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Thucydides

The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians

Edited by

Jeremy Mynott

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HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

JEREMY MYNOTT

Emeritus Fellow, Wolfson College, Cambridge

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Preface

Thucydides is a foundational author in the history of political thought. He stands at the very start of reflective thinking about politics in the western tradition and that in itself gives his voice a great freshness, force and originality. But it also presents us with some immediate problems of understanding, since the sort of distinctions we now make between political science, political theory, political history and the study of international relations did not exist in his day, though he has on occasion been claimed as the originator of each of these modern 'subjects'.

One key aim of this series is to present each author and text in their proper cultural and historical context and to avoid importing into our understanding of them anachronistic concepts derived from later developments and theories. I have tried to take this objective seriously in various ways. First, and perhaps controversially, I have not called the text by its traditional title, 'The Peloponnesian War', which is not a title we have any evidence Thucydides himself used and which was seen to be one-sided even in his own time.[1] Secondly, in structuring the work I have given precedence to the internal divisions by years and campaigning seasons that Thucydides chose to employ rather than the conventional division into 'books', which was again a later addition (though I have retained the latter as background headings for ease of cross-reference within the text and to the secondary literature).[2] These two tactics are intended to help prevent us projecting false assumptions on to the work even before we start reading it.

[1] See introduction, p. xxvii.
[2] See further in the preamble to the synopsis of contents, p. 614.

I have also tried to be wary of at least one form of 'over-translating', that is the uncritical use of terms drawn from later political discourse that may be inappropriate for Greece in the fifth century BC. Words and phrases like 'political party', 'revolution', 'counter-revolution' and 'civil war' come to mind all too readily in the wish to make the text familiar to us and lend a superficial relevance to the passages in question. These terms have their uses, but it is very easy to import with them associations that are misleading. Even such apparently universal concepts as 'fairness', 'human rights', 'morality' and 'conscience' have a history of their own and rarely if ever have exact equivalents in the language of this period. In fact one more often finds a deeper sense of relevance precisely in reflecting on such differences than in drawing easy parallels, just as learning a foreign language can make one much more self-conscious about one's own.

In addition, there is a strong temptation to slip into paraphrase in decoding some of Thucydides' more complex sentences and ideas in order to provide a smoothness and immediate accessibility that is all too often lacking in the original. In the interests of authenticity I have tried where possible to give readers a sense of such difficulties. In the same spirit I have included an extended glossary to explain some of the key Greek terms (see pp. 628–38) and have often commented in footnotes to the text on difficult or contestable points of translation to try and draw the reader in to the problems and be continuously aware that this is indeed a translation, and therefore an interpretation of a kind. I offer a longer discussion of such issues in the introduction (especially in the section subtitled 'Translation and interpretation', pp. xxxiv–xxxviii).

I have otherwise included all the standard reference features associated with this series in terms of biographical sketches, chronologies, synopses and a section on bibliography and further reading. I have also added two appendixes, one listing the small deviations from the standard Greek text that I have adopted on the recommendations of various authorities, and the other presenting a series of translated extracts from other ancient authors to illustrate reactions to Thucydides in the ancient world itself.

I gratefully acknowledge the crucial advice and support of various people in completing this work. First, the series editors themselves, Quentin Skinner and Raymond Geuss, who were a great inspiration to me in my earlier professional career and whose invaluable attentions I have now experienced first-hand from the other side of the desk, so to speak. Richard Fisher, the person responsible for managing this series at the Press so successfully for most of its life, has been unfailing in his intelligent

and good-natured support, as have my editor, Elizabeth Friend-Smith, and the other Press staff who have worked on this title.

I am grateful to the Jowett Copyright Trustees for a grant towards the cost of producing the maps, which seemed a necessary feature for this particular edition in the series. The maps have all been drawn especially for this volume by David Cox, using the most recent satellite images where relevant. Maps 1–4 are based on the maps he produced for the *Cambridge Ancient History*, volume V (second edition, 1992) and other maps are either drawn afresh or based on the sources acknowledged in the footnotes. I am grateful to him for his patience and ingenuity in finding practical solutions to the many problems involved.

At an early stage in the project I circulated sample versions to help me establish a voice (or as it turned out a range of voices) in which to tackle this demanding work and I was much helped then by the comments received from Pat and John Easterling, Tom Griffiths, Richard Winton, Quentin Skinner and Raymond Geuss. At later stages I have been further assisted in specific ways by Pat Easterling, Simon Hornblower, Paul Cartledge, William Shepherd, Terence Ball, Kinch Hoekstra, Anthony Bowen and Malcolm Schofield, all of whom have been very generous with their time and advice.

It has also been a pleasure to exchange experiences with another labourer in the same vineyard, Martin Hammond. It so turned out, as our author might have said, that there were by chance two translators of Thucydides working concurrently, one for Oxford University Press and one for Cambridge University Press, and living about five miles apart in rural Suffolk, quite unknown to each other for a long time. Martin won this particular University Book Race by a country mile since I was only on book VI when his own excellent translation was published, but it was very cheering and instructive for me to be able to discuss our common problems with him when we finally met.

By far my largest debt is to Geoffrey Hawthorn, who for many years taught a celebrated course on Thucydides in Cambridge, attended by just the kind of students I hope my edition might reach, and who by another happy chance has been writing his own, very original, work on Thucydides as a political thinker[1] while I have been doing this translation. He has read every word of my drafts (some of them several times!) and has made the most subtle and perceptive comments on the whole thing, both in detail

[1] *Thucydides on Politics: back to the present* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

and in general. He has also given me much needed encouragement and stimulation in our innumerable conversations about Thucydides during the long span of this work and has greatly enriched my sense of why Thucydides remains an important author to read today.

Finally, I must thank Pauline Hire, my former colleague at Cambridge University Press, who before this book was ever conceived met with me over several summer and winter seasons in our two-person Greek reading group to go through the whole text of Thucydides, translating to each other in turn in various moods of perplexity, rumination and excitement. I would never have had the enthusiasm for this project without that experience.

30 November 2012

Introduction

Approaches

Thucydides is the author of one of the earliest and most influential works in the history of political thought. His subject was the conflict we now call the 'Peloponnesian War', the great war between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies, which lasted from 431 to 404 BC (with a break in the middle) and ended with the defeat of Athens and the dissolution of the Athenian empire. Thucydides saw this as a momentous and historic conflict, on an unprecedented scale, and he states his ambition of producing a full and objective account that will be 'a possession for all time'. His book does indeed contain a very detailed record of the events of the war, which includes such famous set-pieces as Pericles' Funeral Speech, the plague in Athens, the civil disorder in Corcyra, the debates on imperialism over Mytilene and Melos, and the disastrous failure of the Athenian expedition to Sicily. But through these narratives he also presents a sustained and sophisticated study of political power itself – its exercise and effects, its agents and victims, and the arguments through which it is justified and deployed.

This was a new kind of history – rationalistic in its purpose, self-conscious and explicit in its methodology – and Thucydides himself was very concerned to distinguish it from the work of his predecessors. But it would be anachronistic to classify his 'history' too narrowly. It was conceived in a fifth-century BC milieu of still emergent literary forms in drama, rhetoric, logic, physics and philosophy as well as in history (all these names of 'subjects' are derived from Greek words), and at a time when literacy was rare. Thucydides' work draws on most of these

other genres (as well as on the earlier model of Homer's oral epic) and we do well to approach it free from the particular assumptions we bring to historical texts in our own culture.

His book enjoyed an immediate celebrity in the ancient world: Xenophon and other historians sought to continue and complete it, Plato was moved to respond to it, Demosthenes aspired to emulate its rhetoric, while later literary critics such as Cicero, Quintilian and Dionysius treated it as a paradigm of style to be variously admired or avoided. Today, it remains a classic in Greek literature and historical writing; it is also, and increasingly, read as a text in politics, international relations and political theory, whose students will find in Thucydides striking contemporary resonances and 'relevance' (but may need warnings about direct applications or easy analogies).

This edition therefore finds a natural place in the series Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, which takes a broad view of what constitutes a text in political theory. It is part of the editorial purpose of the series to demonstrate that it may be anachronistic to impose our own categories on texts produced in different times and cultures, and that we need to be sensitive to the different kinds of interest that may be taken in them. In modern terms, Thucydides' work is usually hailed as the first real 'history' in the western tradition (after due acknowledgement to Herodotus as a predecessor), though interestingly Thucydides himself didn't actually refer to it as a *historia* (as Herodotus did his work). But it was evident from the start that it was intended to be read as a work *in* political theory, if not *of* political theory. Hobbes makes the point very nicely in the Preface to his own translation of Thucydides (the first translation of Thucydides into English directly from the Greek and still one of the best):

> For the principal and proper work of history being to instruct and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future: there is not extant any other (merely human) that doth more naturally and fully perform it, than this of my author. It is true, that there be many excellent and profitable histories written since: and in some of them there be inserted very wise discourses, both of manners and policy. But being discourses inserted, and not of the contexture of the narration, they indeed commend the knowledge of the writer, but not the history itself: the nature whereof is merely narrative. In others, there be subtle conjectures at the secret aims and inward cogitations

> of such as fall under their pen; which is also none of the least virtues in a history, where conjecture is thoroughly grounded, not forced to serve the purpose of the writer in adorning his style, or manifesting his subtlety in conjecturing. But these conjectures cannot often be certain, unless withal so evident, that the narration itself may be sufficient to suggest the same also to the reader. But Thucydides is one, who, though he never digress to read a lecture, moral or political, upon his own text, nor enter into men's hearts further than the acts themselves evidently guide him: is yet accounted the most politic historiographer that ever writ. The reason whereof I take to be this. He filleth his narrations with that choice of matter, and ordereth them with that judgment, and with such perspicuity and efficacy expresseth himself, that, as Plutarch saith, he maketh his auditor a spectator.

Hobbes' comment suggests a further point. Thucydides achieves his effects and purposes through a very detailed, 'thick' description of the war he has taken as his subject. He does have occasional authorial asides and, more especially, he does have the key participants explain in their speeches their view of the overall situation and their motivation for their own actions (indeed their speeches are very significant 'actions' in themselves); but for the most part he lets the narrative speak for itself. That is, he tends to address the general through the particular. And that is a characteristic not only of history but also of epic and drama, which were the most familiar literary forms of his day, and of the novel, which is one of the most familiar forms of ours. Some commentators have even suggested that Thucydides' 'history' should be read as a kind of tragic drama, the tragedy of power.[1] That would be to overemphasise just this one aspect and so pigeon-hole the work in another limiting way. But it does make a point. Perhaps we should think of these literary forms as a kind of continuum, which might have at one end of it philosophy, dealing with the most general considerations and expressed in a largely abstract way, and at the other end literature and history, with their emphasis on particular lived experience. Works of political theory, as we now usually understand it, would on this model cluster close to philosophy at one end of the continuum; but works at the other end, whether fiction or non-fiction, may still be important *in* or *for* political theory through the issues they embody and the reflections they prompt. Would not Sophocles' *Antigone*, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Gibbons' *Decline and Fall* all

[1] For example, F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (Edward Arnold, 1907).

qualify, in their different ways, under this larger rubric? And does this not enrich as well as enlarge our conception of the subject? My suggestion at any rate is that we take seriously the form in which Thucydides chose to write and that we find his political thought in the densely textured detail of his work as well as in the more explicit generalising comments embedded within it.

If we read his work this way we can see that Thucydides does indeed contribute in important and distinctive ways to many of the central issues of political theory as we now conceive it. Among the themes explored in his history are:

- The nature of *political judgements* – the circumstances in which they are conceived, the kinds of calculations that underlie them, and the assessments we should make of them from different standpoints in the later course of events. For example, Thucydides gives us a fascinating picture in his first two books of the crucial judgements made by the key participants on each side as they contemplate the possibility of war and decide whether to commit to it. Pericles is a central character here, as revealed through his own speeches and decisions and the reactions to these of others, on both sides; it has indeed been suggested that the whole of the rest of the work is effectively a vindication of Pericles' initial 'foresight' (*pronoia*).[1] And in later books the expressed political judgements of other major figures like Cleon, Brasidas, Nicias, Hermocrates and Alcibiades are also partly constitutive of the broader action of the war as Thucydides portrays it and equally in need of complex interpretation.
- Closely connected are the different kinds of *persuasion and influence* available to such agents in advocating their chosen policies. These include the role of rhetoric and argument, which may take on a different kind of importance in a predominantly oral culture; the forms of public pressure and support that can be exerted through established institutions in the different kinds of polity; and the relative importance of individuals, social classes, ruling groups and international relationships in reaching decisions.
- We are thereby led to reflect on the characteristic decision-making *processes* in each case and on the comparative strengths and weaknesses

[1] See J. H. Finley, *Thucydides*, pp. 203 and 308, an example discussed in the much subtler analysis by G. P. Hawthorn in 'Pericles' Unreason' in R. Bourke and R. Geuss (eds.), *Political Judgement* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 203–28.

of the different political *constitutions*, especially in Athens and Sparta. The principal characters offer some explicit thoughts on this: Cleon, for example, roundly declares that a democracy is incapable of running an empire (III 37); and the Corinthians criticise the Spartans for being so constitutionally rigid and inward-looking as to be incapable of external initiatives (I 68–71); while Thucydides himself compares and contrasts the national characteristics of Syracuse, Sparta and Athens (VIII 96.5).

- There are dramatic illustrations too of what happens when such established political procedures and conventions break down, as in the kinds of *internal conflict* within states that Thucydides describes as *stasis*. We are shown how one kind of breakdown can lead to or be mirrored in another, most famously in the case of Corcyra at III 82–84, as the political disintegration is matched by a social, psychological and even linguistic disintegration. There is also a brilliant vignette of 'the rule of terror' in Athens at VIII 66, which shows how insecurity can breed a deadly combination of distrust and confusion.
- The speeches and debates provide many examples of the explicit *justifications* the different participants offer for their political choices, including what we would think of as 'moral' justifications, which compare the competing claims of self-interest and such other-regarding virtues as justice, respect and compassion; or, more interestingly perhaps, which represent these as conflicts between different forms of self-interest. The dramatic debates over Mytilene (III 37–48) and Melos (V 85–113) are an especially good source for these kinds of arguments, but such conflicts are in fact pervasive throughout the text and serve to connect it with the larger philosophical discussions going on in Greek society at that time. They raise important questions too about how far the moral and political concepts of this culture can be mapped on to those of our own.
- More generally, we are given very rich material for reflection – though in the form, I am suggesting, of specific historical illustration not formal argument or general theory – on the confused but dynamic interplay of *reasons, causes and motives* in the explanation of behaviour, both of individuals and of states; and we are continually reminded of the extent to which the actual outcomes are also the product of what Thucydides portrays as the inexorable forces of 'chance and necessity'.

And on all these issues we have the further challenge of interpreting not only what the agents in the action do and say but also how Thucydides

himself may be assessing what they so reveal. It is dangerously easy to move between these two different levels of interpretation without realising it. Even Hobbes, whose warning remarks on interpretation I quoted admiringly above, cannot resist going on to say:

> For his opinion touching the government of the state, it is manifest that he least of all liked democracy. And on divers occasions he noteth the emulation and contention of the demagogues for reputation and glory of wit; with their crossing of each other's counsels, to the damage of the public; inconsistency of resolutions, caused by the diversity of ends and power of rhetoric in the orators; and the desperate actions undertaken upon the flattering advice of such as desired to attain, or to hold what they had attained, of authority and sway among the common people. Nor doth it appear that he magnifieth anywhere the authority of *the few*: among whom, he saith, everyone desired to be the chief; and they that are undervalued, bear it with less patience than in a democracy; whereupon sedition followeth, and dissolution of government. He praiseth the government of Athens, when it was mixed of *the few* and *the many*; but more he commendeth it, both when Peisistratus reigned (saving that it was a usurped power), and when in the beginning of this war it was democratical in name, but in effect monarchical under Pericles.[1]

In fact it is hard enough to say just what moral and political stance Pericles or Cleon or Alcibiades took, either as historical figures or as agents in Thucydides' history; but the question whether or to what extent Thucydides himself was a moralist is both a different and deeper one.

Context

Most of Thucydides' work is devoted to a close description of the Peloponnesian War, but he begins with an account of its prehistory and immediate causes. Book I is devoted to these preliminaries, though it does not follow one continuous chronological sequence. He first has a section on the early history of Greece (I 2–9), to explain how it evolved from a collection of separate and often quarrelling city-states to a point where the

[1] The two Hobbes quotations come from his prefatory notes, 'To the Readers' and 'Of the Life and History of Thucydides'.

Greeks were able to unite sufficiently[1] to resist two major invasions from Persia (in 490 and 480/79). Sparta and Athens had by then emerged as the principal powers in Greece: the first a formidable militaristic society based in the Peloponnese in southern Greece, conservative in its instincts, austere in its culture, and traditionally excelling in a form of land warfare based on heavy infantry; the second a naval power based in Attica, with a network of mercantile and colonial relationships throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean, more outward-looking and enterprising, and more democratic in its institutions.[2] Both were crucial to the Greek successes against Persia, but their interests then diverged and eventually they came into conflict with each other. Thucydides emphasises the importance of this conflict – in its length, its scale and its sufferings – as compared to all earlier wars (I 23) and goes on to describe the specific grievances and disputes that precipitated it (I 23–88). He then returns to the earlier history to explain what he regards as the deeper causes of the war in the period of about fifty years after the end of the Persian Wars (I 89–118). He identifies two key and related factors: first the growth of Athenian power as their 'Delian League', originally founded in 478 to maintain and finance the protection of Greece against Persia, steadily developed into an empire which instead served Athens' own interests more directly; and secondly the Spartan response to this, which was first one of apprehension, converted by stages into alarm and then aggression.

That at any rate is the broad outline of Thucydides' account. Later historians have minutely examined this version of events, as they have his whole history, and have found much to challenge. The fact remains, however, that Thucydides is himself the main source for most of what we know about the period he covers, in particular the war itself, so much criticism necessarily takes the form of discussions of the internal consistency of his work and its claims.[3] And there is considerable scope for

[1] But no more than sufficiently: in fact only about thirty states (out of some 1,000) joined the Greek League against Persia, but these did include the key states of Athens, Sparta, Corinth and Aegina.

[2] Thucydides puts some vivid (if self-interested) comparisons of the political character of Athens and Sparta into the mouths both of a Corinthian delegation trying to urge the Spartans into the war (I 69–71) and of Pericles giving his encomium on Athens in the 'Funeral Speech' (II 39). See also VIII 96.5.

[3] Archaeology and epigraphy provide a check at some points (for example through surviving public inscriptions), but there are no other extended, contemporary literary sources (see VIII 66.1n). On the inscriptional evidence, see Gomme I, pp. 30–5 and Hornblower I, p. 95 and II, pp. 93–107.

this – not surprisingly, since his history is so long, complex and detailed and was itself composed over a period of some thirty years starting, as he tells us, at the very outbreak of war in 431. But without Thucydides we should know very little about this period at all and it may be worth reflecting, in counterfactual spirit, what view we would then have of fifth-century Greece as a whole or of Athens and Sparta.[1]

Indeed, we should know little about Thucydides himself, either. The few hard biographical facts we have derive from brief mentions in his own book: at II 48 he tells us he can accurately describe the symptoms of the plague that struck Athens (in 430) because he contracted it himself; at IV 104–7 he refers to himself (in the third person) as the general deputed to try to save Amphipolis from Brasidas' advance in 424/3 (he fails but does secure nearby Eion) – and we learn that his father's name is Olorus and that he has mining interests and political connections in Thrace; and then at V 26 in his 'second preface' he reports in a matter-of-fact way that he was exiled from Athens for twenty years after Amphipolis and so had the opportunity to observe events 'from both sides' and the leisure to reflect on them. And that is all. Everything else is inference and conjecture. Reasonable inferences are that he was born to an aristocratic Athenian family in about 460 (which allows him to be over thirty when he was made a general in 424/23), travelled widely during his exile (especially to the Peloponnese) and died back at Athens after returning there in 404 at the end of the war. The conjectures come mainly from the work of much later biographers such as Marcellinus[2] who needed a story to tell and are very unreliable witnesses, though some of the anecdotes they retail are certainly intriguing (for example, that Thucydides was murdered at the end of the war and that his daughter salvaged the book and put it together).

Thucydides therefore has only a very minor and rather inglorious role as an actual *agent* in his own work, a fact that might argue either way about his impartiality and objectivity. He can scarcely have exaggerated his role, but might he have misrepresented it? Speaking as an *author*, on the other hand, he does make some large claims for his originality and importance. He is very aware of his predecessors and he comments at I

[1] Thucydides himself has a characteristic speculation about how the later reputation of cities depends on the physical evidence about them available to us (I 10).

[2] A shadowy figure, possibly seventh-century AD. This 'Life' seems in fact to be a composite work, binding together various other unreliable fragments of biography. For some excerpts see appendix 2, pp. 601–6.

97 that he is writing about the earlier period between the Persian Wars and his own principal subject, the Peloponnesian War, partly to fill the gap they have left. He is thinking here of Hellanicus (whom he mentions by name[1]) and more particularly Herodotus (whom he doesn't, but who is the more important figure by far for us[2]).

Herodotus (*c.*485–425) was the author of *The Histories*, an expansive, very readable but not wholly reliable account of the peoples and places of the known ancient world, centred on and celebrating the victories of the Greeks in the wars against Persia. Herodotus called his book a *historia* ('enquiry'), and it begins as follows (rendered rather literally):

> This is a presentation of the enquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that human events of the past do not become erased by time and that the great and wondrous achievements displayed by the Greeks and the barbarians, and especially their reasons for fighting each other, do not go unrecognised.

This is the first surviving work of 'history' we have in the west and it deserves that name. Herodotus was eager to preserve a record of what was by then already a fading memory of the Greek heroics against Persia, and to do so he travelled widely, interviewed many informants and compiled an elaborate account of his findings and speculations. He liked a good story, however, and was not always concerned to sift fact from fancy, or tradition from truth; and of course he dealt with many events for which there were no surviving witnesses. Thucydides by contrast was for the most part writing contemporary history and placed great stress on his own more rigorous and objective methods of research, which he sets out explicitly at I 20–22 and which are the basis of his claim to be writing a new kind of history, to be distinguished from the work of poets and chroniclers and also, by implication, from that of Herodotus.[3]

> From the evidence I have presented, however, one would not go wrong in supposing that events were very much as I have set them

[1] Hellanicus was a fifth-century compiler of prose 'chronicles' and genealogies, of which only fragments now remain and our knowledge of all these predecessors of Thucydides except Herodotus is very limited.

[2] Herodotus is in fact enjoying a great vogue as a historian now, admired for his skills as a raconteur, his engaging curiosity about human social life (including sex, cultural practices and religion) and his willingness to identify his sources, even where he does not agree with them.

[3] At I 20.3 he pointedly mentions two 'mistakes' in previous histories, both of which are committed by Herodotus.

> out; and no one should prefer rather to believe the songs of the poets, who exaggerate things for artistic purposes, or the writings of the chroniclers, which are composed more to make good listening than to represent the truth, being impossible to check and having most of them won a place over time in the imaginary realm of fable. My findings, however, you can regard as derived from the clearest evidence available for material of this antiquity . . .
>
> As to the events of the war themselves, however, I resolved not to rely in my writing on what I learned from chance sources or even on my own impressions, but both in the cases where I was present myself and in those where I depended on others I investigated every detail with the utmost concern for accuracy. This was a laborious process of research, because eyewitnesses at the various events reported the same things differently, depending on which side they favoured and on their powers of memory. Perhaps the absence of the element of fable in my work may make it seem less easy on the ear; but it will have served its purpose well enough if it is judged useful by those who want to have a clear view of what happened in the past and what – the human condition being what it is – can be expected to happen again some time in the future in similar or much the same ways. It is composed to be a possession for all time and not just a performance-piece for the moment.

There has been a huge amount of scholarly discussion about how far Thucydides himself actually observes these more demanding standards, but as a statement of intent this certainly signals a new kind of project.

Herodotus' *History* was probably 'published' (in the sense of being distributed in written form) between 430 and 425, but it is possible that Thucydides heard parts of it before then in the many public readings Herodotus is supposed to have given.[1] The only other prose models available to Thucydides at this time were a few works of philosophers, 'sophists'[2] and orators and some medical and cosmological treatises; but these were part of an intellectual milieu which will undoubtedly have influenced him and will have helped to create a responsive audience for

[1] For some anecdotes, see appendix on ancient sources (extracts **28** and **32**).

[2] Itinerant intellectuals and teachers of a wide range of subjects, especially rhetoric and the art of speaking; the root of the word means no more than 'skilled', 'clever' or 'wise' and it may only later have acquired pejorative connotations after Aristophanes made fun of them (notably in *The Clouds*) and Plato attacked them (in various dialogues like the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*). The word in fact only occurs once in Thucydides (at III 38.7, see Hornblower II, p. 427).

work of a rationalising, humanistic bent as well as for works of argument and debate, though the latter also had their sources in the dramatised exchanges in epic, tragedy and comedy.[1] It was characteristic of this emerging 'enlightenment' to express the issues in terms of contrasts between such concepts as the human and the divine, convention and nature, appearance and reality, belief and knowledge, speech and action, or justice and a state of nature. There were slogans in the air such as 'man is the measure of all things' (Protagoras) and 'justice is simply the advantage of the stronger' (Thrasymachus), and these could be developed into new and disturbing lines of thought, as may be illustrated from just one longer quotation from an actual protagonist in Thucydides' history, Antiphon:[2]

> Justice, therefore, consists in not violating the customary laws of the city in which one is a citizen. So a person takes most advantage for himself from 'justice' if he respects the importance of the laws when witnesses are present, but follows nature in their absence. For the requirements of the laws are discretionary but the requirements of nature are necessary; and the requirements of the laws are by agreement and not natural, whereas the requirements of nature are natural and not by agreement. Thus, someone who violates the laws avoids shame and punishment if those who have shared in the agreement do not notice him, but not if they do. By contrast, if someone were to violate an innate law of nature (which is impossible) the harm he would suffer is no less if he is seen by no one, and no greater if all see him; for he is harmed not in reputation but in truth.

There are clear resonances of such ideas in some of the debates in Thucydides. But if he was neither wholly original nor alone in his interests, the one thing he did need to do was invent a new form of writing in which to express what was distinctive about his project in order to make it, as he hoped, 'a possession for all time'.

[1] See the table of dates (pp. xli–xliv) for some of the authors active at around 430. For extracts from the relevant writings see M. Gagarin and P. Woodruff (eds.), *Early Greek Political Thought* in this series, in particular the Hippocratic corpus, Protagoras, Gorgias, Critias, Thrasymachus, Democritus and Antiphon.

[2] DK 87B fr. 44a, lines 6–33. See Thucydides VIII 68 for a character sketch. It is possible, however, that the orator/politician and the sophist of this name were different people.

Structure and character of the work

To understand the nature of Thucydides' achievement we may need to unthink several of our modern assumptions about composition, texts, books, readers and publication. Fifth-century Greece was still a largely oral culture, and the great works of literature were more often performed and recited than read; indeed the most valued works in their whole cultural heritage – those of Homer– had actually been *composed* orally for the most part, incredible though that may now seem. The capacities of memory and attention this assumes would have been correspondingly very different from ours.

Thucydides himself is quite likely to have dictated his work to one or more amanuenses, a considerable feat in itself, on his part and theirs; and parts of it might well have been read out to audiences – in particular, one imagines, the speeches and the more vivid narrative sections. But it was clearly a crucial fact for him, and part of the originality he claimed, that he *wrote it down*[1] and so made a permanent record that could be studied, discussed and returned to as a trusted reference. Yet the physical characteristics of this 'publication' would seem quite primitive and rebarbative to us, and a considerable constraint on easy reading. The work would probably be inscribed on a series of papyrus rolls and it would be read by holding it in one hand and scrolling across (not down) with the other. There would be about one book of Thucydides per roll, but the 'text' itself would have none of the divisions into books, chapters and sections that we now rely on for ease of reading and reference; these were all added by scholarly editors in the Hellenistic period well over one hundred years later, and we must be careful not to infer his authorial intentions about the structure of the work from such divisions.[2] Even the fine articulations of the text into punctuated sentences and words usually represent later editorial interventions[3]: the original text might well have been

ACONTINOUSSEQUENCEOFCAPITALLETTERSWITHOUTSPACESLIKETHIS

[1] He uses the verb *sungraphein* with some emphasis in the very first sentence of the book and repeatedly thereafter.

[2] Some early editions in the ancient world divided the work into thirteen 'books' (Marcellinus 58), and our 'chapters' were only included from the late seventeenth century.

[3] For some qualifications, see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* I (Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 178–81.

and it is certain that both contemporary and later copyists would have introduced errors.

Nor do we know what title if any Thucydides gave his work. The traditional title is *The Peloponnesian War*, but that is of course rather one-sided.[1] I have therefore adopted a title suggested by the opening sentence of the work, *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, to avoid projecting a particular interpretation on to it even before one starts reading the text itself. For similar reasons I have also given precedence in the arrangement of the work and the typography of the headings to Thucydides' own divisions by years and campaigning seasons, as against the conventional division of the work into books.[2]

Thucydides tells us that he began the work at the outset of the war; and we can infer from various internal references that he was still writing it in 404 and had already revised parts of it. The narrative breaks off in mid-sentence in the year 411 and was evidently unfinished when he died. Only very short extracts of the text now survive in papyrus fragments (all of them from later copies) or in quotations from other ancient authors, and our modern texts derive from just seven medieval manuscripts (which themselves vary a good deal).

For all these reasons, therefore, we should be wary of the idea of one original master-text, whose authority could be definitely established and which Thucydides would have regarded as his final word. What we have is a long, partially revised and incomplete text, which had a history of its own both in Thucydides' lifetime and thereafter. This is a situation, not uncommon in classical scholarship, that offers scope for many possible reconstructions and then for an infinity of interpretations of those reconstructions; it therefore also argues for a certain open-mindedness and tolerance of doubt.

The text as we have it, though, is a wonderfully rich, original and profound meditation on political power and human nature. It is internally complex, not just in the sense that there are interrelationships between its many parts, but also in containing within it a range of different 'voices' and kinds of text: long narrative accounts of campaigns; vivid reportage of key events such as the great plague and the dramatic battle scenes; speeches by participants that are both part of the action and commentaries upon it; some dialogue and debate; texts of letters and of treaties; occasional

[1] See V 28.2n, 31.3 and 31.5, and my note on the quotation from Diodorus Siculus in appendix 2, p. 594.

[2] See further the preamble to the synopsis of contents (p. 614).

authorial asides from Thucydides in his own person; longer political analyses, such as the famous account of civil conflict at Corcyra; and a few biographical sketches and 'obituaries'. The most important actors have their characters quite fully developed and revealed and there are many brilliant vignettes of both major and minor figures in the history.[1] Thucydides does have a very distinctive and recognisable overall style, but there are more variations within this than have always been recognised.

The speeches deserve separate mention since they are rightly regarded as central to the whole work and are themselves quite varied. There is first the formal contrast between those in direct and those in indirect speech (though this may not correspond to the difference we would nowadays expect between verbatim reporting and interpreted summary[2]). Then there are important contextual differences between, for example, free-standing speeches like Pericles' famous Funeral Speech (II 35–46); dialogues (the Melos exchange at V 85–111); decision-making debates at conferences of allies (I 67–77), at an Athenian assembly (III 37–49, VI 9–23), or at a war tribunal (III 53–68); proclamations of heralds (II 2, IV 97–99); a speech delivered via a letter (VII 11–15); battle-field addresses (IV 95 and 126, VI 68, VII 61–68); conversational exchanges (VIII 92.9–11) and grumblings in the ranks (VIII 78). These could be subdivided further by type of speaker (and single or joint), by length, by audience, and so on.[3] And all these differences may have implications for their literary and dramatic effect within the history as well as for their authenticity. At I 22 Thucydides makes one general remark about his practice in composing these speeches, which was intended to clarify this:

> As to what was said in speeches by the various parties either before they went to war or during the actual conflict, it was difficult for me to recall the precise details in the case of those I heard myself, just as it was for those who reported back to me on cases elsewhere. What I have set down is how I think each of them would have expressed what was most appropriate in the particular circumstances, while staying as close as possible to the overall intention of what was actually said.

It is in fact very hard to judge when he might be reporting 'what was actually said' and when inventing 'what was most appropriate', but in the spirit of my cautious remarks above we should perhaps not be too zealous

[1] See the biographical notes (pp. xlv–liii) for references.
[2] See footnotes on I 22, VII 69.2 and VIII 27.1.
[3] See further the synopsis of speeches (pp. 623–7).

in seeking to make these precepts wholly consistent with each other or with his actual practice as it developed. This was an unusually long and ambitious work, produced over a great length of time, about an ongoing conflict whose final outcome was uncertain, and in circumstances – both personal and political – that were themselves changing as he wrote. It is surely unthinkable that he would not have evolved his principles and practices and changed his mind to some degree in the course of all this.

Style and language

Thucydides has been famous since antiquity for his extraordinary style. Dionysius of Halicarnassus memorably remarked, 'the number of people who can understand the whole of Thucydides can be easily counted, and there are parts of it not even these can manage without a grammatical commentary', and most translators would be happy to adopt that as their epigraph. The text is often articulated in long structures that, unlike the periodic prose of Demosthenes, Cicero and Gibbon, do not have a progressive forward movement, to be resolved and completed in their final cadences. Rather, a whole series of clauses shuffle forward together, each deliberately fashioned in a different grammatical construction to create a much more open texture. Within these there are many distortions of the natural word order to generate particular emphases and effects; and there are other innovations in (or liberties with) syntax and vocabulary. The meaning is sometimes highly compressed and, as with poetry, resists decompression.

Thucydides wrote at an early stage in the development of Greek prose and was undoubtedly trying to forge an original style for what he rightly regarded as a new form of enquiry. At its best his prose is a very powerful and vivid vehicle for this,[1] but often he seems to be straining too hard for his effects with artificial contrasts, asymmetries and abstractions. In addition, there are the purely practical uncertainties of knowing which parts of the text Thucydides himself regarded as finished and which were only drafts. In the case of some obscure passages, therefore, one can never be quite sure whether one is dealing with clumsy expression, unrevised

[1] Macaulay commented on the retreat from Syracuse in book VII, 'Is it or is it not the finest thing you ever read in your life?' and he described book VII as a whole as the best prose composition he had ever read: 'It is the *ne plus ultra* of human art.' Letter to Thomas Flower Ellis, 25 August 1835, in *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, ed. T. Pinney (Cambridge University Press, 1976), vol. 3, p. 154.

draft, unreliable textual transmission, overwrought stylistic innovation or deliberate ambiguity. The translator has to make choices and the reader in English should be made aware of these where possible.

It is therefore worth looking in advance at a few examples of his distinctive stylistic features:[1]

1. Vocabulary. Thucydides liked to experiment and innovate, quite often using terms that are very rare or that he even seems to have invented himself, though since they are usually compound words made up of familiar elements it is easy to see what they mean in context.[2] More interestingly, he sometimes uses poetic terms derived from Homer or from tragedy for special effects (IV 97.3, V 29.3, VII 74.1 and 80.3) or possibly to assist in characterisation (IV 85.1, 108.3); and he very often displays a preference for using abstract nouns as subjects in contexts where we might have expected human subjects, which makes one wonder about the notions of agency and explanation implied.

One must remember, of course, that Thucydides was not the only one experimenting at this time, and that a large proportion of ancient literature, which might have furnished us with more precedents, is now lost to us.[3] And the meanings even of familiar words may have been more fluid at this time, when there were no dictionaries or sources of linguistic authority to appeal to or to fix them. It is easy to over-interpret Thucydides in places by assuming that he was entirely consistent in making subtle distinctions between different words with similar meanings.[4]

2. Word order. Thucydides' manipulations of word order are possible in Greek because, unlike English, it is a highly inflected language in which the word forms (in particular the word endings) tell you what grammatical part they play in the sentence, so that for example the object of the verb can be put before its subject and still be recognised as an object. We do this in English to some degree ('bananas I cannot stand!'), but Thucydides takes it a great deal further, with adjectives or prepositions separated from their nouns and main verbs postponed for many clauses. A happy

[1] There are very good detailed treatments of Thucydides' style in the introductions to K. J. Dover (ed.), *Thucydides VII* and J. S. Rusten (ed.), *Thucydides II*. See also J. D. Denniston, *Greek Prose Style*, and the various ancient sources quoted in appendix 2.

[2] For example: IV 80.1 'to cause distress besides and against', IV 85.1 'out-sending', IV 112.2 'up-hauling'. See also VI 99.2n.

[3] For example, we have only 7 of the 81 plays Aeschylus is supposed to have written, 7 out of 123 in the case of Sophocles, 19 out of 92 for Euripides, 11 out of 44 for Aristophanes and just 1 complete play out of 105 for Menander.

[4] See, for example, my notes on *aitia/prophasis* at I 23.4 and on *deos/phobos* at I 33.3.

parody runs, 'Difficult animals to drive is a sheep; one man, many of them, very.'[1] One short example from the author himself is at IV 135, where the sentence I have translated as 'Brasidas was in action again at the end of the same winter when just before spring started he made an attempt on Potidaea' might more literally read, 'An attempt he made the same winter indeed Brasidas as it was ending and towards spring now on Potidaea.'

3. Variation. There is a tradition that Thucydides met the sophist Gorgias,[2] who was famous as the originator of a style of rhetoric that cultivated beautifully balanced clauses and antitheses. Thucydides does employ antitheses a great deal for rhetorical purposes, especially between such pairs as *word* and *deed*, *nature* and *convention* or *public* and *private*, but he tried extremely hard to avoid simple parallelism in the grammar and adopted all manner of unexpected and sometimes harsh devices to confound one's expectations and vary the forms of expression. This reaction against Gorgias, if that is what it was, can at its best produce a far more rugged and arresting prose than the ornate and rather bland symmetries of conventional rhetoric (see, most strikingly, the Funeral Speech of Pericles at II 35–46, which is full of such effects), but it can also create a disjunction between the grammar and the underlying meaning that makes interpretation (and therefore translation) very difficult.[3]

4. Long and unusual structures. Some 'sentences' in the text are very long indeed, though this isn't necessarily a difficulty, in Greek or in English. Some of the best-regarded English prose of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had this sort of periodic structure, and if the ideas flow naturally the sense can be grasped and is indeed given emphasis and force by the succession of clauses (especially when read aloud). Gibbon is an obvious example:

> In their censures of luxury the fathers are extremely minute and circumstantial; and among the various articles which excite their pious indignation, we may enumerate false hair, garments of any colour except white, instruments of music, vases of gold or silver, downy pillows (as Jacob reposed his head on a stone), white bread, foreign wines, public salutations, the use of warm baths, and the practice of shaving the beard, which, according to Tertullian, is a lie

[1] Ascribed to Richard Shilleto (by Donald Lateiner in a review in *Histos* 2, 1998, p. 280).
[2] Gorgias first visited Athens in 427.
[3] See, for example, III 65.3, IV 117.2, V 16.1, 36.1, VIII 71.1.

> against our own faces, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator.[1]

While Dr Johnson is perhaps more testing:

> That affluence and power, advantages extrinsick and adventitious, and, therefore, easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectation of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they, who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.[2]

Thucydides sets the standard, however, with the added twist that he often compiles such sentences with a succession of coordinate participle clauses that are not introduced by such explanatory markers as 'though', 'but', 'unless', 'so', 'while' or 'because'; their grammatical relationships therefore have to be interpreted or left ambiguous.[3] A short example is in the very first section of the book (I 1), which I have translated as:

> Thucydides of Athens wrote the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, how they waged it with each other. He began writing at its very outset, in the expectation that it would be a great war and more significant than any previous one. He based this judgement on the grounds that both sides came into the war at the height of their powers and in a full state of military readiness; and he also saw that the rest of the Greek world had either taken sides right at the start or was now planning to do so.

This is one sentence not three in the Greek, which lacks my explanatory markers and just says, 'beginning . . . expecting . . . inferring . . . seeing'. The meaning here is fairly evident, but consider this deliberately very literal version of the extract from I 21.1 I quoted above (pp. xxiii–xxiv):

> From the stated evidences, nevertheless, someone would not go wrong by considering what I have recounted to be very much of that kind [i.e. reliable]; not, rather, believing as the poets have sung with decorated exaggeration concerning these matters or as the chroniclers, in a manner more attractive to hear than true, have composed

[1] *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* I (1776), ch. 15.
[2] The second paragraph in his *Life of Savage* (1744).
[3] Sometimes the right policy if it is a productive ambiguity (see notes at II 41.4, 65.13, III 40.5 and VII 86.5, for example).

> things that are incapable of being disproved and things that have – many of them in time – won their way into the fabulous in a way that cannot be believed; but (one would not go wrong) considering [what I have recounted] to have been researched from the clearest evidences, given that the matters are sufficiently ancient.[1]

And perhaps the limiting case of this, described as 'probably the most difficult sentence in Thucydides' by one commentator,[2] comes in Pericles' Funeral Speech at II 42.4. In the Greek this is again just one sentence, but I quote a 'free version', which is designed to demonstrate the structure:

> As for these men: of those who had wealth not one turned coward because he preferred to prolong its enjoyment, nor did any pauper, hoping he could yet escape his poverty and become rich, postpone the dread moment. But taking the victory over their enemies to be more desired than that, and believing this the most glorious of risks, they were willing to pursue the victory at this risk, while delaying the rest, deciding to hope for prosperity in a future that was uncertain, but resolving to take in hand personally what confronted them now; and, recognising that resistance and death were involved in it rather than surrender and survival, they fled from disgrace, but faced up to their task with their lives; and through the fortune of the briefest instant, at the height of glory rather than fear, they departed.

A more literal translation of this would be virtually unsayable, and that points to an important distinction about the speeches that Cicero first made and that is far more enlightening than the blank disapproval Dionysius expresses. Cicero warmly praises their literary and philosophical qualities:

> Thucydides easily surpasses everyone else in dexterity of composition: so rich is the material at his disposal that he has almost as many ideas as words, and moreover he is so precise and exact in his language that you cannot be sure whether it is the subject that is illuminated by the style or the words by the ideas.

But he also comments that this wouldn't do at all for an actual speech, considered as a public performance:

[1] From H. D. Cameron's commentary on book I, *Thucydides Book* I*: a students' grammatical commentary* (University of Michigan Press, 2003).

[2] H. Flashar, *Der Epitaphios des Perikles* (Heidelberg, 1969), cited by J. S. Rusten in his edition of book II (1989). Rusten has an excellent discussion of the whole passage and offers the reconstruction quoted below.

> Thucydides, on the other hand, describes the events of history and wars and battles – all with great good sense and dignity, but none of this can be carried over to the law-courts or applied to public life. These famous speeches contain so many obscure and impenetrable sentences as to be scarcely intelligible, which is a cardinal sin in a public oration.[1]

The same point could be made about some of the battle-field addresses, which would scarcely be intelligible, let alone motivating, in the circumstances in which they were delivered.[2]

This difference between oral and literary rhetoric may be relevant to interpreting the sense in which the speeches express 'what is most appropriate'.

Translation and interpretation

The analysis of Thucydides' style and the circumstances under which he wrote already suggests some likely practical difficulties for the modern reader of the text in English. But there are also more general problems in knowing what would in principle *constitute* a good version in English, even if we could achieve it. Take the case of translations of the Bible, for example. We know that because of advances in scholarship modern versions are more accurate linguistically and historically than many of their Renaissance predecessors. But the archaisms of the Authorised Version can still have their advantages in taking us closer to the intentions of the authors of the Bible. 'And God saw the light, that it was good' is a more powerful and memorable piece of syntax than 'God saw how good the light was' (New American Bible); and it also means something different, in conjuring up a more anthropomorphic god who 'sees with his eyes' rather than an abstract one who 'realises'. Similarly, we can more easily imagine a charismatic preacher delivering his sermon on the mountainside in the AV version 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth' than in the pedantic 'How blest are those of a gentle spirit; they shall have the earth for a possession' (NEB). And some modern translations become very brave indeed, as when 'And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain' (AV, Matthew V.41) becomes

[1] For these and more quotations about Thucydides' style from the ancient world, see appendix 2.

[2] For example, II 87, IV 10, 126 and V 9.

'And if one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one kilometre, carry it two kilometres' (Good News Bible).[1] Which of these versions is the better and closer translation (and are those two questions or one)?

Translators of classical texts tend to be strangely silent on such issues, beyond saying modestly that they intend to be as invisible as possible themselves and that they want their versions to be both 'accurate and accessible' representations of the original. But does that ambition beg important questions? Surely all representation involves interpretation, and interpretation for a purpose? It may be helpful to look at some of the problems in interpreting Thucydides from the practical point of view of the problems arising in translation. I mention here just three, in a roughly ascending order of generality.

1. As we have already seen, it is not always possible to match the *structure* of a Greek sentence closely in English and retain intelligibility because of the different grammatical features of the two languages. Interestingly, one of the first and best translators of the Bible into English, William Tyndale, remarked how much easier it was to translate the Hebrew and Greek into English than into Latin (the only permitted translation at that time):

> They will say it cannot be translated into our tongue it is so rude. It is not so rude as they are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin.[2]

That is because Greek itself is more fluid than Latin, with fewer fixed rules (like the expectation in Latin that the verb will come at the end of a sentence); but it is in this respect much more fluid than English too and permits far more variations in word order that cannot just be copied 'word for word' without loss and confusion of meaning.[3]

2. Thucydides is also wilfully complex in his *rhetorical style*, with many special effects and distortions that were evidently regarded as 'difficult' even in his own day. Does the translator have an obligation to reproduce

[1] Gerald Hammond uses some of these examples in his essay on Bible translations in R. Alter and F. Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987).

[2] William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528). His pioneering translations of the Bible into English, which were regarded as heretical and cost him his life in 1536, were the main source for the versions eventually published in the King James Version (the AV) in 1611.

[3] See for example IV 135, V 35.3 and VIII 99.

difficult Greek in difficult English to convey the same effects and produce the same reactions? This is a serious issue and a pervasive one. It is very hard for translators to stop themselves trying to smooth all this out in the interests of producing an 'accessible' text, even if it is not then an 'accurate' one in every sense and even if this produces a conflict between the translators' professional modesty and their evident (but unstated) belief that they can improve on Thucydides. Hobbes has probably succeeded better than anyone else in squaring this particular circle.[1] His translation is indeed inaccurate in some particular respects, though it was an extraordinary achievement at the time, considering the paucity of lexical aids or precedents available to him. But where it most succeeds is in catching something of the rugged strength, rhythms and confidence of Thucydides' prose as well as his intellectual sophistication, much as the AV often succeeds over other Bible translations in its deeper fidelity to the tone and force of the original.

3. Then there is the large issue of *cultural distance*. Not surprisingly, many of Thucydides' concepts and assumptions do not map neatly on to our own. There is no precise English equivalent of *polis*, *demos*, *arete*, *logos* and so on; nor, in reverse, are there ancient Greek words that mean exactly what we mean by 'conscience', 'religion', 'landscape', 'text' and 'human rights'. This is not through any paucity in either language but because these terms functioned in a different political, cultural, and therefore linguistic, world. One solution sometimes adopted is to represent all such terms in transliteration to remind us of their foreignness and resist any contamination of meaning from the target language; but this soon comes to seem a counsel of despair as the page becomes increasingly furred with these italic substitutes, which remain as opaque in English letters as they were in Greek.[2]

Moreover, this difficulty arises not only with the sort of moral and political concepts that naturally attract most interest and attention, but also with more humdrum terms for distances, seasons, times, names and places. It might be thought that here at least one could just translate 'word for word', but consider the following little problems. A 'stade' in Greece was a measurement of about two hundred yards, so there are between eight and nine to the mile. But if you translate 'about ten stades' as 'about

[1] Hobbes' version of 1629 achieves the rare status (alongside Chapman's *Homer* and a handful of other translations) of being a work of literature in its own right.

[2] The Borgesian *reductio* of this practice would presumably be just to repeat the Greek text word for word this way – perfect accuracy at the cost of the very project of translation.

one and a quarter miles' you introduce a quite misleading precision. And is it better to render a place like *Enneahodoi* (I 100) as 'Enneahodoi' or as 'Nine Ways'? What then about *Amphipolis*, whose etymology and relationship to *Enneahodoi* are explained at IV 102? Would we want to see *Cambridge* translated as 'Pont-du-Cam' in a French work? It gets even worse with dates and coinage, though some translators have made rash attempts to translate drachmai, for example, into modern currencies and values.

All this underlines the continual need to be aware of context and possible authorial intention. The classic expression of the possible snares and delusions is set out by Collingwood in his *Autobiography* (1939) where he is taking to task the Oxford 'realists' of his generation for foisting their own moral vocabulary on to the Greeks and then criticising them for their use of it:

> It was like having a nightmare about a man who had got it into his head that τριήρης was the Greek for 'steamer', and when it was pointed out to him that descriptions of triremes in Greek writers were at any rate not very good descriptions of steamers, replied triumphantly, 'That is just what I say. These Greek philosophers . . . were terribly muddle-headed and their theory of steamers is all wrong.'

I have regarded transliteration in the text itself as an evasion and have tried instead to explain such problems more pragmatically as they arise, through alerts in footnotes and, more particularly, in the extended glossary (pp. 628–38) and the note on Greek terms for distances, coinage and the calendar (pp. lvii–lix).

These practical examples emphasise again that all translation is in the end a form of *interpretation*. In fact an early sense of the word 'interpretation' was 'translation', though we now tend to distinguish interpreters (of the spoken word) from translators (of the written word).[1] The distinction that is often made between literal and free translation begs or avoids the main issue, since it does not correspond to the difference between an accurate and an inaccurate translation. You can be inaccurate and untrue to an author's voice precisely by being *too* literal in translating their words and structures into another language that has its own and quite different

[1] Hobbes describes his translation as an 'interpretation' on his title-page and Valla remarks in the preface to his translation (into Latin) of 1452, 'Nam quid utilius, quid uberius, quid etiam magis necessarium librorum interpretatione' ('For what more useful, more fruitful, indeed more necessary thing is there than interpreting/translating books?').

forms of expression. But if you free yourself from the original too far, you then risk importing larger assumptions and ideas that are anachronistic in a deeper sense and therefore also 'inaccurate', and you may omit subtleties and associations that are intrinsic to the author's purposes. How then can one translate the words, the idioms and the sentences in a way that stays true to the sense, the style and the intentions?

We struggle to find good metaphors for this process of interpretation. The distinction between form and content, which has been given new currency in the electronic age, is naïve in this context, as if the essence of Thucydides' meaning could be fully extracted and then re-expressed without addition or subtraction of sense in any number of other forms. The medium does indeed affect the message. Nor can we think of different languages just as alternative vehicles, each conveying passengers to the same destination with the same experience of the journey travelled. A more attractive metaphor may be that used by the Chinese sage, Mencius (372–289 BC), whose advice to the reader of the ancient Chinese *Odes*, already difficult to understand in his own day, was to 'let his thought go to meet the intention as he would a guest'. But there is no final theoretical answer to this conundrum. All translators in the end make a series of pragmatic compromises based on the different kinds of contemporary readers they have in mind and their different purposes. This edition tries at least to be explicit about the problems and options and tries to involve its readers in the solutions through its apparatus of comment and explanation.

Thucydides today

Thucydides has been admired by a remarkable range of later readers and for an equally wide range of reasons. The first scholarly editions began to appear in the Renaissance and of course Hobbes found him deeply sympathetic and did a great deal to popularise his work among English readers with his 1629 translation. In the nineteenth century Thucydides was revered in Germany as the first 'scientific historian'; in the USA he became the preferred presidential reading of Jefferson ('I have given up newspapers in exchange for Tacitus and Thucydides . . . and I find myself much the happier') and in Britain, with her own empire at the height of its powers, Macaulay, Mill and Arnold all championed him as a writer of exceptional literary merit and penetration of thought. In the last hundred years he has been claimed as a founding father of a bewildering number of

-isms and -ologies in political theory and international relations, has been subjected to new forms of analysis by post-modernists and narratologists, has figured on the reading lists of such different admirers as Scott of the Antarctic, W. H. Auden and Bob Dylan, and has been regularly quoted by journalists in their accounts of recent conflicts in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Just as Thucydides resists easy translation, however, so it is difficult and dangerous to extract neat 'opinions' from him in lazy support of one's favourite causes and arguments. This is not at all to suggest that he is not 'relevant' to our current preoccupations and to our attempts to understand them in the context of whatever larger historical dynamics or more universal human values may underlie them. It was his own hope, after all, that his work would be of permanent value in just these ways. It is rather to respect the form in which he chose to write and the context in which his work was created. One purpose of this introduction has been to suggest that there is more than one way to contribute to such political reflection and that differences in culture and context can be as suggestive as similarities when they are properly distinguished and understood. If we acknowledge in advance the gaps in our knowledge and our cultural distance, we are more likely to resist the temptation to simplify or over-interpret Thucydides. The temptation arises precisely because he offers so much, but it can lead to a wish to idealise him that in the end actually undermines or obscures his real achievement.

Keats famously spoke of Shakespeare and other great writers as having what he called 'negative capability', the capacity to 'be in uncertainty' and therefore to resist neat categorisation. And Isaiah Berlin identifies Turgenev as one such when he praises his habit 'of holding everything in solution – of remaining outside the situation, in a state of watchful and ironic detachment, uncommitted, evenly balanced . . . For him reality escapes all ideological nets, all rigid, dogmatic assumptions, defies all attempts at codification.'[1] Thucydides surely shares something of this quality too. His most enduring virtue may lie more in his intellectual temper than his quotable conclusions. We get the strong impression of an intense, penetrating gaze: quite unflinching and unsentimental but with a deep sense of the tragedies and ironies of the human condition; very knowing about its hopes, fears and vanities; fascinated by the political interactions of individuals and groups; aware of the role of chance and

[1] Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (Hogarth Press, 1978), p. 148.

circumstance in interacting with human purposes to create the outcomes we call 'events'; curious about details and their significance, serious about facts and about how the world works.

But these too are contestable interpretations, of course, and it is the principal purpose of an edition such as this to assist readers in making their own judgements.

Principal dates

Early history

776	Foundation of the Olympic Games (traditional date)
c.750	Greek alphabet devised
c.700	Homer *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
594	Solon's laws at Athens
545–27	Peisistratus 'tyrant' of Athens
508	Cleisthenes introduces democratic reforms in Athens
c.505	Sparta's Peloponnesian League formed

Persian Wars

499–94	'Ionian revolt' against Persia
490	First Persian invasion under Darius: Greeks led by Athens defeat Persians at the Battle of Marathon
480	Second Persian invasion under Xerxes: Greeks win decisive sea battle at Salamis (480) and land battle at Plataea (479)

Growth of Athenian empire

479–31	The *Pentacontaetia*, the half century described by Thucydides (I 89–118) as the interval between the end of the Persian Wars and the start of the second 'Peloponnesian War'
478	Athens founds Delian League (which becomes the Athenian Empire and lasts to 404)

472	Aeschylus *Persae*, a dramatisation of the Greek victory over the Persians
465	Helot revolt at Sparta
461	Democratic reforms of Ephialtes at Athens
460–46	First 'Peloponnesian War': a series of conflicts between Sparta and her allies (including Thebes) and Athens and hers (including Argos); ends inconclusively with the Thirty Years Truce
460–29	The 'Age of Pericles' at Athens, as he holds many successive generalships
c.460	Birth of Thucydides
459/7	Long walls built at Athens
454	Treasury of Delian League moved to Athens
c.451	Sophocles *Antigone*, which explores the right of the individual to defy the state
449	Peace of Callias: formal end to Persian Wars, an accommodation between the Delian League and Persia
447	Parthenon started (completed 432)
446	Thirty Years Truce between Athens and Sparta (ended in 431 in fact)
c.433	The sophist Protagoras in Athens
432	Revolt of Potidaea from Athens

The war between Athens and Sparta

431–04	Second 'Peloponnesian War' between Athens and Sparta and their allies
431	Pericles' Funeral Speech
430	Plague at Athens
c.430–25	Herodotus *Histories*, his account of the Persian Wars
429	Death of Pericles
428	Revolt of Mytilene from Athens
427	The sophist Gorgias visits Athens
427	Siege of Plataea by the Peloponnesians ends in its capitulation and destruction; civil disorder in Corcyra
425	Athenians capture Pylos and imprison a Spartan force on the island of Sphacteria

425	Aristophanes *Acharnians*, the first of his surviving comedies and one of his 'peace plays', in which the hero makes his own treaty with Sparta
424	Battle of Delium: Boeotian victory over the Athenians
424	Brasidas takes Amphipolis and Thucydides is exiled
422	Brasidas and Cleon killed at Battle of Amphipolis
421	Peace of Nicias
418	Battle of Mantinea: Sparta defeats Argos (supported here by Athens)
416	'Melian debate' ends with the destruction of Melos
415	Euripides *Trojan Women*, a harrowing portrait of the fate of women about to be enslaved (as the women of Melos just have been)
415–13	Athenian expedition to Sicily, which ends in total failure
414	Alcibiades defects to Sparta
413	Surrender of Demosthenes and Nicias at Syracuse and their execution
411	Oligarchic coup in Athens, government of the 'Four Hundred'
411	Alcibiades recalled to Samos by the Athenian army there
411	The 'Five Thousand' replace the 'Four Hundred' at Athens in a partial restoration of the democracy
411	End of Thucydides' narrative
406	Battle of Arginusae (Athenian victory but heavy losses on both sides)
405	Battle of Aegospotami ('Goat River'): conclusive Spartan victory
404	Sparta dictates terms to Athens, demolishes long walls and establishes puppet government of the Thirty Tyrants. Effective end of the war
c.404	Death of Thucydides

Shifting alliances and fourth-century empires

404–371	Spartan hegemony
399	Plato's *Apology*, commemorating the trial and execution of Socrates
371	Thebans defeat Spartans at Leuctra and assume ascendancy to 362

362	Battle of Mantinea: Theban alliance defeats combined Athenian and Spartan forces, but is fatally weakened by the loss of its leaders
359	Accession of Philip of Macedon (ruled to 336)
338	Battle of Chaeronea: Philip decisively beats combined Athenian and Theban forces
336	Accession of Alexander the Great of Macedon; his empire extended as far as India
323	Death of Alexander the Great; start of the 'Hellenistic age', which runs to the final absorption of Greek territories into the Roman empire in 30 BC.

Biographical notes

Brief details about significant figures (generally defined as those mentioned in the text three or more times but with a few exceptions). Figures in bold give the first or principal references in the text of a biographical kind. See index of names for the full list of names and references. There are 431 personal names mentioned in the text (excluding patronymics and signatories of agreements).

Agis II — Son of Archidamus; King of Sparta from *c*.427–400; victorious general at the Battle of Mantinea in 418 between Sparta and the Argive confederacy (supported by Athens); from 413 had general command of the Peloponnesian forces in central Greece and occupied a fort at Deceleia (within Athenian territory in Attica) from 413 to 404. **V 57–63**; **VIII 5.3**

Alcamenes — Spartan commander; son of Sthenelaidas; appointed commander at Lesbos 413/12 and killed in a sea battle 412. **VIII 5.1–2**

Alcibiades — (*c*.450–404) Athenian aristocratic leader, rival of Nicias; charismatic and ambitious commander but a divisive figure politically, with a wayward and flamboyant personal life; involved in many intrigues and shifting allegiances; accused of conspiracy and impiety by the Athenians in 415 and defects to Sparta; becomes a suspect figure

there and takes refuge with Tissaphernes in Asia; negotiates with the Athenians in Samos and seeks rehabilitation at Athens, where he is recalled, disgraced again and eventually murdered in 404. **V 43.2–3**; **VI 15.2–4**; **VIII 86.4**

Alcidas Spartan commander in the early part of the war, appointed 427; associated with various acts of brutality which damaged Sparta's reputation; involved with the foundation of Heracleia. **III 30–33**

Amorges Son of Pissuthes (illegitimate), in revolt against King of Persia 413/12. **VIII 5.5**

Antiphon (*c*.480–411) Athenian politician and orator (and probably the same person as the 'sophist' of this name); leading member of the oligarchic 'Four Hundred' (411) but was tried and executed when the coup collapsed; also a professional speech writer for litigants; reportedly Thucydides' teacher and much admired by him. **VIII 68.1–2**

Archidamus King of Sparta for over forty years (469–27) and led his allied forces in their invasions of Attica during the first part of the war (which is now named after him, 'the Archidamian War'), though in 432 he had advised against war with Athens. **I 79–85**

Aristarchus Athenian oligarch, extreme member of the 'Four Hundred'. **VIII 90.1**, **98.1–4**

Aristogeiton Assassin (with Harmodius) of Hipparchus in a failed attempt on Hipparchus' brother, the tyrant Hippias, in 514. **VI 54–9**

Arrhabaeus King of Lyncus; attacked by Brasidas and Perdiccas in 423. **IV 83.1–6**

Artaxerxes Son of Xerxes; King of Persia 465–424. **I 137.3–138.1**

Astyochus Spartan admiral, appointed 412 and active in the eastern Aegean; had varying success and was distrusted at different times by the Spartans, who sent 'advisers' to assess him; provoked hostility among Sparta's allies. **VIII 38–9**, **84**

Athenagoras Syracusan populist leader; addressed the assembly in an important speech in 415. **VI 35.2–41.1**

Brasidas Enterprising and charismatic Spartan general; leads successful campaigns in Thrace and Northern Greece in 424/3 where he detached various cities from the Athenian alliance and outmanoeuvred Thucydides, who had been sent as general to oppose him; killed in 422 when he defeated an Athenian army under Cleon at Amphipolis but was himself mortally wounded. **IV 81.1–3**; **V 10.1–11.1**

Calligeitus Megarian exile, agent of Pharnabazus **VIII 6.1**

Chalcideus Spartan commander 413/12; negotiated Persian support for Sparta; killed at Panormus in 412. **VIII 14.1–17.4**

Charminus Athenian general deployed at Samos 412/11, where he colludes with oligarchic conspirators. **VIII 73.3**

Cimon (*c.*510–450) Athenian statesman and general, son of Persian War hero Miltiades and probably related to Thucydides through his mother; pro-Spartan sympathies and a rival of Pericles; leads an Athenian force to support Sparta against a helot uprising in 462 but ostracised from Athens in 461 after their help was rejected; returns to Athens in late 450s and dies in battle against the Persians in Cyprus. **I 98.1**

Clearchus Spartan commander, put in charge of fleet at the Hellespont 412/11. **VIII 8.2**

Clearidas Spartan general, appointed governor of Amphipolis in 423. **IV 132.3**

Cleon Populist Athenian politician, prominent after the death of Pericles; rival of Nicias; portrayed by Thucydides and the playwright Aristophanes as a crude and aggressive demagogue and imperialist; recommends mass executions at Mytlinene in 427 and at Scione in 423; successful (with Demosthenes) in forcing the surrender of the Spartan troops at Pylos in 425; probably

	responsible for Thucydides' exile; defeated by Brasidas and killed at Amphipolis in 422. **III 36.6**; **IV 21.3**
Cnemus	Spartan admiral, active in early part of Archidamian War. **II 66.2**
Darius I	King of Persia (522–486), quelled the Ionian Revolt of 499–94 and consolidated and extended the huge Persian empire (see Herodotus III 89–97), but failed in the invasion of Greece that ended at the Battle of Marathon in 490. **I 14.2**
Darius II	King of Persia (424–404), son of Artaxerxes. **VIII 105.3–114.2**
Demosthenes	Athenian general, won some spectacular victories in Western Greece in 426–25 and (with Cleon) secured the capture of the Spartan troops at Pylos in 425; sent to reinforce Nicias at Syracuse in 413 but executed there after the final failure of the expedition in 413. **III 105–14**
Diodotus	Athenian politician; made a famous speech in opposition to Cleon in the 'Mytilene debate' of 427 and won a reprieve for the Mytilenaeans. **III 41–49.1**
Diomedon	Athenian general active in the eastern Aegean in 411. **VIII 19.2–20.2**
Dorieus	Commander of Thurian ships in the Spartan fleet. **VIII 35.1**, **84.2**
Endius	Spartan ephor; family friend of Alcibiades. **VIII 6.3**
Epitadas	Spartan commander on Sphacteria in 425. **IV 8.9**
Eurylochus	Spartan commander in attacks on Naupactus and Amphilochia (426–25). **III 100.2–102.7**
Eurymedon	Athenian general, involved especially at Corcyra (427), Tanagra (426) and in Sicily (426–24 and 414–13), where he was killed in 413. **III 80.2**
Euthydemus	Athenian general, signatory of Peace of Nicias and colleague of Nicias in Sicily. **VII 16.1**
Gylippus	Enterprising and successful Spartan commander in Sicily (414–12); receives surrender of Athenian

forces and opposes final executions of Nicias and Demosthenes. **VII 85.1–86.4**

Hagnon Athenian general, involved at Potidaea in 430, founder of Amphipolis and signatory to Peace of Nicias in 421; father of Theramenes. **II 58.1–3**; **V 11.1**

Harmodius Assassin (with his lover Aristogeiton) of Hipparchus in 514. **VI 53.3–59.1**

Hermocrates Influential Syracusan statesman and general, who did much to unify Sicily against the Athenians; later collaborates with Gylippus in resisting the Athenian invasion; incurs hostility of Tissaphernes and is finally exiled from Syracuse. **VI 78.2**

Hipparchus Son of Athenian 'tyrant' Peisistratus and brother of Hippias; assassinated by Harmodius and Aristogeiton in 514. **VI 54.2–57.3**

Hippias Eldest son of Peisistratus and succeeds him as tyrant of Athens (527–10). **I 20.2**; **VI 54.2–59.4**

Hippocrates (1) Athenian general involved at Megara, in Boeotia and at Delium, where he was killed in 424. **IV 66.3**

Hippocrates (2) Spartan commander involved in engagements of 412–411. **VIII 35.1**

Laches Athenian general; leads first expedition to Sicily (427–25); negotiator and signatory of peace of Nicias (421); killed in Battle of Mantinea (418). **III 86.1–4**

Lamachus Athenian general; signatory of Peace of Nicias (421); joint commander of Sicilian expedition with Nicias and Alcibiades but his proposals overridden; killed in battle in 414. **VI 49.1–50.1**

Leon Athenian general, involved in eastern Aegean and at Samos in 412–11. **VIII 23.1** [for various other more minor figures called Leon, see index of names]

Lichas Spartan official and diplomatic envoy; involved in controversial incident at Olympic Games in 420;

	adviser to Astyochus; died in Miletus 411. **V 50.4**; **VIII 84.5**
Menandrus	Athenian commander in Sicily jointly with Nicias (414–13). **VII 16.1**
Mindarus	Spartan admiral, succeeding Astyochus (411); died at Battle of Cyzicus (410). **VIII 85.1**
Myronides	Athenian general in the mid-fifth century; wins Battle of Oenophyta (457). **I 105.4**
Nicias	(*c*.470–13) Athenian statesman and general; a large and tragic figure in Thucydides' account of the war; various commands in the period 427–421; eponymous negotiator and signatory of the Peace of Nicias in 421; unwilling commander for much of Sicilian expedition (415–13), which ends in failure and his execution. **V 16.1**; **VII 50.4, 86.2–5**
Nicostratus	Athenian general, involved in various campaigns from 427; signatory for Athens to the truce of 423. **III 75.1–4**; **IV 119.2**
Paches	Athenian general; forced capitulation of Mytilene after its revolt, poised to conduct a mass execution but receives the dramatic news of their reprieve (428–27). **III 18.3–4, 49.4**
Pagondas	Theban leader; persuades Boeotians to take on the Athenians in Battle of Delium (424/3). **IV 91.1–93.1**
Pausanias	Spartan commander and hero of the Persian Wars, leading the Greeks at Plataea (479); later compromised and killed by the Spartans by starvation (*c*.470); father of Pleistoanax. **I 94.1–96.1, 128.3–135.2**
Pedaritus	Spartan commander, appointed governor of Chios (412); killed in an attack on the Athenians. **VIII 28.5, 55.3**
Peisander	Athenian politician; strong supporter of oligarchic movements and of the 'Four Hundred'; negotiates on their behalf with Tissaphernes and Alcibiades; escapes on the fall of the oligarchy (411). **VIII 53.1–54.4**

Peisistratus	'Tyrant' of Athens, briefly in 560 and then from 546/5 to his death in 527; father of Hippias and Hipparchus. **III 104.1**
Perdiccas	King of Macedonia (*c.*450–413); originally an Athenian ally but switched sides opportunistically many times in the course of the war. **I 56.2–59.2**
Pericles	(*c.*495–429); Athenian statesman and general; a central figure in fifth-century history and in the early part of the war; elected general regularly from 460, uninterruptedly from 442–429; sponsored the arts and public building programmes in Athens' cultural heyday; directed Athenian war strategy and delivered the famous 'Funeral Speech' in 431; died of the plague in 429. **I 127.1–3; II 65.1–13**
Phaeax	Athenian envoy sent on missions to Sicily and Italy in 422. **V 4.1–5.3**
Pharnabazus	Persian satrap and rival of Tissaphernes; based in the Hellespont; initially collaborates with Sparta (413–11) but in 408 seeks Athenian alliance. **VIII 99**
Philip of Macedonia	Brother of Perdiccas but collaborated with the Athenians against him (433). **I 57.3**
Phormio	Athenian naval commander, very active and successful in the early part of the war, 433–428. **II 83.1–92.7**
Phrynichus	Athenian politician and general, especially prominent 412–411; extreme member of the 'Four Hundred', at odds with Peisander and Alcibiades; murdered in 411. **VIII 27.1–5**
Pissouthnes	Persian governor of Sardis, father of Amorges. **I 115.4–5**
Pleistoanax	King of Sparta, son of Pausanias; exiled in 445 on suspicion of taking bribes from Pericles not to attack Athens, but recalled in 426 and ruled until his death in 408. **V 16.1–17.1**
Polydamidas	Spartan commander at Mende (423). **IV 129–30**

Pythodorus Athenian general in Sicilian campaign (426–425), but exiled in 424 after his return to Athens for failure to achieve control of Sicily. **III 115.2–6**

Salaethus Spartan officer sent to Mytlinene to assist in promoting rebellion (428–427); captured by Paches and executed in Athens. **III 25.1, 35.1–36.1**

Salynthius King of Agraea (bordering Amphilochia in central Greece); won over to the Athenian cause by Demosthenes. **III 111.4**

Seuthes King of the Odrysians (Thrace) in succession to his uncle Sitalces. **II 97.3**

Sicanus Syracusan general, appointed 415/14 but quickly deposed; one of the commanders in the final sea battle of the Athenians' Sicilian expedition in 413. **VI 73.1**; **VII 70.1**

Sitalces King of the Odrysian empire in Thrace; an ally of the Athenians and an enemy of Perdiccas early in the war; died in 424/3. **II 29.1–7, 95.1–98.4**

Sophocles Athenian general involved in Sicily in 425 but exiled on return in 424; no connection with the playwright of the same name. **III 115.5**

Sthenelaidas Spartan ephor advocating war with Athens in the congress at Sparta in 432. **I 85.3–87.2**

Strombichides Athenian general, active in eastern Aegean 412/11. **VIII 15.1–17.1**

*Themistocle*s Athenian politician and military commander; architect of Greek victory over the Persians at Salamis (480) and the inspiration behind the growth of Athenian naval power; later suspected of disloyalty and ostracised (470); probably died in about 459. **I 90.3–93.7, 135.2–138.6**

Theramenes Athenian statesman, active in last decade of the war; leader of oligarchic coup of 411 and of the moderate wing of that movement. **VIII 89.2–92.10**

Therimenes Spartan commander (died 412/11); organises reinforcements for Astyochus and is later involved in negotiations with Persia; lost at sea 412/11. **VIII 26.1, 38.1**

Thrasyboulus Athenian general and politician; leader with Thrasyllus of the democratic movement in Samos (411); commander at Battle of Cynossema in 411; banished by Thirty Tyrants in 404 but returned leading the democratic resistance; died 388. **VIII 75.2**

Thrasyllus Athenian general and politician, leader with Thrasyboulus of democratic movement in Samos (411); commander at Battle of Arginusae (406) and executed at Athens along with five fellow generals in the aftermath. **VIII 75.2**

Thucydides (*c*.460–*c*.404) Athenian historian and general; family and business connections in Thrace; involved against Brasidas at Amphipolis and Eion (424/3) and later exiled from Athens for his supposed failure there; died about 404 with his history of the war unfinished. **IV 104.4–107.1**; **V 26.1–5**

Timagoras Exile from Cyzicus in court of Pharnabazus; his agent in various military enterprises. **VIII 6.1**

Tissaphernes Persian satrap administering Asia Minor; rival of Pharnabazus; persuaded by Alcibiades to intervene in the war on side of Spartans (412) but was mainly concerned later to play off each side against the other. **VIII 5.4–5**, **87–88**

Xenares Spartan ephor, opposed to peace treaty (421); later governor of Heracleia and killed in a local battle (420/19). **V 36.1–37.1**

Xerxes King of Persia (486–65), son of Darius and father of Artaxerxes; led second Persian attempt to conquer Greece in 480–79 but was beaten at Salamis and Plataea and repulsed. **I 14.2**, **128.3–129.2**

Greek deities, heroes and mythological figures

Thucydides disavows mythological stories and traditional 'explanations' in his own conception of history (I 20–21), but he is well aware of the prevalence and importance of superstition, ritual and religious observance in Greek society generally and he documents these frequently (see general index under 'religious practices'). The following are brief notes on the main deities and legendary figures mentioned in the text that may be unfamiliar to some modern-day readers.

The references in bold are to the first or main entries in the text; see index of names for the full list of references.

Achilles Foremost Greek warrior in the expedition against Troy. His quarrel with Agamemnon is the organising theme of Homer's *Iliad*. **I 3.3**

Agamemnon King of Mycenae and commander-in-chief of the Greek expedition against Troy. **I 9.1–4**

Aphrodite Greek goddess of sexual love; had a sanctuary at Eryx. **VI 46.3**

Apollo Greek god of poetic and musical inspiration; has special associations with the Oracle at Delphi (**IV 118.1**), which was thought to be his inspired 'voice'; celebrated with festivals at Delos (**III 104.2**) and at sanctuaries and temples in many places mentioned in the text.

Ares Greek god of war, son of Zeus and Hera. Had a temple under the name Enyalius at Minoa. **IV 67.2**

Artemis Greek goddess, daughter of Zeus and sister of Apollo; associated with hunting and the moon and with margins and transitions; had temples at Rhegium (**VI 44.3**) and Ephesus, where in the last sentence of the work as we have it the Persian satrap Pharnabazus is sacrificing to her. **VIII 109**

Athena Greek goddess, daughter of Zeus and associated with wisdom; patron of Athens, with a statue and temple on the Acropolis. **II 15.4**

Cecrops Legendary King of Attica, founder of Athens. **II 15.1**

Dionysus Greek god, associated with ecstacy, wine and drama; celebrated in festivals, especially at Athens (**II 15.4**), and in temples in various parts of Greece.

Dioscuri (the 'youths of Zeus') Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Leda and Tyndareus; they had sanctuaries and temples in various parts of Greece. **III 75.3**

Eumenides 'the kindly goddesses' (euphemistic): also 'the dread ones', that is, the Furies, which are spirits of vengeance. **I 126.11**

Ge A primordial female deity symbolising Earth; the source of life, change and death; had a temple in Athens. **II 15.4**

Helen daughter of Tyndareus, wife of Menelaus of Sparta, whose abduction by the Trojan Paris was the supposed cause of the Trojan War. **I 9.1**

Hephaestus Greek 'blacksmith' god of fire, furnaces and volcanoes, thought to have his workshop on Hiera in the Aeolian Islands off Sicily. **III 88.3**

Hera Greek goddess, wife of Zeus, associated with women and marriage; widely worshipped in temples at Argos (**IV 133.2**), Corcyra (**I 24.7**), Epidaurus (**V 75.6**) and Plataea (**III 68.3**).

Heracleidae Sons of Heracles who conquered the Peloponnesian kingdoms of Mycenae, Sparta and Argos. **I 9.2**

Heracles Greek hero who undertook the famous 'twelve labours'. He had a temple at Mantinea (**V 64.5**) and a festival at Syracuse (**VII 73.3**).

Hermes Messenger of the gods, associated variously with roads, travel, stones, commerce, oratory and thieving; had a temple outside Mycalessus (**VII 29.3**). Statues of Hermes

	(Herms) were vandalised in a famous incident at Athens just before the Sicilian Expedition. **VI 27.1–28.2**
Itys	Son of Tereus and Procne; in a gruesome myth he was killed and served up for dinner to punish Tereus for his rape and mutilation of Philomela, Procne's sister. **II 29.3**
Minos	Legendary King of Crete, who perhaps became just a dynastic name for Cretan rulers. **I 4**
Odysseus	Hero of Homer's *Odyssey*, which tells the story of his journey home from Troy. **IV 24.5**
Pelops	Legendary figure who came to Pisa in the Peloponnese from the east and gave his name to the region. **I 9.2**
Perseus	Greek hero, son of Zeus and Danaë, credited with killing the Gorgon. **I 9.2**
Poseidon	Greek god of the sea, brother of Zeus; responsible for earthquakes and destructive natural forces; had temples and sanctuaries in various parts of Greece, and after a victory at sea a ship might be dedicated to him. **II 84.4**
Procne	Wife of Tereus, who punished her husband to avenge her sister and was turned into a nightingale (in the Greek version of the myth). **II 29.3**
Tereus	Husband of Procne and father of Itys (see above); he was turned into a hoopoe. **II 29.3**
Theseus	Legendary King of Athens, who killed the Minotaur and conquered the Amazons. **II 15.1–2**
Zeus	Father of the gods, especially associated with thunder and lightning, eagles and oak trees; worshipped in special festivals and connected with particular responsibilities (**II 71.2**) and with places like Olympia (**III 14.1**) and Athens (**I 126.4–6**).

Greek terms for distances, coinage and the calendar

Distances

Thucydides usually gives distance*s* between places in 'stade*s*'. I express these in miles, assuming one stade usually to be about 200 yards or 600 feet (or 185 metres), so between eight and nine to the mile (or between five and six to the kilometre), though it is not a precisely fixed measurement and seems to vary quite a bit where it can be checked.[1] A *stadion* in Greek was the length of a 'stadium' or race-course, with Olympia setting the standard.

There is a less common measurement by *plethra* (e.g. at VI 102.2 and VII 38.3). There seem to have been six *plethra* to the stade (so, about 100 feet each), though a *plethron* was also a unit of area.

A smaller unit is the *pekus* (e.g. at VII 36.2), which is a cubit or just over eighteen inches (supposedly the distance from the elbow to the tips of the fingers) and was itself divided into twenty-four *dactyloi* (each the width of a 'finger').

Coinage

The main denominations referred to in the text are:

Obol, the smallest unit
Drachma, consisting of six obols

[1] Dover (in his 1965 edition of VII, commenting on VII 2.4) suggests that it varies between about 130 and 170 metres. Hornblower (III, pp. 261–2) puts the range at 140–260 metres.

Stater, representing different multiples of drachmai (three in the case of the Corinthian staters at III 70.4, but possibly 24 in the case of the Phocean staters at IV 52.2; the Daric stater (VIII 28.4) was 20 drachmai).

Mna, consisting of 100 drachmai

Talent, consisting of 60 mnae or 6,000 drachmai (this was basically a measure of weight and coins were not actually minted to this value). The tribute and revenue from the Delian League was assessed in talents (see I 96 and II 13).

The practice of using standardised coinage for commercial exchanges developed in stages from the early sixth century BC. Most coins were minted in silver and most states (or groups of states) produced their own coinage, though the Athenian mints were accepted more internationally. Other currencies briefly mentioned are the Corinthian (III 70.4), Phocaean (IV 52.2), Aeginetan (V 47.6) and Chian (VIII 101). Coins were stamped with symbols on both sides to represent the state validating the coinage, for example Athena and the owl for Athens, and the turtle (later the tortoise) for Aegina.

It makes no sense to translate these denominations into contemporary coinage. But in terms of value we learn that a hoplite at Potidaea in 428 BC earned two drachma a day, one for himself and one for his attendant (III 17.4); the Thracian peltasts at VII 27.2 were thought too expensive at a drachma a day; while the references at VI 8.1 and 31.3 and VIII 29.1–2 suggest that a drachma a day was standard naval pay, though some of that might be withheld while on active service abroad (VIII 45).

The calendar

Thucydides demonstrates the difficulty of using traditional chronological systems in his attempts to specify the start of the war at II 2.1, which makes reference to three quite different systems of expressing dates. The difficulty is made worse by the fact that each major state had its own names for the different months and different dates for the start of new years (see IV 118–19 and V 54.2–3). The only international system was dating by the four-yearly Olympiads, the first of which was agreed to have been in 776 BC, but that does not seem to have become standard until the fourth century BC and Thucydides does not make any use of it, except for an occasional mention of Olympic victors (as at I 126.3). His own innovation was to divide the war by winters and summers and number

each year from the start of the war (II 1, V 20). This has the advantage of relating the divisions to the seasonal realities of campaigning and of offering an overall systematic structure, but it has the disadvantage that the narrative has to advance on several fronts simultaneously so that it is often much interrupted[1] (see, however, III 24.3n and VIII 45.1n).

Thucydides does not seem to have had any specific calendar date in mind for the official start of his 'summer' and 'winter' periods but tends to refer to familiar seasonal indicators like the state of the crops (see IV 1.1n).[2]

The Athenian New Year began with the new moon after the summer solstice and their months, with the approximate equivalences in our calendar, were:

Hecatombaeon (July)
Metageitnion (August)
Boedromion (September)
Pyanopsion (October)
Maemacterion (November)
Posideon (December)
Gamelion (January)
Anthesterion (February)
Elaphebolion (March)
Munychion (April)
Thargelion (May)
Scirophorion (June)

[1] A difficulty noted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Thucydides* 9): quoted in appendix 2, extract 13, pp. 596–7.

[2] Scholars have disagreed about this. Compare the long article by Gomme (III, pp. 699–725) with Hornblower (I, pp. 235–6) and Andrews (Gomme V, pp. 148–9), and see their further references.

Map 1. Greece and the Aegean


26°E
28°E
Hebrus
Euxine
(Black Sea)
THRACE
Byzantium
Abdera
Propontis
Thasos
CHERSONESE
Lampsacus
Hellespont
Cyzicus
Imbros
Sestos
Abydos
Mt Athos
40°N
Troy
Lemnos
Aegean Sea
Caicus
Mytilene
Lesbos
Scyros
AEOLIS
Sardis
Chios
IONIA
38°N
Ephesus
Maeander
Andros
Samos
Ceos
Tenos
Myconos
Miletus
CARIA
Delos
Paros
Leros
Naxos
Cos
Melos
Thera
Rhodes
36°N
0
50
100
150
200 km
0
25
50
75
100
125 miles
26°E
28°E

Map 1. (*cont*).

Map 2. Peloponnese and Central Greece

Map 3. Western Asia Minor and Hellespont

Map 4. Sicily and South Italy

The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians

[BOOK I]

Thucydides of Athens wrote the war of the Peloponnesians and the 1
Athenians, how they waged it against each other.[1] He began writing at its very outset, in the expectation that this would be a great war and more worthy of account than any previous one. He based this judgement on the grounds that both sides came into the war at the height of their powers and in a full state of military readiness; and he also saw that the rest of the Greek world had either taken sides right at the start or was now planning to do so. This was certainly the greatest ever upheaval among the Greeks, [2]
and one which affected a good part of the barbarian[2] world too – even, you could say, most of mankind. In respect of the preceding period and the [3]

[1] I have translated this first sentence very literally since this is effectively Thucydides' title-page. The key word is *sunegrapse*, 'he wrote', and 'the war' is its direct object; that is, 'he wrote the war' and he does not here or elsewhere call his work a 'history' (in contrast to Herodotus, see introduction, pp. xvi and xxiii), though he does go on to say that it is *axiologotatos*, especially worthy of a *logos* (a discussion, description or reasoned account). See glossary (pp. 637 and 634) on *sungraphein* and *logos*.

[2] He presumably has particularly in mind the non-Greek-speaking peoples immediately affected by the war (like the Thracians). The distinction between Greek and barbarian and the sense of identity that came from this was a matter both of language and culture and was largely formed in the fifth century in the aftermath of the Persian Wars. See further I 3.3 below and VI 18.2n; also 'barbarian' in glossary and more generally E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek definition through tragedy* (Oxford University Press, 1989) and E. S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

still remoter past, the length of time that has elapsed made it impossible to ascertain clearly what happened; but from the evidence I find I can trust in pushing my enquiries back as far as possible, I judge that earlier events were not on the same scale, either as regards their wars or in other respects.

It is evident that long ago what is now called 'Hellas'[1] had no stable 2
settlements; instead there were various migrations in these early times and each group readily abandoned their own territory whenever forced to do so by those with superior numbers. For there was no commerce [2]
and people were insecure about making contact with each other either by land or sea, so they each lived off their own land just at subsistence level and neither produced any surplus goods nor planted the ground, since they had no walls and never knew when some invader might come and rob them. They took the view that they could secure their daily needs for sustenance anywhere, and so were not exercised about uprooting and moving on, with the consequence that they had no cities of any size or other general resources to make them strong. It was always the finest land [3]
that was most subject to changes of population: namely, what is now called Thessaly, Boeotia, most of the Peloponnese excluding Arcadia, and the best parts elsewhere. And the quality of the land gave some groups more [4]
power than others, and that led to internal conflict,[2] which destroyed them and at the same time encouraged outsiders to have designs on them. Attica, at any rate, has been free of such strife from the earliest times [5]
on account of its poor soil and has always been inhabited by the same people. This is a good illustration of my argument that it was because of [6]
relocations that other places did not develop in the same way as Attica; for the most powerful figures from other parts of Greece, who were driven out either by war or internal conflict, resorted to the safety of Athens, and by becoming citizens right from the very earliest times they so increased the city's population that Attica could not contain them and the Athenians later sent out colonies to occupy Ionia as well.

A strong indication of the weakness of ancient peoples is this. Before the 3
time of the Trojan War Greece appears not to have united in any common action. Indeed, as far as I know, there was as yet no name for the country [2]
of 'Hellas' as a whole, but before the time of Hellen son of Deucalion

[1] *Hellas*, the ancient as well as the modern Greek name for the country, which I use here because of the word-play on its origins in I 3.2 below. Elsewhere I use the more familiar 'Greece' and 'Greeks'.

[2] *Stasis*, see further glossary p. 637; the classic discussion of *stasis* is at III 82–84.

that actual appellation did not even exist and different places took their names instead from the various tribes, predominantly the Pelasgians; however, when Hellen and his sons became powerful in Phthiotis and were called in to help other cities, one by one these now tended to be called 'Hellenes' by association, though it was a long time before that name prevailed among them all. Homer provides the best evidence for [3] this. Though born much later even than the Trojan War he never uses this name to refer to them all collectively nor to any of them separately, except for the followers of Achilles from Phthiotis, who were in fact the first Hellenes; instead he calls them 'Danaans', 'Argives' and 'Achaeans' in his poems. Moreover, he does not speak of 'barbarians' either – in my view because the Hellenes had not yet been identified by some contrasting name. These various 'Hellenes', then – whether they acquired the name [4] one by one as they came to understand the same language or were later called that collectively – because of their individual weakness and their lack of contact with each other, failed to achieve anything together before the Trojan War. And they only came together for this expedition because they were by then becoming more experienced seafarers.

Minos was the earliest known figure we hear about to acquire a navy **4** and he made himself master over most of what is now called the Hellenic Sea;[1] he ruled over the Cyclades and was in most cases the first to found colonies in them, driving out the Carians and installing his own sons as governors. He probably also cleared piracy from the seas as far as he was able, to enable his revenues to get through to him more easily. For in **5** earlier times the Greeks and those of the barbarians who lived on the coast of the mainland or on the islands turned to piracy as soon as the passage of ships between them built up. They were led in this by their most powerful men, who acted both for their own gain and to provide for the needy. They directed their attacks at cities that were unwalled and consisted of village settlements and raided these, making most of their living from this activity, which was not yet regarded as anything to be ashamed of but had a certain prestige. The same attitude is illustrated by [2] some people on the mainland even today who glory in such exploits, and by the early poets who invariably ask the same question of those arriving anywhere by sea – whether they are pirates, the assumption being that neither would those questioned disavow the practice nor would those concerned to know the answer blame them for it. On the mainland too [3]

[1] That is, the present-day Aegean Sea.

men raided each other, and even up to the present day many parts of Greece live by the old ways: the Ozolian Locrians, the Aeotolians, the Acarnanians and that part of the mainland generally. The habit of bearing arms in these mainland communities is a survival from the old practice of piracy. Indeed in the whole of Greece men used to go around armed, **6** since their settlements were unprotected and travel between them was unsafe, and so they got used to carrying weapons in their everyday life, just as barbarians do. The parts of Greece that still live this way are an [2] indication of practices once universal everywhere.

The Athenians were the first of the Greeks to put aside their arms and [3] adopt a more relaxed and comfortable lifestyle.[1] This taste for indulgence meant that only recently did the older men among the well-off give up wearing tunics of linen and pinning their hair back in a knot fastened with golden cicada brooches. The older generation of Ionians had, through their kinship with the Athenians, adopted the same style of dress and it persisted a long time among them. The Spartans[2] on the other hand were [4] the first to adopt a simpler form of dress in the modern fashion, and in other respects too the better off among them made every effort to share the lifestyle of the ordinary people. They were also the first to strip naked [5] for exercise in public and anoint themselves with oil afterwards. The old way, including at the Olympic Games, was for athletes to compete wearing loincloths to cover their genitals and this practice only ceased a few years ago. There are still those among the barbarians even now, particularly those from Asia, who wear loincloths for their boxing and wrestling contests. Indeed, one might point to many other respects in [6] which the customs of Greece long ago resemble those of the barbarians today.

[1] Sections 3–4 may look like a curious digression on social mores and fashion, but several of the details connect with important later themes: cicadas were 'earth-born' and therefore symbolic of the Athenian belief that they were the aboriginal inhabitants of Attica (see I 2.5 and II 36.1); the 'kinship' with Ionians is frequently invoked later in the formation and management of political alliances (see glossary under *suggeneia*); and the comparison of the Spartans prefigures lengthier contrasts the interested parties on both sides will make between the Athenian and the Spartan cultures (most famously the Corinthians at I 68–71 and Pericles at II 36–41).

[2] I translate *Lakedaimonios* as 'Spartan' throughout, as a more familiar term than 'Lacedaemonian' and often interchangeable with it, and in the relatively few (27) places where Thucydides uses *Spartiates* and may be intending a distinction I translate as 'Spartiate'. Laconia or Lacedaemon was the district in the south-east Peloponnese in which Sparta was the dominant city.

The cities that were more recently established, at a time when seafaring 7
was getting easier, were starting to have more ample resources and so were fortified with walls and were built right on the coastline; and they occupied isthmuses with a view to trade and to strengthen themselves against their neighbours. Ancient cities, by contrast, because of the long persistence of piracy were usually built away from the sea, whether on islands or on the mainland (since the pirates used to raid non-seafaring communities on the coast as well as plundering each other), and to this day these are still inland settlements.[1]

The islanders were just as much involved in piracy – these were Carians 8
and Phoenicians, who had settled most of the islands. There is evidence for this. When Delos was purified by the Athenians in the course of this war and all the graves of the dead were dug up, they found that more than half of them were Carian, recognisable from the style of the weapons buried alongside them and the manner of their burial, which is still practised
today. When the navy of Minos was established, however, travel between [2]
places by sea became easier (since he cleared the wrongdoers out of the
islands in the process of colonising most of them). So those who lived [3]
on the coast were now more able to pursue the acquisition of wealth and lived in greater security, some even building walls round their cities on the basis of their newfound prosperity. In their desire for material gain the weaker submitted to the domination of the stronger, while the stronger, with the advantage of more resources, made the smaller cities
subservient. This was already largely the situation when they later made [4]
the expedition against Troy.

In my view Agamemnon was able to assemble his expeditionary force 9
more because he was the most powerful figure of his day than because the suitors of Helen whom he was leading were bound by oaths of loy-
alty to Tyndareus.[2] According to the clearest traditional account of the [2]
Peloponnesians, Pelops was the first to achieve power there and, despite arriving as an immigrant, he gave his name to the place because of the great wealth he brought from Asia, coming to a people without means.

[1] Examples of the newer cities on the coast would be colonies like Samos and Syracuse, and examples of the older ones on land would be Argos and Athens; but archaeological discoveries have since complicated this distinction (see Hornblower I, pp. 27–8 and his references).

[2] An early signal (with 9.3) that Thucydides will look for explanations of events in more general terms than the sort of personal motives which figure so prominently in Homer, the tragedians and also in Herodotus. Tyndareus was the father of Helen of Troy and the suitors were supposed to have sworn to protect her.

And later his descendants were even better off. Eurystheus was killed in Attica by the Heracleidae, but Atreus was his uncle on his mother's side (having been banished by his father Pelops for killing Chrysippus) and it was to Atreus as his kinsman that Eurystheus had entrusted Mycenae and his realm when he left on his expedition. But when Eurystheus failed to return Atreus took over Mycenae and the whole of Eurystheus' kingdom. He was supported in this by the Mycenaeans, who feared the Heracleidae and also recognised Atreus' abilities and his popularity with the masses that he had courted. And so the descendants of Pelops became more powerful than those of Perseus.[1]

In my view then Agamemnon, with the combination of this inheritance [3] and his superior naval strength, was enabled to put together and launch this expedition less by good will than by the fear he inspired.[2] For he [4] evidently came with the largest contingent of ships himself and in addition supplied the Arcadians with theirs, as Homer has stated clearly – if he constitutes sufficient evidence; and in his account of the handing-down of the royal sceptre he further says that Agamemnon was 'lord over many islands and the whole of Argos'.[3] Being based on the mainland Agamemnon would not have held power over any islands except local offshore ones (which would not have been 'many'), unless he possessed a significant navy. And it is on this expedition that we must base our assumptions about what earlier ones were like.

Now, just because Mycenae was a small place – or because some other **10** township of that period does not now seem to amount to much, that is not a valid reason[4] to doubt the size of the joint force as reported by the poets and as traditionally accepted. For just suppose the city of Sparta [2] were wiped out and all that was left were its shrines and the foundations of its buildings, I think that years later future generations would find it hard to believe that its power matched up to its reputation. Yet in fact

[1] The essence of this complicated little story (made more complicated in the Greek by being just one long sentence through section 2) is that power shifted from the descendants of Perseus to those of Pelops through this sequence of family feuds and misfortunes. See the list of deities (pp. liv–lvi) for some of these figures.

[2] Fear as a motivating political cause recurs repeatedly throughout Thucydides, though usually as the explanation for antagonism rather than compliance (see, for example, the notes on I 23.6 and 75.3 and under *phobos* in the glossary p. 635).

[3] Homer, *Iliad* II 108. The sceptre was the symbol of royal power, passed in succession in this passage from Zeus to Pelops, Atreus, Thyestes and then to Agamemnon.

[4] Literally, 'anyone using exact evidence (*akribei semeio*) would not doubt', another reference to his self-consciously 'scientific' approach (see also I 22).

the Spartans occupy two-fifths of the Peloponnese and are leaders of the whole of it as well as of many allies beyond it. Nevertheless, because they are not united in one city[1] and have no lavish shrines or public buildings but instead live in village settlements in the traditional Greek manner, they would be underestimated. On the other hand, if the Athenians were to suffer the same fate they would be thought twice as powerful as they actually are just on the evidence of what one can see.

One should therefore keep an open mind and not judge cities by their [3] appearances rather than by their actual power; and one should accept that the Trojan expedition was the greatest of any up to that time but smaller than modern ones, assuming again that we can trust Homer's account here too, which as a poet he may well have exaggerated for effect, though even on his reckoning the expedition was comparatively small by our standards. He puts the size of the fleet at 1,200 ships and gives [4] the Boeotian contribution as 120 men a ship and that of Philoctetes as fifty a ship, thereby indicating in my view the maximum and minimum figures – at any rate he has not recorded the size of any other vessels in his Catalogue of Ships.[2] That the rowers were also all fighting men he has made clear in the case of Philoctetes' ships, for he describes all the oarsmen as archers. It is unlikely that there were many passengers apart from kings and others of high office, especially since they were to make the sea-crossing with military equipment on board and their boats were not fitted with upper decks but were built in the old pirate style. So if [5] you take a middle point between the largest and the smallest vessels you can see that not so many men went to Troy, considering that this was a combined expedition from the whole of Greece.

The reason for this was not so much shortage of men as shortage of 11 means. Because of their lack of supplies they took quite a modest army, limited to the size they thought could live off the land while on active service. After they won a battle on arrival, as they clearly did – otherwise they could not have fortified their camp[3] – even then they evidently did not exploit their power to the full but through their lack of provisions got diverted into farming the Chersonese and into plunder. With the Greek forces split this way the Trojans were enabled to resist them in battle for

[1] A 'synoecised' city, here with the emphasis on being physically concentrated in one place rather than politically unified (see glossary on *sunoikismos* and compare II 15.1 and 16.1).

[2] The inventory of the Greek fleet in Homer, *Iliad* II 484ff.

[3] This seems inconsistent with *Iliad* VII 336–40. See G. S. Kirk's *The Iliad: a commentary*, vol. II (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 276–8.

ten years, since they were a match for whatever force remained behind. If the Greeks had come with additional supplies at the outset[1] and had [2] applied their whole force to the war continuously, without resorting to plunder and farming, they would easily have prevailed in battle and captured Troy, since even with less than their full force they held the Trojans off with whatever part of the army was to hand; and if they had been able to settle down to a siege they would have taken Troy in less time and with less effort. But instead, just as a lack of resources led to the weakness of previous expeditions so this particular expedition, despite its great celebrity, demonstrably fell well short of its reputation and of the received tradition derived from the poets.

Of course, even after the Trojan War Greece was still undergoing 12 population changes and settlement, so there was no period of peaceful development. The long-delayed return of the Greeks from Troy caused [2] great political turmoil, and there was widespread civil strife in cities, causing the departure of exiles, who founded new cities. For example, the [3] present-day Boeotians were driven out of Arne by the Thessalians in the sixtieth year after the fall of Troy[2] and settled the land that was once called Cadmeïs and is now Boeotia (a proportion of them were settled in this land earlier and it was some of these who went on the expedition against Troy); and in the eightieth year after the fall of Troy the Dorians and the Heracleidae occupied the Peloponnese. After a long course of time Greece [4] emerged from her difficulties to enjoy a period of peace and security with a stable population. They then started to send out colonies, the Athenians colonising Ionia and the majority of the islands, the Peloponnesians most of Italy and Sicily and some places in the rest of Greece. All these colonies were founded after the Trojan War.

As Greece grew more powerful and became more active than before in 13 the acquisition of wealth, tyrannies[3] were established in the cities in most places (where previously there were hereditary kingships based on fixed

[1] Rather an offhand remark. The supply of fresh food must have been a problem for all invading armies of this period and all will have resorted to foraging to some degree. See V. D. Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, p. 329 n40, Gomme I, p. 16, and the difficulties reported at I 112.4, IV 27.1 and VII 13.

[2] We don't know exactly when Thucydides thought that was but inferences from other references suggest that he was assuming a date of about 1250 BC (see Hornblower I, p. 38 for the calculations).

[3] *Turannoi* were autocratic rulers and were a common phenomenon in Greek cities during the seventh and sixth centuries. The word did not acquire a pejorative connotation, however, until late in the fifth century. See glossary.

privileges[1]), revenues increased, and Greece began to equip itself with navies and came to embrace the element of the sea. The Corinthians are [2] said to have been the first to adopt something like the modern approach to ship-building, and it was in Corinth that triremes[2] were first constructed in Greece. Ameinocles, a Corinthian shipwright, apparently built four [3] ships for the Samians too, and it is about 300 years before the end of this war that he went to Samos.[3] The earliest sea battle we know about involved [4] the Corinthians against the Corcyraeans, about 260 years before the same date. The Corinthians, with their city established on the Isthmus, had [5] from the very earliest times engaged in commerce, while the Greeks of old, both those within the Peloponnese and those outside it, travelled more by land than by sea and passed through Corinthian territory on their way to see each other; and so the Corinthians became mightily rich, as the ancient poets indicate in calling the place 'Wealthy Corinth'.[4] And when the Greeks took to the sea more, the Corinthians acquired ships and cleared the sea of piracy, and by offering a market both by land and sea they made their city powerful through the income produced.

Later on the Ionians too became a great naval power, at the time of the [6] first Persian King Cyrus and his son Cambyses.[5] They went to war with Cyrus and for some time gained control of the seas in their own area. Polycrates too, who was tyrant at Samos at the time of Cambyses, was able through his sea power to make various islands subject to him, among them Rheneia, which he captured and consecrated to the Delian Apollo. And lastly the Phocaeans, when they were colonising Massalia, defeated the Carthaginians in a sea battle.

These were the most powerful of the fleets but apparently even these, **14** operating many generations after the Trojan War, had few triremes and were instead equipped with penteconters and long ships just like the earlier fleets. It was only a little before the Persian Wars and the death of [2]

[1] I have relocated this parenthesis to what seems the logical place. It is unclear if a causal relationship (in either direction) is implied between the growth in revenues and the political changes.

[2] Warships with three banks of oars that came to replace the older fifty-oared ships (penteconters, see glossary). On the construction and deployment of triremes, see Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*. The authors supervised the building of a life-sized working model of a trireme, see www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/trireme.

[3] That is, 704 BC. This is one of the remarks indicating that parts at least of this first book were written or revised after the end of the war in 404 BC.

[4] For example, Homer, *Iliad* II 570 and Pindar, *Ol.* XIII 4.

[5] Cyrus was king from 559 to 530, Cambyses from 530 to 522.

Darius (King of Persia after Cambyses) that triremes were available in any numbers to the tyrants in Sicily and to the Corcyraeans, and these were the last significant navies to be established in Greece before the invasion of Xerxes.[1] The Aeginetans and Athenians and a few others had only [3] acquired quite small fleets and these consisted mostly of penteconters. It was not until the last moment that Themistocles persuaded the Athenians, when they were at war with the Aeginetans and when the Persian invasion was imminently expected, to build the ships with which they actually fought their sea battles against them, and even these were not completely decked over.

These, then, were the navies of the Greeks, including both the older and **15** the later ones. Those who actively developed them, however, strengthened their positions greatly in terms of revenue and dominion over others, especially those of them who had insufficient land of their own and who sailed against the islands and subjugated these. But on land not a single [2] war took place from which any new power accrued. All those that did occur were individual disputes between neighbours, and the Greeks did not undertake distant expeditions abroad for foreign conquests. For they had not yet been brought together as subjects of the great powers,[2] nor did they of their own accord make expeditions in common as equal partners, but each fought their individual wars against neighbours. The main [3] exception was the war of long ago between Chalcis and Eretria when the rest of Greece divided itself into alliances with one side or the other.

Different states encountered different obstacles to growth. In the case **16** of the Ionians they were making great progress when King Cyrus and the Persians, after conquering Croesus, invaded all the territory between the River Halys and the sea and enslaved the cities on the mainland; and later Darius used his Phoenician fleet to conquer the islands too.

As for the tyrants in Greek cities, their first thoughts were always for **17** themselves – for their personal well-being and the aggrandisement of their private households, and they therefore ran their cities with safeguarding this uppermost in their minds and never achieved anything significant except in individual actions against their neighbours (and those in Sicily did indeed make very great advances in power this way). Thus on all sides Greece was for a long time held back from accomplishing anything

[1] Darius was king from 522 to 486 and Xerxes, his successor, from 486 to 465. See further the chronological table on p. xli for the dates of the invasions and the key battles.

[2] As they were later, in the Peloponnesian and the Delian Leagues.

notable in terms of joint action and the individual cities were lacking in enterprise.

18 Eventually, nearly all the tyrants in Athens and in the rest of Greece (most of which was ruled by tyrants from an earlier time) were finally deposed by the Spartans, though those in Sicily were an exception. Note that Sparta, though it went through the longest known period of civil strife after its present inhabitants, the Dorians, had taken possession of it, has nonetheless enjoyed good government[1] from a very early period and has always been free of tyranny; for rather more than four hundred years before the date of the end of this war they have had the same constitution and have consequently been powerful enough to settle the affairs of other states as well as their own. After this final expulsion of the tyrants from Greece, then, it was not many years before the Battle of Marathon took place between the Persians and the Athenians.

[2] Ten years after this the barbarian returned to invade Greece with a mighty armada, intent on enslavement. With great danger impending, the Spartans as the pre-eminent power assumed leadership of the allied Greek forces; and the Athenians, having resolved to abandon their city in the face of the Persian advance, packed up their possessions, took to their boats and so became sailors.[2] The barbarian was repulsed by a common effort, but not much later both the Greeks who were in revolt from the Persian King and those who had fought together as allies became divided between the Athenian and the Spartan sides. The Athenians and the Spartans were quite clearly the two greatest powers, the one dominant on land, the other by sea. [3] For a short time this defensive alliance held together, then the Spartans and the Athenians got into dispute and made war on each other with their respective allies, and any of the other Greeks who had ever had differences of their own now joined one of these groupings. So over the whole time from the Persian Wars up to the present war, while sometimes under truce and sometimes fighting (either with each other or with allies who had revolted), the two sides developed their readiness for war and got training in the hard school of experience.

19 The Spartans exercised their leadership not by making their allies subject to tribute but by taking good care to ensure that they were governed by oligarchies and served Spartan interests exclusively. The Athenians,

[1] *eunomia*, literally 'the state of having good laws', in this context stable government rather than civil strife (*stasis*).

[2] Surely a key comment, given the importance of Athenian naval power in the conflict to come.

by contrast, ruled by taking possession of the ships of allied cities over time, except for those of Chios and Lesbos, and by imposing fixed taxes on all these.[1] Their own military resource available for this war was therefore greater than it had ever been when the alliance against Persia was intact and at the height of its power.[2]

These, then, are my findings about early history, though it is diffi- **20**
cult to be sure of every detail in the evidence since people accept quite uncritically any reports of the past they get from others, even those relat-
ing to their own country. The great majority of Athenians, for example, [2]
think that Hipparchus was tyrant when he was killed by Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and are unaware that Hippias, as the oldest of the sons of Peisistratus, was the ruler while Hipparchus and Thessalus were his younger brothers. In fact on the very day in question, indeed right at the last minute, Harmodius and Aristogeiton suspected that Hippias had been told something by one of their fellow conspirators and believing him to be forewarned held back from him. But since they were still willing to risk their lives in achieving something before being arrested, when they ran into Hipparchus by the shrine called Leocorium while he was organ-
ising the Panathenaic procession, they killed him. The other Greeks too [3]
have many other mistaken beliefs about matters that are current now as well as about those from the dim and distant past, such as thinking that the Spartan kings each cast not one but two votes, and that they have a special Pitanate unit of troops (which never actually existed).[3] So little trouble do people take to search out the truth, and so readily do they accept what first comes to hand.

From the evidence I have presented, however, one would not go wrong **21**
in supposing that events were very much as I have set them out; and no one should prefer rather to believe the songs of the poets, who exaggerate things for artistic purposes, or the writings of the chroniclers, which are composed more to make good listening than to represent the truth, being impossible to check and having most of them won a place over time in the imaginary realm of fable. My findings, however, you can regard as derived

[1] Again excluding Chios and Lesbos, though that is not made explicit in the text.

[2] I assume the comparison is between Athenian power in 431 and its power in 480/79, but some have interpreted the latter reference to be to the *combined* power of the alliance in 480/79. See Gomme and Hornblower for the arguments.

[3] Herodotus must have been at least partly in mind in the case of these two examples (see his accounts at VI 57 and IX 53).

from the clearest evidence available for material of this antiquity.[1] And so [2]
back to this war. Men always think that the war they are at that moment engaged on is the greatest one ever, and then when it is over they are more impressed by earlier ones. Nevertheless, for those who look at the actual facts, this war will prove to be greater than the earlier ones.

As to what was said in speeches by the various parties either before **22**
they went to war or during the conflict itself, it was difficult for me to recall the precise details in the case of those I heard myself, just as it was for those who reported back to me on cases elsewhere. What I have set down is how I think each of them would have expressed what was most appropriate in the particular circumstances, while staying as close as possible to the overall intention of what was actually said.[2] As [2]
to the events of the war themselves, however, I resolved not to rely in my writing on what I learned from chance sources or even on my own impressions, but both in the cases where I was present myself and in those where I depended on others I investigated every detail with the utmost concern for accuracy. This was a laborious process of research, because [3]
eyewitnesses at the various events reported the same things differently, depending on which side they favoured and on their powers of memory. Perhaps the absence of the element of fable in my work may make it seem [4]
less easy on the ear; but it will have served its purpose well enough if it is judged useful by those who want to have a clear view of what happened in the past and what – the human condition being what it is – can be

[1] Section 1 is just one sentence in the Greek, difficult enough in construction to have led to a range of different translations, but H. D. Cameron in his commentary on Book I (2003) gives a super-literal version which sets out the structure of the sentence very clearly: 'From the stated evidences, nevertheless, someone would not go wrong by considering what I have recounted to be very much of that kind [i.e. reliable]; not, rather, believing as the poets have sung with decorated exaggeration concerning these matters or as the chroniclers, in a manner more attractive to hear than true, have composed things that are incapable of being disproved and things that have – many of them in time – won their way into the fabulous in a way that cannot be believed; but (one would not go wrong) considering [what I have recounted] to have been researched from the clearest evidences, given that the matters are sufficiently ancient.'

[2] The whole of I 22 has been much discussed, as an unprecedented statement of 'historical method' and scholars have in particular disagreed about what degree of interpretation and invention in Thucydides' rendering of the speeches is implied by 22.1. Many of the speeches are clearly far from being verbatim records (see notes to I 36.4, II 86.6, 87.3, III 52.5, 61.1), and Thucydides himself makes an important distinction in 22.2 with his treatment of the more narrative sections, on which the speeches are often a kind of internal commentary by the participants. See further introduction, pp. xxviii–xxix, the synopsis of speeches, pp. 623–7 and the discussions and references in Gomme I, pp. 141–8 and Hornblower I, pp. 59–60.

expected to happen again some time in the future in similar or much the same ways. It is composed to be a possession for all time and not just a performance-piece[1] for the moment.

23 The Persian War was the greatest action of earlier times, yet that was speedily settled in two battles at sea and two on land.[2] But the present war lasted a long time and in the course of it Greece was afflicted with [2] sufferings unprecedented in any comparable period of time. Never before were so many cities captured and laid waste – some by barbarians and others by Greeks fighting wars among themselves (and some of these cities went on to be resettled with new inhabitants after they had been captured). Never before were so many men made exiles, never before was there so much slaughter – some in the course of the war itself and some [3] as a result of internal conflicts. And things that in the past were reported on the basis of hearsay, where the actual evidence was rather flimsy, now ceased to be incredible: earthquakes, which spread to most parts of the world and were also very violent; eclipses of the sun, which became more frequent than those in past memory; great droughts in some places, and arising from them both famines and the most damaging thing of all, which wiped out part of the population – the deadly plague. All these disasters descended on them at the same time along with this war.

[4] The Athenians and Spartans began the war when they broke the thirty- [5] year truce they made after the capture of Euboea.[3] To explain why they broke it I first set out the reasons they gave and the matters of dispute between them so that no one in future ever need enquire how it came [6] about that so great a war arose among the Greeks. I consider the truest cause, though the one least openly stated, to be this: the Athenians were becoming powerful and inspired fear in the Spartans and so forced them into war. As for the reasons that *were* openly stated by each side for breaking the treaty and going to war, they were as follows.[4]

[1] *Agonisma*, a prize performance, the sort of party-piece Cleon criticises at III 38.7 (and see III 82.7 for use of the word again).

[2] Salamis and Artemisium (or possibly Mycale) were the sea battles, Thermopylae and Plataea the land ones. See the list of principal dates, pp. xli–xliv.

[3] In 446 BC, see I 115.1.

[4] This important section has been variously translated and interpreted. The basic problem is that we would have expected Thucydides to use the words *aitia* (here 'reason') and *prophasis* (here 'cause', though confusingly it can elsewhere mean 'allegation' or 'pretext') the other way round, to make the distinction we make in English between (underlying) causes and (asserted) pretexts. But the Greek terminology is more fluid, at least at this point in the history of the written language, as can be seen from other usages of these words: for example, *prophasis* at I 118.1, I 133, II 49.2 and VI 6.1; *aitia* at I 146 and

Epidamnus is a city on the right as you sail into the Ionian gulf. **24**
The neighbouring population are Taulantians, barbarians of the Illyrian
race. The city was colonised by Corcyraeans but the founding father[1] [2]
was Phalius son of Eratocleides, a Corinthian descended from the line
of Heracles, who was invited there from the mother-city very much
in accordance with ancient practice. Some Corinthians and some other
Dorians were also among the colonists. As time went on the Epidamnians [3]
became very powerful with a large population; but after internal conflicts [4]
lasting many years, it is said, they were decimated as a consequence of a
war with the neighbouring barbarians and were deprived of much of their
power. Finally, just before our present war, the common people there [5]
expelled the leading men,[2] who then joined the barbarians in attacking
the inhabitants of the city and harried them both by land and sea. When [6]
the Epidamnians in the city found themselves hard pressed they sent
envoys to Corcyra as their mother-city, petitioning them not to look on
while they were being destroyed but to reconcile the exiles with them
and bring the war with the barbarians to an end. This petition they made [7]
sitting as suppliants at the temple of Hera. The Corcyraeans refused their
supplication,[3] however, and sent them away empty-handed.

When the Epidamnians learned that no help would be forthcoming **25**
from Corcyra they were at a loss how to deal with the crisis and sent to
Delphi[4] to ask the god whether they should make the city over to the
Corinthians as their original founders and try to obtain some assistance
from them. The god responded that they should do so and should make
the Corinthians their leaders. So the Epidamnians went to Corinth in [2]
accordance with the oracle and committed the city to them, pointing
out that their founder was from Corinth and revealing the terms of
the oracle. They petitioned them not to look on while they were being
destroyed but to come to their defence. The Corinthians undertook to [3]

II 48.2; and both at I 146, III 13.1 and V 53 (see further glossary). The real contrast is not between logically different modes of explanation but between the 'stated' and the 'true' explanations.

[1] *Oikistes* (see glossary).

[2] I use here 'common people' for *demos* and 'leading men' for *dunatoi* (see also II 65.2 and glossary).

[3] *Hiketeia*, a somewhat formal procedure, characteristically undertaken on a consecrated site or in a ritual performance to request assistance, immunity or mercy (see glossary).

[4] Oracles were consulted on a wide range of topics, not just narrowly religious ones, and that at Delphi was the most important and prestigious. See also I 112.5n and general index.

give assistance, both as a matter of right,[1] since they regarded the colony to be at least as much theirs as the Corcyraeans', and also out of hatred for the Corcyraeans, since although they were colonists of theirs they were failing to show them respect. They did not present the traditional gifts of [4] honour at their common festivals, nor did they bestow the first portion of the sacrifices on a Corinthian as the other colonists did. Instead, the Corcyraeans looked down on them: for in terms of financial power the Corcyraeans were at that time the equals of the richest of the Greeks and in terms of military resource they were even stronger, sometimes boasting of their great superiority at sea and citing the earlier occupation of Corcyra by the famed naval power Phaeacia (which led them to build up their naval strength all the more and become no mean power – having 120 triremes available when they began the war).

With all these reasons for complaint, therefore, the Corinthians were **26** happy to send help to Epidamnus and called for volunteers to go as settlers, joining a detachment of Ambraciots, Leucadians and their own troops. They made their way on foot to Apollonia, a colony of the Corinthians, [2] for fear that the Corcyraeans might obstruct them if they travelled by sea.

When the Corcyraeans learned that the colonists and troops had arrived [3] at Epidamnus and that the colony had been given to the Corinthians, they reacted angrily. They immediately sailed with twenty-five ships,[2] and later with a second force, and peremptorily ordered the Epidamnians to take back their exiles (who had gone to Corcyra, pointing to the tombs and invoking ties of kinship as they petitioned them to reinstate them) and to dismiss the troops the Corinthians had sent as well as the settlers. The Epidamnians refused all these demands, so the Corcyraeeans began [4] operations against them with a force of forty ships, joined by the exiles they intended to reinstate and taking along the Illyrians too. Stationing [5] themselves in front of the city they proclaimed that any of the Epidamnians who so wished and also any foreigners could leave with impunity, otherwise they would be treated as enemies. When they declined to leave, the Corcyraeans laid siege to the city (which is on an isthmus).

The Corinthians for their part, when messengers came from Epi- **27** damnus with news of the siege, made preparations for an expedition. At the same time they made a general proclamation about a colony at Epidamnus, offering volunteers full and equal rights of citizenship;

[1] *Dikaion*, here both a right and a duty.
[2] It was about 150 miles from Corcyra to Epidamnus. See map 1 (p. lx).

and they said anyone who did not wish to sail at once but nonetheless wanted to participate in the colony could deposit fifty Corinthian drachmai and stay behind. There were many who sailed and many too put down the money. They also asked the Megarians to join in providing a [2] convoy of ships, in case they should be prevented from sailing by the Corcyraeans; and the Megarians provided them with eight ships to join the escort, while Pale in Cephallenia added four more. They made the same request of the Epidaurians who provided five; the Hermionians provided one, the Troezenians two, the Leucadians ten and the Ambraciots eight. From the Thebans they requested money, as they did from the Phliasians, while from the Eleans they requested unmanned ships and money. The Corinthians themselves provided thirty ships and 3,000 hoplites.[1]

When the Corcyraeans learned of these preparations they went to **28** Corinth, taking with them Spartan and Sicyonian envoys, and told the Corinthians to withdraw the troops and settlers they had in Epidamnus since they had no part in the place. If the Corinthians had any counter- [2] claims they would be willing to submit to arbitration in the Peloponnese by any states both of them agreed upon; and whichever party it was adjudged the colony belonged to should prevail. They were also willing to submit the matter to the oracle at Delphi. War, however, they advised [3] against; otherwise, they said, they in turn would be compelled, if the Corinthians forced them into it, to make new friends not of their choosing and different in kind from their current ones in order to get help.[2] The [4] Corinthians replied that if they withdrew the ships and the barbarians from Epidamnus they would consider the matter; but meanwhile it was quite inappropriate for there to be arbitration while the siege was still going on. And the Corcyraeans responded that they would do this if the [5] Corinthians too would withdraw their men in Epidamnus; but they were also prepared for both sides to remain in place and make a truce pending arbitration.[3]

[1] Hoplites were the more heavily armed infantrymen and the most important component in Greek land forces. See glossary p. 629.

[2] Athens is the unspoken threat here.

[3] The exchanges between the two sides in I 28 nicely illustrate the escalation of the conflict at this early stage, where each side could at various points easily withdraw or settle, but each feels impelled to press for some advantage in doing so, until a confrontation becomes inevitable, which both have therefore implicitly willed.

The Corinthians, however, would have none of this, but when their 29
ships were fully manned and their allies had arrived they sent a herald[1] on
ahead to declare war on the Corcyraeans, then setting off with seventy-
five ships and 2,000 hoplites they sailed for Epidamnus to join battle
with them. In command of the ships were Aristeus son of Pellichus, [2]
Callicrates son of Callias and Timanor son of Timanthus; and in command
of the infantry were Archetimus son of Eurutimus and Isarchidas son of
Isarchus. When they reached Actium in the region of Anactoria, where [3]
there is a temple of Apollo at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, the
Corcyraeans sent on a herald in a small boat telling the Corinthians
not to sail against them; and at the same time they manned their ships,
strengthening the older ones to make them seaworthy and getting the
others ready. The herald reported a hostile reaction from the Corinthians [4]
and when their ships were fully manned (eighty of them in all, for forty
were besieging Epidamnus), they put to sea, drew up their battle-lines
and engaged the Corinthians in battle. The Corcyraeans won a complete [5]
victory and destroyed fifteen of the Corinthian ships. On the same day, as
it turned out, the Corcyraeans besieging Epidamnus forced it to come to
terms, the conditions being that they would sell the foreigners[2] as slaves
and keep the Corinthians as prisoners of war pending further decisions.

After the sea battle the Corcyraeans set up a trophy[3] at Leucimne, 30
a headland in Corcyraean territory, and then put to death all the other
captives they had taken, except the Corinthians whom they kept as pris-
oners. Later on, when the Corinthians and their allies had retreated with [2]
their ships in defeat, the Corcyraeans assumed control of the whole sea in
that area, and sailing to the Corinthian colony at Leucas they ravaged the
land and set fire to the Eleans' harbour at Cyllene because the Eleans had
provided ships and money to the Corinthians. And for most of the time [3]
after the sea battle they kept control of the sea and harried the allies of
the Corinthians with attacks on water until towards the end of summer,
when their allies were feeling their sufferings, the Corinthians dispatched
ships and an army which encamped at Actium and by Cheimerium in
Thesprotis to protect Leucas and all the other cities that were friendly to
them. The Corcyraeans set up opposing positions at Leucimne with their [4]

[1] *Kerux*. Heralds had an important function in conveying official messages, almost always orally. They were identified by staffs of office and were given safe passage.

[2] The Ambraciots and Leucadians, see I 26.1.

[3] The victors in any battle usually set up a 'trophy' on the battle-field, consisting of some captured armour raised on a pole.

ships and infantry. Neither side made a move to sail against the other but they faced each other throughout the summer, and when winter came both sides went back home.

31 For the whole of the year after the sea battle and the next year the Corinthians, in a mood of anger about the war with the Corcyraeans, were building ships and preparing the strongest possible fleet, recruiting oarsmen both from the Peloponnese itself and from the rest of Greece with the promise of pay. When the Corcyraeans learned of these prepa- [2] rations they became alarmed; and since they were not allied by treaty to any of the Greeks and had not enrolled themselves either in the Athenian league or the Spartan one they decided to go to the Athenians seeking to become allies of theirs and to try and find some help from that quarter. When the Corinthians learned of this they too went to Athens [3] to put their case, to prevent the addition of the Athenian fleet to the Corcyraean becoming an obstacle to their settling the war as they would wish. An assembly[1] was held where the two parties made their opposing [4] arguments and the Corcyraeans spoke first as follows.[2]

32 'Athenians, it is only right[3] that people who go to their neighbours asking for help, as we do now, but who have no prior claim on them arising from some great service rendered or from an alliance, should demonstrate certain things at the outset: first, and most important, that there really are advantages in what they request, or at least no positive disadvantages; and then that their lasting gratitude can be relied upon. If they do not establish these things convincingly they should not be upset if they are disappointed in their appeal. Now in this case the Corcyraeans [2] have sent us here to ask for an alliance, in the confidence that they will be able to give you firm assurances on exactly these points.

In terms of our present request, however, this past policy of ours turns [3] out to be both illogical from your point of view and also prejudicial to our own best interests in the current circumstances. Before this we never [4] voluntarily made an alliance with anyone, but we have now come to seek one from another party; and at the same time as a consequence of this

[1] *Ekklesia*, the forum for a general political meeting to debate issues of policy, involving all the male citizens. See glossary.

[2] We do not know whether more than one member of a delegation of this kind actually spoke. These are the first of the speeches reported directly – and ostensibly in full. Thucydides himself might have been present on this occasion as an interested citizen (and having already decided to write his work).

[3] *Dikaion* (what is 'right' or 'just') is emphasised as the first word in this appeal, though in fact the subsequent arguments rely wholly on considerations of expediency not justice.

policy we now stand isolated in our present war with the Corinthians. So what we used to think of as prudent behaviour on our part – avoiding any external alliance that could expose us to sharing the risks in a neighbour's policy – is now revealed as a misjudgement and a source of weakness.[1] It is true that we did single-handedly repel the Corinthians in the sea [5] battle we had with them; but now that they have set out to attack us with a larger force drawn from the Peloponnese and the rest of Greece, we see that we are not strong enough to prevail through our own resources alone; and since it will be very dangerous for us to fall under their power, we are forced to ask for help from you and everyone else. So we should be forgiven if we now venture on a course contrary to our previous policy of non-involvement[2] – our failure here is more a matter of judgement than character.

If you accept our case you will achieve a happy combination of several 33
results: first, you will be rendering help to people who are being wronged, not to those who are inflicting harm upon others; then, if you accept into an alliance people whose most vital interests are at stake, you can certainly expect to see abiding proofs of their gratitude; and furthermore, we have built up a navy which is greater than any but yours. Just think – what [2] could be a greater stroke of luck for you, or more irksome to your enemies, if an additional force you would have paid so much to have and would have been so grateful for comes to you of its own accord, unsolicited, and offers itself up at no risk or expense on your part, bringing you honour in the world at large, the gratitude of those you are directly helping and more power to your own cause? Few people in history have had all those opportunities at the same time; and conversely, few people seeking an alliance are in a position to offer the relationship no less in terms of security and honour than they derive from it.

As to the war, in which we could be of service to you, any of you who [3] thinks that it will not happen is deluded and is failing to understand the

[1] It is ironic that it should be the Corcyraeans who are here describing how a virtue (*sophrosune* 'prudence', 'moderation', 'self-discipline') can turn into or be seen as a failing (see I 37.2 and glossary). Corcyra is the example used in the famous set-piece on the breakdown of society in time of war which describes the consequent changes in the use of value terms (III 82–84).

[2] *apragmosune*, literally 'non-activity', regarded in this context as a virtue to be contrasted with *polupragmosune*, the sort of interference a busy-body might engage in. See VI 87.3n and the Corinthians' warnings about the inertia of the Spartans (I 69.4) and the restless energy of the Athenians (I 70.9).

situation: the Spartans are ready to go to war through their fear of you;[1] while the Corinthians, who are influential with them and hostile to you, are seeking to dispose of us first in preparation for a direct attempt on you, their intention being to prevent us uniting in a common enmity to stand against them; they mean to keep the advantage in one of two ways, either by damaging us or enlarging their own strength.[2] Our task, therefore, [4] is to take the initiative – with an offer from us and an acceptance from you – so that we anticipate their strategy rather than reacting to it.

If the Corinthians argue that you have no right to receive colonists **34** of theirs into an alliance, they should learn the lesson that every colony which is well treated holds the mother-city in esteem but when they are wronged they become estranged. Colonists are sent out not to be the slaves but the equals of those who are left behind. And it is clear enough that [2] the Corinthians were in the wrong, because when they were invited to submit to judicial arbitration over Epidamnus they preferred to prosecute their case by act of war rather than through a fair settlement. Let their [3] behaviour to us, their allies, be a clear warning to you, so that you are neither led astray by their deceit nor support any direct requests they may make. The people with the best long-term security are those with the least cause to regret doing favours to an enemy.

Nor will you be breaking your treaty with the Spartans by accepting **35** us, since we are allies of neither side. It is stipulated in the treaty that [2] if any Greek city is not a part of any alliance they are permitted to join whichever side they please. It would therefore be an outrage if they are [3] allowed to recruit for their navy not only from those inside their alliance but also from the rest of Greece – and particularly from among your own subjects – while they debar us from an alliance that is readily available and from any other sources of help, and then call it a crime if you are persuaded to grant our request. In fact it is we who will hold you far [4] more at fault if you are not so persuaded: you will be rejecting us, though we are the ones in danger and are not your enemies, whereas they are the enemies and aggressors and not only will you be failing to stand in their way but you will actually be looking on while they build up their

[1] The word translated here as 'fear' is *phobos* and that is also the word used when a similar point is being made at I 23.6 and I 88. See glossary for the related word *deos*, which we might have expected here, and see introduction, pp. xxix–xxxiv and I 23.6n on his fluidity of usage generally.

[2] That is, either Corcyra will be defeated and so taken out of the equation, or her forces will be added to theirs.

forces from your own empire. That cannot be right. You should either be preventing them from hiring mercenaries from within your empire or else helping us as well on whatever terms you can be persuaded to accept; but best of all would be for you openly to accept us as your allies and support us.

We can point to many advantages in this, as we said at the beginning, [5] the greatest being that you and we share the same enemies (which is the surest basis for trust) and that these enemies are by no means weak but are well able to inflict damage on those who defect from them. Moreover, it is one thing to alienate a land power offering an alliance, but quite another in the case of a naval power: you should instead do everything you can to prevent anyone else acquiring ships, and failing that you must make friends with whoever emerges as the strongest.

There may be those of you who do see the advantages in what we **36** have said but fear that to take this advice will mean breaking the treaty with Sparta.[1] Well, they should understand that their fear if backed by strength will be frightening enough to their adversaries, whereas being confident but weak – as a result of rejecting us – will do less to intimidate an enemy who is strong. They must understand, moreover, that you are discussing the future of Athens as much as that of Corcyra, and that you will not be providing for her best interests if, in the face of a war which is imminent and all but upon us, you hesitate just for short-term considerations to acquire a place whose friendship or enmity has such momentous consequences for you.[2] Apart from the other advantages it [2] offers, Corcyra is well situated on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily, so you could prevent any naval force coming from there to join the Peloponnesians or being sent there from here.

We can summarise our overall argument in just a few words, to demon- [3] strate why you should not abandon us. There are three navies of any significance in Greece: yours, ours and that of the Corinthians. If you are going to stand by and let two of these come together into one unit with the Corinthians seizing us first, then you will end up fighting the combined navies of the Corinthians and the Peloponnesians; but if you accept us as allies you will be able to take them on with our ships added to yours.'

[1] The 'Thirty Year Treaty' of 446 BC (see I 23.4 and I 115.1).

[2] Section 1 is all one long and complex sentence in the Greek (described cheerfully as 'a lollapalooza of a sentence' by H. D. Cameron in his commentary). I have broken it up but have tried to preserve its internal structure by inserting suitable connectives.

Such was the speech of the Corcyraeans.[1] The Corinthians then [4]
responded as follows.

'We are forced[2] to make some initial comments. These Corcyraeans 37
have not confined their speech to the question of your receiving them into an alliance but have also argued that we are the ones in the wrong and that they are the undeserving victims of war. We too therefore must address both these points before going on to the rest of the argument, so that you may be the better prepared to see the merits of our claim and will have good grounds for resisting their appeals.

They say it was "prudence" on their part not to make alliances with [2]
anyone. But in fact their motives for this policy were bad ones not good, since they did not want any ally to be a witness to their crimes nor did they want to be disgraced if they called one in to help. Moreover, the [3]
autonomy their city's location provides also allows them to act as their own judges of any wrongs they inflict on others rather than to be subject to terms of legal agreement[3] – the reason being that they hardly ever travel to their neighbours' ports but very regularly receive visits from others who are forced to put in at Corcyra. This is why they maintain this front [4]
of virtuous neutrality – not to avoid becoming involved in the crimes of others, but in order to commit their own crimes alone, to use force when they have the power to do so, to take advantage when they can get away with it, and always to brazen out their gains. Yet if they were the honest men they claim to be, then the greater their immunity from attack by their neighbours the greater the chance they would have to demonstrate their good character by both offering and accepting just terms.[4]

[1] Literally, 'such were the things they said', which is Thucydides' stock way of concluding a speech. Occasionally he uses an expression that might seem to imply a more precise record of the speech in question ('these were the things he said', III 29.2) and occasionally a more general expression ('he spoke thus/in this way', I 85.3), but it seems unlikely that these variations signify real distinctions in the degree of verbatim authenticity he is claiming in each case (see I 22). I have, however, marked these non-standard usages where they occur. Similarly, where he is introducing a speech he varies between 'they spoke such things' and 'they spoke these things', but here our expression 'they spoke as follows' is suitably ambiguous and I have usually adopted that for both.

[2] The speech begins with the word *anankaion* ('necessary') and I have tried to reflect that emphasis, which matches the emphasis on *dikaion* ('right') at the start of the Corcyraeans' speech – and is just as disingenuous.

[3] *Sunthekai*, see glossary under *spondai* (treaties).

[4] The standard phrase, which in effect means 'accepting judicial arbitration' or 'recognising their equality under the law'.

But in fact this is not how they behave, either towards ourselves or 38
others. Although they are colonists of ours they have all along been
disaffected and are now at war with us, complaining that they were not
sent out to be ill-treated. We for our part say that we did not establish [2]
the colony to be insulted by them but to be treated with proper respect as
their recognised leaders. We are certainly honoured by our other colonies [3]
and the colonists are very devoted to us. It is therefore evident that if most [4]
of these people are satisfied with us there can be no good reason why the
Corcyraeans alone should be *dis*satisfied with us; nor are we now going to
war with them without good reason, but only as a result of being seriously
wronged. The honourable course for them, even if we were at fault, would [5]
have been to defer to our mood of resentment, and then it would have
been shameful for us to override their moderation with force. But as it is, [6]
in the arrogance of their great material wealth they have wronged us time
and again and never more so than in the case of our colony, Epidamnus,
which they made no claim to when it was in trouble but seized when we
came to its rescue and which they now hold by force.

They say, of course, that they were willing at an earlier stage to have the 39
matter decided by arbitration; but that does not count for much coming
from the party with the advantage, who make their proposals from a
position of security, rather than from those who act on their professions
of good faith[1] *before* engaging in hostilities. These men, however, came [2]
forward with their fine offer of arbitration not before they had laid siege to
the place but only after they realised that we would not simply stand idly
by. And now they come here, after the fact of their own transgressions
at Epidamnus, and effectively request that at this point you become not
their allies but their accomplices in crime, and that you receive them into
an alliance at a time when they are in dispute with us. What they should [3]
have done was to make their approach when they were completely secure:
not when we have been wronged and they are at risk; nor when you who
never took a share in their power will now have to give them a share of
your aid, and when you who had no part in their misdeeds will now have
to bear an equal part of the blame from us; for only if they had long since
made you party to their power should they have made you party to its
consequences.

We have shown, then, that we for our part have come here with rea- 40
sonable grounds for complaint and that they are violent and grasping

[1] Literally, 'place both their deeds and their words on an equal basis'.

people.[1] The next point you need to understand is a matter of justice – that you have no *right* to receive them into your alliance. Even though [2] the treaty specifies that any state not already included on the list can join whichever side it wishes, this provision is not meant for those who commit malicious acts of aggression against others, but for a state requesting protection when it is not at the same time defecting from some other relationship and is not about to bring war rather than peace to those taking them on as allies (if they are wise).[2] And that is just the misfortune you may suffer if you do not listen to us now. You would not just become [3] their supporters but also our enemies, instead of our allies by treaty. We would be forced, if you join their side, to defend ourselves against you as well as against them.

The right thing for you to do, surely, is to stand aside from both parties [4] or, failing that, to take the opposite course of joining us against them. You do at least have a treaty with the Corinthians, whereas with the Corcyraeans you have never even been in a state of truce. And you should not establish the precedent of admitting as allies those who have rebelled against the other side. After all, when the Samians were in revolt from [5] you and the other Peloponnesians were split in their voting on whether they ought to give them support, we did not cast our vote against you but publicly supported the right of each power to discipline its own allies. But [6] if you are going to aid and abet wrongdoers, then you will find that just as many of your own allies will come over to our side and the precedent you establish will work more against you than against us.

These, then, are the considerations of justice that we urge on you – and **41** they are quite sufficient according to the laws of the Greeks; but we also have a claim on your gratitude to request. We think it is one you should grant in the present circumstances, since we are neither enemies in the business of harming each other nor yet friends with a close understanding. It is this. Once, when you were short of fighting-ships for your war against [2] Aegina before the Persian conflict, you borrowed twenty ships from us Corinthians. That good turn gave you the upper hand over the Aeginetans,

[1] *biaioi* and *pleonektai*: an anticipation of the traits revealed in the stress of civic breakdown, III 82.

[2] That is, if they are wise enough *not* to let them do this. This awkward parenthesis is usually translated in some more or less strained way to try and make some proper sense of it, but I think Thomas Arnold (quoted by Bloomfield I, pp. 74–5) expresses the translator's real problem rather nicely, 'the words [if they are wise] have in reality nothing to do with the sentence as it is actually expressed, but rather with another sentence which is suggested as it were parenthetically to the writer's mind, but which he did not set down in words'.

just as our good turn over Samos, when we deterred the Peloponnesians from helping the Samians, gave you the chance to punish them. And these were favours given at critical times, when men are engaged with the enemy and oblivious to every consideration apart from victory. In those circumstances they count as a friend anyone who helps them, even if he was previously an enemy, and count as hostile anyone who stands in their way, even if he happens to be a friend, since in their immediate preoccupation with victory they are prepared to damage even their closest relationships.[1]

42 Bear these favours in mind, then, making sure the younger ones among you are told about them by the older; and recognise your obligation to support us in like manner. Don't take the view that we may be right in what we say but that if it comes to war your advantage lies elsewhere. [2] One's advantage is in fact best served by making the fewest mistakes; and the future prospect of war, with which the Corcyraeans are trying to scare you and lead you astray, remains just an uncertain possibility. You should not, therefore, be so carried away by that prospect that you enter into a hostile relationship with the Corinthians, which will then be a definite fact and very much in the present. The prudent course would rather be to dispel some of the prevailing suspicion over Megara.[2] [3] A well-timed favour of that kind, however slight or late in the day, can outweigh a larger grievance. [4] And don't be led astray by their offer of a mighty naval alliance. It is a surer source of strength to avoid wronging one's equals than to make risky gains in the flush of excitement about some immediate prospect.

43 Now that we find ourselves involved in the sort of situation on which we pronounced in Sparta, namely that each power should discipline its own allies, we claim the right to the same treatment from you – you benefited from our vote [2] and you should not now damage us with yours. Pay back like with like, recognising that this is one of those moments which most define you as a friend or enemy, according to whether you aid or oppose. Do not accept these Corcyraeans as your allies in defiance of our wishes and do not support them in their crimes. [4] This is the proper course of action for you and also the policy that best serves your own interests.'

[1] *Ta oikeia*, which could mean 'their closest friends and kin' or 'their own interests' (or perhaps both).

[2] Presumably a reference to the incident described in I 67.4, which dates to the 430s, though possibly referring to earlier grievances (see I 103.4), which are said to be the origin of the deep bitterness between Corinth and Athens.

Such was the Corinthians' speech. The Athenians listened to both **44**
sides and there were actually two meetings of the assembly.[1] At the first
they were quite receptive to the arguments of the Corinthians, but at
the later one they changed their minds in favour of making an alliance
with the Corcyraeans; this would not be a full alliance, where they would
recognise the same friends and enemies (for if the Corcyraeans required
them to sail with them against Corinth they would be breaking the treaty
with the Peloponnesians), but a defensive alliance[2] to protect each other's
territory against attacks, whether on Corcyra or Athens or the allies of
either. They thought that there would in any case be a war with the [2]
Peloponnesians[3] and they did not want Corcyra, with a fleet of the size
they had, to fall into Corinthian hands; they wanted rather to bring the
two of them into collision and wear each other out as much as possible, so
that the Corinthians and other naval powers would be much weakened,
should the need arise and they had to go to war with them. At the same [3]
time it was clear to them that the island of Corcyra had a favourable
location on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily.

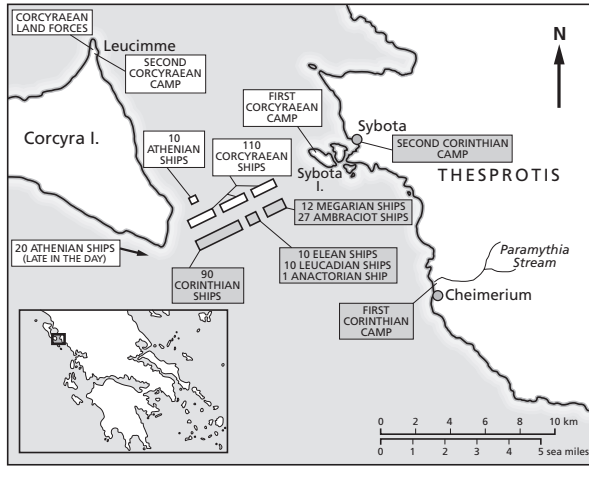
So minded, the Athenians accepted the Corcyraeans as allies and soon **45**
after the Corinthians had left they dispatched ten ships to help them.
The commanders of these were Lacedaemonius son of Cimon, Diotimus [2]
son of Strombichus and Proteas son of Epicles. They instructed them [3]
not to engage the Corinthians in battle unless they attacked Corcyra or
were about to land there or on some other part of their territory, in which
case they were to use every means to prevent them. The object of these
instructions was to avoid breaking the treaty.

These ships arrived at Corcyra and the Corinthians, when they had **46**
made their preparations, sailed against Corcyra with 150 ships. Of these,
ten were from the Eleans, twelve from the Megarians, ten from the Leu-
cadians, twenty-seven from the Ambraciots, one from Anactorians and
ninety from the Corinthians themselves. The commanders of each smaller [2]
contingent were drawn from their own cities, while for the Corinthians
the commanders were Xenocleides son of Euthycles and four others.

[1] A case where we would like to have had more information about why there were two meetings, what the different speeches at each were and whether it was Pericles who finally swayed them (as the story in Plutarch, *Pericles* 29.1, suggests).

[2] *Epimachia*, a rare technical term. The usual word for an alliance is *summachia* which I have here translated 'full alliance' just to make the contrast. See also glossary.

[3] He does not quite say, here at least, that such a war was 'inevitable' (which is the usual translation but a more loaded expression).



Map 5. Battle of Sybota (433)[1]

They sailed from Leucas and when they had made the mainland shore [3]
opposite Corcyra they anchored at Cheimerium in the territory of Thes-
protis. There is a harbour there and above it and inland from the sea [4]
lies the city of Ephyra in the Elaean district of Thesprotis. Nearby the
Acherousian lake discharges into the sea, and the River Acheron (which
gives it its name) runs through Thesprotis and issues into this lake. The
River Thyamis also runs here, forming the boundary between Thesprotis
and Cestrine, and the promontory of Chemeirion rises between these two
rivers. This is the point on the mainland, then, where the Corinthians
came to anchor and made their encampment.

When the Corcyraeans became aware of their approach they manned **47**
110 ships, led by Miciades, Aesimides and Eurybatus, and stationed
themselves at one of the islands that are called Sybota, the ten Attic[2]
ships being there with them. Their infantry were at the promontory of [2]
Leucimme along with 1,000 hoplites of the Zacynthians who had come in
support. On the mainland the Corinthians also had the support of many [3]

[1] Based on J. S. Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme* (second edition, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 64.

[2] He calls them 'Attic' or 'Athenian' apparently without distinction and henceforth I translate them all as 'Athenian'.

barbarians, since the people on the mainland in that area have always been friendly to them.

When the Corinthians had made their preparations they took provisions **48**
for three days and set off by night for Cheimerium ready for battle. As [2]
they were sailing along at dawn they caught sight of the Corcyraeans
out at sea and heading towards them. As soon as they saw each other [3]
the two sides drew up opposing battle-lines. The Athenian ships were
on the right wing of the Corcyraeans, while the Corcyraeans themselves
were extended in three divisions across the rest of the front, each led
by one of the three commanders. That was the Corcyraean formation. [4]
On the Corinthian side the Megarian and Ambraciot ships took the right
wing and the rest of the allies were distributed in the centre, while the
Corinthians themselves took the left wing with the fastest ships and were
drawn up against the Athenians and the right wing of the Corcyraeans.

The lines met and when the standards had been raised on each side **49**
they joined battle. Both sides had many hoplites on deck, together with
many archers and javelin-throwers, being still set up to fight in a very
clumsy and old-fashioned way. The battle was a fierce one, but not so [2]
much because of their skills; indeed it was more like a battle on land.
When they clashed with each other they could not easily separate because [3]
of the crowded throng of ships and they placed most of their hopes for
victory in the hoplites on deck, who fought a pitched battle while the ships
stood still; there were no breakthrough manoeuvres,[1] but they relied in
their fighting more on passion and brute strength than on science.[2] On [4]
all sides, therefore, there was a terrific commotion and great disorder in
the sea battle; in the course of it the ships from Athens would come up to
the Corcyraean ones if ever these were hard pressed and so cause alarm
in the opposition, but their commanders did not initiate attacks for fear
of disobeying the orders from Athens. The right wing of the Corinthians [5]
suffered particularly: the Corcyraeans with twenty ships routed them
and pursued them to land in disarray; sailing right up to their camp they
went ashore and burned the deserted tents and looted their possessions.
In that quarter, then, the Corinthians and their allies were defeated and [6]
the Corcyraeans got the better of them. But on the left side, where
the Corinthians themselves were, the Corinthians won decisively, for

[1] *Diekploi*, a standard technical manoeuvre whereby the ships 'broke through' the opposing line and then turned and attacked from behind. See further glossary.

[2] Here *episteme* 'knowledge', which in this context means much the same as *techne* 'skill' (as in 49.2 above and II 87.4).

the Corcyraeans were missing the twenty ships involved in the pursuit and these were from what was already a smaller number overall. The [7] Athenians, seeing that the Corcyraeans were under pressure, now began to help them with less hesitation; at first they stood off and avoided ramming any ship; however, when it was clearly becoming a rout and the Corinthians were pushing on there came a point where every man got involved in the action and distinctions were no longer made, and the situation finally made it unavoidable that they came into direct conflict, Corinthians against Athenians.[1]

After this rout the Corinthians, instead of towing off the hulls of the **50** ships they had disabled, turned their attention to the men and cut among the ships more intent on slaughter than on taking prisoners; and they unwittingly began killing their own friends, being unaware that their right wing had been defeated. For there were many ships on both sides [2] spread out over a large expanse of sea and when they engaged with each other it was not easy to recognise who the victors or the vanquished were.[2] For never before had quite so many ships been involved in a sea battle in which Greek fought against Greek.

When the Corinthians had chased the Corcyraeans to land they turned [3] to the wrecks and their own dead, most of whom they recovered and brought to Sybota, where the land forces of the barbarians had come up in their support (this Sybota[3] being a deserted harbour in Thesprotis). After doing this they again mustered their forces and sailed out against the Corcyraeans. And the Corcyraeans in turn sailed out to oppose them [4] with those of their ships that were still seaworthy and all the others they had left, together with those from Attica, fearing that the Corinthians might attempt a landing on their territory. By now it was late in the [5]

[1] Literally, 'it fell to this point of necessity (*anankes*) that they laid hands on each other, the Corinthians and Athenians'. A very significant and dramatic moment in the escalation of the war, emphasised by the word order.

[2] This may sound surprising, but the physical conditions of ancient warfare must have been quite chaotic and there were no uniforms or the like to aid recognition in the fog of war. See the vivid descriptions in Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, pp. 237–49, for example 'Perhaps the most common method of dispatching defeated seamen was to sail amid the wreckage and spear them like fish' (p. 248).

[3] Evidently different from the Sybota islands in 47.1, though Thucydides keeps alternating confusingly between them in his references in 50–52. For a detailed account of the geography and the tactics of this engagement, see Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, pp. 62–9.

day and the paean had been sung to sound the advance.[1] And then the Corinthians suddenly began to back water. They had spotted twenty Athenian ships sailing towards them, which the Athenians had sent out later to supplement the first ten, feeling (rightly, in the event) that the Corcyraeans might be defeated and that their ten ships might be too few to protect them.

51 The Corinthians were the first to see these ships and, suspecting that they were from Athens and that there were actually more than they had seen, they started to retreat. But the Corcyraeans did not have such a [2] clear view of the approaching ships and did not notice them, so they were very surprised to see the Corinthians backing away, until some of them did catch a sight and exclaimed, 'Ships over there, coming our way.' Then they too started to withdraw, since it was now getting dark, and the Corinthians turned back and broke off the action. So the two sides [3] separated from each other and the sea battle came to an end at nightfall. The Corcyraeans were encamped at Leucimme and the twenty ships from [4] Athens (under the command of Glaucon son of Leagrus and Andocides son of Leogorus[2]) made their way through the wreckage of ships and corpses and sailed up to their camp to join them not long after they were sighted. It was now night and the Corcyraeans were at first afraid they [5] might be enemy vessels, but then they recognised them and the ships came to anchor.

52 On the next day the thirty ships from Athens and all the Corcyraean ships that were seaworthy sailed out to the harbour at Sybota where the Corinthians were, wanting to see if they were going to fight. The [2] Corinthians put out from land and drew up their battle-lines in open sea, but there they stayed with no intention of initiating a battle when they could see the fresh ships that had arrived from Athens in support and when they had problems enough of their own, both in guarding the prisoners of war they were holding on board and from the absence of means to repair their ships in this deserted place. They were more concerned with [3] thinking how they could make the voyage back home, since they feared

[1] The military paean was a war-song designed to give the signal to go into ramming mode and also no doubt to set a tempo for the rowers, rouse the spirits, frighten the enemy and invoke the help of the gods.

[2] Commentators point out (with some satisfaction) that this seems to be a factual mistake on Thucydides' part. There is inscriptional evidence that the commanders were actually Glaucon, Dracontides (not Andocides) and a third general called Metagenes, but little is known for sure about any of these men.

the Athenians might now regard the treaty between them as broken – because they had come into physical conflict– and might prevent them from sailing away.

The Corinthians therefore decided to put some men into a small boat **53** to visit the Athenians without a herald's staff[1] and test their intentions. So they sent them with the following message. 'You are in the wrong, [2] Athenians, to begin a war and break a treaty. We are here settling a score with our enemies and you are standing in our way and taking up arms against us. If your intention is to prevent us sailing to Corcyra or anywhere else we may wish and if you mean to break the treaty, then start by seizing us here and now and treat us as enemies.' So they spoke, and [3] all the Corcyraean forces in earshot immediately shouted that they should be seized and killed; but the Athenians replied as follows. 'We are not [4] starting a war, men of the Peloponnese, nor are we breaking the treaty, but we have come to help these Corcyraeans here, who are our allies. So if you wish to sail elsewhere we do not stand in your way, but if you are going to sail against Corcyra or against any place of theirs then we will do all we can to stop you.'

After this response from the Athenians the Corinthians began prepar- **54** ing for the voyage home and set up a trophy at the mainland Sybota. The Corcyraeans for their part gathered up the wrecks and bodies[2] which had been carried out to them by the tide and by a wind that had got up during the night and scattered them everywhere. And they set up a rival trophy claiming victory at the island Sybota. What each side had [2] in mind in claiming victory was as follows. The Corinthians set up their trophy because they had the better of the sea battle up to nightfall, and had thus been able to carry off most of their wrecks and their dead, and also because they held no fewer than 1,000 men captive and had disabled about seventy enemy ships. The Corcyraeans' reasons were that: they had destroyed about thirty enemy ships; when the Athenians came on the scene they had picked up their own wrecks and their dead; while on the previous day the Corinthians had backed water and retreated at the sight of the Athenian ships; and when the Athenians arrived the Corinthians had not ventured out from Sybota against them. In this way each side claimed victory.

[1] See I 29.1n. In this case they did not want the exchange to be a formal one, which would have meant accepting that the treaty had been broken and that there was a state of war.

[2] Being able to recover bodies without formal permission was taken to be a mark of victory, or at least of the avoidance of defeat.

On their way homewards the Corinthians took Anactorium, which is **55**
at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf. They took it by treachery (it was
held jointly by them and the Corcyraeans), installed Corinthian settlers
there and left for home. Of their Corcyraean prisoners they sold 800
who were slaves and kept in captivity 250 whom they looked after with
some care, intending that when these men returned to Corcyra they
should win it over to their side, most of them in fact being leading figures
in the city.[1] Thus Corcyra came through[2] the war with Corinth and the [2]
Athenian fleet withdrew from their territory. And for the Corinthians this
constituted the first reason[3] for the war with Athens, that the Athenians
had fought on the side of Corcyra against them while the treaty was still
in effect.

Straightaway after this the following incident took place and became **56**
a further cause of contention between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians on the road to war. The Corinthians were working on ways of [2]
getting their revenge on the Athenians and the Athenians were wary of
their hostility. The Athenians therefore made various demands on the
Potidaeans, who live on the isthmus of Pallene and were colonists of the
Corinthians but were also tribute-paying allies of the Athenians: they
required them to dismantle their wall on the Pallene side of the city, hand
over hostages, expel their magistrates[4] and refuse in future to accept those
the Corinthians sent out each year. The Athenian fear was that the Potidaeans might be persuaded by the combined efforts of Perdiccas and the
Corinthians to revolt and cause the other allies in the Thracian region[5] to
revolt with them.[6]

The Athenians took these precautions over Potidaea immediately after **57**
the sea battle at Corcyra; for the Corinthians were now openly antagonistic [2]

[1] An idea with dramatic consequences, as revealed when the story is taken up again at III 70.

[2] *Perigignomai* can mean 'gain advantage' or 'survive', but is probably mainly the latter here, although Corcyra could be said to have come out the better in that Corinth had failed either to free Epidamnus or defeat Corcyra.

[3] The first, therefore, of the 'reasons' (*aitiai*) referred to at the end of I 23.

[4] *Epidemiourgoi* (literally 'working among the people'), a term which seems to have been specifically used for the officials sent out by Doric states to their colonies. There was clearly much scope for tension (which must in a general way have preceded this particular incident) over the unusual status of Potidaea.

[5] One of the designated regions of the Athenian empire, in the coastal area of the north-east Aegean where they had allies and subjects in and around the Chalcidice (see map 7). 'Thrace' proper was further to the north and east (roughly, modern-day Bulgaria).

[6] For the Potidaea area, see map 22, p. 299.

and Perdiccas (son of Alexander and the king of Macedon), though once a friend and ally, had become an enemy.[1] That was because the Athenians [3] had made an alliance with his brother Philip and with Derdas, who had made common cause against him. In his alarm he was busy negotiating [4] with Sparta to engineer a war between the Athenians and Peloponnesians and was also trying to involve the Corinthians in bringing about a revolt at Potidaea; he further made proposals to the Chalcidians in Thrace and [5] to the Bottiaeans about joining in the revolt, thinking that if he had these adjoining places on his side as allies it would be easier to manage the war. The Athenians were aware of all this and wanted to pre-empt the revolt [6] of the cities. As it happened, they were just now sending thirty ships and 1,000 hoplites to his territory under the command of Archestratus son of Lycomedes and two others, and they ordered the commanders of the fleet to take hostages from the Potidaeans and demolish the wall and also to guard against any revolt by the neighbouring cities.

The Potidaeans sent envoys to the Athenians to see if they could **58** persuade them not to upset the status quo; they also went to Sparta with the Corinthians to secure support in case that should be needed. However, after a long negotiation they got no satisfactory concession out of Athens; on the contrary, the ships that were heading for Macedon were directed against them too, and after the Spartan authorities also promised them that if the Athenians proceeded against Potidaea they would invade Attica, they then decided that the time for action had come and, forming a sworn alliance with the Chalcidians and Bottiaeans, they revolted. Perdiccas [2] meanwhile persuaded the Chalcidians to abandon and demolish the cities on the coast and to settle inland at Olynthus and make a single, strong city there. To those who made the move he awarded part of his own territory in Mygdonia around Lake Bolbe for them to cultivate for as long as the war with Athens lasted. And they began to demolish their cities, move inland, and prepare for war.

When the thirty Athenian ships got to the Thracian region they found **59** Potidaea and the other places in a state of revolt. The commanders formed [2] the view that it was impossible with their present forces to fight a war against both Perdiccas and the other places that had joined together in

[1] Perdiccas immediately demonstrates his propensity for changing sides at short notice, which G. E. M. de Ste. Croix calculates he did nine times in the course of this war (*The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (Duckworth, 1972), p. 80), though one is inclined to say that he left sides without ever really joining them. There is a later summary of early Macedonian history at II 99–100.

the revolt, so they turned their attention to Macedon, which was their original target; they established themselves there and conducted a war in concert with Philip and the brothers of Derdas,[1] who had invaded with an army from the interior.

60 At this point, now that Potidaea was in revolt and Athenian ships were off Macedon, the Corinthians began to fear for the safety of the place and felt the danger was getting close to home, so they dispatched there a force consisting of volunteers of their own and such other Peloponnesians as they could induce by pay, in all 1,600 hoplites and 400 light-armed troops.[2] [2] Aristeus was in command, as a long-standing friend to the Potidaeans, and it was because of their feelings for him that most of the Corinthians joined up as volunteers. These troops arrived in the [3] Thracian region on the fortieth day after Potidaea revolted.

61 News of the cities' revolt quickly reached the Athenians as well, and when they further realised that the troops with Aristeus were on their way they dispatched 2,000 hoplites of their own and forty ships to the places in revolt, under the command of Callias son of Calliades and four others. On [2] first reaching Macedon, they found that the 1,000 troops sent previously had just taken Therme and were in the process of besieging Pydna. They stopped and joined in the siege of Pydna, but later they made an [3] agreement and a makeshift[3] alliance with Perdiccas under pressure from the situation at Potidaea and the arrival of Aristeus, and then withdrew from Macedon. They came to Beroia and thence to Strepsa, and after [4] first making an unsuccessful attempt on that place they travelled on by land to Potidaea with 3,000 hoplites of their own and many from their allies besides and with 600 Macedonian cavalry who were with Philip and Pausanias;[4] and at the same time their seventy ships sailed along the coast. Advancing by short stages they reached Gigones on the third day [5] and encamped there.

62 The Potidaeans and the Peloponnesians with Aristeus were encamped in readiness for the Athenians on the Olynthus side of the isthmus and

[1] A shadowy figure, possibly a cousin of Perdiccas and a ruler of Elymiotis in upper Macedon (see Hornblower I, pp. 100–1).

[2] *Psiloi*. The poorer counterparts of the hoplites, who could not afford body-armour and were usually carrying only inferior weapons (see glossary).

[3] *Anankaias* 'forced', with the sense here probably both of 'basic' and 'necessary in the circumstances'.

[4] Probably a brother of Derdas.

they established a market outside the city.[1] The allies chose Aristeus as [2]
commander of the combined infantry and Perdiccas as commander of the cavalry (the latter had immediately deserted the Athenian side again and allied himself with the Potidaeans, having appointed Iolaus to deputise for him in command). Aristeus' plan was to keep his own army on the [3]
isthmus and watch out for any Athenian attack, while the Chalcidians and the allies from outside the isthmus and the 200 cavalry from Perdiccas should remain at Olynthus; then when the Athenians moved against Aristeus' men the other forces would come up in support and trap the enemy between the two of them. Callias and his fellow commanders, [4]
however, sent off the Macedonian cavalry and a few of the allies towards Olynthus to cut off help from that quarter, while they themselves broke camp and moved against Potidaea. When they reached the isthmus and saw the enemy preparing for battle they took up an opposing position, and quite soon afterwards battle was joined. Aristeus' wing and all the [6]
elite Corinthian and other troops with him routed the opposite wing and chased it a long way; but the rest of the Potidaean and Peloponnesian force was beaten by the Athenians and fled back within the walls of Potidaea.

When Aristeus returned from the pursuit he saw that the rest of the **63**
army had been defeated and he was in a quandary about which course to risk – whether to make for Olynthus or Potidaea. He decided in the end to bring his forces as close as possible together and force a route to Potidaea and made his way by the breakwater through the water; he came under fire from missiles and it was hard going, but though he lost a few of his men he got most of them through safely. Meanwhile the [2]
forces supporting Potidaea from Olynthus (which is about seven miles[2] away and clearly visible) advanced a little way to give support when battle was joined and the standards raised, and the Macedonian cavalry took up opposing positions to prevent them. But when the battle quickly went the way of the Athenians and the signals were lowered, the supporting forces retreated to the wall and the Macedonians[3] rejoined the Athenians (so no cavalry were engaged on either side). After the battle the Athenians [3]

[1] Army rations away from home were often supplemented by temporary 'markets' supplied by nearby towns (in this case Potidaea and Olynthus) as well as by foraging and plunder. See *agora* in glossary and I 11n.

[2] 'sixty stades'. A stade was just over 200 yards (185 metres). See note on distances, etc., p. lvii.

[3] Not those of Perdicas, of course (now on the other side again), but those of Philip and Pausanias referred to at I 59 and 61.4.

set up a trophy and let the Potidaeans take back their dead under truce. The casualties were as follows: the Potidaeans and their allies lost just under 3,000 dead and the Athenians lost 150, along with their commander Callias.[1]

64 The Athenians at once made a blockading wall on the north side of the isthmus and mounted guard there, while the side facing Pallene remained unblockaded since they decided there were not sufficient of them both to keep guard on the isthmus and to cross over towards Pallene and build a wall, their fear being that if they divided their forces the Potidaeans and their allies might make an attack.[2] When the Athenians [2] back home realised that Potidaea was not walled off they sent out some time later 1,600 hoplites of their own under the command of Phormio son of Asopius. After arriving at Pallene and making his base at Aphytius he led his army to Potidaea, advancing gradually and destroying the crops as he went. When no one came out to attack him he built a blockading wall on the Pallene side. And so Potidaea was now firmly under siege on both [3] sides as well as blockaded by ships from the sea.

65 With the city cut off Aristeus now had no hope of saving it, unless some salvation came from the Peloponnese or there was some other miracle. He therefore counselled the others that all of them except 500 should wait for a favourable wind and make a break for it, which would help conserve their supplies; and he said he himself was willing to remain among those who stayed. But he was unable to persuade them, so wanting to make the best of the circumstances and improve the external situation as much as possible, he managed to sail out undetected by the Athenian guards. He remained [2] among the Chalcidians and supported their war efforts in various ways, particularly in ambushing and destroying a large force of Sermylians near their city; he also opened negotiations with the Peloponnese to try and get their help in some way. Phormio, however, after Potidaea was blockaded off took his 1,600 troops and wasted the Chalcidice and Bottice, capturing some of their townships.

66 These were the additional grounds of complaint against each other for the Athenians and Peloponnesians: the Corinthian grievance was that

[1] The tombstone commemorating the war dead survives and is in the British Museum.

[2] The description of the different walls and counter-walls is confusing. It seems that counter-walls built by the besiegers could be of two kinds: small, circular defensive ones that enclosed and protected their own position, and blockading ones which cut off or enclosed the walls of the besieged. The most obvious interpretation is that the Athenian walls both to north and (later) to south were of the latter kind, so that Potidaea was completely hemmed in by land and sea. See glossary under *teichos*.

the Athenians were besieging Potidaea, which was a colony of theirs and had Corinthian men and Peloponnesians inside the city; the Athenian complaint against the Peloponnesians was that they had caused to revolt a city that was in the Athenian alliance and paid them tribute, and that they had come to fight openly with the Potidaeans against them. But war had not yet broken out and the truce[1] still held, for the Corinthians had acted in this as a private matter.[2]

67 While the siege continued, however, the Corinthians did not stand by quietly, since they had their own men in there and they also feared for the place. They straightaway called the allies together at Sparta and loudly denounced the Athenians for breaking the treaty and wronging the Peloponnesians. [2] The Aeginetans did not send representatives openly, in their fear of the Athenians, but they did so secretly and were foremost among the delegates in urging war, saying that they did not have the autonomy the treaty stipulated.[3] [3] The Spartans also invited any of their allies who had other charges of wrongdoing to make against the Athenians, then held one of their regular assemblies and invited them to speak. [4] Various people attending made their different complaints, especially the Megarians, who presented many grievances and particularly their exclusion from the ports of the Athenian empire and the market in Attica contrary to the terms of the treaty. [5] Finally, the Corinthians came forward, after first letting these others work the Spartans up, and made their own speech, as follows.

68 'Spartans, your faith in your own constitution and society makes you mistrustful of outsiders like ourselves when we have something to tell you. This does give you your quality of self-discipline,[4] but it also leaves you in greater ignorance when it comes to dealing with anything outside Sparta. [2] Many are the times, for example, that we warned you of

[1] *Anocoche*, a truce. The general word for 'treaty' is *spondai* (as at I 67.1–2 and 115.1 below), though one can of course have a truce without a treaty (as at V 32.7 and as in the contemporary case of North and South Korea). In practice, Thucydides was probably not entirely consistent in his usages (see I 103.1 and II 6.1, where *hupo-spondoi* evidently means 'under truce'). See further glossary under *spondai*.

[2] Independently, that is, of the Peloponnesian League, though as the Corinthians discovered themselves in the respect of the Athenian involvement in Corcyra there could be a thin line between 'private' initiatives and international responsibilities.

[3] Presumably again a reference to the Thirty Year Treaty of 446 BC, though little is known about how that affected Aegina.

[4] *Sophrosune*, which can be variously translated as 'moderation', 'restraint' and 'prudence' (see 32.4, 37.2 above and glossary). Sparta was a notoriously closed and xenophobic society with fierce internal controls.

the threat the Athenians posed to us, but you refused to learn the lessons we were giving you and preferred instead to suspect the speakers of being motivated by our domestic feuds with Athens. As a consequence, it was only after our sufferings actually began, not before, that you acted to summon these allies here – allies before whom we have a special right to be heard since we are the ones with the most serious grievances – victims both of Athenian arrogance and of your neglect.

Now, had the Athenians ever been less overt in their crimes against [3] Greece you might have needed further instruction in your state of ignorance; but as it is, why should we need to make a long speech, when you can see how they have enslaved some of us, are plotting against others – not least our own allies, and that they have long been making preparations for the possibility of war? Otherwise, they would not have seized Corcyra [4] from us by force and taken control there, nor would they be besieging Potidaea – the latter a highly strategic location for operations in the Thracian region, while the former would have provided the Peloponnesians with a very large fleet.

You are the ones to blame for all this. You first allowed them to **69** strengthen their city after the Persian Wars and then later to put in place the long walls; and right up to the present you have been perpetually denying people freedom, not only those who have been enslaved by the Athenians but now also your own allies. For the real agent is not the one who does the enslaving but the one who could stop it and just looks on, even though he claims the distinction of being the liberator of Greece.

Now at least we have just about managed to meet together, but not [2] even now do we have a clear agenda. We ought not to be still considering whether we have been wronged but how we should be responding in our defence. Men of action make their plans and then strike decisively and at once against those who dither. We know the way the Athenians move in [3] gradual stages against their neighbours. As long as they think it is through a lack of awareness that you have not noticed what they are doing they proceed quite cautiously, but should they realise that you are knowingly ignoring them they will press on strongly. Of all the Greeks you Spartans [4] are the only ones to be so passive: you defend yourselves against attack not by the use of power but by being *about* to use it; and you alone put an end to an enemy's expansion not in its early stages but when they are twice their original size. Yet you used to be thought a source of security, [5] though it now seems that the report outdid the reality. For example, we

know ourselves that the Persians came from the ends of the earth to the Peloponnese before your forces made any move against them; and now you are looking on at the Athenians, who are not far off as the Persians were but near at hand, and instead of initiating an attack you choose just to respond defensively to their attacks and so take the chance that you will be engaging them when they are that much stronger. And this although you know that the barbarians' failure was mostly down to their own mistakes and that against the Athenians themselves we have so far largely owed our successes to their failures rather than any act of support from you.[1] Indeed, it was the hopes placed in you that have before now been the ruin of some who trusted in you and so left themselves unprepared.

Let none of you suppose that all this is said more from hostility than by [6] way of criticism. Criticism is between friends and is addressed to failings; accusations are for enemies committing crimes.

Besides, surely we if anyone have the right to level complaints against **70** our neighbours, especially when such large differences[2] are at stake – and ones to which you are quite insensitive in our view. You seem never once to have analysed these Athenians, to see just what sort of people you are going to be up against nor how totally different they are from yourselves.

They are natural innovators, quick to have ideas and then to put their [2] plans into action. Your instinct on the other hand is to keep things as they are, not to make any new decisions and not even to take the minimum action necessary. Then again, they are bold beyond their means, they run [3] risks beyond reason and stay sanguine in times of trouble; your way, on the other hand, is to do less than your power allows, to distrust even your surest judgements and never to expect deliverance from dangers. In truth, [4] they never shrink from action while you always hesitate; they are always abroad while you never leave home. They expect to gain something by being away, you expect that by venturing out you might harm even what you have. In any military success they press their advantage to the limit, [5] in defeat they fall back as little as possible. Their bodies they disown and [6] sacrifice to the service of the state, but their minds are very much their own in acting on her behalf. And if they fail to go and achieve something [7] they have planned on doing they believe they have been deprived of what was already theirs, while if they succeed in getting what they went for

[1] The same fear that Pericles has in reverse from the Athenian end (I 144.1).

[2] The Greek *diapheronta*, like the English 'differences', is ambiguous between 'distinctions' and 'disagreements'.

they count that a small gain compared with future prospects; and should they actually fail in some venture they redirect their hopes to make good the loss elsewhere. For them alone to hope for something is to have it, such is their speed in executing their plans.

This, then, is their life-long labour, in hardship and in danger. They [8] scarcely enjoy what they have because they are always after getting more; the only holiday they can imagine is in doing what they feel they must,[1] and they think of idle leisure[2] as a greater disaster than irksome toil. In sum, you could rightly say that they are born neither to enjoy any peace themselves nor to allow it to others.

That, Spartans, is the kind of city you have opposing you. But still **71** you go on hesitating. You forget that peace lasts longest for those who use their resources in the cause of justice but demonstrate a clear spirit of resistance when they are mistreated. Instead, your idea of fair dealing is in not offending others and so not being harmed yourself by the need for self-defence.

You could scarcely succeed with that policy, however, even if you had [2] a state like your own as a neighbour; whereas in actual fact, as we have just demonstrated, your practices are antiquated compared to those of the Athenians. Inevitably, it is the new that prevails, in this as in other [3] fields of expertise. It is true that in times of peace a city's established practices are best left undisturbed, but when one is forced into greater activity the need for innovation also grows. And that is why the more varied experience of the Athenians has led to greater changes there.

This is the time, therefore, to bring your dithering to an end. Go now [4] and help the Potidaeans and your other allies, just as you promised to do. Invade Attica with all speed, lest you betray your friends and kinsmen to their worst enemies and drive the rest of us to seek out some other alliance in despair. We would not be held guilty for so doing either by [5] the gods we invoked or by men who were aware of the situation, for the people who actually break treaties are not the ones who turn to others when deserted but the ones who fail to help those to whom they swore oaths of allegiance. If you show your commitment, however, we will stay [6] with you, since it would then be a sacrilege to make a change and we would not find other partners who were more congenial.

[1] Literally, doing what is necessary/one's duty (*ta deonta praxai*). Here it is almost 'in acting out these compulsions'.

[2] *Hesuchia apragmon*. See note on I 32.5 and glossary.

Weigh all this carefully in your deliberations and try to ensure that [7]
under your leadership the Peloponnesian League is in no way diminished
from the one you inherited from your fathers.'

Such was the Corinthians' speech. Now, an Athenian delegation hap- 72
pened to be already present in Sparta on other business and when they
heard these speeches they thought it advisable to come before the Spar-
tans – not to answer any of the specific charges the cities were bringing
against them, rather to show that the overall issue was not one the Spar-
tans should decide on quickly but needed further consideration. At the
same time, they wanted to point out just how powerful their city was,
reminding the older ones of what they already knew and explaining to
the younger ones matters outside their experience, in the belief that what
they said might incline them more to keeping the peace than going to war.
They therefore approached the Spartans and said that they too would like [2]
to address their assembly if there was no objection. The Spartans invited
them to come forward, and the Athenians did so and spoke as follows.

