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Livy's Use of Thucydides in His Account of the Siege of Syracuse

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Abstract

This paper briefly presents the few ancient testimonies connecting Livy to Thucydides, and the more numerous Thucydidean echoes found in Livy by modern scholars. It then explores the allusions to Thucydides in Livy's account in Books 24 and 25 of the Roman siege of Syracuse in 213–212. There are several more or less secure echoes of Thucydides, but Livy chose to compose a less Thucydidean account than he could have. There may be some reversals of Thucydidean model situations, and if so, they consistently follow a pattern: Livy's Syracusans continuously play the part of Thucydides' Athenians and Livy's Romans always perform better than Thucydides' Greeks did. It is suggested that this was a means by which Livy intended to ensure his readers that this siege would end in Roman victory and to suggest the superiority of his own account over that of the Peloponnesian War's historian.

Keywords

Livy; Thucydides; ancient reception of Thucydides; ancient historiography; Syracuse

This study was written as part of the research activities of the Centre for Classical Studies of the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. It is based on a paper I gave in November 2019 at the conference *Roma aurea MMXIX: Structures of Historical Narrative*, and previous versions of it were sent to two other scholarly journals before it was accepted for publication here. In consequence, the text presented here has benefitted enormously from greater number of anonymous reviewers than, I imagine, a great majority of scholarly articles. I am most grateful to the original audience at Prague, to all the anonymous reviewers, and especially to Professor Rhiannon Ash, who very kindly sent me her comments although she was under no obligation to do so, and made me rethink the basic structure of my argument. Naturally, I take sole responsibility for any remaining errors.

Introducing Thucydides' Presence in Livy

History-writing is a complex process that involves assembling and selecting the source material and arranging and representing the resulting texts. These decisions are influenced by the author's cultural milieu, including earlier historical writings that may serve as models, even if they cover different periods than the one being described.¹

Thucydides was considered by some of Livy's contemporaries to be the authoritative stylistic model, not only for historiography but also for other genres, including oratory. More than a decade before Livy began writing *Ab Urbe condita*, Roman Thucydideans were criticised by Cicero (esp. *Cic. orat.* 30–32).² During Livy's lifetime, the Athenian historian's style was subjected to stringent criticism by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (esp. *D. H. Thuc., passim*, or *ep. Pomp.* 3,15).³ The Thucydides-enthusiasts, such as the addressee of Dionysius' *De Thucydide*, Q. Aelius Tubero,⁴ were certainly familiar with their model, and sought Thucydidean allusions in contemporary literature – not only Thucydidean sentences, but also model situations.

For such readers, Livy was hardly the first choice – it was Sallust who took the pride of place as Rome's most Thucydidean historiographer (note already Vell. 2.36.2).⁵ However, that does not necessarily mean that readers like Tubero did not read Livy with their favourite Greek author in mind.⁶ It must be admitted that if that they did, they left very few traces of it. To the best of my knowledge, there are only two ancient testimonies connecting Livy to Thucydides, and upon inspection, one of the two does not concern the Athenian historian at all. The relevant testimony comes from Seneca the Elder's *Suasoriae* and it compares the practices of the two historians in praising famous upon their death (*Sen. suas.* 6.21).⁷ The problematic testimony is a part of the *Controversiae* by the same author. It apparently cites a rhetorician named Arellius Fuscus, who claimed that Livy criticised Sallust's translation of one supposedly Thucydidean sentence (*Sen. contr.* 9.1.13–14, citing the Greek original as δεινὰ γὰρ αἱ εὐπραξίαι συγκρῦψαι καὶ συσκιᾶσαι τὰ ἐκάστων ἁμαρτήματα, and *Sall. hist. frg.* I,55,24 Maurenbrecher = I,53,24 La Penna & Funari = I,49,24 Ramsey). The sentence in question is not from Thucydides, but from

1 Aside from the literature on intertextuality specifically in Livy that will be cited below, see, e.g., Damon (2010); Rood (2012); Pelling (2013); Rood (2017); Kurpios (2021).

2 For Cicero's complex relationship with Thucydides, see Binot (2010) and Meister (2013: pp. 53–55).

3 For Dionysius and Thucydides in general, see Lévy (2010); Jonge (2017).

4 If this Q. Aelius Tubero was the historian utilised by Livy and Dionysius, we might expect to find many Thucydidean traits in his work; but it is by no means certain, see Oakley (2013: pp. 363 and 367), and I cannot see anything Thucydidean in the preserved fragments of Aelius Tubero (*FRHist* 38 F 1–18); some (dis)similarities are offered by Samotta (2012: pp. 366–367).

5 Thucydides' influence on Sallust has been exhaustively treated by Scanlon (1980); see also Meister (2013: pp. 55–64).

6 Quint. 10.1.101 famously compared Sallust to Thucydides and Livy to Herodotus, which may have had the (possibly unintended and in my view unhappy) consequence of deemphasising Thucydides' influence on Livy.

