

at the lowest level of the social scale, for Melanthius the goatherd, the man who served wine to the suitors (*Od.* 20.255), kicked and insulted the disguised Odysseus (*Od.* 17.233, 20.172ff.), and later almost ruined Odysseus' assault by sneaking out armour for the suitors from the store-room (*Od.* 22.135ff.), is aptly reserved the most ghastly and humiliating punishment of all, to be, for general ridicule,⁷ a limbless, living⁸ corpse in the halls he had abused.⁹ It may be relevant that as the degradation of the punishment increases so too does its distance from Odysseus, who is directly responsible for the deaths of the suitors and Leodes, whereas Telemachus supervises the hanging of the maids, and the identity of the assailants of Melanthius is not even revealed (any more than is the idea's originator), as if he were too despicable for giving such details to be justified.¹⁰ At any rate the passage, standing as it does in a climactic position, is a useful antidote against the still common assumption that the *Odyssey* is invariably more 'ethically advanced' than the *Iliad*.

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⁷ See above n. 6. The fates of *all* of Odysseus' victims are deliberately presented in a way that is lacking in sympathy: see W. Kullmann, *Homerische Motive* (Stuttgart, 1992), p. 288.

⁸ This is not to deny that someone who has undergone the indignities that Melanthius has is likely to die sooner than the norm from e.g. exhaustion, malnutrition, gangrene or the like. But the immediate aim of the punishment will have been humiliation rather than death (cf. Dronke as cited in n. 6 on killing a man 'by inches'), and that a victim can survive such torment is explicitly attested by, for instance, the English law of c. A.D. 1210 (*Willelmi Articul Londonis Retractati* §17: *eruantur oculi et abscidantur pedes vel testiculi vel manus ita quod truncus remaneat vivus in signum prodicionis et nequicie sue*) whereby the criminal is to have his 'eyes gouged out and his feet cut off or his testicles or hands, so that the trunk remain alive as a sign of his treachery and villainy': translation from A. S. Diamond, *Primitive Law, Past and Present* (London, 1971), p. 99 (see too his Index s.v. 'mutilatio'). For the Latin text see F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903), i.491.

⁹ Fernandez-Galiano's further idea that the four lines in question are interpolated is unattractive. 'Blood-thirsty' interpolations may occur in Greek tragedy (see my note on Soph. *Trach.* 781–2) but the present passage is perfectly appropriate, once we recognise the primitive custom that underlies it. Likewise, H. van Thiel, *Odysseen* (Basel, 1988), p. 262 takes the passage to be a foreign body of sorts largely because Melanthius is not said to die ('die sich überschlagende Metzerei an Melanthios, der daran nicht einmal stirbt'). Again, accept the practice implied, and the objection ceases to have any force.

¹⁰ This may be compared with a (somewhat different) technique of folk-tale (discussed by Röhrich, *sup. cit.* [n. 6], p. 156 = p. 133), which brings out 'the narrator's desire to clear the hero of responsibility for the punishment's severity' to 'emphasise that the hero himself would not stoop to such practices'.

DON'T TAKE IT LITERALLY: THEMISTOCLES AND THE CASE OF THE INEDIBLE VICTUALS

There is a standard tradition in the ancient sources, which makes its first appearance at Thucydides 1.138.5, that, when Themistocles had fled into exile and been given the equivalent of political asylum by the Persian King Artaxerxes,¹ he was 'given' the three Asiatic Greek cities of Magnesia, Myus and Lampsacus. There has been a fair amount of scholarly controversy² over how the King could 'give' Themistocles Lampsacus, a city of great strategic importance on the Hellespont, which, by the mid-

¹ Thucydides, 1.137.3, Plutarch, *Themistocles* 27.1.

² See e.g. F. J. Frost, *Plutarch's Themistocles* (1980), pp. 220–3, A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* I, p. 292.

