

THUCYDIDES

History of the Peloponnesian War

Translated by
REX WARNER

with an Introduction and Notes by
M. I. FINLEY

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in the same dilemma, since he has taken over for himself the words of the great seventeenth-century philosopher. On such occasions I have usually followed his lead, and I have taken something from him, too, in the knowledge that he would probably wish me to do so, just as my own ambitions would be gratified if some future translator were to see fit to employ some words or phrases of my own. Certainly I would not pretend that in this translation I have improved on Crawley. He is accurate, where Hobbes is not; he has a zeal and a love for his author; he has a clear, flowing, and distinguished style. I owe much to him and much to Hobbes, and for my own translation can claim no merit other than the questionable one of modernity. For it is more than three hundred years since Hobbes wrote and nearly eighty since the publication of Crawley's version. Thucydides himself is alive, and it would be a pity if any reader were deterred from studying him by any misapprehension about his antiquity.

Finally I must express my gratitude to Professor Kitto, of Bristol University, for his great kindness in reading the proofs, in detecting error, and in making many valuable suggestions.

R. W.

BOOK ONE

INTRODUCTION

¹ THUCYDIDES the Athenian wrote the history of the war fought between Athens and Sparta, beginning the account at the very outbreak of the war, in the belief that it was going to be a great war and more worth writing about than any of those which had taken place in the past. My belief was based on the fact that the two sides were at the very height of their power and preparedness, and I saw, too, that the rest of the Hellenic world was committed to one side or the other; even those who were not immediately engaged were deliberating on the courses which they were to take later. This was the greatest disturbance in the history of the Hellenes, affecting also a large part of the non-Hellenic world, and indeed, I might almost say, the whole of mankind. For though I have found it impossible, because of its remoteness in time, to acquire a really precise knowledge of the distant past or even of the history preceding our own period, yet, after looking back into it as far as I can, all the evidence leads me to conclude that these periods were not great periods either in warfare or in anything else.

² It appears, for example, that the country now called Hellas¹ had no settled population in ancient times; instead there was a series of migrations, as the various tribes, being under the constant pressure of invaders who were stronger than they were, were always prepared to abandon their own territory. There was no commerce, and no safe communication either by land or sea; the use they made of their land was limited to the production of necessities; they had no surplus left over for capital, and no regular system of

¹ In the Greek language, ancient as well as modern, the name of the country is 'Hellas', of the people 'Hellenes'. 'Hellas' included all Greek communities, wherever they were established, but here Thucydides is referring more narrowly to the Greek peninsula.

agriculture, since they lacked the protection of fortifications and at any moment an invader might appear and take their land away from them. Thus, in the belief that the day-to-day necessities of life could be secured just as well in one place as in another, they showed no reluctance in moving from their homes, and therefore built no cities of any size or strength, nor acquired any important resources. Where the soil was most fertile there were the most frequent changes of population, as in what is now called Thessaly, in Boeotia, in most of the Peloponnese (except Arcadia), and in others of the richest parts of Hellas. For in these fertile districts it was easier for individuals to secure greater powers than their neighbours: this led to disunity, which often caused the collapse of these states, which in any case were more likely than others to attract the attention of foreign invaders.

It is interesting to observe that Attica, which, because of the poverty of her soil, was remarkably free from political disunity, has always been inhabited by the same race of people. Indeed, this is an important example of my theory that it was because of migrations that there was uneven development elsewhere; for when people were driven out from other parts of Greece by war or by disturbances, the most powerful of them took refuge in Athens, as being a stable society; then they became citizens, and soon made the city even more populous than it had been before, with the result that later Attica became too small for her inhabitants and colonies were sent out to Ionia.

- 3 Another point which seems to me good evidence for the weakness of the early inhabitants of the country is this: we have no record of any action taken by Hellas as a whole before the Trojan War. Indeed, my view is that at this time the whole country was not even called 'Hellas'. Before the time of Hellen, the son of Deucalion, the name did not exist at all, and different parts were known by the names of different tribes, with the name 'Pelasgian' predominating. After Hellen and his sons had grown powerful in Phthiotis and had been invited as allies into other states, these states separately and because of their connections with the family of Hellen began to be called 'Hellenic'. But it took a long time before the name ousted all the other names. The best evidence for this can be found in Homer, who, though he was born much later

than the time of the Trojan War,² nowhere uses the name 'Hellenic' for the whole force. Instead he keeps this name for the followers of Achilles who came from Phthiotis and were in fact the original Hellenes. For the rest in his poems he uses the words 'Danaans', 'Argives', and 'Achaeans'. He does not even use the term 'foreigners',³ and this, in my opinion, is because in his time the Hellenes were not yet known by one name, and so marked off as something separate from the outside world. By 'Hellenic' I mean here both those who took on the name city by city, as the result of a common language, and those who later were all called by the common name. In any case these various Hellenic states, weak in themselves and lacking in communications with one another, took no kind of collective action before the time of the Trojan War. And they could not have united even for the Trojan expedition unless they had previously acquired a greater knowledge of seafaring.

- 4 Minos, according to tradition, was the first person to organize a navy. He controlled the greater part of what is now called the Hellenic Sea;⁴ he ruled over the Cyclades, in most of which he founded the first colonies, putting his sons in as governors after having driven out the Carians. And it is reasonable to suppose that he did his best to put down piracy in order to secure his own revenues.
- 5 For in these early times, as communication by sea became easier, so piracy became a common profession both among the Hellenes and among the barbarians who lived on the coast and in the islands. The leading pirates were powerful men, acting both out of self-interest and in order to support the weak among their own people. They would descend upon cities which were unprotected by walls and indeed consisted only of scattered settlements; and by plundering such places they would gain most of their livelihood. At this time such a profession, so far from being regarded as disgraceful, was considered quite honourable. It is an attitude that can be

2. As is pointed out in the Introduction, p. 17, Thucydides gives no date for the Trojan War.

3. Rex Warner regularly translates the Greek *barbaroi* by 'foreigners'. It should be noted that the Athenians, for example, would call other Greeks, such as Spartans or Corinthians, *xenoi*, which is also commonly rendered by 'foreigners'.

4. We now say 'Aegean Sea'.

illustrated even today by some of the inhabitants of the mainland among whom successful piracy is regarded as something to be proud of; and in the old poets, too, we find that the regular question always asked of those who arrive by sea is 'Are you pirates?' It is never assumed either that those who were so questioned would shrink from admitting the fact, or that those who were interested in finding out the fact would reproach them with it.

The same system of armed robbery prevailed by land; and even up to the present day much of Hellas still follows the old way of life – among the Ozolian Locrians, for instance, and the Aetolians and the Acarnanians and the others who live on the mainland in that area. Among these people the custom of carrying arms still survives from the old days of robbery; for at one time, since houses were unprotected and communications unsafe, this was a general custom throughout the whole of Hellas and it was the normal thing to carry arms on all occasions, as it is now among foreigners. The fact that the peoples I have mentioned still live in this way is evidence that once this was the general rule among all the Hellenes.

The Athenians were the first to give up the habit of carrying weapons and to adopt a way of living that was more relaxed and more luxurious. In fact the elder men of the rich families who had these luxurious tastes only recently gave up wearing linen undergarments and tying their hair behind their heads in a knot fastened with a clasp of golden grasshoppers: the same fashions spread to their kinsmen in Ionia, and lasted there among the old men for some time. It was the Spartans who first began to dress simply and in accordance with our modern taste, with the rich leading a life that was as much as possible like the life of the ordinary people. They, too, were the first to play games naked, to take off their clothes openly, and to rub themselves down with olive oil after their exercise. In ancient times even at the Olympic Games the athletes used to wear coverings for their loins, and indeed this practice was still in existence not very many years ago. Even today many foreigners, especially in Asia, wear these loincloths for boxing matches and wrestling bouts. Indeed, one could point to a number of other instances where the manners of the ancient

Hellenic world are very similar to the manners of foreigners to-day.

7 Cities were sited differently in the later periods; for, as seafaring became more general and capital reserves came into existence, new walled cities were built actually on the coasts, and isthmuses were occupied for commercial reasons and for purposes of defence against neighbouring powers. Because of the wide prevalence of piracy, the ancient cities, both in the islands and on the mainland, were built at some distance from the sea, and still remain to this day on their original sites. For the pirates would rob not only each other but everyone else, seafaring or not, who lived along the coasts.

8 Piracy was just as prevalent in the islands among the Carians and Phoenicians, who in fact colonized most of them. This was proved during this present war, when Delos was officially purified by the Athenians and all the graves in the island were opened up. More than half of these graves were Carian, as could be seen from the type of weapons buried with the bodies and from the method of burial, which was the same as that still used in Caria.⁵ But after Minos had organized a navy, sea communications improved; he sent colonies to most of the islands and drove out the notorious pirates, with the result that those who lived on the sea-coasts were now in a position to acquire wealth and live a more settled life. Some of them, on the strength of their new riches, built walls for their cities. The weaker, because of the general desire to make profits, were content to put up with being governed by the stronger, and those who won superior power by acquiring capital resources brought the smaller cities under their control. Hellas had already developed some way along these lines when the expedition to Troy took place.

9 Agamemnon, it seems to me, must have been the most powerful of the rulers of his day; and it was for this reason that he raised the force against Troy, not because the suitors of Helen were bound to

5. In III, 104 Thucydides explains more fully: burials were henceforth prohibited on Delos because it was declared sacred ground. The archaeological evidence suggests that Thucydides, or his source, incorrectly identified early (Geometric) Greek pottery as Carian; see R. M. Cook in *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 50 (1955), 266–70.

follow him by the oaths which they had sworn to Tyndareus.⁶ Pelops, according to the most reliable tradition in the Peloponnese, came there from Asia. He brought great wealth with him, and, settling in a poor country, acquired such power that, though he was a foreigner, the whole land was called after him. His descendants became still more prosperous. Eurystheus was killed in Attica by the sons of Heracles, and before setting out he had entrusted Mycenae and its government to his relative Atreus, the brother of Eurystheus's mother, who had been exiled by his father because of the death of Chrysippus. When Eurystheus failed to return, Atreus, who had the reputation of a powerful man and who had made himself popular with the Mycenaeans, took over at their request, since they were frightened of the sons of Heracles, the kingship of Mycenae and of all the land that Eurystheus had ruled. So the descendants of Pelops became more powerful than the descendants of Perseus. It was to this empire that Agamemnon succeeded, and at the same time he had a stronger navy than any other ruler; thus, in my opinion, fear played a greater part than loyalty in the raising of the expedition against Troy. It appears, if we can believe the evidence of Homer, that Agamemnon himself commanded more ships than anyone else and at the same time equipped another fleet for the Arcadians. And in describing the sceptre which Agamemnon had inherited, Homer calls him:

Of many islands and all Argos King.

As his power was based on the mainland, he could not have ruled over any islands, except the few that are near the coast, unless he had possessed a considerable navy. And from this expedition we can make reasonable conjectures about other expeditions before that time.

10 Mycenae certainly was a small place, and many of the towns of that period do not seem to us today to be particularly imposing; yet that is not good evidence for rejecting what the poets and what general tradition have to say about the size of the expedition.

6. The tradition was that Helen was wooed by many leading Greek kings and nobles, that she was allowed to make her own choice, and that all the suitors swore on oath to her father Tyndareus to abide by her decision.

Suppose, for example, that the city of Sparta were to become deserted and that only the temples and foundations of buildings remained, I think that future generations would, as time passed, find it very difficult to believe that the place had really been as powerful as it was represented to be. Yet the Spartans occupy two-fifths of the Peloponnese and stand at the head not only of the whole Peloponnese itself but also of numerous allies beyond its frontiers. Since, however, the city is not regularly planned and contains no temples or monuments of great magnificence, but is simply a collection of villages, in the ancient Hellenic way, its appearance would not come up to expectation. If, on the other hand, the same thing were to happen to Athens, one would conjecture from what met the eye that the city had been twice as powerful as in fact it is.

We have no right, therefore, to judge cities by their appearances rather than by their actual power, and there is no reason why we should not believe that the Trojan expedition was the greatest that had ever taken place. It is equally true that it was not on the scale of what is done in modern warfare. It is questionable whether we can have complete confidence in Homer's figures, which, since he was a poet, were probably exaggerated. Even if we accept them, however, it appears that Agamemnon's force was smaller than forces are nowadays. Homer gives the number of ships as 1,200, and says that the crew of each Boeotian ship numbered 120, and the crews of the ships of Philoctetes were fifty men for each ship. By this, I imagine, he means to express the maximum and the minimum of the various ships' companies. In any case he gives no other figures for the crews in his catalogue of the ships. The men not only rowed in the ships but also served in the army, as is made clear by the passage about the ships of Philoctetes, when he states that the rowers were all archers. Apart from the kings and the very highest officers, it is unlikely that there were many men aboard who were not sailors; especially as they had to cross the open sea, carrying all their equipment with them, in ships that had no decks but were built in the old fashion of the pirate fleets. If, therefore, we reckon the numbers by taking an average of the biggest and the smallest ships, they will not appear very great, considering that this was a force representing the united effort of the whole of Hellas.

11 The reason for this was not so much shortage of man-power as shortage of money. Lack of supplies made them cut down their numbers to the point at which they expected they would be able to live off the country in which they were fighting. Even after the victory which they won on landing (it is clear that there must have been a victory: otherwise they could not have put up the fortifications round their camp), it does not appear that they brought the whole of their force into action; instead they cultivated the soil of the Chersonese and went on plundering expeditions because of their shortage of supplies. It was because of this dispersal of their forces that the Trojans managed to hold out for ten years of warfare, since they were always strong enough to deal with that fraction of the Greek army which at any one time remained in the field. If, however, Agamemnon had had plenty of supplies with him when he arrived, and if they had used their whole force in making war continuously, without breaking off for plundering expeditions and for cultivating the land, they would have won easily, as is obvious from the fact that they could contain the Trojans when they were not in full force but employing only whatever portion of their army happened to be available. If, therefore, they had all settled down to the siege at once, they would have taken Troy in a shorter time and with less trouble.

12 As it was, just as lack of money was the reason why previous expeditions were not really considerable, so in the case of this one, which was more famous than any others before it, we shall find, if we look at the evidence of what was actually done, that it was not so important as it was made out to be and as it is still, through the influence of the poets, believed to have been.

Even after the Trojan War Hellas was in a state of ferment; there were constant resettlements, and so no opportunity for peaceful development. It was long before the army returned from Troy, and this fact in itself led to many changes. There was party strife in nearly all the cities, and those who were driven into exile founded new cities. Sixty years after the fall of Troy, the modern Boeotians were driven out of Arne by the Thessalians and settled in what is now Boeotia, but used to be called Cadmeis. (Part of the race had settled in Boeotia before this time, and some of these joined in the expedition to Troy.) Twenty years later the Dorians with the

descendants of Heracles made themselves masters of the Peloponnese.

Thus many years passed by and many difficulties were encountered before Hellas could enjoy any peace or stability, and before the period of shifting populations ended. Then came the period of colonization. Ionia and most of the islands were colonized by the Athenians. The Peloponnesians founded most of the colonies in Italy and Sicily, and some in other parts of Hellas. All of them were founded after the Trojan War.

13 The old form of government was hereditary monarchy with established rights and limitations; but as Hellas became more powerful and as the importance of acquiring money became more and more evident, tyrannies were established in nearly all the cities, revenues increased, shipbuilding flourished, and ambition turned towards sea-power.

The Corinthians are supposed to have been the first to adopt more or less modern methods in shipbuilding, and it is said that the first triremes ever built in Hellas were laid down in Corinth. Then there is the Corinthian shipwright, Ameinocles, who appears to have built four ships for the Samians. It is nearly 300 years ago (dating from the end of this present war) that Ameinocles went to Samos. And the first naval battle on record is the one between the Corinthians and the Corcyraeans: this was about 260 years ago.

Corinth, planted on its isthmus, had been from time immemorial an important mercantile centre, though in ancient days traffic had been by land rather than by sea. The communications between those who lived inside and those who lived outside the Peloponnese had to pass through Corinthian territory. So Corinth grew to power by her riches, as is shown by the adjective 'wealthy' which is given to her by the ancient poets. And when the Greeks began to take more to seafaring, the Corinthians acquired a fleet, put down piracy, and, being able to provide trading facilities on both the land and the sea routes, made their city powerful from the revenues which came to it by both these ways.

