- would a different type of government be able to handle this type of thing in a better way?

-Maybe, maybe not. Most likely, knowledge just probably wasn't there to be able to care for people.

-Page 47 shows that they are trying to learn from mistakes.

-Partially through what he writes in his book for future generations.