'We did not come on this mission intending to enter into a debate with 73
your allies but are here on other state business.[1] However, we are aware
of the strength of the outcry against us and have come forward – not to
answer the charges brought by these cities (since you are not the appointed
judges of either our representations or theirs), but to prevent you from
being too easily influenced by your allies and making bad decisions on
matters of the greatest importance. We would like at the same time to
deal with the larger charges against us and prove that we have rightful
possession of our acquisitions and that our city is one of some significance.

There is no need to rehearse what is now ancient history, where the [2]
evidence comes from second-hand reports rather than from the audience's
direct experience. But you do have personal knowledge of the Persian
Wars and the other events, and these we really must talk about, even
though it is tedious to keep going back over this ground. When we
performed these deeds the risks were taken for our common benefit. You

[1] We are not told what this might have been, prompting the suspicion that the whole speech is just a device by Thucydides to dramatise some points about the Athenian empire. But the point is repeated often enough (72.1, 73.1, 75.5) to suggest that it was genuine, though if the Athenians' speech really was impromptu it would have been a remarkable performance. There are at any rate interconnections between this group of speeches: the next speaker, Archidamus, makes a least one argument based on the Athenians' speech (the point about arbitration at 85.2), and the fourth speaker, Sthenelaidas, responds very directly to it. See further Gomme I, pp. 252–5.

had a share in the results so we should not be deprived of all the credit,[1] for what that is also worth. The point of our speech will not be to turn [3] aside criticism but to give you clear evidence of the kind of city you will be taking on if you make the wrong decisions.

Our case is that at Marathon we stood alone against the barbarian and [4] faced the dangers on your behalf; and when he came a second time and we were unable to mount a defence on land we embarked as a whole people on to our ships and engaged him at Salamis in a sea battle. That was what stopped him sailing against each of your cities in turn and ravaging the Peloponnese, since you would have been unable to go to each other's help in the face of that many ships. The enemy himself provided the best proof of this, for when his fleet was defeated, thinking his power no longer what it was, he hastily withdrew with the greater part of his forces.

That was the outcome and it was a clear demonstration that the for- **74** tunes of the Greeks depended on their ships. And the three most valuable contributions to the cause came from us: the largest number of ships, the shrewdest of the generals and the most wholehearted commitment. Towards the total of four hundred ships we contributed a little less than two-thirds.[2] Themistocles was the commander and the man largely responsible for the policy of fighting in the straits, which was undoubtedly our salvation and the reason why you paid him greater honour than any other foreign visitor.[3] And we showed exceptional nerve and com- [2] mitment: when there was no one to help us on land and everyone right up to our borders was already enslaved, we were the ones who made the decision to abandon our city and sacrifice our property; but not even then did we desert the common cause of our remaining allies, nor did we withdraw our services by dispersing; instead we resolved to embark on our ships and face the danger, without resenting the fact that you had earlier failed to come to *our* aid.

Consequently, we maintain that we gave you more help than we [3] received. You provided your support from cities that were still your homes and that you had every intention of continuing to inhabit in the future. You did so fearing more for yourselves than for us – at any rate you failed to come forward while we were still undamaged. We on the

[1] A rather artificial contrast between *ergon* (here 'results' or 'practical outcome') and *logos* (here 'credit', from its sense as an 'account' or 'reckoning').

[2] Actually, about 200 from a total of fewer than 400, according to the numbers given by Herodotus (which themselves don't quite add up: see Herodotus VIII 1, 14, 48 and 61).

[3] Herodotus VIII 124.

other hand set forth from a city that no longer existed and risked our lives for one surviving as a slender hope, and so played our part in saving you as well as ourselves. But if we had gone over to the Persian side at an earlier [4] stage, as others did, in fear for our territory, or if we had later lacked the courage to embark on our ships believing ourselves to be defeated, no further sea battle would have been required, since you would have had insufficient ships and the enemy would then have furthered his cause just as he wished without recourse to arms.

Surely then, men of Sparta, considering the commitment and the native **75** wit we then displayed, we do not deserve this extreme resentment from the Greeks, at least not for just *possessing* an empire. After all, we did not [2] acquire it by force. It was only when you were unwilling to stay on to deal with what was left of the barbarian forces that the allies approached us and of their own accord asked us to assume the leadership. These were [3] the circumstances that first forced us to develop the empire to its present point. Fear[1] was the strongest motive, followed later by honour and then by self-interest as well. But when most of the allies had come to hate us, [4] and some had already rebelled and been suppressed, and you were no longer as friendly as before but had become suspicious and at odds with us, then it no longer seemed a safe option to risk letting the empire go (since any rebels would have been going over to you). And no one can [5] be blamed for protecting their own interests properly in circumstances of extreme danger.

You Spartans, at any rate, use your leadership to manage the cities **76** in the Peloponnese to your own advantage. Moreover, if you had stayed on at that time to the end of the war and had been as detested for your leadership as we have been, we know perfectly well that you would have been just as hard on your allies as we have been and you would have been compelled either to rule with a strong hand or else expose yourselves to risk. In the same way, there is nothing remarkable or contrary to normal [2] human behaviour in what we have done, just because we accepted an empire when one was offered and then declined to let it go, overcome by these strongest of all motives – honour, fear and self-interest. Nor were we the first to take this course but it has always been established practice for

[1] Fear (here *deos* but see glossary) is always identified by Thucydides as a dominant motive in human behaviour, though in this case it is not entirely clear who the Athenians were especially afraid of at this early stage in the growth of the empire (see Hornblower I, p. 120).

the weaker to be ruled by the stronger.[1] Besides, we believed ourselves worthy of this role and you agreed, until now when in a calculation of your own interests you started appealing to "justice" – though no one ever let that consideration stop them getting an advantage when presented with an opportunity to gain something by force. In fact people deserve special [3] credit if in following human nature and ruling over others they still behave with more sense of justice than their power would allow them to do. At [4] any rate, if others were to take over our position we think they would very clearly demonstrate just how moderate we have been, though in our own case being reasonable has paradoxically brought us more blame than praise.

For example, because we come off badly in those lawsuits with our allies **77** which are governed by treaties and have therefore established tribunals here at Athens which operate under impartial laws,[2] we are thought to be unduly fond of legal processes. None of the allies actually realises why it [2] is that those with empires elsewhere who are less moderate than we are in their treatment of their subjects are nonetheless not met with the same reproaches. The reason is that those who can use force have no need for recourse to law. Our allies, by contrast, are used to a relationship with us [3] based on equality and if they ever come off worse than they think right in any respect, whether in consequence of a judgement we have made or some exercise of our power as rulers, instead of being grateful not to be deprived of more they feel worse about their loss than if we had from the first put aside the law and taken advantage of them. In that case not even they would have disputed that the weaker should yield to the stronger. People in general, it seems, feel more upset to be the victims [4] of injustice than of force. The one feels like exploitation by an equal, the other like compulsion by a superior. At any rate, though they endured [5] worse sufferings than these at the hands of the Persians, they still find our rule oppressive – not surprisingly, since it is always the present that weighs most with subject peoples.

As for you, if you overthrow us and assume the position of their rulers [6] you would quickly lose the goodwill you obtained through their fear of

[1] A recurring theme in the work, most fully expressed in the celebrated 'Melian debate' at V 84–116 (especially V 105). It connects also with larger contemporary debates about nature (*phusis*) and convention (*nomos*): see the quotation from Antiphon in the introduction, p. xxv.

[2] See the long note by Gomme I, pp. 236–44 on different interpretations of this sentence. The speakers' main point, however, is surely just to emphasise the Athenian willingness to have recourse to law when they could have relied on force.

us – that is, if you mean to show now the same cast of mind as you did then, when for a brief period you took on the leadership against the Persians.[1] Your domestic customs and practices are not compatible with those of others and, what is more, when any one of you travels abroad he fails to respect either your own practices or those of the rest of Greece.

78 Take your time, then, in your deliberations[2] since these are matters of real moment; and do not be so swayed by the opinions and objections of others that you add to your own burdens. Think in advance about how [2] unpredictable war can be before you find yourselves involved in one. The longer a war lasts the more likely it is to turn on matters of chance, which we are all equally unable to control and whose outcome is a matter of [3] risk and uncertainty. Men go to war and launch into action as their first rather than what should be their last resort, and only when they come to [4] grief do they turn to discussion. We are not yet in the grip of any such error ourselves and neither apparently are you, so we urge you, while both sides still have the option of listening to good advice, not to break the treaty or transgress your oaths but let our differences be settled by arbitration according to our agreement. Otherwise we shall call on the gods by whom we have sworn as our witnesses and we shall try to defend ourselves against you, the authors of the war, following closely on the path you have set.'

79 Such was the Athenians' speech. And now that the Spartans had listened both to the charges made by their allies against the Athenians and to what the Athenians had to say, they dismissed everyone else and conferred [2] amongst themselves about the situation they were facing. The views of the majority tended to the same conclusion, that the Athenians were already guilty of wrongdoing and that war must follow without delay; but Archidamus, their king, a man with a reputation for intelligence and moderation,[3] came forward and spoke as follows.

[1] Presumably a reference to the behaviour of Pausanias (see I 94–5 and 130), though Brasidas later constitutes a counter-example. See also the later cases of Polydamidas (IV 130.4), Astyochus and Lichas (VIII 84) and the general comment at III 93.2.

[2] This picks up other references to Spartan slowness, as a counter-argument to the Corinthians' complaint at I 71 and as an ironic anticipation of Archidamus' recommendation at I 84.

[3] *Sunetos* and *sophron*, both of which are interesting terms of praise. On *sunetos* ('intelligent', 'sagacious', 'quick to understand') see the note on III 37.3. Other individuals called *sunetos* are Theseus (II 15), Themistocles (I 138.3), Brasidas (IV 81.2) and Phrynichus (VIII 27.5), while Pericles is included among those with at least a reputation for *sunesis* at II 34.6 and claims it for himself at I 140.1. On *sophron* and its noun *sophrosune*, see glossary; surprisingly, Archidamus is actually the only person Thucydides directly calls *sophron*,

'Spartans, I have in my time had personal experience of many wars 80
and I see others here of my generation, none of whom will be eager for
action through inexperience (the most usual reason) or in the belief that
this would be a good and safe course. On any sober calculation one would [2]
discover that the war we are now considering will prove no trifling affair.
In a war against Peloponnesians and neighbouring states our military [3]
might is of a similar kind to theirs and can be quickly deployed wherever
it is needed. But this war would be against men whose land is far away;
their expertise at sea, moreover, is supreme; they are the best equipped
in every other respect – with wealth, both public and private, with ships,
horses, arms and a larger populace than is found in any other single place
in Greece; and they also have many allies paying tribute. How could we
lightly undertake a war against men like these, and what could give us
the confidence to rush in unprepared? Our ships? But we are weak there, [4]
and if we are to train and to match our preparations to theirs that will
take time. Our resources of money? But in this respect we are even more
lacking: we neither have a common treasury nor can we readily raise
money from private sources.

Someone might take heart from our superiority over them in arms and 81
numbers, which allows us to invade their land at will and plunder it. But [2]
they have other territory in plenty in their empire and they will bring in
what they need by sea. And if we should try to make their allies revolt [3]
we shall also have to support them with a fleet, since for the most part
they are islanders. What sort of war will we fight, then? Unless we beat [4]
them at sea or cut off the revenues from which they support their navy
we will be the ones to suffer the greater damage. And in that situation it [5]
will no longer be possible to conclude an honourable peace, especially if
we are thought to be the main instigators of the dispute. On no account, [6]
therefore, must we let ourselves be carried away by the hope that the
war can be brought to a speedy end if we devastate their land. My fear is
rather that we may actually bequeath this war to our children, since the
chances are that a people as proud as the Athenians will neither become
slaves to save their land nor be thrown into panic by war like novices.

I am certainly not proposing that we turn a blind eye, however – that 82
you just let them harm our allies and do nothing to arrest their schemes.
But make no move to arms just yet. Instead, send a formal complaint

though Pericles is said to rule *metrios* ('with moderation', II 65.5), which is in the same general semantic area.

to them without explicitly indicating whether we intend to go to war or make concessions, and then let us use the time to get our own forces ready by acquiring new allies, both Greek and foreign, to add to our naval or financial resources (since no one could blame people in our situation – the target of Athenian designs – if we seek salvation by attaching to our cause not only Greeks but also foreigners). At the same time we should be making our own preparations. If they then pay any heed to [2] our representations, so much the better. But if not, after two or three years have passed we shall be better equipped to take them on, if that is what we decide to do. And perhaps when they see the level of our [3] preparations and see that these match our claims they might be more inclined to compromise, while they still have their land intact and can make decisions about valuable property that still exists and is not yet ruined. Think of their land just as a hostage – and the better cultivated it [4] is the better the hostage. We should spare it as much as possible instead of driving them to desperation and making them harder to manage. If [5] we are goaded by the complaints of our allies into laying waste[1] the Athenians' land before we are fully ready, then we must be careful we do not just create a situation fraught with more dishonour and difficulty for the Peloponnese. Complaints, whether brought by cities or individuals, [6] can be dealt with; but a war, which is undertaken by a whole coalition protecting their individual interests and whose outcome is unknowable – that will not be easy to bring to a seemly conclusion.

Let no one think it cowardice if a group of many cities should hesitate 83 to attack a single one. They too have allies contributing money, just as [2] numerous as ours; and war is not so much a matter of arms as of the money that makes arms available for use, especially when land powers are facing sea powers. Let us first build our finances instead of being carried [3] away prematurely by what our allies say. We are the ones who will have to take responsibility for the consequences for good or ill, so let us be the ones to think about them calmly beforehand.

As for that "slowness" and "hesitation" for which they criticise us – 84 don't be ashamed of that. More haste may in the end mean less speed if you set off unprepared. Moreover, the city we live in has always enjoyed freedom and fame. So what these traits really amount to is enlightened self-discipline. This is why we alone do not indulge in arrogance in times [2]

[1] Literally, 'cutting down (crops)' but here used more generally of destroying anything standing. See glossary under *temno*.

of success and why we wilt less than others do in adversity; when others cheer us on to desperate deeds against our better judgement we are not carried away by the flattery of their praise; and again, if someone tries to provoke us with accusations[1] we are no more likely to be goaded into compliance. Our sense of good order is what makes us both brave in war [3] and wise in counsel. We are brave in war because self-respect is derived mainly from self-discipline, as courage is from the sense of shame.[2] And we are wise in counsel because we are educated with too little learning to despise the laws[3] and with too harsh a discipline to disobey them; we do not attain the level of useless intelligence that enables one to demolish an enemy's preparations convincingly in a fine speech but then fail to match that performance on the field of action; rather, we are taught to believe that our neighbour's approach to planning[4] is much like ours and that the course of chance events cannot be determined by a speech. Our own [4] preparations are always practical ones, made on the assumption that we face opponents who have taken good advice. We should not base our hopes on them in the expectation of mistakes on their part, but on ourselves and the safety of our own precautions; nor should we suppose that there is much difference between one man and another, but the one to come out on top will be the one trained in the hardest school of necessity.

These, then, are the practices our fathers bequeathed to us, which we **85** have ever since followed to our advantage. Let us not abandon them, nor be rushed into deciding, in the brief span of a day, something that will affect the lives and possessions of many people, their cities and their honour. Let us instead take our time. That option is more available to us than to others because of our basic strength. Send envoys to Athens to [2] discuss Potidaea; and send envoys to discuss the wrongs our allies claim

[1] The Corinthians (at 69.6) had said they were making a 'criticism' (*aitia*) not an 'accusation' (*kategoria*).

[2] Literally, 'self-respect (*aidos*) takes the greatest part in self-discipline (*sophrosune*), as courage (*eupsuchia*) does in shame (*aischune*)'. *Aidos* and *aischune* are closely related concepts, but I have used two different terms in English here since Thucydides does so in the Greek. Commentators are divided as to whether in the Greek 'takes the greatest part' means 'is largely constituted by' or 'is the largest element in'. I have translated so as to stress the causal relationships, which seem to be the main point.

[3] A clear dig at Athenian 'sophistication', recalling Cleon's later warnings against their tendency to over-cleverness (III 37.3–5). Sophists were actually forbidden at Sparta (see Plato's *Hippias Major* 283–4).

[4] *Dianoiai*, which suggests both the planning and the cast of mind that produces it. The actual 'plans' or 'preparations' are usually just conveyed by *paraskeuai* (a very common word in Thucydides).

to have suffered, especially now that the Athenians are ready to submit to arbitration – since it is not lawful to initiate attacks in such a case, as if against a proven wrongdoer. But at the same time prepare for war. These are the policies to put us in the strongest position and make us most formidable in the sight of our enemies.'

Such was Archidamus' speech; but Sthenelaidas, one of the ephors[1] [3] at the time, came forward as the final speaker and addressed them as follows.[2]

'The Athenians spoke a great deal but I have no idea what they meant. **86** They had a lot to say in praise of themselves but at no point did they deny that they are wronging our allies and the people of the Peloponnese. They may have been good against the Persians in the past but now they are bad as far as we are concerned, so they deserve a double dose of punishment for changing from good to bad. We, however, are the same [2] now as we were then and the 'prudent'[3] thing for us to do is not look on while they do down our allies nor put off punishing them in return, any more than the allies can put off their suffering. Others have money and [3] ships and horses, but we have good allies and we must not betray them to the Athenians. Nor should the matter be settled by lawsuits and speeches when the damage is not a matter of words; but we must hit back quickly and with all our might. And don't let anyone tell you that at a time when [4] we are being wronged the proper thing to do is to have a discussion. It is for those who are about to wrong us who ought to be having the discussion – and a long one at that.

Vote for war then, as the reputation of your city of Sparta[4] demands, [5] and do not let the Athenians grow any stronger. Let us not abandon our allies, but with the gods on our side let us advance on the wrongdoers.'[5]

After speaking in these terms Sthenelaidas, as one of the ephors, put **87** the vote to the assembly of the Spartans. They reach their decisions by [2]

[1] The ephors were the five most senior officials in Sparta, elected to office and serving just for one year, and they rather than the 'kings' effectively managed foreign policy at this period. See further glossary.

[2] Here *hode* (in this way/thus) rather than the usual *toiade* (such things), but see the note on I 36.4. Sthenelaidas' speech is in fact one with a very marked individual style.

[3] A sneer at the *sophrosune* recommended by Archidamus (84.2) and ironically commended by the Corinthians (68.1).

[4] One of the few (17) places where Thucydides refers explicitly to 'Sparta' as opposed to 'Lacedaemon'. See I 4.4n on 'Spartiate'.

[5] *Adikountes*, those who are 'acting wrongly', a term that is repeated several times in this short speech. Sthenelaidas is made to express outrage at the 'injustice' of the Athenian 'aggression' as well as expressing aggressive instincts of his own.

shouting out loud rather than by voting and he told them he could not determine which shout was the louder; but because he wanted them to declare themselves more openly and so push them further in the direction of war,[1] he said, 'Spartans, those of you who think that the treaty has been broken and that the Athenians are in the wrong stand over there', pointing out a spot to them, 'and those of you who think otherwise stand on the other side'. They rose and divided, and the verdict of the great majority [3] of them was that the treaty had been broken. The Spartans then recalled [4] their allies to the assembly and said that in their view the Athenians were in the wrong but that they wanted to summon a full meeting of all the allies[2] and put the matter to a vote, so that they would be undertaking the war on the basis of a common resolution, if that was the decision. Having [5] concluded these matters the allies then went home, as the Athenians envoys later did too after transacting the business on which they had come.

This decision of the assembly, that the treaty had been broken, was [6] made in the fourteenth year of the Thirty Year Treaty, which was concluded after the affair at Euboea.[3]

The Spartans voted that the treaty had been broken and that they must **88** go to war, not so much because they were persuaded by the speeches of their allies as because they feared a further growth in the power of the Athenians, seeing that most of Greece was already subject to them.[4]

The circumstances in which the Athenians achieved this expansion of **89** power were as follows.[5] After the Persians retreated from Europe, beaten [2] by the Greeks both on land and sea, and those of them who fled with their ships to Mycale were destroyed, Leotychidas, the king of the Spartans

[1] Sthenelaidas was politically aware enough to realise that the answer depends on the question, and thought that the question 'Should we go to war?' might not yield the answer he wanted.

[2] See later I 119, resuming the story. The present gathering was only a selected group of the allies (I 67.1).

[3] The revolt of Euboea in 446 BC, see I 114.

[4] A repetition of the 'true' cause of the war described at I 23.6, which is summarised again at I 118.

[5] The period dealt with in 89–117 later came to be known as the *Pentekontaetia*, the 'Fifty year' period (though it actually ran from the final defeat of the Persians in 479 to the outbreak of war in 431). Thucydides' account of it has been criticised for not being more comprehensive and chronologically explicit (see the references in Hornblower I, pp. 13–14 and the long discussion in Gomme I, pp. 361–412). He does explain here that his main purpose was the more limited one of marking the key stages in the growth of Athenian power, though he certainly gives hostages to scholarship in his later criticism of Hellanicus (see I 97.2n).

and the man who led the Greek force at Mycale, departed for home with the allies from the Peloponnese. Meanwhile, the Athenians and the allies from Ionia and the Hellespont, who were now in revolt from the King of Persia, stayed and besieged Sestos, which was in Persian hands; and after spending the winter there they captured Sestos when the barbarians abandoned it and then sailed home to their various cities.

The Athenian people, once the barbarians had left their country, imme- [3]
diately began bringing back their wives and children and what remained of their belongings from the places they had lodged them for safety[1] and began making preparations to rebuild their city and its walls; for only small portions of the surrounding wall[2] were left standing and most of their homes were in ruins, the few surviving ones being those in which the most important Persians had made their quarters.

Realising their intentions, the Spartans sent an embassy to Athens, **90**
partly because they would themselves have preferred to see neither the Athenians nor anyone else in possession of any walls at all, but more because their allies urged them on, fearing both the size of the Athenian navy (which had not existed before) and the spirit of enterprise they had shown in the war with the Persians. So the Spartans recommended them [2]
not to build walls but rather to join with them in demolishing all the walls surrounding cities outside the Peloponnese that were still standing. They did not reveal their true objectives in this or the suspicions they harboured towards the Athenians, but represented the need in the event of any future invasion to deny the barbarians the kind of secure base from which to launch an attack that they had just had in Thebes; and they said that the Peloponnese would serve as a sufficient refuge and base for all parties.

On the advice of Themistocles, the Athenians responded to the Spartan [3]
spokesmen that they would send them envoys to address this question and they then dismissed them without further ado. Themistocles next told the Athenians to dispatch him to Sparta as quickly as possible; then to select the other envoys to join him, but instead of sending them out straightaway to hold off until they had raised a wall to the minimum

[1] According to Herodotus (VIII 41) this was at Salamis, Aegina and the Troezen.

[2] A surrounding wall is a *peribolos* and the more general word for a wall or fortification is *teichos* (see glossary). The frequency and length at which walls are discussed in Thucydides emphasises their importance in ancient warfare (both practical and symbolic) and the corresponding importance of siege-craft (see, for example, Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, pp. 163–99).

height necessary for defence; the whole population of the city – men, women and children – should be involved in the work of fortification, and they should spare no building, either public or private, which could be used to further the task but should demolish them all. Having given these [4] instructions, and adding that he would himself deal with everything else at Sparta, he departed. And when he got to Sparta he did not go directly [5] to the officials but kept putting it off and making excuses. Whenever anyone in authority asked him why he did not come before the people in assembly he said he was awaiting his fellow envoys, that they were delayed on some other business, that he was expecting them to come any moment and was surprised they were not already there.

The Spartan officials were persuaded to believe what Themistocles **91** said because they thought of him as a friend, but when other visitors arrived with clear contrary evidence – that a wall was going up and had already reached some height – they could find no reasons to disbelieve them. When Themistocles became aware of this he told them not to be [2] misled by assertions but instead to send some good and trusted men of their own to make a direct inspection and report back. They therefore [3] did so, and Themistocles secretly sent word to Athens telling them to detain the envoys in the least obvious way possible and not to let them go until he and his colleagues got back to Athens (for by this time his fellow envoys, Habronichus son of Lysicles and Aristeides son of Lysimachus, had arrived with the news that the wall was now high enough), his fear being that when the Spartans heard the real truth they would no longer let them go. The Athenians accordingly detained the envoys as instructed, [4] while Themistocles went to the Spartans and told them openly then and there that their city was now well enough walled to protect its inhabitants and that if the Spartans or their allies wanted to send envoys to them they would in future be dealing with men who had a clear sense both of their own interests and of the general good.[1] He said that when they [5] had decided to abandon the city and take to their ships they had taken this bold decision without involving the Spartans, while in all their joint consultations the Athenians had proved themselves second to none in terms of judgement. And their view now was that it would be better [6] for their city to have a wall and that this would better serve both their

[1] An important first assertion of independence and ambition on the Athenians' part. 'General good' translates *ta koina*, that is, what is shared in common or is public rather than private. See further glossary.

citizens' own interests and those of the allies as a whole; they could only [7]
have a similar or equal voice in the common counsels from a position of matching military strength. It followed, he said, that either they should all be in an alliance without walls or else the Spartans should acknowledge that the Athenian actions were in fact justified.[1]

When they heard this the Spartans did not express any open signs **92**
of anger against the Athenians – since the supposed purpose of their embassy was not to obstruct but to offer thoughts and advice for the common good, and they were anyway feeling at their friendliest towards the Athenians at this time because of the commitment the Athenians had shown against the Persians. Nonetheless they did feel secretly annoyed since they had failed in their purpose. So the envoys of both sides went back home without making any formal complaints.

This was how the Athenians got their city walled in a short space of **93**
time. And it is clear even now that the building-work was done in some [2]
haste. The foundations are constructed of all sorts of stones, not cut to fit together in any way but used just as they were when they were brought along, and many gravestones and other hewn stones were also worked into the structure. The circuit of the city wall was extended in every direction and as a consequence they ransacked everything indiscriminately in their haste.

Themistocles also persuaded them to fortify the rest of the Peiraeus (a [3]
task that had been started earlier when he held the office of archon to the Athenians for a year[2]), judging it to be a fine site with its three natural harbours. He also thought that becoming seamen gave the Athenians a great advantage in the acquisition of power (indeed he was the first person bold enough to tell them to 'stick to the sea') and he immediately helped them make a start on this.[3] It was on his advice too that they built the wall round the Peiraeus to the thickness you can see today (two chariots could pass each other, bringing in the stones from opposite directions).

[1] The Spartans had already proposed that all the cities outside the Peloponnese should lose their walls (and they had none themselves), so could they not have called Themistocles' bluff by accepting his first option?

[2] Thought to be in 493/2: see Hornblower I, p.139. Archons were the nine chief magistrates at Athens, one of whom gave his name to his year of office (thus, 'in the archonship of Themistocles').

[3] The Greek is ambiguous here because the key word *arche* can mean either a 'beginning' or an 'empire'. If the latter is intended (as most commentators and translators suppose) the sentence would mean 'he directly helped to establish the empire'. I think the context, and in particular the next sentence, favour the more modest claim I have rendered.

Inside there was neither rubble nor clay, but very large blocks of stone were cut square and fitted together, clamped to each other on the outside with iron and lead. The height ended up at about half of what he intended. He had wanted to be able to repel enemy attacks by virtue of the size and [6] thickness of the wall, and thought that a small detachment of the least skilled would be sufficient to guard it, while the rest would man the ships. The ships were what he really emphasised, observing, I think, that the [7] Persian army had found it easier to make an incursion by sea than by land. He considered that the Peiraeus offered more advantages than the upper city and repeatedly advised the Athenians that if they were ever hard pressed by land to go down to Peiraeus and take on all-comers with their ships. This, then, is how the Athenians got their walls and constructed [8] their other defences immediately after the withdrawal of the Persians.

Pausanias son of Cleombrotus was now sent out from Sparta as com- **94** mander of the Greek forces with twenty ships from the Peloponnese, accompanied by thirty Athenian ships and many more from the other allies. They made an expedition against Cyprus, conquering most of it, [2] and then later against Byzantium, which was in Persian hands, and forced its surrender. This was under Pausanias' leadership.

By now, however, the Greeks were reacting against his domineering[1] **95** manner, especially the Ionians and those who had been recently liberated from the Persian King. They went to see the Athenians and asked them, as their kinsmen, to become their leaders and not to let Pausanias get away with any oppressive behaviour. The Athenians accepted what they said [2] and determined not to tolerate this and in general to manage affairs as they themselves thought best. Meanwhile the Spartans recalled Pausanias for [3] an investigation of the things they had heard: there were many charges of wrongdoing brought against him by visiting Greeks, and the picture that emerged was more one of a would-be tyrant than a general. It so happened [4] that he was summoned to Sparta at the same time as the allies were moved by their detestation of him to go over to the Athenians (except, that is, for the Peloponnesian forces). When he went to Sparta he was called to [5] account for his private misdeeds against individuals but was exonerated on the most important charges of misconduct. He was, however, in particular

[1] *Biaios* is a strong word, usually to be translated 'violent'; but it seems in this context to have more the sense of 'overbearing' or 'dictatorial', judging by the description of his behaviour here and later (I 130–35, and I 130.2, where he is said to be of a 'harsh temper' and was 'hard to approach'). The same adjective is applied to Cleon at III 36.6 and to the Corcyraeans (by the Corinthians) at I 40.1.

accused of Medism[1] and the case for that seemed clear. They did not [6]
restore him to his command but instead sent Dorcis and some others
with a modest force, but they found the Greek allies no longer willing
to accord them the position of leadership. When they realised this they [7]
left and the Spartans never sent out any other replacements; they feared
that those going overseas might become corrupted, as they had observed
in the case of Pausanias, and they also wished to be rid of the Persian
War and felt the Athenians were competent to take command and were
friendly enough to themselves at that time.[2]

After the Athenians had taken over the leadership in this way, sup- **96**
ported by these allies because of their hatred of Pausanias, they assessed
which cities should be required to contribute money for the war against
Persia and which ships – the ostensible purpose being to avenge their
sufferings by ravaging the King's land. This was when the office of the [2]
'Hellenic Treasurers'[3] was first established by the Athenians, whose job
it was to receive the tribute (which is what the 'contribution' of money
was called). The tribute was first assessed at 460 talents.[4] Delos was their
treasury and the meetings took place in the temple there.

To begin with the Athenians exercised their leadership over allies who **97**
were autonomous and participated in deliberations in joint assemblies.
And in the interval between the Persian War and the present one, through
a combination of warfare and their management of affairs, they undertook
all the many operations I shall describe, some directed by them against
the barbarian and some against rebellious allies of their own and against
those Peloponnesians they met in various encounters. I have recorded [2]
these things and have made this digression from my narrative for the
following reason: this theme was neglected by everyone before me, who
composed their work either about Greek affairs before the Persian War
or about the Persian Wars themselves. The man who did touch on these

[1] 'Medism' was the crime of conspiring or sympathising with the Persians (see further I 132.2, and II 62–3, where the Thebans answer the same charge).

[2] A key moment, though the Spartans already have their suspicions of the Athenians, as reported at I 92 above.

[3] *Hellenotamiai* 'Stewards of Greece', that is, officially at least, treasurers of and for Greece, not just for the Athenians, though later (probably in 454) the Treasury was in fact moved to Athens.

[4] There is a large scholarly literature on the size of this tribute, how the contribution of money was related to that of ships and how it changed during the Athenian exploitation of their empire. See in particular Gomme's long discussion at I, pp. 273–80 and 284–6 and the more recent references given in Hornblower I, pp. 145–6. On the value of 460 talents, see my note on coinage, pp. lvii–lviii.

matters in his *Atthis* was Hellanicus,[1] but he dealt with it only briefly and was inaccurate in his chronology. At the same time my account serves as an exposition of how the Athenian empire was established.

98 First, under the command of Cimon son of Miltiades, they took by siege Eion, a city on the Strymon in the hands of the Persians, and enslaved its inhabitants. They then enslaved Skyros, an island in the [2] Aegean which the Dolopians inhabited, and resettled it themselves. There [3] then followed a war between themselves and the Carystians, not involving other Euboeans, and eventually the Carystians capitulated on agreed terms. After this they fought a war with the Naxians, who had revolted [4] but were forced back into compliance by a siege. This was the first allied city to be enslaved,[2] in contravention of established practice,[3] but later the same thing happened to the others too in their various different circumstances.

99 Among the reasons for revolt the most important were defaults in the contributions of tribute and ships and in some cases the withdrawal of military support; for the Athenians were exacting masters and caused offence in the coercion they applied to those who were neither accustomed nor willing to suffer hardships. In other ways too the Athenians were no [2] longer the congenial leaders they had once been; they did not participate in joint campaigns on an equal basis, and it was easier for them to reduce to subjection anyone who revolted. For this state of affairs the allies [3] themselves were to blame. Because of this reluctance of theirs to undertake military campaigns most of them, in order to avoid leaving home, had themselves assessed to make their due payment in the form of money instead of ships, and so the Athenian fleet was expanded[4] using the

[1] Hellanicus came from Mytilene and was thought to have been an older contemporary of Thucydides. He may have taken his *Atthis* (a local history of Attica) down to near the end of the war, in which case this passage is a late insertion or revision on Thucydides' part. His comments about Hellanicus are rather ungenerous but he does at least mention him. Herodotus, who was a much more famous and important predecessor and surely a major source, is never mentioned by name, though *apodeixis* 'exposition' is the very word Herodotus himself uses in the first sentence of his *History*.

[2] Gomme (I, p. 282) points out the linguistic significance of the use of the verb *douloun* here (to enslave, in the sense of 'deprive of freedom') as opposed to the verb *andrapodizein* at 98.1 (to enslave, in the sense of 'sell into slavery').

[3] *Kata to kathestekos*, literally 'against what was established', which could be a general reference to established Greek custom (as most people take it) or, more pointedly, a specific reference to the terms of constitution of the alliance.

[4] Gomme (I, p. 283) makes the good tactical point that not only did this help expand the Athenian fleet but it also unified it under one control and hence made it more effective than a mere collection of naval contingents separately constructed, trained and led.

funds they had contributed, while the allies themselves, whenever they rebelled, were left to go to war unequipped and without experience.

Next came the battles of the River Eurymedon[1] in Pamphylia, fought 100
by the Athenians and their allies against the Persians both on land and by sea, The Athenians won both battles on the same day under the command of Cimon son of Miltiades, and they captured and destroyed up to 200 Phoenician triremes in all. Later on there was a revolt of Thasians, after [2]
disagreements about the trading-posts on the Thracian coast opposite and about the mine they worked there. The Athenians sent a fleet to Thasos, beat them in a sea battle and made a landing. At about the same time they [3]
sent to the Strymon10,000 settlers (drawn both from their own people and from the allies) to colonise the place then called Nine Ways, now Amphipolis. They overcame Nine Ways itself, which was in the hands of the Edonians, but when they advanced into the interior of Thrace they were destroyed at Drabescus in Edonia by a full[2] force of Thracians, who regarded their occupation of the place as a hostile act.

The Thasians, defeated in battle and now under siege, appealed to the 101
Spartans for help and urged them to support them by invading Attica. The Spartans promised to do so, without revealing this to the Athenians, [2]
and did have that intention but were prevented by the occurrence of the earthquake,[3] during which their helots and the 'outsiders' from Thuria and Aethaia seceded to Ithome.[4] Most of the helots were descendants of the early Messenians who had long been enslaved and were hence all called Messenians. So with the Spartans engaged in a war against these [3]
rebels at Ithome, the Thasians, who were in the third year of the siege, came to terms with the Athenians: they demolished their walls, handed over their ships, settled the question of what indemnity they had to pay immediately and what tribute in the future, and surrendered their claims on the mainland and on the mine.

[1] A famous victory, thought to have been between 469 and 466.

[2] See appendix 1 (p. 582). An alternative textual reading would give the meaning, 'they [the Athenian forces] were all destroyed'; but this would have been a colossal disaster and would surely have been more emphasised?

[3] This was the 'great earthquake' of 464 BC (see later at I 128.1).

[4] The helots were a subordinate class, largely employed in agriculture and food production, who far outnumbered their repressive Spartan masters and were always a threat, actual or feared, as the enemy within. The 'outsiders' (*perioikoi*, see glossary) were a population of free Greeks, dependent and without political rights but living in semi-autonomous communities outside the city.

The Spartans meanwhile, finding their war against the men in Ithome **102**
dragging on, called on the help of various people, including the Athenians,
who then came with a small force under the command of Cimon. They [2]
had particularly called on them because of the Athenian reputation for
siege operations, while the long continuation of the siege revealed their
own inadequacy in this respect – since otherwise they would have taken
the place by force. And it was from this campaign that an open difference [3]
first emerged between the Spartans and the Athenians. When the place
did not fall to an assault by force the Spartans became fearful lest the
daring and initiative of the Athenians – whom they thought of anyway
as a race apart – might, if they stayed on, lead to them being persuaded
by the men in Ithome to cause trouble. They therefore dismissed them,
alone of the allies, not revealing their suspicions but saying that they had
no further need of them. The Athenians realised that they were not being [4]
dismissed for any better reason than some suspicion that had arisen. They
took offence at this and felt they did not deserve to be treated this way by
the Spartans; so just as soon as they had left they abandoned the alliance
they had made with the Spartans against the Persians and became allies
of the Spartans' enemies, the Argives; and both these parties at the same
time confirmed a further alliance with the Thessalians, sworn on the same
terms.

In the tenth[1] year of the siege the men in Ithome, unable to hold **103**
out any longer, came to terms with the Spartans, agreeing that they
would leave the Peloponnese under truce and would never set foot there
again; anyone caught doing so would become the slave[2] of his captor.
There was also an earlier oracle that the Spartans had from Delphi telling [2]
them 'to release the suppliant of Zeus at Ithome'. So the rebels left with [3]
their women and children; and the Athenians accepted them because
of the hostility they now felt towards the Spartans and settled them at
Naupactus, which they happened to have recently taken from the Ozolian
Locrians occupying it. Meanwhile, the Megarians also came over to the [4]
Athenian side as allies, seceding from the Spartans because of oppression
by the Corinthians in a war about boundaries; and so the Athenians
secured Megara and Pegae, built the long walls for the Megarians running

[1] The chronology has been much disputed and the correct reading may be 'fifth' (see, for example, the long discussions in Gomme I, pp. 302–3 and 400–11).

[2] A slave (*doulos*, see glossary) had a status below even that of helots, who could at least have their own homes and families and could not be just bought and sold as a form of property.

from the city to Nisaea and garrisoned these themselves. And it was mainly because of this that the Corinthians first conceived such a vehement hatred of the Athenians.

Inaros son of Psammetichus, a Libyan and king of the Libyans by the **104** Egyptian border, set out from the city of Mareia above Pharos and caused most of Egypt to revolt from Artaxerxes; and after himself becoming leader he invited in the Athenians. They happened to be engaged in a [2] campaign against Cyprus with a fleet of 200 of their own and allied ships, and they left Cyprus and came to Egypt. After sailing from the sea up the Nile and making themselves masters of the river and of two-thirds of Memphis they proceeded to attack the other third, which is called White Fort; within it there were those of the Persians and Medes who had escaped and those Egyptians who had not joined in the revolt.

The Athenians made a landing at Halieis and there was a battle between **105** them and the Corinthians and Epidaurians, in which the Corinthians were victorious. Later the Athenians fought a sea battle against the Peloponnesian fleet at Cecryphaleia, which the Athenians won. After this [2] a war broke out between the Athenians and the Aeginetans and there was a great sea battle off Aegina between them, each with their own allies. The Athenians were victorious and seizing seventy of the enemy ships they made a landing and besieged Aegina, under the command of Leocrates son of Stroibus. Thereupon the Peloponnesians, in their wish [3] to support the Aeginetans, sent over to Aegina 300 of their hoplites who had previously been supporting the Corinthians and Epidaurians; meanwhile the Corinthians with their allies captured the heights of Geraneia and descended into the territory of Megara, thinking that the Athenians would be unable to help the Megarians since most of their army was away in Aegina and Egypt, and that if they did come to help this would mean their withdrawing from Aegina. In fact the Athenians did not touch the [4] army attacking Aegina, but the oldest and the youngest men[1] left in the city went to Megara under the command of Myronides. They fought an [5] indecisive battle with the Corinthians and the sides separated, neither side thinking they had got the worst of the action. The Athenians had [6] in fact come off best and when the Corinthians withdrew they set up a trophy. The Corinthians for their part were taunted by the older men in

[1] Those under twenty or over fifty did not normally go on active service outside Athens. The meaning here seems to be not that they sent 'the youngest and oldest of all the men left in the city' but that they sent 'the men left in the city, being the oldest and youngest' (see Gomme I, p. 308).

the city, and after making their preparations came back twelve days later and set up a rival trophy, as if they had been the victors. Whereupon the Athenians marched out from Megara, killed the men setting up the trophy, engaged the rest in battle and defeated them.

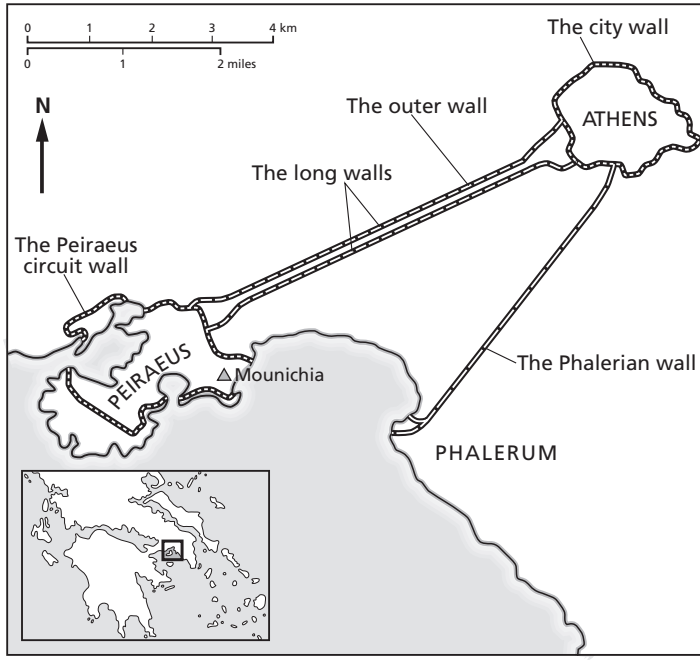
106 The Corinthians retreated in defeat, and a sizeable contingent of them lost their way under pressure and rushed into a piece of private land which [2] happened to be enclosed by a great ditch and offered no way out. The Athenians realised this and barred the entrance with their hoplites, then, deploying their light-armed troops in a circle around those inside, stoned them all to death. This incident was a terrible calamity for the Corinthians. The main body of their army, however, made its way home.[1]

107 At about this time the Athenians also began to build their long walls[2] down to the sea, both the one to Phalerum and the one to the Peiraeus. [2] Meanwhile the Phocians took military action against the inhabitants of Doris, the mother country of the Spartans comprising Boeum, Cytinium and Erineum, and captured one of these townships. In response the Spartans, under the command of Nicomedes son of Cleombrotus (acting on behalf of King Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, who was still a minor), came to the aid of the Dorians with 1,500 hoplites of their own plus 10,000 of their allies.[3] They forced the Phocians to agree terms and surrender the town, then went to leave for home. [3] If they wanted to take the sea route, which meant crossing by the Crisaean Gulf, the Athenians were going to be blocking their way, having brought their fleet round the Peloponnese. But neither did it seem safe to them to make their way through Geraneia, since the Athenians held Megara and Pegae; besides, the route through Gerainea was difficult going and was under constant guard by the Athenians, and they could see that the Athenians were ready to block them there on this occasion too. [4] They concluded that it would be best to wait in Boeotia and examine further the safest option for making the passage home. A further factor was that some Athenians were secretly urging their involvement in Athens, hoping to put an end

[1] A characteristic brief episode, with some vivid details set among matter-of-fact narrative comments, made the more dramatic as a consequence. See also, for example, the rout of the Athenians at III 98, that of the Ambraciots at III 112, and the atrocities at Corcyra at IV 47–48 and at Mycalessus at VII 29–30.

[2] In the case of the long wall to Peiraeus this seems to have been just the first of the famous pair of parallel walls that later proved to be of such strategic importance.

[3] See also 107.5 below. This was a very large-scale commitment on both sides, which surely made it impossible for them to believe that they were not seriously at war. Gomme (I, p. 308) thought this 'First Peloponnesian War' started, rather precisely, at 105.3.



Map 6. The walls of Athens[1]

to popular rule[2] there and stop the construction of the long walls. The [5]
Athenians came out against them with a full force, together with 1,000
Argives and various contingents from the other allies, 14,000 in all. They [6]
made this expedition against them in the belief that the Spartans were
at a loss how to find their way back, and to some extent also because of
their suspicions about plots to overthrow the people.[3] Some Thessalian [7]
cavalry also joined the Athenians, in accordance with their alliance with
them, though these changed over to the Spartan side in the course of the
action.

[1] Based on J. S. Rustenâ€™s edition of *The Peloponnesian War, Book II* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 119 (and see also map 29, p. 566).

[2] Here and at 107.6 and 115.4 below the *demos* not the *demokratia* (as at 115.3), though it is perhaps a fine distinction to make (see glossary and VIII 49n and 64.2n).

[3] Intriguing evidence for the political opposition in Athens at this stage, but we have no other real information about it.

In the ensuing battle at Tanagra in Boeotia the Spartans and their allies **108**
were victorious, and there was great carnage on both sides.[1] The Spartans [2]
then entered Megarian territory and after cutting down their fruit trees
returned home again via Geraneia and the Isthmus. The Athenians, for
their part, on the sixty-second day after the battle made an expedition
into Boeotia under the command of Myronides. They won a battle against [3]
the Boeotians at Oenophyta, took control of the territory of Boeotia and
Phoci, pulled down the walls of Tanagra and took as hostages the hun-
dred richest men of the Opuntian Locrians; they also completed their
own long walls. After this, the Aeginetans too came to an agreement with [4]
the Athenians – pulling down their walls, surrendering their ships and
accepting an assessment for future tribute. Then under the command [5]
of Tolmides son of Tolmaeus the Athenians sailed round the Peloponnese. They burned the Spartans' dockyard,[2] seized the Corinthian city of Chalcis and defeated the Sicyonians after making a landing on their territory.

Meanwhile in Egypt, the Athenians and their allies stayed on and **109**
experienced war in all its many forms.[3] At first the Athenians were in [2]
control of Egypt, and the Persian King sent a Persian called Megabazus
to Sparta with money in order to persuade the Spartans to invade Attica
and so draw the Athenians away from Egypt. But when he made no [3]
progress and the money was being spent to no purpose, Megabazus was
recalled to Asia with what remained of the funds and the King sent out
another Persian, Megabyzus son of Sopyrus, with a large army. Arriving [4]
by land, he overcame the Egyptians and their allies in a battle; he drove
the Athenians from Memphis and finally trapped them on the island of
Prosopitis, where he besieged them for a year and six months until – by
draining the channel and diverting the water elsewhere – he left the boats
high and dry and turned most of the island into part of the mainland; he
then crossed on foot and captured the place.

And so the Greek cause came to grief after six years of warfare. Few out **110**
of many survived – by making their way through Libya into Cyrene – but
most perished. Egypt once again came under the control of the Persian [2]
King, except for Amyrtaeus, the king in the marshlands. This man they

[1] 457 BC. [2] Thought to be at Gytheion in the Gulf of Laconia (see map 2, p. lxii).

[3] *Ideai*, which has the general meaning of 'forms' or 'kinds' and may therefore refer to either the outer appearance or the inner nature (it also became a technical medical and philosophical expression, see *eidos* in glossary). Here it presumably includes war both by land and sea and both victory and defeat.

were unable to capture, because of the huge extent of the marshes and because the marsh men are the best fighters among the Egyptians. Inarus, [3] king of the Libyans, who was instigator of the whole Egyptian adventure, was betrayed, captured and crucified. And when fifty relief ships from [4] Athens and the alliance sailed to Egypt and put in at the Mendesian mouth of the Nile, quite unaware of the course of events, they were attacked by the Persian infantry from land and by the Phoenician fleet by sea. Most of their ships were destroyed, and only a few escaped to return home. So ended the great expedition of the Athenians and their allies against Egypt.[1]

Meanwhile Orestes son of Echecratidas, the king of the Thessalians, 111 who was in exile from Thessaly, persuaded the Athenians to reinstate him. And they mounted a campaign against Pharsalus in Thessaly, taking with them Boeotian and Phocian allies. They did gain control of the land, if only in the immediate vicinity of the camp (being restricted to this by the Thessalian cavalry), but they did not capture the town or achieve any of the other objectives of the campaign and instead retreated empty-handed taking Orestes with them. Not long after, a thousand Athenians [2] embarked on the ships at Pegae (which they held) and sailed along the coast to Sicyon under the command of Pericles[2] son of Xanthippus; they landed there and defeated in battle the Sicyonians who engaged them. Straightaway after this they made the crossing, taking some Achaeans [3] with them, and attacked and besieged Oeniadae in Acarnania, but were unable actually to capture it and so returned home.

Three years later[3] there was a five-year truce between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians. The Athenians did abstain from wars involving 112 [2] Greeks, but they made an expedition against Cyprus with two hundred of their own and allied ships under the command of Cimon. Sixty of [3] these ships went on to Egypt at the request of Amyrtaeus, the king in the marshlands, while the rest laid siege to Citium. After Cimon's death, [4]

[1] This episode irresistibly recalls the much larger and more tragic Sicilian expedition dealt with in book VII (see especially the language of VII 87.5–6).

[2] The first (low-key) mention of Pericles, who comes to play a central role in the war and in Thucydides' history of it.

[3] Probably 451, but see Gomme (I, pp. 325–9) and Hornblower (I, p. 179) on disputes about the chronology arising from discrepancies between Thucydides' account and that of Diodorus, who wrote a large-scale (but heavily derivative) 'Universal History' in the first century BC and provides the only other continuous historical narrative for much of this period.

however, and suffering from lack of food, they withdrew from Citium;[1] and while en route off Salamis (the one in Cyprus) they engaged both by land and sea with Phoenician, Cyprian and Cilician forces. They won both battles and left for home, joined by the ships that had returned from Egypt. After this the Spartans undertook the so-called 'Sacred War', in [5] which they took control of the sanctuary at Delphi and handed it over to the Delphians. Later on, when the Spartans had gone away, the Athenians in turn made an expedition there, got possession of the place and handed it back to the Phocians.

Some time after this, with Boeotian exiles in possession of Orchome- **113** nus, Chaeronea and some other places in Boeotia, the Athenians mounted a campaign against these now hostile places, taking with them a force of 10,000 hoplites of their own and various allied contingents, under the command of Tolmides son of Tolmaius. They captured Chaeronea, enslaved its inhabitants and departed after establishing a garrison there. But while they were on their way they were attacked at Coroneia[2] by [2] the Boeotian exiles from Orchomenus, together with the Locrians, some Euboean exiles and other sympathisers. They defeated the Athenians in the ensuing battle, killing some of them and taking others prisoner. The Athenians thereupon evacuated the whole of Boeotia after making [3] a treaty that allowed them to get their own men back. The exiled [4] Boeotians returned and they and all the other Boeotians regained their independence.

Not long after this Euboea revolted from Athens, and Pericles had **114** only just crossed over there with an Athenian army when he was told the news that Megara had revolted, that the Peloponnesians were about to invade Attica, and that the garrison of Athenian troops had been completely destroyed by the Megarians, except for those who fled to Nisaea. In making their revolt the Megarians had also brought in Corinthians, Sicyonians and Epidaurians to help them. So Pericles brought the army back from Euboea with all speed. Then the Peloponnesians, [2] under the command of Pleistoanax son of Pauanias, king of the Spartans, invaded Attica as far as Eleusis and Thria, devastating the land; but they advanced no further and returned home.[3] The Athenians then crossed [3] back over to Euboea again, under the command of Pericles, and subdued

[1] In south-east Cyprus, the site of present-day Larnaka. [2] 446 BC.

[3] There was speculation about the reasons for not pushing home their advantage, including possible bribery (see II 21.1); and there were good stories circulating about this (see Plutarch, *Pericles* 23.1 and Aristophanes, *Clouds* 859).

the whole island; they made agreed arrangements everywhere except at Hestiaea where they expelled the inhabitants and settled the land themselves.

They returned from Euboea and shortly afterwards made a treaty with **115** the Spartans and their allies to last thirty years, giving back Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen and Achaea, which were Peloponnesian places the Athenians had been occupying.[1]

In the sixth year of the treaty war broke out between the Samians [2] and Milesians over Priene, and the Milesians (who were coming off worse) went to the Athenians and complained loudly about the Samians. They were also supported in this by various private individuals from Samos itself, who wanted a radical change in their form of government.[2] The Athenians therefore sailed to Samos with forty ships and set up a [3] democracy; they took as hostages fifty Samian boys and as many men, depositing them on Lemnos; then they withdrew, leaving a garrison behind. Some of the Samians, however, had not remained there but [4] had fled to the mainland; and having formed an alliance with the most influential men in the city and with Pissouthnes son of Hystapes (who was in control of Sardis at that time), they gathered a force of some six hundred mercenaries and crossed by night over to Samos. They caused an uprising against the people and gained overall control, then after smuggling their hostages out of Lemnos they staged a revolt; and they turned over to Pissouthnes the Athenian garrison troops and officers who had been left with them and at once made ready to mount a campaign against Miletus. The Byzantians too joined them in this revolt.

When the Athenians became aware of all this they sailed for Samos with **116** sixty ships. Sixteen of these they did not use (some of them were heading for Caria to look out for the Phoenician fleet, and some for Chios and Lesbos to summon help), so with forty-four ships under the command of Pericles and nine other generals they fought a sea battle off the island of Tragia against seventy Samian ships, twenty of which were troop carriers (and all of them on their way from Miletus). And the Athenians carried

[1] Given the importance attached to this Thirty Year Treaty by all parties in justifying their later actions (especially in their speeches), it is perhaps surprising that more is not made of it here (see the references at I 23.6, 35.1–2, 36.1, 67.1–2, 78.4, 140.2, 144.2 and 146).

[2] The verb I have translated as 'wanted a radical change' is *neoterizo*, literally 'to make changes', but often with the implication of sudden or forced change (see I 97.1, 102.3 and glossary); it is sometimes translated here as 'wanted a revolution', but that has other, modern connotations for us. 'Form of government' translates *politeia*, and again the common rendering of 'constitution' seems, here at least, to imply too much.

the day. Later on, forty ships arrived as reinforcements from Athens and [2]
twenty-five from Chios and Lesbos, and after landing and gaining control
with their infantry they blockaded the city with walls on three sides as
well as by sea. Pericles, however, removed sixty ships from the blockading [3]
force and went in haste to Caunus and Caria, after reports had reached
him that Phoenician ships were now sailing against them (for Stenagoras
and others had indeed left Samos with five ships to fetch the Phoenicians).

The Samians chose this moment to make a sudden sally and attacked the **117**
undefended camp. They destroyed the sentry ships and won a sea battle
against the ships that put out to oppose them. They were then masters
of their own seas for a period of about fourteen days, able to convey
things in and out as they wished. On Pericles' return, however, they [2]
were again confined by naval blockade. Pericles was later reinforced by
forty additional ships from Athens under the command of Thucydides,[1]
Hagnon and Phormio, twenty under Tlepolemos and Anticles, and thirty
more from Chios and Samos. The Samians did put up a brief resistance in [3]
a sea battle, but they were unable to hold out and in the ninth month were
reduced by siege and capitulated on the following terms: they agreed to
pull down their city walls, hand over hostages, surrender ships and accept
an assessment for war costs to be paid in instalments.

Not many years after this there then took place the events that have **118**
already been narrated: the episodes at Corcyra and at Potidaea and all
the things that constituted the occasion[2] for this war. All these activities [2]
of the Greeks, both in relation to each other and to the barbarians, took
place in this period of about fifty years between the retreat of Xerxes and
the start of the present war. In that time the Athenians established their
empire on a stronger basis and greatly advanced their own power. The
Spartans were aware of this but did little to check them. For most of the
time they remained passive, being ever slow to go to war unless forced to
do so, and partly too being hampered by wars of their own at home, until
the power of the Athenians was finally clear for all to see and their actions
were beginning to impinge directly on the Spartan alliance. Then they
could bear it no longer, and decided they must commit themselves totally
to the cause and break the might of Athens, if they could, by undertaking
this war.

[1] Thought not to have been our author, though he does appear later in the action as a military commander (IV 104–6).

[2] *Prophasis*, see glossary and notes on I 23.5–6.

The Spartans, then, had decided in their own minds that the treaty had [3] been broken and that the Athenians were the ones at fault, but they sent to Delphi to enquire of the god if war was the best course for them.[1] The god responded, it is said, that if they fought the war with all their strength victory would be theirs, and added that he himself would support them, whether bidden or not.[2]

The Spartans also wanted to summon their allies again and take a vote **119** on whether they should go to war. When the envoys arrived from the alliance and the meeting took place they all spoke their minds, most of them denouncing the Athenians and recommending war. The Corinthians in particular had already gone round each city privately urging them to vote for war, in their fear that Potidaea might fall before they reacted; they were also in attendance and they now came forward last of all and spoke as follows.

'Allies, we can no longer complain about the Spartans: they have voted **120** for war themselves and they have now convened us here to do the same. It is indeed the duty of leaders to deal with individual interests[3] in an even-handed way but to have special regard for the common good, in return for their special privileges in other matters. Those of us who have [2] dealt with Athens in the past do not need to be told to be on our guard against them. However, those who live further inland and are not on the trade routes should be aware that if they do not help defend those of us on the coast they will find it more difficult to bring their produce down to us and receive in return what the sea provides to the mainland. They should not so misjudge what is being said here as to think it no concern of theirs; but they should expect that if they abandon the coastal areas to their fate the danger may one day reach them too, and they must realise that what they are now discussing affects their own interests no less than ours.

They should not therefore hesitate to choose war in place of peace. It [3] is the mark of prudent men to enjoy the quiet life if they are not being wronged; but when they are, it is the mark of brave men to go from

[1] He now picks up the story again from 87.6.

[2] Delphic oracles often covered themselves with qualifications or ambiguities of this kind (see also I 126.4–6).

[3] *Ta idia*. It is not clear from the text whether these are the Spartans' own interests or just the interests of individual allies considered separately. Gomme thinks the latter (see his note at I, p. 414). At any rate, Sparta is here being thought of as a first among equals (see also Pericles at I 141.6–7).

peace to war, and then again at the right opportunity to abandon war for negotiation, neither being carried away by success in war nor allowing their pleasure in peace and quiet to let them be exploited. The person who [4] holds back to protect his pleasures may very quickly, if he stays quiet, be deprived of that very enjoyment of ease which caused him to hold back; while the one who over-reaches himself in the flush of military success has failed to realise how treacherous is the confidence that carries him along. Many a badly conceived enterprise has chanced to succeed because [5] the other side were even worse advised, and even more enterprises that seemed to be well planned have turned out to be shameful failures. No one ever executes in practice just what he confidently pictures in his own mind; we think up our schemes when feeling secure, but then are possessed by fear and fail to realise them in practice.

So now in our own case, we are instigating this war as the injured party, **121** with ample cause for complaint; and we will bring it to an end at the appropriate time when we have avenged ourselves against the Athenians. There are many grounds for being confident of our success: first, we are [2] superior in numbers and in military experience; secondly, we all respond as one to the word of command; and as for naval power, which is their [3] strength, we shall build that up, each from their current resources and also from the funds deposited at Delphi and Olympia. A loan will enable us to lure away their foreign sailors with the promise of higher pay. The Athenian power is more bought-in than home-grown whereas ours is less vulnerable in this respect, relying more on manpower than on money. It [4] will probably take just one victory at sea to beat them. Should they hold out, however, then we shall have more time to practise our naval skills, and once we have equalled them in terms of expertise there can be no doubt about our superiority in terms of fighting spirit. For the benefits that we have from nature cannot become theirs through instruction, while the advantage they have in expertise we can nullify through training. We [5] will raise the money needed for this through contributions. For think how extraordinary it would be if on the one side their allies continued to contribute to their own slavery, while we were not even willing to invest in vengeance on our enemies and in our own salvation and so prevent ourselves being damaged by the very funds they have taken from us.

There are also other avenues open to us in waging this war: a revolt **122** among their allies – the surest means of cutting off the flow of revenues on which they depend; a fortified post on their territory; and a range of other

things one couldn't now foresee. For war does not proceed by set rules but generally improvises its own course according to the circumstances. In dealing with war a cool head offers the safer policy, while a heated reaction more likely leads to grief.

Bear this in mind too. If these were just local boundary disputes between [2] individual states of equal strength that would not matter too much. But as it is the Athenians are a match for all of us put together, and are much more powerful than any one city. So unless we combine to attack them with one accord, nation with nation and city with city, they will defeat us easily in our disunity. And defeat, you must realise – however terrible it is to hear this – leads only to outright slavery. It casts a slur on [3] the Peloponnesians that such a thought should even be mooted and that so many cities should suffer at the hands of just one. In that event we should be thought either to deserve our misfortune or to be succumbing through cowardice in a way quite unworthy of our fathers. They liberated Greece. We, by contrast, so far from even making that freedom secure for ourselves would be allowing a tyrant state to be set up right in our midst, while urging the need to depose such sole rulers in any one city.[1] Such [4] behaviour must surely imply one of the three greatest failings: stupidity, weakness or negligence. So far from escaping these failings you have reached that fatal sense of superiority which has ruined so many men that it is better called "sense*less*ness".[2]

There is nothing to be gained by raking over complaints about what is **123** past unless it helps us here and now. But when it comes to the future we must make every effort to safeguard what we have – after all we have a tradition of excelling[3] through hard labour; and we must not change our ways, even if you are now slightly better off in terms of wealth and means (what was won in time of need should not by rights be lost in prosperity). Rather you must go to war, and you have many reasons for confidence: the god has spoken and has promised his own support, and the whole of the rest of Greece will join you in the struggle, partly out of fear and

[1] The analogy is between a tyrant state (ruling Greece) and a tyrant despot (ruling a single city). See also VI 85.1 'a tyrant man or city'.

[2] This is all a bit forced, in the Greek as in the English. There is no very great difference between *asunesia* ('stupidity') and *aphrosune* ('senselessness') but the latter affords a verbal play on *kataphronesis* ('sense of superiority'). Another interpretation is that the sentence means, 'having escaped these failings you can't have reached . . . ', but that seems to have less point in this context.

[3] Literally, 'acquiring *arete*', which in this context seems to have more of the sense of 'achieving success' than 'building character'.

partly from self-interest. You will not be the ones to break the treaty first. [2]
That has already been transgressed, as the god recognises in bidding you go to war; rather, you will be going to the rescue of a treaty that has been violated. It is not those defending themselves who break treaties but the initial aggressors.

All the circumstances therefore favour war and that is what we ourselves **124**
recommend in the common interest – assuming shared interest to be the surest guarantee for states and individuals alike. Do not hesitate, then. Go to help the Potidaeans, who are Dorians being besieged by Ionians[1] (in a reversal of the former situation), and seek freedom for the others, since it is no longer acceptable that we wait around while some of us are already suffering and others soon will be if we are known to have met but to have lacked the courage to defend ourselves. Allies, you must recognise [2]
that you are facing the inevitable and that what has been said is for the best. Vote for war, not out of fear at the immediate danger but looking forward to the lasting peace that will follow. A peace that is born of war is much the stronger, while avoiding war to preserve one's peace and quiet is fraught with danger. Understanding, then, that the tyrant state [3]
established in Greece is a threat to all alike – with some already under its control, and others in its sights – let us attack it and bring it to terms, and let us henceforth live our own lives in safety and set free those Greeks who are already enslaved.'

Such was the Corinthians' speech.

When the Spartans had listened to everyone's opinion they put the vote **125**
to each of the allies present in turn, cities large and small alike, and the majority of them voted for war. The decision made, it was still impossible [2]
for them to give effect to it immediately given their state of unreadiness, but they each determined what their appropriate contribution was and agreed to proceed without delay. Nevertheless, organising everything they needed took time – though less than a year – before they invaded Attica and openly undertook the war.[2]

Meanwhile, the Spartans kept sending envoys to the Athenians to **126**
make various complaints, in order to give themselves the best possible justification[3] for going to war should the Athenians pay no attention to

[1] An overtly ethnic (if not racial) appeal, drawing on the tradition that Ionia was colonised from Athens. See also I 95.1 and glossary under *suggeneia*.

[2] 'Undertaking the war' is the same phrase as at I 118.2 above. 'Openly' here has the force of both 'not covertly' and also 'undeniably' (see also II 2.3).

[3] *Prophasis* again: see I 23.5–6 and glossary.

them. The first[1] demand the Spartans made through these diplomatic [2]
missions was that the Athenians should expiate the curse of the goddess.
The background to this curse was as follows. Long ago there was an [3]
Athenian called Cylon, an Olympic champion and an influential man of
good family, who had married the daughter of Theagnes of Megara (the
tyrant of Megara at that time). Cylon consulted the oracle at Delphi and [4]
the god responded that he should seize the acropolis of Athens during
'the greatest festival of Zeus'. So he obtained a force from Theagenes and [5]
persuaded his friends to join him; then when the time of the Olympic
festival in the Peloponnese came round, he seized the acropolis, with
tyranny in mind, for he assumed that this was the greatest festival of
Zeus and also had some relevance to himself as an Olympic victor. As [6]
to whether the 'greatest festival' intended was the one in Attica or one
somewhere else he did not consider further and neither did the oracle
make this clear, but thinking he was right in his interpretation he made
his attempt. (In fact the Athenians also have their 'Diasia', which is known
as the greatest festival of Zeus Meilichius.[2] It is held outside the city and
in it they offer their sacrifices as a whole people, many of them making
not the normal sacrifices of animals but offerings of local origin.)[3]

When the Athenians realised what was happening they all came in [7]
from the countryside together to attack the intruders, took up positions
round the acropolis and besieged them. After a time, however, they [8]
wearied of the siege and most of them departed, giving the nine archons
responsibility for maintaining the guard and empowering them to manage
the whole situation in whatever way they thought best (the nine archons at
that time handled most of the affairs of the city). Cylon and his besieged [9]
companions were meanwhile suffering badly through lack of food and
water. Cylon and his brother managed to escape; but the others, since they [10]
were in great distress and some were even dying, sat down as suppliants

[1] We don't hear of the next until I 139.1, after the long digressions on Cimon, Pausanias and Themistocles, all of which link in the end to Pericles, whom the Spartans wish to discredit, but which are longer than needed for that purpose alone and must be partly the result of a natural authorial wish to supplement or correct existing accounts (as also in the review of early history at I 2–20). These digressions are written in an unusually relaxed narrative style, which prompted one of the ancient commentators to remark at this point, whether in appreciation or just relief, 'Here the lion laughed'.

[2] Gods could have special epithets (here Zeus 'the gracious one'), indicating their special attributes and responsibilities that could then be invoked on suitable occasions (see later II 71.2).

[3] This reads like a digression too far, and its meaning is in any case obscure. For a discussion of the rites in question (and a possible textual variant) see Hornblower I, p. 208.

at the altar on the acropolis. The Athenians who had been entrusted [11]
with the guard, when they saw them dying in the temple, made them
get up on the understanding that they would do them no harm, but
then led them away and killed them; and some others, who had taken
refuge on the altars of the 'Dread Goddesses'[1] as they were passing, they
dispatched even there. For this action they were pronounced accursed
and offenders against the goddess, they and their descendants with them.
The Athenians accordingly banished those under the curse, as too did the [12]
Spartan Cleomenes later on with the assistance of Athenian dissidents;
they banished the living and dug up the bones of the dead and cast them
all out. Later they came back, however, and descendants of this line are
still in the city.

This, then, was the curse that the Spartans demanded the Athenians **127**
drive out, supposedly out of respect for the gods in the first place, but
in fact knowing that Pericles son of Xanthippus was connected with the
curse on his mother's side and thinking that if he were in exile it would be
easier for them to take forward their agenda with the Athenians. However, [2]
they did not really expect that he would suffer this fate, but hoped rather
that they might incite political prejudice against him on the grounds
that the war would be partly caused by this unfortunate connection of
his. For as the most capable man of his time and the leading figure in [3]
government[2] Pericles opposed the Spartans in every possible way and
allowed no concessions but kept urging the Athenians on to war.

The Athenians made a counter-demand that the Spartans should drive **128**
out the curse of Taenarum. For the Spartans had once made some helots
who were suppliants in the sanctuary of Poseidon at Taenarum get up and
leave and had then led them off and done away with them. And they think
it was as a direct result of this that they suffered a mighty earthquake in
Sparta itself.

The Athenians also told them to drive out the curse of the Bronze [2]
House, which had come about as follows. After the first occasion when [3]
Pausanias the Spartan had been recalled by the Spartiates from his com-
mand in the Hellespont and was tried and found not guilty by them, he
was no longer sent out in an official capacity; but on his own initiative
and without involving the Spartans he took a trireme from the town of

[1] The 'Eumenides' or 'Furies': see note on Greek deities, p. lv.

[2] Literally, 'leading the *politeia*', which can mean the body of citizens, the constitution or form of government, and the government or administration (see glossary). The usual translation 'leader of the state' is not quite any of these.

Hermione and made a private visit to the Hellespont. His professed reason was to support the Greek cause in the war, but in fact he wanted to pursue an agenda with the Persian King, just as he had tried to do on the first occasion, his ambition being dominion over Greece.

The circumstances in which he had first placed the King under an [4] obligation to himself and had so begun the whole affair, were as follows. On his previous visit to the area after the retreat from Cyprus Pausanias [5] had captured Byzantium, then in possession of the Persians and of various associates and relatives of the King who were captured in the course of this. These prisoners he sent back to the King, concealing this from the other allies, the story put out being that they had escaped from him. In [6] this he acted with Gongulos the Eretrian, the man he had actually placed in charge of Byzantium and the prisoners. He sent Gongulos to take a letter to the King, which contained, as it later emerged, the following message:

'Pausanias, leader of Sparta, wishing to win your favour, sends you [7] back these men, captured by the spear.[1] I propose further, if this would be welcome to you, to marry your daughter and to make Sparta and the rest of Greece subject to you. I believe I can achieve this, in consultation with you. Therefore, if any of this pleases you, send to the coast a trustworthy man through whom we can communicate in future.'

So much the text disclosed. Xerxes was delighted by the letter and dis- **129** patched Artabazus son of Pharnaces to the coast. He ordered him to take over the Dascylian satrapy, replacing the previous governor Megabates, and gave him a letter of response, which he was to deliver to Pausanias as quickly as possible and show him its seal; and if Pausanias gave him any commissions concerning Xerxes' affairs he was to execute these as quickly and faithfully as he could. On his arrival he did just as instructed [2] and passed on the letter, which contained this written response:

'King Xerxes says the following in reply to Pausanias. Regarding the men whom you sent back safely to me from Byzantium across the sea, this good deed stands to your credit in our house, recorded for everlasting memory; and the words you wrote also give me pleasure. Let neither night nor day cause any slackening or hindrance in accomplishing the things you promise me; and do not let yourself be held back through any lack of gold and silver to spend, or of manpower if you ever need military

[1] That is, as prisoners of arms, a poetic touch in keeping perhaps with Pausanias' changing self-image. Xerxes' response is even more flowery.

involvement anywhere; but work with Artabazus, who is a good man I have sent you, and act with every confidence in managing both my and your affairs in the way that will jointly serve the honour and interests of us both.'

130 On receiving this letter Pausanias, who already enjoyed the high esteem of the Greeks because of his leadership at Plataea, then felt far more elevated still and could no longer bring himself to live in an ordinary fashion. Instead he would leave Byzantium dressed in the Persian style; he travelled through Thrace with a bodyguard of Persians and Egyptians; he had his table set in the Persian manner; and he could not contain his ambitions but revealed in small ways what he had it in mind to do on a larger scale later. He made himself hard to approach and showed such a [2] bad temper in dealing with everyone that no one could come near him. And this was a major factor in the alliance going over to the Athenians.

131 It was this same conduct that had led the Spartans to recall him the first time round when they became aware of it. So when he sailed out on the ship from Hermione without their telling him to do so, he seemed to be behaving the same way all over again; and when he did not return to Sparta after the Athenians had forcibly dislodged him from Byzantium, but settled in the Troad and was reported to be scheming with the Persians and staying on for no good purpose, then finally they could no longer restrain themselves. The ephors sent a herald with a coded message[1] and told him not to let the herald come back without him, otherwise the Spartans would declare him a public enemy. So Pausanias, wanting to [2] remove suspicion from himself as much as possible and trusting that he could dispose of the charges against him by bribery, returned a second time to Sparta. He was first thrown into prison by the ephors (who have the power to do this to a king), then having later contrived to get out of prison he presented himself for trial by those who wanted to conduct an examination into the case.

132 The Spartiates, both his personal enemies and the state as a whole, lacked any clear evidence they could rely on confidently enough to punish a man who was of royal descent and who still enjoyed high office at the time (for as cousin of the king, Pleistoanax son of Leonidas, Pausanias acted as his guardian while he was still under age). But Pausanias [2]

[1] *Skutale*, a stick around which a strip of leather was wrapped and written on crosswise; it could only be read when wrapped round an exactly matching stick, which was part of the standard Spartan diplomatic kit (though it is not clear in this case how Pausanias could have got the counterpart stick).

himself, through his unruliness and his affectation of Persian ways, gave them ample grounds for suspecting that he was unwilling to conform to the constraints of his current position.[1] They therefore went back over all his behaviour carefully to see if he might ever have transgressed established standards in any way, and they gave particular consideration to the fact that on the tripod at Delphi, which the Greeks dedicated as their first spoils of victory from the Persians, he had the presumption to have inscribed at his personal instigation the following elegiac couplet:

> Pausanias as captain of the Greeks destroyed the Persian army
> Then dedicated this memorial to Phoebus Apollo

The Spartans thereupon immediately erased this couplet from the [3]
tripod and inscribed on it the names of each of the cities which had set up this offering after they had jointly overthrown the barbarian. Even at the time this had seemed a criminal act on Pausanias' part and now, in the light of his present situation, his behaviour then seemed all the more consistent with his current frame of mind.

The Spartans were also given to understand that he was up to something [4]
with the helots, as indeed he was. He was promising them freedom and citizenship if they would join in an uprising and help him execute his overall plan. But not even then, not even trusting the evidence of informers from among the helots, did they think it right to initiate some action against him; instead they kept to their usual practice where they were themselves concerned – of being slow to take any irrevocable action against a Spartiate without indisputable proof; until at last, it is said, the man who was due to deliver to Artabazus Pausanias' latest letter for the King, a man from Argilus, who was once a special favourite of Pausanias' and was completely trusted by him, turned informer. He became alarmed when he realised that none of the messengers sent out before him had returned back home, and after counterfeiting the seal so that he would not be discovered if he proved to be wrong in his suspicions or if Pausanias should ask to make some changes to the letter, he opened it and found it included a note of just the kind he had suspected – an instruction to kill him.

[1] Literally, 'was not willing to be equal (*isos*) to current things', the suggestion being that he wanted to be king, or have king-like power, in his own right.

When the man showed them the letter, the ephors were certainly 133
more persuaded, but they still wanted to hear for themselves something directly from Pausanias' own mouth. So by prior arrangement the man went to Taenarum as a suppliant and occupied a hut divided into two by a partition. He hid some of the ephors inside and when Pausanias came and asked him the reason for his supplication they were fully aware of everything that was said: the man accused Pausanias over the references to him in the letter and brought everything else out into the open, item by item, complaining that he had never put Pausanias in any jeopardy in his own missions to the King but was to be rewarded, just like the many other emissaries – with death. Pausanias admitted all this and tried to defuse the man's anger about the present situation, giving him instead a guarantee that he could get up and leave the sanctuary in safety and urging him to be on his way as quickly as possible and not to hinder the business in hand.

After hearing every word of this the ephors then went home and, secure 134
now in their knowledge of the truth, they prepared to arrest Pausanias in the city. The story goes that when he was about to be apprehended in the street Pausanias caught sight of the face of one of the ephors approaching him, realised the purpose for which he was coming, and when another ephor gave him a friendly tip-off with a covert nod, made a run for the temple of the Bronze House and got there before his pursuers, the precinct being quite close. To protect himself from the elements he made his way into a small room that was part of the temple and there he stayed.
The ephors were just too late to catch him on that occasion, but then they [2]
removed the roof of his building and after checking that he was inside they trapped him there and walled up the doors; then they settled outside
and proceeded to starve him out. He was about to expire then and there in [3]
the building, when they became aware of his condition and brought him out of the temple still breathing, and as soon as he was brought outside he died.

They first intended to throw him into the Caeadas[1] along with the [4]
other criminals, but then they decided to bury him somewhere nearby. The god at Delphi later pronounced that the Spartans should transfer his tomb to the place where he had died (and he now lies in the entrance to the precinct, as the stele[2] inscription indicates), and that since they had committed an act of defilement the Spartans should restore two bodies to

[1] A ravine or cave near the city. [2] An inscribed slab: see glossary.

the Bronze House in return for one. And so they had two bronze statues made and dedicated them there in requittal for Pausanias.

So the Athenians retaliated with their demand for an act of expiation 135
on the part of the Spartans, since the god himself had declared that there had been a defilement.

Arising from this Medism of Pausanias, the Spartans sent envoys to [2]
Athens to accuse Themistocles of complicity too, which they had discovered in their investigations into Pausanias, and they recommended that he be punished in the same way. The Athenians were persuaded, but [3]
since he had been ostracised[1] and was living in Argos and making visits to other parts of the Peloponnese as well, they sent some men together with the Spartans (who were happy to join in the hunt) with instructions to arrest him wherever they might find him.

Themistocles got wind of this and fled from the Peloponnese to Cor- 136
cyra, where he was a recognised public benefactor. The Corcyraeans claimed they were afraid to have him there (and so incur the hostility of the Athenians and Spartans) and they conveyed him to the mainland directly opposite. Themistocles, pursued by those assigned to track him [2]
down wherever he went, was forced in desperation to seek lodging with Admetus, king of the Mossians, who was no friend of his. Admetus hap- [3]
pened not to be there and Themistocles came to his wife as a suppliant and was told by her to take their son in his arms and seat himself by the hearth. When Admetus returned shortly afterwards Themistocles revealed who [4]
he was and urged that, despite his having spoken against some request Admetus had made to the Athenians, Admetus should not take revenge on a fugitive; in his present state he would be in a much weaker position than Admetus and should not be made to suffer, and nobility demanded that one take one's revenge on equals and on even terms. He himself had opposed Admetus only in response to some request he had made and not over a matter of life and death; while if Admetus were to give him up (he

[1] Ostracism was an Athenian procedure in the fifth century (first used in 488 and lapsing in 416) whereby a political figure could be exiled from Athens and her dependencies, though without loss of property or citizenship, for a period of ten years if there was an initial majority in favour of such a vote taking place and if he then received a majority of votes cast (with a quorum of 6,000). It seems to have been used to resolve political deadlocks and remove troublesome individuals, but it is not clear why Themistocles, presumably a war hero, should have been so selected.

explained who his pursuers were and what they intended), he would be depriving him of any salvation.[1]

Admetus listened to him and raised him to his feet still with the son, **137** whom he had held while sitting down, as the most powerful form of supplication. Not much later the Spartans and the Athenians arrived, and despite everything they said he did not hand Themistocles over to them but sent him, as he wished, to the King of Persia, travelling by land across to Pydna in the kingdom of Alexander on the Aegean Sea. There [2] he found a merchant vessel heading for Ionia and got on board, but was carried by a storm to the naval station of the Athenian force blockading Naxos. In some fear he told the captain who he was and why he was fleeing (since no one on board had recognised him), and said that if he did not protect him he would claim that the captain had been bribed to take him on board; that his safety depended on no one leaving the ship before the voyage resumed; and that if the captain complied he would return the favour handsomely. The captain did as he asked and after riding at anchor off the Athenian position for a day and a night made it to Ephesus.

Themistocles duly rewarded him with a gift of money (which came [3] from friends in Athens and from funds deposited in Argos), proceeded inland with one of the Persians from the coastal area, and sent on a letter to King Artaxerxes son of Xerxes, who had recently come to the throne.

The letter declared: 'I, Themistocles, am come to you, the man who [4] did your house more harm than any of the other Greeks – for as long as I was forced to defend myself against your father's attack – but also the man who did you far more good when I was the one safe and he was in danger at the time of the retreat home. My services deserve a return (here he referred in his letter to the warning he had given after Salamis of the Greek retreat and to the failure to destroy the bridges, for which he falsely took credit[2]), and now I am here, in a position to do you great good service, pursued as I am by the Greeks because of my friendship

[1] Literally, in the early part of the sentence 'saving his body (*soma*)' and in the latter 'saving his soul (*psuche*)', but they are in effect equivalent here and the contrast is only a rhetorical variation.

[2] Thucydides here seems to assume that readers will be familiar with the story that he effectively tipped off the Persians, which Herodotus tells in fuller but slightly different detail at VIII 75 and 108–10 (though in fact Themistocles may have been playing a double game).

with you. I wish to wait a year and then come to explain in person why I am here.'

The King, it is said, was much impressed by his purpose of mind[1] and 138
told him to do as he said. And during this interval Themistocles learned as much as he could of the Persian language and the customs of the land. When the year was up he went to them and became a more important [2]
figure in the court than any other Greek ever had, both on account of his existing reputation and the hope of Greek dominion he kept alive in the King's mind, but most of all because of his evident and proven intelligence.

Themistocles did indeed demonstrate his natural powers most [3]
convincingly.[2] He was quite exceptional in this respect, a man to marvel at, in a class of his own. It was his native wit, without the need for additional study beforehand or at the time, that made him outstanding at judging an immediate situation with the minimum of deliberation, and supremely good at envisaging future events very fully. Moreover, he had the ability to give a full exposition of anything he was directly engaged in, and where something was outside his personal experience he still managed to make perfectly adequate judgements; and he could always see in advance the better and worse options in a still uncertain future. In short, through his natural powers and his speed of reaction he was without equal at improvising the right course of action.

His life was ended by illness, though some say he died by his own hand, [4]
poisoning himself because he came to think it impossible to deliver the results he had promised the King. There is a monument to him in the [5]
market-place at Magnesia in Asia, the land where he became governor, the King having given him Magnesia for bread (bringing in fifty talents a year), Lampsacus for wine (reputed to be the most productive wine-country then) and Myous for meat. His bones, say his relatives, were [6]
brought home at his request and were buried in Attica, unknown to the Athenians, since it was forbidden to bury there anyone exiled for treason. Such was the end of the Spartan Pausanias and the Athenian Themistocles, the most illustrious Greeks of their time.

[1] *Dianoia*, perhaps intentionally ambiguous here between his 'declared purpose' and his 'cast of mind'.

[2] Thucydides now resumes in his own voice, so to speak, and the language again becomes more compressed, abstract and rhetorical. See the note on 126.2 above. There are parallels with the later description of Pericles' qualities, for example at I 139.3, II 60.5 and 65.

These, then, were the demands the Spartans had made on their first **139**
diplomatic mission, and the counter-demands they had faced concerning
the expulsion of the men cursed.[1] On later visits to the Athenians they
told them to withdraw from Potidaea and give Aegina back its freedom;
but most of all, and in the clearest possible terms, they kept advising that
there would be no war if the Athenians revoked the Megarian decree,
by which the Megarians were forbidden access to the harbours in the
Athenian empire or even to the Athenian market itself.[2] The Athenians [2]
heeded none of their other appeals, nor did they rescind the decree but
accused the Megarians of encroachments in cultivating land that was
sacred or was undefined border territory and of harbouring runaway
slaves. Finally, the Spartans sent one last team of envoys, consisting of [3]
Ramphias, Melesippus and Agesandrus, who did not go over any of their
other usual complaints but just said this: 'The Spartans want there to be
peace, and there would be if you give the Greeks back their independence.'
The Athenians then called an assembly and proposed a general debate,
resolving to consider the whole question and give their answer once and
for all. Many people came forward to speak, representing the views of [4]
both sides, some arguing that they should go to war, and some that the
decree should not stand in the way of peace but should be rescinded. Then
Pericles son of Xanthippus came forward, the leading man in Athens at
the time, supremely capable both at speaking and in action, and he advised
them as follows.

'Athenians, I hold to the same opinion I have always had – that we **140**
should not give in to the Peloponnesians. I know, however, that the mood
in which people in general are persuaded to go to war does not remain the
same when they actually undertake it, but that they change their minds
with their circumstances. So I see that I must now give you very much
the same advice as before, and I call on those of you who are persuaded by
what I say to support the common policy, even if we should have setbacks
to come; otherwise, if things go well for us, you can claim no share of
credit in our good judgement. We know that the course of events can go

[1] Picking up the story again from 126 above.

[2] See also I 67.4, though one could wish he had explained the circumstances of this 'Megarian decree' further since some of the protagonists insist so strongly on its importance (I 139.4, 140.4). The other earlier references to the Megarians are at 42.2, 103.4 and 114.1.

awry as senselessly[1] as the plans of men, which is why we usually blame luck for things that take an unexpected turn.

It was clear before that the Spartans were plotting against us and it is [2] even clearer now. For although it was explicitly agreed that we should settle any differences by mutual arbitration,[2] with each side keeping what it has, they never asked for arbitration themselves nor do they accept it when offered by us, but they prefer to resolve complaints with war rather than words; and now they have come here issuing instructions and no longer just making requests. They order you to get out of Potidaea, [3] to restore independence to Aegina and to rescind the Megarian decree; and now finally they come and tell us to restore independence to the Greeks.

None of you should think it a little matter that we would be fighting [4] for if we refused to rescind the Megarian decree – which is the thing they claim could stop the war happening. You must leave no lingering suspicions in your own minds that you went to war over a trifle. This [5] "little matter" involves nothing less than the test of your resolution and the proof of your policy. If you give way on this you will immediately face some new and greater demand, since they will realise that you lost your nerve in making that first concession. But if you flatly refuse, you will be giving them a clear demonstration that they must treat you more like equals.

Make up your minds, then, here and now: either give in before we get **141** hurt in any way, or if are to go to war – which I for one recommend – make sure that we will not be moved to yield for any suggested reason large or small and will not be afraid to hold on to what we have acquired. If people are pressing demands on their neighbours and equals without due process of law,[3] no matter to what degree, it amounts to enslavement just the same.

[1] *amathos*, which is an arresting choice of word. The core meaning is 'without learning' or 'stupidly' but it is applied here somewhat metaphorically to events, which in English too we can talk of as being 'senseless'. Things resist our ability to account for them (they turn out *para logon*).

[2] *Dike* (see glossary): one of the terms in the Thirty Year Treaty of 446 (I 115.1). The next clause clearly implies (though it does not quite say) that while arbitration is ongoing each side for the time being keeps what it has 'without prejudice', as we should say, though this has also been interpreted in some more absolute sense (see Hornblower I, pp. 227–8).

[3] The language is deliberately legalistic. Literally, a 'demand for justice' (*dikaiosis*) made in advance of 'legal arbitration' (*dike*).

Now, as regards this war and the resources available to each side, [2] listen while I explain point by point and understand why we are not the weaker party. The Peloponnesians are farming people and have neither [3] private nor public funds available; and besides, they have no experience of protracted overseas wars because their own campaigns against one another are kept brief by the fact of their poverty. People in this situation [4] are not capable of manning ships or constantly sending out armies by land, if at the same time they are going to be absent from their property, spending from their own savings and in addition barred from the sea. Capital is what sustains a war rather than forced contributions. Farmers [5] are the kind of men who are more ready to risk their persons than their property in war, having more confidence that their bodies will survive the perils of war than that their funds will hold out, especially if the war is prolonged beyond their expectations, as it may well be. In a single [6] battle the Peloponnesians and their allies are able to withstand the whole of Greece, but they are incapable of sustaining a war against a power so differently organised from theirs. They have no single executive council[1] and cannot take prompt emergency action; and since they all have an equal vote and come from different nationalities, each of them presses their own case – a recipe for getting nothing done. What some of them [7] want is the heaviest possible retaliation against a particular enemy, while others want the least possible damage to their own property. On the rare occasions when they do get together, they spend only a small fraction of their time looking at matters of common concern but devote most of it to their private interests, and each of them thinks his own negligence will do no harm but that it is someone else's business to look after the future on their behalf. The result is that because they each share the same misconception they fail to notice the ruin of their common cause.

The main point, however, is that they will be hampered by their lack **142** of money, since they are slow to generate it and are therefore subject to delays. But in war opportunities do not wait. Moreover, we have nothing [2] to fear either from their fort-building or from their navy.[2] As regards the [3] former, it is difficult enough even in time of peace to found something amounting to a rival city, let alone doing so in enemy territory and when

[1] *Bouleterion*, see glossary.

[2] These were essentially the Corinthian recommendations at I 121–22. It was Alcibiades who later (VI 91) persuaded the Spartans to concentrate on both parts of this strategy, which was certainly instrumental in Athens' defeat. It is impossible to say if Thucydides had this irony in mind when he wrote (or re-wrote) this passage.

we are actively countering it with fortifications of our own. But suppose [4]
they do establish a small fort – they may damage some part of our land
through the activities of their raiders and our deserters, but that will not
be sufficient to prevent us from sailing and building forts on their territory
and retaliating with our navy, which is our great strength. We have more [5]
experience of land warfare as a result of our naval background than they
have in naval matters from their experience on land. It will not be an easy [6]
matter for them to acquire an expert knowledge of the sea. Even we – [7]
who have been practising this ever since the Persian Wars – have not yet
fully mastered the art. How then could men who are farmers and not
seamen achieve anything worthwhile – men, moreover, who will not be
allowed to practise because we shall have them under constant blockade
with our large fleet? Against a small blockading force their confidence in [8]
their advantage of numbers might outweigh their ignorance and persuade
them to take the risk; even so, when they are confined by a large fleet they
will not stir and through their lack of practice they will become even less
competent and so the more hesitant. Seamanship is a matter of skill like [9]
anything else. It cannot just be practised now and then, as a sideline; on
the contrary, it leaves no time for anything else even to *be* a sideline.

What, then, if they get hold of the money at Olympia or Delium and **143**
try to lure away our foreign sailors with the offer of higher pay? That
would indeed be a threat if we ourselves and our metics[1] were not a match
for them when we take to the sea. But the fact is we are a match, and
most important of all we have citizens for helmsmen and both more and
better specialist crews than the rest of Greece put together. And none of [2]
the foreign sailors would take the risk of exile from their own countries,
combined with reduced hopes of victory by joining the fight on the other
side, just because of the offer of a few days' higher pay.

This is more or less the situation of the Peloponnesians, at least in my [3]
judgement. I think our situation is free of the weaknesses I criticised in
theirs, and it has other very positive advantages. If they march against our
territory we shall sail against theirs, and you cannot equate the devastation
of a part of the Peloponnese with the devastation of the whole of Attica.
They will have no other territory they can replace it with, except by [4]
fighting, while we have plenty of land both in the islands and on the
mainland. Mastery of the sea is the key. Just consider. If we were island [5]
dwellers who is there who would be more impregnable? So we must

[1] Metics were 'resident immigrants' in Athens: see glossary.

now think like islanders as much as we can: let your land and houses go, but keep guard over the sea and the city; do not let your anger with the Peloponnesians over these losses make you fight it out against their much greater numbers (for if we win we have to fight again with the same disadvantage and if we lose we lose our allies too, the source of our strength, since they will not stay quiet once we no longer have the capacity to send out a force against them[1]); and you must make your lamentations not over the loss of houses and land but over the loss of lives. Men give us these possessions, the possessions do not give us men.[2] Indeed if I thought I could persuade you, I would tell you to go out and destroy these things yourselves and show the Peloponnesians that you will never surrender yourselves for your property.

I have many other reasons to hope for success, provided you agree not **144** to extend your empire while the war is going on and not to add to our dangers in ways of your own making. The truth is, I fear our own mistakes more than I fear the plans of the enemy.

But all that will be explained in another speech, as events develop. For [2] the present let us send these envoys back with this response:

- We will grant the Megarians access to our markets and harbours, if the Spartans for their part stop expelling us and our allies as aliens[3] (there is nothing in the treaty to prevent either of these moves).
- We will let the cities have their independence, if they were independent when we made the treaty[4] and as soon as the Spartans grant the cities in their own alliance the right to be independent in a way that suits their own individual wishes rather than the Spartans' interests.
- We are willing to accept arbitration as set out in the treaty, and we will not begin a war but will defend ourselves against those who do.

This will be a just response and one worthy of our city.

You must know, however, that war is inevitable (and the more willing [3] we are to embrace it the less the pressure we shall get from our enemies); and that from the greatest dangers emerge the greatest honours, for cities and individuals alike. Our fathers, remember, withstood the Persians, [4]

[1] *Strateuein* is 'to campaign' or 'to send out a force', but the implication here is that the Athenian army, in the narrower sense of land forces and not just the navy, was crucial to maintaining control in the empire.

[2] See also VII 77.7 and Herodotus VII 61.2.

[3] *Xenelasia* was the Spartan custom of expelling foreigners. See also II 39.

[4] That is, the Peace Treaty of 446 BC (see I 115.1n).

starting with fewer resources and sacrificing even those they had. By dint of good judgement rather than good fortune and through their courage rather than the might of power, they beat back the barbarian and brought us to our present state. We must not fall short of their example, but must resist our enemies in every way we can and try to pass on our heritage intact to those who follow after.'

Such was the speech of Pericles. The Athenians concluded that he had **145** given them the best advice and voted as he recommended. They gave their answer to the Spartans, following his express advice both in detail and overall, and said they would do nothing in response to orders but were ready to go to arbitration, as the treaty provided, to deal with the complaints on a fair and equal basis. The Spartans went home and never again came on an official mission.

These, then, were the reasons for complaint and the matters of dispute **146** on both sides before the war, arising directly from the events in Epidamnus and Corcyra. Nonetheless they continued to communicate in the midst of all this and paid visits to each other, without heralds but not without distrust; for these events constituted the end of the treaty and the occasion for war.[1]

[1] This completes the circularity of the account so far, taking us back to the introduction on the causes of war at I 23.5–6 and the recapitulation at I 118. The war narrative proper can now begin.

[BOOK II][1]

First year of the war, 431–30 [II 1–47.1]

Summer [II 1–32]

This marks the beginning of the war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians and the allies on each side, the point from which they only dealt with each other through heralds and were continuously at war once they had started.[2] Events have been recorded in the order of their occurrence, by summers and winters.[3] 1

The Thirty Year Treaty made after the capture of Euboea remained in force for fourteen years; but in the fifteenth year – that is, when Chrysis had been priestess at Argos for forty-eight years, when Aenesias was ephor at Sparta and Pythadorus still had two months to serve as archon at Athens, in the sixth month after the Battle of Potidaea and at the start of spring – some 300 or more Thebans led by the boetarch Pythangelus son of Phyleides and Diemporus son of Onetorides made 2

[1] On the conventional division into books, see the introduction p. xxvi and the preamble to the synopsis of contents, p. 614.

[2] The official start of war is marked by the use of heralds for communications. Thucydides insists that it really was one continuous action, despite the interruption of the peace of 421 (see V 26.2).

[3] This chronology based on years and the seasonal realities of military campaigning seasons was an innovation of Thucydides, though there seems to be no precise calendar date when his 'summer' starts (see IV 1.1 and note on calendar, pp. lviii–lix). In 2.1 below there is a rather pedantic recitation of other dating systems, which reveals their awkwardness.

an armed entry during the first watch of night into Plataea, a Boeotian city allied to the Athenians. A group of Plataeans invited them in and [2] opened the gates for them – these were Naucleides and his followers, who for reasons of personal ambition wanted to do away with their political opponents and make the city over to the Thebans. They arranged this plan [3] through Eurymachus son of Leontiades, one of the most powerful men in Thebes. The Thebans foresaw that there would be a war and wanted to take the initiative and seize Plataea – which had always been at odds with them – while the peace still held and war had not yet been openly declared. This is why they found it relatively easy to get in unobserved, because no guard had yet been established.

The Thebans laid down their arms in the market-place and instead [4] of following the advice of the men who had brought them in – that they should go into action immediately and make straight for the houses of their enemies – they determined to try making conciliatory announcements to draw the city into a friendly agreement. Their herald therefore proclaimed that anyone who wanted to be their allies in accordance with the ancestral constitution of the Boeotians as a whole, should place their arms alongside theirs. Their thought was that in this way the city would more easily be brought over to their side.

When the Plataeans realised that the Thebans were inside and that 3 the city had been suddenly taken over they were terrified, believing that far more Thebans had got in than was the case (since they couldn't see in the dark of night). They therefore came to terms and accepted the proposals offered without resistance, especially since the Thebans were not using force against anyone. But at some point in the negotiations [2] they became aware that the Thebans were few in number and calculated that they could easily overpower them if they set on them – for the great majority of the Plataeans had no wish to defect from the Athenians. So [3] they determined to make the attempt: they gathered together by breaking through the party walls between their houses in order to avoid being seen going through the streets; they placed wagons without their draught animals in the streets to serve as barricades; and they took every other measure that seemed likely to be helpful in the present circumstances. When things were as ready as they could make them, they waited for the [4] time of night just before dawn and came from their houses to attack the Thebans. The intention was to avoid taking them on in daylight when the Thebans would be more sure of themselves and would face them on an equal basis, but to do so at night when they were more frightened and

at a disadvantage because of the Plataeans' familiarity with the city. They then attacked straightaway and quickly engaged in close combat.

When the Thebans realised they had been taken in, they rallied together **4**
and tried to fend off the attackers wherever they struck. Twice or three [2]
times they beat them back, but then the Plataeans charged them with a tremendous commotion, and at the same time the women[1] and domestic slaves were shouting and screaming at them from the houses and pelting them with stones and tiles, and on top of all this it poured with rain all night. Their nerve broke and they turned and fled through the city. Most of them were unfamiliar with the passageways that would lead to safety amid the mud and darkness (this was all happening towards the end of the month), while their pursuers knew their way around and could prevent their escape, with the result that many of the Thebans
perished. Moreover, one of the Plataeans closed the gates by which they [3]
had entered – and which were the only ones open – by using the point of a spear to serve instead of a pin to hold the bolt, so that there was no
longer any way out for them there. Hunted throughout the city, some [4]
of them climbed on to the wall and threw themselves over – to their deaths in most cases; others did make their escape undetected through an unmanned gate when a woman gave them an axe and they hacked off the bolt, but this was quickly noticed and only a few made it outside; while yet others were scattered here and there throughout the city and
were killed. But the largest group, who had kept close together, burst into [5]
a large house which abutted the wall and whose doors happened to be open, thinking that the doors of the house were city-gates and that there
was a direct way through to the outside. When the Plataeans saw them [6]
trapped there they debated whether to set fire to the building and burn
them alive without more ado or to deal with them in some other way. In [7]
the end these men, together with the other surviving Thebans wandering about the city, reached an agreement with the Plataeans that they would surrender themselves and their arms for the others to deal with as they pleased.

That was how the Thebans in Plataea fared. [8]

The rest of the Thebans, who should have arrived in full force in the **5**
course of the night in case those who had entered the city encountered

[1] One of the few references to women as agents of any kind in the whole work (the index of names lists only seven women out of a total of 431 personal names). See Cartledge, *The Greeks: a portrait of self and others*, pp. 70–4 and Hornblower I, pp. 241–2 for comment and other secondary references. See also II 45.2n and 'Women' in the general index.

any setback, got a message about what had happened while they were still on their way and were now coming to the rescue. Plataea is about [2] eight miles from Thebes and the rain that fell in the night had made their journey slower, with the River Asopus running high and not easy to cross. So after travelling in the rain and crossing the river with difficulty [3] they arrived too late – some of their men having already been killed and others taken alive. When the Thebans realised what had happened, they [4] considered making a move against the Plataeans who were outside the city – there were men and property out in the fields since the trouble had arisen unexpectedly in a time of treaty. They wanted to have any of these they might capture available to them to use as counters in exchange for those inside, if indeed any should happen to have been taken prisoner.

That was what they had in mind, but while the Thebans were still [5] thinking this through the Plataeans, who had suspected some such eventuality and feared for those outside the city, dispatched a herald to the Thebans saying that what they had done in trying to seize their city in a time of treaty was an act of impiety and telling them not to commit any offence[1] against the people and property outside; otherwise, they said, they themselves would kill the men they held captive; but if the Thebans withdrew from the territory they would give the men back to them. This is [6] the account of it the Thebans give and they say that the Plataeans swore it on oath. The Plataeans disagree: they say they did not promise to give the men back straightaway but only if after first discussing it the parties came to some agreement, and they deny swearing to it on oath.[2] At any rate [7] the Thebans duly withdrew from the territory without committing any offence, whereupon the Plataeans quickly brought their things in from the land and then immediately killed the men. There were 180 captives, among them Eurymachus, with whom the traitors had conspired.

This done, they sent a messenger to Athens and gave the Thebans back **6** their dead under truce and arranged affairs in the city as seemed best in the current circumstances. What had happened in Plataea itself was [2] immediately reported to the Athenians and they straightaway arrested all

[1] *Adikein*, see glossary: here probably in the senses both of 'wronging' and of physically 'harming' or 'damaging'.

[2] Thucydides passes no comment on the two differing accounts but the protagonists return to this in their climactic debate at Sparta at III 53–67, where they take the same high moral tone, again using the language of 'wrongdoing', 'impiety' and 'loyalty to oaths' (see especially III 56, 59.2 and 66).

the Boeotians who were in Attica[1] and sent a messenger to Plataea with orders to tell them not to initiate any action over the Theban men they were holding until the Athenians themselves had had some discussion about them. They had not been told the news of their death, since the [3] first messenger had gone out at the same time as the Thebans were entering the city, and the second left immediately after their defeat and capture; so the Athenians knew nothing of what happened subsequently. Thus it was that the Athenians sent their instructions in ignorance of the situation, and when the messenger arrived he found the men slain. After [4] this the Athenians marched to Plataea, brought in provisions and left a garrison there, evacuating the least able-bodied men and the women and children.

After this engagement at Plataea and now that the treaty had been 7 clearly broken, the Athenians prepared to go to war and the Spartans and their allies did the same. Both sides were intending to send ambassadors to the King and to the barbarians elsewhere to see if they might hope to secure additional help from some source, and they were also trying to make allies of those cities outside their own sphere of influence.

The Spartans gave orders to those in Italy and Sicily who had commit- [2] ted to their side to build ships additional to those they already had in the Peloponnese, in numbers proportional to the size of their cities, the aim being to produce a grand total of 500 ships. They were also instructed to provide a fixed contribution of money, but in other respects to take no action and limit the Athenians' access to a single ship[2] until such time as these preparations were all complete.

The Athenians for their part reviewed their existing alliance and [3] sent ambassadors to the places surrounding the Peloponnese – Corcyra, Cephallenia, Acarnania and Zacynthus – seeing that if these could be counted on to be friendly they would be taking the war to the Peloponnese by a process of encirclement.

There was nothing slight about the scale of planning on either side, 8 but both were eager for war – and quite naturally so. Enthusiasm is always keenest at the start of any enterprise, and at this time there were many young men in the Peloponnese, and many too in Athens, who had no experience of war and embraced it willingly, while the whole of the rest of Greece was held in suspense over the clash between its leading

[1] One wonders how they knew who and where they were so quickly.
[2] The standard way of indicating neutrality (see also, III 71.1 and VI 52.1).

cities. Many were the prophecies uttered and many the oracles recited by [2] soothsayers, both among those preparing for war and in other cities too. Moreover, Delos was shaken by an earthquake just before all this, for the [3] first time in Greek memory. That was declared, and was indeed believed, to be an omen for the future and every other incident of this kind was closely examined.

Public support in general was very much on the side of the Spar- [4] tans, especially as they proclaimed that they were liberating Greece. Everyone – individuals and cities alike – was eager to lend them what support they could, by word or deed. And everyone felt that the cause suffered if ever they were not personally involved. Such was the animus [5] most people felt towards the Athenians, some of them wishing to be freed from their rule and others fearing to fall under it.

These were the plans and preparations they started out with, and the **9** allies each side had when they went to war were as follows.

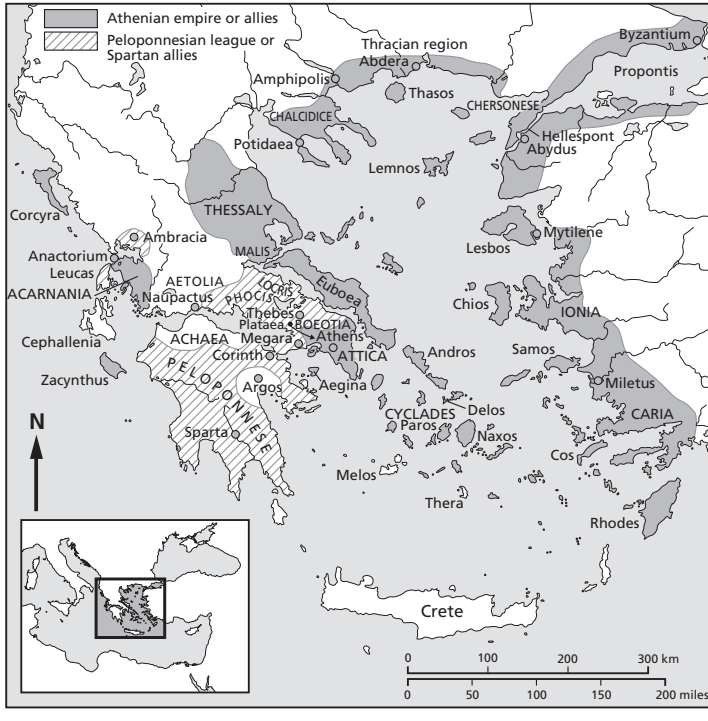
These were the allies on the Spartan side: all the Peloponnesians [2] south of the Isthmus, apart from the Argives and Achaeans (the latter had friendly relations with both sides, and the Pellenians were the only Achaeans to take part in the war on the Spartan side at the beginning, though later on they all did); and outside the Peloponnese, the Megarians, Boeotians, Locrians, Phocians, Ambraciots, Leucadians and Anactorians. Of these, the ones providing ships were the Corinthians, [3] Megarians, Sicyonians, Pellenians, Eleans, Ambraciots and Leucadians; the ones providing cavalry were the Boeotians, Phocians and Locrians; the others all provided infantry. This was the Spartan alliance.

The allies of the Athenians were: the Chians, Lesbians and Plataeans, [4] the Messenians in Naupactus, most of the Acarnanians, the Corcyraeans, Zacynthians and the other cities paying tribute to the Athenians among the following peoples – those on the Carian seaboard, the Dorians neighbouring the Carians, Ionia, the Hellespont, the Thracian region,[1] all the islands east of a line between the Peloponnese and Crete, and all the Cyclades except Melos and Thera. Of these, the ones providing ships [5] were the Chians, Lesbians and Corcyraeans, while the rest contributed infantry and money.

This was the alliance on each side and these were their preparations [6] for war.[2]

[1] See I 56.2n.

[2] Useful though this catalogue is as a checklist it would have been more helpful historically if information had also been given on the numbers contributed and the organisation of



Map 7. Athenian and Peloponnesian leagues (431)

Straightaway after the events in Plataea the Spartans sent word to 10
the cities throughout the Peloponnese and to those beyond it that they
should provide forces and supplies of the kind appropriate for a foreign
expedition, the intention being to invade Attica. As the various cities got [2]
themselves ready, two-thirds of the complement from each assembled
at the appointed time at the Isthmus. And when the whole army was [3]
gathered together Archidamus, King of the Spartans, who was leading
this expedition, summoned together the generals of all the cities and the
men of the highest rank and distinction, and addressed them as follows.

the alliances, suggesting that the catalogue is partly there for rhetorical effect, to parade the forces before the actual conflict begins (a literary formula also used, for example, by Homer in the 'catalogue of ships' at *Iliad* II 484–877, by Herodotus listing the Persian forces before Salamis at VII 60–99, and by Thucydides later at VII 57–58 before the final sea battle at Syracuse).

'Peloponnesians and allies, our fathers fought many campaigns both in 11
the Peloponnese itself and beyond it, and the older men amongst us here
are not without experience in war. Never before, however, have we set out
with a greater armament than this; but now we are going to war against a
very powerful city indeed and are taking our largest and best forces. We [2]
have a duty, therefore, both to show ourselves the equals of our fathers
and to live up to our own reputations. The whole of Greece has been
aroused by this venture of ours and is paying it close attention, wishing us
well in our objectives because of their hatred for the Athenians. So even [3]
if you may think that it is a huge force we are taking against them and that
there is little risk the enemy will come out to face us in a battle, we must
not for these reasons be any less cautious in preparing our advance. On
the contrary, the commanders and soldiers from every city should be on
constant alert against some direct threat. In the murk of war attacks come [4]
fast and furious; and often it is the smaller force, inspired by fear, that
puts up the better defence against a larger one caught overconfident and
unprepared. In enemy territory one should always be bold in spirit when
on the battle-field, but cautious when making your practical preparations.
In that way men will be bravest in their attacks on the enemy and most
secure in their own defence.

The city we are now advancing on is far from being powerless to defend [6]
itself; on the contrary, it is very well prepared in every way. We must
therefore fully expect them to engage us in battle – if they haven't actually
set out already before we get there, then they certainly will when they see
us in their territory, wasting and destroying their property. Everyone feels [7]
a rush of anger if they have to watch some unaccustomed blow inflicted
on them right before their very eyes; and the less they stop to think the
more the passion with which they rush into action. The Athenians are [8]
even more likely than others to behave in this way, since they think they
have the right to rule over others and to invade and waste the land of their
neighbours rather than see the same thing happen to theirs.

Remember, then, the kind of city you are taking on and the conse- [9]
quences, for good or ill, on the reputations of your ancestors and your-
selves. Follow wherever your leaders take you, make discipline and vig-
ilance your watchwords, and respond smartly to the word of command.
There is no finer or more reassuring sight than to see a whole body of
men unified by good discipline.'

After this short speech Archidamus dismissed the meeting and his 12
first move was to send Melesippus, son of Diacritus and a Spartiate, to

Athens in case they might be more inclined to yield now that they could
see the Spartans were already on the march. The Athenians, however, [2]
did not grant him access to the public meetings or even entry into the
city, for Pericles had already carried the day at an earlier stage with his
policy of receiving neither herald nor ambassador into the city once the
Spartans had taken the field. They therefore sent the man away without
hearing him and instructed that he be clear of the borders that same
day and that if in future they wanted anything they should make their
representations *after* they had withdrawn to their own territory. They also
sent escorts with Melesippus to stop him having contact with anyone else.
And when he reached the border and was about to part company with [3]
them, Melesippus said these words as he went on his way, 'Today will
be the beginning of great misfortunes for the Greeks.' When he got back [4]
to camp Archidamus learned that the Athenians were not as yet yielding
in any way; and at that point he broke camp and advanced with the army
into Athenian territory. Meanwhile, the Boeotians supplied their own [5]
contingent and the cavalry to serve with the Peloponnesians and then
went with the rest of their forces to Plataea, where they proceeded to
waste the land.[1]

While the Peloponnesians were still gathering at the Isthmus or were on **13**
the march prior to the invasion of Attica, Pericles son of Xanthippus, one
of the ten generals, realising that there was about to be an invasion, became
concerned that Archidamus, with whom he had a family connection,[2]
might perhaps pass by his own fields without wasting them – either
because Archidamus himself wanted to do him a favour or as a result of an
instruction from the Spartans for the purpose of discrediting Pericles (just
as it had been on his account that they had demanded the Athenians drive
out the curse[3]). He therefore announced to the Athenians in assembly
that Archidamus did have this personal connection with him but that it
had not been to the detriment of the city. He said that in case the enemy
should make an exception of his own fields and buildings and not ravage

[1] Thucydides uses a little clutch of words to describe the devastation of enemy territory but does not seem to make entirely consistent distinctions between them. I generally translate *deio* (the commonest word and the one used here) as 'waste' or 'devastate'; *temno* (or, less often, *kopto* or *keiro*) as 'cut down', 'fell' or 'despoil' (the crops); *ptheiro* as 'ruin' or 'destroy'; *portheo* as 'ravage', and *lesteuo* as 'plunder' (as a pirate). See glossary under *temno*.

[2] *xenos*, literally a 'guest-friend', a relationship implying mutual hospitality and respect. See glossary. These were long-standing and often hereditary relationships.

[3] See I 126–27.

them like the rest he would give them up to be public property – so let there be no suspicion against him on this account!

As for the present, he urged the same advice as before: that they should [2] prepare for war and bring in their property from the fields; that they should not go out to take the enemy on in battle but should retreat to the city and defend it; that they should make ready their fleet, in which their strength lay, and keep a tight control over their allies, explaining to them that their strength depended on the revenues of money from this source. For the most part, he said, success in war was a matter of good judgement and ample resources. They should feel every confidence, he told them: [3] tribute worth some 600 talents a year came to the city from the allies, not counting their other revenues; there were still at this point 6,000 talents of coined silver on hand in the Acropolis (at its maximum it had been 9,700 talents, from which expenditure had been made on the Propylaea to the Acropolis and on other buildings as well as on Potidaea). Besides this [4] there was the uncoined gold and silver in public and private offerings, and there were all the sacred items used for processions and competitions, and the Persian spoils and anything else of that kind, not less than 500 talents in all. To this he added the not insignificant treasures from the [5] other sanctuaries, which were available for their use, and if they were absolutely without other resource there was the inlaid gold on the statue of Athena herself. He pointed out that the statue had on it forty talents' weight of refined gold which was removable. And he said they would have to pay full compensation for any use made of this in safeguarding their survival.

This was how he sought to reassure them about their financial [6] resources. He also said there were also 13,000 hoplites, not counting the 16,000[1] in the garrisons and on the city walls. Those were the numbers on [7] guard duty at the time of the first enemy invasions and they were drawn from the oldest and youngest men and from those metics who were armed as hoplites. The Phalerian wall was about four miles long as measured up to the city wall around Athens, and the portion of that circuit-wall which was guarded was some five miles long (part of it being left unguarded, the portion between the long wall and the Phalerian wall), while the long

[1] The number of the home guard in relation to the forces in the field seems high and has often been challenged. See Gomme II, pp. 34–9, M. H. Hansen, 'The number of Athenian hoplites in 431 BC', *Symbolae Osloenses* 56 (1981), pp. 19–32 and Hornblower I, pp. 255–7.

walls to Peiraeus were four and a half miles long, the outer wall being the one manned. The whole circuit of the wall round Peiraeus together with Mounichia was between six and seven miles long, half of which was guarded.[1] The cavalry, Pericles noted, numbered 1,200, including the [8] mounted archers; and there were 1,600 regular archers and 300 triremes fit for service.

These were the forces available to the Athenians – with at least these [9] numbers in each category – when the first invasion of the Peloponnesians was impending and the Athenians entered into a state of war. And Pericles went on to add some of his usual points to demonstrate that they would prevail in the war.

After listening to him the Athenians were convinced and they brought **14** in from the countryside their women and children and all their household equipment as well, even removing the wooden fixtures from their houses. Their livestock and draught animals they sent over to Euboea and the islands off the coast. But this relocation was hard for them to make since [2] most of them had spent their whole lives in the country.

This had been a feature of life for the Athenians from the very earliest **15** times, more so than for others. From the time of Cecrops and the earliest kings down to that of Theseus Attica had always been settled by communities having their own public centres and officials;[2] and as long as they had nothing to fear they did not come together before the king to discuss policy but each of them managed their own affairs and conducted their own deliberations. Indeed some of them they even went to war against the king at times, as the Eleusians under Eumolpus did against Erechtheus. But when Theseus was king, combining the power with his intelligence, [2] he reorganised the region in various ways, and in particular he abolished the separate councils and offices of the other places and brought them all together into what is now the city, designating a single council chamber and public centre. Each continued to occupy their own territory as before but he made them treat Athens as their single city, and since they were all now contributing taxes this became the great city that Theseus handed on to those who followed. And down to the present day Athenians still hold

[1] See map of the long walls at I 107 (map 6, p. 64).

[2] Thucydides uses here the rather anachronistic vocabulary of his own time – *poleis* (cities), *prutaneia* (town halls) and *archontes* (magistrates) – to describe what was presumably a smaller-scale and perhaps simpler situation in the outlying townships in this period.

at public expense the festival of Synoikia[1] that he established in honour of the goddess, Athena.

Before this, what is now the Acropolis was the city, taken together with [3] the area generally to the south of it. There is proof of this. The temples [4] of the other gods are also placed on the Acropolis itself and those outside it tend to be situated more towards that part of the city, namely the temples of Olympian Zeus and Pythian Apollo, the temple of Earth[2] and that of Dionysus in the Marshes, for whom the more ancient Dionysia is celebrated on the twelfth of the month Anthesterion,[3] just as the Ionian descendants of the Athenians still observe it to this day. Other ancient temples are situated in this area too. The spring, which is now called [5] Nine Fountains after the tyrants constructed it like that but was long ago known as Fairwaters[4] when the streams were open to view, was used by the ancients on special occasions because it was close to hand, and even now they observe the tradition of using the water before a wedding and on other sacred occasions. And arising from their early occupation of this [6] area, the Acropolis is known today by the Athenians as 'the city'.

16 The Athenians, then, had for a long time lived in independent settlements throughout the region even after their unification; most of those in antiquity and their descendants down to the time of the present war were born and lived in the countryside in the traditional way and therefore did not find it at all easy to make the move with their entire households, especially as they had only just made good the state of their homes after the Persian wars.[5] They were distressed and aggrieved to be leaving their [2] homes and the places of worship which had been their abiding inheritance from their ancient forms of society; they were facing the prospect of changing their way of life and leaving behind what each of them felt to be the equivalent of their native city.

17 When they arrived in Athens only a few of them had homes or places they could take refuge in with friends or relatives. Most settled in uninhabited parts of the city and occupied the sanctuaries and the shrines of

[1] The 'Festival of Union', though this may in fact have preceded Theseus (see Hornblower I, p. 265). On *sunoikismos* see glossary.

[2] *Ge*: see list of deities, pp. liv–lvi.

[3] For a list of the months in the Athenian calendar see note on dates, pp. lviii–lix and for the various deities see note on deities, pp. liv–lvi.

[4] *Callirrhoe* 'Fairwaters' and *Enneacrounos* 'Nine Fountains'.

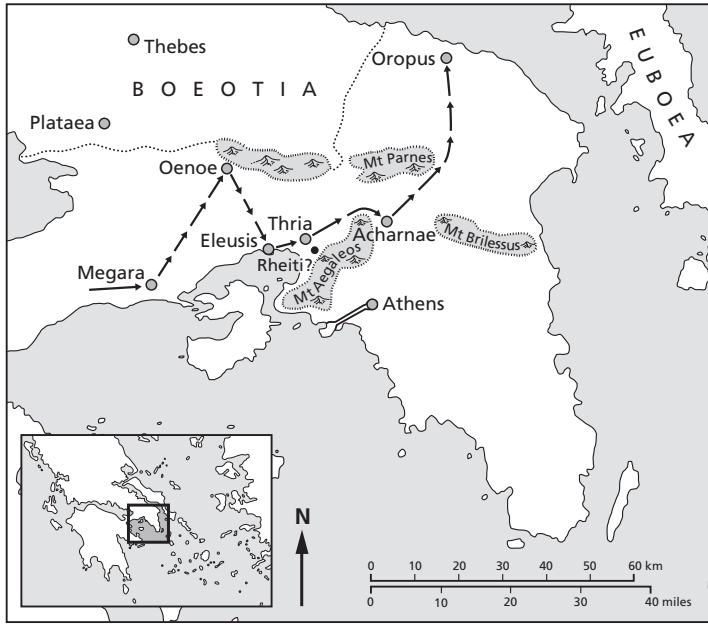
[5] The text of 16.1 is highly suspect and seems to be missing some words or phrases. All translations are reconstructions to some degree, but the general sense seems clear. See notes on the text, p. 583.

heroes, except for the Acropolis and the Eleusinium and anywhere else that was securely closed off. Occupation of the area called the Pelargicum under the Acropolis was actually forbidden by a curse and there was even the tail-end of a Pythian oracle to the same effect, which said: 'better the Pelargicum unused'. Nevertheless, under the pressure of the moment it too was fully occupied. And it seems to me that the oracle was in fact [2] fulfilled in the opposite way to what they expected. It was not because of the unlawful occupation that troubles were visited on the city, but the necessity of occupation was because of the war, although that was not mentioned when the oracle foretold that no good would ever come from its occupation. Many of them even settled themselves in the towers of [3] the city walls or wherever else each of them could. The city could not cope with this general influx; indeed they later divided up the long walls and most of the Peiraeus into lots and occupied those too. Meanwhile, [4] the Athenians continued to address their plans for the war, mustering their allies and fitting out a hundred ships for an expedition against the Peloponnese.

This was the state of the Athenian preparations. [5]

The Peloponnesian army was meanwhile advancing and the first place **18** they reached in Attica was Oenoe, from where they intended to launch the invasion. When they were set up in camp there they began preparing to assault the wall of the town with siege-engines and other means. Oenoe is [2] on the border between Attica and Boeotia and so had been fortified, and the Athenians made use of it as a garrison in time of war. The Peloponnesians therefore continued completing their preparations to assault it and in other ways too used up more time in the area. This was a principal [3] complaint levelled against Archidamus, who had already got a reputation for being weak and too friendly to the Athenians during the process of mobilisation when he was refusing to come out strongly in favour of war.[1] And after the army was actually gathered together the waiting about at the Isthmus and the leisurely progress of the march added to his unpopularity, as in particular did this halt at Oenoe. For the Athenians [4] went on bringing things in all this time and the Peloponnesians thought that by pressing on quickly they could have seized all this while it was still outside, had it not been for this delay on his account. That was the mood [5] of the army towards Archidamus while they sat there. But he continued to hold them back, expecting, so it is said, that the Athenians would make

[1] This is a reference back to I 80–5 and II 11.



Map 8. Invasions of Attica (431)[1]

some concession while their land was still untouched and that they would flinch from seeing their crops flattened.

The Spartans were unable to take Oenoe, however, despite launching **19** these attacks on it and trying by every means available; nor did the Athenians make any overtures to them. So it was that they set off from there, about eighty days after the events at Plataea when it was summer and the corn was ripe, and began the invasion of Attica, led by Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus and king of the Spartans.[2] They established a base [2] and proceeded to destroy crops at Eleusis and in the Thriasian plain and repulsed some Athenian cavalry near the streams called Rheiti. Then they advanced, keeping Mount Aegaleos on the right as they passed through Croupia, until they reached Acharnae, the largest of the 'demes' of Attica,

[1] Based on J. S. Rusten's edition of *The Peloponnesian War, Book II* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 126.

[2] A rather formal statement, which helps dramatise the irrevocable step now being taken.

as they are called.[1] There they stopped and made camp and remained a long time while they were destroying the crops.

20 Archidamus' motive for staying around Acharnae in battle order instead of going down into the plain during this invasion was said to be as follows. [2] He hoped that the Athenians, who had a flourishing population of young men and were prepared for war as never before, might perhaps come out to fight him, unable to bear seeing their land destroyed. So when they did not oppose him at Eleusis or on the Thriasian plain he based himself at Acharnae, to test them out and see if they would now come out against him there. [4] That seemed to him a good place in itself for an encampment, and at the same time the Acharnians, who represented a large proportion of the citizen body (with 3,000 hoplites[2]), seemed unlikely to stand by and watch the destruction of their territory but would urge the whole people to join the fight as well. And if the Athenians did not come out to oppose him in this invasion, then he would have less apprehension in any future one about ravaging the plain and going right up to the city itself; for the Acharnians, deprived of their own property, would not be so eager to run risks on behalf of anyone else's – which would have divisive consequences for Athenian policy.[3] [5] That was the strategy Archidamus had in mind in being at Acharnae.

21 The Athenians meanwhile, as long as the Spartan army remained in the area around Eleusis and the Thriasian plain, continued to have some hope that they would advance no closer. They remembered that Pleistoanax, son of Pausanias and king of the Spartans, had invaded Attica as far as Eleusis and Thria with the Spartan army fourteen years before the present war and had then gone back again without advancing further (indeed that was the reason he was exiled from Sparta, since he was believed to have been bribed to retreat). [2] However, when they saw the Spartan army in the area of Acharnae some seven miles from the city they could stand it no longer. Not surprisingly, they found it terrible to watch their fields being devastated before their eyes, a sight the younger men had never witnessed, nor even the older ones except at the time of the

[1] A deme was a local subdivision of the *polis* in Attica (at the 'parish' level). There were 139 demes in the classical period, each of which sent representatives (the number depended on their size) to the central *boule* (council) at Athens.

[2] Thought to be an impossibly high figure since the whole army was only 13,000 hoplites (13.6). The figure may have been mistranscribed or Thucydides may have said 3,000 *politai* (citizens) rather than 3,000 *hoplitai* (hoplites). See Hornblower I, pp. 273–4.

[3] Literally, '*stasis* (internal division, discord) would enter into the *gnome* (mind, thinking, policy, purpose)'.

Persian War; and there was a general move, especially among the youth, to go out and fight rather than just look on. They gathered in groups and [3] engaged in furious arguments, some urging that they go out, some others opposing this. Soothsayers were reciting oracles to their eager listeners to suit every taste. And the Acharnians, aware that they comprised no small part of Athens and since it was their land that was being destroyed, pressed especially hard for an active response. In short, the whole city was in ferment and feelings against Pericles were running high. His earlier advice was all forgotten and instead they abused him for being a general but not leading them out to fight, and they held him responsible for all their sufferings.[1]

Pericles saw how discontented they were with their current situation **22** and that they were reacting unwisely, but he remained convinced that he was right about not going out to engage the enemy. He did not therefore summon a meeting of the assembly or any other meeting, lest in coming together they should be moved more by passion than good judgement into making a bad mistake, but he attended to the defence of the city and calmed things down as much as possible. He did, however, send out [2] cavalry from time to time to prevent advance parties from the Spartan army from attacking and despoiling the fields close to the city; and there was a skirmish at Phrygia involving one unit of Athenian cavalry and the Thessalians accompanying them against the Boeotian cavalry, in which the Athenians and Thessalians held their own until the arrival of hoplites in support of the Boeotians. The Athenians and Thessalians were then turned and a few of them were killed, but they recovered their bodies the same day without a truce. The next day the Peloponnesians set up a trophy. This support from the Thessalians was provided in accordance [3] with an ancient alliance and those who came to join them were from Larisa, Pharsalus, Peirasus, Crannon, Pyrasus, Gyrtone and Pherae. They were led by Polymedes and Aristonous from Larisa, each from a different faction in the city, and by Menon from Pharsalus; there were also commanders there from the various other cities.

The Peloponnesians for their part, when the Athenians did not come **23** out to meet them in battle, set out from Acharnae and proceeded to lay waste some of the other demes between Parnes and Mt Brilessus.

[1] He was branded a coward in contemporary Greek comedies. See Rusten (pp. 128–9) on this and on the careful rhetorical construction of this section as the momentum of unrest is developed progressively until Pericles seizes the situation again at the start of 22.

While they were still in their territory the Athenians dispatched to the [2]
Peloponnese the fleet of 100 ships they had been equipping together with
1,000 hoplites and 400 archers. The generals in charge were Carcinus
son of Xenotimus, Proteas son of Epicles and Socrates son of Antigenes.
They set off on their voyage with this force; and the Peloponnesians, after [3]
remaining in Attica for as long as their supplies allowed, then retreated
back through Boeotia taking a different route from the one by which they
had entered Attica. Passing through Oropus they wasted the territory
called Graea, which is occupied by the Oropians who are subjects of the
Athenians. And when they reached the Peloponnese they dispersed to
their various cities.

After they had withdrawn, the Athenians established guard-posts to **24**
keep watch both by land and sea, just as they were to do for the whole
duration of the war. They also decided to set aside a special reserve of
1,000 talents from the funds on the Acropolis and not to spend that but to
use other funds to pay for the conduct of the war; and if anyone proposed
or moved a motion to touch this money for any other purpose except that
of actually having to repel a sea-borne assault by the enemy on the city,
they decreed death as the penalty.[1] Along with this they designated their
hundred best ships each year as a reserve fleet and appointed commanders
for them, with restrictions on their use similar to those on the reserve
funds and limited to the same emergency.

The Athenians in the hundred ships going round the Peloponnese, **25**
along with the Corcyraeans who had come to support them with fifty ships
and some others of their allies there, were inflicting damage on various
places as they sailed around; and in particular they put off at Methone
in Laconia where they made an attack on the wall, which was a weak one
and was unmanned. But as it happened Brasidas,[2] son of Tellis and a [2]
Spartiate, was in the area with a patrol and when he saw the situation he
went to help the people there with a force of a hundred hoplites. Charging
through the Athenian army, which was scattered around the countryside
and was turned away facing the city wall, he burst into Methone, losing
a few of his own men in the process but taking possession of the city.
For this exploit he became the first of those in the war to receive a public
commendation in the city of Sparta.

[1] A rule that was to be broken in 412, after Pericles' time (VIII 15.1).

[2] This is our introduction to one of the few heroes of Thucydides' story and the man whose later exploits, ironically, were partly responsible for Thucydides' own military failure and exile (IV 102–8).

The Athenians weighed anchor and continued sailing around the coast. [3] They put in at Pheia in Elis and spent two days wasting the land; and they won a battle against a defending force of 300 picked men who had come out from lowland Elis and had been joined by some Eleans from the surrounding area subject to Elis. But a mighty wind got up and they [4] were exposed to the elements in an area without a harbour. Most of them got on the ships and sailed round the promontory called Ichthys[1] into the harbour at Pheia, while the Messenians and some others who were unable to get on board went by land and took Pheia. Later on the ships that were [5] sailing round picked them up and they put out to sea and abandoned Pheia, since by now the main body of Eleans had come to the rescue. The Athenians sailed on round the coast against other places and wasted them.

At about the same time the Athenians sent thirty ships to the area **26** to patrol off Locris and also to keep guard over Euboea. These were commanded by Cleopompus son of Clinias, who landed at some places along the coast and wasted them; he took Thronium, seized hostages there, and in a battle at Alope he defeated the Locrians who had come to defend it.

In this same summer the Athenians expelled the Aeginetans from **27** Aegina – men, women and children – alleging that they were largely responsible for bringing the war upon them;[2] besides, since Aegina lay close to the Peloponnese it seemed safer to occupy it with replacement settlers of their own and not much later they did send these colonists out there. As for the Aeginetan refugees, the Spartans gave them Thyrea [2] to settle in and land to cultivate there, both because of their differences with the Athenians and because the Aeginetans had done the Spartans a service at the time of the earthquake and the helot revolt. Thyrea is on the border between Argolis and Laconia, reaching down to the sea, and some of the Aeginetans did settle there while others dispersed throughout the rest of Greece.

In the same summer and at the start of the lunar month, which seems to **28** be the only time such an occurrence is possible, the sun went into eclipse after midday and became fully visible again only after it had shrunk to a crescent and some stars had become visible.

[1] 'Fish Point'.

[2] There was a history of enmity here (see I 67.2, 139.1 and 140.3 and Plutarch, *Pericles* 8, where Pericles calls Aegina 'the infection in the eye of Peiraeus').

In this summer too the Athenians appointed as a foreign representative[1] **29**
Nymphodorus son of Pythes, a man from Abdera whose sister was married to Sitalces and who had great influence with him. They summoned Nymphodorus to Athens (though he was a man they had previously regarded as an enemy) in their wish that Sitalces, son of Teres and king of the Thracians, should become an ally of theirs.

This Teres was the father of Sitalces and the first to make the great [2]
kingdom of the Odrysians the most extensive one in Thrace[2] (a large part of Thrace still being independent).[3] There is no connection at all [3]
between this Teres and the Tereus who married Procne, daughter of Pandion from Athens; nor do they even come from the same 'Thrace'. Tereus lived in Daulia, which is now called Phocis but was then occupied by the Thracians. It was in that land that the women perpetrated the deed involving Itys (indeed many of the poets use the expression 'the bird of Daulia' to refer to the nightingale). Besides, Pandion would presumably have arranged the marriage contract for his daughter having in mind the possibilities of their mutual assistance over this shorter distance to Daulia, rather than the many days' journey to the Odrysians.

But Teres, who did not even have the same name as 'Tereus', was the first king to attain real power among the Odrysians. And it was *his* [4]
son Sitalces whom the Athenians were trying to make an ally, wanting him to help them exercise control over places in the Thracian region and over Perdiccas. So Nymphodorus came to Athens, made the alliance with [5]
Sitalces and had his son made an Athenian citizen. He also promised to bring the war in Thrace to an end, saying he would persuade Sitalces to send the Athenians a Thracian force of cavalry and peltasts.[4] He even [6]
reconciled Perdiccas with the Athenians and persuaded them to restore Therme to him, whereupon Perdiccas immediately joined forces with the Athenians under Phormio. In this way Sitalces, son of Teres and [7]

[1] *Proxenos*: see glossary.

[2] Or possibly 'extend it over most of Thrace'. See II 96–7 for a description of Sitalces' kingdom (and map 11).

[3] 29.3 is a digression, which may perhaps have had a local (Thracian) interest for Thucydides. The myth was that Tereus raped his wife's sister Philomela and cut out her tongue to keep her quiet; she wove her story into a tapestry and sent it to her sister Procne; the sisters took revenge by killing Itys (son of Tereus and Procne) and serving him up in bits to his father; all surviving parties were metamorphosed into birds (in the Greek version of the myth Procne became the nightingale and Philomela the swallow, but this was reversed in the later tradition).

[4] Peltasts (see glossary) were usually armed with a javelin and light shield; they were a speciality of the Thracian forces.

king of Thrace, became an ally of the Athenians, as did Perdiccas, son of Alexander and king of the Macedonians.

30 Meanwhile, the Athenians in the hundred ships who were still off the coast of the Peloponnese took Sollion, a Corinthian township, and handed the city and its land over to the Palaerans of Acarnania for their exclusive use. Astacus, where Euarchus was tyrant, they stormed by force, drove him out and incorporated the place into the alliance. They then sailed to [2] the island of Cephallenia and brought that over to their side without a battle. (It lies across from Acarnania and Leucas and comprised the four cities of the Paleans, Cranians, Samians and Pronnians). Soon afterwards the ships returned to Athens.

31 Towards the autumn of this year the Athenians invaded the Megarid with their full force, comprising both citizens and metics, under the command of Pericles son of Xanthippus. When the Athenians in the hundred ships round the Peloponnese (which happened to be already at Aegina on their way home) learned that the full force of men from the city was in Megara they sailed over there to join up with them. This was [2] the greatest Athenian force ever assembled together, since the city was at peak strength and had not yet been struck by plague: the Athenians themselves numbered no fewer than 10,000 (not counting the 3,000 at Potidaea) and no fewer than 3,000 metics joined them as hoplites in the invasion, besides which there were a good number of other light-armed troops. After wasting most of the land they retreated. Later on in the war [3] the Athenians made other invasions annually into the Megarid, either with cavalry or with all their forces, up until their capture of Nisaea.[1]

32 Towards the end of this summer Atalante, the island lying off Opuntian Locris and hitherto deserted, was fortified as a military post to prevent pirates from sailing out of Opus and other places in Locris to inflict damage on Euboea.

These were the events that took place in the course of the summer after the Peloponnesian withdrawal from Attica.

Winter [II 33–47.1]

33 The following winter Euarchus the Acarnanian, who wanted to return to Astacus, persuaded the Corinthians to sail with forty ships and 1,500 hoplites to restore him to power there, and he added some hired troops of

[1] In 424 (IV 66–69).

his own. The commanders of the force were Eumachus son of Aristony-
mus, Timoxenus son of Timocrates and Eumachus son of Chrysis. They [2]
duly sailed over and restored him. There were also some other places
along the seaboard of Acarnania which they wanted to acquire as well and
they made the attempt but failed and so set sail for home. Following the [3]
coast they put in at Cephallenia and made a landing on the territory of
the Cranians. They were deceived by them, however, as a result of some
supposed 'agreement' and lost a number of their men when the Cranians
launched a surprise attack; then after forcing their way back on to the
boats they managed to get away home.

In the same winter the Athenians held a public funeral for the first **34**
men to die in the war. The ceremony is as follows.[1] They lay out the [2]
bones of the deceased for two full days beforehand in a tent they have
constructed and people bring such offerings as they choose for their own
dead. On the day of the procession carts bring coffins made of cedar,
one for each tribe,[2] and the bones of each man are placed in the coffin
of his tribe. One covered but empty bier is led out, prepared for the
missing dead whose bodies could not be found for burial. Anyone who [4]
wishes – citizen or foreigner – joins in the procession and the women of
the families are present at the grave making their lamentations.[3] They [5]
place the coffins in a public tomb, which is in the most beautiful suburb of
the city where they always bury their war dead, except of course for those
who died at Marathon, whose valour they judged so outstanding that they
buried them just where they fell. After they cover the coffins with earth a [6]
man chosen by the city for his wise judgement and high public standing
delivers over them a suitable eulogy.[4] And then they depart. These are [7]
their rites of burial, and they observed this practice throughout the whole
war, whenever they had occasion.

[1] The whole description of the ceremony has a rather dignified quality, a suitably hushed and dramatic introduction to one of the most famous speeches in history.

[2] The *phule* (tribe) was both a military and political unit. After the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508/7 BC Athens was divided into ten recognised tribes.

[3] For the associated rituals see M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1974), especially pp. 5 and 11–23.

[4] The *epitaphios* (funeral speech) was a standard feature of these ceremonies, and Pericles had himself given at least one of them before (in 440/39 BC: see Plutarch, *Pericles* 28). It was later to become a literary genre, with this speech of II 35–46 its most celebrated model. But its great literary qualities and its dramatic importance at this point in the narrative do themselves raise all the questions about the authenticity of the speeches in Thucydides referred to in the note to I 22 and the introduction, pp. xxviii–xxix. To what extent was this what Pericles actually said or what Thucydides needed him to say?

For these first victims of the war Pericles son of Xanthippus was the [8]
man chosen to speak. And when the moment arrived he stepped forward
from the tomb, mounted the platform that had been set up so that he
could be heard by as many as possible in the throng, and spoke as follows.

'Most of those who have spoken on this occasion in the past have praised **35**
the man who added this speech to the traditional ceremony, regarding it
a fitting public tribute at the burial of our war dead. To me, however, it
would seem sufficient that when men have proved their worth in action[1]
we should also honour them with action – as indeed you see us do today
in the provision of this state funeral. Otherwise we risk the good name
of many on the persuasive powers of one man, who may speak well or
badly. It is difficult for a speaker to strike the right balance when there is [2]
not even any firm agreement between different perceptions of the truth.[2]
The listener who is close to these events and a friend of the dead may
perhaps think that the presentation falls short of what he wants to hear
and knows to be the case, while a stranger to the situation may suspect
some exaggeration, envious if he hears of feats beyond his own abilities.
After all, we can only bear to hear words of praise for others as long as we
can each imagine ourselves capable of doing something similar; anything
beyond this prompts resentment, and then actual disbelief. However, [3]
since our forebears deemed this the right and proper practice, I too must
follow the tradition and try to meet your different wishes and expectations
as best I can.

I will begin with our ancestors. It is right in itself and also proper to **36**
the occasion that they should have the honour of first mention. This is
a land occupied continuously by the same people[3] through a succession
of generations up to the present day and handed on as a free country, a
bequest of their courage. They deserve our praise, and still more so do our [2]
fathers, for in addition to what they inherited they acquired – after many
a struggle – the whole of the empire we now have, which they then left as
a legacy to our own generation. And we here today, who are still alive and [3]

[1] The first of the many contrasts (often rather forced) between *logos* (word/speech) and *ergon* (deed/action) in the Funeral Speech. A. Parry, *Logos and Ergon in Thucydides* (Ayer Co. Publishers, 1981), counts thirty-two such pairings concentrated here and the speech closes with a final one at II 46.

[2] Literally, 'when even the appearance (*dokesis*) of truth is not firmly secured', an obscure statement that has been variously understood. See III 43.1 for a similar use of the term *dokesis*, which is rare in other prose writers.

[3] See I 2.5. This 'autochthony' was an important article of faith for the Athenians, used to justify various contentious domestic and foreign policies.

for the most part in the prime of life, we have further strengthened[1] it and have provided the city with every resource to make it independent[2] both in peace and in war.

Their deeds in war, through which each of these possessions was [4] won, and the occasions when we or our fathers fought hard to repel enemy attack, whether from Greeks or foreigners – these I pass over. This audience knows them well and I do not wish to labour a familiar theme. Instead, I shall portray the way of life that brought us to our present position and the institutions and habits of mind[3] behind our rise to greatness, and then I shall proceed to my commendation of the dead. I trust that such a speech will be appropriate to the present occasion and that the whole body of townspeople and foreign visitors[4] in the audience may listen to it with advantage.

We enjoy a form of government that does not emulate the institutions **37** of our neighbours; indeed we ourselves are more often the model for others than their imitators. Democracy is the name we give to it, since we manage our affairs in the interests of the many not the few; but though everyone is equal before the law in the matter of private disputes, in terms of public distinction preferment for office is determined on merit, not by rank[5] but by personal worth; moreover, poverty is no bar to anyone who has it in them to benefit the city in some way, however lowly their status. A spirit of freedom governs our conduct, not only in public [2] affairs but also in managing the small tensions of everyday life, where we show no animosity at our neighbours' choice of pleasures, nor cast aspersions that may hurt even if they do not harm. Although we associate [3] as individuals in this tolerant spirit, in public affairs fear[6] makes us the

[1] Presumably in the sense of 'consolidated' rather than 'expanded', since he has just congratulated the previous generation on effectively acquiring all the current empire.

[2] *Autarkes* is usually 'self-sufficient', but he makes a particular point later about the imports (38.2).

[3] The three key terms (*epitedeusis, politeia* and *tropoi*) have been variously distinguished and translated, but jointly at least they signify the 'culture' which encompasses the practices of education and training referred to in 39 and the social attitudes underlying the claims in 37–8.

[4] The 'foreign visitors' are the *xenoi* with no civic rights; presumably the 'townspeople' (*astoi*) include here the metics, the permanent foreign residents with limited rights.

[5] Most current commentators prefer the interpretation 'taking turns' or 'by rotation', a reference to the Athenian practice of choosing some officials in an annual lottery (Rusten, pp. 145–6; Hornblower I, pp. 300–1). But that seems both to undermine the logic of the section and to involve Thucydides in appearing to *deny* this common practice.

[6] Here *deos* (see glossary under *phobos*) perhaps more in the sense of 'reverence' or 'respect' (but see also Hornblower I, p. 302).

most severely law-abiding of people, obedient to whoever is in authority and to the laws, especially those established to help the victims of injustice and those laws which, though unwritten, carry the sanction of public disgrace.

38 Furthermore, we have provided many diversions from work to refresh the spirit: there are regular public games and festivals of sacrifice throughout the year, while in private we have lovely things at home to delight us every day and drive away our cares. [2] Because of the importance of our city the products of the whole world all flow in here, and it is our good fortune to enjoy with the same familiar pleasure both our home-produced goods and those of other peoples.

39 We also differ from our enemies in our approach to military training, in the following ways. We keep our city open to the world and do not ever expel[1] people to prevent them from learning or observing the sort of thing whose disclosure might benefit an enemy. Our way is to place our trust not so much in secret preparations as in our own innate courage in action. In the matter of education too, whereas the Spartans right from their early youth follow an oppressive regime designed to make men of them, we are more relaxed in our style of life but are no less ready to face comparable dangers. [2] Here is a proof. When the Spartans invade our land they come not on their own but with all their allies, whereas we act alone when we attack a neighbour's territory and generally have no difficulty in gaining the upper hand, although we are fighting on the soil of others and against people defending their own homes. [3] No enemy has in fact ever encountered the full might of our combined forces, because we not only maintain a navy but at the same time deploy an army of our own citizens on many different missions by land. Whenever our enemies engage with a part of our forces, they flatter themselves that a success against some of us is the same as repelling all of us, and that in any defeat they were beaten by the whole of our forces.

[4] So, if we choose to meet danger with an easy regime rather than an oppressive one, and with a courage that owes more to natural character than to force of law, then we are spared the need to suffer in advance for hardships still in the future; and when we do come to face them we show ourselves just as bold as those who are always labouring under stress. All this is reason enough to admire our city, and there is more.

[1] A reference to the Spartan system of *xenelasia* or 'expelling foreigners' (see I 144).

We love fine things but are not extravagant,[1] and we love learning but **40**
are not effete. Wealth we treat as an opportunity for action not a reason for
boastful talk, and for us the shame of poverty lies not in admitting it but
in the failure actively to escape it. With us, moreover, people combine an [2]
interest in public and private matters, and those who are more involved
in business are still well enough aware of political issues. In fact we
alone regard the person who fails to participate in public affairs not just as
harmless but as positively useless; and we are all personally involved either
in actual political decisions or in deliberation about them,[2] in the belief
that it is not words which thwart effective action but rather the failure
to inform action with discussion in advance. Indeed, in this too we are [3]
distinguished from others. We bring to our ventures a very high degree
of both daring and analysis, whereas for others their boldness comes from
ignorance and analysis means paralysis. The bravest spirits are rightly
judged to be those who see clearly just what perils and pleasures await
them but do not on that account flinch from the danger.

Our idea of doing good is unusual, too. We make our friends not by [4]
receiving favours but by conferring them. The benefactor is the stronger
partner, as the one who through his favours maintains the debt of grat-
itude in the recipient, while the one who incurs the obligation has a
weaker motive, knowing that he will repay the service not to win a favour[3]
but to return a debt. Finally, we alone have the courage to be benefac- [5]
tors not from a calculation of advantage but in the confidence of our
freedom.

In summary, I say that the city as a whole is an education for Greece; **41**
and I believe every individual among us has the self-sufficiency to respond
to every situation with the greatest versatility and grace. This is no mere [2]
boast designed just for present effect but the actual truth, as the very
power of the city demonstrates, a power acquired through just these
qualities. Athens alone of cities today outdoes her reputation when put [3]

[1] *euteles* is the hardest to translate of all the key terms in this famous sentence, since it seems elsewhere to mean 'cheap' in a pejorative sense rather than 'thrifty' in a positive one, though that would spoil the rhetorical flourish. See also VIII 46.2.

[2] Most commentators translate as 'we at least *decide* issues even if we do not formulate them'. But that seems both to force an unusual sense on *enthumeomai*, which generally means 'reflect' or 'ponder' not 'formulate', and to run counter to the logic of the passage, which surely favours taking the two verbs together not contrasting them ('we Athenians all participate directly in the political process, one way or another').

[3] The word *charis* is reciprocal in Greek and is used to mean both giving a *favour* and owing *gratitude* for one, so here the service is repaid both *as* a favour and *for* a favour.

to the test. She alone neither gives an aggressor cause for resentment at the calibre of opponent by whom he is beaten, nor gives a subject cause for complaint that his rulers are unworthy. The proof of our power is [4] supported by the strongest evidence and by every possible witness. We shall be the wonder of this and of future generations. We need no Homer to sing our praises, nor any poet to gratify us for the moment with lines which may fail the test of history,[1] for we have forced every land and sea to yield to our daring and we have established everywhere lasting memorials of our power for good and ill.[2]

Such, then, is the city for which these men nobly fought and died, in [5] their righteous determination to prevent her being taken from us, and it is only fitting that we their survivors should each be willing to suffer hardships in her cause.

I have dwelt upon the subject of the city to demonstrate that we **42** Athenians have more at stake in this contest than do those who lack these advantages, and to illustrate with these shining examples my tribute to the men I now praise. My main points are already made: the qualities I [2] praised in the city were the ones these men and others like them enhanced by their virtues, and there are few other Greeks whose reputation would be found equalled by their deeds, as would theirs. The end they met is surely proof of their manly courage – whether in its first revelation or its final confirmation. Even those with other failings deserve to be first of all [3] remembered for their manly courage in war in the service of their country. They erased the bad with good and thus did more publicly to benefit the common cause than ever they harmed it in their private lives. Not one [4] of these men weakened because he valued more highly the continued enjoyment of his wealth; nor did any put off the evil day in the poor man's hope that he might yet escape his condition and become rich; the defeat of the enemy was their ruling passion, and judging this the most

[1] The Greek is somewhat ambiguous: literally, 'the truth of the deeds will harm the underlying meaning (*huponoia*)'. The usual interpretation implies that the poet's praises will later be discredited, but that runs counter to the repeated claim that Athens alone outdoes her reputation and (if the text is right) the sense must surely be the reverse, that the immediate celebration would fall short of the truth as revealed by the actual history.

[2] Another disputed passage: the Greek just says 'memorials of bad and good things', which some have interpreted as a reference to the culture of 'harming one's enemies and helping one's friends', while others take it to mean 'memorials of our success and failure' (which if true might support an ironic intent on Thucydides' part, and a late date for the composition of the speech). I have tried to retain the ambiguity of the original.

glorious of dangers to face they embraced it, choosing to be avenged on the enemy and to put aside all other thoughts. They entrusted to hope the uncertainty of future success, but resolved to seize with their own hands the challenge now before them. This, they knew, meant fighting and suffering rather than surviving through surrender; they fled only the stigma of dishonour, and stood their ground with life and limb in the field of action. And so, in the fortune of a single moment, at a climax of glory not of fear, they passed away.[1]

Such men they proved to be, worthy of their city; and you who survive **43** them must pray that your own defiance of the enemy has a safer outcome but is no less resolute. Look not just to arguments about advantage, since anyone could recite at length all the benefits of resisting the enemy – and you know these just as well as they do. Rather, feast your eyes every day upon the actual power of the city, become her lovers,[2] and when you realise her greatness reflect within you that men of courage won all this, men who knew their duty and kept their honour in its execution; and even when they failed in some venture, they were resolved not on that account to deprive the city of their valour but to present it to her freely as their finest offering. They gave their lives to the common cause and so gained [2] for themselves an enduring tribute and the finest tomb, not the one in which they lie but that in which their fame survives in eternal memory, to be celebrated forever in word and deed. The whole earth is the tomb [3] of famous men, and not only in their native land does the inscription on a monument commemorate their lives but in foreign lands too there lives on an unwritten memorial, engraved not in stone but in every mind.[3] These are the men you must now emulate: see that happiness depends [4] on freedom and freedom on courage, and do not stand aside from the dangers of war. It is not the world's unfortunate, with no hope of better [5] days, who have more reason to be lavish with their lives, but those who still risk a change in their prospects for the worse, to whom a reverse therefore matters the most. Indeed for a man of spirit the degradation [6]

[1] See Rusten, pp. 164–8 for the structure and interpretation of this very complex and highly rhetorical passage (42.4 is effectively one sentence in the Greek, with a single colon, as is 43.1 below).

[2] *Erastes*, a strong word, seriously intended (see Hornblower I, p. 311 for background references and discussion).

[3] *Ergon* and *gnome* again ('deed' and 'mind'), which have a wide range of uses and which I have translated rather freely here to make the contrast between the physical and the mental.

of a feeble act of cowardice is more painful than a death he never feels when struck down in the full flower of his strength, sharing the hopes of all.[1]

To those parents of the dead who are here now, I therefore offer not **44** commiseration but cheer. You know that you grew up in a world of chance and change; and this is good fortune – to win honour in death as they have done, and in grief as you have; good fortune too, when one's measure of happiness has lasted life's full span. It will be difficult, I know, [2] to persuade you of this, when you will have so many reminders of them, seeing others with the good fortune you once enjoyed yourselves. The grief of bereavement comes not from being deprived of good things one has never experienced, but from the loss of what has become familiar. Those of you still of an age to have children must take strength in the [3] hope of having others: to you as individual parents, the ones who come along later will help you forget those no longer with us, and the city will benefit twice over – in replenishment and in security. Indeed, one cannot expect fair and just counsel from citizens who do not have children at stake to give them an equal share in the dangers. Those of you who are [4] past that age, however, must instead count as clear gain the greater part of your lives in which you have enjoyed your good fortune; remember that the remaining part will be short and let your spirits be lifted by these men's fame. The love of honour, alone, never grows old; and when one is in one's failing years it is not the reward of money, as some suggest, which is most satisfying but the reward of honour.

As for those of you who are sons and brothers of these men, I see **45** you face a formidable challenge: everyone tends to glorify the dead, and because of their exceptional merit you can scarcely be judged even a good second, let alone their equals. The living are rivals, who incur our envy, while those safely out of our way are honoured in a spirit of ungrudging goodwill.

If I am to make some mention also of a woman's special virtues, for [2] those who will now be widows, I can reduce it all to one short message. You will be well honoured if you do not fall short of what is natural for

[1] More literally, 'death coming unperceived together with strength and public (*koine*) hope'. The latter phrase may have some sense of 'public-spirited hope' (i.e. patriotism) as well as 'shared hope' (i.e. of success).

your sex, as will she who is least invoked in male conversation, for praise or blame.[1]

I have now made my speech, as custom requires, and have tried to pay **46** a fitting tribute in words. As for the tribute of deeds, the dead have been honoured already in the act of burial, while for the future the city will maintain their children at public expense from now until they come of age. That is the reward and crown given to them and their survivors for the trials they have suffered. Those who offer the greatest prizes for civic virtue are also the ones to have the best men serving as citizens.

So now make your due laments, each for your own, and go your way.' [2]

Such were the funeral ceremonies held in this winter, at the close of **47** which the first year of the war came to an end.

[1] Earnest attempts have been made in various commentaries and translations to soften this brief and dismissive dictum, but it is a reminder of the very different status women had in the Athenian democracy of this period, which has just been so extravagantly celebrated. See II 4.2n.

Second year of the war, 430–29 [II 47.2–70]

Summer [II 47.2–68]

As soon as summer began the Peloponnesians and their allies, under the [2]
leadership of Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus and king of the Spartans,
invaded Attica with two-thirds of their forces just as they had done the
year before. They established themselves and set about wasting the land.
They had not been there many days when the plague first broke out [3]
among the Athenians, and although it is said to have struck in many
places before, particularly at Lemnos but also elsewhere, there is no
previous record anywhere of a pestilence so severe and so destructive
to human life.[1] The physicians were not able to help at its outset since [4]
they were treating it in ignorance, and indeed they themselves suffered
the highest mortality since they were the ones most exposed to it. Nor
were other human arts of any avail. Whatever supplications people made

[1] The plague narrative of 47.3–54 is another famous passage, the first in a literary genre which runs through Lucretius (VI 1138–1286), Virgil (*Georgics* III 478–566), Ovid (*Metamorphoses* VII 523–81) and Procopius (*Persica* II 22) in the ancient world to such later works as Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, Mann's *Death in Venice* and Camus' *The Plague*. Questions have been raised about the historicity of Thucydides' account, partly because there is so little independent reference to the plague in other sources and partly because of its literary qualities. Its close juxtaposition to the idealistic Funeral Speech has great dramatic and symbolic effect, of course, but that is not by itself reason to doubt its reliability. See further the discussions in A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (Routledge, 1988), pp. 32–40, Rusten, pp. 179–80 and Hornblower I, pp. 316–18.

at sanctuaries and whatever oracles or the like they consulted, all were useless and in the end they abandoned them, defeated by the affliction.

48 It first came, so it is said, out of Ethiopia beyond Egypt, and then spread into Egypt and Libya and into most of the territory of the Persian King. When it got to Athens it struck the city suddenly, taking hold first [2] in the Peiraeus, so that it was even suggested by the people there that the Peloponnesians had put poison in the rain-water tanks (there being no wells yet in the Peiraeus). Later on it reached the upper city too and then the mortality became much greater. I leave it to others – whether [3] physicians or lay people – to speak from their own knowledge about it and say what its likely origins were and what factors could be powerful enough to generate such disruptive effects.[1] For my part I will say what it was like as it happened and will describe the facts[2] that would enable anyone investigating any future outbreak to have some prior knowledge and recognise it. I speak as someone who had the disease myself and witnessed others suffering from it.

49 This particular year, it was generally agreed, happened to be exception- ally free from other forms of illness; but if anyone did suffer anything at all it always turned into this disease. In other cases there was no apparent rea- [2] son for it, but suddenly people who were previously healthy were affected by sensations of violent fever in the head and a redness and inflamma- tion of the eyes; internally, both the throat and the tongue immediately became bloody and emitted an unnatural and foul-smelling breath. At the [3] next stage the victims suffered an onset of sneezing and hoarseness, and soon afterwards the affliction went to the chest, accompanied by violent coughing; when it took hold in the stomach it caused severe upset there, and every kind of bile that has been named by physicians was discharged, attended by extreme distress. In most cases an empty retching ensued, [4] producing violent spasms, in some cases straight after the emissions had ceased, in others much later. Externally, the body was not particularly [5] hot to the touch nor pale but was reddish and livid, breaking out in small

[1] The Greek is rather laboured, as indicated in Rusten's literal rendering, 'what causes (*aitias*) of so great a change (*metaboles*) he considers sufficient to have the capacity for disruption (*to metastasai*)', but the general intention must be to place special stress on the idea of *change*, which looks forward to the changes in behaviour described at II 53 below and then, more distantly, to the celebrated account of *stasis* and the breakdown of values and society in III 82–4.

[2] The usual translation is 'symptoms', but this is slightly anachronistic since in fact Thucydides has no word for that and just says 'these things', though he does of course go on to describe in 49 what we should certainly call the 'symptoms'.

blisters and sores; internally, however, sufferers were on fire and could not bear contact with the lightest of clothing and linens or anything other than going naked, and what they most felt like was throwing themselves into cold water. Indeed many who were not being looked after actually did so, jumping into rain-tanks, possessed by a thirst that could not be quenched – since it made no difference whether they drank much or little.

They were beset by a constant restlessness and by insomnia. The body [6] did not waste away while their illness was at its height but was surprisingly resistant to the ordeal, so that most people died from the internal fever in six to eight days with some strength still left in them, but if they survived that and the disease descended to the bowels, simultaneously causing serious ulceration and acute diarrhoea, then many died later from the weakness so caused. For the illness spread through the whole body [7] after starting at the top and establishing itself in the head, and even if anyone survived the most serious stages the assault on the extremities still left its mark. It struck the genitals and the fingers and toes, and many [8] people escaped its clutches only with the loss of these parts – and in some cases their eyes too. Some suffered a total loss of memory straight after their recovery and no longer knew who they themselves or their friends were.[1]

Indeed the form the plague took defied all reason.[2] When it attacked **50** anyone it was beyond all human endurance and in one respect in particular it showed itself quite different from any of the more familiar diseases. Despite there being many unburied bodies the birds and animals which feed on human flesh either kept away from the corpses or if they started eating them died themselves. The evidence for this is that there was a [2] marked absence of such birds, which were not to be seen at the bodies or anywhere else at all.[3] The dogs on the other hand offered a better chance for one to observe the effects since they live alongside man.

[1] There have been many inconclusive attempts to identify the disease from this detailed description, the main candidates being some unknown form of typhus, smallpox, bubonic plague or influenza.

[2] Literally, 'the *eidos* (form, kind, nature) of the disease is *genomenon* (an occurrence) *kreisson* (stronger/greater) than [any] *logou* (word/account)'. At 61.3 and 64.1 below Pericles describes the plague's unpredictability in similar language.

[3] An interesting detail, since the evidence is that vultures can eat carrion infected with anthrax, botulism and other diseases without ill effects because of the very strong acids in their stomachs which neutralise bacteria; indeed vultures have actually been relied on to dispose of the dead in many cultures (see 'Towers of Silence' on the web), and the generic name for the turkey vulture is *Cathartes* ('the purifier').

This, then, was the general character of the plague, leaving aside its **51**
many peculiarities in the different ways it affected different people. While
it lasted there were none of the usual complaints, or if they did occur
they ended up turning into this one. Some people died from neglect, [2]
others despite devoted care. Not a single remedy was found, one has to
say, whose application guaranteed relief, since what helped one person
harmed another. No one's constitution was proof against it,[1] regardless [3]
of their strength or weakness, but it swept them all away, whatever kind
of care and treatment they had received. The most terrible thing of all in [4]
this affliction, however, was the sense of despair when someone realised
that they were suffering from it; for then they immediately decided in
their own minds that the outcome was hopeless and they were much more
likely to give themselves up to it rather than resist. There was also the
fact that one person would get infected as a result of caring for another
so that they died in their droves like sheep, and this caused more deaths
than anything else. If in their fear they were unwilling to go near each [5]
other they died alone (and many homes were emptied through the lack of
someone to give care); but if they did make contact they lost their lives
anyway, particularly those with pretensions to virtue, who were ashamed
to spare themselves from visiting friends at a time when even the relatives
were finally wearied of lamenting the dying, so overcome were they by
the sheer weight of the disaster. Yet it was those who had survived the [6]
disease that showed most compassion for the sufferers, both because they
knew from experience what it was like and because they were now feeling
more confident about themselves – since the plague did not strike the
same person twice, at least not fatally. These people were congratulated
by others on their good fortune and in the exhilaration of the moment
entertained the blithe hope that at no time in the future would they ever
be killed by any other disease.

Their general misery was aggravated by people crowding into the city **52**
from the fields, and the worst affected were the new arrivals. There were [2]
no houses for them but they lived in huts that were stifling in the heat of
summer and they were visited by death in conditions of total disorder.
The bodies of those dying were heaped on each other, and in the streets
and around the springs half-dead people reeled about in a desperate desire

[1] Literally, 'no *soma* (body/person) was *autarkes* (self-sufficient)', a deliberate echo surely of the boast in the Funeral Speech about the self-sufficiency of the Athenian character at 41.1, where precisely the same words are used.

for water. The sanctuaries in which they had taken shelter were full of the [3] bodies of those who had died there. Overwhelmed by the disaster people could not see what was to become of them and started losing respect for the laws of god and man alike.[1] All the funeral customs they usually [4] observed were cast into confusion and each buried their dead as best they could. Many people resorted to quite shameless forms of disposal through their lack of means after so many of their relatives had already died. They took advantage of the funeral pyres others had raised, and some of them would move in first, place their own dead on the pyre and set fire to it, while others threw whoever's body they were carrying on top of one that was already burning and went away.

It was the plague that first led to other forms of lawlessness in the city **53** too. People were emboldened to indulge themselves in ways they would previously have concealed, since they saw the rapid change in fortunes – both for those who were well off and died suddenly and for those who originally had nothing but in a moment got possession of the property of these others. They therefore resolved to exploit these opportunities [2] for enjoyment quickly, regarding their lives and their property as equally ephemeral. No one was eager to add to their own hardships for suppos- [3] edly fine objectives, since they were uncertain whether they would die before achieving them. Whatever gave immediate pleasure or in any way facilitated it became the standard of what was good and useful. Neither [4] fear of the gods nor law of man was any restraint: they judged it made no difference whether or not they showed them respect, seeing that everyone died just the same; on the contrary, no one expected to live long enough to go on trial and pay the penalty, feeling that a far worse sentence had already been passed and was hanging over their heads, and that it was only reasonable to get some enjoyment from life before it finally fell on them.[2]

Such was the burden of suffering the Athenians bore, with people **54** dying inside the city and their land ravaged outside it. And in their [2] distress they not surprisingly remembered the following verse, which the old men claimed had been recited long ago, 'A Dorian war shall come

[1] *Hosion* would usually mean 'holy', but in contrast with *hieron* here it means 'profane', permitted by the gods but outside their sphere (see glossary and II 53.4).

[2] This brilliant piece of social commentary, like III 82–4 to which it looks forward, has many stylistic features more characteristic of the speeches than the regular narrative: great compression, complex oppositional devices, *variatio* and the frequent construction of abstract nouns and noun phrases.

and with it plague.' There was some disagreement among them as to [3]
whether the word used by the men of old was not 'plague' but 'famine',[1]
but in the present circumstances the view naturally prevailed that it was
'plague', as people matched their memories to their sufferings. I fancy
at any rate that if another Dorian war should visit them after this one
and if that were accompanied by a famine they would probably recite
the verse that way. There were those who also recalled an oracle given [4]
to the Spartans when the Spartans asked the god whether they should
go to war and he answered that victory would be theirs if they fought
with all their might and promised that he would himself take their side.
They therefore supposed that what then happened was the fulfilment of [5]
the oracle, and indeed the plague did begin straight after the invasion of
the Peloponnesians; and although it did not get into the Peloponnese to
any significant extent, it invaded Athens in particular and after that other
densely populated areas elsewhere.

These were the occurrences[2] relating to the plague.

The Peloponnesians, meanwhile, after destroying the crops in the plain, **55**
went on to the coastal district called Paralus and got as far as Laureium,
where the Athenians had their silver mines. They first ravaged the part
of it that looks towards the Peloponnese and then the part facing Euboea
and Andros. Pericles, however, who was general, still held to the same [2]
opinion he had had at the time of the earlier invasion: namely, that the
Athenians should not go out to oppose them.

Nonetheless, while the Peloponnesians were still in the plain and before **56**
they reached the coast, Pericles began preparing a naval force of a hun-
dred ships to attack the Peloponnese and when they were ready he put to
sea. He took on board these ships 4,000 Athenian hoplites and 300 cavalry [2]
on horse-transports that were newly constructed from old vessels; and
with them went a further force of fifty ships from Chios and Lesbos.
When the Athenian force set sail they had left the Peloponnesians occu- [3]
pying the coastal district of Attica. On reaching Epidaurus in the Pelo- [4]
ponnese they despoiled most of the land there and then attacked the city.
They had some hopes of taking it but did not succeed. Putting to sea [5]
again from Epidaurus they despoiled the land at the Troezen, Halieis and
Hermione, all of them coastal areas of the Peloponnese. They then set off [6]
from there and came to Prasiae, a coastal town in Laconia, where they

[1] There is a word-play in the Greek between *loimos* (pestilence) and *limos* (famine).

[2] *Ta genomena* literally 'the happenings', a common expression in Thucydides, which here seems to embrace both 'the facts' and 'the events'.

wasted the land, captured the town itself and destroyed it. After these operations they returned home, where they found that the Peloponnesians were no longer in Attica but had also withdrawn.

57 All the time the Peloponnesians were in Athenian territory and the Athenians were away on naval ventures the plague was taking its toll both of the Athenians in the armed forces and those in the city. Indeed it was even said that the Spartans were making haste to leave the territory through their fear of the plague, since they learned from those deserting the city that it was present there and they could at the same time see people burying their dead. But in this invasion they did in fact stay longer than ever before and despoiled all the land, remaining in Attica for about forty days.

58 During the same summer Hagnon son of Nicias and Cleopompus son of Cleinias, who were fellow generals with Pericles, took over the army he had employed and went straight on to attack the Chalcidians in Thrace and Potidaea (which was still under siege). On their arrival they brought [2] siege-engines to bear on Potidaea and did all they could to take it. But they made no progress either in capturing the city or in achieving any other objective commensurate with their efforts; for the plague had attacked them here too and was a terrible affliction for the Athenians, wreaking destruction on their army as even soldiers who had previously been healthy now caught the disease from those in Hagnon's army. (Phormio, [3] and his 1,600 men, however, were no longer in the Chalcidice.) Hagnon therefore returned to Attica with his ships, having in the space of about forty days lost to the plague 1,050 hoplites from a total of 4,000, while the original force of soldiers stayed in the area and went on besieging Potidaea.

59 After the second invasion by the Peloponnesians the Athenians had undergone a change of heart. Their land had been ruined a second time and they were feeling the combined pressure of the plague and the war. [2] They now began to criticise Pericles, holding him responsible for persuading them to go to war and for being the agent of the misfortunes they had encountered; and they became eager to come to terms with the Spartans. They even sent ambassadors to them, though to no effect. And [3] in complete despair they turned their anger on Pericles. When he saw that they were suffering in the present situation and were reacting just as he had himself expected he called a meeting (he was still a general), wanting to give them fresh heart and draw the sting of their anger and so

restore them to a calmer and more confident frame of mind. And he came forward and spoke as follows.[1]

'I have been expecting your outbreak of feeling against me – and I **60** know the reasons for it.[2] I have therefore summoned this assembly for a particular purpose. I mean to administer some reminders to you and take you to task for any misplaced resentment against me or any undue weakening in the face of difficulties.

I hold that a city confers greater benefits on its individual citizens [2] when it is succeeding as a whole than it does when the citizens flourish individually but the city fails collectively. A man can be doing well in his [3] own affairs, but if his country is destroyed he nonetheless falls with her; on the other hand if he is faring badly while his country is faring well, then he is more likely to come through safely. Therefore, since the state can [4] bear the misfortunes of individuals but each one of them is incapable of bearing hers,[3] it must follow that all should rally to her defence – and not do as you are now doing! In your distress at your domestic misfortunes you are sacrificing our common security, and you are not only blaming me for advocating war but are also blaming yourselves for supporting that decision. I am the object of your anger, but I think I am as good as any [5] man at knowing what has to be done and communicating it. I also love my city[4] and am above corruption. The man who can conceive a policy but [6] cannot expound it might as well never have had the ideas, while the man who can do both these things but is unpatriotic is unable to speak out with the same loyalty; and if he has the loyalty too but cannot resist money, then for that one reason all the other qualities would be up for sale. So, if [7] you were persuaded by me to go to war because you believed me to be at least to some degree better qualified than others in these respects, then I cannot reasonably now be blamed for anything like misconduct.

If people are free to choose and are in other respects faring well, then **61** it would be the height of folly to go to war. But if one is forced to

[1] This is Pericles' last speech. Dionysius was highly critical of it, both on grounds of style and logic (*Thuc.* 44–7), but it is now rightly seen as a very powerful and important complement to the more famous Funeral Speech of 35–46, setting out the realities of Athenian imperial policy to justify his own military strategy.

[2] A reference back to I 140.1.

[3] There may be a subtle point of logic or emphasis here in that Pericles chooses the formulation 'each one of them is incapable' rather than the expected 'no one of them is capable' (the usual rendering).

[4] *Philopolis*, a term Alcibiades later exploits for his own purposes at VI 92.2.

choose between giving in to your neighbours with the immediate result of subjection or risking danger to secure success, more blame attaches to the man who runs away from danger than the one who stands up to it. I [2] have not changed and my position remains the same.[1] What has happened is that you were persuaded to go to war when you were still unscathed but you regret it now that you are suffering harm, and with your resolve weakened you have come to think my policy wrong because each of you is already experiencing the suffering while no one can yet see evidence of the benefit; and now that you have been visited by this great disaster – with very little warning – you lack the strength of mind to persevere with the policy you decided on. The spirit is crushed when something so sudden, [3] unexpected and so completely unaccountable comes along; and that is what has happened to you, especially as regards the plague. Nevertheless, [4] since you come from a great city and were brought up in a way of life worthy of her, you must willingly endure even the worst misfortunes and do nothing to eclipse your fame. After all, people feel as justified in blaming someone who is too faint-hearted to live up to the reputation he already enjoys as they do in hating someone who is arrogant enough to grasp at a reputation he does not deserve. You must therefore put aside private sorrows and concentrate on securing our common safety.