Later the Ionians were a great naval power. This was in the time of Cyrus, the first King of the Persians, and of his son Cambyses. Indeed, when they were fighting against Cyrus, they were for some time masters of all the sea in their region.

Then Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos, made himself powerful by means of his navy. He conquered a number of the islands, among which was Rhenea, which he dedicated to the Delian Apollo.

The Phocaeans, too, when they were founding Marseilles, defeated the Carthaginians in a naval engagement.

14 These were the greatest navies of the past, and even these navies, though many generations later than the Trojan War, do not seem to have possessed many triremes, but to have been still composed, as in the old days, of long-boats and boats of fifty oars. Triremes were first used in any numbers by the Sicilian tyrants and by the Corcyraeans. This was just before the Persian War and the death of Darius, who was King of Persia after Cambyses. There were no other navies of any importance in Hellas before the time of the expedition of Xerxes. Athens and Aegina and a few other states may have had navies of a sort, but they were mainly composed of fifty-oared boats. It was at the very end of this period, when Athens was at war with Aegina and when the foreign invasion was expected, that Themistocles persuaded his fellow-citizens to build the ships with which they fought at Salamis. Even these ships were not yet constructed with complete decks.

15 All the same these Hellenic navies, whether in the remote past or in the later periods, although they were as I have described them, were still a great source of strength to the various naval powers. They brought in revenue and they were the foundation of empire. It was by naval action that those powers, and especially those with insufficient land of their own, conquered the islands. There was no warfare on land that resulted in the acquisition of an empire. What wars there were were simply frontier skirmishes; no expedition by land was sent far from the country of its origin with the purpose of conquering some other power. There were no alliances of small states under the leadership of the great powers, nor did the smaller states form leagues for action on a basis of equality among themselves. Wars were simply local affairs between neighbours. The nearest approach to combined action was in the ancient war between Chalcis and Eretria. On this occasion the rest of the Hellenic world did join in with one side or the other.

16 Different states encountered different obstacles to the course of

their development. The Ionians, for instance, were a rapidly rising power; but King Cyrus and his Persians, having eliminated Croesus, invaded the country between the river Halys and the sea, and brought the Ionian cities on the mainland into the Persian Empire. Later Darius, with the aid of the Phoenician navy, conquered the islands as well.

17 And in the Hellenic states that were governed by tyrants, the tyrant's first thought was always for himself, for his own personal safety, and for the greatness of his own family. Consequently security was the chief political principle in these governments, and no great action ever came out of them – nothing, in fact, that went beyond their immediate local interests, except for the tyrants in Sicily, who rose to great power. So for a long time the state of affairs everywhere in Hellas was such that nothing very remarkable could be done by any combination of powers and that even the individual cities were lacking in enterprise.

18 Finally, however, the Spartans put down tyranny in the rest of Greece, most of which had been governed by tyrants for much longer than Athens. From the time when the Dorians first settled in Sparta there had been a particularly long period of political disunity; yet the Spartan constitution goes back to a very early date, and the country has never been ruled by tyrants. For rather more than 400 years, dating from the end of the late war, they have had the same system of government, and this has been not only a source of internal strength, but has enabled them to intervene in the affairs of other states.

Not many years after the end of tyrannies in Hellas the battle of Marathon was fought between the Persians and the Athenians. Ten years later the foreign enemy returned with his vast armada for the conquest of Hellas, and at this moment of peril the Spartans, since they were the leading power, were in command of the allied Hellenic forces. In face of the invasion the Athenians decided to abandon their city; they broke up their homes, took to their ships, and became a people of sailors. It was by a common effort that the foreign invasion was repelled; but not long afterwards the Hellenes – both those who had fought in the war together and those who later revolted from the King of Persia – split into two divisions, one group following Athens and the other Sparta. These were

clearly the two most powerful states, one being supreme on land, the other on the sea. For a short time the war-time alliance held together, but it was not long before quarrels took place and Athens and Sparta, each with her own allies, were at war with each other, while among the rest of the Hellenes states that had their own differences now joined one or other of the two sides.⁷ So from the end of the Persian War till the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, though there were some intervals of peace, on the whole these two Powers were either fighting with each other or putting down revolts among their allies. They were consequently in a high state of military preparedness and had gained their military experience in the hard school of danger.

19 The Spartans did not make their allies pay tribute, but saw to it that they were governed by oligarchies who would work in the Spartan interest. Athens, on the other hand, had in the course of time taken over the fleets of her allies (except for those of Chios and Lesbos) and had made them pay contributions of money instead. Thus the forces available to Athens alone for this war were greater than the combined forces had ever been when the alliance was still intact.

20 In investigating past history, and in forming the conclusions which I have formed, it must be admitted that one cannot rely on every detail which has come down to us by way of tradition. People are inclined to accept all stories of ancient times in an uncritical way – even when these stories concern their own native countries. Most people in Athens, for instance, are under the impression that Hipparchus, who was killed by Harmodius and Aristogiton, was tyrant at the time, not realizing that it was Hippias who was the eldest and the chief of the sons of Pisistratus, and that Hipparchus and Thessalus were his younger brothers. What happened was this: on the very day that had been fixed for their attempt, indeed at the very last moment, Harmodius and Aristogiton had reason to believe that Hippias had been informed of the plot by some of the conspirators. Believing him to have been forewarned, they kept away from him, but, as they wanted to perform some daring exploit before they were arrested themselves, they killed Hipparchus when they

7. See Appendix 1.

found him by the Leocorium organizing the Panathenaic procession.⁸

The rest of the Hellenes, too, make many incorrect assumptions not only about the dimly remembered past, but also about contemporary history. For instance, there is a general belief that the kings of Sparta are each entitled to two votes, whereas in fact they have only one; and it is believed, too, that the Spartans have a company of troops called 'Pitanate'. Such a company has never existed. Most people, in fact, will not take trouble in finding out the truth, but are much more inclined to accept the first story they hear.⁹

21 However, I do not think that one will be far wrong in accepting the conclusions I have reached from the evidence which I have put forward. It is better evidence than that of the poets, who exaggerate the importance of their themes, or of the prose chroniclers, who are less interested in telling the truth than in catching the attention of their public, whose authorities cannot be checked, and whose subject-matter, owing to the passage of time, is mostly lost in the unreliable streams of mythology. We may claim instead to have used only the plainest evidence and to have reached conclusions which are reasonably accurate, considering that we have been dealing with ancient history. As for this present war, even though people are apt to think that the war in which they are fighting is the greatest of all wars and, when it is over, to relapse again into their admiration of the past, nevertheless, if one looks at the facts themselves, one will see that this was the greatest war of all.

22 In this history I have made use of set speeches some of which were delivered just before and others during the war. I have found it difficult to remember the precise words used in the speeches which I listened to myself and my various informants have experienced the same difficulty; so my method has been, while keeping as closely as possible to the general sense of the words that were actually used, to make the speakers say what, in my opinion, was called for by each situation.¹⁰

8. In VI, 53–9 there is a lengthy digression on the assassination of Hipparchus in 514 B.C.

9. See the Introduction, p. 15.

10. See the Introduction, pp. 25–9.

And with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war I have made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible. Not that even so the truth was easy to discover: different eye-witnesses give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories. And it may well be that my history will seem less easy to read because of the absence in it of a romantic element. It will be enough for me, however, if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future. My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last for ever.

- 23 The greatest war in the past was the Persian War; yet in this war the decision was reached quickly as a result of two naval battles and two battles on land. The Peloponnesian War, on the other hand, not only lasted for a long time, but throughout its course brought with it unprecedented suffering for Hellas. Never before had so many cities been captured and then devastated, whether by foreign armies or by the Hellenic powers themselves (some of these cities, after capture, were resettled with new inhabitants); never had there been so many exiles; never such loss of life - both in the actual warfare and in internal revolutions. Old stories of past prodigies, which had not found much confirmation in recent experience, now became credible. Wide areas, for instance, were affected by violent earthquakes; there were more frequent eclipses of the sun than had ever been recorded before; in various parts of the country there were extensive droughts followed by famine; and there was the plague which did more harm and destroyed more life than almost any other single factor. All these calamities fell together upon the Hellenes after the outbreak of war.

War began when the Athenians and the Peloponnesians broke the Thirty Years Truce which had been made after the capture of

Euboea. As to the reasons why they broke the truce, I propose first to give an account of the causes of complaint which they had against each other and of the specific instances where their interests clashed: this is in order that there should be no doubt in anyone's mind about what led to this great war falling upon the Hellenes. But the real reason for the war is, in my opinion, most likely to be disguised by such an argument. What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta. As for the reasons for breaking the truce and declaring war which were openly expressed by each side, they are as follows.

THE DISPUTE OVER EPIDAMNUS

- 24 The city of Epidamnus is on the right of the approach to the Ionic Gulf. It is in foreign territory that is inhabited by an Illyrian race called the Taulantians. The place is a colony of Corcyra and it was founded by Phalius, the son of Eratocleides, a Corinthian of the family of the Heraclids. In accordance with the old custom, the founder had been invited from the mother city. Among the colonists there were also a certain number of Corinthians and some other Dorians.

As time went on Epidamnus became both powerful and populous; but there followed many years of political unrest, caused, they say, by a war with the foreign inhabitants of the country. As a result of this Epidamnus declined and lost most of her power. Finally, just before the war between Athens and Sparta, the democratic party drove out the aristocratic party, who then went over to the foreign enemies of the city and joined them in making piratical attacks on it both by sea and by land. The democrats inside the city now found themselves in difficulties and sent an embassy to Corcyra, begging their mother country not to allow them to perish, and asking for help both in making some settlement with the exiled party and in putting an end to the war with the foreigners. The ambassadors took up their position in the temple of Hera in Corcyra, and there made their requests, but the

11. In 446-5 B.C.

people of Corcyra refused to receive the ambassadors and sent them back without having achieved anything.

- 25 When the people in Epidamnus realized that no help was forthcoming from Corcyra, they were at a loss how to deal with the situation. They therefore sent to Delphi to inquire from the god whether they should hand over their city to the Corinthians, who had founded it, and so get help from that quarter. The reply from Delphi was that they should hand over their city and accept the leadership of Corinth. So, in obedience to the oracle, they sent to Corinth, and made over the colony to the Corinthians. They pointed out that the original founder had come from Corinth; they made public the reply which they had received from Delphi, and they begged the Corinthians to come to their help and not allow them to be destroyed.

The Corinthians agreed to come to their assistance. They felt they had a good right to do so, since they regarded the colony as belonging just as much to them as to Corcyra; and at the same time they hated the Corcyraeans because they failed to show to Corinth the respect due from a colony to the mother city. Unlike their other colonies, the Corcyraeans did not give to Corinthians the usual rights and honours at public festivals or allow them the correct facilities for making sacrifices. Instead they looked down upon their mother city, claiming that their financial power at this time made them equal with the richest states in Hellas and that their military resources were greater than those of Corinth. In particular they boasted of their naval superiority, sometimes even basing this claim on the ground that those famous sailors the Phaeacians had inhabited Corcyra before them. This belief did in fact encourage them to give particular attention to their navy, which was by no means an inconsiderable one. They had, at the outbreak of war, a fleet of 120 triremes.

- 26 All this caused ill feeling, and so the Corinthians were glad enough to send to Epidamnus the help required. They advertised for volunteers to settle there, and sent out a force consisting of Ambraciots, Leucadians, and their own citizens. This force marched by land to Apollonia, a Corinthian colony, avoiding the sea route out of fear that they might be intercepted by the Corcyraeans.

When the Corcyraeans discovered that the settlers and the

troops had arrived at Epidamnus and that the colony had been handed over to Corinth, they reacted violently. As soon as the news arrived they put to sea with twenty-five ships, which were soon followed by another fleet. Sailing up to Epidamnus, they demanded in the most threatening and abusive language first that the Epidamnians should reinstate the exiled party. These exiles, meanwhile, had come to Corcyra, had appealed to the claims of their family connections (pointing out the tombs of their own ancestors there), and begged for help in being brought back. Secondly they demanded that the Epidamnians should send away the troops and settlers that had come from Corinth.

The Epidamnians rejected both demands, and the Corcyraeans began operations against them with a fleet of forty ships. They had with them the exiles, whom they promised to restore to power, and also the Illyrian army. Taking up their positions in front of the city, they proclaimed an offer of immunity to all, whether citizens or not, who would abandon the city; those who failed to take advantage of the opportunity would be treated as enemies. Then, since there was no response to this offer, they began to besiege the city, which stands on an isthmus.

- 27 Messengers soon arrived at Corinth with the news that Epidamnus was being besieged, and the Corinthians began to equip a relief force. At the same time they advertised for volunteers to form a new colony at Epidamnus. Those who went out there were to have absolutely equal rights, and those who were not prepared to sail at once, but still wanted to have a share in the colony, could buy this share, together with the right of remaining behind, by putting down the sum of fifty Corinthian drachmae. There was a wide response to this offer both from people who wanted to sail at once and from people who paid the deposit. Various cities were asked to help with ships to escort the convoy in case the Corcyraeans attempted to intercept it. Megara provided eight ships; Pale, the Cephallenian city, provided four; five ships came from Epidaurus, one from Hermione, two from Troezen, ten from Leucas, and eight from Ambracia. The Thebans and Phliasians were asked to provide money, the Eleans were asked for money and also for hulls. The Corinthians themselves equipped a fleet of thirty ships and 3,000 hoplites.

28 When the Corcyraeans heard of these preparations they sent an embassy to Corinth, accompanied by some envoys from Sparta and Sicyon to support them. There they demanded that Corinth should withdraw her troops and colonists from Epidamnus, since Epidamnus was no concern of hers. They were prepared, however, if Corinth wished to put in a counter claim, to accept arbitration. Cities in the Peloponnese should be chosen by mutual agreement to act as arbitrators, and the colony should go to whichever side the arbitrators awarded it. Alternatively, they proposed referring the matter to the oracle at Delphi. They urged Corinth not to start a war, saying that, if she did, they themselves, through no fault of their own, would be forced in sheer self-defence to make friends elsewhere and in quarters where they had no wish to make friends.

The Corinthian reply to this was that if Corcyra withdrew the fleet and the foreign army from Epidamnus, then discussion might be profitable; but it was quite absurd to talk of arbitration while the city was still being besieged.

The Corcyraeans countered by saying that if the Corinthians also withdrew their forces from Epidamnus, they would do as was suggested. Or, they were prepared to let both sides stay in their present positions and to arrange an armistice to remain in operation until the result of the arbitration was declared.

29 None of these proposals was acceptable to the Corinthians. By this time their ships were manned and their allies were ready. They sent in front of them a herald to declare war, and then set sail with a force of seventy-five ships and 2,000 hoplites to fight against the Corcyraeans at Epidamnus. The fleet was under the command of Aristeus, the son of Pellichas, Callicrates, the son of Callias, and Timanor, the son of Timanthes. The land forces were commanded by Archetimus, the son of Eurytimus; and Isarchidas, the son of Isarchus.

They sailed on as far as Actium in Anactoria, at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, where the temple of Apollo stands. Here they were met by a herald from the Corcyraeans who had sailed out in a light boat with instructions to urge them not to attack. At the same time the Corcyraeans were manning their ships; they had fitted new crossbeams in the old vessels to make them sea-worthy and had seen to it that the rest of their fleet was ready for action.

By the time their herald had returned and reported that his offers of peace had been rejected, the ships, eighty of them in all, were manned (forty were still engaged in the siege of Epidamnus). They then put out to sea against the enemy, formed line, and went into action. The result of the engagement was a decisive victory for the Corcyraeans, who destroyed fifteen Corinthian ships. It happened that on the very same day the besiegers of Epidamnus had forced the city to surrender, the terms being that all foreign troops and settlers in the garrison should be sold as slaves and that Corinthian citizens should be held as prisoners pending a further decision.

30 After the battle the Corcyraeans put up a trophy on Leukimme, a headland of Corcyra. They then put all their prisoners to death, with the exception of the Corinthians, whom they still kept in custody.

