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Rotting Ships and Bloodied Water:

Destructive Liquids and Thucydides' Skepticism of Naval Imperialism

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in History

by

Anthony Vivian

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Rotting Ships and Bloodied Water:

Destructive Liquids and Thucydides' Skepticism of Naval Imperialism

by

Anthony Vivian

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor David Daniel Phillips, Chair

Thucydides' construction of liquids and solids undermines both the rhetoric of Athenian characters within his *History* and the consensus reading of this text. This dissertation analyzes Thucydides' depiction of liquids as active and destructive and contextualizes it within Greek history and literature.

From the oldest extant Greek texts, authors have described all sorts of liquids as active, mutable, and in motion. Their activeness is the fundamental quality that separates them from solids. One major subcategory of liquid activeness in Greek literature is liquid destructiveness. Greek authors consistently show the sea and other liquids to be dangerous, destructive, and deadly. These authors developed this theme as Greek seafaring and naval warfare consistently

increased in the Aegean from the end of the eighth century up through the fifth century BCE and beyond.

Thucydides writes within these well-established traditions. He portrays the motion and activeness of liquids in scenes of changing topography. He maps the binary between active liquids and inert solids onto his important dichotomy between Athens and Sparta. The Athenians, who control a naval empire, are active, mutable, and loquacious; the land-based Spartans are stable, conservative, and laconic. Thucydides also develops the destructiveness of liquids throughout his text. Seawater and river water sink ships and kill soldiers. The historian constructs the plague in particularly liquid terms. The Athenians prove to be the most frequent victims of liquid destruction; their over-extended naval empire exposes them to the sea and other dangerous liquids. This reality undermines the rhetoric of Athenian characters within the text who argue for the stability and security of naval empire.

This project thus argues against the consensus reading of Thucydides which frames him as a general supporter of Athenian naval imperialism; it contextualizes him within Greek history and literature; and it argues for the study of authors' construction of physical, inanimate material as a useful analytical tool.

This dissertation of Anthony Vivian is approved.

Kathryn Anne Morgan

Giulia Sissa

Peter James Stacey

David Daniel Phillips, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

For Tonya

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NOTE TO THE READER

All ancient dates are BCE, unless otherwise noted. All numbered citations without an author's name, e.g. (6.18.5), are from Thucydides. The Greek text used throughout this work for Thucydides' *History* is from the Oxford Classical Text edition by Henry Stuart Jones. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

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I am indebted to my family, who have supported me and patiently put up with me as I completed this project, as they have with my other endeavors. To my wife Tonya and daughter Ophelia, thank you. I am likewise thankful to my parents who have always supported me unconditionally.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Anthony Vivian graduated from Villanova University in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He has studied at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Turkey and taught ESL in Paju, South Korea. He has earned two Masters of Arts in History and Classics from UCLA. His article, "Entanglement at the Assinarus: Destructive Liquids and Fluid Athenians in Thucydides," is forthcoming in *The Classical Journal.* He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and daughter.

INTRODUCTION

In line with previous and contemporary Greek texts, Thucydides constructs liquids as active and destructive. At a fundamental level, Greek authors use motion to distinguish liquids from solids (e.g., Heraclitus D-K 12; Simonides 581 [Campbell]; Aristotle *Generation and Corruption* 2.2).[1] Liquids' activeness, mutability, and flux can take on multifarious forms: liquids can be generative; they can be destructive; their change can take on a range of other resonances. As seafaring increased in the Aegean, Greek authors often described and thematized the destructiveness of the sea and other liquids. Thucydides taps into these well-established traditions as he depicts active and destructive liquids. He maps the binary between liquids and solids onto his construction of the Athenians and Spartans. The activeness of the Athenians matches that of the water which buoys their triremes; the Spartans are as solid as the ground upon which their hoplites tread. This characterization renders the Athenians dangerous to their allies and other poleis; the Athenians' fluidity catalyzes their empire similar to other naval powers in the cycle which Thucydides illustrates in his Archaeology (1.1-19). Yet the Athenians' naval empire also exposes them to the perils of the sea and other destructive liquids. Thucydides develops the theme of active and destructive liquids to undermine the imperialistic rhetoric of Athenian characters within his text.

A River and a Flood, 1964 CE

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[1] D-K = Diels and Kranz numbering, employed for all citations of Heraclitus herein.

Thucydides' work parallels contemporary and earlier Greek authors, and much of this project aims to contextualize him within Greek history and literature; however, to understand his use of liquids, it will be helpful to start a world away. Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come" and Bob Dylan's "The Times they are a-Changing" were both released in 1964. Although of different genres and disparate sounds, they have much in common. Both songs explicitly discuss the ongoing civil rights movement and other cultural and social changes of the tumultuous 1960s. Both utilize liquids to symbolize the change that their world was experiencing.

Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come" conflates the singer with a river while insisting on long awaited change. A black R&B star known for his soulful voice, Cooke was more accustomed to performing danceable, less political tracks. In "A Change is Gonna Come," he sings of being excluded from segregated spaces and being knocked to his knees.[2] Tragically, Cooke was fatally shot on December 11, 1964, shortly after the song's debut. It was rereleased on a single, days after his death. For the first two verses, he sings:

> I was born by the river in a little tent
> Oh and just like the river I've been running ever since
> It's been a long, a long time coming
> But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will
> It's been too hard living, but I'm afraid to die
> Cause I don't know what's up there beyond the sky
> It's been a long, a long time coming
> But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will.[3]

Cooke's exposition on change begins with a river. The river imagery was inspired, in part, by the 1927 tune "Ol' Man River."[4] Cooke's second line situates the river within this song; it is a

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[2] Cooke 1964, 9-16.

[3] Cooke 1964, 1-8.

[4] Cantwell 2015.

parallel for the singer himself, their point of connection: constant motion. Cooke's death drastically altered the verses' reception. It was no longer Cooke running but his legacy and this song itself as his stand-in. Otis Redding included a version of the song on his album *Otis Blue* the following year; from there it was covered by a range of artists, perhaps most famously Aretha Franklin and Al Green. The running river of the first two lines—similar to the song's long, winding existence—shows a world in constant motion.[5] This imagery allows Cooke to strike an optimistic tone, anticipating change yet to come.

Bob Dylan's "The Times they are a-Changing" opens with flood imagery to illustrate the evolving times. A white folk singer, Dylan had already positioned himself as an advocate of civil rights. His 1963 song "Blowin' in the Wind" also used liquid imagery to denote change and destruction: "Yes, 'n' how many years can a mountain exist/ Before it is washed to the sea?"[6] Despite the difference in sound between Dylan and Cooke, "Blowin' in the Wind" in part motivated Cooke to sing about change.[7] Dylan's new civil rights anthem "The Times they are a-Changing," released as the title track of his 1964 album, likewise begins with liquid imagery:

> Come gather 'round, people
> Wherever you roam
> And admit that the waters
> Around you have grown
> And accept it that soon

---

[5] Cf. Heraclitus' river imagery: ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ (Heraclitus D-K 12, "Upon the same people stepping into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow"), analyzed in chapter 1.

[6] Dylan 1963.

[7] "[Cooke] was so carried away with the message, and the fact that a white boy had written it… he was almost ashamed not to have written something like that himself," Guralnick 2006, 512; Cantwell 2015.

You'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
And you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.[8]

He illustrates the tumultuous change of his era as a flood. The waters' rise is constant and inevitable, similar to the running of Cooke's river. The liquid of the flood, though, proves potentially destructive to the time of those unwilling to adjust. All "will be drenched to the bone," but only those unable to adjust and start swimming will "sink like a stone."

The liquid imagery in these two songs by no means forms a direct correspondence to Thucydides. While we may argue about the the historicity of various passages within the *History*, there is no doubt that Thucydides describes actual liquids as opposed to Cooke and Dylan's allegory.[9] Moreover, while Cooke and Dylan are advocates of the change they use liquids to illustrate, Thucydides, I argue, critiques the changes he sees around him, particularly regarding the Athenian empire. I begin with these two songs to show some of liquids' basic resonances. Liquid is readily available for these two songwriters to use as materializations of change because of its inherent susceptibility to motion. Greek authors consistently understand this to be what separates liquids from solids.[10] Liquids and the motion they entail can be generative or destructive. Cooke links the river with his birth; Dylan's flood proves potentially destructive. The inherent fluctuations and instability of liquids, particularly the sea, and the

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[8] Dylan 1964, 1-10.

[9] A more direct Greek correspondence to the content of these songs is Alcaeus' ship-of-state imagery (6, 326 [Campbell]), where the poet uses a storm at sea to discuss political disturbances, see chapter 1.

[10] Cf., e.g., Aristotle *Generation and Corruption* 2.2.

potentialities that these create are an indispensable foundation to understanding Thucydides' *History*.

Argument and Goals

Thucydides, in line with contemporary and earlier Greek authors, depicts liquids in motion and solids at rest. Liquid motion takes on different forms, but I focus here on one particular subset: destructive liquids. Thucydides develops a theme of destructive liquids, I argue, to reveal a deep-seated skepticism about naval empire. Throughout his narrative, he constructs solidity as an ideal and liquidity as unstable and dangerous. This binary maps directly onto his polar characterizations of the Spartans and Athenians, who control the land and sea respectively. The Spartans are as solid as the ground upon which their hoplites tread, while the Athenians are as fluid as the sea which buoys their triremes. I endeavor to convince the reader of the value in this reading and in doing so to achieve one primary and two secondary goals.

My primary goal in analyzing Thucydides' construction of liquids and solids is to undermine the consensus reading that Thucydides' text supports Athenian naval imperialism. The common reading of this text makes the author out to be a proponent of Athens' naval empire, especially as articulated by his character Pericles. However, Thucydides undermines Pericles and the Athenians in various ways, especially by developing a theme of destructive liquids. While he shows the sea as a place for potential wealth and power accumulation, he paints naval power as dangerous and unstable. At points in the narrative he criticizes the Spartans' conservatism, but when we view the text as a whole, Spartan solidity compares favorably with

Athenian fluidity. A close analysis of liquids and solids within this text and destructive liquids in particular reveals Thucydides' deep-seated skepticism of Athens' naval policies.

This project also seeks to fulfill two secondary goals. First, I aim to contextualize Thucydides within the wide network of Greek thought and thereby show the strong connections between him and other extant authors. Thucydides writes up a unique text, but he is indebted to contemporary and earlier Greek works: those of Herodotus, Homer, the Hippocratic corpus, and others. By examining how Thucydides' construction of liquids parallels that of other authors, we can better delineate the complex network of Greek literary history. Finally, I hope this project exemplifies the benefit in studying how ancient texts construct inanimate material. Scholars have recently brought materialist readings to bear on ancient texts.[11] In this project, I rely on other ancient Greek conceptualizations of liquids and liquidity (chapters 1 and 2) to contextualize and analyze Thucydides' text (chapters 3, 4, and 5). He may not personify liquids (like Homer, for example), but a better understanding of Thucydidean liquids and solids enriches our reading of the text.

Chapter Outline

I divide this project into five chapters, excluding this introduction and my conclusion. My first two chapters look at Greek history and literature prior to and contemporary with Thucydides. These chapters aim to show that how Thucydides constructs liquids is not revolutionary nor even innovative. He is instead working with well-established motifs. As

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[11] Purves 2015; Foster 2009; Dewald 1993.

Greek seafaring increases over time, Greek literature shows consistency in its depiction of liquids as volatile and destructive.

Chapter 1 covers Greek history and literature up until c. 500. Greek seafaring increases in the late eighth century and continues accelerating after that. From that time up through c. 500, Greek authors showcase both the mutability and destructiveness of the sea and liquids in general. Here are a few of the many examples: Homer depicts the Scamander River as a quick and deadly god on the verge of killing Achilles (Homer *Iliad* 21.1-382). Hesiod and Solon detail the dangers of seafaring (Hesiod *Works and Days* 618-94, Solon 13 [Edmonds], 43-6). Tyrtaeus characterizes enemy armies as waves (Tyrtaeus 8 [Edmonds], 22). Finally, Heraclitus conflates river water with change and separately shows the dangers that liquids pose to souls (Heraclitus D-K 12, 36, 91, 117, 118).

Chapter 2 examines the fifth century with a special focus on Athens' rise. Athens ascended from a small naval player before the Persian Wars of the early fifth century into the premier naval power of the Aegean Sea by Thucydides' time. Our oldest extant tragedies and comedies come from this period. Athenian and other Greek authors continue to exhibit the volatility and destructiveness of liquids across genre. Herodotus picks up Homer's depiction of the conflict between men and river water (Herodotus 1.188.2, 7.35.1-2). Euripides develops the perils of seafaring (Euripides *Trojan Women* 82-104). The Old Oligarch posits that the sea has both upset the Athenian constitution and diluted Athenian culture, mixing it with the outside world. To him, both of these processes are destructive and predicated on motion ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.7-8).

Chapter 3 introduces Thucydides. I provide an overview of the past century or so of Thucydidean scholarship, showing the consistency with which scholars depict him as an advocate of Athenian naval imperialism. These scholars include but are by no means limited to Finley, de Romilly, Momgliano, Connor, Kagan, and Schulz.[12] There have been authors, especially over the past decade, who argue against this common reading, particularly Foster, Taylor, and Kopp.[13] Despite these scholars' persuasive arguments against the characterization of Thucydides as a naval imperial advocate, this side of the argument remains in the minority. After this historiographical section, I provide a reading of the beginning of the *History* (1.1-2.65), arguing that even the part of the text seemingly most favorable to the consensus reading, in fact, consistently undermines it. This section, instead, first reveals Thucydides' skepticism of Athens' naval imperialism, laying the groundwork for the remainder of the text.

Chapters 4 and 5 continue my analysis of Thucydides, returning to the themes of fluctuating and destructive liquids. Chapter 4 details the volatility of liquids in Thucydides. This chapter shows the changeability of liquids (e.g. 1.109, 3.89) and introduces the binary between the Athenians and the Spartans in this text (8.96, *passim*). The Athenians prove active, fickle, and loquacious; the Spartans remain conservative, solid, and laconic.

Chapter 5 showcases how Thucydides constructs the destructiveness of liquids. The active, naval Athenians are the most common victims of liquid destruction. Thucydides clusters scenes of destructive liquids in and around the two major crises for the Athenians within the narrative, the plague and the Sicilian Expedition. The plague narrative is told with particularly

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[12] Finley 1942; de Romilly 1947; Momgliano 1960; Connor 1984; Kagan 2009; Schulz 2011.

[13] Foster 2010; Taylor 2010; Kopp 2016.

liquid imagery (2.47-54). In Sicily, Athenian ships rot from overexposure to the sea (7.12), and the Assinarus River entices, entangles, and kills Athenian men and mixes with Athenian blood (7.84-85.1). Other examples abound of the havoc wreaked by liquids coming to bear on the Athenians.

My conclusion looks to Greek history and literature later than Thucydides. Rather than provide a cursory survey of the complex naval history and many relevant authors that take up the theme of destructive liquids in the fourth century—Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and others—I provide a close analysis of one particularly relevant construction. Plato's Atlantis myth exhibits destructive liquid, showing the continued proliferation and evolution of this literary theme (Plato *Timaeus* 21e-25d, *Critias* 108e-121c). Plato mixes these liquids with Athenian history in a way that deepens our understanding of Thucydides.

CHAPTER 1

Seafaring in the Aegean and Liquids in Greek Literature up to the Fifth Century

Greek authors discuss liquids and use liquid imagery in numerous passages for diverse reasons. Liquids cover a range of meanings. At the most fundamental level, liquids are associated with motion and change. In addition, authors often employ liquids as a force of destruction, a subset of the basic association connecting liquids with motion and change. This chapter and the next will discuss Greek history and literature up until Thucydides' time, contextualizing the Peloponnesian War[14] and Thucydides' *History.* Chapter 1 looks at two periods (c. 750 to c. 650 and c. 650 to c. 500) in turn; chapter 2 examines the fifth century with a closer focus on Athens. For all three time periods, I first lay out the historical background on seafaring and navies before analyzing how contemporary authors use liquids to depict motion, change, and destruction.

Historical Background, c. 750-c. 650

The second half of the eighth and first half of the seventh century saw many changes in and around the Aegean Sea. To be sure, Greek seafaring long predates this period. However,

[14] The Peloponnesian War here and *passim* denotes the Second or Great Peloponnesian War, 431-404.

this era's increase in seafaring catalyzes large shifts in Greek society and introduces the alphabet to the Aegean.[15] Material culture shows evidence of increased mobility of goods during this period; Greek art exhibits influence from Greece's eastern neighbors.[16]

It was not just goods that saw an uptick in sea travel during this period, but colonists hit the high seas with far greater frequency. Figure 1 tracks the colonies and settlements in the Mediterranean and Black Sea founded from 800 to 500. Included within this table are both foundation dates as recorded in ancient literature and dates of the earliest archeological material for each colony (where these dates exist).[17]

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[15] Snodgrass 1971, 416-28; Morris 2008.

[16] Coldstream 1977, 367; Hiller 1983, 9.

[17] Figure 1 is based on the data provided in Tsetskhladze 2006, lxvii-lxxiii. Where Tsetskhladze lists a range of dates, I use the median (i.e. 655-625 = 640, 6th c. = 550, etc.). Where two or more authors provide differing but close dates for the same colony, I average them; where authors provide radically different dates for the same colony, I include both as two separate data points. Several data points fall outside of this date range (literary: 14th c., 12th c., 1050, 493, 421; archeological: 12th c., 11th c., 4th c.).

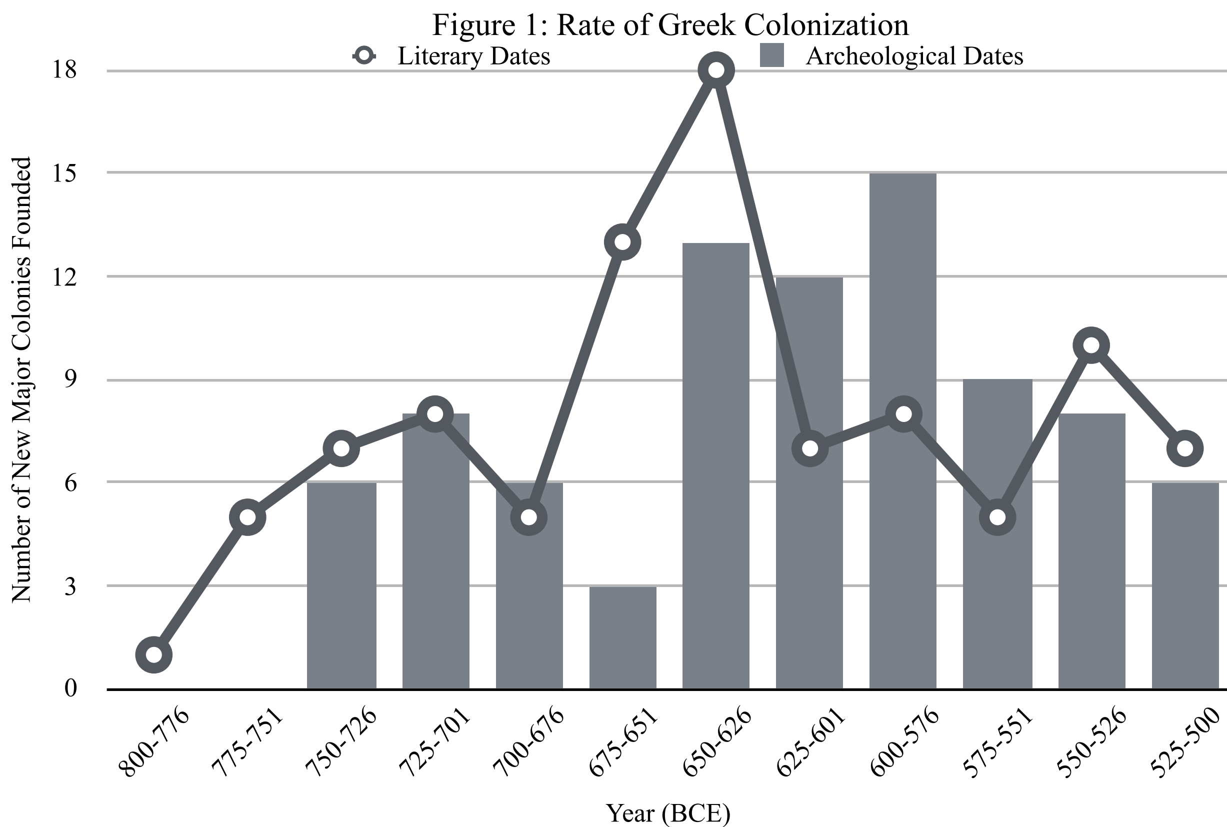

Figure 1: Rate of Greek Colonization

With scant archeological data for the previous centuries, twenty-three major colonies are attested for the hundred years between 750 and 651. Literary sources claim more colonies before 750, but they nevertheless depict a general acceleration in colonization during this same period.[18]

Thucydides offers only cursory treatment of this period in his Archeology (1.1-19), but he does identify a period of colonization after the Trojan War and Dorian Invasion (1.12.4). He later returns to the topic with more specificity throughout the later parts of his work, in particular towards the beginning of his Sicilian Narrative (6.4-6).[19] Scholars have long called the period from c. 750 to c. 550 the 'Age of Colonization.' Lately, the label Age of Colonization has come

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[18] See below for discussion on the right half of this graph.

[19] See Strassler 1996, 652 for an extensive compilation of the many instances where Thucydides discusses individual colonies. Thucydides is a major source for the data in Tsetskhladze's table and, therefore, Figure 1.

under siege from scholars not just for the misleading connections it draws between Greek and more modern forms of colonization but also for the false distinctions it implies between this and surrounding eras. For example, John-Paul Wilson points out that the division between the colonization of this era and the preceding ones are modern constructs and that colonization by no means stopped in the year 550.[20] Yet even over the course of successfully undermining many of our preconceived notions about this era in Greek history, Wilson acknowledges the increase in colonial-minded seafaring beginning towards the end of the eighth century. "No one questions that during these centuries [c.730 to c. 550] the Greeks populated some areas they had never reached before and others that had perhaps been settled in the Late Bronze Age, but never with equivalent voracity."[21]

A Greek proverb—originating from this period according to later sources—offers a glimpse of seafarers' perspective on the destructiveness of liquids.[22] The proverbial Melian Skiff came to be associated with leaky, ineffective ships in this period. In what is most likely a false attribution, Photius cites Aristotle in this fragment that glosses the proverb:[23]

> τὸ Μηλιακὸν πλοῖον· τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῶν ἄγαν ῥεοντων πλοίων ἀπὸ ἱστορίας τινὸς εἴρηται. φησὶ γὰρ Ἀριστοτέλης Ἱππότην εἰς ἀποικίαν στελλόμενον τοῖς μὴ βουλητεῖσι αὐτῷ συμπλεῖν καταράσασθαι. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ προφασιζόμενοι οἱ μὲν τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτοῖς ἀρρωστεῖν οἱ δὲ τὰ πλοῖα ῥεῖν κατέμενον, κατηράσατο μήτε πλοῖα στεγανὰ αὐτοῖς γενέσθαι ποτὲ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν κρατεῖσθαι ἀεί (Photius *Lexicon* 594, 9).

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[20] Wilson 2006.

[21] Wilson 2006, 27.

[22] For this theme's appearance in Greek literature of this period, see "Liquid as Destruction, c. 750-c. 650" section below.

[23] For a close reading of this proverb, see Carson 1990, 159-60.

> The Melian Skiff: this has been said about the very leaky skiffs from a certain story. For Aristotle says that Hippotes, dispatched to found a colony, called down curses on those not willing to sail with him. Since they remained, some making the excuse that their wives were unwell, others that their skiffs constantly leaked, he called down curses upon them that their skiffs would never be watertight and that they would always be ruled by women.

It is impossible to date the proverb with certainty, but certain data suggest an origin in this era or earlier.[24] Paralleling literature from this period and later, the story as told by Photius brings together the themes of colonization, the danger and destructiveness of the sea, the necessary solidity of seafaring vessels, disease, and femininity. It associates leaky vessels with female leadership and paints both as unwanted inversions of circumstance and threats to security and natural order.

The increased sea traffic resulted in advances in naval technology. Philip de Souza argues that the late eighth century saw the invention of the warship as distinct from the merchant

[24] Noting that the fragment does not identify which colony Hippotes was founding, Karl Müller 1848, 150 suggests it is Cnidus based on a scholion at Lycrophon 1388 by Tzetzes which names Hippotes as that settlement's founder (Tzetzes *ad Lycrophon* 1388; see also Diodorus 5.9.2). A second fragment on the Melian Skiff found in Pseudo-Diogenian differs from this fragment in a couple of ways, including replacing Hippotes with "the Lacedaemonians" (Diogenian] Prov. 8.31). Müller points out that the Lacedaemonians are also attributed as founders of Cnidus, bolstering his claim that this is, in fact, the unnamed settlement (Diodorus 5.53.3). In the archeological record, Cnidus shows signs of Greek settlement as early as the eleventh century (Vanschoonwinkel 2006, 137). Whether or not Hippotes was a real person, later generations of Greeks used the phrase Melian Skiff to refer to leaky vessels. Furthermore, they understood this phrase not as a neologism but from an older era, one in which colonies were regularly founded. Nothing from Melian history suggests an origin different from the one named in the fragment. (As islanders, the Melians were seafarers, though not particularly noteworthy ones: they contributed two penteconters to the Battle of Salamis in 480 [Herodotus 7.46.4-48.1]. The Melians are perhaps most famous for the siege of Melos in 416 and their portrayal as οἱ ἀσθενεῖς ["the weak"] in Thucydides' Melian Dialogue [5.89.1, 5.84.2-116]. If the proverb somehow sprung from an association with this famous passage on weakness, this connection would most likely be remembered in the later aetiologies of the proverb.) In the absence of a more plausible origin, it is best to take the fragment as simply glossing a proverb from a real or dramatic founding date of a colony.

ships already in existence. Surveying the entire eastern Mediterranean, he acknowledges that the earliest fighting on sea was done by nonspecialized ships, pictorial and literary depictions of which range back to the thirteenth century. “Representations of archaic ships, found mainly on painted vases, seem to indicate that the development of the ‘warship’ was a phenomenon of the late eighth century in the eastern Mediterranean.”[25] His identification of warships include multiple components which he outlines as follows: “its low, elongated hull, raised sides, oars rowed at one or more levels, a fighting platform for marines and the ram, extending out from the bows of the ship at the waterline.”[26] Others scholars see no distinction between these two types of ship, arguing that merchant ships would also benefit from added protection. For instance, H.T. Wallinga claims that “It is impossible to differentiate between the pictures [of warships and merchant ships], not even by the ram.”[27] However one chooses to classify these changes, an increase in sea traffic occurred hand in hand with technological advancements in naval weaponry during this period.

Pictorial evidence can also help us identify the development of rowers’ tiers from one to two and eventually to the three tiers of triremes, the main warship of the Peloponnesian War. J. S. Morrison and J. F. Coates trace the origins of the trireme. They outline how Attic pottery of the Late Geometric period still primarily showcases simple, single-tiered ships. However, ships with two levels begin to appear on pottery from the end of this period, which corresponds to the

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[25] de Souza 1998, 272.

[26] de Souza 1998, 272.

[27] Wallinga 1993, 38.

end of the eighth century.[28] They even point to two lines in the *Iliad* which hint at Homer's knowledge of two-tiered ships: "It is recorded there in the Catalogue of Ships that '120 young men went' in each of the Boeotian ships," suggesting the possibility that these Boeotian ships had two levels of rowers.[29] A relief dated to 701 from the Phoenician territory of Sidon (modern-day Lebanon) shows a ship with a distinctive yet unmanned third tier.[30] Morrison and Coates interpret this piece of evidence as an early prototype for the trireme. Nevertheless, triremes did not play any major role during this period, and there is no evidence that they existed in Greece until later.[31]

Lastly, the development of the Greek alphabet is itself an indication of increased sea traffic and contact with the east. The Greeks adopted their alphabet from the Phoenicians, renowned seafarers of the eastern Mediterranean.[32] Although scholars have put forth arguments that the alphabet was created to record hexametrical oral poetry,[33] the more likely scenario remains that it was first employed for utilitarian, mercantile uses.[34] The oldest extant inscriptions come from the eighth century, constituting a firm *terminus ante quem*, though some scholars argue for an earlier transmission.[35] Whatever the exact date of and motive for

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[28] Morrison and Coates 2000, 25, 32 fig. 24.

[29] Morrison and Coates 2000, 25; Homer *Iliad* 2.509-10. See also Wallinga 1993, 40.

[30] Morrison and Coates 2000, 33-4.

[31] See the discussion on the development of the trireme below.

[32] Wilson 2009, 542-544; Harris 1989, vii; Johnston 1983.

[33] Powell 1991; Robb 1994.

[34] Johnston 1983; Wilson 2009, 548-549.

[35] Wilson 2009, 545-6; Harris 1989, vii-viii; Johnston 1983.

transmission, it is clear that the Greek alphabet was only made possible through naval contact with the east. Seafaring then accelerated the spread of the new alphabet in the late eighth and seventh centuries.

The development of the Greek alphabet, in turn, allowed for the writing down in the late eighth and seventh centuries of the Homeric and Hesiodic oral traditions, the oldest extant works of Greek literature. Most scholars today agree that both the Homeric and Hesiodic corpora come at the end of long oral traditions.[36] I will refer to Homer and Hesiod for simplicity's sake, yet I agree that these texts are best conceptualized—here and elsewhere—as the end products of centuries. Despite this long history, it is worth noting that the texts primarily reflect the society and culture of the time at which they were written down, namely the late eighth or seventh centuries.[37] We will get to how these texts construct fluidity and solidity below, but first it is worth examining what they can do to supplement our knowledge of contemporaneous Greek seafaring as outlined above.

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[36] This reality became evident for Homer ranging back to Milman Parry's revolutionary work on oral poetics. See the collection of his papers published posthumously by his son (Parry 1971) and the work of his protégé Albert Lord (particularly Lord 1960). The scholarship identifying the works known under the name of Hesiod as the result of a long oral tradition is more recent but no less convincing. See in particular Lamberton 1988, Martin 1992, Nagy 1990 and 2009.

[37] This is still debated, particularly in Homeric studies with texts claiming to be narrating historical events with a specific date centuries prior to the time of written composition. The side espoused here (that the texts primarily reflect the time at which they were written down) is currently the majority opinion and well argued by Ian Morris (particularly Morris 1986, 1997). See also Bennet 1997, Van Wees 1999, and Raaflaub 2005. For an influential outlier, see West 2011.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* presents itself as a farming manual but goes on a substantial and unexpected tangent regarding seafaring.[38] Coming approximately three quarters into the text, the passage starts: εἰ δέ σε ναυτιλίης δυσπεμφέλου ἵμερος αἱρεῖ… (Hesiod *Works and Days* 618, "If desire of stormy seafaring seizes you…"). Unlike other advice in this text, this passage starts with a conditional. Seafaring is an activity one can—and should—choose to avoid. The noun with its transferred epithet ναυτιλίης δυσπεμφέλου ("stormy seafaring") defines seafaring with the most unpredictable and dangerous sea conditions in which one can undertake it. This sets the tone for the upcoming passage. As with the data on farming, Hesiod presents his information as advice, sometimes getting into specifics. For example, he says that during stormy season after drawing up one's ship on shore to protect it from the winds, one should χείμαρον ἐξερύσας, ἵνα μὴ πύθῃ Διὸς ὄμβρος (Hesiod *Works and Days* 626, "Remove the bilge plug, so that rain from Zeus does not cause the ship to rot"). Despite this advisory pretext, Hesiod's disdain for seafaring bleeds through:

> οὔ μιν ἔγωγε
> αἴνημ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἐμῷ θυμῷ κεχαρισμένος ἐστίν·
> ἁρπακτός· χαλεπῶς κε φύγοις κακόν· ἀλλά νυ καὶ τὰ
> ἄνθρωποι ῥέζουσιν ἀιδρείῃσι νόοιο·
> χρήματα γὰρ ψυχὴ πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.
> δεινὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ θανεῖν μετὰ κύμασιν (Hesiod *Works and Days* 682-7).
>
> I myself do not
> praise it, since it is not dear to my heart,
> snatched. And you would hardly avoid evil, but even now
> people do this in their ignorance,
> since money is life for wretched mortals.

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[38] Starting with Hesiod is not a tacit agreement with the minority opinion that he preceded Homer. I have yet to see an argument that successfully refutes Richard Janko's chronology (Janko 1982). Although the majority of this chapter follows a chronological order, I start with Hesiod for thematic purposes.

But it is terrible to die among waves.

The Hesiodic corpus ties seafaring closely with commerce and warns its audience against it. Yet this only confirms the prevalence of seafaring during this era. As Samuel Mark puts it, "The fact that a landlubber like Hesiod disseminates information on lading cargo and other nautical matters, such as the best and worst sailing season, implies that sea trade was a common aspect of the times."[39] In addition, this passage attests to a backlash from the agricultural society which the increase in seafaring and related commerce was changing.[40]

Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are predicated on a world in which seafaring is normal for both commercial and military purposes. As Mark asserts, "Ships are… a fundamental component of the economic prosperity of Homeric heroes."[41] Whatever degree of historicity one grants the events within the epics, they were clearly produced in a society and culture intimately familiar with seafaring. Two sizes of ships appear in the epics: "The smaller are twenty-oared, such as the vessel that Telemachus employs to seek news of his father (*Odyssey* 1.280). Larger vessels are penteconters - they have fifty oars, like the ships of the contingents of Achilles and Philoctetes (*Iliad* 16.169-70; 2.719-20)."[42] The expedition to Troy would, of course, never have been possible without the Achaeans' fleet of ships.[43] Amidst the war, they are keenly aware that their return home and, therefore, their survival rest upon their ships. Achilles tells Patroclus:

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[39] Mark 2005, 19.

[40] The specifics within this passage and the vehemence of the author's disdain for seafaring make the counterargument—that this passage exhibits a memory of frequent seafaring generations prior—less likely.

[41] Mark 2005, 24.

[42] Thomas 2009, 39.

[43] This fleet is outlined in the Catalogue of Ships, Homer *Iliad* 2.484-759.

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς Πάτροκλε νεῶν ἄπο λοιγὸν ἀμύνων
ἔμπεσ᾽ ἐπικρατέως, μὴ δὴ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο
νῆας ἐνιπρήσωσι, φίλον δ᾽ ἀπὸ νόστον ἕλωνται (Homer *Iliad* 16.80-82).[44]

But even so, Patroclus, protect the ships from ruin,
fall upon them mightily, so that they do not, with a fire kindled,
burn the ships, and take away our dear homecoming.

The *Odyssey* tells the story of one of those very homecomings, focusing even more on life on the high seas. Not only does this epic point to the danger of the sea, but it also hints at a stigma attached to those who profit from the commerce upon it (Homer *Odyssey* 8.162-4, 14.288-9).[45]

Despite their vast differences, the two major epic traditions of this era tell a similar story, one in which Greek lives are deeply intertwined with the sea. The character of Hesiod claims to have gone on one—and only one—sea journey in his entire life, traveling from Aulis to nearby Euboea.[46] This journey consists of a distance of less than half a stade, or roughly an American football field. It is here that Hesiod makes a striking reference to the Trojan War and, with it, the realm of Homeric poetry:

εὖτ᾽ ἂν ἐπ᾽ ἐμπορίην τρέψας ἀεσίφρονα θυμὸν
βούληαι χρέα τε προφυγεῖν καὶ λιμὸν ἀτερπέα,
δείξω δή τοι μέτρα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
οὔτε τι ναυτιλίης σεσοφισμένος οὔτε τι νηῶν.
οὐ γάρ πώ ποτε νηί γ᾽ ἐπέπλων εὐρέα πόντον,
εἰ μὴ ἐς Εὔβοιαν ἐξ Αὐλίδος, ᾗ ποτ᾽ Ἀχαιοὶ
μείναντες χειμῶνα πολὺν σὺν λαὸν ἄγειραν
Ἑλλάδος ἐξ ἱερῆς Τροίην ἐς καλλιγύναικα (Hesiod *Works and Days* 646-53).

Whenever you turn your witless heart towards commerce
and want to flee debt and joyless hunger,

[44] See Nagy 1990, 77-8, cited below.

[45] Hall 2014, 274.

[46] Even if one believes Hesiod was a historical man here relating a historical event, his text still draws the contrast with the *Iliad* described below.

> I will show you the measures of the loud-roaring sea,
> though I am not at all practiced in seafaring nor in ships.
> For I have never yet sailed the wide sea on a ship,
> except to Euboea from Aulis, where the Achaeans once
> waiting out a storm gathered a great army
> from divine Greece for Troy, land of beautiful women.

This reference to the other major corpus proves unusual and is the subject of much scholarship. Gregory Nagy argues that this passage draws a purposeful distinction between the two corpora:

> There is a built-in antithesis here with the long sea voyage undertaken by the Achaeans when they sailed to Troy… The strong Homeric emphasis on navigation as a key to the Achaeans' survival (for example, *Iliad* XVI 80-82) is in sharp contrast with the strong Hesiodic emphasis on the poet's personal inexperience in navigation—especially in view of Hesiod's additional emphasis on Aulis as the starting point for not only his short sea voyage but also for the long one undertaken by the Achaeans. Perhaps, then, this passage reveals an intended differentiation of Hesiodic from Homeric poetry.[47]

Hesiod distinguishes his poetry from the realm of Homer, utilizing the subject of seafaring. Although this difference does indeed exist, both authors depict the sea as a place of motion and destruction. Homer may show Achaeans making greater use of the sea than Hesiod, yet he similarly repeatedly stresses the unpredictability therein.

Liquid as Motion and Change, c. 750-c. 650

At a fundamental level, Greek authors associate liquids with a sense of motion and change. One recurring example of this comes in the form of new beginnings: liquid as catalyst, generative liquid, liquid creating movement from non-movement. In certain ways, this generative liquid is the inverse of destructive liquid analyzed in the following section. In the fifth century, Herodotus calls Homer and Hesiod the theologians of Greece (Herodotus 2.53.2).

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[47] Nagy 1990 77-8.

Liquid's central role at the beginning of both these authors' theogonies reveals the centrality of generative liquid to Greek thought.

In book 14 of the *Iliad*, Homer offers glimpses at a cosmology that begins with liquid. Intending to distract Zeus by seducing him, Hera borrows Aphrodite's ἱμάς (Homer *Iliad* 14.214 "magic, love-inducing girdle"). Refusing to reveal her true intentions to Aphrodite, Hera says that she needs the love charm to help reconcile Oceanus and Tethys, the two divine bodies of water whom she calls the oldest of the gods: Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν (Homer *Iliad* 14.201, "Oceanus the genesis of the gods and mother Tethys"). Later speaking with Zeus, she repeats the same line identifying Oceanus and Tethys as the oldest gods (Homer *Iliad* 14.302). Between these two lines, Sleep calls Ocean the parent of all: Ὠκεανοῦ, ὅς περ γένεσις πάντεσσι τέτυκται (Homer *Iliad* 14.246, "Oceanus, who is the parent of all"). This is a different cosmology than what we find in Hesiod who gives Ouranos and Gaia this distinction, but the idea of Oceanus as progenitor most likely has ancient, eastern roots, bearing a striking resemblance to the Babylonian epic, the *Enuma Elish* (Tablet I, lines 1-5).[48] In the fourth century, Plato directly ties this particular genesis with the idea of motion. He says that the ancients—a reference to Homer—teach that ἡ γένεσις τῶν ἄλλων πάντων Ὠκεανός τε καὶ Τηθὺς ῥεύματα ὄντα τυγχάνει καὶ οὐδὲν ἕστηκε[49] (Plato *Theaetetus* 180d, "The genesis of all others is, in fact, Oceanus and Tethys, who are streams, and nothing is static"). According to this doctrine,

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[48] Janko 1992, 181-2.

[49] Cf. Plato *Cratylus*, 402b-c.

everything is in flux, and the beginning of this existence came from the motion inherent in the flow of two streams.[50]

Although Hesiod's cosmology does not begin with liquid gods in the same way as the one found in Homer, liquid plays a separate but still critical role in the proem of the *Theogony.* The work begins with the Muses and a stream:

> μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ᾽ ἀείδειν,
> αἵθ᾽ Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε ζάθεόν τε
> καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσσ᾽ ἁπαλοῖσιν
> ὀρχεῦνται καὶ βωμὸν ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος (Hesiod *Theogony* 1-4).
>
> From the Heliconian Muses let us begin to sing,
> who occupy the mount of Helicon both great and holy
> and around the blue stream with tender feet
> they dance and around the altar of the mighty son of Cronos.

In the very first sentence of the text, the stream appears, flowing at the center of the Muses' dance. The Muses treat the stream in the same way that they treat Zeus' altar. From this foundational usage, Hesiod continues to associate the Muses with liquidity. He replaces talk of the physical stream on Mount Helicon with a focus on the Muses' voice, which he repeatedly depicts with liquid language. For example, he says that " τῶν δ᾽ ἀκάματος ῥέει αὐδὴ/ ἐκ στομάτων ἡδεῖα (Hesiod *Theogony* 39-40, "An unyielding voice flows/ from their mouths sweetly"). In the first hundred lines of the poem, he uses the verb ῥέω ("flow") to describe their speech twice (Hesiod *Theogony* 39, 97). Hesiod uses the same verb to describe gentle words inspired by the Muses (Hesiod *Theogony* 84). To catalyze these words, the Muses χείουσιν ("pour") sweet dew onto a mortal tongue (Hesiod *Theogony* 83). The verb ἵημι ("utter"), which Hesiod uses four times to describe the Muses' speech (Hesiod *Theogony* 10, 43, 65, 67), has a

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[50] Cf. Heraclitus D-K 12.

wide range of meanings, including denoting flowing liquids ("let flow," "spout forth") in early Greek poetry.[51]

Richard Broxton Onians ties the liquidity of divine inspirations here and elsewhere with the makeup of the Greek conception of the θυμός ("life, soul"):

> θυμός is vapour from liquid, and liquid drunk goes to the φρένες or lungs. Hence it is, we may guess, that prophetic inspiration was sought by inhaling vapour, or by drinking blood or water, or wine or honey, or by chewing (i.e. extracting the essence in liquid), not eating, the divine plant; hence that the Muses were water-nymphs, and poets drank of their springs on Helicon or Parnassus, Castalia, etc. and τῷ μὲν ἐπὶ γλώσσῃ γλυκερὴν χείουσιν ἐέρσην, τοῦ δ᾽ ἔπε᾽ ἐκ στόματος ῥεῖ μείλιχα (Hes. *Theog.* 83 f.) and a poem was water, honey or nectar of the Muses. So too the *Camenae* and *Carmenta* were water nymphs.[52]

Beyond speaking to the composition of the θυμός, the ubiquity of the association between divine inspiration and liquidity shows that the connection between gods and mortals was in part via liquids. This liquid connection acted as a catalyst for Hesiod, jumpstarting the *Theogony*.

The motion inherent in liquidity plays a role in Homer beyond beginnings. In his tale of his time in Egypt, Menelaus reminisces about Proteus, γέρων ἅλιος (Homer *Odyssey* 4.349, "the Old Man of the Sea"), who becomes the personification of mutability. First Menelaus tells of Proteus' daughter Eidothee's instructions on how to capture and extract a prophecy from Proteus. She warns that amidst the capture, πάντα δὲ γιγνόμενος πειρήσεται, ὅσσ᾽ ἐπὶ γαῖαν/ ἑρπετὰ γίγνονται, καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ θεσπιδαὲς πῦρ (Homer *Odyssey* 4.417-8, "He will try to become all things, however many beasts move upon the earth, as well as water and divinely kindled fire"). Proteus has the ability to turn into all things, including liquid itself and fire, another non-static

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[51] Early examples of this verb being used to describe water: Homer *Iliad* 12.25, 21.158, *Odyssey* 11.239.

[52] Onians 1951, 66-7; West 1960, 170n39.

element. Sure enough, when Menelaus recounts his actual capture of Proteus, Eidothee's warning materializes. He recounts the experience in detail:

> οὐδ᾽ ὁ γέρων δολίης ἐπελήθετο τέχνης,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τοι πρώτιστα λέων γένετ᾽ ἠυγένειος,
> αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δράκων καὶ πάρδαλις ἠδὲ μέγας σῦς·
> γίγνετο δ᾽ ὑγρὸν ὕδωρ καὶ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτηλον (Homer *Odyssey* 4.455-8).
>
> The old man did not forget his deceitful art,
> but he first became a well-maned lion,
> but then a snake, a leopard, and a great boar.
> And he became fluid water and a tree with high leaves.

The adjective δολίης comes from the noun δόλος ("trick"), which may originate from the sea-related meaning of "fishing bait."[53] In addition to the living creatures that Proteus becomes, he takes the form of fluid water. Proteus's ability to change form on command plays off of the constant flux of the sea's water.

Odysseus's changeability also has ties to the sea. Traveling the seas for ten years, he, not dissimilar from Proteus, has the ability to assume various forms. Scholars like to argue over whether his famous identification as πολύτροπον in the first line of the Odyssey has a passive sense, "much turned," or an active one, "turning much" (Homer *Odyssey* 1.1). I argue that the poet must have intended both senses in the use of the adjective, a fact to which the subsequent scholarly debate attests. Much turned by others, particularly the sea-god Poseidon, and much tossed by the sea itself, Odysseus also turns much, wielding great agency.

Liquid as Destruction, c. 750-c. 650

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[53] See Homer *Odyssey* 12.252; LSJ "δόλος" A; see also Chantraine 1968, 1.292.

Liquidity sometimes represents destruction on its own; at other points, it is contrasted with the ideality of solidity or dryness. Just as the *Odyssey*'s Proteus stands in for the mutability of water, the Scamander, a river god, represents the destructive properties of liquidity in the *Iliad*. In book 21, the god simultaneously constitutes a feature of the landscape and a battle opponent of Achilles. In both of these roles, he exhibits destructive liquidity. This book begins with Achilles routing the Trojans; the river is identified, by its alternate name Xanthus, as the location in the book's opening sentence. Achilles divides the fleeing Trojans in half. The first half προχέοντο (Homer *Iliad* 21.6, "poured forth") across the plain. The use of verb conflates the Trojans with liquid even before the river takes up the fight on their behalf. Achilles forces the other half into the river:

> ἡμίσεες δὲ
> ἐς ποταμὸν εἰλεῦντο βαθύρροο ἀργυροδίνην,
> ἐν δ᾽ ἔπεσον μεγάλῳ πατάγῳ, βράχε δ᾽ αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα,
> ὄχθαι δ᾽ ἀμφὶ περὶ μεγάλ᾽ ἴαχον· οἳ δ᾽ ἀλαλητῷ
> ἔννεον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ἑλισσόμενοι περὶ δίνας (Homer *Iliad* 21.7-11).
>
> And half
> were pressed into the deep flowing, silver eddying river
> they fell in with a great splash, and the deep stream rang,
> The banks around resounded greatly. And the men swam
> with a shout, being tossed here and there about the eddies.

The change of topography from land to river, from solid to liquid, creates confusion, mixture, and destruction. The men are tossed this way and that, replicating the motion of the eddies in which they find themselves. Homer returns to this imagery a few lines later: Ξάνθου βαθυδινήεντος/ πλῆτο ῥόος κελάδων ἐπιμὶξ ἵππων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν (Homer *Iliad* 21.15-6, "The rushing stream of the deep-eddying Xanthus was filled pell mell with horses and men"). The confusion stems ultimately from the change from solid ground to rushing river. Achilles and

later the Scamander both boast that they will kill their opponents in the water where their bodies will be lost forever (Homer *Iliad* 21.123-7, 308-23).[54] The fluctuating nature of the liquid location has the power to disappear a body and thereby prevent proper burial.

When the Scamander directly confronts Achilles, the poet continues to examine the theme of liquidity's destructiveness. During this fight, liquidity even wields the power to disrupt the grammar of the verse. Commenting on lines 21.233-50, Nicholas Richardson observes that "The style and structure reflect [the river's actions]: notice the very high frequency of enjambment, especially periodic and progressive."[55] The content of these lines highlights the divide between solidity and liquidity as well: ὦθει δ᾽ ἐν σάκεϊ πίπτων ῥόος· οὐδὲ πόδεσσιν/ εἶχε στηρίξασθαι (Homer *Iliad* 21.241-2, "The descending stream pushed against his shield, and he could not stand firm with his feet"). The premier warrior in the Trojan War, amidst a particularly effective killing spree, realizes he is bested by the river and turns to flee. Throughout the epic, Homer highlights Achilles' exceptional speed, and this scene is no different. The poet compares him in his flight to a black eagle, ὅς θ᾽ ἅμα κάρτιστός τε καὶ ὤκιστος πετεηνῶν (Homer *Iliad* 21.253, "Who is both the strongest and the fastest of winged creatures"). Nevertheless, the water is faster, overcoming Achilles' spear's throw head-start. Homer attributes the water's ability to outpace even fleet-footed Achilles[56] to its status as a god (Homer *Iliad* 21.264), but this scene also emphasizes the changeability and motion of liquidity. In a second simile after Achilles is compared to a black eagle, Homer highlights the speed of the Scamander by comparing it to

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[54] See Lindenlauf 2003; Kitts 2000.

[55] Richardson 1993, 72.

[56] Homer uses different epithets to refer to Achilles' fleet-footedness throughout the *Iliad*, including, pointedly, amidst this very passage: ποδάρκης (21.265).

something apparently faster than a black eagle: another type of water (Homer *Iliad* 21.257-64). After the water closes the gap, it overpowers Achilles. Homer explains how κονίην δ᾽ ὑπέρεπτε ποδοῖιν (Homer *Iliad* 21.271, "[the river] cut away the sand from under his feet"). The fight between the Scamander and Achilles plays out as a battle between liquid and solid. With the river undermining the solid ground beneath his feet, Achilles is defeated. He is saved only through the intervention of Hephaestus' fire, a natural element with strong ties to dryness.

Jonathan Fenno discusses the elemental conflict between the Scamander and Achilles in his reading of the *Iliad* that pits Greeks and the saltwater of the sea against Trojans and the fresh water of Trojan rivers.[57] His argument projects geographic material onto the warring sides of the Trojan War. "Landscape is thus drawn into action, and action into landscape."[58] The conflict between seawater and freshwater again ties Homer back to the *Enuma Elish* and its war between Apsu and Tiamat.[59] He analyzes the battle between Poseidon and Hector in books 13 and 14 as a compliment to the Scamander's fracas with Achilles. Like the Scamander would later, Poseidon takes on human form to enact destruction: "In the battle by the ships, Poseidon repeatedly comes out of the salty sea (13.15, 44, 352), assumes human likeness (13.45, 216, 357; 14.136), and instills *menos*, "force" or "rage," into the Greeks (13.59-61,14.151-52)."[60] It is during this scene of Poseidon wreaking havoc, the Battle by the Ships, that Homer has characters twice cite the

[57] Fenno 2005, 498-502.

[58] Fenno 2005, 494.

[59] Fenno 2005, 496n42.

[60] Fenno 2005, 494.

liquid origins of the universe (Homer *Iliad* 14.201, 302).[61] Poseidon's actions set him against his brother Zeus, who is supporting Hector and the Trojans.

Hera forms a plan to help to distract Zeus from Poseidon's assistance of the Achaeans. Her plan is to appear to Zeus wearing Aphrodite's girdle so that τῷ δ' ὕπνον ἀπήμονά τε λιαρόν τε/ χεύῃ ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἰδὲ φρεσὶ πευκαλίμῃσι (Homer *Iliad* 14.164-5, "She might pour a sleep both untroubled and warm upon his eyelids and wise mind"). Given the context of this sentence, Anne Carson translates the adjective πευκάλιμος ("wise") as "dry" and asserts: "In Homer, the efficiently functioning mind of Zeus is characterized as 'dry.'"[62] Dryness is the ideal state for the mind of the patriarch of the gods. Hera *pouring* sleep on his dry mind paints sex and sleep as detriments to this ideality and implicitly links them with wetness. The fact that she is doing all of this to benefit the battlefield incursions of Poseidon reinforces the destructiveness of liquidity throughout this entire scene.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* likewise describes the destructiveness of wetness. The text's depiction of rain stands as a reminder that liquids need not be wholly destructive nor negative: although Hesiod advises one how to keep dry from the rain (Hesiod *Works and Days* 543-6.), he recognizes the obvious necessity and benefits of rain for farming (Hesiod *Works and Days* 448-51, 491-2, *passim*). I do not argue that the change and motion which liquids represent are always associated with destruction; as rain in *Works and Days* bears witness, liquids can be positive. Water is, after all, necessary for life. These categories are not absolute. Nevertheless, this same text also develops the theme of destructive liquid in its juxtaposition of farming and

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[61] See analysis above.

[62] Carson 1990, 137.

seafaring. Even before his passage on seafaring, Hesiod contrasts these two ways of life, saying the just choose to work the land: οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ νηῶν νίσσονται, καρπὸν δὲ φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα (Hesiod *Works and Days* 235-6, "[The just] do not travel on ships, but the grain-giving earth bears them produce").[63] In the more detailed passage on seafaring, Hesiod outlines the dangers of this way of life in contrast to the relative stability of farming. The sea has the power to destroy (ἀποφθείσειε) sailors, as do Poseidon and Zeus (Hesiod *Works and Days* 666).[64] The dangers of the sea stem from its volatility. Hesiod begins the passage with the phrase ναυτιλίης δυσπεμφέλου ("stormy seafaring") which associates seafaring with the most volatile condition of the sea (Hesiod *Works and Days* 618). He later reinforces this idea, claiming the sea is particularly harsh (χαλεπὸν) when winds and rain stir it up (ὤρινε, Hesiod *Works and Days* 676-7). The liquid of rain in and of itself can destroy a ship through rot (Hesiod *Works and Days* 626). Finally, Hesiod states: δεινὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ θανεῖν μετὰ κύμασιν (Hesiod *Works and Days* 687, "It is terrible to die among the waves"). Parallel to *Iliad* 21, this terror arrises in part from the confusion of the sea preventing a proper burial.

Despite his disdain for seafaring, Hesiod does offer some advice to sailors. He further elaborates upon the potential dangers of the sea. For instance, he warns:

> μηδ᾽ ἐν νηυσὶν ἅπαντα βίον κοΐλῃσι τίθεσθαι·
> ἀλλὰ πλέω λείπειν, τὰ δὲ μείονα φορτίζεσθαι.
> δεινὸν γὰρ πόντου μετὰ κύμασι πήματι κύρσαι (Hesiod *Works and Days* 689-91).
>
> Do not place your entire livelihood onto hollow ships,
> but leave the majority, and load the minority.
> For it is terrible to meet with misery among the waves of the sea.

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[63] For the subject's antecedent (ἰθυδίκῃσι…ἀνδράσι), see line 230.

[64] The reference to Zeus here is in his capacity to create storms so both deities are included thanks in large part to their association with liquidity.