As for your misgivings about the hardships involved in this war – that **62** they may prove to be great and yet we may still lose in the end – I have often enough demonstrated to you on other occasions that these fears are groundless, and those arguments should now suffice. But I have a further point to make about what your empire and its sheer size mean for you, which you never seem to have fully taken in yourselves and which I have not dealt with in earlier speeches either.[2] Nor would I do so now, since it involves a rather boastful claim, if I did not see that you were so unreasonably dejected. You think that your rule extends only over your [2] allies, but I would point out that of the two realms available – the land and the sea – you are absolutely dominant throughout the latter, including not only the parts you already occupy but anywhere further you might wish to go too. With the naval power you now possess there is no one to stop you sailing the world's seas – neither the Great King of Persia nor any other people on earth.

[1] Pericles several times emphasises his consistency, here and at I 140.1 and II 13.2. Cleon imitates the claim at III 38.1.

[2] It was in fact stated, but not developed as an argument, at II 41.4.

This power cannot be compared with the use of your houses and [3] land, which you regard as such a great deprivation. That is self-evident and there is therefore no good reason[1] to take these things so hard. By contrast, you should make light of them and regard the land and houses just as the gardens and ornamental symbols of your wealth. You should also recognise that if we hold fast to our freedom and come through safely we shall easily make good these losses, but that once you become subject to others then even past acquisitions have a habit of disappearing. You must match the twofold example of your fathers: they worked hard to gain their possessions, which were not inherited from others, and then in addition they handed them on safely to you. Remember that losing what one has is more shameful than failing to acquire something more. Confront your enemies not just with confidence but with disdain.[2] Any [4] fool who strikes lucky can boast, even a coward; but the pride of disdain belongs to the man who has the good judgement to believe that he is better than his opponents – which is the case with us. When luck is not a factor [5] on either side it is intelligence, derived from this sense of superiority, that fortifies one's courage, placing its trust less in hope, whose force depends on desperation, than in a judgement based on the facts, which offers more reliable foresight.[3]

It is right for you to uphold the honour, in which you all take such pride, **63** that your city derives from its empire; but if you pursue the privileges of prestige you must also shoulder its burdens. And do not suppose that what is at stake here is a simple issue of freedom versus slavery. On the contrary, it is also about loss of empire and the danger from the hatred your empire has brought you. Nor can you now give up possession of [2] the empire, should anyone be frightened by the present situation and try to make a manly virtue of non-involvement.[4] For by now your empire is like a tyranny, which it seems wrong to take but perilous to let go.[5]

[1] *eikos* (what is 'reasonable' or 'fair' or 'right') is grammatically the key word introducing all the clauses in this long and complex sentence (which in the Greek extends right to the end of section 3). The word is repeated at 63.1.

[2] There is word-play in the Greek here between *phronema* ('pride') and *kataphronema* ('contempt'), which Dionysius criticised as vulgar and sophistical rhetoric (*Thuc.* 46).

[3] 'Intelligence' here is *sunesis* and 'judgement' is *gnome*. Sections 4–5 are very complex and compressed but the basic thought seems clear: it is reasonable to be confident when you know you have certain definite advantages.

[4] *Apragmosune*, see glossary. Here it is clearly ironic.

[5] A similar thought is expressed by the Corinthians at I 122.3, Cleon at III 37.2 and Euphemus at VI 85.1.

Men who can suggest this would soon destroy their city if they persuaded [3] others to share their view – as they would destroy any other city they set up under their own control elsewhere. The inactive can only survive with the support of an active element, and inactivity is not an advantage in a state that rules others, only one that is subject and seeks safety in submission.

Do not be led astray by citizens like these and do not direct your anger **64** at me when you yourselves joined me in the decision to go to war – not even though the enemy has invaded us and has reacted as you might expect to your unwillingness to submit; and even though this plague has been inflicted on us, coming out of nowhere (it is in fact the only thing out of all that has happened to have defied prediction). I know it is largely because of this that I am even more a hated figure now – unjustly so, unless when you get some positive gain you did not reckon on you put that down to me as well. We must treat afflictions sent by the gods as [2] necessary ills and bear with courage those that come from our enemies. That was the character of our city in the past and you should do nothing to reverse it now.

Remember that the reason why Athens has the greatest[1] name in the [3] world is because she never yielded to misfortunes but has to an extraordinary degree lavished her lives and labours upon war. She has acquired the greatest power that has ever existed, whose memory will live on for ever, and even if we do now have to accept some eventual loss (everything being subject to natural decline) posterity will always recall that we were the Greeks to rule over most fellow Greeks,[2] that in the greatest of all wars we held out against them, whether in combination or separately, and that we inhabited a city which was the richest in every resource and the greatest.

True, those given to apathy may disparage all this; but men of action [4] and ambition will want to emulate us and those of them who fail to match these achievements will be envious. To be hated and unpopular [5] in the short term has been the common experience of all those who have presumed to rule over other people than themselves; the wise decision is

[1] There is a constant repetition of the same superlatives in this section, which I have reproduced as part of the rhetoric.

[2] Literally, 'we Greeks ruled over most Greeks', which could mean 'we ruled over more Greeks than any other Greek state ever did' or 'we ruled over most of the Greek world, being ourselves Greeks'. I have tried to preserve something of the ambiguity, which may of course be deliberate.

to accept the odium in pursuit of the larger purpose. For hatred is short-
lived, but the brilliance of present deeds shines on to be remembered in
everlasting glory.[1] Fix your minds, then, on achieving that fine future [6]
to come and on incurring no present shame, and commit yourselves to
both objectives. Do not negotiate with the Spartans, and do not let them
see you weighed down by your present troubles, since those who in the
face of misfortunes show the least distress of mind and the greatest active
resistance, be they cities or men, these are the ones to prevail.'

With such words Pericles tried to dispel the anger the Athenians felt **65**
towards him and distract them from their present troubles.[2] On matters of [2]
public policy they did take his advice– they made no more approaches to
the Spartans and committed themselves more wholeheartedly to the war;
but as individuals they were all feeling the pains of their sufferings. In the
case of the populace this was because they started out with little enough
and were now deprived even of that; while in the case of the leading men
it was because they had lost their fine property in the country with all
their buildings and expensive furnishings, and worst of all because they
had war instead of peace. Indeed the people as a whole did not put aside [3]
their anger towards him until they had punished him with a fine.[3] But [4]
not much later, in the way typical of people when acting as a crowd, they
again chose him as general and entrusted all their affairs to him, having
now become inured to their private pains and because they regarded him
as indispensable to the needs of the city as a whole. Indeed, as long as he [5]
was the city's leader in the time of peace he ruled them with moderation
and kept Athens safe and secure, and under him it reached the height of
its greatness; and after the war broke out he then too showed himself a
far-sighted judge of the city's strengths.

[1] This striking sentence has been much worked over. Literally, it is 'the brilliance of the moment *and* the future glory are left in everlasting remembrance'. Stahl and others have queried the text on the rather pedantic grounds that 'the brilliance of the moment' cannot logically last forever in the same way as 'future glory' can. But Macleod is surely closer to the spirit of the original when he says, 'In this phrase Pericles rolls "present splendour and future fame" into one syntactical ball and tries to tear them through the gates of oblivion' (*Collected Essays*, p. 153).

[2] Whatever view one takes of Thucydides' authorial voice in the speeches it is clear that section 65, in which he assesses Pericles and his policies and gives his explanation for Athens' eventual defeat in the war, is one of the most important *direct* political statements of his own opinions in the whole work; it was evidently written at a late stage in composition since it refers to the failure of the Sicilian expedition in 413 and some subsequent events.

[3] Surprisingly, Thucydides gives us no further information about the nature of the charge or the penalty in what must surely have been a celebrity case.

Pericles lived on two years and six months longer,[1] and after he died his [6]
foresight about the war became still more fully recognised. He told them [7]
that if they held back, looked after their navy, did not try to extend their empire during the war and did not expose the city to risk, then they would prevail. But they did just the opposite of this in every way,[2] and in other respects apparently unconnected with the war they were led by private ambition and personal greed to pursue policies that proved harmful both to themselves and to their allies; for when these policies succeeded they brought honour and benefit just to individuals but when they failed they
were detrimental to the city in its war effort. The explanation for this [8]
was that Pericles, through his personal ability, his judgement and his evident integrity could freely restrain[3] the masses. He led them more than he was led by them. That is, he did not say things just to please them in an unseemly pursuit of power, but owed his influence to his personal distinction and so could face their anger and contradict them.
At any rate, whenever he sensed that arrogance was making them more [9]
confident than the situation merited he would say something to strike fear into their hearts; and when on the other hand he saw them fearful without good reason he restored their confidence again. So it came about that what was in name a democracy was in practice government by the foremost man.

His successors, by contrast, being more on a level with each other and [10]
in competition each to be first, began to surrender even the conduct of
affairs to the whims of the people. The consequence was – this being [11]
a great city and one in possession of an empire – that many mistakes were made, in particular the Sicilian expedition. That was not so much a mistake of judgement about the enemy they were attacking as a failure on the part of those sending the men abroad to follow up this decision with further support for them. Instead they engaged in personal intrigues over the leadership of the people and so blunted the effectiveness of the forces

[1] We are told by Plutarch that Pericles died from the after-effects of the plague (*Pericles* 38.1). Thucydides removes him from the narrative at this point and does not even mention his death in its chronological place in the autumn of 429.

[2] One would have liked examples to explain the judgements here and at 65.10 and 11. Pericles died in 429 but the Sicilian expedition was not until 415–13, so what were the major mistakes in the interim that Pericles would have avoided, who were the culprits, and what are the implications of 'for the first time' in the last sentence of 65.11 below? For comment and suggestions see Gomme II, pp. 191–2 and Hornblower I, pp. 342–3.

[3] A deliberate oxymoron, combining the ideas that he controlled them 'in the manner of a free society' and that he did it 'easily and without constraint'.

in the field and for the first time embroiled the city at home in factional turmoil.

Despite their failure in Sicily, involving most of their fleet as well as [12] other forces, and the arrival of civil disorder in Athens, they nonetheless held out for eight years longer against their original enemies, who were joined now by the Sicilians and by the majority of the allies in revolt. They were also joined later on by Cyrus son of the King of Persia, who provided the Peloponnesians with money for their fleet. And they only finally capitulated when they fell on each other in their private disputes and brought about their own ruin.

Thus there were ample reasons why Pericles was in a position to [13] make his prediction that the city could easily prevail in the war over the Peloponnesians alone.[1]

66 In the course of the same summer the Spartans and their allies made an expedition with 100 ships against the island of Zacynthus, which lies opposite Elis. The people of Zacynthus are colonists of the Achaeans from the Peloponnese and were in alliance with the Athenians. There were 1,000 Spartan hoplites on board the invading fleet under the command of the Spartiate Cnemus. They made a landing and devastated most of the land, but as the Zacynthians would not come to terms with them they sailed back home.

67 At the end of the same summer Aristeus the Corinthian and three Spartan envoys, Aneristus, Nicolaus and Pratodamus, together with Timagoras of Tegea and Pollis of Argos (in his case in a private capacity) set out for Asia to visit the King and see if there was any way of persuading him to give them financial support and join in the war on their side. On the way they first called on Sitalces son of Teres in Thrace, meaning to do what they could to persuade him to break away from the Athenian alliance and lead an expedition to Potidaea, where there was a besieging Athenian force. They also wanted, as a particular objective, to arrange through him

[1] An important but obscure sentence. The main verb *perisseuo* is usually taken to mean 'was present in abundance' (LSJ II 1, citing this sentence), though what exactly is thought to be 'in abundance' varies: thus, 'So overwhelmingly great were the resources Pericles had in mind when he prophesied . . . ' (Warner); 'such abundant grounds had Pericles at that time for his own forecast . . . ' (Smith). However, the verb later also came to mean 'be superior in, have an advantage' (LSJ III 2) and Hobbes may have had this sense in mind in his version: 'So much was in Pericles above other men at that time that he could foresee . . . ' This latter picks up better on the comparison between Pericles and later leaders, which is surely the main point of this section and thus also makes better sense of the emphatic *autos* (himself) which tends to be untranslated in the first set of versions. I have tried to retain some of the ambiguity of the original.

to cross the Hellespont to visit Pharnaces son of Pharnabazus who was to convey them up-country on to the King.

It so happened, however, that two Athenian envoys, Learchus son of [2] Callimachus and Ameiniades son of Philemon, were with Sitalces and they persuaded his son Sadocus, who had become an Athenian citizen, to deliver the men into their hands in order to stop them crossing over to the King and so harming his adopted city. He agreed and while they [3] were travelling across Thrace to get to the boat in which they were to make the crossing of the Hellespont he had them arrested before they could embark. He had already sent out a party of men to accompany Learchus and Ameiniades with orders to hand the captives over to them, and they duly received them and conveyed them to Athens. When they [4] arrived there the Athenians became afraid that Aristeus might escape and do them some fresh harm,[1] because even before this he had evidently been responsible for all the incidents at Potidaea and in the Thracian region. They therefore put them all to death that very day, though they were given no trial and had things they wanted to say,[2] and threw them into a pit. They claimed the justification that they were using the same means of defending their interests as the Spartans had done earlier when they put to death and threw into pits the Athenian and allied traders they had caught sailing round the Peloponnese in merchant ships. For at the beginning of the war the Spartans had indeed killed everyone without exception whom they captured at sea, regarding them as enemy agents whether they were fighting on the side of the Athenians or were on neither side.

At about the same time, towards the end of summer, the Ambraciots **68** together with a large barbarian force they had raised launched a campaign against Amphilochian Argos and the rest of Amphilochia. The [2] origin of their hostility to the Argives was as follows. Amphilochus son [3] of Amphiareus founded Amphilochian Argos and colonised the rest of Amphilochia in the Ambracian Gulf after returning home after the Trojan War and finding himself dissatisfied with the state of affairs in Argos. He called it Argos after his native city. This city was the largest in [4] Amphilochia with the most powerful group of settlers. Many generations [5] later, under the pressure of misfortunes, they called in as fellow settlers

[1] Aristeus was last heard of at I 65 and was clearly a thorn in their side.

[2] Another small atrocity that is made more poignant by the matter-of-fact reporting. The right to at least a hearing and a statement in self-defence was a basic one in Athenian judicial practice.

the Ambraciots, who live on the borders of Amphilochia; and it was from them that they first learned to speak the Greek language, as they do now, as a consequence of living alongside them, while the rest of the Amphilochians remain barbarians.[1] Eventually the Ambraciots expelled the Argives and took control of the city themselves. When that happened [7] the Amphilochians placed themselves under the protection of the Acarnanians and together they called in the Athenians, who sent Phormio as general with thirty ships. When he arrived they took Argos by force and enslaved the Ambraciots, and the Amphilochians and the Acarnanians settled the place jointly. It was after this that the alliance between the [8] Athenians and the Acarnanians was first concluded.

The Ambraciots originally conceived their enmity towards the Argives [9] as a result of this enslavement of their people, and later in the war they launched this offensive with their own men, joined by some Chaonians and various other neighbouring barbarians. They came to Argos and took control of the countryside but were unable to capture the city by assault, so they returned home and the different tribes dispersed.

Such were the events of the summer.

Winter [II 69–70]

The following winter the Athenians sent twenty ships round the Pelo- **69** ponnese under the command of Phormio. He made his base at Naupactus and kept watch to stop anyone either sailing into or out of Corinth and the Crisaean Gulf. They also sent six others to Caria and Lycia under the command of Melesandrus to collect tribute from them and prevent pirates from the Peloponnese basing themselves there and interfering with the movement of merchant shipping from Phaselis and Phoenicia and from that part of the mainland. Melesandrus went inland with a force [2] of Athenians from the ships and other allied troops, but he was killed in battle and lost part of these forces in the course of the defeat.

The same winter the Potidaeans found they could hold out against the **70** siege no longer. The Peloponnesian invasions of Attica had done nothing to make the Athenians abandon the siege. The Potidaeans' own supplies of grain had run out and the people there were by this time forced to

[1] Literally, 'they were hellenised in respect of their language'. See note on I 2 for the importance of language in defining 'Greek' and 'barbarian' culture. This is the only fifth-century use of the verb *hellenizo*.

extremes just to get food, and some had even tasted each other.[1] In these circumstances, then, they opened discussions about terms with the Athenian generals in charge of operations against them: Xenophon son of Euripides, Hestiodorus son of Aristocleides and Phanomachus son of Callimachus. The Athenians accepted the terms, conscious of the [2] sufferings of their army in a place so exposed to winter weather and of the fact that their city had already expended 2,000 talents on the siege. The terms they therefore agreed were that the Potidaeans were to leave [3] the city with their children, women and mercenaries, taking one garment apiece (two in the case of the women) and a fixed sum of money for the journey. So they left Potidaea under protection of a truce and went into [4] Chalcidice or anywhere they could. The Athenians back home, however, were critical of the generals for making an agreement without consulting them (thinking they could have taken control of the city on any terms they liked), and they later sent settlers of their own to Potidaea and colonised it.

These were the events of the winter, and so ended the second year of the war Thucydides wrote.

[1] I have translated literally. Versions like 'there were actually cases of cannibalism' (Warner and Jowett) miss the startling immediacy of this revelation and the sense of agency involved. This is a historian's description not an anthropologist's explanation. See P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: responses to risk and crisis* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 28f. for other occurrences in the ancient world.

Third year of the war, 429–28 [II 71–103]

Summer [II 71–92]

The following summer the Peloponnesians and their allies did not invade 71
Attica but instead launched a campaign against Plataea under the command of Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus and king of the Spartans. After establishing his army's position he was about to start wasting the land, but the Plataeans quickly dispatched envoys to him with the following message:[1]

'Archidamus and Spartans, this invasion of the territory of Plataea is [2]
an act of injustice and one unworthy both of you and of the men who were your fathers. Remember the commitment made by Pausanias son of Cleonbrotus, himself a Spartan, when he had liberated Greece from the Persians with the help of those Greeks who were prepared to share the danger in the battle that was fought on our land.[2] He made sacrifices to Zeus God of Freedom in the market-place of Plataea and, summoning together all the allies, granted the Plataeans the right to hold and occupy their land and city as an independent people; no one was to take up arms against them without just cause or to enslave them; and if they did so the

[1] The critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus greatly approved of this group of speeches (II 72–74) as models of style and relevance (*Thuc.* 36) and he contrasts them favourably with the (now) more famous Melian dialogue of V 84–113, though this may tell us more about him than the speeches themselves.

[2] The Battle of Plataea of 479 BC.

allies present[1] would do everything in their power to defend them. This [3]
was the reward your fathers gave us for the courage and commitment we showed at that time of danger. But you are doing just the reverse – you have come here with the Thebans, our worst enemies, intending to make us slaves. We call to witness the gods in whose name we then swore and [4]
the gods of your ancestors and of our own country, and we say to you, do not wrong the land of Plataea and do not violate your oaths, but let us live in independence just as Pausanias decreed.'

After the Plataeans had said this Archidamus responded as follows: **72**

'Yes, what you say is just, Plataeans, provided that you are consistent in practice. That is, in accordance with the terms Pausanias granted you, do assert your own independence but also join in liberating others who shared the dangers of that time with you, swore the same oaths as you and are now under the control of the Athenians. It is to liberate these people and the rest of Greece that this great force has been assembled and this war has come about. Best of all would be for you to take your part in that liberation and stay true to the oaths yourselves; but failing that do as we have already proposed: keep quiet and look after your own affairs, do not side with either party, treat both as friends and neither as enemies. That would be enough to satisfy us.'

So much Archidamus said. After hearing him the Plataean envoys [2]
returned to the city and reported the exchange to the people. They then responded to Archidamus that it was impossible for them to act as he proposed without the consent of the Athenians (for their wives and children were in Athens), and that they also feared for the safety of the whole city when the Spartans left: either the Athenians might come and not allow them this neutrality, or the Thebans might claim they were included in the terms sworn about receiving both sides and might again try to capture the city. To reassure them about these matters Archidamus [3]
then said this:

'You hand over the city and your houses to us Spartans and indicate the boundaries of the land and the numbers of your trees and anything else that can be quantified exactly. Then take yourselves off wherever you like for the duration of the war. When it is finished we will give you back whatever we took over. Until then we will hold your property in trust on your behalf, working the land and paying whatever rent would prove sufficient for you.'

[1] This would have included both the Athenians and the Spartans, as part of the Greek force united against the Persians in 479.

They listened to this and went back into the city again, and after 73
conferring with the people said that they wanted first to share these proposals with the Athenians and that if they could get them to agree then they would do what he proposed. Meanwhile they urged him to make a truce with them and not to devastate the land. And he agreed a truce for the number of days it was reasonable to allow for the journey and withheld from destroying the crops. So the Plataean envoys went to [2]
the Athenians and consulted with them and then returned with this news for the people in the city:

'Men of Plataea, the Athenians respond that at no time in the past, ever [3]
since we became their allies, have they abandoned you when you were the victims of wrongdoing, nor will they allow it now but they will do everything they can to help you. They solemnly urge you by the oaths your fathers swore not to upset the basis of the alliance.'

When the envoys reported this the Plataeans decided not to break with 74
the Athenians but to hold out, even if it meant seeing their lands ruined and suffering whatever other misfortunes might come their way; no one was to leave the city from now on, but the answer should be given from the walls that it was impossible for them to do what the Spartans proposed. As soon as they had given that answer King Archidamus' first action was [2]
to call to witness the gods and the heroes of the land, speaking as follows:

'You gods and heroes who protect the land of Plataea, be our wit- [3]
nesses that we did no wrong at the beginning of this affair. It was only because these men were the first to break our communal oaths that we invaded this land, where our fathers invoked you in their prayers and conquered the Persians and which you rendered auspicious for the Greeks in their time of trial. Nor shall we now be in the wrong if we take some action, for we have made many reasonable proposals that have not found favour. Grant then that those beginning this cycle of wrongdoing are punished for it, while those seeking lawful redress get their retribution.'

After this appeal to the gods Archidamus opened hostilities.[1] His army 75
first built a stockade round the Plataeans with trees they had cut down to prevent anyone coming out; then they began raising a ramp against the city, hoping that with so large an army engaged on the work this would

[1] The account of the siege of Plataea which follows (75–78) is one of the most detailed and vivid we have of how a siege might actually have been conducted and resisted in this era, with all the improvisation, primitive technology and dependence on weather conditions and luck. This picks up the story of Plataea from II 2–6, one that will resume at III 20–25 and end (badly) at III 52–68.

be the speediest way of taking it. They therefore cut down timber from [2] Cithaeron and made a lattice-work construction both sides of the ramp to serve as a wall and stop the mound spreading out too much. They brought in wood, stone, earth and anything else that could usefully be thrown in to build it up. They continued raising the ramp for seventeen [3] days and nights without a break, working in relays so that some were always engaged in the carrying while others were taking food or sleep; and Spartan officers attached to each city as supporting overseers kept up the pressure on the work. When the Plataeans saw the ramp going up they put together a wooden structure which they placed on top of their own wall at the point where the ramp was being raised and built into it bricks which they tore out from nearby houses. The wood served to bind it all [5] together so that the construction did not become weakened as it gained height, and it had skins and hides over it to protect the builders and the woodwork from being struck by burning arrows and keep them safe. The [6] wall was raised to a great height, but the ramp opposite went up at equal pace. So the Plataeans had the following idea: digging through the wall where the ramp abutted it they carried away the earth from the mound into the city.

When the Peloponnesians became aware of this they compacted clay **76** in reed matting and threw that into the cavity, so that it would not just trickle through like the earth and be carried away. Thwarted by this, the [2] Plataeans abandoned that tactic and instead dug a tunnel out of the city and, calculating their position under the ramp, they again started taking away soil over to their side. For a long time they were undetected in this by the enemy outside, who were piling on material from above but making little progress since the mound was being undermined from below and was continuously settling back into the space.

The Plataeans were nonetheless afraid that they would be unable to [3] hold out, few as they were against so many, and so devised this further scheme. They stopped working on their large structure opposite the ramp but, starting on either side of it from within the wall beneath, they began building a new crescent-shaped wall on the city side, so that if the main wall were taken this new one would offer protection. The enemy would then again have to throw up a ramp against that and while they advanced within the crescent would not only have all their work to do over again but would also be more exposed to attack from both sides. Meanwhile, however, in addition to building the ramp, the [4] Peloponnesians also brought up siege-engines to attack the city: one of

these was pulled up the ramp and knocked down a large part of their structure opposite, terrifying the Plataeans; others were deployed against different parts of the wall elsewhere, but the Plataeans attached nooses to these machines and pulled them up. They also fastened huge beams with long iron chains at each end and suspended them from two spars projecting over the wall. They hauled these beams up at a sideways angle from the ram and when the machine was about to make a strike somewhere they released the beam by letting go and allowing the chain to run slack so that the force of the beam's descent snapped off the head of the ram.

77 After this, since the siege-engines were producing no results and there were these counter-measures to the ramp under way, the Peloponnesians decided that there was no way of taking the city with such means of threatening it as they had to hand and began making preparations for a full circumvallation.[1] [2] But before doing that they decided to try using fire, to see if when a wind got up they might be able to set fire to the city, which was not a large one. In fact, they considered every possible way of bringing the city under their control without the expense of a siege. [3] They brought bundles of brushwood and threw them down from the top of the mound, first into the space between the wall and the ramp; and when that filled up, as it did very quickly with so many hands at work, they also piled them up in such other parts of the city as they could reach from their elevated position on the ramp. Then they set fire to the brushwood by throwing in lighted torches together with sulphur and pitch. [4] That produced the biggest conflagration anyone had ever seen up to that time, the biggest man-made one that is, for in the mountains timber rubbed together by winds can catch fire spontaneously and produce a conflagration. [5] At any rate, this fire was a big one and came close to destroying the Plataeans after they had survived everything else. A large part of the city became totally inaccessible and if there had been a wind to convey the flames towards it, which was of course just what the attackers were hoping for, the Plataeans would not have survived. [6] But in the event there was also said to have been heavy rain and a storm, which put out the flames and so averted the danger.

78 After the Peloponnesians had failed in this objective too, they sent most of their army away, leaving just a part of it behind. They then built a wall right round the city in a circle, dividing up the length and apportioning

[1] This may seem a curious tactic in the case of a city that already had a wall but it was a standard way of trying to isolate a city completely. See III 21 for more detail.

it by cities. There was both an internal and an external ditch, from which they got material for the bricks. When the work was completed – at about [2] the rising of Arcturus[1] – they left behind guards for half the wall (the Boeotians were guarding the other half), withdrew the army and dispersed back to their cities. The Plataeans had already sent to Athens their women [3] and children, the older men and everyone else in the population unfit for service. Those who were left to face the siege were 400 of their own men, 80 Athenians and 110 women to prepare the food.[2] This was the grand [4] total when the siege began and there was no one else inside the wall, either free man or slave.

Such were the preparations for the siege of Plataea.

In the course of this summer, at the same time as the attack on Plataea **79** and just when the corn was ripening, the Athenians mounted a campaign against the Chalcidians in the Thracian region and the Bottiaeans. The Athenians were under the command of Xenophon son of Euridides and two other generals. They proceeded to Spartolus in Bottice and destroyed [2] the grain crops. They had hopes too that the city would be surrendered by some activists inside, but those opposed to this sent word to Olynthus and a force of hoplites and other troops came to their defence. When these made a sally out of Spartolus the Athenians engaged them right outside the city. The Chalcidian hoplites and some mercenaries with [3] them were defeated by the Athenians and retreated into Spartolus, but the Chalcidian cavalry and light-armed troops defeated the Athenian cavalry and their light-armed contingent, which included a few peltasts [4] from the district called Crousis. Just after this battle was over more peltasts arrived from Olynthus in support of the Chalcidians. When the [5] light-armed troops from Spartolus saw them they were emboldened both by the arrival of these reinforcements and by the fact that they had not been beaten in the previous encounter; and they again attacked the Athenians, supported by the Chalcidian cavalry and the reinforcements. The Athenians thereupon withdrew to join the two companies they had left by the baggage-train. Whenever the Athenians attacked, the others [6] gave ground; when the Athenians fell back they pressed forward and bombarded them with javelins. The Chalcidian cavalry also rode up and kept attacking the Athenians whenever they saw an opportunity. They threw the Athenians into a complete panic, routed them and then pursued them for some distance. The Athenians fled to Potidaea for refuge and [7]

[1] The middle of September. [2] Rather a generous ratio?

later, after retrieving their dead under truce, withdrew to Athens with what remained of their army. Four hundred and thirty men had died and with them all the generals. The Chalcidians and Bottiaeans set up a trophy and after taking up their own dead dispersed to their various cities.

80 In the same summer and not long after this, the Ambraciots and Chaonians, who wanted to subdue the whole of Acarnania and detach it from Athenian control, persuaded the Spartans to prepare a fleet from the allied forces and send a thousand hoplites to Acarnania. They said that if the Spartans joined them with a combined force of both ships and infantry, the Acarnanians would be unable to send help inland from the coast and it would be easy for the Spartans to occupy Acarnania and get control of Zacynthus and Cephallenia as well; and then the Athenians would no longer be able to sail round the Peloponnese as they had before, and the Spartans might even hope to take Naupactus. The Spartans were [2] persuaded by this and immediately dispatched Cnemus (who was still an admiral) and the hoplites on a few ships, while they gave instructions for the fleet to be prepared as quickly as possible and to sail to Leucas.[1] The [3] Corinthians were especially eager to support the Ambraciots, who were colonists of theirs. And while the fleet from Corinth and Sicyon and the places in that region was under preparation the contingents from Leucas, Anactorium and Ambracia, which had arrived before them at Leucas, waited there.

Meanwhile, Cnemus and the thousand hoplites with him made the [4] crossing without being seen by Phormio, who was in command of the twenty Athenian ships on guard off Naupactus, and they straightaway began preparing for the campaign on land. The Greek troops he had [5] with him were the Ambraciots, Leucadians and Anactorians as well as the thousand troops he had himself brought. The barbarian troops consisted of a thousand Chaonians, a people with no king who were led by Photyus and Nicanor, the members of the ruling clan holding the annual presidency; the Thesprotians, another people without a king, also served alongside the Chaonians; Sabylinthus as guardian of King Tharyps, who [6] was still a boy, led the Molossians and Atintanians, and the Parauanians

[1] This was presumably the allied fleet we hear of at II 66 above, not the larger one they had requisitioned at the start of the war (see II 7.2), much of which did not take part until later. Sparta had no real fleet of its own at this point, though it did supply naval commanders like Cnemus (II 66 and here) and Brasidas and others (85.1) for the allied fleet. Later in the war Sparta made a strategic commitment to developing its naval power (see VIII 3.1, 52, 87.4 and 106) and this ultimately had a decisive effect in the final years of the war (notably at Aegospotami in 405, after the end of Thucydides' narrative).

Map 9. Operations in Acarnania and the north-west (429)[1]

[1] Based on J. S. Rusten's edition of *The Peloponnesian War, Book II* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 224.

were led by their king Oroedus. The Parauanians were joined in the campaign by a thousand Orestians, whose king Antiochus had entrusted them to Oroedus. Finally, Perdiccas, unknown to the Athenians, sent [7] along a thousand Macedonians, though they arrived too late.

With this army Cnemus set off without waiting for the fleet from [8] Corinth, and while moving through Argive[1] territory they sacked Limnaea, an unwalled village. They then came to Stratus, the largest city in Acarnania, thinking that if they could take that first the rest of the country would soon come over to their side.

When the Acarnanians realised that a large army had invaded by land **81** and that the enemy would also be arriving by sea with a fleet, instead of acting together in mutual support they each looked to their own defence and sent to Phormio asking for protection. He responded that with a fleet expected to sail from Corinth it was impossible for him to leave Naupactus unguarded. Meanwhile, the Peloponnesians and their allies, [2] dividing themselves into three divisions, advanced on the Stratians' city and set up camp nearby so that if they failed to persuade them by negotiation they could move into action[2] and try to take the wall by force. In [3] this advance the Chaonians and the other barbarians held the centre, the Leucadians and Anactorians and those who accompanied them were on their right, while Cnemus and the Peloponnesians and Ambraciots were on the left. All these were widely spaced out and at times could not even see each other.

The Greek contingents kept their order as they advanced and stayed on [4] their guard until they had made camp in a suitable place. The Chaonians, however, who were very confident of their own abilities and had the reputation among the local mainland tribes of being very aggressive, did not hold back to make camp but rushed forward with the other barbarians thinking that they would take the city at the first shout[3] and could claim the victory all for themselves.

The Stratians realised that the Chaonians were still advancing and [5] reasoned that if they could overpower them while they were isolated the Greek contingents would be less inclined to move against them. They therefore set ambushes in the area round the city and when the Chaonians

[1] This is the Amphilochian Argos of II 68 (see map 16, p. 228).

[2] Literally, 'by words . . . by action', the familiar (and over-worked) contrast between *logos* and *ergon*.

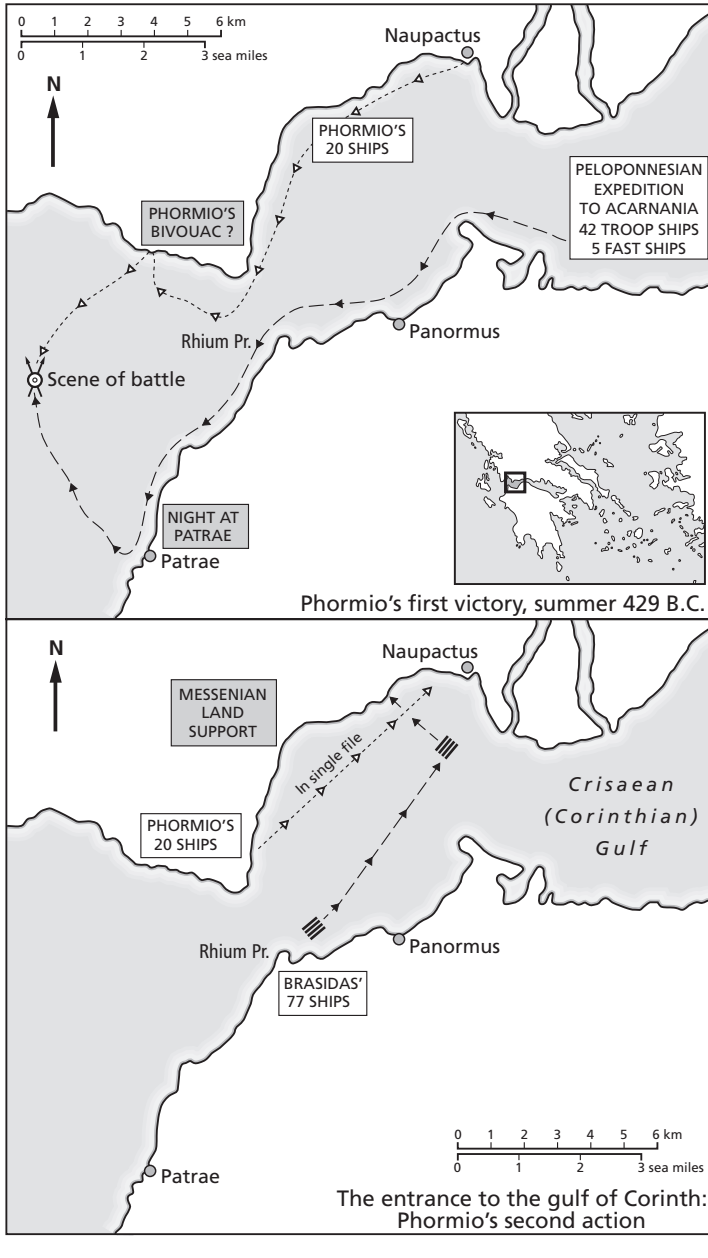
[3] *Autoboei*. I have stayed close to the literal meaning here, though it also becomes a dead metaphor meaning 'without a blow struck' or 'at the first assault'.

drew near they charged out of the city to meet them and at the same time fell on them from the ambushes. The Chaonians were thrown into a panic [6] and many of them were killed; and when the other barbarians saw them giving way they no longer held their ground but took flight. Neither of the [7] Greek camps was aware of the battle because these others had gone a long way ahead and they had supposed that they were pressing on to set up a camp. But when the fleeing barbarians burst in on them the Greeks took [8] them in and combining their camps remained where they were all day. The Stratians did not close in on them because the other Acarnanians had not yet come up in support, but they used slings against the Greeks from a distance and rendered them helpless since they could not move about without armour. The Acarnanians are thought to excel in this skill.

When night fell Cnemus quickly retreated with the army to the River 82 Anapus, which is ten miles from Stratus, and on the next day he recovered the dead under truce; and since the Oeniadae had joined up with them in a spirit of friendship he then withdrew to their country before the reinforcements arrived. From there they each returned to their various homes. For their part the Stratians set up a trophy for the battle against the barbarians.

The fleet from Corinth and the other allies in the Crisaean Gulf, which 83 was to have joined Cnemus to prevent the Acarnanians sending help inland from the coast, did not in fact reach him, but at the time of the fighting at Stratus was forced into a sea battle with Phormio and the twenty Athenians ships on guard at Naupactus. Phormio was watching [2] for them to sail along the coast and out of the Gulf since he wanted to engage them in open water. The Corinthians and their allies had not sailed [3] with the intention of fighting a sea battle but were set up more to transport troops into Acarnania, and they did not suppose that the Athenians with their twenty ships would dare to start a sea battle against their forty-seven ships. However, they saw that while they were themselves following the coastline the Athenians were tracking them along the opposite coast; they then noticed that as they started crossing from Patrae in Achaea to make for Acarnania on the mainland opposite the Athenians were sailing towards them from the direction of Chalcis and the River Evenus; and they discovered that they were unable to elude them even when they set sail at night. So then it was that they were finally compelled to fight a sea battle in the middle of their crossing.

There were generals from each of the cities contributing to the force, [4] the Corinthian ones being Machaon, Isocrates and Agatharchidas. The [5]



Map 10. Phormio's campaigns (429)[1]

[1] Based on J. S. Rusten's edition of *The Peloponnesian War, Book II* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 226 and J. S Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme* (second edition, Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 70 and 73.

Spartans drew up their ships in as large a circle as they could without leaving an opening for a breakthrough manoeuvre, prows turned outward and sterns inward; within this circle they placed the small boats that were with them and their five fastest ships, so that these were immediately on hand anywhere the enemy might attack.[1]

84 The Athenians, drawn up in a single column, sailed around them in a circle and kept constricting them into an ever-smaller space, almost grazing them as they passed continuously round, giving the impression that they would attack at any moment. They had in fact been instructed by Phormio not to engage before he himself gave the signal. His expectation [2] was that the Spartan line would not hold firm, as an infantry line on land would, but the ships would fall foul of each other and the small boats would create confusion. He calculated that if a wind should spring up from the Gulf, which is what he was waiting for as he sailed round them and which usually did happen in the morning, then the Peloponnesian fleet would not remain in stable formation for any length of time. He thought that the initiative for any attack rested with him and could be at a time of his choosing, since his ships were the faster ones, and that this wind would determine the best moment.

The wind did get up and the ships, already confined in a small space, [3] were thrown into disorder from the combined pressure of the wind and the small boats; ships collided one with another and were fended off with poles; crews shouted warnings and abuse at each other and were quite unable to hear the word of command or their officers; and finally, in their inexperience men failed to lift their oars clear of the water in the swell and so rendered the ships unresponsive to their helmsmen. That was the critical moment for Phormio to give the signal and the Athenians fell on them. First they sank one of the commanders' ships, and then they destroyed the others at will as they came on them, with the result that in their confusion none of them turned to resist but all fled to Patrae and Dyme in Achaea. The Athenians pursued them, captured [4] twelve ships, picked up most of the men from them and then sailed off to Molycreum. They set up a trophy at Rhium and after dedicating a ship to Poseidon withdrew to Naupactus. As for the Peloponnesians, they sailed [5] away immediately with their surviving ships from Dyme and Patrae to Cyllene, the port of the Eleans, where they were joined by Cnemus coming

[1] See Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, pp. 68–71, where they criticise this tactic and discuss this whole battle in detail.

from Leucas after the battle at Stratus together with the ships there that were supposed to have joined them.

The Spartans sent the fleet three men to act as advisers to Cnemus: **85** Timocrates, Brasidas and Lycophron. Their instructions were to make better preparations for the next sea battle and not to be driven from the seas by just a few ships. The situation seemed quite incomprehensible [2] to the Spartans, the more so since this was their first experience of a sea battle, and they could not believe their fleet was so much inferior but supposed there must have been some lack of spirit involved, since they failed to take due account of the long experience of the Athenians compared with their own brief training. So it was in a mood of anger that they dispatched these advisers.

On their arrival, they and Cnemus together put out a call to the var- [3] ious cities for additional support and began fitting out the existing fleet for a sea battle. Meanwhile Phormio sent word to Athens to give news [4] of their preparations and report on the sea battle they had just won. He urged them to send him as many ships as possible with all speed, since they were in daily expectation of a sea battle. They did send him [5] twenty ships but gave special instructions to the man in charge of conveying them to go first to Crete.[1] This was because Nicias, a Cretan from Gortys who was a local representative of theirs, persuaded them to sail against Cydania in Crete, claiming that he could bring this hostile city over to them, though he was actually bringing them in as a favour to the people of Polichna, who were neighbours of the Cydanians. So [6] the commander took the ships and went to Crete, where he duly helped the people of Polichna ravage the Cydanians' territory; and what with winds and bad sailing conditions he was delayed there for quite a long time.

While the Athenians were thus delayed in Crete, the Peloponnesians at **86** Cyllene made their preparations for a sea battle and sailed along the coast to Panormus in Achaea, where the Peloponnesian infantry had come up in their support. Phormio was also sailing along the coast to Rhium in [2] Molycria and he anchored outside it with the same twenty ships he had employed in the earlier sea battle. This Rhium is friendly to the Athenians, [3] while the other Rhium, the one in the Peloponnese, lies opposite it; they are separated by about a mile of water and this constitutes the mouth of

[1] Strategically a bizarre and irresponsible move. The whole incident is odd since, unusually, we are not told the identity of 'the commander' nor do we know who this Nicias was.

the Gulf of Crisa. When the Peloponnesians saw the Athenians were there [4]
they likewise anchored their seventy-seven ships at the Rhium in Achaea,
not far from Panormus where their land forces were. For about six or [5]
seven days both fleets remained anchored opposite each other, practising
and preparing for a sea battle; the strategy on the one side was not to
sail outside the two Rhiums into open water, since they had been made
fearful by their earlier disaster, and on the other it was to not to sail into
the straits, thinking that a sea battle in a confined area would favour the
other side.

At this point Cnemus, Brasidas and the other Peloponnesian comman- [6]
ders, wanting to bring on the sea battle before any reinforcements came
from Athens, assembled their troops together; and, seeing that many of
them were frightened and demoralised as a result of their earlier defeat,
they sought to encourage them and addressed them as follows:[1]

'Men of the Peloponnese, if this sea battle which has just taken place 87
should have made any of you nervous about the one to come, then rest
assured that you have no just cause to be afraid. Our preparations for [2]
that encounter were inadequate, as you know, since the object of our
voyage was not so much to enter a sea battle as to set up a land operation.
Moreover, most of the luck went against us and our inexperience, in what
was our first sea battle, may also have contributed to our failure. So it [3]
was not some moral failing[2] on our part that brought about our defeat,
and it would be wrong to let an accidental outcome blunt our resolve,
when our spirits have not been broken by force but we remain inwardly
defiant. Rather, you should realise that though all men can suffer reverses
of fortune the brave in spirit always remain true to their character, and as
such they would never offer inexperience as a good excuse for cowardice
in any situation.[3] Any lack of experience on your part is more than [4]

[1] As in other cases where there is a plural 'speaker' it is unclear whether one person in fact made the speech (despite the '*they* addressed them as follows'), whether they divided it up in some way (unlikely in this case but perhaps possible with longer addresses), or whether they divided up the troops and each gave the same basic address (more likely in the case of military harangues like this one). Whichever the explanation, it emphasises the need not to take the intentions expressed at I 22.1 too literally. See also III 52.5 and the synopsis of speeches (pp. 623–7).

[2] *Kakia* 'cowardice' or 'moral weakness', the opposite of *arete* ('excellence', 'virtue', 'courage').

[3] Section 3 is all one complicated sentence and another reminder that this can scarcely be *verbatim* reportage, especially since this is meant to be a military harangue. No commander would have articulated such a thought, and no ordinary soldier could have followed it in

compensated for by your advantage in physical courage.[1] In their case, however, the knowledge you particularly fear needs the further stimulus of bravery if it is to prompt the memory in a moment of crisis to put into practice what it has learned; unless you are brave at heart no amount of expertise can prevail in the face of danger. Fear drives things from the mind, and expertise without inner strength is of no use. Against their [5] greater experience, therefore, set your greater courage, and against the fear caused by your defeat set the accident of your being unprepared at that time. We have the advantage in the number of our ships and in [6] fighting this sea battle close to our native shores with hoplites at hand. And in most cases victory goes to those with the biggest numbers and the best preparations. So not a single reason can be found why we should [7] fail, and even those earlier mistakes will themselves now represent an advantage by teaching us a lesson.

Be confident, then, whether you are helmsman or sailor. Each of you [8] must take personal responsibility for following our lead, and do not desert whatever position you may be assigned. We shall prepare for the battle [9] at least as well as the previous commanders did and will leave no one any excuse to play the coward. Should anybody still choose that course he will get the punishment he deserves, while the noble will be honoured with the rewards that befit their good character.'

Such were the words of encouragement the Peloponnesian comman- 88 ders gave their troops. Meanwhile, Phormio too was apprehensive about the great agitation[2] in his own men, seeing them standing around in groups, alarmed by the sheer number of the enemy ships. He therefore wanted to call them together to give them fresh heart and encouragement in their present situation. In the past he had always impressed on their [2]

battle-field conditions, let alone been motivated by it. The awkwardness, which I have slightly smoothed, is well brought out in the more literal version Rusten gives (p. 231): 'nor is it right that resolution – when it is not utterly defeated, but still has the power to make some response – should be dulled by the outcome of the event, but to realise that men may fail through chance, yet it is by their resolve that the same men remain truly brave, and would not rightly turn into cowards on any occasion by claiming inexperience when courage is present'.

[1] There is a cluster of closely related 'courage' words in II 87.3–4. I have generally translated *tolma* here as 'physical courage', *andreia* as 'bravery' and *eupsuchia* as 'spirit' or 'heart', and (at 87.8) *agathoi* as 'noble' and *arete* as 'character'. It would be unwise to press these distinctions, however. See also *andragathia* 'manly courage' (II 42.3 and glossary).

[2] *Orrodia*, a rare word in prose, and a dramatic one, repeated at 89.1. See under *phobos* in glossary.

minds when he spoke to them that there was no number of ships too great for them to face in battle; and the sailors had long since accepted this assessment of themselves – that as Athenians they did not give way before a mere mass of Peloponnesian ships, however large. But when [3] he saw them losing heart at what they saw before them he wanted to remind them of the reasons for their former confidence, and he called them together and spoke as follows.[1]

'Men, I see that you are frightened by the enemy's numbers, and so **89** I have called you together since I do not believe there are any terrors here worth this degree of agitation. In the first place, it is just because [2] you have beaten these men before and they do not think themselves our equals that they have assembled this large body of ships to outnumber us. Secondly, as to the belief on which they rely so heavily in making this move – that bravery is some special attribute of theirs, their only reason for that confidence comes from the general success they have through their experience in land warfare, and they think that will produce the same result for them in naval warfare too. But the advantage today will [3] by rights rest with us even if they do have the advantage on land, since they are not superior to us in terms of fighting spirit and each side is more confident in the element where it has the greater experience.

Moreover, the Spartans are commanding the others on account of their [4] own reputation[2] and are leading most of their allies into danger against their wishes, since after being beaten so decisively they would not have wanted to attempt a second sea battle. You therefore have no reason to [5] dread their confidence. On the contrary, you inspire a fear in them that is greater and more justified, both because you have already defeated them and because they think you would not be opposing them unless you expected to achieve an equally decisive result now. Most opponents, like [6] these, rely more on physical strength than on resolve when they move to the attack; by contrast, those who have far fewer resources and are under no external compulsion to fight, must have great strength of purpose to stand up to them. And when your enemies try to analyse this they come to fear us more because of our paradoxical character than because of any proportionate resources on our side. Many an army before now has fallen [7]

[1] A 'response' to the Spartan speech, as in the paired speeches in the debates in assembly; but of course in this case Phormio could not have actually listened to the previous speech, though he is made to respond directly to some of its arguments.

[2] The preposition *dia* can imply consequence or purpose ('as a result of' or 'in order to promote') and perhaps both are meant here.

to a smaller force through lack of experience, and some also from a lack of courage, but in the present situation we lack neither.

As for the battle, I shall not want to contest it in the gulf if I can help it, [8] nor shall I sail into it. I am aware that a confined space is not an advantage for a force consisting of few experienced and fast ships that is taking on a larger but untrained force. No one could make a ramming charge without a clear view of the enemy from a distance, nor could you retreat under pressure when necessary. There can be no breakthrough manoeuvres or sharp turns,[1] which are the speciality of faster ships, but the sea battle would necessarily be converted into a land battle and in that situation the larger force prevails. I shall therefore do my best to keep all this in mind [9] beforehand. For your part, you must stay in good order close to your ships and respond smartly to the word of command, especially since the two fleets are moored not far apart; and when the action starts, pay particular attention to maintaining discipline and silence,[2] which are advantages in warfare generally and especially at sea; and repel this enemy in a manner worthy of your past exploits. This is a momentous contest for you: either [10] you shatter the hopes the Peloponnesians have in their fleet or you bring closer to home the Athenian nightmare of losing control of the sea. Once [11] again I remind you that you have defeated most of these men already, and men who have been beaten find it hard to summon up a similar resolve when facing the same dangers a second time.'

Such were the words of encouragement from Phormio. The Pelopon- **90** nesians, finding that the Athenians were not sailing into the Gulf and the narrows to attack them but were wanting to draw them in against their will, set sail at dawn along their own shore, their ships drawn up in four columns, just as they had been when at anchor, with the right wing leading the way. On that wing they positioned their twenty fastest ships, [2] so that if Phormio concluded they were sailing to Naupactus and were to sail along the coast that way to defend it himself, the Athenians could not escape their attack by outrunning this wing but would be cut off by these ships. Just as they expected, Phormio became afraid for the safety of the place since it was now unguarded; and when he saw them setting out he embarked, unwillingly but in haste, and sailed along the coast, with Messenian infantry following along the shore in support. When the [4] Peloponnesians saw that the Athenians were skirting the coast in single

[1] *Diekploi* and *anastrophai* are the technical terms (see glossary).
[2] To hear orders and the paean. See Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, p. 76 n13.

file and were now inside the gulf and close to land, just where they wanted them, at a given signal they suddenly turned to face them in a line and charged the Athenians, each at top speed, hoping to cut them all off. The [5] eleven leading ships outran the Peloponnesian wing as it turned around and escaped to open water, but the Peloponnesians did catch the rest, driving them to shore as they tried to escape. They disabled the ships and killed all the Athenians who did not swim away from them. Some of [6] the ships they made fast to their own and towed away empty (though one they seized with its crew actually still aboard); others were rescued by the Messenians who dashed into the sea in their armour, boarded the ships to fight from the decks, and seized them even as they were being towed away.

In this engagement, then, the Peloponnesians were winning and they **91** put the Athenians' ships out of action; but the twenty ships from their right wing pursued the eleven Athenian ships that had escaped them seawards when they had wheeled around. All except one of these eluded the Peloponnesians and escaped to Naupactus, where they stationed themselves off the temple of Apollo, prows facing outwards and ready to defend themselves if the others rowed towards the shore to attack them. When the Peloponnesians subsequently arrived they were singing the [2] paean as they came, as if they were already victorious, and a single Leucadian ship that was far ahead of all the others was pursuing the one Athenian ship that had fallen behind. But a merchant ship happened to be moored in open water. The Athenian boat was the first to reach this, sailed round it and then rammed the pursuing Leucadian vessel amidships and sank it. At this unexpected and extraordinary feat there was [4] consternation in the Peloponnesian ranks. As the winning side, they were in any case pursuing the Athenians in some disorder and some of their ships had put down their oars and stopped moving, intending to await the main fleet – a bad mistake considering how close they were to the enemy anchorage; others had even run aground in the shallows through their unfamiliarity with the area.

When the Athenians saw what was happening they felt a surge of **92** confidence and at a single command charged the enemy with a shout. And the Peloponnesians – after the mistakes they had made and the state of disorder they had got into – resisted only a short time and then turned to make for Panormus, from where they had put to sea. The Athenians [2] gave pursuit, captured the six nearest ships and recovered the ships of theirs that the Peloponnesians had disabled close to shore at the beginning

of the battle and had taken into tow. Some of the men they killed, others they took prisoner. Timocrates the Spartan was on board the Leucadian [3] ship which went down near the merchant vessel. He committed suicide when the ship was sunk and his body was washed ashore in the harbour of Naupactus.

On their return the Athenians set up a trophy at the place from which [4] they had set out to win their victory. They also recovered all the bodies and the wreckage close to their shore and gave the enemy back those that belonged to them under truce. The Peloponnesians also set up a trophy, [5] as if they had won the victory, to mark the ships they had disabled by the shore; and the one ship they had taken they dedicated at Rhium in Achaea next to the trophy. After this, fearing the arrival of reinforcements [6] from Athens, all of them except the Leucadians set sail by night into the Gulf of Crisa and to Corinth. Meanwhile the twenty Athenian ships from Crete, which were supposed to have been with Phormio before the battle, arrived at Naupactus a little after this withdrawal of the Peloponnesian ships.

And so the summer ended.[1]

Winter [II 93–103]

Before disbanding the fleet, which had withdrawn to Corinth and the **93** Crisaean Gulf, Cnemus, Brasidas and the other Peloponnesian commanders were prompted by the Megarians as winter approached to plan an attack on the Peiraeus, the harbour of the Athenians. This was unguarded and open – quite reasonably so, given the great superiority their fleet gave the Athenians. The Peloponnesians decided that each sailor should take [2] with him his own oar, cushion and oar-loop and go on foot from Corinth to the coast on the Athenian side; they should then go quickly to Megara, launch from the docks at Nisaea the forty ships of theirs which happened to be there, and sail straight to Peiraeus. There was no fleet on guard [3] there at all, nor any expectation that the enemy would suddenly invade it in this way, since they would surely not dare to make such an open attack

[1] Gomme (II, pp. 233–7) raises the interesting question of why we hear so little more of Phormio (the only other references are at II 102.1, 103.1 and an indirect one at III 7.1), when he was clearly a popular Athenian hero whom Thucydides himself admired. But even a figure as important as Pericles can disappear from the narrative quite abruptly (see II 65.6n).

even if they had the time to plan it in advance; and, if they did intend that, their plans were bound to be detected beforehand anyway.

The Peloponnesians decided on this course and proceeded immedi- [4]
ately. Arriving by night they launched the ships from Nisaea and set sail – but not now to Peiraeus as planned, since they had become frightened of the dangers involved (and a wind is supposed to have held them up as well), but to the tip of Salamis facing Megara. There was a fort there and a detachment of three ships on guard to prevent anything sailing into or out of Megara. They attacked the fort, towed away the triremes empty and in a surprise attack set about devastating the rest of Salamis.

Meanwhile fire signals were flashed to Athens, and the consternation **94**
there was as great as any in the war. Those in the city thought the enemy had already sailed into the Peiraeus, while those in the Peiraeus thought Salamis had been taken and the Peloponnesians were on the point of sailing against them. Which is just what easily could have happened if they had kept their nerve and if a wind had not hampered them. But at [2]
daybreak the Athenians went to the rescue in full force. Heading for the Peiraeus they launched and embarked their ships there, hastily and with a great commotion, and sailed with the fleet to Salamis, while with their infantry they established a guard over the Peiraeus. The Peloponnesians [3]
had meanwhile overrun most of Salamis and had captured men and booty and the three ships from the fort at Boudorum; but when they saw relief forces on the way they hastily sailed back to Nisaea. They were also afraid about the state of their ships, which had been launched after a long period of disuse and were by no means watertight. After reaching Megara they returned again to Corinth on foot. When the Athenians [4]
found they were no longer at Salamis they too sailed back home, and after this experience they kept Peiraeus under better guard from now on, closing up the harbour and taking other precautions.

At about the same time, at the beginning of this winter, Sitalces the **95**[1]
Odrysian, son of Teres and king of the Thracians, mounted a campaign against Perdiccas, son of Alexander and king of the Macedonians, and also against the Chalcidians in Thrace. He wanted to make good two promises, enforcing one of them and fulfilling another. Perdiccas was the [2]
one who had made him a promise: it was made on condition that Sitalces would reconcile him with the Athenians when he was hard pressed at the

[1] This strand of the narrative follows on from II 29 and 67 and becomes an extended digression on Thrace and its peoples, rather in the style of Herodotus and no doubt partly derived from him (see Cartledge, *The Greeks*, pp. 54–5).

Map 11. Sitalces' kingdom[1]

beginning of the war and that he would not restore Perdiccas' brother Philip (who was an enemy of his) and make him king. But Perdiccas did not keep his side of this bargain.[2] The promise Sitalces himself had made was to the Athenians, an agreement when he entered into an alliance with them that he would put an end to the war with the Chalcideans in Thrace. So Sitalces had both promises in mind in making this invasion. He took with him Amyntas son of Philip, intending to make him king of

[1] Based on J. S. Rusten's edition of *The Peloponnesian War, Book II* (Cambridge University Press 1989), p. 241.

[2] We are not told what Perdiccas had promised to do but his reneging on it is entirely in keeping with his earlier form (see note to I 56.2), though it should be noted that this episode ends with Perdiccas *keeping* a promise, which Thucydides remarks on (101.6).

Macedonia, some Athenian envoys who were conveniently visiting him for this purpose and Hagnon as leader, the understanding being that the Athenians would come to support him against the Chalcidians with a fleet and with as large an army as they could manage.

96 Starting first with the Odrysians, then, Sitalces called to arms all the Thracians he ruled from the Haemus and the Rhodope mountains down to the sea, as far as the shores of the Euxine and the Hellespont; then beyond Haemus, the Getae and all the other peoples dwelling south of the Istrus river and towards the Euxine sea.[1] These people and the Getae are neighbours of the Scythians and equip themselves for war in a similar way, all of them being mounted archers. He also called on many [2] of the mountain tribes of Thracians who are independent. These are the swordsmen called Dians, most of whom inhabit Rhodope, some of them coming as mercenaries and some as volunteers. He also called on the [3] Agrianians and Laeaeans and all the other Paeonian tribes he ruled. These are the most distant peoples in his empire. It extends on that side as far as the Laeaean Paeonians and the Strymon river, which runs from Mount Scambrus through the land of the Agrianians and Laeaeans, its boundary set there by the Paeonians who are from that point on independent. On the [4] other side towards the Triballi, who are also independent, the boundary is formed by the Treres and Tilataeans, who live to the north of Mount Scambrus and reach to the west as far as the Oscius river which flows from the same mountain as the Nestus and Hebrus, a huge and uninhabited range extending beyond Rhodope.

97 In size, the empire of the Odrysians extended along the sea-coast from the city of Abdera to the Euxine Sea as far up as the Istrus river. That represents a coastal voyage, at its shortest and if the wind stays steady astern, of four days and as many nights for a merchant vessel. By land, taking the shortest route from Abdera to the Istrus a man travelling light could do it in eleven days. This was the length of its coastline; travelling [2] inland, from Byzantium to the Laeaeans and the Strymon river (the furthest point the empire inland went from the sea) it would take the same man thirteen days to complete the journey.

[3] Tribute came in from all the barbarian territories and from all the Greek cities in their empire at the time of Seuthes (who was king after Sitalces and got the tribute up to its highest level). The total value was

[1] The Istrus is the Danube and the Euxine is the Black Sea.

about 400 talents of silver coin, paid in both gold and silver; and gifts of gold and silver of equal value were also contributed, quite apart from all the plain and embroidered fabrics and other domestic items – and these were presented not just to the king but also to the Odrysian princes and noblemen. The established custom was therefore the opposite to [4] that obtaining in the Persian kingdom, namely that of taking rather than giving, so that it was considered more shaming not to give when asked than to ask and not receive.[1] The other Thracians shared this tradition, but the Odrysians took it furthest because of their power, and made it impossible to achieve anything without giving gifts. Consequently, the kingdom advanced to a position of great strength.

Of all the kingdoms in Europe between the Ionian Gulf and the Euxine [5] Sea this was the greatest in term of its revenues and its general prosperity, though in terms of its fighting strength and the size of its army it came a long way second after that of the Scythians. In comparison with that [6] kingdom not only could none in Europe rival it but not even in Asia is there a single people, measured one against one, that could stand up to the Scythians if they acted as a united people. Not that they are comparable with others in terms of good sense and intelligence as regards the better things of life.[2]

Such was the size of the territory Sitalces ruled over at the time when **98** he was preparing his army.

When everything was ready he set off for Macedonia, travelling first through his own territory then through the uninhabited mountain range of Cercina, which is on the border between the Sinti and Paeonians. He passed over that using a track he had himself cleared through the forests earlier when he fought a campaign against the Paeonians. As he crossed [2] over the mountain, leaving behind the kingdom of the Odrysians, they had the Paeonians on their right and the Sintians and Maedi on their left; and after traversing this they came to Doberus in Paeonia. On this journey [3] his army suffered no losses, except a few through illness, but was actually augmented. For many of the independent Thracians joined the army unbidden in the hope of plunder, so that the total number is reported to have been not less than 150,000. The greater part of these were infantry [4]

[1] The generosity of the Persian kings was legendary (see, for example, Xenophon, *Cyrus* 8.2.7), but the distinction seems an unreal one. Both were gift-cultures.

[2] Literally, 'the things present for life'. It is not clear if this is just a statement about material needs or a sneer about the Scythian lack of 'civilised values'.

and about a third cavalry. The Odysians themselves supplied most of the cavalry, and after them the Getae. Of the infantry, the fiercest fighting forces were the independent tribes of swordsmen who came down from Rhodope, while the rest of the mixed mob that followed behind was terrifying mostly because of their sheer numbers.

99 So this army was being mustered at Doberus and was preparing to descend from the heights to invade Lower Macedonia, where Perdiccas ruled. [2] Included among the Macedonians are the Lyncestians, Elmiotes and other tribes in the interior that are allied to these Lower Macedonians and subject to them, [3] though they have their own kingships. What is now the coastal part of Macedonia was first acquired by Alexander, father of Perdiccas, and his ancestors, who were originally Temenids from Argos. They established their kingdoms after fighting and driving from Pieria the Pierians, who later settled Phargres and other places below Pangaeus beyond the Strymon (where to this day the land below Pangaeus facing towards the sea is called the Pierian Gulf). They also drove from the place called Bottia the Bottiaeans, who now live on the borders of the Chalcidians. [4] In addition they acquired a narrow strip of Paeonia, which stretched along the Axius river from the interior down to Pella and the sea; and beyond the Axius as far as the Strymon they occupied the place called Mygdonia after driving out the Edonians. [5] They drove out the Eordians from the place now called Eordia and most of them were killed, but a remnant settled in the neighbourhood of Physca; and they drove the Almopians from Almopia. [6] These Macedonians also conquered other peoples whose land they still hold today – Anthemus, Grestonia and Bisaltia as well as much of Macedonia itself. The whole territory is now called Macedonia and Perdiccas son of Alexander was its king when Sitalces made his invasion.

100 These Macedonians were unable to withstand the invasion of so large a force and they took shelter in such strongholds and fortified positions as there were in the country. [2] These were then fewer in number; but later when Archelaus son of Perdiccas became king he constructed those that are now in the country, cut straight roads and generally organised the country for war with the provision of horses, arms and other military equipment surpassing that of all the eight previous kings.[1] [3] The Thracian

[1] Archelaus succeeded Perdiccas in 413 and died in 399, so if this is a posthumous 'obituary' judgement it would represent a very late addition to Thucydides' text.

army left Doberus and first invaded the former empire of Philip. They took Eidomene by force, and Gortynia, Atalante and some other places by negotiation, since these came over to them as a consequence of their friendship with Amyntas son of Philip who was accompanying them. They also besieged Europus but were unable to take it. The army then [4] advanced into the rest of Macedonia that lies on the left of Pella and Cyrrhus. They did not penetrate beyond these into Bottia and Pieria but laid waste Mygdonia, Grestonia and Anthemus. The Macedonians had [5] no intention at all of resisting them with their infantry, but they did send for more cavalry from their allies inland and, though few against many, launched attacks on the Thracian army whenever they saw an opportunity. When the Macedonians charged in like this no one could withstand them, being such good horsemen and also well equipped with breast-plates; but when they were surrounded by the sheer mass of the enemy they found themselves at risk from a force many times their own size and in the end they gave up, concluding that they lacked the manpower to defy these odds.

Sitalces started negotiations with Perdiccas about the objectives of **101** his expedition, and since the Athenians did not arrive with their fleet – not believing that Sitalces would come, though they sent him gifts and envoys – he also dispatched part of his army against the Chalcidians and Bottiaeans and keeping them pinned behind their walls wasted their land. While he stayed around in this area those living to the south – [2] the Thessalians, Magnesians and the other subjects of the Thessalians, and the Greeks as far south as Thermopylae – became afraid that his army might proceed against them too and began making preparations. The same fear was felt by the Thracians to the north, who occupy the [3] plains beyond the Strymon – the Panaeans, Odomantians, Droans and Dersaeans, all of them independent tribes. He even caused talk among the [4] Greeks hostile to Athens that his Thracians might be brought in by the Athenians (in line with their alliance with him) and would move against them as well. Sitalces meanwhile was despoiling Chalcidice, Bottice and [5] Macedonia as he overran them, but since none of his original objectives was being realised and the army was lacking food and was suffering in the winter weather, he was prevailed on by Seuthes son of Sparadocus, his nephew and second only to him in power, to withdraw with all speed. Seuthes had been secretly won over by Perdiccas, who had promised him his sister in marriage along with a settlement. Sitalces was persuaded and [6] after staying thirty days in all, eight of them among the Chalcidians, he

quickly returned home with his army. And Perdiccas did afterwards give his sister Stratonice to Seuthes, just as he had promised.

These, then, were the events of the expedition of Sitalces.

During the same winter, after the Peloponnesian fleet had dispersed, **102** the Athenians in Naupactus set off on a campaign under the command of Phormio. They sailed along the coast towards Astracus, made a landing and marched into the interior of Acarnania with 400 Athenian hoplites drawn from those on the ships and with 400 Messenians. They then expelled from Stratus, Coronta and other places various men thought to be unreliable and after restoring Cynes son of Theolytus to Coronta they returned to the ships. It seemed impracticable in winter to mount a [2] campaign against the inhabitants of Oeniadae, who were the only people in Acarnania to have been persistently hostile to them over a long period. The River Achelous, rising in Mount Pindus, flows through Dolopia, the Agraean and Amphilochian territories and the Acarnanian plain, passes by the city of Stratus further upstream and issues into the sea near Oeniadae, where it surrounds the city with a lake and so makes military operations impossible in winter because of the water. And most of the Echinades [3] islands lie opposite Oeniadae, right by the mouth of the Achelous, so that this large river is constantly building up deposits of silt there; some of the islands are already joined to the mainland and there is reason to expect that the same thing will happen to all of them before too long. The current is strong, deep and turbid, and the islands are closely packed [4] together and serve to trap the silt, which cannot disperse, lying as they do in an irregular pattern and not in rows so that they do not offer the water a straight channel into the sea.

The islands are deserted and quite small. And there is a story that when [5] Alcmaeon son of Amphiaraus was wandering in exile after the murder of his mother, Apollo told him in an oracle to live in this land. He intimated that Alcmaeon would have no release from his terrors until he found a place that at the time he killed his mother had not yet seen the sun and was not even land then, since he had polluted all the other land. Alcmaeon [6] was at his wits' end, as the story goes, but at last noticed this sandbank of the Achelous and thought that sufficient land to support life had been deposited there since he had begun his long wanderings after killing his mother. And so he settled there near Oeniadae, established a seat of power and bequeathed the country its name after his son Acarnan. Such is the traditional story handed down about Alcmaeon.

Phormio and the Athenians set off from Acarnania and reached Nau- **103**
pactus. At the beginning of spring they sailed back to Athens, taking with them the ships they had captured and the free men from among the prisoners they had taken in the sea battle, who were then exchanged man for man.

So this winter ended and with it the third year of the war Thucydides [2]
wrote.

[BOOK III]

Fourth year of the war, 428–27 [III 1–25]

Summer [III 1–18]

The following summer, just when the corn was ripening,[1] the Peloponnesians and their allies invaded Attica under the command of Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus and king of the Spartans.[2] They established a base there and started wasting the land. As usual, the Athenian cavalry launched assaults against them whenever the opportunity arose and so prevented the main body of their light-armed troops from leaving the safety of their camp and causing damage in the areas near the city. The Spartans remained there as long as their provisions lasted, then withdrew and dispersed to their various cities. 1 [2] [3]

Immediately after the Peloponnesian invasion all Lesbos, except Methymna, revolted from Athens. They had been wanting to do that before the war began, but the Spartans were not then willing to receive them as allies. Now, however, they were forced to stage their revolt before they intended. They were still waiting to complete the blockage of the harbour, the construction of the walls and the building of ships, as well as for 2 [2]

[1] That is, about the middle of May – the usual, almost formulaic description of the timing of these annual invasions (see II 19.1 etc.).

[2] The last reference to Archidamus. As Hornblower points out (II, p. 381), it is perhaps surprising that there is no kind of 'obituary' later on to mark his death, given his important role in the early stages of the war (but see also II 65.6n on Pericles and II 93.6n on Phormio).

the arrival of everything they needed from the Black Sea – archers, grain
and the other things they had requisitioned. Meanwhile, the Tenedians [3]
(who were on bad terms with the Lesbians), the Methymnians and some
of the Mytilenaeans themselves, who as representatives of the Athenians
had their personal reasons for opposition, were collaborating as informers.
They told the Athenians that the Mytilenaeans were forcibly centralising
the political control of Lesbos in Mytilene; that they had revolt in mind
and were pressing ahead with all their preparations in concert with the
Spartans and the Boeotians, their own kinsmen; and that if no one acted
now to stop them the Athenians would lose Lesbos.

The Athenians, however, were at this time suffering from the effects 3
of the plague and from the full force of the war that was now under way.[1]
They therefore thought it would be a serious matter if they added Lesbos
to their list of enemies, with its fleet and its power intact, and they did not
at first listen to the accusations made but preferred to believe that they
were untrue. However, when the envoys they sent could not persuade
the Mytilenaeans to abandon their programme of centralisation and their
preparations for war, they became alarmed and wanted to forestall them.
So they abruptly dispatched to Lesbos forty ships that had been made [2]
ready to sail around the Peloponnese, under the command of Cleïppides
son of Deinias and two other generals. They had had word that there [3]
was to be a festival of Apollo Maloeis[2] outside the city, which would be
celebrated by the whole populace, and that if they made haste they might
hope to catch them unawares in an attack. If that worked, well and good;
if not, they were to tell the Mytilenaeans to surrender their ships and
pull down their walls; and if they refused they were to declare war on
them.

So the ships set off. The Athenians also detained ten triremes belonging [4]
to the Mytilenaeans which happened to be present at Athens serving with
the fleet in accordance with the terms of their alliance, and they placed
their crews under arrest. But the Mytilenaeans got word of this expedition. [5]
A man crossed over from Athens to Euboea, went from there on foot to
Geraestus, came across a merchant ship that was putting out to sea and
with the benefit of a fair wind reached Mytilene with the news on the

[1] The sense can scarcely be 'the war that had just started', as a very literal translation might go, since it is now in its fourth year.

[2] Gods were worshipped in particular aspects at different times and places (see I 13.6, II 15.3 and note on deities, pp. liv–lvi). For the possible etymology of Maloeis see Hornblower I, p. 385. Blanco confidently translates as 'Apollo of the Apple Country'.

third day after leaving Athens. The Mytilenaeans therefore did not go out [6]
to the temple of Apollo Maloeis. Instead they barricaded the unfinished
parts of the walls and harbours and mounted guard.

The Athenians sailed in a little later and when they saw the situa- **4**
tion the generals delivered their message as instructed and then, since
the Mytilenaeans did not comply, opened hostilities. The Mytilenaeans, [2]
caught unprepared and finding themselves suddenly forced into war,
made some show of sending ships out to fight a battle just outside the
harbour, but when they were chased back by the Athenian ships they
straightaway began negotiating with the Athenian generals to see if they
could get reasonable terms on which the Athenian ships might be recalled.
The Athenian generals were responsive to this, fearing for their part that [3]
they were not strong enough to take on the whole of Lesbos in a war. A [4]
truce was agreed and the Mytilenaeans sent to Athens one of the orig-
inal informers (who had now repented his action) and some others, to
see if they could persuade the Athenians to withdraw the ships on the
understanding that they were not planning to start some new trouble.[1]
Meanwhile, however, they also sent envoys to Sparta by trireme, eluding [5]
the fleet which was stationed at Malea to the north of the city, since
they had no confidence in getting a positive response from the Athenians.
After a difficult journey to Sparta across the open sea these envoys nego- [6]
tiated with the Spartans to send some sort of help. But when the other **5**
envoys returned empty-handed from Athens the Mytilenaeans went to
war, joined by the rest of Lesbos with the exception of the Methymni-
ans, who had come to support the Athenians, as had the Imbrians and
Lemnians and a few other Athenian allies.

The Mytilenaeans made a full-scale sortie against the Athenian camp [2]
and a battle ensued in which the Mytilenaeans gained some advantage, but
they did not have the confidence to encamp there and instead withdrew.
They then kept quiet, reluctant to take any risks unless further help
were forthcoming from the Peloponnese in the form of fresh resources.
For they were now visited by Meleas, a Laconian, and Hermaeondas, a
Theban, who had actually been sent out to them before the revolt but
had not been able to get there in advance of the Athenian expeditionary
force; later on after the battle their trireme did sail in secretly and they

[1] The verb is *neoterizo* which literally means 'doing something new' and would perhaps be slightly over-translated here as 'revolting' or 'causing a revolution' (see I 115.2, II 11.1 and 82.1 below and glossary).

recommended that the Mytilenaeans send a second trireme and envoys back with them to Sparta, which they duly did.

Meanwhile the Athenians, much encouraged by this inactivity on the **6** part of the Mytilenaeans, summoned their allies, who came all the more quickly in the absence of any show of strength from the Lesbians. The Athenians sailed round to anchor to the south of the city and fortified two camps, one each side of the city; they also established blockades of both harbours. They thus prevented the Mytilenaeans from using the [2] sea, though for their part the Mytilenaeans and the other Lesbian forces who had now come to support them controlled the rest of the land. The Athenians just had the small strip of land round the camp and it was Malea that they tended to use as a station for their ships and as a source of supplies.

Such was the course of the war at Mytilene.

At about the same time in the course of this summer the Athenians also **7** sent thirty ships to the Peloponnese under the command of Asopius son of Phormio, the Acarnanians having specifically requested that they send as commander either a son or a relative of Phormio. These ships sailed down [2] the coast of Laconia ravaging the land as they went. Asopius then sent [3] most of the ships back home while he himself went with twelve ships to Naupactus. Later on, he mobilised the whole population of Acarnania and made an expedition against Oeniadae, sailing up by way of the Achelous while his army wasted the land. When they refused to submit, however, [4] he dismissed his infantry while he sailed to Leucas and made a landing at Nerica; but on his way back he was himself killed along with part of his army by the local people who had rallied in defence and by a few guards. The Athenians later sailed away and took back their dead under treaty [5] from the Leucadians.

Meanwhile, the Mytilenaean envoys who had been sent out on the first **8** ship were told by the Spartans to present themselves at Olympia in order that the other allies too could hear them and decide what to do. They came to Olympia – it was the Olympiad where Dorieus from Rhodes won his second victory – and when they held their conference after the festival they spoke as follows.[1]

[1] See Macleod (*Collected Essays*, pp. 88–92) on the tension between the moral and prudential arguments mounted by the Mytilenaeans against the Athenians. The speech is quite complex and the central sections (11 and 12) have an almost Shakespearean compression of thought at times. The appeal needs to be read together with the debate between Cleon and Diodotus at III 37–48.

'Spartans and allies of Sparta, we are well aware of the traditional 9
attitude of the Greeks towards those who secede[1] in time of war and
abandon their previous allegiance: those who accept them as allies are
pleased to welcome them to the extent that they may get some benefit
from it, but they think the worse of them for being traitors to their former
friends. Nor is this an unjust assessment, provided that those who secede [2]
and those from whom they separate share the same attitudes and loyalties
and are evenly matched in military resource and power, and provided
also that no reasonable excuse exists for making the break. That was not
the situation between ourselves and the Athenians, however, and no one
should think any the worse of us if after being honoured by them in time
of peace we seceded in time of danger.

We shall begin by addressing the issues of justice and honour. That 10
is our first task as we are the suitors for an alliance and we know that
neither friendships between individuals nor collaboration between states
can be in any way well-founded unless the relationship is based on an
assumption of good faith[2] on both sides and unless both have the same
general approach to life in other respects, since differences of attitude
lead to disagreements in conduct.

The alliance between us and the Athenians first came about when you [2]
withdrew from the Persian War while they stayed on to finish the work
that remained. However, we did not become allies of the Athenians for the [3]
enslavement of the Greeks, but we became allies of the Greeks for their
liberation from the Persians. As long as they exercised their leadership [4]
on a basis of equality we were very willing followers; but when we saw
them relaxing their efforts against the Persians and becoming bent on
the subjection of their allies we began to lose confidence. And the allies, [5]
unable to unite and defend themselves because of the large number of
voting states, were indeed all made subjects, apart from ourselves and the
Chians; and we Mytilenaeans did join in their campaigns, "independent"
as we were and "free"[3] at least in name. With these precedents in mind, [6]

[1] I translate *aphistamai* as 'secede' or 'break away from' in this speech rather than as the stronger 'rebel' or 'revolt' since the Mytilenaeans had seen the relationship with Athens more as one between equal allies. See Gomme II, p. 261.

[2] Literally 'unless they present themselves to each other with seeming virtue (*dokouses aretes*)'. The 'seeming' has been variously translated with such different meanings as 'apparent' and 'evident', but I think that in context it must mean 'believed in' (by both sides).

[3] *Autonomos* (independent) and *eleutheros* (free): for their conjunction elsewhere see III 39.2/39.7 and 46.5–6, and more generally the glossary.

however, we no longer thought of the Athenians as trusted leaders, since it seemed unlikely that men who had subjugated our fellow allies, protected though we all were by treaty, would not deal with the rest of us the same way if they ever had the power to do so.

11 If we had all of us remained independent we would have felt more assurance that they would do nothing to force a change in the relationship; but when they had most of the cities under their control, while continuing to treat us as equal partners, they were naturally going to find it a difficult contrast that while the majority had already submitted we alone were continuing to assert our equality, especially given the rate at which they were growing more powerful and we were becoming more isolated. Equivalence in the balance of fear is the only basis for trust in [2] an alliance; for then the party that wants to break faith in some way is deterred from doing so by not having the advantage for any aggression.

We were left independent only because they felt their imperial ambi- [3] tions were better served by clever rhetoric and diplomatic pressure rather than brute force.[1] On the one hand, they could make the case that those [4] who enjoyed an equal vote would not willingly join them in a campaign unless those under attack had done some wrong; at the same time, they led a combination of the strongest states against the weakest first, and left the strongest till last when they could expect to find them weakened with the other support stripped away. If they had begun with us, at a [5] time when the whole body of allies still had their own power intact and also had something to rally round, they would not have gained control so easily.[2] Besides, our navy also gave them cause for alarm, lest it should be [6] combined and united either with yours or someone else's and so pose a threat to them. To some extent also we survived by keeping well in with [7] the Athenian public and the political leaders of the day. We would not, [8] however, have expected to last very long if this war had not broken out, judging by the example of their treatment of others.

12 Was this, then, the kind of friendship or freedom we could both put our trust in, when we were insincere in our mutual embrace? They paid court to us in time of war out of fear, as we did to them for just the same reasons in time of peace; and so the trust that in other cases good will

[1] Literally, 'by speciousness of word (*logos*) and an assault of mind/policy (*gnome*) rather than of force (*ischus*)'.

[2] An unconvincing argument, and a disingenuous one, which ignores the Samian revolt of 440 BC (which Chios and Lesbos helped Athens suppress: I 115–16) and the case of Chios (not disciplined until 425: IV 51). See Hornblower I, pp. 395–6.

secures in our case depended on fear, and we were constrained to remain allies more by fear than friendship; whichever of us was first emboldened by a sense of security was also going to be the first to transgress in some way. Someone might think that just because of the delay on their part [2] in realising our fears we are wrong to make the first move and break away, instead of waiting to be quite sure on our side that something of this kind was going to happen. But that would be a failure to understand the situation properly. If we had the power to retaliate on equal terms [3] and choose either to take the offensive or bide our time, then by the same token we should have no need to make a move against them? But since the power of attack is always in their hands the right of pre-emptive defence must always be in ours.[1]

These then, men of Sparta and allies of Sparta, were the reasons and 13 causes[2] behind our secession. They are clear enough to convince any audience that we acted justifiably, and they are sufficient to alarm us and make us reach for some form of security. We wanted to do this long ago when you were still at peace and we made an official approach to you about breaking with the Athenians, but we were blocked because you would not receive our overtures; now, however, when the Boeotians[3] invited us we came at once and decided on a double secession: from the Greeks,[4] to avoid joining the Athenians in harming them instead of joining in their liberation, and from the Athenians, to take the initiative and avoid being ourselves later on destroyed by them.

Our secession has, however, happened suddenly and without due [2] preparation, which is all the more reason to accept us as allies and send us help quickly, so that you are seen to be both defending those who need your defence and at the same time harming your enemies. This is an [3] opportunity as never before. The Athenians have been crippled by plague and by their expenditures. As for their ships, some are around your coast and others are arrayed against us, so they are unlikely to have any ships in [4] reserve if you invade them for a second time this summer, both by land and sea. On the contrary, either they will be unable to resist your fleet or they will withdraw from both your waters and ours.

[1] The text is disputed here, mainly because the thought has seemed obscure, but the sentence as I have translated it (see appendix 1, p. 583) seems to me an intelligible version of standard deterrence theory.

[2] *Prophaseis* and *aitiai*. See I 23.6 (where the distinction is more important) and glossary.

[3] The role of the Boeotians was not mentioned at III 8.1 but is perhaps implied by III 2.3.

[4] That is, the Delian confederacy.

No one should suppose that you will be risking danger of your own [5]
for the sake of some foreign country. Lesbos may seem to be far away,
but the benefit she will bring is very close at hand. The war will not be
decided in Attica, as you might suppose, but in the territory from which
Attica gets her support. Athens' revenue comes from her allies and it [6]
will be increased further if they overcome us; for no one else will then
secede and there will be the additional income from us; moreover, we
would be treated more severely by the Athenians than those who were
made subjects at an earlier stage. If on the other hand you commit to [7]
our support you will be adding to your side a city with a large navy –
something you badly need; you will more easily overturn the power of
Athens by stealing away her allies – since every one of them will then feel
braver in coming over to you; and you will rid yourselves of the charge
you have been labouring under of not helping those who rebel. But if you
are instead seen to be liberators you will greatly strengthen your position
in the war.

Please, therefore, respect the hopes which the Greeks place in you **14**
and respect Zeus[1] the Olympian, in whose sanctuary we are in effect
suppliants. Make the Mytilenaeans your allies and defend them. Do not
abandon us, when we have staked our own lives on this and embraced the
dangers. If we succeed we will confer a general benefit on all – but the
harm done will be even more generally shared if you are not persuaded
and we fail. Prove yourselves the men the Greeks believe you to be and [2]
the men we in our fear want you to become.'

Such was the Mytilenaeans' speech. When the Spartans and their allies **15**
had heard them out they accepted their arguments and made the Lesbians
their allies. The Spartans then instructed the allies present to prepare for
the invasion of Attica and told them to go immediately to the Isthmus
with the quota of two-thirds of their forces. They themselves got there
first and proceeded to construct slipways for the ships at the Isthmus to
drag them from the Corinthian side to the sea on the Athenian side, in
readiness for a simultaneous assault by land and sea. The Spartans set to [2]
with a will, but the rest of the allies were slow to assemble, being occupied
with their harvesting and in no mood for campaigning.

The Athenians saw that these preparations were based on a perception **16**
of their vulnerability. They therefore wanted to demonstrate that this

[1] Zeus is invoked here both as 'Olympian' and as protector of suppliants. The Mytilenaeans' speech exploits throughout the Panhellenic context of the games.

was ill founded and that without moving their fleet at Lesbos they were quite capable of resisting the invading force from the Peloponnese. They manned a hundred ships, both with their own citizens (excluding only cavalrymen and the five-hundred-bushel men[1]) and with metics, and sailed out to make a show of force around the Isthmus, landing at will anywhere on the Peloponnese they chose. When the Spartans observed [2] this they concluded that they had made a serious miscalculation and that what the Lesbians had said must be untrue. Considering the situation hopeless, since not only had their allies still failed to join them but news also came that the thirty[2] ships of the Athenians were sailing round the Peloponnese and ravaging the country districts, they sailed back home. (At a later date they did prepare a fleet to send to Lesbos and instructed the [3] allied cities to raise a force of forty ships, appointing Alcidas as admiral to sail with the fleet.) The Athenians also returned home with their hundred [4] ships when they saw them departing.

[At the time when these ships were deployed the Athenians possessed **17** about the largest fleet of high-quality ships she had ever had in active service, though there were as many if not more at the beginning of the war.[3] There were a hundred guarding Attica, Euboea and Salamis, and [2] another hundred around the Peloponnese, in addition to those at Potidaea and elsewhere, making a grand total of 250 available together in a single summer. It was this, along with Potidaea, that so exhausted her resources: [3] for in the siege of Potidaea each of the hoplites was paid two drachmai a [4] day (one for himself and one for his attendant), and there were 3,000 of these at the outset, with the numbers remaining at this level throughout the siege, in addition to the 1,600 with Phormio who left before the siege was over; and the ship's crews were all paid at the same rate. It was in this way, then, that the resources were so drained at first, and this was the largest number of ships ever manned by them.]

At the same time as the Spartans were at the Isthmus, the Mytile- **18** naeans together with their auxiliaries launched a campaign by land against

[1] The *pentakosiomedimnoi* were the wealthiest class, the top of the four old census-classes established by Solon; the *hippeis* (cavalrymen) were the second wealthiest and the two lower classes were the *zeugitai* ('yoke-men', that is, able to keep a team of oxen) and the *thetes* (VI 43.1).

[2] This may be a mistranscription for 'a hundred' (16.1 above), but see Hornblower I, p. 400.

[3] Some scholars suspect chapter 17 is misplaced here or possibly even interpolated by some later editor, since the numbers and dates are hard to reconcile with other references. See Gomme II, pp. 272–7 and Hornblower I, pp. 400–1.

Methymna, expecting its surrender. They attacked the city, but when they did not meet with the success they imagined they withdrew to Antissa, Pyrrha and Eresus, increased the security in these places and strengthened their walls, then quickly went home. As soon as they had withdrawn [2] the Methymnians moved against Antissa; but the Antissans and their auxiliaries made a sortie against them and the Methymnians were beaten back – many were killed, and the rest quickly retreated. When the Athe- [3] nians learned this news, that the Mytilenaeans were in control of the land and that their own forces were inadequate to contain them, they sent out Paches son of Epicurus at about the beginning of autumn with 1,000 of their hoplites under his command. The hoplites rowed themselves there[1] [4] and when they reached Mytilene they encircled it with a single wall right round the city, constructing forts at some of the strongest points. Mytilene was now forcibly cut off on all sides, by land and sea alike, and [5] winter was approaching.

Winter [III 19–25]

The Athenians needed more money for this siege, even though they had **19** for the first time raised among themselves a levy of 200 talents, so they also sent twelve ships to the allies to collect money from them, under the command of Lysicles and four others. He sailed round collecting money [2] from various places and then went inland from Myus in Caria across the plain of the Maeander as far as the hill of Sandius. There Lysicles was set upon by the Carians and Anaeans and was himself killed in the attacks along with many of his men.

In the course of the same winter the Plataeans, who were still being **20**[2] besieged by the Peloponnesians and the Boeotians, were starting to suffer from shortages of food. There was no hope of help from the Athenians, nor any prospect of salvation from elsewhere, so they made their own plans together with those Athenians who were caught up in the siege with them. The first idea was that they should all leave the city and go over the enemy's walls, if they could force their way out. The authors of that initiative were Theaenetus son of Tolmides, a soothsayer, and Eupompides son of Daimachus, one of the generals. But then half of [2]

[1] That is, instead of being passengers on the upper decks and rowed by *thetes* – a possible indication of overstretched Athenian manpower (see Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, p. 115).

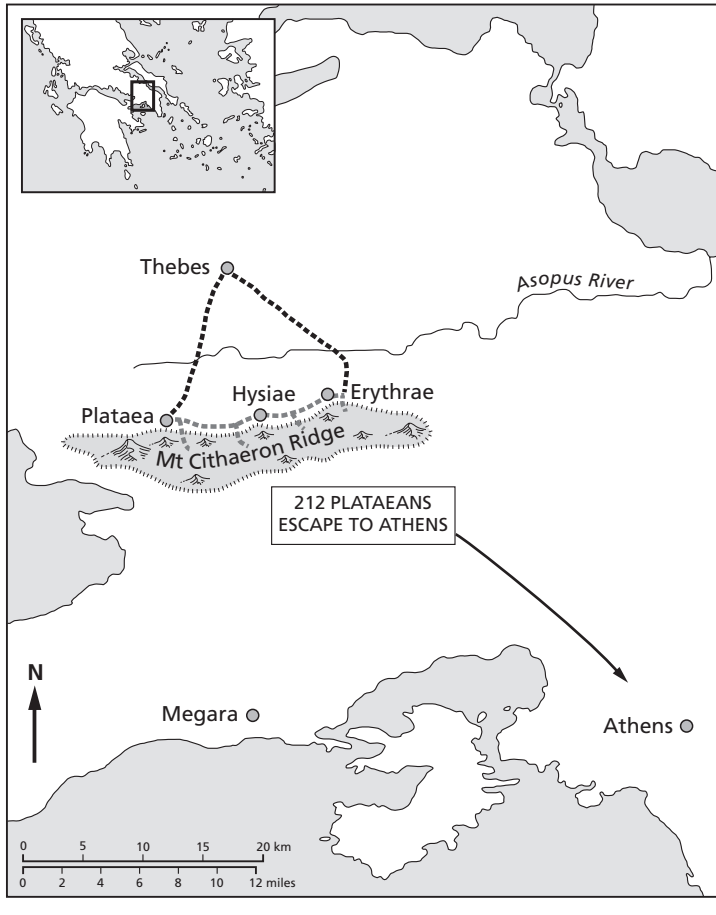
[2] The story of the siege of Plataea now resumes from II 78.

them backed off in one way or another, thinking the risk too great, and only some 120 men remained committed to making their escape, which they planned in the following way. They constructed ladders equal in [3] height to the enemy wall, measuring its length by the courses of bricks in places where the wall had not been fully plastered on their side. Many of them counted these at the same time, and though some were always going to make mistakes most hit on the correct number, especially since they counted them several times from fairly close up and the wall was clearly visible at the point they wanted. So they calculated the length of [4] the ladders this way, estimating the measurement from the thickness of the bricks.

21 The Peloponnesian wall was constructed in the following way. It had two encircling lines, one directed against the Plataeans and one to guard against an Athenian attack from the outside; and these circuits were about sixteen feet apart. The area between the walls was constructed to provide [2] living quarters that were distributed among the guards, and it was joined up so that the whole thing looked like one thick wall with battlements on both sides. At intervals of ten battlements there were tall towers the [3] same width as the wall, which themselves extended from the inner to the outer edges so that there was no way round the towers but one had to pass through the middle of them. On nights when it was wet and stormy, [4] therefore, the guards left the battlements and kept watch from the towers, which were close together and roofed over. Such, then, was the structure of the wall by which the Plataeans were blockaded.

22 When their preparations were complete they waited for a wet and stormy night with wind and no moon and then went forth, led by the same men who had planned the escape attempt. They first crossed the ditch surrounding the town, then came up to the enemy wall unobserved by the guards, who could neither see them in the dark nor hear them in the gusts of wind which drowned the sound of their approach. They were [2] also well spaced out in order to stop their weapons knocking together and giving them away. They were lightly armed and wore shoes only on their left feet to give them a secure footing in the mud.[1] They made [3] for the battlements in the spaces between the towers, knowing that these were unguarded. First came the men carrying the ladders which they set against the wall; then twelve men lightly armed with daggers and a

[1] Some scholars have seen this as a case of the religious phenomenon of 'monosandalism' (see Hornblower for various – mainly French – references). Thucydides evidently prefers a more practical explanation.



Map 12. Plataea, the breakout (428/7)[1]

corselet[2] climbed up, led by Ammeas son of Coroilus who was first to ascend; then after him his followers went up, six of them against each

[1] Based on the descriptions in W. K. Pritchett, 'New Light on Plataea', *AJA* (1957), pp. 9–18 and plate 7 in his *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* (University of California Press, 1965) I, pp. 103–21, which refer back to N. G. L. Hammond, A *History of Greece to 322 BC* (Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 247 (map). See also Herodotus IX 39. The location of the pass of Dryoscephalae (III 24.1) is uncertain (see further references in Hornblower I, p. 408).

[2] Minimal body-armour, maybe of leather or linen rather than metal.

of the adjoining towers. After them came more lightly armed men with spears, while another group carried these men's shields to help them climb up more easily and were ready to hand these over to them as they got close to the enemy. When a good number of them had reached the [4] top, the guards in the towers became aware of them because one of the Plataeans in grabbing at the battlements dislodged a tile, which fell to the ground with a loud noise. Immediately a shout went up and the soldiers [5] rushed to the walls. They didn't know what the trouble was – since it was a dark and stormy night – and at the same time the Plataeans who had been left behind in the city sallied out and attacked the Peloponnesian wall away from where their men were crossing to divert attention from them. The guards were therefore confused and held their ground – no one [6] dared to leave his station to lend help but they were at a loss to imagine what could be going on. Moreover, their force of three hundred men, [7] whose instructions were to give support where needed, made off outside the wall in the direction of the shouting, and warning fires to signal enemy danger were directed towards Thebes. But the Plataeans from the city lit [8] from their wall many answering beacons they had prepared beforehand specifically to give the enemy confusing signals and stop them coming to help by making them misinterpret the situation, thereby giving the men getting out time to make their escape and reach safety.

Meanwhile, the Plataeans were making progress in getting across. The **23** leading party climbed up, killed the guards and took possession of each of the two towers, from where they could themselves guard against anyone passing through the towers to bring help. They set ladders against the towers from the top of wall and sent more men up there. Some of the Plataeans kept the rescuing forces away from the towers by hurling missiles at them from above and below, while the main body of them were at the same time setting up lots of ladders, pushing away the battlements and climbing over the section between the towers. As each man got across he [2] took up position at the edge of the ditch and from there launched arrows and javelins against rescuers who tried to pass along the wall to interfere with their crossing. When everyone else had got across, the last of the [3] party made their way with some difficulty down from the towers and got to the ditch, at which moment the force of three hundred bore down on them carrying torches. The Plataeans standing on the edge of the ditch [4] saw them quite clearly and attacked their unprotected side, while they were themselves harder to see because of the torches the others carried, and so even the last of the Plataeans succeeded in crossing the ditch

without being caught, though only with difficulty and after a struggle. Ice had formed on the surface, not thick enough to enable one to walk [5] on it, but the slushy sort that you get from an east or north wind; and a night of snow brought on by just such a wind had left the ditch so full of water that they could scarcely keep their heads above it as they crossed. It was the severity of the weather, in fact, that was largely responsible for their escape.

When the Plataeans set out from the ditch they made their way in a **24** group along the road leading to Thebes, with the shrine of Androcrates on their right. They calculated that this was the last road anyone would expect them to take, leading as it did towards the enemy; and at the same time they saw the Peloponnesians setting out in pursuit of them with torches along the road to Cithaera and Dryoscephalae,[1] which is the one leading to Athens. For about three-quarters of a mile the Plataeans followed the [2] road leading to Thebes, then they turned off and took the mountain road to Erythrae and Hysia, and on reaching the mountains they escaped to Athens. Two hundred and twelve men made it out of the larger number starting, since a few had turned back to the city before crossing and one archer had been taken at the outer ditch. So the Peloponnesians gave [3] up the pursuit and returned to their positions. Meanwhile the Plataeans in the city, who had no idea what had happened but had heard from those turning back that no one had survived, sent out a herald at day break to make a truce to recover their dead, though when they learned the truth they stopped that.

Thus did the men of Plataea make their escape and were saved.[2]

Meanwhile, as the same winter was ending, a Spartan called Salaethus **25** was sent out from Sparta to Mytilene in a trireme. He sailed to Pyrrha, and going on from there by foot he went along the bed of a watercourse where it passed under the enclosing wall and so got undetected into Mytilene. He told the presiding officers[3] there that there was to be an invasion of Attica, that the forty ships due to come to their aid would now arrive,

[1] 'Oakheads'.

[2] The Plataea narrative is resumed at III 52. Thucydides' policy of structuring his history by relatively short divisions of summers and winters may have led him to break up the narrative this way in order to deal effectively with synchronous events in different places; but he might also have had other reasons of dramatic effect. See Dionysius' criticism at *De Thuc.* 9 (extract 13 in appendix 2, pp. 596–7) and Tim Rood's more subtle discussion in *Thucydides: narrative and explanation*, pp. 111–21. See also note on dates, pp. lviii–lix.

[3] *prohedroi*, a term only otherwise used at VIII 67.3 (with reference to Athens).

and that he himself had been sent to explain all this and to take charge generally. The Mytilenaeans were much encouraged and were now less [2] inclined to come to terms with the Athenians.

So ended this winter, and with it the fourth year of the war that Thucydides wrote.

Fifth year of the war, 427–26 [III 26–88]

Summer [III 26–86]

26 The following summer, after the Peloponnesians had dispatched the forty ships to Mytilene, appointing their admiral Alcidas to take command, they and their allies invaded Attica in order that the Athenians might be harassed by both land and sea and be less able to take action against the ships while they were en route to Mytilene. The leader of this invasion was [2] Cleomenes, acting on behalf of his nephew Pausanias son of Pleistoanax, who was king but still a minor. They wasted Attica, destroying anything [3] that had grown back in the parts previously flattened and anywhere else that had been passed over in the earlier invasions. Indeed from the point of view of the Athenians this was the most severe of all the invasions after the second one.[1] The Peloponnesians pressed on doing extensive [4] damage while all the time expecting to hear news from Lesbos of some accomplishment by their fleet, which they supposed must have made the crossing by then. But when none of their expectations were realised and their supplies of food had run out, they withdrew and went home to their various cities.

27 Meanwhile the Mytilenaeans were forced to come to terms with the Athenians. The promised ships had failed to arrive from the Peloponnese but were loitering en route, and their food supplies had also run out. The background was as follows. Salaethus had himself lost confidence [2]

[1] That is, the one in 430 (see II 57.2).

Map 13. Alcidas in Ionia (427)[1]

[1] Paches is described as pursuing Alcidas (at III 33.3) 'as far as the island of Patmos' so I have suggested a more southerly return route for Alcidas to make sense of this (though Alcidas is also described as leaving Ephesus for 'the open sea' (33.1), which could conceivably suggest a more northern one).

that the ships would come and therefore issued the populace, who had previously only had light arms, with full hoplite armour in order to prepare them for an attack on the Athenians. When they had got hold of [3] these arms, however, the people would no longer listen to their leaders but gathered in groups and told those in power to bring the food supplies out into the open and distribute them to everyone; otherwise, they said, they would make their own agreements with the Athenians and surrender the city to them. The authorities realised that they were not in a position to **28** prevent this and saw the dangers of being excluded from any agreement. They therefore joined them in making an agreement with Paches and his army, to this effect: the Athenians would be able to make whatever resolution they chose about the fate of the Mytilenaeans, and the army would be allowed to enter the city; the Mytilenaeans for their part could send an embassy to Athens to represent themselves there; and until that returned Paches would not imprison, enslave or execute any Mytilenaean. That was the agreement, but those of the Mytilenaeans who had been [2] most involved in the negotiations with the Spartans were nevertheless terrified, and when the army entered the city they could no longer stand it but went and sat on the altars for protection. Paches induced them to leave, promising not to mistreat them, and he lodged them on Tenedos pending a decision from the Athenians. He also sent triremes to Antissa [3] and captured that, and generally made such dispositions of his forces as he thought best.

Meanwhile, the Peloponnesians in the forty ships, who ought to have **29** arrived quickly, took their time cruising round the Peloponnese itself and continued the rest of their journey in leisurely fashion, unnoticed by the Athenians in the city, until they finally reached Delos and from there put in at Icarus and Myconos, where they first heard that Mytilene had fallen. Wanting to be sure of this they sailed across to Embalus in [2] Erythraean territory, which they reached about seven days after the capture of Mytilene. After having the truth confirmed they started debating what to do in the new circumstances, and Teutiaplus, a man from Elea, made the following speech.[1]

'Alcidas and my fellow commanders of the Peloponnesian army here, **30** my view is that we should sail to Mytilene without more ado, before our presence is realised. In all probability we shall find them very much [2]

[1] This speech is, unusually, introduced by the words 'he spoke these things (*tade*)' rather than 'he spoke such things (*toiauta*)', but that is unlikely to signal any particular claim to verbatim authenticity. See further I 36.4n.

off their guard, as you might expect of men who have only just taken possession of a city. That will be especially true of an attack by sea, where they least expect the enemy to strike and where we happen to be particularly strong;[1] but their infantry are probably scattered among the houses too, in the careless assumption of victory. So, if we were to fall [3] on them suddenly and by night I would expect that with the help of people inside – just supposing we have any supporters left – we could seize control of affairs. Let us not shrink from the danger, but remember [4] that this situation is typical of the surprises of war. The most successful general is the man who can guard against such factors in his own case and who attacks when he sees a chance to exploit them against the enemy.'

He failed to persuade Alcidas with this speech. Various others – some **31** exiles from Ionia and the Lesbians who had sailed with them – then urged Alcidas that since he feared the risks in this course of action he should instead seize one of the Ionian cities or Cyme in Aeolis in order to have a city to use as a base from which to get Ionia to revolt (not an unrealistic hope, since they had never been made unwelcome anywhere they had gone). That would cut the Athenians off from their greatest source of income and would at the same time be a drain on Athenian resources if they chose to mount a blockade against them; they also thought they could persuade Pissouthnes to join the war on their side. Alcidas did not [2] accept this advice either; his overriding concern, now that he was too late for Mytilene, was to get back to the Peloponnese as quickly as possible.

Alcidas therefore set out from Embatum and sailed along the coast. **32** He put in at Myonnesus in Teian territory and slaughtered most of the prisoners he had taken on the voyage. He then anchored at Ephesus, [2] where a Samian delegation from Anaea came and told him that this was a poor way to be liberating Greece – massacring men who had never raised a hand against him and were not his enemies, and were allies of the Athenians only under duress; if he didn't stop he would convert few of his enemies into friends but would make many more friends into enemies. He was persuaded by this and released all the Chians he was holding as [3] well as some of the others. (It should be explained that these people had not tried to flee when they saw his ships arriving but went up to them, supposing them to be from Attica, since they never dreamed that while the Athenians were masters of the seas ships from the Peloponnese would ever sail across to Ionia.)

[1] Rather a surprising claim, unless it just means 'at this moment', which has led to suggested emendations of the text. See II 80.2n and Hornblower I, p. 411.

Alcidas sailed away from Ephesus in haste and took to flight. He had 33
been spotted by the *Salaminia* and *Paralus*[1] (which happened to be on a
voyage from Athens) while he was still at anchor off Clarus, and in fear
of pursuit he sailed off across the open sea, intending to avoid putting
into land anywhere until he reached the Peloponnese. The news of his [2]
presence reached Paches and the Athenians from Erythrae – and then
came in from all directions, for since Ionia was unfortified there was a
real fear that the Peloponnesians might sail along the coast and, even if in
these circumstances they had no intention of remaining there, might still
descend on cities and plunder them. And now the *Paralus* and *Salaminia*
came with this first-hand news of sighting him in Clarus. Paches set of in [3]
hot pursuit. He chased Alcidas as far as the island of Patmos, but when
he no longer seemed likely to catch him he turned back. In fact, having
failed to catch the Peloponnesians up in the open sea, he thought it was
actually an advantage that he had not cornered them somewhere where
Alcidas would have been forced to set up a camp and so given him the
trouble of keeping watch over them and organising a blockade.

On his way back along the coast one of the places Paches put in to was 34
Notium, part of Colophon where the Colophonians had settled when the
upper city was captured by Itames and his Persians, who had been called
in as a result of some internal dispute. (It had been seized at about the
time of the second Peloponnesian invasion of Attica.) The refugees who [2]
had settled in Notium were now again split into factions: one group called
in Arcadian and Persian mercenaries from Pissouthnes and established
them behind a separate wall (where the Persian sympathisers from the
Colophonians in the upper town joined them and formed a community);
the other group had seceded from these and it was these exiles who called
in Paches. He invited in for a discussion Hippias, the leader of the Arcadi- [3]
ans behind the wall, on the understanding that Paches would restore him
safe and sound to his enclave if Hippias was not satisfied with what was
said. So Hippias came out to join him, but Paches then placed him under
guard (though not actually bound) while he himself carried out a sudden
and surprise attack on the fortified area, captured it and put to death all
the Arcadians and Persians who were inside. Afterwards he led Hippias
back in there, just as he had formally undertaken to do, and when he was
inside had him seized and shot dead with arrows. He then handed over [4]
Notium to the Colophonians (excepting the Persian sympathisers). The

[1] The two ships the Athenians kept for special missions, renowned for their speed.

Athenians later sent out founding settlers and colonised Notium under their own system of laws, bringing together there all the Colophonians they could find from other cities.[1]

When Paches got back to Mytilene he forced Pyrrha and Eresus to **35** come to terms, and having caught Salaethus, the Spartan, hiding in the city sent him back to Athens along with the Mytilenaeans he had put on Tenedos and anyone else who seemed to him implicated in the revolt. He also sent back most of his army, and staying behind with the rest he [2] proceeded to manage the situation in Mytilene and the rest of Lesbos as he saw fit.

When Salaethus and the other men arrived, the Athenians immediately **36** executed Salaethus himself, though he was offering among other things to bring about the withdrawal of the Peloponnesians from Plataea (which they were still besieging). They debated what to do about the other men [2] and in their anger decided to kill not only the ones there in Athens but also the whole adult male population of Mytilene, and to enslave the women and children. They particularly condemned the revolt because the Mytilenaeans had staged it despite not being subjects like the others, and what made the Athenians really furious was the fact that Peloponnesian ships had dared to venture into Ionia to support them; that, in their view, made it look as though the revolt was not just the result of a sudden decision. They therefore sent a trireme to convey the news of this decision [3] to Paches, with orders to finish off the Mytilenaeans without delay.

The very next day there was an immediate change of mind, and they [4] began to reconsider the savage and extreme decision to destroy an entire city rather than just those directly responsible. When the Mytilenaean [5] delegation present and their Athenian sympathisers became aware of this they got the authorities to reopen the question. They were not difficult to persuade, because it was obvious to them that most of the citizens wanted someone to give them the opportunity of discussing the matter

[1] III 34 is a characteristic vignette: a vivid but very factual account of a minor atrocity, which also shows how the Athenians regularly exploited such local disputes to enlarge and manage their empire. The historian George Grote, writing in the nineteenth century, found this objectivity shocking, 'Of this species of fraud, founded on literal performance and real violation of an agreement, there are various examples in Greek history; but nowhere do we read of a more flagitious combination of deceit and cruelty than the behaviour of Paches at Notium. How it was noticed at Athens, we do not know; yet we remark, without surprise, that Thucydides recounts it plainly and calmly, without a single word of comment' (*History of Greece*, second edition, London, 1851, VI, pp. 331–2). On the question of whether Thucydides as a historian does or should make explicit judgements about such incidents, see introduction, pp. xvii–xx.

again. An assembly was immediately convened and various opinions were [6]
expressed. One of the speakers was Cleon son of Cleainetus, the man who had carried the motion at the previous assembly to impose the death sentence. He was in general the most aggressive[1] member of the citizen body and the one who was the most influential with the people at that time. He came forward and spoke as follows.

'Time and again in the past have I realised that a democracy is incapable **37**
of exercising rule over others, but never more so than now in this matter of your change of heart about the Mytilenaeans. Just because you enjoy an [2]
absence of fear and intrigue in your everyday relations with each other[2] you assume the same applies to your relations with your allies. You do not realise that with every mistake they talk you into and every concession you make out of compassion your weakness does more to expose you to danger than to win the gratitude of your allies. You do not see that the empire you hold is a tyranny, and one imposed on unwilling subjects who for their part plot against you. They accept your rule not because of any sacrifices you may make to please them but because of the superiority that derives from your strength rather than from their goodwill.[3]

The most dire prospect of all is if none of our decisions remain firm [3]
and if we fail to recognise the following facts: that a city is in a stronger position if it has bad laws which are always enforced than if it has good laws which lack authority; that a lack of learning combined with a sense of responsibility is of more general benefit than undisciplined smartness; and that unsophisticated people are for the most part better at managing cities than their intellectual superiors.[4] The latter always want to appear wiser [4]
than the laws and to outdo any proposals made in the public interest,[5] as if there were no better ways to demonstrate their mental powers; and as a result they generally ruin their cities. The ordinary citizens, however,

[1] The superlative from *biaios*, see I 95.1n.

[2] The first of several echoes of Pericles in this speech (III 37.2: II 63.2; III 38.1: II 61.2 and I 140.1; III 39.8: II 13.2; and III 40.4: II 63.2; and see Hornblower I, pp. 334–5), which Cleon is presumably trading on deliberately, though to very different overall effect in Thucydides' assessment of the two men.

[3] 37.2 is one long and difficult sentence in the Greek. It is surely meant to be ironic that Cleon uses so much complex rhetoric throughout this anti-rhetorical speech, which actually comes over as less clear and direct than the following one by Diodotus.

[4] There is a deep anti-intellectualism in Cleon's address here and he uses a cluster of related expressions with different degrees of evaluative force. I have generally translated *sophos* as 'wise', *sunetos* as 'intelligent' or 'intellectual', *deinos* as 'clever', *dexios* as 'smart' and *amathia* as 'lack of learning'.

[5] Or 'to dominate every public debate', but that is less pointed here.

distrusting their own intelligence, judge themselves less learned than the laws and less competent than a fine speaker to criticise an argument. Content to be judges among equals[1] rather than competing contestants, they are generally the more successful citizens. We should therefore act [5] likewise and not be so carried away by cleverness and contests of wit that we offer you, the public, perverse advice.[2]

I myself haven't changed my mind at all, and I wonder at those who 38 now want to reopen the debate about Mytilene and so introduce a delay which is to the advantage of the wrongdoers (since in that situation the injured party then goes after the culprit with the edge taken off his anger, whereas an immediate reprisal for the injury suffered does most to fit the punishment to the crime). I also wonder who there is to contradict me and presume to show that the crimes of the Mytilenaeans benefit us while our own misfortunes really constitute damage for the allies. Clearly, such [2] a man would either have to be so confident in his powers of performance that he can prove by his oratory that you did not decide what you definitely did decide; or else he must have been primed by bribes to try and lead you astray with an elaborate display of specious rhetoric. In contests of [3] this kind, however, the city bestows the prizes on others, while she herself bears all the risks.

You have yourselves to blame for perverting these contests. You have [4] got used to being spectators of words and listening to deeds.[3] You judge the feasibility of future projects from the performances of good speakers, and the facts of past events from the speeches of clever critics, preferring to believe in what you hear rather than in the deeds you can actually witness. You are champions at being deceived by novelties in argument [5] and in your reluctance to go along with received opinions, slaves as you are to fashions for the extraordinary and sceptics of the familiar. The [6] greatest ambition of each of you is himself to be an orator, or failing

[1] *Apo tou isou* is usually translated 'impartially' here, but the main point is that ordinary citizens do not set themselves above the laws or above other people. The phrase elsewhere usually means 'on the basis of equality', see for example I 77.3–4, 99.2, 136.4, 140.5; III 10.4, 11.1, 42.5, 84.1; IV 19.2 and V 101.1.

[2] *para doxan* here is usually translated as '[advice] against your better judgement' but the more usual and literal meaning of the phrase anticipates 38.2, 38.5 and 39.4 below (where the phrase is repeated). See Gomme I, p. 302 for other possible interpretations.

[3] A famous and striking reproach, but the image should not be pressed too literally. An audience is obviously responding to both sights and sounds. The attack is on the culture of politics as a spectator sport, where the emphasis is on technique and performance not on good judgement and practical policy.

that to participate in competition with those who make these speeches by trying to appear quick on the uptake and being the first to applaud a sharp remark. You are as eager to anticipate what will be said as you are slow to foresee its consequences. Indeed you are seeking, one could [7] say, some world other than the one we actually live in and you pay too little heed to the here and now. In a word, you are overcome by the pleasure of listening. You sit here more like an audience of spectators at a performance of sophists than men deliberating about matters of state.

These are the habits of mind I am trying to make you abandon when I **39** tell you plainly that Mytilene has wronged you more than has any other single state. I can make allowance for states that revolted from you because [2] they could not bear your rule or were compelled by your enemies to do so. But these Mytilenaeans are people who occupy an island, one fortified with walls, and who have no fear of our enemies except by sea – and even there they have had their own force of triremes to protect them. These are people who enjoyed independence of government[1] and were held in the highest honour by us. How could they have done this? And how else can you describe it except as conspiracy and insurgency (the word "revolt"[2] only applies to victims of forceful oppression) and as a deliberate attempt to take the side of our worst enemies to destroy us? Surely this is worse than if they had made war on us by themselves to enlarge their own power. The fate of their neighbours did not serve as an [3] example to them, though all of them who have so far revolted have been subdued by us; nor did the good fortune they were enjoying give them pause in taking this dire step. On the contrary, becoming overconfident about the future and entertaining hopes beyond their powers if not their desires, they have declared war. They have seen fit to put might before right; and just as soon as they thought they could get the better of us they launched an unprovoked attack.

[1] The adjective *autonomos* must here imply some degree of independence within the constraints of the Athenian empire, falling short of real 'freedom' (*eleutheria*), as 39.7 following indicates. See further III 10.5n and glossary.

[2] The Greek word is *apostasis*, literally a 'standing apart' or secession. The Mytilenaeans use the same term repeatedly in their appeal to the Spartans at III 9–14 (and especially in 9.1, 13.1–2). The distinctions between *apostasis* and the terms I translate as 'conspiracy' and 'insurgency' (the verb forms are *epibouleuo* and *epanistemi*) are not really clear-cut, but Cleon is trying to emphasise as much as possible that the Mytilenaeans had a favoured status and were not oppressed subjects, so they could not claim the excuse of a just rebellion.

It is in fact a general rule that cities to which success comes most [4] unexpectedly and suddenly tend to turn arrogant. Good fortune for the most part poses fewer risks to people when it arises according to rather than contrary to reasonable expectation;[1] indeed you could say that people find it is easier to hold off misfortune than to hold on to happiness. The [5] Mytilenaeans should never have been privileged by us over the other states from the start, and they would not then have got so much above themselves. It is in any case human nature to despise those who indulge you and respect those who stand up to you.

Let them now be punished, therefore, in the way the crime deserves, [6] and do not let the blame fall on the ruling few[2] while you absolve the people. They all of them joined in attacking you, though if they had taken our side they could now be back in possession of their city. They judged, however, that siding with their rulers presented the safer option and so joined in the revolt with them.

Think of your allies too. If you impose just the same penalty on those [7] who choose to revolt as on those who are forced to do so by the enemy, who is there, do you think, who will not revolt on the slightest pretext, when the reward for success is liberation and the penalty for failure is easy to bear? We, on the other hand, will have risked serious loss in lives [8] and money fighting against one city after another. If we are successful, we shall just be taking over a ruined city and you will be for ever deprived of the future revenue which is the source of our strength; but if we fail, we shall be adding new enemies to the existing ones, and all the time we should be confronting our present foes we shall be fighting wars with our own allies.

We must not, therefore, hold out to them any hope, whether secured by **40** oratory or bought with bribes, that they will be pardoned just on grounds of human fallibility. They did us harm not through some involuntary deed but in a deliberate act of conspiracy, and one only pardons what is involuntary. I have consistently fought, now as before, against your [2] changing your minds about your earlier decisions and being led astray by the three qualities least compatible with imperial power: compassion, a love of speeches and a sense of fairness.[3] It is right to show pity to the like- [3] minded, not to those who cannot return it but are always and inevitably

[1] The contrast is between *logos* and *doxa*: see above 37.5n.

[2] The contrast here is between the *oligoi* (ruling class) and the *demos* (populace). See also Diodotus at III 47.2 and glossary.

[3] 'compassion' here is *oiktos* and 'fairness' *epieikeia*. See glossary under *eleos* and *eikos*.

our enemies. As for the orators who delight us with their speeches, they will have other arenas for display in matters of less moment, not when the city pays a heavy penalty for its brief pleasure while they themselves get a fine reward for their fine speeches. And fairness is better reserved for those likely to be useful friends in the future and to remain so, rather than for those who will always be the same old enemies.

I can sum up in a word. If you follow my advice you will be doing what [4] is just as far as the Mytilenaeans are concerned and what is at the same time advantageous for us. If you decide otherwise, you will still fail to win their gratitude and will instead be passing sentence on yourselves, for if they were right to revolt you must be wrong to be ruling over them. But if you are still resolved to carry on as rulers, however unjustified, then you must put aside considerations of fairness and punish these people in your own interests; otherwise you must give the empire up and go around doing good in safety. And through the same act of punishment[1] [5] be resolved to avenge yourselves too and not let it seem that you who have survived their conspiracy are less sensitive to suffering than those who perpetrated it, bearing in mind what they would have probably done if they had beaten you, especially since they were the ones to transgress first. Indeed, it is those who have wronged someone without good reason [6] who pursue him to the point of destruction, since they are aware of the danger posed by such an enemy left alive. The one who suffers gratuitous harm is a more dangerous opponent than an enemy who fights on an equal footing.[2]

Do not, therefore, be traitors to your own cause. Recall as closely as [7] you can how you felt then and how you would have given anything then to beat them. This is your chance to pay them back: do not weaken at the moment of decision and do not forget the threat that once hung over you. Punish them as they deserve and give the other allies a clear warning that anyone who revolts is punished with death. If they come to realise this,

[1] Usually taken to mean either 'the same as they would have visited on you' or 'the same as you decided before', but it would be an obscure way of expressing either thought. My more literal version looks back to the preceding sentence and suggests that the same act of punishment might achieve both named objectives.

[2] The psychological point seems to be that enemies are more to be feared if they are victims of an unprovoked attack rather than if they are playing by the same rules (*apo tes ises* 'from the equal' in the Greek: see III 37.4 and glossary). But the application to the present case is very forced. The argument is that the Mytilenaeans will be more remorseless enemies because they were in the wrong and know the Athenians will respond accordingly; so, the Athenians have to destroy them first. But Thucydides may also have thought the point applied to the Athenians as the original 'transgressors'.

you will be less distracted from your enemies by having to fight your own allies.'

Such was Cleon's speech. After him Diodotus son of Eucrates, who **41** in the earlier assembly too had been the one most strongly opposed to putting the Mytilaeneans to death, came forward again now and spoke as follows.

'I have no fault to find with those who propose to reopen the debate **42** about Mytilene, and I do not support those who object to reconsidering matters of real importance several times over. On the contrary, the two things I consider most prejudicial to good counsel are haste and high emotion:[1] the latter usually goes with folly, the former with crude and shallow judgement.

As for words, anyone who argues seriously that they should not guide [2] our actions is either stupid or has some personal interest at stake: stupid, if he thinks there is any other way to explore the future in all its uncertainty;[2] self-interested, if he wants to argue some discreditable case but concludes that though he cannot speak well enough to carry a bad cause he can slander well enough to intimidate both the opposing speakers and the audience.

Still worse to deal with, however, are those who also accuse opponents [3] of having financial motives for public performances. If the accusation were just one of ignorance a speaker who fails to carry the day could leave the floor with damage to his reputation for intelligence rather than his integrity; but when the charge is malpractice the speaker becomes an object of suspicion if he succeeds, and is thought dishonest as well as stupid if he fails. The city too loses out in this situation, since fear [4] robs it of its counsellors. Indeed we would be best served if citizens of this kind were less able speakers and the city would then be led astray less often. The good citizen should want to prove the better speaker, not [5] by intimidating his opponents but in a fair debate. In the same way, the prudent city should not keep conferring fresh honours on the person who regularly gives it good advice, but neither should it detract from those he already has; and the speaker who fails to win assent should not only not be punished but should not be held in any less respect either. This [6] would make it less likely that the successful speaker will be moved by the prospect of still greater honours to give insincere advice which promotes

[1] Picking up on the original 'haste' and 'anger' (*orge*) in making the decision (III 36.2–3). *Orge* recurs as a concept a lot in this speech (43.5, 44.4, 45.4).

[2] Diodotus in his turn also invokes arguments from the Funeral Speech (II 40.2–3).

his popularity, or that the unsuccessful speaker should in his turn use the same kinds of flattery to win over the people.

Our actual practice is just the opposite of this. What is more, if anyone **43** here is even suspected of having financial motives for giving us what is nevertheless the best possible advice, we are so prejudiced against him by the thought of his supposed gains that we deprive the city of an obvious benefit. It has therefore come about that good advice honestly given has [2] become as suspect as bad, and the result is that just as the person who wants to urge some dire proposal resorts to deceit to win over the people, so the person with better policies must lie to be credible. This is therefore [3] the only city so clever that it is impossible to do good here openly and without deceit. Anyone who performs an obvious public service is in return suspected of secretly profiting somehow.

In matters of great importance like the present one, however, we should [4] be expected to take a rather longer view in what we say than the limited attention you give matters, especially since we as advisers can be held responsible in a way that you as listeners are not. If those who gave [5] advice and those who followed it suffered the same consequences you would make your decisions more carefully. But as it is, in the mood of the moment, when things go wrong you punish the single judgement of your adviser not the multiple judgements on all your own parts that were implicated in the same error.

I have come forward neither to represent the Mytilenaeans nor to accuse **44** them. The issue for us, if we are sensible, is not about their wrongdoing but about what is the best policy for ourselves. If I showed them to be [2] guilty of great crimes I would not on that account urge you to go on and put them to death unless that were expedient for us; and if I showed that they had some excuse for their actions I would not then have you let them off if that was unlikely to benefit the city. In my view, what we are really [3] discussing concerns the future not the present. On the particular point that Cleon so strongly asserts – that inflicting death as the penalty will serve our future advantage in reducing the number of revolts – I equally strongly deny it and assert the opposite, also for reasons of our future well-being. I urge you not to let the specious appeal of his argument make [4] you reject the practical advantages of mine. You are still angry with the Mytilenaeans and you might, I imagine, find his appeal to justice the more attractive argument. But we are not engaged in a legal dispute with them about rights and wrongs; this is a political debate about how best they can serve our interests.

Now of course, various states apply the death penalty for many offences **45**
that are minor by comparison with this one; but people are still inspired
by hope to take the risk, and no one ever began a dangerous enterprise
by condemning his own chances of success. So in the case of cities in [2]
revolt, which one ever made its move in the belief that it lacked the means
to succeed, whether relying on its own resources or on those of allies?
It is only human to err, whether in private or in public life, and there [3]
is no law that will prevent this. In fact societies have run through the
whole gamut of penalties, adding one after another to try and protect
themselves somehow against criminal offenders. Long ago there were
probably milder penalties for the worst offences, but as they came to be
disregarded over time most of them evolved progressively into the death
penalty. Nonetheless even this is disregarded.

So now we must either find something even more frightening than [4]
death or at least accept that death is no deterrent. The things that drive
men on to take risks are: poverty, which makes them bold from necessity;
affluence, which fuels their greed with arrogance and pride; and those
other conditions of high emotion when we are overcome by irresistible
impulses. In every case it is desire and hope that do the greatest damage: [5]
desire leading and hope following; the one conceiving the project, the
other suggesting that good fortune will smooth the way; and so these
invisible forces count for more than the threats we can actually see.
Fortune too plays an equal part in the motivation. She can present herself [6]
unexpectedly and so tempt individuals (and cities too) to take risks even
beyond their means when the stakes are highest – freedom versus the rule
of others – and when the individual as one of a crowd is deceived into
overestimating his own powers.

In a word, it is a fact of human nature – and it is very naïve of anyone to [7]
believe otherwise – that when people are really committed in their hearts
to doing something they cannot be deterred by force of law or by any
other threat.

We must therefore avoid making bad policy decisions based on a belief **46**
that the death penalty offers us security, and we must not make rebels
despair of the possibility of repenting and correcting their mistake as
quickly as possible. Just think about it. As things are now, if a city even [2]
after it has rebelled comes to realise that it would not be able to hold out, it
could come to terms while it still has the capacity to refund our expenses
and resume its contributions for the future. In the other case, however,
what city do you think would not prepare better than at present and then

hold out to the very last in a siege, if it makes no difference whether they
come to terms early or late? As for us, surely it must hurt our interests [3]
to have the expense of settling down to a siege because we cannot agree
terms and then, if we capture the place, take over an utterly ruined city
and deprive ourselves of any future revenue from it – revenue that is the
source of our strength against our enemies?

I conclude that we must not be such strict judges of offenders that [4]
we harm ourselves. Rather, we should see how by imposing moderate
penalties we can retain the benefit of having cities strong enough to be
solvent; and we must choose to find security not in the threat of law but
through practical precautions.[1] We do just the reverse at present: when [5]
we subdue a free people who are in our empire under duress and who
make an unsurprising bid for independence in a rebellion, our instinct is
to punish them severely. But instead of meting out extreme punishments [6]
on free people when they rebel we should be exercising extreme vigilance
before they rebel and prevent them in advance from ever starting on that
line of thought; and after suppressing any revolt we should limit the blame
as much as possible.

Reflect also on one further mistake you would be making if you follow **47**
Cleon's advice. At present the common people in each city are well- [2]
disposed to you and either refuse to join the ruling minority in rebellion
or, if coerced into doing so, are from the start hostile to the rebels; and so
when you go to war you have the populace of the opposing city on your
side. But if you are going to destroy the people of Mytilene, who took [3]
no part in the rebellion and who voluntarily surrendered the city to you
when they got possession of arms, you will first be guilty of the injustice
of killing your benefactors, and then you will be playing into the hands
of the men in power. When they get a city to rebel they will from the
start have the people on their side since you will have advertised your
intention of applying the same punishment without distinction both to
those guilty of wrongdoing and to the innocent. What you should do, [4]
even if they were guilty, is pretend that they were not, to prevent the only
faction still loyal to us from becoming hostile. Indeed, in my view, the [5]
security of the empire is better served by willingly allowing ourselves to
be wronged than by exercising our right to destroy those we should spare.

[1] Literally, 'in the careful attention of deeds (*erga*)'. Deeds are here contrasted with laws, by extension from the usual contrast with words (see note to II 35.1).

Cleon's claim that this particular punishment is both just and expedient is invalidated because the combination is in this case impossible.

Follow my advice, then, for the reasons I have given – because you **48** recognise that this is the best course of action and not because you are unduly moved by a sense of compassion or fairness (for I too would not want you to be influenced by such motives). Put on trial at your leisure the Mytilenaeans whom Paches identified as the guilty ones and sent over here, and let the rest live their lives. This is the best policy for the [2] long term and also the one that will most alarm our enemies right now. Wise counsel is more effective in dealing with an enemy than mindless aggression based on brute force.'

Such was Diodotus' speech. These contrary arguments were quite **49** evenly matched, but the Athenians had to decide between them and though on a show of hands the voting was very close the view of Diodotus nonetheless prevailed. A second trireme was immediately dispatched with [2] all speed, lest the first one, which had about a day and a night's start,[1] should beat them to it and they should find the city destroyed. The [3] Mytilenaean delegates provided them with barley and wine and promised them great rewards if they arrived in time; and they were so spurred on for the voyage that they ate their meals of barley mixed with oil and wine while carrying on rowing and they took turns at rowing and sleeping. By luck there were no contrary winds, and since the first ship was not hurrying on its unwelcome[2] mission while the second was pressing on urgently, as described, the first ship only got there far enough ahead for Paches to have time to read out the decree and prepare to execute the order before the second ship put in after it and prevented the massacre. So close did Mytilene come to disaster.

The other men whom Paches had sent back as being chiefly responsible **50** for the revolution were killed by the Athenians on a motion by Cleon (and there were slightly more than a thousand of these[3]). The Athenians also demolished the walls of the Mytilenaeans and took over their ships. Later [2]

[1] The distance by sea from Athens to Mytilene direct is about 184 sea miles (340 km), but the assumption is that the first ship will have stopped off somewhere each night, as would be usual in such a voyage (see Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, pp. 95–6).

[2] *Allokoton* meaning 'strange, unusual, uncouth, against the grain, unwelcome' (LSJ), therefore not quite such a strong word of moral disapproval as might be suggested by some of the usual translations of it.

[3] This number is so large that it has been queried. The notation of numbers in texts made it very easy for scribal errors to occur (see Gomme II, pp. 325–6). One wonders in any case how these mass executions were actually carried out (see also IV 80.4).

on, instead of imposing tribute on the Lesbians they divided up all the land (excepting that at Methymna) into 3,000 plots, designated 300 of these sacred to the gods and they sent out cleruchs[1] to take over the rest. The Lesbians arranged to pay them a rent of two mnas[2] a year for each plot and to work the ground themselves. The Athenians also took over [3] all the towns on the mainland that the Mytilenaeans had controlled, and later made them Athenian subjects.

Such was the course of events at Lesbos.

51 In the same summer, after the capture of Lesbos, the Athenians made an expedition under the command of Nicias son of Niceratus against the island of Minoa, which lies off Megara and was used as a fortified post by the Megarians, who had built a tower on it.[3] Nicias wanted to [2] have the Athenian watch-point closer to Megara on that side rather than on Boudorum and Salamis. His purpose was to stop the Peloponnesians sending out unobserved from Megara either triremes (as had happened before) or pirate expeditions,[4] and at the same time to prevent anything coming in to Megara by sea. He therefore first captured two towers [3] that projected from the side facing Nisaea, taking them by using siege equipment deployed from the sea, and freed access to the channel between the mainland and the island. He then also walled off the mainland side, where reinforcements could reach the island (which was quite close to the mainland) via a bridge thrown over the shallows there. He completed [4] this work in a few days; later he left a fort and a garrison on the island itself and then departed with his army.[5]

52 And at about the same time this summer, the Plataeans, now without food and unable to hold out against the siege, surrendered to the Peloponnesians. It happened in the following way. Their wall was under [2] attack and they could no longer defend it. The Spartan commander noted their vulnerability but did not want to take them by force. (Instructions to this effect had come from Sparta, prompted by the thought that if a treaty were ever made with the Athenians agreeing that each side should

[1] That is, colonists chosen by lot or 'allotment-holders': see glossary.

[2] See note on coinage, p. lviii. [3] For the Megara area, see map 19, p. 275.

[4] The earlier surprise attack by triremes (in 429) is described at II 93–94; for the Spartan use of privateers to supplement their sea power see II 69.1 and Hornblower's note at I, p. 355.

[5] Most translations make these topographical details clearer than they actually are in the text. It is very hard to work out where the towers, forts and walls must have been and the coastline there has now changed anyway. Thucydides had no maps, but Gomme offers a reconstruction (II, pp. 334–6).

give back all the places taken in war, then Plataea would not need to be handed over, on the grounds that the Plataeans had come over to their side voluntarily.) He therefore sent them a herald with the message that if they were willing to hand the city over to the Spartans voluntarily and accept them as judges, the Spartans would punish the guilty but harm no one in a way contrary to their rights. That was all the herald said. [3] The Plataeans were now *in extremis* and surrendered the city. The Peloponnesians then provided them with sustenance for the few days it took for the judges to come from Sparta, five of them in number. When these [4] arrived no formal accusation was made but they summoned the Plataeans and asked them this single question: if in the course of the present conflict they had done anything to benefit the Spartans and their allies. The [5] Plataeans asked to be allowed to give a fuller answer and appointed as their spokesmen Astymachus son of Asopolaus and Lachon son of Aeimnestus, a friend of the Spartans. These two came forward and spoke as follows.[1]

'Spartans,[2] when we surrendered our city we did so because we trusted **53** you. We did not expect to undergo a trial of this kind but thought there would be some more conventional procedure; and we did not choose to face some other body of judges, as we are now doing, since we believed that we would be treated completely fairly by you. As it is, however, we [2] fear that we may have been wrong on both counts: we have good reason to suspect that the trial is a matter of life and death, and also that you will not prove to be impartial judges. We adduce this from the fact that we were not presented in advance with an accusation to which we were required to respond (but we ourselves had to ask for permission to speak), and that the question now put to us is so abbreviated that a truthful answer is damaging while a false one can be refuted. We are beset on [3] all sides with nowhere to turn, so we are forced into a situation where what seems the safest course is in fact to take the risk of speaking up.

[1] It is interesting that here *two* spokesmen are nominated (and named). Did both speak? From whom did Thucydides get his information about them? See further II 87n and III 61n. This pair of speeches has always been much admired, for example by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 'Of all the speeches . . . I most admire the defence of the Plataeans, especially because there is nothing tortured or over-elaborate about it' (quoted at more length as extract 16 in appendix 2, p. 598). They also contain obscurities and weaknesses, however, which should provoke more than simple admiration. See further the discussions by Macleod (*Collected Essays*, pp. 103ff.) and Hornblower (I, pp. 444–6) and my notes on 56.7 and 59.3 below.

[2] This appeal is evidently addressed, at least in literary and dramatic terms, to the Spartans in general, over the heads of the five appointed 'judges'.

For people in our situation a word unsaid might later become a cause for reproach if we came to think that had it been spoken it could have been our salvation.

The task of persuasion presents us with a further difficulty, in addition [4] to everything else. If you and we did not know each other we might have been helped by introducing evidence of which you were unaware; but as it is, everything that is said will be known to you; and what we fear is not that you are making this particular charge against us because you have already decided that we fall short of your own standards, but that we are standing before you and facing a predetermined judgement as a favour you are giving others.

Nevertheless, we shall present what evidence we can to justify our- **54** selves, both as regards our feud with the Thebans and in relation to you and the rest of the Greeks. We will offer a reminder of our good deeds in the past and will do what we can to convince you. What we say in response [2] to that "short question" of yours, as to whether we have rendered any benefit to the Spartans and their allies in this war, is that if you put the question to us as your enemies[1] then you were not wronged just because you received no positive benefits from us; but if you are thinking of us as friends you yourselves are the ones more at fault for taking the war to us. We proved our worth both in the peace and in the war against the [3] Persians: we have not now been the first to break that peace and we alone of the Boeotians rallied to the earlier fight for the freedom of Greece. Even [4] though we are mainlanders we fought in the sea battle at Artemisium, and in the battle that took place on our own soil[2] we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with you and Pausanias; and whatever other perils threatened the Greeks at that time[3] we did all we could and more to play our part in confronting them. You, men of Sparta, were particular beneficiaries [5] at that critical moment after the earthquake when your city was gripped by fear because the helots were in revolt and had seized Ithome,[4] and we

[1] *Polemioi*. There may be a distinction intended between *polemioi* who are enemies as a consequence of a war and *echthroi* who are 'personal' enemies. See Macleod, *Collected Essays*, p. 109 n11 and Hornblower I, p. 448. The Thebans are the Plataeans' *echthroi* but the Spartans have become *polemioi* in the course of the war. See glossary. But I doubt if the terms are used entirely consistently here (see, for example, 55.1, 56.3, 58.2, 59.1–4 and 65.3 below).

[2] The Battle of Plataea, 479 BC.

[3] A covert reference to Marathon (490 BC), which is a sensitive point with the Spartans since Athens took the lead there.

[4] See I 101.

sent out a third of our own men to support you then. These are things that should not be forgotten.

Such was the part we thought it right to play in the great events of **55** the past, but later on we became your enemies. And that was your fault. At the time when we asked for an alliance with you against our violent oppression by the Thebans you rejected us and told us to turn to the Athenians, on the grounds that they were near us while you lived a long way away. However, in the course of that war you suffered no special harm [2] at our hands, nor were you ever going to. If we were unwilling to desert [3] the Athenians when you told us to do so, that was not wrong of us; for they were the ones to help us against the Thebans when you held back, and after that it would not have been honourable to betray them, especially as we were well treated and at our request we were added to their list of allies and shared in the rights of citizenship.[1] On the contrary, there was good reason to follow their orders with a will. You and the Athenians gave the [4] lead to your respective allies; so those who followed it are not the ones to blame for any resulting misdeeds, but those who led them down the wrong road.

As for the Thebans, they have wronged us in many ways in the past **56** and you are yourselves aware of this final outrage, which is the cause of our present sufferings. They were trying to seize our city during a peace [2] agreed by treaty, and what is more on a holy day, so we were right to retaliate in accordance with the universal convention that it is a sacred right to repel the aggressor, and we cannot reasonably be made to suffer on their account now. If you are going to decide questions of justice by [3] such short-term considerations as your immediate advantage and their hostility, then you will be seen not as true arbiters of what is right but as slaves to expediency. And yet, if the Thebans seem to be of service to you [4] now, how much more so were we and the rest of the Greeks then, when you were in greater danger. Now you are the aggressors to be feared by others, but at that time, when the barbarian was threatening to impose slavery on everyone, these men were on his side.

Justice demands that you balance our present offence, if offence there [5] is, against our former commitment. You will find that the latter outweighs the former and was demonstrated at a time when it was rare to find Greeks with the courage to confront the power of Xerxes and when the ones to

[1] It is not clear quite what these rights consisted in or when exactly they applied. See Hornblower I, pp. 449–50.

attract special praise were those who in the face of the enemy invasion
did not protect their own interests and safety but were willing to brave
danger for the greater good. We were of that number and were held in the [6]
highest honour; but now we fear we may be destroyed for acting on the
same principles and choosing to side with the Athenians in the interests
of justice rather than with you in the interests of gain. Yet you should [7]
appear consistent in your judgements and should consider true advantage
to rest in showing lasting gratitude to good allies for their past valour,
while also securing what seem to be your own immediate interests.[1]

Keep in mind that you are regarded as a model of manly character[2] **57**
by most of the Greeks. And remember that this is not some obscure
case you are judging – you are men of high standing and we are of no
mean repute either. If you fail to reach a fair decision about us you should
beware lest people repudiate what they see as an inappropriate judgement
passed on good men, albeit by their betters,[3] and resent the dedication
in the national shrines of spoils of war taken from us, the benefactors of
Greece. It will seem an outrage that the Spartans should sack Plataea and [2]
that you, whose fathers inscribed our city's name on the role of honour
at Delphi[4] for her courage, should now erase her entirely from the map
of Greece – and for the Thebans! See to what depth of misfortune we [3]
have fallen. We were ruined after the Persian victories and now come off
second best to the Thebans in your affections, though you were once our
closest friends; and we have had to face two of the greatest ordeals: first
the threat of death by starvation if we did not give up our city to you, and
now a trial with our lives at stake. We have been rejected by everyone – [4]
we Plataeans, who gave everything and more for Greece and are now
deserted and unprotected. Not one of our former allies is here to help us.
You Spartans are our only hope but are frail friends, we fear.

Yet we still feel obliged to urge you, for the sake of the gods who once **58**
sanctioned our alliance and for our brave services to the cause of Greece,
to relent and change your minds, if the Thebans have prevailed on you
in any way. Ask them to return your gift of that promise and do not kill

[1] A very vexed passage and indeed a 'tortured' one (*pace* Dionysius 52.5n above), which has been variously understood; the text is also suspect (see Gomme II, p. 342 for a possible reconstruction).

[2] *Andragathia*, one of the 'courage' words (see II 87.4n and glossary), but in this context apparently implying integrity and fairness too.

[3] Ironic, of course.

[4] The inscribed tripod at Delphi (see I 132.2), which is now in the Hippodrome in Istanbul.

those you ought properly[1] to spare; win a gratitude that brings respect not shame, and do not indulge others at the cost of your own disgrace. It is [2] a short matter to take our lives but hard to erase the infamy of the deed. For we are not enemies you have the right to punish but well-wishers, forced into war. Your pious duty as judges, therefore, is to protect our [3] lives, bearing in mind that you took us in voluntary surrender and with the outstretched arms of suppliants (whom Greek law forbids one to slay), and remembering further that we have been your benefactors from the first.

Cast your eyes on the tombs of your fathers, killed by the Persians and [4] buried in our land, men we have honoured year on year with public gifts of garments[2] and other traditional offerings, and also with the first fruits of everything our land produces in season. These are gifts by well-wishers from a friendly country and from allies to old comrades in arms. You would be acting in a very contrary spirit if you reach the wrong verdict. Just consider this. Pausanias gave them a place of burial here, believing [5] he was placing them among friends in a friendly soil. But you, if you kill us and make the land of Plataea a part of Thebes, will actually be leaving your fathers and kinsmen behind in enemy soil and among their murderers, dispossessed of the honour they now enjoy. What is more, you will be enslaving the land in which the Greeks won their freedom, you leave desolate the shrines of the gods to whom they prayed before their victory over the Persians, and you will be taking away the hereditary sacrifices from those who founded and established them.[3]

This course would not befit your reputation, Spartans – neither the **59** offence against the common tradition of the Greeks and against your ancestors, nor the destruction of us, your benefactors, to satisfy the private enmity of others when you yourselves have not been wronged. Instead, you should spare us and let your hearts be moved to regard us with compassion and restraint;[4] fix your minds not only on the terrible fate we shall suffer, but also on the manner of men we are who would suffer it, and on the vagaries of misfortune which may at any time afflict even the

[1] *prepei* conveys what is 'fitting' or 'proper' (also III 59.2), a less strong term perhaps than one might have expected (or it is usually translated as).

[2] Probably ritual offerings of clothes (see Sophocles, *Electra* 452). *Esthemata* (garments) is one of several unusual or poetic terms used in the solemn appeal of this section (see Gomme II, p. 344, for other examples).

[3] An oddly composed sentence where there may be some textual problem (see Gomme II, pp. 344–5). The last clause is obscure and has been translated many different ways.

[4] See the references to supposed Spartan *sophrosune* at I 32.4, 68.1, 84.2, 86.2, etc.

innocent. For us, propriety and need point the same way: calling aloud [2]
on the gods whose altars the Greeks share in common worship, we beg you to hear our words; invoking the oaths which your fathers swore, we ask you as suppliants before your ancestral tombs not to forget them; and we appeal to the fallen dead that we should not come into the hands of the Thebans, that their dearest friends should not be delivered to their worst enemies; and we remind you today, when we stand on the brink of disaster, of the day we shared with them in triumph.

And now we must bring this speech to an end,[1] however difficult that [3]
is for men in our situation, since it brings ever closer the moment of mortal danger. We will end now by saying that we did not surrender our city to the Thebans (we would have preferred the most abject death by starvation to that), but we made our approach to you because we trusted you. So if we fail to convince you the just thing would be to restore us to the same position as before and let us choose for ourselves which danger to confront. At the same time we solemnly entreat you Spartans: we are [4]
Plataeans and the most devoted supporters of the Greek cause – do not deliver us out of your hands and your protection, suppliants as we are, to the Thebans, our most hated enemies. But become our saviours and not, while you liberate the rest of Greece, the agents of our destruction.'

Such was the speech of the Plataeans. Then the Thebans, fearing that **60**
the Spartans might be moved by this speech to relent in some way, came forward and said that they too wished to speak, since the Plataeans had been permitted to give a long speech instead of just answering the question. And when instructed to do so they spoke as follows.

'We would not have asked to make this speech[2] if these men had **61**
actually answered your question briefly instead of turning on us with their accusations, mounting a long defence of themselves on matters irrelevant to the issue in hand and against charges that were never made,

[1] The speech has actually become quite rambling and repetitious in section 59, particularly in its sentimental appeals to the past, and this final flourish does not add anything. This all detracts from its overall quality as a speech (*pace* Dionysius), though not necessarily from its dramatic effect. As Macleod comments (*Collected Essays*, p. 113), 'The historian, like the tragedians, here and often uses rhetorical skills in order that they should be seen to fail; that not only heightens the pathos but also draws our attention to the reasons why they fail.' In any case, the Spartans brutally ignore the whole thing and at 68 just put the same question again in the same form, to which they eventually get the short, incriminating answer they wanted.

[2] Thucydides may have had more information about the content of this speech than that of the Plataeans, since the latter could only have been reported through intermediaries who may themselves have been unsympathetic to the Plataeans (i.e. Spartans or Thebans).

and also praising themselves for things no one had ever criticised. But as it is we must answer their accusations and refute their claims, so that they are not helped either by a bad reputation on our part or a good one on theirs but you can hear the truth about both before making your decision.

Our differences with the Plataeans go back to the time when we first [2] founded Plataea, some time later than the rest of Boeotia, together with other places we took possession of by driving out various mixed populations. These Plataeans refused to accept our leadership, as had been originally agreed, but broke away from the other Boeotians and severed their traditional ties of loyalty; and when force was applied they went over to the Athenians and in conjunction with them did us a lot of damage, for which they too suffered in return.

They also say that when the barbarian attacked Greece they were the **62** only Boeotians who were not Persian collaborators,[1] and this is a point on which they particularly pride themselves and abuse us. But we say [2] the reason they did not collaborate was because the Athenians did not either; and on the same principle when the Athenians attacked the Greeks they were the only Boeotians to "collaborate" with them. Yet consider [3] the political circumstances[2] in which we each acted as we did. In our case the city was at that time not constituted either as an oligarchy with equality[3] under the law or as a democracy, but affairs were managed by a small cabal[4] – something at the opposite extreme to the rule of law and moderation in government, indeed closer to tyranny. These men, who [4] hoped to increase their personal power still further if the Persian cause prevailed, constrained the people by force and brought the Persians in. The city as a whole was not fully in control of itself at the time it did this and does not deserve to be blamed for mistakes committed when it was not under the rule of law. At any rate, you see what happened after the [5] Persians withdrew and the city had law restored. When the Athenians later became aggressive and were trying to bring under their control both the rest of Greece and our country (and because of our internal disputes

[1] Siding with the Persians was called 'medizing' and was the charge made against Pausanias (I 95.5). At 62.2 below the contrary form of collaboration is by analogy called 'atticizing'.

[2] *Eidos* is a rather general term meaning 'form', 'kind' or 'sort' (see glossary). As Hornblower documents (I, p. 455), the word also acquired a political flavour but the usual translation of 'constitution' is surely an over-interpretation. In any case the Thebans go on to describe only their own political arrangements.

[3] *Isonomos*, a term usually applied to democracies. The point of the claim here is to distinguish legitimate oligarchies and democracies from tyrannies that flouted the law.

[4] *Dunasteia* (see glossary).

were already in possession of most of that), did we not fight them and win at Coronea and so liberate Boeotia? And are we not now actively helping to liberate others, by providing more cavalry and more resources than any of the other allies?

63 That is our answer to the charge of collaboration with the Persians. Now we will try to demonstrate that you Plataeans wronged the Greeks more than we did and that you are the ones to deserve any punishment. [2] It was to protect yourselves against us, you claim, that you became allies and citizens[1] of the Athenians. In that case you should have brought them in only to deal with us instead of joining them in attacks on others; and this was always an option for you if at any point you were being led on further than you wanted by the Athenians, since you already had in place the alliance of these Spartans[2] against the Persians, as you keep insisting yourselves. That was in itself quite enough to keep us away from you and, what is especially relevant, to give you the peace of mind to make your own decisions. Instead, willingly and not now under any compulsion, you embraced the Athenian cause. [3] You say that it would have been dishonourable to betray your benefactors; but surely it was much more dishonourable and more unjust to betray so completely all the Greeks, your sworn allies, who were liberating Greece, rather than just the Athenians, who were enslaving it. [4] The debt of gratitude you repaid them was out of all proportion and brought its own dishonour. You brought them in, you claim, because you were yourselves being wronged, but then you cooperated with them in inflicting wrongs on others. True dishonour comes from failing to repay favours in like measure not from refusing to discharge just debts through unjust actions.[3]

64 You have made it clear that it was not for the sake of the Greeks that you refused to collaborate with the Persians at that time, but because the Athenians also refused, and you wanted to side with them and stand out against the rest of us. [2] And now you expect to be rewarded for the good conduct they prompted in this way. But that is unreasonable. You chose

[1] It suits the Thebans to run these two ideas together to emphasise the closeness of the relationship, but see III 55.3n above.

[2] There was the general league of all the Greeks against the Persians, in which the Spartans originally took a leading role; but there was also the more specific guarantee Pausanias gave after the Battle of Plataea (see III 58.1 and II 71).

[3] Gomme (II, p. 349) finds this thought 'frigidly and obscurely expressed', but is it not rather a typically compressed formulation of a mildly paradoxical dictum, explaining why their support of the Athenians was 'out of proportion' (*ouk isen*)?

the Athenians, so you can stick with their side; and don't keep bringing up the sworn alliance made in the past as something which should save you now. You abandoned it and violated it by assisting in rather than [3] preventing the enslavement of the Aeginetans and various other sworn members of the alliance; and you did this willingly, under the same laws you have always had up to now and, unlike us, under no compulsion from anyone else. Moreover, you refused the final offer of peace we made before you were put under siege, which was on condition that you helped neither side.

Who, then, has better reason to be hated by all the Greeks than you [4] do, you who displayed your heroism at the cost of their ruin? You have now revealed that the qualities you once claimed to possess were never really yours, and your natural instincts have been exposed by the light of truth. The Athenians took the wrong road and you followed them down it. Such is our case on the question of collaboration – an unwilling one [5] with the Persians on our part, a willing one with the Athenians on yours.

As for the final wrong you claim to have suffered – that we unlawfully **65** invaded your city when a treaty was in force and on a holy day – we do not consider that even in this we were more at fault than you. If on our own [2] initiative we advanced on your city, fought you and plundered the land like enemies, then we are in the wrong. But if the leaders among you – men of substance and good family,[1] wishing to rid you of a foreign alliance and restore you to the traditional institutions shared by all Boeotians – if these men deliberately chose to invite us in, then what wrong did we do? It is indeed the leaders not the led who break the law. In fact in this [3] case, in our judgement, neither they nor we did wrong. They are citizens just as much as you are and they have more at stake.[2] They opened up their own gates and brought us in as friends not as enemies, because they wanted to keep the worse sort among you from becoming still worse and let the better kind have their due rewards; they wanted to be moderators[3]

[1] Code for 'oligarchs', with whom the Thebans now associate themselves and whose case they develop, despite what they say at III 62.3 above.

[2] A standard argument for oligarchy (see also VI 39, VIII 65.3), often adapted and deployed in other historical contexts; for example, Bloomfield in his commentary on this passage (published in 1842) hails it as follows, 'That those who hold the greatest stake in the welfare of a country should have most to do with its government, is one of the most certain principles of political science, and forms a prominent feature in the British Constitution' (vol. 1, p. 484).

[3] *Sophronistai*, Athenian magistrates with responsibility for supervising behaviour at gymnasia (see glossary).

of your policies, not to estrange your persons from your city but to reunite you with your own kind, putting you on bad terms with no one but making good alliances with everyone alike.[1]

66 The proof that we were not committing acts of war is that we treated no one unjustly and proclaimed that anyone who wished to be governed in accordance with the traditions of Boeotia as a whole should come over to us. You were pleased to do so and after making an agreement you kept [2] quiet at first, but later you realised how few in number we were. We grant that we may seem to have acted a little improperly[2] in entering the city without the consent of the people at large, but nonetheless you did not repay us in kind. Instead of refraining from radical action and persuading us by argument to withdraw, you attacked, contravening the terms of the agreement. Those whom you killed in the actual fighting we are not so much troubled about (they no doubt suffered a certain rough justice[3]). But what about those others who stretched out their hands to you as suppliants and whom you took prisoner and later promised not to kill? Contrary to all law you slaughtered them. Was that not terrible?[4] And [3] then after committing three crimes in quick succession – the violation of the agreement, the later murder of these men, and the lying promise you made us not to kill them if we did not harm you by damaging your property in the fields – you nonetheless say that we are the ones to flout the law and you claim the right to escape justice yourselves. No, not if [4] these judges recognise right from wrong: you will be punished for each and every crime.

67 Spartans, the reason why we have gone through all this, both for your sakes and ours, is so that you can be sure you will have justice on your

[1] The language of the Greek here has led commentators either to suggest textual changes to remove 'difficulties' (see Spratt and Gomme) or to smooth it in their English versions. There is in particular a strained and forced contrast between *gnome* (here 'policies') and *somata* (here 'persons'): see further glossary.

[2] *Anepieikesteron*, a deliberately mild word – the Plataeans had called it the 'final outrage' at 56.1–2. By contrast the references to suppliants (66.2) and divine sanction (67.1) are deliberate, and barbed, imitations of phrases from the Plataeans' speech (56.2 and 58.3).

[3] Literally, 'according to some law (*nomos*)' which contrasts with 'contrary to law (*paranomos*)' in the next sentence. It is interesting here to see *nomos* standing for 'natural law', rather than being contrasted with *phusis* and then dismissed as merely 'conventional', which was the standard sophistic move.

[4] See II 5.7. This 'atrocity' is not as much emphasised as one might expect, perhaps on the grounds Gomme suggests, that the Spartans themselves would not have been particularly shocked by it. This whole passage (section 2 is one long sentence in the Greek) is very complex and self-interrupting, perhaps indicating that they are trying to work themselves up to a pitch of self-righteous indignation.

side in condemning these men and so that we can feel a higher sanction in being avenged. Do not let your judgement be distorted by their tales [2] of past virtues, if indeed there were any. These should count in favour of victims of wrongdoing, but should mean double punishment for those doing something shameful just because their offence is out of character. And do not let this weeping and wailing avail them or their loud appeals over the tombs of your fathers and their own desolation. We on our [3] side can point to the far more dreadful sufferings of our young men, slaughtered at their hands. Some of their fathers died at Coronea trying to win Boeotia over to your cause, while others were left to grow old and they and their bereft homes constitute a far more powerful appeal for you to exercise justice and punish these men. Pity is due more to those who [4] do not deserve their suffering, but when men suffer just deserts, as these do, it is by contrast cause for celebration.[1]

As for their present desolation, that is of their own making. The better [5] allies they rejected of their own free will. They broke the law, without provocation on our part, moved more by hatred than by justice in their decision, and they have not now paid back a compensating penalty.[2] For they will suffer the punishment prescribed by law, not after appeal for mercy on the field of battle, as they would have it, but after an agreement to deliver themselves up to the court's judgement.

Spartans, you must therefore defend the law of the Greeks that these [6] men have transgressed and repay to us, the victims of this lawlessness, a just reward for our devoted support. Do not let us be pushed aside by their words. Show by example to the Greeks that you set before them a contest not of words but of deeds, and that in the case of good deeds a short answer suffices, while in the case of misdeeds speeches tricked out with words are just a concealment. But if leaders will only do what you are [7] now doing – summarising the essential question for everyone and then

[1] An unattractive piece of *schadenfreude*. In fact III 67 makes a whole series of unattractive appeals, as Gomme effectively documents, listing cases in turn of envy, malevolence, hatefulness, hypocrisy and sophistry and ending with the observation, 'There is no palliation in Thucydides' (II, p. 353).

[2] This is what the Greek seems to say – it assumes that the judgement has already been given but that the penalty still falls short of their crimes. But they then go on to say, as if in explanation, that a lawful sentence *will* be a fair and adequate one, and that is what they can now expect. The commentators propose various ingenious ways of reinterpreting this but it may just be a piece of carelessness or illogic.

passing judgement – there will be less seeking after fine words to justify foul deeds.'[1]

Such was the Thebans' speech. The Spartan judges decided that their **68** first question still held good, whether in the course of the war they had received any specific benefit from the Plataeans. They told themselves that they had all along recommended that the Plataeans take no active part in the war, in accordance with the ancient treaty made with Pausanias after the Persian War; and they had later, before the start of the siege, offered them the opportunity to be neutral under the same terms. The Plataeans had refused the offer, so the Spartans were now released by their own honourable intentions from the terms of the treaty and felt themselves to have been badly treated by the Plataeans. They therefore brought the Plataeans in again one by one and asked each man the same question, if in the course of the conflict they had done anything to benefit the Spartans and their allies. When the men answered 'no' they led them away and killed every one of them, without exception.

They put to death no fewer than two hundred of the Plataeans, along [2] with twenty-five Athenians who were with them in the siege; and they enslaved the women. The city itself they gave to some Megarians who had [3] been driven out in an internal dispute and to any Plataean survivors who had taken their side, allowing them to occupy it for about a year. Later they razed it utterly to the ground and built on the foundations next to the sanctuary of Hera a hostel two hundred feet square, with rooms all round at two levels. For this they reused the roofs and doors of the Plataean houses, and with the rest of the material within the walls of the city – the bronze and iron fittings – they fashioned couches which they dedicated to Hera; and they also built her a hundred-foot long stone temple. The land they took over and rented out on ten-year leases to Theban tenants. In practically every respect this Spartan antipathy to the Plataeans arose [4] from their wish to please the Thebans, since the Spartans thought they might be useful to them at this point in the war.[2]

That was how things ended at Plataea, in the ninety-third year after [5] they became allies of the Athenians.

[1] It is not clear how much we are meant to contrast the rhetoric of these two speeches with those of the Mytilene debate, since the two pairs are addressed to very different audiences: the panel of Spartan judges and the Athenian assembly. We are, however, surely meant to note, as Hornblower argues (I, p. 462), the very different responses of the Spartans in the first case and of the Athenians in the second.

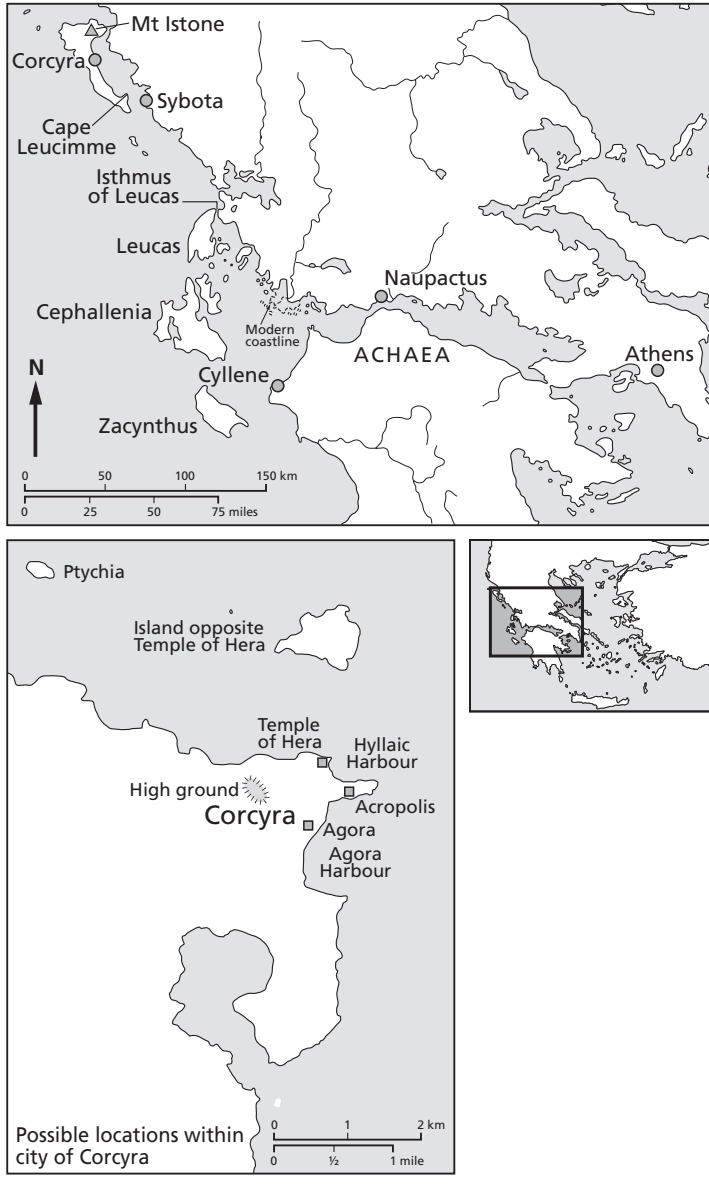
[2] Literally 'in the war that had then just started', but see note on III 3.1.

As for the forty Peloponnesian ships that had gone to help the Lesbians, **69**
they had been fleeing across the open sea with the Athenians in pursuit.[1]
They were then caught in rough weather off Crete and consequently
straggled back to the Peloponnese, where at Cyllene they met up with
thirteen Leucadian and Ambraciot triremes and with Brasidas son of
Tellis, who had arrived there as an adviser to Alcidas. After their failure [2]
at Lesbos, the Spartans wanted to enlarge their fleet and sail to Corcyra,
which was in the throes of civil strife. The Athenians only had twelve
ships at Naupactus and the Spartans wanted to reach Corcyra before
reinforcements could arrive from Athens. So Brasidas and Alcidas started
making preparations to this end.

The Corcyraeans had been in this state of conflict ever since the home- **70**
coming of the prisoners of war who had been taken at the time of the
sea battles off Epidamnus and had been subsequently released by the
Corinthians. Officially they were let out on bail of 800 talents[2] pledged
by their friends in Corinth, but in fact they had been persuaded to try
and bring Corcyra over to the Corinthians. These men went to work,
approaching each citizen individually to try and make the city defect
from the Athenians. A ship then arrived from Attica and another from [2]
Corinth, each bringing envoys; and after discussions with them the Cor-
cyraeans voted to continue as Athenian allies, according to their agreement
with them, but also to be friends of the Peloponnesians just as they had
formerly been.

Now there was a certain Peithias, who was a self-appointed friend of [3]
the Athenians and a leading figure on the people's side. The returning
prisoners brought him to trial, saying that he was enslaving Corcyra to
the Athenians. He was acquitted and retaliated with lawsuits against their [4]
five wealthiest men, alleging that they were cutting vine-poles from the
sanctuaries of Zeus and Alcinous, an offence for which the penalty was
one stater per vine-pole. They were convicted and because of the size of [5]
the fine they took refuge as suppliants in the temples, asking to have the
payments reassessed. But Peithias, who happened also to be a member
of the council, persuaded it to enforce the law. With this legal avenue [6]
blocked they learned at the same time that Peithias intended, while he
was still on the council, to try and prevail on the people to enter into a full

[1] This picks up the story from III 33.
[2] A huge figure if correct (see Gomme II, pp. 359–60).



Map 14. Corcyra – the region and town[1]

[1] On this reconstruction of the possible topography in the city itself, see Gomme II, pp. 370–2 (and the plan facing p. 372) and Hornblower I, p. 471.

alliance with the Athenians.[1] So they banded together, seized daggers and burst into the council, where they killed Peithias along with sixty or so others, including both council members and private citizens. A few who were of the same mind as Peithias did, however, escape to the Attic trireme that was still there.

After the conspirators had committed this act they called the Cor- 71
cyraeans together and told them that this was all for the best and that they were now much less likely to be enslaved by the Athenians; for the future, they said, they should welcome in neither side unless they came in peace in a single ship – any more than that would be interpreted as a hostile act. As soon as they had spoken they forced the Corcyraeans to ratify this policy. They also sent a delegation immedi- [2]
ately to Athens in order to explain what they had done, presenting it in the best light, and to dissuade the refugees there from undertaking any prejudicial action that might provoke counter-measures. On their 72
arrival, the Athenians immediately arrested the envoys as troublemakers, together with such fugitives as they had won over, and deposited them on Aegina.

Meanwhile, those in charge of affairs at Corcyra, after the arrival of [2]
a trireme from Corinth with Spartan envoys, launched an attack on the popular forces[2] and defeated them in a battle. Come nightfall the latter [3]
retreated to the acropolis and the high parts of the city, where they gathered and established themselves, also keeping control of the Hyllaic harbour. Their opponents seized the market-area, where most of them lived, and the harbour facing the mainland.

The next day the two sides skirmished a little and each sent word to 73
the fields to try and rally the slaves to their cause, promising them their freedom. Most of the domestic slaves sided with the people, while 800 mercenaries from the mainland supported their opponents.

A day passed, then there was fighting again; and this time the people 74
won, thanks to their stronger positions and superior numbers. Their womenfolk also boldly joined in the fighting, hurling pots and tiles from their houses and braving the turmoil with a courage that belied their gender. By late afternoon it was a rout, and the oligarchic party was afraid [2]
the people would overwhelm the arsenal at a single push and kill them all. They therefore set fire to the houses surrounding the market-place and

[1] Literally, 'to have the same friends and enemies', the usual formula for an offensive and defensive alliance, that is, 'a full alliance'.

[2] The *demos*, that is 'the people' as opposed to 'the few': see glossary.

to the tenement blocks in order to halt the advance, sparing neither their own houses nor other people's, so that a great deal of merchandise caught fire and the whole city was in danger of being completely destroyed had a wind sprung up to carry the flames in that direction.

Both sides then stopped fighting and stayed quiet during the night with sentries in place. Following the people's victory, the Corinthian ship stole out of harbour and most of the mercenaries made their way back to the mainland unobserved.

75 The next day Nicostratus son of Diitrephes, an Athenian general, came to help from Naupactus, bringing with him twelve ships and 500 Messenian[1] hoplites. He tried to negotiate a settlement, and persuaded them to accept a mutual agreement whereby they put on trial the ten men chiefly responsible (who had already left); the rest should make peace with each other and live together, and should also enter into a full alliance with Athens. After arranging this he was preparing to sail away, [2] but the leaders of the popular party persuaded him to leave behind with them five of his ships to make it less likely that their opponents would make any kind of move, while they would man the same number of ships and send those with him. He agreed to that and they selected their own [3] opponents as the ones to go in the ships. But the latter feared that they might be sent off to Athens and sat down as suppliants in the temple of the Dioscuri. Nicostratus tried to persuade them to leave and reassure [4] them; but he had no effect, and the populace used this as a pretext to arm themselves, interpreting their opponents' distrust about sailing with Nicostratus as a symptom of trouble. They seized arms from the houses of the men and would have killed any they encountered had not Nicostratus intervened to stop them. The rest of them, seeing what was going on, [5] retreated as suppliants to the temple of Hera, no fewer than 400 of them in total. Whereupon the populace, fearing that they might cause trouble, persuaded them to get up and leave and conveyed them to the island in front of the temple of Hera, where they sent out provisions for them.

76 At this stage in the unrest, four or five days after the men were transported to the island, the Peloponnesian ships arrived from Cyllene, where they had been anchored after their crossing from Ionia. There were fifty-five of them, under the command of Alcidas as before, with Brasidas on

[1] These were the Messenians resettled at Naupactus after the uprising of 457–56 at Ithome (I 103).

board as his adviser. They anchored at the harbour of Sybota on the mainland, and then sailed at dawn for Corcyra.

77 The Corcyraeans, in great confusion and frightened both by events in the city and by the onset of the enemy fleet, worked on making ready sixty ships all at the same time and sent them out against the enemy as fast as they were manned, although the Athenians were recommending that they should be allowed to sail out first and that the Corcyraeans should follow later with all their ships in one group. [2] As the Corcyraean ships approached the enemy in this scattered fashion, two of them deserted immediately, while in the rest the crews were fighting amongst themselves, and there was no sort of order in anything they did. [3] When the Peloponnesians saw the confusion they were in they arrayed twenty of their ships against the Corcyraeans but all the rest against the twelve ships of the Athenians, two of which were the *Salaminia* and *Paralus*.

78 The Corcyraeans, who were engaging the enemy ineffectively and with few ships at a time, were suffering in their area of the battle. The Athenians for their part were nervous of the enemies' superior numbers and the risk of encirclement; so instead of attacking the main body or the middle section of the ships arrayed against them they charged the wing and sank one ship. When the enemy reacted by forming a circle they sailed round them and tried to throw them into confusion. [2] The Peloponnesian ships facing the Corcyraeans observed this and, fearing a repetition of the events at Naupactus,[1] went to their help, and the whole of the Peloponnesian fleet now combined in an attack on the Athenians. [3] The Athenians started retreating and backed water, wanting to give the Corcyraeans as much time as possible to escape back into harbour, while they themselves slowly made their retreat keeping the enemy engaged in formation against them. [4] Such was the sea battle, which lasted until sunset.[2]

79 The Corcyraeans now feared that their enemies might follow up their victory by sailing up to attack them in the city and might either take on board the men in the island or start some other initiative. They therefore brought back the men on the island to the temple of Hera and set guards over the city. [2] The Peloponnesians, however, although victorious in the sea battle, did not have the confidence to attack the city by sea but sailed away to the mainland from where they had set out, taking with them

[1] See II 83–84.

[2] The Corcyraean performance here is rather at odds with their claims at I 32–36 about their importance as a naval power.

thirteen Corcyraean ships they had captured. They made no more effort [3]
to attack the city the next day either, although people there were in a state of disorder and panic and Brasidas is said to have recommended this to Alcidas (but he did not have an equal voice). Instead, they landed on the promontory of Leucimme and plundered the fields there.

Meanwhile, the populace in Corcyra, petrified lest the ships should **80**
come and attack them, entered into discussions with the suppliants and the others about how the city was to be saved. They even persuaded some of them to board the ships and succeeded in manning thirty of them in anticipation of the attack. The Peloponnesians, however, continued [2]
wasting the land until midday and then sailed away; and towards nightfall the news was flashed[1] to them that sixty Athenian ships were heading in their direction from Leucas. These were ships the Athenians had decided to dispatch, under the command of Eurymedon son of Thoucles, when they learned about the civil unrest in the city and the impending attack on Corcyra by Alcidas and his ships.

The Peloponnesians, therefore, set off home following the coastline – **81**
that night, at once and at speed.[2] They carried their ships over the Leucadian isthmus, to avoid being seen if they sailed round it, and so got away. The Corcyraeans for their part, when they realised that the Attic [2]
ships were sailing towards them and the enemy ships were departing, took the Messenians who had previously been outside the city and brought them in. They then ordered the ships they had manned to sail around into the Hyllaic harbour, and while the ships were on their way round they killed any of their enemies they caught. They also put ashore all of the men they had persuaded to go on to the ships and did away with them too, then went to the temple of Hera, persuaded about fifty of the supplicants there to stand trial and condemned them all to death. The majority of [3]
the suppliants, however, whom they had failed to persuade, when they saw what was happening set about putting an end to each other's lives right there in the temple precincts; and some hanged themselves from trees, while others took their own lives any way they could. For the seven [4]
days that Eurymedon stayed there after arriving with his sixty ships, the

[1] We do not know quite how these fire-signals worked or how much detailed information they could transmit, but Polybius X 43–7, commenting on Aeneas Tacticus' fourth-century manual on siege-craft (VII 4), suggests that the devices were very ingenious. See also II 94.1, III 22.7–8, IV 42.4 and index (signals).

