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The Fear and Pursuit of Risk: Corinth on Athens, Sparta and the Peloponnesians (Thucydides 1.68–71, 120–121)

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At the opening of the Peloponnesian war, the Corinthians found themselves in an awkward position. Allied with Sparta as a member of the Peloponnesian league, Corinth was itself a major naval power and could, with the acquisition of Corcyra's fleet, conceivably threaten Athenian mastery of the seas (Thuc. 1.33, 44). Their geographical and social position suspended the Corinthians between Sparta and Athens and put them in a good position to evaluate the strengths of these two cities. They do this in a speech at Thucydides 1.68–71, and then, after securing the support they need from Sparta, they continue, though in less flamboyant style, their analysis of national characteristics in a second speech directed to the more backward Peloponnesian allies (1.120–121). This paper does not attempt to determine whether the Corinthians actually delivered the speeches attributed to them. (The phrase "Thucydides' Corinthians," used from time to time, is intended as neutral.) Its primary goal is to explore the intellectual context for their analysis of national characteristics, including the less famous, but equally important, analysis of the land–locked Peloponnesian allies. It argues that the Corinthian expositions are more than spectacular, but empty, rhetorical exercises.

Athens and Sparta in fact exhibit fundamentally different attitudes. Averse to risk and stubbornly hesitant to commit their own resources, the Spartans and their allies embody a conservatism commonly valued in the archaic and classical Greek world. Ultimately, weakness and uncertainty (two prolific themes in early Greek literature) are responsible for this attitude, and most of our sources praise what may be called a "subsistence ethic": the limited pursuit of wealth, the preference for security over risk, and the emphasis on one's immediate situation. The Athenians, on the other hand, have an insatiable appetite for risk and for the profits which risks can bring. Dynamism and acquisitiveness are clearly not an invention of the fifth century, but Athens embraces these qualities more intensely and whole–heartedly than any contemporary state. Yet Athens represents not just an opponent, but a force qualitatively different from Sparta and from most of Sparta's allies (the Corinthians themselves being a possible exception). In the Archaeology,

Thucydides describes the evolution of sea–power, of sea–borne trade, and of the prosperity which maritime ἀρχή could bring. The Corinthians introduce these ideas into the "modern world," applying them to the powers which dominated their time and with which they had to contend. Although the Corinthians build their discussion of Athens, Sparta and the Peloponnesians on traditional ideas and values, Athenian character is so restless and terrifying that the Corinthians question the restraint which conventional sources praise. When the Corinthians turn to tradition, they assume that fundamental assumptions behind this tradition no longer obtain.

1. The Contrast between Athens and Sparta: Previous Views

The Corinthian delegates present the first speech in an assembly of the Peloponnesian league at Sparta. The issue is war with Athens and its empire. The Corinthians have already appeared in Thucydides. In the previous year, they delivered a speech before the Athenian assembly that was unsuccessful (1.37–42)—barely so (1.44), but unsuccessful all the same; that failure has led them to Sparta and to a desperate call to arms. Whatever really happened at Sparta, Thucydides' Corinthians certainly took the opportunity to present one of the arguments which has most dazzled, even where it has not convinced, readers of the *History*. The subject of their speech is simple. In Gomme's words: "Both those who believe that there is some historical content in Thucydides' speeches and those who believe that he made them all up in his own head, are convinced that his intention in writing this is to show one aspect of the forces at work both in provoking the war and in the fighting itself...Thucydides was anxious to show the temper of the Athenians, Corinthians, and Lacedaemonians at the time; he selects and composes (with or without authority for it) this speech to throw some light on that temper."[1]

The contrast between a dynamic Athens (1.70) and a sluggish, obsolescent Sparta (1.71) is certainly one of the best–known passages in Thucydides. Connor (1984, 37) remarks that "up to this point, the analysis has been based almost entirely on the quantifiable factors of—above all, ships and money." The Corinthian speech allows us to focus on the "less tangible considerations, the morale and the determination of the belligerents." Most readers have admired the rhetorical skill with which the Corinthians make their points, and some—particularly scholars of an earlier generation—find the implicit model

[1]A.W. Gomme, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1945) 233. Full references to works hereafter cited by author and date are gathered at the end. Word searches were performed using the *Pandora Search System* with the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

of a progressive Athens vs. a backward Sparta to be self–evident.[2] Many others, however, are more critical. For Donald Kagan, "it is immediately evident that the Corinthian portrait of both Spartans and Athenians is enormously exaggerated. A people so sluggish and unimaginative as the Spartans depicted by the Corinthian speech could hardly have won mastery over the Peloponnese, leadership of the Greeks in the successful resistance to Persia, and victory in the first Peloponnesian war...The depiction of Athenian actions and character is even more remote from the facts" (1969, 290–291). J. B. Salmon, in his book on Corinth, feels that "the complaints about past Spartan policy are hardly justified...The Corinthian attack on Sparta was deficient in logic" (1984, 299). Marc Cogan is perhaps the most specific in his critique: "This chapter is a famous piece of Thucydides' *History*, yet while a rhetorical masterpiece, in another respect it is usually overrated. As a useful characterization of the Athenians it is, though pointed, strangely insubstantial" (1981, 23).

The Corinthians of course oversimplify and exaggerate the contrast. The Athenian Nikias is, as represented by Thucydides, neither dynamic nor daring, just as the Spartan Brasidas, "a good speaker for a Spartan" (4.84.2), possessing both ἀρετή and σύνεσις (4.81.2), a man of action (4.81.1), exhibits many of the qualities which are normally associated with Athens. Recent scholars have even cast doubt not only on the historical validity of the Athens/Sparta dichotomy, but on the programmatic role which the Corinthian speech has for Thucydides as a whole.[3] Nevertheless, Thucydides in his own narrative voice contrasts Athens and Sparta elsewhere in the *History* (4.55, 8.96). The Corinthian speech, which sets the tone for this debate and to which the speeches of the Athenians and of Archidamus respond, is at least programmatic in presenting, in the opening section of the *History*, a clear set of criteria with which to contrast Athenian and Spartan behavior.[4]

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[2]E.g. Schwartz (1929) 103, who accepts Thucydides' point of view: "indirectly, without imposing his own judgment, he wants to lead the thoughtful reader to the understanding that the modern Great Power, ruthlessly pursuing its own goals, is superior to the Spartan state, caught as it is in an outmoded tradition." Cf. Gundert (1968) 116; Woodhead (1970) 115. For the Corinthians' impressive rhetoric see, in addition to Schwartz, Connor (1984) 40; Cogan (1981) 23–24.

[3]Thus Demont (1990) 210: "A beaucoup près, malgré leur brillant, les textes cités ne sont pas definitifs" and adds in a note "Je ne pense donc que le discours corinthien soit à lui seul 'programmatic.'" Cf. Hunter (1982) 41, n. 40.

[4]Edmunds (1975) 89–93, criticized by both Demont and Hunter (above, n. 3).

2. "Safety First" in Sparta and Greek Culture

2.1. Spartan Conservatism. The Spartans, so the Corinthians tell us, have such faith in their institutions and in themselves that they trust no one else (1.68.1). At the opening of their speech, the Corinthians concede that the Spartans possess the prized quality σωφροσύνη, "self–restraint" or "self–possession," but their disdain for the outside world fills them with ἀμαθία, "ignorance." The Spartans are, however, not truly independent. "Sparta claims for itself the respect for its ἀρετή as the liberator of Greece" (69.1); yet Sparta failed to recognize the threat which the Persians posed until they had come from the ends of the earth to threaten the Peloponnese directly (69.5). Even then, when Sparta took the field, the Persians failed more because of their own mistakes than because of anything the Spartans did (69.5). Likewise, the obtuseness of the Spartans (69.3), we are told, encourages the Athenians to continue their expansionist path. Sparta's sense that it is self–contained and can define its own destiny is entirely out of place.

The most far–reaching and harsh Corinthian observations about Spartan character appear within a single paragraph (70). Sparta, so the Corinthians argue (70.2), seeks to preserve the *status quo* (τὰ ὑπάρχοντά τε σῴζειν) and conceives of no new plans. When it acts, it does not go far enough. The Spartans (70.3) do not exploit the full extent of their power or plans, nor do they even have confidence in things that are certain. Once entangled in difficulties, they believe that they will never work themselves free. The Spartans are chronic procrastinators (70.4) and reluctant to leave their own territory. Where the Athenians are eager for new opportunities, the Spartans are sure that new enterprises will endanger what they already have (70.5).

It is not hard to see specific reasons why the Spartans preferred security over risk in their foreign relations: the Spartiates were under considerable pressure at home. The Helot population bitterly resented its lot and terrified its Spartiate masters. A generation before the Corinthians delivered their speech at 1.68–71, an earthquake had inflicted serious casualties on the Spartan population (1.101–102), the Helots had revolted, and only a negotiated settlement could bring the subsequent ten years of war to an end (103.1). Conquest of Messenia had increased the agricultural base of Spartan society, but it provided additional burdens as well as wealth for individual Spartans. Hard–pressed in the best of times to maintain their system, the Spartans were particularly vulnerable in 432. Where 5,000 Spartiates took the field at Plataia in 479, the number of Spartans between 20 and 49 years of age seems to have

declined to just over 3,000.[5] In other words, while Sparta continued to exert its control over the same amount of territory, the Spartan population was only about 60% as large as it had been fifty years before.

