ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THUCYDIDES' DANGEROUS WORLD: DUAL FORMS OF
DANGER IN CLASSICAL GREEK INTERSTATE RELATIONS.

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In his analysis of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides uses a single Greek word, *kindunos*, an extraordinary two hundred times, often with contorted grammatical and syntactical constructions which focus his reader's attention on its use. With the assumption that Thucydides is writing for a retrospective reader who understands the outcome of the war as well as many of the smaller episodes which led to that outcome, the problem is to determine exactly why Thucydides relies so heavily on this word, particularly in instances when any number of simpler words or constructions would have provided a more straightforward explanation. To solve this problem, this dissertation examines Thucydides' use of the term *kindunos*, not on a case-by-case basis as in a commentary, but on a thematic basis by constructing broad categories that help explain one aspect of Thucydides' purpose. This dissertation shows that Thucydides uses the term *kindunos* in different ways in order to express to his reader the idea that there are two forms of danger threatening his contemporary world: external dangers and internally generated ones. The external dangers are the more easily defined. Thucydides' era was filled with strife and his analysis is of a twenty-seven year long war between Greek *poleis*. The internal dangers, however, are harder for modern readers to define as they are a result of Thucydides' contemporaries' tendency to give into internal urges: the urge to

act, to preserve honor, to exact revenge, and to intervene on others' behalf. This dissertation uses Greek tragic poetry, contemporary to Thucydides' writing, to help define these emotional urges. It also relies heavily on interstate relations theories, namely the Realist paradigm, to define the mechanics of inter-*polis* behavior Thucydides witnessed. But, in the end, this dissertation argues that Thucydides' didactic message to his reader was that in an already dangerous world there is only one way for leaders to hope to mitigate the danger: they must eschew emotional urges and respond to external situations with rationality and reason instead.

THUCYDIDES' DANGEROUS WORLD:
DUAL FORMS OF DANGER IN CLASSICAL GREEK INTERSTATE RELATIONS

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Dedicated to my family...

To my mother, Sally, who sat with me all night long when I wrote my first elementary school research paper. She taught me the value of planning ahead.

To my father, Eddie, who has supported in everything I've ever attempted. He taught me the value of hard work and "stick-to-it'iveness."

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The Department of History at the University of Maryland welcomed me with open arms and helped me broaden my focus through a comprehensive course of study. Special thanks must go out to Dr. Ken Holum whose perspective on history is very different from my own. This difference, of course, has made me a better historian and a more well rounded student as I continually wrestle with the questions he poses.

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Chapter 1: The Question

1.1 <u>General Thesis</u>

Thucydides' *History* analyzes a large part of the twenty-seven year conflict between two of the most powerful *poleis* of the fifth century, Athens and Sparta. Thucydides consciously writes, however, not only for his contemporaries but also for a future audience. By looking at the various ways in which people, both individuals and whole communities, react to the exigencies of war, Thucydides is able to provide an in-depth evaluation of human nature. The Peloponnesian War, to a certain extent, is Thucydides' subject and it is approached in great detail but it is also a transient medium through which Thucydides is able to provide what he sees as fundamental truths about humanity to future generations. As Thucydides himself says, he was hoping his writing would be "judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the understanding of the future." He writes for an audience which he believes will understand the work "not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time" (1.22.4).

That audience, however, is a unique one in that it was likely considered by Thucydides to be an audience of readers, of individuals analyzing his work as deeply as he himself analyzes the events of the Peloponnesian War.[1] For this reason, I will consistently refer to "Thucydides' reader" as opposed to "Thucydides' audience" throughout this dissertation. I will do this in order to highlight the fact that Thucydides' analysis was meant to be read actively and critically, not performed orally for a listening audience. In this interpretation, I follow the arguments of several prominent scholars on

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[1] J. V. Morrison, *Reading Thucydides* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 14.

the subject who agree that Thucydides' work was meant to be read, not performed.[2] As such, Thucydides' is a work whose very complexity and oftentimes incomplete descriptions of events seem designed to highlight the subtle realities of human nature, which, according to Thucydides, offers the reader a glimpse not only of distant past, but also of the future.[3]

What sort of glimpse into human nature is Thucydides providing to his reader? That is the basis of the question that I will examine in this dissertation. The answer, of course, is as complex and varied as the events which comprise the war itself. This dissertation, however, will focus on one facet of Thucydides' work. I will argue that Thucydides' didactic message to his reader is that in a dangerous world where external threats to security combine with the often self-destructive internal threat of irrationality, the wise statesman needs to recognize that the only way to mitigate these dangers is to temper one's natural impulses with reason and rationality. I will define these two sources of danger as Thucydides saw them primarily through analysis of the Thucydidean text but also through the tragic poetry of Thucydides' contemporaries and other Classical Era history-writers of the period in Athens, especially Herodotus. I will also refer to several central themes common to fifth-century philosophy. I will argue that Thucydides carefully presented his narrative by relying heavily on terms representing both types of danger, in order to shape his reader's perception into the same understanding. I will then show that, in Thucydides' analysis, the combination of these two sources of danger led

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[2] W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 28; Gregory Crane, *The Blinded Eye: Thucydides and the Written Word* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), esp. chapter 1; and Morrison (2006), esp. chapters 1-2.

[3] Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 4-5.

certain leaders in his society to act primarily out of fear concerning both their lack of

physical safety (the external danger) as well as out of anger at perceived threats to their

honor and status (emotions which Thucydides saw as the internal danger). I will show,

however, that fear *per se* need not be an irrational or destructive response. In fact, in

Thucydides' analysis, fear is often the most rational response to dangerous external

situations as long as the dangers are correctly identified, where it can take the place of

less rational options such as hope. In other words, there are two kinds or aspects of fear

which Thucydides carefully distinguishes: proper fear of the unknown and of external

dangers, which leads to caution in decision-making is, however, far less problematic to

Thucydides than fear of loss of honor and status, which can lead to impulsive, and angry

decision-making. Thucydides constructed his narrative so that a preponderance of terms

representing danger and the resultant fears are apparent to his intended reader (which is

the decision-making elite[4]), in order to instill in them a greater consciousness of these

dangers, and to illustrate the benefits of a more rational approach to interstate relations.

 The relative frequency with which Thucydides utilizes terms representing danger

makes it clear that he is consciously attempting to focus his reader's attention on the

concept; κίνδυνος and various derivatives appear 200 times in the eight books.

Thucydides even frames the concept of "safety" as merely an "absence of

danger,"ἀκίνδυνος, 12 times instead of relying on the more general term ἀσφάλεια

which itself appears nevertheless 88 times. Thucydides, however, seems to have a deeper

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4 Connor (1984) concludes that work "reflects and reinforces the attitudes of the class into which
Thucydides was born and from which it readership was largely drawn," 239. Morrison (2006) argues that
Thucydides intended his work for a "select group -- perhaps of elite political and social standing," 175.
While he does not investigate the "elite" class of his readers, Ronald T. Ridley explores Thucydides' efforts
to write for a pan-Hellenic readership. See "Exegesis and Audience in Thucydides," *Hermes* 109 (1981),
25-46.

understanding of the concept of danger and provides examples of two types of danger: external and internal. The difference for a near contemporary such as Xenophon is immediately apparent, and shows the more subtle purpose of Thucydides' use of the concept: in Xenophon's *Hellenica*, the term κίνδυνος (and various derivatives) appears only 28 times, far less frequently than in Thucydides. Furthermore, when it does appear it always refers merely to a specific and immediate military danger.[5]

The subtle types of dangers depicted by Thucydides in fact appear to correspond to two of the three parts of the human soul as described in Plato's *Republic*.[6] Plato's interlocutors discuss three opposing forces that comprise the human soul: appetite, spirit, and reason.[7] The two types of danger originate in appetite (external) and spirit (internal), while the function of reason is to control both types of situations.

For the purpose of this analysis, an external danger is any force outside of the state or individual that might threaten that state's or individual's power, status or survival. These threats include opposing states, political enemies, natural forces, or even opposing

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[5] Xen. *Hell*. 1.4.15, 1.4.17, 1.6.4, 1.7.19, 2.2.20, 2.4.9, 2.4.20, 3.5.12, 3.5.16, 3.5.21, 4.2.1, 4.2.19, 4.3.23, 4.4.2, 4.8.2, 5.1.4.2, 5.1.4.5, 5.1.16, 5.2.41, 5.4.50, 6.1.6, 6.2.23, 6.4.5, 6.4.6, 6.4.22, 6.4.24, 6.5.43, 6.5.44, 6.5.47.5, 6.5.47.6, 7.1.6, 7.1.7, 7.1.11, 7.2.17, 7.3.5, 7.4.10, 7.4.34, 7.4.35, 7.5.19.

[6] Though the philosophers I rely upon here, Plato and Aristotle, both post-date Thucydides' writings, I am writing under the assumption that the ideas they presented would have been understood – if not commonly accepted – by the upper class members of late fifth century Athenian society with which Thucydides was certainly engaged. Various parallels between Thucydides and the late fifth, early fourth century philosophers have been illustrated by several scholars. For instance, Nancy Kokaz argues that Thucydides had already moved past the sophistic traditions of his time and was moving closer to Aristotle's later ideas of "nature, power, and necessity," in "Moderating Power: A Thucydidean Perspective," *Review of International Studies* 27 (Jan., 2001), 37. Similarly, J.V. Morrison (2006) highlights how both Thucydides and Plato seem to have embraced the same literary trends, i.e. the shift between a primarily oral culture and one based on reading prose, esp. Chapter 10. D. Shanske presents the connections between Thucydides and his contemporary philosophers in *Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[7] Plato *Rep*. 4:441a.

factions within states in as much as they are willing to transgress normal political

boundaries of behavior in the attainment of their goals. External threats correspond most

closely with Plato's definition of man's "appetite" which longs for "what is good;" with

respect to the study of interstate relations, men desire security as a scarce commodity.[8]

They see security as a "good" to be desired. Hence they desire both wealth and power, for

these things (allegedly) lead to security. Thucydides' narrative of the twenty-seven year

long war certainly makes clear the proliferation of external threats to security.

     Internal dangers, however, are less easily defined by us moderns; they depend on

Thucydides' deeper understanding of the culture and ethos of Classical Greek statesmen.[9]

Thucydides understands this form of danger to be the irrational aspects of man's nature,

which tend to respond violently, especially to perceived disrespect. Internal threats

correspond to Plato's category of "spirit" in the sense that the spirit drives men to

"struggle till death or victory" in indignation over perceived slights, insults, disrespect,

and threats to honor or status.[10] Internal dangers are very broadly represented by

Thucydides. They are centered on the irrational emotions which often shape men's views

of the world. For instance, "hope," ἐλπὶς, appears 109 times in Thucydides' work and

seems to represent an irrational desire to circumvent the forces of circumstance and

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[8] Plato defines appetite in *Rep. 4:438a*. Arthur M. Eckstein discusses security as a scarce commodity which leads states to engage in power-maximizing behavior in *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 14-23.

[9] The idea that Thucydides presents material that cannot be fully understood by casual readers outside of the cultural context in which it which it was composed is one with which Michel Foucault and Hayden White would likely agree. Foucault "stressed the way in which all the densely interlocking symbolic systems of a given culture at a given time were part of a larger *episteme* that could only be understood on its own terms, from the inside, as it were." This idea is presented and discussed in great detail by Carolyn J. Dewald in *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 10-22.

[10] Plato *Rep. 4.440c*.

chance, and usually "hope" by itself (if not backed by reason or calculation) leads to failure.[11] Additional concepts such as concern for appearances of strength and weakness and obsession with honor and shame, comprise examples of the internal dangers of irrational tendencies which often lead to self-destructive behavior.

This dissertation will not simply provide philological analysis of these terms *per se*. It will focus more carefully on an analysis of Thucydides' use of these types of terms to argue that his fundamental purpose for writing was to provide an education to future statesmen in the harsh dangers of an anarchic world as well as the emotional dangers which that anarchic world provoked. It will be argued that Thucydides uses stark terms, especially forms of κίνδυνος, to represent both forms of danger in such a way as to guide his reader towards his didactic message that the only way to mitigate danger is to eschew the traditional, emotional approach to interstate competition and violence in favor of a more rational approach to interstate relations leading if not to success, then at least to survival.

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[11] Cornford argues that hope does not have for the Classical Greeks the same Christian connotation of "hope for better days." Instead, it is often a beguiling refuge of those already damned, a "dangerous passion," in *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (London: E. Arnold, 1907), 167. This argument is repeated in other forms by more recent scholars. Pierre Huart says "Dans la grande majorité des cas, ἐλπίς, marque l'espoir et … il est bien peu fréquent que ces espoirs soient réalisés. in *Le vocabulaire de l'analyse psychologique dan l'oeuvre de Thucydide (*Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968), 145; See also Connor (1984), 153-7; Patrick Coby, "Enlightened Self-Interest in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydidean Speakers on the Right of the Stronger and Inter-State Peace," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24 (1991), 83; Clifford Orwin, *The Humanity of Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 111-17; June W. Allison highlights that Thucydides has Pericles demonstrate disdain for those who have nothing greater than hope on which to rely. She cites as evidence Thuc. 2.62.5 in which Pericles refers to hope as the "prop of those who are without recourse" in *Word and Concept in Thucydides (*Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 61; David Bedford and Thom Workman, "The Tragic Reading of the Thucydidean Tragedy," *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), 65; John Zumbrunnen, "Courage in the Face of Reality: Nietzsche's Admiration for Thucydidesn" *Polity* 35 (2002), esp. 250.

1.2 <u>Literature / Scholarship Survey</u>

In this section, this dissertation exists within the broader framework of modern scholarship across three disciplines: scholarship concerning Thucydides' work itself, relevant political science theories, and relevant literary theories. The dissertation provides an analysis of Thucydides' narrative; it is an analysis of a book and the mind of that book's author. That book, however, documents and analyzes the events of a twenty-seven year long war, filled both with moments of intense action, e.g. individual battles and protracted campaigns, and with long, relatively combat-free periods during which the major powers in the conflict engaged one another through other means, including direct diplomacy between each other and external powers such as Persia, intervention in the affairs of peripheral *poleis*, and internal preparations to gain an advantage in the conflict. It is therefore important to tie the relevant work on Thucydides' narrative and the events of the Peloponnesian War to scholarship in political theory and literary theory. Both of these disciplines, though not a part of Thucydides' world, provide alternative perspectives from which to view Thucydides' work; they provide uniquely specific vocabularies with which to discuss the nuances of his analysis and writing style. Therefore, I will first examine this dissertation's placement within the most relevant scholarship on Thucydides. I will then discuss the most relevant political science scholarship and literary theory scholarship in order to position this dissertation within the broader interdisciplinary context required to understand more fully Thucydides' analysis of his dangerous world.

1.2.1 <u>Relevant Scholarship on Thucydides</u>

  The scholarship on Thucydides' analysis of the Peloponnesian War is vast. There are, however, some major themes within the corpus of scholarly literature that provide context for this dissertation. While it appears that no previous scholars have thoroughly analyzed Thucydides' conception of danger, more specifically his use of the term κίνδυνος, this dissertation will be heavily influenced by others' methodologies and their analytical frameworks concerning the nature of Thucydides' analysis, personality, and theory about the usefulness of history-writing as a didactic medium. In order to locate this dissertation within the existing scholarship, I will analyze the scholarship from the perspective of a tri-polar configuration of the general theories which have shaped the scholarly debate over the course of the past century. I will then demonstrate how the methodology and perspective of this dissertation compare to the more recent scholarly trends with a special focus on one of the past decade's newest trends of close narrative analysis: narratology.

  The first pole of the proposed configuration is also the earliest: F. M. Cornford's, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*.[1] In Cornford's analysis, the whole of Thucydides' work was written as a "Tragedy of Athens" where the individual states and statesmen were merely "participants in a grand drama."[2] In a sense, Cornford focuses on Thucydides as an artist who is merely reflecting the genre of tragic poetry in which he was imbued as a full participant in the culture of fifth century Athens. While this dissertation will partially reflect Cornford's view that Thucydides was influenced by the literary trends of his age,

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[1] F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (London: E. Arnold, 1907).

[2] Connor cites these phrases to describe Cornford's work in "A Post Modernist Thucydides?," *Classical Journal* 72 (1977): 293.

Cornford's conclusions are not compatible with the theory underlying this dissertation --

that Thucydides was, in fact, attempting to create an accurate report and analysis of the

war. It is important to note that although Cornford's analysis is seminal for study of

Thucydides' writings, it has also been built upon many times over by succeeding

generations of scholars over the course of more than a century. This dissertation

acknowledges Cornford's legacy to the field of Thucydidean studies, but relies much

more heavily on more recent work that analyzes Thucydides' influences and his narrative

technique.

Scholars such as J.H. Finley, Jacqueline de Romilly, and C.F Macleod have also

relied upon the foundations of Cornford's analysis but shifted away from his final

judgment on the "tragic nature" of Thucydides' *Histories*.[3] Instead of arguing that

Thucydides was essentially a "tragic historian," these three scholars represent a tangent to

Cornford's work that argues that any tragic elements in Thucydides' analysis were merely

products of the literary climate of his time but are not central to his world-view. Macleod,

for instance, makes the case that "all literature is nourished from two sources: life and

other literature."[4] There is, for Macleod, no sign that Thucydides took tragic poetry as his

model. Instead, Macleod argues that it was Homer's world-view that influenced both

Thucydides and the tragedians. Yet it is clear that Thucydides did recognize the tragic

elements in the events of the Peloponnesian War. For example, the disaster experienced

by the Athenians at Sicily was not a simple act of fate. Thucydides portrays it as a

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[3] J.H Finley, *Three Essays on Thucydides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), esp. Chapter 1, "Euripides and Thucydides." Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977). C.F. Macleod, *Collected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 140-58.

[4] Macleod, 157.

reversal of their overconfidence.[5] It was an example of the way in which *Nemesis* seeks

retribution from men and *poleis* who transgress the natural limits of proper human

conduct, an important theme in Greek tragedy.[6]   In much the same way, Finley presents

the argument that the parallels between Thucydides' and Euripides' works "make it

abundantly clear … that [Thucydides] was himself deeply affected by ideas current" in

Athens.[7] If Cornford represents one of the three major poles of the most relevant trends in

scholarship, it is with the variant of such scholars as Finley and Macleod that my views

on the "tragic nature" of Thucydides' *Histories* are most aligned.

Another scholar's analysis of the links between Thucydides' analysis of the war

and his contemporary tragic poetry deserves mention. While Bernard Knox does not go

so far as to label Thucydides a "tragic historian," he draws significant parallels between

Sophocles' tragic hero Oedipus and Thucydides' depiction of Athens.[8] He notes that

Oedipus gained his power by killing the hereditary king and taking his place both on the

throne and in the queen's bedroom by force. Thus, the "violence and pride" that

characterize a tyrant are clearly exemplified in his character and are also seen in

Thucydides' work.[9] The parallels, however, extend much further. Knox draws attention to

the traits shared by Thucydides' Athens and Sophocles' Oedipus: decisiveness, courage,

impatience, intelligence, self-confidence, adapability, patriotism and, most fatefully,

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[5] Ibid.

[6] David Bedford and Thom Workman, "The Tragic Reading of the Thucydidean Tragedy," *Review of International Studies* 27 (Jan, 2001), 55-6.

[7] J.H. Finley, 54.

[8] Bernard Knox, *Oedipus at Thebes: Sophocles' Tragic Hero and His Time* (New York: Norton Library, 1971).

[9] Knox (1971), 58.

anger.[10] From this perspective, Knox demonstrates that Thucydides' work is best understood as a by-product of his contemporary tragic poetry. Tragedy "deals with the irremediable" and Thucydides' work provides a "reality of the tragic reversal."[11] As Sophocles portrayed Oedipus' fall, so too did Thucydides highlight the "fall towards which Athens is forcing its way with all the fierce creative energy" that led to its power and empire in the first place.[12] For both Sophocles and Thucydides, the hero's ruin "is the stubborn and heroic insistence on being themselves." [13] Thus Knox' perspective on the "tragic nature" of Thucydides' writing helps shape my own analysis.

The second locating polarity of this dissertation's relationship to previous scholarship is the work of C.N. Cochrane, *Thucydides and the Science of History*.[14] Cochrane focuses on Thucydides the scientist, the objective analyst of events, who provided an account of the war that allows us to "prognosticate in any given situation with reasonable assurance of finding ourselves correct." [15] Cochrane essentially argues that Thucydides' objectivity leaves little room for the literary, religious, or philosophical ideas that dominated his times. Certainly, this dissertation will rely upon the notion that Thucydides was fundamentally accurate in terms of events and was attempting to provide his reader with an understanding of human nature as it was displayed in real events. Cochrane's theory, however, is too restrictive in that it does not allow for discussion of

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[10] *Ibid.*, 67-77.

[11] Knox (1971), 105.

[12] *Ibid.*, 105.

[13] *Ibid.*, 106.

[14] C.N. Cochrane, *Thucydides and the Science of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).

[15] Ibid., 167.

the ethos of classical Athenian society as an essential aspect of Thucydides' analysis and problems in that society as a focus of his emotional and intellectual concern. In this respect, this dissertation must be located along an axis which puts Thucydides between Cochrane's "scientific historian" and Cornford's "tragic historian." As with Cornford's work, there has been much more modern analysis of Thucydides' scientific approach which build's upon Cochrane's ideas, especially as they analyze his influence on the field of international relations.[16]

The third locating polarity of the scholarship upon which this dissertation will be established is represented by a much more recent position between these two early scholars: W.R. Connor's analysis of the "Post Modern Thucydides." Connor puts forward the conclusion that "facts never speak for themselves unless selected and arranged by the narrator" and that in this selection and arrangement the attentive reader can recognize Thucydides' fundamental principles and assumptions about human nature.[17] He exhorts Thucydidean scholars to search for the "reconciliation of the artist and the historian." [18]It is in this search for reconciliation, this inquiry into both Thucydides the "historian of integrity" and "artist of profound intensity," that this dissertation is most fundamentally grounded.[19]

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[16] See 1.2.3 Modern Interstate Relations: Basic Concepts and Definitions. See also Stanley Barney Smith, "The Economic Motive in Thucydides," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 51 (1940), 267-301; W.P. Wallace, "Thucydides," *Phoenix* 18 (1964), 251-61; and Virginia Joyce Hunter, "Thucydides and the Historical Fact," *The Classical Journal* 67 (1971), 14-19.

[17] Connor, 298.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Connor describes Thucydides' "integrity and intensity," 298.

Yet these poles merely describe various perspectives on Thucydides the writer, investigating whether he was an artist or historian, or how the artist can be reconciled with the historian. While this is an important task, this dissertation will be more focused on a particular methodological point of view, an inquiry into both what Thucydides is saying and how he is saying it. In this respect, the dissertation is still closely aligned with Connor's perspective.[20] Other scholars, however, provide significant influences on the methodology and interpretive strategies this dissertation will employ.

Scholars such as Hans-Peter Stahl, Virginia Hunter, W.P. Wallace, Pierre Huart and Lowell Edmunds all contribute to the methodological and interpretive strategies that will be followed in this dissertation.[21] Stahl, for instance, focuses on how Thucydides uses his narratives of individual events to illustrate tendencies in human nature. In his opening chapter he argues that the narration and analysis of the Aristogeiton and Harmodius affair in 6.53-61 demonstrates a "strong involvement on the part of the writer," which seems designed to underscore the irrational motives of those described in the narrative; Thucydides highlights for his reader how ignorance about past events (the Revolution of 510-508) led to an irrational fear of the nature of tyranny a century later, an internal danger that may have doomed the Sicilian expedition under Alcibiades' command.[22] From a similar perspective, Virginia Hunter presents the idea that Thucydides made deliberate choices about his narrative in order to shape his reader's

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[20] Connor notes that "Thucydides' text is often the best possible commentary on itself," 298.

[21] Hans-Peter Stahl *Thukydides: Die Stellung des Menschen im Geschichtlichen Prozess* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1966), Virginia J. Hunter, *Thucydides: The Artful Reporter* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1973), W.P. Wallace, "Thucydides," *Phoenix* 18 (1964), Lowell Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence in* Thucydides (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), Pierre Huart, *Le vocabulaire de l'analyse psychologique dans l'oeuvre de Thucydide,* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968).

[22] Stahl, 2-5.

perceptions and to highlight the broader cycles of history he perceived, so that rational

statesmen might learn from the past.[23] So too Wallace contends that Thucydides uses

"what one may almost call subliminal persuasion, careful repetitions and echoes of words

and phrases" to shape his reader's perceptions.[24]

From almost a purely methodological standpoint, the works of both Lowell

Edmunds and Pierre Huart help define this dissertation. Edmunds employs a traditional

stance, using philological analysis of key terms, namely γνώμη and τύχη, to search for

Thucydides' point of view and the lessons he presents to his reader. In a similar but much

more expansive fashion, Huart provides a philological analysis of all the terms he

considers to be psychological in nature within Thucydides' work. He shows how

Thucydides carefully chooses his language to construct a distinct vocabulary consisting

of subtle variations in terms in order to provide his reader with very clear insight into the

psychological motives that help leaders make decisions in the face of uncertainty. For

instance, he highlights one important distinction about the way in which Thucydides uses

two different terms for fear, φοβεῖσθαι and δεδιέναι, to distinguish between rational and

irrational responses. Huart provides examples that demonstrate that φοβεῖσθαι represents

for Thucydides an emotional response, while δεδιέναι represents the more intellectual

response.[25] Even if the rest of his work had no bearing on this dissertation, this aspect

(along with his example of how to perform detailed philological analysis) provides an

important perspective for this dissertation. Huart's work, along with others such as Stahl,

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[23] Hunter, 177-84.

[24] Wallace, 258.

[25] Huart, 126.

Hunter, and Edmunds, forms a solid foundation for this dissertation by letting

Thucydides' text comment upon itself, letting his word choice illustrate how he puts forth

his message so intensely to his reader.

One recent trend in Thucydidean scholarship seems to have come even closer to

fulfilling Connor's call for a "post modern Thucydides": narratology.[26] Essentially the

careful analysis of the structure of the narrative, recent narratological analyses of

Thucydides' have profoundly influenced the methodology for this dissertation and will be

discussed in greater depth later.[27] The concept has been effectively employed as a

analytic tool by several recent scholars including Tim Rood, Carolyn Dewald, J.V.

Morrison, and E. Greenwood.[28] These scholars provide an analytical paradigm for this

dissertation: each analyzes a focused aspect of the narrative structure, i.e. the manner in

which Thucydides presents his narrative. It is this sort of analysis which highlights the

various methods by which Thucydides conveys his theme to his reader. Thus, some basic

concepts in literary theory form the foundation for my broader argument that Thucydides

deliberately crafts his narrative with specific word choice in order to provide his reader

with clear images of the various forms of danger which exist in his contemporary society.

Aside from these general theories and methodologies, certain scholars have

provided the idea that there are differences between what I refer to as external and

internal dangers. Richard Ned Lebow, for instance, sparked the idea of two forms of

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[26] R. B. Rutherford, review of *Thucydides' War Narrative*, by Carolyn J. Dewald, *Classical Review* 58 (2008): 43.

[27] See 1.2.2 Literary Theory: Basic Concepts and Definitions

[28] Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), Carolyn J. Dewald, *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), J.V. Morrison, *Reading Thucydides* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), E. Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (London: Duckworth Publishing, 2006).

danger in his article "Thucydides and Deterrence."[29] Certainly, Lebow's main focus is

the analysis of international relations, not historiography.[30] But he places Thucydides'

analysis of interstate relations in the context of the the later philosophical and political

theories of Plato and Aristotle, namely that the human psyche consists of three distinct

impulses: appetite, spirit, and reason.[31] It is these three impulses which form the basis of

my analysis of the two sources of danger: the appetite corresponds to external sources,

the spirit corresponds to internal sources, and an understanding of how to temper each

source with reason will be argued to be Thucydides' didactic message. Rosaria Vignolo

Munson also alluded to this idea in her analysis of how Herodotus presents the "external

or internal constraints" that he felt affected causality.[32] While Munson deals with

Herodotus, her argument that an otherwise free Greek subjected to ἀνάγκη might

perceive it as "tantamount to slavery and a reason for contempt" helps clarify some of the

subtleties of the Greek ethos of honor and shame which is part of the internal danger

presented in Thucydides' analysis.[33]

Finally, it must be noted that much work has already been done by other scholars

to analyze Thucydides' conception of fear and its role in guiding decisions. As previously

mentioned, Huart uses philological analysis to illustrate Thucydides' understanding that

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[29] Richard Ned Lebow, "Thucydides and Deterrence," *Security Studies* 16, no. 2 (April-June 2007), 163-88.

[30] Political science scholarship relevant to an analysis of Thucydides but not necessarily focused on Thucydides' example will be discussed in section 1.2.3.

[31] Lebow (2007), 168.

[32] Rosaria Vignolo Munson, "Ananke in Herodotus," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121 (2001): 30-50.

[33] Ibid., 37.

fear could be either a rational or irrational approach to uncertainty.[34] In much the same fashion, both Edmunds and Williams present the idea that Thucydides presents fear as either a virtue or a vice based on how it guides decision-makers to either rational decisions or emotional responses.[35] William Desmond has perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of Thucydides' representation of fear.[36] He argues that Thucydides presents fear as a "rational necessity" in his implicit political theory.[37] This is, of course, part of the larger point that will be made in this dissertation. Desmond, however, includes neither a discussion of Thucydides' conception of the dual forms of danger nor even the more straightforward concept of κίνδυνος. In this respect, while Desmond's analysis of fear provides another important perspective from which this dissertation will analyze Thucydides' narrative, it does not supersede the new analysis of Thucydides' conception of danger and rationality that this dissertation will provide.

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[34] Huart, 126.

[35] M.F. Williams, *Ethics in Thucydides: The Ancient Simplicity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 57 and Edmunds, 59.

[36] William Desmond, "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006): 359-79.

[37] Ibid., 359.

1.2.2 <u>Literary Theory: Basic Concepts and Definitions</u>

As previously mentioned there are many scholars who have approached the study

of Thucydides' writing with a strong focus on its literary nature; in other words, they treat

Thucydides more like a literary author than what we think of as a historian. Some of the

more prevalent among these scholars are Tim Rood, Carolyn Dewald, J.V. Morrison, and

E. Greenwood.[1] Many others, however, have influenced their work and subsequently the

present dissertation on Thucydides' analysis of the war. As each of these provides a

particular and unique perspective on the structure of Thucydides' work, in this section I

will provide a brief analysis of each one's methodology, viewpoint and the way in which

their perspective provides a useful vocabulary with which to examine Thucydides'

lessons about danger.

Tim Rood, the earliest of the four scholars representing this recent trend, provides

two important concepts for this dissertation: a basic definition of "narratology" and the

idea of "focalization." He considers narratology to be the study of the "constraints of

narrative" and focuses on what Thucydides is saying (the story) and how he says it (the

presentation).[2] By focusing his analysis on Thucydides' variation of pace, order, and

focalization, i.e. the center of perception from the reader's perspective, he argues that

Thucydides "explains more by narrating better."[3] Essentially, Rood's close analysis of

the way in which Thucydides presents his narrative gives weight to his argument that

Thucydides not only presents a comprehensive and comprehensible narrative of past

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[1] Rood (1998), Dewald (2005), Morrison (2006) and Greenwood (2006).

[2] Rood, 9.

[3] Ibid., 285.

events, but also makes the future comprehensible by appealing to broader categories of

inquiry, i.e. essential truths about human nature.[4] For instance, Rood takes careful note of

the intensity with which Thucydides describes the final stages of the Spartan disaster at

Sphacteria.[5] Thucydides goes beyond a detached, scientific description to capture the

emotions of men who "could not use their eyes to see what was before them" and were

"unable to hear the words of command" with literary brilliance.[6] This, according to Rood,

helps capture the "claustrophobic intensity" that highlights the scope of this war as

greater than any previous wars. It also helps the reader to understand the human

limitations that were a factor in the conflict between these two *poleis*.[7] Rood's

narratological analysis is very closely related to the methodology of this dissertation:

Thucydides' narrative serves as its own best commentary.

Carolyn Dewald takes a similar approach to Thucydides' war narrative but

focuses her analysis more closely on specific narrative units within the larger work and

how they change over the course of the narrative as a whole. Dewald bases her own

analysis of Thucydides' narrative structure upon such scholars as Michel Foucault and

Hayden White, both of whom theorize about the importance of understanding the cultural

context of the history writing, i.e. the subtle linguistic codes that would have been easily

recognizable by contemporaries but are nearly indecipherable by a modern reader.[8]

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[4] Ibid., 286.

[5] Thuc. 4.31-39.

[6] Thuc. 4.34.3

[7] Rood discusses the "claustrophobic intensity" and human limitations, 57.

[8] Dewald opens her book with an in-depth analysis of the literary theories and the changes in Thucydidean scholarship which most affected her own work and presents both Foucault and White as exemplars of the "Post Modern approach," 10-22.

Dewald's careful analysis of Thucydides' narrative structure supports her basic argument

that Thucydides' writing was consciously organized to relate the events of the war in such

a way as to allow the reader to understand the decisions of major actors and Thucydides'

own understanding of them simultaneously.[9] Her narratological analysis and contention

that Thucydides consciously constructed the patterns of his writing style to influence his

reader's understanding of the lessons to be learned from history influence this dissertation

and provide a paradigm for its methodology and basic research question.

Two other scholars rely on narrative analysis to demonstrate how Thucydides

specifically constructed his narrative in such a way as to lead engaged, retrospective

readers to their own conclusions about events, their causes and other possible outcomes:

E. Greenwood and J.V. Morrison. Greenwood's narratological analysis focuses on three

main questions: how Thucydides crafted his account, how he was affected by the literary

trends of his time, and how he influences his reader and invites them to participate in the

analysis.[10] Similarly, Morrison argues that Thucydides' work is intended to be interactive

and requires the reader's active participation to create meaning.[11] Like Dewald, who

based her analysis partly on Foucault's theories, Morrison argues that Thucydides' unique

features must be put into proper cultural perspective in order to gain full insight into their

value as didactic tools.[12] This dissertation will follow this narratological trend in order to

argue that Thucydides constructed his narrative with such a heavy reliance on terms

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[9] Ibid., 15.

[10] E. Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (London: Duckworth, 2006).

[11] J. V. Morrison, *Reading Thucydides* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 14.

[12] Morrison makes a careful analysis of Thucydides' intended audience of both readers and auditors in antiquity, then compares this to the perspectives of modern audience, Ch. 10. He does not explicitly cite Foucault.

representing the two sources of danger in order to guide his reader to the understanding

that only with a rational approach can these sources of danger be mitigated and to win

their assent to this perception.

1.2.3 <u>Modern Interstate Relations: Basic Concepts and Definitions</u>

Thucydides narrates the events of a war fought over twenty-four hundred years ago among a group of Greek city-states which were, on average, no larger than even moderately sized modern American cities; 80% of the known *poleis* had a population numbered in four figures and only 10% exceeded 10,000.[1] Yet his analysis of this war continues to captivate the imagination of not only classicists and ancient historians, but political scientists as well.[2] Thus it is that the field of interstate relations theories provides both a unique perspective from which to analyze Thucydides' writing and a unique vocabulary with which to discuss various concepts he presents. In this dissertation, I will rely heavily on the "Realist approach to interstate behavior," which is founded upon three fundamental concepts: interstate relations are not regulated and are thus considered a form of "anarchy;" states react to this anarchy by attempting to maximize their own power through "self-help;" and stable or unstable balances of power are important factors in bringing about war or peace.[3] In this section, I will present the most essential terms and discuss them with respect to examples from Thucydides' *History* in order to lay the foundation for more specific analysis in later sections of the dissertation. In defining these terms, I will be making assumptions about certain aspects of Greek society, especially as

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[1] Mogens Herman Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 76.

[2] The bibliography on the various ways in which Thucydides' work is interpreted and used as evidence for theories of scholars of interstate relations is vast and will be presented at various points in this dissertation based on relevance to specific points in my argument. For a general overview of the basic trends in Thucycides' applicability to interstate relations theories, see Richard Ned Lebow, "Thucydides the Constructivist," *The American Political Science Review 95* (2001), 547-60; and A.M. Eckstein, "Thucydides, the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and the Foundation of International Systems Theory," *The International History Review* 25 (2003), 757-74; and *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), ch. 3.

[3] A. M. Eckstein (2006), 12.

reflected in interstate relations. These assumptions and the definitions of these concepts –

all subject to debate – provide a starting point for this analysis of Thucydides' use of

kindunos as a didactic theme concerning relations among states in his work.

The first fundamental concept is that the Greek city-states of Thucydides' time

existed in the form of an "anarchy." For the various *poleis,* there was no formal

international law, no universally recognized central authority, and no mechanism of

enforcement for any norms of behavior should they have existed.[4] In such an

environment security was a scarce commodity, as each state competed with every other

state to provide for its own security and to increase its chance of survival. To paraphrase

modern Realist theoreticians, the anarchy of Thucydides' world created a situation in

which any state could use force at any time, leading all states to be prepared to do so. The

state of nature, according to this theory, is a state of war.[5] In other words, Thucydides'

city-states existed in a world defined by a lack of universally accepted and enforced law,

which led to constant competition between states in the "arts of violence" and power.[6]

There were, of course, certain standards of behavior and accepted customs which

differentiated Greek society or culture from non-Greeks, but these were not externally

imposed and were not generally enforceable except by individual *poleis* with the power

to do so.[7] Though each sovereign *polis* recognized various treaties and customs

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[4] Eckstein (2006), 12.

[5] K.N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1979), 102. See also, T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Collier Books, 1959), 65; C.T. Schelling, "The Diplomacy of Violence," *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues,* R. J. Art and R. Jervis, eds. (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 182; and Eckstein (2006), 13.

[6] Eckstein (2006), 19.

[7] Polly Low, *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.

governing standards of conduct among cities in both war and peace, there was no

published code of international law and no central authority capable of enforcing such

laws.[8] Athens, for instance, might have made treaties or created regulations which were

considered to be binding in a wider community, that of the Athens and its allies, but

Athens alone had input into the enforcement of such treaties and there was no external

authority beyond that of Athens to regulate the power of the largest *poleis*.[9] Certain

standards existed which were considered to the "common *nomoi* of the Greeks," κατὰ

τὸν νόμον or κατὰ τοὺς νόμους.[10] Examples of these customs include the treatment of

heralds in both peace and war, and the return of the dead after a battle. But *nomoi*

furnished no more than a general sense of right and wrong, "there [was] no legislative

body which could create positive *nomoi* on behalf of the Greeks."[11] What existed instead

was a set of international rights and standards for the *poleis* which were "defined by the

strong for the weak."[12] Or, as Thucydides explains, "the strong do what they will, the

weak what they must."[13] While certain enforcement mechanisms, such as arbitration,

were employed for the peaceful resolution of interstate disagreements, the primary

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[8] Low (2007), 84. See also J. Plescia, *The Oath and Perjury in Ancient Greece* (Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1970), 58; F.E. Adcock and D.J. Mosley, *Diplomacy in Ancient Greece* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 121; and M. Ostwald, *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law: Law, Society and Politics in Fifth-Century Athens* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 119.

[9] Low (2007), 70, 88-9.

[10] Thucydides uses these phrases a total of 10 time in his *History*. κατὰ τὸν νόμον: 1.24.2, 2.46.1, 3.56.2, 3.66.2, 4.38.1, 5.66.3. κατὰ τοὺς νόμους: 1.41.1, 2.37.1, 3.34.4, 4.118.2.

[11] Low (2006), 96.

[12] Demosthenes, *Rhod*. 15.29. See also Eckstein (2006), 308, n. 215 and Low (2007), 96.

[13] Thuc. 5.89.

obstacle was that there was "no suitable third-party to perform the arbitration" among the most powerful *poleis*.[14] In other words, there was no mechanism of enforcement and the most common sanction was violence and war. The anarchy of Thucydides' world was such that "truces and treaties [were] mere interruptions in a permanent condition of war."[15]

Political scientists argue that the often-violent nature of this interstate anarchy impels states to focus almost entirely on short-term survival and security;[16] this leads to the second fundamental concept of the Realist paradigm, "self-help." Within such anarchy, all states exist with the belief that no other state can be completely relied upon for help. Thus, each state feels compelled to rely on its own resources for survival and thus can be expected to attempt to maximize its power or be at the mercy of those who do.[17] This is another aspect of Demosthenes' claim that rights and standards were defined "by the strong for the weak," in the sense the the actions of the strong *poleis* pushed the weaker ones to make every effort to build up their own power in order to improve their chances of survival and independence in the violent anarchy of Thucydides' time.[18]

The uncertainty felt by each state with respect to the actions of its neighbors – and competitors for security – creates a preoccupation with potential dangers and the

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[14] Low (2007), 105-6.

[15] Low (2007), 108.

[16] Eckstein (2006), 14. See also R. Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973), 64-5; K.N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (1988), 616; and M. Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History and Theory* (London: Routledge, 1996), 8.

[17] Eckstein (2006), 15. See also Aron (1973), 8-9, 112 and Waltz (1979), 104.

[18] Demosthenes, *Rhod*. 15.29.

preparations for the worst-case scenario become a way of life. This is what Realist

theoreticians refer to as the "uncertainty principle."[19] Uncertainty and assumptions about

the worst-case intentions and capabilities of other states are additional contributors to

each state in the anarchy seeking to maximize its own power. For, as Waltz theorizes, "in

power lies safety."[20] The quest for power and security, however, can be thought of as a

zero-sum game because each state's growth in power will create feelings of insecurity

and fear for every other state. This is called the "security dilemma" by political scientists,

and can be thought of as one way of describing Thucydides "truest cause" of the

Peloponnesian War; the growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired

in Sparta, made war inevitable."[21]

Thucydides, in fact, seems to understand fear to be "one of the dominant forces

shaping political thought."[22] This theme is evident throughout his work. His earliest

description of archaic Greek society is one where the earliest Hellenes maintained no

settled populations and did not plant crops due to the fear that migrations of stronger

tribes would invade and take what they had built up.[23] By the end of his narrative, the

situation at Athens is no different as news of the Sicilian disaster caused the Athenians

"great fear and consternation" as they "thought their enemies in Sicily would

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[19] Eckstein (2006), 17.

[20] K.N. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," *International Security* 25 (2000), 33. See also Eckstein (2006), 18-19.

[21] Thuc. 1.23.6 and Eckstein (2006), 50. The scholarship on this passage and the various interpretations of the causes of the war will be presented in 1.2.4 Thucydides 1.23.5-6: A Realist Perspective.

[22] William Desmond, "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides, *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 360.

[23] Thuc. 1.2 and Desmond (2006), 363-4.

immediately sail with their fleet against the Piraeus … while their adversaries at home,

redoubling all their preparations, would vigorously attack them by sea and land at

once." [24] In the anarchic environment of interstate relations, Thucydides presents the idea

that "rational apprehension of future evil … is the prime motive of international

politics." [25] Thus, the "self-help regime" of states in this environment can lead to a

consistently competitive, violent and dangerous world.

The third fundamental concept of the Realist paradigm is the concept of balances

of power and, perhaps more importantly for this dissertation, the way in which they can

lead to what is known to political scientists as a "power transition crisis." The anarchy of

Classical Greek interstate relations, as I have noted, was typically violent as each state

competed with every other one for security. In such an environment, one of the only

reliable mitigators of violence is the presence of balances of power.[26] If we define a

"pole" as a single, powerful state within the international system, it is possible to

recognize a range of models defining the relationship between large and small states

within that system. At one extreme would be the model of "unipolarity," a situation in

which one state is the dominant power in the system and is more than a match for any

other state within the system.[27] This environment tends to be stable and war much less

prevalent, as the superpower is able to establish the control, authority, and enforcement

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[24] Thuc. 8.1.2 and Eckstein (2006), 52

[25] M. Wight, *Power Politics* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978), 138-9. Desmond (2006) argues that "fear may figure so prominently in Thucydides' narrative, analysis, and speeches because he sensed that his Classical audiences were in particular need of an education in rational prudence," 377. See also Eckstein (2006), 52.

[26] Eckstein (2006), 23.

[27] *Ibid*.

mechanisms necessary to replace the anarchy with its own version of international law. The hegemon, in other words, subsumes the anarchy of the interstate system into its own system of control. At the other extreme would be the model of "multipolarity," where there are many powerful states in the system, none of which is dominant over the rest.[28] There would be a higher expectation of violent interactions among various states in this system as each state competes freely for scarce resources of power and security within the anarchy. A third system, bipolarity, reflects a situation in which there are two major powers, both of which have strong control over their own sphere own influence, allies or subjects. Evidence suggests that this situation is generally less violent than multi-polarity but, as expected, more violent than unipolarity -- as each major pole competes for dominance over the other.[29]

It is this third model, bipolarity, which for the most part describes the Classical Greek interstate system Thucydides depicts. Athens and its (subject) allies of the Delian League might be considered one pole; Sparta and its allies in the Peloponnesian League might be considered the other. Yet, as various incidents in Thucydides' narrative indicate, the power of the two hegemons was not nearly so overwhelming as to be more than a match for all the other states within its sphere of influence. The Spartans, for instance were convinced – goaded, perhaps even insulted – by the Corinthians to enter the war with the Athenians in the first place against their natural isolationist tendencies because they feared losing Corinth as an ally (as the Corinthians explicitly threaten.[30] The

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[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Eckstein (2006), 23. See also Waltz (1979), 161-70 and D. S. Geller and J.D. Singer, *Nations at War: A Scientific Study of International Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 115-17.

[30] Thuc. 1.68-71.

Athenians, of course, were forced to contest not only with the Peloponnesian League, but also with rebellious members of their own Delian League at various points in their history.[31] So the Greeks' situation (as all real world situations) is theoretically bipolar but more complex than that. What is important to understand for this dissertation is simply how the perceived expansion of one pole or the contraction of another within the system destabilizes the entire system as a whole and leads other states to make their own bids for increased power as the systemic structure becomes unstable. This is called a "power-transition crisis" as states seize upon an opportunity to advance their position within the system with the perceived decline of a previously superior power.[32] Some political scientists argue that such power transition crises often lead to "hegemonic war" -- a contest for a new distribution of power and status throughout the entire system, affecting every state within the system.[33] Thucydides' war certainly fits this model; political scientists have long recognized this, and have claimed his analysis of the origins of the war (1.23.5-6) as their own.

Perceived shifts in power among states and the ensuing transition crisis they entails as leaders seek to provide greater levels of security for their own states, pushes decision-makers into what appears to be an ever-shrinking set of options in terms of relations with other states. At some point, a situation may occur in which leaders feel as if "there is exists no other choice." Theorists call this situation "premature cognitive

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[31] Thasos, 1.100.2; Euboea and Megara, 1.114.1; Samos and Byzantium, 1.115.5; Mytiliene, 3.2; Acanthus, 4.88.1; Amphipolis, 4.108.3; Torone, 4.110.6; Mende, 4.123.1; Chios, 8.14.1-2; Clazomenae, 8.14.3; Miletus, 8.17.3; Rhodes, 8.44.2; Oropus, 8.60.1; Abydos and Lampsacus, 8.62.1.

[32] Eckstein (2006), 24.

[33] Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (1988), esp.592 and 597.

closure," and it leads decision-makers to ignore any diplomatic (non-violent) options which do exist in favor of the violent one they see as their last, best hope for security in the face of uncertainty.[34] Only some states, however, appear satisfied with their power position within the system or the hierarchy of powers; they are referred to as being "*status quo* states." Other states are "revisionist states," seeking to improve their position relative to their competitors. In reality almost every state is willing to engage in revisionism in the proper circumstances, because of the impulse to power maximization.[35]

What is important to remember, however, is that the states themselves, and even individual leaders within those states still make the decision whether or not to go to war. In other words, the "structures [of the interstate system] shape and shove; they do not determine the actions of states."[36] And this is a phenomenon Thucydides understood; his narrative of the events of the war is a nuanced analysis which balances a systems-level approach to interstate relations with an understanding of those aspects of human nature, at the individual level, that led to the clash of the two major poles and their often-contentious allies in the Classical Greek world. By presenting a brief analysis of Thucydides' statement concerning the cause of the war, I will demonstrate how the Realist perspective on interstate relations can provide a useful vocabulary for the discussion of Thucydides' work.

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[34] Eckstein (2006), 25.

[35] Eckstein (2006), 15.

[36] Waltz (2000), 24. See also Eckstein (2006), 27.

1.2.4 <u>Thucydides 1.23.5-6: A Realist Perspective</u>

Thucydides 1.23.5-6 is one of the most critically examined and often discussed

passages in his work. However, for all of the erudite discussion, it remains one of the

most contentious and "poorly understood" passages.[1] Various authors support their own

theories of causation, determinism, and human nature with differing translations and

insights into Thucydides' linguistic, grammatical, and syntactical choices.[2] While

Realists, perhaps focusing more heavily on Thucydides' "scientific approach" to history-

writing, "take their descent from Thucydides to be incontestable,"[3] others argue that he

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[1] W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 126.

[2] Thuc. 1.23.5-6. Determining exactly what Thucydides is trying to say about the nature and causation of the Peloponnesian War has vexed scholars across the disciplines for many years and is the source of a rich bibliography. A brief overview of the major topics might include the following works. On the "truest cause," see H. Rawlings, *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 68. On the meaning of *prophasis*, see E. Schwartz, *Das Geschichtswerk des Thukydides* (Bonn: George Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1929)m 250; K, Deichgräber, "πρόφασις. Eine terminolgische Studie," *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin* 3.4 (1933), 1-17; Lionel Pearson, "Prophasis and Aitia" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 83 (1952); C. Schneider, *Information und Absicht bei Thukydides* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck un Ruprecht, 1974), 101-10; H. Rawlings, "A Semantic Study of Prophasis to 400 BC" *Hermes* Enzelschrift 33 (1975); A. Heubeck, "πρόφασις und keine Ende (zu Thuk. i 23) *Glotta* 58 (1980); M. Heath, "Thucydides 1.23.5-6," *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 11 (1986), 104-5; J.S. Richardson, Thucydides 1.23.6 and the Debate About the Peloponnesian War," in E.M. Craik, ed, *Owls to Athens: Essays in Classical Studies Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Clifford Orwin, *The Humanity of Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 213-14. More general discussions of the causes of war are provided by G. Dickins, "The True Causes of the Peloponnesian War," *The Classical Quarterly* 5 (1911); G.E.M. de Ste. Croix *Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Cornell University, 1972); R. Sealey, "The Causes of the Peloponnesian War," *Classical Philology* 70 (1975); C.A. Powell, "Athens' Difficulty, Sparta's Opportunity," *Antiquité Classique* 49 (1980), 87-113; P.J. Rhodes, "Thucydides on the Causes of the Peloponnesian War," *Hermes* 115 (1987); and Ernst Badian, "Thucydides and the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War: A Historian's Brief" in *From Plataea to Potidaea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 125-62. For the perspective of international relations theorists, see Richard Ned Lebow, "Thucydides, Power Transition Theory, and the Causes of War," in *Hegemonic Rivalry from Thucydides to the Nuclear Age*, Richard Ned Lebow and Barry Strauss, eds. (Westview Press, 1991), Mark V. Kauppi, "Contemporary International Relations Theory and the Peloponnesian War," in Lebow/Strauss (1991); and A.M. Eckstein, "Thucydides, the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and the Foundation of International Systems Theory," *The International History Review* 25 (2003), 757-774.

[3] Eckstein (2003), 757.

writes of human behavior with "pent-up intensity of feeling and of thought."[4] Both

opinions are correct, though neither exclusively so. In this section, I will explore the

subtle degrees of distinction Thucydides assigns to various causes of the war and then

provide a grammatical and syntactical analysis of how Thucydides expresses his "truest

cause." Thucydides writes:

> διότι δ' ἔλυσαν, τὰς αἰτίας προύγραψα πρῶτον καὶ τὰς
> διαφοράς, τοῦ μή τινα ζητῆσαί ποτε ἐξ ὅτου τοσοῦτος
> πόλεμος τοῖς Ἕλλησ κατέστη. τὴν μὲν γὰρ
> ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ, τοὺς
> Ἀθηναίους ἡγοῦμαι μεγάλους γιγνομένους καὶ φόβον
> παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ
> πολεμεῖν· (1.23.5-6)

This section will not provide a complete and definitive answer to the question of "what is

Thucydides really trying to say" where so many have failed to do so in the past.[5] I will,

however, argue that Thucydides describes the nature and causation of the Peloponnesian

War through the combination of a systems-level analysis with insight into human

behavior and free will, standing in opposition to complete determinism about the

inevitability of war resulting from a crisis in the transition of power. This nuanced

approach, relying as it does in part (but only in part) on vocabulary drawn from the

Realist school of interstate relations theories, provides the perspective from which the

rest of this dissertation will analyze Thucydides' work.

  Thucydides "thought that future enquirers into the origins of the Peloponnesian

War would obtain a complete and final answer if they combined the detailed information

he offered on the complaints and quarrels ... with the implications of 1.23.6 on the power-

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[4] Connor (1977), 289.

[5] For an overview of the various popular translations, see Eckstein (2003).

transition crisis, and if they understood the particular events of 1.23.5 within a structural framework."[6] Far from making any moral judgments about human nature or deterministic systems,[7] he is simply showing future generations that there is a combination of system-level factors that influence, but do not determine, the human decision-making process. The explanation given in 1.23.6 is simply a "first approximation of the truth that would be expanded on and modified in the course of the subsequent narrative."[8] It represents Thucydides' effort to tell his reader that this is the basic premise of the situation and what follows will explain how the human element affected and was affected by the international anarchy. I accept this formulation.

So, if Thucydides is laying the foundation for a systems-level approach, one would look for the changing variables within that system that create sufficient instability for a hegemonic war. To this end, Thucydides offers several ideas in his layered approach to the causes of the war. In the first portion of this passage, he writes about the accusations and differences, αἰτίας... καὶ διαφοράς, that account for the breaking of the Thirty Years' Peace Treaty of 446 between Athens and Sparta. However, he does not stop his analysis here, but proceeds to offer what is, in his opinion, ἡγοῦμαι, the "truest cause" of the conflict. It is in wrongly attempting to identify a contrast between these thoughts that many theorists find inconsistencies in Thucydides' writing. However,

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[6] Eckstein (2003), 773.

[7] A.W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* I, (Oxford 1945): 152.

[8] Richard Ned Lebow, "Thucydides, Power Transition Theory, and the Causes of War," in *Hegemonic Rivalry from Thucydides to the Nuclear Age,* Richard Ned Lebow and Barry S. Strauss, eds. (Westview Press 1991): 156.

understanding this series of thoughts, experienced very compactly to be sure, can be simplified via some basic definitions.

For instance, αἰτίας... καὶ διαφοράς may represent "charges made by one side against the other," definitions which are in line with *comparanda* from other ancient history writers, particularly Herodotus.[9] These charges and accusations led to a breach of the treaty, but not necessarily to the start of open hostilities, which is why Thucydides only begins exploring causation with these terms. In his preliminary statement of 1.23.5, he frames his thesis with what he conceived of as lesser, or more transient, causes for so great a war -- though they were sufficient to cause it. But Thucydides does not stop at this level. He continues beyond the grievances that plagued all parties in the conflict to find his "truest cause," the anarchic international system and its effects on human behavior.

This does not mean that a reader should discard the earliest stated grievances as mere symptoms of the system. They can be, and were, "true causes."[10] The problem is that too often translators highlight a contrast between the earlier αἰτίας... καὶ διαφοράς and Thucydides' "truest cause" where no contrast exists. "We can ignore... the many analyses which assume, wrongly, that there is some inherent opposition between the expressions *prophasis* and *aitia* … The meaning of these two words often partly overlaps."[11] Therefore, to argue that "when Thucydides directly contrasts *prophasis* with *aitia* he contrasts 'justification' with 'accusation,'"[12] is to invent a contrast where one is not indicated. Thucydides' postpositive γὰρ clarifies that he is explaining "the details of that

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[9] Pearson (1952), 205 and 221; Herod. 1.1.

[10] Gomme: 53.

[11] de Ste. Croix (1972), 53. See also Gomme, 153.

[12] Pearson: 222.

which was promised in an incomplete or general statement."[13] Why does Thucydides need to explain his prior statement? Because he is postulating a layered approach to his systems theory. The accusations and grievances did occur, but they were compounded by the "truest cause" and its effect on human nature.

So why does Thucydides need to offer a "truest cause" with a third word, πρόφασις, to define the causes of the war? The quest for the precise meaning of the word πρόφασις is a long-standing one.[14] Pearson's work, however, seems to distill it to its essence by combining the competing ideas on the word's root with the theory that "whether derived from προφαίνω or προφῆμι, [πρόφασις] means in the most general terms something that you show or say, an explanation you offer for behavior, giving the reason or purpose."[15] He buttresses his argument with the poetic image of Pindar, who views πρόφασις as the "daughter of After-thought."[16] This allows us to sense from the word's intellectual lineage something more fundamental than an obvious cause. Πρόφασις reflects Thucydides' contemplation of the war and the power-transition within the system. The αἰτίας... καὶ διαφοράς may in fact represent causes of the war, but they are not privileged as the "truest cause" because they lack the depth of Thucydides' reflection. In 1.23.5-6, Thucydides is like a doctor: he recognizes that while certain disputes and differences brought about changes in a susceptible system, the susceptible system itself plays a role. The medical analogy properly clarifies this idea since so much

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[13] H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, s.v. "γὰρ;" cf. Eckstein (2003), 770.

[14] See Schwartz (1929); Deichgräber (1933), 1-17; Pearson (1952); Schneider (1974), 101-10; Rawlings (1975); and Heubeck (1980).

[15] Pearson, (1952), 206.

[16] Pindar: *Pythian Ode* 5.28, cited by Pearson (1952), 207.

discussion of this word centers on its use in Hippocratic writings. Though a sick person may attribute the cause of his illness to a combination of a recent snowstorm and wet clothing, the learned doctor, after reflection, understands that while the patient's αἰτίας... καὶ διαφοράς are indeed causative factors, the ἀλαθεστάτην πρόφασιν is the patient's weak constitution.[17] For Thucydides' analsysis, it is important to note that the surface grievances all have to do with Athenian pressure -- specifically on Sparta's allies (especially Corinth) and Sparta's fear of losing them. This is what connects the grievances with the "truest cause," the growth of Athenian power and the fear it creates for the Spartans. Thucydides' psychological analysis of the cause stems from his layered understanding that, while the world is shaped by systems-level forces, humans have the free will to make decisions within that changing system, and here the general Spartan fear of Athens is crucial with that changing system.

With precise diction, in this case the use of the superlative ἀλεθεστάτην, "truest," Thucydides offers his multifaceted explanation for the war.[18] Inherent in the use of the superlative is the idea that there may be other true causes.[19] This particular phrase, ἀλαθεστάτην πρόφασιν, was not a casual comment for Greek writers. Rather, it occurs only twice in extant Greek literature.[20] The second occurrence is also found in Thucydides, specifically as part of his discussion of Athenian motivations for the Sicilian

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[17] Gomme, 1:153. See T. J. Luce, *The Greek Historians*, (London: Routledge Press, 1997), 83 and Pearson (1952), 217.

[18] Eckstein (2003), 770.

[19] Ibid, 769.

[20] Hunter. R. Rawlings, *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 68.

invasion.[21] Both cases indicate "states of mind"[22] of the actors involved, either Spartan

fear (1.23.6) or Athenian desires (6.6.1), and in both cases Thucydides uses the phrase "to

distinguish between openly-avowed... charges and the real cause."[23] Thus, Thucydides is

not providing a contrast between false justifications and the true cause; he is providing a

complex, multi-layered theory of Realist causation and human nature.

Though there is no contrast between his deep explanatory causes and the surface

grievances (which are real), Thucydides does, with a μὲν... δὲ construction, contrast that

his "truest cause" is also "least apparent in speech," ἀφανεστάτην λόγῳ. There is an

apparent anomaly in this passage in the sense that "what is stated at 1.23.6 in unqualified

terms to be ἀφανεστάτην plays a prominent part in the debates which Thucydides

reports."[24] This is true. What is stated in 1.23.6 is that Thucydides believes the "truest

cause" of the war is that the Athenians, by growing greater and causing fear among the

Spartans, compelled them into conflict. But for Thucydides, this idea is ἀφανεστάτην

λόγῳ. He cannot mean "never put into words" since he describes the Corinthians arguing

against Athenian growth in their first speech at Sparta.[25] So, the phrase does not mean

that this reason was not heard in speeches. Rather, it refers to what Thucydides heard

from contemporary historians, politicians, and ordinary people -- who focused on the

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[21] Thuc. 6.6.1

[22] Luce (1977), 84.

[23] Rawlings (1975), 68.

[24] Richardson (1990), 156.

[25] Thuc. 1.68.

(real) grievances with a "Homeric" perspective on causation.[26] With this simple μὲν... δὲ construction, he contrasts his contemporaries' beliefs with his own.

Having laid out the foundation of complaints and disagreements, Thucydides proceeds to demonstrate his layered theory of realist politics and human nature by explicating the "truest, though least evident in speech, cause" of the war with the succinct, yet loaded combination of two present participles and an infinitive. With this simple phrase he encapsulates an amalgamation of what we would call international relations theory and human nature rarely achieved even by modern theorists. Thucydides believed that the "truest cause" of war was that the Athenians were becoming great, μεγάλους γιγνομένους, and this growth, by causing fear among the Spartans, φόβον παρέχοντας, compelled them into conflict. Though grammatically simple, these two present participles are syntactically powerful. They allow Thucydides to demonstrate not a single, specified act of imperialistic growth, but a trend being perpetrated up to the point of conflict.[27]

Thucydides' image of Athenian greatness is certainly contentious.[28] By this time, Athens had experienced defeats in Egypt (454) and at Coronea (447/46) and had lost control of Megara (447/46). But Thucydides is not saying that the Athenians were becoming "greater" or "greater than ever before." To do so, he might employed the comparative or perhaps a superlative qualified by the particle ὡς. Instead, what he is saying is that the Athenians were, at the time of these events, "becoming great." He

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[26] Richardson (1990), 158.

[27] Eckstein (2003), 765.

[28] Lebow (1991), 128.

leaves it to the reader, just as it is left to other states in an anarchic system, to determine this subjective definition of relative power.

Thus, Thucydides was not wrong about Athenian power. Though "Athens was weaker than she had been in 460, she was far stronger than she had been in 445."[29] An analysis of the strategic situation proves that Athens was actually much more powerful from 439 onwards than she had been at her nadir in 445.[30] Three basic points highlight Athenian growth: Athens had proven that no subject states could hope to revolt without Spartan aid by successfully quelling the Samian revolt (441/40); Athens had established Amphipolis in her empire with its vast timber resources and geostrategic control of the Strymon River (437); and Athens continued to improve the tactical proficiency of her navy.[31] Besides these three points, Pericles' pre-war policies and actions provide further evidence of growing Athenian power. His involvement with the Epidamnian affair and the Megarian Decree demonstrates an interest in westward expansion and a "low-cost opportunity to enhance Athenian power."[32] This active effort to expand her involvement throughout Hellas proves that Athens was indeed "growing great."

From the Spartan perspective, however, the most tangible evidence of Athenian growth may have been the Megarian Decree because it potentially affected the northern entrance to the Peloponnese via the isthmus of Corinth, as Athenian pressure on Corinth itself -- at Corcyra and Potidaea -- affected the southern exit from the isthmus. This

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[29] Dickins (1911), 243.

[30] George Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War*, (London and New York, Routlege Press 1997): 23.

[31] Ibid, 23.

[32] Lebow (1991), 153.

created a sense of urgency for the Spartans.[33] "No one who reads the account of the debate in Sparta can fail to see that the overwhelming feeling of the audience was one in favor of war not against the commercial foe of Corinth... but against the imperial menace of Athens which was threatening to isolate the Peloponnese."[34] Hence the Spartan objective was not so much "to gain anything definite as to check Attic expansion."[35] This expansion is reflected in the Thucydides' phrase μεγάλους γιγνομένους.

By emphasizing Athenian growth Thucydides "postulates a power-transition crisis … which finds expression in the 'complaints and disputes' between states."[36] It is a power-transition crisis since Athenian growth threatened the status quo of the basically bipolar Greek world.[37] A rough, though asymmetrical, military balance of power between the two states provided stability in their anarchic world, but that stability was fragile.[38] It was threatened "in 431 very much as it had been in 461, and the expansion of 445 to 435 was analogous to that of 477 to 461."[39] Both instances resulted in war. Thucydides understands the balance of power and recognizes that Athenian growth exerts pressure on the international system.

The second participial phrase also supports the idea that Thucydides had a systems-level approach or understanding. After explaining that the Athenians are

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[33] Ibid, 133.

[34] Dickins (1911), 248.

[35] Ibid, 245.

[36] Eckstein (2003), 763.

[37] Ibid, 758.

[38] Lebow: 146.

[39] Dickins (1911), 243.

becoming great, he writes that they are causing fear among the Lacedaemonians, φόβον

παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις. Thucydides is hinting at one of the basic tenets of

contemporary realism by showcasing Spartan fear for "self-preservation in a fiercely

competitive world."[40] The parallel construction of the two present-tense participles,

γιγνομένους and παρέχοντας, shows the equal realities of Athenian growth and the

resulting Spartan fear. Thucydides is explaining that fear pervaded Spartan society and

clouded the Spartans' ability to make sensible judgments by placing them in a position of

"premature cognitive closure."[41] This is where he begins to highlight the role of human

behavior in an otherwise systems-level analysis.

Although stories of sacrifice and daring have created an aura of "inborn valor and

unfailing courage" around the Spartans, the reality is that they were "innately and

essentially a most fearful people with a strong tendency to become terrified and to act

accordingly."[42] The Spartans cultivated a martial society as a reaction against their

overarching sense of fear. Thucydides recognized this facet of Spartan character and

"clearly believed the Spartans were a fearful people."[43] From numerous references to

aspects of their fear, Thucydides seems to have believed that "it would be difficult to find

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[40] Eckstein defines the basic tenets of contemporary realism (758). Specific application to this example is my own.

[41] Kauppi (1991),115. Kauppi defines "premature cognitive closure" as "a failure to search seriously for alternative policies." It is further explained as a "psychological phenomenon... particularly dangerous during crisis situations involving stress and time pressure."

[42] Preston H. Epps, "Fear in Spartan Character," *Classical Philology* 28, (Jan. 1933), 12. William Desmond analyzes the "prudent, rational fear" with which Thucydides shows the Spartans -- and others -- acting throughout his narrative. See "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 359-79, esp. 360.

[43] Ibid, 16. He cites Thucydides 4.5, 4.38, 4.40, 4.41, and 4.55.

a people more actuated and controlled by fear than the Spartans."[44] So it is with this understanding of Spartan character that Thucydides parallels Athenian growth with Spartan fear. Essentially describing the workings of an international system with relatively predictable behavior, he is also making a profound statement about human nature within that system.

The idea of Spartan fear meshes with his argument in several ways. In a systems-level approach it joins seamlessly with the concept of the power-transition crisis in which "dominant powers start wars when their relative power is on the decline."[45] As an exploration of human nature it allows him to show how fear can cause people to make sub-optimal decisions. Finally, it lends support to his earlier statement that the "truest cause" was also least expressed in speech because the Spartan fear, while evident in their character and decision-making process, was a "conception that could be freely expressed at Sparta, but not by a Spartan at Athens."[46]

Contemporary realists privilege the systemic approach over the consideration of human nature in this passage. They try to show that Thucydides "explains the outbreak of the war in terms of a system-level process whose outcome is inevitable."[47] However, Thucydides' Greek yields more than simply a systemic explanation. It illustrates that within a systems-level approach one must also understand the free will of the actors. Unfortunately, there are many political scientists who, through reliance on misguided

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[44] Ibid, 25.

[45] Lebow (1991), 137.

[46] de Ste. Croix (1972), 58.

[47] Eckstein (2003), 757.

translations, "make Thucydides appear both more assertive of the impact of systems process than he is, and more deterministic."[48]

Thucydides, however, is not overly deterministic. In 1.23.5-6 he does not speak of the war as "naturally occurring" or "arising" from some set of circumstances. Rather, he explains that he is writing so that no one might ever search for the reason such a war "was established," κατέστη.[49] His use of the intransitive aorist form of καθίστημι is repeated in his description of how the Athenian empire was established, κατέστη.[50] Thucydides deliberate word choice shows that this war was established from specific reasons and not from a natural inclination of the system towards war. Yet, some analysts argue the war's inevitability through Thucydides' use of the infinitive ἀναγκάσαι. Various translations of this verb include a phrase such as "made war inevitable."[51] To translate the verb this way makes it seem as though Thucydides focused "directly on system-level process: the growth of the power of one state within a state system, and the fear which it arouses in another state whose relative power is declining, leads -- inevitably -- to a system wide war."[52]

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[48] Ibid, 759.

[49] There are instances elsewhere in his work in which Thucydides relies on impersonal verbs to depict interstate violence as an inevitable force of nature. I analyze these instances later in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

[50] Thuc. 1.97.2.

[51] See *Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner (rev. ed., London, 1972): 49 and *Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Crawley, rev. and with an introduction by T.E. Wick (New York, 1982): 14. Both translations cited by Eckstein (2003), 760.

[52] Eckstein (2003), 760.

The problem is that ἀναγκάσαι does not mean "to make inevitable." It only represents the "pressure" which may affect human decision making.[53] Rather than stating that the war is inevitable, Thucydides uses ἀνάγκη to show "strong pressure in one direction, not philosophical determinacy or practical inevitability."[54] Instead of providing a deterministic model based on a systems-level analysis, Thucydides does not deny that people "have a real power of choice."[55] Free choice is instead one of his major themes, as is demonstrated by the very next phrase, ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν, "into the fighting," which denies that war was inevitable. Here the problem is that some translators wrench the phrase "made war inevitable"[56] from ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν. They fail to recognize Thucydides' subtlety. Thucydides does not say "the war." He uses a preposition, ἐς, to indicate general motion towards an object or idea, and the articular infinitive, τὸ πολεμεῖν, commonly rendered into English with a gerund, here "fighting."[57]

Thucydides is not saying that the war was inevitable. He is saying that the Athenians, in his opinion, were growing great and causing fear among the Spartans. The combination of these factors pressured the Spartans towards a fighting option. Still, "the Spartans were not in any literal sense 'compelled' to declare war."[58] At many points along the path to open hostility in 431 Thucydides describes delegations, discussions, offers of

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[53] Martin Ostwald, *Ananke in Thucydides*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). See also de Ste. Croix (1972), 61.

[54] Connor (1984), 32.

[55] de Ste. Croix (1972), 62.

[56] *Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Crawley, rev. and with an introduction by T.E. Wick (New York, 1982): 14, cited by Eckstein: 760.

[57] H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, s.v. "articular infinitive."

[58] de Ste. Croix (1972), 61.

arbitration, and opportunities for each party to choose peace. Had he felt war was inevitable, based purely on a systems-level approach, he would not have needed to emphasize these attempts as decision-points (often through speeches) as frequently as he does. He put these incidents in his narrative to illustrate what he meant in 1.23.6, that the Spartans were compelled towards fighting, but he does not mean that the war was inevitable.

With precise language, Thucydides explains the nature and causation of the Peloponnesian War by combining a systems-level approach with a deep understanding of human behavior in an anarchic international system. Upon the foundation of the various disputes and disagreements over which the treaty of 445 was broken, he establishes what he believes is the "truest cause" of the war, although it was "least spoken of in discussion" among his contemporaries. Yet, regardless of the system-level pressure this exerted on the Spartans, he is adamant that the war was the result of human choices, hence the emphasis on speeches before assemblies. While both realists and sociologists might accurately claim Thucydides' patronage, neither group may claim him exclusively. Far from suffering under a lack of such categories for his analysis, Thucydides was actually liberated by the freedom to straddle disciplines – which did not exist yet! – and write his work as a textbook for many schools of thought. To understand his complexity, we must play our part as engaged *readers*, and not simply settle back as a passive audience – much less one of translators![59] The concepts and vocabulary provided by the Realist paradigm of interstate relations allows us, as historians and classicists, to view

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[59] Morrison (2006), 14.

Thucydides' work from a new perspective which incorporates human nature into a systems-level analysis of the war.

This is an important concept for this dissertation because it focuses us on the idea that individuals and states make decisions which determine the level of violence between them. Though the pressures of the system may "shape and shove," they are not the final determinants.[60] Thucydides understood this and presented it with his nuanced analysis, balancing the system-level pressures against human nature and human decisions. Indeed, he must have thought that these decisions were not inevitable (though pressured) because one of his goals is to warn his readers about emotionally-driven reasons and the fact that decision-makers faced κίνδυνος from two directions, the external world and their internal reactions. As it helps us understand Thucydides' analysis of the "truest cause" of the war, the Realist perspective on interstate relations also provides a useful vocabulary for a discussion of Thucydides' view on danger, κίνδυνος, and the ways in which leaders must mitigate danger lest they feel compelled into making less-than-rational decisions.

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[60] Waltz (2000), 24. See also Eckstein (2006), 27.

1.2.5 <u>Conclusion: The Two Forms of Danger</u>

In this chapter I have established the basic paradigm upon which this dissertation will be based, especially in regards to the most relevant Thucydidean scholarship, literary theories and interstate relations theories. With respect to previous scholarship on Thucydides' work, I have shown that while there may be tension between those who view Thucydides as either a "tragic historian" or an objective analyst, this dissertation focuses on the reconciliation between these two positions. Thucydides is both a literary writer, influenced by contemporary themes of epic and tragic poetry, as well as an objective historian, searching for more accurate explanation for the cause of a war that rivaled all other events as the "greatest movement yet known in history."[1] Thucydidean scholarship, however, does not always incorporate the various literary theories that are relevant for this dissertation. Thus it is that I have included in this section a brief introduction to the recent literary trend of "narratology." By incorporating this sort of analysis into the more traditional approaches to Thucydides' narrative it is possible to demonstrate how Thucydides employs patterns in his writing style in order to affect his reader's understanding of the lessons to be learned from so great a war.

Those lessons, of course, are the essence of this dissertation. Hence interstate relations theories, especially those in the Realist paradigm, form an important component of my overall analysis. As modern readers engage with Thucydides' narrative with the benefit of retrospection and an awareness of the eventual outcome, interstate relations theorists provide an effective vocabulary with which to evaluate Thucydides' understanding and explanation of the system of *poleis* with competing interests and the

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[1] Thuc. 1.1.2.

ways in which that system exerted influence on individual decision makers. By understanding that Thucydides' world was an anarchy in which the state of nature was a state of war, a modern reader can more fully appreciate the individual *poleis'* necessity to provide for their own security. The reliance on "self-help" seemed to them the only trustworthy safeguard in an environment of very imperfect intelligence about other *poleis'* motives and capabilities. This grim system, as I have shown, "shaped and shoved" the states and individual leaders, but did not determine their decisions entirely. Thucydides' explanation of the "truest cause" of the war demonstrates that there were a variety of factors that guided human decisions, which were often made under great emotional pressure and therefore led to sub-optimal outcomes.

Against this backdrop of systems-level pressures Thucydides' focus is on human nature as he provides a didactic message to his reader. That message, as I will argue, is that the world is a dangerous place filled with external threats to security and leaders must control their irrational passions if they want any chance of mitigating these dangers. There are many forces outside of the state or individual that threaten survival: opposing states, opposing politicians or other factions within a state, and even natural forces. Men naturally seek security from these dangers as Plato would argue, they seek to satisfy their "appetite" for the necessities of life. Making the situation worse for Thucydides' contemporaries are the internally generated dangers, the irrational emotions in men's "spirits" -- as Plato would have defined it -- which cause them to react violently over perceived insults, disrespect or potential threats to honor and status. The tendency of political and military leaders to give in to these irrational, and often self-destructive, internal urges and passions works in synergy with these external threats to make the

world all the more dangerous as a result. I will show in this dissertation that Thucydides understood this and constructed his narrative with a heavy reliance on *kindunos* in order to guide his reader to the same understanding. Thucydides' message to his reader is that the only hope of mitigating the external dangers in the world of interstate relations is to diminish the impact of irrational emotion and passionate urges for action in favor of a more rational approach. Only by using *logos* to trump *ergon* can states or individuals hope to succeed -- or at least survive -- in the world's brutal anarchy.

Chapter 2: Thucydides' Analysis of External Dangers

2.1 Introduction

As has been previously mentioned, the subtle types of dangers that Thucydides depicts seem to be accurately defined slightly later by Plato in his *Republic*. Though there is no specific link between Plato's and Thucydides' work, these definitions still provide a framework with which to analyze Thucydides' conception of danger.[1] According to Plato, there are three opposing forces within the human soul: appetite, spirit, and reason.[2] The appetite generates external dangers as men struggle to get that which they need to survive: essentials such as food and shelter. The spirit, on the other hand, generates internal dangers as men strive to obtain that which allows them to feel fulfilled: honor, pride and reputation. The third element, reason, serves to control both of these aspects of mens' constantly yearning souls.

This chapter, however, will focus only on external dangers, which are most simply conceived of as dangers which threaten survival. For the ancient Greeks this encompasses a wide range of dangerous sources: cosmic-level dangers from natural forces, interstate-level dangers from other *poleis,* and personal-level dangers from political enemies. These dangers relate to Plato's model because the appetite is the part of the soul which seeks out that "which is good;" with respect to danger, especially in interstate relations, that means "security," a commodity which is as good as it is scarce.[3] But the desire for security in the

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[1] For further analysis of the parallels between Thucydides and the late fifth, early fourth century philosophers see Chapter 1.1, General Thesis.

[2] Plato *Rep*. 4:441a.

[3] Plato defines appetite in *Rep. 4:438a*. Arthur M. Eckstein discusses security as a scarce commodity which leads states to engage in power-maximizing behavior in *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 14-23.

realm of interstate relations translates to the desire for power, which theoretically yields

security. Threats to survival, of course, fill Thucydides' narrative of the twenty-seven year

long war and make it clear that his contemporaries experienced a world vastly different

from our own. And yet Thucydides believed that his world would not be fundamentally

different from future generations'. From his perspective, human nature was essentially an

unchanging variable, thus allowing him to provide his analysis as a κτῆμά ἐς αἰεὶ.

In this chapter I will present examples in which Thucydides makes the external

dangers of war clear to his reader by inserting the word κίνδυνος into his narrative to

relate various forms and concepts of danger. In the first section, I will explain how

Thucydides presents the world to his reader: it is a dangerous place filled with violence,

forces beyond men's control, and options which are often only between lesser and greater

forms of danger. The second section deals with Thucydides' impressions about the ways

in which rational leaders incorporate an understanding of ever-present dangers into their

strategic or tactical planning process. The third section builds upon the first two by

examining how Thucydides portrays the role of danger in leaders' profit-maximizing

behavior; it focuses on the concepts of risk versus reward as well as elements of random

chance which Thucydides incorporates into the understanding of danger he is portraying

for his reader. In all three sections, however, the underlying theme is that Thucydides

uses variations of the word κίνδυνος to paint an unmistakable image for his reader: there

are forces throughout the world which threaten survival and for which a rational leader

must account if he wants to maximize his state's potential for survival.

2.2 <u>Κίνδυνος as General State of Nature</u>

Thucydides analyzes a war between the two major powers in Greece; clearly the general state of existence among the *poleis* at this time was dangerous. In Thucydides' mind, however, this state of existence was not an extraordinary instance of violent interstate relations. He therefore carefully constructs his narrative with a heavy reliance on the term κίνδυνος and other terms laden with negative emotional valence to guide his reader towards the conclusion that "dangerous" is, in fact, the most accurate characterization of the general state of nature and not simply a momentary aspect of the ongoing war.