[2] A powerful short sentence, indicating a humiliating over-reaction and retreat, which puts the Peloponnesians in not much better a light as a naval power than the Corcyraeans.

Corcyraeans went on slaughtering those they took to be their enemies: some they charged with overthrowing the people, but some were in fact killed because of personal feuds, and others at the hands of those who owed them money they had lent them. Death came in every shape and [5] form, and everything that is liable to happen in such a situation did take place – and worse besides. Father killed son, men were dragged from temples and killed right beside them, and some were even walled up in the temple of Dionysus and died there.

Such was the savage progress of the civil strife,[1] and it seemed all the **82** worse because it was the first of its kind, though later practically the whole Greek world was in turmoil as everywhere there were rival efforts by the leaders of the populace to bring in the Athenians and by the oligarchs to bring in the Spartans. In time of peace they would have had neither pretext nor inclination to ask for help; but when these states were at war any faction seeking radical change readily found allies who could be brought in both to help damage their opponents and to bolster their own position. Civil strife inflicted many a terrible blow on the cities, as [2] always does and always will happen while human nature remains what it is, though the degree and kind of the damage may vary in each case according to the particular circumstances. In times of peace and prosperity cities and individuals alike show better judgement because they do not fall prey to forces beyond their control. But war is a violent master: it robs us of the means of providing easily for our daily life and needs, and it usually generates passions[2] to match our circumstances.

Civil strife therefore became a fact of political life, and those cities [3] affected later rather than sooner, hearing what had happened elsewhere, went to ever greater extremes in inventing ingenious forms of attack and outlandish reprisals. Men assumed the right to reverse the usual [4] values in the application of words to actions. Reckless audacity came to be thought of as comradely courage, while far-sighted hesitation became well-disguised cowardice; moderation was a front for unmanliness; and to understand everything was to accomplish nothing. Wild aggression was a mark of manhood, while careful planning for one's future security was a glib excuse for evasion. The troublemaker was always to be trusted, [5] the one who opposed him was to be suspected. The man who devised a

[1] The usual translation of *stasis* as 'civil war' seems anachronistic and inappropriate to the scale of these conflicts. Corcyra was quite small (see Hornblower I, pp. 472–3 on the probable numbers of combatants). See further glossary.

[2] *Orgas* (passions), to be contrasted with *gnomas* (judgement) above.

successful plot was intelligent, the one who detected it still cleverer; but the man who thought ahead to try and find some different option was a threat to party[1] loyalty and must have been intimidated by his opponents. In short, the way to be praised was to be first in planning an outrage and the cheerleader for others who had never considered it.

Indeed, the ties of family became less close than those of party since [6] party members had no inhibitions about any venture. Their associations did not exist to promote welfare in accordance with established laws but to subvert the law for selfish advantage. The strength of their pledges of loyalty to each other depended less on the sanction of divine law than on their partnership in crime. If opponents made attractive pro- [7] posals they responded, when in a position of strength, with defensive counter-measures rather than with generous acceptance. To get revenge on someone mattered more than not being hurt in the first place oneself. And if oaths of reconciliation were ever exchanged they were binding just for the time being, since each side only made them when they had no other options and no other source of power; but when the opportunity arose, the one who got in first with his attack, if he saw the other off-guard, enjoyed a vengeance all the sweeter because it was a breach of trust and not done openly; this gave him a margin of safety, but he further calculated that by using deception to get the upper hand he also took the prize for intelligence. As a rule, people are more readily called 'clever' when wicked than 'good' when stupid,[2] and they take pride in the first name but are ashamed of the second.

At the root of all this was the desire for power, based on personal greed [8] and ambition, and the consequent fanaticism of those competing for control. The leaders in the various cities would each of them adopt specious slogans professing the cause either of 'political equality for the masses' or 'aristocracy – the government of moderation'; they pretended in their speeches to be competing for the public good, but in fact in their struggle to dominate each other by any available means they brazenly committed all manner of atrocities and perpetrated even worse acts of revenge, with no regard for the constraints of justice and the public interest; each

[1] *Hetaireiai* (or *hetairiai*) were party associations or clubs with both a political and a social function (see glossary and Hornblower I, p. 484). At III 82.6 below I use the more neutral 'associations' to translate *sunodoi* (which does not here mean much more than 'gatherings').

[2] This contrast has been variously understood. See Gomme II, pp. 378–9 and Macleod, *Collected Essays*, pp. 128 and 138. Textual changes might support the more obvious sense 'most men would prefer to be thought clever criminals than simple saints'.

recognised only the limitations set by their immediate appetites, and each stood ready to indulge to the full the animosities of the moment, either by passing unjust votes of condemnation or seizing control by brute force. As a result, neither side behaved with any higher scruples,[1] but those who found a good-sounding explanation for their dreadful deeds enjoyed the better reputation. And the citizens who were in the middle fell prey to both parties, either because they would not take sides or because their very survival was resented.

So it was that every kind of wickedness took root in Greece as a result 83
of these civil conflicts. Simplicity of spirit, which is such an important part of true nobility,[2] was laughed to scorn and vanished, while people
were largely divided into opposite and mutually suspicious camps. No [2]
words were binding enough, no oath terrible enough, to reconcile them; all those who were sufficiently strong calculated that it was hopeless to expect any security and preferred to protect themselves against injury
rather than rely on trust. And the less intelligent were the ones who [3]
most often came out on top. They were afraid that because of their own shortcomings and their opponents' cleverness they might be defeated in any battle of words and be caught unawares by plots devised by their quick-witted opponents. They therefore committed themselves boldly to
action. Those, on the other hand, who disdainfully assumed that they [4]
would foresee things well in advance and that there was no need to secure by action what would come to them by power of intellect – they were instead taken off-guard and perished.

[It was in Corcyra, then, that most of these outrages were first perpe- 84
trated.[3] There were all the acts of retaliation you might expect men to

[1] 'With *eusebeia*', literally 'with (religious) piety'. An interesting expression here since though Thucydides regularly refers to religious behaviour and belief he does not generally seem to endorse them himself.

[2] Literally, 'Simplicity (*to euethes*), in which a noble nature (*to gennaion*) most partakes'. Gomme (II, pp. 380–1) interprets this the opposite way, to mean that nobility is a large part of simplicity, but that would be confusing in context; see further Martha C. Nussbaum, *Fragility and Goodness: luck and ethics in Greek tragedy and philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 507–8 n24.

[3] Chapter 84 is thought by most scholars not to be by Thucydides, mainly for the external reason that it was either not known or thought to be spurious in the ancient world. On the other hand, it is unclear who else could have written it and for what purpose. The syntax is certainly up to the usual standard of complexity (especially in the opening sentence, which in the Greek runs right down to '. . . frenzy of passion') and it is hard to imagine even a clever imitation being as stylistically rough as this. Could the chapter be some sort of draft by Thucydides that he later discarded or failed to integrate properly with the rest of the text?

commit when they see an opportunity for revenge on rulers who have shown them more arrogance than moderation. There were the deliberate crimes of those who were prepared to break the law to escape their familiar treadmill of poverty and who as a result of their hardships cast especially covetous eyes on their neighbours' property. And there were acts of savage and pitiless aggression by people who were not in this case motivated by personal gain but who turned particularly on their equals[1] in a frenzy of uncontrollable passion. At this crisis in the breakdown of [2] civic life human nature, which is in any case conditioned to defy the laws in doing wrong, now triumphed over them and revelled in showing itself powerless against passion, too strong for justice and hostile to anything superior. No one would otherwise have put revenge before reverence and profit before the avoidance of wrongdoing, but for the pernicious power of envy. As for the common laws about such things, from which everyone [3] derives hopes of their own salvation when facing disaster, men see fit to abolish them in advance when they are inflicting revenge on others, instead of leaving them in place against some time of danger when they might need their protection.]

These, then, were the outbreaks of violent passion – the first of their **85** kind – that the Corcyraeans in the city unleashed on each other, and Eurymedon and the Athenian ships sailed away. Later on, the Corcyraeans [2] who escaped (about 500 of them managed to save themselves) seized the fortifications on the mainland, and so took control of the Corcyraean territory across from the city and used that as a base for raids on those in the island; they did a great deal of damage and there was a serious famine in the city. They also sent envoys to Sparta and Corinth to negotiate [3] their return to Corcyra; but since nothing came of those discussions they later procured boats and mercenaries, and about six hundred of them in all crossed over to the island. There they burned their boats, to leave themselves no option but winning control of the land, then went up to Mount Istone, built a fort there and started destroying the people in the city and taking control of the countryside.

Towards the end of the same summer the Athenians dispatched twenty **86** ships to Sicily under the command of Laches son of Melanopus and

[1] Literally, 'attacking from equal'. The contrast presumably is between attacks on those better off (who are therefore envied) and attacks on one's equals (who may provoke more gratuitous aggression). Alternatively, the phrase *apo* [*tou*] *isou* might possibly carry some sense of 'out of a desire for equality', that is, to drag the other person down. For the same phrase see also III 37.4n and glossary.

Charoeades son of Euphiletus. War had broken out there between the [2]
Syracusans and the Leontines. The Syracusans had as allies all the Dorian cities except Camarina – the same ones that had enrolled in the Spartan alliance from the very start of the war but had not yet joined in the actual fighting; while the Leontines had on their side the Chalcidian cities[1] and Camarina. In Italy the Locrians sided with the Syracusans, while the Rhegians sided with their kinsmen, the Leontines. The Leontine alliance [3]
accordingly sent for help to Athens, appealing both to an ancient alliance and to the fact that the Athenians were Ionians, and persuaded them to send them ships, blockaded as they were by the Syracusans both by land and sea. The Athenians did send the ships, ostensibly on the grounds [4]
of their kinship, but also because they wanted to prevent grain from being imported into the Peloponnese from that area and to test out the possibility of bringing affairs in Sicily under their control. They therefore [5]
established themselves at Rhegium in Italy and went to war together with their allies.

And so the summer ended.

Winter [III 87–88]

The following winter the plague struck the Athenians for a second time – 87
not that it had ever left them entirely, though there had at least been some respite.[2] This second outbreak lasted a year or more, the first having [2]
been for two full years, and no greater calamity was ever inflicted on the Athenians or so weakened their power.[3] No fewer than 4,400 from the [3]
hoplite ranks died and 300 cavalrymen,[4] and an untold number from the population at large. There were also many earthquakes throughout the [4]
land at this time: in Athens, in Euboea and Boeotia, and especially at Orchomenus in Boeotia.

During the same winter the Athenians in Sicily and the Rhegians sent a 88
force of thirty ships against the Aeolian Islands, as they are called, which are invulnerable to attack in the summer because of the lack of water

[1] That is, Naxos, Leontini and Rhegium, founded by Chachis from Euboea (see VI 3.1 and 4.5).

[2] For the first outbreak, see II 47–55.

[3] A striking judgement, and one wonders whether or not this was written before the final defeat in Sicily in 413.

[4] That is, about 4,400 from about 13,000 from the hoplite class and 300 from the 1,200 cavalrymen (see II 13.6).

there.[1] These islands are inhabited by the Liparians, who are colonists [2]
of the Cnidians. They live in one not very large island called Lipara and use that as a base from which to cultivate the others: Didyme, Strogyle and Hiera.[2] People there believe that Hephaestus has his forge on Hiera, [3]
because of the mighty fire they see it emitting by night and the smoke by day. These islands lie off the coast of the Sicels and Messinians[3] and were allied with the Syracusans. The Athenians destroyed their crops, [4]
but when the inhabitants did not come over to their side they sailed away back to Rhegium.[4]

So the winter ended, and with it the fifth year of the war that Thucydides wrote.

[1] See map 4, p. lxiv. [2] Now the islands of Salina, Stromboli and Vulcano.

[3] Here (and at 90 below) the inhabitants of the town in north-east Sicily not the one in the Peloponnese (the latter reappear at 94.3). The Greek confusingly has the same word for both places and I have used the modern names of Messina and Messenia to distinguish them.

[4] Gomme remarks, equally pithily, 'a singularly unimpressive end to an unimportant expedition'; but we learn from III 90.1 that there must have been many even more inconsequential (and unrecorded) engagements.

Sixth year of the war, 426–25 [III 89–116]

Summer [III 89–102]

The following summer the Peloponnesians and their allies, led by Agis, **89**
son of Archidamus and king of the Spartans, advanced as far as the Isthmus on their way to invade Attica; but there were a number of earthquakes
so they turned back again and no invasion took place that year. At about [2]
the same time as all these earthquakes were happening, the sea at Orobiae on Euboea receded from what had been the shoreline, then reared up in a wave and overran part of the city. It subsided in some places but engulfed others, so what was formerly dry land is now sea; and the wave killed
everyone who could not scramble up in time to higher ground. There was [3]
a similar inundation at Atalante, the island off the coast of the Opuntian Locrians, and that carried away part of the Athenian fort and wrecked one
of the two ships beached there. At Peparethus too the waters receded some [4]
way, but here they did not flood back; and an earthquake demolished part
of the city wall there as well as the town hall and a few other houses. The [5]
cause of this phenomenon in my view is that at the point where the force of the earthquake is greatest the sea retreats and then suddenly rushes back with renewed power and so produces the inundation. Without an earthquake I do not think anything like this would happen.

During the same summer the war went on in Sicily in various dif- **90**
ferent forms and circumstances – Siceliots[1] fighting each other and the

[1] The 'Siceliots' here are the Sicilian Greeks (descended from Greek colonists) and the 'Sicels' (88.2 above) are the earlier inhabitants of Sicily (originally from Italy). Thucydides gives his summary of early Sicilian history at VI 2–5.

Athenians acting together with their allies. However, I shall record only the most significant of these events – those involving either the Athenians and their allies acting together or the Athenians' enemies acting against them.[1] After the Athenian general Charoeades had been killed in action [2] by the Syracusans, Laches had sole control of the fleet and led the allies in an expedition against Mylae, a place belonging to the Messinians. It so happened that there were two tribes of Messinians garrisoned at Mylae and they had actually prepared some sort of ambush against the landing party. The Athenians and their allies routed the men waiting in ambush, [3] killing many of them, and in an attack on the garrison's defences forced the people of Mylae to agree a surrender of the acropolis and to join them in a campaign against Messina. Subsequently, at the approach of [4] the Athenians and their allies, the Messinians also surrendered, made hostages over to them and provided the other forms of guarantee.

The same summer the Athenians sent thirty ships around the Pelo- **91** ponnese under the command of Demosthenes son of Alcisthenes and Procles son of Theodorus, and a further sixty ships with 2,000 hoplites to Melos, under the command of Nicias son of Niceratus. The Melians [2] were islanders and unwilling to be subject to Athens, or even to join their alliance, and the Athenians wanted to force them into it.[2] The Melians [3] did not submit, however, although their land was ravaged, and the Athenians left Melos and sailed on to Oropus in Graea. They put in there by night and the hoplites straightaway left the ships and went on foot to Tanagra in Boeotia. The army from Athens joined them there in full [4] force, under the command of Hipponicus son of Callias and Eurymedon son of Thucles, having at some prearranged signal travelled overland and come to the same spot. They set up camp and spent the same day [5] plundering Tanagra, then spent the night there. The next day they won a battle against the Tanagrans, who had gone out to engage them, and some Thebans who had come in support. They took their arms, set up a trophy and returned, some to Athens and others to the ships. Nicias [6] sailed along the coast with his sixty ships, wasted the seaboard of Locri and then returned home.

[1] Hornblower hails this as 'a major programmatic statement' (II, p. 498), but it may just be a practical reminder of his main theme. His interest in these minor squabbles is in showing how the great powers sought to exploit them and how the smaller powers in turn exploited their interventions for their own purposes.

[2] Noteworthy as a precursor of the later assault on Melos in 416, dramatised in the famous description and debate at V 84–116.

At about the same time the Spartans founded Heracleia, their colony **92**
in Trachis, with the following purpose in mind.[1] The people of Malis [2]
taken as a whole divide into three separate groups: Paralians, Hiereans
and Trachinians. Of these the Trachinians had suffered very badly in
a war with their neighbours the Oetaeans and first thought of attaching
themselves to the Athenians; but they then became afraid that they could
not trust them and instead approached the Spartans, sending Teisamenus
there as their envoy. The Dorians, from the mother-city of Sparta, joined [3]
in this mission too and with the same requests, since they were also
suffering at the hands of the Oetaeans. The Spartans listened to their [4]
appeals and were minded to send out a colony. They wanted to support
both the Trachinians and the Dorians, and at the same time the city
seemed to them well placed for their war with Athens: a fleet could be
made ready there for an attack on Euboea with only a short crossing to
make, and it gave useful access to Thrace. All in all, they were very eager
to found a settlement there.

So they first consulted the god at Delphi[2] and with his approval sent out [5]
settlers, drawn both from their own citizens and the 'outsiders',[3] and they
invited to join them any other Greeks who so wished, except for Ionians,
Achaeans and some other peoples. Three Spartans were the founding
leaders of the colony: Leon, Alcidas and Damagon. They established and
fortified anew the city that is now called Heracleia, located some four
and a half miles from Thermopylae and just over two miles from the
sea. They began building dockyards and also blocked off the side facing
Thermopylae, right at the pass, to make the place easier to defend.

While the formation of this city was under way the Athenians were at **93**
first alarmed, thinking that its establishment was aimed at Euboea, since
there was only a short crossing from there to Cenaeum on Euboea. Things
turned out contrary to their expectations, however, and nothing terrible
resulted from the colony at all. The reason was that both the Thessalians, [2]
who were dominant in that region, and the people in whose territory the
city was established were afraid that their neighbours might become very
powerful. So they continually oppressed and attacked the new settlers

[1] This was an unusual strategy for the Spartans and therefore a significant one, to which Thucydides devotes two chapters here. The scale of the colony was impressive, but it was to come under pressure later (V 51–52).

[2] A conventional procedure in founding a colony but probably not a mere formality, even at this period (see Hornblower I, pp. 504–5).

[3] The *perioikoi* (see glossary).

until they finally wore them down, even though there had originally been a great many of them (for everyone had come there confident in the security of the place because the Spartans were its founders). In addition, the leaders sent out from Sparta did a great deal themselves to ruin matters and cause the depopulation, frightening most people there by their harsh and at times unfair government, so that their neighbours found it all the easier to prevail over them.

94 The same summer, and at about the same time as the Athenians were detained on Melos, the Athenians from the thirty ships that were off the Peloponnese first killed some guards they had ambushed at Ellomenum in Leucadia, then moved against Leucadia itself with a larger armament, consisting of the full force of accompanying Acarnanians (except for the Oeniadae), Zacynthians, Cephallenians and twenty-five ships of the Corcyraeans. The Leucadians' land was ravaged both outside and inside [2] the isthmus (on which Leucas and the temple of Apollo stand), but they were outnumbered and forced to remain passive. The Acarnanians for their part urged Demosthenes, the Athenian general, to wall the Leucadians off, thinking it would be easy to besiege them and be rid of a city that had always been hostile to them. Demosthenes, however, was at [3] the same time being persuaded by the Messenians that with such a large force assembled he had a fine opportunity to attack the Aetolians, since they were hostile to Naupactus; and if he could overcome them he would then find it that much easier to bring the rest of the mainland there over to the Athenian side. The Aetolians, they told him, were a great and warlike [4] people, but they lived in unwalled villages, scattered over a wide area, and since they were only lightly armed they should be easy to subdue before they could combine. They recommended that he attack the Apodotians [5] first, then the Ophioneans, and after them the Eurytanians. These last constituted the largest part of the Aetolians; they speak a language very hard to comprehend and are eaters of raw flesh, it is said. If these tribes were taken, the Aetolians urged, the rest would come over easily.

95 Demosthenes was persuaded by this plan, partly in order to please the Messenians, but more particularly because he also thought that without using Athenian manpower he and his mainland allies, if joined by the Aetolians, would be able to make an overland expedition against the Boeotians. They would go through the territory of the Ozolian Locrians to Cytinium in Doris, keeping Parnassus on their right, until they descended to the territory of the Phocians. He thought the latter would surely be eager to join in the campaign in view of their long-standing friendship with

the Athenians, or else they could be forced to do so (and the Phocaeans have Boeotia right on their border). He therefore set out with his whole army from Leucas, despite the objections of the Acarnanians, and sailed along the coast to Solliun. He shared his plan with the Acarnanians, [2] but they were opposed to it because of his failure to besiege Leucas. So he set out on his expedition against the Aetolians without them, taking with him the rest of the army consisting of Cephallenians, Messenians, Zacynthians and the three hundred Athenian marines from their own ships (the fifteen ships from Corcyra having left). He made his base for [3] the expedition at Oeneon in Locris. These Ozolian Locrians were allies and they were to go out in full force and meet the Athenians in the interior. They were neighbours of the Aetolians and were similarly equipped, so it was thought a great help to have them join the expedition because of their knowledge of Aetolian warfare and the local terrain.

96 Demosthenes encamped with his army in the precinct of Nemean Zeus, where the poet Hesiod is said to have been killed by the local people (in fulfilment of an oracle foretelling this fate at Nemea[1]). Then he set out at dawn for Aetolia. On the first day he took Potidania, on the second [2] Crocyleum and on the third Teichium. There he paused and sent the war-booty back to Eupalium in Locris. His intention was to continue subduing other places this way until he reached the Ophioneans and then, if they would not submit, to go back to Naupactus and launch a later expedition against them. However, his invasion plans did not take [3] the Aetolians by surprise. They had been aware of them when they were first being formed, and when the army did invade the Aetolians all rallied in a great show of strength, including support from even the most remote Ophioneans stretching as far away as the Malian Gulf, the Bomians and Callians.

97 The Messenians, however, gave Demosthenes just the same advice as they had at the beginning, insisting that the conquest of Aetolia would be easy. They told him to move as quickly as possible against the villages and not to wait until they had all gathered together and organised their defence, but to try and take each as he came upon them in turn. Trusting [2] in this advice and hopeful of his good fortune – since he had met no opposition yet – he did not wait for the Locrians who were to have come

[1] Oracles were notoriously ambiguous and the point of this story is that the well-known Nemea was the other one, in the Peloponnese. Literature is full of such misunderstandings and realisations, for example, Oedipus in Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* and Henry IV in Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part 2*, IV.5.

in support (for he was greatly in need of light-armed javelin-throwers), but attacked Aegitium and stormed it in an assault. The inhabitants made their escape, however, and positioned themselves on the hills above the town, which stood on high ground some nine miles from the sea. The [3] Aetolians, who had by now arrived in support of Aegitium, attacked the Athenians and their allies, running down from the hills on all sides and throwing javelins. When the Athenians advanced, they retreated; when the Athenians fell back, they pressed the attack. The battle went on a long while in this way – alternate pursuits and attacks – and the Athenians came off worse in both.

As long as the archers still had arrows and were able to use them **98** the Athenians managed to hold out (the lightly armed Aetolians being pushed back when fired upon). But when the captain of the archers was killed and his men scattered, and the soldiers had become exhausted from their repeated exertions, and the Aetolians were pressing them hard and showering them with javelins, then eventually they were turned and fled. Plunging into impassable ravines and across unfamiliar terrain, they perished; for even their guide on the way, a Messenian called Cromon, had also been killed. The Aetolians kept throwing their javelins and since [2] they were both lightly armed and quick runners they caught up with many of those on the run and killed them. The majority of them, however, lost their way and got themselves into thickets from which there were no tracks out and which the Aetolians promptly set fire to and burned down around them. The rout and destruction of the Athenian army took every [3] conceivable form, and the survivors barely managed to make their escape to the sea and to Oeneon in Locris, the place from which they had started out. Many of the allies were killed and the Athenians themselves lost [4] about 120 hoplites. So many men and all of the same age – these were surely the best of all that died in this war from the city of Athens; and the second general, Procles, died there too.

They retrieved their dead under truce from the Aetolians and retreated [5] to Naupactus, from where they later returned in their ships to Athens. Demosthenes, however, remained behind in Naupactus and the area around, since he was afraid of the Athenian reaction after what had happened.[1]

[1] As well he might be. There seems to have been little consultation at 94 with the authorities back home. Compare Nicias' revealing remarks at VII 14.2. Demosthenes is later referred to as if he were a private citizen (102.3) and with his generalship in the past tense (105.3), which may indicate either that he was dismissed or that his term of office had come to its

Around the same time the Athenians off the coast of Sicily sailed to 99
Locris, made a landing there and defeated a force of Locrians who had
come out against them. They also captured a fort on the River Halex.

In the course of the same summer the Aetolians, who had previously 100
sent to Corinth and Sparta three envoys – Tolophus the Ophonean,
Boriades the Eurytanian and Teisandrus the Apodotian – succeeded in
persuading them to send a force to join in an attack on Naupactus for their
role in bringing in the Athenians. So towards autumn the Spartans sent [2]
out 3,000 hoplites drawn from their allies, including 500 from Heracleia,
the city recently founded in Trachis. The Spartiate Eurylochus led the
force, with his fellow Spartans Macarius and Menedaïus appointed as his
deputies.

When the army was mustered at Delphi Eurylochus sent a messenger 101
to the Ozolian Locrians, since the road to Naupactus went through their
territory and he also wanted to get them to break away from the Athenians.
His chief collaborators among the Locrians were the Amphissians, who [2]
were made fearful by the hostility of the Phocians. They were the first to
offer him hostages[1] and they persuaded the others to do likewise in their
fear of the invading army – first in fact their neighbours, the Myoneans
(who had the most difficult passes into Locris), then the Ipneans, Messapi-
ans, Tritaeans, Chalaeans, Tolophonians, Hessians and Oeantheans. All
these joined in the expedition. The Olpaeans gave hostages but declined
to join in the invasion, while the Hyaeans refused even to give hostages
until after one of their villages by the name of Polis had been seized.

When preparations were complete and he had deposited the hostages at 102
Cytinium in Doris, Eurylochus advanced with his army through Locrian
territory against Naupactus, seizing on the march the towns of Oeneon and
Eupalium, which had refused to come over to him. Once in Naupactian [2]
territory they were joined by the Aetolians, and together they wasted the
land and seized the unfortified suburbs of the city. They also advanced
on and took Molycreon, the Corinthian colony now subject to Athens.
The Athenian Demosthenes, who happened still to be in the area round [3]
Naupactus after the events in Aetolia, had gained advance information
about the expedition and feared for the safety of the city. He therefore
went and persuaded the Acarnanians – with some difficulty in the light

appointed end; at any rate he displays just the same kind of independence again at 109.2, and by 114.1 a bold victory has restored his nerve.

[1] Presumably as some kind of surety, though this seems a rather negative form of alliance (see also III 90.4).

of his withdrawal from Leucas – to come to the aid of Naupactus. They [4] sent out with him on board the ships a thousand hoplites, who entered the place and secured it, since there had otherwise been some danger that those inside might not hold out, the walls being long and the defenders few in number.

When Eurylochus and those with him realised that the relieving army [5] had entered the town and that it was now impossible to take it by storm, they retreated, not to the Peloponnese but to what is now called Aeolis, also to Calydon and Pleuron and places in that area, and to Proschium in Aetolia. For the Ambraciots had come and persuaded them to join [6] them in attacking Amphilochian Argos, the rest of Amphilochia and also Acarnania, saying that if they got control of these places then they would bring the whole of the mainland into alliance with the Spartans.[1] Eurylochus was persuaded. He dismissed the Aetolians and held back [7] with his army in the area until such time as the Ambraciots might take the field around Argos and he should go to help them.

So the summer ended.

Winter [III 103–16]

The following winter the Athenians in Sicily marched out with their **103** Greek allies, accompanied by all those Sicels who had been subjected and forced into alliance by the Syracusans but had now defected from them to join the war on the Athenian side. Together they attacked the Sicel township, Inessa, where the Syracusans were in possession of the acropolis, but they were unable to capture it and retired. During their [2] retreat, however, the Syracusans left their fortified position to make an attack on the Athenian allies who were in the rear; they fell on them, routed part of the army and killed quite a few. After this, Laches and [3] the Athenians left the ships to make various landings into Locris, and at the River Caïcinus they won a battle against about 300 Locrians who had come out with Proxenus son of Capato to fight them. They captured some of their arms and then departed.

The same winter the Athenians also purified Delos, in accordance **104** with some oracle, it seems. It had been purified before by the tyrant Peisistratus – not the whole of it but only the part of the island visible

[1] Effectively the same promise as made by the Messenians to Demosthenes at 94.3, and Eurylochus is here persuaded just as easily.

from the temple. Now, however, it was all purified, and in the following way.[1] All the tombs of those who had died on Delos were removed and [2] it was decreed that in future no one should be allowed to die or be born on the island but should be taken across to Rheneia. Polycrates was the tyrant of Samos who for a time controlled the seas with his fleet and ruled over the other islands; and when he took possession also of Rheneia it is such a short distance from Delos that he dedicated the island to Delian Apollo by attaching it to Delos with a chain.

It was after this purification that the Athenians first instituted the Delian festival. Long ago there used to be a great gathering of the Ionians [3] and the neighbouring islanders on Delos. They attended the festival with their wives and children, as the Ionians do now at the festival of Ephesus. There were both athletic and musical contests there then, and the cities would bring along choruses. Homer is quite clear about such details, as [4] he shows in the following lines taken from *The Hymn to Apollo*:[2]

> Delos it was, Phoebus, that most delighted your heart,
> There when the long-robed Ionians gathered
> With their children and wives on your sacred way.
> There when with boxing and dancing and song
> They delight you through the contests they hold in your honour.

Homer makes it clear in some lines from the same hymn that there were [5] also musical contests which they went there to compete in; for when he celebrates the Delian dance of the women in his songs he ends his tribute with these words, in which he also refers to himself:

> Come now, may Apollo favour you, and Artemis too,
> I bid you all fare well. In times hereafter
> Remember me, when some other man from our earthly world
> Comes here, a weary wanderer, and asks
> 'Maidens, which man is the sweetest singer
> Of those who come here, and in whom do you most delight?'
> Then do you all answer him well with this soft reply,
> 'A blind man, who dwells in the rocky isle of Chios'.

This is Homer's evidence that long ago too there was a great gathering [6] and festival in Delos. Later the islanders and the Athenians continued to

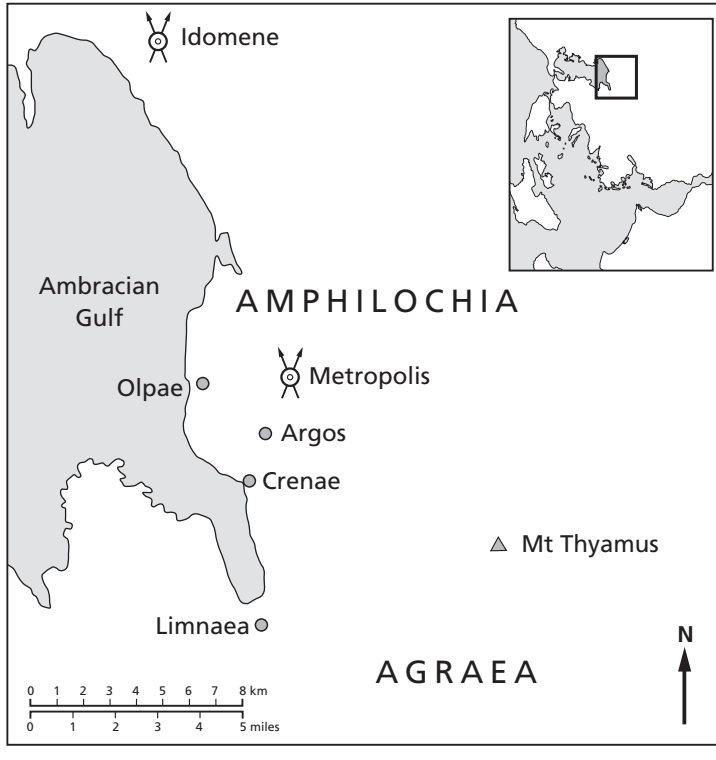
[1] The purification was mentioned before at I 8. This is quite a long digression but not an uncharacteristic one (see further Hornblower I, pp. 525–6).

[2] Not now thought to be by Homer but a later sixth-century BC composition. Thucydides' version differs from our text in a few small respects and looks slightly suspect.

Map 15. Campaigns of Demosthenes and Eurylochus in the west (426/5)[1]

send choruses with sacrifices, but the contests and most of the events were abolished, no doubt because of various crises, until this time when the Athenians restored the competition and added horse-races, something not done previously.

[1] On the location of Molychrium, see Gomme II, pp. 219–20 and Hornblower I, p. 365; and on Phytia, see Gomme II, p. 419.



Map 16. Amphilochia detail[1]

During the same winter the Ambraciots kept the promise they had **105**
made to Eurylochus in persuading him to keep his army there and
marched out against Amphilochian Argos with a force of 300 hoplites.
They invaded Argive territory and captured Olpae, a stronghold on a hill
by the sea, which the Acarnanians had once fortified and used as a com-
mon court of justice and which is about three miles from the coastal city of
Argos. Some of the Acarnanians went to the defence of Argos, while oth- [2]
ers set up camp in the place called Crenae,[2] to stop the Peloponnesians

[1] Based on the locations suggested by N. G. L Hammond in *Studies in Greek History* (Oxford University Press, 1973), fig. 21, p. 473. See also the text of ch. 14 in that work, especially pp. 475–84.

[2] 'Springs', see Gomme II, pp. 426–8.

with Eurylochus slipping through undetected to join the Ambraciots. They also sent for Demosthenes, who as general had led the Athenian [3] expedition into Aetolia, inviting him to come and act as their leader; and they sent for the twenty Athenian ships which happened to be off the Peloponnese under the command of Aristotle son of Timocrates and Hierophon son of Antimnestus. The Ambraciots at Olpae sent a messen- [4] ger back to their own city to tell them to come in force to support them, since they were afraid that the men with Eurylochus might not be able to get past the Acarnanians, with the result that they themselves would then either have to fight on their own or, if they wanted to retreat, would find themselves in danger.

106 When the Peloponnesians and Eurylochus realised that the Ambraciots had arrived at Olpae, they set off with all speed from Proschium to support them. They crossed the River Achelous and made their way through Acarnania, which was undefended because of the help sent to Argos, keeping the city of Stratus and its garrison on their right and the rest of Acarnania on their left. After going through the territory of the Stratians [2] they continued through Phytia, skirted the borders of Medeon, and then passed through Limnaea; and so they left Acarnania behind and entered the land of the Agraeans, which was friendly territory. Reaching Mount [3] Thyamus, which is part of Agraea, they crossed over it and descended into Argive territory, now in darkness, passing unobserved between the city of Argos and the Acarnanians on guard at Crenae to join the Ambraciots at Olpae.

107 The combined forces took up positions at dawn at a place called Metropolis and made their camp there. Soon afterwards the Athenians arrived at the Ambracian Gulf with their twenty ships in support of the Argives, and Demosthenes also arrived with 200 hoplites and sixty Athenian archers. The ships off Olpae blockaded the hill from the sea, [2] while the Acarnanians and a few of the Amphilochians (most of them being occupied fighting the Ambraciots) had already gathered at Argos and were preparing to do battle with their opponents. They chose Demosthenes to take command of the whole allied force, acting in concert with their own generals. He led them close to Olpae and made camp there, [3] with a great ravine separating the two forces.

For five days neither side made any move, but on the sixth day they drew up battle ranks. The Peloponnesian army was larger than Demosthenes' and outflanked it. Fearing encirclement, Demosthenes therefore placed an ambush party of hoplites and light-armed troops, about 400 men in

all, in an overgrown hollow track. At the moment the armies clashed they were to rush out and take the enemy in the rear at the point where his line overlapped. When preparations were complete on both sides they [4] engaged in close combat. Demosthenes held the right wing together with the Messenians and a few Athenian troops, while the various Acarnanian contingents and the Amphilochian javelin-throwers present held the rest of the line. Meanwhile, the Peloponnesians on their side were drawn up mixed in with the Ambraciots, except for the Mantineans who were massed more on the left wing, though not on the extreme left, where Eurylochus and his men were stationed facing Demosthenes and the Messenians.

108 When they closed on each other and the Peloponnesians on the left wing were outflanking the right wing of their opponents and were beginning to encircle it, the Acarnanians emerged from the ambush to attack them from behind and routed them so completely that they did not stand and fight but in their terror caused most of the rest of their army to take to flight as well; and they panicked all the more when they saw the contingent of their best troops under Eurylochus being cut down. It was the Messenians who were with Demosthenes in this part of the field who bore the brunt of the work. Meanwhile, the Ambraciots (who are the best fighters of all [2] those in this region) and those on the right wing were defeating those opposing them and pursued them to Argos. But when they returned and [3] saw most of their army defeated and the rest of the Acarnanians began to bear down on them, they made their escape – with some difficulty – to Olpae, suffering heavy losses on the way as they all rushed on without discipline or order (all, that is, except for the Mantineans who kept their ranks better than anyone else in the retreat). It was late in the day when the battle finally ended.

109 The next day, after the deaths of Eurylochus and Macarius, Menedaïus assumed sole command. The defeat had been so heavy that he was quite at a loss to know how he could either stay and face a siege, cut off as he was by the Athenian fleet by land and sea, or alternatively how he could find safety in retreat. He therefore made overtures to Demosthenes and the Acarnanian generals about the terms for a truce and a retreat, and also about the recovery of his dead. They did give back the dead, [2] and set up a trophy of victory for themselves and recovered their own dead, some 300 in number; but they did not agree to a retreat, at least not openly. Secretly, however, Demosthenes with his Acarnanian fellow commanders granted permission for a quick retreat to the Mantineans

and to Menedaïus and the other Peloponnesian leaders and any others of note among them. Their objective was to isolate the Ambraciots and the mob of mercenaries, and more especially to discredit the Spartans and Peloponnesians in the eyes of the Greeks in that region for betraying their own side and serving their own interests. So the Peloponnesians [3] took up their dead and quickly buried them as best they could, and those to whom permission had been granted began secretly planning their retreat.

Word was now brought to Demosthenes and the Acarnanians, however, 110 that the Ambraciots from the city of Ambracia were advancing through Amphilochia in full force in response to the original message from Olpae and intended to join up with the forces at Olpae, knowing nothing of what had happened. Demosthenes straightaway sent part of his army [2] to set ambushes on the route and to occupy strongholds in advance, and at the same time prepared to deploy the rest of his army against them.

Meanwhile, the Mantineans and the others who were in on the agree- 111 ment went out on the pretence of gathering herbs and firewood and stole away in small groups, while still gathering up the things they had supposedly gone out for; and once they had got well away from Olpae they started quickening their pace. The Ambraciots and the others who hap- [2] pened to have gone out in a body with them, when they realised they were getting away, themselves set off and broke into a run, hoping to catch them up. The Acarnanians at first thought that everyone was leaving in [3] the same way, contrary to the agreement, and they gave pursuit to the Peloponnesians. One of them even threw a javelin at some of the generals who were trying to restrain them and explain that there was an agreement, thinking that they were being betrayed. Eventually, however, they let the Mantineans and the Peloponnesians go on and set about killing the Ambraciots. And there was much dispute and uncertainty as to who was [4] a Mantinean and who was a Peloponnesian. In the end they killed about 200 of them, while the rest made their escape to the neighbouring country of Agraea where Salynthius, King of the Agraeans, who was friendly towards them, took them in.

Meanwhile, the Ambraciots from the city reached Idomene. Idomene 112 consists of two high hills, the larger of which had already been occupied by the troops who had been sent out ahead from the camp by Demosthenes and who had got there first without being observed; the smaller one the Ambraciots were the first to climb up and they made their camp

there. After supper Demosthenes went out with the rest of his army, [2] immediately after nightfall. Half of the army he took himself, making for the pass, while the rest went into the Amphilochian mountains. At [3] early dawn he fell on the Ambraciots, who were still in their beds and had no knowledge of the earlier events. On the contrary, they thought that these were their own men. Demosthenes had deliberately organised [4] the Messenians at the front with orders to engage the Ambraciots in conversation using the Doric dialect to inspire confidence among the sentries in the outposts, since it was still dark and they could not actually be seen. So he fell on their army, routed them and killed most of them on [5] the spot, while the rest fled to the mountains. But the roads were already [6] held, and the Amphilochians were familiar with their own country and were light-armed soldiers fighting hoplites, while the Ambraciots were ignorant of the terrain and did not know which way to turn; so the latter stumbled into ravines and into the ambushes set for them and were killed. They tried every means to escape and some even turned to the sea, which [7] was not far off, and when they saw the Attic ships which were sailing down the coast at just the time of this engagement they swam out towards them, thinking in the panic of the moment that if they had to die it would be better to be killed by the men in the ships than by the Amphilochians, who were barbarians and their worst enemies.

In this way, therefore, the Ambraciots suffered a disaster, and few out [8] of many returned in safety to their city.[1] The Acarnanians for their part stripped the corpses and after setting up trophies of victory returned to Argos.

The next day a herald came to them from the Ambraciots who had taken **113** refuge from Olpae among the Agraeans. He was requesting recovery of the bodies of the men they had killed following the first battle when the Ambraciots had left the camp along with the Mantineans and those protected by truce, but without themselves having the same immunity. However, when the herald saw the arms belonging to the Ambraciots from the city he was amazed at the quantity of them, knowing nothing of the disaster and thinking they must belong to his own party. And someone [3] asked him why he was so amazed and how many of his comrades were dead – the questioner assuming for his part that the herald came from those at Idomene.

[1] A characteristic Thucydidean expression, repeated in much the same words at I 110.1 (the Athenian defeat in Egypt) and VII 87.6 (the Sicilian disaster).

'Some two hundred', he said.

The questioner then persisted, 'But these are not the arms of two [4] hundred men – more than a thousand, surely?'

He responded, 'Then they don't belong to the men who fought alongside us.'

'Yes, they do,' he replied, 'that is, if you are the ones who fought yesterday, at Idomene.'

'But we did not fight anyone yesterday. That was the day before yesterday, in the course of the retreat.'

'Well, these were certainly the men we fought yesterday, the ones coming up to support you from the city of the Ambraciots.'

When the herald heard this and had realised that the relief force from [5] the city had been destroyed, he cried out loud, stunned by the magnitude of the disaster before him; and he left abruptly, without performing his mission and without asking further about the corpses. This was surely the [6] greatest disaster to befall any one Greek city in so few days in the whole course of the war. I have not recorded the number of those who died, because the total claimed is unbelievable in relation to the size of the city. I do know, however, that if the Amphilochians had been willing to follow the advice of Demosthenes and the Athenians and had attacked Ambracia they would have taken it at the first push; but as it was, they feared that if the Athenians were in control of it they would be more troublesome as neighbours.[1]

After this the Acarnanians allotted a third of the spoils to the Athenians **114** and distributed the rest among their cities. The Athenian share was seized from them on the voyage back, but the 300 sets of armour[2] set aside as Demosthenes' personal share, which still reside in the form of dedicatory offerings in the Attic sanctuaries, he brought back when he sailed home. This return was no doubt made less anxious by his exploits here, coming as they did after the disaster in Aetolia. The Athenians in the twenty ships [2] also left to return to Naupactus, and after the departure of Demosthenes and the Athenians the Acarnanians and Amphilochians granted permission to the Ambraciots and Peloponnesians who had taken refuge with

[1] This chapter has several notable features. There is the piece of extended dialogue, only paralleled in Thucydides by the Melian dialogue at V 87–111; the tragic devices of the arrival of the herald and the 'recognition' scene; the first-person judgement on a wartime catastrophe (cf. Mycalessus at VII 30.4); and the final confident, counterfactual assessment.

[2] Literally a 'panoply', which was a full set of armour, an expensive item used for a symbolic show of wealth.

Salynthius and the Agraeans to make their retreat from Oeniadae, where they had ended up after leaving Salynthius.

For the future, the Acarnanians and Amphilochians also concluded a [3] treaty and alliance with the Ambraciots, to last a hundred years. These were the terms. The Ambraciots were not to join the Acarnanians in military expeditions against the Peloponnesians, nor were the Acarnanians to join any made by the Ambraciots against the Athenians, but both were to defend each other's territory. The Ambraciots were to give back all the land and hostages that they held belonging to the Amphilochians, and they were not to give any support to Anactorium, which was at war with the Acarnanians. On these terms of agreement they ended the war. [4] Subsequently, the Corinthians sent to Ambracia a garrison of their own men, consisting of 300 hoplites, under the command of Xenocleides son of Euthycles, and these troops arrived there after making a difficult journey overland.

Such was the course of events in Ambracia.

During the same winter the Athenians in Sicily made a landing from **115** their ships on the territory of Himera, acting jointly with the Sicels who had invaded its borders from the interior. They also sailed against the Aeolian islands. Returning to Rhegium they caught up with Pythadorus [2] son of Isolochus, the Athenian general who had succeeded Laches and taken charge of his ships. Their allies in Sicily had sailed to Athens to [3] persuade them to support them with more ships; their case was that the Syracusans were in control of their land but they were kept from the sea by just a few ships, so they were preparing to assemble a fleet rather than just standing by looking on. The Athenians manned forty ships to [4] send them, both because they thought that would help end the war there more quickly and at the same time because they wanted to give their fleet some practice. They therefore dispatched a few ships with one of their [5] generals, Pythadorus, and planned to send out more with Sophocles son of Sostratidas and Eurymedon son of Thucles. Pythadorus, who by now [6] had taken over command of Laches' ships, sailed out towards the end of winter to the garrison post at Locri which Laches had earlier taken, and after being defeated in a battle by the Locrians he retreated.

At the very beginning of the next spring there was an eruption of fire **116** from Aetna, as had happened before, and it destroyed some of the land of the Catanaeans who live on the slopes of Mount Aetna (the biggest mountain in Sicily). They say that this eruption took place fifty years [2]

after the previous one and that there have been three eruptions in total in the period Sicily has been inhabited by Greeks.[1]

These were the events of this winter, and so ended the sixth year of the war Thucydides wrote. [3]

[1] According to Diodorus (XIV 59.3) there was also an eruption in 396 BC, which Thucydides seems not to take account of here, suggesting that he had at least stopped writing and revising by then, and indeed may well have already died (see introduction, p. xxii).

[BOOK IV]

Seventh year of the war, 425–24 [IV 1–51]

Summer [IV 1–49]

The following summer, at about the time the first ears of corn were 1
showing,[1] ten Syracusan and the same number of Locrian ships sailed
to Messina[2] in Sicily, where they had been invited in by the inhabitants,
and took control of it. Messina now revolted from the Athenians. The [2]
chief motive the Syracusans had for doing this was that the place offered
an entry point into Sicily and they were afraid that the Athenians might
establish a base there for some later attack with a larger force. The Locrians
for their part were motivated by their enmity with the Rhegians, whom
they wanted to engage in war on two fronts, both by land and by sea.
Indeed, the Locrians had at the same time mounted a full-scale invasion [3]
of Rhegian territory to stop the Rhegians going to help the Messinians;
they were also responding to some Rhegian exiles who lived among the
Locrians and had added their encouragement. The Rhegians had for a
long while been in a state of internal conflict and it was not possible for
them at that time to hold off the Locrians, who were consequently all
the more eager to attack them. The Locrians wasted their land and then [4]

[1] A number of fine seasonal distinctions are made by reference to the state of the harvest. See also 2.1 and 6.1 below and the note on the calendar (pp. lviii–lix).

[2] See III 88.3n on Messina (Sicily) and Messenia (Peloponnese). The latter crops up almost immediately at 3.2 below.

withdrew their infantry, while their ships continued to guard Messina. Meanwhile they were also manning other ships to be stationed at Messina and to continue the war from there.

2 At about the same time that spring, before the corn was fully ripe, the Peloponnesians and their allies invaded Attica, led by Agis, son of Archidamus and king of the Spartans. They encamped there and set about wasting the land.

[2] The Athenians meanwhile dispatched to Sicily the forty ships they had been equipping, together with the two remaining generals, Eurymedon and Sophocles (the third general, Pythadorus, had already arrived at Sicily). These two had instructions that while on their voyage they should [3] attend to the concerns of the Corcyraeans in the city, who were suffering from raids made by the exiles in the mountains. Moreover, sixty ships of the Peloponnesians had already sailed there to support the party in the mountains and since there was serious famine in the city they thought they would easily be able to take control of affairs there. Demosthenes was [4] now a private citizen after his return from Acarnania, but in response to a request from him the Athenians told him that he could if he wished make use of their fleet of forty ships for operations around the Peloponnese.

3 When the Athenians were off the coast of Laconia on their voyage and learned that the Peloponnesian ships were already at Corcyra, Eurymedon and Sophocles were all for pushing on to Corcyra, but Demosthenes urged that they should first put off at Pylos and do what he thought was needed there before continuing. The others disagreed, but by chance a storm got up and drove the ships into Pylos. Demosthenes immediately [2] recommended that they fortify the place (which was the project he had had in mind from the start in sailing with them). He pointed out that there was ample timber and stone there and that the location was naturally strong and was uninhabited, as was much of the surrounding region. Pylos is about forty-five miles from Sparta, situated in the land that was once Messenia (the Spartans call the place 'Coryphasium'[1]). The other [3] two generals said that if he wanted to waste public money there were plenty of uninhabited headlands in the Peloponnese he could occupy.[2] Demosthenes, however, took the view that this place was rather different from any other: there was a harbour close by and the Messenians, who

[1] Literally, 'a little headland'.

[2] Hornblower (II, p. 155 and I, pp. 387–8) sees this droll remark as a rare glimmer of humour in Thucydides (his other candidates being IV 40.2 and 84.2). Thucydides generally dealt more in paradox than humour, though (e.g. IV 12.3).

were the original inhabitants and spoke the same dialect as the Spartans, could inflict the maximum harm on them from this base and would at the same time form a reliable garrison there.

4 Demosthenes failed to persuade either the generals or the soldiers, even after later sharing his views with the divisional commanders;[1] so since they were in any case prevented from sailing on by the bad weather, they just stayed there idly until the soldiers themselves, with nothing else to do, felt prompted to go round and get on with fortifying the place. They [2] set to work with their bare hands, having no iron tools to work the stone, and picked up rocks, carried them along and fitted them in where they could. And where clay was needed they carried it on their backs, in the absence of any hods, stooping low to keep it in position as best they could with their hands clasped behind them to stop it falling off. They pressed [3] on in every way they could to finish the work on the most vulnerable parts before the Spartans could come and attack it, since for the most part the place was strong enough in itself not to need fortification.

5 The Spartans happened to be holding a festival at the time and when they heard this news they made light of it, supposing that when they did make a move either the Athenians would withdraw or they would easily take the place by force; and the fact that their army was still away near Athens also gave them some pause. The Athenians fortified the place on [2] the side facing inland, completing the most important tasks in six days, and then left Demosthenes there to guard it with five ships while most of the fleet pressed on with their voyage to Corcyra and Sicily.

6 When the Peloponnesians in Attica heard that Pylos had been occupied they quickly returned home. The Spartans among them and King Agis took the view that events at Pylos were becoming a domestic concern; and besides, since the invasion had taken place early in the year and the corn was still green, most of the men were short of food, and severe weather of an unseasonable kind was causing the army further distress. For all these [2] many reasons, then, they hastened to return and this turned out to be the shortest invasion of those they made, having spent just fifteen days in Attica.

7 At about the same time the Athenian general Simonides captured Eïon,[2] the Mendean colony in the Thracian region, which was hostile

[1] *taxiarchos*, head of a *taxis* (squadron), see glossary.

[2] Evidently different from the Eïon at the mouth of the Strymon, which had been subject to the Athenians for some time (see I 98.1 and index of names).

to Athens. He had gathered together a few Athenians from the garrisons and many more men from the allies in the area and took the city, which was betrayed from within. The Chalcidians and Bottiaeans immediately came to the town's rescue, however, and he was ejected with the loss of many of his troops.

8 On the return of the Peloponnesians from Attica the Spartiates and the 'outsiders'[1] living nearest to Pylos went at once to relieve the place, while the rest of the Spartan forces were slower to set out, having only just got back from other campaigning. They sent word round the Peloponnese [2] summoning help for Pylos as quickly as possible, and they also sent for the sixty ships they had at Corcyra, which were dragged across the Leucadian isthmus, eluded the Athenians ships at Zacynthus and made their way to Pylos, where their land forces were already in place.

[3] While these Peloponnesian ships were still on the way, however, Demosthenes managed to send out two ships ahead of them on a mission to notify Eurymedon and the Athenian fleet at Zacynthus to come at once since the place was now under threat. They sailed without delay [4] in response to Demosthenes' summons; meanwhile the Spartans were preparing an assault on the fortified area both by land and sea, hoping that they would easily be able to capture a structure built in such haste and occupied by so few men. At the same time they were expecting the relief [5] force of Athenian ships to come from Zacynthus, so they conceived a plan whereby, in case they failed to overrun the place first, they should also block up the entrances to the harbour to stop the Athenians anchoring inside it.

[6] Now, the island called Sphacteria stretches across the harbour and lies close in to it, thus making the harbour safe and the entrance to it narrow; at one end, that adjoining the Athenians' fortified position and Pylos, there is just space for two ships to pass, and at the other end facing the rest of the mainland there is space for eight or nine.[2] The island is wooded and trackless, being uninhabited, and it is about a mile and three-quarters long. The Spartans planned to close off the entrances, [7] with ships jammed tight together facing prow outwards; as for the island,

[1] For 'Spartiates' see I 6.4n, and for the 'outsiders' see *perioikoi* in the glossary.

[2] The distances here and in the description of the length of the island seem to be understated, though it is unclear whether this is Thucydides' inaccuracy or a result of some textual corruption (it could be 'eight or nine *stades*' and so 'about a mile'). See the topographical discussions in Gomme (III, pp. 443–4 and 482–6) and Hornblower (II, pp. 159–60).

they were afraid that the Athenians might use it as a base from which to conduct operations against them, so they disembarked some hoplites on it, stationing others along the coast of the mainland. In this way, [8] they thought, not only would the island become hostile territory for the Athenians but so would the mainland, where they would have nowhere to land (since there were no harbours facing the sea at Pylos outside this entrance to give them a base from which to support their troops). They on the other hand would probably be able to besiege the place without having a sea battle or incurring any risk, since there were no supplies of food within and the place had been occupied with such little preparation. With these thoughts in mind, then, they sent the hoplites across to the [9] island, selecting them by lot from all the companies. Several detachments had already passed over in succession; and the last to do so was the force of 420 men who were later captured there together with their accompanying helots, under the command of Epitadas son of Molobrus.

When Demosthenes saw that the Spartans were intending to attack him **9** simultaneously by land and sea, he started making his own preparations. He dragged the triremes he still had from those left to him up the beach to the protection of the fortifications and incorporated them in the stockade. He then armed the crews with shields – rather inadequate ones, mostly made from osiers, for there were no weapons to be had in this uninhabited place, and even these he took from a Messenian thirty-oared pirate-ship and its tender, which had just turned up. About forty of these Messenians were armed as hoplites and he made use of them along with the rest. Most [2] of the men – the hoplites and non-hoplites[1] alike – he stationed at the best-fortified and strongest points in the place on the side facing inland, with instructions to defend these against the enemy infantry if they attacked. Meanwhile he himself picked out sixty hoplites from the whole force and a few archers and went outside the wall down to the sea, to where he expected the enemy were most likely to try and land. The ground there was rocky and difficult where it faced the sea, but he thought they would be eager to force an attack there, at a point where the wall was at its weakest. Indeed, the Athenians themselves had not fortified this area [3] very strongly, not expecting ever to be beaten at sea, and Demosthenes knew that if the enemy could force a landing there the place could be taken. He therefore went right to the sea's edge and drew up the hoplites, [4]

[1] Literally, 'those without arms (*aoploi*) and the armed', but the former must in fact be those who are just armed like *psiloi* rather than hoplites (see also IV 33.2, 94.1 and glossary).

determined to hold off the enemy if he could, and addressed them in these terms.[1]

'Men, we are sharing this danger together, and under the force of circumstances like these none of you should seek to prove how clever he is by calculating in detail the full extent of the threats that surround us. Instead you must engage with the enemy without pause for thought but with the confidence that you will come through even this ordeal alive. For in the necessity we now face we have no time for calculation but must embrace the danger without delay. 10

Moreover, in my view the odds are in our favour so long as we have the [2] will to stand our ground and not be so aghast at their sheer numbers that we just throw away the actual advantages we have. For one thing, I think [3] the difficulty of making a landing in this terrain is a positive factor for us, which will help our side if we stand firm; but if we fall back and offer no resistance it will be easy enough for them to make their way despite the difficulty of the ground – and we shall then have an enemy that much more formidable, with no easy means to turn again and retreat even if we force him back; the enemy are easiest for us to repel when they are on their ships, but once they have landed they are on equal terms.

Then as regards their numbers, we need have no great fears, for no [4] matter how big their force the difficulty of getting in close to the shore is such that only a few of them will be able to fight at any one time; and this is not a larger army than ours fighting us on equal terms on land, but one operating from ships which need the many different factors in play at sea to come together in their favour.

So, I believe that their disadvantages outweigh our smaller numbers, [5] and at the same time I call on you, as Athenians who know from experience that you cannot ever force a ship-borne landing against an enemy on the shore if he holds his ground and does not fall back in fear of the tumult of noise and the menace of the approaching ships – I call on you in your

[1] This is usually referred to (and translated) as a brisk speech of exhortation, with a few key battle-field points emphasised; but in fact the speech is another complicated and difficult one syntactically and in this form it could scarcely have been delivered (or understood) in the conditions described (see also II 87.1n and 87.3n). A very literal translation of 10.3, for example, might go: 'For of the place the difficult-to-land I consider ours, which on the one hand with us staying becomes an ally, but on the other (us) retreating although difficult will be easy to cross with no one hindering, and we will have a more formidable enemy there not being an easy way back again for him, even if he is forced by us (for they are easiest to repel on the ships, but getting off then on the equal).'

turn now to stay and make your stand at the very water's edge to save both ourselves and our position.'

11 After this address by Demosthenes, the Athenians were made more confident and went down to the sea to take up positions right on the shore.
[2] The Spartans set out and simultaneously attacked the fortifications with their land army and with their fleet, forty-three ships in all, which had on board the admiral Thrasymelidas, son of Cratesicles and a Spartan citizen. And he made the attack just where Demosthenes had expected.
[3] The Athenians were therefore defending themselves from both directions, by land and by sea. Meanwhile, the Spartans divided their ships into small detachments because they could not make the approach with more, and they rested in turns and made their attacks in relays, cheering each other on in their determination to push the enemy back somehow and take
[4] the fortified position. Brasidas was more prominent than anyone in this. As ship's commander[1] he noticed that because of the difficulty of the place the other trierarchs and their helmsmen were holding back, even when there was a chance of landing, and were taking care not to crash their ships. So he shouted at them that there could be no reason to be sparing of timbers if it meant watching the enemy build fortifications on their land; he told them to smash up their own ships in forcing a landing; and he told the allies that in return for the great benefits they had received they should not shrink from donating their ships as a gift to the Spartans in the present emergency; rather, they should run them aground, get ashore by any means possible and overpower the men and their position.

12 Spurring the others on in this way, Brasidas forced his helmsman to run his own boat aground and was starting down the gangway; but as he tried to land he was beaten back by the Athenians and, heavily wounded, he fainted. As he fell into the outrigger his shield slipped off his arm into the sea and was washed ashore; the Athenians picked it up and later
[2] used it for the trophy they set up to mark this encounter.[2] The oth-ers made great efforts to land but were prevented from doing so by the difficulty of the terrain and because the Athenians stayed and held their
[3] ground. So in a chance turn-around of events, the Athenians found them-selves repelling the Spartans from the land – and Laconian territory at

[1] *Trierarchos* (see glossary).

[2] In the Greek this long sentence is a series of clauses joined by 'and's to create a rather breathless effect of action-narrative.

that – which the Spartans were attacking by sea; while the Spartans were fighting from ships and invading the Athenians on their own land, which had become enemy territory. For at that time the Spartans were renowned as a mainland power excelling in their land forces, while the Athenians were a sea power with a pre-eminent navy.

13 All this day and part of the next the Spartans continued their assaults; but then they paused and on the third day they sent some ships to Asine to get timber for siege-equipment, hoping that they could thereby capture the part of the fortification by the harbour where the landing was easier [2] though the wall was higher. Meanwhile the fifty Athenian ships from Zacynthus arrived, this support supplemented by some ships from guard [3] duty at Naupactus and by four Chian vessels. When these saw that both the mainland and the island were full of hoplites and that the Spartan ships were in the harbour and were not coming out, they were unsure where to go and anchor. So for the present they sailed away to Prote, an uninhabited island not far away, and bivouacked there. The next day they set out again, ready for a sea battle if the enemy chose to sail out to engage them in open water, and otherwise ready to sail in on the [4] attack themselves. In fact, the Spartans did not sail against them, nor as it happens did they do what they had planned and block off the entrances; on the contrary they stayed back quietly on the shore, manning the ships and preparing to fight a sea battle if anyone came into the harbour, which was by no means a small one.

14 When the Athenians realised the situation they launched an attack on them through both entrances, bore down on their ships, most of which were on the water and facing outward, and put them to flight. They pursued them a short way in the limited space available, damaged many of them and captured five, one of these with all its crew; and they kept charging against the rest, who had escaped to the shore. Some were hit while they were still being manned and before they could put out to sea, and some they disabled and towed away empty after the crews had taken flight.

[2] At the sight of all this, the Spartans on the shore suffered agonies, realising that their men were being cut off on the island, and they rushed to the rescue. They dashed into the sea in full armour and tried to get hold of the ships and drag them back. And everyone behaved as if the [3] success of the cause depended wholly on his own personal efforts. In the great tumult that followed each side adopted the traditional naval tactics

of the other: the Spartans, in their excitement and consternation, were effectively fighting a sea battle from the land; while the Athenians, who had the upper hand and wanted to press their good fortune as far as they could while it lasted, were fighting a land battle from ships. After inflicting [4] great distress and damage on each other the two sides separated, and the Spartans rescued all their unmanned ships except for those seized at the outset. Both then made camp. The Athenians set up a trophy, returned [5] the dead and took possession of the wrecks; they also immediately began to sail round the island and maintain a guard over it, regarding the men there as now trapped. Meanwhile, the Peloponnesians on the mainland, now with reinforcements from every quarter, remained in position at Pylos.

When the news of events at Pylos reached Sparta they treated it as a **15** major disaster and resolved to send officials down to the camp, authorised to decide on the spot what the best course of action was. Once there they [2] saw that it was impossible to help their men, and they were reluctant to run the risk that they should starve or be overwhelmed by force of numbers. So they decided to make a local truce at Pylos with the Athenian generals, if they would, and send envoys to Athens to make a general agreement and try to get the men back as quickly as possible.

The generals accepted their proposal and a truce was put into effect on **16** the following terms: the Spartans were to bring to Pylos and hand over to the Athenians the ships in which they had fought and all the other warships which were in Laconia, and they were not to bear arms against the fortified post either by land or sea; the Athenians were to allow the Spartans on the mainland to send food to the men on the island, in fixed amounts and ready prepared – two Athenian measures of barley each, two cups of wine and some meat, and half these quantities for each of their attendants; these were to be sent across under Athenian supervision and no vessel was to sail in secretly; and the Athenians were to maintain their guard on the island as before, short of actually landing on it, and they were not to take up arms against the Peloponnesian army either by land or sea. If either side should infringe these conditions in any [2] way at all, then the terms of the truce were broken; but otherwise the terms were to hold until the Spartan envoys returned from Athens; the Athenians were to convey them there in a trireme and bring them back again; on their return this truce was at an end, and the Athenians were then to give the ships back in just the same condition as they received them.

A truce was made on these terms, and the ships – numbering about [3]
sixty – were handed over and the envoys dispatched. When these arrived
at Athens they spoke as follows:[1]

'Athenians, the Spartans have sent us to negotiate some practical solu- **17**
tion for the men on the island, one that we might persuade you is to your
advantage and would at the same time be most likely to represent a good
outcome[2] for us in the circumstances of our present misfortune. If we [2]
explain this at some length, that will not be counter to our usual practice;
in fact, although it is the custom of our country not to use many words
where few will suffice, we do have more to say whenever there is occa-
sion to expound a matter of real importance in a speech and so achieve a
necessary objective. Please do not take these comments in a hostile spirit, [3]
then, or as a lecture to the ignorant. Just regard them as a gentle reminder
of what good counsel consists in, directed at those who can appreciate it.

The fact is that you are in a position to exploit your present good [4]
fortune, and not only retain what you have won but gain in honour and
reputation as well. You would thus avoid what happens to those who
receive some unwonted piece of luck: they keep on grasping hopefully for
more, just because their good fortune actually came to them so unexpect-
edly. Whereas those who have often seen their fortunes change in either [5]
direction are right to distrust any success; and experience suggests that
this lesson would surely apply particularly both to your city and to us.

To realise this, just look at our own current misfortunes. We who are **18**
pre-eminent in status among the Greeks have come here before you, to
entreat you now for the favours we formerly thought it was our prerogative
to grant. And yet we suffered this reverse, not through any lack of power [2]
nor through the arrogance that comes from some growth in power, but
with no change in our circumstances we made a mistake of judgement –
a common experience for everyone. So, there is no reason for you to sup- [3]
pose that because of the present strength of your city and its acquisitions
you will always enjoy the same good fortune. Sensible people protect [4]
themselves by counting their gains as provisional – and the same people
also deal more intelligently with life's misfortunes; and when it comes to

[1] Thucydides unusually here presents us with the unsuccessful speech of the Spartans but not with the answering 'winning' speech of Cleon (summarised very briefly at 20.2–3 below). The speech is another tortuous one in stylistic terms, which Hornblower thinks may reveal Thucydides' attitude to the content (II, pp. 170–1), though Gomme reminds us that Thucydides is systematically elusive about his own opinions (III, pp. 459–60).

[2] Literally 'bring us *kosmos*', which may here imply both 'credit' and 'good order' (see glossary).

war they realise this will not be restricted to whatever limited involvement one might wish to have, but will take whatever course their luck determines. Such people are least likely to come to grief, since they do not have an inflated confidence in any success but are most likely to make terms while their good fortune lasts. And this, Athenians, is the favourable [5] opportunity you now have to negotiate with us today. Otherwise, if you ignore our advice and at some point in the future suffer the sort of reverse which is always possible, you may be thought to have achieved even your present successes just through chance, when it was in your power to leave behind you a secure and lasting reputation for strength and intelligence.

19 The Spartans, then, formally invite you to agree the terms of a treaty and the cessation of war: they offer you peace and an alliance, and every other form of close friendship and relationship that might exist between us. They for their part ask for the return of the men on the island; they judge it best for both sides not to run more serious risks – either that the besieged should force an escape when some opportunity for safety presents itself, or that they should be reduced to submission by the blockade. We take the view that great enmities are most securely resolved, [2] not when one party vengefully seeks to impose compulsory and binding terms because they have gained a decisive upper hand over an enemy, but when, from a position of strength and in a reasonable spirit they make peace on terms that are moderate beyond any expectation and so get a moral advantage over their enemies too. For then the adversary is placed [3] under an obligation to respond in kind, instead of seeking retribution for the duress he has suffered and is shamed into abiding by the terms he has agreed.[1] Indeed, people are more disposed to act in this way towards their [4] real enemies than towards those with whom they have relatively minor differences, and it is natural to make concessions quite happily to those who have voluntarily offered a compromise, but to resist the arrogant at any cost, even against one's better judgement.

20 For both of us, now if ever is the right time for this agreement, before some fatal catastrophe intervenes, which would force us to regard you for ever as personal as well as political enemies[2] and would deprive you of all we are now offering. While matters are still undecided, then, while you [2] have the advantage of your reputation for success and of our friendship as

[1] Compare the psychology of II 40.4, which is closer to the conventional Greek ethos of 'helping friends and harming enemies'.

[2] See note to III 54.2.

well, and while our misfortune can be settled on moderate terms and we can avoid any actual dishonour, let us be reconciled. Let us of ourselves choose peace instead of war and so give the rest of the Greeks a respite from their troubles – an outcome for which they will assume you are mainly responsible. They are waging this war without any clear idea of who began it; but if there is a settlement – which is now very much in your hands – it is you they will thank for it. And if you do so decide you [3] may secure the firm friendship of the Spartans, on terms which they are the ones to propose and which you grant as a favour rather than impose by force. Do consider all the advantages there are likely to be in that event: [4] for if we and you speak with one voice we can be sure that the rest of the Greek world, subordinate to us as it is, will hold us in the greatest honour.'[1]

The Spartans said this much.[2] They were thinking that, as the Atheni- **21** ans had earlier been eager for a truce and had been frustrated then by the Spartan opposition to it, they would now he happy to accept the offer of peace and would hand back their men. But the Athenians reasoned that [2] while they were holding the men on the island they could have a truce with the Spartans at any time they wanted to arrange one, and they were grasping[3] for something more. In this they were most strongly urged on [3] by Cleon son of Cleaenetus, a popular leader[4] at the time and very influential with the people. He persuaded them to reply that the men on the island must first surrender themselves and their weapons and be taken to Athens; when they arrived there the Spartans should give back Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen and Achaea, places they had not taken in war but which had been ceded by the Athenians as part of an earlier agreement when the Athenians were suffering setbacks and were rather more in need of a peace;[5] they could then have their men back and make a truce for as long as they might mutually agree.

[1] The reference to 'honour' (the verb from *time*, see glossary) is just a rhetorical and cynical claim here. See Hornblower (II, pp. 176–7) and his cross-reference to IV 120.3.

[2] The same formula as at II 12.1 (Archidamus) and IV 88.1 and V 10.1 (Brasidas).

[3] *Oregonto*, quite a strong word, repeated from 17.4, and reminding one that it was the Athenians 'over-reaching themselves' that contributed to their downfall in Sicily.

[4] *Demogogos*. Quite an unusual Greek word: its only other use in Thucydides is at VIII 65.2 (Androcles) and it is not necessarily derogatory in its connotations (see glossary), though Thucydides evidently had some animus against Cleon (see also V 7.3n). Cleon was introduced at III 36.6.

[5] A reference to the Thirty Years Peace of 446 (see I 115.1).

22 The Spartans said nothing in response to this, but recommended that commissioners be chosen to discuss the matter calmly and in detail and [2] make such decisions as they could mutually agree. Thereupon Cleon weighed in heavily, saying that he had always known that they did not have a good case to make[1] and now it was plain to see, since they were unwilling to speak out before the people as a whole but wanted to confer with just a small group. If they had proposals to make that were at all [3] sound,[2] he told them, they should declare them before everyone. The Spartans saw that neither was it possible to speak out in public about any concessions they might decide to make in the light of their difficult circumstances – lest they be discredited in the eyes of their allies if their proposals were then unsuccessful; nor were the Athenians about to grant what they proposed on any moderate terms. So they withdrew from Athens empty-handed.

23 When the Spartans got back from Athens the truce at Pylos was immediately terminated and the Spartans asked for their ships to be returned, just as had been agreed. But the Athenians refused to give them back, citing a raid on the fortified position as an infringement of the truce and making other seemingly minor accusations. They insisted that it had been specified that the treaty would be annulled if any of its terms at all were violated. The Spartans disagreed, and denouncing the business over the ships as an act of injustice they went away to prepare for war.

[2] Hostilities around Pylos were now vigorously resumed on both sides. The Athenians kept two ships continuously encircling the island in opposite directions throughout the day, while by night all their ships were anchored round the island, except on the side exposed to the sea whenever it was windy; and twenty more ships arrived from Athens to reinforce the blockade, giving them seventy in all. The Peloponnesians meanwhile were encamped on the mainland and launched attacks on the fortifications, watching for any opportunity that might present itself for them to rescue their men.

24 Meanwhile in Sicily[3] the Syracusans and their allies, having added the rest of the fleet they had been equipping to the ships keeping guard at [2] Messina, were carrying on the war from Messina. The Locrians were

[1] Literally, 'had nothing just (*dikaion*) in mind', the reference here being to notions of legal right not of honour.

[2] The Greek word here is *hugies*, literally 'healthy'. An archaic form of English would be 'if their proposals had any health in them' (see also III 75.4).

[3] The Sicily theme resumes here from IV 1–2, breaks off at 25 and then begins again at 58.

the ones in particular urging this out of their enmity with the Rhegians,
whose land they had themselves invaded in full force. The Syracusans [3]
also wanted to try a sea battle, seeing that the Athenians had few ships
actually available and learning that the large fleet expected to join them
was now engaged in the blockade of the island. They hoped that a victory [4]
by their fleet would enable them easily to overcome Rhegium by mounting
a blockade both by land and sea; that would then put them in a strong
position, since the promontories of Rhegium in Italy and Messina in Sicily
lie very close to each other and the Athenians would be unable to lie up
there and control the strait. The strait is the water between Rhegium and [5]
Messina, where Sicily comes closest to the mainland, and is the location of
the place called Charybdis, which Odysseus was supposed to have sailed
through. Because of its narrowness and because the water rushes into it
from two great seas, the Tyrrhenian and the Sicilian, and generates such
strong currents, the strait was understandably regarded as dangerous.

It was in this strait that the Syracusans and their allies were forced to **25**
fight a sea battle late in the day to support a ship that was making the
passage, and they put out with just over thirty ships against the sixteen
Athenian and eight Rhegian ones. The Syracusan forces were defeated by [2]
the Athenians and each contingent pulled back hastily as best as they could
and made for their friendly stations at Messina and Rhegium with the loss
of one ship, as nightfall cut short the action. After this the Locrians pulled [3]
out of Rhegian territory, while the Syracusan and allied fleets gathered
and anchored at Peloris in Messinian territory, where they were joined
by their land forces. The Athenians and Rhegians sailed up and seeing [4]
that the ships were unmanned bore down on them, losing one ship in
the process themselves when a grappling-iron was thrown on to it and
its crew dived overboard. After this, when the Syracusans had embarked [5]
on their ships and were sailing towards Messina close along the shoreline
taking soundings,[1] the Athenians attacked them again but lost another
ship as the Syracusans swivelled and rammed them first. The Syracusans [6]
more than held their own, then, in this sort of 'sea battle along the shore'[2]
and made their way on to the harbour at Messina.

The Athenians got word that Camarina was being betrayed to the [7]
Syracusans by Archias and his associates, and so they sailed there; and

[1] Literally, 'sailing by rope/line (*kalos*)', which is usually translated as 'being towed', though this would surely have hopelessly encumbered them and made impossible the subsequent manoeuvres. Perhaps the reference was to a 'sounding-line' (see Herodotus II 28).

[2] A recurrent paradox: see also I 49.2, II 89.8, IV 14.3 and VII 62.2.

that prompted the Messinians to launch an attack with all their forces, both by land and with ships, on their Chalcidian neighbour, Naxos. On [8] the first day they confined the Naxians within their walls and wasted their land, and the next they sailed round with their fleet and wasted the land along the River Akesinus, while moving against the city with their land forces. Meanwhile, the Sicels[1] came down in large numbers from the hill [9] country to give their support against the Messinians. When the Naxians saw this they took heart and, calling out to each other that the Leontines and their other Greek allies were on the way to help them, they rushed out of the city and fell on the Messinians. They routed them and killed over a thousand, and the rest had a hard time getting home, since the barbarians attacked them on the roads and slaughtered most of them.

The ships put into Messina and later dispersed on their various jour- [10] neys homewards. The Leontines and their allies, in company with the Athenians, at once mounted a campaign against Messina, believing it to be in a weakened state; the Athenians attempted an assault with their ships by the harbour, while the land forces attacked the city. The Messinians [11] and some of the Locrians with Demoteles, who had been left behind in the city as a garrison after the disaster, made a break-out and suddenly fell on the Leontine army, routing much of it and killing many of the men. When the Athenians saw this they disembarked from their ships to go to their aid and chased the Messinians back into the city, finding them in some disarray. They then set up a trophy[2] and returned to Rhegium. After this the Greeks in Sicily resumed warfare against each other by land [12] without the involvement of the Athenians.

Meanwhile back at Pylos the Athenians were still besieging the Spartans **26** on the island, while the Peloponnesian army remained in place where they were on the mainland. Keeping guard was proving troublesome for the [2] Athenians because of the shortage of food and water. There was just one spring high up on the acropolis of Pylos, and that was only a small one, so most of the men scraped into the shingle on the beach and only got the kind of water you could expect from that source. Moreover, these were [3] cramped and restricted conditions in which to camp, and since the ships had no anchorage crews would take turns to have their meals on land while the rest moored out to sea. They were also very demoralised by the [4]

[1] The Sicels were non-Greek inhabitants (see III 90.1) and are the 'barbarians' referred to a little later in 25.9.

[2] But not a signal success, one might think, after losing Messina and gaining no compensating advantage.

inexplicably long duration of the siege, since they had been expecting to force a surrender in a matter of days, what with the men being on a desert island and only having brackish water to drink. The explanation was that [5] the Spartans had called for volunteers to convey on to the island supplies of ground corn, wine, cheese and any other foodstuff that might be useful in a siege; they offered a lot of money for this and promised freedom to any helot getting food in. Many took the risk, especially the helots, setting off [6] from this or that point of the Peloponnese and sailing by night to the side of the island facing the sea. Mostly they waited for a favourable wind to [7] carry them into shore. They could more easily elude the guard of triremes when the wind was coming off the sea since it was difficult for these to hold an anchorage, while they themselves did not have to spare their boats in landing them but had had them valued[1] and could run them aground where the hoplites were awaiting them at the landing places. By contrast, those who risked crossing in calm weather were caught. There were also [8] divers at the harbour who swam out underwater, towing after them on a cord skins filled with poppy-seed mixed with honey and ground linseed. At first these went unnoticed but later on guards were set for them. And [9] so each side kept devising different schemes, the one to get food in, and the other to catch them doing so.

When they learned at Athens that the army was suffering this way and **27** that food was getting in to the men on the island, they were at a loss what to do and feared that the blockade would be overtaken by the onset of winter. They saw that conveying provisions round the Peloponnese would be impossible – it was such a remote place that even in summer they would be unable to send in sufficient supplies – and that they could not continue a blockade in a place with no harbours; so either they would have to relax their vigilance and the men on the island would survive the ordeal, or else the men would wait for bad weather and then sail out on the boats that were bringing them in food.[2] Above all, the Athenians [2] were alarmed by the attitude of the Spartans, thinking that they must have some strong reasons for feeling secure since they were not making overtures to them; and they began to regret not having accepted the truce.

Cleon, realising that their misgivings were directed at him for blocking [3] the agreement, said that the authors of these reports were not telling

[1] A curious detail, suggesting that the Spartan authorities had somehow 'underwritten their value' already and guaranteed compensation.

[2] One wonders why they had not thought of doing this already (see Gomme III, p. 468).

the truth. Whereupon the messengers who had come from Pylos recommended that if the Athenians did not believe them they should send some inspectors, and Cleon himself was chosen by the Athenians, together with Theogenes. Realising that he would be compelled either to report [4] the same message as the men he was impugning or else be exposed as a liar if he said something different, and seeing that the Athenians were becoming more inclined to send a force there, Cleon declared that they should not be sending inspectors and so losing their opportunity through further delays; but if they believed the reports to be true they should sail to attack the men. He gestured at Nicias son of Niceratus, who was a [5] general and also a personal enemy of his, and taunted him saying that if the generals were men it would be easy enough with a proper force to sail there and capture the men on the island; and that was what he would do himself if he were in charge.

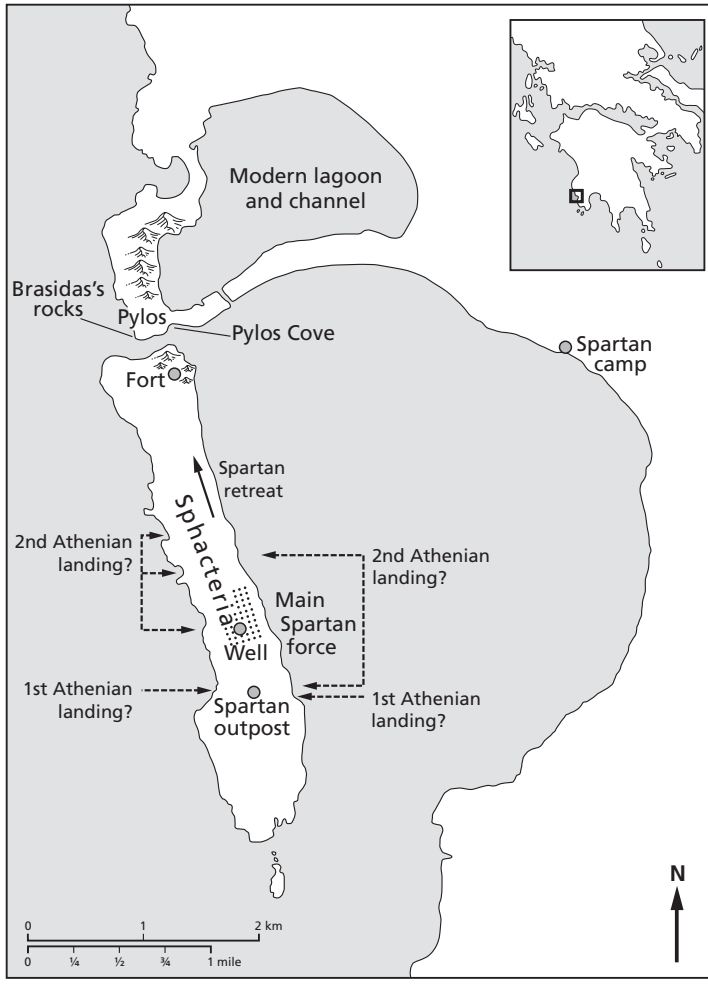
The Athenians were roused to challenge Cleon, clamouring that if he 28 thought it was so easy why didn't he set sail right now; and when Nicias saw that he was himself the object of Cleon's censure he told him that as far as he and the generals were concerned Cleon could take whatever force he wanted and try it. At first Cleon thought that Nicias was bluffing [2] about standing aside, and he showed willing; but when he realised that Nicias was really serious about handing over he backtracked and said that it was Nicias not he who was the general. By now he was alarmed and never thought that Nicias would have the nerve to withdraw in his favour. But Nicias repeated what he had said and offered his resignation, making [3] the Athenian people his witnesses. And in the way of all crowds, the more Cleon tried to evade the expedition and back out of what he had said, the more they urged on Nicias to hand over his command and shouted at Cleon to sail. So Cleon, with no way left of getting out of what he had [4] said, agreed to undertake the expedition. He came forward and said he had no fear of the Spartans and would sail without taking a single man from the city, but only the Lemnians and Imbrians present in Athens, peltasts who had come in support from Aenus and four hundred archers from other parts. With these, he said, added to the troops already in Pylos, he would within twenty days either bring back the Spartans alive or kill them there. This prompted the Athenians to burst out laughing at his [5] empty talk, while the wise heads among them reflected with satisfaction that they would get one or other of two benefits: either they would be rid of Cleon – the result they expected; or if they were wrong about this, they would have the Spartans as their prisoners.

After he had completed all the arrangements in the assembly and the **29** Athenians had voted for his expedition, Cleon chose as his colleague Demosthenes, one of the generals at Pylos, and prepared to set off as quickly as possible.[1] He selected Demosthenes on learning that he was [2] already planning a landing on the island. Demosthenes' soldiers, suffering from the privations of their position and feeling more besieged than besieging, were eager to face whatever the risks there might be. A fire on the island gave Demosthenes extra confidence too. He had previously [3] been made nervous by the largely overgrown state of the island, which had no tracks of any kind, having never been inhabited. He considered these to be factors that favoured the enemy, since they could mount an attack from unseen positions against anyone landing with a large army and inflict damage on them. And while the enemy's failings[2] and state of preparation would be relatively obscured by the cover, all his own weak points would be made evident, so the others could mount a surprise attack wherever they wished and the initiative would rest with them. Alternatively, if he should force his way into the thicket to fight at close [4] quarters he thought the advantage would lie with the smaller numbers of men familiar with the terrain over the larger force without that experience; his own army, large as it was, would be cut to pieces before they knew it, having no way of seeing where they needed to go to help each other out.

These thoughts occurred to Demosthenes largely as a result of his **30** experiences in Aetolia, where the woods had been a factor in the outcome. Because of the cramped conditions at Pylos his soldiers were compelled [2] to land on the edges of the island and take their meals there protected by guards posted as lookouts; and when one of the soldiers accidentally set fire to a small area of woodland and a wind got up this resulted in most of the wood being burned down before they knew what was happening. He [3] then got a better view and could see that there were more Spartans there than he had thought (having previously supposed they were sending in food for smaller numbers). He also saw that the island was now easier to land on. He therefore prepared to make an attempt on the place, as an objective well worth a more serious effort on the part of the Athenians,

[1] Cleon's choice was astute and his planning generally seems better considered than Thucydides leads us to expect in his description of the debate in assembly.

[2] *Hamartia* usually means 'mistake' or 'fault' but in this context perhaps has some sense of 'weakness' or 'tactical disadvantages' too.



Map 17. Pylos (425)[1]

[1] These locations are based on the reconstructions of W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Greek Topography* (University of California Press, 1965), I, pp. 6–29, J. B. Wilson, *Pylos 425 BC* (Aris and Philips, 1979), especially maps B to D and the appendix, pp. 133–7, and William Shepherd, *Pylos and Sphacteria 425 BC* (Osprey Publishing, 2013).

and he sent for troops from the nearby allies and made all other necessary preparations.

Cleon, meanwhile, after sending on a messenger to tell Demosthenes [4] he was coming, arrived at Pylos with the forces he had requested. As soon as they had joined forces their first step was to send a messenger to the Spartan camp on the mainland to invite them, if they so wished, to tell the men on the island to surrender their arms and themselves to the Athenians, without prejudice to their safety and on the understanding that they would be held in reasonable conditions of detention until some agreement should be reached on the larger issues.

When that offer was rejected they waited one day, then on the next **31** they embarked all their hoplites on to a few ships and set off by night. A little before dawn they landed their men on both sides of the island – the side towards the open sea and also that facing the harbour, about 800 hoplites in all, and they made for the first guard post at a run.

The dispositions of the Spartan forces were as follows. In this first [2] post there were about thirty hoplites. In the central and most level part of the island, near where the water supply was, they stationed most of the troops with their commander Epitadas. And a small detachment guarded the very end of the island where it faced Pylos, which was precipitous on the seaward side and also very hard to storm from the landward side; there was also an old fort there constructed out of stones just picked up off the ground, and they thought that might be useful to them if a forced retreat proved necessary. This was the disposition of the enemy forces.

The Athenians immediately rushed the first group of guards and killed **32** them while they were still in their beds and groping for their weapons. The landing operation had caught them unawares, as they had supposed that the ships were just sailing to their usual anchorage for the night. Then [2] right at dawn the rest of the army made their landing too. There were the entire crews from just over seventy ships (except for the lowest rank of rowers[1]), variously equipped, 800 archers and as many peltasts, and also the Messenian reinforcements and all the others occupying Pylos apart from those guarding the fort. Demosthenes divided them into groups of [3] two hundred, or in some cases fewer, and these occupied the highest parts of the island in order to create the maximum uncertainty in the minds

[1] The *thalamioi* (the lowest rank) were usually fifty-four a trireme, with a further fifty-four *zeugitae* in the middle rank and sixty-two *thranitae* in the top rank (see VI 31.3), so over 8,000 men in all from the seventy or so ships (see Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, p. 136).

of the enemy, which was surrounded on all sides and unsure in which direction to line up and face them. The Spartans were thus exposed to assault all round by hostile forces: if they attacked those in front of them, they would be hit by those in the rear; if they attacked those on the flanks, then by those drawn up on the opposite side. Whichever way they turned [4] the enemy was always at their backs, lightly armed and the most awkward of opponents to deal with, since their strength was in long-range combat with arrows, javelins, stones and slings; and it was not even possible to get to attack them – they had the upper hand even as they fled, and when others retreated they turned on them again.

These were the tactics Demosthenes had in mind in first planning the landings and he put them into effect.[1]

Now when the troops under Epitadas – the main body of those on the 33 island – saw the first guard-post destroyed and the army advancing on them, they got into formation and moved to attack the Athenian hoplites, wanting to draw them into close combat: these were the troops stationed opposite them, with the light-armed troops at their flanks and rear. But [2] they were in the event unable to engage with them and make use of their own particular strengths, since the light-armed troops held them back by raining missiles on them from all sides, while the Athenian hoplites did not respond to the attack but stayed where they were. Whenever the light-armed troops pressed strongly forward and ran at them the Spartans turned them, but then they would wheel round again and fight back; and being lightly armed they easily evaded the enemy in this difficult and rough terrain that had never been inhabited and in which it was impossible for the Spartans to pursue them in full hoplite armour.

So for a short time they skirmished with each other in this way. But as 34 the Spartans became less able to run out and respond quickly to the point of attack, the light-armed troops observed that they were now slower in defence, while they themselves were very greatly emboldened to see how much more numerous they were than the enemy; and since they had not immediately suffered as badly as they had expected, they were increasingly coming to feel that the Spartans no longer seemed quite so formidable to them as when they first landed, when they were overawed by the thought that it was Spartans they were taking on. But now they conceived some contempt for them and rushed at them en masse, shouting

[1] IV 32–33 is a classic description of the tactics of light-armed fighters in this sort of terrain. See also the conflict in Aetolia (III 97–98), which is where Demosthenes learned this lesson by painful experience.

and pelting them with stones, arrows and javelins, whatever each had to hand. This combination of shouting while charging caused consternation [2] among men unaccustomed to this mode of fighting. Moreover, clouds of dust and ashes from the recently burned woodland rose to the sky, making it impossible for anyone to see in front of their faces, with the rain of arrows and stones cast from so many hands all mixed up with the dust storm. And so the engagement turned into a real ordeal for the [3] Spartans. Their helmets could not protect them from the arrows and the javelins broke off short as they struck home. They were quite unable to help themselves, prevented from seeing ahead with their vision cut off, deaf to the word of command on their own side because of the louder shouts of the enemy, assailed by danger on all sides, and despairing of any means by which to defend themselves and so be saved.

35 Eventually, after suffering many casualties from being continuously moved to and fro in the same space, the Spartans closed ranks and retreated to the furthest point of the island, which was not far away, to join their comrades guarding it. As soon as they fell back, however, [2] the light-armed troops were emboldened to press forward on to them with even louder shouts, and the Spartans caught retreating were killed, though most of them escaped to the fort and ranged themselves all along it, together with the troops on guard there, to defend every point that could be attacked. The Athenians followed them, but the position was [3] too strong to enable them to surround and encircle the Spartans, so they kept trying to dislodge them in a frontal attack. For a long time – indeed [4] for most of the day – both sides held out, despite suffering badly from the fighting, from thirst and from the heat of the day, the one side trying to drive the enemy off the high ground, the other trying not to cede it. The Spartans, however, now found it easier than before to defend themselves since their flanks were no longer being enveloped.

36 When there seemed no end to the struggle, the commander of the Messenians came to Cleon and Demosthenes and said that they were wasting their efforts; but if they would give him a portion of the archers and the light-armed troops to try and find some route to get round the back of the Spartans he thought he could force an assault. He got [2] the forces he asked for and set off from a position out of sight of the enemy so that he could not be observed. He picked his way as best he could along the most precipitous parts of the island, where the Spartans, trusting to the strength of the position, had posted no guards. With great difficulty he and his men just about managed to get round without being

detected, then they suddenly emerged on the high ground behind the Spartans, to their complete surprise and consternation but to the even greater excitement of their own side, boosted by the sight they had been waiting for. The Spartans were now under assault from both sides and, [3] to compare small things with great, were in the same predicament as the men at Thermopylae; for just as those men were annihilated when the Persians went round by that famous path, so these Spartans could no longer hold out now, assailed as they were on both sides; but as few men fighting many and weakened in body by lack of food they began to fall back, with the Athenians in control of every approach.

Cleon and Demosthenes realised that if the Spartans gave way even a 37 step further they would be destroyed by the Athenian troops and so they put a stop to the battle and held their men back. They wanted to deliver the Spartans alive to the Athenians and hoped that if they heard a herald's voice it would break their spirit and they would agree to surrender their arms and submit in the face of their present danger. The herald therefore [2] proclaimed that if they wanted they could surrender themselves and their arms to the Athenians for them to decide what they wished to do.

When they heard this, most of the Spartans laid down their shields 38 and waved their hands to signal that they accepted the terms announced. There was then a truce and Cleon and Demosthenes entered into discussion with Styphon son of Pharax representing the other side, since from the generals appointed earlier the first in command, Epitadas, was dead, while his chosen successor, Hippagretus, was lying among the corpses taken for dead (though he was actually still alive). Styphon had therefore been selected as third in succession, to take command, according to Spartan law, should anything befall the others. Styphon and those with [2] him said that they wanted to send a herald across to the Spartans on the mainland to ask for instructions how to proceed. But the Athenians would [3] not allow any of them to leave and themselves called for heralds to come over from the mainland; and after two or three exchanges the last herald to make the crossing from the Spartans on the mainland brought this message: 'The Spartans instruct you to make your own decisions about yourselves as long as you do nothing dishonourable.' And after discussing the matter together they surrendered their arms and themselves.

That day and the following night the Athenians kept them under guard; [4] and on the next day, after raising a trophy on the island, they made all their other preparations for the voyage and distributed the prisoners among the ship-commanders for their custody, while the Spartans sent a herald and

then conveyed their dead back to the mainland. The numbers of those [5]
killed and taken alive on the island were as follows: 420 hoplites crossed over there in all; of these 292 were taken alive and the rest perished; and the number of Spartiates[1] among the living was 120. The Athenians for their part did not lose many men, since it was not a pitched battle at close quarters.

The men were blockaded on the island for seventy-two days in all, from **39**
the time of the sea battle up to the fight on the island. For about twenty of these – while the envoys were absent negotiating the truce – they received regular provisions, but the rest of the time they were sustained by what was smuggled in. In fact, there was even some grain recovered from the island as well as other foodstuffs, since Epitadas was giving each man smaller rations than his supplies would have actually permitted.

The Athenians and the Spartans now both withdrew their armies from [3]
Pylos and left for home, and so the promise of Cleon, crazy though it had seemed, was fulfilled. He had delivered the men within twenty days, just as he had undertaken.

Of all the events of the war this was the one that took the Greeks most **40**
by surprise. They would never have expected Spartans to surrender their arms from starvation or any other form of compulsion, but thought they would keep hold of them and fight any way they could until they died.
They could not believe that those who surrendered were men of the same [2]
kind as those who had died. And when one of the Athenian allies later asked a captive from the island, by way of insult, whether those who died were 'good men and true',[2] he answered that it would indeed be a valuable spindle (by which he meant an 'arrow') that could pick out the brave, making the point that it was a matter of chance who was hit and killed by stones and arrows.

When the men were brought back, the Athenians determined to keep **41**
them chained up in prison until some agreement should be reached, but if the Peloponnesians were to invade their land before then they would
take them out and kill them. They placed a garrison at Pylos; and the [2]
Messenians from Naupactus, claiming Pylos as their native land (for it was once part of Messenian territory), sent out some of their most effective

[1] See I 6.4n. The Spartans were very sensitive about manpower losses, as becomes evident later in their strenuous efforts to negotiate for the men's release (IV 41.3, 108.7, 117.1, V 15.1–2, 17.1). The matter is not finally resolved until the peace of 422–421 (V 24.2).

[2] *kaloi k'agathoi*, literally 'fine and brave men', a formula indicating a superior class and kind of person (see also VIII 48.6 and Hornblower II, pp. 195–6).

troops to plunder Laconia and being speakers of the same dialect[1] did
a great deal of damage. The Spartans had no previous experience of [3]
predation and warfare of this kind. Moreover, the helots were deserting,
and they were afraid that they might be faced with a more extensive
uprising throughout the country, so they became seriously troubled and
although they did not want to reveal their concern to the Athenians they
kept sending envoys to them, trying to get back both Pylos and their men.
The Athenians wanted more, however, and as often as the envoys came [4]
they sent them away empty-handed.

These were the events concerning Pylos.

Immediately afterwards and during the same summer, the Athenians **42**
launched a campaign against Corinth with eighty ships, two thousand
of their hoplites and two hundred cavalry on board horse-transports.
They were joined by allied troops from Miletus, Andros and Carystus,
with Nicias son of Niceratus in overall command along with two other
generals. They sailed off and at dawn landed on the beach midway between [2]
Chersonese and Rheitus at the place overlooked by the Solygeian hill,
where in ancient times the Dorians established themselves when they
were engaged in a war with the Corinthians in the city, who were Aeolians.
Indeed, there is still a village on the hill called Solygeia to this day. From
the point on the beach where the ships put in the village itself is about
a mile and a half away, the city of Corinth about seven miles and the
Isthmus about two and a half miles.

The Corinthians had advance information from Argos that the Athe- [3]
nian forces were coming and had some time ago gone to defend the
Isthmus with all their forces, except for those living beyond the Isth-
mus and five hundred of their troops who were away on guard duty in
Ambracia and Leucas. All the rest joined in keeping watch to see where
the Athenians would put into land. But the Athenians eluded them by [4]
sailing at night, and after the Corinthians had been alerted by the deploy-
ment of signals they left half of their number in Cenchreae, in case the
Athenians should after all move against Crommyon, and rushed to offer
support.

Battus, one of the two Corinthian generals present in the action, took **43**
a unit and went to guard the village of Solygeia, which is unfortified,

[1] The dialect in question is the same as that of the helots, so the point presumably is that there would be opportunities for infiltration and subversion. See also I 101.2, III 112.4 and more particularly IV 3.3.

Map 18. Isthmus region

while Lycophron moved into the attack with the rest. The Corinthians [2]
first put pressure on the right wing of the Athenian forces, which had just disembarked in front of Chersonese, and then engaged the rest of the army as well. The battle was hard-fought and all at close quarters.
The right wing of the Athenians and Carystians (who had been deployed [3]
at the extreme end of it) took the force of the Corinthian charge and with some difficulty pushed them back. The Corinthians retreated to a loose stone wall where the ground all around was very steep, pelted

them with rocks from above and then charged them again shouting their war-cry. The Athenians withstood the attack and hand-to-hand fighting resumed. Then a company of the Corinthian forces that had gone in [4] support of their left wing routed the Athenian right and pursued them to the sea; and again the Athenians and Carystians turned and pushed them back from the ships. The rest of the army on both sides fought on [5] continuously, especially the Corinthian right wing, where Lycophron was in charge and was defending against the Athenian left, expecting them to make an attempt on the village of Solygeia.

For a long time they each held out, neither side giving way. But even- **44** tually, since the Athenians had the advantage of cavalry support in the fighting while the other side had none, the Corinthians were turned and withdrew to the hill, where they called a halt and did not come out again but held back. It was in the course of this rout on the right wing that [2] the Corinthians suffered most of their casualties, including the death of the general Lycophron. The rest of the army, however, was not pursued very far or forced into hasty flight, and when they came under pressure they retreated to the high ground, as described, and established a position there. So since the Athenians were no longer opposed in the field, they [3] started stripping the enemy corpses and retrieving their own dead, and immediately set up a trophy.

The other half of the Corinthian forces, who were stationed at [4] Cenchreae to guard against the Athenians sailing to Crommyon, were prevented from having a clear view of the battle by Mount Oneion. But when they saw the cloud of dust and understood the situation they immediately set off to help. Help was also forthcoming from the older Corinthians in the city when they realised what was happening. The [5] Athenians saw all these people advancing and supposed that reinforcements were arriving from nearby neighbours in the Peloponnese, so they retreated to their ships at speed, taking with them their spoils of war and their own dead, except for two bodies they could not find and abandoned.[1] Embarking on their ships they crossed to the islands offshore, from which [6] they dispatched a herald and recovered under truce the bodies they had left behind. There died in this battle 212 Corinthians and just under fifty Athenians.

[1] A characteristic Thucydidean detail and a reminder of the importance to the Greeks of recovering the dead after battle (for further examples, see II 92.4, IV 98–99, VII 72.2 and general index under 'dead').

The Athenians set off from the islands and sailed the same day to **45**
Crommyon in Corinthian territory, which is thirteen miles or more from
the city. Anchoring[1] there, they wasted the land and encamped for the
night. The next day they sailed along the coast, first to Epidaurus, where [2]
they made a landing, then on to Methana, which lies between Epidaurus and Troezen. Here they walled off the isthmus of the peninsula on which Methana stands, and after establishing a garrison then proceeded to plunder the territory of Troezen, Halieis and Epidaurus. And when they had finished fortifying the place the fleet sailed back home.

At about the same time as this was going on Eurymedon and Sopho- **46**
cles, after leaving Pylos to go to Sicily with the Athenian ships, reached
Corcyra and joined forces with the men from the city against the Corcyraeans who had established themselves on Mount Istone.[2] These men
had moved there after the civil disturbances and were taking control of the
countryside and doing great damage. The attackers took their stronghold [2]
by assault, while the men fled in a body to some high ground and then agreed to terms whereby they would hand over their mercenaries and allow the Athenian people to decide on their own fate after they had
surrendered their arms. The generals conveyed the men under truce to [3]
the island of Ptuchia, to be held under guard there until they might be sent to Athens, on condition that if any one of them was caught running
away the truce was broken for them all. The people's leaders in Corcyra, [4]
however, were afraid that the Athenians would not put them to death when they got to Athens, and so devised a stratagem of the following
kind. They proceeded to win over a few of the men on the island by [5]
secretly sending in friends whom they instructed to say in a show of 'goodwill' that it would be best for the men to escape with all speed and that they would have a boat waiting for them, the suggestion being that the Athenian generals were in fact about to hand them over to the Corcyraean people.

They convinced them with this story and the men were then caught **47**
sailing away on the boat the others had contrived to supply; the truce had thus been broken and the men were all handed over to the Corcyraeans.

[1] Triremes were generally not 'anchored' offshore in quite the modern sense. They had no living accommodation on board and no tenders to ferry from ship to shore. They were beached, with anchors at stern and prow to keep the partially afloat ships in place, and had ladders for disembarking.

[2] This picks up the Corcyra story from III 85 and takes it to its ghastly conclusion at 48 below.

The Athenian generals contributed not a little to this outcome, which [2] provided the perfect excuse and made the plotters more brazen in carrying out their scheme; for they made it clear that since they were themselves on their way to Sicily they would be unhappy for the men to be transported to Athens by others, who would then get the credit for taking them there. So the Corcyraeans seized the men and imprisoned them in a large [3] building, from which they later brought them out in groups of twenty and made these pass between two lines of hoplites drawn up on either side. The prisoners were bound to each other and were beaten and stabbed by anyone in the lines who recognised a personal enemy among them; and men with lashes accompanied them and hurried along any of them who loitered on the way.

In this way they took out and killed about sixty men without the others **48** in the building being aware of it, since these thought the men were being removed in order to be transferred elsewhere. But when someone tipped them off and they realised what was happening they appealed to the Athenians and begged them to kill them themselves if that was what they wanted to happen; and they refused to leave the building any more and said they would do their utmost to stop anyone else entering it. The [2] Corcyraeans for their part had no intention of forcing their way in through the doors, but went up on to the roof of the building, broke through the ceiling and rained tiles and arrows down on them from above. The men [3] below defended themselves as best they could and at the same time many of them set about committing suicide, either thrusting into their throats the arrows the others had fired at them or hanging themselves with straps from some beds they happened to have in there and with strips they tore from their clothing. Night fell on the scene of their suffering, and for most of it they were either taking their own lives or being struck by the men above them, and so they all perished. When day came, the Corcyraeans [4] stacked them criss-cross on wagons and dumped them outside the city. The women who had been captured in the stronghold they enslaved. In this way the Corcyraeans from the mountain were destroyed by the [5] popular party and the long conflict came to this end, at least as far as the present war was concerned, since of the other side there was hardly anything left worth mentioning.

The Athenians sailed off to Sicily, which was where they were first [6] headed, and continued the war in company with their allies there.

Just as the summer was coming to an end the Athenians in Nau- **49** pactus and the Acarnanians mounted a campaign against Anactorium,

the Corinthian city that lies at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, and with help from inside[1] they captured it. The Acarnanians expelled the Corinthians and occupied the place with settlers of their own drawn from all parts of their country. So the summer ended.

Winter [IV 50–51]

The following winter Aristides son of Archippus, one of the commanders **50**
of the Athenian ships sent to allies to collect money, arrested at Eïon in
the Strymon a Persian called Artaphernes who was on his way from the
Persian King to visit Sparta. He was taken to Athens, where they had [2]
the letters he was carrying translated from the Assyrian and read them.[2]
These dealt with many subjects but the main point made to the Spartans
was that the King did not know what it was they wanted, for although
many envoys had come and gone they all said something different; if
the Spartans wanted to make a definite point they should send men
to accompany the Persian back to the King. The Athenians later sent [3]
Artaphernes on a trireme to Ephesus together with some envoys, but
there they heard that King Artaxerxes son of Xerxes had just died (as he
did at about this time) and they returned home.

The same winter the Chians demolished their new wall on the instruc- **51**
tions of the Athenians, who harboured suspicions that the Chians might
be planning some new move against them. In complying, however, the
Chians extracted the firmest assurances they could from the Athenians
that they in turn were not planning any initiatives against the Chians.

So the winter ended and with it the seventh year of the war Thucydides wrote.

[1] Literally 'by treachery', almost a formulaic phrase used when external aggression is supported by internal opposition.

[2] The Greek actually says 'transcribed' but that wouldn't have been much help unless you could read the language (likely to have been Aramaic) to start with. Presumably the Spartans would have had to do the same, unless Artaphernes was bilingual.

Eighth year of the war, 424–23 [IV 52–116]

Summer [IV 52–88]

Right at the start of the following summer there was a partial eclipse of **52**
the sun at the time of the new moon, and early in the same month the
earth quaked.[1] The exiles from Mytilene and other parts of Lesbos, most [2]
of them setting out from the mainland, gathered together a mercenary
force they had hired from the Peloponnese or had recruited on the spot.
They captured Rhoeteum, but then gave it back again without having
done any harm on receipt of two thousand Phocaean staters.[2] After this [3]
they made an expedition against Antandrus and took the city with inside
help. It was in fact their intention to liberate the other so-called 'Actaean
cities' (which the Athenians now held though they were once occupied
by Mytilenaeans[3]) and above all to liberate Antandrus. They thought
that after strengthening Antandrus, where there was every facility for
building ships (with timber locally available and Mount Ida nearby) and
other kinds of equipment too, they could from that base more easily

[1] Literally, 'it [or the god] quaked', as we might say 'it rained' or 'it thundered'. The idea that these were portents of a kind, though not explicitly stated, is implicitly strengthened by the use of the active verbal form. See also I 23, II 8 and the other index entries under 'earthquake'.

[2] Said to be equivalent to eight talents (see the note on coinage, pp. lvii–lviii) and also equal to the exact value of Rhoetium's tribute, though there are various doubts about this (see Hornblower II, pp. 211–12).

[3] A reference back to III 50.

inflict damage on Lesbos (which was nearby) and also subdue the Aeolic townships on the mainland. These were the plans they were preparing.

53 During the same summer the Athenians went with sixty ships, two thousand hoplites and a few cavalry, taking with them some Milesians and other allies, and launched a campaign against Cythera. The generals in charge of the force were Nicias son of Niceratus, Nicostratus son of Diitrephes and Autocles son of Tolmaeus.

[2] Cythera is an island, lying off Laconia opposite Malea; the people are from the class of Spartan 'outsiders', and a magistrate called the 'Cythera-Judge' from Sparta itself crosses over there on an annual visit. The Spartans also regularly sent out hoplites to maintain a garrison there and gave the place their closest attention, since it served them as a port of [3] call for merchant vessels coming from Egypt and Libya; moreover, pirates were then less likely to harry the coast of Laconia from the sea, which was its only vulnerable side (the whole coastline of Laconia extending, as it does, into the Sicilian and Cretan seas).

54 The Athenians therefore put in there with their army, and with a force of ten ships and two thousand Milesian hoplites[1] they captured the coastal city called Scandeia. Meanwhile with the rest of the army they landed on the island on the side facing Malea and moved to attack the city of the Cytherians, whom they found already encamped there. Battle was joined [2] and for a short time the Cytherians resisted, but they then turned and fled to the upper town and later made terms with Nicias and his fellow commanders, whereby they were to allow the Athenians to decide their fate, provided that they were not killed. Some negotiations had in fact [3] already taken place between Nicias and some of the Cytherians, and as a result both the immediate and the longer-term parts of the agreement were concluded more swiftly and more favourably from their point of view. Otherwise the Athenians would have forced the Cytherians to leave, since they were Spartans and the island lay so close to the coast of Laconia. After [4] this settlement the Athenians took possession of Scandeia, the township at the harbour, and placed a guard on Cythera; then they sailed on to Asine and Helus and most of the coastal towns, where they landed and encamped wherever convenient and wasted the land for about seven days.

55 The Spartans saw that the Athenians were in possession of Cythera and were expecting them to make similar incursions on to their own territory,

[1] This figure seems improbably large and may be a copyist's error (but see Hornblower II, pp. 216–17 and 215).

but at no point did they oppose them with a force of any size. Instead they dispersed hoplites to form garrisons throughout the country, in the numbers each place required, and in general put themselves on high alert, fearing some new threat to their established order of things: the disaster at Sphacteria had been unexpected and calamitous, both Pylos and Cythera were now in enemy hands, and on all sides they were encompassed by a war that was developing rapidly and in ways that it was difficult to anticipate and defend against. And so, quite contrary to their usual practice, they [2] organised a force of four hundred cavalry and [some[1]] archers, and in their approach to military action became far more hesitant even than before, engaged as they were in a naval struggle that made demands outside the normal scope of their resources – and that too a struggle against the Athenians, for whom an attempt forgone was always an opportunity lost.[2] At [3] the same time the reverses of fortune that had been so many, unaccountable and rapid had shocked them to the core, and they were now afraid that some new disaster might strike, just like the one on the island.[3] As [4] a consequence, they were less confident about giving battle; their morale had been undermined because of their previous inexperience of adversity and they now thought that every move they made would end in failure.

So, although the Athenians were ravaging their seaboard, the Spartans **56** for the most part remained passive at this time. Whenever any particular garrison faced an incursion they thought they were too few in numbers to cope with it, such was their state of mind. There was one garrison, however, which did actually offer some resistance, in the neighbourhood of Cotyrta and Aphroditia.[4] The soldiers from there frightened the scattered mob of light-armed troops with a charge, but then drew back again when the hoplites confronted them; a few of their men were killed and some arms taken, whereupon the Athenians set up a battle-field trophy and sailed away to Cythera. From there they sailed round to Epidaurus [2] Limera and after wasting a portion of the land came to Thyrea, which is part of the district called Cynouria, on the border between the Argive and Laconian territories. The Spartans who inhabited this district had given it to the Aeginetans to live in after they were expelled, as a reward

[1] A numeral may be omitted here in our standard text. One ms suggests 300.

[2] A clear echo here of the Corinthians' vignette of the 'Athenian character' at I 70.

[3] This is the first full stop in the Greek text since the start of 55 and the successive clauses build up like a kind of breaking wave to deliver this devastating portrait of the collapse of Spartan morale.

[4] Locations unknown.

for their good services towards them at the time of the earthquake and the helot uprising,[1] and also because the Aeginetans had always inclined to their side, although they were subject to the Athenians.

57 While the Athenians were still approaching by sea, the Aeginetans abandoned the fortification they were just building on the coast and retreated to the upper city where they lived, which is just over a mile from the sea. [2] One of the Spartan garrisons in the area was actually helping them with the work, but the Spartans had no wish to join them behind their fortifications, despite Aeginetan pleading, since they felt there was a risk of being trapped inside them. They therefore retreated to the high ground, thinking themselves no match for the enemy in a fight, and held back there. [3] Meanwhile, the Athenians landed and with the whole of their forces made straight for Thyrea and captured it. They burned down the town and plundered its contents; and any Aeginetans they had not killed in the fight they took with them to Athens, along with their resident Spartan commander, Tantalus son of Patrocles, who was wounded and taken prisoner. [4] They also took with them a few men from Cythera whom they felt it safer to remove. The Athenians made these further decisions: to deposit these men on the islands; to let the other Cytherians occupy their own land, paying a tribute of four talents; to kill all the Aeginetans they captured, on account of their long-standing enmity with them; and to imprison Tantalus along with the other Spartans captured on the island.

58 In Sicily during this same summer, first the Camarinaeans and the Geloans made a truce with each other; and then representatives from all the other Sicilian cities came together in Gela to confer and see if they might somehow be reconciled. Many different opinions were expressed on both sides of the question, with various disputes and claims as each felt they were being put at some potential disadvantage. Then Hermocrates son of Hermon, a Syracusan and the man who had done most to persuade them to come together, delivered a speech along these lines.[2]

59 'Fellow Sicilians, the city I represent is not the least of those here, nor the one suffering most in this war; but it is with our common good in mind that I shall address you and I will lay out the policy which seems to me the

[1] 465 BC, but a very powerful memory in Sparta (see I 101–103).

[2] Literally, 'spoke words such as these', a small variation on the usual formula (see I 36.4) suggesting that here at least there should be no expectation of verbatim reportage (and note that no other speeches at this conference are even paraphrased, underlining the selectivity involved even more).

best for Sicily as a whole. As for the miseries of war, what would be the [2]
point of listing them all at great length for those who already know them?
No one is forced into war by ignorance, any more than they are deterred
from it by fear – if they think they can get some advantage out of it. The
fact is that to one side the gains appear to outweigh the fears, while the
other chooses to accept the risks rather than suffer any immediate loss.[1]
But if both parties turn out to have thereby misjudged the situation, then [3]
they may be helped by counsels advocating compromise. And that is just [4]
what it would most benefit us to accept in our present situation; for it
was with our own best interests in mind, was it not, that each of us went
to war in the first place, and now we must seek some reconciliation of
those interests through negotiation; and if in the end we do not succeed
in leaving here each with a fair settlement – then back to war we shall be
going again.

Yet if we are sensible, we should recognise that our conference will not **60**
be concerned only with our separate interests, but with whether we can
still secure the safety of Sicily as a whole, which is in my view what the
Athenians have their sights on; and we should realise that we have in the
Athenians an argument for peace far more compelling than any words of
mine on the subject. The Athenians are the greatest power in Greece and
they are here with a few ships just watching out for our mistakes; and on
the pretext of an appeal to the legalities of an "alliance" they are seeking
to manage the natural enmities among us to their own advantage. If we [2]
undertake a war amongst ourselves and bring them in – men who are
ready to send in their forces uninvited and on their own initiative – and
if we spend our resources in harming each other and so prepare the way
for their supremacy, then as soon as they see that we have worn ourselves
out they will surely come back one day with a larger force to try to bring
everything here under their own control.

Yet if we are sensible, I say, each of us should bring in allies and take **61**
on additional risks only to acquire what is not yet ours, rather than to
damage what we already have. We should realise that civil strife is the
overriding cause of ruin for our separate cities, as it is for Sicily itself:
we, her inhabitants, are all alike in being the targets of conspiracy, but
we are divided city by city in our internal disputes. We must recognise [2]
that and be reconciled one with another, as individuals and as cities, and

[1] As Gomme points out (III, pp. 513–14), the grammatical structure here does not quite match the logical structure. That is, the first and second sides do not correspond to the two parties prompted by ignorance or fear but both relate to the latter.

together we must try to save Sicily as a whole. Nor should anyone suppose that while the Dorians among us count as enemies of the Athenians the Chalcidian element is safe just because of its Ionian kinship. It is not on [3] the basis of the races here that they are attacking us, because they hate one or other of them; what they covet are the good things of Sicily, which we hold in common. They have just demonstrated this in the matter of [4] the appeal made by the cities of Chalcidian origin;[1] for, although the Chalcidians never offered the Athenians the support due under their military alliance, the Athenians for their part were only too willing to go beyond their obligations in keeping to their side of the agreement. The [5] Athenians you can forgive for such a policy of aggressive self-interest; the people I blame are not those who want to rule but those who are too ready to submit, for it has always been human nature to dominate those who yield and to protect oneself against attack. The mistake is to know [6] all this and yet fail to take proper precautions, or to come here and not judge it the highest priority that we all deal together with what threatens us jointly. The quickest release from this threat would be for us to reach [7] a mutual agreement amongst ourselves, since the Athenians are making their moves not from a base in their own territory but from that of the people who called them in. In this way one war is not just ended with another, but our differences are ended quietly with peace, and those who were called in with a good excuse to come and do harm will now have good reason to depart empty-handed.

This is the great advantage we would be wise to gain in relation to **62** the Athenians. But as to peace, which is universally regarded as the most [2] precious benefit of all, why should we not achieve that amongst ourselves? Or do you not think that where one person enjoys good fortune and another adversity, it is inactivity[2] rather than war that would both put an end to the second and help preserve the first? And does not peace bring its own honours and glories with less risk of danger, along with all the other consequences that one could rehearse at the same length as the consequences of war? You must reflect on my words. Don't overlook them but look beyond them, each towards your own security. And if [3] anyone thinks that he can be sure of achieving some objective because he has either justice or force on his side, then let him prepare for bitter

[1] That is, Chalcis in Euboea and therefore 'Ionian'. For the history of this involvement see III 86.2–3, IV 25.7 and VI 3–5.

[2] I translate *eirene* as 'peace' and *hesuchia* as 'inactivity' here to preserve any contrast that may be intended in the Greek.

disappointment. He should realise that many before him have tried to retaliate against wrongdoers or have hoped to serve their ambitions with power – and then in the first case they have not only failed to administer punishment but have failed even to survive, while in the second case instead of gaining more they have ended up losing what they already had. Retaliation does not lead to success when it rightly should, just because [4] a wrong has been committed; nor can you rely on strength, just because it gives confidence. It is the uncertainty of the future that has the biggest influence on events and though this uncertainty is fraught with danger it nonetheless also proves very salutary – for if we all have equal reason to fear the future we are that much more circumspect about attacking each other.

So now we are seized with alarm on two counts: we have an obscure **63** dread about an uncertain future and an immediate fear of the Athenian presence; and if we have failed to realise the particular plans we each of us had we can conclude that these two obstacles were sufficient reason. Let us, then, drive from our land the enemy who is at the gate, and let us conclude an agreement for all time, or failing that draw up a truce for as long as possible and postpone to another day our private quarrels. In short, [2] let us recognise that if we follow my advice we shall each of us keep our cities free, and as masters of our own fate can deal with friend and foe alike, with honour intact and on equal terms; but if we remain unconvinced and submit to others, there will be no question of punishing anyone, but even on the best outcome we are bound to find ourselves friends with our worst enemies and at odds with those who should be our friends.

For my part, as I said at the beginning, I represent the most powerful **64** city here, more likely to think of aggression than defence. But as I contemplate the future I conclude that my city should reach some compromise: we must avoid harming our enemies in such a way that we are the more damaged ourselves, and we should avoid persuading ourselves, in some stupid fit of ambition, that we are as much the masters of fortune, which we do not control, as we are of our own plans; instead, we should make whatever reasonable concessions we can. And I recommend that the rest [2] of you do the same, accepting this outcome on your own initiative not that of your enemies. There is no disgrace in making concessions to one's [3] own people – as Dorian does to Dorian or Chalcidian to others of their kin – since we are all of us neighbours and share one island home and one name as Sicilians. We shall no doubt have our wars in future when occasion arises, and we shall no doubt then make peace again by conferring

amongst ourselves. But when foreigners invade we would always be wise [4] to act together to repel them, since if any one of us is harmed we are all endangered; and never again in future should we bring in allies or peace-makers from outside. If we follow my advice in the present situation we [5] shall do Sicily double service, freeing ourselves both from the Athenians and from domestic war, and hereafter we shall dwell by ourselves in a land which is free and less vulnerable to the designs of others.'

65 The Sicilians were convinced by this speech of Hermocrates and decided on an agreed policy amongst themselves. They would put an end to their wars, each keeping what they had but with Morgantina going to the Camarinaeans on payment of a set sum of money to the Syracusans. The states allied to the Athenians for their part sent for the Athenian offi- [2] cers in command and told them that they were about to reach an agreement and that the terms of the treaty would also include them. The generals gave their consent, the agreement was confirmed, and the Athenian ships then sailed away from Sicily. But when the generals got back to the city [3] the Athenians there sentenced Pythodorus and Sophocles to exile and fined the third general, Eurymedon, on the grounds that when they had the chance of completely taking over Sicily they had been bribed to leave. For such was their current run of good fortune that the Athenians felt the [4] right to expect that nothing could go wrong for them, but that they could accomplish the possible and the impracticable alike, no matter whether with a large force or a weaker one. The reason for this attitude was the success of most of their undertakings, which defied rational analysis and so added to the strength of their hopes.[1]

66 The same summer, the Megarians in the city were being worn down both by the war with the Athenians, who regularly invaded their land twice a year in full force, and also by their own exiles based in Pegae, who had been expelled by the people in the course of an internal conflict and were now harassing them with raiding parties. They therefore started talking amongst themselves about the need to let the exiles return to avoid this double process of destruction. The friends of the exiles picked up [2] on these conversations and themselves began urging more openly than before that this proposal be adopted. The people's leaders, however, [3] realising that the populace would not be strong enough under the pressure of their afflictions to stand firm with them, were frightened into opening

[1] This brief judgement marks a tipping point in Athenian fortunes, at least from a later perspective (see Gomme III, pp. 525–6).

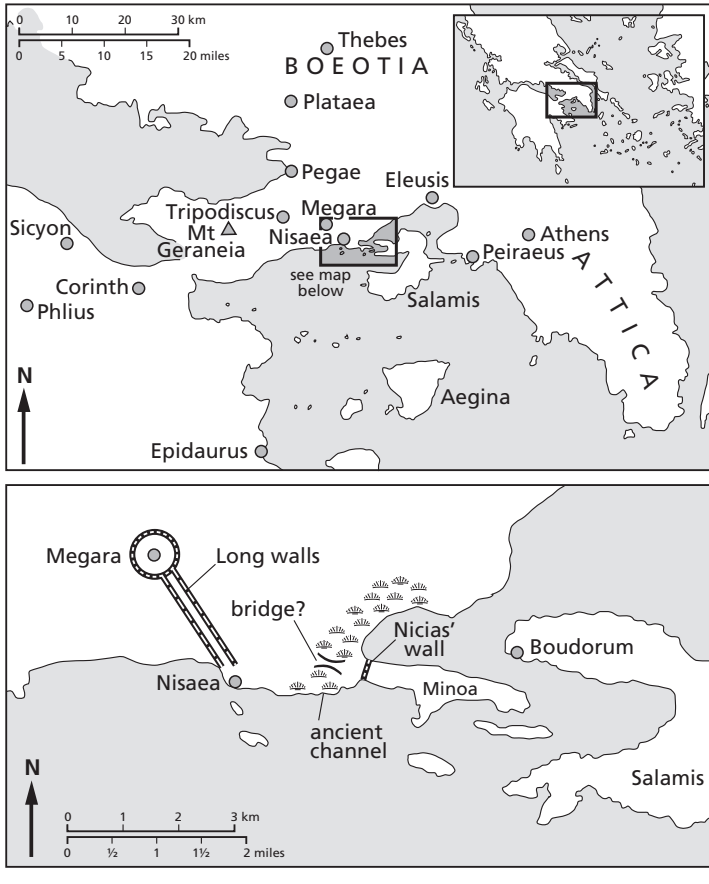
discussions with the Athenian generals, Hippocrates son of Ariphron and Demosthenes son of Alcisthenes. They were willing to betray the city to them and thought there was less risk to themselves in this than in the return of the men they had banished. And so they agreed, first [4] that the Athenians should occupy the long walls (which extended about a mile from the city to their harbour at Nisaea), in order to stop the Peloponnesians coming up in support from Nisaea (where they alone formed the garrison to safeguard the security of Megara); secondly, they would try to hand over to them the upper city as well, in which event the Megarians would be more likely to come over to the Athenian side.

So after both parties had prepared what to do and say, the Athenians **67** sailed by night to Minoa, the island off Megara, and with six hundred hoplites under the command of Hippocrates stationed themselves in a quarry from which the bricks for the walls were dug and which was not far off. Meanwhile, a second force of Plataean light-armed troops and [2] some other border-guards[1] set up an ambush at Enyalius, which is even nearer. And no one at all noticed, except for those whose business it was to be aware of it that night.

Just before dawn, the men who were to betray Megara went into action. [3] They had long been establishing a routine to secure the opening of the gates whereby, pretending to be a raiding party, they had loaded on to a cart a sculling boat and with the permission of the commander had conveyed it by night through the ditch down to the sea, where they would put out in it; and before daybreak they would carry it back on the cart to the wall passing through the gates, supposedly to confuse the Athenian garrison at Minoa since no boat would be visible in the harbour.

So on the night in question the cart was already in position at the gates [4] and when they were opened for the boat in the usual way the Athenians, just as arranged, ran at top speed from their hiding-place, trying to get there before the gates closed again and while the cart was still between them and stopping them shutting; and at the same time their Megarian conspirators were killing the guards at the gates. First, the Plataeans and [5] the border-guards with Demosthenes rushed in where the trophy now stands, and as soon as the Plataeans were inside the gates they engaged with the Peloponnesians who had come up in support (for those nearest

[1] The *peripoloi* are apparently some kind of frontier guards, only mentioned once elsewhere in Thucydides at VIII 92.2 (see Hornblower II, pp. 234–5).



Map 19. Megara[1]

could see what was happening). They defeated them and so secured the gates for the incoming Athenian hoplites.

Then, as each of the Athenians got inside he made for the wall. At first **68** [2]
a few of the Peloponnesians from the garrison stood their ground and

[1] Historians have found it difficult to reconcile the descriptions of Minoa and Nisaea in Thucydides with the current physical geography. This plan is based on the reconstruction of R. P. Legon in *Megara* (Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 27–33 and map 3. See also Gomme II, pp. 334–6.

offered some resistance. Some were killed, but most of them took to flight, terrified by the enemy's night attack and at finding the Megarian traitors fighting on the other side, which made them think all the Megarians had turned against them. And it so happened that the Athenian herald [3] had on his own initiative also announced that any Megarian who wished could join the Athenian cause. When the Peloponnesians heard this they delayed no longer but were now really convinced that they were facing a concerted attack and fled to Nisaea.

At dawn the walls had already been captured and the Megarians in the [4] city were in a state of turmoil. The men who had been negotiating with the Athenians, along with a large number of supporters privy to the plot, then proposed that they should open up the gates and go out to fight. What [5] they had arranged was that as soon as the gates were opened the Athenians would rush in, while they would identify themselves by smearing on olive oil in order to avoid being harmed in the attack.[1] Moreover, opening the gates would now be that much safer for them after the arrival of the four thousand Athenian hoplites and six hundred cavalry it had been agreed would travel overnight from Eleusis. But when they were all oiled up [6] and were standing ready by the gates, someone with inside information denounced the plot to the other side, who gathered together and came in a group to say that they should neither march out (something they had never been brave enough to do before, even when they were stronger than now), nor should they lead the city into such obvious danger. If anyone was unconvinced, they said, the battle would be here and now.[2] They gave no sign that they knew of the intrigues, but insisted strongly on this, as if just advising the best possible course; and at the same time they stayed close to the gates, keeping guard, so that the plotters' intentions were foiled.

When the Athenian generals realised that there had been a setback of **69** some kind and that they would not be able to take the city by force, they immediately began walling off Nisaea, their thought being that if they could take it before any help arrived Megara itself would capitulate all the sooner. Supplies of iron quickly arrived from Athens, together with [2] stonemasons and other requirements. They started from the wall they

[1] 'An unpromising ruse', as Hornblower drily remarks (II, p. 237), especially if they were wearing heavy body-armour.

[2] A curious threat, if that is what it is. Another possible meaning is that the (subsequent) battle with the enemy would take place in rather than outside the city, but it would be a very unclear way of expressing that.

already held and built a cross-wall facing Megara and then extended from that a ditch and walls down to the sea each side, dividing up the work among the army.[1] They used stones and bricks from the suburbs and cut down trees and wood to build palisades wherever needed; indeed, even the houses in the suburbs were themselves incorporated into the defences with the addition of battlements. They worked on this the [3] whole of that day, and by late afternoon the next day the fortification was all but completed. The men in Nisaea then became alarmed – they were short of food (which they had been getting on a daily basis from the upper city); they did not expect any speedy relief to come from the Peloponnesians; and they thought the Megarians were hostile. So they reached agreement with the Athenians that they would give up their arms, with each man ransomed for a given amount; as for the Spartans, including the commander and any others inside, they said the Athenians could do with them what they wished. Having reached an agreement on [4] these terms they came out, and the Athenians breached the long walls to separate them from the city of Megara, took possession of Nisaea and proceeded with their other arrangements.

70 The Spartan Brasidas, son of Tellis, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Sicyon and Corinth at this time, preparing for a campaign in Thrace. When he heard about the seizure of the walls he became apprehensive about the safety of the Peloponnesians in Nisaea and the possible capture of Megara. So he sent word to the Boeotians asking them to come at speed with an army and meet him at Tripodiscus (there is a village by that name in the Megarid, at the foot of Mount Geraneia). Brasidas himself went with 2,700 Corinthian hoplites, 400 from Phlius, 600 Sicyonians and such other troops with him as were already mustered, thinking he could still get to Nisaea before it was taken. But when he learned the [2] truth (for he had in fact left for Tripodiscus by night), he picked out 300 men from the army and before he could be detected reached the city of Megara unobserved by the Athenians who were down by the sea. His professed objective, which he would have been quite happy to realise if that were possible, was to make an attempt on Nisaea; but what he most wanted was to enter Megara itself and secure it. He therefore urged the Megarians to admit him, saying he had hopes of taking Nisaea.

[1] A very 'loose and irregular sentence', as C. E. Graves says in his commentary on book IV (*The Fourth Book of Thucydides*, second edition (Macmillan, 1884)), pp. 220–1, with 'a maze of participles and parentheses'. It seems to be missing at least one main verb (see appendix 1, p. 585).

But the rival factions felt apprehensive, the one side concerned that he 71
might bring back the exiles and drive them out instead, the other that the
people, fearing precisely this, might attack them and that the city, then
at war with itself and with the Athenians lying in wait nearby, might face
destruction. They therefore refused him, both sides thinking that they
should stand aside and see what would happen. Each was expecting that [2]
a battle would take place between the Athenians and the relieving force
and that it would therefore be safer for them not to join whichever side
they favoured until it had actually won. So after failing to persuade them
Brasidas went back again to join the rest of his army.

The Boeotians arrived at dawn. They had intended to help Megara 72
even before Brasidas sent for them, thinking that the danger was getting
rather close to home, and they were already at Plataea with all their forces.
So when the messenger arrived they were all the more motivated and sent
2,200 hoplites and 600 cavalry, returning home with the majority of their
forces. The whole army now gathered consisted of some 6,000 hoplites [2]
in total. Meanwhile on the Athenian side their hoplites were in formation
around Nisaea and by the sea, with the light-armed troops dispersed over
the plain. The Boeotian cavalry fell on the light-armed troops in a surprise
attack (for no help had ever before been sent to Megara from any source)
and drove them back to the sea. The Athenian cavalry counter-attacked in [3]
turn and engaged them, and a prolonged cavalry battle took place in which
each side claimed to have held their own. The Athenians did succeed in [4]
killing the Boeotian cavalry commander and a few others as they charged
on to Nisaea itself. They stripped these of their weapons and returned
under truce the bodies they had taken and then raised a trophy. But in the
action taken as a whole neither side had achieved a definite result when
they parted, the Boeotians returning to their own army and the Athenians
to Nisaea.

After this Brasidas and his army moved nearer to the sea and to the city 73
of Megara. They found an advantageous location and stayed back there,
inactive but in battle order, expecting the Athenians to attack and fully
aware that the Megarians were watching to see who would win. They [2]
felt they were well placed in two respects: first by not initiating a battle
and deliberately courting danger, since at least they had demonstrated
clearly that they were ready to defend themselves; and so they thought
they might justifiably be credited with victory without even raising the
dust. By the same token they thought things were also turning out well as
regards the Megarians, for if Brasidas and his men had failed even to put

in an appearance they would have had no chance of victory, but would have immediately lost the city as surely as if they had been worsted in battle. As it was, however, it might just happen that the Athenians would choose not to contest things, and they would then achieve their objectives without a fight.

And that is exactly what happened. The Athenians came out in battle [4] order by the long walls, but when the enemy did not come out to engage them they too stayed there inactively. Their generals calculated that since most things had gone their way so far[1] there was a disproportionate risk to them in starting a battle against superior numbers, and then either capturing Megara if victorious or losing the very flower of their hoplites if defeated; while on the Peloponnesian side each commander might reasonably be prepared to put at risk what was just part of the whole force present.[2] The armies waited some time, but when neither made any move, first the Athenians withdrew to Nisaea and then the Peloponnesians went back to where they started from. So in the end the Megarian friends of the exiles plucked up their courage and it was actually Brasidas and the leaders of the other cities whom they opened the gates to and welcomed in, treating Brasidas as the victor in a battle the Athenians no longer wanted to fight. They opened discussions with him, while those who had collaborated with the Athenians were now in a state of shock.

Later on, after the allies had dispersed to their cities, Brasidas himself **74** travelled to Corinth to prepare for his expedition to Thrace, which was where he was originally headed. Meanwhile after the Athenians had gone [2] home, the Megarians in the city who had played the largest part in the dealings with the Athenians immediately slipped away, knowing that they had been exposed. The others entered into discussions with the friends of the exiles and then brought the exiles back from Pegae, having first bound them by the most solemn oaths not to nurse past grudges but to consider only the best interests of the city. When these men [3] assumed office, however, they called for an inspection of arms, divided up the companies and picked out those they identified as their personal enemies and the ones who seemed most complicit in the dealings with the Athenians, about a hundred men in all, and forced the people to hold an open vote on them. When they were convicted they executed them, so restoring the city to an extreme form of oligarchy. And never was there [4]

[1] A surprising assessment and it is unclear whether Thucydides shared it.
[2] The text of this passage is likely to be corrupt (see appendix 1, p. 585).

a change of constitution arising from internal conflict that was brought about by so few and lasted so long.[1]

During the same summer the Mytilenaeans were about to carry out **75** their intention of equipping a base at Antandrus.[2] But the generals in charge of the Athenian ships collecting money, Demosthenes and Aristeides, were in the Hellespont area (their third colleague, Lamachus, having sailed with ten ships to the Pontus[3]), and when they heard about these preparations they became concerned that the Mytilenaeans might prove to be a threat comparable to that posed to Samos by Anaea. That was where the Samian exiles had established themselves and were helping the Peloponnesians by sending them helmsmen for their fleet, while also keeping the Samians in the city in a state of agitation and offering a haven to refugees. So the generals gathered together a force from the allies and sailed there. They defeated in battle the men that came out from Antandrus against them and regained possession of the place.

Shortly after this Lamachus, who had sailed to the Pontus and had come [2] to anchor at the mouth of the River Cales in Heracleian territory, lost his ships when a heavy downpour produced a sudden flood. Lamachus and his army made their way on foot through the land of the Bithynian Thracians, who are on the other side in Asia, and came to Calchedon, the Megarian colony at the mouth of the Pontus.

Also in the same summer and immediately after the retreat from the **76** Megarid, the Athenian general Demosthenes came to Naupactus with forty ships. He and Hippocrates were involved in negotiations about [2] Boeotian affairs on the instigation of certain men in the cities there who wanted to change the form of government and turn it into a democracy such as the Athenians had. The prime mover in this was Ptoeodorus, an exile from Thespiae, and their plans were as follows. Some men were [3] to betray Siphae, a coastal town in Thespian territory in the Gulf of Crisae. Others from Orchomenus were to hand over Chaeronea, which is a dependency of that city (now known as Boeotian Orchomenus but once called Minyan Orchomenus). The exiles from there were the ones most active in these negotiations, and they were also hiring some men from the Peloponnese. (Chaeroneia is right on the edge of Boeotia where it

[1] There is a play here on *metastasis* (change of state) and *stasis* (conflict) but no explicit mention of political 'government' or 'revolution' (the usual translations). See VIII 75.2n.

[2] See IV 52.3. [3] Literally, 'The Sea', their name for the Euxine (now the Black Sea).

faces Phanotis in Phocis, and some Phocians were in on the plot too.) The [4]
Athenians were to occupy Delium, the sanctuary of Apollo, which is in Tanagran territory facing Euboea. And all these events were to take place simultaneously on an appointed day, to prevent the Boeotians combining to send a joint force to the defence of Delium, since each of their cities would be separately occupied with their local disturbances. If the attempt [5]
succeeded and Delium was made secure they confidently expected that even if there were no immediate constitutional upheavals in Boeotia, once they were in possession of these places and the land was being raided and there was a ready refuge for various people, then things would not remain just as they were; but in time, when the Athenians moved to support the rebels and the opposing force was no longer unified, they would be able to turn affairs to their own advantage.

This was the plot they were hatching. Hippocrates himself was to 77
take a force from Athens at the appropriate time and march against the Boeotians, while he sent Demosthenes on ahead with forty ships to Naupactus in order to gather together from that region a force of Acarnanians and the other allies and then sail to Siphae, expecting its betrayal. And they determined a day on which these operations would be simultaneously executed. When Demosthenes got there he found that [2]
the Oeniadae had already been forced into the Athenian alliance by the combined Acarnanian forces. He himself called up the whole alliance in the area and, after first campaigning against Salynthius and the Agraeans and attaching them also to the alliance, he proceeded to make all the other necessary arrangements to ensure that he would get to the rendezvous at Siphae at the due time.

At about the same time this summer Brasidas was making his journey 78
to the Thracian region with 1,700 hoplites. When he reached Heracleia in Trachis he sent a messenger on ahead to his sympathisers at Pharsalus, requesting them to provide an escort for him and his army through Thessaly. In response, he was met at Meliteia in Achaea by Panaerus, Dorus, Hippolochidas, Torylaus and Strophacus, an official representative of the Chalcidians, and only then did he proceed on his way. Other Thessalians [2]
helped to guide him too, including Niconidas from Larisa, who was an associate of Perdiccas. It was, of course, always difficult to pass through Thessaly without an escort, and especially so with an armed force; indeed among the Greeks in general travelling through a neighbour's land without their permission was always looked upon with suspicion. Besides,

Map 20. Brasidas' march through Thessaly (424)

the bulk of the Thessalian people had always been favourably disposed towards the Athenians. And so, if the Thessalians had not traditionally [3] been governed by powerful ruling groups rather than enjoying equality before the law,[1] he would never have made any progress, since even

[1] The contrast in the Greek is between *dunasteia* and *isonomia*, which may amount in practice to the difference between oligarchy and democracy but doesn't quite say that. See also III 62.3.

as it was he was confronted on his march by Thessalians of the opposite persuasion. They stopped him at the River Enipeus and told him he had no right to go on without the consent of the whole community. His escorts reassured them that they would not take him through against [4] their wishes, but explained that they were just acting as good hosts in helping an unexpected visitor on his way. And Brasidas himself told the Thessalians that he was travelling through their land as a friend and was bearing arms against his enemies, the Athenians, and not against them; he was not aware of any existing enmity between the Thessalian and Spartan peoples which would debar their access to each other's land; but if in this case they were unhappy he would not proceed (which he would have been unable to do anyway), though he could see no actual reason why they should prevent him.

The Thessalians listened to what he said and went away. On the advice [5] of his escorts Brasidas then set off at high speed without making a halt, before any larger group could be assembled to stop him. In fact on the same day as he set out from Meliteia he completed his journey to Pharsalus and camped there by the River Apidanus;[1] from there he went on to Phacion and from there to Perrhaebia. At this point his Thessalian [6] guides left him and went back, while the Perrhaebians, who are subjects of the Thessalians, brought him on to Dion in the kingdom of Perdiccas, a township in Macedon lying at the foot of Mount Olympus and facing Thessaly.

In this manner, then, Brasidas managed to move through Thessaly **79** quickly enough to prevent anyone organising the means to stop him, and he reached Perdiccas[2] and the Chalcidice. Getting this army to come from [2] the Peloponnese was the work of those in the Thracian region who had revolted from Athens[3] and of Perdiccas, both of them fearful of ongoing Athenian successes: the Chalcidians thought that the Athenians would move against them first (and the neighbouring cities of theirs who had not actually revolted were secretly joining them at the same time in bringing in the Peloponnesians); while Perdiccas for his part, though not openly hostile to the Athenians, had his own fears arising from his long-standing differences with them and was in particular keen to displace Arrhabaeus, king of the Lyncestians.

[1] A march of about 35 km, according to Gomme (III, p. 544).
[2] On Perdiccas and his shifting loyalties, see I 56–57; he was last heard of at II 99–101.
[3] The Chalcidians and Bottiaeans who had joined in the revolt of Potidaea (see I 58, II 101).

It was the fact that the Spartans were having a bad time of it currently [3]
that had made it relatively easy for them to get an army sent out from the
Peloponnese.[1] The Athenians were applying pressure to the Peloponnese, **80**
and not least to the Spartans' own territory, so the Spartans hoped that the
best way of diverting them would be some painful retaliation in kind by
sending out a force to help subvert their allies, especially since these allies
were ready to maintain it and had themselves called for their help in their
revolt. Moreover, the Spartans were glad to have an excuse for sending [2]
some of their helots out there, in case they should try to start something
in the current situation when Pylos was in enemy hands. The Spartans' [3]
relations with the helots had always been largely determined by issues
of security, and indeed on one occasion they were so fearful of the large
numbers of helot youth that they even perpetrated the following deed.
They made a proclamation that all those helots who could claim to have
best distinguished themselves in war would be selected as candidates for
emancipation. In fact they were testing them out, with the thought that
the ones who had the confidence to press their case for freedom would
be the ones most likely to turn on them. Accordingly, they selected about [4]
2,000 of them, who then paraded round the temples in garlands in the
belief that they were freed, but shortly afterwards the Spartans did away
with them and no one ever knew how they each met their end. So on [5]
the present occasion they gladly dispatched 700 helots as hoplite support
for Brasidas and he hired the rest of his men from the Peloponnese as
mercenaries.

Brasidas himself was sent out by the Spartans very much on his own **81**
wishes (and the Chalcidians were also keen to have him). He had the
reputation in Sparta itself of a man who always got things done and when
he went out he proved himself invaluable to the Spartans. In the present [2]
situation he caused many of the cities to revolt from Athens through
the just and moderate way he dealt with them, while other places he
took with the help of betrayal from within, so that when the Spartans
later wanted to negotiate, as in fact they did, they had places available to
transact in mutual exchanges and there was some relief of pressure on
the Peloponnese from the war. And later on in the war, after the events
in Sicily, it was the character and intelligence[2] Brasidas showed at this
time, which some experienced first-hand and others knew by report, that

[1] The reluctance of the Spartans in general to leave the Peloponnese was notorious (see I 70.4), emphasising what an unusual Spartan Brasidas was.

[2] *Arete* and *sunesis* (see glossary).

did most to inspire enthusiasm for the Spartan cause among those who were allies of the Athenians. As the first Spartan to go abroad and win a [3] reputation for being in all respects a good man, he left behind him a firm expectation that others too would be like him.

82 As soon as the Athenians heard of Brasidas' arrival in the Thracian region, therefore, they declared Perdiccas an enemy, holding him responsible for his passage, and they also set a closer watch on their allies there.

83 Perdiccas immediately took Brasidas and his army along with his own forces on a military campaign against Arrhabaeus son of Bromerus, who was king of the Lyncestian Macedonians. He was a neighbour with whom Perdiccas had a dispute and wanted to overthrow. But when Perdiccas, [2] accompanied by Brasidas, reached the pass leading to Lyncus with his army, Brasidas said he wanted to go in and first see if he could make Arrhabaeus an ally of the Spartans through discussion – before they resorted to war. Arrhabaeus had in fact made some sort of overture to [3] the effect that he was ready to accept Brasidas as an intermediary in arbitration, and the Chalcidian envoys accompanying them were also telling Brasidas not to start clearing troubles from Perdiccas' path, since they wanted to keep him fully engaged with their own concerns too. Moreover, Perdiccas' own people had hinted at some such thing when [4] they were in Sparta, suggesting that he would bring many of the places in his neighbourhood into alliance with the Spartans. The upshot of this was that Brasidas felt equally entitled to deal directly with the issue of Arrhabaeus himself.[1] Perdiccas told Brasidas that he hadn't brought him [5] in to act as an arbitrator in their domestic disputes, but rather to do away with anyone he, Perdiccas, designated as an enemy; and since he was the one providing maintenance for half of Brasidas' army Brasidas had no right to get together with Arrhabaeus. Brasidas did meet him, [6] though, despite this disagreement and Perdiccas' opposition, and he was sufficiently persuaded by what was said to withdraw his army without invading the country. After this Perdiccas, thinking himself badly treated, reduced his contribution from a half to a third of the army's maintenance.

84 Immediately after this, in the same summer and shortly before the grape harvest, Brasidas took some Chalcidians with him and went on a campaign against Acanthus, a colony of the Andrians. They were divided [2] amongst themselves about whether to let him in: one side had joined the

[1] *Koine* here might also mean 'with impartiality' or 'in the general interest'.

Chalcidians in inviting him, on the other side were the people. Nonetheless, the populace was afraid for their grape crop still outside the city and they were persuaded by Brasidas that he should be allowed in on his own and that they should listen to him before deciding. He was duly admitted, and he came before the people – he was in fact not a bad speaker for a Spartan[1] – and spoke as follows.

'Men of Acanthus, the fact that the Spartans have sent me out here with **85** this army is confirmation of the reason we gave in beginning the war – that we were fighting the Athenians to liberate Greece.[2] And if we have [2] been rather late in coming, misled by the course of the war at home where we hoped we could quickly dispose of the Athenians ourselves without involving you in any danger, please don't hold this against us. We are here now, coming as soon as the situation allowed, and together with you we will endeavour to finish them off. So I am very surprised to find your [3] gates closed against me and to get such a cool reception. We Spartans [4] were already thinking, before we actually arrived here in person, that we were coming to join people who were in spirit at least already allies and who wanted us here. That is why we took such risks in making a journey lasting many days through foreign parts and why we have shown such total commitment.

But if you have something else in mind or are going to oppose both [5] your own freedom and that of the rest of Greece, that would have dire consequences. Your own resistance would be bad enough; but anyone [6] else I might approach will also then be less likely to join me, since they will raise the objection that you – who were the first people I approached, who represent a city of real repute and who are thought to be shrewd judges – you rejected me. I shall not have a credible answer to offer, but it will be thought that either there is something wrong with the freedom I am bringing or that I came here too weak and powerless to defend you against the Athenians if they should attack. Yet the army I have here now [7] is just the same as I had when I went to the aid of Nisaea; and there the

[1] An ironic contrast with the Spartan stereotype represented by the taciturn Sthenelaidas at I 86 and perhaps part of the continuing differentiation of the Athenian and Spartan characters (see I 69–71, III 38 and IV 17.2).

[2] A rather formal beginning, using a rare abstract noun (*ekpempsis*), as if to emphasise the point that Brasidas is a practised speaker. Literally, 'the sending-out of me and the army has come about demonstrating the truth of the reason (*aitian*) we proclaimed beginning the war'. And it makes an obvious difference to the sense whether one translates the last phrase as 'for beginning' or 'when beginning'; 'in beginning' may be helpfully ambiguous between the two.

Athenians were unwilling to engage with us despite their superiority in numbers,[1] so it is surely unlikely that now, when the troops must come by sea, they will actually send against us a force of comparable size to the army they had at Nisaea.

86 As for myself, I have not come here to harm the Greeks but to liberate them, and I have bound the Spartan authorities with the most solemn oaths to guarantee absolutely that those whom I win over as allies will keep their autonomy. Moreover, I have come not to add you to our list of allies either by force or by fraud, but on the contrary to offer ourselves as your allies in your fight against enslavement by the Athenians. Surely [2] then I don't deserve your suspicion, when I have given you these absolute guarantees; nor should I be thought powerless to defend you. So I urge you to take courage and come over to our side.

If there is anyone feeling reservations, through fear of some personal [3] enemy, lest I should place the city into the hands of one particular party, then he most of all can feel reassured. I have not come here to support any [4] faction; nor would I think I was bestowing any real freedom if I set aside tradition[2] and either enslaved the majority to the few or the minority to the whole people. That would be an even harsher imposition than foreign [5] rule, and we Spartans would receive no thanks for our pains, but blame in place of honour and glory; and the result would be to expose ourselves to the very charges we brought against the Athenians in going to war with them, but in our case made more odious by our virtuous claims. To men [6] of good standing at least, it is more dishonourable to make one's gains by plausible deceit than by open force. For the latter justifies aggression by brute strength, which is the gift of fortune, while the former proceeds by cynical manipulation.[3]

87 As you see, we Spartans think very carefully about those issues that matter to us most; and you could not have any stronger assurance, over and above the oaths we have sworn, than you get from men whose deeds correspond so closely to their words and demonstrate conclusively that their interests are just what they claim them to be.

Suppose you now say that you are unable to accept these offers of [2] mine, but still bear us goodwill and should not be made to suffer for this

[1] Not actually true (see the numbers at IV 72–73, and the admission at IV 108.5); his real point is that the Athenians would only be likely to send a smaller force by sea.

[2] It is unclear whether this means 'your' (Acanthian) or 'Spartan' traditions.

[3] 86.5–6 and 87.1 are highly rhetorical, but in a literary rather than oral form which is very compressed and artificial in the Greek (see introduction, pp. xxix–xxxiv).

rejection – claiming that this freedom I am offering seems to you to be not without its dangers; and that while it is right to confer freedom on those who are in a position to accept it, no one should have it imposed against their will? I should in that case call on the gods and heroes of this country as my witness, that though I came here for your good I could not persuade you. And then I will waste your land and try to compel you by force. Nor shall I think I am any longer wrong to do so, but [3] will feel justified for two compelling reasons: first, I must protect the Spartans from this "goodwill" of yours, should you not be won over to our side, to stop them being harmed by the money you are contributing to the Athenians; and secondly, I must make sure that the Greeks are not prevented by your actions from escaping their enslavement. Otherwise [4] we should indeed have no reason for acting this way. Nor do we Spartans have any obligation, except for reasons of the common good, to liberate the unwilling. Nor, again, do we have any ambitions for empire, but [5] we are determined to stop those of others; and we would be failing the majority if we ignored the fact of your opposition when we are seeking to bring independence to everyone.

Bearing all this in mind, then, take good counsel. Strive to be the first [6] to start the process of liberation for the Greeks, and in so doing win everlasting fame, avoid damage to your personal interests, and earn the finest tributes for your whole city.'

Brasidas said this much. And the Acanthians, after a long debate on 88 both sides of the question, voted by secret ballot and reached a majority verdict. Moved both by Brasidas' persuasive words and by their fears for the grape-harvest, they decided to secede from Athens.[1] They then made Brasidas commit personally to the oaths the Spartan authorities had sworn when they sent him out, guaranteeing the autonomy of any allies he might bring over to their side, and on this basis they allowed in

[1] The nineteenth-century historian George Grote hails this as a triumph of Greek democracy in action: 'There are few acts in history wherein Grecian political reason and morality appear to greater advantage than in this proceeding of the Acanthians. The habit of fair, free and pacific discussion – the established respect to the vote of the majority – the care to protect individual independence of judgement by secret suffrage – the deliberate estimate of reasons on both sides by each individual citizen – all these main laws and conditions of healthy political action appear as part of the confirmed character of the Acanthians' (*History of Greece*, VI, pp. 555–6). But of course it also showed how easily a democracy could be swayed by 'persuasive words' and 'fear': the Acanthians had no real reason to complain about their treatment by the Athenians and did not seem to be much resenting it.

his army. Shortly after this the Andrian colony, Stagirus, also joined the [2]
revolt.

These were the events of this summer.

Winter [IV 89–116]

Right at the start of the following winter the stage was set for the acts of **89**
betrayal in Boeotia to the Athenian generals. Demosthenes was to have stationed himself at Siphae and Hippocrates at Delium, but a mistake was made about the exact days on which each of them was required to set out with their forces and Demosthenes, who had on board Acarnanians and many allies from that region, sailed to Siphae too soon.[1] The plot was betrayed by Nicomachus, a Phocian from Phanotis, who told the Spartans and they told the Boeotians. So his mission was a failure. Help [2]
came in from all quarters of Boeotia – since Hippocrates was not yet in their land to harass them and create a diversion – and both Siphae and Chaeroneia were occupied before they could be betrayed. When the conspirators realised what had gone wrong they no longer tried to stir things up in their cities.

Hippocrates for his part had mobilised a full force of Athenians, both **90**
citizens and metics and other visitors present too, but reached Delium too late, after the Boeotians had already returned from Siphae. He encamped his army and proceeded to fortify Delium in the following way. They dug [2]
a ditch in a circle round the temple and its precinct and heaped up the spoil from the ditch to serve as a wall, with a line of stakes set along it; and they threw in vines they cut down from round the sanctuary along with stones and bricks from nearby buildings they pulled down, and did everything they could to raise the height of the defensive structure. They also erected wooden towers at suitable places where no temple building survived – for example, where the portico had collapsed. They began this work on the [3]
third day after leaving home and kept at it through that day and the next and up to supper time on the fifth. Then, when it was largely completed, [4]
the army withdrew just over a mile from Delium, preparing to go home; most of the light-armed troops went straight on, while the hoplites made a halt and rested there. Hipparchus meanwhile stayed behind and placed

[1] Not a surprising mistake, considering that states tended to have their own calendars (see pp. lviii–lix), nor perhaps a crucial one either, since the plot was in any case betrayed.

Map 21. Delium campaign (424/3)

guards and got on with arranging the completion of the remaining tasks on the outworks.

During these same days the Boeotians were gathering at Tanagra. When **91**
they had all arrived from their different cities and they could see that the Athenians were heading off home, all but one of the boeotarchs[1] (of which there are eleven) were agreed in advising against fighting, since the Athenians were no longer in Boeotia (they were more or less on the border with Oropus when they had halted). The exception was Pagondas son of Aeolidas who, with Arianthidas son of Lysimachidas, was commander

[1] See glossary.

for Thebes and was in overall charge.[1] He wanted to make a fight of it, judging the risk worth taking. He therefore summoned the men to come before him, one company at a time to avoid them all leaving their arms behind together, and tried to persuade the Boeotians to move against the Athenians and force the issue. He spoke as follows.[2]

'Men of Boeotia, it should never have even entered the heads of any of **92** us in command to imagine we have no good reason to take the battle to the Athenians unless we actually catch them still in Boeotia. It is Boeotia they intend to destroy, coming from across the border and setting up a fort here, and they are surely just as much our enemies wherever they may be caught and from wherever they came to commit these acts of war. As things now stand, anyone who did think that holding off [2] was the safer course had better change his mind. The time for making careful calculations about your territory is not when you are yourself the target of external aggression but when you are deliberately planning to attack someone else, secure in your own possessions and eager for more. Moreover, you Boeotians have a tradition of defending yourselves against [3] an invading foreign army, whether it be on your territory or that of your neighbours; and when it is the Athenian army – and they are right on your frontiers into the bargain – it becomes all the more imperative. In [4] general, when you are dealing with neighbouring states it is always the capacity to meet force with force that actually constitutes freedom; so above all in dealing with these people, who are trying to dominate those near and far alike, we must surely fight them to the very end. (We have as an example the experience of the Euboeans[3] just across the strait as well as most of the rest of Greece.) We have to realise that, whereas in other cases neighbouring states fight to settle territorial disputes over particular boundaries, in our case if we are defeated just one boundary stone[4] will be planted – beyond dispute and encompassing the whole country, for

[1] This phrase could alternatively belong with what follows and mean that he wanted to act *while* he was still in overall charge.

[2] This is interesting as a speech that was clearly repeated several times (as is Hippocrates' at 94.2 below), though in the form set out here it might have been hard to assimilate as a spoken address, starting as it does with a testing triple-negative (see also II 87.3n, IV 9.4n and VI 67.3).

[3] See I 114.

[4] *Horos* means both a boundary (as in the previous clause), and the stone that marks it. The point here is surely not that there will be one boundary (rather than several), but that the Athenians will incorporate the whole of Boeotia within their own boundaries and mark that with a *horos*.

they will come and take possession of what we have by force. That is the [5] measure of how much greater danger these men pose by their proximity than do others.

Besides, those who attack their neighbours in the confidence which brute force gives, as the Athenians do now, are likely to be bolder in their aggression against those who are passive and who defend themselves only within their homelands. They are likely to be less ready to deal with those who go out to meet them outside their boundaries and who seize the opportunity to take the initiative in war. Indeed, we have a proof of this [6] in the case of the Athenians. It was our victory over them at Coronea,[1] at the time when they were taking advantage of our internal conflicts to occupy our land, which gave Boeotia the total immunity from fear that has lasted to the present time.

We should now remember those times, and the older ones among us [7] must emulate our earlier deeds while the younger ones, sons of fathers who performed those heroic feats, should endeavour not to disgrace the values which are their heritage. We must trust that we shall have on our side the god whose sanctuary the Athenians have so impiously occupied as a fortified camp, and we must trust in the favourable omens we see from our sacrifices. Let us go out to meet them and show them that they must get what they want by attacking people who do not defend themselves; since those for whom it is a matter of honour always to fight for the freedom of their own land and never unjustly to enslave that of others – these men will not let them get away without a fight.'

With an exhortation such as this Pagondas persuaded the Boeotians to **93** engage with the Athenians. He quickly broke camp and led his army out (since it was already late in the day), and when he drew close to the enemy forces he took up a position at a point where an intervening hill prevented the two armies seeing each other directly, and there he drew up his forces and prepared for battle. Hippocrates was meanwhile away at Delium, but [2] when he was told about the Boeotian advance he sent on instructions to his army to take up battle positions and he joined them soon afterwards, having left at Delium about 300 cavalry to guard it in case of attack and to watch for a chance to turn on the Boeotians in the coming battle. The Boeotians positioned men to defend against such an attack and when [3] everything was in good order they appeared over the hill and halted in full

[1] In 447/6 (see I 113.2). Hippocrates in his reply at 95 below refers to a corresponding victory by the Athenians at Oenophyta in 457 (see I 108.3).

battle order: they were about 7,000 hoplites, more than 10,000 light-armed troops and 500 peltasts. The Thebans and their confederates[1] took the [4] right wing; in the centre were the Haliartians, Coroneans, Copaeans and the others from around Lake Copaïs; those on the left were the Thespians, Tanagrans and Orchomenians. The cavalry and the light-armed were on both wings. The Theban contingent was drawn up in ranks twenty-five deep,[2] with the rest in their various formations. These were the Boeotian forces and their dispositions.

94 On the Athenian side the hoplites, who were equal in number to those opposing them, were drawn up eight deep along the whole line, while their cavalry were positioned on each wing. There were no regular light-armed troops present on this occasion, nor did the Athenians have any of these in the city; those who did join in the invasion were many times more numerous than the enemy, but they tagged along without proper armour in most cases since there had been a mass mobilisation of anyone visiting Athens at the time as well as of its citizens, and once these had started for home only a few remained to take part.

When the armies were drawn up on battle order and about to engage, [2] Hippocrates went along the lines of the Athenian army and spoke as follows:

95 'Athenians, my speech to you is a short one, but that is quite enough for men of courage, and it is in any case more of a reminder than a new appeal. Let none of you think that we have no business to be chancing these risks in a foreign country. The battle will take place in their country, but it will be on behalf of our own. And if we are victorious, never again will the Peloponnesians invade your land, since they will be deprived of the Boeotian cavalry; and in just one battle you both gain this land and make your own a freer country. Advance to meet them, therefore, and be worthy both of your city – the fatherland we are all proud to celebrate as the foremost in Greece – and of your fathers who beat these men in battle under Myronides at Oenophyta[3] and who once held Boeotia in their possession.'

96 Hippocrates was still delivering this speech of encouragement and had got no further than half-way along the army lines, when the Boeotians,

[1] *summoroi*, that is, members of the same *moira* or division in the Theban federation.

[2] Evidently unusual and therefore noted, though its tactical function is unclear since any advantage in momentum and impact (physical or psychological) would seem to be counteracted by their lack of manoeuvrability.

[3] See I 108.3 for the Battle of Oenophyta in 457.

similarly urged on by a brief harangue on the spot from Pagondas, charged down from the hill shouting their war-cries. The Athenians responded and met them at a run. The outer wings of the armies never closed on [2] each other, since both had experienced the same obstacles in the form of torrential streams. But the rest engaged in a long and hard struggle, with shield shoved against shield.[1] The Boeotians on their left wing as far as the [3] centre of the line were losing to the Athenians, who pressed hard against all of them on this side, especially the Thespians. As their ranks crumbled and they became surrounded in a very small space, the Thespians were butchered in hand-to-hand fighting as they tried to defend themselves. Even some of the Athenians got confused in this encirclement, failed to recognise their comrades and killed each other. On this wing, then, the [4] Boeotians came off worst and fled to join the fighting elsewhere; but the right, where the Thebans were, was defeating the Athenians, pushing them back – gradually at first and then pursuing them. There was then a [5] further turn of events when Pagondas, seeing his left wing in difficulties, sent two squadrons of cavalry around the hill from a point out of sight; and when these suddenly appeared in full view the victorious Athenian wing, thinking that another army was advancing on them, was thrown into panic.

The combined effect of this and the action of the Thebans in chasing [6] them and breaking up their ranks was a complete rout of the whole Athenian army. Some of them rushed to Delium and the sea, some [7] towards Oropus, others to Mount Parnes, others to wherever they saw any hope of salvation. The Boeotians pursued them and kept up the [8] slaughter, especially the Boeotian cavalry and the Locrians who had come in support just as the rout started; but when night interrupted the action it became easier for the mass of fugitives to find some safety. On the next [9] day the troops from Oropus and from Delium, after leaving a garrison at Delium (which they still held), were conveyed home by sea.

The Boeotians set up a trophy, retrieved their own dead and stripped **97** the armour from the enemy corpses; and after placing a guard they retired to Tanagra, where they made their plans for an attack on Delium.

[1] This passage is regarded as a *locus classicus* for the description of hoplite warfare, though the actual mechanics of this *othismos* or 'shoving' are still unclear. Hornblower has a full discussion (II, pp. 304–6), but see also H. van Wees, *Greek Warfare*, pp. 188–91, for a more sceptical view: he points out that in a very dense formation hoplites could scarcely deploy their weapons against the enemy without inflicting almost equal damage to their own side (spears were sharpened at both ends after all); and we ourselves talk of a military 'push' in a metaphorical sense.

Meanwhile a herald travelling from Athens to ask for their dead met [2]
a herald coming from Boeotia who turned him back, saying he would
achieve nothing until he himself had returned from Athens. When this
man appeared before the Athenians he delivered the Boeotians' message,[1]
that the Athenians had done wrong in transgressing the laws of the Greeks.
It was universal and established practice among them that those invading [3]
another's country should keep out of the holy sanctuaries within it; but the
Athenians had made a fortress of Delium and were living there, doing all
the things people do in unhallowed ground,[2] including drawing and using
water which the Boeotians themselves were forbidden to touch except for
purification in sacred rituals. The Boeotians therefore, on behalf of the [4]
gods as well as themselves and invoking both Apollo and the other deities
sharing his temple cults, served notice on the Athenians that they should
first depart from the sanctuary and then take away the dead that belonged
to them.

After the Boeotian herald had made this speech, the Athenians sent **98**
their own herald to the Boeotians to say that in the matter of the sanctuary
they had done no wrong nor would they do any deliberate damage in the
future. That was not their purpose in going there in the first place, but
they had intended to use it as a base from which to defend themselves
against those who were attacking them. The accepted law of the Greeks [2]
was that whoever had control of any piece of land, be it large or small,
always got with it the sanctuaries there, along with the responsibility of
looking after them in accordance with previous traditional practices as
far as possible. Indeed the Boeotians themselves, in common with many [3]
others who had inhabited a land after expelling its population by force,
now regarded as their own property the sanctuaries that had belonged to
others when they first occupied them.[3] If the Athenians themselves had [4]
been able to conquer more of Boeotia, they would have kept hold of it; and

[1] From 97.2 to 99 there are extended pieces of indirect speech, unmatched elsewhere (even in book VIII). Was this a draft to be turned later into more 'finished' direct speech, a change of style, or an innovation thought somehow suited to these exchanges? In the Greek, at any rate, the resulting grammatical effect of a sequence of nested infinitives makes for inelegant prose. See also IV 114.3–5.

[2] *Bebelo*, an unusual word from tragedy, meaning trodden or unhallowed (ground). There are several other poetic words used in this section, and one unique usage (*homochetas*, 'sharing the temple cults'), presumably indicative of some deliberate stylistic effects. On the euphemism for bodily functions, see also VII 87.2.

[3] See I 12 and III 61 for the Boeotian precedent; but the Athenian arguments in this section are all very forced.

as it was, they would not voluntarily leave the part they did have, which they now considered to be their own. As for meddling with the water, that [5] was a matter of necessity not some deliberate act of disrespect[1] on their part. They had been forced to use it in self-defence against the Boeotians, who had been the ones to invade their territory in the first place.[2] Indeed, surely anything done under the stress of war and danger could [6] be forgiven to some degree, even by the god. Altars were a refuge in the case of involuntary offences, while 'transgression' was a term applied to those who committed wrongs when under no compulsion rather than to those made desperate by some emergency. And as for the bodies of [7] the dead, those who thought it right to exchange them in return for a sanctuary were acting far more sacrilegiously than those who refused to bargain with sanctuaries to recover what was theirs by right.

The Athenians therefore urged the Boeotians to confirm without qual- [8] ification that they could recover their dead, not on condition of their leaving Boeotian territory (for they were no longer in Boeotia – this was land they had 'won by the spear'), but under truce, in accordance with traditional practice.

The Boeotians answered that if the Athenians were in Boeotia they **99** should get out of their land and take their dead with them; but if they were in their own territory it was for them to decide what to do. Their thinking was that Oropus, which was where the bodies were actually lying after the battle had taken place on the border, belonged to the Athenians by virtue of its subject status, though the Athenians would not get possession of the bodies against Boeotian wishes; and they were not in any position to offer a truce over territory belonging to the Athenians.[3] So it seemed an appropriate answer to say, 'let them get out of our territory and then take back what they are asking for'. The Athenian herald listened to this and went away without having achieved anything.

The Boeotians immediately sent for javelin fighters and slingers from **100** the Malian Gulf and they received further support from the Corinthians who came after the battle with 2,000 hoplites, from the Peloponnesian

[1] *Hubris* (see glossary).

[2] This can hardly refer to Delium, but it is unclear how having to use the water could be directly blamed on some earlier 'aggression' on the part of the Boeotians. The Boeotians' 'answer' in 99 doesn't make it any clearer.

[3] The structure of this passage in the Greek is obscure, but the basic intention seems to be to put the Athenians in a kind of Morton's Fork, whereby if they admitted the land was Boeotian they could get their dead back, but if they claimed it as their own they couldn't.

garrison that had evacuated Nisaea and from some Megarians who joined them. With these forces they marched on Delium and attacked the fortifications. After trying various means of assault they finally succeeded in taking it by employing an engine of war constructed in the following way.

They sawed a great beam lengthwise into two halves, which they then [2] hollowed out and fitted together again very neatly like a flute. At one end they hung a cauldron suspended with chains, and into that they bent an iron nozzle running through the wooden beam, which was itself reinforced with metal plating for much of its length. They conveyed it [3] on carts from some distance away up to the point in the wall where it was constructed mostly of vines and timber; and when they got it near they inserted a huge bellows into their end of the beam and started blowing. The blast of air passed through the narrow passage of the pipe into the [4] cauldron, which was full of lighted coals, sulphur and pitch, so creating a mighty flame that set the wall on fire and made it impossible for anyone to stay there any longer. The defenders therefore abandoned it and took to flight. And this was how the fort was captured. Some of the garrison [5] were killed, two hundred were captured and of the rest the majority made it to the ships and were taken home.

Delium was taken on the seventeenth day after the battle, and shortly **101** afterwards the Athenian herald, who had no idea what had happened, went back again to ask about the bodies. This time the Boeotians did not repeat their earlier answer but gave the bodies back. The numbers [2] of those killed in battle were just under 500 men on the Boeotian side, and just under 1,000 men on the Athenian side, including Hippocrates their general, besides a large number of light-armed troops and baggage-carriers.

Demosthenes had earlier sailed to Siphae but had met with disappoint- [3] ment there when the plans for its betrayal failed.[1] Now, not long after the battle at Delium, he took on board his ships a force of Acarnanians, Agraeans and 400 Athenian hoplites and made a landing in Sicyonian territory. But before the ships could come to shore the Sicyonians gathered [4] to defend themselves and turned back the landing-parties. They pursued them to the ships, killing some and taking others prisoner. They then set up a trophy and gave back the dead under truce.

Sitalces, king of the Odrysians, died at the time of these events at [5] Delium, after leading a campaign against the Triballi in which he was

[1] IV 89.1.

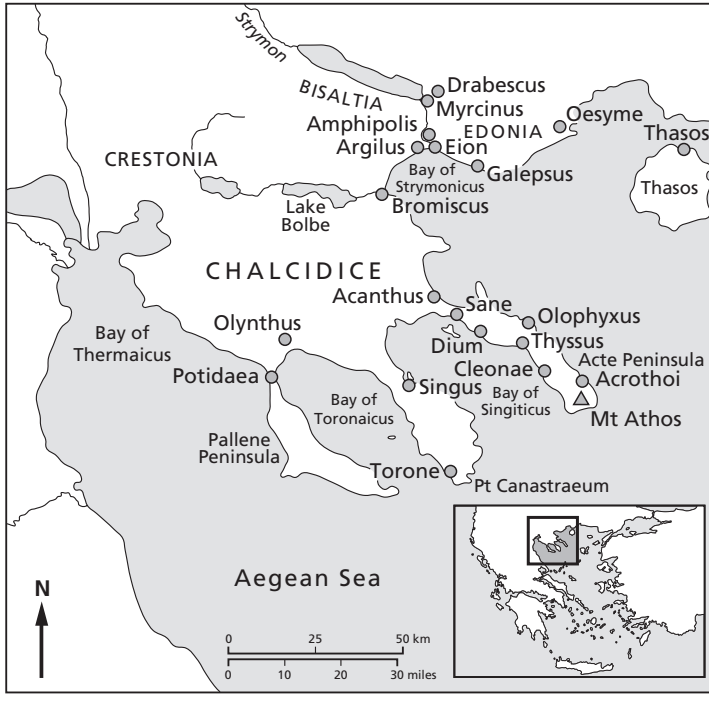
defeated in battle.[1] His nephew Seuthes son of Sparadocus now became king of the Odrysians and all the other parts of Thrace over which Sitalces had ruled.

102 In the same winter Brasidas went with his allies in the Thracian region on a campaign against Amphipolis, the Athenian colony on the River Strymon. There had been various earlier attempts to colonise the site [2] on which the present city stands. First Aristagoras the Milesian had tried to do so when he was fleeing from Darius, but he was beaten back by the Edonians; then the Athenians had tried thirty-two years later, sending out 10,000 settlers along with volunteers from elsewhere, who were massacred by the Thracians at Drabescus. Then the Athenians came [3] again twenty-nine years later, sending out Hagnon son of Nicias to found the colony, and this time they drove out the Edonians and settled the site, which they first called 'Nine Ways'. They made their base at Eïon, which [4] they were using as a seaport and trading post, situated at the mouth of the river some three miles from the present city. Hagnon named the new city 'Amphipolis' because the River Strymon flows round it on both sides and he built it so as to be conspicuous from both sea and land, running a long wall across the loop of the river to enclose it.