The Corinthians and their allies went back home after their defeat in the sea battle, and now Corcyra had complete control of the seas in her own area. A Corcyraean fleet descended on Leucas, a colony of Corinth, and laid its territory waste. They also burnt Cyllene, the Elean port, because the Eleans had provided Corinth with ships and money. So for most of the time after the battle the Corcyraeans kept control of the sea and sent fleets to attack the allies of Corinth. Finally, however, at the beginning of the following summer, Corinth, seeing the difficulties in which her allies were placed, sent out a fleet and an army. This force, in order to protect Leucas and the other friendly cities, held and fortified positions at Actium and round Chimerium in Thesprotis. The Corcyraeans, also with naval and land forces, took up positions opposite them at Leukimme. Here they stayed for the rest of the summer, neither side making any move, and it was not until the beginning of winter that they both retired to their home bases.

THE DISPUTE OVER CORCYRA

31 In Corinth tempers were running high over the war with Corcyra. All through the year following the sea battle and in the year after that the Corinthians were building ships and doing everything possible to increase the efficiency of their navy. Rowers were

collected from the Peloponnese itself, and good terms were offered to bring them also from the rest of Hellas.

In Corcyra the news of the preparations provoked alarm. They had no allies in Hellas, since they had not enrolled themselves either in the Spartan or in the Athenian league. They decided therefore to go to Athens, to join the Athenian alliance, and see whether they could get any support from that quarter.

When the news of this move reached Corinth, the Corinthians also sent representatives to Athens, fearing that the combined strength of the navies of Athens and Corcyra would prevent them from having their own way in the war with Corcyra. An assembly was held and the arguments on both sides were put forward. The representatives of Corcyra spoke as follows:

32 'Athenians, in a situation like this, it is right and proper that first of all certain points should be made clear. We have come to ask you for help, but cannot claim that this help is due to us because of any great services we have done to you in the past or on the basis of any existing alliance. We must therefore convince you first that by giving us this help you will be acting in your own interests, or certainly not against your own interests; and then we must show that our gratitude can be depended upon. If on all these points you find our arguments unconvincing, we must not be surprised if our mission ends in failure.

'Now Corcyra has sent us to you in the conviction that in asking for your alliance we can also satisfy you on these points. What has happened is that our policy in the past appears to have been against our own present interests, and at the same time makes it look inconsistent of us to be asking help from you. It certainly looks inconsistent to be coming here to ask for help when in the past we have deliberately avoided all alliances; and it is because of this very policy that we are now left entirely alone to face a war with Corinth. We used to think that our neutrality was a wise thing, since it prevented us being dragged into danger by other people's policies; now we see it clearly as a lack of foresight and as a source of weakness.

'It is certainly true that in the recent naval battle we defeated the Corinthians single-handed. But now they are coming against us with a much greater force drawn from the Peloponnese and from

the rest of Hellas. We recognize that, if we have nothing but our own national resources, it is impossible for us to survive, and we can imagine what lies in store for us if they overpower us. We are therefore forced to ask for assistance, both from you and from everyone else; and it should not be held against us that now we have faced the facts and are reversing our old policy of keeping ourselves to ourselves. There is nothing sinister in our action; we merely recognize that we made a mistake.

33 'If you grant our request, you will find that in many ways it was a good thing that we made it at this particular time. First of all, you will not be helping aggressors, but people who are the victims of aggression. Secondly, we are now in extreme peril, and if you welcome our alliance at this moment you will win our undying gratitude. And then, we are, after you, the greatest naval power in Hellas. You would have paid a lot of money and still have been very grateful to have us on your side. Is it not, then, an extraordinary stroke of good luck for you (and one which will cause heart-burning among your enemies) to have us coming over voluntarily into your camp, giving ourselves up to you without involving you in any dangers or any expense? It is a situation where we, whom you are helping, will be grateful to you, the world in general will admire you for your generosity, and you yourselves will be stronger than you were before. There is scarcely a case in history where all these advantages have been available at the same time, nor has it often happened before that a power looking for an alliance can say to those whose help it asks that it can give as much honour and as much security as it will receive.

'In case of war we should obviously be useful to you, but some of you may think that there is no immediate danger of war. Those who think along those lines are deceiving themselves; they do not see the facts that Sparta is frightened of you and wants war, that Corinth is your enemy and is also influential at Sparta. Corinth has attacked us first in order to attack you afterwards. She has no wish to make enemies of us both at once and find us standing together against her. What she wants is to get an initial advantage over you in one of two ways – either by destroying our power or by forcing us to use it in her interests. But it is our policy to be one move ahead, which is why we want you to accept the alliance

which we offer. It is better to have the initiative in these matters – to take our own measures first, rather than be forced to counter the intrigues that are made against us by others.

- 34 'If the Corinthians say that you have no right to receive one of their colonies into your alliance, they should be told that every colony, if it is treated properly, honours its mother city, and only becomes estranged when it has been treated badly. Colonists are not sent abroad to be the slaves of those who remain behind, but to be their equals. And it is quite clear that Corinth was in the wrong so far as we are concerned. We asked them to settle the affair of Epidamnus by arbitration; but they chose to prosecute their claims by war instead of by a reasonable settlement. Indeed, the way in which they are treating us, their kinsmen, ought to be a warning to you and ought to prevent you from falling into their deceitful traps or listening to what may appear to be their straightforward demands. When one makes concessions to one's enemies, one regrets it afterwards, and the fewer concessions one makes the safer one is likely to be.

- 35 'It is not a breach of your treaty with Sparta if you receive us into your alliance. We are neutrals, and it is expressly written down in your treaty that any Hellenic state which is in this condition is free to ally itself with whichever side it chooses. What is really monstrous is a situation where Corinth can find sailors for her ships both from her own allies and from the rest of Hellas, including in particular your own subjects, while we are shut off from a perfectly legitimate alliance, and indeed from getting help from anywhere: and then, on top of that, they will actually accuse you of behaving illegally if you grant our request. In fact it is we who shall have far greater reasons to complain of you if you are not willing to help us; you will be rejecting us, who are no enemies of yours, in the hour of our peril, and as for the others, who are enemies of yours and are also the aggressors, you will not only be doing nothing to stop them, but will actually be allowing them to build up their strength from the resources of your own empire. Is this right? Surely you ought either to stop them from engaging troops from your own subjects, or else to give us, too, whatever assistance you think proper. Best of all would be for you to receive us in open alliance and help us in that way.

'We have already suggested that such a course would be very much in your own interests. Perhaps the greatest advantage to you is that you can entirely depend on us because your enemies are the same as ours, and strong ones, too, quite capable of doing damage to those who revolt from them. And then it is quite a different matter for you if you reject alliance with a naval power than if you do the same thing with a land power. Your aim, no doubt, should be, if it were possible, to prevent anyone else having a navy at all: the next best thing is to have on your side the strongest navy that there is.

- 36 'Some of you may admit that we have shown that the alliance would be in your interests, and yet may still feel apprehensive about a breach of your treaty with Sparta. Those who think in this way should remember that, whether you feel apprehensive or not, you will certainly have become stronger, and that this fact will make your enemies think twice before attacking you; whereas if you reject us, however confident you may feel, you will in fact be the weaker for it, and consequently less likely to be treated with respect by a strong enemy. Remember, too, that your decision is going to affect Athens just as much as Corcyra. At the moment your thoughts are on the coming war – a war, in fact, which has almost broken out already. Certainly you will not be showing very much foresight for your own city if, at this time, you are in two minds whether to have on your side a power like Corcyra, whose friendship can be so valuable and whose hostility so dangerous to you. Apart from all other advantages, Corcyra lies in an excellent position on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily, and is thus able to prevent naval reinforcements coming to the Peloponnese from there, or going from the Peloponnese to those countries.

'The whole thing can be put very shortly, and these few words will give you the gist of the whole argument why you should not abandon us. There are three considerable naval powers in Hellas – Athens, Corcyra, and Corinth. If Corinth gets control of us first and you allow our navy to be united with hers, you will have to fight against the combined fleets of Corcyra and the Peloponnese. But if you receive us into your alliance, you will enter upon the war with our ships as well as your own.'

After this speech from the Corcyraean side, the representative of
 37 Corinth spoke as follows: 'These Corcyraeans have not confined their argument to the question of whether or not you should accept their alliance. They have named us as aggressors and have stated that they are the victims of an unjust war. Before, therefore, we go on to the rest of our argument, we must deal first with these two points. Our aim will be to give you a clear idea of what exactly we are claiming from you, and to show that there are good reasons why you should reject the appeal of Corcyra.

"Wisdom" and "Moderation" are the words used by Corcyra in describing her old policy of avoiding alliances. In fact the motives were entirely evil, and there was nothing good about them at all. She wanted no allies because her actions were wrong, and she was ashamed of calling in others to witness her own misdoings. The geographical situation of Corcyra gives its inhabitants a certain independence. The ships of other states are forced to put in to their harbours much more often than Corcyraean ships visit the harbours of other states. So in cases where a Corcyraean has been guilty of injuring some other national, the Corcyraeans are themselves their own judges, and there is no question of having the case tried by independent judges appointed by treaty. So this neutrality of theirs, which sounds so innocent, was in fact a disguise adopted not to preserve them from having to share in the wrong-doings of others, but in order to give them a perfectly free hand to do wrong themselves, making away with other people's property by force, when they are strong enough, cheating them, whenever they can manage to do so, and enjoying their gains without any vestige of shame. Yet if they really were the honourable people they pretend to be, this very independence of theirs would have given them the best possible opportunity of showing their good qualities in the relations of common justice.

38 'In fact they have not acted honourably either towards us or towards anyone else. Though they are colonists of ours, they have never been loyal to us and are now at war with us. They were not sent out in the first place, they say, to be ill treated. And we say that we did not found colonies in order to be insulted by them, but rather to retain our leadership and to be treated with proper respect. At all events our other colonies do respect us, and indeed they treat

us with great affection. It is obvious, then, that, if the majority are pleased with us, Corcyra can have no good reason for being the only one that is dissatisfied; and that we are not making war unreasonably, but only as the result of exceptional provocation. Even if we were making a mistake, the right thing would be for them to give in to us, and then it would be a disgrace to us if we failed to respect so reasonable an attitude. As it is, their arrogance and the confidence they feel in their wealth have made them act improperly towards us on numerous occasions, and in particular with regard to Epidamnus, which belongs to us. When this place was in distress, they took no steps towards bringing it under their control; but as soon as we came to relieve it, they forcibly took possession of it, and still hold it.

39 'They actually say that they were prepared in the first place to submit the matter to arbitration. The phrase is meaningless when used by someone who has already stolen an advantage and makes the offer from a safe position; it should only be used when, before opening hostilities, one puts oneself on a real and not an artificial level with one's enemies. And in their case there was no mention of this excellent idea of arbitration before they started to besiege Epidamnus; they only brought the word forward when they began to think that we were not going to let them have their own way.

'And now, being in the wrong themselves over Epidamnus, they have come to you and are asking you not so much for alliance as for complicity in their crime. They are asking you to welcome them at a time when they are at war with us. What they should have done was to have approached you in the days when they were really secure, not at this present moment, when they have wronged us and when danger threatens them. Under present circumstances you will be giving aid to people who never gave you a share in their power, and you will force us to hold you equally responsible with them, although you took no part in their misdeeds. Surely, if they expect you to join fortunes with them now, they should have shared their power with you in the past.

40 'We have shown, I think, that we have good reasons for complaint, and that the conduct of Corcyra has been both violent and grasping. Next we should like you to understand that it would

not be right or just for you to receive them as allies. Though there may be a clause in the treaty stating that any city not included in the original agreement is free to join whichever side it likes, this cannot refer to cases where the object of joining an alliance is to injure other powers; it cannot refer to a case where a city is only looking for security because it is in revolt, and where the result of accepting its alliance, if one looks at the matter dispassionately, will be, not peace, but war. And this is what may well happen to you, if you will not take our advice. You would not only be helping them, but making war on us, who are bound to you by treaty. If you join them in attacking us, we shall be forced to defend ourselves against you as well as against them.

'The right course, surely, is either for you to preserve a strict neutrality or else to join us against them. At least you have treaty obligations towards Corinth, whereas you have never even had a peace treaty with Corcyra. What you ought not to do is to establish a precedent by which a power may receive into its alliance the revolted subjects of another power. At the time when Samos revolted from you and when the Peloponnesian states were divided on the question whether to help them or not, we were not one of those who voted against you; on the contrary, we openly opposed the others and said that every power should have the right to control its own allies. Now, if you are going to welcome and assist people who have done wrong to us, you will find just as many of your own people coming over to our side, and you will be establishing

41 a precedent that is likely to harm you even more than us. All this we have a perfect right to claim from you by Hellenic law and custom. We should like also to give you some advice and to mention that we have some title to your gratitude. We are not enemies who are going to attack you, and we are not on such friendly terms that such services are quite normal. We say, therefore, that the time has come for you to repay us for what we did for you in the past.

'You were short of warships when you were fighting Aegina, just before the Persian invasion. Corinth then gave you twenty ships. As a result of this act of kindness you were able to conquer Aegina, and as a result of our other good turn to you, when we prevented the Peloponnesian states from helping Samos, you were

able to punish that island. And these acts of ours were done at critical periods, periods when people are very apt to turn upon their enemies and disregard every other consideration except victory. At such times people regard even former enemies as their friends, so long as they are on their side, and even genuine friends as their enemies, if they stand in their way; in fact their overmastering desire for victory makes them neglect their own best interests.

42 'We should like you to think carefully over these points; we should like your young men to ask their elders about them, and for you to decide that you ought to behave towards us as we have behaved towards you. Do not think: "the Corinthians are quite right in what they say, but in the event of war all this is not in our interest." It is generally the best policy to make the fewest errors of judgement, and you must remember that, though Corcyra is trying to frighten you into doing wrong by this idea of a coming war, there is no certainty that a war will come. You may think that Corinth will be your enemy in the future, but it is not worth your while to be carried away by this idea and to make open enemies of us now. A much wiser course would be to remove the suspicions which we already feel towards you in connection with Megara. And you will find that an act of kindness done at the right moment has a power to dispel old grievances quite out of proportion to the act itself.

'Do not be influenced by the fact that they are offering you a great naval alliance. The power that deals fairly with its equals finds a truer security than the one which is hurried into snatching

43 some apparent but dangerous advantage. We ourselves are now in the position that you were in at the time when, during the discussions at Sparta, we laid down the principle that every power should have the right to punish its own allies. We claim that you should uphold this principle, and, since our vote helped you then, you should not injure us now by voting against us. No, you should deal with us as we have dealt with you, and you should be conscious that we are in one of those critical situations where real friendship is to be gained from helping us and real hostility from opposing us. Do not go against us by receiving these Corcyraeans into your alliance. Do not aid and abet them in their crimes. Thus

you will be acting as you ought to act and at the same time you will be making the wisest decision in your own interests.'

- 44 This was the speech of the Corinthian delegation. The Athenians, after listening to both sides, discussed the matter at two assemblies. At the first of these, opinion seemed to incline in favour of the Corinthian arguments, but at the second there was a change, and they decided on entering into some kind of alliance with Corcyra. This was not to be a total alliance involving the two parties in any war which either of them might have on hand; for the Athenians realized that if Corcyra required them to join in an attack on Corinth, that would constitute a breach of their treaty with the Peloponnese. Instead the alliance was to be of a defensive character and would only operate if Athens or Corcyra or any of their allies were attacked from outside.

The general belief was that, whatever happened, war with the Peloponnese was bound to come. Athens had no wish to see the strong navy of Corcyra pass into the hands of Corinth. At the same time she was not averse from letting the two Powers weaken each other by fighting together; since in this way, if war did come, Athens herself would be stronger in relation to Corinth and to the other naval Powers. Then, too, it was a fact that Corcyra lay very conveniently on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily.

- 45 So, with these considerations in mind, Athens made her alliance with Corcyra. The Corinthian representatives returned to Corinth, and soon afterwards Athens sent ten ships as a reinforcement to Corcyra. These ships were under the command of Lacedaimonius, the son of Cimon, Diotimus, the son of Strombichus, and Proteas, the son of Epicles. Their instructions were to avoid battle with the Corinthians except under the following circumstances. If the Corinthians sailed against Corcyra with the intention of landing on the island itself or at any point in Corcyraean territory, then they were to do whatever they could to prevent it. These instructions were given in order to avoid breaking the existing treaty.