460s, was almost certainly within the ambit of the Delian League, i.e. no longer his to give. My concern in this paper is not with that political problem, but rather with a different, though related, issue – whether valid conclusions can be drawn from the Thucydides passage and the subsequent tradition for the social and economic history of these three cities in the classical period. I suggest that they cannot.

There can be no doubt that Themistocles ‘ruled’ Magnesia. It was his place of residence and his strategic headquarters in the later 460s.³ Probably the Persian expectation was that he would use it as a base of operations against Delian League interests in and around Miletus. Magnesia also provided Themistocles with the wherewithal to keep himself and his family in the style to which Artaxerxes presumably felt he should become accustomed. Thucydides tells us that he received a revenue from it of no less than 50 talents per year, and this figure is invariably repeated in the later sources. There is no suggestion in Thucydides that these revenues were other than those derived from taxation on land and property which would normally have been remitted annually to the Great King. But Thucydides reports the King’s threefold present through the medium of a metaphor – a metaphor of food and drink. These cities were Themistocles’ ‘victuals’, his bread, wine and *opson*. – δόντος βασιλέως αὐτῷ Μαγνησίαν μὲν ἄρτον, ἣ προσέφερε πεντήκοντα τάλαντα τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ, Λάμψακον δὲ οἶνον (ἐδόκει γὰρ πολυνοιώτατον τῶν τότε εἶναι), Μυοῦντα δὲ ὄψον.

Gomme (*HCT* I, p. 445) does not comment on the parenthesis within the passage here, but one cannot help feeling that there is something both odd and awkward about it. Odd because it seems that the ‘victuals’ motif is no longer just a metaphor, but has turned into a factual statement about the agricultural economy of Lampsacus. It was ‘most rich in wine’. Awkward because the formulation of the statement in parenthesis is so tentative. ‘It was thought to be’ (ἐδόκει) – by whom? And is the implication of ‘then’ (τότε) that it is not *now*, when Thucydides was writing? And who are the cities τῶν τότε? All those in the Hellespont, all those on the Asiatic coastline, all those in the Aegean world, or what?

It may be helpful to look at the question from a different angle. The tripartite division of ἄρτος (or σίτος), οἶνος and ὄψον, with bread coming first of the three items, was the standard characterization of a ‘full’ Greek meal.⁴ I suggest that the ‘victuals’ motif in the original version of the story of the Great King’s gifts to Themistocles was *purely metaphorical*. Magnesia was his place of residence, his headquarters, his main source of revenue, hence it is his ἄρτος – the chief, first item of a full Greek meal. This interpretation is surely confirmed by the way Thucydides places the words ἄρτος, οἶνος and ὄψον directly in apposition to the names of the respective cities, without any intervening proposition. There is no ambiguity of sense. The meaning in each case is ‘as his bread, as his wine, as his ὄψον’.

There is no suggestion in the Thucydides passage that Magnesia was especially rich in grain, or Myus in fish, but in one case, that of Lampsacus, Thucydides seems to

³ He had a house there, he issued a personal coinage there, he was buried in a splendid tomb there (Thuc. 1.138.4–5, Plutarch, *Themistocles* 31.2, 32.3, G. F. Hill, *Sources for Greek History*, C10 (a), p. 332 = A. J. Podlecki, *Life of Themistocles* (1975), p. 176 plate 3a).

⁴ Cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 3.479–80 σίτον καὶ οἶνον ἔθηκεν | ὄψα τε, Plato, *Gorgias* 518b ὁ μὲν ἄρτους ... παρασκευάζων, ὁ δὲ ὄψον, ὁ δὲ οἶνον. The sense of ὄψον seems to have changed, or rather expanded, between the time of Homer and that of Plato. Earlier it seems to mean ‘cooked flesh’ only, but by the later fifth century in Athens it can also mean a relish, often a fish-paste relish, or sometimes cooked fish. However, the traditional tripartite division itself, with bread as the first item in the list, does not seem to have changed.

have misunderstood, or 'improved upon', the purely metaphorical character of the original version and interpreted the motif literally. Or was it not Thucydides at all, but an early editor, whose explanatory gloss has crept into the text? Certainly the vague and tentative phrasing of the parenthesis betrays an uncertainty we do not expect from the master himself.