103 This, then, was the place Brasidas went to attack, setting out with his army from Arnae in Chalcidice. Sometime in the early evening he reached Aulon and Bormiscus, where Lake Bolbe has its outlet into the sea. There he stopped to eat and then travelled on through the night. It was wintry [2] weather with snow in the air, so he hastened on all the more, wanting to take everyone in Amphipolis by surprise, except the conspirators.

To explain, there were in Amphipolis settlers from Argilus, an Andrian [3] colony, along with others who were also involved with them in the conspiracy, some prompted by Perdiccas and some by the Chalcidians. But [4] the leading conspirators were the inhabitants of Argilus itself, which was nearby. There was a history of bad relationships between them and the Athenians and they had long had designs on Amphipolis and had been plotting for some time back with their countrymen who had citizenship there to bring about the city's betrayal. Now that the opportunity

[1] Sitalces was last heard of at II 95–101. This obituary notice is curiously disconnected from the narrative here and Thucydides does not usually feel obliged to note the deaths of prominent people. See II 65.6 (Pericles), II 93.6 (Phormio) and III 1.1 (Archidamus). Maybe this is a 'note to self', not yet fully integrated in the text; and perhaps Sitalces may have been of particular interest because his successor, Seuthes, became Perdiccas' brother-in-law (II 101.6).



Map 22. Chalcidice and Amphipolis[1]

presented itself with Brasidas' arrival they welcomed him into the city, declared their secession from Athens that same night, and before dawn brought his army to the bridge over the river, which is some distance from [5] the town and was not then incorporated within its walls as it is now. There was only a small detachment of guards stationed at the bridge, and Brasidas easily overwhelmed these, helped partly by the conspiracy within and partly by his surprise attack in bad weather. He crossed the bridge and was immediately in control of all the property of the Amphipolitans who were living throughout this area outside the city.

His crossing of the bridge took the people in the city completely by **104** surprise. Many of those outside it were captured while others took refuge

[1] See also map 23, p. 325.

within the walls, and the Amphipolitans were thrown into complete tur-
moil, made worse by their mutual suspicions of each other. Indeed, people [2]
said their impression was that if Brasidas had made straight for the city
instead of letting his army turn aside to indulge in plunder he could have
taken it then and there. As it was, however, when he had overrun the area [3]
outside the city and discovered that nothing had come of his expectations
of the people inside, he settled there with his army and made no further
move. Meanwhile, those who opposed the conspirators were sufficient in [4]
numbers to stop the gates being immediately thrown open. With the sup-
port of Eucles, the general who had come to them from Athens to secure[1]
the place, they sent word to the other general in the Thracian region,
Thucydides, the man who wrote this work.[2] He was at Thasos, which is
an island colony of Paros and about half a day's sail from Amphipolis,
and they urged him to come to their aid. When he got this message he [5]
sailed at full speed with seven ships he had available, his most important
objective being to save Amphipolis before it was surrendered in any way,
or failing that to secure Eion.

Brasidas was meanwhile becoming alarmed about this support force **105**
of ships coming from Thasos, and he had also learned that Thucydides
had the rights to work the gold mines in this part of Thrace and was in
consequence influential among the leading men on the mainland. He was
therefore very keen to seize the city before Thucydides arrived if he could,
lest the populace there should become disinclined to come to terms, in the
expectation that when he got there Thucydides would mobilise an allied
force from the islands and from Thrace and would come to their rescue.
Brasidas therefore offered them moderate terms and made a proclamation [2]
to the effect that any of the Amphipolitans or Athenians in the city who
wished could remain there, retaining their property with fair and equal
rights,[3] but that anyone who did not wish to stay should leave within five
days, taking their belongings with them.

[1] Literally, 'as guardian (*phulax*) of the place', though we don't know what troops were sent with him.

[2] This matter-of-fact introduction of himself in the third person is consistent with his intention of recounting events in an objective and balanced manner, as is his very sympathetic portrait of Brasidas, who was after all involved in Thucydides' own military failure and exile.

[3] *Ise kai homoia* ('the equal and the same') seems to be a sort of formula, of which we also get an echo in 106.1 below (which reads literally 'not being deprived of the city (*polis*) in the equal (*iso*)'. See also I 27 and *isos* in glossary.

When they heard this offer people began to change their minds, espe- **106**
cially since few of the citizen body were Athenians, most being of mixed origins, and because there were within the city relatives of many of those captured outside it. Compared to what they had feared, the proclamation sounded to them a fair offer: the Athenians were only too glad to get out, since they felt they were the ones most threatened and at the same time were not expecting help to arrive in the near future; while the general mass of people were happy not to be losing their equal rights in the city and to have this unexpected release from danger. The result was that those working with Brasidas now spoke openly [2]
in support of these terms, since they could see that opinion had shifted and that people were no longer heeding the Athenian general who was present. So the agreement was accepted and they admitted Brasidas on [3]
the terms that had been announced. In this way they surrendered the city, even as Thucydides and his ships sailed into Eïon late in the same day. Amphipolis had just fallen to Brasidas and he was within a night of seiz- [4]
ing Eïon too; if the ships had not arrived so fast he would have had it by dawn.

After this Thucydides organised things at Eïon to protect it against **107**
any immediate attack from Brasidas and also for the longer term; and he took in all those who wanted to come there from the upper city, as agreed in the treaty. Brasidas meanwhile suddenly set off with a number [2]
of boats down the river to Eïon, to see if he could capture the headland running out from the wall so as to control the entrance. He also made a simultaneous attempt on it by land, but was beaten back on both fronts and returned to consolidate the position around Amphipolis.

Myrcinus, an Edonian town, now came over to his side too when [3]
Pittacus, the king of the Edonians, had been killed by the sons of Goaxis and by his own wife Brauro. Not long afterwards Galepsus and Oesyme, both colonies of Thasos, also came over to him. Perdiccas too arrived immediately after the capture of Amphipolis and took part in organising things there.

With Amphipolis now in enemy hands the Athenians became very **108**
alarmed. There were various reasons for this: in particular, the city was useful to them both as a source of timber for ship-building and as a source of revenue; moreover, although the Spartans had up to this time been given access by the Thessalians to Athens' allies as far up as the Strymon, without controlling the bridge they had been able to get no further, since for a long way above the city the river was a great lake and they could be

watched by triremes from the side facing Eion. Now, however, all this had become easy.

They were also afraid their allies might revolt. Brasidas was presenting [2] himself generally in a moderate way and made it clear at every opportunity in the speeches he gave that he had been sent out to liberate Greece. And [3] when the cities that were subject to Athens heard about the capture of Amphipolis and the terms that were offered and about the easy manner[1] of the man himself, they were fired with thoughts of change and kept making representations to Brasidas, urging him to come and intervene, each of them wanting to be the first to secede. They felt there was no cause [4] to fear, though this later proved to be an underestimation of Athenian power on the same scale of magnitude as the power itself. They preferred to make their judgements on the basis of wishful thinking rather than prudent foresight, as men often do when they indulge in uncritical hope for what they want but use their sovereign powers of reason to reject what they would prefer to avoid.[2] Furthermore, they were emboldened by the [5] recent trouncing of the Athenians in Boeotia and by the seductive but misleading assertions of Brasidas, who was claiming that the Athenians had been unwilling to engage with him at Nisaea when he was there just with his own army. Nor did they believe that any supporting force would be sent out against them. But above all they were ready to take any sort [6] of risks because they felt a rush of excitement in their present situation and were for the first time about to have some demonstration of what the Spartans could do when strongly aroused.

Aware of all this, the Athenians sent out garrisons to the cities, doing the best they could at such short notice and in the wintry weather. Meanwhile, Brasidas made an urgent request to Sparta for an additional force to be sent out and himself started making preparations for building triremes on the Strymon. The Spartans, however, did not support his requests, partly [7] because of personal envy of him among the principal leaders there and partly because they were more concerned to get back the men captured from the island and bring the war to an end.

[1] *Praotes*, literally 'gentleness' or 'mildness' from a root meaning to 'tame' or 'soothe', suggesting perhaps both diplomacy and responsiveness. A striking word to use of such a dashing warrior and its only occurrence in Thucydides. Hornblower argues that a good deal of the language used by and about Brasidas is distinctive (II, pp. 42–9 and 276–8).

[2] The very literary antitheses of this passage recall the famous discussion of *stasis* at III 82–84.

In the same winter the Megarians captured their long walls, which the 109
Athenians had been holding,[1] and razed them to the ground. And Brasi-
das followed up his capture of Amphipolis by campaigning with his allies
against the area called Acte. This is the promontory that runs out from [2]
the King's Canal and ends at the high mountain of Athos as it projects
into the Aegean. There are various cities along it: Sane, the Andrian [3]
colony which is right by the canal on the seaward side facing Euboea,
and then Thysssus, Cleonae, Acrothoi, Olophyxus and Dium, which are [4]
inhabited by mixed barbarian peoples speaking Greek as well as their own
languages. There is also a small Chalcidian element there, mostly Pelas-
gian, descended from the Tyrrhenians that once also inhabited Lemnos
and Athens, but also Bisaltians, Crestonians and Edonians, all of them
living in tiny communities. Most of these came over to Brasidas, but Sane [5]
and Dion resisted him and he stayed in their territory with his army and
wasted it.

When they still refused to submit he promptly led a campaign against 110
Torone in Chalcidice, which was held by the Athenians, having been
encouraged to go there by a few men in Torone who were ready to betray
the city to him. He arrived just before dawn while it was still dark and
settled with his army in a position near the temple of the Dioscuri, five
or six hundred yards from the city. Most of the populace of Torone and [2]
the Athenian garrison there remained unaware of his presence, but the
conspirators were expecting him and a few of them came out secretly
beforehand to watch for his arrival. When they saw that he was there they
smuggled in with them seven of his light-armed men carrying daggers
(these were the only ones from the twenty originally assigned to the
operation who were not too scared to attempt an entrance, and they were
under the command of Lysistratus, an Olynthian). They slipped through
a gap in the seaward wall and climbed up unobserved to a guard-post
(the highest in the city, which is built on the slope of a hill). They killed
the sentries there and began breaking through the postern-gate on the
Canastreum side.

Brasidas moved forward a little with the rest of the army and then 111
paused, but sent on ahead 100 peltasts to be ready to rush in first when
any of the gates might be opened and the agreed signal raised. As time [2]
passed and they were left wondering what was going on, these men edged
closer to the city. Meanwhile the Toronaeans inside the city were making

[1] IV 69.64.

the necessary arrangements together with the party of infiltrators. When they had succeeded in breaking through the postern-gate and the main gate near the market-place had been opened by sawing through its bar, they first brought some men round to the postern-gate and brought them in, in order to take the townsmen unawares in a surprise attack from both sides and throw them into a panic. Then they raised the fire-signal, as had been arranged, and let the rest of the peltasts in through the gates by the market-place.

112 As soon as Brasidas saw the agreed signal he set off at a run and roused his army to shout in unison and spread panic throughout the city. Some [2] of his men straightaway poured through the gates, while others climbed in over some planks that happened to be leaning against the wall to help hauling up the stones where part of the wall had fallen in and was being rebuilt. Brasidas and the bulk of the army immediately headed up the hill, [3] making for the high point of the city in their wish to get complete control of it from top to bottom. The remaining body of troops spread out and scattered everywhere throughout the place.

113 Most of the Toronaeans had no idea what was going on while the city was being captured this way and were in complete disarray, but the conspirators and their sympathisers immediately joined forces with the invading troops. The Athenians had about fifty hoplites in the market- [2] place, asleep at the time, but as soon as they became aware of the situation some were killed in close fighting while others escaped, either on foot or to the two ships on guard duty and found refuge at Lecythus. This was a fort their own men had seized and now occupied, situated on a promontory jutting out to sea from the edge of the city on a narrow isthmus. Those of [3] the Toronaeans who were on their side also took refuge there with them.

114 Come daybreak and with the city securely in his possession, Brasidas made a proclamation to the Toronaeans taking refuge with the Athenians, to the effect that anyone who wished could without fear come out and return to his property with his citizenship unaffected. To the Athenians, on the other hand, he sent a herald to tell them to leave Lecythus under truce taking all their belongings with them since this was Chalcidian territory. They refused to go, but asked for a day's truce in which to [2] retrieve their dead. Brasidas offered them two days, and during these he strengthened the nearby buildings, while the Athenians did the same to their position.

Brasidas then summoned the Toronaeans to a meeting and spoke to [3] them in much the same way as he had the Acanthians. He said it would

not be right for them to think the worse of those who had dealings with him over the capture of the town or to regard them as traitors. They had not acted this way to enslave the city or in response to bribes, but for its own good and for its freedom. Nor should they think that those who had not taken part would be treated any differently from those who had, for he had not come on a mission to destroy either the city or any individual within it. He said the reason for making this proclamation to those who [4] were taking refuge with the Athenians was to show that he thought none the worse of them for their friendship with them. He expected that when they had got some experience of the Spartans they would feel more rather than less favourably disposed towards them, as they saw that they were the ones behaving with more regard for justice; their present fear of them was just based on inexperience. He now called on the whole people to prepare [5] to show themselves loyal allies for the future and from this moment on to be held accountable for any failings. As for the past, the Spartans had not been wronged by the Toronaeans but the Toronaeans had themselves been wronged by a stronger power and any opposition they had given him was pardoned.

Brasidas gave them these words of reassurance and when the truce had **115** expired made his assault on Lecythus. The Athenians defended themselves from their inadequate fort and from such houses as had battlements, and succeeded in beating them off for a day. But on the second day when [2] they saw their opponents preparing to bring against them a war-engine designed to throw fire against their wooden defences, and with the army now advancing on them, they set up a wooden tower on a building at the most vulnerable point where they thought the enemy would be very likely to position the flame-thrower. They carried up many jars and casks of water and huge stones, and lots of people climbed up too. But the [3] building could not cope with all the weight and suddenly collapsed with a great crash. The Athenians close enough to see it were more annoyed than frightened, but those further away, and especially those a long way off, thought that the place had now been taken at that point and set off in flight for the ships and the sea.

When Brasidas realised that they were deserting the battlements and **116** saw what was happening he immediately attacked the fort and took it, killing everyone he caught inside it. And so this was how the Athenians [2] left the place and were taken in their ships and small boats to Pallene.

There is in Lecythus a temple to Athena. Brasidas had in fact [3] announced, when he was about to make the attack, that he would donate

thirty mnas of silver[1] to the first man to scale the wall, but he now concluded that the capture had been effected by some agency other than a human one, and so he donated the thirty mnas instead to the goddess for her sanctuary, and after demolishing Lecythus and clearing the ground he consecrated the whole place as sacred ground.[2]

For the rest of the winter Brasidas proceeded to consolidate his position [5] in the places he already held and to plan moves against others. And so when the winter was over the eighth year of the war ended.

[1] See note on coinage, pp. lvii–lviii. Gomme suspects a copyist's mistake, pointing out that this would be a huge reward, equivalent to 3,000 days' pay for most soldiers.

[2] A reminder of religious sensitivities, even in such a worldly entrepreneur as Brasidas – and perhaps another politically shrewd act too.

Ninth year of the war, 423–22 (IV 117–35)

Summer [IV 117–33]

Right at the beginning of spring the following summer the Spartans 117
and the Athenians concluded a truce for one year. The thinking on the Athenian side was that Brasidas would not now be able to go on causing more defections and they would be given time to organise things properly; and in addition, if things went well for them, they could enlarge the terms of the agreement. The Spartans for their part recognised exactly what the Athenian apprehensions were and thought that if they had some respite from their trials and tribulations they might be more willing to come to terms, and having returned the men[1] to them might make some longer-term peace agreement as well. It was the men of course that they wanted [2]
back above all, since Brasidas was still enjoying a run of success. If he went on to yet further successes and brought about a more equal balance of power they still stood to lose them, even if in carrying on the fight on an equal basis they would have a better chance of final victory.[2]

[1] Spartan shorthand for 'the men captured at Sphacteria', their continuing preoccupation.

[2] 117.2 is a notoriously difficult passage and there may also be textual problems (see appendix 1, p. 586). It is unclear why Brasidas' current successes should make this a politically opportune time for the Spartans to negotiate, whereas further successes might imperil the process (the motivation as described at V 15, by contrast, is entirely comprehensible). Most editors succumb to the strong temptation to rewrite the text, but it may just be that Thucydides drafted a bad sentence here and allowed the antithetical structures of the rhetoric to obscure rather than emphasise the intended meanings. Or maybe it was the Spartans who were confused?

These, then, were the terms of the armistice they and their allies [3]
agreed.[1]

Concerning the sanctuary and the oracle of the Pythian Apollo,[2] we **118**
resolve that anyone who wishes it should have access without fear or fraud
in accordance with established custom and practice. This is resolved by [2]
the Spartans and their allies present; and they undertake to send heralds
to the Boeotians and Phocians and do their best to persuade them.

Concerning the treasury belonging to the god, we resolve to take mea- [3]
sures to pursue wrongdoers in a right and proper way in accordance with
established custom and practice, as observed by you, ourselves and any
others that may wish to do so, all in accordance with established practice
and custom. So it is resolved by the Spartans and the rest of their allies.

The following is resolved by the Spartans and the rest of their allies, [4]
if the Athenians agree to the treaty. Each side shall remain in its own
territory, keeping what it now holds: the Athenians at Coryphasium[3]
shall stay within the area defined by Bouphras and Tomeus; there shall
be no dealings in either direction between the Athenians at Cythera and
the alliance; the Athenians in Nisaea and Minoa shall not cross the road
leading from the gates at the shrine of Nisus to the temple of Poseidon
and leading from the temple of Poseidon to the bridge over to Minoa
(and the Megarians and their allies shall not cross this same road either);
the Athenians shall keep the island of Minoa which they took, but there
shall be no dealings between the sides in either direction; in Troezen the
Athenians shall keep the places they now hold, in accordance with the
agreements made between them and the Troezenians.

[1] The words introducing and concluding the next section at 117.3 and 119.1 ('these things' not 'such things') seem to indicate that unlike the speeches these are intended to be verbatim reports. Even so they are still not quite 'texts' of an agreement. 118.1–10 are the Spartan draft proposals (with 118.2 a sort of comment on the text of 118.1); 118.11–14 are the Athenian resolutions (including the details of the ratification process proposed at 118.12–14); and 119.1–2 are the signatories. It is in any case suspected that there may be omissions in the documents as Thucydides records them (and there are small variations in the formulaic phrases used, and between the first, second and third person). The language suggests that either Thucydides was following transcriptions of formal documents passing between the two sides or was deliberately imitating a 'legal' style.

[2] Delphi, to which the Athenians may have had access restricted by the Boeotians and Phocaeans who are mentioned (and who may be the ones responsible for any exploitation or 'fraud'). This first resolution is another reminder of the importance of religious institutions and practices in the period.

[3] The Spartan name for Pylos. The other two places are unknown.

As for access to the sea by the Spartans, in so far as they use it along [5]
their own coast and that of their allies, they shall not sail in a ship of war
but only in an oared vessel of up to 500 talents' burden.[1]

There shall be safe conduct for heralds, envoys and their assistants, [6]
in whatever numbers necessary, who are dealing with the ending of the
war and the settlement of disputes and travelling between Athens and the
Peloponnese in either direction by land and by sea.

During the period of the truce neither side will receive deserters, [7]
whether free men or slaves.

Both sides shall accept legal arbitration in accordance with established [8]
custom and shall submit disputes for resolution by courts of law without
recourse to war.

These matters are so resolved by the Spartans and their allies. If you [9]
have anything to propose that would improve on this or make it more
just, then come to Sparta and tell us. There will be no resistance to any
just proposal from either the Spartans or their allies. Those who come [10]
should come with full authority, just as you were requesting of us. And
the agreement will be for one year.

Resolved by the Athenian people. The tribe Acamantis had the pry- [11]
tany, Phaenippus was clerk, Niciades was president. Laches proposed
the motion, for the good fortune of the Athenians,[2] that they should
conclude the truce on the terms agreed by the Spartans and their allies
and approved by the Athenian people: the truce to be for one year, and [12]
should begin on that day, the fourteenth of the month Elaphebolion; for [13]
the duration of the truce envoys and heralds should go between the two
sides and discuss terms on which there will be an ending of the war;
the generals and prytanes shall first call an assembly [to consider][3] the [14]
question of peace and the Athenians should decide on the proposals made
by the Spartan envoys; and the envoys now present should forthwith
solemnly agree before the people to abide by the terms of the agreement
for one year.

These agreements the Spartans and their allies made with the Athenians **119**
and their allies on the twelfth day of the Spartan month Gerastius. Those [2]
who made the agreement and solemnised it for the Spartans were: Taurus

[1] A similar technical expression in both Greek and English. A talent was a unit of weight, of variable value over time and place, but this probably indicated a vessel of quite small capacity of not more than 15 tonnes (compare the monster at VII 25.5).

[2] A conventional 'blessing', following the formal minutes dating the documents.

[3] At least one probable lacuna here (see appendix 1, p. 586).

son of Echetimidas, Athenaeus son of Pericleidas, Philocharidas son of Eryxilaidas; for the Corinthians Aeneas son of Ocytus, Euphamidas son of Aristonymus; for the Sicyonians Damotimus son of Naucrates, Onasimus son of Megacles; for the Megarians Nicasus son of Cecalus, Menecrates son of Amphidorus; for the Epidaurians Amphias son of Eupaeidas; and for the Athenians the generals Nicostratus son of Diitrephes, Nicias son of Niceratus, Autocles son of Tolmaeus.

So the truce was concluded on these terms and while it was in force [3] they continued meeting to discuss a more general treaty.

During the period in which they were [completing][1] this Scione, a city **120** in Pallene, defected from the Athenians to join Brasidas. The Scionaeans say that they originally came from Pellene in the Peloponnese, but that when they were sailing back from Troy their forebears were driven into this place by the storms the Greeks encountered and settled there. Brasidas sailed across to Scione in support of their revolt. He was accom- [2] panied by a friendly trireme that sailed ahead of him, while he followed some way behind in a small boat. His thought was that if he should encounter some craft larger than his then the trireme would offer him protection, but if a second trireme of equal size came on the scene it would make for the warship not the smaller boat and he would thereby get through safely.

He succeeded in making the crossing and then called a meeting of the [3] Scionaeans to address them. He began by repeating what he had said in his speeches at Acanthus and Torone, and then went on to add that the Scionaeans were especially deserving of praise because, when Pallene was cut off at the isthmus by the Athenians occupying Potidaea and they were effectively made into islanders, they had of their own free will come forward to claim their freedom rather than timidly waiting to be led by some external compulsion to do what was so evidently in their own interests; and that was clear proof that they would bravely endure even the severest challenges. He said that if he could now settle matters in the way he planned he would truly count them as the most loyal of Sparta's friends and would pay them every other honour.[2]

The Scionaeans were very motivated by this speech and all of them, **121** including those who had previously been dissatisfied with the moves being made, were strengthened in their determination to carry on the war. They

[1] The translation and the text are disputed here (see appendix 1, p. 586).

[2] A claim that comes to seem cynical by V 32. Or perhaps, as Gomme says at 123.2, 'They knew Brasidas . . . but did not know Sparta.'

gave Brasidas a hero's welcome and publicly crowned him with a golden crown as the liberator of Greece, while individuals among them came up and decorated him as if he were a champion athlete.

Brasidas left them with a temporary guard while he made the crossing [2] back and then quite soon returned with a larger force. His plan was to make an attempt on Mende and Potidaea with their help, since he expected that the Athenians would send help to Pallene, thinking of it as an island, and he wished to make his own moves first. Besides, he also had in hand some negotiations with these other cities about engineering their betrayal.

Just as Brasidas was about to start offensive action against these cities, a **122** trireme arrived with officials broadcasting the news of the truce, Aristony- mus representing the Athenians and Athenaeus the Spartans. His army [2] returned to Torone, while Brasidas was briefed on the terms of the agreement, and all the allies of the Spartans in the Thracian region accepted the outcomes of the treaty. Aristonymus agreed about the status of all [3] these allies except the Scionaeans, since he found on reckoning up the days that they had seceded after the agreement was made and so he said that they were not covered by its terms. Brasidas objected at length that they had seceded *before* the agreement, and he refused to give the city up. When Aristonymus reported all this back to the Athenians they [4] were immediately[1] ready to launch a military campaign against Scione. The Spartans for their part sent envoys to argue that this would be a transgression of the terms of the agreement; they pressed their claim to the city, choosing to believe in Brasidas' account, and were ready to go to arbitration about it. The Athenians, however, did not want to take [5] the risk of arbitration but wanted to send a force out as soon as possible, angered that even islanders should now think they could defect from them, relying on Spartan land power, useless to them though that was in this situation. Indeed the facts of the situation supported the Athe- [6] nian claims, for the Scionaeans had made their revolt two days too late. The Athenians immediately passed a decree, on the motion of Cleon, to destroy Scione and execute its inhabitants. And they put everything else aside to prepare for this.

At this point Mende defected from the Athenians, a city in Pallene **123** and an Eretrian colony. Brasidas accepted this revolt, seeing nothing

[1] The expressions 'immediately', 'at once' or 'as soon as possible' are repeated several times in 122–23 presumably to emphasise Athenian outrage and impetuosity.

wrong in the fact that they had manifestly come over to him while the armistice was in force, since he had some charges of his own to make about Athenian transgressions of the treaty. This further emboldened [2] the Mendeans, who noted Brasidas' positive frame of mind and drew their own conclusions from the fact that he was not giving up on Scione; moreover the conspirators among them, though few in number, were not about to abandon their plans, but were nonetheless afraid for their own safety in case of detection and so coerced the majority against their better judgement. As soon as the Athenians became aware of this they were even [3] more enraged and immediately made preparations to attack both cities. Brasidas, therefore, in expectation of an Athenian naval expeditionary [4] force, moved the children and women of the Scionaeans and Mendeans over to Olynthus and dispatched for their protection 500 hoplites and 300 Chalcidian peltasts under the overall command of Polydamidas. And the two cities collaborated for their joint defence, expecting the Athenians to arrive in the very near future.

Brasidas and Perdiccas meanwhile made a second expedition together **124** to Lyncus against Arrhabaeus.[1] Perdiccas was leading the forces of the Macedonians he ruled over and a body of hoplites from the Greeks living in Macedon.[2] Brasidas had with him Chalcidians, Acanthians and such forces as the other allies could contribute, in addition to the rest of the Peloponnesians in the area. The total number of Greek hoplites was about 3,000, the accompanying cavalry force of Macedonians and Chalcidians was just under 1,000 and there was also a large crowd of barbarians. They [2] made an incursion into Arrhabaeus' territory, and finding the opposing Lyncestian forces already in place they took up their own positions against them. The infantry occupied two facing hills, with a plain between them [3] into which the cavalry of each side galloped down to start the fighting. The Lyncestian hoplites advanced from their hill ready to fight alongside their cavalry, then Brasidas and Perdiccas responded by leading out their own forces to engage them and routed the Lyncestians. They killed many of them and the rest escaped to higher ground where they stayed out of things.

After this Brasidas and Perdiccas set up a trophy then waited there two [4] or three days for the Illyrians, who were supposed to be joining Perdiccas

[1] See IV 83 for the first. Brasidas has in the meantime evidently changed his mind.

[2] Macedonians are apparently to be distinguished from the Greeks here, but also (later in this section and in 125.1) from the barbarians. They pass the test of speaking Greek (see I 2n) but are regarded as a wild, fringe element.

as hired mercenaries. Perdiccas next wanted to proceed against the villages of Arrhabaeus instead of stopping where they were; but Brasidas had his mind very much on Mende, in case the Athenian fleet got there first and the city suffered accordingly; and besides, the Illyrians had not yet appeared so he was not eager to go on but preferred to retreat.

125 Their dispute was interrupted by the news that the Illyrians had betrayed Perdiccas and gone over to Arrhabaeus. The Illyrians were a formidable warrior people and in fear of them both parties now thought it best to retreat; but as a result of their dispute nothing had been agreed about just when they should set out and as night came on the Macedonians and the mass of barbarians at once took fright, in the way that panic can seize large armies for no apparent reason. Thinking that the advancing Illyrians were many times more numerous than was actually the case and were all but on them, they set off in a sudden flight and made for home. Perdiccas did not at first see what was happening, but as soon as he realised he was forced to take off before seeing Brasidas (since they were camped some distance apart).

[2] At dawn when Brasidas saw that the Macedonians had already gone and that the Illyrians and Arrhabaeus were about to attack, he started planning his own withdrawal and formed his hoplites into a square, with the light-armed troops placed inside it. [3] He arranged the youngest men where they could run and charge the enemy at any point they threatened an attack, while he himself intended to bring up the rear with 300 picked men and fend off the assaults of the front-line enemy troops. [4] And in the short time he had before the enemy got close he gave the soldiers some words of encouragement along the following lines.

126 'Men of the Peloponnese,[1] I suspect that you are rather shocked because you have been left isolated to face an onslaught from such a horde of barbarians. And I would not otherwise have thought of giving you this sort of briefing along with my words of encouragement. But as things are, in the face of the desertion of our allies and the vast numbers of our assailants, I will try to impress the key points on you with a few words of reminder and advice.

[2] The bravery we have learned to expect from you in war does not derive from the presence of any allied support but comes from your own native courage. Nor should you be afraid of the numbers of those on the other

[1] This formal beginning must be taken to include the Chalcidians and others, assuming Brasidas is addressing all 3,000 troops (quite a challenge in itself, see also V 9.1n) and not just the 300 members of the elite Peloponnesian corps.

side, for you come from a political system where the many rule the few, not one like theirs where the minority rule the majority, a minority that has acquired its privileged position solely by virtue of success in battle.[1] And [3] as for these barbarians, whom you now fear through your inexperience of them, you should learn the lessons both from your earlier encounters with the Macedonians amongst them[2] and from my own estimate of them, confirmed by the reports of others – namely, that they hold no terrors for you. When an enemy's situation gives an impression of strength but [4] is in fact weak, learning the truth makes their opponents all the bolder; but where the enemy has some genuine advantage, the opponent who is unaware of it beforehand may attack them with more confidence than he should.

Now, these Illyrians do present a frightening prospect to those who [5] have no experience of them. Their sheer numbers make a terrifying sight, the noise of their shouting is almost deafening, and all that empty brandishing of weapons in the air looks very threatening. But when it comes to close combat with those who can stand all this they do not seem the same men at all. Nor are they the sort who hold their ranks and would be ashamed to abandon a position under pressure. Flight and fight carry equal kudos with them and so neither offers a true test of courage (in battle an independent agent will always find good excuses for saving his skin); and they reckon it a safer option to try to frighten you without risk to themselves than to close in hand-to-hand combat (which is why they preferred the first tactic to the second). And so you see, all that seemed [6] frightening about them in advance comes to nothing in practice, just something startling to the eye and ear. If you withstand this pressure and then, when the opportunity presents itself, retreat again in good order, you will soon reach a place of safety; and you will know for the future that against those who can absorb their first impact mobs of this kind will just make a show of courage, threatening their intentions only from a distance, while they are quick to make a safe display of their heroism in hot pursuit of those who run away from them.'

[1] This sentence would be almost unsayable with its clumsy structure and confusing double-negative (especially if Brasidas was short of time); his literal utterance would have been, 'for you do not come from these constitutions (*politeion*) in which the many do not rule the few, but rather the few the many, not by anything else acquiring the position of power (*dunasteian)* than by winning fighting'. The speech as a whole is very far from being the series of snappy bullet-points he promises (see also IV 9.4n).

[2] That is, the Lyncestians (see 83.1 and 124.3 above).

After giving such words of advice Brasidas began to withdraw his army. **127**
When the barbarians saw this they started attacking with a tremendous clamour and commotion, thinking that he was running away and that they could catch his men and destroy them. But their attacks were all [2]
met by his men's charges, and Brasidas himself with his picked men resisted the pressures from behind; and so to the surprise of the enemy the Peloponnesians withstood the first assault and went on defending themselves against further attacks, and then when the barbarians held back they continued their own retreat. In the end most of the barbarians stood off Brasidas and his Greeks while they were in open country and left just a part of their forces behind to follow them and keep up the attacks. The rest made off at a run after the fleeing Macedonians, killing any they caught, and went on ahead to take control of the narrow pass that lies between two hills and leads into the territory of Arrhabaeus, knowing that Brasidas had no other line of retreat. And as he approached the most difficult part of the route they began to encircle him to cut him off.

Realising what was happening, Brasidas gave orders to the 300 men **128**
to break ranks and each run as fast as he could to the hill he thought it easiest to capture and to try and dislodge the barbarians already there before the larger encircling group could join them. His men attacked and [2]
overpowered the party on the hill, enabling the main body of Greeks to make their way to join them with relatively little difficulty, since the barbarians became terrified when their own men had been driven off the high ground there and stopped following the main army, calculating that it was now at the frontier and had made good its escape.

As for Brasidas, now that he had taken the high ground he went [3]
on in greater security and got to Arnisa, the first place he reached in Perdiccas' kingdom. His soldiers were furious on their own account at [4]
the premature retreat of the Macedonians, and whenever they came across any of their oxcarts or any baggage that had fallen off (as is always likely in a panicky retreat by night) they would cut loose and slaughter the oxen and appropriate the baggage for themselves. It was now that Perdiccas started [5]
thinking of Brasidas as an enemy, and from then on he nursed a lasting hatred of the Peloponnesians. That was against his natural instincts – given his relationship with the Athenians – but he ignored the inevitable consequences for his own best interests and worked to reach an agreement with the Athenians as quickly as possible and to detach himself from the Spartans.

When Brasidas got back to Torone from Macedon he found the Athe- 129
nians already in control of Mende. Pausing there he concluded that it
was now impossible for him to cross over and rescue Pallene and instead
he kept a watch over Torone. What had happened was that at the same [2]
time as the events in Lyncus the Athenians had sailed against Mende and
Scione, just as they had been planning to do, with a force of fifty ships
(including ten from Chios), 1,000 hoplites of their own and 600 archers,
1,000 Thracian mercenaries and other peltasts from their allies in the
region, all under the command of Nicias son of Niceratus and Nicos-
tratus son of Diitrephes. Setting out with the fleet from Potidaea they [3]
put in by the temple of Poseidon and advanced against the Mendeans.
These, together with the 300 Scionaeans who had come in support and
the Peloponnesian allies, numbered 700[1] hoplites in all, under the overall
command of Polydamidas, and they had set up camp outside the city in a
strong position on a hill. Nicias tried to approach them by a path running [4]
up the hill, having with him 120 light-armed Methonaean troops and sixty
picked Athenian hoplites and all the archers, but he suffered casualties
at the hands of the defenders and was unable to force a way through.
Meanwhile, Nicostratus with the rest of the army took a different and
longer route up the hill over very difficult terrain and they were thrown
into complete disorder. Indeed the whole army came very close to defeat.
So on this day, since the Mendeans and their allies showed no signs of [5]
yielding, the Athenians retreated and made camp, while the Mendeans
went back into their city as night fell.

On the next day the Athenians sailed round to the side of Mende 130
facing Scione and captured the outskirts. They spent the whole day
wasting the land without meeting any opposition from the city (there
was in fact some kind of uprising in Mende) and the 300 Scionaeans
returned home that night. The following day Nicias took half the army [2]
to the Scionaean border and as he advanced wasted the land there, while
Nicostratus took the rest and positioned them in front of the city by the
upper gates on the road to Potidaea. That happened to be the place where [3]
inside the walls the Mendeans and their allies had their arms deposited
and Polydamidas was there getting the men organised for battle and was
urging the Mendeans to go out and fight. As part of the general unrest [4]
someone on the people's side objected that he wasn't going out and saw
no need for war, whereupon Polydamidas grabbed the protester by the

[1] The number is suspect: see appendix 1, p. 586.

arm and shook him about. The people at once picked up the arms in great anger and turned on the Peloponnesians and the opposition party that had been working with them. They were completely thrown by this [5] onslaught, partly because the attack was so sudden and partly because they were afraid the gates were being opened for the Athenians and supposed the attack had been prearranged with them. Those of them who were not [6] killed on the spot escaped to the acropolis, which the Peloponnesians had held from the start. Meanwhile, Nicias had turned back and was close to the city, and the whole Athenian army burst into Mende. Since the gates had not been opened as part of some agreement they plundered the city as if they had taken it by storm, and the generals were scarcely able to stop them destroying the inhabitants as well.

After it was over they told the Mendeans to go on managing their [7] political affairs[1] as they were used to doing and to pass judgement among themselves on any they considered responsible for the revolt. As for the men on the acropolis, they cut them off with a wall running down to the sea on both sides and set a guard over them. And when they had secured the position at Mende the Athenians moved on to attack Scione.

The Scionaeans and the Peloponnesians came out to oppose them and **131** took up a strong position on a hill in front of the city, which would have to be taken by the enemy forces if they were to surround the city with a siege wall. The Athenians stormed the hill by force and in the battle dislodged [2] the men who were up there. They then set up camp, raised a trophy and started preparing to build a siege wall round the city. Not long afterwards [3] and while they were still engaged on this work, the Peloponnesian allies who were blockaded on the acropolis at Mende forced their way by night past the guard and along the coast, and the majority of them slipped through the army camped outside Scione and got into the city.

While Scione was being walled off, Perdiccas sent a herald to the **132** Athenian generals and reached an agreement with the Athenians. He was moved to do this by his hatred for Brasidas, arising from the retreat from Lyncus, after which he had straightaway started these negotiations. Just [2] at this time Ischagoras the Spartan was about to march with an army to join Brasidas, but Perdiccas had two reasons for resisting this. First, he was under pressure from Nicias, now that there had been an agreement, to give the Athenians some evidence that they could rely on him; and

[1] This phrase translates the one word *politeuein* but there is some risk of over-interpretation in 'retain their civic rights' (Crawley), 'govern themselves as before' (Warner), 'retain their former constitution' (Jowett).

secondly he himself no longer wanted Peloponnesians moving into his territory. So he prevailed on his friends in Thessaly, where he was always well connected in high places, and made things so difficult for the army in its preparations that the Spartans did not even test the Thessalian reactions.[1] However, Ischagoras, Ameinias and Aristeus did make their [3] own way to Brasidas, having been sent by the Spartans to take a look at the situation, and they brought with them from the city of Sparta some young men, contrary to normal Spartan practice, to install them as governors in the cities instead of leaving things to the people who happened to be there. And Brasidas duly appointed Clearidas son of Cleonymus at Amphipolis and Pasitelidas son of Hegesander at Torone.

During the same summer the Thebans demolished the walls of the 133 Thespians, accusing them of being too pro-Athenian. Indeed they had long wanted to do this, and now a ready opportunity presented itself since what had been the flower of their youth had fallen in the battle with the Athenians.[2]

In the same summer the temple of Hera at Argos was burned down [2] when Chrysis the priestess placed a lighted torch too near the woollen headbands and then fell asleep, so that everything caught fire and was ablaze before she became aware of it. Chrysis herself fled to Phlius that [3] very night in fear of the Argives; and they, following the standard procedure, appointed another priestess, whose name was Phaeinis. At the time Chrysis fled she had served for eight and a half years of the war.[3]

At the end of the summer Scione was completely surrounded by the [4] siege wall, and the Athenians, leaving a garrison there, returned home with the rest of their army.

Winter [IV 134–35]

The following winter things were quiet between the Athenians and Spar- 134 tans as a result of the armistice, but the Mantineans and Tegeans and

[1] See Brasidas' experience at IV 78–79.

[2] That is, at Delium (IV 96). Thucydides does not comment on what seems like perverse and unfair treatment by the Thebans of their allies in that battle.

[3] Another somewhat isolated insertion in the narrative, a consequence here perhaps both of Thucydides' method of presenting synoptic accounts by summers and winters (see III 24.3n) and of his passion for recording interesting information. Chrysis' role was in any case important enough to be part of at least one standard way of calculating years (see II 1). She must have been an old woman at the time of this accident, having been priestess for over fifty-six years in all.

their respective allies clashed in battle at Laodocium in Oresthis. Victory was disputed since each routed the opposing wing of the other side and set up their own trophies and sent spoils of war off to Delphi. However, [2] although there was heavy loss of life on both sides and the outcome of the battle was still undecided when night fell to put an end to the action, it was the Tegeans who bivouacked there and immediately set up their trophy, while the Mantineans retreated to Boucolion and erected their rival trophy later on.

At the end of the same winter just before spring started Brasidas made **135** an attempt on Potidaea. Approaching it by night, he had put up a ladder without so far being detected since it was placed there precisely in the interval after the sentry bell had been passed along the line and before the man handing it on had returned to his post. But they noticed the ladder in no time at all before anyone could climb up it, and Brasidas hastily led his army back again without waiting for day to come.

So ended the winter and with it the ninth year of the war that Thucy- [2] dides wrote.

[BOOK V]

Tenth year of the war, 422–21 [V 1–24]

Summer [V 1–12]

The next summer the one-year treaty had come to an end after being 1
extended to the time of the Pythian Games;[1] and during the truce the Athenians relocated the Delians from Delos, in the belief that because of some ancient offence they had still been in a state of pollution when consecrated and that there had also been an omission in the act of purification, though they had thought they had followed the correct procedure in removing the graves of the dead, as I recounted earlier.[2] The Delians set off and each made their own way to settle at Atramyttium in Asia, which Pharnaces[3] had made available to them.

[1] The four major Panhellenic athletic festivals were the Olympian, Pythian, Nemean and Isthmian, and an extension was needed because the Pythian took place in late summer while the truce had formally ended in spring of 422.

[2] An interesting cross-reference to III 104 (the only other explicit cross-reference in Thucydides being at VI 94.1). There are other mentions of the purification at Delos at the very start and end of the work (I 8.1 and VIII 108.4), which may be by accident or design, and at V 32.1 we learn that the Delians are reinstated. People as well as places could evidently be 'impure' and one speculation is that the impurity in this case may be connected with the Athenian plague (see Diodorus 12.58 and Robert Parker, *Miasma: pollution and purification in early Greek religion* (Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 276–7).

[3] The Persian satrap in charge of the Hellespont region (see II 67.1). This turns out, surprisingly, to be the only reference to Persians between IV 50.1 (Artaphernes) and VIII 5.4 (Tissaphernes).

After the truce expired Cleon got the agreement of the Athenians and 2
sailed to the Thracian region, taking with him 1,200 Athenian hoplites
and 300 cavalry, plus a larger force of allied troops and thirty ships.
He first put in at Scione, which was still under siege, and taking on [2]
some additional hoplites from the garrison there he sailed down to the
Toronaean port of Cophus, which is not far from the city. From there, [3]
when he gathered from deserters that Brasidas was not in Torone and
that those in the city were no match for his own force, he marched his
infantry into the city and sent ten ships to sail round to the harbour.
He first came to the surrounding wall that Brasidas had thrown around [4]
the city. Brasidas was wanting to include the suburb within it and after
demolishing part of the old wall he had thus made one city of Torone.

The Spartan commander Pasitelidas and the garrison on hand there 3
came up to defend this wall and were resisting the Athenian attack. But
after they came under pressure and the ships that had been sent round
were now sailing into the harbour, Pasitelidas became afraid that the ships
might take the undefended town before he could get back there and that
if the wall were taken he himself might be trapped. So he abandoned the
wall and made a run for the city. But the Athenians beat him to it and [2]
their troops from the ships took Torone, while the infantry followed hard
after him and rushed into the city unopposed through a breach in the
old wall. Some of the Peloponnesians and Toronaeans they killed on
the spot in hand-to-hand fighting, while others they took alive, includ-
ing the commander Pasitelidas. Brasidas was meanwhile coming to help [3]
Torone, but when he heard on the way that it had fallen he turned back –
having been only about five miles away from getting there in time.[1]

Cleon and the Athenians set up two trophies of victory, one in the [4]
harbour and one by the wall; they enslaved the women and children of
Torone and sent the men to Athens along with the Peloponnesians and any
Chalcidians among them – a total of 700 men in all. The Peloponnesian
contingent was later released as part of the treaty that was made, while
the rest were brought back by the Olynthians, having been exchanged on
a man-for-man basis.

At about this time the Boeotians, with some inside help, took Panactum, [5]
an Athenian border-fort.[2] Meanwhile Cleon, after placing a garrison to [6]

[1] An ironic counterpart of Thucydides' own experience against Brasidas at Amphipolis (IV 103–6).

[2] A disconnected interruption to the narrative of the kind that makes some scholars think parts of book V were unrevised drafts on which he expected to work further (though there

guard Torone, set off and sailed round Athos, intent on making for Amphipolis.

At about the same time[1] Phaeax son of Erasistratus and two other envoys were sent by the Athenians on a mission to Italy and Sicily and sailed there in two ships. The background was this. When the Athenians had left Sicily in the aftermath of the peace agreement the Leontines enrolled many new citizens and the people started planning a redistribution of the land. But on becoming aware of this the landed classes[2] called in the Syracusans and threw the common people out to scatter in every direction, while they themselves made an agreement with the Syracusans that they would leave their own city deserted and settle at Syracuse with rights of citizenship there. Later on some of these became discontented and left Syracuse again. They occupied a part of the city of Leontini called Phocaeae and also Bricinniae, which is a stronghold in Leontine territory. They were joined by most of the common people who had previously been expelled and they now established themselves there and continued the conflict from these fortified positions. It was when the Athenians became aware of this that they sent out Phaeax, to see if they could persuade their allies there and other Siceliots[3] too if possible to unite with them in fighting the growing power of the Syracusans and so save the people of Leontini. 4 [2] [3] [4] [5]

When Phaeax got there he did win over the Camarinaeans and Acragantians, but when his plans met resistance at Gela he did not go on to the other places, realising that he would not persuade them, and instead returned through Sicel territory to Catana, stopping off on the way at Bricinniae to raise morale there. Then he sailed home. [6]

In his journey to and from Sicily Phaeax negotiated with some of the cities in Italy too about forming a friendly relationship with the Athenians. He also encountered the Locrian settlers who had been displaced from Messina; these were the ones who had been sent out as settlers when the Messinians were in a state of internal conflict after the agreement 5

are similar examples in other books, see for example IV 101.5n). The following section on Phaeax in Sicily is also very jerky, but the narrative becomes more fluent again from V 7 to 17.

[1] This resumes the Sicilian strand in the narrative from IV 65, where the Sicilians had just agreed to end their internal disputes with a peace treaty. See map 4, p. lxiv.

[2] The *dunatoi*, literally 'those with power' or in this case (since 'the people' now had the power) the oligarchs or landed upper class.

[3] The Siceliots are the Greek colonists as opposed to the Sicels, the indigenous non-Greek inhabitants (see III 90.1n and IV 25.9n).

made among the Siceliots and one of the sides there had brought in the Locrians – so that for a time Messina belonged to the Locrians. These [2] were the people Phaeax encountered as they were on their way home and he did them no harm, since the Locrians had made an agreement with him for a treaty with the Athenians. They alone of the allies had [3] not made a treaty with Athens when the Siceliots were being reconciled; nor would they have done so now except for the pressure of a war with the Hipponians and Medmaeans, who were neighbours and colonists of theirs. Some time after this Phaeax returned home.[1]

Cleon had by now left Torone and sailed round against Amphipolis. **6** Basing himself at Eïon he made an attack on Stagirus, an Andrian colony, but failed to take it, though he did capture the Thracian colony of Galepsus in an assault. He then sent envoys to Perdiccas asking him to come and [2] join him with his army, in accordance with the terms of their alliance; and he sent further envoys into Thrace to Polles, king of the Odomantians, to raise as many Thracian mercenaries as possible. Cleon meanwhile stopped at Eïon and made no further move.

When Brasidas learned of this situation he took up an opposing position [3] at Cerdylium. This is a place on high ground the other side of the river in Argilian territory. It is not far from Amphipolis and commands a view in all directions, so that Cleon could not fail to be observed if he set out with his army. And that is what Brasidas expected Cleon to do – advance on Amphipolis with the forces he already had present, scornful of the size of the enemy numbers. At the same time Brasidas made ready [4] his force of 1,500 Thracian mercenaries and called up all the Edonians, both peltasts and cavalry. He also had 1,000 Myrcinian and Chalcidian peltasts, in addition to the troops in Amphipolis. In all the total hoplite [5] force assembled was about 2,000 and about 300 Greek cavalry. Brasidas took up position at Cerdylium with about 1,500 of these, while the rest were deployed in Amphipolis with Clearides.

For a while Cleon made no move, but then was forced to do just **7** what Brasidas was expecting. His soldiers were resenting the inactivity [2] and started analysing his leadership, comparing the incompetence and feebleness he showed with the experience and boldness on the other side, and recalling how reluctant they had been to leave home to come with him. Cleon was aware of their grumbling and not wanting them to get

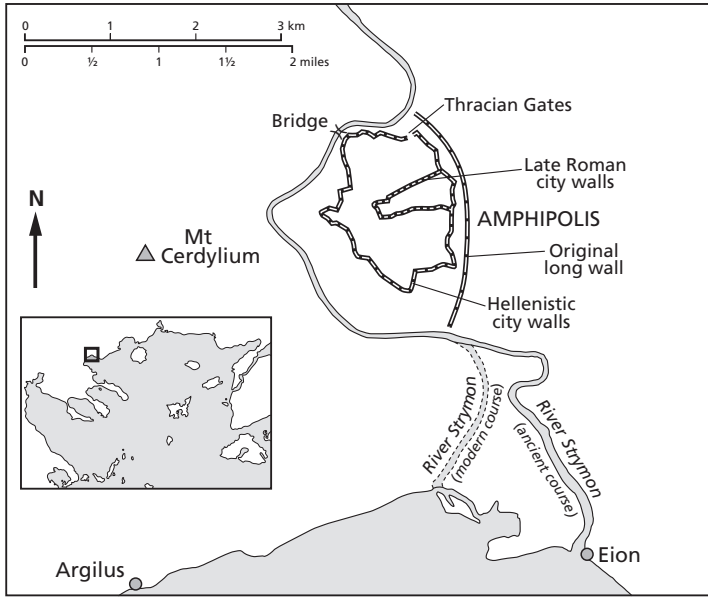
[1] We hear no more of Phaeax in Thucydides but he seems to have been a capable and persuasive envoy, whose rhetorical powers are remarked on by the comedians Aristophanes and Eupolis (see Gomme III, pp. 634–5).

depressed by just sitting where they were he called the men to ranks and led them out. In this he showed the same attitude that had brought [3] him success at Pylos and had strengthened his self-belief.[1] He did not expect that anyone would come out against him in battle, but said he was just going up to take a look at the situation and was waiting for the larger force to arrive – not just to improve his margin of safety if he was forced to fight, but so that he could surround the city and take it by force. So he went out and established his army in a strong position on a [4] hill overlooking Amphipolis where he could see for himself the marshy stretch of the Strymon and the situation of the city on the Thracian side. He was thinking that he could withdraw at any time he chose – and [5] without a fight, since no one was visible on the walls nor was anyone coming out of the gates, which were all closed. In fact he thought he had made a mistake in not bringing siege-equipment up with him, believing he could have taken the city in its undefended condition.

8 As soon as Brasidas saw the Athenians on the move he came down from Cerdylium himself and entered Amphipolis. However, he did not [2] march his men out in battle-formation to confront the Athenians because he was nervous about the resources on his side and judged his forces to be inferior[2] – not in numbers, which were about equal, but in quality, since the opposing force taking the field consisted of a purely Athenian contingent and the pick of the Lemnian and Imbrian troops. Instead he contrived a stratagem for attack. He calculated that if he revealed to the [3] enemy the numbers of the men with him and the basic state of their equipment he would be less likely to prevail than if they had no advance sight of them and therefore no good reason to make light of his forces. He therefore handpicked 150 hoplites himself and assigned the rest of the [4] force to Clearidas. His plan was to make a sudden attack on the Athenians before they could get away, thinking that they would never get a better chance of catching them on their own like this once the relieving force

[1] More literally, 'he trusted that he had some sense (*ti phronein*)'. This passage is often taken as evidence that Thucydides was prejudiced against Cleon and did less than justice to his military successes, but it does seem incautious of Cleon to have taken his whole force up the hill just for a reconnaissance, knowing that Brasidas was somewhere in the area. The later criticisms at V 10.9 and 16.1 seem more unfair, however.

[2] Something of a surprising admission, given his successes with them to date, but the core force was after all a coalition thrown together from Peloponnesian mercenaries and Spartan helots, now joined by local tribal mercenaries (IV 80.5). The word used to describe the Athenian contingent is *katharon* – 'pure', suggesting that a force consisting of citizens only would have better training and stronger motivation.



Map 23. Amphipolis (422)[1]

had come to join them. He therefore called together all his troops to boost their morale and explain his thinking to them, and spoke as follows.

'Peloponnesians,[2] I need not spend long telling you what kind of coun- 9
try we come from – that its spirit of courage is what keeps it free, and that you are Dorians fighting with Ionians, whom you are well used to

[1] See the discussion in Hornblower II, pp. 325–7, citing D. Lazaridis, *Amphipolis* (Athens, 1994). Excavations of a later Hellenistic-type wall have suggested that this could have been the course of the original 'long wall' referred to in IV 102.3, which would then have been a circuit wall rather than the simple arc joining the two bends in the Strymon indicated by the text (and adopted in the plan in Gomme III, facing p. 654). I have shown both possibilities here. Thucydides must have known this site first-hand, unlike some others he describes.

[2] Somewhat clumsy, since we have just been told that he has summoned *all* his troops, since few of them are in any sense 'free' and since some of them are Ionians; however, we should perhaps assume that different parts of this speech are addressed to different parts of his audience (Clearidas at 9.7 and 9, and the 'allies' at 9.7). A greater act of imagination is in any case required to suppose that he could be audibly addressing several thousand men simultaneously (V 6.5 above, and see also IV 126.1n).

beating. But I will explain my plan of attack in case anyone is discouraged [2] by thinking that it is not enough to commit to battle just a few men at a time rather than the whole force. My assessment is that the enemy are off [3] their guard: they are seriously underestimating us and in the confidence that they are safe from attack they have gone up to that place and are now looking around at the view, heedlessly and in no sort of order. The best [4] chance of success in war comes from clearly identifying such mistakes on the part of an enemy and then adjusting your mode of attack to your own strengths, relying less on an obvious move in standard counter-formation than on exploiting the opportunities of the moment. These are the tricks [5] and tactics that bring the greatest glory, when you completely deceive the enemy and thereby most benefit your friends.

So while they are still overconfident and unprepared and seem more [6] intent, as far as I can see, on drifting away than on holding their position, and while they have relaxed their concentration and before they can get their thoughts together, I will take my own troops and do my best to surprise them by charging right into the midst of their army. Then [7] you, Clearidas, when you see me applying this pressure – and in all probability throwing them into a panic – you take your men, including the Amphipolitans and the other allies, throw open the gates all of a sudden, rush out and press on to engage them with all possible speed. There is every hope that they will completely panic at this, for the second [8] wave of attack is always more threatening to an enemy than the one which is already there fighting them.

For your part, Clearidas, you must now show your mettle, as one would [9] expect from a true Spartan.[1] And you, our allies, must follow his lead like men and remember the three keys to success in warfare: motivation, honour and discipline. Remember too that on this day your courage can mean freedom and the right to call yourselves allies of the Spartans rather than slaves of the Athenians; for in that situation, even assuming you are lucky enough to avoid outright bondage or death, you would still be facing a servitude even harsher than you suffered before and you would become an obstruction to the liberation of the rest of Greece.

Do not weaken, then, when you see just how much is at stake in this [10] contest. And I for my part will prove that I am a man who carries out in person and in practice what he preaches to those around him.'

[1] Here *Spartiates* not *Lakedaimonios* (see I 64.4n).

After saying as much Brasidas started preparing for his own sortie and **10**
positioned the others with Clearidas at the Thracian Gates, as they are
called, ready to go out on the attack from there as instructed. Meanwhile [2]
reports were reaching Cleon. Brasidas had been clearly seen coming down
from Cerdylium and sacrificing at the temple of Athena in the city (which
was in full view from outside) as he busied himself with his preparations.
And Cleon, who had gone forward at just that time to look around, was told
that the whole of the enemy army was clearly visible in the city and that
the feet of the horses and men could be glimpsed in great numbers under
the gate, as if ready to exit. When Cleon heard this he went over and took [3]
a look. Then, since he had no wish to fight it out before reinforcements
reached him and thought he could get away in time, he gave the order to
sound the retreat and passed on word to those leaving to draw off from
the left wing, the only way possible in fact, on the road to Eion. But as [4]
he thought this was all taking too long he himself started to lead the army
away by wheeling the right round and thus exposing their unarmed side[1]
to the enemy.

Brasidas immediately saw his opportunity with the Athenian army on [5]
the move, and said to the men round him and the others, 'Those men are
not standing up to us. It is clear from the way their spears and heads are
moving about, and men behaving like that they do not usually hold their
ground against attackers. Come on, someone open the gates for me where
I said; be bold and let us set on them as fast as possible.'

Brasidas then launched through the gate leading to the palisade (which [6]
was the first one in the long wall, as it then was) and charged down the
straight road where the trophy now stands as one comes to the steepest
part of the hill. He hit the Athenian centre, who were panicking at their
own disorder and were also shocked by his audacity, and he routed them.
At the same moment Clearidas, as instructed, came out of the Thracian [7]
Gate with the army and started his assault. As a result, the Athenians
were thrown into confusion by this sudden and unexpected attack from
both sides. Their left wing on the side facing Eion, which had already [8]
gone on ahead, at once broke off and started fleeing. And just as that wing
was in retreat and Brasidas was moving over to the right he was wounded.
The Athenians did not see that he had fallen, but those near him lifted
him up and carried him away.

[1] That is, their right side, since the left side was protected by their shields. The details of these manoeuvres and of the topography are discussed at some length both by Gomme (III, pp. 647–50) and Hornblower (II, pp. 446–7).

The Athenian right wing was holding up better. Cleon, who from the [9]
start had never intended to stay his ground, fled straightaway and was overtaken and killed by a peltast from Myrcinus; but the hoplites with him rallied together on the hill and repulsed two or three attacks from Clearidas, and they only gave way when the Myrcinian and Chalcidian cavalry and the peltasts put them to flight, surrounding them and attacking them with javelins.

So now the entire Athenian army was on the run and they were picking [10]
their way with great difficulty by various routes across the mountains. And those who survived being killed, either immediately in the hand-to-hand fighting or by the Chalcidian cavalry and peltasts, made their way back to Eion.

Brasidas' rescuers picked him up and took him back to the safety of [11]
the city, still breathing. He took in the news that his men had won the day and then shortly afterwards died. The rest of the army returned with Clearidas from the pursuit, stripped the enemy dead and set up a trophy.

After this all the allies processed in full armour and gave Brasidas a 11
public burial in the city, in front of where the market-place now is. The Amphipolitans created an enclosure around his tomb and ever since then they make blood-sacrifices for him as a cult hero and have instituted games and annual offerings in his honour.[1] They also nominated him as the founding father of their colony, pulling down the buildings associated with Hagnon and obliterating any possible reminders of Hagnon's role as founder. In their own minds Brasidas was the man who had become their saviour, and at the present time they were also cultivating an alliance with the Spartans in their fear of the Athenians; honouring Hagnon, by contrast, seemed both less advantageous and less congenial in view of their hostile relations with Athens.

They gave the Athenians back their dead. On the Athenian side some [2]
600 had been killed, but only seven of their opponents; and that was because the battle was, as described, not one fought in organised formations but was this affair of chance and premature panic. After recovering [3]
their dead the Athenians sailed back home, while Clearidas and his colleagues settled affairs at Amphipolis.

At about the same time and late in the summer, the Spartans Ram- 12
phias, Autocharidas and Epicydidas were leading a force of 900 hoplite

[1] 'they make blood sacrifices' translates the even more vivid 'they cut throats'. Another reminder of Brasidas' exceptional status and of the religious observances practised by and for him: see IV 116.3, 121.1 and V 10.2.

reinforcements to the Thracian region, and when they reached Heracleia in Trachis they dealt with whatever problems seemed to need addressing there. It was while they were spending time there that this battle took [2] place. And so the summer ended.

Winter [V 13–24]

Right at the start of the next winter Ramphias and his colleagues moved **13** through Thessaly as far as Pierium; but then, with the Thessalians hindering their progress and with Brasidas dead – the man for whom they were bringing this army – they turned back home. They thought the opportunity had now passed, since the Athenians had retired in defeat and since they themselves were not up to carrying out any of the plans Brasidas had in mind. But the chief reason for their return was that they [2] knew when they set out that the Spartans were inclining more towards peace.

In fact what happened was that directly after the battle at Amphipo- **14** lis and Ramphias' withdrawal from Thessaly neither side engaged any further with the war but turned their minds increasingly to thoughts of peace.[1] The Athenians had suffered a blow at Delium and again shortly afterwards at Amphipolis and they no longer had the confidence that comes from assured strength, a confidence which had previously led them to reject the chance of a treaty when they thought they could ride their good fortune to final victory. They were also afraid of their allies, [2] lest they felt encouraged by these reverses of theirs and became more likely to revolt; and they now regretted that they had not come to terms after the Pylos episode when circumstances were more favourable.

The Spartans for their part were similarly inclined. The war was not [3] turning out as they had expected: they had thought that they could in a few years destroy the power of Athens if they kept despoiling their land; but instead they had suffered the disaster on the island,[2] the like of which had never happened before to the city of Sparta, and there were raids on their own territory from Pylos and Cythera; the helots were deserting and there was always the apprehension that even those who

[1] This recapitulation picks up earlier comments on morale and motivation from IV 41, 55, 80–81, 108 and 117.

[2] This had so entered the Spartan consciousness that the Sphacteria episode (IV 8–41) is regularly just referred to as 'the disaster on the island' (see also IV 38.5, 117.1, V 24.2, 75.3).

remained might be influenced by those outside to take advantage of the circumstances and revolt, as they had done before. It happened also to [4] be the case that their thirty-year treaty with Argos was coming to an end and the Argives were unwilling to make a new one unless they got back the territory of Cynouria – and it seemed impossible to carry on wars with the Argives and Athenians simultaneously. Besides, they suspected that some of the cities in the Peloponnese would go over to the Argives, as in fact happened.

Both sides accordingly weighed up these considerations and thought **15** it best to make an agreement, the Spartans especially so because of their desire to get back the men taken on the island – who were leading Spartiates or similarly influential kinsmen of theirs. They had therefore started [2] negotiations immediately after their capture, but the Athenians were not yet inclined – while things were going well for them – to settle the matter on reasonable terms. However, when the Athenians had their own setback at Delium the Spartans knew they would then be more receptive and immediately made a truce for a period of one year, in which there were to be meetings about a longer-term agreement.

The situation had changed[1] after the Athenian defeat at Amphipolis **16** and the deaths of Cleon and Brasidas, the men on either side who had been most opposed to peace: Brasidas because of his success and the prestige he got from the war, Cleon because he thought that in time of peace his misdeeds would be more transparent and his slanders less credible. But now the main aspirants to power on each side, Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, King of the Spartans, and Nicias son of Niceratus, the most successful general of his day in his terms of office, were becoming far more eager for peace. In Nicias' case he wanted to protect his good fortune while he was still unscathed and respected; he wanted to find some immediate relief from their troubles both for himself and for his fellow citizens and to leave behind for the future the reputation of a man who lived his whole life without ever failing the city in any way; and he thought that the best way of doing this was to avoid taking risks and to expose oneself as little as possible to chance, and that peace was what

[1] The whole of 16.1 is one long and rather rambling sentence in the Greek (the longest in Thucydides, at 160 words: see also VI 100.1n), made more complicated by the double set of comparisons both between and within the two pairs of men contrasted and by the digression on Pleistoanax and early Spartan history. I have tried to preserve its general character but have added the initial phrase to indicate the structure more clearly. The main narrative resumes at 17.2.

offered freedom from risk. Pleistoanax for his part wanted peace because he kept being maligned by his enemies about his return from exile, and whenever any setbacks occurred they cast his case before the Spartans to excite their sensitivities,[1] as if such events could be explained by his illegal return.

The story was this. They made the accusation that Pleistoanax together [2] with his brother Aristocles had induced the priestess at Delphi to keep responding to the stream of Spartan observers[2] coming to consult the oracle over time that 'they should bring the seed of the demigod son of Zeus back from foreign lands to their own, otherwise they would plough with a silver share'.[3] Eventually, they said, the Spartans were persuaded [3] to bring him back from exile. He had taken refuge on Mount Lycaeum, because of the allegations of bribery on the occasion when he withdrew from Attica, and in his fear of the Spartans he lived there in a house built half-way inside the sanctuary of Zeus. In the nineteenth year of his exile they brought him back and celebrated his return with the same dances and offerings as when they installed their kings on the first foundation of Sparta.

Irked, then, by these continued accusations Pleistoanax was strongly in **17** favour of an agreement. His reasoning was that if there were peace and no further reverses occurred and if at the same time the Spartans got their men back, then he would be less exposed to attacks from his enemies; whereas in time of war it was inevitable that leading figures would be blamed in the event of disasters.

They met for discussions in the course of this winter and as spring [2] approached the Spartans made intimidating moves by sending word round the cities to prepare to build a fort in enemy territory, intending this threat to make the Athenians more responsive. After holding meetings with many claims and counter-claims an agreement was finally reached that they should make peace, with each side giving back what they had won in war, with the exception that the Athenians should keep Nisaea. (That was because when the Athenians had first asked to have Plataea back the Thebans had refused on the grounds that they had acquired the place

[1] The Greek word *enthumia* is a very rare one indeed, used only here by Thucydides and in one other case that seems to imitate this reference. It may have overtones of superstitious or religious sensibilities.

[2] *Theoroi*: see glossary.

[3] Spartan kings were supposed to have been descended from Heracles son of Zeus. The proverb of the 'silver ploughshare' apparently implies famine.

not by force but with the agreement of the Plataeans, who came over to their side of their own accord and not as a result of betrayal – whereupon the Athenians replied that they had acquired Nisaea just the same way.) At this point the Spartans summoned a meeting of their allies and they voted to put an end to the war, except for the Boeotians, Corinthians, Eleans and Megarians, who were unhappy with the negotiations.[1] So they made the agreement and formally committed themselves to it with libations and oaths on both sides, the Spartans swearing oaths to the Athenians and the Athenians to the Spartans. And these were the terms.

18 The Athenians and the Spartans and their allies[2] made a treaty on the following terms and swore to it city by city:

[2] Concerning the common sanctuaries, anyone who wishes can sacrifice, visit, consult the oracles and attend festivals according to their established practices with safe passage by land and sea. The sanctuary and temple of Apollo at Delphi and the people of Delphi shall be self-governing in their laws, taxes and courts in respect of themselves and their territory according to custom and practice.

[3] The treaty shall be in force for fifty years between the Athenians and their allies and the Spartans and their allies without deceit or intent to harm[3] and shall have effect by land and sea.

[4] It will not be permitted to bear arms with hostile intent either for the Spartans and their allies against the Athenians and their allies or for the Athenians and their allies against the Spartans and their allies by any means or contrivance. And if there is any dispute between them they should have recourse to such legal procedures of justice and oath as they may jointly agree.

[5] The Spartans and their allies are to give back Amphipolis to the Athenians.

In the case of those cities the Spartans have handed over to the Athenians people who so wish are to be allowed to leave taking their belongings with them.

[1] Important exceptions, as emerges later, for example at 30–31. If the Peace of Nicias was essentially a return to the earlier situation they must have wondered what the ten years of war had achieved, remembering the exchanges at the first Peloponnesian conference (I 67–88) and the cautions of Archidamus (80–85).

[2] As the text stands 'the allies' seems only to refer to the allies of the Spartans, and this is a substantive point in that the Spartans and their allies sign jointly whereas Athens speaks for all her allies.

[3] A formulaic phrase in treaties, rather like 'without let or bar'.

The following cities are to be independent provided that they continue to pay tribute at the level assessed at the time of Aristeides; and the Athenians and their allies are not allowed to bear arms against them to do them harm, provided that they pay the tribute, now that the treaty has been concluded. These cities are: Argilus, Stagirus, Acanthus, Scolus, Olynthus and Spartolus. They are to be allies of neither side, neither of the Spartans nor of the Athenians; but if the Athenians so persuade them and have their consent the Athenians are allowed to make them their allies.[1]

[6] The people of Mecyberna, Sane and Singus shall have their own towns to live in, just like the people of Olynthus and Acanthus.[2]

[7] The Spartans and their allies are to give Panactum back to the Athenians. The Athenians are to give back to the Spartans and their allies Coryphasium, Cythera, Methana, Pteleum and Atalante along with all the Spartan men who are in the state prison in Athens or in a state prison in any other place under Athenian control; they should also release the Peloponnesians being besieged at Scione and all the other allies of the Spartans who are in Scione and those whom Brasidas sent in there; and they should release anyone from Sparta's allies who is in the state prison in Athens or anywhere else under Athenian control. The Spartans and their allies are to give back in like manner any Athenians or anyone from the allies of Athens whom they are holding.

[8] In the case of the people of Scione, Torone, Sermyle and any other city the Athenians hold, the Athenians are to make whatever decisions they see fit about these and the other cities.[3]

[1] Section 5 is vaguer than one might expect or is either misquoted or mistranscribed. I have adopted the small textual changes recommended by Gomme and Hornblower and have further emphasised the division into three classes of cities in my paragraphing, but it surely remains odd that in the third class we have cities that are 'independent' yet also tribute-bearing and biddable?

[2] 'Live in' presumably also implies 'have free possession of' or 'manage' (as above), but these cities must form some separate category to have been worth listing separately and Gomme suggests that the freedom is from encroachment by Olynthus in the case of Mecyberna and Singus, which had been absorbed along with other Chalcidian cities (I 58.2), and by Acanthus in the case of Sane (which may or may not be the Sane at IV 109.2). See map 22, p. 299.

[3] If 'the other cities' is not an interpolated gloss from a later commentator it suggests an inclusive extension to the whole of Athens' imperial holdings, and hence a major concession by Sparta. The brief reference to Scione and other places is in any case already a bitter reminder of the initial euphoria of Brasidas' liberation and the later betrayal of his promises (IV 120–21). Lewis (*Cambridge Ancient History*, V, p. 432) says of the whole treaty, 'after ten years of war, Sparta had abandoned, not only all attempts to destroy the Athenian empire,

The Athenians shall swear oaths to the Spartans and their allies, city [9]
by city. Each party is to swear the oath in whatever is its most binding local form, seventeen men representing each city. The wording of the oath shall be as follows: 'I will abide by this agreement and treaty justly and without deceit.' The Spartans and their allies are to swear an oath to the Athenians on just the same terms, this oath to be renewed annually on both sides.

Stelai[1] are to be erected at Olympia, Delphi, the Isthmus, at Athens on [10]
the Acropolis and at Sparta on the Amyclaeum.

If they have omitted any point at all on any matter the oath allows for [11]
both parties to enter into just and proper discussion to make such changes as they may both agree, Athenians and Spartans.[2]

The treaty begins at Sparta in the ephorship of Pleistolas on the fourth **19**
day from the end of the month Artemisium, and in Athens in the archonship of Alcaeus on the sixth day from the end of the month Elaphebolion.

The following took the oath and poured the libations: on behalf of the [2]
Spartans, Pleistoanax, Agis, Pleistolas, Damaetus, Chionis, Metagenes, Acanthus, Daithus, Ischagoras, Philocharidas, Zeuxidas, Antippus, Tellis, Alcinadas, Empedias, Menas and Laphilus; and the following on behalf of the Athenians, Lampon, Isthmionicus, Nicias, Laches, Euthydemus, Procles, Pythadorus, Hagnon, Myrtilus, Thrasycles, Theogenes, Aristocrates, Iolcius, Timocrates, Leon, Lamachus and Demosthenes.

The treaty was made right at the end of winter and the beginning of **20**
spring, immediately after the City Dionysia,[3] exactly ten years (within a few days) after the first invasion of Attica and the start of the war.[4]
One should look at things on the basis of periods of time rather than [2]

but also some cherished interests of major allies, bargaining the liberation of Greece for the security of her own system. Athens had won the war.'

[1] Pillars inscribed with public notices (see glossary).

[2] Another brief but hugely significant qualification. The Athenians and Spartans (and in *neither* case now are the allies mentioned) have to right to change anything in these terms at their joint discretion. See 29.2 below.

[3] The important Athenian festival in honour of Dionysus at which dramas were performed over several days, including of course all the major works of tragedy and comedy we now have.

[4] Hornblower (II, pp. 490–3) summarises the huge scholarly literature on this sentence, where both the text and the meaning have been much disputed since it seems inconsistent with Thucydides' dating of the origins of the war at II 2.1 and 19.1 (where it is ten years less two and a half months). It is perhaps rather too easy, here and elsewhere in Thucydides, to omit inconvenient phrases just to save his consistency, but this would admittedly be a bad mistake for him to make in a passage specifically commending his own chronological methods.

trust in a listing of the officials at various places – whether archons or some other title-holder – whose names are used to mark the dates of past events. That is an imprecise method since an event may have occurred at the beginning, in the middle or at any point in their tenure. If one [3] counts instead by summers and winters, as set out in this work, with each amounting to half a year, one will find that ten summers and the same number of winters have passed in this first war.

21 It fell by lot to the Spartans to be first to give back possessions. They immediately released all the prisoners they held and sent Ischagoras, Menas and Philocharidas as envoys to the Thracian region with orders for Clearidas to hand over Amphipolis to the Athenians and for the others to accept the terms of the treaty as they applied to each of them. These [2] refused, however, finding that the treaty did not suit their purposes; nor did Clearidas hand over the city, but to oblige the Chalcidians said that it was not in his power to enforce this against their will. He himself [3] returned in haste to Sparta with some envoys from the area to defend this decision, in case Ischagoras and his colleagues should accuse him of disobeying orders; and he also wanted to learn if the agreement could be changed. When he found that they were tied to it he hurried back in person, sent under strict instructions from the Spartans who confirmed that he was indeed to hand the place over but failing that to withdraw all the Peloponnesians who were in the city.

22 The allies were, as it happens, again present at Sparta and the Spartans urged those of them who had not accepted the treaty now to adopt it. They refused to do so, for the same reason they had given in rejecting it before, unless they could make fairer terms than these. So since their allies [2] would not listen to them the Spartans dismissed them and made their own agreement with the Athenians. Their view was that the Argives, who had been unwilling to make a treaty with the Spartans when Ampelidas and Lichas had visited them, would be no real danger to them without the Athenians[1] and that the rest of the Peloponnese would take no action at all, though if the possibility were there they might go over to the Athenians. Accordingly, after talks with the Athenian envoys who were [3] present they reached an agreement. The oaths taken and the terms of the alliance[2] were as follows.

[1] The text is probably corrupt here (see appendix 1, p. 587, for my reading).

[2] The word used is *summachia* ('alliance' – here a mutual defensive alliance) not *spondai* ('agreement', as in V 18.1).

23 The Spartans and Athenians shall be allies for fifty years on the following terms:

If any enemies enter Spartan territory and do harm to the Spartans the Athenians will help the Spartans in whatever way they can with all possible strength at their disposal; and if the invader departs after acts of devastation then that city shall be counted an enemy to the Spartans and Athenians and shall suffer at both their hands, and both cities shall end hostilities at the same time. And these things are to be observed in a spirit of justice and commitment and without deceit.

[2] And if any enemies enter Athenian territory and do harm to the Athenians the Spartans will help the Athenians in whatever way they can with all possible strength at their disposal; and if the invader departs after acts of devastation then that city shall be counted an enemy to the Spartans and Athenians and shall suffer at both their hands, and both cities shall end hostilities at the same time. And these things are to be observed in a spirit of justice and commitment and without deceit.

[3] If there is an uprising of slaves the Athenians shall support the Spartans with all their strength to the best of their ability.[1]

[4] Those who swore to the other treaty on both sides shall also swear to this one. The oath shall be renewed annually, with the Spartans going to Athens at the Dionysia and the Athenians going to Sparta at the Hyacinthia.

[5] Each side shall erect a stele, the one in Sparta at the temple of Apollo at Amyclae and the one at Athens at the temple of Athene on the Acropolis.

[6] If the Spartans and the Athenians are minded to add or delete anything to do with this alliance the oath allows them both to do whatever they see fit.[2]

24 The following swore to the oaths: on behalf of the Spartans, Pleistoanax, Agis, Pleistolas, Damaetus, Chionis, Metagenes, Acanthus, Daithus, Ischagoras, Philocharidas, Zeuxidas, Antippus, Alcinadas, Tellis, Empedias, Menas and Laphilus; and the following on behalf of the Athenians, Lampon, Isthmionicus, Laches, Nicias, Euthydemus, Procles,

[1] The only asymmetrical clause in the terms. For the Spartan fear of a helot revolt see IV 56n and I 101–3.

[2] This is a small variation on 18.11 where 'both' is repeated and some scholars have proposed textual changes to make them wholly consistent. Perhaps a more important omission, however, is a clause formally relating the terms of this 'alliance' to the earlier agreement and specifying a date for its implementation.

Pythadorus, Hagnon, Myrtilus, Thrasycles, Theogenes, Aristocrates, Iolcius, Timocrates, Leon, Lamachus and Demosthenes.[1]

This alliance was made not long after the treaty, and the Athenians [2] gave back the men taken on the island to the Spartans; and so began the summer of the eleventh year.

The first war, which lasted continuously for these ten years, has now been written.[2]

[1] Exactly the same list as at 19.2 above, with just two changes to the sequence of names.

[2] We don't know whether Thucydides himself divided his work into 'books', or if so how many (see introduction, p. xxvii), but this is a very clear mark of some sort of a break in his writing and in the twenty-seven-year war.

Eleventh year of the war, 421–20 [V 25–39]

Summer [V 25–35]

After the treaty and the alliance were made between the Spartans and the **25**
Athenians at the end of the ten-year war, in the ephorate of Pleistolas
and the archonship of Alcaeus, there was peace among the parties that
accepted these agreements; but the Corinthians and some of the cities in
the Peloponnese tried to destabilise the arrangements, and that immedi-
ately led to further disturbance in the relations between Sparta and her
allies. And as time passed the Spartans began to arouse the suspicions of [2]
the Athenians too, by not implementing some of the specific provisions
from the agreements. For six years and ten months the two sides refrained [3]
from invading one another's territory, but elsewhere the truce failed to
hold firm and they inflicted as much damage on each other as possible;
and then they were finally driven[1] to break the treaty concluded after the
ten-year war and reverted again to open warfare.

The same Thucydides of Athens[2] has written down these events too, **26**
setting them out in sequence by winters and summers, down to the

[1] *anankasthentes* 'acting under *ananke*', recalling how the Spartans were 'forced' to start the war at I 23.6.

[2] A very similar form of words to that at I 1, hence the conventional name of 'the Second Preface' for this introduction to the second half of the war. In both passages Thucydides generally refers to himself in the third person, which was standard practice among Greek and Roman historians and which helps to give a sense of impersonality to the account, but in both places he lapses into the first person too. V 26 was clearly written after the end of the war in 404, though the surviving narrative only goes as far as 411.

time when the Spartans and their allies put an end to Athenian rule and captured the long walls and the Peiraeus. At that point the war had lasted a total of twenty-seven years. As for the agreement that intervened in the [2] middle, one would be quite wrong to think that this period did not count as a state of war. For looked at carefully in the light of the relevant facts it will be seen that one cannot describe as 'peace' a situation in which the two sides neither restored nor received back everything that had been agreed by treaty; and quite apart from that, there were violations of the treaty on both sides in the Mantinean and Epidaurian conflicts among others, the allies in Thrace remained just as hostile to Athens, and the Boeotians were observing a truce which only lasted ten days at a time. So [3] if one adds together the first ten-year war, the uneasy truce that followed this and the later war after that, and then calculates the periods of time involved, one ends up with that number of years I have said to within a few days. And this is actually the only reliable fact that those who put their trust in oracles have got right. I always remember that from the very [4] start of the war right up to its end there were many who prophesied that it would last 'thrice nine years'.

I lived through the whole of it when I was of an age to appreciate what [5] was going on and could apply my mind to an exact understanding of things. It so turned out that I was banished from my own country for twenty years after the Amphipolis campaign and thus had the time to study matters more closely; and as consequence of my exile I had access to activities on both sides, not least to those of the Peloponnesians. I will [6] therefore now relate the differences that arose after the ten-year war and the collapse of the treaty, and then the subsequent course of the war.

After the fifty-year treaty and the subsequent alliance had been con- **27** cluded the envoys from the Peloponnese who had been summoned there for that purpose began leaving Sparta. Some returned home, but the [2] Corinthians first turned aside to visit Argos and entered into discussions with some of the Argives in positions of authority. They said that since it was not for the benefit of the Peloponnese but for its enslavement that the Spartans had concluded a treaty and an alliance with the Athenians, once their bitter enemies, there was now an obligation on the Argives to consider how the Peloponnese might be saved:[1] they should pass a resolution that any Greek city so wishing – which was also independent and would

[1] Argos and Sparta had traditionally been rivals for supremacy within the Peloponnese (see below 28.2, 41.2 and 69.1, and see Hornblower III, pp. 63–4 on the mythical origins of Argos' claims).

observe fair and equal practices of justice – should make an alliance with the Argives for their mutual defence; and they should appoint a few men who were fully empowered to make decisions rather than having discussions take place directly with the people, in order to avoid public exposure of the proposals if the populace was not persuaded. The Corinthians said that there would be many joining them in such an alliance through their hatred of the Spartans. After presenting these arguments the Corinthians [3] went home.

28 The men from Argos who heard these proposals reported them back to the authorities and to the people, whereupon the Argives passed a decree and appointed twelve men with whom any of the Greeks who so wished could conclude an alliance – except for the Athenians and Spartans, neither of whom should be allowed to make a treaty without the consent of the Argive people.

[2] The Argives accepted these proposals the more readily because they saw that there was going to be a war with the Spartans (since their treaty with them was on the point of expiring) and they were also hoping to win the leadership of the Peloponnese. Sparta's reputation had at this time sunk very low indeed and she was despised for the reverses she had suffered, while the Argives were very well placed in every respect and by contrast had reaped the benefits of not being involved in the war with Attica[1] and of having a treaty with both sides. So the Argives were ready [3] to receive into an alliance any of the Greek states that wanted it.

29 The first to come over to them were the Mantineans and their allies, prompted by their fear of the Spartans. While the war with Athens was still going on the Mantineans had forcibly subjected a part of Arcadia and they thought the Spartans would not continue to tolerate their rule there, especially now that the Spartans were free from other pressures. So they gladly turned to Argos, thinking it an important state and one permanently hostile to the Spartans, which was also democratically governed like themselves. When the Mantineans broke away there were murmurings [2] throughout the rest of the Peloponnese that they should be doing the same. They thought that the Mantineans must have had some inside knowledge in deciding to change sides and they were in any case angry with the Spartans, particularly over the clause in the Attic Agreement where by sworn oath the pair of them were allowed to add or subtract anything

[1] The Peloponnesians naturally thought of this as the 'Attic War' not the 'Peloponnesian War'. See I 1n, V 31.3 and 31.5 and introduction, p. xxvii.

they chose at their own discretion, just the Athenians and the Spartans.
Disquiet about this clause rumbled on[1] throughout the Peloponnese and [3]
created a suspicion that the Spartans wanted to join with the Athenians in enslaving them. The right thing, in their view, was for all the allies to be party to any amendment to the treaty. So in this mood of fear most [4]
of them were inclined to make their own individual alliances with the Athenians.

When the Spartans became aware of these murmurings of discontent in **30**
the Peloponnese and realised that the Corinthians were the ones orchestrating it and were themselves about to make an alliance with the Argives, they sent envoys to Corinth to try to forestall this. They accused the Corinthians of setting the whole thing in motion and said that if they deserted them to become allies of the Argives they would be transgressing their sworn oaths; indeed, they were already at fault in not accepting the terms of the treaty with Athens, which specified that a majority vote of the allies would be binding, unless there was some impediment from gods or heroes.

The Corinthians had with them all their allies who had similarly refused [2]
to accept the treaty (and whom they had themselves invited to attend beforehand), and they now took issue with the Spartans. They did not directly state their real grievances – that the Spartans had not recovered Sollium or Anactorium from the Athenians for them, and some other matters where they felt they had come off badly – but offered the pretext[2] that they could not betray the people of Thrace. They said they had sworn oaths to them, both independently when they first joined the Potidaeans in their revolt and on other later occasions. Their refusal to enter into the [3]
treaty with the Athenians, therefore, did not involve any transgression of their oaths to their allies; they had sworn allegiance to the Thracians and would be violating this if they now betrayed them. The wording was 'unless there was some impediment from the gods or heroes' and this seemed to them to be a case of just such a religious impediment.

This is what they said about these ancient oaths.[3] On the subject of [4]
the Argive alliance, they said they would consult with their friends and

[1] *diathorubeo* is a very unusual Greek word, no doubt chosen for dramatic effect, as is *throus*, which I translate as 'murmurings' at 29.2 and 30.1.

[2] Here *proschema* 'something held up in front of one', a cloak or pretence.

[3] There is no reference to such oaths of allegiance in the description of these events at I 56ff. and the rhetoric seems rather forced here. The formula in 30.3 sounds like some standard legal/religious qualification but in fact we do not meet it elsewhere.

do whatever was the right thing. The Spartan envoys then returned [5] home. But there happened to be Argive envoys also present at Corinth and they urged the Corinthians to come and join their alliance without further delay. The Corinthians thereupon invited them to attend the next assembly meeting at Corinth.

An embassy from Elis arrived shortly afterwards as well and made an **31** alliance with the Corinthians, after which they went on to Argos and, following the procedures laid down, became allies of the Argives too. The Eleans were at odds with the Spartans over Lepreum. There had [2] once been a war between the Lepreans and some of the Arcadians, and the Eleans had been invited by the Lepreans to make an alliance with them for a half-share in their territory; then when the war was over the Eleans had assessed the Lepreans for a rent of one talent payable to Zeus at Olympia for their own occupation of the land. This they continued [3] to pay up to the time of the Attic War, and then they stopped, using the war as an excuse, whereupon the Eleans tried to force them and they turned to the Spartans for help. With the case in the hands of the Spartans the Eleans suspected that they would not get fair treatment, so they renounced the arbitration and proceeded to destroy the crops of the Lepreans. The Spartans nonetheless gave a ruling that the Lepreans [4] were an independent people and that the Eleans were in the wrong; and as the latter did not abide by the terms of the arbitration the Spartans then dispatched a garrison of hoplites to enter Lepreum. The Eleans took [5] the view that the Spartans had taken on a relationship with a city of theirs in rebellion, and they pointed to the clause in the treaty where it was specified that whatever possessions states held on entering the Attic War they should retain when it came to an end. So on the grounds that they were not being treated fairly they defected to the Argives and they too made an alliance with them in accordance with the procedures laid down.

The Corinthians and the Chalcidians in Thrace immediately followed [6] them into the Argive alliance. The Boeotians and the Megarians, however, agreed between themselves to hold back and were more circumspect, finding the form of democracy at Argos less favourable to their own oligarchic governments than the constitution of Sparta.

At about the same time this summer the Athenians took Scione by siege, **32** killed all the adult males, took the women and children into slavery,[1] and

[1] The brutal conclusion to the hopes and promises of IV 121. There is a minor inconsistency here in that the women and children were supposed to have been already removed to safety (IV 123.4).

gave the Plataeans the land to occupy. They also restored the Delians to Delos, taking to heart both their own failures in battle and an oracle from the god at Delphi.

Meanwhile the Phocians and Locrians began fighting a war too.[1] [2]

The Corinthians and Argives, now allies, went to Tegea to try to detach [3] it from Sparta, since they saw what a large proportion of the Peloponnese it represented and thought that if it came over to them they would then have the whole Peloponnese on their side. But when the Tegeans said [4] that they would do nothing to oppose the Spartans, the Corinthians, who up to this point had been so committed in their efforts, dropped their aggressive stance and were seized with a sudden fear that none of the others would now come over to them. Nevertheless, they did go to the [5] Boeotians and asked them to become allies of theirs and the Argives and to collaborate more generally with them. They also requested the Boeotians to come with them to Athens and get them a ten-day truce of the same kind the Athenians and Boeotians had agreed shortly after the fifty-year treaty; and if the Athenians refused to accept this, the Boeotians should renounce their truce with the Athenians and should make no further agreement without involving the Corinthians.

These were the Corinthians' demands, and the Boeotians responded [6] as follows. On the subject of the Argive alliance they told them to hold off; but they did go with the Corinthians to Athens where, however, they failed to secure the ten-day treaty since the Athenians replied that they already had a treaty with the Corinthians – if they were indeed allies of the Spartans. The Boeotians thereupon did nothing to renounce their own [7] ten-day truce, despite the claims and complaints of the Corinthians that there was an agreement between them to this effect. So the Corinthians had a truce without a treaty with Athens.

The same summer the Spartans mounted a full-scale campaign led by 33 Pleistoanax, son of Pausanias and king of the Spartans, against the Parrhasians in Arcadia, who were subjects of the Mantineans. The Spartans had been called in by the Parrhasians in the course of an internal conflict there and they also wanted to destroy the fort at Cypsela if they could, which the Mantineans had constructed and had themselves manned, lying as it did in Parrhasian territory and threatening the Sciritis region of Laconia. The Spartans proceeded to waste the land of the Parrhasians, [2] while the Mantineans, after entrusting the defence of their own city to

[1] Another interjection that looks like a note for future expansion or integration (see V 3.5n).

the Argives, tried to defend their allies' territory. They were unable, however, to save the fort at Cypsela or the cities in Parrhasia and withdrew. Thereupon the Spartans gave the Parrrhasians their independence, [3] pulled down the fort and then went home.

Also this summer, the troops who had gone out with Brasidas returned **34** to Sparta from the Thracian region, having been brought back by Clearidas after the peace treaty. The Spartans then voted that the helots who had fought with Brasidas should be free men and should live where they liked; and not much later they settled them with the freedmen[1] at Lepreum, a place on the border between Laconia and Elis (the Spartans now being at odds with the Eleans). As for the men who had been captured on [2] the island and had surrendered their arms, the Spartans were apprehensive that they might think they were about to be disadvantaged as a result of the disaster and might try to start trouble while they had full citizen rights.[2] So although some of them were actually current office holders, they deprived them of those rights, namely the right to hold office and the authority to buy and sell anything. Later on, however, the rights were restored to them.

Still in the same summer, the Dians seized Thyssus, a place on the **35** peninsula of Athos, which was an ally of Athens.

Throughout the whole of this summer communications continued [2] between the Athenians and Peloponnesians, but immediately after the treaty they began to develop mutual suspicions on account of their failure to give places back to each other.[3] Amphipolis was a case in point. [3] Although the Spartans had drawn the lot to start the process of restoration they had failed to give that back, as they had various other places too; nor had they prevailed on their allies in the Thracian region to accept the treaty, nor on the Boeotians or the Corinthians, though they repeatedly said that they would make common cause with the Athenians in coercing these states if they refused; and they proposed deadlines – though not in writing – by which those who did not join in the treaty should be declared enemies of both sides.

[1] *neodamodeis*, the class of newly enfranchised helots (see glossary). Despite the previous sentence, the helots in this case were evidently directed where to live.

[2] *epitimoi* (with rights) as opposed to *atimoi* in next sentence (without rights) – see further under *time* in glossary. The Spartans were always very nervous about internal security. They had desperately wanted these men back (see IV 41.3 and V 14.3), but then became troubled that they might become a disaffected element.

[3] This is rather differently expressed at 25.2 above, another small indication that the parts of book V before and after 26 were not fully revised and integrated with each other.

When the Athenians saw that none of this was actually happening [4] in practice, they therefore began to suspect that the Spartans had no intention of fulfilling their just obligations; and as a result not only did they refuse to give back Pylos, as the Spartans demanded, but they even began to regret having given back the prisoners from the island; and they held on to the other places, waiting until the Spartans should have fulfilled their side of the agreement. The Spartans for their part declared [5] that they had done what they could. They said they had given back the Athenian prisoners that were in their hands, had withdrawn their troops from the Thracian region, and had done whatever else it was in their power to do. Amphipolis, they went on, they did not control so could not hand over,[1] but they would try to get the Boeotians and Corinthians to enter into the treaty, to get back Panactum and to secure the return of all the Athenian prisoners in the hands of the Boeotians. They insisted, [6] however, that the Athenians should return Pylos to them – or failing that should at least remove the Messenians and helots from there, just as the Spartans had withdrawn their own men from Thrace; and the Athenians could continue to garrison it themselves if they so wished.

After many meetings and much talking in the course of this summer [7] they did persuade the Athenians to withdraw from Pylos the Messenians and the others, whether helots or deserters from Laconia. And the Athenians settled all these in Cranii on Cephallenia.

So, for this summer there was peace and there were these diplomatic [8] missions between the two sides.

Winter [V 36–39]

The following winter, however, there were different ephors now in office **36** from those under whom the treaty had been made, and some of these were actually opposed to the treaty. Embassies came to Sparta from the allies and there were also present Athenians, Boeotians and Corinthians. A great deal was said on each side but nothing was agreed, and when they were leaving for home Cleoboulus and Xenares, the two ephors who most wanted to do away with the treaty, had some private discussions with the Boeotians and Corinthians, urging that as far as possible they take a common view and that the Boeotians first become allies of the

[1] The word used is *paradidonai* (to hand over) not *apodidonai* (to give back). The importance of Amphipolis is indicated by its position, here and at 35.3 above, as the first word in the clause, just as Pylos is at 35.6.

Argives and then try to make the Argives allies of the Spartans along with themselves. This way the Boeotians would feel under least compulsion to enter into the Attic treaty; and if there was a choice, the Spartans minded more about having the Argives as friends and allies than about incurring the hostility of the Athenians and the dissolution of the treaty. The two ephors knew that the Spartans would always want Argos as a friend of theirs on good and honourable terms, believing that war outside the Peloponnese would then be an easier matter for them.[1] They did, [2] however, ask the Boeotians to hand over Panactum, in order that they might get back Pylos in exchange, if they could, and so be in a better position for the war with Athens.

After receiving these instructions from Xemares and Cleoboulus and **37** their Spartan sympathisers, the Boeotians and Corinthians set off to pass them on to their respective governments.[2] But two very high-ranking [2] Argive officials who had been watching out for them intercepted them on their way back and opened a discussion to see if the Boeotians might join them as allies, just as the Corinthians, Eleans and Mantineans had done. They thought that if this went ahead and they all made common cause it would open the way for them to make war and peace more readily – either with Sparta, if they so chose, or with anyone else as need be. The Boeotians were delighted to hear all this, since as luck would [3] have it the Argives were asking for the very things their friends at Sparta had recommended. And the Argives, seeing that they were receptive to their proposals, told them that they would be sending envoys to Boeotia and then went their way. When the Boeotians got back they reported to [4] the Boeotarchs what had been said both at Sparta and by the Argives who had met them. The Boeotarchs welcomed the news warmly and were all the more enthusiastic because of the double good fortune in having their friends at Sparta asking for the same things as they were and in also having the Argives eager for a similar result.[3]

[1] 36.1 is a very clumsily expressed section, consisting of one long straggling sentence. It is not made any simpler by the complicated assumptions about the intentions of others underlying the proposed horse-trading. Various textual emendations have been proposed to smooth out both the text and the line of thought, and the OCT has a heroic system of parentheses to try to rescue the grammar (see Gomme IV, pp. 39–41).

[2] Here *ta koina*, their communities or collective governments (see also I 89.3).

[3] Is a subtle distinction being made here that was blurred at 37.3 above? The Spartans, Boeotians and the Argives all thought they wanted the same result, but for very different reasons, hence the hesitation by the Boeotarchs in 37.5 and the breakdown which follows.

Not long afterwards the Argive envoys arrived and made the proposals [5]
as indicated. The Boeotarchs commended the offer and sent them away
with a promise to send envoys to Argos to discuss the alliance.

In the meantime the Boeotarchs along with the Corinthians, Megarians 38
and the envoys from Thrace were minded to start by having an exchange
of oaths with each other: they would pledge their solemn support for any
one of them that needed it at any time; and they would neither start any
war nor conclude any agreement except by common consent; and after
that the Boeotians and Megarians (who were acting jointly) should make
their treaty with the Argives. Before these oaths were formally sworn, [2]
however, the Boeotarchs shared their plans with the four councils of the
Boeotians, which have the supreme authority, and recommended that
the oaths should be concluded with such cities as wished to join them
in pledging mutual support. But the members of the Boeotian councils [3]
refused to accept their proposal, being afraid of opposing Spartan interests
by exchanging oaths with Corinth, which had seceded from Sparta. The
Boeotarchs had not told them what had happened at Sparta, when the
two ephors, Cleoboulus and Xenares, and their sympathisers had advised
them first to become allies with the Argives and Corinthians and then
with the Spartans themselves; that was because the Boeotarchs thought
that even if they did not tell council this they would not do otherwise
than vote for the course on which the Boeotarchs had already resolved
and were now recommending to them.[1] There the matter stalled, so the [4]
Corinthians and the envoys from Thrace left and went away empty-
handed. For their part the Boeotarchs, who had been intending – if they
had got their proposals through – to go on to try and arrange an alliance
with Argos too, did not now bring forward to the councils their proposals
about the Argives, and neither did they send to Argos the envoys they
had been promising. And the whole business became beset by distraction
and delay.

In the course of the same winter the Olynthians overran Mecyberna, 39
which had an Athenian garrison there, and captured it.

We do not hear what happened when the Corinthian delegation, whose motives will have been different again, returned home.

[1] We know little about these 'councils' or the operations of Boeotian government, but evidently the Boeotarchs did not have quite the authority (or trust) they assumed and did not feel willing or able to supply (even belatedly) the crucial information they had omitted to present at the outset.

Discussions continued all the time between the Athenians and Spartans [2]
about places they were holding on to belonging to the other. The Spartan
hope now was that if the Athenians got Panactum[1] back from the Boeo-
tians they would themselves recover Pylos, so they sent envoys to Boeotia
to ask them to hand over Panactum and the Athenian prisoners to them,
in order that they might in turn recover Pylos from the Athenians. The [3]
Boeotians responded that they would not hand them back unless the
Spartans made a separate alliance with them, just as they had with
the Athenians. Now, the Spartans knew they would be acting unjustly[2]
towards the Athenians by doing this, since it was specified that neither
side should make treaties or declare war without mutual consent; on the
other hand they did want to take over Panactum in order to get back
Pylos in exchange, and at the same time those bent on ditching the treaty
with Athens were keenly supporting the relationship with Boeotia. They
therefore made the alliance, towards the end of winter and the approach
of spring; and the demolition of Panactum started immediately.[3]

So ended the eleventh year of the war.

[1] See map 21, p. 290.
[2] The verb is *adikein* 'to wrong' (see glossary).
[3] The demolition is a surprise, but one explained later at V 42.

Twelfth year of the war, 420–19 [V 40–51]

Summer [V 40–50]

Right at the beginning of spring in the next summer season, the Argives **40**
noted with mounting concern that the envoys the Boeotians had promised
to send did not arrive, that Panactum was being destroyed and that the
Boeotians had made a private alliance with the Spartans. They therefore
became afraid that they would be isolated and that the whole alliance
would go over to the Spartans. They supposed that the Boeotians had [2]
been persuaded by the Spartans to destroy Panactum and to enter into
a treaty with the Athenians; and they imagined that the Athenians knew
all this, with the result that it was no longer possible for them to make
an alliance with the Athenians, though they had previously hoped that
while Athens and Sparta remained at odds with each other, even if their
treaty with the Spartans did not survive, they could at least become allies
of the Athenians.[1] The Argives were therefore at a loss what to do in [3]
this situation. They were afraid that they might find themselves at war
simultaneously with the Spartans, Tegeans, Boeotians and Athenians,
having previously declined to accept a treaty with the Spartans, indeed
having even entertained the proud fancy that they might become the

[1] Another chain of thought based on miscalculations and misinformation about the intentions of others, which seems to be a theme of the whole narrative from V 34–46. The effect of complex uncertainty is heightened by the sentence structure in the Greek: 40.2 and 40.3 are each composed of one long sentence with many linked participles whose causal relationships are not made explicit (see introduction, pp. xxx–xxxiv).

leading power in the Peloponnese. They therefore now sent envoys as quickly as possible to Sparta – in the persons of Eustrophus and Aeson, who they thought would be the ones most congenial to the Spartans – taking the view that in the present circumstances it would be best to make an agreement with the Spartans on whatever terms possible and then be at peace.[1]

On their arrival the envoys began discussions with the Spartans about **41**
the terms of their proposed treaty. At first the Argives argued for the right [2]
to submit to arbitration – whether by some city or individual – the case of their long-standing dispute over the territory of Cynouria. (This was a place on their borders which contained the cities of Thyrea and Anthene and which the Spartans were occupying.) The Spartans initially refused to allow any mention of that in the treaty, and said they were instead willing to conclude a treaty on the same terms as before, if the Argives so wished. But the Argive envoys did in the end induce the Spartans to agree the following terms with them: for the present they should make a fifty-year treaty, but either side should be able to challenge the other, provided that there was neither plague nor war in Sparta and Argos, to decide the issue of this territory by combat (just as they had done once before, when both sides had claimed victory[2]), but with no pursuit
allowed beyond the boundaries into Argos or Sparta. At first this seemed [3]
a complete nonsense to the Spartans, but later, since they wanted above all to keep Argos on friendly terms, they did agree to the conditions the Argives demanded and had a written agreement drawn up. The Spartans told them, however, that before any of this should come into effect they should first take the terms back to Argos and present them to the people; and if they found favour they should return to Sparta at the festival of Hyacinthia and swear the oaths. And so the envoys left.

While the Argives were engaged on this business, however, the Spartan **42**
envoys – Andromedes, Phaedimus and Antimenidas – who were to take over Panactum and the Athenian prisoners from the Boeotians and give them back to the Athenians, discovered that the Boeotians had taken it into their hands to destroy Panactum. The pretext they gave was that a long time ago oaths had once been exchanged by the Athenians and

[1] *hesuchian echein*, literally 'to have peace' (see glossary), which has been variously understood either in an active sense ('let things rest' or 'be neutral') or in a passive one ('be left alone' or 'avoid conflict'); both may be intended.

[2] Herodotus gives the story at I 82: three hundred men from each side fought until nightfall, by which time only two Argives and one Spartan were left standing.

Boeotians in the course of a quarrel about Panactum, to the effect that neither of them should occupy the place but they should both have the use of the land in common. As for the men the Boeotians held as Athenian prisoners of war, Andromedes and his men did get them back and they took them to the Athenians and returned them. They also reported to them the destruction of Panactum, regarding that too as effectively being handed over, since no longer could anyone hostile to Athens occupy it. The Athenians broke out in uproar on being told this: they thought they [2] had been wronged by the Spartans over the destruction of Panactum, which they should have had back intact, and they now discovered that the Spartans had also made a separate alliance with the Boeotians, despite their previous assertion that they would act jointly with the Athenians to coerce those who did not accept the treaty. And they started looking at all the other ways in which the Spartans had defaulted on the terms of the treaty, and thought themselves seriously deceived. So they gave the envoys an angry response and sent them away.

As divisions between the Spartans and the Athenians sharpened in **43** this way, those in Athens who also wanted to see an end to the treaty immediately stepped up the pressure. Notable among these was Alcibiades [2] son of Cleinias, who was still of an age that would be thought young in any other city,[1] but was highly regarded because of his distinguished ancestry. His considered view was that it was better to side with the Argives, but that is not to say that he had no other motive for his opposition too. His pride was stung because the Spartans had negotiated the treaty through Nicias and Laches and had spurned him on the grounds of his youth, thereby failing to show him the respect he thought due to the ancient connections his family had once enjoyed with Sparta. His grandfather had renounced these, but he was seeking to revive them through the personal interest he had taken in their prisoners from Sphacteria. Feeling [3] slighted on all sides, therefore, he first spoke out against the treaty, arguing that the Spartans were not to be trusted but had made the treaty with the Athenians specifically in order to neutralise[2] the Argives and then move in turn against the Athenians, who would now be isolated. Next, immediately after the rift with Sparta had deepened, he sent a private

[1] He was probably in his early 30s (see biographical notes, p. xlv). This is the first mention of the man who is to take centre stage for much of the rest of the war and his character is lightly sketched in immediately.

[2] The verb is *exairein*, which usually means 'destroy' but more literally means just 'remove'. The modern slang term 'take out' perhaps covers both.

message to Argos, telling them to come as quickly as possible with the Mantineans and Eleans and invite the Athenians to join an alliance with them – the moment was right, he said, and he himself would do all he could to support them.

When the Argives received this message and also realised that the **44** alliance with the Boeotians had been made without reference to the Athenians and that the Athenians were in fact now involved in a major dispute with the Spartans, they turned their attention away from the envoys which they had in Sparta negotiating about the treaty and focused their minds on the Athenians instead. They reflected that if it came to war they would have in Athens a city fighting alongside them that had ancient ties of friendship with them and was governed by a democracy, as they were, and moreover had great power at sea. They therefore at once sent envoys [2] to Athens to discuss the alliance, joined on the mission by Eleans and Mantineans.

But there also arrived from Sparta a hastily dispatched team of envoys, [3] consisting of Philocharidas, Leon and Endius – men they thought likely to be appropriate for the Athenians.[1] The Spartan fear was that the Athenians might in their anger conclude an alliance with the Argives, and the envoys were at the same time to ask for the return of Pylos in exchange for Panactum and to explain that the Spartan alliance with Boeotia was not made with any intention of harm against Athens.

The envoys spoke about these issues in the council[2] and presented **45** themselves as having full authority to settle all their differences. But that alarmed Alcibiades into thinking that if they made the same statement to the people in assembly they might actually win them over en masse and the alliance with the Argives might be rejected. So he devised the [2] following deception for the envoys. He convinced them – giving them every assurance – that if they did not admit to the assembly that they had come with full authority he would have Pylos given back to them, using his personal powers of persuasion on the Athenians for them rather than against them, as he had just been doing; and he would achieve a reconciliation on the other outstanding matters too. His motive in doing [3] this was both to distance the envoys from Nicias and to enable him in the

[1] *Epitedeioi* can mean either 'well-suited' or 'friendly', maybe both in this case. It is in any case interesting that here and at 40.3 above some thought goes into choosing suitable individual envoys for the particular mission.

[2] Perhaps surprisingly, this is the first mention of the Athenian *boule* in the work (see glossary).

assembly to discredit the Spartans for having dishonest intentions and for never saying the same thing twice, and thereby to effect the alliance with the Argives, Eleans and Mantineans. And so it turned out. When the [4] envoys came before the people and denied under questioning that they had come with full powers to make decisions, despite what they had said in council, the Athenians lost all patience with them and listened instead to Alcibiades as he denounced the Spartans increasingly loudly; and they were ready to bring in the Argives and their companions there and then and make them allies. But before anything could be concluded there was an earthquake, and the assembly was adjourned.

At the assembly the next day Nicias spoke. Although he had in turn **46** been deceived by the deception played on the Spartans themselves in their 'confession' that they had not come with full executive powers,[1] he nonetheless maintained that the priority was to win the friendship of the Spartans. He recommended that they should defer the question of their relations with the Argives and send a further mission to Sparta to discover what their intentions were. He said that a postponement of actual warfare would serve to enhance their own standing but would be an embarrassment to the Spartans; the Athenians' situation was a very satisfactory one and their best course was to preserve their success for as long as they could, while the Spartans were suffering misfortunes and urgently needed to risk everything on a lucky break.

Nicias succeeded in persuading them to send a team of envoys, him- [2] self among them, to tell the Spartans that if their intentions were just they should give Panactum back to them in good condition along with Amphipolis and should renounce their alliance with the Boeotians, unless these acceded to the treaty, in accordance with the stipulation that neither side should enter into agreements without the involvement of the other. They further instructed their envoys to say that if the Athenians had [3] wanted to break faith they would already have made allies of the Argives, who were present at Athens for that very purpose. So they dispatched Nicias and his colleagues in the delegation with all these instructions, including other complaints they had to make.

On their arrival they delivered all these messages and ended by saying [4] that if the Spartans did not renounce their agreement with the Boeotians in the event of their failure to accede to the treaty, they would themselves

[1] This sounds like a rhetorical flourish. Are we to assume that Nicias knew nothing of what had been said at the *boule*? If so, his 'deception' was at least of a very different kind from that practised by Alcibiades on the envoys.

make an alliance with the Argives and their associates. The Spartans refused to renounce the Boeotian alliance – the prevailing view in favour of this outcome being that of Xenares, the ephor, and his supporters and others of the same opinion. They did, however, agree to renew their oaths[1] at the request of Nicias, who was afraid that otherwise he would be returning home empty-handed and would be taken to task – which indeed he was – as the man generally thought responsible for the treaty with the Spartans. When he did return and the Athenians heard that nothing had [5] been achieved at Sparta, they flew into a rage, thinking themselves to be the victims of injustice. The Argives and their allies turned out[2] to be present and when Alcibiades presented them the Athenians made a treaty and an alliance with them as follows.[3]

The Athenians and the Argives, Mantineans and Eleans made a treaty **47** for a hundred years [between each other], on behalf of themselves and the allies they respectively ruled over, to be observed without deceit or intent to harm and by both land and sea.[4]

It will not be permitted to bear arms with hostile intent either for the [2] Argives, Eleans and Mantineans and their allies against the Athenians and the allies they rule over, or for the Athenians and the allies [the Athenians rule over] against the Argives, Eleans and Mantineans and their allies, by any means or contrivance.

The Athenians and the Argives, Mantineans and Eleans shall be allies [3] for one hundred years on the following terms.

If enemies invade the territory of the Athenians, the Argives, Mantineans and Eleans will come to the aid of Athens, in accordance with such requests as the Athenians may make, with all the strength at their

[1] The oaths, that is, to the treaty at V 18 and the alliance at V 23, though all parties would surely now see this as a hollow gesture.

[2] Usually translated as 'happened to be present', but Alcibiades is unlikely to have left that to chance in his wish to parade them.

[3] We do in fact have a surviving inscription with part of this treaty recorded and the few small discrepancies of wording between that and Thucydides' version are noted in square brackets (see Hornblower III, pp. 109–12 for a full account). The close correspondence between Thucydides' text and the inscription is reassuring, but Gomme notes (IV, p. 62, citing M. N. Tod and others) that small discrepancies were tolerated even between different copies of engraved public decrees, which may give us pause in the expectations we have of what constitutes historical accuracy in this period.

[4] The wording and many of the formulaic phrases are repeated here almost verbatim from V 18 and 23. The precise wording of the first sentence in the Greek suggests that the 'Argives, Mantineans and Eleans' are being treated as one of two parties, each with their own empires, though later in the treaty they are considered as separate powers.

disposal; and if the invaders have wasted the land and have departed, the city in question shall be declared an enemy of the Argives, Mantineans, Eleans and the Athenians and shall suffer harm at the hands of all of them; and it will not be permitted for any one of these cities to end the war against the offending city unless that is agreed by them all.

[4] The Athenians will come to the aid of Argos, Mantinea and Elis if enemies invade the territories of the Argives, Mantineans or Eleans, in accordance with such requests as these cities may make, with all the strength at their disposal; and if invaders have wasted the land and departed the land, the offending city shall be declared an enemy of the Athenians, Argives, Mantineans and Eleans and shall suffer harm at the hands of all of them; and it will not be permitted for [any one of them] to end the war against that city unless that is agreed by all [the cities].

[5] No armed force shall be allowed to pass for purposes of war through the land either of their own or of the allies they each rule over, or by sea, unless approval for such passage is voted by all the cities – Athenians, Argives, Mantineans and Eleans.

[6] The city that sends troops in support shall provision them for thirty days from the time they come to support the city that requested them, and similarly on their departure. If the city that sent for them wishes to have the use of the forces for any longer period of time it should maintain them, at the rate of three Aeginetan obols a day for each hoplite, light-armed soldier and archer, and one Aeginetan drachma a day for each cavalryman.

[7] The city summoning help shall have command [of the forces] when the war is in its territory; but if [all] the cities agree on a joint campaign elsewhere then all the cities shall participate equally in the command.

[8] The Athenians shall swear to the treaty on their own behalf and that of their allies; the Argives, Mantineans and Eleans shall swear to it individually by city. And each city shall swear the oath over full-grown sacrificial victims in whatever local form is most binding. The wording of the oath shall be as follows: 'I shall abide by the alliance in accordance with the terms agreed, justly and without harmful intent or deceit, and I shall not transgress it by any means or contrivance.'

[9] The oaths shall be sworn at Athens by the council and the city magistrates,[1] and they shall be administered by the prytanes. In Argos

[1] *Endemoi archai*, thought to have responsibility only for 'home affairs'. There follow a number of names of officials at the other states, which (except for the prytanes and

these shall be sworn by a council and the Eighty and the administrators, and administered by the Eighty. In Mantinea sworn by the representatives, the council and other officials, administered by the inspectors and the polemarchs. At Elis sworn by the representatives and the principal office holders and the Six Hundred, administered by the representatives and the trustees.

To renew the oaths, the Athenians shall go to Elis, Mantinea and [10] Argos thirty days before the Olympic Games; the Argives, Eleans and Mantineans shall go to Athens ten days before the Great Panathenaea.

The terms of the agreement about the treaty, the oaths and the alliance [11] shall be inscribed on stelai by the Athenians in the city of Athens, by the Argives in the sanctuary of Apollo in the market-place, by the Mantineans in the sanctuary of Zeus in the market-place; and they shall jointly set up a stele in bronze at Olympia for the current Olympic Games.[1]

If these cities decide on any improvement they wish to add to these [12] agreed terms, then whatever they may all jointly agree in consultation shall be binding.

Thus the treaty and the alliance were concluded; but the existing treaty **48** between the Spartans and Athenians was not on this account renounced by either party. The Corinthians, Argive allies though they were, did not [2] join in this sworn treaty – indeed they had not joined the Eleans, Argives and Mantineans earlier in making their full alliance to be at war and peace with the same people – but said instead that they were satisfied with their first limited alliance whereby they helped each other defensively but did not join in campaigns to attack third parties. In this way the Corinthians [3] distanced themselves from their allies and were turning their attention again to Sparta.

There was an Olympic festival in the course of this summer – the **49** one in which Androsthenes the Arcadian first won the all-in fighting contest[2] – and the Spartans were excluded from the sanctuary by the

polemarchs: see glossary) occur nowhere else in Thucydides and about which we know almost nothing. I have translated these as follows: *artunai* 'administrators' at Argos (from *artunein* 'to prepare or arrange'); *demiourgoi* 'representatives' at Mantinea and Elis ('one who works for the people'); *theoroi* 'inspectors' at Mantinea ('observers'); and *thesmophulakes* 'trustees' at Elis ('guardians of the law').

[1] This last is effectively the Elean version, since they had responsibility for Olympia. Each of these versions would have been transcribed in a different dialect of Greek.

[2] Olympic Games were often dated by the names of victors. The *pankration* was an extreme martial art combining wrestling and boxing; only gouging and biting were forbidden (except at Sparta!).

Eleans so that they could not take part in the sacrifices or the competitions. This was for having refused to pay the fine that the Eleans got awarded against them, in accordance with Olympic law, on the charge that the Spartans had made an armed incursion into their territory to attack the fort at Phyrcus and had sent their hoplites into Lepreum during the period of an Olympic truce.[1] The fine was assessed at two thousand mnas, two for each hoplite, as the law prescribes.

The Spartans sent envoys to protest that they were unjustly charged, [2] arguing that the official news of the treaty had not reached Sparta at the time they had sent in the hoplites. But the Eleans replied that the [3] treaty was already in force in their country (where they broadcast it first among themselves), and that the Spartans had taken them by surprise and committed this crime against them when they were observing the peace, as they thought, and were off their guard. The Spartans countered that there [4] was no need for the Eleans to go and make the announcement in Sparta if they already thought the Spartans were in the wrong at that point, but there was no sign that they did think that since they had gone ahead anyway; and they added that they had not subsequently deployed armed force against them anywhere. The Eleans, however, held to their original [5] argument and could not be persuaded that the Spartans were innocent; but they said that if the Spartans were willing to return Lepreum to them they would forgo their part of the fine and would themselves pay the share that was due to the god.

When the Spartans still refused they made a further proposal: the **50** Spartans need not return Lepreum if they did not wish to, but since they were so keen to have full access to the sanctuary they should go up to the altar of Zeus the Olympian and solemnly swear on oath before the Greeks that they would indeed pay the fine at some later date. But when they [2] refused that too the Spartans were debarred from the sanctuary [and its sacrifices and contests] and they returned home to perform their sacrifices there,[2] while the rest of the Greeks (except the Lepreans) sent their representatives to participate. Nonetheless, the Eleans, apprehensive that

[1] The Elean claims in V 49 are puzzling. There was in any case a general understanding that during the Olympics and other Panhellenic festivals there should be no military activity in the territory of the states hosting them (Delphi, Nemea, Elis, Isthmia), so it is unclear why the Eleans make so much of the need to 'announce' a truce on this occasion. Nor is it clear how these hostilities relate to those described at V 31 and 34 above.

[2] Another case where we are reminded of the seriousness with which such religious ritual was regarded in Greece at this period, not least by the Spartans (see also V 54.2, 55.3 and 116.1); the Argives, however, could evidently be more cynical (54.3 below).

the Spartans might still force their way into the ceremonies, set an armed guard of their young men, who were joined by Argive and Mantinean troops (a thousand each), along with Athenian cavalry who had been in Harpine awaiting the start of the festival. The whole gathering was [4] terrified that the Spartans might come under arms, especially when Lichas son of Arcesilaus, a Spartan, got a public lashing from the referees on the course. His winning chariot and pair had been announced as part of the Boeotian national team on account of his own disqualification from the contest, and he had come on to the course and crowned the charioteer in his desire to show that the chariot was his. That alarmed everyone all the more and they thought there would be trouble. However, the Spartans took no action and the festival passed off without incident.

After the Olympics the Argives and their allies went to Corinth and [5] asked them to join their league. Some Spartan envoys happened to be there too at the time,[1] but despite much discussion there was no practical outcome, and when an earthquake intervened they went their separate ways home.

So the summer ended.

Winter [V 51]

The following winter there was a battle between the people of Heracleia **51** in Trachis and the Aenianians, Dolopians, Malians and some of the Thessalians. These neighbouring tribes were hostile to the city since the [2] place had been fortified specifically to threaten their territories. They had opposed the city ever since it was established and had kept doing everything they could to destroy it; and now they succeeded in beating the Heracleians in this battle, in which Xenares son of Cnidis, their Spartan leader, died and other Heracleians were killed too.

So the winter ended and with it the twelfth year of the war.

[1] These apparently unplanned 'presences' of envoys at critical moments seem to occur so regularly that one wonders if routine visits were made all the time, if only to share news. See, for example, I 72.1 and V 22.1–3, 46.5.

Thirteenth year of the war, 419–18 [V 52–56]

Summer [V 52–55]

Right at the start of the following summer the Boeotians took over Hera- 52
cleia, which had been badly damaged after the battle, and they dismissed the Spartan Agesippidas for his poor leadership.[1] They took over the place, fearing that while the Spartans were distracted by their troubles in the Peloponnese the Athenians might seize it. The Spartans, however, were angry with them.

The same summer Alcibiades son of Cleinias, now one of the Athenian [2]
generals, acting in conjunction with the Argives and their allies, entered the Peloponnese with a small force of Athenian hoplites and archers along with allied troops he gathered from elsewhere. He travelled through the Peloponnese with this army, establishing the position of the alliance generally. He also persuaded the people of Patrae to extend their walls down to the sea and was intending himself to fortify Rhium in Achaea. However, the Corinthians and the Sicyonians and others who were directly threatened by such a fortification came and put a stop to it.

In the same summer war broke out between the Epidaurians and the 53
Argives. The immediate pretext[2] was over the sacrifice to Apollo Pythaeus (for whose sanctuary the Argives had special responsibility), which the

[1] His relationship to Xenares (above) is unclear, but each is described as *archon*.

[2] *Prophasis* ('pretext') and *aitia* ('excuse') are used almost interchangeably here (see I 23.5n and glossary).

Epidaurians had not sent as their due payment for pasturage.[1] But even without that excuse it seemed a good idea to Alcibiades and the Argives to attach Epidaurus to the alliance if they could, both to keep Corinth quiet and to offer the Athenians a shorter route from Aegina by which to support Argos than sailing round Scyllaeum. The Argives, then, were preparing to invade Epidaurus as if they were doing so on their own account to enforce payment of the sacrifice.

54 At about this time too the Spartans mounted a full-scale campaign under the command of Agis son of Archidamus to Leuctra, on the border opposite to Mt Lycaeum. No one knew where the expedition was heading, however, not even the cities from which the troops were sent. But the [2] sacrifices made on the border did not prove to be favourable, so the Spartans returned home and sent word to their allies to prepare for an expedition after the coming month of Carneius, which was held sacred by the Dorians. When the Spartans had withdrawn, the Argives set out four [3] days before the month of Carneius, and keeping that as the same nominal 'date' the whole time they were there they invaded Epidaurian territory and wasted it. The Epidaurians called in their allies, but some of them [4] either cited the month as an excuse or came up as far as the Epidaurian border and then just stayed there.

55 While the Argives were in Epidaurian territory delegations from the cities met together at Mantinea, on the invitation of the Athenians. In the course of the discussions Euphamidas, the Corinthian, objected that their speeches were ignoring the facts:[2] here they were gathered together talking about peace, while the Epidaurians with their allies and the Argives were facing each other under arms in the field of battle; he said they should therefore first go to the respective camps and break things up, and then they should resume talks about peace. Persuaded by this, they [2] went and got the Argives to withdraw from Epidaurian territory. Later they reconvened at the same place, but were still unable to reach agreement, and the Argives again invaded Epidaurian territory and wasted it. The Spartans in turn marched out to Caryae, but there too sacri- [3] fices at the border proved not to be propitious and they returned. The [4] Argives destroyed the crops over about a third of Epidaurian territory

[1] The meaning of *botamion* remains unknown; 'pasturage' is the commonest guess but may be wildly out.

[2] Literally, the *logoi* did not agree with the *erga*. For the *logos/ergon* contrast, see II 35.1n and glossary.

and went home. The Athenians sent 1,000 hoplites to support them, under the command of Alcibiades, when they learned that the Spartans were in the field, but as there was now no further need for them they withdrew.

And so the summer passed.

Winter [V 56]

56 The next winter the Spartans introduced into Epidaurus a garrison of 300 men under the command of Agesippidas. They sent them by sea, managing to escape detection by the Athenians. [2] The Argives then went to the Athenians and complained that although it was specified in writing in the treaty that neither party should allow enemy forces to pass through their territory the Athenians had in their case allowed such a passage through their waters; they would therefore have a right to feel themselves aggrieved if the Athenians did not in return send the helots and Messenians back into Pylos to harass the Spartans. [3] On the advice of Alcibiades the Athenians had it inscribed at the foot of the stele recording the treaty with Sparta that the Spartans had not honoured their oaths; and they sent the helots from Cranii back to Pylos to resume raiding but otherwise took no further action. [4] During this winter there were no pitched battles in the continuing warfare between the Argives and the Epidaurians, but there were various surprise attacks and forays in which there were the odd casualties on both sides. [5] At the end of winter and the approach of spring the Argives brought scaling ladders to attack Epidaurus, expecting to find it without defenders because of the war and vulnerable to an assault; but they failed to achieve anything and returned home.

And so the winter ended and with it the thirteenth year of the war.

Fourteenth year of the war, 418–17 [V 57–81]

Summer [V 57–75]

In the middle of the following summer the Spartans made a move. They 57
were aware that their Epidaurian allies were suffering badly and that the rest of the Peloponnese was either in revolt against them or not well disposed. Thinking, therefore, that if they did not act quickly to arrest the situation things would go from bad to worse, they and the helots launched a full-scale attack on Argos, led by Agis, son of Archidamus and king of the Spartans. They were joined in the campaign by the [2]
Tegeans and by all the rest of the Arcadians who were Spartan allies. Meanwhile, their allies from other parts of the Peloponnese and from outside it mustered at Phlius: 5,000 Boeotian hoplites, and as many light-armed soldiers; 5,000 cavalrymen and an equal number of supporting foot-soldiers[1]; 2,000 Corinthian hoplites; and from other states what each could manage, but the full force of Phliasians – since it was in their territory that the army was gathering.

The Argives had advance knowledge of the military preparations the 58
Spartans were making from the start, and when the Spartans moved to Phlius where they wanted to make contact with the others, the Argives took the field themselves. They were supported by the Mantineans, who came with their own allies, and by 3,000 Elean hoplites. They advanced [2]

[1] *Amippoi* (literally 'keeping up with the horses'): foot-soldiers attached to cavalry in some supporting role, but we know little about their actual deployment.

and confronted the Spartans at Methydrium in Arcadia. Each side took up a position on a hill, and the Argives prepared to engage the Spartans in battle while they were on their own; but Agis moved his army by night and eluded them as he made his way to join the other allies at Phlius. At [3] first light the Argives realised this and set out, first to Argos and then on the road to Nemea, where they expected the Spartans would be making their way down with their allies. Agis, however, did not take the road they [4] expected; but after briefing the Spartans, Arcadians and Epidaurians he took another, more difficult route and descended to the plain that way. The Corinthians, Pellenians and Phlians set off at dawn on a different route again, while the Boeotians, Megarians and Sicyonians were told to take the road down to Nemea, where the Argives were stationed, so that if the Argives went into the plain to take on Agis and his forces they could deploy their cavalry to attack the Argives in the rear. Having made these [5] dispositions, Agis invaded the plain and proceeded to waste Saminthus and other areas.

When day came and the Argives realised the situation they started back **59** from Nemea in defence of their territory. They ran into the Phliasian and Corinthian forces on the way, and killed a few of the Phliasians, while suffering rather more casualties of their own at the hands of the Corinthians. The Boeotians, Megarians and Sicyonians were meanwhile [2] making their way to Nemea, as instructed, but failed to catch the Argives there. They had already gone down to the plain and when they saw their land being despoiled they began forming their battle lines. The Spartans too lined up to face them.

The Argives were now trapped in the middle: in the plain the Spartans [3] and their allies cut them off from the city; on the ground above them were the Corinthians, Phliasians and Pellenians; while on the Nemean side there were the Boeotians, Sicyonians and Megarians. Nor did they have cavalry, since the Athenians, alone among their allies, had not yet arrived.

The bulk of the Argive and allied army did not see this as such a terrible [4] situation but thought the battle would go well, with the Spartans cut off in their territory and near to the city. But two Argive men, Thrasylus [5] (who was one of the five generals) and Alciphron (a representative of the Spartans), made their way to Agis just at the point when the two armies were about to engage and mooted the idea of avoiding battle. They said the Argives were ready for arbitration of a fair and equal settlement on both sides, if the Spartans had any complaint to make against the

Argives, and that they would make a treaty and observe the peace for the future.

60 In saying these things the two Argives were speaking for themselves and without the authority of the people. For his part Agis accepted what they said on his own initiative too, and he did not consult more widely but simply shared his decision with one of the officials accompanying the expedition. He made an agreement, to last four months, in which time the Argives were to fulfil the obligations specified. He then led his army away immediately, without further explanation to a single one of his allies.

[2] The Spartans and their allies followed his lead, as the law required them, but amongst themselves they were severely critical of Agis, since they thought that they had a good opportunity to strike, with the enemy cut off on all sides by both cavalry and infantry, but that they were now going away without anything to show for all the military build-up. For [3] this was indeed the finest Greek army ever assembled up to this time, as was most obvious while they were still all gathered together at Nemea, a force that included the Spartans in full strength, Arcadians, Boeotians, Corinthians, Sicyonians, Pellenians, Phliasians and Megarians – all of them picked men from these cities, who looked capable of taking on not only the Argive alliance but that and another such too. In a mood of [4] complaint against Agis, then, the army started withdrawing and the allies each dispersed homewards.

[5] The Argives for their part were even more critical of those who had made the truce without involving the people at large; they in turn thought that the Spartans had had an escape, in circumstances that would never be more favourable to themselves – after all, the contest would have taken place near their own city and they had many good allies on their own side. So as they were returning and had reached the bed of the River Charadrus [6] (which is where they judge cases arising on military campaigns before they enter the city) they started to stone Thrasylus. He fled to take refuge at the altar and so saved his life; his property, however, they confiscated.

61 After this the Athenian reinforcements arrived, consisting of 1,000 hoplites and 300 cavalry, under the command of Laches and Nicostratus. The Argives were nonetheless reluctant to break the treaty with Sparta. They were telling the Athenians to go away and were refusing them access to the people, with whom they wanted to deal direct, until the Mantineans and Eleans (who were still present) pressured them into allowing it. The [2] Athenians, with Alcibiades present as their spokesman, made the case before the Argives and their allies that by rights the treaty should never

have come about at all without the involvement of the other allies, and that given their own opportune presence they should now embrace the war. The Athenians persuaded the allies by these arguments, and all of [3] them set out at once for Orchomenus in Arcadia, except for the Argives; they too were convinced but held back at first and then later came on as well. All of them then settled in outside Orchomenus to besiege it and [4] launched a series of assaults on the town, wishing to take possession of the place in particular because hostages from Arcadia had been lodged there by the Spartans. The Orchomenians were afraid that the weakness [5] of their defensive wall and the numbers of the enemy forces would lead to their annihilation before any help arrived; and so they agreed terms whereby they would become allies and would give hostages of their own to the Mantineans and would give back the hostages the Spartans had deposited there.

62 With Orchomenus now in their possession, the allies then debated which of the remaining enemy cities they should next attack. The Eleans urged that it be Lepreum, the Mantineans Tegea; and the Argives and Athenians sided with Mantinea. Thereupon the Eleans, angered that they [2] had not voted to make Lepreum the target, left for home, while the other allies started making their preparations in Mantinea to attack Tegea; and there were in fact some of the Tegeans in the city ready to hand things over to them.

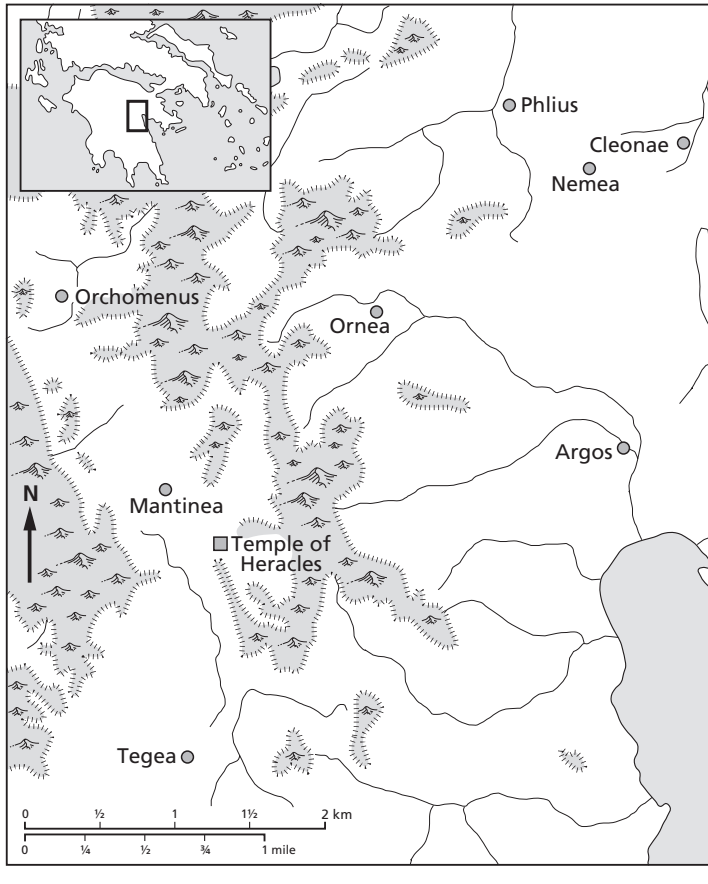
63 When the Spartans returned home from Argos after concluding the four-month truce, they censured Agis very severely for failing to conquer Argos for them, when in their view there had never been a better opportunity to do so; for to bring together allies in such numbers and of such a kind was no easy matter. But when news started coming in that [2] Orchomenus had been taken too, they became even angrier and in the heat of the moment made a decision – in a manner quite out of character for them – that they should demolish his house and fine him 100,000 drachmis. He appealed to them to do no such thing, and said that he [3] would answer their criticisms with a signal deed on the field of battle – or they could then do with him what they wished. They put off the penalty [4] and the demolition, but for the time being established a rule, which was without precedent at Sparta: they appointed ten Spartiates to act as his advisers, without whose approval he had no authority to withdraw an army from enemy territory.

64 Meanwhile, news reached them from their sympathisers in Tegea that unless they went there quickly Tegea would be seceding from them to

join the Argives and their allies – indeed had all but done so already. That [2] prompted an immediate and unprecedented response from the Spartans, who sent in support a full force of their own men and helots combined. They advanced to Orestheium in Maenalia and told their allies among the [3] Arcadians to gather together and follow hard on their heels to Tegea. The Spartans themselves all went as far as Oestheium, but from there they then sent home a sixth part of their own troops, including the oldest and youngest, to keep guard at home, while they made their way with the rest of the army to Tegea. And not much later the allies from Arcadia arrived there too. They also sent word to Corinth, and to the Boeotians, Phocians [4] and Locrians, telling them to send support to Tegea with all speed. But they got this request at short notice and it was not easy for them to cross through the intervening hostile territory that blocked their way, unless they waited for each other and combined forces; nonetheless they did respond with some urgency. The Spartans meanwhile took with them [5] the Arcadian allies who were already there and invaded Mantinea, and after setting up camp by the sanctuary of Heracles they started wasting the land.

When the Argives and their allies saw them there they took up a position **65** on steep ground that was hard to approach and organised themselves for battle. The Spartans at once advanced to meet them. But when they had [2] come to within a stone's throw or a javelin's cast, one of the older men, seeing that the position they were advancing on was a strong one, shouted out to Agis that he was intent on curing one ill with another, meaning by this that Agis was wanting to make amends for his much-criticised retreat from Argos with his present over-eagerness. And Agis, whether because of this shouted message or because he had himself had the same or other thoughts, suddenly led his army off at speed before they could engage. When he reached Tegea he set about diverting into Mantinean territory [4] the stream of water that had been a continual cause of conflict between the Mantineans and Tegeans because of the damage it regularly does in whichever country it discharges into. He wanted the men on the hill to come down to deal with the diversion of the waters when they found out about it and to fight the battle on the plain. So he spent the day there by [5] the waters diverting them.

The Argives and their allies were at first staggered at this sudden and abrupt departure of the Spartans and were unsure what to make of it. But as the Spartans continued to withdraw and disappeared from view while they themselves were left idle and were not sent in pursuit, then



Map 24. Mantinea (418)

they again started blaming their generals, both for letting the Spartans escape on the earlier occasion when they had them nicely trapped near Argos and now because the Spartans were running away and no one was giving chase; on the contrary, while the Spartans were being saved by this inactivity on their part they themselves were being betrayed by it. The [6] generals were momentarily thrown by all this, but later they led their men down from the hill and moved on to the plain where they set up camp, ready to attack the enemy.

The next day the Argives and their allies drew themselves up in battle **66**
formation, ready to fight in the event of an encounter. Meanwhile the
Spartans were returning from the stream to their old camp at the sanctuary
of Heracles, when they saw the enemy close at hand and already all in
formation and in a forward position after coming down the hill. The [2]
Spartans were very shaken by this, more so than on any other occasion
in living memory.[1] They had little time to prepare themselves and with
some urgency dropped straight into formation, with King Agis directing
everything, in accordance with legal custom. When a Spartan king is [3]
acting as leader all the commands stem from him: he dictates what is
needed to the polemarchs, they pass it on to the captains, and then it goes
on in turn to the company commanders, the section commanders and
the units.[2] Any special announcements they may wish to give follow the [4]
same sequence and are rapidly transmitted. So with few exceptions there
is a complete chain of command through the army, and responsibility for
action is devolved on to many people.

On this occasion the Sciritae were placed on the left, a position they **67**
were always uniquely privileged to have in the Spartan lines; next to
them were Brasidas' troops from Thrace and with them the freedmen;
then came the Spartans themselves, with their units posted in order; next
to them the Heraeans from Arcadia, then the Maenalians; and on the
right wing the Tegeans, with a few Spartans at the extreme end; and the
cavalry were placed on each wing.

That was the Spartan formation. On the opposing side the Mantineans [2]
took the right wing, because the action was taking place in their territory;
next to them were the allies of the Arcadians, then the thousand picked
troops of the Argives, who had long been given military training by the
city at public expense; close beside them were the other Argives, and
after them their other allies from Cleonae and Orneae; and finally, the
Athenians occupying the extreme left wing, and their cavalry with them.

These were the forces and their dispositions on each side. The Spartan **68**
army looked to be the larger, but I could not accurately record the numbers [2]
of the different contingents on each side or the grand total. Because of

[1] Commentators are surprised that the Spartans were surprised; they are also puzzled by the apparent lack of consequence in what follows (see Gomme IV, pp. 99–104) and have assumed various textual lacunae.

[2] For 'polemarch' see glossary. The other terms for Spartan military ranks here are, in sequence: *lochagoi* ('leaders of a company'), *pentekonteres* ('leaders of fifty men'), *enomotarchoi* ('leaders of a band of sworn men') and those in an *enomotia* ('a sworn band').

their secrecy about matters of state the size of the Spartan force was not known, while on the other side the figures were suspect because of the tendency people have to exaggerate their own numbers. However, one can form a view of the Spartan numbers in the field on this occasion by the following calculation. If you discount the 600 Sciritae, there were [3] seven divisions involved in the battle, and in each one there were four companies of fifty, and in each of these four units. In the front rank of each unit fought four men, but they varied in depth at the discretion of each captain, though with an average of eight deep. Along the whole line, then, again excluding the Sciritae, the front rank consisted of 448 men.[1]

69 When they were all ready to engage, each set of troops was given an exhortation by their generals on the following lines. The Mantineans were told that the battle was for fatherland, and also for either sovereignty or slavery – to avoid losing the first after once tasting it, and to escape a second dose of the latter. The Argives were reminded of their ancient pre-eminence and their former position of equality in the Peloponnese; they should not allow themselves to be deprived of these for all time, indeed they should take their revenge for the many wrongs suffered at the hands of men who were their foes and neighbours. The Athenians were encouraged to think how glorious it would be to be contending alongside so many good allies and to outdo them all; moreover, if they beat the Spartans in the Peloponnese they would both safeguard and extend the empire they had and never again would anyone else invade their land. These were the addresses made to the Argives and their allies.[2] For their [2] part the Spartans took their encouragement from each other and joined in war-songs together to remind themselves of what as brave warriors they already knew – that their long training in action would be more important to their safety than any brief exhortation in words, however well turned.

70 After this the armies met. The Argives and their allies moved forward excitedly, with feelings running high; the Spartans more slowly, to the rhythm of the pipers who were stationed among the ranks in the traditional

[1] The calculation here is $7 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 = 448$, which would give a grand total of 4,184 ($448 \times 8 = 3{,}584 + 600$). Some commentators think Thucydides may have overlooked another factor here in the structure of the Spartan 'divisions' and that the real total is double this, which if so will be 'one of the biggest mistakes anywhere in his History', according to Hornblower (III, p. 182).

[2] Nicely judged appeals in each case: to the immediate interests of the Mantineans, to memories of former glory in the case of the Argives (the reference harks back to the folklore of the Trojan Wars and the days of Agamemnon, king of Argos), and to the competitive spirit of the Athenians.

way – not for religious reasons but so that they march in step to the beat as they go and do not break up their formation, as tends to happen when large armies advance.

While the two armies were still closing on each other, King Agis decided 71
on a tactical manoeuvre. All armies tend to behave in the following way. In the act of engaging with the enemy they become extended on their right wing, and each side overlaps the enemy's left with their right because every man fears for his unprotected side and presses as close as possible to the shield of the man positioned on his right, in the belief that the tighter the line the greater the protection. The problem starts with the man positioned on the far right wing, who always tries to keep his unprotected side away from the enemy, and everyone else then follows him with the same fear in mind.[1] On this occasion the Mantineans overlapped the [2]
Sciritaean wing by a long way, while the Spartans and Tegeans overlapped the Athenian wing by even more, in proportion to their larger force. Agis [3]
was fearful that his left wing might become encircled and thought the Mantineans were overlapping them by too much, so he signalled to the Sciritae and to Brasidas' former troops to move from their position in his line to cover the Mantineans; and to fill the gap they left he ordered two of the polemarchs, Hipponoïdas and Aristocles, to cross over with two divisions from the right wing and throw them into the space, thinking that his own right wing was still amply supported and that the line facing the Mantineans would have thus been strengthened.

What actually happened was that since he gave this order at such short 72
notice just as the attack was starting Aristocles and Hipponoïdas refused to cross over, an offence for which they were later exiled from Sparta on suspicion of cowardice. The enemy forces engaged too quickly for them to react, and when the divisions failed to cross over to replace the Sciritae Agis ordered the Sciritae to rejoin them, but now they too were no longer able to close up the gap. However, although the Spartans displayed a [2]
complete and utter failure in tactical skill[2] on this occasion, they went on to show a corresponding superiority in fighting spirit. When the two sides [3]
closed in hand-to-hand combat, the right wing of the Mantineans duly

[1] A *locus classicus* for the description of hoplite warfare (along with IV 96). To be literal about it, however, the man on the extreme right is the only man *without* this motivation since there is by definition no one to his right; but one can imagine a general lateral drift, with much pushing and shoving, to reduce the risk of being outflanked.

[2] *Empeiria*, more usually 'experience', but it must here mean something more like tactical knowledge or *techne* (see glossary).

routed the Sciritae and the Brasidas veterans on the Spartan side; and the Mantineans and their allies and the thousand picked Argive troops burst through the still-open gap and caused carnage among the Spartans, whom they surrounded and drove back in rout to the baggage-train, where they killed some of the older men stationed there. Here, then, [4] the Spartans came off worse. But elsewhere in the army it was different, and especially in the middle where King Agis was stationed with his 300 so-called 'knights'. There the Spartans fell on the older Argive troops and those called 'The Five Divisions' and on the Cleonaeans, Orneaeans and Athenians drawn up next to them. They routed these, and most of them did not even wait to fight back but when the Spartans attacked gave way at once, some of them even being trodden underfoot in their efforts to avoid capture.

When the Argives and their allies had given way here in the centre, **73** the line threatened to break up on the wings too; and at the same time the right wing of the Spartans and Tegeans was encircling the Athenians with their projecting flank. So the Athenians were beset by a double danger, being encircled at one point and already defeated at another. And they would have suffered worse than any other part of the allied forces had their cavalry not been on hand to help them. Agis then gave [2] events another twist. When he saw that his left was struggling against the opposing Mantineans and the Argive 'Thousand' he ordered his whole army to move to support this embattled section. When that had happened [3] and the enemy forces had passed on and away from them, the Athenians had ample time to escape to safety together with the defeated part of the Argive forces. As for the Mantineans and their allies, including the elite Argive force, they were losing the will to keep up the pressure on their opponents, and when they saw their own men defeated and the Spartans bearing down on them they turned and fled. The Mantineans suffered [4] serious losses but most of the Argive elite force survived. Their flight from battle, however, was neither a bloody retreat nor a lengthy one. The Spartans are prepared to fight long and hard, standing their ground until they turn the battle, but having done so they offer only brief pursuit for a short distance.

This, or something very like this, was how the battle went. It was **74** the greatest battle in the Greek world for a very long time and one that involved their most important cities.

The Spartans laid out the arms of the enemy dead and immediately [2] set up a trophy and stripped the corpses; their own dead they gathered

up and conveyed to Tegea, where they buried them; and they gave the enemy back their dead under truce. The numbers killed were: 700 Argives, [3] Orneaeans and Cleonaeans, 200 Mantineans, 200 Athenians (including their Aeginetan colonists) and both generals. On the Spartan side: their allies did not suffer any significant losses, and though it is difficult to know the truth about the Spartans themselves they were said to have had about 300 men killed.

Just as the battle was about to start Pleistoanax, the other Spartan **75** king, had also set out with a supporting force of the older and younger troops. He got as far as Tegea, but when he learned of the Spartan victory he returned home. The Spartans also sent word to turn back the allies [2] coming from Corinth and beyond the Isthmus and after they had returned themselves and dismissed their allies they began celebrating the festival of Carneia, which fell at that time.

So through this single action the Spartans wiped away the stain of [3] the charges the Greeks had been holding against them at that time – of cowardice over the disaster on the island, and more generally of indecision and slowness. They were now thought to have been the victims of a chance misfortune but to be still the same men in spirit that they always were.

Another incident was that the day before this battle the Epidaurians [4] mounted a full-scale invasion of Argos, knowing that it was now undefended, and killed many of those the Argives had left behind as a garrison when they themselves had taken the field. And later on after the battle [5] some 3,000 Elean hoplites had arrived to help the Mantineans, along with a further 1,000 Athenians in addition to their first contingent. All of these allies now combined to march on Epidaurus, while the Spartans were still celebrating their Carneia, and they started to wall off the city, dividing the work between them. Although the others gave it up, the Athenians [6] promptly finished their assigned section, which was the fortification of the promontory on which the temple to Hera stood. After all contributing to the garrison in this part of the fortifications the allied forces went back to their own cities.

And so the summer ended.

Winter [V 76–81]

Right at the start of the following winter, with the Carneia celebrations **76** now over, the Spartans went back out on campaign and on reaching

Tegea they sent peace proposals ahead to Argos. They already had various [2] sympathisers in Argos who wanted to overthrow the rule of the people there, and after the battle had taken place these men were in a stronger position to get the majority to come to an agreement. They wanted first to make a treaty with the Spartans and after that to have an alliance, so preparing for an eventual attack on the people. There now arrived at [3] Argos Lichas son of Arcesilaus, who was a representative of the Argives. He brought with him to Argos two sets of proposals from the Spartans, the first to apply if they wanted war, the second if they wanted peace. There was much debate about the terms of these (especially since Alcibiades happened to be there), but those who were in contact with the Spartans were now bold enough to declare themselves openly and they succeeded in persuading the Argives to accept the terms of the peace treaty, which were as follows:

It is resolved by the Spartan assembly to make an agreement with the **77**[1] Argives on the following terms.

The Argives shall restore to the Orchomenians their children and to the Maenalians their men; and they shall restore to the Spartans the men they deposited in Mantinea.[2]

They shall also evacuate Epidaurus and demolish the fortifications [2] there. And if the Athenians do not withdraw from Epidaurus they shall be enemies of the Argives and the Spartans and of the allies of the Spartans and the allies of the Argives.

And if the Spartans are holding any children they shall restore them in [3] all cases to the cities they came from.

Concerning the sacrifice to the god, the Argives shall if they wish get [4] the Epidaurians to swear the oath; if not, they shall swear it themselves.

The cities in the Peloponnese, whether large or small, shall all be [5] independent in accordance with custom and practice.

If anyone from outside the Peloponnese invades Peloponnesian ter- [6] ritory with hostile intent they shall repel the invader after consulting each other about the most equitable arrangements for involving the other Peloponnesians.

Those allies of the Spartans who are from outside the Peloponnese [7] shall have the same status as the allies of the Spartans and Argives within it, and shall remain in possession of their territories.

[1] This document and the one that follows at V 79 are both transcribed in the Doric dialect, which suggests a very direct use of this source material.

[2] See V 61.4–5.

The two parties are to present these terms to their allies and make an [8] agreement with them, if they so decide; but if the allies have any points to raise they should refer them back.

The Argives first accepted this proposal and the Spartan army returned **78** home from Tegea. After this, however, there were further exchanges between the parties and before too long the same negotiators effected a second agreement, that the Argives should renounce their alliance with the Mantineans, Athenians and Eleans and should conclude a treaty and an alliance with the Spartans, as follows.

The Spartans and the Argives have resolved to make a treaty and an **79** alliance for fifty years on the following terms.

They shall settle legal disputes on fair and equal terms according to custom and practice. The other cities in the Peloponnese shall be parties to the treaty and the alliance as independent states in their own right,[1] each retaining possession of their own territory, and shall settle legal disputes on a fair and equal basis in accordance with custom and practice.

Those allies of the Spartans outside the Peloponnese shall have the [2] same status as the Spartans in these matters; and the allies of the Argives shall have the same status as the Argives, and they shall retain possession of their own territory.

If it is necessary to make a joint military expedition anywhere the [3] Spartans and the Argives will consult about the fairest division of responsibilities between the allies.

If any of the states, either within the Peloponnese or outside it, has [4] a dispute either about boundaries or anything else, the matter shall be settled as follows: if any of the allied cities has a dispute with another one they shall appeal to some other state agreed by both sides to be impartial.

Private citizens shall pursue their legal rights according to custom and practice.

That was the treaty and the alliance they concluded; and they dealt with **80** all the places either side had acquired from the other in the war and any other issues they had. Acting together now in the conduct of their affairs, the Spartans and Argives voted not to offer access to herald or envoy from the Athenians unless they abandoned their forts and withdrew from the Peloponnese; they also voted to make neither peace nor war with anyone unless they did so jointly. They then set to with a will and among other [2] activities both of them sent envoys to places in Thrace and to Perdiccas,

[1] *autopoleis* 'states in themselves', a word not found elsewhere in Greek literature.

whom they succeeded in persuading to pledge allegiance to them. He did not immediately make a break with the Athenians, however, though he did contemplate it because he saw the Argives doing so and he was himself of Argive descent. With the Chalcidians too they renewed their ancient oaths of allegiance and swore new ones. The Argives also sent envoys to [3] the Athenians telling them to abandon the fort at Epidaurus, whereupon the Athenians, noting that their own men were only a small proportion of the larger force, sent Demosthenes to take them away. When he got there he made an excuse about holding some gymnastic event outside the compound and then, when the rest of garrison went out there, he closed the gates on them.[1] Later on the Athenians renewed their treaty with the Epidaurians and gave up the fort of their own accord.

After the Argives had seceded from the alliance, the Mantineans held **81** out at first; but later, feeling unable to continue without them, they too made terms with Sparta and relinquished control over their Arcadian cities.[2] The Spartans and Argives now mounted a joint campaign, each [2] supplying a thousand troops. First the Spartans themselves went and instituted arrangements at Sicyon to favour the oligarchs more; then they jointly put an end to the rule of the people in Argos, and an oligarchy[3] more sympathetic to Sparta was established there.

These events happened as winter was giving way to the approach of spring; and so ended the fourteenth year of the war.

[1] An odd anecdote. Why did he need to trick them anyway, and didn't this put him the wrong side of the gates to withdraw the men? He did not give the fort back until 'later on' anyway.

[2] The text just says 'the cities' but this must be a reference back to the subject states mentioned at 29.1 and 33.1.

[3] The word *oligarchia* is used on thirty-four occasions in the work and all but six of these are in book VIII. Elsewhere in book V he refers more concretely to the few (*oligoi*) or, on the other side, the people (*demos*) rather than to these constitutional abstractions.

Fifteenth year of the war, 417–16 [V 82–83]

Summer [V 82]

The following summer the people of Dium on Mount Athos seceded from 82
Athens to join the Chalcedonians, and the Spartans reorganised affairs in
Achaea to suit their own interests better than before. Meanwhile the pop- [2]
ular movement in Argos, which had been gradually consolidating its posi-
tion and recovering its confidence, attacked the oligarchs there, delaying
their move to coincide exactly with the celebrations of the Gymnopae-
diae by the Spartans. There was a battle in the city in which the people
got the upper hand, killing some of their opponents and driving others
out. Although Sparta's friends in Argos kept sending for their support, [3]
for a long time the Spartans did not come; eventually, however, they
put off the Gymnopaediae and went to help. But when they learned at
Tegea that the oligarchs had been defeated the Spartans refused to go any
further, despite the appeals of the fugitives from the city, and returned
home to proceed with the festival. Later on representatives from the [4]
Argives in the city and from those outside it joined a meeting with the
allies present where a great deal was said on each side. The Spartans
concluded that the people in the city were in the wrong and decided
on military action against Argos, but there were delays and procrasti-
nations. Meanwhile, the people at Argos, in fear of the Spartans and [5]
seeking to re-establish an alliance with the Athenians, which they still
thought their best hope, started building long walls down to the sea.
Their thought was that if they were cut off on the landward side they

would still have the advantage, with the help of the Athenians, of being able to import supplies by sea. Some of the cities in the Peloponnese also [6] had inside knowledge about this work of fortification. The whole Argive people – men, women and domestic slaves – set about the building-work, and carpenters and masons from Athens came to help them too.

And so the summer ended.

Winter [V 83]

The following winter, when the Spartans became aware of the work of 83 fortification they mounted an expedition to Argos together with their allies (except the Corinthians) and with the collaboration of an active element within Argos itself. The Spartan army was led by Agis, son of Archidamus and king of the Spartans. The support they expected from [2] the city did not materialise in time, but they seized the walls that were under construction and demolished them. They also took a place in Argive territory called Hysiae, killed all the free men they caught there,[1] then withdrew and dispersed to their various cities.

The Argives too made an expedition against Phliasia, which was har- [3] bouring fugitives from Argos, most of whom had settled there; and after ravaging the place they returned home. During the same winter too the [4] Athenians cut off the Macedonians with a blockade,[2] charging Perdiccas with committing to an agreement with the Argives and Spartans and also with being false to their own alliance when they had been preparing to lead an army against the Chalcidians in Thrace under the command of Nicias son of Niceratus. This expedition had foundered mainly because of Perdiccas' defection, they said, and he was therefore to be regarded as an enemy.

So this winter ended and with it the fifteenth year of the war.

[1] One of many brief references to acts of brutality in war (see 'atrocity' in general index); another is to follow at Melos, but nothing has prepared us for the famous dialogue which elaborates that episode, without which the text might well have run on from V 84 direct to 114. See the different kinds of answers to the question, 'Why Melos?' given by Hornblower III, p. 225 and Hawthorn, *Thucydides on Politics: back to the present*, ch. 11.

[2] The physical difficulty of achieving this across such a long coastline has prompted various doubts about the text here (see Hornblower III, p. 214).

Sixteenth year of the war, 416–15 [V 84–116, VI 1–7]

Summer [V 84–115]

The next summer Alcibiades sailed to Argos with twenty ships and 84
arrested those Argives who still seemed to be suspect figures and sympathisers of the Spartans. There were 300 of them in all and the Athenians deposited them on nearby islands that they controlled.

The Athenians also mounted an expedition against the island of Melos, with a force consisting of thirty ships of their own, six from Chios and two from Lesbos, together with 1,200 Athenian hoplites, 300 archers, 20 mounted archers and about 1,500 hoplites from their allies and the islanders. The Melians are Spartan colonists and were unwilling to recog- [2]
nise Athenian authority as the other islanders did. At first they stayed neutral and took no active part, but when the Athenians tried to force them by wasting their land they openly put themselves on a war footing. The Athenians therefore encamped in their territory with the forces [3]
mentioned above, but before doing any damage to the land the Athenian generals, Cleomedes son of Lycomedes and Teisias son of Teisimachus, sent envoys first to make proposals to the Melians. The Melians did not bring this delegation before the people in assembly but told them to

explain the business they had come on to the authorities and the smaller ruling group.[1] So the Athenian envoys addressed them as follows.[2]

85 'We see that our discussions are not to take place before the popular assembly – no doubt to prevent us from deceiving the people at large with one continuous presentation of persuasive arguments that would go unchallenged (for we do realise that this is the point of your bringing us before this smaller body). Why then don't you who sit before us adopt yet one further safeguard? Why don't you too deal with the issues point by point rather than in just one speech and take up straightaway anything you object to in what we say? And you can begin by saying if this proposal is acceptable to you.'

86 To this the Melian commissioners replied: 'We have no objection on the grounds of fairness[3] to a debate over which we take our time; but your proposal is clearly at odds with the realities of war, which are already with us and not just a future prospect. We see that you have come here as self-appointed judges of what is said, and so we also see the likely outcome of this debate for us: if we win it by the justice of our case and therefore refuse to submit, that means war; but if we concede, enslavement.'

87 Athenians. 'If you have come here to argue from suspicions about the future, or for any other reason than to face present facts and negotiate to save your city, then we should stop now. But if that is your objective, let us continue.'

88 Melians. 'It is natural and understandable for people in our situation to explore many different lines of argument and thought. However, this present meeting is indeed about the question of survival, and if that is how you want to proceed, so be it.

89 Athenians. 'Well then, we for our part will not resort to fine phrases and embark on long and unconvincing arguments – that we have the right to rule just because we overthrew the Persians or that we are now seeking redress as an injured party. And we don't expect you to think you can win us over by saying that although you are colonists of the Spartans you did not join them in the war or that in your relations with us you have done

[1] The *archai* and the *oligoi*. We know little about the constitution of Melos.

[2] The point about the style and rhetoric of the speeches (introduction, pp. xxxi–xxxiv) applies here too. The language of this 'dialogue' is very carefully expressed and highly wrought; indeed it is highly complex and 'difficult' in places, unlike the colloquial diction of an actual spoken exchange. It is unclear in any case who could have been Thucydides' informant in this case.

[3] *Epieikeia*. See glossary under *eikos*. There is another reference to 'fairness' at V 96 below.

us no wrong. Our concern must rather be with the practical possibilities, based on what we each actually know. You understand as well as we do that in the human sphere judgements about justice are relevant only between those with an equal power to enforce it, and that the possibilities are defined by what the strong do and the weak accept.'[1]

Melians. 'In our view, at any rate, there is real advantage – and we **90** are forced to speak in terms of advantage since you have just established that expediency as opposed to justice is the basis for discussion – in your not quashing considerations of the general good: a person placed at risk should always be entitled to fairness and justice and should have the benefit of the doubt, even if their case is not quite fully demonstrated. And that is just as relevant to your interests too, for in the event of your downfall your retribution will be proportionately severe just because of the example you have set others.'

Athenians. 'Well, as for this empire of ours, if that came to an end we **91** would not be too daunted by its passing. The threat to the defeated comes not from other ruling powers like the Spartans (though our dispute here is not with them) but from their subjects – should they be the ones to take on their former masters and get the upper hand. And that is a risk [2] you must leave us to deal with. What we will demonstrate is that we are here for the benefit of our own empire and that what we have to say is also for the safety of your state. We want to rule you without any trouble to ourselves and we want your safety to benefit both of us.'

Melians. 'And how could we benefit from being slaves as you would **92** from being masters?'

Athenians. 'Because submission would save you from suffering a most **93** terrible fate, while we would profit from not destroying you.'

Melians. 'So, would you not allow us to remain quietly disengaged, to **94** be friends instead of enemies but allies of neither side?'

Athenians. 'No, because your enmity does us less harm than your **95** friendship; that would be taken by our subjects as a sign of weakness on our part, while your hatred is a sign of our strength.'

[1] The Athenian position is often misleadingly summarised by the modern slogan, 'might is right'. In fact what is meant here, at 105.2 and more generally at I 76.2 and elsewhere by implication, is not that might literally *is* right (and restraint 'wrong'), but that those with might on their side may be cynical and may disregard moral considerations of right and justice just because they can. Crawley (1874) produced a memorable translation of this passage: 'The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.' This has been much quoted and imitated but is not what the Greek actually says.

Melians. 'Surely your subjects are capable of making fair and reasonable 96
distinctions and do not put those who have no connection with you into the same category as those who have been conquered by you, most of them colonists and some of them subjects in revolt.'

Athenians. 'They would say that neither party lacks its justifications, 97
but it is power that enables some to prevail and only fear that deters us from aggression. So, quite apart from the question of expanding the empire you would give us security through being crushed,[1] especially since as islanders – and from one of the weaker islands at that – you would be succumbing to the masters of the seas.'

Melians. 'But do you not think there is security in the other course? 98
Just as you require us to stand aside from arguments about justice and defer to your interests, so we in this case should urge what is to our benefit and try to press that on you, if it turns out to be to your advantage as well. Surely you will be making enemies of those who are at present neutral when they look at this situation and conclude that you will one day move against them too? And what do you thereby achieve, except to strengthen your existing enemies and add to their number those who had no wish or intention to join them?'

Athenians. 'Not so. We judge we have most to fear not from those 99
on the mainland somewhere who are enjoying their freedom and will therefore be slow to take active precautions against us, but from some of the islanders who are either outside the empire like you or are smarting under its compulsions. These are the ones most likely to commit some irrational act and plunge both themselves and us into a crisis that could have been foreseen.'

Melians. 'Surely, then, if both of you are willing to run such risks – 100
you to keep your empire and your present subjects to be rid of it – those of us who still have our freedom would be despicable cowards if we did not go to every length to avoid enslavement.'

Athenians. 'Not if you think it through carefully: this is not a test set up 101
on equal terms to demonstrate your manly courage and save your honour; the question you must consider is rather one of self-preservation – that is, not resisting those who are far stronger than you.'

[1] The logic of this thought would be strengthened by putting this the other way round: beating a small island doesn't do much to enhance the Athenians' reputation for naval superiority but being beaten by one would destroy it (cf. I 75.3–4). Some translations 'improve on' Thucydides this way but the text does not actually say that.

Melians. 'On the other hand, we know there are times in war when the 102
odds are more even than the relative strength of each side would suggest. For us to yield now would be to give up all hope straightaway, but as long as we are taking action we may still hold up our heads in hope.'[1]

Athenians: 'Well, hope is certainly an encouragement[2] in time of dan- 103
ger, and those who rely on hope when they have other resources may be damaged but are not destroyed by it. Hope, however, is prodigal by nature, and those who stake everything they have on it see the truth only at the moment of disaster; at the time when they could still guard against its effects themselves, if only they knew its real nature, hope is in plentiful supply. Don't let this happen to you, weak as you are and with your lives [2]
in the balance; and don't make the common mistake of those who still have the means to save themselves through normal human resources but when all obvious grounds for hope desert them at a time of stress they turn instead to the obscure – to divination, oracles and whatever else of this kind inspires hope but brings ruin.'

Melians: 'We too are quite aware, we can assure you, of the difficulty 104
of contending both with your power and with fortune, unless the odds are made equal. Nonetheless, as far as fortune goes, we trust that the gods will place us at no disadvantage since we stand here as righteous men confronting wrongdoers; as for power, we trust that our alliance with the Spartans will make up for any shortfall there, since they are bound to come to our aid if for no other reason than that of kinship and honour. So, you see, our confidence is not altogether irrational.'

Athenians: 'As far as good relations with the gods are concerned, we 105
don't feel we shall be any worse off than you. There is nothing either in our principles or our practice at odds with human assumptions about the gods or with human purposes in their own sphere. In the case of the gods [2]
we believe, and in the case of humankind it has always been obvious, that as a necessity of nature wherever anyone has the upper hand they rule. We were not the ones to lay down this law, nor the first to take advantage of its existence. We found it already established, expect to leave it to last for ever, and now make use of it, knowing full well that you and anyone else who enjoyed the same power as we do would act in just the same way. So then, as far as relations with the gods are concerned, we have no good [3]

[1] The unusual phrase *stenai orthos* may have the sense both of pride and military bearing. Aristotle in *Politics* 1254b.30 takes physical uprightness to be one natural distinction between slave and free.

[2] I take *paramuthion* here to mean an incitement to take risks, as well as a source of comfort.

reason to fear that we shall be at a disadvantage. As for your expectations about the Spartans – your faith that they will come to your aid from some sense of honour – we congratulate you on your innocence but do not envy you your folly. The Spartans do indeed display the greatest virtue [4] where they themselves or their native institutions are concerned; but in their relations with others, to put it briefly, they are in our experience most conspicuous in regarding what is pleasing as honourable and what is expedient as just. And that is a disposition which does nothing to encourage your present irrational hopes for safety.'

Melians: 'But that is precisely why we now have the strongest grounds **106** for believing that in their own interests they will not choose to betray Melians, who are their colonists, and thereby lose the trust of their friends among the Greeks and benefit their enemies.'

Athenians: 'Don't you think, then, that self-interest lies in security, **107** whereas there is danger in behaving with justice and honour – and that is the sort of risk the Spartans are usually the last people to take?'

Melians: 'No, we take the view that they would be more ready to incur **108** even such dangers as these on our behalf and would regard them as a safer option than they would in the case of others, since for practical purposes we are situated closer to the Peloponnese and we are more to be trusted than the others because of our kindred views.'

Athenians: 'But surely in any joint military action one's sense of security **109** comes not from the goodwill of the party seeking help but from the party with well-proven success in the exercise of power. And that is something the Spartans pay even more attention to than anyone else – at any rate they distrust their own national resources and bring in a host of allies when they attack their neighbours – so it is surely unlikely that they will ever cross over to an island while we are masters of the sea.'

Melians: 'Well, there would be others they could send too. And the **110** Cretan Sea is large, making it more difficult for those who control it to catch someone than it is for those who want to evade them to get through safely. And even if they should fail in this, the Spartans would turn against [2] your own territory and against the remaining allies whom Brasidas did not reach, and then you will have to exert yourselves not so much for what does not belong to you as for your own alliance and country.'

Athenians: 'Something of this sort could happen, as experience demon- **111** strates, but you should be aware that never once have the Athenians abandoned any siege through fear of a third party. We are concerned to [2] note, however, that despite your promise to discuss safety you have said

nothing in these exchanges that would reassure the ordinary person of their future survival. Indeed, your strongest arguments just rest on hopes for the future, while your present resources are too slender to prevail against those now arrayed against you. So you are deeply misguided if, even now, you do not ask us to withdraw and then formulate some more prudent policy than we have heard so far. Surely you will not be drawn [3] into that sense of shame which is quite fatal when it is danger and dishonour that are staring you in the face. For many people, even though they can see the dangers they are being led into, are still overcome by the power of a name – this thing we call 'dishonour'– and, victims of a word, in fact fall of their own accord into irreversible disaster and so bring on themselves a dishonour all the more shameful because it comes more from their folly than their misfortune.[1] That is the outcome you [4] will be well advised to avoid and you should realise that there is no loss of face in submitting to a great power which is offering reasonable terms – namely, for you to become allies, retaining your own territory on payment of tribute – and that when you have a choice between war and safety you should not be so contrary as to insist on the worse option. The best recipe for success is to stand up to equals, defer to superiors and be moderate towards your inferiors.

Reflect again, then, after our withdrawal and bear constantly in mind [5] that it is your fatherland you are talking about: you have only one fatherland and it will be saved or destroyed by just one decision.'

With this, the Athenians withdrew from the discussion; and the **112** Melians, left to themselves, reached very much the same conclusion as they had expressed before, and so replied:

'Athenians, we see no reason to change our original decision. Nor in a [2] few short minutes are we about to deprive of its freedom a city that has now been inhabited for 700 years. Instead, we will put our trust in the good fortune we owe to the gods, which has protected our city thus far, and in the help of our fellow men, particularly the Spartans, and so seek our salvation. We call on you to let us be your friends, enemies of neither [3] side, and to leave this land of ours after making a treaty that suits us both.'

That was the response of the Melians; and as the Athenians broke up **113** the discussion they made this statement:

[1] For the complex word-play on various related terms meaning 'shame' and 'dishonour' see Gomme III, pp. 178–9 and Hornblower III, pp. 247–8, but I think Hobbes in his translation is the one to make the crucial distinctions.

'Well, to go by your decisions, you must be the only people in the world who judge that the future is clearer than what is before your eyes and who can envisage what is uncertain as a present reality just by an act of will. You have staked everything on your trust in Spartans, in chance and in hope and everything is what you will now lose.'

114 With this the Athenian envoys returned to the army, and since the Melians showed no signs of yielding the generals immediately commenced hostilities and built a wall round the Melians, dividing up the work between the different cities. Later on, after leaving some of their own and some allied troops to keep guard both by land and sea, they withdrew with most of the army. The rest stayed behind to begin a siege of the place.

115 At about the same time the Argives invaded Phliasia, but they were ambushed by the Phliasians and the fugitives from Argos and lost about eighty men. And the Athenians at Pylos seized a great deal of plunder [2] from the Spartans, but not even this made the Spartans renounce the treaty and make war on them, though they did make a proclamation that any of their own people who so wished might plunder the Athenians in return. The Corinthians also went to war with the Athenians on account [3] of some private dispute, though the rest of the Peloponnese kept out of it.

The Melians made a move too, capturing the part of the encircling [4] wall over against the market-place in a night raid. They killed some men and brought in grain and quantities of such other necessities as they needed, then withdrew and took no further action. After that the Athenians strengthened the guard.

And so the summer ended.

Winter [V 116, VI 1–7]

116 The following winter the Spartans were intending to make an expedition into Argive territory, but sacrifices made at the border were not propitious and they returned home. But the fact of this intention made the Argives suspicious of certain men in the city and they arrested some of them, while there were others who escaped.

At about the same time the Melians seized another part of the Athe- [2] nians' encircling wall, which was only lightly guarded. But as a result of [3] this passage of events another force was subsequently dispatched from Athens, under the command of Philocrates son of Demeas. The Melians were now under heavy siege and there was also some treachery from

within, so they surrendered to the Athenians, to be dealt with as they wished. The Athenians killed all the adult males they had taken and [4] enslaved the women and children. The place itself they occupied with their own people, sending out 500 colonists at some later time.

[BOOK VI]

The same winter the Athenians were again wanting to sail to Sicily and 1 subjugate it if they could, this time sending a larger force than the ones that had gone out under Laches and Eurymedon.[1] Most of them were unfamiliar with the size of the island and the large number of inhabitants there (both Greek and barbarian), and were unaware that they were taking on a war on almost the same scale as that against the Peloponnesians.[2] After all, it takes a merchant ship almost eight days to sail right round [2] Sicily, though despite its size the island is separated from the mainland by only two miles or so of water.

Sicily[3] was originally settled as follows and these are all the peoples 2 who occupied it. The earliest inhabitants of any part of the island are said to have been the Cyclops and Laestrygonians, though I am unable to say what race they were, nor where they came from, nor where they later went: we have to rely here on what the poets have said and on what we can each of us gather for ourselves. Anyway, after them the Sicanians were [2] evidently the first to settle there. Indeed they themselves claim to have been there even earlier, as the indigenous people, but on investigation the truth is that they were in fact Iberians and were driven from the River Sicanus in Iberia by the Ligurians. The island was at that time called Sicania after them, having previously been called Trinacria, and they still live there now in the western part of Sicily. During the fall of Troy, some [3] of the Trojans escaped from the Achaeans and reached Sicily by boat;

[1] Laches in 427 (III 86.1), Eurymedon in 424 (IV 2).

[2] A remark of some significance, as will emerge, and one which might also be a clue to the structural design of his work. Was book VI conceived as the introduction to the second of two five-book parts with various deliberate parallels of wording and content between books I and VI (see H. R. Rawlings, *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (Princeton University Press, 1981), ch. 2, pp. 58–125 and Hornblower III, pp. 260–1)? But see also V 24.2n.