The Corinthian argument is complex and has deep roots in Greek traditional thought. The ideas they employ were developed not for the military Spartan state, but for the small farmers who throughout the classical period composed the bulk of the population. Though personally liberated from the peasant's agricultural labor, the Spartiates had only exchanged one form of risk (food shortages) for another (revolt). If Spartan conservatism has its own peculiar causes, Sparta's allies in the Peloponnesian league are clearly small farmers who embrace a narrow definition of self–interest and hesitate to confront problems that do not immediately affect them. The contrast which the Corinthians draw primarily sets Athens against Sparta, but its general terms could be used to contrast Athens with the Peloponnesian league as a whole. The Spartans are, in fact, a special case, and the Peloponnesians at large more faithfully reflect Greek society as a whole.

2.2. Agricultural Conservatism and the Peloponnesian League in Thucydides. While the Spartans themselves were full–time soldiers, most of the hoplites who marched into battle under Spartan hegemony were αὐτουργοί (Thuc. 1.141.3, 5), men who worked their own land. Speakers on both sides of the war comment on the stubborn conservatism with which the Peloponnesian league as a whole manages its resources. The Corinthians and Perikles, in speeches that echo one another, outline the "grand strategies" of the Peloponnesian and Athenian sides. Their arguments imply that a large proportion (and no doubt a majority) of the troops serving in Peloponnesian league expeditions were narrow–minded and conservative peasant farmers.

Perikles reminds his fellow citizens that the Peloponnesians are small farmers who live in a highly decentralized society with no common sources of accumulated wealth. The Peloponnesians have no experience with wars that are long or that are across the sea, for they have only undertaken brief campaigns against each other because of their limited wealth. These αὐτουργοί simply cannot afford to leave their homes for long or to expend wealth from their own funds (141.4). As independent small farmers, the Peloponnesians, according to Perikles, are subject to more than financial weakness. The Peloponnesians have developed attitudes consistent with their way of life, and their outlook detracts from their military power. They are far more willing to serve in person than to provide money, for they are less frightened of death

[5]Figueira (1986), esp. 210–213.

than of losing what money they do have (σώμασί τε ἑτοιμότεροι οἱ αὐτουργοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἢ χρήμασι πολεμεῖν, 141.5). Each of them looks primarily out for his own personal interest, and such behavior rarely leads to any conclusive action (τὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστος σπεύδῃ· ἐξ ὧν φιλεῖ μηδὲν ἐπιτελὲς γίγνεσθαι, 141.6).

The Corinthians treat their allies no less harshly than Perikles does his enemies. Now that they no longer have any reason to condemn the Spartans (1.120.1), the Corinthians turn their attention directly to the Peloponnesian allies who live inland and apart from the main routes of communication (120.2). The Corinthians direct against the allies arguments similar to those directed against Sparta at 1.68–69. They attack the stubborn caution and praise of ἡσυχία among the landlocked farmers of the Peloponnesian league and the narrow interpretation which these small farmers apply to their interests. Each of these people must come to understand that they are, in fact, part of a larger world. If the inland communities do not come to the aid of those who are close to the sea, they will be less able to export their own surplus products and receive those necessities which only sea–borne trade can deliver. The Corinthians must convince the other Peloponnesians that Athenian power will reach out and harm them no matter where they live and that the war really does affect their interests (120.2). They must not hesitate to exchange peace for war (120.3).

Perikles and the Corinthians both assume that, aside from the Spartan elite, the Peloponnesian league was largely a confederation of peasant farmers, who work their own land to support their households and who have limited, usually indirect, contact with the outside world. Their comments indicate that the rank and file of the Peloponnesian league exhibited stubbornly conservative attitudes similar to those which modern researchers of peasant societies have observed.[6] When peasants lead rebellions, they generally fight for a return to some idealized conservative society rather than for revolutionary change.[7]

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[6]S. Ortiz in Shanin (1987) 300; for discussions of the term "peasant" as a useful analytical category and the problems in any such broad generalizations, see Shanin (1987) 2–9; F. Cancian, "Economic Behavior in Peasant Communities," in S. Plattner, ed., *Economic Anthropology* (Stanford 1989) 127–170. Much modern discussion focuses on the degree to which peasant communities are open to change and to adapting themselves to the opportunities of the modern capitalist market. Cancian's piece is particularly useful, in that it contrasts "homogeneity theorists" (who see peasants as immersed in a special economic system and resistant to change) with "heterogeneity theorists" (who find peasants "eager to change when genuine opportunities are open to them," 129). The terms of the modern debate—change vs. continuity—are much the same as those which the Corinthians bring to bear.

[7]See, for example, E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (February 1971); Scott (1976), Scott (1985).

When Marx in the nineteenth century focused upon the urban proletariat as the necessary engine of change, small farmers provoked in him frustrations similar to those which the Corinthians in Thucydides vent against Sparta.

This attitude has been termed the "subsistence ethic" or "the moral economy of the peasant." "This ethic, which Southeast Asian peasants shared with their counterparts in nineteenth century France, Russia, and Italy, was a consequence of living so close to the margin. A bad crop would not only mean short rations; the price of eating might be the humiliation of an onerous dependence or the sale of some land or livestock which reduced the odds of achieving an adequate subsistence the following year. The peasant family's problem, put starkly, was to produce enough rice to feed the household, buy a few necessities such as salt and cloth, and meet the irreducible claims of outsiders...Living close to the subsistence margin and subject to the vagaries of weather and the claims of outsiders, the peasant household has little scope for the profit maximization calculus of traditional neoclassical economics. Typically, the peasant cultivator seeks to avoid the failure that will ruin him rather than attempting a big, but risky, killing. In decision making parlance his behavior is risk averse; he minimizes the subjective probability of the maximum loss."[8]

Classical Greece subsisted primarily upon agriculture, which meant that hunger was always a threat.[9] In Attica (one of the driest areas of Greece), for example, modern data on rainfall suggest that the barley crop would fail one year out of twenty, wheat more than one year in four, and seed legumes almost three years out of four.[10] Colonization was one response to the pressure on existing land resources, but Garnsey and Morris have recently concluded that the Greek polis did not in the classical period develop "a comprehensive framework of institutions and laws designed to protect the average citizen–consumer from hunger and starvation" (105). If, however, the Greek polis as an institution did not adapt itself to the precarious base of existence, archaic

[8]I quote Scott (1976) 2—also excerpted in Shanin (1987) 304–309—and again Scott, 4–5. The basic principle has been called "safety first." See J. A. Roumasset, *Risk and Choice of Technique for Peasant Agriculture: Safety First and Rice Production in the Philippines*, Social Systems Research Institute, University of Wisconsin, 7118 (August 1971) and *Rice and Risk: Decision–Making among Low–Income Farmers*, (New York 1976).

[9]Thus Finley (1973) 123–149, and, more recently with regard to Athens, Osborne (1984), who argues at length that Athens itself is not, properly speaking, a city in the modern sense of the word and that both the political and productive center of the Athenian state was firmly rooted in the Attic countryside.

[10]Garnsey and Morris (1989) 98; on the food supply of Athens in the archaic and classical period generally, see Garnsey (1988).

and classical texts, with their emphasis on the weakness of being mortal, their frequently expressed aversion to risk and approval of restraint, show that the people of the time adapted their personal attitudes to their condition.

2.3. In Praise of Caution: Herodotus and Hesiod. The Corinthians paint a discouraging portrait of Sparta and of the Peloponnesian league, but the attitudes which the Corinthians assault can be portrayed very differently. The praise of restraint, of caution, and of limited goals fills archaic and classical Greek literature. Mortals are by their nature ἐφήμεροι, "creatures of a day," and as such must view the future with caution, if not fear.[11] Pindar wrote for some of the wealthiest members of the Greek elite, but even he expresses suspicion for the profit and hoarded wealth which paid for his own honoraria.[12] In their critiques of Sparta and the Peloponnesian allies, the Corinthians are arguing against a position widely praised in Greek literature.

Herodotus offers a useful contrast to the Corinthian analysis of Sparta, for eloquent figures in the *Histories* urge restraint and limited goals. In the programmatic first book, the Lydian Croesus, an archetype of the rich and generous man (Pi. *P*. 1.94; B. 3), initially confuses ὄλβος with the accumulation of wealth (Hdt. 1.30.2), only to understand his delusion while he sits upon the pyre (1.86). The most direct parallel, however, comes at the opening of Book 7, as the Persians consider whether or not to launch the invasion of Greece. According to Herodotus, Artabanos, Xerxes' uncle, rises in council to present his advice. "A dramatic figure,...more than a wise adviser, he is almost a seer" and events will prove his judgment all too sound.[13] He argues against the campaign and praises circumspection. Avoid courting great risk when no necessity compels it (Hdt. 7.10.1), advises Artabanos. Adjourn this meeting, consider your options ahead of time and then, when you choose, announce what seems best to you. Good planning is the greatest profit of all (7.10.2): one cannot avoid unexpected events and occasional failure, but the one who plans badly and nonetheless succeeds has enjoyed empty luck and has

[11]For the association of mortal insecurity and the term ἐφήμεροι, see Pindar *P*. 8.95; also E. *Heracl*. 865–6: τὸν εὐτυχεῖν δοκοῦντα μὴ ζηλοῦν, πρὶν ἂν / θανόντ' ἴδῃ τις· ὡς ἐφήμεροι τύχαι, which echoes the general advice of Solon at Hdt. 1.33.