In this section, I will present specific examples which fall into three categories representing three different aspects of the way in which Thucydides carefully crafts his narrative to guide his reader towards the conclusion that the state of nature is one of danger. First, I will point to Thucydides' belief that all states, regardless of size, geography, or relative power live in a continual state of danger.[1] Then I will show how Thucydides presents danger, threats, and conflict as impersonal forces largely outside of human control.[2] Finally, I will highlight Thucydides' tendency to focus on the inherent dangers even in situations generally considered to be safe, i.e. peace, freedom, or civic life.[3] The combination of these three aspects of Thucydides' narrative will demonstrate that Thucydides understood danger to be a fundamental force defining the general state of nature and designed his narrative to guide his reader to the same understanding.

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[1] 1.33.1, 1.35.4, 2.39.1, 3.59.3-4, 4.92.5.

[2] 1.115.2, 1.122.1, 3.54.4, 4.64.4-5.

[3] 2.44.4, 4.62.2, 4.87.2.

2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All *Poleis*

Thucydides presents the notion that all states, regardless of size, geographical location, or relative power, are faced with constant exposure to dangerous external forces. He first underscores this dangerous state of nature by describing the situation between Corcyra and its metropolis, Corinth. This situation, a prelude to the broader war between Athens and Sparta, serves a dual purpose in Thucydides' narrative: it showed one of the disputes between Athens and the members of the Peloponnesian League, and it gives Thucydides an early opportunity to demonstrate to his reader the dangerous arena within which *poleis* of every size competed for security.[4]

In the year 435, Corcyra and its metropolis Corinth had conflicting interests in their efforts to help the independent *polis* of Epidamnus quell its own civil unrest.[5] The Epidamnians had originally sought help from their metropolis, Corcyra.[6] Rebuffed in this attempt, however, the Epidamnians followed the advice of the Delphic oracle and made

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[4] This peripheral conflict, cited as it is by Thucydides as one the first "cause of the war that Corinth had against the Athenians" (1.55.2), is also analyzed by a host of modern scholars. As a "prelude to war," however, it appears frequently in political science analyses, especially those focused on the Realism. For a general overview, see A.M. Eckstein, "Thucydides, the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and the Foundation of International Systems Theory," *The International History Review* 25 (Dec. 2003), esp. 776. Eckstein cites earlier work on the topic: A. Andrews, "Thucydides and the Causes of War," *Classical Quarterly* (1959), 223-39; Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 357-74; C.W. Fornara and L.J. Samons II, *Athens from Cleisthenes to Pericles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 141; and Richard Ned Lebow, "Thucydides, Power Transition Theory, and the Causes of War" in *Hegemonic Rivalry from Thucydides to the Nuclear Age*, R.N. Lebow and Barry Strauss, eds. (Westview Press, 1991, 129-30. For a monograph on the conflict and Corcyra's role in the war, see John Wilson, *Athens and Corcyra: Strategy and Tactics in the Peloponnesian War* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1987).

[5] Thuc. 1.24.4. The civil unrest to which Thucydides refers is left without explanation. H.D. Westlake argues that this is an instance in which Thucydides is obtaining his background material from a separate written source, likely Hecataeus. See "ΛΕΓΕΤΑΙ in Thucydides," *Mnemosyne* 30 (1977), 357.

[6] Thuc. 1.24.6.

the same request of the Corinthians, explaining that their true founder had been from

Corinth.[7] The Corinthians, based in part on their hatred of the Corcyraeans who had a

long-standing pattern of disrespectful behavior towards Corinth, agreed to help the

Epidamnians and sent a group of settlers overland to stabilize the situation.[8] Eventually

the two *poleis,* Corinth and Corcyra, came into open conflict in a naval battle near Cape

Leukimme, at the southern tip of the island of Corcyra in the Ionian Gulf.[9] The

Corinthians were soundly beaten and departed, leaving the Corcyraeans "masters of all

the sea about those parts;" the city of Epidamnus itself was forced to capitulate to its

besiegers and hand over the Corinthians as prisoners of war.[10] The conflict, however, did

not fade. The Corcyraeans continually harassed the allies of Corinth in the region which

eventually caused Corinth to mobilize all its resources and to prepare its fleet for another

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[7] Thuc. 1.25.1-2. J. B. Salmon details the motives behind Corinth's anger in *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 281-305. Gregory Crane details the relationship between Corinth and Corcyra in "Fear and Pursuit of Risk: Corinth on Athens, Sparta and the Peloponnesians (Thucydides 1.68-71, 120-121)" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 122 (1992), 227-56.

[8] Thuc. 1.26.1. George A. Sheets sees this decision to send new settlers as well as a military force is part of the Corinthian effort to establish itself legally – inasmuch as that term can be applied to the norms and customs governing Greek interstate relations – as the new metropolis for the Epidamnians, a status given them by the Epidamnians in "obedience to the demands of the oracle" (1.25.2). See "Conceptualizing International Law in Thucydides," *The American Journal of Philology* 115 (Spring, 1994), 65-66. Lionel Pearson provides a similar reading of the passage when he argues that Thucydides has presented his narrative with the emphasis on justice and accepted norms which hint that he believed that at this stage in the conflict "Greece still thought of international relations in terms of justice and friendship, not exclusively in terms of self-interest." See "Popular Ethics in the World of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 52 (Oct., 1957), 232.

[9] For a detailed military perspective on this conflict, see J.F. Lazenby, *The Peloponnesian War: A Military Study* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 22-25.

[10] Thuc. 1.29-30.2. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are from the translation of Richard Crawley, as published in 1874 and updated by Robert B. Strassler, ed., The Landmark Thucydides (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

engagement.[11] By 433, the Corcyraean government decided to look to its own safety and

preparation for war by sending a delegation to Athens to request an alliance.[12]

Thucydides uses the speech given by the Corcyraean delegation at Athens, in part, to

push his reader to an understanding of the dangers inherent in the relations between

polities.[13]

The Corcyraeans had to confront one major obstacle to being accepted as an ally

by the Athenians: they had previously remained neutral, independent of the alliances that

divided the Hellenic world into either the Delian or Peloponnesian Leagues. That they

had not earlier supported Athens and were now asking for help was cause for distrust in

the eyes of their Athenian audience.[14] Thucydides, nevertheless, has the Corcyraeans

point out two ways in which the Athenians would benefit through an alliance with

Corcyra. First, they make it clear that the Athenians would be helping those who have

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[11] Thuc. 1.30.3-31.1. R. P. Legon estimates that Corinth was able to build, man and equip at least one hundred new triremes in short space of two years following this battle. See "The Megarian Decree and the Balance of Greek Naval Power," *Classical Philology* 68 (July, 1973), 161-71. He calls this one of "the most significant military developments of the fifth century," 162.

[12] Thuc. 1.31.2.

[13] On this speech as paired with its Corinthian counterpart, see L. Craici, "I Kerykaika di Thucidide," *Acme* 6 (1953), 405-18; W.M. Calder, "The Corcyraean-Corinthian Speeches in Thucydides I," *Classical Journal* 50 (1955), 179-80; de Romilly, J., *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1956), 197-201; H. P. Stahl, *Thukydides: Die Stellung des Menschen in geschichtlichen Prozess* (Munich: Beck, 1966), 36-40; Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 205-50; G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), 66-79.

[14] Thuc. 1.32.1. Neutrality was not a well-defined concept in the Classical Greek world. Though states did attempt to remain neutral during the war – and some, namely Argos, were even successful for long periods of time – more common was the situation represented by the Corcyraeans' speech where the neutral state essentially had to plead for restraint from the more powerful belligerent states such as Corinth or for help from another powerful state. Since neutrality did not carry with it the same inviolability that might pertain to sacred sites, there was no formal restraint on belligerents. For in-depth analysis see Robert A. Bauslaugh, *The Concept of Neutrality in Classical Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). On this issue, he cites Marc Cogan, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 84-5.

been wronged; this underscores the Hellenic ideology of intervention, which will be

discussed in later chapters of this dissertation.[15] Second, they focus the Athenians'

attention on the dangerous world that Thucydides believes exists for the Greek *poleis*.

The Corcyraeans argue that:

> ἔπειτα περὶ τῶν μεγίστων κινδυνεύοντας δεξάμενοι ὡς ἂν μάλιστα μετ᾽ αἰειμνήστου μαρτυρίου τὴν χάριν καταθήσεσθε·
>
> … because all that we most value is at stake in the present contest, and by acceding to our request under these circumstance you will give unforgettable proof of your goodwill and create in us a lasting sense of gratitude (1.33.1).[16]

Thucydides has the Corcyraeans identify themselves in terms of the dangerous nature of

their existence by having them refer to themselves with an active participial form of

κίνδυνος, κινδυνεύοντας. Furthermore, he does not indicate that they are simply in a

precarious position, momentarily threatened by the Corinthians. Instead, Thucydides has

consciously chosen to describe their situation with a present active participle,

κινδυνεύοντας. This puts the continual presence of danger in the foreground. In other

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[15] Thuc. 1.33. Polly Low presents a comprehensive discussion of the "ideology of intervention" in *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). This ideology will be analyzed as it relates to the concept of internal sources of danger, most specifically in Chapter 3.2, "Κίνδυνος and the Ethos of Intervention."

[16] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are from the translation of Richard Crawley, as published in 1874 and updated by Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

words, Thucydides guides his reader to the assumption that states such as Corcyra were in continual danger from revisionist Hellenic states.[17]

Thucydides quickly reinforces this image of the constant danger to which the Corcyraeans are exposed when he presents their arguments against the notion that an Athenian alliance with Corcyra might be considered a breach of the Thirty Years' Peace Treaty of 446. Thucydides has the Corcyraeans claim that it would be practically criminal if the Athenians should not agree to help. Thucydides' rendition of the speech continues with the following:

> πολὺ δὲ ἐν πλέονι αἰτίᾳ ἡμεῖς μὴ πείσαντες ὑμᾶς
> ἕξομεν· ἡμᾶς μὲν γὰρ κινδυνεύοντας καὶ οὐκ ἐχθροὺς
> ὄντας ἀπώσεσθε

> On the other hand, we shall have much greater cause to
> complain of you, not complying with our request, if we
> who are in peril, and are no enemies of yours, meet with a
> rejection at your hands (1.35.4).

As before, Thucydides' use of the present active participle, κινδυνεύοντας, asserts that the danger is not of the moment; that might more accurately be represented with an aorist active participle.[18]

Thus, Thucydides' rendition of the Corcyraean appeal underlines that the state of nature is continually dangerous. Before they faced the Corinthian threat, the Corcyraeans

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[17] The term "revisionist state" is discussed in Chapter 1.2.2, "Relevant Political Science Scholarship and Theories." In sum, however, a "revisionist" state differs from a "status quo" state in that revisionist states are generally unsatisfied with the distribution of resources, especially with respect to security, and status within the international system while status quo states are satisfied. Revisionist states often seek to shift the situation in their favor through violence. See Eckstein (2006), 25 and 108.

[18] Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), par. 1923. Jesse L. Rose says of Thucydides' use of the aorist tense "[w]hen his mind dwells upon an action long enough to describe it or see it in its development, he uses a durative tense to denote it. On the other hand, if his mind does not dwell upon it nor see it in its development, but views it as a whole, as a single act, then he uses an aorist to denote it, no matter how long a time was consumed by it" in "The Durative and Aoristic Tenses in Thucydides," *Language* 18 (1942), 7.

had been content to exist in this state, confident that their position on the fringes of the

Hellenic world and their own navy, second in strength only to the Athenians, might

provide relative security against the threats faced by other *poleis*.[19] The conflict with

Corinth, however, showed to the Corcyraeans the truly dangerous nature of the anarchic

world and convinced them to seek an alliance with Athens.[20] Thucydides' narrative of

Corinth's second campaign against Corcyra, this time with a fleet of 150 ships, highlights

to the reader the degree of danger which the Corcyraeans were facing when they sought

their alliance.[21]

Though the Corcyraean example is arguably only illustrative of the continual

dangers faced by even relatively powerful states that had sought to avoid conflict with

both the Peloponnesian League and the Delian League and thus had ties with neither,

Thucydides applies the same paradigm to Athens itself.[22] In his depiction of Pericles'

Funeral Oration, Thucydides uses the term κίνδυνος to show that Athens' fundamental

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[19] Thuc. 1.33.2.

[20] It should be noted that the Athenians' decision was reached, in part, through the motive of harming both Corcyra and Corinth in the short-run. This will be discussed in later sections of this dissertation. See Philip A. Stadter, "The Motives for Athens' Alliance with Corcyra (Thuc. 1.44)," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 24 (1983), 131-36; and Gregory Crane, "Power, Prestige and the Corcyrean Affair in Thucydides 1," *Classical Antiquity* 11 (1992), 1-27.

[21] Thuc. 1.46-54. Legon notes that "Corinth's naval policy after Leucimme was altering the balance of Greek sea power fundamentally, and Athens could scarcely ignore this new reality," 162. It is this alteration in the balance of power against which Corcyra was struggling and with which Athens was being forced to attend.

[22] Bauslaugh argues that even though the war was filled with "hostile ideological rhetoric" which intensified the traditional opposition to neutrality among *poleis*, states still continued to consider it a "tenable option, preferable to alignment, as long as circumstances permitted" (79). But I am arguing that even a state with the second most powerful navy in the Hellenic world was forced to do whatever was necessary to survive the relative clash of the titans when the Peloponnesian and Delian Leagues came into conflict. Bauslaugh points out that he opposes Marc Cogan's view as presented in *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), esp. 152.

way of life – like that of those with less education such as Sparta – is inextricably tied to

danger.[23] Thucydides has Pericles say:

> καὶ ἐν ταῖς παιδείαις οἱ μὲν ἐπιπόνῳ ἀσκήσει εὐθὺς
> νέοι ὄντες τὸ ἀνδρεῖον μετέρχονται, ἡμεῖς δὲ
> ἀνειμένως διαιτώμενοι οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἐπὶ τοὺς
> ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους χωροῦμεν.

> While in education, where our rivals from their very cradles
> by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we
> live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to
> encounter every legitimate danger (2.39.1).

Thus, even among the two most powerful *poleis* the fundamental way of life is based

upon the assumption that external danger is omnipresent. The Athenians, according to

Thucydides' Pericles, do not spend their days actively preparing themselves for danger as

the Spartans do. They are, however, no less ready to face equivalent threats, ἐπὶ τοὺς

ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους. Gomme argues that this phrase, ἐπὶ τοὺς ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους,

means the Athenians are prepared to meet dangers to which they are equally matched.[24]

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[23] The literature on Thucydides' rendition of Pericles' Funeral Oration is vast. A.B. Bosworth, however, attempts to describe the historical circumstances in which Thucydides' reports this speech. This helps put this speech and its value as an example in this dissertation into the broader context of the early events of this war. See "The Historical Context of Thucydides' Funeral Oration, "*The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 120 (2000), 1-16. Much of the debate centers on whether this oration reflects Pericles' original speech or Thucydides' effort to eulogize Athens' at the height of its power and, in so doing, describe the character of the city at the start of the war. See J.T. Kakrides, *Der Thukydideische Epitaphios: Ein stilkritischer Kommentar* (Munich, 1961); H. Flashar, *Der Epitaphios des Perikles* (Sitzb. Heidelberg, 1969); Nicole Loraux *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City* (Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press, 1986), esp. 9; P.A. Brunt, *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. 159-80; Karl Prinz, *Epitaphios Logos: Struktur, Funktion, und Bedeutung der Bestattungsreden im Athen des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt, 1997), esp. 94-143; Sophie Mills *Theseus, Tragedy, and the Athenian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. 47-50; and C.B.R. Pelling, *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. 229-32. The debate, however, is less vital in this dissertation as the basic point is made either way: if the speech represents a verbatim copy of Pericles' original oration, it is Thucydides' who is choosing to incorporate it as a lesson for his reader; if the speech is a complete fabrication, it is Thucydides who is fabricating it for his reader's benefit.

[24] A.W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides,* Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956, reprint 1979), 117.

Hornblower, on the other hand, understands the comment to mean that the Athenians are

"equally ready to face the perils which [the Spartans] face."[25] Regardless which

commentator is correct, the underlying message is that Athens, despite being one of the

two poles of Greek military power, recognizes that there are real and continual security

threats in the world; the Athenians are ready to face threats equal to their own significant

military might, and with valor equal to their own, the significant competitors for security.

Thucydides' use of κίνδυνος in this instance focuses his reader on the omnipresent

nature of external dangers even for the most powerful states and the condition of

watchfulness – perhaps even over-watchfulness – which this situation creates.[26]

Thucydides also makes it clear to his reader that no *polis* in this danger-filled

world can reasonably consider itself to be safe because it can never fully understand the

motives of its neighbors – a prime example of the "uncertainty principle" as part of a

state's security dilemma.[27] The decision-making elites must, in Thucydides' analysis, take

into consideration the relative revisionist tendencies of each state's neighbors in order to

grasp the true degree of danger present. Thucydides points his reader towards this

understanding through his rendition of Pagondas' speech to the Boeotians in 424/3.[28]

During the winter of 424/3, the Athenians sent a force to seize and fortify the

sanctuary of Apollo at Delium in order to provide both an Athenian stronghold in Boeotia

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[25] Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides, Volume I: Books 1-3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 304.

[26] One might further extrapolate that this creates yet another dangerous dimension of watchfulness not to "bend the knee" as Pericles explains in 2.62.3, a dimension which will be discussed later in this dissertation, chapter 3.4.

[27] The terms "uncertainty principle" and "security dilemma" are defined above in Chapter 1.2.2, "Relevant Political Science Scholarship and Theories."

[28] Thuc. 4.92. On Pagondas, see Hornblower 2: 289.

as well as a refuge for any Boeotian partisans of Athens who might support revolution among the Boeotian cities.[29] They seized the sanctuary without opposition and quickly fortified it using all available materials, including the vines surrounding the sanctuary and bricks from nearby houses.[30] With most of the fortifications complete, the Athenians departed homeward, leaving only a guard force to complete the work and maintain security.[31] The Boeotians, meanwhile, were mustering at nearby Tanagra but, by the time they had gathered all their forces, realized that the Athenians had already departed.[32] Almost all of the Boeotian commanders were opposed to forcing a battle upon the departing Athenians.[33] Only Pagondas, the commander-in-chief, recognized the danger of allowing the Athenians to establish their stronghold within Boeotia and exhorted his

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[29] Thuc. 4.77.5. For detailed military analysis of the campaign and the final battle, see Victor Davis Hanson, *Ripples of Battle: How Wars of the Past Still Determine How We Fight, How We Live and How We Think* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), ch. 3; Lazenby (2004), 87-91; and J.E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 78-90.

[30] Thuc. 4.90.2.

[31] Thuc. 4.90.4.

[32] Thuc. 4.91.1.

[33] A.J. Holladay mentions the "general docility" of the Boeotian forces and cites the reluctance of their leaders to engage the Athenians in "Athenian Strategy in the Archidamian War," *Historia* 27 (1978), 419.

troops to risk battle and attack the Athenians.[34] In part of this exhortation, Thucydides has

Pagondas say:

> τοσούτῳ ἐπικινδυνοτέραν ἑτέρων τὴν παροίκησιν
> τῶνδε ἔχομεν. εἰώθασί τε οἱ ἰσχύος που θράσει τοῖς
> πέλας, ὥσπερ Ἀθηναῖοι νῦν, ἐπιόντες τὸν μὲν
> ἡσυχάζοντα καὶ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ μόνον ἀμυνόμενον
> ἀδεέστερον ἐπιστρατεύειν, τὸν δὲ ἔξω ὅρων
> προαπαντῶντα καί, ἢν καιρὸς ᾖ, πολέμου ἄρχοντα
> ἧσσον ἑτοίμως κατέχειν.

> So much more dangerous is the neighborhood of the
> Athenians than that of others. Besides, people who in the
> confidence of strength attack their neighbors, as the
> Athenians now do, are wont to march more fearlessly
> against one who keeps quiet and defends himself only in
> his own land, but are less ready to grapple with him who
> meets them outside of his own boundaries and, if
> opportunity offers, makes the first attack (4.92.5).[35]

Thucydides uses Pagondas' speech to provide an important insight for his reader: no *polis*

is safe with respect to its neighbors' motives. In this instance, the neighbor in question is

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[34] Thuc. 4.91.1. H.D. Westlake argues that this speech more likely represents Thucydides' attempt to coalesce a battle exhortation, which may well have been given, with the substance of what "must already have been expressed a the meeting of the Boeotarchs and would indeed have been more appropriate to that occasion" in *Individuals in Thucydides* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 312. Antonios Rengakos analyzes this speech, and its counterpart by the Athenian general, as part of a broader argument to support the notion that the Athenians did not follow Pericles' advice and were swept up in an effort to broaden their imperialism after his death. See *Form und Wandel des Machtdenkens der Athener bei Thukydides* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Weisbaden, 1984). N.G.L Hammond discusses the way in which Pagondas' single day as Boeotarch affected his tactical decision to make a hasty speech and attack in "Political Developments in Boetia," *The Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000), 86-7. On Thucydides' battle exhortations in general, see Virginia Hunter, "Thucydides, Gorgias, and Mass Psychology," *Hermes* 114 (1986), 412-29; Mogens Herman Hansen, "The Battle Exhortation in Ancient Historiography: Fact or Fiction?" *Historia* 42 (1993), 161-80; Michael Clark, "Did Thucydides Invent the Battle Exhortation?" *Historia* 44 (1995), 375-6; and Juan Carlos Iglesias Zoido, "The Battle Exhortation in Ancient Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 25 (2007), 141-58.

[35] Here I rely on the translation of Charles Forster Smith, *Thucydides in Four Volumes*, Vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920, revised 1930, reprint 1965). The substantial difference is in Smith's use of the phrase "so much more dangerous" which Crawley translates as "so much more have we to fear." Crawley's translation dilutes the force of Thucydides' original Greek, ἐπικινδυνοτέραν.

Athens, a *polis* with a long history of aggressive revisionist tendencies. This speech, perhaps one of the first explanations of the idea of a preemptive defense, focuses on the idea that "keeping quiet" and depending solely on defense only invites attack and is a sign of weakness.[36]

Putting aside the specifics, the general sentiment being expressed supports the idea that Thucydides is consciously crafting the image of relations between polities as a dangerous state of nature. The notable phrase he employs is ἐπικινδυνοτέραν ἑτέρων τὴν παροίκησιν τῶνδε, "a neighborhood more dangerous than that of others." Thucydides is not saying that the Boeotians face a unique situation in having a dangerous neighbor. Instead, the only unique factor is that they face "more" danger.[37] Thus, in Thucydides' paradigm every *polis* faces danger, though some even more than others; every *polis* must choose not only when to defend but also when to attack preemptively. This particular speech simply underscores the more intense danger facing the Boeotians because of their immediate neighborhood, inhabited as it is by the aggressive Athenians.

The dangerous state of nature was so prevalent in Thucydides' mind that he even presents his reader with a stark image of the sub-optimal options faced by *poleis*. He guides his reader to the understanding that *poleis* are often in a position where all of their options are merely different forms of danger; the choice is not between danger or

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[36] Hanson (2003) calls this speech "perhaps the first recorded defense of the strategy of preemption [or] forward defense," 179.

[37] Hornblower argues that this phrase actually means "[the Athenians] are far more dangerous than ordinary neighbors." See *A Commentary on Thucydides, Volume II: Books 4-5.24* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 294. If Hornblower is right, however, it does not mean that the Athenians are uniquely dangerous and other *poleis* are peaceful; the Athenians, if Hornblower is right, are merely unique in that they are "more dangerous" than ordinary neighbors, who are still dangerous. Either way, the comparative highlights degrees of danger, not the contrast between danger and safety.

safety, but only among types of κίνδυνος. Thucydides uses the Plataean speech, given

in their own defense to the Spartans in 427, to underscore the desperate set of options

which face less-powerful *poleis*. The state of nature for these *poleis* is characterized by

the dangerous options from which they must choose.[38]

The Spartans had laid siege to Plataea in the summer of 429.[39] Though

completely circumvallated by elaborate siegeworks, the Plataeans resisted for nearly two

years. By 427, however, they found themselves without sufficient provisions and unable

to continue their resistance.[40] The Spartans eventually made a successful assault along

one portion of the city walls and the Plataeans were unable to repel them. At this point,

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[38] Gregory Crane provides a detailed analysis of the precarious position in which the Plataeans existed for generations, if not their entire history, caught as they were like a "shrimp between whales." He presents the delicate balance they had to strike between freedom and subordination to larger powers in order to maintain survival in "The Case of Plataea: Small States and the (Re-)Invention of Political Realism," in David R. McCann and Barry S. Strauss, eds. *War and Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Korean War and the Peloponnesian War* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 129. Clifford Orwin argues that every action and alliance the Plataeans have undertaken have not been for an ideological love of pan-Hellenism, but "for her own sake, no one else's" as the small *polis* has consistently struggled to maintain independence in a tenuous geographical position, the border between Boeotia and Attica. See *The Humanity of Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 74.
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[39] Thuc. 2.71-75. Lazenby (2004) refers to Thucydides' depiction of the siege as "the most detailed evidence for siege techniques at this time," 42. Westlake (1977) discusses Thucydides' apparent distaste at incorporating elements of "divine intervention," i.e. a storm which put out a fire threatening the city, 354. Kelly Thomas discusses the disputed length of the siege, seventy-seven days in "Thucydides and Spartan Strategy in the Archidamian War," *The American Historical Review* 87 (1982), 53. Ernst Badian provides an overview of Plataea's unique position between the two great powers in " Plataea Between Athens and Sparta," in Hartmut Beister and John Buckler, eds. *Boiotika* (Munich: Editio Maris, 1989), 95-111. See also *From Plataea to Potidaea: Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). N.G.L. Hammond responds to Badian (1989) in "Plataea's Relations to Thebes, Sparta and Athens," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 112 (1992), 143-50. M. Amit discusses Plataea's uniquely dangerous position as a smaller state, caught up in the long-lasting enmity between Athens and Thebes in *Great and Small Poleis: A Study in the Relations Between the Great Powers and the Small Cities in Ancient Greece,* Collection Latomus vol. 134 (Bruxelles, 1973), ch. 2. V. Aravantino et al. detail results of the geophysical survey around the site of Plataea which provides evidence for some of Spartan walls described by Thucydides in "Plataiai in Boiotia: A Preliminary Report of the 1996-2001 Campaign," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 72 (2003), 315.

[40] Thuc. 3.52.1.

the Spartan commander, following his orders that the city should be given the

opportunity to come over voluntarily to the Spartan side, sent a herald offering the

following terms of surrender: if the Plataeans would surrender the city, the guilty would

be punished but no one would receive unjust treatment.[41] The Plataeans accepted their

terms and faced five Spartan judges who asked them only whether they had done any

service to Sparta or its allies during the ongoing war.[42] Realizing the gravity of their

situation and the punishment certain to be waiting for them in the form of such Spartan

justice, the Plataeans appointed two representatives to speak for them. Thucydides offers

his rendition of this speech and, in part, uses it to showcase the grim options facing

poleis in this anarchic world where justice was imposed on the weak by the strong.

Thucydides has the Plataeans say:

> ὅπερ δὲ ἀναγκαῖόν τε καὶ χαλεπώτατον τοῖς ὧδε
> ἔχουσι, λόγου τελευτᾶν, διότι καὶ τοῦ βίου ὁ κίνδυνος
> ἐγγὺς μετ'αὐτοῦ, παυόμενοι λέγομεν ἤδη ὅτι οὐ
> Θηβαίοις παρέδομεν τὴν πόλιν (εἱλόμεθα γὰρ ἂν πρό
> γε τούτου τῷ αἰσχίστῳὀλέθρῳ λιμῷ τελευτῆσαι), ὑμῖν
> δὲ πιστεύσαντες προσήλθομεν (καὶ δίκαιον, εἰ μὴ
> πείθομεν, ἐς τὰ αὐτὰ καταστήσαντας τὸν ξυντυχόντα
> κίνδυνον ἐᾶσαι ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἑλέσθαι)
>
> Finally, to do what is necessary and yet most difficult for
> men in our situation – that is, to make an end of speaking,
> since with that ending the peril of our lives draws near – we
> say in conclusion that we did not surrender our city to the
> Thebans (to that we would have preferred inglorious
> starvation), but trusted in and capitulated to you; and it
> would be just, if we fail to persuade you, to put us back in

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[41] Thuc. 3.52.

[42] Thuc. 3.52.4. Crane (2001) discusses the "chronologically shallow" nature of the Spartans'
question, brushing aside as it does the "profound attachments established in the memory of men still living
and kept alive by solemn rituals year by year," 152. Orwin, however, argues that the real point is that every
action taken by the Plataeans, both of past generations and the current, is focused on survival and thus the
Spartan question is merely cutting to the core of the issue at hand in a more pragmatic way, 70-75.

the same position and let us take the chance that falls to us
(3.59.3-4).

Thucydides shows that the Plataeans are facing a choice between two forms of danger:
end their appeal and accept their imminent death, or plead with the Spartans to be given
another "chance that falls" to them of facing the Spartans in battle.

Twice in this short passage Thucydides puts the concept of κίνδυνος in the
foreground. The emphasis in the first instance, τοῦ βίου ὁ κίνδυνος ἐγγὺς μετ'αὐτοῦ,
is on the reality of the danger facing the Plataeans. They are, quite literally, approaching a
supreme moment of danger to their lives. When their speech is finished, they will face
judgment from the Spartan judges who have proven themselves hostile to any
sympathy.[43] Though the term κίνδυνος is not translated as "death," Thucydides is using
it in this instance to present his reader with a clear link between the mortal realities of
weaker *poleis* and the dangerous world in which they exist – at least for now. The
Plataeans, as Thucydides has presented them, approach the end of their speech with the
very real danger that it represents the end of their lives. It is indeed a dramatic moment,
consciously represented as such by Thucydides in order to focus his reader on the gravity
of the situation and its implications for the dangerous world that faces the weak.

Thucydides has the Plataeans finish their speech with the simple, yet disturbingly
bleak, request that, should they fail to persuade, they be allowed to face a different

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[43] Thuc. 3.52.4. Thucydides makes the hostility of the judges clear by explaining that no charges
were actually brought against the Plataeans, as would be the case in a trials. The Plataeans were merely
asked to show what they had done to help the Spartan side in the war. Modern commentators have drawn
some interesting parallels to this seemingly stark question. Gomme, for instance, points to Livy 36.33 in
which the Romans pose a similar question to Capua in the Second Punic War, *ecquis Campanorum bene
meritus de Republica Romana esset*, 2.337. Hornblower focuses on Xenophon's description of a similar
question posed by Agesilaos concerning the criminal activities of Phoibidas and Sphodrias in *Hell*. 5.2.32.
See Hornblower, 1.443.

danger, and return to their appointed, fateful danger, τὸν ξυντυχόντα κίνδυνον.[44] The Plataeans had neither the provisions to withstand further siege nor the power to resist a Spartan assault. Nevertheless, they asked to be allowed to suffer their fate. Certainly this could be nothing other than death. The difference is that this death would occur in battle and not at the executioners' hands. Thucydides has them ask merely for the opportunity to face the κίνδυνος that falls to them, their allotment of danger. Once again, Thucydides is pointing his reader towards the conclusion that danger is the natural state of things; the Plataeans are not asking for anything extraordinary, only an opportunity to meet with their appointed dangers. Their choice is not between a safe or dangerous option. They only have a choice between the forms of dangers which – at least from their perspective – define the state of nature in Thucydides' analysis.

The Acanthians, in similar fashion, provide an example of how small communities were often in a position to choose only between two dangerous options. Thucydides' rendition of Brasidas' speech to the Acanthians in 424 puts this in sharp focus for his reader.[45] Brasidas, the Spartan general who had executed a brilliant land campaign against Athens' allies throughout Thrace, approached Acanthus with his army and some allies and was allowed entry into the city to present his argument as to why the Acanthians should revolt from Athens.[46] In this speech, he argued that his purpose was to free them, with the rest of Hellas, from Athenian domination.[47] Near the end of this

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[44] Thuc. 3.59.4.

[45] Thuc. 4.85-87.

[46] Thuc. 4.84.2.

[47] Thuc. 4.85.1. Athenian domination is represented in the fact that the Acanthians had paid a three talent tribute as late as 428.

speech, Thucydides has Brasidas rely on the assumption that danger is the natural state of

the world and he presents the Acanthians with their only two options, both of which are

dangerous. Thucydides has Brasidas say:

> εἰ ... τὴν ἐλευθερίαν μὴ ἀκίνδυνον ὑμῖν φαίνεσθαι,
> δίκαιόν τε εἶναι, οἷς καὶ δυνατὸν δέχεσθαι αὐτήν,
> τούτοις καὶ ἐπιφέρειν, ἄκοντα δὲ μηδένα
> προσαναγκάζειν, μάρτυρας μὲν θεοὺς καὶ ἥρως τοὺς
> ἐγχωρίους ποιήσομαι ὡς ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ ἥκων οὐ πείθω,
> γῆν δὲ τὴν ὑμετέραν δῃῶν πειράσομαι βιάζεσθαι

> If … you say that freedom, in your opinion, is not without
> its dangers, and that it is right to offer it to those who can
> accept it, but not to force it on any against their will, then I
> shall take the gods and heroes of your country to witness
> that I came for your good and was rejected, and shall do my
> best to compel you by laying waste your land (4.87.2).

Freedom, which may be considered fundamental to potential greatness for a *polis*, has

become simply another medium of danger in Thucydides' rendition of Brasidas appeal.[48]

But what "freedom" is being offered by Brasidas? He means the opportunity to

revolt from Athens. Freedom, in this sense, is certainly not without danger. Brasidas is

using the term as a threat against the Acanthians; they must either accept the "freedom"

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[48] The concept of *autonomia* and its relevance to a *polis'* identity is a matter of debate. It has long been considered an essential characteristic of a Greek city-state. See V. Martin, *La Vie Intenationale dans la Grèce des Cités, VIe-IVe S. av. J. -C* (Paris: Librairie du recueil Sirey, 1940), 84-7; and G. Ténékidès, "La notion juridique d'indépendente et la tradition hellénique," *Les Relations internationales dans la Grèce Antique* (Athens: Fondation A.G. Leventis, 1993), 253. Recently, however, Herman Mogens Hansen has argued that autonomy is not necessarily a pre-requisite for characteristic of a *polis*. See "The 'autonomous city-state': Ancient Fact or Modern Fiction," in *Studies in Ancient Greek Polis* (Stuttgart: Historia Einzelschriften 95, 1995), 37; *Polis and City-State: An Ancient Concept and its Modern Equivalent* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1`998), 78; and Polly Low, *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece: Morality and Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007),188-99. For this dissertation, I am focused on Pericles' assertion that freedom was essential to Athens' future strength when he said "liberty (ἐλευθερίαν) preserved … will easily recover for us what we have lost, while, the knee once bowed, even what you have will pass from you" (2.62.3). It is from this perspective that I contend that freedom – which may differ from the concept of *autonomia* – is vital to a *polis'* identity.

being offered or face destruction at the hands of their Spartan liberator.[49] Thucydides is

presenting his reader with a dark image of the choices which exist for *poleis* struggling to

survive in a world dominated by two major powers. The particularly violent set of

options presented to the Acanthians represent the options facing nearly all *poleis:* either

face destruction fighting as an ally of one of the major powers or face destruction trying

to live independently. While the first option, fighting, has obvious dangers; the less

obvious dangers of the second option, neutrality, are made manifest later to the

independent-minded Melians.[50] The practical impossibility of neutrality is in the forefront

of Brasidas' speech as it was for the Melians. The Melians' non-hostility towards the

Athenians was perceived as a danger by the Athenians who reacted by placing the

Melians in danger. The Melian response, of course, was not to "bend the knee" as

Pericles had taught the Athenians at the start of the war.[51]

Thucydides continues to highlight smaller states facing two dangerous options

later in his analysis of the Athenians' Sicilian campaign. When the Athenians invaded

Sicily in 415 with the "most costly and splendid Hellenic force that had ever been sent

out by a single city up to that time," they initially attained moderate success against the

less experienced Syracusan forces.[52] When the Syracusans learned that the Athenians

were following up on their success by sending emissaries to the Sicilian city of Camarina

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[49] A.B. Bosworth draws parallels between the Acanthians' dilemma and that of the Melians. He points to Brasidas' threat but argues that the Acanthians' reason was clouded by their hope of freedom. See "The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993), 36.

[50] Thuc. 5.84-116.

[51] Thuc. 2.62.3. The Melian Dialogue (5.84-116) will be analyzed later in this dissertation. See 4.3 A New Interpretation of the Melian Dialogue.

[52] Start of the campaign, Thuc. 6.31.2. Early success, Thuc. 6.69-71.1.

to strengthen the old ties of an alliance and bring a Sicilian city to their side, they sent a delegation to Camarina in hopes of prejudicing them against the Athenians.[53]

Thucydides' depiction of the debate at Camarina, highlights the fact that smaller states were often faced with few options, all of which were dangerous. The two speeches, that of Hermocrates and that of Euphemus, "neatly encapsulate the difficulties faced by smaller cities during times of conflict between larger ones, particularly when … the smaller cities were technically allied to both of the larger." [54] In his rendition of the first speech, he has the Syracusan Hermocrates focus his audience on the perception that every Sicilian *polis* shares in the danger of any single Sicilian *polis*.[55] The Camarinaeans, therefore, are in danger by virtue of simply being Sicilian. In two portions of the speech Thucydides puts danger in the foreground of Hermocrates' speech to illustrate one thing: the Camarinaeans share the danger of the other Sicilian states. In the first instance, Thucydides has Hermocrates say:

> καὶ εἴ τῳ ἄρα παρέστηκε τὸν μὲν Συρακόσιον, ἑαυτὸν δ' οὐ πολέμιον εἶναι τῷ Ἀθηναίῳ, καὶ δεινὸν ἡγεῖται ὑπέρ γε τῆς ἐμῆς κινδυνεύειν, ἐνθυμηθήτω οὐ περὶ τῆς ἐμῆς μᾶλλον, ἐν ἴσῳ δὲ καὶ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἅμα ἐν τῇ ἐμῇ μαχούμενος, τοσούτῳ δὲ καὶ ἀσφαλέστερον ὅσῳ οὐ προδιεφθαρμένου ἐμοῦ, ἔχων δὲ ξύμμαχον ἐμὲ καὶ οὐκ ἐρῆμος ἀγωνιεῖται·

> As for the Camarinaean who says that it is the Syracusan, not he, who is the enemy of the Athenian, and thinks it awful to have to encounter risk on behalf of my country, I would have him bear in mind that he will fight in my country not more for mine than for his own, and will do so

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[53] Thuc. 6.75.3-4.

[54] Lazenby, 145.

[55] The scholarship focused n Thucydides' characterization of Hermocrates' leadership style is vast. It will be more thoroughly discussed in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

> much more safely in that he will enter the struggle not
> alone, after the way has been cleared by my ruin, but with
> me as his ally (6.78.1).

Hermocrates argues that the danger to Syracuse is inherently that of Camarina. He did

this, according to Thucydides, in order to show them that the danger was common to all

and to forge alliances based on this danger: δεινὸν ἡγεῖται ὑπέρ γε τῆς ἐμῆς

κινδυνεύειν, ἐνθυμηθήτω οὐ περὶ τῆς ἐμῆς μᾶλλον.[56] Certainly to fight for Syracuse

would be to risk danger; Thucydides' Hermocrates does not hide this, ὑπέρ τῆς ἐμῆς

κινδυνεύειν ... ἐν τῇ ἐμῇ μαχούμενος. Thucydides' depiction is clear about the

dangerous end result of an alliance. But Thucydides has Hermocrates allude to a

metaphorical bond of kinship in order to make them aware of the danger they faced as

part of a broader Sicilian "community," real or imagined though it may be.[57] Thucydides'

Hermocrates stresses to the Camarinaeans that they are a small state in a larger

community and share in the danger of all, even if by proxy.

The second instance reinforces this theme by stressing a sense of obligation

Hermocrates believes the Camarinaeans should feel to aid their fellow Sicilians.

Thucydides has Hermocrates say:

> ἀδύνατον δὲ προεμένῳ καὶ μὴ τοὺς αὐτοὺς κινδύνους
> οὐ περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν ἔργων,
> ἐθελήσαντι προσλαβεῖν· λόγῳ μὲν γὰρ τὴν ἡμετέραν
> δύναμιν σῴζοι ἄν τις, ἔργῳ δὲ τὴν αὐτοῦ σωτηρίαν.
> καὶ μάλιστα εἰκὸς ἦν ὑμᾶς, ὦ Καμαριναῖοι, ὁμόρους

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[56] Thuc. 6.34.1. Thucydides has Hermocrates advise the Syracusans to "despatch envoys to the rest of Sicily to show that the danger is common to all," ἔς τε τὴν ἄλλην Σικελίαν πέμπωμεν πρέσβεις δηλοῦντες ὡς κοινὸς ὁ κίνδυνος. I am not arguing that Thucydides is implying some deception on Hermocrates' part. The point is merely that it was his intention all along to stress to the smaller *poleis* that they shared danger with Syracuse by virtue of the perceived bonds of kinship.

[57] The concept of perceived ties of kinship and "fictive kinship" will be discussed in 3.3.2 Internal Dangers of Intervention: Perceived Ties of "Fictive" Kinship

ὄντας καὶ τὰ δεύτερα κινδυνεύσοντας προορᾶσθαι αὐτὰ καὶ μὴ μαλακῶς ὥσπερ νῦν ξυμμαχεῖν, αὐτοὺς δὲ πρὸς ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον ἰόντας, ἅπερ ἂν εἰ ἐς τὴν Καμαριναίαν πρῶτον ἀφίκοντο οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι δεόμενοι ἂν ἐπεκαλεῖσθε, ταῦτα ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου καὶ νῦν παρακελευομένους ὅπως μηδὲν ἐνδώσομεν φαίνεσθαι.

An idle wish, if he now sacrifice us and refuse to take his share of perils which are the same in reality, though not in name, for him as for us; what is nominally the preservation of our power being really his own salvation. It was to be expected that you, of all people in the world, Camarinaeans, being our immediate neighbors and the next in danger, would have foreseen this and, instead of supporting us in the lukewarm way that you are now doing, would rather have come to us of your own accord and be now offering at Syracuse the aid you would have asked of us for Camarina (if the Athenians had first come to Camarina), in order to encourage us to resist the invader (6.78.3-4).

This statement reinforces the notion that the Camarinaeans must consider danger to the Syracusans as their own: the two *poleis* face the same dangers, τοὺς αὐτοὺς κινδύνους. "Because they are neighbors," the Camarinaeans will surely face the danger next if they do not choose to face it now, ὁμόρους ὄντας καὶ τὰ δεύτερα κινδυνεύσοντας. Thucydides has Hermocrates pressure the Camarinaeans with the theoretical proposition that "you would have asked us for help had the Athenians come" – which they did not, ἄν. Now, in Hermocrates' argument, the onus is on the Camarinaeans to repay this potential favor by helping the Syracusans in actuality. The Camarinaeans should feel obliged to choose the dangerous option of breaking their treaty with Athens to help the Syracusans.

But it was the Camarinaeans who were, in part, responsible for bringing the Athenian danger to Sicily in the first place. Thucydides' rendition of Euphemus' counter-argument to Hermocrates highlights this. Finding themselves caught between the

conflicts among larger *poleis*, the Camarinaeans went beyond Sicily to seek an external

alliance. Thucydides indicates that Euphemus, the Athenian speaker at Camarina in 415,

reminded them of this fact when he argued against Hermocrates' plea for a pan-Sicilian

alliance. In the point-counterpoint logic of Euphemus' argument, Thucydides highlights

the way in which the Camarinaeans originally attempted to gain security from their

Sicilian threats by allying themselves with Athens. Thucydides has Euphemus say:

> τὸ γὰρ πρότερον ἡμᾶς ἐπηγάγεσθε οὐκ ἄλλον τινὰ
> προσείοντες φόβον ἤ, εἰ περιοψόμεθα ὑμᾶς ὑπὸ
> Συρακοσίοις γενέσθαι, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ κινδυνεύσομεν.

> When you first asked us over, the fear which you held out
> was that of danger to Athens if we let you come under the
> dominion of Syracuse (6.86.2).

The Camarinaeans had, in Thucydides' mind, attempted to engage in "balancing

behavior" by hinting that the Athenians themselves would face danger if Syracuse

expanded its power over Sicily.[58] The smaller state pleaded for the intervention of the

larger state to protect its own interests and Thucydides highlights that the focus for all

involved was danger, whether for the Camarinaeans in Sicily or the Athenians in Attica.

The Camarinaeans, in Thucydides' analysis brought an external power – itself a

dangerous, imperialist power – into Sicily to ward off the danger already present within

Sicily.

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[58] Gomme notes that the Camarinaeans were, in fact, among the allies of the Leontini who asked Athens for help in 427, 4:357. Peter Hunt discusses the concept of "balancing behavior" as a way of mitigating the differences in the hierarchy of Greek city-states in *War, Peace, and Alliance in Demosthenes' Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 97-107. This is also an instance which falls under his category of "anticipating threats," 150-3.

This set of speeches highlights the precarious position in which most small Greek existed.[59] Thucydides highlights this fact for his reader in a quick summary of the Camarinaean decision at the end of the debate. Caught between their kinship with the fearsome Syracusans and their more recent alliance with the Athenians, the Camarinaeans attempted to give no further help to either side. In the end, of course, Camarina eventually came to the aid of the Syracusans against the foreign invader, the Athenians.[60] The situation, however, demonstrates that there really was little opportunity for smaller states such as Camarina to remain in a safe position in the face of the larger states. Smaller states were often faced with a few options, all of which were dangerous.[61]

But even the larger *poleis* could find themselves caught between two dangerous options. Such was the case for the Spartans in 432, when they were compelled by their allies to decide whether or not to go to war with Athens. After the siege of Potidaea, the Corinthians summoned Sparta's allies to discuss their various grievances with the Athenians.[62] Thucydides' rendition of the Corinthians' speech is an indictment of Spartan inaction in the face of growing Athenian power.[63] He has the Corinthians conclude by calling on the Spartans to "assist your allies, and Potidaea in particular, *as you promised*, by a speedy invasion of Attica, and do not sacrifice friends and kindred to their bitterest

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[59] Lazenby, 145.

[60] Thuc. 7.33, 7.58.

[61] That smaller states often face a choice between two dangers, is also shown by the example of the Mytilenian commons in their revolt of 427 (3.27). This incident will be further analyzed in 2.3.4 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Groups Exhibiting *Coup d'Oeil*.

[62] Thuc. 1.67.

[63] Thuc. 1.68-9.

enemies, and drive the rest of us in despair to some other alliance."[64] Thus threatened

with the loss of their allies, the Spartans then allow some Athenian envoys, who

happened to be "present at Sparta on other business," to address the assembly.[65]

Thucydides uses their speech, in part, to demonstrate to his reader the dangers present

should Sparta choose to engage in war on its allies' behalf. He has them warn the

Spartans to "consider the vast influence of accident in war … an affair of chances,

chances from which neither of us is exempt."[66] Thucydides follows the Athenians' speech

with that of Archidamus, who counsels patience in deliberation along with diligence in

preparation.[67]

Thucydides' rendition of the Spartan ephor Sthenelaidas' response to these

concerns, however, highlights for the reader the dangerous dilemma faced even by the

strong states in Thucydides' dangerous world. Even a *polis* as strong as Sparta often faced

only two dangerous options: war or internal collapse. Thucydides has Sthenelaidas say:

> ...ἡμεῖς δὲ ὁμοῖοι καὶ τότε καὶ νῦν ἐσμέν, καὶ τοὺς
> ξυμμάχους, ἢν σωφρονῶμεν, οὐ περιοψόμεθα
> ἀδικουμένους οὐδὲ μελλήσομεν τιμωρεῖν· οἱ δ'οὐκέτι
> μέλλουσι κακῶς πάσχειν. ἄλλοις μὲν γὰρ χρήματά ἐστι
> πολλὰ καὶ νῆες καὶ ἵπποι, ἡμῖν δὲ ξύμμαχοι ἀγαθοί,
> οὓς οὐ παραδοτέα τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ἐστίν, οὐδὲ δίκαις
> καὶ λόγοις διακριτέα μὴ λόγῳ καὶ αὐτοὺς
> βλαπτομένους, ἀλλὰ τιμωρητέα ἐν τάχει καὶ παντὶ
> σθένει. καὶ ὡς ἡμᾶς πρέπει βουλεύεσθαι ἀδικουμένους
> μηδεὶς διδασκέτω, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας ἀδικεῖν
> μᾶλλον πρέπει πολὺν χρόνον βουλεύεσθαι. ψηφίζεσθε

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[64] Thuc. 1.71.4.

[65] Thuc. 1.72.1.

[66] Thuc. 1.78.1-2. This section of the speech is analyzed in greater detail in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples).

[67] Thuc. 80-85. Thucydides' characterization of Archidamus' leadership style will be analyzed with a bibliography of relevant scholarship in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

οὖν, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, ἀξίως τῆς Σπάρτης τὸν πόλεμον, καὶ μήτε τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐᾶτε μείζους γίγνεσθαι μήτε τοὺς ξυμμάχους καταπροδιδῶμεν, ἀλλὰ ξὺν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπίωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας.

We meanwhile are the same then and now, and shall not, if we are wise, disregard the wrongs of our allies, or put off till tomorrow the duty of assisting those who must suffer today. Others have much money and ships and horses, but we have good allies whom we must not give up to the Athenians, nor by lawsuits and words decide the matter, as it is anything but in word that we are harmed, but render instant and powerful help. And let us not be told that it is fitting for us to deliberate under injustice; long deliberation is rather fitting for those who have injustice in contemplation. Vote therefore, Spartans, for war, as the honor of Sparta demands, and neither allow the further aggrandizement of Athens, nor betray our allies to ruin, but with the gods let us advance against the aggressors (1.86.2-5).

Thucydides does not explicitly mention *kindunos* in this instance. But Sthenelaidas' perspective show that some Spartans perceived only two dangerous options: either engage in a dangerous war or risk an equally dangerous collapse of their alliance system. The Spartans are witnessing the growing power of Athens and their fears are urging them to take action against Athenian domination of their own allies.[68] Thucydides' diction makes it clear that the ephor feels that Sparta is obligated to help its allies; the repetitive sequence of "rare verbal adjectives" underscores the Spartans' obligations.[69] They must

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[68] Eckstein (2003) discusses Sthenelaidas' speech in the context of the Spartans' perception of the "power transition crisis," 762.

[69] June W. Allison analyzes the repetitive structure of the speech and highlights the "series of admonitions" presented in the "rare" verbal adjectives. See "Sthenelaides' Speech: Thucydides 1.86," *Hermes* 112 (1984), 11-12. Edmund F. Bloedow argues that the sophisticated rhetorical devices are more a product of Thucydides' depiction than of Sthenelaidas' original speech. But the point for this dissertation is not whether or not Sthenelaides said these exact words but that Thucydides chose to include them for his reader's benefit. Thus Bloedow's analysis only reinforces Allison's assertion that the verbal adjectives are designed to have significant impact on both Sthenelaidas' audience as well as Thucydides' reader. See "Sthenelaidas the Persuasive Spartan," *Hermes* 115 (1987), 61.

not betray their allies, οὐ παραδοτέα; they must not debate this matter, οὐδὲ δίκαις καὶ λόγοις διακριτέα; and they must render instant and powerful help, ἀλλὰ τιμωρητέα ἐν τάχει καὶ παντὶ σθένει. Even for a state as strong as Sparta, the obligations to their allies are, from Sthenelaidas' perspective, overwhelming. They force the Spartans into an "essentially irrational mood."[70] This is compounded by Sthenelaidas' anger at the Athenians' power which threatens the stability of the Greek world.[71] The necessities highlighted in this brief speech leave little room for other, less-dangerous options. Additionally, Sthenelaidas' focus on the potential damage to Spartan honor should they fail to act, "shamed them into voting to dissolve the treaty [of 446/5] by recharging the emotional atmosphere … and forcing the decision into the realm of the moral qualities wherein the Spartans would seem *kakoi* to vote otherwise."[72] Thucydides' analysis of the dangerous implications of his contemporaries' focus on honor and reputation will be discussed later in this dissertation.[73] But, even a cursory analysis of Sthenelaidas' argument makes it clear that Thucydides is focusing his reader on the powerful impulse

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[70] Edmund F. Bloedow analyzes the irrationality of the Spartans' decision in "The Speeches of Archidamus and Sthenelaidas," *Historia* 30 (1981), 142.

[71] Patrick Coby, "Enlightened Self-Interest in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydidean Speakers on the Right of the Stronger and Interstate Peace," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24 (1991), 71-2. Mabel L. Lang focuses on Sthenelaidas' "outrage at the Athenians' arrogance in "The Thucydidean Tetralogy (1.67-88)," *The Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999), 329. Impulsive anger as a force which urged Thucydides' contemporaries to undertake non-rational action is discussed in both 3.2.1 Defining the Greek "Ethos of Action."

[72] Allison (1984), 15. So too does Ryan K. Balot point to Sthenelaides' use of an unusual voting method for the Spartans, i.e. asking them to stand in certain areas of the assembly to express their opinion (Thuc. 1.87.2), as further evidence that he "shamed the Spartans into voting for war." See "The Dark Side of Democratic Courage," *Social Research* 71 (2004), 89. Egon Flaig analyzes the unique nature of the Spartan voting in "Die spartische Abstimmung nach der Lautstärke. Überlegungen zy Thukydides 1.87," *Historia* 42 (1993), 139-60.

[73] See Thucydides' analysis of his contemporaries' urge to preserve their honor is presented in 3.4.1 Internal Dangers of Honor: Defining the Ethos.

his contemporaries felt to protect their honor. He has Sthenelaidas call on the Spartans to act "as the honor of Sparta demands," without allowing more time for discussion or alternative solutions, such as Archidamus offered. Sthenelaides, in other words, presents no option but immediate action.[74] For the Spartans, even though they were a powerful *polis*, the only realistic solution was to engage in war lest they lose the support of the Peloponnesian League. Just as smaller states such as Camarina existed in an environment which seldom provided safety from the pressure of larger states, so too did the powerful states seldom feel secure from the pressures of their allies and other states. Though on the surface, powerful states seem to have had more available options, Thucydides' rendition of Sthenelaidas' speech makes it clear that the reality was often much more limited and all available options were dangerous.

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[74] Felix M. Wasserman notes the contrast between Sthenelaidas' speech and that of Archicamus. He analyzes the differences and argues that Sthenelaidas' "vehement and emotional words" highlight the beginning of the "Hellenic tragedy" that results from the "urge for action." See "The Speeches of King Archidamus in Thucydides," *The Classical Journal* 48 (1953), 194; David Bedford and Thom Workman focus on his call for actions "as the honor of Sparta demands" in "The Tragic Reading of the Thucydidean Tragedy," *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), 61.

2.2.2 Danger: A Constant Within the Polis

It is also interesting to note how Thucydides presents the idea that danger is also a constant presence in civic life. This aspect is important to understand because taking an active role in political activities, i.e. participating in the communal life of the *polis*, was one of the most defining activities of a Greek's life; it was the act that not only made him a citizen, but also helped him fulfill his potential as a civilized human being.[1] That Thucydides has often chosen to cast involvement in politics in terms of its dangers demonstrates just how deeply he believed danger was fundamental to the general state of the human condition in the world.

Thucydides presents this representation of the personal dangers of political involvement in his rendition of Pericles' Funeral Oration. In one section of this speech, Thucydides has Pericles say:

> οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ἴσον τι ἢ δίκαιον βουλεύεσθαι οἳ ἂν μὴ καὶ παῖδας ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου παραβαλλόμενοι κινδυνεύωσιν

> ...for never can a fair or just policy be expected of the citizen who does not, like his fellows, bring to the decision the interests and apprehensions of a father (2.44.4).

Thucydides diction presents a stark representation of the dangerous nature of the political process; those who engage in the management of the *polis* are potentially risking the lives of their sons by the results of their speeches or votes.[2] Thucydides makes it clear that to take part in political deliberations is to face danger, κινδυνεύωσιν. This image points Thucydides' reader to the idea that the public arena is one in which the decisions made

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[1] Paul A. Rahe, "The Primacy of Politics in Classical Greece," *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 2 (Apr. 1984): 275-76.

[2] Gomme, 1:142.

are fundamental to the city's survival, i.e. war and peace, life and death. Though politics are completely embedded in society and to engage in the debates of the assembly are perhaps second nature to most citizens, Thucydides makes his reader aware of the true nature of the political process: danger is a constant force.[3] In Thucydides' mind, civic life is merely another aspect of the world of Greek interstate relations – in this case "intra-state" relations – that is fraught with peril. Active participation in the assembly means choosing to engage with the external dangers facing the *polis*. Though civic life, or "intra-state" relations, may seem to be internal dangers, they are not; the external threat is real and may or may not be exacerbated by internal passions or urges. But Thucydides' point in this instance is merely to highlight the external dangers a citizen chooses to face when he participates in civic life.

The dangers, however, are oftentimes experienced on a more personal level in Thucydides' society, imbued as it was with such a strong sense of honor and shame.[4] The competitive nature of Thucydides' contemporary society made it physically dangerous for citizens who chose to engage in public affairs; their competitive urge drove them to speak up in the assembly, but their need to protect their honor and status in the community made it dangerous for them to do so lest they be proven wrong, bested in a vote or – like

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[3] Josiah Ober argues from the premise that the political process was "embedded" in Greek society in *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 35.

[4] The importance of the concepts of honor and shame will be discussed in 3.4 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame.

Nicias – fail in a responsibility appointed them by the assembly.[5] Thucydides highlights

this in his analysis of Nicias' reasons for pursuing an armistice with Sparta in 422. He

writes:

> Νικίας μὲν βουλόμενος, ἐν ᾧ ἀπαθὴς ἦν καὶ ἠξιοῦτο, διασώσασθαι τὴν εὐτυχίαν, καὶ ἔς τε τὸ αὐτίκα πόνων πεπαῦσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τοὺς πολίτας παῦσαι καὶ τῷ μέλλοντι χρόνῳ καταλιπεῖν ὄνομα ὡς οὐδὲν σφήλας τὴν πόλιν διεγένετο, νομίζων ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου τοῦτο ξυμβαίνειν καὶ ὅστις ἐλάχιστα τύχῃ αὐτὸν παραδίδωσι, τὸ δὲ ἀκίνδυνον τὴν εἰρήνην παρέχειν.

> Nicias, while still happy and honored, wished to secure his good fortune, to obtain a present release from trouble for himself and his countrymen, and hand down to posterity a name as an ever-successful statesman, and thought the way to do this was to keep out of danger and commit himself as little as possible to fortune, and that peace alone made this keeping out of danger possible(5.16.1).

Certainly Thucydides here ascribes to Nicias a certain degree of patriotic altruism, saying

that he wanted to keep the state from suffering further damage in the war. But Thucydides

also offers the proleptic comment that Nicias was concerned for the preservation of his

own reputation as a successful leader.[6] Nicias' concern, according to Thucydides'

analysis, was for his own public image. The longer Nicias remained under the scrutiny of

the assembly, voicing opinions, offering advice, and accepting the responsibility of

leading armies into battle, the longer he risked failure in any enterprise. His arguments

might not convince the assembly, which would be a humiliation. He was certainly happy

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[5] J. E. Lendon discusses the competitive nature of Greek society as conveyed to them through Homeric epics in *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 36-38. John Atkinson also notes that "the Athenian social system was as competitive as it was democratic" in "Nicias and the Fear of Failure Syndrome," *Ancient History Bulletin* 9 (1995), 55.

[6] Atkinson (1995), 59.

to accept the honor of a command, but was quite aware of the risks should he fail.[7] The

risk, of course, are physical; Nicias was eventually killed by his captors after the disaster

in Sicily.[8] But that is not entirely what Thucydides is alluding to here; there is a focus on

Nicias' reputation, his memory in future generations. There is also his susceptibility as a

public figure to those who might some damaging information on him and might be

greedy for his wealth, as Plutarch notes.[9] Engaging in matters of state and conitnually

putting oneself on display in the competitive arena of the assembly was certainly a source

of potential reward, with respect to both finances and reputation. It was also a source of

danger as other citizens watched and waited for the appropriate moment, one instance of

weakness or failure, in which to strike for their own self-interest – or simply to criticize.

Thucydides recognized the fickle nature of the Athenian assembly. In separate passages

he praises the citizens for their ability to adapt quickly to unfavorable situations as well

as pointing to citizens' susceptibility to deceptive rhetoric and theatrical speakers.[10] By

highlighting the challenges a political leader faced, he focuses his reader on the dangers

inherent in public life. Nicias cannot simply address the assembly with an idea. He must

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[7] Atkinson (1995), 60; Gomme, 4:230.

[8] Thuc. 7.86.2.

[9] Plut. *Nic*. 4.3-5. See also Atkinson (1995), 59-60.

[10] Thucydides praises the Athenian citizens for changing the opinion of Pericles as they focus on the needs of the state, 2.65.4; he praises the citizens for their prudence in the midst of panic after the Sicilian disaster, 8.1.4; he has Cleon chastise the assembly for giving in to specious rhetoric, 3.37-8. Josiah Ober argues that the assembly was quite astute and made it a "daunting prospect" for orators to address – at least in the fourth century. See *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), esp. 134-8. More recently John Zumbrunnen analyzes the competitive nature of assembly meetings, the "agonistic democracy," and argues that the citizens in both assembly and theater were, in fact, quite clever and stand in opposition to the image Thucydides paints with the demagogic Cleon. See "Elite Domination and the Clever Citizen: Aristophanes *Archarnians* and *Knights*," *Political Theory* 32 (2004), 656-77.

also ponder the future dangers and how best to avoid them in order to protect the

reputation which he had already earned.

Thucydides similarly presents one of Hermocrates' speeches as a rational leader's

perspective on the need to protect his own reputation in the eyes of potential political

opponents.[11] To illustrate the potential intra-*polis* dangers for which politicians had to

account, Thucydides points his reader to an assembly at Syracuse in 415 at which the

leading men spoke either to acknowledge or to contradict the reports that the Athenians

had launched an expedition against their *polis* and the whole island of Sicily.[12]

Hermocrates addressed this assembly and Thucydides highlights how he dealt with the

cultural necessity to react to any perceived loss of status he might suffer by appearing

weak and admitting that the city was in danger. Thucydides has Hermocrates say:

> καὶ Ἑρμοκράτης ὁ Ἕρμωνος παρελθὼν αὐτοῖς, ὡς σαφῶς οἰόμενος εἰδέναι τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν, ἔλεγε καὶ παρῄνει τοιάδε.
> Ἄπιστα μὲν ἴσως, ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλοι τινές, δόξω ὑμῖν περὶ τοῦ ἐπίπλου τῆς ἀληθείας λέγειν, καὶ γιγνώσκω ὅτι οἱ τὰ μὴ πιστὰ δοκοῦντα εἶναι ἢ λέγοντες ἢ ἀπαγγέλλοντες οὐ μόνον οὐ πείθουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄφρονες δοκοῦσιν εἶναι.
> ὅμως δὲ οὐ καταφοβηθεὶς ἐπισχήσω κινδυνευούσης τῆς πόλεως, πείθων γε ἐμαυτὸν σαφέστερόν τι ἑτέρου εἰδὼς λέγειν.

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[11] Edmund F. Bloedow analyzes Hermocrates' advice to the Syracusans in 415 and remarks that Thucydides has designed his narrative with such a focus on Hermocrates' rational approach and good sense that the reader "scarcely requires Thucydides' comment when he introduces him once more a later stage as being 'in every way a remarkably intelligent man' (6.72.2)." See "The Speeches of Hermocrates and Athenagoras at Syracuse in 415 B.C.: Difficulties in Syracuse and in Thucydides," *Historia* 45 (1996), 143.

[12] Thuc. 6.32.3.

> … Hermocrates son of Hermon came forward, being persuaded that he knew the truth of the matter, and gave the following counsel: Although I shall perhaps be no better believed than others have been when I speak about the reality of the expedition, and although I know that those who either make or repeat statements thought no worthy of belief not only gain no converts, but are thought fools for their pains, I shall certainly not be frightened into holding my tongue when the state is in danger, and when I am persuaded that I can speak with more authority on the matter than other persons (6.32.3-33.1).

First, it should be noted that Thucydides twice stresses Hermocrates' conviction that he has a clear understanding of the situation and the clearest ability to articulate the options: ὡς σαφῶς οἰόμενος εἰδέναι τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν and πείθων γε ἐμαυτὸν σαφέστερόν τι ἑτέρου εἰδὼς λέγειν. This stands out all the more because the speeches are set against a backdrop of irrational decision-making: the reader knows the Athenians are coming and this debate itself is irrational, and the reader knows just how irrationally the Athenians have behaved in their zeal for this expedition.[13] Hermocrates realizes that the city is in danger: κινδυνευούσης τῆς πόλεως, and Thucydides highlights for his reader that Hermocrates sees the danger, understands the danger, and believes himself most capable of expressing the truth about the danger to his fellow Syracusans.

The main point for us, however, is not that Hermocrates has a unique understanding of the situation, but the way in which Thucydides depicts the opening of Hermocrates speech: Hermocrates begins by publicly acknowledging the potential loss of reputation he might suffer by advocating a policy others perceive as weak. Yet he is not scared of this loss. Hermocrates, in Thucydides' depiction, recognized the cultural necessity to react to the perception that his reputation might be diminished in the eyes of

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[13] Bloedow (1996), 142.

his peers and addressed it openly. The reader has seen Hermocrates do this before. In

Thucydides' depiction of his speech at Gela in 424, he admits that, as a citizen of a larger

polis, he would be expected to discuss aggressive action, not self-defense.[14] But it is

precisely his ability to look past his own situation and be willing to "give way to others"

that marks the rationality of his longer-term views.[15] This is, in part, why Thucydides

holds Hermocrates up as a positive example of rational leadership. Politicians of

Thucydides' era were public figures in the most literal sense of the phrase. They gained,

exercised and lost power based on how well they were able to control the public

assembly.[16] It is no mean thing when a man such as Hermocrates stands in front of the

assembly and opens himself up to public ridicule or scorn. Both Hermocrates and

Thucydides understand this. Thus it is that Thucydides depicts the opening of

Hermocrates' analysis of the situation with an *apologia* of sorts. He is using the

beginning of this speech to highlight the reality of intra-*polis* dangers: Hermocrates has to

defend his own status as offering "weak" advice even before he can consider defending

the state! This opening *apologia* does not forward the action of Thucydides' narrative in

any way – which is what advice Hermocrates actually gave. That Thucydides includes it

in his rendition of the speech is an important indicator of the weight he gives to this

concept. Hermocrates' defense against his detractors is a stark illustration of the force of

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[14] Thuc. 4.64.1.

[15] Hermocrates speaks of "giving way to others" (4.63.3). See Bloedow (1996), 144. Orwin (2001) clarifies that Hermocrates' long-term views are, of course, that the time is simply not ripe for Syracusan expansion and it is better to bide the time while promoting a grand coalition against Athens. This coalition will in due time lead to the rise of Syracuse, an idea that Orwin argues Hermocrates' audience understands very well, 166-67.

[16] Thucydides points to Pericles' abilities to "exercise an independent control over the multitude" and "with a word" keep their emotions in check and aligned with his perception of what was necessary in any occasion (2.65.8-9). See Ober (1989), esp. 315-33.

cultural necessity that Thucydides believed was felt by his contemporary leaders to react to a perceived loss of status. Leading men were impelled to defend themselves against the slightest perception of weakness lest they suffer the consequences of actual weakness.

That political leaders, especially in Athens, had to be aware of the dangers inherent in political activity is very clear from Thucydides' depiction of the waxing and waning fortunes of three key political leaders – not to mention his own exile! His description of the mutable fortunes of Themistocles, Pericles and Alcibiades makes it clear that oftentimes a political leader's reputation was not the only thing at stake. They also faced loss of power, ostracism and exile from the *polis*. The concept of a *polis* forcing one of its leaders into exile through ostracism is indicative of the high-stakes competition that defined political activism for the Greeks. First established as a feature of the "intense intra-aristocratic strife that characterized politics of the Archaic period of Greece," it provided a legal means for the *demos* to remind aristocrats of its power.[17] But on a more personal level, it represented a tangible danger to those who chose to compete in the political arena. Though the danger was not necessarily mortal, it was significant and represents a physical concern for one's welfare that extends beyond simply a concern for reputation. Ostracism and exile were a risk to one's continued involvement in the *polis* at the most basic level: citizenship and residency.

Thucydides' depiction of the Athenian statesman Themistocles, for instance, demonstrates that even the most revered political leaders faced the risk of exile for their continued engagement in politics. Thucydides highlights that Themistocles played a pivotal role in the growth of Athenian power during the fifth-century. He persuaded the

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[17] Sara Forsdyke, "Exile, Ostracism and the Athenian Democracy," *Classical Antiquity* 19 (2000), 232-3.

Athenians to build their fleet in the first place;[18] he led that fleet to overwhelming victory over the Persians at the Battle of Salamis;[19] and he was instrumental in the Athenian effort to rebuild its city walls and to fortify the Piraeus after the Persian invasion despite Sparta's objections.[20] Themistocles was, very clearly, a Thucydidean image of a "reasonable Athenian hero."[21] Regardless of his heroics, Themistocles was exiled for circumstances which are not well known enough to draw any conclusions about the use of ostracism.[22] While in exile, however, things went from bad to worse for Themistocles after the Spartans convinced the Athenians that he was implicated in the medism of Pausanias, which led to Sparta's loss of hegemony over the confederacy of Greeks carrying on the Hellenic war against Persia in the Hellespont in 478.[23] He was forced to seek the protection of Admetus, the Molossian king, through the intervention of Admetus' wife who argued Themistocles was "far too low" for any revenge.[24] Though Themistocles enjoyed a resurgance of fortune during his stay with the Persians and eventually rose to political prominence in the foreign empire, Thucydides makes it clear that he died "an outlaw for treason" outside of his native Attica.[25] While Thucydides

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[18] Thuc. 1.14.3.

[19] Thuc. 1.74.1.

[20] Thuc. 1.89.3-1.93.

[21] Haruo Konishi, "Thucydides' Method in the Episodes of Pausanias and Themistocles," *The American Journal of Philology* 19 (1970), 68.

[22] Forsdyke (2000), 257.

[23] Thuc. 1.130.2.

[24] Thuc. 1.136.2-4.

[25] Thucydides praises eulogizes his role in the Persian administration, Thuc. 1.138.5. He his death as an outlaw, 1.138.6.

argues that he died of natural causes, he acknowledges that there are some who report

that Themistocles commited suicide.[26] Suicide, of course, is a reasonable possibility as

Themistocles would have had a "continuing respect for his own reputation, his previous

deeds" and would have been plagued by the dishonor of being exiled from Athens, a city

he once led with such great success.[27]

The point, however, is not how Themistocles died, but that political circumstances

forced him to spend the last part of his life as an outcast from Athens. Though

remembered as a hero, he suffered defeat in his final political competition and was

punished not merely by a loss of honor or reputation but by a loss of citizenship from the

state he himself had led to greatness. Thucydides depicts his reversal of political fortunes

to make the high stakes of political competition clear to his reader. His depiction of

Themistocles' reversal is not unique, however, as it foreshadows the changing fortunes of

another "ideal hero," Pericles.[28] Even in his eulogy for Pericles, Thucydides notes that he

too suffered at the hands of the *demos* who held him accountable for the suffering they

were undergoing as a result of the Spartan invasion in 430. Thucydides' comment that

Pericles was subjected to punishment according to the fickle "way of the multitude"

parallels his comments on Themistocles in several important ways.[29] Both "ideal heros"

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[26] Thuc. 1.138.4.

[27] John Marr, "The Death of Themistocles," *Greece and Rome* 42 (1995), 161. Though he acknowledges that this is a reasonable argument, Marr concludes that Thucydides' answer is the correct one and Themistocles "almost certainly died a natural death," 165.

[28] Konishi (1970), 68; Edwin M. Carawan, "Thucydides and Stesimbrotus on the Exile of Themistocles," *Historia* 38 (1989), 161.

[29] David Gribble highlights the most basic, yet important, parallel between these two instances by demonstrating that they are two of only twenty-two examples of Thucydides' narrator intervention in the text. See "Narrator Interventions in Thucydides," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 118 (1998), 48-9.

in Thucydides' narrative enjoyed great success in their political careers. They were accomplished military leaders and exercised conservative management of the state, especially in times of distress.[30] But, more ominously, both men suffered physical losses – Pericles was fined and Themistocles was exiled – for their efforts to remain active in the public realm as political leaders.

So too does Thucydides' portrayal of Alcibiades highlight the dangers of political engagement.[31] As the Athenians debated the idea of sending an expedition to Sicily in 415, Thucydides notes that Alcibiades was "by far the warmest advocate of the expedition" because of his ambition for the wealth and reputation a successful command of the expedition would bring him.[32] Even so, Thucydides also notes that "his conduct of the war was as good as could be desired" even if his private habits, his indulgences and extravagent tastes"gave offense to everyone."[33] He was a "political chameleon" whose ability to ingratiate himself with various constituencies despite their obvious misgivings contributed to his frequent political successes.[34] He was, at this stage in the war, a successful politician even though many in Athens thought of him as "an aspirant to tyranny" and sought ways to keep his power in check.[35] In other words, Alcibiades'

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[30] Themistocles' "faculty of intuitively meeting an emergency," Thuc. 1.138.3; Pericles' wartime ability to "rightly gauge the power of his country," 2.65.5.

[31] A detailed analysis of Thucydides' characterization of Alcibiades with a bibliography of the most relevant scholarship is presented in 3.2.2 Thucydides Defines Greek "Ethos of Action."

[32] Thuc. 6.15.2.

[33] Thuc. 6.15.4.

[34] Kirby (1983), 202.

[35] *Idem*. Scanlon (1987) points to Thucydides' characterization of Alcibiades as a "tyrant type" parallel to Pausanias, which allowed Thucydides to explore Athens' "persistant historical pattern" of fear of tyrants, 298-9.

successes brought him both honor and reputation as well as political enemies from whom

he would later experience intra-*polis* danger. Thucydides highlights Alcibiades' victory in

the assembly by presenting his debate with Nicias and focusing on the outcome: the

Athenians "fell in love with the enterprise" that Alcibiades proposed.[36] Shortly after this

political victory, however, Alcibiades suffered defeat in the same arena of public opinion.

Thucydides details this reversal in order to highlight the intra-*polis* dangers which

political leaders often faced.

As the Athenians prepared for the expedition, some unidentified group of vandals

mutilated the stone *Hermae*, the "customary square figures so common in the doorways

of private houses and temple." [37] The Athenians took this matter very seriously,

considering it to be "ominous for the expedition and part of a conspiracy to bring about a

revolution and to upset the democracy." [38] From a modern perspective, the mutilation of

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[36] Thuc. 6.24.3.

[37] The scholarship on this portion of Thucydides' narrative, *i.e.* Alcibiades, the affair of the Herms and Thucydides digression on the Harmodius/Aristogeiton affair, is extensive. For further discussion see Lionel Pearson, "A Note on a Digression of Thucydides (VI, 54-59), *American Journal of Philology* 70 (1949), 186-89; H. -P. Stahl, "Speeches and the Course of Events in Books Six and Seven of Thucydides" in Stadter (1973), esp. 70; Michael Gagarin, "Socrates' Hybris and Alcibiades' Failure," *Phoenix* 31 (1977), 9-26; John T. Kirby "Narrative Structure and Techniques in Thucydides VI-VII," *Classical Antiquity* 2 (1983), 183-211; Thomas F. Scanlon, "Thucydides and Tyranny," *Classical Antiquity* 6 (1987), 288-301;Walter M. Ellis, *Alcibiades* (New York: Routledge, 1989), esp. 58-62; Steven Forde, *The Ambition to Rule: Alcibiades and the Politics of Imperialism in Thucydides* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), esp. 31-37; J. Winkler, "*Phallos* Politics: Representing the Body Politic in Athens," *Differences* 21 (1990), 29-44; W.D. Furley, *Andokides and the Herms: A Study of Crisis in Fifth-Century Athenian Religion* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 1996); Kennedy Mayer, "Alcibiades the Deserter: P. OXY. 111 411 Col. IV. 98," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 123 (1998), 232-4; Victoria Wohl, "The Eros of Alcibiades," *Classical Antiquity* 18 (1999), 349-85; H. -P. Stahl, *Thucydides: Man's Place in History* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2003), esp. ch. 1; Josephine Crawley Quinn, "*Herms*, *Kouroi* and the Political Anatomy of Athens," *Greece and Rome* 54 (2007), 82-105; Elizabeth A. Meyer, "Thucydides on Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Tyranny, and History," *The Classical Quarterly* 58 (2008), 13-34.

[38] Thuc. 6.27. Desmond (2006) sees in this fear an example of the "state of constant fear" in which Athenians existed concerning the safety of their laws and democracy, 365.

the *Hermae* would be the equivalent of a decapitation of every crucifix in the Vatican City on the eve of a holy day.[39] It was indeed an ominous and dastardly act. Alcibiades was quickly implicated in the affair by "those who could least endure him."[40]Though he offered to stand his trial before setting off on the expedition, his enemies feared the army's support for Alcibiades and argued that he should stand trial after his return, planning all the while to have brought home once they had trumped up a more serious charge in his absence.[41] The initial mutilations – regardless of who were the actual perpetrators – were merely the opening salvo in a "paradigm of nonverbal, unwritten, performative rhetoric" that allowed those who could not win the assembly's favor to compete in politics via other means.[42] After the expedition's departure, the Athenians became "very hostile" to Alcibiades through the efforts of those "same enemies who had attacked him before he went out." Their fear of his potential ability to overthrow the democracy caused the Athenians to decide "to bring him to trial and execute him."[43] They ordered Alcibiades to return to Athens and face trial. Alcibiades initially obeyed the summons but eluded his captors on the return voyage and entered the Peloponnesus as an "outlaw" while "the Athenians passed a sentence of death by default upon him."[44]

Though Thucydides does not explicitly point to the *kindunos* surrounding Alcibiades, his reversal of fortunes demonstrates to the reader the dangerous nature of

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[39] Fredal (2002), 598.

[40] Thuc. 6.28.

[41] Thuc. 6.29.

[42] Fredal (2002), 599-600.

[43] Thuc. 6.61.1-4.

[44] Thuc. 6.61.6-7.

intra-*polis* relationships and political competitions. Alcibiades' ambitions and desires, which are equalled only by the Athenians' desires to conquer Sicily in the first place, highlight the tension between productive and destructive desires at this stage of the war.[45] Alcibiades desires to win honor and wealth through political – and military – victory. But this desire is equally matched by those of his competitors who seek his destruction. As soon as it appears that Alcibiades' youthful exuberance will be rewarded, it is figuratively "cut down" by his previously "flaccid" opponents who find an alternative means of competing with him outside of his domain, the assembly.[46] Very shortly after what should have been his greatest achievement, being awarded the command of the Sicilian expedition, Alcibiades is forced into exile and must spend the next several years living as an outlaw from Athens, just as Themistocles had been forced to do in his later years.

Alcibiades' pattern of success and failure provides Thucydides with another example of the various forms of intra-*polis* danger political leaders often faced. The crime of which Alcibiades was accused was a private one with political repercussions.[47] But the political effects were very real and because of the keen competition Alcibiades faced from his opponents, Athens was robbed of his genius in what was arguably the "greatest calamity" of the war.[48] While certain leaders such as Nicias were rightly concerned with a loss of reputation, Alcibiades' case, like those of Pericles and Themistocles, demonstrates that at times the stakes were much higher and the intra-*polis* dangers political leaders faced were much more tangible, whether they faced pecuniary

[45] Wohl (1999).

[46] Wohl (1999), 364.

[47] Pearson (1949), 186-9.