[3] See map 4, p. lxiv.

settling next to the Sicanians they were collectively known as Elymians and their cities were called Eryx and Egesta. They were also joined there as settlers by some Phocians who had been driven by a storm from Troy to Libya and thence to Sicily. The Sicels crossed over to Sicily from their [4] homelands in Italy, fleeing from the Opicans. The story goes – and it is plausible enough – that they made the passage on rafts, having watched the straits until a favourable wind got up, though they were probably sailing in by other means too. But even now there are still Sicels in Italy and the country was called Italy after Italus, a Sicel king of that name. A vast army [5] of these Sicels came over to Sicily, overwhelmed the Sicanians in battle and pushed them back into the southern and western parts of the island, so causing it to be renamed as Sicily in place of Sicania. They settled the best of the land and held it for nearly 300 years after their crossing until the Greeks came to Sicily; even now they still occupy the central and northern parts of the island. The Phoenicians too had settlements all [6] around Sicily, seizing headlands and the small outlying islands in order to trade with the Sicels. But when the Greeks began to arrive in large numbers they abandoned most of these places and formed communities together in Motya, Soloeis and Panormus near to the Elymians, both because they trusted in their alliance with them and because from that area it is the shortest crossing from Carthage to Sicily.

These, then, were the barbarians who settled in Sicily and this was how they did so.

As for the Greeks, the first to arrive were Chalcidians who sailed over 3 from Euboea with Thucles as their founder[1] and settled in Naxos. They established there the temple to Apollo as 'First leader'[2] that now stands outside the city and is the place where the city representatives first make sacrifice before sailing from Sicily. The following year[3] Syracuse was [2]

[1] *Oikistes* (see glossary). It is tempting to use the vocabulary of 'coloniser', 'colony' and 'colonise' for the various related usages in what follows in VI 3–5, but that may be anachronistic for this period (see Hornblower III, pp. 275–6) and I have tried to use more neutral terms like 'founder', 'settlement' and 'settle'. A separate question is why there was this perceived need to have a named 'founder' at all and to what extent it was just an honorific practice.

[2] *Archegetes*, a cult title derived from the regular practice of consulting the Delphic oracle, where Apollo was the presiding deity, to endorse plans for new colonies.

[3] Thucydides gives no absolute dates in this prehistory of Sicily but some can be fairly reliably established by working backwards from datable events like the destruction of Megara Hyblaea (VI 4 below). This yields 733/2 as the foundation date for Syracuse, which is taken as the baseline here. See Dover in Gomme IV, pp. 198–210 for a full discussion of the dates and of Thucydides' sources. The rather dense factual style

founded by Archias, one of the Heracleidae from Corinth, after he had first driven the Sicels out of the island (now no longer completely surrounded by water) on which the inner city stands; later on the city outside was also incorporated within the walls and became very populous. In the fifth [3] year after the foundation of Syracuse, Thucles and the Chalcidians set out from Naxos, fought with the Sicels and drove them out, and founded first Leontini and then Catana, though the Catanaeans made their own choice of Euarchus as founding father.

At about the same time too Lamis arrived in Sicily, leading emigrants 4 from Megara. He settled a place called Trotilus on the River Pantacyas and later formed a joint community with the Chalcidians for a short time but was then expelled by them and settled Thapsus, where he died. His followers were forced to leave Thapsus and settled a place the Sicel king Hyblon led them to and made over to them, which was called Megara Hyblaea. Here they lived for 245 years, until they were forced to leave [2] the city and the land by Gelon, the tyrant of Syracuse; but before this departure and 100 years after their settlement there they sent Pamillus to found Selinus and he left the mother-city Megara to join them in the settlement there.

Gela was founded jointly by Antiphemus from Rhodes and Entimus [3] of Crete, who had led settlers there forty-five years after the settlement of Syracuse. The city was named after the River Gelas, but the place where the city now stands and which was the first part to be fortified is called Lindii, and the institutions established there were Doric. Almost [4] exactly 108 years after the foundation of their own settlement the Geloans went on to settle Acragas, naming the city after the River Acragas. They appointed Aristonous and Pystilus as founders and established Geloan institutions there.

Zancle was originally settled by marauders who came from Cumae, [5] the Chalcidian city in Opicia; but later large numbers also came from Chalcis and the rest of Euboea to share in the distribution of the land, the founders being Perieres and Crataemenes, the former from Cumae and the latter from Chalcis. It was first given the name Zancle by the Sicels because the place is in the shape of a scythe and the Sicels call a scythe a *zanclon*. But later these people were driven out by Samians and other Ionians, who descended on Sicily in their flight from the Persians.

of VI 1–5 and the occasional oddities of vocabulary suggest that he might have transcribed some of this almost verbatim from an earlier chronicler like Antiochus of Syracuse.

Not long afterwards the Samians were in turn expelled by Anaxilas, the [6]
tyrant of Rhegium, who settled the city himself with a mixed group of people and renamed it Messina after his own original fatherland.

Himera was founded by Euclides, Simus and Sacon. Most of those **5**
coming to the settlement were Chalcidians but they were also joined by exiles from Syracuse, ousted by civil strife, who were called the Mytel-
idae. The resulting language was a mixture of Chalcidian and Doric but
Chalcidian institutions prevailed. Acrae and Casomenae were founded by [2]
Syracusans, Acrae seventy years after Syracuse, and Casomenae nearly
twenty years after Acrae. Camarina was first settled by Syracusans nearly [3]
135 years after the foundation of Syracuse, the founders being Dascon and Menecolus. The people of Camarina were driven out by a war with the Syracusans following an uprising and some time later Hippocrates, tyrant of Gela, took their land as a ransom for some Syracusan prisoners of war and then himself became 'founder' and resettled Camarina. The place was later again depopulated by Gelon and resettled for the third time by Geloans.

These were the Greek and barbarian peoples who inhabited Sicily and **6**
this was the size of the place the Athenians were so bent on invading.
Their real motive[1] was their wish to rule over the whole island but at the same time they wanted to pretend to the more acceptable pretext of supporting their own kinsmen and the allies they had already acquired
there. They were also strongly urged on by Egestan envoys present, who [2]
were very pressing in their appeals. The Egestans were neighbours of the Selinuntians and had got into a war with them over some issues about intermarriage and disputed territory, and the Selinuntians had brought in the Syracusans as allies and were putting them under pressure in the war both by land and sea. So the Egestans were reminding the Athenians of their alliance with Leontini made at the time of the earlier war under Laches and now begged them to send ships to their defence. The Egestans made many points, but the central one was that if the Syracusans were allowed to drive out the Leontines with impunity and went on to finish off the remaining allies of the Athenians they would get complete control of Sicily for themselves; there was then a danger that at some time they would give large-scale military support to the Peloponnesians, both as Dorians helping Dorians on grounds of kinship and at the same time as colonists

[1] The 'truest *prophasis*', as at I 23.6, another parallel between books I and VI. Contrasted here with *euprepos* (done 'with good appearance').

helping those who had sent them out, and so would combine with them to overthrow the power of Athens. It would therefore be prudent, they said, to join with their remaining allies in opposing Syracuse, especially as the Egestans would furnish sufficient funds for the war.

After hearing these arguments made repeatedly in their assemblies [3] by the Egestans and their supporters, the Athenians voted first to send envoys to Egesta to investigate whether the funds were in fact on hand in the public treasury and the temples, as the Egestans claimed, and how things stood in their war with the Selinuntians.

So the Athenian envoys were duly dispatched to Sicily. And the same 7 winter, the Spartans and their allies (except for Corinth) invaded Argive territory, where they despoiled[1] a small part of the land and took away a quantity of grain in wagons they had brought. They also resettled the Argive exiles in Orneae, leaving with them a small body of troops from the rest of the army, and after arranging a temporary period of truce between the Orneaeans and Argives, in which neither was to do damage to the other's land, they left for home with their army. Not long afterwards [2] the Athenians came with thirty ships and 600 hoplites and a full force of Argives went out with them and besieged the men in Orneae for one day; but during the next night, when the besieging army had made camp some way away, the men in Ormeae made a run for it and escaped. The next day, when the Argives realised what had happened, they razed Orneae to the ground and left; and later on the Athenians too left for home in their ships.

The Athenians also took with them by sea some of their cavalry and [3] some Macedonian exiles they had with them. They made for Methone, which borders on Macedonia, and from there they started despoiling Perdiccas' land. The Spartans responded by sending word to the Chalcid- [4] ians in Thrace, who were observing a 'ten-day truce'[2] with the Athenians, to urge them to join Perdiccas in the war, but this they refused.

So ended the winter and with it the sixteenth year of the war that Thucydides wrote.

[1] *Temno* (see glossary): as this is winter they are presumably slashing and burning, 'cutting down' vineyards and trees, and the grain they carry off must be stored grain.

[2] That is, a truce renewable every ten days (see also V 26.2).

Seventeenth year of the war, 415–14 [VI 8–93]

Summer [VI 8–62]

Next summer, in the early spring, the Athenian envoys returned from 8
Sicily, accompanied by the Egestans who brought with them sixty talents
of uncoined silver as a month's pay for a fleet of sixty ships,[1] which is
what they were about to ask the Athenians to send. The Athenians held an [2]
assembly and listened to the Egestan envoys and their own telling them
various things that were both enticing and untrue, in particular that there
was plenty of money available in the temples and the public treasury. They
accordingly voted to send sixty ships to Sicily and appointed as generals,
with full powers of decision, Alcibiades son of Cleinias, Nicias son of
Niceratus and Lamachus son of Xenophanes. These were to support the
Egestans against the Selinuntians and to join in restoring the Leontines
to their city if the progress of the war allowed it, and in general to take
whatever actions in Sicily they judged to be in the best interests of the
Athenians.

Four days after this there was another assembly to discuss what provi- [3]
sion was needed to equip the ships with all speed and to vote anything else
the generals might need for the expedition. Nicias had been elected to the [4]
command against his wishes, and he thought that the city had reached
the wrong decision and was harbouring ambitions for Sicily as a whole,

[1] If a trireme crew is about 200 men, that works out at a drachma a day for each sailor. See further VI 31.3 below and the note on coinage (pp. lvii–lviii).

a huge undertaking but one conceived on the basis of slight and specious considerations. He therefore came forward, hoping to divert them, and advised the Athenians as follows.[1]

'This assembly was convened to discuss ways and means of equipping **9** our naval expedition to Sicily. In my view, however, this begs the very question we ought still to be considering – whether it is right to send the ships at all; I don't believe that after only a hasty consultation on matters of the greatest moment and on the advice of men who are not even Greeks[2] we should be undertaking a war which is actually none of our business. For myself, I get personal honours from this kind of thing, of course, and [2] I am less fearful about my own physical safety than others, though I do recognise that a man who takes some thought for his person and property is just as good a citizen – since he then has a direct interest in wanting the city to be successful. Nonetheless, I have never in the past sought preferment by speaking contrary to my real beliefs, nor do I do so now. I shall just speak in whatever way I think best. I know your temperament, [3] and I know my arguments would be powerless if I tried to persuade you just to look after what you have and not put present possessions at risk for uncertain future ones;[3] but I shall at least seek to show you that your haste is untimely and that your ambitions are not easy to achieve.

I tell you, then, that you are leaving many enemies behind you here **10** in your desire to sail off there and attract yet new ones over in this direction. Perhaps you think that the treaty you have made affords you [2] some security? Well, as long as you are not actively engaged that will remain a treaty in name alone, as various parties here and from among our enemies so contrived;[4] however, should you anywhere suffer a reverse of significant proportions our enemies will be quick to move against us, since in the first place the agreement was forced on them by adverse circumstances, a result more to their discredit than ours, and secondly in

[1] Stylistic analyses have highlighted the frequent grammatical qualifications in Nicias' rhetoric, which perhaps express his general hesitancy (see D. P. Tompkins, 'Stylistic characterization in Thucydides: Nicias and Alcibiades', *Yale Classical Studies* 22 (1972), pp. 181–214 and Hornblower III, pp. 320–3).

[2] Literally 'men of another race', here the Egestans, who at 11.7 and 18.2 below are more bluntly called 'barbarians'. The same word (*allophulos)* is used at IV 64.4 by Hermocrates, referring there to the Athenians as the threatening 'foreign' invaders of Sicily (see further glossary).

[3] Echoes here of Pericles at I 144 and 2.65 (and Hermocrates at IV 62).

[4] The reference is to Alcibiades at Athens (V 43) and to Cleoboulus and Xenares at Sparta (V 36), who were thought to be undermining the 'fifty-year alliance' of 421 BC, the 'Peace of Nicias' (V 23), whose value as a protection, ironically, Nicias now queries.

the agreement itself there are plenty of points open to dispute. There are [3] also states that haven't yet accepted even this agreement – and those are not by any means the weakest ones; some of them are openly at war with us, while yet others are inhibited by the ten-day truces just because the Spartans are still disengaged. But the chances are that if they should catch [4] our forces divided – a situation we are now hastening to bring about – they would promptly throw themselves into an attack together with the Siceliots, whom they would in the past have given a great deal to have as allies. So one should reflect on all this and while things are so up in [5] the air we should resolve not to put our city at risk by reaching out for a new empire before we have secured the one we have – especially as the Chalcidians in the Thracian region, after all those years in revolt from us, have still not been subdued, and there are others on the mainland who are unreliable subjects too. We rush to help the Egestans of all people, on the grounds that they are allies who have been wrongly treated, while we still hesitate to redress the wrongs we ourselves have long been suffering at the hands of these rebels.

Yet in the case of these defectors, if they were once put down they 11 might also be kept down; whereas even if we get the better of the Siceliots they are so far away and so numerous that we should find great difficulty in maintaining our rule over them. It is just foolishness to attack people when conquest does not lead to control and where failure leaves one worse off than before the attempt. Moreover, as things stand now, the Siceliots [2] would in my view be even less of a threat to us if the Syracusans came to rule over them – the very bogey the Egestans most frighten us with. At [3] present, the Siceliots might perhaps come separately against us city by city out of loyalty to the Spartans, but in the other case it is unlikely that one whole empire would take on another. For the very means they use to deprive us of our empire by combining with the Peloponnesians will likely then be employed by the same parties to destroy their own.[1]

As for us, the Greeks there would be the most impressed if we did [4] not come at all or, failing that, if we made a brief show of our power and then left. We all know that there is an aura of respect attaching to what is most distant and least susceptible to having its reputation put to the test. But if we should suffer a setback they would be quick to lose that respect

[1] An obscure and weak argument – presumably the 'same parties' here are the Spartans and Syracusans and the thought is just that 'if you gang up on us, others may one day gang up on you'.

and would join our enemies here in attacking us. And that, Athenians, [5]
is exactly your own experience with the Spartans and their allies. Just
because you have got the better of them, contrary to your expectations
and your initial fears of them, so now you disdain them and set your sights
on Sicily. You should not feel so elated at the chance misfortunes of your [6]
enemies; rather, you should only start to feel confidence when you have
defeated their designs;[1] and you must not think that the Spartans have
anything else in mind than how, in their humiliation, they can even now
cause our downfall and so recover from their loss of face – especially given
their long-term preoccupation with their reputation for valour.

So the issue for us, if we are wise, is not about the Egestans in Sicily, [7]
who are barbarians, but how best to keep a sharp watch on a state like
Sparta, which as an oligarchy[2] has active designs on us.

We should remember that only recently have we recovered sufficiently 12
from a great plague and a war to build up our assets of money and
men. These are resources we should rightly be spending here on behalf
of ourselves, not on behalf of these exiles who are begging our help:
their interest is to lie convincingly, endangering third parties but offering
only words of support themselves. In the event of success they show no
commensurate gratitude, and in the event of any failure they pull their
friends down with them.

Now, suppose there is a certain person here who is so gratified at being [2]
chosen to command that he urges you to let the fleet sail, thinking only
of his own interests (especially since he is too young for a command) and
how he may be admired for his stables and get some return from his office
to defray their expense. Don't allow such a man to parade his personal
glamour at the risk of the city's safety. Be aware that people like this
damage the public interest while they expend their private means, and
remember that this is a matter of great moment and not one for the young
to debate and dispatch hastily.

I am myself alarmed to see these young people seated here, responding 13
to the appeal of this very same man, and I appeal for my part to the
older generation: if any of you are sitting next to one of these people,

[1] *Dianoias* seems an unusual word to use after 'defeating' (*kratesantas*). Others translate this as 'when you have mastered their spirits'. I have assumed a strong contrast is intended between 'chance' and 'designs'.

[2] The right translation of the preposition *dia* here is unclear and another version might be 'by means of oligarchy' (i.e. by fomenting oligarchy in Athens), but that thought is not developed and I take the point to be that Sparta is *naturally* threatening as a rival polity.

do not feel embarrassed that in voting against war you might seem to be cowardly; nor should you share their perverse craving for what is beyond reach, in the knowledge that little is achieved by longing but much by forethought; on the contrary, support your country, which is running the greatest risk in its history, and hold up your hands against the resolution, voting instead that the Siceliots should observe their current boundaries with us, which are uncontroversial (that is, the Ionian sea if one is sailing along the coast, and the Sicilian if one is making the sea-crossing), and that in full possession of their land they should settle their own affairs among themselves.[1] As for the Egestans, tell them that in their case since [2] they started the war with the Selinuntians without the Athenians they can also bring it to an end by themselves. And in future, we should stop making allies of those who get our help when they are in trouble but are not there for us when we ourselves need support.

Chairman, if you really do regard it as your role to care for the city and **14** if you want to prove yourself a good citizen, put this matter to the vote and reopen the issue with the Athenians. If you have any qualms about holding a vote again you should take the view that with so many witnesses present you could not be blamed for a breach of procedures. Think rather that you would be acting as physician to the city when it was suffering from a bout of bad decision-making, and that this is the responsibility of office – to do everything you can to help your city, or at least never to harm it knowingly.'

Such was Nicias' speech; but most of the Athenians who came forward **15** spoke in favour of the expedition and against rescinding the previous vote, though there were also some who argued the contrary. The most enthu- [2] siastic supporter of the expedition was Alcibiades son of Cleinias, who wanted to oppose Nicias both because of the general political differences between them and because Nicias had made this slanderous reference to him. But above all he was passionately eager to be made general and hoped that he could thereby conquer both Sicily and Carthage[2] and so by his success promote both his personal wealth and his reputation.[3]

[1] 13.1 is one long complex sentence in the Greek, which is entirely Thucydidean in character (see introduction p. xxxi and for other examples I 9.2, 24.1, 36.1, II 42.4, IV 55.4, VI 101.1), but is also here somehow appropriate to Nicias' cumulative complaints and insinuations.

[2] A wildly ambitious idea, which Alcibiades doesn't actually mention in his own speech following but which does come up later at 90.2.

[3] Dover (Gomme IV, pp. 229–30) makes a strong case for taking very seriously these kinds of personal rivalries and ambitions in the deep explanations of events in this period.

For Alcibiades' status among the townspeople was such that he indulged [3]
his desires beyond his actual means in maintaining a stable of horses and
in other extravagances, which was just the kind of thing that was largely
responsible later for the destruction of Athens.[1] The people at large were [4]
so apprehensive about the scale of his general lawlessness and the self-
indulgence of his lifestyle and also about the ambitions behind every
activity he engaged in that they thought he craved a tyranny and became
hostile towards him; and although in the public sphere he was excellent
at managing the affairs of war, in private matters they were every one of
them offended by his mode of life and so they put their trust in others
and in no time at all brought about the downfall of the city.

Alcibiades now came forward and advised the Athenians as follows. [5]

'Athenians, I am more entitled than others to hold the command – I **16**
have to start with this point after Nicias' criticism – and I also think I
deserve it on merit.[2] The things for which I am loudly abused in fact
reflect well both on my ancestors and myself and they also bring benefits
to our country. The Greeks had previously expected our city to have [2]
been exhausted by warfare, but they actually came to overestimate its real
strength because of the impressive presence I put up at Olympia, where I
entered seven chariots (more than any private individual ever had before),
took the first prize and the second and fourth places, and generally put
on a show worthy of a champion. The prestige that comes from this sort
of thing is generally recognised, but such an achievement also adds to the
sense of our underlying power. In the same way, my high profile in the [3]
city because of the choruses and other things I sponsor attracts a natural
envy on the part of fellow citizens but gives to the outside world a further
impression of strength. So it is not just a pointless folly when through
his private outlays a person manages to benefit not only himself but also
his city. Nor is there anything wrong if someone who has reason to be [4]
proud of himself is treated differently, since a person who is doing badly
doesn't share his *misfortunes* with others. On the contrary, just as we are
ignored in public when we are down on our luck, on the same principle

[1] A remarkable judgement, in suggesting so definite and dramatic an outcome to this chain of consequences, in its implicit estimate of Alcibiades' ability to turn the war single-handed and in its apparent contradiction of the final sentence of 15.4 below. Are Alcibiades' extravagances meant to remind us of those of Athens too in living beyond its means and so contributing to its own downfall?

[2] A contrast seems intended between *prosekon* ('entitlement' deriving from background, family, status) and *axios* ('merit' from personal qualities).

ordinary people must stand being looked down upon by the successful, or else they must treat everyone on the same level in order to be so treated themselves.[1]

I know that successful people of this kind and all those who have stood [5] out as pre-eminent in some way are resented in their own lifetimes, in the first place by their peers and then by others they associate with; but their legacy is that later generations claim a relationship with them, even where none existed, and their countrymen, from wherever they come, feel a sense of pride in them and hail them not as foreigners or offenders but as their own home-grown heroes.

That is the nature of my ambition and the reason for all the personal [6] criticism – so look hard at my public record to see how it compares with anyone else's. I brought together the greatest powers in the Peloponnese,[2] without any real risk or expense on your part, and I forced the Spartans to stake their all against them on the outcome of a single day at Mantinea. As a result, although the Spartans won the battle, they still have not recovered their confidence even now.

That is how in my supposed "youth" and "insanity" I found the right **17** arguments to deal with the Peloponnesian powers and showed the spirit to win them over. So don't fear these qualities now, but while I am still in the prime of youth and Nicias is thought to have a winning touch make the most of the advantages we each separately offer.

Do not change your minds about the Sicilian expedition on the grounds [2] that we shall be encountering a great power. Their cities swarm with people but they are a very mixed crowd and they have a constantly changing citizen body. For that reason no one is equipped with arms for [3] his personal protection or has established a proper stake in the land, as they would have if it were their own country; instead each person provides himself with whatever public funds he thinks he can extract by special pleading or intrigue, expecting that he will move on elsewhere if things don't work out. It is unlikely that a rabble of this kind will be of one mind [4] in responding to any proposal or will act with a common purpose. More probably, each of them would come over to us individually if they were

[1] This compressed thought seems to assume a pecking-order of three classes of person, with the 'ordinary' one in the middle.

[2] See V 61.2–3. Here, and at the start of 17, the 'Peloponnesian powers' are Argos, Elis and Mantinea. Usually the term 'Peloponnesians' also includes Sparta, of course. The claim here is rather undermined by the outcome (V 74).

attracted by what was said, especially if they are in a state of conflict,[1] as we understand them to be. Moreover, when it comes to hoplites, they do [5] not have as many as they boast. (Nor in fact did the other Greeks prove to have as many as their separate estimates suggested – indeed the numbers were massively exaggerated and Greece herself scarcely had sufficient hoplite power for this war).[2]

That is the situation there, as I understand it from reports – and in fact [6] it will be even easier than that for us to deal with since we shall have many barbarians there who hate the Syracusans and will join us in attacking them; nor will the situation here cause you problems, if you consider it aright. Our fathers had just the same enemies as we are told we would now [7] be leaving behind us if we sail, and they had the Persians as enemies too; yet they acquired their empire and had no other advantage than their sea power. As for the present, never were the Peloponnesians less confident [8] in facing us. But even if they take an optimistic view they can only manage to invade us by land – and they can do that even if we do not make the expedition – whereas with their fleet they cannot harm us at all since we have in reserve a fleet that is a match for theirs.

What good reason, then, could we give ourselves for holding back or **18** what excuse could we offer our allies over there for failing to come to their aid? There is an obligation to go to their defence since that much we pledged in our exchange of oaths, and we should not object that they have not come to ours. We enrolled them in the alliance not for the reciprocal help they could give us at home but to be a thorn in the side of our enemies there and to distract them from coming to attack us here. That is [2] how empires are acquired – both ours and other people's; we have always responded wholeheartedly to appeals for help (whether from barbarians or Greeks[3]) since if we refused to engage at all or if we make distinctions of race in deciding who to help, then instead of adding anything much to the empire we should put the empire itself at risk, since against a superior opponent you do not just resist his attacks but pre-empt them in advance. It is not an option for us to set limits to the empire like accountants; on [3]

[1] *Stasis* (see glossary), which is in this case likely to be *between* different states rather than within them.

[2] The remark in parentheses seems likely to be an editorial interpolation, either by Thucydides (which would be very unusal in a speech) or even by a later commentator.

[3] On the distinction see I 1.2 and VI 9.1. Here 'barbarians' and 'men of another race' seem to be equivalent; but see Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* for some complexities in all this: he cites, for example, Herodotus II 158 where Herodotus claims that the Egyptians too use the term 'barbarian' of anyone who does not speak *their* language.

the contrary, since we are in this situation we are forced to take active initiatives against some cities and keep our grip on the rest, because there is a danger that if we do not take others into our empire we shall fall into theirs. You cannot take the same passive stance as other states might, that is unless you are also going to change your whole style of life to match theirs as well.[1]

On the calculation, then, that we shall strengthen our position here all [4] the more if we go over there, let us make this expedition. We can hope to puncture the pride of the Peloponnesians when they see we so resent our current inactivity that we even sail against Sicily; and we can at the same time probably extend our empire over the whole of Greece by annexing to it the Greeks in Sicily, or we can at least inflict damage on the Syracusans, from which both we and our allies will benefit. As for security – whether [5] we stay there, if things go well, or return home – our ships will provide for that, for we shall be masters of the sea, even against all the Siceliots combined.

Do not let Nicias deter you from your purpose with his talk of non- [6] intervention and his divisive attempt to set the younger generation against the older; but hold to your traditional good practice whereby our fathers, as young men in consultation with their elders, raised our fortunes to their current heights. In the same way you now must endeavour to take the city further forward. You must know that neither youth nor age can achieve anything without the other, but if you blend together the poorer, the average and the finer elements you have a very powerful combination. A city that is inactive wears itself out from within, just like anything else, and all its knowledge will diminish with age; but when it is exercised in adversity it will keep adding to its experience and will acquire the habit of defending itself not just by argument but by action.

In conclusion, then, I would say that a city which is accustomed to [7] activity would be very quickly destroyed by a change to inactivity, and that the people who live in the greatest security are those who most respect their existing character and institutions, whatever their shortcomings, in the way they manage their affairs.'

Such was Alcibiades' speech. And after listening to him and also to **19** representations from the Egestans and some Leontine exiles, who came forward and made formal supplications for support, reminding them of their sworn oaths, the Athenians were even more motivated than before to

[1] An echo in this section of Cleon at III 37.1–2, and perhaps of Pericles at II 63.

undertake the expedition. So Nicias, realising that he could now no longer [2]
deter them by repeating his original arguments but that he might perhaps change their minds by stressing the scale of the resources required, came forward again and spoke as follows.

'Athenians, since I see you are completely set on making this expedition, **20**
let us pray that things turn out in the future as we wish. As for the immediate situation we face, I will indicate my views. We shall be taking [2]
on cities, as I understand the reports, which are large and which are not subject to one another; nor are they in need of change of the kind people might welcome in order to exchange an enforced subjection for some easier status, nor are they likely to embrace our rule in place of freedom; and for a single island the number of Greek cities in Sicily is a large one. Leaving aside Naxos and Catana, which I expect will join our side [3]
through their kinship with the Leontines, there are seven other cities and these are fully equipped much as our own forces are, especially so our two particular targets – Selinus and Syracuse. They have many hoplites, [4]
archers and javelin-throwers, many triremes and a horde of people to man them. They also have money, partly in private hands and partly in the temples at Selinus; and the Syracusans also receive payment of tribute from various barbarians. But their main advantage over us is that they have many horses[1] and can use home-grown rather than imported grain.

Against such a power it is not enough to have just a weak naval force.[2] **21**
Plenty of infantry should sail out with them if we want to do justice to our plans and avoid being restricted in our movements across country by the number of their cavalry – especially if their cities are frightened into joint action and if we fail to find friends other than the Egestans to provide some matching cavalry for our defence. It would be shameful to have to [2]
leave under duress or to send later for reinforcements just because we did not plan carefully enough at the outset. So we must set out from here with proper resources, in the knowledge that we are about to voyage far from home and on a very different kind of campaign from those where you were attacking some enemy, acting as allies to your subjects over here and easily able to get the supplies you need from a friendly territory. Instead, you are taking yourselves away to completely foreign lands, from which

[1] Nicias was proved right about the tactical importance of the enemy cavalry in the war (see, for example, VI 64.1, 71.2 and VII 4.6) and, as Athenagoras implies (37.1–2 below), it is therefore surprising that Nicias did not request additional Athenian cavalry at this point.

[2] A surprising comment on Athenian sea power, if taken literally, unless it means 'just naval power, poorly supported'.

it is difficult for a messenger to get back here over the winter period even in four months.

I think we therefore have to take a large number of hoplites, both **22** of our own and from allies – including subject states and any from the Peloponnese we can persuade or hire to join us; and we need plenty of archers and slingers to help us withstand their cavalry; and in ships we must have a clear advantage, to be sure also to safeguard the passage of supplies; and something else we must take from here on our transport vessels is grain – that is, wheat and roasted barley, together with bakers, conscripted for pay from the mills on a quota basis, to ensure that if we are cut off by bad weather at sea the army will have its supplies (since the force is so large that not every city will be able to accommodate its needs); and we must make every other preparation we possibly can, to avoid being dependent on other people, and in particular we should take as much money as possible from here. The "ready money" we are told is available at Egesta you should assume is only ready in theory.

So, when we leave here we must have assembled an armament that **23** is not just a match for theirs – except, of course, against their fighting strength in hoplites – but is actually superior in every respect, and even then we shall find it hard to conquer the enemy and come through safely ourselves. You must think of us as founding a city in the midst of alien [2] and hostile peoples, and on the very day the invaders land they must immediately become masters of the field, in the sure knowledge that if they fail they will find every circumstance hostile to them. And because [3] that is the outcome I fear and because I know that while we need a great deal of good planning we must rely even more on good fortune, which cannot be guaranteed in this world of ours[1] – for both these reasons, I want to depend as little as possible on chance in this expedition and when we sail I want us to be as safe in our preparations as we reasonably can. That, I believe, offers the best security to the city as a whole and the [4] best chance of safety for those of us on the expedition. If anyone thinks differently, however, then I offer to yield my command to him.'

Nicias said all this, thinking that he would thereby deter the Athenians **24** by the magnitude of the task he was presenting or, if he were forced to undertake the expedition, that they would on this basis at least be sailing out with the maximum security. The Athenians, however, were [2]

[1] Literally, 'which is difficult, we being mortals'. Nicias' 'luck' is a running theme (see V 16.1, VI 17.1, 103.4, VII 77.2 and his final 'ill-luck' at VII 86.5).

not to be shaken from their passionate desire for the expedition by the prospect of these burdensome preparations; in fact they were all the more motivated, and the result was just the opposite of what he had expected – they thought that he had given them good advice and that now the safety of the enterprise would be fully assured. Everyone alike had fallen in [3] love[1] with the voyage: the older men believing that either they would overwhelm the places they sailed against or that so great a force could at least suffer no disaster; the young men of military age yearning to see these far-off sights and spectacles, full of good hope for their safe return; and the mass of common soldiery seeing an opportunity to earn some money in the short-term and to acquire a power that would be an endless source of earnings in the future. And so, in the face of this extreme passion on [4] the part of the majority,[2] anyone who felt otherwise was afraid of seeming disloyal if he voted against and therefore held his peace.

25 Finally, one Athenian came forward and challenged Nicias, telling him that he should stop making excuses and delaying things but should declare there and then in front of everyone what resources the Athenians should vote him. Nicias reluctantly said that he would prefer to consult with [2] his fellow-commanders in a more considered way, but as far as he could see now they would need to sail with the following: no fewer than 100 triremes to be supplied by the Athenians themselves (including troop-carriers in numbers to be determined), with others to be commissioned from the allies; no fewer than 5,000 hoplites in all (from both the Athenians and the allies again), and more if at all possible; and then the rest of the forces they would need to take with them, all in due proportion, including archers from home and from Crete, slingers and anything else that seemed appropriate.

26 On hearing this the Athenians immediately voted to give the generals full powers with regard to the size of the army and the whole expedition, to act in whatever way they thought in the best interests of Athens. The [2] preparations now began, and they sent word to the allies and began to muster the troops at home. The city itself had just recovered from the

[1] *eros* 'love', a powerful and poetic term, picking up on *duserotes* 'perverse longing' at 13.1 and, more distantly perhaps, Pericles' injunction that they become *erastai* 'lovers of the city' (II 43.1). There are several other equally emotional terms used in this passage: *pothos* 'yearning' at 24.3, *epithumia* and cognates 'passionate desire' at 24.2 and 24.4, *horme* and cognates 'impulse' at 6.1, 19.1, 20.1 and 24.2 (but all variously translated in context). The grammar is perhaps correspondingly jerky, as the words tumble out.

[2] The Greek might mean either 'of most people' or possibly 'for more', or conceivably both (see Hornblower III, p. 363).

plague and the years of continuous warfare and there had been a big increase both in the numbers of young men of military age who had grown up in the meantime and in the money that had been accumulated in consequence of the truce, so all this could be provided for more easily.

27 The Athenians were thus engaged in these preparations. But then this happened. In the course of one night the statues of Hermes in the city of Athens – the square-cut ones in the local style which stood everywhere in the doorways of private houses and in temples – were almost all of them mutilated and defaced. No one knew who the perpetrators were, but [2] large rewards were publicly offered for their detection and the Athenians furthermore voted that if anyone knew about any other act of sacrilege they could volunteer information about it with impunity – whether they be citizen, foreigner or slave. They took the matter very seriously,[1] since [3] it seemed like an omen for the expedition and at the same time to betoken a conspiracy for a political uprising and the subversion of popular rule.[2]

28 Information accordingly came in from some metics and servants, not about the statues of Hermes at all but about mutilations of other statues, which had happened earlier during some drunken horseplay by young men; and they also reported incidents of mock celebrations of the Mysteries[3] in private houses. And Alcibiades was one of those implicated in these charges. The accusations were taken up by those who most [2] resented Alcibiades for standing in the way of their ambitions of securing the leadership of the people.[4] They thought that if they could get him exiled they would be first in line, and so they exaggerated the situation and loudly proclaimed that the affair of the Mysteries and the mutilation of the Herms were part of an attempt to undermine the rule of the people and that none of this would have happened without Alcibiades' involvement, citing as evidence other examples of his anti-populist[5] style of life.

[1] As does Thucydides, another striking example of his recognition of the importance of religious sensitivities in this period (see also V 50.2n and the reference to the Mysteries at 28.2 below). The particular ominous significance of Hermes in this context was that he was the god of travellers.

[2] See glossary notes on *neoterizo* and *demos*, usually over-translated here perhaps as 'revolution' and 'democracy'.

[3] The Mysteries were religious cults with their own special rituals. See the very full account in Hornblower (III, pp. 367–72).

[4] See II 65.10–11.

[5] 'not *demotiken*' which is usually translated as 'undemocratic' but seems to be more a matter of social elitism (see 15.4 above).

29 Alcibiades immediately defended himself against these allegations and was ready to stand trial for anything he might have done before the expedition set off (for which the preparations had now been made); if he was guilty of any of this, he said, he would pay the penalty, but if he was cleared he would keep the command. He publicly appealed to them not [2] to entertain slanders about him in his absence but to put him to death now if he were guilty, pointing out that it would be wiser not to send him out at the head of so great an expedition with such a charge hanging over him unresolved. His enemies, however, were afraid that the army might [3] be well-disposed to him if it went to trial, and that the people would be lenient and take his side because it was through him that the Argives and some of the Mantineans were supporting them in the campaign. They therefore actively discouraged that course and put up other speakers in assembly to argue that he should sail now and not delay the departure but should then come back within some prescribed period to stand trial. What they wanted was to assemble some larger calumny against him, which would be easier to do in his absence, and then recall him for trial under summons. So it was decided that Alcibiades should sail.

30 After all this it was midsummer when the departure for Sicily finally began. Instructions had been given beforehand to most of the allies, along with the supply ships, the smaller boats and all the rest of the supporting force, to muster at Corcyra, from where they would cross the Ionian Sea in convoy to reach the tip of Iapygia.[1] The Athenians themselves and any of the allies already with them went down to Peiraeus at dawn on the appointed day and began to man the ships ready for departure. And to [2] join them there came practically the whole of the rest of the population of Athens – both citizens and foreigners. The local people were seeing off their own, whether friends, relatives or sons, all departing in hope and tears: hope for the conquests to come, and tears for those they might never see again, as they took to heart how far from their native land the voyage was taking them.

31 At that moment, when amid all these impending dangers they were about to take their leave of each other, the perils of their situation came home to them more forcefully than they ever had when they were voting to make the voyage. Nonetheless, they took courage again at the evidence before them of their present strength, the sheer quantity of every kind of resource they could see with their own eyes. As for the foreigners and the

[1] The promontory on the 'heel' of Italy (see map 4).

rest of the crowd, they came for the extraordinary spectacle, finding the whole conception of the thing quite remarkable and incredible.

This first armada did indeed represent the most expensive[1] and the most magnificent display of Greek power ever to be launched from any single city up to that time. In terms of the number of ships and hoplites [2] the force sent out to Epidaurus under Pericles and then again to Potidaea under Hagnon was not inferior, it is true: on that voyage 4,000 hoplites, 300 cavalry and 100 triremes from Athens itself sailed out, together with fifty triremes from Lesbos and Chios and many other allied troops.[2] But [3] these were setting off on a short voyage and with relatively little support, whereas the present expedition was equipped for what would be a long campaign, with ships and infantry for operations both by sea and land. The fleet was brought to its elaborate completion at very great expense on the part of both the trierarchs[3] and the city: public funds provided pay for each sailor at the rate of a drachma a day and supplied sixty unmanned warships, forty transport ships and staff of the best quality; the trierarchs for their part funded additional payments to the sailors on the upper decks[4] and the staff and they spared no expense in other ways on the insignia and the fittings, as each of them strove to the utmost to ensure that their own ship excelled both in its presentation and its speed of performance. The infantry were selected from the best recruitment lists and there was keen competition among the men over the quality of their arms and personal equipment.

The result was that there was rivalry between Athenians in their differ- [4] ent roles, and it all looked more like a public display of power and wealth aimed at the rest of the Greeks rather than a preparation for war with their enemies. Just imagine the result of reckoning up both the public [5] expenditure of the city and the private expenditure of the men taking part. On the part of the city, there was what it had already spent in advance and what it was sending the generals to take with them; on the part of private individuals, add what each had spent on his personal equipment, and in the case of the trierarchs what they had spent on their ships and all

[1] The word *poluteles* is highlighted as a superlative and by an emphatic following particle. Could we be meant to recall the use of its contrary *euteles* by Pericles at II 40.1?

[2] See II 56.4 and 58.1–2.

[3] See glossary under 'trireme'; the 'trierarchy' was another form of taxation or 'liturgy' on the rich at Athens, comparable to the responsibility for sponsoring dramatic festivals and choruses (see above 16.3).

[4] These elite rowers were the *thranitai*. The rowers on the middle deck were the *zeugitai* and those on least salubrious lower row were the *thalamioi* (IV 32.2).

that was yet to be spent; and then add to that the money over and above the state pay which everyone would have taken with him for his travel expenses on such a long expedition, and all that each of them, whether soldier or merchant, would have taken on board for the purposes of trade. In total a huge number of talents would be found to be leaving the city.

The armada thus became a talking point less because of general amaze- [6] ment at its daring ambition and its splendour as a spectacle than for the excessive scale of the forces compared with those against which they were ranged, and because it was the longest voyage from home ever yet attempted and one undertaken with the most disproportionate hopes of future gains compared to their present possessions.

When the ships were manned and they finally had on board everything 32 they were going to take with them, a trumpet gave the signal for silence and they offered the prayers that are customary before setting out – not separately ship by ship but led by a herald in unison; and they mixed the wine and throughout the whole army, commanders and men together, they poured libations from cups of silver and gold. They were joined in [2] their prayers by the rest of the crowd on the shore, both citizens and their other well-wishers present. And when they had sung the paean and finished the libations, they put out to sea, sailing out first in a single line and then racing each other as far as Aegina.

So the Athenian fleet pressed on to Corcyra, where the allies were assembling with the rest of the force. Meanwhile in Syracuse, news was [3] coming in from many sides about the armada bearing down on them, though for a long time none of it was believed. But when an assembly was in fact held various speeches were made, some by those who gave no credence to reports of the Athenian expedition and some by those taking the opposite view. Among these Hermocrates son of Hermon came forward to speak, in the belief that he had a clear grasp of the matter, and advised them as follows.[1]

'You will perhaps find it hard to believe me, just as you have others, 33 in what I have to say about the reality of this invasion, and I am aware that those who express or repeat views that seem incredible not only fail to carry conviction but are actually thought to be out of their minds. Nonetheless, I will not be inhibited by this fear at a time when our city is in danger, since I am sure in myself that I am better informed than

[1] He was last heard of at IV 58–64, at the conference at Gela in 424, successfully persuading the Siceliots to put aside their differences and unite in the interests of Sicily as a whole to deter an Athenian invasion.

others than others in what I have to say. You find it extraordinary – but [2]
the Athenians really have launched against you a large armament of land
and sea forces. Their pretext is their alliance with the Egestans and the
resettlement of the Leontines in Sicily, but what they are really set on
is Sicily, and in particular our city, in the belief that if they can acquire
this they will easily take the rest. So you must expect them here soon and [3]
look to see how you can best mobilise your current resources to defend
yourselves. You must neither be caught off your guard by taking them too
lightly nor be so disbelieving that you neglect the whole issue entirely.

Anyone who does find what I say persuasive, however, should not be [4]
shocked by this daring initiative of theirs and by their military might.
They will not be able to inflict more damage on us than they sustain
themselves; nor is the fact that they are invading us with such a large
fleet a disadvantage for us in itself. On the contrary, as far as our relations
with the other Siceliots[1] are concerned it is a considerable bonus, for they
will be more willing to join in an alliance with us if they are shocked
into it; and if in the end we either finish the Athenians off or send them
away frustrated in their ambitions – since I have no fear at all that they
will actually achieve what they expect – then this will prove to be a most
splendid triumph for us, and not one I myself regard as at all unlikely.
There are few enough examples of success for mighty armaments, whether [5]
Greek or barbarian, when they are operating far from home. They will not
outnumber the combination of the local inhabitants and their neighbours
(all brought together by fear); and if they are defeated by the failure of
their supply-lines in a foreign country, they bequeath the credit of victory
to their intended victims, even though they were mainly responsible for
their own downfall. After all, that was just the experience these same [6]
Athenians had in reverse. When against all reasonable expectation the
Persians failed so comprehensively against them, the Athenians grew
great on the grounds that they were the intended targets. And there is no
reason to doubt a similar outcome in our case.

We must therefore make our preparations here in a spirit of confidence: **34**
we should send word to the Sicels, to strengthen the relationships we
already have and to try and create new friends and allies elsewhere; and
we should send envoys to the rest of Sicily to draw attention to the
common danger, and also to Italy, either to make them our allies or at
least to stop them allying with the Athenians. I think it would be best also [2]

[1] For the distinction between Siceliots and Sicels see III 90.1n.

to approach the Carthaginians – not that this would come as a surprise to them, since they have always been afraid that the Athenians might make a move against their city and so will perhaps calculate that if they leave Sicily to its fate they themselves would be in trouble. They may therefore be willing to support us, secretly if not openly, or in some way at any rate. And there is no one in a stronger position at present if they do so decide, for they have accumulated very large reserves of gold and silver – the means to success in war and in much else. We should also send word [3] to Sparta and Corinth, asking them to come and help us here as quickly as possible and to crank up the war over there too.

The course of action I think the most timely now is also the one you [4] are least likely to agree to quickly, given your preference for a quiet life; but I will tell you anyway. What if all the Siceliots together, or failing that as many as will join us, were to launch the whole of our existing navy with two months' provisions and confront the Athenians at Tarentum and the promontory of Iapygia to make it plain to them that what is first to be contested is not Sicily but their crossing of the Ionian Sea? That way we should really shock them and force them to calculate that while we make our defence from a friendly base (since Tarentum will give us access) in their case they will have had a long stretch of open sea to cross with the whole of their armament. It is difficult to maintain formation over such a long voyage, so they would be vulnerable to our attacks as they come up slowly and a few at a time. Suppose on the other hand [5] that they launched a more concentrated attack with their fast warships unencumbered.[1] If they had used their oars we would set on them when they had exhausted themselves; and if we decided against that we could always retire to Tarentum. They, however, after making the crossing with limited supplies in preparation for a sea battle, would find themselves in uninhabited regions and would have a dilemma: they could stay and be blockaded or, if they tried to sail along the coast, they would be leaving behind the rest of the expedition, would be uncertain of their reception in the cities there, and would lose heart.

My view, therefore, is that they would be deterred by this line of [6] thought from even leaving Corcyra. They will either take time to weigh up the options and gather intelligence on our numbers and dispositions until they are forced by the weather to extend operations into the winter

[1] Literally, 'lightening [their ships]'. Warships could be stripped of non-essential gear for battle (see VII 24.2 and VIII 43.1) and they would in this case also be 'unencumbered' by the slower-moving parts of the fleet.

season; or they will be so taken aback by the surprise of it all that they abandon the expedition altogether, especially as the most experienced of their generals, as I understand it, is taking command reluctantly and would be glad to have the excuse of pointing to a significant initiative on our part. Reports of our strength would be exaggerated, I'm sure. It is [7] a fact of life that people's views are much influenced by what they are told, and the enemies they most fear are those who get in first with their attacks or who at least demonstrate in advance to aggressors that they will defend themselves, since the others then judge that the dangers are at least equally shared.

And that would be exactly the effect on the Athenians. They are coming [8] to attack us expecting no resistance, justifiably dismissive of us because we did not join the Spartans in seeking to destroy them; but if they should witness an unexpected display of daring they would be more taken aback by the shock of this than they would by our true strength.

Believe me, the boldest course in this case is by far the best one. But [9] failing that, you must make other preparations for war with all speed. Everyone must come to understand that although the best way to show contempt for an invading enemy on the field of action is through bravery, in the present situation fear is our greatest safeguard and the most advantageous course is to assume that we are now acting in an emergency. These men really are coming to attack us; they are already under sail, I am quite sure; and they are all but upon us.'

That was what Hermocrates had to say and the people of Syracuse were **35** very much divided amongst themselves. Some held that there was no way the Athenians could be coming and that what Hermocrates had said was untrue, while others asked what harm, even if they did come, they could do to the Syracusans that they would not suffer even more in return. Yet others were completely dismissive and tried to turn the whole thing into a laughing matter. And just a small minority believed Hermocrates and feared for their future.

There then came forward Athenagoras,[1] who was a popular leader and [2] at this time very influential with the general populace, and he spoke as follows.

[1] Not otherwise known or heard of again. This introduction closely recalls that of Cleon at IV 21.2 and his speech contains a good deal of bluster, though it is hard to say how fully characterised it might be since it includes some very Thucydidean complexities, for example at 38.4 and at 40.1–2, whose long final sentence is scarcely a rousing punch-line.

'You talk of the Athenians. Anyone who does *not* want them to be 36
so misguided as to come here and fall into our hands is either a coward
or a traitor to the city. As for those who spread this sort of news and
make you frightened, I don't wonder so much at their audacity as at their
lack of sense if they think we don't see through them. The fact is they [2]
have reasons of their own to be frightened and they want to reduce the
city to panic so that public fears overshadow their own.[1] This, then, is
the significance of these reports, which do not arise spontaneously but
are manufactured by those people who are always agitating here. You, [3]
if you are well advised, should judge the probabilities not from their
reports but from the actions of such clever and experienced people as I
take the Athenians to be. It is surely not likely that they would leave the [4]
Peloponnesians behind them before bringing the war there to a secure
conclusion and choose to come here to embark on another war just as
great; indeed in my view, considering the number and size of our cities,
they would be only too glad that we are not moving to attack *them*.

But just suppose the reports are right and the Athenians were indeed 37
to come. I think Sicily is better able than the Peloponnese to carry on a
war, to the extent that it is better equipped in every respect and our city
just by itself is much stronger than the army they say is now advancing
on us (or even one twice that size). I understand at any rate that no
horses will be coming with them, nor will any be provided from here
(except just a few from the Egestans); nor will their hoplites match ours
in number, considering that they have to come on ships (after all, it is a
major undertaking even for lightly laden ships to make the long journey
here to Sicily); and the rest of the equipment that must be supplied for
an assault on as large a city as ours is no small matter either. In fact, I [2]
would go so far as to say that even if they were to come here bringing with
them another city the size of Syracuse and were to wage their war from a
settlement on our borders they would still be unlikely to escape complete
annihilation; even less so when the whole of Sicily is united against them,
as it will be, and they are in a camp assembled from their ships with little
tents and only basic supplies, and unable to venture far because of our
cavalry. In short, I do not think they would even secure a base on the land
here, so much superior do I judge our resources to be.

[1] Three different 'fear' type words are used in this sentence (*phobos*, *ekplexis* and the verb related to *deos*: see glossary under *phobos*).

The Athenians must be aware of all this, as I say, and I am sure they **38**
will be protecting their own interests. People here are the ones fabricating [2]
stories which are not true and never will be, and I have been aware, not just for the first time now but from way back, that what they want is to strike panic into your populace at large, either with reports of this kind (and still more mischievous ones) or through direct action, in order to take control of the city themselves. And I am afraid that if they try long and hard enough they may in the end succeed, since we are bad at taking precautions before we become victims and at acting decisively on our perceptions. There you have the reason why our city is rarely at peace but [3]
inflicts a multitude of conflicts and struggles not so much on its enemies as on itself, including sometimes tyrannies and illegal regimes.

I will try to ensure, if you will only follow my lead, that no such thing [4]
shall ever happen to us in our time. I shall try to persuade you, the people, to punish the authors of such schemes, not only when they are caught in the act (which is not easy to do) but also for the things they want to do but cannot – since you need to pre-empt not only an enemy's actions but also his designs, to avoid being the first to suffer what you have failed to forestall. As for the oligarchs, I shall act variously as prosecutor, watchdog and even tutor, which I think is the best way to divert them from their wicked ways.

Now then, young men, to turn to you, here is a question I have often [5]
wondered about – what do you actually want? To hold an office of state right now? That would not be legal – the law debars you while you are still unqualified, but does not deny you these honours when you do qualify. Or is it that you don't want to be equal before the law with the majority? Yet how could it be right that people should not be valued on their merits, like for like?

It will be said that a democracy is neither wise nor fair and that those **39**
who own property are the people most likely to rule well.[1] But I say first that "people" is the name of the whole and "oligarchy" the name of only a part, and secondly that while the rich are the best guardians of property, the wise would be the best counsellors, and the majority the best judges of what they hear; and all these, considered separately and together, have an equal share in a democracy. An oligarchy shares the dangers with the [2]
people but wants more than its share of the benefits – it actually wants to

[1] See also III 65.3 and VI 89.6, and for an opposing view Pericles at II 37.1.

take and keep them all.[1] And that is what the powerful and the young among you are bent on – something impossible to achieve in a great city.

You idiots, if you still do not realise that you are rushing down the **40** wrong track you are either the most stupid of all the Greeks I know, or the most immoral – if you do know what you are doing and still brazen it out. Even now, I say, either learn your lesson, or repent and promote the common interests of the city for everyone's sake, realising that the better class of people among you would enjoy the benefits the populace at large has in equal or even greater measure, whereas if you hope for other things you run the risk of losing everything. So, let us have no more of such reports – remember that you are dealing with people who are aware of what is going on and will not put up with it. Even if the Athenians *do* [2] come, this city of ours will give a good account of itself and repel them – we have generals who will see to this. But if none of this is true – and I believe none of it is – the city will not be so terrified by your reports as to choose you as her rulers and so impose a self-inflicted servitude on herself; instead, she will make her own judgements and will examine your words as if they had the force of deeds; and she will not be deprived of her present freedom through listening to you, but will seek to preserve it through taking active precautions to resist you.'

Such was the speech of Athenagoras. One of the generals then got up, **41** preventing anyone else from taking the floor, and gave his own views on the situation as follows:

'It is unwise for speakers to exchange personal insults with each other [2] or for their audience to tolerate this. We should look instead at the reports that are coming in and see how each individual and the city as a whole can best prepare to defend ourselves against the invaders. And even if none [3] of this turns out to be necessary there is no harm in furnishing our state with horses and weapons and all the other glories in which war rejoices.[2] (You can leave us to manage and review all that.) And there can be no [4] harm either in dispatching missions to the cities for observation and any other purposes thought useful. We have already attended to some such matters and we will be bringing before you any findings we have.'

After that speech from the general the Syracusans dissolved the assembly.

[1] For other explicit comparisons or conjunctions of the abstract terms *demokratia* and *oligarchia*, see VIII 49n and glossary under *demokratia*.

[2] A curious little flourish in this brisk, no-nonsense address from the military.

By now the Athenians and their allies were already all at Corcyra. 42
The generals first held a further review of the forces and decided on the dispositions in which they were to anchor and encamp. They divided them into three parts and assigned them by lot, one to each of the three generals, in order to avoid them all sailing together and so getting into difficulties over the provision of water, harbours and supplies at landing-places; the intention was also to promote good order generally and make them easier to command through the assignment of a separate general for each division. They then sent three ships on ahead to Italy and Sicily [2]
to discover which of the cities would receive them, with instructions to come back to meet them so that they should be aware of the situation when putting in anywhere.

After this the Athenians set off from Corcyra and began the passage to 43
Sicily with a force that was now numbered as follows: 134 triremes in all and two penteconters from Rhodes (100 of the triremes were from Attica, of which sixty were warships and the rest transports, with the remainder of the fleet coming from Chios and the other allies); 5,100 hoplites in total (and of these 1,500 were Athenians from the citizen service roll, 700 were from the lowest class[1] serving as marines on board, and the rest were allies joining in the campaign – some from subject states as well as 500 Argives and 250 Mantinean and other mercenaries; 480 archers in all (of which eighty were from Crete), 700 slingers from Rhodes, 120 Megarian exiles serving as light-armed troops, and one horse-transport carrying thirty cavalry.[2]

Such was the size of this first force that sailed over for the war. In their 44
support, thirty grain-transports brought in supplies, also carrying bakers, stonemasons, builders and all the tools needed for siege operations; 100 smaller boats were also conscripted to sail with these transports. Meanwhile many other small boats and transports voluntarily accompanied the expedition for trading purposes. And all these set off from Corcyra at this time to cross the Ionian Gulf. The whole force reached the coast [2]
at the Iapygian promontory and at Tarentum or wherever they found the best approach, and then started sailing along the Italian coast. Some cities were unwilling to give them access to their markets or towns but did offer them water and anchorage, though Tarentum and Locri did not even offer them that, and eventually they reached Rhegium at the tip of

[1] The *thetes* (see III 16.1).
[2] There are full analyses of these numbers in Gomme IV, pp. 308–10 and Hornblower III, pp. 1061–6.

Italy. They gathered outside the city there, since they were not allowed [3]
in, and set up camp in the temple grounds of Artemis where the Rhegians
did provide a market for them, and drawing up the ships there they took
a rest. They opened discussions with the Rhegians and urged them to
assist the Leontines, as Chaclidians supporting Chalcidians. However,
the Rhegians said they would join neither side but would do whatever the
rest of the Italian states decided. The Athenians at this point reviewed the [4]
situation in Sicily to decide how best to proceed; at the same time they
waited for the advance party of ships to arrive from Egesta, wanting to
know about the money – whether there really were the funds there that
had been reported in Athens by their heralds.

Meanwhile the Syracusans were receiving clear reports from all sides, **45**
including from their own reconnaissance, that the ships were at Rhegium,
and in response they now gave their full attention to preparations for the
attack and no longer entertained any doubts about it. They sent round
defenders to some of the Sicel communities and envoys to others and
installed garrisons in the guard-houses in outlying country districts. In
the city itself they carried out checks to inspect the condition of the
weapons and horses and in general organised everything for the war that
was coming soon – indeed was almost upon them.

The advance party of three ships came back from Egesta to rejoin **46**
the Athenians at Rhegium and reported that the rest of the money that
had been promised did not exist and that only thirty talents were to be
found. The generals' spirits fell sharply at this, both at receiving such an [2]
early setback and because the Rhegians had refused to join their forces –
though these were the people with whom they had begun their campaign
of persuasion and were good candidates for this given both their kinship
with the Leontines and their long-standing friendship with the Athenians.
This business with the Egestans was therefore turning out just as Nicias
had expected, but it seemed quite inexplicable to the other two generals.

The Egestans had in fact resorted to the following trick when the [3]
original team of envoys had come from Athens to check up on the money.
They brought them into the temple of Aphrodite at Eryx and showed
off the dedicatory offerings there – bowls, urns, ladles, incense cups and
many other utensils, which being made of silver gave a much greater
impression of wealth than the Egestans' scant resources justified. They
also entertained the men from the triremes privately and brought out for
them gold and silver drinking-cups, not only those collected from Egesta
itself but also some borrowed from neighbouring cities (both Phoenician

and Greek) which they passed off as their own. And since everyone was [4]
using more or less the same cups and there seemed to be lots of them around everywhere they made a big impression on the Athenians from the triremes who, when they got back to Athens, spread news of the great wealth they had seen. But having themselves been deceived and then [5]
having persuaded others, when the word got out that the money was not actually there in Egesta these men came in for heavy criticism from the soldiers. Meanwhile the generals for their part started considering how to respond to this situation.[1]

Nicias' view was that they should sail with the entire force against **47**
Selinus, which was the principal objective they had been sent for.[2] If the Egestans then came up with funds to support the whole army they should plan accordingly, but if not they should require them to provide maintenance for exactly the thirty ships they had requested and should stay there long enough to bring the Selinuntians to terms with them, either by force or agreement; they should then sail down the coast past the other cities to display the power of the city of Athens and to demonstrate their commitment to their friends and allies; and then they should set sail for home – unless some quick and unexpected way of helping the Leontines or winning over one of the other cities presented itself – and not take risks with the safety of the state at their own expense.

Alcibiades said that after setting out with such a mighty force they **48**
should not return home in shame having achieved nothing. They should instead open negotiations with all the cities except for Selinus and Syracuse and also approach the Sicels, in some cases to try and detach them from the Syracusans and in others to make friends of them, in order to get themselves supplies of food and troops; and first of all they should seek to win over Messina, which was right on the path of the approach to Sicily and would offer the perfect harbour and observation-point for their

[1] Their three proposals are given in indirect speech, though it seems unlikely that we should read into this anything about their source or relative authenticity. Nor can we say which of them Thucydides himself found most promising, except retrospectively. Perhaps this was just a convenient way of setting out the options, in a form consistent with the known characters and positions of the speakers (though the proposal of Lamachus is the one most fully developed here and we know least about him from other references).

[2] The objective is in fact stated in different terms in different places, emphasising a crucial (and dangerous) unclarity of purpose: see VI 8.2, 20.1–3, 69.3, 83.4–87.2 and VII 11.2, 15.1 and 64.1. It suits Nicias here to limit the purpose as far as he can. The view from the other side is different again, of course (see Hermocrates at IV 61.3–5 and Gylippus at VII 66.2). For a subtle discussion of these different apparent 'objectives' see Hawthorn, *Thucydides on Politics: back to the present*, ch. 12.

forces. Then when they had won over the cities and knew what side everyone was on, they should finally attack the Syracusans and Selinuntians – unless, that is, the Selinuntians had come to terms with the Egestans and the Syracusans were allowing the resettlement of the Leontines.

Lamachus said that they should sail directly against Syracuse and take **49** the fight to the city as soon as possible, while the enemy was still unprepared and would be most terror-stricken. It was at the very beginning, [2] he said, that every army was at its most terrifying. If it delayed before coming into view men recovered their nerve and when they did see it would be more inclined to be dismissive. But if they were to launch a sudden attack while the others were still feeling the dread of anticipation they would have the best chance of success and would throw them into all kinds of panic – at the sight of them (since that would be the time when they would look their most numerous), at the expectation of the fate they had in store, and most of all at the immediate peril of the battle. It was also likely that many of them would be left out in the fields through [3] their refusal to believe that the Athenians were coming and while they were moving their goods into the city the Athenians would not lack for resources if they took up a commanding position in front of the city. In [4] this situation the rest of the Sicels would then be less likely to ally with the enemy but would come over to the Athenian side and not wait about to see which side would end up on top. Finally, he said, they should go back and make a naval base at Megara, which was uninhabited and not far from Syracuse either by land or sea.

This was what Lamachus said, but he nevertheless gave his support **50** to Alcibiades' proposal.[1] Alcibiades then went in his own ship across to Messina to discuss a possible alliance with them but failed to persuade them. He was told that they would not give the Athenians access to their city but would provide a market for them outside it, so he sailed back to Rhegium. The generals immediately manned sixty ships drawn from [2] the whole fleet and taking the necessary supplies sailed across to Naxos, leaving the rest of the army with one of them[2] back at Rhegium. The [3] Naxians did admit them into their city and they then sailed on to Catana

[1] Lamachus was the minor partner in political terms, though constitutionally the equal of the other two, and in the case of disagreements of this kind a decision depended on a general supporting one of the others. The immediate aftermath of the debate suggests that Lamachus was in fact right about the degree of unpreparedness at Syracuse.

[2] Thucydides is usually so assiduous in supplying detail that one wonders why he does not name names in cases like this (and at VI 41 above and 60.2 below).

but were rejected there (some of the men in the city were supporters of the Syracusan cause) and went on to the River Terias. There they encamped and the next day sailed to Syracuse with all their ships in line, except for ten that they sent on ahead to enter the Great Harbour and ascertain if any fleet had been launched. They were also to make a proclamation from their ships that the Athenians were coming to restore the Leontines to their own land, in accordance with their alliance and their kinship with them; therefore any Leontines in Syracuse should without fear leave the city to join their friends and benefactors, the Athenians. After making [5] this proclamation and completing their reconnaissance of the city, the harbour and the surrounding countryside that would have to be their base of operations in war, they sailed back to Catana.

51 The Catanaeans held an assembly and although they would not admit the army into the city they did invite the generals to come in and address them if there was something they wanted to say. But while Alcibiades was speaking and the people in the city had their attention fixed on the assembly, the soldiers broke into the city unnoticed through a badly constructed gate and went into the market-place.[1] When they saw the [2] soldiers inside the city those of the Catanaeans who were Syracusan sympathisers were instantly alarmed and slipped away, though there were relatively few of them. The others voted for an alliance with the Athenians and told them to bring the rest of the army over from Rhegium. The [3] Athenians then sailed back to Rhegium and this time set off for Catana with the whole force, and on their arrival there they began setting up camp.

52 News was now coming in from Camarina that if the Athenians went there the Camarinaeans would come over to them and that the Syracusans were manning their fleet. So they sailed across with their entire force, first to Syracuse, where they found no evidence of the fleet being manned, then on again along the coast to Camarina, where they put in on the shore and sent in a herald. The Camarinaeans, however, would not admit them, saying that they were under oath only to allow the Athenians in if they came with a single ship, unless they themselves sent for more. So the Athenians sailed away without having accomplished anything.[2] [2] They then made a landing somewhere in Syracusan territory and made a raid, but after the Syracusan cavalry came out in defence and killed a

[1] A verb in the Greek 'they market-placed', which could mean they did some shopping as well as entering the area.

[2] Rather pointedly this is the same phrase exactly that Alcibiades used at 48.1.

few of the light-armed stragglers the Athenians took themselves back to Catana.

There they found that the state ship, the *Salaminia*,[1] had arrived from **53** Athens ordering Alcibiades to return home and defend himself against charges the city was bringing; the same applied to certain other soldiers who along with Alcibiades had been accused by informers of acts of impiety, some to do with the Mysteries and some to do with the Herms. After the expedition had left Athens the Athenians in no way slackened [2] their enquiries about the affairs of the Mysteries and the Herms, and instead of testing the claims of the informers critically they were in a mood of suspicion where they were ready to entertain each and every accusation; and on the word of complete scoundrels they arrested and imprisoned some of their best citizens. They took the view that it was more expedient to resort to any means to get at the truth[2] than to allow anyone to escape investigation, whatever the worthlessness of the informer and the good reputation of the accused.

The people knew the traditional story of how the tyranny of Peisistratus [3] and his sons became oppressive in its final stages – and furthermore that it had been brought to an end not by themselves and Harmodius but by the Spartans, and this left them in a constant state of fear, regarding everything with suspicion.

The daring deed of Aristogeiton and Harmodius was in fact the chance **54** result of a love affair, as I shall relate at some length to demonstrate that other sources, including the Athenians themselves, fail altogether to give an accurate account of their tyrants or this incident.[3]

[1] See III 33.1.

[2] Literally, 'to test out and discover', but the word for 'test' *basanizein* also means 'to extract information under torture' (as at VII 86.4 and VIII 92.2), so some stronger rendering here seems justified.

[3] Herodotus tells much the same story at V 55ff. and 62ff., so Thucydides may have more in mind Hellanicus, whose general reliability he has already criticised (I 97.2). Whether this presents a plausible analogy to the situation in 415, as Thucydides claims, or is strictly a 'digression' has been much discussed: Dover (Gomme IV, p. 329) thinks he has succumbed to the temptation 'before which all historians and commentators are by their very nature weak, the temptation to correct historical error wherever they find it, regardless of its relevance to their immediate purpose' (and he has already mentioned the story briefly at I 20 where it *was* relevant to his purpose); while Hornblower (persuasively) suggests that it may simultaneously serve several different literary and historical purposes (III, pp. 433–40).

Peisistratus died an old man, still ruling as tyrant,[1] and he was suc- [2]
ceeded in the position not by Hipparchus, as is commonly supposed, but
by his elder brother Hippias. And there was a young man, Harmodius,
a famous beauty now in the full bloom of youth, whom Aristogeiton, a
citizen of the middle rank, had taken as his lover. Hipparchus the son of [3]
Peisistratus tried to seduce him but Harmodius refused him and com-
plained to Aristogeiton, who in a fit of lover's jealousy and in fear that
Hipparchus might use his power to take Harmodius by force immediately
started plotting the downfall of the tyranny, in so far as someone of his
status could. Meanwhile Hipparchus made a second attempt to seduce [4]
Harmodius but was no more successful in winning him over. Hipparchus
did not, however, want to resort to force of any kind, but tried to find
some covert way of besmirching[2] Harmodius without revealing his true
motive.

In fact, these tyrants were in general not oppressive in their exercise of [5]
power towards the people at large but managed their authority without
arousing resentment; and compared to other tyrants they set the highest
standards of behaviour and good sense.[3] Indeed, although they exacted
from Athenians only a twentieth of their income they kept their city in
good order, fully supported their wars and provided sacrifices for the
temples. The city remained free to observe all the laws previously in [6]
place, except in so far as the tyrants took care to ensure that one of their
people always held office. Among those who held the annual post of
archon at Athens was Peisistratus, son of the Hippias who became tyrant
and named after his grandfather, and when he was archon he dedicated
the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the agora and the Altar of Apollo in the
Pythian sanctuary. Later on when the Athenians built on the altar in the [7]
agora and extended its length the inscription there was obliterated, but
the faint lettering on the one in the Pythian sanctuary is still legible and
reads as follows:

THIS MEMORIAL OF HIS ARCHONSHIP PEISISTRATUS
SON OF HIPPIAS
SET UP IN THE PRECINCT OF PYTHIAN APOLLO

[1] See glossary for the non-pejorative sense of 'tyrant'. Indeed the point of the present passage is to emphasise that tyrants were *not* necessarily oppressive.

[2] Here and at 56.1, literally 'dragging through the mud' and so both insulting and humiliating.

[3] *Arete* and *sunesis* (see glossary).

That it was Hippias who as eldest son held the archonship I can con- **55**
firm from reported information I have which is more accurate than that available to others; but one could also infer it from this simple fact. He alone of the legitimate brothers appears to have had children. The altar demonstrates that, as does the stele set up on the Athenian acropolis to commemorate the crimes of the tyrants, on which no child of Thessalus or Hipparchus is listed but five children of Hippias are, all born to him by Myrrine, the daughter of Callias son of Hyperochides – and it was to be expected that the eldest would marry first. On the [2]
same stele his name is inscribed immediately after his father's. Nor is this surprising, since he was next in seniority and became tyrant after him. Nor indeed could Hippias in my view have easily taken over the [3]
tyranny on the spot if Hipparchus had been in power when he died and if Hippias had tried to assume the position that very day. As it was, the habit of fear he had instilled into the citizenry and the strict discipline he had over his bodyguards enabled him to control the situation with a good degree of safety, rather than being at a loss as a younger brother would have been who had not been continuously exposed to the demands of office. It was the misfortune of Hipparchus, whose name is [4]
remembered for his unhappy fate, also to have acquired the reputation for tyranny.

So after Harmodius had rejected his advances Hipparchus did as he **56**
planned and deliberately insulted him. They invited Harmodius' sister, a young virgin, to take part as a basket-bearer in some ceremonial procession but then turned her away, saying that they had never invited her in the first place because she was 'unworthy'. Harmodius took this badly, but [2]
Aristogeiton reacted still more angrily on his behalf. They had by now arranged all the practical details with their fellow conspirators and were just awaiting the Great Panathenaea,[1] the one day on which the citizens who were to take part in the procession could all assemble together under arms without arousing suspicion. The plan was that the pair of them would themselves make the first move and that the others should then immediately join in an attack on the bodyguards. The numbers of those [3]
in the conspiracy had been kept small for reasons of security; and their hope was that even if only a few of these dared to act those who were

[1] The Panathenaea was the festival of Athena, the patron goddess of Athens, and every fourth year it was celebrated on a larger scale as the Great Panathenaea. It was therefore a particularly significant occasion on which to attempt such an act of liberation.

not privy to the plot but happened to be there carrying arms would then choose to participate in their own liberation.

When the day of the festival came, Hippias was outside with the body- **57**
guard in the area called Cerameicus, arranging the order of the procession;
and Harmodius and Aristogeiton, ready armed with their daggers, moved
forward to do the deed. But when they saw one of their fellow conspira- [2]
tors chatting in a friendly fashion with Hippias (who was easily accessible
to everyone) they panicked, thinking that they had been informed on
and were about to be arrested at any moment. And before that could [3]
happen they wanted, if they could, to take vengeance on the man who
was the cause of their troubles and on whose account they were risking
everything; so in this state they rushed forward inside the gates and came
upon Hipparchus by the sanctuary called Leocorieum. They fell on him
instantly in a blind fury, and as men possessed, in one case by the passion
of love and in the other by wounded pride, they stabbed him repeatedly
and killed him. One of them escaped the guards for the moment as the [4]
crowd ran forward – that was Aristogeiton, but he was later caught and
was handled anything but gently. The other, Harmodius, was killed on
the spot.

When the news reached Hippias in the Cerameicus he made at once not **58**
for the scene of the incident but for the hoplite parade, which was some
way away from there, before they could find out what had happened.
Without betraying anything of the crisis in his expression he pointed to
a certain spot and told them to go there leaving behind their arms. They [2]
did so, thinking that he had something to say to them, whereupon he
ordered his bodyguards to remove the weapons and immediately picked
out the men he held responsible along with anyone else carrying a dagger
(the practice being to parade only with shield and spear).

This, then, is the story of Harmodius and Aristogeiton – how their con- **59**
spiracy began through the pangs of love and how their reckless audacity
arose from a sudden panic. Tyranny took on an altogether harsher form [2]
for the Athenians after this, as Hippias became increasingly fearful. He
had many of the citizens killed and at the same time looked abroad to find
some safe haven for himself in case of a change in the situation.[1] At any [3]
rate he subsequently married his daughter Archedice to Aeantides son of

[1] Most translators (except Hobbes) render *metabole* here as 'revolution'; but it is used elsewhere of 'change' or 'political change' more generally, including of course rapid and dramatic changes: see glossary and VIII 75.2n.

Hippocles, the tyrant of Lampsacus (an Athenian arranging a marriage to a Lampsacene!), being aware that this family had great influence with King Darius. And her tomb in Lampsacus carries this inscription:

THIS DUST COVERS ARCHEDICE, DAUGHTER OF HIPPIAS,
THE BEST MAN OF HIS TIME IN GREECE.
THOUGH HER FATHER, HUSBAND, BROTHERS AND SONS
WERE ALL TYRANTS
SHE WAS NEVER CARRIED AWAY BY PRESUMPTUOUS PRIDE

Hippias remained tyrant at Athens for another three years. He was [4] deposed in the fourth year by the Spartans and the Alcmaeonid family exiles and made his way under safe conduct to Sigeium and to Aeantides at Lampsacus; and from there he went to the court of King Darius; and from there, twenty years later and now an old man, he set off for Marathon with the Persian expedition.

The Athenian people had taken this very much to heart and were mind- **60** ful of all they had learned of these events from hearsay. They were therefore now fiercely suspicious of those who stood accused in the affair of the Mysteries, and they thought it was all part of some conspiracy involving oligarchy and tyranny.[1] Emotions of this kind were running high.[2] Many [2] well-respected men were already in prison and there seemed no end to it all; on the contrary, day by day people were growing more savage and still more men were being arrested. Then one of those imprisoned,[3] who was in fact a principal suspect, was persuaded by a fellow-prisoner to become an informer, though whether his 'information' was actually true or not is unclear – opinions are divided and no one then or later has been able to say anything for certain about the perpetrators of the deed. At any rate [3] the other man persuaded him, arguing that even if he had not done it he ought to get immunity and both save himself and free the city from the atmosphere of suspicion now hanging over it; he would have a better chance of safety if he confessed under immunity than if he denied the

[1] Dover makes the point (Gomme IV, p. 337) that this is to run together two very different ideas, joined here as 'the antithesis of democracy'.

[2] There are echoes in VI 60 of the topsy-turvy, irrational psychology inspired by *stasis* at III 82 (and exactly the same phrase for 'reckless audacity' is used a little earlier at 59.1 as at III 82.4).

[3] This unnamed informant was in fact the future politician and orator Andocides, who must have been a source for Thucydides and who published his own account of the events of 415 in his speech, *The Mysteries*, in 400.

charge and went to trial. So the man informed against both himself and [4] others in the matter of the Herms. The people of Athens had earlier found it very hard not knowing who it was who was plotting against them all and they were now so delighted to have got at the truth, as they thought, that they promptly released the informer along with all the others he had not made accusations against. Those who *had* been accused, on the other hand, they brought to trial. They executed all those they had arrested and sentenced to death those who had got away, offering a bounty to anyone killing one of them.

In all this it was unclear whether the victims had been punished [5] unjustly, but at the time the city as a whole was certainly benefited.

61 To return to Alcibiades. The enemies who had attacked him even before he sailed were keeping up their pressure and the Athenians stiffened their attitude. Since they now thought they had the truth about the Herms they were all the more convinced that the affair of the Mysteries, in which Alcibiades was accused, was motivated by the same purpose of conspiring against the people and that he was behind that too. And it so [2] happened that at the time of all this agitation on their part a small Spartan force had advanced as far as the Isthmus to transact some business with the Boeotians. The belief therefore arose that this was also his doing and that they had come by arrangement and not because of the Boeotians; moreover, they thought that had they not acted in advance to arrest the men on the strength of the information they had received, the city would have been betrayed. Indeed, they even slept out one night under arms in the temple of Theseus in the city. In addition, the associates of Alcibiades [3] in Argos were suspected at the same time of planning an attack on the people there, so the Athenians responded by handing over to the Argive people the Argive hostages who had been deposited on the islands, to be dealt with accordingly.

Suspicions were converging on Alcibiades from all sides. So, in their [4] wish to bring him back for trial and execute him, the Athenians sent the state ship *Salaminia* to Sicily to fetch him along with the others named by informers. The instruction was to summon him to follow them back to [5] make his defence but not to arrest him, since they were concerned about the effect of any commotion on their own troops and on the enemy, and they were particularly eager for the Mantineans and Argives to stay on with them, mindful that it was as a result of Alcibiades' persuasion that they had first joined the expedition.

So Alcibiades and those accused with him sailed from Sicily on his [6] own ship in company with the *Salaminia*, heading as for Athens. But when they got to Thurii they followed no further but abandoned ship and disappeared, afraid to sail back and face trial against this background of prejudice. The crew of the *Salaminia* searched long and hard for [7] Alcibiades and his companions, but as they were nowhere to be seen they gave up and sailed home. Alcibiades himself, now an exile, soon afterwards crossed over by boat to the Peloponnese from Thurii and the Athenians sentenced him and his companions to death in his absence.

After this the two Athenian generals left in Sicily divided the army into **62** two parts and were assigned one part each by lot. They then sailed with the whole force for Selinus and Egesta, aiming to discover if the Egestans would make over the money and also to investigate the situation at Selinus and understand the nature of their differences with the Egestans.[1] Sailing [2] along the coast and keeping on their left the side of Sicily facing the Tyrrhenian Gulf, they put in at Himera, which is the only Greek city in this part of Sicily; but they were not allowed in and sailed on again. On their way they took Hyccara, a Sicanian township on the coast but [3] one hostile to Egesta. They enslaved the city[2] and made it over to the Egestans (some of whose cavalry joined them). They themselves then went back through Sicel country with their infantry until they reached Catana, while the ships sailed round carrying the captives. Nicias had [4] already sailed straightaway from Hyccara to Egesta and rejoined the army there after transacting various items of business and in particular taking receipt of the thirty talents. The Athenians sold off the captives, which made them another 120 talents. They then sent word to their allies among [5] the Sicels, asking for troops, and with half of their own forces they went to attack Hybla, an enemy town in the territory of Gelea, but they did not succeed in taking it.

Winter [VI 63–93]

The following winter the Athenians made immediate preparations for an **63** assault on Syracuse, while the Syracusans likewise prepared to make a

[1] The original issue (VI 6).

[2] Another matter-of-fact description of what was evidently considered an uncontroversial act of war, perhaps especially (but not only) against barbarians (see for example I 98.1–2, I 113.1, II 68.7); more commonly it is the women and children who are enslaved (III 36.2, III 68.2, IV 48.4, V 3.4, V 32.1, V 116.4).

move against the Athenians. When the Athenians failed to attack them [2] straightaway, as the Syracusans had feared and expected, their confidence grew with every passing day. Moreover, when the Athenians were seen to be on the far side of Sicily well away from them and after they had failed in their attempt to take Hybla by force in their expedition there, the Syracusans became all the more dismissive of them and urged their generals, as a mob will in a rush of confidence, to lead them against Catana, since the enemy was not coming to attack them. Meanwhile, [3] Syracusan scouts on horseback kept riding up to the Athenian army, taunting them with various insults and asking if they had come to join them in a settlement abroad rather than resettling the Leontines in their own land.

64 The Athenian generals were aware of all this and wanted to draw the whole Syracusan force as far as possible away from the city; meanwhile, they themselves would sail down the coast under cover of darkness and set up camp in a suitable place in their own time, knowing that they would face a very different situation if they were disembarking from ships against a well-prepared enemy or if they were detected moving by land. Since they had no cavalry of their own they realised that the large numbers of Syracusan cavalry would inflict heavy damage on their light-armed forces and the mass of their followers. This way, however, they would take up a position from which they would be protected against any significant damage from the cavalry; and some Syracusan exiles who were with them had told them about the position by the sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, which was the one they did in fact occupy.

The generals therefore devised the following scheme to further these objectives. They sent a man who was loyal to themselves but whom the [2] Syracusan generals were equally confident was on their side. He was a Catanaean and claimed he had come from men in Catana whose names were familiar to the Syracusans and whom they knew to be among their remaining supporters in the city. He told them that the Athenians were [3] staying overnight in the city, without their weapons, and if the Syracusans wanted to make a concerted dawn attack on an agreed day these Catanaeans would close the gates to trap the men inside and would then set fire to their ships. The Syracusans could then easily mount an assault on the stockade and take the camp. There were many Catanaeans, he said, who were standing by to join in this undertaking and he had come there from them.

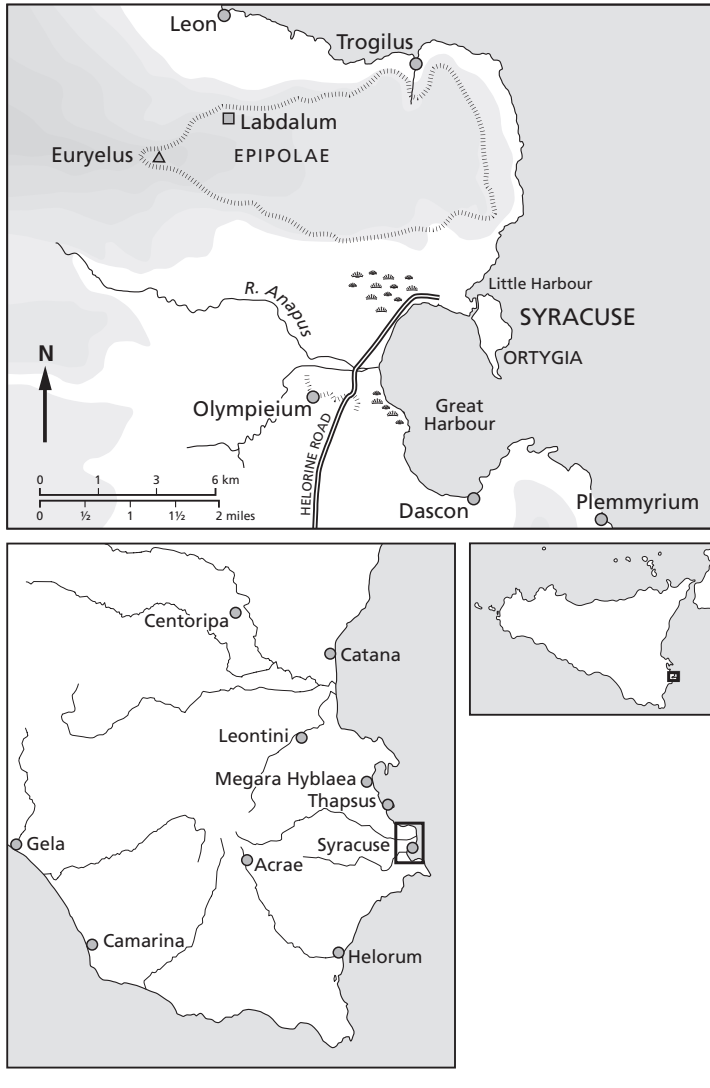
65 The Syracusan generals were in a confident mood, even without this prompting, and were already minded to prepare a move against Catana;

so they were inclined to trust this fellow without further examination and immediately agreed a day when they would be there and sent him back. The Selinuntians and some others of their allies had now arrived and the generals gave orders for the whole force to take the field. When their preparations were all complete and they were nearing the time fixed for their arrival, they proceeded towards Catana and bivouacked by the River Symaethus in Leontine territory. When the Athenians became [2] aware of their advance, they took the whole of their army and all the Sicels and others who had joined them and embarking on their warships and other craft they sailed by night for Syracuse. At dawn the Athenians [3] were disembarking to make camp at the site opposite the sanctuary of Olympian Zeus; and the Syracusan cavalry, who were the first to reach Catana, discovered that the whole army was gone, so turned around and gave this news to the infantry, whereupon the entire force turned and started back to defend the city.

66 Meanwhile, since the Syracusans had a long journey to make, the Athenians had time to settle their army in an advantageous spot from which they could initiate a battle at a time of their choosing and where the Syracusan cavalry would be least able to hurt them either during any action or before it. On one side walls, buildings, trees and marshy ground formed a barrier, on the other a line of cliffs. They also cut down nearby [2] trees and hauled them down to the shore where they drove them in to make a stockade for the ships; and at Dascon, where the easiest point of access was for the enemy, they hastily erected a barrier with rocks they picked up and with timber, and they pulled down the bridge over the River Anapus.[1] While they were making these preparations no one came [3] out from the city to try and stop them. The first of the defence forces to arrive were the Syracusan cavalry, and then later all the infantry gathered there too. They initially came up close to the Athenian forces, but when the Athenians did not come out to engage them they retreated across the Helorum road and bivouacked there.

67 The next day the Athenians and their allies made their preparations for battle and arranged their forces in the following formation. The Argives and Mantineans took the right wing, the Athenians were in the middle and the rest of the allies completed the line. Half of their army was up in front, drawn eight deep, and half was near the sleeping-area, drawn up in

[1] Gomme IV, pp. 466–84 has a detailed analysis of the topography in and around Syracuse where these engagements took place. It is unclear how much first-hand knowledge Thucydides had of it himself.



Map 25. Site map of Syracuse (415/14)[1]

[1] Position of Trogilus based on Dover's edition of book VI (1965), p. viii. See the discussion in Hornblower III, pp. 528–9.

a hollow square and also eight deep. The orders for the latter were to be on the alert to support any part of the army that was being particularly hard pressed, and the baggage-carriers were placed inside this body of reserves.

The Syracusans drew up all their hoplites in ranks sixteen deep, incor- [2]
porating the full force of Syracusans and all the allies who had come to support them (mostly Selinuntians but also some Geloan cavalry, about 200 in all, and some twenty cavalry and fifty archers from Camarina). Their cavalry, consisting of not fewer than 1,200, they positioned on the right, and on its flank the javelin-throwers.

When the Athenians were ready to initiate an attack, Nicias passed [3]
along the lines of all the different peoples present and delivered the following address.[1]

'Men, we are all fighting for the same cause, so what need is there **68**
for a long speech? Our array of forces seems to me in itself to give you better grounds for confidence than would a fine address combined with a
weak army. We have together here Argives, Mantineans, Athenians and [2]
the pick of the islanders. Surely, therefore, with so many allies of such quality every one of us can have the highest hopes of victory, especially against defenders assembled from the general population rather than a picked force like ours, and in particular against Siceliots, who may look down on us but cannot stand up to us – since they have more bravado than skill.

And never forget this either: we are far away from our own land, and [3]
the only friendly territory here is what you yourselves win in battle. My message to you is just the reverse of the one I'm sure my opposite numbers are giving the enemy: they are being told that the battle will be for their own country; I tell you that it will not be in your own country but in a place where you must win or else face a difficult exit, with their cavalry all over us in numbers.

So remember your own true worth and attack the enemy with a will, [4]
believing that our present circumstances of need and necessity are more to be feared than they are.'

After such words of exhortation Nicias immediately led out his army. **69**
The Syracusans, however, were not at that moment expecting to be called on to fight quite so soon – indeed some of them had gone back into the

[1] The suggestion seems to be that he repeated the same speech several times to each national contingent (*ethnos*) and it is a short and rather generic one. See IV 91n for other examples of repeated speeches.

city, which was close by. These men now rushed back in some haste to add their support, but they were late arriving and each of them had to fall in with the main army wherever they could join it. They were by no means lacking in commitment or daring, either in this or subsequent battles, but although they were a match for their enemies in terms of courage they were limited by their lack of skill and this undermined their good intentions. Nevertheless, although they were not expecting the Athenians to attack first and were forced to mount a hasty defence, they immediately took up their arms and went to return the attack.

The first to engage on each side were the stone-throwers, slingers and [2] archers and they each in turn drove the others back, as usual with light-armed troops. Then the soothsayers offered the customary sacrifices[1] and the trumpeters sounded the advance for the hoplites. So the two sides [3] moved forward: the Syracusans fighting for their country and for the immediate safety and future freedom of each individual; on the other side, the Athenians fighting to make a foreign country their own and to save their own country from the damage of defeat; the Argives and the independent allies each wanting to help them make the conquests for which they had come and after achieving victory to see once again the country that was their own; in the case of the subject allies, the main motivation was to secure their immediate survival, which could only be expected if they were the victors, with the secondary hope that if they helped contribute to Athenian successes elsewhere they might find the terms of their own subjection eased.

They now engaged at close quarters and for a long time neither side **70** gave ground to the other. At the same time there was some thunder and lightning and a heavy downpour of rain, which contributed to the fears of those who were fighting in their first battle or were relatively inexperienced in warfare, while the more experienced soldiers just put the phenomenon down to the season of the year and were more struck by the fact that their adversaries were still not succumbing to defeat. But then first the Argives succeeded in pushing back the left wing of the [2] Syracusans and subsequently the Athenians did the same to the section of the line facing them, and now the whole Syracusan formation broke up and they were all put to flight. The Athenians did not pursue them [3] very far, inhibited by the large numbers of the still undefeated Syracusan cavalry who charged at any Athenian hoplites they saw leading a chase

[1] See V 50.2n and VI 27.3n on other religious rituals.

and drove them back. Instead the Athenians kept in a body and followed the others as far as they could, then fell back and set up a trophy. The [4] Syracusans gathered together on the Helorum road and regrouped as best they could in the circumstances, but they still managed to send a unit to guard the temple sanctuary, fearing that the Athenians might get their hands on some of the money stored there. Meanwhile the rest of the Syracusans returned to the city.

The Athenians did not in fact go to the sanctuary but gathered up their **71** dead and piled them on to a pyre, then made camp for the night where they were. The next day they gave back the Syracusan dead under truce (about 160 of the Syracusans and their allies had died) and they gathered up the bones of their own dead from the pyre (there were about fifty of theirs and their allies); then taking with them the enemy spoils they sailed back to Catana.

It was now winter and they thought it would not be possible to continue [2] the war there until they could get cavalry sent over from Athens and could gather some from their allies in Sicily, to avoid being completely outmatched in this respect. There were other requirements too: they needed more funds, both to be collected in Sicily and sent over from Athens; they should win over some of the cities there to their side – and they hoped these would now be more responsive to them given the outcome of this battle; and finally, they had to organise grain supplies and anything else they needed to be ready to attack the Syracusans in the spring.

With all this in mind, they sailed away to Naxos and Catana to spend the **72** winter there. Meanwhile, the Syracusans buried their dead and called an assembly. Hermocrates son of Hermon came forward to address them. He [2] was a man of outstanding intelligence,[1] who had proved in the course of the war to be very capable in terms of practical experience and conspicuous for his courage. He now stiffened their resolve and refused to let them give in to the course of events. He told them that their spirit[2] had not been [3] conquered – what had hurt them was their lack of discipline. However, they had not done as badly as might have been expected, especially since they had been pitted against men who were foremost among the Greeks in their experience – laymen set against skilled professionals, you might

[1] *Sunesis*: see glossary and note on I 79.2. This is the quality ascribed to Themistocles, Pericles, Brasidas and just a few others.

[2] *Gnome* (an unusual usage, see glossary).

say. They had been badly hurt too by the sheer number of the generals [4]
(they had fifteen of them) and by the multiple command structure as well
as by the disorganisation of the troops at large and their lack of leadership.
If they had just a few generals of real experience and if they used this
winter to prepare the hoplite force, providing arms to those who did
not have them to maximise its numbers and enforcing military training
generally, then there was, he said, every chance that they would get the
better of their enemies. They already had the courage, and discipline in
action would follow. And both would be improved – the discipline by
its exercise in conditions of danger, the courage growing ever bolder as
they came to trust more in their skills. The generals they elected should [5]
be few in number and should be given full powers, and the Syracusans
should swear by oath to allow them full discretion of judgement in their
command. That way confidential information would be better protected
and things in general would be organised in a more orderly and transparent
manner.

The Syracusans listened to this speech and then voted for everything he **73**
had requested. They chose as generals Hermocrates himself, Heracleides
son of Lysimachus and Sicanus son of Execestus – just these three, and
they sent envoys to Corinth and Sparta to get allied support for their
cause and persuade the Spartans to make a firmer and more explicit
commitment to the war with the Athenians on their behalf; thus they
would either draw the Athenians away from Sicily or undermine their
ability to send further support to their army there.

The Athenian force at Catana sailed immediately to Messina, whose **74**
betrayal they were expecting. But their intrigues there were not realised.
As soon as Alcibiades had been relieved of his command and summoned to
Athens, knowing that he would become an exile, he passed on information
to the friends of the Syracusans in Messana, since he knew what was in
mind. These people had already killed the conspirators, and they and
their sympathisers now constituted an armed faction in the city with
sufficient power to refuse admission to the Athenians. The Athenians [2]
waited around for about thirteen days, but as they had bad weather and
ran short of supplies and were making no progress they left for Naxos
where they reinforced the perimeter of the camp, built stockades and
prepared to winter there. They also sent a trireme to Athens for funds
and cavalry in order to receive these at the start of spring.

During this same winter the Syracusans were building fortifications. **75**
They added a wall to the city, taking in the Temenites precinct and

extending the whole length of the area facing Epipolae. This was to prevent them being so easily confined by a shorter circuit of wall in the event of a defeat. They also built a fort at Megara and another in the sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, and they fixed stakes along the shore wherever there were landing-places. Since they knew the Athenians were wintering at [2] Naxos they marched at full strength to attack Catana, where they ravaged some of the land and set fire to the Athenian shelters and campsite before returning home. Then, when they learned that the Athenians were [3] sending envoys to Camarina, on the strength of the alliance made under Laches, to see if they could somehow win them over, the Syracusans countered by sending an embassy of their own. Their suspicions were that the Camarinaeans had not been keen to send them even the help they did for the first battle and that they might no longer wish to support them in the future, seeing the success the Athenians had enjoyed in that battle, but might rather be persuaded to attach themselves to the Athenian cause on the basis of their earlier friendship with them.

So the two delegations arrived at Camarina: Hermocrates along with [4] others from Syracuse, and Euphemus with others from Athens. The Camarinaeans called an assembly and Hermocrates, who wanted to get in first and prejudice opinion against the Athenians, addressed them as follows.

'Men of Camarina, we came on this mission not because we feared **76** that you would be overawed by the might of the Athenian presence but rather in fear of the speeches they will be making, lest they win you over before you have heard anything from us. Their pretext for coming [2] to Sicily you know about. Their real purpose we all suspect.[1] In my view, what they want is not so much to find homes for the Leontines as to evict us from ours. It is scarcely logical, surely, to be forcibly depopulating the cities back in Greece[2] but resettling those here, and to be showing this concern for the Leontines on the grounds of their kinship as Chalcidians but keeping in servitude the Chalcidians in Euboea, whose colonists the Leontines are.[3] In fact, their acquisitions there and their [3]

[1] The contrast here is between *prophasis* and *dianoia* (see glossary).

[2] Such as the mass expulsions or executions at Potidaea (II 70.3), Scione (V 32.1) and most notably Melos (V 115.4). Hornblower (III, p. 495) points out the irony that the Syracusans did the same (twice) to Camarina itself (its own colony) in the course of its early history and that Thucydides uses precisely the same word to describe those 'depopulations' at VI 5.3.

[3] There are many appeals to 'kinship' in these exchanges (see below 77.1, 79.2, 80.2–3, 82.2 and 88.7) and it is often presented as a strong moral argument elsewhere (see I 95.1,

initiatives here are all part of the same policy. When they became the chosen leaders of the alliance of Ionians and other colonists of theirs, formed to make reprisals against the Persians, they made these people into their subjects – charging some with a refusal to provide troops, others with fighting amongst themselves, and others with whatever specious accusation was convenient in each case. So, the resistance to the Persians [4] was not about freedom – that is, freedom for the Greeks, delivered either by the Athenians or the Greeks themselves. As far as the Athenians were concerned it was about enslavement – to themselves instead of to the Persians; and for the Greeks it brought a change of masters –not to one more stupid but one more wickedly cunning.

It is easy enough to find fault with the Athenian state, but we have 77 not come here now just to demonstrate all their misdeeds to an audience familiar with them. Instead, we are here much more to blame ourselves. Despite the examples provided by the Greeks over there – who were enslaved, having failed to fight in support of each other, and despite having the same old sophistries now directed against us (resettlements of Leontine kinsmen and support for Egestan allies) – we are still unwilling to unite and summon the spirit to show them that we here are not Ionians or people from the Hellespont and the islands, who are continually enslaved either to the Persians or to some new master or another; no, we are Dorians, a free people from an independent Peloponnese, and our home is Sicily.

Or should we wait to be picked off city by city, when we know that this [2] is the only way in which we can be conquered and when we see their mode of operation: provoking dissension among some of us by their arguments, setting others to fight each other in the hope of an alliance, and doing whatever mischief they can elsewhere with a word or two of inducement? And are we supposed to think that when some distant compatriot is first destroyed we ourselves shall not later be visited by disaster as well, but that the previous victim will be alone in their misfortune?

Should anyone have got it into his head that it is Syracuse not Camarina 78 who is the enemy of Athens, and so thinks it outrageous that he should run these risks on behalf of my[1] country, let him reflect on this. Though

III 65.3, IV 61.2, VI 9.1 and VII 57). See also general index under 'kinship' and glossary under *suggeneia*.

[1] Hermocrates here uses a whole string of 'me' and 'my' words when one might have expected 'us' and 'our'. His 'other colleagues' (75.4) in any case play no apparent role in the appeal.

the battle will take place in my land he will be fighting for his own country as much as for mine; and he will be all the safer for joining the battle, not in isolation after I have first been disposed of, but with me as his ally. Remember that what the Athenians want is not to punish the Syracusans for their enmity but to use my city as a pretext to secure stronger ties of friendship with yours.

If anyone is moved by envy or even fear (great powers attract both [2] reactions) and therefore wants to see the Syracusans suffering enough to teach them a lesson but surviving sufficiently to protect his own safety, then he is hoping for something beyond any human power to deliver. No one can so regulate[1] the outcomes of fortune as to match them with his own desires. And if he makes a mistake of judgement, then amidst the [3] lamentations for his misfortunes perhaps he would wish again for some future chance to begrudge us our success. But that will be impossible if he abandons us and is unwilling to share the dangers which are in reality the same for both of us, however they may be described: it may be said that he is securing our power, but in practice he will be securing his own safety.

People of Camarina, you of all people, who are our neighbours and [4] are next in line of danger – you should surely have foreseen all this. You should not now be so half-hearted as allies but should yourselves be doing more to rally to our side; and just as you would have made an appeal for our help if the Athenians had come first to Camarina, so now you should be seen to be urging us for just the same reasons not to yield a step. But so far neither you nor the others have made any moves in this direction.

Perhaps out of cowardice you will cultivate an equal concern for justice **79** for both us and the aggressors, citing the alliance you have with the Athenians. That alliance, however, was not directed against your friends but was made in case any of your enemies attacked you; you were to help the Athenians only if they were the victims of attack, not when they were the offenders, as they are now against your neighbours. Why, not [2] even the Rhegians want to help restore the Leontines, fellow Chalcidians though they are. It is strange indeed if they hold back in defiance of these arguments because they suspect the reality behind this fine appeal to justice, while you, with this show of argument as your pretext, are willing to help your natural enemies and destroy those who by even stronger ties

[1] The image here is of a *tamias*, a treasurer or controller of accounts (see also VI 18.3).

of nature are your kin, joining company with their most hated foes. That [3] cannot be 'justice'. Come instead to our defence and do not fear their array of forces, which is not so terrible if we all stand together, only if we stand apart – which is what they are so eager for. Remember that even when they attacked us on our own and proved superior in battle, they failed to achieve what they wanted but made a hasty retreat.

If we stick together, then, there is good reason not to lose heart but to **80** commit all the more to the allied cause, especially as help will be forthcoming from the Peloponnesians, who altogether outclass these people in warfare. As for your cautious policy of helping neither one side nor the other on the grounds that you are allies of both – no one should think that represents either a fair outcome for us or a safe one for you. It may be fair [2] as a debating point but it is not so in practice. For if it is a consequence of your neutrality that the victim succumbs and the victor prevails, what have you achieved by thus distancing yourselves other than a failure to defend the safety of one party and to avert the wrongdoing of the other? The better course would be to take the side of those who are both the victims of injustice and also your kinsmen, and so protect the common interest of Sicily and save your "friends", the Athenians, from the error of their ways.

In summary, then, we Syracusans say that there is clearly no point in [3] briefing you or the others in detail about things you know as well as we do. We do make this appeal to you, however; and at the same time if we cannot win you over we want to put it on record that we are the victims of hostile machinations by the Ionians, our traditional enemies, and of betrayal by you, our fellow Dorians. If the Athenians do overcome us they [4] will owe their victory to your policies, though it will be celebrated in their own name, and their prize in victory will be none other than the people who handed it to them. If we are the ones to win through, however, you again will pay the penalty for being the cause of the dangers we face.

Think about this, then, and make your choice now – either take no risks [5] and embrace immediate servitude; or, if you join us and we prevail, avoid the disgrace of accepting these people as masters and escape a lasting feud with ourselves.'

That was how Hermocrates spoke. And after him Euphemus, the **81** Athenian envoy addressed them as follows.

'Our purpose in coming here was to renew our former alliance, but **82** after this attack by the speaker from Syracuse we are compelled also

to say something in justification of our empire.[1] In fact he made the [2]
most important point himself – that the Ionians have always been the
enemies of the Dorians. Precisely. As Ionians we gave thought to how we
could reduce our dependence on the Dorians of the Peloponnese, who
outnumber us and live next door to us. And after the wars with Persia, [3]
by which time we had built up a fleet, we freed ourselves from Spartan
control and leadership since the only justification for them to be giving us
orders rather than vice versa was that they were the dominant force at that
time. We ourselves, on the other hand, maintained the leadership we had
established over the former subjects of the King of Persia, thinking that
in this way we should be least vulnerable to the Peloponnesians since we
had the power to defend ourselves. Nor were we wrong, strictly speaking,
to make subjects of the Ionians and the islanders, though the Syracusans
accuse us of having enslaved our own kin in so doing. They joined the [4]
Persians in attacking us, their mother-city, and they did not have the
courage to revolt and to sacrifice their homes, as we had to when we
abandoned our city. They willed their own enslavement and wanted to
impose the same thing on us.

For these reasons we deserve to have our empire – because we were the 83
ones to give the largest fleet and make the most wholehearted commitment
to the Greek cause, while these Ionians damaged us by their ready support
for the Persians; and we also have it because we sought to strengthen
ourselves against the Peloponnesians. We do not justify our right to [2]
rule with fine words – claiming that we overcame the foreign enemy by
ourselves or that we faced these dangers more for the freedom of our
subjects than for that of all the Greeks, including our own. No one can
be blamed for making due provision for their own safety. And now, when
our safety is what brings us here, we see that your and our interests also
coincide. We can demonstrate this with reference to their diatribe against [3]
us and the doubts which are making you so nervous, for we know that
people who are in such a state of fear and suspicion may respond eagerly
in the short term to any congenial argument, but when it comes down to
action later they will consult their better interests. We have said that we [4]
hold our empire in Greece out of fear, and it is fear that brings us here

[1] Euphemus ('Good speaker') in fact offers a more aggressive justification of Athenian imperialism here than anyone elsewhere in the whole work (cf. the Athenian envoys at the Peloponnesian conference I 73–78, Pericles at II 63.2, Cleon at III 37.2 and the Melian debate V 85–113, especially 89).

with our friends to establish our security, not to enslave you but rather to prevent that happening.

84 Don't let anyone object that we have no good reasons of our own to be showing this concern for you. They should realise that if you are safe and strong enough to offer some resistance to the Syracusans, then we are protected against their sending a force to help the Peloponnesians. In [2] that respect you are of immediate and vital importance to us. Similarly, it makes good sense for us to restore the Leontines, not to be subjects like their kinsfolk in Euboea but to be in as strong a position as possible to help us by causing trouble for the Syracusans from their borders. As [3] far as Greece is concerned we have the capacity to deal with our enemies there by ourselves, and it is to our advantage that the Chalcidians, whom he says we are inconsistent to liberate here and enslave there, should be disarmed and should just contribute money, while the Leontines and other friends here should be as independent as possible.

85 For a tyrant or a city with an empire, expediency is the only logic and trust the only bond.[1] In every case circumstances determine who is friend and who is foe, and in our situation here our advantage lies not in harming our friends but in weakening our enemies through the strength of our friends. You must not distrust us. We treat each of the allies we [2] lead in Greece according to their utility: the Chians and Methymnians have their independence because they provide ships; the majority, under more compulsion, pay tribute in money; and some others, despite being islanders we could easily take over, have the full freedom of allies because they occupy strategic positions round the coast of the Peloponnese. Here [3] too there is good reason to dispose things with regard to our self-interest and, as we say, our fear of the Syracusans. Their aim is to rule over you and what they want when they have brought you together through your suspicions of us is to become rulers of Sicily themselves, whether by force or through your isolation when we have gone away empty-handed. This is inevitable if you unite with them: such a large combined force would no longer be easy for us to handle;[2] and they would be quite strong enough to deal with you once we were gone.

86 Anyone who doubts this is contradicted by the plain facts. When you brought us in before, this was precisely the fear you thrust in our faces – that if we stood by and watched you fall under the power of the Syracusans

[1] Literally, 'nothing is illogical (*alogon*) that is expedient (*sumpheron*), nor is anything kindred (*oikeion*) that is not trusted (*piston*)'.

[2] This seems to concede the case for Sicilian unity that Hermocrates is making.

we would ourselves be endangered. It cannot therefore be right that now [2] you should mistrust the very argument you thought good enough to win us over then; nor should you be suspicious of us because we are here with a larger force to confront their might; you should much rather be distrustful of them. For our part we are not able to stay on here without [3] your support, and even if we turned bad and overpowered you we would be unable to sustain our conquests on account of the length of the voyage and the difficulty of policing large cities equipped like mainland ones. They, on the other hand, are not just encamped here but live right next to you, confronting you in a city that outnumbers our present force. They are always plotting against you and never miss any opportunity, as they [4] have often demonstrated before, especially against the Leontines. And now they have the effrontery to invite your help against those who are frustrating these plans and have so far kept Sicily from falling into their hands – as if you were too stupid to see what is going on.

We by contrast invite you to enjoy a security that is far more real. [5] We urge you not to surrender the common security we derive from each other, and to reflect that even without allies the Syracusans will always find a way to get at you because of their numbers; you on the other hand will not often have the offer of so large a supporting force to join in your defence. If through your suspicions you let that force go away unused or even defeated, the day will come when you long to see just the merest fraction of it back again, by which time you would be beyond help even if it arrived.

People of Camarina, neither you nor the others should be led to believe 87 the slanders of these Syracusans. We have told you the whole truth about the matters that have raised suspicions, and with one more reminder of the key points we shall expect to convince you. We say this. We [2] exercise our rule over Greece to avoid subjection to another power there, while in Sicily we promote freedom for your cities to avoid being harmed by them here. We are compelled to busy ourselves so much[1] because we have so much to guard against; and it is as allies that we have come here now just as before, to help those of you who are suffering wrongs – not unbidden but here by invitation.

[1] *polla prassein* usually has the disapproving sense of 'busy interference' but here (and below with the corresponding noun *polypragmosune* 'restless spirit') there may be an intent to convey its more positive aspect of 'enterprise', along the lines of the Corinthians' character sketch of the Athenians at I 70. There is a contrast with the passivity of *apragmonos* ('without exertion') in 87.4 below.

Do not set yourselves up as judges or censors[1] of our conduct and try to [3]
change it, which would be difficult now. Rather, exploit our restless spirit
for whatever benefit to yourselves you can and come to realise that this
is not uniformly harmful but actually benefits the great majority of the
Greeks. Every person in every place feels its force, even where we have no [4]
physical presence: both the person who expects to suffer wrongdoing and
the agent who plans to inflict it – for the first has the ready expectation
that he will get redress through our help, and the second that our arrival
will make his venture a dangerous one; both are constrained: the one to
accept salvation without exertion and the other to exercise a reluctant
self-restraint. Do not, therefore, reject the security we offer to you, as [5]
we do to anyone requesting it; but follow the others in joining us against
the Syracusans and instead of being constantly on the defensive take the
chance to counter their aggressive schemes on an equal footing.'

That was how Euphemus spoke. And the Camarinaeans responded 88
to these speeches as follows. On the one hand they felt generally well-
disposed to the Athenians, except to the extent that they thought they
would enslave Sicily; by contrast, they were always at odds with the
Syracusans as their next-door neighbours and this proximity made them
the more afraid of them, lest the Syracusans should come out on top even
without their support. So in the first instance they sent the Syracusans
a few cavalry and decided that for the future they would give them their
practical support, though they would keep it as modest as possible; while
for the time being – to avoid any appearance of disfavouring the Athenians,
who had after all proved the stronger in the last battle – they would give
the same formal answer to each side. After reaching this conclusion they [2]
therefore gave it as their answer that since this was a war between two
parties, both of whom happened to be their allies, they thought the best
way to honour their oaths was to give help to neither. The envoys of the
two sides then departed.

The Syracusans continued their preparations for war, while the Athe- [3]
nians negotiated with the Sicels from their encampment at Naxos to
encourage as many as possible of them to come over to their side. Those [4]
living towards the plain, who were subjects of the Syracusans, for the
most part did not revolt from them; but the settlements in the interior,
which had always been independent, immediately and with few excep-
tions sided with the Athenians and supplied grain, and in some cases

[1] *sophronistes* (see glossary).

money, for the army. As for those who did not come over, the Athenians [5] took military action to force some of them into line but were held off in other cases by the Syracusans sending guards to the rescue. During the winter the Athenians moved their anchorage from Naxos to Catana and reconstructed their former camp which had been burned down by the Syracusans. They then settled in there for the winter period.

They also sent a trireme to Carthage on a mission of friendship to see [6] if they could get any help from there, and another to Tyrrhenia,[1] where some of the cities were actually volunteering to join them in the war. They sent word around the Sicels too and dispatched a messenger to Egesta asking them to supply as many horses as possible, and they continued getting everything ready for the siege, including brick-frames, iron and anything else needed, so that they could actively resume the war as soon as spring came.

The Syracusan envoys sent to Corinth and Sparta tried, as they sailed [7] down their coast, to persuade the Italian Greek communities not to ignore the activities of the Athenians, warning that they were under a similar threat from their plans. When they reached Corinth they made a speech urging them to send them help on grounds of their kinship. The Corinthi- [8] ans immediately took the initiative and voted to commit themselves in every way to their support, and they sent envoys to accompany them on their mission to Sparta and join in persuading the Spartans both to prosecute the war over there more openly and to send some form of aid to Sicily.

When these envoys from Corinth reached Sparta they found Alcibiades [9] there too with his fellow exiles. He had originally crossed on a cargo-boat straight from Thurii to Cyllene in Elis and had then come to Sparta at the invitation of the Spartans themselves, travelling under promise of safe conduct since he was afraid of their reaction to his role in the Mantinean affair.[2] So it turned out that at the Spartan assembly the Corinthians, [10] the Syracusans and Alcibiades were all there making the same appeal and were winning the Spartans over. Indeed the ephors and others in authority were of a mind to send envoys to Syracuse to prevent them making terms with the Athenians, but they were not eager to send help. Alcibiades therefore came forward and addressed the Spartans as follows, in a speech designed to sting them into action.

[1] Etruria in Italy. [2] See VI 16.6 and before that V 45.4 and 46.5.

'I must address you first on the subject of the allegations made against **89**
me, lest you fail to heed what is in the general interest through your
suspicions of me personally. My ancestors renounced their status as your [2]
foreign representatives over some complaint and I was personally trying
to restore that status by serving your interests, particularly over the
disaster in Pylos. Despite my continued commitment, however, you then
dealt with my enemies[1] in making your peace with the Athenians and so
conferred power on them and dishonour on me. As a result you deserved [3]
the harm I did you when I transferred my support to the Mantineans and
the Argives and opposed you generally. So if anyone felt hurt then and got
unjustifiably angry with me, they should now look at events in their true
light and accept what I say. Or if anyone thought the worse of me because
I was also more inclined to the people's side he should concede that this
hostility too is unjustified. My family has always been opposed to tyrants [4]
(and every form of opposition to absolute power gets identified as "the
people's party"), so as a consequence we have retained the leadership of
the masses.[2] Besides, while the city was operating as a democracy it was
necessary for the most part to go along with the way things were. Amid [5]
the prevailing indiscipline,[3] however, we did try to behave with greater
moderation in our politics, though there were others, both then and now,
who led the mob into worse habits – and these were the ones who banished
me. We for our part acted as leaders of the people as a whole, thinking it [6]
right to preserve the form of constitution we inherited in which the city
enjoyed its greatest power and freedom. As for democracy, anyone with
any sense knew what that was like, and as its victim I had better reason
than most to revile it. However, there is nothing new to be said about
such an acknowledged folly, and it did not seem to us a safe time to be
changing the system when you, our enemies, were almost on top of us.

This, then, was the context of the allegations made against me. But **90**
now you have decisions to make and I must explain such further inside
information as I have. So attend. We sailed to Sicily in the first place to [2]

[1] *echthroi*: a rather strong and personalised expression of hostility since he means his fellow generals, Nicias and Laches (V 43.2, and see VI 15.2 n3). See further glossary.

[2] Distinctions are made in 89.3–6, in roughly descending order of approbation, between *sumpas* ('the people as a whole'), *demos* ('the people' or 'people's party'), *plethos* ('the masses' or 'common people') and *ochlos* ('the mob'). The word 'democracy' only occurs in the next sentence (as a verb) and at 89.6 (as a noun). Alcibiades is presenting himself as representing the 'popular' or national interest, while going on roundly to condemn 'democracy' as a system of government.

[3] *akolasia*, the approximate contrary of *sophrosune* (see glossary).

overcome the Sicilians if we could, and after them the Italians too, and then to make an attempt on the Carthaginians and their empire. If all or [3] most of this went well, we were intending to attack the Peloponnesians, bringing over the whole of the Greek force assembled there and hiring many barbarian troops too, both Iberians and others acknowledged as the best fighting men from the foreign tribes there; and we would build many triremes to be added to our own (Italy having such an abundance of timber) and with these we would surround the Peloponnese in a blockade, and launching a simultaneous assault by land with our infantry we would take some cities by force and others by walling them in, and so hope easily to complete our conquest and then rule over the whole of Greece. As [4] for the money and food needed to make any of this more feasible, the additional territory acquired over there would provide enough, without the revenue from here.

You have now heard from the person with the best inside knowledge **91** exactly what the intentions were behind the expedition now in progress; and the remaining generals will, if they can, execute these plans accordingly. Next you must understand that without your help Sicily will not survive. So attend.[1] The Siceliots are relatively lacking in experience, yet [2] if they could be united as one body they could even now prevail. The Syracusans alone, however, having already been defeated in battle when they were at full strength, and hemmed in as they now are by ships, will be unable to hold out against the present Athenian armament over there. And if that city is taken the whole of Sicily is theirs also, and then soon [3] afterwards Italy too; and it would be not long before the danger I just predicted from that quarter would hit you.

So let no one think you are just deliberating about Sicily here – it is [4] about the Peloponnese as well if you do not quickly take the following action: send there on your ships a force of men who can double as oarsmen for the passage and then immediately on arrival act as hoplites in the field; in addition, and this I think even more essential for the army, put someone from the city of Sparta in charge as commander to manage the forces already present and press the reluctant into service. In that way your existing friends will be encouraged and waverers will come over to you with fewer misgivings.

[1] Literally 'learn'. A second and exact repetition (see 90.1 above) of an abrupt imperative, presumably in keeping with the sharp tone of the speech (88.9).

At the same time you must prosecute the war here in a more con- [5]
spicuous way, in order that the Syracusans will be convinced of your commitment and offer the more resistance, while the Athenians will be less able to send additional help to their troops here. You must also fortify [6]
Deceleia in Attica: that has always been the Athenians' worst fear and the only test of war they feel they have yet fully to face. The surest way to hurt your enemies is to identify clearly the things they most dread and then inflict those on them, since naturally everyone knows precisely what their own worst terrors are and fears them accordingly. As to the benefits you [7]
will accrue for yourselves and deny to your enemies through this fortification, I pass over most of them and summarise only the most important: most of the assets of the land will come to you, either by capture or of their own accord;[1] the Athenians will also be immediately deprived of the revenues from the silver mines at Laureium and their present income from the land and the courts; above all, they will lose the regular revenue paid in by their allies, who will be less conscientious about it when they believe you are involved in all-out war.

Spartans, it is up to you if any of this is to be realised quickly and with **92**
your full commitment. That it *can* be done, I am entirely confident and I don't think my confidence misplaced.

Next, none of you ought to think the worse of me if, patriotic as I must [2]
once have seemed, I now turn so forcefully against my native city and join her worst enemies. Nor should my speech be distrusted as just the zeal of the exile. I am indeed an "exile", but only in escaping from the [3]
wickedness of those who drove me out, not in avoiding the opportunity to benefit you, if you will only listen to me. The worse enemies are not those like you who do their enemies some harm, but those who force their friends to become enemies. My loyalty is not to a city where I am being [4]
wronged but to one in which I was secure in my role as a citizen. I do not think of myself now as attacking a city which is still mine so much as reclaiming one which is mine no longer. The true patriot is not the man who holds back from attacking the city he has had unjustly taken from him, but the one who in his passion for it makes every effort to get it back.

So, Spartans, I urge you to have no qualms in using me, whatever the [5]
danger and hardship to myself. Accept the argument, now in common currency, that if as an enemy I did you so much damage I could be useful enough to you as a friend, since I do know the secrets of the Athenians

[1] Meaning that the slaves, who are part of the 'physical assets', will choose to join them.

whereas I could only guess at yours. I urge you now to realise that you are deliberating about matters of the greatest moment, and not to shrink from carrying the war into both Sicily and Attica. That way you will protect your major interests there by contributing just a fraction of your forces, and you will destroy the present and future power of the Athenians. After that you may live in security yourselves and may become the chosen leaders of the whole of Greece, not by force but with her blessing.'

That was what Alcibiades said. Even before this the Spartans had on **93** their own account been considering an expedition against Athens, but were still hesitating and circumspect. Now, however, they were greatly encouraged when Alcibiades told them all this in such detail, judging that they had been listening to the one man who really knew the facts. So they [2] focused their attention on the fortification of Deceleia, and more immediately also on sending some help to those in Sicily. They accordingly appointed Gylippus son of Cleandridas to take command in Syracuse and instructed him to consult with the Syracusans and Corinthians about the best and quickest way of providing assistance to the people on the ground there. Gylippus told the Corinthians to send him two ships to Asine [3] straightaway, then to make ready all the rest of the ships they intended to send and to stand by to sail when the moment came. With these matters settled, the envoys left Sparta for home.

Meanwhile the trireme sent from Sicily by the generals to get money [4] and cavalry arrived back at Athens. The Athenians listened to the requests and voted to send the army both the subsistence payments and the cavalry.

And so the winter ended and with it the seventeenth year of the war that Thucydides wrote.

Eighteenth year of the war, 414–13 [VI 94–105, VII 1–18]

Summer [VI 94–105, VII 1–9]

At the beginning of spring in the following summer the Athenians in 94
Sicily set out from Catana and sailed down the coast to Sicilian Megara,
from which, as I have mentioned before,[1] the Syracusans had driven out
the inhabitants at the time when Gelon was tyrant, and which they were
still occupying themselves. The Athenians landed there and wasted the [2]
fields. They also attacked a Syracusan fort, but without success, and so
went on again with both fleet and army to the River Terias. Here they went
inland and wasted the plain, setting fire to the corn. They encountered a
few Syracusans, some of whom they killed, and after setting up a trophy
they returned to their ships. They sailed back to Catana and after taking [3]
on provisions there they advanced with the whole army against the Sicel
township of Centoripa, which agreed terms to come over to them; and
then they left, burning the crops of the Inessians and Hyblaeans as they
went. On reaching Catana they took receipt of the horsemen who had [4]
arrived from Athens – 250 in number, with their equipment but without
the horses (which were to be procured in Sicily), together with thirty
equestrian archers and 300 talents of silver.

[1] At VI 4.2, but the explicit cross-reference is very unusual (see I 118.1 and V 1, the only other clear-cut cases).

During the same spring, the Spartans launched a campaign against **95** Argos and got as far as Cleonae, when there was an earthquake and they turned back.[1] After this the Argives invaded the neighbouring territory of Thyrea and seized a lot of booty from the Spartans, which was sold for at least twenty-five talents. And soon afterwards in the same summer [2] the populace of Thespiae made an attack on the ruling classes there but failed in the attempt. Help arrived from Thebes and some of the rebels were arrested while others escaped to Athens.

During the same summer, when the Syracusans learned that the Athe- **96** nians had received the cavalry and were now on the point of attacking them, they calculated that unless the Athenians got control of Epipolae, a steep-sided plateau lying directly above the city, they would find it difficult to wall them off, even if the Athenians defeated them in a battle. They therefore had it in mind to secure the access route to Epipolae to prevent the enemy climbing up there unobserved, since there was no other way they could get up. The rest of the plateau has steep cliffs which [2] slope right down to the city and are wholly visible from inside it, and the Syracusans call it Epipolae since it is 'up above' the surrounding terrain. So at dawn the Syracusans went out at full strength down to the meadow by the River Anapus for a military review (Hermocrates and his fellow generals having just taken up their appointments) and they began by selecting a special force of 600 hoplites, under the command of Diomilus (an exile from Andros), to keep guard at Epipolae and to be ready to be brought together quickly for any other purpose.

But during the night the Athenians, unknown to the Syracusans, had **97** made their way with the whole of their forces from Catana and put in at a place called Leon, over half a mile from Epipolae. They disembarked their infantry there and anchored their fleet off Thapsus, which is a peninsula extending into the sea from a narrow isthmus and is not far from Syracuse, whether by land or sea. The naval force of the Athenians ran a stockade [2] across the neck of the isthmus and then retired to Thapsus, while their infantry made a run straight for Epipolae and got up there by way of Euryelus before the Syracusans were aware of them and could get there from their exercise in the meadow. Every one of the Syracusans then [3] rushed to help as quickly as they could, including the unit of 600 under

[1] More for superstitious than other reasons presumably (see III 89, V 45.4 and 50.5). The 'great earthquake' of 465/4 when the helots revolted had been a traumatic event in Spartan history (see I 101.2 and 128.1).

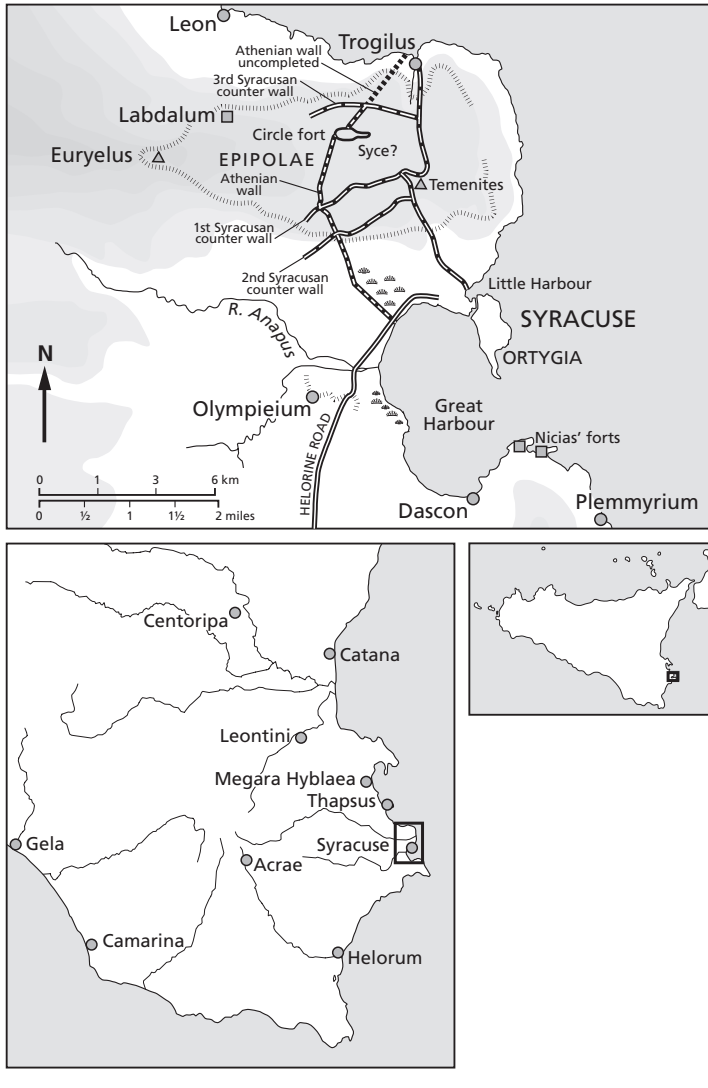
Diomilus, but they had some three miles from the meadow to cover before they could engage with the Athenians. They were consequently in some [4] disorder when they did make their attack and they were defeated in battle on Epipolae and fell back into the city. Diomilus was killed along with some 300 others. Afterwards the Athenians raised a trophy and returned [5] the Syracusans their dead under truce. The next day they went down to threaten the city itself, but when no one came out to challenge them they went back and constructed a fort at Labdalum, which was on the edge of the Epipolae cliffs facing Megara, to give themselves a storeroom for their equipment and goods whenever they moved forward either to engage the enemy in battle or to build walls.

98 Not long afterwards, the Athenians received 300 cavalry from Egesta and about 100 more from the Sicels, Naxians and a few other sources. The Athenians themselves already had 250 cavalrymen of their own, for whom they were given some horses from Egesta and Catana and bought others, and so in total they could muster 650 cavalry. After installing a garrison [2] at Labdalum the Athenians then made for Syce, where they stopped and quickly built the Round Fort.[1] The Syracusans were startled by the speed of its construction and came out resolved to make a fight of it rather than standing by and watching. As the two armies lined up to engage each [3] other, the Syracusans generals saw that their forces were dispersed and difficult to bring into formation, so they led them back to the city, except for a detachment of cavalry who stayed to obstruct the Athenians from gathering stones or spreading further outwards. One tribal division[2] of [4] Athenian hoplites together with all their cavalry attacked and routed the Syracusan cavalry. They killed some of them and set up a trophy to mark the cavalry battle.

99 The next day some of the Athenians were building the wall to the north side of the Round Fort, while others worked continuously gathering rocks and timber and placing them along a line towards the place called Trogilus, which would give them the shortest route for their blockading wall from the Great Harbour to the sea the other side. In response the Syracusans, [2] acting on the advice of their generals, and in particular Hermocrates, were no longer inclined to take the risk of a full-scale battle with the Athenians

[1] This seems to be a known and named landmark, just as Syce will have got its name as 'the place of the fig tree'.

[2] Athens was for civil purposes divided into ten 'tribes' (*phulai*), which could also be the basis for hoplite contingents (see Gomme IV, p. 372 and glossary).



Map 26. Walls and counter-walls at Syracuse (414)[1]

[1] Position of Trogilus and the various walls based on Dover's edition of book VI (1965), p. viii. See the discussion in Hornblower III, p. 489, his map 5 on p. 490 and pp. 528–9.

but judged it better to build a counter-wall[1] across the intended line of the Athenian wall in the hope of cutting it off if they could complete theirs first; meanwhile, if the Athenians were to offer resistance in the course of this work they would send a part of their army against them and they would themselves be first to take control of the access routes by building stockades; the Athenians would then have to break off from their work and divert all their attention to them.

The Syracusans therefore came out of the city and began the building- [3]
work. They started the cross-wall from their city and ran it below the Athenian Round Fort and at right angles to it, cutting down olive trees in the precinct and setting wooden towers in the wall. The Athenian ships [4]
had not yet sailed round from Thapsus into the Great Harbour, but the Syracusans were still masters of the surrounding seas while the Athenians were bringing in their supplies by land from Thapsus.

In fact the Athenians did not come out to impede the work, fearing **100**
that if their forces were divided they would be more vulnerable in any fighting, and they were in any case intent on pushing on with their own work on the encircling wall.[2] So when the Syracusans thought they had made sufficient progress with their stockade and counter-wall they left behind one tribal contingent to guard the building-work and went back into the city. The Athenians meanwhile destroyed the pipes that brought drinking-water underground into the city. Then, keeping a lookout until they saw that most of the Syracusans had retired to their tents at midday (and some had even left to go back into the city) and that the ones at the stockade had relaxed their guard, they picked 300 men of their own and a select group of light-armed troops who were given hoplite equipment and sent them to run on ahead and launch a sudden attack against the counter-wall. The rest of their army divided in two: the first part made for

[1] Thucydides uses a large technical vocabulary, some of it not otherwise known, to describe these various walls and counter-walls, commonly prefixing the word for 'building/walling' with prepositions like 'over', 'round', 'before' and 'off'. On the topography and site plan see the long appendix in Gomme IV, pp. 466–84.

[2] The whole of 100.1 is one very long sentence (of 137 words) in the Greek and I have changed the sequence of clauses somewhat at the beginning to break it up. See the article on long sentences in Thucydides, analysing this passage, by S. Yaginuma in E. M. Craik (ed.), '*Owls to Athens': essays on classical subjects presented to Kenneth Dover* (Clarendon Press, 1990). Yaginuma argues that this feature of his prose was motivated by the wish to have 'one sentence for one action', including all the relevant 'motives, grounds, purposes, expectations, results and so on' in one connected utterance. He computes that in the OCT text of the narrative (excluding the speeches and decrees) there are 4,462 sentences, with an average length of 25.3 words (which is not in itself very surprising or interesting).

the city with one general in case the Syracusans sent out reinforcements, and the second part under the other general made for the section of the stockade by the postern gate.

The force of 300 took the stockade in their attack and the guards [2] abandoned it and fled to the outworks surrounding Temenites. Their pursuers burst in with them, but once inside they were forcibly expelled by the Syracusans and some of the Argives and a few of the Athenians were killed there. The whole army then went back, destroyed the counter- [3] wall, ripped up the stockade, carried off the stakes for themselves and set up a trophy.

The next day the Athenians, starting from the Round Fort, began 101 fortifying the cliff above the marsh, which on this side of Epipolae looks out across the Great Harbour, this being also the shortest line for them to bring their wall down across the level ground and the marshy area to the harbour. Meanwhile the Syracusans came out and started again to [2] build a stockade running from the city through the middle of the marshy area; at the same time they dug a ditch alongside this to prevent the Athenians continuing their wall all the way to the sea. In response the [3] Athenians, when they had completed their work at the cliff, launched a further attack on this Syracusan stockade and ditch. After ordering their ships to sail round from Thapsus into the Great Harbour of Syracuse, they made their own descent from Epipolae just before daybreak to the level ground below and crossed the marshy area by treading on door-planks and boards they had placed over it where the ground was more clay-like and firmest. Then at dawn they seized almost all the stockading and the ditch (and later they got the rest too). A battle ensued in which [4] the Athenians were victorious. Those on the Syracusan right wing took flight to the city, while those on the left made for the riverside. Wishing to cut the latter off from the crossing, the 300 Athenian special forces pressed on at a run for the bridge. In alarm the Syracusans (who had [5] most of their cavalry there) closed with the 300, routed them and drove on into the Athenian right wing, whose front-line tribal contingent was in turn panicked by this assault. Seeing this, Lamachus came over from [6] the Athenian left wing in their support with a few archers, bringing the Argives with him too; but after crossing a ditch in pursuit he became isolated with a few others who had crossed over with him and Lamachus himself was killed along with five or six of his companions. The Syracusans immediately grabbed their bodies before the Athenians could stop them, hurried with them across the river to a place of safety and then made

their retreat as the rest of the Athenian army now began to advance on them.

Meanwhile, those of the Syracusans who had at first fled towards the **102** city recovered their nerve when they saw what was happening and came back from the city to take up their positions and face the Athenians in front of them. They also sent a contingent to the Round Fort on Epipolae, thinking that they would find it undefended and capture it. They did [2] succeed in seizing the thousand-foot length of the Athenian outwork and destroyed it, but not the Round Fort itself, which Nicias prevented them from taking. It so happened that he had been left behind there because of an illness and he ordered his staff to set fire to all the siege-gear and timber piled up against the wall there, since he realised that with their depleted manpower there was no other way they could survive. And so it turned [3] out. The Syracusans were deterred by the fire from approaching any closer and they retreated. Moreover, relief for the fort was already on the way now from the Athenians who had been chasing away the Syracusans down below, and at the same time their ships from Thapsus were sailing into the Great Harbour as instructed. When the Syracusans up there saw [4] this they abruptly departed and the whole Syracusan army returned to the city in the belief that with the forces currently at their disposal they were no longer capable of preventing the Athenian wall from reaching the sea.

After this the Athenians set up a trophy and returned the Syracusan **103** dead under truce, retrieving in turn the bodies of Lamachus and his companions. Now that the whole of their armament of ships and infantry was present they began to wall off the Syracusans with a double wall down to the sea, starting from Epipolae and the cliffs. Supplies for the army [2] were arriving from all over Italy. And many Sicels, who had previously been watching the turn of events, now joined the Athenians as allies and three peneteconters also arrived from Tyrrhenia. Other things too were progressing just as they hoped. The Syracusans no longer expected [3] to prevail by force of arms since no help had reached them, even from the Peloponnese; indeed all the talk amongst themselves was of coming to terms, and they were saying this also to Nicias, who now had sole command after the death of Lamachus. There was no resolution to this, [4] but as you might expect from men who were running out of options and increasingly beleaguered many things were said to Nicias and still more were talked about round the city. Under the weight of their present misfortunes they even began to harbour some suspicions of each other and

deposed the generals under whose command these things had befallen them, as if it was bad luck or treachery on their part that had done them the damage.[1] They appointed in their place Heracleides, Eucles and Tellias.

104 Meanwhile the Spartan Gylippus and the ships from Corinth had now got to Leucas, intent on bringing relief to Sicily with all speed. Alarming reports were reaching them, all to the same effect and all false – that the Syracusans had already been completely walled off. Gylippus no longer held out any hope for Sicily, but he wanted to keep Italy safe. He and Pythes the Corinthian with two Spartan ships and two Corinthian ones crossed as quickly as possible over the Ionian Gulf to Tarentum; while the Corinthians were to sail over later, after manning two Leucadian and three Ambracian ships in addition to ten of their own. From Tarentum [2] Gylippus first sent a mission to Thurii, on the basis of the citizenship once granted to his father there, but being unable to win them over he set sail for Italy. Caught by a gale in the Terinaean Gulf, where the prevailing wind from the north is very strong, he was carried out to sea and met more violent weather before making it back to Tarentum; there he hauled up the ships that had suffered the worst damage from the storms and set to repairing them. Nicias learned of his approach by sea but made [3] light of the size of his fleet, just as the Thurians had done, and thinking that they were equipped to sail more as privateers he set no special guard as yet.

105 At the same time this summer the Spartans and their allies invaded Argos and inflicted widespread damage on the land. The Athenians sent thirty ships to help the Argives and in so doing violated their treaty with the Spartans in the most blatant manner. Before then they had sup- [2] ported the Argive and Mantinean war effort by making raids from Pylos into the rest of the Peloponnese rather than into Laconia. The Argives had frequently urged them just to make an armed landing there and to leave again after inflicting even token damage, and they had always refused. But now, under the command of Pythodorus, Laespodias and

[1] The deposed generals must have included Hermocrates (see 73.1) and it seems curious that Thucydides doesn't comment on that given Hermocrates' key role, both to date and subsequently. Dover (Gomme IV, pp. 375–6) finds it irrational that the generals are blamed for these particular failings rather than for incompetence, but the Syracusans were lashing out in despair and one can think of many modern parallels. Good luck was in any case thought to be an important qualification, perhaps even a necessary attribute, of a successful general (see VI 17.1 and 23.3n below and compare Napoleon's, 'I have plenty of clever generals, just give me a lucky one').

Demaratus, they wasted some of the land at Epidaurus Limera, Prasiae and the other places they landed, so giving the Spartans a more plausible reason from now on for retaliation against the Athenians. After the Athe- [3] nian fleet withdrew from Argos and the Spartans left too, the Argives invaded Phliasia, destroyed some of their crops and killed a number of men. Then they returned home.

[BOOK VII]

After repairing their ships Gylippus and Pythen sailed down the coast 1 from Tarentum to Epizephyrian Locri. They now learned more about the true situation at Syracuse – that it was not completely walled off, but that it was still possible for an army to effect an entrance if they approached it by way of Epipolae. They debated therefore whether to run the risk of sailing in by sea, keeping Sicily on their right, or whether to sail first to Himera, with Sicily on their left, pick up the Himerans themselves and any other forces they could persuade to join them, and then proceed by land. They decided in the end to sail to Himera, mainly [2] because the four Athenian ships (which Nicias had after all dispatched on hearing that they were at Locri) had not yet arrived at Rhegium. They passed through the strait ahead of this defending force and after putting in at Rhegium and Messina they arrived at Himera. Once there they [3] persuaded the Himerans to come into the war on their side, and not only to join up themselves but also to supply arms to those sailors from their ships who had none (these ships had now been hauled up at Himera). They also sent a request to the Selinuntians to meet them with an army at a designated place. The Geloans too promised to send a modest force, [4] as did some Sicels, who were now ready to join them with far greater enthusiasm following the recent death of Archonides (king of some of the Sicels in this area and a person of considerable power, who had been friendly with the Athenians) and the arrival from Sparta of Gylippus, apparently very committed. Gylippus now set out for Syracuse, taking [5] with him a force of some 700 of his own sailors and marines armed as hoplites, from Himera a combined total of a thousand hoplites and light-armed troops and also 100 cavalry, some light-armed troops and cavalry from the Selinuntians, a few from the Geloans and about 1,000 Sicels in all.

2 Meanwhile, the Corinthians were coming up in support as fast as they could from Leucas with the rest of the ships. Gongylus,[1] one of the Corinthian commanders, started last in his one ship but arrived at Syracuse before the others, a little ahead of Gylippus, and found the Syracusans on the point of holding an assembly to discuss getting out of the war. He managed to prevent this and tried to encourage them by saying that there were more ships still on the way there and that with them was Gylippus son of Cleondridas, whom the Spartans had sent as commander. [2] Upon this the Syracusans recovered their nerve and went out straightaway with their whole army to meet Gylippus, who they found was now very near. [3] He had just captured Ietae, a Sicel fort, on his way there and now arrived at Epipolae in full battle order. He ascended by way of Euryelus, just as the Athenians had first done, and advanced with the Syracusans on the Athenian fortification. [4] He happened to come at the critical moment when the Athenians had completed about a mile of their double wall to the Great Harbour and had only a short stretch left to reach the sea, which they were still working on. As for the rest of the wall heading for Trogilus on the other coast, rocks had already been positioned along most of its length and parts of it remained uncompleted while some other parts had been finished. So close did the Syracusans come to disaster.[2]

3 The Athenians were at first thrown into confusion by this sudden attack of Gylippus and the Syracusans, but they drew themselves up in battle order. Gylippus stood his men down nearby while he sent over a herald to say that if the Athenians liked to leave Sicily within five days taking their belongings with them he was ready to offer a truce. [2] The Athenians were openly dismissive and sent the herald away without an answer, after which the two sides made their preparations to join battle. [3] When Gylippus saw that the Syracusan troops were in disorder and not easy to organise in proper formation he led the army off to the more level ground. Nicias did not take the Athenians out against him, however, but stayed back by their own wall. When Gylippus realised that they were not coming out he led his army away to the high point called Temenitis and camped there for the night. [4] On the next day he took most of his army and drew

[1] Gongylus is not heard of again, but we learn from Plutarch, *Nicias* 19, that he died in the action described at VII 5.

[2] This irresistibly recalls the narrow escape of Mytilene and indeed uses almost exactly the same wording as at III 49.4. Both are cases of high drama where chance plays a major role. Gylippus' decisive actions and sure touch also recall Brasidas' campaigns in book IV. He even has sufficient confidence to admit to a mistake (5.3), unlike Nicias (11.2, 15.1).

them up facing the Athenian walls, to prevent the Athenians sending out reinforcements anywhere else. Meanwhile he sent a detachment against the fort at Labdalum, which was out of sight of the Athenians. He took it, killing all those he caught inside it. On the same day an Athenian trireme [5] that was blockading the harbour was captured by the Syracusans.

The Syracusans and their allies next began to build a single wall, starting **4** from the city and running across Epipolae at right angles to the Athenian wall, so that unless the Athenians could stop them they would no longer be able to wall the Syracusans off. The Athenians had by now gone up on [2] to Epipolae after completing their wall down to the sea; but there was a weak spot in the wall and Gylippus took his army up by night to attack it. As it happened, the Athenians had bivouacked outside the wall there and [3] when they became aware of this move they counter-attacked, whereupon Gylippus reacted by quickly withdrawing his men again. The Athenians then built up that part of the wall to raise its height and mounted guard there themselves, while they disposed their other allies along the rest of the wall to guard it at various assigned stations.

Nicias now decided to fortify the place called Plemmyrium, a headland [4] opposite the city that juts out into the Great Harbour and so narrows its mouth. His impression was that if it were fortified it would be easier to bring in supplies, since they would be operating their blockade at a shorter distance from the harbour used by the Syracusans[1] and would not, as now, have to make their sallies from the recesses of the Great Harbour whenever there was any enemy naval activity.

Nicias was at this point giving more of his attention to the war at sea, observing that the arrival of Gylippus had now reduced their prospects by land. Accordingly, he conveyed troops and the ships over to Plemmyrium [5] and built three forts, where most of their equipment was deposited and where the large transport ships and the warships were now moored. And [6] that was both the start and the major cause of the deterioration of the state of the ships' crews that followed. Supplies of water were scarce and distant; and at the same time whenever the sailors went out to scavenge firewood they were picked off by the Syracusan cavalry which controlled the countryside there – a third of them having been stationed at the little town of Olympieium specifically to prevent the men at Plemmyrium from making their forays and causing damage.

[1] Although not specified, he seems to mean the 'Little Harbour' to the north, here and at 3.5 and 22.1 (where it is specified). See maps 25 and 26, pp. 427, 448.

Nicias was now hearing that the rest of the Corinthian fleet was [7] approaching and he sent twenty ships to patrol for them, with instructions to lie in wait at Locri, Rhegium and the approaches to Sicily.

Gylippus meanwhile continued building the wall across Epipolae, using **5** stones the Athenians had put aside earlier for their own use. At the same time he kept leading out the Syracusans and their allies and marshalling them in battle order in front of their wall; and the Athenians would then do likewise to counter them. When Gylippus thought the moment was [2] right he began the assault. The armies engaged in hand-to-hand fighting in the area between the walls, where the Syracusan cavalry were of no use. The Syracusans and their allies were defeated, and after they had [3] collected their dead under truce and the Athenians had raised a trophy, Gylippus called the army together and addressed them. He said that the fault was his, not theirs: he had drawn them up too close to the walls and had thus deprived them of the benefit of their cavalry and javelin-throwers; and he would now lead them out again. He told them to bear [4] in mind that in terms of physical resources they were not outmatched, and in terms of spirit it was unthinkable that men who were Peloponnesians and Dorians should not expect as a right to overcome a group of Ionians, islanders and other assorted rabble and drive them from the land.

After this, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, he led them out **6** again. Nicias and the Athenians were thinking that even if the enemy had no wish to start a battle it was imperative for them that they did not just stand around watching the building of the counter-wall; for by now the construction of this enemy wall had all but passed the end of the Athenian wall, and if it got beyond it then it was all the same if they won every battle or never fought at all. They therefore came out to oppose the Syracusans. Gylippus led his hoplites far further from the walls than the [2] time before and engaged the Athenians, placing his cavalry and javelin-throwers on the Athenian flank in the open area where the construction work on both walls gave out. In the ensuing battle the Syracusan cav- [3] alry attacked the Athenian left wing facing them and routed it; and in consequence the rest of the army too was defeated and fell back, a broken force, behind their fortifications.[1] The following night the Syracusans [4] continued their counter-wall, and succeeded in overtaking the Athenians;

[1] See VI 99.2n on the elaborate technical vocabulary used in describing these walls and counter-walls. Hornblower (III, pp. 551–4) speculates that these passages represent an actual stylistic *enactment* of the building-work (and offers a diagram to illustrate).

they passed the end of their building-work, with the result that the Athenians could no longer obstruct their work but were themselves altogether prevented from walling them off, even if they got the better of them in battle.

7 After this the remaining twelve ships of the Corinthians, Ambraciots and Leucadians sailed in under the command of the Corinthian,[1] Erasinides, having eluded the Athenian ships placed on guard duty, and their crews helped the Syracusans build the rest of their cross-wall. [2] Meanwhile Gylippus had gone to other parts of Sicily to recruit for the army, aiming to raise both land and sea forces and at the same time win over such cities as were either lukewarm in their support or had so far kept out of the war altogether. [3] More Syracusan and Corinthian envoys were also dispatched to Sparta to get fresh forces sent over, whether in merchant ships, boats or any other means of transport practicable, since it was known that the Athenians too were sending for reinforcements. [4] The Syracusans were also manning their fleet and practising to engage in this form of warfare as well, and morale was generally very high.

8 Observing all this and seeing both his enemies' strength and their own helplessness growing day by day, Nicias likewise sent word to Athens. He was used to briefing them regularly on events in some detail and he now made a special point of it, since his view was that they were in a desperate situation and that unless the Athenians acted swiftly either to recall them [2] or to send significant reinforcements they were beyond salvation. And since he was afraid that the men he sent would fail to report the true facts – whether through lack of ability in speaking or failure of memory or a wish to indulge mass opinion – he put his report in writing in the form of a letter, thinking that in this way the Athenians would learn his own views directly, undistorted by transmission, and could then deliberate about [3] the situation as it really was. The emissaries left carrying the letter, with instructions on what they had to say. Meanwhile he gave his attention to matters at the camp, with an emphasis now more on security than on running unnecessary risks.

[1] R. S. Stroud in his article 'Thucydides and Corinth', *Chiron*, 24 (1994), pp. 267–302, remarks on the detailed information Thucydides seems to have about Corinth and quite minor Corinthian figures (see also 34.2 and 39.2 below and other references in Gomme II, p. 94), though the paradox is that we hear almost nothing about the *major* policy-makers there or about its form of government, despite the key role Corinth has in the war and its origins (see, for example, I 66, 68–71 and 103.4). Corinth is the third most mentioned place in Thucydides, after Athens and Sparta.

At the end of the same summer the Athenian general Euetion made 9
a joint expedition with Perdiccas,[1] leading a large body of Thracians against Amphipolis. He failed to take it, but brought triremes round into the Strymon and blockaded the city from the river, mooring off Himeraeum.

And so the summer ended.

Winter [VII 10–18]

The following winter the men sent by Nicias arrived at Athens. They gave 10
their oral report as instructed, answered such questions as were asked and delivered the letter. The city clerk now came forward and read out the contents of the letter to the Athenians, as follows.

'Athenians, you know about our earlier activities from many previous 11
dispatches,[2] and you must inform your decisions now with an equally full
understanding of our current situation. We had been successful in most [2]
of our battles with the Syracusans, whom we were sent to fight, and we had built the fortifications in which we are now. Then Gylippus came, a Spartan, with an army drawn both from the Peloponnese and from some of the cities in Sicily. In the first battle we had he was defeated by us, but on the next day we retreated within our walls under pressure from the
large numbers of their cavalry and javelin-throwers. Now, therefore, we [3]
have abandoned work on the siege wall because of the enemy's numbers and we are standing idle. (You understand that we could not even deploy our full army, since part of our hoplite force is taken up with guarding the walls.) They, on the other hand, have built a single counter-wall to ours, so we cannot any longer surround them with a siege wall, unless someone
were to attack this counter-wall with a large force and capture it. So, the [4]
upshot is that we who were supposed to be besieging others are instead the besieged, at least by land; indeed, because of their cavalry we cannot even venture far into open country.

They have also sent envoys to the Peloponnesians for fresh forces, 12
and Gylippus has gone to visit the cities of Sicily to persuade some of the currently neutral ones to join in the war as well and to try and get

[1] Last heard of at VI 7.3, since when he has changed sides again, but this is his final mention in Thucydides.

[2] It is interesting that there were these previous *written* dispatches. If this was standard practice Thucydides may have had documentary sources for other parts of his narrative too.

others to supply further land troops and naval support. I understand that [2]
they plan to make a combined attack on us, using their infantry against
our fortifications on land and their ships by sea. And no one should be [3]
surprised that I include "by sea". Our fleet, as the enemy themselves are
aware, was initially in peak condition in terms both of the soundness of
the ships and the condition of the crews; but now the ships are water-
logged, having already been so long at sea, and the crews are spent. It [4]
has not been possible to beach the ships and dry them out, because the
enemy fleet is a match or more than a match for ours in numbers and
so keeps us in constant expectation of an enemy assault. They practise [5]
their manoeuvres in full view of us; the initiative to attack lies with them;
and they have more opportunity to dry out their ships, since they are not
blockading others.

We, however, would still be at a disadvantage, even if we had far more **13**
ships than they do and were not forced, as we now are, to use them all
for guard duty. For if we relax our vigilance even a little we will lose
our supplies, which are already hard enough to bring in past their city.
We have been and still are losing crewmen, because the sailors are killed [2]
by enemy cavalry while on their foraging trips for firewood and plunder
and distant supplies of water. Our servants are deserting, now that we
are reduced to equal terms with the enemy. Then there are the foreign
mercenaries:[1] some, who embarked as forced conscripts, are returning to
their cities just as quickly as they can; others were inspired in the first
instance by the prospect of high pay and thought they would be making
money rather than war, but now that to their surprise they see enemy
resistance actually coming from the fleet as well as on other fronts they
are finding excuses to desert[2] or are just making off in any way they
can (Sicily is a large place); yet others, doing some trading on their own
account, persuade the trierarchs to take Hyccarian slaves on board in their
place and so take the edge off the fleet's performance.

This letter need not remind men of your experience that a crew can **14**
only maintain peak condition for a short time and that there are only a
few sailors able to get a boat under way and keep a rhythm to the rowing.
But my biggest problem is that I, the general, can do nothing to stop all [2]

[1] *xenoi* see glossary.

[2] The literal meaning is 'are leaving on the pretext (*prophasis*) of desertion', which makes little sense. All the suggested interpretations seem to strain either the Greek or the logic in context (see Dover in Gomme IV, p. 389 and Hornblower III, p. 564). Various textual emendations have been suggested to give other senses.

this happening (your Athenian temperament is a hard one to control), and that we have no further sources from which to replenish our ships' crews, while the enemy has many such. On the contrary, the forces we came with have had to suffice both for present needs and past losses. The cities of Naxos and Catana, our only current allies, are powerless to help. If the enemy gain just one further advantage – namely, if the regions of [3] Italy that currently supply us, seeing us in this state and with no prospect of further help from you, were to go over to the enemy – then we will be besieged into submission and they will have won the war without a battle fought.

I could have sent you a more welcome report but not a more useful [4] one – that is, if you need a clear grasp of the situation here in making your decisions. I do in any case know what you are like:[1] you want to hear the most agreeable news; but you find fault later if there are subsequent disappointments, and so I judged it less risky to tell you the truth of the matter.

So now keep this firmly in mind. Your soldiers and leaders have not **15** failed you in terms of the situation we first came to address.[2] But since all Sicily is now united and the enemy expects the support of another army from the Peloponnese, you must make up your minds straightaway that since our men here are no match even for their present forces you must either recall them or reinforce them with another armament – one as big again, of both land and naval forces, and with significant new funds; and you must also send a replacement for me since I have a kidney disease and am unable to carry on. I can claim a right to your indulgence in [2] this, since in my prime I served you well in many positions of command. Whatever you intend to do, however, do straightaway, right at the start of spring and with no delays, since the enemy will procure new resources, some immediately from Sicily and others from the Peloponnese which may come more slowly; nevertheless, if you do not apply your minds to it those from the Peloponnese will elude you (as they did before) and the Sicilian troops will get here before yours do.'

That was what Nicias set out in his letter. When the Athenians had **16** listened to it they did not act to relieve Nicias of his command; instead, until such time as other generals could be elected and could get there to

[1] Nicias' second mention of the Athenian character in 14. He comes back to it at VII 48.3–4.

[2] Not quite 'in respect of our original objectives' (the usual translation), since they have evidently not achieved those (see 11.2 above and VI 47n). What he goes on to argue is that the facts of the situation have changed critically.

share the command, they chose two of those already there, Menandrus and Euthydemus, to serve with him so that he was not suffering this distress alone in his weakened condition. They also voted to send a further armament of both land and naval forces, to be recruited from Athenians on the register[1] and from the allies. They selected as his fellow [2] generals Demosthenes son of Alcisthenes and Eurymedon son of Thucles. Eurymedon they sent out to Sicily straightaway, at the time of the winter solstice;[2] he took with him ten ships and 120 talents of silver and he bore the news that help was on the way and that their concerns were being kept in mind.

17 Demosthenes stayed behind and made preparations to launch the expedition in the early spring. He sent out a request for forces to the allies and started making ready funds, ships and hoplites at Athens. The Athenians [2] also sent ten ships round the Peloponnese to guard against anyone crossing over from Corinth and the Peloponnese to Sicily. Corinthian morale [3] had been rising sharply since envoys arrived there with better news about the situation in Sicily; this convinced them that their earlier contribution of ships had been timely and so they now prepared to send a force of hoplites in merchant ships to Sicily themselves, while the Spartans were doing likewise with troops drawn from the rest of the Peloponnese. The [4] Corinthians manned twenty-five ships, intending to offer battle to the Athenian ships on guard at Naupactus and leave the Athenians there less able to disrupt their merchant ships because of the need to maintain a defensive force to counter these Corinthian triremes.

18 The Spartans were also making their preparations for the invasion of Attica, something they had already determined on and had been encouraged to do by the Syracusans and Corinthians. They had found out about the reinforcements to be sent by the Athenians to Sicily and had the idea that these might be forestalled in the event of an invasion. And Alcibiades was insistently telling them to fortify Deceleia and to keep up the pressure in the war. What gave the Spartans most confidence, however, was their [2] belief that the Athenians, with this double war on their hands – against both themselves and the Sicilians – would become easier to overcome. They also thought that the Athenians had been the ones to break the treaty first. In the earlier phase of the war the fault of transgression was more on their side, in that Thebans had entered Plataea while a treaty

[1] The *katalogos* was the list of all those qualified by age and wealth to serve as hoplites (see also VI 26.2, VI 43 and VIII 24.2).

[2] So one could make some winter sailings, despite VI 21.2.

was in force; and though it was laid down in the earlier agreements that no one should take up arms if the other side was willing to go to arbitration, they had themselves been deaf to the Athenian invitation to do so. They considered that they had deservedly suffered as a consequence and they took very much to heart the disasters inflicted on them at Pylos and elsewhere.[1] But now the Athenians were using Argos as a base from [3] which to ravage parts of Epidaurus and Prasiae and other places, in addition to continuing their raids from Pylos, and they were the ones refusing to submit to arbitration at the invitation of the Spartans whenever there was a disagreement about disputed points in the treaty. In this situation, then, the Spartans took the view that the very same fault of transgression, for which they had previously been guilty, had reverted to the Athenians. They therefore felt committed to the war.

So in the course of this winter the Spartans circulated requests to their [4] allies for iron and they got ready the other implements needed for the building-work. At the same time they made provision to send additional help in the merchant ships and required other Peloponnesians to do the same.

So the winter ended and with it the eighteenth year of the war Thucydides wrote.

[1] A striking passage, showing how seriously – and not cynically – this issue was taken even in the midst of all-out war, with the Spartans accepting their earlier culpability and even concluding that they deserved the punishment they thought resulted.

Nineteenth year of the war, 413–12 [VII 19–87, VIII 1–6]

Summer [VII 19–87, VIII 1]

Right at the start of the following spring – at an earlier date than ever 19
before, in fact – the Spartans and their allies invaded Attica, under the command of Agis, son of Archidamus and king of the Spartans. They first wasted the land in the area of the plain and then began building a fort at Deceleia, dividing the work between the allied states. Deceleia is [2]
about eleven miles from the city of Athens[1] and approximately the same or a little further from Boeotia. The fort was built overlooking the plain and the richest parts of the land with a view to despoiling them, and it was clearly visible from as far away as the city of Athens.

While the Peloponnesians and their allies were building this fort in [3]
Attica, those in the Peloponnese were at about the same time dispatching hoplites to Sicily in transport ships. The Spartans selected the best of the present or recently enfranchised helots, 600 hoplites in all, and sent them under the command of the Spartiate Eccritus; and the Boeotians chose 300 hoplites to go under the command of the Thebans Zenon and Nicon and the Thespian Hegesander. These troops were among the first to sail, [4]
putting out into the open sea from Taenarum in Laconia; not long after them the Corinthians sent 500 hoplites, some from Corinth itself, others

[1] '120 stades', which assumes a shorter than usual length to a stade (see note on distances, p. lvii).

being Arcadian mercenaries they hired in, and appointed the Corinthian Alexarchus to the command. The Sicyonians dispatched an additional 200 hoplites along with the Corinthians under the command of Sargeus, a Sicyonian. Meanwhile the twenty-five Corinthian ships that had been [5] manned during the winter stood off facing the twenty Athenian ships at Naupactus, which was precisely why they had been manned in the first place – to focus the Athenians' attention on the triremes rather than the merchant ships.

20 The Athenians too were active in this period. While the fort was being constructed in Deceleia and right at the start of the same spring, they sent thirty ships to the Peloponnese under the command of Charicles son of Apollodorus, whose instructions were that on arrival at Argos he should ask to come on board the Argive hoplites promised under the terms of their alliance. They also sent Demosthenes to Sicily, as planned, with sixty [2] Athenian ships, five from Chios, 1,200 Athenian hoplites from the register, and as many islanders as could be brought into service from the different sources, drawing in from the other subject allies whatever else would be of use for the war. Demosthenes' instructions for his voyage were first to support Charicles in his operations round the coast of Laconia. He [3] therefore sailed over to Aegina and waited there for any stragglers from his forces and for Charicles to pick up the Argive troops.

21 Meanwhile in Sicily, at about the same time this spring, Gylippus returned to Syracuse, bringing with him from the cities he had won over as large a force as he could muster from the different places. Calling [2] the Syracusans together, he told them that they should man as many ships as possible and venture a sea battle; he hoped they could thereby accomplish something for the war effort that would justify the risks involved. Hermocrates in particular lent his support in persuading the [3] Syracusans not to be faint-hearted about attacking the Athenians with their fleet. He said that Athenian expertise at sea was neither inherited nor would it last for ever; on the contrary, compared to the Syracusans the Athenians were really landsmen and had been forced by the Persian Wars to become seamen.[1] When taking on people as daring as the Athenians, he added, those who matched their daring in confronting them would present them with the greatest difficulties. The very boldness with which the Athenians intimidated neighbours, to whom they were not

[1] Not true as a matter of history (though VI 82.3 is sometimes translated as if it were), but Hermocrates was right about the strategy he is recommending.

always superior in terms of power, was a weapon the Syracusans could likewise use to subvert their own enemies. He said he was quite sure that [4] by making a spirited and unexpected attack on the Athenian fleet the Syracusans would cause them consternation; and this would give them an advantage that would outweigh any damage Athenian expertise could inflict on Syracusan inexperience. He therefore urged them to go and put their fleet to the test and not to shrink from it. And under this persuasion [5] from Gylippus, Hermocrates and perhaps some others too, the Syracusans roused themselves for a sea battle and started manning their ships.

22 When the fleet had been made ready Gylippus led out the whole infantry army under cover of night, intending that his force would make an assault by land on the fortifications at Plemmyrium. At the same time, on a prearranged signal, thirty-five Syracusan triremes sailed to the attack from the Great Harbour, while forty-five issued from the Little Harbour, which was where the shipyard was. Their intention was to sail round and link up with those inside, while at the same time attacking Plemmyrium by sea, so that the Athenians would be thrown into confusion on both fronts. The Athenians, however, quickly manned sixty ships to meet their own [2] attacks and with twenty-five of them engaged the thirty-five Syracusan ships in a sea battle in the Great Harbour, while with the rest they went to confront those sailing round from the shipyard. They now fought a sea battle in front of the mouth of the Great Harbour and for a long time each side held out against the other, the one seeking to force an entrance, the other to prevent this.

23 Gylippus now made a surprise move. The Athenians at Plemmyrium had gone down to the shore and were concentrating on the sea battle, and Gylippus made a sudden, dawn attack on the forts. He took the biggest one first and then also the two smaller ones, whose garrisons did not stay to resist when they saw the biggest one taken so easily. The men from the [2] fort that was captured first escaped to the ships and a merchant vessel, and all these were brought safely back to camp – but only with difficulty, since the Syracusan fleet was winning the sea battle in the Great Harbour and they pursued these Athenians with a single, fast trireme. By the time the other two forts were taken, however, the Syracusans were now suffering a reverse in their fortunes and those escaping from the forts found it easier to sail past them. What happened was that the Syracusan ships fighting [3] in front of the harbour mouth had overpowered the Athenian ships and were now sailing into the harbour in no sort of order; they fell foul of each other and so handed the victory to the Athenians, who routed these ships

and also the ones they had first been losing to in the harbour. They sank [4]
eleven Syracusan boats and killed most of their men, except for those from three ships whose crew they took prisoner; of their own ships three were lost. The Athenians hauled ashore the wrecks of the Syracusan boats, set up a trophy on the little island opposite Plemmyrium and then returned to their own base.

That was how the Syracusans fared in the sea battle, but they did **24**
now hold possession of the forts at Plemmyrium and they set up three trophies for them. The demolished one of the two forts they had taken last, but the other two they repaired and garrisoned. Many men died or [2]
were taken prisoner in the course of the capture of these forts and a large quantity of goods was seized in total. The Athenians had used the forts as a warehouse and many goods belonging to traders and a great deal of food was stored there, as well as a lot of things belonging to the trierarchs – since even the sails and other tackle from forty triremes had been put away in there along with three beached triremes.

This capture of Plemmyrium was one of the greatest and most serious [3]
blows suffered by the Athenian army. No longer was it safe to sail in to deliver provisions, since the Syracusans would have their ships lying in wait there to stop them, and ships bringing in supplies now had to fight their way through. In other respects too the capture of the forts brought general alarm and despondency.

After this the Syrcusans sent out a party of twelve ships under the **25**
command of Agatharchus, a Syracusan. One of these made for the Peloponnese, taking envoys who were to explain that they had good hopes of their situation and urge the Peloponnesians to intensify the war over there still more. The other eleven ships sailed for Italy, having learned that boats laden with supplies for the Athenians were approaching. They [2]
engaged these ships and destroyed most of them, and they also burned some timber in the territory of Caulonia, which was there ready for the Athenians to use in ship-building. They then went on to Locri and while [3]
they were at anchor there one of the transport ships bringing Thespian hoplites from the Peloponnese sailed in. The Syracusans took these on [4]
board and then sailed along the coast for home. The Athenians, however, had been watching out for them at Megara with twenty ships and they seized one Syracusan vessel together with its crew; the rest they failed to catch and these escaped to Syracuse.

There was also some skirmishing in the harbour around the wooden [5]
stakes which the Syracusans had driven into the seabed in front of the old

dockyards so that their own ships could be safely moored behind them and the Athenians would be prevented from sailing in and doing damage by ramming them. The Athenians brought up a very heavy transport ship[1] [6] fitted with wooden towers and bulwarks. They fastened cables round the posts from their small boats and winched them up, or else they broke the posts off or had divers saw through them. The Syracusans meanwhile kept up a barrage of missiles from the dockyards, but the Athenians returned their fire from the transport ship and eventually succeeded in removing most of the stakes. But the part of the stockade that caused most [7] difficulties was the part hidden under water. The Syracusans had driven some of the stakes in so that they did not project above the surface, with the result that it was perilous to sail in over them in case one failed to spot them in advance and impaled the boat on them, as if on a reef. However, divers were hired to go down and saw these off too – though then the Syracusans responded in turn by driving in a fresh stockade. The two [8] sides continued to contrive many such moves and counter-moves, as you would expect from two opposing forces operating at such close quarters, and they constantly skirmished and tried out different tactics.

The Syracusans also sent delegations composed of Corinthians, [9] Ambraciots and Spartans to the cities in Sicily to announce the capture of Plemmyrium and to explain that their defeat in the sea battle owed more to their own disarray than to the strength of the enemy; they were also to declare that they were in good heart and urge the cities to support them with both ships and infantry, since the Athenians were also expecting another army, and if they could pre-empt its arrival and destroy their present forces first, then the war was as good as over.

This was how the forces in Sicily were occupied.

Meanwhile Demosthenes, when he had gathered together the army of **26** reinforcements he was to take to Sicily, set out from Aegina and sailed to the Peloponnese to join forces with Charicles and the fleet of thirty Athenian ships. He took on board there the hoplites from Argos and sailed on to Laconia. They first wasted part of Epidaurus Limera, then [2] putting in on the coast of Laconia opposite Cythera, where the temple of

[1] Literally, 'a 10,000-capacity boat', but 10,000 of what is not known and it was probably an imprecise notion anyway (see IV 118.5n). There is a little flurry of technical terms in this passage and the mechanics of some of the winching activities are unclear (to the point where Dover suggests a possible alternative reading – see Gomme IV, p. 399); but the whole episode in 25.5–8 is a typically vivid picture of improvised warfare and ingenious devices of the kind that Thucydides enjoys reporting (as also, for example, at Pylos IV 26, Plataea II 75–78, III 20–24 and in the sea battles at VII 34.5 and 53.4).

Apollo is, they ravaged some of the land there too and fortified a sort of isthmus area in order to provide a refuge for helots deserting the Spartans and a base from which raiding-parties could carry out their plundering, just as at Pylos. As soon as he had played his part in occupying the place [3] Demosthenes sailed straight on to Corcyra in order to pick up some of the allied troops there and sail on as quickly as possible to Sicily. Charicles on the other hand stayed on until he had fortified the place and then, leaving behind a garrison, sailed home with his thirty ships, as did the Argives as well.

During this same summer there arrived at Athens 1,300 Thracian 27 peltasts, swordsmen from the Dian tribe. These were to have sailed to Sicily with Demosthenes, but since they were late arriving the Athenians [2] proposed to send them straight back to Thrace where they came from. In view of the Deceleian war it seemed extravagant to retain them, since each of them was receiving a drachma a day.

Deceleia, remember, had been first fortified by the whole army this [3] summer and it was later occupied by a succession of garrisons from the different cities to initiate offensives in the countryside there. This did huge damage to the Athenians and the destruction of property and the loss of life involved was one of the principal factors in their demise. Earlier invasions had been short in duration and did not prevent them [4] from enjoying the use of the land the rest of the time; whereas now the enemy was in continuous occupation, sometimes invading with a larger force and sometimes overrunning the countryside from the garrison there and plundering it to meet their own needs;[1] moreover, Agis king of the Spartans was also present and was giving all his attention to the war. So the Athenians were being very badly damaged. They were deprived [5] of access to their entire countryside, more than 20,000 slaves deserted – a large proportion of them skilled workmen,[2] and they lost all their livestock and draught animals; and now that their cavalry were going out every day to make raids on Deceleia and maintain guard throughout the countryside their horses suffered, some being lamed by the constant punishment from the hard ground and some wounded in battle.

Another problem was that the transport of supplies from Euboea, which 28 had previously come in quickly overland from Oropus by way of Deceleia,

[1] The text is very likely corrupt here (see appendix 1, p. 588).

[2] *Cheirotechnai* literally 'handcraftsmen': a very large number (from a total slave population in Attica of up to 100,000), presumably including agricultural and mine workers and artisans but not the domestics.

now had to go at great expense by sea round Sounium. Everything else the city needed had to be imported too and instead of being a city the place became a fortress. By day the Athenians had to keep guard on the [2] battlements in relays, and by night all of them except the cavalrymen had to be on duty, either at one of the armed posts or on the wall; summer and winter it went on and they were suffering terribly. But what put most [3] pressure on the Athenians was that they were conducting two wars at the same time, and they brought to them a competitive spirit[1] that had to be seen to be believed. It was incredible that when they were themselves under siege from a Peloponnesian fort in their own country they should not even then withdraw from Sicily but should in turn be besieging the Syracusans in just the same way, inhabitants of a city which was itself as big as that of Athenians; incredible too that in their display of power and daring they could so confound the Greeks – who at the start of the war had some of them thought the Athenians would survive one year, some two, but none more than three years, if the Peloponnesians invaded their country; and now, against all reasonable expectation, in the seventeenth year after the first such invasion, and already war-worn in every way, they should go to Sicily and undertake another war on the same scale as the one they already had with the Peloponnese.

For all these reasons, then, and because Deceleia was hurting them so [4] badly and other large costs were mounting up, they became financially crippled. And it was at this time that they imposed on their subjects a duty of five per cent on all goods going by sea to replace the tribute payments, calculating that this way they would increase their income. Their outgoings, after all, had not remained the same but had grown greatly with the scale of the war, while their revenues by contrast were failing.

With money so short the Athenians were unwilling to commit to expen- **29** diture, and so they immediately sent away the Thracians who had arrived too late for Demosthenes' expedition. They commissioned Diitrephes[2] to take them back home and told him to use them to do the enemy any damage he could on the way (they were going by the Euripus channel). He disembarked them at Tanagra and quickly grabbed some plunder, [2] then at nightfall sailed from Chalcis in Euboea across the Euripus and

[1] *Philonikia*, literally 'love of victory': a further explanation of the Athenians' motivation in Sicily, this time an authorial one in terms of the Athenian character (see VI 47n).

[2] Thucydides does not apportion blame for the subsequent atrocity between Diitrephes and the Thracian troops under his command. Diitrephes appears again at VIII 64, putting down the democracy at Thasos.

after landing in Boeotia led them against Mycalessus. He camped for the [3] night undetected near the sanctuary of Hermes, somewhat less than two miles from Mycalessus and at daybreak made an assault on the town, which is not a large one. He took it by storm, falling on the inhabitants when they were off their guard and not expecting anyone to come so far inland to attack them; besides, their walls were weak, in some places dilapidated and in others built to no great height; and at the same time the gates had been left open because they felt they had nothing to fear. The Thracians surged into Mycalessus and started sacking the houses [4] and temples and butchering the people; they spared neither young nor old but killed everyone in their path as they came on them – women and children, even beasts of burden and any other living thing they set eyes on. These Thracians are at their most murderous when their blood is up, like the very worst savages. On this occasion total mayhem ensued, and [5] death and destruction came in every form. They even burst in on a boys' school, the largest one there, just after the pupils had entered it, and they massacred them all. So disaster struck the whole city and was the worst ever suffered, so sudden was it and so terrible.