The construction δεινὸν…μετὰ κύμασι recalls the same phrase four lines earlier in which Hesiod says it is terrible *to die* among the waves. This puts a play on the word βίον, which means "livelihood" here but can also mean "life." This advice rests upon the assumption that traveling on the sea is precarious. This reinforces a sentiment voiced earlier in the poem. Hesiod states that οὐδὲ τό γ᾽ ἐν οἴκῳ κατακείμενον ἀνέρα κήδει./ οἴκοι βέλτερον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ θύρηφιν (Hesiod *Works and Days* 364-5, "That which is stored up at home does not trouble a man. It is better at home, since that which is abroad is vulnerable"). In this advice, Hesiod does not explicitly mention seafaring, but the distinction he makes goes hand in hand with what he says in the seafaring passage. A farmer stores his wealth at home and has complete control over his livelihood. The sea offers an otherwise unattainable connectivity to the outside world. It allowed Hesiod's father to come from Cyme and the Achaeans to reach Troy (Hesiod *Works and Days* 651, 636). While an admiral or a merchant might see advantages in this connectivity, Hesiod sees instability, risk, and destruction.

Historical Background, c. 650-c. 500

The changes of the eighth and early seventh centuries, particularly the increase in seafaring, continued and accelerated in the later seventh and sixth centuries.

Thucydides sketches this period in his Archaeology. The section on this time period emphatically begins δυνατωτέρας (1.13.1, "more powerful"). In this initial clause, this adjective modifies τῆς Ἑλλάδος ("Greece") generally; throughout these passages, that growth in power narrows to become the quantitative and qualitative growth in navies throughout the Greek-

speaking world. In that first sentence, Thucydides links the growth of Greece and the acquisition of wealth (τῶν χρημάτων τὴν κτῆσιν) with the establishment of tyrannies and the development of navies (1.13.1). Although these passages display what A. W. Gomme dubs "a severe compression of history,"[65] they do identify the major naval players of this era. They delineate the growth and power of the navies of Corinth, Samos, Phocaea, and later Sicily and Corcyra. While connecting growth and power with navies, Thucydides notes an intrinsic instability. He writes: ναυτικά τε ἐξηρτύετο ἡ Ἑλλάς, καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης μᾶλλον ἀντείχοντο (1.13.1, "Greece fit out navies, and they clung more to the sea"). His choice of the verb ἀντείχοντο ("clung to") points to the logical contradiction of clinging to liquid, highlighting the inherent instability of the sea.[66]

Greek colonization of the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions increased in this period. Figure 1 above shows the rate of Greek colonization across the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries. Both the literary and the archeological data show a clear increase moving into the latter part of the seventh and sixth centuries. This surge is even more evident in the archeological dates, the more reliable data.[67] This increase in colonization went hand in hand with an upsurge in sea traffic of all sorts during this era. Trade and commercial seafaring increase between Greek poleis as well as between Greece and the outside world. Jonathan Hall

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[65] Gomme 1945-1982, 1.121.

[66] A similar construction comes later: τῆς γὰρ δὴ θαλάσσης πρῶτος ἐτόλμησεν εἰπεῖν ὡς ἀνθεκτέα ἐστί (1.93.4, "For [Themistocles] first dared to say that the Athenians should cling to the sea"). Here the verb ἐτόλμησεν ("dared") reinforces the idea that this construction contains a logical contradiction.

[67] Although some of the literary dates appear sound, the use of very late authors, such as Plutarch and Eusebius, render this data set relatively less reliable.

recognizes the specialization that results from all of this sea traffic: “It is, however, the second half of the sixth century that sees a significant increase in instances of what we might characterize as professional, profit driven trade.”[68] This parallels what Thucydides terms τῶν χρημάτων τὴν κτῆσιν (1.13.1, “the acquisition of wealth”).

Innovation in naval technology simultaneously intensified. It is in this period that triremes first operated with regularity in Greece. As mentioned above, a relief from Phoenician Sidon dated to 701 depicts a ship with three rowing tiers. There is no evidence that triremes appeared in Greece that early. There is a debate fueled by our paucity of data over whether the Phoenicians or the Greeks were the first to invent the trireme.[69] Given the relief from Sidon as our earliest attestation, Thucydides’ limiting comment that the Corinthians were the first to build triremes *in Greece* (1.13.2), and the large advantage that the Phoenicians held in trireme building by the early fifth century, the Phoenicians used triremes before the Greeks and were likely the inventors of the trireme. The earliest Greek literary attestation of the word comes from the sixth century poet Hipponax: Μιμνῆ κατωμόχανε, μηκέτι γράψῃς/ ὄφιν τριήρεος ἐν πολυζύγῳ τοίχῳ/ ἀπ᾽ ἐμβόλου φεύγοντα πρὸς κυβερνήτην (Hipponax Fr. 28 [West], 1-3,(“Gaping-assed Mimnes, stop painting/ the snake on the many-benched side of the trireme/ slithering from the ram to the pilot”).[70] Herodotus first mentions triremes in connection with the Egyptian pharaoh Necos, who ruled at the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth centuries (Herodotus 2.159). In

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68 Hall 2014, 274.

69 Among those who argue the Greeks were first are: Morrison and Coates 2000 and A.B. Lloyd 1975. Among those who favor the Phoenicians are Basch 1969 and Davison 1947. See also Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.43; Meijer 1986, 6.

70 See Morrison and Coates 2000, 34-5; Wallinga 1993, 103.

Greece, he frames Polycrates, the late sixth century tyrant of Samos, as the pivotal figure. After Polycrates seized control of Samos in c. 525, he used a navy of one hundred penteconters to conquer many of the surrounding islands and mainland towns (Herodotus 3.39). However, he later sent forty triremes to aid the Persian king Cambyses (Herodotus 3.44).

Thucydides also depicts Samos as an early possessor of triremes; however, he offers an earlier date:

> πρῶτοι δὲ Κορίνθιοι λέγονται ἐγγύτατα τοῦ νῦν τρόπου μεταχειρίσαι τὰ περὶ τὰς ναῦς, καὶ τριήρες ἐν Κορίνθῳ πρῶτον τῆς Ἑλλάδος ναυπηγηθῆναι. φαίνεται δὲ καὶ Σαμίοις Ἀμεινοκλῆς Κορίνθιος ναυπηγὸς ναῦς ποιήσας τέσσαρας· ἔτη δ᾽ ἐστὶ μάλιστα τριακόσια ἐς τὴν τελευτὴν τοῦδε τοῦ πολέμου ὅτε Ἀμεινοκλῆς Σαμίοι ἦλθεν (1.13.2-3).
>
> The Corinthians are said to be first to manage their navies most similar to the present-day method, and triremes were built in Corinth first of all Greece. Ameinocles, a Corinthian shipwright, clearly made four ships for the Samians. The end of this war was around three hundred years after Ameinocles went to Samos.

In Thucydides' telling, Corinth—also famous for its wealth and tyrants—is the home of the first Greek triremes, but Samos still plays a central role. The historian's reckoning would put Ameinocles' trip to Samos at c. 704 (1.13.2).[71] F. Meijer argues that the clause claiming that the Corinthians were the first Greeks to develop the trireme is parenthetical and that the ships Ameinocles builds for Samos should not be understood to be triremes.[72] H. T. Wallinga comes to a similar conclusion.[73] In line with Morrison, Coates, Hornblower, and Occam's Razor, I find

[71] He says that these ships were built three hundred years before the end of "this war." Some have interpreted this to mean the Archidamian War, the first third of the Peloponnesian War which ended in 421, as opposed to the entire war which ended in 404. This would push his dates for these events even seventeen years earlier to 721. See Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.44.

[72] Meijer 1988, 461-3.

[73] Wallinga 1993, 14-5.

this interpretation to be misreading Thucydides' rather straightforward prose.[74] Hornblower succinctly sums up this passage: "It does seem to me natural to take Th. to be moving from the general (naval innovativeness) to the particular (triremes), then to the very particular (Ameinokles), and then offering a date for what he has just been talking about—that is, for the triremes and Ameinokles."[75] Even after we acknowledge that this passage would make little logical sense unless the ships that Ameinocles built for the Corinthians were triremes, there are reasons to doubt the early date of c. 704. W. G. Forrest argues that Thucydides bases his dates on generations, assigning forty years per generation, a figure that is too large.[76] A more accurate calculation based on thirty-year generations produces a date of c. 654. Even with this adjustment, this account puts Ameinocles in Samos a century before Polycrates' first fleet lacked triremes according to Herodotus. This is not as large a problem as some make it out to be. It is perfectly conceivable that Samos had four copies of an early prototype trireme in the second half of the seventh century and lost those ships over the course of the following tumultuous century. The innovative and presumably expensive ship would not have been easy to replace, but the newfound strength under Polycrates set the stage for them to build a new fleet. There remain other possibilities, but lacking hard archaeological evidence, we should not put our two best sources in opposition when they can be reconciled.

Continuing to attribute firsts to the Corinthians, Thucydides ascribes the first naval battle to the Corinthians and the Corcyraeans (Thucydides 1.13.4). He claims that this occurred forty

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[74] Morrison and Coates 2000, 38; Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.43.

[75] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.43.

[76] Forrest 1969. Others have agreed with this refined dating: Lloyd 1972, 278; Salmon 1984, 218. See also Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.44.

years after Ameinocles went to Samos. Judging from the end of the entire Peloponnesian War and recalculating for thirty-year generations as before, this would put this naval battle at the end of the seventh century, which lines up with the conflict between the states as described by Herodotus (Herodotus 3.49-53).[77] There is no major reason to doubt that a naval battle between Corinth and Corcyra occurred around this time, yet there are reasons to suspect it may not have been the first. As we saw above, depictions of ships from the late eighth and seventh centuries begin to show warships, or, at the very least, components of warships such as rams. These include the Aristonothos krater which is dated to the second quarter of the seventh century and displays a battle between two ships opposite an illustration of Odysseus blinding the cylcops.[78] Moreover, Thucydides has a motive for highlighting the conflict between Corinth and Corcyra early in his text: this conflict will, later in book 1, prove to be one of the sparks for the Peloponnesian War (1.24-55). Nevertheless, both Thucydides and the other forms of evidence point to the fact that this era saw a distinctive uptick in naval military engagements.

The *diolkos*, a road constructed to transport ships or goods across the Corinthian isthmus, bears witness to the increased importance of the sea and sea traffic in this era. Nikolaus Verdelis excavated extant parts of the *diolkos* in the 1950s and dated it to the late seventh or early sixth century on the basis of inscribed letters and nearby pottery.[79] He posited that the function of the road was for the portage of ships across the isthmus, as we see it operating in the fifth century. Thucydides shows the Peloponnesians twice planning (and once succeeding) to carry triremes

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[77] Forrest 1969, 106; Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.45.

[78] Aristonothos Krater, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Capitoline Museums, Rome, no. 172. Morrison and Coates 2000, 28.

[79] Verdelis 1957.

across the isthmus (3.15, 8.7), and Aristophanes uses his audience's knowledge of the *diolkos* to construct a sexual joke (Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazusae* 647-8). Though Verdelis' interpretation of the road's function remains the general consensus, some scholars prefer to think of the road as primarily transporting cargoes, arguing that the fifth century literature remarked upon unusual occurrences.[80] Whether the *diolkos* was constructed to facilitate the portage of ships regularly or to ease the transport of other materials, the building of the road represents a commercial shift to the sea. Thucydides states that Corinth's location always rendered it an ἐμπόριον ("market") for those to the north and south, or τῶν τε ἐντὸς Πελοποννήσου καὶ τῶν ἔξω, ("both those inside the Peloponnesus and those outside"), since τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὸ πάλαι κατὰ γῆν τὰ πλείω ἢ κατὰ θάλασσαν (1.13.5, "the Greeks of old <communicated with one another> more by land than by sea"). As seafaring became more common, he continues, Corinth, by now already wealthy, was in the position to capitalize. He does not mention the *diolkos* specifically, but the construction of this passageway comports with the transformation he describes. The *diolkos* catalyzed traffic—be it ships or cargoes—between east and west, allowing Corinth to sit atop a true crossroads, straddling north and south, east and west, land and sea, past and future.

Liquid as Motion and Change, c. 650-c. 500

The themes of liquid change and liquid destruction seen in epic materialize in other genres, fractals of a common culture. The next two sections analyze these themes in the

80 Wiseman 1978, 45; MacDonald 1986, 192; Lewis 2001, 13–14; Pettegrew 2011.

Homeric hymns,[81] lyric poetry,[82] and natural philosophy. Although certain authors analyzed in these sections, such as Archilochus, Simonides, and Heraclitus, could fit temporally into the previous or following sections, I will address them here to maintain consistency in genre.

The subset of generative liquid developed by both Homer and Hesiod continues to be employed in different ways by authors of this period. For instance, Thales of Miletus, who flourished in the early sixth century, conceptualized water as the beginning of all things. The majority of our information on Thales comes from Aristotle, who paraphrases several of Thales' tenets across multiple works. One relevant passage reads:

> Θαλῆς μὲν ὁ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχηγὸς φιλοσοφίας ὕδωρ φησὶν εἶναι (διὸ καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐφ᾽ ὕδατος ἀπεφήνατο εἶναι), λαβὼν ἴσως τὴν ὑπόληψιν ταύτην ἐκ τοῦ πάντων ὁρᾶν τὴν τροφὴν ὑγρὰν οὖσαν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ θερμὸν ἐκ τούτου γιγνόμενον καὶ τούτῳ ζῶν (τὸ δ᾽ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται, τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ πάντων) διά τε δὴ τοῦτο τὴν ὑπόληψιν λαβὼν ταύτην καὶ διὰ τὸ πάντων τὰ σπέρματα τὴν φύσιν ὑγρὰν ἔχειν, τὸ δ᾽ ὕδωρ ἀρχὴν τῆς φύσεως εἶναι τοῖς ὑγροῖς (Aristotle *Metaphysics* 983b).
>
> Thales, the first of this type of philosopher says [the primordial element] is water (which is why he described the earth resting on water). Perhaps he formed this assumption from observing that the nourishment of all things is wet and that heat itself comes from this and exists from this (and that from which something comes, this is the beginning of all things). Because of this and the fact that the seeds of all things have a wet nature, he formed this assumption that water is the beginning of nature for wet things.

Aristotle mixes his own interpretations and explanations in with the tenets of Thales' philosophy. Nevertheless, the basic fact that the material world originated from water comes from Thales

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[81] There is evidence that these hymns were meant to be sung by a bard before a recitation of other epic poetry; yet Janko 1982 analyzes linguistic evidence and argues that all of the extant hymns we have were composed after *the Iliad* and *the Odyssey*, as well as after Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days.*

[82] Though the term lyric can apply to more specific strands of poetry, I am using it here in its broader sense, early Greek poetry outside of dactylic hexameter.

himself. Aristotle later lists other natural philosophers who credited other elements as coming first, but in this passage he makes sure to specify that Thales was first of this type of philosopher, making water the first element to be named as the first element. Another iteration of generative liquid that continues in this period is the liquid imagery used to describe speech. For instance, in a Homeric hymn addressed to the Muses, Apollo, and Zeus, though commonly titled simply *To the Muses and Apollo*, a man whom is loved by the Muses is called blessed. The hymn continues: γλυκερή οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδή ([Homer] *To the Muses and Apollo* 25.5, "A sweet voice flows from his mouth"). The Muses play an essential role in the beginning of both Homeric epics (Homer *Iliad* 1.1, *Odyssey* 1.1) and some Homeric hymns (e.g., [Homer] *To Hermes* 1, *To Aphrodite* 1). Flowing speech's association with the Muses here renders it generative liquid; we will see flowing imagery also emphasize the mutability of speech below.

Parallel to how Homer constructs Odysseus, the character most closely linked with seafaring, as changeable like the sea itself, Semonides, writing in the latter part of the seventh century, directly makes this same connection between the mutability of the sea and those associated with it. In his long diatribe against womankind, he derides various categories of women. Among these are women from the sea:

> τὴν δ᾽ ἐκ θαλάσσης, ἣ δύ᾽ ἐν φρεσὶν νοεῖ·
> τὴν μὲν γελᾷ τε καὶ γέγηθεν ἡμέρην·
> ἐπαινέσει μιν ξεῖνος ἐν δόμοις ἰδών·
> 'οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη τῆσδε λωΐων γυνὴ
> ἐν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν οὐδὲ καλλίων·'
> τὴν δ᾽ οὐκ ἀνεκτὸς οὔτ᾽ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν
> οὔτ᾽ ἆσσον ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλὰ μαίνεται τότε
> ἄπλητον ὥσπερ ἀμφὶ τέκνοισιν κύων·
> ἀμείλιχος δὲ πᾶσι κἀποθυμίη
> ἐχθροῖσιν ἶσα καὶ φίλοισι γίγνεται·
> ὥσπερ θάλασσα πολλάκις μὲν ἀτρεμὴς

ἕστηκ᾽ ἀπήμων χάρμα ναύτῃσιν μέγα
θέρεος ἐν ὥρῃ, πολλάκις δὲ μαίνεται
βαρυκτύποισι κύμασιν φορευμένη·
ταύτῃ μάλιστ᾽ ἔοικε τοιαύτη γυνὴ
ὀργήν, φυὴν δὲ πόντος οὐκ ἄλλην ἔχει (Semonides 7 [Edmonds], 27-42).

Another woman is from the sea, who thinks with two minds.
One day she laughs and rejoices.
A stranger would praise her, seeing her in the house:
"There is not another woman more agreeable than her
in all of humankind nor more beautiful."
But then she is unbearable either to look upon with your eyes
or to come near, but she rages then
unapproachably just like a bitch around her young.
She becomes implacable and detestable
to all, enemies and friends alike.
Just as the calm sea often stands
undisturbed, a great joy to sailors
in summertime, but often rages
being borne upon loud-thundering waves.
Such a woman seems especially like this
in her passion, and she has a nature no different than the sea.

This type of woman, according to Semonides, resembles the sea in the sense that they are both changeable: calm, even enticing one day and raging the next.[83] The verb μαίνεται ("rages") is used to describe both the woman and the sea, tying the two closer together. The woman is the subject of verb γελᾷ ("laughs"), but the sea is often the subject of this verb in Greek idiom.[84] This comparison and the overarching misogynistic nature of the poem reveal that Semonides viewed the sea's changeability and resultant unpredictability as negative. This is not surprising; the fluctuations of the sea can be dangerous to seafarers then and now.

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[83] Cf. Alcaeus 298 (Campbell), 7 for another attestation of a lyric poet commenting (albeit more indirectly) on the changeability of the sea. The poem is quite fragmentary at this point, but its illustration of the sea as changeable is not in doubt.

[84] i.e. [Homer] *To Demeter* 14, [Aeschylus] *Prometheus Bound* 90. See Stanford 1936, 114-6; Campbell 1990, 188.

A changeable personality is not always constructed as a negative, however. Just as Homer, at times, depicts the shifty character of Odysseus as useful, so Theognis, a mid-sixth century Megarean poet,[85] praises a changeable personality. Earlier in his corpus, Theognis disparages shiftiness and untrustworthiness (Theognis [Edmonds], 61-8). All the same, Theognis details the advantages of mutable behavior, comparing it not to the sea itself but to a sea creature:

> θυμέ, φίλους κατὰ πάντας ἐπίστρεφε ποικίλον ἦθος,
> ὀργὴν συμμίσγων ἥντιν᾽ ἕκαστος ἔχει.
> πουλύπου ὀργὴν ἴσχε πολυπλόκου, ὃς ποτὶ πέτρῃ
> τῇ προσομιλήσῃ τοῖος ἰδεῖν ἐφάνη·
> νῦν μὲν τῇδ᾽ ἐφέπου, τότε δ᾽ ἀλλοῖος χρόα γίνου.
> κρέσσων τοι σοφίη γίνεται ἀτροπίης (Theognis [Edmonds], 213-8).
>
> Spirit, turn a changeable character to each and every friend,
> mixing the impulse which each possesses.
> Have the impulse of a crafty octopus, who assumes
> the appearance of the rock to which it clings:
> Now follow this way, then take on the skin of another.
> Cunning is better for you than inflexibility.

The advice stands as a reminder that possessing a flexible personality can be seen as positive. The adjective ποικίλον ("changeable") in the first line of this excerpt is used by Hesiod to describe Prometheus (Hesiod *Theogony* 510-1).[86] The final word of the passage, ἀτροπίης ("inflexibility"), coupled with earlier wordplay πουλύπου… πολυπλόκου, evokes the first line of the *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus is famously characterized as πολύτροπον ("much turned," "turning much"). Homer, too, uses a clinging octopus simile to describe Odysseus' clinging to a rock: ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε πουλύποδος θαλάμης ἐξελκομένοιο/ πρὸς κοτυληδονόφιν πυκιναὶ λάιγγες ἔχονται/ ὣς τοῦ πρὸς πέτρῃσι θρασειάων ἀπὸ χειρῶν/ ῥινοὶ ἀπέδρυφθεν (Homer *Odyssey*

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[85] The date of Theognis is disputed: see Miller 1996, 82.

[86] Campbell 1990, 360.

5.432-5, “As when an octopus gets dragged from its lair, numerous pebbles are held by its suckers, so from his bold hands, pieces of skin were torn off in the rocks”). In a twist from the opening of the simile where it appears that Odysseus is being compared to the octopus (ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε πουλύποδος θαλάμης ἐξελκομένοιο), the author—exuding his own shiftiness—parallels Odysseus to that which the octopus clings to. Yet Theognis, nevertheless, evokes Odysseus while discussing an octopus' crafty shiftiness. Already in the sixth century, Odyssean shiftiness was being used as a common referent.

Flourishing around the turn of the fifth century, Heraclitus equated the fluidity of rivers with change itself. The extant evidence on this topic from Heraclitus is succinct, one fragment in direct speech and paraphrases from later Greek authors. Present day notions of this material largely stem from the latter. The first century doxographer Arius Didymus provides the fragment which is “the only statement on the river whose wording is unmistakably Heraclitean”:[87] ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ (Heraclitus D-K 12, “Upon the same people stepping into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow”). The fragment discusses the flux of liquidity, ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα (“other and still other”), within the larger context of unity, τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν (“the same”). The opening four words, all dative masculine plural, create an ambiguity: the adjective τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν (“the same”) agrees with both the people and the rivers. Thomas M. Robinson claims that “the point seems trivial, and hardly part of his intention.”[88] Charles H. Kahn references other syntactical ambiguity in Heraclitus' corpus but falls short of fully endorsing a purposeful ambiguity here, saying only “it

[87] Kahn 1979, 167.

[88] Robinson 1987, 84.

is possible."[89] However, such an ambiguity would have been clearly evident to Heraclitus and could have been avoided if he so wished. The careful construction is meant to emphasize the theme of unity seen in the first half of the fragment.

Despite the under-appreciation of this ambiguity, scholars have been diligent in showing that this fragment does not describe only flux, the concept that Plato and other later Greeks associate with Heraclitus, but it places flux within a larger unity. Kahn argues that "What is emphasized is that the structure and hence the identity of a given river remains fixed, despite or even because its substance is constantly changing."[90] Robinson offers a similar analysis: "For the river is a striking example of precisely that which preserves structural identity and unity while undergoing constant and predictable change of content."[91] These scholars are correct that the structure of the river shows unity, but the liquid contents of the river, ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ("other and still other water") represent flux. Kahn insightfully shows how the careful syntax of the fragment mirrors its contents: "The sentence structure imitates the river: the dative forms suggest the disappearance of water downstream, whereas the neuter plural subject *hetera kai hetera hydata* represents the oncoming waters from upstream."[92] The shift in case represents the movement of the water which, in turn, represents the abstract concept of change itself.

Later Greek authors are largely responsible for shaping our understanding of Heraclitus' river imagery and its connection to flux. Although they do not quote Heraclitus directly, the

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[89] Kahn 1979, 167.

[90] Kahn 1979, 168.

[91] Robinson 1987, 84.

[92] Kahn 1979, 167.

sentiment that one cannot step into the same river twice can be gleaned from their paraphrases. Writing in the fourth century, Plato states that λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι 'πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει,' καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῇ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς 'δὶς ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης' (Plato *Cratylus* 402a, "Heraclitus somewhere says that all things move and nothing is at rest, and comparing the universe to the flow of a river, he says that you would not step twice into the same river"). Plato is largely responsible for the view of Heraclitus as a major proponent of universal flux.[93] Discussing the same Cratylus around whom Plato centered this dialogue, Aristotle notes this same maxim of Heraclitus (Aristotle *Metaphysics* 4 1010a). Centuries later, Plutarch paraphrases Heraclitus in this way:

> ποταμῷ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν εμβῆναι δὶς τῷ αὐτῷ καθ' Ἡράκλειτον οὐδὲ θνητῆς οὐσίας δὶς ἅψασθαι κατὰ ἕξιν· ἀλλ' ὀξύτητι καὶ τάχει μεταβολῆς σκίδνησι καὶ πάλιν συνάγει μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ πάλιν οὐδ' ὕστερον, ἀλλ' ἅμα συνίσταται καὶ ἀπολείπει καὶ πρόσεισι καὶ ἄπεισι (Plutarch *De E apud Delphos* 392b; Heraclitus D-K 91).
>
> For it is not possible to step twice into the same river, according to Heraclitus, nor to touch twice the substance of a mortal substance, but because of the quickness and speed of its motion, it scatters and gathers again, or rather not again nor later, but simultaneously combines and dissolves, approaches and departs.

Scholars disagree over whether these two iterations of Heraclitus' river imagery, the direct quotation in D-K 12 and the sentiment underlying these paraphrases, should be taken together or separately. Kahn argues for taking them together, suggesting that the paraphrases may offer a more radical extrapolation of D-K 12: "Since new waters are ever flowing in, it is in fact *not* possible to step into the same river twice."[94] He continues with another alternative that also attempts to take them together: "Or, more plausibly, the formula of LI [= D-K 91] may have

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[93] See, in particular, Plato *Theaetetus* 160d, *Cratylus* 401d-401a.

[94] Kahn 1979, 169.

been stated first, with L [= D-K 12] following as its justification: 'One can never bathe in the same river, For as one steps into [what is supposed to be] the same rivers, new waters are flowing on."[95] Recent scholarship has attempted to move Heraclitus away from his representation in Plato, where he strictly advocates a doctrine of flux.[96] Notwithstanding, no one would argue that Heraclitus uses the liquid contents of rivers to connote flux itself.

Liquid as Destruction, c. 650-c. 500

The association of liquids with different types of destruction likewise flows through this era. Lyric poets, in particular, connect these concepts in a variety of ways. Destruction is often directly related to the changeable, unpredictable aspects of liquids; then again, at times this relation is not readily observable. Just as Heraclitus drew one of the more direct connections between liquidity and change, other fragments of his construct a direct line between liquids and destruction.

In the seventh century, Archilochus became renowned for his versatility. He composed poetry in a variety of meters, on a range of topics, and in diverse tones. In a ten-line fragment, he encourages one Pericles to take heart after a shipwreck has taken some lives. This poem discusses the dangers of the sea but also connects this to the grief of the aftermath through liquid imagery:

> κήδεα μὲν στονόεντα, Περίκλεες, οὔτε τις ἀστῶν
> μεμφόμενος θαλίῃς τέρψεται οὔτε πόλις·
> τοίους γὰρ κατὰ κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης

[95] Kahn 1979, 169.

[96] For a brief discussion of this related to the river imagery, see above. For an outline of this historiography regarding Heraclitus's corpus more generally, see Kahn 1979, 147-53.

ἔκλυσεν, οἰδαλέους δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ ὀδύνῃς ἔχομεν
πνεύμονας: ἀλλὰ θεοὶ γὰρ ἀνηκέστοισι κακοῖσιν,
ὦ φίλ᾽, ἐπὶ κρατερὴν τλημοσύνην ἔθεσαν
φάρμακον· ἄλλοτε δ᾽ ἄλλος ἔχει τάδε· νῦν μὲν ἐς ἡμέας
ἐτράπεθ᾽, αἱματόεν δ᾽ ἕλκος ἀναστένομεν,
ἐξαῦτις δ᾽ ἑτέρους ἐπαμείψεται· ἀλλὰ τάχιστα
τλῆτε γυναικεῖον πένθος ἀπωσάμενοι (Archilochus 13 [West]).

Blaming groan-inducing mourning, Pericles, none of the
townspeople nor the polis itself will rejoice in good cheer.
For the swell of the loud-roaring sea flooded over
such men, we have lungs swollen with distress.
But the gods, friend, have made stout endurance
the remedy for incurable evils.
Different people have these evils at different times. Now
they turn towards us, and we groan over this bloody wound,
but they will go in turn to others. But take heart most
speedily, pushing back womanly grief.

The first and most explicitly destructive liquid is, of course, the sea. κῦμα ("the swell") directly refers to the motion of the sea. It exerts its agency as the subject of the intensified verb κατὰ… ἔκλυσεν ("flooded over"). The -φλοίσβοιο portion of the adjective πολυφλοίσβοιο ("loud-roaring") refers to "any confused roaring noise."[97] In the *Iliad*, it describes the din of battle (Homer *Iliad* 5.322, 10.416), and it is later often paired with the sea (i.e., [Aeschylus] *Prometheus Bound* 792). Archilochus' word choice illustrates the changeable, unpredictable nature of the sea as underlying its destructiveness.

The sea is not the only destructive liquid in this fragment; Archilochus also describes the disadvantageous grief of the aftermath in liquid terms. He states that their πνεύμονας ("lungs") were οἰδαλέους ("swollen") with ὀδύνῃς ("distress"). The noun "lungs" may be employed here

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97 LSJ "φλοῖσβος."

as the seat of love, similar to the English *heart*.[98] This is the first extant usage of this adjective. Homeric usages of the verb from which the adjective is derived, οἰδάνω ("cause to swell"), and later usages of this adjective in the Hippocratic Corpus denote body parts becoming swollen from excess (liquid) humors.[99] The use of the adjective here hints at distress as a liquid. The idea of swelling with distress also links the mourners' grief with the cause of that grief, the *swell* of the ocean (κῦμα). Grief-induced tears, though not mentioned directly, likewise connect liquid, swelling, and distress. Archilochus illustrates this negative circumstance as a αἱματόεν ἕλκος ("bloody wound"), continuing the negative, liquid imagery. Deborah Steiner contextualizes this poem within sympotic culture, mixing liquefying drunkenness into our understanding of Archilochus' verse.[100] Finally, the poet encourages Pericles to resist γυναικεῖον πένθος ("womanly grief"). The authors of later medical texts comprising the Hippocratic Corpus (analyzed in the following chapter) repeatedly depict women's flesh as more moist than that of men ([Hippocrates] *Nature of the Child* 15, *Glands* 16, *Diseases of Women* 1.1, *Airs, Waters, Places* 10).[101] Given liquids' repeated connections with misfortune and grief throughout, one can view this fragment—similar to the depiction of Hera in book 14 of the *Iliad*—as a precursor to later medical texts. Archilochus's use of liquid imagery ties the resultant grief to the dangerous swell of the sea and reinforces his theme that this grief should be avoided.

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[98] Campbell 1990, 146.

[99] See, for example, Homer *Iliad* 9.554, 646; [Hippocrates] *Diseases* 4.57; [Hippocrates] *Diseases of Women* 1.39, 70.

[100] Steiner 2012.

[101] See also King 1998, 1-39.

Allegory was employed throughout this period to elucidate the perils of liquidity. A later Heraclitus, the first century CE Homeric scholar, details early examples of non-Homeric allegory. The first three poems he cites all play upon the unpredictability and destructiveness of the sea to illustrate war and civil strife (Heraclitus *Homeric Problems* 5). Heraclitus first cites the following poem from Archilochus:

> Γλαῦχ', ὅρα· βαθὺς γὰρ ἤδη κύμασιν ταράσσεται
> πόντος, ἀμφὶ δ' ἄκρα Γυρέων ὀρθὸν ἵσταται νέφος,
> σῆμα χειμῶνος· κιχάνει δ' ἐξ ἀελπτίης φόβος (Archilochus 105 [West]).
>
> Glaucus, look: the deep sea is already disturbed with waves,
> and around the peaks of Gyrae a cloud stands straight,
> sign of a storm, and fear arrives from the unexpected.

Heraclitus glosses this allegory: Ἀρχίλοχος μέν ἐν τοῖς Θρᾳκικοῖς ἀπειλημμένος δεινοῖς τὸν πόλεμον εἰκάζει θαλαττίῳ κλύδωνι (Heraclitus *Homeric Problems* 5, "Archilochus caught up in the Thracian dangers, compares the war to the billow of the sea"). The verb ταράσσεται ("disturbed") connects the storm's churning of the sea to the disruption of war.[102] This final clause connects the dangers that both weather and the sea pose to their changeable and unpredictable natures.

The other two poems that Heraclitus cites as examples of early allegory are Alcaeus' constructions of the ship of state (Heraclitus *Homeric Problems* 5).[103] These play upon the same unpredictability and perilous nature of the sea, but the seafaring aspect adds layers of urgency and vulnerability. Alcaeus flourished on Lesbos around the turn of the sixth century. Heraclitus tells us that both poems allude to civil strife in Lesbos surrounding the tyrant Myrsilus. For both

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[102] Cf. κίνησις (1.1.2, "movement").

[103] For a detailed analysis of this allegory, see Gentili 1988, 197-215. For a counterargument, see Uhlig 2018, who argues that these fragments are, in fact, not allegories.

poems, Heraclitus cites the beginning, and papyri fill in portions of the remainder. The first of the two fragments begins:

> τόδ’ αὖτε κῦμα τὼ προτέρω νέμω
> στείχει, παρέξει δ’ ἄμμι πόνον πόλυν
> ἄντλην, ἐπεί κε νᾶος ἔμβᾳ […]
>
> φαρξώμεθ’ ὡς ὤκιστα τοίχοις,
> ἐς δ’ ἔχυρον λίμενα δρόμωμεν (Alcaeus 6 [Campbell], 1-8).
>
> This wave, in turn, just like the last,
> approaches, and it will provide us much labor
> to bail out, when it boards the ship…
>
> Let us shore up the ship’s sides as quickly as possible
> and rush to a secure harbor.

The waves represent unpredictability, coming from one direction and then the next. Ships are built to rove the seas, but they must maintain an ideal level of solidity to remain both safe and effective. The difficulties of retaining this solidity were a concern for Hesiod (Hesiod *Works and Days* 626) and will also be a focal point for Thucydides (7.12.3-4). In the first stanza, water ends up where it should not, forcing the sailors to work to expel it. Alcaeus advises that they find a secure harbor, away from the chaos and danger of the open sea. The second fragment begins:

> ἀσυννέτημμι τὼν ἀνέμων στάσιν·
> τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔνθεν κῦμα κυλίνδεται,
> τὸ δ’ ἔνθεν, ἄμμες δ’ ὂν τὸ μέσσον
> νᾶϊ φορήμμεθα σὺν μελαίνᾳ
>
> χείμωνι μόχθεντες μεγάλῳ μάλα·
> πὲρ μὲν γὰρ ἄντλος ἰστοπέδαν ἔχει,
> λαῖφος δὲ πὰν ζάδηλον ἤδη,
> καὶ λάκιδες μέγαλαι κὰτ αὖτο,
>
> χάλαισι δ’ ἄγκυρραι, τὰ δ’ ὀή[ϊα (Alcaeus 326 [Campbell], 1-9).
>
> I do not understand the strife of the winds.

For one wave rolls in from here,
then another from there, and we are borne
in the middle with our black ship,

suffering acutely in the great storm.
For bilge water has filled the mast-hold,
the sail is already perforated all over,
and huge tears are throughout it,

the anchors are loosened, and the rud[der

The use of the noun στάσιν ("civil strife") in the first line draws the reader's attention to the underlying meaning of the allegory. Otherwise, the extant portion of the poem focuses on the troubles of a ship caught in a storm similar to the previous poem. Here, too, waves roll in from different directions. Here, too, water has managed to get to where it is not supposed to be. The storm tears the sail and loosens the anchors, removing these objects from their ideal wholeness and security. The allegory in both poems uses the unpredictability and perilousness of the sea's liquid to illustrate the dangers of civil strife. Moreover, the comparison of the polis to a ship relies on the reader's knowledge that though a ship is meant to be at sea it must remain whole, dry, and firm to retain its efficacy and security.

Theognis takes up the imagery of the ship of state. The beginning of the following passage resembles the constructions of Alcaeus in certain respects, but for Theognis, the chaos of the storm is only the beginning of the seafarers' troubles:

νῦν δέ με γινῴσκοντα παρέρχεται, εἰμὶ δ᾽ ἄφωνος
χρημοσύνῃ, πολλῶν γνοὺς ἂν ἄμεινον ἐτέων,
οὕνεκα νῦν φερόμεσθα καθ᾽ ἱστία λευκὰ βαλόντες
μηλίου ἐκ πόντου νύκτα διὰ δνοφέρην·
ἀντλεῖν δ᾽ οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν· ὑπερβάλλει δὲ θάλασσα
ἀμφοτέρων τοίχων· ἦ μάλα τις χαλεπῶς
σῴζεται οἷ ἔρδουσι· κυβερνήτην μὲν ἔπαυσαν
ἐσθλόν, ὅτις φυλακὴν εἶχεν ἐπισταμένως,

χρήματα δ᾽ ἁρπάζουσι βίῃ· κόσμος δ᾽ ἀπόλωλεν,
δασμὸς δ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἴσος γίνεται ἐς τὸ μέσον·
φορτηγοὶ δ᾽ ἄρχουσι, κακοὶ δ᾽ ἀγαθῶν καθύπερθεν·
δειμαίνω μή πως ναῦν κατὰ κῦμα πίῃ.
ταῦτά μοι ᾐνίχθω κεχρησμένα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν·
γινώσκοι δ᾽ ἄν τις καὶ κακός, ἂν σοφὸς ᾖ (Theognis [Edmonds], 669-82).

But now [wealth] passes by me although I am aware, and I am speechless
in want, although I would know better than many others
the fact that now we are borne, lowering our white sails
from the Melian sea through the dark night.
But the men are not willing to bail it out, and the sea crashes over
both sides of the ship. In truth, only with much difficulty is anyone
to be saved with them doing this. They stopped the good
helmsman, who held guard skillfully,
and they seize money by force. Good order is gone,
and equal distribution no longer happens in the open.
The rabble is in charge, and the base are above the good.
I fear that the wave might somehow gulp down the ship.
Let these words put to use be riddles for the good to understand,
and even some base man would get it, if he is wise.

The storm that faces the sailors encapsulates the unpredictability and perilousness of the sea, just as the storms in Alcaeus did. Waves crash over both sides of the ship, bringing water on board where it endangers the crew. However, Theognis shifts the allegory after the first four lines. Alcaeus says that it will take great labor ἄντλην ("to bail out") the ship, but then exhorts his fellow crewmen to rally and confront the difficulty posed by the storm (Alcaeus 6 [Campbell], 3). In contrast, Theognis here flatly states that the crew are not willing ἀντλεῖν ("to bail out") the ship.[104] In Alcaeus, the destructiveness of the storm stood as the vehicle for the political tenor of the poem. Here the chaos of the storm creates a desperate situation in which the crew mutiny against their betters. The upheaval in the social order mirrors the disruptions of nature. The last

[104] This is the same infinitive of the same verb used by Alcaeus; their different dialects account for the difference in spelling.

two lines of this citation reveal that Theognis still considers this passage to be allegorical. The breakdown of good order ("κόσμος") on the ship is meant to stand for the breakdown of the hierarchy of the polis. κῦμα ("wave") in the third-to-last line seems to bring us back to nature, yet it could also be describing the political disruptions which it more immediately follows. Theognis collapses the storm and the mutiny together to illustrate the chaotic, dangerous nature of civil strife.

From Archilochus onward, Greek poets of this period use liquid imagery to describe the detrimental effects of love.[105] This thread of destructively liquid love also has its precedent in Homer's depiction of Hera in book 14 of the *Iliad*. Anne Carson describes this phenomenon: "The emotions of *Erōs* are especially liquid and liquefying. *Erōs* pours, drips, heats, softens, melts, loosens, cooks, boils, dissolves. Men pride themselves on being able to resist such assaults on their physiological and psychological boundaries."[106] Here are some of the examples of this recurrent motif: Archilochus describes πόθος (Archilochus 196 [West], "desire") as ὁ λυσιμελής ("the limb-loosener"), suggesting liquefaction. Sappho, who flourished at the turn of the sixth century in Lesbos, uses the same epithet, ὁ λυσιμελής (Sappho 130 [Campbell], 1, "the limb-loosener"), for Ἔρος ("Love"). According to these two poets, these related impulses could loosen the ideal solidity of one's body. The association between this epithet and liquid becomes even more manifest when we turn to Alcman. Born in either Sparta or Lydia according to dueling traditions and living about the same time as Sappho, Alcman uses a construction similar to Archilochus, λυσιμελεῖ …πόθῳ (Alcman 3 [Campbell], 61, "limb-loosening desire"), in close

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[105] Cf. Thucydides 6.13.1, 6.24.3.

[106] Carson 1990, 138.

proximity to the comparative adverb τακερώτερα (Alcman 3 [Campbell], 61, "more meltingly"). In another fragment, Alcman returns to this theme: Ἔρως με δηὖτε Κύπριδος ϝέκατι/ γλυκὺς κατείβων καρδίαν ἰαίνει (Alcman 59A [Campbell], "Love, at the command of Cyrpis (=Aphrodite), again/ sweetly pours down and melts my heart"). The two verbs drive home the liquid theme. Born in Rhegion in southern Italy and ending up in Samos in the later sixth century, Ibycus, too, adopts this theme. Discussing Ἔρος (Ibycus 287 [Campbell], "Love"), he employs a version of the same adverb, τακέρ' ("meltingly"), used by Alcman earlier. In this tradition, love is viewed as a destructive force, pouring upon, loosening, and melting those afflicted.

One way to understand the association between liquids and destruction in this era is to see how authors inversely connect solidity and firmness with security. Tyrtaeus, a poet from Sparta, composed different types of poetry but remains most renowned for his writing on war. He appears to have lived through Sparta's Second Messenian War in the seventh century. Two centuries later, his polis would, of course, be Athens' rival in the Peloponnesian War, and the ethos outlined in his poetry would still dominate Sparta's famously conservative society. We can, therefore, observe the foundations for what would become Athens' foil in Thucydides' *History* in Tyrtaeus's verse. His exhortation to Sparta's (exclusively land-based) soldiers features calls not only for bravery and selflessness but also for firmness.

> ξυνὸν δ᾽ ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληϊ τε παντί τε δήμῳ,
> ὅστις ἂν εὖ διαβὰς ἐν προμάχοισι μένῃ
> νωλεμέως, αἰσχρῆς δὲ φυγῆς ἐπὶ πάγχυ λάθηται (Tyrtaeus 8 [Edmonds], 15-8).
>
> It is a common good for the polis and the entire people,
> when a man standing astride among the frontlines holds
> firm, and completely forgets shameful flight.

Tyrtaeus exhorts his fellow countrymen to hold firm—to use an English idiom—and seek victory through immobility as opposed to motion. This is not a unique passage; he, in fact, threads this language through his other two major extant war poems. For example, he implores the Spartans: ἀλλά τις εὖ διαβὰς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισιν (Tyrtaeus 7 [Edmonds], 21, "But let each man hold, standing with both feet astride"), and also: μένοντες,/ μηδὲ φυγῆς αἰσχρᾶς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου (Tyrtaeus 6 [Edmonds], 15-6, "Hold,/ commence neither shameful flight nor panic"). Tyrtaeus elaborates upon the idea of flight, describing how he who flees battle lives a life of wandering (πλαζόμενον, Tyrtaeus 6 [Edmonds], 5-6). One instant of movement leads to a lifetime not only of shame and poverty but also of restlessness and motion. Elsewhere, the poet contrasts the ideal solidity and inertia of the Spartans with the motion and disorderliness of the enemy. He encourages the Spartan soldiers not to fear a πληθύν (Tyrtaeus 7 [Edmonds], 3, "throng") of men. The word connotes a large amount of men but also an inherent lack of order and discipline in their ranks. The three lines of Tyrtaeus with which this paragraph began, 8 (Edmonds), 15-8, speak of the common good that is a man who "standing astride among the frontlines holds firm." This sentence continues with the following metaphor: ἔσχεθε κῦμα μάχης (Tyrtaeus 8 [Edmonds], 22, "He checks the wave of battle"). The Spartan soldier is a common good in that he holds his ground and resists the liquid motion of the enemy.

Although Sparta and Athens would be contrasted in the work of Thucydides, the early sixth century Athenian Solon employed the theme of ideal solidity in a way similar to that of Tyrtaeus. The Athenians of Solon's time were active in the Straits of Salamis but primarily remained a land-based power at this stage and would not shift their gaze to the wider sea until a

century later. Solon was an Athenian statesman who enacted constitutional reforms to ease class strife within Athens. His poetry taps the theme of ideal solidity to paint the author as a champion of both the few and the many. In one poem, he employs a martial metaphor to assert himself as protector of both factions: ἔστην δ᾽ ἀμφιβαλὼν κρατερὸν σάκος ἀμφοτέροισι,/ νικᾶν δ᾽ οὐκ εἴασ᾽ οὐδετέρους ἀδίκως (Solon 5 [Edmonds], 5-6, "I stood holding my stout shield around both sides, and allowed neither to prevail unjustly"). Solon does not sound all that different from the ideal Spartan soldier standing his ground in Tyrtaeus's war poetry. His strength is rooted in his inertia. He uses the same adjective κρατερὸν ("stout") that Archilochus used to describe the type of endurance that should be used to resist grief (Archilochus 13 [West], 6), as analyzed above. In another poem, Solon uses a different metaphor to depict his same role as mediator between factions: ὅρος κατέστην (Solon 40 [Edmonds], 10, "I stood as a boundary stone").[107] Interestingly, while a boundary stone still stands between the two sides, it divides them as opposed to a soldier encompassing both behind the same shield. Despite this difference, Solon still finds his strength in his motionlessness; few things exude motionlessness as well as a boundary stone. The first person verbs from the two quotations both come from ἵστημι ("to stand"). Although Solon was, in certain ways, a political innovator, his poetry defends his actions by identifying himself with themes of sturdy motionlessness and ideal solidity.

In addition to developing the ideality of solidity, Solon directly remarks upon the dangers of seafaring. Solon notes that each man seeks profit from a different source and then goes on to detail several of them. The life of the seafaring merchant he describes in this way:

ὁ μὲν κατὰ πόντον ἀλᾶται

[107] Cf. Solon 39 (Edmonds), 6, where Solon takes credit for moving Attica's boundary stones.

ἐν νηυσὶν χρῄζων οἴκαδε κέρδος ἄγειν
ἰχθυόεντ᾿, ἀνέμοισι φορεύμενος ἀργαλέοισι
φειδωλὴν ψυχῆς οὐδεμίαν θέμενος (Solon 13 [Edmonds], 43-6)·

One man wanders on the sea filled with fish
in ships, craving to lead profit home,
borne by the troublesome winds,
having no regard for his own life.

As we have seen in the histories of these eras, the development of seafaring is tightly linked with the concept of κέρδος ("profit"). The passive construction takes agency away from the seafarer and grants it to the winds. These, in turn, are described as ἀργαλέοισι ("troublesome"), denoting the unpredictability and perilousness of seafaring. The last line of this quotation throws even more emphasis behind the dangers of this profession. This passage reads as a condensed version of Hesiod's longer warnings against seafaring above. Solon's negative depiction of seafaring comes despite the facts that Athenian society at this point already relied upon seaborne imports to help feed its population and that Solon himself was known to travel by sea (Solon 19 [Edmonds]; [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 11; Herodotus 1.29).

In refuting an earlier poet, Simonides provides an argument for the destructiveness of liquids. Born on Keos, Simonides flourished in the sixth and early fifth centuries, working, among other places, in the courts of the Athenian Peisistratid Hipparchus and the Syracusan tyrant Hieron. The second century CE biographer Diogenes Laertius provides the text of an epitaph written by Cleoboulus for a Phrygian Midas (not the famous king) and the response of Simonides. Here is the original epitaph:

χαλκῆ παρθένος εἰμί, Μίδα δ᾿ ἐπὶ σήματι κεῖμαι.
ἔστ᾿ ἂν ὕδωρ τε νάῃ καὶ δένδρεα μακρὰ τεθήλῃ,
ἠέλιός τ᾿ ἀνιὼν λάμπῃ, λαμπρά τε σελήνη,
καὶ ποταμοί γε ῥέωσιν, ἀνακλύζῃ δὲ θάλασσα,

αὐτοῦ τῇδε μένουσα πολυκλαύτῳ ἐπὶ τύμβῳ,
ἀγγελέω παριοῦσι, Μίδας ὅτι τῇδε τέθαπται (Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.89-90).

I am a bronze young woman, and I rest upon the tomb of Midas.
As long as water should flow and trees should grow tall,
and the rising sun should shine, and the radiant moon,
and rivers should flow, and the sea should stir,
remaining here upon this tomb much grieved over,
I will announce to those who pass by that Midas is buried here.

The text relies upon tropes common to other epitaphs. It announces the identity of the person buried and makes a claim of immortality on his behalf. In this instance, Cleoboulus wraps the claim for immortality up in the solid material of the grave marker. Simonides takes issue with the epitaph, in particular the claim for perpetuity:

τίς κεν αἰνήσειε νόῳ πίσυνος Λίνδου ναέταν Κλεόβουλον
ἀενάοις ποταμοῖς ἄνθεσί τ᾽ εἰαρινοῖς
ἀελίου τε φλογὶ χρυσέας τε σελάνας
καὶ θαλασσαίαισι δίναισ᾽ ἀντιθέντα μένος στάλας;
ἅπαντα γάρ ἐστι θεῶν ἥσσω· λίθον δὲ
καὶ βρότεοι παλάμαι θραύοντι· μωροῦ φωτὸς ἅδε βουλά (Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.90; Simonides 581 [Campbell]).

Who, relying upon their mind, would praise Cleoboulus of Lindus
saying the strength of a stone would resist ever-flowing rivers,
spring flowers, the burning of the sun,
the golden moon, and whirlpools of the sea?
All things yield to the gods. But even human hands
can shatter a stone. This was the plan of a moron.

The solidity that the original epitaph advertises is the bronze of the statue of the young woman on the tomb, a still novel (and relatively durable) sculpting material at the time of composition.[108] In response, Simonides notes the fragility not of bronze but of stone. David A.

[108] Ford 2002, 102.

Campbell assumes that the bronze maiden must have been set on a stone base;[109] Andrew Ford convincingly counters that the issue is not whether the stone can hold up the statue forever but whether it can carry the inscription in perpetuity.[110]

Simonides' also shifts the meaning of the natural forces that appear in the original epitaph. He evokes the gods in attempt to render Cleoboulus hubristic. He envisions the gods acting indirectly through the natural forces that Cleoboulus himself listed. Cleoboulus utilizes the forces of nature—flowing rivers, growing trees, etc.—to stand in for existence as we know it. Half (three out of six) of the forces he mentions are liquid. These, in particular, emphasize an understanding of flux. ἔστ' ("As long as") these forces continue to operate, the bronze woman and inscription will proclaim the name of Midas to those present. Simonides does not deny the forces of nature the meaning that Cleoboulus gives them. In fact, he begins his rehashing of these forces with the adjective ἀενάοις ("ever-flowing") which is absent from the original epitaph. Ford explains, how this is a loaded word: "With the other key term, 'ever-flowing' (ἀενάοις), eternity (ἀεί) is granted to Kleboulos' 'flowing' (νάῃ or ῥέῃ) waters but implicitly denied to the stele… In Simonides, *Aenaos* sums up both the endless change of nature and its perpetual renewal through generations."[111] Simonides insults Cleoboulus for not understanding the destructiveness inherent to these cycles of nature. He argues that it is this very flux of nature—including natural liquids—that is destructive to the solidity of Cleoboulus's stone inscription.

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[109] Campbell 1990, 394.

[110] Ford 2002, 108.

[111] Ford 2002, 108-9.

Just as Heraclitus's river imagery conflates liquidity and motion, so his fragments about souls show the dangers of liquid. Heraclitus conceptualizes ἡ ψυχὴ as a place of cognition; Robinson states that "For Heraclitus psyche ('soul') was seen as a cognitive principle, not simply a biological principle and/or source of our 'emotional,' non-rational selves, as seems to have been thought by most of his predecessors."[112] For Heraclitus, the functioning of this cognitive principle depends on its dryness. In one fragment, Heraclitus states: αὐγὴ ξηρὴ ψυχὴ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη (Heraclitus D-K 118, "A ray of light, a dry soul is wisest and best"). There is an ambiguity concerning which noun ξηρὴ modifies. Following the majority of translators and commentators, both ancient and modern, I consider it best to take it with ψυχὴ.[113] σοφωτάτη and ἀρίστη clearly go with ψυχὴ. Less clear is in what way a dry soul is, or, is like, a ray of light. Kahn asserts that "The poetic associations of the word connect it with the light of the sun as a figure of life itself, as in the Homeric phrase 'to see the rays (*augai*) of the sun', meaning 'to be alive' (*Il.* XVI.188; cf. *Il*. I.88, *Od*. XI.498, etc.). The radiance of the sunlit sky thus stands traditionally for life."[114] Heraclitus further explores the connection between dry souls and life in another fragment that depicts the transformation of the natural elements: ψυχῇσιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή (Heraclitus D-K 36, "For souls, it is death to become water, and for water it is death to become earth. From earth, water is born, and from water, the soul"). Here, the soul fills in for air, which can vary in

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112 Robinson 1986, 305; Robinson 1987, 158.

113 See discussion and list of commentators and translators in Kahn 1979, 245-7; see also Robinson 1987, 158.

114 Kahn 1979, 247.

wetness, in the philosopher's conceptualization of elements.[115] It is also significant that Heraclitus uses the broader term ὕδωρ here, as opposed to the subcategory θάλασσα as he does in other fragments about the transformations of the elements (D-K 31A and D-K 31B).[116] The overlap of these terms as it occurs within Thucydides will be examined in subsequent chapters. The fact that becoming water is the death of souls reinforces Kahn's reading of D-K 118 that connects rays of light (and therefore dry souls) with life.

Two other fragments follow this thread, now conversely focusing on wet souls. In these, Heraclitus associates wetness with drunkenness. The first reads: ἀνὴρ ὁκόταν μεθυσθῇ, ἄγεται ὑπὸ παιδὸς ἀνήβου σφαλλόμενος, οὐκ ἐπαΐων ὅκη βαίνει, ὑγρὴν τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχων (Heraclitus D-K 117, "Whenever a man is drunk, he is led by a beardless boy, staggering, not perceiving where he is going, with his soul wet"). Alcohol affects this man in several ways. It hinders his perception, as well as his ability to walk straight. The fact that he follows a beardless boy can be interpreted in different ways: It can show his willingness to cede his right as elder to lead, as well as his willingness to surrender to his own libido. This parallels the depictions of love and desire as liquids in poets of this era. Finally, given the fragments above, the description of his soul as wet may allude to a potential or partial death.[117] The final fragment only comes to us in indirect speech: ὅθεν καὶ Ἡράκλειτον ψυχῇσι φάναι τέρψιν ἢ[118] θάνατον ὑγρῇσι γενέσθαι.

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[115] Kahn 1979, 239; Robinson 1986, 306.

[116] Kahn 1979, 238.

