

ATHENS, THE LOCRIANS AND NAUPACTUS

καὶ αὐτοὺς Ἀθηναῖοι δεξάμενοι... ἐς Ναύπακτον κατώκισαν ἣν ἔτυχον ἡρηκότες νεωστί
 Λοκρῶν τῶν Ὀζολῶν ἐχόντων. (Thuc. 1.103.3)

When Athens settled the Messenians at Naupactus, the Athenians (so Thucydides is said to tell us) had only just captured the city from the Locrians, who had been in possession of it. This, in fact, is all that Thucydides tells us of these important events, and it has (*inter alia*) caused grave difficulties for those who believe that Thucydides tells all the events he records in strict chronological order. The interpretation of this passage is taken for granted and has not (to my knowledge) been discussed. Crawley, Smith (Loeb edition), Romilly (Budé), Landsmann (Artemis) will suffice to represent translation into various Western languages. It also seems to be accepted by all historians, certainly as far back as Grote (iv. 420), where their language is sufficiently specific to enable us to judge how they understand the passage.

Some scholars have paid attention to how and when the Locrians themselves gained possession of the place. This point seems to have been first raised by E. Curtius, in an incidental remark in an important article in *Hermes* 10 (1876), in the course of a discussion of the then recent discovery of a decree establishing a Locrian colony at Naupactus.¹ He seems to have been the first to connect the colony decree with the passage in Thucydides, and he suggested (pp. 239f.) that Thucydides' phrase shows that the Locrians had seized the place and were now trying to colonise it: Thucydides' ἐχόντων (he thought) implied occupation in war, a usage he found in several other passages he collects. Discussing the incident in his *History*, he put the capture of Naupactus by the Athenians in 458, before the battle of Tanagra, and the settlement of the Messenians there (following Diodorus) after that battle and Oenophyta, as part of Tolmides' achievements on his *periplous* in 457.²

His interpretation of Thucydides found much support, e.g. by Classen in his first edition, by Croiset, and by Busolt (*GG* iii. 1, 300 n. 2), even where his odd chronology was rejected and scholars preferred to follow Diodorus (11.84.8) and connect both the capture and the settlement with Tolmides' *periplous*. Then Eduard Meyer³ pointed to the hostages taken from the Opuntian Locrians after Oenophyta (Thuc. 1.108.3): 'Wahrscheinlich bei dieser Gelegenheit verloren sie den Besitz von Naupaktos ... wohin sie vor einiger Zeit, zusammen mit den Ozolern von Chaleion, Ansiedler geschickt hatten.' Meyer does not expand on how he imagines the 'Gelegenheit' in detail, e.g. whether he thought that Myronides captured Naupactus after a march (as improbable as it is unattested) through Ozolian Locris, and how he would explain Thucydides' mere reference to Ozolian Locrians.⁴

¹ For the decree, first published in 1869, see Meiggs–Lewis, *GHI* 20. The earlier colony decree, more recently discovered (Meiggs–Lewis 13), does not seem to be relevant to our discussion.

² *Griech. Gesch.* ii⁶ (1888), pp. 168ff., 172ff. (fitting in the colony decree, not yet known at the time of his first edition, 1861). He does not explain how, on his view, Tolmides actually captured Naupactus: unless we assume a previous *periplous* (improbable and unreported), it is difficult to see how he could have got there.

³ *GdA* iii (1901), p. 597; unchanged in Stier's edition, iv.1 (1944), p. 563.

⁴ For Meyer's chronology see p. 591 of the first edition. He basically accepts Diodorus, to whom in general he gives little credit: in this instance, his dates happen, by accident ('Es ist Zufall'), to be essentially correct. In a characteristic piece of imaginative fiction, he adds to his reconstruction that the Naupactians may have begged the Ozolians to take the city over, to defend it against the Aetolians.