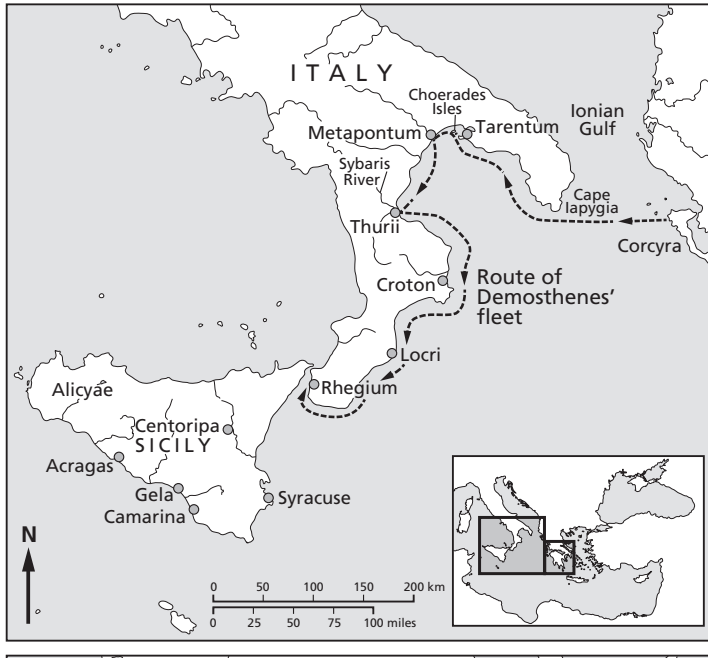
When the Thebans realised what was happening they went to help. **30** They caught the Thracians before they had got very far away, took their booty from them and drove them in a panic to the coast at the Euripus crossing where the boats that had brought them were lying at anchor. Most of those killed died in the act of embarking, since they did not [2] know how to swim and the men in the boats had anchored them outside the range of bowshot when they saw what was happening on the shore. Otherwise, in the course of general retreat the Thracians put up a quite reasonable defence against the Theban cavalry, relying on their local tactic of charging and then regrouping, and relatively few of them were killed in that part of the action. Some of their number were, however, caught looting in the city itself and perished there. In all 250 out of the 1,300 Thracians were killed. Of the Thebans and the others who took part in [3] the rescue action a total of about twenty cavalrymen and hoplites died, and with them one of the Theban Boetarchs, Scirphondas. And part of the Mycalessian population was completely wiped out. Such was the fate of Mycalessus, which in relation to its size suffered a calamity as grievous as any in the war.[1]

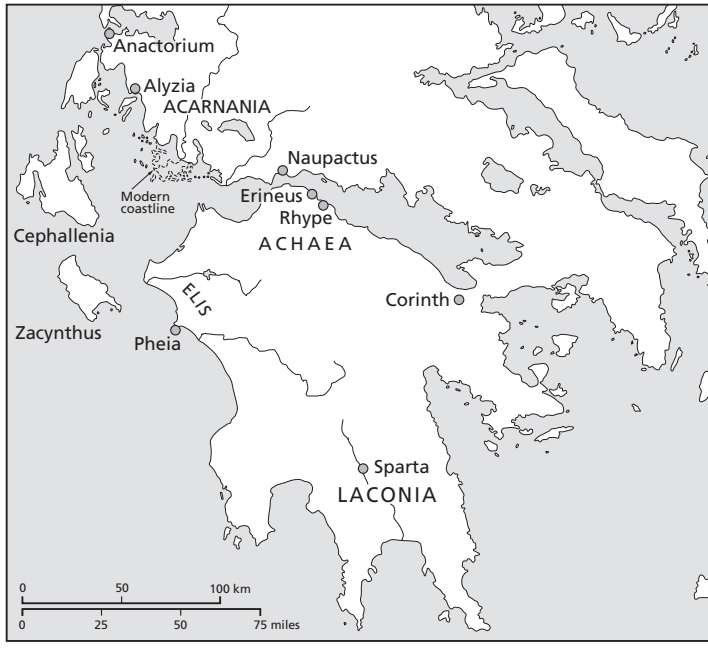
[1] Literally, 'worthy to be lamented'. It is hard to say which factors weighed most in Thucydides' reaction: that barbarians were assaulting a Greek *polis*; that the Athenians were to a

Demosthenes was by now at sea heading for Corcyra after establishing **31** the fort at Laconia. On his way he came across a merchant ship lying at anchor at Pheia in Elis, in which the Corinthian hoplites were about to make the crossing to Sicily, and destroyed it. The men, however, escaped and later got hold of another boat in which they continued their voyage. After this Demosthenes went on to Zacynthus and Cephallenia, where he [2] took some hoplites on board and sent for more from the Messenians at Naupactus; he then crossed over to the mainland of Acarnania opposite, putting in at Alyzia and Anactorium, which the Athenians currently occupied. While Demosthenes was thus occupied Eurymedon sailed to meet [3] him on his return journey from Sicily, where he had been sent during the winter with money for the army. Eurymedon told him the news, including the report he had heard while still at sea that Plemmyrium had been taken by the Syracusans. They were joined there by Conon, the commander [4] at Naupactus, who came to report that the twenty-five Corinthian ships lying at anchor opposite his, so far from backing down, were preparing to fight them at sea. He therefore urged them to send him some ships, since his eighteen triremes were no match for the enemy's twenty-five in a sea battle. So Demosthenes and Eurymedon sent Conon ten of the fastest [5] triremes they had to reinforce the fleet at Naupactus, while they themselves made the necessary arrangements to gather their force together. Eurymedon broke off his journey back to Athens and sailed to Corcyra. He was by now exercising the joint command with Demosthenes to which he had been elected and he asked the Corcyraeans to man fifteen ships and to enlist hoplites; meanwhile Demosthenes recruited slingers and javelin-throwers from the region of Acarnania.

The Syracusan envoys who after the capture of Plemmyrium had **32** approached the other cities in Sicily proved successful in persuading them to help and were about to bring back the forces they had collected there. Nicias, however, got wind of this beforehand and sent word to his Sicel allies who commanded the passes – the Centoripae, Alicyae and others – not to let the enemy through but to combine to block their

degree conniving; that the community was unsuspecting, had done nothing to provoke the attack and was quite irrelevant to the larger war anyway; or that Thucydides himself was 'a Thracian'? Or was it more the scale of the massacre and the bloodlust that extended to children and animals? The reaction can in any case be read more as a deep revulsion than a 'moral' judgement, in some strong or narrow sense of that term. The obvious comparisons are with his judgements, or lack of them, after the deaths of the Ambraciots (III 113.6) and the Melians (V 116.3–4), though these have only the relative scale of the disaster in common and the other factors don't apply.





Map 27. Route of Demosthenes's voyage (413)

passage; he explained that there was no other route they would even attempt since the Acragantines had refused them passage through their own territory. The Sicels did just as the Athenians asked and when these [2] Siceliots were already on their way they set up an ambush at three points. They fell on them suddenly when they were off their guard and killed about 800 of them, along with all the envoys except one, the Corinthian; and he brought all those who escaped – some 1,500 of them – back to Syracuse.

In the same period the Camarinaeans arrived in support with 500 **33** hoplites, 300 javelin-throwers and 300 archers. The Geloans too sent a force of five ships, 400 javelin-throwers and 200 cavalry. So now almost [2] the whole of Sicily[1] was united in support of the Syracusans against the Athenians, excepting the Acragantines (who joined neither side) but including all the rest who had earlier just been onlookers.

The Syracusans, after the experience they had suffered at the hands of [3] Sicels, held back from any immediate attack on the Athenians. Meanwhile, Demosthenes and Eurymedon, with their force raised in Corcyra and the mainland now ready, took the entire army across the Ionian Sea to the tip of Iapygia, from where they proceeded to Iapygia's Choirades Isles. They [4] put in there to take on board about 150 javelin-throwers of the Messapian tribe; and after renewing an old friendship with Artas, the local chieftain who had supplied them with these javelin-throwers, they went on to Metapontum in mainland Italy. There they persuaded the Metapontians, [5] under the terms of their alliance, to supply 300 javelin-throwers and two triremes for the expedition; these they took with them and sailed on to Thurii, where they found that the people opposed to the Athenians had recently been expelled in a coup. They wanted to assemble their whole [6] armament here and conduct a review to see if anyone had been left behind, and they also wanted to persuade the Thurians to commit themselves as fully as possible to the expedition and, in view of the current state of their fortunes, to agree a full alliance[2] with the Athenians. So they stayed there to transact this business.

At about the same time the Peloponnesians in the twenty-five ships **34** that were stationed facing the Athenian fleet at Naupactus to secure the passage of the merchant ships to Sicily had been preparing for a sea battle; and after manning some additional ships so that they now had almost as

[1] All the Siceliot Greek cities, that is.

[2] Literally, 'recognise the same enemies and friends as the Athenians' (see glossary under *summachia*).

many as the Attic fleet they anchored them off Erineus in Achaea in Rhypaean territory.

[2] The place they moored at was a crescent-shaped bay and the supporting infantry provided by both Corinthian and local allies were drawn up on the projecting headlands either side, while their ships were stationed between them, blocking the entrance. The fleet was commanded by Polyanthes, a Corinthian. [3] The Athenians sailed out from Naupactus to attack them with thirty-three ships under the command of Diphilus. [4] The Corinthians did not at first respond in any way, but when they judged the time right a signal was raised and they advanced to engage the Athenians in a sea battle.

[5] For a long time the two sides resisted each other. Three Corinthian ships were destroyed, but although no Athenian ship was sunk outright seven of them were disabled when they were rammed head-on and had their outriggers shattered by the Corinthian ships which had had their prows reinforced with cross-timbers for precisely this purpose.[1] [6] The outcome of the sea battle was sufficiently indecisive for each side to claim victory, though the Athenians got possession of the wrecks because they were driven by the wind into the open sea and the Corinthians made no further advance against the Athenians. The two sides separated and no pursuits were made, nor were prisoners taken on either side – the Corinthians and Peloponnesians were fighting near the shore and easily escaped to safety, while on the Athenian side no ship was sunk. [7] When the Athenians sailed off to Naupactus, however, the Corinthians immediately raised a trophy to claim victory, on the grounds that they had disabled the larger number of ships. They also took the view that if the Athenians had not been victorious it followed that they had not been beaten: for the Corinthians counted it a victory if they were not decisively beaten, while the Athenians counted it a defeat if they were not decisively victorious.[2] [8] After the Peloponnesians had sailed away, however, and their infantry had dispersed, the Athenians set up a trophy themselves to claim victory too at a place in Achaea a little more than two miles from the Corinthian mooring at Erineus.

So this was how the sea battle ended.

[1] A typical practical detail (see VII 25.6n). These cross-timbers in the bows (sometimes translated 'catheads') were projecting beams (*epotidai*, literally 'ears') either side of the prow over which the anchor tackle was passed. See further Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, pp. 165–7, Gomme IV, p. 415 and Hornblower III, p. 611 for the technical vocabulary in this passage and at VII 36.

[2] In the spirit of the sketch of the Athenian character given, ironically, by the Corinthians themselves at I 70.7.

To return to Demosthenes and Eurymedon: when they had completed **35**
arrangements for the Thurians to join the expedition with their 600
hoplites and 300 javelin-throwers, they gave orders for the fleet to sail
along the coast to the territory of Croton, while they themselves, after
first reviewing all the land forces at the River Sybaris, led them on though
Thurian territory. When they got as far as the River Hylias the Crotonians [2]
sent word to say that the army did not have their consent to pass through
Crotonian territory. Thereupon Demosthenes and Eurymedon went on
down to the sea and camped for the night by the mouth of the Hylias,
where their ships met up with them. The next day they embarked and
sailed on round the coast, putting in at the various cities (except Locri)
until they reached Petra in the territory of Rhegium.

The Syracusans meanwhile, having become aware of their impending **36**
approach, were eager to test the Athenians out again with their fleet and
also with their other land forces that had been deliberately assembled in
advance of the arrival of these reinforcements. The Syracusans modified [2]
their ships on the basis of their experience in the previous sea battle[1] to try
and give them some advantage. In particular they shortened the length
of their ships' prows to make them more robust, and they attached to
them thick cross-timbers which were secured by struts extending down
the sides of the ship both inside and out to a length of some nine feet,
which was exactly how the Corinthians had reconstructed the prows of
their ships for the battle at Naupactus.

The Syracusans calculated that they would thereby get some advan- [3]
tage against the Athenian ships, which had not been similarly adapted as
a counter-measure but had a lighter prow-structure better suited to their
own tactic of outflanking and then ramming amidships rather than attack-
ing head-to-head. They also thought a sea battle in the Great Harbour,
involving many ships in a small space, would work in their favour, since
they would be employing head-on collisions to smash the enemy's prows,
striking with their solid, thick rams against the other's hollow, weak ones;
the Athenians would find it impossible in the confined space to employ [4]
their favourite manoeuvres of 'outflanking' and 'breakthrough',[2] in which
they could exercise their skills. So the plan was that they would now make [5]

[1] This must be the one at VII 25; the more relevant experience is that of the Corinthians at VII 34, as he goes on to mention, but it is not clear if the Syracusans could have heard about that battle yet.

[2] *Periplous* ('sailing round') and *diekplous* ('sailing through'): see glossary. This passage is a *locus classicus* for the description of these tactics of trireme warfare.

maximum use of the very same tactic of head-to-head ramming that had previously been put down to incompetence on the part of the helmsmen, and they expected to gain great advantage from it since if the Athenians were pushed out of formation the only direction in which they could back water would be towards land, and then only a short way and only to the short stretch of shore where their own camp was. The Syracusans were themselves in control of the rest of the harbour, so if the Athenian ships [6] were forced back at any point they would all be pressed together in the same small space and would fall foul of each other in great confusion. Indeed, that was the factor that did most damage to the Athenians in all these sea battles,[1] since unlike the Syracusans they did not have the whole harbour into which to back water. Nor would the Athenians be able to outflank them and sail into open water, since the Syracusans were in control of the means both to enter the harbour from the open sea and to back out of it, especially since Plemmyrium was enemy territory for the Athenians and the mouth of the harbour was restricted in size.

That was the strategy the Syracusans adopted, as the one best suited to **37** their skills and strengths. At the same time they were feeling increasingly confident as a result of the previous sea battle and they now launched a simultaneous initiative by both land and sea. Gylippus led out the [2] infantry force based in the city a little in advance and took them up to the stretch of the Athenian wall facing the city; and the troops from the Olympieium, including all the hoplites there and the cavalry and light infantry of the Syracusans, advanced against the wall from the other side. Then the Syracusan and allied fleet launched[2] an immediate attack. The [3] Athenians had at first been supposing that the enemy would make their assault by land only and they were thrown into confusion to see these ships suddenly bearing down on them. Some took up positions against the attackers on and in front of the walls, some went out to oppose the large force of cavalry and javelin-throwers advancing rapidly on them from the Olympieium and outside, while others were manning the ships and going down to the shore in support; and when they were fully manned

[1] Hornblower takes this to be a generalisation of a 'paradigmatic' kind (III, p. 614), but in fact it seems only to refer to the current conflict (as Demosthenes implies at 49.2 below).

[2] 'Literally, 'sailed out against [them]'. *Pleo* and its compound verbs are conventionally translated 'sailing' not 'rowing', but sails were not used in battle-situations when boats were stripped for action (for example, Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.1.13, 2.1.29 and 6.2.27; see Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, pp. 86, 97 and 175), so I have tried to use other terms where the distinction might be relevant.

they put out their seventy-five ships against the Syracusan fleet of about eighty.

38 For most of the day they tested each other out, advancing and backing away again, but neither side was able to win any significant advantage, apart from the Syracusans sinking one or two Athenian ships. So they separated, and at the same time the Syracusan infantry withdrew from the walls.

[2] The next day the Syracusans stayed quiet, giving no indication of what move they intended to make next. Nicias, however, seeing that the outcome of the sea battle had been evenly balanced and expecting a further enemy attack, made his captains repair any damage done to the triremes.[1] He also had merchant ships moored in front of the stockade of posts that had been set in the seabed in front of the fleet and was [3] intended to provide an enclosed harbour area for it. He positioned the merchant ships at intervals of up to 200 feet from each other so that any ship coming under pressure could make a safe retreat and sail back out again without interference. The Athenians spent the whole day until nightfall completing these preparations.

39 The following day, though at an earlier hour, the Syracusans engaged the Athenians in another combined attack by land and sea. The two sides [2] again tested each other out as they had before for most of the day, until Ariston son of Pyrrhicus, a Corinthian and the best helmsman on the Syracusan side, intervened. He urged their naval commanders to send word to those in charge in the city and tell them to move the market down to the shore as quickly as possible; they should also require anyone who had supplies of food to bring it all down there too and sell it. That way they could disembark the sailors amongst the tradesmen and they could immediately have their meal right there by the ships; and then they could shortly afterwards make another attack on the Athenians and take them by surprise.

40 The commanders agreed to this plan and sent a messenger. The market was duly set out and the Syracusans suddenly backed up and rowed back towards the city, where they immediately disembarked and had their meal on the spot. The Athenians assumed that they were rowing back to the [2] city because they felt they were coming off worse. They therefore took their time disembarking and busied themselves with having their meal

[1] Here just 'ships' (*naus*), but this usually means warships (triremes) and there is a contrast here with the 'merchant ships' (*holkades*) that needs to be marked.

and various other things, sure in the belief that there would be no more fighting at sea this day. Then suddenly the Syracusans manned their [3] ships and were launching an attack again. The Athenians – very confused and most of them unfed – got back into the ships in great disorder and just about got themselves under way to meet them. For some time the [4] two sides stood apart defensively; then the Athenians concluded that to delay further was to risk defeating themselves through exhaustion and therefore decided to attack at once. So they roared themselves on and joined battle.

The Syracusans withstood their charge and, using the head-to-head [5] tactic they had planned, they shattered large sections of the outriggers on the Athenian ships with their specially constructed prows. The javelin-throwers operating from the decks inflicted many injuries on the Athenians, and even greater damage was done by those Syracusans who rowed round in light craft, slipped under the banks of oars from the enemy ships, rowed up alongside them and hurled javelins at the sailors from their boats.

After fighting really hard this way, the Syracusans eventually emerged **41** victorious and the Athenians turned tail and made their escape back through the line of merchant ships to their place of anchorage. The Syra- [2] cusan triremes pursued them as far as the merchant ships, but were halted there by the spars suspended from these ships carrying the 'dolphins'.[1] Two of the Syracusan ships, in the excitement of victory, approached too close to the merchant vessels and were destroyed, and one other was captured along with its crew. The Syracusans for their part sank seven [4] of the Athenian ships and disabled many others, taking most of their crews prisoner and also killing some of them. They then withdrew and set up trophies to commemorate both sea battles. And by now they firmly believed that they enjoyed a considerable superiority over the Athenians by sea, and were expecting to prevail on land as well.

While the Syracusans were thus preparing to start a new offensive **42** by both land and sea, Demosthenes and Eurymedon arrived with the reinforcements from Athens. These consisted of about seventy-three ships, including the non-Athenian ones, about 5,000 hoplites from both Athens and her allies, and a substantial number of javelin-throwers, both Greek and barbarian, together with slingers, archers and appropriate

[1] Heavy iron weights in the form of dolphins, which were swung from the spars over enemy craft and then dropped to smash them.

logistic support.[1] The immediate reaction of the Syracusans and their [2]
allies was one of great consternation at the thought that there was no final deliverance from danger in sight, since they saw that despite the fortification of Deceleia a further invading army as large or nearly as large as the first one had now arrived and that the scale and reach of Athenian power seemed endless. The effect on the original Athenian force, by contrast, was some strengthening of morale after their earlier troubles.

Demosthenes saw how things stood and concluded that it was not open [3]
to him to delay and so suffer the same experience as Nicias. Nicias was feared when he first arrived, but he came to be treated with scorn when instead of immediately putting pressure on the Syracusans he spent the winter at Catana and gave Gylippus time to come from the Peloponnese with an army that the Syracusans would never have sent for had he attacked them at the outset. They would have gone on thinking they could manage by themselves and would only have realised their weak position when they had been completely walled off, so even if they had then sent for support it would have come too late to help them as much. Demosthenes, therefore, registering all this and realising that he too would seem most formidable to the enemy right now, on his very first day, wanted to exploit the immediate consternation his army had created as quickly as possible. He observed that the Syracusan cross-wall, with [4]
which they had prevented the Athenians from completing their encircling wall, was a single one and could easily be taken by anyone who seized control of the way up to Epipolae and then of the camp on top (since no one would stay on to resist them). He was therefore eager to try this [5]
offensive and thought it the shortest way for him to end the war – since either he would be successful and take Syracuse, or he would take his army home and both the Athenians serving with him and the city as a whole would be spared pointless waste.

First, then, the Athenians went out and devastated the land of the [6]
Syracusans round the River Anapus, and their forces were dominant by both land and sea, as they had been before, since the Syracusans offered no active resistance in either arena except with their cavalry and javelin-throwers from Olympieium.

Demosthenes then thought they should make a prior attempt on the **43**
cross-wall with the use of siege-engines. But when the engines were

[1] Hornblower gives a full analysis of the numbers cited here and elsewhere in III, pp. 619–21 and appendix 2.

burned by the enemy defenders on the wall even as he brought them up and when the various assaults he made with the rest of his army were repulsed, he decided they should waste no more time and after securing the agreement of Nicias and his fellow commanders he did as first planned and launched his attack on Epipolae.

It looked as if it would be impossible in daytime to make the approach [2] and ascent without being detected, so Demosthenes ordered five days' provisions and taking with him all the masons and carpenters together with the supplies of arrows and everything else needed for the work of fortification, should they be successful, he set off at first watch with the whole army to advance on Epipolae. Eurymedon and Menandrus accompanied him but Nicias was left behind in their fortified area.

After Demosthenes and the others reached Epipolae by way of [3] Euryelus, just where the earlier force had made its first ascent, they managed to escape the attention of the Syracusan garrison and advanced on the Syracusan fort there, capturing it and killing some of the guards. Most of the garrison, however, fled at once to the camps in the outworks [4] (of which there were three: one for Syracusans, one for other Siceliots and one for the allies) and they spread news of the attack. They also alerted the 600 Syracusans who were posted as an advance guard on this part of Epipolae. These immediately rushed to help, but Demosthenes and [5] the Athenians met this move and despite their spirited resistance put the Syracusans to flight. The Athenians then immediately pushed on to press home their advantage and use their forward momentum to accomplish their mission. Meanwhile another party of Athenians proceeded straightaway to take possession of the Syracusan cross-wall, whose guards did not stay to defend it, and were starting to pull down its battlements. The Syra- [6] cusans and their allies together with Gylippus and his men came up from their positions in the outworks to mount a defence. While still stunned by the unexpectedness of this daring night-time assault they charged the Athenians but were initially forced back by them and retreated. The [7] Athenians, however, were moving forward in some disorder now, thinking that they were already the victors and wanting to run as quickly as possible through all the enemy forces that had not yet been engaged in the fighting, in order to stop them rallying again if their own forward impetus spent itself. And it was the Boeotians who were the first to stand their ground against them, and moving on to the attack they turned the Athenians back and put them to flight.

The Athenians were now getting so confused and bewildered that it was 44
difficult to learn from either side in any detail how events continued. In
daytime things are clearer, of course, but even then individual participants
scarcely know what is happening right by them, let alone across the whole
field of action. But in a night-battle – and this was the only one involving
significant forces in this particular war – how could anyone know anything
for sure?[1] There was a bright moon that night and so what they could [2]
see of each other was only what you would expect in moonlight – they
could see the outline of a person before them but did not trust themselves
to recognise one of their own. Moreover, large numbers of hoplites from
both sides were milling around in a confined space. On the Athenian side [3]
some were already losing the fight, while others who were so far unbeaten
in their first advance were still moving forward. Moreover, most of the
rest of their forces had either just made the ascent or were still on the
way up and didn't know which way to turn, since in the aftermath of
the rout the forward troops were in complete chaos and the shouting made
all recognition difficult. The Syracusans and their allies were cheering [4]
each other on in victory, all yelling their heads off – there was no other way
to communicate in the darkness – while at the same time withstanding
the waves of attackers. The Athenians were trying to find their own side
and assumed that anything coming at them from the opposite direction
must be hostile, even if it was in fact a friend from those now fleeing in
retreat. And they were constantly demanding the use of the password,
which was their only means of identification, and they caused tremendous
confusion in their own ranks by all asking for it at the same time, while
revealing what it was to the enemy.[2] Nor did they so readily learn the [5]
enemy's password because the Syracusans, who were winning and were
not so scattered, had fewer problems of recognition. The result was that
if a superior force of Athenians encountered an enemy party, the latter
would get away by virtue of knowing the Athenian password, whereas if
the Athenians themselves gave the wrong response they were killed.

[1] A rare authorial direct question (the other is at VIII 96.2), which reveals a special difficulty in the interview process described at I 22.3 and one only partly reduced by his privileged range of informants (V 26.5).

[2] The confusion on the battle-field is mirrored in the syntax, since Thucydides himself often only gives pronouns to refer to the different sides. A literal rendering (my italics) gives the overall effect: 'But *theirs* [their password] *they* did not get to know similarly, on account of *them*, as winning and not scattered, being less unknown, so that if *they*, being superior, happened upon some of the enemy *they* escaped *them*, inasmuch as knowing *their* password, but if *they* themselves did not answer *they* were killed.'

But the thing that did the Athenians the most damage of all was actually [6] the singing of the paean, which sounded almost exactly the same on both sides, and left the Athenians unsure how to react. So when the Argives and Corcyraeans and any Doric element on the Athenian side raised the paean they induced just as much terror in the Athenians as the enemy's paean did.

The upshot was that having once been thrown into this confusion many [7] parts of the army fell on each other, friend against friend, citizen against citizen, and they not only panicked but actually grappled with each other in hand-to-hand fighting and were only separated with some difficulty. The way down from Epipolae was narrow and many of those pursued fell [8] headlong over the cliffs and were killed. Of those who survived to reach the level plain in their descent from the heights most, including all those from the earlier expedition who had a first-hand knowledge of the terrain, made their escape back to the camp; while those who came up late lost their way and wandered about all over the countryside. And when day came the Syracusan cavalry rounded them up and killed them.

The next day the Syracusans set up two trophies of victory, one on **45** Epipolae at the top of the ascent and the other at the place where the Boeotians started their resistance. The Athenians meanwhile took back their dead under treaty. Many had died, both Athenian and allied troops; [2] but even more sets of weapons were taken, the reason being that of those forced to leap down from the cliffs leaving their weapons behind some died but others escaped to safety.

After this stroke of unexpected good fortune Syracusan morale was **46** once again restored to its previous level. They dispatched Sicanus with fifteen ships to Acragas, where there was political unrest, to see if he could win the city over to them. Meanwhile Gylippus again toured the rest of Sicily by land to raise more troops since, in the light of events at Epipolae, he was now hopeful that he might even take the Athenian walls by force of arms.

Meanwhile the Athenian generals conferred about the disaster they had **47** just suffered and about the wholesale collapse of morale now prevailing throughout the army. They saw their initiatives failing and their troops resentful about the prolonged length of their stay there. The men were [2] afflicted by illness from two sources – first it was the time of year when people most often tend to fall sick, and at the same time the place where they were camping was marshy and difficult. Indeed their whole situation seemed completely hopeless to them.

Demosthenes was of the view that they should not stay on there. The [3] attempt on Epipolae had failed and, in keeping with his earlier thinking when he had risked that attack, his vote was for waiting no longer but going now, while a sea-crossing was still feasible and while their overall forces at least still had the upper hand after the arrival of the supporting fleet. From the point of view of Athens, he said, there was more to be [4] gained from continuing the war against those who were establishing bases in their own countryside than against the Syracusans, who were proving difficult to subdue; it was not rational to go on spending all these resources to no purpose and just sitting there on a siege.

That was the line Demosthenes took. Nicias, however, while agree- 48 ing that their situation was a very sorry one, did not want to have their weakness revealed in anything that was publicly said, nor to have the enemy learn by report that there had been a general vote[1] for withdrawal, since they would in that case have much less chance of leaving unob- served whenever they might wish to do that. Besides, the situation of the [2] enemy – and he had more inside information about this than his colleagues did – still gave some reason to hope that their position would become even worse than their own if the Athenians persisted in the siege; they would exhaust the Syracusans by starving them of resources, especially now that the Athenians, with the support of their present fleet, were far more the masters of the seas. There was also a party in Syracuse that wanted to surrender to the Athenians and they were getting messages to him urging him not to withdraw.

Despite being privy to this information Nicias was in fact still in two [3] minds about the options and he kept turning them over in his mind; but in his public statement at the time he said he would not be leading the army away. He well knew, he explained, that the Athenians would not approve of any such decision on their part unless they had themselves voted for withdrawal. And those voting about them would not be making their judgements on the same basis as they did – seeing the situation first-hand rather than hearing about it from the criticisms of others; on the contrary, they would be persuaded by whatever misrepresentations a clever speaker might come up with. Moreover, he said, many – or even [4]

[1] Literally, 'voting with many' but many of whom? Perhaps an impromptu assembly of the Athenian troops is envisaged? This conference of generals is parallel in some ways to that at VI 47–49 (involving Nicias, Alcibiades and Lamachus) and there is the same tension between what good tactics on the ground might recommend and the perception of the situation back at Athens.

most – of the soldiers there with them who were now loudly complaining what dire straits they were in, when they got back to Athens would be just as loudly complaining of the reverse, that the generals had been bribed to betray them and pull out. For his part, therefore, knowing the Athenian character as he did, he had no wish to be unjustly put to death by the Athenians on some dishonourable charge; but would rather take his chance and die at the hands of the enemy on his own terms. Besides, [5] the situation of the Syracusans, he went on, was even worse than their own. They had been spending money to support mercenary troops and carrying the costs of guard-posts, and had furthermore been maintaining a large fleet for a year now; they were in difficulties and would soon be desperate; they had already spent 2,000 talents and were in debt for still more; and if they should lose any part of their present force through an inability to pay for its maintenance they would be facing ruin, since unlike the Athenians they were dependent on mercenary troops and not on forced conscription. The Athenians should therefore continue the [6] siege, he concluded, to wear the enemy down and not go away defeated by money, on which count they were by far the stronger.

Nicias expressed all this very robustly, as one with a detailed sense of **49** the situation in Syracuse – both their lack of financial resources and the fact that there was a significant element there who wanted their affairs to come under Athenian control and kept sending him messages not to withdraw; and at the same time he had more confidence than before in Athenian superiority, by sea at least.

Demosthenes, however, would not even hear of continuing the siege on [2] any grounds at all. If they were obliged not to withdraw the army without a vote by the Athenian assembly but must wear the enemy down, then, he said, they should do so only after relocating to Thapsus or Catana. From such a base they could use their infantry to overrun large areas of the country, and they could then support themselves by plundering the enemy's property and could inflict some damage on them too. As for their fleet, they would in future contest their battles in the open sea, not in confined areas that worked more in the enemy's favour. In the wide-open spaces they could exploit their expertise to better advantage and could make their manoeuvres forwards and backwards without having to start and finish from a narrow and restricted base. In short, he said, there was [3] no way he would find it acceptable to remain in the same place, but they should move elsewhere as quickly as possible and without delay.

Eurymedon advocated the same course as Demosthenes. But since [4] Nicias continued to object there was some hesitation and delay, accompanied by a suspicion that Nicias must have some additional knowledge for him to take such a strong line. And so it was that the Athenians continued to procrastinate and stayed on where they were.

Gylippus and Sicanus were by now at Syracuse. Sicanus had failed to **50** win over Acragas – the faction friendly to the Syracusans having been driven out while he was still at Gela; but Gylippus returned from Sicily with a large additional force, as well as with the hoplites who had been dispatched in merchant ships from the Peloponnese in the spring and had come to Selinus by way of Libya.

These hoplites had been driven off course to Libya, where the Cyre- [2] naeans had given them two triremes and pilots for the voyage; passing round the coast they had joined forces with the Euesperides, who were being besieged by the Libyans, and defeated the latter. They then sailed on round the coast from there to the Carthaginian trading-post of Neapolis, which is the nearest point to Sicily (a voyage of two days and one night), and from there they made the crossing back to Selinus.

As soon as they arrived the Syracusans began preparations to attack [3] the Athenians again on two fronts, by both land and sea. The Athenian generals for their part saw that the enemy had been reinforced by a fresh army, while their own situation was not improving, indeed was deteriorating by the day in every respect, aggravated especially by the weakened condition of the men. They now regretted not moving out sooner; and since even Nicias was no longer so opposed to this but only urged against an open vote on the matter, they gave everyone notice, as discreetly as they could, to prepare to evacuate the camp and to stand by to do so when the signal was given. Then, just when everything was [4] finally ready and they were on the point of leaving, there was an eclipse of the moon, which was then on the full. The majority of Athenian troops reacted strongly to this and urged the generals to hold back; and Nicias (who was rather too much given to divination and that kind of thing) refused even to discuss the question of an earlier move until they had waited the 'thrice nine days' the soothsayers prescribed.

So this was the reason why the Athenians prolonged their delay as they were on the point of departing.

But when the Syracusans themselves learned about this they became **51** even keener to keep up the pressure on the Athenians, since even they had

now acknowledged that they no longer had superiority either by land or sea – otherwise they would not have planned this exodus. At the same time the Syracusans did not want the Athenians to settle down anywhere else in Sicily, where they might become more difficult opponents, but they were eager to force them into a sea battle there and then, in conditions that favoured themselves. The Syracusans therefore manned their ships [2] and conducted naval exercises for as many days as they thought sufficient. When that time came, they first attacked the Athenian walls. A small body of Athenian hoplites and cavalry came out through one of the gates to take them on, and the Syracusans cut off some of these hoplites, turned them and chased after them; and since the entrance to the camp was a narrow one the Athenians lost seventy horses and a few of these hoplites.

52 That day the Syracusan army pulled back, but on the day following they put out a fresh fleet of seventy-six ships and at the same time advanced on the walls with their infantry. The Athenians responded by putting out eighty-six ships of their own and engaged the Syracusan fleet in a sea battle. Eurymedon, who commanded the Athenian right wing, wanted to [2] encircle the enemy ships, but in doing so extended his own line too close to the shore, whereupon the Syracusans and their allies, after defeating the Athenian centre, cut Eurymedon off in a narrow inlet of the harbour. They killed him and destroyed the ships he had with him; then they went after the entire Athenian fleet and started driving it towards the shore.

53 When Gylippus saw the enemy ships being defeated and carried beyond the protection of the stockade and their own camp, he came down the causeway with part of his army hoping to kill the men as they landed and so make it easier for the Syracusans to tow away the Athenian ships from what was now a friendly shore. The Tyrrhenians, however, who were [2] acting as guards to protect the Athenians here, seeing Gylippus' men moving forward in some disorder, rushed out in defence. They fell on the foremost troops, turned them and drove them into the marsh called Lysimeleia. Later on, after more of the Syracusans and allied forces had [3] arrived, the Athenians too came out against them and, fearing for their ships, engaged them in battle. The Athenians came out on top and then pursued the Syracusans and killed a few of their hoplites. As for the ships, they rescued many of them and brought them back to their base, while on their side the Syracusans and their allies seized eighteen of the Athenian ships and killed their crews to a man. Wanting to burn the remaining [4] ships, the Syracusans loaded up an old merchant ship with branches and

pine-wood, set it on fire and cast it adrift with a following wind towards the Athenians. Whereupon the Athenians, fearing for their ships, devised some counter-measures to extinguish the flames, and so put the fire out and averted the danger of the ship getting too close.

54 The Syracusans then set up a trophy to commemorate both the sea battle and the engagement in which they had cut off the hoplites up at the wall and thereby captured the horses. The Athenians in turn set one up where the Tyrrhenians had put the Syracusan infantry to rout and another one to celebrate their own victory over the rest of the army.

55 Now that the Syracusans had won this brilliant naval victory too, despite their earlier apprehensions about the further fleet that had arrived with Demosthenes, the Athenians were completely demoralised. There was great surprise at this unexpected outcome, and even greater regret about having made the expedition itself. For the first time [2] they were coming up against cities[1] that were similar in character to themselves – democratically governed, as they were, and strong in ships, horses and manpower; so they were unable to exploit any differences between them,[2] either by imposing a change of constitution to help bring them over, or from any superiority of resources. They had themselves suffered repeated failures and even before the last reverse were already at their wits' end; and now that they had even been defeated with their fleet – something they would never have believed possible – it was that much worse.

56 The Syracusans for their part could now sail round the harbour at will and were minded to close it off at the mouth, so that the Athenians would no longer be able to sail out undetected even if they wished to. The Syracusans in fact were no longer concerned about securing their [2] own safety but rather with denying the Athenians theirs, reasoning, quite rightly, that in present circumstances their own position was much the stronger one and that if they could defeat the Athenians and their allies by both land and sea this would be hailed as a glorious feat by the Greeks; the rest of Greece would at a stroke either be liberated from subjection or released from fear, since the Athenians' remaining capabilities would

[1] Commentators make the point that it is really one city, Syracuse, that is in question here and Hornblower (III, pp. 649–50) notes some other linguistic oddities about VII 55 that suggest it might represent a reflection pasted in later and not fully integrated. It is at any rate a characteristic piece of commentary on the action just passed (see also, for example, III 84).

[2] Another interpretation of this phrase has been 'introduce any discord among them' (see Dover, 1965 edition of VII, p. 46).

no longer be sufficient to withstand the forces of war that would then be unleashed upon them, while the Syracusans themselves would be given the credit for this and would become the wonder of all mankind, now and for posterity. Indeed the contest was a worthwhile one, both for these [3] reasons and because they would be proving themselves superior not only to the Athenians but also to their many other allies; moreover, they would not be standing alone but would have their allies alongside them, and they would be taking their place as leaders together with the Corinthians and Spartans, having exposed their own city to the brunt of the impending danger and having made great advances with their navy.

This gathering represented the greatest number of nationalities ever [4] assembled at a single city, with the exception of course of the overall totals involved in this war with the cites of the Athenians and Spartans.

There follows a list of those on each side who came to Sicily to join in **57** the war at Syracuse over the fate of Sicily and to take their part either in the conquest of the country or in its salvation. They aligned themselves with one side or another not so much on the grounds of principle, or even kinship, as on various contingent factors of self-interest and necessity.[1]

The Athenians themselves came of their own free will, as Ionians [2] against Dorian[2] Syracusans; and joining them in the campaign, as former Athenian colonists who still shared their language and institutions, were the Lemnians, Imbrians, Aeginetans (who at that time occupied Aegina) and also the Hestiaeans from Hestiae in Euboea.

Of the other states joining in the expedition, some did so as subjects, [3] others as independent states coming in consequence of an alliance; and there were also some mercenaries.

The subjects who paid tribute consisted of the Eretrians, Chalcidians, [4] Styrians and the Carystians from Euboea; from the islands there were the Ceans, Andrians and Tenians; and from Ionia the Milesians, Samians and the Chians, of whom the latter came along as independents, providing ships but not paying tribute. All the above were Ionians and colonists of the Athenians, except for the Carystians (who are Dryopians); they

[1] Hornblower (III, pp. 654–60) has a comprehensive note on 'lists' as a literary device and the internal evidence in VII 57–58 about the date of composition of this section. Of particular interest are the fine distinctions in the relationships of dependency and alliance set out here.

[2] The contrast between Dorian and Ionian is a running theme in the conflict, as are their often stereotyped characterisations (see, for example, I 6.3, IV 17.2, IV 84.2, V 9.1, VI 76.2, VII 5.4, VIII 25.5 and more generally in Pericles' Funeral Speech II 36–41 and the Corinthian speech at the Peloponnesian assembly I 68–71).

provided the bulk of the force and came along as subjects and under compulsion, but nonetheless also as Ionians against Dorians.

[5] In addition to these there were Aeolians: the Methymnians, who were subjects contributing ships rather than tribute, and the Tenedians and Aeonians who paid tribute. These Aeolians were forced to fight with other Aeolians, namely their Boeotian founders, who were on the side of the Syracusans, while the Plataeans were the only Boeotians fighting directly against other Boeotians – and not surprisingly so in view of the bad blood between them.

[6] Then there were the Rhodians and Cytherians, both Dorian peoples: the Cytherians were Spartan colonists but bore arms with the Athenians against Gylippus and his Spartans; while the Rhodians, who were of Argive descent, were forced to go to war not only against the Syracusans, who were Dorians, but also against the Geloans, who were colonists of theirs fighting on the Syracusan side.

[7] Of the islanders off the Peloponnese, the Cephallenians and Zacynthians joined as independents but were somewhat constrained by their island status since the Athenians controlled the seas. The Corcyraeans, who were not only Dorians but actually Corinthians too, were serving against both Corinthians and Syracusans, as colonists of the first and kinsmen of the second; this was allegedly under compulsion but in fact quite as much from deliberate choice, on account of their enmity with the Corinthians.

[8] And the Messenians, as they are now called, from Naupactus and Pylos (then in possession of the Athenians) were also brought into the war. In addition there were a few Megarian exiles whose unfortunate circumstances led them to end up fighting against other Megarians, the Selinuntians.

[9] As far as the rest of them were concerned, their part in the campaign was more of a voluntary one at this point. The Argives followed the Athenian cause, fighting as Dorians against Dorians on the side of Ionian Athenians, not so much because of their alliance with them but rather from their hatred of the Spartans and also for individual reasons of immediate private advantage. The Mantineans and other Arcadians, however, went as mercenaries, always ready to turn out against anyone designated as their enemies at any given time; and on this occasion, when there was profit to be made, they regarded the Arcadians who had come with the Corinthians as enemies like any other. The Cretans and Aetolians were also induced by pay; and for the Cretans, who had co-founded Gela with the Rhodians, it was a case of their willingly accepting pay to fight not

with their colonists but against them. Some of the Acarnanians did also [10] serve for personal gain, but the majority of them offered their support out of loyalty to Demosthenes and from good will towards the Athenians whose allies they were.

All these were within the bounds of the Ionian Gulf; but of the Greeks [11] in Italy,[1] the Thurians and Metapontians joined the expedition on the Athenian side, forced to get caught up in the conflict by the current state of their internal struggles; among Siceliots, the Naxians and the Catanaeans joined the Athenians; among barbarians, those joining in were the Egestae, who had been the ones to bring the Athenians in, and most of the Sicels; and from outside Sicily, some Tyrrhenians (through a dispute with the Syracusans) and also some Iapygian mercenaries.

These, then, were all the peoples who served on the Athenian side.

On the Syracusan side and opposing these were the following: the **58** Camarinaeans, their neighbours, and the Geloans who lived next along the coast after them; then the Selinuntians who lived the other side of the Acragantines (who were staying neutral). These all occupied the side of [2] Sicily that faces Libya, while the Himerans came from the side facing the Tyrrhenian Sea and were the only Greeks living in that part of Sicily and also the only ones from there who supported the Syracusans.

These were the Greek peoples of those in Sicily who fought on this [3] side, all of them Dorians and all independent states. Of barbarians, there were only those of the Sicels who had not gone over to the Athenian side. Of the Greeks outside Sicily: there were the Spartans, who provided a Spartiate as commander and otherwise troops from the freedmen and helots; the Corinthians, who were the only ones to come with both ships and infantry; the Leucadians and Ambraciots, for reasons of kinship; from Arcadia, mercenaries commissioned by the Corinthians and a conscript force of Sicyonians; and of those outside the Peloponnese, the Boeotians.

In comparison with the troops coming from outside, the Siceliots, as [4] the ones living in large cities, themselves supplied the majority in every category, and they assembled a force consisting of hoplites, ships, horses and a wealth of other troops besides. And to make a further comparison, the Syracusans on their own made a larger contribution than all the rest

[1] The 'Italiots', corresponding to the 'Siceliots' (see III 90.1n).

put together, both because of the relative size of their city and the fact that they were the ones in the greatest danger.

This, then, is the list of the supporting troops assembled on each side, **59** and by now they both had all these allies present with them and there were no further additions to either side of any kind.[1]

The Syracusans and their allies understandably thought that it would [2] be a splendid feat for them to follow up their victory in the earlier sea battle and capture the entire Athenian armament, which was on the huge scale described, and not allow them any means of escape either by land or sea. They therefore immediately began to close off the mouth of the Great [3] Harbour, which is nearly a mile wide, with triremes and other boats of all sizes spread broadside at anchor across it. They also made every other possible preparation in case the Athenians should still be adventurous enough to fight another sea battle, and there was no lack of ambition in any of their planning.

The Athenians, observing the closing of the harbour and perceiving **60** the enemy's larger intentions, decided that they needed to confer. So [2] the generals and divisional commanders[2] held a meeting to address their present difficulties, in particular the problem that they no longer had supplies to meet their immediate needs (since in the expectation that they would be departing they had already sent word ahead to Catana cancelling further deliveries), and were unlikely to get any in the future unless they controlled the seas. They therefore decided to abandon the upper walls and construct a cross-wall to make an enclave just large enough to accommodate their stores and their sick and wounded; this they would protect with a garrison, and with the rest of their land forces they would man every ship they had – those fit for service and the unseaworthy alike – and put on board every last man to fight it out by sea. If they won, they would take the fleet on to Catana; if not, they would burn their boats, regroup and go on by foot, taking whatever route would get them most quickly to some friendly territory, whether Greek or barbarian.

These decisions made they proceeded to implement them. They [3] slipped away quietly from the upper walls and manned all their ships, compelling every man of military age who seemed in any way suitable to

[1] There is a strikingly multiple negative here in the text ('no longer, nothing, to no one'), followed by another at 59.3 below ('they thought nothing small in anything') but the point of these emphases, in particular the first, is rather puzzling.

[2] *Taxiarchoi* (see glossary).

go on board. They manned 110 ships in all, embarking large numbers of [4] archers and javelin-throwers from Acarnanian and other foreign forces and making such other provisions as the circumstances and their plans required.

When things were nearly ready, Nicias saw that the troops were feeling [5] demoralised by the unexpectedness of their heavy defeat at sea and were reacting to the shortage of supplies by wanting to risk fighting it out at sea just as soon as possible. He therefore called them together and before they went into action gave them a speech of exhortation, as follows.

'Soldiers of Athens and of our allies, the coming contest will involve **61** all of us alike in a struggle for survival and for fatherland, no less than it will the enemy. If we prevail now with our ships we may live to see again our native cities, wherever they are. We must not lose heart nor react like [2] raw recruits, who respond to their first defeats by ever after letting fear reduce their expectations to match these early misfortunes. I call instead [3] on all you Athenians present, with your experience of many wars, and on all you allies, who have been our constant comrades in arms. Remember the uncertainty of war, and prepare to renew the fight in the hope that fortune may swing our way too, and in a manner worthy of the mighty force you see yourselves right here before you.

With the restricted space in the harbour in mind, we have looked to **62** identify ways of dealing with the large numbers of enemy ships expected and with their forces on deck – the factors which damaged us last time; and after consultation with the helmsmen we have now prepared for them as far as we can in the circumstances. Many archers and javelin-throwers [2] will be going on board; and there are troops in numbers we would not allow if we were fighting a real sea battle in the open sea, because they would weigh down the ships and neutralise our skills; but in the land battle from ships, which is what we are being forced to fight here, they will be an advantage. We have devised the necessary counter-measures in [3] the construction of our ships, including a defence against their reinforced cross-timbers that did us so much damage before, in the form of grappling irons which can be thrown to prevent a ship that has rammed us from backing away again, provided the marines then follow up and play their part.[1] The fact is, we have been forced into fighting a land battle from [4] ships and it is clearly in our interest neither to back water ourselves nor

[1] That is, board the enemy ship for hand-to-hand fighting.

to let them do so, especially since the whole shore, except for the part our land force occupies, is in enemy hands.

With all this in mind, you must fight to the end and push yourselves **63** to the limit. Do not let yourselves be driven back to the shore, but be sure that when two ships engage you don't let them be separated before you have swept the enemy decks clear of hoplites. Here I am addressing [2] the hoplites at least as much as the sailors, since this is the particular job of those up on deck; and even now we still have the upper hand for the most part with our infantry. As for the sailors, I urge you, indeed [3] in the same breath I beg you, not to be too cast down by our misfortunes, since we now have much greater strength up on deck and we have more ships. And those of you who have always been thought of as Athenians, even though you were not, should reflect on the value of preserving the pleasure you took in that status: you were admired throughout Greece because you knew our language and shared our culture, and you more than fully participated in the benefits our empire offered through the fear it inspired in our subjects and through your own immunity from wrongful treatment. Since you alone have been free partners in our [4] empire, justice demands that you do not now betray it: make light of the Corinthians, whom you have often defeated, and also these Siceliots, not one of whom presumed to stand up to us while our navy was at its best; repel them and show them that even from a position of weakness and disaster your skills outweigh the strength and good fortune of your opponents.

As for the Athenians among you, I remind you once more that you did **64** not leave behind you in the docks at home any further supply of ships to match these here, nor any more men of hoplite age; and if there is any outcome other than victory for you, our enemies here will straightaway sail to Athens and those who have been left at home will be unable to resist the combination of the enemies already there and these new invaders. Meanwhile those of you here would immediately come under the power of the Syracusans – and you know yourselves what *your* intentions were in attacking *them*, while our people there would come under the power of the Spartans. This is therefore one battle for a double cause. Stand firm [2] now if ever and reflect, one and all, that those of you who will presently be on board the ships are both army and navy for the Athenians. You are all that remains of the city and the great name of Athens; and on her behalf, anyone who excels in skill or spirit will find no better occasion

to display his qualities, both for his own benefit and for the salvation of all.'

After this exhortation Nicias immediately gave the order to man the **65** ships. Gylippus and the Syracusans, who had been observing these preparations in progress, were able to see that the Athenians were going to fight at sea. They had also been warned in advance about the Athenian deployment of grappling-irons and had prepared special counter- [2] measures against this as well as for other contingencies. They stretched hides over the prows and much of the upper parts of each ship so that any hook cast would slip off again and not get a purchase. And when [3] everything was ready the generals and Gylippus rallied their own men with an address, as follows.

'Syracusans and allies, we have already achieved fine feats and there **66** are still fine prizes to be won in the contest to come. Most of you seem to know that – how otherwise could you have taken up the cause with such a will – but if anyone has still not fully understood it we will now make the situation clear.

The Athenians invaded this country with the intention of enslaving [2] first Sicily and then, if they succeeded in that, the Peloponnese and the rest of Greece as well, after already acquiring an empire greater than that possessed by any other Greek state past or present. But you were the first people to withstand their fleet, which has been the instrument of their supremacy everywhere, and you have already won victories in the battles at sea, and will no doubt do so again now. When men are pulled up short [3] in just the area where they claim to excel, what is left of their self-esteem is more fragile than if they had never had this belief in the first place; and after this unexpected blow to their pride they then fail to use the actual strength of which they are capable and give in. And that is probably the experience the Athenians have just had.

In our case, however, the belief that earlier led us to take this bold **67** course, even despite our inexperience, is now even stronger; and since we also have the further expectation that we are the strongest because we have defeated the strongest, each man's hope is redoubled. And in most undertakings the greatest hopes also produce the greatest commitment. Moreover, their attempts to model their preparations closely on [2] ours present us with a familiar kind of warfare and we shall be ready with our various counter-measures. They, on the other hand, will have all these hoplites on deck in an unaccustomed role, along with many javelin-throwers too – landlubbers, as one might say, from Acarnania and

elsewhere, who won't even work out how to loose off a missile from a sitting position. How then will they avoid upsetting the ships and getting in each other's way, when they are making such unaccustomed movements? Nor will they be helped by the great size of their fleet – in case any of [3] you is alarmed that we shall be fighting at a numerical disadvantage. In a confined space their many ships will make them clumsy in executing any plan they have and more vulnerable to the measures we have prepared. And there is one thing you can be quite sure of – and we have this on [4] the best authority. They are so overwhelmed by their troubles and under such pressure in their present quandary that they are reduced to the desperate condition of trusting more to luck than preparation. So they are chancing their all in the only way they can: they plan either to force their way through and sail out, or failing that to make their retreat by land, since either way they could not fare any worse than at present.

68 In the face, then, of such disarray and the failed fortunes[1] of our bitterest enemies, let us engage them with real passion. Remember the general rule that against one's enemies you have a wholly legitimate right to satisfy your heart's desire in punishing the aggressor; such revenge, as the saying goes, is the sweetest of all pleasures and it is now within our grasp. That they are our enemies, and the worst of enemies, you all know: [2] they came to our land to enslave us; and had they succeeded they would have inflicted the most terrible suffering on our men, gross indignities on our women and children, and on the city as a whole the ultimate brand of shame. In the face of that there must be no weakening, nor should [3] anyone count it a gain if they depart without further danger to us. They will depart anyway, even if they win; but if, as we expect, we accomplish our aims of punishing these men and delivering to the whole of Sicily the freedom she formerly enjoyed now made more secure, what a glorious contest to fight that would be! These are the rarest of risks, when failure means least pain and success brings most gain.'

69 After Gylippus and the Syracusan generals had also encouraged their troops with words such as these they immediately began to man their ships, seeing the Athenians doing the same.

Nicias for his part was badly shaken by the situation that confronted [2] them, seeing just what danger they were in and how close it now was, since they were on the point of putting to sea. And supposing, as men do

[1] Literally, 'against the fortune which has betrayed itself', which is usually translated as if it were the more familiar thought that fortune had betrayed *them*.

on the eve of great battles, that all too little had been done on their side and not enough had been said, he once again called on each one of the trierarchs, addressing them by their father's name, their personal names and the names of their tribes. He urged them to be true to whatever claims for distinction they made for themselves, and appealed to those of them with distinguished ancestors not to tarnish their family honour; he reminded them of their country – the freest in the world, and one in which they all had the opportunity of living unregimented lives. He went on to say all those things men come out with in such moments of crisis, when they cease to be embarrassed about using the traditional language of references to 'wives, children and the ancestral gods', which occur in much the same form on all these occasions, but instead loudly invoke them, regarding them as helpful sentiments at a time of distress.[1]

When he had finished his address – which he thought by no means [3] sufficient but all that time allowed– he turned and led his infantry back to the shore, where he drew them up so as to cover the maximum area and serve as the greatest possible encouragement to the men on the ships. Demosthenes, Menandrus and Euthydemus, who went on board [4] as the Athenian generals, then put out to sea from the camp and made immediately for the barrier at the harbour mouth and the gap left in it, hoping to force their way through to the sea outside.

The Syracusans and their allies had already put out with about the same **70** number of ships as before. With a part of the fleet they were guarding the exit and were also encircling the harbour more generally so that they could assault the Athenians simultaneously from all sides; and their infantry was at the same time coming up in support whenever the Athenian ships put into shore. The commanders of the fleet on the Syracusan side were Sicanus and Agatharchus, each taking one wing of the entire fleet, while Pythes and the Corinthians held the centre.

When the Athenians came up against the barrier, they overpowered the [2] ships stationed there in the impetus of their first charge and started trying to break the fastenings that bound them together. But the Syracusans and their allies launched themselves at them from all sides and the fighting was no longer confined to the area round the barrier but spread out into

[1] 69.2 is largely composed as one complex periodic sentence in reported speech, a device that allows Thucydides to insert his own editorial comments as it proceeds (see Hornblower III, pp. 689–90). There are many echoes of Pericles' Funeral Speech (II 35–49) in this passage.

the harbour too. This naval battle was a mighty one, more so than any previous engagement. There was great commitment from the sailors on [3] each side in making the charge whenever the order was given, and great rivalry between opposing helmsmen as they pitted their skills against each other; the marines too took good care that whenever ships collided they showed the same skill on deck as elsewhere; and every individual strove to excel in whatever role he had been assigned.

Many ships were clashing in a small area – for never had so many [4] fought in less space before, with almost 200 ships in the combined fleets. There were therefore few ramming attacks, there being no opportunity for either backing or breakthrough manoeuvres, but instead there were more frequent clashes arising from chance collisions between ships as they either evaded or charged each other. All the time that one ship was [5] bearing down on another the sailors on the deck of the latter kept up a hail of javelins, arrows and stones against it; but when they closed in, the marines fought hand-to-hand as they tried to board each other's vessels. And in the confined space it often happened that as the ships of one side [6] rammed the enemy they were themselves rammed, and that two ships, and sometimes even more, got unavoidably entangled around another one and the helmsmen were faced with defending on one side and attacking on the other, and not just in single moves but in many, and in all directions; and the great din from the many ships crashing into each other caused consternation and drowned out the voices of the coxswains.

On both sides the coxes were shouting out their technical instructions [7] and were cheering on their crews in the heat of the struggle. On the Athenian side, they were bellowing to the men to force a passage out and with one more effort, now or never, to seize their chance of a safe return to their native lands; while on the other side, the Syracusans and their allies were shouting about the glory there would be in preventing the enemy's escape and the honour they would each bestow on their various native cities through victory. The generals on each side too, if they caught [8] sight of anyone backing away when they were not being forced to do so, called on the trierarchs by name and challenged them. The Athenians asked if they were withdrawing because they now felt more at home in the land of their worst enemies than on the sea they had worked so hard to control. The Syracusans asked why, when they could see so clearly that the Athenians were bent on escape by any means, they would themselves flee the fleeing.

While the outcome of this sea battle still hung in the balance, the 71
armies on shore were struggling with intense and conflicting emotions,
the home troops ambitious to add to their fine feats, the invaders dreading
an outcome even worse than the present situation. For the Athenians [2]
everything now depended on their fleet, and their fears for the future were
beyond imagining; and as the fortunes of the battle at sea fluctuated so
their different views of it from land necessarily varied. Since the spectacle [3]
they were witnessing was close to the shore they were not all looking at the
same thing at the same time. If one group saw their comrades coming out
on top anywhere their spirits rose, and they fell to invoking the gods not
to dash their hopes of a safe return; while those who were watching some
reverse uttered loud cries of lamentation and were more crushed at the
sight of what was going on than were those in the thick of the action; and
yet others, who had their eyes fixed on some part of the battle where the
outcome was undecided lived through agonies of suspense as the conflict
continued inconclusively, even swaying their bodies in the extremity of
their terror in sympathy with the movement of their opinions, as at any
one moment they were either on the point of salvation or on the point of
destruction. While the battle was still even you could hear this Athenian [4]
army voicing every kind of noise simultaneously – wailing, shouting,
'we're winning', 'we're losing'[1] – and all the various cries a great army
utters under pressure of mortal danger.

The men on the ships suffered much the same experiences until even- [5]
tually, after a protracted battle, the Syracusans and their allies routed the
Athenians, and bearing down on them triumphantly with loud shouts and
rallying cries they chased them to the land. Then the whole of the fleet [6]
that had not been captured on the open water was driven ashore hither
and thither and the crews tumbled out of the ships and rushed for the
camp.

As for the forces on land, now united in their reactions, with one [6]
impulse they all broke into howls and groans of despair, scarcely able to
bear what was happening. Some went to help the ships, others went to
guard what was left of the wall, while others – in fact most of them – now
looked to themselves and their own safety. And at this moment there was a [7]
greater sense of shock than any ever before. These men had now suffered
much the same fate as they had inflicted at Pylos,[2] where the men who

[1] Dover describes the language here as, 'this splendid and lucid incoherence' (1965 edition of VII, p. 60).
[2] See IV 14.

had crossed over to the island were as good as lost to the Spartans when their ships were destroyed. Similarly now, the Athenians had no hope of escaping to safety by land unless something quite extraordinary should happen.

72 Emerging victorious after this hard-fought battle with the loss of many ships on both sides, the Syracusans and their allies gathered up their wrecks and their dead then rowed back to the city and set up a trophy.
[2] The Athenians, however, were too overwhelmed by the magnitude of their present ills even to think of asking about the recovery of bodies[1] or
[3] wrecks, but planned to leave at once that night. Demosthenes, however, went to Nicias and proposed that they man the remaining ships and force their way through at dawn if they could, making the point that they still had more serviceable ships than the enemy did (in fact the Athenians had
[4] about sixty ships left while their adversaries had fewer than fifty). Nicias agreed to this proposal and they were ready to man the ships, but the sailors refused to embark on them,[2] feeling shattered by their defeat and no longer believing they could still win.

73 The Athenians were now all of the opinion that they should retreat by land, but the Syracusan Hermocrates suspected them of that intention and thought so large an army would pose a serious risk if they retreated overland, settled somewhere in Sicily and then wanted to make war on them once again. He therefore went to the authorities to speak his mind, explaining that they ought not to allow the Athenians to get away during the night, but that the Syracusans and their allies should all go out right now to barricade the roads and forestall them by guarding the narrow
[2] passes through the country before the Athenians reached them. They shared his views entirely and agreed that this was the right course of action, but they thought they could not rely on the willingness of the rank and file to accept orders of this kind. They were just getting a welcome rest after a tremendous sea battle and there was also a festival on (this happened to be the day the Syracusans were sacrificing to Heracles); in fact, overjoyed at their victory, most of the troops had given themselves over to drinking at the festival and the very last order you could expect them to obey at that

[1] An obligation only neglected in extreme circumstances (see also III 113.5).

[2] An interesting intimation of the realities of, and perhaps shifts in, authority within the army (see also 48.1n and 50.4 above), though of course the Athenian troops were only one element in it. The assumed reluctance of the Syracusan troops to interrupt their celebrations at 73.2 below seems a different sort of case, as Hornblower remarks (III, pp. 703–4). In book VIII this will become more of a real issue, on both sides (see, for example, VIII 47.2–48.1, 76, 78, 82–84).

moment was to take up their arms and leave. With these thoughts in mind [3]
the authorities could see no way forward and Hermocrates was unable to persuade them further; so he responded by devising the following scheme himself, in his fear that the Athenians might get a head start on them and pass undisturbed through the most difficult parts of the terrain that night. He sent some of his own associates accompanied by some horsemen to the Athenian camp when it was getting dark. They rode up close enough to be in earshot and, presenting themselves as friends of the Athenians (for there were people in the city who had been informants to Nicias) they called out to some of the soldiers They asked them to tell Nicias that he should not lead his army away by night since the Syracusans were guarding the roads, but to take his time and depart by day after due preparation.

With this message they left and those who had heard what they said [4]
reported it back to the Athenian generals.

In view of these tidings,[1] which they saw no reason to distrust, the **74**
Athenians held back that night. And since they had not after all set out immediately they decided to remain there the following day too, so enabling the soldiers to pack up as best they could whatever would come in most useful, leaving everything else behind, and to start their journey with only the essentials for their bodily needs.

Gylippus and the Syracusans went on ahead with their infantry and [2]
blocked off those roads through the country along which the Athenians were most likely to travel. They also set guards at the crossing-points of rivers and streams and disposed their forces wherever seemed best to prepare a reception for the Athenian army and obstruct them. At the same time they had their ships row up and drag away the beached Athenian ships. The Athenians themselves had set fire to a few of these, in line with their original plan,[2] but the Syracusans, now under no pressure of time or from enemy interference, lashed ropes to the rest of them wherever they had run aground and towed them back to the city.

After this, when Nicias and Demosthenes thought the preparations **75**
adequate, the departure of the army did finally take place, two days after

[1] Thucydides uses here a most unusual word (*angelma*) for this apparently mundane 'message' (indeed the trick itself was so obvious that it actually worked!), and throughout the vivid descriptions of the Athenian retreat, in particular in 75, he uses several other rare and often poetic terms, whose force it is hard to recapture in English but which suggest a deliberate dramatisation, perhaps designed for some kind of oral 'performance'.

[2] See above 60.2.

the sea battle. And what was so terrible about the situation was not just [2] the fact that they were retreating after losing all their ships, and that in place of their high hopes they and the city were now in mortal danger; but in the very act of leaving the camp behind each of them also had to suffer torments of sight and mind. The bodies of the dead were unburied, so [3] anyone seeing a friend lying there was reduced to a mixture of grief and fear; and the living who were left behind sick and wounded were far more distressing to their living comrades than were the dead, and were in a more wretched state than those who had already lost their lives. They drove [4] the men to distraction as they resorted to entreaties and lamentations, begging to be taken with them and crying out to any individual friend or relation they caught sight of; they clung to their tent-mates as they were leaving, followed after them as far as they could and, when their strength of body finally failed them, fell back with many a last appeal and piteous cry. So the whole army was full of tears and in such despair that they found it hard indeed to start on their way, even though they were leaving behind a hostile land and had already endured sufferings too great for tears and were now dreading what they might yet suffer in an uncertain future.

There was also a mood of shame and self-reproach. They were like [5] nothing so much as a city in secret flight, escaping after a siege – and no small city at that. In the whole mass of them there were no fewer than 40,000 men on the move together. Every one of them was carrying with him anything he could that might be useful, and the hoplites and cavalrymen, in contrast to their usual practice, carried their own provisions, some for the want of any attendants, others through distrust of them, since these had long ago started deserting and very many more of them were doing so at this point. Even so they were not carrying enough, as there was no longer any food in the camp.

The general misery of their abject condition was indeed equally shared, [6] which did something to lighten the load of suffering, since it was spread among many; but it still seemed hard to bear in their present circumstances, especially considering that the early glamour and bravado of the enterprise had come to such a humiliating conclusion. This was certainly [7] the greatest reversal that ever befell a Greek army: they had come to enslave others but were now going away fearing that fate for themselves; instead of the paeans and prayers with which they had launched out, they were heading back again with curses of a very different kind ringing in their ears; and they were travelling as infantrymen instead of as sailors,

reliant on a hoplite force not a naval one. Yet even so, all this was made to appear bearable by the magnitude of the danger that still hung over them.

Nicias saw that the army was deeply dispirited and was facing very **76** changed circumstances. He therefore passed up and down the ranks to raise their morale and reassure them as best he could, shouting ever louder in his fervour as he came to each group in his wish to make himself more widely heard and to be of some service to them.

'Athenians and allies, even in your present state you must keep your **77** hopes alive. Men have been saved before now from situations even more dire than this. Nor must you blame yourselves unduly for past reverses and your present sufferings, which are undeserved. As for me, I am [2] certainly not superior to any of you in terms of physical strength (you see what my illness has done to me); nor, I imagine, was I ever thought inferior to anyone in the good fortune of my private life or in other respects; and yet I am now caught up in just the same danger as the least among you.[1] I have lived a life of pious service to the gods and a just and blameless one in my dealings with my fellow men. Nonetheless, I [3] still feel confident and hopeful about the future, and our calamities do not frighten me into doubting our worth at all. Perhaps we may even get some respite, since our enemies have had their sufficient share of good luck and if we offended any of the gods by our expedition we have already been punished enough. After all, people before now have been aggressors [4] against others, acting as human beings will and enduring the consequences they must. So, in our case, we can reasonably expect the gods now to treat us more kindly – since we have become more deserving of their pity than their spite. Furthermore, when you look at yourselves and see the sort of hoplites you are and the numbers that march in your ranks, do not be too cast down, but bear in mind that wherever you settle yourselves down you constitute a city and that no other city in Sicily could easily withstand your attack or could force you out once you had established yourselves.

As for our journey, you must see to it yourselves that it is safe and [5] orderly. Focus on just one thought – that wherever you may be forced to fight that place will, if you win, become your homeland and your fortress.

[1] The logic of the reference to his physical disability is unclear since it is linked with his general good fortune and they are jointly contrasted with his present fate. On Nicias' 'luck' see VI 23.3n.

We shall make haste on our way, by night and day alike; our supplies are [6] running low, and if we can reach some friendly place among the Sicels (whom we can still rely on because of their fear of the Syracusans) you can then consider yourselves safe and secure. Word has been sent on ahead and we have told the Sicels to meet us and to bring food with them as well.

It all comes down to this, my fellow soldiers, and you must accept the [7] truth of it. You have no choice but to be brave, since there is no place of safety nearby if you weaken. And if you now escape the enemy, the rest of you will get to see once more what you most desire, and the Athenians among you will raise up again the great power of their fallen city. It is men that make a city, not walls or ships empty of men.'

With such words of encouragement Nicias went along the army ranks, 78 and where he saw anyone getting isolated or straying out of line he led them back and restored the formation. Demosthenes did the same and spoke to his men in much the same terms as Nicias had done. The army [2] went on its way drawn up in a hollow square, with Nicias and his troops leading the way and those with Demosthenes following on behind. The baggage-carriers and the great mass of others were enclosed in the middle flanked by hoplites.

When they reached the crossing of the River Anapus, they found some [3] of the Syracusans and their allies in position to meet them. They routed these, took the position and then moved on, but the Syracusans kept up an attack with their cavalry riding alongside them and their light-armed troops hurling javelins. In the course of this day the Athenians [4] advanced about five miles and then bivouacked by a hill. Early next day they advanced about another two and a half miles, went down to a flat plain and camped there, wanting to get something to eat from the houses in the area (the place was inhabited) and to draw some water to take with them, since there was little to be had for a long way ahead on the route they were taking. Meanwhile the Syracusans had gone on and [5] were building a wall to block a pass that lay ahead, where there was a steep hill with a precipitous ravine on each side known as the Acraean Crag.

The next day the Athenians moved forward but were impeded by [6] Syracusan and allied troops in large numbers harassing them on both sides by throwing javelins and riding up alongside them. The Athenians put up a fight for a long time but then retreated back to their previous

camp, though they were now running out of supplies of food, since they were prevented by the cavalry from leaving there.

79 Starting early, the Athenians set off again and made their way to the hill where the pass had been walled off. There they found the enemy's infantry confronting them behind the wall, drawn up many ranks deep because the place was so narrow there. [2] The Athenians attacked and tried to storm the wall but found themselves under fire from the large enemy numbers on the hill, which was a steep one – so they were within easy range of those above. Unable to force their way through they retreated again and rested. [3] There also happened to be some thunder and rain at the time, as is often the case towards autumn, and this made the Athenians even more disheartened, thinking that in these occurrences too everything was contributing to their destruction.[1] [4] While the Athenians paused, Gylippus and the Syracusans sent a detachment from their army to build a wall cutting off from the rear the route by which the Athenians had come, but the Athenians sent some of their own men to counter this and stopped them. [5] After this the Athenians retreated with their whole army to more level ground and camped there for the night.

The next day they moved on again, and the Syracusans surrounded them and attacked them with missiles from every side, wounding many of them. If the Athenians attacked they retreated; if the Athenians fell back they pressed forward; and they concentrated their attacks particularly on those right at the rear, hoping that by inflicting piecemeal defeats they could panic the whole army. [6] For a long time the Athenians resisted such attacks and then after having advanced the best part of a mile they paused to rest in the plain; and the Syracusans too disengaged and returned to their own camp.

80 During the night Nicias and Demosthenes made a decision. The army, they saw, was suffering for want of supplies of all kinds and many of the men had been wounded by the enemy's attacks. They therefore resolved that after lighting as many watch-fires as possible they would lead the army away, not by the route they had first planned but in the opposite direction from the one the Syracusans had under observation. [2] The overall direction of their actual route was not now towards Catana but to the other side of Sicily in the direction of Camarina and Gela and the cities in that region, both Greek and barbarian. [3] So they lit many fires and

[1] One can read into this a tinge of fatalism, but not necessarily superstition, though extreme weather events were often taken as portents in the ancient world (see VI 70.1, 95.1).

left by night. And they found themselves in the position familiar to all armies, in particular the largest ones, in which fears and strange fancies[1] are bred, especially at night and when moving through enemy territory with the enemy themselves not far away – and they were thrown into disarray.

Nicias' army, as the one leading the way, kept together and got a long [4] way ahead, while Demosthenes', which was about half the size or more of the whole army, became separated and was moving forward in some disorder. Nonetheless they reached the sea at dawn and taking the road [5] called the Helorine they continued on their way, intending that when they reached the River Cacyparis they would follow that up into the interior. And they hoped that the Sicels they had sent for would meet them in that area. But when they got to the river they actually found a detachment [6] of Syracusan guards there blocking off the way with a wall and stockade they had constructed. Forcing their way past these they crossed the river and went on again to reach another river, the Erineus, taking the route their guides had recommended.

Meanwhile, when the Syracusans and their allies realised at daybreak **81** that the Athenians had gone, most of them blamed Gylippus for deliberately letting them get away. They quickly gave pursuit, finding it easy to track their line of retreat, and caught up with them by the time of their midday meal. They launched an immediate assault on Demosthenes' [2] troops as soon as they came up to them. These were the ones in the rear and they were moving rather more slowly and in some disorder, following the general confusion of the night before; and since they had become isolated from the others the Syracusan cavalry found it easy to encircle them and herd them together.

Nicias' force was now as much as six miles ahead. He had marched [3] them on more rapidly, thinking that in the circumstances safety lay not in choosing to hold their ground and fight but in getting away as quickly as possible and only fighting when they were forced to do so. Demosthenes [4] on the other hand had been labouring under continual harassment from the enemy because he was right at the rear of the retreating forces; and now, when he realised that the Syracusans were in pursuit, he was more concerned with organising his troops for battle than pressing forward, so as he lingered there he was surrounded by the Syracusans and both

[1] *deima*, yet another 'fear' word (see VI 36.2n and glossary under *phobos*), in this case a rare and poetic one, perhaps with a sense of superstitious dread (Hornblower III, p. 727).

he and the Athenians with him were in complete turmoil. They were crowded into a piece of ground that was surrounded by a wall and had a road passing either side of it, with a number of olive trees inside the walled area. And there the Athenians were pelted with missiles from every side.

The Syracusans had good reason to favour this mode of attack rather [5] than hand-to-hand fighting. To risk their lives at this point against men in such despair was more to the Athenians' advantage than their own, and every man was inclined to spare their efforts somewhat to avoid expending their lives just at the time when their success was assured; and they thought that in this other kind of fighting they would in any case overpower the Athenians and capture them.

The enemy went on raining missiles down from all sides on the Athenians and their allies throughout the day; and when they saw that they were now quite worn down by their wounds and their general misery, Gylippus and the Syracusan allied forces sent them a proclamation, first to invite any of the islanders who wished to come over to them on a promise of freedom. A few states did go over but not many. Later, however, an [2] agreement was made with all the rest of the troops under Demosthenes, that if they laid down their arms no one was to suffer death by violence, imprisonment or deprivation of the bare necessities of life. The entire [3] force of 6,000[1] surrendered themselves and gave up all the money they had, casting it into upturned shields (and filling four of them). The Syracusans then straightaway took these captives off to the city. Meanwhile on the same day Nicias and his men reached the River Erineus and after crossing it encamped the army on some higher ground. 82

The next day the Syracusan forces overtook Nicias and informed him 83 that the troops under Demosthenes had surrendered themselves, urging him to do the same. Nicias could not believe this and obtained a truce to send a horseman to investigate. The man came back from his mission [2] with the news that they had indeed surrendered, whereupon Nicias sent a herald to Gylippus and the Syracusans to say that he was ready to

[1] The different estimates of numbers are hard to relate. Demosthenes was supposed to have 'more than half' the total force (80.4), which numbered 40,000 (75.5). Dover takes this latest figure to mean that Demosthenes must have suffered 'casualties on a prodigious scale' (Dover, 1965 edition of VII, p. 69), but perhaps there is some confusion about the relative numbers in the two groups led by Nicias and Demosthenes as opposed to the 'great mass' in the middle (78.2)?

make a formal agreement on behalf of the Athenians to pay back all the money the Syracusans had spent on the war, on condition that they let his army go; and until such time as the money should be paid he would give them Athenian men as hostages, one for each talent. Gylippus and the Syracusans refused these terms, however, and instead attacked and surrounded this part of the army as they had the other and pelted them with missiles from every quarter until evening. Now they too were in a [3] terrible state through lack of food and provisions. Nevertheless they were [4] going to wait for the dead of night and then move on again. But no sooner had they taken up their arms to leave than the Syracusans saw what was going on and sounded the paean. When the Athenians realised that they [5] were discovered they put down their arms again, except for about 300 of them who forced their way through the enemy's guard and made off into the night any way they could.

When day came Nicias led his army on, but the Syracusan and allied **84** forces kept up their attack in the same manner, hurling javelins and other missiles at them from every side. The Athenians pushed on to the [2] River Assinarus under a double pressure: they were being overpowered by attacks from all sides by the many cavalry and the mass of troops and were thinking things might be easier for them if they crossed the river; at the same time they were also suffering from fatigue and a craving for water. When they reached the river they rushed in, no longer in any sort of order [3] but all wanting to be the first across; and at the same time enemy pressure now rendered the crossing difficult. Forced to move in a dense mass they fell over each other and were trampled underfoot; and encumbered by spears and baggage as they were, some perished instantly, while others were carried off downstream. The Syracusans stood along the banks on [4] the other side of the river, which were steep ones, and hurled missiles down on the Athenians from above as most of the men were gratefully drinking in the water, huddled in disorder in the deep bed of the river. And now the Peloponnesians came down the bank and butchered them, [5] especially those in the river. The water was immediately polluted, fouled with mud and blood, but they drank it anyway and many of them even fought over it.

The dead now lay piled high on top of each other in the river and the **85** army was completely destroyed, some of it by the river, while others who had escaped were killed by the cavalry. Then Nicias finally surrendered himself to Gylippus, putting more trust in him than in the Syracusans.

He told Gylippus and the Spartans to do with him what they would but to stop the slaughter of the rest of the soldiers. After this Gylippus [2] eventually ordered them to take prisoners. All the survivors who had not been smuggled away by the soldiers (as many of them were),[1] they rounded up together and brought in alive; they also sent men in pursuit of the 300 who had broken through the guards in the night and captured them. The total number of prisoners held together in public custody was [3] not large but the number secreted away was, and the whole of Sicily was full of them, inasmuch as they had not been taken as part of an agreement in the way Demosthenes' men had. Indeed, a large proportion had also [4] been killed – the recent carnage had been on a huge scale, as big as any in this war, and many died too in the other frequent attacks made during the march. Nonetheless many still escaped, some at the time, others after being enslaved and then running away, and these found refuge in Catana.

When the Syracusans and their allies had been gathered together they **86** took with them as many of the captives as they could, together with their booty, and returned to the city. All the rest of the Athenians and their [2] allies they took prisoner and sent down to the stone quarries, thinking that was the safest place to keep them under guard. In the case of Nicias and Demosthenes, however, they cut their throats, although Gylippus had been against this. He had been thinking what a fine prize it would be, on top of their other triumphs, to bring the opposing generals back home to the Spartans. One of the two was actually regarded as their worst [3] enemy – that was Demosthenes – on account of the events on the island and at Pylos; while for the same reason the other one – Nicias – was considered a very good friend. Nicias had been very active on behalf of the Spartan prisoners on the island[2] and had persuaded the Athenians to make peace, so securing their release; and that was why the Spartans were generally friendly to him and why in particular he had trusted Gylippus enough to surrender himself to him. But some of the Syracusans, it was said, were afraid that because they had been in communication with him he might on that account be tortured and so cause them trouble in their moment of success; and others, especially the Corinthians, were afraid that because Nicias was so rich he might bribe people to let him escape and then go on to cause them fresh difficulties on another occasion; and these

[1] Presumably to be sold off privately, though Thucydides doesn't explain this.
[2] See V 16.

won over the allies and had him killed. For such or very similar reasons, [5]
then, Nicias met his death, a man who of all the Greeks in my time least deserved to meet with such misfortune, since the whole conduct of his life had been regulated by virtuous practices.[1]

The prisoners in the quarries were at first harshly treated by the Syra- 87
cusans. There were large numbers of them in a small space in the pits, and as there was no roof they were first oppressed by the heat of the sun by day and by the stifling air; the nights that followed were in contrast autumnal and chilly and the men's condition was further weakened by the change in temperature. Besides, because of the confined space they [2]
had to do everything in the same spot and to make matters worse the bodies of the dead were heaped one on top of another (whether dying from wounds, from the change in temperature or from other such causes) and the stench was intolerable. At the same time they were badly afflicted by hunger and thirst – the Syracusans having for eight months given each man a daily ration of only one cup of water and two of food. And of all the other miseries men cast into such a place would be likely to suffer there was none that did not befall these men.

For seventy days they lived like this all together. The Syracusans [3]
then sold them off, except for the Athenians and any Sicilian or Italian Greeks[2] who had joined them in the campaign. The total number of those [4]
captured is difficult to specify with any precision but it was no fewer than 7,000.[3]

This passage of events was the most momentous of any in this war and [5]
indeed, in my view, of any we know reported in Greek history – for the victors the most glorious, for the vanquished the most disastrous. They [6]
were completely and utterly defeated. Their misery was extreme in every

[1] This crucial judgement is a very difficult one to translate. The literal sense and word order is 'on account of the whole for virtue (*arete*) having been observed practice [of his life]'; but the relationship of the key words is unclear, and perhaps deliberately ambiguous, and there may be a sense that he practised the conventional virtues as well as regulating his life by virtuous practices (see Hornblower III, pp. 241–2 and see *arete* in glossary).

[2] Siceliots (see III 90.1n) and Italiots (see VII 57.11n).

[3] That is, 6,000 of those under Demosthenes (82.3) and an assumed 1,000 under Nicias (after massive losses, 85.4). But surprisingly we do not hear what happened to the Athenian and other captives *not* sold off at this point, though we learn later than 'a few' at least got home (87.6). There are various other oddities in 87, which it seems almost improper to quibble about in such an elevated piece of narrative prose: but how is the eight months in 87.2 calculated and how does it relate to the seventy days in 87.3, and why are the Syracusans said to have treated them badly only 'at the beginning' (87.1)?

respect and it was, as the expression goes, a case of total annihilation. They lost army, ships, everything; and few out of many returned home.

Such were the events concerning Sicily.[1]

[BOOK VIII][2]

When the news reached Athens, for a long time they could not believe 1
that their forces had suffered such complete and utter destruction, even
though they were getting direct eyewitness reports from the soldiers who
had actually survived the action and escaped. But when they had taken it [2]
in, they turned their anger on the orators who had joined in promoting
the expedition – as if they had not voted for it themselves[3] – and were also
furious with the oracle-mongers, seers and all those whose divinations at
the time had raised their hopes of conquering Sicily. They were suffering [2]
distress of every kind and from every quarter, and in the aftermath of
what had happened they were severely afflicted by fear and shock alike.
After their losses, both as individuals and as a city, of so many hoplites
and cavalry and a generation of their youth, for whom they could see
no ready replacements, they felt crushed by the weight of despair. Nor
could they see sufficient ships in the shipyard or money in the public
purse or crews for the ships that might give them any hope of salvation in
their present circumstances. They thought their enemies in Sicily would
immediately sail with their fleet to attack the Peiraeus, especially after
winning so convincingly, and that their enemies at home, with all their
resources now doubled in this way, would strive their utmost to apply

[1] A tremendous coda to book VII, though one is reminded at the very end that this division into 'books' is ours and not Thucydides', since the last sentence has in it the particle *men* ('on the one hand') which is answered by a *de* ('on the other hand') in the first sentence of VIII (as also in the division between books III and IV); indeed VIII 1 is an equally dramatic passage. There has in any case been a summation of sorts already at 75.7.

[2] It has often been suggested that what we have as book VIII is an unrevised draft (see Andrewes in Gomme V, pp. 369–75, for a strong statement of this case, and Hornblower III, pp. 1–4, for dissenting views). It is certainly unfinished, breaking off in the middle of 109, and there have been speculations from ancient times onwards about its composition and, even more wildly, about its authorship (see Marcellinus, extract 26, in appendix 2). See also VIII 27.1n.

[3] See III 43 for a similar complaint by Diodotus.

pressure both by land and sea and that their own allies would defect to join them.

Nevertheless,[1] they resolved that as far as their circumstances permit- [3]
ted they should not give in. Instead, they should prepare a fleet, gathering timber and money from whatever sources they could, and they should make sure of their allies, especially Euboea;[2] they should also make prudent economies in the city's expenditure, and select a board of elders to oversee current business as might be required. And in the panic of [4]
the moment they were ready to accept good discipline in everything, as the people tend to do in such circumstances. They then proceeded to implement the decisions they had made.

And so the summer ended.

Winter [VIII 2–6]

The following winter, the whole of Greece experienced an immediate **2**
surge of elation at the massive Athenian disaster in Sicily. Those who were aligned with neither side were thinking that even if no one invited them to join in they should no longer stand aside from the war but should of their own accord move to attack the Athenians, each of them reasoning that the Athenians would have done the same to them had they met with success in Sicily; they also calculated that the rest of the war would be short-lived and that it would be a fine thing to have played some part in it. The allies of Sparta meanwhile were more than ever united in their
eagerness to be speedily released from their great hardships. And most [2]
important of all, the subjects of Athens were now ready to revolt from her, even beyond their means to do so, because they were judging the situation in a mood of high emotion and could see no case for believing the Athenians would survive through the following summer.

Sparta and its citizens[3] were much encouraged by all this, especially [3]
the fact that their allies from Sicily, having now been forced to acquire a navy, would in all probability be coming to join them the next spring.
So with high hopes all round they determined to take a grip on the war [4]

[1] A most dramatic word in context. It announces a remarkable revival of political will in Athens, coming so soon after the despairing 'conclusions' of VII 75.7, VII 87.5–6 and VIII 1–2; and it signals that the war is not yet over (see also VIII 106.5).

[2] For the strategic importance of Euboea see VII 28.1 and, more especially, VIII 1.3, 95.2 and 96.2.

[3] The Greek actually personifies it as 'the city of the Spartans'.

without further hesitation, reckoning that if it ended well they would in future be released from the sort of dangers in which the Athenians would have embroiled them had they added the resources of Sicily to their own; and that having overthrown the Athenians the leadership of all Greece would then be securely theirs.

During this same winter, therefore, Agis set out straightaway with 3
a force from Deceleia and levied money for the fleet from the allies. Then passing through the Malian Gulf, he seized much of the livestock belonging to the Oetaeans, with whom the Spartans had a long-standing enmity, and exacted payment from them. He also forced the Achaeans of Phthiotis and the other subjects of the Thessalians in that region to give him money and hostages, despite the objections and opposition of the Thessalians; and he then deposited the hostages at Corinth and tried to bring these peoples into the alliance.

The Spartans requisitioned from their allies the building of a total [2]
of 100 new ships: the figure they fixed for themselves and the Boeotians was twenty-five each, fifteen were to come jointly from the Phocaeans and Locrians, fifteen from the Corinthians, ten shared between the Arcadians, Pellenians and Sicyonians, and ten from the Megarians, Troezenians, Epidaurians and Hermionians. Meanwhile they continued with all their other preparations so as to be ready to resume war just as soon as spring arrived.

The Athenians too were making their preparations during this same 4
winter, as planned: they procured timber for the construction of ships; they fortified Sounium to give protection to their grain-transports as they rounded the promontory; and they abandoned the fort they had built in Laconia when passing round the coast on their way to Sicily. And in general they made economies wherever they thought there was unnecessary expenditure; but above all they kept a close watch on their allies to prevent them revolting from them.

So both sides were engaged in these activities and were busily equip- 5
ping themselves for war just as though they were only now beginning it. Meanwhile, the Euboeans were the first to send envoys to Agis in the course of this winter to talk about revolting from Athens. Agis was receptive to what they said and sent for Alcamenes son of Sthenelaidas and Melanthus to come from Sparta with a view to their acting as commanders in Euboea; and they duly came with about 300 of their freedmen while Agis made arrangements for their crossing. Meanwhile the Lesbians also [2]
made an approach, since they too wanted to revolt; and as the Boeotians

were supporting them in this Agis was persuaded to hold back as far as Euboea was concerned and start preparing the ground for the Lesbians to revolt. He sent them as governor[1] Alcamenes, who was to have sailed to Euboea, and the Boeotians promised them ten ships and Agis another ten.

These negotiations were conducted without reference to Sparta itself, [3] since as long as Agis was at Deceleia with his own force he had the authority to send an army anywhere he wished, to levy troops and to raise money. Indeed one could say that at this time the allies paid more attention to him than to the Spartans in the city. He had a force at his own disposal and his appearance anywhere inspired immediate fear.

While Agis was dealing with the Lesbians this way, the Chians and [4] Erythraeans, who were also ready to revolt, turned for help not to Agis but to Sparta. With them went an envoy representing Tissaphernes, who was military commander in the west for Darius son of Artaxerxes. Tissaphernes too was trying to win over the Peloponnesians and was [5] promising to provide maintenance for their men. He had recently had a demand from the King for tribute from his province, which had fallen into arrears because the Athenians had made it impossible for him to exact it from the Greek cities there. He was calculating, therefore, that if he could damage the Athenians he would be better able to collect his tribute. He also thought he could at the same time make the Spartans allies of the King and could carry out the King's instruction either to take alive or kill Amorges, the bastard son of Pissouthnes, who was in revolt in Caria.

The Chians and Tissaphernes had a common purpose, therefore, and **6** were negotiating for the same end; but at the same time there arrived at Sparta Calligeitus son of Laophon, a Megarian, and Timagoras son of Athenagoras, a Cyzicene, both of them fugitives from their own cities who were residing at the court of Pharabazus son of Pharnaces. They had been sent by Pharnabazus to try and get a fleet sent out to the Hellespont. His motivation was just the same as that of Tissaphernes: he wanted the cities in his province to revolt from the Athenians, with getting their tribute in mind, and he wanted it to be through his agency that the King gained an alliance with the Spartans.

With separate negotiations going on with these two groups, represent- [2] ing Pharnabazus and Tissaphernes respectively, there was a great deal of rivalry at Sparta as one party was trying to persuade them to send

[1] *Harmostes*: the only occurrence of this Spartan title in Thucydides.

ships and an army first to Ionia and Chios, and the other to send them to the Hellespont. However, the Spartans were much more receptive to the [3] proposals of Tissaphernes and the Chians. Alcibiades too was working on their side and he was a very close family friend of the ephor Endius (which in fact explains why his family acquired its Spartan name, Endius being known as the son of Alcibiades). Nevertheless the Spartans first sent [4] Phrynis, one of their 'outsiders',[1] as an observer to Chios to see if they had as many ships as they claimed and if in other respects the city's capabilities matched the reports the Spartans had been given. When Phrynis brought back word that what they had heard was true they immediately made the Eythraeans and Chians allies and voted to send them forty ships – there being already no fewer than sixty ships there, as they understood from the Chians. At first they were going to send them ten of these [5] with Melanchridas, who was their naval commander; but there was an earthquake and instead of Melanchridas they sent Chalcideus, and instead of ten ships they reduced the number of ships they were fitting out in Laconia to five.

So the winter ended and with it the nineteenth year of the war Thucydides wrote.

[1] See *perioikos* in glossary.

Twentieth year of the war, 412–11 [VIII 7–60]

Summer [VIII 7–28]

The Chians were pressing the Spartans to send the ships, afraid that 7
the Athenians might become aware of the negotiations (since all the discussions with envoys had been kept secret from them). So right at the beginning of spring the following summer the Spartans sent three Spartiates to Corinth to arrange as soon as possible for the ships to be dragged across from the sea the other side of the Isthmus to the side facing Athens; they were then to order the whole fleet to sail for Chios – both the ships Agis was getting ready for Lesbos and the others. The overall total of the allied ships was nineteen.

Calligeitus and Timagoras, who were acting on behalf of Pharnabazus, 8
did not join this expedition to Chios; nor did they contribute the money (amounting to twenty-five talents) which they had brought with them to fund the dispatch of ships, but they planned to sail later with a separate expeditionary force of their own. As for Agis, he saw that the Spartans [2]
were intent on going to Chios first and had no objection to this himself. But the allies gathered at Corinth to deliberate on the matter and decided the following: they would first sail to Chios under the command of Chalcideus, who was preparing the five ships in Laconia; then they would proceed to Lesbos under Alcamenes, the man Agis had also had in mind; and finally they would go on to the Hellespont, where Clearchus son of Ramphias had already been assigned the command. They would trans- [3]
port half of the ships across the Isthmus in the first instance, and these

would set off straightaway, the idea being to divert Athenian attention from those setting out towards those crossing the Isthmus later.[1] They [4] went about making their voyage from here quite openly, dismissive of what they saw as Athenian impotence – since no fleet of theirs of any size had yet appeared. And in line with these decisions they immediately transported twenty-one ships across.

9 Despite this allied pressure to start the voyage, the Corinthians were reluctant to join them in the expedition until they had finished celebrating the Isthmian festival taking place at that time. Agis was quite happy to let the Corinthians observe the festival truce and to take on the expedition as a private venture of his own. The Corinthians objected, however, and [2] a delay ensued. The Athenians were now beginning to get some sense of what the Chians might be up to and sent one of their generals, Aristocrates, to challenge them with an accusation. This the Chians denied, so the Athenians demanded that as a guarantee of their good faith they should send some ships with the Athenian fleet to join the allied force, and the Chians sent them seven. Their reasons for doing so were that most of [3] the Chians did not know about the negotiations that had been taking place, while the oligarchs who were involved in the plot did not want to alienate the populace at this point, before they could strengthen their own position; and because of the delays they now no longer expected that the Peloponnesians would be coming anyway.

10 Meanwhile the Isthmian festival was under way and as a truce had been proclaimed the Athenians sent along their representatives. While they were there the true situation at Chios became ever more apparent to them, and on their return they began taking measures to ensure that enemy ships could not embark from Cenchreae without their knowledge. After the festival the Spartans did set out for Chios with twenty-one ships [2] under the command of Alcamenes. The Athenians at first sailed up to them with an equal number of ships and tried to draw them away into the open sea; the Peloponnesians did not follow them very far, however, but turned back, so the Athenians also withdrew, feeling unsure if they could rely on the seven Chian ships in their ranks. Later, however, they [3] manned additional ships to give them an overall total of thirty-seven and gave chase to the enemy ships as they sailed along the coast, pursuing them to Speiraeum, a place in Corinthian territory. This is an abandoned

[1] The practical logic of this is unclear (and the text of passage has been suspected). Hobbes translates in the opposite, more meaningful sense, that they diverted attention *to* those setting out.

harbour, the last in the direction of Epidaurus. The Peloponnesians lost one ship out at sea but gathered the rest together at anchorage there. The [4] Athenians attacked them, both with their fleet at sea and on the ground after putting men ashore. There was a great commotion and in the general chaos the Athenians disabled most of the ships on the shore and killed the Spartan commander, Alcamenes, losing some of their own men in the process too.

After breaking away from the action the Athenians stationed enough **11** of their ships to blockade those of the enemy and anchored the rest of them at a small island nearby where they made camp. They also sent to Athens for reinforcements, since the following day the Corinthians had [2] arrived in support of the Peloponnesian fleet, joined shortly afterwards by others from the immediate area. The Peloponnesians could see that maintaining a guard in a deserted spot like that was a tiresome matter and were unsure how to proceed. They even thought of burning the ships, but then decided to beach them and settle down there with their land forces to guard them until a suitable opportunity to escape presented itself. When Agis learned of their situation he sent them a Spartiate called Thermon.

The first news that had reached the Spartans was that the ships had set [3] out from the Isthmus (Alcamenes had been instructed by the ephors to send a horseman as soon as this happened), and their immediate reaction was that they should send the five ships of their own with Chalcideus in command, accompanied by Alcibiades. But when they were primed to set sail they then received the news about the ships taking refuge at Speiraeum and were so disheartened to have failed in their first undertaking in the Ionian War[1] that they were no longer minded to dispatch the ships from the home fleet, but even thought of recalling some of those that had already set out.

When Alcibiades heard about this he put further pressure on Endius **12** and the other ephors not to back out of the expedition. He said that they would have completed the voyage before the Chians heard about the disaster to their ships; and when he made landfall in Ionia he would find it easy to persuade the cities there to revolt by telling them in person about the weakness of the Athenians and the commitment of the Spartans, since he would have greater credibility in their eyes than anyone else would. He also suggested privately to Endius that it would be a [2]

[1] Meaning the phase of the war that followed the Sicilian expedition and took place mainly in Ionia and the Hellespont.

fine thing for him to be the one to get the Ionians to revolt and to make the King an ally of the Spartans – so denying this prize to Agis (with whom Alcibiades himself was having his differences[1]). So having persuaded [3] Endius and the other ephors he put to sea with his ships, accompanied by Chalcideus, and they hurried on their way.

At about the same time the sixteen Peloponnesian ships that had served **13** with Gylippus throughout the war in Sicily were now heading back. They were intercepted off Leucas and were battered by the twenty-seven Athenian ships under the command of Hippocles son of Menippus, who was on the lookout for ships returning from Sicily; but all except one of these escaped the Athenians and sailed into Corinth.

While on their voyage Chalcideus and Alcibiades arrested everyone **14** they met to prevent news of their coming from getting out. They put in first at Corycus on the mainland, released their prisoners there and held a preliminary conference with some of the Chian conspirators, who urged them to sail on to the city without warning. So they made a sudden arrival at Chios. The people at large were amazed and alarmed to see [2] them, but the oligarchs had contrived that the council should happen to be in session at the time. Chalcideus and Alcibiades made speeches to the effect that many more ships were coming, but they did not reveal anything about the blockade of their ships at Speiraeum. So the Chians revolted from Athens, followed later on by the Erythraeans. They then took three [3] ships to Clazomenae and brought about a revolt there. The Clazomenians immediately crossed over to the mainland and started fortifying Polichna in case they should need to retreat there from the little island on which they lived. All these cities in revolt, then, were engaged in building fortifications and preparing for war.

News of the revolt at Chios soon reached Athens. They recognised that **15** the danger surrounding them was now clearly serious and that the rest of their allies would become restive after the largest city among them had seceded. There was a fund of 1,000 talents, which throughout the whole war they had jealously guarded,[2] but in their present state of shock they waived the penalties that were to be imposed on anyone who proposed or moved a motion to use the fund, and they voted to activate it and use it to man a significant number of ships. They also voted to send straightaway from the fleet of ships blockading Speiraeum the eight that had left guard

[1] An affair with Agis' wife, as we are told by Plutarch (*Alcibiades* 23), though Thucydides himself chooses not to elaborate.

[2] A precaution instituted by Pericles (see II 24).


Byzantium
Imbros
Sestos
Lampsacus
Abydos
Priapus
Harpagium
Cyzicus
Dascylium
Lemnos
Antandrus
Antissa
Methymna
Lesbos
Eresus
Pyrrha
Mytilene
AEOLIS
Arginousae
Oenoussae
Drymousa
Cyme
Cardamyle
Mt Mimas
Phocaea
Bolissus
Delphinium
IONIA
Chios
Chios
Clazomenae
Sardis
Erythrae
LYDIA
Leuconium
Cape Phanae
Aerae
Teos
Mt Corycus
Cape Arginum
Lebedus
Ephesus
Samos
Magnesia
Icarus
Anea
Lade
Miletus
Teichioussa
Naxos
Iasus
CARIA
Leros
Halicarnassus
Cos Meropis
Cos
Caunus
N
Thera
Cnidus
Syme
Camirus
Ialysus
Teutloussa
Chalce
Rhodes
Lindus
0 50 100 km
0 25 50 75 miles

Map 28. Ionia

duty there to give chase to the ships under Chalcideus but had returned after failing to catch up with them (Strombichides son of Diotimus being the commander of these eight); and they voted that a further twelve under Thrasycles should soon afterwards leave the blockade and go to help. As [2] for the seven Chian ships that had joined them in the blockade of the ships at Speiraeum, they withdrew these too, freed the slaves that had been on board and put the free men in chains. And they made haste to man ten other ships and sent these to continue the blockade of the Peloponnesians and help replace all the ones that had left, and they planned to prepare thirty more. In fact they showed great commitment and were making every effort to prepare a relief force for Chios.

16 Meanwhile Strombichides arrived at Samos with his eight ships. He took on one additional Samian ship there and sailed on to Teos, where he urged the people not to get involved. However, Chalcideus was also bearing down on Teos, coming from Chios with twenty-three ships, and at the same time the land forces of the Clazomenians and Erythraeans were moving down the coast. Strombichides realised the situation in time [2] and headed out to sea. When he was in open water and saw how many ships there were coming from Chios he took flight to Samos, pursued by enemy ships. The Teans at first refused to admit the land forces, but [3] when the Athenians fled they let them in. These troops waited a while for Chalcideus to join them from his pursuit as well; but as he was taking some time they took it on themselves to demolish the wall that the Athenians had built up on the mainland side of the city; and a few barbarians arrived to join them in this work, their commander being Stages, a lieutenant[1] of Tissaphernes.

17 After they had chased Strombichides to Samos, Chalcideus and Alcibiades armed the sailors from the ships that had come from the Peloponnese and left them in Chios. They replaced them with crews from Chios and, manning a further twenty ships, they sailed for Miletus to try and bring about its revolt. Alcibiades was on friendly terms with the leading Mile- [2] sians and wanted to win them over before the Peloponnesian ships arrived. That way, in collaboration with the Chian forces and Chalcideus he would have succeeded in causing multiple revolts in the cities and would so win a triumph for the Chians, for himself, for Chalcideus and, as promised, for the man who had sent them out, Endius. They managed to make most of [3]

[1] *Huparchos*: an 'under-governor' in the Persian hierarchy, a term found in Thucydides only here and at VIII 31.2, 87.1 and 108.4.

the voyage undetected, reaching Miletus just before Strombichides and also before Thrasycles, who had just come over from Athens with twelve ships and had joined in the chase; and they did bring about the revolt of Miletus. The Athenians sailed in hard on their heels with nineteen ships, but when the Milesians would not admit them they moored at Lade, the island off Miletus.

And immediately after the Milesian revolt the first alliance between [4] the King and the Spartans was concluded through Tissaphernes and Chalcideus, as follows.

'These are the terms on which the Spartans and their allies made an **18** alliance with the King and Tissaphernes:

Whatever territory and cities are in the possession of the King and were in the possession of his forefathers, these will belong to the King. And whatever monies or other goods that had been going to the Athenians from these cities, the King and the Spartans and their allies shall act in common to stop, in order to prevent the Athenians receiving money or anything else.

The King and the Spartans and their allies are to conduct the war [2] against the Athenians in common, and no termination of the war is to be permitted unless agreed by both parties, by the King on the one hand and by the Spartans and their allies on the other.

Any who revolt from the King shall also become the enemies of the [3] Spartans and their allies, and any who revolt from the Spartans and their allies shall likewise become the enemies of the King'.[1]

This was the alliance made. Immediately following this, the Chians **19** manned ten ships and sailed to Anaea, wanting to learn about events at Miletus and also to spread revolt among the cities in the area. But [2] a message reached them from Chalcideus warning them to sail away again because Amorges was on the way there overland with an army; so they sailed off to the Temple of Zeus.[2] There they spotted sixteen ships approaching, those which Diomedes was bringing from Athens, following on after Thrasycles. At the sight of these they fled, one ship [3] going to Ephesus and the rest making for Teos. The Athenians captured four of the latter, though the ships were empty since their crews had

[1] A provision that seems formulated to include individuals like Amorges (see 5.5 above) as well as states, but the apparent reciprocity in this last clause seems in practice to favour the Persians, who were very unlikely to be called upon by the Spartans in this capacity (see Gomme V, pp. 41–2, and the later remark at VIII 36.2).

[2] Thought to be the place-name ('Dios Hieron') of a village between Colophon and Lebedus.

already escaped to land, and the other five ships made their escape to Teos. The Athenians then headed for Samos, while the Chians put out [4] to sea with the rest of their ships and together with the supporting land force caused first Lebedus and then Aerae to revolt. After this both the army and the fleet returned home.

At the same time the twenty Peloponnesian ships at Speiraeum, the **20** ones which had been chased there before and had been blockaded by an equal number of Athenian ships, made a sudden break-out, won an engagement at sea and captured four of the Athenian ships. They then sailed back to Cenchreae and once again prepared for the voyage to Chios and Ionia. Astyochus came out from Sparta to act as their admiral, in the course of assuming supreme command of the Peloponnesian fleet as a whole.

When the land force had withdrawn from Teos, Tissaphernes came [2] there in person with an army and after finally demolishing whatever remained of the Athenian fortifications he too withdrew. Shortly after he had gone, Diomedes arrived with ten Athenian ships and reached a formal agreement with the Teians that the Athenians should be granted admission there also. He then sailed along the coast to attack Herae, but after failing to take the city he sailed away again.

At the same time there was an uprising against those in power[1] in **21** Samos by the people, acting in concert with the crews of three Athenian ships that happened to be present there. The people of Samos killed in all about 200 of the most important of these figures, condemned 400 others to exile, and then distributed their land and homes amongst themselves. The Athenians thereupon voted to grant the Samians their autonomy, regarding them now as reliable allies, and from this point on the people managed the affairs of the city; and they gave the landowners no further share in anything, and prohibited any future marriages in either direction between them and their own people.

The Chians were proving to be just as highly committed as they had **22** been at the beginning, and even before the Peloponnesians came in force

[1] *Dunatoi*, literally 'the powerful', given in the next sentence in its superlative form ('the most powerful'). Scholars disagree whether these are to be identified as the class of 'oligarchs' or just as a competing group of 'the people'. Hornblower argues for the latter view (III, pp. 808–9), relying heavily on an interpretation of a later reference at VIII 63.3, though the immediately following reference at 21 to the 'landed classes' (*geomoroi*) might suggest the former. Whichever view is correct the killing is on a brutal scale and recalls other discussions of *stasis* in cities (for example, III 82–85), though the actual word used here is *epanastasis* ('a rising up against').

they wanted to induce the cities to revolt and get as many as possible of them to share the dangers with them. So later on in the same summer they themselves mounted an expedition against Lesbos, which had originally been identified by the Spartans as the next target, from which they would later go on to the Hellespont. At the same time a land force, consisting of the Peloponnesians already present and their allies from the region, was moving along the coast towards Clazomenae and Cyme. Eualas, a Spartiate, was in command of the land force while Deiniadas, a Spartan 'outsider', was in command of the fleet.[1] The ships first put in at Methymna and brought about its revolt; they left four ships there and the rest of the fleet then caused Mytilene to revolt too.

23 Meanwhile Astyochus, the Spartan admiral, set out from Cenchreae with four ships, as intended, and reached Chios. On the third day after his arrival the twenty-five Athenian ships sailed to Lesbos, commanded by Leon and Diomedon (Leon having arrived from Athens after Diomedon
[2] with a reinforcement of ten ships). Later that same day Astyochus put out to sea as well, and taking with him one additional Chian ship sailed to Lesbos to give what help he could. He got as far as Pyrrha, then on the next day went on to Eresus, where he learned that Mytilene had been
[3] taken by the Athenians at their first attempt. The Athenians had caught them unawares by rowing straight into the harbour. They got the better of the Chian ships there and landed their men, who overcame the resistance
[4] in a battle and took possession of the city. Astyochus learned all this from the Eresians and from the Chian ships that came from Methymna with Euboulus. These were the ones that had been left there on the previous occasion and had then fled when Mytilene was taken; and three of them fell in with him, the other one having been captured by the Athenians. Astyochus now changed his plans and instead of pressing on to Mytilene he raised a revolt in Eresus, and after arming the men from his own ships he sent them along the coast on foot to Antissa and Methymna, under the command of Eteonicus. Meanwhile he himself went with his ships and the three Chian ones along the coast, hoping that the Methymnians would feel emboldened by the sight of them and would persist in their revolt.
[4] But since everything in Lesbos was going against him,[2] he took his troops

[1] For the distinction, and the unusualness of a *perioikos* being given such a role, see Andrewes in Gomme V, pp. 50–1.

[2] A comment for which we have not been prepared and which is not really explained, despite all the great detail in these sections. Astyochus seems to have been a very unhappy choice as commander. Hornblower remarks rather crushingly that in Thucydides' account he

on board again and sailed off back to Chios. The allied land forces, which had been going to proceed to the Hellespont, were also conveyed back to their various cities. After this, six of the allied Peloponnesian ships at Cenchreae arrived to join them at Chios.

[6] The Athenians meanwhile restored the situation at Lesbos and sailed on from there to capture Polichna from the Clazomenians, which was their fortified settlement on the mainland. They took the people there back to their city on the island, except for the men responsible for the revolt who got away to Daphne. And so Clazomenae passed back again to the Athenians.

24 During the same summer the Athenians stationed with their twenty ships off Lade in the blockade of Miletus made a landing at Panormus in Milesian territory and killed the Spartan commander, Chalcideus, who had come to its defence with a few men. Three days later they sailed across and raised a trophy there, which the Milesians pulled down on the grounds that it was placed in territory where the Athenians were not fully in control.[1] [2] Meanwhile Leon and Diomedes, with the fleet from Lesbos, took the war to the Chians by sea, launching attacks with their ships from the Oenoussae islands off Chios and from Sidoussa and Pteleum (two fortified positions they held in Erythraean territory) as well as from Lesbos; and they had on board as marines some hoplites conscripted from the service-lists. [3] They also made landings at Cardamyle and Bolissus and defeated the Chian defenders who came to oppose them, killing many of them and leaving the whole area devastated; they also won a further battle at Phanae and a third at Leuconium.

After this the Chians no longer came out to face them and the Athenians plundered their land, which was richly stocked, having remained undamaged from the time of the Persian Wars up to the present time. [4] The Chians, along with the Spartans, were in fact the only people known to me who managed to be both successful and prudent at the same time.[2] The greater their city grew, the more they cared for its good order and security. [5] And even this revolt, if that should seem to have been an incautious move

'comes across as mostly rigid, incompetent, arrogant, tactless and short-tempered' (III, p. 806).

[1] An insight into the symbolic power of this practice and the conventions governing it (see IV 98.2 for a similar comment about 'control of the territory').

[2] This passage represents one of Thucydides' few explicit authorial judgements, in this case about a whole city. The term *sophrosune* and its variants are used both of cities and individuals he admires (see I 79.2 and 84.1 and glossary).

on their part, they were only bold enough to undertake after they were assured of sharing the dangers with many good and true allies of theirs and when they could see that after the Sicilian disaster not even the Athenians were still disposed to deny how dire their situation was. And if the Chians were caught out here by one of those unaccountable contingencies of human life, then they shared that mistake with many others who had reached the same view – that Athens and all her works would soon be completely overthrown. However, now that they were being cut off by [6] sea and plundered by land, some of them made an attempt to bring the city over to the Athenians. When the ruling body became aware of this move on their part, they took no direct action themselves but brought in the Spartan admiral, Astyochus, from Erythrae with the four ships he had there and started considering what the least extreme way was to put an end to the conspiracy, whether by taking hostages or by some other means.

This, then, was the situation at Chios.

Late in the same summer a force sailed out to Samos from Athens, **25** consisting of 1,000 Athenian hoplites and 1,500 from Argos (of which 500 were light-armed troops, equipped as hoplites by the Athenians); and there were a further 1,000 troops from the allies. These were conveyed in forty-eight ships, including some troop-carriers, under the command of Phrynichus, Onomacles and Scironides. From Samos they crossed over to Miletus and encamped there. They were opposed by the Milesians [2] themselves with 800 hoplites, the Peloponnesians who had come out with Chalcideus, and some mercenaries of Tissaphernes, who was also there with his cavalry. This force now marched out and engaged the Athenians and their allies.

The Argives on their wing rushed out ahead of the others, and in the [3] contemptuous belief that they were only taking on Ionians, who would not wait to face their attack, they advanced in some disorder and were defeated by the Milesians, losing nearly 300 men. Meanwhile, the Athenians first [4] defeated the Peloponnesians and then pushed back the barbarians and the other assorted enemy troops. They did not, however, engage with the Milesians, who after their rout of the Argives had retreated into the city when they saw their other wing being beaten, but having emerged as victors now halted just outside the city itself. So the outcome of the battle [5] was that on both sides the Ionians got the better of the Dorians.[1] The

[1] This contrast is a running theme (see VII 57.2n), though on the present occasion the two sides were divided differently.

Athenians beat the Peloponnesians opposed to them and the Milesians beat the Argives. The Athenians then raised a trophy and prepared to wall off the place (which was shaped like an isthmus), thinking that if they could force the Milesians to join their side the other cities would quickly follow too.

26 At this point, when it was already late in the day, they received word that the fifty-five ships from the Peloponnese and Sicily were almost upon them. Some of these came from the Sicilian Greeks, whom Hermocrates had been particularly urging to contribute to the final destruction of the Athenians – the Syracusans providing twenty and the Selinuntians another two.[1] There were also the Peloponnesian ships, which they had been equipping and which were now ready. The combined fleet was assigned to the Spartan Therimenes, to be conveyed to Astyochus as admiral. They sailed first to Leros, the island before you get to Miletus; and from there, realising that the Athenians were at Miletus, they went [2] on into the Iasian Gulf to learn more about the situation in the city. They [3] gathered the facts about the battle when Alcibiades arrived on horseback at Teichioussa, a place in Milesian territory right where they had camped overnight while on their voyage in the gulf. Alcibiades had been present at the battle and had fought alongside the Milesians and Tissaphernes, and he now advised them that if they did not want to ruin their initiative in Ionia – and indeed their whole cause – they should go quickly to the aid of Miletus and not just stand by while it was walled off.

27 They were therefore intending to go in support at daybreak. But when Phrynichus, the Athenian general, received definite information from Leros about the enemy fleet, although his fellow commanders wanted to stay on and fight it out at sea, he refused. He would not do this himself, he declared,[2] nor would he allow them to do so, nor anyone else, if it was in his power to stop it. He would never take such extreme risks without [2] good reason, just to avoid reproaches of shameful behaviour; not when

[1] A smaller measure of support than the Athenians had been fearing at 1.2 above (cf. VII 64.1).

[2] There follows a long indirect speech. The speeches in book VIII are all in this indirect form (with one tiny exception at 53.3), in contrast to most of those in the earlier books (except book V), which has led some scholars to suggest that book VIII is not only incomplete but also unrevised. See Gomme V, pp. 113–16 (referring here to VIII 48.7, another long indirect speech) for a statement of this case, and Hornblower III, pp. 32–5, for a more balanced view. See also VIII n2 and VII 27.1n. It is in any case unclear why it would be easier or more natural to draft the speeches first in indirect than in direct form.

it was possible to fight at a later time – after getting definite knowledge about how many enemy ships they would be taking on and with how many of their own, and after taking time to prepare properly. There was no shame in the Athenians giving way to an enemy fleet if the situation required it; what would be more shameful, in any circumstances, would be to suffer defeat. The city would then be plunged not only into shame[1] but also into the direst peril. Indeed, following the recent disasters the city could barely afford to take further initiatives anywhere, even deliberately and after making sound preparations, except in a real emergency; much less should they be rushing into dangers of their own choosing when there was no compulsion to do so. He urged them instead to take up [4] their wounded as quickly as possible, along with the forces on foot and whatever equipment they had brought with them, but to leave behind what they had taken from enemy territory in order to help lighten the ships; they should then sail back to Samos and after gathering together their whole fleet they should use that as a base from which to launch attacks anywhere the opportunity might arise.

Phrynichus prevailed and put his own recommendations into effect. [5] And he gained a reputation as a man of intelligence[2] – not only now or in this matter, but just as much later and in whatever else he was involved in.

So the Athenians pulled back from Miletus immediately after nightfall, [6] their victory incomplete; and the Argives also sailed off for home in some haste, stung by their defeat.

At dawn the Peloponnesians set off from Teichioussa and put in at **28** Miletus. They waited there one day and then on the next day they incorporated in their fleet the Chian ships originally chased into port there with Chalcideus. They now sailed back to Teichioussa, wanting to retrieve the equipment they had deposited there. When they arrived Tissaphernes [2] came up with his land forces and persuaded them to go on to Iasus, where his enemy Amorges was in control. They made a sudden assault on Iasus and took it, the inhabitants thinking that their ships could only

[1] The last in a series of repetitions of this word *aischron* (see *aischune* in glossary), recalling the appeals in the Melian debate at V 111.3 and suggesting, along with the other rhetorical emphases in this passage, that the language is more fully worked here than one might expect if this were only an early draft.

[2] Literally 'not without *sunesis*': a word of high praise, used sparingly. See glossary and I 79.2n.

be Athenian ones. In this action the Syracusans were especially commended. The Peloponnesians took Amorges alive (he was the bastard son [3] of Pissouthnes and was in revolt from the King) and handed him over to Tissaphernes to take back to the King, if he so wished, in line with his instructions. The Peloponnesians then plundered Iasus and the army seized many valuables, since the place had long been very wealthy. As for [4] the mercenaries who were with Amorges, they took these into their own ranks without harming them, since most of them were Peloponnesians. The town itself they handed over to Tissaphernes along with all their captives, both slave and free, agreeing to accept from him a payment of one Daric stater a head. They then withdrew to Miletus. Pedaritus son [5] of Leon, whom the Spartans had sent out to Chios to take charge, they dispatched by land as far as Erythrae with the mercenary force which had accompanied Amorges, and in Miletus itself they put Philippus in charge.

So the summer ended.

Winter [VIII 29–60]

The following winter, after Tissaphernes had made arrangements for **29** guarding Iasus, he went on to Miletus and distributed a month's pay, just as he had promised before at Sparta, at the rate of one Attic drachma a day for each man throughout the whole fleet; for the future, however, he said he wanted to reduce that to three obols[1] a day, until he could consult the King, and if the King so ordered he would then pay the full drachma. Hermocrates, the Syracusan general, raised objections about [2] this matter of pay (though Therimenes, who was not admiral and was only sailing along with the fleet to hand it over to Astyochus, shirked the issue). Anyway, the upshot was an agreement to pay each man more than the three obols a day, based on a total payment assuming five more ships.[2] That is, he gave the fifty-five ships thirty talents a month, and any additional ones beyond that number were paid *pro rata*.

The same winter, the Athenians at Samos received reinforcements in **30** the form of thirty-five more ships from home under the command of

[1] That is, half a drachma (see note on coinage, pp. lvii–lviii).

[2] An obscure mode of expression, apparently meaning that the fifty-five ships got the equivalent total pay of sixty (see the calculations in the footnote to Smith's Loeb translation, pp. 240–1, supported by Hornblower III, pp. 836–8), though how this overall payment was then divided among the men is still unclear.

Charminus, Strombichides and Euctemon. They then brought together the ships from Chios with all their other ships, wanting to blockade Miletus with the fleet and to send a combined naval and land force against Chios, assigning the commands by lot.[1] And this they did. Strombichides, [2] Onomacles and Euctemon, with thirty ships and part of the force of 1,000 hoplites that had come from Miletus (whom they took on troop-transports) were allotted the voyage to Chios, while the other generals remained in Samos with seventy-four ships to keep control of the seas and make attacks on Miletus.

Astyochus, who was at that time in Chios selecting hostages as a pre- **31** caution against treachery there, broke off from this task when he became aware that the ships with Therimenes had arrived and that the position of the Peloponnesian alliance was improving; and taking ten Peloponnesian and ten Chian ships he put to sea. After attacking Pteleum but [2] failing to take it, he sailed on to Clazomenae and ordered the Athenian sympathisers there to relocate inland to Daphnus and come over to the Peloponnesian side; and Tamos, the Persian lieutenant in charge of Ionia, issued the same instruction. When they refused to obey he launched an [3] attack on the city, which was an unwalled one, but he could not take it and sailed away helped by a strong wind. He himself went to Phocaea and Cumae, while the rest of the fleet put in at the islands of Marathoussa, Pele and Drymoussa. Here they were detained by the wind for eight days, [4] and everything the Clazomenians had stored there for safe keeping they either plundered and consumed or else took on board before sailing off to Phocaea and Cumae to join Astyochus.

While he was there envoys from Lesbos arrived, wanting to raise a revolt **32** again. They succeeded in persuading Astyochus, but the Corinthians and the other allies were reluctant because of their earlier failure;[2] so Astyochus set sail and made for Chios, which his ships eventually reached, arriving from various directions after hitting a storm. Pedaritus had earlier [2] been coming down the coast from Miletus with a body of infantry and on reaching Erythrae he now crossed over with his army to Chios, where there were also available to him up to 500 of the troops Chalcideus had taken from his five ships and had left behind there fully armed.[3] Some [3]

[1] As at VI 42.1 and 62.1, for example. Appointment by lot (sortition) was a widespread practice in ancient democracies, especially for political positions but also for some military ones, as here. The intended effect was to limit individual power, prevent electioneering and encourage rotation of experience.

[2] VIII 22–23. [3] See VIII 11.3, 12.3 and 17.1.

of the Lesbians were now talking up the rebellion, so Astyochus put it to Pedaritus and the Chians that they should take their ships to Lesbos and help effect this revolt: that way, he said, they would either increase the number of their allies or, even if they failed in that to some degree, they would at least be doing the Athenians some damage. They would not listen to this, however, and Pedaritus refused to hand the Chian ships over to him.

Astyochus, therefore, took the five Corinthian ships, a sixth from 33
Megara, one from Hermione and also the ones he had himself brought from Laconia, and sailed to Miletus to take up the position of admiral, uttering many a threat to the Chians as he went that he was certainly not going to be helping *them* should they ever need anything from him. He put in at Corycus in Erythraean territory and spent the night there. [2]
Meanwhile the Athenian force from Samos was on its way by sea to Chios with troops on board and they moored in the same area, but were on the other side of the hill from the others, separated by a ridge, which meant that neither side was aware of the other's presence. During the night a [3]
letter arrived from Pedaritus, saying that some Erythraean prisoners had been released from Samos and had arrived at Erythrae intending to betray it. Astyochus immediately set sail again to return to Erythrae, and that is how close he came to running into the Athenians.[1]

Pedaritus also crossed over to join him at Erythrae. The two of them [4]
then investigated the story about the supposed traitors and when they discovered that the whole thing had been a pretext to get the men out of Samos they dropped the charges and sailed away again, Pedaritus to Chios and Astyochus to Miletus, as he had originally intended.

Meanwhile the Athenian force, whose fleet was sailing from Corycus, 34
came upon three Chian warships[2] as it was rounding the point of Arginum, and on sighting them immediately gave chase. A great storm blew up and the Chian ships just about made it safely into the harbour, but the three Athenian ships in closest pursuit were wrecked and cast ashore at the city of Chios and their crews either taken captive or killed,

[1] Reminiscent, both in the language used and as a counterfactual dramatic device, to the 'chance' events involving Paches (III 49.4), Brasidas (IV 106.4) and Gongylus (VII 2.4). See also Hornblower's nice notes on the irony of the contingency at 41.1 below (III, p. 867) and on another near miss at 44.3 (p. 882). The relatively greater difficulties in and slowness of communications in the ancient world meant that such accidental factors regularly played a large role in military outcomes.

[2] Here the generic expression 'long ships' (see glossary under 'trireme' and Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme*, p. 244).

while the rest of their fleet escaped to a harbour called Phoenicus at the foot of Mt Mimas. From there they later sailed to station themselves at Lesbos and start preparing for the work of fortification.[1]

35 The same winter, the Spartan Hippocrates set out from the Pelo-
ponnese with ten Thurian ships (under the command of Dorieus son
of Diagoras), one Laconian ship and one from Syracuse. He put in at
Cnidus, which had already revolted at Tissaphernes' instigation. When [2]
the Peloponnesians in Miletus heard about them they ordered half of this
fleet to guard Cnidus and the other half to stay around Triopium (which
is a headland in the territory of Cnidus and a sanctuary of Apollo) and
apprehend merchant ships putting in there on their way from Egypt.
When the Athenians learned of this they sailed from Samos and captured [3]
the six ships on guard at Triopium, though their crews got away. They
then sailed into Cnidus, attacked the city (which was unfortified) and very
nearly took it. The next day the Athenians renewed the attack, but dur- [4]
ing the night the inhabitants had built better defences and had also been
reinforced by the men who had escaped from the ships.[2] The Athenian
assault therefore did a good deal less damage this time, and they left and
sailed off to Samos after wasting the land around Cnidus.

36 At about the same time Astyochus arrived to take command of the
fleet. The Spartans were still well provided with everything they needed
for the camp: the pay distributed was adequate, all the goods plundered
from Iasus were at the disposal of the troops, and the Milesians were
supporting the war with a will. Nevertheless the first treaty with Tissa- [2]
phernes, made between him and Chalcideus,[3] seemed inadequate to the
Peloponnesians and rather to their disadvantage, so they made another
one while Therimenes was still there with them, and this read as follows.

37 'Agreement made by the Spartans and their allies with King Darius
and the sons of the King and Tissaphernes for a treaty and friendship on
the following terms.

[1] Apparently a reference forward to Delphinium in Chios at 38.2.

[2] It is interesting that adequate defences could be run up so quickly (see also I 90.3 and III 51.3). But they could presumably also be pulled down quite quickly: see VIII 92.10 (Athens); and for other demolition jobs see I 101.3 (Thasos), I 108.3 (Tanagra), I 117.3 (Samos), III 50.1 (Mytilene), IV 51 (Chios), V 2.4 (Torone), VI 100.3 (Syracuse) and VIII 16.3 and 20.2 (Teos). City walls in this period were usually constructed of sun-dried mud bricks on a base of stone rubble, but more substantial ones like the Athenian long walls involved elaborate ashlar masonry (see I 93.3–6).

[3] VIII 18 above.

Whatsoever land and cities belong to King Darius or belonged to his [2] father or their ancestors, neither the Spartans nor the allies of the Spartans shall move against these, either in an act of war or with intent to harm; nor shall the Spartans and the allies of the Spartans exact tribute from these cities. Nor shall King Darius or those over whom the King rules move against the Spartans or their allies, either in an act of war or with intent to harm.

If the Spartans or their allies request anything of the King or the King [3] requests anything of the Spartans and their allies, whatever they mutually agree shall hold good.

Both parties agree to make war jointly on the Athenians and their allies, [4] and if they terminate it they shall do that jointly too. Whatever forces shall be in the territory of the King on the summons of the King, the King shall meet their costs.

If any of the cities that have entered into this agreement shall move [5] against the territory of the King, the others shall prevent them and defend the King as far as is in their power; and if any of those who are in the territory of the King or in any territory over which the King rules move against the territory of the Spartans or their allies, then the King is to prevent this and defend them as far as is in his power.'

After this agreement was concluded, Therimenes handed over the 38 ships to Astyochus and sailed off in a small boat, never to be seen again. Meanwhile the Athenians from Lesbos, who had already crossed over to [2] Chios with their army and were in control by land and sea alike, were proceeding to fortify Delphinium, a place that was in any case strong on the landward side and also had harbours and was not far from the city of Chios. The Chians, however, did not respond. They had already taken [3] a drubbing in many previous battles and in any case relations among them were far from easy – indeed, they were actively suspicious of each other after the associates of Tydeus son of Ion had been put to death by Pedaritus for their pro-Athenian sympathies and the rest of the city was then compelled to accept the control of just a few people.[1] For these reasons they did not feel themselves a match for the Athenians, and neither did the mercenaries with Pedaritus. Instead they sent word to [4] Miletus, urging Astyochus to come to their aid; and when he paid no heed Pedaritus sent a letter about him to Sparta, accusing him of misconduct.

[1] A disputed text and interpretation. I have translated the OCT text rather literally, but see my note on the text (p. 589) and Hornblower's long discussion (III, pp. 859–61).

So this was the situation the Athenians were presented with in Chios, [5]
while at Samos their ships made a number of sorties against the fleet at Miletus, though when the latter kept refusing to put out against them they retired back to Samos and took no further action.

39 In the course of the same winter, the twenty-seven ships that had been equipped by the Spartans for Pharnabazus, through the agency of Calligeitus of Megara and Timagoras of Cyzicus, set sail for Ionia at around the time of the solstice, the commander on board being the Spartiate Antisthenes. The Spartans also sent with them eleven Spartiates [2]
as advisers to Astyochus, one of whom was Lichas son of Arcesilaus. Their instructions were that on arrival at Miletus they should join in the general oversight of affairs to help achieve the best results and that at their discretion they should dispatch these ships (either the same number or more or fewer) to Pharnabazus in the Hellepont. Clearchus son of Ramphias, who was travelling out with them, was to be put in charge, and if they so decided the eleven were to remove Astyochus from the overall command and appoint Antisthenes in his place – since in view of the letter from Pedaritus they were now suspicious of Astyochus. These [3]
ships were therefore sailing across the open sea from Malea and were putting in at Melos when they encountered ten Athenian ships, three of which they captured (without their crews) and burned. After this, afraid that the Athenian ships escaping from Melos might inform the Athenians at Samos of their approach (as in fact they did), the Peloponnesians headed for Crete. They took the longer route as a precaution and made landfall in Asia at Caunus. Feeling themselves safe there, they then sent a message to the fleet at Miletus requesting a convoy to take them along the coast.

40 At the same time the Chians and Pedaritus continued to send messengers to Astyochus, despite his prevarication, urging him to come with his whole fleet to help them resist the blockade and not stand by and watch the largest of the allied cities cut off by sea and devastated by raiding parties on land. There were large numbers of domestic slaves[1] at Chios – [2]
in fact more than in any other single city except that of the Spartans – and on account of the sheer mass of them they were the more harshly punished for any misdeeds. So when the Athenian army was seen to be securely entrenched in their fortified base these slaves immediately deserted to them in large numbers, and because they knew the country they were the ones to do the most damage. The Chians therefore argued [3]

[1] *Oiketai*: see glossary under *doulos* (a 'slave' more generally).

that the Peloponnesians should come and help them while there was still both some hope and possibility of stopping the Athenians, with the fortification of Delphinium still in progress and uncompleted and a larger line of defences being thrown around the camp and the ships. And although Astyochus had not been intending to help, following his earlier threat,[1] when he saw that the allies too were enthusiastic he was moved to support them.

Meanwhile news came from Caunus that the twenty-seven ships and **41** the Spartan advisers had arrived there, whereupon Astyochus concluded that the priority was to provide a convoy along the coast for the ships, which would strengthen their control of the seas, and to secure the safe passage of the Spartans who had come to inspect him. He therefore abandoned the plan of sailing to Chios and instead went immediately to Caunus.

On his way up the coast he landed at Cos Meropis and sacked the town, [2] which was undefended by walls and was in ruins after being struck by what was certainly the largest earthquake in living memory. The people had fled to the mountains and he pillaged the countryside for its booty, sparing only the free inhabitants, whom he let go.

Arriving at Cnidus from Cos overnight, he came under strong pressure [3] from the Cnidians not to disembark the sailors there but to sail on directly, as they were, to take on the twenty Athenian ships that Charmides, one of the generals from Samos, was using to watch out for the twenty-seven ships coming from the Peloponnese – the same ones Astyochus was going to meet. The Athenians at Samos had got word from Melos of their [4] arrival and Charmides had guards on the lookout for them on Syme, Chalce, Rhodes and on the coast of Lycia (he already knew about their being in Caunus itself).

Astyochus therefore sailed on as he was to Syme before he could **42** be detected, to see if he could manage to intercept the Peloponnesian ships somewhere on the open sea. But there was a real downpour and the overcast conditions caused his ships to lose their way and become confused in the bad visibility. At dawn the ships were scattered everywhere and [2] though the left wing was already visible to the Athenians the rest of them were roaming about all round the island. Charmides and the Athenians quickly put out to sea with fewer than twenty ships, thinking that the ships they saw were the ones they were on the lookout for from Caunus. They [3]

[1] VIII 33.1.

attacked immediately and sank three of them, damaging some others, and were getting the better of the engagement when, to their surprise, the larger part of the enemy fleet came into view and they found themselves cut off on all sides. They then took to flight, losing six of their ships [4] but escaping with the others to the island of Teutloussa and from there to Halicarnassus. After this the Peloponnesians put in at Cnidus, where they were joined by the twenty-seven ships from Caunus, and then sailed out with the whole fleet combined, set up a trophy at Syme and anchored again at Cnidus.

When the Athenians heard about the result of the sea battle, they sailed **43** to Syme with all their ships from Samos. They did not, however, make any move to attack the fleet at Cnidus, nor did it attack them, but instead they collected all the ships' gear stowed at Syme and after touching at Loryma on the mainland they sailed back to Samos.

All the Peloponnesian ships were now at Cnidus and were undergoing [2] any necessary repairs. Tissaphernes was there too, and the eleven Spartan inspectors were having discussions with him about the matters already negotiated, in case they were dissatisfied with any points, and about the conflict to come, to see how the war could be conducted to serve both their best interests. Lichas in particular scrutinised what was being done [3] and declared that neither of the two treaties – neither that of Chalcideus nor that of Therimenes – was well formulated.[1] It was outrageous, he said, that all the territory the King and his ancestors had ruled in the past should be deemed to lie under their control now too; that would open the way for all the islands to be returned to slavery, as well as Thessaly, Locri and everywhere as far as Boeotia; and what the Spartans would then be conferring on the Greeks was not freedom but Persian rule. He told them [4] to make a new and better treaty. At any rate, he said, they would not be abiding by the present agreements, nor did they want to accept support at all on these terms. Tissaphernes was vexed by this response and left in a temper without achieving anything.

The Spartans, for their part, were minded to sail on to Rhodes. They **44** had been receiving reports from some of the most powerful men there[2]

[1] The clauses in question were those at 18.1 and (the less explicit) 37.2, amended in the third treaty at 58.2.

[2] There are similarities, but also small variations, in the language used to distinguish the different groups here at Rhodes (*dunatoi* and *polloi*), those at Chios (*oligoi* and *polloi*, 9.3) and at Samos (*dunatoi* and *demos*, 21), though it is unclear in all these cases what, if any, formal sense of organised oligarchic or democratic 'parties' is implied.

and hoped to bring over to their side an island that was of some strength in terms of its naval and infantry manpower. At the same time they thought they would be able to maintain their fleet by themselves on the basis of their existing alliance and without asking for money from Tissaphernes. They therefore sailed immediately from Cnidus that same winter. The [2] first place in Rhodes they put in to was Cameirus. They struck fear into the people there, who knew nothing of what was going on and fled, not least because their city was unwalled. The Spartans later called them all together, along with the people from the other two cities of Lindus and Ialysus, and persuaded the Rhodians to revolt from Athens. And so Rhodes joined the Peloponnesian side.

At this juncture the Athenians, who were aware of the situation, sailed [3] out with the fleet they had at Samos, hoping to forestall the Spartans, and made an appearance at sea. They were just too late, however, and sailed back to Chalce for the time being, and from there to Samos, and later continued hostilities against Rhodes with raids on Chalce and Cos. The [4] Peloponnesians levied tribute from the Rhodians to the value of thirty-two talents, but otherwise remained inactive there for eighty days, with their ships drawn up on shore.

Meanwhile, however, and even before the Peloponnesians moved their **45** base to Rhodes, the following moves were being made.[1] Following the death of Chalcideus and the battle at Miletus, Alcibiades found himself a suspect figure to the Peloponnesians and Astyochus received a letter from them, sent from Sparta, with instructions to have him killed (he was a personal enemy of Agis and was more generally regarded as untrustworthy). Alcibiades' first reaction in his alarm was to take refuge with Tissaphernes, and then he proceeded to do as much harm as he could to the Peloponnesian cause, working through Tissaphernes as his consultant in every matter. He cut the level of service pay, which was reduced from [2] one Attic drachma to three obols, and even that was only paid irregularly. He urged Tissaphernes to tell the men that the Athenians, even with their

[1] The main narrative will resume at 55, but 45–54 is not so much a digression as an important exploration of a parallel theme that cannot be fitted neatly into a rigidly unidirectional chronological framework; indeed no serious analysis of political motivation could be and there are many other (if usually smaller) examples in the text of deliberate and necessary dislocations of this kind, despite literalist interpretations of Thucydides' own methodological pronouncements at II.1 and V 20 (like those of Dionysius: see extract **13** in appendix 2). See further Rood, *Thucydides: narrative and explanation*, pp. 109–15 and 262–8, and Hornblower II, pp. 256–7 and III, pp. 883–6.

greater naval experience, only paid three obols – and this recommendation was made not so much from any shortage of money as to prevent their sailors getting above themselves through being overpaid; the view was that some would damage their physical condition by spending their money on unhealthy things, while others would desert the ships (without having to leave behind part of the pay owed them as a security).[1]
Alcibiades also counselled Tissaphernes to use bribes to win over the [3]
trierarchs and generals in the cities to his way of thinking on these things (though that did not apply to the Syracusans, where Hermocrates alone opposed him but spoke for the alliance as a whole).

Moreover, when the cities came asking for money Alcibiades took it [4]
on himself to send them away with a refusal, telling them on behalf of Tissaphernes that the Chians were acting shamelessly – they were the richest of all the Greeks but despite being rescued by outside support they were now asking that others should risk both lives and resources
to protect *their* freedom. As for the other cities, he said that they were [5]
in the wrong since before they revolted they were lavishing money on the Athenians and they should surely be willing to pay just as much,
if not even more, on their own behalf now. He also pointed out that [6]
Tissaphernes, who was fighting this war with his own resources, was being quite properly frugal, but that if resources were forthcoming from the King he would be giving the men full pay and would offer the cities reasonable assistance too.

Alcibiades further advised Tissaphernes not to be too keen to bring **46**
the war to an end. Nor should he want to give the same people control of both land and sea, either by bringing up the Phoenician ships he was equipping or by providing pay to a larger number of Greeks. Instead he should let the two sides divide power between them and so make it possible for the King always to turn the other side against whichever of
them was proving troublesome to him. If control over both land and sea [2]
was ever concentrated in one party the King would be at a loss with whom to combine to destroy those possessing that power – unless he wanted, at great personal cost and risk, to come forward at some point, take on the struggle and see it through to the end himself. The cheaper course to adopt was this: at a small fraction of the outlay and at no danger to

[1] It is unclear whether this is an amplification of the incident at 29.1 above or a separate one (36.1 may suggest the latter). The interpretation of the clause in parenthesis is disputed and the text may be unreliable (see Goodhart, p. 65, whose 1893 edition of book VIII is full of sharp insights).

himself, to let the Greeks wear each other out, one against the other. The [3] most suitable partners for him to share power with, he said, were the Athenians. They had fewer ambitions on land and were in both word and deed the closest to his interests in their conduct of the war: the Athenians could collaborate with him – with the domain of the sea subject to them, and all the Greeks living in his territory subject to him. The Spartans by contrast had come to liberate these people; and it was improbable that if they were now liberating Greeks from other Greeks, they would not go on to liberate them from barbarians like the Persians too, unless the latter got the Spartans out of the way first.

Alcibiades therefore urged Tissaphernes first to wear down both sides [4] and then, after curtailing the Athenians as much as possible, finally to get the Peloponnesians out of his territory. And for the most part this [5] is what Tissaphernes was inclined to do, in so far as one can judge from his activities. As a result of this advice he did indeed place his confidence in Alcibiades as a trusted counsellor on these matters. He gave the Peloponnesians a poor level of maintenance, and did not allow them to fight at sea but kept claiming instead that the Phoenician ships would be coming and that they would then be more than amply competitive; and so he steadily undermined the Peloponnesian cause and reduced their fleet, which had been very strong, from its peak condition; and in other respects he made it only too evident that he had little enthusiasm for collaborating with them in the war.

Alcibiades made these recommendations to Tissaphernes and the King **47** while he was staying under their protection, believing this to be the best advice; but over and above that he was also carefully preparing the ground for his own return to his country, in the knowledge that if he did not ruin it there would at some time be a chance for him to talk his way back in. And he thought his best chance of persuading them would be if he was seen to be on good terms with Tissaphernes. And so it turned out. The Athenian [2] soldiers in Samos saw that he had great influence over Tissaphernes, and this was partly because Alcibiades had sent word to the most powerful men in the army to let it be known among the best people[1] that he was prepared to come back if there were to be an oligarchy in place rather than the vile democracy that had cast him out, and was able to deliver Tissaphernes as a friend and was willing to join them as a fellow citizen.

[1] Here the *beltistoi* ('best'), who are evidently here a different group from the *dunatotatoi* ('most powerful'). See above 44.1n and Andrewes (Gomme III, p. 106).

An even more important factor, however, was that on their own initiative the Athenian trierarchs in Samos and the most powerful figures there were bent on destroying the democracy.

This movement began in the camp and later spread from there to the 48
city of Athens. Some men crossed over from Samos and had discussions with Alcibiades, who held out the prospect of making first Tissaphernes and then the King a friend of theirs, provided that they were not governed as a democracy (so giving the King more confidence in them). This group of the most powerful citizens therefore started to conceive high hopes for themselves, supposing that they – the ones who had been having the hardest time of it – would now get control of affairs into their own hands and would also prevail over the enemy.

Returning to Samos they set about organising the most suitable individ- [2]
uals into a conspiracy and told the people at large that the King would be a friend of theirs and would be providing money if Alcibiades was restored to Athens and they were not governed as a democracy. The mass of troops, [3]
whatever their immediate dissatisfactions with these negotiations, kept quiet because of the ready prospect of pay from the King; while those who were trying to establish the oligarchy, after they had communicated this message to the masses, returned to examining Alcibiades' proposals among themselves and with a wider circle of their membership.[1]

The rest of these thought the proposals viable and credible, but Phryn- [4]
ichus (who was still general) was totally dissatisfied with them. Alcibiades seemed to him to have no more desire for oligarchy than for democracy, as was indeed the case, and to be concerned only with finding some way of securing his own return at the invitation of his associates by destabilising the existing order of things in the city. But their own overriding concern, he insisted, must be this – to avoid internal conflict. Nor was this a viable option for the King, he went on. After all, the Peloponnesians were just as much a presence on the sea as were the Athenians and they had possession of some of the more significant cities in his empire, so why would he want to make trouble for himself by becoming attached to the Athenians, whom he did not trust, when he could make friends of the Peloponnesians, from whom he had never suffered any harm.

As for the allied cities, to whom they would no doubt be promising an [5]
oligarchy – since they themselves would have ceased to be a democracy, he said he was sure that those who had already revolted would be made

[1] *Hetairikon*: see glossary and the long note by Hornblower (III, pp. 916–20).

no more likely to return to the fold nor would those still with them be more likely to stay loyal. They did not want to be enslaved under either an oligarchy or a democracy but to be free, whichever of these they might end up having. And as for the so-called 'good men and true',[1] the allies [6] thought they would bring them just as much trouble as the common people, being both the facilitators and the authors of crimes committed by the people, crimes from which they were the principal beneficiaries. Indeed, under their regime the allies could expect executions without trial and greater violence, whereas the people would represent a refuge for them and a curb on these others. The allied cities, he concluded, had [7] learned all this from actual experience and he himself had no doubt that this was their view. Accordingly, he for one saw no merit in anything coming from Alcibiades or in the current proposals.

But the conspirators who were gathered at the meeting confirmed **49** their original reaction and accepted the proposals now before them. They prepared to send Peisander and other envoys to Athens to negotiate about the return of Alcibiades and about destroying the popular cause[2] there and to establish the friendship between Tissaphernes and the Athenians.

Phrynichus, realising that there would be a discussion about the return **50** of Alcibiades and that the Athenians would agree to this, was now afraid, in view of the opposition he had expressed in his speech, that if Alcibiades did return he would do him some harm for standing in his way. He therefore resorted to the following device. He secretly sent a letter to [2] Astyochus, the Spartan general who was still at Miletus at that time, telling him that Alcibiades was undermining the Spartan cause by making Tissaphernes a friend of the Athenians and setting out all the other details quite explicitly. Phrynichus added that he could be forgiven for making such mischief in connection with an enemy,[3] even at some cost to the city itself. But Astyochus had no intention of punishing Alcibiades in [3] revenge, especially since he was no longer so much within his reach.

[1] See IV 40.2n.

[2] Thucydides actually says 'destroy the *demos*' here (as at I 107.4, I 107.6, III 81.4, VIII 54.4 and then often in VIII – see 64.2n) not 'destroy the *demokratia*' (as at VIII 47.2 and 63.3), so I have tried to preserve a distinction, though it may be a very fine one in practice. The more abstract terms *demokratia* and *oligarchia* crop up far more often in book VIII than elsewhere in Thucydides in fact (10 out of 21 instances of the former and 27 out of 34 of the latter), presumably because of the focus there on Athenian constitutional changes.

[3] He uses the word *polemios* here (usually an enemy of war) not *echthros* (usually a private enemy, as at 50.5 below). See glossary and VI 92.3, where ironically it is Alcibiades making this same excuse and in much the same language.

Instead he went to Magnesia to see him and Tissaphernes and told them both about the contents of the letter from Samos, so himself becoming an informer. Moreover, it is alleged, he attached himself to Tissaphernes for personal gain in connection with other matters as well as this one (and that is also why he shirked grappling with the issue of the reduced pay).

Alcibiades immediately sent a letter to those in authority at Samos, [4] denouncing Phrynichus for what he had done and urging them to put him to death. Seriously disturbed by this and now in grave danger because [5] of what he had divulged, Phrynichus sent a second letter to Astyochus. In this he reproached him for failing to honour his previous confidences and said he was now ready to give the Spartans an opportunity to destroy the entire Athenian army at Samos, explaining in detail in the letter how they could achieve this, given that Samos was unwalled; he added that, since his very life was endangered by the Athenians, he could not be blamed for doing this or anything else rather than being destroyed by his worst enemies. Astyochus, however, passed this information too on to Alcibiades.

Phrynichus had foreseen that Astyochus would play false and that a **51** letter from Alcibiades about all this was on the point of being delivered, so he now pre-empted this by himself being the one to break the news that the enemy was about to launch an attack on the camp while Samos was undefended by a wall and while not all the ships were in the harbour. He said he had definite information about this and that they must fortify Samos immediately and take all other security measures. (Phrynichus was general and had the power to do this on his own authority.) They [2] started on the work and as a result the fortification of Samos, which was to have been done anyway, was finished all the sooner. Soon afterwards the letter from Alcibiades arrived, saying that the army had been betrayed by Phrynichus and that the enemy were about to attack. But Alcibiades [3] lost credibility, since it was thought that having this foreknowledge of the enemy's plans himself he had attributed complicity in them to Phrynichus out of personal enmity; and he therefore failed to do Phrynichus any harm but rather confirmed his story by repeating the same news.

After this, Alcibiades continued to work on Tissaphernes and try to get **52** him to conclude a friendship with the Athenians. Tissaphernes remained apprehensive about the Peloponnesians, because they were there with more ships than the Athenians, but he nevertheless wanted to accept this advice if he could, especially having become aware of the differences between him and the Peloponnesians that had emerged in the dispute at

Cnidus over the treaty of Therimenes (this had already happened before the Peloponnesians moved to Rhodes, where they were now). In that exchange, Alcibiades' earlier statement about the Spartan policy of liberating all the Greek cities had been verified by Lichas, when he protested that it was unacceptable to include in the agreement the provision that the King should be in control of all the cities either he or his forefathers had ever ruled over at any time. Alcibiades, then, was applying himself energetically to cultivating Tissaphernes, conscious that he was competing for a great prize.

Meanwhile, the Athenian envoys sent with Peisander from Samos 53
arrived at Athens and presented their proposals to the people. The key points they emphasised in their general summary were that by bringing back Alcibiades and modifying the form of their democratic government it was possible for the Athenians both to have the King as an ally and
to prevail over the Peloponnesians. There were dissenting voices on the [2]
subject of the democracy, and Alcibiades' enemies were also protesting loudly that it would be a terrible thing if he should come back after what he had done in trampling on the laws; and the Eumolpidae and the Heralds[1] testified about the affair of the Mysteries, which was the cause of his banishment, and invoked the gods in opposing his recall. Peisander then came forward, and in the face of widespread opposition and abuse he challenged each of the objectors in turn and asked them this question. In a situation where the Peloponnesians had at least as many ships as their own lined up against them at sea, where the Peloponnesians had the larger number of cities in their alliance, and where the King and Tissaphernes were supplying the enemy with money while the Athenians no longer had any themselves – what hopes did the Athenians then have of saving the city, unless someone persuaded the King to change over to their
side? And when they had no answer to the question, he then told them [3]
bluntly:

'This is not going to happen unless we govern ourselves more prudently and restrict office to fewer people than now, so that the King comes to trust us; unless we stop consulting more about our constitution than about our salvation in the present situation (we can always make some changes later if there is anything we don't like); and unless we recall Alcibiades, who is the only man alive able to bring this off.'

[1] The two hereditary groups performing the priestly duties at the Eleusinian mysteries. For Alcibiades' 'impiety', see VI 28–29 and 61.

When the people first heard the proposals they reacted badly to the **54** point about the oligarchy; but after being instructed by Peisander that there was no other path to salvation then, partly in fear and partly in the hope that things could be changed later, they gave in. They voted [2] that Peisander should sail with the others to conduct negotiations with Tissaphernes and Alcibiades in whatever way they thought best. At the [3] same time, when Peisander slandered Phrynichus, the people deposed the latter from office along with his colleague Scironides and sent Diomedon and Leon as generals in their place to take charge of the fleet. Peisander had slandered Phrynichus by alleging that he had betrayed Iasus and Amorges,[1] and he did so believing that Phrynichus would not be appropriate for the negotiations with Alcibiades. Peisander also made the rounds [4] of the private associations[2] that already existed in the city to deal with lawsuits and elections to office and urged their members to make common cause and consult together how they could destroy the popular movement. Then after making all the other practical arrangements required in the present circumstances to avoid any further delay, he set off by ship with the other ten men to go and see Tissaphernes.

In the same winter Leon and Diomedes had by now joined the Athenian **55** fleet and they made an attack on Rhodes. They found the Peloponnesian ships drawn up on the shore; and after making a landing and defeating in battle those of the Rhodians who came out in defence, they retired to Chalce. They carried on the war from that base rather than from Cos, since that was the easier place for them to watch out for any movements of the Peloponnesian fleet.

At this point there arrived at Rhodes a Laconian called Xenophantidas, [2] who came from Pedaritus at Chios with the news that the Athenian fortification at Delphinium was now completed and that unless they went to help with all their ships their cause at Chios was lost. And they were intending to do that, but meanwhile Pedaritus himself, together with the [3] mercenaries he had with him and the full force of Chians, made an assault on the Athenian defensive wall around their ships, captured part of it and got possession of some of the beached ships. But when the Athenians launched a counter-attack and routed the Chians, straightaway the rest of Pedaritus' force was also defeated. He himself was killed along with many of the Chians, and a large quantity of arms was seized.

[1] The incident at 27–28 above, in which Thucydides actually praises Phrynichus' good judgement.

[2] *Synomosiai*: see glossary and 48.3n above.

After this, the Chians were subject to an even tighter siege by both 56
land and sea and there was a great famine there. Meanwhile, the Athenian envoys with Peisander had reached Tissaphernes and were having discussions about an agreement. But Alcibiades was not altogether sure [2]
of Tissaphernes (who was now rather more afraid of the Peloponnesians than of the Athenians, though he did still want to do as Alcibiades had instructed and wear out both sides), so he adopted the plan that Tissaphernes should make such huge demands on the Athenians that no agreement would be possible. My own view[1] is that Tissaphernes wanted that [3]
same result too, the motive in his case being fear. However, once Alcibiades saw that Tissaphernes was not about to reach an agreement anyway, he did not want the Athenians to think that he was unable to influence Tissaphernes, but to conclude that the latter had in fact been won over and wanted to reach terms and that it was the Athenians who were not conceding enough in the negotiations with him. For Alcibiades himself [4]
was speaking on Tissaphernes' behalf, though in his presence, and was making such excessive demands that although those on the Athenian side were agreeing to most of what he asked for they were the ones to be put in the wrong. He first insisted that they should give up the whole of Ionia, and then added the outlying islands, and then other things as well; and when the Athenians still made no objections, he made one final demand at the third of their meetings, fearing that his lack of influence would be completely exposed; he insisted that the King be allowed to build ships and sail off his own coast wherever and with as many vessels as he pleased. That was the sticking point.[2] The Athenians concluded that there was no way forward and that they had been taken in by Alcibiades. They left in a temper and went back to Samos.

Immediately after this and in the course of the same winter, Tissa- 57
phernes proceeded down the coast to Caunus. He wanted to bring the Peloponnesians back to Miletus and, after making a further agreement with them on such terms as he could get, to offer them maintenance and avoid an all-out conflict. His fear was that if they ran short of supplies for their large fleet they might either be forced into a sea battle with the Athenians and lose it, or that their ships might be deserted by their crews and the Athenians would then get what they wanted without his

[1] An unusually direct editorial comment. Does this suggest some particular inside knowledge or a controversial opinion? See also VIII 87.4.

[2] See appendix 1, p. 589. The text as we have it seems truncated and overly colloquial.

involvement. His further and principal fear was that in search of supplies they might plunder the mainland.

Taking all this into account then and thinking ahead, bearing in mind [2] his wish to maintain a balance of power between the Greeks, he therefore sent for the Peloponnesians, gave them their maintenance support and concluded a third treaty with them, as follows.

'In the thirteenth year of the reign of Darius, when Alexippides was **58** ephor at Sparta, an agreement was made in the plain of the Maeander by the Spartans and their allies with Tissaphernes, Hieramenes and the sons of Pharnacus about the King's affairs and those of the Spartans and their allies.

All the territory of the King that is in Asia shall belong to the King;[1] [2] and with regard to his own territory the King shall determine what he pleases.

The Spartans and their allies shall not move against the territory of the [3] King with harmful intent, nor shall the King move with harmful intent against the territory of the Spartans or their allies.

If any of the Spartans or their allies moves against the territory of [4] the King with harmful intent, the Spartans and their allies shall prevent it. And if anyone from the King's territory moves with harmful intent against the Spartans or their allies the King is to prevent it.

Tissaphernes shall provide maintenance for the ships now present in [5] accordance with the existing agreements[2] until such time as the ships of the King come.

The Spartans and their allies should maintain their ships, if they so [6] wish, on their own responsibility. If, however, they choose to receive maintenance payments from Tissaphernes he shall provide it and at the end of the war the Spartans and their allies shall pay back Tissaphernes whatever they have received.

When the ships of the King have arrived the ships of the Spartans and [7] their allies are to act jointly with them in prosecuting the war, in whatever way may seem best to Tissaphernes and to the Spartans and their allies. And if they wish to bring the war with the Athenians to an end they shall end it jointly.'

The treaty was agreed on these terms and after this Tissaphernes began **59** preparing to bring over the Phoenician ships, as stipulated, and to carry

[1] A softening of the earlier clause at 37.2, so partly meeting the objections of Lichas at 43.3, but still less than fully explicit about the King's territorial claims *outside* Asia.

[2] Presumably the clause at 29.2 in the 'second' agreement.

out everything else promised; and he wanted it to be seen that he was at least starting these preparations.[1]

With the winter now coming to an end, the Boeotians took Oropus, **60**
where the Athenians had a garrison but which was betrayed from within. The Boeotians' collaborators were men from Eretria and from Oropus itself, who were plotting the revolt of Euboea. The place lies opposite Eretria and while the Athenians were in possession it could not fail to be a source of trouble for Eretria and the whole of Euboea. So now [2]
that they held Oropus the Eretrians came to Rhodes and called on the Peloponnesians to intervene in Euboea. The Peloponnesians, however, were more intent on relieving Chios in its distressed state and they set off from Rhodes with their entire fleet. When they were off Triopium they [3]
caught sight of the Athenian fleet out to sea on their way from Chalce. Neither fleet moved to attack the other and the Athenians went on to Samos, while the Peloponnesians went on to Miletus, seeing that it was no longer possible to go to the aid of Chios without fighting a sea battle.

So the winter ended, and with it the twentieth year of the war Thucydides wrote.

[1] An ironic conclusion to all the fuss about the wording of the treaty since, as Andrewes drily points out (Gomme V, p. 146), the ships never got further than Aspendus in Pamphylia anyway (below 87.2–3).

Twenty-first year of the war, 411–10 [VIII 61–109, unfinished]

Summer [VIII 61–109, unfinished]

Right at the beginning of spring the following summer the Spartiate **61**
Dercylidas was sent with a small force along the coast to the Hellespont
to try and bring about a revolt at Abydos, a Milesian colony; and the
Chians, while Astyochus was still at a loss how to get help to them, were
compelled by the pressures of the siege to undertake a battle at sea. As it [2]
happened, while Astyochus was still at Rhodes the Chians had received
a new commander from Miletus after the death of Pedaritus, a Spartiate
called Leon, who had come out as an officer under Antisthenes; with him
they also received twelve ships that had been on guard duty at Miletus
(five of them Thurian, four Syracusan, one Anaean, one Milesian and one
Leon's own ship). The entire Chian land forces now came out as a body [3]
and occupied a strong position; and at the same time their thirty-six ships
went to take on the thirty-two ships of the Athenians and the sea battle
took place. This was fiercely contested and the Chians and their allies by
no means got the worst of the action, but since it was now getting late
they returned to the city.

Immediately after this, when Dercylides had completed his march **62**
along the coast from Miletus, Abydos in the Hellespont did revolt and
went over to Dercylides and Pharnabazus, as did Lampsacus two days
later. On learning this, Strombichides hastened in support from Chios, [2]

arriving with twenty-four Athenian ships, some of which were troop-transports carrying hoplites. He defeated the Lampsacenes who came out against him and took the city of Lampsacus, which was unwalled, at the first attempt. The property and slaves he seized as booty, but he restored the free population to their homes and then moved against Abydos. That [3] did not surrender, however, and he was unable to take it by assault, so he sailed back to the coast opposite Abydos and established a guard-post at Sestos, a city on the Chersonese which the Persians had once held, to keep watch over the whole of the Hellespont.[1]

63 Meanwhile, the Chians strengthened their control of the sea and at the same time Astyochus and the Peloponnesians at Miletus took encouragement from hearing about the result of the sea battle and the departure of Strombichides with his ships. So Astyochus sailed along the coast to [2] Chios with a couple of ships and picked up the other ships from there, then with the combined fleet advanced against Samos. But since the Athenians there did not put to sea against him – as a result of the suspicions they harboured against one another – he returned to Miletus.

[3] The reason for their mutual distrust was that at about this time or somewhat earlier the democracy at Athens had been overthrown. When Peisander and his fellow envoys came from seeing Tissaphernes to Samos they not only further strengthened their hold on the actual army but they also urged the most powerful men in Samos itself to work with them to try and establish an oligarchy there, despite the fact that the Samians had just been through an internal uprising to *avoid* being governed by an oligarchy.[2] At the same time the Athenians at Samos had conferred [4] together and were minded to leave Alcibiades out of things, since he was in any case an unwilling partner (and was actually an unsuitable person to join an oligarchy). Instead they would act on their own, since they were the ones already bearing the risks, and see how they could avoid losing momentum. They would maintain their commitment to the war and would contribute money and anything else required from their own private resources, doing so with a will, as men whose burdens were now borne for no one but themselves.

64 After encouraging each other in these resolutions they immediately afterwards dispatched Peisander and half the envoys to return home to manage affairs there, with instructions also to establish an oligarchy in any of the subject cities at which they stopped on the way. The other

[1] See maps 28 and 30, pp. 519, 577. [2] See VIII 21.

half they sent off in different directions to various other subject states.
They also sent Diitrephes, who was in the vicinity of Chios but had [2]
been selected to take command in the Thracian region, to take up his
position, and when he got as far as Thasos he overthrew the popular
party there.[1] But about two months after he had left the Thasians got [3]
on with fortifying their city, thinking that they had no further need of
an aristocracy supported by the Athenians when they daily expected a
liberation delivered by the Spartans. There were also Thasian exiles who [4]
had been driven from the city by the Athenians now taking refuge with
the Spartans, and together with their friends in the city these were making
every effort to get ships and bring about the revolt of Thasos. They thus
found that what they most wanted actually came about: the city was set
to rights without risk and the opposition that would have come from the
people had been crushed.

In Thasos, therefore, the result was the opposite of what those Athe- [5]
nians establishing the oligarchy had wanted, just as it was, I suppose, in
many of the other subject states as well. After acquiring a 'moderate' gov-
ernment and losing their fear of reprisals, they went straight for outright
freedom in preference to the hollow promise of 'good order' offered by
the Athenians.

Peisander and his colleagues sailed along the coast, unseating the pop- **65**
ular parties from power, as agreed. At some places they also got hoplites
to join forces with them and arrived at Athens with these in support.
There they found that most of their work had already been done by their [2]
associates.[2] Some of the young bloods had banded together and secretly
put to death Androcles, a prominent popular leader who had been largely
responsible for the expulsion of Alcibiades. They killed him for two rea-
sons: because of his status as a demagogue and also, and more especially,
because they thought this would please Alcibiades, who they believed was
returning and was making a friend of Tissaphernes. And they secretly did
away with some other inconvenient people in the same way. In addition, [3]
they had openly promulgated a proposal that no one should receive public
pay, except for those on active military service, and that no more than
5,000 people should participate in the management of affairs, those being
the ones with the most to contribute both materially and personally. This, **66**

[1] See VIII 49n. 'Overthrow the *demos*' now seems to become the preferred term (64.4, 65.1, 68.1, 68.4, 86.2, 86.9). I translate as 'the people', 'the people's cause' or 'the popular party', according to context.

[2] *Hetairoi*: see above 48.3 and 54.4 and glossary.

however, was a specious message, directed at the masses, since the ones making these changes were also going to be the ones in control of the city.

Nevertheless, the people and the Council of the Bean[1] were still convened, though they considered no business that had not been approved by the conspirators, who also provided the speakers and reviewed in advance what they were to say.[2] None of the others any longer objected, through [2] fear and because they saw how widespread the conspiracy was. Anyone who did speak out against them met with a sudden death in some convenient way; and there was neither any search for the perpetrators of the deed nor any legal action taken against suspects. So the populace held their peace instead and were in such a state of consternation that they counted it a gain merely to avoid suffering any act of violence even if they stayed silent. Since they supposed the conspiracy to be much more [3] widespread than it actually was they felt beaten in spirit; and because of the size of the city and not knowing who each other were, they were unable to find out the facts and were at a loss how to react. For the same [4] reason it was impossible for anyone with a grievance to open his heart to another by way of plotting revenge, since he would find himself either speaking to a stranger or to someone he knew but could not trust. Indeed, [5] everyone on the people's side now approached each other with suspicion in case the other person might be involved in what was going on. And there were those among them whom one would never have expected to convert to oligarchy, and it was these who created the greatest feelings of distrust in the majority[3] and so contributed most to the security of the few by ensuring that the people had a deep-rooted distrust of each other.

It was during this crisis that Peisander and his colleagues arrived and **67** they immediately set about implementing the rest of their plans. First,

[1] That is, the one chosen by lot (beans being used in drawing lots), which was the more popular 'Council of 500', in contrast to the 'Council of the Areopagus', which after Ephialtes' reform of 462 was reserved for a few judicial purposes. The latter is never mentioned by Thucydides and the former is only otherwise mentioned at V 43–5, VIII 69.4 and 86.6 (see Hornblower's long note on the significance of this in III, pp. 23–31).

[2] From this point onwards in the history of the period there is for the first time another substantial literary source, the *Athenian Constitution* (*Athenaion Politeia*), probably written by a pupil of Aristotle in the 330s BC: this has none of the colour of Thucydides' brilliant account here of 'the reign of terror', but sections 29–33 of the *Ath. Pol.* provide a useful cross-check on (and sometimes correction to) the details of the constitutional history of 411 BC (see Gomme V, pp. 212–51 and Hornblower III, pp. 945–6).

[3] Goodhart (p. 97) points out that the text as it stands should really mean 'towards the majority' rather than 'among the majority' (the way it is usually translated, and which does make best sense of what follows). I have left it ambiguous.

they summoned the people to a meeting and proposed a resolution that ten secretaries[1] be chosen with full authority and that these should draft a resolution to be brought before the people on an appointed day about how the state should best be governed. Secondly, when that day came, [2] they confined the assembly within the area of the hill at Colonus, which is a sanctuary of Poseidon just over a mile from the city. The commissioners then brought forward just this one resolution: that it should be permitted for any Athenian to propose with impunity whatever motion he wished; and if anyone should indict the proposer for making an unconstitutional proposal or should in any other way act to harm him, they would impose heavy penalties on that person. And now they finally showed their hand [3] and further proposed: that no one would continue to hold any of the offices which were part of the present order of things or draw any pay from them; that they should choose five men as presiding officers and these would choose 100 men, who should in turn each choose three others; and that these, as the 'Four Hundred', should take their places in the council chamber and rule with full authority as they judged best, and should convene the 'Five Thousand' whenever they judged appropriate.[2]

Peisander was the one who proposed this resolution and was in general **68** the one most in the public eye in his very active role in helping to overthrow the popular party. However, the one who planned the whole strategy up to this point and had been committed to it the longest was Antiphon, a man second to none among the Athenians of his day in his qualities and his powers of thought and expression.[3] He was reluctant to come forward and present himself before the people or in any other public arena, but was regarded with suspicion by the general populace because of

[1] *Sungrapheis*: literally 'draftsmen' or 'writers' (Thucydides applies the verb to his own 'writing down', see p. xxvi). We still use the term 'secretary' to refer to similar positions of importance in certain organisations. The 'full authority' seems only to extend to the right to present their proposals directly to the assembly and perhaps means no more than nominally 'independent'.

[2] See 65.3 above and 72.1 below, but the list of 5,000 was never published (92.11 below and *Ath. Pol.* 32). It would have been a high proportion of the male adult citizens, whose number has been estimated to be some 60,000 in 431 but more like 25,000 in 400 after the toll taken by plague and war: see M. H. Hansen, *Three Studies in Athenian Demography* (Royal Danish Academy, 1988), pp. 26–8 and R. K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 114–19.

[3] See introduction, p. xxvn and biographical notes, p. xlvi. Few other figures receive such direct, extended and unqualified praise, though perhaps Themistocles at I 138.3 comes closest. Thucydides' evident admiration for Brasidas, Hermocrates and Pericles is expressed more indirectly through the narrative, and his favourable mentions of Phrynichus and Theramenes are very brief.

his reputation for cleverness. Nevertheless, he was the one man best able to help those contending in the law-courts or in the people's assembly if he was consulted on anything. And when at a later time the actions of the [2] Four Hundred had been reversed and provoked a harsh response from the people, and he was himself accused of being a collaborator in establishing the regime, he mounted what was undoubtedly the best defence against a capital charge ever heard in my time.[1]

Phrynichus too revealed his exceptional commitment to the cause of [3] the oligarchy. He was afraid of Alcibiades and knew that the latter was aware of all his dealings with Astyochus at Samos, but thought Alcibiades was unlikely ever to be restored to Athens under an oligarchy. And once Phrynichus had committed himself he proved to be utterly reliable in the face of the danger. Theramanes son of Hagnon was also a foremost [4] figure among those who joined to overthrow the popular party, a man of considerable eloquence and judgement.

So it was not at all surprising that the enterprise succeeded, despite the magnitude of the undertaking, considering that it was a combined effort by so many very able men. But it was no easy matter, after a span of a hundred years or so since the tyrants were overthrown, to deprive the Athenian people of their freedom, when not only had they never been subjects but for more than half of that period they were themselves used to ruling others.

The assembly ratified these proposals without a dissenting voice and **69** was immediately dissolved. The conspirators next introduced the Four Hundred into the council building, in the following way. Because of the enemy's presence at Deceleia, the Athenians were all kept continuously under arms, some deployed on the walls and some on patrol in the ranks. On this particular day they allowed those troops who were not privy to [2] their plans to go off duty in the usual way, while those who were in on the conspiracy were told to stay quietly back, not right beside their arms but some way off, and if anyone challenged what was being done they were to take up their arms and intervene. There were also present [3] some Andrians, Teneans, 300 Carystians and some Aeginetan settlers (whom the Athenians had sent there as colonists); all these had come with their arms for this specific purpose and were given the same instructions. When these had taken up their positions in this way the Four Hundred [4]

[1] The text here is very suspect and all translations rely on some element of reconstruction and paraphrase. See further appendix 1, p. 589.

approached, each man with a concealed dagger, together with the 120 young men they made use of whenever there was physical force to be used. They broke in on the serving members of the Council of the Bean who were in the chamber and told them to take their pay and leave. They themselves brought the councillors' pay for the whole of the remaining period of their term of office and handed it to them on their way out.

70 When the council had slipped out in this fashion without a word of protest and the other citizens had remained quiet and not started anything, the Four Hundred installed themselves in the council building. To start with they duly appointed prytanes by lot from their own number and observed all the usual rites of prayer and sacrifice for the gods on assuming office. But later they made major changes to the whole system of administration by the people (though, with the case of Alcibiades in mind, they did not recall the exiles), and in general they ruled the city with a strong hand. They put certain people to death, not many but [2] those whom it seemed most convenient to have out of the way; some they imprisoned; and others they banished. They also made overtures to Agis, King of the Spartans, who was at Deceleia, saying that they were willing to make peace and that it now made more sense for him to come to terms with them rather than with the fickle Athenian public.

71 Agis, however, fancied that the people would not so quickly surrender their ancient liberties and thought that the sight of a large Spartan army would unsettle them. He had no real confidence at the present time that their disturbances were at an end and therefore made no efforts to give the emissaries of the Four Hundred a positive response of any kind. He sent instead for a large additional force from the Peloponnese and shortly afterwards took the men from the garrison at Deceleia, along with these new arrivals, and went down himself to the Athenians' walls. His hope was that either they would in their confusion be cowed into submission on terms that suited the Spartans or that they would fall at the first assault through the turmoil that would probably arise both outside and within the city.[1] At all events, he thought, he could scarcely fail to capture the long walls, bereft as they were of defenders.

But when Agis drew near the walls the Athenians showed no signs [2] of agitation from within. Instead they sent out cavalry and part of their

[1] 71.1 is one long, disjointed sentence up to this point, with some clumsy-sounding repetitions, and this has led to suspicions of textual corruption. Andrewes (Gomme V, p. 182) tends to put this down to unfinished drafting, while Hornblower (III, pp. 964–6) sees it, more interestingly, as a reflection of Agis' own psychology.

hoplite force and some light-armed troops and archers, and with these they shot down some of his men who had strayed too close and got possession of some of the weapons and bodies. Agis now recognised what the situation was and withdrew his forces. He and his troops then [3] remained in their position at Deceleia, while the men who had come out stayed in the area for a few days and were then sent home by him.

After this the Four Hundred continued undeterred to send envoys to Agis. He was now more receptive to them and on his advice they also sent envoys to Sparta to discuss an agreement, since they now wanted to make peace.

They also sent ten men to Samos to reassure the army there and explain **72** that the oligarchy had not been established with any thought of doing harm to the city or its citizens but to rescue the overall situation. They further explained that there were 5,000 and not just 400 who were actively involved in managing affairs, though because of their military expeditions and other overseas preoccupations the Athenians had not yet had to deal with an issue important enough to get 5,000 to a meeting together. So with [2] these and other instructions on what it was appropriate to say, the Four Hundred dispatched the men immediately after establishing themselves in office. Their fear – a justified one as it turned out – was that a mob of sailors would not want to remain under an oligarchical system, and that if trouble started there at Samos it would lead to their own removal.

In fact there were already new moves under way in Samos in connection **73** with the oligarchy, and the following events took place at about the same time as the Four Hundred were establishing themselves. Those of the [2] Samians who had been involved in the uprising against those in power[1] and who had classed themselves as 'men of the people' now changed sides again under the influence of Peisander when he visited and of his Athenian accomplices in Samos. Up to 300 of the Samians formed themselves into a sworn conspiracy with the intention of attacking the rest, who were now 'the people'. There was an Athenian called Hyperbolus, an evil character [3] who had been ostracised – not from any fear of his power and status but because he was a rogue and a disgrace to the city.[2] They had him killed, acting in collusion with Charminus (one of the generals) and some other Athenians with them at Samos, thus demonstrating to them their good

[1] See VIII 21n.

[2] A successor to Cleon, both as a leading demagogue and as a target for abuse from both Thucydides (see V 16.1 for Cleon) and the comic poets (Aristophanes: *Clouds* 1066, *Peace* 684 and *Knights* 130). On ostracism as a political device, see I 135.3n.

faith. They also joined them in committing a number of other such acts, and they were eager to take on the general populace too.

