Anastasios G. Nikolaidis (University of Crete): “Revisiting the Pylos Episode and its Aftermath: Observations on Thucydides’ Attitude toward Nikias, Kleon and Alkibiades.”

The Pylos episode, culminating in the capture of almost 300 Spartans who had been cut off on the island of Sphakteria, was the first major setback suffered by Sparta during the war and, at the same time, the first major – and more importantly – unexpected success of Athens, in Peloponnesian territory at that. Without overlooking the military elements involved, this paper will primarily focus on the political aspects of the enterprise in an attempt to (a) assess and evaluate Thucydides’ attitude to Nikias, Kleon and even Alkibiades; (b) explain this attitude in the context of the circumstances under which the historian composed his work; and (c) reflect briefly on Thucydides’ political vocabulary.