[117] Robinson 1987, 157; Kahn 1979, 244. Cf. D-K 36.

[118] There is a textual dispute here. Kahn prints μὴ as opposed to ἢ (1979, 76). Yet this μὴ would have this fragment directly contradict D-K 36, analyzed above. For this reason, I employ the Greek as Robinson has it (1987, 48).

τέρψιν δὲ εἶναι αὐταῖς τὴν εἰς γένεσιν πτῶσιν (Heraclitus D-K 77, "Hence, Heraclitus also says that it is joy or death for souls to become wet and that the fall into generation is a joy for them"). Despite there being no explicit mention of drunkenness in this fragment, scholars understand Heraclitus to be discussing alcohol. In his analysis of this fragment, Robinson connects it to two of the fragments analyzed above: "The drunkenness (fragment 117) that involves pleasure can also lead to death (fragment 36)."[119] Kahn's note on this fragment makes the same connection between it and the drunkenness seen in D-K 117: "This fits well with, but does not substantially add to, the idea of the soul moistening itself with drink attested in CVI (D. 117)."[120] The drunkenness is not as explicit as it is in D-K 117. However, the seemingly contradictory results of joy or death suggest a continued thematization to drunkenness, and when looked at in conjunction with D-K 117, the allusion proves discernible. The connection between wetness and drunkenness in these two fragments need not necessitate that drunkenness is implied in the first two. It is better to view the dry soul as the ideal and drunkenness as one among many possible wetnesses that can destroy or hinder it. In his commentary on D-K 118, Kahn succinctly outlines the perilousness of wetness and the ideality of dryness for souls:

> As we proceed downwards, we have in elemental terms the physical death of psyche into water (CII, D. 36), in psychological terms the visual 'quenching' of a man in darkness followed by the quenching of his consciousness in sleep (XC, D. 26), in psychological terms the moistening of the soul in drunkenness (CVI, D. 117) and perhaps in sensual pleasure generally (CVIII, D. 77), corresponding to the cattle-death of men who seek satiety and procreation (XCVII-XCVIII, D. 29 and 20). In all probability, the discharge of semen in intercourse was conceived as the waste of life-spirit into liquid form. By contrast, the rational clarity of the best men who choose 'one thing in exchange for all' represents the polar opposite

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[119] Robinson 1987, 131.

[120] Kahn 1979, 245.

> to this dissolution into water and darkness: the dry state of the soul, which is (or is like) a beam of light.[121]

In other words, in Heraclitus a distinct binary emerges: On one side stands dryness, cognition, and mental clarity; on the other flows wetness, drunkenness, sensuality, and destruction.

From the oldest extant Greek texts to writing at the turn of the fifth century, Greek authors distinguish liquids and solids at a fundamental level as being susceptible and resistant to motion respectively. Liquids' motion and changeability often materialize within Greek texts as destruction. From Homer and Hesiod to Archilochus and Solon, one liquid constructed as particularly destructive is the sea. Alcaeus and Theognis, too, use the perilousness of the sea to frame their ship-of-state allegories. This literary tradition coincided with a marked rise in Aegean and eastern Mediterranean seafaring. Following a relatively quiet period, sea traffic burgeoned in the eighth century and only accelerated from there. Sea trade, colonization, and naval warfare all increased. Authors' wariness of the sea and depictions of liquids in general should be understood within this evolving world.

[121] Kahn 1979, 248.

CHAPTER 2

Seafaring in the Aegean and Liquids in Greek Literature in the Fifth Century

This chapter on the fifth century follows the same pattern as developed for the two eras of the first chapter. I detail the historical context of the Aegean before analyzing how Greek authors describe liquids as motion, change, and destruction. I concentrate on the rise of Athens given the polis's growing role in the Aegean, the increased amount of extant Athenian authors, and this project's focus on Thucydides. As Athens takes control of the the Aegean, Athenian and other authors continue to construct liquids in general and the sea in particular as fickle, mutable, and potentially deadly. The sea offers an access point to the outside world but can also bring invading armies and more subtle corrupting elements. Athens' naval empire does not have an extant propagandist to articulate and defend its policies. Many consider Thucydides to fill this role. Although Athenians within the *History* attempt to do so, the text as a whole undermines their rhetoric. Depicting liquids as destructive, Thucydides falls in line with the authors discussed in the final third of this chapter.

Historical Background, c. 500-c. 400

The acceleration of seafaring throughout the Aegean in previous centuries saw a steep increase in the first two decades of the fifth century. The Persian Wars brought an influx of Persian-led ships into Greek waters and, in turn, caused a buildup among Greek navies. This section will center on the rising power of Athens. Themistocles played a prominent role in this

rise, but before getting to his naval policies and their aftermath, I will briefly outline Athens' prior naval history.

The Athenians participated in the history of archaic seafaring analyzed in chapter one. Fifty Athenian ships under Menestheus are recorded within the Catalogue of Ships (Homer *Iliad* 2.546-56). This is not evidence that they necessarily took part in a historical expedition to Troy but that, when this lines were codified, Athens was remembered as having a naval history. Attic vase paintings depict ships beginning in the Geometric period.[122] Herodotus claims that the *naukraroi* were in charge of managing affairs in Athens at the time of Cylon's conspiracy in the late seventh century (Herodotus 5.71.2). Many doubt the veracity of this claim, but *naukraroi*, Athenian administrative officials tasked with funding ships, did exist long before Themistocles' reforms.[123] Hence, Athens did engage in naval affairs in the seventh and sixth centuries, but it did so on a scale much smaller than other Greek powers such as Corinth. After detailing the naval progress of these more advanced states, Thucydides contends: Αἰγινῆται γὰρ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ εἴ τινες ἄλλοι, βραχέα ἐκέκτηντο, καὶ τούτων τὰ πολλὰ πεντηκοτόρους (1.14.3, "The Aeginetans, the Athenians, and some others possessed small [navies], and the majority of these were penteconters.") He mentions the Aeginetans and Athenians in close succession because they fought a war, mostly at sea, in the beginning of the fifth century.[124] He is clarifying the fact that before this war, these states did not wield significant naval power.

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[122] Jordan 1972, 5; Morrison and Coates 2000, figures 20, 22a, 22b, 23, 24, and 26.

[123] See Jordan 1972, 5-16 for an analysis of the extant evidence we have for these officials.

[124] For Aegina's role in Aegean naval history, see Herodotus 5.82-8; Figueira 1981, 1991.

Herodotus tells us that the Athenians sent twenty ships in 499 to assist the Milesians in the Ionian Revolt: οἵ τε Ἀθηναῖοι ἀπίκοντο εἴκοσι νηυσί, ἅμα ἀγόμενοι Ἐρετριέων πέντε τριήρεας (Herodotus 5.99.1, "The Athenians arrived with twenty ships, bringing with them five triremes of the Eretrians"). This line provides further evidence for the Athenian navy before Themistocles' reforms. Some scholars take Herodotus' use of the noun νηυσί ("ships") for the Athenian vessels and the noun τριήρεας ("triremes") for the Eretrian ones as proof that the Athenians did not possess triremes before Themistocles' reforms.[125] To them, this passage dovetails with Thucydides' assertion, analyzed in the previous paragraph, that the Athenians only had a small navy. However, that Thucydidean passage says that the small navies of the Athenians, Aeginetans, and others consisted *mostly* of penteconters (τούτων τὰ πολλὰ πεντηκοτόρους, 1.14.3), suggesting that these navies did include a minority of triremes. Similarly, this passage from Herodotus does not point to a lack of Athenian triremes in 499 as some scholars conclude. Borimir Jordan contends, "Clearly Herodotos is varying his expression for stylistic purposes here: he uses trireme to avoid repeating *naus*."[126] He is right to push back against those who see this passage as proof that the Athenian force did not include triremes, but he goes on to argue that these twenty ships were all triremes,[127] an assertion which I find equally problematic. The term ναῦς ("ship") is not mutually exclusive with the term τριήρης ("trireme") but, like its English equivalent, describes a larger category which includes triremes. Authors can use the general term ναῦς to mean τριήρης, but here it is safest to understand Herodotus saying

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[125] Wallinga 1994, 133, 159; Morrison and Coates 2000, 42.

[126] Jordan 1972, 7.

[127] Jordan 1972, 8.

that the Eretrians sent five triremes and the Athenians sent twenty ships, including an unspecified breakdown of triremes and penteconters. If he wanted to assert that the ships were all of either, he could have used either specific term. The Athenians had a small navy that likely included some but not many triremes before Themistocles's reforms. A pre-Themistoclean Athenian fleet likewise sailed in Miltiades' failed expedition to Paros after his success at Marathon (Herodotus 6.132-135.1).

The expansion of Persia greatly increased military traffic on Aegean waterways. The Persians brought in ships from around the eastern Mediterranean, particularly Phoenicia, and their expansion catalyzed an increase in naval action from the Greeks.[128] Herodotus is our closest and best source for this time period. He uses 600 ships as a stock size for Persian fleets in the Aegean. As he numbers Darius' forces mustered at the Bosphorus for the Scythian campaign in 513, he lists 600 ships which would have traveled through the Aegean to reach the strait (Herodotus 4.87). Later, the satrap Artaphrenes and Darius approved Aristogoras' plan to construct 200 triremes to conquer Naxos and the Cyclades (Herodotus 5.31-2). The plan eventually led to the Ionian Revolt which entailed further naval buildup in the Aegean. The revolt culminated with the Battle of Lade which pitted 353 ships who were initially on the side of the rebels against 600 Persian ships (Herodotus 6.8-9.1).[129] Finally, in 490 Darius sent Datis and Artaphernes with a fleet of 600 ships across the Aegean, conquering the Cyclades en route to Eretria and Athens. Herodotus, therefore, gives the same number, 600, for the Persian fleets of the Scythian Campaign, the Persian side of the Battle of Lade, and the expedition that culminates

[128] For Persia's reliance on Phoenicia for seapower, see Herodotus 1.143.1, 3.19.2-3.

[129] See note above on the number 600.

at Marathon. The historian very well may have heard from a source that the Persian fleet was 600 strong under Darius and then applied that number to all of the expeditions that occurred during his reign. We should be skeptical, however, that all these fleets were the same size, especially as Herodotus points to large-scale Persian fleet construction projects between these events (Herodotus 5.32, 6.48.2). The specificity of the initial rebel force at the Battle of Lade, 353 ships, inspires greater confidence. Even if we do not trust Herodotus' numbers for the Persian fleets, we have no reason to cast doubt on the events themselves or the fact that they increased traffic in the Aegean.

Our sources frame Themistocles as a pivotal figure in Athens' transition to seapower. Ancient sources rely on Great Men more than modern analyses, often reducing complex processes down to the deeds of a single man, in this case Themistocles. However, there is little doubt he was influential, and since this project is interested in ancient constructions of seapower, it is worth our time to understand what Thucydides and other sources say about him. Later sources such as Plutarch have their value, but our best two sources for Themistocles are Herodotus and the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* (*Ath. Pol.*). It is worth quoting the relevant passage from each in full. Herodotus writes:

> ἑτέρη τε Θεμιστοκλέι γνώμη ἔμπροσθε ταύτης ἐς καιρὸν ἠρίστευσε, ὅτε Ἀθηναίοισι γενομένων χρημάτων μεγάλων ἐν τῷ κοινῷ, τὰ ἐκ τῶν μετάλλων σφι προσῆλθε τῶν ἀπὸ Λαυρείου, ἔμελλον λάξεσθαι ὀρχηδὸν ἕκαστος δέκα δραχμάς· τότε Θεμιστοκλέης ἀνέγνωσε Ἀθηναίους τῆς διαιρέσιος ταύτης παυσαμένους νέας τούτων τῶν χρημάτων ποιήσασθαι διηκοσίας ἐς τὸν πόλεμον, τὸν πρὸς Αἰγινήτας λέγων. οὗτος γὰρ ὁ πόλεμος συστὰς ἔσωσε ἐς τὸ τότε τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἀναγκάσας θαλασσίους γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους. αἳ δὲ ἐς τὸ μὲν ἐποιήθησαν οὐκ ἐχρήσθησαν, ἐς δέον δὲ οὕτω τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἐγένοντο. αὗταί τε δὴ αἱ νέες τοῖσι Ἀθηναίοισι προποιηθεῖσαι ὑπῆρχον, ἑτέρας τε ἔδεε προσναυπηγέεσθαι (Herodotus 7.144.1-2).

> Another timely plan of Themistocles prevailed earlier than this. When the Athenians had a great amount of money in their treasury which came to them from the mines at Laurium and each and every citizen was about to receive ten drachmae, Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to halt this distribution and build two hundred new ships from this money for the war, referring to the war against the Aeginetans. The joining of this war saved Greece at the time, forcing the Athenians to become seamen. The ships were not used for the purpose which they had been built but in this way were there for Greece in need. Previously made by the Athenians, these ships were ready, and others needed to be built in addition.

And the author of the *Ath. Pol.* writes:[130]

> ἔτει δὲ τρίτῳ μετὰ ταῦτα Νικοδήμου ἄρχοντος, ὡς ἐφάνη τὰ μέταλλα τὰ ἐν Μαρωνείᾳ, καὶ περιεγένετο τῇ πόλει τάλαντα ἑκατὸν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων, συμβουλευόντων τινῶν τῷ δήμῳ διανείμασθαι τὸ ἀργύριον, Θεμιστοκλῆς ἐκώλυσεν, οὐ λέγων ὅ τι χρήσεται τοῖς χρήμασιν, ἀλλὰ δανεῖσαι κελεύων τοῖς πλουσιωτάτοις Ἀθηναίων ἑκατὸν ἑκάστῳ τάλαντον, εἶτ᾽ ἐὰν μὲν ἀρέσκῃ τὸ ἀνάλωμα, τῆς πόλεως εἶναι τὴν δαπάνην, εἰ δὲ μή, κομίσασθαι τὰ χρήματα παρὰ τῶν δανεισαμένων. λαβὼν δ᾽ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐναυπηγήσατο τριήρεις ἑκατόν, ἑκάστου ναυπηγουμένου τῶν ἑκατὸν μίαν, αἷς ἐναυμάχησαν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους ([Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 22.7).
>
> In the third year after these events, during the archonship of Nicomedes [483/2], when the deposits in Maronea appeared and one hundred talents came to the polis from their being worked, although some advocated distributing the silver to the people, Themistocles prevented this. He did not reveal how he would use the money but urged them to lend the one hundred richest Athenians one talent each, so that if the expenditure were satisfactory, the profit would be the city's, and if it were not, the money could be recalled from the borrowers. Taking the money on these terms, he built one hundred triremes, with each borrower building one of the hundred. With these ships, they fought against the barbarians at Salamis.

There are some discrepancies here, but these are often overstated. For example, Wallinga's identification of this event as "one of the thorniest problems of Greek history" is a vast

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130 A debate still rages, but I understand the author most likely to have been a student of Aristotle, not Aristotle himself.

overstatement.[131] These sources and the later sources primarily based on these can be reconciled to a large degree. The one hundred rich men in the *Ath. Pol.*, for instance, are not mentioned by Herodotus, but his account does not necessarily preclude their participation. The location of the *Ath. Pol.*'s Maronea is not agreed upon, but H. Rackham suggests it is "possibly five miles north of Cape Sunium," which would place it in or very close to Herodotus' Laurium.[132] The main discrepancy lies in the number of ships, and here Herodotus's number of two hundred should be dismissed. The later sources (except for Justin) follow the *Ath. Pol.*'s reckoning (Nepos *Themistocles* 2; Plutarch *Themistocles* 4.2; Polyaenus 1.30.6; Justin 2.12). Herodotus himself later repeatedly places the Athenians' full force at two hundred (Herodotus 8.1, 8.14, 8.44, 8.46, 8.61). Given that he shows them possessing a navy before Themistocles and building additional ships after this reform, the number cannot also pertain to the number of new ships built at this point.

The sources all indicate two major factors in the bulking up of the Athenian navy: money and Themistocles. In the previous chapter, I discussed the connection between seapower and wealth. However, I focused primarily on the wealth that seapower can bring. Athens would later benefit from this wealth. Speaking of fifth-century Athens, John R. Hale succinctly states, "Naval power naturally stimulated and protected commerce."[133] The sources describing the Themistoclean naval reforms of 483/2 make clear that the relationship between seapower and

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131 Wallinga 1993, 148. To be fair, he was referring to the discrepancies among Herodotus, the *Ath. Pol.*, and later sources. Yet these later sources rely to a very large extent on the two sources cited here.

132 Rackham 1952, 69nA.

133 Hale 2009, xxvii.

wealth flows both ways. In order for individuals to profit from sea commerce, they need boats; in order for states to profit from thalassocracy, they need war fleets. At both levels, the sea constitutes a costly space upon which to operate. I am far from the first person to acknowledge that, if the mines at Laurium did not yield a timely vein of silver, Xerxes' expedition could have played out very differently.

But money, of course, does not yield triremes on its own. Themistocles is credited with directing this money to bulk up Athens' navy. This action, in conjunction with his leadership during the Second Persian War and his fortification of the Piraeus, earned him the reputation for single-handedly turning the Athenians towards the sea.[134] In *Knights*, performed in 424, Aristophanes's Sausage Seller mocks Cleon for claiming that Athens owes more to him than Themistocles:

> σὺ Θεμιστοκλεῖ ἀντιφερίζεις;
> ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν μεστὴν εὑρὼν ἐπιχειλῆ,
> καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀριστώσῃ τὸν Πειραιᾶ προσέμαξεν,
> ἀφελών τ᾽ οὐδὲν τῶν ἀρχαίων ἰχθῦς καινοὺς παρέθηκεν (Aristophanes *Knights* 813-6).
>
> You somehow compare yourself to Themistocles?
> He who filled our polis, finding it filled only to the lip,
> and in addition added the Piraeus to our lunch,
> removing nothing of our traditional meals, served up fresh fish.

Aristophanes uses two metaphors to illustrate Themistocles' influence. In the first, the polis of Athens is a drinking bowl, and Themistocles fills it to its full liquid potential. In the second, he adds seafood to the Athenians' diet. Both metaphors play upon Themistocles' turning Athens

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[134] Leadership in the Second Persian War: Herodotus 7.143-4, 8.58-62, 8.75, 8.79-83, 8.123-4; fortification of the Piraeus: Thucydides 1.93.3-7.

towards the liquid of the sea. Centuries later, Plutarch more directly paints Themistocles as responsible for the transformation of Athens into a sea power:

> ἐκ δὲ τούτου κατὰ μικρὸν ὑπάγων καὶ καταβιβάζων τὴν πόλιν πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν, ὡς τὰ πεζὰ μὲν οὐδὲ τοῖς ὁμόροις ἀξιομάχους ὄντας, τῇ δ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν νεῶν ἀλκῇ καὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους ἀμύνασθαι καὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄρχειν δυναμένους, ἀντὶ μονίμων ὁπλιτῶν, ὥς φησιν ὁ Πλάτων, ναυβάτας καὶ θαλαττίους ἐποίησε, καὶ διαβολὴν καθ᾽ αὑτοῦ παρέσχεν, ὡς ἄρα Θεμιστοκλῆς τὸ δόρυ καὶ τὴν ἀσπίδα τῶν πολιτῶν παρελόμενος εἰς ὑπηρέσιον καὶ κώπην συνέστειλε τὸν Ἀθηναίων δῆμον (Plutarch *Themistocles* 4.3).
>
> After this, leading it on little by little and bringing the city down to the sea, saying that their infantry were no match for their neighbor, but with the strength from their fleet they would be able both to ward off the barbarians and to rule Greece, he made in the place of stable hoplites, as Plato says, sailors and seafarers. And he allowed this insult against himself, that Themistocles, seizing the spear and shield from his fellow citizens, reduced the people of Athens to the rower's cushion and oar.

Plutarch's disdain for seapower as opposed to land-based power bleeds through the passage. He quotes Plato (who we will see below is also no fan of seapower) in labelling hoplites *stable* (μονίμων). The descriptor plays upon the sturdiness—and ideality—of solidity.

Our sources color Themistocles as a man of Odyssean wiles. Herodotus, Thucydides, and later sources describe how Themistocles' intelligence and language skills won him influence. Herodotus repeatedly shows Themistocles' persuasive abilities, often relying upon deceit.[135] Thucydides identifies Themistocles as establishing the Athenian naval empire, effusively praises his intelligence, and even shows him learning Persian to win over the Great King (1.93.3-4, 1.138). This makes him one of three Greeks of the archaic and classical ages—along with Alcibiades and Histiaeus—whom Greek sources depict as studying or knowing Persian

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[135] Passages that show Themistocles persuading successfully (* indicates passages that include deceit): Herodotus 7.143,7.144, 8.5*, 8.58-62, 8.75*, 8.109-10*.

(Athenaeus 12.535e; Herodotus 6.29.2).[136] Even the *Ath. Pol.*, which only briefly mentions Themistocles, describes him concealing his motive for distributing the money from Maronea in a way that would make Odysseus proud ([Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 22.7). Authors follow Odyssean tropes when characterizing Themistocles and other naval leaders such as Alcibiades. But, perhaps, the sea also attracted a certain type of military leader. It made naval endeavors politically and financially risky. Eloquence was a prerequisite for persuading the Athenian demos; these figures also discovered that deceit could help grease the wheels. The shiftiness and slipperiness that allowed Themistocles success in constructing a fleet—and Alcibiades success in launching one—resembled the sea they strove to utilize.

The cult of Poseidon grew in Attica following the Battle of Salamis in 480, paralleling Athens' shift to naval power. According to tradition, when competing for the patronage of Athens, Athena and Poseidon gave the Athenians a sacred olive tree and a saltwater pool respectively, and the gods granted Athena the victory (Herodotus 8.55; Plutarch *Themistocles* 19.2-3; Ps. Apollodorus 3.14.1; Pausanias 1.24.5; 1.26.5; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 6.70-86). This myth may very well predate the fifth century; a fragment of a black-figure neck amphora dated to 540 and found on the Athenian acropolis potentially depicts a scene from it.[137] It is also difficult to prove that the cult of Poseidon in Attica did not find its beginning before the fifth century. Whenever the cult and accompanying myth may have begun, they grew in influence during Athens' naval turn in the fifth century. The west pediment of the Parthenon, built 447-432, depicts Athena's victory over Poseidon. From roughly the same time, Herodotus

[136] Gera 2007, 445n2.

[137] Marx 2011; Morgan 2014, 73.

provides the oldest extant literary account of the divine competition for Athens (Herodotus 8.55). Discussing Themistocles, Plutarch frames the myth as a rebuke to Poseidon. He argues that Themistocles was τρόπον τινὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς βασιλεῦσι τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀντιπολιτευόμενος (Plutarch *Themistocles* 19.2, "in a certain respect campaigning against the ancient kings of the Athenians"). He explains that the ancient kings spread the myth of Athena's sacred olive tree on the acropolis to encourage a settled, agricultural society over one reliant upon the sea (Plutarch *Themistocles* 19.3). However, it is perhaps best to understand Poseidon's place in the myth (and on the west pediment of the Parthenon) as "the Athenians [having] their mythological cake as well as eating it."[138] Poseidon lost to Athena, but he still held a place of prominence for the Athenians, especially following their pivot to the sea.

The role of Athens' navy in the victory of the Persian Wars bolstered Athens' standing within Greece as well as the demos' standing within Athens. Our best source for the rise of Athens during this period is Thucydides, who includes a digression dubbed by later scholars as the *Pentecontaetia* (1.89-117). This translates to *the Fifty Years*, referring to the time, roughly five decades, between the Second Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, 479-431. This section will be more thoroughly analyzed in the following chapter. Before then it is worth outlining the general contours of Athenian growth in this period. It was the Spartans' fear of this growth that Thucydides cites as their reason for their voting for war in 431, launching the historian into the Fifty Years (1.88). Thucydides bookends this section with two major naval leaders, Themistocles and Pericles. The former foresees Athens' potential for naval empire and fortifies the Piraeus. The Athenians first assume a leadership role among willing, autonomous allies, after Pausanias

138 Morgan 2014, 73.

sours the Greeks on Spartan leadership. Again money is central to naval endeavors: the Athenians fix a tribute on member states and establish a treasury on Delos, which is why this confederacy is often called the Delian League. The Athenians move the treasury to Athens in 454/3; extant tribute lists survive beginning in this year (*IG* I^^{3} 259–90). The popularity of Athens' leadership role wanes as they impose a heavier and heavier hand on their league members. Thucydides reasons that the Athenians benefit from member poleis becoming increasingly willing to pay their tribute in money as opposed to ships. The Athenians construct the Long Walls which connect Athens to the Piraeus. The Athenians and their allies actively compel new poleis to join, forcibly prevent existing members from revolting, take on the Persians in theaters as far afield as Cyprus and Egypt, and fight against Sparta and her allies in what has come to be known as the First Peloponnesian War. This war ends with what is supposed to be a Thirty Years' Peace signed in 446. The digression comes to an end with Pericles and other generals defeating the revolting Samians.

The Athenian navy's undergirding of the growth of Athens in this period strengthens the role of the demos in Athenian politics. Hale writes that "a naval tradition that depended on the muscles and sweat of the masses led inevitably to democracy: from sea power to democratic power."[139] Of course, the groundwork for the Athenian democracy had already been forming for over a century by the time of Themistocles' reforms. Important developments necessary for democracy occurred under Solon's leadership in the beginning of the sixth century and then under Cleisthenes' at the end of the sixth century. After Themistocles' reforms, Ephialtes weakened the conservative Council of the Areopagus, another important step towards the radical

[139] Hale 2009, xxvii.

democracy that ruled until 411. Our sources do not give us much information on Ephialtes, but it is intriguing that two of our sources name two different naval leaders as his accomplice: Aristotle pairs Ephialtes with the next generation's leader, Pericles (Aristotle *Politics* 1274a); the author of the *Ath. Pol.* identifies the leader of the last generation, Themistocles, as his collaborator ([Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 25). Both sources are quite likely incorrect, but it is telling that they associate Ephialtes with naval leaders, the two leaders that bookend Thucydides' Fifty Years no less. The *Ath. Pol*. begins the passage on Ephialtes with the clause, αὐξανομένου δὲ τοῦ πλήθους ("after the majority grew in power"). This opening recognizes the increasing power that Athens' now strong navy granted the lower classes. In his *Politics*, Aristotle details the connection between naval victories and democracy: καὶ πάλιν ὁ ναυτικὸς ὄχλος γενόμενος αἴτιος τῆς περὶ Σαλαμῖνα νίκης καὶ διὰ ταύτης τῆς ἡγεμονίας διὰ τὴν κατὰ θάλατταν δύναμιν τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἰσχυροτέραν ἐποίησεν (Aristotle *Politics* 1304a, "And then again the naval mob, becoming responsible for the victory at Salamis, via this hegemony and because of seapower, made the democracy stronger"). The term ὄχλος ("mob") has its own connections to democracy. Through the negative connotation of the term, Aristotle informs his readers of his distrust in this form of government.

Liquid as Motion and Change, c. 500-c. 400

This section and the next will look at texts from all over Greece, but we have many more extant Athenian sources from the fifth century than previous eras. Whereas chapter 1 analyzed Solon alone, this chapter explores Athenian drama and comedy. All extant Greek tragedies and old and middle comedies come from Athens, and all of these plays come from the fifth century,

save two comedies from the early fourth century. Herodotus was from Halicarnassus but spent much of his life traveling, and Athens comprises a large focus of his work. The Hippocratic Corpus was composed from various places from the sixth to the fourth century. Originally attributed to Hippocrates, who lived in the fifth and early fourth centuries, the corpus is generally agreed to have been written by a number of different authors. Authors from all of these genres describe liquid as motion and change. One of the veins of this description to be analyzed in this chapter is the characterization of the sea as a catalyst for travel and an access point to the outside world.

Usages of the adjective διερός, which has a base meaning of "liquid, fluid," showcase the centrality of motion to liquidity in Greek thought. In the two extant Homeric usages of the word, any fluidity is metaphorical; the adjective denotes movement and life respectively: διερῷ ποδὶ (Homer *Odyssey* 9.43, "with swift foot"), οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ οὗτος ἀνὴρ διερὸς βροτὸς (Homer *Odyssey* 6.201, "there is no mortal man alive"). The use of διερὸς in the latter passage leads Chantraine to comment, "There is no doubt that the ancients viewed the liquid element as connected to life."[140] Metaphorical attestations continue through the fifth century. For example, Aristophanes uses this word of a nightingale's songs (διεροῖς μέλεσιν, Aristophanes *Birds* 213). The fifth century also sees the first extant usage that carries a literal meaning, from Aeschylus's *Eumenides*, first performed in 458. Out to avenge the murder of Clytemnestra, the Furies track her son and murderer through the scent of his mother's blood: αἶμα μητρῷον χαμαὶ/ δυσαγκόμιστον, παπαῖ,/ τὸ διερὸν πέδοι χύμενον οἴχεται (Aeschylus *Eumenides* 261-3, "A

[140] "Il n'est pas douteux que les Anciens voyaient l'èlément humide comme lié à la vie," Chantraine 1968, 1.281.

mother's blood on the ground is hard to pick up, alas, the liquid once poured upon the earth is gone"). Here the article renders the adjective a noun, τὸ διερὸν "the liquid." The motion of the noun is highlighted by both the participle χύμενον ("poured") and the verb οἴχεται ("is gone"). Both metaphorical and literal usages of the word highlight the Greek understanding of liquidity as predicated on motion.

This same scene in which the Eumenides track Orestes across Greece proves relevant for another reason. Aeschylus subtly contrasts the land and the sea, depicting the ease of traveling over the latter as compared to the former. Hunting down their prey, the chorus of Eumenides comments:

> πολλοῖς δὲ μόχθοις ἀνδροκμῆσι φυσιᾷ
> σπλάγχνον· χθονὸς γὰρ πᾶς πεποίμανται τόπος,
> ὑπέρ τε πόντον ἀπτέροις ποτήμασιν
> ἦλθον διώκουσ᾽, οὐδὲν ὑστέρα νεώς (Aeschylus *Eumenides* 248-51).
>
> My lungs pant from many, man-wearying
> toils. For the entire area of the land has been traversed.
> And above the sea in wingless flight
> I have come in pursuit, no slower than a ship.

The travel over land is marked with hardship, while travel over the sea comes with ease and is associated with speed. Alan H. Sommerstein notes the dichotomy in Aeschylus's construction: "The couplet describing the toils and troubles of the chase over land is now balanced by one telling of an easy and effortless pursuit over water."[141] The Eumenides, of course, differ from human travelers. However, the contrast they experience replicates real life. The liquidity of the sea allows for faster and, at times, easier travel.

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[141] Sommerstein 1989, 126-7.

This difference between land and sea was responsible for ever increasing sea traffic. It also creates new resonances for the sea in the literature of the day. Two extant plays composed by Euripides, who flourished in the second half of the fifth century, paint the sea as an escape route and, therefore, salvation for the protagonists. In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the title character deceives King Thoas, telling him she will cleanse the statue of Artemis in the sea, and she, Orestes, and Pylades then utilize the sea to escape with the statue (Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1328-1419). In *Helen*, the title character fools King Theoclymenus, saying that she must perform a ritual burial at sea for her husband, whereby she and Menelaus use the sea to escape back to Greece (Euripides *Helen* 1512-1618). Both plays feature a female protagonist tricking a king to gain access to the sea. The liquidity of the sea, in turn, allows them an escape from the king in the form of access to the wider world. A *deus ex machina* assists each protagonist (two in the case of Helen), but the sea offers them both an accelerated escape that land cannot.

In addition to ease of travel, the motion of the sea also facilitated more militaristic seafaring. After the Greek victory in the Persian Wars, this naval aggression primarily came from Athens, as discussed in the historical section above. In the following chapters, I will dissect how Thucydides characterizes the growth of this imperialism. Furthermore, I will analyze how contemporary authors depict the destructiveness of this imperialist expansionism in the following section of this chapter. However, it would be useful now to discuss briefly how Aristophanes, a comedic playwright contemporary with Thucydides, highlights Athenian expansionism. In *Wasps*, Aristophanes has the character Bdelycleon berate his father Philocleon for the latter's addiction to serving on juries. He explains that the Athenian empire is powerful enough and takes in enough money to provide more than a piddling juror's fee:

σκέψαι τοίνυν ὡς ἐξόν σοι πλουτεῖν καὶ τοῖσιν ἅπασιν
ὑπὸ τῶν ἀεὶ δημιζόντων οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπῃ ἐγκεκύκλησαι,
ὅστις πόλεων ἄρχων πλείστων ἀπὸ τοῦ Πόντου μέχρι Σαρδοῦς (Aristophanes *Wasps* 698-700).

Consider, then, that it is possible for you and the whole population to be rich.
I don't know how you have been boxed in by those continually fooling you,
you who rule most of the poleis from the Pontus to Sardinia.

He delineates the breadth of the Athenian *arche* by marking the Pontus, today's Black Sea, in the east and Sardinia in the west, an area Douglas M. MacDowell labels "exaggerated."[142] He chooses a body of water and an island unsurprisingly; the Athenians wield a naval *arche* encompassing the liquidity of the sea within range of their triremes and many poleis within range of the sea. Islands, surrounded by water, were particularly susceptible to Athenian rule. Referring to the west, MacDowell notes, "No city in this area paid tribute, and there is no other evidence of any Athenian influence over Sardinia,"[143] but the island seemed plausibly vulnerable to Aristophanes and his audience in 422. Bdelycleon elaborates upon the riches that the Athenian population could be enjoying if the tribute taken were distributed more equitably:

δύο μυριάδ᾽ ἂν τῶν δημοτικῶν ἔζων ἐν πᾶσι λαγῴοις
καὶ στεφάνοισιν παντοδαποῖσιν καὶ πυῷ καὶ πυριάτῃ,
ἄξια τῆς γῆς ἀπολαύοντες καὶ τοῦ 'ν Μαραθῶνι τροπαίου (Aristophanes *Wasps* 709-11).

Twenty thousand of our citizens would live among all hare feasts,
crowns of all sorts, beestings, and curdled beestings,
enjoying things worthy of the land and the trophy at Marathon.

The Athenian empire relies upon its navy, but Bdelycleon still roots his argument in the land, citing the land itself and the Athenians' victory in the land battle at Marathon. Although the speech as a whole disparages the system in place, he does not take issue with Athenian

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[142] MacDowell 1971, 228.

[143] MacDowell 1971, 228.

imperialism. It is not that the Athenians seize tribute from others that is the problem but that they do not distribute it fairly among their citizens.

In a particularly striking metaphor in his *Persians*, Aeschylus equates the movements of Persia's imperialist army to a wave of the sea.[144] The chorus sings:

> δόκιμος δ᾽ οὔτις ὑποστὰς
> μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν
> ἐχυροῖς ἕρκεσιν εἴργειν
> ἄμαχον κῦμα θαλάσσας·
> ἀπρόσοιστος γὰρ ὁ Περσᾶν
> στρατὸς ἀλκίφρων τε λαός (Aeschylus *Persians* 87-92).
>
> No one is trustworthy to stop
> the great stream of men,
> to shut out with secure defenses
> the invincible wave of the sea.
> For the army of the Persians is unstoppable
> and their host is made up of stout-hearted men.

The Persians were a land power. This was the common understanding in fifth-century Greece and is developed within this play itself. Phillippe Yziquel shows how Aeschylus paints Persia as "a mainland power, from all of Asia (56-7)."[145] He states, "The symmetry between Ἀσιατογενής born of Asia (12) and ἠπειρογενής, born on solid ground (42), comes to define clearly the field of action of this eastern army by specifically excluding the sea."[146] The Persian advance into Greece was stymied at the naval battle at Salamis,[147] the battle around which this play is

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[144] For Aeschylus on land and sea in the *Persians*, see Pelling 1997; Said 1992/3.

[145] "Une puissance de nature continentale, issue de *l'Asie entière* (v. 56- 57)," Yziquel 2004, 149.

[146] "La symétrie entre Ασιατογενής, *née de l'Asie* (v.12) et ἠπειρογενής, née sur la terre ferme (v. 42), vient définir clairement le domaine d'action de cette armée orientale en excluant spécifiquement le mer," Yziquel 2004, 149.

[147] On the pivotal nature of Salamis, see Herodotus 7.139 specifically and books 7, 8, and 9 generally.

centered. Aeschylus here chooses to equate the Persian force with the terrain on which it was defeated. The tragedian uses two different words that denote liquidity, ῥεύματι (“stream”) and κῦμα (“wave”). The first word is usually used to describe freshwater streams and rivers; Aeschylus specifies that the second word is to be understood as part of the saltwater sea (θαλάσσας). The quality these two different types of water share is motion, a motion that is difficult to curb, and Aeschylus desires to associate this quality with the Persian army here.

Herodotus’s narrative features rivers and other bodies of water, and he narrates humans successfully and unsuccessfully attempting to manipulate rivers and the seascape, highlighting the activeness and changeability of liquid. The Nile dominates the opening of Herodotus’ Egyptian narrative (Herodotus 2.1-35.2). In the course of this account, Herodotus discusses the Nile’s annual flood: ἐπέρχεται δὲ ὁ Νεῖλος, ἐπεὰν πληθύῃ, οὐ μοῦνον τὸ Δέλτα ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ Λιβυκοῦ τε λεγομένου χωρίου εἶναι καὶ τοῦ Ἀραβίου ἐνιαχῇ καὶ ἐπὶ δύο ἡμερέων ἑκατέρωθι ὁδόν, καὶ πλέον ἔτι τούτου καὶ ἔλασσον (Herodotus 2.19.1, “The Nile covers, whenever it floods, not only the Delta but also certain places throughout the land called Libya and Arabia and as far as a two day journey in either direction, sometimes more, sometimes less”). The liquidity of the Nile allows it to pour over a large amount of the surrounding land during flood season. The verb ἐπέρχεται (here “cover”) can also carry the connotation of a hostile attack. The Nile’s regular flood bewitches Herodotus, who entertains three explanations for it, before offering his own theory based upon the sun (Herodotus 2.19-26). The yearly change in the Nile’s level and accompanying change in the topography of the land and sea does not have a destructive effect. The relative predictability of the flood gives Egypt an advantage over other lands such as Greece:

> πυθόμενοι γὰρ ὡς ὕεται πᾶσα ἡ χώρη τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀλλ᾽ οὐ ποταμοῖσι ἄρδεται κατά περ ἡ σφετέρη, ἔφασαν Ἕλληνας ψευσθέντας κοτὲ ἐλπίδος μεγάλης κακῶς πεινήσειν. τὸ δὲ ἔπος τοῦτο ἐθέλει λέγειν ὡς, εἰ μὴ ἐθελήσει σφι ὕειν ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ αὐχμῷ διαχρᾶσθαι, λιμῷ οἱ Ἕλληνες αἱρεθήσονται· οὐ γὰρ δή σφι ἐστὶ ὕδατος οὐδεμία ἄλλη ἀποστροφὴ ὅτι μὴ ἐκ τοῦ Διὸς μοῦνον (Herodotus 2.13.3).
>
> For when [the Egyptians] learned that the entire land of the Greeks is rained upon and not watered by rivers like their own land, they said the Greeks would at some time be disappointed in their great expectation and starve pitifully. This statement means to say that, if god would be unwilling to send the Greeks rain but allows for drought instead, the Greeks will be seized with famine, since for them there is no source of water other than from Zeus alone.

Herodotus articulates the discrepancy between the two locations from the perspective of the Egyptians as a collective, to whom the reliance on unpredictable rains seems relatively precarious. He adds his own explanation after the Egyptians' indirect speech, allowing him to repeat and underline the distinction.

In addition to his fascination with liquids as they appear in nature, Herodotus details various rulers grappling with liquid as it appears in rivers and the sea. Sesostris, an early Egyptian king noteworthy for, among other accomplishments, conquering much of Asia, dug an extensive system of canals into the Egyptian countryside surrounding the Nile: κατέταμνε δὲ τοῦδε εἵνεκα τὴν χώρην ὁ βασιλεύς· ὅσοι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων μὴ ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ ἔκτηντο τὰς πόλις ἀλλ᾽ ἀναμέσους, οὗτοι, ὅκως τε ἀπίοι ὁ ποταμός, σπανίζοντες ὑδάτων πλατυτέροισι ἐχρέωντο τοῖσι πόμασι, ἐκ φρεάτων χρεώμενοι (Herodotus 2.108.4, "The king cut canals through the land for the following reason. However many Egyptians had communities not on the river but inland, these, whenever the river receded, lacking water, used brackish water from wells"). Just as the pharaoh conquered foreign lands, he bends the topography of Egypt to his will. He manipulates both the solid land and the liquid river, slicing up the former and extending the presence of the

latter in time and space. Herodotus consolidates the work of millennia into the actions of a single king; his account shows a human actor successfully corralling the motion of liquid for the benefit of his subjects and himself.

Herodotus depicts others wielding agency over Egyptian topography. Necos, the pharaoh at the turn of the sixth century who, as noted above, was an early possessor of triremes, attempts to cut a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea. He does not complete this project, but it is taken up and finished by Darius (Herodotus 2.158-9, 4.39.1, 4.42.2). The Egyptian queen Nitocris manipulates the flow of the Nile, using the river's changeability to eliminate her nemeses. After her brother is killed, she invites those she knows to be most responsible to a feast in a large underground room; δαινυμένοισι δὲ ἐπεῖναι τὸν ποταμὸν δι᾽ αὐλῶνος κρυπτοῦ μεγάλου (Hdt. 2.100.3, "As they feasted, she released the river against them through a giant, secret canal"). She steers the rush of the river to avenge her brother and kill his murderers. The episode showcases both the river's motion and its destructiveness. Many of these Herodotean characters' interactions with rivers—especially Nitocris's engagement with the Nile—stand as potential models for Thucydides' treatment of the Battle of Prosopotis (1.109.4).[148]

Herodotus depicts plenty of individuals trying to rule over liquids by manipulating rivers and carving canals outside of Egypt as well. Croesus manipulates the Halys river, with the help of Thales of Miletus, the natural philosopher who theorized that water preceded all other elements:

> ἀπορέοντος γὰρ Κροίσου ὅκως οἱ διαβήσεται τὸν ποταμὸν ὁ στρατός (οὐ γὰρ δὴ εἶναι κω τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον τὰς γεφύρας ταύτας) λέγεται παρεόντα τὸν Θαλῆν ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ ποιῆσαι αὐτῷ τὸν ποταμὸν ἐξ ἀριστερῆς χειρὸς ῥέον τατοῦ

[148] See chapter 4.

στρατοῦ καὶ ἐκ δεξιῆς ῥέειν, ποιῆσαι δὲ ὧδε· ἄνωθεν τοῦ στρατοπέδου ἀρξάμενον διώρυχα βαθέαν ὀρύσσειν, ἄγοντα μηνοειδέα, ὅκως ἂν τὸ στρατόπεδον ἱδρυμένον κατὰ νώτου λάβοι, ταύτῃ κατὰ τὴν διώρυχα ἐκτραπόμενος ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων ῥεέθρων, καὶ αὖτις παραμειβόμενος τὸ στρατόπεδον ἐς τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἐσβάλλοι· ὥστε ἐπείτε καὶ ἐσχίσθη τάχιστα ὁ ποταμός, ἀμφοτέρῃ διαβατὸς ἐγένετο (Herodotus 1.75.4-5).

Now Croesus was at a loss as to how to get his army across the river (since these bridges did not yet exist at this time). It is said that Thales, present in the camp, made the river, which was flowing to the left of the camp, also flow to the right. He did so in this way: beginning upstream from the camp, he dug a deep canal, leading it in a crescent shape so that it would lead to the rear of where the camp was situated, in this way diverted along the canal from its original course, and passing by the camp, discharging again into its original course. The result was then that once the river was split, it became fordable at both halves.

With the help of Thales, Croesus is able to successfully cross the Halys River, although the ensuing campaign may have made him wish he had not. The manipulation of the topography and the crossing of boundaries are often depicted as acts of hubris by Herodotean scholars,[149] although it should be noted that not all nature-manipulators or boundary-transgressors receive retribution in the narrative. The Cnidians begin building a canal to protect themselves from the expanding Persians, but after they are struck with unusual injuries, they consult the oracle at Delphi, who responds: Ἰσθμὸν δὲ μὴ πυργοῦτε μηδ᾽ὀρύσσετε· Ζεὺς γάρ κ᾽ ἔθηκε νῆσον, εἴ κ᾽ ἐβούλετο (Herodotus 1.174.5, "Do not fortify nor cut through the isthmus: For Zeus would have made an island, if he wanted an island"). The Cnidians do not alter the seascape, but they are then overtaken by the Persians.

The Babylonian queen Nitocris proves herself adept at controlling liquidity to help protect Babylon. In a manner similar to the Egyptian queen of the same name, Nitocris bends a river to her will. She diverts the Euphrates temporarily to build a bridge, permanently makes its

[149] For example, Raaflaub 2002, Ward 2008, and Stadter 2013.

course windy, and creates a large artificial lake (Herodotus 1.185-6). The purpose of the bridge is self-evident; Herodotus explains the reason for the other two works: ἐποίεε δὲ ἀμφότερα ταῦτα, τόν τε ποταμὸν σκολιὸν καὶ τὸ ὄρυγμα πᾶν ἕλος, ὡς ὅ τε ποταμὸς βραδύτερος εἴη περὶ καμπὰς πολλὰς ἀγνύμενος, καὶ οἱ πλόοι ἔωσι σκολιοὶ ἐς τὴν Βαβυλῶνα, ἔκ τε τῶν πλόων ἐκδέκηται περίοδος τῆς λίμνης μακρή (Herodotus 1.185.5, "She did both of these things, making the river crooked and the entire excavation a marsh, so that the river would be slower around many bends, and the journey to Babylon would be crooked and from there the large circuit of the basin should await"). This passage reinforces the access that the liquidity of the Euphrates can offer. This parallels the access and connectivity that the sea offers as seen in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*. Nitocris recognizes this access so she tries to extend the water's length to help make her city more defensible.

This theme of humans battling against the liquid and solid topography reaches its apex within Herodotus' treatment of Persian kings. Over the course of exploring Persian customs, Herodotus establishes their relationship with rivers: ἐς ποταμὸν δὲ οὔτε ἐνουρέουσι οὔτε ἐμπτύουσι, οὐ χεῖρας ἐναπονίζονται, οὐδὲ ἄλλον οὐδένα περιορῶσι, ἀλλὰ σέβονται ποταμοὺς μάλιστα (Herodotus 1.138.2, "They neither urinate nor spit into rivers, nor wash their hands, nor do they allow others to do these things, but they particularly revere rivers"). Herodotus paints this relationship as sacred early in the work to cast Persian kings' later interactions with waterways in stark contrast. The swift current of the river Gyndes sweeps up a sacred white horse of Cyrus, the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty. Herodotus depicts Cyrus's wrath as personifying the river: κάρτα τε δὴ ἐχαλέπαινε τῷ ποταμῷ ὁ Κῦρος τοῦτο ὑβρίσαντι, καί οἱ ἐπηπείλησε οὕτω δή μιν ἀσθενέα ποιήσειν ὥστε τοῦ λοιποῦ καὶ γυναῖκας μιν εὐπετέως τὸ γόνυ

οὐ βρεχούσας διαβήσεσθαι (Herodotus 1.188.2, "Cyrus grew very angry at the river insulting him in this way: he threatened to make him so weak that in the future even women would easily cross without getting their knees wet"). Cyrus treats the river more as a human rival than a natural feature, following Homer's treatment of the Scamander. In addition to addressing it as a human, Cyrus's boast that he will make the river unable to get women wet above the knees is a threat to emasculate it. He then puts his expedition on hold to cut three hundred and sixty canals into the sides of the river, weakening it as promised. The act is an amplification of Croesus and Thales' treatment of the Halys. Immediately afterwards, Cyrus replicates the action of Nitocris. She had diverted the Euphrates to build a bridge across Babylon; the Persian king does the same to capture the city she once ruled (Herodotus 1.191). Cyrus's successor Darius finishes Necos' canal connecting the Nile to the Red Sea (Herodotus 4.39.1, 4.42.2). Neither Cyrus nor Darius receives immediate retribution for their respective manipulations of nature, as Croesus did or as Xerxes will. Xerxes and his troops' repeated engagements with liquidity will be taken up in the following section with a focus on liquid's destructiveness.

Finally, the Hippocratic Corpus also extensively connects liquids with motion. The centrality of humoral theory to Hippocratic thought has been largely overblown, because of the position of the theory within later medical thought. Elizabeth M. Craik argues that it "has been accorded an exaggerated prominence" and that "although humoral theory became dominant in later medical writing—and in literature, and action—it was not fully developed in the [Hippocratic] Corpus."[150] Nevertheless, this corpus does include plenty of discussion of the humors and humoral theory. The Hippocratic treatise *Nature of Man* defines humoral theory: Τὸ

[150] Craik 2015, 288.

δὲ σῶμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔχει ἐν ἑωυτῷ αἷμα καὶ φλέγμα καὶ χολὴν ξανθὴν καὶ μέλαιναν, καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν αὐτῷ ἡ φύσις τοῦ σώματος, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ἀλγεῖ καὶ ὑγιαίνει ([Hippocrates] *Nature of Man* 4, "The body of a person contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile; the nature of one's body is these, and because of these one is in pain or in good health"). This definition proved influential to later medical thinkers; however, other definitions of humoral theory abound in the Hippocratic Corpus. The author of *Diseases 4* also identifies four humors but combines the two forms of bile into one humor and includes water as the fourth ([Hippocrates] *Diseases* 4.1);[151] the author of *Humors* does not limit himself to four categories but identifies all sorts of bodily fluids as humors ([Hippocrates] *Humors*; Craik 2015, 288-9).

While discussing humors, Hippocratic authors emphasize the humors' propensity to move throughout the body. A representative example comes from *Nature of Man*. After the author offers the influential definition of humoral theory cited above, he discusses how properly flowing humors account for good health. Afflictions are likewise caused by the humors, specifically when their flow is disrupted in one way or another. The author offers a few examples:

> ἀνάγκη γάρ, ὅταν τούτων τι χωρισθῇ καὶ ἐφ᾽ ἑωυτοῦ στῇ, οὐ μόνον τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ἔνθεν ἐξέστη ἐπίνοσον γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔνθα ἂν στῇ καὶ ἐπιχυθῇ, ὑπερπιμπλάμενον ὀδύνην τε καὶ πόνον παρέχειν. καὶ γὰρ ὅταν τι τούτων ἔξω τοῦ σώματος ἐκρυῇ πλέον τοῦ ἐπιπολάζοντος, ὀδύνην παρέχει ἡ κένωσις. ἤν τ᾽ αὖ πάλιν ἔσω ποιήσηται τὴν κένωσιν καὶ τὴν μετάστασιν καὶ τὴν ἀπόκρισιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων, πολλὴ αὐτῷ ἀνάγκη διπλῆν τὴν ὀδύνην παρέχειν κατὰ τὰ εἰρημένα, ἔνθεν τε ἐξέστη καὶ ἔνθα ὑπερέβαλεν ([Hippocrates] *Nature of Man* 4).
>
> For it is necessary, whenever any [humor] becomes separated off and stands by itself, that not only does the location from which it was displaced become unhealthy, but also where it stands and floods in, overfilled, it causes pain and suffering. And whenever some amount flows out of the body, more than is common, the emptying causes pain. If, on the other hand, it so happens that the

[151] Craik 2015, 289.

> emptying, the shift, and the separation from the rest occur within, it is quite necessary that it must cause double pain for him according to what has been said, from where it is displaced and where it overflows.

The humors' proper and improper functioning is centered in their proper and improper movement. This focus on humors within the human body privileges the body's fluids, and these fluids understood diachronically are systems of flux.

Liquid as Destruction, c. 500-c. 400

Authors writing in all of the genres discussed in the previous section—tragedy, comedy, historiography, and medical writing—likewise paint liquids as dangerous and destructive forces.

Aeschylus utilizes the Persian perspective on the Battle of Salamis to highlight "the dangerous nature of seafaring."[152] Above, we saw how Aeschylus compares the Persians advancing on Greece to a fluid stream and a wave of the sea. The metaphorical language emphasizes the sweeping motion of the invading army. When the playwright describes the Persian army, which was renowned on land, embarking onto ships, the motion of the sea now works against them:

> ἔμαθον δ᾽ εὐρυπόροι-
> ο θαλάσσας πολιαι-
> νομένας πνεύματι λάβρῳ
> ἐσορᾶν πόντιον ἄλσος,
> πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πεί-
> σμασι λα-
> οπόροις τε μαχαναῖς.
> δολόμητιν δ᾽ ἀπάταν θεοῦ
> τίς ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει;
> τίς ὁ κραιπνῷ ποδὶ πήδη-
> μα τόδ᾽ εὐπετῶς ἀνᾴσσων;

[152] "Le caractère dangereux de la navigation," Yziqel 2004, 147.

φιλόφρων γὰρ παρασαίνει
βροτὸν εἰς ἄρκυας Ἄτα,
τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὕπερθέν
νιν ἄνατον ἐξαλύξαι (Aeschylus *Persians* 100-14).

They learned to look
upon the marine district
of the broad-wayed sea
whitening under the violent wind,
trusting upon their
thinly-built cables
and their human-conveying machines.
What mortal man can
escape the wily guile of a god?
What man on swift foot
can lightly spring this leap?
For welcoming Ruin tricks
mortals into her nets.
From there it is not possible
to escape unharmed.

Aeschylus depicts the liquid sea swirling dangerously, turning white under violent winds. The solid material of the boats, on the other hand, is classified as precarious: the cables are thinly built and the boats themselves are μαχαναῖς ("machines"), artificial contrivances to put humans where they do not tread naturally. The second half of the citation emphasizes the fragility of mortals thereby underlining the strangeness of their being on the sea. The double negative οὐκ… ἄνατον ("not…unharmed") and the appearance of Ἄτα ("Ruin") personified articulate the direness of the circumstance. Aeschylus details this ruin concretely in his description of the battle and in its aftermath: αἱμαχθεῖσα δ᾽ ἄρουραν/ Αἴαντος περικλύστα/ νᾶσος ἔχει τὰ Περσᾶν (Aeschylus *Persians* 597-9, "The blood-soaked, sea-washed land of Ajax's island holds the corpses and wreckage of the Persians"). Ajax's island refers to Salamis, from where the Greek navy departed before the battle and the namesake of the battle itself. Aeschylus liquifies its land

with two compound adjectives, mixing blood with seawater and thereby highlighting the destructiveness of the latter. About these three lines, Philippe Yziquel states: "The lyricism is thus the expression of a high political ideal, which rejects adventurous imperialism and war of conquest."[153] This statement holds true for the play as a whole.