But the people were aware of their intentions and alerted the generals [4] Leon and Diomedon (who as public figures honoured by the people were only going along with the oligarchy reluctantly) and also Thrasyboulus and Thrasyllus, the one a trierarch and the other a serving hoplite, along with others thought to be strong and long-standing opponents of the regime. They urged all these not to stand by and watch while they were themselves destroyed and Samos was estranged from Athens after being the only reason the empire had held together thus far. The others listened [5] to what they said and approached the soldiers one by one to resist these moves, in particular the crews who sailed in the *Paralus*, all of them free Athenian citizens who were inveterate opponents of oligarchy, even in its absence; and Leon and Diomedon used to leave the Samians some ships for their defence whenever they sailed anywhere. So when the 300 made [6] their attack all these crews, and especially the Paralians, rallied in support and the Samian people carried the day. They killed thirty or so of the 300 and punished the three principal culprits with exile; the rest they granted amnesty and henceforth lived together with them as fellow citizens under a democratic government.

The Samians and the soldiers then sent the *Paralus* to go at full speed **74** to Athens, taking on board with them Chaereas son of Archestratus, an Athenian who had been very active in supporting the resistance. Their mission was to tell the Athenians the news of what had happened at Samos, since they did not of course yet know that the Four Hundred were in power at Athens. When they sailed in, the Four Hundred immediately [2] imprisoned two or three of the crew of the *Paralus*; the rest they removed from their ship and transferred to a different military vessel, assigned to guard duty round Euboea. Chaereas somehow managed to escape [3] immediately when he saw the situation, and he returned to Samos to give the news to the soldiers there. He exaggerated all the horrors at Athens, saying that they were punishing everyone with floggings, that one couldn't say a word against those who were running the government, that their women and children were being abused, and that the Four Hundred had it in mind to seize and keep in confinement all those who were not of their way of thinking, their intention being that if they did not submit they would die. And he spread many other such lies besides.

On hearing this, the soldiers' first impulse was to go and smash the **75** prime movers of the oligarchy and some of the others who had taken

part; but they held off when they were restrained by the moderates who told them not to ruin their cause – with enemy ships lined up ready for action nearby. After this incident Thrasyboulus son of Lycus and [2] Thrasyllus, the two leading proponents of change,[1] now became open about their wish to restore democracy at Samos. They bound all the soldiers, including those closest to the oligarchy, to swear by the most solemn oaths that they would promise to be governed as a democracy and live together in harmony; that they would be fully committed to the war with the Peloponnesians; and that they would be the declared enemies of the Four Hundred and would make no overtures for peace with them. The same oath was sworn by all the Samians of military age. [3] And the Athenian soldiers made common cause with the Samians in all their affairs and for all future eventualities in these times of danger. They took the view that there was no safe place of retreat for the Samians or for themselves, and that if the Four Hundred were to prevail, or if the enemy at Miletus did, they would be completely and utterly destroyed.

So the two sides were now deadlocked in dispute, the one wanting to **76** force democracy on the city, the other to force oligarchy on the army. The [2] soldiers held an assembly in which they deposed their former generals along with any of the trierarchs they suspected and chose other trierarchs and generals in their place, among them Thrasyboulus and Thrasyllus. Men stood up in the meeting and offered each other various forms of [3] encouragement, in particular that there was no need to lose heart because the city had revolted from them.[2] This was a case of the smaller number breaking away from the larger; they were the majority, and they were also the better resourced in every respect. After all, they had possession [4] of the whole fleet, and they would force the other cities in the empire to make their contributions just as if they were based at Athens. In Samos they also had a city that was by no means weak, but one that had come very close to taking control of the sea from the Athenians when it had

[1] *metabole* is usually translated here as 'revolution' or (confusingly) 'counter-revolution', though these terms seem inaccurate and perhaps anachronistic if understood literally (see VI 59.2n, VIII 98.1 and glossary). Thucydides uses various *meta-* words in his accounts of the constitutional upheavals in Athens and Samos, including, for example *methistemi* (66.1, 72, 75.2, 76.3 and 81.1), *metallasso* (70.1), *metaballo* (73.2 and 90.1) and *metastasis* (74.1 and 86.3), and the core meaning of all of these is just 'change'.

[2] A nice inversion. The Samian army now progressively assumes the functions of the *polis* itself, holding assemblies, making appointments, managing resources and even planning to raise tribute. There was a similar image, though in very different circumstances, of the army as the 'city abroad' at VII 75.5 and 77.4–7.

fought a war with them.[1] As for the enemy, they would be defending themselves against them from just the same base as they had before. Moreover, as the ones with the fleet they were better able to source their supplies than were the people in the city. Indeed, they claimed that it was [5] because of their own forward position at Samos that the Athenians had so far kept control of the sea-approaches to Peiraeus; and they had now reached the point where, if the Athenians were unwilling to give them back their constitution, then they were more strongly placed to exclude the Athenians from the sea than the Athenians were to exclude them. In [6] any case, in terms of overcoming the enemy forces, the city could offer them only slight and insignificant help and was no loss to them at all, since the Athenians were no longer in a position to send them money (on the contrary, their troops were providing for themselves) nor to offer good advice, which is the reason why states exercise control over the military. Indeed, in that respect the Athenians were actually at fault in abolishing the ancestral laws, while they were the ones preserving them and they would try to make the others do the same; so they were just as well off among themselves with men who could give good advice. Alcibiades was [7] another factor. If they offered him immunity and a recall, he would gladly deliver them an alliance with the King. Finally and most important of all, there was the point that even if they failed completely in their objectives they possessed such a large fleet that there were many places available to them where they could find both cities and land as a refuge.

After discussing these things among themselves in assembly and **77** strengthening their resolve, they also resumed their preparations for war just as actively as before; and the envoys sent to Samos from the Four Hundred, learning how things stood when they had got as far as Delos, stayed there without taking any further action.

At about this time too the Peloponnesian soldiers in the fleet at Miletus **78** were grumbling amongst themselves[2] that Astyochus and Tissaphernes were ruining things between them. Astyochus, they pointed out, had not been willing to fight at sea before, while they were still relatively the stronger and the Athenian fleet was small; nor was he willing to fight now, when the Athenians were said to be politically divided and their ships had not yet been brought together in one place. Instead, they ran the risk that they would themselves be worn out by waiting for the Phoenician ships from Tissaphernes to arrive – which were a matter of mere talk and no

[1] In 440–39 BC (see I 115.2–117.3). [2] See VII 72.4n.

action. Tissaphernes was not only failing to bring up these ships but was actually damaging the fleet by not making regular and full payments for their maintenance. For these reasons, they concluded, there should be no more delay but they should fight it out at sea now. And the Syracusans were the ones who were most insistent about this.

79 Astyochus and the allies became aware of these rumblings, and a decision had been made at a council of war to fight this sea battle when they got the further news of the upheavals at Samos. So they put to sea with all their 120 ships and sailed towards Mycale, directing the Milesians to go round there by land. [2] The Athenians had their eighty-two ships from Samos anchored off Glauce in Mycale (which Samos faces at only a short distance from the mainland on this side), and when they saw the Peloponnesian ships approaching they retreated to Samos, thinking that they had too few ships to put everything at risk that way. [3] Besides, they had already learned from Miletus that the Peloponnesians were wanting to engage them at sea, and they were expecting Strombichides to come from the Hellespont and reinforce them with the ships that had gone from Chios to Abydos (a messenger had previously been sent to him). [4] The Athenians accordingly retired to Samos; but the Peloponnesians sailed on to Mycale and made camp there, together with the land forces of the Milesians and the local people. [5] On the next day, when the Peloponnesians were about to sail to attack Samos, news reached them that Strombichides had arrived with his ships from the Hellespont, and they retreated at once to Miletus. [6] Now it was the turn of the Athenians, with their numbers augmented by these ships, to seek to fight a decisive sea battle, and they sailed to attack Miletus with their 108 ships; but as no one put out to sea against them they sailed back to Samos.

80 After this failure on their part to take on the Athenians at sea, believing themselves to be outmatched even with their combined force, the Peloponnesians also became unsure how they could find the money to support so many ships, especially since Tissaphernes was such a bad paymaster. So immediately after this and in the course of the same summer they dispatched Clearchus son of Ramphias with forty ships to go to Pharnabazus, in accordance in fact with his original orders from the Peloponnese.[1] [2] Pharnabazus was encouraging such a visit and was ready to pay for their maintenance, while at the same time Byzantium was making overtures to them about revolting from Athens.

[1] See VIII 8.2.

So this party of Peloponnesian ships put out into the open sea, to [3] avoid being seen on their voyage by the Athenians, but they were caught in a storm. Clearchus and most of the ships made it to Delos and then later got back to Miletus (Clearchus himself then going on by land to the Hellespont, where he assumed command); but ten of them got safely through to the Hellespont with their Megarian general, Helixus, and brought about the revolt of Byzantium. Afterwards, when the Athenians [4] at Samos learned this, they sent some ships to the Hellespont to act as reinforcements and guards and there was a minor naval battle, eight ships against eight.

Thrasyboulus had always been firmly of the opinion that Alcibiades **81** should be recalled and after bringing in the changes at Samos he, along with the other leaders there, finally persuaded the mass of troops of this in an assembly, and they voted to grant Alcibiades his recall and an immunity. Thrasyboulus then sailed to Tissaphernes and brought Alcibiades back with him, in the belief that their only hope of salvation was if Alcibiades could convert Tissaphernes from the Peloponnesian side to theirs.

An assembly was held in which Alcibiades blamed his personal sit- [2] uation on his exile and complained bitterly about his misfortunes. He also said a great deal about the political situation and instilled in them strong hopes for the future, while hugely exaggerating his own influence with Tissaphernes. His various intentions in this were: that those who controlled the oligarchy back at home would fear him the more; that the private associations[1] would be led to break up; that the men in Samos would hold him in greater esteem and would themselves be emboldened by what he said; and finally, that the enemy would be decisively prejudiced against Tissaphernes and would have their present hopes dashed.

Alcibiades therefore held out the following extravagant promises to [3] boost his own standing. He said that Tissaphernes had given him a solemn undertaking that provided he could trust the Athenians they would not lack for daily sustenance, not even if it meant 'selling off his own bed' as a last resort; that he would deliver the Phoenician ships, which were even now at Aspendus, to the Athenians and not to the Peloponnesians; but that he could only trust the Athenians if Alcibiades was safely restored and acted as his guarantee.

[1] See above VIII 54.4.

On hearing this, and a good deal else besides, the Athenians imme- 82
diately appointed Alcibiades general, alongside the existing ones, and entrusted all their affairs to him. There was not one of them who would exchange his renewed hopes of safety and of revenge on the Four Hundred for anything else. Indeed, on the basis of what they had been told, they were ready there and then to make light of their present enemies and sail against the Peiraeus.

Alcibiades, however, stopped any idea that they should sail against the [2]
Peiraeus and so turn their backs on the enemy closer to hand, though there were many urging that course. He said that as their elected general his first task now was to sail and see Tissaphernes and arrange for the
future conduct of the war. He set off straight from the assembly, to [3]
give the impression that he shared everything with Tissaphernes; at the same time he wanted to improve his standing with him and make the point that he had indeed now been elected general and was in a position either to help him or harm him. So from Alcibiades' point of view the effect was that he was using Tissaphernes to intimidate the Athenians and was using them to intimidate Tissaphernes.

The Peloponnesians were already distrustful of Tissaphernes and 83
when they heard about the recall of Alcibiades from exile they
became even more suspicious of him. Two factors combined in this. [2]
At the time of the Athenian advance against Miletus, when the Peloponnesians had declined to put out to sea to take them on in a battle, Tissaphernes had become more casual about their pay; and now the appointment of Alcibiades had increased the growing
hatred they had felt for Tissaphernes even before these events. As [3]
they had done before, the soldiers gathered together in groups – and not just the rank-and-file but some people of standing too – and compared calculations, reckoning that they had not yet received their pay in full but were being paid short and also irregularly; and unless someone forced a decisive battle or removed them to some place where there was a new source of subsistence, people would start deserting the ships; and this, they said, was all the fault of Astyochus, who humoured Tissaphernes and his moods for his own private gain.

While they were analysing their dissatifactions this way, there was the 84
following disturbance involving Astyochus. The Syracusan and Thurian [2]
sailors in particular were for the most part free men and they were to that extent more assertive in confronting Astyochus and clamouring for their pay. He gave them a surly answer and threatened them, even raising his

baton against Dorieus, who was arguing the case for his own sailors. When [3]
the crowd of troops saw this they exploded with anger, as sailors would,
and rushed at Astyochus to beat him. He saw them in time, however, and
took refuge at an altar.[1] He did escape an actual beating, and the crowd
broke up and dispersed.

Meanwhile, the Milesians made a surprise attack on the fort built [4]
by Tissaphernes at Miletus, captured it and expelled the garrison that
was installed there. This met with the approval of the other allies, and
in particular the Syracusans. Lichas, however, was unhappy with this. [5]
He said that the Milesians and the others living within the King's ter-
ritory had, within limits, to accept a degree of necessary servitude to
Tissaphernes and court his favour until they had brought the war to a
successful conclusion.[2] The Milesians were angry with him for this and
similar interventions, and when he later fell ill and died they refused the
Spartans permission to bury him where they wanted.

While there was this rift in the soldiers' relations with Astyochus and **85**
Tissaphernes, Mindarus came out from Sparta to succeed Astyochus as
admiral and took up his command. Astyochus himself sailed back home.
Tissaphernes sent with him an envoy from his inner circle, a bilingual [2]
Carian called Gaulites, who was to lay accusations against the Milesians
over the fort and at the same time mount a defence on Tissaphernes' own
behalf. He knew that the Milesians were on their way to Sparta specifically
to raise an outcry against him and that with them was Hermocrates,
who intended to expose Tissaphernes for conspiring with Alcibiades
to undermine the Peloponnesian cause and for playing a double game.
Tissaphernes had felt hostile to Hermocrates ever since the issue of the [3]
wage-payments,[3] and after Hermocrates had been exiled from Syracuse
and other generals had come out to take over the Syracusan fleet at Miletus
(namely Potamis, Myscon and Demarchus), Tisspahernes finally laid into
him even more fiercely now that he was an exile and accused him among
other things of once asking him for money and then turning against him
when he did not get it. So Astyochus, the Milesians and Hermocrates [4]

[1] A place of sanctuary that it would be sacrilege to invade. See also I 126.10–11, III 28.2, III 81.5 and, for a similar incident, V 60.6. As Hornblower remarks (III, p. 992), there always seemed to be a handy altar nearby on such occasions.

[2] A surprising reaction, since Lichas had been the one raising objections to the terms at 43.3 and 52 above. Andrewes suggests (Gomme V, pp. 279–80) that he may just have been reminding them of the final terms set out at 58.2; or he may perhaps have been more 'political' than has emerged so far.

[3] VIII 45.3.

left for Sparta. Meanwhile Alcibiades had already crossed back to Samos after seeing Tissaphernes.

The envoys who had earlier been sent by the Four Hundred to brief **86** and reassure the men at Samos now arrived from Delos. Alcibiades was already there and an assembly was held at which the envoys attempted to speak. At first the soldiers would not listen to them but kept shouting for [2] the deaths of those who had deposed the popular party; later, however, they quietened down and gave them a hearing. The envoys told them [3] that the change in government had been introduced not to destroy the city but to save it; nor did they intend to hand it over to the enemy, which they could have done at the time of the invasion[1] when they were already in power; moreover, as far as the Five Thousand were concerned, they would all be involved in their turn; and the men's families were not being abused, as Chaereas had reported in his scandal-mongering; nor were they suffering any other form of ill-treatment, but they remained just where they were, each on their own property.

The envoys said much else besides, but the soldiers were in no mood [4] to listen. Instead they reacted angrily and voiced various proposals, in particular that they should sail against Peiraeus. Now it was that Alcibiades, for the first time and to a greater extent than anyone else, seems to have performed a real service to the state. When the Athenians at Samos were bent on sailing to attack their own people – in which case the enemy would undoubtedly have at once seized possession of Ionia and the Hellespont – Alcibiades was the one who stood in their way. At that particular [5] moment no one else would have been capable of restraining the mob, but he put a stop to the expedition and with some strong language of his own deterred the men from venting their anger on the individual envoys. He [6] sent the envoys back with the following answer from himself: he would not prevent the Five Thousand from ruling, but he told them to get rid of the Four Hundred and reconstitute the council as it had been before, a body of Five Hundred; and if there had to be any cutbacks in the interests of economy, which would result in better pay and provisions for the men on active service, then he applauded that. Otherwise, they should hold [7] firm and concede nothing to the enemy. If the city was kept safe there was every hope that they could also reach agreement amongst themselves; but once one or other party faltered, either those at Samos or the Athenians at home, then there would be no one left to be reconciled with.

[1] That is, Agis' most recent invasion (VIII 71 above).

Some envoys from Argos were also present, announcing offers of help [8]
for 'the people of Athens at Samos'. Alcibiades gave them his thanks,
asked them to be available when requested and then sent them away. The [9]
Argives had arrived with the crew of the *Paralus*, who had previously[1]
been assigned by the Four Hundred to cruise round Euboea in a military
vessel. They were conveying to Sparta some Athenian envoys sent by the
Four Hundred (namely, Laespodias, Aristophon and Melesias) and when
they were off Argos in the course of this voyage they seized these envoys
and handed them over to the Argives, for being directly implicated in
deposing the popular party. The crew of the *Paralus* did not themselves
return to Athens thereafter but went from Argos to Samos, bringing the
envoys with them in their trireme.

During the same summer the Peloponnesians were feeling vexed at **87**
Tissaphernes for various reasons and particularly over the recall of Alcib-
iades, thinking that he was now openly siding with the Athenians. So
he chose that moment to make preparations for a journey to Aspendus,
ostensibly at least to clear himself of the charges in their eyes. He asked
Lichas to travel with him, and as far as the army was concerned he said
he would appoint Tamos as his lieutenant to ensure the continuation of
subsistence payments while he was himself away. Accounts differ, and [2]
it is not easy to know what he had in mind in going to Aspendus or
why after going he did not bring back the ships. What is clear is that [3]
the Phoenician ships, 147 of them, did get as far as Aspendus, but there
are many different conjectures about why they then came no further.
Some think that he went away to continue the attrition of Peloponnesian
resources, just as he had planned (at any rate the provision of subsistence
pay was no better under Tamos, to whom he had delegated it, but actually
worse). Some thought he brought the Phoenicians as far as Aspendus in
order to extract money from them for their discharge (since he had no
further use for them anyhow). Others suggested he was reacting to the
uproar at Sparta so that it could be said that he was doing no wrong –
but was clearly going to get the ships, which really were manned. To [4]
me, however, it seems perfectly clear that the reasons for not bringing
the fleet were to wear out and immobilise the Greek forces: this was a
process both of attrition – while he was making the journey there and
wasting time, and of equalisation – in making neither side stronger than

[1] VIII 74.2. 'Previously' is Thucydides' characteristic form of shorthand cross-reference (equivalent to 'as I have already said'). For more explicit cross-references, see V 1n.

the other by lending his support to it. Had he actually wanted to, he could have brought the war to an end by making a decisive appearance on the scene. By bringing in the fleet he would probably have handed victory to the Spartans, who even as things stood were now an equal match for the Athenians with their fleet. What really exposed his dishonesty is the [5] excuse he gave for not bringing the ships. He said that there were fewer of them assembled than the King had assigned. But in that case he would surely have won still greater credit for saving the King much expense and achieving the same result with fewer resources. At any rate, whatever his [6] intentions were, Tissaphernes did come to Aspendus and met with the Phoenicians, and on his instructions the Peloponnesians sent a Spartan called Philippus with two triremes to collect the ships.

88 When Alcibiades learned that Tissaphernes was on his way to Aspendus he also sailed there himself with thirteen ships, promising the men at Samos that he would secure them a major benefit from this move without incurring any risk: either he would bring back with him the Phoenician ships for the Athenians, or he would at least prevent them going to the Peloponnesians. In all probability he had long since known what was in Tissaphernes' mind – that he had no intention of bringing the ships – and just wanted to discredit him as much as possible in the eyes of the Peloponnesians for being a friend to himself and the Athenians. That way Tissaphernes would be under greater pressure to come over to the Athenian side. So Alcibiades put to sea and headed east directly to Caunus and Phaselis.

89 When the envoys sent by the Four Hundred to Samos arrived back at Athens they reported what Alcibiades had told them: that they were to hold firm and concede nothing to the enemy, and that he had high hopes of effecting a reconciliation between the army and them and of prevailing over the Peloponnesians. This was far more cheering news for most of those involved with the oligarchy, who were already feeling troubled and would gladly have got rid of the whole business any safe way they could. These people were now starting to gather in groups and find fault with the [2] state of affairs. Their leaders were men who were very much part of the oligarchy and held office within it, such as Theramenes son of Hagnon, Aristocrates son of Scelias and others. They had all been taking a leading role in affairs but were now seriously afraid, they said, of Alcibiades and the army in Samos, as well as of those sending delegations to Sparta, which they feared might inflict some harm on the city through acting

without majority approval. They thought they should dispense with the excessively narrow oligarchy they had, and should instead demonstrate that the Five Thousand existed in reality and not only in name, and should establish the constitution on a more equal basis.

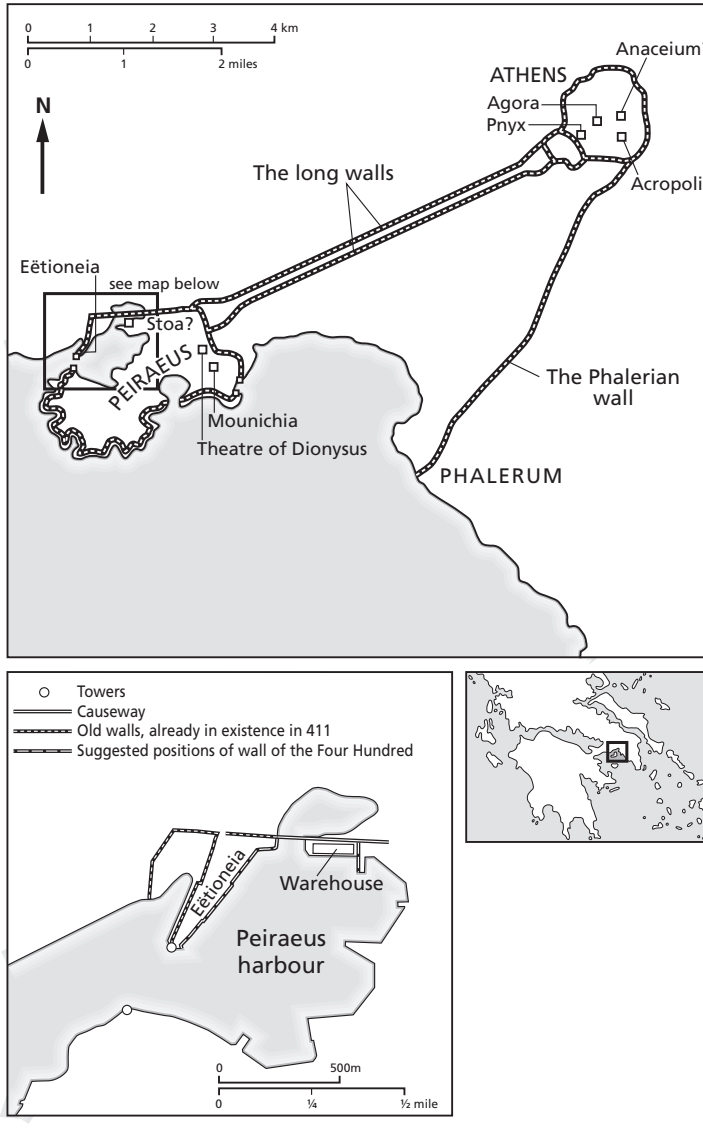
But this form of words was just their political pretence. Most of them [3] were drawn through personal ambition into a mode of behaviour that is sure to end up destroying any oligarchy that emerges from a democracy. Right from the first day they not only all fail to consider themselves equals, but each thinks he deserves the very first place himself. Whereas under a democracy an election is held and a person can bear the result more easily, telling himself that he was not defeated by his peers.[1] What most [4] clearly spurred these men on was the strength of Alcibiades' position at Samos and their own belief that the oligarchy would not be an enduring one. Each of them was therefore contending to establish himself as the foremost champion of the people.[2]

Those of the Four Hundred most opposed to this policy were leading **90** figures such as Phrynichus (who when general at Samos had once crossed swords with Alcibiades[3]), Aristarchus (an extreme and long-standing enemy of the people), Peisander, Antiphon and other very influential figures. At an earlier stage, when they first came to power, and then later too, when Samos broke away from them in favour of democracy, they had been sending envoys of their own to Sparta in their eagerness to reach an agreement and they had also been constructing a fortification at a place called Eëtioneia. When their envoys returned from Samos they now intensified their efforts, seeing that not only the populace but also those of their associates they had formerly thought most loyal were turning against them. In their alarm at the situation both at home and at Samos, [2] they therefore hurriedly dispatched Antiphon, Phrynichus and ten others to try and reach an accommodation with the Spartans on any terms at all that were tolerable. Meanwhile they also pressed on even harder with [3] building the fortification at Eëtioneia.

[1] This seems doubtful, both as a historical and a psychological generalisation, unless Thucydides is thinking of democracy as offering a more *impersonal* form of competition (often determined by lot as well as by election). The generalisation above about the fate of oligarchies seems doubtful too, as Andrewes remarks (Gomme V, pp. 300–1), referring to the cases of Megara (IV 74.4) and Samos itself (VIII 21).

[2] *Prostates* of the *demos*: a recognised status rather than an official position (see II 65.11, VI 89.4 and VIII 65.2).

[3] VIII 48–50.



Map 29. Peiraeus fortifications (411)[1]

[1] The locations of walls in the larger map are based on J. S. Rusten's edition of *The Peloponnesian War, Book II* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 119 and in the smaller map on H. C. Goodhart's edition of *Thucydides Book VIII* (Macmillan, 1893), p. 138 (but on the latter see further the different locations suggested by Andrewes in Gomme V, pp. 303–6 and the discussion of the two alternatives in Hornblower III, pp. 1013–16).

The actual purpose of this fortification, according to Theramanes and his circle, was not so much to keep the men at Samos out, should they try to force a passage by sea into Peiraeus, but rather to let the enemy come in at will, whether with sea or land forces. Eëtioneia is a breakwater [4] for the Peiraeus and the entrance to the harbour runs right alongside it. The wall now being built was to connect with an existing wall that faced inland, so that just a few men stationed there could control the entrance to the harbour. Both the old wall facing the land and the new inner wall being built on the seaward side came to an end at one of the two towers at the mouth of the harbour, which was narrow at this point. They also [5] extended a wall to enclose a warehouse, which was the largest in the Peiraeus and immediately adjoined this new wall. They took control of this themselves and forced everyone to deposit there both their existing stocks of grain and the imported grain and to draw it from there for sale.

Theramenes had for some time been broadcasting his thoughts about all **91** this, and when the envoys returned from Sparta without having achieved anything by way of an agreement for the people as a whole, he made a point of declaring that this fortification would threaten to be the city's final undoing. It so happened that just at this time, at the request of the [2] Euboeans, forty-two ships from the Peloponnese (among them Italian vessels from Tarentum and Locri and a few from Sicily) were already lying off Las in Laconia and were preparing for their voyage to Euboea under the command of Agesandridas son of Agesandrus, a Spartiate; and these ships, Theramenes claimed, were not bound for Euboea but were to help the men fortifying Eëtioneia, and if the Athenians didn't look sharp they would be done for before they knew it. Indeed there was something [3] of the sort going on involving the people he accused, and what he said was not just empty slander. What the men in question most wanted in fact was to stay in power as oligarchs and rule over the allies too, but failing that they hoped at least to keep their ships and fortifications and be independent; and if that too was denied them, then at any rate they had no wish to become prime candidates for certain destruction at the hands of a resurgent populace, but would actually bring in the enemy, giving up their walls and ships, and agree the fate of the city on any terms at all, provided that they saved their own skins. This was why they pressed **92** on with the building of the fortification, with its gateways, entrances and points of access for the enemy, and why they wanted to have the work completed in good time.

Up to this point discussions had been confined to a few people, mostly [2] meeting in secret. But then Phrynichus, after his return from the mission to Sparta, was struck down in a planned move by one of the border-guards[1] in the market-place, at a time when it was very crowded. Phrynichus had not got far from the council chamber and he died on the spot. The man who had stabbed him escaped but his accomplice, a fellow from Argos, was captured and tortured by the Four Hundred. He did not reveal the name of whoever had ordered the killing or any other information, except for saying that he knew numbers of men had been gathering at the home of the commander of the border-guards and in various other houses.

This incident did not spark off any further disturbances, however, so Theramenes, Aristocrates and their sympathisers, both from within the group of the Four Hundred and outside it, now gained in confidence and went into action. By this time the Peloponnesian ships had already sailed [3] round from Las, made a base at Epidaurus and overrun Aegina. At this, Theramenes declared that if their destination was Euboea it was unlikely that they would cross into the gulf as far as Aegina and then move back again to Epidaurus, unless they had been summoned to come for the very purposes he had kept accusing them of; the Athenians could therefore no longer just do nothing. So finally, after more rebellious talk and after airing [4] fresh suspicions, they took some practical action to grasp the situation. The hoplites in the Peiraeus who were working on the fortification of Eëtoneia (among them Aristocrates, an officer with a detachment from his own tribe) made an arrest. They seized Alexicles, a general from the oligarchy who was especially close to those in the political cabals, led him off and confined him in a private house. Others who joined them in this [5] arrest included one Hermon, a commander of the border-guards based at Mounichia; but what mattered most was that the rank-and-file hoplite troops were backing these moves.

When the news was given to the Four Hundred (who happened to be [6] all together in session in the council chamber) the immediate reaction of those opposed to what was going on was to rush to arms, and they began to threaten Theramenes and his associates. He said in his defence that he was ready to go with them right away to help release the man; and taking with him one of the generals who shared his views he went to the

[1] *Peripolos*: see glossary.

Peiraeus. Aristarchus and some of the young men in the cavalry went to help as well.

The scene was one of great consternation and alarm. The people in [7] the city now thought that the Peiraeus had been captured and that the man arrested had been put to death, while those in the Peiraeus thought those in the city were all but on them. With some difficulty the older [8] men present restrained the men in the city who were running around everywhere making for their weapons, while Thucydides of Pharsalus, the Athenian representative there who happened to be in the city, passionately confronted everyone he met and shouted at them not to destroy their country with the enemy waiting their chance nearby; and in this way they calmed people down and kept the sides apart.

As for Theramenes (who was himself a general), when he came down [9] to the Peiraeus he expressed himself angrily enough at the hoplites, as far as shouting went, but Aristarchus and those opposed to them were genuinely furious. Most of the hoplites, however, took active issue with them and showed no signs of repenting. They asked Theramenes if he thought it a good thing that the fortifications were being built or if it would be better for them to be demolished. Theramenes replied that if they thought they should be demolished then he would agree with them. Thereupon the hoplites and many of the people immediately climbed up on to the fortifications and began tearing them down. The call went out to [11] the crowd that whoever wanted the Five Thousand to rule instead of the Four Hundred should set to the work. Even now they were still hiding behind the name of 'The Five Thousand' instead of coming right out with it and saying 'Whoever wants *the people* to rule', since they were afraid that the Five Thousand might actually exist and that in conversation with strangers one could be caught out through ignorance. Indeed, this was why the Four Hundred did not want the Five Thousand either to exist or to be exposed as not existing, thinking that in the one case having so many participants in government would effectively mean the whole people,[1] and in the other that the uncertainty would make everyone fear each other.

The Four Hundred were shaken by these events, but on the next **93** day they nonetheless gathered in the council chamber. Meanwhile the hoplites at the Peiraeus released Alexicles, whom they had been holding prisoner, and after completing their demolition of the fortifications went

[1] See VIII 67.3n above.

to the theatre of Dionysus at Mounichia, grounded arms there and held an assembly. They resolved to march to the city, which they did at once and grounded arms again in the Anacium. Selected representatives of the [2] Four Hundred went to meet them and talked to them man to man, trying to persuade the ones they identified as being reasonable people to take no action themselves and to restrain the others. They told them that they would reveal who the Five Thousand were and that the Four Hundred would come from their number by rotation in whatever way the Five Thousand decided; meanwhile the hoplites should not do anything to ruin the city or drive it into the arms of the enemy. After many exchanges [3] all round the mass of hoplites had calmed down from the mood of the day before and their main fear now was for the whole citizen body.[1] They agreed that on an appointed day they should hold an assembly in the sanctuary of Dionysus to discuss the issue of unity.

When the time for the assembly came and they had all but gathered **94** there, news came that Agesandridas and his forty-two ships had left Megara and were sailing along the coast of Salamis. Everyone had the same thought, that this was what Theramenes and his associates had long been predicting and that the fleet was making for the fortified area, which it was just as well they had demolished. It may well be that Agesandridas had [2] been hanging around Epidaurus and that area under some prearranged agreement, but it is also likely that he stayed there of his own accord with an eye to the current disturbances in Athens, in the hope that he might arrive there at a critical moment. Anyway, when the Athenians got the [3] news of his movements they went in full force and at a run down to the Peiraeus, thinking a war launched by the enemy, and one more serious than their domestic dispute, was not now a distant prospect but was right here at their harbour. Some of them manned the ships that were there and some launched additional ones, while others went to defend the walls and the mouth of the harbour.

But in fact the Peloponnesian ships sailed on past, rounded Sounium **95** and moored between Thoricus and Prasiae, going on later to Oropus. The Athenians were forced into a hasty reaction and had to make use of [2] a complement of crews that had never trained together – what with the city being in its divided state and their wish to mount a rapid defence

[1] The phrase used is *tou pantos politikou*, '[of] the whole political' a unique expression in Thucydides and extremely rare elsewhere. Goodhart (p. 147) quite plausibly thinks it may just be a later interpolation that should be bracketed.

of their main asset (since with Attica now closed to them Euboea was all-important). They sent Thymochares as general to Eretria with some ships, which on their arrival made up a combined total of thirty-six, including those already at Euboea. And they were immediately forced into a sea battle. Agesandridas had led his fleet out from Oropus straight after giving them their morning meal, and Oropus is something over six miles by sea from the city of Eretria. So when he began to advance on [4] the Athenians they set about manning their fleet at once, assuming that the crews were close by their ships. As it turned out, however, they were fetching provisions for their meal, not from the market-place (where the Eretrians had so contrived it that nothing should be on sale) but from the houses in the furthest parts of the city. The Eretrian plan was that the enemy could in this way get a head start in attacking the Athenians while they were taking time to man their ships and could force them to put out to sea just as they were. Moreover, a signal had been raised at Eretria telling the Peloponnesians at what time they had to set off.

In this state of disarray the Athenians put to sea and fought a battle off [5] the harbour of Eretria. For a short time they nonetheless held their own, but then they turned in flight and were pursued to the shore. Those of [6] them who fled for refuge to the city of Eretria, believing it to be friendly, suffered a terrible fate, being butchered by the inhabitants there; but those who escaped to the fort the Athenians had in Eretria survived, as did all the ships that reached Chalcis. The Peloponnesians captured [7] twenty-two ships of the Athenians, killing some of the men and taking others prisoners, and set up a trophy. Soon afterwards they secured the revolt of the whole of Euboea (except for Oreus, which the Athenians held themselves) and established control over affairs there generally.

When the news from Euboea reached Athens the sense of shock there **96** was greater than ever before.[1] Neither the disaster in Sicily, great though it seemed to be at the time, nor any other event had ever scared them as much. Indeed, how could they not have had good reason to feel cast [2] down – when the army at Samos was in revolt, when there were no more ships to be had nor crews to man them, when they themselves were divided and there was no telling when they might break out in open conflict with each other; and now there was this new disaster in which they had lost ships and, worst of all, Euboea, which had been worth more

[1] Similar expressions, and indeed claims, occur at II 94.1, VII 71.7 and VIII 1.2.

to them than Attica. But what caused the greatest consternation of all [3]
was the threat so close to home, and the fear that the enemy might be
emboldened by their victory to go straight on to attack the Peiraeus now
that it was bereft of ships. Indeed, they thought they were as good as
there already. In fact, had the enemy been bolder they could easily have [4]
done just that, and they would then either have deepened the divisions
in the city still further by standing off Peiraeus or, if they had stayed and
settled into a siege, they would have forced the fleet in Ionia, despite their
hostility to the oligarchy, to come to the rescue of their own relatives and
the city as a whole; and in the process the Hellespont would have fallen
into enemy hands – and Ionia, the islands and everything as far as Euboea –
in fact you could say, the whole Athenian empire.

Instead, on this occasion and on many others too, the Spartans proved [5]
themselves to be the best possible opponents for the Athenians to be at
war with. They were completely different from the Athenians in temperament – the latter quick and the former slow, the latter enterprising
and the former cautious – and this benefited the Athenians a great deal,
particularly as a naval power. The Syracusans prove the point. They
were most like the Athenians in character and also their most successful
opponents.[1]

At any rate, after this news came in the Athenians still managed to **97**
man twenty ships and they also convened the assembly, the first of whose
meetings was held immediately in the place called the Pnyx, which was
a traditional site for assemblies. At this assembly they deposed the Four
Hundred and voted to hand affairs over to the Five Thousand, this body
to consist of all those who could provide their own hoplite armour; they
also decided that no one was to receive pay for any public office, on pain
of having a curse put on them.[2]

The assembly met frequently later on and as a result voted in legal [2]
commissioners and passed other constitutional measures. And for the
first time, in my life at any rate, the Athenians appear to have enjoyed
good government, with a moderating balance between the few and the
many, and this was the thing that first began to lift the city out of its sorry

[1] This comparison between Athenians and Spartans is in effect a summary of what the Corinthians say, I 70. For the comparison with the Syracusans, see also VII 52.2, though as Andrewes points out (Gomme III, pp. 322–3) this overlooks their near-capitulation at VII 103.3–4 and the fact that they were rescued by prompt action on the part of Gylippus, a Spartan.

[2] Another reminder of the persistence of religious practices and belief. See also II 17.1 and V 50.2n.

state.[1] They also voted to recall from exile Alcibiades and others with [3]
him, and they sent word to him and the army at Samos urging them to take an active role in affairs.

At this change of government, Peisander, Alexicles and their associates **98**
and all those most involved in the oligarchy immediately slipped away from the city and made for Deceleia. All, that is, except Aristarchus, who was a general, and quickly took some of the real savages as archers[2] and
went to Oenoe. This was an Athenian fort on the borders of Boeotia, [2]
which the Corinthians were besieging on their own account, though they also called on the Boeotians to help them. (The Corinthians were doing this in response to the reverse they had suffered at Oenoe in losing some
of their men returning from Deceleia.) Anyway, after sharing his plans [3]
with the Corinthians, Aristarchus deceived the men at Oenoe by telling them that the Athenians in the city had made an agreement with the Spartans that among other things they were to hand over the place to the Boeotians. Those were the conditions, he explained, on which this agreement had been reached. As Aristarchus was a general they believed him, and in any case because of the siege they had no idea what was going on, so they withdrew from there under truce.

This was how the Boeotians captured Oenoe and took it over, and how [4]
the oligarchy and the internal conflict in Athens came to an end.[3]

To come back to the Peloponnesians at Miletus.[4] At about the same **99**
time this summer the situation there developed as follows. None of the officials appointed by Tissaphernes at the time when he went to Aspendus had been forthcoming with subsistence payments; nor had the Phoenician ships or Tissaphernes himself so far arrived. So Philippus (who had been sent with Tissaphernes) and another man, Hippocrates (a Spartiate who was at Phaselis), had written to Mindarus as admiral to say that the ships would never come and that Tissaphernes was failing them badly all

[1] The interpretation of this striking authorial judgement has attracted much (unresolved) dispute: see Hornblower's summary at III, pp. 1033–6, which has the despairing conclusion, 'It seems extraordinary that two important discussions of the same topic by powerful authorities (Andrewes; De Ste. Croix), reaching diametrically opposed conclusions, should have appeared in the same year 1981, written by members of the same Oxford college, but showing no awareness of each other's (new) arguments.'

[2] Literally, 'the most barbarous' (a rare use of the superlative, see glossary): this was presumably the Scythian force stationed in the Areopagus and available for general policing.

[3] A more conclusive ending than one might have expected, at least on the basis of this one incident.

[4] The subject here has no verb but is more like a heading. It picks up the story from VIII 87.

round; moreover, Pharnabazus was issuing them with invitations and was eager to use the arrival of the Peloponnesian fleet to do himself just what Tissaphernes was doing and induce the rest of the cities in his empire still under the Athenians to revolt from them, hoping thereby to gain some advantage.

In this situation, then, Mindarus put out to sea from Miletus, keeping the fleet under tight discipline and giving little advance notice in order to avoid alerting the Athenians at Samos. He sailed for the Hellespont with seventy-three ships (sixteen had sailed there earlier in the same summer and had already overrun part of the Chersonese), but was caught in a storm and was forced to put in at Icarus, where he saw out the bad weather for five or six days and then went on to reach Chios.

When Thrasyllus[1] heard that Mindarus had put out from Miletus he **100**
too set out at once from Samos with fifty-five ships, pressing to make
sure that Mindarus did not beat him to the Hellespont. On learning [2]
that Mindarus was at Chios and thinking that he would pause there, Thrasyllus posted lookouts both at Lesbos and on the mainland opposite, so that if the ships made any sort of move anywhere he would be aware of it. Meanwhile, he himself sailed along the coast to Methymna and gave orders to lay in barley-meal and other provisions so that if there was an extended delay he could make an attack on Chios by sea using Lesbos as his base.

At the same time he wanted to sail against Eresus (which had revolted [3]
from Lesbos) and destroy it if he could. The background to this was that some of the most powerful figures in Methymna, now in exile, had brought over from Cyme about fifty hoplites who were close associates of theirs and had hired others from the mainland, making 300 in all, under the command of Anaxandrus, as a Theban and kinsman.[2] These troops first launched an assault on Methymna, but when they were foiled in this attempt by the prior arrival of the Athenians from Mytilene and were then again beaten back in a battle outside the city they made their way
across the mountain and caused Eresus to revolt. Thrasyllus responded by [4]
sailing there with all his ships, intending to make an attack. Thrasyboulus had already got there before him, having gone from Samos with five ships when the news arrived about this crossing made by the exiles; but since he

[1] Last mentioned at VIII 76.2 above, when he was elected general.

[2] For the 'kinship' between Thebes and Lesbos see III 2.3 and VII 57.5, and on kinship more generally VI 76.2n.

was too late to save Eresus he anchored there on arrival. These two were [5]
also reinforced by a couple of ships from home and by the Methymnaean ships, giving them a total of fifty-seven present there in all. With a force drawn from these ships they prepared to take Eresus by assault, using siege-engines and any means they could.

Meanwhile Mindarus and the Peloponnesian ships at Chios spent two **101**
days taking on provisions, and the Chians gave each man three Chian fortieths.[1] On the third day they put out from Chios in some haste, and made not for the open sea (wanting to avoid an encounter with the Athenians at Eresus) but for the mainland, keeping Lesbos on their left. They put in at the harbour of Carteria in Phocaea and took their morning [2]
meal there, then passed along the coast of Cyme and had their evening meal at Arginusae on the mainland opposite Mytilene.[2] From there, with [3]
most of the night still ahead of them, they sailed on along the coast and reached Harmatus on the mainland opposite Methymna. There they took a hurried morning meal and then pressed on past Lectum, Larisa, Hamaxitus and the places in that area, finally reaching Rhoetium in the Hellespont before midnight. Some of the ships also made harbour at Sigeium and other places in the neighbourhood there.

The Athenians present at Sestos with their eighteen ships[3] realised **102**
from the signals sent them by their lookouts and from the many watch-fires they could see suddenly blazing on the enemy shore that the Peloponnesians were entering the straits. So this same night they sailed out towards Elaeus as fast as they could, stealing round the shore in their wish to outrun the enemy ships and reach open water. They did elude the [2]
sixteen ships at Abydos, which had advance warning from their approaching friends to keep a sharp lookout in case the Athenians tried to break out. But at dawn they came into view of Mindarus' ships, which immediately gave chase. They could not all escape them, but while most of the fleet escaped to Imbros and Lemnos the hindmost four ships were overtaken near Elaeus. One of these, which ran aground by the sanctuary [3]
of Protesilaus, the enemy captured along with all on board; two they took

[1] Evidently a small denomination in the local currency. An unusual fraction, as Andrewes notes (Gomme III, pp. 346–7).

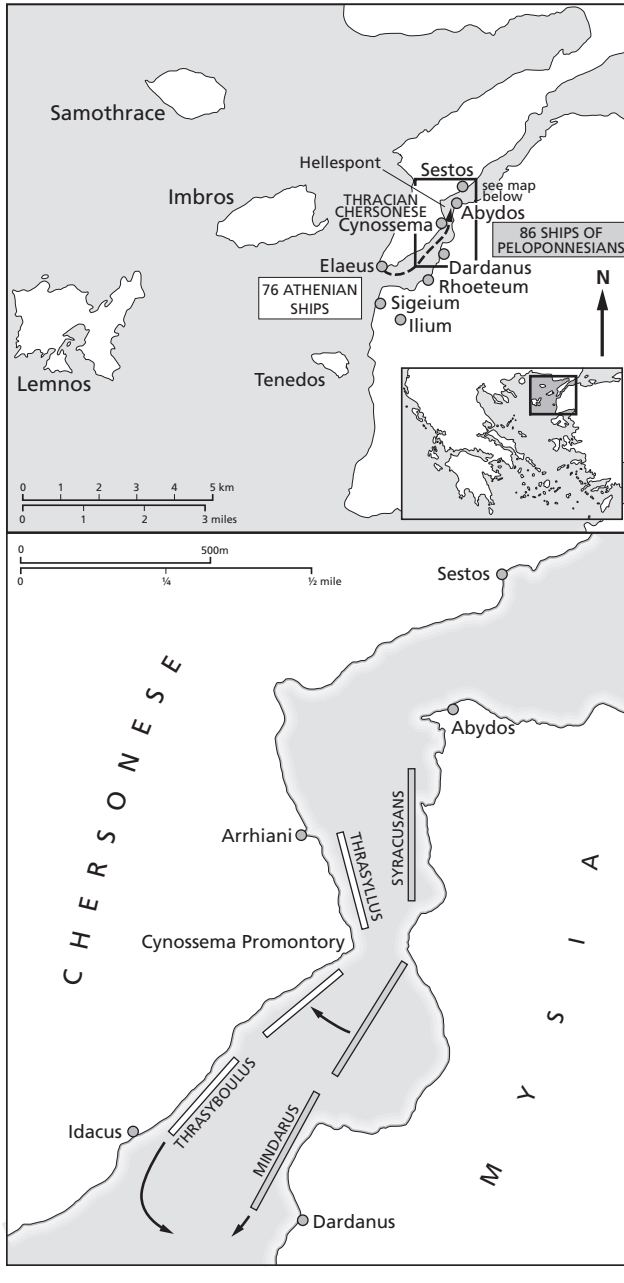
[2] There are suddenly various mentions of meals taken, a practical and logistical issue that might well have received more attention in the military history generally (see also VII 39–40), though the narratologists seek to emphasise its purely literary significance here (see Rood, *Thucydides: narrative and explanation*, p. 135n9 and Hornblower III, pp. 1044–5).

[3] See 62.3 and 80.4 above.

without their crews; and the last one, which was abandoned, they set fire to near Imbros. After this Mindarus and the entire Peloponnesian fleet of **103** eighty-six ships, including those from Abydos, spent that day besieging Elaeus, but when it did not capitulate they sailed back to Abydos.

The Athenians, meanwhile, had been let down by their lookouts and, [2] never thinking that the enemy fleet could sail past them without being seen, were taking their time in their assault on the fortifications at Eresus. But as soon as they found out they immediately abandoned Eresus and rushed to defend the Hellespont. They captured two of the Peloponnesian [3] ships, which encountered them after incautiously venturing into the open sea in the course of their pursuit, and when the Athenians reached Elaeus a day later they moored there. They then brought in all the ships from Imbros that had taken refuge there and spent five days preparing for the sea battle to come.

They then went into battle, which was fought as follows. The Athenian **104** fleet proceeded in a single line close in to shore in the direction of Sestos and the Peloponnesians in turn responded by putting out from Abydos to engage them. When the two sides realised that battle was now imminent [2] the Athenians extended their line of seventy-six ships along the shore of the Chersonese, from Idacus at one end to Arrhiani at the other, while the Peloponnesian line of eighty-six ships stretched from Abydos to Dardanus. On the Peloponnesian side, the Syracusans held the right [3] wing while Mindarus himself with their fastest ships took the left; on the Athenian side, Thrasyllus took the left and Thrasyboulus the right, with the other generals spread out between them. The Peloponnesians [4] were keen to take the initiative and engage first, seeking to outflank the Athenian right wing with their left and so cut them off from the exit to the straits if they could; meanwhile in the centre they would push them to the shore, which was just a short distance away. The Athenians realised their intentions and at the point where their opponents wanted to block them off they countered by extending their own line and manoeuvring beyond them. Their left wing was meanwhile already extended past the [5] promontory called Cynossema and the result of these movements was that in the middle their position was weakened and the line of ships became straggling; this was made worse by the fact that they had the smaller number of ships to deploy and the coastline at Cynossema is sharply angled here, with the result that what was happening on the far side of the turn was not visible.



Map 30. Hellespont and the Battle of Cynossema (411)[1]

[1] Based on H. C. Goodhart's edition of *Thucydides Book VIII* (Macmillan, 1893), p. 164 and J. S Morrison et al., *The Athenian Trireme* (second edition, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 83.

The Peloponnesians therefore charged at their centre, drove the Athe- **105**
nian ships ashore and landed to go after them, getting much the best of this
phase of the action. There was no help available to defend the Athenian [2]
centre: neither from Thrasyboulus and his men on the right, who were facing pressure from a mass of enemy ships; nor from the troops with Thrasyllus on the left, because the centre was obscured from them by the promontory of Cynossema and at the same time they were hemmed in by at least equal numbers of the Syracusans and others arrayed against them. But eventually the Peloponnesians, who were recklessly chasing vessels here and there in the flush of victory, began to lose shape in their own formations. Thrasyboulus and his men, realising what was happening, [3]
stopped extending their own line and instead faced about and immediately counter-attacked the ships bearing down on them. They put these to flight, then next took on the ships in the victorious part of the Peloponnesian forces that were wandering out of line. They smashed into them and made most of them turn tail without a fight. It so happened that in the other engagement too the Syracusans had already given ground to Thrasyllus and his men and were all the readier to take to flight when they saw these others doing so as well.

After the ensuing rout, most of the Peloponnesians sought refuge first **106**
at the River Meidius and later at Abydos. The Athenians captured only few of their ships (since the Hellespont is narrow and afforded their opponents nearby places to escape to), but the victory they won in this
sea battle came at the best possible time. Before this they had come to fear [2]
the Peloponnesian fleet, as a consequence of their succession of smaller failures and the catastrophe in Sicily; but now they were released from their self-reproaches and no longer felt the same respect for the enemy's prowess at sea.[1] The Athenians did, in any event, capture the following [3]
enemy vessels: eight Chian ships, five Corinthian, two Ambraciot, two Boeotian, and one each from the Leucadians, Spartans, Syracusans and
Pellenians. They themselves lost fifteen ships. They set up a trophy on the [4]
headland where the Cynossema[2] stands, retrieved the wreckage, restored the enemy their dead under truce and dispatched a trireme to take news
of the victory to Athens. When the ship arrived and the Athenians heard [5]
the news of their good fortune – coming unexpectedly as it did following

[1] See II 80.2n on the development of Sparta's naval strength. In the final years of the war, after the end of Thucydides' narrative, it was to become decisive.

[2] 'Cynossema' literally means 'Tomb of the Bitch', a reference to the legend of Hecuba who was supposed to have drowned herself here after being turned into a dog.

the recent disasters at Euboea and their internal conflicts – their spirits revived and they came to believe that if they tried hard to regain the initiative things could still go their way and bring them success.

107 The Athenians at Sestos hastily repaired their ships and on the fourth day after the battle they sailed against Cyzicus, which had revolted. Passing off Priapus and Harpagium they spotted the eight ships from Byzantium[1] lying at anchor there and launched an attack. They defeated the forces on the shore in a battle and captured the ships. When they arrived at Cyzicus, which was unwalled, they brought it back into the alliance and exacted payments from it.

[2] Meanwhile the Peloponnesians sailed from Abydos to Elaeus and recovered those of their ships captured there that were still seaworthy (the Elaeusians had burned the rest). They then sent Hippocrates and Epicles to Euboea to fetch the ships there.

108 At about the same time Alcibiades sailed back from Phaselis and Caunus to Samos with his thirteen ships, announcing that he had taken action to prevent the Phoenician fleet from coming to join the Peloponnesians and had made Tissaphernes more of a friend to the Athenians than before. [2] After manning nine more ships in addition to those he already had, he levied large sums of money from the Halicarnassians and fortified Cos. After doing this and also installing a governor at Cos, he sailed back to Samos as autumn was approaching.

[3] When Tissaphernes learned that the Peloponnesians had sailed from Miletus to the Hellespont he broke camp at Aspendus and headed for Ionia.

[4] While the Peloponnesians were in the Hellespont the Antandrians (who are Aeolians) had transported hoplites[2] overland from Abydos across Mt Ida and had introduced them into their city, where they were being ill-treated by Tissaphernes' lieutenant, a Persian called Arsaces. He was the man who had been involved in an earlier incident with the Delians. When the Delians settled Atramyttium after being removed from Delos by the Athenians as part of its purification,[3] this Arsaces, professing some unexplained feud, was recruiting their best men to fight with him. He led them out on the expedition, supposedly as his friends and allies, waited

[1] 80.4 above.

[2] Presumably from, or at least with the help of, the Peloponnesians in view of Tissaphernes' reaction at 109. Diodorus does actually add 'from the Peloponnesians' in his own history (XIII 42.4).

[3] See V 1.

until they were having their midday meal and then surrounded them with his own men and struck them down with javelins. The Antandrians were [5] therefore afraid that on the evidence of this precedent he might commit some outrage against them too, and since he was in any case inflicting other intolerable burdens on them they ousted his garrison from the acropolis.

When Tissaphernes heard of this further act on the part of the Pelo- **109** ponnesians, coming on top of those at Miletus and Cnidus (where his garrisons had also been expelled), he concluded that his relations with them were seriously prejudiced and he was afraid they might do him some new harm. He was at the same time irked to think that Pharnabazus was accepting their overtures and that he might do somewhat better against the Athenians after spending less time and money than he had himself. He therefore resolved to go to the Hellespont to meet the Peloponnesians, both in order to complain about what had happened and to defend himself as plausibly as he could against the various charges made against him, including the issue of the Phoenician ships. Stopping first at Ephesus[1] he made sacrifice to Artemis . . .[2]

[1] Ephesus was an Ionian religious centre (III 104.3). So the work ends with a Persian sacrificing in Asia to a Panhellenic Greek goddess, whose core identity has been defined as 'a concern with transitions and transitional marginal places . . . and marginal situations' (*OCD*, p. 183), though David Lewis tells us sternly not to read too much into this Artemis connection (*Sparta and Persia* (Brill, 1977), p. 108).

[2] The text ends abruptly here and is evidently uncompleted, though Thucydides himself lived to see the end of the war in 404 BC and wrote at least parts of the work from that perspective. Xenophon takes up the story almost seamlessly, near the end of this summer season of 411, 'After this, not many days later . . . ' (*Hellenica* I 1.1)

APPENDIX I

Notes on the Greek text: variations from the OCT

I have commented briefly in the introduction (pp. xxvi–xxvii) on the very different circumstances in which what we think of as 'texts' were written and disseminated in the ancient world. We do not have an exact copy of the work that Thucydides wrote, either in its original form or with such revisions as he made himself as he proceeded with it over the course of twenty-five years or more. He did not live to complete the work or the revisions, and in this sense there never has been a single, authoritative 'master text', which we could in principle recover. Moreover, even in Thucydides' day, the versions produced by successive scribes will have contained copying mistakes, which other scribes will have attempted to correct, so introducing further mistakes, and no two ancient copies will have been identical in every respect. Our own texts are derived from just a few medieval manuscripts that also differ from each other and are themselves derived from these earlier versions, many times recopied.

There is a huge scholarship on this textual tradition. See J. S. Rusten's edition of book II (1989), pp. 28–32 and his *Thucydides*, pp. 481–2 for a summary and a list of some of the main works.

I have for the most part followed the *Oxford Classical Text* (1942 edition) for this translation, since this is still the most accessible and widely used text in the English-speaking world. But I have also consulted the more recent edition of J. B. Alberti (1972–2000) as well as some older editions like that of S. T. Bloomfield (1842–3), together with the textual notes included in

various commentaries, particularly those of A. W. Gomme et al. (1945–81) and S. Hornblower (1991–2008). I list below the places where I have followed the recommendations in these other works in preference to the readings in the OCT. I also comment on a few places where I have followed the OCT despite uncertainties. Words and phrases placed in square brackets as doubtful or rejected readings in the OCT are not translated unless otherwise stated.

I have tried to resist the temptation, to which editors and translators sometimes succumb, of accepting textual conjectures which are mainly motivated by the wish to 'improve on' Thucydides rather than to recover him. It would be quite easy to simplify many obscure passages in this way, but Thucydides was in fact often an obscure writer, as his reputation in the ancient world itself confirms (see appendix 2). The standard texts are no doubt still imperfect in many small ways, but a conservative approach to these questions seems the appropriate one in an edition of the present kind.

The references in parentheses are to the sources of these emendations or to helpful discussions about them.[1]

Book I

2.6 reading μετοικεσίας τὰ ἄλλα (Alberti, but see also Gomme and Hornblower)

17 placing in parentheses οἱ γὰρ . . . δυνάμεως (Alberti)

51.2 placing in parentheses ἐπέπλεον . . . ἀφανοῦς (Alberti)

57.6 reading δυοῖν for δέκα (Hermann, Gomme), though τεσσάρων (four) is also possible (Krüger, Alberti)

66 reading προσεγεγένεντο for προυγεγένεντο (Ullrich, Alberti)

67.3 deleting τε after συμμάχων (various mss, Alberti; but see also the alternatives suggested in Gomme and Hornblower, which would give a slightly different meaning)

90.3 retaining καὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ παῖδας, which the OCT brackets as an interpolation

91.1 reading ἄλλων δέ τινων for τῶν δὲ ἄλλων (Gomme)

91.5 deleting ἔφασαν (Hude)

100.3 reading αὐτῶν for αὐτοὶ (Hude)

100.3 an alternative textual reading (Valla, Hornblower) would be *ξύμπαντες* for *ξυμπάντων*, but see 100.3n

126.6 reading πολλοὶ not πολλὰ (mss, Hornblower)

128.1 retaining ἀπὸ Ταινάρου, which the OCT brackets (Alberti, Hornblower)

[1] I refer to the Gomme commentaries by the names of the principal volume editors (Gomme for books I–V.24, Dover for VI–VII and Andrewes for V 24–115 and VIII).

134.4 retaining οὕπερ τοὺς κακούργους, which the OCT brackets, and replacing ἐσβάλλειν with ἐμβαλεῖν (Alberti)
136.4 reading ἀσθενέστερον for ἀσθενεστέρου (Alberti)
141.4 reading πληροῦν for πληροῦντες (Herwerden, Gomme, Alberti)

Book II

15.4 there is a possible lacuna after ἀκροπόλει (Gomme, Alberti)
15.4 retaining τῇ δωδεκάτῃ, which the OCT brackets
16.1 transposing πανοικεσίᾳ to after πολέμου (Alberti, but see Rusten, p. 123 on the larger problems here)
22.3 reading Πειράσιοι for Παράσιοι, which the OCT brackets (Alberti, Rusten)
44.1 reading ἐπίσταθε for ἐπίστανται (Herwerden, Gomme)
40.2 deleting οἱ before αὐτοὶ (some mss, Alberti, Rusten)
42.4 reading ἀφίεσθαι for ἐφίεσθαι (Poppo, Gomme)
65.12 reading ὀκτὼ for τρία (Gomme, but see Rusten)
73.2 retaining Πλαταιῆς which the OCT brackets (Alberti, Rusten)
75.3 reading ἑπτακαίδεκα for ἑβδομήκοντα (Steup, Gomme)
80.5 reading Φώτυος not Φώτιος (Alberti, Rusten)
89.5 retaining τοῦ παρὰ πολὺ as OCT (Rusten, despite Gomme II, p.226)
90.1 reading παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν γῆν not επὶ (some mss, Gomme)
90.2 reading πλέοντες for πλέοντα (Dobree, Rusten but see Gomme)
93.3 retaining text and punctuation of the OCT (Gomme and Rusten)
96.1 retaining ἐς τὸν . . . Ἑλλήσποντον, which the OCT brackets (Alberti, Rusten)
97.3 reading ὅσωνπερ ἦρξαν not ὅσον προσῆξαν (Dobree, Gomme, Alberti)
102.4 retaining τῷ μὴ σκεδάννυσθαι, which the OCT brackets (Rusten)

Book III

10.4 reading ἐπειγομένους not ἐπαγομένους (Ross, Gomme, Alberti)
12.3 reading ἐπ' ἐκείνους ἰέναι (Krüger, but see Gomme for other variations)
17 The OCT brackets the whole chapter as an interpolation, but Alberti does not, and see Gomme II, pp. 272–7 (especially p. 277)
23.5 retaining ἢ βορέου which the OCT brackets (Gomme, Alberti)
26.1 deleting δύο καὶ (Krüger, Hornblower)
30.4 reading καινὸν for κενὸν (several mss, Alberti, Hornblower)
36.2 adding καὶ after ἀπόστασιν (Classen, Gomme)
38.1 deleting ὃν after ἀντίπαλον (Haase, Gomme)
44.2 reading οὐδ' ἐᾶν for εἶεν, which the OCT brackets (Gomme)

49.1 transposing ὅμως from after ἀγῶνα to after ἐκράτησε δὲ (Heilmann, Alberti)
52.2 reading κολάσειν not κολάζειν (Krüger, Gomme, Alberti)
53.1 deleting ἢ ὑμῖν which is bracketed by the OCT (Hude) and inserting ἐν ὑμῖν before ἂν φέρεσθαι (Gomme)
56.7 reading ἔχουσι for ἔχωσι (Heilmann, Gomme, Alberti)
61.1 reading οὗτοι for αὐτοὶ (Hude, Gomme)
62.5 reading ἵππον not ἵππους (Cobet, Gomme)
65.3 reading φιλίους, οὐ πολεμίους not φιλίως, οὐ πολεμίως (Steup, Gomme, Alberti)
68.1 reading κατ' ἐκείνας for κατ' ἐκεῖνα, ὡς (Badham and Smith, but see Gomme)
82.6 reading ὠφελίᾳ for ὠφελίας (Poppo, Gomme, Alberti)
82.8 reading προστιθέντες for προτιθέντες (Dion. Hal., Smith, Alberti)
84 This chapter is bracketed by the OCT (see note to translation *ad loc.*)
92.2 reading Ἱερῆς for Ἰριῆς (mss)
94.3 reading ἠπειροτικὸν for Ἠπειροτικὸν (Classen, Gomme)
102.5 adding a comma after καλουμένην (Smith, Hornblower)
111.2 reading τούτοις for οὕτως (Herwerden), but the text is probably more radically corrupt
112.1 deleting the parentheses before τὸν δ' ἐλάσσω and after προαναβάντες, and also adding a colon point before the τὸν (Smith)

Book IV

4.1 reading ἡσύχαζον for ἡσύχαζεν (Dobree, Alberti; but see Gomme)
10.1 omitting ἢ after μᾶλλον (various mss, Gomme)
10.4 full point instead of comma before τό τε πλῆθος (Gomme)
13.2 reading πεντήκοντα for τεσσαράκοντα (some later mss, Gomme, Alberti)
19.2 reading πολεμίου for πολέμου (Stahl, Gomme, Alberti)
20.2 adding τῆς after τινὸς (Stahl, Gomme)
25.2 I have translated the OCT text as it stands, but Gomme and Hornblower suspect that part or all the section ἐς τὰ οἰκεῖα . . . Ῥηγίῳ should be deleted
27.3 reading Θεογένους for Θεαγένους (Hornblower, cross-referencing V 19.2)
30.3 reading αὐτοὺς for αὐτοῦ (Gomme, Alberti); I have followed the OCT for the sequence of words later in that section (but see Gomme)
32.3 reading καταλαβόντες for λαβόντες (Cobet, Gomme)
32.3 reading ἔχουσι not ἔχωσι (Gomme, Alberti)
42.4 reading αὑτῶν for αὐτῶν (Poppo, Gomme, Alberti)
43.1 reading ξυνέβαλλεν not ξυνέβαλεν (most mss, Gomme, Alberti)

45.2 retaining ἐν ᾧ ἡ Μεθώνη ἐστί, which the OCT deletes (Alberti)
46.1 inserting ταῖς or a numeral before ναυσὶν (Gomme)
46.4 reading αὐτοὺς ἐλθόντας for τοὺς ἐλθόντας (Poppo, Gomme, Alberti)
47.1 reading παρεδέδοντο for παρεδίδοντο (some mss, Gomme)
49 reading οἰκήτορες for οἰκήτορας (various mss, Alberti)
52.3 reading καὶ τὰ ἄλλα σκεύη for καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ σκευῇ (Smith, Rutherford)
56.1 I have translated as the OCT, but see Gomme for the suspicion that some words are missing
58 repunctuating by moving the comma after αὐτούς to after κοινὸν (Hornblower)
62.2 reading οὐχ ἡσυχία μᾶλλον ἢ πόλεμος τὸ μὲν παύσειεν... ξυνδιασῶσειε (Gomme, Alberti)
63.1 Gomme and others suspect a possible corruption here but I have translated as the OCT to maintain the emphasis on ἤδη
67.3 ἀφανὴς δὴ εἴη ἡ φυλακή seems suspect since it is the activity that must be invisible to the Athenians not the garrison itself; for possible reconstructions see Gomme and Hornblower, of which Gomme's ἐκδρομή for φυλακή gives the best sense with the smallest change
69.2 I have translated the text as in the OCT and Alberti, but see Graves and Gomme
72.4 deleting ἀλλ' (Alberti), but there may be some further reconstruction needed (Gomme)
73.2 I have translated the text as in the OCT and Alberti, though Gomme raises queries (followed by Hornblower)
73.4 The clause τοῖς δὲ ξυμπάσης... τολμᾶν has been suspected, being a difficult expression with an accumulation of redundant infinitives (see Gomme and Hornblower), but no simple amendment has been proposed
76.2 reading Θεσπιῶν for Θηβῶν (two mss variants, Gomme, Hornblower)
76.3 moving the closing parenthesis from Φωκίδος to after τινες gives a better sense (Gomme, Alberti); an even more logical reconstruction would be to move the last phrase καὶ Φωκέων μετεῖχόν τινες to precede the parenthesis
77.2 reading Οἰνάδας δὲ τε ὑπο Ἀκαρνάνων for Οἰνάδας δὲ ὑπό τε Ἀκαρνάνων (Poppo, Gomme)
79.2 reading νεότητα for σκαιότητα (most mss, Gomme, Alberti)
85.7 reading νήιτην for νήιτῃ (Hude, Gomme, Alberti)
94.1 inserting οἱ after ἄοπλοί τε (Krüger, Gomme)
96.3 reading κυκλωθέντες for κυκλωθέντων (Krüger) and deleting οἷπερ διεφθάρησαν Θεσπιῶν (Gomme, Alberti)
98.2 reading πρὸ τοῦ for πρὸς τοῖς (Stahl, Gomme, Alberti)
102.4 inserting a section heading [4] before ὡρμῶντο (Classen, Alberti) and retaining διὰ τὸ περιέχειν, which the OCT deletes (Pritchett, Hornblower)
108.4 reading ἐψευσμένοι for ἐψευσμένοις (one ms, Dover, Alberti)

113.1 reading ταὐτὰ for ταῦτα (Classen)
117.2 I have translated the text as in Gomme and Alberti but this has been suspected, more on editorial grounds of sense than on textual ones (see Gomme and Hornblower)
118.10 reading ἐκελεύετε for κελεύετε (Kirchhoff, Alberti)
118.14 there is probably a lacuna in the text between εἰρήνης and βουλεύσασθαι (Kirchhoff, Gomme, Alberti)
118.14 reading εἴπῃ not ἐσίῃ (Gomme, Alberti)
120.1 The OCT and Alberti both read ἐπήρχοντο, which might be the imperfect of either ἐπέρχομαι or ἐπάρχομαι, though neither seems convincing in context and both Gomme and Hornblower have doubts about the text
129.3 I have translated the text as in the OCT and Alberti but the number ἑπτακόσιοι is suspect and the text may be incomplete (Gomme, Hornblower)

Book V

1.1 some words may be missing after διελέλυντο, for example ἄλλαι δὲ ἐπεγένοντο (Gomme and Hornblower); Alberti prefers διεγένοντο to διελέλυντο
2.3 adding ἐς (bracketed by the OCT) before τὸν λιμένα (Bekker)
5.2 omitting τοῖς before κομιζομένοις (Dobree, Alberti)
7.3 reading περιμένειν for περιέμενεν (Marshall)
10.4 reading σχολῇ for σχολὴ (Gomme, Alberti)
15.1 ὁμοίως is the reading of the mss but is marked as corrupt or incomplete by the OCT, though the scholiast gives the general sense (Hornblower); Alberti prefers ὁμοίοις (Reiske)
15.2 reading οὔπω not οὔπως (some mss, Dover, Alberti)
16.1 reading οἱ ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ τῇ πόλει (some mss, Alberti, Hornblower); and see the long note by Gomme on other possible changes
18.2 reading πάντως (Hude); to say, 'if we all refuse . . . ' fails to make the same contrast with 'making distinctions'
18.5 reading ἔχοντας. Τάσδε δὲ πόλεις . . . εἶναι· (Steup, Hornblower)
18.7 adding καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις after Λακεδαιμονίοις (Kirchhoff, Gomme)
19.2 reading Θεογένους for Θεαγένους (mss, Hornblower) and cf. IV 27.3 and V 24.1
20.1 some authorities delete ἡ ἐς τὴν Ἀττικὴν καὶ, but not the OCT or Alberti, and I have translated it (see my footnote to V 20.1)
20.2 reading τῇ ἀπαριθμήσει for τὴν ἀπαρίθμησιν, but the sequence of words may also be suspect (Gomme, Alberti)
22.1 reading αὖθις for αὐτοί (Lloyd-Jones, Alberti, Hornblower)

22.2 punctuation as Alberti, deleting νομίσαντες and adding καὶ (see also Gomme and Hornblower for other possible changes; some commentators have suspected that the whole of 22–23 is a later interpolation, not fully integrated with the surrounding text)
23.1 adding καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι (bracketed by the OCT) after Λακεδαιμόνιοι (F. Portus)
23.2 adding Ἀθηναίους (bracketed by the OCT) after Λακεδαιμονίους (Ullrich)
31.6 delete ὑπὸ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων (Dobree)
31.2 reading καταλυσάντων for λυσάντων (Krüger, Alberti)
36.1 reading ταὐτά for ταῦτά (Reiske, Andrewes, Alberti)
38.3 reading μετ᾽ αὐτῶν Λακεδαιμονίων (Stahl, Andrewes, Alberti)
42.1 reading Ἀνδρομέδης not Ἀνδρομένης (twice here; some mss, Andrewes)
47.7 reading αὐτῆς not αὑτῆς (Duker, Andrewes, Alberti)
49.3 reading παρ᾽ αὑτοῖς not παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς (Andrewes)
55.1 reading ἐφ᾽ ἑκατέρων for ἀφ᾽ ἑκατέρων (one ms and Stahl)
55.4 reading πυθόμενοι δὲ τοὺς . . . ἀπῆλθον (various mss)
58.4 reading ὀρθριον not ὀρθιον (Hornblower)
62.2 reading Τεγεατῶν for τῶν (Steup)
63.4 reading πολεμίας for πόλεως (Haase, Andrewes, Hornblower)
79.4 reading διακριθῆμεν ἅδε· αἰ τις (Alberti)
82.4 deleting ἀγγέλων (Portus)
83.4 reading ἀποστάντος for ἀπάραντος (Andrewes)
116.3 amending punctuation to τινός ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῶν (Smith)

Book VI

4.2 the correct spelling may be Πάμμιλος (Herodian I.162) and there may be another proper name missed out as co-founder (Dover)
6.1 reading προγεγενημένοις not προσγεγενημένοις (some mss)
11.4 Dover (Gomme III, pp. 234–5) argues strongly for a transposition of the Greek second and third sentences (in my translation) on the grounds of their logical connection with 11.3; but the logical connection with 11.5 seems to point the other way and I have retained the OCT text
12.1 omitting εἶναι after ἐνθάδε (one ms)
15.4 reading διαθέντος not διαθέντι (Herwerden, Dover)
17.2 reading πολιτειῶν not πολιτῶν (most mss)
17.5 adding parentheses round καί μὴν . . . ὡπλίσθη
18.2 reading πάντως not πάντες (Hude, Alberti)
25.2 adding ὧν after Ἀθηναίων and placing the parenthesis or commas around ὧν ἔσεσθαι . . . δοκῶσι (Dover, Alberti)

31 some start chapter 31 three sentences later at παρασκευή (Smith), perhaps more logically; some of the starting points for the numbered sections in 31 also seem odd
31.1 transposing the comma from after ἑώρων to after ὄψει (Dover)
31.1 reading αὕτη ἡ πρώτη (Dobree, Dover)
37.1 adding a comma after παρασκευὴν (Smith)
38.4 reading πείθων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα μηχανωμένους κολάζειν (Weil, Dover)
40.1 break as Alberti (the OCT starts this chapter a sentence later at ἀλλ' ἤτοι)
40.1 reading ὥνπερ for ἥπερ (Dover, Alberti, Hornblower)
49.4 reading ἐφορμισθέντας for ἐφορμηθέντας (Schaefer, Dover)
54.5 reading ἐπαχθεῖς ἦσαν . . . κατεστήσαντο for ἐπαχθὴς ἦν . . . κατεστήσατο (Hude, Hornblower)
62.5 reading περιέπεμψαν for περιέπλευσαν (one ms, Dover)
69.3 reading ξυνκαταστρεψάμενοι and ὑπακούσονται (one ms, Dover)
82.2 deleting αὐτῶν after ἥκιστα (Herwerden, Dover, Alberti)
87.4 reading ἀδεὲς for ἀδεεῖ (Reiske, Dover, Alberti)
88.4 reading οὐ πολλοὶ not οἱ πολλοὶ (Canter, Dover)
88.6 reading πλινθεῖα not πλινθία (Dover, following a scholiast)
89.6 inserting μέγιστα ἠδίκημαι after ὅσῳ καὶ (Dover, after Valla)
97.1 deleting τῇ ἐπιγιγνομένῃ . . . καὶ (Dover, after Krüger)
104.2 reading κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρός ποτε πολιτείαν for καὶ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἀνανεωσάμενος πολιτείαν (various mss, Dover)

Book VII

1.3 reading στρατιᾷ for πανστρατιᾷ (most mss, Dover)
2.4 deleting τοῦ κύκλου after ἄλλῳ (Dover, Alberti)
7.1 deleting μέχρι (Dover, Alberti)
7.3 reading ὁπωσοῦν for ὅπως ἂν (Hude, Dover, Alberti)
13.2 deleting the second τῶν after ναυτῶν (Dover, Alberti, though Hornblower defends it)
16.2 restoring καὶ ἑκατὸν, which is bracketed in the OCT (Dover, Alberti, Hornblower)
27.4 omitting ἴσης (Alberti); but there may well be some larger corruption of the text
27.5 omitting τὸ between τούτων and πολὺ (most mss, Alberti)
28.2 reading που for ποιούμενοι (one ms, Dover)
31.4 deleting τὸν πόλεμον (Madvig, Dover, Alberti)
42.1 deleting μάλιστα (one ms, Erbse)
48.3 deleting αὐτῶν after σφῶν (Dover)
49.2 reading αὐτοὺς not αὐτοῦ (mss, Dover, Alberti)

50.4 adding ἀποπλεῖν after μελλήσασι (Clausen, Steup)
70.2 deleting ἄλλοι after δὲ οἱ (ms B, Dover, Alberti)
70.7 transposing the comma from after αὖθις to after ποτε (Dover)
75.4 reading πολλῶν for ὀλίγων (Valla, Dover, Alberti)
75.5 deleting ὑπὸ τοῖς ὅπλοις (ms C, Smith)
76 reading αἰεί τι μᾶλλον for ἔτι μᾶλλον (Weidgen, Dover, Alberti)

Book VIII

10.1 inserting αἱ σπονδαί after γάρ in the parenthesis (Andrewes, Alberti)
15.2 inserting δέκα after ἑτέρας δὲ (Stahl, Andrewes)
22.1 reading παρόντων not παρόντες (Wilhamowitz, Alberti); this makes more sense of the contextual references, though it strains the word order and suggests other possible textual changes, as Andrewes notes (Gomme III, pp. 49–50).
23.4 reading ἀποστήσας, καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ νεῶν ὁπλίσας πέζῃ παραπέμπει (Powell, Alberti)
23.5 deleting πεζὸν (all mss except B, Andrewes)
24.3 reading Βολίσσῳ for Βολίσκῳ (Alberti, Hornblower)
27.2 restoring ἔξεστιν which is bracketed in the OCT (Andrewes, Alberti)
38.3 I have followed the OCT text of ὀλίγους (also Dobree, Goodhart and Alberti), but the mss have ὀλίγον (see Hornblower)
39.3 reading προσέβαλλον for προσέβαλον (one ms, Alberti, Hornblower)
46.3 restoring τῶν βαρβάρων, which the OCT brackets (most mss, Valla, Alberti), and replacing the second μὴ with πῃ (Goodhart, Hornblower)
48.1 reading περιποιήσεσθαι for περιποιήσειν (Andrewes)
48.5 reading ὑποσχήσεσθαι for ὑπεσχῆσθαι (Böhme, Hornblower, despite Andrewes' objection)
49.2 reading του for τοῦ (Goodhart)
49.3 omitting κοινοῦσθηαι (as most mss, but Goodhart retains)
56.4 reading ἐνταῦθα δὴ οὐκέτι, ἀλλ' ἄπορα νομίσαντες; that is, accepting the text as it stands without the ellipsis in the OCT (Alberti, Hornblower), though some authorities suspect some missing text and also start with a new section break [5] here
65.2 repunctuating to remove the commas after ἀμφότερα and after χαριεῖσθαι (Andrewes)
65.3 reading προσείργαστο for προείργαστο (several mss, Goodhart, Andrewes)
68.2 omitting the text from μετέστη to κατέστη, which is clearly corrupt in some way (Andrewes, Alberti), though Goodhart suggests a possible reconstruction

74.4 reading Θράσυλλος not Θράσυλος here and elsewhere (Alberti, Hornblower)
82.1 replacing τε with γε (Stahl, Alberti; but see also Goodhart)
87.4 adding ἂν after διαπολμῆσαι (Dobree, Goodhart)
88.9 restoring πεμπτοὺς, which the OCT deletes (Alberti)
89.2 deleting στρατηγῶν τῶν (Hornblower, but see also Andrewes)
89.2 reading ᾤοντο ἀπαλλαξείεν τοῦ ἄγαν ἐς ὀλίγους οἰκεῖν (Hornblower, from various sources)
92.6 deleting πλὴν (Steup, Andrewes, Alberti)
99 restoring ὅτε ἐπὶ τὴν Ἄσπενδον παρήει, which the OCT brackets (Andrewes, Alberti)
100.5 reading καὶ αἱ Μηθυμναῖαι (one ms, Alberti) and omitting πέντε, which is bracketed by the OCT
101.1 restoring οὐ, which the OCT brackets (Hacke, Andrewes)

APPENDIX 2

Thucydides in the ancient world: a selection of texts

This is a selection of texts from the ancient world commenting directly on Thucydides' life and work. There exist two extended treatments – by Dionysius (mainly on his style) and 'Marcellinus' (mainly on his life) – but it is perhaps surprising how few other direct sources of this kind there are, given Thucydides' great celebrity and influence.[1]

Cicero (106–43 BC). Roman orator, statesman and philosopher. He played an active part in Roman politics before the death of Caesar, delivered many important political speeches and wrote major treatises on rhetoric and philosophy.

Brutus. A study of the history of oratory, cast in the form of a dialogue.

Cicero is describing the origins of the art of oratory in Greece, and in particular in Athens:

(1) It was in that city that the orator first came into prominence and where oratory began to be committed to written records. But before Pericles, who is credited with some writings, and Thucydides – who belong not to the infancy of Athens but to her maturity – there is not a single example of the

[1] See Hobbes, 'Of the Life and History of Thucydides' in the introduction to his translation for a general survey with some quotations, and J. R. Rusten (ed.), *Thucydides*, pp. 2, 25–6 and 496–8 for a bibliography of some primary and secondary sources.

written word that shows any degree of elaboration at all or looks like the work of a real orator. [He then mentions various earlier figures famous for their eloquence] . . . And after them came Pericles, who excelled in every way but was especially renowned for this ability. We also know that in the same period Cleon, for all the trouble he caused as a citizen, was a man of eloquence. Among his near contemporaries were Alcibiades, Critias and Theramenes, and it is from the writings of Thucydides that one can best understand the style of speaking that flourished at that time: these were impressive in their choice of words, full of wise sayings, and so concise through their compression of material as to be sometimes obscure. (*Brutus* 26–29)

He asks who are the greatest writers in Attic (Greek):

(2) 'Thucydides is the one to imitate.' Certainly he is, if you are thinking of writing history, but not if you are pleading a legal case. For Thucydides was a narrator of events and actions – and was honest and even sublime; but this forensic kind of speech with its judicial wrangling he never practised. As for the speeches he included – and there are many of them – I have nothing but praise for these; but I could never imitate them even if I wished, nor perhaps would I wish to if I could. It is like the case of someone fond of Falernian wine, but who wants it neither as new as last year's vintage, nor as old as the classic ones of the past. 'But are these not recognised to be the best?' So I believe, but too old a wine lacks the mellowness we are looking for – indeed it is scarcely tolerable. 'But if that's his response and he still wants a drink should he think of drawing it from a new cask?' Not at all; he should look for wine of a certain age. In the same way, I take the view that these people should shun this new oratory, still fermenting in the vat; but they should not strive to imitate the style of Thucydides either, splendid though it is but of too old a vintage. Indeed, Thucydides himself, had he lived at a later time, would have been of a better age and more gentle. (*Brutus* 287–8)

De Oratore. An analysis of the functions and methods of oratory, cast in the form of a dialogue.

He contrasts attitudes to oratory and its applications in Greece and Rome:

(3) For none of our people cultivates eloquence except for reasons of display at the bar or in the forum; whereas in Greece the most eloquent men had no role in forensic advocacy but applied themselves to more reputable studies, and in particular to the writing of history. Indeed, we understand that even the famous Herodotus, who was the first to give distinction to this field, was not at all concerned with lawsuits; and yet his eloquence is such that I at any rate take the greatest pleasure in it (to the extent that I can understand written Greek, that is). And after him, in my judgement, Thucydides easily

surpasses everyone else in dexterity of composition: so rich is the material at his disposal that he has almost as many ideas as words, and moreover he is so precise and exact in his language that you cannot be sure whether it is the subject that is illuminated by the style or the words by the ideas. But even in his case, although he was a man of affairs, we do not think of him in the category of those who plead causes; and we are told he wrote the books in question when far removed from political life, having been driven into exile – the common fate of anyone outstanding at Athens. (*De Oratore* II. xiii. 55–6)

Every age produces its own style of oratory, and the Greeks provide a written record with which others can be compared:

(4) Just about the earliest of whom we have actual written records are Pericles and Alcibiades, along with Thucydides from the same generation – all of them subtle, sharp, terse and more prolific in ideas than words. After them came Critias, Theramenes and Lysias. There are many surviving writings of Lysias, and a few of Critias, but Theramenes is just a name to us. All these could never have achieved such a unity of style had they not had one model in mind to imitate: they all retained the particular vigour of Pericles but their texture was a little richer. (*De Oratore* II. xxii. 93)

Orator. A sketch of the 'ideal orator' and his skills.

He contrasts different styles of Greek oratory. Lysias could hold his own in the law-courts, but Thucydides is very different.

(5) Thucydides, on the other hand, describes the events of history and wars and battles – all with great good sense and dignity, but none of this can be applied to the law-courts or public life. These famous speeches contain so many obscure and impenetrable sentences as to be scarcely intelligible, which is a cardinal sin in a public oration . . . Indeed, what Greek teacher of rhetoric ever followed Thucydides' example in anything? He is praised by everyone, of course. That I grant you, but it is as a commentator on events – intelligent, serious and weighty – a man to describe wars in narrative history, not one to manage cases in law-courts. Consequently, he has never been classed as an orator; nor, truth be told, would his name be so well known if he had not written his history, although he had been signally honoured with public office and was of noble birth. No one, however, can imitate the gravitas of his language and opinions, but when they have uttered a few mangled, incoherent phrases (which they could have managed well enough without a teacher) each thinks he is a proper Thucydides. (*Orator* 30–32)

He criticises the over-elaborate style of various teachers of rhetoric like Gorgias and Thrasymachus and compares them with Herodotus and Thucydides:

(6) Herodotus and Thucydides therefore are all the more admirable because although contemporary with those I have just mentioned they have no part at all in such tricks – or rather, I should say, absurdities. Herodotus flows along like a peaceful, unruffled stream, while Thucydides is more energised and in his description of warfare sounds a more warlike note, as it were. (*Orator* 39)

Diodorus Siculus (Diodorus the 'Sicilian', *fl.* about 50–30 BC). A Greek author, who settled in Rome about 55 BC, completing his 'universal history' in about 30 BC and drawing on Latin as well as Greek sources.

Bibliotheke ('Library'). A huge history from mythological times to 60 BC, published in forty books of which only fifteen survive (covering the period 480–302).

(7) Thucydides the Athenian began his history at this point [the siege of Potidaea in 432] and wrote the war[1] that took place between the Athenians and Lacedaemonians (which has been called the 'Peloponnesian' war[2]). This war lasted twenty-seven years, but Thucydides wrote twenty-two years of it in eight books (or, as some say, nine). (XII 37.2)

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*fl. c.*30 BC). Historian and literary critic, writing in Greek. His major work was on the early history of Rome but he is best remembered now for his 'rhetorical writings', which include several critical essays on Thucydides.

'Letter to Pompeius'. The first part of this 'literary letter' is about the style of Plato, and he then goes on to compare Herodotus and Thucydides as historians. He makes some very flat-footed criticisms of Thucydides' choice of subject-matter, complaining that it is unpatriotic and inappropriate to deal with a war that casts Athens and the Greeks in such a bad light.[3] The historian must in the first place pick the right theme:

(8) The first and, one might say, most necessary task for writers of all kinds of history[4] is to choose a noble subject and one pleasing to their readers.

[1] Diodorus has the same expression 'wrote the war' that Thucydides uses in the first sentence of his history (see I 1n).

[2] This and the reference in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (17 below) seem to be the first mentions of this title anywhere (some 350 years after Thucydides); but note that Plutarch, writing later still in 'On Exile' 605c, quotes the first line of the text as the title (which is the title I have used too).

[3] Hobbes was sufficiently irritated by this to say, 'I think there was never written so much absurdity in so few lines' (from 'Of the life and history of Thucydides'). See W. K. Pritchett, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: on Thucydides* (University of California Press, 1975), pp. xxii–xxvi, for an anthology of other dismissive comments of this kind and also some more sympathetic ones.

[4] *Historia*, a word Herodotus uses of his work but Thucydides does not.

In this respect Herodotus seems to me to have been more successful than Thucydides. He has produced a general history of the Greek and barbarian world 'so that human events of the past do not become erased by time and that the achievements . . . ', to quote his own words. And this same introductory remark defines both the start and the end purpose of his work. Thucydides, however, writes the story of a single war, and one that was neither glorious nor fortunate. It would have been best that it never happened, but failing that it should have been consigned to silence and oblivion and ignored by posterity. Indeed Thucydides himself makes it clear in his own introduction that he has chosen a bad subject. He says that many Greek cities were devastated by the war, some by barbarians, others by Greeks themselves, and there were more mass expulsions and massacres than ever before, and more earthquakes, droughts, plagues and a multitude of other disasters. The consequence is that readers of this introduction are alienated from the subject, since the affairs we are about to hear about are Greek ones. The superiority of Herodotus' judgement to that of Thucydides in his choice of subject-matter is directly related to the superiority of the story of the wonderful deeds of the Greeks and barbarians to that of the pitiable and terrible sufferings of the Greeks. ('Letter to Pompeius' 768)

And he must then start at the right point:

(9) Thucydides takes as his starting point the time when the affairs of Greece went into decline. This was quite inappropriate for one who was a Greek and an Athenian (and that too by no means a social outcast but one whom the Athenians counted among the foremost of those deserving high command and other honours). Such is his spite that he even saddles his own city with overt responsibility for the war though he could have attributed the causes to many other sources. ('Letter to Pompeius' 770)

He ascribes Thucydides' attitude to prejudice:

(10) Herodotus' attitude is fair-minded throughout, expressing a sympathetic pleasure at good outcomes and distress at bad ones. Thucydides on the other hand has a harsh and bitter attitude, bearing a grudge against his native city because of his exile. He sets out her failings in great detail but when things go according to plan he makes no mention of it, or only does so like a man forced into it. ('Letter to Pompeius' 773)

Dionysius does, however, go on to make some more interesting comments about their different styles:

(11) Thucydides is better at portraying the emotions, while Herodotus is cleverer in representing character. Next come the qualities that exhibit grandeur and impact in composition, and in these respects the two authors

are equal. Then come the qualities encompassing force, intensity and similar powers of expression, and in these Thucydides is superior to Herodotus. But in qualities that engender pleasure, persuasion, delight and the like Herodotus has much more to offer than Thucydides. In his choice of style Herodotus aims at what is natural and Thucydides aims at effect. Of all literary virtues the pre-eminent one is appropriateness, and Herodotus is more sensitive to this than is Thucydides, whose style is uniform in every context –even more so in his speeches than in his narrative. Like me, however, my friend Caecilius thinks that Thucydides' modes of argumentation have been imitated and emulated to a high degree by Demosthenes. To sum up, I would say that the literary compositions (and I would not shrink from calling them that) of both men are beautiful, and the chief point of difference between them is that in Herodotus the beauty is charming while in Thucydides it is terrifying. ('Letter to Pompeius' 776–7)

'On Thucydides' is an extended essay on Thucydides' strengths and weaknesses as a writer, with many long quotations and examples, which are then subjected to detailed practical criticism. He starts with a paraphrase of Thucydides' own statement on intent in Book I:

(12) Thucydides followed on from these [other historians] and did not want to base his history on just one place, as Hellanicus and his school had done, nor to follow Herodotus and bring together in a single history the achievements of the Greeks and barbarians throughout the whole world. He scorned the former as too paltry and modest a project– and one incapable of offering his readers much benefit. The latter, on the other hand, he thought too large a subject for the human mind to comprehend in any really detailed treatment. He therefore selected one war, the one which the Athenians and Peloponnesians waged with each other, and applied himself to writing a record of that. He remained healthy in body and sound of mind and lived to see the end of the war; and he composed his account of the action not from such second-hand reports as came to hand but from his own direct experience of those events at which he was present, while he learned about those events from which he was excluded by his exile from whatever sources were the best informed. The first difference, then, between him and previous writers was in choosing a subject that was neither completely on one theme nor divided up into many unconnected topics; and the second was that he did not introduce into his work any material from the realms of fable and he did not distort what he wrote for the deception or indulgence of the many, as all his predecessors had done . . . ('On Thucydides' 6)

He then discusses the structure and arrangement of Thucydides' work:

(13) I will begin with the division of material and say by way of introduction that whereas earlier historians had provided readily intelligible accounts subdivided either by place or by time Thucydides adopted neither of these principles. He based his exposition not on the places in which the action occurred, as Herodotus, Hellanicus and some of his other predecessors had done; nor on the time they occurred, as those who published local histories preferred (dividing their accounts either by the accession of kings or priests, or by the cycles of Olympiads, or by the appointments of officials to annual posts).[1] He wanted to follow a path that was new and untrodden by others and so divided his history by summer and winter seasons. But the result of this was the opposite of what he expected. The chronological division by seasons was in fact not clearer but harder to follow, and one wonders how he could have failed to realise that where many events are taking place simultaneously in many different places a narrative broken up into tiny sections will not reflect that 'pure light which shines from afar',[2] as is evident from what actually happens in practice. ('On Thucydides' 9)

And he then goes on to questions of style:

(14) Coming after this man [Herodotus] and the others I mentioned before and recognising their various qualities, Thucydides was eager to be the first to introduce into historical work an individual style the others had all disregarded. In the choice of vocabulary he gave preference to what was figurative, obscure, archaic and foreign over the common words in standard use among his contemporaries. In constructing both shorter and longer segments of text he chose what was more dignified and austere, what was robust and steady, and what was jarring to the ear through the choice of grating letters, in preference to what was clear, soft and polished and free from discordant sounds. He was especially keen to outdo his predecessors in the matter of formal arrangement,[3] to which he devoted great attention. At any rate, for the whole twenty-seven year period of the war, from its start to its end, he continued revising his eight books, which are all that he left behind, honing and reworking each individual element of expression . . .

In his argumentation and trains of thought there are many parenthetical insertions that delay the delivery of the conclusion for a long time, and there are features that are tortuous, over-complicated, difficult to disentangle and the like. One also finds in his work a number of forms of speech used for theatrical displays – I mean the kind of parallel clauses, assonances and antitheses that are used to excess by Gorgias of Leontini, by Polus and Lycymnius and their followers and by many others of his contemporaries. But the most

[1] See II 1n and pp. lviii–lix.

[2] The quotation is perhaps based on Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 3.75.

[3] Literally 'figures of speech', but in a more general sense than the English expression.

obvious and distinctive of his characteristics is his attempt to convey as much as possible in the fewest number of words and to compress many ideas into one, leaving the listener still expecting to hear something further, with the result that his brevity becomes obscurity. In summary, there are four basic instruments, as it were, of Thucydides' style: inventiveness of vocabulary, diversity of formal structures, discordant composition and rapidity of signifying meanings. The complexion of his style is characterised by density, compression, pungency, severity, gravity, the power to shock and frighten, and above all emotional effect. These are the distinguishing characteristics of Thucydides' style compared with that of others. ('On Thucydides' 24).

In his assessment of particular speeches in Thucydides, however, Dionysius does pick out two for special praise, both of which involve the Plataeans. In both cases he is presumably very sympathetic to the content as well as the style of presentation (and is by contrast very critical of such other famous passages as the crisis at Corcyra (III 82–84) and the Melian debate (V 85–113)). The first is the exchange between the Plataeans and Archidamus at II 71–2:

[15] He assigns speeches to both sides of the kind they might well have made – suited to their characters and relevant to the context, neither understated nor overdone. He has enhanced them with a diction that is pure and clear and concise, and has all the other virtues too; and the arrangement is so harmonious that [lacuna] it stands comparison with the most delightful compositions. ('On Thucydides' 36)

The second is the defence of the Plataeans at III 58–59:

[16] Of all the speeches presented in the seven books[1] I most admire the defence of the Plataeans, particularly because there is nothing tortured or over-elaborate about it but it is adorned with an authentic and natural colouring. The arguments are full of feeling and the language does not distract the listener. The composition is well-expressed and the forms of speech are appropriate. These are the models in Thucydides' work for historians to imitate. ('On Thucydides' 42)

His summary of his views is as follows:

[17] So to those who think that only the well-educated are qualified to read and understand Thucydides' language, I have this to say. They are thereby removing from the common currency of life what is essential and of universal value (since nothing could be more essential or more widely beneficial); they are restricting it to a small minority, as in oligarchical or tyrannical forms

[1] Only the first seven books have direct speeches, though the eighth has many reported speeches. See synopsis of speeches, pp. 623–7.

of government. The number of people who can understand the whole of Thucydides are easily counted, and even these cannot understand some parts of it without a grammatical commentary.

And to those who would relate Thucydides' language to its historical context and assert that it would have been familiar to his contemporaries, a short and obvious response will suffice. Of the many orators and philosophers who lived at Athens during the time of the Peloponnesian War none used this kind of language – neither Andocides, Antiphon, Lysias and their fellow orators, nor the Socratic schools of Critias, Antisthenes or Xenophon. It is clear from all this that Thucydides was the first to practise this style of expression, in order to distinguish himself from the other historians. When he employs it in a controlled and moderate way he is marvellous and in a class of his own; but when he uses it to excess and indiscriminately, is insensitive to context and disregards due measure, then he is to be censured.

For myself, I would not want to see a historical treatise written in an arid, unadorned and commonplace style, but it should have a touch of the poetic about it. Yet neither should it be altogether poetical, but should transcend the ordinary just a little. Excess is off-putting even in the most agreeable things, while moderation is beneficial in every situation. ('On Thucydides' 51)

Quintilian (AD *c.*35–96). Roman orator and author of works on rhetoric and grammar.

Institutio Oratoria. A manual of 'training in oratory'.

(18) There have been many distinguished writers of history but no one disputes that there are two who stand out from the rest, and their different qualities have won each of them almost equal praise. Thucydides is condensed, terse and always forcing himself; Herodotus is sweet, clear and fluent. Thucydides is better at the more intense emotions, Herodotus at the more relaxed ones; Thucydides at set speeches, Herodotus at conversations. (*Inst. Orat.* X 1.73–74)

Plutarch (AD *c.*50–120). Prolific Greek author, widely travelled and well-connected. He was a biographer and essayist, whose main works are collected in two large compilations as: the *Lives* of famous Greek and Roman figures, which derived much of their material from Thucydides and other earlier historians; and the *Moralia*, a very varied set of essays, not all of them on 'ethical' topics.

'The Fame of the Athenians'. Included in the *Moralia* under the full title 'Whether the Athenians were more famous in War or in Wisdom'.

(19) Simonides calls painting 'silent poetry' and poetry 'talking pictures'. For the actions that painters portray while they are going on, literature

describes and records after they have taken place. And although artists use colour and form, and writers use words and phrases to represent the same things, it is only in their medium and mode of imitation that they differ, and both have one and the same end; so the most effective historian is the one who makes a painting[1] of his narrative through the emotions and characters he portrays. Certainly, Thucydides is always striving for these visual effects in his work, avid to make the reader a spectator,[2] as it were, and to engender in readers the same emotions of consternation and disturbance felt by those who actually witnessed the events. (*Moralia* 346f–347a)

Plutarch goes on to give as examples of particularly vivid reportage: the battle on the beach at Pylos in IV 10–12 and the portrayal of the physical effects of fear in the Sicilian Expedition at VII 71.

Cimon. One of the parallel lives, paired with Lucullus.

(20) Cimon son of Miltiades had a mother called Hegesipyle, who was a woman of Thracian descent, the daughter of Olorus, as it is related in the poems of Archelaus and Melanthius, which were addressed to Cimon himself. That explains how the historian Thucydides (who was connected by birth with the family of Cimon) came to have a father called Olorus who traced his name back to their common ancestor; and this also explains how Thucydides also came to have acquired gold mines in Thrace. And it is said that Thucydides met his end in Skapte Hyle (a place in Thrace), having been murdered there; his remains were brought to Attica and his tomb is displayed among those of Cimon's family right next to the tomb of Elpinice, Cimon's sister. But Thucydides belonged to the deme of Halimous, while the family of Miltiades belonged to that of Laciadae. (IV 1–2)

Pausanias (*fl*. about AD 150). He probably came from Asia Minor but travelled extensively in Greece and wrote in Greek. His *Periegesis* ('Descriptive guide') gave its name to a genre of 'periegetic literature', now mostly lost to us.

Guide to Greece. A survey of the topography and monuments of Greece in ten books, which became a standard travel guide.

He is here describing the monuments on the Acropolis in Athens:

(21) As for the statues that stand behind the horse, Critias made the image of Epicharinus, who trained for the foot-race in armour, while Oenobius is the man who performed a kind service for Thucydides. Oenobius secured

[1] *graphe* means 'painting', that is 'something drawn'; but also it also means 'writing'.
[2] An analogy later reused (with acknowledgement) by Hobbes in the preface to his translation (quoted in the introduction p. xvii).

the vote to let Thucydides return to Athens from exile; he was treacherously murdered on his way home and there is a memorial to him not far from the Melitide gate. (I.23.11)

Lucian (born about AD 120). Essayist, wit and bellettrist, writing in Greek (probably his second language, his first being Aramaic) and in a great variety of styles and forms, including mock-tragic verse, philosophical dialogues, satires, parodies, biographies and critical essays.

'How to write history'. An essay which starts by condemning the many unsatisfactory 'histories' rushed out in the immediate aftermath of the Parthian War of 162–6; he then goes on to discuss the writing of history more generally and stresses the importance of honesty and objectivity and of finding an appropriate style.

(22) This is the sort of person a historian should be – fearless, incorruptible, free, a friend to outspokenness and truth; someone, as the comic poet says, who will call a fig a fig and a trough a trough; indulging neither hatred nor friendship, and feeling neither pity nor shame nor embarrassment; an impartial judge, well-disposed to everyone – short of allowing anyone more than their due; in his writing a stranger to others and a man without a city – independent, subject to no king, never calculating what this or that person might think, but telling it as it happened. Thucydides establishes this rule very well and made a clear distinction between the right and wrong way to write, when he saw that Herodotus was so much admired that his books were named after the muses.

Thucydides says he is writing a possession for all time rather than a competition-piece for the present, and that he rejects the stories of myth but wants to leave behind for posterity a true account of what happened. He also raises the question of utility and the end purpose of history as any sensible person would see it: that is, if anyone is ever again faced with a similar situation they may be able, he says, to look at the writings of the past to deal appropriately with the present now confronting them. (42)

(23) Certainly Thucydides himself makes little use of this mode of expression [verbosity] – see how quickly he goes on from explaining a siege-engine, or showing the necessary and best ways of conducting a siege, or setting out the plan of Epipolae or of the harbour at Syracuse. And when he describes the plague at some length and seems to be getting long-winded you must reflect on the facts of the case and you will realise how fast-moving he actually is and how all the many details seize hold of him as he does his best to escape. (57)

Marcellinus (maybe seventh-century AD). Named as the author of a Greek 'Life of Thucydides', which is probably a composite work derived from at

least three other earlier authors and contains much repetitious anecdotal material that is inconsistent and unreliable but became an important part of the later tradition. The work shows a close familiarity with the writings of Dionysius (**8–17** above).

The 'Life of Thucydides' is divided into fifty-eight sections in the standard Oxford Classical Text and I have excerpted those sections that deal particularly with Thucydides' style. Since the material is not generally available I have very briefly summarised the parts I do not translate.[1]

(24) For those who are devotees of the divine speeches and debates in [1] Demosthenes and who have become imbued with deliberative and judicial ideas and are sufficiently well-versed in them, it is time now to penetrate the mysteries of Thucydides. He was a man excelling in skills and in the beauty of his use of words, in the precision of his facts, and in subjects military, deliberative and panegyric. But first it is necessary to speak of the man's family background and life, since sensible people should study these things before looking at what he said.

Thucydides the historian, then, was born to a father called Olorus, who was [2] named after Olorus, king of the Thracians, and to a mother called Hegesipyle, and he was a descendant of the most distinguished generals – I speak here of Miltiades and Cimon. For he was distantly related to Miltiades the general and through him to Aeacus son of Zeus. The historian can thus proudly lay claim to a line of descent from on high. (1–2)

There is next a rambling account of the early history of Miltiades and his family connections (3–18), and Marcellinus then resumes with Thucydides:

(25) Thucydides married a woman from Scapte Hyla in Thrace, who was [19] very wealthy and owned mines there. Having come by this wealth, however, [20] Thucydides did not consume it on luxuries. But sensing the stirrings of the conflict to come before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War he determined to become its author and gave much of the money to soldiers from Athens and Sparta and to many others to get them to tell him, as the prospective author, what was being said and done in the course of this war as it happened. One might ask why he gave money to the Spartans and others when he could [21] have just given it to the Athenians and got his information from them. I would answer that his payment to these other parties was quite deliberate – his

[1] The texts of the 'Marcellinus' and the 'Anon' in the next entry are printed together in the standard OCT of Thucydides, volume I (1942) and there is an Italian edition of them both by L. Piccirilli (ed.), *Storie dello storico Tucidide* (Il Melangolo Università, 1985). For the historical and literary background see the article by J. Maitland, 'Marcellinus' Life of Thucydides: criticism and criteria in the ancient biographical tradition', *CQ* **46** (1996), pp. 538–58.

purpose was to write the truth about these affairs, and the likelihood was that the Athenians would give false reports to serve their own interests and would often claim 'we won' when they hadn't. He therefore paid money to everyone, hoping to hunt down and capture the truth from the chorus of many voices; for what is unclear can be teased out of the harmony of many voices in chorus.

His teachers were Anaxagoras in philosophy (in which, according to Antyl- [22]
lus, Thucydides came to be thought of as mildly atheistical, having drunk deep at that well of speculation) and the orator Antiphon, a man notably skilled in rhetoric, whom he mentions in his eighth book as the man responsible for the dissolution of the democracy and the establishment of the 400.[1] After Antiphon's death the Athenians took their revenge on him by throwing his body outside the city, a fact that Thucydides passes over in silence in deference to his teacher. [It is said that the Athenians threw Antiphon's body out of the city as the man responsible for the change from the democracy.][2]

When our author came of age he took no part in political life nor did he take [23]
the stand at the assembly, but he became a general, so assuming an office that proved to be the beginning of his troubles since it led directly to his exile. He was sent to Amphipolis, but when Brasidas got there first and captured the city Thucydides was held responsible; despite the fact that his efforts were not entirely without value to the Athenians, since although he failed over Amphipolis he did take Eion, the city by the River Strymon.[3] Nonetheless the Athenians interpreted the first misfortune as a failure on his part and exiled him.

After his exile he lived on Aegina and invested much of his capital in [24]
money-lending, as a man of his wealth could do. But he left there too and [25]
went to Scapte Hyle in Thrace where he spent his time writing under a plane tree. We should discount the report of Timaeus, who said that after being exiled he went to live in Italy. Nor did he write in a spirit of malice towards the [26]
Athenians, but as a lover of truth and a man of moderate disposition. Indeed neither Cleon nor Brasidas, who was the cause of his misfortune, comes in for any abuse at his hands, as they would have if the historian had been enraged. Yet most writers let their feelings influence their work, with little or no regard [27]
for the truth. (19–27)

Marcellinus compares other writers unfavourably in this respect and then digresses about some other people called Thucydides and retails some gossipy reports about the circumstances of the historian's death (28–33).

[1] See VIII 68.1–2.
[2] The words in square brackets are regarded as doubtfully part of the original text.
[3] See IV 104–7.

(26) He is said to have had the following physical appearance: a thoughtful [34]
face, a pointed head with spiky hair, and a general bearing in keeping with his writing. His life came to an end after his fiftieth year, and before he had brought his history to its appointed end.

Thucydides took Homer as his model in terms of general arrangement, and [35]
Pindar in terms of his grand and elevated style, but he was himself deliberately obscure, not wishing to be accessible to everyone or to cheapen his reputation by being easily understood by any casual reader; rather, he wanted the esteem and admiration of the real intelligentsia. For the man who is praised by the best and wins a reputation based on discriminating assessment achieves a stamp of approval that lasts for all time and is in no danger of being erased by
later criticisms. According to Antyllus, he also imitated Gorgias of Leontini in [36]
his balanced clauses and verbal antitheses, which were the fashion in Greece at that time; and he imitated Prodicus of Ceos in the precision of his use of
words. But most of all, as I said, he modelled himself on Homer – in the [37]
choice of words, the exactness of composition, the power of his exposition and his beauty and pace.

The authors and historians who preceded him produced writings that were [38]
lifeless and employed only a bare form of narrative throughout, not putting words into the mouths of their characters nor presenting political speeches. Herodotus was an exception who made efforts in this direction, but he was unable to carry it through – he does compose some short lines of direct speech, but more for characterisation than to represent political speeches. It was our author who invented political speeches and articulated them so fully with summary headings and subdivisions that the speeches have a systematic basis,[1] which is the mark of a perfectly formed speech.

Of the three kinds of literary style – the elevated, the plain and the inter- [39]
mediate – Thucydides rejected the last two and chose the elevated style as the one best suited to his own nature and to the scale of such a war. Where the deeds are great ones one needs the appropriate words to match them.

If you want to know about the other styles, you should be aware that [40]
Herodotus used the intermediate form, which is neither elevated nor plain,
and Xenophon used the plain form. In keeping with his elevated style Thucy- [41]
dides often employed poetical expressions and some metaphors. Indeed some people have ventured to say about his work as a whole that the writing is not rhetorical but poetic. Yet it is evident that this is not a work of poetry from the fact that it is not set out in metre. And if anyone objects that not all prose is rhetorical – for example, the works of Plato and the medical writers,

[1] A rather free interpretation of this puzzling phrase. Literally it is, 'so that the speeches actually fall under the *stasis* (basis/standing/position)'. See Quintilian III 6.1–22 for a lengthy discussion of *stasis* and its Latin equivalent, *status*. Perhaps the basic point here and at 41 below is that his prose had the *structure* of rhetoric.

I reply that his history is divided by headings and is so brought into the category of rhetoric. Historical writing as a whole belongs to the category of the [42] deliberative (though some say it should be categorised as panegyric, pointing to his encomium on war heroes), but Thucydides exceptionally comes into all three classes: deliberative, in all the political debates (except that between the Plataeans and the Thebans in Book III); panegyric, in the funeral speech; and forensic, in the debate between the Plataeans and Thebans, which we distinguished above from the others. In this example, the Spartans present are the jurors delivering the judgement, the Plataean is being judged in the cross-examination and defends himself at length against the line of questioning, while the Theban responds by trying to inflame Spartan opinion against him; and the arrangement of the exchange, the method and the form make it clear that the genre is forensic.

Some say that the eighth book is spurious and not by Thucydides: some [43] attribute it to his daughter and some to Xenophon. I say in response that it is clearly not by his daughter. It is not within a woman's natural capacity to match this level of quality and skill; besides, if there was such a woman she would have had no desire to remain anonymous, nor would she have written only the eighth book but would have left behind a great deal else as evidence of her native talent. Neither could it have come from Xenophon, as the whole style of the work tells us loud and clear, especially the style – for there is a big difference between the plain and the elevated style. And it is certainly not by Theopompus, as some claim. Others, and these the more discriminating, think [44] that it is indeed the work of Thucydides, though not particularly polished but hammered out roughly and full of summary accounts that could have been smoothed and amplified; and from this I conclude that it is a weaker and abbreviated piece of writing, inasmuch as he seems to have put it together when he was unwell. When the body is in a somewhat weakened state one's intellectual powers are likely to slacken too, since there is a certain sympathy between intellect and body.

He died in Thrace, after the Peloponnesian War ended, while writing the [45] events of the twenty-first year. The war itself lasted 27 years and the account of the events of the further six years was completed by Theopompus and by Xenophon, who continued the history in his *Hellenica*.

Marcellinus goes on to repeat the story of Thucydides' exile in Thrace (46–7), and in 48–9 he gives a superficial and not wholly accurate summary of Thucydides' historical principles (as set out at I 21–22).

He then praises his character portrayal and descriptive powers:

(27) That is how he treats mythical material, but he is clever at portraying [50] character, and though he is clear in individual sections he sometimes seems obscure in his general composition as a result of his compressed expression.

He has a style that is very grave and grand. The composition is full of roughness, dense, given to transpositions and sometimes obscure. The compressions are remarkable and there are more thoughts than words. His deployment of [51] memorable sayings[1] is especially commendable. He is very powerful in his narration when he is describing sea battles, sieges, plague and civil disturbance. He is versatile in his use of rhetorical figures, for the most part imitating Gorgias of Leontini, rapid in the signification of meanings, pungent in his severity, and a supreme artist in his representation of character. You will see portrayed in his work the proud spirit of Pericles and something about Cleon that defies comment, the youthful qualities of Alcibiades, [everything about] Themistocles, in the case of Nicias his excellence, his god-fearing nature and his good fortune up to the time of Sicily, and much else besides, which I shall try to examine item by item.

This promise is not fulfilled but instead he makes some miscellaneous comments on Thucydides' use of the early Attic dialect and spelling (52) and his style (53), followed by the famous anecdote about his encounter with Herodotus:

(28) He was evidently alive in Herodotus' time since the latter does mention [54] the Theban attack on Plataea which Thucydides records in his second book. There is also a story that goes like this. When Herodotus was giving a public reading of his history Thucydides was present in the audience and burst into tears when he heard it. We are told that when Herodotus noticed this he remarked to Olorus, Thucydides' father, 'Olorus, your son has a natural passion for learning.'

He then retails the conflicting stories about his place of burial (55) and there is a final, repetitious summary of his main stylistic habits, including another comparison with Demosthenes (54–7). The concluding section is on the division of the text:

(29) You should be aware that some people divide his history into thir- [58] teen books, others in other ways. Nevertheless, the generally prevailing and majority view has been that the history is divided up into just eight books, as Asclepiades concluded as well.

Anon Another later Greek 'Life' (date uncertain). Like 'Marcellinus' this seems to have been uncritically compiled from a collection of anecdotal material to satisfy the appetite for short biographies of celebrated figures.

[1] *gnomologikon* was the use of *gnomai* or (in Latin) *sententiae* (sayings, maxims) and was thought to be a key skill in rhetoric (see Cicero, *Brutus* 7.29, quoted as part of extract (1) above, 'grandes verbis, crebri sententiis, compressione rerum breves . . . ').

The 'Life of Thucydides' has ten sections. Section (1) describes his family background and (2) is about his teacher, Antiphon, and is followed by a very summary account (3) of the events at Amphipolis which led to his exile.

(30) Having become an exile Thucydides had the leisure to write his history [4]
of the Peloponnesian War and through it seems to have greatly favoured the Spartans, while accusing the Athenians of tyranny and greed. He took whatever opportunity he could to denounce the Athenians – and with the Corinthians offering accusations, the Spartans blame and the Mytilenaeans criticisms, most of his charges flowed in the direction of the men of Attica. He also made much of the victories of the Spartans in what he said and exaggerated the Athenian misfortunes, including those they suffered in Sicily.

Section (5) explains that Xenophon and Theopompus wrote the sequels to Thucydides' unfinished history, and (6) looks like a conflation of biographical anecdotes about another Thucydides (son of Melesias) with some about the historian.

(31) They say that the proem[1] was composed after the writing of the [8]
history, since in it he is recalling things that happened in the war, such as the purification of Delos, which is supposed to have taken place in about the seventh year of the archonship of Euthynus. He even refers in it to 'the end of this war' (in those words). And at the beginning he says, 'This was certainly the greatest ever upheaval among the Greeks, which affected a significant part of the barbarian world too – even, one could say, most of mankind.'

[9] After finishing the eighth book of the history he died from a disease. Those who say the eighth book is not by Thucydides but by some other author are mistaken. After his death in Athens he was buried near to the Melitide gate, in a place known as Koile. Either he returned to Athens from his exile after serving the full term of his sentence and died in his own fatherland, or his bones were conveyed to Athens from Thrace after his death there. One hears both stories. And a memorial pillar has been set up in Koile bearing the inscription, 'Here lies Thucydides son of Olorus of Halimous'.[2]

Souda A massive tenth-century AD Byzantine encyclopaedia (in Greek), with numerous short, derivative biographies.

'Thucydides'. The complete text.

(32) Thucydides son of Olorus, an Athenian, had a son called Timotheus. He was descended on his father's side from the general Miltiades and on his mother's from Olorus King of Thrace. He was a student of Antiphon. He

[1] That is, the 'archaeology' or prehistory in I 2–19.
[2] Halimous is a small deme in Attica, as are Koile and Melite (a few lines above).

flourished around the time of the 87th Olympiad. He wrote 'The War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians'. As a boy he had the experience of hearing Herodotus reciting at Olympia from the 'Histories' he had written and was so inspired as to be moved to tears. And Herodotus, recognising the boy's temperament said to his father, 'Olorus, congratulations, you are blessed in your offspring. Your son has a great passion for learning.' Nor was he mistaken in this assertion. This Thucydides was a man excelling in skills and in the beauty of his use of words, in the precision of his facts, and in subjects military, deliberative and panegyric. This writer makes transpositions from the feminine to the neuter, as in the example 'so they turned their attention to Macedon, which was their original target'.[1]

[1] See I 59.2, where 'Macedon' is feminine and 'which' is neuter. A curious point with which to end the biographical sketch.

Bibliography and further reading

I list below a short selection of the works referred to or used in this work, grouped by topic. Full bibliographical details for other works cited in the footnotes and editorial matter are given at the place of mention. I use abbreviated forms of reference for the two large-scale commentaries by Gomme and Hornblower (e.g. Gomme III, pp. 12–15) and for other principal works of reference as indicated below.

Texts

The text used for this translation is the *Oxford Classical Text* (OCT). See appendix 1: notes on Greek text (pp. 581–90), for a general comment and the variations adopted. A widely used older text is the Loeb (with facing-page translation) and an important (but much less readily available) later one incorporating recent textual scholarship is the Alberti.

Alberti, J. B. Three-volume critical edition of Greek text. *Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato*, Rome, 1972–2000; Smith, C. F. Four-volume text and translation. Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1919–23; Stuart Jones, H. Two-volume critical edition of Greek text. Oxford Classical Texts, revised edition by J. E. Powell, Oxford University Press, 1942.

Commentaries

The standard complete commentary until recently was the massive five-volume work edited by Gomme and others (conceived as a *historical* commentary, but also strong on textual and topographical matters, and with some sharp observations on the politics); this is now partly but not wholly superseded by the equally massive series of volumes by Hornblower (paying much more attention to literary and cultural issues and including a critical synthesis of a huge range of secondary

scholarship).[1] An older commentary I have found useful, particularly on grammatical issues, is Bloomfield's 1842 edition. There are also many shorter student commentaries on individual books of Thucydides: those by Rusten (book II), Dover (books VI and VII)[2] and Goodhart (book VIII) stand out.

Bloomfield, S. T. *Thucydides: the History of the Peloponnesian War*, two volumes of text and commentary, Longman, 1842; Dover, K. J. *Thucydides: book VI*, Oxford University Press, 1965; Dover, K. J. *Thucydides: book VII*, Oxford University Press, 1965; Gomme, A. W., Andrewes, A. and Dover, K. J. *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 5 volumes (Gomme was the principal editor for books I–V.24, Andrewes for the rest of V and VIII, Dover for VI and VII), Oxford University Press, 1945–81; Goodhart, H. C. *The Eighth Book of Thucydides' History*, Macmillan, 1893; Hornblower, S. *A Commentary on Thucydides*, 3 volumes, Oxford University Press, 1997–2008; Rusten, J. S. *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War*, *Book II*, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Translations

The first proper translation of the text into English directly from the Greek was that by Thomas Hobbes, which is a distinguished piece of English prose in its own right and catches the tone of the original more successfully than most of its successors. The other translations that are most used today and from which I quote for comparative purposes in some of my footnotes are those by Crawley, Jowett, Warner, Lattimore, Blanco and most recently Hammond. There is also the still very useful Loeb volume by C. F. Smith in the usual Loeb format with facing-page original text.

Crawley, Richard. *The Landmark Thucydides: a comprehensive guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B, Strassler, with an introduction by Victor Davis Hanson, a new and revised edition of the Richard Crawley translation of 1874, Touchstone Edition, Simon & Schuster, 1998; Hammond, Martin. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, a new translation by Martin Hammond, with introduction and notes by P. J. Rhodes, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 2009; Hobbes, Thomas. *The Peloponnesian War: the complete Hobbes translation* (first published in 1629), ed. David Grene, University of Chicago Press, 1989; see also *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. William Molesworth, volumes 8 and 9, Bohn, 1843; Jowett, Benjamin. *Thucydides*, Jowett's original two volumes (Oxford University Press, 1881, revised 1900) now issued as one volume, omitting Jowett's commentary and essays from the original volume 2, for the Great Minds series of Prometheus Books, 1998; Lattimore, Steven. Thucydides, *The Peolponnesian War*, new translation with introduction, notes and glossary by Steven Lattimore, Hackett, 1998. Loeb. Thucydides, *History of the Peolponnesian War*, ed. and trans.

[1] Hornblower himself has a long note on the differences between the two projects in his volume II, pp. 1–19.

[2] Derived from his contributions to Gomme, volumes IV and V.

C. F. Smith in four volumes, Harvard University Press/Heinemann, 1919–23, revised 1928; Norton. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Norton Critical Edition with a new translation, backgrounds and interpretations, trans. Walter Blanco, ed. Walter Blanco and Jennifer T. Roberts, Norton, 1998; Warner, Rex. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, with an introduction and notes by M. I. Finley, Penguin Books, 1954, revised with a new introduction 1972.

General reference

The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (OCD) is a traditional A–Z reference encyclopaedia on all aspects of the classical world. The standard lexical dictionary is Liddell, Scott and Jones (LSJ), with important information on the historical development of ancient Greek words. Schrader's comprehensive, computer-generated concordance offers a quick way of tracking all the occurrences of particular words in Thucydides. The *Cambridge Ancient History* (CAH) is an authoritative multi-volume narrative history of events in the ancient world, with good chapters on the cultural and intellectual background too. J. K. Davies provides a short and readable introduction to the political history of the classical period in his Fontana History volume and Cartledge gives a more general introduction to the ancient Greeks. The best recent large-scale atlas is the Barrington.

Cartledge, P. *The Greeks: a portrait of self and others*, second edition, Oxford University Press, 2002; Davies, J. K. *Democracy and Classical Greece*, second edition, Fontana History of the Ancient World, Fontana Press, 1993; Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. (eds.) *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, third edition, Oxford University Press, 1999; Lewis, D. M. et al. *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume 5, *The Fifth Century*, second edition, Cambridge University Press, 1992; Liddell, H. G., Scott, R. and Jones, H. S. *A Greek–English Lexicon*, ninth edition with a revised supplement, Oxford University Press, 1996; Schrader, C. (ed.) *Concordantia Thucydidea*, four volumes, Olms-Weidmann, 1998; Talbert, R. (ed.) *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, Princeton University Press 2000.

Thucydides and his work

The collection edited by Rusten is an excellent introduction to current Thucydidean scholarship and also has a first-rate bibliographical section. A useful earlier bibliography with helpful editorial comment is Dover's Greece and Rome survey. Good general introductions by single authors include those by Hornblower, Finley and Connor, and there are a number of classic essays in the Norton volume edited by Blanco. Macleod's *Collected Essays* includes a number of very powerful analyses, especially of the speeches and the political rhetoric. At a more advanced level there is the huge Brill collection of essays.

Blanco, W. (ed.) *Thucydides: the Peloponnesian War: a new translation, backgrounds, interpretations*, Norton Critical Edition, Norton, 1998; Connor, W. R. *Thucydides*, Princeton University Press, 1984; Dover, K. J. *Thucydides*, Greece and Rome: new surveys in the classics no. 7, Oxford University Press, 1973; Finley, J. H., *Thucydides*, Harvard University Press, 1942; Hornblower, S. *Thucydides*, second edition, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994; Macleod, C. *Collected Essays*, Oxford University Press, 1983; Rengakos, A. and Tsakmakis, A. (eds.) *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, Brill, 2006; Rusten, J. R. (ed.) *Thucydides*, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Language and style

Thucydides was a famously 'difficult' author. For reactions in the ancient world itself see my appendix 2, and in particular the critical essays by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. There are good summaries of Thucydides' stylistic habits and innovations in the introductions to the editions by Dover and Rusten (see above under 'Commentaries'); there are comparative analyses in the older monographs by Lamb, Denniston (not indexed, but see in particular pp. 8–22, 28–31 and 72–4) and Finley (ch. 2); and there are many references in Dover's monograph on the evolution of Greek prose more generally. The monographs by Rood and Greenwood are examples of modern literary critical and narratological approaches to Thucydides, with important insights into the structure of the work and the function of different elements (like the speeches) within it.

Denniston, J. D. *Greek Prose Style*, Oxford University Press, 1952; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 'Letter to Pompeius', 'Thucydides' and 'On literary Composition', dual language version in the two Loeb volumes of *Critical Essays*, ed. S. Usher, Harvard University Press, 1985; Dover, K. J. *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style*, Oxford University Press, 1997; Finley, J. H. *Three Essays on Thucydides*, Harvard University Press, 1967; Greenwood, E. *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*, Duckworth, 2006; Lamb, W. R. M. *Clio Enthroned: a study of prose-form in Thucydides*, Cambridge University Press, 1914; Rood, T. *Thucydides: narrative and explanation*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Books and readers in the ancient world

The Cambridge History of Classical Literature starts with a general introduction to this topic, and Simon Goldhill has written a wide-ranging study of the rise of prose and rhetoric as a literary and cultural phenomenon in his Greece and Rome survey. There is an older monograph on the production and use of books in classical Athens by Turner, and there is a very readable introduction to the questions of production, transmission and textual criticism by Reynolds and Wilson (now in its third edition) and an excellent short illustrated guide by Easterling and Handley. Thomas and Yunis have each produced studies on the broader theme of literacy and orality, with references to the relevant anthropological literature.

Easterling, P. E. and Handley, C. (eds.) *Greek Scripts: an illustrated introduction*, Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studes, 2001; Easterling, P. E. and Knox, B. M. W. (eds.) *Greek Literature*, volume 1 in The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, Cambridge University Press, 1985; Goldhill, S. *The Invention of Prose*, Greece and Rome, New Surveys in the Classics no. 32, Oxford University Press, 2002; Reynolds, L. D. and Wilson, N. G. *Scribes and Scholars: a guide to the transmission of Greek and Latin literature*, third edition, Oxford University Press, 1991; Thomas, R. *Oral Tradition and Literary Record in Classical Athens*, Cambridge University Press, 1989; Thomas, R. *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 1992; Turner, E. G. *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries*, second edition, H. K. Lewis & Co, 1952; Yunis, H. (ed.) *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Political theory and intellectual background

The Cambridge History of Political Thought has a volume devoted to the Greek and Roman world (ed. Rowe and Schofield) and the series Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought includes a range of key texts in the classical period, both before and after Thucydides, which provide important contextual material. Cartledge offers a balanced survey of some of the main concepts and their application in practice. Grene, in an older monograph, makes thoughtful comparisons between different styles of thought in the classical Greek world. Hobbes' translation (the first and still one of the best) has an introduction with important reflections on Thucydides' assumptions and methods as a historian, and other philosophers have been drawn to the underlying epistemological questions, for example Collingwood and Bernard Williams. There have been many interpretations of Thucydides as a possible forerunner of recent theories in political theory and international relations: a range of views are represented in the Lebow monograph and the Morley collection; Hawthorn is a very acute and sensitive commentator on all such issues, with an unusually broad range of reference.

Cartledge, P. *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 2009; Collingwood, R. G. *The Idea of History*, Oxford University Press, 1946; Gagarin, M. and Woodruff (eds.) *Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, 1995; Grene, D. *Man in his Pride: a study in the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, University of Chicago Press, 1950; later retitled as *Greek Political Theory: images of man in Thucydides and Plato* (1965); Hawthorn, G. P. *Thucydides on Politics: back to the present*, Cambridge University Press, 2014; Lebow, R. N. *The Tragic Vision of Politics: ethics, interests and orders*, Cambridge University Press, 2003; Morley, N. and Harloe, K. (eds.) *Thucydides: reception, reinterpretation, influence*, Cambridge University Press, 2012; Rowe, C. and Schofield, M. (eds.) *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2005; Williams, B. A. O. *Shame and Necessity*,

University of California Press, 1993; Williams, B. A. O. *Truth and Truthfulness: an essay in genealogy*, Princeton University Press, 2002 (especially pp. 149–71).

Military background

Hanson's book is a very readable account of the (generally ghastly) conditions of warfare in the ancient world, while the van Wees monograph challenges various conventional views about ancient warfare (including some of Hanson's) and surveys all the ancient evidence. Paul Cartledge counter-balances the usual emphasis on Athens with a lively description of the Spartan war-machine. Morrison et al. explain what is known about the manufacture, operation and military deployment of triremes and report some modern experiments. *The Cambridge History* (ed. Sabin et al.) is a new and systematic, large-scale scholarly survey.

Cartledge, P. *The Spartans: the world of the warrior-heroes of Ancient Greece*, first published 2002, Vintage paperback, 2007; Hanson, V. D. *A War Like No Other: how the Athenians and Spartans fought the Peloponnesian War*, Random House, 2005; Morrison, J. S., Coates, J. F. and Rankov, N. B. *The Athenian Trireme: the history and reconstruction of an ancient Greek warship*, second edition, Cambridge University Press, 2000; Sabin, P., van Wees, H. and Whitby, M. *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, Volume 1, *Greece, The Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, 2007; Van Wees, H. *Greek Warfare: myths and realities*, Duckworth, 2005.

Synopsis of contents

This synopsis is intended to give readers a schematic guide to the contents and to enable them to locate key events and phases of the action within the overall chronology. It should be remembered, however, that the conventional division of the text into books, chapters and sections was not one created by Thucydides himself but was imposed by later editors (see introduction, pp. 17–18). I have preserved it for ease of reference to the secondary literature and for cross-reference within the text itself, but I have made it structurally and typographically subordinate to the division by years and campaigning seasons, which Thucydides himself saw as his particular innovation in the arrangement of his history (see II 1, V 20 and note on calendar, pp. lviii–lix).

Synopsis of speeches

This synopsis is complementary to the synopsis of contents (above) and is set in the same structure, which includes both the conventional divisions by books and chapters and Thucydides' own chronological division into years.

The speeches in Thucydides are a central feature of the work and have always been among the parts most quoted and studied (see introduction pp. xxviii–xxix and I 22n). I have listed here all the speeches that appear in the text in the form of direct speech, including some that are really only short quotations or conversational remarks, and also some 'letters' that were intended to be read aloud (for example that of Nicias at VII 11–15). I have indicated the kind and context of each item very briefly in the introductory description and have grouped related items together under these headings. I have dealt slightly more selectively with speeches that appear only in the form of indirect or reported speech in the text ('he said that . . . '), but I have included all the most important ones (and some are very significant, for example that of Pericles at II 13) and those that purport to summarise the whole speech delivered; most examples of such reported speech are in fact quite short, though it should be noted that all the speeches in book VIII (with one tiny exception) are in this form (see further IV 97.2n and VIII 27.1n).

Most speeches are by individual speakers but there are a few examples of 'plural speakers', which tends to undermine the idea of the speeches as verbatim reports (see II 86.6n and III 52.5n).

[BOOK I]

Before the outbreak of war [I 1–146]

Athenian assembly, 433: the Corcyraeans [I 32–36.3]; the Corinthians [I 37–43]

Exchanges over Corcyra, 433: the Corinthians [I 53.2]; the Athenians [I 53.3]
Peloponnesian league at Sparta, 432: the Corinthians [I 68–71]; the Athenians [I 73–78]; Archidamus [I 80.1–85.2]; Sthlenelaidas [I 86]
Reported speech of Spartan envoys [I 90.1–2]
Reported speeches of Themistocles at Sparta [I 90.3–4, 91.4–7]
Peloponnesian league at Sparta, 432: the Corinthians [I 120–24]
Exchange of letters between Pausanias and Xerxes [I 128.7, 129.3]
Letter from Themistocles to Artaxerxes [I 137.4]
Athenian assembly, 432–31: Spartan envoys [I 139.3]; Pericles [I 140–44]

[BOOK II]
First year of the war, 431–30 [II 1–47.1]
Peloponnesian army at the Isthmus: Archidamus [II 11]
Athenian assembly: reported speech of Pericles [II 13]
Funeral Speech at Athens: Pericles [II 35–46]
Second year of the war, 430–29 [II 47.2–70]
Athenian assembly: Pericles [II 60–64]
Third year of the war, 429–28 [II 71–103]
Exchanges at Plataea: Plataeans [II 71.2–4]; Archidamus [II 72.1 and 72.3]; Plataeans [II 73.3]; Archidamus [II 74.2]
Battle-field addresses at Rhium: Cnemus and Brasidas [II 87]; Phormio [II 89]

[BOOK III]
Fourth year of the war, 428–27 [III 1–25]
Peloponnesian league at Olympia: Mytilenaean envoys [III 9–14]
Fifth year of the war, 427–26 [III 26–88]
Peloponnesian discussion at Embatum: Teutiaplus [III 30]
Athenian assembly: Cleon [III 37–40]; Diodotus [III 42–48]
Trial of Plataeans: Plataeans [III 53–59]; Thebans [III 61–67]
Sixth year of the war, 426–25 [III 89–116]
Exchanges with Ambraciot herald [III 113.3–4]

[BOOK IV]
Seventh year of the war, 425–24 [IV 1–51]
Battle-field address at Pylos: Demosthenes [IV 10]

Reported battle-field address by Brasidas [IV 11.4]
Athenian assembly: Spartan envoys [IV 17–20]; reported exchanges between Cleon and the envoys [IV 21.3–22.2]
Athenian assembly: reported exchange between Cleon and Nicias [IV 27.3–28.4]

Eighth year of the war, 424–23 [IV 52–116]
Sicilian assembly: Hermocrates [IV 59–64]
Acanthian assembly: Brasidas [IV 85–87]
Delium: Pagondas addresses Boeotians [IV 92]; Athenian battle-field address by Hippocrates [IV 95]; reported exchanges between the heralds [IV 97.1–99]
Toronaean assembly: reported speech by Brasidas [IV 114.3–5]
Scionaean assembly: reported speech by Brasidas [IV 120.3]

Ninth year of the war, 423–22 [IV 117–35]
Battle-field address at Lyncestis: Brasidas [IV 126]

[BOOK V]

Tenth year of the war, 422–21 [V 1–24]
Battle-field address at Amphipolis: Brasidas [V 9]
Battle-field instruction at Amphipolis: Brasidas [V 10.5]

Eleventh year of the war, 421–20 [V 25–39]
Reported advice by Corinthian envoys to Argos [V 27.2]
Reported exchange between Sparta and Corinth at Corinth [V 30.1–4]

Twelfth year of the war, 420–19 [V 40–51]
Athenian assembly: reported exchanges between Spartan envoys, Alcibiades and Nicias [V 44.3–46.1]; and instructions for Athenian envoys to Sparta [V 46.2–4]

Thirteenth year of the war, 419–18 [V 52–56]
Conference at Mantinea: reported speech of the Corinthian Euphamidas [V 55.1]

Fourteenth year of the war, 418–17 [V 57–81]
Argos: reported speech of Alcibiades [V 61.2]
Mantinea: reported battle-field addresses [V 69]

Fifteenth year of the war, 417–16 [V 82–3]
[no speeches]

Sixteenth year of the war, 416–15 [V 84–116, VI 1–7]
Melos: debate between Melians and Athenians [V 85–113]

[BOOK VI]

Seventeenth year of the war, 415–14 [VI 8–93]

Athenian assembly: Nicias [VI 9–14]; Alcibiades [VI 16–18]; Nicias [VI 20–23]; reported exchanges [VI 25]

Syracusan assembly: Hermocrates [VI 33–34]; Athenagoras [VI 36–40]; an unnamed general [VI 41.2–4]

Reported discussion of Athenian generals at Rhegium [VI 47–49]

Battle-field address at Syracuse: Nicias [VI 68]

Syracusan assembly: reported speech of Hermocrates [VI 72.2–5]

Camarinaean assembly: Hermocrates [VI 76–80]; Euphemus [VI 82–87]

Spartan assembly: Alcibiades [VI 89–92]

Eighteenth year of the war, 414–13 [VI 94–105, VII 1–18]

[BOOK VII]

Epipolae: reported battle-field address of Gylippus [VII 5.3–4]

Athenian assembly: letter from Nicias [VII 11–15]

Nineteenth year of the war, 413–12 [VII 19–87, VIII 1–6]

Syracuse: reported discussion between Demosthenes and Nicias [VII 47–49]

Battle-field speeches in Syracuse harbour: Nicias [VII 61–64]; Gylippus and Syracusan generals [VII 66–68]; reported response of Nicias [VII 69.2]

Syracuse: Nicias addresses Athenian survivors [VII 77]

[BOOK VIII]

Twentieth year of the war, 412–11 [VIII 7–60]

Reported speech of Phrynichus at Miletus [VIII 27.2–4]

Reported appeal of Chians to Astyochus [VIII 40]

Reported criticism by Lichas of Tissaphernes [VIII 43.3–4]

Reported advice by Alcibiades to Tissaphernes and others [VIII 45.2–46.4]

Reported criticism by Phrynichus of Alcibiades in public [VIII 48.4–7] and by private letter [50.2]

Reported debate at Athens [VIII 53], including one direct quotation from a speech by Peisander [53.3]

Twenty-first year of the war, 411–10 [VIII 61–109, unfinished]

Reported motion of Peisander at Athens [VIII 67]

Reported speech of Chaereas at Samos [VIII 74.3]

Reported debate in assembly at Samos [VIII 76.3–7]
Reported complaints of Peloponnesian troops at Miletus [VIII 78]
Reported speech of Alcibiades at Samos [VIII 81.2–3]
Reported debate in assembly at Samos: Alcibiades and others [VIII 86.1–5]
Reported debate in Athens [VIII 89.1–3]
Various reported statements by Theramenes [VIII 90.3, 91.1–2, 92.3, 92.10]
Reported exchanges in assembly at Athens [VIII 93.2–3]

Glossary

A brief explanation is offered here of some Greek terms that have no real equivalent in English. It is divided into two sections: the first of terms that are anglicised and not translated in the text, the second of transliterated terms that are translated in the text by their nearest equivalents in English. Select references to occurrences of these terms in the text or discussions of them in the footnotes are included in bold.

See the general index for fuller references to some of the English equivalents; see the introduction p. xxxvi for the general policy about transliterations; and see further the note on coinage (pp. lvii–lviii) for the Greek names of coins.

Anglicised terms that are not translated in the text:

acropolis: the high point of a city or its fortified citadel, often the site of temples and public buildings (**II 15**); the location for public records and notices **V 18.10**, **23.5**; and the final refuge for inhabitants in the case of external attack **III 72.3**

archon 'ruler': an important political magistrate at Athens, nine of which were chosen annually by lot; the first of these, the archon eponymos, gave his name to the year in official records **I 93.3**; **II 15.1**; **VI 54.6**

barbarian: non-Greek peoples, as defined by language and culture I **1.2**, **3.3**, **6.1**; VI **11.7**, **18.2** (but also by behaviour, 'savages' **VII 29.4** and, as an adjective, **VIII 98.1**); often the Persians (as contrasted with the Greeks) I **14.3**, **89.2–3**, **90.2**; VIII **46.3**; see also *allophulos* ('of another race')

Boeotarch: official representing member states of the Boeotian League (eleven in number at this period) **IV 91.1**; **V 37.4–5**, **38.1–4**; **VII 30.3**

cleruch: Athenian 'lot-holder' sent as settler to occupied territory but retaining Athenian citizenship **III 50.2**

deme: small political division in Athenian state, corresponding to a parish, village or ward **II 19.2, 23.1** (the same word as *demos* 'the people', see below)

drachma: unit of currency: literally a 'handful' (of six obols) **III 17.3**; **VI 31.3**; **VIII 29.1**; see note on currency (pp. lvii–lviii) for the other units of mna, obol, stater and talent

ephor: one of five Spartan officials elected annually as a check on the power of the kings and with extensive powers of their own **I 85.3, 87.1, 131.2**; **V 36.1**; **VIII 6.3**; ephors gave their names to the year in official records **II 2.1**

helots: native Greeks but effectively a serf class in Sparta and its surrounding districts (in particular Messenia), employed mainly on agriculture to support the Spartan population and military machine; they were both exploited and feared, since they outnumbered their masters and occasionally rose up against them **I 101.2, 132.4–5**; **IV 80 2–5**; **V 23.3, 34.1**

hoplite: heavily armed infantryman, usually fighting in close formations. Drawn mainly from farmers and the middle classes who could afford their own armour **I 27.2**; **II 13.6**; **IV 9.2, 33.1–2, 96.2–6**; **V 71**; might be redeployed in ships **VII 1.7**; **VIII 24.2**

metics: long-term resident aliens in Athens, many of them involved in commerce; did not have full civic rights but were liable for taxes and military service **I 143.1**; **II 13.7, 31.1–2**; **VII 63.3–4**

ostracism (from *ostrakismos*, banishment 'by potsherd'): a procedure at Athens whereby a citizen could be banished for ten years from Attica on a popular vote (with a quorum of 6,000); voting was done on sherds of pottery called *ostraka*; Themistocles and Hyperbolus were so 'elected'; see also *phuge* (exile) **I 135.1**; **VIII 73.3**

paean: war-cry or chant, which was shouted by soldiers or sailors when going into battle or to celebrate a victory; intended to foster morale and intimidate the enemy **I 50.5**; **IV 43.3**; **VII 44.4–6**; similarly, launching a fleet **VI 32.2**

peltast: lightly armed infantry, fighting not in formation but as skirmishers with javelin and small shield (*pelte*) from a distance; originally from Thrace or more backward areas and often hired as mercenaries **II 29.5, 79.4**; **IV 93.3**; see also *psiloi*

penteconter: fifty-oared boat, made obsolescent by the trireme by the fifth century **I 14.1, 14.3**; **VI 43.1, 103.2**

polemarch 'war leader': a military official at Mantinea and in the Spartan army **V 47.9, 66.3, 71.3**

prytany: Athenian committee presiding over the *boule* (council) with a revolving membership of 'prytanes' from the 'tribes' (**IV 118**; **V 47.9**;

VIII 70.1), one of whom would act as chair (**VI 14**); the *prytaneion* was the town hall where they met **II 15.1**; **III 89.4**

satrap: Persian provincial governor (a Persian word meaning 'protector of power'); the province ruled was a 'satrapy' **I 129.1**

stele (plural 'stelai'): inscribed (and sometimes decorated) stone slab used as grave marker and for the publication of decrees and official notices **I 134.4**; **II 43.3**; **V 18.10**, **23.5**; **VI 55.1–2**; sometimes in bronze **V 47.11**

trireme: warship, with three banks of oars; the mainstay of Greek fifth-century navies **I 13.2–14.3**; **III 33.1**; **VI 31.2–32.2**; **VII 24.2**, **36.3**, **49.2**; but sometimes just referred to as *naus* (ship) **VII 38.2**; hence trierarch, a rich person responsible for maintaining a trireme as a form of taxation or 'liturgy' **VI 31.3–5** and also more generally a 'ship's captain'; 'long ship' (*makron ploion* or *makra naus*) is a more generic term for a warship (**I 14.1**, **41.2**; **IV 118.5**; **VIII 35.4**), contrasted with a merchant ship (see below under *holkas*)

tyrant: an autocrat with supreme power in a state, usually obtained by some sort of coup or through family connections; 'tyrants' were often enlightened and popular rulers and the Greek word did not always have negative connotations **I 13.1**, **17–18.1**; **VI 53–54**

Transliterated terms that are translated in the text with whatever their nearest English equivalents are in context. In the headings below I sometimes first cite the literal meaning in quotes where relevant and interesting. I separate different clusters of meanings by semicolons, which may help explain why it is not always possible to translate 'word for word' and why some terms are translated differently in different contexts. In other cases I indicate closely related meanings within one headword entry (for example, 'fear' words under *phobos*).

adikia wrongdoing, injustice **I 77.4**, **86.5**; **II 5.5**; harm, physical damage **V 84.3**, **89**

agora the market-place in a Greek city and a centre for many commercial, social and civic activities **I 62.1**; **VIII 95.4**; the related verb **VI 51.1**

aidos sense of shame, respect (including self-respect), reverence **I 84.3** (the only occurrence)

aischune disgrace, dishonour, shame done to one; also sense of shame (as also *aidos*) **I 84.1**; **II 37.3**, **51.5**; **V 101.1**, **104**, **111.3**; **VIII 73.3**; the adjective is *aischron* **VIII 27.2–3**

aitia cause, reason, explanation **I 23.5–6**; **II 48.3**; **III 13.1** (but pretext or excuse **V 53** more like prophasis); also charge or accusation **I 69.6**

allophulos 'of another race': foreigner, alien **I 2.4**, **102.3**; **IV 86.5**, **92.3**; **VI 9.1**, **23.2** (used by a Syracusan at **IV 64.4** of the Athenians)

amathia ignorance **I 140.1**, **142.8**; **III 37.3**

ananke (from *ancho* 'compress, hold tight, strangle') necessity, compulsion, constraint, force **I 61.3**, **144.3**; **II 64.2**; **IV 20.1**; **VII 57.7**; **VIII 27.3**

anastrophe 'turning back': a naval manoeuvre involving sharp turns **II 89.8**

andragathia bravery, manly character or virtue **II 42.3**; **III 57.1**, **64.4**; **V 101.1**; see **II 87.4n** for other 'courage' words

anokoche 'a holding back': a cessation or respite **IV 38.1**, **117.1**, specifically a truce or cessation of hostilities **I 40.4**, **66**; **III 4.4**; **V 26.3** and **32.7** 'a truce without a treaty' (see also *ekecheiria*)

apoikoi 'away from home': colonists **I 25.3**; **II 27.1**; **V 84.2**; **VI 76.2**; **VII 57**; also *oiketor*, a settler or colonist **II 27.1** and *epoikoi*, colonists usually sent out after the early settlers, in part as military reinforcements **II 27.1**, **70.4**; **IV 102.2**; **V 5.1**; **VIII 69.3**

apostasis 'standing away from': secession, defection, revolt **I 99.1**, **122.1**; **III 39.2**; **IV 122.2**; **VIII 23.4**

apragmosune freedom from or avoidance of business and politics; non-involvement; love of leisure **I 32.5**, **70.8**; **II 63.2**; **VI 18.6**; contrasted with *polypragmosune* ('busybodiness', 'enterprise') **VI 87.4**

arche beginning, origin **I 93.3**; **III 82.8**; hence first place, command **II 65.9**; rule, sovereignty, empire **I 77.5**; **II 63.1–2**; **III 37.2**, **40.2**; **VI 18.2–3**, **17.7**; **VIII 43.3**; office, magistracy **VIII 67.3**, **70.1**, thus 'those in *arche*' (or the *archai* = the magistrates or 'the authorities' **V 84.3**); a board **VIII 1.3**

arete excellence, virtue (in the older sense of our word); hence moral worth, goodness, courage, merit **I 123.1**; **III 53.4**, **6.3**, **58.1**; **IV 81.2**; **VI 54.5**; **VII 86.5**

aristokratia 'rule of the best', aristocracy **III 82.8**; **VIII 64.3**

autonomos 'living under one's own law': independent, self-governing **I 67.2**, **97.1**; **II 71.2**; **III 10.5**, **39.2**; **VI 77.1**; see also *eleutheria*

boule at Athens the council of 500 citizens (50 from each tribe, chosen annually by lot), which prepared the business for the *ekklesia* **V 45.1**; **VIII 66.1**, **69.4**, **86.6**; a similar body at other places **III 70.5–6** (Corcyra), **V 38.2–4** (Boeotia), **V 47.9** (Mantinea) and **VIII 14.2** (Chios)

bouleuterion deliberative body, council or senate **I 141.6**; **II 15.2**; **VIII 67.3**; the council-chamber **VIII 92.6**, **93.1**

demagogos 'leader of the people': popular leader (not necessarily derogatory) **IV 21.3**; **VIII 65.2**

demokratia 'people power' **II 37.1**, **65.9**; **III 37.1**; **VI 89.6**; opposed to *oligarchia* **III 62.2**; **VI 39.1–2**; **VIII 47.2**, **48.4–5**, **63.3**, **89.3**

demos 'the people': the common people, the citizenry (as *plebs* in Latin); the popular movement or party, usually opposed to the *oligoi* **I 24.5**, **115.4**; **III 39.6**, **81.4** or the *dunatoi* **I 24.5**; **II 65.2**; compared to other

terms for 'the masses' **VI 89.4**; thus by extension 'the people's cause' or 'the rule of the people' or (effectively) the democracy **I 107.6**; **III 72.2**; **V 76.2**, **81.2**; **VI 27.3** but see footnotes to **I 107.4**; **VIII 49** and **64.2**; the people in assembly **VIII 68.1**; hence the abstraction *demokratia* (as above); adjective *demotikos* 'populist' **VI 28.2**; also a 'deme', a small political division or parish (see above)

deos fear (see under *phobos*)

dianoia thought, intention, purpose, policy, strategy; intelligence, understanding **I 84.3**, **138.1**; **VI 11.6**, **15.4**; conception **VI 31.1**

diekplous literally 'sailing through', breakthrough: a tactical manoeuvre in naval warfare, breaking through gaps in the enemy lines to ram them **I 49.3**; **II 83.5**, **89.8**; **VII 36.4**

dikaios right, lawful, just; fair, reasonable and moderate; hence *dikaiosune*: justice, righteousness **I 25.3**, **32.1**, **37.4**, **71.1**, **76.2**; **III 40.3**, **58.3**, **82.8**; **V 89–90**; see also *adikia*

dike custom, law, right, justice **I 141.1**; **III 52.2**, **67.5**; trial, judgement, decision, case **I 28.5**, **77.1**; **III 57.1**; legal arbitration **I 78.4**, **85.2**, **140.2**, **144.2**; **IV 122.4**; **VII 18.2**; penalty, punishment **II 53.4**; **III 66.3**; **VII 36.4**

doulos a slave **I 103.1**; **II 78.4**; **IV 118.7**; **VI 27.2**; **VIII 15.2**, **28.4**; as a verb *douloun* to enslave or deprive of freedom, applied to peoples and states **I 16.1**, **69.1**, **98.4**, **101.2**, **124.3**; a slave by conquest (rather than birth) is usually an *andrapodon* **I 139.2**; **VI 62.3**; **VII 13.2**; **VIII 28.4**; domestic slaves are *oiketai* **II 4.2**; **III 73.1**; **V 82.6**; **VIII 40.2**

dunamis power, might, strength, ability; force, authority **II 41.2**, **43.1**, **65.5**; **VII 77.7**; worth or value of money **II 97.3**; hence *dunatoi* 'those with power', leading men **I 2.6**, **24.5**, **115.4**; **II 65.2**; **III 27.3**; **V 4.3**; **VIII 21**, **44.1**

dunasteia powerful (unelected) ruling group or family, a cabal **III 62.3**; **IV 78.3**; **VI 38.3**; power **IV 126.2**; as a verb, *dunasteuo*, to exercise or establish such a power **II 102.6**; **VI 89.4**

echthros personal enemy, as opposed to a *polemios* (enemy in war) **I 69.4**; **III 54.2**; **VI 89.2**; **VIII 50.2** (though these are not always clearly distinguished: see **III 54.2n**)

eidos (or *idea*) form, shape, kind, class **I 109.1**; **II 50.1**; **III 62.3**; mode of operation or policy **VI 77.2**; **VIII 56.2**, **90.1**

eikos 'likeness': probable, likely, reasonable to expect **I 4**; **IV 75.7**; **V 9.7**; **VIII 87.4**; fair, reasonable and equitable **II 62.3**, **63.1**; **III 40.4**, **V 96**; hence *epieikeia* fairness **III 40.2–3**, **48.1**; **V 86.1**

ekecheiria 'a holding of hands': a truce or armistice **IV 117.3**, **122.1**; **V 26.2**, **32.5** (not always clearly distinguished from *anokoche*; see also *spondai*)

ekklesia 'calling out': the general political assembly which debated and voted on all significant decisions, meeting several times a month and attended

by all adult male citizens; here most often at Athens **I 31.4**; **II 22.1**; **V 45.4** but also at Sparta **I 87.1**; **V 77.1**; **VI 88.10**, Syracuse **VI 72.1** and Catana **VI 51.1**

eleos pity, compassion **III 40.3**; *oiktos* pity is used almost interchangeably at **III 37.2**, **40.2–3**, **48.1**, **59.1**, **67.4**; **VII 77.4** but can also be used to mean more the expression of pity, that is lamentation **III 67.2**, though the distinction isn't always sharp

eleutheros free, applied to individuals (as opposed to *doulos*, slave) **II 78.4**; **IV 118.7**; **V 34.1**; **VIII 15.2**; or to citizens and states **I 84.1**; **II 36.1**, **43.4**; **III 10.5**, **39.7**; **VI 89.6**; **VII 69.2**; *eleutheria* freedom **II 40.5**, **63.1**; **III 45.6**; **IV 86.4**; **VI 76.4**; **VIII 68.4**, **71.1**

epibates the soldiers or marines 'on board' a boat, either generally **VI 32.1** or as opposed to the rowers and seamen **VI 43**; **VII 62.3**

epimachia a defensive alliance, where two states make a mutual agreement to support each other against external attacks, but falling short of a *summachia* or full alliance **I 44.1**; **V 27.2**, **48.2**

ergon work, deed, action, business; hence *erga* the facts **V 55.1**; often opposed to *logos* (word) meaning 'in reality' as opposed to 'what was claimed' **I 22.2**, **73.2**, **78.3**, **128.3**; **II 35.1**, **43.3**, **81.2**; **III 67.6**, **82.7**; **V 69.2**

eros love, sexual passion, desire **III 45.5**; metaphorically **VI 24.3**; hence *erastes* (lover) **II 43.1**; various cognate terms are used in the description of the 'crime of passion' at **VI 54–59**

gnome mind: hence thought, judgement, intelligence, purpose, opinion **I 70.6**; **II 20.4**; **III 11.3**, **83.3**; resolve, spirit **II 43.3**, **89.6**; **VI 72.3**; **VII 5.4**; policy **III 65.3**; **VIII 68.1**; motion or resolution **VIII 67.2**; contrasted with *orge* **III 82.2**, with *ergon* **II 43.3**, with *soma* **III 65.3** and with *tuche* **I 144.4**; **II 87.3**; **V 75.3**

hesuchazein be still or quiet; rest or be inactive; not take part (in battle or war) **I 69.4**; **IV 62.2**; **V 40.3**; **VI 18.6**; the corresponding noun *hesuchia* quiet, leisure, peace **I 70.8**

hetaireiai (and *hetairiai* or *hetairika*) associations, fellowships, clubs, political cabals **III 82.5**; **VIII 48. 3**, **54.4**, whose members are *hetairoi* **VIII 65.2**, **92.4**; see also *sunomosiai*

hiketeia supplication **I 24.7**, **133.1**; **III 67.3**, **75.5**, **81.3**

hippeis 'horsemen': cavalrymen (the 'knights' able to maintain a horse), and the second of the four Athenian property classes (see **III 16.1n**); hence *hipparchos* cavalry commander (and see *strategos*); Athenian **II 13.8**; **VI 71.2**; **VII 27.5**; Spartan **IV 55.2**; Syracusan **VI 66.1**; **VII 13.2**

holkas literally 'towed boat' (as in the English 'hulk'): a merchant ship as opposed to a warship or trireme **VII 38.2**, often a transport ship for supplies **VI 22.1**, **30.1** and **44.1**; there is also a variety of terms for small craft; the generic term for 'ship' is *naus*, often just meaning 'trireme',

and for 'boats' *ploia*, sometimes contrasted with triremes **IV 116.2** but not always **VII 23.2**

hosios holy, sanctioned by divine law (as opposed to *dikaios*, according to human law) **III 56.2, 58.3, 67.1, 84.2**; but also profane, secular (in contrast to *hieron*) **II 52.3**; righteous, pious, religious, pure **I 71.6**; **II 5.2**; **V 104**

hubris arrogance, overconfidence **I 38.5**; **II 65.7**; **III 39.4, 45.4, 84.1**; to the point of disrespect for the gods, almost sacrilege **IV 98.4**; **VII 28.1**; the related verb *hubrizein* 'to insult' **I 38.2, 68.2** or 'behave arrogantly' **IV 18.2**; **VIII 45.2**; and can also have the sense of 'abuse' or 'maltreat' **VIII 74.3, 86.3**

idios private, personal (as opposed to *demosios* or *koinos*, public) **II 37.1**; **III 45.3, 81.4**; **VI 16.6**; **VII 77.2**; **VIII 50.3**; one's own property, private affairs or interests (not always a distinct meaning) **I 120.1**; **III 34.1**

isonomia equality of rights, equality before the law **III 62.3, 82.8**; **IV 78.3**; as an adjective **III 62.3** and as a verb **VI 38.5**; *isos* (equal) is a very common adjective in Thucydides, and for the phrase *apo tou isou* ('on a basis of equality') see **III 37.4, 40.6** and **84.1**

kakia badness of character (as opposed to *arete*), cowardice, wickedness; ill-repute **I 32.5**; **II 87.3**; **III 58.1, 61.1**; hence *kakourgos* wrongdoer **I 8.2** and *kakourgia* wrongdoing **I 37.2**

kaloi k'agathoi 'fine and good men': a traditional phrase like 'good men and true', indicating a superior class and kind of person **IV 40.2**; **VIII 48.6**

kategoria accusation, charge **I 69.6, 84.2**; **III 52.4, 61.1**

kerux herald, public messenger; town crier making proclamations **I 29.1**; **II 2.4, 6.3**; **IV 38.3**

koinos common, shared, public (as opposed to *idios*); hence *to koinon* the government, public authority, the state; and *ta koina* public affairs, public good **II 43.6**; **V 37.1–2**; the common (Greek) cause **I 91.4**; **III 59.1**

kosmos order, good order, including military good order **II 11.1, 11.9, 89.9**; **V 66.2**; **VI 72.5**; **VII 23.3**; political order, government **IV 76.2**; **VIII 48.4, 67.3, 72.2**; ornament, decoration; honour, credit **I 5.2, 33.2**; **IV 17.1**

logos word, statement, speech, discourse, talk (often opposed to *ergon*, deed) **I 22.2, 73.2, 78.3**; **II 35.1, 81.2**; story, narrative, description, account, prose **I 10.1**; **II 50.1**; **III 67.6**; thought, reason, ground; account, analysis, calculation, explanation, reasonable expectation **I 140.1, 65.1**; **II 64.1**; **III 39.4**; **IV 26.4**; so *axiologos* worthy of discussion/record **I 1.1**

metabole change, especially political change: see **II 48.3** (medical); **II 53.1, 61.2**; **III 82.2** (fortune); **VI 17.2** (population); **VI 20.2, 59.2, 76.4**; **VII 55.2**; **VIII 75.2, 98.1** (political)

nauarchos naval commander (see *strategos*)

neodamodeis 'new citizens' (literally 'newly of the *demos*'): helots who were awarded their personal freedom by the Spartans for their service in battle

(but not necessarily full civic rights), that is 'freedmen' **V 34.1, 67.1; VII 19.3, 58.3; VIII 5.1**

neoterizo 'do something new': foster political changes or innovations, in some cases violently; hence, cause an uprising **I 58.1, 97.1, 115.2; II 73.3; III 4.4, 11.1, 82.1; IV 76.2; VI 27.3**

nomos custom, usage, law, convention (as opposed to *phusis*, nature) **I 76.2, 77.1–3; II 37.1–3; III 37.4, 66.2**

oikistes founder of a city, who might be later memorialised and honoured as a city hero or 'founding father', coloniser (but see **VI 3.1n**) **I 24.2; IV 102.3; V 11; VI 3. 1–3**

oligoi 'the few'; usually a ruling party consisting of a few families or a clique as opposed to the *demos* **III 39.6, 47.2**; hence *oligarchia* 'the rule of the few' (in practice, the richer) or oligarchy **I 19; V 81.2; VI 39.1–2; VIII 89.3**

orge mood, disposition; also strong emotion, passion, spirit, anger **I 31.1; II 60.1; III 36.2, 43.5, 44.4, 45.4; VI 17.1**; contrasted with *gnome* (mind, judgement) **II 22.1; III 82.2**

paraskeuai 'preparations' **I 1.1, 84.3; II 72.1; VI 34.9**; equipment, resources, means, military readiness, armaments **I 19.1, 25.4, 91.6; II 100.2; IV 93.5**; power **IV 27.5; V 60.2**

peribolos 'going round': enclosure, circuit; wall enclosing a town **I 89.3, 93.2; II 13.7**

perioikoi 'dwellers around': neighbours **I 17.1**; in a more specific sense 'outsiders', dependent inhabitants of Spartan territory who had limited political rights but not full Spartan citizenship **I 101.2; III 92.5; IV 8.1, 53.2; VIII 6.4, 22.1**

periplous 'sailing round' (the coast or a headland) **II 80.1, 97.1**; also a technical naval manoeuvre to encircle the enemy ships and attack them from the side or rear (see also *diekplous*) **VII 36.3–4**

peripoloi 'going the rounds': watchmen; special militia acting as a frontier patrol force **IV 67.2; VIII 92.2, 92.5**

phobos fear, which tends to mean the sort of immediate and outward signs of fear one might feel on the battle-field in flight (the words are related) **I 9.3, 33.3, 88; II 87.4, 89.5, 91.4**; whereas *deos* is perhaps a more long-term and inward sense of apprehension or dread, although the words are not used consistently to make these distinctions **I 36.1, 75.3, 76.2; III 11.2; VI 36.2, 83.3–4, 91.6; VIII 56.3**; both *deos* (**II 37.3**) and *phobos* (**II 53.11**) are used to indicate reverence or respect for authority and the gods; *ekplexis* is a sense of shock **IV 55.3; VI 36.2** and *kataplexis* is also a severe shock or panic **VIII 1.2**; *orrodia* is extreme fearfulness, dread or agitation (just used twice as a noun) **II 88.1, 89.1**; *deima* is a more poetic word for superstitious dread **VII 80.4**

phuge exile or banishment (literally 'flight'): a more serious and longer-lasting form of punishment in the Greek world than ostracism (see above), usually involving loss of civic rights and property: for example, Pleistoanax **II 21.1**, Thucydides himself **V 26.5**, Alcibiades **VI 61.7**; exiles could also be restored by a vote, for example Alcibiades **VIII 97.3**; could involve whole factions or defeated parties **III 85.2–3**

phule tribe, one of ten district divisions in Athens (like English counties or 'hundreds') **II 34.3**; **III 90.2**; these could also be the basis for hoplite contingents **II 90.2**; **VI 98.2**, **100.1**, **101.5**; **VIII 92.4**

phusis nature, natural constitution or qualities of a thing; natural character or bent (often opposed to *nomos*) **I 76.2**, **138.3**; **II 35.2**; **III 64.4**, **82.2**, **84.2**; **VI 79.2**; **VII 14.2**

polemios 'belonging to war': enemy of one's country or in war (sometimes opposed to *echthros*, a personal enemy) **I 69.4**; **III 54.2**; **VIII 50.2**

polis a political community, city-state, state; the city, sometimes the citadel (as opposed to the *astu*, the town) **I 2.6**, **10.1–3**, **142.3**; **II 15.3–6**, **60.2–4**; **VII 28.1**; more rhetorically, the nation rather than its physical embodiment **VII 77.7**; *polisma* fortified place, citadel, town (often on borders or non-Greek) **I 10.1**, **65.2**; **IV 52.3**, **54.4**, **103.4**

politeia citizenship, civic life; the business of government and administration; form of government, constitution **I 115.2**, **127.3**; **II 16.2**, **36.4**; **VII 55.2**; **VIII 53.3**; hence *politeuein* be a citizen, manage or take part in political affairs, have a certain form of government **II 37.2**; **IV 130.7**; **VIII 53.3**, **97.2**

prophasis alleged or apparent cause, pretext, excuse, occasion **I 118.1**, **126.1**, **141.1**, **146**; **III 13.1**, **86.4**; **VI 6.1**; but also sometimes reason or motive **I 23.6**; **VI 6.1**; see also *aitia*

proxenos someone with the status of a 'friend' or ambassador of another state who might represent their interests in his home state; could be hereditary **II 29.1**, **85.5**; **III 2.3**; **IV 78.1**; **V 43.2**, **59.5**; **VIII 92.8**; hence *proxenia* the status of being a *proxenos* **VI 89.2**; for a unique variant see **III 70.3** (*etheloproxenos* a 'self-appointed' *proxenos*)

psiloi 'bare': light-armed infantry without hoplite armour, such as archers and slingers or skirmishers who would use anything to hand **I 60.1**; **III 97.2–98.2**, **112.6**; **IV 9.2**, **33.1–2**, **93.3**; they often acted in a support role to hoplites and in a less organised formation, though their mobility could give them a tactical advantage, for example at **IV 32.4–36.1**; a more generic term than 'peltast' (see above)

psuche breath, spirit, life **I 136.4**; **III 39.8**; **VIII 50.5**; soul, mind (as opposed to *soma*, body); spirit, courage **II 40.3**

soma body (as opposed to *psuche*), physical condition **II 49.5, 51.3**; **VIII 45.2**; person, life **I 17.1, 136.4**; **II 51.3**; **III 65.3**; **VIII 65.3, 91.3** (a 'corpse' in Thucydides is usually *nekros*)

sophron 'sound mind': sensible, wise, self-controlled, moderate, temperate; hence *sophrosune*, the noun for these virtues, applied both to cities and individuals **I 32.4, 37.2, 68.1, 79.2, 84.3, 86.2**; **III 59.1, 62.3**; **VIII 24.4**; used ironically at **VIII 64.5**; compare its contrary *akolasia* **III 37.2**; **VI 89.5**

sophronistes moderator, inspector, supervisor; so metaphorically a 'moderating influence' **III 65.3**; **VI 87.3**; **VIII 48.6**

spondai 'drink-offerings': treaty or ageement (often concluded with libations) **I 67.2, 115.1**; **V 18.1, 22.3, 46.4–5**; **VI 7.4**; **VIII 57.2**; often contrasted with a truce (*ekecheiria* or *anokoche*) **I 40.4**; **V 32.5–7** but can be used more loosely in that sense too **I 103.1, 112.1**; the specific terms of a treaty are usually the *sunthekai* **I 37.4, 40.2, 78.4**

stasis 'standing', hence a state or position; later a party or faction **VII 50.1**, and the disturbance or sedition or discord caused by conflicts within or between states **I 12.2**; **II 20.4, 48.3**; **III 34.1, 62.5, 82.1**; **IV 74.4**; **VI 17.4**; a coup **VII 33.5**

strategos general, commander; in Athens one of ten generals elected annually to commands in the army and navy; three were usually sent together on specific campaigns or missions; sometimes commander of infantry, as opposed to *nauarchos* (navy) or *hipparchos* (cavalry); also had civic powers **I 62.4**; **II 13.1**; **III 30.4**

suggeneia or *to suggenes* kinship, a blood-relationship; adjective *suggenes* kin, related by *genos* (race) **I 4.3, 95.1**; **III 65.3, 86.3–4**; **IV 61.2**; **VI 6.1, 76.2, 88.7**; **VII 57.1**; contrasted with the more general *oikeiotes* and *oikeioi* familiars (family and friends) **IV 19.1, 64.3**

summachia 'fighting together', a full alliance whereby two or more states 'share the same friends and enemies' **I 19, 44.1, 99.2–3**; **II 9.1–5**; **VI 76.3**; **VII 33.6**; see also *epimachia*

sunesis literally a 'coming together': quick-wittedness, intelligence **I 79.2**; **II 62.5**; **III 37.3**; **IV 81.2**; **VI 54.5, 72.2**; **VIII 27.5**

sungraphein to write down (particularly prose), compose, compile, record **I 1**; **II 70**; **IV 104.4**; **V 41.3**; *sungrapheis* secretaries (to organisations) **VIII 67.1–2**; *sungraphe* writing **I 97.2**; **V 35.3**

sunoikismos 'living together': unification of a number of towns into one geographical or political unit **I 10.2**; **II 15.2–3, 16.1**; **III 2.3, 93.1**

sunomosiai 'sworn associations': political and social groups or cabals of an oligarchical tendency **VIII 54.4, 81.2** (see also *hetaireiai*)

taxiarchos Athenian hoplite commander, responsible to the *strategoi*; there were ten (one from each tribe), chosen annually by the assembly **IV 4.1**; **VII 60.2**

techne art, skill, craft **I 49.2**, **71.3**; **II 47.4**, **87.4**; **V 18.4**; **VII 36.4**

teichos wall, fortification, fort **I 64.1–3**, **89.3**, **107.1**, **116.2**; **II 13.7**, **77.1**; for compounds and related technical vocabulary, see **VI 99.2**

temno cut down (crops) **II 19.2**, **55–56**; **III 26.3** (and in winter vineyards, trees **VI 7.1**); destroy crops and property more generally **I 82.5**; **V 55.4**; one of a cluster of similar words meaning to waste, ravage or devastate enemy territory **II 12.5**, **73.1**; **V 14.3**; also related to *dendrotomao* cut down trees **I 108.2**, *kopto* fell, knock down, flatten **II 75.1**; **IV 69.2** and *keiro* cut down, lay bare **I 64.2**

theoroi 'observers': official inspectors or representatives of a city sent to attend the great Panhellenic festivals or to consult oracles **V 16.2**, **50.2**; **VI 3.1**, **16.2**; **VIII 10.1**; also a special class of officials at Mantinea **V 47.9**

time honour, esteem **I 75.3**, **76.2**; **II 65.7**; **IV 17.4**; hence (in plural) honours, rewards **I 144.3**; **II 35.1**; **III 42.5**; **V 11.1**; privilege, office **I 132.1**; **II 63.1**; **V 20.2**; hence *epitimos* 'with full (political) rights' and *atimos* 'without rights' **V 34.2**

trierarchos the commander of a trireme, who was also required to maintain it; so both a form of indirect taxation on the rich and also a military appointment **II 24.2**; **IV 11.4**; **VI 31.5**

tuche 'what one happens on': chance, fortune (usually good), luck **I 140.1**; **II 42.4**; **III 45.6**; **IV 12.3** (sometimes luck sent by gods **V 104**, **112.2**); often contrasted with *gnome* **I 144.4**; **II 87.3**; **V 75.3**; but the very common verb *tunchanein*, often translated 'happen to be', sometimes means little more than 'is' without the connotation of chance **V 46.5**

xenelasia 'driving out foreigners': Spartan practice of periodically expelling non-Spartans **I 144.2**; **II 39.1**

xenos 'stranger', also with a specialised sense of 'guest-friend' (sometimes hereditary) between individuals in separate states with reciprocal obligations of hospitality **II 13.1**; foreigner **II 36.4**; **VI 31.1**, hence foreign mercenaries **VII 13.2**; see also *proxenos*

Index of names

References are to book, chapter and section. In the longer entries bold type indicates the more significant references. Subheadings are arranged in broadly chronological sequence.

For major entries like 'Athens' and 'Sparta', see also synopsis of contents, pp. 614–22.

For personal names, see also biographical notes, pp. xlv–liii and note on deities, pp. liv–lvi. Thucydides refers to 431 personal names in all (excluding those who only appear in patronymics or as signatories to agreements).

Entries for places should be understood also to include their inhabitants, so Corinth/Corinthians come under the same heading. There are 631 place names in all (including both natural features like rivers and headlands and man-made features like forts, roads and mines, but excluding tribes and peoples).

For proper names of festivals and months of the year, see general index.

General index

References are to book, chapter and section of the text. More important references are printed in bold.

See glossary, pp. 628–38, for explanations of Greek terms and see note on distances, dates and coinage, pp. lvii–lix, for terms of measurement, the calendar and coin denominations.

See also the synopses of the contents and the speeches for an analysis of the narrative, pp. 614–27.