[12]E.g., wealth must be displayed and expended: Pi. *N*. 1.31–2, *I*. 1.67–8; Pindar almost always scorns material κέρδος (*N*. 5.16, 7.18, 9.33, 11.47; *P*. 1.92, 3.54, 4.140, 8.13). The only 'profit' worth having is the praise of one's fellow citizens (*I*. 1.51); see in particular *I*. 2 with the discussion by L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise* (Cornell 1991) 240–256; on the underlying ethos of generosity, see Kurke 163–182.

[13]J. A. S. Evans, *Herodotus: Explorer of the Past: Three Essays* (Princeton 1991) 14; on this passage and its implications for Persian imperialism in Herodotus, see pp. 9–40.

planned badly all the same. While Artabanos is a Persian, his advice has at least as much to do with Greek values as with those of the Persian court.

Artabanos applies to Xerxes a favorite Herodotean theme, one well suited to the highly decentralized archaic Greek world, with its hundreds of tiny city–states dominated (if the Peloponnesian league is any guide) by small αὐτουργοί. Excessive wealth or power threaten this order and are viewed with suspicion. Thus, at Hdt. 1.32.1, Solon warns Croesus that, in the case of human affairs, "the divine is envious and causes trouble." Polykrates, his ring, and his subsequent destruction at Hdt. 3.39–43, 120–125 provide the Herodotean locus for this phenomenon. Amasis, alarmed at the continuous good fortune of his friend Polykrates, advises him to throw away something that he values, and thus alternate success with failure; for otherwise Polykrates' abnormal prosperity will bring down on him the envy of the gods (3.40). The gods act like shrewd and ruthless tyrants who cut down individuals who grow too high (cf. Thrasyboulos' advice to Periander at Hdt. 5.92). Artabanos warns Xerxes against this divine levelling. "The god" launches his thunderbolts against the most outstanding living things, but small things do not annoy him (7.10). The god tends to cut down all things that stand out. For this reason, a large army can be destroyed by one that is much smaller, when the god sends panic, thunder or lightning to encourage the weaker side. "For the god does not suffer anyone to be proud other than himself." Caution and hesitancy are key virtues, according to Artabanos. Haste always engenders disasters, and from these great damages tend to spring (7.10). Good fortune lies with the exercise of restraint, and if Xerxes does not believe this yet, he will in time come to see that Artabanos is right (ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐπισχεῖν ἔνεστι ἀγαθά, εἰ μὴ παραυτίκα δοκέοντα εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἀνὰ χρόνον ἐξεύροι τις ἄν). Artabanos, of course, proves to be correct, but the persistent dream that appears to both Xerxes and Artabanos forces both men to embrace the invasion against their better judgment (7.12–18).

According to Artabanos' logic, Athens was doomed sooner or later to experience a disastrous reversal of fortune. Spartan caution might in the short term incur losses, but in the long run would provide a sound strategy. But the Corinthians have lost their interests in Epidamnos and Corcyra in the west and are about to lose their influential position at Poteideia in the northeast. Hard–pressed by Athens, the Corinthians have no use for these distant rewards and instead focus upon the (to them) catastrophic results to which further Athenian expansion would soon lead. Greek tradition had fostered a highly developed rhetoric in praise of restraint and caution. The Corinthians in their analysis of Sparta must directly attack their foot–dragging ally and at the same time

undermine the ideological position by which Sparta justifies its reluctance to act. They must discredit the kind of sage advice which figures in Herodotus such as Solon, Amasis and Artabanos offer.

The conservative αὐτουργοί of the Peloponnesian league are more typical of the archaic and classical world than the well–drilled Spartiates. The *Works and Days* is the most developed poetic expression of peasant values in early Greek literature (the Ithacan sections of the *Odyssey* are earlier but less systematic). This poem exhorts the listener to focus on his own concerns, to labor, and to produce just enough wealth. Hesiod presents arguments which provide a justification for the caution and narrow self–interest which the Peloponnesian allies embrace. He argues for wealth, but the πλοῦτος which Hesiod's farmers are to accumulate consists neither of precious metals nor of dominance over others, but of stored agricultural surplus: σοὶ δ' ἔργα φίλ' ἔστω μέτρια κοσμεῖν, / ὥς κέ τοι ὡραίου βιότου πλήθωσι καλιαί. ἐξ ἔργων δ' ἄνδρες πολύμηλοί τ' ἀφνειοί τε (*Op.* 306–308). The blessed existence which the members of the Golden Age enjoyed in life is revealing. If wealth accumulates or diminishes, it does so within the household (377, cf. 325–26). Although the earth provides generously for them of its own accord (αὐτομάτη, 118), they still live off of what they produce (ἔργ' ἐνέμοντο, 119). They do not renounce agricultural labor, but perform it "'as they pleased,' casually and unforcedly," as West glosses ἐθελημοί (118). Likewise, the heroes on the Islands of the Blessed reap three crops a year in their congenial surroundings (172–3). In this scheme there are no Helots or serfs. The *Works and Days* assumes that anyone, in whatever sphere of existence, must personally extract a livelihood from the land, and its visions of paradise offer a kind of "busman's holiday" for the peasant.[14]

But if the material conditions assumed by the *Works and Days* reflect the Peloponnesian αὐτουργοί allies better than the Spartiates, the world view is not so dissimilar. The Spartans, as seen by the Corinthians, conform to Hesiodic norms in at least two regards, but fall short on a third point. First, Hesiod and the Spartans believe that, for the most part, if they behave properly and do not bother others, they will prosper. The Corinthians open their speech at 1.68 by criticising the "trust which the Spartans place in their own constitution and in their own society" (1.68.1). The repeated jibes at Spartan passivity and sluggishness have their root in an underlying Spartan attitude: ἐπὶ τῷ μὴ λυπεῖν τε τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀμυνόμενοι μὴ βλάπτεσθαι τὸ

[14]See, for example, V. P. Jajlenko, "Die sozialstrukturelle Charakteristik der hesiodischen Polis im Epos Werke und Tage," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 4 (1988) 95–111.

ἴσον νέμετε, (1.71). The Spartans believe that, if they bother no one, no one will bother them. They locate control for interstate relationships wholly in their own hands. So long as they behave properly, nothing untoward should happen to them.

The Spartans, as represented by the Corinthians, seek to implement the isolationist view of justice which the *Works and Days* espouses. The just city (*Op.* 225–237) is self–contained and self–defining. If the people do not cheat foreigners or their countrymen (225–6), the polis and its inhabitants flourish. Peace reigns (228–9), and neither *Limos* nor *Ate* visit (230–1). The land and flocks are fruitful, and people "flourish with good things through and through." In such a well ordered society, there is no reason to board a ship and engage in commerce (235–6). The polis is fully self–sufficient and harmonious, providing all that its citizens need. Justice is not just a moral course, but almost an act of sympathetic magic which allows the city to detach itself from the rest of the world and to create its own safe, autonomous sphere.

Second, the Spartans share the obsessively conservative perspective that emerges within the *Works and Days*. The Spartans, like the Hesiodic peasants, seek to reproduce their societies exactly over time. In Hesiod, the extent to which children resemble their parents reflects the extent to which a society follows δίκη. In the just city, women bear ἐοικότα τέκνα γονεῦσιν (235), while the final decay of the fifth generation of men is visible when the father no longer resembles his children (182). One son, who can inherit the family property intact, is the ideal (376–7). Spartan society is vastly different from that of Hesiod and does not focus upon the individual oikos, but it values stability and attempts to reproduce itself unchanged. The Spartans are ἀρχαιότροπα (71.2) in their habits, and, in their desire to preserve the status quo (τὰ ὑπάρχοντά τε σῴζειν), they are explicitly contrasted with the Athenians, who are νεωτεροποιοί (70.2).

Change or innovation is anathema to the Spartans: the verb νεωτερίζω is a favorite term in Thucydides (it does not appear in Herodotus). Thucydides applies it to groups wishing to improve their status with respect to someone else. The verb describes Athenian allies generally (1.97.1) and the Spartan Helots in particular (4.41.4) who try to revolt. The Mytileneans, however, appropriate this term to describe a degradation of their own status: they revolt because they fear that Athens may introduce some change (νεωτερισεῖν, 3.11.1) in rendering Mytilene more subordinate. The most important passage for 1.70.2 is 1.102.3, where the Spartans send back Athenian help after the Helot revolt, fearing in general τῶν Ἀθηναίων τὸ τολμηρὸν καὶ τὴν νεωτεροποιίαν and in particular that, persuaded by the rebellious Helots, the

Athenians would come up with some innovation (νεωτερίσωσι). As used by Thucydides, the verb does not simply denote innovation, but a change in the social structure that is prejudicial to the speaker. For the Spartans in particular, virtually any νεωτεροποιία is dangerous and to be avoided. Again, the Corinthians obliquely emphasize the stiff conservatism of Sparta when they emphasize that the Athenians see action as the ideal ἑορτή (70.8). The Spartans observe their religious festivals scrupulously, even when such punctilio is detrimental to their interests at Pylos (4.5) and after the battle of Mantinea (5.75).[15] The rigidity of religious practice reflects a more general caution and adherence to social norms which characterize the Spartan mentality.

The third point contrasts the Corinthian view of Sparta with Hesiod's peasant world. Hesiod's farmers share none of the sluggishness that the Corinthians bitterly attribute to Sparta. They are fiercely energetic, and in this they resemble the restless Athenians. The positive Eris at *Op.* 17–26 is admirable because it drives men to compete with one another. It spurs the lazy man on to toil. The sight of the rich man makes one "long for toil." The rich man "rushes" to his work (σπεύδει, 22) and is seen "rushing" after wealth (24). The good Eris makes potter resentful of potter, builder of builder, spurring all on to greater labors. A few lines later, Hesiod explains that the gods have hidden our livelihood (42–46). Otherwise, men could easily labor for a single day to provide for themselves during the whole year. Men could quickly put aside thoughts of sailing and the labors of oxen and mules would fade away.