[48] Kirby (1983), 201.

loss or exile from their native *polis*. Thucydides himself, of course, understood this all too well; his own exile proves that there were consequences for military defeat even if one survived it physically.[49]

The danger, however, could also be physical in times of great stress for the state. Thucydides highlights this in his analysis of one of the later stages of the war when the very nature of Athens' democratic society was in doubt as oligarchs and democrats fought for control of the government in 412/1. The Athenians had a sizeable force at Samos to defend Athenian interests in the islands near Asia Minor and putting down revolts among the allies. Alcibiades, hoping to bring about his own restoration into Athens, sent word to several of the leading men of the expedition that he had enough influence with the Persian satrap Tissaphernes to bring him over to Athens' side if only they would "embrace the idea of subverting the democracy."[50] Only Phrynicus, it would seem, saw through his plan to realize Alcibiades' selfish ambition and he set out to oppose his ambition.[51] But as he saw the cabal forming and support for Alcibiades growing, Phrynicus began to fear for his safety. Thucydides describes the very real nature of the danger he faced for having spoken his mind in the "assembly" at Samos. He writes:

> γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Φρύνιχος ὅτι ἔσοιτο περὶ τῆς τοῦ
> Ἀλκιβιάδου καθόδου λόγος καὶ ὅτι Ἀθηναῖοι
> ἐνδέξονται αὐτήν, δείσας πρὸς τὴν ἐναντίωσιν τῶν
> ὑφ' αὐτοῦ λεχθέντων μή, ἢν κατέλθῃ, ὡς κωλυτὴν
> ὄντα κακῶς δρᾷ...

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[49] Thuc. 5.26.5.

[50] Thuc. 8.47.2.

[51] Thuc. 8.48.4. For details chronology and analysis of the confusing events and exchange of letters surrounding these events, see H.D. Westlake, "Phrynichos and Astyochos (Thucydides VIII 50.1)" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 76 (1956), 99-104; and Mabel L. Lang, "Alcibiades vs. Phrynichus" *The Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996), 289-95.

θορυβούμενος δὲ ὁ Φρύνιχος καὶ πάνυ ἐν τῷ μεγίστῳ
κινδύνῳ ὢν διὰ τὸ μήνυμα ἀποστέλλει αὖθις πρὸς τὸν
Ἀστύοχον, τά τε πρότερα μεμφόμενος ὅτι οὐ καλῶς
ἐκρύφθη καὶ νῦν ὅτι ὅλον τὸ στράτευμα τὸ τῶν
Ἀθηναίων ἕτοιμος εἴη τὸ ἐν τῇ Σάμῳ παρασχεῖν
αὐτοῖς διαφθεῖραι (8.50.1-5).

Phrynicus now saw that there would be a proposal to
restore Alcibiades, and that the Athenians would consent to
it; and fearing after what he had said against it that
Alcibiades, if restored, would revenge himself upon him for
his opposition, had recourse to the following scheme…

Phrynicus distracted, and placed in the utmost peril by the
denunciation, sent again to Astyochus, reproaching him
with having so ill kept the secret of his previous letter, and
saying that he was now prepared to give him an opportunity
to destroy the whole Athenian armament at Samos…
(8.50.1-5)

Phrynicus recognized that he was in danger. But, unlike Nicias who was concerned for

his reputation and fortune, Phrynicus was in physical danger because of his political

opposition to Alcibiades. He understood the situation and had a rational fear of

Alcibiades' revenge, γνοὺς ... δείσας.[52] Here Thucydides is putting the danger of

political involvement in the foreground in order to make it clear to his reader that,

regardless the patriotic nature of the motives – Phrynicus is, after all, trying to preserve

the Athenian democracy – the competition among leading citizens is so fierce that it can

result in physical dangers. Phrynicus was not merely in a position to "lose face" or suffer

a political setback. He feared for his life. And he was right to do so; he was murdered by

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[52] Huart analyzes variants of δεινός as part of a rational fear of an outcome, 140, n.5. Mabel L.
Lang (1996) discusses this passages with respect to Thucydides' use of participles describing motivation
and focuses on Phrynicus' knowledge and fear, 290-91. See also Mabel L. Lang, "Participial Motivation in
Thucydides," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), 48-65.

an assassin in the open *agora* a few short months later.[53] Thus it is that Thucydides

focuses his reader on the dangers faced by those choosing to compete in the public arena.

The realm of interpersonal relations was no less dangerous than the world of interstate

relations; in both was danger a constant medium for action.

The final example in this section is also the most stark with respect to the physical

dangers leading men could expect to face as a result of their actions in the public arena.

Though Phrynicus tried to oppose Alcibiades' scheme, the Athenian democracy fell in the

summer of 411.[54] The original conspirators on Samos continued to strengthen their

control over the army while simultaneously distancing themselves from Alcibiades,

whom they did not consider to be "the man for an oligarchy."[55] As the conspirators

worked to strengthen their position, Thucydides makes it clear just how real a danger they

were facing. He writes:

> καὶ ἐν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἅμα οἱ ἐν τῇ Σάμῳ τῶν Ἀθηναίων κοινολογούμενοι ἐσκέψαντο Ἀλκιβιάδην μέν, ἐπειδήπερ οὐ βούλεται, ἐᾶν (καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιτήδειον αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐς ὀλιγαρχίαν ἐλθεῖν), αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐπὶ σφῶν αὐτῶν, ὡς ἤδη καὶ κινδυνεύοντας, ὁρᾶν ὅτῳ τρόπῳ μὴ ἀνεθήσεται τὰ πράγματα, καὶ τὰ τοῦ πολέμου ἅμα ἀντέχειν καὶ ἐσφέρειν αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων προθύμως χρήματα καὶ ἤν τι ἄλλο δέῃ, ὡς οὐκέτι ἄλλοις ἢ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ταλαιπωροῦντας.

> At the same time the Athenians at Samos, after a consultation among themselves, determined to let Alcibiades alone, since he refused to join them, and besides was not the man for an oligarchy; and *now as they were already facing danger*, to see for themselves how they could best prevent the ruin of their cause, and meanwhile to

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[53] Thuc. 8.92.2.

[54] Thuc. 8.63.3 and 65-69.

[55] Thuc. 8.63.3-4.

> sustain the war, and to contribute without stint money and all esle that might be required from their own private estates, as they would henceforth labor for themselves alone (8.63.4).[56]

Thucydides highlights the risks these conspirators were facing as a result of their revolutionary actions. It is an understatement to say that they would "have difficulty resuming a career under normal democracy."[57] And that is precisely why Thucydides has put κίνδυνος in the foreground; the danger they are experiencing is real and they must be ready to face the most serious of consequences should their attempt falter. In a society that is based on competition, the conspirators have chosen to compete for the highest reward, ultimate control of the city. And with this reward comes the greatest danger. Failure will certainly not mean a loss of prestige. It will mean the potential destruction of those involved. And in the end, the feared destruction is narrowly avoided when the democracy is restored and the revolution's chief architects are forced to flee Athens.[58]

What is interesting in these examples is the progression of danger Thucydides highlights. In the early phase of the war, Pericles describes the risks men agree to share when they propose or vote for legislation in the assembly. Men with children bear potential consequences for themselves as well as their family. Whether this is danger to reputation or standing in the community or physical danger is less defined. Certainly the danger is external to the city in the sense that these decisions all involve foreign relations.

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[56] I have changed Crawley's translation in part of this passage. He renders the phrase ὡς ἤδη καὶ κινδυνεύοντας as "now that they were once embarked on this course." I have substituted "now as they were already facing danger" to reflect the on-going sense of danger Thucydides may have intended with the participle κινδυνεύοντας.

[57] Gomme does not provide an alternate translation for the passage but comments on their predicament, 5:156.

[58] Thuc. 8.98.1.

It is, however, arguable that what drives citizens to participate in such debates in the first place is the internal urge to compete for honor in Greek society.[59] But as the Thucydides' narrative shows how the war broke down the established norms of society, the risks become more personal and more urgently felt. Nicias, a man who spent a great deal of time in the public eye, pushed for policies that would allow him to live a life out of danger, a way to preserve what he had gained through previous success in risky operations. But there is risk in any advocacy itself and Nicias ended up as an unwilling commander of the expedition by vote of the assembly. And, in the end, the dangers are manifest for leaders such as Phrynicus and the oligarchs who take the already competitive political arena to its ultimate manifestation in revolution. At this point in Thucydides' narrative, reputation seems to be no longer a concern as the focus turns towards the physical dangers faced by these men who chose to engage in political competition with the highest stakes.

This pattern fits well with Cogan's assessment of the various phases of the war. Pericles' theoretical κινδυνεύωσιν shifts to the conspirators actual κινδυνεύοντας, as the ideology of the leaders and cities makes the conflict a "war of survival." [60] In early speeches, such as Pericles', Thucydides puts the political process in the foreground and the personal risks of politics, though substantial, are all mitigated somewhat by long-standing legal mechanisms. But, by the end of his narrative, war is more brutal, the danger is more real, and "deliberation is replaced by simple reaction" such as seen in the quick actions of the oligarchic conspirators who faced much greater potential for physical

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[59] The internal urge to compete for honor will be discussed in 3.4.1 Internal Dangers of Honor: Defining the Ethos.

[60] Cogan (1981), 127. He does not specifically ties these incidents to his thesis.

danger within their own *polis* than Pericles ever implied.[61] What is clear is that danger to oneself was a constant element for active participants even within the political activity of a *polis*. Whether a well-known citizen risks his reputation with a proposal in the assembly or a revolutionary risks his life in a bid for ultimate power, danger was a constant presence for Thucydides' contemporaries. It was a force not only seen in the anarchy of interstate relations, but in the seemingly well-ordered constructs of an established Greek *polis*.

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[61] Cogan, 162. As before, Cogan does not tie his thesis specifically to these instances of κίνδυνος but the parallel is there nonetheless.

2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force

Thucydides not only sees danger as a constant in the world of Greek interstate relations; he also sees it as an impersonal force, one that is outside of man's ability to control. In this sense, it is not much different from that form of danger which he presented in his rendition of the Plataeans' speech to the Spartans in 427, τὸν ξυντυχόντα κίνδυνον.[1] In an early portion of this speech, Thucydides personifies the concept of danger in order to stress its power as a force of nature and to show how it simply occurs. In Thucydides' mind, danger spontaneously happens in the world of interstate relations. Thucydides has the Plataeans say:

> καὶ γὰρ ἠπειρῶταί τε ὄντες ἐναυμαχήσαμεν ἐπ'
> Ἀρτεμισίῳ, μάχῃ τε τῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ γῇ γενομένῃ
> παρεγενόμεθα ὑμῖν τε καὶ Παυσανίᾳ· τέ τι ἄλλο κατ'
> ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ἐγένετο ἐπικίνδυνον τοῖς Ἕλλησι,
> πάντων παρὰ δύναμιν μετέσχομεν.

> For though we are an inland people, we took part in the
> sea-fight at Artemisium; in the battle that was fought here
> in our own land we stood side by side with you and
> Pausanias; and whatever perils arose to threaten the
> Hellenes in those days, we bore our part in them all beyond
> our strength (3.54.4).[2]

Danger, here ἐπικίνδυνον, is presented as something which simply "happens," ἐγένετο. Certainly Thucydides has the Plataeans note they chose to face danger during both the sea battle at Artemisium in 480 and the land battle in their own territory in 479.[3] The other danger which arose during those times, τι ἄλλο ... ἐπικίνδυνον, may represent a delicate

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[1] Thuc. 3.59.4

[2] Translation here is Smith's. Crawley renders the phrase as "… in all the other Hellenic exploits of the time." This translation dilutes the impact of Thucydides' use of the term ἐπικίνδυνον.

[3] Herodotus points out that the Plataeans did not furnish their own ships, but helped man the Athenian ships because of their "valor and zeal" (8.1).

reference to Marathon, but Thucydides does not have the speaker give an explicit example.[4] The point, however, is not the specific instance of the danger; the important aspect of this phrase is how Thucydides points to danger "happening" during a notable time period indicated by the phrase κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον, "in those days." [5]The period of time being presented by the Plataeans is "the war against the Persians and *during the peace which followed*." [6] What might seem an obvious statement, that dangers occurred during the Persian war, is transformed when he has the Plataeans present the idea that dangers arose for the Hellenes even during peace. Κίνδυνος here represents an impersonal force that men cannot control and it occurs both in times of war and the intervals between war (peace). What men can control, however, is their reaction to this external force. This idea will be presented in a later chapter.[7]

Thucydides presents other violent confrontations as simply "happening." His ability to express danger-filled situations, however, does not always require the term κίνδυνος to demonstrate that danger can be understood as an impersonal force. Often his carefully chosen phrases illustrate the dangerous nature of interstate reality to his reader without explicit mention. For instance, when Thucydides briefly describes a territorial dispute between the Samians and Milesians, two *poleis* in southern Asia Minor, he summarizes the conflict with the phrase: Σαμίοις καὶ Μιλησίοις πόλεμος ἐγένετο περὶ

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[4] A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides,* vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956, reprint 1979), 339.

[5] Thuc. 3.54.4. Translation here is Smith's.

[6] Thuc. 3.54.3: τὰ δ' ἐν τῇ εἰρήνῃ καὶ πρὸς τὸν Μῆδον . Translation here is Smith's. Italics are my own.

[7] This idea will be presented in Chapter 2.5, "Κίνδυνος as the Path to Gain."

Πριήνης.[8] In other words, war happened. Certainly this might be considered over-

analysis of a stock phrase in Greek history writing; where it appears elsewhere in

Thucydides' text, the antagonists' conscious motives are immediately given.[9] Gomme,

however, captures the subtle essence of Thucydides' message to his reader. He notes that

this was "a quarrel, *of the usual type*, over border lands." [10]The point is that Thucydides

has chosen to present a violent confrontation between *poleis* as something usual, which

merely "happened" in much the same way as a storm or any other natural event might

spring up anywhere around the Aegean. He avoids ascribing responsibility for the

violence to either combatant. The state of nature, in Thucydides' analysis, is so dangerous

that violence simply occurs because of the inherent rivalries and antagonism between

poleis.[11]

War, an obvious external danger, is elsewhere personified by Thucydides. Part of

his rendition of the Corinthian speech to the members of the Peloponnesian League in

432/1 describes war as an impersonal force outside of man's control. Prior to the speech,

the Athenians, understanding the depth of Corinthian hostility towards them as a result of

their alliance with Corcyra, had attempted to reduce Corinthian influence in the city of

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[8] Thuc. 1.115.2. N.G.L Hammond examines this conflict as part of his analysis of the rights of individual states within the Athenian Alliance to wage war on other states in "The Origins and Nature of the Athenian Alliance of 478/7 B.C." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 87 (1967), 56.

[9] This exact phrase is used to describe a conflict between Athens and Carystus during Athens' rise to power (1.98.2) and another between the Epidaurians and the Argives which was actually part of an Athenian effort to insure the neutrality of Corinth and to shorten their route for reinforcements from Aegina to her allies (5.53.1).

[10] A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides,* vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945, reprint 1982), 349. Italics are my own.

[11] Hornblower even cautions against the "crude categorization of oligarch versus democrat," 1.188. This is a deeper issue, cutting to the core of interstate rivalries based on perceived feelings of insecurity and necessary competition.

Potideia, a Corinthian colony that also paid tribute to Athens as part of the Delian League.[12] The Athenians had ordered the Potideians to raze their walls, to give hostages, and to receive no further magistrates from their metropolis, Corinth.[13] The Potideians responded by sending delegations both to Athens, where they asked the Athenians to reconsider, and to Sparta, where they sought support with the Corinthians.[14] Failing to persuade the Athenians and armed with the confidence that Sparta would support them by invading Attica, the Potideians revolted from Athens.[15] The Athenians besieged the city, supported though it was by both Corinthians and the citizens of other Peloponnesian states, and elevated the conflict between Athens and Corinth to one involving the whole Peloponnesian League.[16]

After convincing the Spartans to vote for war, the Corinthians needed to convince the rest of the League at a congress of the Peloponnesian allies in 432/1.[17] In part of this

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[12] Thuc. 1.56.2, 57.2. For an overview of Potidaea's role in Thucydides narrative, see E. Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea: Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). John A. Alexander provides a detailed analysis of the possible Athenian route to Potidaea as support for a minor textual emendation in terms of a place name in "Thucydides and the Expedition of Callias against Potidaea, 432 B.C.," *The American Journal of Philology* 83 (1962), 265-87. He also provides a general overview from an archaeological perspective with a special focus on the economic importance of this city's lumber resources in *Potidaea: Its History and Remains* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1963). Both Raphael Sealey and P.J. Rhodes examine the way in which Thucydides balances his narrative of the Corcyraean and Potidaean conflicts as part of his discussion of the "truest cause" of the Peloponnesian War. See Raphael Sealey, "The Causes of the Peloponnesian War," *Classical Philology* 70 (1975), 89-109 and P.J. Rhodes, "Thucydides on the Causes of the Peloponnesian War," *Hermes* 115 (1987), 154-65.

[13] Thuc. 1.56.2.

[14] Thuc. 1.58.1.

[15] Thuc. 1.58.1.

[16] Thuc. 1.66.

[17] Thuc. 1.119.1.

speech, Thucydides once again presents the concept of war as a fundamental aspect of the natural order. He has the Corinthians say:

> ἥκιστα γὰρ πόλεμος ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς χωρεῖ, αὐτὸς δὲ ἀφ’ αὐτοῦ τὰ πολλὰ τεχνᾶται πρὸς τὸ παρατυγχάνον· ἐν ᾧ ὁ μὲν εὐοργήτως αὐτῷ προσομιλήσας βεβαιότερος, ὁ δ’ ὀργισθεὶς περὶ αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐλάσσω πταίει.

> ... war of all things proceeds least upon definite rules, but draws principally upon itself for contrivances to meet an emergency, and in such cases the party who faces the struggle and keeps his temper best meets with most security, and he who loses his temper about it with correspondent disaster (1.122.1).

War, in Thucydides’ analysis, is a natural force unbounded by rules, ῥητοῖς.[18] War proceeds along its own path and is such an elemental force of nature that it even draws strength from its own essence, αὐτὸς δὲ ἀφ’ αὐτοῦ. Men, according to Thucydides, are left only to consider their role and decide how to react to war. In this speech at least, Thucydides presents only one way for men to mitigate war: keeping one’s temper to gain the best security. His analysis of the world presents war as a natural force, the emergencies of which compel men to act according to the best way they perceive to end that emergency. I will argue later that for many Greek men this often entails acting in a violent manner, but Thucydides himself is more cautious.[19]

Thucydides personifies war even more distinctly in his rendition of Hermocrates’ speech to the Siceliots in 424. The Athenian invasion of Sicily in 424 – actually a

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[18] Hornblower notes the parallels between this passage and Thuc. 3.82.2, was a “violent taskmaster,” 1.200. He also notes the similar imagery presented by Plutarch in his *Pericles* in which he describes war as “striding” from Peloponnese, 8.7.

[19] See Chapter 3.2 Κίνδυνος and the Greek “Ethos of Action.”

relatively small incursion compared to their later invasion – had provoked a conflict among the Greeks in Sicily which persisted even after the Athenians had departed.[20] Attempting to end the conflict and unite against future Athenian aggression, the Sicilian cities assembled at Gela.[21] Thucydides presents a speech from Hermocrates, the most infuential leader present and a man whom Thucydides compares to Pericles himself in terms of his mastery of *logos*.[22] In this speech, Hermocrates indicates the rational reasons for a pan-Sicilian alliance.[23] In part of this speech, Thucydides presents the idea that, uncertain though the future may be, one thing certain is war, an external danger that will regularly occur. Thucydides has Hermocrates say:

> οἳ πολεμήσομέν τε, οἶμαι, ὅταν ξυμβῇ, καὶ ξυγχωρησόμεθά γε πάλιν καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς λόγοις κοινοῖς χρώμενοι.

> We shall go to war, no doubt, whenever occasion arises – yes, and we shall make peace again by taking common counsel among ourselves (4.64.4-5).

The theory is that the Siceliots will wage war again, πολεμήσομέν, whenever it occurs, ὅταν ξυμβῇ: the "future more vivid" construction underscores the expected reality of

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[20] Thuc. 4.25.12.

[21] Thuc. 4.58.

[22] Darien Shanske, *Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 56. Clifford Orwin provides a similar analysis of the parallels between the two in *The Humanity of Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). See also H.D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 10; F.T. Hinrichs, "Hermokrates bei Thukydides," *Hermes* 109 (1981), 46-59, esp. 47; Patrick Coby, "Enlightened Self-Interest in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydidean Speakers on the Right of the Stronger and Inter-State Peace," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24 (1991), 67-90; Edmund F. Bloedow, "The Speeches of Hermocrates and Athenagoras at Syracuse in 415 B.C.: Difficulties in Syracuse and in Thucydides," *Historia* 45 (1996), 141-58; and S. Sara Monoson and Michael Loriaux, "The Illusion of Power and the Disruption of Moral Norms: Thucydides' Critique of Periclean Policy," *The American Political Science Review* 92 (1998), 285-97.

[23] Thuc. 4.58.

future conflict. Even more notable, however, is the impersonal nature of the protasis, ὅταν ξυμβῇ. Instead of offering a vague reference to an external source of danger (a future dispute or an opportunity for gain) or an internal source of danger (vengeance sought for a perceived slight), Thucydides appears here to present war as a natural condition among states. His image of Hermocrates here stresses the idea that prudent action, in this case, means accepting the violence and participating in it in order to preserve the long-term community of Siceliots.[24]

The establishment of peace, on the other hand, takes a specific act of human will and reason: ξυγχωρησόμεθά γε πάλιν καθ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς λόγοις κοινοῖς χρώμενοι. Thucydides' contemporaries would not be frightened away from behaving aggressively if the opportunity or need arose. Thucydides makes that clear by having Hermocrates state it explicitly: οὐδεὶς γὰρ … αὐτὸ δρᾶν, οὔτε φόβῳ, ἢν οἴηταί τι πλέον σχήσειν, ἀποτρέπεται.[25] Thucydides' underlying tone, however, is that man cannot stop war from occurring but may find ways of dealing with it rationally when it does occur. This takes effort, as does peace-making.

Thucydides' rendition of Hermocrates' speech highlights another way in which Thucydides views the world as fundamentally dangerous: even those conditions generally considered to be safe are inherently dangerous. He represents peace, for instance, in terms which highlight not its safety, but the relativity of its dangers.[26] That is, peace, though

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[24] S. Sara Monoson and Michael Loriaux (1998), 295.

[25] Thuc. 4.59.2. "No one is forced to engage in it by ignorance, or kept out of it by fear, if he fancies there is anything to be gained by it."

[26] This was also the case in the Plataeans speech to the Spartans in which war arose even "in that time" of relative peace, τι ἄλλο κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ἐγένετο ἐπικίνδυνον τοῖς Ἕλλησι, 3.54.4. This instance of κίνδυνος has been discussed previously in this chapter.

less attended by dangers, still has dangers present. Thucydides presents this idea through

Hermocrates' assertion: τὰς τιμὰς καὶ λαμπρότητας ἀκινδυνοτέρας ἔχειν τὴν

εἰρήνην, "peace has its honors and splendors of a less perilous kind."[27] Thucydides has

Hermocrates mention the benefits of peace to the assembled statesmen to induce them to

unite against the common threat of Athenian forces. Notable, however, is that peace is not

free from dangers. It is merely a situation that has rewards that are "less dangerous,"

ἀκινδυνοτέρας.[28] Peace is generally accepted as good; Thucydides has Hermocrates

delineate this in his speech when he refers to the value of peace as something about

which all agree: τὴν δὲ ὑπὸ πάντων ὁμολογουμένην ἄριστον εἶναι εἰρήνην.[29] It may

even be that ἀκινδυνοτέρας is simply a clear way of representing "safety." Yet, the point

is that Thucydides has defined peace through danger. Whether he is focusing on the

relative dangers that still accompany peace or defining peace by its lack of danger, he is

pushing his reader forces to confront the issue that the world is generally dangerous. War

is certainly more dangerous than peace. But in the anarchy of Greek interstate relations,

Thucydides recognizes that external sources of danger are often present in even in

peacetime and guides his reader to accept this view. Just as the Plataeans looked at their

own history as an example of dangers experienced even in the absence of war,

Hermocrates reminds his fellow Siceliots that danger even in peace can be expected to

threaten their perception of stability.[30]

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[27] Thuc. 4.62.2.

[28] The word Thucydides is using relies on the ἀ- privative and the comparative form. This construction most literally translates as "more un-dangerous." The point, however, is that he consciously describes the benefits of peace in terms founded upon the relative nature of danger in the world.

[29] Thuc. 6.62.2.

[30] Thuc. 3.54.4.

2.2.4 <u>Danger: Concluding Thoughts on Thucydides' Dangerous World</u>

In this section, I have presented examples from Thucydides' narrative which illustrate how Thucydides perceived the world: it was filled with external dangers which could not be avoided by *poleis* regardless of their size, geography, or relative autonomy in the Greek world. Thucydides believed that all states existed in a continual state of danger and that this danger, while generated by humans in any specific case, could even be understood as an impersonal force largely outside of human control. So fundamental to the natural order was this danger that it presents itself – and is highlighted by Thucydides – even in situations generally considered to be safe, i.e. peace or freedom. Smaller *poleis,* in fact, often found themselves in situations where the only choice available to them was the choice between two dangerous options. Even large states could find themselves in such a position as the speech of Sthenelaides the Spartan shows. Thucydides' narrative is so filled with the term κίνδυνος and other fearsome images that it is clear that Thucydides understood danger to be one of the fundamental forces defining the general state of nature and designed his narrative to guide his reader to the same understanding. To what end he forced his reader's attention onto such a bleak world is the subject of a later chapter where I will focus on Thucydides' didactic message of rationality.

2.3 Κίνδυνος as an Aspect of Rational Tactical/Strategic Planning

In this section, I will define a second aspect of Thucydides' conception of the external dangers plaguing his contemporary Greek reader: the value of recognizing real danger and responding to it with rational tactical analysis. The examples in this section, for the most part, are positive ones in which Thucydides constructs the narrative in such a way as to highlight a rational response to a recognized danger. By contrast, the next chapter, dealing with "internal" dangers, will focus on Thucydides' tendency towards negative examples. It is interesting to note that Thucydides' narrative is roughly balanced between positive examples of Athenian and non-Athenian leaders who recognized and correctly responded to danger. In the chapter focused on emotional responses, it will be shown that they are relatively over-represented as if they are more susceptible to internally-generated passions. This is perhaps a function of Thucydides' desire to appear objective, to appear to be a dispassionate outsider rather than a one-time leading politician of Athens.[1] Or it may be that Thucydides' analysis of the events of the war taught him that it was the Athenians' nature that led, in part, to their defeat in the war: too

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[1] Thucydides served as a *strategos* in the year 424/3 (4.104). His election to this post makes it clear that he had, at one time, a solid reputation and political following among Athenian citizens. The idea that Thucydides is to be considered is to be viewed as a dispassionately cold and objective reporter of events is an old one, dating back to C.N. Cochrane, *Thucydides and the Science of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929). More recent scholarship has tended to view Thucydides as passionate and completely engaged with the events of the war on a very personal, often emotional, level. See Albin Lesky *A History of Greek Literature,* Cornelis de Heer and James Willis, trans. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1946); W.P. Wallace, "Thucydides," *Phoenix* 18 (1964), 251-61; G. Bowersock, "The Personality of Thucydides," *Antioch Review* 25 (1965), 135-46; M.I. Finley, "Thucydides the Moralist," *Aspects of Antiquity* (London, 1968), 43-57; A. Parry, "Thucydides' Historical Perspective," *Yale Classical Studies* 22 (1972)), 47-61; H. -P. Stahl, "Speeches and the Course of Events in Books Six and Seven of Thucydides," in *The Speeches in Thucydides: A Collection of Original Studies*, P. Stadter, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973); and Virginia Hunter, *Thucydides: The Artful Reporter* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 19773). These works are all summarized by W.R. Connor who also provides a different perspective, the median between Thucydides the scientist and Thucydides the artist, in "A Post Modernist Thucydides?" *Classical Journal* 72 (1977), 289-98.

little rational recognition of danger and too much decision-making based on emotion led to their downfall. The Corinthians characterized the Athenians by a sense of hyper-activity; they "take no rest themselves or involvement.[2] Modern scholars have agreed with this assessment of the Athenians' natural meddlesomeness, πολυπραγμοσύνη.[3] Thucydides accordingly recognized that the Athenians, his countrymen, habitually became emotionally engaged with issues, personally and overly committed to their original plan, instead of cooly and rationally able to recognize the real dangers facing them. This, in part, may be why Thucydides believed they were not successful in the war and, therefore, why he accurately under-represented them with positive examples.

In this dissertation, I have defined the broad concept of external danger as any force which threatens the survival of a state or an army.[4] In most military situations, the external danger is obvious. Men prefer not to be killed by other men with spears. External danger in a military context should be that clear. Thucydides, however, wants his reader to understand how successful leaders grasp specific threats more quickly or more effectively than others. In this sense, it is as if Thucydides is foreshadowing Carl von Clausewitz who theorized that certain individuals had the ability to analyze situations with what he called *coup d'oeil*. Clausewitz presented this as "an intellect that, even in

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[2] Thuc. 1.70

[3] Interestingly this term only appears once in Thucydides' narrative (6.87.3). Robert D. Luginbill notes that its antonym and related forms may be taken to represent the same basic idea that the Athenians were consistently engaged in others' affairs. See *Thucydides on War and National Character* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p. 97, n.5. Other scholars, of course, have addressed this concept. See also W. Nestle, "ἀπραγμοσύνη," *Philologus* 81 (1925), 129-140; V. Ehrenberg, "*Polypragmosune*: A Study in Greek Politics," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 67 (1947), 46-67; K. Kleve, "ἀπραγμοσύνη and πολυπραγμοσύνη: Two Slogans in Athenian Politics," *Symbolae Osloenses* 39 (1964), 83-88; A. Adkins, "*Polupragmosune* and Minding One's Business," *Classical Philology* 71 (1976), 301-27; and June Allison, Thucydides and πολυπραγμοσύνη," *American Journal of Ancient History* 4 (1979), 10-22.

[4] See Section 2.1.

the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth … the quick recognition of a truth that the mind would ordinarily miss or would perceive only after long study and reflection."[5] In short, Thucydides, like Clausewitz, wants readers to recognize the realities of danger with one quick glance at the tactical situation.

I will argue throughout this section that Thucydides inserts the concept of κίνδυνος into his narrative to help his reader understand the importance of the ability to recognize the dangers faced in war and to react rationally to them. Combat in the classical era provides many examples in which leaders, soldiers, or whole communities may have been guided in their decision making by concepts of honor and shame which win out over the reality of their precarious security.[6] Thucydides, however, presented his reader with what he hoped would become a paradigm of rational planning at both the strategic and tactical level.[7] My argument in this section will be divided into two broad categories: those individuals whom Thucydides specifically identifies as having a solid understanding of danger, and those groups in which the leaders remain nameless but whose rational recognition of danger is made explicit, and is praised. These examples cut across the political boundaries of the Peloponnesian War and make it clear that Thucydides consciously puts forward a vivid image of κίνδυνος to teach his reader how important it is for every leader to factor the realities of danger into military planning in a

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[5] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1993), 117-18.

[6] This will be discussed in Chapter 3.3, Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame.

[7] For purposes of this argument the terms tactical and strategic are defined as follows. "Tactical" will refer to those decisions made by a general or a group of leaders prior to a battle or campaign. The outcome of such decisions, while potentially far-reaching, are considered to affect only the forces actually engaged in the battle. "Strategic," on the other hand, will refer to those decisions taken at the state, or political, level and potentially involve the use of all the state's resources in the attainment of its goals or the assurance of its survival.

proper manner related to reality. Rational planning, according to Thucydides, requires that leaders discount other factors, such as honor, shame, and the urge to act aggressively, and weigh the external dangers in military operations which may, in all likelihood, result in massive destruction and loss of life for a community.[8] This idea, as will be discussed, is an example of the radical nature of Thucydides' perspective on his contemporary society's proclivity for action, its focus on honor and shame, and its concern for the perception of one's status.[9]

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[8] The potential magnitude of these decisions is best quantified by Peter Krentz, "Casualties in Hoplite Battles," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 26 (1985): 13-20. According to Krentz, even victors in hoplite battle could expect to lose 5% of their hoplites while the defeated lost, on average, 14%. While 5% may not sound like too much of an impact, one must keep in mind that a Greek army was not an "all volunteer army" in the modern sense. Instead, it was an "all volunteer army" in the sense that all Greek male citizens of the *polis* were expected to fight in the phalanx. Thus, losing 5% of that force in a tactical victory would mean losing 5% of the adult male population of the city, a significant price to pay for a victory.

[9] See Chapter 3, Thucydides' Analysis of Internal Dangers.

2.3.1 <u>Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Non-Athenian Examples of *Coup d'Oeil*</u>

The first category of examples that I will analyze are those in which Thucydides highlights certain named individuals' abilities to recognize and understand the dangers in a campaign or battle. Thucydides often directs his reader's attention to named individuals in order to make his point more clear because he was aware that the particular person carried with him a reputation for a certain standard of leadership ability or accomplishments.[1]

The first such individual to appear in the text is not actually the Corinthian general Aristeus who led a force of Peloponnesian mercenaries in support of the Potidaeans during their revolt from Athens. The basic situation is well known: in 433 the Athenians demanded that the Potidaeans, colonists of Corinth but tributary allies of Athens, raze their defensive walls, send hostages to Athens, dismiss the Corinthian magistrates, and refuse any future Corinthian magistrates.[2] The Potidaeans, their confidence bolstered by a Spartan promise to invade Attica should Athens attack Potidaea, revolted.[3] The Corinthians responded by supporting the revolt with 1600 hoplites and 400 light troops, a mix of Corinthian volunteers and mercenaries led by Aristeus, a well respected general

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[1] Marc Cogan addresses this concept as it relates those speeches Thucydides attributes to specific individuals as opposed to groups such as "the Corinthians" in *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 220. His logic, though specific to speeches, applies more broadly to this analysis of decision-making.

[2] Thuc. 1.56.2. A thorough bibliography of this important conflict has been presented earlier in this chapter. See Section 2.2.3.

[3] Thuc. 1.58.

whose reputation was a driving factor behind the large number of volunteers.[4] The

Athenians sent 2000 hoplites and forty ships to augment their original force of nearly a

thousand men who were campaigning in Macedonia against Perdiccas.[5] After an

indecisive battle near Potidaea, Aristeus found himself with his successful infantry

separated from the rest of the army which had withdrawn inside the fortifications of

Potidaea.[6] At this point in the narrative, Thucydides describes Aristeus' moment of

decision:

> Ἐπαναχωρῶν δὲ ὁ Ἀριστεὺς ἀπὸ τῆς διώξεως, ὡς ὁρᾷ
> τὸ ἄλλο στράτευμα ἡσσημένον, ἠπόρησε μὲν
> ὁποτέρωσε διακινδυνεύσῃ χωρήσας, ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς
> Ὀλύνθου ἢ ἐς τὴν Ποτείδαιαν· ἔδοξε δ' οὖν
> ξυναγαγόντι τοὺς μεθ' αὑτοῦ ὡς ἐς ἐλάχιστον χωρίον
> δρόμῳ βιάσασθαι ἐς τὴν Ποτείδαιαν, καὶ παρῆλθε
> παρὰ τὴν χηλὴν διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης βαλλόμενός τε καὶ
> χαλεπῶς, ὀλίγους μέν τινας ἀποβαλών, τοὺς δὲ
> πλείους σώσας.

> Returning from the pursuit, Aristeus perceived the defeat of
> the rest of the army. Being at a loss which of the two risks
> to choose, whether to go to Olynthus or to Potidaea, he at
> last determined to draw his men into as small a space as

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[4] Thuc. 1.60.1-2. Gomme notes that Thucydides' stress on the "volunteers" highlights that there was still no formal declaration of war between Corinth and Athens and, as such, only volunteers could go to help Potidaea (I:212). H.D. Westlake argues that Thucydides was himself and admirer of Aristeus and may have gotten facts about this campaign directly from him in "Aristeus the Son of Adeimantus," *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1947), 25-30.

[5] Thuc. 1.61. Thucydides' narrative of the specific actions of the Athenian force is confusing and subject to a fair amount of speculation. For a discussion of possible textual emendations concerning the geographical situation and its relevance to the Athenian tactics, see Gomme 1:215-18. Ernst Badian, however, takes a contrary view of the emendation and analyzes the Athenian motives behind all of the movements Thucydides describes in this passage. He argues that there is no problem with the text and that the Athenians' main goal was to get to Potidaea as quickly as possible by a series of forced marches. See *From Plataea to Potidaea: Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 174-79. Frank Pierce Jones argues that the Aristeus' involvement was the key motive for the Athenians' haste. He cites Thuc. 1.61.3 in "The *Ab Urbe Condita* Construction in Greek: A Study in the Classification of the Participle," *Language* 15 (1939), 35.

[6] Thuc. 1.62.6.

> possible, and force his way with a run into Potidaea. Not without difficulty, through a storm of missiles, he passed along by the breakwater through the sea, and brought off most of his men safe though a few were lost (1.63.1).

Thucydides highlights Aristeus' ability to recognize the dangers present in each of his tactical options, ὁποτέρωσε διακινδυνεύσῃ χωρήσας, ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς Ὀλύνθου ἢ ἐς τὴν Ποτείδαιαν. As with states facing geopolitical decisions, sometimes or even often the military situation offered only a choice of dangers. On the one hand, he was facing the Athenian forces in Potidaea through whom he would have to advance to join forces with the rest of his army. On the other hand, he faced the Macedonian cavalry posted at Olynthos.[7] Thucydides' diction highlights the result of Aristeus' ability to recognize danger and respond rationally to it; Aristeus recognizes κίνδυνος, διακινδυνεύσῃ, and makes an appropriate response by which he is able to lead his men to safety. Thucydides emphatically ends this passage with the participle σώσας to highlight the positive result of Aristeus' rational response to correctly perceived danger.

It might seem obvious to modern readers that a general's options in battle are dangerous even though the battlefield is something with which most of us are unfamiliar. To Thucydides' Greek reader, by contrast, the battlefield was a more central feature of the social structure, and something of which they were expected to have an understanding, if

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[7] Gomme, 1:219.

not a personal experience.[8] Tactical decision making, however, was not a familiar concept

from these battles in which Greeks typically chose the "smoothest and fairest plain" upon

which they might match their phalanxes in a highly codified, almost ritualistic clash of

arms.[9] Therefore, what Thucydides does in his narrative of this tactical situation is to

highlight Aristeus' rational decision making process; he intelligently perceived the

nuances of the tactical situation, ὁρᾷ. Thucydides uses various forms of the verb ὁρᾷ to

indicate an act of understanding reality.[10] In this case he is highlighting Aristeus' clear

understanding of the dangers facing him. Furthermore, with the phrase ὁποτέρωσε

διακινδυνεύσῃ he shows his reader that Aristeus' overriding concern was not a

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[8] I accept the notion that warfare was an essential component of Greek society. There is, however, some disagreement concerning just how prevalent battle was in that society. In other words, just how often could Greek males expect to experience the unique horror of a hoplite battle? Some of the most well known classical scholars have weighed in on this topic with various perspectives. The following scholars tend to agree that war was an accepted fact of life: Arnaldo Momigliano, "Some Observations on Causes of War in Ancient Historiography," *Studies in Historiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 199-211; Erik Havelock, *Classical Values and the Modern World*, ed. E. Gareau (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1972), 19-78; J. de Romilly, "Guerre et paix entre cites" in J.P. Vernant, ed. *Problemes de la guerre en Grece ancienne* (Civilisations et societes, xi, Paris, 1968), Kenneth Dover *Greek Popular Morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), esp. 315; Moses Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. 67. All of these are cited and discussed by W.R. Connor, who takes the unique perspective that war was not as frequent or as intense as we have come to believe in "Early Greek Land Warfare as Symbolic Expression," *Past and Present* (119 (1988): 3-29. Nevertheless, he argues, because of its codification, ritualization, and representation of social realities, war was fundamental to Greek society and had "close links to almost every major feature of the culture" (29). A. M. Eckstein points to the weakness in Connor's argument *ex silentio* with respect to the lack of evidence for the frequency with which the early Athenians engaged in war (2006: 45-6). Even Connor then argues that war was inextricably bound in some way, physically or emotionally, to Greek society and Thucydides' reader could be expected to be intimately familiar – if not personally experienced – with the details of hoplite battle, agrees with the broad consensus of scholars over the past five decades and represents a fundamental tenet of this dissertation.

[9] Hdt. 7.9.2. For a thorough discussion of Thucydides' perspective on the evolving role of the general in hoplite warfare and the ability to be trained in the art or skill of war, see Everett l. Wheeler, "The General as Hoplite," in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (New York: Routledge, 1991, Reprint 1998), esp. 136-38.

[10] Huart analyzes the various forms of ὁρᾷ and argues that Thucydides' use of the verb indicates an act of understanding reality. *Le vocabulaire de l'analyse psychologique dans l'œvre de Thucydide* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968), 176.

misguided sense of honor to engage with the Athenian forces. Rather, Thucydides highlights that Aristeus measured the dangers surrounding him and made a sound tactical decision based on a rational risk assessment. Thucydides puts the concept of κίνδυνος in the foreground to demonstrate to his reader why Aristeus was so feared by the Athenians;[11] he was a general capable of grasping the dangerous realities of a tactical situation and making sound decisions without having his judgment clouded by the emotions of battle.

In similar fashion, Thucydides presents the actions of the Theban general Pagondas in Boeotia as an exemple of rational decision-making – though Pagondas was reviled by the Athenians. The basic tactical situation has already been discussed, so a brief overview will suffice. The Athenians had invaded Boeotia and seized the sanctuary of Apollo at Delium in 424/3.[12] While the other Boeotian generals were willing to allow the Athenians to withdraw, Pagondas used his day of hegemony as the Theban general to commit the army to battle.[13] Thucydides shows his reader Pagondas' logic: βουλόμενος τὴν μάχην ποιῆσαι καὶ νομίζων ἄμεινον εἶναι κινδυνεῦσαι, "[Pagondas was] wishing to bring on the battle and thinking it was better to take the risk" than to let the

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[11] Thucydides says that when the Athenians captured Aristeus in 430 they executed him out of fear that he "might live to do them still more mischief if he escaped" because they considered him to be "the prime mover in the previous affairs of Potidaea and their Thracian possessions," 2.67.4. H.D. Westlake analyzes Thucydides' treatment of Aristeus and concludes both that Thucydides' description of Aristeus' motives was generated from his personal interview with Aristeus sometime before or during his brief captivity and that Thucydides admired Aristeus' qualities of leadership and military experience. See "Aristeus the Son of Adeimantus," *The Classical Quarterly* 41, no. 1/2 (Jan-Apr, 1947): 25-30.

[12] Thuc. 4.90.1-3. For details, including bibliographical references, see 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant for All Poleis.

[13] Thuc. 4.91. For analysis, see N.G.L. Hammond, "Political Developments in Boeotia," *The Classical Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2000): 86-7.

Athenians besiege Delium without resistance.[14] The risk Pagondas understood, of course, was that he could expect significant casualties, even in victory.[15] Should he suffer defeat, he stood to lose not only up to 20% of the Boeotian army, but also his own political influence and, should the defeat be disastrous enough, Theban hegemony over Boeotia could be threatened. Thucydides points to the fact that Pagondas understood the danger and made an appropriate response which, in this case, was to accept the risk of battle on the principle of preemptive defense of his homeland.[16]

Thucydides focuses his reader on this rational decision-making process in a compact, but powerfully loaded sentence. The words he uses to describe it point the reader to a logical process that is seemingly unaffected by any emotional response to having one's homeland invaded: βουλόμενος, νομίζων, and κινδυνεῦσαι.[17] It is certainly correct to translate the first, βουλόμενος, simply as "wishing." The word, however, also carries with it the notion of a deliberate decision taken by a council or the assembly, part of a rational process of debate and deliberation.[18] The second word,

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[14] Thuc. 4.91. Here I use Charles Forster Smith's translation as Crawley compresses both participles βουλόμενος … καὶ νομίζων into one phrase and renders it as ""thought it best to fight a battle." In so doing he dilutes the force of Thucydides' Greek, especially the emphasis on Pagondas' rational assessment of danger, νομίζων ἄμεινον εἶναι κινδυνεῦσαι.

[15] Krentz (1985).

[16] Hanson (2003), 179.

[17] Mabel L. Lang cites these specific instances of βουλόμενος and νομίζων as examples of the various ways in which Thucydides expresses a character's motivation to act in "Participial Motivation in Thucydides," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), 48-65. In this sense, they are indicating a rational consideration of the situation and directly motivating Pagondas' action, rather than simply providing an emotional response.

[18] Huart, 322-25. See especially his discussion on the middle/passive forms of the verb in which he argues that these forms indicate an even stronger sense of reflection and judgment than the active forms: *Cependant, beaucoup plus que* βουλεύειν βουλεύεσθαι /*suggère assez fréquemment l'exercice de la réflexion*, 323.

νομίζων, stresses the logical process of closely examining one particular aspect of the situation at hand.[19] Thucydides uses these two terms to set up his final point: the main consideration was the danger, κινδυνεῦσαι. Thucydides' image of Pagondas demonstrates to his reader the consideration a prudent general gives to the risks involved in a tactical situation. Pagondas does not, like so many other Greeks of his day, rush into battle urged on by *orgei* or *thumos*.[20] Instead, Thucydides shows that Pagondas made a calculating, logical decision which resulted in a significant Boeotian victory over the Athenians[21]

Thucydides' image of the Syracusan leader Hermocrates provides a similar lesson to his reader.[22] While Thucydides repeatedly highlights Hermocrates' rationality, one particular incident in which Thucydides highlights his rational incorporation of κίνδυνος

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[19] Huart, 262-65. Huart points to the specificity of rational consideration indicated by the verb νομίζειν: … la plupart du temps,νομίζειν ne nous montrera pas la réflexion d'un esprit sur l'ensemble d'une situation, ou des vues d'une grande portée, mais un jugement sur un point précis, 265.

[20] This idea will be analyzed further in Chapter 3.1, Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Action. For a contrast to Pagondas' analytical approach, see Gylippus' battle exhortation at 7.68.1-2. In this portion of the speech, Gylippus encouraged an emotional response from his Syracusan allies; he wanted them to engage the enemy with anger, ὀργῇ προσμείξωμεν, and give in to their pent-up rage and volatile emotions. To make the ideas of emotional irrationality vivid to his reader, Thucydides relies on words showcasing various degrees of anger and emotion: ὀργῇ, τὸ θυμούμενον, ἐχθροὶ καὶ ἔχθιστοι, τἄλγιστα, τὴν αἰσχίστην ἐπίκλησιν.

[21] J.F. Lazenby provides a very clear description and analysis of the battle in *The Peloponnesian War:A Military Study* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 88-90. He argues that the Athenian losses were "severe" and, exceeding 14% of their force, the losses were "proportionally perhaps the worst ever suffered by a hoplite army in a pitched battle," 90.

[22] H.D. Westlake incorporates Hermocrates throughout his analysis of various individuals given specific representation by Thucydides in *Individuals in Thucydides* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968). His general tone, however, is summed up when he argues that Thucydides "probably admired [Hermocrates] more than any contemporary leader except Pericles" (10).

into strategic planning is similar to the previous two individuals.[23] Hermocrates is

portrayed as being one of the few Syracusan leaders who grasped the magnitude of

Athens' ambition and the threat it posed to the Sicilian *poleis*. He acted on his insight by

urging the Sicilians to set aside their differences and unite against the Athenian threat.

Though reports of an Athenian expedition were met with skepticism from many Sicilian

leaders, the threat to Sicily in 415 was real: the Athenians had already set sail from the

Piraeus with the "most costly and splendid Hellenic force that had ever been sent out by a

single city."[24] When the Syracusans met in assembly to discuss the veracity of the reports

concerning the Athenian force and whether there was any necessity to act on them,

Hermocrates spoke in favor of a making preparations for a strong defense of Syracuse,

including gathering new allies to help.[25] Hermocrates' points throughout the speech

provide insight into how Thucydides guides his reader towards an understanding of the

value of rational judgment; these points will be discussed elsewhere in this dissertation.

For the moment, however, the end of the speech provides the most clarity with respect to

strategic planning. Thucydides uses the culminating point of Hermocrates' plea for

preparedness to show how well Hermocrates grasped the realities of the danger facing

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[23] Thucydides also provides a rendition of Hermocrates' speech at Gela in 424 (4.58-64). The specific incidents in question are different, but these two speeches, one from 424 and one from 415, are essentially concerned with the same theme: forming a union Sicilian *poleis* to stand against Athenian aggression. For a discussion of Thucydides' use of $\kappa \acute{\iota} \nu \delta \upsilon \nu o \varsigma$ in various sections of speech from 424, see 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force. A more complete bibliography of scholarship on Hermocrates can be found there.

[24] Thuc. 6.31.2. Gomme notes that there is some dispute as to a precise translation of Thucydides' Greek in this description and the comparison with its predecessors. He agrees, however, that "there can be no doubt what Thucydides meant, that this was the greatest expedition ever mounted by one Greek city" (4:292).

[25] Thuc. 6.33-34.

Syracuse and how appropriately he chose to respond to the danger. He has Hermocrates

point to the value of strategic preparation for danger. He writes:

> Πείθεσθε οὖν μάλιστα μὲν ταῦτα τολμήσαντες, εἰ δὲ
> μή, ὅτι τάχιστα τἆλλα ἐς τὸν πόλεμον ἑτοιμάζειν, καὶ
> παραστῆναι παντὶ τὸ μὲν καταφρονεῖν τοὺς ἐπιόντας
> ἐν τῶν ἔργων τῇ ἀλκῇ δείκνυσθαι, τὸ δ' ἤδη τὰς μετὰ
> φόβου παρασκευὰς ἀσφαλεστάτας νομίσαντας ὡς ἐπὶ
> κινδύνου πράσσειν χρησιμώτατον ἂν ξυμβῆναι.

> I could wish to persuade you to show this courage; but if
> this cannot be, at all events lose not a moment in preparing
> generally for the war; and remember all of you that
> contempt for an assailant is best shown by bravery in
> action, but that for the present the best course is to accept
> the preparations which fear inspires as giving the surest
> promise of safety, and to act as if the danger was real
> (6.34.9).

What Hermocrates really wants is for the Sicilian *poleis* to assemble their collective naval

power for a preemptive strike against the Athenians while they are still journeying to

Sicily.[26] What Thucydides has him focus on in this passage, however, is that they should

at least act as if the danger was real – which it was – and prepare for the worst, regardless

of what specific measures they might take. Thucydides' κίνδυνος is the climax of this

speech and focuses his reader on how to conduct strategic analysis: even if the proper

attitude towards an enemy is contempt and preparation may seem to be an indication of

fear, preparations for the realities of danger are the most valuable for a city,

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[26] Thuc. 6.34.4.

χρησιμώτατον.[27] The moral of the story, so to speak, is that the "surest promise of safety" is to act "as if" an unknown danger is a known reality, ὡς ἐπὶ κινδύνου. Thucydides' reader, of course, will not necessarily avoid the danger by following this advice. He will, however, be prepared to face it with the necessary strength required for survival in the anarchic world of Greek interstate relations.

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[27] June W. Allison analyzes the concept of preparation, *paraskeue*, as it leads to power in *Power and Preparedness in Thucydides* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). Her analysis of the term *paraskeue* is similar the analysis of κίνδυνος in this dissertation in that she demonstrates that the concept, though familiar to us moderns, was new to Thucydides' reader and demonstrates the new insight into military tactics and strategy Thucydides brought to his work (133-4). If, as she argues, "*paraskeue* is the foundation of *dynamis* ["power"]," then it is closely linked to Thucydides' insistence on understanding κίνδυνος (26).

2.3.2 <u>Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples</u>

Thucydides also highlights Athenian generals who demonstrated the ability to grasp the significance of the dangers they faced on both the strategic and tactical levels of warfare. It is striking, given the centrality of Athens to the narrative, how few these examples are. Demosthenes was one such leader and Thucydides points to his strong sense of *coup d'oeil* on two separate occasions.[1] The first instance describes the moment of his greatest tactical success, the siege at Pylos; the second actually describes his final defeat at the very end of the Sicilian expedition.[2] In both instances, however, Thucydides explicitly uses the term κίνδυνος to describe the tactical situation and to point his reader to the important lessons to be learned from Demosthenes' example.

In 425 Demosthenes convinced an Athenian force en route to Sicily to establish an *ad hoc* fortification at Pylos from which they might threaten the Peloponnesian

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[1] There is an interesting body of literature on Thucydides' treatment of Demosthenes, most of which is generally sympathetic towards his innovations in military leadership and tactical planning. See Eric Charles Woodcock, "Demosthenes, Son of Alcisthenes," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 39 (1928), 93-108; H.D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 97-121; A.J. Holladay, "Athenian Strategy in the Archidamian War," *Historia* 27 (1978), 399-427; Graham Wylie, "Demosthenes the General: Protagonist in a Greek Tragedy?" *Greece and Rome* 40 (1993), 20-30; and J. Roisman, *The General Demosthenes and His Use of Military Surprise* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993).

[2] Demosthenes, it should be noted, is also highlighted by Thucydides for his reversal of fortunes between the disastrous campaign in Aetolia, which resulted in the loss of "by far the best men in the city of Athens" during the war (3.98.3), and his overwhelming victory in Amphilocia, in which he brought about "the greatest disaster that befell any one Hellenic city" upon his opponents (3.113.6). David Gribble comments on Thucydides' narrative intervention in these instance and argues that the narrator's intervention in these passages serves to highlight the fact that Demosthenes "learned from his mistakes" which is a key point to set up the analysis in this dissertation. See "Narrator Interventions in Thucydides," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 118 (1998), 52.

mainland.[3] The Spartans, after delaying their response to celebrate a festival, finally

recalled their army from Attica and sent it to meet the threat.[4] When the Spartans arrived,

they prepared an attack on the hastily built Athenian fortifications by land and sea

simultaneously. Demosthenes focused his defense on a particular spot at which he

correctly perceived the Spartans would try to assault.[5]   Thucydides adds to his

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[3] Thuc. 4.2-9. The phrase *ad hoc* captures the reality that, though Demosthenes was urging this action, he was not able to convince the other generals; his plan was successful only when the soldiers themselves acted autonomously out of boredom to fortify the place after they had been forced by a storm to make an unscheduled landing. For details of the unique Athenian defensive posture, see Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 136-37. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.1: Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Action.

There is a vast body of literature on the Pylos campaign. See G.B. Grundy, "An Investigation of the Topography of the Region of Spakteria and Pylos," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 16 (1896), 1-54; R.M. Burrows, "Pylos and Sphacteria," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 16 (1896), 55-76; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Sphakteria" in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil-Hist. Klasse, 1921), 306-18; A.W. Gomme, *Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 125-31; W.K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965); Donald Kagan, *The Archidamian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 218-59; R. Bauslaugh, "The Text of Thucydides IV 8.6 and the South Channel at Pylos," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 99 (1979), 1-6; J.F. Lazenby, *The Spartan Army* (Warminster, 1985), 113-123; H.D. Westlake, "The Naval Battle at Pylos and its Consequences," *Classical Quarterly* 24 (1974), 211-26; John B. Wilson, *Pylos 425 B.C.: A Historical and Topographical Study of Thucydides' Account of the Campaign* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979); R.B. Strassler, "The Harbor of Pylos," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988), 198-203; J. Roisman, *The General Demosthenes and His Use of Military Surprise* (Stuttgart: Historia Enzelschriften 78, 1993); R. B. Strassler, "The Opening of the Pylos Campaign," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990), 110-25; J.L. Davis, ed. *Sandy Pylos: An Archaeological History from Nestor to Navarino* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); C. Rubincam, "The Topography of Pylos and Sphacteria and Thucydides' Measurements of Distance," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121 (2001), 77-90; Loren J. Samons, "Thucydides' Sources and the Spartan Plan at Pylos," *The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 75 (2006), 525-40.

[4] Thuc. 4.5-6. R.B. Strassler (1990) argues that the motive for Spartan delay was actually their fear of a helot revolt, 119.

[5] Thuc. 4.9.2-3.

narrative of the events Demosthenes' brief pre-battle exhortation in which he opens with

a very explicit assessment of the dangers facing the Athenians.[6] Thucydides writes:

> Ἄνδρες οἱ ξυναράμενοι τοῦδε τοῦ κινδύνου, μηδεὶς
> ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ τοιᾷδε ἀνάγκῃ ξυνετὸς βουλέσθω δοκεῖν
> εἶναι, ἐκλογιζόμενος ἅπαν τὸ περιεστὸς ἡμᾶς δεινόν,
> μᾶλλον ἢ ἀπερισκέπτως εὔελπις ὁμόσε χωρῆσαι τοῖς
> ἐναντίοις καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἂν περιγενόμενος. ὅσα γὰρ ἐς
> ἀνάγκην ἀφῖκται ὥσπερ τάδε, λογισμὸν ἥκιστα
> ἐνδεχόμενα κινδύνου τοῦ ταχίστου προσδεῖται.

> Soldiers, partners in this danger, I hope that none of you in
> our present strait will think to show his wit by exactly
> calculating all the perils that encompass us, but that you
> will rather hasten to close with the enemy, without staying
> to weigh the odds, seeing in this your best chance of safety.
> In emergencies like ours calculation is out of place; the
> sooner the danger is faced the better (4.10.1-2).[7]

Thucydides opens the speech with two explicit instances of κίνδυνος. Though on the

surface these instances seem to advocate ignoring danger through sheer courage, both

actually serve to demonstrate that Demosthenes was a capable leader who had a solid

grasp on the realities of danger in this tactical environment.

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[6] H.D. Westlake finds nothing remarkable in this speech and categorizes it as a typical representation of a leader's encouragement in *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 109. Hornblower agrees, calling the speech "simple" with "general considerations about courage and rational considerations," 2.162.

[7] In this instance I have made a slight change to Crawley's translation. I have translated the phrase Ἄνδρες οἱ ξυναράμενοι τοῦδε τοῦ κινδύνου as "soldiers, partners in this danger." Crawley essentially romanticized Thucydides' language by translating the phrase as "soldiers and comrades in this adventure." He lends a somewhat dramatic and heroic flair to the phrase while Thucydides' diction, Ἄνδρες οἱ ξυναράμενοι τοῦδε τοῦ κινδύνου, puts the reader's focus on the stark reality of the Athenians' dangerous position. I would argue that a more literal translation, one closer to capturing the essential meaning Thucydides intended, would be something closer to "men taking part in this danger." A more artistic rendition, which balances the artistic attempt to capture the emotion of a pre-battle exhortation with the scholarly attempt to remain faithful to Thucydides' stark language might be "soldiers, partners in this danger…" The point, however, is not to find the perfect translation. Rather it is to notice the emphasis Thucydides places on the concept of κίνδυνος.

The first instance presents a stark image of the danger facing his soldiers: Ἄνδρες οἱ ξυναράμενοι τοῦδε τοῦ κινδύνου. Demosthenes does not identify his soldiers as citizens, hoplites, or even soldiers – a term which might encompass the allies and lightly armed troops. Instead he focuses their attention on the immediate reality: they are the men with whom he is about to experience danger regardless their social status or citizenship. One medium through which the general might establish kinship with his soldiers is shared danger.[8] Demosthenes recognizes this and, in Thucydides' rendition, points it out to his soldiers. In this instance, Demosthenes provides a positive leadership example for Thucydides' reader by opening his exhortation not with an appeal to shared glory, i.e. "comrades in arms," or patriotism, "fellow Athenians." Those would be trite sentiments in a dire situation such as this. Instead, Thucydides focuses on Demosthenes' grasp of the grim realities of the situation and his ability to think rationally amid such dangers.

The second instance of κίνδυνος, λογισμὸν ἥκιστα ἐνδεχόμενα κινδύνου τοῦ ταχίστου προσδεῖται, is a bit more puzzling. On first glance it appears as though Thucydides is telling his reader to ignore danger and "rely on blind hope," ἀπερισκέπτως εὔελπις.[9] Thucydides, however, is not reversing his course and showing an Athenian leader calling on his troops to act irrationally in the face of such dangers.

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[8] John Keegan presents the idea that there are five basic categories summarizing the duties of a general. One of these categories is "kinship" or the establishment of a bond between himself and the soldiers. See *The Mask of Command* (New York: Viking Press, 1987), 315-38. Everett Wheeler mentions these categories and discusses their relationship to the evolution of the general's involvement in the phalanx in "The General as Hoplite" in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, Victor Davis Hanson ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991), 124.

[9] Gomme, as I will show, wrongly analyzes Thucydides' intent behind this passage and provides this translation, (2:446).

Gomme does admit that "the position of the Athenians on Pylos did indeed seem desperate for the time being, and to dwell on it might well have led to despair."[10] But that sentiment, while correct, does not seem to be Thucydides' point. To understand what Thucydides has Demosthenes say, one must take into account not just this speech, but the whole context in which this speech was given. The moment was indeed desperate. But Demosthenes was a capable leader who had exercised the due diligence of his "cerebral skills."[11] He had himself rationally taken into account all the dangers facing his men as Thucydides has already explained to his reader in the previous section. He writes:

> Δημοσθένης δὲ ὁρῶν τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους μέλλοντας προσβάλλειν ναυσί τε ἅμα καὶ πεζῷ παρεσκευάζετο καὶ αὐτός.

> Demosthenes, seeing that the Spartans were about to attack him by land and sea simultaneously, was himself making preparations (4.9.1).[12]

Demosthenes clearly perceived, ὁρῶν, the Spartans' most likely tactical plan and the Spartans did indeed attack just as he had predicted, προσέβαλλε δὲ ᾗπερ ὁ Δημοσθένης προσεδέχετο.[13] Thucydides assigns "intentional prominence" to use of the term παρεσκευάζετο in this passage to underscore the "demonstrable power"

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[10] Ibid. Hornblower argues that Demosthenes' point, "courage, not calculation," is fitting to the task at hand as his men prepare to face "intimidating relays of triremes thrashing towards the shore," 2.162.

[11] Everett L. Wheeler analyzes the evolution of the general's role in hoplite warfare in "The General as Hoplite," *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience,* ed. Victor Davis Hanson (New York: Routledge, 1991, Reprint 1998). The specific phrase "cerebral skills" applies to some of the trends seen during the fifth century, 123.

[12] Here I amend Crawley's translation slightly. He renders the phrase παρεσκευάζετο καὶ αὐτός as "was himself not idle." While there is nothing technically wrong with this translation, it fails to capture the essence of the verb παρεσκευάζετο which, as Allison argues, carries the notion of deliberate preparations which lead to strength. See *Power and Preparedness in Thucydides* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[13] Huart, 176; Thuc. 4.11.2.

Demosthenes' foresight provided to the forces under his responsibility.[14] He had taken all reasonable precautions to protect his beached triremes and arm his sailors. He had posted his men along the strong points of the fortification and established a hand-picked force in the place where he thought the danger most acute.[15] He had done these things because he was a capable leader who understood that he was ultimately responsible for the lives of his men. As a result, he is able to put his mens' minds at ease by telling them not to expend their energy calculating the risks; he had done that for them. Thucydides has already highlighted the fact that these soldiers were capable of taking the initiative and making their own tactical decisions; they had built the original fortifications because they were "seized with a sudden impulse to go round and fortify the place." [16] In this instance, however, Thucydides points his reader to the fact that Demosthenes was so capable that he was able to combat the "inversion of leaders and led," one of the defining problems in post-Periclean Athens.[17] The point is that Thucydides' reader is drawn to the idea that in a crisis situation the leader's role is to calculate the dangers and prepare adequately for them. The soldier's role, on the other hand, is to trust in and execute what is likely to be a rational plan. Demosthenes does not want his men to trust in "blind hope," as Gomme argues; he wants his men to trust in the rationality of his own planning.

Though successful at Pylos, Demosthenes was not always successful and Thucydides uses an example of one of his military failures to convey a lesson to his

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[14] Allison's analysis of the "intentional prominence" which Thucydides gives to *paraskeue* applies to this micro-level instance of tactical planning even though she takes a more macro-level approach, i.e. strategic planning, and does not provide an in-depth analysis of this particular instance (133).

[15] Thuc. 4.9.1-2.

[16] Thuc. 4.4.1.

[17] Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 30.

reader about planning for the reality of risk.[18] In 413, Demosthenes had been sent with

seventy-three ships and five thousand hoplites, plus a large contingent of light armed

troops, to provide relief to the beleaguered Athenian force near Syracuse.[19] Immediately

upon his arrival he assessed the situation and recognized that his arrival would renew a

certain amount of fear in the Syracusans, a definite force multiplier. He wanted to

capitalize on this fleeting advantage by launching an attack on the heights of Epipolae,

which, if successful, would be the quickest way to win the siege of Syracuse.[20]

Thucydides' brief description of Demosthenes' plan is carefully crafted to underscore

Demosthenes' logical and reasonable analysis. The finite tenses and indicative verbs – as

opposed to the accusative-infinitive construction of the indirect speech with which

describes the tactical assessments in other phases of the same campaign – makes it

arguable that this passage reflects Thucydides' own judgment of what might have

happened in this situation and not merely a report of Demosthenes' judgment.[21] A few

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[18] See above, p. 55 n. 2.

[19] Thuc. 7.42.1. The scholarship on the Athenians' Sicilian campaign is vast. For an overview of the events and analysis of the strategic and tactical decisions, see Lazenby (2001), 131-69. See also W. Liebeschütz, "Thucydides and the Sicilian Expedition," *Historia* 17 (1968), 289-306; Peter Green, *Armada From Athens* (New York: Doubleday, 1970); U. Laffi, "La spedizione ateniense in Sicilia del 415 a.C." *Rivista storica Italiana* 82 (1970),277-307; Donald Kagan, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981); George Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 75-91; and Lisa Kallett, *Money and the Corrosion of Power in Thucydides: The Sicilian Expedition and its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Donald Kagan, *Thucydides: The Reinvention of History* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), 162-221.

[20] Thuc. 7.42.3-5

[21] Gomme compares this passage to 6.64.1 and 7.51 and argues that this reflects Thucydides' personal assessment of the situation, which may very well have coincided with Demosthenes' judgment (4:419).

excerpts from the passage demonstrate the depth with which Demosthenes was able to

grasp the tactical fundamentals:

> ὁ δὲ Δημοσθένης ἰδὼν ὡς εἶχε τὰ πράγματα καὶ νομίσας οὐχ οἷόν τε εἶναι διατρίβειν οὐδὲ παθεῖν ὅπερ ὁ Νικίας ἔπαθεν ...

> Demosthenes, seeing how matters stood, recognized that he could not drag on and fare as Nicias had done… (7.42.3)[22]

> ταῦτα οὖν <u>ἀνασκοπῶν</u> ὁ Δημοσθένης, καὶ <u>γιγνώσκων</u> ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ παρόντι τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ μάλιστα δεινότατός ἐστι τοῖς ἐναντίοις, <u>ἐβούλετο</u> ὅτι τάχος ἀποχρήσασθαι τῇ παρούσῃ τοῦ στρατεύματος ἐκπλήξει. καὶ <u>ὁρῶν</u> τὸ παρατείχισμα τῶν Συρακοσίων, ᾧ ἐκώλυσαν περιτειχίσαι σφᾶς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους, ἁπλοῦν ὂν καί, εἰ κρατήσειέ τις τῶν τε Ἐπιπολῶν τῆς ἀναβάσεως καὶ αὖθις τοῦ ἐν αὐταῖς στρατοπέδου, ῥᾳδίως ἂν αὐτὸ ληφθέν (οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑπομεῖναι ἂν σφᾶς οὐδένα), <u>ἠπείγετο</u> ἐπιθέσθαι τῇ πείρᾳ, καί οἱ ξυντομωτάτην <u>ἡγεῖτο</u> διαπολέμησιν·

> Recollecting this, and well aware that it was now on the first day after his arrival that he like Nicias was most formidable to the enemy, Demosthenes determined to lose no time in drawing the utmost profit from the consternation at the moment inspired by his army; and seeing that the counter-wall of the Syracusans, which hindered the Athenians from investing them, was a single one, and that he who should become master of the way up to Epipolae, and afterwards of the camp there, would find no difficulty in taking it, as no one would even wait for his attack, made all haste to attempt the enterprise. (7.42.3-4)

Note the plethora of words indicating rationality: ἀνασκοπῶν, γιγνώσκων, ἐβούλετο,

ὁρῶν, and ἡγεῖτο. Thucydides makes it clear to his reader that this was a rational plan,

not emotional or designed to capture individual glory. In this sense, Thucydides is

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[22] Here I have modified Crawley's translation. He translated the participle νομίσας as "felt." I have tried to capture the force of Thucydides' Greek which conveys a much more rational activity than "feeling." Huart argues that in the vast majority of cases, Thucydides' use of the verb νομίζειν signifies the act of "thinking" or "making an assessment" (264). For further analysis, see Huart, 263-72.

providing Demosthenes' quick, but rational plan as a contrast to Cleon's quick, but

illogical plan to attack the Spartans on Sphacteria.[23]

Demosthenes' recognition of danger is the focal point of this narrative.

Thucydides, after describing the logical way in which Demosthenes analyzed this

situation, shows his reader that Demosthenes understood the inherent risks in his plan and

made a reasonable allowance for the possibility of failure. The Athenian generals

attempted Demosthenes' plan with a night attack which failed due to the Athenians'

confusion and disorganization. Only after this defeat did they come to realize the gravity

of their situation.[24] At this point in the narrative, Thucydides explicitly points his reader

to the fact that Demosthenes did, in fact, have a full understanding of the dangers

inherent in the Athenian's tactical situation from the moment he first surveyed the scene.

He says that, after the night attack failed, Demosthenes voted to return to Athens by sea

"consistent with his original idea in risking the attempt upon Epipolae," ἀλλ' ἅπερ καὶ

διανοηθεὶς ἐς τὰς Ἐπιπολὰς διεκινδύνευσεν.[25] Demosthenes' thinking was clear with

regards to his original plan, διανοηθεὶς. Even so, he recognized that the attempt to make

a rapid advance against the heights of Epipolae was dangerous, perhaps even a gamble,

ἐς τὰς Ἐπιπολὰς διεκινδύνευσεν. Thucydides consistently points his reader to the

analytical and decision-making skills of those leaders for whom he has respect; in this

instance, Demosthenes' plan was one based on fundamentally sound judgment and one

that, in Thucydides' analysis, provides a solid example from which future leaders might

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[23] τῇ κουφολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 4.28.5. For further analysis of this incident, see chapter 3.2 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Action.

[24] Thuc. 7.47.1-2.

[25] Thuc. 7.47.3.

learn even though it failed. More to the point, it showed the proper way for a leader to react to a dangerous situation: neither passively (Nicias) nor impetuously.

Thucydides credits the Athenian general Lamachus with much the same ability to recognize the importance of the most dangerous moment in a campaign and to respond rationally – neither passively nor impetuously. Lamachus, like Demosthenes, was the sort of man who understood that the most critical moment in a campaign might well be a moment literally defined by danger. When the Athenian force arrived in Sicily in 415 they met initial disappointment in their expectations for local support against Syracuse.[26] The three Athenian generals, Nicias, Alcibiades, and Lamachus, discussed their options, each advocating a different course of action.[27] Nicias' argued for a quick display of power before returning to Athens while Alcibiades advocated building an alliance of Sicilian cities in order to fulfill the long-term goal of attacking Syracuse and Selinus.[28] Lamachus, however, presented the most dramatic option: sail straight to Syracuse and strike while the city was unprepared and panic was at its height; this, of course, foreshadows Demosthenes' eventual appraisal of the situation two years later when he arrives with reinforcements to correct the mistakes made in this early phase of the campaign. While some have argued that while Thucydides' description of this conference stresses only the differences between the three generals, subsequent events point to the fact that there must have been a significant number of issues upon which they agreed or, at least, compromised.[29] The point for this analysis, however, is not any issues upon which they

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[26] Thuc. 6.46.

[27] Thuc. 6.46.5.

[28] Thuc. 6.47-48.

[29] Thuc. 6.49.1. H.D. Westlake (1968), 174-5.

theoretically agreed. Rather, the point is that Thucydides uses one contentious issue to highlight for his reader the importance of recognizing danger. He presents Lamachus' analysis as one based upon a rational understanding of the dangers inherent in the critical moments of a campaign. In his depiction of Lamachus' rationale, Thucydides writes:

> αἰφνίδιοι δὲ ἢν προσπέσωσιν, ἕως ἔτι περιδεεῖς προσδέχονται, μάλιστ' ἂν σφεῖς περιγενέσθαι καὶ κατὰ πάντα ἂν αὐτοὺς ἐκφοβῆσαι, τῇ τε ὄψει (πλεῖστοι γὰρ ἂν νῦν φανῆναι) καὶ τῇ προσδοκίᾳ ὧν πείσονται, μάλιστα δ' ἂν τῷ αὐτίκα κινδύνῳ τῆς μάχης.
>
> By attacking suddenly, while Syracuse still trembled at their coming, they would have the best chance of gaining a victory for themselves and of striking a complete panic into the enemy by the aspect of their numbers – which would never appear so considerable as at present – by the anticipation of coming disaster, and above all by the immediate danger of the engagement. (6.49.2)

Thucydides focuses on Lamachus' keen appreciation of the danger a swift attack would create for the Syracusans, μάλιστα δ' ἂν τῷ αὐτίκα κινδύνῳ τῆς μάχης. Where Demosthenes recognized and responded rationally to danger against the Athenians by advocating an attack on the momentarily demoralized Syracusans, Lamachus makes a rational response by creating danger for his opponents, the Syracusans. Thucydides points his reader to the fact that Lamachus' analysis was based on a very simple, yet often overlooked, aspect of the campaign: the impact of danger. By underscoring his insight into the immediate danger that the Athenian force was capable of bringing to the Syracusans and their possible panic, Thucydides shows his reader just how important this factor should be in tactical analysis and decision-making.

Even though, in the end, Lamachus agreed to Alcibiades' plan – perhaps because he preferred to ally himself politically with his perception of Alcibiades' popularity[30] –the implication in later parts of Thucydides' analysis of the Sicilian expedition is that he believed Lamachus' advice to be the most sound.[31] Demosthenes, as already discussed, also wanted to make a quick attack because his arrival in Sicily demoralized the Syracusans.[32] The point, however, is that Thucydides uses Lamachus' analysis as an opportunity to present an idea to his reader: danger is not simply a momentary distraction on the battlefield to be overcome with courage and bravery; it is a vital aspect of tactical decision-making. Had the other Athenian generals understood this, Lamachus' insight might well have led to victory in the face of the otherwise long odds the Athenians faced in 415.

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[30] Gomme 4:315-16.

[31] See previous discussion of Thuc. 7.42.3. Several prominent modern scholars also agree that Lamachus' strategy was the most appropriate given the circumstances. See G. Donini "Thucydides 7.42.3: Does Thucydides Agree With Demonsthenes' View?" *Hermes* 92 (1964), 116-19; W. Liebeschütz, "Thucydides and the Sicilian Expedition," *Historia* 17 (1968), 299-302; Peter Green, *Armada From Athens* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 141; Donald Kagan, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 215-6; and Kallet (2001), 151-9.

[32] Thuc. 7.42.3.

2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples

While it may seem paradoxical that Thucydides agrees both with a rapid strike in the case of Lamachus' guidance to the Athenians in Sicily and with a potentially protracted garrison operation in the case of Demosthenes' plan at Pylos, this is an overly simplistic view of Thucydides' message. It is not that Thucydides is advocating for or against action, even violent, aggressive action, in any general sense. Rather, he advocates a rational response to correctly perceived danger in every specific situation. In the case of Lamachus, Thucydides guides his reader to see that Lamachus correctly perceived the potential danger and understood that this danger could be a force multiplier for the Athenians if they responded rapidly. The same with Demosthenes two years later. This sort of rapid response is not impetuous; it is rational. In other cases, however, Thucydides points his reader to the idea that the rational response is the exact opposite: a slow, methodical approach. This can be considered an exceptionally radical departure from the norms among Thucydides' contemporaries for whom the proclivity for action and aggression were powerful motivating factors.[1]

The Spartan king and general Archidamus provides such an example. Thucydides praises him for his ability to understand the dangerous situation his first invasion of Attica would create for one of the Athenian *demes*, the Acharnians.[2] In preparation for Archidamus' invasion, the Athenians abandoned the countryside and were prepared to

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[1] This concept will be analyzed in greater depth in Chapter 3.1 Κίνδυνος and the Greek "Ethos of Action."

[2] Thuc. 2.10.3. Westlake analyzes Archidamus' leadership style and Thucydides' depiction of the same in *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968),122-35. Felix M. Wasserman argues that he provides for Thucydides a "paragon of old fashioned … *arete*" in "The Voice of Sparta," *The Classical Journal* 59 (1964), 293. For broader analysis of both events and the leaders involved in this phase of the war, see Donald Kagan, *The Archidamian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

allow the Spartans to lay waste their land. They put their faith in their fleet to keep Athens supplied.[3] The mass of citizens, for obvious reasons, was not pleased with the situation of having to abandon their goods and land to the enemy.[4] Archidamus, it would seem, took this general sentiment of the Athenians into account in his tactical planning by paying particular attention to the lands of the Acharnians, the largest of the Athenian *demes,* even at the risk of appearing of cowardly for his slow, methodical invasion.[5] Thucydides points his reader to the lessons to be learned by providing insight into Archidamus' motive.[6] He explains that Archidamus thought he might entice the Athenians to meet him in open battle by ravaging such an important part of their countryside: the Acharnians may have contributed as many as 3,000 hoplites to the Athenian army.[7] He writes:

> εἴ τε καὶ μὴ ἐπεξέλθοιεν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἐσβολῇ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀδεέστερον ἤδη ἐς τὸ ὕστερον τό τε πεδίον τεμεῖν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν πόλιν χωρήσεσθαι· τοὺς γὰρ Ἀχαρνέας ἐστερημένους τῶν σφετέρων οὐχ ὁμοίως προθύμους ἔσεσθαι ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ἄλλων κινδυνεύειν, στάσιν δ' ἐνέσεσθαι τῇ γνώμῃ.

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[3] Thuc. 2.14.

[4] Thuc. 2.16.1.

[5] Thuc. 2.19-20.

[6] Westlake points out that Thucydides' emphasis on Archidamus' motives suggest that he thought Archidamus "may have shown a certain amount of shrewdness" despite the charges levied against him by his men for his seemingly dilatory behavior during the invasion (130). J.E. Lendon discusses Archidamus' plan and the "overwhelming shame" felt by the Athenians at their inability or unwillingness to react to it in *Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 120. The concepts of honor and shame will be discussed later in Chapter 3.4, Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame.

[7] Thuc. 2.20.1-4. Gomme, however, argues that this figure "cannot stand." Instead he proposes that the text was corrupted and the actual figure could have been no more than 1,200 (2:74). Hornblower agrees and argues that the text is actually corrupted and Thucydides was commenting not on the number of hoplites, but instead on the number of citizens, 1.274. Regardless of the accuracy of Thucydides' figure, the motives he ascribes to Archidamus are still valid: Acharnia was the largest of the Athenian demes and a prolonged invasion there would be most likely to elicit a response from the Athenian hoplite force.

> On the other hand, should the Athenians not take the field during this incursion, he could then fearlessly ravage the plain in future invasions, and extend his advance up to the very walls of Athens. After the Acharnians had lost their own property they would be less willing to risk themselves for that of their neighbors and so there would be division in the Athenian counsels (2.20.4).