William Oldfather, whose article on 'Lokris' in *RE* xiii. 1 (1926) is probably his most important historical work, naturally presents a full discussion of the Locrian occupation of Naupactus. His treatment is in some ways rather odd. He at first puts the Athenian occupation in 456, the Locrian colony decree not long before (1194f.), and in an insertion in square brackets defends Curtius' interpretation of Thucydides' statement. A little later (1195) he puts the Athenian occupation in the summer of 457, after Tanagra. He presumably alludes to (but fails to explain) Thucydides' reference to 'Ozolian' Locrians by stating that the Athenians expelled 'die lokrische, vor allem [*sic*] die ostlokrische Bevölkerung' when Tolmides settled the Athenians there in 'summer 455/4' (late summer 455 or early summer 454?). In his article 'Naupaktos' (*RE* xvi.2 (1935), 1985f.), the foundation of the Locrian colony is assigned to 'shortly before 457', with a reference to the earlier article, and the second account of the capture of Naupactus by the Athenians and the settlement of the Messenians is repeated *verbatim* (1986f.). He largely follows Meyer, whom he cites, in this interpretation, and he vigorously defends the Athenian action: since the Locrians were incapable of holding the place, 'lag es durchaus im allgemeinen Interesse, und nicht nur Athens selbst, dass die rohen, zahlreichen, und daher gefährlicheren Aitolier ein Seeräubernest dort einzurichten verhindert werden sollten.' (In this context it is worth recalling that Curtius, both in his article and in his *History*, thought that the Locrian occupation of Naupactus had been undertaken in the interests of Corinth, which wanted a base against Athenian expansion.)⁵ He concludes his arguments on this by asserting that the insecure nature of Locrian possession shows that the Athenian action was 'eine weniger schroffe Verletzung des Völkerrechts' than it might otherwise appear.

It is worth looking at an eminent representative of the school that wants Thucydides to keep his story in strict chronological order⁶ (which, for the *Pentekontaetia*, he himself nowhere claims or implies to be his purpose). Gomme (*Commentary* i. 304) has the expected difficulty in fitting in the date of the Athenian seizure of Naupactus, in view of the attested ten years' duration of the siege of Ithome. But he partly follows Curtius' interpretation of Thucydides by recognising that his phrase 'may easily imply *recent* possession of Naupaktos by the Ozolian Locrians'. (He gives a lengthy and very useful collection of references to Thucydides' use of the verb ἔχειν in this and related senses, but agrees with Steup – see below – that it does not always have this meaning.) He rejects the relevance of the colony decree to this question, and in the end suggests (with surprising light-heartedness, in a Thucydidean fundamentalist who, e.g., refuses to admit any possible merit in Diodorus' account of the events concerning Naupactus because Thucydides does not mention them⁷): 'Perhaps Thucydides has made a mistake in writing Ὀζολῶν.'

⁵ Oldfather argues for both a strategic and a commercial purpose in the Athenian decision to occupy Naupactus: the main purpose, in fact, was the protection of Athenian trading interests against both Locrian and Aetolian piracy.

⁶ Meiggs and Lewis (p. 37), who also belong to this school, consistently date the law 'Certainly earlier than the seizure of Naupaktos by Athens... c. 460... (Thuc. i.103.3); how much earlier, we cannot be sure.' They follow Jeffery, *LSAG* 108, in dating it '(?) 500–475', to fit in with this view. They would probably admit that Jeffery's date is almost a pure guess, and that on epigraphic grounds a date even decades later could hardly be excluded.

⁷ Although in his general discussion of his method in using Thucydides' evidence as against other sources, he merely excludes acceptance of any later source where it contradicts Thucydides (84f.), he here inexplicably claims that Diodorus' report 'deserves no credence' even though it in no way contradicts Thucydides, except in chronology, as arrived at by emending Thucydides' well-attested 'tenth year' (i.103.1) out of the way. See further n. 13 below.

We have seen that scholars who have looked into the matter have found that ἔχειν quite frequently (though not invariably) refers to possession of a place that is implied to be temporary, or at least military and based on force. Steup (*ad loc.*) is really the only scholar who has tried to refute Curtius' interpretation, stating (quite correctly) that such phrases can simply mean 'eine Stadt, ein Land in Besitz haben'. He cites three passages for this meaning, one of them the very one on which he is commenting, a second (1.115.4) where the more general meaning is quite possible, but not certain, and a third (for which he goes to 3.39.2) where it is indeed certain (see below). On the strength of this rather small and rather mixed collection he concludes: 'In ἐχόντων kann also unmöglich [my emphasis] mit C. eine Bezugnahme auf den lokrischen Synökismos [*sic*] in Naupaktus gefunden werden ..., mag es auch aus anderen Gründen wahrscheinlich sein [my emphasis], daß diese Inschrift der Zeit vor der Einnahme von Naupaktus durch die Athener angehört.' (He also rejects Diodorus' connection of the capture to Tolmides' *periplous*.)