Euripides explores the dangers of seafaring in his *Trojan Women*. The play opens with Poseidon, who supported the Greeks in the Trojan War. Athena, who also supported the Greeks but was disturbed by Ajax's seizure of Cassandra from her shrine, soon convinces Poseidon to turn against the Greeks. Athena approaches him because his domain, the sea, both stands as the connection for the Greeks from Troy to home and has the potential for destructiveness. Athena's instructions to Poseidon articulate the latter's power as god of the sea:

> σὺ δ᾽ αὖ, τὸ σόν, παράσχες Αἴγαιον πόρον
> τρικυμίαις βρέμοντα καὶ δίναις ἁλός,
> πλῆσον δὲ νεκρῶν κοῖλον Εὐβοίας μυχόν,
> ὡς ἂν τὸ λοιπὸν τἄμ᾽ ἀνάκτορ᾽ εὐσεβεῖν
> εἰδῶσ᾽ Ἀχαιοί, θεούς τε τοὺς ἄλλους σέβειν (Euripides *Trojan Women* 82-6).
>
> And you, in turn, for your part, supply the Aegean strait
> as roaring with third waves and whirlpools of saltwater.
> Fill the gulf of Euboea with corpses,
> so that in the future, the Achaeans know to revere
> my shrines and to honor the other gods,

In Greek, the third wave is an idiom to denote a particularly large swell.[154] Poseidon's power is predicated on the sea, and the sea's destructiveness is, in turn, based upon its motion. Athena's mention of third waves and whirlpools underscores the motion; her evocation of corpses

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[153] "Le lyrisme se fait ainsi l'expression d'un idéal politique élevé, qui refuse l'impérialisme aventureux et la guerre de conquête," Yziquel 2004, 157.

[154] Barlow 1986, 161; cf. Plato *Republic* 472a.

highlights the destructiveness. Poseidon's response repeats the themes apparent in Athena's request:

> ἔσται τάδ᾽ ἡ χάρις γὰρ οὐ μακρῶν λόγων
> δεῖται· ταράξω πέλαγος Αἰγαίας ἁλός.
> ἀκταὶ δὲ Μυκόνου Δήλιοί τε χοιράδες
> Σκῦρός τε Λῆμνός θ᾽ αἱ Καφήρειοί τ᾽ ἄκραι
> πολλῶν θανόντων σώμαθ᾽ ἕξουσιν νεκρῶν (Euripides *Trojan Women* 87-92).
>
> So it will be. For your favor requires not many
> words. I will stir up the broad Aegean Sea.
> The beaches of Myconos, the Delian rocks,
> Skyros, Lemnos, and the promontories of Caphareus
> will possess the bodies of many dead corpses.

Poseidon reiterates the mention of corpses. He agrees to stir up the sea, accessing his power by setting the sea into motion.

Poseidon and Athena then exit the stage, replaced by Hecuba, who laments her fate. At the beginning of her first strophe, she offers instructions that one must go with the flow, so to speak:

> πλεῖ κατὰ πορθμόν, πλεῖ κατὰ δαίμονα,
> μηδὲ προσίστω πρῷραν βιότου
> πρὸς κῦμα πλέουσα τύχαισιν (Euripides *Trojan Women* 102-4).
>
> Sail along with the stream, sail along with destiny,
> do not set the ship of life
> against the wave sailing by chance

The metaphor reinforces the tragedy's focus on the sea. It is strengthened by its placement shortly after Athena and Poseidon's discussion on the perilousness of the sea. This earlier conversation foreshadowed storms for the Greeks and captive Trojan women on their imminent voyages, which, in turn, adds depth to Hecuba's words. The metaphor recalls the flux of life

seen in Heraclitus's river imagery (Heraclitus D-K 12). The shift to the sea and the mention of waves add a dimension of danger to this conceptualization of life.

Aristophanes' *Birds* further develops the theme of Athenian *arche* seen in his earlier play *Wasps*. The comic poet adds a negative coloring to *arche* not visible in *Wasps*. The two protagonists leave Athens in search of τόπον ἀπράγμονα (Aristophanes *Birds* 44, "a quiet place"). This adjective is loaded with meaning. Nan Dunbar explains:

> The terms *ἀπράγμων*, *ἀπραγμοσύνη* and their opposites *πολυπράγμων*, *πολυπραγμοσύνη* were loaded words for Athenians in [Aristophanes's] time and beyond. Applied to individuals or to cities, the first pair denote unaggressive, non-interfering behavior, the second pair a restless, meddlesome activity; the second were often used of the Athenians, by their enemies as a reproach but by themselves as a source of pride.[155]

These descriptors play large roles in Thucydides' narrative. Dunbar associates πολυπράγμων and πολυπραγμοσύνη with restlessness; the activeness in Athens' nature parallels the motion of the sea, where their restless nature leads them.

The two protagonists meet Tereus and request his help in finding them a place to live. When he suggests a town on the Red Sea, Euelpides responds: οἴμοι μηδαμῶς/ ἡμῖν παρὰ τὴν θάλατταν, ἵν' ἀνακύψεται/ κλητῆρ' ἄγουσ' ἕωθεν ἡ Σαλαμινία (Aristophanes *Birds* 145-7, "Goodness no!/ Not by the sea where the *Salaminia*/ will crop up at dawn bearing a summoner for us"). The first line is part of an antilabe, revealing Euelpides' eagerness to say no. The *Salaminia* was one of two Athenian ships used for official state business and renowned for their speed.[156] When the play was performed in 414, the *Salaminia* had recently been sent to Sicily to recall Alcibiades, an event to which this passage alludes (6.53.1, 6.61.4-7). The *Salaminia*

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[155] Dunbar 1995, 151.

[156] See Aristophanes *Birds* 1204.

represents to the protagonists (as it did to Alcibiades) a similar danger to what the Athenian navy represented to less powerful cities. The access opened up by the sea here becomes a negative that the protagonists desperately want to avoid. Aristophanes employs the unusual verb, ἀνακύψεται ("will crop up"), to describe the ship's appearance. Dunbar calls this verb, "a lively description of a ship suddenly appearing above the horizon."[157] Moreover, the verb makes it look as though the ship issues directly from the sea, further entangling the swift official ship of Athens with the liquidity of the sea. Aristophanes develops the unfavorable aspects of the sea's capacity for connectivity throughout the play. For example, while the protagonists are setting up their new city, five outside intruders interrupt affairs.[158] These include an Athenian special inspector and a vendor of imperialist decrees, two figures associated with Athenian imperialism. These visitors are particularly unwelcome and further reinforce the negativity of the Athenian *arche* and the sea that enables it.

Throughout his narrative, Herodotus uses storms to depict the destructiveness of liquids. He repeatedly shows storms stirring up the sea and destroying the solids that men construct to tread upon it, ships and bridges (Herodotus 6.44.2-3, 7.34, 7.170.2, 7.188, 8.13, 8.117.1). A storm that destroyed a Persian fleet under Mardonius in 492 proves pivotal for Xerxes' campaign over a decade later. προσπταισάντων τῶν πρώτων περιπλεόντων περὶ τὸν Ἄθων (Herodotus 7.22.1, "Since those who first sailed around Mount Athos met with disaster"), Xerxes resolves to cut a canal across the Mount Athos peninsula in the eastern Chalcidice. The earlier destructiveness of the sea results in Xerxes' attempt to manipulate the solid and liquid

[157] Dunbar 1995, 181.

[158] Aristophanes *Birds* 903-1057.

topography of northern Greece. Xerxes comes at the end of a long line of leaders in Herodotus's narrative who wrestle with both liquid and solid natural features, analyzed in the section above. Herodotus indicates Xerxes' μεγαλοφροσύνης (Herodotus 7.24, "arrogance") in changing the topography when he could have easily dragged his ships over the land.[159] On the other hand, just as Herodotus earlier detailed Thales' role in helping Croesus divert the Halys River (Herodotus 1.75.4-5), he now singles out the Phoenicians for their superior method in digging out the canal (Herodotus 7.23.2-3). A degree of hubris may be involved in taking on natural features, but Herodotus still registers respect for those who do so effectively.

To complement the digging of the canal across the Mount Athos peninsula, Xerxes yokes Asia and Europe at the Hellespont. As with the previous examples, manipulation of liquid natural features entails manipulation of their solid counterparts. This dualism dovetails with Herodotus's depictions of Persian leaders demanding earth and water as symbols of submission.[160] Similarly one must remove solid earth to create a liquid passageway through a peninsula. One cannot bridge a waterway without solid material. Herodotus focuses on the makeup of this solidity: ἐς ταύτην ὦν τὴν ἀκτὴν ἐξ Ἀβύδου ὁρμώμενοι ἐγεφύρουν[161] τοῖσι προσέκειτο, τὴν μὲν λευκολίνου Φοίνικες, τὴν δ᾽ἑτέρην τὴν βυβλίνην Αἰγύπτιοι. ἔστι δὲ ἑπτὰ στάδιοι ἐξ Ἀβύδου ἐς τὴν ἀπαντίον (Herodotus 7.34, "To this promontory beginning from Abydos, those who were commanded built bridges; the Phoenicians built one of white flax, and

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159 For Xerxes and hubris, see Cairns 1996, 13-5.

160 See especially Herodotus 6.48, 6.94, 7.32, and also Herodotus 4.126-7, 4.132, 5.17.1-18.1, 5.73.2-3, 6.49.2, 7.163.2, 7.233.1, 7.132-3, 7.138, 8.46.4.

161 ἐγεφύρουν: This verb means to bridge over or dam up, in other words, to manipulate a body of water by means of a solid artifice. The root noun γέφυρα means "dam" in Homer and either "dam" or "bridge" after Homer.

the Egyptians built the other of papyrus. It is about three quarters of a mile from Abydos to the other side"). Herodotus elsewhere praises the Phoenicians for their naval expertise and canal-digging skills and the Egyptians for their invention of geometry (Herodotus 1.143, 2.109.3, 3.19.3, 7.23.2-3, 7.44). Neither this combined expertise nor the differing solid materials are able to save the bridges beyond the next sentence: καὶ δὴ ἐζευγμένου τοῦ πόρου ἐπιγενόμενος χειμὼν μέγας συνέκοψέ τε ἐκεῖνα πάντα καὶ διέλυσε (Herodotus, 7.34, "And after the crossing was yoked, a great storm rising up thrashed and dissolved everything"). As with other storms depicted by Herodotus including the storm that destroyed Mardonius's fleet off of Mount Athos in 492, the destructiveness dissolves solid material that had been constructed by humans over the sea. Herodotus shows this storm coming into being after the bridges' completion, thereby highlighting its suddenness and predicating its destructiveness on its mutability. The Phoenician and Egyptian builders did not long outlive their constructions, beheaded by Xerxes shortly thereafter (Herodotus 7.35.3).

Between the storm's destruction of the bridges and Xerxes' beheading of his subjects, the Persian king confronts the liquid strait directly:

> ὡς δ᾽ ἐπύθετο Ξέρξης, δεινὰ ποιεύμενος τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ἐκέλευσε τριηκοσίας ἐπικέσθαι μάστιγι πληγὰς καὶ κατεῖναι ἐς τὸ πέλαγος πεδέων ζεῦγος. ἤδη δὲ ἤκουσα ὡς καὶ στιγέας ἅμα τούτοισι ἀπέπεμψε στίξοντας τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον. ἐνετέλλετο δὲ ὦν ῥαπίζοντας λέγειν βάρβαρά τε καὶ ἀτάσθαλα: 'ὦ πικρὸν ὕδωρ, δεσπότης τοι δίκην ἐπιτιθεῖ τήνδε, ὅτι μιν ἠδίκησας οὐδὲν πρὸς ἐκείνου ἄδικον παθόν. καὶ βασιλεὺς μὲν Ξέρξης διαβήσεταί σε, ἤν τε σύ γε βούλῃ ἤν τε μή. σοὶ δὲ κατὰ δίκην ἄρα οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων θύει ὡς ἐόντι καὶ θολερῷ καὶ ἁλμυρῷ ποταμῷ' (Herodotus 7.35.1-2).
>
> When Xerxes learned of this, he took it terribly and he ordered the Hellespont to be given three hundred blows with a whip and his men to drop a pair of chains into the sea. I further heard that at the same time as these events he sent for branders to brand the Hellespont. He commanded those thrashing it to say

> barbarous and reckless things: 'Pungent water, your master lays this punishment upon you, since you wronged him having suffered no wrong from him. King Xerxes will cross you, whether you are willing or not. No mortal offers you sacrifice with good reason for you are a foul and brackish river.'

As other leaders before him, including the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, Cyrus, Xerxes treats the river as a human rival. This parallels Achilles' rivalry with the Scamander (Homer *Iliad* 21); Xerxes' invading force also drinks numerous rivers dry, including the Scamander (Herodotus 7.21.1, 7.43.1). Upset by the Hellespont's destructiveness (in conjunction with the storm), he insults it instead for being a deficient river, ὦ πικρὸν ὕδωρ ("pungent water"), θολερῷ καὶ ἁλμυρῷ ("foul and brackish"). The absurdity of trying to punish a liquid body of water as a human can be seen in Xerxes' specific punishments. He drops a solid set of chains into the water to showcase its subjugation. The act is, of course, symbolic, yet the symbolism does not reflect well upon Xerxes. The water flows unfettered through, around, and over the submerged chains.[162] Herodotus slightly distances himself from the credibility of the next punishment, ἤδη δὲ ἤκουσα ὡς ("I further heard that"). The punishment plays out similar to the first: the absurdity of the premise is witnessed in the impossibility of branding water. Notwithstanding, the competition between man and liquid continues, with the Hellespont getting the last laugh. Xerxes' rapid retreat after the Battle of Salamis is halted by the fact that a storm had destroyed the two pontoon bridges that had replaced the first two bridges. The blow proves more than a minor inconvenience: ἐνθαῦτα δὲ κατεχόμενοι σιτία τε πλέω ἢ κατ᾽ ὁδὸν ἐλάγχανον, καὶ οὐδένα τε κόσμον ἐμπιπλάμενοι καὶ ὕδατα μεταβάλλοντες ἀπέθνησκον τοῦ στρατοῦ τοῦ περιεόντος πολλοί (Herodotus 8.117.2, "Detained there, they were able to obtain more food than they had on

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[162] On the difficulty of yoking and fettering the Hellespont, cf. Aeschylus *Persians* 681-752.

the journey. Stuffing themselves with no order and changing their water many members of the army perished who had survived up to this point"). The change of water denotes the difference in water qualities from region to region. After the storms destroyed the bridges, changes in liquidity finish off many of Xerxes' soldiers.

Developed in parts of the Hippocratic Corpus, humoral theory showcases the liquid humors as responsible for both good and poor health. The treatise *Diseases 4* offers a definition of humoral theory slightly different than the one from *Nature of Man* cited in the previous section. The author of *Diseases 4* writes that ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ ὑγροῦ τέσσαρα εἴδεα ἐν τῷ σώματι, ἀφ᾽ ὧν αἱ νοῦσοι γίνονται, ὁκόσα μὴ ἀπὸ βίης νουσήματα γίνεται ([Hippocrates] *Diseases* 4.1, "Both women and men have four forms of liquid in their body, from which diseases occur, however many afflictions do not occur from violence"). Although the four humors he goes on to name differ slightly from those named in *Nature of Man*, the placement of liquid humors as the center of functioning bodies remains the same. The author considers humors responsible for all diseases not caused by violence. It is not the presence of such liquids that causes diseases, for they are present in every human and vital to good health. As liquids, they flow throughout the body, and any breakdown in this flow is what causes disease. This circumstance can be observed in the passage of *Nature of Man* cited in the previous section. It is also perceivable elsewhere in the corpus. Analyzing the treatise *Afflictions*, Craik finds the same dynamic: "The aetiology of disease is consistently and quite conventionally explained in terms of the movement (2, 12, 15, 30), collection (2, 9, 16, 29), flux (4, 24) and fixation (11, 23, 29, 30) of bodily fluids."[163] The adverb "conventionally" points to the widespread nature of this

[163] Craik 2015, 16.

understanding of the cause of disease in the Hippocratic Corpus. Human life relies upon humors continually coursing through the human body, and any breakdown in the body's many systems of flux can have destructive consequences in the form of diseases.

Finally, the author known as the Old Oligarch offers a negative view on the constitution of Athens and the Athenian *arche*, wherein the liquidity of the sea leads to poor government. Roughly contemporaneous with Thucydides, his *Constitution of the Athenians* has come down to us in the corpus of Xenophon; however, the author's true identity is unknown.[164] He reveals his negative opinion of the Athenian constitution from the very opening of the work: περὶ δὲ τῆς Ἀθηναίων πολιτείας, ὅτι μὲν εἵλοντο τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς πολιτείας οὐκ ἐπαινῶ διὰ τόδε, ὅτι ταῦθ᾽ ἑλόμενοι εἵλοντο τοὺς πονηροὺς ἄμεινον πράττειν ἢ τοὺς χρηστούς ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 1.1, "Concerning the constitution of the Athenians, I do not praise the form of constitution they have selected, since selecting it, they have selected to make the base fare better than the good"). The reason that the author dislikes the Athenian constitution is that it favors less worthy men over their superiors. The problem is, therefore, conceptualized as an overturning or upsetting of proper order. The author offers an explanation of this overturning: unlike other poleis which rely primarily upon land armies, the Athenians rely upon their navy which, in turn, depends upon more members of society:

> πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τοῦτο ἐρῶ, ὅτι δικαίως <δοκοῦσιν> αὐτόθι [καὶ] οἱ πένητες καὶ ὁ δῆμος πλέον ἔχειν τῶν γενναίων καὶ τῶν πλουσίων διὰ τόδε, ὅτι ὁ δῆμός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλαύνων τὰς ναῦς καὶ ὁ τὴν δύναμιν περιτιθεὶς τῇ πόλει, καὶ οἱ κυβερνῆται καὶ οἱ κελευσταὶ καὶ οἱ πεντηκόνταρχοι καὶ οἱ πρῳρᾶται καὶ οἱ ναυπηγοί, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ τὴν δύναμιν περιτιθέντες τῇ πόλει πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ οἱ ὁπλῖται καὶ οἱ γενναῖοι καὶ οἱ χρηστοί. ἐπει δὴ οὖν ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, δοκεῖ δίκαιον εἶναι πᾶσι τῶν ἀρχῶν

[164] For more on this author see Ober, who begins his extensive study on political dissent in democratic Athens with an analysis of him, 1998, 14-26.

μετεῖναι ἔν τε τῷ κλήρῳ καὶ ἐν τῇ χειροτονίᾳ, καὶ λέγειν ἐξεῖναι τῷ βουλομένῳ τῶν πολιτῶν ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 1.2).[165]

I will say this first, that at Athens the poor and the demos justly expect to have more than the noble and the wealthy because the demos is driving the ships and bestowing power upon the polis. The pilots, boatswains, commanders, look-outs, and shipbuilders bestow power upon the polis much more than the hoplites, the nobles, and the good. Since this is the case, it seems just that all take part in the allotment and the election of the magistracies, and that whichever citizen wishes be able to speak.

The author, an advocate of oligarchy, seems unwilling to name the lowly rowers among the jobs that are necessary for the operation of the navy. Notwithstanding, he shows how the navy taps into a wider share of the population, and this military reality translates into a political one, democracy.

Although the author blames the navy for the Athenians' backward constitution, he identifies advantages which navies wield over land armies. These advantages are predicated on the access and connectivity that the sea offers. The Old Oligarch discusses the sea's seeming ability to shrink distances: ἔπειτα δὲ τοῖς μὲν κατὰ θάλατταν ἄρχουσιν οἷόν τ᾽ ἀποπλεῦσαι ἀπὸ τῆς σφετέρας αὐτῶν ὁπόσον βούλει πλοῦν, τοῖς δὲ κατὰ γῆν οὐχ οἷόν τε ἀπὸ τῆς σφετέρας αὐτῶν ἀπελθεῖν πολλῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδόν ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.5, "Moreover, it is possible for those ruling over the sea to sail out from their own land however far they want to sail, but it is not possible for those ruling over the land to take a journey of many days"). The sea, of course, does not actually shrink the distances between Athens and its subjects, but it does vastly decrease the amount of time it takes to cover these distances. This accessibility that the sea provides allows Athens to create a monopoly on wealth, according to the author:

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165 Cf. Aristotle *Politics* 1304A, analyzed above.

> τὸν δὲ πλοῦτον μόνοι οἷοί τ᾽ εἰσὶν ἔχειν τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων. εἰ γάρ τις πόλις πλουτεῖ ξύλοις ναυπηγησίμοις, ποῖ διαθήσεται, ἐὰν μὴ πείσῃ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς θαλάττης; τί δ᾽ εἴ τις σιδήρῳ ἢ χαλκῷ ἢ λίνῳ πλουτεῖ πόλις, ποῖ διαθήσεται, ἐὰν μὴ πείσῃ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς θαλάττης; ἐξ αὐτῶν μέντοι τούτων καὶ δὴ νῆές μοί εἰσι, παρὰ μὲν τοῦ ξύλα, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ σίδηρος, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ χαλκός, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ λίνον, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ κηρός ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.11).
>
> They alone among the Greeks and barbarians are able to possess wealth. For if some polis is wealthy in ship-building timber, where will it distribute it, unless it persuades the ruler of the sea? What if some city is wealthy in iron, bronze, or flax? Where will they distribute these unless they persuade the ruler of the sea? My ships are from these materials, wood from one place, iron from another, bronze from another, flax from another, and wax from another.

The author lists the solid materials necessary for shipbuilding and, therefore, for seafaring. Rule over the sea allows Athens—or any other thalassocracy—to monopolize the flow of solid material necessary to rove the sea in the first place.

Although the two citations in the previous paragraph exhibit a writer who respects the power of a navy and thalassocracy, other passages reinforce the work's opening in showcasing the negativity of the Athenian system. The author develops the theme of mixing, a quality associated with liquidity, to display what he views as the drawbacks of the Athenian rule over the sea: διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς θαλάττης πρῶτον μὲν τρόπους εὐωχιῶν ἐξηῦρον ἐπιμισγόμενοι ἄλλῃ ἄλλοις· <ὥστε> ὅ τι ἐν Σικελίᾳ ἡδὺ ἢ ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ ἢ ἐν Κύπρῳ ἢ ἐ Αἰγύπτῳ ἢ ἐν Λυδίᾳ ἢ ἐν τῷ Πόντῳ ἢ ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ ἢ ἄλλοθί που, ταῦτα πάντα εἰς ἓν ἥθροισται διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς θαλάττης (Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.7, "Because of their rule of the sea, [the Athenians] first discovered the ways of luxury, mixing with various peoples in various places. Whatever pleasure is in Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, the Pontus, the Peloponnesus or anywhere else, all of these are collected into one place because of the rule of the sea"). The

access allowed by the sea, which can offer a monopoly on wealth as seen above, here brings luxury, a more pejorative iteration of wealth, from numerous lands. εὐωχιῶν ("luxury," literally "feasts") and ἡδὺ ("pleasure") carry negative connotations. This all stems from the Athenians using the sea to mix with various peoples from various places. The author focuses on this mixing again in the following passage: ἔπειτα φωνὴν πᾶσαν ἀκούοντες ἐξελέξαντο τοῦτο μὲν ἐκ τῆς, τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ τῆς· καὶ οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἰδίᾳ μᾶλλον καὶ φωνῇ καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ σχήματι χρῶνται, Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ κεκραμένῃ ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.8, "Then, hearing every language, they pick out something from here and something from there. And the Greeks use more their own language, way of life, and dress, while the Athenians use a mixture from all Greeks and barbarians"). The heterogeneity of Athenian culture is avoided by other Greeks who do not rely upon rule over the sea. When the sea gets stirred up, the resultant storm proves destructive. The Old Oligarch posits that the sea has both upset the Athenian constitution and diluted Athenian culture by mixing it with the outside world, two destructive processes predicated on motion.

CHAPTER 3

Thucydides and Athenian Naval Imperialism

Before analyzing how Thucydides constructs liquids and solids in the following chapters, it is necessary to orient ourselves to his perspective on Athenian naval imperialism. The *opinio communis* on this topic paints Thucydides as a strong supporter of Pericles and Athens' brand of naval imperialism. This has been the default reading of Thucydides for at least one hundred years, and its proponents include, in the words of Connor, "some of the most brilliant Thucydidean scholars."[166] The minority position challenges this argument, showcasing the ways in which Thucydides problematizes the Athenians' imperialistic drive and undermines Pericles' naval agenda. Despite its ancient pedigree and some recent attestations, this argument has so far failed to break through. After I examine the historiography of both of these arguments, I will detail why I believe the *opinio communis* to be flawed and the minority position to be correct. I will analyze important passages from Thucydides 1.1-2.65, the section of the text usually assumed to be most supportive of the *opinio communis*. A close analysis will show, on the contrary, that even this section supports the minority position. Once we establish Thucydides' skepticism about naval imperialism, the following chapters on liquids and solids will confirm and build upon these findings.

Opinio Communis: Thucydides, an Advocate of Athenian Imperialism

[166] Connor 1984, 73.

Throughout the twentieth century and into this one, it has been the accepted consensus among Thucydidean scholars that the historian paints Athenian imperialism in a favorable light. Perhaps he sours on it by the time of the Melian campaign and Sicilian expedition—the conventional thinking goes—but he supports the form of Athenian imperialism at the beginning of the war articulated through the character of Pericles. While there are those who have dissented, a majority of scholars cling to this consensus with varying degrees of intensity. Rather than comprehensively detail the past one hundred years of Thucydidean scholarship, an impossible task, I will showcase the perspectives of notable scholars from the past century. Although they offer a range of viewpoints, they insist on Thucydides' support for the Athenian empire or Pericles.

In 1911, George Beardoe Grundy noted how Thucydides only offers a detailed account of Pericles' policy in the lead up to and very beginning of the Peloponnesian War and argues that Thucydides approved of his leadership in this time period: "The historian's own view as to the causes, both of the war itself and of the disasters which befell Athens in the later phases of it, would inevitably lead him to approve of this section of the Periklean policy."[167] He uses some biographical information on Thucydides, that many today would consider problematic, to inform his views on the historian's relationship with Pericles:

> Thucydides *was* attracted—more than attracted—by the abstract side of Periklean democracy [his emphasis]. It is easier to imagine than to realise the impression which life at Athens in those years preceding the Peloponnesian War must have made on one who was acquainted with life in Thrace. It would tend to idealise and exaggerate the best elements in it. And so throughout his story of the fall of

[167] Grundy 1911, 208.

> Athenian greatness there runs one theme of lament at the destruction of that system of social life which he had known in Athens under the rule of Perikles.[168]

Grundy separates out Thucydides' views on Pericles from his views on empire. However, this leads to some confusion. While trying to account for what he understands to be Thucydides' approval of Pericles (cited above) and his misgivings of Athenian empire, he writes that "[Thucydides'] attitude is somewhat strange. He must have known that which every one else knew, that the system was based on a mode of life rendered possible by the exploitation of the resources of the empire—an empire which he condemned alike in its beginning and in its end."[169] While Grundy should be given credit for observing Thucydides' skepticism of empire, he proves unable to critically question what that skepticism means for the historian's characterization of the man that best and most thoroughly articulates that empire.

Bernard W. Henderson's 1927 *Companion to the Military History of Thucydides* expounds an extreme view of the *opinio communis.* Henderson draws no distinction between Pericles and his imperialistic policy, and he argues that Thucydides thinks highly of them both:

> There is no shadow of criticism in the account which Thucydides has given either of Pericles' policy which led up to the war and helped to cause the war, or of the strategy which he invented and directed for the first two and a half years of the struggle. The panegyric is whole-hearted and the more emphatic because the historian so rarely passes judgement of his own, and still more rarely indulges in the luxury of praise.[170]

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[168] Grundy 1911, 209.

[169] Grundy 1911, 209.

[170] Henderson 1927, 46.

The phrase “no shadow of criticism” and the term “panegyric” reveal the author’s firm approach to this issue. Leaving no space for nuance or hedging, Henderson completely melds Thucydides to Pericles’ brand of naval imperialism.

In the following year, Alfred Zimmern drew a similar conclusion. His essay “Thucydides the Imperialist,” does not equivocate in its argument. He identifies Thucydides as a strict follower of Pericles: “We need not ask who the man was round whom the ideals of the young Thucydides centred. His ideal Athenian statesman was Pericles: and the political creed of Pericles was the political creed of young Thucydides.”[171] It is this perceived bias that Zimmern uses to denigrate Thucydides near the end of the essay: “Thucydides—the patriot and the imperialist—was after all but a Periclean… the insight of Euripides and the wisdom of Plato were beyond him.”[172] Zimmern also argued that Thucydides was a warmonger: “[Thucydides] prefers war, with all its glories and horrors, to the inglorious futilities of peace.”[173] Finally and most relevant to this project, Zimmern argues that Thucydides was an advocate of naval power: “And [Thucydides] goes on to make Pericles demonstrate that in a country like Greece, land power is nothing and sea power is everything.”[174] All of these assertions prove problematic.

Following Henderson and Zimmern, in 1942, John H. Finley Jr. characterized Thucydides as a staunch Periclean. Finley equates Thucydides and Pericles based upon the former’s characterization of the latter:

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[171] Zimmern 1928, 81.

[172] Zimmern 1928, 104.

[173] Zimmern 1928, 101.

[174] Zimmern 1928, 100.

> It is at once clear that [Thucydides] greatly admired both the policies of Pericles and the united democracy which Pericles represented and that, to his mind, the chief cause of Athens' ultimate defeat was not the strength of Sparta but the rise of faction in Athens herself and the ensuing abandonment of Pericles' temperate policies by his more radical successors.[175]

Later, examining Pericles' final speech, Finley states, "Convinced that Pericles' estimate of Athens was correct, [Thucydides] sought an explanation of her power in the distant past and satisfied himself that naval strength had always been the key to dominion."[176] This construction entwines Pericles' rhetoric with Thucydides' Archaeology, arguing for a pro-Periclean and pro-naval reading of Thucydides in general.

Later that decade, Jacqueline de Romilly, one of the more influential Thucydidean scholars, published her doctoral thesis *Thucydide et l'impérialisme athénien*, which paints Thucydides as an Athenian patriot: "Thus, in his judgment of Athenian imperialism, Thucydides adopts the point of view of Athens herself and not that of Greece."[177] She builds upon this point, identifying Thucydides not only as an Athenian partisan but as an advocate of Athenian imperialism: "Thucydides loves the power of Athens and can find moving terms in which to praise it; he admires those who contribute to it, but can also blame those who try to increase it in

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[175] Finley 1942, 19.

[176] Finley 1942, 152.

[177] "Thucydide ne se place donc pas, pour juger l'impérialisme athénien, du point de vue de la Grèce, mais du point de vue d'Athènes," de Romilly 1947, 92. Given the prominent stature of Philip Thody's English translation, I employ it for quotations of this work, de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 101.

a clumsy, untimely or excessive manner."[178] Thucydides *loves* Athenian power. Rather than find fault with Athenian power, he, according to this reading, only faults those who wield it poorly.

In her chapter on "Figure de l'impérialisme dans l'oeuvre" ("The characteristics of Athenian imperialism in the work of Thucydides"), de Romilly explicates her understanding of imperialism in Thucydides as exclusively maritime. Discussing the author's focus on the naval aspect of empire, she argues, "By presenting Athenian imperialism and, indeed, all imperialisms, as inevitably maritime in nature, [Thucydides] was distorting no essential facts…The rule over the sea did in fact offer possibilities not made available by the rule over the land."[179] De Romilly states that Thucydides establishes this in the Archaeology, and it is further elaborated upon in the Old Oligarch's *Constitution of the Athenians*: "The mastery of the sea, in practice, enables a city to resist all attacks: since she is at home on the sea, she can harm others when and where she chooses without being exposed to the fear of reprisals [II, 4-5]."[180] This leads her to the conclusion that the nature of thalassocracy leads to inevitable expansion, similar to wine filling out a wine bowl: "It is thus understandable that the slightest superiority tends, when it is based

[178] "Thucydide aime la puissance athénienne; il sait la célébrer avec des mots émus; il admire ceux qui y collaborent; mais il sait aussi blâmer tous ceux qui ont voulu la développer d'une façon maladroite, excessive, ou hors de saison," de Romilly 1947, 93; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 103.

[179] "En ne dégageant que cette forme unique tant pour l'impérialisme athénien que pour tout autre impérialisme, il ne déforme en rien l'essential… La thalassocratie permettait en effet ce que la supériorité sur terre ne permettait pas," de Romilly 1947, 65; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 69.

[180] "La maîtrise de la mer permet à une cité de résister pratiquement à toutes les attaques: étant chez elle sur l'eau, elle peut nuire aux autres, où, quand et comme elle veut, sans s'exposer aux représailles (II. 4-5)," de Romilly 1947, 65; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 69-70.

upon the sea, to develop indefinitely and with complete impunity."[181] The capacity for expansion of naval empire thus replicates the nature of the liquidity that allows for its existence. For de Romilly, Thucydides, the lover of Athenian power, constructs this imperialism as a positive.

In a paper first given in 1956, Joseph Vogt agrees with de Romilly's argument that Thucydides promotes a Periclean, imperialistic agenda but, unlike de Romilly, argues that we should be skeptical of this aim. Vogt sees no distance between Pericles' rhetoric in Thucydides' text and the narrative sections: "The narrative part of Thucydides' account, together with the speeches ascribed to Pericles, form such a well thought-out and unified composition, and are so internally consistent, that we are able to deduce from them the historian's agreement with Pericles' policy."[182] Since Pericles' policies are based upon naval imperialism, Vogt argues that Thucydides associates "civilization" with the navy: "In his effectiveness Thucydides recognizes the harmony between a democratic constitution and personal leadership, between civilization and naval Empire."[183] He believes that the author "thoroughly idealizes his statesman."[184] Therefore, when he writes that "It is necessary that we not be prevented by Thucydides from seeing the cracks in the Periclean principate," Vogt seems unwilling to consider that Thucydides himself constructed those very cracks.[185] This view leads to inevitable bewilderment from Vogt himself:

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[181] "On Comprend ainsi que la plus petite supériorité, quand elle est d'ordre maritime, tende à se développer indéfiniment et impunément," de Romilly 1947, 64; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 70.

[182] Vogt 2009, 221.

[183] Vogt 2009, 222.

[184] Vogt 2009, 224.

[185] Vogt 2009, 226.

"It is strange that Thucydides so uncritically admires [Pericles'] policy," and again later he asks: "How can Thucydides, who in the effects of the plague saw the power of the irrational burst forth with such rage, let his statesman estimate *tuchê* (fortune) so lightly?"[186] The point of the paper is ultimately anti-imperialistic; Vogt argues that we should be wary of the message that Pericles espouses in Thucydides' text, yet he never considers that the author himself had similar misgivings.

A pair of scholars in the following years drew the same connection between Thucydides and his characterization of Pericles. In 1957, Mortimer Chambers published an article on this very relationship. His conclusion is that Thucydides' view of Pericles was "favorable."[187] In his opinion, this attitude was justified, arguing that "modern scholars are, and should be, deeply impressed with Pericles' remarkable achievements."[188] Three years later, Arnaldo Momigliano presents Pericles and Thucydides as inseparable. Contrasting the Old Oligarch's *Constitution of the Athenians* and Thucydides' text, Momigliano writes:

> If the oligarch's implicit assumption was that sea-power ought to be given up as being related to an immoral form of empire, the implicit conclusion of Pericles (Thucydides) is that the immorality of the Athenian Empire is to be accepted and defended because it is related to the glory of sea-power.[189]

With the parenthesis, Momigliano elides Thucydides's character of Pericles and Thucydides himself. Moreover, he makes clear his own understanding that Thucydides was an advocate of sea-power and the Athenian empire.

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[186] Vogt 2009, 231, 236.

[187] Chambers 1957, 88.

[188] Chambers 1957, 80.

[189] Momigliano 1960, 60.

W. Robert Connor's influential 1984 reading of Thucydides provides a little more evenhandedness than most of the authors in this section, but he nevertheless describes Thucydides as pro-Athenian in his analysis of the first book. Evaluating the Archaeology, he discusses imperialism as beneficial and predicated on seapower: "Imperialism brings its benefits, not only for the imperialists but even for the subjects. What makes it possible is sea power. Thus it is not surprising that this selective survey of early Greece should turn into a brief essay (13-15.1) on early Greek naval history."[190] Analyzing Pericles' first speech, Connor connects it back to the Archaeology:

> Pericles' confidence is the culmination of the analysis of the first book. The factors that have shaped Greek history in the past are the ones upon which Pericles builds his strategy. We know that if the innovative and energetic spirt of the Athenians endures, Pericles has good reason for his assurance. In addition, a third consideration encourages confidence in Athenian success. The new factor is leadership.[191]

Connor thus produces a very optimistic reading of Pericles' leadership, although he himself knows the outcome of the war was not positive for Athens. In his analysis of later parts of the text, he provides some nuance, assessing both Pericles and Athenian naval power as two-sided.[192] That precision, however, is absent from these original analyses of book one, which would benefit from contextualization within the text as a whole.

Stewart Flory espoused a robust version of the *opinio communis* while analyzing Thucydides' biography in 1993. He identifies an evolution in Thucydides' motif of sea battles becoming land battles (and *vice versa*); however, instead of attributing this change to an arc

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[190] Connor 1984, 25.

[191] Connor 1984, 48.

[192] Connor 1984, 63, 246.

constructed by Thucydides to emphasize Athens' fall, Flory problematically reads the evolution as evidence for information on Thucydides' death date. The misreading stems, in part, from Flory's reliance on the *opinio communis.* He is so wedded to the idea of Thucydides supporting Pericles and naval imperialism that he attributes the unfinished nature of his work to Thucydides being unable to revise it, disappointed and embittered by Athens' defeat:

> He believed, furthermore, that Athens would win, because Pericles' strategy was wise (2.65). For a while, even despite some reverses, the evidence conformed to this theory. Then, through a concatenation of unexpected circumstances, of which the most important was perhaps the unexpected death of Pericles himself, the theory began to unravel. Later, embittered by exile Thucydides came to see that Athens was headed for destruction, perhaps had always been headed for it and even in the end deserved it.[193]

Flory takes the conventional approach to Thucydides' perspective on Pericles and uses it to paint an unconventional—some would say, unrecognizable—image of Thucydides: confused, aggrieved, and incapable. He continues, "we can appreciate the pathetic situation of a rigorous thinker like Thucydides, for whom the congruence of λόγος and ἔργον was all important."[194] This problematic reading is predicated on an unwavering belief that Thucydides was an ardent supporter of Pericles.

Two works in the first decade of this century characterized Thucydides as an unwavering follower of Pericles. In 2002, Victoria Wohl published an innovative analysis of the erotics underlying Thucydides' narrative, using thinkers such as Sigmund Freud and Louis Althusser. In her extensive examination of the Funeral Oration, she argues that "Thucydides' voice and Pericles' are effectively inseparable; indeed as I suggest at the end of the chapter, Thucydides

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[193] Flory 1993, 116.

[194] Flory 1993, 116.

goes to some effort to make the two indistinguishable."[195] As promised, towards the end of the chapter, she states, "the vision of Athens Pericles articulates is the guiding vision for Thucydides' history of the fifth century, the focal point around which historical events fall into perspective."[196] She makes it clear that this vision represents an ideal, "a fragile fantasy;"[197] however, she contends that this fantasy is wholly Thucydides'. P.J. Rhodes, tasked with investigating the historian's portrayal of Athenian History for *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, contends that "we thus have an aristocratic Athenian, from a strongly anti-Periclean background, who nevertheless became an admirer of Pericles and of the Athenian democracy and the Athenian empire as led by Pericles."[198] He separates Thucydides from post-Periclean policy but does not question Thucydides' allegiance to Pericles.

Donald Kagan became one of the preeminent Thucydidean scholars of the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in part through his Periclean reading of Thucydides. Throughout his many writings, he describes Thucydides as a staunch supporter of Pericles and a proponent of naval imperialism. In discussing Thucydides' advocacy of Pericles, he does not mince words: "Thucydides gives a full and unequivocal endorsement of Pericles' strategy for victory in the great war that began in 431."[199] Later discussing Pericles' third speech which he

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[195] Wohl 2002, 31.

[196] Wohl 2002, 71.

[197] Wohl 2002, 70.

[198] Rhodes 2006, 523.

[199] Kagan 2009, 75.

calls "a most powerful presentation of Pericles' views, which Thucydides himself endorses,"[200] Kagan argues:

> The reader is invited simply to accept the policy of Pericles as both correct and inevitable, and to see its opponents as merely short-sighted, self-centered, and lacking in courage, determination, and wisdom. Pericles alone is permitted to speak, and the force of his words is magnified by the thorough endorsement of the historian, who speaks in thunder, like a *deus ex machina*.[201]

While the first part of the quotation is about Pericles' third speech, the second part refers to Thucydides' assessment of Pericles at 2.65. The language is powerful; "speaks in thunder" paints Thucydides in the image of Zeus. The evocation of a *deus ex machina* again associates Thucydides with immortality and proves even more telling from its misuse. Tragedians, most famously Euripides, employed this contrivance to resolve matters at the end of a given drama. Thucydides' assessment comes in the first quarter of his extant text and—as centuries of scholarly debate bear witness—resolves little.

Finally, Raimund Schulz published a chapter in 2011 examining the role of the sea in Thucydides' narrative which, I will argue, largely misrepresents Thucydides. Schulz contends that "the dangers of the sea and its gods play no significant role in his history."[202] This perspective allows him to view naval power in Thucydides as a positive, in line with the thinking of the authors above. Since the sea is not a dangerous place, the thalassocracies described in the

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[200] Kagan 2009, 96.

[201] Kagan 2009, 97.

[202] "Spielen die Gefahren des Meeres und dessen Götter in seinem Geschichtswerk keine nennenswerte Rolle," Schulz 2011, 63; see chapter four below for more on his argument.

Archaeology are viewed as steadfast: "stable thalassocracies."[203] Pericles' characterization is, likewise, viewed as favorable. His first speech is identified as "great,"[204] and Schulz continues:

> Undoubtedly, the Athenians possessed the better starting conditions and the greater financial resources, and they had in Pericles a strategist who knew how to use the maritime superiority of Athens effectively and minimized the risks of war by largely abandoning territorial conquests and land battles.[205]

The adverb *zweifellos* ("undoubtedly") is particularly surprising considering Sparta's stature in the Greek world at this point. Schulz attributes Athens' eventual defeat to, among other things, τύχη ("chance"); he does not consider the role that the precariousness of the sea may play therein. This is all argued in order to reaffirm the centrality of seapower: "The Peloponnesian War in this way served Thucydides not only to demonstrate the importance of maritime power as the decisive factor in major military conflicts; it should also prove the validity of the structural elements of seapower."[206] Schulz asserts that Thucydides' focus on sea power ultimately aims to praise its efficacy and stability. This argument is made possible by his assumption that Thucydides views the sea as a safe and benign place.

The Minority Position: Thucydides, a Skeptic of Athenian Imperialism

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[203] "stabiler Thalassokratien," Schulz 2011, 72.

[204] "großen" Schulz 2011, 78.

[205] "zweifellos verfügten die Athener über die besseren Startbedingungen und die größeren finanziellen Ressourcen, und sie besaßen mit Perikles einen Strategen, der die maritime Überlegenheit Athens effektiv einzusetzen wusste und durch weitgehenden Verzicht auf territoriale Eroberungen und Landschlachten die Kriegsrisiken minimierte," Schulz 2011, 79.

[206] "Der Peloponnesiche Krieg diente somit Thukydides nicht nur dazu, die Bedeutung maritimer Macht als ausschlaggebenden Faktor militärischer Großkonflikte zu demonstrieren; er sollte auch die Gültigkeit struktureller Elemente von Seemacht beweisen," Schulz 2011, 84.

The argument that Thucydides undermines his character of Pericles and argues against Athenian naval imperialism has a long pedigree and has been gaining steam of late. After a brief look at its history, I will focus on three prominent books of the last decade which take up this argument.

The idea that Thucydides offers an unpatriotic or inadequately praiseworthy account of his home polis stretches back at least to Dionysus of Halicarnassus, the first century Greek historian. Dionysus, no fan of Thucydides, faults him for beginning with negative events as opposed to the events of Athenian growth during the Fifty Years, which he views as more positive and which he believes Thucydides covers with inadequate depth. His critique is rooted in Thucydides' own status as an Athenian: ὅπερ Ἕλληνα ὄντα καὶ Ἀθηναῖον οὐκ ἔδει ποιεῖν (καὶ ταῦτα οὐ τῶν ἀπερριμμένων ὄντα, ἀλλ᾽ ὧν ἐν πρώτοις ἦγον Ἀθηναῖοι στρατηγιῶν τε καὶ [τῶν] ἄλλων τιμῶν ἀξιοῦντες) (Dionysus of Halicarnassus *Letter to Pompey* 3, "Which [i.e. not starting his narrative with the Fifty Years] [Thucydides] should not have done as a Greek and an Athenian—and not one of the outcasts but among those whom the Athenians held in their first ranks, electing him to generalships and other offices"). He continues with criticism of the causes for war that Thucydides indicates: καὶ οὕτω γε φθονερῶς, ὥστε καὶ τῇ πόλει τῇ ἑαυτοῦ τὰς φανερὰς αἰτίας τοῦ πολέμου περιάπτειν, ἑτέραις ἔχοντα πολλαῖς ἀφορμαῖς περιάψαι τὰς αἰτίας (Dionysus of Halicarnassus *Letter to Pompey* 3, "And indeed he was so envious that he attributes the overt causes of the war to his own city, when he was capable of attributing these causes to many other origins").[207] The mention of envy reveals Dionysus' conceptualization of an unfavorable portrayal of Athens in Thucydides' work. Dionysus has different criteria for judging

[207] Cf. Dionysus of Halicarnassus *On Thucydides* 11, *passim*. See also: Rood 1998, 205-6.

historiography than the more recent scholars from the previous section; he believes historians should praise and build up their own cities, and his assessment is filtered through that belief. Nevertheless, his understanding of Thucydides' negative portrayal of Athens renders him at odds with the scholars from the previous section and a precursor to the following authors.

Over the past century or so (the same period analyzed in the previous section) authors have argued against the consensus outlined above and have examined the gap between Thucydides' perspective and Pericles' imperialistic policies. For instance, in the early twentieth century, G. F. Abbott argued of the Funeral Oration: "The passages depicting the refinement of a certain side of Athenian life Thucydides very likely endorsed, though he never alludes to that side. On all other points, however, he presents a picture of the Athenian democracy so much at variance with the one presented by Pericles that, had he wished to refute the orator, he could not have done it differently."[208] In the mid-twentieth century, H.-P. Stahl's reading of Thucydides' narrative stressed the ineffectiveness of human agency and questions any given character's control of events.[209] This endeavor may be more generally palatable regarding Nicias or Alcibiades' role in the narrative; however, undermining Pericles' agency puts Stahl at odds with the scholars who depict Thucydides as the statesman's champion.[210] Just before the turn of the twenty-first century, Tim Rood's narratological analysis of Thucydides engaged directly with Thucydides' relationship with Athenian imperialism and its primary spokesman: "But I have argued that we should not read Thucydides' narrative as an attempt to exculpate Athens amidst

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[208] Abbott 1925, 110.

[209] Stahl 2003.

[210] Stahl 2003, 94-5, *passim*.

post-war controversies about war-guilt; we cannot even too hastily proclaim that Thucydides had no reservations about Perikles himself."[211] Rood undercuts Thucydides' commitment to the Athenian war-machine and calls into question his relationship with Pericles. Voices have consistently argued against the *opinio communis* yet have failed to overturn this default understanding of the historian in Thucydidean scholarship at large.

Momentum to uproot the common reading has been growing over the last decade thanks in large part to the works of Edith Foster, Martha Taylor, and Hans Kopp. In 2010, Foster directly debunked Thucydides' support for his character of Pericles and the latter's agenda. Her programmatic statement reads: "[This book] argues that Pericles is an historical character in Thucydides' *History*, and that Thucydides does not share his views, but composed Pericles' speeches to display Pericles' character and views to the reader; moreover, it argues that Thucydides carefully introduced and surrounded Pericles' speeches with contrasting narrative illustrations." She finds this distance between author and character, as others have, in the difference between the text's narrative passages and speeches, in this case Pericles' speeches: "In writing up Pericles' speeches, Thucydides showed that he shared with many other actors in the *History* a mistaken confidence in the power, significance, and glory of the instruments of force."[212] In this reading, rather than being set apart from other characters within the narrative, Pericles represents "the exemplar of this human weakness: an intelligent, devoted, and self-controlled leader who succumbed to a belief in the historical significance of Athens' empire and

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[211] Rood 1998, 292.

[212] Foster 2010, 3.

armed force that made it possible."[213] Foster is interested in how Thucydides uses materials (e.g. ships, walls, the statue of Athena on the Athenian acropolis, etc.) within his narrative to separate himself from his character of Pericles. She argues that "Thucydides wrote the *History* partly in order to show the price of Periclean materialism and imperialism."[214] Though she does not concentrate on the difference between liquids and solids as this project does, her focus on materials and the difference between Periclean and Thucydidean materialism within the text brings Foster to the same conclusion—that Thucydides aims to undermine Pericles' agenda.

In the same year that Foster published her work, Taylor made a congruent argument. "Thucydides," she argues, "repeatedly questions and discredits the Periclean vision."[215] Rather than focus on the first book and a half of Thucydides like Foster, Taylor takes in the work in its entirety. She uses Thucydides' spatial dichotomy between Spartan lands and Athenian seas to drive home her argument, commenting upon "Thucydides' critique of Pericles' radical redefinition of Athens as a city divorced from its traditional homeland of Attica."[216] Shortly thereafter, she continues, "He demonstrates that this vision of Athens as a city separated from Attica and coextensive with the sea leads the Athenians both to Melos and to Sicily."[217] Taylor does not recognize a break between Periclean and later Athenian leadership nor between the first book and a half and the rest of the narrative. To her, Pericles' thinking underlies the Melian campaign: "Thucydides' narrative from Pericles' death through the Melian campaign shows the

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[213] Foster 2010, 5.

[214] Foster 2010, 3.

[215] Taylor 2010, 1.

[216] Taylor 2010, 1.

[217] Taylor 2010, 1.

Athenians following a flexible vision of Athens that at its most expansive imagines a city at sea, or rather, a city coextensive with the sea, ruling all islands and coastal territories,"[218] and it also results in the Sicilian expedition: "As we move into the Sicilian narrative, we see this flexible, sea-focused vision of Athens repeatedly working *against* the Athenians, confusing political debate, fueling their enemies abroad, and ultimately, exacerbating civil strife at home."[219] In Taylor's reading, as in Foster's, Thucydides utilizes the character of Pericles to warn his audience against imperialistic excess.

In 2017, Kopp analyzed the role of the sea and naval power in Thucydides. Like other analysts of these themes in this work, Kopp shows how Thucydides links the character of Pericles with naval power: "The dramatic development of seapower in Thucydides seems closely connected with the figure of its strategist."[220] Unlike the scholars discussed in the previous section, Kopp argues that Thucydides employs the narrative passages to undercut both Pericles and his naval imperialist vision: "Thucydides formulated a kind of antithesis to this thesis of Pericles via the account of the war."[221] Ultimately, Kopp argues, Thucydides focuses on the sea and naval power to alert his audience to the latter's shortcomings. The historian offers insight into "the concrete limit of the possibilities of ancient seapower."[222] Kopp's analysis

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[218] Taylor 2010,134.

[219] Taylor 2010,134, her emphasis.

[220] "Das dramatische Entwicklung von Seeherrschaft bei Thukydides eng mit der Figur des Strategen verbunden erscheinen lässt," Kopp 2017, 47.

[221] "Thukydides zu dieser These des Perikles mittels der Kriegsberichte eine Art Antithese formuliert," Kopp 2017, 47.

[222] "die ganz konkretfaktische Begrenzung der Möglichkeiten antiken Seekrieges," Kopp 2017, 47.

supplements Foster's and Taylor's, forcefully undermining the consensus that Thucydides supports Athenian imperialism.

Although Foster is the only of these three scholars who explicitly discusses materialism, it is telling that physical material (topography for Taylor and the sea for Kopp) is fundamental to the arguments of all three scholars. In the chapters to follow, I will use an analysis of liquids and solids to make an argument that bolsters theirs. All these studies hopefully look ahead to a near future in which this position holds sway. Nevertheless, until now the inertia of decades of scholarship has allowed the opposing argument to retain its position as the default reading of Thucydides. A good example of this persistence can be found in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* entry on Thucydides. In the first edition of the dictionary published in 1949, H. T. Wade-Gery coined the oft-cited description of Thucydides' political affiliations (based, of course, only on Thucydides' own text): "Born in the anti-Pericles opposition, [Thucydides] followed Pericles with a convert's zeal."[223] This same formulation remains in the most recent edition of the dictionary released in 2012.[224]

Thucydides 1.1-2.65

The adherents of the *opinio communis* argue that Thucydides supports Athenian imperialism. As his narrative progresses, Thucydides showcases the Athenians suffering many hardships. Therefore, some who hold this position argue that Thucydides only favors the form of Athenian empire at the beginning of the war under Pericles. Nevertheless, they all agree that

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[223] *Oxford Classical Dictionary* 1949, s.v. Thucydides.

[224] *Oxford Classical Dictionary* 4th ed. 2012, s.v. Thucydides.

Thucydides supports the Athens found in the first part of the text, 1.1-2.65. This is the section, therefore, that I will focus on here. I will look in particular at three subsections: the Archaeology (1.1-19), the Fifty Years (1.89-118), and Athens under Pericles (1.140-2.65). As my analysis progresses, the concept of Athenian imperialism gets more and more intertwined with the leadership of Pericles; yet this merely replicates how Thucydides progressively elides the concept and the character within his text. I argue that although Thucydides shows respect for Pericles, this entire section consistently exhibits his skepticism of naval imperialism in general and the Athenian empire in particular.

The Archaeology

The stated purpose of the Archaeology (1.1-19) is to show that the Peloponnesian War was more worthy of account than the wars that preceded it (1.1). Thucydides builds this section around sea power. Scholars have taken this to mean that the historian advocates a naval imperialist agenda, but such a view only holds if his work in general is intended to be a handbook on how to accumulate power or build empire. This section will briefly review how the Archaeology is built upon the sea, analyze scholarly interpretations, and finally look to how Athens and Sparta are portrayed to help us build a more precise reading.

A majority of the Archaeology is a chronological history of Aegean sea powers. The oldest figure that Thucydides names is Minos of Crete. After briefly discussing the Trojan War in an analysis of the origin of the names of *Hellas* and *Hellenes*, he uses the sea to transition to his chronological account beginning with Minos: ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτην τὴν στρατείαν θαλάσσῃ ἤδη πλείω χρώμενοι ξυνεξῆλθον. Μίνως γὰρ παλαίτατος ὧν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν ναυτικὸν ἐκτήσατο καὶ τῆς

νῦν Ἑλληνικῆς θαλάσσης ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐκράτησε (1.3-4, "But they launched this expedition [to Troy] having already become more practiced at sea. Now Minos was the first whom we know through hearsay to acquire a navy and he ruled most of what is now called the Hellenic Sea"). His discussion of Minos focuses more on the piracy that characterized the sea before his rule than his rule itself (1.4-8). After Minos, Thucydides cycles through a litany of sea powers, ranging from individual leaders to poleis to peoples. He mentions Agamemnon, tyrants, Corinth, the Ionians, Polycrates, the Phocaeans, the Corcyraeans, Aegina, and Athens. The sheer number of sea powers speaks to their inability to retain authority for extended periods of time.