- 46 The ten ships reached Corcyra, and now the Corinthians had completed their preparations and sailed for the island with a fleet of 150 ships. Ten of these came from Elis, twelve from Megara, ten from Leucas, twenty-seven from Ambracia, one from Anactorium, and ninety from Corinth herself. Each contingent had its

own officers; the Corinthian admiral, who had four subordinate commanders, was Xenoclides, the son of Euthycles.

This fleet sailed out from Leucas to the mainland opposite Corcyra and came to anchor at Chimerium in the territory of Thesprotis. There is a harbour here, and above it, at some distance from the sea, is the city of Ephyre in the Elean district. Near Ephyre the waters of the Acherusian Lake flow into the sea. It gets its name from the river Acheron, which flows through Thesprotis and falls into the lake. The other river in the district is the Thyamis, which forms the boundary between Thesprotis and Cestrine. Between the mouths of these two rivers is the high promontory of Chimerium. It was at this point of the mainland that the Corinthians came to anchor and made an encampment.

- 47 The Corcyraeans, as soon as they heard of their enemies' approach, manned 110 ships, commanded by Miciades, Aisimides, and Eurybatus, and made a camp on one of the group of islands which are called 'Sybota'. The ten Athenian ships were with them. Their land forces were posted on the headland of Leukimne and had been reinforced by a contingent of 1,000 hoplites from Zacynthus. The Corinthians, too, on the mainland received considerable reinforcements from the natives of those parts, who had always been on friendly terms with them.
- 48 When the Corinthians had finished their preparations, they took with them rations for three days and put out to sea by night from Chimerium with the intention of engaging the enemy. At dawn they came in sight of the Corcyraean ships already in the open sea and bearing down upon them. As soon as they saw each other, both sides took up their positions for battle. The Athenian ships were on the right of the Corcyraean line, which otherwise consisted of their own ships in three squadrons, each under the command of one of their admirals. This was the Corcyraean order of battle. On the other side the ships of Megara and of Ambracia were on the right, the other allies were variously distributed in the centre, and the Corinthians themselves, with the best ships at their disposal, held the left of the line, facing the Athenians and the right wing of the Corcyraeans.
- 49 Then, after the signals had been hoisted on both sides, they joined battle. The fighting was of a somewhat old-fashioned kind,

since they were still behindhand in naval matters, both sides having numbers of hoplites¹² aboard their ships, together with archers and javelin throwers. But the fighting was hard enough, in spite of the lack of skill shown: indeed, it was more like a battle on land than a naval engagement. When the ships came into collision it was difficult for them to break away clear, because of the number engaged and of their close formation. In fact both sides relied more for victory on their hoplites, who were on the decks and who fought a regular pitched battle there while the ships remained motionless. No one attempted the manoeuvre of encirclement; in fact it was a battle where courage and sheer strength played a greater part than scientific methods. Everywhere in the battle confusion reigned, and there was shouting on all sides.

The Athenian ships would come up in support of the Corcyraeans whenever they were hard pressed and would so help to alarm their enemies, but they did not openly join the battle, since the commanders were afraid of acting contrary to the instructions they had received at Athens.

The right of the Corinthian line was in the greatest difficulties. Here a Corcyraean squadron of twenty ships routed their enemies and drove them back in confusion to the mainland. Sailing right up to their camp, they landed, set fire to the empty tents, and plundered the property they found there. Here, then, the Corcyraeans won a victory and the Corinthians and their allies suffered a defeat. But on the left, where the Corinthians themselves were, things went very differently. The Corcyraeans were in any case in inferior numbers, and they also lacked the support of the twenty ships engaged in the pursuit. And now the Athenians, seeing that the Corcyraeans were in difficulties, began to support them more openly. At first they refrained from actually ramming any Corinthian ship; but finally, when there was no doubt about the defeat and the Corinthians were still pressing on, there came a point where everyone joined in and nothing was barred. Thus a situation inevitably came about where Corinthians and Athenians were openly fighting with each other.

12. The hoplites were the heavily accoutred infantry. Since they were responsible for providing their own arms and armour, they were drawn solely from the wealthier sections of the population.

50 After their victory, the Corinthians, instead of taking into tow and dragging away the ships that they had put out of action, turned their attention to the men. They sailed in and out of the wreckage, killing rather than taking prisoners. Thus they unknowingly killed some of their own friends, since they did not realize that those on the right of their line had been defeated. Many ships had been engaged on both sides and the action had been an extensive one, so that, once battle was joined, it was not easy to make out who were winning and who were being defeated. Indeed, so far as numbers of ships were concerned, this was the biggest battle that had ever taken place between two Hellenic states.

After they had driven the Corcyraeans to the land, the Corinthians gave their attention to the wrecks and to their own dead, most of whom they were able to recover and bring back to Sybota, not an inhabited place, but a harbour in Thesprotis, where the land army of their native allies was stationed in their support. They then formed up again and sailed out against the Corcyraeans.

The Corcyraeans, fearing that they might attempt to make a landing on their island, came out to meet them with every available ship, including the ten Athenian ships as well as the remainder of their own fleet.

It was already late in the day, and both sides had sung the paean before attacking, when suddenly the Corinthian ships began to back water. They had seen in the distance twenty more Athenian ships approaching. These had been sent out later from Athens to reinforce the original ten, since the Athenians feared (quite rightly, as it turned out) that the Corcyraeans might be defeated and that 51 their own ten ships would not be enough to support them. It was this new force that the Corinthians saw. They suspected that they came from Athens, and thought that there might be still more behind the ships that were visible. Therefore they began to retire.

The Corcyraeans were making their attack from a direction where visibility was not so good, and had not sighted the ships. They were amazed when they saw the Corinthians backing water. Finally someone sighted them and shouted out that there were ships ahead. Then they also retired, since it was already getting dark and the Corinthians had turned and broken off contact with them. The Corcyraeans went back to their camp on Leukimme,

and the twenty Athenian ships, which were under the command of Glaucon, the son of Leagrus, and Andocides, the son of Leogoras, sailed up to their camp, making their way through the wrecks and the dead bodies. They arrived not very long after they had originally been sighted, but it was now night and the Corcyraeans feared that they might be enemy ships. However, they were recognized and came safely to anchor.

- 52 Next day the thirty Athenian ships with all the Corcyraean ships that could put to sea sailed out to the harbour of Sybota, where the Corinthians lay at anchor, to see whether they were prepared to fight. The Corinthians put out from shore and formed a line in the open sea. There they remained, having no intention of starting an engagement. They saw that a fresh fleet had arrived from Athens, and they were conscious of their own difficulties: the prisoners whom they had aboard their ships had to be guarded, and in the desolate place where they were there were no facilities for repairing their vessels. What particularly worried them was the thought of how they were to make their voyage home. They feared that the Athenians might consider that the treaty had been broken by the recent fighting and might intercept them on their way back.
- 53 They therefore decided to put some of their men, not carrying a herald's wand, on board a boat and to send them to the Athenians to find out how matters stood.

This was done, and the Corinthian messengers made the following speech: 'Athenians, you are putting yourselves in the wrong. You are starting a war and you are not abiding by the treaty. We are here in order to deal with our own enemies, and now you are standing in our path and have taken up arms against us. Now if your intention is to prevent us from sailing against Corcyra or anywhere else that we wish, if, in other words, you intend to break the treaty, then make us who are here your first prisoners, and treat us as enemies.'

After this speech of the Corinthians, all those in the Corcyraean forces who had been within hearing shouted out in favour of making prisoners of them at once and then putting them to death. The Athenians, however, replied as follows: 'Peloponnesians, we are not starting a war and we are not breaking the treaty. These Corcyraeans are our allies, and we came here to help them. We

shall do nothing to stop you if you wish to sail in any other direction; but if you sail against Corcyra or against any part of her territory, then we shall do our best to prevent you.'

- 54 When they received this reply from the Athenians, the Corinthians began to prepare for their voyage home. They also put up a trophy to commemorate their victory on the part of Sybota that is on the mainland. Meanwhile the Corcyraeans salvaged the wreckage of their ships and took up the bodies of their own dead. These had been washed towards them by the current and by a wind which got up during the night and scattered them in all directions. They then put up a trophy on the island of Sybota, claiming that the victory had been theirs.

The reasons that each side had for claiming the victory and setting up a trophy were as follows. The Corinthians had had the upper hand in the fighting until nightfall: thus they had brought in most of the disabled ships and their own dead: they held at least 1,000 prisoners and they had sunk about seventy enemy ships. The Corcyraeans had destroyed about thirty ships and, after the arrival of the Athenians, they had recovered off their coast their own dead and their disabled vessels. Then on the day after the battle the Corinthians, on seeing the Athenian fleet, had backed water and retired before them, and after the Athenians had arrived, had not come out from Sybota to fight. So both sides claimed the victory.

- 55 On their voyage home the Corinthians took Anactorium, at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf. It was a place in which both Corinth and Corcyra had rights and it was given up to the Corinthians by treachery. Before sailing home the Corinthians put settlers of their own into Anactorium. They sold 800 of the Corcyraean prisoners who were slaves, and they kept in captivity 250 whom they treated with great consideration, hoping that a time would come when they would return and win over the island to Corinth. Most of them were in fact people of great power and influence in Corcyra.

So Corcyra remained undefeated in her war with Corinth and the Athenian fleet left the island. But this gave Corinth her first cause for war against Athens, the reason being that Athens had fought against her with Corcyra although the peace treaty was still in force.

THE DISPUTE OVER POTIDAEA

56 Almost immediately afterwards it happened that there was another dispute between Athens and the Peloponnese. This also contributed to the breaking out of the war. It concerned the people of Potidaea who live on the isthmus of Pallene, and who, though colonists of Corinth, were allies of Athens in the tribute-paying class. Corinth was searching for means of retaliation against Athens, and Athens had no illusions about the hatred felt for her by Corinth. She therefore made the following demands of Potidaea: they were to pull down the fortifications looking towards Pallene, to send hostages to Athens, to banish their Corinthian magistrates, and in future not to receive those who were sent out annually from Corinth to replace them. These demands were made because Athens feared that, under the influence of Perdiccas and of the Corinthians, Potidaea might be induced to revolt and might draw

57 into the revolt the other allied cities in the Thracian area. It was directly after the sea battle off Corcyra that the Athenians took these precautions with regard to Potidaea. Corinth was now quite openly hostile, and though Perdiccas, the son of Alexander and King of Macedonia, had in the past been a friend and an ally, he had now been made into an enemy. This had come about because the Athenians had entered into an alliance with his brother Philip and with Derdas, who had joined forces together against Perdiccas. Perdiccas was alarmed by these moves and not only sent his agents to Sparta in order to try to involve Athens in a war with the Peloponnese, but also was approaching Corinth in order to get support for a revolt in Potidaea. He was also in communication with the Chalcidians in Thrace and with the Bottiaeans, and was urging them to revolt at the same time. All these places bordered on his own country, and his idea was that if he had them as his allies, their support would make his own military position easier.

The Athenians knew what he was doing and wished to anticipate the revolt of these cities. They were just on the point of sending out to Macedonia a force of thirty ships and 1,000 hoplites under the command of Arcestratus, the son of Lycomedes, with other commanders. Now, these officers were instructed to take hostages

from the Potidaeans, to destroy the fortification, and to keep a close watch on the neighbouring cities so as to prevent any movement of revolt.

58 Meanwhile the Potidaeans had sent representatives to Athens in the hope of persuading the Athenians not to make any alterations in the existing state of affairs. They also sent representatives with the Corinthians to Sparta in order to win support there in case it should be necessary. After long negotiations at Athens nothing valuable was achieved; in spite of all their efforts, the fleet for Macedonia was ordered to sail against them too. The Spartan authorities, however, promised to invade Attica if the Athenians attacked Potidaea. This, then, seemed to the Potidaeans to be the moment: they made common cause with the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans and revolted from Athens.

Perdiccas, at this point, persuaded the Chalcidians to pull down and abandon their cities on the coast, and to settle inland at Olynthus, making that into one big city. To those who left their homes in this way he offered the use for the duration of the war with Athens of some of his own territory in Mygdonia round Lake Bolbe. The Chalcidians therefore, after destroying their cities,

59 settled inland and prepared for war. When the thirty Athenian ships arrived in Thrace they found that Potidaea and the other cities were already in a state of revolt. Their commanders considered that with the forces at their disposal it was impossible to make war both against Perdiccas and against the league of revolted cities; they therefore turned their attention to Macedonia, which had been their original objective. They established themselves on the coast and made war in cooperation with Philip and the brothers of Derdas, who had invaded the country from the interior.

60 Now that Potidaea had revolted and the thirty Athenian ships were off the coast of Macedonia, the Corinthians feared that the place might be lost and regarded its safety as their own responsibility. They therefore sent out a force of volunteers from Corinth itself and of mercenaries from the rest of the Peloponnese. Altogether this force amounted to 1,600 hoplites and 400 light troops. It was under the command of Aristeus, the son of Adeimantus, who had always been a staunch friend to the people of Potidaea. And it was largely because of his personal popularity that most of

the Corinthian volunteers joined the expedition. This force reached Thrace forty days after the revolt of Potidaea.

- 61 The Athenians also had received the news immediately after the revolt of the cities. They heard, too, of the reinforcements under Aristeus, and they sent out against the places in revolt an army of 2,000 citizen hoplites and a fleet of forty ships. This force was commanded by Callias, the son of Calliades, with four other commanders. First they arrived at Macedonia, where they found that the original force of 1,000 had just captured Therme and were now besieging Pydna. They therefore joined in the operations against Pydna. The siege lasted for a time, but finally they came to an agreement with Perdiccas and made an alliance with him. They were forced into doing this by the need to hurry on with the campaign at Potidaea and by the arrival there of Aristeus.

Leaving Macedonia, then, they came to Beroea and from there went on to Strepia. After making an unsuccessful attempt at capturing the place, they marched on by land to Potidaea. They had 3,000 hoplites of their own, apart from a large force of allies and 600 Macedonian cavalry from the army of Philip and Pausanias. The seventy ships sailed with them along the coast. Proceeding by short marches, they reached Gigonus on the third day and camped there.

- 62 The people of Potidaea and the Peloponnesian army under Aristeus had been expecting the Athenians and had made their camp on the isthmus facing Olynthus; a market for the troops had been established outside the city. The allies had chosen Aristeus as commander-in-chief of all the infantry, and given the command of the cavalry to Perdiccas. The latter had immediately once again broken his treaty of alliance with Athens and was now fighting on the side of the Potidaeans. Instead of being there in person, he sent Iolaus as deputy commander.

The plan of Aristeus was as follows: he would be on the isthmus with his own force and would there wait for an Athenian attack; the Chalcidians, the other allies from outside the isthmus, and the 200 cavalry of Perdiccas were to stay in Olynthus; this force, when the Athenians attacked the positions on the isthmus, was to take them in the rear and thus place the enemy between the two armies.

However, the Athenian general Callias and his colleagues sent

out to Olynthus their Macedonian cavalry and a small force of allied troops to prevent reinforcements coming from there. They then broke up their camp and marched on Potidaea. Arriving at the isthmus, they saw the enemy making ready for battle. They, too, formed up in battle order, and soon the forces were engaged. The wing commanded by Aristeus, where the Corinthians and other picked troops were fighting, routed the troops in front of it and went after them for some distance in pursuit. But the rest of the army of Potidaeans and Peloponnesians was defeated by the Athenians and fled back behind their fortifications. Thus, when

- 63 Aristeus turned back from the pursuit and saw that the other part of his army had been defeated, it was difficult for him to decide which was the safest direction in which to go, whether to Olynthus or into Potidaea. In the end he decided to concentrate his troops into as small a space as possible and to force his way through into Potidaea at the double. He managed to do this by going along by the breakwater through the sea; but it was not an easy operation, as arrows and javelins were falling among his men and, though he got most of them through safely, he lost a certain number.

At the beginning of the battle, signals were shown, and those who were meant to reinforce the Potidaeans from Olynthus (which is about seven miles away and in sight of Potidaea) advanced a little way with the object of joining in. At the same time the Macedonian cavalry took up their positions to intercept them. But victory soon went to the Athenians, and the signals were lowered. The troops from Olynthus thereupon fell back again and the Macedonians rejoined the Athenians. There was therefore no cavalry in action on either side.