Unlike the the Athenians, the energetic Hesiodic farmers are urged to place their work in a moral framework. In the end, the issue is not simply material success, but an active choice between κακότης (287) and ἀρετή (289). The former is easy to acquire, but the gods have placed "sweat" for those who chose the path to ἀρετή. This path starts out steep and rough, but once one reaches the heights, it then becomes easy (290–2). For Hesiod, δίκη is not just an external program of behavior, but is linked to moral character. When Hesiod urges Perses on to labor and slights the ἀεργός and ἀεργίη (299 ff.), he is careful to frame material prosperity in a larger context: ἀρετή and renown accompany wealth (πλούτῳ δ' ἀρετὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ, 313). Wealth is valuable not just because it fills one's stomach but because the process of creating wealth by labor associates one with qualities such as ἀρετή and κῦδος.

[15]So Edmunds (1975) 93.

The Corinthians represent the Spartans as utterly removed from any Hesiodic ideal of industry. The Spartans, sluggish and timid, remain inactive within their own borders. Both pictures, those constructed by the Corinthians and the moral imperative issued by Hesiod, are more complex than they may at first seem. In praising labor, the *Works and Days* has two objects in mind. First, members of the heroic age are selected for extensive praise at *Op.* 156–173. Where the labors of athletics will provide members of the Greek elite with a medium in which to emulate the labors of the heroes, Hesiod's hard path to ἀρετή is open to any peasant farmer who works his own land. Hesiod constructs a framework wherein the αὐτουργός has a program for excellence suited to his own condition.

The second object is somewhat defensive. Hesiod repeatedly warns not just against injustice, but against those who, moved by desire κτήμασ' ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίοις (34), seek to manipulate the system of justice so that they can appropriate the property of others (27–34, 282–283, 320–326, esp. 322). He does not simply tell Perses to expend energy, but to redirect his efforts away from law-suits and towards productive labor. Although Perses is contesting an inheritance, the picture which Hesiod draws of him resembles that which many nervous peasants form of the entrepreneur accumulating property. Hesiod well understands the extent to which profit can warp the human spirit (e.g. 320–326). From the very beginning Hesiod seeks to channel the intense energy of Eris and desire for advancement into what he considers to be socially constructive directions.

The Corinthians choose a rhetorical strategy which inverts the Hesiodic praise of energy. Hesiod offers a vision of a "heroic" farmer whose labors fashion not only πλοῦτος, but the symbolic qualities of ἀρετή and κῦδος. Hesiod's vision is protreptic and designed to spur his listener on. The Corinthians attribute to the Spartans the passive qualities of Hesiod's peasants, but deny to them the dynamism and energy whereby Hesiod's peasants can refashion themselves into something quasi-heroic. The implications of sluggishness and sloth should have been extremely forceful: Spartiates spent their entire lives engaged in brutal physical toil, preparing themselves for the strains of combat. Later in Book 1, the Corinthians themselves remind the Spartans and their allies: πάτριον γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐκ τῶν πόνων τὰς ἀρετὰς κτᾶσθαι (123.1). The Spartans had for generations cultivated a myth of invincible toughness, and the tone of 70–71 must have grated on their sensibilities.

If the Spartans, like Hesiod's peasants, believe in the almost magical qualities of justice and attempt to maintain their social structure unchanged, the

Corinthians withhold from their Spartans energy and dynamism, and instead attribute these qualities to Athens. The Corinthians in effect dissect the overall justification for limited goals such as appears in Hesiod, and redistribute the qualities between two groups. Both Athens and Sparta share between them qualities which, if combined in the Hesiodic model, would provide strength, but which, when separated create two imbalanced societies, one passive and the other predatory.

3. Risk and Accumulation at Athens

3.1. Athenian Energy. The energy and initiative which the Corinthians have denied to Sparta they attribute in almost superhuman measure to the Athenians. The Corinthians begin by citing a number of specific characteristics by which they contrast Athenian dynamism with Spartan torpor. The Athenians are νεωτεροποιοί (70.2), suggesting at once, as noted above, both the innovator and trouble-maker. They are quick to conceive of an idea and to act upon what they conceive (ἐπινοῆσαι ὀξεῖς καὶ ἐπιτελέσαι ἔργῳ ἃ ἂν γνῶσιν). They are audacious beyond their material power (παρὰ δύναμιν τολμηταί, 70.3), take risks that defy rational plan (παρὰ γνώμην κινδυνευταί), and are optimistic even in fearsome situations (ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς εὐέλπιδες). They are not hesitant (ἄοκνοι, 70.4) and are ready to leave their homes (ἀποδημηταί).

For the remainder of this chapter (70.5–9), the Corinthians leave the Spartans aside altogether and launch into an extended discussion of the Athenian character. The Athenians follow up their victories to the maximum degree and, in defeat, they fall back as little as possible (70.5). If they conceive of an idea which they do not pursue (70.7), they feel that they have been deprived of something that already belongs to them, and whatever they acquire they see only as a small down-payment on what will soon be theirs. Should they fall short in some enterprise, they immediately develop new plans and fill their need. Athenians make no distinction between conceiving an idea and actually carrying it through. For them, ἐπινόησις and ἐπιχείρησις are near synonyms (70.7). Where Hesiod piles instances of ἔργον and ἐργάζεσθαι one on top of the other at *Op.* 298–316, Thucydides effects even more intense concentration in a single sentence. The Athenians toil on all enterprises with tireless exertions and risks (μετὰ πόνων καὶ κινδύνων, 70.8) throughout their entire lives. They have no opportunity to enjoy the good things that they already possess because they are so busy adding to what they have (ἀπολαύουσιν ἐλάχιστα τῶν ὑπαρχόντων διὰ τὸ αἰεὶ κτᾶσθαι). The Athenian idea of a holiday celebration (ἑορτή) is to get on with business (τὰ δέοντα πρᾶξαι). The Athenians consider ἡσυχία ἀπράγμων to be no less a misfortune than toilsome labor (ἀσχολία ἐπίπονος). When the Corinthians

sum up their rhetorical tour de force at 70.9, they assert that the Athenians are "by nature the kind of people" who can neither enjoy ἡσυχία themselves, nor allow others to do so. The verb used in 70.9, πεφυκέναι, is significant. At the opening of 70, the Corinthians warn the Spartans that they have not calculated the degree to which their future adversaries differ from them. At 70.9, the Corinthians summarize their argument. The Athenians do not simply offer a quantitative challenge to Sparta. They differ in their very φύσις (πεφυκέναι).

A modern reader might, in summing up, turn to somewhat different rhetoric. If the Spartans follow a "subsistence ethic," in which "safety first" is the primary goal and according to which they are "risk–averse," the Athenians are precise opposites. They are classic entrepreneurs: they take risks and innovate, see possibilities which had not existed before, and aggressively pursue them. Broadly speaking, the Corinthians are distinguishing between what we might term "capitalist" and "subsistence" perspectives. The Athenians have begun to move beyond the stage of simple accumulation which characterizes the Spartans. In Thucydides' view, it will be argued, accumulated wealth is not a static entity, but confers upon its holder power to control others and to accumulate more wealth. In the Athenian empire, tribute supports the navy, and the navy allows Athens to coerce tribute. Surplus wealth may be stored and later converted into more ships and mercenary oarsmen (1.121.3, 143.1–2). The revenues which stream in from the Athenian empire accumulate each year in a growing pool.

Of course, we cannot impute to Thucydides an excessively elaborate theoretical scheme: the formal categories of modern economics, capitalist or marxist, did not exist at the time. We must, however, be careful not to underestimate him. Even if we were to insist that Thucydides belonged to the class of "prescientific statements," we should not go so far as to argue that his analysis of power was "not made to bear any 'superstructure.'"[16] Thucydides

[16]Finley (1973) 132. In looking for ancient authors who show some consciousness of the "balance of trade" as an abstract concept, Finley can adduce only three sources, which are not only post–classical but post–hellenistic (Plu. *Solon* 22.1, Pliny *Nat.* 6.101, 12.84 and D.Chr. 79.5–6). Finley may well be right to argue that classical Greeks had not worked out for themselves "balance of trade" as an analytical principle. Likewise, Austin and Vidal–Naquet (1977) properly follow Polanyi in emphasizing that Greek economic activity is embedded in a larger social sphere (8–11). Thucydides nevertheless deserves separate study by those searching antiquity for analogues to modern economic thought: he does not appear at all in Finley's index, while Austin and Vidal–Naquet oversimplify when they assert that, subsequent to the Archaeology, "Thucydides gives very little space to economic factors in the history of his own time. For him true history and its analysis exist only at a higher level, that of politics." In fact, he intensely observes and interprets the "rational choice behavior" as studied by neoclassical economics, but frames his analysis in terms of power, domination and desire.

struggled to abstract from the chaotic events of his time generalized principles which he could apply elsewhere. The Archaeology (1.2–19), for example, is an exercise in applying the analysis of imperial power to the ancient past, while the analysis of stasis at Corcyra is offered not just as a particular event but as a case study in the general category of stasis.[17]