Throughout this passage, explicit statements reinforce the theme of seapower. For example, he concludes: τὰ μὲν οὖν ναυτικὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τοιαῦτα ἦν, τά τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ ὕστερον γενόμενα (1.15.1, "Such were the navies of Greece, the old ones and those that came later"). After this long section on sea power (1.3.4-1.15.1), he briefly touches upon land power, or rather, the lack thereof:

> κατὰ γῆν δὲ πόλεμος, ὅθεν τις καὶ δύναμις παρεγένετο, οὐδεὶς ξυνέστη· πάντες δὲ ἦσαν, ὅσοι καὶ ἐγένοντο, πρὸς ὁμόρους τοὺς σφετέρους ἑκάστοις, καὶ ἐκδήμους στρατείας πολὺ ἀπὸ τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἐπ᾽ ἄλλων καταστροφῇ οὐκ ἐξῇσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες. οὐ γὰρ ξυνειστήκεσαν πρὸς τὰς μεγίστας πόλεις ὑπήκοοι, οὐδ᾽ αὖ αὐτοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης κοινὰς στρατείας ἐποιοῦντο, κατ᾽ ἀλλήλους δὲ μᾶλλον ὡς ἕκαστοι οἱ ἀστυγείτονες ἐπολέμουν (1.15.2).
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> Land warfare, from which some power was also gained, there was none. Land wars, however many occurred, were all against each one's own neighbors, and the Greeks did not embark upon expeditions far abroad for the subjugation of others. For subjects did not join forces under the greatest cities, nor did they make common expeditions as equals, but rather neighbors each made war upon one another.

Claiming that no land war brought power to those involved emphasizes the sea's role as a catalyst for power accumulation and empire. Gomme notes wars that Thucydides omits: Pheidon

of Argos's wars of expansion and multiple periods of Spartan aggression.[225] The omissions grant Thucydides a cleaner contrast: stable land and fluctuating seas.

Scholars have long incorporated the Archaeology's focus into their interpretations. The passage proves important, for example, to de Romilly's work on imperialism: She argues that "The whole of the Archaeology tends to give the impression that the only real empires which ever existed were those based upon sea-power. It is the sea which allows great expeditions to be made, while military conflicts on land can end only in a victory over a few neighbours."[226] To de Romilly, Thucydides lays out an argument in favor of imperialism, and it is in the Archaeology that this imperialism is established as exclusively naval in nature. De Romilly and others who understand Thucydides as an imperial advocate claim that the theme of *progress* courses through the chronology. Gomme contends that Thucydides emphasizes "the use of the sea as a measure of progress."[227] This idea of progress speaks not just to developments in military technology but to a more general societal advancement. Peter Pouncey argues that "Thucydides does in fact allow a progressive element, both in the overall way of life and in particular details."[228] Connor concurs; discussing a later passage, he states that "the tone at this point in the work is confident and optimistic, a corollary to the idea of progress that we encounter in the Archaeology."[229] This

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[225] Gomme 1945-1982, 1.126.

[226] "Toute l'Archéologie tend à faire supposer qu'il n'y a eu de vraies dominations que celles qu'assurait la maìtrise de le mer; celle-ci semble la condition des grandes expéditions, et sur terre les luttes n'aboutissent qu'à triompher de quelques voisins," de Romilly 1947, 64; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 68.

[227] Gomme 1945-1982, 1.100.

[228] Pouncey 1980, 64.

[229] Connor 1984, 26.

conceptualization of the Archaeology as progressive leads these scholars to misread it as favorable to Athens. Connor claims, “the early history of Greece shows the importance of naval and financial power. It points to Athens, not to Sparta. Indeed, if the Archaeology were our only evidence, we might conclude that Athens should win the war with Sparta.”[230] This remains the consensus reading and allows its adherents to posit Thucydides’ Athens (at least under Pericles) as the culmination of this trend of progress.

The question of whether Thucydides subscribes to the concept of progress hinges on what he means when he says the Peloponnesian War is ἀξιολογώτατον (1.1.1, “most worthy of account”) in his opening. In addition to this superlative, he uses forms of the adjective μέγας (“great”) three times, including once in the superlative (1.1). However, μέγας need not have a positive connotation and may simply refer to magnitude (cf., 2.5.2, 2.49.3). Likewise, being worthy of account is by no means limited to positive events. The Archaeology is better understood as advancements of technologies. These advancements when combined with the constants of human nature allow for more and more destructiveness. Foster argues, “the Archaeology in fact shows that each successive phase of Greek history wrecks itself on warfare and the attempt to exploit others and showcases the psychologies (the love of gain and glory, the desire to be free of labor, the fear of domination) that motivate the continuous appearance of the imperialistic drive.”[231] This reading of the Archaeology is supported by later events in the narrative as Thucydides shows the destructiveness of the Peloponnesian War, particularly during

[230] Connor 1984, 34.

[231] Foster 2010, 43.

the Sicilian campaign. Moreover, there are details within the Archaeology itself that suggest that the section should not be read as a favorable progression.

The war's—and therefore the narrative's—two main poleis, Athens and Sparta, do not stand out in the Archaeology as prominently as they do later. However, the dichotomy between the two poleis that defines the remainder of the work does find its roots in this section, especially in its closing (1.18-9). Even before this, the poleis come up in juxtaposition three times.[232] In all of these instances their portrayals offer hints that we should not read this section as describing a positive progression.

In the text's opening sentence, Thucydides names the two main combatants of the war. From here, he constructs the two not only as rivals but also as polar opposites in how they approach war and in their collective character. The Athenians' strength lives in their navy, and they are quick to action; the Spartans' power resides in their army, and they are conservative decision-makers. This binary, which is built up throughout the narrative, begins right in the Archaeology. Thucydides discusses the geography of the two places as diametrically opposed and explains the different historical trajectories which result. This thinking should be understood as parallel to prior and concurrent works that develop the idea of environmental determinism such as the Hippocratic *Air, Waters, Places* and Herodotus's *Histories*.[233]

Many of the authors of the *opinio communis* discussed above essentially argue that Thucydides' text portrays a reversal of fortune for the Athenians. The work resembles a tragedy in the sense that the Athenians begin at a high point (under Pericles) and descend from there to a

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[232] Four times if you count the naming of the two sides in the opening sentence.

[233] See, e.g., the final passage in Herodotus, 9.122.

low point (under his successors). I do not argue against their premise— that the Athenians undergo a reversal—but against the timing thereof. I argue that the following passage (1.2.3-6) is the sole description of the Athenians' high point and their descent begins from there, within the Archaeology itself.

The Athenians' good fortune stems directly from the geographical situation and is itself predicated on an upending of expectations. The poor soil of Athens, contrary to what one may expect, benefits the Athenians. Given the importance of this passage, I include it here in its entirety:

> μάλιστα δὲ τῆς γῆς ἡ ἀρίστη αἰεὶ τὰς μεταβολὰς τῶν οἰκητόρων εἶχεν, ἥ τε νῦν Θεσσαλία καλουμένη καὶ Βοιωτία Πελοποννήσου τε τὰ πολλὰ πλὴν Ἀρκαδίας, τῆς τε ἄλλης ὅσα ἦν κράτιστα. (4) διὰ γὰρ ἀρετὴν γῆς αἵ τε δυνάμεις τισὶ μείζους ἐγγιγνόμεναι στάσεις ἐνεποίουν ἐξ ὧν ἐφθείροντο, καὶ ἅμα ὑπὸ ἀλλοφύλων μᾶλλον ἐπεβουλεύοντο. (5) τὴν γοῦν Ἀττικὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον διὰ τὸ λεπτόγεων ἀστασίαστον οὖσαν ἄνθρωποι ᾤκουν οἱ αὐτοὶ αἰεί. (6) καὶ παράδειγμα τόδε τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἐλάχιστόν ἐστι διὰ τὰς μετοικίας ἐς τὰ ἄλλα μὴ ὁμοίως αὐξηθῆναι· ἐκ γὰρ τῆς ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος οἱ πολέμῳ ἢ στάσει ἐκπίπτοντες παρ᾽ Ἀθηναίους οἱ δυνατώτατοι ὡς βέβαιον ὂν ἀνεχώρουν, καὶ πολῖται γιγνόμενοι εὐθὺς ἀπὸ παλαιοῦ μείζω ἔτι ἐποίησαν πλήθει ἀνθρώπων τὴν πόλιν, ὥστε καὶ ἐς Ἰωνίαν ὕστερον ὡς οὐχ ἱκανῆς οὔσης τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἀποικίας ἐξέπεμψαν (1.2.3-6).
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> Certainly, the best of the land had constant changes of its inhabitants, the land now called Thessaly, Boeotia, the majority of the Peloponnesus except Arcadia, and whatever part of the rest of the land that was the strongest. (4) Because of the excellence of the land, the increasing power of certain individuals produced outbreaks of stasis from which the lands were destroyed and at the same time were more plotted against from abroad. (5) Attica from the most remote time was free from stasis because of its barrenness; the same people inhabited it always. (6) And a proof of my argument is that Attica increased in population because of migration unlike anywhere else. Driven out of the rest of Greece by war or stasis, the most powerful men withdrew to the Athenians for security, and from long ago becoming citizens straightaway, they filled the polis with people so that later the Athenians sent out colonies to Ionia since Attica was not sufficient.

Commentators are quick to question the historicity of this passage.[234] I am not concerned with the text's historicity (in fact, fictionality would only strengthen my point) but with how this passage sets up the rest of the narrative. Gomme reads the second half of this passage as a footnote to the first: "From τὴν γοῦν Ἀττικὴν to the end of the chapter is, as it were, a footnote, giving a reason for the inference that Thessaly, Boeotia, and the greater part of the Peloponnese, though naturally rich countries, were yet in continual disturbance and so not prosperous."[235] Contrary to Gomme's reading, however, this passage lays out the distinct dichotomy between Sparta and Athens (here in geographical terms) that develops over the course of the entire narrative. Boiled down to its most skeletal summary, Thucydides' argument reads: In these early days, the poor soil of Attica offered the Athenians the advantages of freedom from stasis and a stable and even increasing population, while lands with rich soil such as that surrounding Sparta experienced warfare and population migrations.[236] This passage implies that it is, therefore, striking—and tragic for the Athenians—that later periods see not only relative political stability at Sparta and stasis at Athens but also a massive war in which Sparta defeats Athens.

The reversal begins almost immediately. Still discussing ancient history, Thucydides sketches the diametrically opposed fashion trends that develop in the two regions:

> ἐν τοῖς πρῶτοι δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι τόν τε σίδηρον κατέθεντο καὶ ἀνειμένῃ τῇ διαίτῃ ἐς τὸ τρυφερώτερον μετέστησαν. καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι αὐτοῖς τῶν εὐδαιμόνων διὰ τὸ ἁβροδίαιτον οὐ πολὺς χρόνος ἐπειδὴ χιτῶνάς τε λινοῦς ἐπαύσαντο φοροῦντες καὶ χρυσῶν τεττίγων ἐνέρσει κρωβύλον ἀναδούμενοι τῶν ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ τριχῶν· ἀφ᾽

[234] Gomme 1945-1982, 1.93 argues rightly that early Athens was not free from stasis; Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.13 contends that it was not the barrenness of the Attic soil that caused this circumstance.

[235] Gomme 1945-1982, 1.93.

[236] For early Sparta, cf. Herodotus 1.65-6.

οὗ καὶ Ἰώνων τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους κατὰ τὸ ξυγγενὲς ἐπὶ πολὺ αὕτη ἡ σκευὴ κατέσχεν. (4) μετρίᾳ δ᾽ αὖ ἐσθῆτι καὶ ἐς τὸν νῦν τρόπον πρῶτοι Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἐχρήσαντο καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄλλα πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς οἱ τὰ μείζω κεκτημένοι ἰσοδίαιτοι μάλιστα κατέστησαν (1.6.3-4).

The Athenians were the first among these [peoples of Greece] who set aside their weapons and changed their way of life, loosened toward the more luxurious. And the older men among the upper class, because of their delicate way of life, only recently stopped wearing linen chitons and binding a knot of hair on their head in a fastening of golden cicadas, from which the style long persisted among the older men of Ionia as well stemming from their common descent. (4) The Lacedaemonians, on the other hand, were the first to wear moderate clothing, which is now common, and regarding their other habits, those who possessed the larger shares especially lived as equals to the many.

Although this passage is not as explicitly spatial as the previously cited passage, Thucydides' phraseology brings the reader's attention back to geography. He reiterates Athens' link to Ionia via the Aegean Sea. When describing what the upper class of the Spartans possesses, he uses τὰ μείζω ("the larger," here translated "the larger shares") instead of the expected τὰ πλείω ("the more") to denote Spartan wealth in terms of space, i.e. land ownership.[237] In contrast to Athenian resources, Spartan wealth is tied to solid ground. In the previously cited passage, Thucydides showed how Athens' poor soil kept them from stasis unlike Sparta and other fertile locales. Although full blown stasis does not yet arise, the class cohesion of the two poleis has already reversed. The clothing of Athens reveals a large gap between the classes while Spartan clothing erases the wealth gap. The Athenians stopped wearing luxurious clothing shortly before Thucydides' time, but the path towards stasis had already been set.

Shortly thereafter, in a passage notorious for showcasing Thucydides' foresight, the historian conjectures that future people might underestimate the power of the Spartans of his day

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[237] Marchant 1905, 146.

from the modesty of their city's architecture. Meanwhile, these future analysts are liable to think that the Athenians' power was twice what it was in actuality for the same reason (1.10.2-3). This passage follows the same trajectory as the one on clothing trends analyzed above: the Spartans favor moderation, whereas the Athenians succumb to ostentatious shows of wealth. Taylor shows how this passage calls into question the superiority of naval powers within the Archaeology: "This warning serves as a counterpoint to the Archaeology's apparent general thesis that naval powers are the strongest."[238] Foster summarizes the portrayal of Athens in this passage with her materialistic focus: "We note that his analysis treats the impressive appearances of Athenian buildings as detriments to a realistic assessment of Athens' power, not as an expression of Athens' power."[239] She continues, positing Thucydides' perspective: "Thucydides himself, then, was not prone to believing in their glory but rather took an analytical approach to their effect on human sensibilities."[240] After the initial passage in which the poor soil proved to be a benefit for the Athenians, Thucydides offers two passages that directly juxtapose the Spartans and Athenians with the former being shown as relatively more cohesive.

These three passages set the stage for the Athenians and Spartans' arrival at the culmination of the Archaeology. As detailed above, Thucydides cycles through the various sea powers of the Aegean. He ends this cycle with the Athenians. His compatriots are paired with Aeginetans against whom they went to war around the turn of the fifth century. Although an underlying theme of the Archaeology is that the passing of time brings larger and larger navies,

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[238] Taylor 2010, 9.

[239] Foster 2010, 36.

[240] Foster 2010, 36.

the Athenians and Aeginetans possessed small (βραχέα) navies for their times (1.14.3). These navies, moreover, contained mostly penteconters, as opposed to the more technologically advanced triremes (1.14.3). In other words, Thucydides does mention Athens in his chronology of sea powers but mainly to remind his audience of their navy's relative insignificance. He adds that even the more recent ships that the Athenians built under Themistocles did not have complete decks, again portraying the Athenians as relatively primitive at this stage in their history (1.14.3).

Devoted to diminishing the audience's conception of Athens' power, these two sentences stand in stark contrast to his depiction of Sparta. The section on Sparta begins with the Athenians: ἐπειδὴ δὲ οἵ τε Ἀθηναίων τύραννοι καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῆς ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος ἐπὶ πολὺ καὶ πρὶν τυραννευθείσης οἱ πλεῖστοι καὶ τελευταῖοι πλὴν τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων κατελύθησαν (1.18.1, "When the tyrants of the Athenians and the majority and final tyrants of the rest of Greece, which to a large extent had previously been ruled by tyrants, were, with the exception of those on Sicily, overthrown by the Lacedaemonians"). Thucydides here refers to the Spartans under Cleomenes helping the Athenians overthrow the Peisistratids in 510.[241] The clause begins with Athenian leaders, but they do not end up exerting any agency. They fall under the control of a passive verb and Spartan over-throwers. At this point, the still unfinished sentence is interrupted by a long parenthesis on Spartan history:

> ἡ γὰρ Λακεδαίμων μετὰ τὴν κτίσιν τῶν νῦν ἐνοικούντων αὐτὴν Δωριῶν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ὧν ἴσμεν χρόνον στασιάσασα ὅμως ἐκ παλαιτάτου καὶ ηὐνομήθη[242] καὶ αἰεὶ ἀτυράννευτος ἦν· ἔτη γάρ ἐστι μάλιστα τετρακόσια καὶ ὀλίγῳ πλείω ἐς τὴν

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[241] Cf. Herodotus 5.63-5.

[242] This verb evokes Tyrtaeus's *Εὐνομία* analyzed in Chapter 1.

τελευτὴν τοῦ δε τοῦ πολέμου ἀφ᾽ οὗ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τῇ αὐτῇ πολιτείᾳ χρῶνται, καὶ δι᾽ αὐτὸ δυνάμενοι καὶ τὰ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις πόλεσι καθίστασαν (1.18.1).

For Lacedaemon, after the settlement of the Dorians who inhabit the land now, was in stasis for the longest time of any that we know; nevertheless, it has been well-ordered for a very long time and has never been ruled by a tyrant. Up through the end of this war, it has been about four hundred years and even a little more since the Lacedaemonians have been exercising the same constitution, and they were strong because of it and settled affairs in other poleis.

This passage reiterates the fact that stasis once infected Sparta, which Thucydides earlier attributed to the region's fertility. Just as Athens' initial freedom from stasis came to result in a stratified society, Sparta's civil strife gave way to a well-ordered polis. Other positive attributes he assigns to the Spartans are the stability of having the same constitution for over four centuries and the freedom of never having been ruled by a tyrant. These strengths allow the Spartans to project power outward and overthrow tyrants in other poleis.

With both sides formally introduced into the chronology of the Archaeology, Thucydides resumes contrasting the two. He provides a cursory summary of the Persian Wars and the Fifty Years which includes the crucial spatial division between Spartans and Athenians, ἴσχυον γὰρ οἱ μὲν κατὰ γῆν, οἱ δὲ ναυσίν (1.18.2, "For the one was strong on land and the other with ships"). This passage establishes Athens and Sparta as allies during the Persian Wars but enemies soon thereafter; the brevity with which he presents the Fifty Years is elaborated upon later in the text (1.89-117). He concludes by describing the opposing ways in which the two poleis led their respective leagues:

καὶ οἱ μὲν Λακεδαιμόνιοι οὐχ ὑποτελεῖς ἔχοντες φόρου τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἡγοῦντο, κατ᾽ ὀλιγαρχίαν δὲ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς μόνον ἐπιτηδείως ὅπως πολιτεύσουσι θεραπεύοντες, Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ ναῦς τε τῶν πόλεων τῷ χρόνῳ παραλαβόντες πλὴν Χίων καὶ Λεσβίων, καὶ χρήματα τοῖς πᾶσι τάξαντες φέρειν (1.19).

> And the Lacedaemonians led, not making tribute-paying subjects out of their allies but only taking care that they were governed by oligarchies amenable to themselves. The Athenians, on the other hand, commandeered the ships of the poleis as time passed, except for those of the Chians and Lesbians, and assessed a tribute for all to bear.

Later in the narrative, multiple characters develop the elaborate metaphor that Athens is a tyrant-polis (1.122.3-124.3, 2.65.1-2, 3.37.2, 6.85.1).[243] They thus project an intra-polis political term onto inter-poleis affairs in attempt to elucidate the overbearing nature of Athenian leadership. Given this later conflation of intra- and inter-poleis relations, it is helpful to view the passage cited here in light of the previous passages contrasting Athens and Sparta. Earlier, Athens saw ostentatious displays of wealth by its upper class in fashion as well as architecture and was ruled by tyrants for a time until the Spartans intervened; here, Athens exacts a tribute from its allies and otherwise rules them heavy-handedly. Earlier, Sparta showed a remarkable amount of unity across classes; here, Sparta leads her allies with relatively little intrusiveness.

De Romilly says of Thucydides' elucidation of Spartan power in 1.18.1 that "it is a complete surprise."[244] The passage does witness Thucydides turn his attention from the sea, but given the earlier mentions of Sparta, this passage is anything but a surprise. She continues, "Even though Thucydides then points out the different nature of the two dominions, that established by Sparta remains an isolated fact, independent of the main tradition which interests him."[245] On behalf of her own focus on naval imperialism, de Romilly misrepresents

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[243] See Connor 1977.

[244] "C'est tout à faire par surprise," de Romilly 1947, 64; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 68.

[245] "Thucydide a beau préciser alors la nature des deux dominations, celle de Sparte reste un fait à part, et indépendant de la tradition qui l'intéresse dans l'ensemble," de Romilly 1947, 64; de Romilly 1979, trans. Thody, 68.

Thucydides' work here. Sparta is far from independent of Thucydides' project. The stark contrast between Sparta and Athens allows Thucydides to analyze more closely Greece's naval history culminating with Athens. This contrast begins in the Archaeology and increases throughout the work and helps undermine the argument that the Archaeology traces a story of progress culminating with Athens. This section instead hints that we should be skeptical of the stability of Athenian power, showing how navies can bring power but also how that power is unstable.[246]

The Fifty Years

After the Archaeology, Thucydides discusses events in Corcyra and Potidaea on the eve of the Peloponnesian War before rewinding and covering Athens' rise in the decades between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. This section is known as the *Pentecontaetia*, or the Fifty Years (1.89-118). Some scholars claim that Thucydides here glorifies Athens or at least paints his home-polis in a positive light.[247] However, as with the Archaeology, we should be careful not to conflate power accumulation with glory. Details throughout the section and its framing show us that instead of a panegyric for Athens the Fifty Years foreshadow the destruction of the Peloponnesian War.

Connor's reading of the Fifty Years proves exemplary in the way it overlooks the section's ominous warnings and misreads Athens' growing empire as favorable to Athenian power. He associates this section closely with the Archaeology: "Thucydides' discussion of

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[246] See Saxonhouse 2017.

[247] Huxley 1983; Connor 1984, 33; Kagan 1991, 91-116.

increasing Athenian strength follows directly from the analysis of power in the Archaeology, and especially from his emphasis on the importance of naval power. Indeed early Greek history is seen as strongly favorable to the continuing growth of Athenian power and mixed at best for the Spartans."[248] The two sections do bear a strong connection, focusing on the growth of naval power before the Peloponnesian War era. Yet just as the Archaeology depicted naval power as unstable, the Fifty Years show a fragile Athenian empire en route to the disastrous Peloponnesian War.

Foster, too, links Thucydides' description of the Fifty Years back to the Archaeology. However, she astutely argues that the rise and fall pattern seen in the Archaeology means that an incipient fall should be read into Athens' rise: "The outlines of the story line up well with Thucydides' analysis of the expansion and defeat of dynamic acmes throughout history. Thucydides shows that such powers arise, come to believe in their power, fight continuously, and find an end."[249] Kopp likewise sees in both the Archaeology and the Fifty Years "the inevitable decline of every power, and therefore every seapower."[250] This decline is witnessed in the Fifty Years, he argues, in some of the powers that Athens defeats, especially Samos. The Fifty Years foreshadows danger for Athens through conflict with Sparta, conflict with their own allies, and even internal conflict among Athenians.

Thucydides makes plain that the placement of his section on the Fifty Years is meant to prove his claim that the underlying cause of the Peloponnesian War was Spartan fear of Athenian

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[248] Connor 1984, 33.

[249] Foster 2010, 117.

[250] "Den unabänderlichen Verfall jeder Macht, und damit auch jeder See-Macht," Kopp 2017, 105.

growth, as preciously stated (1.23.6). After he narrates the Spartan assembly voting for war, he reiterates this claim in the sentence immediately preceding the Fifty Years: ἐψηφίσαντο δὲ οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τὰς σπονδὰς λελύσθαι καὶ πολεμητέα εἶναι οὐ τοσοῦτον τῶν ξυμμάχων πεισθέντες τοῖς λόγοις ὅσον φοβούμενοιτοὺς Ἀθηναίους μὴ ἐπὶ μεῖζον δυνηθῶσιν, ὁρῶντες αὐτοῖς τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑποχείρια ἤδη ὄντα (1.88, "The Lacedaemonians voted that the treaty had been broken and that war must be fought, not so much persuaded by the speeches of their allies as fearing that the Athenians might grow stronger, seeing that the majority of Greece was already subject to them"). From here, he begins his section on the Fifty Years:
οἱ γὰρ Ἀθηναῖοι τρόπῳ τοιῷδε ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα ἐν οἷς ηὐξήθησαν (1.89.1, "Now the Athenians came upon those events in which they expanded in the following way"). This transition sets the motive for the entire section. As Hornblower states, "Th.'s aim is not to give an abridged history of the period…but is more restricted: he aims to describe the growth of Athenian power."[251] The already clear motive is fortified by ring composition. After cycling through some of the events of this period, Thucydides repeats the section's motive in its conclusion: the Peloponnesian War commenced because the Spartans feared Athens' expanding power (1.118.2).

Another instance of symmetry marks the section but goes less noticed. The section begins with Themistocles, the man responsible for setting Athens on its path towards becoming a naval city, and ends with Pericles, the man responsible for finishing what Themistocles had started. The symmetry of the composition connects the two generals and their respective agendas. After beginning with a brief outline of the events at Sestos, where Herodotus' *Histories*

[251] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.133.

leave off, Thucydides offers a prolonged anecdote about Themistocles, a main character in the latter books of Herodotus, in a markedly Herodotean style. Hornblower calls the anecdote "a thoroughly Herodotean story, although the type of the 'trickster' hero goes back further still, to the Homeric Odysseus."[252] The Spartans encourage the Athenians to hold off on rebuilding their walls following the Persians' retreat; Themistocles goes to Sparta and stalls the Spartans while the Athenians build up their walls to a defensible height; he even commands the Athenians to hold Spartan envoys hostage until he and his colleagues are released (1.90-2). Athens' walls, therefore, were founded upon Themistocles' Odyssean-style trickery.

Thucydides showcases Themistocles' devotion to the sea, noting that τόν τε Πειραιᾶ ὠφελιμώτερον ἐνόμιζε τῆς ἄνω πόλεως, καὶ πολλάκις τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις παρῄνει, ἢν ἄρα ποτὲ κατὰ γῆν βιασθῶσι, καταβάντας ἐς αὐτὸν ταῖς ναυσὶ πρὸς ἅπαντας ἀνθίστασθαι (1.93.7, "He believed the Piraeus was more beneficial than the upper city, and he often encouraged the Athenians, if they were ever constrained on land, to descend to the Piraeus and stand against all with their ships"). Athens' turn towards the liquidity of the sea requires the use of solids such as ships and walls, and Thucydides dwells upon the materiality of the walls. Before spelling out Themistocles' belief that the Piraeus is more important than Athens proper as quoted above, Thucydides exhibits how this belief has materialized in the walls themselves. The walls around Athens show signs of their rushed construction still in Thucydides' day (1.93.2), whereas Themistocles ordered that the walls around the Piraeus be built with a remarkable thickness for easy defense (1.93.5-6).

[252] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.136-7.

Following the Themistocles anecdote, Thucydides outlines Athens' imperial expansion with particular attention paid to resistance from members of the Delian League. First, Naxos tries to leave the league and is brought back in under force (1.98.4). Next comes a discussion of Athens' severity and resultant unpopularity (1.99). Then Thasos revolts and is eventually defeated and forced to rejoin the league (1.100.2, 1.101.3). The Boeotians, recently captured by the Athenians, defeat their new masters and win their freedom (1.113). Euboea and Megara rise up in revolt; the Athenians are able to subdue the former but not the latter (1.114). Finally, Samos and Byzantium revolt and are eventually defeated and brought back into the league (1.115.2-117). These uprisings, of course, occur amidst other Athenian victories and defeats.[253] Yet within such an abbreviated history, the space Thucydides spends on dissension within the Delian League is striking. Had he intended to show a lead up to the Peloponnesian War that favors Athens, as Connor contends, he could have given these revolts less attention. Instead, in addition to outlining Athens' rise that led to Spartan fear, Thucydides foreshadows Athenian troubles from within their own league during the Peloponnesian War.

Among these conflicts with their own allies, Thucydides makes note of conflict among Athens' own citizenry. The Athenians are in the process of building the Long Walls, connecting Athens proper to its port of Piraeus and therefore to the sea. A Spartan army finds itself in Boeotia pondering how it might safely return to Sparta, when Thucydides mentions one additional reason for their hesitancy: τὸ δέ τι καὶ ἄνδρες τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐπῆγον αὐτοὺς κρύφα, ἐλπίσαντες δῆμόν τε καταπαύσειν καὶ τὰ μακρὰ τείχη οἰκοδομούμενα (1.107.4, "In addition,

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[253] Among the important defeats is the ill-fated Egyptian campaign, a warning against imperial adventurism, covered in depth in the following chapter.

men among the Athenians somehow induced them secretly, hoping to end the democracy and the building of the Long Walls"). The Athenians had been aware of these machinations, and the dissension fails to grow, rendering this a minor incident which Thucydides, again, might have overlooked had he intended to display Athenian strength. Taylor explains how this event connects internal discord to Athens' abandonment of Attica and Pericles' naval policy: "Thucydides thus contrives that his first mention of political division in Attica (division so wide that it leads to treating with Sparta) arises from a new conception of the city: walled and dependent on the sea rather than on the countryside."[254] This foreshadows the Athenians' displeasure at Pericles upon having to abandon Attica, the factional discord among Pericles' successors, and eventually the Athenian stasis of book 8. Furthermore, it connects this civil strife with Athens' commitment to the sea. Phalanx warfare begets unity and camaraderie; the Athenians' move to become a naval power brings division and discord.

For all its forebodings of destruction, the section on the Fifty Years does detail a period of Athenian ascent. This fact has led scholars to describe the section as a whole as favorable to the Athenians. It is not just recent scholars who misinterpret this section; Thucydides constructs his text to show how characters within his narrative misunderstand Athenian potential based on the events in this period. Foster argues that "[The Fifty Years] also helps us to understand why Pericles would place his hope on naval power in particular, which is clearly the instrument through which Athens enforces her will."[255] Pericles looms large in the final chapters of the Fifty Years. In particular, he arrives at Samos in time to snuff out the revolt from one of Athens' most

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[254] Taylor 2010, 36.

[255] Foster 2010, 117.

powerful allies (1.117.2-3). This and other victories provide the impetus for Pericles to finish Athens' transition, begun under Themistocles, into a naval power.

Athens under Pericles

In his first speech (1.140-4), Pericles steels the Athenians' resolve for war, primarily by enumerating Athenian resources and comparing them favorably to those of Sparta. The conventional view holds that Thucydides agrees with Pericles' assessment of Athens' advantage entering the war. While discussing this first speech, Kagan argues that "Pericles himself fully understood the unique character of the naval empire as the instrument of Athenian greatness, and on the eve of the great Peloponnesian War, he encouraged the Athenians with an analysis of its advantages."[256] Kagan is, of course, correct regarding Thucydides' construction of Pericles' perspective. Thucydides' character of Pericles *does* believe that Athens' naval empire sets it apart and grants it advantages on the eve of the Peloponnesian War. Where Kagan and others err is in arguing that Thucydides believes—or that we, Thucydides' readers, should believe—the same thing.

While presenting Pericles in a favorable light, Thucydides foreshadows the inefficacy of his plans. In the speech's second sentence, Pericles himself broaches the specter of looming disaster: ἢν ἄρα τι καὶ σφαλλώμεθα ("And if we are perhaps somehow overthrown"). In the following sentence, he elaborates: ἐνδέχεται γὰρ τὰς ξυμφορὰς τῶν πραγμάτων οὐχ ἧσσον ἀμαθῶς χωρῆσαι ἢ καὶ τὰς διανοίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· δι᾽ ὅπερ καὶ τὴν τύχην, ὅσα ἂν παρὰ λόγον ξυμβῇ, εἰώθαμεν αἰτιᾶσθαι (1.140.1, "For it is accepted that the happenings of events move no

[256] Kagan 1991, 112.

less unknowably than human designs. Therefore, we have been accustomed to attribute to chance whatever happens contrary to calculation").[257] In a speech attempting to gird his compatriots for war, such an admission seems out of place. It does, however, make the speaker look more thoughtful to a readership aware that his plans end up falling short.

In other instances, Thucydides' audience's knowledge of the ending of the war undermines the character of Pericles. In recounting a number of Sparta's disadvantages, Pericles admits that Sparta is formidable on any given day but argues that they will be unable to fight an enemy inherently different from themselves: μάχῃ μὲν γὰρ μιᾷ πρὸς ἅπαντας Ἕλληνας δυνατοὶ Πελοποννήσιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι ἀντισχεῖν, πολεμεῖν δὲ μὴ πρὸς ὁμοίαν ἀν τι παρασκευὴν ἀδύνατοι (1.141.6, "For in a single battle, the Peloponnesians and their allies can hold their own against all Greece, but they are unable to fight against a dissimilar force"). Shortly thereafter, he asserts that Athens is not susceptible to the list of disadvantages he just attributed to Sparta: τὰ δὲ ἡμέτερα τούτων τε ὧν περ ἐκείνοις ἐμεμψάμην ἀπηλλάχθαι (1.143.3, "But our forces are free from the disadvantages for which I rebuked them"). With the gift of hindsight, Thucydides and his audience are already aware that it was, on the contrary, Athens that proved unable to fight a sustained war against an opponent different in kind from itself.

Even the points where Pericles seems his most prescient are not as they at first appear. This first speech features a sentiment which is often noted as proof of Pericles' foresight and prudence. The general warns against imperial adventurism and overreach: πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἔχω ἐς ἐλπίδα τοῦ περιέσεσθαι, ἢν ἐθέλητε ἀρχήν τε μὴ ἐπικτᾶσθαι ἅμα πολεμοῦντες καὶ

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[257] For the shortcomings of human foresight and unpredictability of events in Thucydides, see Stahl 2003.

κινδύνους αὐθαιρέτους μὴ προστίθεσθαι· μᾶλλον γὰρ πεφόβημαι τὰς οἰκείας ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίας ἢ τὰς τῶν ἐναντίων διανοίας (1.144.1, "And I have many other reasons to hope you will be victorious, provided that you do not desire to augment your empire while at war and do not add self-inflicted perils. For I fear our own mistakes more than their designs"). Had Pericles stopped there, those who point to this line as proof of Pericles' prudent foresight would have a better argument. Yet he continues, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνα μὲν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ λόγῳ ἅμα τοῖς ἔργοις δηλωθήσεται (1.144.2, "But those things will be made clear in another speech amidst the course of events"). This additional line proves significant to our understanding of the the previous counsel.

There are two established understandings of the fulfillment of this promise, and I propose a third. Hornblower outlines the two main readings in his commentary. Since no later passage obviously fulfills the promise, some readers understand Pericles to be promising to speak consistently against imperial overreach as the need arises as opposed to pointing ahead to a specific speech in the future. This is the reading that Hornblower favors: "The present passage is hardly more than an undertaking to offer the right kind of detailed advice at the right time."[258] Yet the other common interpretation holds that Pericles is promising to elaborate in a specific speech in the future, a promise he fulfills in the speech presented in indirect discourse early in book two. In this speech, Pericles does remind his fellow citizens not to go out into battle, but he by no means makes clear or elaborates upon the sentiment first expressed in book one, and the majority of this speech pertains to other matters (2.13). After stating his preference for the first reading, Hornblower entertains this second interpretation:"If a cross-reference *is* intended (Periclean or authorial? see ii.13.2n) it is not very exact [his emphasis]. The 'speech' at ii.13

[258] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.230.

does not develop the theme of Athenian mistakes (if that is what is meant by ἐκεῖνα, 'all this'); instead, it speaks in detail about finance."[259] He picks up the thought in his note on 2.13.1. Referring back to this first passage, he argues, "But that passage [i.e. 1.144.2] was no more than a general promise not to keep silent when the hour for action struck, and in any case at i.144 the phrase 'all this' appeared to refer to Athenian mistakes, which are not a leading theme of ii. 13."[260] If Thucydides meant for these two passages to exhibit an intratextual connection, in other words, he would have fit the connection more snugly.

I suggest a third option. The phrase ἐν ἄλλῳ λόγῳ (1.144.2, "in another speech") does gear the reader to look for Pericles to fulfill his promise in his three remaining speeches (two in direct discourse and one indirect) within the narrative. Having created this expectation, Thucydides never lets Pericles make good on it. As Hornblower argues, the tangentially related, passing mention at 2.13 does not accomplish the task. Pericles has ample space to complete his thoughts on avoiding imperial overreach and self-inflicted wounds within the narrative but never does. In fact, when he broaches the subject of Athenian imperialism in his final speech and has the opportunity to fulfill his promise, he does the opposite. With the Athenian population decimated by the plague and their resolve wavering, Pericles drops his caution and hints at imperial gains to be made: γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, τοῦ ἑτέρου ὑμᾶς παντὸς κυριωτάτους ὄντας, ἐφ' ὅσον τε νῦν νέμεσθε καὶ ἢν ἐπὶ πλέον βουληθῆτε (2.62.2, "of the land and sea, you have the supreme authority over one, as far as you now control and if you want more"). Thucydides has Pericles include the original promise to complete his thought in order to pique his audience's

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[259] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.230.

[260] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.252.

anticipation. This brings further emphasis to Pericles' surprising shift in position and indication of imperial gains to be made.

The implementation of Pericles' plan to abandon Attica impels Thucydides to depict anguish, dissension, and anti-Periclean anger. Following his speech in indirect discourse reiterating Athens' financial position, Pericles carries out the yet most radical step of his plan, having the Athenians abandon Attica and move within the city's walls. Rood recognizes "hints of the impracticality of the Periklean strategy in the narrative of the first Peloponnesian invasion."[261] Thucydides first dwells upon the Athenians' understandable difficulty in abandoning their homes: χαλεπῶς δὲ αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ αἰεὶ εἰωθέναι τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς διαιτᾶσθαι ἡ ἀνάστασις ἐγίγνετο (2.14.2, "The move was difficult for them because the majority had been always accustomed to living in the country"). From here, he launches into an excursus on the history of Attica, ending with the repetition of the adverb χαλεπῶς (2.15-6, "with difficulty"). The placement of the excursus and the symmetry confirm that the purpose of the passage is to reinforce how difficult it is for the Athenians to abandon their land per Pericles' orders. He adds that for these Athenians, leaving behind their homes is οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ πόλιν τὴν αὑτοῦ ἀπολείπων ἕκαστος (2.16.2, "no different than each abandoning his polis"). This statement undercuts these Athenians' allegiance to Athens in general and Pericles and his plan in particular.

Upon reaching the city, their new living conditions prove cramped and unsavory. These conditions make the Athenian population susceptible to the imminent plague and, within the text, foreshadow the plague narrative. The lack of space also forces the Athenians to occupy the

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[261] Rood 1998, 140.

sacred space known as the Pelargikon, despite the oracle at Delphi's previous warning that: τὸ Πελαργικὸν ἀργὸν ἄμεινον (2.17.1, "the Pelargikon is better untouched"). As is his wont, Thucydides attempts to correct a common misperception, stating that the occupation was the effect of the Athenians' suffering, not the cause. This correction reveals Thucydides' negative views of both the war and Pericles' plan. Finally, Thucydides describes the gut-wrenching scene of the Spartans ravaging the Attic land as the Athenians stand by impotently. The Spartan actions do not provoke a battle, but they do induce dissension and conflict among the Athenian population as well as a feeling of bitter resentment towards Pericles. I include the passage in its entirety, for it is telling how much space Thucydides devotes to the scene:

> ἐπειδὴ δὲ περὶ Ἀχαρνὰς εἶδον τὸν στρατὸν ἑξήκοντα σταδίους τῆς πόλεως ἀπέχοντα, οὐκέτι ἀνασχετὸν ἐποιοῦντο, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτοῖς, ὡς εἰκός, γῆς τεμνομένης ἐν τῷ ἐμφανεῖ, ὃ οὔπω ἑοράκεσαν οἵ γε νεώτεροι, οὐδ᾽ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι πλὴν τὰ Μηδικά, δεινὸν ἐφαίνετο καὶ ἐδόκει τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ μάλιστα τῇ νεότητι ἐπεξιέναι καὶ μὴ περιορᾶν.(3) κατὰ ξυστάσεις τε γιγνόμενοι ἐν πολλῇ ἔριδι ἦσαν, οἱ μὲν κελεύοντες ἐπεξιέναι, οἱ δέ τινες οὐκ ἐῶντες. χρησμολόγοι τε ᾖδον χρησμοὺς παντοίους, ὧν ἀκροᾶσθαι ὡς ἕκαστος ὥρμητο. οἵ τε Ἀχαρνῆς οἰόμενοι παρὰ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἐλαχίστην μοῖραν εἶναι Ἀθηναίων, ὡς αὐτῶν ἡ γῆ ἐτέμνετο, ἐνῆγον τὴν ἔξοδον μάλιστα. παντί τε τρόπῳ ἀνηρέθιστο ἡ πόλις, καὶ τὸν Περικλέα ἐν ὀργῇ εἶχον, καὶ ὧν παρῄνεσε πρότερον ἐμέμνηντο οὐδέν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκάκιζον ὅτι στρατηγὸς ὢν οὐκ ἐπεξάγοι, αἴτιόν τε σφίσιν ἐνόμιζον πάντων ὧν ἔπασχον (2.21.2-3).
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> When they saw the army near Acharnae, around seven miles from Athens, they no longer considered it bearable. But as is natural with the land being ravaged in plain sight, which the younger had never seen nor the older except for during the Persian Wars, it appeared terrible to them, and it seemed good to others and especially to the youth to march out and not allow it. (3) Clustering in groups, they were in heated disputes: some demanding they march out, some forbidding it. Diviners sang variant oracles, of which each rushed to hearken one or another. The Acharnians, believing themselves to be not a very small portion of the Athenians, especially urged an attack, as their land was being ravaged. In every way, the polis had been stirred up, and they were furious at Pericles, remembering nothing of the exhortations he previously gave, but they abused him for not

> leading them out although he was their general, and they believed he was responsible for all of the ills they suffered.

Much of this passage aims to paint the demos as indecisive and hard to control. Yet there is ample room for the demos to be fickle and for Pericles' agenda to be unreasonable. Thucydides asserts it is natural (ὡς εἰκός) that the Athenians consider the destruction of their land to be terrible (δεινὸν). The adjective δεινὸν also includes connotations of fear. Thucydides' critique of the demos' mutability is not that their present sufferings are not terrible but that they should not have shown such empty bravery before the action without better anticipating what was to come.

Pericles proves able to survive the political maelstrom. He does so by forbidding assemblies or meetings of any kind (2.22.1). Thucydides here depicts what he later glosses as democracy in name only and, in fact, rule by the first citizen (2.65.9).[262] Pericles τήν τε πόλιν ἐφύλασσε (2.22.1, "guards the polis"). This describes the behavior of someone who is more than a mere democratic leader.[263] The Athenians meanwhile were furious (χαλεπαίνοντας, 2.22.1). The participle connects the Athenians' fury to the difficulty with which they earlier reacted to the event (2.14.2, 2.16.2). Despite Pericles' ability to weather their righteous anger, the event does not bode well for the future.

Pericles' final two speeches must be understood within their context in the narrative. In the Funeral Oration, Pericles offers an eloquent encomium to Athens (2.35-46). The speech touches upon previous generations but focuses on contemporary Athens, which Pericles and his

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[262] Cf. Thucydides 1.139.4.

[263] Cf. [Aristotle] *Constitution of the Athenians* 8.4, where Solon tasks the Council of the Areopagus with τὸ νομοφυλακεῖν ("guarding the laws").

naval policy helped form. The idealized Athens he constructs in the speech looks wholly alien to the Athens of the plague narrative, which follows immediately thereafter (2.47-54). The juxtaposition of these two passages has not been lost on scholars. For example, June W. Allison argues:

> But the inexplicable and uncontrollable loss of life which the plague dealt Athens stands in sharp contrast to the rational power of the city and the glory of its war dead which Pericles presented in the Funeral Oration. This oration (II 35-46) immediately precedes the plague description in the narrative and the two passages form an antithetical pair much like the paired speeches in Thucydides.[264]

Just as with the paired speeches elsewhere, the force of the Funeral Oration within the text is not fully realized until the plague narrative. Foster understands the plague narrative to be working in conjunction with other narrative passages on the war in opposition to both the Funeral Oration and Pericles' final speech. She contrasts "the simultaneously idealized and evasive presentations of Athenian imperial rule in Pericles' last two speeches" with "Thucydides' inexorably precise description of the war and the plague."[265] This reading, she argues, elucidates "the differences between Pericles and Thucydides."[266] The plague narrative differs from the Periclean speeches that bookend it both in its portrayal of Athens and in the scientific, detailed manner with which it is written. In line with the dichotomy between λόγος and ἔργον developed throughout the work, Thucydides fills Pericles' speeches with contradictions and dissembling.

More than his earlier speeches, Pericles' final speech exposes some of the cracks in his thinking. This speech develops a false choice between war and utter defeat that does not reflect

[264] Allison 1983, 14.

[265] Foster 2010, 188.

[266] Foster 2010, 188.

the reality which the Athenians face. He argues: καὶ γὰρ οἷς μὲν αἵρεσις γεγένηται τἆλλα εὐτυχοῦσι, πολλὴ ἄνοια πολεμῆσαι· εἰ δ᾽ ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἴξαντας εὐθὺς τοῖς πέλας ὑπακοῦσαι ἢ κινδυνεύσαντας περιγενέσθαι, ὁ φυγὼν τὸν κίνδυνον τοῦ ὑποστάντος μεμπτότερος (2.61.1, "To those who have a choice and are otherwise prospering, it is very foolish to wage war. But if it is necessary either to surrender and immediately be subject to one's neighbors or to run the risk and prevail, the one fleeing the danger is more to blame than the one submitting to it"). Pericles showed in the Funeral Oration that he believes the Athenians to be prospering; if there is any choice available to them, they would be foolish to wage war, in Pericles' own reckoning. In his first speech, however, Pericles had already primed the Athenians for choosing war (1.140.4-5), and Thucydides claimed Pericles would not allow compromise but ἐς τὸν πόλεμον ὥρμα τοὺς Ἀθηναίους (1.127.3, "continually rushed the Athenians to war"). Immediately before this final speech, the Athenians sent envoys to Sparta (2.59.2). Although this particular attempt to treat with the Spartans failed, it shows other Athenians' openness to exploring options between the poles of waging war and utter surrender. Thucydides suggests that the ultimate cause of the conflict is Sparta's fear over Athens' rise (1.23.6); nevertheless, this does not mean that the war necessarily had to commence and play out the way it did. The historian shows actors, such as Pericles and the Corinthians, consistently accelerating the conflict. Pericles' rhetoric does not reflect a reality already in existence but constructs a new one.

The same logic—coercing his fellow citizens into war—is at play when he appropriates the tyrant-polis metaphor later in the speech. The Corinthians had previously labelled Athens a tyrant-polis as a derogatory term, themselves attempting to coerce Sparta into war (1.122.3, 1.124.3). The term was apt as the Corinthians were warning against the Athenian overreach and

the Spartans were famous for overthrowing tyrants. Pericles surprisingly takes the comparison and uses it for his own purposes: ἧς οὐδ᾽ ἐκστῆναι ἔτι ὑμῖν ἔστιν, εἴ τις καὶ τόδε ἐν τῷ παρόντι δεδιὼς ἀπραγμοσύνῃ ἀνδραγαθίζεται. ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον (2.63.2, "It is no longer possible for you to abandon [this empire], if one, fearing the present danger, plays the honest man and sits out. You possess something like a tyranny; if its seizing seems to be unjust, it is still dangerous to release"). Pericles employs a simile, ὡς ("like"), instead of a metaphor, but the point remains the same. In his Archaeology, Thucydides said that the tyrants generally closely guard their own interest (1.17), and Pericles here asks the Athenians to do likewise. He tells them to put aside their sense of justice and cites danger for those who do not listen. Connor argues that Pericles and his successors assume the term because "the tyrannical life is the most enjoyable and desirable way of life."[267] However, as Kurt A. Raaflaub counters, there is little positivity in Pericles' rhetoric:

> The tyrant metaphor, evoking the *negative* associations inherent in the concept—above all, the constant danger from resentful subjects— serves, in extreme situations, to arouse the citizens' determination to pursue their city's harsh policy of imperial domination. In the hands of Athenian leaders, it is a stick, not a carrot, intended to force the citizens to accept an unwelcome reality.[268]

This line of argument fits much closer with Pericles' words. Pericles is not the first Athenian to claim that Athens' imperialistic drive and hawkishness is forced upon the polis.[269] Yet Pericles' final speech is the clearest, most developed articulation yet of Athenians citing a false choice or no choice in justifying their war-mongering. Like the tyrant-polis construction, this line of

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[267] Connor 1977, 98.

[268] Raaflaub 2003, 81, my emphasis.

[269] See the argument of the Athenians at Sparta, 1.75.4.

argumentation will be taken up by Pericles' successors to justify offensive empire building amidst the war.[270]

Many scholars look to later Athenian offensives as operating contrary to Pericles' policy as laid out in his first speech. However, Pericles never makes good on his promise to speak in greater detail regarding his admonitions not to add to their empire while at war nor otherwise take unnecessary risks (144.1). Thucydides includes a final speech of Pericles, offering the statesman a chance to make good on the promise to both his and Thucydides' audiences. Instead, with the plague bearing down upon Athens, a development which he admits he did not account for (2.64.1), Pericles shifts tack. He admits to changing his rhetoric in reaction to both the plague and the Athenians' resultant panic: δηλώσω δὲ καὶ τόδε, ὅ μοι δοκεῖτε οὔτ᾽ αὐτοὶ πώποτε ἐνθυμηθῆναι ὑπάρχον ὑμῖν μεγέθους πέρι ἐς τὴν ἀρχὴν οὔτ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐν τοῖς πρὶν λόγοις· οὐδ᾽ ἂν νῦν ἐχρησάμην κομπωδεστέραν ἔχοντι τὴν προσποίησιν, εἰ μὴ καταπεπληγμένους ὑμᾶς παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἑώρων (2.62.1, "I will also make clear to you the benefit from your empire's magnitude which you yourselves appear never to have considered nor have I laid out in previous speeches. Nor would I now employ something containing a claim so boastful, if I did not observe you to be unreasonably panic-stricken"). Pericles abstained from saying previously what he is about to say because he considers it κομπωδεστέραν ("so boastful"). He seems to have preferred to keep the following claim to himself. The same bashfulness was lacking from his grandiose encomium to Athens, the Funeral Oration. The differing speech genres, epitaphic and symbouleutic, allow Thucydides' audience to see two jarringly discordant perspectives from the same man.

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[270] For later iterations of the tyrant-polis construction, see 3.37.2, 6.85.1. For other later examples of the broader argument, see 5.91.2, 6.18.6-7.

As various characters and Thucydides himself do throughout the entire work, Pericles divides the world between liquid and solid in his final speech. The seas are consistently depicted as the Athenians' field of operations, as opposed to the land-based Spartans. However, Pericles jumps from there to the Athenians exercising supreme control over the seas:

> οἴεσθε μὲν γὰρ τῶν ξυμμάχων μόνων ἄρχειν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποφαίνω δύο μερῶν τῶν ἐς χρῆσιν φανερῶν, γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, τοῦ ἑτέρου ὑμᾶς παντὸς κυριωτάτους ὄντας, ἐφ᾽ ὅσον τε νῦν νέμεσθε καὶ ἢν ἐπὶ πλέον βουληθῆτε· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις τῇ ὑπαρχούσῃ παρασκευῇ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ πλέοντας ὑμᾶς οὔτε βασιλεὺς οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἔθνος τῶν ἐν τῷ παρόντι κωλύσει (2.62.2).
>
> You think that you rule only your allies, but I assert that of the two parts manifest for use, land and sea, you have the supreme authority over one, as far as you now control and if you want more. And there is no one—neither the Great King nor any present people—who will hinder you sailing with the armament of your navy.

Earlier in the narrative Pericles sought to rein in the imperial passions of his compatriots, at least while the war lasted. Now, with the war going terribly, with the plague raging and Attica ravaged a second time, Pericles *stokes* those same passions. In attempt to quantify his extravagant claims on the interminable scope of the Athenian empire, he belittles the Attic land. The Athenians are facing immense losses: ὁ μὲν δῆμος ὅτι ἀπ᾽ ἐλασσόνων ὁρμώμενος ἐστέρητο καὶ τούτων, οἱ δὲ δυνατοὶ καλὰ κτήματα κατὰ τὴν χώραν οἰκοδομίαις τε καὶ πολυτελέσι κατασκευαῖς ἀπολωλεκότες (2.65.2, "the people were stirred up, deprived even of the very little which they had, and the powerful lost beautiful possessions throughout the land both in terms of buildings and very expensive furniture"). Pericles trivializes these material losses, glossing the Attic land as κηπίον καὶ ἐγκαλλώπισμα πλούτου (2.62.3, "a little garden and ornament of wealth"). The characterization fits with his naval agenda but, considering that many in his audience have recently lost everything, comes across as detached at best, callous at worst.

Even within Pericles' two symbouleutic speeches, Thucydides displays two contrasting Pericles, a cautious assessor in his first speech and a wide-eyed imperialist in his final speech. Edmund Bloedow notes the contradiction and broaches the question "whether Thucydides himself may have erred."[271] This misinterprets Thucydides' characterization, as Foster argues: "For Thucydides, Pericles' character was not entirely coherent, but characterized by contradictions and flaws, as well as virtues. The conflict between rhetoric such as we see in this passage, and the prudent advice or accurate assessments Pericles also provides, is not an error, but rather part of Thucydides' portrait of Pericles." I add to her keen insight that the conflict is diachronic within the narrative. We should not take this to mean that Pericles evolved over the course of the first book and a half; the Pericles from his final speech conforms to what we see of his earlier military career (1.111.2, 1.114, 1.116.1-117.2, 2.31.1). Rather, the devolving situation weighs upon Pericles' internal conflict over how much of his vision of Athens to disclose to his fellow citizens. At the eve of the war, he wishes to encourage their prudence and advocate for consolidation. After the gory plague and the Athenians' reaction to the ravaging of Athens, Pericles feels the need conversely to whet their imperial imagination. The shift does not bode well for Pericles' war plan and foreshadows later more pronounced failings of human agency.