Thucydides here underscores that any action taken at this point or in the future by the Acharnians would be a dangerous gamble, κινδυνεύειν. Certainly his choice of words could be *variatio*; in the preceding phrases he uses both ἐπεξελθεῖν, "to go out against," and ὁρμήσειν καὶ τοὺς πάντας ἐς μάχην, "to urge the rest into battle," to describe combat. But, in a sense, these are mere details. What Thucydides is showing his reader is just what he has written: combat is danger which must be accounted for rationally. Thucydides shows his reader that Archidamus understood this and based his tactical decision-making on it. He expected the Acharnians to respond in a certain way to the presence of danger. In the end, of course, his estimation was incorrect: the Acharnians did not break the Athenian unity.[8] But, as elsewhere, the outcome is not the point; instead, Thucydides writes with the purpose of illustrating that the recognition of danger to oneself or to others is part of the rational calculation of a good general.

With similar purpose in mind, Thucydides also portrays the Spartan general Brasidas as a leader capable of recognizing danger, correctly analyzing its nature in a

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[8] Gomme notes that the Acharnians remained "as warlike and as hostile to any compromise with the Spartans" six years later (2:74).

specific instance, and either exploiting it or avoiding it.[9] Moreover he highlights the fact

that Brasidas was able to communicate his understanding to his soldiers so that they

might fully realize the situation confronting them.[10]

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[9] Scholars have generally agreed with Thucydides' positive assessment of Brasidas' abilities as a general. See T. R. Harley, "A Greater Than Leonidas," *Greece and Rome* 11 (1941), 68-83; G.B. Grundy, *Thucydides and the History of his Age II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), vi; Michael Palmer, "Machiavellian Virtù and Thucydidean Arete: Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides," *The Review of Politics* 51 (1989), 365-85; Graham Wylie, "Brasidas: Great Commander or Whiz Kid?" *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 41 (1992), 75-95; Ernst Badian, "The Road to Acanthus," in *Text and Tradition: Studies in Greek History and Historiography in Honor of Mortimer Chambers* (Claremont: Regina Books, 1999), 3-35; and P. Debnar, *Speaking the Same Language: Speech and Audience in Thucydides' Spartan Debates* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), ch. 8. Thomas Heilke, however, takes a contrary view of Thucydides' image of Brasidas in the sense that he highlights Brasidas' ultimately self-destructive policy of aggression in Thrace. See "Realism, Neorealism, and Happenstance: Thucydides' Tale of Brasidas," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 1 (2004): 121-138. Though I do not disagree with his argument on the macro-level, i.e. looking at the broad issues of Spartan policy and the Thracian campaign in general, his ultimate conclusion does not apply to every single instance in which Thucydides describes Brasidas. The following example, for instance, is very specific and does not completely mesh with Heilke's characterization.

[10] Westlake (1968) opens his analysis of Brasidas with the assumption that he "is the antithesis of the conventional Spartan leader" (148). His fuller analysis, however, focuses on several of his more intellectual traits, especially his "skillful handling of his forces so as to counteract their acknowledged inferiority in quality," which is most closely tied to the present argument (163). For his complete analysis, see 148-65.

In 422, Brasidas established a base of operations near the city of Amphipolis as part of his Thracian campaign.[11] Though he felt confident in his numerical equality with the Athenian force, Brasidas recognized the quality of the Athenian force, comprised as it was of the "flower of the Athenian army … with the best of the Lemnians and Imbrians." [12] Brasidas' force, on the other hand, was a heterogeneous force of volunteers and helots from the Peloponnese.[13] To make up for this perceived inequality of strength, Brasidas devised a stratagem in which he would engage the Athenians with a hand-picked force of 150 hoplites while the remainder of his force would remain in the city until the battle was joined and the Athenians could be surprised by the sudden appearance of these troops despite their makeshift armament.[14] Brasidas explained his plan to his men in his

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[11] Brasidas establishes his camp at Cerdylium, a hill near Amphipolis, exact location unknown (5.6.3). For a more full analysis of Brasidas' motives and understanding of the importance of Brasidas' campaign, as opposed to the policy of the Spartans in general, see Lisa Kallet-Marx, *Money, Expense, and Naval Power in Thucydides' History 1-5.24* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp. 171; Simon Hornblower argues, however, that Brasidas' campaign had the full support of the Spartan government and Thucydides' literary consideration was to portray Brasidas as "romantic loner." See *A Commentary on Thucydides* 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 268-9. See also Ernst Badian, "The Road to Acanthus" in *Text and Tradition: Studies in Greek History and Historiography in Honor of Mortimer Chambers* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1999), 3-35.

Lazenby (2001) provides a detailed analysis of the military planning and execution of the campaign and provides extensive bibliography, 91-105. See also H.D. Westlake, "Thucydides and the Fall of Amphipolis," *Hermes* 90 (1962), 276-87; J.K. Anderson, "Cleon's Orders at Amphipolis," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 85 (1965), 1-4; W.K. Pritchett *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 30-45; Donald Kagan, *The Archidamian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 321-330; Nicholas Jones, "The Topography and Strategy of the Battle of Amphipolis in 422 B.C.," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 10 (1977), 71-104; and Wylie (1992), 88-92.

[12] Thuc. 5.8.2.

[13] Thuc. 4.70.1. See also Gomme 3:641. Alan L. Boegehold provides an in-depth analysis both of Brasidas' reckoning in regards to his tactical options as well as the actual strength of his forces and his opponent's in "Thucydides' Representation of Brasidas Before Amphipolis," *Classical Philology* 74 (1979), 148-52.

[14] Thuc. 5.8.3-4. Lazenby provides a detailed account of the confusing action in the Thraceward region along with a map of the terrain (102-5).

pre-battle exhortation and, in Thucydides' rendition, focused on the reality of the danger

with which they were choosing to engage. Thucydides has Brasidas say:

> τὴν δὲ ἐπιχείρησιν ᾧ τρόπῳ διανοοῦμαι ποιεῖσθαι, διδάξω, ἵνα μή τῳ τὸ κατ' ὀλίγον καὶ μὴ ἅπαντας κινδυνεύειν ἐνδεὲς φαινόμενον ἀτολμίαν παράσχῃ.

> But as for the plan of attack that I propose to pursue, this it is well to explain in order that the fact of our taking this risk with part instead of with the whole of our forces may not damp your courage by the apparent disadvantage at which it places you (5.9.2).[15]

Thucydides confronts his reader with the fact that Brasidas clearly understood and

wanted his men to understand just how how dangerous this attack would be. The attempt,

τὴν δὲ ἐπιχείρησιν, was going to be made with only part of their force, κατ' ὀλίγον καὶ

μὴ ἅπαντας. Thucydides' rendition, however, expands on the idea that this is merely an

"attempt"; he is "risking battle," κινδυνεύειν. He makes it clear that Brasidas wanted his

men to understand that what they were about to do was dangerous; there was to be no

denying that fact. Thucydides is highlighting that one of the traits of a successful leader is

to recognize this risk and bring his men to terms with its reality. He goes out of his way –

syntactically speaking – to show this by incorporating a somewhat contorted articular

infinitive into the speech to make vivid the idea of "engaging in danger," τῳ …

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[15] Here I have modified Crawley's translation. Where I have tried to capture the essence of κινδυνεύειν with the phrase "taking this risk," Crawley provides the phrase "our adventuring."

κινδυνεύειν.[16] Thucydides has Brasidas recognizing the danger and accounting for it in his strategy.

One final "Spartan" example illustrates Thucydides' emphasis on individual genius: Teutiaplus, an Elean general and Spartan ally.[17] In 427 the Peloponnesians assembled a fleet of forty-two ships under the command of Alcidas to support the Mytilenean revolt from Athens.[18] The Mytileneans, however, could not withstand the pressures of the Athenian siege and surrendered before the fleet could arrive.[19] While remaining at harbor near Embatum, along the Ionian coast, the Peloponnesians were at a loss as to what their next tactical move should be. Thucydides explains that the Elean

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[16] Stephen Brooks Heiny analyzes the important distinctions Thucydides makes in his choice to use the articular infinitive in "The Articular Infinitive in Thucydides" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1973). He says that, due to all the potential distinctions, "Thucydides could have used the noun and the articular infinitive as equivalents only if he disregarded the distinctions inherent in the nature of each" (86). His overall conclusion was that Thucydides, when forced to choose between rules of grammar and rules of style, gave preference to the stylistic consideration *in order to make his point more vivid* (188-89, italics my own).

[17] Gomme analyzes Thucydides' source in this instance as an inquiry into Thucydides' analytic process (2:293). Perhaps the Ionian Greeks supplied the information. Regardless, this is one of the instances where Thucydides is certainly inserting his opinion into the mind of a speaker.

[18] Thuc. 3.26.1. The Mytilenean revolt narrative is begun in 3.2-18. For a detailed summary of the military events of this revolt, see Lazenby (2001), 39-43.
    The scholarship on Thucydides' narrative of the revolt of Mytilene is divided into two main topics: the revolt itself and the (in)famous Mytilenian Debate (3.36-49). The debate and associated scholarship will be analyzed in Chapter 4.1 A New Interpretation of the Mytilenian Debate. The scholarship concerning the revolt itself is primarily focused on its relevance to the issue of the general popularity or unpopularity of the Athenian Empire. See G.E.M. de Ste Croix, "The Character of the Athenian Empire," *Historia* 3 (1954/55), 1-41; D.W. Bradeen, "The Popularity of the Athenian Empire," *Historia* 9 (1960), 257-259; Ronald P. Legon, "Megara and Mytilene," *Phoenix* 22 (1968), 200-25; Daniel Gillis, "The Revolt at Mytilene," *The American Journal of Philology* 92 (1971), 38-47; T.J. Quinn, "Political Groups in Lesbos During the Peloponnesian War," *Historia* 20 (1971), 405-17; and H.D. Westlake, "The Commons at Mytilene," *Historia* 25 (1976), 429-40; C.W. Macleod analyzes Mytilenean speech to the Spartans (3.9-14) in his analysis of the limits of reasoning in "Reason and Necessity (Thuc. 3.9-14, 37-48) " in *Collected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1983); George Cawkwell (1997) agrees with Bradeen that it was hunger, not loyalty, that moved the *demos*," 97.

[19] Thuc. 3.27.1-28.2.

general Teutiaplus provided counsel to the force. His advice, essentially, was to capitalize

on the element of surprise with a rapid attack on the Athenians who could be expected to

be in the "carelessness of victory" and scattered among the Mytilenean houses.[20] This is

similar to the advice given to the Athenians in Sicily by Lamachus in 415 and then by

Demosthenes in 413; the only difference is that while the Athenian generals recognized

the panic their sudden attack might cause for the already-demoralized Syracusans, the

Elean general recognized the carelessness with which his Athenian opponents might act

in victory. This is, perhaps, another indicator that Thucydides believed it was the

Athenians' impetuous nature that led to their defeat in the war. Specifically, however,

Thucydides uses this example to highlight that good generals have "equal measure of

prudence and aggressiveness, with circumstances dictating which should be employed."[21]

He has Teutiaplus give this oft-paraphrased tactical planning proverb:[22]

> καὶ μὴ ἀποκνήσωμεν τὸν κίνδυνον, νομίσαντες οὐκ
> ἄλλο τι εἶναι τὸ κενὸν τοῦ πολέμου ἢ τὸ τοιοῦτον, ὃ εἴ
> τις στρατηγὸς ἔν τε αὐτῷ φυλάσσοιτο καὶ τοῖς
> πολεμίοις ἐνορῶν ἐπιχειροίη, πλεῖστ' ἂν ὀρθοῖτο

> Let us not shrink from the risk, but let us remember that
> this is just the occasion for one of the baseless panics
> common in war; and that to be able to guard against these
> in one's own case, and to detect the moment when an attack
> will find an enemy at this disadvantage, is what makes a
> successful general (3.30.4).

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[20] Thuc. 3.30.1-2.

[21] Robert D. Luginbill, *Author of Illusions: Thucydides' Rewriting of the History of the Peloponnesian War* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 186.

[22] The general maxim is provided by several later authors in various forms. See Arist. *Eth. Nic*. iii. 8.6, III6 b 7, Polyb 29.16, Diod. 20.30, 67, and Cicero, *ad Att*. 5.20.3. Gomme notes these references as part of his analysis of various manuscript possibilities concerning the Greek phrase τὸ κενὸν (2.292). Hornblower disagrees and offers his own emendation, 1.411-12. See also N. van der Ben, "The Interpretation of Teutiaplus' Speech, Thucydides 3.30, and its Textual Problem," *Mnemosyne* 51 (1998), 64-71. The manuscript variations are not important to this analysis and need not resolved here.

What Thucydides has Teutiaplus advise is that this is one of those tactical moments in which the appropriate and rational (calculated) response is to a dangerous situation is aggressive exploitation. Thucydides' word choice focuses his reader on Teutiaplus' awareness that he needed to address the danger involved in the operation.[23] This is the same point both Demosthenes and Lamachus made to the Athenians.[24] But Thucydides' Greek provides something more serious than simply a "moment" that ought not be lost; this moment is a specific instance of danger, τὸν κίνδυνον. Thucydides' Greek makes it vivid for his reader that a successful general not only understands the situation and senses that moment at which the danger is most explicit, but also recognizes that this moment might be most effectively exploited by one who stands ready. A good leader can make danger, τὸν κίνδυνον, the deciding factor in a battle either by avoiding it or exploiting it.

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[23] N. van der Ben, 69.

[24] Lamachus' advice, 6.49.2; Demosthenes' advice, 7.42.3-4.

2.3.4 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Groups Exhibiting *Coup d'Oeil*

Thucydides also highlights the ability of certain groups to recognize the dangers inherent in a tactical situation and to make rational decisions based on that recognition. In the following examples, one should not assume that Thucydides is indicating that certain *poleis* or peoples were intrinsically more rational than others: the examples are drawn from across the Hellenic world. The examples, however, all fall within the period of the Archidamian War, perhaps reflecting Thucydides' notion that the major protagonists were acting at that point more rationally and were less ideologically motivated for destructive – perhaps self-destructive – behavior.[1] This supports the argument that Thucydides uses these examples to show his reader that any community has the capacity for rational thought under certain conditions. The leaders of these groups probably did exert a considerable influence on their communities but, unlike the previously discussed examples which highlight the decisions of leaders, the decision-makers here remain a group of anonymous individuals. What is important to note, however, is that in these instances, Thucydides is focused on highlighting the rational "personality" of a group of individuals; the group itself becomes a "rational character" in Thucydides' narrative.[2]

For example, Thucydides highlights the Macedonians' ability to respond rationally to danger during the early phases of the war. In 429/8, Sitalces of Thrace had

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[1] Marc Cogan identifies three phases of the war based on the absence or presence of less rational, ideological considerations in the minds of the protagonists in *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles in Thucydides' History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). The first phase, in his paradigm, is characterized by the shift from peace to war. It is not until the second phase, beginning in Book 3, that the protagonists tend to shift from rational motivations to more ideologically driven ones (127-29).

[2] Cogan (1981) makes analyzes the distinction between the "personality" of a named speaker and the "character" of an unnamed speaker (215-23). I am merely extending his analytical paradigm to tactical decision-making.

invaded Macedonia with approximately 150,000 troops.[3] The Macedonians lacked a

comparable force and had to rely on the few fortresses scattered throughout their country

for defense.[4] From these fortresses the Macedonians engaged in limited operations,

refusing to engage in a set infantry battle with the Thracian invaders. Instead they

employed their highly skilled cavalry to attack as opportunity presented itself.[5] Both

Gomme and Lazenby refer to this entire section of the narrative as a "digression" about

an incident "of very little importance." [6]I argue differently: Thucydides is highlighting

the parallel between the Macedonian defense of their homeland against a numerically

superior foe and Pericles' proposed defense of the Athenian homeland against the

superior Spartan land forces.[7]

Thucydides points his reader to the Macedonians' calm rationality, even in the

face of limited successes against the Thracian forces. He describes the details of their

tactical situation and underscores their recognition of the dangers facing them:

> οἱ δὲ Μακεδόνες πεζῷ μὲν οὐδὲ διενοοῦντο
> ἀμύνεσθαι, ἵππους δὲ προσμεταπεμψάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν
> ἄνω ξυμμάχων, ὅπη δοκοίη, ὀλίγοι πρὸς πολλοὺς
> ἐσέβαλλον ἐς τὸ στράτευμα τῶν Θρακῶν. καὶ ᾗ μὲν
> προσπέσοιεν, οὐδεὶς ὑπέμενεν ἄνδρας ἱππέας τε
> ἀγαθοὺς καὶ τεθωρακισμένους, ὑπὸ δὲ πλήθους
> περικληόμενοι αὐτοὺς πολλαπλασίῳ τῷ ὁμίλῳ ἐς

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[3] Thuc. 2.95-98.

[4] Thuc. 2.100.1-2.

[5] Thuc. 2.100.5.

[6] Gomme, 2.241; Lazenby (2001), 48. For more detail, see J.W. Cole, "Perdiccas and Athens," *Phoenix* 28 (1974), 55-72; and Nicholas G.L. Hammond, "Cavalry Recruited in Macedonia Down to 322 B.C." *Historia* 47 (1998), 404-25.

[7] Pericles explains his "limited warfare" strategy to the Athenians (1:143). The Athenians abandon the countryside and move into the relative safety of the walls of Athens (2:14).

κίνδυνον καθίστασαν, ὥστε τέλος ἡσυχίαν ἦγον, οὐ
νομίζοντες ἱκανοὶ εἶναι πρὸς τὸ πλέον κινδυνεύειν.

The Macedonians never even thought of meeting him with
infantry; but the Thracian host was, as opportunity offered,
attacked by handfuls of their horse, which had been
reinforced from their allies in the interior. Armed with
breastplates, and excellent horsemen, wherever these
charged they overthrew all before them, but ran
considerable risk in entangling themselves in the masses of
the enemy, and so finally desisted from these efforts,
deciding that they were not strong enough to venture
against numbers so superior (2.100.5).

The Macedonians were experiencing success against a numerically superior foreign

invader; they were, to a certain degree, successfully defending the honor of their

homeland and doing what they could to resist destruction. Thucydides, however, bases

his analysis of their tactical decision-making ability not on their success, but on their

restraint in spite of success.[8] He understood well the nature of the terrain and the

character of its people.[9] He shows his reader that the Macedonians were able to contain

their emotions and restrain their anger at the invader. Rather than being carried away by

their limited success and desire to continue an active defense of their homeland,

Thucydides says the Macedonians recognized that if they continued to engage with a

numerically superior enemy they would only put themselves into danger, αὐτοὺς

πολλαπλασίῳ τῷ ὁμίλῳ ἐς κίνδυνον καθίστασαν. As a result, ὥστε, they stopped the

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[8] This is very much like the later author Polybius' measure of a leader's success. Polybius believed that the one of the greatest measure of a man's character was his ability to handle success. See his analysis of the various stages of Philip V of Macedon's development, esp. 16.28.3 and 8, 18.33.4-8, and 25.3.9-10. These examples are all cited and fully analyzed by Arthur M. Eckstein in *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), esp. 214 and 246.

[9] Thucydides possessed the right to operate gold mines in Thrace and "had great influence with the inhabitants of the mainland" (4.105.1). This influence must have carried with it a reasonable understanding of the character of the people or, at least, the character of the most influential leaders who remain anonymous in Thucydides' analysis.

engagements altogether. Thucydides then makes their motive explicit to his reader. The Macedonians made a logical assessment of the dangers facing them and recognized the eventual pitfall of engaging a numerically superior enemy, οὐ νομίζοντες ἱκανοὶ εἶναι πρὸς τὸ πλέον κινδυνεύειν. As elsewhere, Thucydides ties the concept of rational calculation to the variable of risk: the participle νομίζοντες demonstrates the Macedonians' rational evaluation; the infinitive κινδυνεύειν points to the dangerous variable under evaluation.[10]

Thucydides' Macedonians are thus very much more than "a digression … of very little importance."[11] They represent his conscious effort to point his reader to a group of people who recognized the nature of the danger facing them and adapted their response accordingly. This situation is analogous to the way in which the Athenians themselves had been successfully restrained by Pericles during the first Spartan invasion in 431.[12] In this case, however, the reader can see that the Macedonians' rational approach to tactical decision-making resulted in their eventual success against Sitalces' larger force.[13]

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[10] Huart analyzes νομίζοντες, 262-65.

[11] Gomme, 2:241.

[12] Pericles's strategy is explained at 1:143. Thucydides makes it clear that the Athenian people were incited by their anger and emotion to engage the Spartans in battle (2:21). Pericles, however, was able to restrain their anger and allowed no response other than limited cavalry raids against the Spartans (2:22). This use of cavalry was somewhat revolutionary and further speaks to Pericles' talents as not only a politician, but also as a general. See J. Ober, "Thucydides, Pericles, and the Strategy of Defense," in J.W. Eadie and J. Ober, eds. *The Craft of the Ancient Historian: Essays in Honour of Chester G. Starr* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 171-88; G.R. Bugh, *The Horsemen of Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); I.G. Spence, "Pericles and the Defense of Attica During the Peloponnesian War," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990), 91-109; J. Hugh Hunter, "Pericles' Cavalry Strategy," *Quaderni Urbinati de Cultura Classica* 81 (2005), 101-8.

[13] Thuc. 2.101.6.

Thucydides similarly presents the Megarians' decision-making process in 424 as they had been facing a series of annual Athenian invasions since the start of the war.[14] In 424, some popular leaders, hoping to lessen their continual hardships, began to correspond with the Athenian generals to betray the city.[15] They arranged it so the Athenians could capture the long walls guarding the supply route between Megara and its port city, Nisaea. The description of the subsequent tactical situation demonstrates a rational analysis with a quick and correct response to danger; Thucydides' narrative highlights that both the conspirators and the Athenian generals recognized the greatest potential danger was the possibility that the Spartans in Nisaea might be able to support the Megarian loyalists in town.[16] By devising a plan to isolate these two forces, the Athenians and the Megarian faction reduced the potential danger facing them.[17] In a single night the Athenians quickly captured the long walls by means of a clever stratagem and killed or put to flight the Peloponnesian garrison guarding the city.[18] By daybreak the city of Megara was in great distress and the conspirators attempted to convince the rest of the people to open the gates and meet the Athenians in battle.[19]   Betrayed by one of

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[14] The first such invasion, with the entire Athenian army, occurred in 431. The Athenians invaded each each subsequent year with either the entire army or a smaller cavalry force until 424 (2:31).

[15] Thuc. 4.66.1-3. Discussion of these partisans can be found in Hornblower 2. 231-2; Ronald P. Legon (1968), 211-22; and de Ste. Croix (1972), 243.

[16] For a detailed military analysis of this situation, see Lazenby (2001), 85-8. See also T.E. Wick and T.T. Wick, "Megara, Athens and the West in the Archidamian War: A Study in Thucydides," *Historia* 28 (1979), 1-14; Ronald P. Legon, *Megara: The Political History of a Greek City-State to 336 B.C.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); T. Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), esp. 67-8; and J. Roisman, "The General Demosthenes and His Use of Military Surprise," (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 78, 1993), esp. 93.

[17] Thuc. 4.66.3.

[18] Thuc. 4.67-68.

[19] Thuc. 4.68.4.

their own members, however, the conspirators found themselves facing other citizens

who resisted their efforts and argued that they should not march out to battle. Thucydides

uses this portion of the narrative to highlight the level of rationality with which the

Megarian citizens evaluated the risks facing them. He writes:

> ἀληλιμμένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὄντων ἤδη περὶ τὰς πύλας
> καταγορεύει τις ξυνειδὼς τοῖς ἑτέροις τὸ ἐπιβούλευμα.
> καὶ οἳ ξυστραφέντες ἀθρόοι ἦλθον καὶ οὐκ ἔφασαν
> χρῆναι οὔτε ἐπεξιέναι (οὐδὲ γὰρ πρότερόν πω τοῦτο
> ἰσχύοντες μᾶλλον τολμῆσαι) οὔτε ἐς κίνδυνον
> φανερὸν τὴν πόλιν καταγαγεῖν·

> The conspirators were all anointed and at their posts by the
> gates when one of their accomplices denounced the plot to
> the opposite party, who gathered together and came in a
> body, and roundly said that they must not march out – a
> thing they had never yet ventured on even when they were
> in greater force than at present – or wantonly compromise
> the safety of the city (4.68.6).

Though the main story line in this instance concerns the *stasis* that threatens to rip the

city apart – and indeed eventually results in the deaths of one hundred conspirators at the

hands of the oligarchy[20] – Thucydides uses the incident to highlight the logical

assessment of risk. He shows how the mass of the opposite party, ξυστραφέντες

ἀθρόοι, declares that they should not march out; they would not have done this even

against a lesser foe. To do so, in their assessment, would be to lead the city to a very clear

danger, ἐς κίνδυνον φανερὸν τὴν πόλιν καταγαγεῖν. As elsewhere, Thucydides'

specific word choice highlights the deeper meaning. Here the rational party argues that

they would not have "dared to" rush out and engage the enemy in the past even when

they had a larger army. The verb τολμῆσαι represents a proclivity for swift action

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[20] Thuc. 4.74.3-4.

without consideration.[21] Instead, they must consider the danger outside the gate and not expose the city to that clear risk, κίνδυνον φανερὸν. Thucydides is not merely describing the actions. He is describing the motives – the rational thoughts and analysis among the popular Megarian leaders. He uses κίνδυνον to point his reader to the dangers facing people when they rush out to react without first considering the alternatives. In this instance, the decision reached was correct; the Megarians were eventually aided by Brasidas and his Spartan army against the Athenians, leaving Megara intact and in the hands of the oligarchs.[22]

Thucydides points to a similar rational consideration of the dangers faced by a besieged *polis* in his analysis of events at Mytilene in 427.[23] The Mytileneans had revolted from Athens in 428, citing their belief that the relative independence they felt as an autonomous ally – one to whom the Athenians had allowed the privilege of maintaining their own navy – was specious at best and would be stripped from them by the Athenians at the first opportunity.[24] As the winter of that year approached, the Mytileneans found themselves blockaded on both land and sea by the Athenians.[25] During the winter, however, a Spartan, Salaethus, was sent to inform the Mytileneans that

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[21] Huart identifies this term as part of a group of terms which signify audacity in action. It is rarely, however, to be considered in an "evil" sense. It is instead presented as a characteristic of certain peoples to be more prone to action without a great deal of consideration (431-32).

[22] Thuc. 4.73-74.

[23] For a detailed military analysis, see John Wilson, "Strategy and Tactics in the Mytilene Campaign," *Historia* 30 (1981), 144-63.

[24] Thuc. 3.9-13. Aristotle, however, ascribes the revolt to a faction fight which began on the personal grouds that Timophanes, a wealthy Mytilenean had died and left two daughters as heirs. When the Athenian *proxenos* Dexander was denied his wish to have his own sons marry them, he "started the faction which spurred Athens into action," *Pol. 1304a4*.

[25] Thuc. 3.18.5.

the Spartans were preparing to send a relief force and additionally planning to invade

Attica to convince Athens to raise their siege.[26] The Spartans were fulfilling their

promise, but the Mytileneans perceived that the Spartan fleet would be too slow in

arriving. With their provisions dwindling, the Mytileneans felt compelled to come to

terms with the Athenians and, when Salaethus issued hoplite arms to the people, they

revolted from their own leaders.[27]

It is at this point in the narrative that Thucydides highlights a moment of rational

assessment of danger. He indicates that "those in power," οἱ ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν,

recognized that they could not prevent the mass of people from surrendering the city and

would find themselves in grave danger if they were excluded from the final settlement,

γνόντες δὲ οἱ ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν οὔτ᾽ ἀποκωλύειν δυνατοὶ ὄντες, εἴ τ᾽

ἀπομονωθήσονται τῆς ξυμβάσεως κινδυνεύσοντες. The Mytilenean leaders

rationally understood their situation, γνόντες. They recognized that they were no longer

in control of the city and, should they not make the right decision at this critical moment,

would face grave danger, κινδυνεύσοντες. This is a simple and plain statement about the

reality of their situation. Thucydides, however, frames their recognition of danger in stark

terms for his reader; the syntax of this conditional phrase, i.e. a future passive tense in the

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[26] Thuc. 3.25.

[27] Thuc. 3.27. This incident has been repeatedly used as evidence in the debate concerning the general popularity of the Athenian empire. G.E.M. de Ste Croix argues that this incident proves the popularity of the Athenian empire with the *demos* in "The Character of the Athenian Empire," *Historia* 3 (1954/55), 3-4. D. W. Bradeen argues that the people generally supported their own oligarchs until the food ran out in "The Popularity of the Athenian Empire" *Historia* 9 (1960), 263-5. T.J. Quinn provides a broader analysis of the varying political interests which may have affected the outcome of this siege in "Political Groups in Lesbos During the Peloponnesian War" *Historia* 20 (1971), 405-17, C.W. Macleod analyzes Mytilenean speech to the Spartans (3.9-14) in his analysis of the limits of reasoning in "Reason and Necessity (Thuc. 3.9-14, 37-48) " in *Collected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1983); George Cawkwell (1997) agrees with Bradeen that it was hunger, not loyalty, that moved the *demos*," 97.

protasis and a future participle in the apodosis, represents a future emotional condition.[28]

The condition – if the leaders are excluded from the final settlement – is an option they

did not desire. The most certain result – κινδυνεύσοντες – takes on the force of a threat

or an "earnest appeal to the feelings." [29] In this case, where Thucydides is providing his

reader with insight into the psychological motivations of a group of people, it is arguable

that the earnest appeal is to the feelings of the reader in whom Thucydides is trying to

instill an understanding of danger. It is one thing to resist; it is quite another to continue

to resist stubbornly with no thought given to changes in the tactical situation which might

make resistance not only futile, but foolhardy.

　　In this instance it is not only the Mytilenean leaders to whom Thucydides

attributes a rational assessment of risk but also the people, ὁ δῆμος. In Thucydides'

assessment, they also recognized their dangerous position and made a rational decision.

Thucydides actually highlights this idea through a unique medium. He inserts the idea

into his rendition of Cleon's speech to the Athenian assembly calling for the

extermination of the entire Mytilenean population.[30] In this speech, Cleon berates the

mass of Athenians as being incapable of managing an empire but, in the case of the

Mytileneans, he puts equal burden on the mass and the elite.[31] Cleon argues that both had

an equal share in the decision and must suffer the ultimate penalty. Thucydides has Cleon

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[28] Smyth, 2328. Guy L. Cooper cites this instance in his study of fear as a causal force in Thucydides' analysis. He argues that this construction often provides "the idea of bleak inevitability, or fatal necessity" in a situation. See "A Neglected Idiom of Fear and Implied Causality in Thucydides," *The Classical Journal* 76 (1981), 213.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Thuc. 3.37-40. This debate in the Athenian assembly will be analyzed more thoroughly in Chapter 4.2, A New Reading of the Mytilenean Debate.

[31] Thuc. 3.37.

say that the people "considered it a less dangerous risk to throw in their lot with the aristocracy [than to revolt against their oligarchic government] and so joined their rebellion," ἀλλὰ τὸν μετὰ τῶν ὀλίγων κίνδυνον ἡγησάμενοι βεβαιότερον ξυναπέστησαν.[32] Thucydides uses κίνδυνον here to underscore that the mass of the Mytileneans did not feel any sense of safety or security. What they understood, in Thucydides' analysis, was that they were caught between two dangerous options and, when they rationally analyzed these options – oppose their leading citizens or oppose Athens – they recognized that the less dangerous option was the more acceptable one. Though Cleon's point is not in favor of the Mytilenean's interests, Thucydides uses the Mytlinean's actions to show how they were able to make a rational decision from the recognition of their dangerous position.

Thucydides uses similar language later in his account of the Melian Dialogue where his diction points to the idea that the Melians compare relative dangers.[33] When asked by the Athenians to justify why they thought the Spartans would accept danger on their behalf, the Melians responded that the Spartans would consider the risks faced on their account to be less dangerous, κινδύνους τε ἡμῶν ἕνεκα μᾶλλον ἡγούμεθ᾽ ἂν ... βεβαιοτέρους.[34] Providing an appropriate translation which carries the full impact of

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[32] Thuc. 3.39.6. Here I have modified Crawley's translation. Instead of "considered it a surer risk," Crawley provides the phrase "thought it safer." This dilutes the force of Thucydides' Greek and his use of the phrase κίνδυνον ἡγησάμενοι βεβαιότερον. Gomme provides the phrase "less dangerous risk" for κίνδυνον ... βεβαιότερον" and compares this passage to 5.108.1, κινδύνους ... βεβαιοτέρους," 4:176.

[33] Thuc. 5.85-112. Gomme points to this parallel (2:308). This dialogue will be analyzed – with a complete bibliography – in Chapter 4.3 A New Reading of the Melian Dialogue. The situation facing the Melians, however, has been discussed briefly in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant for all *Poleis*. In that section, the Melians' attempt to maintain neutrality was perceived by the Athenians as a threat. Thus it was in that instance too that the Melians were choosing between two sub-optimal options: submit or be destroyed.

[34] Thuc. 5.108.1. Gomme provides the translation "less dangerous risk" (4:176). See note above.

Thucydides' insistence on danger-filled imagery is a semantic puzzle.[35] I would render

Thucydides' Greek with this phrase: "we believe that they [the Spartans] would consider

dangers undertaken on our behalf to be consistent risks." The implication, as will be

discussed in greater detail later, is that risk undertaken on behalf of kinship is more

understandable and therefore more consistently expected in the anarchy of Greek

interstate relations.[36] But, even without a perfect translation it is clear that Thucydides

intended the impact on his contemporary Greek reader to be one of recognition. He

wanted his reader to recognize the dangers facing these groups of people and the

decisions made by them based on their own assessment of danger.

In this case, there are two seemingly rational reasons for the Melians' decision: a

tactical consideration and an appeal to perceived ties of kinship. While the emotional

appeal to kinship, τῆς δὲ γνώμης τῷ ξυγγενεῖ πιστότεροι, may not appear rational at

first – there is nothing about kinship that particularly lessens the danger – the rationality

comes into play when one considers that the Melians were relying on Greeks' proclivity

for using kinship, real or perceived, as a justification for intervention. There is some

reason to justify their "hope" that the Spartans will help, even if it is a narrow

justification.[37] The Melians explained to the Athenians that they trust in the Spartans

because "they are so close to the Peloponnese that they could operate more easily," πρὸς

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[35] Crawley provides the following translation: But we believe that they would be more likely to face even danger for our sake…

[36] The idea of intervention on behalf of ties of kinship, real or perceived, will be discussed in Chapter 3.3, Κίνδυνος and the Greek "Ethos of Intervention."

[37] Thucydides highlights the non-rationality of the Melians' reliance on hope elsewhere in the dialogue, 5.102, 5.104. As has been presented in Section 1.1 General Thesis, Thucydides conceives of hope as a "dangerous passion." See Cornford (1907), 167; Huart (1968), 145; Connor (1984), 153-7; Coby (1991), 83; Orwin (1994), 111-7; Allison (1997), 61; Bedford and Workman (2001), 65; Zumbrunnen (2002), 250.

μὲν τὰ ἔργα τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἐγγὺς κείμεθα.[38] Melos is, of course, an island and not terribly close to the Peloponnese – especially given Athenian naval dominance. Yet there is some merit to the Melians' analysis: Melos is the closest of the Cyclades to the Peloponnese and, as such, carries tactical significance for any Spartan incursions into or across the Aegean Sea in order to threaten Athenian dominance in that theater.[39] The Melians. therefore, were making a somewhat rational assessment of the situation from their perspective. Their determination that the danger was mitigated by the fact that their geographical position is of tactical significance to the Spartans, who happened to be their kin, is founded upon a certain degree of rationality based on the situation they are in at the moment. In the broader context, of course, this assessment was wrong and it will be shown that their hope for Spartan assistance clouded their overall judgement.[40]

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[38] Thuc. 5.108.

[39] Gomme, 4:176.

[40] See 4.3 The Melian Dialogue: A New Interpretation.

2.3.5 <u>Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Athenian and Spartan *Coup d'Oeil*</u>

Thucydides does highlight that even the Athenians, despite the fact that they lost the war, made some sound decisions based on a solid understanding of danger. Consequently, far from only pointing out their flaws, he also highlights these moments to show the instances in which the Athenians correctly understood danger. One such moment occurred in late 431 when the Athenians were preparing for what they correctly believed would be a long war. The Peloponnesians first invaded Attica in that year and were essentially thwarted by Pericles' strategy of abandoning the countryside to the invaders, keeping the hoplites from engaging in a set battle, and sending out cavalry to prevent raids on nearby areas.[1] While the Peloponnesians were ravaging Attic territory, Pericles refused to call an assembly out of his reasonable fear that they would make a passion-driven decision and bring about their own ruin by voting to engage the Peloponnesian infantry.[2]

As soon as the invaders had departed, however, the Athenians held an assembly to plan for the future.   The assembly made several quick but long-lasting strategic decisions. On a purely practical level, they established several guard-posts on both land and sea to be manned for the duration of the war.[3] More generally, they also established a national emergency fund of one thousand talents and a special fleet of one hundred of their best ships to remain in strategic reserve lest Athens be threatened by an enemy

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[1] Thuc. 2.18-23. For further analysis of Pericles' strategy in this opening phase of the war, especially on his use of cavalry, see J. Ober (1985), G.R. Bugh (1988), I.G. Spence (1990), and J. Hugh Hunter (2005). For a more general analysis of what types of operations were considered reasonable under Pericles' strategy, see A.J. Holladay, "Athenian Strategy in the Archidamian War," *Historia* 27 (1978), 399-427.

[2] Thuc. 2.22.1.

[3] Thuc. 2.24.1.

fleet.[4] Thucydides is explicit about their motives: these ships were not to be used except in conjunction with the emergency fund and "against the same peril, should such peril arise," περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ κινδύνου, ἢν δέῃ.[5] While the specific reason for this strategic reserve was to guard against an attack by sea, μὴ οἱ πολέμιοι νηΐτῃ στρατῷ ἐπιπλέωσι τῇ πόλει, Thucydides focuses his reader on the broader rational response to danger in strategic planning by highlighting κίνδυνος, τοῦ αὐτοῦ κινδύνου.[6] He teaches his reader by noting the specific threat and then expanding the analysis to a broader understanding of how to respond correctly to the prospect of danger. His general conclusion, τοῦ αὐτοῦ κινδύνου, ἢν δέῃ, was intended to remain in his reader's mind after the specific details of the assembly are forgotten: the people of Athens prepared themselves realistically for the real dangers of a long war. Their rational strategic planning in the opening phase of the war considered not only their momentary needs, but also the need to prepare for an unknown, yet possible, danger to the city.

Thucydides makes it clear that the Spartans also understood and incorporated a rational response to prospective danger into their planning process. An example is their garrison in Thyrea, the Argive-Laconian border district. In 424, the garrison had been

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[4] Thuc. 2.24.2.

[5] Thuc. 2.24.2.

[6] Thuc. 2.24.1. Gomme points out that Thucydides might be presenting specific wording very close to that which would have actually appeared in the decree passed by the assembly. The phrase νηΐτῃ στρατῷ represents, in his analysis, a "very formal expression" (2:82).

dispatched to help construct a fort for Aeginetan exiles.[7] Facing an Athenian invasion

force, which had already ravaged several cities along the eastern Peloponnesian coast, the

Aeginetans evacuated the fort they were building and retreated to the perceived safety of

their upper town.[8] The Spartan garrison, however, saw the situation differently and chose

not to shut themselves up in the city, deciding instead to occupy the high ground near the

city.[9]

Thucydides explains their motivation and the most important factor in their

tactical analysis: it was a rational response to danger. He explains that to be shut up

within the city seemed to the Spartans to be dangerous, ἀλλ' αὐτοῖς κίνδυνος ἐφαίνετο

ἐς τὸ τεῖχος κατακλῄεσθαι.[10] The danger was manifest to the Spartans, ἐφαίνετο; they

clearly understood the risks they were facing. They were no match for the Athenian force

that had already ravaged several similar cities, and the brevity of Thucydides' narrative –

a single paragraph to detail the entire incident – highlights the effective offensive

techniques with which the Athenians fought following their recent success at Pylos.[11]

Though the Spartans may have lost confidence in themselves due to their recent

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[7] The Aeginetans were expelled from Aegina by the Athenians in 431 under the pretense of having been the chief agents in bringing on the war (2.27). The Spartans help them with the construction of a fort (4.57.2). Gomme presents both the idea that the Athenians invaded Aegina to use as a base for future invasions of the Peloponnese and that they invaded to prevent the Peloponnesians from using the island similarly against Athens. He believes the defensive motive to be the more powerful (2:86). For further analysis of the relations between these three states, see A.J. Podlecki, "Athens and Aegina," *Historia* 25 (1976), 396-413; Thomas J. Figueira, "Aeginetan Membership in the Peloponnesian League," *Classical Philology* 76 (1981), 1-24; and Thomas J. Figueira, "Aeginetan Independence," *The Classical Journal* 79 (1983), 8-29.

[8] Thuc. 4.57.1.

[9] Thuc. 4.57.2.

[10] Thuc. 4.57.2.

[11] Thuc. 4.57.2. Rood, (1998), 55-6.

experiences with adversity at Sphacteria, they were not gripped by irrational fear.[12] According to Thucydides, they simply recognized that it would be dangerous for them to submit to a siege. They wanted to avoid a situation from which they might have no escape, a lesson learned from Sphacteria.

The Spartan motive in this instance is not one that readers familiar with the Spartans might expect; they did not choose the honor of the open battlefield or desire to meet their enemy in a quick action. They simply calculated the relative danger of the options and decided that it was too dangerous to be enclosed in a small space. Based on this analysis, they made a rational decision not to meet the superior force and die bravely and uselessly, but to maintain their flexible position and avoid combat if possible. Thucydides does not explicitly praise their decision. That is not his style. With his word choice, however, he guides his reader to the understanding that they were motivated by a rational understanding of the situation, ἐφαίνετο.[13] Rational decision making, in Thucydides' analysis of the war, is a goal to which every actor should aspire.

In the end, the Athenian forces were overwhelming and both the city and the Spartan commander were captured and sent to Athens.[14] The point, however, is not the outcome; even the good tactical plans can be defeated by such overwhelming force as the

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[12] Thuc. 4.55.3. Thucydides literally refers to the Spartans' experience "on the island." Hornblower contends that this is an implicit reference to Sphacteria, 2.218.

[13] Huart contends that verbs in the category of φαίνεσθαι are similar to δοκεῖν in their sense of rational perception of reality, 255-59.

[14] Thuc. 4.57.3. Thucydides makes no mention of the fate of the rest of the Spartan garrison. He reports that Tantalus, the Spartan commander, was wounded, captured, and eventually imprisoned with the other Spartan prisoners from the siege at Sphakteria (4.57.4).

Athenians presented in this instance.[15] The point is that Thucydides uses this brief section

of his narrative to show his readers the value of recognizing the real dangers in a tactical

situation and to react accordingly, as the Spartans did in this instance. The Spartans made

a decision about how, when, and where to engage the Athenians – or not – based not on

their measure of courage or honor, but on their assessment of the realities of the danger

facing them. Their rational decision-making ability, while it might appear less honorable

in the short run, was intended to help them avoid a disastrous fate both to themselves and

the Spartan state in the long run.[16]

One final passage provides an example of how Thucydides portrays both Athenian

and Spartan leaders analyzing a situation based on equally rational assessments of danger

and making tactical decisions accordingly. In his analysis of the closing phases of the

Athenian attack on Megara in 424, Thucydides highlights the intellect of both the

Athenians and the Spartans. The Athenians had already captured Megara's port, Nisaea,

and were preparing to assault Megara itself.[17] The Spartan general Brasidas was nearby

and reacted promptly to the news by marching his army quickly to Megara. He was,

however, refused entry by the cautious Megarians who chose to wait for the outcome of

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[15] John F. Charles argues that the amphibious force used in this instance was among the largest employed by Athens during the war. See "The Marines of Athens," *The Classical Journal* 44 (1948), 181-8.

[16] Paul Cartledge provides a detailed discussion of the far ranging consequences of the Spartan "disaster" at Pylos in *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300 to 362 B.C.* (New York: Routledge, 2d edition, 2002), 205-14. In this issue, the specter of Sphacteria seems to have influenced the garrison at Thyrea.

[17] Thucydides describes the activities of the "fifth column" within Megara that tried to help the Athenians capture Nisaea (4.66-69). He describes the final assault on the city and the preparations to attack Megara (4.69). Luis L. Losada provides a full analysis of this "fifth column" along with other instances of treachery in Thucydides' analysis of the war in *The Fifth Column in the Peloponnesian War* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), esp. 49-56. See also Lazenby (2001), 85-8; T.E. Wick and T.T. Wick (1979), 1-14; Ronald P. Legon (1981); T. Rood (1998), esp. 67-8; and J. Roisman (1993), esp. 93.

the battle before deciding which side to allow in to the city, the Athenians or the

Spartans.[18] After an indecisive cavalry engagement, both the Athenians and the Spartans

drew their forces up in line of battle and each waited on the other to make the first

move.[19]

Thucydides provides his analysis of the situation and demonstrates to his reader

what factors influenced the leaders' decision-making at this tense moment in the

campaign. He explains each leader's thought process:

> οἱ γὰρ Μεγαρῆς, ὡς οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἐτάξαντο μὲν παρὰ
> τὰ μακρὰ τείχη ἐξελθόντες, ἡσύχαζον δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ μὴ
> ἐπιόντων, λογιζόμενοι καὶ οἱ ἐκείνων στρατηγοὶ μὴ
> ἀντίπαλον εἶναι σφίσι τὸν κίνδυνον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὰ
> πλείω αὐτοῖς προυκεχωρήκει, ἄρξασι μάχης πρὸς
> πλέονας αὐτῶν ἢ λαβεῖν νικήσαντας Μέγαρα ἢ
> σφαλέντας τῷ βελτίστῳ τοῦ ὁπλιτικοῦ βλαφθῆναι,
> τοῖς δὲ ξυμπάσης τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ τῶν παρόντων
> μέρος ἕκαστον κινδυνεύειν εἰκότως ἐθέλειν τολμᾶν…

> The Athenians formed outside the long walls, and the
> enemy not attacking, there remained motionless; their
> generals having decided that the risk was too unequal. In
> fact most of their objects had been already attained; and
> they would have to begin a battle against superior numbers,
> and if victorious could only gain Megara, while a defeat
> would destroy the flower of their hoplite forces. For the
> enemy it was different; as even the states actually
> represented in his army risked each only a part of its entire
> force, he might well be more audacious (4.73.4).

Thucydides focuses his reader on the Athenian army's and the Spartan Brasidas'

awareness of the dangerous realities of the situation, both tactical and strategic.

Thucydides stresses that the Athenian leaders were logical in their assessment,

λογιζόμενοι καὶ οἱ ἐκείνων στρατηγοὶ. They gave the situation measured

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[18] Thuc. 4.70-71.

[19] Thuc. 4.73.1-2.

consideration and weighed the possibilities.[20] They conceded that the available force was not equal to the danger, μὴ ἀντίπαλον εἶναι σφίσι τὸν κίνδυνον. Thucydides' lesson is explicit: the Athenian leaders recognized and gave proper weight to the danger facing them.

With respect to the Spartans, Thucydides also highlights their logical risk assessment. By allowing the participle λογιζόμενοι also to govern the second half of this sentence, Thucydides demonstrates that he considers the Spartans also to have been making a rational analysis of danger. They understood that, while there was risk involved, κινδυνεύειν, their risk was not as great: they had superior numbers and the forces they had were not the "flower of their hoplite forces." Unlike the Athenians, the Spartans were most interested in facing the danger of a battle, κινδυνεύειν εἰκότως ἐθέλειν τολμᾶν.[21] While the syntax of this particular phrase is contorted, Thucydides' lesson to his reader is clear: the Spartans were in a position where the logical choice was to face danger – if one accepts the infinitive κινδυνεύειν as accurate – or at least to act boldly and aggressively, ἐθέλειν τολμᾶν.[22] Where danger motivated the Athenians to avoid battle, it did not deter

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[20] J.E. Lendon provides a detailed analysis of the decisions reached by both sides in this confrontation in *Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 1-6, 319. Lazenby (2004) contends that Thucydides' stated motive for the generals does not agree with Athens' general aims for this campaign, 87.

[21] Lendon (2010) argues that Brasidas understood that, to the Megarians inside the town, this stand-off appeared to be a "trial of manhood" which would sway the loyalties of those observing towards "the better men" who would win this standoff, 6.

[22] Gomme notes that the sentence as the manuscript has it "can hardly stand." He provides a brief analysis of the problem concerning the redundancy of the phrase κινδυνεύειν … ἐθέλειν τολμᾶν and concludes that one of the infinitives, κινδυνεύειν or τολμᾶν is merely an adscript to explain the other. His conclusion is that "no satisfactory correction has been made" (3:535). Hornblower agrees, 2.244. But regardless which infinitive is original, the concept of danger and rash action are essentially balanced and point Thucydides' reader to the same lesson.

the Spartans from seeking battle upon rational consideration of the relative nature of that

danger.

2.3.6 <u>Conclusion: Rational Plans Account for Κίνδυνος</u>

In this section I have shown that Thucydides emphasizes the term κίνδυνος in his narrative to help his reader understand the value of the ability to recognize the dangers and potential dangers of combat and to respond rationally. He shows that good generals did this in the war; even entire populations could do it. He is, in a sense, presenting a paradigm of rational planning at both the strategic and tactical level because his examples focus on those instances in which concerns of honor and shame were removed from the planning process in favor of more realistic measures of danger. The examples, in which Thucydides showcases both individuals and groups, make it clear that Thucydides believed it was fundamental for a good leader to be able to make rational decisions in the face of combat and in the face of cultural impulses that pushed for action on the basis of honor.

2.4 Κίνδυνος and Profit Maximizing Behavior

If one assumes that rational decisions are those based on principles of "profit maximizing behavior," then one might conclude that individuals who weigh the costs of their actions against the potential rewards are rational actors.[1] Thucydides' narrative highlights these decisions on two levels. First, some decisions have an ethical cost, namely the tension between τὸ δίκαιον and τὸ ξυμφέρον. It is a radical proposition on Thucydides' part to explicate this tension between selfless morality and self-interest in

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[1] The term "profit maximizing behavior" has been introduced in Chapter 1.2.2, Relevant Political Science Scholarship / Theories. It is a product of the "Self-Help Regime," defined as the inability of states under conditions of anarchy to depend for their security on anything other than their own power.

interstate relations.[2] These types of decisions do not always involve danger *per se*; the

factors involved are unique to each situation. Elsewhere, however, Thucydides highlights

the cost of an action with respect to the explicit concept of danger, κίνδυνος. These are

the occasions in which Thucydides also believes that certain leaders were conscious of

the relationship between risk and reward, and he points his reader to the importance of

that cognition as part of a rational decision making process.

In this section I will argue that Thucydides incorporates the term κίνδυνος into

his writing to link the concepts of risk and reward in his reader's mind. As discussed

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[2] Thucydides most famously makes this contrast explicit in part of the Melian Dialogues (5.85-11) when he writes Οὔκουν οἴεσθε τὸ ξυμφέρον μὲν μετ' ἀσφαλεία εἶναι, τὸ δὲ δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν μετὰ κινδύνου δρᾶσθαι, "then you do not adopt the view that expediency goes with security, while justice and honor cannot be followed without danger" (5.107). The dialogue will be analyzed in Chapter 4.2 A New Reading of the Melian Dialogue.

The concepts of justice and expedience are addressed in other notable passages and the subject of a wide ranger of modern scholarship. Lionel Pearson examines the two as part of a larger study of ethics in "Popular Ethics in the World of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 52 (1957), 228-44. A.G. Woodhead aruges that Thucydides presents a morally neutral view of power in *Thucydides and the Nature of Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). C.W. Macleod points to Thucydides' theme that the allies tacitly accepted the harsh world of expediency over justice in " Form and Meaning in the Melian Dialogue," *Historia* 23 (1974), 385-400. Arlene W. Saxenhouse looks at the lack of justice between cities as a societal norm in "Nature and Convention in Thucydides' History," *Polity* 10 (1978), 461-87. C.W. Macleod explores the limits of reasoning and morality in "Reason and Necessity (T. 3.9-14, 37-48)" in *Collected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). Clifford Orwin, "The Just and the Advantageous in Thucydides: The Case of the Mytilenian Debate," *The American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 485-94. Malcolm Heath analyzes the Athenians' rejection of justice in "Justice in Thucydides' Athenian Speeches," *Historia* 39 (1990), 385-400. Patrick Coby, "Enlightened Self-Interest in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydides Speakers on the Right of the Stronger and Inter-State Peace," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24 (1991), 67-90. Steven Forde explores the tension between justice and advantage in "Varieties of Realism: Thucydides and Machiavelli," *The Journal of Politics* 54 (1992), 372-93. A. B. Bosworth, "The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993), 30-44. J.V. Morrison examines the morality expressed in Thucydides' depiction of cities as characters in "Preface to Thucydides: Rereading the Corcyrean Conflict (1.24-55)," *Classical Antiquity* 18 (1999), 94-131; "Historical Lessons in the Melian Episode," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 130 (2000), 119-48; and "A Key Topos in Thucydides: The Comparisons of Cities and Individuals," *The American Journal of Philology* 115 (1994), 525-41. G.W. Cawkwell analyzes the concepts as they apply to the speeches of the Corcyraeans and Corinthians in *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 105-8. Nancy Kokaz argues that Thucydides was an advocate for moderation in "Moderating Power: A Thucydidean Perspective," *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), 27-49.

earlier, Thucydides' contemporaries lived in a dangerous world.[3] Beset by danger, the

Greeks did not necessarily perceive it as a negative force, often because risk could be

viewed as a potential source of positive gains. The many positive examples in this section

will attest that Thucydides does not believe this to be a bad thing. That is not to say that

Thucydides' contemporaries always understood the degrees of danger facing them, nor

were they always capable of mitigating the elements of random chance in dangerous

situations. Thucydides, however, incorporates both degrees of danger and elements of

chance in his conception of κίνδυνος.[4] In this section, I will show Thucydides'

perception of successful leaders as those who correctly gauged the links between risk and

reward. Examples will be broken down into two main types: the first highlights leaders'

perceptions of the direct correlation between risk and reward; the second highlights

leaders' perceptions of the dangerous nature of random chance. Across both categories,

however, I will argue that Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to demonstrate to his reader that

successful leaders use rational analysis of the variables in the many dangerous situations

they face, in order to mitigate the risk and maximize the potential reward.

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[3] Chapter 2.2 Κίνδυνος as a General State of Nature.

[4] Johann Knobloch explores the semantic links between κίνδυνος and images of random chance, specifically dice-games. See "Griech κίνδυνος mit 'Gefahr' und das Würfelspiel," *Glotta* 53 (1975), 78-81.

2.4.1 Κίνδυνος: A Measure of Potential Reward

The first series of examples is found in at the assembly of the Peloponnesian League in summer 432. The allies had been assembled at the insistence of the Corinthians. Frustrated by Athenian intervention in the conflict between Corcyra and Epidamnus, and offended by Athenian actions towards their own colony at Potidaea, the Corinthians wanted the Peloponnesian League to declare war on Athens. First, however, they had to convince the Spartans that war was necessary. To this end, they addressed the assembled allies and presented their grievances.

It is the Athenians, however, whom Thucydides provides as one of the first examples in which the actors correctly perceived danger as an opportunity for real gains in security and power. He makes this clear to his reader in his rendition of the Athenians' speech to the Peloponnesian League.[1] After the Corinthians made their attempt to goad the Spartans into a war, an Athenian delegation which just happened to be in Sparta on other business tried to convince the Spartans not to rush its decision to start a war.[2] While their general theme is to "call attention to the great power of Athens," their method of

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[1] Thuc. 1.73-78. For analysis of these speeches, see W.M. Calder, "The Corcyrean-Corinthian Speeches in Thucydides I," *Classical Journal* 50 (1955), 179-80; Jacqueline de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, Philip Thody, trans. (Oxford: Alden Press, 1963), 242-72; A.E. Raubitscheck "The Speech of the Athenians at Sparta," in *The Speeches in Thucydides*, P. Stadter, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 33-48; Gregory Crane, "Fear and Pursuit of Risk: Corinth on Athens, Sparta and the Peloponnesians," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 122 (1992), 227-56 and *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 264-73; William Desmond, "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 359-79; for survey of scholarship, see M. Meier, "Problem der Thukydides-Interpretation und das Perikles-Bild des Historikers," *Tyche* 21 (2006), esp. n. 154, 166, 172, 175.

[2] Thuc. 1.72.

doing so is to remind the Spartans of how they attained such power: by facing danger.[3]

Thucydides has them say:

> Καὶ τὰ μὲν πάνυ παλαιὰ τί δεῖ λέγειν, ὧν ἀκοαὶ μᾶλλον λόγων μάρτυρες ἢ ὄψις τῶν ἀκουσομένων; τὰ δὲ Μηδικὰ καὶ ὅσα αὐτοὶ ξύνιστε, εἰ καὶ δι' ὄχλου μᾶλλον ἔσται αἰεὶ προβαλλομένοις, ἀνάγκη λέγειν· καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἐδρῶμεν, ἐπ'ὠφελίᾳ ἐκινδυνεύετο, ἧς τοῦ μὲν ἔργου μέρος μετέσχετε, τοῦ δὲ λόγου μὴ παντός, εἴ τι ὠφελεῖ, στερισκώμεθα.

> We need not refer to remote antiquity: there we could appeal to the voice of tradition, but not to the experience of our audience. But to the Persian wars and contemporary history we must refer, although we are rather tired of continually bringing this subject forward. In our action during that war we ran great risks to obtain certain advantages: you had your share in the solid results; do not try to rob us of all share in the good that the glory may do us (1.73.2).

Thucydides has the Athenians explain that they acted in the face of danger that was beyond their control; the verb signifying their willingness to act is in the first person, ἐδρῶμεν, while the danger is presented as an impersonal force, ἐκινδυνεύετο.[4] Their motive, as Thucydides' diction suggests, was material gain, ἐπ'ὠφελίᾳ. Certainly this gain appears in the translation as purely conceptual "glory." But in Thucydides' Greek it is much more tangible, τι ὠφελεῖ, "something that is a benefit or profitable." [5] Thucydides has the Athenians continue to address this issue throughout their speech. He makes the dangers they faced clear to his reader: they abandoned their city, they

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[3] Thuc. 1.72.1.

[4] Thucydides' conception of danger as an impersonal force is discussed is Chapter 2.2 Κίνδυνος as a General State of Nature.

[5] Gregory Crane *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 269. In his analysis of the speech, Crane uses both the phrase "concrete advantage" and "material advantage" to define Thucydides' Greek τι ὠφελεῖ.

sacrificed their property, and they staked their lives on the "desperate hope" for a reborn city.[6] He makes the material gain for facing this danger equally explicit: the Athenians' empire. Thucydides has them say that they acquired their empire not by conquest over other Greeks, but because the Spartans "were unwilling to prosecute to its conclusion the war against the barbarian," καὶ γὰρ ὑμῶν μὲν οὐκ ἐθελησάντων παραμεῖναι πρὸς τὰ ὑπόλοιπα τοῦ βαρβάρου.[7] The Athenians acquired their power from their willingness to face the dangers that surrounded them, ἐδρῶμεν, ἐπ'ὠφελίᾳ ἐκινδυνεύετο. Highlighting this, Thucydides explicates the correlation between risk and reward. In a dangerous environment, taking the proper perspective on the existence of danger and making the right choices when it arises can lead to material gains.

In the very next section of the speech, Thucydides focuses his reader on the idea that the Athenians consciously weighed the advantages of their empire, in other words "the potential gain," against the danger involved in both acquisition and maintenance. He has them explain the reason they established themselves as the dominant power over so many other *poleis*, namely their service to the Hellenic cause in the wars against Persia.[8] Though they argue that they do not deserve the "extreme unpopularity with the Hellenes," it is because of this unpopularity that the Athenians no longer consider it safe to give up their empire.[9] Thucydides uses this logic to present his reader with an explicit link between perceived danger and potential reward. He has the Athenians say:

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[6] Thuc. 1.74.2-3. Thucydides also makes the danger explicit in his description of the Athenians' role at Marathon. He writes that they "were in the forefront of the danger," φαμὲν γὰρ Μαραθῶνί τε μόνοι προκινδυνεῦσαι (1.73.4).

[7] Thuc. 1.75.2.

[8] Thuc. 1.72.2-74.4.

[9] Thuc. 1.75.1-4.

> πᾶσι δὲ ἀνεπίφθονον τὰ ξυμφέροντα τῶν μεγίστων
> πέρι κινδύνων εὖ τίθεσθαι.
>
> And no one can quarrel with a people for making, in
> matters of tremendous risk, the best provision that it can for
> its interests (1.75.5).

When faced with danger, an actor can be expected to arrange things to his own

advantage. Thucydides' Greek illustrates his conscious effort to focus his reader on this

concept, the relationship between danger and advantage. Note the unique anastrophe with

which Thucydides highlights the magnitude of the danger, τῶν μεγίστων πέρι

κινδύνων; the accent on πέρι is technically out of place and points the preposition to the

preceding word.[10] The anastrophe pulls danger out of the flow of the sentence and

highlights both the magnitude, μεγίστων, and the danger itself. Thucydides puts his

reader's focus on the external dangers as he also considers the benefits, τὰ ξυμφέροντα.

The rewards are attainable. The dangers, however, are great. Thucydides' grammar

focuses his reader's attention on the danger to help him understand the dangerous

position out of which Athenian power grew. The lesson is clear: before engaging in

dangerous action, take care to understand the relationship between the potential reward

and the cost.

In his depiction of the same conference, moreover, Thucydides has the

Corinthians indicate that the ability to live without danger is itself a potential reward for

dangerous action.[11] The Corinthians were angry with Athenian actions at both Corcyra

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[10] Smyth, 175, 1665.

[11] Thuc. 1.119-124.

and Potidaea and demanded that the Peloponnesian League begin a war with Athens.[12]

After reminding their audience of the common grievances with Athens, proclaiming an

optimistic outlook on the war's potential course, and discussing how best the league

might suborn Athens' allies to its own interests, the Corinthians call for immediate action

against what they see as impending disaster should they delay.[13] Thucydides explicitly

refers to κίνδυνος twice in their final appeal. He has them say:

> ἀλλὰ νομίσαντες ἐς ἀνάγκην ἀφῖχθαι, ὦ ἄνδρες
> ξύμμαχοι, καὶ ἅμα τάδε ἄριστα λέγεσθαι, ψηφίσασθε
> τὸν πόλεμον μὴ φοβηθέντες τὸ αὐτίκα δεινόν, τῆς δ᾽
> ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ διὰ πλείονος εἰρήνης ἐπιθυμήσαντες· ἐκ
> πολέμου μὲν γὰρ εἰρήνη μᾶλλον βεβαιοῦται, ἀφ᾽
> ἡσυχίας δὲ μὴ πολεμῆσαι οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀκίνδυνον. καὶ
> τὴν καθεστηκυῖαν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι πόλιν τύραννον
> ἡγησάμενοι ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως καθεστάναι, ὥστε τῶν
> μὲν ἤδη ἄρχειν, τῶν δὲ διανοεῖσθαι, παραστησώμεθα
> ἐπελθόντες, καὶ αὐτοί τε ἀκινδύνως τὸ λοιπὸν οἰκῶμεν
> καὶ τοὺς νῦν δεδουλωμένους Ἕλληνας
> ἐλευθερώσωμεν.

> Delay not, fellow allies, but convinced of the necessity of
> the crisis and the wisdom of this counsel, vote for the war,
> undeterred by its immediate terrors, but looking beyond to
> the lasting peace by which it will be succeeded. Out of war
> peace gains fresh stability, but to refuse to abandon repose
> for war is not so sure a method of avoiding danger. We
> must believe that the tyrant city that has been established in
> Hellas has been established against all alike, with a
> program of universal empire, part fulfilled, part in
> contemplation; let us then attack and reduce it, and win
> future security for ourselves and freedom for the Hellenes
> who are now enslaved (1.124.2-3).

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[12] Thucydides narrates the events between Corinth and Corcyra, 1.24-55. He narrates the events between Athens and Corinth concerning Potideia, 1.56-65. The Corinthians "denounce Athens and demand war," 1.119.1.

[13] Thuc. 1.124.2.

Thucydides focuses his reader on danger – more specifically the desirable state of being without danger – by twice putting it in the foreground, ἀκίνδυνον and ἀκινδύνως. The link between danger and potential gain is unique in this instance because a variant of κίνδυνος itself is the potential gain even though the Corinthians are trying to convince the Spartans to go to war, certainly a dangerous option. Thus it is that they argue that the choice not to engage in war is not necessarily without danger, ἀφ' ἡσυχίας δὲ μὴ πολεμῆσαι οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀκίνδυνον. Thucydides is, perhaps, making another comment on the ever-present violence in Greek society.[14] Yet the Corinthians' main point is also their final one: they want to attack preemptively to establish a future without danger. While these goals may appear antithetical – a preemptive attack on powerful Athens is certainly not without danger – their particular logic is not the point. The point is that Thucydides' Corinthians say the Peloponnesians have only dangerous options: to live with the threat of Athenian aggression or to attack preemptively.[15] The Corinthians' goal is to establish a new, less dangerous status quo. Thucydides' representation of danger is stark. His variants of κίνδυνος, ἀκίνδυνον and ἀκινδύνως, focus his reader on the real issue: all decisions must be made in a dangerous world and one rational approach is to focus on the potential material benefits from the most pressing danger. Thucydides' reader, who knows the outcome of this initial attack is a 27-year period of violent conflict, might recognize that the Corinthians' logic is not without flaw. But that same

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[14] See Chapter 2.2 Κίνδυνος as the General State of Nature.

[15] Gregory Crane (1992) does not cite this passage specifically. But it is in line with his general argument that the Corinthians were not embellishing Athenian power when they attempted to instill fear in their Spartan allies. See also Desmond (2006).

reader should also recognize Thucydides' underlying message that danger is always there but can be balanced against the potential rewards of calculated action.

Though the Spartans were also present at the conference at which the Athenians and Corinthians spoke, Thucydides makes no explicit mention of their understanding of the relationship between risk and reward. Later, however, he provides a few examples which highlight how the risk versus reward paradigm affected Spartan military decisions. One such example can be found in Thucydides' analysis of the Athenians' siege of the Spartans on Sphacteria. The Spartans had been trapped on the island after a failed assault on the Athenian fortifications at Pylos in 425.[16] After a Spartan offer of peace was rejected by the Athenian assembly, both the besiegers and besieged found themselves in dire straits from lack of food and water.[17] The Spartans, however, received assistance from a somewhat unlikely source, the Helots. The Spartans had promised freedom to any Helot who smuggled food or water to the trapped soldiers.[18] Thucydides uses this unique arrangement to highlight the connection between risk and reward and to show how it affects decision-making. He writes:

> καὶ ἐσῆγον ἄλλοι τε παρακινδυνεύοντες καὶ μάλιστα
> οἱ Εἵλωτες, ἀπαίροντες ἀπὸ τῆς Πελοποννήσου
> ὁπόθεν τύχοιεν καὶ καταπλέοντες ἔτι νυκτὸς ἐς τὰ
> πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος τῆς νήσου. μάλιστα δὲ ἐτήρουν
> ἀνέμῳ καταφέρεσθαι· ῥᾷον γὰρ τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν
> τριήρων ἐλάνθανον, ὁπότε πνεῦμα ἐκ πόντου εἴη·
> ἄπορον γὰρ ἐγίγνετο περιορμεῖν, τοῖς δὲ ἀφειδὴς ὁ
> κατάπλους καθειστήκει· ἐπώκελλον γὰρ τὰ πλοῖα

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[16] Thuc. 4.8-14. Bibliography of scholarship on this battle has already been presented in 2.3.2, Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

[17] The Athenians reject the Spartans' offer of peace (4.22). Both sides in the siege find themselves in difficulty (4.26).

[18] Thuc. 4.26.5.

τετιμημένα χρημάτων, καὶ οἱ ὁπλῖται περὶ τὰς κατάρσεις τῆς νήσου ἐφύλασσον. ὅσοι δὲ γαλήνῃ κινδυνεύσειαν, ἡλίσκοντο.

The Helots accordingly were most forward to engage in this risky traffic, putting off from this or that part of the Peloponnesus, and running in by night on the seaward side of the island. They were best pleased, however, when they could catch a wind to carry them in. It was more easy to elude the triremes on guard, when it blew from the seaward, as it then became impossible for them to anchor round the island; while the Helots had their boats valued at their worth in money, and ran them ashore without caring how they landed, being sure to find the soldiers waiting for them at the divers landing places. But all who risked it in fair weather were taken (4.26.6-7).

Thucydides explicitly mentions danger twice in this section, παρακινδυνεύοντες and

κινδυνεύσειαν. Certainly the reader is already aware of the grave danger to which the

Helots were submitting themselves; Thucydides mentions the Athenian triremes, the

variable weather, the hazardous boat landings on the beach. Thucydides fills his reader's

mind with dangerous imagery in order to define the conditions under which the Helots

were making their decision. The Helots see the potential reward, their freedom, as being

worth the risk – which also shows how important freedom is to these Greeks.[19] They

provide for Thucydides a positive example of how certain individuals or groups were able

to operate in dangerous conditions. Faced with dangers all around, the Helots weighed

those dangers against the potential rewards for their actions and made their decisions

accordingly.

Thucydides also notes those occasions on which Spartan leaders seem to have

incorrectly judged the degree of risk and thus sacrificed their opportunity for significant

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[19] Fanoula Papazoglou cites this as one of a very few instances in which Helots were granted their freedom in exchange for military service in "Sur la condition des hilotes affranchis," *Historia* 44 (1995), 371. He is quick to note, however, that this is quickly followed by a "tragic end" (372, Thuc. 4.80).

material gains. In 429/8, for example, the leaders of the Spartan fleet overestimated the

risk facing them and missed a chance for military success in Athens' port, the Piraeus.

Having suffered defeat in a naval battle near Naupactus, the Peloponnesians sailed

towards Corinth to avoid further confrontation with the Athenian fleet.[20] Thucydides

notes that Cnemus, Brasidas and the other Peloponnesian leaders arrived at Corinth and

were persuaded to make a surprise attack on the Piraeus.[21] Thucydides additionally notes

that the Piraeus was "naturally left unguarded and open."[22]Thucydides' comment on the

Peloponnesians' execution of their plan highlights their miscalculation of the magnitude

of the danger. On the night of the attack, they launched their ships from Nisaea, just south

of Megara, but did not attack the Piraeus as planned. Thucydides writes:

> καὶ ἀφικόμενοι νυκτὸς καὶ καθελκύσαντες ἐκ τῆς
> Νισαίας τὰς ναῦς ἔπλεον ἐπὶ μὲν τὸν Πειραιᾶ οὐκέτι,
> ὥσπερ διενοοῦντο, καταδείσαντες τὸν κίνδυνον (καί
> τις καὶ ἄνεμος αὐτοὺς λέγεται κωλῦσαι), ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς
> Σαλαμῖνος τὸ ἀκρωτήριον τὸ πρὸς Μέγαρα ὁρῶν·

> Arriving by night, they launched the vessels from Nisaea
> but sailed not to the Piraeus as they had originally intended,
> being afraid of the risk (besides which there was some talk
> of a wind having stopped them), but to the point of Salamis
> that looks toward Megara (2.93.4).[23]

The Peloponnesians were afraid of the dangers they perceived facing them,

καταδείσαντες τὸν κίνδυνον. This is significant because Thucydides implies that this is

not simply a case of the rational recognition of danger and an *ad hoc* adjustment of

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[20] Thuc. 2.92.4-6.

[21] Thuc. 2.93.1.

[22] Thuc. 2.93.1. Thucydides says the port was unguarded and open on account of Athens' superiority on the sea, ἦν δὲ ἀφύλακτος καὶ ἄκλῃστος εἰκότως διὰ τὸ ἐπικρατεῖν πολὺ τῷ ναυτικῷ.

[23] The "point of Salamis that looks towards Megara" is thought to be the Boudoron, an Athenian fort. See W.E. McLeod, "Boudoron, an Athenian Fort on Salamis," *Hesperia* 29 (1960), 316-23.

tactics. He seems to indict the leaders' unwillingness to accept a reasonable risk by saying

that there was a vague report of some wind which might have stopped them, τις καὶ

ἄνεμος αὐτοὺς λέγεται κωλῦσαι. Thucydides' use of the impersonal form of the verb

λέγεται presents his negative appraisal of the situation, his contemptuous rejection of an

excuse put forward by irresolute leaders.[24] It is as if he is implying that "it is said – but

not necessarily believed – that a wind stopped them." Thucydides later makes an explicit

judgment, noting that they "might easily have [sailed into the port] if their hearts had

been a little firmer; certainly no wind would have prevented them."[25] His point is that the

Peloponnesian leaders used the unpredictable nature of the weather to justify a decision

based on their incorrect assessment of the danger and their unwillingness to commit to

battle. They misjudged the potential for success and the material gains to be had. The

Athenians, on mere rumors and belief that the enemy was sailing into the port, were

struck with "a panic … as serious as any that had occurred during the war."[26] Thucydides

is clear that there was reward to be gained from an unexpected attack that far outweighed

the danger to be faced.[27] His contemptuous comment with regard to the Peloponnesian

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[24] H.D. Westlake, "λέγεται in Thucydides" *Mnemosyne* 30 (1977), 353.

[25] Thuc. 2.94.1.

[26] Thuc. 2.94.1. Hornblower points to Xen. *Hell*. 5.1.21 as evidence of the damage a "small force with the advantage of surprise" might do to the Athenian port, 1.370. Xenophon narrates how a small Spartan force led by Teleutias surprised the Athenians with a dawn raid on the Piraeus, damaging several triremes and capturing several merchant ships and their crews, 5.1.21-22.

[27] This is similar to the advice given in Sicily by Lamachus in 415 (6.49.2) and Demosthenes in 431 (7.42.3). Both examples have been analyzed in 2.3.2, Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples

leaders guides his reader to believe that they were wrong to avoid danger.[28] More rational

leaders, in Thucydides' mind, would have taken note of the danger and attacked, knowing

that their objective outweighed the risk they were taking.

Certain individual Spartan leaders, however, are given credit for their

understanding of the relationship between risk and reward. Once such Spartan is

Gylippus, who served as an advisor to the Syracusans against the Athenians. By 413, the

Syracusans had nearly completed their efforts to shut the entire Athenian force inside the

Great Harbor.[29] When Gylippus recognized that the Athenians were preparing one last-

ditch effort to break out, he addressed the Syracusan forces.[30] He focused on the

Athenians' recent defeats and theorized that they no longer had the spirit to fight

effectively.[31] Thucydides has Gylippus close his speech with an explicit judgment on the

relationship between risk and reward in order to describe the conditions under which he is

making his decisions. Thucydides has him say:

> καὶ κινδύνων οὗτοι σπανιώτατοι οἳ ἂν ἐλάχιστα ἐκ τοῦ
> σφαλῆναι βλάπτοντες πλεῖστα διὰ τὸ εὐτυχῆσαι
> ὠφελῶσιν
>
> And the rarest dangers are those in which failure brings
> little loss and success the greatest advantage (7.68.3).

Thucydides' Gylippus puts danger in the forefront of his mens' minds by explaining that

the potential reward for this danger is worth the cost. Certainly there was often a marginal

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[28] Thucydides' analysis of this incident parallels his analysis of Nicias' seeming inability to be decisive during certain phases of the Syracusan campaign, see especially 7.42 which is further analyzed in 2.3.2 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

[29] Thuc. 7.59.3-60.1.

[30] Thuc. 7.65.

[31] Thuc. 7.66-67.

difference between the costs of failure and the rewards of success in Classical Greek battle.[32] But in this particular instance Gylippus sees something beyond the normal expectations. That is why Thucydides highlights his analysis of the situation by presenting such a unique image of the danger, κινδύνων οὗτοι σπανιώτατοι. Where most pre-battle decisions take place under conditions of an indeterminable risk versus reward paradigm, Gylippus sees in this particular instance that the paradigm is heavily skewed towards the potential rewards. He uses this to encourage his men with the idea that this is a risk worth taking and a risk that has been heavily mitigated by the Athenians' state of despair. He has previously described to his men that the "excess of [the Athenians] sufferings and the necessities of their present distress have made them desperate; they have no confidence."[33] Thucydides shows his reader that Gylippus was a good enough leader to be able to say that "in most instances we don't know if the rewards are worth the cost. But at this moment, take heart. I know we are most definitely facing a win-win situation." The Syracusans, in Gylippus' analysis, simply cannot lose. Thucydides highlights this analysis to present his reader a clear image of Gylippus' ability to find clarity in what are normal dangerous conditions of certain risks and uncertain rewards.

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[32] Peter Krentz argues that the victors in hoplite battle were only marginally better off, suffering between 3-10% casualty rates while the defeated suffered 10-20%. See "Casualties in Hoplite Battles," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 26 (1985), 13-20.

[33] Thuc. 7.67.4. Felix M. Wasserman points to Thucydides' use of Gylippus' speech as a foil to that of Nicias with a focus on the Spartan's seeming rejection of conservative values and his tendency to act in a bold manner in "The Voice of Sparta in Thucydides," *The Classical Journal* 59 (1964), 295. John T. Kirby highlights the harsh realism with respect to the Athenians position as a form of encouragement in Gylippus' speech in "Narrative Structure and Technique in Thucydides VI-VII," *Classical Antiquity* 2 (1983), 187-90. Elizabeth Keitel argues that Thucydides' presentation of the speeches prior to this battle (7.61-69) serves to highlight the intensity and the tactics of the leaders in this battle in "The Influence of Thucydides 7.61-71 on Sallust *Cat*. 20-21," *The Classical Journal* 82 (1987), 293-300.

2.4.2 <u>Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples)</u>

Some of what Thucydides has to say about danger can be taken as a statement on "random chance" in warfare. He often uses κίνδυνος to present another perspective on what other authors might call *tyche*, τύχη. In other words, for Thucydides κίνδυνος can be a condition synonymous with gambling against unknown odds.[1] This is not to say that every Thucydidean instance of κίνδυνος represents an illogical "toss of the dice" based on nothing more than the hope of a positive outcome. To the contrary, Thucydides merely points to this idea on occasion to highlight an occasional condition of warfare subject to forces outside of men's control regardless the level of rationality in the planning process. Thucydides uses this to convey to his reader a practical lesson: rational leaders understand the random conditions and uncertainties of war and can still resolve themselves to accept the risks if the potential rewards are great enough. Chance itself is one of the dangerous conditions leaders must recognize and contend with as they make decisions.

The first example of Thucydides' analysis of random danger is intertwined with another example already discussed in this chapter: the Athenian delegations' speech at

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[1] For in-depth philological analysis of the semantic links between κίνδυνος and images of random chance, specifically dice-games, see Johann Knobloch "Griech κίνδυνος mit 'Gefahr' und das Würfelspiel," *Glotta* 53 (1975), 78-81.

Sparta in 432/1.[2] In their effort to urge the Spartans to weigh their options carefully, they

say that the Spartans should be aware, according to Thucydides' rendition of the speech,

that there is a very dangerous element of chance in military decisions:

> Βουλεύεσθε οὖν βραδέως ὡς οὐ περὶ βραχέων, καὶ μὴ ἀλλοτρίαις γνώμαις καὶ ἐγκλήμασι πεισθέντες οἰκεῖον πόνον πρόσθησθε. τοῦ δὲ πολέμου τὸν παράλογον, ὅσος ἐστί, πρὶν ἐν αὐτῷ γενέσθαι προδιάγνωτε· μηκυνόμενος γὰρ φιλεῖ ἐς τύχας τὰ πολλὰ περιίστασθαι, ὧν ἴσον τε ἀπέχομεν καὶ ὁποτέρως ἔσται ἐν ἀδήλῳ κινδυνεύεται. ἰόντες τε οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐς τοὺς πολέμους τῶν ἔργων πρότερον ἔχονται, ἃ χρῆν ὕστερον δρᾶν, κακοπαθοῦντες δὲ ἤδη τῶν λόγων ἅπτονται.