Risk and opportunity are a constant leitmotiv in Thucydides: he uses verbal and nominal forms of ἐλπίς, τόλμα, and κίνδυνος more than 350 times, more than four times as often as does Herodotus.[18] Nor is it always the Athenian who seizes the initiative. In an early phase of the conflict at Pylos, Brasidas, the most daring of Spartans, urges his men not to overestimate their own risks (κινδυνεύειν, 5.9.2) and suffer "a lack of daring" (ἀτολμία). The enemy have themselves not properly anticipated what the Spartans can do (οὐκ...ἐλπίσαντας).[19] But if Athenians have no monopoly on confident ἐλπίς or on bold τόλμα in the face of κίνδυνος, they are nevertheless the masters of these qualities. When the Athenians present their own position to the Spartan assembly in Book 1, they point to their daring as the foundation on which they base their claim for admiration and their justification for rule (Thuc. 1.74.3: ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀπό τε τῆς οὐκ οὔσης ἔτι ὁρμώμενοι καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐν βραχείᾳ ἐλπίδι οὔσης κινδυνεύοντες ξυνεσώσαμεν ὑμᾶς τε τὸ μέρος καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτούς). Perikles does not just balance ἐλπίς and κίνδυνος. He analyzes the way in which others make this calculation: the Athenian allies (1.143.2) will not accept the κίνδυνος of exile from their home polis in the ἐλπίς of a few days' pay from the Peloponnesians, but Perikles warily makes his overall ἐλπίς

[17]See Thuc. 3.81.1 and esp. the programmatic statement at 3.82.2: καὶ ἐπέπεσε πολλὰ καὶ χαλεπὰ κατὰ στάσιν ταῖς πόλεσι, γιγνόμενα μὲν καὶ αἰεὶ ἐσόμενα, ἕως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾖ; note also 3.81.5. Other uses of the verbal form φύω in the perfect reflect Thucydides' particular quest for general laws: e.g., 2.64.3, πάντα γὰρ πέφυκε καὶ ἐλασσοῦσθαι. Cf. 3.39.5; 3.45.3; 4.19.4; 4.62.5. On the Archaeology, see Hunter (1982) 17–49; A. Parry, "Thucydides' Historical Perspective," *YCS* 22 (1972) 47–61; J. de Romilly, *Histoire et Raison chez Thucydide* (Paris 1956) 240–298.

[18]E.g. ἐλπίζω, κατελπίζω, ἀντελπίζω, ἐπελπίζω, ἐλπίς, εὔελπις: Hdt. 54 times, Thuc. 136 times; τολμάω, ἀντιτολμάω, ἀποτολμάω, προτολμάω, τόλμα, τολμητής, τολμηρός: Hdt. 16 times, Thuc. 63 times; ἀνακινδυνεύω, συγκινδυνεύω, κινδυνεύω, κίνδυνος, ἀκίνδυνος, ἰσοκίνδυνος, ἐπικίνδυνος, κινδυνευτής: Hdt. 35 times, Thuc. 180 times; total: Hdt. 107 times, Thuc. 380 times. When adjusted for the different sizes of the two works (Hdt. 180,000 words, Thuc. 150,000), these terms are 4.4 times more common in Thucydides than in Herodotus.

[19]For an analysis of Brasidas, see Hunter (1982) 119–175; although she does not view Brasidas as an "Athenian" version of the "Spartan," she does bring out his effectiveness as "a veritable whirlwind of daring, or τόλμα, a man whose vigor, speed, and cunning take the cities, and the Athenians, by storm, holding out the hope of endless success and permanent security from reprisal" (162).

for the war contingent on the Athenians not assuming self–imposed κίνδυνοι (1.144.1). In one of the most complex sections of the Funeral Oration, he bases his praise of the dead on their selfless calculation of ἐλπίς and κίνδυνος (2.42.2–3).[20]

Perhaps the most elaborate analysis of ἐλπίς and κίνδυνος takes place in the Mytilenean debate. Diodotus attributes this reckless daring to humans generally, offering an extended pathology of risk–taking at Thuc. 3.45. No penalty, no matter how brutal, has dissuaded people from accepting dangers (τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐπαιρόμενοι κινδυνεύουσι, 45.1). Diodotus offers this as a universal condition of human nature: poverty breeds audacity, plenty, and greed, which alike drive mortals ἐς τοὺς κινδύνους. Desire (ἔρως) leads the way, and optimistic calculation (ἐλπίς) soon follows to lead men into recklessness. Athenian foreign policy, argues Diodotus, should be predicated on this general paradigm of human behavior. But Diodotus is not, of course, Thucydides. He is one particular Athenian who, in Thucydides, presents an argument that modern readers often admire, but other speakers in Thucydides take a different position (as do the Corinthians in their "safety–first" characterization of Sparta). Sometime later, the Athenians lecture the Melians in general terms that a modern economic planner might endorse (5.103). Optimistic calculation (ἐλπίς) in the face of κίνδυνος is a luxury reserved for those who enjoy a surplus (περιουσία) so that the risk is not unacceptably high. The Melians are horribly exposed, and their entire fate rests upon a single turn of the scale. They should not let themselves act in a "vulgar manner." Human means can still save them (παρὸν ἀνθρωπείως ἔτι σῴζεσθαι), and they should not degrade their hopes by turning to prophecies and oracles.

In the Melian dialogue, the Athenians show that they are well able to exploit the arguments of caution and "safety–first" when it is expedient. The peasant gives safety and stability the highest priority because his margin of error is so small and his control over his own life is so limited. Surplus, περιουσία (another favorite Thucydidean term[21]), describes a surplus of material goods and is the foundation of prosperity. This provides Thucydides with one of his key analytical concepts in the Archaeology.[22] For Perikles,

[20]On this passage, see J. S. Rusten, "Structure, Style and Sense in Interpreting Thucydides: the Soldier's Choice (Thuc. 2.40.1–2)," *HSCP* 90 (1986) 49–76.

[21]The term περιουσία is not common in classical Greek and appears almost twice as often in Thucydides as in all other sources (thirteen times in Thucydides, six times in the Hippocratic corpus as a whole, and once in Aristophanes).

[22]The primitive inhabitants of Hellas scratch out a mere subsistence (νεμόμενοί τε τὰ αὑτῶν ἕκαστοι ὅσον ἀποζῆν, 1.2.2) and lack any περιουσίαν χρημάτων. Gradually, the

περιουσία χρημάτων is the strategic base on which Athenian success in the war rests (1.141.5, 2.13.2). The Athenian advice to the Melians at 5.103.1 articulates the basic idea of the subsistence ethic, but not in a cool academic setting. The Athenians are masters of overwhelming force who urge their listeners to adhere to a traditional norm, which emphasizes a constrained and limited program of desires.

The strongest indications which we have for the existence of this subsistence ethic are thus frequently arguments directed against those who do not follow its logic—Hesiod berating Perses, the Athenians exasperated with the suicidal behavior of the Melians—or against those who follow it too well, as the Corinthians charge the Spartans with doing. But if Hesiod is the starting point for anyone examining this program in Greek, the *Works and Days* reflects a strongly agrarian bias. If we are to study the manner in which the subsistence ethic is applied in a more complex society and to more fully appreciate the arguments which the Corinthians make at Thuc. 1.68–71, we need to turn to Solon.

3.2. Solon: the Subsistence Ethic in the Developing Polis. The Athenians are above all, according to the Corinthians, dynamic. They embrace risk and devote all their energies to augmenting what they already possess. Frenetic greed is, of course, a common theme in Greek literature: it is a topos that possessing too much (κόρος) leads to outrageous behavior (ὕβρις).[23] In the fifth century, Persian imperialism could be portrayed as a morality play in which Xerxes, maddened by imperial greed, brought disaster upon himself (e.g., A. *Pers.* 818–826). Solon's *Elegy to the Muses* (fr. 13 West = fr. 1 G–P) is, however, one of the earliest and best statements of this idea. Solon expresses a conventional outlook which other sources share, and upon which the Corinthian description of Athens is a significant variation. Where other sources stress the disastrous consequences of greed, the Corinthians picture no divine justice moving against the Athenians. Or, to rephrase the situation in conventional terms, the Athenians enjoy κόρος and one could accuse them of

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increase in sea-borne trade allowed people to accumulate surpluses (περιουσίας μᾶλλον ἔχουσαι χρημάτων, 1.7.1). In search of their own profits (ἐφιέμενοι γὰρ τῶν κερδῶν, 1.8.3), the weak subordinated themselves to the wealthy. Wealth translated into power, because surpluses allowed those who possessed them (περιουσίας ἔχοντες) to subject others to their will. Such surpluses are also crucial to any who wish to exert control by brute force: the Greek army at Troy, lacking a περιουσία τροφῆς (1.11.2), had to spend so much time gathering supplies that it could not gain the quick victory that its initial success warranted.

[23]E.g., Theognis 153: τίκτει τοι κόρος ὕβριν, ὅταν κακῶι ὄλβος ἕπηται; Pi. *O.* 13.10; Hdt. 8.77.1.

ὕβρις, but the Corinthians exhibit no confidence that ἄτη will put a stop to Athenian success.

Like the opening of the *Works and Days*, the *Elegy to the Muses* is a programmatic discussion of justice.[24] Solon's views are decidedly similar to those advanced by Hesiod, but his perspective differs markedly. Solon provides us with our first example of an emphatically Athenian literary voice, and his subtle changes in perspective change the form which this rhetorical program will subsequently take. Elegiac poet, lawgiver, traveller, almost universally included in the list of the seven wise men of the archaic period, the Athenian Solon was one of the most prominent figures looming over fifth–century thought. Herodotus built a programmatic episode of his history, the story of Croesus, on a chronologically implausible meeting between the Lydian king and Solon (Hdt. 1.29–33), because, for him, Solon's views and character embodied the praise of restraint and the inevitable catastrophes of greed. Equally important, Solon applied his moral principles to a world that extended beyond the farm and that incorporated the full breadth of influences that constituted the polis.