The following section, in which Thucydides notes Pericles' death and opines on his life, includes much praise for the Athenian statesman; it is, therefore, often cited by adherents of the *communis opinio* as proof that Thucydides believes in Pericles' naval policy. I argue that it instead forms a perspective that respects Pericles and his ability to unite the polis under him but nevertheless retains its skepticism of his naval policy. Thucydides details Pericles' ability to

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[271] Bloedow 2000, 308.

steer the Athenian democracy with more authority than his successors (2.65.8-11). He adds that Athens reached its peak under Pericles before the Peloponnesian War and praises his foresight during the war: ὅσον τε γὰρ χρόνον προύστη τῆς πόλεως ἐν τῇ εἰρήνῃ, μετρίως ἐξηγεῖτο καὶ ἀσφαλῶς διεφύλαξεν αὐτήν, καὶ ἐγένετο ἐπ᾽ ἐκείνου μεγίστη, ἐπειδή τε ὁ πόλεμος κατέστη, ὁ δὲ φαίνεται καὶ ἐν τούτῳ προγνοὺς τὴν δύναμιν (2.65.5, "For as long as he was foremost in the city at peace, he led moderately and guarded it securely, and it reached its pinnacle in his time. And when the war commenced, he at this time too clearly prognosticated its power"). The claim that Athens was at its apex on the eve of the Peloponnesian War reveals respect for Pericles' leadership at this time; however, it can also be read as an indictment of the push for war: Pericles built up the Athenian empire and in his final major act impelled it into a catastrophic war, which it eventually lost. Thucydides places Athens' peak during Pericles' leadership but before this final act.

As for Pericles' leadership during the war, Thucydides does praise his foresight. The comment on this cited above should be analyzed in conjunction with Thucydides' other comments on Pericles' foresight within this section. Shortly thereafter, Thucydides claims: καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἀπέθανεν, ἐπὶ πλέον ἔτι ἐγνώσθη ἡ πρόνοια αὐτοῦ ἡ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον (2.65.6, "And when he died, his foresight for the war became yet better recognized"). He likewise ends this passage by arguing: τοσοῦτον τῷ Περικλεῖ ἐπερίσσευσε τότε ἀφ᾽ ὧν αὐτὸς προέγνω καὶ πάνυ ἂν ῥᾳδίως περιγενέσθαι τὴν πόλιν Πελοποννησίων αὐτῶν τῷ πολέμῳ (2.65.13, "Pericles had such an abundance of resources at that time, from which he himself prognosticated that the Athenians would very easily defeat the polis of the Peloponnesians themselves in the war"). Scholars cite this continued focus on Pericles' foresight and this final line in particular as proof of Thucydides'

backing of Pericles' agenda. Connor notes that many read this final line as revealing Thucydides as "the defender of Pericles and his policies against critics who fail to recognize that if only his advice had been followed, Athens could have won."[272] Taylor takes issue with this interpretation: "On the other hand, such readings (of Thucydides and the *Epitaph*) seem to ignore the unavoidable awkwardness and irony of praising Pericles' foresight of victory in a war that was, in fact, lost."[273] Even if we are hesitant to attribute it to irony, it is strikingly odd for Thucydides to praise Pericles for correctly foreseeing that Athens could defeat the polis of the Peloponnesians, when even at the onset of the war the Athenians were fighting against Sparta plus a host of poleis allied with it.[274] As for the argument that Thucydides' praise of Pericles refers to the first portion of the war that ends with the Peace of Nicias, this reading ignores the fundamental framing of the narrative and its characterization of the Peace of Nicias as no peace at all.[275] Across this text, Thucydides aims to show the changeability of events. The praise of Pericles' foresight describes him favorably relative to his successors, but it also functions to show the reader that perceptive forethought and keen assessments of power are no match for the unpredictability of events, especially in wartime.

Thucydides cites and states his approval of Pericles' cautious advice in the first speech: ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἡσυχάζοντάς τε καὶ τὸ ναυτικὸν θεραπεύοντας καὶ ἀρχὴν μὴ ἐπικτωμένους ἐν τῷ

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[272] Connor 1984, 73.

[273] Taylor 2010, 83-4. She uses the label *Epitaph* for 2.65, not the Funeral Oration.

[274] Ober 2001, 291.

[275] See 5.25-6, esp. καὶ τὴν διὰ μέσου ξύμβασιν εἴ τις μὴ ἀξιώσει πόλεμον νομίζειν, οὐκ ὀρθῶς δικαιώσει (5.26.2, "if anyone should deem the truce in the middle [i.e. the Peace of Nicias] not worthy of being considered war, they do not judge correctly").

πολέμῳ μηδὲ τῇ πόλει κινδυνεύοντας ἔφη περιέσεσθαι (2.65.7, "For he told them that keeping at rest, taking care of their navy, not adding to their empire during the war, and not risking the polis, they would be victorious"). Thucydides does not repeat Pericles' claim from his final speech that the Athenians are masters of the seas. This section is not meant to repeat exhaustively Pericles' maneuverings from earlier in the work. It, instead, eulogizes Pericles, highlighting the man in a favorable light at his death, in a way that parallels Thucydides' treatment of the deaths of other men he respects. After Brasidas's death, Thucydides details the Amphipolitans' remembrance of of him as a hero (5.11.1) After Nicias's death, the historian himself laments upon the undeserved nature of his fate and commends his ἀρετήν (7.86.5, "excellence"). The latter example is particularly relevant to Thucydides' treatment of Pericles' death because of its disregard for the parts of the narrative that reflect poorly upon Nicias (6.24-6, 7.16.1, 7.50.4). Thucydides' comments on Pericles at his death purposefully exhibit the Athenian statesman in a favorable light; for a full understanding of the character's role within the narrative, we must observe the narrative as a whole.

From the Archaeology to the death of Pericles, Thucydides constructs a careful skepticism of Athenian naval power. This skepticism foreshadows Athenian hardships to come, especially in Sicily. A close look at Thucydides' construction of a binary between liquids and solids will offer fresh evidence that advances the analyses presented in this chapter and the important work done by adherents of the minority position.

CHAPTER 4

Liquid as Motion and Change in Thucydides

This chapter begins by looking at how Thucydides conceptualizes motion and how he associates it with liquids. Through his use of the words κίνησις ("motion" or "movement") and κινέω ("move") and his descriptions of evolving topography, Thucydides shows himself to be in line with the Greek authors analyzed above in the understanding that motion and change fundamentally distinguish liquids from solids. The second portion of this chapter examines how the binary between liquids and solids maps directly onto Thucydides' construction of the Athenians and Spartans. He uses the polarity between liquids and solids to strengthen the dichotomy between these two peoples. Each group mirrors the domain which their military dominates. The Athenians take on the active, fluctuating characteristics of the sea, while the Spartans resemble the stability of the land. Athenian and other characters throughout the text construct the Athenians as active and the Spartans as conservative; in the narrative sections, Thucydides agrees with these assessments. The Peloponnesian War does not merely pit the Athenians against the Spartans; it is a more fundamental opposition, a conflict of liquidity (seapower, activity, flexibility, loquaciousness) versus solidity (land-power, conservatism, rigidity, laconicism).

κίνησις and κινέω in Thucydides

Before exploring motion in conjunction with liquidity, it is worth briefly exploring the concept of movement in Thucydides more generally. The noun κίνησις ("motion" or

"movement") and the etymologically related verb κινέω ("move") take on a wide spectrum of meanings and often denote destructive movement both within this work and beyond. Thucydides frequently—and at particularly important points in the narrative—uses these words to denote motion that is violent and destructive or even substantively to speak of violence itself.

The Greek noun for movement, κίνησις, appears only three times in the entire work. In its most consequential usage, it begins the second sentence of the whole narrative. After introducing himself and his early awareness of the grand scale of his subject, he writes: κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη δὴ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐγένετο καὶ μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὡς δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων (1.1.2, "This movement was the greatest ever for the Greeks and some portion of the barbarians and, so to speak, most of humankind"). The placement of κίνησις in the work's second sentence and its position at the very beginning of this sentence, before its modifiers, heap immediate emphasis on the noun. The motion inherent in this noun catalyzes the narrative into action, but what exactly it signifies has been up for debate.

The common reading of this sentence is that κίνησις ("movement") denotes the Peloponnesian War. The war is, after all, the subject of this history. Several usages of the verb κινέω ("move"), analyzed below, suggest waging war or military disturbances, seeming to confirm this reading (1.82.1, 3.82.1, 4.76.4, 6.34.3). N. G. L. Hammond disputes this interpretation, arguing: "When we take this sentence in relation to I.I and ask what the movement was, the answer is clearly the movement which culminated in the contestants (the Peloponnesians and the Athenians) reaching their acme of power, and in the other Greek powers aligning themselves on one side or the other *at the beginning of the war*."[276] The sentences

[276] Hammond 1952, 132, emphasis his.

before and after this do make mention of the time leading up to the war, and Hornblower issues measured support for Hammond's interpretation, stating that "there is much to be said for" it.[277] Rood does not take a side between Hammond's interpretation and the common reading; he instead gives each equal credence and explains how either interpretation would support his own argument.[278]

Rather than viewing these options as mutually exclusive, I argue that they can be taken together. Given later usages of κινέω and the reader's expectation of an introduction to the war, the author's main subject, κίνησις must signify the conflict itself. However, Hammond is not wrong in indicating that the surrounding sentences and the Archaeology as a whole narrate the rapid growth in the decades before the war. The movement can indicate the war beginning with its cause as laid out by the author himself (1.23.6, 1.88, 1.118.2). The word itself, κίνησις, is an unusual choice that can cover both the growth of the powers before the war, especially the rapid growth of the Athenians, as well as the disturbance of the war itself; in other words, though perhaps unexpected at first glance, the word is well suited to cover the main conflict of the narrative and the lead up thereto, which itself comprises the whole Archaeology as well as much of the first book. The range of action that the word covers, moreover, illuminates the spectrum of motion within the narrative. Movement can signify both growth and destruction.

The two remaining usages of κίνησις within the narrative both describe the movements of soldiers and evince a duality of their own. On the one hand, soldiers on the move are soldiers in action, effective soldiers. The people of Corcyra induce the Athenian general Nicostratus to

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277 Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.6.

278 Rood 2006, 232.

leave five ships, ὅπως ἧσσόν τι ἐν κινήσει ὦσιν οἱ ἐναντίοι (3.75.2, "so that the enemy would be on the move somewhat less"). The movement of the enemy soldiers is dangerous and something to be prevented. Later, however, Brasidas sees the movements of the Athenian soldiers as a sign of their weakness. First, Thucydides uses a participle of κινέω to describe Brasidas seeing the enemy army κινούμενον (5.10.5, "on the move"). The Spartan general views this as a sign that the time is right to attack, and in addressing his soldiers, he uses κίνησις to describe another type of motion displayed by the enemy soldiers, shaking: οἱ ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς οὐ μενοῦσιν. δῆλοι δὲ τῶν τε δοράτων τῇ κινήσει καὶ τῶν κεφαλῶν· οἷς γὰρ ἂν τοῦτο γίγνηται, οὐκ εἰώθασι μένειν τοὺς ἐπιόντας (5.10.5, "The men will not stand their ground against us. It is clear that their spears and helmets are shaking [literally: in motion]. This happens to those who are not accustomed to holding their ground against those attacking"). In hoplite warfare, in which holding firm is of utmost importance, movement can take on a pejorative connotation. It is no coincidence that a Spartan general is articulating this sense of movement. Centuries earlier, the Spartan poet Tyrtaeus railed against flight during battle and posited that it leads to a life of wandering (Tyrtaeus 6 [Edmunds], 1-14).[279] Movement is a concept Thucydides associates closely with the Athenians. These two usages of κίνησις show that it is a complex idea that can separately denote military strength and military weakness.

The motion described throughout the narrative by the verb κινέω can include a sense of violence and war. For instance, Thucydides employs the passive participle κινούμενα to denote Athenian military attacks across Boeotia (4.76.4). The Athenians' connection with movement and the Spartans' resistance thereto will be taken up in depth below. For now, it is relevant to

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[279] See chapter 1.

note the use of the verb κινέω by speakers within the narrative trying to convince the Spartans to move—i.e. militarily—or not. Before the war, the Spartan king Archidamus warns the Spartans: ὅπλα μὲν μήπω κινεῖν (1.82.1, "Do not yet take up [literally: move] arms"). Later, the abstract concept of war replaces the physical arms as the object of κινέω. Convinced of the reality of the coming Athenian expedition, Hermocrates, the popular leader of Syracuse, implores his compatriots to send to Sparta and Corinth to convince them to send aid and τὸν ἐκεῖ πόλεμον κινεῖν (6.34.3, "to wage [move] the war there [i.e. back in Greece]"). The Spartans are characterized by their slowness to action throughout the narrative, and calls for them to join or refrain from the war employ the verb κινέω. This stems, in part, from the verb being more readily associated with violent motion than its English equivalent.

Another usage of κινέω recalls the attestation of κίνησις in the work's opening paragraph. Amidst his description of the bloody Corcyrean stasis, Thucydides uses the concept of motion to move from the particular stasis of this one polis to a general disruption across the Greek world: οὕτως ὠμὴ <ἡ> στάσις προυχώρησε, καὶ ἔδοξε μᾶλλον, διότι ἐν τοῖς πρώτη ἐγένετο, ἐπεὶ ὕστερόν γε καὶ πᾶν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐκινήθη (3.82.1, "So fiercely the stasis progressed, and it seemed greater because it happened first, since later all, so to speak, of the Greek world was set in motion"). The verb προυχώρησε ("progressed") has a basic sense of motion as well, although its metaphorical sense (the one seen here) is common.[280] The verb ἐκινήθη "was set in motion" parallels the other uses of κινέω and κίνησις that include a sense of violence. This same form of the verb is earlier used to describe an earthquake, a kind of natural violence: Δῆλος ἐκινήθη (2.8.3, "Delos was shaken"). The sentence on the Corcyrean stasis recalls the

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[280] LSJ "προχωρέω" A.II.

usage of κίνησις in the opening paragraph: both sentences describe a movement that extends to the wider world, the Greek world in this sentence and most of humankind in the former. In both sentences, Thucydides employs the phrase ὡς εἰπεῖν ("so to speak") to qualify such expansive claims. Despite the qualification, Thucydides uses the concept of movement to describe the rapid spread of violence in both instances. This construction attests to the connection between the concepts of motion and destruction.

Liquids as Motion and Change

Like the authors analyzed in chapters one and two, Thucydides conceptualizes the difference between liquids and solids as between motion and change on the one hand and a lack thereof on the other. This conceptualization materializes as he discusses fluctuating geographical features across three different points in the narrative.

In the first, Thucydides' interest in natural science leads him to illustrate the causal connection between earthquakes and tidal waves, thereby highlighting the mobility of the sea. At the end of the fifth year of the war in the winter of 427/6, as a second wave of the plague sweeps into Athens, Thucydides mentions a string of earthquakes that strikes central Greece (3.87). Shortly thereafter, he discusses these natural phenomena as an explanation for the Spartans' failure to invade Attica in the sixth year of the war. William D. Furley draws out the Spartans' thinking, noting that Poseidon was god of both earthquakes and the isthmus that the Spartans had to cross to reach Attica.[281] Gomme views this as an inauspicious sign for the Spartan king Agis,

[281] Furley 2006, 422.

remarking how it "seems almost like an omen of Agis's unsuccessful career."[282] Thucydides describes tidal waves and unusual tidal activity that occurred across three locations in connection to the earthquakes, from which he posits his theory on the causal connection between earthquakes and tidal waves.[283]

His astute theory shows the sea's receptiveness to motion, its readiness to move. The motion of earthquakes can and does cause damage to solid structures. Yet, as Thucydides details, the liquidity of the sea reacts to the motion more readily and in a more comprehensive way, with the shock waves of earthquakes materializing as physical tidal waves. After detailing the phenomenon across the three locations, Thucydides delivers his theory on the causal connection, which doubles as the reason for this brief narratological detour around central Greece: αἴτιον δ' ἔγω γε νομίζω τοῦ τοιούτου, ᾗ ἰσχυρότατος ὁ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο, κατὰ τοῦτο ἀποστέλλειν τε τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἐξαπίνης πάλιν ἐπισπωμένην βιαιότερον τὴν ἐπίκλυσιν ποιεῖν· ἄνευ δὲ σεισμοῦ οὐκ ἄν μοι δοκεῖ τὸ τοιοῦτο ξυμβῆναι γενέσθαι (3.89.5, "I, at any rate, believe the cause of this to be the sea drawing back to the epicenter of the earthquake and immediately returning again, making the swell more violent. Without the earthquake, it seems to me, this sort of thing would not happen"). The Greek noun for earthquake, σεισμὸς, like its English equivalent, carries an inherent sense of motion, meaning at its base level *shaking*. The liquidity of the sea takes on this motion across two verbs of movement, ἀποστέλλειν ("drawing back") and ἐπισπωμένην ("returning," literally: "dragging after"), and the motion physically manifests itself in τὴν ἐπίκλυσιν ("the swell").

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[282] Gomme 1945-1982, 2.390.

[283] Then again, Poseidon's authority over both the sea and earthquakes may suggest a general awareness of this connection, Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.497.

The description of the tidal wave at the first of these three locations connects liquidity to both motion and change. Thucydides illustrates the tidal wave ripping through the strait between Euboea and central Greece:

> καὶ περὶ τούτους τοὺς χρόνους, τῶν σεισμῶν κατεχόντων, τῆς Εὐβοίας ἐν Ὀροβίαις ἡ θάλασσα ἐπανελθοῦσα ἀπὸ τῆς τότε οὔσης γῆς καὶ κυματωθεῖσα ἐπῆλθε τῆς πόλεως μέρος τι, καὶ τὸ μὲν κατέκλυσε τὸ δ᾽ ὑπενόστησε, καὶ θάλασσα νῦν ἐστὶ πρότερον οὖσα γῆ (3.89.2).
>
> And around the same time, when the earthquakes occurred, the sea at Orobiae on Euboea receded from the current shoreline, and swelling into a wave it came upon some section of the polis. In some places it flooded temporarily; in others it settled permanently, and that which was formerly land is now sea.

Two forms of the verb ἔρχομαι ("to go"), namely ἐπανελθοῦσα ("receded") and ἐπῆλθε ("came upon," in other contexts: "attacked"), denote the sea's movement. Each leg of the short μέν…δέ clause, τὸ μὲν κατέκλυσε τὸ δ᾽ ὑπενόστησε ("In some places it flooded temporarily; in others it settled permanently"), exhibits change brought on by the rushing water. The first areas get inundated and then change back again as the water recedes to the sea. The second locations experience a more permanent change as the wave of liquid settles, forever altering the coastline. The sea takes on the motion of the earthquake and uses it to wreak havoc upon the land.

Another scene of evolving topography likewise exhibits liquids as the impetus of change. Discussing military maneuvers in northeastern Greece, Thucydides uses a description of the local geography to venture briefly into mythology. The Achelous River's discharge of silt creates mainland of the sea: μέγας ὢν ὁ ποταμὸς προσχοῖ αἰεὶ καὶ εἰσὶ τῶν νήσων αἳ ἠπείρωνται, ἐλπὶς δὲ καὶ πάσας οὐκ ἐν πολλῷ τινὶ ἂν χρόνῳ τοῦτο παθεῖν (2.102.3, "Being large, the river continually silts up, and some of the islands have become mainland, and the expectation is that they might all experience this soon"). The change that Thucydides describes is ongoing allowing

him to make a prediction on the geographical future of the region. He proceeds to tell the story of Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaraus: the oracle of Apollo tells Alcmaeon that, to free himself from the horrors that pursue him following his matricide, he must find and settle in a land, ἥτις ὅτε ἔκτεινε τὴν μητέρα μήπω ὑπὸ ἡλίου ἑωρᾶτο μηδὲ γῆ ἦν, ὡς τῆς γε ἄλλης αὐτῷ μεμιασμένης (2.102.5, "which, when he killed his mother, had not yet been seen by the sun nor was yet land, as any other land was polluted for him"). He discovers the newly formed land at the mouth of the Achelous, settles, and becomes king. His story sees him transitioning from a life of movement—ἀλᾶσθαι (2.102.5, "wandering")—to settlement— κατοικισθείς (2.102.6, "settled"). An inverse of the area struck by the tidal wave above, the local topography here ends up with more land and less sea. However, in both passages, it is the motion of the water that serves as the catalyst of change.

A third scene showcasing shifting waterscapes likewise encapsulates the motion and change inherent in liquid, this time with human manipulation. During the Athenian expedition to Egypt from 460 to 454, Thucydides illustrates a scene in which the water of the Nile is manipulated not by nature but by an army. These passages channel Herodotus who repeatedly shows humans manipulating waterscapes, especially around rivers (Herodotus 1.75.4-5, 1.185-6, 1.191).[284] Of particular note, Sesostris and Nitocris of Egypt both exploit the flow of the Nile. Intratextually, Thucydides uses this scene to foreshadow the calamitous Sicilian Expedition, another failure of Athenian imperial adventurism four decades later. He looks ahead implicitly, as Hornblower explains: "Th. here borrows Homer's technique of comparison, using similarities

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[284] See chapter two above. See also Xerxes' engagement with the Hellespont, Herodotus 7.35. This passage aside, Thucydides is far less apt to describe humans manipulating waterscapes. This passage, of course, also echoes Herodotus in its depiction of Greeks fighting Persians.

of phrasing instead of spelling the comparison out."[285] The link may be subtle, but the two passages are further connected by the theme of the Athenians' reliance on their ships and, therefore, liquid.

The success and failure of the Athenians' expedition to Egypt hinges on their navy's control of the Nile, just as the arc of the Sicilian Expedition follows Athenian control of liquids.[286] In conjunction with a later scene showing Athenian operations on the Strymon River (7.9), this Nilotic narrative works to erase the line between saltwater and freshwater. Any body of water that can buoy Athenian triremes, be it navigable rivers or the sea, lies open to Athenian imperialistic ambitions. The Athenians see initial success: ἀναπλεύσαντες ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἐς τὸν Νεῖλον τοῦ τε ποταμοῦ κρατοῦντες (104.2, "sailing up from the sea to the Nile, gaining control of the river"), they conquer two thirds of Memphis. Thucydides leaves the Egyptian narrative there while he recounts events around Greece. When he returns to the campaign in Egypt, control of the Nile has become control of Egypt: τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον ἐκράτουν τῆς Αἰγύπτου οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι (109.2, "At first the Athenians controlled Egypt"). The connection between control of the liquid river and control of the region is fundamental to understanding the campaign's turning point.

Megabazus son of Zopyrus, a Persian commander, enters the scene and turns the tide on the Athenians, relying upon the mutability of liquids. The Persians had been in control of Egypt until Inaros son of Psammetichus, a Libyan king, led a revolt and originally invited the Athenians in. Despite the initial success of the Athenians, Megabazus is able to make short work of them:

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[285] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.176.

[286] See chapter 5 below.

> ὃς ἀφικόμενος κατὰ γῆν τούς τε Αἰγυπτίους καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους μάχῃ ἐκράτησε καὶ ἐκ τῆς Μέμφιδος ἐξήλασε τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ τέλος ἐς Προσωπίτιδα τὴν νῆσον κατέκλῃσε καὶ ἐπολιόρκει ἐν αὐτῇ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ ἓξ μῆνας, μέχρι οὗ ξηράνας τὴν διώρυχα καὶ παρατρέψας ἄλλῃ τὸ ὕδωρ τάς τε ναῦς ἐπὶ τοῦ ξηροῦ ἐποίησε καὶ τῆς νήσου τὰ πολλὰ ἤπειρον, καὶ διαβὰς εἷλε τὴν νῆσον πεζῇ (1.109.4).
>
> Arriving by land, [Megabazus] beat the Egyptians and their allies in battle and drove the Greeks from Memphis. Finally, he closed them off on the island of Prosopitis. He besieged them there for a year and six months until, draining the canal and diverting the water in a different direction, he forced the ships onto dry land and turned much of the island into mainland. Crossing over, he captured the island with his infantry.

Thucydides marks the Persians fulfilling the role of land-based power (usually held by Sparta) in opposition to Athens' navy (κατὰ γῆν). He and his troops are able to retake the city of Memphis with relative ease, but they have trouble dislodging the Athenians from the island of Prosopitis. The island is, of course, protected by a ring of water and, therefore, Athens' navy. Rather than face the strength of the Athenians, Megabazus manipulates nature, diverting the water and turning the island into mainland. The juxtaposition of τὴν νῆσον ("the island") and πεζῇ ("with his infantry") at the end of the quotation drives home the irregularity of the scene. The crux of the entire campaign rests on this action, and the efficacy of Megabazus's tactic depends on the mutability of water. After a year and a half of unsuccessfully besieging the Athenians on Prosopitis, he realizes that changing the flow of the Nile remains his easiest recourse. Although the landscape changes inverse to the waterscape, the mutability of the water acts as the impetus for change, similar to the two examples above.

Naval Athenians and Land-based Spartans

Athens' power depends on its navy; Spartan strength resides in its land army. We have discussed the dichotomy between the two powers intermittently; it is time to lay out how stark and comprehensive Thucydides constructs this divide to be.

Thucydides introduces the land and sea dichotomy at the outset of his work: κατὰ γῆν… διὰ θαλάσσης (1.2.2, "on land…by sea"). Hornblower deems the placement of this phrase at the very beginning of the narrative "surely deliberate."[287] In his cursory outline of the Fifty Years later in the Archaeology, Thucydides fits the divide between land and sea onto the rivalry between the Spartans and Athenians: ὕστερον οὐ πολλῷ διεκρίθησαν πρός τε Ἀθηναίους καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους οἵ τε ἀποστάντες βασιλέως Ἕλληνες καὶ οἱ ξυμπολεμήσαντες. δυνάμει γὰρ ταῦτα μέγιστα διεφάνη. ἴσχυον γὰρ οἱ μὲν κατὰ γῆν, οἱ δὲ ναυσίν (1.18.2, "Not much later, the Greeks who revolted from the king and those who fought with them were divided between allies of the Athenians and allies of the Lacedaemoneans. For these were clearly the greatest in power. The one was strong on land and the other in ships"). The final sentence does not specify which polis was strong on which terrain, instead relying on a bare μέν… δέ construction. Thucydides assumes his audience is well aware of which one is which. This stark divide did not always exist between these two poleis; Athens *became* a sea power over time.[288] The historian depicts two Athenians as largely responsible for transitioning their polis from a land power into Greece's

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[287] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.9.

[288] This process is parallel to other poleis becoming naval powers, especially Syracuse (7.55.2, 8.96.5). Thucydides conceptualizes poleis as land powers by default; seapower requires change.

premier naval powerhouse, namely Themistocles and Pericles. He devotes considerable time showcasing each man's indispensability to this process.[289]

The dichotomy between land and sea plays out over the rest of the narrative. Scholars have applied the analogy of an elephant and a whale, the largest animal on land and sea respectively, to this war as well as other similar conflicts through history, both ancient and modern.[290] Peter Hunt explains the significance of the analogy: "Behind all the detail, the reader keeps in mind the essential point that this was a war between 'an elephant and a whale,' a land power and a sea power, neither willing to risk a decisive battle in the other's element."[291] This quotation comes from Hunt's chapter on the first ten years of the war, and the analogy is most relevant to this section of the narrative, when each side was more apt to remain within its respective domain. Later in the war, even when either side starts to venture out of its element, they do so tentatively and for the most part unsuccessfully, right up until the narrative cuts off in 411.

Although the geographic divide between the warring poleis undergirds the entire narrative, Thucydides mostly does not discuss it directly. In addition to the sentence from the Archaeology quoted above, a rare exception comes as he details the reversal in circumstance that occurs at Pylos in 425:

> ἐς τοῦτό τε περιέστη ἡ τύχη ὥστε Ἀθηναίους μὲν ἐκ γῆς τε καὶ ταύτης Λακωνικῆς ἀμύνεσθαι ἐκείνους ἐπιπλέοντας, Λακεδαιμονίους δὲ ἐκ νεῶν τε καὶ ἐς τὴν

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[289] For Themistocles, see 1.14.3, 1.90-91.7, 1.92.3-7. For Pericles, see 1.140-4, 2.60-4, 2.65.7. See chapter 3. Taylor 2010 also presents a comprehensive analysis of this process.

[290] Armitage 2007 provides an overview of the uses of this analogy. Bagnall 2006, 306; Hanson 2005, 6; Hunt 2017, 130-2 are examples of those who use it in regard to the Peloponnesian War.

[291] Hunt 2017, 132.

> ἑαυτῶν πολεμίαν οὖσαν ἐπ᾽ Ἀθηναίους ἀποβαίνειν· ἐπὶ πολὺ γὰρ ἐποίει τῆς δόξης ἐν τῷ τότε τοῖς μὲν ἠπειρώταις μάλιστα εἶναι καὶ τὰ πεζὰ κρατίστοις, τοῖς δὲ θαλασσίοις τε καὶ ταῖς ναυσὶ πλεῖστον προύχειν (4.12.3).
>
> At this juncture, chance would have it that the Athenians defended from the land —and Laconian land at that—against those attacking by sea and the Lacedaemonians disembarked from ships onto their own land, which was hostile, to attack the Athenians. For at that time it was a great part of the one's glory to be mainlanders above all and the strongest in infantry, and it was a great part of the other's to be seamen and most preeminent in ships.

The temporary exchange of tactics leads Thucydides to restate the default dynamic between the two powers. The word order in the first sentence, Ἀθηναίους μὲν ἐκ γῆς… Λακεδαιμονίους δὲ ἐκ νεῶν ("The Athenians from land… the Lacedaemonians from ships"), juxtaposes each side's soldiers with the terrain on which they are not usually accustomed to fighting, emphasizing the strangeness of the situation. The phrase τὴν ἑαυτῶν πολεμίαν οὖσαν ("their own land, which was hostile") likewise highlights the circumstance's convoluted nature. The final sentence which reiterates the normal state of affairs does not name either side; instead, like the passage from the Archaeology above, it employs a simple μέν… δέ construction. Given the context of the passage and the contents of the rest of the narrative, Thucydides feels confident that his readers are well aware of his meaning.

Active Athenians and Conservative Spartans

Thucydides depicts populations of poleis having distinct collective characters. The Athenians embody activity; the Spartans prove conservative. Their characteristics stem, at least in part, from their geographical domain. The Corinthians, a naval power like the Athenians, are depicted as actively coaxing their allies the Spartans into action (1.68-71). The Syracusans shift

from a people who, according to Hermocrates, have an ingrained sense of inactivity (6.34.4, τὸ ξύνηθες ἥσυχον) to one whose collective character resembles that of the Athenians (7.55.2, 8.96.5); this evolution occurs as the Syracusans develop a navy. Robert D. Luginbill explains, "For the Syracusans to challenge the Athenians on their own element in naval combat was risky… As the Syracusans begin to confront the Athenians with equal daring they must also begin to assume other Athenian attributes such as inventiveness and determination."[292] The risk of naval combat against the Athenians necessitates a flexibility and activeness that matches the Athenians'. Thucydides' Greeks, particularly the Athenians and Spartans, take on the characteristics of their preferred terrain. Athanassios Platias and Constantinos Koliopoulos depict their conflict in terms of solidity and motion. "This examination of the two contending states brings to light an important point: although Spartan power rested on *solid foundations*, it lacked the *dynamism* Athens possessed."[293] The motion of the Athenians matches that of the water which buoys their triremes; the Spartans are as solid as the ground upon which their hoplites tread. The effect is in line with the contemporary Hippocratic text *Airs Waters Places.* In the medical text, the author argues that one's natural environment has as effect on their constitution and health ([Hippocrates] *Airs Waters Places* 1-2, *passim*); in the *History*, Thucydides conflates Athenians with fluidity and Spartans with solidity as a literary device to sharpen the contrast between them.

Thucydides tinges his illustration of Athenian activity with hyperactivity. Although the historian only once uses the term πολυπραγμοσύνη (6.83.7, "hyperactivity"), Victor Ehrenberg

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[292] Luginbill 1999, 179.

[293] Platias and Koliopoulos 2010, 27, emphasis mine.

considers it an appropriate label for Thucydides' Athenians generally. He argues, "It can be said with very little exaggeration that to Thucydides πολυπραγμοσύνη was something particularly Athenian, the quality of which the Athenians themselves were proud and for which they were blamed by others."[294] Hyperactivity is the foundation for Athenian imperialism and expansionism: "Athenian imperialism was the main result of Athenian πολυπραγμοσύνη, or to put it the other way round, πολυπραγμοσύνη was the psychological basis of Athenian imperialism."[295] As the Athenians' motion resembles that of liquids, they are not constrained by fixed political borders. Ehrenberg utilizes their democratic government to emphasize his point: "Much of the restless audacity of the Athenian character as well as, on the other hand, of the personal ambitions of some of the leaders and the excitable fickleness of the masses, is expressed by πολυπραγμοσύνη."[296] Excitable fickleness could equally describe the flow of a young stream. Noting how the word πολυπραγμοσύνη occurs only once in Thucydides (6.87.3), Allison counter-argues, "the role assigned to the concept *polypragmosynē* in the *History* has been enlarged," in part by Ehrenberg.[297] However, the concept courses through the entire work, as detailed below, and culminates with the Athenian imperialist Euphemus uttering it aloud (6.87.3). πολυπραγμοσύνη, therefore, is a valid and important concept to consider beyond that single passage.

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[294] Ehrenberg 1947, 47.

[295] Ehrenberg 1947, 47.

[296] Ehrenberg 1947, 51.

[297] Allison 1976, 16.

In the previous chapter, we saw how Thucydides introduces Attica as a place erstwhile free from stasis and violence on account of the poverty of its soil (1.2). The rest of the narrative, I argued, marks a reversal in fortune from this advantageous position. This reversal in fortune, at a fundamental level, is a reversal in motion. The richness of the soil around Sparta resulted in αἰεὶ τὰς μεταβολὰς (1.2.3, "constant changes") in population; the fact that Attica's soil was not worth fighting over meant that the same inhabitants always lived there (1.2.5), constituting a type of motionlessness. The poleis' ultimate swapping of fortunes is predicated on their reversal in motion. The Spartan population settles. They draw up good laws (ηὐνομήθη), and they preserve the same constitution for about four-hundred years (1.18.1). This stability is associated with their status as land-based; the old Greek cities were built inland to protect against piracy (1.7). The Athenians, in opposition to Spartan *eunomia*, develop a fickle mob (e.g. 2.65.4, ὅπερ ὅμιλος) and a robust sense of activity. The Archeology cycles through a list of thalassocracies before running into the stability of Sparta (1.18.1), at which point Thucydides contrasts the Spartans and the Athenians (1.18.2, 1.19).

Thucydides' narrative on the Fifty Years develops Athenian activity.[298] As Foster explains, "the Pentekontaetia, that is, Thucydides' account of the approximately fifty years between the defeat of the Persian invasion and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, shows that Athenian warfare against both Greeks and non-Greeks vastly *accelerated* once Athens had proved *the power of her navy* in the Persian Wars."[299] Thucydides ties Athenian motion and expansion to its navy. Antonios Rengakos also highlights a sense of acceleration in the pace of

[298] See chapter three for a detailed analysis of this development.

[299] Foster 2010, 3, emphasis mine.

the narrative at this juncture: "The perceptibly accelerated tempo of the narrative in the second part of the *Pentekontaetia* (98-118) also serves to suggest that the *polypragmosynē* of Athens, the cause of Sparta's fear of increasing Athenian power (ἡ ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις) of the Peloponnesian War, is turning into a growing threat."[300] Through both content and form, Thucydides emphasizes Athenian motion.

The difference between the conservative Spartans and active Athenians undergirds τὴν ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν (1.23.6, "the truest cause") of the war. Before going into great detail about the machinations at Corcyra or the Athenians' siege of Potidaea, Thucydides dismisses these events and others in the run-up to the war as secondary to a fundamental dynamic: τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ, τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἡγοῦμαι μεγάλους γιγνομένους καὶ φόβον παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν (1.23.6, "I believe the truest cause of the war, albeit least evident in speech, is the Athenians becoming great and striking fear in the Spartans, forcing them to fight"). Thucydides bookends his section on the Fifty Years by reiterating this argument (1.88, 1.118.2). Fundamental to this understanding of the war are Athenian movement and a Spartan desire to maintain the status quo.

In his final articulation of the truest cause of the war, Thucydides most clearly details the elements of movement and aversion thereto. Having just recounted the Fifty Years, he summarizes this period succinctly. These decades are defined by Athenian action, οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι… ἐπὶ μέγα ἐχώρησαν δυνάμεως (1.118.2, "The Athenians advanced greatly in power"). The clause, ostensibly about the Athenian empire, takes a construction that pairs the Athenians as a people with a verb of motion. The Spartans, meanwhile, remain at rest: οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι…

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[300] Rengakos 2006, 291.

ἡσύχαζόν τε τὸ πλέον τοῦ χρόνου, ὄντες μὲν καὶ πρὸ τοῦ μὴ ταχεῖς ἰέναι ἐς τοὺς πολέμους, ἢν μὴ ἀναγκάζωνται (1.118.2, "The Spartans were inactive most of the time, being not quick to go to war even before, unless compelled to"). Thucydides' use of ἡσύχαζόν ("were inactive") recalls and affirms the Corinthians' characterization of the Spartans (1.69.5, 1.70.9). Circling back to the Athenians, Thucydides now pairs their power with a verb denoting change: ἡ δύναμις τῶν Ἀθηναίων σαφῶς ᾔρετο καὶ τῆς ξυμμαχίας αὐτῶν ἥπτοντο (1.118.2, "The power of the Athenians was clearly rising, and they were draining the Spartans' league"). The verb ἥπτοντο ("were draining," literally: "fastening to") can simply mean "attack" and that is how it is often translated here. However, this specific word for attack has a fundamental sense of attaching onto, portraying the Athenians as leeches of Spartan allies. Thucydides depicts the Spartans as hesitant even in their decision to commence war against the Athenians: οὐκέτι ἀνασχετὸν ἐποιοῦντο (1.118.3, "They could bear it no longer"). This war boils down to a battle of inertia between a polis in motion and one at rest, and it is this dynamic that sparks war in the first place.

Finally the theme of Athenian activity is developed explicitly and repeatedly by characters within the text who connect it with Athenian naval imperialism. These interwoven themes follow a trajectory similar to that of Thucydides' tyrant-polis metaphor. Regarding the latter, the Corinthians twice label Athens a tyrant-polis (1.122.3, 124.3); Pericles surprisingly accepts and appropriates the term for his own purposes (2.63.2); Cleon adopts and twists Pericles' usage (3.37.2); finally, the Athenian envoy Euphemus employs a similar argument (6.85.1). The Corinthians likewise first present the fused themes of Athenian activity and thalassocracy to Thucydides' audience (1.69.3-70.9). In the second half of these paired speeches, the Athenians agree with the Corinthians' characterization, taking it up for their own argument

(1.73.4-75.2). Finally, a string of Athenians further develop these interrelated themes, namely Pericles (2.62.2-64.4), the Athenians at Melos (5.97-9), Alcibiades (6.18.2-7), and Euphemus (6.82.3-87.3). After these themes are well developed by these (mostly Athenian) characters, in a break from the trajectory of the tyrant-polis metaphor, Thucydides himself endorses in narrative passages the rhetoric on Athenian activity and naval imperialism (7.55.2, 8.96.3-5).[301] Over the following five sections, I analyze the development of and relationship between these two themes.

Active Athenians and Conservative Spartans: The Corinthians and Athenians at Sparta

The Corinthians and Athenians at Sparta in 432/1 first contrast the collective characters of the Spartans and Athenians. The Corinthians begin, attempting to catalyze Spartan action by disparaging Spartan conservatism in the face of Athenian naval activity and expansion.

The Corinthian speaker paints the Athenians as in motion, meticulously expanding: καὶ ἐπιστάμεθα οἵᾳ ὁδῷ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ ὅτι κατ᾽ ὀλίγον χωροῦσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς πέλας (1.69.3, "And we know on what sort of path and why the Athenians advance piece by piece against their neighbors"). In response, he asserts, the Spartans do nothing: ἡσυχάζετε γάρ, μόνοι Ἑλλήνων, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, οὐ τῇ δυνάμει τινά, ἀλλὰ τῇ μελλήσει ἀμυνόμενοι (1.69.4, "For you, Lacedaemonians, alone among the Greeks remain inactive, defending against some enemy not with strength but with threat"). The contrast is then expressed more bluntly: οἱ μέν γε νεωτεροποιοὶ καὶ ἐπινοῆσαι ὀξεῖς καὶ ἐπιτελέσαι ἔργῳ ἃ ἂν γνῶσιν· ὑμεῖς δὲ τὰ ὑπάρχοντά τε σῴζειν καὶ ἐπιγνῶναι μηδὲν καὶ ἔργῳ οὐδὲ τἀναγκαῖα ἐξικέσθαι (1.70.2, "They are

[301] Morrison 2006, 275-6 discusses the relationship between speech and narrative regarding poleis' collective character.

revolutionary, quick to plan and execute that which they conceive. But you are quick to preserve what you already have and not to plan anything nor reach for the necessities with action"). The speaker juxtaposes Athenian changeability with Spartan conservatism. The Greek is difficult to parse: the δὲ clause (ὑμεῖς δὲ… ἐξικέσθαι) has a string of three infinitives but no main verb, leaving the reader to supply the construction from the μέν clause, where the adjective ὀξεῖς ("quick") introduces two infinitives. This leaves the rather jumbled thought of the Spartans being quick to preserve their status quo. Noticing the strangeness, E. C. Marchant calls the construction "sarcastic."[302] I argue that it is purposefully cumbersome. The syntax matches the world that the Corinthians describe. Later in the text, Thucydides uses the adjective ὀξεῖς to contrast the Athenians with the slow (βραδεῖς) Spartans, confirming it as a word befitting Athenian motion (8.96.5). In the Corinthians' argument, the Spartans (ὑμεῖς) struggle to smoothly appropriate the Athenians' adjective and accompanying construction just as they fail to emulate Athenian military and political quickness.

In a pithier formulation, the speaker adds: καὶ μὴν καὶ ἄοκνοι πρὸς ὑμᾶς μελλητὰς καὶ ἀποδημηταὶ πρὸς ἐνδημοτάτους (1.70.4, "Moreover, they unhesitating are set against you delaying, foreign adventurers against the most ardent isolationists"). ἄοκνοι ("unhesitating") is a negated adjective formed from the noun ὄκνος ("hesitation"). Motionlessness is inherent within hesitation so ἄοκνοι carries a sense of continual motion. Thucydides gets creative in the final juxtaposition (ἀποδημηταὶ πρὸς ἐνδημοτάτους), employing two hapaxes. ἀποδημηταὶ ("foreign adventurers," literally "away-from-homers") materializes only here in all of extant Greek literature, while ἐνδημοτάτους ("most ardent isolationists," literally "most-at-homers") appears

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302 Marchant 1905, 208.

in the superlative only here. Both of these words are based upon the noun δῆμος ("home," or "homeland"). The opposition primarily denotes the Athenians' willingness to be abroad versus the Spartans' conservatism yet also implies those off-of-the-landers against these most-on-landers. The conflation of the Athenians' deployment from Attica with their detachment from solid ground parallels Aristotle's binary of wetness and dryness: ὑγρὸν δὲ τὸ ἀόριστον οἰκείῳ ὅρῳ εὐόριστον ὄν, ξηρὸν δὲ τὸ εὐόριστον μὲν οἰκείῳ ὅρῳ, δυσόριστον δέ (Aristotle *Generation and Corruption* 2.2, "Wetness, not limited by its own boundary, is easy to limit, and dryness, easily limited by its own boundary, is difficult to limit"). Separated from Attica, the fluctuating, expanding nature of Athenian imperialism leaves the Athenians themselves in a fluid state.

Having detailed the Spartans' character and contrasted it with the Athenians' in multiple couplings, the Corinthians focus on the Athenians' character: ὥστε εἴ τις αὐτοὺς ξυνελὼν φαίη πεφυκέναι ἐπὶ τῷ μήτε αὐτοὺς ἔχειν ἡσυχίαν μήτε τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους ἐᾶν, ὀρθῶς ἂν εἴποι (1.70.9, "Therefore, if someone should sum them up as born neither to practice inaction nor to suffer other humans to, they would be correct"). The infinitive πεφυκέναι ("born") paints their character as inherent: The Athenians and Spartans differ at a fundamental level. Yet the Athenians will not allow the Spartans to remain in their natural state. Relentless Athenian motion catalyzes all that it touches. The reader is left to ask why, if this is true, the Corinthians need to convince the Spartans to get going. Together, two naval powers are battering the solidity of the Spartans; the rhetoric of the Corinthians and the imperialism of the Athenians work together to spur the Spartan audience.

A contingent of Athenians are conveniently at Sparta ready to respond. They do not wholly deny the Corinthians' characterization of them. They do find it necessary to account for

their naval predilection. Recounting their glory in the Persian Wars, they concede that fighting at sea was the second option: οὐχ ἱκανοὶ ὄντες κατὰ γῆν ἀμύνεσθαι (1.73.4, "Being incapable of defending ourselves on land"), they battled the Persians at sea. Although by the time of the Peloponnesian War the Athenians and naval power seem synonymous, the Athenians themselves remind us that their naval empire is only a few decades old; they also admit here that naval power proves secondary to land power. Nevertheless, after this admission, the way in which they describe their conduct in the Persian Wars emphasizes their association with naval power. A similar scene in Herodotus provides a striking contrast. Before the Battle of Plataea in 479, the Athenians and the Tegeans each try to convince the Spartans that they deserve to hold the left flank (a position of prestige second only to the Spartans' own on the right flank). These scenes overlap in a few key ways: in the second half of a paired speech, the Athenians outline their polis' past accomplishments in attempt to persuade a Spartan audience. In Herodotus, after noting a few accomplishments from a distant (today we may say, mythic) past, the Athenians claim that their victory at Marathon, a land battle more than a decade earlier, is reason enough for the Spartans to honor the Athenians (Herodotus 9.27.5). They make no mention of the Battle of Salamis, their pivotal and much more recent naval victory. While recounting their exploits in the Persian Wars, the Athenians in Thucydides, on the other hand, reverse the emphasis. After a short, eight-word clause on Marathon, the Athenians go into 281 words worth of detail on their victory at Salamis (1.73.4-75.1). The reversal in part marks a difference in context. The Athenians in Herodotus are arguing for a station of honor in an imminent land battle, whereas in Thucydides the Athenians are ultimately trying to justify their naval empire. The switch in emphasis also shows a greater comfort with naval power. It may not have been their first option

during the Persian Wars, but the Athenians of 432/1 are ready to defend their reliance on their navy.

Amid their navy-heavy retelling of the Persian Wars, the Athenians agree with the Corinthians' description of their restlessness, appropriating it as a positive descriptor. The Athenians recall the Persian Invasion of 480/79 as decided at sea: ἐν ταῖς ναυσὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὰ πράγματα ἐγένετο (1.74.1, "the events transpired on the ships of the Greeks"). The genitive τῶν Ἑλλήνων ("of the Greeks") falls between ταῖς ναυσὶ ("the ships") and τὰ πράγματα ("the events") going with either noun and linking them together. The Athenians attribute Greek victory to their three superlative contributions: they provided the most ships, the most intelligent general (that is, Themistocles), and προθυμίαν ἀοκνοτάτην (1.74.1, "the most unhesitating zeal"). With the adjective ἀοκνοτάτην ("most unhesitating"), the Athenians endorse and amplify the Corinthians' depiction of them as ἄοκνοι (1.70.4, "unhesitating"). The echo is sharp; these are the only two attestations of this adjective in all of Thucydides. The noun προθυμία ("zeal") proves particularly Athenian over the course of the work. The Athenians mean to highlight it, repeating it emphatically as the first word of the following sentence and then again at the beginning of the next paragraph (1.74.2, 1.75.1). Later in the work, the word denotes Athenian zeal against the Persians and again during the Sicilian campaign (1.92.1, 6.83.1). Alcibiades uses it of himself and later claims it for the Spartans when he is acting on their behalf (6.92.2, 8.12.1). We are not meant to take his rhetoric seriously in the latter instance. His mention of the Spartans' προθυμία proves jarring, but his Themistoclean attempts to arouse the Spartans' zeal (both in action and with words) mark a high point in Athenian προθυμία.

After recounting the glory of Salamis, the Athenians move on to the Fifty Years. They mark the pivotal transfer of rule from the Spartans to the Athenians as stemming from the conservatism of the former. They claim: καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴν τήνδε ἐλάβομεν οὐ βιασάμενοι, ἀλλ᾽ ὑμῶν μὲν οὐκ ἐθελησάντων παραμεῖναι πρὸς τὰ ὑπόλοιπα τοῦ βαρβάρου, ἡμῖν δὲ προσελθόντων τῶν ξυμμάχων καὶ αὐτῶν δεηθέντων ἡγεμόνας καταστῆναι (1.75.2, "And we attained this empire not by violence, but because you were unwilling to persist against the remainder of the barbarian and the allies approached us and requested us to become leaders"). The Athenians mask the violence inherent within their imperialism, but they do not hide the fact that their activeness undergirds it. Implied within the mention of the Spartans' unwillingness to act is the Athenians' own contrasting willingness. The Athenians do not deny and instead amplify the Corinthians' characterization of Athenian activeness in a thread that is then taken up by individual Athenians throughout the narrative.

Active Athenians and Conservative Spartans: Pericles and the Melian Dialogue

Pericles assumes the arguments of Athenian naval superiority and Athenian activeness. The Athenians of the Melian Dialogue describe a world in which the rhetoric from Pericles' final speech plays out.

Pericles details his vision of Athens in the first book and a half of the narrative. He completes the process begun by Themistocles decades earlier, rendering Athens a naval power, wholly reliant upon its ships. Thucydides shows Pericles as a general wielding Athens' naval might (1.111.2, 1.114, 1.116.1-117.2, 2.31.1); however, Pericles' vision of Athens primarily comes through his four (three direct, one indirect) speeches (1.140-144, 2.13, 2.35-46, 2.60-64).

His first speech steels the resolve of the Athenians for the imminent war by enumerating their impressive naval and financial standing (1.140-144). Pericles and the Athenians, unsurprisingly, value liquid currency, which was necessary to fund the activity of their navy, as opposed to more traditional, solid, and land-based forms of wealth.[303] Much of the speech is a defense of naval power: μέγα γὰρ τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης κράτος (1.143.5, "Rule of the sea is great"). The design of the Peloponnesian League and the Spartans' ties to their land lead to Spartan slowness, which make them no match for Athens' naval prowess (1.141.2-143). Fearing that the Spartans might leave his and only his estate unravaged, Pericles promises to donate it to the state should this happen (2.13). He, therefore, leads by example in giving up his land with his faith in the Athenian navy. The Funeral Oration, Pericles' second direct speech, constructs an encomium to Athens which is portrayed in an idealized light (2.35-46).

Pericles' final speech expands upon his thoughts on naval power expressed in his first speech and ties them in with the concept of Athenian activeness. In a surprising reversal from his message of consolidation and caution espoused in the first speech, Pericles now contends that the Athenians' superior navy grants them an unfettered rule over any sea that they wish:

> οἴεσθε μὲν γὰρ τῶν ξυμμάχων μόνων ἄρχειν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποφαίνω δύο μερῶν τῶν ἐς χρῆσιν φανερῶν, γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, τοῦ ἑτέρου ὑμᾶς παντὸς κυριωτάτους ὄντας, ἐφ᾽ ὅσον τε νῦν νέμεσθε καὶ ἢν ἐπὶ πλέον βουληθῆτε· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις τῇ ὑπαρχούσῃ παρασκευῇ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ πλέοντας ὑμᾶς οὔτε βασιλεὺς οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἔθνος τῶν ἐν τῷ παρόντι κωλύσει (2.62.2).
>
> You think that you rule only your allies, but I assert that of the two parts manifest for use, land and sea, you have the supreme authority over one, as far as you now control and if you want more. And there is no one—neither the Great King nor any present people—who will hinder you sailing with the existing armament of your navy.

[303] Kallet-Marx 1993, 6 *et passim*.

Just as seafaring shrinks the space between two points by allowing for faster travel, Pericles uses the Athenians' superiority at sea to collapse the marine world into Athenian control. This conceptualization of Athens aligns Pericles' perspective with the Corinthians' earlier characterization of the Athenians. He makes this argument seeing the depressed state of his compatriots. It is this message of limitless imperialism—and not his earlier message of consolidation—that his successors take up and expand upon.

Pericles combines this naval imperialistic message with a return to the Corinthians' construction of the dichotomy between active and inactive: καίτοι ταῦτα ὁ μὲν ἀπράγμων μέμψαιτ᾿ ἄν, ὁ δὲ δρᾶν τι καὶ αὐτὸς βουλόμενος ζηλώσει· εἰ δέ τις μὴ κέκτηται, φθονήσει (2.64.4, "And another thing, the stationary man may find fault with us, but the man who wishes to act himself will imitate us, and if someone does not possess what we have, he will envy us"). Rather than draw a divide between active Athenians and conservative Spartans like the Corinthians did, Pericles divides the world as reacting to the Athenians' activity in an active or conservative manner. The connection between this rhetoric and that of the Corinthians is the presupposition that the Athenians are active. Allison uses this passage as an example in her argument against the importance of *polypragmosyne*, that is hyperactivity. Since Thucydides contrasts ὁ μὲν ἀπράγμων ("the stationary man") with ὁ δὲ δρᾶν τι καὶ αὐτὸς βουλόμενος ("the man who wishes to act himself") instead of some form of *polypragmosyne*, she concludes that it is wrong to project *polypragmosyne* onto Thucydides' construction. She adds, "In this particular passage not only is the word 'polypragmosynē' absent, but the concept is also not in

evidence."[304] However, these passages on Athenian (hyper)activity are best understood together, wherein these early passages are building up to Euphemus' eventual use of the term *polypragmosyne* (6.87.3).

The Melian Dialogue is one of the several passages in which later Athenian speakers pick up where Pericles leaves off. Taylor explains the connection between the passages: "The campaign against Melos is not an attempt to *add* to the Athenians' *arche*, for Melos exists in the part of the world over which the Athenians already hold their *arche*. Athens is merely asserting a more direct control over Melos."[305] The content of the Athenians' arguments in the dialogue shows a reliance on Pericles' formulation of Athenian rule over all of the seas. The Athenians describe themselves as ναυκρατόρων (5.97, "masters of the seas"). They argue that their most frightening enemies are not mainlanders (like the Spartans) but islanders not subject to their direct control (like the Melians): οὗτοι γὰρ πλεῖστ᾽ ἂν τῷ ἀλογίστῳ ἐπιτρέψαντες σφᾶς τε αὐτοὺς καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐς προὖπτον κίνδυνον καταστήσειαν (5.99, "For these, turning especially to irrationality, would bring themselves and us to obvious danger"). The Melians are accused of irrationality for not seeing the world through an Athenian prism and charged with driving themselves and the Athenians towards conflict.

The context of the dialogue reveals the Athenians, earlier described as active, operating likewise. Up to 416, the Melians were a relatively small settlement that strove to remain neutral and posed no threat to Athens (5.84.2, 94, 98). Yet the Athenians aggressively invade the island of Melos and, eventually, execute the men and enslave the women and children, recolonizing the

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[304] Allison 1976, 13.

[305] Taylor 2010, 122.

island with their own (5.116.4). The impetus for this slaughter comes straight from Pericles' rhetoric. By viewing the entire marine world (including islands) as Athenian property, the Athenians are compelled to proactively attack not just those islanders warring with them but all islanders not yet directly subject to them. The Athenians' activity may have earlier fueled their initial construction of a navy and rebirth as a naval power; here their naval mindset demands and ultimately reinforces that same activity.