7 Cf. Mensching (1996: pp. 265–266), for what passages of Livy Seneca may have had on his mind. As for Thucydides, I believe Seneca envisaged Thuc. 2.65.5–13 (Pericles) and 1.138.3 (Themistocles).

one pseudo-Demosthenic letter ([Dem.] 11.13: αἱ γὰρ εὐπραξία δεινὰ συγκρῦσαι καὶ συσκιᾶσαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσὶν), which in turn is based on Demosthenes' *Second Olynthian* (Dem. 2.20: αἱ γὰρ εὐπραξία δεινὰ συγκρῦσαι τὰ τοιαῦτ' ὄνειδη). Thucydides does not use the verbs συγκρῦπτειν and συσκιᾶζειν.⁸

At first glance, this may seem discouraging for finding Livian readings of Thucydides. However, Arellius' mistake itself suggests the search for Livian connections to Thucydides was not deemed absurd. In fact, modern scholars have identified numerous Thucydidean traits in Livy. Phrases inspired by the *Peloponnesian War* have been found in the preface to the *Ab urbe condita*, throughout the first pentad, and in the introduction to the second pentad; additionally, the discussion with the Campanian delegates in Book 7 appears to have been inspired by Thucydides' Corcyrean debate.⁹ Livy's portrayal of C. Flaminius may owe something to Thucydides' Cleon;¹⁰ several echoes of Thucydides, particularly of the *Redetrias* between Nicias and Alcibiades about the Athenian expedition to Sicily, have been found in the duel between Scipio and Fabius Maximus regarding the expedition to Africa;¹¹ Livy's account of Scipio's departure for Africa from Lilybaeum (Liv. 29.26.1–27.13) integrates elements of Thucydides' account of the Athenians' departure to Sicily (Thuc. 6.30.1–32.2);¹² and a recent study has found some further echoes of Thucydides in Livy's books 31, 34, 38, and 39.¹³ It is therefore quite possible

8 For this reason, the attempt of Polleichtner (2010: pp. 72–74) to use Seneca to prove Livy's intimate knowledge of Thucydides is not persuasive, although the passage has been so taken by Ogilvie (1965: p. 17) or Meister (2013: p. 65); but I fully agree with Polleichtner that Livy knew his Thucydides well, and that he was engaged 'in an ongoing conversation with Thucydides by using Thucydides as a background against which Livy's parallels need to be read and interpreted' (ibid. 78).

9 See Ogilvie (1965: pp. 16–17) with references to relevant passages of his commentary and to Liv. 7.30.1–31.3 and Thuc. 1.32.1–43.4; Moles (1993: p. 154) concerning the two prefaces.

10 Simon-Mahé (2010: p. 89), noting both similarities and differences of the two characters. Simon-Mahé (2010: pp. 85–89) adduces more possible parallels from Books 6–10 and 21–22, but I find them mostly unconvincing, as I do the majority of the supposed structural affinities between Thucydides and Livy's third decade detected by Strebel (1935: pp. 27–28), who ascribes them to Livy's use of annalists, esp. of L. Coelius Antipater (see below, p. 154).

11 Liv. 28.40.1–44.18 and Thuc. 6.8.4–26.2. For the Thucydidean echoes, see esp. Rodgers (1986) and Polleichtner (2010: pp. 78–90); more references to modern literature are given by Schlip (2019: pp. 334–335, n. 291), who, however, does not refer to the judiciously sceptical remarks of Levene (2010: pp. 111–114). I agree with Levene that Rodger's labels are not always persuasive, but I think Thucydidean echoes are there, esp. the dichotomy between the old and the young, and the dangers inherent in long maritime expeditions.

I have little to contribute to this debate, except perhaps that I think that Scipio's *praeteritio* in Liv. 28.44.16–18 is only apparent (note esp. the self-contradictory *modestia certe et temperando linguae adulescens senem vicerō* – a very modest phrase indeed!). This interpretation is cemented by the narrator's comment *ipse nulla iam modica gloria contentus* in Liv. 28.40.1. Livy's Scipio is thus actually more divisive than Thucydides' Alcibiades, who genuinely tries to unite the old and young (under his leadership; Thuc. 6.18.6); I would thus side rather with Mineo (2015: p. 149), against Rodgers (1986: pp. 349–350), or Schlip (2019: pp. 335–338).

12 Noted by Strebel (1935: p. 28), Mineo (2006: pp. 303–304 and 307), and Rood (2017: p. 27, n. 25).

13 Levene (2017), arguing that the Spartans suffered from the Romans what they had inflicted on the Athenians.

that there were many Thucydidean allusions in portions of Livy that have been lost to us. At least some Roman readers of Livy would have been sensitive to such interconnections.

The crucial question is, whether Livy's used Thucydides directly, or whether he utilised later sources that had drawn on Thucydides.¹⁴ Since the great majority of Livy's sources are lost, the answer can only be hypothetical. For example, Livy's probable sources for the Roman siege of Syracuse in 213–212¹⁵ were Polybius and L. Coelius Antipater,¹⁶ a late 2nd-century author of seven books about the Second Punic War. Polybius' account of the siege survives only in the Byzantine excerpts of his seventh and eighth book that have many gaps, making it difficult to determine the extent of Thucydidean borrowings in Polybius' account.¹⁷ There are no extant fragments of Coelius that pertain to the siege of Syracuse, so it is impossible to speculate on any possible Thucydidean influences.

Yet, I think that Thucydides' prominence in Livy's Rome, and the two passages from Seneca the Elder discussed above, make it likely that Livy did know the Athenian historian well and did feel the need to allude to him. The purpose of this analysis is to determine if there are any detectable allusions to Thucydides in Livy's account of the siege of Syracuse.

There are two reasons for posing this question. First, to the best of my knowledge, Thucydidean elements in this part of Livy have not been subjected to detailed scrutiny. Second, of all the battlegrounds of the Second Punic War, Syracuse was the one imbued with most Thucydidean associations, and places with rich historical memory often serve as triggers for allusions.¹⁸ In fact, the Syracusan victory over the Athenians is explicitly mentioned twice in quick succession in the narrative of the Roman victory (Liv. 25.24.11–12 and 29.6). It is tempting to read this as an encouragement for Livy's readers to look for less explicit Thucydidean echoes even in the preceding chapters that do not contain such obvious reminiscences.