Like Hesiod, Solon clearly champions a particular vision of prosperity. Wealth is valuable, but only if acquired justly, for injustice leads ultimately to destruction (7–16), just as surely as corrupt behavior in Hesiod's Unjust City leads to its destruction (*Op.* 238–247). Like Hesiod, Solon emphasizes social stability: time legitimates wealth, for sooner or later the gods will exact a penalty for ill–gotten wealth, even if that penalty devolves upon future generations (25–32). But where Hesiod describes a potential danger for Perses, we know from other sources that Solon became prominent in an Athens where the rich all too successfully came to dominate the poor. Our best source, the *Athenaion Politeia*, informs us that ἐδούλευον οἱ πένητες τοῖς πλουσίοις καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰ τέκνα (2.2). The precise details are obscure, but the native peasantry was reduced to some kind of serfdom, in which many of them were forced to pay a share of their crops as μίσθωσις.[25] Solon emerged as the central figure, who reformed the situation in Attica and laid the foundations on which democracy would emerge three generations later.

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[24]W. Jaeger, *Scripta Minora* (Rome 1960) vol. 1, xxiv; quoted by Spira (1981) 191. For a survey of scholarship on Solon 13 West (= fr. 1 G–P = 1 D), see Spira (1981) and, more recently, Christes (1986).

[25]E.g., the ἑκτήμοροι. On this, see the full survey of the problem in the comments *ad loc.* in P. J. Rhodes, *Commentary on the* Athenaion Politeia (Oxford 1981) 89–97; more recently, P. B. Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Classical Athens* (Princeton 1990) 111–116.

The *Elegy to the Muses* is a strongly "ideological" poem, in that it gives authority to a particular point of view. Unlike Hesiod, however, Solon, at least in this poem, does not specifically advocate an agrarian model for society. When Solon enumerates the various livelihoods in which mortals vainly struggle, agriculture is only one among many occupations. Aside from farming (which gets a single elegiac couplet at 47–48), Solon mentions fishing (43–46), the crafts of Athena and Hephaestus (49–50), poetry (51–52), prophecy (53–56), and medicine (57–63). Solon does not assign to agriculture the dominant role which it surely played at the opening of the sixth century. Whatever Solon's intention may have been, the form of this list, in neglecting to give agriculture pride of place, suggests that, at least as far as this poem is concerned, agriculture is not the main occupation in society.[26]

Unlike the *Works and Days*, Solon's elegy does not advocate a particular profession. Its focus is more general. Its target is greed, and Solon is attempting to establish a point of view which will maintain Hesiodic values in the light of more recent experience.[27] Illusion prevents mortals from properly appreciating their circumstances, so that the terminally ill man expects to recover (37–38), the δειλὸς ἀνήρ thinks that he is ἀγαθός (39) and the ugly man thinks himself καλός (40). Above all, the poor man is sure that he will become wealthy (41–42), and thence comes the mad dash of human activity. Where Hesiod's industrious peasant rushes (σπεύδω) to his work (*Op.* 22, 24, 461, 576), Solon uses the term dismissively, opening his catalogue of vain effort with the comment σπεύδει δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος (43). Hesiod urges the peasant farmer to accumulate his agricultural wealth justly, but with the greatest possible energy. Solon acknowledges the value which moderate prosperity has to any reasonable man, but only so that he can categorically ridicule those who seek to accumulate wealth in great quantities.

Solon's elegy is a classic statement advocating limited accumulation. On the one hand, risk provides a negative justification: all human enterprises are inherently uncertain and we never know how an affair will end once it has begun (65–66). The careful man fails (67–68) and the fool sometimes prospers (69–70). At the same time, this argument has a positive side. Towards the end of the poem, Solon declares at some length that there is no natural limit to the accumulation of wealth for wealth's sake (71–73). A certain level of ὄλβος is

[26]Many readers assume that Solon's poem specifically supports "landed" wealth: e.g., B. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore 1988) 159–160, citing Alfonso Mele, *Il Commercio Greco Arcaico: Praxis ed Emporie*, in *Cahiers du Centre Jean Bérard*, vol. 4 (Naples 1979).

[27]Spira (1981) 195; Christes (1986) 15–16.

desirable (1–4), and Solon elsewhere succinctly outlines a "program" of acceptable wealth (frags. 23, 24 West). Solon's fictional meeting with Croesus, which Herodotus composed in Thucydides' lifetime, shows how closely Solon was linked to this idea of "limited wealth." Solon articulates this at once positive and defensive stratagem of the subsistence ethic: with the peasantry threatened by those who ruthlessly accumulate wealth at the expense of others, Solon champions the idea of limited wealth. This idea appears in Hesiod (see, for example, *Op.* 40–41), but Solon gives it sharper focus and greater urgency.

Thucydides' Corinthians fundamentally differ from Solon also in that they see τέχνη as a force that qualitatively changes the conditions of human existence. The Corinthians clearly have a very different view of human history than does Solon. Solon and the Corinthians both emphasize human τέχνη. In Solon, however, τέχνη creates an illusion of power and of advancement which mocks those mortals whom it deceives. The human condition is stable and unchanging. For the Corinthians, change is a desperate reality which the Spartans must confront if they are to maintain their position. They deplore the antiquated ways of the Spartans (ἀρχαιότροπα ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, Thuc. 1.71.2). One must keep abreast of rapid change in international affairs just as one would need to master the latest developments of a craft, τέχνη (71.3). The Corinthians concede the underlying assumption of Hesiod, and of Solon too,[28] that stable customs are the best (τὰ ἀκίνητα νόμιμα ἄριστα), but this judgment is not absolute. The Athenians have become new and strange (τὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων...κεκαίνωται) because their experiences are so diverse (ἀπὸ τῆς πολυπειρίας). Peoples such as the Spartans must learn new skills (ἐπιτείχνησις) if they and their old-fashioned values are to survive.

4. Conclusion: the Value of the Corinthian Analysis

We noted at the beginning of this paper that most readers of Thucydides have expressed their admiration for the rhetorical power of the Corinthian speech and especially for its contrast between the Athenian and Spartan character. As Edmunds points out, the Corinthians are not alone in this analysis. Thucydides himself found this general contrast useful, for he makes similar comparisons in

[28]Solon does not present himself as a revolutionary, but as a reformer who balances the needs of rich and poor (e.g. frags. 5–8, 34 West). As discussed above, most modern peasants, even when driven to rebel, argue that they are seeking their traditional rights and eschew revolution. Solon portrays his reforms not as revolution but as a restoration to Athenians of rights and privileges which had been improperly lost (fr. 36 West). He sets this conservative reform against the possibility of a much more disruptive tyranny (fr. 10, 11, 33 West).

his own voice elsewhere.[29] Nor should we find this surprising: Thucydides pushed beyond the surface of events and sought out the hidden forces at work. A qualitative contrast between the Athenian and Spartan characters had great explanatory power, even though Thucydides himself emphasized the limitations inherent in such generalizations. Thus the Spartan Brasidas was as daring and energetic as any Athenian, while the Athenian Nikias exhibited the problematic caution which the Corinthians treat as a Spartan characteristic. But if Thucydides felt that the contrast between national characteristics was justified and analytically useful, what reality did this contrast between Athens and Sparta have beyond Thucydides?

Certainly, the Athenians liked to think of themselves as "a race apart," and the myth of autochthony is a major theme of Funeral Orations. Traditionally, nothing is ἀπώμοτον if the gods take a hand, but Eupolis gives this expression a local twist. In the *Poleis* (fr. 217 Kock), one character expansively asks τί δ' ἔστ' 'Αθηναίοισι πρᾶγμ' ἀπώμοτον; Aristophanes several times quotes an equally expansive oracle which compares Athens to an eagle soaring in the clouds.[30] His plays in particular document how clearly the Athenians during the Peloponnesian war felt that their world was in the process of change. Terms such as ἀρχαῖος and καινός are highly charged in Aristophanes, and use of these words often locates the speaker in the moral framework of the polis. In the *Clouds*, of course, the advocates of the new education sneer at τὰ ἀρχαῖα (821, 915, 984, 1357, 1469), while the disreputable intellectuals of the *Clouds* promise μηχαναὶ καιναί (479–80), γνώμαι καιναί (896), ῥημάτια καινά (943), καινὰ ἔπη (1397), καινὰ πράγματα (1399), and καινοὶ νόμοι (1423). The *Kreitton Logos*, however, opens his speech by appropriating to himself the program of ἡ ἀρχαία παιδεία (961), and Aristophanes himself, speaking *in propria persona* during the parabasis, uses εἰς τἀρχαῖον (593) almost as a slogan for the return to the superior standards of an earlier generation. In the *Knights*, when the Sausage-Seller miraculously rejuvenates Demos, he associates Demos with αἱ ἀρχαῖαι

[29]Edmunds (1975) 90 cites Thuc. 4.55, where Thucydides describes the impact which the disaster at Pylos had upon Sparta, and Thuc. 8.96, where Thucydides, describing an opportunity which Spartan timidity let slip, remarks: οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ Λακεδαιμόνιοι 'Αθηναίοις πάντων δὴ ξυμφορώτατοι προσπολεμῆσαι ἐγένοντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις πολλοῖς (8.96.5). The following sentence restates, in essence, the Corinthian argument: διάφοροι γὰρ πλεῖστον ὄντες τὸν τρόπον, οἱ μὲν ὀξεῖς, οἱ δὲ βραδεῖς, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπιχειρηταί, οἱ δὲ ἄτολμοι, ἄλλως τε καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ναυτικῇ πλεῖστα ὠφέλουν. ἔδειξαν δὲ οἱ Συρακόσιοι· μάλιστα γὰρ ὁμοιότροποι γενόμενοι ἄριστα καὶ προσεπολέμησαν.