After the battle the Athenians put up a trophy and granted an armistice to the Potidaeans so that they could recover their dead. Nearly 300 of the Potidaeans and their allies had been killed; the Athenians had lost 150 of their own citizens, including their general, Callias.

- 64 The Athenians at once built and manned a counter wall to the north of the wall across the isthmus. They did not build fortifications opposite Pallene, since they did not think they were strong enough both to man their wall on the isthmus and also to cross over to Pallene and build a wall there; they were afraid that, if they

divided their force in two, the Potidaeans and their allies would attack them.

When it was reported in Athens that no fortifications had been raised against Pallene, the Athenians sent out some time later a force of 1,600 citizen hoplites under the command of Phormio, the son of Asopius. Phormio arrived at Pallene and, basing himself at Aphytis, moved slowly forward towards Potidaea, ravaging the country on his way. The Potidaeans did not come out to fight, and so he built a counter wall cutting them off from Pallene. Now, therefore, Potidaea was firmly invested by land on both sides, and at the same time Athenian ships were blockading the place from
65 the sea. Cut off as it was, Aristeus had no hope that it could survive unless some miracle happened or else events in the Peloponnese took a different turn. The advice he gave to the Potidaeans was to watch for a favourable wind and then sail away, leaving behind a garrison of 500, amongst whom the food would last longer. He himself volunteered to stay with those who were left behind. His advice, however, was not taken, and, wishing to do what he thought was best under the circumstances and at the same time to organize help from outside, he slipped through the Athenian blockade and sailed out of the town. He then lived with the Chalcidians and helped them in the fighting. Among his other actions, he organized an ambush near the city of Sermyle and destroyed a number of men there. He was also in touch with the Peloponnese and was trying to arrange for help from that quarter.

Phormio, now that the blockade had been completed, used his 1,600 troops in laying waste the country of Chalcidice and Botiaca. He also captured some of their towns.

THE DEBATE AT SPARTA AND DECLARATION OF WAR

66 Both the Athenians and the Peloponnesians had already grounds of complaint against each other. The grievance of Corinth was that the Athenians were besieging her own colony of Potidaea, with Corinthians and other Peloponnesians in the place: Athens, on the other hand, had her own grievances against the Pelopon-

nesians; they had supported the revolt of a city which was in alliance with her and which paid her tribute, and they had openly joined the Potidaeans in fighting against her. In spite of this, the truce was still in force and war had not yet broken out. What had been done so far had been done on the private initiative of Corinth.

67 Now, however, Corinth brought matters into the open. Potidaea was under blockade, some of her own citizens were inside, and she feared that the place might be lost. She therefore immediately urged the allies to send delegates to Sparta.¹³ There her own delegates violently attacked the Athenians for having broken the truce and committed acts of aggression against the Peloponnese. The people of Aegina were on her side. Out of fear of Athens they had not sent a formal delegation, but behind the scenes they played a considerable part in fomenting war, saying that they had not been given the independence promised to them by the treaty. The Spartans also issued an invitation to their own allies and to anyone else who claimed to have suffered from Athenian aggression. They then held their usual assembly, and gave an opportunity there for delegates to express their views. Many came forward with various complaints. In particular the delegates from Megara, after mentioning a number of other grievances, pointed out that, contrary to the terms of the treaty, they were excluded from all the ports in the Athenian empire and from the market of Athens itself. The Corinthians were the last to come forward and speak, having allowed the previous speakers to do their part in hardening Spartan opinion against Athens. The Corinthian speech was as follows:

68 'Spartans, what makes you somewhat reluctant to listen to us others, if we have ideas to put forward, is the great trust and confidence which you have in your own constitution and in your own way of life. This is a quality which certainly makes you moderate in your judgements; it is also, perhaps, responsible for a kind of ignorance which you show when you are dealing with foreign affairs. Many times before now we have told you what we were likely to suffer from Athens, and on each occasion, instead of taking to heart what we were telling you, you chose instead to suspect our motives and to consider that we were speaking only about our own grievances. The result has been that you did not call together

13. On the procedure, see Appendix 1.

this meeting of our allies before the damage was done; you waited until now, when we are actually suffering from it. And of all these allies, we have perhaps the best right to speak now, since we have the most serious complaints to make. We have to complain of Athens for her insolent aggression and of Sparta for her neglect of our advice.

'If there were anything doubtful or obscure about this aggression on the whole of Hellas, our task would have been to try to put the facts before you and show you something that you did not know. As it is, long speeches are unnecessary. You can see yourselves how Athens has deprived some states of their freedom and is scheming to do the same thing for others, especially among our own allies, and that she herself has for a long time been preparing for the eventuality of war. Why otherwise should she have forcibly taken over from us the control of Corcyra? Why is she besieging Potidaea? Potidaea is the best possible base for any campaign in Thrace, and Corcyra might have contributed a very large fleet to the Peloponnesian League.

69 'And it is you who are responsible for all this. It was you who in the first place allowed the Athenians to fortify their city and build the Long Walls after the Persian War. Since then and up to the present day you have withheld freedom not only from those who have been enslaved by Athens but even from your own allies. When one is deprived of one's liberty one is right in blaming not so much the man who puts the fetters on as the one who had the power to prevent him, but did not use it – especially when such a one rejoices in the glorious reputation of having been the liberator of Hellas.

'Even at this stage it has not been easy to arrange this meeting, and even at this meeting there are no definite proposals. Why are we still considering whether aggression has taken place instead of how we can resist it? Men who are capable of real action first make their plans and then go forward without hesitation while their enemies have still not made up their minds. As for the Athenians, we know their methods and how they gradually encroach upon their neighbours. Now they are proceeding slowly because they think that your insensitiveness to the situation enables them to go on their way unnoticed; you will find that they will develop their

full strength once they realize that you do see what is happening and are still doing nothing to prevent it.

'You Spartans are the only people in Hellas who wait calmly on events, relying for your defence not on action but on making people think that you will act. You alone do nothing in the early stages to prevent an enemy's expansion; you wait until your enemy has doubled his strength. Certainly you used to have the reputation of being safe and sure enough: now one wonders whether this reputation was deserved. The Persians, as we know ourselves, came from the ends of the earth and got as far as the Peloponnese before you were able to put a proper force into the field to meet them. The Athenians, unlike the Persians, live close to you, yet still you do not appear to notice them; instead of going out to meet them, you prefer to stand still and wait till you are attacked, thus hazarding everything by fighting with opponents who have grown far stronger than they were originally.]

'In fact you know that the chief reason for the failure of the Persian invasion was the mistaken policy of the Persians themselves; and you know, too, that there have been many occasions when, if we managed to stand up to Athenian aggression, it was more because of Athenian mistakes than because of any help we got from you. Indeed, we can think of instances already where those who have relied on you and remained unprepared have been ruined by the confidence they placed in you.

'We should not like any of you to think that we are speaking in an unfriendly spirit. We are only remonstrating with you, as is natural when one's friends are making mistakes. Real accusations must be kept for one's enemies who have actually done one harm.

70 'Then also we think we have as much right as anyone else to point out faults in our neighbours, especially when we consider the enormous difference between you and the Athenians. To our minds, you are quite unaware of this difference; you have never yet tried to imagine what sort of people these Athenians are against whom you will have to fight – how much, indeed how completely different from you. An Athenian is always an innovator, quick to form a resolution and quick at carrying it out. You, on the other hand, are good at keeping things as they are; you never originate an idea, and your action tends to stop short of its aim. Then again,

Athenian daring will outrun its own resources; they will take risks against their better judgement, and still, in the midst of danger, remain confident. But your nature is always to do less than you could have done, to mistrust your own judgement, however sound it may be, and to assume that dangers will last for ever. Think of this, too: while you are hanging back, they never hesitate; while you stay at home, they are always abroad; for they think that the farther they go the more they will get, while you think that any movement may endanger what you have already. If they win a victory, they follow it up at once, and if they suffer a defeat, they scarcely fall back at all. As for their bodies, they regard them as expendable for their city's sake, as though they were not their own; but each man cultivates his own intelligence, again with a view to doing something notable for his city. If they aim at something and do not get it, they think that they have been deprived of what belonged to them already; whereas, if their enterprise is successful, they regard that success as nothing compared to what they will do next. Suppose they fail in some undertaking; they make good the loss immediately by setting their hopes in some other direction. Of them alone it may be said that they possess a thing almost as soon as they have begun to desire it, so quickly with them does action follow upon decision. And so they go on working away in hardship and danger all the days of their lives, seldom enjoying their possessions because they are always adding to them. Their view of a holiday is to do what needs doing; they prefer hardship and activity to peace and quiet. In a word, they are by nature incapable of either living a quiet life themselves or of allowing anyone else to do so.

- 71 'That is the character of the city which is opposed to you. Yet you still hang back; you will not see that the likeliest way of securing peace is this: only to use one's power in the cause of justice, but to make it perfectly plain that one is resolved not to tolerate aggression. On the contrary, your idea of proper behaviour is, firstly, to avoid harming others, and then to avoid being harmed yourselves, even if it is a matter of defending your own interests. Even if you had on your frontiers a power holding the same principles as you do, it is hard to see how such a policy could have been a success. But at the present time, as we have just pointed out to you, your

whole way of life is out of date when compared with theirs. And it is just as true in politics as it is in any art or craft: new methods must drive out old ones. When a city can live in peace and quiet, no doubt the old-established ways are best: but when one is constantly being faced by new problems, one has also to be capable of approaching them in an original way. Thus Athens, because of the very variety of her experience, is a far more modern state than you are.

'Your inactivity has done harm enough. Now let there be an end of it. Give your allies, and especially Potidaea, the help you promised, and invade Attica at once. Do not let your friends and kinsmen fall into the hands of the bitter enemies. Do not force the rest of us in despair to join a different alliance. If we did so, no one could rightly blame us – neither the gods who witnessed our oaths nor any man capable of appreciating our situation. The people who break a treaty of alliance are the ones who fail to give the help they swore to give, not those who have to look elsewhere because they have been left in the lurch. But if you will only make up your minds to act, we will stand by you. It would be an unnatural thing for us to make a change, nor could we find other allies with whom we have such close bonds. You have heard what we have to say. Think carefully over your decision. From your fathers was handed down to you the leadership of the Peloponnese. Maintain its greatness.'

- 72 This was the speech of the Corinthians. There happened to be already in Sparta some Athenian representatives who had come there on other business. When they heard the speeches that had been made, they decided that they, too, ought to claim a hearing. Not that they had any intention of defending themselves against any of the charges that had been made against Athens by the various cities, but they wished to make a general statement and to point out that this was an affair which needed further consideration and ought not to be decided upon at once. They wanted also to make clear how powerful their city was, to remind the elder members of the assembly of facts that were known to them, and to inform the younger ones of matters in which they were ignorant. In this way they hoped to divert their audience from the idea of war and make them incline towards letting matters rest. They therefore

approached the Spartans and said that, if there was no objection, they, too, would like to make a speech before the assembly. The Spartans invited them to do so, and they came forward and spoke as follows:

73 'This delegation of ours did not come here to enter into a controversy with your allies, but to deal with the business on which our city sent us. We observe, however, that extraordinary attacks have been made on us, and so we have come forward to speak. We shall make no reply to the charges which these cities have made against us. Your assembly is not a court of law, competent to listen to pleas either from them or from us. Our aim is to prevent you from coming to the wrong decision on a matter of great importance through paying too much attention to the views of your allies. At the same time we should like to examine the general principles of the argument used against us and to make you see that our gains have been reasonable enough and that our city is one that deserves a certain consideration.

'There is no need to talk about what happened long ago: there our evidence would be that of hearsay rather than that of eye-witnesses amongst our audience. But we must refer to the Persian War, to events well known to you all, even though you may be tired of constantly hearing the story. In our actions at that time we ventured everything for the common good; you have your share in what was gained; do not deprive us of all our share of glory and of the good that it may do us. We shall not be speaking in the spirit of one who is asking a favour, but of one who is producing evidence. Our aim is to show you what sort of a city you will have to fight against, if you make the wrong decision.

'This is our record. At Marathon we stood out against the Persians and faced them single-handed. In the later invasion, when we were unable to meet the enemy on land, we and all our people took to our ships, and joined in the battle at Salamis. It was this battle that prevented the Persians from sailing against the Peloponnese and destroying the cities one by one; for no system of mutual defence could have been organized in face of the Persian naval superiority. The best proof of this is in the conduct of the Persians themselves. Once they had lost the battle at sea they realized that their force was crippled and they immediately withdrew most of

74 their army. That, then was the result, and it proved that the fate of Hellas depended on her navy. Now, we contributed to this result in three important ways: we produced most of the ships, we provided the most intelligent of the generals, and we displayed the most unflinching courage. Out of the 400 ships, nearly two-thirds were ours: the commander was Themistocles, who was mainly responsible for the battle being fought in the straits, and this, obviously, was what saved us. You yourselves in fact, because of this, treated him with more distinction than you have ever treated any visitor from abroad. And the courage, the daring that we showed were without parallel. With no help coming to us by land, with all the states up to our frontier already enslaved, we chose to abandon our city and to sacrifice our property; then, so far from deserting the rest of our allies in the common cause or making ourselves useless to them by dispersing our forces, we took to our ships and chose the path of danger, with no grudges against you for not having come to our help earlier. So it is that we can claim to have given more than we received. There were still people living in the cities which you left behind you, and you were fighting to preserve them; when you sent out your forces you feared for yourselves much more than for us (at all events, you never put in an appearance until we had lost everything). Behind us, on the other hand, was a city that had ceased to exist; yet we still went forward and ventured our lives for this city that seemed so impossible to recover. Thus we joined you and helped to save not only ourselves but you also. But if we, like others, had been frightened about our land and had made terms with the Persians before you arrived, or if, later, we had regarded ourselves as irretrievably ruined and had lacked the courage to take to our ships, then there would no longer have been any point in your fighting the enemy at sea, since you would not have had enough ships. Instead things would have gone easily and quietly just as the Persians wished.

75 'Surely, Spartans, the courage, the resolution, and the ability which we showed then ought not to be repaid by such immoderate hostility from the Hellenes – especially so far as our empire is concerned. We did not gain this empire by force. It came to us at a time when you were unwilling to fight on to the end against the Persians. At this time our allies came to us of their own accord and

begged us to lead them. It was the actual course of events which first compelled us to increase our power to its present extent: fear of Persia was our chief motive, though afterwards we thought, too, of our own honour and our own interest. Finally there came a time when we were surrounded by enemies, when we had already crushed some revolts, when you had lost the friendly feelings that you used to have for us and had turned against us and begun to arouse our suspicion: at this point it was clearly no longer safe for us to risk letting our empire go, especially as any allies that left us would go over to you. And when tremendous dangers are involved no one can be blamed for looking to his own interest.

76 'Certainly you Spartans, in your leadership of the Peloponnese, have arranged the affairs of the various states so as to suit yourselves. And if, in the years of which we were speaking, you had gone on taking an active part in the war and had become unpopular, as we did, in the course of exercising your leadership, we have little doubt that you would have been just as hard upon your allies as we were, and that you would have been forced either to govern strongly or to endanger your own security.