At the end of this introduction, some further clarifications are in order. I do not mean to suggest that Livy alluded to Thucydides and to none other. Nor do I claim that Livy's readers were looking exclusively for Thucydidean allusions. After all, the eventful history of Syracuse allowed for great many allusions to other historiographers (and poets,

14 Perhaps the most vocal recent proponent of the latter approach has been Meister (2013: pp. 65–66).

15 Chronology of the siege is not of paramount importance for this article, but for readers' convenience, I follow the chronology of Walbank (1967: esp. pp. 2–3, 7–9 and 77) throughout. See also Eckstein (1987: pp. 345–349), and, for more references, Carawan (1984: p. 135, n. 14) and Marino (1988: pp. 56–58, 66, n. 163, and 80–81, n. 192).

16 Soltau (1894: pp. 20–25) concluded that Livy's account of Syracuse is composed partly from Polybius, partly from Coelius, who was also used (and at times criticised) by Polybius; see also the table at Soltau (1897: pp. 79–80). Against later doubters, Levene (2010: pp. 127–163) has argued persuasively, with copious references, that Livy used Polybius directly. On Livy's use of Coelius, see recently Levene (2010: pp. 126, 132–135, 141, and 145); Briscoe and Rich (2013: p. 84); Briscoe (2013: p. 261).

17 On Polybius' use of Thucydides generally, see esp. Foulon (2010); Rood (2012); Wiater (2017: pp. 659–666), with references.

18 See Kraus (1998: pp. 267–269 and 275–276) on internal allusions to (sites of) earlier battles in Livy, and Chaplin (2010), summarised in n. 20 below (p. 155).

orators, and other writers), both Greek and Roman.¹⁹ It is possible for one sentence or episode to allude to more than one pre-text in different genres.²⁰ However, Livy's other possible pretexts dealing with sieges of Syracuse were not as popular in Livy's Rome as Thucydides was.²¹

Livy Alluding to Thucydides

I give a list of Livy's possible allusions to Thucydides, in the order from (as I see them) the most explicit ones to the least persuasive ones.

As I have just mentioned, there are two explicit allusions to the Syracusan victory over the Athenians at the end of Livy's siege narrative. **(1)** According to Livy (25.24.11), after a successful breakthrough in the city, the Roman general M. Claudius Marcellus wept when he remembered the Athenians' (and the Carthaginians') disastrous attempts to take the city (Liv. 25.24.11).²² It is worth noting that in the entirety of Thucydides' work, there is only one mention of tears: when the Athenians wept at the beginning of their retreat from Syracuse (Thuc. 7.75.4).²³ The difference between the two besiegers of Syracuse could not have been more pronounced.

(2) During negotiations with Marcellus, the Syracusan envoys reminded the Roman general of the trophies they had won from the Carthaginians and Athenians (25.29.6). It is possible to read this as a mild joke at the expense of Thucydides' fixation on *Athenian* τρόπαια near Syracuse.²⁴

(3) Another, this time not explicit, allusion to Thucydides comes, too, rather late in Livy's narrative of the final defeat of Syracuse in 212: During negotiations for the release of a Spartan Damippus, the Syracusan envoy to Philipp V of Macedon, who had been intercepted by the Romans, an unnamed Roman soldier counted the stones in the Syracusan wall and concluded that it was not as high as the Romans had believed and that it could be stormed by ladders (Pol. 8.37.1 and Liv. 25.23.11–12). This recalls Thucydides' account of the siege of Plataea, in which the Plataeans prepared to escape by counting

19 For an excellent overview of the Romans' (not only) literary engagements with Sicily, see Hutchinson (2013: pp. 77–81).

20 See, e.g., Chaplin (2010), on Livy's account of the battle between the Romans and Antiochus III in 191: it suppresses echoes of Herodotus' famous narrative of the 480 battle, but Herodotus is nevertheless (sort of) present through a "window allusion" to Livy's own account of the battle of Aous in 198.

21 Already in Cicero's times Thucydides, not Philistus, was already *the* author of *the* account of the expedition: Cic. *ad Q. fr.* 2.12.4. For Philistus and his use of Thucydides, see (sceptically) Fromentin (2010).

22 Regarding this episode, cf. esp. Rossi (2000), who suggests that tears serve as a marker of the end of an era (in this instance, the final collapse of Greek civilization in Italy); Marincola (2005), who stresses Marcellus' reflections are 'a complex piece of cultural and literary allusiveness' (ibid. p. 228; for Livy's nod to Thucydides here, see ibid. pp. 224–225); Feeney (2007: p. 52) on Syracuse serving here as "a link in a chain of imperial destiny"; and Jaeger (2010: pp. 33–41) for Livy's complex echoes of Cicero.

23 Cf. Hornblower (2008: p. 710); Lateiner (2009: p. 114–115); Pelling (2023: p. 232).

24 Cf. Connor (1984: p. 186, n. 3).

the bricks in the Peloponnesian siege-wall (Thuc. 3.20.3).²⁵ This is one of the earliest nods to this siege narrative that was to have a significant impact on historiography.²⁶

(4) Near the beginning of the story of Syracuse's demise, there is a slightly less certain allusion: In 214, Adranodorus, the son-in-law of the late king Hiero, attempted to seize tyranny under pressure from his wife, but failed and was killed. In response, the Syracusan people decided to execute all female descendants of Hiero. The order was promptly carried out, before the people changed their minds.²⁷ The news arriving just about the time of execution (Liv. 24.26.14–15: *caedemque per se miserabilem miserabiliorem casus fecit, quod paulo post nuntius venit, mutatis repente ad misericordiam animis, ne interficerentur*) is reminiscent of Thucydides' introduction and epilogue to the Mytilenean debate (Thuc. 3.36.4: *μετάνοιά τις εὐθὺς ἦν αὐτοῖς*, and 3.49.4: *μὴ διαφθεῖραι*).²⁸