Active Athenians and Conservative Spartans: Alcibiades on Sicily

The mentality that sparked the massacre on Melos leads to the invasion of another island, Sicily. Thucydides launches into his long Sicilian narrative in the sentence following the description of the massacre and enslavement of the Melian population (6.1.1). In the lead-up to the Sicilian Expedition of 415-3, Thucydides uses paired speeches between Nicias and Alcibiades to outline the arguments against and for the expedition respectively (6.9-18). The expedition proves to be a calamity for the Athenians. Thucydides reminds his audience of Nicias' prescience by consistently echoing Nicias' rhetoric in the narrative sections of the text (e.g., 6.8.2, 6.43, 7.15.1).[306] Alcibiades vehemently defends the ships' imminent launch, winning over the assembly and articulating Athenian thinking in going to Sicily. He stations assurances of naval superiority amidst calls for expansion and descriptions of Athenian activity.

Alcibiades champions Athenian empire-building, rooting the present need for action within Athens' rampant naval rise. In his own rendition of the Fifty Years, he argues that the Athenians won their empire by constant motion and striking first:

[306] Stahl 1973, 65-66.

> τήν τε ἀρχὴν οὕτως ἐκτησάμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ ὅσοι δ᾽ ἄλλοι ἦρξαν, παραγιγνόμενοι προθύμως τοῖς αἰεὶ ἢ βαρβάροις ἢ Ἕλλησιν ἐπικαλουμένοις, ἐπεὶ εἴ γε ἡσυχάζοιεν πάντες ἢ φυλοκρινοῖεν οἷς χρεὼν βοηθεῖν, βραχὺ ἄν τι προσκτώμενοι αὐτῇ περὶ αὐτῆς ἂν ταύτης μᾶλλον κινδυνεύοιμεν. τὸν γὰρ προύχοντα οὐ μόνον ἐπιόντα τις ἀμύνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅπως μὴ ἔπεισι προκαταλαμβάνει (6.18.2).
>
> We and however many others ruled acquired an empire in this way: always zealously coming to assist those who call upon us, both Greeks and barbarians, since if all would keep quiet or make unnecessarily fine distinctions among those it was necessary to help, we would add little to our empire and would put it at greater risk. For one not only defends against a superior aggressor but preempts them attacking.

In the building up of their empire, Athenian action, παραγιγνόμενοι προθύμως ("zealously coming to assist"), won out over inaction, ἡσυχάζοιεν ("keep quiet"). προθύμως ("zealously") echoes the Athenians' evocation of their own προθυμίαν ("zeal") to the Spartans on the eve of the war (1.74.1). One way in which the Athenians refused to keep quiet was they did not φυλοκρινοῖεν οἷς χρεὼν βοηθεῖν ("make unnecessarily fine distinctions among those it was necessary to help"). Beneath this positive-sounding claim of broad inclusivity, Alcibiades depicts the Athenians as more active and consequently more violent and expansive. The final sentence's call for preemptive action exhibits Athenian motion in the face of quiet. He continues:

> καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ταμιεύεσθαι ἐς ὅσον βουλόμεθα ἄρχειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνάγκη, ἐπειδήπερ ἐν τῷδε καθέσταμεν, τοῖς μὲν ἐπιβουλεύειν, τοὺς δὲ μὴ ἀνιέναι, διὰ τὸ ἀρχθῆναι ἂν ὑφ᾽ ἑτέρων αὐτοῖς κίνδυνον εἶναι, εἰ μὴ αὐτοὶ ἄλλων ἄρχοιμεν. καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐπισκεπτέον ὑμῖν τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ ἥσυχον, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα ἐς τὸ ὁμοῖον μεταλήψεσθε (6.18.3)
>
> It is not possible to control to what extent we would like to rule, but it is a necessity, since indeed we have come thus far, to plot against some and not let go of others, because we risk being ruled by others ourselves unless we rule over others. And inaction is not to be considered from the same perspective by you as

> it is by others, unless you will also exchange your pursuits to something resembling theirs.

The impossibility of limiting Athenian boundaries depicts Athenian power as liquid-like, seeping and flowing on its own terms. Alcibiades, similar to other Athenian imperialists throughout the work, understands two binary options: rule or be ruled. He brings up τὸ ἥσυχον ("inaction") only as something to be spurned. His choice of the noun ἐπιτηδεύματα ("pursuits") again recalls the Athenians at Sparta who pejoratively used it to refer to the Spartans': ἀρχαιότροπα ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα (1.71.2, "your old-fashioned pursuits").[307]

Soon thereafter, Alcibiades segues from the theme of Athenian activity to Athenian naval strength. Having already contextualized the need for action within past Athenian activity and overarching Athenian activeness, Alcibiades implores his audience, ποιώμεθα τὸν πλοῦν (6.18.5, "Let us sail"). This brief exhortation reminds us that the action Alcibiades is clamoring for is naval in nature. This circumstance leads, according to Alcibiades, not to precarity but security: τὸ δὲ ἀσφαλές, καὶ μένειν, ἤν τι προχωρῇ, καὶ ἀπελθεῖν, αἱ νῆες παρέξουσιν. ναυκράτορες γὰρ ἐσόμεθα καὶ ξυμπάντων Σικελιωτῶν (6.18.5, "The ships will provide our security, both remaining, if we meet with some success, and departing. For we will be masters of the sea over all of the Sicilians"). ναυκράτορες ("masters of the sea") ties Alcibiades' rhetoric to the Melian Dialogue, in which the Athenians employ the same word. Taylor asserts, "The echo suggests that the Sicilian Expedition was fueled by the same insistence that no land is 'unconnected' to Athens if it is connected to the sea and that Athens rules the sea."[308] In the narrative sections of the text,

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[307] Cf. Pericles' use of this noun in the Funeral Oration, 2.37.2.

[308] Taylor 2010, 144.

Thucydides illustrates the changeability and perils of the sea. At this inflection point, he has Alcibiades cite Athenian naval superiority as stable and as the Athenians' source of security.

Having hit upon Athenian naval strength, Alcibiades returns to the theme of Athenian activity: καὶ τὴν πόλιν, ἐὰν μὲν ἡσυχάζῃ, τρίψεσθαί τε αὐτὴν περὶ αὑτὴν ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλο τι, καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐγγηράσεσθαι, ἀγωνιζομένην δὲ αἰεὶ προσλήψεσθαί τε τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὸ ἀμύνεσθαι οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ᾽ ἔργῳ μᾶλλον ξύνηθες ἕξειν (6.18.6, "And the polis, if it is at rest, will wear itself out just as anything else, and its knowledge of all things will grow stale. But the polis constantly contending will gain experience, and defense will become customary not in word but rather in deed"). So in step with motion is the Athenian orator and soon-to-be-traitor that he cannot fathom a polis not imperialistically expanding or mired in stasis. He paints motion as usefully experience-building and offense as necessary for defense. He continues, concluding his speech with a synopsis of his argument on the benefits of and necessity for activity: παράπαν τε γιγνώσκω πόλιν μὴ ἀπράγμονα τάχιστ᾽ ἄν μοι δοκεῖν ἀπραγμοσύνης μεταβολῇ διαφθαρῆναι, καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀσφαλέστατα τούτους οἰκεῖν οἳ ἂν τοῖς παροῦσιν ἤθεσι καὶ νόμοις, ἢν καὶ χείρω ᾖ, ἥκιστα διαφόρως πολιτεύωσιν (6.18.7, "I know absolutely that a city which is not inactive would be very quickly ruined by a change to inactivity, and among humans, those manage most securely who govern their city the least differently from their present customs and laws, even if those are for the worse"). With Nicias calling for a halting of proceedings regarding Sicily, Alcibiades depicts inaction as dangerous and un-Athenian. The mobilization and launching of this colossal fleet are to him in line with Athens' nature. This includes not only the Fifty Years as outlined by him but also the rhetoric of the Athenians at Sparta, Pericles, and the Athenians at Melos.

Active Athenians and Conservative Spartans: Euphemus at Camarina

By the end of their first campaigning season in Sicily, in the winter of 415/4, things have not gone as planned for the Athenians. Westward progress has been slower than expected; Alcibiades, the campaign's champion and articulator, has defected to Sparta; the initial shock and awe from the magnitude of the armada have waned without decisive victories. Still, events have not yet completely turned on them; the campaign's success still hangs in the balance. In a set of paired speeches, Thucydides exhibits the Athenians and Syracusans (Athens' primary antagonists on Sicily) appealing to the Camarinaeans, the inhabitants of a polis on the southern shore of Sicily. The Athenian Euphemus, whose name roughly translates to *Well-Spoken*, and Hermocrates make the case for their respective poleis. Euphemus takes the themes of Athenian naval supremacy and activity from previous Athenian speakers to their logical conclusions.

By this point in the narrative, the events of the Fifty Years have been told by Thucydides as narrator twice (1.18, 1.89-118), the Athenians at Sparta (1.74-7), Pericles (2.36), and Alcibiades (6.18.2-3). Seeming to respond to the earlier lengthy accounts, Pericles offers a *praeteritio*. Alcibiades likewise keeps his comments on these decades concise. With the reader well briefed on these events, Euphemus discusses the Fifty Years, offering analysis more than narration: καὶ μετὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ ναῦς κτησάμενοι τῆς μὲν Λακεδαιμονίων ἀρχῆς καὶ ἡγεμονίας ἀπηλλάγημεν (6.82.3, "And after the Persian Wars, acquiring ships we escaped from the rule and hegemony of the Spartans"). He assigns the Athenian ships agency in allowing the Athenians to ward off Spartan influence and carve out a domain of their own. He cites Athenian naval supremacy together with Athenian readiness for action as earning the Athenians the right to rule:

ἀνθ᾽ ὧν ἄξιοί τε ὄντες ἅμα ἄρχομεν, ὅτι τε ναυτικὸν πλεῖστόν τε καὶ προθυμίαν ἀπροφάσιστον παρεσχόμεθα ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας (6.83.1, "Therefore, we are worthy to rule because we provided both the largest fleet and the most ready zeal for the Greeks"). The construction recalls the argument of the Athenians at Sparta that the Athenians' superlative fleet, zeal, and commander contributed to victory in the Persian Wars (1.74.1). The repetition of the formula sans commander hints at the recent departure and treachery of the Sicilian campaign's rightful commander. This acts as a subtle foreboding for the expedition and connects Alcibiades with the commander from the original construction, his slippery and treacherous predecessor Themistocles.[309]

Euphemus builds upon earlier Athenian constructions of activity and claims of empire as the only alternative to subjugation. Justifying Athenian presence in faraway Sicily, he asserts, φαμὲν γὰρ ἄρχειν μὲν τῶν ἐκεῖ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπακούωμεν ἄλλου, ἐλευθεροῦν δὲ τὰ ἐνθάδε, ὅπως μὴ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν βλαπτώμεθα, πολλὰ δ᾽ ἀναγκάζεσθαι πράσσειν, διότι καὶ πολλὰ φυλασσόμεθα (6.87.2, "We say we rule over those there (in Greece) so that we may not be subjugated by another, and we liberate those here (on Sicily) so that we may not be harmed by them. We are compelled to do much since we are on guard against much"). He relegates talk of ruling (ἄρχειν) to Greece, defining Athenian actions in Sicily conversely as liberating (ἐλευθεροῦν). Inherent in all of this is constant motion. The imminent use of πολυπραγμοσύνη ("hyperactivity") is set up here with the etymologically related phrase πολλὰ…πράσσειν ("to do much"). His mention of hyperactivity marks an attempt to sweeten his offer, an advertisement of Athenian services:

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309 For Themistocles' slipperiness, see Herodotus 8.5, 8.75, 8.109-10; Thucydides 1.90-93.2. For his treachery, see Herodotus 8.109-10; Thucydides 1.136-8.

καὶ ὑμεῖς μήθ᾿ ὡς δικασταὶ γενόμενοι τῶν ἡμῖν ποιουμένων μήθ᾿ ὡς σωφρονισταί, ὃ χαλεπὸν ἤδη, ἀποτρέπειν πειρᾶσθε, καθ᾿ ὅσον δέ τι ὑμῖν τῆς ἡμετέρας πολυπραγμοσύνης καὶ τρόπου τὸ αὐτὸ ξυμφέρει, τούτῳ ἀπολαβόντες χρήσασθε, καὶ νομίσατε μὴ πάντας ἐν ἴσῳ βλάπτειν αὐτά, πολὺ δὲ πλείους τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ ὠφελεῖν (6.87.3)

> And do not become anything akin to judges of our actions nor anything akin to moderators, which is already difficult. Do not attempt to dissuade us, but partake in and utilize however much of our hyperactivity and manner benefits you. Know that these do not harm all equally, but actually help a great majority of the Greeks.

Euphemus constructs Athenian hyperactivity as a cornerstone of their empire and conveniently as a benefit to their subjects. Allison's argument that, since this is the only attestation of πολυπραγμοσύνη ("hyperactivity") in Thucydides, it is not an important theme in this work fails to note the extensive foundations of Euphemus' rhetoric.[310] The Athenian envoy is in conversation with earlier Athenian (and Corinthian) descriptions of the Athenians on the move. Thucydides constructs his text in general and the speeches in particular with frequent intratextual links, callbacks, and foreshadowings. Similar to earlier speeches, Euphemus depicts the Athenians as hyperactive and this hyperactivity as wedded to the naval nature of their empire.

Active Athenians and Conservative Spartans: The Narrator Weighs In

Thus far, Athenian activity and its connection to Athens' naval empire have been primarily developed by speakers within the narrative. These speakers are mostly Athenian, with the exception of the Corinthians who first extensively articulated these themes and represent not the Athenians' main antagonist but a major naval opponent. Thucydides has used each speech to

[310] Allison 1976, 10-11, 15.

build upon the last; finally, Thucydides as narrator weighs in, endorsing the themes as articulated across these speeches.

After a Syracusan naval victory over the Athenians in 413, Thucydides himself discusses poleis' collective character. The fact that this topic is raised at a turning point in naval superiority connects it to the theme of naval efficacy. Foreshadowing the imminent destruction of the Athenian invading force, Thucydides notes that the poleis on Sicily are particularly formidable against the Athenians since they are ὁμοιοτρόποις (7.55.2, "similar in character [to the Athenians]"). Coming shortly after the Syracusan victory and in conjunction with what Thucydides says later (8.96.5, see below), it is clear that he is primarily talking about the Syracusans here. He goes on to list attributes that make the Sicilians so difficult to face, beginning with another comparison to the Athenians. He calls their cities δημοκρατουμέναις, ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτοί (7.55.2, "democratic, just as they themselves were"). Democracy, elsewhere seen as a liability, here makes these Sicilian poleis more worthy opponents. Thucydides argues that the spread of power within Sicilian poleis hinders Athenian machinations (7.55.2).

Thucydides picks up the theme after the Sicilian narrative. In 411, the Spartans score a shocking naval victory off Eretria, leading almost all of Euboea to revolt against Athens. This poses a massive danger for the Athenians. Thucydides takes his readers through the aftermath from the perspective of the Athenians: μάλιστα δ᾽ αὐτοὺς καὶ δι᾽ ἐγγυτάτου ἐθορύβει, εἰ οἱ πολέμιοι τολμήσουσι νενικηκότες εὐθὺ σφῶν ἐπὶ τὸν Πειραιᾶ ἐρῆμον ὄντα νεῶν πλεῖν· καὶ ὅσον οὐκ ἤδη ἐνόμιζον αὐτοὺς παρεῖναι. ὅπερ ἄν, εἰ τολμηρότεροι ἦσαν, ῥᾳδίως ἂν ἐποίησαν, (8.96.3-4, "The most serious and nearest threat rocking them was that their victorious enemies would dare to sail straightaway against their Piraeus now devoid of ships, and they believed they

would be present almost immediately, which they easily would have accomplished, if they were more daring"). By detailing the situation through the eyes of the Athenians, Thucydides highlights the stark contrast between the two poleis. The Athenians await an attack which they believe is imminent because had roles been reversed they, of course, would attack. Thucydides adds his own disapproval of Spartan hesitancy, predicting Spartan success had they been more daring and attacked.

The historian utilizes the Spartans' unwillingness to capitalize on this victory to make a general point about the contrasting natures of the two poleis:

> ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ Λακεδαιμόνιοι Ἀθηναίοις πάντων δὴ ξυμφορώτατοι προσπολεμῆσαι ἐγένοντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις πολλοῖς. διάφοροι γὰρ πλεῖστον ὄντες τὸν τρόπον, οἱ μὲν ὀξεῖς, οἱ δὲ βραδεῖς, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπιχειρηταί, οἱ δὲ ἄτολμοι, ἄλλως τε καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ναυτικῇ πλεῖστα ὠφέλουν. ἔδειξαν δὲ οἱ Συρακόσιοι· μάλιστα γὰρ ὁμοιότροποι γενόμενοι ἄριστα καὶ προσεπολέμησαν. (8.96.5).
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> Not only on this one occasion, but on many others, the Lacedaemonians proved to be the most convenient enemy of all for the Athenians to wage war against. For they are the most different in manner: the one quick, the other slow. The one enterprising; the other risk-averse. Especially in their naval empire, the Athenians benefitted most. And the Syracusans made this clear: They became especially similar in character to the Athenians and fought best against them.

In case the context of the discussion, again after a pivotal naval battle, does not make it sufficiently clear, Thucydides explicitly confirms the connection between the Athenians' quick nature and their navy. The mention of the Syracusans connects this circumstance to the Syracusans' previous ability to follow up on their victories and ultimately defeat the Athenian forces on Sicily. The contrasting pairings recall the Corinthians' original description of slow Spartans and quick Athenians (1.69.3-70.9). The narrator seemingly endorses the views of the Corinthians and the various Athenian speakers throughout the narrative who have discussed these

themes. However, the passage can be deceptive. As Taylor notes, "If readers did not know the outcome of the war, they would judge from this passage that the Spartans will not defeat the Athenians."[311] Yet the Spartans do ultimately defeat the Athenians. Quickness and willingness to act can lead to some victories, but they do not bring security. They can cause dangerous overreach, such as the Sicilian Expedition, and they—if the Athenians themselves are to be believed—create a restless state of affairs which calls for continued motion *ad infinitum*.[312]

Loquacious Athenians and Laconic Spartans

Thucydides thematizes the fluid nature of spoken language to sharpen the dichotomy between liquids and solids at the heart of his characterization of the Athenians and Spartans. His depiction of language parallels contemporary and more recent characterizations of language as in flux. In the fifth and fourth centuries, philosophers debated whether *nomos* or *physis* dictates linguistic meaning, with those advocating for *nomos* highlighting an inherent flux in language.[313]

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[311] Taylor 2010, 264.

[312] See Saxonhouse 2017.

[313] For this rivalry, see Plato *Gorgias* 482e, *Republic* 1.338d-354c, *Protagoras* 320c-328d. See also Schmitz 1988.

More recently, French linguists have detailed the slippage and fluidity of language.[314] Others have described the flux of language under the term elasticity.[315] Thucydides likewise develops the flux of spoken language through his speeches and his narrative on the Corcyrean stasis (3.82.4).

Although Thucydides asserts a timelessness to his own written words, calling his work a κτῆμά ἐς αἰεὶ (1.22.4, "a possession for all time"), within his work, he meticulously constructs the many direct speeches to showcase spoken language's malleability, flexibility, and fluidity. Hornblower shows how Thucydides' speeches arouse a general distrust in language. He looks to Athens' ever-slippery upstart: "The word 'patriotism,' rare in Thucydides, is put into the mouth of Alcibiades at Sparta, a man to whom the word meant less than to virtually any other

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[314] Citing the *mouvement de temporalisation*, an understanding of time in conversation with Heraclitus, Jacques Derrida conceptualizes *différance* as pivotal to his project of *déconstruction*, Derrida 1967, 1968. (For Derrida and Heraclitus, see O'Connell, 2006.) Language, consequentially, operates in a state of constant flux. John D. Caputo argues Derrida's *déconstruction* shows texts (among other things) to "exceed the boundaries they currently occupy… Every time," he asserts, "you try to stabilise the meaning of a thing, try to fix it in its missionary position, the thing itself, if there is anything at all to it, slips away," Caputo 1996, 31. Jacques Lacan takes up Derrida's conceptualization of the flux of language and the resultant semantic slippage. He argues, "We are forced, then, to accept the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier - which Ferdinand de Saussure illustrates with an image resembling the wavy lines of the Waters in miniatures from manuscripts of *Genesis*; a double flux marked by fine streaks of rain," Lacan 1977, 154, trans. Sheridan; Muller and Richardson 1982, 16.

[315] At the turn of the twentieth century, Arthur W. Machen Jr.'s article "The Elasticity of the Constitution" grapples with "the problems which arise when a constitution, the letter of which remains unchanged, is to be applied by the courts to an altered state of facts," Machen 1900, 200. Developing her theory on elastic language, Grace Q. Zhang lists three principles of (linguistic) elasticity: fluidity, stretchability, and strategy, and she elucidates the importance of the first principle: "Fluidity indicates that language itself is rubber-band-like elastic. If language were not fluid, the other two principles would not exist," Zhang 2015, 57. To Zhang, elasticity is a primal feature of language, and fluidity, in turn, is a primary aspect of elasticity.

Greek."[316] Hornblower adds, "The speeches often have a subversive effect."[317] The historian carefully weaves direct speech and narrative together for many narratological and thematic ends. Among them, the consistent unreliability of speeches highlights the shortcomings and instability of spoken language.

Beyond the function of his speeches, Thucydides addresses the slippage of language after his description of the Corcyrean stasis.[318] The stasis spreads from Corcyra to engulf the entire Greek world as poleis splinter into pro-Spartan, oligarchic and pro-Athenian, democratic factions. Thucydides employs the verb ἐκινήθη (3.82.1, "[the Greek world] was set in motion") to denote this spreading, connecting the phenomenon of stasis to motion, despite the word's etymology.[319] After calling war βίαιος διδάσκαλος (3.82, "a violent teacher"), Thucydides details, among other evils, a slippage in values: καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξίωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ δικαιώσει (3.82.4, "And they exchanged at will the accustomed valuation of actions in words"). He lists off many valuations which come to be considered their opposite, starting with reckless daring, which is now selfless bravery. Unlike after the Euboean revolt where Thucydides expresses the disadvantages of Spartan conservatism (8.96.5), these slippages showcase the dangers of quickness and motion: μέλλησις δὲ προμηθὴς δειλία εὐπρεπής… τὸ δ'

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[316] Hornblower 1987, 68.

[317] Hornblower 1987, 69.

[318] Cf. the fluidity of stasis in Alcaeus 6, 326 (Campbell) and Theognis (Edmonds), 669-82, analyzed in chapter 1 above. Cf. also Price 2001, 79-126.

[319] The noun στάσις ("stasis") is connected to the verb ἵσταμαι ("to stand") which, of course, implies a lack of movement. However, the use of στάσις to mean "civil strife" is a later usage stemming from the definition "faction," which, in turn, comes from "party" and "state." Along the way, the word departs from its original sense of motionlessness. For Thucydides usage of ἐκινήθη ("to set in motion") here, see above and Loraux 2009 [1984], 265.

ἐμπλήκτως ὀξὺ ἀνδρὸς μοίρᾳ προσετέθη (3.82.4, "prudent delay is considered specious cowardice… rash quickness is attributed to a man's duty"). The breakdown of society witnessed in stasis leads to fluidity in the relationship between signifier and signified. While explaining this slippage, Thucydides characterizes the societal breakdowns as favoring hasty motion and eschewing prudent conservatism. Linguistic flux parallels social fluidity, together constituting the potential damage of stasis.[320]

Kopp shows how Thucydides uses this passage to set up the fluidity of his own language. He analyzes the phrase τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης κράτος (1.43.5, 8.46.1, "seapower") throughout the work, and instead of stability befitting τὸ κράτος ("power"), he notices a flux of meaning consistent with ἡ θάλασσα:

> It will turn out that Thucydides by no means understands this central and also (in the reception of his text) enormously prominent formulation as a valid axiom with a somewhat 'static' meaning, but rather - per another passage (3.82.4), he formulates insight into the situationally relative context-dependency of word usage - ascribing a dramatic 'fate' that spans the entire work.[321]

He means fate (*Schicksal*) in the negative sense; throughout the narrative, doom lurks over Athenian seapower. To this point, the cycle of thalassocracies in the Archaeology set up the anticipation of an Athenian fall (1.1-19). He goes on to call the trajectory of this phrase a

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[320] Cf. Pindar *Paean* 9 where stasis is linked to natural phenomena featuring liqudity; Loraux 2009 [1984], 264.

[321] "Dabei wird sich herausstellen, dass Thukydides diese zentrale und auch in der Rezeption seines Textes ungeheuer prominente Formulierung keineswegs als ein gültiges Axiom mit gleichsam >statischer< Bedeutung begreift, sondern ihr - gemäß seiner an anderer Stelle (3,82,4) formulierten Einsicht in die situativ bedingte Kontextabhängigkeit von Wortverwendungen - ein das gesamte Werk umspannendes dramatisches >Schicksal< zuschreibt," Kopp 2017, 47.

"decay-curve" (*Verfallskurve*), which encapsulates the diachronic change of Thucydides' own language.[322]

Nicole Loraux uses the implications of the slippage in language spurred by the Corcyrean stasis to make a weighty assertion. She explains how the content of this passage comes up against Thucydides' perceived objectivism: "Thucydides does not belong—is perceived as not belonging—to one side or the other; in regard to values, however, he has chosen his side, that of tradition against change. The problem is that in his work tradition and change have been tentatively attached to the names of Sparta and Athens respectively."[323] Her conceptualization of tradition and change match the binary of solid Sparta and liquid Athens that this chapter has developed. She concludes that Thucydides is "neither on one side or the other, but all the same on the side of tradition."[324] Her careful wording is warranted. Thucydides never openly advocates for the Spartans or Athenians, but throughout the work, he shows a preference for solidity, as do the Spartans.[325]

Thucydides' characterization of the Athenians as particularly loquacious and the Spartans as especially laconic, coupled with his depiction of language as fluid, further associates the Athenians with liquidity and the Spartans with solidity. Thucydides develops this aspect of the language divide in several ways. On a basic level, in a narrative focusing on two major powers, Athenian speakers give almost twice as many direct speeches as Spartan speakers (sixteen to

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[322] Kopp 2017, 47

[323] Loraux 2009 [1984], 280.

[324] Loraux 2009 [1984], 280.

[325] Edmunds 1975, 148, 188 argues for Thucydides having Spartan proclivities.

nine).[326] This asymmetry continues past the Athenians and Spartans to other land and sea powers. Of the fourteen direct speeches given by individuals not from Athens or Sparta, ten are spoken by those from poleis that are primarily naval powers.[327] The divide gets even more interesting when we look beyond the speakers to the audiences of the direct speeches. Speakers assume Spartan audiences to be less apt to listen to long speeches *and* long sentences. Antonis Tsakmakis shows that "speeches addressed to a Spartan audience have a lower average of words per period: Archidamus (18.7 words per period), Sthenelaïdas (19.1), Mytilenaeans (20.3), Corinthians (20.7), Alcibiades (21.3); the average number in the total corpus of speeches is about 24."[328] The speakers tone down the verbosity and complexity of their speeches in other ways while speaking to a Spartan audience:

> Alcibiades' Spartan speech is carefully structured, with audience-friendly indications of its parts, heading, summaries, and transitions. Its three parts are equal in length, and the central part is subdivided into two equal sections. Alcibiades' cooperative stance unveils the medium of rhetoric to appease the well-known mistrust of his Spartan audience toward rhetoric. In contrast, Brasidas' speech to the Acanthians (4.89–92) seeks to achieve the opposite aim: to overwhelm the audience and make them surrender.[329]

Spartan envoys in 425, similar to Brasidas, depart from simplicity and brevity as they speak at length in front of an Athenian audience (4.17-20). According to the analysis of E. D. Francis, this speech features "sustained syntactic complexity" and constitutes the Spartans' "one national attempt at rhetorical sophistry."[330]

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[326] Strassler 2008 [1996], 695.

[327] Strassler 2008 [1996], 695.

[328] Tsakmakis 2017, 278. See also Debnar 2001.

[329] Tsakmakis 2017, 278-9.

[330] Francis 1991, 205, 212; Hornblower 1991-2008, 2.172.

Two passages reinforce these characterizations of the Spartans as laconic and the Athenians as loquacious. Both include a feature exceedingly rare in Thucydides, humor. First, after the Corinthian and Athenian paired speeches at Sparta in 432/1 comes a pair of Spartan speeches. Archidamus warns his fellow Spartans against the war, and Sthenelaidas makes a forceful argument for war. The latter's speech is quintessential laconicism: short and brusque. His pithy opening sentence reads: τοὺς μὲν λόγους τοὺς πολλοὺς τῶν Ἀθηναίων οὐ γιγνώσκω (1.86.1, "I do not understand the long speeches of the Athenians"). The Corinthians and Archidamus also just gave relatively long speeches, but he singles out the Athenians as the antithesis to his own brevity. The complexity of the Athenians' statements are lost on Sthenelaidas, he would have us believe, so their contents are irrelevant. Thucydides himself adds a quip in his introduction to Brasidas's first speech, the one in which Tsakmakis argues Brasidas attempts to overwhelm his audience, the Acanthians. Priming the reader for the speech, Thucydides says of Brasidas : ἦν δὲ οὐδὲ ἀδύνατος, ὡς Λακεδαιμόνιος, εἰπεῖν (4.84.2, "He was not an incapable speaker, for a Spartan"). Unsurprisingly, Brasidas, an Athenian's Spartan, joins two Athenians, Pericles and Nicias, as the only speakers to give more than two direct speeches over the course of the narrative. To say Thucydides is not prone to comedy would be a gross understatement, yet the idea of the laconic Spartan is so ingrained within his perspective that he bases two jokes on it.

The flux of language is, of course, far from an unmitigated evil for Thucydides. Words are his own medium of choice. Within his eulogy for Pericles, he admires the statesman's ability to steer τὸ πλῆθος (2.65.8-9, the many), a particularly volatile group, with words. Detailing the origins of sophistry, the third century CE self-styled sophist Philostratus writes that σχεδίων δὲ

πηγὰς λόγων οἱ μὲν ἐκ Περικλέους ῥυῆναι πρώτου φασίν (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 1, "They say the founts of extemporaneous speech flow first from Pericles"). In this construction, too, the flowing of Pericles' liquid language marks a positive for the author. Language's fluctuations can lead to slippage and deception, but fluidity is also what renders language effective. Throughout the narrative, Thucydides shows an awareness of the flexibility and potential for slippage inherent to language. The Spartans' laconicism strengthens their conservatism, as the Athenians' loquaciousness accentuates their liquidity.

Thucydides connects liquids to motion and change in line with his predecessors and contemporaries. His understanding of the activity of liquids seeps into his characterization of the Athenians as he contrasts them with the Spartans. He goes to great lengths throughout his narrative to depict the Peloponnesian War as a conflict between two antitheses. Scholars have long analyzed the divide in preferred domains between the Athenians, who feel more at home on the sea (7.70.8, *passim*), and the Spartans, who possess the strongest land army (1.18.1-2, *passim*). This chapter has demonstrated that Thucydides makes the divide between these two poleis even more fundamental. The Athenians exude fluidity in the speed of their triremes, the (hyper)activity of their imperialism, and the loquaciousness of their speakers. The Spartans exemplify solidity in the sturdiness of their phalanxes, the conservatism of their decision-making, and their disdain for verbosity.

CHAPTER 5

Liquid as Destruction in Thucydides

Thucydides showcases the destructiveness of liquids in a number of different ways throughout his narrative. Tidal waves and storm surges sink ships. Human bodies melt away under the plague. The sea rots Athenian triremes at sea for too long. The flux of river water ends Athenian expeditions in Egypt and Sicily. Liquids play a role in repeated scenes of Athenian bodies denied proper burial. Intriguingly, later (and largely dubious) biographies of Thucydides, trying to account for the abrupt end of his narrative, show him dying an untimely death. These do not agree on the type of death, but they all have him succumbing to some sort of liquid destruction: dying by poison, disease, or shipwreck.[331] Perhaps it is a coincidence, but the death of Thucydides in these biographies parallels the contents of his narrative. The most common victims of the destruction wreaked by liquids within his text are Athenians. Scenes of this type of destruction cluster around the two lowest points for the Athenians within the narrative: the plague and the Sicilian Expedition. I argue that Thucydides constructs these scenes to illustrate the Athenians' foolhardiness in predicating their empire on the liquid of the sea.[332]

The argument that Thucydides develops a theme of destructive liquids stands in opposition to the common reading of the *History*. Scholars tend not to talk about liquids in general in Thucydides, but there are plenty of analyses on Thucydides' perspective on the sea. Scholars often overlook or downplay his depiction of the perils and destructiveness of the sea.

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[331] Flory 1993, 114. For the liquid nature of disease, see below.

[332] For Athens' reliance on the sea, see 1.18.2, 1.93.4-7, 1.143.5, 2.62, *passim*. Also see chapter 3.

Instead, they misread the sea as a safe place for power accumulation and empire building within his narrative. Although the historiographic section of chapter three covers these arguments, it would be beneficial to review two prime examples. In her influential work on imperialism in Thucydides, de Romilly brings in the Old Oligarch to complement Thucydides and stress the security that the sea represents to both of these authors: "The mastery of the sea, in fact, allows a city to resist all attacks: since it is at home on the sea, it can harm others when and where it chooses without exposing itself to counterattacks ([Xenophon] *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.4-5)."[333] This brings her to the conclusion that the nature of thalassocracy leads to inevitable expansion: "One can thus understand that the slightest superiority, when it is of the maritime type, tends to expand indefinitely and with impunity."[334] De Romilly argues that the sea in Thucydides acts as both a secure form of defense and a catalyst for growth and imperialism. Her argument remains dominant to this day.

Schulz's 2011 chapter on Thucydides and the sea stands as a testament to the persistence of this line of argument. Unlike de Romilly, who connects Thucydides with the Old Oligarch, Schulz understands Thucydides to be fundamentally different from his fellow Greeks: "The sea was for the Greeks—as for all ancient peoples—a wild power, which one met with reverence… Quite the opposite for Thucydides: Although he recognizes in the forces of nature a major

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333 "La maîtrise de la mer permet à une cité de résister pratiquement à toutes les attaques: étant chez elle sur l'eau, elle peut nuire aux autres, où, quand et comme elle veut, sans s'exposer aux représailles (II. 4-5)," de Romilly 1947, 65.

334 "On Comprend ainsi que la plus petite supériorité, quand elle est d'ordre maritime, tende à se développer indéfiniment et impunément," de Romilly 1947, 64.

historical factor, the dangers of the sea and its gods play no significant role in his history."[335] He argues that not a single ship sinks into the sea as the result of a storm, but this claim is, in fact, not true.[336] He precludes the sea from exerting agency and ties Thucydides' famous omission of the gods into a perceived disregard for natural forces:

> These lessons of Thucydides must—and are able to—forgo granting the sea an independent power; of course, it took endless effort, constant vigilance, and struggles to conquer the sea. But these struggles were more aimed at envious rivals than at the natural element itself. At a time when intellectuals denied the gods any intervention in human development, nature could no longer set any limits especially on human ingenuity, where she developed most spectacularly, namely on the sea.[337]

He argues that Thucydides constructs the sea as passive. It may be a location for much of the action in the narrative, but neither it nor its liquidity plays any part in that action. Its dangers no longer pose a problem, given advancements in human ingenuity.

Contrary to de Romilly's and Schulz's arguments, Thucydides consistently emphasizes the instability and perils of the sea. De Romilly is correct that he shows that the sea can be a

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[335] "Das Meer war für die Griechen - wie für alle Menschen der Antike - eine wilde Macht, der man mit Ehrfurcht begegnete… Ganz anders Thukydides: Obwohl er in den Naturgewalten einen bedeutenden Faktor der Geschichte erkennt, spielen die Gefahren des Meeres und dessen Götter in seinem Geschichtswerk keine nennenswerte Rolle," Schulz 2011, 63.

[336] Schulz 2011, 63. The Athenian general Lamachus loses ships to a storm while campaigning in the Pontus region (4.75). Perhaps, Schulz takes Thucydides' comment that the ships were anchored ἐς τὸν Κάλητα ποταμὸν (4.75.2, "at the Calex River") to mean *on* the Calex River. The ships, therefore, would sink into the river as opposed to the sea. Even if this is the case, Schulz's claim is misleading. The Athenians also lose a ship to a tidal wave (3.89.3), see below.

[337] "Diese Lehren des Thukydides mussten—und konnten—darauf verzichten, dem Meer eine eigenständige Potenz zuzuerkennen; selbstverständlich kostete es unendliche Mühen, das Meer zu erobern, ständige Wachsamkeit und Anstrengungen. Aber diese Anstrengungen richteten sich eher auf neidische Konkurrenten als auf das Element selbst. In einer Zeit, in der die Intellektuellen den Göttern jegliches Eingreifen in die menschlichen Entwicklungen absprachen, vermochte die Natur zumal dort der menschlichen Erfindungskraft keine Schranken mehr zu setzen, wo sie sich am eindrucksvollsten entfaltete, nämlich auf dem Meer," Schulz 2011, 85.

catalyst for growth; however, he likewise conveys that any power built upon the sea is unstable and tenuous given the liquid's volatility and capacity for destruction.[338] Schulz overlooks the agency that Thucydides grants to the sea itself and vastly overestimates the texts' characters' control of nature.[339] This chapter explores the ruinousness of the sea as part of a more fundamental form of destructiveness, that of liquids in general. The sea's capacity for destruction is predicated upon the changeability and instability of its liquid material.[340] Its destructiveness, therefore, is shared by all liquids, from rainwater to bodily humors. This is in line with other Greek conceptualizations of liquid as a category.[341] The Athenians, who rest their hopes upon their naval empire, are the most frequent victims of liquid-induced destruction throughout the text, and Thucydides clusters the mentions of destructive liquids in and around the two major Athenian crises in the narrative, the plague that began in 430 and the Sicilian Expedition of 415-3. This chapter unpacks the historian's depictions of destructive liquids in these two sections and beyond, scrutinizing what this theme can tell us about the historian's perspective on Athens and its reliance on naval imperialism.

The Plague

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[338] Saxonhouse 2017.

[339] Stahl 2003 [1966] provides an insightful look at the limits of human agency within Thucydides.

[340] See chapter 4.

[341] See chapters 1 and 2 and, in particular, Heraclitus D-K 117, 118 and Aristotle *Generation and Corruption* 2.2.

During the narrative's first major disaster for the Athenians, the plague, Thucydides describes the disease in liquid terms and uses other liquid imagery to tie this calamity to the Athenians' unhealthy relationship with and dependence upon liquids. The long, detailed passage immediately follows Pericles' Funeral Oration (2.35-46). In that speech, Pericles had offered an encomium of Athens, depicting it in its most idealized and favorable light. The onset of the plague betrays the hollowness of Pericles' rhetoric. The author's use of liquids and liquid imagery throughout this scene further undermines Pericles, the man in large part responsible for Athenian dependence on the instability of the sea.

Pericles' naval policy exacerbates the plague. He had previously persuaded the Athenians to abandon the Attic countryside to the Spartans and to trust in their navy. Thucydides dwelled upon the Athenians' anguish at abandoning their homes, noting that leaving them behind was οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ πόλιν τὴν αὑτοῦ ἀπολείπων ἕκαστος (2.16.2, "no different than each abandoning his polis"). Nevertheless, the Athenians obliged and crowded into the city walls, taking up residence in temples, the towers of the walls, and just about anywhere else they could (2.17.1-3). Taylor depicts the population influx with liquid imagery of her own: "The stream of displaced villagers on the country tracks and roads…must have borne some resemblance to that after the defeat of a besieged city, as the displaced inhabitants gathered what belongings they could carry and left their homeland for an uncertain future… Here, of course, the stream was in the opposite direction."[342] Super-saturated with its own citizens, the city of Athens proves more easily susceptible to the plague, as Thucydides himself notes. Amidst his description of the plague, he states: ἐπίεσε δ' αὐτοὺς μᾶλλον πρὸς τῷ ὑπάρχοντι πόνῳ καὶ ἡ ξυγκομιδὴ ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ἐς τὸ

[342] Taylor 2010, 69.

ἄστυ, καὶ οὐχ ἧσσον τοὺς ἐπελθόντας. οἰκιῶν γὰρ οὐχ ὑπαρχουσῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνκαλύβαις πνιγηραῖς ὥρᾳ ἔτους διαιτωμένων ὁ φθόρος ἐγίγνετο οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ (2.52.1-2, "The crowding from the fields into the city weighed more heavily upon them in addition to the existing misery, not least upon the new arrivals. Since they had no homes but lived in huts stifling in the heat of summer, the destruction occurred without any order"). He adds that after Athens, which suffered the worst from the plague, the other most populated cities of Greece were most affected (2.54.5). Pericles' focus on the sea renders the Athenian population more vulnerable to the plague.

The disease arrives at Athens by way of liquids. The Athenians first fear that the Spartans poisoned their wells (2.48.2). Thucydides refuses to vouch for this claim. However, the plague's initial arrival at Athens' port, the Piraeus, suggests that if the plague did not enter through the wells, it came by sea (2.48.2). The plague's capacity to travel by sea is later confirmed by its journeying with the Athenians on their ships to Potidaea and elsewhere (2.57.1, 2.58.2). Meanwhile, the plague did not spread over land as freely. Although the Spartans regularly ravage the Attic land surrounding Athens and spend more time there in the year of the plague's arrival than any year previous, they never contract the plague, and the disease does not enter the Peloponnesus to a noteworthy extent (2.54.5, 2.57.2).

In his description of the disease's typical symptoms, Thucydides constructs the plague itself as something liquid. It starts in the head and flows down throughout the body from there: διεξῄει γὰρ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ σώματος ἄνωθεν ἀρξάμενον τὸ ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ πρῶτον ἱδρυθὲν κακόν, (2.49.7, "For the disease traveled through the entire body beginning from above, having first settled in the head"). Marking its descent, the disease manifests itself as an outpouring of all

four humors and other bodily fluids.[343] It bloodies the tongue and esophagus: καὶ τὰ ἐντός, ἥ τε φάρυγξ καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα, εὐθὺς αἱματώδη ἦν (2.49.2, "And their insides, both their throat and their tongue, immediately became bloody"). It also causes the body to increase its production of phlegm in the form of πταρμὸς (2.49.3, "sneezing"). From there it slips down to the stomach: καὶ ὁπότε ἐς τὴν καρδίαν στηρίξειεν, ἀνέστρεφέ τε αὐτὴν καὶ ἀποκαθάρσεις χολῆς πᾶσαι ὅσαι ὑπὸ ἰατρῶν ὠνομασμέναι εἰσὶν ἐπῇσαν, καὶ αὗται μετὰ ταλαιπωρίας μεγάλης (2.49.3, "And whenever it would settle in the stomach, it upset it, and all the purges of bile that have been identified by physicians followed, with great suffering"). This statement covers the final two humors, and its particular construction vividly illustrates the violent and wretched sufferings of the afflicted.

With all four of the humors expelled, the disease continues its descent. If the patient still survives, the disease finally flows down into the bowels: ἢ εἰ διαφύγοιεν, ἐπικατιόντος τοῦ νοσήματος ἐς τὴν κοιλίαν καὶ ἑλκώσεώς τε αὐτῇ ἰσχυρᾶς ἐγγιγνομένης καὶ διαρροίας ἅμα ἀκράτου ἐπιπιπτούσης οἱ πολλοὶ ὕστερον δι᾽ αὐτὴν ἀσθενείᾳ διεφθείροντο (2.49.6, "Or if they would survive that, after the disease descended into the bowels and a strong ulceration happened together with severe diarrhea, the majority later died due to the weakness from this"). The wet, liquifying path of the disease comes to an end with this severe and potentially deadly diarrhea. These are not the only symptoms that the disease causes, and this account is not unique in showing that disease increases bodily fluids. Nevertheless, Thucydides' emphasis on the

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[343] By the four humors I mean blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. This is how they appear at [Hippocrates] *Nature of Man* 4, and this grouping later became standard. Different conceptualizations of the humors can be found at [Hippocrates] *Diseases* 4.1 and [Hippocrates] *Humors*. See Craik 2015; chapter 2 above.

plague's wet, destructive path illustrates the afflicted Athenians' suffering as mixed with manifold liquids.

After describing the effect of the disease on a typical Athenian body, Thucydides details the havoc it wreaks on the body politic. In the loosening of social norms produced by the disease, Thucydides continues to moisten Athenian bodies. In addition to outpourings of bodily fluids, the plague produces a high fever that leaves those afflicted desperate for relief. Thucydides earlier noted the Athenians' fear that the Spartans had sparked the outbreak by poisoning the wells (2.48.2); here sick Athenians disregard concerns about spreading the disease and desperately seek the wells out: ἥδιστά τε ἂν ἐς ὕδωρ ψυχρὸν σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ῥίπτειν. καὶ πολλοὶ τοῦτο τῶν ἠμελημένων ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἔδρασαν ἐς φρέατα, τῇ δίψῃ ἀπαύστῳ ξυνεχόμενοι· καὶ ἐν τῷ ὁμοίῳ καθειστήκει τό τε πλέον καὶ ἔλασσον ποτόν (2.49.5, "The sweetest thing for them would be to throw themselves into cold water. And many neglected people did this, throwing themselves into the wells, tormented by a ceaseless thirst, whether they drank a lot or a little"). Thucydides thus shows Athenian bodies mixing with liquids at micro- and macro-levels: humors are expelled from and mix with individual bodies; meanwhile, Athenians rush into and mix with external waters. He constructs this latter scene as a mesmerizing image symbolizing the Athenians' greedy but ultimately foolhardy pivot to the sea. The Athenians plunge themselves into water but prove unable to quench their thirst.

Thucydides returns to a similar image shortly thereafter. After mentioning how Pericles' policy of crowding the Athenians into the city exacerbated the plague's impact (2.52.1-2), the historian paints a grisly scene: ὁ φθόρος ἐγίγνετο οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ νεκροὶ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοις ἀποθνῄσκοντες ἔκειντο καὶ ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς ἐκαλινδοῦντο καὶ περὶ τὰς κρήνας ἁπάσας ἡμιθνῆτες

τοῦ ὕδατος ἐπιθυμίᾳ (2.52.2, "The destruction had no order, but dying corpses were lying upon one another and were wallowing in the roads and those half-dead lay around every spring in their desire for water"). The desire for water again evokes Athens' turn towards the sea. The death inherent in the scene conveys that rushing to water is not only futile but dangerous and ultimately ruinous. This image comes at the heretofore low point for the Athenians; Thucydides paints a strikingly similar scene at the Athenians' next low point, the Battle at the Assinarus River of 413.

The Sicilian Expedition: The Sea, Drinking Water, and Rain

Thucydides constructs the destructiveness of liquids most thoroughly in his narrative of the Sicilian Expedition. Between the plague and the Sicilian Expedition, Thucydides continues to develop this theme: the tidal waves of 427/6, analyzed in chapter four for their motion, destroy property, kill humans, and permanently alter the shoreline (3.89). Flood waters from the Calex River sink Athenian ships (4.75). However, Thucydides' depiction of the Sicilian Expedition stands out for the depth with which it explores the destructiveness of liquids. This long narrative which spans books six and seven details the Athenians' wildly ambitious attempt at imperial overreach and its utter failure. Thucydides' increased focus on liquid destruction here further intertwines it with Athenian naval imperialism. Alcibiades persuades his fellow citizens to launch the armada to Sicily, reassuring them that τὸ δὲ ἀσφαλές, καὶ μένειν, ἤν τι προχωρῇ, καὶ ἀπελθεῖν, αἱ νῆες παρέξουσιν. ναυκράτορες γὰρ ἐσόμεθα καὶ ξυμπάντων Σικελιωτῶν (6.18.5, "The ships will provide our security, both remaining, if we meet with some success, and departing. For we will be masters of the sea over all of the Sicilians"). As Taylor notes, his description of the Athenians as ναυκράτορες ("masters of the sea") is rooted in Pericles' rhetoric,

analyzed in chapter three above, as well as in the Athenian speaker's arguments in the Melian Dialogue.[344] Pericles described the Athenians as κυριωτάτους ὄντας (2.62.2, "having supreme authority") over the sea; the Athenian speaker in the Melian Dialogue used the same word as Alcibiades, ναυκράτορες (5.97, "masters of the sea"), to characterize the Athenians while arguing for their need to conquer the Melians. Alcibiades' rhetoric, therefore, establishes the Sicilian Expedition firmly in the broader tradition of Athenian imperialism. This section and the next analyze the destructive effects that liquids have on the Athenians in Sicily.

This section will track the Athenians' early successes and later failures at controlling liquids throughout the Sicilian Expedition. One can understand the arc of the campaign by analyzing the Athenians' relationship with water. It is not only their control of the sea that is at issue; their access to drinking water and their reaction to rain follow the same trajectory. In the first half of the Sicilian narrative, although the Athenians encounter various setbacks, they retain tight control over all forms of liquid. In the second half of this narrative, control over liquids begins to elude the Athenians, and liquids, such as drinking water and rainwater, begin to control and destroy them.

The Athenians set out to Sicily calculating that victory will require both a strong land presence and control over the seas (6.17.8, 6.18.5, 6.21-3, 6.25-6.1). They abandon their commitment to the land first. With the help of the newly arrived Spartan commander Gylippus, the Syracusans begin to build a counter-wall to prevent the Athenians' circumvallation of their city. With his plans on land stalled, Nicias turns his attention elsewhere: προσεῖχέ τε ἤδη μᾶλλον τῷ κατὰ θάλασσαν πολέμῳ (7.4.4, "[Nicias] now devoted himself more to the war at

[344] Taylor 2010, 144.

sea"). This policy is in direct contradiction to his own earlier argument that Athenian objectives would not be achievable without a strong land force (6.21-3). His new devotion to the sea includes moving the Athenian camp to Plemmyrium, which he considers a more advantageous position for guarding the waterways. This move proves disastrous for the Athenians' access to drinking water, as we will see below. Nicias's abandonment of all but the war at sea mirrors the tactics in Attica since Pericles' abandonment of the Attic countryside (2.14-7, see chapter three). Although this marks a turning point and Athenian fortunes decline from here, the Athenians are able to persist for as long as they can retain control of the sea.

The Athenians begin to lose their control of the sea to the Syracusans soon thereafter. They move their base camp again to within the Great Harbor itself, and the move again proves unfavorable to the Athenian soldiers. The land of the new camp is ill-suited for habitation: καὶ τὸ χωρίον ἅμα ἐν ᾧ ἐστρατοπεδεύοντο ἑλῶδες καὶ χαλεπὸν ἦν (7.47.2, "And the land on which they were encamped was marshy and grievous"). Like the Athenian war plans which overemphasize the liquid sea at the expense of the solid land, the very ground where the Athenians reside is too wet. Then the Syracusans defeat them in a combined land and sea battle (7.51-2). The Athenians losing at sea marks a turn of events ὃ οὐκ ἂν ᾤοντο (7.55.2 "which they would not have imagined").[345] Thucydides here explains how the Syracusans, whose character becomes active to resemble the Athenians' own, embody a particularly formidable enemy (7.55).[346] The Athenians find themselves in an unfavorable position, trapped in the Great Harbor. The Syracusans, who once faced near-circumvallation of their own city, now work to cut off the

[345] Cf., for example, Alcibiades' rhetoric (6.18.5), cited above.

[346] See Luginbill 199, 173-88.

Athenians' escape. They attempt to close off the mouth of the Great Harbor: ἔκλῃον οὖν τόν τε λιμένα εὐθὺς τὸν μέγαν, ἔχοντα τὸ στόμα ὀκτὼ σταδίων μάλιστα, τριήρεσι πλαγίαις καὶ πλοίοις καὶ ἀκάτοις ἐπ᾽ ἀγκυρῶν ὁρμίζοντες (7.59.3, "They immediately tried to close off the Great Harbor, whose mouth is almost a mile wide, mooring triremes, boats, and skiffs sideways at anchor"). They physically manipulate the seascape in attempt to eliminate Athenian access to the open sea. The strategy exposes the Athenians' over-reliance upon the sea, and the fact that the Syracusans can attempt such a strategy reveals the Athenians' diminished control of the sea.

The Athenians attempt to burst out of the harbor and escape home, sparking a last-ditch naval battle in the Great Harbor. Thucydides emphasizes the chaos and confusion in his long description of the battle (7.70-1). The Athenians are again defeated, their men forlorn. They do not even think to ask to collect their dead (7.72.2), an astonishing breach of custom and duty analyzed in greater detail below. The Athenian generals plan to reman the ships and try again: their ships still outnumber the enemy's, and they deem this their best chance for survival. The men have none of it; they have had enough of the sea: οἱ ναῦται οὐκ ἤθελον ἐσβαίνειν διὰ τὸ καταπεπλῆχθαί τε τῇ ἥσσῃ καὶ μὴ ἂν ἔτι οἴεσθαι κρατῆσαι. καὶ οἱ μὲν ὡς κατὰ γῆν ἀναχωρήσοντες ἤδη ξύμπαντες τὴν γνώμην εἶχον (7.72.4-73.1, "The sailors refused to board because of their shock at the defeat and their lack of belief that they could prevail. And now they all intended to retreat by land"). Kopp rightly labels this as a pivotal point in the thinking of these soldiers: "The desperate Athenians finally for their part lose faith in the *kratos* (power) of

their own ships."[347] The shift back to land, an act of desperation that proves unsuccessful, marks the completion of the Athenians' loss of their authority over the sea.

The Athenians' access to drinking water follows the same arc as their authority over the sea, initial control followed by an increasing lack thereof. Although one may expect this trajectory regarding access to drinking water for an unsuccessful expeditionary force, the amount of space Thucydides commits to it and the distinctness of the rise and fall reveal Thucydides' careful construction of this topic. At the outset of the expedition, the generals are well aware that access to drinking water is as important as command over the sea.[348] Only with mastery over these two separate liquids can the expedition be successful. The bloated size of the armada, however, exasperates the problem of maintaining a supply of drinking water. The generals take steps to curtail the problem: καὶ τρία μέρη νείμαντες ἓν ἑκάστῳ ἐκλήρωσαν, ἵνα μήτε ἅμα πλέοντες ἀπορῶσιν ὕδατος καὶ λιμένων καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδείων ἐν ταῖς καταγωγαῖς, (6.42.1, "Dividing the armada into three parts, [the generals] allotted one of themselves to each part, so that they would not lack water nor harbors sailing together nor supplies during their landings"). This foresight eases their passage and confirms their attentiveness to the issue.

Despite the generals' planning, there are still troubles with securing drinking water on the journey to Sicily. Frightened by the vastness of the Athenian force, the cities on the southern coast of Italy deny them entrance within their walls and access to a market. Two cities deny more still: παρεκομίζοντο τὴν Ἰταλίαν, τῶν μὲν πόλεων οὐ δεχομένων αὐτοὺς ἀγορᾷ οὐδὲ ἄστει, ὕδατι δὲ καὶ ὅρμῳ, Τάραντος δὲ καὶ Λοκρῶν οὐδὲ τούτοις (6.44.2, "They sailed along the coast

[347] "Die verzweifelten Athener schlussendlich ihrerseits den Glauben an das kratos der eigenen Schiffe verlieren," Kopp 2017, 157.