However, this wrongheaded literal interpretation, whenever it began, became the standard one in the later tradition. It is seen in its most extreme form in Diodorus, 11.57.7, which may go back to Ephorus: *ἔδωρήσατο δ' αὐτῷ καὶ πόλεις τρεῖς πρὸς διατροφήν καὶ ἀπόλαυσιν εὐθέτους, Μαγνησίαν μὲν ... πλείστον τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν πόλεων ἔχουσιν σίτον, εἰς ἄρτους, Μυοῦντα δὲ εἰς ὄψον, ἔχουσιν θάλατταν εὐίχθυν, Λάμψακον δὲ, ἀμπελόφυτον ἔχουσιν χώραν πολλήν, εἰς οἶνον.*

Here the literal interpretation has taken over in the case of all three cities, not just Lampsacus. We should note the appearance of the preposition *εἰς* plus accusative case (significantly *not* present in the Thucydides version), which gives an ambiguous sense: 'for/to supply with' allows for either a metaphorical or a literal interpretation in both Greek and English. But Diodorus goes further. He explicitly tells us that Magnesia had more grain than any other Asiatic Greek city, that the sea at Myus was rich in fish, that Lampsacus had much viticulture.

Later versions⁵ of the story mostly repeat this verbal formulation with *εἰς* plus accusative (though Strabo, 14.1.10, is an exception, reverting to the appositional construction of Thucydides) and further cities are added (Percote 'to provide him with bedding', Palaiacepsis and/or Gryneion 'for his clothing'). They all imply that the various cities on the list actually supplied Themistocles with particular products in kind, one local speciality from each. This literal interpretation of the original conceit has been followed by a number of modern scholars.⁶

But is there any independent evidence that Lampsacus was a *particularly* noted wine-producing state in the early fifth century, or that Magnesia produced *especially* vast quantities of grain and Myus of fish in that period?

Scholars cite Strabo, 13.1.19 (cf. also 13.1.12), for the information that, in his day, there was a good wine-producing place within the territory of Lampsacus called Gergithion. But is that enough? Virtually any Greek polis could make a similar claim. There is also a Lampsacene stater from the fifth century which depicts a winged sea-horse within a vine wreath; but it was the winged horse, not the vine wreath, which became the symbol of Lampsacus on its subsequent coinage.⁷ For Catullus Lampsacus

⁵ E.g. Strabo, 13.1.12, Plutarch, *Themistocles* 29.7, Athenaeus 1.29f, schol. Aristophanes, *Knights* 84. Similarly Cornelius Nepos, *Themistocles* 10. 2–3, has 'namque hanc urbem [Magnesia] ei rex donarat, his quidem verbis, *quae ei panem praeberet* – ex qua regione quinquaginta talenta quotannis redibant – Lampsacum autem, *unde vinum sumeret*, Myunta, *ex qua obsonium haberet*.'

⁶ Thus the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1970), s.v. *Lampsacus*, states: 'It was assigned by Artaxerxes I to Themistocles whom it supplied with the wine for which it was famous'. R. Flacelière, *Plutarch, Vie de Thémistocle* (1972), p. 96, refers to Thucydides 'qui précise que Magnésie du Méandre fournissait annuellement 50 talents *de pain*' [my italics], and quotes Diodorus' remark about fishy Myus without comment, as does Gomme, *HCT* I p. 445. Frost (1980), p. 222, refers to the possibility that Themistocles 'enjoyed the wine revenues of Lampsacus' – a sort of half-way house position. But it is hard to visualize how such an arrangement could have operated in practice. A. H. Sommerstein, *Aristophanes, Wasps* (1983), pp. 187–8, on *Wasps* 496–9, rightly takes the 'bread' of Magnesia as the traditional terminology of a metaphorical gift, and this interpretation is followed by James Davidson in a wide-ranging article (*CQ* 43 [1993], 101–26, particularly 113–14) on the possible social and political connotations of *opsophagia* at Athens. I would argue that all three items of Thucydides' list are to be interpreted in this way.