(5) In 213, the Roman garrison in Henna, commanded by one L. Pinarius, preemptively massacred the city's inhabitants (we are assured that the inhabitants had had an agreement with the Carthaginian commander Himilco). Thucydides does not describe any comparable massacre of a population by a foreign garrison, but one might be tempted to compare Pinarius' invocation of local gods (Liv. 24.38.8) to the invocation uttered by King Archidamus II of Sparta (Thuc. 2.74.3): Archidamus' position was morally awkward as well, because he was going to attack Plataea, despite the fact that the Spartans had guaranteed its independence. However, the importance of the Pinarius character is hardly comparable to Thucydides' Archidamus.²⁹ Are we encouraged to reflect on the differences?

Incidentally, Marcellus lost many cities in Sicily due to his approval of the massacre in Henna (Liv. 24.39.7–9), and Demosthenes similarly angered the Acarnanians in 426, when he interrupted the siege of Leucas (Thuc. 3.95.2). This is not the only parallel between Thucydides' portrait of Demosthenes and Livy's rendering of Marcellus.³⁰ Both suggest that these commanders discourage emotions at the expense of reason in their soldiers: Demosthenes said so before the battle at Pylos in 425 (Thuc. 4.10.1), Marcellus implicitly did the same during the capture of Leontini (Liv. 24.30.1). Thucydides does not often discuss booty, but he does mention that Demosthenes took three hundred

25 It might be objected that the siege of Plataea has little to do with the siege of Syracuse. Certainly, Thucydides' Plataeans cannot have served as models for Livy's Syracusans, let alone Romans. That said, it remains true that the detail of counting layers of wall material is common to Thucydides, Polybius, and Livy. Note that Pol. 9.19.5–7 on calculating the proper length of scaling ladders does *not* involve counting of such layers.

26 See Whately (2017: pp. 696–700). See also below, pp. 161–162, for the function of this episode in Livy.

27 See Moore (1993: pp. 42–43) and Jaeger (2003: pp. 219–227) for parallels with the story of Lucretia.

28 Rood (2004: p. 379) duly notes, with reference to Liv. 2.42.1 and 6.20.15, that the motif of crowds regretting an execution is common – but a last-minute reversal (or a failed attempt at it) is not present that often. The Mytilenean debate is more apposite than, say, the Thracian sack of Mycalessus (Thuc. 7.29.2–5), because the Thracians were *not* ordered by the Athenians to sack the unfortunate Boeotian πόλις. See also below pp. 160–161, for the function of this episode in Livy.

29 For Archidamus in Thucydides, see now Bruzzone (2021: pp. 287–295).

30 For Thucydides' portrait of Demosthenes, see esp. Roisman (2017: pp. 145–185), with references; for Livy's portrait of Marcellus, see, e.g., Carawan (1984); Mensching (1996: pp. 259–267 and 274–275); Levene (2010: pp. 197–214); Balmaceda (2017: pp. 99–101).

captured panoplies with him when he returned to Athens in the winter of 426/5 (Thuc. 3.114.1). The devastation of morals by the influx of wealth from conquests was essential to Livy's narrative of the breakdown of Roman values; accordingly, he went to great lengths to highlight the importance of Marcellus' spoils from Syracuse (Liv. 25.40.1–3, 26.31.9 and elsewhere, e.g. 34.4.4, or 39.4.12).³¹ Finally, both the generals were killed by their enemies: Demosthenes was executed in prison (Thuc. 7.86.2), Marcellus died in a skirmish (Liv. 27.25.6–27.14 and 27.33.10–11).³² However, even if the Roman conqueror of Syracuse, as portrayed by Livy, shares these several character traits and experiences with the Athenian general defeated by the Syracusans, as presented by Thucydides, the similarities are far too general to support the claim that Livy consciously modelled his portrayal of Marcellus on Thucydides' Demosthenes.

(6) Another Livian character with a possible Thucydidean parallel is one Apollonides, who warns the Syracusans against civil war and supports the alliance with Rome in an *oratio obliqua* (Liv. 24.28.1–7). Apollonides can be compared to Thucydides' Diodotus (Thuc. 3.41–49.1), as both urge temperance and are mentioned only once. However, a better parallel can be drawn with Thucydides of Pharsalus, who dissuaded the Athenians from violent στάσις (Thuc. 8.92.8). It is uncertain whether Livy's intended readers would detect parallels between such minor characters.

(7) After Marcellus captured a part of the city, an epidemic broke out in the city and its surroundings (Liv. 25.26.7–13). Every plague narrative in ancient literature must be compared to the epidemic that hit Athens in 430 and was vividly described by the historian of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 2.47.1–54.5).³³ It is possible that Livy had Lucretius (Lucr. 6.1090–1286) in mind here; but the Epicurean poet had closely followed the Athenian historian. The influence of the Greek model on the Romans is perhaps best seen in the fact that they all mention the neglect of funeral rites (Thuc. 2.52.3–4; Lucr. 6.1138–1286; Liv. 25.26.10).³⁴ Another Thucydidean passage that could serve as a better parallel is the casual remark in the seventh book that the Athenians suffered from an

31 For modern treatments of Livy's emphasis on Syracusan spoils, see, e.g., Gruen (1992: pp. 95, 98, and 241–242); Mensching (1996: pp. 261–263); Jaeger (1997: pp. 124–131); Mineo (2006: pp. 293–296); further references are given by Levene (2010: p. 209, n. 104). As for Marcellus' later relationship with the Syracusans, I think Jaeger (2003: pp. 230–231) paints too rosy a picture of it, laying too much stress on Marcellus' portrait in the *Verrines* and the *caritas* in Liv. 25.28.7 and divining Marcellus' putative future *beneficia* to the city; the Syracusans' attitude to Marcellus in Liv. 26.29.1–32.8 seems to me dictated by fear rather than gratitude, if only because they were brought to Rome by Marcellus' political enemies – see Gruen (1992: p. 97, n. 56), with references.