> Take time then in forming your resolution, as the matter is of great importance; and do not be persuaded by the opinions and complaints of others and so bring trouble on yourselves, but consider the vast influence of accident in war, before you are engaged in it. As it continues, it generally becomes an affair of chances, chances from which neither of us is exempt, and whose event we must risk in the dark. It is a common mistake in going to war to begin at the wrong end, to act first, and wait for disaster to discuss the matter (1.78.1-3).

The translation illustrates the random factors in war "whose event we must risk in the

dark," but Thucydides' Greek is more explicit: ὁποτέρως ἔσται ἐν ἀδήλῳ

κινδυνεύεται. Thucydides' use of the impersonal κινδυνεύεται puts the concept of

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[2] Thuc. 1.73-78. One of the major themes of this speech is the Athenians' famous justification for empire, the "fear, honor, and profit" motive (1.76.2). This is the section of the speech that is most often used in political science analysis of Thucydides' Realist tendencies. See Michael Palmer, "Love of Glory and the Common Good," *The American Political Science Review* 76 (1982), 825-36; Steven Forde, "Thucydides on the Causes of Athenian Imperialism," *The American Political Science Review* 80 (1986), 433-48; Clifford Orwin, "Justifying Empire: The Speeche of the Athenians and the Problem of Justice in Thucydides," *The Journal of Politics* 48 (1986), 72-85; Daniel Garst, "Thucydides and Neorealism," *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989), 3-27; William O. Chittick and Annette Freyberg-Inan, "Chiefly For Fear, Next For Honour, Lastly For Profit: An Analysis of Foreign Policy Motivation in the Peloponnesian War," *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), 69-90; William Desmond, "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 359-79; Richard Ned Lebow, "Fear, Interest and Honour: Outlines of a Theory of International Relations," *International Affairs* 82 (2006), 431-8.

danger in the foreground. Whatever will happen is going to present unknown danger, ἐν ἀδήλῳ κινδυνεύεται. The Athenians declare that the Spartans – and hence Thucydides' reader – must give pause to consider this or risk being like so many others who act first, and discuss other options later, possibly after meeting disaster.[3] Thucydides is not counseling that war be avoided at all costs. He only has the Athenians suggest that the Spartans consider the uncertainties "before [the Spartans] engage in it." As has been discussed, Thucydides' world is dangerous and violent.[4] What Thucydides stresses here is another dimension: war may present opportunities, but before those opportunities can be sought, consideration should also be given to the dangerous uncertainties that will inevitably affect war's outcome.

Thucydides provides a negative example of this in his depiction of one Athenian's inability to manage the dangerous element of chance in battle: Hippocrates. In 424, he led the Athenian force that invaded Boeotia and established a fortified position at Delium.[5] Most of the Athenian light troops were quickly sent back to Athens while the hoplites stayed to complete the fortifications.[6] They were eventually met by a hastily assembled Boeotian force and Hippocrates gave a short pre-battle exhortation. Thucydides has him say:

> παραστῇ δὲ μηδενὶ ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῇ ἀλλοτρίᾳ οὐ
> προσῆκον τοσόνδε κίνδυνον ἀναρριπτοῦμεν. ἐν γὰρ
> τῇ τούτων ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας ὁ ἀγὼν ἔσται· καὶ ἢν

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[3] The concept of "acting first" is discussed in Chapter 3.2 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Action.

[4] See chapter 2.2.

[5] Thuc. 4.89-90. The details of this battle, its main characters and the scholarship on both have already been presented in 2.2.1, Danger: A Constant for All Poleis.

[6] Thuc. 4.90.4.

νικήσωμεν, οὐ μή ποτε ὑμῖν Πελοποννήσιοι ἐς τὴν χώραν ἄνευ τῆς τῶνδε ἵππου ἐσβάλωσιν, ἐν δὲ μιᾷ μάχῃ τήνδε τε προσκτᾶσθε καὶ ἐκείνην μᾶλλον ἐλευθεροῦτε.

None of you must suppose that we are going out of our way to run this risk in the country of another. Fought in their territory the battle will be for ours; if we conquer, the Peloponnesians will never invade your country without the Boeotian horse, and in one battle you will win Boeotia and in a manner free Attica (4.95.2).

Even before this speech, Thucydides has referred to the pending battle more in terms of a contest or game than a bloody struggle. The Boeotian general, Pagondas, is described as urging his men to go against the Athenians and make a trial of it, ἰέναι ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους καὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα ποιεῖσθαι.[7] Thucydides' rendition of Hippocrates' speech reinforces this motif and focuses his reader on the connection between random chance and danger, προσῆκον τοσόνδε κίνδυνον ἀναρριπτοῦμεν. The verb, ἀναρριπτοῦμεν, can be tied to dice games and the reader can almost imagine Hippocrates shaking his hand as if tossing dice while acknowledging to his men the random chance in battle.[8] Thucydides uses this image to focus his reader on Hippocrates' shortcomings as a leader. After acknowledging the element of chance, Hippocrates focuses his men on the potential gains, the chance to defeat an enemy on foreign soil and to defend Athens from future invasion. In Hippocrates' mind, the lives of his men were worth a roll of the dice and Thucydides wants his reader to see this. By linking κίνδυνον and ἀναρριπτοῦμεν, Thucydides highlights the dangerous gamble of battle. The outcome of the battle, of course, makes it clear that Hippocrates was wrong – dead wrong – to have assumed this

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[7] Thuc. 4.91.1.

[8] Knobloch (1975), 79-80.

risk: the Athenians were routed and Hippocrates was killed along with nearly a thousand hoplites. It was "perhaps the worst [disaster] ever suffered by a hoplite army in a pitched battle."[9] Thucydides highlights that it was a dangerous gamble in the first place. His reader is guided to recognize that leaders face incalculable risks in battle and simply acknowledging that those risks include random elements of chance does not mitigate them.

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[9] Thuc. 4.101.2. Lazenby, 90. Xenophon points to the magnitude of this disaster as one reason "the prestige of Athens by comparison with the Boeotians has been lowered" (*Mem*. 3.5.5).

2.4.3 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Non-Athenian Examples)

Certain Spartans also provide Thucydides with opportunities to show both positive and negative examples of how to handle the dangers of chance. He highlights in Brasidas, for instance, the ability to recognize the dangerous chaos and random events which define long-term combat operations.[1] In 424, Brasidas led an army of 1,700 hoplites towards the region of Thrace.[2] He moved quickly enough to pass through Thessaly and reach the Chalcidice peninsula "before any armed force could be assembled to stop him."[3] Once there he persuaded some cities to revolt and eventually marched against the city of Acanthus where the citizens were divided on whether or not to admit him.[4] To settle the question, the Acanthians allowed Brasidas to address the assembly and Thucydides provides a rendition of his speech. In the opening section of this speech, Brasidas asks the Acanthians for support and describes the risks he has faced to appear before them with his army, ready to support their revolt from Athens. Thucydides has him say:

> εἰ δὲ χρόνῳ ἐπήλθομεν, σφαλέντες τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκεῖ
> πολέμου δόξης, ἢ διὰ τάχους αὐτοὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ὑμετέρου
> κινδύνου ἠλπίσαμεν Ἀθηναίους καθαιρήσειν, μηδεὶς
> μεμφθῇ· νῦν γάρ, ὅτε παρέσχεν, ἀφιγμένοι καὶ μετὰ
> ὑμῶν πειρασόμεθα κατεργάζεσθαι αὐτούς. θαυμάζω

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[1] Scholars have generally agreed on Thucydides' positive assessment of Brasidas. For full bibliography, see 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples

[2] Thuc. 4.78.1. Lazenby discusses the details of his entire campaign, 91-104. The question of Brasidas' objectives is not fully answered by Thucydides, but Connor (1984) agrees with D.W. Knight, "Thucydides and the War Strategy of Perikles," *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970), 150-61, that he may have been hoping to impact the Athenian grain supply from the Chersonese, 127. Wylie (1992) argues that Brasidas focused on Acanthus in order to close escape routes for the remaining cities on the peninsula, 80.

[3] Thuc. 4.79.1.

[4] Thucydides describes Brasidas' ability to convince the Chalcidians to revolt (4.81). Brasidas marches on Acanthus and finds the citizens divided in their opinion (4.84).

δὲ τῇ τε ἀποκλήσει μου τῶν πυλῶν, καὶ εἰ μὴ ἀσμένοις ὑμῖν ἀφῖγμαι. ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι οἰόμενοί τε παρὰ ξυμμάχους, καὶ πρὶν ἔργῳ ἀφικέσθαι, τῇ γοῦν γνώμῃ ἥξειν καὶ βουλομένοις ἔσεσθαι, κίνδυνόν τοσόνδε ἀνερρίψαμεν διὰ τῆς ἀλλοτρίας πολλῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν ἰόντες καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρόθυμον παρεχόμενοι·

Our delay in coming has been caused by mistaken expectations about the war in Greece which led us to hope that by our own unassisted efforts, and without your risking anything, we could effect the speedy downfall of the Athenians; and you must not blame us for this, as we have now come at the first moment we could, prepared with your aid do our best to defeat them. I am therefore astonished at finding your gates shut against me, and at not meeting with a better welcome. We Spartans thought of you as allies eager to have us, to whom we should come in spirit even before we were with you in body; and in this expectation undertook all the risks of a march of many days through a strange country, so far did our zeal carry us (4.85.2-4).

Thucydides has Brasidas insert the concept of κίνδυνος into his speech twice in order to point his reader to the idea that there are dangerous random elements that must be considered as part of the conditions of military operations. First, Brasidas acknowledges that the Spartans miscalculated the war's real challenges and made a decision based on the hope of avoiding danger, ἄνευ τοῦ ὑμετέρου κινδύνου ἠλπίσαμεν Ἀθηναίους καθαιρήσειν. The Spartans, he admits, may not have been thinking rationally when they undertook the war and Thucydides indicates this with the verb ἠλπίσαμεν, which provides a contrast to a more analytical thought process.[5] The Spartans originally *hoped* to avoid danger for cities such as Acanthus but certain random events transpired and the Spartans were unprepared for the consequences. The capture of 120 Spartiates at Sphacteria, for instance, surprised most of Greece and brought the Spartans to the point

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[5] Huart, 145; Luginbill (2011), 31-33.

of seeking peace with the Athenians.[6] Thucydides' rendition of Brasidas' speech highlights the Spartans' initial inability to account for the dangerous conditions of random chance that factored so heavily in the early phase of this long war – the warning given them by the Athenians in 432/1. "Consider the vast influence of accident in war, before you are engaged in it. As it continues, it generally becomes an affair of chances, chances from which neither of us is exempt and whose event we must risk in the dark." [7]

Brasidas' second mention of κίνδυνος, however, provides a more explicit gambling metaphor as Thucydides has Brasidas describe his military campaign, an extended march through potentially hostile regions, in terms expressing random chance. Where the translation reads "undertook all the risks of a march," Thucydides' Greek is actually κίνδυνόν τοσόνδε ἀνερρίψαμεν. The march is described with dice-casting imagery, ἀνερρίψαμεν.[8] There were many potential pitfalls along the march: rough terrain, bad weather, confusing mountain paths, local hostilities towards so large a force. All of these were variables that Brasidas must have seen as outside of his control and subject to the whims of fate. Thus, danger of this sort, κίνδυνόν τοσόνδε, was something against which Brasidas was willing to roll the dice, ἀνερρίψαμεν. In the end Brasidas' march was a success. This success gives Thucydides an opportunity to point his reader to the idea that successful leaders are able to account for dangerous elements outside of their control. Brasidas recognized the random events and accepted the gamble; it was, in Thucydides' mind, a calculated gamble, but a gamble nonetheless.

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[6] Thuc. 4.40.

[7] Thuc. 1.78.1-2. This passage has already been discussed in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples).

[8] Knobloch (1975), 79-80.

Thucydides highlights not only an individual Spartan general, but also the capable tactical reasoning of anonymous Spartans thrust into pressure-filled situations. He shows his reader how the Spartans generally accounted for dangerous elements of chance at the very start of their engagement with the Athenians near Pylos in 425. The Athenians had landed at Pylos and established a fortified garrison for incursions into the Peloponnesus.[9] When the Peloponnesians who were invading Attica learned of the Athenian fort, they hastened homeward to regroup and confront the Athenians at Pylos.[10] Upon their arrival, they devised a complex plan to besiege the Athenian garrison by both land and sea.[11] Thucydides' analysis of this plan focuses the Spartans' attempt to minimize the inherent dangers by accounting for the dangerous role of chance in combat. Thucydides writes:

> οὕτω γὰρ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις τήν τε νῆσον πολεμίαν ἔσεσθαι τήν τε ἤπειρον, ἀπόβασιν οὐκ ἔχουσαν (τὰ γὰρ αὐτῆς τῆς Πύλου ἔξω τοῦ ἔσπλου πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος ἀλίμενα ὄντα οὐχ ἕξειν ὅθεν ὁρμώμενοι ὠφελήσουσι τοὺς αὑτῶν) σφεῖς δὲ ἄνευ τε ναυμαχίας καὶ κινδύνου ἐκπολιορκήσειν τὸ χωρίον κατὰ τὸ εἰκός, σίτου τε οὐκ ἐνόντος καὶ δι' ὀλίγης παρασκευῆς κατειλημμένον.

> By this means both the island and the mainland would be hostile to the Athenians, as they would be unable to land on either; and since the shore of Pylos itself outside the inlet toward the open sea had no harbor, there would be no point that the Athenians could use as a base from which to relieve their countrymen. Thus the Spartans would in all probability become masters of the place without a sea fight or risk, as there had been little preparation for the occupation and there was no food there (4.8.8).

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[9] Thuc. 4.3. This incident has been analyzed with a full bibliography at 2.3.2 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples

[10] Thuc. 4.6-4.8.1.

[11] Thuc. 4.8.5-8.

Thucydides states that the Spartans expected to become masters of the place without either a sea fight *or* danger. The translation accurately reflects Thucydides' Greek, ἄνευ τε ναυμαχίας καὶ κινδύνου, which highlights the distinction between a sea fight and another, less distinct danger, κινδύνου.[12] He is showing his reader that the Spartans recognized that any form of violent engagement, whether by sea or land, carries a separate element of danger, the element of chance. They planned accordingly and Thucydides uses the phrase, κατὰ τὸ εἰκός, "in all probability," to underscore their rational approach to this concern.[13] Thucydides is holding the Spartans up as a positive example for his reader. Although they were in a situation which might be subject to an immediate and emotionally charged response, the Spartan commanders accounted for the variable nature of the situation's dangerous conditions. Thucydides' phrase, κατὰ τὸ εἰκός, indicates to his reader that this is a positive example focused on the use of rational decision-making to attempt to overcome the external danger brought about by the unforeseen chances of war.

The irony in Thucydides' narrative is that the Spartans' plan, however, did not go well and 292 soldiers, among whom were 120 Spartan hoplites, were eventually trapped by the Athenians on the small island of Sphacteria. As with the Spartan forces at Thyrea, even good tactical plans can be foiled by overwhelming force or chance outcomes in

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[12] Though the idea that this is actually an example of hendiadys cannot be ruled out, the translation agrees with me in that Thucydides intends two separate ideas presented as equals. Even if he intended the noun κινδύνου to serve as an adjective to modify the noun ναυμαχίας, he is still presenting them in such a way as to draw his reader's attention to the stark reality of danger by using the conjunction τε ... καὶ for emphasis.

[13] Huart, 231.

battle.[14] As the Spartans realized the gravity of the situation for their besieged men, they

concluded an armistice with the Athenian generals at Pylos and sent a delegation to

Athens to settle the affairs of their men trapped on the island.[15] Thucydides provides a

rendition of the Spartan delegation's speech in which they focus on war's vicissitudes and

fortune's fickle nature.[16] In his rendition he highlights the external danger inherent in the

stochastic nature of combat by having the Spartans link κίνδυνος to chance. He has the

Spartans say:

> Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ ὑμᾶς προκαλοῦνται ἐς σπονδὰς καὶ
> διάλυσιν πολέμου, διδόντες μὲν εἰρήνην καὶ
> ξυμμαχίαν καὶ ἄλλην φιλίαν πολλὴν καὶ οἰκειότητα ἐς
> ἀλλήλους ὑπάρχειν, ἀνταιτοῦντες δὲ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς
> νήσου ἄνδρας, καὶ ἄμεινον ἡγούμενοι ἀμφοτέροις μὴ
> διακινδυνεύεσθαι, εἴτε βίᾳ διαφύγοιεν παρατυχούσης
> τινὸς σωτηρίας εἴτε καὶ ἐκπολιορκηθέντες μᾶλλον ἂν
> χειρωθεῖεν.

> The Spartans accordingly invite you to make a treaty and to
> end the war, and offer peace and alliance and the most
> friendly and intimate relations in every way and on every
> occasion between us; and in return ask for the men on the
> island, thinking it better for both parties not to hold out to
> the end, hoping that some favorable accident will enable
> the men to force their way out, or of their being compelled
> to succumb under the pressure of blockade (4.19.1).

Thucydides' κίνδυνος, διακινδυνεύεσθαι, is a gamble. The Spartans are suggesting that

they consider it better for neither side to make a desperate attempt, μὴ

διακινδυνεύεσθαι. While the Spartans might gamble that the besieged men could

stumble upon some safe opportunity, παρατυχούσης τινὸς σωτηρίας, the Athenians

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[14] Thuc. 4.37-38. This is similar to the same irony already discussed with respect to the Spartan defeat at Thyrea. See 2.3.5 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Athenian and Spartan Group *Coup d'Oeil*.

[15] Thuc. 4.15-17.1.

[16] Thuc. 4.17-4.18.

might gamble that the besieged men would succumb to the exigencies of the siege, ἐκπολιορκηθέντες. Neither of these two options, however, presents an immediately recognizable danger. These two options represent gambling on uncontrollable events, and the Spartans argue against both, μὴ διακινδυνεύεσθαι. Thucydides' reader can recognize that the external condition of chance is always present, dangerous, διακινδυνεύεσθαι, and should be factored into decisions. Perhaps the reader already knows that the Athenians did not accept the Spartans' offer and chose instead to avoid these chance outcomes by launching an audacious assault on the besieged Spartans instead.[17] But this does not change Thucydides' message; it actually reinforces that the Athenians also recognized the need to mitigate the dangers of chance in combat by launching an assault at a time of their choosing, place of their choosing, and a manner of their choosing. They chose danger on their terms. It is seemingly a paradox of war that launching an assault might mitigate risk. But, the Athenians, in Thucydides's analysis, made a rational decision to act aggressively, rather than to submit the outcome of the engagement to the vagaries of chance in a prolonged siege.

The final example in this section is drawn from among the peripheral conflicts which define the Peloponnesian War and demonstrates how Thucydides guides his reader to understand that leaders at all levels in international society deal with the dangers of uncertainty and chance. It involves a people who were caught in between the great powers of Athens and Sparta: the Mytileneans. In 428, almost the entire island of Lesbos

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[17] The Athenians reject the Spartan offer (4.21-22). The Athenians are successful in their assault and capture 292 soldiers, 120 of whom were Spartiates (4.37-38).

revolted from Athens.[18] The Mytileneans, after suffering a relatively limited naval defeat, offered to parley with the Athenian commanders while simultaneously sending a delegation to Sparta to beg for assistance.[19] This delegation addressed the allies of the Peloponnesian League at Olympia and argued that their revolt from Athens was not an act of treason against a loyal ally, but of liberation from a cruel tyranny.[20] In his rendition of the closing section of their speech, however, Thucydides focuses on the balance between risk and reward and the unknown variable of chance. He ties κίνδυνος and "a roll of the dice with an uncertain outcome" together when he has them say:

> Αἰσχυνθέντες οὖν τάς τε τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐς ὑμᾶς ἐλπίδας καὶ Δία τὸν Ὀλύμπιον, ἐν οὗ τῷ ἱερῷ ἴσα καὶ ἱκέται ἐσμέν, ἐπαμύνατε Μυτιληναίοις ξύμμαχοι γενόμενοι, καὶ μὴ προῆσθε ἡμᾶς ἴδιον μὲν τὸν κίνδυνον τῶν σωμάτων παραβαλλομένους, κοινὴν δὲ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ κατορθῶσαι ὠφελίαν ἅπασι δώσοντας, ἔτι δὲ κοινοτέραν τὴν βλάβην, εἰ μὴ πεισθέντων ὑμῶν σφαλησόμεθα.

> Respect, therefore, both the hopes placed in you by the Hellenes, and Olympian Zeus in whose temple we stand virtually as suppliants; become the allies and defenders of the Mytilenians, and do not sacrifice us, who put our lives in jeopardy for a cause in which general good will result to all from our success, and still more general harm if we fail through your refusing to help us (3.14.1).

The translation focuses on "[those of] us who put our lives in jeopardy for a cause." The Greek, however, is more explicit about the type of danger the Mytileneans chose to accept. The Mytileneans see themselves as gambling with their own bodies, ἴδιον μὲν

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[18] Thuc. 3.2.1. This revolt has already been presented along with a bibliography in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

[19] Thuc. 3.4.

[20] Thuc. 3.8-13.

τὸν κίνδυνον τῶν σωμάτων παραβαλλομένους. They are hazarding a chance on danger to their own bodies because they see a common security as the potential reward, κοινὴν δὲ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ κατορθῶσαι ὠφελίαν. Should they fail, they argue, not only are their own lives forfeit but also there will be a more widely spread injury, κοινοτέραν τὴν βλάβην.[21] Unfortunately for the Mytileneans, they do fail and more than a thousand of their citizens are put to death by the Athenians as punishment.[22] But, as before, Thucydides' message to his reader goes beyond the simple outcome of the event. On a deeper level, he is pointing his reader to the idea that risk and reward are aspects of danger and decisions made are gambles amid dangerous uncertainty. He is showing his reader that sound decisions must account for war's uncertainties. The Mytileneans understand the danger to their own lives. They have a notion of the danger that others will experience if they fail and Athens grows even stronger. But they also see the general benefit that can be achieved by their success. Perhaps the notion that they are fighting for a cause beyond their own independence is simply the Mytileneans' way of winning the Spartans' respect. Thucydides does not comment on that. What Thucydides comments upon, by linking κίνδυνος to a dice throw, παραβαλλομένους, is that war is filled with uncertain outcomes and part of a rational decision making process is to be aware of this uncertainty and to be prepared for the unexpected outcomes.

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[21] Gomme renders κοινοτέραν as "more widely spread," 2:269.

[22] The Mytilenean commoners, when given heavy arms by the Spartan leader, Salaethus, and forced their leaders to surrender the city (3.27.2). The Athenians killed more than a thousand citizens labeled as "prime movers in the rebellion" (3.50.1).

2.4.4 <u>Conclusion: Κίνδυνος as a Potentially Profitable Gamble</u>

In this section, I have argued that Thucydides consciously incorporates the term κίνδυνος into his narrative to shape his reader's perception of the links between risk and reward, profit maximization in a generally dangerous, uncertain interstate environment. The Classical Greek world of polities was dangerous.[1] But Thucydides recognizes occasions in which certain leaders were conscious of the relationship between the present dangers and potential rewards and dealt with the danger through rational decisions (even though those decisions sometimes did not work out). He points his reader to the importance of that cognition to show how certain leaders perceived dangers as both a negative force to be avoided as well as a possible source of gains to be embraced. I have provided examples which show either how leaders – or even whole communities – recognized the potential rewards from danger and capitalized on them, or how leaders perceived the dangerous nature of random chance. Throughout the analysis, however, I have shown that Thucydides' message to his reader is consistent: successful leaders are those who are capable of rationally analyzing the many variables in dangerous situations to mitigate the risk and maximize the potential reward.

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[1] See Chapter 2.2 Κίνδυνος as a General State of Nature.

2.5 <u>Thucydides' Analysis of External Dangers: Conclusion</u>

This chapter has been filled with the ways in which Thucydides focuses his reader on the ever-present external dangers which threaten survival to states in the anarchy of the Greek international system. I have shown that Thucydides inserts the word κίνδυνος into his narrative in a variety of ways to give his reader a broad understanding of the multiple forms danger assumes. In the first section, I demonstrated that to Thucydides the world is a dangerous place filled with violence, forces beyond men's control, and options which are often only between lesser and greater forms of danger. In the second section, I analyzed Thucydides' impressions about the ways in which rational leaders incorporate an understanding of ever-present dangers into their strategic or tactical planning process. He shows his reader a variety of ways in which leaders perceived dangers and either reacted rationally to them or chose to ignore them. In the third section, I examined how Thucydides portrays the role of danger in leaders' profit maximizing behavior. I focused on both the concepts of risk versus reward and the elements of random chance which Thucydides incorporates into the understanding of danger he is portraying for his reader. Though Thucydides' analysis of the various forms of danger is complex, my argument throughout this chapter has been simple: Thucydides uses variations of the word κίνδυνος to paint the unmistakable image for his reader that there are external forces throughout the world which threaten survival. A rational leader must account for these forces if he wants to maximize his state's potential for success, even if the measure of success is nothing more than mere survival in the violent international anarchy of Thucydides' world.

One final example will serve to highlight a positive example of a leader who

understood the true nature of the external dangers facing his *polis* but was still unable to

restrain the often self-destructive impulses felt by his contemporaries. Thucydides'

depiction of the speech given by Nicias to advise the Athenians not to vote for the

Sicilian campaign highlights the tension and parallels between external and internal

dangers.[1] After being chosen as one of the leaders of this campaign, Nicias used the

occasion of a second assembly, held to determine logistical requirements for the

campaign, to speak against the campaign and to attempt to divert the Athenians from their

original intentions.[2] After explaining that the Sicilians cannot directly threaten the

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[1] The debate over Thucydides' final appraisal of Nicias' character, leadership ability and performance is a long-standing one. A.B. West highlights Thucydides' negative appraisal in "Pericles' Political Heir," *Classical Philology* 19 (1924), 1224-46; H.D. Westlake agrees in "Nikias and Thucydides," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1941), 58-65; Jacqueline de Romilly highlights Thucydides' sympathy towards Nicias in *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1963), 181; D.P. Tompkins points to Thucydides' reliance on abstractions in Nicias' speeches as proof of Thucydides' belief that Nicias lacked a leader's requisite self-confidence in "Stylistic Characterization in Thucydides," *Illinois Classical Studies* 22 (1972), 181-214; A.W.H. Adkins focuses on Thucydides' positive appraisal in his eulogy, "The Arete of Nicias: Thucydides 7.86," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 16 (1975), 379-92; Guy L. Cooper III examines Thucydides' grammar to highlight Alcibiades' sarcasm towards Nicias' outdated mode of thinking in "Alcibiades' Criticism of Nicias at Thucydides 6.18.1," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 109 (1979), 29-38; Marc Cogan sees in the reaction Nicias' speeches a solid vision of the Athenians' "strength of desire" and their ability to ignore reason, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), esp. 176; Donald Kagan provides a general overview of the issues in *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), esp. 364; W. Robert Connor highlights the complexity of Thucydides' portrayal in *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 162-7; Michael Palmer highlights Nicias traditional virtues in "Machiavellian Virtù and Thucydidean Arete: Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides," *The Review of Politics* 51 (1989), 365-85; John Atkinson argues that Nicias was driven to poor performance by the fear of failure, a by-product of the competitive Athenian democracy in "Nicias and the Fear of Failure Syndrome," *Ancient History Bulletin* 9 (1995), 55-63; A.V. Zadorojnyi argues that Nicias' archaic values were ineffective in a world whose values had moved on, "Thucydides' Nicias and Homer's Agamemnon," *The Classical Quarterly* 48 (1998), 298-303; B. Jordan highlights Nicias' correct advice and the way in which Alcibiades swept the crowd's emotions against it in "The Sicilian Expedition Was a Potemkin Fleet," *The Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000), 63-79; Donald Kagan sees Thucydides' depiction and eulogy of Nicias as an *apologia* for the man who was "able to turn a mistake into a disaster" in *Thucydides: The Reinvention of History* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), 221..

[2] Thuc. 6.8.3-4.

Athenians and that it would be in Athens' best interest to use the recent respite from

plague and invasion to regain strength, Nicias makes a personal attack against

Alcibiades' motives.[3] As part of this attack, Nicias highlights the random dangers of

warfare and the chances Alcibiades is encouraging the Athenians to take. Thucydides has

Nicias say:

> Οὓς ἐγὼ ὁρῶν νῦν ἐνθάδε τῷ αὐτῷ ἀνδρὶ παρακελευστοὺς καθημένους φοβοῦμαι, καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἀντιπαρακελεύομαι μὴ καταισχυνθῆναι, εἴ τῷ τις παρακάθηται τῶνδε, ὅπως μὴ δόξει, ἐὰν μὴ ψηφίζηται πολεμεῖν, μαλακὸς εἶναι, μηδ', ὅπερ ἂν αὐτοὶ πάθοιεν, δυσέρωτας εἶναι τῶν ἀπόντων, γνόντας ὅτι ἐπιθυμίᾳ μὲν ἐλάχιστα κατορθοῦνται, προνοίᾳ δὲ πλεῖστα, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ὡς μέγιστον δὴ τῶν πρὶν κίνδυνον ἀναρριπτούσης ἀντιχειροτονεῖν, καὶ ψηφίζεσθαι τοὺς μὲν Σικελιώτας οἷσπερ νῦν ὅροις χρωμένους πρὸς ἡμᾶς.

> When I see such person now sitting here at the side of that same individual and summoned by him, alarm seizes me; and I, in my turn, summon any of the older men that may have such a person sitting next to him, not to let himself be checked by same, for fear of being thought a coward if he does not vote for war, but, remembering how rarely success is gained by wishing and how often by forecast, to leave to them the mad dream of conquest, and as a true lover of his country, now threatened by the greatest danger in its history, to hold up his hand on the other side to vote that the Sicilians be left in the limits now existing between us (6.13.1).

The translation does not accurately capture the carelessness with which Nicias believed

his countrymen are acting. Thucydides' Greek, however, highlights Nicias' perception

that his homeland is "rolling the dice" with respect to the greatest danger ever faced, ὡς

μέγιστον δὴ τῶν πρὶν κίνδυνον ἀναρριπτούσης. The active participle

ἀναρριπτούσης points to the explicit gamble Athens is taking on its future. Nicias

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[3] Thuc. 6.10-12.

seemed to have a clear perception of the situation and an understanding of the dangerous conditions. The expedition is not only needless since the Sicilians are not an imminent threat to Athens, but also a very dangerous gamble, ill considered and lacking in sufficient potential gains. But Nicias, in this instance, understood the true external danger, the violent conditions which would subject Athens to the fickle nature of fate. He was also well aware of the internally-generated dangers of the intra-*polis* political situation: men don't want to lose honor by publicly voting against the expedition and being called cowards.[4] Thucydides highlights his keen perception and provides him as a positive example of a leader who recognizes that dangerous conditions of chance are potentially disastrous to those who fail to comprehend – or who ignore – their magnitude. In the end, of course, the Athenians ignored his warnings and give in to their urge to act aggressively, an internally generated danger against which Nicias' rationality could not withstand.[5] But internal dangers are, as I will argue in the next chapter, much harder to define and much more difficult to avoid for Thucydides' contemporaries.

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[4] Nicias comments on the concerns for honor facing those opposed to the expedition, 6.9.2, 6.13.1; Thucydides notes that, in the end, the few who were opposed to the expedition kept quiet "feared to appear unpatriotic by holding up their hands against it," 6.24. An analysis of the competitive nature of Athenian politics and the pressures facing the citizens has been presented in 2.2.2 Danger: A Constant Within the Polis.

[5] The Greeks' predilection for acting aggressively is discussed more fully in Chapter 3.1 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Action.

Chapter 3: Thucydides' Analysis of Internal Dangers

3.1 General Introduction

External dangers are relatively easy for us moderns to understand; even those of

us most completely ensconced in a world of gated communities and collegial

interpersonal relationships can identify the threat another person with a gun may pose to

our survival. Internal dangers, however, are less easily defined by us moderns, though

Thucydides saw them clearly in the ethos and culture of this contemporaries.[1] Thucydides

understood this form of danger to be a by-product of the irrational aspects of man's

nature. Men, especially in Thucydides' dangerous world, tend to respond violently when

they perceive themselves to have been insulted or slighted in some way. This positions

internal dangers within Plato's category of "spirit" in the sense that men feel urged to

fight to the death to protect their honor or status within a community.[2] Thucydides

provides a very broad representation of internal dangers and highlights the ways in which

they emanate from irrational emotions such as certain versions of "hope," $\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\grave{\iota}\varsigma$, the

concern for appearances of strength or weakness, and the obsession over honor and

shame.[3] Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to focus his reader's attention on the internal dangers

which rise from the spirit and often lead to self-destructive behavior for individuals or

entire communities.

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[1] This idea is supported by the theories of Michel Foucault and Hayden White as previously discussed in 1.1, General Thesis. See Carolyn J. Dewald, *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 10-22.

[2] Plato *Rep*. *4.440c*. The philosophical connections between Thucydides and Plato have been presented in Chapter 1, The Question. See D. Shanske (2007).

[3] See 1.1 General Thesis.

For this dissertation, I define internal dangers as the emotional impulses that drive people to act with minimal regard for circumstance or consequence. In political science terms, internal dangers might be considered to be the self-generated urges that bring about "premature cognitive closure," the feeling that there exists no alternative to action when, in fact, other options still exist but are masked by the individuals' or states' blinding emotions such as fear, anger or humiliation.[4] An example of this can be seen in Achilles' tendency to become immediately enraged in the opening scenes of Homer's *Iliad*.[5] When Agamemnon tells Achilles that he intends to take Briseis, the poet highlights Achilles' emotion:

> A pain like grief weighed on the son of Peleus,
> and in his shaggy chest this way and that
> the passion of his heart ran: should he draw
> longsword from hip, stand off the rest, and kill
> in single combat the great son of Atreus,
> or hold his rage in check and give it time?
> And as this tumult swayed him, as he slid the big blade
> slowly from the sheath, Athena
> came to him from the sky… (220-8)[6]

Achilles is immediately overcome by emotion at the prospect of loss; it is a foregone conclusion that he will respond aggressively. The only question is when; should he draw his sword now or "give it time." And indeed, even as his thoughts continue to envisage potential outcomes, he prepares himself for the inevitable violent response by beginning to draw his sword. The emotion overcoming him may be one of any number of

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[4] This term is discussed in Chapter 1.2.2, Relevant Political Science Scholarship / Theories. See Eckstein (2006), 25.

[5] I use the *Iliad* here to describe a complex emotive response that would have been well understood by Thucydides' contemporaries who would have agreed that "one should arrange one's entire life according to this poet." See J.E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 37.

[6] Translation is Robert Fitzgerald's as published in *The Iliad* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989).

categories: the need to act publicly out of pride, the need to seek vengeance for the public insult, the pressure to maintain his status as the leading warrior in this volatile military camp, or simply anger at the idea that he might lose Briseis. Any one of these possibilities could be the driving factor leading him to respond violently. All of them represent facets of the internally generated dangers against which Thucydides warns his reader – as Athena, the goddess of Wisdom, intervenes in Achilles' case to stop his impulsive action. The point is that this scene defines internal dangers for this dissertation: Achilles' passion drives him to act with minimal regard for consequence.

In this chapter, I will present a thorough analysis of various forms of internal dangers and the way in which Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to provide an education to future statesmen in the dangers potentially created by the prevalence of emotion among leaders and states; these are less-recognized, less obvious dangers, than externally-generated ones. I will present this analysis in four phases. The first section will give examples in which Thucydides relies on the word κίνδυνος to highlight the dangers inherent in his contemporaries' proclivity for quick, often violent action with little consideration of possible outcomes or other solutions. I will then discuss how this tendency to act created a culture in which intervention in the affairs of other states was not only considered normal, but even considered a vital part of expressing the power of the state in order to insure survival in the anarchic international system. Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to guide his reader to the understanding that the ethos of intervention, though commonplace and expected, provided potential sources for danger. In the third section, I will present examples in which Thucydides demonstrates to his reader just how dangerous the concepts of honor and shame could be to their society. In a world where

the slightest insult could be viewed as *hubris*, reactions were often violent and even self-destructive, as Thucydides shows, when rational thought is not given to alternative options. In the final section, I will explain how Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to make clear to his reader the dangers arising from the "security dilemma," a situation in which states feel compelled to increase the appearance of their own strength to provide for greater security. This increase, however, necessarily decreases neighboring states' own sense of security and often leads to escalating measures of aggression and violence.[7] Throughout this chapter, there will be one predominant theme: Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to guide his audience towards his didactic message that the only way to mitigate danger is to eschew the traditional, emotional approach to interstate competition and violence in favor of a more rational approach to interstate relations leading if not to success, then at least to survival.

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[7] This concept has been presented in Chapter 1.2.2 Relevant Political Science Scholarship / Theories. See Eckstein (2006), 21-22.

3.2 Κίνδυνος and the "Ethos of Action"

In this section I will further define Thucydides' conception of internal forms of danger by presenting examples which demonstrate how dangerous Thucydides believed the Greek "ethos of action" to be. Though it is difficult for us moderns to define the internal dangers faced by Greek citizens, both statesmen and the ordinary males involved in the decisions of the assembly, Thucydides seems to have recognized that his contemporaries created danger for themselves by responding quickly and violently to perceived slights. I will present this tendency to respond violently as a fundamental aspect of the Greek "ethos of action" and will argue that Thucydides offers images of this ethos to warn his reader about the potential dangers of impulsive action.

It should be noted that the Athenians themselves are relatively over-represented in these mostly negative examples. As with earlier sections, this is perhaps due to Thucydides' desire for perceived objectivity; by focusing on the Athenians' faults, he may be creating an illusion of objectivity for a skeptical reader.[1] Thucydides' analysis, however, may reflect an accurate understanding of the true reason behind Athens' defeat: their tendency to respond emotionally and act impetuously led to their downfall. Thucydides' over-representation of the Athenians in negative examples points to the fact that Thucydides believes that the Athenians generally failed to control their impulses and too often reacted with an emotionally driven response. Thucydides focuses his reader on the Athenian faults in order to help him understand how significantly impulsive action can damage a state's bid for survival in a dangerous world.

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[1] For scholarship on Thucydides' objectivity, see Section 2.3 Κίνδυνος as an Aspect of Rational Tactical/Strategic Planning.

The analysis presented in this chapter will be divided into four sections, two of which will provide a clear definition of the ethos of action, and two of which will highlight how Thucydides uses this ethos to educate his readers about its dangers. In the first section, I will define the ethos of action with examples from fifth-century Greek tragedy and history writing; these show how Greeks could depict themselves as responding aggressively and without forethought to perceived crises. I will show that the tragedians presented the fundamental nature of Greek society as one in which *ergon* trumped *logos*.[2] I will then supplement these examples with Herodotus' similar view of the Greeks' tendency to act rashly. In the second section, I will compare the tragedians to Thucydides' own writing by presenting specific examples from Thucydides' text in which he defines the Greek ethos of action for his reader. I will show that Thucydides frames his narrative around events which highlight the same Greek ethos of action that is presented by his contemporary tragic poets.

In the next two sections, I will provide two categories of examples from Thucydides' text which illustrate how he constructed his narrative to guide his reader to the understanding that action without reason is dangerous and leads to sub-optimal results. The first category of examples, drawn from Thucydides' narrative of the events leading up to the Athenian invasion of Sicily, will demonstrate that Thucydides wants his reader to admire those individuals who recognized the internal dangers that lead to

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[2] Though here I intentionally invoke the theme of Adam Parry's dissertation, *Logos and Ergon in Thucydides* (Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer Company, 1981, Reprint 1988), I am, in fact, taking a contrary perspective. Where Parry uses the term *logos* to stress "the element of language rather than thought," I am stressing the element of thought rather than language. Parry would not have disagreed with this approach. He writes, "the two (language and thought) belong together, but one may stress either one" (13). More recently David Bedford and Thom Workman analyzed the decline of *logos*, representing well reasoned analysis, and the ascendency of *ergon* as a theme in Thucydides work. See "The Tragic Reading of the Thucydidean Tragedy, "*Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), esp. 59-61.

precipitate action. The second category, drawn from Thucydides' narrative of the Sicilian

invasion itself, will underscore that Thucydides wants his reader to learn from the success

experienced by those who not only recognized the dangers of precipitate action but also

avoided them with rational behavior. The point of all of these examples is to argue that

Thucydides was, in fact, consciously crafting his narrative in order to point out the

potentially dangerous nature of the Greek ethos of action and to teach his reader that a

leader's success is founded upon his ability to trump *ergon* with *logos*.

3.2.1 <u>Defining the Greek "Ethos of Action"</u>

Perhaps the only way to define the "ethos of action" is by example. In this section, I will do just that, by providing a few examples from Euripidean tragedy to show how fifth-century Greeks perceived themselves to be prone to violent action.[1] Euripides, a contemporary of Thucydides, produced plays filled with images that were at least familiar, if not completely acceptable, to his Athenian audience.[2] As Finley argues, the parallels between Thucydides' narrative and Euripides' plays make it "abundantly clear" that Thucydides was profoundly affected by the ideas present in Athens before the period of his exile.[3] In this sense, it is fair to say that the ideas, attitudes, and actions Euripides presented on the Athenian stage were ones which Thucydides was vividly aware existed among his fellow Athenians. Furthermore, as I will argue, the images of rash action presented by Euripides were among those which Thucydides wanted his reader to avoid.

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[1] For analysis of the contextual links between Greek tragedy and fifth-century Athenian society, see Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (New York: Zone Books, 1972, trans. 1988); Brian Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy: Drama, Myth, Society* (London: Longman, 1973); Charles Segal, "*Interpeting Greek Tragedy: Myth, Poetry, Text* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, *Nothing To Do With Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

[2] Justina Gregory notes that "a poet who twenty-two times was chosen to compete at the City Dionysia can scarcely have been held in contempt by his fellow citizens" in *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 188. She is referring specifically to her view of Euripides, as a moral educator for his fellow Athenians, in contrast to the views presented by other biographers of Euripides as feeling alienated from his own city. In this instance, however, I am arguing that just as Gregory believes Euripides the man was accepted by Athens, so too were the images in his plays.

[3] John H. Finley, Jr. *Three Essays on Thucydides* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 54. In this section I am also expanding on the idea that Euripides implied a criticism of the arrogance and tyrannical nature of Athens presented by Richard Seaford in "Tragic Tyranny," *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. K.A. Morgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 111. I am expanding his analysis by claiming that Thucydides understands Euripides to be portraying images not just of the potentially tyrannical Athenians and their empire, but of Greeks in general.

In the *Phoenician Women*, produced around 408 B.C., Euripides provides vivid images of how consistently the dominant Greek males could be expected to act violently with little thought given to the other party's perception of their action. Euripides showcases the image of dominant men making no effort to maintain control of their aggressive and sexual impulses.[4] Interestingly enough, the two male protagonists ignore the sage counsel given by the female Jocasta. The first time Euripides presents Polynices, for instance, he is raging, sword in hand, through the streets of Thebes looking for his brother, Eteocles, and his mother, Jocasta, in order to determine whether or not the civil war between he and his brother can be stopped.[5]

When the brothers finally meet, however, their proclivity for violent action proves to be an obstacle to peace. Eteocles openly admits that he would prefer not to be negotiating and is only stifling his rage on his mother's behalf. In his brother's presence he tells Jocasta, "Here I am, mother, out of deference to your wishes… Let the negotiations begin."[6] Certainly this represents an aggressive opening statement for a "peace" conference. Once Jocasta admonishes Eteocles to get rid of his "fierce gaze and angry breathing," the other brother, Polynices, in a classic case of "compellence diplomacy," admits that if his demands are met, he will send the army away. If not, however, he will proceed with "ravaging the country [and] assaulting the fortifications

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[4] Victoria Wohl restates the idea that the "norm of adult male sexuality in Athens … was active, aggressive, dominant, and phallic" in "The Eros of Alcibiades," *Classical Antiquity* 18, no. 2 (Oct., 1999), 359. She cites several studies including those of K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), and M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

[5] Eur. *Phoen*. 260-270. Euripides, *Orestes and Other Plays: A New Translation,* translated Waterfield, Robin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[6] Eur. *Phoen*. 450-452.

with sturdy scaling-ladders."[7] Both brothers appear to view this attempt at diplomacy as merely a formality for their mother's sake with which they will soon dispense. Euripides presents them more as wild beasts who are ripping the city apart with their violent struggle over power, rather than as respected citizens and leaders of a *polis* each should be hoping to preserve.[8] Each brother's urge for action far outweighs his desire for a mutually beneficial outcome and drives both men to a seemingly unavoidable clash of arms.

The point, however, is that Euripides' representation of this mythic scene likely represents an accurate image both of standard Greek diplomacy and of interpersonal relations. J.R. Grant analyzes the language typically used between "diplomats" of the classical Greek era and argues that there was no stability in diplomatic negotiation and that they were not fundamentally different from private altercations in their aggressive tone.[9] Far from it, the "frankness, realism, and directness" of diplomatic interaction between Greek *poleis* points to the intensely competitive nature of Greek society.[10] That

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[7] Eur. *Phoen*. 490. On "compellence diplomacy," see Eckstein (2006), 60-64. J.R. Grant notes the "common use of threat" in Greek diplomacy in "A Note on the Tone of Greek Diplomacy," *Classical Quarterly* 15 (1965), 263.

[8] Anthony J. Podlecki, "Some Themes in Euripides' *Phoenissae*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962): 365. Podlecki concludes that Oedipus' "physical blindness is paralleled-surpassed, rather-by the moral blindness of his sons, who will not see that they have brought their family and their city to the brink of destruction" (373). This leads one to believe that Euripides, like Thucydides, not only recognized the dangerous nature of the Greeks' ethos of action, but portrays it so clearly on stage for the same reason Thucydides incorporates it into his analysis: both want to teach their audience to act with forethought. This ties in well with J. Gregory's argument that Euripides' focus was on providing an education to the citizens of Athens that was grounded on his "attentiveness to personal responsibility, his insistence that character – not birth or station – defines the noble or slave" (188).

[9] J.R. Grant (1965), 262.

[10] Ibid. See also J.E. Lendon, "Homeric Vengeance and the Outbreak of Greek Wars," in *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, Hand van Wees, ed. (London: Duckworth, 2000), 1-30.

is precisely the sort of diplomacy Euripides is putting on display: two brothers willing to commit their city, their armies, and their own lives to combat without first having a serious and rational conversation about alternatives. There is no realistic effort at diplomacy, only aggressive posturing in a "diplomatic" setting. Athenians who had witnessed the "diplomacy" in 432-431 B.C. described by Thucydides would not have been surprised.

The second example that demonstrates the ease with which Greeks were provoked to violence is from Euripides' *Suppliant Women,* produced around 423 B.C., which points to the internal arrogance of individual leaders as a cause of inter-*polis* conflict.[11] In the beginning of this play, the Athenian king, Theseus, indicates that he is willing to make a diplomatic effort of sorts to recover the bodies of the fallen dead at Thebes. Euripides writes:

> δράσω τάδ'· εἶμι καὶ νεκροὺς ἐκλύσομαι λόγοισι
> πείθων· εἰ δὲ μή, βίᾳ δορὸς ἤδη τόδ' ἔσται κοὐχὶ σὺν
> φθόνῳ θεῶν.

> I shall do this. I shall go and I shall redeem the corpses with persuasive words. If that doesn't work, it will then at last be a matter to be settled by military might and we shall not incur divine resentment (346-48).[12]

His diplomatic effort is that he *will* do these things, δράσω τάδ', and he *will* rescue the dead, νεκροὺς ἐκλύσομαι. I emphasize here the future indicative form of both verbs.

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[11] Seaford, 111. Barry S. Strauss echoes this idea with a greater focus on the youthfulness and aggressive tendencies of the protagonists, especially Theseus, in *Fathers and Sons in Athens: Ideology and Society in the Era of the Peloponnesian War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 141-42. Jacqueline de Romilly (1963), too, sees in Theseus similar ideals to these which were held by Athenian males, 134-5.

[12] Translation is James Morwood's as published in *Euripides: Suppliant Women with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

This underscores Theseus' complete confidence that his "diplomacy," convincing with words, λόγοισι πείθων, will result in the successful attainment of his goals. Equally vivid, however, is the reaction that will instantly follow should his diplomacy fail; the spear, he says, *will* decide the issue *immediately*, ἤδη τόδ' ἔσται. Both of Theseus' tools, words or weapons, are vividly aggressive and both demonstrate the Greeks' ethos of action.[13]

The arrival of a herald from Thebes, however, preempts either option by sparking Theseus' anger. The herald proclaims the aggressive demands from Thebes:

> ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ πᾶς τε Καδμεῖος λεὼς Ἄδραστον ἐς
> γῆν τήνδε μὴ παριέναι· εἰ δ' ἔστιν ἐν γῇ, πρὶν θεοῦ
> δῦναι σέλας, λύσαντα σεμνὰ στεμμάτων μυστήρια
> τῆσδ' ἐξελαύνειν, μηδ' ἀναιρεῖσθαι νεκροὺς βίᾳ,
> προσήκοντ' οὐδὲν Ἀργείων πόλει. κἂν μὲν πίθῃ μοι,
> κυμάτων ἄτερ πόλιν σὴν ναυστολήσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, πολὺς
> κλύδων ἡμῖν τε καὶ σοὶ συμμάχοις τ' ἔσται δορός.

> I and all of Kadmos' people order you not to allow
> Adrastos to enter this land, and if he is in this land, to drive
> him out of it before the sun-gods brightness sets, undoing
> the solemn mysteries of suppliant branches – and not to
> take the bodies up for burial by force since you have no
> connection with the Argives' city. And if you obey me, you
> will steer your city's ship unbuffeted by waves. But if not,
> we and you and our allies will suffer a great tempest of war
> (467-75).

There is no middle course, no room for negotiations in the herald's message: Theseus either submits to another ruler's demands, κἂν μὲν πίθῃ μοι, or faces war. The herald's posture is just like Theseus' own. Theseus, giving in to the Greek ethos of action,

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[13] Note Strauss' discussion of the image portrayed by Euripides and – apparently – accepted by the Athenians of Theseus as "hot-blooded, emotional, rash, energetic, aggressive, and a lover of battle" (114). Theseus, young and aggressive though he was, had the enviable power to "ride roughshod over others" (115). For more detailed analysis of the variety of media through which Theseus was portrayed to the Athenians, see especially 106-29.

immediately becomes belligerent and abandons all of his earlier inclination for a

diplomatic solution - such as it was.[14]

After exclaiming that the Theban leader, Creon, has no power to "compel" Athens

to do his bidding, Theseus gives the herald his own demand: allow the recovery of the

dead or expect that Theseus will "bury them by force of arms," εἶμι καὶ θάψω βίᾳ.[15]

Once again the future indicative tense in this conditional sentence leaves no question

about his intent to make good his threat.[16] The Athenian audience must have understood

that Theseus – legendary king of Athens – perceived no other option than to react

violently to the herald's message. This is precisely the sort of violent action against which

Thucydides tries to warn his own audience, the reader, by constructing a narrative which

highlights the dangerous nature of such volatile anger.

Herodotus provides his own audience with the same image of the Greeks'

tendencies to react violently against each other even though their homogenous ethnicity

might have allowed for a less destructive dispute resolution process. In his depiction of

Xerxes' "assembly of the noblest Persians," Herodotus describes Mardonius' advice to

Xerxes. How and Wells comment on this passage as a particular example where

Herodotus "seems to be putting his own ideas into the mouth of Mardonius." [17]It

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[14] Strauss points to Theseus' reaction (514-523) as an indication that the "ideal Athenian male citizen … was aggressive to the point of ferocity in his refusal to accept another man as master" (215).

[15] Eur. *Supp. 560*.

[16] Morwood acknowledges that the verb εἶμι is often a "regular exit formula" but he argues that its repeated use in the play (cf. 346, 772-4) provide the audience with a strong image of Theseus' "purposeful motion," (187).

[17] W.W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus in Two Volumes* 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912, Reprint 2001), 129. W.R. Connor agrees with this assessment and uses it as a fundamental starting point in his analysis of the codification and ritualization of warfare in "Early Greek Land Warfare as Symbolic Expression, "*Past and Present* 119 (1988), 18.

therefore provides a genuine Greek perspective on the Greeks' own penchant for action

where diplomacy should work. Herodotus has Mardonius say:

> καίτοι γε ἐώθασι Ἕλληνες, ὡς πυνθάνομαι, ἀβουλότατα πολέμους ἵστασθαι ὑπό τε ἀγνωμοσύνης καὶ σκαιότητος. ἐπεὰν γὰρ ἀλλήλοισι πόλεμον προείπωσι, ἐξευρόντες τὸ κάλλιστον χωρίον καὶ λειότατον, ἐς τοῦτο κατιόντες μάχονται, ὥστε σὺν κακῷ μεγάλῳ οἱ νικῶντες ἀπαλλάσσονται· περὶ δὲ τῶν ἑσσουμένων οὐδὲ λέγω ἀρχήν· ἐξώλεες γὰρ δὴ γίνονται· τοὺς χρῆν ἐόντας ὁμογλώσσους κήρυξί τε διαχρεωμένους καὶ ἀγγέλοισι καταλαμβάνειν τὰς διαφορὰς καὶ παντὶ μᾶλλον ἢ μάχῃσι·

> Yet wars the Greeks do wage, and, as I learn, most senselessly they do it in their wrongheadedness and folly. When they have declared war against each other, they come down to the fairest and most level ground that they can find and there they fight, so that the victors come not off without great harm; and of the vanquished I say not so much as a word, for they are utterly destroyed. Yet speaking as they do the same language, they should end their disputes by the means of heralds and messengers, and by any way rather than fighting (7.9).[18]

Though ostensibly Herodotus is providing a brief overview of the Greeks' fighting

techniques, his point is not simply descriptive in nature. Rather, Herodotus seems to be

focusing his audience – Greeks who most likely have repeated personal experience with

this style of warfare[19] – on the fact that these same Greeks share one language, one

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[18] Translation by A.D. Godley as published in *Herodotus with and English Translation by A.D. Godley* 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922. Reprint 1982). How and Wells, in their commentary compare this passage to Polybius' analysis at 13.3 in which he explains that the ancients fought in this manner from a desire for an honorable as well as decisive battle. One might extrapolate from this analysis that diplomacy was neither considered an honorable option nor offered the potential for a decisive outcome.

[19] Victor Davis Hanson argues that "hoplite battle was a common, shared experience to most men of the city-state," in his "The Ideology of Hoplite Battle, Ancient and Modern," *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, Victor Davis Hanson, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991, Reprint 1998), 7. This assumption is fundamental to Peter Krentz' conclusion that Greek leaders, especially those such as Pericles who was criticized for being too conservative, were well aware of the heavy casualties expected even in victory (3-10%), not to mention those expected in defeat (14%). See Peter Krentz, "Casualties in Hoplite Battles," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 26 (1985):18.

cultural code, and could resolve their differences without such destructive violence. Even with this opportunity, however, Greeks consistently chose to destroy each other on "the smoothest and fairest plain." [20] Herodotus points his Greek audience to the awareness that although diplomacy among ethnically and culturally similar people should work, their choice was never whether or not to fight or how they might fight more efficiently. Their only choice, in his analysis, was where to fight. This ethos permeated Greek interstate relations and certainly would have been intimately familiar to Thucydides.

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[20] According to Josiah Ober, this statement holds true only until the late fifth century during which the uniquely drawn-out crisis of the Peloponnesian War eroded the "code of military ethics that had stood in the place of a system of strategy and tactics," "Hoplites and Obstacles" in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, Victor Davis Hanson, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991, Reprint 1998), 173-196, esp. 189-90.

3.2.2 <u>Thucydides Defines Greek "Ethos of Action"</u>

Echoes of this sort of rash behavior are indeed found in Thucydides' narrative and serve to illustrate Thucydides' own idea of the Greek "ethos of action." In this section, I will provide examples from Thucydides' narrative in which he incorporates the term κίνδυνος to make the inherent dangers of action without forethought explicit to his reader. By placing danger in the foreground, Thucydides points his reader to the idea that the Greek ethos of action, which pushes leaders into a position of premature cognitive closure concerning conflicts, with a proclivity for violent reaction, is one which must be suppressed in order to avoid continually sub-optimal outcomes.

In 423, for instance, the Athenians had just concluded a one-year armistice with the Spartans.[1] The small *polis* of Scione, however, had revolted from Athens and welcomed the Spartan general Brasidas "with all possible honors" at some point during the period in which the terms of the armistice were being discussed.[2] When news of the armistice was delivered to Brasidas, who had already left a garrison in Scione to defend against Athenian reprisals, he objected and refused to give up the city on the grounds that the Scioneans had revolted prior to the signing of the armistice. This in itself points to Brasidas' unwillingness to prefer peace over war even when faced with an armistice agreed upon by his own *polis*.[3] Perhaps this is a matter of honor; despite the famous

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[1] Thuc. 4.117-119.

[2] Thuc. 4.120-121. Gomme argues that the Greek text, πάντες ὁμοίως, indicates that "the people … all of them … nobles and masses alike" were ready to join in this revolt from Athens, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides* 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956, Reprint 1966), 609-10.
The scholarship on Thucydides' view of Brasidas has already been presented in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

[3] Graham Wylie mitigates Brasidas' apparent bellicosity be positing the idea that Brasidas "felt justified in evading a truce to which he had been no party," in Brasidas: Great Commander or Whiz Kid?" *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 41 (1992), 86.

Spartan discipline and obedience to the state, Brasidas protested violently when his arrangements were abrogated.[4] The issue is certainly a grey area. Owing to the slowness of communications both parties laid claim to their legal rights over Scione; Brasidas, of course, considered the revolt to have been before the armistice, yet the Athenians' calculations show them to have revolted two days after the armistice. Thucydides agrees with the Athenians that the revolt was after the armistice and Athens should, by rights, still control Scione.[5]

The point for this discussion, however, is the Athenian reaction. Thucydides writes that, upon word of Brasidas' and the Scioneans' refusal to submit to the terms of the treaty, the Athenians "at once, εὐθὺς, prepared to send an expedition to Scione."[6] Not only did the Athenians leap into action, Thucydides writes that they were unwilling to take the risk of arbitration, οἱ δὲ δίκῃ μὲν οὐκ ἤθελον κινδυνεύειν. Fueled by anger, ὀργὴν ποιούμενοι, they wanted to fight the Scioneans as quickly as possible, στρατεύειν δὲ ὡς τάχιστα.[7] The Athenians simply refused to honor the terms of the recent armistice which stipulated that disputes would be handled "by law without recourse to hostilities."[8] This sort of fiery, anger-fueled response is very close to that which Euripides depicted on the Athenian stage.

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[4] Issues of honor and shame will be analyzed in Chapter 3.4 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Honor and Shame.

[5] Thuc. 4.122.5.

[6] Thuc. 4.122.4.

[7] Thuc. 4.122.5. Gomme's colorful imagining of this scene supports my argument by saying "we can see the fiery Marathonomachai, Acharnians, and waspish dicasts, refusing with indignation," 611.

[8] Thuc. 4.118.8-9. Gomme notes this irony in the Athenians' word versus their actions. He agrees, however, that Brasidas' conduct was "certainly provocative" and the Athenians would feel as though Sparta's word could not be trusted, 611.

The problem, from the Athenian perspective, is that they were caught between two forms of danger: they might lose the arbitration, thereby losing power (and honor), or they might feel they lost honor and status by simply submitting to arbitration. The obvious interpretation is that they Athenians were afraid that they would lose in arbitration, even though Thucydides implies that they were most likely correct in their opinion. The Scioneans had revolted "two days after the convention."[9] The other alternative is that the Athenians were afraid that merely submitting to arbitration diminished their power and standing in the international community enough to present real danger to their holdings in other parts of the empire.[10] As Lendon aptly puts is, "what insular ally of Athens would turn on her next? Thasos? Chios? Euboea? … The whole point of the truce had been to stop the momentum of the rebellion, which now seemed to roll on regardless."[11] Thus it was that an example needed to be made of Scione. The dangers of submitting to arbitration – even one they should win! – and appearing unwilling or unable to act, outweighed the dangers of sending an expedition out to quash the revolt through genocide.[12]

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[9] Thuc. 4.122.6.

[10] William Desmond sees this incident as evidence that the Athenian empire was held together by little more than fear of Athens' unrestrained power in "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 363 and 373.

[11] Lendon (2010), 348. This is also an example of the relationship between power, reputation and security which will be discussed in 3.5 *Κίνδυνος* and the Security Dilemma: Power and Reputation.

[12] Thuc. 4.122.6. Polly Low looks at the role of arbitration in Greek interstate relations and notes that it was a more prevalent mechanism for resolving disputes during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. This is presumably due the fact that, in a dispute between the great powers of the Classical period it would have difficult to find a "suitable third party to perform the arbitration." Arbitration would, therefore appear to be the resort only of states too weak to enforce their will by military means. See *Interstate Relations in Classical Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 106-7.

A second example highlights the eagerness of the Athenian hoplite to "just do something." Hoplites did not generally assume defensive postures.[13] At Pylos in 425, however, the Athenian forces were stuck in a position which, to them, felt more like the defense than the offense.[14] During the spring of 425, the Athenians had sent a fleet of 40 ships to Sicily.[15] As they made their way along the western coast of the Peloponnese, a sudden storm forced them to land at Pylos.[16] One of the Athenian generals, Demosthenes, tried to convince the rest of the commanders to fortify the place but it is not until the soldiers, out of sheer boredom, took the initiative to do so that the Athenians gained a stronghold in Messenia.[17] The Spartans, after making light of the news and delaying their response to celebrate a festival, finally reacted by recalling their army from Attica and sending it to meet the threat.[18] Once the Spartans arrived, they attempted to threaten the Athenians from both sides by sealing off the narrow naval approach to the island with

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[13] Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 136-37, cf. 139.

[14] Thuc. 4.29.2. The scholarship on Pylos has been presented in 2.3.2 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

[15] Thuc. 4.2.2.

[16] Thuc. 4.3.1.

[17] Thuc. 4.3.2 - 4.4.3. Gomme notes the difficulty in determining Demosthenes' official position in the Athenian chain of command since he was acting, as Thucydides says, in his role as a private citizen after the debacle at Acarnania. Gomme does not accept the view that he was in the position of "strategos-elect." Instead, he argues that it is more likely that Demonsthenes had not been re-elected to the position if, in fact, he even stood for re-election. He was more likely acting under the authority of some commission allowing him to take charge as opportunity warranted (Thuc. 4.3.1). For this analysis, see A.W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1956, Reprint 1969), 437-38.

[18] Thuc. 4.5-6. R.B. Strassler argues that the motive for Spartan delay was actually their fear of a helot revolt in "The Opening of the Pylos Campaign," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990): 110-25, esp. 119.

their ships and by positioning their land forces on the island of Sphacteria.[19] Eventually the Spartans made an assault on Demosthenes and his fortified troops, unsuccessful "owing to the difficulty of the ground and the unfailing tenacity of the Athenians," i.e. they took action, rather than besieging the Athenians.[20] With the timely arrival of their fleet, the Athenians were quickly able to drive the Spartan ships from the area and trap the Spartan infantry on the small island.[21] Thus began a lengthy Athenian siege.[22]

The length of the siege, however, caused the Athenian soldiers to feel more like the besieged than the besiegers; they felt as though they were in a defensive crouch.[23] Cleon, having been given a commission by the assembly to take troops with him and cooperate with the generals on the spot, understood the position of the men and based his tactics on their emotional state.[24] Thucydides describes the situation:

> τὸν δὲ Δημοσθένη προσέλαβε πυνθανόμενος τὴν ἀπόβασιν αὐτὸν ἐς τὴν νῆσον διανοεῖσθαι. οἱ γὰρ στρατιῶται κακοπαθοῦντες τοῦ χωρίου τῇ ἀπορίᾳ καὶ μᾶλλον πολιορκούμενοι ἢ πολιορκοῦντες ὥρμηντο διακινδυνεῦσαι.

> His choice (to appoint as colleague) fell upon Demosthenes because he heard that he was contemplating a descent on the island and because the soldiers, distressed by the difficulties of the position and feeling more like the

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[19] Thuc. 4.8.7.

[20] Thuc. 4.12.2.

[21] Thuc. 4.14.

[22] Thuc. 4.27.1.

[23] Thuc. 4.29.2.

[24] Gomme, as before with Demosthenes, argues that Cleon is not elected *strategos* and no elected *strategos* stepped aside to make way for him (470).

> besieged than the besiegers, were eager to fight it out
> (4.29.2).[25]

The point, however, is not merely that the Athenians were uncomfortable with the fact

that they felt as though they were actually the ones under siege. Instead, the point is that

they were so distraught by this sense of inactivity that they "were eager for the danger of

battle," ὥρμηντο διακινδυνεῦσαι.[26] My translation here differs from Crawley's because

it more accurately captures the dangerous connotation behind the Greek phrase ὥρμηντο

διακινδυνεῦσαι. Pierre Huart cites this particular phrase in his discussion of the

psychological valence behind terms such as ὥρμηντο and focuses on incorporating the

concept of "danger" instead of simply an eagerness "to fight it out." He says " … il

signifie être disposé à (par exemple à «courir des dangers», ὥρμηντο διακινδυνεῦσαι,

4.29.2." The Athenian hoplites were burning with desire for dangerous action.

Thucydides recognizes the dangers inherent in battle and puts them in the foreground of

his depiction of the soldiers' collective state of mind. Not content to hold their positions

and maintain the relative safety of the siege, which may have eventually starved out the

Spartans on the island, the Athenians needed action; they wanted to face danger, not

delay.

Though the attack proved to be successful in the end – the Spartans eventually

surrendered and were taken to Athens as prisoners[27] – there are indications that

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[25] Though here I use Crawley's translation, I contend that the phrase "eager to fight it out" does not really capture the force of Thucydides' Greek in this instance.

[26] Huart, 415-17, esp. 415, n.5.

[27] Thuc. 4.41

Thucydides himself believed Cleon's plan to be reckless in its conception.[28] As he

summarizes the political maneuverings which took place between Cleon and Nicias, the

general being blamed for not taking enough initiative to capture the Spartans, Thucydides

points to Cleon's boast that he would kill or capture the Spartans within twenty days with

a force comprised entirely of allied peltasts and archers.[29] Thucydides categorizes his

speech as τῇ κουφολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ, his "empty words," i.e. his speech was devoid of the

logos expected of an assembly speaker.[30] Thucydides is highlighting how recklessly

Cleon sways the Athenian assembly with his illogical plan.[31] With this phrase, τῇ

κουφολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ, he makes it clear that Cleon has settled on a plan that exploited the

Athenians' proclivity for action by launching a risky offensive against a completely

surrounded enemy. Thucydides wants his reader to see the inherent danger in this plan, a

plan about which the "sensible men" of Athens, τοῖς σώφροσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων,

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[28] The debate over Thucydides' general characterization of Cleon is a long-standing one. The following scholars focus on Thucydides' negative appraisal of Cleon (whether or not his charaterization was accurate, however, is another question!): A.G. Woodhead, "Thucydides' Portrait of Cleon," *Mnemosyne* 13 (1960): 289-317; Francis Cairns, "Cleon and Pericles: A Suggestion," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982), 203-4; M.H.B. Marshall, "Cleon and Pericles: Sphacteria," *Greece and Rome* 31 (1984), 19-36; Barbara Mitchell, "Kleon's Amphipolitan Campaign: Aims and Results," *Historia* 40 (1991), 170-97; I.G. Spence, "Thucydides, Woodhead, and Kleon," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), 411-37. F. Bourriot takes a middle stance and questions long-standing beliefs about Cleon's ignoble background in "La Famille et le milieu social de Cléon," *Historia* 31 (1982), 404-35. The following scholars focus on the positive aspects of Thucydides' characterization: Mabel L. Lang, "Cleon as the Anti-Pericles," *Classical Philology* 67 (1972), 159-69; James A. Andrews, "Cleon's Ethopoetics," *The Classical Quarterly* 44 (1994), 26-39; and S. Sara Monoson and Michael Loriaux, "The Illusion of Power and the Disruption of Moral Norms: Thucydides' Critique of Periclean Policy," *The American Political Science Review* 92 (1998), 285-97.

[29] Thuc. 4.28.4.

[30] Thuc. 4.28.5.

[31] Gomme, 469.

happened to be wrong in their calculations of what would be expected to happen.[32]

Thucydides wants his reader to realize that, while this situation resolved itself favorably,

the dangers of simply taking action are not something to be taken lightly by those who

would consider themselves "sensible men."

In another example, Thucydides makes it clear that an extended period of

misfortune was more likely to make Greeks look for a way to risk danger rather than to

find an alternative solution. In this example, Thucydides summarizes the negotiations

between Athens and Sparta during the year 421/0 concerning the possible exchange of

conquests each *polis* held.[33] Sparta's main goal was to secure the return of those 292

prisoners, about 120 of whom were full Spartan citizens, held in Athens since their

capture at Pylos in 425.[34] Their captivity had substantially hampered Spartan efforts over

the past four years, as Sparta struggled to continue prosecuting the war while

simultaneously dealing with its ever-present fear of helot revolt.[35] Though Sparta was

able to secure the release of some Athenian prisoners held in Boeotia, along with the city

of Panactum, they were not able to gain reciprocity from Athens because Panactum had,

in fact, already been razed by the Boeotians, and the Athenians perceived this as a sign of

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[32] Gomme, 469. Gomme also notes the sad irony that Thucydides himself may well have been among these "sensible men" present at that assembly.

[33] Thuc. 5.39-45.

[34] Thuc. 5.39.1. Thucydides provides the number of Spartan prisoners at 4.38.5.

[35] Paul Cartledge provides a detailed discussion of the far ranging consequences of the Spartan "disaster" at Pylos with analysis of its effects on Sparta's relationships with its allies in *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300 to 362 B.C.* (New York: Routledge, 2d edition, 2002), 205-14. More specifically, he addresses the problem of *oliganthropia,* manpower-shortage, as a continual threat to the Spartan state between 480-371 and the primary reason they were "prepared to sue for peace at once in order to retrieve these few hostages" in *Spartan Reflections* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 183-84. In this sense he expands on the original notions of Aristotle who claims that Spartan power eventually fell due to a shortage of men, *Politics* 1270a.

Spartan duplicity in negotiations.[36] To complicate matters further, the youthfully

ambitious Athenian politician Alcibiades makes his first appearance in Thucydides'

narrative when he attempts to undercut further Spartan-Athenian negotiations by sending

private messages to Argos to begin negotiations for an alliance.[37] When the Spartans,

fearing an Athenian-Argive alliance, send another delegation to Athens, they are tricked

by Alcibiades into not revealing that they had come with full powers to settle all issues,

and they are rejected by the Athenian assembly.[38] The assembly, however, was cut short

by an earthquake before the final decision could be reached.[39] On the following day, the

assembly met to finalize the decisions and Nicias reintroduced the idea that it would be

best to make friends with the Spartans.[40]

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[36] Thuc. 5.42.2. Thomas Kelly justifies the Athenian skepticism in "Cleobulus, Xenares, and Thucydides' Account of the Demolition of Panactum," *Historia* 21 (1972), 159-69.

[37] Thuc. 5.43.2-44.2. Thucydides' characterization of Alcibiades' brilliance, leadership ability, and (questionable) moral character is the subject of vast body of scholarship. See the following: H. Bengston focuses on his brilliant naval tactics in *Zu de stratigischen Konzeptionen des Alkibiades* (Munich: Bayerisch Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979); Donald Kagan highlights his image as the cleverest man in Athens, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); W. R. Connor sees him as brilliant and controversial, *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 165; Walter M. Ellis highlights Thucydides' balanced and nuanced view in *Alcibiades* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Edmund F. Bloedow argues that Thucydides highlights Alcibiades cleverness, but in a negative way in "Not the Son of Achilles, but Achilles Himself: Alcibiades' Entry on the Political Stage at Athens II," *Historia* 39 (1990), 1-19 and "Alcibiades 'Brilliant' or 'Intelligent'?" *Historia* 41 (1992), 139-57; Gregory Crane highlights Alcibiades' image as that of an "Anti-Pericles" in *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicty: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 322-4; Victoria Wohl focuses on the affair of the *herms* as proof that Thucydides believed Athens was unable to defend itself against the "castrating power" of Alcibiades' influence in "The Eros of Alcibiades," *Classical Antiquity* 18 (1999), 349-85.

[38] Thuc. 5.45.

[39] Thuc. 5.45.4.

[40] Thuc. 5.46.1.

Thucydides writes a brief summary of Nicias' speech and, in this summary, highlights for his reader the latent potential for violence that existed in the Greeks' ethos of action.[41] Thucydides writes:

> τῇ δ' ὑστεραίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ὁ Νικίας, καίπερ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων αὐτῶν ἠπατημένων καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξηπατημένος περὶ τοῦ μὴ αὐτοκράτορας ὁμολογῆσαι ἥκειν, ὅμως τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἔφη χρῆναι φίλους μᾶλλον γίγνεσθαι, καὶ ἐπισχόντας τὰ πρὸς Ἀργείους πέμψαι ἔτι ὡς αὐτοὺς καὶ εἰδέναι ὅτι διανοοῦνται, λέγων ἐν μὲν τῷ σφετέρῳ καλῷ, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐκείνων ἀπρεπεῖ τὸν πόλεμον ἀναβάλλεσθαι· σφίσι μὲν γὰρ εὖ ἑστώτων τῶν πραγμάτων ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἄριστον εἶναι διασώσασθαι τὴν εὐπραγίαν, ἐκείνοις δὲ δυστυχοῦσιν ὅτι τάχιστα εὕρημα εἶναι διακινδυνεῦσαι.

> In the assembly held the next day, Nicias, in spite of the Spartans having been deceived themselves, and having also allowed him to be deceived in not admitting that they had come with full powers, still maintained that it was best to be friends with the Spartans. He argued that they should postpone action on the Argive proposals and send once more to Sparta and learn her intentions. The postponement of the war could only increase their own prestige and injure that of their rivals; the excellent state of their affairs making it in their interest to preserve this prosperity as long as possible while the affairs of Sparta were so desperate that they were looking for some 'lucky discovery' which will give them the occasion to run the risk of going to war again (5.46.1).[42]

Thucydides' diction reflects a very stark image of the Greek ethos of action. While Athens would be best served by enjoying its momentary superiority, Sparta should be

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[41] The scholarship on Thucydides' general appraisal of Nicias has been presented in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples).

[42] Here I have modified the final part of Crawley's translation. He translates the phrase ἐκείνοις δὲ δυστυχοῦσιν ὅτι τάχιστα εὕρημα εἶναι διακινδυνεῦσαι by saying that "the affairs of Sparta were so desperate that the sooner she could try her fortune again the better." This translation does not, in my opinion, capture the force of Thucydides' Greek My translation is supported by Gomme's analysis, 4:53.

expected to seek an opportunity to risk the dangers of combat *as soon as possible,* ὅτι

τάχιστα. Because of a period of bad luck and the perception that Sparta might continue

to lose power relative to its rival, the Spartans are depicted, in Nicias' analysis, as

aggressively ready to change the status quo.[43] Nicias' analysis, which Thucydides

presents with no disagreement, underscores for the reader the violent tendencies one can

expect to see from his contemporary Greeks when they are in positions of weakness;

rather than seeking a peaceful or diplomatic alternative, they can be expected to lash out

violently to regain lost power or prestige.

In the next two examples Thucydides also uses his rendition of a speech to put the

Greeks' tendency to seek action in the foreground of his reader's attention. Both

examples come from his rendition of the Spartan general Gylippus' battle exhortation

before the last major naval battle against the Athenian forces in the Syracusan harbor.[44]

By the year 413, the Athenian invasion of Sicily was beginning to founder and, though

the Athenians had experienced some success in their offensive operations, the Syracusans

perceived that the Athenians lacked the combat power to contend further with them in

battle on either land or sea.[45] The Syracusans determined to seize the initiative and close

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[43] The term "revisionist state" will have been defined in Chapter 1.2.2.

[44] Gomme argues that the wording of Thucydides' text, παρεκελεύσαντο ἐκείνοις οἵ τε στρατηγοὶ καὶ Γύλιππος καὶ ἔλεξαν τοιάδε makes it clear that this speech either was given by a general whom Thucydides cannot specifically name or represents an amalgamation of several speeches given on the occasion. In either case, Gomme contends that this particular speech is a "warning against too rigid a defense of the historical fidelity of all Thucydidean speeches. For his complete argument, see A. W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover, *A Historical Cmmentary on Thucydides* 4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970, Reprint 1983), 444. In this case, as elsewhere in this dissertation, the point is not to be concerned with the veracity of the speeches, but with the style by which Thucydides presents the speeches to his reader. In this particular instance, the point is to show how Thucydides presents the Greeks' ethos of action to the reader via the speech. Because this is the subject of my analysis, I will simplify the argument by referring to this speech as if it were Gylippus' alone.

[45] Thuc. 7.56.2.

the mouth of the Syracusan harbor, thus completely enclosing the Athenian forces and sealing their fate.[46] The Athenians were forced into a dire position, requiring immediate and dramatic action: they contracted their defenses to cover only what was required for the supplies and the wounded, they compelled all able bodied men to go on board the ships, and they manned 110 ships of their once powerful fleet.[47]

Gylippus and his generals made reasonable tactical preparations for battle and exhorted their men by focusing on the opportunity to finish their opponents. In one portion of the speech, Thucydides has Gylippus say:

> τὸ δ' ἀληθέστατον γνῶτε ἐξ ὧν ἡμεῖς οἰόμεθα σαφῶς πεπύσθαι· ὑπερβαλλόντων γὰρ αὐτοῖς τῶν κακῶν καὶ βιαζόμενοι ὑπὸ τῆς παρούσης ἀπορίας ἐς ἀπόνοιαν καθεστήκασιν οὐ παρασκευῆς πίστει μᾶλλον ἢ τύχης ἀποκινδυνεῦσαι οὕτως ὅπως δύνανται, ἵν' ἢ βιασάμενοι ἐκπλεύσωσιν ἢ κατὰ γῆν μετὰ τοῦτο τὴν ἀποχώρησιν ποιῶνται, ὡς τῶν γε παρόντων οὐκ ἂν πράξαντες χεῖρον.
>
> Indeed, if you would know the plain truth, as we are credibly informed, the excess of their sufferings and the necessities of the present distress have made them desperate; they have no confidence in their former military expertise in tactics or discipline, but wish to try face the dangers of chance in the only way they can and either to force their passage and sail out, or after this to retreat by

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[46] Thuc. 7.56.1, 59.2-3.

[47] Thuc. 7.60.3.

land, it being impossible for them to be worse off than they
are (7.67.4).[48]

Thucydides seems to be pushing his reader to the conclusion that the Athenians were

ignoring those things which had made them strong in the past. They had been forced into

such dire straits that they no longer trusted in their combat training, οὐ παρασκευῆς

πίστει. Instead, the Athenians were more willing to face the dangers of chance, τύχης

ἀποκινδυνεῦσαι. Facing a shortage of supplies – the Athenians had earlier ordered the

city of Catana not to send any further supplies – and a distinctly inferior tactical position

– the constricted harbor would not allow the Athenians to take advantage of their superior

naval maneuverability and experience – one might expect a more rational approach to the

situation.[49] While simply waiting the enemy out may not have been an option,

Thucydides gives no indication that the Athenian commanders made any effort to

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[48] Here I have changed Crawley's translation to capture more accurately the meaning of Thucydides' Greek. Where Crawley translates the phrase οὐ παρασκευῆς πίστει as "they have no confidence in their force," I have inserted "nothing left of their former military expertise in tactics or discipline." I base this translation on June Allison, *Power and Preparedness in Thucydides* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). Allison refers to this particular example of the term παρασκευή as referring to "the strategies and forces of the Athenians" and "conveying the idea that with nothing left of their own *paraskeue,* they have had to mimic that of the Syracusans" (111-12). At this point in the narrative, Thucydides is highlighting that the Athenians have nothing left of their former military expertise in tactics or discipline. They are left with no other option than to react to the Syracusans' newly achieved preparedness and tactical superiority. Allison also notes how strongly Thucydides is casting the image of the Athenians as one in an "irrational state of mind" with the phrase ὑπὸ τῆς παρούσης ἀπορίας ἐς ἀπόνοιαν. The term ἀπόνοιαν is uncommon and found in only one other place in Thucydides' narrative (1.82.4), 117-18.