[348] Hunt 2006, 393.

of Italy, and the cities welcomed them neither with a market nor within their town, but only with water and anchorage, and Tarentum and Locri did not even provide these"). Out of the four things that the Athenians expect from the cities that they pass (a market, access within the walls, drinking water, and anchorage) no cities concede the former two land-based items. Most concede the latter two which center on water; however, Tarentum and Locri refuse all requests from the Athenians. These two cities do not dispute the Athenians' dominance of the sea; however, they do challenge their control of water by disallowing anchorage and access to drinking water. The Athenians eventually make it to Sicily intact; however, the early opposition to their control of water foreshadows the troubles yet to come.

At length, the Athenians settle into a siege around their main target, the city of Syracuse. Similar to any besieging army, the Athenians must stem the flow of supplies into the city if they are to be successful. As a part of closing off the city, they attempt to disrupt the influx of drinking water: οἱ δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι τούς τε ὀχετοὺς αὐτῶν, οἳ ἐς τὴν πόλιν ὑπονομηδὸν ποτοῦ ὕδατος ἠγμένοι ἦσαν, διέφθειραν, (6.100.1, "The Athenians destroyed [the Syracusans'] pipes which were laid underground bringing drinking water into the city"). The destruction of these pipes does not cut off Syracusan drinking water completely. However, it does mark a point of success within the Athenians' siege operations around Syracuse. These operations see multiple ups and downs as Thucydides depicts the Athenians coming maddeningly close to closing off the Syracusans. This marks the last mention of the Syracusans' water supply and a high point in the arc of the Athenians' relations with drinking water on Sicily. The remainder of the discussion on drinking water refers to that of the Athenians themselves, as they go from besiegers to besieged.

A turning point in this arc comes when Nicias decides to move the Athenian camp to Plemmyrium. He believes this location will serve them better in their attempt to control sea traffic. However, his focus on the sea distracts him from securing Athenian control over the other essential liquid, drinking water.[349] Thucydides explains: ὥστε καὶ τῶν πληρωμάτων οὐχ ἥκιστα τότε πρῶτον κάκωσις ἐγένετο· τῷ τε γὰρ ὕδατι σπανίῳ χρώμενοι καὶ οὐκ ἐγγύθεν, καὶ ἐπὶ φρυγανισμὸν ἅμα ὁπότε ἐξέλθοιεν οἱ ναῦται, ὑπὸ τῶν ἱππέων τῶν Συρακοσίων κρατούντων τῆς γῆς διεφθείροντο (7.4.6, "The result [of the move to Plemmyrium] at that time was the first cause of the crews' suffering. For they now used scanty and far-off water, and whenever the sailors went out for firewood, they were destroyed by the the cavalry of the Syracusans who controlled the land"). Thucydides marks this shift in location as a turning point in the whole campaign; the difficulty in securing a supply of drinking water marks the beginning of the end for the Athenian forces. Soon thereafter, Nicias writes a letter to those back in Athens, enumerating the hardships that he and his troops face and noting among them the difficulty in obtaining drinking water (7.13.2).

The Athenians' situation shifts from bad to worse. Despite the dispatch of reinforcements in response to Nicias's letter, the Athenians lose their superiority at sea. They are compelled to retreat over land. Knowing that the march will take them over spots with little drinking water, the generals try to provide for their water supply, but their slow progress dashes these plans (7.78.4-6). Just as drinking water shaped the Athenian generals' plans from the outset, it remains a crucial issue of the campaign until the very last battle. At length, the Syracusans overtake the slower half of the Athenian army under the command of Demosthenes and force its surrender.

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[349] Hunt 2006, 395-6.

They finally catch up with Nicias's half of the army at the Assinarus River. The final battle of the Sicilian campaign ensues. In it, the exhausted, desperate, and dehydrated Athenians break rank, afflicted τοῦ πιεῖν ἐπιθυμίᾳ (7.84.2, "by a desire to drink"). As they are slaughtered in the river, Thucydides emphasizes the Athenians' thirst: καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ εὐθὺς διέφθαρτο, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἐπίνετό τε ὁμοῦ τῷ πηλῷ ᾑματωμένον καὶ περιμάχητον ἦν τοῖς πολλοῖς (7.84.5, "The water was immediately spoiled, but it was drunk no less; bloodied and mixed together with mud, it was much fought over by the many"). The inability to secure access to drinking water on the retreat has a serious, negative result for the Athenians in this battle. In a reversal, the water exerts control over the Athenians, attracting and entangling them (7.84.2-85.1).

Thucydides does not end his exposition on drinking water and the Sicilian Expedition with this scene. Nicias, the man who tried to quell the Athenians' desire for conquest, is forced to surrender whatever remains of his bloodied, wet troops. Thucydides describes the wretched fate of the Athenian survivors: they spend their days rotting in a quarry outside of Syracuse. Among the other horrors that this entails, Thucydides explains: καὶ λιμῷ ἅμα καὶ δίψῃ ἐπιέζοντο, ἐδίδοσαν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἑκάστῳ ἐπὶ ὀκτὼ μῆνας κοτύλην ὕδατος καὶ δύο κοτύλας σίτου (7.87.2, "They were oppressed by hunger and thirst. For the Syracusans gave each of them a kotyla[350] of water and two kotylae of grain daily for eight months"). Once masters of the sea in firm control of their drinking water supply, the Athenians now struggle to survive on a water supply that is insufficient and rationed off for them by others.

The Athenians' opposite reactions to two separate rainstorms, one in the first half of the Sicilian narrative, one in the second half, parallel their loss of control of both the sea and their

[350] A kotyla equals just over 9 fluid ounces or about a cup, Gomme 1945-1982, 4.464.

drinking supply. The Athenians never claim control of rain in the same way they claim to rule the sea and manage their water supply. Nevertheless, showing discipline when a rainstorm hits mid-battle can allow one side to harness the rainstorm to its advantage, as is the case with the following two scenes. In the first pitched battle of the Sicilian theater, the Athenians' and their allies' experience proves critical to their success:

> γενομένης δ᾽ ἐν χερσὶ τῆς μάχης ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀντεῖχον ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ξυνέβη βροντάς τε ἅμα τινὰς γενέσθαι καὶ ἀστραπὰς καὶ ὕδωρ πολύ, ὥστε τοῖς μὲν πρῶτον μαχομένοις καὶ ἐλάχιστα πολέμῳ ὡμιληκόσι καὶ τοῦτο ξυνεπιλαβέσθαι τοῦ φόβου, τοῖς δ᾽ ἐμπειροτέροις τὰ μὲν γιγνόμενα καὶ ὥρᾳ ἔτους περαίνεσθαι δοκεῖν, τοὺς δὲ ἀνθεστῶτας πολὺ μείζω ἔκπληξιν μὴ νικωμένους παρέχειν. (2) ὠσαμένων δὲ τῶν Ἀργείων πρῶτον τὸ εὐώνυμον κέρας τῶν Συρακοσίων καὶ μετ᾽ αὐτοὺς τῶν Ἀθηναίων τὸ κατὰ σφᾶς αὐτούς, παρερρήγνυτο ἤδη καὶ τὸ ἄλλο στράτευμα τῶν Συρακοσίων καὶ ἐς φυγὴν κατέστη (6.70.1-2).
>
> After the fight came to close combat, the two sides held out against one another for a long time. Some thunder and lightning struck, and much rain fell. This increased the fear for those who were fighting for the first time and were least familiar with war. But it seemed right to the experienced to attribute the weather to the season of the year. To them, the enemy not being defeated provided much more terror. (2) After the Argives first forced back the left wing of the Syracusans and after them the Athenians forced back those in front of them, the Syracusans were now broken and the rest of their army also took to flight.

Thucydides makes a direct connection between the storm and the experience of the soldiers. The veterans rationalize that rain is common in that region during that time of year, implying that the soldiers ought not be stunned. In the following sentence, the invading force wins the battle.

After numerous reversals and defeats over two years outlined in part above, the Athenians face a reversed circumstance: The Syracusans have gained much experience, and the Athenians have lost their confidence. After the Athenians have lost control over the sea, on the retreat over land during which they struggle to secure adequate drinking water, the Athenians attempt to overtake some fortifications thrown up to block their way. Then the sky opens up: ἔτυχον δὲ καὶ

βρονταί τινες ἅμα γενόμεναι καὶ ὕδωρ, οἷα τοῦ ἔτους πρὸς μετόπωρον ἤδη ὄντος φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι, ἀφ᾽ ὧν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι μᾶλλον ἔτι ἠθύμουν καὶ ἐνόμιζον ἐπὶ τῷ σφετέρῳ ὀλέθρῳ καὶ ταῦτα πάντα γίγνεσθαι (7.79.3, "Some thunder and rain happened to occur, which sort of thing is wont to happen during the late autumn. From these, the Athenians were still more disheartened and believed all these things occurred for their own destruction"). Believing a natural phenomenon takes place for your own sake is never a favorable perspective to hold in Thucydides. While the storm two years before instilled fear into the inexperienced, few, if any, combatants remain inexperienced at this point. Instead, the storm further discourages the already demoralized Athenians. Just as above, Thucydides notes the time of the year and its tendency to see rain. The fact that these two events occur during the time of year when rain is common strengthens Thucydides' implicit claim that the fear caused by the storms is irrational. In both battles, the participants' reactions to the storms indicates their respective fortunes at the time. This second storm affects the fate of the Athenians: after the storm, the Athenians no longer seek the friendly territory of Catana but head south on the path that eventually leads them to the Assinarus River.

The Athenians' hopes and failures are written in liquids, their initial mastery over them and their eventual loss of control. G. M. Paul recognizes the rainstorms artfully bookending the Athenians' campaign on Sicily. He argues: "Athenian reactions to the storms are specified to focus the reversal of mood; the effect on the reader is like that of ring composition."[351] The reversal of mood—as well as the reversal of fortunes—can be seen not only in the differing Athenian reactions to the two rainstorms but in their relationship with liquids of all kinds.

[351] Paul 1987, 311.

Throughout the Sicilian narrative, Thucydides emphasizes the Athenians' losing control of liquids and the disastrous results that ensue.

The Sicilian Expedition: Bloodied Water[352]

The Sicilian Expedition ends entangled in the flow of the Assinarus River. This scene violently caps the Athenians' utter defeat. Thucydides builds upon his portrayal of the Athenians' earlier defeat at the Nile and draws from Herodotus and Homer to highlight the destructiveness of river water.

The battle scene's opening two sentences reintroduce the two opposing forces and highlight the already desperate nature of the Athenians' predicament. They have abandoned their navy in the Great Harbor of Syracuse; half of the retreating Athenians, those under Demosthenes, have surrendered; the Syracusans overtake the remaining half as it reaches the Assinarus River. The scene begins with Nicias, whom Thucydides earlier showed spearheading and articulating the resistance to the expedition (6.9–15, 6.19.2–25), now leading what remains of it (7.85.1). At points in his narrative of the Sicilian campaign (e.g., 6.8.2, 6.43, 7.15.1), Thucydides echoes much of Nicias' earlier rhetoric against the expedition, thereby rendering Nicias prescient.[353] Although the historian may agree with Nicias' arguments for avoiding the expedition in the first place, he also emphasizes the problems that arise when a general becomes responsible for a campaign he argued against and is ill-suited to lead (6.104.3, 7.15, 7.40.4). For

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[352] Parts of this section appear in my article, "Entanglement at the Assinarus: Destructive Liquids and Fluid Athenians," forthcoming in the *Classical Journal.*

[353] Stahl 1973, 65-66.

example, Nicias' decision to move the Athenian camp to Plemmyrium to focus on the campaign's naval front results in their inability to collect drinking water and firewood safely (7.4.4–6). The antithesis of his ambitious and slippery rival Alcibiades, Nicias exudes the caution and conservatism of a Spartan.[354] The battle's second sentence shifts primary focus to the Athenians' opponents: οἱ δὲ Συρακόσιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι προσέκειντο τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον πανταχόθεν βάλλοντές τε καὶ κατακοντίζοντες (7.85.1, "The Syracusans and their allies pressed them from all sides in the same way, striking them with javelins and other missiles"). Before and after this passage, Thucydides highlights how the Syracusans become the Athenians' most challenging opponent, as they replicate the Athenians' quickness to act (7.55.2, 8.96.5).[355]

The following sentence introduces the setting of the battle, the river Assinarus, which becomes an active element of the scene. Here, early in the course of the action, the river entices the pressed and desperate Athenian soldiers:

> καὶ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἠπείγοντο πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσίναρον ποταμόν, ἅμα μὲν βιαζόμενοι ὑπὸ τῆς πανταχόθεν προσβολῆς ἱππέων τε πολλῶν καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου ὄχλου, οἰόμενοι ῥᾷόν τι σφίσιν ἔσεσθαι, ἢν διαβῶσι τὸν ποταμόν, ἅμα δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας καὶ τοῦ πιεῖν ἐπιθυμίᾳ (7.84.2).
>
> The Athenians hastened to the Assinarus River, forced by an attack on all sides by many horsemen and the rest of the crowd. They believed it would be somewhat easier for them if they crossed the river; at the same time, they were in distress and overcome by a desire to drink.

The Athenians pursue the water to quench their thirst and in the belief that the going will get easier when they cross the river. The imagery of their rushing to the water is best understood in the context of the entire *History*, which features the Athenians increasingly turning to the sea.

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354 Luginbill 1999, 126n2; Connor 1984, 41.

355 Luginbill 1999, 173–88.

Thucydides depicts Themistocles and Pericles as largely responsible for Athens' shift to a naval power: Themistocles catalyzed Athens' naval buildup amidst the Persian Wars in the first two decades of the fifth century (1.14.3) and oversaw the rebuilding of Athens' defensive walls beginning in 479/8 (1.90–91.7, 1.93.3–7); Pericles convinces the Athenians to forfeit Attica and rely on their navy in his first and last speech of the narrative, in 432/1 and 430 respectively (1.140–4, 2.60–4, see also 2.65.7).[356] Following Pericles' death, the Athenians take the naval nature of their empire for granted. The Athenians' rush to water in this scene can be read as an allegory for their polis' naval pursuits.

Thucydides' employment of ἐπιθυμίᾳ ("desire") helps establish the symbolism. This scene caps a series of passages featuring this word. The noun largely carries a negative connotation and is closely associated with the Sicilian Expedition; six of its nine usages (6.13.1, 6.15.3, 6.24.2, 6.33.2, 6.78.2, 7.84.3) come during the Sicilian narrative. Before Sicily, the Athenians half-dead from the plague lie around every spring in their τοῦ ὕδατος ἐπιθυμίᾳ (2.52.2, "desire for water"). Arguing against the imminent Sicilian Expedition, Nicias tries to temper the passion of the Athenians. Speaking directly to the older generation, he states that they know that ἐπιθυμίᾳ μὲν ἐλάχιστα κατορθοῦται,[357] προνοίᾳ δὲ πλεῖστα (6.13.1, "Least is accomplished with desire and most with foresight"). In the narrative sections, Thucydides uses the noun to describe Alcibiades' excessive desires and the passion for the expedition on the eve of its launch (6.15.3, 6.24.2). In the latter example, he utilizes the phrase τὴν ἄγαν τῶν πλεόνων ἐπιθυμίαν (6.24.4, "the excessive passion of the majority"). The rest of the sentence makes clear

[356] Taylor 2010 presents a comprehensive analysis of these two leaders' roles in this process. See also chapter 3 above.

[357] κατορθοῦται for κατορθοῦνται, see Smith 1913 *ad loc.*

that τῶν πλεόνων ("of the majority") denotes the majority present at the Assembly that day. However, the phrase often means "the many" as opposed to "the few" (cf., e.g., 8.89.2), which in Thucydides can carry a negative connotation (cf. the fickleness of the ὅμιλος ("mob") at 2.65.4). The Athenians' lust for conquest ends in the rush to the Assinarus; the only remaining desire is simply to drink.

The trajectory of ἐπιθυμία becomes even more meaningful when understood with the interconnected arc of προθυμία ("zeal"), built upon the same root, -θυμία. προθυμία becomes closely associated with Athenian imperialistic fervor as various speakers and the historian himself use it for this purpose. The Athenians at Sparta in 432 credit Greek victory against the Persians to their superlative contributions: the most ships, the smartest general (i.e., Themistocles), and προθυμίαν ἀοκνοτάτην (1.74.1, "the most unhesitating zeal"). The superlative adjective grants the Athenian zeal a sense of activity and even aggressiveness. The Athenians emphasize the noun, repeating it twice more in quick succession, defending their current empire by founding it on their ancestors' zeal at Salamis (1.74.2, 1.75.1). Thucydides says that the Spartans forgave Themistocles' and the Athenians' deception in rebuilding their walls in part because of their zeal against the Persians (1.92.1). Euphemus, the Athenian envoy to the Camarinaeans in 415/4, evokes the Athenians' earlier phrasing, stating that their right to rule stems from their furnishing the most ships and the most ready zeal (1.74.1, 6.83.1). The omission of the third piece of the formulation (the smartest general) poignantly underlines the recent treachery of Alcibiades, the Sicilian Expedition's own crafty admiral. For his part, Alcibiades uses προθυμία of himself and later claims it for the Spartans when he is acting on their behalf (6.92.2, 8.12.1). We are not meant to take his rhetoric seriously in the latter instance,

but his attempts to arouse the Spartans' zeal (both in action and with words) mark him as an Athenian's Athenian despite his temporary political affiliations. The development of προθυμία and ἐπιθυμία dovetail in a manner comparable to Hesiod's characterization of Προμηθεύς ("Prometheus," i.e. "Forethought") and Ἐπιμηθεύς ("Epimetheus," i.e. "Afterthought"), wherein the latter acts as a dimwitted foil for his brother's cunning (Hesiod *Theogony* 510–6, *Works and Days* 83–105).[358] The Athenians' προθυμία helps them build an empire but begets reckless ἐπιθυμία for Sicily. At the end of this dual trajectory, the desperate and soon to be slaughtered Athenian soldiers hurry to the Assinarus, desiring simply to survive.

The river does not make the going easier for the Athenian soldiers.[359] On the contrary, the water breaks down any remaining semblance of Athenian order and acts in tandem with the Syracusans in destroying the Athenian troops:

> ὡς δὲ γίγνονται ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ, ἐσπίπτουσιν οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ ἔτι, ἀλλὰ πᾶς τέ τις διαβῆναι αὐτὸς πρῶτος βουλόμενος καὶ οἱ πολέμιοι ἐπικείμενοι χαλεπὴν ἤδη τὴν διάβασιν ἐποίουν. ἁθρόοι γὰρ ἀναγκαζόμενοι χωρεῖν ἐπέπιπτόν τε ἀλλήλοις καὶ κατεπάτουν, περί τε τοῖς δορατίοις καὶ σκεύεσιν οἱ μὲν εὐθὺς διεφθείροντο, οἱ δὲ ἐμπαλασσόμενοι κατέρρεον (7.84.3).
>
> However, as they reached the river, they fell into it, no longer in any order; every man wanted to cross first himself, and the attacking enemy made the crossing difficult. For forced to move as a mass, they fell upon and trampled one another. Some were immediately killed by their spears and gear; others, becoming entangled, flowed downstream.

The liquid of the river, instead of acting as a catalyst for the Athenians' escape as they had hoped, causes chaos, confusion, and destruction. The mutability of the Nile befuddled and helped

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[358] Although the ἐπι- prefix of ἐπιθυμία does not normally connote a sense of subsequent time as it does in Ἐπιμηθεύς, we have seen above Thucydides use it in a προ-/ἐπι- pairing: ἐπιθυμίᾳ μὲν… προνοίᾳ δὲ (6.13.1, "with desire… with foresight").

[359] Cf. the river Asopus, 2.5.2.

destroy a previous Athenian expedition (1.109.4).[360] At the point of contact between the troops and the Assinarus, what solidity remained of the men's discipline and order dissolves. Although the enemy makes the crossing difficult, Thucydides focuses on the other factors destroying the Athenian soldiers: they trample one another; the objects they carry kill them; finally, the river takes part in their demise. The struggling Athenians become entwined with and inseparable from the flowing water. The river becomes a part of the action in the same vein as Homer's Scamander or Herodotus's Gyndes or Hellespont (Homer *Iliad* 21.1-382; Herodotus 1.188.2, 7.35).

The entanglement also parallels a construction of Heraclitus and, in so doing, showcases the Athenians' fluidity. Athenian soldiers κατέρρεον ("flowed downstream"), inseparable from the liquid that has helped destroy them. The scene parallels Heraclitus' river proverb: ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ (Heraclitus D-K 12, "Upon the same people stepping into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow"). The opening four words, all dative masculine plural, construct an ambiguity: the phrase τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ("the same") agrees with both the people and the rivers. This careful ambiguity conflates the rivers and the people as they experience the flux of new waters, just as Thucydides melts the Athenians into the river water of the Assinarus.

Over the remainder of the battle narrative, Thucydides emphasizes the spatial difference between the Syracusans (above) and Athenians (below) as he sharpens the contrast between the two sides. The imagery grows vivid and gory as the battle reaches its climax:[361]

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[360] See chapter 4.

[361] Ps.-Longinus cites this section as an example of effective hyperbole ([Longinus] *On the Sublime* 38.3), his only direct quotation of Thucydides.

> ἐς τὰ ἐπὶ θάτερά τε τοῦ ποταμοῦ παραστάντες οἱ Συρακόσιοι (ἦν δὲ κρημνῶδες) ἔβαλλον ἄνωθεν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους, πίνοντάς τε τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀσμένους καὶ ἐν κοίλῳ ὄντι τῷ ποταμῷ ἐν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ταρασσομένους. οἵ τε Πελοποννήσιοι ἐπικαταβάντες τοὺς ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ μάλιστα ἔσφαζον. καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ εὐθὺς διέφθαρτο, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἐπίνετό τε ὁμοῦ τῷ πηλῷ ᾑματωμένον καὶ περιμάχητον ἦν τοῖς πολλοῖς (7.84.4–5).
>
> Standing on the other bank of the river, which was steep, the Syracusans rained missiles from above upon the Athenians, most of whom were drinking greedily and disrupting one another in the deep riverbed. The Peloponnesians descended and slaughtered them, especially those in the river. The water was immediately spoiled, but it was drunk no less; mixed with mud, bloodied, it was much fought over by the many.

The enemy soldiers at first stand on dry land and attack the Athenians ἄνωθεν ("from above"). In the following sentence, Thucydides shifts from discussing the Syracusans to the Peloponnesians. There were Peloponnesians on the Syracusan side (7.58), and Thucydides credits them with finishing off the Athenians. The shift in terminology also deepens the differences between the opponents. By this point, the Syracusans resemble the Athenians as a naval power with an active character (7.55.2, see also 8.96.5); the Peloponnesians evoke the Spartans, the Athenians' antithetical, land-based opponent, reinforcing the battle's divide between liquids and solids. They descend (ἐπικαταβάντες) and attack the men below. The spatial dichotomy depicted here and earlier with ἄνωθεν emphasizes the same divide. Given that dry land naturally sits above the waterline, the verb καταβαίνω ("walk down"), with or without the extra ἐπι- prefix, can mean specifically to walk down to the shore or waterline (cf., e.g., 4.11.1, 7.23.1, 7.35.2). High ground, of course, constitutes a military advantage, and the spatial divide of this passage highlights the one-sidedness of the battle. However, given the context of the passage, the emphasis on the Athenians' being below their enemies also amplifies their association with the river water.

There are other ways in which Thucydides entwines the dying Athenians in fluidity. As the Syracusans rain missiles from above, the Athenians drink greedily, a process that physically combines the river water with their bodies. At the same time, they disturb (ταρασσομένους) one another in the riverbed. This usage is in line with others throughout the work; Thucydides most often uses forms of this verb to describe armies (4.25.11, 4.96.3, 7.3.3, 7.44.3, 7.44.7) or navies (2.84.3, 7.23.3, 7.36.6, 7.67.3) thrown out of regular order, particularly during the Sicilian Expedition. Other Greek authors, meanwhile, often use this verb to denote the disturbance or choppiness of water (cf., e.g., Archilochus [Edmonds] 56, Euripides *Trojan Women* 88). The participle adds a fluidity to the Athenian actions. As the slaughter progresses and the river spoils, the Athenians continue drinking, refusing to break their bond with the water. The spoiling of the river marks a final entanglement of the Athenian bodies and the river. Earlier, whole bodies became embedded in the river and flowed downstream; here, Athenian bodily fluids blend with the water, creating a liquid mixture of the Athenians and the Assinarus. Thucydides thus mixes Athenians with water at the macro- and micro-levels, just as he did in the plague narrative. He continues to underscore the connection between the river and the Athenians after they die: τέλος δὲ νεκρῶν τε πολλῶν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοις ἤδη κειμένων ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ (7.85.1, "Finally, many corpses lay upon one another in the river"). Nicias then surrenders his surviving men, thereby bringing the Sicilian Expedition to an emphatic resolution.

This passage directly echoes the plague narrative in a way that reinforces Thucydides' theme of the Athenians' liquefaction on Sicily. There are manifest verbal echoes between this battle scene and the description of Athens' loss of social norms stemming from the plague (2.52.2-3). Connor details these:

> The passage is richly evocative… of the plague as described in the second book: 84.2 τοῦ πιεῖν ἐπιθυμίᾳ, recalls 2.52.2 τοῦ ὕδατος ἐπιθυμίᾳ; 84.3 οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ, recalls 2.52.2 οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ; and 85.1 νεκρῶν τε πολλῶν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοις ἤδη κειμένων evokes 2.52.2 νεκροὶ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοις… ἔκειντο. The parallels are all in the passage that marks the transition from the description of the physical symptoms of the plague to the discussion of the psychological and ethical disintegration that accompanied it.[362]

The close connection between these two scenes draws together the events which are, not coincidentally, the two lowest points for the Athenians within Thucydides' narrative. Similarly, the visual image of Athenians desperately—and futilely—rushing headlong into water distinctly evokes the Athenians afflicted by the plague desperately and futilely throwing themselves into the wells (2.49.5). During this earlier scene, the well water provided empty relief for the plague-ridden Athenians. It does not directly hurt or destroy the Athenians, but it instead creates an image that symbolizes the Athenians' foolhardy pivot to the sea. The water of the Assinarus River replicates this evocative scene, but here the water itself hinders and helps destroy the Athenian soldiers, strengthening the force of the symbolism.

The Sicilian Expedition was a disastrous example of imperial overextension. Thucydides narrates the campaign in detail, noting the many times the Athenians nearly succeeded. In the end, many factors worked against the invaders: the defection of the expedition's primary champion, the leadership of a Spartan general, and the resolve of the Syracusans. Moreover, the Athenians' naval imperial model shows its flaws more clearly than at any point in the narrative. Thucydides utilizes the theme of destructive liquids to expose the impracticality of Athenian naval imperialism. The Athenian navy, the strength of its empire, rests upon a liquid foundation. Athenians desperately seeking water become easier prey for their opponents on high ground.

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[362] Connor 1984, 204n51.

Rotting Ships and Unburied Corpses

Finally, the destructiveness of liquids shows the capacity to physically rot Athenian ships and disappear corpses, especially of those who die in naval battle. These scenes drive home the dangers and the foolhardiness inherent within the Athenians' naval policy.

When the Sicilian Expedition begins to flounder, Nicias writes home to Athens requesting that his troops be recalled or reinforced. He details the dangerous predicament he and his men find themselves in. In the course of these data, he explains that, with the enemy not giving them an opportunity to dry their ships out periodically, they are rotting from overuse: νῦν δὲ αἵ τε νῆες διάβροχοι τοσοῦτον χρόνον ἤδη θαλασσεύουσαι, καὶ τὰ πληρώματα ἔφθαρται. τὰς μὲν γὰρ ναῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνελκύσαντας διαψύξαι διὰ τὸ ἀντιπάλους τῷ πλήθει καὶ ἔτι πλείους τὰς τῶν πολεμίων οὔσας αἰεὶ προσδοκίαν παρέχειν ὡς ἐπιπλεύσονται (7.12.3-4, "Being at sea already for such a long time, the ships are now waterlogged, and their crews are ruined. We are unable to draw up and dry out the ships, because of the ever-present expectation that the enemy, equal or even greater than us in number, will attack by sea"). Physically trapped onboard and grammatically sandwiched between two comments on the ships, the men are likewise rotting. Thucydides' word choice complements the grammatical construction in conflating the ships and the men onboard. Hornblower notes that διάβροχοι ("saturated," "rotted") and διαψύχω ("to dry") are both medical terms present in contemporary medical texts.[363] The moistening of the ships and the resultant lack in efficacy again connect the Athenians struggling in Sicily to the Athenians who ailed from the liquifying plague.

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[363] Hornblower 1991-2008, 3.562.

Peter Hunt includes the description of the poor condition of the Athenian triremes at this juncture on a list of "banal" details of trireme maintenance that "had no important consequences."[364] However, the importance of the details in this passage is hard to overstate. The inefficacy of the Athenian triremes compounds their other struggles, and they soon lose two major naval battles (7.51-2, 7.70-1). Moreover, the passage overflows with symbolism that undercuts Athenian naval imperialism. Kopp analyzes this passage in light of Pericles' and Alcibiades' earlier rhetoric that the Athenians can always find security in their ships. He argues that, whereas Pericles' and Alcibiades' λόγοι ("words") need not line up with ἔργα ("events"), Nicias' letter offers a firsthand and accurate depiction of the reality of Athenian empire building: "Thucydides, on the other hand, allows the reader with his compositional trick to recognize with the eye of the commander, so to speak, the desolate condition of the ships and to understand the internal agony in the face of this now still scarcely usable 'guarantee' of Athenian security."[365] The softening of the ships' hulls reveals the fallacy of trusting in ships for security in the first place. The overexposure to the sea speaks to the Athenians' overreach in Sicily and undermines the false stability of their empire.

Thucydides highlights the destructiveness of liquids in scenes showcasing unburied Athenian corpses that thread through his narrative. He develops the theme of unburied corpses in general to illustrate the moral degradation of his times. Donald Lateiner explains, "In [Thucydides'] *History* however, a community's failure to observe traditional religious and

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[364] Hunt 2006, 407n121.

[365] "Thukydides jedoch lässt den Leser mittels dieses kompositorischen Kunstgriffes gleichsam mit den Augen des Kommandanten den desolaten Zustand der Schiffe erkennen und die innere Agonie angesichts dieser nun kaum noch brauchbaren 'Garantie' athenischer Sicherheit nachvollziehen," Kopp 2017, 229.

secular practices signals disease in the body politic."[366] Foster contrasts the persistence of the corpses themselves with the decline of the rites once associated with them: "Thucydides deploys these materials in order to show the attenuation of their significance for human beings by contrast to their persistence as physical objects or substances. The integrity of… bodies evaporates, but the physical things… remain."[367] Athenian corpses often go unburied or are improperly buried, and Thucydides' repeated inclusion of liquids in scenes of Athenian corpses further emphasizes the Athenians' unhealthy relationship with liquid. Four passages depict unburied corpses showing the destructiveness of liquids both directly and indirectly. Three of these passages feature unburied Athenians. Two of these three, show unburied Athenian corpses amidst the two low points already discussed, the plague and the Sicilian Expedition. In all of these passages, the increasing entanglement of Athenian corpses and water, coupled with the Athenians' indifference or inability to bury their dead, highlights the dangers inherent in their reliance upon liquids.

The first scene of unburied corpses is the only one in which the corpses are not Athenians; it shows the Athenians in control in a way that emphasizes their lack of control in later scenes. After the Corinthians defeat a squadron of Corcyreans (and ten Athenian triremes) off the shore of Corcyra in 433, twenty additional Athenian triremes show up: διὰ τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ναυαγίων προσκομισθεῖσαι κατέπλεον (1.51.4, "They sailed down, traveling through corpses and wrecks"). The liquid terrain makes the collection of corpses difficult. Yet the Athenian sailors are safe on board, sailing through the corpses. In contrast to the Athenians repeatedly

[366] Lateiner 1977, 98.

[367] Foster 2009, 385.

failing to secure burial for their own corpses in later scenes, these Athenians' arrival allows the Corcyreans to take up their dead eventually and make a claim of victory (1.54).

The pomp and pageantry of the memorial for the Athenians who died in the first year of the war also set a standard against which the Athenians' later failures to bury properly their war dead fall short. Performed according to τῷ πατρίῳ νόμῳ (2.34.1, "ancestral custom"), the ceremony is illustrated in great detail: the bones of the dead, the offerings of the families, the cypress wood of the coffins, their distribution by tribe, their transportation to the public tomb, the procession of citizens and foreigners, the lamentation of female relatives (2.34.2-4). Thucydides adds a rare acknowledgment of beauty, describing the setting of the public tomb as: ἐπὶ τοῦ καλλίστου προαστείου τῆς πόλεως (2.34.5, "in the most beautiful suburb of the polis"). Hornblower says of the acknowledgement: "The comment on the physical beauty of the site is almost unique in Th., who seems to have had little aesthetic sense or interest."[368] Thucydides elucidates the care and honor with which the Athenians treat the war dead of the first year to throw the following scenes into stark relief.

At the ceremony for the war dead of the first year, Pericles gives the Funeral Oration in which he glorifies Athens (2.35-46).[369] Immediately after the oration ends, the plague, with all of its liquid connections analyzed above, falls upon Athens. Thus just a short time after the burial of the first year's war dead, the Athenians undergo a shocking reversal in their observance of funerary rites. With the Athenians overwhelmed by the sheer number of corpses and their

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[368] Hornblower 1991-2008, 1.294.

[369] The oration picks up where the previous passage left off, in ritually honoring the dead. It does, however, break from the previously described ceremony in key ways, such as its focus on the present generation as opposed to ancestral roots. See Foster 2010, 191.

own suffering, νόμοι τε πάντες ξυνεταράχθησαν οἷς ἐχρῶντο πρότερον περὶ τὰς ταφάς (2.52.4, "all the customs concerning burial rites which were practiced earlier were disrupted"). Corpses defiled temples (2.52.3);[370] citizens appropriated funerary pyres of their fellow citizens (2.52.4). It is this passage that is echoed in the depiction of the Battle at the Assinarus River, and it is here that Thucydides illustrates the corpses as particularly amassed around water sources: περὶ τὰς κρήνας ἁπάσας ἡμιθνῆτες τοῦ ὕδατος ἐπιθυμίᾳ (2.52.2, "those half dead lay around every spring in their desire for water"). Plato's Socrates famously describes the maritime Greek world as frogs or ants gathered around a pond (Plato *Phaedo* 109b). The disregard for standard funerary rites allows Thucydides to construct a similar—albeit gorier and more pessimistic—allegory for the maritime Athenians.

The next passage also combines the themes of sacred spaces, liquids, and unburied Athenian corpses. This scene following the Battle of Delium of 424/3, like the plague, illustrates the moral degradation of the times. Lateiner argues that it expresses "trivialization of politics and the diminution of religious and moral values caused by the Peloponnesian War."[371] A spring at Delium holds sacred value to the Boeotians and becomes a point of contention after the battle. After losing the battle, the Athenians send a herald to receive permission to collect their dead in accordance with standard practice. However, a Boeotian herald intercepts the Athenian and demands to speak to the Athenian camp first. He upbraids the Athenians for occupying Delium, a consecrated precinct, and using its sacred water:

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[370] This scene violently complements the Athenians' settling on the sacred Pelargikon during their painful abandonment of Attica (2.17.1).

[371] Lateiner 1977, 103.

> πᾶσι γὰρ εἶναι καθεστηκὸς ἰόντας ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλλήλων ἱερῶν τῶν ἐνόντων ἀπέχεσθαι, Ἀθηναίους δὲ Δήλιον τειχίσαντας ἐνοικεῖν, καὶ ὅσα ἄνθρωποι ἐν βεβήλῳ δρῶσι πάντα γίγνεσθαι αὐτόθι, ὕδωρ τε ὃ ἦν ἄψαυστον σφίσι πλὴν πρὸς τὰ ἱερὰ χέρνιβι χρῆσθαι, ἀνασπάσαντας ὑδρεύεσθαι (4.97.3).
>
> It is an established custom for all that those invading the land of others keep away from the holy precincts within, but the Athenians have fortified and occupied Delium, and everything is occurring there that people do on unhallowed grounds. Drawing and fetching the water, which was untouched except for usage in sacrifices, the Athenians are using it to wash their hands.

He concludes his speech by invoking the gods and refusing to give back the war dead until the Athenians end their occupation of Delium. The standoff pits an ancient, particularly Boeotian sacrilege against an especially Athenian one. By refusing to return the corpses of men who fell in battle, the Boeotians are committing a crime common to Greek literature ranging back to the *Iliad*. Of particular interest to us is the prominent role this motif plays in the Theban cycle. The Boeotians' actions in the narrative of this Athenian historian mirror that of Creon across multiple contemporary Athenian tragedies.[372]

On the other side of the stalemate, the Athenians seem to be engaging in a strikingly Athenian sacrilege. Just as they practice naked imperialism on the high seas, they commandeer the water at Delium for their own use—to wash their dirty hands—despite the objections of the locals.[373] Thucydides includes the Athenians' response to the Boeotian herald. They refuse the ultimatum, and regarding the water, they explain: ὕδωρ τε ἐν τῇ ἀνάγκῃ κινῆσαι, ἣν οὐκ αὐτοὶ ὕβρει προσθέσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκείνους προτέρους ἐπὶ τὴν σφετέραν ἐλθόντας ἀμυνόμενοι βιάζεσθαι

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[372] See especially Sophocles *Antigone* 1-99 *et passim*, Euripides *Suppliants* 524-7, 537-40 *et passim.* For prose analyses of this myth, see Herodotus 9.27 and Lysias 2.7-10.

[373] Cf. Pericles' assertion that the Athenians' are masters of however much of the sea they want (2.62.2).

χρῆσθαι (4.98.5, “They removed the water by necessity, which they did not assent to insolently, but defending themselves against [the Boeotians] who earlier attacked their own land, they were compelled to use the water”). This argument matches Athenian rhetoric that their empire and militaristic expansion was not their own choice but was forced upon them by necessity (e.g. 1.75.4, 2.63.2, 6.18).[374] The only other mention of sacred water in the *History* comes in Thucydides’ depiction of a sacred stream, named Καλλιρρόη (“Beautiful-Flow”), that courses through the heart of Athens (2.15.5). This stream and its usages connect the Athenians of Thucydides’ day to their ancestors. Of the two passages on sacred water, the first speaks to Athenian self-identity, and the second sees Athenians appropriate the sacred water of others. Their treatment of sacred water parallels their engagement with the sea and here prevents them from properly burying their compatriots who died at Delium.

The final scene of unburied Athenian corpses takes us back to the Athenians’ failed endeavor on Sicily. Many factors and multiple events play into the Athenians’ shocking loss in Sicily, but the final blow to their rule over the sea comes in a last-ditch naval battle within the Great Harbor (7.70-1). After the Athenians fail to break out of the harbor and are utterly defeated in the battle, they lose sight of their duty to bury their fallen brethren: οἱ δ᾽ Ἀθηναῖοι ὑπὸ μεγέθους τῶν παρόντων κακῶν νεκρῶν μὲν πέρι ἢ ναυαγίων οὐδὲ ἐπενόουν αἰτῆσαι ἀναίρεσιν (7.72.2, “The Athenians, under the magnitude of their present evils, did not even think to request permission to recover their dead or their wrecks”).[375] The construction again conflates damaged Athenian ships and bodies. Whereas the Athenians at Corcyra allowed the Corcyreans

[374] See chapter 3. For Thucydides on necessity, see Pouncey 1980, Ostwald 1988, Luginbill 1999, 36-52.

[375] Thucydides reiterates the Athenians’ failure to bury their dead a few paragraphs later (7.75.3).

to take up their dead, the Athenians in the plague narrative were overwhelmed by the amount of corpses, and the Athenians at Delium attempted to bury the war dead, the Athenians at this juncture do not even think to bury their dead, signifying a new low point in the war's ongoing moral decline. Lateiner states that "never before were the Athenians disheartened to the extent of not requesting their dead who lay in the enemy's power."[376] The functions of liquids in this scene are straightforward. The liquid of the harbor, no longer under the Athenians' control, drowns Athenian soldiers. After the battle is over, their living comrades' neglect leaves the corpses to bob in that same liquid.

In these scenes, Thucydides seems to be setting himself up for his depiction of the Battle of Arginusae of 406 and its aftermath, but the narrative cuts off before he gets there. It is impossible to know with certainty how Thucydides planned to compose the remainder of his work. However, given the information available to us, we can make an informed conjecture. Thucydides lived to see the end of the war, but his narrative only gets partway through 411, seven years before the war's end.[377] After an Athenian victory at the Battle of Arginusae, a storm prevented the Athenian generals from collecting their war dead still at sea (Xenophon *Hellenica* 1.6.35); on trial for not collecting and properly burying their dead, the generals specifically blamed the destructiveness of the storm (Xenophon *Hellenica* 1.7.3-4); the Athenian demos executed the generals, including Pericles' son, accelerating Athens' demise (Xenophon *Hellenica* 1.7.34). Thucydides, in the scenes analyzed in this section, develops the intertwined themes of

[376] Lateiner 1977, 104.

[377] Thucydides shows clear knowledge of and foreshadows Athens' ultimate loss in 404 (2.65.12, 6.15.3-5). I do not agree with the argument that 6.15.3-5 denotes the failure of the Sicilian Expedition rather than the ultimate fall of Athens. K.J. Dover provides a convincing refutation of this argument, Dover 1965, 23-4.

destructive liquids and the Athenians' failure to bury their dead. These data all point to the conclusion that Thucydides constructs these scenes of unburied Athenian corpses and includes destructive liquids therein in preparation for an unrealized description of the Battle of Arginusae and its aftermath.

The repeated depictions of unburied corpses elucidate the moral decline brought about by the Peloponnesian War. The war takes its toll on Athens, and this is witnessed in the gap between the honor granted those who die during the first year of the war and the treatment of those who die later. At Delium, the Athenians' aggressive and sacrilegious appropriation of water leads to their inability to bury their dead. During the plague and Sicilian narratives, the unburied Athenians remain in or around water, a stark and vivid reminder of the Athenians' ruinous relationship with destructive liquids.

CONCLUSION

I hope to have shown that Thucydides constructs liquids as in motion and destructive in order to undermine the rhetoric of Athenian characters within his text. Chapters one and two have demonstrated that Thucydides' conceptualizations of liquids and solids are far from novel. He works within a well-established tradition that spans centuries and literary genres. The thematization of liquids as moving and potentially damaging does not culminate with Thucydides. His text fuels this ongoing tradition and acts as a model for fourth-century authors. This conclusion aims to glimpse at Thucydides' influence in the literary construction of liquids and solids. Rather than give a cursory summary of the complex naval history and diverse literature of the fourth century, I will dive into one particularly telling set of passages, Plato's construction of the Atlantis myth, to showcase the continuance of our themes and the influence of Thucydides.

Plato develops the Atlantis myth through the words of Critias across two extant dialogues, the *Timaeus* and the *Critias.* Active in the conversation is Hermocrates, the popular Syracusan leader responsible, according to Thucydides, for transforming Syracuse into a naval power (6.33-4. 7.21.3-5, see also 7.55). The *Timaeus* thematizes motion beyond its discussion of Atlantis, with Socrates' desire to see the polis in motion (Plato *Timaeus* 19c-d) and Timaeus' distinction between being and becoming (Plato *Timaeus* 27d–28a). I will focus on Plato's depictions of liquids in the Atlantis myth as well as the opposition he constructs between Atlantis

and ancient Athens.[378] He exhibits destructive liquids marking the passage of time, and he sets up his two mythical powers to evoke fifth-century Sparta and Athens. Through both developments, Plato builds on Thucydides' narrative and shows the themes analyzed in this project to be thriving into the fourth century.

The Passage of Time

Plato thematizes the passage of time in the Atlantis myth, illustrating it with destructive liquid imagery. He couches the myth in antiquity. The story purportedly took place nine millennia earlier, and its telling and retelling underscore the theme of old age. Critias tells the story he long ago heard from his grandfather, also named Critias (Plato *Timaeus* 21a-b).[379] He wraps up the age of the tale in that of the elder Critias: ἐγὼ φράσω, παλαιὸν ἀκηκοὼς λόγον οὐ νέου ἀνδρός (Plato *Timaeus* 21a, "I will tell you, having heard an old story from a man who was not young"). The elder Critias heard the story from Solon, who was of the generation before and heard it, in turn, from Egyptian priests versed in antiquity (Plato *Timaeus* 21d-22a). Solon represents not just an Athenian founding father but one associated with old-fashioned Athenian solidity.[380] Egypt was known to the Greeks as a land much older than their own, famous in fact for its old age. Plato's framing evokes the scene in Herodotus where Egyptian priests belittle

[378] Throughout this conclusion, "ancient Athens" is shorthand for Plato's construction of Athens within the Atlantis myth.

[379] Brisson opens *Plato the Myth Maker* with this scene as an example of collective memory, 1998, 17-8.

[380] See chapter 1.

Hecataeus's reported lineage (Herodotus 2.143).[381] The myth later argues that ancient Athens was even older than Egypt (Plato *Timaeus* 23e-24a), establishing precedence for this now lost iteration of Athens.

In the *Timaeus*, the passage of time is marked by watershed floods. Solon recounts μετὰ τὸν κατακλυσμὸν αὖ περὶ Δευκαλίωνος καὶ Πύρρας ὡς διεγένοντο (Plato *Timaeus* 22a, "after the flood about Deucalion and Pyrrha, how they survived") as an example of Greek antiquity. The Egyptian priests respond, distinguishing their own civilization from younger ones such as the Greeks'. The Nile River grants Egypt water from below; this process does not feature the same violence as experienced in the rest of the world, which relies on water from above (Plato *Timaeus* 22e). This dynamic allows the Egyptians to record world history, while other cultures must start fresh after each liquid disaster:

> τὰ δὲ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄρτι κατεσκευασμένα ἑκάστοτε τυγχάνει γράμμασι καὶ ἅπασιν ὁπόσων πόλεις δέονται, καὶ πάλιν δι᾽ εἰωθότων ἐτῶν ὥσπερ νόσημα ἥκει φερόμενον αὐτοῖς ῥεῦμα οὐράνιον καὶ τοὺς ἀγραμμάτους τε καὶ ἀμούσους ἔλιπεν ὑμῶν, ὥστε πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἷον νέοι γίγνεσθε, οὐδὲν εἰδότες οὔτε τῶν τῇδε οὔτε τῶν παρ᾽ ὑμῖν, ὅσα ἦν ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς χρόνοις (Plato *Timaeus* 23a-b).
>
> You and others are in fact equipped fresh each time with writing and all things poleis require, and after the accustomed number of years, just like a disease, the flood from heaven comes again, being borne against these, and leaves the illiterate and uncultured among you, so that you again become just like the young from the beginning, knowing nothing of what happened in ancient times either in this land or in your own.

The Egyptians illustrate the carnage that these intermittent floods wreak on the world's populations. They compare these floods to diseases, reminiscent of Thucydides' portrayal of the

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[381] Morgan 1998, 103.

Athenian plague as liquid (2.49). After ancient Athens' glorious victory over Atlantis, earthquakes and floods destroy ancient Athens and Atlantis (Plato *Timaeus* 25c-d).[382]

The *Critias* likewise develops these destructive floods to measure the passage of time. The intermittent, deadly floods described in the *Timaeus* do not just cull the human populations, they can alter and erase the physical topography of the lands they hit. Critias describes how Attica changed from a place of fertility to the barren landscape with which we are familiar from Thucydides (1.2.5): πολλῶν οὖν γεγονότων καὶ μεγάλων κατακλυσμῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐνακισχιλίοις ἔτεσι… τὸ τῆς γῆς ἐν τούτοις τοῖς χρόνοις καὶ πάθεσιν ἐκ τῶν ὑψηλῶν ἀπορρέον οὔτε χῶμα, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις τόποις, προχοῖ λόγου ἄξιον ἀεί τε κύκλῳ περιρρέον εἰς βάθος ἀφανίζεται (Plato *Critias* 111a-b, "After many great floods occurred in the 9,000 years… the soil of the ground, during these times and these disasters, flowing away from the high regions, forms no land worthy of mention, as in other regions, but flowing down continually and all around, disappears into the deep"). Athens' transformation from a land power in the Atlantis myth to a naval power in Thucydides and Plato's time accompanies the physical erosion of the land it rests upon. Critias says that, like a small island, only the bones of Attica's sick body remain (Plato *Critias* 111b), further conflating these natural phenomena with sickness and associating Athens with the sea. Like Attica as a whole, the Athenian acropolis has experienced transformative erosion from flood waters (Plato *Critias* 112a). This erosion occurs on one preeminently wet (ὑγρὰ) night during the third destruction wrought by extraordinary water (ὕδατος ἐξαισίου) before that in the time of Deucalion and Pyrrha. According to the Egyptian priests, long before Greece's collective memory kicked in, flood waters cut back the acropolis, the foremost landmark in Athens.

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382 For Thucydides on the connection between these two natural phenomena, see 3.89.

Plato's illustration of the passage of time through moving liquids proves reminiscent of Heraclitus' river imagery: ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ (Heraclitus D-K 12, "other and still other waters flow"). The damage that these flood waters cause parallels the destructiveness of liquids in Thucydides and elsewhere.

Atlantis and Athens

Plato creates the opposition between ancient Athens and Atlantis to evoke different historical oppositions, including that of Athens and Sparta of the late fifth century. Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Christopher Gill show how Plato's binary between ancient Athens and Atlantis makes various fifth-century connections. Ancient Athens can signify Athens at the time of Marathon facing off against an imperialistic Persia.[383] Gill acknowledges this resonance but argues that Plato's ancient Athens can "more persuasively" be seen as Sparta.[384] This turns Atlantis into Athens: "the dream or ideal Periclean Athens had about itself… a graphic symbol of the development of Athenian maritime imperialism."[385] Kathryn Morgan agrees with these two interpretations and posits that the myth also "plays upon concerns about the nature of Athens' maritime alliances at the time of the second Athenian league."[386] These multifarious historical evocations enrich the characterizations of ancient Athens and Atlantis and reveal Plato —like Thucydides—operating within a broad literary environment. I focus on associations with

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[383] Vidal-Naquet 1964, 426-9.

[384] Gill 1977, 295-6.

[385] Gill 1977, 296.

[386] Morgan 1998, 114.

the Peloponnesian War here to draw out connections between these passages and Thucydides' narrative.

Plato constructs ancient Athenian moderation as comparable to Spartan moderation in Thucydides' Archaeology. Early Athenians shared property in common: ἴδιον μὲν αὐτῶν οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν κεκτημένος, ἅπαντα δὲ πάντων κοινὰ νομίζοντες αὑτῶν, πέρα δὲ ἱκανῆς τροφῆς οὐδὲν ἀξιοῦντες παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων δέχεσθαι πολιτῶν (Plato *Critias* 110c-d, "No one among them possessed any personal property; they considered all things to be common among all of them; and they expected to receive nothing beyond sufficient nourishment from the other citizens"). Thucydides' Spartans exhibit moderation in clothing and architecture relative to their Athenian rivals (1.6.3-4, 1.10.2-3). Plato completes the comparison by outlining the Atlantians' transformation from being unconcerned with wealth to becoming shameful (αἰσχροὶ) in their pursuit of it (Plato *Critias* 120e-121b). This trajectory of empires deteriorating under their own success parallels that in Herodotus (9.122) and similarly appears at the very end of the extant work. Thucydides' Athenians, too, begin free of stasis (1.2.3-6) and grow less cohesive over time.

Plato adopts Thucydides' stark divide between land and sea, allowing him to associate Atlantis closely with the motion and destructiveness of the sea. The Egyptians explain to Solon how natural forces dissolved ancient Athens and Atlantis following their war: τό τε παρ᾽ ὑμῖν μάχιμον πᾶν ἁθρόον ἔδυ κατὰ γῆς, ἥ τε Ἀτλαντὶς νῆσος ὡσαύτως κατὰ τῆς θαλάττης δῦσα ἠφανίσθη (Plato *Timaeus* 25d, "the entire soldiery of your city sank together into the earth, and the island of Atlantis likewise disappeared, sinking into the sea"). Similar to Thucydides, Plato

grants deference to natural forces' agency over human lives. The two powers are swallowed up by their respective domains and return to their material essences.

Atlantis stands not exactly as Thucydides' Athens but more as the pure naval polis that Pericles and the Athenians strive to construct. Other authors show Poseidon falling short to Athena in his attempt to win over Athens (Herodotus 8.55, Plutarch *Themistocles* 19.2-3, etc.),[387] yet in Plato Poseidon succeeds in gaining Atlantis as his own (Plato *Critias* 113b-e). Atlantis was also an island unreachable except by ship (Plato *Critias* 113d-e), as Pericles attempted to make Athens (1.140-4). Plato takes Thucydides' already stark divide between a land power and a sea power and strengthens it, describing Atlantis as more purely naval than even Pericles' Athenians. Atlantis, however, proves no more successful than fifth-century Athens, suggesting that it was not the Athenians' failure to implement Pericles' plan that doomed them.

Plato echoes Thucydides in his depiction of the underlying dynamic that leads ancient Athens and Atlantis to war. Thucydides details many events in the lead up to war but frames them all as secondary to the truest cause of the war: τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ, τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἡγοῦμαι μεγάλους γιγνομένους καὶ φόβον παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν (1.23.6, "I believe the truest cause of the war, albeit least evident in speech, is the Athenians becoming great and striking fear in the Spartans, forcing them to fight"). He reiterates this primary cause twice more (1.88, 1.118.2). Plato paints a similar picture: λέγει γὰρ τὰ γεγραμμένα ὅσην ἡ πόλις ὑμῶν ἔπαυσέν ποτε δύναμιν ὕβρει πορευομένην ἅμα ἐπὶ πᾶσαν Εὐρώπην καὶ Ἀσίαν, ἔξωθεν ὁρμηθεῖσαν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀτλαντικοῦ πελάγους (Plato *Timaeus* 24e, "The records state that your polis once stopped so great a power

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387 See chapter two.

that was advancing in insolence against all Europe and Asia, attacking from the Atlantic Ocean"). Atlantis, the power predicated on the churn of the sea, advances (πορευομένην) and attacks (ὁρμηθεῖσαν); ancient Athens, Plato's land-based power, holds its ground and stops (ἔπαυσέν) the advance. The motion of the naval power sparks the war; the land power's solidity wins it.

Plato's Atlantis myth reveals his skepticism of Athens' naval imperial policy. "Plato did not approve of Athens' imperial past," Morgan argues.[388] He employs destructive liquids to undermine the stability of naval power. Thucydides, too, registers skepticism and disapproval of Athens' imperial policies. This is not yet the majority reading of Thucydides' *History*, but I hope that this project contributes to its soon becoming so.

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[388] Morgan 1998, 108.

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