32 For modern discussions see, e.g., Mensching (1996: pp. 263–267) and Levene (2010: pp. 206–208). See also Liv. 26.29.9 with Schlip (2019: pp. 288–289). Note that Pol. 10.32.1–33.7 did not hesitate to castigate Marcellus' death as a result of his outright stupidity; for Polybius' consistent criticism of Marcellus, see Flower (2003: pp. 45–50).

33 Adduced by Strebel (1935: p. 28, n. 97).

34 More Thucydidean parallels in Livy's account of the epidemic are listed by Rodgers (1986: p. 336, n. 7), Filippetti (2004), and Simon-Mahé (2010: p. 90).

illness during the siege of Syracuse (Thuc. 7.47.2).³⁵ However, this epidemic is unlikely to have been a memorable event for most Roman readers of Thucydides.

Moving closer to *loci communes*, one might compare: (8) Demosthenes' night attack on Epipolae in 413 (Thuc. 7.43.2–54.2) with Marcellus' attempt at the same place during another night two centuries later (Liv. 25.23.14–24.7); the case for allusion is here strengthened by something of a verbal echo.³⁶ (9) The Syracusan envoys' denial that the people of Syracuse were responsible for their defection from Rome (Liv. 25.29.2–3, discussing with Marcellus, and 26.30.1–3, in Roman Senate); this echoes the argument made by Thucydides' Thebans in the Plataean debate, where they claimed that it was not their city but only a narrow oligarchy that had joined with the Persians in 480 (Thuc. 3.62.3–4); but there are no verbal echoes. (10) The reluctance of a strong Punic fleet near Pachynum to join battle with the Romans (Liv. 25.27.8–12); this is reminiscent of the common occurrence in Thucydides' Book 8 – two fleets in one place that refuse to engage (Thuc. 8.33.2–3, 8.63.2, or 8.79.2–6).³⁷ (11) Livy's judgment in the aftermath of the killings of female descendants of Hiero (24.25.8: *«e» a natura multitudinis est: aut servit humiliter aut superbe dominatur; libertatem, quae media est, nec suscipere modice nec habere sciunt*), echoing perhaps Thucydides' condemnations of popular wilfulness (Thuc. 2.65.4: ὄπερ φιλεῖ ὄμιλος ποιεῖν, and 4.28.3: οἷον ὄχλος φιλεῖ ποιεῖν; and Thuc. 8.1.4: ὄπερ φιλεῖ δῆμος ποιεῖν). However, this observation is hardly unique to Thucydides. (12) Inflated reports of Roman atrocities in Leontini that helped convince the Syracusans to rebel against Rome (Liv. 24.30.3–5); this is similar to Chaereas' exaggerations about atrocities committed by Athenian oligarchs in 411 (Thuc. 8.74.3); yet, overstatement is ubiquitous in (not just) ancient historiography, and Chaereas is, again, a minor character. (13) After he has Marcellus establish a winter camp, Livy interrupts the narrative of Sicilian affairs to describe events in Macedonia, Italy, and Rome, and this interruption ends with the Romans' alarm at the news of recent setbacks in Italy (Liv. 25.23.1: *hae clades super aliam alia Romam cum essent nuntiatas, ingens quidem et luctus et pavor civitatem cepit*); this can be compared to Thucydides' description of the Athenians' mood after the news about Sicily (Thuc. 8.1.2: *πάντα δὲ πανταχόθεν αὐτοὺς ἐλύπει τε καὶ περιεστῆκει ἐπὶ τῷ γεγενημένῳ φόβος τε καὶ κατάπληξις μεγίστη δὴ*). If the Athenians decided to continue fighting despite the Sicilian disaster, we have even more reason to expect that the Romans will show the same perseverance.³⁸ However, bad news was a regular occurrence then as it is now, and this sentence is slightly beyond the scope of this paper.

These allusions (if they can be called that) may not seem significant. It may be more beneficial to credit Livy with the capability for a more creative use of Thucydides. After

35 For a comparison of Thucydides' description with that of Liv. 25.26.7–12 (and of D. S. 14.70.4–6 on the epidemic that wiped out the Carthaginian army besieging Syracuse in 396), see Villard (1994) and Levene (2010: p. 62, n. 158), who is sceptical of the Thucydidean echo.

36 While some Demosthenes' men διωκόμενοι κατὰ τε τῶν κρημῶν οἱ πολλοὶ ῥίπτοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἀπώλλυντο (Thuc. 7.44.8), while it was Marcellus' opponents who *omnia teneri ... «rati» alii per murum fugere, alii salire de muro praecipitarique* (Liv. 25.23.5).