[49] Thucydides comment' on the Athenian supply lines in 7.60.2. Lazenby provides more clarification on the Athenians' logistical challenge, 160-61. John T. Kirby highlights Gylippus' understanding of the desperation the Athenians faced in "Narrative Structure and Technique in Thucydides VI-VII," *Classical Antiquity* 2 (1983), 187-90. See also Felix M. Wasserman (1964), 295, Elizabeth Keitel, (1987), 293-300.

negotiate the surrender of their forces to Syracuse and her allies.[50] Nicias would surely

remember that the Spartans had, in the end, done just that with their men on Sphacteria

and had survived.[51] Thucydides uses this speech to show that the Athenians acted out of

desperation and exposed themselves to the dangers of chance.

So too does Thucydides show that the Syracusans and their Peloponnesian allies

chose to react emotionally, not logically. In the very next section, Thucydides has

Gylippus say:

> πρὸς οὖν ἀταξίαν τε τοιαύτην καὶ τύχην ἀνδρῶν
> ἑαυτὴν παραδεδωκυῖαν πολεμιωτάτων ὀργῇ
> προσμείξωμεν, καὶ νομίσωμεν ἅμα μὲν νομιμώτατον
> εἶναι πρὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους οἳ ἂν ὡς ἐπὶ τιμωρίᾳ τοῦ
> προσπεσόντος δικαιώσωσιν ἀποπλῆσαι τῆς γνώμης τὸ
> θυμούμενον, ἅμα δὲ ἐχθροὺς ἀμύνασθαι
> ἐκγενησόμενον ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ λεγόμενόν που ἥδιστον
> εἶναι. ὡς δὲ ἐχθροὶ καὶ ἔχθιστοι, πάντες ἴστε, οἵ γε ἐπὶ
> τὴν ἡμετέραν ἦλθον δουλωσόμενοι, ἐν ᾧ, εἰ
> κατώρθωσαν, ἀνδράσι μὲν ἂν τἄλγιστα προσέθεσαν,
> παισὶ δὲ καὶ γυναιξὶ τὰ ἀπρεπέστατα, πόλει δὲ τῇ πάσῃ
> τὴν αἰσχίστην ἐπίκλησιν. ἀνθ' ὧν μὴ μαλακισθῆναί
> τινα πρέπει μηδὲ τὸ ἀκινδύνως ἀπελθεῖν αὐτοὺς
> κέρδος νομίσαι.

> The fortune of our greatest enemies having thus betrayed
> itself, and their disorder being what I have described, let us
> engage in anger, convinced that nothing is more legitimate
> between adversaries than to claim to satisfy the whole
> wrath of one's soul in punishing the aggressor, and nothing
> more sweet, as the proverb has it, than the vengeance upon
> an enemy which it will now be ours to take. That enemies
> they are and mortal enemies you all know, since they came
> here to enslave our country, and if successful had in reserve

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[50] Thucydides does mention the necessity for a "council of war," βουλευτέα ἐδόκει, but gives no details of the plans discussed other than those involving this desperate effort to escape by force (7.60.1-2). That Thucydides excluded a discussion of any other options, which may well have been discussed, makes it even more clear that he is consciously constructing his narrative to highlight the dangerous nature of their tendency to act.

[51] Thuc. 4.38.1.

> for our men all that is most dreadful, and for our children and wives all that is most dishonorable, and for the whole city the name which conveys the greatest reproach. None should therefore relent or think it gain if they go away without further danger to us (7.68.1-2).

Thucydides shows how Gylippus encouraged an emotional response from his Syracusan allies; he wanted them to engage the enemy with anger, ὀργῇ προσμείξωμεν, and give in to their pent-up rage and volatile emotions. Note the varying degrees of anger and emotion Thucydides compresses into this one section: ὀργῇ, τὸ θυμούμενον, ἐχθροὶ καὶ ἔχθιστοι, τἄλγιστα, τὴν αἰσχίστην ἐπίκλησιν. This brief section is built around bristling emotions: anger and passion, hated and most hateful enemies, pain and shame. Thucydides is showing his reader the goads with which his Greek contemporaries could be whipped into a frenzy.

Thucydides here puts focus on the dangers in which Greeks will willingly participate. He brings the speech to a climax by putting the real danger in the foreground. Thucydides' Gylippus admonishes his audience not to consider it a gain should the Athenians depart without danger, μηδὲ τὸ ἀκινδύνως ἀπελθεῖν αὐτοὺς κέρδος νομίσαι. The less dangerous option would have been to let the Athenians go; they were defeated and giving them another battle exposed the Syracusans to the whims of fate. Another less dangerous option would have been to seal up the harbor even more completely and to starve the Athenians into submission through a siege. A third option would have been to send a herald to the Athenians to make it clear the futility of their position and offer terms of surrender. None of these options factor into Thucydides' rendition of Gylippus' speech. Instead, he focuses on making explicit Gylippus' need to avoid options that might present themselves without danger, ἀκινδύνως. Thucydides

grabs his reader's attention with a cacophony of violent emotional imagery and concludes by laying bare idea that both the Athenians and the Syracusans (led by a Spartan) seem to prefer dangerous action to safer options which might yield more optimal results for both parties.

3.2.3 Athenian Impulse to Act: Thucydides' Pedagogical Technique (Pre-Sicilian Examples)

Marc Cogan identifies three distinct phases of the twenty-seven year long conflict and places the events surrounding the invasion of Sicily in the third and most violent phase, one driven entirely by ideological passions and one which leads all combatants to perceive every situation as a threat to their very survival. He argues that, during this phase of the war, "concrete expressions of danger or of policy" were cast aside by the Athenians in favor of more abstract expressions about ideological dangers" offered by demagogues such as Alcibiades.[1]

While Thucydides provides examples in his narrative which help his reader to define the Greek ethos of action, his goal of educating his reader necessitates that he also provide positive examples of how this this dangerous ethos might be avoided. To accomplish this, he tries to focus his reader's attention on those instances in which certain individual leaders or communities actually recognize this danger on their own. It appears that Thucydides wants to show that self-evaluation is possible and Greeks are not trapped in an endless cycle of violent actions. Several examples from the build-up to one of the most risky and disastrous episodes of the war, the Athenians' Sicilian Expedition in 415, highlight Thucydides' belief that there were moments of clarity for some individuals and for the Athenians as a whole during which the dangerous nature of their situation became clear even through the fog of their proclivity for violent action.

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[1] Marc Cogan, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), ch. 4, esp. 161.

The first of these individuals is Nicias, the Athenian politician known for his desire to preserve the status quo and to seek peace.[2] Elected unwillingly to the position of general, Nicias believed the Athenian decision to send sixty ships in support of the Egestaeans was ill-advised.[3] The Athenians had already voted in an assembly to help the Egestaeans against the Selinuntines, to restore Leontini, and "to order all other matters in Sicily as they [the appointed generals] should deem best for the interests of Athens."[4] Five days later another assembly was held to determine how best and most rapidly to support the earlier decision.[5] Nicias, though Thucydides gives no indication that he spoke against the expedition in the first assembly, must have thought that the five-day period would have given the assembly enough time to reflect on the gravity of their decision to invade Sicily.[6] He now addressed the assembly in an effort to dissuade them from this course of action. Thucydides provides a rendition of Nicias' speech, and focuses on his recognition of the ethos of action and its inherent dangers. Thucydides has Nicias say:

> καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς τρόπους τοὺς ὑμετέρους ἀσθενὴς
> ἄν μου ὁ λόγος εἴη, εἰ τά τε ὑπάρχοντα σῴζειν
> παραινοίην καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἑτοίμοις περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν καὶ
> μελλόντων κινδυνεύειν· ὡς δὲ οὔτε ἐν καιρῷ σπεύδετε
> οὔτε ῥᾴδιά ἐστι κατασχεῖν ἐφ' ἃ ὥρμησθε, ταῦτα
> διδάξω.

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[2] Thuc. 5.16.1. The scholarship on Thucydides' characterization of Nicias has been presented in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples). The most thorough analysis of Nicias' risk-aversion can be found in John Atkinson, "Nicias and the Fear of Failure Syndrome," *Ancient History Bulletin* 9 (1995), 55-63.

[3] Thuc. 6.8.4.

[4] Thuc. 6.8.2.

[5] Thuc. 6.8.3.

[6] A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* 4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970, Reprint 1983), 230.

> Against your [Athenian] character any words of mine would be weak enough, particularly if I were to advise you to keep what you have and not risk it for advantages which are dubious in themselves, and which you may or may not attain. I will, therefore, content myself with showing that your ardor is untimely, and your ambition not easily accomplished (6.9.3).

Nicias has put his sense of reason, μου ὁ λόγος, on display to the Athenian assembly. Furthermore, he did this knowing that it will be a weak competitor against the Athenian character, πρὸς μὲν τοὺς τρόπους τοὺς ὑμετέρους. The Athenians were renowned for their active nature, πολυπραγμοσύνη, and Thucydides' rendition of Nicias' speech makes a point of contrasting the Athenians' desire for action against the need for rational consideration of potential consequences.[7] He makes the contrast even more explicit by pointing to the Athenians' refusal to ignore the dangers of aggressive expansionism in favor of the potential gains, μὴ τοῖς ἑτοίμοις περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν καὶ μελλόντων κινδυνεύειν. The logical option, in Thucydides' analysis, is for the Athenians to hold on to what they have, to preserve their present advantages, τά τε ὑπάρχοντα σῴζειν. The alternative, the pursuit of uncertain gains, is fraught with peril, κινδυνεύειν. Thucydides is here restating, in different words, the wartime strategy he ascribed to Pericles and summarized as " to wait quietly, to pay attention to their marine, to attempt no new conquests, and to expose the city to no hazards during the war."[8] This was, as Gomme rightly contends, "just what the Athenians were incapable of doing … a difficult policy to

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[7] Gomme, 231. Thucydides assigns the term πολυπραγμοσύνη to the Athenian character (6.87.3). See also John H. Finley, *Thucydides* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 153-54; V. Ehrenburg, "Polypragmosyne," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 67 (1947); and Jacqueline de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, trans. Phlip Thody (Oxford: Alden Press, 1963), 77-8. The Corinthians provide a similar characterization of Athenian character in Thucydides' rendition of their speech to the Peloponnesian League, 1.70.

[8] Thuc. 2.65.7.

carry out in war for any people, but especially for the Athenians." [9] Though Thucydides is not making a universal statement that "all Greeks act without thinking," he is showing that, like Gylippus, the Athenians often respond without considering the alternatives or consequences.

Thucydides, immediately after introducing the concept of danger, κινδυνεύειν, makes his didactic goal explicit. He has Nicias proclaim that he is trying to teach the Athenians about these issues, ταῦτα διδάξω. The two issues are presented in straightforward language. First, he wants the Athenians not to rush into action at a time like this, οὔτε ἐν καιρῷ σπεύδετε. Second, he stresses the irrational passion that is fueling the Athenians' haste, ἐφ' ἃ ὥρμησθε. [10] The Athenians, in Thucydides' analysis, had the opportunity to avoid their eventual destruction in Sicily had they only reined in their passion and proclivity for action. But Nicias presents their passion as being so powerful that no degree of logic can stand against it. Thucydides' rendition of Nicias' speech provides his reader with an explicit pedagogical example of how a rational statesman ought to view situations such as these, situations seemingly ripe with opportunity, but definitely filled with profound danger.

Thucydides continues to use Nicias' speech to educate his reader with an even more distinct definition of Athens' precarious situation at this point in the war and the dangers of the ethos of action. He has Nicias explain the details of the various treaties among Athens, Sparta, and the Peloponnesian allies, many of which were under dispute

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[9] Gomme, 2.190.

[10] Here I am expanding on Huart's analysis of the term ὁρμὴ and its cognates. Huart remarks that Thucydides uses ὁρμὴ at 3.36.2 to indicate a violent impulse which is fundamentally no different than that inspired by rage, "…en III, 36,2, où il signifie *impulsion violente*, avec une valeur pas tellement différente de ὀργή," 415-6, n. 5.

and some of which were so tenuous they require renewal every ten days.[11] Thucydides

has Nicias deliver a sober lesson:

> ὥστε χρὴ σκοπεῖν τινὰ αὐτὰ καὶ μὴ μετεώρῳ τε <τῇ>
> πόλει ἀξιοῦν κινδυνεύειν καὶ ἀρχῆς ἄλλης ὀρέγεσθαι
> πρὶν ἣν ἔχομεν βεβαιωσώμεθα.
>
> A man ought, therefore, to consider these points, and not to
> think of running risks with a country placed so critically, or
> of grasping at another empire before we have secured the
> one we have already (6.10.5).

The contrast here is between the logical search for a careful political position and an

illogical grasp for more in the midst of uncertainty. Thucydides' logical approach would

be to examine the options with an eye towards finding the optimal solution; he makes this

clear with his use of the verb σκοπεῖν.[12] To examine with the eyes, σκοπεῖν, is to look

carefully into the options and consider the possible outcomes before acting. The illogical

approach is to ignore careful examination and instinctively deem it a situation in which it

is worthy to risk the dangers of combat, ἀξιοῦν κινδυνεύειν. Thucydides' word choice

here gives two clear indicators that underscore the dangers explained by the verb

κινδυνεύειν; Both μετεώρῳ and ὀρέγεσθαι provide the reader with an image of a city

precariously situated in a moment of danger. Thucydides intends his reader to perceive

that Athens is in a state of uncertain balance, μετεώρῳ, yet the Athenians are on the

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[11] Thuc. 6.10.1-3.

[12] Huart examines various forms of this verb in his discussion of knowledge and inquiry, ch. 3. He analyses various forms of the verb σκοπεῖν and its particular importance and frequency in Thucydides' narrative, 183-95. A main point upon which I am basing the idea that σκοπεῖν represents a rational analysis of the situation is in his discussion of the relationship between Thucydides' use of these terms and Hippocrates' use of the same terms to underscore the "rigorous scientific analysis" implied by such terms (188-89). Crane echoes this idea and argues that "Thucydides uses the verb *skopeo* to dramatize the penetrating gaze of the logical observer" (243).

verge of extending themselves even more precariously, ὀρέγεσθαι.[13] Thucydides' lesson

is simple: when faced with uncertain and violent options, understand the dangers

completely before accepting violent action as the course to take. His point is that many

people do not do this and the Athenian population in 415 is a terrible example.

Both of these instances explicitly mark the Athenian character as being very

susceptible to a perceived necessity for action. In the first instance, Nicias rightly

predicted that his logic would have little impact against the Athenian character, καὶ πρὸς

μὲν τοὺς τρόπους τοὺς ὑμετέρους ἀσθενὴς ἄν μου ὁ λόγος εἴη.[14] In the second

instance, Nicias highlighted the Athenians' proclivity for imperial overreach, ἀρχῆς

ἄλλης ὀρέγεσθαι πρὶν ἣν ἔχομεν βεβαιωσώμεθα.[15] But in his narrative of a such a

pivotal moment in the war, Thucydides wants to be as explicit as possible for his reader.

He repeatedly focuses his reader's attention on inherent problems with the ethos of action

by following Nicias' speech with one by Alcibiades in which he focuses on how quickly

the Athenians gave in to their impulse for decisive, large-scale action even when

presented with better solutions. Thucydides has Alcibiades present several arguments

designed to mock Nicias' conservative approach and to instill confidence in the Athenians

and secure their full support for the expedition.[16] At the end of the speech, the

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[13] Gomme argues for a translation with the sense of a city "in a delicate position," citing *comparanda* in Hippocrates which refer to the body not being in a condition necessary for good health (233). See Hipp. *VM* 19.

[14] Thuc. 6.9.3.

[15] Thuc. 6.10.5.

[16] Thuc. 6.16-18. On Alcibiades' sarcastic language, which "suggests trepidation, and ... is directed at supposed pusillanimity in Nicias," see Guy L. Cooper (1979), 36.

culminating point to which the entire speech builds, Thucydides focuses his reader on the

weakness of the Athenians' proclivity for action. He has Alcibiades say:

> παράπαν τε γιγνώσκω πόλιν μὴ ἀπράγμονα τάχιστ᾽ ἄν
> μοι δοκεῖν ἀπραγμοσύνης μεταβολῇ διαφθαρῆναι, καὶ
> τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀσφαλέστατα τούτους οἰκεῖν οἳ ἂν
> τοῖς παροῦσιν ἤθεσι καὶ νόμοις, ἢν καὶ χείρω ᾖ, ἥκιστα
> διαφόρως πολιτεύωσιν.

> In short, my conviction is that a city not inactive by nature
> could not choose a quicker way to ruin itself than by
> suddenly adopting such a policy, and that the safest rule of
> life is to take one's character and institutions for better and
> for worse, and to live up to them as closely as one can
> (6.18.7).

While it is true that Thucydides presents no obvious image of danger here, it is equally

true that the logic that he has Alcibiades present is, in fact, quite wrong.[17] Thucydides

links two ideas to educate his reader: Alcibiades' image of the city as one prone to act and

the reader's own understanding of the disastrous results of the Sicilian invasion.[18]

Thucydides' rendition of Alcibiades' speech defines the Athenian character: one of action,

πόλιν μὴ ἀπράγμονα.[19] The quickest path to destruction, according to politicians such

as Alcibiades who might revel in the opportunity of the moment, would be to become less

active, ἀπραγμοσύνης μεταβολῇ. It is this mistaken attitude that Thucydides wants his

reader to see. The reader can not help but understand the fallacy in Alcibiades'

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[17] Cogan notes that Thucydides' rendition of Alcibiades' characterization should appear to the reader as "a grotesquely distorted picture of the Athenian character." But the fact that this characterization seems to have been accepted at Athens –or at least represented as true by Thucydides – demonstrates that "real distortions have occurred in Athenian attitudes," 96.

[18] This instance is a good example of what Morrison called the "retrospective reader" who understood the course of the war in outline and saw the Athenians' eventual defeat in 404 as the "terminus towards which events are headed" (14).

[19] Romilly sees in this phrase, πόλιν μὴ ἀπράγμονα, the "essential definition of the psychological characteristic which determines Athenian policy" (78).

perspective. Alcibiades sees the Athenians' passion for action as a path to glory; a road to

perdition is all that Thucydides sees. Alcibiades' argument is slick and almost fatalistic:

"we have no choice but to follow our active character. Anything else would be self-

destructive." This is, of course, simply not true as the outcome in Sicily proves. The

Athenians πολυπραγμοσύνη is their downfall.

Thucydides, however, does not believe that the Athenians are completely

incapable of seeing the true nature of their dangerous actions. In fact, he makes a point of

showing his reader that the Athenians themselves did finally comprehend, even if just

briefly, the magnitude of danger they had chosen to accept in voting for the Sicilian

expedition. After outlining all the preparations that were undertaken for the expedition,

Thucydides paints a very poignant image of the day of departure for the Athenian

expedition:

> καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι καιρῷ, ὡς ἤδη ἔμελλον μετὰ
> κινδύνων ἀλλήλους ἀπολιπεῖν, μᾶλλον αὐτοὺς ἐσήει
> τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ὅτε ἐψηφίζοντο πλεῖν· ὅμως δὲ τῇ παρούσῃ
> ῥώμῃ, διὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἑκάστων ὧν ἑώρων, τῇ ὄψει
> ἀνεθάρσουν.
>
> Indeed, at this moment, when they were now upon the point
> of parting from one another, the danger came home to them
> more than when they had voted for the expedition, although
> the strength of the armament, and the profuse provision
> which they observed in every department, was a sight that
> could not but comfort them (6.31.1).

Thucydides shows that the Athenians experienced a brief moment of clarity when they

recognized they were sending the fleet off "in the midst of dangers," μετὰ κινδύνων.

These dangers were twofold: the expedition was a dangerous invasion of Sicily and

Athens itself still faced local dangers from enemies barely kept in check by the tenuous

peace treaties.[20] In this moment, the Athenians experienced a more rational understanding of the truly terrible nature of the horrors they might face in taking such an aggressive course of action, μᾶλλον αὐτοὺς ἐσήει τὰ δεινά.[21] The reader, however, is meant to be struck by Thucydides' reminder that this moment of clarity comes too late; it occurs after the vote to act has been taken, μᾶλλον … ἢ ὅτε ἐψηφίζοντο πλεῖν. Thucydides is showing his reader that the Athenians did possess have the capacity to understand the dangerous reality of their world but, nonetheless, tended to overlook that reality when brought together in an assembly, whipped into a frenzy by fiery rhetoric, and faced with the possibility of being perceived as unpatriotic should they choose not to act audaciously.[22] This ethos of action, in Thucydides' analysis, was simply too strong for the Athenians to resist even when the stakes were the highest and the realities of the danger were actually understood. Only a few leaders, men such as Nicias, had the courage or desire to go against the community's nature and push for more rational options. Thucydides highlights for his reader that the inability to resist their impulse for decisive action may well have been the key factor in the Athenians' eventual downfall in the final

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[20] Thucydides focused his reader on the reality of the Athenians' position among her mainland Greek allies and foes during his rendition of Nicias' speech (6.10.1-4).

[21] Huart points out that Thucydides uses variants of the term δεινός to describe the external origin of the sentiment of fear, i.e. "the thing which is to be feared," "il indique toujours ce quit fait peur, l'origine extérieure de ce sentiment" (140, n.5.). Though Desmond does not include this term in his discussion of fear in Thucydides' analysis, it does seem, in this instance at least, to fit into his general idea of a "prudent, rational fear" in that Thucydides is describing how the Athenians are finally coming to terms with the fearsome nature of reality. See William Desmond, "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006)359-79.

[22] Thucydides points to the fact that a minority of Athenians kept quiet because they "feared to appear unpatriotic by holding up their hands against it" (6.24.4). B. Jordan analyzes the visual imagery of this departure scene compared to the images of glory presented by Alcibiades in his speech to the Athenians assembly and argues that the "Athenians have become willing dupes of Alcibiades." See "The Sicilian Expedition Was a Potemkin Fleet," *The Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000), 69.

phase of this long war. When the Corinthians explained to the Spartans that the Athenians were "adventurous beyond their power, and daring beyond their judgment," Thucydides seems to be giving them a sort of prescient knowledge of the true cause of their eventual defeat.[23]

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[23] Thuc. 1.70.3.

3.2.4 Athenian Impulse to Act: Thucydides' Pedagogical Technique (Sicilian Examples)

Thucydides uses his narrative of certain events during the Sicilian expedition itself to highlight instances in which well respected leaders appear to have understood both the dangers and, more importantly, the Athenians' dangerous proclivity for rash action in the midst of danger. As before, he provides his reader with opposing views of two leaders, Nicias and Alcibiades, to show his reader the fundamental danger of impulsive action. At this point in the narrative, Thucydides has already described how the Athenian forces departed, seemingly bound for fortune and glory, though with some trepidation as previously mentioned.[1] The Syracusans, however, were aware of the Athenians' intentions and had come together in assembly to determine the best response to the threat.[2] After debating various means of responding and listening to speeches presented in favor of several different options, the Syracusans came to no certain conclusion as to how to respond.[3] Once the Athenians passed Corcyra and arrive at Rhegium, however, the Syracusans threw themselves into action and took "all the other steps to prepare for a war which might be upon them at any moment."[4] The Athenian generals, realizing that the Egestaeans had employed a devious trick to convince the Athenian assembly that they had the financial resources to support this invasion when, in fact, they did not, came together to decide their plan.[5] Thucydides constructs a brief description of this council-of-war to highlight one of the fundamental differences

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[1] Thuc. 6.31-32.

[2] Thuc. 6.32.

[3] Thuc. 6.33-42.

[4] Thuc. 6.45

[5] Thuc. 6.46

between Nicias and Alcibiades: the former embodies rational restraint, the latter

embodies the ethos of action. In other words, Nicias embodies the rational mindset with

which Thucydides believes the Athenians may have won this war, Alcibiades the

aggressively active mindset by which Thucydides believes the Athenians lost this war.[6]

During his description of this council-of-war, Thucydides writes that Nicias

proposed a more conservative strategy for the expedition, based on the breach of trust

with their original allies, the Egestaeans. Thucydides says that he was in favor of giving

the Egestaeans one more chance to make good on their monetary pledge and then, if they

did not, Nicias wanted to settle matters between the Egestaeans and Selinuntines as

quickly as possible. The Athenian expedition would then sail around the coast to make a

show of force. His motivation, according to Thucydides, was "not to endanger the state

by wasting its home resources," τῇ πόλει δαπανῶντας τὰ οἰκεῖα μὴ κινδυνεύειν.[7]

Thucydides points his reader to the dangers inherent in pursuing other, more ambitious

actions without the proper financial support; Nicias, in Thucydides' analysis, understood

the specific dangers to the expedition as well as the broader dangers to the state.

Alcibiades, on the other hand, is portrayed by Thucydides as the embodiment of

the Athenians' penchant for aggressive action. He has the exact opposite reaction to the

situation and urges the generals to continue to pursue the aggressive intent of the

Athenian assembly and find a way to attack both Syracuse and Selinus.[8] Thucydides'

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[6] Gregory Crane (1998) says of Alcibiades' character that "Alcibiades – energetic, insatiably acquisitive – may be the anti-Perikles, but he perfectly embodies the Athenian character that the Corinthians sketched at Thucydides 1.68-71," 324.

[7] Thuc. 6.47.1.

[8] Thuc. 6.48

description in indirect speech of Alcibiades' advice underscores the irrational nature of his proposal. He portrays Alcibiades arguing that "a great expedition like the present must not disgrace itself by going away without having accomplished anything," οὐκ ἔφη χρῆναι τοσαύτῃ δυνάμει ἐκπλεύσαντας αἰσχρῶς καὶ ἀπράκτους ἀπελθεῖν.[9] Thucydides draws his reader's attention to the irrationality of this aggressive plan by showing that Alcibiades' "logic" is centered on his contemporary Greek conception of shame. Alcibiades is not arguing in favor of some material gain for the state or an opportunity for the state to increase its security in the midst of an unstable peace with the Peloponnesians. These arguments might be considered rational in the sense that they present at least the potential for some tangible benefit to the state. Instead, Thucydides points to the fact that Alcibiades believed that the expedition came to Sicily to act and, as such, not to act would be shameful. Where Nicias recognizes the inherent danger to the state of pushing the expedition beyond its logistical capabilities, Alcibiades is blinded by his aversion to inaction and believes the city of Athens would lose status should the expedition not pursue aggressive action.[10] While this may have deeper implications about the broader Greek conception of action and manly virtues, one thing is certain:

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[9] Thuc. 6.48.

[10] Lazenby supports the idea that Nicias' advice was correct given the circumstances and, though he admits that Nicias would be hard-pressed to defend his decision in the Athenian assembly, he would agree with my argument when he writes "good generals should not think of their own skins in such circumstances" (139). There are, of course, advocates for Alcibiades' view. See especially Cawkwell, George *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 82-3). The more common point of view is that the third general, Lamachos, held the most correct opinion: that the fleet should sail straight to Syracuse for an immediate attack while the city was still in a state of panic from the sudden arrival of such a large fleet. See Liebeschütz, W "Thucydides and the Sicilian Expedition," *Historia* 17 (1968), 299-302; Green, P *Armada From Athens* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 141; Kagan, Donald *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 215-16; and Kallet, Lisa *Money and the Corrosion of Power in Thucydides: The Sicilian Expedition and its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 151-9.

Alcibiades, the Athenian, believed a lack of action would be met with derision and scorn from his countrymen. Thucydides' reader, who knows the final outcome of the expedition even as he reads this analysis, is expected to recognize that the rational course would have been conservative, limited action; the irrational, and ultimately self-destructive, option was to continue acting without restraint.[11]

Thucydides presents his reader with one more foil to the image of the Athenians' irrational and essentially self-destructive penchant for action. The foil in this instance is the collective rationality of those facing the Athenians: the Syracusans.[12] In his depiction of two separate incidents, Thucydides presents his reader with the idea that the Syracusans recognized that it would be more dangerous to face their Athenian invaders impulsively before giving thought to the consequences of their action. In the first, the Syracusans are portrayed as reacting with a measured response when the Athenians threaten to circumvallate their city.[13] In the second, the Syracusans resist the urge to act impulsively and choose a seemingly less-than-honorable style of combat to destroy the Athenians.[14] Thucydides constructs his narrative of these separate, but related, instances in such a way as to demonstrate to his reader how the Syracusans' effort to mitigate the risks of rash action led to their success. Thucydides thus does not see the ethos of action

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[11] Morrison addresses the "retrospective reader" as well as the "engaged reader" (14).

[12] Throughout this analysis, it must be noted that Thucydides seems to be setting up the Syracusans as fundamentally equal to the the Athenians, at least in the earlier phases of the war when they were still holding to the basically defensive strategy laid out by Pericles. June W. Allison, in her analysis of the Greek term παρασκευήν, focuses on the explicit similarities between the two *poleis, Power and Preparedness in Thucydides* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 87 and 115-6.

[13] Thuc. 6.99.2.

[14] Thuc. 7.81.5.

as a timeless and universal Greek compulsion; the ability to overcome the urge to act

appears in Thucydides' analysis as one that is without borders or ethnic boundaries.

The situation appeared grim for the Syracusans in 414.[15] The Athenians had

experienced success in their Sicilian conquests just north of Syracuse and had already

been reinforced with additional cavalry units, archers, and money.[16] They had moved

rapidly down the coast and had fortified Epipolae, the high ground overlooking the city of

Syracuse.[17] The Syracusans had made one attempt to disrupt the Athenian momentum by

advancing out from the city to meet them in battle. They had, however, failed miserably

in this attempt because their troops were so disorganized and unprepared for combat that

the Syracusan generals felt they had no choice but to retreat back into the city without

actually engaging the Athenians.[18] In this brief encounter, it seems as if the Syracusans

gave in to their impulsive instinct for action – but then their generals wisely backed off.

Thucydides makes it clear that the Syracusans did not despair and did not give in

to the urge to "just act" out of desperation. Instead, he points his reader to the fact they

took the opposite approach and went to great lengths to avoid the dangerous gamble of a

direct confrontation with the enemy who was encamped just outside their city walls and

steadily taking ownership of their land, fields, and crops. He writes:

> οἱ δὲ Συρακόσιοι οὐχ ἥκιστα Ἑρμοκράτους τῶν
> στρατηγῶν ἐσηγησαμένου μάχαις μὲν πανδημεὶ πρὸς
> Ἀθηναίους οὐκέτι ἐβούλοντο διακινδυνεύειν,

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[15] For detailed military analysis of this sequence of events and the important geographical relationship between the city and the heights at Epipolae, see Lazenby (2001), 146-8.

[16] Thuc. 6.94.

[17] Thuc. 6.97-98.

[18] Thuc. 6.98.2-3.

ὑποτειχίζειν δὲ ἄμεινον ἐδόκει εἶναι, ᾗ ἐκεῖνοι ἔμελλον ἄξειν τὸ τεῖχος...

The Syracusans, guided by their generals, and above all by Hermocrates, instead of risking the danger of any more general engagements, determined to build a counter-wall in the direction in which the Athenians were going to carry their wall (6.99.2).[19]

The Syracusans, according to Thucydides' narration of the events, were of one mind with one of Thucydides' paragons of rational leadership: Hermocrates.[20] Rather than throwing caution to the wind and attacking rashly, the Syracusans engaged in a more manageable, defensive strategy. Thucydides, in this sense, seems to be highlighting how the Syracusans succeed in following the basic tenets behind Pericles' earlier advice where the Athenians eventually failed: they looked to their walls for protection and did not give in to the violent urge for action.[21]

When the tables were turned, however, Thucydides again highlights that the Syracusans maintained their composure and continued to restrain their emotions. Less than a year after the Athenians began their siege of Syracuse, they found themselves desperately hoping to escape their situation on the island. The Syracusans had been helped by the Spartans; the Athenians, on the other hand, had suffered high casualties

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[19] Where Crawley translates διακινδυνεύειν as "risking," I have changed to "risking the danger" to capture a more literal sense of Thucydides' reliance on κίνδυνος to highlight the danger.

[20] Thucydides refers to Hermocrates as a man "with great general ability of the first order [who] had given proofs of military capacity and brilliant courage," (6.72.2). Allison notes that Hermocrates "provided Syracuse with a *logos*" and that Thucydides sets up an implied comparison of the forethought and preparation of both Themistocles and Hermocrates. As "Themistocles defeated the Persian invaders so Hermocrates will defeat these [Athenian] invaders," 116-17. A more in-depth bibliography on Thucydides' portrayal of Hermocrates has been presented in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

[21] For examples of Pericles' ability to restrain the Athenian urge to counterattack the invading Peloponnesian forces see Thuc. 2.13.2, 2.22.1, 2.55.2, and 2.65.7. This also parallels the Macedonians' success against Sitalces of Thrace, which is discussed in depth in 2.3.4 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Groups Exhibiting *Coup d'Oeil*.

even in their victories on both land and sea and, despite receiving reinforcements from

Athens, the Athenian navy had suffered a significant defeat in the Syracusan Harbor.

Thucydides explains that the Athenians were in a state of despair owing to the fact that

they "had now been defeated at sea, where defeat could never have been expected." [22]

After yet another defeat on land, the Athenian generals Nicias and Demosthenes decide to

attempt an escape with their remaining forces.[23] In the course of this flight, however, they

were pursued and destroyed by the Syracusans. Thucydides' description of this retreat

and the Syracusan pursuit provides his reader with one final image of the Syracusans'

rationality. In his narrative of Demosthenes' last stand, Thucydides writes:

> ὁ δὲ Δημοσθένης ἐτύγχανέ τε τὰ πλείω ἐν πόνῳ
> ξυνεχεστέρῳ ὢν διὰ τὸ ὑστέρῳ ἀναχωροῦντι αὐτῷ
> πρώτῳ ἐπικεῖσθαι τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ τότε γνοὺς τοὺς
> Συρακοσίους διώκοντας οὐ προυχώρει μᾶλλον ἢ ἐς
> μάχην ξυνετάσσετο, ἕως ἐνδιατρίβων κυκλοῦταί τε
> ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν πολλῷ θορύβῳ αὐτός τε καὶ οἱ μετ'
> αὐτοῦ Ἀθηναῖοι ἦσαν· ἀνειληθέντες γὰρ ἔς τι χωρίον
> ᾧ κύκλῳ μὲν τειχίον περιῆν, ὁδὸς δὲ ἔνθεν [τε] καὶ
> ἔνθεν, ἐλάας δὲ οὐκ ὀλίγας εἶχεν, ἐβάλλοντο
> περισταδόν. τοιαύταις δὲ προσβολαῖς καὶ οὐ
> ξυσταδὸν μάχαις οἱ Συρακόσιοι εἰκότως ἐχρῶντο· τὸ
> γὰρ ἀποκινδυνεύειν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους
> ἀπονενοημένους οὐ πρὸς ἐκείνων μᾶλλον ἦν ἔτι ἢ
> πρὸς τῶν Ἀθηναίων...

> On the other hand, Demosthenes was, generally speaking,
> harassed more incessantly, as his post in the rear left him
> the first exposed to the attacks of the enemy; and now,
> finding that the Syracusans were in pursuit, he ceased to
> push on, in order to form his men for battle, and so lingered
> until he was surrounded by his pursuers and himself and the
> Athenians with him placed in the most distressing position,

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[22] Thuc. 7.55.2. Virginia Hunter examines the crushing psychological effects of fear from unexpected reversals of fortune, including this series of Athenian defeats, in "Thucydides, Gorgias and Mass Psychology," *Hermes* 114 (1986), esp. 418-9.

[23] Thuc. 7.73.

> being huddled into an enclosure with a wall all round it, a road on this side and on that, and olive trees in great number, where missiles were showered in upon them from every quarter. This mode of attack the Syracusans had with good reason adopted in preference to fighting at close quarters, as to risk a struggle with desperate men was now more to the advantage of the Athenians than to their own…
> (7.81.4-5)

In much the same way as the Athenians had previously overwhelmed the Spartan forces at Pylos, the Syracusans now overwhelmed the Athenians by not engaging them in face-to-face combat but by giving preference to seeming less honorable, but more effective missile weapons.[24] Rather than giving in to their pent-up rage and desire for revenge (see above), the Syracusans adopted a less direct tactic for the endgame in their conflict with Athens. They recognized that risking a confrontation against desperate men, τὸ γὰρ ἀποκινδυνεύειν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀπονενοημένους, would allow an element of chance to enter the situation. As it stood, they had the Athenians completely trapped and, if they could restrain their desire to act rashly, they could manage the situation until the Athenians were forced to surrender.

The point in this instance is that Thucydides uses his narrative structure to underscore how the Syracusan generals recognized the dangers inherent in this situation and benefitted from a more rational approach. The articular infinitive τὸ γὰρ ἀποκινδυνεύειν puts danger in the forefront and compels the reader to understand – γὰρ provides a strong explanatory force – the Syracusans are not merely "risking a struggle" as Crawley's translation provide; Thucydides is focusing his reader on the Syracusan generals analysis of danger, ἀποκινδυνεύειν. They recognized the dangerous gamble

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[24] Thuc. 4.36-40. Thucydides makes the point that missile weapons do not distinguish virtuous soldiers in their effectiveness (4.40.2).

they faced in attacking desperate men and made their decision accordingly, and their men obeyed them. But Thucydides highlights that the more natural mode would have been a direct attack and that is the "ethos of action." In this instance, the Syracusan generals avoided the danger of rash action by the rational decision to employ less honorable missile weapons to effect the desired outcome, an Athenian defeat.

3.2.5 Κίνδυνος and the "Ethos of Action": Conclusion

In this section I have argued that Thucydides recognized that his contemporaries'

tendency to act without forethought was a major source of danger, especially in regards to

his fellow Athenians. Thucydides recognized that his own countrymen were habitually

prone to emotional decision-making; the Athenians too often reacted to issues with an

emotionally driven response. This, in part, may be why Thucydides believed they were

not successful in the war and, therefore, why he tends to highlight their strong proclivity

for action in his *Histories* relative to other *poleis* or individuals.

I have outlined this ethos in the same way Thucydides himself first would have

seen it outlined, through tragic representations upon the Athenian stage. Thucydides,

however, goes beyond his contemporary literary cohort by not only making this ethos

clear for his reader but also pointing his reader towards the danger he saw as an inherent

aspect to rash action. Thucydides carefully weaves this ethos of action into his analysis of

the war, especially in his narrative of one of the most pivotal moments of the war, the

Sicilian Expedition, to teach his reader a lesson about successful leadership: in the midst

of uncertainty and danger, one must give pause for rational forethought before

instinctively leaping into action. Nicias wants to act in this manner, but fails to convince

others; in the end, the Syracusan generals are similarly cautious, but are successful

because they win over the Syracusan populace and army to their position. Certainly,

aggressive action may be the best option – Cleon's plan to attack at Sphacteria did, in

fact, succeed. But, in Thucydides' mind, aggressive action without forethought generally

leads to sub-optimal outcomes, and a leader's potential for success depends upon his

proclivity for rational thought over irrational action; in other words, a good leader values

logos over *ergon*.

3.3 <u>Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Intervention</u>

  In this section, I will analyze another aspect of the internally generated dangers which Thucydides noticed affecting his contemporaries as they struggled for survival in the anarchic world of Greek interstate relations: the urge for intervention on others' behalf. Interestingly, the Greeks themselves did not have a term that equates to the modern concept of intervention.[1] Therefore, in this section "intervention" will be defined as the "interference by one *polis* in the quarrels of one or more other states whether in an internal *stasis*, or in a bi- or multi-lateral conflict." Though this concept lacks an equivalent Greek term, it has a strong tradition of representation in Classical sources and can be conceived of as the norm, or even an obligation, for Thucydides' contemporaries.[2] Thucydides recognizes that his contemporary Greek society was built upon a strong moral code that encouraged individuals and *poleis* alike to help the wronged, actual or perceived; Greeks "valorized assistance to states suffering aggression at the hands of other states."[3] This moral code often created feelings of obligation for *poleis* to participate outside of their city in much the same way as individual Greeks engaged outside of their *oikos* to help the wronged. The idea that helping the wronged was an acceptable and even admirable principle for Greeks of the Classical era was, in fact, never openly challenged.[4] Thucydides, however, recognizes some of the problems with this ethos of intervention and points his reader to the notion that it often leads to an

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[1] Low (2007), 177; Peter Hunt. *War, Peace, and Alliance in Demosthenes' Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 97.

[2] Low (2010) provides this definition and its conceptualization as "a norm" in Greek interstate relations, 175-211.

[3] Hunt (2010), 96.

[4] Low (2007), 210.

incorrect perception of the real danger being faced. He is, in essence, trying to warn his reader about the unintended consequences of entering into alliances with polities under threat; while alliances may appear to guarantee security, the ties formed often bind both parties to further danger.

I will present this argument in two stages. As in the earlier section, I will begin by presenting images from Greek tragedy and history-writing which help to define the nature of this ethos of intervention. The tragic examples, appreciated by Thucydides and his contemporaries, will help demonstrate just how commonplace was the urge to get involved in the affairs of others. An example of Herodotus' history-writing will demonstrate just how seriously the major powers in Greece, namely Athens and Sparta, took the ideas of alliance and obligations to intervene on others' behalf. Having provided these defining examples, I will then analyze Thucydides' presentation of these concepts by looking at three main justifications with which various *poleis* intervened in the affairs of others: first, the ties of kinship, often fictive; second, the urge to help the wronged; and finally, the tension between formal alliances and each *polis'* autonomy. Throughout these examples it will be shown that Thucydides recognizes that, while the urge to intervene may be considered simply another representation of power or a means of sustaining one's power, those who intervene consistently often ignore the real dangers and unintended consequences of their intervention.[5] Thus it is that he uses κίνδυνος to focus his reader on the internally-generated dangers of the ethos of intervention: the ripple effects of acts designed to generate security or "justice" often lead to greater danger.

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[5] Low discusses intervention as a representation of power, 210.

3.3.1 <u>Internal Dangers of Intervention: Defining the Ethos</u>

   As in the earlier analysis of the "ethos of action," it is most straightforward to define this culturally-generated danger through examples drawn from Thucydides' contemporary poets and historians. Euripides, as a contemporary of Thucydides, produced plays filled with images that were familiar to and appreciated by his Athenian audience.[1] As Finley argues, the parallels between Thucydides' narrative and Euripides' plays make it "abundantly clear" that Thucydides was profoundly affected by the ideas present in Athens before the period of his exile.[2] In this section, I will present two images from Euripides' tragedies and one scene from Herodotus' *Histories* which illustrate how Thucydides' contemporaries saw in themselves a natural proclivity to become involved in the affairs of others regardless the potentially dangerous consequences. Euripides' examples show just how the Athenians mythologized this ethos of intervention; Herodotus' example shows just how strongly the Athenians believed in their own proclivity to remain loyal to those whom they considered to be kindred relations.

   In Euripides' play, *Medea*, produced at the start of the Peloponnesian War in 431, the action is centered on Medea's murderous revenge against her husband, Jason, who has become engaged to a younger princess, Creon's daughter. Having already been

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[1] Gregory (1991), 188. She sees Euripides as a moral educator for his fellow Athenians and places herself in contrast to the views presented by other biographers of Euripides who see Euripides as being alienated from his own city. In this instance, however, I am arguing that just as Gregory believes Euripides the man was accepted by Athens, so too were the images in his plays.

[2] John H. Finley, Jr. *Three Essays on Thucydides* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 54. In this section I am also expanding on the idea that Euripides implied a criticism of the arrogance and tyrannical nature of Athens presented by Richard Seaford in "Tragic Tyranny," *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. K.A. Morgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 111. I am expanding his analysis by claiming that Thucydides understands Euripides to be portraying images not just of the potentially tyrannical Athenians and their empire, but of Greeks in general.

banished by King Creon, she plots her revenge. Before she carries out her plan, however,

she makes arrangements for her future as an exile by seeking the protection of an ally. At

this point in the play, Aegeus, the king of Athens, chances upon Medea in her distress.

When Aegeus asks Medea why she seems so troubled she explains how she has been

mistreated by Jason who has hurt her deeply even though he was "never wronged of

[Medea]." [3] When she explains that she has been banished and seeks sanctuary at Athens,

Aegeus responds without hesitation that "many reasons make me ready to acquiesce in

your request, not least of all the gods …. get yourself to Athens and there as is incumbent

on me, I shall do my best to protect you." [4] He does not give a second thought to what

this might do to relations between himself and the king of Corinth other than to stipulate

that he "cannot risk offending the Corinthians" by actually helping Medea leave the city.[5]

This is an example of just how strongly influenced Greeks could be by the perception of a

weaker individual (or entity) being wronged.

Certainly Aegeus does not entirely commit himself to fighting on Medea's behalf,

but he becomes involved without much forethought nonetheless. He offers Medea his

protection and swears that he will protect her from any future enemies who might attempt

to snatch her away from Athens' protection without ever asking why she was being

banished;[6] the reason for her banishment, of course, is that Creon rightly feared her

revenge and Aegeus does not pause to consider how this will affect himself and,

potentially, his *polis*. Euripides' audience in 431 would have seen nothing out of the

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[3] Eur. *Med*. 692.

[4] Eur. *Med*. 719-28.

[5] Eur. *Med. 729-30*.

[6] Eur. *Med. 728*.

ordinary with Aegeus' offer to help – after all, they had just voted to help Corcyra only two years earlier![7] Thucydides reader, however, is presented with another perspective. There are additional dangers created by giving in to this impulse to intervene when the more rational course might be to remain uninvolved or at least skeptical of deeper motives until further research can be done.

In Euripides' final play, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the poet presents his audience with a different justification for intervention: oaths and alliances. Produced in approximately 406/5, the play focuses on the Greek army as they wait in Aulis for favorable winds with which to set sail on their campaign against Troy. The Trojan War, of course, can be thought of as the first alliance of Greeks against a common enemy.[8] This war, though Thucydides argues that it was smaller in scope than Homer describes, he thinks of as a defining event in the Greeks' collective consciousness and history.[9] It brought Greek states together for a common effort against a single enemy; for one brief moment, the Greeks were united, drawn together by a pan-Hellenic alliance.[10]

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[7] Thuc. 1.44.1 Other scholars have noted Euripides' allusion to the Corcyrean appeal of 433. See Aristide Tessitore, "Euripides' *Medea* and the Problem of Spiritedness," *The Review of Politics* 53 (1991), 587-601; Pavlos Sfyroeras, "The Ironies of Salvation: The Aigeus Scene in Euripides' *Medea*," *The Classical Journal* 90 (1994), 125-42.

[8] Thucydides says that there "is no indication of any common action in Hellas" before the Trojan War and cites Homer as evidence of the lack of any Hellenic unity, 1.3.

[9] Thuc. 1.10.3-1.11. See Lendon (2005), esp. 36-38, for full bibliography, 396-99.

[10] Thucydides argues that the Greeks were united more by the force of Agamemnon's wealth than any oaths, 1.9.1. But he does not deny that the oaths played a role in bringing about unity for the campaign.

Euripides' prologue to the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, delivered by Agamemnon, describes

the scenario which brought the states together.[11] He has Agamemnon explain that Helen's

father Tyndareus was frustrated by the violence of his daughter's suitors as they

contended for her hand. He convinced them all to "grasp their right hands in pledge, seal

it with burnt offerings, and drink to the following treaty" that they would all protect

whoever became Helen's husband.[12] The oath further stipulated that the suitors would

work together to march against the man who might steal Helen away and "raze his city to

the groun." [13] The Greeks were first united by this oath in what might be labeled an

ξυμμαχία, an alliance forged for offensive action against a common enemy. Helen

eventually chose Menelaus as her husband but later fell in love with the Trojan prince

Paris who "carried her off to his ranch in the Idan hills." [14] This crime, of course, enraged

Menelaus who "came scorching through Greece and clamoring for action: fulfillment of

the Tyndarian treaty against aggression." [15] The Greeks did not simply muster to satisfy

their oath. The allies are, in fact, described as being "possessed by a kind of lust to sail at

once to this foreign land and put an end to the raping of Greek wives." [16] United by oath

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[11] For scholarship concerning the cooperative virtues and the constructed convictions of united action, see Herbert Siegel, "Agamemnon in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*" *Hermes* 109 (1981), 257-65; Marianne McDonald, "Iphigenias 'Philia': Motivation in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 34 (1990), 69-84; Christina Elliott Sorum, "Myth Choice and Meaning in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *The American Journal of Philology* 113 (1992), 527-42 and Dana L. Burgess, "Lies and Convictions at Aulis," *Hernes* 132 (2004), 37-55.

[12] Eur. *IA* 59-65.

[13] Eur. *IA* 64.

[14] Eur. *IA* 77.

[15] Eur. *IA* 77-79. This may well be considered another example of the Greeks' proclivity for action as is described in 3.2 Κίνδυνος and the "Ethos of Action."

[16] Eur. *IA* 1264-6.

and loyal to their alliance, the Greeks burned with desire to fulfill their vow and cooperate for revenge. Euripides' image of this incident in Greek history highlights just how powerfully Greeks could be urged to act on each others' behalf. Once bound by an oath, intervention was practically a religious obligation, one that Thucydides shows brings with it the possibility of future dangers as the unintended consequences ripple outward.[17]

One final example brings into focus the importance Greeks attached to the idea of kinship. Herodotus' *Histories* contain a striking instance in which the Athenians make a decision about future intervention on the basis of their perceived kinship with other Greeks over the reality of the potential power they could have acquired otherwise. During the spring of 480/79, the Persian general, Mardonius, dispatched Alexander, the son of Amyntas of Macedon, to offer an alliance to the Athenians. Herodotus comments that Mardonius was aware of Athens' naval strength and believed – rightly, according to Herodotus – that an alliance with Athens would give him mastery of the sea and the power to overcome the Greeks.[18] The Athenians refuse the offer. Herodotus' depiction of their justification, however, highlights the powerful influence exerted upon Greeks by their perceived ties of kinship. First off, he makes it clear that the Athenians knew well the potential gains they were rejecting; in his depiction of their speech to Alexander he has them admit that they "know … that the power of the Mede is many times greater than our own." [19]But, in their speech to the Spartan envoys who were in Athens to persuade

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[17] Low analyzes the religious significance of oaths sworn as part of the process of ratifying a treaty, 118-26.

[18] Herod. 8.136.

[19] Herod. 8.143.

them not to join the Persians, he reports that the Athenians explained their justification for rejecting the Persian offer. The Athenians, according to Herodotus, promised that they would never want to help enslave their countrymen and reaffirmed that "there is our common brotherhood with the Greeks: our common language, the altars and the sacrifices of which we all partake, the common character."[20] Herodotus is highlighting the Athenians' willingness to risk future conflict with a much-stronger Persian empire on behalf of the ties of kinship they felt with other Greeks. These are the same Greeks, of course, with whom the Athenians have already been described as waging wars "against one another in the most foolish way, through sheer perversity and doltishness" when they are incapable of resolving their differences through diplomacy even though they share a common tongue.[21] The point is that Herodotus' history-writing provides a clear example of the importance of kinship in Greek interstate relations. Thucydides understands this concept – and the potential for fictive kinship to serve as a justification for intervention – and provides his reader another aspect to the problem, the dangers which are often

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[20] Herod. 8.144. W.W. How and J. Wells point out that this "noble assertion of Hellenic nationality may be unhistorical, but is keeping in line with the struggle against the Mede." See *A Commentary on Herodotus Volume II*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1912), 286.

[21] Herod. 7.9.

generated as a result of the impulse Greeks felt to intervene on behalf of those with whom they perceived themselves to share a bond of kinship.[22]

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[22] The scholarship on Greek ethnicity and kinship, including its malleability for purposes of justification in Greek interstate relations and intervention is vast. See C. Phillipson, *The International Law and Custom of Ancient Greece and Rome, vol. 1 &2,* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1911), 1-31; S. Perlman, "Panhellenism: The Polis and Imperialism," *Historia* 25 (1976), 1-30; J. T. Roberts, "Dorians and Ionians," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982), 1-14; F. W. Walbank, "The Problem of Greek Nationality," *Phoenix* 5 (1951), 41-60; O. Curty, "La notion de la parenté entre les cités chez Thucydide," *Museum Helveticium* 51 (1994), 193-7; Gregory Crane, *The Blinded Eye: Thucydides and the New Written Word* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), esp. ch. 5; Simon Hornblower (1996), 61-80; J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); D. Konstan, "Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity," *Diaspora* 6 (1997), 97-110; C.P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); J.M. Hall, "Contested Ethnicities: Perceptions of Macedonia Within Evolving Definitions of Greek Identity," in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, I. Malkin, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Low (2007), 43-54; and Hunt (2010), 76-84.

3.3.2 <u>Internal Dangers of Intervention: Perceived Ties of "Fictive" Kinship</u>

Thucydides' contemporaries often emphasized the relationships among individuals and *poleis*, often making them the basis of connections and even obligations among otherwise wide-spread groups.[1] Thucydides himself hearkens on the theme of kinship as a major factor in the events of the war.[2] Thucydides points his reader to this concept with his analysis of the conflict between Corinth and Athens over a peripheral state, Potidaea, in 432.[3] The general situation has been analyzed earlier in this dissertation.[4] Though the Potidaeans were a tributary ally of Athens, they were also a Corinthian colony. Because of the Athenians' distrust of Corinth after the Corcyraean incident, they ordered the Potidaeans to raze part of their defensive walls, give hostages, and dismiss their Corinthian magistrates.[5] Potidaea, after a series of diplomatic envoys to both Athens and Sparta, revolted from Athens.[6] The Corinthians, according to Thucydides, focused on the perceived ties of kinship as they committed their forces to support the Potidaeans:

> καὶ ἐν τούτῳ οἱ Κορίνθιοι, τῆς Ποτειδαίας
> ἀφεστηκυίας καὶ τῶν Ἀττικῶν νεῶν περὶ Μακεδονίαν
> οὐσῶν, δεδιότες περὶ τῷ χωρίῳ καὶ οἰκεῖον τὸν
> κίνδυνον ἡγούμενοι πέμπουσιν ἑαυτῶν τε ἐθελοντὰς
> καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Πελοποννησίων μισθῷ πείσαντες

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[1] Low (2007), 48.

[2] Several recent scholars have analyzed Thucydides' perspective on the ties of kinship. See O. Curty (1994); 193-7, Hornblower (1996), 61-80; Crane (1996), ch. 5.; Van Wees (2004), 9; Low (2007), 48; and Hunt (2010), 78.

[3] Thuc. 1.55-66.

[4] For an overview with bibliography on the subject, see 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

[5] Thuc. 1.56.2.

[6] Thuc. 1.58.1.

> ἐξακοσίους καὶ χιλίους τοὺς πάντας ὁπλίτας καὶ ψιλοὺς τετρακοσίους.
>
> Meanwhile the Corinthians, with Potidaea in revolt and the Athenian ships on the coast of Macedonia, alarmed for the safety of the place, and thinking its danger theirs, sent volunteers from Corinth, and mercenaries from the Peloponnesus, to the number of sixteen hundred hoplites in all, and four hundred light troops (1.60.1).

Note how Thucydides describes the Corinthian analysis of the danger to their own interests: οἰκεῖον τὸν κίνδυνον ἡγούμενοι. Thucydides points to their belief that this danger was tied to their own sense of the important boundaries and loyalties of their *oikos*, οἰκεῖον.[7] The relationship between a *polis* and its colony is, in this instance, indicative of what Low refers to as the bilateral ties which combine to "form a wider 'family.'"[8] The Corinthians perceive Athenian aggression against Potidaea as aggression against a family member. Thucydides has, with the phrase οἰκεῖον τὸν κίνδυνον, highlighted that the feelings of kinship were real and materially contributed to the Corinthians' dangerous involvement in what should have been the internal affairs of the Delian League or, a dispute between Athens and its allies. The Corinthians, however, considered the danger to Potidaea as danger to their own *oikoi*, the building blocks of their *polis*. Consequently, they gave in to the urge to react with aggressively instead of to allow Athens to handle its own internal affairs in the manner it deemed suitable.

Thucydides highlights the pressures even perceived or fictive ties of kinship could be expected to exert on a *polis'* decision-making. He points to the Mytileneans as an

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[7] Hornblower translates the phrase as "the felt that the danger had come home to them," explaining that the word οἰκεῖον is appropriate for the special feeling of kinship to a colony, 2:103.

[8] Low (2007), 51. See also A.J. Graham, *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964) and Gregory Crane (1992).

example in which a state facing danger might attempt to create a sense of highly arbitrary and artificial kinship by which to persuade a larger state to act on its behalf.[9] When the Mytileneans revolted from Athens in 428, they sent an embassy to Sparta to ask for help.[10] Thucydides' rendition of their speech to the assembled allies points to the fact that they attempted to make an appeal to the League's proclivity for kinship-motivated intervention with the logic that danger for Mytilene was the equivalent of danger to a Peloponnesian *oikos*. Thucydides has them say:

> νομίσῃ τε μηδεὶς ἀλλοτρίας γῆς πέρι οἰκεῖον κίνδυνον ἕξειν. ᾧ γὰρ δοκεῖ μακρὰν ἀπεῖναι ἡ Λέσβος, τὴν ὠφελίαν αὐτῷ ἐγγύθεν παρέξει. οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ ἔσται ὁ πόλεμος, ὥς τις οἴεται, ἀλλὰ δι᾽ ἢν ἡ Ἀττικὴ ὠφελεῖται.

> Nor must it be thought this is a case of putting yourselves into danger for a country which is not yours. Lesbos may appear far off, but when help is wanted she will be found near enough. For it is not in Attica that the war will be decided, as some imagine, but in the countries by which Athens is supported (3.13.5).

Thucydides demonstrates that one of the obstacles to be overcome when attempting to establish an alliance was to make it relevant to both parties' sense of kinship, real or implied. The Athenians argued against this very technique, as employed by the Corinthians, when they urged the Spartans not to consider troubles which are actually none of their concern as their own, Βουλεύεσθε οὖν βραδέως ὡς οὐ περὶ βραχέων,

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[9] Jonathan M. Hall examines the process of creating "fictive kinship" where the genetic lineage is far less important than the "fictive and performance dimension of ethnic proclamation" in *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 15. See also Hunt (2010), 78-82. Detailed discussion of the vast bibliography on this incident has been presented in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

[10] Thuc. 3.2-4. The embassy eventually was required to speak to all the allies of the Peloponnesian League at Olympia (3.8). The setting, however, is not relevant to an analysis of Thucydides' rendition of their plea.

καὶ μὴ ἀλλοτρίαις γνώμαις καὶ ἐγκλήμασι πεισθέντες οἰκεῖον πόνον πρόσθησθε.[11]

In the Mytileneans' case, of course, the kinship is being created to meet current

exigencies: the Mytileneans were not a Spartan colony and were merely offering a new

tie of kinship in the sense that they could be counted upon to provide assistance as

neighbors should danger threaten the Peloponnesians, τὴν ὠφελίαν αὐτῷ ἐγγύθεν

παρέξει. This is a clear attempt to create a sense of kinship where one did not previously

exist. It is a "fictive kinship" based on the fact that ethnic classifications in Thucydides'

time were "malleable" and "tended to be shaped by other factors rather than to determine

decisions." [12] Thucydides' account of their speech highlights for his reader one way in

which various *poleis* might attempt to establish a perceived tie of kinship with another in

order to create a situation that impels the stronger *polis* to intervene. He is skeptical of

such links, which tended to rupture under force of expediency, and the Mytileneans'

example demonstrates why.[13] The fictive kinship, once established, creates a hard-to-

resist feeling of familial danger, οἰκεῖον κίνδυνον, and could set a precedent for the

future "possibility of mutual obligation or even accomodation." [14] The Mytileneans,

perhaps, recognize that this could be considered an illogical assumption; danger to

Mytilene is hardly a direct threat to Sparta, nor are the Mytileneans actually the Spartans'

kin. But they recognize that the war's real battles will not be fought in Attica, but in

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[11] Gomme notes the similarity between the Mytilenean' and Athenian' arguments (2:269). Hornblower (1996) offers the phrase "which are no concern of yours" for Thucydides' ἀλλοτρίαις γνώμαις (1:124).

[12] Hunt (2010), 78.

[13] Christopher Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30.

[14] Hunt (2010), 81. Jones (1999) would agree but would add that these ties often require reinforcement, *e.g.*"prestige" or "expediency," in matters of great consequence and danger (35).

peripheral states such as their own, states which could be tied to Sparta and with which they might share the danger from their common enemy, Athens, as families share the danger of external threats to their survival.

Thucydides' narrative of the struggle between Athens and Sparta over the city of Megara provides another example in which kinship, in this case potentially fictive kinship, provides the basis of justification for intervention. His analysis of how the Boeotians actually got involved in the standoff between Athenian and Spartan forces over the city of Megara in 424 highlights how malleable the concept of kinship can be and how easily it can lead to the internally-generated dangers of intervention.[15] Athenian forces had plotted with the popular faction inside Megara to take over the city but the plot was discovered and the Athenians were only able to capture the port area of Nisaea and the long walls leading up to Megara.[16] While the Athenians were preparing to lay siege to Megara, the Spartan general Brasidas called upon the Boeotians for support and rushed to the scene with three hundred picked men from his own army.[17] The Boeotians' action and motive provides an interesting example of the Greek ethos of intervention. Before they were even called upon by Brasidas they had already mustered in full force at Plataea. They did this, as Thucydides says, because they considered Megara's danger their own, ὡς οὐκ ἀλλοτρίου ὄντος τοῦ κινδύνου.[18]

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[15] Thuc. 4.66-74.

[16] Thuc. 4.66-68. Details of this battle and bibliography of relevant scholarship has been presented in 2.3.4 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Groups Exhibiting *Coup d'Oeil*.

[17] Thuc. 4.70. Brasidas had been relatively close, in the area of Sicyon and Corinth, preparing his army for the march through Thrace.

[18] Thuc. 4.72.1 Hornblower argues that a literal translation would be "the danger was not foreign," 2:240.

There are two main possibilities why the Boeotians might justify their intervention on behalf of kinship; perceiving the danger as οὐκ ἀλλοτρίου ὄντος τοῦ κινδύνου is essentially the same as an οἰκεῖον κίνδυνον. One is that Athenian control of Megara would essentially cut the Boeotians off from the Peloponnesus, making it an easier target for future Athenian aggression.[19] The other is that Thucydides is pointing to the Boeotians' own conception of kinship with Megara as their justification for intervention at this time.[20] Note the explanatory particle ὡς may well indicate that this was the Boeotians' rationale and not Thucydides' own belief. There is evidence to suggest that the Boeotians considered the eponymous founder of Megara, Megareus, to be one of their own.[21] Both arguments have merit and provide reasonable justification for Boeotian involvement: both the security of the major route to the Peloponnese and the ties of kinship perceived as real by the Boeotians with sufficient justification for intervention. Regardless, Thucydides points to the Boeotians' perception that kinship between themselves and the Megarians existed and saw in this tie a significant justification for intervention. The Boeotians were willing to intervene with their entire force, ἤδη ὄντες πανστρατιᾷ Πλαταιᾶσιν, and were willing to justify this intervention with a fictive relationship they perceived as real when, in fact, an economic one existed as well.

Hermocrates of Syracuse, in Thucydides' depiction, also justified common action with a malleable perception of kinship during the conference of Sicilian *poleis* at Gela in

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[19] Gomme 3:532. N.G.L. Hammond presents a thorough analysis of the possible route by which rapid movement of troops or goods might have passed in "The Main Road from Boeotia to the Peloponnese through the Northern Megarid," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 49 (1954), 103-22.

[20] Hornblower 2:240-1.

[21] Hornblower (240) cites K. Hannell *Megarisch Studien* (Lund, 1934, 24-35) who in turn relied on evidence from *FGrHist 4 F 78*.

424.[22] Facing the threat of an Athenian invasion, various Sicilian *poleis* had come

together to "try to bring about a pacification" to their internal squabbles long enough to

defend against Athens.[23] Hermocrates, "the most influential man among them," focused

the congress on the necessity of forming a pan-Sicilian alliance, a malleable and

temporary kinship, to stand against the external threat posed by the Athenians.[24] It is the

"combination of a running stalemate among the Sicilian cities and a newly fortified

external threat that forms the background of Hermocrates' speech" and his creation of a

sense of kinship strong enough to urge common action among the constantly-warring

Sicilians.[25] At the end of his speech, Hermocrates focuses his audience on the kinship

they should perceive amongst themselves against an external threat. Thucydides has him

say:

> τοὺς δὲ ἀλλοφύλους ἐπελθόντας ἀθρόοι αἰεί, ἢν
> σωφρονῶμεν, ἀμυνούμεθα, εἴπερ καὶ καθ' ἑκάστους
> βλαπτόμενοι ξύμπαντες κινδυνεύομεν·
>
> But the foreign invader, if we are wise, will always find us
> united against him, since the hurt of one is the danger of all
> (4.64.4).

Danger to one is danger to all. This is essentially the message which Thucydides'

Hermocrates, "the representative of a great city," gives his audience.[26] He is proposing

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[22] Thuc. 4.59-64. Scholarship on Thucydides' depiction of Hermocrates has been presented in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

[23] Thuc. 4.58.

[24] William Desmond notes that this particular alliance was one formed not of "right and kinship," but of the expedience and relative compulsion of fear. See "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 364, n. 16.

[25] Stephen Forde, "Thucydides on Ripeness and Conflict Resolution," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004), 190.

[26] Thuc. 4.64.1.

that there is a broader kinship that should exist among Sicilian-Greeks that transcends the typical divide between Dorians and Ionians; his point is "never mind race! Sicily for the Sicilians!"[27] The reader recognizes this because he has already seen Hermocrates address the issue of race saying "nor should anyone imagine that the Dorians only are enemies of Athens, while the Chalcidian race is secured by its Ionian blood."[28] Because Hermocrates needs the help of all the Sicilian *poleis,* Thucydides indicates that he is creating an illusion of kinship, one based on circumstances, in an effort to transcend the actual bonds of kinship some may or may not have felt based on their Dorian or Ionian heritage. In other words, the only common good between these cities is the "menace of a common enemy."[29] Thucydides has him forward the notion that these perceived bonds of kinship extend to such a degree that the smaller cities should feel obligated to respond to what Hermocrates suggests is a shared danger from an external, i.e. "foreign," threat. Thucydides' Hermocrates understood how powerful an influence the perception of even an ambiguous kinship might exert on his contemporaries and he is depicted as having relied on this understanding by creating a moment of "fictive kinship" in order to unite the Sicilians in support of his own city and – by extension – their own even though he virtually admits that his own city would eventually rise up as an imperial power in its own right.[30]

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[27] Hornblower, 2:225. Hunt (2010) points to the fact that the distinctions between Dorian and Ionian Greeks were fading "almost to nothing" by the start of the fourth century, 77.

[28] Thuc. 4.61.2.

[29] Orwin (1994), 165-66.

[30] Thuc. 4.59, 64. Forde (2004), 191.

3.3.3 Internal Dangers of Intervention: "Helping the Wronged"

Thucydides' contemporaries – as I have mentioned – did not have a word for "intervention."[1] Instead, they more often used a phrase which more clearly defined the moral code under which they were operating; to intervene on another state's behalf was generally approved on the grounds of "helping the wronged." βοηθεῖν τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις.[2] Thucydides, while he does not use this precise phrase, does incorporate the idea that states could be urged into intervention with the idea that they would hold some moral high ground established by helping those who have been wronged. In other words, intervention was "justified" when done on behalf "of those suffering injustice."[3] He also understands the dangers inherent in this tendency among his contemporaries and highlights it for his reader. Here he is different from most of his contemporaries.

He does this in the first speech in his analysis of the events leading up to the war, namely the speech the Corcyraeans gave to the Athenian assembly to beg for assistance against the Corinthians in 433.[4] The basic military and political situation has been explained in an earlier section of this dissertation, so it will suffice to summarize the events leading up to this speech.[5] Because of a recent conflict with their own colony of

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[1] Low (2007), 178.

[2] Low (2007), 178.

[3] Hunt (2010), 94. See also Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 62.

[4] Thuc. 1.32-36. James V. Morrison presents an analysis of Thucydides' narrative of these events with special emphasis on his presentation of the contrasting speeches in "Preface to Thucydides: Rereading the Corcyrean Conflict (1.24-55), *Classical Antiquity* 18 (April, 1999), 94-131. As he does in Morrison (2006), he focuses on the way in which Thucydides consciously structures his narrative for a "engaged, participatory attitude on the part of the reader," 98.

[5] The basic narrative of this conflict and a more thorough bibliography of the scholarship has been presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant for All Poleis

Epidamnus, the Corcyraeans found themselves in a position where they were threatened

by their mother colony Corinth, their *metropolis*.[6] Though historically the Corcyraeans

had been isolationists and had not entered into alliances with either the Delian or

Peloponnesian Leagues, they now sought assistance from Athens.[7] They made their case

for an alliance before the Athenian assembly. In his rendition of this speech, Thucydides

paints a stark image of the danger that he associates with alliances. He has the

Corcyraeans say:

> ξύμμαχοί τε γὰρ οὐδενός πω ἐν τῷ πρὸ τοῦ χρόνῳ
> ἐκούσιοι γενόμενοι νῦν ἄλλων τοῦτο δεησόμενοι
> ἥκομεν, καὶ ἅμα ἐς τὸν παρόντα πόλεμον Κορινθίων
> ἐρῆμοι δι'αὐτὸ καθέσταμεν. καὶ περιέστηκεν ἡ
> δοκοῦσα ἡμῶν πρότερον σωφροσύνη, τὸ μὴ ἐν
> ἀλλοτρίᾳ ξυμμαχίᾳ τῇ τοῦ πέλας γνώμῃ
> ξυγκινδυνεύειν, νῦν ἀβουλία καὶ ἀσθένεια φαινομένη.
>
> We say inconsistent, because a power which has never in
> the whole of her past history been willing to ally herself
> with any of her neighbors, is now found asking them to ally
> themselves with her. And we say inexpedient, because in
> our present war with Corinth it has left us in a position of
> entire isolation, and what once seemed the wise precaution
> of refusing to involve ourselves in alliances with other
> powers, lest we should involve ourselves in risks of their
> choosing, has now proved to be folly and weakness
> (1.32.4).

It is perhaps the case that any rendition of this passage into colloquial English would miss

the stark image of the dangerous nature of alliances which Thucydides provides his Greek

reader. In this passage, the phrase "refusing to involve ourselves in alliances with other

powers, lest we should involve ourselves in risks of their choosing" is a smooth rendition

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[6] Low (2007) cites this incident as one of many examples in which the "connection between colony and mother city [is used as] a powerful weapon in arguments over interstate behavior," 50.

[7] Thuc. 1.32.4.

of Thucydides' Greek phrase τὸ μὴ ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ ξυμμαχίᾳ τῇ τοῦ πέλας γνώμῃ ξυγκινδυνεύειν. While there is nothing technically wrong with this rendition, only in Thucydides' Greek can the reader see the much starker image of the dangers of alliances which Thucydides is highlighting. The overriding construction that he presents, τὸ μὴ … ξυγκινδυνεύειν, is an articular infinitive which governs the concept of what is otherwise a foreign alliance, ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ ξυμμαχίᾳ. What Thucydides has provided in his rendition of the Corcyraeans' words is that what used to seem a wise plan, ἡ δοκοῦσα ἡμῶν πρότερον, was literally "the act of not entering into a sharing of danger, τὸ μὴ … ξυγκινδυνεύειν. Thucydides intensifies this phrase by making it clear he is referring to the potential entanglements with other *poleis'* plans, τῇ τοῦ πέλας γνώμῃ, and that he is referring to the legal – and perhaps moral – implications associated with an oath of alliance with foreigners, ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ ξυμμαχίᾳ, the exact opposite situation of even a fictive kinship.[8] But, at the heart of this issue is κίνδυνος. Thucydides makes it clear to his reader that to enter into what is ostensibly a security agreement with another *polis* is in reality to enter into a sharing of danger. What he shows his reader in this particular instance is that the Corcyraeans had previously avoided sharing danger with others. But when faced with an externally generated danger from the Corinthians, they wanted to involve Athens in a sharing of that danger and, as Thucydides' reader is aware, that initial shared danger grew into a twenty-seven year long war.

This incident, however, demonstrates how strong the impulse to "help the wronged" – or, at least, to be perceived as helping the wronged – was for Thucydides'

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[8] Low argues that one of the most important aspect of treaties was the "religious aspect of law," namely that part of the treaty was a sworn oath symbolizing acceptance by both sides with punishment by the gods as the agreed upon punitive measure should the treaty be broken, 118-126.

contemporaries. He offers this motive as the first reason by which the Athenian audience might have been swayed by the Corcyraean appeal. He depicts the Corcyraeans as having said that there are many reasons the Athenians might "congratulate" themselves on having this request made of them.[9] First and foremost, however, is the fact that the Corcyraeans are offering the Athenians a chance to help a "power which, herself inoffensive, is a victim to the injustice of others," πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι ἀδικουμένοις καὶ οὐχ ἑτέρους βλάπτουσι τὴν ἐπικουρίαν ποιήσεσθε.[10] Thucydides' depiction of their speech is a simple variant on the formula Low offers as a "traditional element of interstate behavior … and a part of contemporary policy-making."[11] The Corcyraeans were attempting to impress a sense of obligation upon the Athenians by casting themselves in the role of "the wronged." This moral consideration, while not essential for motivation, provides the Athenians with a possible justification for their eventual action.[12] Thucydides, of course, makes it clear that the real reasons Athens acceded to their wish were that they considered war with the Peloponnesians as simply a "question of time" and it was in their interest both to prevent Corinth from acquiring the Corcyraean navy through conquest and to allow these two powerful navies to wear themselves out fighting

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[9] Thuc. 1.33.1.

[10] Thuc. 1.33.1.

[11] Low (2007), 178.

[12] Morrison (1999), 113. Connor (1984) notes that this argument was ultimately irrelevant; what Connor does not take into consideration, however, is the possible moral justification it provides for Athens, which Morrison highlights and which this dissertation argues is Thucydides' rationale for including it in his narrative. On the idea of "justification for action," see Hunt (2010), 94.

one another.[13] But for us the point is that Thucydides saw in the Corcyraean request an opportunity to show his reader the potential internally generated danger of the impulse to help the wronged; the Corcyraeans use it as leverage to convince Athens to become involved in a dangerous conflict not in its own direct interest. Thucydides' reader understands that this act, ostensibly justified by helping the wronged, actually hastened the advent of a much broader conflict.[14]

He also highlights for his reader how the Corinthians made much the same attempt in their response to the Corcyraeans' speech; they too attempted to persuade the Athenians that they were the ones being wronged. At the same time, however, Thucydides highlights that the Corinthians made the danger of an alliance with Corcyra explicit to the Athenians. He has the Corinthians say:

> οὓς χρῆν, ὅτε ἀσφαλέστατοι ἦσαν, τότε προσιέναι, καὶ μὴ ἐν ᾧ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἠδικήμεθα, οὗτοι δὲ κινδυνεύουσι, μηδ' ἐν ᾧ ὑμεῖς τῆς τε δυνάμεως αὐτῶν τότε οὐ μεταλαβόντες τῆς ὠφελίας νῦν μεταδώσετε καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπογενόμενοι τῆς ἀφ' ἡμῶν αἰτίας τὸ ἴσον ἕξετε, πάλαι δὲ κοινώσαντας τὴν δύναμιν κοινὰ καὶ τὰ ἀποβαίνοντα ἔχειν.

> But it was when they stood firmest that they should have made overtures to you, and not at a time when we have been wronged and they are in peril; nor yet at a time when you will be admitting to a share in your protection those who never admitted you to a share in their power, and will be incurring an equal amount of blame from us with those in whose offenses you had no hand (1.39.3).

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[13] Thuc. 1.44.2. Philip A. Stadter analyzes Athenian motives in this affair in "The Motives for Athens' Alliance with Corcyra (Thuc. 1.44), *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 24 (1983), 131-6. He argues that Thucydides is being more pragmatic, or Machiavellian, than previously thought, 131.

[14] For a full analysis of how this incident brought about the start of the war, see Kagan (1969), 205-50.

 The Corinthians cast themselves in the position of the wronged; they want to persuade

the Athenians that they have been done an injustice, ἡμεῖς μὲν ἠδικήμεθα. At the same

time, they define the Corcyraean position by danger, κινδυνεύουσι. The imbalance in the

μὲν … δὲ clause is somewhat jarring for the reader. Thucydides does not answer the

Corinthians' μὲν ἠδικήμεθα with some statement that it is the Corcyraeans who are the

wrong-doers. Instead, the Corinthians' claim to suffering is answered by the

Corcyraeans' stress on danger. οὗτοι δὲ κινδυνεύουσι. Thucydides uses the

Corinthians' statement to focus his reader on the danger of the Corcyraean's proposal to

the Athenians. Yet they preface it with the additional element, the moral impulse that the

Athenians could feel if they perceive themselves to be in a position to help the wronged.

They understood that an opportunity for "aiding the unjustly treated and respecting a

state's internal arrangements [were] both desirable."[15] The Corinthians' insistence on the

theme of justice, specifically the injustices being done to them, is a concept which they

use "in all its aspects as a stick with which to pummel their adversaries."[16] That is why

the Corinthians make the case that they are the ones being harmed in this conflict. They

understand how strongly this impulse is felt among the Athenians and use it as a tool to

warn the Athenians off from intervening on behalf of the Corcyraeans. In Thucydides'

narrative of this incident, both sides in the conflict play upon the contemporary Greek

impulse to provide help to those being wronged in order to influence the Athenians'

decision whether or not to intervene.[17]

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[15] Hunt (2010), 97.

[16] Crane (1998), 107. He notes that the frequency with which the concept of injustice appears in this speech. Of eighteen words with *-dik* in their stem, only two are at all positive.

[17] Low (2007), 63.

In his rendition of Nicias' speech opposing Athenian involvement in the affairs of Sicily, Thucydides reinforces the idea that intervention based upon the perceived moral obligation of helping the wronged creates danger to those who help.[18] The Athenians, unknowingly deceived by the Egestaeans, had already voted to send sixty ships under the command of Alcibiades, Nicias and Lamachus to Sicily. But in a second assembly five days later, Nicias attempted to divert the Athenians from the enterprise.[19] In a portion of this speech, Thucydides indicates that Nicias tried to warn the Athenians about the dangers of this intervention. Thucydides has Nicias say:

> Καὶ μεμνῆσθαι χρὴ ἡμᾶς ὅτι νεωστὶ ἀπὸ νόσου μεγάλης καὶ πολέμου βραχύ τι λελωφήκαμεν, ὥστε καὶ χρήμασι καὶ τοῖς σώμασιν ηὐξῆσθαι· καὶ ταῦτα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν δίκαιον ἐνθάδε εἶναι ἀναλοῦν, καὶ μὴ ὑπὲρ ἀνδρῶν φυγάδων τῶνδε ἐπικουρίας δεομένων, οἷς τό τε ψεύσασθαι καλῶς χρήσιμον καὶ τῷ τοῦ πέλας κινδύνῳ, αὐτοὺς λόγους μόνον παρασχομένους, ἢ κατορθώσαντας χάριν μὴ ἀξίαν εἰδέναι ἢ πταίσαντάς που τοὺς φίλους ξυναπολέσαι.

> We should also remember that we are only now enjoying some respite from a great pestilence and from war, to the no small benefit of our estates and persons, and that it is right to employ these at home on our own behalf, instead of using them on behalf of these exiles whose interest it is to lie as well as they can, who do nothing but talk themselves and leave the danger to others, and who if they succeed will show no proper gratitude, and if they fail will drag down their friends with them (6.12.1).