'So it is with us. We have done nothing extraordinary, nothing contrary to human nature in accepting an empire when it was offered to us and then in refusing to give it up. Three very powerful motives prevent us from doing so - security, honour, and self-interest. And we were not the first to act in this way. Far from it. It has always been a rule that the weak should be subject to the strong; and besides, we consider that we are worthy of our power. Up till the present moment you, too, used to think that we were; but now, after calculating your own interest, you are beginning to talk in terms of right and wrong. Considerations of this kind have never yet turned people aside from the opportunities of aggrandizement offered by superior strength. Those who really deserve praise are the people who, while human enough to enjoy power, nevertheless pay more attention to justice than they are compelled to do by their situation. Certainly we think that if anyone else was in our position it would soon be evident whether we act with moderation or not. Yet, unreasonably enough, our very consideration for others has brought us more blame than

77 praise. For example, in law-suits with our allies arising out of con-

tracts we have put ourselves at a disadvantage, and when we arrange to have such cases tried by impartial courts in Athens, people merely say that we are overfond of going to law. No one bothers to inquire why this reproach is not made against other imperial Powers, who treat their subjects much more harshly than we do: the fact being, of course, that where force can be used there is no need to bring in the law. Our subjects, on the other hand, are used to being treated as equals; consequently, when they are disappointed in what they think right and suffer even the smallest disadvantage because of a judgement in our courts or because of the power that our empire gives us, they cease to feel grateful to us for all the advantages which we have left to them: indeed, they feel more bitterly over this slight disparity than they would feel if we, from the first, had set the law aside and had openly enriched ourselves at their expense. Under those conditions they would certainly not have disputed the fact that the weak must give in to the strong. People, in fact, seem to feel more strongly about their legal wrongs than about the wrongs inflicted on them by violence. In the first case they think they are being outdone by an equal, in the second case that they are being compelled by a superior. Certainly they put up with much worse sufferings than these when they were under the Persians, but now they think that our government is oppressive. That is natural enough, perhaps, since subject peoples always find the present time most hard to bear. But on one point we are quite certain: if you were to destroy us and to take over our empire, you would soon lose all the goodwill which you have gained because of others being afraid of us - that is, if you are going to stick to those principles of behaviour which you showed before, in the short time when you led Hellas against the Persians. Your own regulated ways of life do not mix well with the ways of others. Also it is a fact that when one of you goes abroad he follows neither his own rules nor those of the rest of Hellas.

78 'Take time, then, over your decision, which is an important one. Do not allow considerations of other people's opinions and other people's complaints to involve you in difficulties which you will feel yourselves. Think, too, of the great part that is played by the unpredictable in war: think of it now, before you are actually committed to war. The longer a war lasts, the more things tend to

depend on accidents. Neither you nor we can see into them; we have to abide their outcome in the dark. And when people are entering upon a war they do things the wrong way round. Action comes first, and it is only when they have already suffered that they begin to think. We, however, are still far removed from such a mistaken attitude; so, to the best of our belief, are you. And so we urge you, now, while we are both still free to make sensible decisions, do not break the peace, do not go back upon your oaths; instead let us settle our differences by arbitration, as is laid down in the treaty. If you will not do so, we shall have as our witnesses the gods who heard our oaths. You will have begun the war, and we shall attempt to meet you in any and every field of action that you may choose.'

79 The Athenians spoke as I have described. Now the Spartans had heard the complaints made by their allies against Athens and also the Athenian reply. They therefore requested all outsiders to leave and discussed the situation among themselves. Most people's views tended to the same conclusion – namely, that Athens was already acting aggressively and that war should be declared without delay. However, the Spartan King Archidamus, a man who had a reputation for both intelligence and moderation, came forward and made the following speech:

80 'Spartans, in the course of my life I have taken part in many wars, and I see among you people of the same age as I am. They and I have had experience, and so are not likely to share in what may be a general enthusiasm for war, nor to think that war is a good thing or a safe thing. And you will find, if you look carefully into the matter, that this present war which you are now discussing is not likely to be anything on a small scale. When we are engaged with Peloponnesians and neighbours, the forces on both sides are of the same type, and we can strike rapidly where we wish to strike. With Athens it is different. Here we shall be engaged with people who live far off, people also who have the widest experience of the sea and who are extremely well equipped in all other directions, very wealthy both as individuals and as a state, with ships and cavalry and hoplites, with a population bigger than that of any other place in Hellas, and then, too, with numbers of allies who pay tribute to them. How, then, can we irresponsibly start a

war with such a people? What have we to rely upon if we rush into it unprepared? Our navy? It is inferior to theirs, and if we are to give proper attention to it and build it up to their strength, that will take time. Or are we relying on our wealth? Here we are at an even greater disadvantage: we have no public funds, and it is

81 no easy matter to secure contributions from private sources. Perhaps there is ground for confidence in the superiority which we have in heavy infantry and in actual numbers, assets which will enable us to invade and devastate their land. Athens, however, controls plenty of land outside Attica and can import what she wants by sea. And if we try to make her allies revolt from her, we shall have to support them with a fleet, since most of them are on the islands. What sort of war, then, are we going to fight? If we can neither defeat them at sea nor take away from them the resources on which their navy depends, we shall do ourselves more harm than good. We shall then find that we can no longer even make an honourable peace, especially if it is thought that it was we who began the quarrel. For we must not bolster ourselves up with the false hope that if we devastate their land, the war will soon be over. I fear that it is more likely that we shall be leaving it to our children after us. So convinced am I that the Athenians have too much pride to become the slaves of their own land, or to shrink back from warfare as though they were inexperienced in it.

82 'Not that I am suggesting that we should calmly allow them to injure our allies and should turn a blind eye to their machinations. What I do suggest is that we should not take up arms at the present moment; instead we should send to them and put our grievances before them; we should not threaten war too openly, though at the same time we should make it clear that we are not going to let them have their own way. In the meantime we should be making our own preparations by winning over new allies both among Hellenes and among foreigners – from any quarter, in fact, where we can increase our naval and financial resources. No one can blame us for securing our own safety by taking foreigners as well as Greeks into our alliance when we are, as is the fact, having our position undermined by the Athenians. At the same time we must put our own affairs in order. If they pay attention to our diplomatic

protests, so much the better. If they do not, then, after two or three years have passed, we shall be in a much sounder position and can attack them, if we decide to do so. And perhaps when they see that our actual strength is keeping pace with the language that we use, they will be more inclined to give way, since their land will still be untouched and, in making up their minds, they will be thinking of advantages which they still possess and which have not yet been destroyed. For you must think of their land as though it was a hostage in your possession, and all the more valuable the better it is looked after. You should spare it up to the last possible moment, and avoid driving them to a state of desperation in which you will find them much harder to deal with. If now in our present state of unpreparedness we lay their land waste, hurried into this course by the complaints of our allies, I warn you to take care that our action does not bring to the Peloponnese still more shame and still greater difficulties. As for complaints, whether they come from cities or from private individuals, they are capable of arrangement; but when war is declared by our whole confederacy for the sake of the interests of some of us, and when it is impossible to foresee the course that the war will take, then an honourable settlement is not an easy thing at all.

83 'Let no one call it cowardice if we, in all our numbers, hesitate before attacking a single city. They have just as many allies as we have, and their allies pay tribute. And war is not so much a matter of armaments as of the money which makes armaments effective: particularly is this true in a war fought between a land power and a sea power. So let us first of all see to our finances and, until we have done so, avoid being swept away by speeches from our allies. It is we who shall bear most of the responsibility for what happens later, whether it is good or bad; we should therefore be allowed the time to look into some of these possibilities at our leisure.

84 'As for being slow and cautious - which is the usual criticism made against us - there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. If you take something on before you are ready for it, hurry at the beginning will mean delay at the end. Besides, the city in which we live has always been free and always famous. "Slow" and "cautious" can equally well be "wise" and "sensible". Certainly it is because we possess these qualities that we are the only people who do not

become arrogant when we are successful, and who in times of stress are less likely to give in than others. We are not carried away by the pleasure of hearing ourselves praised when people are urging us towards dangers that seem to us unnecessary; and we are no more likely to give in shamefacedly to other people's views when they try to spur us on by their accusations. Because of our well-ordered life we are both brave in war and wise in council. Brave, because self-control is based upon a sense of honour, and honour is based on courage. And we are wise because we are not so highly educated as to look down upon our laws and customs, and are too rigorously trained in self-control to be able to disobey them. We are trained to avoid being too clever in matters that are of no use - such as being able to produce an excellent theoretical criticism of one's enemies' dispositions, and then failing in practice to do quite so well against them. Instead we are taught that there is not a great deal of difference between the way we think and the way others think, and that it is impossible to calculate accurately events that are determined by chance. The practical measures that we take are always based on the assumption that our enemies are not unintelligent. And it is right and proper for us to put our hopes in the reliability of our own precautions rather than in the possibility of our opponent making mistakes. There is no need to suppose that human beings differ very much one from another: but it is true that the ones who come out on top are the ones who have been trained in the hardest school.

85 'Let us never give up this discipline which our fathers have handed down to us and which we still preserve and which has always done us good. Let us not be hurried, and in one short day's space come to a decision which will so profoundly affect the lives of men and their fortunes, the fates of cities and their national honour. We ought to take time over such a decision. And we, more than others, can afford to take time, because we are strong. As for the Athenians, I advise sending a mission to them about Potidaea and also about the other cases where our allies claim to have been ill treated. Especially is this the right thing to do since the Athenians themselves are prepared to submit to arbitration, and when one party offers this it is quite illegal to attack him first, as though he was definitely in the wrong. And at the same time

carry on your preparations for war. This decision is the best one you can make for yourselves, and is also the one most likely to inspire fear in your enemies.'

After this speech of Archidamus, Sthenelaidas, one of the ephors of that year, came forward to make the final speech, which was as follows:

- 86 'I do not understand these long speeches which the Athenians make. Though they said a great deal in praise of themselves, they made no attempt to contradict the fact that they are acting aggressively against our allies and against the Peloponnese. And surely, if it is the fact that they had a good record in the past against the Persians and now have a bad record as regards us, then they deserve to pay double for it, since, though they were once good, they have now turned out bad. We are the same then and now, and if we are sensible, we shall not allow any aggression against our allies and shall not wait before we come to their help. They are no longer waiting before being ill treated. Others may have a lot of money and ships and horses, but we have good allies, and we ought not to betray them to the Athenians. And this is not a matter to be settled by law-suits and by words: it is not because of words that our own interests are suffering. Instead we should come to the help of our allies quickly and with all our might. And let no one try to tell us that when we are being attacked we should sit down and discuss matters; these long discussions are rather for those who are meditating aggression themselves. Therefore, Spartans, cast your votes for the honour of Sparta and for war! Do not allow the Athenians to grow still stronger! Do not entirely betray your allies! Instead let us, with the help of heaven, go forward to meet the aggressor!'
- 87 After this speech he himself, in his capacity of ephor, put the question to the Spartan assembly. They make their decisions by acclamation, not by voting, and Sthenelaidas said at first that he could not decide on which side the acclamations were the louder. This was because he wanted to make them show their opinions openly and so make them all the more enthusiastic for war. He therefore said: 'Spartans, those of you who think that the treaty has been broken and that the Athenians are aggressors, get up and stand on one side. Those who do not think so, stand on the other side,' and he pointed out to them where they were to stand. They

then rose to their feet and separated into two divisions. The great majority were of the opinion that the treaty had been broken.

They then summoned their allies to the assembly and told them that they had decided that Athens was acting aggressively, but that they wanted to have all their allies with them when they put the vote, so that, if they decided to make war, it should be done on the basis of a unanimous resolution.

- Afterwards the allied delegates, having got their own way, returned home. Later the Athenian representatives, when they had finished the business for which they had come, also returned. This decision of the assembly that the treaty had been broken took place in the fourteenth year of the thirty years' truce which was made 88 after the affair of Euboea. The Spartans voted that the treaty had been broken and that war should be declared not so much because they were influenced by the speeches of their allies as because they were afraid of the further growth of Athenian power, seeing, as they did, that already the greater part of Hellas was under the control of Athens.

THE PENTECONTAETIA ¹⁴

- 89 The following is an account of how Athens came to be in the position to gain such strength.

After the Persians had retreated from Europe, defeated by the Hellenes on sea and land, and after those of them who had fled by sea to Mycale had been destroyed, the Spartan king Leotychides, who had commanded the Hellenes at Mycale, returned home, taking with him the allies from the Peloponnese. The Athenians, however, with the allies from Ionia and the Hellespont who had already revolted from the king of Persia, stayed behind and besieged the city of Sestos, which was occupied by the Persians. They spent the winter there and finally took the place after the Persians had evacuated it. They then sailed out of the Hellespont and dispersed to their own cities.

Meanwhile the Athenian people, as soon as their land was free from foreign occupation, began to bring back their children and

¹⁴ On this digression, see the introduction, pp. 15-16, 18.

THE MYTILENIAN DEBATE³⁰

36 When Salaethus and the other prisoners reached Athens, the Athenians immediately put Salaethus to death in spite of the fact that he undertook, among other things, to have the Peloponnesians withdrawn from Plataea, which was still being besieged. They then discussed what was to be done with the other prisoners and, in their angry mood, decided to put to death not only those now in their hands but also the entire adult male population of Mytilene, and to make slaves of the women and children. What they held against Mytilene was the fact that it had revolted even though it was not a subject state, like the others, and the bitterness of their feelings was considerably increased by the fact that the Peloponnesian fleet had actually dared to cross over to Ionia to support the revolt. This, it was thought, could never have happened unless the revolt had been long premeditated. So they sent a trireme to Paches to inform him of what had been decided, with orders to put the Mytilenians to death immediately.

Next day, however, there was a sudden change of feeling and people began to think how cruel and how unprecedented such a decision was – to destroy not only the guilty, but the entire population of a state. Observing this, the deputation from Mytilene which was in Athens and the Athenians who were supporting them approached the authorities with a view to having the question debated again. They won their point the more easily because the authorities themselves saw clearly that most of the citizens were wanting someone to give them a chance of reconsidering the matter. So an assembly was called at once. Various opinions were expressed on both sides, and Cleon, the son of Cleaenetus, spoke again. It was he who had been responsible for passing the original motion for putting the Mytilenians to death. He was remarkable among the Athenians for the violence of his character, and at this time he exercised far the greatest influence over the people.³¹ He spoke as follows:

30. See the Introduction, pp. 27.

31. This wording is echoed by Thucydides in VI, 35 when he introduces the Syracusan 'demagogue' Athenagoras.

37 'Personally I have had occasion often enough already to observe that a democracy is incapable of governing others, and I am all the more convinced of this when I see how you are now changing your minds about the Mytilenians. Because fear and conspiracy play no part in your daily relations with each other, you imagine that the same thing is true of your allies, and you fail to see that when you allow them to persuade you to make a mistaken decision and when you give way to your own feelings of compassion you are being guilty of a kind of weakness which is dangerous to you and which will not make them love you any more. What you do not realize is that your empire is a tyranny exercised over subjects who do not like it and who are always plotting against you; you will not make them obey you by injuring your own interests in order to do them a favour; your leadership depends on superior strength and not on any goodwill of theirs. And this is the very worst thing – to pass measures and then not to abide by them. We should realize that a city is better off with bad laws, so long as they remain fixed, than with good laws that are constantly being altered; that lack of learning combined with sound common sense is more helpful than the kind of cleverness that gets out of hand, and that as a general rule states are better governed by the man in the street than by intellectuals. These are the sort of people who want to appear wiser than the laws, who want to get their own way in every general discussion, because they feel that they cannot show off their intelligence in matters of greater importance, and who, as a result, very often bring ruin on their country. But the other kind – the people who are not so confident in their own intelligence – are prepared to admit that the laws are wiser than they are and that they lack the ability to pull to pieces a speech made by a good speaker; they are unbiased judges, and not people taking part in some kind of a competition; so things usually go well when they are in control. We statesmen, too, should try to be like them, instead of being carried away by mere cleverness and a desire to show off our intelligence and so giving you, the people, advice which we do not really believe in ourselves.'

38 'As for me, I have not altered my opinion, and I am amazed at those who have proposed a reconsideration of the question of Mytilene, thus causing a delay which is all to the advantage of the

guilty party. After a lapse of time the injured party will lose the edge of his anger when he comes to act against those who have wronged him; whereas the best punishment and the one most fitted to the crime is when reprisals follow immediately. I shall be amazed, too, if anyone contradicts me and attempts to prove that the harm done to us by Mytilene is really a good thing for us, or that when we suffer ourselves we are somehow doing harm to our allies. It is obvious that anyone who is going to say this must either have such confidence in his powers as an orator that he will struggle to persuade you that what has been finally settled was, on the contrary, not decided at all, or else he must have been bribed to put together some elaborate speech with which he will try to lead you out of the right track. But in competitions of this sort the prizes go to others and the state takes all the danger for herself. The blame is yours, for stupidly instituting these competitive displays. You have become regular speech-goers, and as for action, you merely listen to accounts of it; if something is to be done in the future you estimate the possibilities by hearing a good speech on the subject, and as for the past you rely not so much on the facts which you have seen with your own eyes as on what you have heard about them in some clever piece of verbal criticism. Any novelty in an argument deceives you at once, but when the argument is tried and proved you become unwilling to follow it; you look with suspicion on what is normal and are the slaves of every paradox that comes your way. The chief wish of each one of you is to be able to make a speech himself, and, if you cannot do that, the next best thing is to compete with those who can make this sort of speech by not looking as though you were at all out of your depth while you listen to the views put forward, by applauding a good point even before it is made, and by being as quick at seeing how an argument is going to be developed as you are slow at understanding what in the end it will lead to. What you are looking for all the time is something that is, I should say, outside the range of ordinary experience, and yet you cannot even think straight about the facts of life that are before you. You are simply victims of your own pleasure in listening, and are more like an audience sitting at the feet of a professional lecturer than a parliament discussing matters of state.