37 Dissimilarities are important here; cf. p. 162 below.

38 Cf. Rood (2012: p. 62), commenting on Pol. 3.75.8.

all, “intertextuality is often most interesting when it underlines differences as much as similarities, or differences within similarities”.³⁹ As recent scholarship has argued, such adaptations and inversions were not beyond Livy.⁴⁰

Excursus: Liv. XXI,1

To illustrate my point, I will very briefly discuss the beginning of the third decade. Its numerous similarities with Thucydides' proem⁴¹ are underlined below:

In parte operis mei licet mihi praefari quod in principio summae totius professi plerique sunt rerum scriptores, bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta sint me scripturum, quod Hannibale duce Carthaginenses cum populo Romano gessere. nam neque validiores opibus ullae inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit, et haud ignotas belli artes inter sese sed expertas primo Punico conferebant bello, et adeo varia fortuna belli ancepsque Mars fuit ut propius periculum fuerint qui vicerunt. odiis etiam prope maioribus certarunt quam viribus, Romanis indignantibus quod victoribus victi ultro inferrent arma, Poenis quod superbe avareque crederent imperitatum victis esse. (Liv. 21.1.1–3)

Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐπολέμησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἀρξάμενος εὐθύς καθισταμένου καὶ ἐλπίσας μέγαν τε ἔσσεσθαι καὶ ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων, τεκμαιρόμενος ὅτι ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμφοτέροι παρασκευῇ τῇ πάσῃ καὶ τὸ ἄλλο Ἑλληνικὸν ὄρων ξυριστάμενον πρὸς ἑκατέρους, τὸ μὲν εὐθύς, τὸ δὲ καὶ διανοούμενον. κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη δὴ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἐγένετο καὶ μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὡς δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων. (Thuc. 1.1.1–2)

Rather than expanding on the similarities, I would like to highlight the interesting differences: Unlike Thucydides, Livy did not mention other belligerents such as Macedon, Hispanic tribes, or Syracuse, perhaps because he did not need to stress the importance of the Second Punic War for the entire οἰκουμένη. There is no equivalent to Thucydides' κίνησις, whatever that may connote;⁴² instead, Livy added *variam fortunam* and *odia*, a curious combination.⁴³ Livy uses the first-person future (*me scripturum*), positioning himself

39 Pelling (2013: p. 7).

40 See, e.g., Chaplin (2010), summarised in n. 20 above; Lushkov (2010: esp. pp. 98–119) on complexities surrounding the citation of Antias regarding the trial of Africanus (Liv. 38.50.5); and Lushkov (2013) on various kinds of Livy's citations.

41 Duly stressed, e.g., by Simon-Mahé (2010: p. 85); see also Marincola (1997: pp. 35–36 and 41–42); Meister (2013: p. 65).

42 See Rusten (2015) with references.

43 *Fortuna* is a very important concept for Livy, see, e.g., Davies (2004: pp. 116–123); Levene (2010: p. 285) with more references. *Odiium* is much less prominent, and appears much less often in the third decade than in the first one.

inside his work, in contrast to Thucydides' third-person aorist (ξυνέγραψε), perhaps to compensate for his lack of direct involvement with the events he was about to describe.⁴⁴

The differences have led numerous scholars to believe that Livy did not allude to Thucydides, but to L. Coelius Antipater.⁴⁵ However, the only available fragment of Coelius' preface is remarkably un-Thucydidean as it deals with Coelius' own style (*FRHist* 15 F 1, from Cic. *orat.* 229–230).

I prefer to see the differences as *deliberate choices by Livy*. He thus acknowledges the importance of Thucydides, but more importantly, implies that his whole oeuvre will be even more memorable than Thucydides' history, by incorporating selected elements of the preface to the entire Thucydides' oeuvre into the introduction to only a *pars* of his own work.⁴⁶ This would be similar to the role of Thucydidean echoes (if such they are) in the introduction to the entire *Ab urbe condita*.⁴⁷

What if Livy could rely on and exploit his readers' expectations to find something Thucydidean?

Livy Reversing Thucydides

At the beginning of the story, Livy deals with the intrigues surrounding the King Hieronymus, who succeeded his grandfather Hiero in 215. The machinations led to Hieronymus' concluding a treaty with Carthage, and to his assassination by his own soldiers shortly thereafter (Liv. 26.4.1–7.9).⁴⁸ Thucydides would find little interest in intrigues of family members or tutors of a young king. The murder of Hieronymus differs greatly from that of Hipparchus (Thuc. 6.54.1–59.4): A tyrant, not a tyrant's brother, was murdered, apparently not from erotic motives (although Livy does not explicitly state what drove the conspirators), and it is evident that Hieronymus' tyranny was violent already before his murder. Because of these dissimilarities, a reader in whom a mention of Syracuse

44 I owe this observation to an anonymous reviewer.

45 See the references listed by Polleichtner (2010: p. 82, n. 47); Meister (2013: pp. 65–66).

46 This has already been emphasised by Polleichtner (2010: p. 83, n. 48). I am more confident that there is a Thucydidean echo than Polleichtner (2010: pp. 82–83), who writes cautiously that the parallels “do not exclude Livy's own knowledge of Thucydides' text”.

47 See Liv. *praef.* 6 (*incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis*) and 10 (*documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri*) with Moles (1993: p. 154): “By this stage Livy is in effect making tremendous claims not only for the value of AUC history in general but also for his work in particular, a κτήμα ἐς αἰεὶ of Thucydidean greatness on several levels, but incomparably greater than Thucydides' work in the enormity of its moral and political potential.”

48 For an attentive reading of the Livian chapters on the murder of Hieronymus, stressing parallels to the story of Tarquinius Superbus, see Jaeger (2003: pp. 212–219); for parallels with Cicero's *Verrines*, see Jaeger (2010). It bears stressing again that I do not think that bringing Thucydides to consideration invalidates her readings, or vice versa.