⁷ See B. V. Head, *A Guide to the Principal Coin Types of the Greeks* (1965), IIA 17, p. 16, and IIIA 18–28, p. 33.

was famous for its oysters,⁸ not its grapes, and it seems likely that, given its strategic position and harbour facilities, Lampsacus' undoubted prosperity⁹ must always have been primarily derived from maritime sources. Perhaps most significant of all, when 'Dionysus' is presented by a fifth-century comic writer¹⁰ as evaluating the quality of the best Greek wines he makes no mention of Lampsacus, but, ironically enough, puts in joint second place the wine of *Magnesia*!

Myus, the harbour town of Magnesia, was on the gulf-estuary of the Maeander, and so doubtless had its share of fishermen, like scores of other Greek towns. Its harbour seems to have silted up at some period in antiquity,¹¹ but even before then there seems to be no other evidence (*pace* Diodorus) that its waters were *notably* rich in fish. As for Magnesia and grain, Athenaeus, 3.78e–f, quotes Polybius (16.24.9) to the effect that in 201 B.C. it had to supply the army of Philip V with *figs* since it had no grain (*ἐπεὶ σίτον οὐκ εἶχον*). But in any case it is clear from the Thucydides passage that it was simply the overall revenues of Magnesia, derived from the regular taxation of land and property, that provided Themistocles with his fifty talents a year.

We do, however, have good independent evidence for the city-gifts of a Persian king being described in metaphorical terminology similar to that used in the case of Themistocles' endowment. According to Herodotus, 2.98.1, Anthylla, a city in Egypt, was made over in perpetuity to the Persian king's wife after the conquest of Egypt in the later sixth century 'to keep her in shoes' (*ἐς ὑποδήματα*). There is no evidence that the inhabitants of Anthylla actually *made* especially fine shoes, or that Persian queens were as acquisitive of footwear as Imelda Marcos. Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.4.9, refers to some Syrian villages which in the early fourth century had been given to Parysatis, the mother of Artaxerxes II, 'to keep her in girdles' (*εἰς ζώνην*). In other words their tax revenues enabled her to buy the girdles she needed (and doubtless other adornments too) in the posh shops of Persepolis. The expression is purely metaphorical.

The conclusion must be that Magnesia, Myus and Lampsacus were given to Themistocles 'as his food and drink', i.e. their revenues, deriving from annually levied taxation, which would normally have been remitted to the Great King, were instead given to him for the support and maintenance of himself and his family. In the case of Lampsacus (and even Myus) the gift may have had theoretical value only, but clearly it was Magnesia which really counted. The 'wherewithal' metaphors by which such personal gifts were described may have been traditionally Persian, but in this case the added refinement of the tripartite division of the victuals into *ἄρτος*, *οἶνος*, and *ὄψον* has a Greek flavour, and probably derives from Thucydides' informants, members of Themistocles' family, maybe going back to the Wily Operator himself.

There is nothing for the social and economic historian in Thucydides 1.138.5, or any of the later passages which echo or expand upon it, for the simple reason that the literary tradition is based on a literal-minded misinterpretation of the original story and metaphor. Indeed a close study of the transmission of this particular story suggests that reliance on literary sources for significant socio-economic data about the classical world is a risky business at best.

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⁸ Catullus fr. 1 (Kroll, 1959); cf. T. P. Wiseman, *Catullus and his World* (1985), p. 257.

⁹ Lampsacus' assessed tribute in 454/3 was the high figure of 12 talents (*ATL* 1, pp. 216–441), and the beautiful gold coins of the fourth century indicate continued prosperity.

¹⁰ Hermippus fr. 77 (Kassel and Austin) = Athenaeus 1.29e–f.

¹¹ So Frost (1980), p. 219.