39 'I am trying to stop you behaving like this, and I say that no single city has ever done you the harm that Mytilene has done. Personally I can make allowances for those who revolt because they find your rule intolerable or because they have been forced into it by enemy action. Here, however, we have the case of people living on an island, behind their own fortifications, with nothing to fear from our enemies except an attack by sea against which they were adequately protected by their own force of triremes; they had their own independent government and they were treated by us with the greatest consideration. Now, to act as they acted is not what I should call a revolt (for people only revolt when they have been badly treated); it is a case of calculated aggression, of deliberately taking sides with our bitterest enemies in order to destroy us. And this is far worse than if they had made war against us simply to increase their own power. They learned nothing from the fate of those of their neighbours who had already revolted and been subdued; the prosperity which they enjoyed did not make them hesitate before running into danger; confident in the future, they declared war on us, with hopes that indeed extended beyond their means, though still fell short of their desires. They made up their minds to put might first and right second, choosing the moment when they thought they would win, and then making their unprovoked attack upon us.

'The fact is that when great prosperity comes suddenly and unexpectedly to a state, it usually breeds arrogance; in most cases it is safer for people to enjoy an average amount of success rather than something which is out of all proportion; and it is easier, I should say, to ward off hardship than to maintain happiness. What we should have done long ago with the Mytilenians was to treat them in exactly the same way as all the rest; then they would never have grown so arrogant; for it is a general rule of human nature that people despise those who treat them well and look up to those who make no concessions. Let them now therefore have the punishment which their crime deserves. Do not put the blame on the aristocracy and say that the people were innocent. The fact is that the whole lot of them attacked you together, although the people might have come over to us and, if they had, would now be back again in control of their city. Yet, instead of doing this, they

Germans in WW2

thought it safer to share the dangers, and join in the revolt of the aristocracy.

'Now think of your allies. If you are going to give the same punishment to those who are forced to revolt by your enemies and those who do so of their own accord, can you not see that they will all revolt upon the slightest pretext, when success means freedom and failure brings no very dreadful consequences? Meanwhile we shall have to spend our money and risk our lives against state after state; if our efforts are successful, we shall recover a city that is in ruins, and so lose the future revenue from it, on which our strength is based; and if we fail to subdue it, we shall have more enemies to deal with in addition to those we have already, and we shall spend the time which ought to be used in resisting our present foes in making war on our own allies.

- 40 'Let there be no hope, therefore, held out to the Mytilenians that we, either as a result of a good speech or a large bribe, are likely to forgive them on the grounds that it is only human to make mistakes. There was nothing involuntary about the harm they did us; they knew what they were about and they planned it all beforehand; and one only forgives actions that were not deliberate. As for me, just as I was at first, so I am now, and I shall continue to impress on you the importance of not altering your previous decisions. To feel pity, to be carried away by the pleasure of hearing a clever argument, to listen to the claims of decency are three things that are entirely against the interests of an imperial power. Do not be guilty of them. As for compassion, it is proper to feel it in the case of people who are like ourselves and who will pity us in their turn, not in the case of those who, so far from having the same feelings towards us, must always and inevitably be our enemies. As for the speech-makers who give such pleasure by their argument, they should hold their competitions on subjects which are less important, and not on a question where the state may have to pay a heavy penalty for its light pleasure, while the speakers themselves will no doubt be enjoying splendid rewards for their splendid arguments. And a sense of decency is only felt towards those who are going to be our friends in future, not towards those who remain just as they were and as much our enemies as they ever have been.

'Let me sum the whole thing up. I say that, if you follow my advice, you will be doing the right thing as far as Mytilene is concerned and at the same time will be acting in your own interests; if you decide differently, you will not win them over, but you will be passing judgement on yourselves. For if they were justified in revolting, you must be wrong in holding power. If, however, whatever the rights or wrongs of it may be, you propose to hold power all the same, then your interest demands that these too, rightly or wrongly, must be punished. The only alternative is to surrender your empire, so that you can afford to go in for philanthropy. Make up your minds, therefore, to pay them back in their own coin, and do not make it look as though you who escaped their machinations are less quick to react than they who started them. Remember how they would have been likely to have treated you, if they had won, especially as they were the aggressors. Those who do wrong to a neighbour when there is no reason to do so are the ones who persevere to the point of destroying him, since they see the danger involved in allowing their enemy to survive. For he who has suffered for no good reason is a more dangerous enemy, if he escapes, than the one who has both done and suffered injury.

'I urge you, therefore, not to be traitors to your own selves. Place yourselves in imagination at the moment when you first suffered and remember how then you would have given anything to have them in your power. Now pay them back for it, and do not grow soft just at this present moment, forgetting meanwhile the danger that hung over your heads then. Punish them as they deserve, and make an example of them to your other allies, plainly showing that revolt will be punished by death. Once they realize this, you will not have so often to neglect the war with your enemies because you are fighting with your own allies.'

- 41 So Cleon spoke. After him Diodotus, the son of Eucrates, who in the previous assembly also had vigorously opposed the motion to put the Mytilenians to death, came forward again on this occasion and spoke as follows:

42 'I do not blame those who have proposed a new debate on the subject of Mytilene, and I do not share the view which we have heard expressed, that it is a bad thing to have frequent discussions on matters of importance. Haste and anger are, to my mind, the

* two greatest obstacles to wise counsel – haste, that usually goes with folly, anger, that is the mark of primitive and narrow minds. And anyone who maintains that words cannot be a guide to action must be either a fool or one with some personal interest at stake; he is a fool, if he imagines that it is possible to deal with the uncertainties of the future by any other medium, and he is personally interested if his aim is to persuade you into some disgraceful action, and, knowing that he cannot make a good speech in a bad cause, he tries to frighten his opponents and his hearers by some good-sized pieces of misrepresentation. Then still more intolerable are those who go further and accuse a speaker of making a kind of exhibition of himself, because he is paid for it. If it was only ignorance with which he was being charged, a speaker who failed to win his case could retire from the debate and still be thought an honest man, if not a very intelligent one. But when corruption is imputed, he will be suspect if he wins his case, and if he loses it, will be regarded as dishonest and stupid at the same time. This sort of thing does the city no good; her counsellors will be afraid to speak and she will be deprived of their services. Though certainly it would be the best possible thing for the city if these gentlemen whom I have been describing lacked the power to express themselves; we should not then be persuaded into making so many mistakes.

‘The good citizen, instead of trying to terrify the opposition, ought to prove his case in fair argument; and a wise state, without giving special honours to its best counsellors, will certainly not deprive them of the honour they already enjoy; and when a man’s advice is not taken, he should not even be disgraced, far less penalized. In this way successful speakers will be less likely to pursue further honours by speaking against their own convictions in order to make themselves popular, and unsuccessful speakers, too,

- 43 will not struggle to win over the people by the same acts of flattery. What we do here, however, is exactly the opposite. Then, too, if a man gives the best possible advice but is under the slightest suspicion of being influenced by his own private profit, we are so embittered by the idea (a wholly unproved one) of this profit of his, that we do not allow the state to receive the certain benefit of his good advice. So a state of affairs has been reached where a good

proposal honestly put forward is just as suspect as something thoroughly bad, and the result is that just as the speaker who advocates some monstrous measure has to win over the people by deceiving them, so also a man with good advice to give has to tell lies if he expects to be believed. And because of this refinement in intellectuality, the state is put into a unique position; it is only she to whom no one can ever do a good turn openly and without deception. For if one openly performs a patriotic action, the reward for one’s pains is to be thought to have made something oneself on the side. Yet in spite of all this we are discussing matters of the greatest importance, and we who give you our advice ought to be resolved to look rather further into things than you whose attention is occupied only with the surface – especially as we can be held to account for the advice we give, while you are not accountable for the way in which you receive it. For indeed you would take rather more care over your decisions, if the proposer of a motion and those who voted for it were all subject to the same penalties. As it is, on the occasions when some emotional impulse on your part has led you into disaster, you turn upon the one man who made the original proposal and you let yourself off, in spite of the fact that you are many and in spite of the fact that you were just as wrong as he was.

- 44 ‘However, I have not come forward to speak about Mytilene in any spirit of contradiction or with any wish to accuse anyone. If we are sensible people, we shall see that the question is not so much whether they are guilty as whether we are making the right decision for ourselves. I might prove that they are the most guilty people in the world, but it does not follow that I shall propose the death penalty, unless that is in your interests; I might argue that they deserve to be forgiven, but should not recommend forgiveness unless that seemed to me the best thing for the state.’

‘In my view our discussion concerns the future rather than the present. One of Cleon’s chief points is that to inflict the death penalty will be useful to us in the future as a means for deterring other cities from revolt; but I, who am just as concerned as he is with the future, am quite convinced that this is not so. And I ask you not to reject what is useful in my speech for the sake of what is specious in his. You may well find his speech attractive, because

it fits in better with your present angry feelings about the Mytilenians; but this is not a law-court, where we have to consider what is fit and just; it is a political assembly, and the question is how Mytilene can be most useful to Athens.

- 45 'Now, in human societies the death penalty has been laid down for many offences less serious than this one. Yet people still take risks when they feel sufficiently confident. No one has ever yet risked committing a crime which he thought he could not carry out successfully. The same is true of states. None has ever yet rebelled in the belief that it had insufficient resources, either in itself or from its allies, to make the attempt. Cities and individuals alike, all are by nature disposed to do wrong, and there is no law that will prevent it, as is shown by the fact that men have tried every kind of punishment, constantly adding to the list, in the attempt to find greater security from criminals. It is likely that in early times the punishments even for the greatest crimes were not as severe as they are now, but the laws were still broken, and in the course of time the death penalty became generally introduced. Yet even with this, the laws are still broken. Either, therefore, we must discover some fear more potent than the fear of death, or we must admit that here certainly we have not got an adequate deterrent. So long as poverty forces men to be bold, so long as the insolence and pride of wealth nourish their ambitions, and in the other accidents of life they are continually dominated by some incurable master passion or another, so long will their impulses continue to drive them into danger. Hope and desire persist throughout and cause the greatest calamities – one leading and the other following, one conceiving the enterprise, and the other suggesting that it will be successful – invisible factors, but more powerful than the terrors that are obvious to our eyes. Then too, the idea that fortune will be on one's side plays as big a part as anything else in creating a mood of over-confidence; for sometimes she does come unexpectedly to one's aid, and so she tempts men to run risks for which they are inadequately prepared. And this is particularly true in the case of whole peoples, because they are playing for the highest stakes – either for their own freedom or for the power to control others – and each individual, when acting as part of a community, has the irrational opinion that his own powers are greater

than in fact they are. In a word it is impossible (and only the most simple-minded will deny this) for human nature, when once seriously set upon a certain course, to be prevented from following that course by the force of law or by any other means of intimidation whatever.

- 46 'We must not, therefore, come to the wrong conclusions through having too much confidence in the effectiveness of capital punishment, and we must not make the condition of rebels desperate by depriving them of the possibility of repentance and of a chance of atoning as quickly as they can for what they did. Consider this now: at the moment, if a city has revolted and realizes that the revolt cannot succeed, it will come to terms while it is still capable of paying an indemnity and continuing to pay tribute afterwards. But if Cleon's method is adopted, can you not see that every city will not only make much more careful preparations for revolt, but will also hold out against siege to the very end, since to surrender early or late means just the same thing? This is, unquestionably, against our interests – to spend money on a siege because of the impossibility of coming to terms, and, if we capture the place, to take over a city that is in ruins so that we lose the future revenue from it. And it is just on this revenue that our strength in war depends.

'Our business, therefore, is not to injure ourselves by acting like a judge who strictly examines a criminal; instead we should be looking for a method by which, employing moderation in our punishments, we can in future secure for ourselves the full use of those cities which bring us important contributions. And we should recognize that the proper basis of our security is in good administration rather than in the fear of legal penalties. As it is, we do just the opposite: when we subdue a free city, which was held down by force and has, as we might have expected, tried to assert its independence by revolting, we think that we ought to punish it with the utmost severity. But the right way to deal with free people is this – not to inflict tremendous punishments on them after they have revolted, but to take tremendous care of them before this point is reached, to prevent them even contemplating the idea of revolt, and, if we do have to use force with them, to hold as few as possible of them responsible for this.

47 'Consider what a mistake you would be making on this very point, if you took Cleon's advice. As things are now, in all the cities the democracy is friendly to you; either it does not join in with the oligarchies in revolting, or, if it is forced to do so, it remains all the time hostile to the rebels, so that when you go to war with them, you have the people on your side. But if you destroy the democratic party at Mytilene, who never took any hand in the revolt and who, as soon as they got arms, voluntarily gave the city up to you, you will first of all be guilty of killing those who have helped you, and, secondly, you will be doing exactly what the reactionary classes want most. For now, when they start a revolt, they will have the people on their side from the beginning, because you have already made it clear that the same punishment is laid down both for the guilty and the innocent. In fact, however, even if they were guilty, you should pretend that they were not, in order to keep on your side the one element that is still not opposed to you. It is far more useful to us, I think, in preserving our empire, that we should voluntarily put up with injustice than that we should justly put to death the wrong people. As for Cleon's point - that in this act of vengeance both justice and self-interest are combined - this is not a case where such a combination is at all possible.

48 'I call upon you, therefore, to accept my proposal as the better one. Do not be swayed too much by pity or by ordinary decent feelings. I, no more than Cleon, wish you to be influenced by such emotions. It is simply on the basis of the argument which you have heard that I ask you to be guided by me, to try at your leisure the men whom Paches has considered guilty and sent to Athens, and to allow the rest to live in their own city. In following this course you will be acting wisely for the future and will be doing something which will make your enemies fear you now. For those who make wise decisions are more formidable to their enemies than those who rush madly into strong action.

49 This was the speech of Diodotus. And now, when these two motions, each so opposed to each, had been put forward, the Athenians, in spite of the recent change of feeling, still held conflicting opinions, and at the show of hands the votes were nearly equal. However, the motion of Diodotus was passed.

Immediately another trireme was sent out in all haste, since they feared that, unless it overtook the first trireme, they would find on their arrival that the city had been destroyed. The first trireme had a start of about twenty-four hours. The ambassadors from Mytilene provided wine and barley for the crew and promised great rewards if they arrived in time, and so the men made such speed on the voyage that they kept on rowing while they took their food (which was barley mixed with oil and wine) and rowed continually, taking it in turn to sleep. Luckily they had no wind against them, and as the first ship was not hurrying on its distasteful mission, while they were pressing on with such speed, what happened was that the first ship arrived so little ahead of them that Paches had just had time to read the decree and to prepare to put it into force, when the second ship put in to the harbour and prevented the massacre. So narrow had been the escape of Mytilene.

50 The other Mytilenians whom Paches had sent to Athens as being the ones chiefly responsible for the revolt were, on the motion of Cleon, put to death by the Athenians. There were rather more than 1,000 of them. The Athenians also destroyed the fortifications of Mytilene and took over their navy. Afterwards, instead of imposing a tribute on Lesbos, they divided all the land, except that belonging to the Methymnians, into 3,000 holdings, 300 of which were set apart as sacred for the gods, while the remainder was distributed by lot to Athenian shareholders, who were sent out to Lesbos. The Lesbians agreed with these shareholders to pay a yearly rent of two minae for each holding, and cultivated the land themselves. The Athenians also took over all the towns on the mainland that had been under the control of Mytilene. So for the future the Mytilenians became subjects of Athens. This completes the account of what took place in Lesbos.