The claim of 'impossibility', based on his evidence, is rather excessive. Evidence for the use of the verb in the meaning noted by Curtius is easy to come by, even if we exclude the aorist, where the nature of the form is likely to produce a meaning such as 'seized'. Evidence for a neutral use, although it certainly exists, is considerably less frequent. The verb is not infrequently combined with βία: thus 1.38.6 (the Corcyraeans holding Epidamnus, as seen by the Corinthians); 68.3 (the Athenians holding Corcyra, again as seen by the Corinthians). More frequently, seizure and occupation by force is implied: thus (again confining ourselves to Book 1) 107.3 (the Athenians holding Megara and Pegae); 111.2 (the Athenians holding Pegae); 113.1 (Boeotian exiles' seizure of Orchomenus and Chaeronea); 115.1 (Nisaea, Troezen, Pegae and Achaea, 'held' by the Athenians, returned under the Thirty Years' Peace). The concentration of passages where the verb requires this meaning in the history of the Pentekontaetia is worth noting.

Sometimes the implication is probable, though not certain; e.g. Byzantium 'held' by the Medes in 478 (128.5); sometimes merely possible, though perhaps less than likely (115.4 – one of Steup's passages cited against Curtius: Pissouthnes 'then holding' Sardis). It should at least be suggested that Thucydides considered all lands 'held' by the Medes to be under forcible occupation – and the King might not have denied this, in many cases. The difference, of course, would be that there were no νόμοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων to limit the King's actions, and probably no implied condemnation on Thucydides' part where the lands were not Greek. This might help to explain a striking use of ἔχειν in the treaty between the Spartans and the satrap (8.18.1), where the point of view and the language is, of course, that of the Greeks, although legitimacy of control is of the essence of the King's case: ὅποσαν χώραν καὶ πόλεις βασιλεὺς ἔχει καὶ οἱ πατέρες οἱ βασιλέως εἶχον the King is to retain or recover as lawful property.⁸

The probability of the interpretation advanced by Curtius can be strongly supported, even though it does not amount to certainty. It is therefore quite likely, though not certain, that Thucydides did mean to imply that the Locrian (and not the Athenian) occupation of Naupactus was 'recent', though in fact it appears that both were. This probability approaches certainty if we devote some attention to the adverb νεωστί, which has perhaps been unduly neglected in this debate. It seems to occur

⁸ As will be clear, I am not denying that there are instances of the use of ἔχειν that do support Steup's view. But it must be stressed that mere reference to passages, without scrutiny and detailed analysis, is inadequate and will often turn out to be misleading.

with *ἔχειν* only once, but that case is striking. In 3.30.2, various men are trying to persuade Alcidas (unsuccessfully, as it turns out) that the Athenians could readily be thrown out of Mytilene if he made the attempt, *ἀνδρῶν νεωστὶ πόλιν ἐχόντων*: they were likely to be caught off their guard. We may compare the adverb *ἄρτι*, very similar in meaning and used in a precisely similar context concerning Brasidas' recent seizure of Amphipolis: *τὴν... Ἀμφίπολιν Βρασίδας ἄρτι εἶχε* (4.106.4). There can be no doubt that the combination of *ἔχειν* with one of these adverbs implies recent seizure by force.

It is time to ask the decisive question. Historians approaching the matter on the basis of the purely historical evidence have found that Naupactus had not been very long in Locrian possession when the Athenians seized it. Can Thucydides be shown to be saying, *not*, as everyone has believed, that the Athenians had recently seized the place from the Locrians (though this too, of course, was true), but that the Athenians had taken Naupactus from the Ozolian Locrians who had recently seized it?

Once the question is asked, the answer at once emerges as practically certain. Bétant's Thucydides lexicon quotes eleven instances of *νεωστὶ*. In *ten* of them it precedes the verb which it modifies. In only *one* (precisely 1.103.3) is it listed as following its verb – no doubt because that passage was 'known' to mean that the Athenians had recently seized Naupactus.