Polybius' account of the murder itself is not preserved, unlike his criticism of earlier historiography on the subject of Sicilian tyrants (Pol. 7.7.1–8.9). For Livy's probable reaction to this passage of Polybius, see Levene (2010: pp. 155–157).

itself has triggered an expectation to come along Thucydidean allusions, is entitled to conclude that the following will also be very different from what Thucydides had to say.

Having described events in Rome and Campania, Livy returns to Syracuse following the death of the tyrant to narrate the fate of Adranodorus and the execution of the female descendants of Hiero (Liv. 24.21.2–26.15). We have already touched upon the last point (4). Livy's account differs from Thucydides's in numerous ways. For instance, no one in Thucydides ever follows the advice of his wife, as Livy's Adranodorus did. If the comparison of Liv. 24.25.8 and Thuc. 8.1.4 above (11) has any merit, the difference between εὐτακτεῖν and *servit humiliter* tellingly distances Livy's Syracusans from Thucydides' Athenians. This dissimilarity is further emphasised by the differences from the Mytilene narrative: While the Athenians decided to execute a thousand Mytileneans (Thuc. 3.50.1), the decree of the Syracusans concerned "only" several women; nevertheless, Livy construes the Syracusans as much more bloodthirsty than the Athenians, because their order was carried out before μετὰμέλεια intervened.

By contrast, if Apollonides, who allegedly warned against civil war and supported the alliance with Rome, can be compared to Thucydides of Pharsalus, as suggested above (6), then Livy's Syracuse would resemble Thucydides' Athens.

Then, envoys from Leontini arrived to Syracuse and an army was sent to help the Leontinians guard their border. The commander of the army was one Hippocrates, by now a "*praetor*" of the people of Syracuse, but formerly Hieronymus' advisor and Hannibal's envoy to Syracuse.⁴⁹ Leontini was promptly conquered by Marcellus, but in the resulting mayhem, Hippocrates and Epicydes took control of the Syracusan army, entered Syracuse, and had their opponents slaughtered (Liv. 24.28.8–32.9). In 415, envoys from Leontini contributed to the start of the war (Liv. 24.29.1 and Thuc. 6.8.1–2), but this time they came to Syracuse instead of Athens.

Livy's account of the first phase of the siege of Syracuse by Marcellus, which began in the spring of 213 (Liv. 24.33.1–36.1), is dominated by Archimedes' machines (Liv. 34.1–16; cf. Pol. 8.3.1–7.12). They could not have had any counterpart in Thucydides, who seems to have been unaware of any siege engine more sophisticated than the Theban flame-thrower (Thuc. 4.100.2–4). Much like any siege narrative, Livy's one shares Thucydides' focus on the ingenuity required of both attackers and defenders, evident in Thucydides' accounts of the siege of Plataea (Thuc. 2.75.1–78.4, 3.20.1–24.3 and 52.1–68.5) and of the fighting in the harbour of Syracuse (Thuc. 7.59.2–71.6). It is interesting to note that the fate of the Plataeans testifies that the more ingenious party need not be victorious.

During the course of fighting, the Syracusan army managed to surprise Marcellus returning to Syracuse from his expedition against Syracusan allies. They did this by advancing through the gaps in Roman fortifications, which allowed them to join forces with their Carthaginian allies. Nevertheless, Marcellus won the ensuing battle (Liv. 24.35.9–36.2). In the 5th century, the Syracusans had made great use of the unfinished state of the Athenian palisade (Thuc. 7.6.3–4), but every Athenian general in Thucydides engaged in battle

49 Rodgers (1986: p. 337), sees a resemblance between Liv. 24.29.3 and Thuc. 3.82.2 and 83.1, but there is no verbal echo. If anything, the attitude of Livy's Syracusans who *sentinam quandam urbis rati exhaustam laetabantur* rather reminds one of the Athenian "σώφρονες" in Thuc. 4.28.5.

without expecting it lost (Thuc. 3.97.1–98.5; 4.96.1–8; or 5.7.4–10.12). This can be read as an assurance that Marcellus would be more successful than the Athenians had been.

In the ensuing narrative (Liv. 24.37.1–39.13 and 25.23.1–24.6; cf. Pol. 8.37.1–13) up until Marcellus' opening negotiations with some important Syracusans (Liv. 25.23.2–7), there are two echoes of Thucydides discussed above (5, 13). Nicias' belief in the fifth column in Syracuse had played an important part in his ill-fated decision to stay at Syracuse, which ultimately led to his death (Thuc. 7.49 and 86.4). In Livy's account, the would-be Syracusan traitors negotiating with Marcellus are the victims. Once again, the Livy's Syracusans suffer more than their Thucydidean counterparts.

There follows Marcellus' conquest of Epipolae following the successful counting of bricks (3 and 8 above). It should be noted that the Plataeans had to cross-check their count multiple times (Thuc. 3.20.3), while in Livy (and Polybius), a single Roman soldier was enough to turn the tide (Pol. 8.37.1 and Liv. 25.23.11–12).

If the epidemic that hit the Roman, and particularly the Carthaginian army in the next phase of fighting, is indeed to be linked with the illness Athenians suffered when they were besieging Syracuse (see 7 above), then we see again that, in Livy, the enemies of Rome play the part of the Athenians in Thucydides. Additionally, in Livy (25.27.8–12), a strong Punic fleet near Pachynum did not encounter the Romans because of a storm (as mentioned in 10 above); when the weather improved, the Carthaginians simply withdrew. By contrast, Thucydides' Book 8 frequently depicts two fleets in one place that refuse to engage each other, but it is usually the weaker fleet that refuses battle (Thuc. 8.33.2–3, 63.2, or 79.2–6). Therefore, Livy portrayed the enemies of Rome as more cowardly than Thucydides' Greeks.