Nicias wants the Athenians to remain disengaged on this issue, certainly not an easy task for the Athenians, generally characterized by their meddlesome nature, their

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[18] Thuc. 6.9-15.

[19] Thuc. 6.8.

polypragmosune.[20] According to Thucydides, he recognized the reality of the situation; an alliance with the Egestaeans meant only one thing: danger to Athens, τῷ τοῦ πέλας κινδύνῳ. Where other Athenians sensed material gain or a potential increase in Athens' status among other *poleis*, Thucydides' Nicias recognized the underlying problem. The Greek ethos of intervention might be profitable for a larger state, but, especially in this case, it was still in the best interest of the weaker state to be less than honest about the situation, τό τε ψεύσασθαι καλῶς χρήσιμον, In so doing, the weaker state might deflect the brunt of the danger from themselves onto a stronger power, τῷ τοῦ πέλας κινδύνῳ. The Greeks' proclivity for intervention generated danger for those stronger powers who felt the cultural necessity to become involved.

But why would Athens have become involved in the first place? This is the dilemma Nicias poses to his audience and Thucydides poses to his reader. Nicias has grave concerns about the motives for this expedition. Thucydides uses his speech to show the reader just what justifications held sway in the assembly's original decision to intervene on behalf of the Egestaeans. He has Nicias note that the Athenians ought to consider enemies much closer to home before becoming entangled on others' behalf. He has Nicias scold his audience for ignoring Chalcidian rebels who have revolted from Athens while running off to help the Egestaeans who have been wronged, ἡμεῖς δὲ

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[20] See W. Nestle, "ἀπραγμοσύνη," *Philologus* 81 (1925), 129-140; V. Ehrenberg, "Polypragmosune: A Study in Greek Politics," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 67 (1947), 46-67; K. Kleve, "ἀπραγμοσύνη and πολυπραγμοσύνη: Two Slogans in Athenian Politics," *Symbolae Osloenses* 39 (1964), 83-88; A. Adkins, "Polupragmosune and Minding One's Business," *Classical Philology* 71 (1976), 301-27; June Allison, Thucydides and πολυπραγμοσύνη," *American Journal of Ancient History* 4 (1979), 10-22; and Robert D. Luginbill, *Thucydides on War and National Character* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p. 97, n.5.

Ἐγεσταίοις δὴ οὖσι ξυμμάχοις ὡς ἀδικουμένοις ὀξέως βοηθοῦμεν.[21] The

Athenians, according to Thucydides' Nicias, have been swayed by their innate impulse to

help the wronged to the extent that they are even willing to ignore injuries received.

Certainly Thucydides makes it clear that there were financial motivations as well: the

Egestaean envoys had brought with them enough silver to fund sixty ships for a month as

well as the promise of an abundance of silver in the temples and treasuries.[22] But the

potential justification for action in helping the wronged seems to have been a significant

factor in the Athenians' decision. Nicias, as Thucydides portrays him, recognizes that this

is an instance in which the desire to be perceived as a strong power willing to help those

who have been wronged is generating danger for the *polis* where danger would not

otherwise exist. As Low describes it, an "appeal to the principle of 'helping the wronged'

seems … to be a widespread phenomenon in Greek interstate relations."[23] In this

instance, it was an appeal that helped bring Athens into a much more grave danger than

previously existed when its enemy was simply the Peloponnesian League. Thucydides

has Nicias point this out.

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[21] Thuc. 6.10.5.

[22] Thuc. 6.8.1-2.

[23] Low (2007), 186; Hunt (2010), 96-7.

3.3.4 Internal Dangers of Intervention: Formal Alliances

Another area where Thucydides is concerned that his reader understand the

externally-generated dangers which can arise from internally-generated impulses is that

of formal treaties or alliances between states. Though there seems to have been no

"formally defined, authoritative, published 'code' of the international law of classical

Greece," it is easy to understand that interstate treaties did establish a sense of obligation

between states.[1] Thucydides, however, recognizes that this sense of obligation often led

to tangible exposure to danger even though treaties and alliances might have been agreed

upon with an eye towards reducing danger for all.

One method by which he focuses his reader on the potential danger of alliances is

to highlight political and military decisions from the era of the Persian invasions. It was a

common theme among the Athenians to refer to their leading role in defeating the

Persians in the early fifth-century.[2] Thucydides writes that they did so even in a speech to

the Spartan assembly in 432/1. He has the Athenian speakers highlight the dilemma they

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[1] Low (2007), 84-85.

[2] Thuc. 1.73.2. Hornblower examines the question of the prominence of this theme in Athenian oratory and concludes with the idea that Thucydides' contemporaries may not have found the subject disagreeably over-represented, but Thucydides himself did. Regardless, he notes that this particular instance is the longest treatment of the subject in any extant oratory from the period, 1:118. Peter Hunt (2010) discusses this theme in Attic oratory, 66-7 and 123-33; On historical allusions in rhetoric generally, see L. Pearson, "Historical Allusions in the Attic Orators, " *Classical Philology* 36 (1941), 209-24; C.D. Hamilton, "Greek Rhetoric and History: The Case of Isocrates," in *Aktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M.W. Knox on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday,* G. Bowersock, W. Burkert, M.C.J. Putnam, eds. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 290-8; I Worthington, "History and Oratorical Exploitation," *Persuasion:Greek Rhetoric in Action*, I. Worthington, ed. (London: Routledge, 1994), 109-29. On specific Athenian reliance on this historical theme, see J.T. Chambers, "The Fourth Century Athenians' View of their Fifth Century Empire," *PP* 30 (1975), 177-91 and E. Badian, "The Ghost of Empire: Reflections on Athenian Foreign Policy in the Fourth Century B.C." *Die athenische Demokratie im Jahrhundert v. Chr.: Vollendung oder Verfall einer Verfassungsform*, W. Eder, ed. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 79-106.

faced in 480: when their commitment to their allies was tested, they accepted the danger

of remaining committed to their allies.[3] He has the Athenians say:

> προθυμίαν δὲ καὶ πολὺ τολμηροτάτην ἐδείξαμεν, οἵ γε, ἐπειδὴ ἡμῖν κατὰ γῆν οὐδεὶς ἐβοήθει, τῶν ἄλλων ἤδη μέχρι ἡμῶν δουλευόντων ἠξιώσαμεν ἐκλιπόντες τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα διαφθείραντες μηδ' ὣς τὸ τῶν περιλοίπων ξυμμάχων κοινὸν προλιπεῖν μηδὲ σκεδασθέντες ἀχρεῖοι αὐτοῖς γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐσβάντες ἐς τὰς ναῦς κινδυνεῦσαι καὶ μὴ ὀργισθῆναι ὅτι ἡμῖν οὐ προυτιμωρήσατε.

> While for daring patriotism we had no competitors. Receiving no reinforcements from behind, seeing everything in front of us already subjugated, we had the spirit, after abandoning our city, after sacrificing our property (instead of deserting the remainder of the league or depriving them of our services by dispersing), to throw ourselves into our ships and meet the danger, without a thought of resenting your having neglected to assist us (1.74.2).

The Athenians felt a moral obligation to support their allies and made a conscious

decision, ἠξιώσαμεν, not to abandon their common concern, μηδ' ὣς τὸ τῶν

περιλοίπων ξυμμάχων κοινὸν προλιπεῖν. They accepted that their course was a

dangerous one and were willing to take the risk, ἐσβάντες ἐς τὰς ναῦς κινδυνεῦσαι.

Was this a rational decision? Obviously it resulted in victory for the allies and a future

empire for Athens. But Thucydides is also noting that far from providing security for the

Athenians, their sense of moral obligation to their allies impelled them to risk all on

behalf of their allies and ostensibly to feel no resentment towards those who had not, μὴ

ὀργισθῆναι ὅτι ἡμῖν οὐ προυτιμωρήσατε.[4] They faced the danger, κινδυνεῦσαι, on

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[3] Thuc. 1.73-78.

[4] Hornblower acknowledges that this "swipe" is the first indication of what will become a theme of the early tensions between Athens and Sparta, but any dissatisfaction is contrary to the basic implication of this passage, namely that the Athenians could have taken offense, but did not, 1:118.

behalf of their alliances and Thucydides is focused on this danger that the Athenians'

alliances brought to them.

He reinforces this idea in the very next section of the speech when he has the

Athenians explicate their motive: they accepted the danger and acted on behalf of their

allies regardless. He has the Athenians explain:

> ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀπό τε τῆς οὐκ οὔσης ἔτι ὁρμώμενοι καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐν
> βραχείᾳ ἐλπίδι οὔσης κινδυνεύοντες ξυνεσώσαμεν
> ὑμᾶς τε τὸ μέρος καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτούς.

> But we left behind us a city that was a city no longer, and staked our lives for a city that had an existence only in desperate hope, and so bore our full share in your deliverance and in ours (1.74.3).

While the Athenians do not refer specifically to any established alliances, they are explicit

in their explanation of the importance of intervention on behalf of allies. They accepted

the risk, κινδυνεύοντες, and saved not only themselves but the Spartans as well,

ξυνεσώσαμεν ὑμᾶς ... καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτούς. Thucydides' Greek highlights the Athenians'

subordination of danger to the greater goal of acting on behalf of an alliance. The

participle κινδυνεύοντες is subordinate to the finite verb ξυνεσώσαμεν. With this

subordination, Thucydides focuses his reader on the most important element of the

Athenians' decision, the need to help their allies (and themselves!). With danger a

constant force in the background, the Athenians acted.[5] Thucydides puts his engaged

reader in the situation and allows him to perceive the reality that danger is an ever-present

factor; what is important, however, is that the reader is immediately focused on how the

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[5] Morrison (2006) cites this passage, among others, as an example of how fifth-century Athens "personified risk, sacrifice and boldness," 244n22.

Athenians chose to live up to their perceived obligations by supporting their allies with action.[6]

Thucydides' rendition of the debate between the Plataeans and the Spartans in 429 echoes this idea of obligation and expands upon it by highlighting the long-lasting nature of these bonds: an alliance once forged, should endure. In 429, the Peloponnesians and their allies marched against Plataea.[7] As they began to ravage the Plataean countryside, they were met by an envoy sent to persuade Archidamus not to attack the city.[8] His appeal was largely based upon the alliances that had been created between Plataea and many other *poleis* to defeat the Persian invader in 479. Thucydides has the envoy say:

> Παυσανίας γὰρ ὁ Κλεομβρότου Λακεδαιμόνιος ἐλευθερώσας τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἀπὸ τῶν μήδων μετὰ Ἑλλήνων τῶν ἐθελησάντων ξυνάρασθαι τὸν κίνδυνον τῆς μάχης ἣ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐγένετο, θύσας ἐν τῇ Πλαταιῶν ἀγορᾷ ἱερὰ Διὶ ἐλευθερίῳ καὶ ξυγκαλέσας πάντας τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἀπεδίδου Πλαταιεῦσι γῆν καὶ πόλιν τὴν σφετέραν ἔχοντας αὐτονόμους οἰκεῖν, στρατεῦσαί τε μηδένα ποτὲ ἀδίκως ἐπ' αὐτοὺς μηδ' ἐπὶ δουλείᾳ·

> Pausanias son of Cleombrotus, your countryman, after freeing Hellas from the Medes with the help of those Hellenes who were willing to undertake the risk of the battle fought near our city, offered sacrifice to Zeus the Liberator in the agora of Plataea, and calling all the allies together restored to the Plataeans their city and territory, and declared it independent and inviolate against aggression or conquest (2.71.2).

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[6] The idea of an engaged, active reader is fundamental to Morrison's (2006) work on how to interpret what it means to "read Thucydides."

[7] A detailed analysis of this incident and bibliography of recent scholarship is presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All *Poleis*

[8] Thuc. 2.71.1.

Thucydides focuses his reader on the long lasting nature of Greek alliances and their

relation to danger. He, in fact, defines alliances through their relationship to danger: the

alliance formed at Plataea was one based upon a willingness to share danger. The Greeks

who fought, according to Thucydides, chose to engage in danger together, τῶν

ἐθελησάντων ξυνάρασθαι τὸν κίνδυνον. Thucydides refers to these Greeks as "all the

allies," πάντας τοὺς ξυμμάχους. As the Plataeans argue, the gods still preserve those

bonds in the form of oaths.[9] Danger is the medium through which disparate Greek *poleis*

could be bound together into an alliance. The generations-old bond formed by this danger

still exerts a sense of obligation on Thucydides' contemporaries and influences the

Plataeans' decision-making on the question of their continued loyalty to Athens. Would it

be better to remain loyal to Athenians, whom they saw as an ally and who were holding

Plataean hostages, or was it preferable to declare their support to Sparta, also an ally from

the era of the Persian invasions?[10]

 Thucydides' rendition of Archidamus' response to the Plataeans' dilemma

continues to point his reader to the tension between safety and danger, independence and

alliance, among the Greeks. His response underscores just how dangerous an alliance

could be for an otherwise autonomous Greek *polis*. Thucydides has Archidamus say:

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[9] Thuc. 2.71.4. Boromir Jordan cites this oath as an example of the many instances in which Thucydides focuses on the Spartans' tendency to make frequent appeals to the gods: "Religion in Thucydides," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 16 (1986), 136.

[10] Thuc. 2.73.3. Gregory Crane analyzes the various competing vectors that were affecting the Plataeans decision, with particular focus on the long-standing "imagined community" of the alliance forged against the Persians versus the short-term necessity with which the Spartans were demanding their submission or – at least – their neutrality. See "The Case of Plataea: Small States and the (Re-)Invention of Political Realism," in *War and Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Korean War and the Peloponnesian War*, David R. McCann & Barry S. Strauss, eds. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 127-60.

καθάπερ γὰρ Παυσανίας ὑμῖν παρέδωκεν, αὐτοί τε αὐτονομεῖσθε καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ξυνελευθεροῦτε, ὅσοι μετασχόντες τῶν τότε κινδύνων ὑμῖν τε ξυνώμοσαν καὶ εἰσὶ νῦν ὑπ᾽ Ἀθηναίοις, παρασκευή τε τοσήδε καὶ πόλεμος γεγένηται αὐτῶν ἕνεκα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐλευθερώσεως.

According to the grant of Pausanias, continue to be independent yourselves, and join in freeing those of your fellow countrymen who, after sharing in the perils of that period, joined in the oaths to you, and are now subject to the Athenians; for it is to free them and the rest that all this provision and war has been made (2.72.1).

There is the tension between freedom and the ties of alliance; Archidamus tells the Plataeans to be free, αὐτονομεῖσθε, and simultaneously commands them to free others, τοὺς ἄλλους ξυνελευθεροῦτε. This fits with Low's theory of intervention which is based, in part, on the idea that "*autonomia* is not something which can be asserted as an absolute but is … a relative condition asserted by a weaker power in the face of a stronger or conceded by that stronger power to weaker states …. It implies the involvement of another state."[11] In Thucydides' depiction of the situation, the Spartans conceded a certain degree of freedom to the Plataeans provided that they used that freedom to join in an alliance to support the Spartan cause, the ostensible war of liberation for Greeks against Athens. Their freedom practically requires them to risk danger by opposing Athens. Thucydides indicates that Archidamus defines the Plataean position through shared dangers, ὅσοι μετασχόντες τῶν τότε κινδύνων ὑμῖν. As such, it was a position that now impelled the Plataeans to continue taking risks on others'

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[11] Low (2007), 189-90. Mogens Herman Hansen takes this idea one step further and argues against the older view that *autonomia* was an essential defining feature of a *polis* by pointing to the several degrees of independence or subjection with which one *polis* might relate to another, any of which still allowing a sense of "self-governance" among the citizens of the weaker *polis*. See *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. 64-5.

behalf. The original alliance against the Persians now places the Plataeans in an untenable

situation: oaths sworn fifty years prior practically require them to participate in the

liberation of any other *polis* involved in the oaths and subsequently oppressed.[12] The

Plataeans are now being urged to share again in dangers neither of their own making nor

in their own interest. The link between alliance and danger, autonomy and commitment,

is brought into sharp focus for Thucydides' reader who is led to understand the long

lasting ripples of obligation that were created from the Greeks' impulse to intervene and

ally themselves against other states when externally generated dangers arise.[13] Ancient

alliances, beneficial though they were, could result in less-than-beneficial options for all

states, but especially smaller ones when faced with dangerous choices in the future. The

obligation to uphold the terms of an alliance, which was "binding states to act even

against their immediate self-interest," could provide security for the weaker state in the

present, paid for by facing greater danger in the future.[14]

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[12] Hornblower, 1:359. Crane (2001) notes the complex position held by Plataea as a result of this oath and the subsequent growth of Athenian power in , 127-60. He asks "how could the caretakers of this magnificent memorial to Greek freedom be the closest allies of the Athenians, who maintained an empire and extracted tribute by force," 144. Hunt (2010) notes that "intervention to free a city from an oppressive government was generally approved" by all *poleis* in Thucydides' time, 94.

[13] The Greeks' understanding of the links between alliances and danger may have influenced some *poleis* to consider breaking treaties even at the risk of offending the gods. There is evidence that elaborate sophistical techniques were occasionally applied to oaths in order to produce interpretations contrary to the original intent of the treay. See Everett L. Wheeler, "Sophistic Interpretations and Greek Treaties," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 25 (1984), 253-74.

[14] Hunt (2010), 187. On the obligations of alliances, i.e. "positive reciprocity," see Hunt (2010), 185-92. On the binding nature of oaths, enforced by divine sanction, see Low (2007), 118-26.

3.3.5 Internal Dangers of Intervention: Thucydides' Judgment on Smaller States

Small *poleis* like Plataea did not always have to ally only with the more powerful *poleis* to achieve their goals. They could, occasionally, assemble a coalition of smaller states to oppose a more powerful *polis*. Thucydides wants his reader to understand that even these alliances, in which small states come together to increase their security, are still defined by danger. In the end, however, he seems to approve of these types of decisions and, in a world where danger is the norm, he explains to his reader that the potential internally-generated dangers of an alliance may be outweighed by a rational approach to alliances which are designed to reduce external danger over the long term. An example of this can be seen in his analysis of how the Chians incited revolt among neighboring Athenian subjects.

By 413, Athens had suffered the "most calamitous" defeat of the war, the disaster at Syracuse.[1] This disaster emboldened Athens' enemies, neutral parties and even many Athenian subjects to revolt against a weakened Athens.[2] One state in particular, Chios, aggressively sought support from Sparta and other *poleis* for a revolt from Athens.[3] Though the anti-Athenian forces suffered defeat at first from a resurgent Athenian navy, Alcibiades, exiled from Athens, convinced the Chian populace to support fully a revolt

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[1] Thuc. 7.87.5.

[2] Thuc. 8.2.

[3] Thuc. 8.5.4. Thucydides indicates that the Chians joined together with Tissaphernes, Darius' commander, to "effect a common purpose … cause the cities in [Tissaphernes'] province to revolt from the Athenians," (8.6).

from Athens.[4] Thucydides says that the Chians' "zeal continued as active as ever."[5] He

also indicates that their small size put them in an exceptionally dangerous position and

one that naturally made them count on other Greeks' tendency to intervene to combat this

danger. He writes:

> Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοῦ αὐτοῦ θέρους οἱ Χῖοι, ὥσπερ
> ἤρξαντο, οὐδὲν ἀπολείποντες προθυμίας, ἄνευ τε
> Πελοποννησίων πλήθει παρόντες ἀποστῆσαι τὰς
> πόλεις καὶ βουλόμενοι ἅμα ὡς πλείστους σφίσι
> ξυγκινδυνεύειν, στρατεύονται αὐτοί τετρισκαίδεκα
> ναυσὶν ἐπὶ τὴν Λέσβον, ὥσπερ εἴρητο ὑπὸ τῶν
> Λακεδαιμονίων δεύτερον ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἰέναι καὶ ἐκεῖθεν
> ἐπὶ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ...

> After this, during the same summer, the Chians, whose zeal
> continued as active as ever, and who even without the
> Peloponnesians found themselves in sufficient force to
> bring about the revolt of the cities and who also wished to
> have as many companions in peril as possible, made an
> expedition with thirteen ships of their own to Lesbos,
> following the instructions from Sparta, which were to go to
> that island next and from there to the Hellespont (8.22.1).

Thucydides is explicit about the nature of the alliance the Chians were forming: they

wanted to share danger, βουλόμενοι ... ξυγκινδυνεύειν. Perhaps this is the same thing

as increasing their security but Thucydides chose his words purposefully. He is

highlighting that the purpose of an alliance is to face danger. The smaller states might

join together, seek alliances, intervene on each other's behalf. But danger would be ever-

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[4] Thuc. 8.14.1-2. This decision to revolt is often cited as evidence in the debate over the popularity of the Athenian empire. See D.W. Bradeen, "The Popularity of the Athenian Empire," *Historia* 9 (1960), 257-69; T. J. Quinn, "Thucydides and the Unpopularity of the Athenian Empire," *Historia* 13 (1964), 257-66 and "Political Groups at Chios," *Historia* 18 (1969), 22-30; For more detail on the relationship between Athens and Chios, see T.J. Quinn, *Athens and Samos, Lesbos, and Chios* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981); J.P. Barron, "Chios in the Athenian Empire" in *Chios: A Conference at the Homereion in Chios*, John Boardman & C.E. Vaphopoulou-Richardson, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 19860, 89-103. For a detailed account of the chronology of this revolt, see W.J. McCoy, "Thrasylbulus and his Trierarchies," *The American Journal of Philology* 112 (1991), 303-23.

[5] Thuc. 8.22.1.

present, a constant force against which they would contend. In this instance, the Chians are trying to increase their own security by trusting in their neighbors' impulse to join together to be free of Athens, to share the danger of a revolt. While an alliance of small states might appear to increase the security of all, Thucydides focuses his reader on the deeper truth: all involved parties were committing themselves to share danger, in the form of the Athenian navy.

Thucydides also shows his reader that some leaders did understand that the culture of intervention was really a culture of shared danger. He does this by providing a different perspective on the Chians' course of action. He writes that the exiled Athenian leader Alcibiades commented on the Chians' reliance on others while serving as an adviser to Tissaphernes and doing "all he could with him to injure the Peloponnesian cause." [6] In his response to *poleis* asking for money from Tissaphernes, he admonished the Chians' behavior. Thucydides writes:

> τάς τε πόλεις δεομένας χρημάτων ἀπήλασεν αὐτὸς ἀντιλέγων ὑπὲρ τοῦ Τισσαφέρνους ὡς οἱ μὲν Χῖοι ἀναίσχυντοι εἶεν πλουσιώτατοι ὄντες τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἐπικουρίᾳ δ' ὅμως σῳζόμενοι ἀξιοῦσι καὶ τοῖς σώμασι καὶ τοῖς χρήμασιν ἄλλους ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνων ἐλευθερίας κινδυνεύειν·

> Meanwhile Alcibiades sent away the cities that were asking for money, telling them, in the name of Tissaphernes, that it was great impudence in the Chians, the richest people in Hellas, not content with being defended by a foreign force, to expect others to risk not only their lives but their money as well on behalf of their freedom (8.45.4).

Alcibiades recognizes the danger in which the Chians are asking others become involved, ἀξιοῦσι … κινδυνεύειν. Thucydides' is using his advice to tell his reader that this

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[6] Thuc. 8.45.1.

attempt to forge an alliance is one which is creating shared danger. Certainly, we should

not ignore Alcibiades' perspective when evaluating his reported advice. He is a shrewd

politician trying to win the favor of his Persian host and to secure his eventual return to

Athens.[7] But Thucydides indicates that he also "thought it really the best" advice he

could offer.[8] On a certain level it appears that Alcibiades was aware of "the mischief that

powerful states could do if they were granted the right to intervene whenever a few exiles

cried tyranny.[9] Regardless, the important point is that Thucydides points his reader to the

idea that at least some contemporary leaders were re-evaluating the Greeks' tendency to a

culture of intervention. When Thucydides indicates that Alcibiades chastised the Chians'

eagerness to have others share danger with them, he is pointing his reader to the idea that

this is a potential internally-generated danger that a minority of his contemporaries did

recognize, even if they often ignored it.[10] Alcibiades may be pointing to a resentment

towards those you help… typical of an aristocratic society.

    Thucydides himself, in a rare example of providing explicit commentary upon

events, praises the Chians for their recognition of the dangers and their decision to seek

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[7] Thuc. 8.47.1.

[8] Thucydides says this primarily of the advice Alcibiades gave directly to Tissaphernes in which he advised him to allow the Spartans and Athenians to wear themselves out with war before attempting to secure more power in Greece, 8.46. But the idea that Alcibiades was, in the main, giving advice that he thought was the best carries over to statements made to these smaller Greek *poleis*, who played a part in what Alcibiades may have seen as his grander scheme.

[9] Hunt (2010) discusses the Greeks' concern for intervening in another state's political system but does not mention this instance specifically, 95.

[10] Hunt (2010) argued that fifth century Greeks generally considered it "desirable" to aid the unjustly treated while still "respecting a state's internal arrangements," 97.

allies.[11] By the summer of 412, the Athenians had rebuilt enough of their naval and land forces to defeat the rebellious Chians in three separate battles. The Chians were trapped in a seemingly hopeless position. They could no longer offer resistance as the Athenians began devastating their lands.[12] It is at this point that one might expect Thucydides to highlight the dangers the Chians had generated for themselves and others by rebelling against the Athenians. But Thucydides instead presents a very different perspective: he praises their ability to understand the Greeks' impulse to intervene and their willingness to benefit from this knowledge. Thucydides writes:

> καὶ οὐδ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἀπόστασιν, εἰ τοῦτο δοκοῦσι παρὰ τὸ ἀσφαλέστερον πρᾶξαι, πρότερον ἐτόλμησαν ποιήσασθαι ἢ μετὰ πολλῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν ξυμμάχων ἔμελλον ξυγκινδυνεύσειν καὶ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ᾐσθάνοντο οὐδ' αὐτοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἔτι μετὰ τὴν Σικελικὴν ξυμφορὰν ὡς οὐ πάνυ πόνηρα σφῶν [βεβαίως] τὰ πράγματα εἴη·

> Nor was this revolt, in which they might seem to have erred on the side of rashness, ventured upon until they had numerous and gallant allies to share the danger with them, and until they perceived that the Athenians after the Sicilian disaster were themselves no longer denying the thoroughly desperate state of their affairs (8.24.5).

Thucydides focuses his reader on the fact that Chians knew they were involving others in their own danger, ἔμελλον ξυγκινδυνεύσειν. The Chians must have recognized their position was precarious. They also must have understood that other Greek *poleis* held to a

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[11] Morrison (2006) refers to Thucydides' tendency to remove his own explicit opinion from the narrative as "authorial reticence," 18. Some well-known passages in which he does pass judgment include,the explanation of the scope of his own work at 1.20-23, his account of Pericles character at 2.65, the conclusion of the Corcyraean *stasis* at 3.82-84, and his description of the temporary peace of 421 at 5.26. To these, which Morrison notes, I would add his discussion of the Chian revolution which is being discussed in this section. See also David Gribble, "Narrator Interventions in Thucydides," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 118 (1998), 41-67.

[12] Thuc. 8.24.3.

moral code that implied there was something fundamentally noble about an alliance, ἀγαθῶν ξυμμάχων, especially one for which the purpose was to fight for freedom, *autonomia*. This objective, of course, could carry a similar valence to the idea of "helping the wronged" in a contest between the justice of freedom and the injustice of tyranny.[13] The Chians, understanding these concepts as they did, made a rational calculation of how best to contend with Athenian power and they forged alliances to share the danger. Their danger was diffused by the presence of allies. These allies who chose to share in the danger are the "noble allies," ἀγαθῶν ξυμμάχων. In this particular instance, Thucydides uses his own voice to teach his reader that danger is part of an alliance, but when approached with reasonable forethought, the danger may well be outweighed by the potential reward of working with another *polis* for the attainment of a common goal. In this case, that goal was freedom from the tyranny of Athens. In fighting for freedom, these smaller *poleis* were both "helping the wronged" and attempting to elevate their own position in the hierarchy of Greek city-states from that of "slaves" to being masters of their own affairs.[14]

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[13] Low (2007), 187.

[14] On the "slave" metaphor as a factor in the international hierarchy, see Hunt (2010), 112-17.

3.3.6 <u>Internal Dangers of Intervention: Conclusion</u>

In this section, I have analyzed the internally generated dangers of the Greeks' proclivity for intervention, their impulse to get involved in others' affairs. The Greeks certainly had a strong tradition of intervention and Thucydides contemporaries may have even thought of this involvement as an obligation for a variety of reasons.[1] Three main justifications for intervention seem to have been offered by poets and history-writers such as Euripides and Herodotus. Thucydides offers the same three justifications as part of his analysis of various situations during the long war: bonds of kinship – whether real, fictive, or simply imagined for coordinated action, "helping the wronged," and fulfilling oaths or formal allegiances. Thucydides recognizes that his contemporary Greek society was built upon these strong moral underpinnings and yet he also recognizes some of the dangers which arise from this ethos of intervention. With careful word choice and strong reliance on the term κίνδυνος, he points his reader to the idea that the impulse to become involved often undermines the correct perception of the potential dangers. He recognizes that intervention is a culturally instilled norm for his society and yet he wants his reader to understand how the ties that may be created to enhance security often lead only to increased danger.

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[1] Low (2007), 175-211.

3.4 <u>Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame</u>

In this section I will further define Thucydides' conception of internal forms of danger by presenting examples which illustrate Thucydides' analysis of the potentially self-destructive impulses caused by the Greek conception of honor and shame. To do so, I will divide this section – as I have done with others – into two parts. In the first part, I will provide a working definition of the Greeks' conception of honor and its potentially self-destructive aspects by presenting examples from Euripides' plays which reflect the world and culture in which Thucydides lived.[1] In the second part, I will analyze the examples Thucydides himself provides. These examples will be broken down into three categories: taking vengeance, gaining honor, and avoiding shame. Though these categories illustrate various aspects of honor, shame, and the way in which Greeks acted amid such an ethos, there will be one fundamental thesis: Thucydides recognized that the Greek ethos of honor and shame created a cultural necessity to respond to perceived slights without careful consideration of more rational alternatives.

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[1] John H. Finley, Jr. (1967), 54.

3.4.1 <u>Internal Dangers of Honor: Defining the Ethos</u>

Thucydides was himself a product of Greek culture and did not disagree with its fundamental tenet that others' perception of one's honor was an important component of real power and security.[1] Defining the various components of honor, however, might easily become a whole chapter in itself. Therefore this section will not attempt to examine every nuance of the Greek ethos of honor and shame.[2] Instead, the Greek conception of honor will here be defined as the degree to which one person is perceived to have surpassed another in any form of competition, *e.g.* political, physical or – as is most often the case – violent competition such as is consistently presented in the *Iliad*. This poem provides a "baseline for understanding the military ethos of the Greeks" in that "nearly every activity in [it] can be imagined to be a competition."[3] The other important aspect of honor that will be assumed is that the competition for honor was considered a "zero-sum

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[1] Eckstein summarizes this concept by explaining "in an anarchy, preserving one's reputation for power in the face of challenge is crucial for preserving one's actual power, and an action taken against one's honor and reputation is an action causing real material injury" in *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 63. This line of reasoning is more specifically applied to Thucydides' work by Gregory Crane, who points out that the Greeks were constantly in wars "in which status and prestige, rather than absolute dominance and possession of territory, were the primary goals" in *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 157. Hans van Wees echoes this idea with the assessment that "any hint of disrespect from other cities was seen as a serious challenge" in *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 24.

[2] The bibliography on the subject of honor in ancient society is vast and beyond the scope of this dissertation. J.E. Lendon provides a comprehensive analysis of the subject and a thorough discussion of recent scholarship on the subject in *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[3] Lendon argues that the competition for honor formed the one of the fundamental tenets of Greek society(2005), 22-24. Van Wees would agree with his assessment and would add that honor was even a self-perpetuating force for increased violence in the Greek world; increased prestige through military victories led to greater honor to defend and fewer insults that could be tolerated (25). This point will be analyzed further in section 3.4.2, "Internal Dangers of Honor: Vengeance in Action." While the competition need not always be violent, Thucydides does not analyze athletic competition; he analyzes an incredibly violent war. Therefore the examples forming the main component of this chapter will typically be violent ones as opposed to other forms of competition, e.g. victories in games, politics, or court cases.

game" by the Greeks; one man's honorable victory was necessarily another's shameful defeat.[4]

Modern theory, however, can only go so far towards establishing our understanding of the ancient ethos of honor and shame and the cultural necessity to act which it provided to the Greeks. Images from Thucydides' contemporary society, the tragedies written for an Athenian audience in the cultural code they would have understood, are far more illustrative.[5] Euripides' *Medea* and *Ion* both provide notable examples of how the ancients perceived actions driven by the need to defend one's honor as a real component of one's security. They also illustrate the potentially self-destructive effect of honor upon Greek society: honor provided the cultural necessity to react to perceived slights without careful consideration given to the consequences.

Euripides' *Medea* can certainly be viewed as an image of an anti-hero(ine); there is little to be admired in Medea's actions.[6] A modern audience, however, might note

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[4] K. J. Dover comments on this without using the term "zero-sum." He writes "[w]hen someone is honored, the honor is necessarily withheld from others who wanted it just as badly; no one can win unless someone else loses, and an honor shared with everybody is a doubtful honor" (231). See K.J. Dover *Greek Popular Morality In the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[5] Here I am interpreting Hayden White's essay "Historical Text As Literary Artifact," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). He says the "primary meaning of a narrative would then consist of the destructuration of a set of events (real or imagined) originally encoded in one tropological mode and the progressive restructuration of the set in another tropological mode" (96). He specifically notes that Thucydides's work is one about which the literary aspects are a crucial element in the historiographical technique. I am expanding this to include the idea that the "literary aspects" of Thucydides are a reflection of those encoded forms with which he was most familiar, i.e. tragic poetry. For further discussion, see Finley, "Euripides and Thucydides."

[6] Carolyn A. Durham provides an interesting perspective on Medea's actions and her classification as a hero in "Medea: Hero or Heroine?" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 8, no. 1 (1984): 54-59. Elizabeth B. Bongie, however, provides a more traditional, i.e. philological, historical approach to the question in "Heroic Elements in the Medea of Euripides," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 107 (1977): 27-56.

Medea's motive: others' perceptions of her honor.[7] It is, in fact, Medea's "consistent and unwavering" commitment to act in accordance with the heroic code of honor that binds Euripides' tragedy into a coherent whole.[8] That whole helps illuminate both the cultural code of Thucydides' society, and how Thucydides understood the often self-destructive actions undertaken to preserve one's honor. In other words, Thucydides recognized that honor is often a trap, "founded on flawed logic of belligerence and a misleading cognitive bias, on an optical illusion that blinded the actors to alternative scripts of honor, to other forms of courage and risk taking: those of timely concession, of conciliation, cooperation, and trust." [9]

A quick synopsis introduces the images of honor on display. Early in the play, the audience learns that Medea's love for Jason, her husband and the father of her two young boys, has been betrayed. As Medea bemoans her fate and plans revenge, she is confronted by Creon, the king of Corinth and father of Jason's new young bride, Creusa. Creon, fearing that Medea will seek revenge, exiles Medea but allows her one day to prepare for exile. In the space of that day Medea does, in fact, exact revenge against Jason by killing his new bride-to-be and her own sons. Medea escapes Corinth by flying away on a chariot drawn by two dragons.

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[7] Bongie says of the modern audience's tendency to misread the ancient literary trope, "our horror at her misdeed interferes with our understanding of her motivation," (32). She adds later "What we must try to remember, nonetheless, is that Euripides' audience did think in terms of the ancient code of honour and would certainly have recognized this dimension of motivation" (46).

[8] Bongie, 56.

[9] Avner Offer, "Going to War in 1914: A Matter of Honor?," *Politics Society* 23 (1995), 236. Offer presents an analysis of the ways in which the concept of honor impelled both individuals and communities to believe that there were no alternatives to war. Though he does not deal specifically with Thucydides, his analysis of honor and its impact on interstate relations parallels that which is provided in this section of the dissertation.

The plot of Euripides' *Medea* is simple; unpacking the images of honor and shame, however, is much more complex. One possible perspective from which to view the play is as a study in Euripides' "idealized concept of character and the heroic concept of virtue." [10] The theme is first presented in the opening scene in which the Nurse explains Medea's motivation: preserving her honor. The Nurse explains:

> δέδοικα δ' αὐτὴν μή τι βουλεύσῃ νέον· βαρεῖα γὰρ
> φρήν, οὐδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς πάσχουσ'· ἐγῷδα τήνδε,
> δειμαίνω τέ νιν [spurious lines] δεινὴ γάρ· οὔτοι ῥᾳδίως
> γε συμβαλὼν ἔχθραν τις αὐτῇ καλλίνικον οἴσεται.

> She is a fierce spirit, takes no insult lying down. I know her well. She frightens me … she is a dangerous woman, and anyone who crosses her will not easily sing a song of triumph (39-44). [11]

The nurse makes it clear to the audience that Medea is a woman following the heroic code, unwilling to suffer any slights, οὐδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς πάσχουσ'. [12]

Euripides repeatedly highlights Medea's honor as the motive for filicide. When Medea explains that for a woman wronged in love "there is no heart more murderous, the chorus replies simply, "As you wish, Medea. You have a score to settle with your lord." [13] The chorus unhesitatingly supports Medea's murderous plot on grounds of honor,

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[10] Bongie, 27.

[11] All translations are from Paul Roche's translation as published in *Euripides: Ten Plays* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998).

[12] Bongie discusses this particular phrase (29). Bongie later cites B.M.W. Knox who points to the fact that the word δεινὴ (here in its feminine form) is used to describe every hero in Sophoclean tragedy, thus making an impact in Euripidean tragedy when it categorizes Medea (32).

[13] Eur. *Med*. 265-8.

offering neither reproach nor admonition.[14] Medea again explains her motive when she

discloses the full breadth of her plot. She says, "I won't be laughed at by my enemies …

Let nobody think me insignificant or weak." [15] The message is clear: Medea's murderous

behavior is motivated by the necessity to regain her honor, regardless the consequences.

Medea is concerned her enemies will laugh at her; to regain her reputation, she "must"

kill her sons and Creusa.[16] No one will laugh then.

Euripides' *Ion,* produced around 412, provides another image of the potential

problems posed by a cultural necessity to react to any perceived slight. The plot, though

more complex than other Greek tragedies, arguably revolves around one theme: Ion's

maturation in a world defined by honor and shame. Ion had been abandoned as an infant

by his mother, Creusa, who was trying to avoid the shame of having been raped by

Apollo. Apollo, however, took pity on his infant son and took him safely to Delphi where

he was raised by the priestesses. The action of the play occurs as Creusa and her husband,

Xuthus, come as suppliants to the temple to determine why they have been unable to have

children. As Creusa and Ion slowly begin to understand the dark secret that binds them

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[14] A similar acceptance of the inevitability of vengeance is seen in Euripides' *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*. Upon learning that her mother has been killed by her brother for murdering her father, Agamemnon, Iphigenia simply remarks, "It was exact of him. I pity him [her brother]" (559). Much like Medea's nurse, there is no hesitation, just acceptance of a natural order of events.

[15] Eur. *Med. 797-808.*

[16] Euripides, in fact, uses the term ἀνάγκη in line 805 to express the necessity of Creusa's death: ἐπεὶ κακῶς κακὴν θανεῖν σφ' ἀνάγκη τοῖς ἐμοῖσι φαρμάκοις. At line 1240 (and at the possible spurious line 1062) he uses the term again to show the necessity of her sons' deaths: πάντως σφ' ἀνάγκη κατθανεῖν. Of course, ἀνάγκη is a crucial term in Thucydides. Justina Gregory discusses Euripides' use of the term ἀνάγκη in *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), and contends that Euripides uses ἀνάγκη as a point of departure to "draw together the ethical and the political and to suggest … a series of lessons to the Athenians" 12, 188). It is in this sense that the ties between Euripides' imagery and Thucydides' narrative are more closely linked: each uses his own medium to provide lessons to his contemporary audience.

together, they make less-than-rational decisions. Chief among them is that Creusa is compelled to preempt the shame that will befall her if her secret past becomes known. To keep the secret that she was dominated against her will by a god, Creusa is willing to kill her son, Ion.

The play exhibits several examples of the cultural necessity that the concepts of honor and shame imposed on the ancients. The first is in a conversation between Ion and Creusa in which Creusa nearly explains her past. She does not, however, reveal to Ion the nature of her private question for the oracle because she is "ashamed," αἰδούμεθα.[17] Ion understands her motive instinctively and immediately responds that "nothing can be done; shame is a hopeless deity, οὔ τἄρα πράξεις οὐδέν· ἀργὸς ἡ θεός."[18] Euripides provides an image of the cultural necessity that shame brings to Greeks; when shamed they perceive that there are no options left to them. In modern sociological terminology, they are forced into a position of premature cognitive closure.[19]

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[17] Euripides, *Ion* 336. Stanley E. Hoffer argues that she is unable to pose her bold question because of her "internalization of blame and shame" in "Violence, Culture, and the Workings of Ideology in Euripides' 'Ion'" *Classical Antiquity* 15, no. 2 (Oct., 1996), 290. He later points out that her shame is actually a manifestation of her fear of further oppression, not of moral guilt (307). Thus, as I argue, the real danger of being dishonored once is that the perceived loss of status becomes real loss of power and increases the chance of further violence and dishonor being visited upon the weaker actor.

[18] Eur. *Ion* 337. Here Roche translates ἀργὸς as "hopeless." Arthur S. Way translates this as "deedless" in the Loeb Classical Library edition (Reprint 1928). Nonetheless, the point is that nothing good will come of shame. K.J. Dover refers to this passage and notes the ease with which concepts such as *aidos* were personified (281). See *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[19] Premature Cognitive Closure is "when the feeling among actors that there is no other choice forecloses options of action that still actually exist." This definition is paraphrased from Eckstein (2006), 25.

Creusa's indecisiveness later in the play provides another opportunity to witness the cultural necessity of defending one's honor. As Creusa wrangles over what to do when her secret is discovered, her slave advises her to act:

> So now, what you have to do is steel yourself to an act worthy of womanhood. Seize a sword, think of a trick, concoct a poison and dispatch your husband and the boy before they do you (843-846).

That a slave advises a master to commit murder is interesting enough. What happens next further illustrates the accepted norms of the ethos of honor and shame: the chorus unhesitatingly supports the murderous advice. The leader responds that she "too is ready to share [Creusa's] lot, to live with honor or die without a blot." [20] This is almost diametrically opposed to a modern's understanding of honorable action. For these ancients, even murder as a preemptive defense against the possibility that one's shameful secret might be revealed is the honorable solution. *Ion* thus provides a clear image of this dissertation's working definition of honor. Creusa perceives the potential for terrible damage to her honor. The slave plainly states the cultural necessity to react violently to this; she presumes the eventuality of a physical attack on Creusa, not just her honor. This indicates that Creusa's honor is tied to her physical security, a topic which will be further analyzed in a later section.[21] The chorus, far from aghast at this option, supports and encourages the murder. Finally, all of this is done with little forethought to the long term consequences; like Medea, Creusa cares more for her honor than for her husband

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[20] Eur. *Med*. 857-8: κἀγώ, φίλη δέσποινα, συμφορὰν θέλω κοινουμένη τήνδ᾽ ἢ θανεῖν ἢ ζῆν καλῶς.

[21] See 3.5 Κίνδυνος and and the Security Dilemma: Power and Reputation.

and child. Concern for honor leads to the cultural necessity to react to perceived

slights; the losses involved may be seen as serious, but ultimately that is simply

accepted as the cost of honor, whose maintenance is all important socially and

psychologically. It should be noted that the play ends when the goddess Athena

intervenes, reveals the truth, and proclaim's Ion's destiny to be the ruler of Athens.

The play has an atypical happy ending as the violent cycle of vengeance is stopped

but it takes a divine intervention to overcome the passions of the mortals involved

in this tragic situation.

3.4.2 <u>Internal Dangers of Honor: Vengeance in Action</u>

Euripides renders images Thucydides himself might have viewed as a stylized version of the real-life ethos of honor and shame among Greeks. Through this filter, it is possible to examine how Thucydides presented this cultural ethos and its associated dangers. The first category of these types of internally-generated dangers is vengeance: Thucydides points out the potentially destructive consequences of the necessity men feel to seek vengeance for perceived slights and the potential glory that might be attained through vengeance.[1]

Thucydides rendition of Pericles' Funeral Oration presents the theme of vengeance as an honor of such high degree that it might make up for a man's shortcomings.[2] After praising the city of Athens' character in general terms, Pericles focuses on the motivations of the men who died in a military engagement during the first year of the war.[3] Though they did not die together in a single action, he describes how each man chose to die fighting his city's enemies rather than to live submitting to the enemies and hoping for material rewards later in life. Danger in the quest for vengeance, according to Thucydides' Pericles, has a redemptive quality. He has Pericles say:

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[1] J.E. Lendon recognizes that while the Dark Age practice of blood vengeance had dwindled in Classical Athens, "the ideology of vengeance remained pervasive." See "Homeric Vengeance and the Outbreak of Greek Wars" in *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, Hans van Wees, ed. (London: Duckworth, 2000), 13. Nick Fisher agrees with Lendon and further ties the ideas of vengeance to instances of *stasis* within *poleis*. See "*Hybris*, Revenge, and *Stasis* in the Greek City-States," in *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, Hans van Wees, ed. (London: Duckworth, 2000), 85.

[2] A brief bibliography on the vast corpus of literature on this speech is presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All *Poleis*

[3] Thuc. 2.42-43. Thucydides provides no specific list of military engagements to explain the number of the dead or the exact circumstances under which they had fallen.

τὴν δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων τιμωρίαν ποθεινοτέραν αὐτῶν λαβόντες καὶ κινδύνων ἅμα τόνδε κάλλιστον νομίσαντες ἐβουλήθησαν μετ' αὐτοῦ τοὺς μὲν τιμωρεῖσθαι, τῶν δὲ ἐφίεσθαι, ἐλπίδι μὲν τὸ ἀφανὲς τοῦ κατορθώσειν ἐπιτρέψαντες, ἔργῳ δὲ περὶ τοῦ ἤδη ὁρωμένου σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἀξιοῦντες πεποιθέναι, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀμύνεσθαι καὶ παθεῖν μᾶλλον ἡγησάμενοι ἢ [τὸ] ἐνδόντες σῴζεσθαι, τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν τοῦ λόγου ἔφυγον, τὸ δ' ἔργον τῷ σώματι ὑπέμειναν καὶ δι' ἐλαχίστου καιροῦ τύχης ἅμα ἀκμῇ τῆς δόξης μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ δέους ἀπηλλάγησαν.

No, holding that vengeance upon their enemies was far more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk, to make sure of their vengeance and to let their wishes wait; and while committing to hope the uncertainty of final success, in the business before them they thought fit to act boldly and trust in themselves. Thus choosing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonor, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, left behind them not their fear, but their glory (2.42.4).

Thucydides has Pericles say that men judge the inflicting of possible vengeance upon their enemies to be the most noble of dangers,

κινδύνων ἅμα τόνδε κάλλιστον νομίσαντες. By acting boldly and choosing to risk death, men escape dishonor. Death is not to be faced with what we would call a rational analysis, but with a look at the balance sheet of honor and shame. Thucydides' contemporaries saw the dangerous pursuit of vengeance as a way to make up for any past dishonor. They saw the probability not merely of life or death, but of more honor or more shame. For Thucydides' contemporaries the choice was easy. The pursuit of vengeance was a worthy cause and it required bold action regardless of the physical consequences.

So aggressively could men be expected to pursue vengeance that it became a factor in the Athenian assembly's debates over how to manage the empire. This is

evident in Thucydides' rendition of Cleon's speech during the Mytilenean debate. In 427, the Athenians debated the fate of the Mytileneans, who had rebelled but had finally been driven to surrender. Initially they planned to kill all the males and sell the women and children into slavery but later they renewed the debate to re-examine their options: genocide of all Mytileneans or just death to the leaders of the revolt.[4]

In part of this debate, Thucydides highlights vengeance as a dangerous aspect of the Greek ethos of honor and shame. He depicts Cleon urging the Athenians to assume that an enemy left alive will seek revenge. He has Cleon say:

> μάλιστα δὲ οἱ μὴ ξὺν προφάσει τινὰ κακῶς ποιοῦντες ἐπεξέρχονται καὶ διολλύναι, τὸν κίνδυνον ὑφορώμενοι τοῦ ὑπολειπομένου ἐχθροῦ· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ξὺν ἀνάγκῃ τι παθὼν χαλεπώτερος διαφυγὼν τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἐχθροῦ.

> It is they who wrong their neighbor without a cause that pursue their victim to the death on account of the danger

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[4] The Mytilenean debate is one of the most analyzed portions of Thucydides' work. An overview of the scholarship in this area includes the following: H. -G Saar, *Die Reden des Kleon und Diodotus und ihre Stellung im Gesamtwerk des Thukydides* (diss, Hamburg, 1953); P. Moraux, "Thucydides et la rhétorique" *Les Etudes Classiques* 22 (1954), 3-23; A. Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate: Thucydides 3.36-49," *Phoeniz* 16 (1962), 64-85; Mabel L. Lang, "Cleon as the Anti-Pericles," *Classical Philology* 67 (1972), 159-69; Donald Kagan, "The Speeches in Thucydides and the Mytilene Debate," *Yale Classical Studies* 24 (1975), 71-94; Marc Cogan, "Mytilene, Plataea, and Corcyra: Ideology and Policy in Thucydides, Book Three," *Phoenix* 35 (1981), 1-21; Marc Cogan, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 50-65; W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 79-81; Malcolm Heath, "Justice in Thucydides' Athenian Speeches," *Historia* 34 (1990), 385-400; Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides, Volume I: Books 1-3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991),421-2 with bibliography; P.E. Arnold, "The Persuasive Style of Debates in Direct Speech in Thucydides," *Hermes* 120 (1992), 44-57; I.G. Spence, "Thucydides, Woodhead, and Kleon," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), 411-37; Gregory Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). 176-87; James A. Andrewes, "Cleon's Hidden Appeals (Thucydides 3.37-40)," *The Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000), 45-62; John Zumbrunnen, "Courage in the Face of Reality: Nietzsche's Admiration for Thucydides," *Polity* 35 (2002), 237-63; Daniel Treisman, "Rational Appeasement," *International Organization* 58 (2004), 395-73; William Desmond, "Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides," *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 359-79.

> which they foresee in letting their enemy survive; since the object of a wanton wrong is more dangerous, should he escape, than an enemy who has not this to complain of (3.40.6).

Vengeance, in Thucydides' analysis, was often a factor in political decisions. Not merely and "indulgence of anger," it actually carried the force of a "positive obligation." [5] Hence he depicts Cleon stressing the need to eliminate any threat of future retribution against Athens from the Mytilenean survivors. Thucydides' style and logic may be hard to follow, even in translation.[6] The underlying ethos, however, is clear: an attacker who does not completely destroy his enemy must expect to face revenge. Cleon wants the Athenians to destroy their enemies completely to avoid future retribution. According to Thucydides, Cleon understood that any injury inflicted on the Mytileneans would provide the cultural necessity for revenge. His view of the world is a continual cycle of reciprocal violence and vengeance. He wants to break this cycle, not with logic and reason, but with violence that cannot be avenged, genocide.

A narrow majority of the Athenians who vote against him are convinced he is wrong.[7] But future events prove that his basic assumption was right: the Mytileneans do seek vengeance a few years later. In the short run, the Athenians realize financial gain by only killing one thousand Mytileneans, dividing the land of

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[5] Hunt (2010), 198.

[6] Hornblower provides a gloss that captures the essence of the grammar and provides an easier logic to follow: "For those who gratuitously attack others rush to extremes. and sometimes, like these Mytileneans, to their own destruction. They know what they can expect from an enemy who escapes: when a man is injured gratuitously he is more dangerous if he escapes than the enemy who has only suffered what he has inflicted" (1:431). Gomme notes how well this argument is illustrated in the killing of Astyanax in Euripides' *Troades*. He adds, however, that the argument here is "very artificially expressed" (2:312).

[7] Thuc. 3.49.1.

the island's inhabitants and requiring rent from those who once owned their own land.[8] But small conflicts with groups of Mytilenean exiles continue and the city revolts again near the end of the war when Athens is much weaker.[9] Though many scholars point to Thucydides' basic dislike of Cleon, events as narrated by Thucydides prove that Cleon knew well what to expect: vengeance.[10] Cleon's understanding of the importance of honor, in this case among the Mytileneans, allowed him to see that this cycle of destruction would only continue if the Mytileneans were not completely destroyed after their first bid for freedom was quashed and their honor slighted.

The imbalance of power that existed between Sparta and Athens as a result of the siege at Pylos in 425 provides another illustration of how the Greeks' sense of honor and shame could be expected to lead a cycle of revenge. Though this particular incident has been previously discussed, a quick summary of the events will help to set up the analysis.[11] While sailing to Sicily, a detachment of the Athenian fleet was diverted by the Athenian general Demosthenes to fortify the island of Pylos and use it as a base of operations against Spartan interests in the nearby countryside.[12] Eventually Demosthenes and his soldiers found themselves

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[8] Thuc. 5.50.2-3

[9] Exiles cause minor troubles, 4.52.2-3 and 4.75.1. The city revolts again, 8.22.

[10] The bibliographic survey of Thucydides' judgment of Cleon has been presented in 3.2.2 Thucydides Defines Greek "Ethos of Action"

[11] The events at Pylos, an in-depth analysis of the external dangers recognized and capitalized upon by the Athenian general Demosthenes, and bibliographic survey of both topics have been presented in 2.3.2 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

[12] Thuc. 4.3.2.

besieging a group of Spartans who had been trapped on Pylos.[13] After enacting a

brief armistice, the Spartans sent an embassy to Athens to negotiate for the release

of their men.[14] In Thucydides' rendition of their speech, the embassy highlights the

cultural necessity for revenge that will be felt by the Spartans should Athens not

agree to settle this issue. The speaker says:

> Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ ὑμᾶς προκαλοῦνται ἐς σπονδὰς καὶ
> διάλυσιν πολέμου, διδόντες μὲν εἰρήνην καὶ ξυμμαχίαν
> καὶ ἄλλην φιλίαν πολλὴν καὶ οἰκειότητα ἐς ἀλλήλους
> ὑπάρχειν, ἀνταιτοῦντες δὲ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς νήσου ἄνδρας,
> καὶ ἄμεινον ἡγούμενοι ἀμφοτέροις μὴ
> διακινδυνεύεσθαι, εἴτε βίᾳ διαφύγοιεν παρατυχούσης
> τινὸς σωτηρίας εἴτε καὶ ἐκπολιορκηθέντες μᾶλλον ἂν
> χειρωθεῖεν. νομίζομέν τε τὰς μεγάλας ἔχθρας μάλιστ'
> ἂν διαλύεσθαι βεβαίως, οὐκ ἢν ἀνταμυνόμενός τις καὶ
> ἐπικρατήσας τὰ πλείω τοῦ πολέμου κατ' ἀνάγκην
> ὅρκοις ἐγκαταλαμβάνων μὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου ξυμβῇ, ἀλλ'
> ἢν παρὸν τὸ αὐτὸ δρᾶσαι πρὸς τὸ ἐπιεικὲς καὶ ἀρετῇ
> αὐτὸν νικήσας παρὰ ἃ προσεδέχετο μετρίως
> ξυναλλαγῇ. ὀφείλων γὰρ ἤδη ὁ ἐναντίος μὴ
> ἀνταμύνεσθαι ὡς βιασθείς, ἀλλ' ἀνταποδοῦναι ἀρετήν,
> ἑτοιμότερός ἐστιν αἰσχύνῃ ἐμμένειν οἷς ξυνέθετο. καὶ
> μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς μειζόνως ἐχθροὺς τοῦτο δρῶσιν οἱ
> ἄνθρωποι ἢ πρὸς τοὺς τὰ μέτρια διενεχθέντας·
> πεφύκασί τε τοῖς μὲν ἑκουσίως ἐνδοῦσιν ἀνθησσᾶσθαι
> μεθ' ἡδονῆς, πρὸς δὲ τὰ ὑπεραυχοῦντα καὶ παρὰ
> γνώμην διακινδυνεύειν.

> Sparta calls upon you to make a treaty and to end the war.
> She offers you peace, alliance, friendly and neighborly
> relations. In return she asks for the men on the island,
> thinking it better for both sides that the affair should not
> proceed to the bitter end – whether, by some stroke of luck,
> the men should manage to force an escape, or else be
> subdued by your blockade and fall still further into your
> power. In our view, where great hatreds exist, no lasting
> settlement can be made in a spirit of revenge, when one side
> gets the better of things in war and forces its opponent to

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[13] Thuc. 4.14.2-4.15.

[14] Thuc. 4.15.

swear to carry out the terms of an unequal treaty; what will make the settlement lasting is when the party that has it in his power to act like this takes instead a more reasonable point of view, overcomes his adversary in generosity, and makes peace on more moderate terms than his enemy expected. In such a case, so far from wanting to get his own back for the violence that has been done to him, the enemy is already under an obligation to pay back good for good, and so is the more ready, from a sense of honor, to abide by the terms that have been made. And men are more inclined to act in this way towards their greatest enemies than towards people with whom they have only minor differences. Then, too, when others are willing to make concessions it is natural for one to give way gladly oneself, just as it is natural, if one meets with an attitude of arrogance, to face things out to the end, even against one's better judgment (4.19).

The theme of the entire paragraph is that revenge is to be expected when an imbalance of power between two adversaries is so sharp that it results in victory for one at the expense of shameful defeat for the other. Thucydides writes in stark terms to highlight the internal danger, κίνδυνος, that can be expected to result from this ethos of honor and shame. The order in which he presents these thoughts makes it clear he wants his reader to understand the dangerous cultural necessity to act that the ethos of honor and shame imposes.[15]

Thucydides first reminds his reader about the reality of war's danger; the better option would certainly be to remove the external dangers of war, ἄμεινον ἡγούμενοι ἀμφοτέροις μὴ διακινδυνεύεσθαι.[16] The possibility exists that the hostages on the island might either escape to rejoin the fight against Athens or come

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[15] Gomme argues the Spartans' main focus was the loss of the men on the island, ἀνταιτοῦντες δὲ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς νήσου ἄνδρας, 3:456. On *oliganthropia*, see Paul Cartledge (2001), 183-84 and (2002), 205-14. Hornblower focuses his analysis on the Spartans' appeal and the fact that the "kinship connection being appealed to is merely factitious, a pretext," 2:175.

[16] Thuc. 4.19.1.

into the power of their enemies completely, which will dishonor the Spartans

completely and hence anger them and compel them all the more to seek revenge.[17]

These are obvious dangers and as reasonable men, ἡγούμενοι, both the Spartans and

Athenians should want to avoid them.[18] This opening statement is essentially self-

evident when one considers the external dangers of war.

Thucydides next begins his analysis of the harder-to-define internal dangers.

He has the Spartans argue:

> νομίζομέν τε τὰς μεγάλας ἔχθρας μάλιστ' ἂν
> διαλύεσθαι βεβαίως, οὐκ ἢν ἀνταμυνόμενός τις καὶ
> ἐπικρατήσας τὰ πλείω τοῦ πολέμου κατ' ἀνάγκην
> ὅρκοις ἐγκαταλαμβάνων μὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου ξυμβῇ, ἀλλ'
> ἢν παρὸν τὸ αὐτὸ δρᾶσαι πρὸς τὸ ἐπιεικὲς καὶ ἀρετῇ
> αὐτὸν νικήσας παρὰ ἃ προσεδέχετο μετρίως
> ξυναλλαγῇ. ὀφείλων γὰρ ἤδη ὁ ἐναντίος μὴ
> ἀνταμύνεσθαι ὡς βιασθείς, ἀλλ' ἀνταποδοῦναι ἀρετήν,
> ἑτοιμότερός ἐστιν αἰσχύνῃ ἐμμένειν οἷς ξυνέθετο.

> Indeed if great enmities are ever to be really settled, we
> think it will be, not by the system of revenge and military
> success, and by forcing an opponent to swear to a treaty to
> his disadvantage; but when the more fortunate combatant
> waives his privileges and, guided by gentler feelings,
> conquers his rival in generosity and accords peace on more
> moderate conditions than expected. From that moment,
> instead of the debt of revenge which violence must entail,
> his adversary owes a debt of generosity to be paid in kind,
> and is inclined by honor to stand by his agreement
> (4.19.2-3).

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[17] The unexpected Athenian success at Pylos is itself an example of what would have seemed to be a "chance outcome" in the war and fear of further events of this magnitude are, in part, motivating the Spartan's appeal for peace. See William Desmond (2006), 371.

[18] Huart analyzes Thucydides' use of the verb ἡγεῖσθαι, 272-6. Though the verb is used less frequently than νομίζειν, it consistently represents a certain depth of reflection about the situation which "follows the rules of good sense," *suggère aussi une réflexion, qui … suit les règles du bon sens* (273).

The argument focuses on emotions; but Thucydides portrays the Spartans as being logical and well reasoned about this specific concern, νομίζομέν.[19] They understand that the animosity between enemies cannot be permanently resolved when one party is compelled into a shameful position of submission. Thucydides believes that a victory or, more importantly, the shame of a defeat which does not result in complete destruction, will only lead to future revenge. A truce from momentary necessity, κατ' ἀνάγκην, will not last or be profitable for either side. That the Spartans could say νομίζομέν points to the fact that Thucydides wants his reader to recognize how significantly the concept of revenge could factor into the political analysis and decision-making of Greeks imbued with the ethos of honor and shame. The Spartans are arguing (out of self-interest) that states ought not enter into situations conducive to impulses of vengeance.

What would be profitable, ὀφείλων γὰρ, would be an equitable agreement that allows the loser's honor to survive intact. Thucydides makes this point in dramatic fashion by focusing his reader's attention on the internal danger of the vengeance cycle. In the final section of this speech, Thucydides' Spartan ambassador focuses even more sharply on "the debt of revenge which violence must entail," ἀνταμύνεσθαι ὡς βιασθείς:

> καὶ μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς μειζόνως ἐχθροὺς τοῦτο δρῶσιν
> οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἢ πρὸς τοὺς τὰ μέτρια διενεχθέντας·
> πεφύκασί τε τοῖς μὲν ἑκουσίως ἐνδοῦσιν ἀνθησσᾶσθαι
> μεθ' ἡδονῆς, πρὸς δὲ τὰ ὑπεραυχοῦντα καὶ παρὰ
> γνώμην διακινδυνεύειν.

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[19] Huart analyzes Thucydides' use of the verb νομίζειν, 263-72. For the most part it is a neutral term which signifies the act of thinking, 264. It does not signify a broader understanding of any given situation as a whole but only makes a judgment on a precise point, *un jugement sur un point précis*, 265. In this sense, I argue, Thucydides is using it to signify that, while the tone of the whole situation and this speech focuses on emotions, on this point Thucydides indicates to his reader that the Spartans are thinking rationally.

> And men too are more inclined to act in this way towards their greatest enemies than towards people with whom they have only minor differences. Then, too, when others are willing to make concessions it is natural for one to give way gladly oneself, just as it is natural, if one meets with an attitude of arrogance, to face things out to the end, even against one's better judgment (4.19.4).

Men, according to Thucydides, can accept a loss, to make concessions, if the superior power acts with moderation.[20] When, however, men are set in a hierarchy and the power imbalance between them is exacerbated by a haughty attitude and behavior, revenge is to be expected. This is the internal danger of the ethos of honor and shame. Thucydides explains that under circumstances of perceived (felt) dishonor, men will take risks, διακινδυνεύειν, even against their own reason, παρὰ γνώμην. Men do have the capability to choose a more rational option: Thucydides' γνώμη.[21] Thucydides' contemporary Greeks, however, were too often compelled by their sense of honor to engage in a self-destructive cycle of violence to satisfy the cultural necessity of revenge.

The Athenians themselves provide evidence of this sort of behavior when they are forced to deal with the revolt of one of their allies, the Scioneans, while the Athenians were negotiating an armistice with the Spartans in 423.[22] When news of the Scionean

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[20] Hornblower (1991) notes the possible comparison between this passage, 5.91 (Melian Dialogue), and the end of the war when Sparta treated Athens with relative leniency but argues that there is no "definite awareness " on Thucydides' part expressed in his writing, 2:176.

[21] Lowell Edmunds provides a thorough analysis of the connotation of γνώμη in *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), esp. 1-87. He discusses the antithesis between reason and emotion, ὀργή, and makes the further clarification that γνώμη has the sense of "policy based on reason" (9). Huart agrees with the distinction between these two concepts, γνώμη and ὀργή (307).

[22] Thuc. 4.120-22. Details of this revolt have been presented in 3.2.2 Thucydides Defines Greek "Ethos of Action"

revolt reached Athens, the response was immediate and predictable in a world founded

upon honor and shame. Thucydides writes:

> ὡς δ' ἀπήγγελλεν ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας ὁ Ἀριστώνυμος περὶ
> αὐτῶν, οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι εὐθὺς ἕτοιμοι ἦσαν στρατεύειν ἐπὶ
> τὴν Σκιώνην. οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι πρέσβεις πέμψαντες
> παραβήσεσθαι ἔφασαν αὐτοὺς τὰς σπονδάς, καὶ τῆς
> πόλεως ἀντεποιοῦντο Βρασίδᾳ πιστεύοντες, δίκῃ τε
> ἕτοιμοι ἦσαν περὶ αὐτῆς κρίνεσθαι. οἱ δὲ δίκῃ μὲν οὐκ
> ἤθελον κινδυνεύειν, στρατεύειν δὲ ὡς τάχιστα, ὀργὴν
> ποιούμενοι εἰ καὶ οἱ ἐν ταῖς νήσοις ἤδη ὄντες ἀξιοῦσι
> σφῶν ἀφίστασθαι, τῇ κατὰ γῆν Λακεδαιμονίων ἰσχύι
> ἀνωφελεῖ πιστεύοντες. εἶχε δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια περὶ τῆς
> ἀποστάσεως μᾶλλον ᾗ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἐδικαίουν·

> When Aristonymus reported the case to Athens, the people
> at once prepared to send an expedition to Scione. Upon
> this, envoys arrived from Sparta, alleging that this would be
> a breach of the truce, and laid claim to the city, trusting that
> the word of Brasidas, and at the same time offering to
> submit the question to arbitration. Arbitration, however,
> was what the Athenians did not choose to risk; rather, they
> were determined to send troops at once to the place, and
> furious at the idea of even the islanders now daring to
> revolt, in a vain reliance upon the power of the Spartans by
> land. Besides the facts of the revolt were rather as the
> Athenians contended (4.122.4-6).

Thucydides' Greek highlights three points about the internal dangers deriving from

obsessive concern about honor and shame: the immediacy of the Athenian response, the

anger which drove the Athenians' dangerous response, and the reality of the situation

which in his depiction was not a large factor in the Athenians' response, *i.e.* Thucydides'

judgment that the Scioneans did rebel after the armistice was agreed to. The way

Thucydides depicts it, it was "islanders" rebelling at all that required vengeance.

Thucydides first underscores the immediacy with which the Athenians were ready

to act. When Aristonymus announced the news, the Athenians were *immediately* ready to

attack, εὐθὺς ἑτοῖμοι ἦσαν στρατεύειν.[23] Thucydides makes it clear that the Athenians

were not interested in wasting a moment on deliberation; they were ready to react without

forethought in response to this perceived injury. The Athenians did not want to take a

chance on arbitration, οἱ δὲ δίκῃ μὲν οὐκ ἤθελον κινδυνεύειν.[24] They saw an

immediate attack as the preferable option, στρατεύειν δὲ ὡς τάχιστα. The more

peaceable (and perhaps more rational) option, the one that seems potentially less

destructive to both sides, would have been arbitration.[25] But the Athenians' sense of

honor and fear of shame made them more interested in attacking than handling the

situation within the legally defined terms of the recent armistice.

Thucydides highlights the Athenians' motive, anger, to make their non-rationality

even more clear to his reader. Thucydides tells his reader than the Athenians' decision

was one based on anger, ὀργὴν ποιούμενοι. While it may be the case that their tactical

reasoning turned out to be sound – the islanders of Scione were, in fact, misplacing their

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[23] Hornblower points out that this instance of the word εὐθὺς is only one of three instances in only two chapter (122.4, 122.6, and 123.3). The combined effect of such repetition is to "stress Athens' instant reactions to events" (2:389).

[24] This is certainly an instance in which much of the emphasis on the word κίνδυνος is on its conceptualization of a game of chance. See Johann Knobloch, "Griech, κίνδυνος m. 'Gefahr' und das Würfelspiel" *Glotta* 53 (1975), 78-81. The Athenians believed combat to be the surer option over the perceived random outcome from arbitration in which, as Thucydides clarifies, they were correct in their argument. The conceptual ties between κίνδυνος and random chance have been discussed in 2.4, Κίνδυνος and Profit Maximizing Behavior.

[25] Low (2007) argues that there are limits to how effective arbitration might have been given the fact that "there is no suitable third party to perform the arbitration," 106. Low sees this as a particular problem in the Peloponnesian War and cites S. Ager, "Why war? Some Views on International Arbitration in Ancient Greece," *Échos du Monde Classique/Classical News and Views* 12 (1993), 1-13. This does not mean, however, that submitting to arbitration was a less rational decision than an immediate attack, only less appealing because it was more complex.

trust in Spartan land power[26] – and while it may be true that the Scioneans technically did rebel two days after the peace was sworn, Thucydides makes a point of demonstrating that the Athenians' decision was not based on a rational assessment of the situation; it was based on anger they felt at having been slighted in terms of their status, their honor. Thucydides is highlighting for his reader that the Athenians had little control over their emotions and were simply giving in to the impulse they felt to respond to the perceived Scionean insult and treachery.[27]

Finally, Thucydides makes a simple, but damning, statement about the Athenians' non-rationality. He explains that the Athenians were more correct than the Spartans were, that the revolt had occurred after the armistice: εἶχε δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια περὶ τῆς ἀποστάσεως μᾶλλον ἦ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἐδικαίουν.[28] So, in the end, the matter could have been decided in the Athenians' favor had they been able to set aside their anger. Thucydides uses this example to stress the Athenians' inability to control their urge to lash out with irrevocable violence – Cleon successfully passed a decree ordering the execution of all the Scioneans which did, in fact, occur in 421.[29] In this case a genocide

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[26] Gomme 3:611. Lazenby argues that Scione was "particularly vulnerable because, while Poteidaia remained in Athenian hands, they could only be reinforced by sea, and the Athenians were not likely to allow the Spartans a free hand on that element for long (97).

[27] Huart cites this particular instance of ὀργὴ in one section of his analysis of the specific variations in the word's meanings. He uses this instance as an example that the Athenians hardly had control of their emotional reactions and we can see that they often give in to their anger, *Les Athéniens, eux, ne contrôlent guère leurs réactions affectives et nous les voyons souvent s'abandonner à la colère* (160).

[28] Gomme, 3:612. Hornblower agrees with Gomme that the "facts were on [the Athenians] side" even though this is an unusual instance in which Thucydides adjudicates so emphatically between competing claims (2:387).

[29] Thuc. 5.32.1.

might have been averted and long-lasting damage to Athens' reputation might have been avoided, and Scione returned to Athens peacefully, through success in an arbitration.[30]

One further example will illustrate how Thucydides points his reader to the internal dangers of the cultural necessity for vengeance. Drawn from the periphery of the Athenian-Peloponnesian conflict, this example shows that even in Sicily, Thucydides' contemporaries felt the same cultural necessity to seek vengeance. By 413, the tide had turned in favor of the Syracusans against the Athenians. The Spartan advisor to the Syracusans, Gylippus, urged them to strike a death blow (the full quote in Greek is given above).[31] Gylippus calls upon the Syracusans to give in to their anger, ὀργῇ προσμείξωμεν. This phrase, of course, also highlights the Greeks' desire for action and has been previously discussed.[32] But another look at this passage and its emotionally-charged diction, reveals another element: a call to vengeance. Gylippus wants the Syracusans to slake the fury of their souls on the destruction of their most hated foes, δικαιώσωσιν ἀποπλῆσαι τῆς γνώμης τὸ θυμούμενον. Vengeance is not only most legitimate, νομιμώτατον, it is the sweetest thing, ἥδιστον.[33] Thucydides uses the anger and emotion of this passage to illustrate the power of the "necessity for revenge"

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[30] That Isocrates still felt obliged fifty years later to defend Athenian actions against allies such as Scione in his *Panegyricus* is evidence of long-lasting damage to Athens' reputation (12.62-3*)*.

[31] Thuc. 7.68. The conditions Gylippus discusses at the very end of this speech have already been analyzed in Chapter 2.4 Κίνδυνος and the Potential for Gain. See page 27.

[32] See 3.2.2 Thucydides Defines Greek "Ethos of Action."

[33] Gomme notes that even though there is evidence of bloodthirsty Greek prayers, e.g. Theognis 341-350, they seldom refer to revenge as ἥδιστον, as Thucydides has done here (4:445). Thucydides is being particularly vicious in his representation of the need for revenge. For an analysis of Theognis' poem, focused on a single emendation which points to Theognis' own desire to become a hound of hell to drink the blood of his enemies, see Robert D. Murray Jr., "Theognis 341-350," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965), 277-81.

argument which his contemporaries felt. He highlights the particular nature of the insult

that must be avenged: Gylippus is referring to shameful treatment that had not actually

occurred! Note how Thucydides describes the situation Gylippus perceives would have

befallen the Syracusans: εἰ κατώρθωσαν, ἀνδράσι μὲν ἂν τἄλγιστα προσέθεσαν,

παισὶ δὲ καὶ γυναιξὶ τὰ ἀπρεπέστατα, πόλει δὲ τῇ πάσῃ τὴν αἰσχίστην ἐπίκλησιν.

Thucydides uses the aorist tense in the protasis and the aorist tense plus the article ἂν in

the apodosis to create for the reader the past contrafactual construction.[34]

Thucydides' Gylippus is thus pointing to a disastrous situation that did not happen

and, what is more, will not happen; Athens is no longer in a position to threaten the

honor, much less the security, of Syracuse. Instead, he has Gylippus describe an unreal

situation: the Athenians *would have* done horrible things, *if they had* been successful

which – as Thucydides' grammar explains – they were not! Gylippus is here urging the

Syracusans to seek revenge for the mere intention of inflicting dishonor. Thucydides

points to the danger in Gylippus' advice, τὸ ἀκινδύνως ἀπελθεῖν and κινδύνων

οὗτοι σπανιώτατοι. It might be safer, perhaps more reasonable, to allow the Athenians

to depart without suffering further destruction (for war and battle is always uncertain).

But Thucydides knows that Gylippus and his audience feel the sting of shameful

treatment – even though it did not actually occur – and feel compelled to seek revenge.

Certainly Gylippus' advice led the Syracusans to an overwhelming victory. Yet

Thucydides' depiction of that victory, with images of the Athenians being slaughtered like

sacrificial beasts in the muddy waters of the Assinarus River, is one of the most heart-

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[34] Smyth, 2302-5.

rending scenes in his entire narrative.[35] Much as their decision to massacre the Scioneans tarnished the reputation of the Athenians, it would seem that Thucydides provides a negative image to his reader of the Syracusans who are led to their blood-thirsty decision not by logic, but by an emotional appeal to their fear of reciprocal violence should they choose anything other than complete destruction of their foe. Certainly Thucydides' readers, who themselves participate in the culture of vengeance, might initially catch themselves nodding in agreement at Gylippus' speech. But Thucydides' later pathos for his fellow Athenians who suffered "total destruction" at the hands of the Syracusans would lead the engaged reader to recognize the problematic nature of Gylippus' advice which incited men to violent actions beyond any witnessed in this war or, as Thucydides attests, in Hellenic history as a whole.[36]

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[35] Thuc. 7.84.

[36] Thuc. 7.87.5-6.

3.4.3 Internal Dangers of Honor: Making Gains from Danger

The second category of the internal dangers inherent in the ethos of honor and shame deals with the idea that gains in honor (status) are seen as a profitable result of danger. Thucydides shows his reader that contemporary Greeks often saw dangerous situations as opportunities to gamble against the odds in hopes of accruing honor.[1] They felt deep temptations to "gain honor" even when a rational analysis of the situation might have suggested the more beneficial long-term choice was to avoid danger.

Pericles, for instance, is one of the first individuals whom Thucydides shows making the point that there is honor to be gained from danger. He uses the idea to convince the Athenians to engage in dangerous enterprises in his first speech to the Athenian assembly in 432/1. Thucydides uses this speech to show that Pericles relied, in part, on his contemporaries' desire for honor to convince them that war with Sparta would be "profitable."[2] He highlights Pericles' emotional appeal to the Athenians' sense of honor:

> ἔκ τε τῶν μεγίστων κινδύνων ὅτι καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώτῃ
> μέγισται τιμαὶ περιγίγνονται. οἱ γοῦν πατέρες ἡμῶν
> ὑποστάντες Μήδους καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ τοσῶνδε ὁρμώμενοι,
> ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἐκλιπόντες, γνώμῃ τε πλέονι ἢ
> τύχῃ καὶ τόλμῃ μείζονι ἢ δυνάμει τόν τε βάρβαρον
> ἀπεώσαντο καὶ ἐς τάδε προήγαγον αὐτά. ὧν οὐ χρὴ

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[1] Van Wees (2004) points to honor as one of the most important motives for war among Greek *poleis* (22-26). In particular he says that "whatever else a war might be about, honor was almost by definition at stake as well" (23). Elsewhere he discusses combat in terms of "point[s] to be scored in the competition for prestige" 124. It is from his work and arguments such as this that I choose to discuss honor as if it were a zero-sum game in which honor is quantifiable and the collection of which necessarily means the reduction of another individual's or *polis'* honor.

[2] I use the term "profitable" to reflect the links between two of Thucydides three motives for war: fear, honor, and self-interest, i.e. "profit" (1.75.3). The term also nicely incorporates van Wees' argument (2004) that love of honor and love of profit were not mutually exclusive goals. Rather, they combined to carry "equal weight as causes of war" (33). A more complete bibliography on these terms has been presented in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples).

λείπεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τούς τε ἐχθροὺς παντὶ τρόπῳ ἀμύνεσθαι καὶ τοῖς ἐπιγιγνομένοις πειρᾶσθαι αὐτὰ μὴ ἐλάσσω παραδοῦναι.

...out of the greatest dangers communities and individuals acquire the greatest glory. Did not our fathers resist the Persians not only with resources far different from ours, but even when those resources had been abandoned; and more by wisdom than by fortune, more by daring than by strength, did not they beat off the barbarian and advance their affairs to their present height? We must not fall behind them, but must resist our enemies in any way and in every way, and attempt to hand down our power to our posterity unimpaired (1.144.3).

Pericles' speech, according to Thucydides, was for the most part, a logical analysis of Athens' resources.[3] Pericles' closing remarks, however, are a furiously patriotic appeal to the Athenians' sense of honor: we must surpass, or at least not fall behind, the deeds of our honorable forefathers, a common trope in Athenian rhetoric.[4] But at this moment in time, when Athens was on a precipice overlooking many potential dangers, Thucydides has Pericles link honor and danger in a way moderns might find unique: a chance for immense gains which will bring glory, ἔκ τε τῶν μεγίστων κινδύνων ὅτι καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώτῃ μέγισται τιμαὶ περιγίγνονται. The dangers, from Pericles' perspective, are not to be viewed merely for what they are, threats to survival. Rather, they should also be viewed as opportunities to gain honor by risking, by overcoming – this will be the

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[3] He points to the material advantages offered by Athens' financial reserves (1.141.2-5), the strength of the Athenian navy (1.142.2-9), and Athens' ability to withstand prolonged land campaigns against its farms and houses (1.143.5).