Now that the truth has been allowed to emerge, we might reflect on Thucydides' possible motive for this rather strange emphasis. He *had* to report the Athenian capture of Naupactus and the settlement of the Messenians there, since it plays a very important part in the story of the war that he set out to tell. As we shall see, he tells us nothing about the way in which the Athenians came to hold Naupactus; why then does he insist on the fact (probably true in itself) that the Locrians had recently seized it? The answer can hardly be better formulated than in the words of Oldfather already quoted: 'Die Besitznahme der Athener erscheint jetzt als eine weniger schroffe Verletzung des Völkerrechts.' He was not aware of the fact that Thucydides had anticipated his conclusion and his implication. An unprovoked attack on a Greek city (possibly without even a proper declaration of war) would offend against the accepted *νόμοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων*, which Greek cities were expected to abide by, though (as we have seen) barbarians in their dealings with barbarians were not. The little adverb, properly interpreted, provides one more instance of Thucydides' persistent apologia for Athens that characterizes his first book. It can be added to a long and already formidable list.⁹

All that remains to be seen is how the colony law fits in and (connected with this) why Thucydides says that the Athenians took the place from the Ozolians, when that law makes the foundation of the colony a mainly Opuntian affair.¹⁰ The answer was glimpsed by Eduard Meyer, whose suggestion merely needs amplification.

After the battle of Tanagra, the Athenians marched out and won the battle of Oenophyta. After that they overran Boeotia and Phocis and (Thucydides reports) took the hundred wealthiest citizens as hostages from the Opuntian Locrians (1.108.3). He does not tell us why, when apparently no hostages were taken in Boeotia or Locris (for why should he have suppressed this if it had happened?), this strikingly

⁹ I have tried to compile that list and discuss Thucydides' attitude in 'Thucydides and the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War: a Historian's Brief', in June W. Allison (ed.), *Conflict, Antithesis and the Ancient Historian* (Columbus, 1990).

¹⁰ To toss off the suggestion that Thucydides made a mistake, as Gomme does (see p. 2 above), is too easy and explains nothing.

harsh demand was inflicted on the Opuntian Locrians, whose co-operation in the Spartan campaign in Central Greece has not been reported and whose co-operation with their Phocian neighbours can certainly not simply be taken for granted.¹¹

It ought to be suggested that the Athenians were even then planning the *periplous* of Tolmides in the following year, which was to end (so Diodorus tells us) with the capture of Naupactus and the settlement of the Messenians there.¹² Whether it was already known in Athens that the Messenians would be available for settling in the place, we unfortunately cannot tell: no really precise chronology of these events can be worked out. But unless we follow Gomme in refusing to accept what Diodorus offers, however reasonable it seems to be and however well it fits together,¹³ we can now make some sense of this demand. The unique demand for these hostages, practically denuding the state of its leading citizens and putting it completely at the mercy of the Athenians, was clearly intended to operate for a short time: to keep the hundred leading citizens of the Opuntians in Athens for years was totally unimaginable.

¹¹ Co-operation with the Spartan campaign (and, consequently, with the Phocians) is frequently stated as a fact, but is derived entirely from this Athenian action. It ought perhaps to be mentioned that Oldfather's reference to Athenian action at Eretria as parallel to that at Opus is unacceptable as such. Hesychius, s.v. *Ἐρετριακὸς κατάλογος*, records a *psephisma* of 442/1 [Oldfather misstates the date as 444], calling for the sons of the wealthiest Eretrians to be taken as hostages. To take the sons of leading citizens as hostages was, of course, standard practice. It is very different from taking the leading men themselves. Moreover, Hesychius does not give a number, although the decree must have specified one. (We know nothing about the background to this – further evidence as to the inadequacy of our information on the *Pentekontaetia*.)

¹² For my own views on the chronology of these actions, see *EMC* 23 (1988), 318f., with notes 42, 43, 46. I there saw no reason to doubt Tolmides' settlement of the Messenians at Naupactus, but was not sure whether to accept Diodorus' report that he actually captured the place on that occasion. At the time, I had not yet thought about the story of the Locrians. I would also now add that the *periplous* as such acquires a more serious purpose, commensurate with the effort, if planned not merely to show Athenian power and inflict some damage *en route*, but to capture a strategic site that could not be reached in any other way. (It would clearly be logistically impossible for Athenian forces to take Naupactus by an overland expedition.) To phrase it differently: if we were asked to conjecture how Naupactus was in fact taken (which is what we must do if we confine ourselves to Thucydides' evidence), it would be hard to avoid the answer that it must have been as a result of a *periplous* of Peloponnese; and that of Tolmides is the only relevant one recorded. Even if the Atthidographer on whom Diodorus' information is ultimately based was only guessing (which need not be assumed), his guess was the only rational one. [After completing this article, I was, through the kindness of Professor D. M. Lewis and Dr Hornblower, shown an advance copy of the treatment of these points in the new *Cambridge Ancient History*. I am happy to see that Diodorus' report that Tolmides settled the Messenians at Naupactus is there 'provisionally' accepted. The view that Tolmides actually captured Naupactus on that occasion is described (without any argument in the portion shown to me) as certainly contradicting Thucydides: I do not know what alternative occasion is proposed for the capture of Naupactus, but the issue will no doubt be faced and discussed.]