During the final phase of the siege, some Syracusans engaged in negotiations with Marcellus, killed the anti-Roman prefects and convened the assembly. Their speech to the people, reported in *oratio obliqua*, warned the Syracusans that the only danger to the city and its people were the Syracusans themselves, and that their only hope lay with the Romans (Liv. 25.28.9: *nec urbi nec hominibus aliud periculum quam ab semet ipsis esse, si occasionem reconciliandi se Romanis praetermissent*). This may be a reference to Pericles' warning the Athenians in his first speech (Thuc. 1.144.1: πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἔχω ἐς ἐλπίδα τοῦ περιέσεσθαι, ἣν ἐθέλητε ἀρχὴν τε μὴ ἐπικτᾶσθαι ἅμα πολεμοῦντες καὶ κινδύνους αὐθαιρέτους μὴ προστίθεσθαι· μᾶλλον γὰρ πεφόβημαι τὰς οἰκειάς ἡμῶν ἀμαρτίας ἢ τὰς τῶν ἐναντίων διανοίας). There are not exactly verbal echoes, but the differences between the two situations are telling: In order to *win through the war*, the Athenians' best hope was to adhere to Pericles' plan, while the Syracusans' only chance was *to make peace*. By now, the Syracusans are in a much worse position Athens was in before the Peloponnesian War.

The last possible reference to Thucydides in the narrative is the Syracusan envoys' denial that the people were responsible for the defection from Rome (9 above). The rest of the story is remarkably un-Thucydidean; this may highlight the contrasts between the two sieges of Syracuse.

Conclusion

First, it is important to stress that Livy's account of the siege of Syracuse does not contain any scenes that can be considered purely Thucydidean. For instance, there is no speech by Marcellus incorporating topics of Thucydidean *παραινέσεις*; the *στάσις* in Syracuse is nowhere made reminiscent of Thucydides' Corcyra; and there is no episode with elements taken from Thucydides' account of the final battle in the Syracusan Great Harbour, although Livy could well have composed such an episode. It can be concluded that Livy made a conscious decision not to follow Thucydides slavishly on the most obvious of occasions.⁵⁰ In other words, Thucydides is *deliberately* excluded from some scenes (e.g., the death of Hieronymus, Adranodorus' attempt to seize tyranny, or the massacre at Henna).

Livy chose to compose a less Thucydidean account than he could have, but some passages exhibit a Thucydidean flavour. It is probable that Livy's decision to record that a Roman soldier counted stones in a Syracusan wall was influenced by Thucydides' account of the siege of Plataea, and that Livy mentioned Syracusans falling from the fortifications on Epipolae due to Thucydides' account of the night battle. Whatever Livy found in his sources, he had the freedom to suppress these details. However, such nods to a great predecessor added meaning and depth to his narrative for the readers willing to look for them.

Curiously, the Thucydidean details in question follow a consistent pattern. Livy's Syracusans repeatedly do what Thucydides' Athenians had done (or even something worse), and Livy's Romans consistently outperform Thucydides' Greeks in comparable situations. For example, the Syracusans executed the female relatives of tyrants, which makes them look worse than the Athenians, who avenged themselves on male citizens of Mytilene; during Marcellus' siege, the 'fifth column' in Syracuse existed in reality, while earlier, it may have just been the wishful thinking of Nicias; the epidemic that broke out near of the city harmed above all the enemies of the besiegers; and the Syracusans were warned that their only chance of survival was to make peace with the Romans, whereas Pericles promised the Athenians that they could win through if they waged war with Sparta. Livy appears to have deliberately included in his account several reversals of Thucydidean model situations to assure his readers that this time, the Syracusans will not emerge victorious. Judging from the introductory plot disclosure at Verg. *Aen.* 1.1–7, the Romans appreciated such assurances. Even when, for once, Livy's Syracusans appear to be following in the footsteps of their Thucydidean ancestors, they achieve less. After breaching the Roman wall, they failed to achieve a resounding victory, unlike their compatriots two centuries earlier.

If this interpretation is accepted, the episodes without Thucydidean references may convey the same message as those with Thucydidean reversals; namely, to inform the readers that the siege (to be) described will not conclude in the same way as the famous Athenian one.

50 Cf. Pelling (1992: p. 20): "Ironically, Plutarch's account of the naval battle of Actium is verbally closer to Thucydides' Great Harbour battle than the *Nicias* account of the Great Harbour itself. In *Antony*, the allusion is a literary echo that adds gravity and resonance; in *Nicias*, it would have been obvious and banal."

Yet, Livy's decision to include some Thucydidean echoes may not have been solely motivated by his desire to showcase his knowledge of Thucydides and to assert Rome's military superiority over Greece in the past. It is possible that Livy used Thucydides' model to promote his own agenda as a historian. One may read him as implying that anything that could be taken from the Thucydidean model takes up only a tiny part of the Livy's all-encompassing oeuvre. So, by incorporating elements from Thucydides, Livy suggested that the siege he was describing was more momentous than the one described by the historian of the Peloponnesian War, within the context of a more momentous war. This would convey the same message as Liv. XXI,1–3, as I understand it. It may be suggested that Livy, through his creative but limited use of Thucydides, implied that the Greeks of old, even Thucydides, should not be valued too highly in comparison to Livy's contemporaries, and especially to Livy himself.

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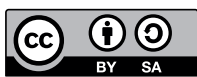
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