THE END OF PLATAEA

51 In the same summer, and after the conquest of Lesbos, the Athenians, under the command of Nicias, the son of Niceratus, made an expedition against the island of Minoa, which lies off Megara. The Megarians had built a tower there and used the island

complaints against Perdiccas were that he had sworn alliance with Argos and Sparta, and that he had failed in his duty as an ally of Athens at the time when the Athenians had prepared an expedition against the Chalcidians in Thrace and against Amphipolis, under the command of Nicias, the son of Niceratus; this expedition had had to be broken up chiefly because Perdiccas had not played his part. He was therefore declared an enemy.

So this winter ended, and so ended the fifteenth year of the war.

THE MELIAN DIALOGUE⁴⁰

- 84 Next summer Alcibiades sailed to Argos with twenty ships and seized 300 Argive citizens who were still suspected of being pro-Spartan. These were put by the Athenians into the nearby island under Athenian control.

The Athenians also made an expedition against the island of Melos. They had thirty of their own ships, six from Chios, and two from Lesbos; 1,200 hoplites, 300 archers, and twenty mounted archers, all from Athens; and about 1,500 hoplites from the allies and the islanders.

The Melians are a colony from Sparta. They had refused to join the Athenian empire like the other islanders, and at first had remained neutral without helping either side; but afterwards, when the Athenians had brought force to bear on them by laying waste their land, they had become open enemies of Athens.

Now the generals Cleomedes, the son of Lycomedes, and Tisias, the son of Tisimachus, encamped with the above force in Melian territory and, before doing any harm to the land, first of all sent representatives to negotiate. The Melians did not invite these representatives to speak before the people, but asked them to make the statement for which they had come in front of the government body and the few. The Athenian representatives then spoke as follows:

- 85 'So we are not to speak before the people, no doubt in case the mass of the people should hear once and for all and without

40. See Appendix 3.

interruption an argument from us which is both persuasive and incontrovertible, and should so be led astray. This, we realize, is your motive in bringing us here to speak before the few. Now suppose that you who sit here should make assurance doubly sure. Suppose that you, too, should refrain from dealing with every point in detail in a set speech, and should instead interrupt us whenever we say something controversial and deal with that before going on to the next point? Tell us first whether you approve of this suggestion of ours.'

- 86 The Council of the Melians replied as follows:

'No one can object to each of us putting forward our own views in a calm atmosphere. That is perfectly reasonable. What is scarcely consistent with such a proposal is the present threat, indeed the certainty, of your making war on us. We see that you have come prepared to judge the argument yourselves, and that the likely end of it all will be either war, if we prove that we are in the right, and so refuse to surrender, or else slavery.'

- 87 *Athenians:* If you are going to spend the time in enumerating your suspicions about the future, or if you have met here for any other reason except to look the facts in the face and on the basis of these facts to consider how you can save your city from destruction, there is no point in our going on with this discussion. If, however, you will do as we suggest, then we will speak on.

- 88 *Melians:* It is natural and understandable that people who are placed as we are should have recourse to all kinds of arguments and different points of view. However, you are right in saying that we are met together here to discuss the safety of our country and, if you will have it so, the discussion shall proceed on the lines that you have laid down.

- 89 *Athenians:* Then we on our side will use no fine phrases saying, for example, that we have a right to our empire because we defeated the Persians, or that we have come against you now because of the injuries you have done us – a great mass of words that nobody would believe. And we ask you on your side not to imagine that you will influence us by saying that you, though a colony of Sparta, have not joined Sparta in the war, or that you have never done us any harm. Instead we recommend that you should try to get what it is possible for you to get, taking into consideration

what we both really do think; since you know as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.

90 *Melians:* Then in our view (since you force us to leave justice out of account and to confine ourselves to self-interest) – in our view it is at any rate useful that you should not destroy a principle that is to the general good of all men – namely, that in the case of all who fall into danger there should be such a thing as fair play and just dealing, and that such people should be allowed to use and to profit by arguments that fall short of a mathematical accuracy. And this is a principle which affects you as much as anybody, since your own fall would be visited by the most terrible vengeance and would be an example to the world.

91 *Athenians:* As for us, even assuming that our empire does come to an end, we are not despondent about what would happen next. One is not so much frightened of being conquered by a power which rules over others, as Sparta does (not that we are concerned with Sparta now), as of what would happen if a ruling power is attacked and defeated by its own subjects. So far as this point is concerned, you can leave it to us to face the risks involved. What we shall do now is to show you that it is for the good of our own empire that we are here and that it is for the preservation of your city that we shall say what we are going to say. We do not want any trouble in bringing you into our empire, and we want you to be spared for the good both of yourselves and of ourselves.

92 *Melians:* And how could it be just as good for us to be the slaves as for you to be the masters?

93 *Athenians:* You, by giving in, would save yourselves from disaster; we, by not destroying you, would be able to profit from you.

94 *Melians:* So you would not agree to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side?

95 *Athenians:* No, because it is not so much your hostility that injures us; it is rather the case that, if we were on friendly terms with you, our subjects would regard that as a sign of weakness in us, whereas your hatred is evidence of our power.

96 *Melians:* Is that your subjects' idea of fair play – that no distinction should be made between people who are quite unconnected with you and people who are mostly your own colonists or else rebels whom you have conquered?

97 *Athenians:* So far as right and wrong are concerned they think that there is no difference between the two, that those who still preserve their independence do so because they are strong, and that if we fail to attack them it is because we are afraid. So that by conquering you we shall increase not only the size but the security of our empire. We rule the sea and you are islanders, and weaker islanders too than the others; it is therefore particularly important that you should not escape.

98 *Melians:* But do you think there is no security for you in what we suggest? For here again, since you will not let us mention justice, but tell us to give in to your interests, we, too, must tell you what our interests are and, if yours and ours happen to coincide, we must try to persuade you of the fact. Is it not certain that you will make enemies of all states who are at present neutral, when they see what is happening here and naturally conclude that in course of time you will attack them too? Does not this mean that you are strengthening the enemies you have already and are forcing others to become your enemies even against their intentions and their inclinations?

99 *Athenians:* As a matter of fact we are not so much frightened of states on the continent. They have their liberty, and this means that it will be a long time before they begin to take precautions against us. We are more concerned about islanders like yourselves, who are still unsubdued, or subjects who have already become embittered by the constraint which our empire imposes on them. These are the people who are most likely to act in a reckless manner and to bring themselves and us, too, into the most obvious danger.

100 *Melians:* Then surely, if such hazards are taken by you to keep your empire and by your subjects to escape from it, we who are still free would show ourselves great cowards and weaklings if we failed to face everything that comes rather than submit to slavery.

101 *Athenians:* No, not if you are sensible. This is no fair fight, with honour on one side and shame on the other. It is rather a question

of saving your lives and not resisting those who are far too strong for you.

102 *Melians*: Yet we know that in war fortune sometimes makes the odds more level than could be expected from the difference in numbers of the two sides. And if we surrender, then all our hope is lost at once, whereas, so long as we remain in action, there is still a hope that we may yet stand upright.

103 *Athenians*: Hope, that comforter in danger! If one already has solid advantages to fall back upon, one can indulge in hope. It may do harm, but will not destroy one. But hope is by nature an expensive commodity, and those who are risking their all on one cast find out what it means only when they are already ruined; it never fails them in the period when such a knowledge would enable them to take precautions. Do not let this happen to you, you who are weak and whose fate depends on a single movement of the scale. And do not be like those people who, as so commonly happens, miss the chance of saving themselves in a human and practical way, and, when every clear and distinct hope has left them in their adversity, turn to what is blind and vague, to prophecies and oracles and such things which by encouraging hope lead men to ruin.

104 *Melians*: It is difficult, and you may be sure that we know it, for us to oppose your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. Nevertheless we trust that the gods will give us fortune as good as yours, because we are standing for what is right against what is wrong; and as for what we lack in power, we trust that it will be made up for by our alliance with the Spartans, who are bound, if for no other reason, then for honour's sake, and because we are their kinsmen, to come to our help. Our confidence, therefore, is not so entirely irrational as you think.

105 *Athenians*: So far as the favour of the gods is concerned, we think we have as much right to that as you have. Our aims and our actions are perfectly consistent with the beliefs men hold about the gods and with the principles which govern their own conduct. Our opinion of the gods and our knowledge of men lead us to conclude that it is a general and necessary law of nature to rule what one can. This is not a law that we made ourselves, nor we the first to act upon it when it was made. We found it already

in existence, and we shall leave it to exist for ever among those who come after us. We are merely acting in accordance with it, and we know that you or anybody else with the same power as ours would be acting in precisely the same way. And therefore, so far as the gods are concerned, we see no good reason why we should fear to be at a disadvantage. But with regard to your views about Sparta and your confidence that she, out of a sense of honour, will come to your aid, we must say that we congratulate you on your simplicity but do not envy you your folly. In matters that concern themselves or their own constitution the Spartans are quite remarkably good; as for their relations with others, that is a long story, but it can be expressed shortly and clearly by saying that of all people we know the Spartans are most conspicuous for believing that what they like doing is honourable and what suits their interests is just. And this kind of attitude is not going to be of much help to you in your absurd quest for safety at the moment.

106 *Melians*: But this is the very point where we can feel most sure. Their own self-interest will make them refuse to betray their own colonists, the Melians, for that would mean losing the confidence of their friends among the Hellenes and doing good to their enemies.

107 *Athenians*: You seem to forget that if one follows one's self-interest one wants to be safe, whereas the path of justice and honour involves one in danger. And, where danger is concerned, the Spartans are not, as a rule, very venturesome.

108 *Melians*: But we think that they would even endanger themselves for our sake and count the risk more worth taking than in the case of others, because we are so close to the Peloponnese that they could operate more easily, and because they can depend on us more than on others, since we are of the same race and share the same feelings.

109 *Athenians*: Goodwill shown by the party that is asking for help does not mean security for the prospective ally. What is looked for is a positive preponderance of power in action. And the Spartans pay attention to this point even more than others do. Certainly they distrust their own native resources so much that when they attack a neighbour they bring a great army of allies with them.

It is hardly likely therefore that, while we are in control of the sea, they will cross over to an island.

- 110 *Melians:* But they still might send others. The Cretan sea is a wide one, and it is harder for those who control it to intercept others than for those who want to slip through to do so safely. And even if they were to fail in this, they would turn against your own land and against those of your allies left unvisited by Brasidas. So, instead of troubling about a country which has nothing to do with you, you will find trouble nearer home, among your allies, and in your own country.

- 111 *Athenians:* It is a possibility, something that has in fact happened before. It may happen in your case, but you are well aware that the Athenians have never yet relinquished a single siege operation through fear of others. But we are somewhat shocked to find that, though you announced your intention of discussing how you could preserve yourselves, in all this talk you have said absolutely nothing which could justify a man in thinking that he could be preserved. Your chief points are concerned with what you hope may happen in the future, while your actual resources are too scanty to give you a chance of survival against the forces that are opposed to you at this moment. You will therefore be showing an extraordinary lack of common sense if, after you have asked us to retire from this meeting, you still fail to reach a conclusion wiser than anything you have mentioned so far. Do not be led astray by a false sense of honour - a thing which often brings men to ruin when they are faced with an obvious danger that somehow affects their pride. For in many cases men have still been able to see the dangers ahead of them, but this thing called dishonour, this word, by its own force of seduction, has drawn them into a state where they have surrendered to an idea, while in fact they have fallen voluntarily into irrevocable disaster, in dishonour that is all the more dishonourable because it has come to them from their own folly rather than their misfortune. You, if you take the right view, will be careful to avoid this. You will see that there is nothing disgraceful in giving way to the greatest city in Hellas when she is offering you such reasonable terms - alliance on a tribute-pay basis and liberty to enjoy your own property. And, when you are allowed to choose between war and safety, you will not be so

insensitively arrogant as to make the wrong choice. This is the safe rule - to stand up to one's equals, to behave with deference towards one's superiors, and to treat one's inferiors with moderation. Think it over again, then, when we have withdrawn from the meeting, and let this be a point that constantly recurs to your minds - that you are discussing the fate of your country, that you have only one country, and that its future for good or ill depends on this one single decision which you are going to make.

- 112 The Athenians then withdrew from the discussion. The Melians, left to themselves, reached a conclusion which was much the same as they had indicated in their previous replies. Their answer was as follows:

'Our decision, Athenians, is just the same as it was at first. We are not prepared to give up in a short moment the liberty which our city has enjoyed from its foundation for 700 years. We put our trust in the fortune that the gods will send and which has saved us up to now, and in the help of men - that is, of the Spartans; and so we shall try to save ourselves. But we invite you to allow us to be friends of yours and enemies to neither side, to make a treaty which shall be agreeable to both you and us, and so to leave our country.'

- 113 The Melians made this reply, and the Athenians, just as they were breaking off the discussion, said:

'Well, at any rate, judging from this decision of yours, you seem to us quite unique in your ability to consider the future as something more certain than what is before your eyes, and to see uncertainties as realities, simply because you would like them to be so. As you have staked most on and trusted most in Spartans, luck, and hopes, so in all these you will find yourselves most completely deluded.

- 114 The Athenian representatives then went back to the army, and the Athenian generals, finding that the Melians would not submit, immediately commenced hostilities and built a wall completely round the city of Melos, dividing the work out among the various states. Later they left behind a garrison of some of their own and some allied troops to blockade the place by land and sea, and with the greater part of their army returned home. The force left behind stayed on and continued with the siege.

115 About the same time the Argives invaded Phliasia and were ambushed by the Phliasians and the exiles from Argos, losing about eighty men.

Then, too, the Athenians at Pylos captured a great quantity of plunder from Spartan territory. Not even after this did the Spartans renounce the treaty and make war, but they issued a proclamation saying that any of their people who wished to do so were free to make raids on the Athenians. The Corinthians also made some attacks on the Athenians because of private quarrels of their own, but the rest of the Peloponnesians stayed quiet.

Meanwhile the Melians made a night attack and captured the part of the Athenian lines opposite the market-place. They killed some of the troops, and then, after bringing in corn and everything else useful that they could lay their hands on, retired again and made no further move, while the Athenians took measures to make their blockade more efficient in future. So the summer came to an end.

116 In the following winter the Spartans planned to invade the territory of Argos, but when the sacrifices for crossing the frontier turned out unfavourably, they gave up the expedition. The fact that they had intended to invade made the Argives suspect certain people in their city, some of whom they arrested, though others succeeded in escaping.

About this same time the Melians again captured another part of the Athenian lines where there were only a few of the garrison on guard. As a result of this, another force came out afterwards from Athens under the command of Philocrates, the son of Demas. Siege operations were now carried on vigorously and, as there was also some treachery from inside, the Melians surrendered unconditionally to the Athenians, who put to death all the men of military age whom they took, and sold the women and children as slaves. Melos itself they took over for themselves, sending out later a colony of 500 men.⁴¹

41. That there were Melian survivors, who were restored by Lysander at the end of the war, is stated by Xenophon (*Hellenica*, II, 2, 9).

BOOK SIX

SICILIAN ANTIQUITIES

1 IN the same winter the Athenians resolved to sail again against Sicily with larger forces than those which Laches and Eurymedon had commanded, and, if possible, to conquer it. They were for the most part ignorant of the size of the island and of the numbers of its inhabitants, both Hellenic and native, and they did not realize that they were taking on a war of almost the same magnitude as their war against the Peloponnesians.

The voyage round Sicily takes rather under eight days in a merchant ship, yet, in spite of the size of the island, it is separated from the mainland only by two miles of sea. The settlement of the place in ancient times and the peoples who inhabited it are as follows: It is said that the earliest inhabitants of any part of the country were the Cyclopes and Laestrygonians. I cannot say what kind of people these were or where they came from or where they went in the end. On these points we must be content with what the poets have said and what anyone else may happen to know. The next settlers after them seem to have been the Sicanians, though according to the Sicanians themselves they were there first and were the original inhabitants of the country. The truth is, however, that they were Iberians who were driven out by the Ligurians from the district of the river Sicanus in Iberia. The island, which used to be called Trinacria, was in their time called Sicania after them, and they still live up to the present time in the western part of Sicily.

After the fall of Troy, some of the Trojans escaped from the Achaeans and came in ships to Sicily, where they settled next to the Sicanians and were all called by the name of Elymi. Their cities were Eryx and Egesta, and there also came to live in these settlements some of the Phocians who had been carried by storms on their way from Troy first to Libya and afterwards to Sicily.