¹³ See n. 7 above with text [and compare what I have seen of the treatment in the new *CAH*: see preceding note]. It is interesting to compare an earlier scholar who set an example of rational reliance on Thucydides which Gomme might well have considered. William Mitford, *History of Greece* ii (1814), p. 394 n. 12, set down his principles as follows: 'I have been very cautious of following any other writer, in relating the transactions of these times, when not in some degree supported by [Thucydides].' He goes on to denigrate Diodorus, comparing his relationship to Thucydides to that of Livy to Polybius. Yet he here thinks Diodorus' account 'in itself probable, and consistent with every authenticated fact', and he accepts Tolmides' settlement of the Messenians at Naupactus and the capture of Naupactus by Tolmides. (It is not clear how he chronologically correlates these two events.) He also accepts 455 as the date, no doubt from Diodorus (who gives 456/5, the date of the *Atthis* for the *periplous*): *ibid.* 397.

It has never occasioned much surprise that Tolmides (or whoever else anonymously did so in Thucydides) was able to take a city that had recently been colonised and no doubt fortified by what must have been perceived as an adequate number of settlers. Despite statements to the contrary in both Herodotus and Thucydides, we do not actually know that the Athenians were specially successful in storming walled cities; and there was clearly no lengthy siege here. But what if the Athenians ordered the Opuntians to withdraw their settlers (who, under a provision of the colony law, could return home if expelled) and took the hostages to make sure the order was obeyed? It would provide the most solid guarantee of Opuntian compliance, and the hostages would not need to be retained for long. Nor need we now assume any unreported previous hostility of a conspicuous sort on the part of the Opuntians. With the Opuntians removed, only the Chaleians would remain to occupy the place, and Tolmides will not have found their expulsion – or, more probably, some peaceful accommodation with them – particularly difficult.¹⁴ Thucydides therefore quite properly reports Athens' taking Naupactus from the Ozolian Locrians. Gomme's eccentric doubts were unjustified.

What stands out as remarkable, of course, is that Thucydides tells us neither how and when Naupactus was captured nor what the singular incident of the taking of these Opuntian hostages was intended to achieve. Perhaps the story can only be pieced together once the tone and main purpose of his first book have been recognised.¹⁵

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¹⁴ Peaceful accommodation may already have been revealed by Meiggs–Lewis 74, though that document is too late to be confidently used as evidence for the original relationship. Meiggs–Lewis, l.c., referred to an unpublished inscription confirming this interpretation. [I see from the new *CAH* that it is still unpublished!] This was noted by E. Mastrokostas in *Arch. Delt.* 19 B 2 (1964 [1966]), p. 295 as 'very important', and as describing the foundation of a joint community by the Messenians and the Naupactians. It is perhaps worth making clear that the 'Naupactians', both in that text and in Meiggs–Lewis 74, should be taken to be Thucydides' Ozolians at Naupactus, not any putative pre-Locrian population, of whom we have no record and whom we cannot even further define. The foundation document for the Locrian colony (see n. 1 above) does not mention any accommodation with those inhabitants and we must assume they were expelled. That the Locrian colonists, like colonists elsewhere, called themselves citizens of the colony (in this case 'Naupactians') was in any case to be expected and is clear from the foundation document. The Messenians were probably not sufficiently numerous to fill the large city [for its size, see now the careful description, *CAH*, l.c.] by themselves and would naturally want to share it with the 'Naupactians'. That the two communities, although jointly protected by Athena Polias, remained notionally and perhaps politically separate is, however, shown by Meiggs–Lewis 74.

¹⁵ See the essay cited n. 9 above. I should like to thank Dr Simon Hornblower for helping to eliminate some errors in this article and for enabling me to obtain permission to see a page (with notes) of the forthcoming *CAH*. Any remaining errors are my own fault.