[30]On the topos "nothing unexpected when a god takes part," see G. Crane, "Ajax, the Unexpected and the Deception Speech," *CP* 85 (1990) 90–94; for Athens as an eagle, see Aristophanes fr. 230 Kock (from the *Banqueters*), *Eq.*1011–1013, 1086–1087, *Av.* 978, 987.

'Αθῆναι (1323, 1327) and triumphantly declares that Demos has appeared ἀρχαίῳ σχήματι λαμπρός (1331). Likewise, Demos himself exults that he has been restored εἰς τἀρχαῖα (1387).

But if the plays of Aristophanes politicize issues of old and new, and if Aristophanes seems ultimately to favor τἀρχαῖα over τὰ καινά, his attitude to innovation is closer to that advocated by the Corinthians than the reactionary passiveness which they attribute to the Spartans. Generally speaking, καινός may be good or bad, but it is always formidable. The phrase λέγειν τι καινόν seems usually to define an effective speech (*Nu.* 1032, *V.* 527–528, 1053). Aristophanes implies that innovation and change serve as necessary tools to preserve society. At the same time as he boasts of attacking Cleon, Aristophanes asserts, αἰεὶ καινὰς ἰδέας εἰσφέρων σοφίζομαι (*Nu.* 547). Likewise, he accuses his fellow citizens of having betrayed him, although he was their defender and had sown καινόταται διάνοιαι (*V.* 1044). He enjoins his audience not to reward those who pursued hackneyed ideas but rather: ὦ δαιμόνιοι, τοὺς ζητοῦντας / καινόν τι λέγειν κἀξευρίσκειν / στέργετε μᾶλλον καὶ θεραπεύετε (*V.* 1052–54). The penchant for ἐπίνοια which Thucydides' Corinthians repeatedly attribute to Athenians shows up in Aristophanes. In the *Knights* the Chorus hails the Sausage–Seller who has rejuvenated Demos ὦ θαυμαστὰς ἐξευρίσκων ἐπινοίας (1322), and in the *Wasps* the Chorus urges Philokleon to discover some καινὴ ἐπίνοια (346). Aristophanes cites ἐπίνοια as a valued characteristic of good poetry. Krates cultivated ἀστειόταται ἐπίνοιαι despite the behavior of his audience (*Eq.* 539) and Aristophanes asserts that he has lost no prestige παρὰ τοῖσι σοφοῖς just because the audience did not appreciate his ἐπίνοια (*V.* 1049–50). Aristophanes demands respect from his audience specifically because he, unlike his 'unimaginative' fellow poets, strives to produce something new and different, and because he defends the real values of the polis. He fiercely defends τὸ καινόν, but only if it is subordinate to a wider moral framework, linking his intellectual creativity to his ability to serve the polis.[31]

A famous passage of Euripides illustrates how conscious the Athenian public was of change over time and of the moral framework within which such change was to be measured. In the *Supplices*, the Argive king Adrastus scorns the crafty, mean and small–hearted state into which Sparta has degenerated: Σπάρτη μὲν ὠμὴ καὶ πεποίκιλται τρόπους, / τὰ δ' ἄλλα μικρὰ κἀσθενῆ (187–188). Only your city, he tells Theseus, can support such a great challenge

[31]On this, see generally Henderson, "The *Demos* and Comic Competition," in Winkler and Zeitlin (1990) 271–313.

(πόλις δὲ σὴ / μόνη δύναιτ' ἂν τόνδ' ὑποστῆναι πόνον, 188–189)—a gratifying comment, seeing that it comes from a non–Athenian. The Athenians themselves surely loved it, just as, in even darker times, Aristophanes' *Frogs* shows us that they loved Aeschylus.

One may well wonder what the Athenian allies, in the city to deliver their tribute, thought as they heard these self–congratulatory lines declaimed in the theater. Once the money had been divided up into talents, the sum was brought into the orchestra when thousands of Athenians had filled the Theater of Dionysus. This ritual of submission was therefore an additional spectacle besides the plays to be performed. Isocrates, who provides us with this piece of information, gives us this description to demonstrate τὴν ἄνοιαν τῶν τότε πολιτευομένων (Isoc. *De Pace* 81). "They really had discovered," Isocrates drily observes, "a very precise formula to get themselves hated as much as possible."[32] The *Supplices* was performed sometime in the 420's, at most a few years since the Athenians had shown their magnanimity towards the weak by exercising "restraint" towards Mytilene after its unsuccessful revolt: instead of butchering the entire adult male population, the Athenians had contented themselves with executing a thousand or so of the most guilty.[33] The Athenians naturally stripped Mytilene of its navy and, instead of setting a new tribute, reduced the remaining population to virtual serfdom.

Whatever the Athenians at the time thought of Adrastus' speech in the *Supplices*, the Thucydides who composed our *History* had little stomach for Athenian posturing. Outside of the Funeral Oration, Athenian speakers in Thucydides far more closely resemble Callikles in Plato's *Gorgias* or Thrasymachus in Book 1 of the Republic than they do the Theseus of the *Supplices* or *Herakleidai*, who postured so nobly in the Theater of Dionysus. In Book 1 of Thucydides, the Athenians promptly follow up the Corinthian speech by arguing that they have, in essence, earned their position of power (1.73–78). Athenian rhetoric grows harsher in the Mytilenean debate and climaxes in the cold *Realpolitik* of the Melian Dialogue. Whatever else they may do, Thucydides' Athenians do not, by and large, demean themselves with false

[32]Isocr. *De Pace* 82: οὕτω γὰρ ἀκριβῶς εὕρισκον ἐξ ὧν ἄνθρωποι μάλιστ' ἂν μισηθεῖεν; see also the Schol. on Ar., *Ach.* 504; for the basic reconstruction of this aspect of the City Dionysia, see A. E. Raubitschek, "Two Notes on Isocrates," *TAPA* 72 (1941) 356–62; discussed most recently by Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia," in Winkler and Zeitlin (1990) 101–2.

[33]Thuc. 3.50.1. Some have felt that the number given must be a mistake, but Connor (1984) 86, n. 18 argues that "the number, I believe, is sound—and meant to shock."

pieties—Thucydides confers that honor on Spartans such as Sthenelaidas.[34] If plays such as the *Supplices* are any indication,[35] the Athenians drew self–serving comparisons between themselves and their Spartan adversaries. Thucydides, however, shows little general inclination to repeat half–truths, at least not of this kind.

Why then do Thucydides' Corinthians draw this unnerving picture of relentless and unstoppable Athenian energy? Of course, the Corinthians, faced with disastrous losses of prestige in both the West and the East, were seriously threatened. But for Thucydides, the Corinthian sketch of Athenian character is more than just an artifact of Corinth's immediate perspective in 431. The answer, at least as far as Thucydides is concerned, divides into three parts. The unnerving vision of Athens explains Athenian behavior in the past, anticipates Athenian actions in the future, and, perhaps most important for Thucydides, introduces the conception of Athens not as a static entity, but as one which even in time of peace is constantly developing.

First, Thucydides did not invent the theme of Athenian energy and dynamism. Herodotus, for example, attributed Athens' unusual prowess to the freedom which the city enjoyed after the expulsion of the Peisistratids (5.66.1, 78). Later in Book 1, Thucydides sketches the overreaching energy which Athenians had directed against Corinth in the early 450's. With a major Athenian fleet away in Egypt and the rest of Athens' front–line forces engaged in Aegina, the Corinthians attacked the Athenian position in Megara, expecting that Athens would have to raise the siege of Aegina (1.105.3). Rather than withdrawing from Aegina to meet this new threat, Myronides led out those remaining in the city, the very young and the very old. An initial battle led to a draw, but the Corinthians, taunted at home for such lacklustre performance against old men and boys, returned to the field—only to suffer a catastrophic defeat (105.6–106.1). Seriously overextended, the Athenians ultimately had to pull back from some of their positions and come to an accommodation with the Peloponnesians, but Thucydides pointedly includes this anecdote to illustrate the Athenian morale a generation before the assembly at Sparta.

The foundation myth for a tenacious, and ultimately unstoppable, Athens derived, however, from the Persian Wars, and especially from Athenian

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[34]Contrast Sthenelaidas' rhetoric at 1.86 with Thucydides' dry analysis at 1.88. Thucydides offers a similarly cold explanation for Athenian support of Corcyra at 1.44.2–3, but Thucydides has not just inserted a fair sounding Athenian speech. Compare as well the explanation at 3.68.4 of why the Spartans turned a deaf ear to the Plataians.

[35]See also the bitter words against Sparta in the *Andromache* (also dated to ca. 425) by Andromache (437, 445–462) and Peleus (590–600).

behavior in and before the battle of Salamis.[36] The Athenians specifically cite both Marathon (1.73.4) and Salamis (1.73–74). Although they had lost everything when the Persians invaded Attica, they refused to give up (Thuc. 1.74.3). Although they knew that their sources for optimism, ἐλπίς, were slight, they nevertheless chose to endure the risk and, against the odds, saved the Spartans as well as themselves. It would be hard to overemphasize the pyschological impact which this desperate evacuation and the ultimately triumphant return had on the estimation of Athenians on what they could accomplish.[37]

Second, Athenian perceptions of the past shaped the concrete steps which Athens took to deal with the future. The evacuation of Attica during the Persian wars led directly to Perikles' most fundamental strategic insight. If the Athenians had once before left behind their land and their property, thus cutting themselves loose from their roots in the soil which almost all farmed, they were far better prepared to do so now. Perikles understood that the Athenian empire had given them an entirely new mode by which to subsist. They could now live entirely on what they could extract from their tribute and from their holdings overseas (1.143.3–4). Even if not a single Athenian could work his farm, the Athenian state could survive indefinitely.

The overcrowding which ensued when refugees filled the city led to the plague and this was a true disaster; however, Perikles' basic strategy, whether or not it was correct, was simple and brilliant. Archidamus himself, in the debate at Sparta, sees this possibility and warns his allies against it (1.81). No matter that most Athenians individually were themselves subsistence farmers, producing mainly for their own households and living as far outside of the money economy as possible.[38] Spartan power, Archidamus emphasizes, is

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[36]While the Persian wars exercise a comparable fascination on Aristophanes, he cites Marathon, in which the old-fashioned hoplite forces were triumphant, far more often (eight times in six plays: *Ach.* 696–7, *Eq.* 781, 1334, *V.* 711, *Ra.* 1296 (?), fr. 413 Kock, Μαραθωνομάχαι at *Ach.* 181, *Nu.* 986) than the naval victory at Salamis (just once: *Eq.* 785). The phrase τὸ ἐν Μαραθῶνι τροπαῖον occurs three times (*Eq.* 1334, *V.* 711, fr. 413), and the expression, τῆς πόλεως/γῆς ἄξια καὶ τοῦ 'ν Μαραθῶνι τροπαίου appears in both *Knights* and *Wasps*. When the more internationally minded Pindar chooses the signal Athenian victory, he selects Salamis rather than Marathon (*P.* 1.76), but there he seeks to contrast the naval prowess of Athens with Sparta's strength as a land force. For the special place which Marathon, the purely Athenian triumph in which no credit need be shared, occupied in the Athenian imagination, see Loraux (1986) 155–171.

[37]See, for example, Loraux (1986), esp. 132–171, "the Athenian History of Athens."

[38]See, for example, Dikaiopolis' lament at *Ach.* 33–36; on the limited use of coinage in day to day purchases, see Austin and Vidal-Naquet (1977) 57; on the decentralized nature of Attic society, see Thuc. 2.16 and Osborne (1984).

comparable to that of the Peloponnesians and their neighbors, but Athens is another matter (1.80.3); and later on Perikles, too, argues that the Peloponnesians are at a disadvantage when faced with a different kind of power (πολεμεῖν δὲ μὴ πρὸς ὁμοίαν ἀντιπαρασκευὴν ἀδύνατοι, 1.141.6). The Athenians as a people were a qualitatively new entity. Independence from the agricultural produce of their own land was almost as novel as if they had suddenly acquired the ability to fly and separate themselves from the surface of the earth. The Athenian state was indeed something new and, if it did not terrify its neighbors in the Peloponnese, it should have.

Third, Athens was not a static entity exactly reproducing itself, but a system which, left to its own devices, constantly developed. Thucydides saw in history two complementary forces at work. On the one hand, human nature remains constant, and similar circumstances, such as the plague at Athens or the stasis at Corcyra, will generate similar patterns of behavior ἕως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾖ (3.82.2). At the same time, the Archaeology reveals a general tendency towards larger and more complex (though not necessarily "better") social formations. In this, Thucydides may be said to follow ideas of his time. Although the Solonic "subsistence ethic" appears in fifth–century literature,[39] Thucydides was not the first person to express a different perspective. Protagoras seems to have placed man firmly at the center of his scheme of things, and the "Greek Concept of Progress" may perhaps be traced to him.[40] The Corinthians were not the first in Greek literature to reformulate

[39]The attitude might be summarized with a concluding line of Simonides, fr. 8 West: ψυχῇ τῶν ἀγαθῶν τλῆθι χαριζόμενος: since greedy accumulation is foolish and serves no purpose, mortals should adopt a more relaxed posture and take pleasure in the things which they actually consume. Sensible people will acquire enough to satisfy their daily wants and refrain from acquisitive behavior, lest one die without having had full enjoyment of one's possessions: e.g., IG 12(9).287 (Eretria, ca. 500–480) ἐνθάδε Φίλων κεῖται, τὸν δὴ κατὰ γαῖ' ἐκάλυσφεν, ναυτίλον, ηὸ φσύχῃι παῦρα δέδωκ' ἀγαθά. Darius' advice to the Persian elders at A. *Pers.* 840–842 (ὑμεῖς δέ, πρέσβεις, χαίρετ', ἐν κακοῖς ὅμως / ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονὴν καθ' ἡμέραν, / ὡς τοῖς θανοῦσι πλοῦτος οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ) has troubled more than one commentator (see Broadhead, *ad loc.*), but it is a classic application of the subsistence ethic. The command to take pleasure καθ' ἡμέραν is the positive aspect of the subsistence ethic's program: the effective message is "don't expend energy increasing your possessions," an eminently suitable message, at least from the Athenian point of view, to the Persian king. E. *Cyc.* 316–341 parodies this general idea, with the Cyclops presenting a grotesque vision of the shepherd's self–sufficient subsistence.

[40]See the story attributed by Plato to Protagoras at *Prt.* 320c–323a; J. S. Morrison, "The Place of Protagoras in Athenian Public Life," *CQ* 35 (1941) 1–16; Mark Griffith, *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1983) on *Pr.* 450–506; on fifth century views of the development of man, see generally A. T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, APA Monograph 25 (1967); E. R. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays* (Oxford 1973) 1–25, esp. 5–18.

the rhetorical elements that we see in Solon, fr. 13 West. In the two long speeches which dominate the center of the *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus outlines a list of skills comparable to those mentioned at Solon 13.43–62. Prometheus, however, triumphantly parades the σοφίσματα (459) and τέχναι τε καὶ πόροι (477, 506) which mortals learned from him. Solon scorns the enthusiasm of his fellows and warns that the justice of Zeus is inescapable (17–32, 75–76). Prometheus celebrates the means by which mortals kept themselves alive in spite of Zeus (235 ff.).[41]

Thucydides is as adamant as any sophist in his revisionism, judging the heroic past as overblown and materially insignificant. But Thucydides is far less of an idealist than Protagoras seems to have been. Not the invention of justice, but the accumulation of wealth, περιουσία χρημάτων, has allowed mortals to organize themselves into prosperous societies. And in the present conflict, both Archidamus and Perikles argue that the Peloponnesians do not have the financial resources to wage a long–term war (1.80.4, 82.1, 142.1). Emergency taxes are no substitute for regular surpluses (1.141.4). Each year, Thucydides tells us that Athens took in far more money from its various sources than it spent, and thus each year its financial reserves grew.[42] To Thucydides, financial incentives are not absolutely powerful (e.g. 1.143.2), but they are the basic means by which leaders subordinate others to their wills (e.g. 1.5.1, 1.8.3, 1.9.2). In establishing their Empire, the Athenians have built what we might now call a machine that runs on tribute. It has reached a critical mass where it absorbs enough revenue so that it can crush any single member state which challenges it (1.99.3). Later, the Mytileneans attribute their revolt to fear of this growing and expansionist power (3.10.4–6). Every Greek state, whether in the empire or not, had to assume that Athens was growing steadily richer and more powerful. Sparta, with its league of static, autonomous allies, was already losing its most precious resource, its full citizens,[43] and had very good reason to fear for the future.

For Thucydides, as for many who study subsistence economies today, the material circumstances of Athenian power are intertwined with the image which Athenians had fashioned of themselves and which they projected outwards to the world. Athens had become gradually more prosperous and

[41]M. Griffith, *The Authenticity of the Prometheus Bound*, (Cambridge 1977) 9–13, 252–254 argues that the play could have been produced as late as 425, but it was in fact probably performed well before the Corinthians delivered their speech.

[42]Thucydides presents his analysis of Athenian resources at the start of the war at 2.13. On some of the problems associated with interpreting this passage, see, for example, the chapter entitled "The Balance–Sheet of Empire," in Meiggs (1972) 255–272.

[43]See Figueira (1986).

successful since the time of Solon, and the great, unexpected victories at Marathon and in the invasion of Xerxes had brought Athenians to appreciate their strength. The empire, coupled with their wealth in silver and their position as a center of trade, freed Athens from the risks which afflicted other Greek states.[44] They, more than anyone else, could (5.103.1) because of their commanding position (ἀπὸ περιουσίας) safely look upon ἐλπὶς as a κινδύνῳ παραμύθιον οὖσα. Athens was an historical phenomenon which had, at least temporarily, shattered the conditions which bound others to follow the traditional subsistence ethic of the pre–industrial agrarian society. Athens had already become new and strange in comparison with Sparta (1.71.3), and this process would only increase with each passing year. We may argue that the Corinthians exaggerate this picture, but the exaggeration is one of degree only. The Athenians had become a qualitatively new force in the Greek world.

[44][X.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.12, 2.7; Hermippus fr. 63 Kock; Meiggs (1972) 264–65.

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