[4] Hunt (2010), 123-33. For the trope in Atheniann assembly-speeches, see also K. Jost, *Das Beispel und Uvrbild der Vorfahren bei den attischen Rednern und Geschichtschreibern bis Demosthenes* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1936); K.J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), esp. 243-6; B.S. Strauss, *Fathers and Sons in Athens: Ideology and Society in the Era of the Peloponnesian War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); L.A. Burckhardt, *Bürger und Soldaten: Aspekte der politischen und militärischen Rolle athenischer Bürger im Kriegswesen des 4 Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), esp 229; H. Yunis, "Politics as Literature: Demosthenes and the Burden of the Athenian Past," *Arion* 8 (2000), 97-118.

measure by which Athenians will be judged in the future. The very seriousness of the dangers incurred ensures glory. Gomme notes that this appeal may not have been as appealing to "realistic Greeks" as it would to others.[5] Yet it may that Pericles is actually making a direct allusion to the Athenian Ephebic Oath, by which each Athenian citizen, the "realistic Greeks," would have sworn to do his duty to protect the fatherland and not to leave it less but more powerful.[6] That would have made an argument like this even more powerful to his audience.

Pericles echoes these themes in Thucydides' rendition of his Funeral Oration, which highlights how his contemporaries could be manipulated by the possibility of gaining honor.[7] In one section, Pericles explains a hallmark of those considered best is to recognize dangers, but not be turned away from them. Thucydides has him say:

> κράτιστοι δ' ἂν τὴν ψυχὴν δικαίως κριθεῖεν οἱ
> τά τε δεινὰ καὶ ἡδέα σαφέστατα γιγνώσκοντες καὶ διὰ
> ταῦτα μὴ ἀποτρεπόμενοι ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων.

> But the prize for courage will surely be awarded most justly
> to those who best know the difference between hardship and
> pleasure and yet are never tempted to shrink from danger
> (2.40.3).

Thucydides has Pericles present honor as a reward for facing danger. He makes no mention of rational consideration of long-term consequences or less dangerous options.

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[5] Gomme, 1:463.

[6] While epigraphical evidence of this inscription exists no earlier than the mid-fourth century, literary allusions, especially in Thucydides' writings, point to the idea that the oath existed in some form as early as the middle fifth-century. See P. Siewart, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth Century Athens" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977), 102-111. Siewart looks at this particular Thucydidean passage (104). For a more thorough bibliography and analysis of scholarship on the oath in general from both epigraphical and literary evidence, see Charles W. Hedrick, Jr. "The American Ephebe: The Ephebic Oath, U.S. Education, and Nationalism" *The Classical World* 97 (2004), 384-407.

[7] Thuc. 2.40.4 and 2.42.4. Bibliographic survey of this speech is presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All *Poleis*.

He only has Pericles identify the greatest men as those who know what is dreadful,

τά δεινὰ, and what is the clearly good, ἡδέα σαφέστατα, and yet are not turned from

dangers, ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων. Earlier in the oration, Pericles praised the Athenians' ability

to balance daring and deliberation.[8] But, at the end, this is overshadowed by the

sentiment that what makes a man truly great, κράτιστοι, is his willingness to face danger,

not his ability to deliberate.[9]

Thucydides' rendition of the Plataeans' appeal to the Spartan leader Archidamus is

another example in which he shows how his contemporaries considered honor to be the

beneficial byproduct of danger. In 429, the Peloponnesians attacked Plataea instead of

once again invading Attica.[10] The Plataeans, hoping to avoid destruction, sent envoys to

Archidamus. As part of their appeal, the Plataeans reminded the Spartan of the reputation

– as well as the physical rewards – they had earned for their part in defending Greece

against the Persian invasion of 479.[11] Thucydides writes:

> τάδε μὲν ἡμῖν πατέρες οἱ ὑμέτεροι ἔδοσαν ἀρετῆς ἔνεκ
> α καὶ π ροθυμίας
> τῆς ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς κινδύνοις γενομένης.

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[8] Thuc. 2.40.2-3.

[9] Gomme compares this passage to Plato *Rep.* 4.429-30 and argues that in this passage "true courage is thus defined," 2:123. Hornblower agrees and additionally cites E. Meyer, *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte* (Halle, 1899) and R. Sharples, "Knowledge and Courage in Thucydides and Plato," *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 7 (1983), 139-40.

[10] Thuc. 2.71.1. Though Thucydides gives no indication of the Spartans' motive for the change in strategy, Lazenby theorizes that they may have been looking to avoid any dangers from the plague in Athens or simply "fed up with the invasions" that had thus far proven to be of limited strategic value (42).

[11] Reputation, however, is not the only thing they earned. Crane (2001) stresses the fact that this section of the speech also refers to the more physical reward they received for their service. The Plataeans land had been restored to them to be inhabited in freedom. He notes that "Plataea became, in effect, something like a 'Panhellenic sanctuary," 143.

> Your fathers rewarded us thus for the courage and patriotism
> that we displayed at that perilous epoch (2.71.3).

Here Thucydides speaks directly to the relationship between honor and danger; the Plataeans received honor for the dangers they faced. Virtue comes from danger, ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα … τοῖς κινδύνοις γενομένης. Thucydides makes it clear to his contemporary reader that the Plataeans' appeal is based on their perception of self-worth from having faced danger. They appeal to the Spartans' understanding of this concept. The rational appeal, based on the reality that their free choice was constrained by the fact that the Athenians held many of their wives and children as hostages, only came after the emotional appeals had already failed.[12] The emotional appeal, in Thucydides' rendition, is given much more weight because the culture of honor makes this more important than other considerations.

Two years later, when the Plataeans had exhausted their provisions, they surrendered to the Peloponnesians and were judged by the Spartans only on the nature of their service to Sparta in the current war.[13] Eventually, however, Thucydides indicates that the Plataeans' appeal returned to the theme of honor accrued from facing danger. Thucydides writes:

> καὶ δίκαιον ἡμῶν τῆς νῦν ἁμαρτίας, εἰ ἄρα ἡμάρτηταί
> τι, ἀντιθεῖναι τὴν τότε προθυμίαν· καὶ μείζω τε πρὸς ἐλ
> άσσω εὑρήσετε καὶ ἐν καιροῖς οἷς σπάνιον ἦν τῶν Ἑλλ
> ήνων   τινὰ
> ἀρετὴν τῇ Ξέρξου δυνάμει ἀντιτάξασθαι, ἐπῃνοῦντό τε
> μ   ᾶ   λ   λ   ο   ν
> οἱ μὴ τὰ ξύμφορα πρὸς τὴν ἔφοδον αὐτοῖς ἀσφαλείᾳ
> πράσσοντες, ἐθέλοντες δὲ τολμᾶν μετὰ κινδύνων τὰ βέ
> λ   τ   ι   σ   τ   α

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[12] Thuc. 2.72.2.

[13] Thuc. 3.52-54.

ὧν ἡμεῖς γενόμενοι καὶ τιμηθέντες ἐς τὰ πρῶτα νῦν ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς δέδιμεν μὴ διαφθαρῶμεν, Ἀθηναίους ἑλόμενοι δικαίως μᾶλλον ἢ ὑμᾶς κερδαλέως.

It is just, therefore, to put our patriotism then against our error now, if error there has been; and you will find the merit outweighing the fault, and displayed at a juncture when there were few Hellenes who would set their valor against the strength of Xerxes, and when greater praise was theirs who preferred the dangerous path of honor to the same course of consulting their own interest with respect to the invasion. To these few we belonged, and highly were we honored for it; and yet we now fear to perish by having again acted on the same principles, and chosen to act honorably with Athens sooner than wisely with Sparta (3.56.5-6).[14]

Thucydides focuses on danger as the core of their argument; the Plataeans chose to act audaciously in the face of a dangerous Persian threat, ἐθέλοντες δὲ τολμᾶν μετὰ κινδύνων. Undoubtedly their actions in the past war were audacious and dangerous. What is interesting, however, is how much of their current appeal, upon which the fate of their entire city rests, is based upon their balance sheet of honor from past dangers and loyalty to their allies. Thucydides categorizes them as having the virtue to fight, which few had, ἀρετὴν τῇ Ξέρξου δυνάμει ἀντιτάξασθαι. Greeks who responded to the danger are praised in the highest terms: ἐπηνοῦντό τε μᾶλλον ἐθέλοντες δὲ τολμᾶν μετὰ κινδύνων τὰ βέλτιστα. The Plataeans themselves were specifically honored for their action, τιμηθέντες. Throughout this section of the speech, Thucydides emphasizes that his contemporaries saw honor as a tangible product of engagement in dangerous situations, *i.e.* a product of courage, ἀρετή. For Greeks, "courage had always been the defining attribute of socially approved

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[14] Here I have amended the translation slightly. Crawley rendered the word δικαίως as "well." I have replaced it with "honorably."

manhood and especially of those willing to fight and die for their communities." [15] In a

moment fraught with the direst of consequences the Plataeans hoped that the Spartans

would respect the honors they had accrued from acting with valor, almost unique valor, in

the face of severe dangers in the past. In fact, at the end they daringly draw a parallel

between their support of Athens which is courageous, though perhaps not wise (as not

supporting Xerxes was not wise). It is not a strictly rational appeal; it is an appeal to the

recognition that Greeks feel a cultural necessity to defend their honor without proper

regard for the consequences. In this instance, the Plataeans felt that the honor they

received from their past actions in confronting (the Persian) danger should influence the

Spartans' present action.[16] The reward of precipitous action, in terms of gaining honor,

was therefore significant.

Thucydides continues to point his reader to the danger of making decisions based

on desire for potential honor by providing a Spartan perspective on the Illyrians' fighting

style.[17] Immediately after the armistice of 423 was announced, the Spartan general

Brasidas diverted his forces to attack the Macedonian Arrhabaeus in the area around

Lyncestis, a northern region between Macedon and Illyria.[18] At one tense moment in the

campaign Brasidas found his forces abandoned by their Macedonian allies and on the

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[15] R. K. Balot, "Subordinating Courage to Justice: Statecraft and Soulcraft in Fourth-Century Athenian Rhetoric and Platonic Political Philosophy," *Rhetorica* 25 (2002), 37-8.

[16] Crane (2001) argues that the issue is, first and foremost, one of loyalty. He argues that "if the Spartans turn on the Plataeans now to please Thebes, then they will be punishing the Plataeans for being loyal to their friends. In so doing, the Spartans attack loyalty in general, putting at risk the values on which their alliance and indeed the rest of Hellas rest," 149. In either case, the Plataeans are relying on reputation to avoid disaster.

[17] Thuc. 4.126.3.

[18] Thuc. 4.124.1. Bibliographic information on Thucydides' depiction of Brasidas has been presented in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

point of being attacked by the Illyrians.[19] Forming his men into a defensive square and

preparing to retreat, he addressed his men.[20] As part of this exhortation, Thucydides

explains that Brasidas passed moral judgment on the Illyrians' fighting style. Thucydides

writes:

> καὶ γὰρ πλήθει ὄψεως δεινοὶ καὶ βοῆς μεγέθει ἀφόρητοι, ἥ τε διὰ κενῆς ἐπανάσεισις τῶν ὅπλων ἔχει τινὰ δήλωσιν ἀπειλῆς. προσμεῖξαι δὲ τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν αὐτὰ οὐχ ὁμοῖοι· οὔτε γὰρ τάξιν ἔχοντες αἰσχυνθεῖεν ἂν λιπεῖν τινα χώραν βιαζόμενοι ἥ τε φυγὴ καὶ ἡ ἔφοδος αὐτῶν ἴσην ἔχουσα δόξαν τοῦ καλοῦ ἀνεξέλεγκτον καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον ἔχει (αὐτοκράτωρ δὲ μάχη μάλιστ᾽ ἂν καὶ πρόφασιν τοῦ σῴζεσθαί τινι πρεπόντως πορίσειε), τοῦ τε ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν πιστότερον τὸ ἐκφοβῆσαι ὑμᾶς ἀκινδύνως ἡγοῦνται·

> Thus the present enemy might terrify an inexperienced imagination; they are formidable in outward bulk; their loud yelling is unbearable; and the brandishing of their weapons in the air has a threatening appearance. But when it comes to real fighting with an opponent who stands his ground, they are not what they seemed; they have no regular order that they should be ashamed of deserting their positions when hard pressed; flight and attack are equally honorable with them, and afford no test of their courage; their independent mode of fighting never leaving anyone who wants to run away without a fair excuse for doing so. In short, they think frightening you at a secure distance a surer game than meeting you hand to hand (4.126.5).

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[19] Thuc. 4.125.2. Graham Wylie provides an in-depth analysis of this battle and questions the veracity of Thucydides' claim concerning the relatively light Spartan casualties inflicted by the Illyrians, portrayed as an "undisciplined pack of yelling savages." See "Brasidas: Great Commander or Whiz Kid?" *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 41 (1992), 86-8.

[20] Thuc. 4.125.4. N.G.L. Hammond argues on the grounds of the exigencies of Brasidas' particular situation that it is "inconceivable" that he had time to draw up such universal conclusions about virtue, freedom, and a sense of honor. He believes that this speech is "a model of the extreme instance when Thucydides uses almost complete freedom of composition." See "The Particular and Universal in the Speeches in Thucydides," in *The Speeches in Thucydides: A Collection of Original Studies with a Bibliography*, Philip A. Stadter, ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 50-51. The veracity of Thucydides' rendition, of course, is almost beside the point for this dissertation. What is important is the way in which Thucydides chooses to render the type of speech that was almost certainly given on this occasion.

Thucydides' account of Brasidas' speech is a moral judgment of the Illyrians' fighting

style. While there is no mention of the logistical or tactical advantages to this style, suited

as it was to quick raids in rough terrain,Thucydides repeatedly highlights the negative

consequences to their reputation with reference to αἰσχυνθεῖεν, δόξαν τοῦ καλοῦ, and

τὸ ἀνδρεῖον. At the end of the passage, however, Thucydides explicitly links honorable

behavior and danger: the Illyrians consider it the surer option to strike terror into their

opponents without facing danger, rather than to meet them in combat [and face danger].

τοῦ τε ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν πιστότερον τὸ ἐκφοβῆσαι ὑμᾶς ἀκινδύνως ἡγοῦνται.

Thucydides' Greek, ἀκινδύνως, highlights that the Illyrians' style of fighting lacks

danger. While it may be the case that they can achieve their tactical objectives from time

to time, the more important matter, as far as Brasidas is concerned here, is that they do

not face danger "man-to-man," τοῦ τε ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν, and cannot attain honor. This is

the opposite of the Spartans. The Spartan leader is presented as asserting the perspective

that there is a cultural necessity to fight a certain way if one wants honor, regardless of

the potential outcomes.

Though Thucydides' depiction of Nicias has been analyzed twice already in this

chapter, there is yet more to be said; his example also shows that the potential for honor

was a constant factor in important decisions regarding aggressive conduct internationally.

In Thucydides' analysis, Nicias used this concept as a point from which to speak against

Alcibiades' Sicilian ambitions. Nicias, in this depiction, recognizes the dangerous weight

being given to a consideration of honor in this particular decision. In a speech delivered

to the Athenian assembly, Nicias took the opportunity to make a final plea that the

expedition be halted.[21] Part of this speech can be considered a direct assault on the character of Alcibiades, who had been chosen by the assembly as one of the commanders for this expedition. Thucydides has Nicias ask the Athenians:

> μηδὲ τούτῳ ἐμπαράσχητε τῷ τῆς πόλεως κινδύνῳ ἰδίᾳ ἐλλαμπρύνεσθαι
>
> ... do not give him the chance of endangering the state in order to live a brilliant life of his own (6.12.2).

Nicias' commentary is clear: Alcibiades is trying to gain honor from danger. The honor would be his but the danger would be the state's. In this situation, his own cost was relatively slight, perhaps a quick death in battle which, as Pericles' Funeral Oration explains, provides redemption for any faults in his life.[22] The state, however, might pay the full price through its exposure to danger. Thucydides' Greek in this instance highlights the cause, κινδύνῳ, and the effect, ἐλλαμπρύνεσθαι. From danger, Alcibiades can gain renown. Certainly the state might also gain renown; Nicias is perhaps distorting things a bit. But regardless of whether it is Alcibiades' gain or the state's gain, the quest for honor is what Thucydides' Nicias argues is motivating Alcibiades to an ill-considered action. The potential disaster in Sicily, therefore, is – according to Nicias – the result of the impulse Alcibiades felt to increase his honor via sailing into danger. Through this expedition, Thucydides contends, Alcibiades hoped both to gain political power – by

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[21] Thuc. 6.9-14.

[22] Thuc. 2.42.4. This passage has been analyzed in 3.4.2 Internal Dangers of Honor: Vengeance in Action

being the commander of a risk-filled expedition which might eventually conquer both Sicily and Carthage – and to gain wealth for himself.[23]

In the end, however, the *polis* that gained the most honor was Syracuse. Thucydides uses this fact as well to point his reader to the danger of seeking honor through danger. In the closing phases of the Sicilian campaign, the Athenians suffered continual losses. In one particular action they sailed out with eighty-six ships against only seventy-six Syracusan ships.[24] During the fight, the Athenian general Eurymedon was killed and the Athenians lost eighteen ships with their sailors.[25] The Syracusans controlled the harbor and were able to prevent any Athenian retreat. Thucydides explains that the Syracusans correctly recognized that they were finally more powerful than the Athenians.[26] One thing more, however, entered their analysis: the chance to eclipse practically every other *polis* in terms of honor. Thucydides writes:

> νομίζοντες ὅπερ ἦν, ἀπό τε τῶν παρόντων πολὺ σφῶν καθυπέρτερα τὰ πράγματα εἶναι καί, εἰ δύναιντο κρατῆσαι Ἀθηναίων τε καὶ τῶν ξυμμάχων καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν, καλὸν σφίσιν ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὸ ἀγώνισμα φανεῖσθαι· τούς τε γὰρ ἄλλους Ἕλληνας εὐθὺς τοὺς μὲν ἐλευθεροῦσθαι, τοὺς δὲ φόβου ἀπολύεσθαι (οὐ γὰρ ἔτι δυνατὴν ἔσεσθαι τὴν ὑπόλοιπον Ἀθηναίων δύναμιν τὸν ὕστερον ἐπενεχθησόμενον πόλεμον ἐνεγκεῖν), καὶ αὐτοὶ δόξαντες αὐτῶν αἴτιοι εἶναι ὑπό τε τῶν ἄλλων

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[23] Thuc. 6.15.2 and 90.2. Edmund Bloedow (1990) analyzes Thucydides' source for this information and argues that he may have met directly with Alcibiades after the fact and discussed his original motives directly, 2-3. See also Bloedow (1992), 147. Ellis (1989) disagrees and argues that Alcibiades' statement at 6.90.2 is simply a case of "melodramatic embellishment," 63. John Finlay analyzes the way in which Alcibiades may have been motivated by either honor or self-interest – and differentiates between the two – in "The Night of Alcibiades," *The Hudson Reivew* 47 (1994), 57-79.

[24] Thuc. 7.52

[25] Thuc. 7.52.2-53.3

[26] Thuc. 7.56.2

ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἔπειτα πολὺ θαυμασθήσεσθαι.
καὶ ἦν δὲ ἄξιος ὁ ἀγὼν κατά τε ταῦτα καὶ ὅτι οὐχὶ
Ἀθηναίων μόνον περιεγίγνοντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων
πολλῶν ξυμμάχων, καὶ οὐδ' αὐτοὶ αὖ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ
μετὰ τῶν ξυμβοηθησάντων σφίσιν, ἡγεμόνες τε
γενόμενοι μετὰ Κορινθίων καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων καὶ τὴν
σφετέραν πόλιν ἐμπαρασχόντες προκινδυνεῦσαί ...

They thought, quite correctly, that they were now the
stronger, and realized that if they could beat the Athenians
and their allies on land and sea, it would be an achievement
that would make them famous throughout Hellas. The other
Hellenes would be immediately liberated or else freed from
their fears, since it would be impossible for Athens with her
remaining strength to stand up to the war that would then be
waged against her; the credit for all this would go to the
Syracusans, and greatly would they be honored for it both in
the present and in future generations. There were other
reasons, too, which made this struggle a glorious one: they
would be conquering not only the Athenians but their many
allies as well; nor did the Syracusans stand alone; their own
allies were there too, and it was in the company of
Corinthians and Spartans that they were taking the lead,
having put their city forward into the post of danger
(7.56.2-3)

The Syracusans in this passage are delighting in the honors they stand to receive from

present and future generations if they win. The end result, of course, was that the

Syracusans were victorious; that, however, is not the point in Thucydides' analysis. What

he is demonstrating to his reader is that the Syracusans were inspired in their efforts by

the prospect of great honor if they win – honor not only over the Athenians but also over

their own major allies, the Corinthians and the Spartans. This is an example of how

"citizens of Greek states envisaged their cities like Homeric heroes, ranked against each

other in terms of honor."[27] The Syracusans were glad to win as a practical matter; they

were actually overjoyed, however, to have "put their city forward into the post of

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[27] Lendon (2000), 22.

danger." This was the post that would net them the greatest honor, and by winning there, undying glory.

In his narrative of this incident, Thucydides' Greek demonstrates that it is the contest that is seen as glorious, καλὸν σφίσιν ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὸ ἀγώνισμα. The struggle itself was honorable: ἦν δὲ ἄξιος ὁ ἀγὼν. To reap the benefits, all the Syracusans had to do was to put themselves forward to engage in the danger and win: ἐμπαρασχόντες προκινδυνεῦσαί. The Syracusans, according to Thucydides, were eager to face danger in part because they felt a powerful impetus to acquire the honor which would come from this risky action. They eagerly sought the opportunity to be recognized as the city that most zealously engaged in danger, and expected to accrue the rewards of honor as a result. Was the danger real? Very much so; the Athenians, trapped like animals, had nothing to lose and everything to gain. Did the potential for honor outweigh this danger? Thucydides' depiction of the Syracusans' thought process demonstrates that their desire for gaining honor far outweighed their fear of danger.

3.4.4 <u>Internal Dangers of Honor: Avoiding Shame</u>

The final aspect of the internal dangers generated by the Greeks' ethos of honor and shame is more negatively defined than the others in that it is focused on avoiding shame instead of gaining honor.[1] Thucydides uses variations of κίνδυνος in his analysis of situations dealing with potential shame to show how his contemporaries felt the cultural necessity to act to avoid even the perception of shameful inaction.

The first example of such behavior is a complex portrait. The Athenian general Nicias is at one time driven by rational tactical and strategic considerations, at another completely driven by the cultural necessity to avoid shame.[2] Two separate incidents, both during the Sicilian expedition, demonstrate that Thucydides provides a balanced portrayal of individuals and is equally able to praise them or censure them based on the effectiveness of their leadership and the rationality with which they prepare for dangerous situations.[3]

In the first example, Thucydides shows his reader that Nicias was capable of resisting the impulse to act in order to avoid perceived shame. When, in 415 the Athenians discovered that they had been duped by some of their Sicilian allies, the Egestaeans, the Athenian generals discussed the appropriate response.[4] In his depiction of this conference, Thucydides contrasts Nicias against Alcibiades, the rational voice of

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[1] Douglas L. Cairns provides a detailed analysis of the general concept of shame and, more specifically, the importance Greeks attached to the avoidance of shame in *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), esp. 265-342.

[2] The scholarship concerning Thucydides' appraisal of Nicias has been presented in 2.5 Thucydides' Analysis of External Dangers: Conclusion.

[3] Thuc. 6.47.1 and 7.48.5.

[4] Thuc. 6.46.5. The particulars of this situation and the relevant scholarship has been presented in 2.3.2 *Κίνδυνος* in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

restraint against the hot-blooded urge to avoid shame. Thucydides writes that Nicias' plan was to try to convince the allies at Selinus to provide the promised support. If they refused, the Athenians would sail near the coastal cities of Sicily as a show of force before returning to Athens. In other words, Nicias wanted to demonstrate Athens' power without actually bringing danger to the city, δηλώσαντας δὲ τὴν ἐς τοὺς φίλους καὶ ξυμμάχους προθυμίαν ... καὶ τῇ πόλει δαπανῶντας τὰ οἰκεῖα μὴ κινδυνεύειν.[5] Thucydides contrasts this advice with Alcibiades' to show his reader that Nicias was resisting the impulse to avoid the perception of shameful inaction. Alcibiades, according to Thucydides, focused on the potential for shame, οὐκ ἔφη χρῆναι τοσαύτῃ δυνάμει ἐκπλεύσαντας αἰσχρῶς καὶ ἀπράκτους ἀπελθεῖν.[6] Sailing away without having done anything, ἀπράκτους, would be to act shamefully, αἰσχρῶς, and that, in Alcibiades' mind, is reason enough to act, regardless the potential cost. Thucydides' contrast is clear: he is showing how Nicias rationally resists and Alcibiades passionately embraces the impulse to avoid shame by acting in the face of danger. At this point in the narrative, however, Thucydides does not make an explicit comment on which general's opinion he supports.[7] It is enough for Thucydides simply to highlight the contrast between the two individuals' and their analysis of the situation. The reader is given portraits of various leadership styles and allowed to ponder them as the tactical situation unfolds.

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[5] Thuc. 6.47.1.

[6] Thuc. 6.48.1

[7] On the idea that Nicias was correct, see Lazenby (2004), 139. On the idea that Alcibiades was right, see Cawkwell (1997), 82-3. On the idea that Lamachos was right, seeLiebeschütz (1968), 299-302; Green (1970), 141; Kagan (1981), 215-16; and Kallet (2001), 151-9.

Thucydides then shows the reader how even generally rational leaders such as Nicias can be so concerned to avoid the perception of shame that they depart from their established patterns of behavior.[8] Two years after the expedition began, the Athenians found themselves in a dire straits. The Syracusans had beaten the Athenian forces on both land and sea.[9] Facing destruction and trying to lead a disease-weakened army, the generals held another council-of-war.[10] Thucydides depicts Nicias' analysis of the situation in such a way as to show his reader that even historically rational leaders were not always able to resist the necessity to avoid the perception of shame. While Demosthenes proposed that they return to Athens, Nicias wanted to continue the siege of Syracuse.[11] Thucydides highlights Nicias' concern for his own reputation:

> οὔκουν βούλεσθαι αὐτός γε ἐπιστάμενος τὰς Ἀθηναίων φύσεις ἐπ' αἰσχρᾷ τε αἰτίᾳ καὶ ἀδίκως ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων ἀπολέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων, εἰ δεῖ, κινδυνεύσας τοῦτο παθεῖν ἰδίᾳ.

> For himself, therefore, who knew the Athenian temper, sooner than perish under a dishonorable charge and by an unjust sentence at the hands of the Athenians, he would rather take his chance and die, if die he must, a soldier's death at the hand of the enemy (7.48.4).

Thucydides argues that Nicias knowingly chose the dangerous option, κινδυνεύσας, by placing the need to avoid shame, αἰσχρᾷ, over the need to protect his men. Note that

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[8] John Atkinson comments on this idea in different terms when he argues that Nicias' record shows a man with a fear of failure. He says Nicias was "[d]riven by the desire for acceptance [and] finally landed himself in a situation where his best defense was to increase the odds against survival." See "Nicias and the Fear of Failure Syndrome" *Ancient History Bulletin* 9 (1995), 55-63.

[9] The Syracusans had won a significant naval battle just prior to the arrival of Athenian reinforcements and had essentially trapped the Athenian navy in the confined waters around the harbor of Syracuse, 7.39-42.1. The Syracusans had also defeated the Athenian assault on Epipolae, 7.43-45.

[10] Thuc. 6.46.5.

[11] Demosthenes' advice, 7.47.3-4. Nicias' advice, 7.48.6.

Thucydides does not say that Nicias thought this option was less dangerous. He only states that Nicias preferred to die at the hands of the enemy, ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων, rather than to be shamefully killed by his countrymen, ἐπ' αἰσχρᾷ ... ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων. Gomme notes Thucydides' emphasis and states that "Nicias' pride and consequent cowardice in the face of personal disgrace led him to put forward as disgraceful a proposition as any general in history."[12] This is, of course, disgrace as understood by modern standards. But Thucydides recognizes the internal danger of Nicias' ancient standard. Nicias gave in to his cultural impulse to avoid shame even though he was completely aware of the danger of the other option, staying to die at the hands of the enemy. He avoided a shameful death at the hands of his countrymen; the same was not true for over seven thousand Athenians and allies who met their deaths in Syracusan rock quarries as a result of his choice.[13]

Nicias' death, narrated as it is alongside the torturous end of so many thousands of his Athenian soldiers, can be viewed as Thucydides' indictment of his inability to control the impulse to avoid personal shame even at the expense of the disaster it wrought on the city of Athens. Though there are many reasons for the defeat, in the end Nicias must, at least, "bear a heavy responsibility for the final disaster."[14] Yet Thucydides eulogizes him by saying he was the man "least deserved such a fate [execution by the Syracusans], seeing that the whole course of his life had been regulated with strict attention to virtue" (7.86.5).[15] Gomme argues that this is not an *apologia* for Nicias' generalship or military decisions. Rather Thucydides is only saying that "Nicias did not deserve the

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[12] Gomme, 4:426.

[13] Thuc. 7.87.

[14] Lazenby, 168.

[15] Thuc. 7.86.5

great misfortune of being executed in cold blood by the enemy to whom he had surrendered." [16] Thucydides is a complex analyst who presents his reader with a multi-faceted image of leaders in this war. While Nicias was, in this instance, perhaps the chief architect of the final stage in the Sicilian disaster, he has elsewhere demonstrated himself to be a leader capable of rational analysis and sound counsel for the Athenians. Nicias, therefore, serves as the exemplar of Thucydides' ability to provide a balanced portrayal of individuals; he points his reader to Nicias' lifetime of virtue and devotion to the state while at the same time making it clear that his inability to control the impulse to avoid shame when it most counted had disastrous effects on Athens.[17]

Thucydides holds up another Athenian commander, Phyrnicus, as an example of one who was able to withstand the necessity to avoid the perception of shame.[18] Phrynicus was one of the commanders of the relatively small Athenian force assembled after the disaster in Sicily to maintain the loyalty of Athens' allies in Asia Minor, especially Miletus.[19] At the start of the siege, the Athenians learned that a combined fleet of both Peloponnesians and Sicilians were hurrying to assist Miletus and to give "the finishing blow to the power of Athens."[20] Faced with the possibility of meeting the

[16] Gomme, 4:462.

[17] Michael Palmer, "Machiavellian Virtù and Thucydidean Aretē: Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides," The Review of Politics 51 (1989), 365-85

[18] Scholars generally agree that Thucydides' characterization of Phrynicus is positive. See H.D. Westlake, "Phrynichos and Astyochos (Thucydides VIII 50.1)," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 76 (1956), 99-104; and Mabel L. Lang, "Alcibiades vs. Phrynichus," *The Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996), 289-95.

[19] The Athenians receive word of the disaster in Sicily and make careful arrangements to ensure the loyalty of their allies, 8.1-4. Phyrnicus is first mentioned with Onomacles and Scironides as one of three commanders of the Athenian force sent to put down the revolt in Miletus, 8.25.1.

[20] Thucydides notes that it was the advice of the Syracusan Hermocrates to deal a death blow to Athenian power (8.26.1).

combined force in a lop-sided naval battle, two of the Athenian commanders wanted to engage immediately.[21] Phyrnicus, however, opposed his colleagues.[22] He recognized the real danger: the need to avoid the perception of shame. Thucydides analyzes Phyrnicus' decision to "flatly refuse either to stay himself or to let them or anyone else do so if he could help it"[23] He writes:

> ὅπου γὰρ [ἔξεστιν] ἐν ὑστέρῳ σαφῶς εἰδότας πρὸς ὁπόσας τε ναῦς πολεμίας καὶ ὅσαις πρὸς αὐτὰς ταῖς σφετέραις ἱκανῶς καὶ καθ᾽ ἡσυχίαν παρασκευασαμένοις ἔσται ἀγωνίσασθαι, οὐδέποτε τῷ αἰσχρῷ ὀνείδει εἴξας ἀλόγως διακινδυνεύσειν. οὐ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν εἶναι Ἀθηναίους ναυτικῷ μετὰ καιροῦ ὑποχωρῆσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετὰ ὁτουοῦν τρόπου αἴσχιον ξυμβήσεσθαι ἢν ἡσσηθῶσιν· καὶ τὴν πόλιν οὐ μόνον τῷ αἰσχρῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ μεγίστῳ κινδύνῳ περιπίπτειν, ᾗ μόλις ἐπὶ ταῖς γεγενημέναις ξυμφοραῖς ἐνδέχεσθαι μετὰ βεβαίου παρασκευῆς καθ᾽ ἑκουσίαν, ἢ πάνυ γε ἀνάγκῃ, προτέρᾳ ποι ἐπιχειρεῖν, ᾗ που δὴ μὴ βιαζομένῃ γε πρὸς αὐθαιρέτους κινδύνους ἰέναι.

> Where they could hereafter contend after full and undisturbed preparation, with an exact knowledge of the number of the enemy's fleet and of the force with which they could confront him, he would never allow the reproach of disgrace to drive him into a risk that was unreasonable. It was no disgrace for an Athenian fleet to retreat when it suited them: put it as they would, it would be more disgraceful to be defeated, and to expose the city not only to disgrace but to the most serious danger. After its late

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[21] Thucydides states that the Athenians had 48 ships, some of which were merely transports (8.25). The Peloponnesian/Sicilian fleet had 55 ships, none of which does Thucydides indicate were transports (8.26.1). Lazenby theorizes that the odds against the Athenians were not so great as generally thought. Had both fleets been joined by ships already at Miletus, the Peloponnesian advantage would only have been eighty versus sixty-eight. Additionally, he questions the efficiency of the Sicilian crews in open waters and the efficacy of Sicilian ships after the modifications carried out during the battle in the harbor of Syracuse (178). If so, the objective way that Thucydides depicts Phyrnicus' caution is striking.

[22] Westlake (1956) points to this example as one which proves Phrynicus to be a "man of exceptional shrewdness who held strong views and did not hesitate to press vigorously for their acceptance even where they were not shared by others," 99.

[23] Thuc. 8.27.1.

> misfortunes the city could hardly be justified in voluntarily taking the offensive even with the strongest force, except in a case of absolute necessity: much less then without compulsion could it rush upon peril of its own seeking (8.27.2-3).

Thucydides highlights two concepts to help his reader understand the connection: shame and danger. He mentions shame, αἰσχρὸν, four times; danger, κίνδυνος, three times.[24] The danger, according to Thucydides, is to give in to the impulse to avoid the perception of shame.

Phrynicus, it would seem, is unique among Thucydides' contemporaries in that he would never yield to a shameful reproach, οὐδέποτε τῷ αἰσχρῷ ὀνείδει εἴξας, and run a risk without rational consideration of the consequences, ἀλόγως διακινδυνεύσειν. Phrynicus' rationale is that there would be no real danger to Athens if they chose to retreat at this time while a defeat would be both dangerous and shameful.[25] Instead, he recognizes that there is a difference between the perception of shame and the reality of danger. The real danger, an external one, would be for Athens to suffer another defeat while still attempting to recover from the disaster in Sicily. This would have resulted in both external danger from being weaker and a greater additional scorn from other *poleis*, τὴν πόλιν οὐ μόνον τῷ αἰσχρῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ μεγίστῳ κινδύνῳ περιπίπτειν. It would become a vicious cycle, as Athens would continue to act aggressively to recover from further shame; that is exactly what is impelling the other generals in this situation to push for action. They feel the need to avoid further shame after the Sicilian disaster, to impress

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[24] Gomme notes the similarity of this repetition of αἰσχρὸν to a section in the Melian Dialogue, 5.111.3 (5:64). This section will be analyzed in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

[25] Though it does not stand out in the translation, Thucydides' γὰρ explains the reason behind the previous statement, that Phrynicus would not give in to the perception of shame.

upon others their steadfastness. It is in this link between shame and danger that Thucydides makes clear to his reader: it is dangerous to submit to the impulse to avoid the perception of shame because defeat in battle yields a real loss of security as well as new shame.[26] Thucydides praises Phrynicus for his decision, explicitly citing him for his common sense in the face of almost overwhelming emotional impulses. He says of Phrynicus that "as he spoke so he acted; and thus not now more than afterwards, nor in this alone but in all that he had to do with, did Phrynicus show himself to be a man of sense."[27] Thucydides' evaluation of Phrynicus' decision was overwhelmingly positive and is portrayed as such in order that his reader get a clear sense of just how important it could be to suppress the impulse to avoid shame in favor of long-term gain for the state.

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[26] In a sense, this puts this is an example of the relationship between reputation and power which will be analyzed in Chapter 3.5 Κίνδυνος and the Security Dilemma: Power and Reputation. See Crane (1998), 157; Eckstein (2006), 63; and van Wees (2004), 24.

[27] Thuc. 8.27.5

3.4.5 <u>Internal Dangers of Honor: Conclusion</u>

In this section I have argued that Thucydides in his work consciously illustrates three aspects of what he sees as the internal dangers inherent in a society so focused on an ethos of honor and shame. First, the need to seek vengeance for perceived injuries creates an endless cycle of escalating violence. Second, the belief that honor can be gained by exposing oneself or one's *polis* to danger leads to irresponsible behavior, the gleeful acceptance of unnecessary risk. Finally, the urge to avoid even the perception of shameful behavior stirs individuals and communities to ill-conceived and preemptory actions. All three of these dangers share a common theme: cultural necessity. We have seen this cultural necessity expressed on stage by Thucydides' contemporary examples. The Greeks for whom Thucydides was writing were often compelled by feelings of necessity to take risks in the pursuit and preservation of their honor. Thucydides recognizes the dangers inherent in such an ethos and writes in such a way as to point his reader to this same understanding: he praises Phrynicus' decision to avoid danger and is critical of Alcibiades' guidance to seek danger in the Sicilian campaign. He presents a complex image of Nicias who was, at times, rational and restrained while, at a critical moment, completely susceptible to the impulse he felt to avoid shame. Throughout his analysis, however, Thucydides is consistent in his message that the Greek conception of honor and shame is fraught with a potentially self-destructive aspect as it impels his contemporaries to take action, sometimes honorable but sometimes irresponsible, in the quest for gaining honor and avoiding shame.

3.5 Κίνδυνος and the Security Dilemma: Power and Reputation

In this section I will further define one aspect of internal dangers by highlighting examples in Thucydides' narrative which point to the dangers inherent in the Greeks' concern for their reputation as it affects their security. Modern political theorist define the "security dilemma" as the dilemma which is created when every state's concern for increasing its own security by taking the strongest possible measures simultaneously undermines every other states' perception of its own security.[1] In this dissertation, however, I will define it differently in order to make its application to the analysis of Thucydides' narrative more specific. The dilemma facing Thucydides' contemporaries consisted of three aspects: power, reputation, and honor. They believed that any perceived loss of reputation – for power or even willingness to use their power – would lead to a loss of physical power. A *polis*' status in the interstate community was merely the shadow thrown by its power. If separated from that power – even if only by the perception that the power is slightly diminished – a state's status collapses with a corresponding loss of physical security. Thus they consistently faced the dilemma of engaging in dangerous situations merely to avoid the perception that they were unwilling to do so and thus suffer a loss of reputation. As Eckstein states, "preserving one's reputation for power in the face of challenge is crucial for preserving one's actual power."[2] The impulse to preserve their reputation, therefore, pushed the Greeks to act even when the available options are

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[1] Eckstein (2006), 21. This term has been more fully analyzed in 1.2.3 Modern Interstate Relations: Basic Concepts and Definitions.

[2] Eckstein (2006), 63. See also van Wees (2004), 24; Crane (2006), 157.

dangerous.[3] This impulse can be seen in Greek tragedy where the powerful heroes often conform to Max Weber's paradigm of "charismatic leadership" and show just how tenuously power was held in the Greek world and how jealously reputations were guarded.[4] I will argue that Thucydides uses the term κίνδυνος to point his reader to the idea that the Greeks' concern for reputation was another form of internal danger because it impelled Thucydides' contemporaries to act in defense of one's reputation under dangerous conditions.

To present this argument, I will divide this section into two parts: the first will provide examples from Greek tragedy to define the status dilemma as it was understood by Thucydides' contemporaries; the second will analyze examples from Thucydides' writing. These examples will be divided into three categories: a survey of how the populace of major *poleis* understood the relationship between power and reputation, a specific look at how two individual leaders, Pericles and Hermocrates, understood and manipulated their fellow citizens' concern for reputation, and an analysis of how second-tier *poleis* reacted when they perceived the reputation of more powerful *poleis* to have

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[3] Daniel Markey analyzes the same concept but refers to it as the "prestige motive" in "Prestige and the Origins of War: Returning to Realism's Roots," *Security Studies* 8:4 (1999), 126-72. He provides a comprehensive survey of the studies done on this topic in the field of international relations and political science and argues that "prestige is a useful tool for the procurement of security," (128, n. 11). William C. Wohlforth provides an in-depth, but very approachable, analysis of the importance of status in interstate relations, one that I will draw from heavily in this chapter. He draws together sociological, psychological, historical, and political science research to argue that "apart from economic payoffs, social status seems to be the most important incentive and motivating force of social behavior" among both individuals and states (29). See "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," *World Politics* 61 (Jan., 2009), 28-57.

[4] Weber defines charismatic leadership as "the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership. This is 'charismatic' domination, as exercised by the prophet or – in the field of politics – by the elected war lord, the plebiscitarian ruler, the great demagogue, or the political party leader" in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans. and eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, reprint 1958), 79. He notes that "the demagogue is peculiar … to Mediterranean culture" (80). For further analysis, see his essay "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," 245-52.

been diminished in some way. These seemingly disparate examples, when viewed from the ancients' perspective, make a unified point: Thucydides shows his reader the dangers inherent in a society in which the perception of one's reputation for power is practically synonymous with real security and states are more concerned with the immediate challenges to their appearances of power than the long term consequences of their actions.

3.5.1 <u>Internal Dangers of Reputation and Power: Defining the Dilemma</u>

Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, produced in approximately 406/5, provides an image of the "charismatic" leader's dilemma: to lead, Agamemnon must be seen as a leader.[1] This play, already discussed as part of "ethos of intervention," is as multi-faceted as any Euripidean tragedy and also reflects the micro-level conflicts faced by individual characters.[2] In this play, Euripides focuses on the dilemma faced by Agamemnon as he waits with his entire army at Aulis for favorable winds to begin their expedition to Troy. The seer Calchas has proclaimed that the Agamemnon must sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, in order to be able to set sail.[3] To a modern audience the alternative is obvious: Agamemnon can simply determine that the potential rewards from Troy are not worth the life of this daughter and disband his army. Yet to the ancient audience, there is another dimension to this problem: Agamemnon feels compelled to protect his position even at the cost of his daughter's life. He can preserve his daughter or his reputation as a strong leader, but not both. Positions of power in his society are subject to the whims of gods and men. Agamemnon explains that positions of power are "a dangerous glory, and ambition – however sweet – lies close to grief. A little irreverence and the gods swoop; and sometimes human beings through prejudice and misconception tear one apart."[4] His

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[1] Weber argues that the "existence of charismatic authority is specifically unstable … [because] the charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by proving his strength in life … if he wants to be a war lord, he must perform heroic deeds" (248-9).

[2] For a summary of both macro- and micro-level themes and conflicts within this play, see John Ferguson, "Iphigeneia at Aulis," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 99 (1968), 157-63; Christina Elliott Sorum, "Myth, Choice, and Meaning in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*," *The American Journal of Philology* 113 (1992), 527-42.

[3] Eur. *IA* 87-93. Translations of this play are all from Paul Roche's translation as published in *Euripides: Ten Plays* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998), 217-75.

[4] Eur. *IA* 21-27.

own position is subject to the consent of men with prejudices and misconceptions whom

he must constantly content. Euripides lays bare the fragility of Agamemnon's command

by having Menelaus, Agamemnon's brother, remind him that once he obtained command

he "came whimpering to [Menelaus]: Oh, what shall I do? How can I hang on to my

command and the glory that goes with it?"[5] Agamemnon fears his army and the

destruction it will visit upon him if he does not lead them to victory. He says he "must"

kill his child; he is compelled by "the entire Achaean army" which will chase him down

and "smash Mycenae to the ground."[6]

The culturally driven impulse with which Agamemnon struggles helps define this

chapter. Modern scholars, though often more interested in Iphigenia's motivation,

generally note that Agamemnon's motivations are more easily understood by an ancient

audience. Dana Burgess notes that while Agamemnon's feelings of necessity may seem

impractical to moderns, "ideological convictions may entail impractical demands."[7]

Marianne McDonald frames the question in more sociological and anthropological terms

by arguing that "Agamemnon purchases power in the public arena with his daughter's

life."[8] It is clear that Agamemnon felt himself to be under an enormous amount of

pressure to sacrifice his daughter in order to maintain his leadership position. Where a

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[5] Eur. *IA* 357-8.

[6] Eur. *IA* 514-535. Herbert Siegel agrees that Agamemnon holds these fears, i.e. the army, the mob, and the power of Odysseus to reveal his secret and suborn his leadership of the army, in his mind and feels a sense of compulsion to prevent the imagined fears from becoming reality. See "Agamemnon in Euripides' 'Iphigenia at Aulis'" *Hermes* 109 (1981), 261.

[7] Dana L. Burgess, "Lies and Convictions at Aulis" *Hermes* 132 (2004), 43.

[8] Marianne McDonald "Iphigenia's 'Philia': Motivation in Euripides' 'Iphigenia at Aulis'" *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 34 (1990), 71. She analyzes this "transaction" from the perspective Claude Levi-Strauss provides in *Structural Anthropology, C. Jacobson and B.G. Schoepf, trans.* (New York, 1963), 296.

modern might think this issue can be resolved – surely the army would not destroy

Agamemnon just because he refuses to kill his daughter? – Thucydides' contemporaries

understood the dual horns of his dilemma; Nicias felt it at Syracuse – which led him to

press on. To preserve his reputation, he must lose his daughter. To preserve his daughter,

he must lose his reputation. The loss of his reputation, however, would mean the loss of

his power, his citadel, his family, and his life. In short, loss of reputation as a strong

leader would have been the loss of everything. For Agamemnon, the need to preserve his

reputation meant that there really was no choice at all. Even his daughter recognized this

when she willingly stepped up to the altar as a willing sacrificial victim.

The idea that a ruler must carry with him a certain degree of reputation in order to

command respect – or even survive among his fellow citizens – can also be seen in

Euripides' *Ion*. The complex plot has been presented earlier.[9] So a brief synopsis of one

particular scene will serve the example. When Ion discovers his true identity, that he is

actually the son of Xuthus, king of Athens, the expectation is that he will be overjoyed to

"lead a rich and distinguished life." [10] Ion, however, falls silent, prompting his father to

ask why he is casting gloom on what should be a joyous event. It is at this critical

moment that the importance of a man's status becomes clear, even to the modern reader.

Euripides has Ion say:

> Athens, they say, that famous city, springs from her own
> soil, she is indigenous, but I an intruder will face twin
> handicaps: a bastard with a foreign father. Under such scorn
> and in this weak position I shall count for nothing – a
> nobody. And if I force myself to the forefront in the realm, I
> shall be hated by the second rate – as the elite are always

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[9] See 3.4.1 Internal Dangers of Honor: Defining the Ethos

[10] Eur. *Ion* 578-9.

> hated; while by the sincere and competent who wisely keep
> their peace and do not plunge in the public gaze, I shall be
> branded as a nincompoop who could not keep quiet in a
> nervous city … As to kingship, it's not worth considering:
> fair of face, full of anguish within. Who can be happy, ho
> can be envied, eking out his days in fear of the sidelong
> glance (590-625)?

Ion's foresight reveals what Agamemnon experienced at Aulis: the ruler's position is only as stable as his reputation causes other men to respect or fear him. He knows that it is not enough simply to be brought into Athens and declared son of the king. The scorn of his bastard heritage will put him in a "weak position," scorned and considered insignificant by the commons over whom he would be expected to exercise power. As his speech continues, he expresses the understanding that his life as a king would be miserable, "full of anguish within." He recognizes that his low status would only result in a lifetime of dread, on guard against "the sidelong glance" from those all too ready to challenge his authority. It stands for Ion as it did for Agamemnon: to rule others, he must possess more than a simple title. Agamemnon feared the ruthless nature of his own army should he not lead them to victory. Ion fears the citizens of his newly-discovered father's own realm should he not be perceived to have earned their respect before being declared the heir-apparent. He must earn a reputation for nobility in order to enjoy a life of relative safety, free from the threat of being usurped.

Euripides' *Medea* offers another illustration of the ancients' overwhelming concern for the perception of their power. When Medea's love is betrayed and she is exiled, she gains her revenge with the gruesome murder of her sons, and her husband's new bride. While much of the play deals with issues of honor and revenge, there is one

particular section that puts Medea's concern for her reputation in the foreground.[11] When Medea explains her plan to the chorus, revenge is in the foreground, but Euripides has her go beyond the obvious motive of revenge and explain her underlying compulsion: the drive to protect her reputation as a powerful woman. Medea explains, "I won't be laughed at by my enemies … Let nobody think me insignificant or weak."[12] Cartledge argues that "the gender dimension of the dominant male hoplite ideology is captured perfectly in the ironic transgression of it by Euripides' Medea."[13] This is why Medea's motivations would have been so well understood by Euripides' audience of Athenian men, Thucydides' contemporaries. Medea is compelled to murder her children and her husband's new wife because to do less would be to appear weak and lose her reputation for power. This perception of weakness in the Greeks' vicious anarchy would have manifested in a real loss of security. When Medea exclaims "let no one think me weak," she is not challenging them to question her authority; she is explaining the reality of her effort to maintain her reputation. Through murder she reinforces others' perception that she is a powerful force not to be trifled with. Woman though she may be, her *andreia* and *kratos* are above reproach.[14]

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[11] Issues of honor and revenge were discussed in 3.3.1 Internal Dangers of Intervention: Defining the Ethos.

[12] Eur. *Med*. 797-806. Translation here is Paul Roche's as published in *Euripides: Ten Plays* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1998), 333-390.

[13] Paul Cartlege "The *Machismo* of the Athenian Empire – or the Reign of the Phaulus?" in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, Lin Foxhall and John Salmon, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 62. On the inversion of roles between the heroic Jason and the "anti-heroine" Medea, see Marianne Hopman, "Revenge and Mythopoiesis in Euripides' *Medea*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 138 (2008), 155-83.

[14] These two terms are prominent among those values with which Cartledge defines the "superior masculine prowess" that was necessary to carry political power in Classical Athens (60-62).

One final example from tragic poetry will help to clarify the ancients' concern for their reputation. This example is from Sophocles' *Antigone*. While elsewhere I have made the case that Thucydides' closest contemporary, in both age and analytical persuasion, was Euripides, Sophocles was writing during the same era of Athenian culture and most likely produced *Antigone* in the late 440's, a mere ten years before the Peloponnesian War.[15] As such, its relevance to Thucydides' contemporary reader is not really in doubt and the values portrayed in Sophoclean tragedy can be assumed to have been recognizable by Thucydides and his readers.[16] Sophocles' *Antigone* provides such a clear image of the relationship between one's reputation for power and one's actual power that it cannot be ignored in this dissertation.

The plot is familiar and I will provide only a brief synopsis. In the wake of civil war, Creon, king of Thebes, has decreed that the brothers who clashed in the war, both sons of Oedipus and heirs to the throne, are to be given very different funerary rights. Eteocles, who fought to defend Thebes, is to be buried with full honors; Polyneices, on the other hand, is to remain unburied in the field as punishment for his rebellion against Thebes. Antigone, daughter of Oedipus and sister of the fallen brothers, vows to bury Polyneices and, against the king's decree, performs a quick funeral rite. When Creon

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[15] There is some question as to the exact date when this play was produced. Albin Lesky addresses the controversy and argues that it was probably around 442 in *A History of Greek Literature*, Cornelis de Heer and James Willis, trans. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, reprint 1996), 275-9.

[16] While the chronological links between the two authors are not subject to much debate, the ideological ones might offer more of a question for interpretation which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is interesting to note, however, that several articles published in political science and international relations journals during the last decade use Sophocles' *Antigone* as the basis for an analysis of the ideological similarities between the two. See David Bedford & Thom Workman "The Tragic Reading of Thucydidean Tragedy," *Review of International Studies* 27 (Jan, 2001), 51-67; Richard Ned Lebow "Thucydides the Constructivst," *The American Political Science Review* 95 (2001), 547-60; and Markell Patchen "Tragic Recognition: Action and Identity in Antigone and Aristotle," *Political Theory* 31 (Feb, 2003), 6-38.

finds out, he threatens to execute Antigone and, despite the pleas of his son and Antigone's fiancé, Haemon, he carries out the sentence by shutting Antigone in a cave where she hangs herself. In separate fits of grief, both Haemon and the king's wife, Eurydice, kill themselves, leaving Creon alone with his conscience and the city over which he still rules.

The obvious issues in this play are the tension between family versus state, and man's law versus divine law. Creon's true motivation for his draconian condemnation of Antigone, however, is at the heart of this analysis of the dangers connected to the Greeks' anxiety over reputation: his actions are driven by the impulse to defend his reputation against perceived diminution. From the start of the play, Creon's position is tenuous. It is his first day as king, having received the throne after the two direct heirs killed each other in civil war.[17] His decree that Polyneices be left unburied is, in fact, his first explicit command as king.[18] When Antigone breaks this command, it can be seen as a direct challenge to his right to rule, his status as a leader.[19] His dilemma is the same as Agamemnon's. What is more, his decree is broken by a woman. That this is a particular problem becomes clear later in the play when Creon argues that all citizens must obey the ruler.[20] He argues that is one thing to have his authority questioned but it is quite another to have it questioned by a woman: "there must be no surrender to a woman. No! If we

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[17] Soph. *Ant*. 170-4. All translations of this play are from *Sophocles: Theban Plays*, Peter Meineck and Paul Woodruff, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003).

[18] Soph. *Ant*. 198-206.

[19] Soph. *Ant*. *245-7*.

[20] Soph. *Ant*. 667.

fall, better a man should take us down. Never say that a woman bested us!"[21] And again later he condemns his son for taking Anitigone's side: "What a sick mind you have. You submit to a woman!"[22] The point for us, however, is not the power differential between men and women in Greek society. The point is that Creon feels his reputation being seriously challenged and perceives that he will have lost power in the eyes of the community if he changes his mind.

In the end, Creon realizes his error and changes his mind but only after giving a clear explanation of his true dilemma: "My mind is shaken. Giving in would be terrible. But standing firm invites disaster!"[23] This is the danger of the security dilemma as I have defined it: Creon perceives the diminution of his reputation for power, changing his mind based on a woman's argument, as a loss of real power which would result in "anarchy" for the city.[24] To counteract this perceived threat to his authority he feels compelled to take actions that even he ultimately realizes are disapproved of by the gods as well as the city, actions with destructive consequences for his own house. Thucydides and his contemporaries would have been very familiar with Creon's concern for his reputation and the necessity he felt to preserve it. Thucydides frames his analysis of some actions in the war with this perspective in mind. He tries to show his reader just how dangerous this dilemma was in reality, as leaders felt compelled to act in non-rational ways fraught with disastrous consequences just to preserve the perception of their power and reputation in others' eyes.

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[21] Soph. *Ant*. 678-80.

[22] Soph. *Ant. 746.*

[23] Soph. *Ant. 1095-7.*

[24] Soph. *Ant. 673.*

3.5.2 Internal Dangers of Reputation and Power: The "Powerful" Perspective

Thucydides' contemporaries seemed to believe strongly that any perceived loss of reputation would lead to a real loss of physical security. This is true even among the three most powerful *poleis*: Athens, Sparta and Corinth.[1] Again, this belief resembles that ascribed to Agamemnon in *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Thucydides keeps the term κίνδυνος in the foreground of his renditions of discourse among these *poleis* in order to show his reader the dangers he perceives in a culture dominated by others' perception of one's power. He consistently reminds his reader that even the most powerful *poleis* felt impelled to act aggressively to protect their reputation for power from perceived diminution. Perception, from their perspective, was reality and any indication of weakness could be potentially catastrophic.

Thucydides explores this mindset and its dangerous consequences early in his work and, to a certain degree, founds the rest of his analysis on this idea. His rendition of the Corinthians' speech to the assembly of Peloponnesian allies in 432/1 provides both a characterization of the Athenian national character and an example of a powerful *polis*' concern for its reputation.[2] In this speech, the Corinthian delegation attempts to "inflame the Spartans" by laying out their grievances with Athens, reproaching the Spartans for their inaction, and analyzing the differences between the Athenian and Spartan

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[1] While I include Sparta and Athens in this triad because they are the primary protagonists in the war, I include Corinth for its prominence in fomenting the Spartans' fear of Athens' growing power.

[2] Robert D. Luginbill provides an analysis of Thucydides' interpretation and presentation of "national character" in *Thucydides on War and National Character* (Boulder, Co,: Westview Press, 1999). He notes that "national character as it is found in the *History* then, consists of that peculiar degree of willingness to act that a national group can characteristically be expected exhibit within the confines of Thucydides' narrative" (16). He analyzes this particular speech as evidence of the Athenian's national character (94-97).

approaches to interstate relations.[3] The Corinthians are not calculating the material

advantages which Athens has over Sparta in a potential war.[4] Instead, they are

highlighting the Athenians' reputation, their status as a *polis* aggressively pursuing

growth, in order to add to the Spartans' fear that Athens' power will continue to grow if

no action is taken.[5] There are, in the Corinthians' analysis, a litany of things from which

the city of Athens draws its reputation for power much in the same was a single citizen

might earn a reputation for τιμή through ἀρετή.[6] These include: the Athenians are

"addicted to innovation" and act swiftly (1.70.2); they are "adventurous beyond their

power, and daring beyond their judgment" (1.70.3); they consistently "extend their

acquisitions" (1.70.4); and they look to new schemes calling "a thing hoped for a thing

got" (1.70.7). These traits yield the Athenians a reputation for aggressive action that is

feared across the Hellenic world.[7] Other *poleis* perceive the Athenians' boldness as an

indication of their power and are less willing to threaten the Athenians' security. The

closing sentiments of this section, however, are where Thucydides points his reader to the

dangers of this audacious lifestyle. He has the Corinthians say:

> καὶ ταῦτα μετὰ πόνων πάντα καὶ κινδύνων δι' ὅλου
> τοῦ αἰῶνος μοχθοῦσι καὶ ἀπολαύουσιν ἐλάχιστα τῶν
> ὑπαρχόντων διὰ τὸ αἰεὶ κτᾶσθαι ...

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[3] Thuc. 1.68-72. Thucydides says the Corinthians were trying to "inflame the Spartans" (1.67.5).

[4] Thucydides has Pericles provide an analysis of Athens' material advantages (1.1141.2-143).

[5] The bibliography on Thucydides' "truest cause" has been presented in 1.2.4 Thucydides 1.23.5-6: A Realist Perspective

[6] Lendon (2005) examines the "habit of ranking cities ... as a mythic collective person whose conduct was ruled by Greek competitive ideals," 62.

[7] The issue of Athenian πολυπραγμοσύνη and the associated bibliography on the concept has already been analyzed in 3.3.3 Internal Dangers of Intervention: "Helping the Wronged."

> Thus they toil on in trouble and danger all the days of their life, with little opportunity for enjoying, being ever engaged in getting (1.70.8).

The Athenians have worked tirelessly to expand their power and hence their status, the shadow thrown by that power. But, because of their aforementioned characteristics – καὶ ταῦτα here is probably best seen as an "accusative of respect," i.e. "with respect to these things just mentioned" – the Athenians spend their lives struggling with danger, μετὰ … κινδύνων δι' ὅλου τοῦ αἰῶνος μοχθοῦσι. They have grown their reputation as a powerful *polis* through hyper-activity and involvement; now they continually contend with the dangers that the struggle for increasing their reputation brings them. As they continue "growing great," their status was, for the moment, intact and created for their opponents enough fear to restrain them for the most part from attacking Athenian interests.[8] But Thucydides focuses his reader on the byproduct of this ethos: danger. With this one phrase, written as the concluding thought to the litany of Athenian characteristics, Thucydides shows his reader that the Athenians' overwhelming concern for their reputation and finding new schemes by which they might increase their power and hence status puts their entire society in danger. The Athenians, in other words, spent their lives giving in service of their reputation. They were, as Thucydides says, "daring beyond judgment."[9] That is why Thucydides highlights κινδύνων. The Athenians'

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[8] Thuc. 1.23.5-6. Certainly the Athenians were not as powerful as they had been in the recent past. But G. Dickins argued long ago, quite persuasively, that though "Athens was weaker than she had been in 460, she was far stronger than she had been in 445." See "The True Causes of the Peloponnesian War," *The Classical Quarterly* 5 (1911), 243. For an opposing view, that Sparta seized upon a moment of weakness in a long period of otherwise growing Athenian power, see C.A. Powell (1980), 87-113. George Cawkwell supports the view that Athens was in period of growth in *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1997), 23.

[9] Thuc. 1.70.3.

concern for others' perception of their power pushes them beyond the rational and compels them to seek any opportunity for gain.

The Athenians, of course, were successful in most of their undertakings and had expanded their power considerably over the course of the fifth-century. Thucydides provides his reader with their motivations for doing so. He indicates that the Athenians themselves explained to the Spartans that their motivations for building the empire and the necessity to hold onto it were only slightly different. But this subtle difference illustrates the importance of status. In 432, an Athenian delegation happened to be in Sparta on other business just as the Spartans' allies were trying to persuade them to go to war against Athens. They were allowed to speak on Athens' behalf to urge restraint and, in Thucydides' words, to remind the Spartans just how powerful Athens was.[10] In part of the speech, Thucydides has the Athenians explain their motives for building and then maintaining an empire. He has them say:

> ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ ἔργου κατηναγκάσθημεν τὸ πρῶτον προαγαγεῖν αὐτὴν ἐς τόδε, μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ δέους, ἔπειτα καὶ τιμῆς, ὕστερον καὶ ὠφελίας. καὶ οὐκ ἀσφαλὲς ἔτι ἐδόκει εἶναι τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀπηχθημένους, καί τινων καὶ ἤδη ἀποστάντων κατεστραμμένων, ὑμῶν τε ἡμῖν οὐκέτι ὁμοίως φίλων, ἀλλ' ὑπόπτων καὶ διαφόρων ὄντων, ἀνέντας κινδυνεύειν· καὶ γὰρ ἂν αἱ ἀποστάσεις πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐγίγνοντο. πᾶσι δὲ ἀνεπίφθονον τὰ ξυμφέροντα τῶν μεγίστων πέρι κινδύνων εὖ τίθεσθαι.

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[10] Thuc 1.72-78. A.E. Raubitschek analyzes "the occasion of the speech, its content, its intention, and its effect" in "The Speech of the Athenians at Sparta" in *The Speeches in Thucydides: A Collection of Original Studies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 32-48. He is, however, particularly focused on the question of the speech's composition by Thucydides and does not discuss the explicit mention of danger as a motivation. See also E. Schwartz, *Das Geschichtswerk des Thukydides* (Bonn, 1929), 102-16; J. de Romilly, *Thucydide et l'impérialisme athénian* (Paris, 1947), 205-29; H. -P Stahl, *Thukydides: Die Stellung des Menschen im geschichtlichen Prozess* (Letemata 40, Munich, 1966), 43-54

> And the nature of the case first compelled us to advance our empire to its present height; fear being our principal motive, though honor and interest afterwards came in. An at last, when almost all hated us, when some had already revolted and had been subdued, when you had ceased to be the friends that you once were, and had become objects of suspicion and dislike, it appeared no longer safe to give up our empire; especially as all who left it would fall to you. And no one can quarrel with a people for making, in matters of tremendous risk, the best provision that it can for its interest (1.75.3-4).

The three motives for empire, fear, honor, and self interest, have been the subject of a vast body of modern scholarship.[11] Less often discussed, however, is the motivation for maintaining that empire once the initial threat had passed.[12] Thucydides explains that the Athenians believed it was dangerous to allow their allies to slip away. The explicit threat is that the allies would "fall to you [Sparta]." Implied is that they would then take advantage of Athens' perceived loss of power which would create a real loss of security. Thucydides' use of the term κίνδυνος, κινδυνεύειν and κινδύνων, focuses the reader's attention on the real issue: giving up their empire would be giving up power, which lowers their status by making them seem weak. This would increase the real dangers of attack. Thucydides shows that the Athenians were caught in a seemingly endless cycle of empire building. To give up their power willingly would be viewed as a sign of weakness. It would signal other Greek *poleis*, equally steeped in the Greek ethos of action and the cultural importance of status, to take advantage of Athens' perceived decline. The

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[11] The bibliography of scholarship which deals with this section in general and specifically these three words, "fear, honor and self-interest," has been presented in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples).

[12] Crane (1998) discusses this briefly and argues that the "Athenians claim now to be prisoners of history" because "circumstances thus force the Athenians to maintain their empire" (275). Where Thucydides is vague concerning the nature of the threats to Athens, Crane gives a more concrete analysis.

perceived loss of status would become a real loss of power and threat to security as

Athens would have been forced to defend itself against revisionist states. Thus

Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to highlight the relationship between power and reputation

from the perspective of a large *polis*. Although the safe course of action might be to

relinquish some control of its empire in order to regain popularity which the empire has

lost for Athens, that action might be perceived as weakness and, as a result, put the state

in even greater danger.

Thucydides continues to highlight this theme for his reader in the next part of the

speech when the Athenian speakers try to relate the dangerous cycle of the security

dilemma to the Spartans. He has the Athenians say:

> ὑμεῖς γοῦν, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, τὰς ἐν τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ
> πόλεις ἐπὶ τὸ ὑμῖν ὠφέλιμον καταστησάμενοι
> ἐξηγεῖσθε· καὶ εἰ τότε ὑπομείναντες διὰ παντὸς
> ἀπήχθεσθε ἐν τῇ ἡγεμονίᾳ, ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς, εὖ ἴσμεν μὴ
> ἂν ἧσσον ὑμᾶς λυπηροὺς γενομένους τοῖς ξυμμάχοις
> καὶ ἀναγκασθέντας ἂν ἢ ἄρχειν ἐγκρατῶς ἢ αὐτοὺς
> κινδυνεύειν.

> You, at all events, Spartans, have used your supremacy to
> settle the state in the Peloponnesus as is agreeable to you.
> And if at the period of which we were speaking you had
> persevered to the end of the matter, and had incurred hatred
> in your command, we are sure that you would have made
> yourselves just as galling to the allies, and would have been
> forced to choose between a strong government and danger
> to yourselves (1.76.1).

States in power establish affairs to suit their own interest, ἐπὶ τὸ ὑμῖν ὠφέλιμον

καταστησάμενοι.[13] Other states, however, are vexed and seek to revise the status quo,

μὴ ἂν ἧσσον ὑμᾶς λυπηροὺς γενομένους τοῖς ξυμμάχοις. The irony of power is that

it should provide total freedom of action but, in reality, it allows only two options: rule

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[13] Hornblower provides the translation "to suit your own interests" (1:121).

harshly or face danger, ἢ ἄρχειν ἐγκρατῶς ἢ αὐτοὺς κινδυνεύειν. Thucydides makes it

clear to his reader that when *poleis* have power they feel compelled, ἀναγκασθέντας, to

preserve their reputation for willingness to use that power or face destruction. The

security dilemma impels *poleis* to defend their reputation aggressively. The cycle is

dominated by either continued violence through the danger of harsh rule or the danger

from other states seeking to revise the *status quo*.

Thucydides notes, however, that some *poleis* recognized these dangers and

offered counsel to avoid them. He shows that the Spartan delegates offered this

understanding to the Athenians in 425 while trying to win the release of their fellow

Spartans trapped on Pylos.[14] In Thucydides' rendition of their speech, the Spartan

delegates tried to convince the Athenians that they could actually augment their

reputation for strength by showing restraint and accepting a peace agreement with

Sparta.[15] The Spartans argued that reversals of fortune in war are to be expected.[16]

Thucydides is presenting the idea that reputation is based on success. His next point,

however, provides an alternative way to increasing the Athenians' reputation for power:

> ὃ νῦν ὑμῖν, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, καλῶς ἔχει πρὸς ἡμᾶς πρᾶξαι,
> καὶ μή ποτε ὕστερον, ἢν ἄρα μὴ πειθόμενοι σφαλῆτε, ἃ
> πολλὰ ἐνδέχεται, νομισθῆναι τύχῃ καὶ τὰ νῦν
> προχωρήσαντα κρατῆσαι, ἐξὸν ἀκίνδυνον δόκησιν
> ἰσχύος καὶ ξυνέσεως ἐς τὸ

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[14] Thuc. 4.17-21. A more detailed analysis of the events and scholarship concerning the actions at Pylos has been presented in 2.3.2 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

[15] Gomme contends that Thucydides composed this speech after 421 (3:456). Hornblower also addresses some of the more puzzling aspects of this speech and associated bibliographic references to the issues under consideration (2:170-77). None of these questions significantly affect the analysis of this dissertation. What is important is that Thucydides is choosing his speeches and offering renditions designed to convince his reader about the lessons that might be learned from the dangers of his contemporary society.

[16] Thuc. 4.17.4-18.4.

ἔπειτα καταλιπεῖν.

> This, Athenians, you have a good opportunity to do now with us, and thus to escape the possible disasters which may follow upon your refusal, and the consequent imputation of having owed to accident even your present advantages when you might have left behind you a reputation for power and wisdom which nothing could endanger (4.18.5).

The opportunity they are suggesting is a peace agreement with Sparta while Athens still enjoys good fortune, before fate's fickle nature reduces their appearance of total domination. By accepting the offer, according to this speaker, the Athenians will secure their reputation for strength and wisdom without danger, ἀκίνδυνον. This would mean that the Athenians would not have to fight to maintain their status in the interstate hierarchy. They could, in fact, even improve their position by agreeing to settle their differences with the Spartans because it is the Spartans who are asking for peace. The Spartans are in a position of weakness and ready to declare an end to hostilities; the Athenians are in a position to be perceived by others as powerful. Thucydides is showing his reader that there are moments when actors in the interstate system have opportunities to display their power through restraint. To act aggressively in the pursuit of even greater gains would be dangerous, the exact opposite of ἀκίνδυνον. This is the counsel Thucydides has the Spartans offer. The Athenians, unfortunately, fell prey to the urge to press their advantage and prove to others their willingness to use their power. They rejected this opportunity and "grasped at something further."[17] Thucydides shows his reader that, even when shown a more rational option, his Greek contemporaries were all too often impelled by the culturally driven urge to pursue the greater prestige that flows

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[17] Thuc. 4.21.2

from power. The dangerous world was made all the more dangerous by their insistence

on increasing their reputation for power as much as possible as often as possible.

3.5.3 Internal Dangers of Reputation and Power: The "Personal" Perspective

The pursuit of greater status often drove the leaders of powerful states to propose even more audacious plans for expansion.[1] Thucydides highlights the connection between expansion and danger by incorporating it into the speeches of two separate leaders, both of whom are generally portrayed as rational thinkers in Thucydides' analysis: Pericles and Hermocrates.[2] Both of these statesmen provide an image of the dangers inherent in expanding a *polis'* power by conquest. They are, however, slightly different in that Thucydides has Pericles argue against the dangers of expansion while Hermocrates

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[1] Van Wees argues that honor was a self-perpetuating force for increased violence in the Greek world; increased prestige through military victories led to greater honor to defend and fewer insults that could be tolerated and that is why "the communities with the greatest power were the most inclined to wage war." See Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 25. Van Wees' analysis has been discussed in Chapter 3.3 *Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame*. Here I am making a distinction between honor, τιμή, and status as a reputation for power. Van Wees' argument, I think, incorporates both terms effectively.

[2] The bibliography on Pericles' life, leadership style, and portrayal in Thucydides' narrative is vast. Of note for this section of the dissertation is that I am consciously accepting what many scholars have noted, that Thucydides' portrayal of Pericles is somewhat one dimensional and focuses on "die harten Züge," which includes his penchant for rationality. See F. Schachermeyr, "Das Perikles-Bild bei Thukydides," *Forschungen und Betrachtungen zur Griechischen un Römischen Geschichte* (Vienna, 1974), 228-252. I analyze Thucydides' portrayal of Pericles with a model provided by the works of three particular scholars. H. D. Westlake has provided the idea that Thucydides deliberately chose "to direct the attention of the his readers only to certain characteristics of Pericles: the farsighted creator of a strategy which could and should have won the war." See *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 23. Hunter R. Rawlings provides the specific theme from which I draw my analysis, namely that "the Thucydidean Pericles is characterized most cogently and clearly by *gnome* in its twin aspects of reason and resolve." See *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). 131. For greater analysis of this topic, see also Lowell Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). Most recently, however, Robert D. Luginbill has argued that Thucydides' image of Pericles' is entirely illusory and that Pericles' strategy and personal connection to scandals in the early phases of the conflict was, in fact, the root cause of the Athenians' defeat in *Author of Illusions: Thucydides' Rewriting of the HIstory of the Peloponnesian War* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011). While this work has merit and must be considered as a new perspective on Thucydides' analysis of events, it does not alter the point in this dissertation; even if Thucydides is filtering events with an eye towards protecting those leaders he admires, even if he is entirely fabricating events to suit his needs, he is still pointing out the dangers present in his contemporary society to his reader. That is the point of this dissertation.

Scholarship on Thucydides' depiction of Hermocrates has been presented in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

encourages his allies to accept the dangers of expansion. Regardless of their point of view, both speakers provide Thucydides with an opportunity to demonstrate the dangers of the status dilemma to his reader from the perspective of the political leaders who are most influential in determining their *poleis*' course of action.

Thucydides' depiction of Pericles' speech on the Megarian Decree provides an example of just how keenly Greek leaders feared a perceived loss of status. He makes it clear that a perceived loss of status would result in even greater indignation against a *polis*.[3] In a speech to the Athenian assembly, designed to convince them that war with Sparta was necessary, Pericles makes it clear that any concession to Spartan demands would be an act of submission and completely unwarranted because of the might of the Athenian navy.[4] This attests to the weight Greek statesmen gave to their perceived status. Pericles argues that "if you give way [to the Spartans' demand to revoke the Megarian decree], you will instantly have to meet some greater demand, as having been frightened into obedience in the first instance."[5] Would a single concession actually be submissive behavior? Perhaps. And this is precisely the point: that a single concession *might* be perceived as an act of submission. That is the danger of the status dilemma. The Athenians cannot be perceived as having submitted – even once! – lest they lose status

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[3] Thuc. 1.144.1.

[4] Thuc. 1.140-143.

[5] Thuc. 1.140.5. G.E.M. de Ste. Croix provides a good overview and analysis of the issues surrounding the Megarian Decree and its importance as a causal factor in the war. See *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), 251-89. See also W.R. Connor, "Charinus' Megarian Decree," *American Journal of Philology* 83 (1962), 225-46; R.P. Legon, "The Megarian Decree and the Balance of Greek Naval Power," *Classical Philology* 68 (1973), 161-71; Charles Fornara, "Plutarch and the Megarian Decree," in Donald Kagan, ed. *Yale Classical Studies* 24 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 213-28; T.E. Wick, "Thucydides and the Megarian Decree," *Antiquité Classique* 46 (1977), 91-99; Raphael Sealey, "An Athenian Decree About the Megarians," *Georgica: Greek Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell* (University of London Institue of Classical Studies, 1991), 152-58.

and be forced to submit further. Only, as Thucydides has Pericles say, "a firm refusal will make them clearly understand that they must treat [Athens] as equals."[6]

Pericles also serves as an example of restraint. Thucydides has him speak out against the impulse his contemporaries felt to increase their *polis'* status. Later in the same speech. Thucydides has Pericles explain that he believes the Athenians can win the war if they do not give in to the culturally-driven urge to increase their power:

> Πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἔχω ἐς ἐλπίδα τοῦ περιέσεσθαι, ἢν ἐθέλητε ἀρχήν τε μὴ ἐπικτᾶσθαι ἅμα πολεμοῦντες καὶ κινδύνους αὐθαιρέτους μὴ προστίθεσθαι· μᾶλλον γὰρ πεφόβημαι τὰς οἰκείας ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίας ἢ τὰς τῶν ἐναντίων διανοίας.

> I have many other reasons to hope for a favorable outcome, if you can consent not to combine schemes of fresh conquest with the conduct of the war, and will abstain from willfully involving yourselves in other dangers; indeed, I am more afraid of our own blunders than of the enemy's devices (1.144.1).

While one might view fighting the war itself to be the dangerous aspect, in this instance that is not Thucydides' focus. He essentially places fighting the war in the background by encapsulating the idea in the present active participle, πολεμοῦντες, which might indicate continual action. Against this background, Thucydides highlights the danger of the security dilemma through his balanced use of two infinitives, ἐπικτᾶσθαι and προστίθεσθαι. The Athenians are going to fight a war, πολεμοῦντες; that is the underlying theme. Pericles' concern, however, is that the Athenians might try to attain more empire, *i.e.* power and resources, ἀρχήν τε μὴ ἐπικτᾶσθαι, and bring self-incurred

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[6] Thuc. 1.140.5.

dangers upon themselves, κινδύνους αὐθαιρέτους μὴ προστίθεσθαι.[7] The middle form of this infinitive, προστίθεσθαι, emphasizes that this choice would reflect back on the Athenians themselves as their status as a strong *polis* would flow from this increase in power. What scares Pericles is not the enemy's power, but the Athenians' own mistakes, ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίας. Thucydides uses Pericles' logic to show his reader the dangers of the security dilemma. Just when the Athenians should recognize the dangerous nature of their situation – they are soon to be fighting a war, πολεμοῦντες – a strong, restrained leader recognizes that the real danger lies in their concern for others' perception of their power. The real danger is the cultural necessity the Athenians will feel to expand their empire in order to convince others that their power has been in no way diminished by the war in progress.

Thucydides has Pericles offer the same assessment in a speech given in 430 to lead the Athenians to a "more hopeful state of mind" after the second Peloponnesian invasion had ravaged their lands and the plague had devastated those within the city walls.[8] He starts his speech with an appeal to the Athenians' patriotism and then reminds

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[7] Hornblower notes that the danger of trying to increase their empire is the cornerstone of Pericles' strategy for the war (1:230). See also George Cawkwell, "Thucydides' Judgment of Pericles' Strategy," *Yale Classical Studies* 24 (1975), 53-70; and *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Routledge. 1997), 43-5. Athanassios G. Platias and Constantinos Koliopoulos agree entirely with Thucydides' assessment of Pericles' potential success. See *Thucydides on Strategy: Grand Strategies in the Peloponnesian War and their Relevance Today* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 35-60. Robert D. Luginbill (2011) analyzes Pericles' strategy as "one of avoiding defeat rather than a true blueprint for victory, 76. He sees in Thucydides' presentation of this strategy – to which he can hardly believe the Athenians agreed – further distortion of the fact, especially as they concern the character of Sparta and Athens in general and Pericles in specific, 62-89. He argues that Pericles demonstrated "either poor foresight or very questionable leadership," 141. Regardless, Thucydides is here focused on the dangerous reality of trying to expand Athenian power under any circumstance.

[8] Thuc. 2.59.

the Athenians of the power of their navy and its ability to keep the city supplied.[9] A

constant theme, however, is the dire warning about the dangers of being overly concerned

with reputation. In one section, Thucydides has Pericles say:

> ὅμως δὲ πόλιν μεγάλην οἰκοῦντας καὶ ἐν ἤθεσιν
> ἀντιπάλοις αὐτῇ τεθραμμένους χρεὼν καὶ ξυμφοραῖς
> ταῖς μεγίσταις ἐθέλειν ὑφίστασθαι καὶ τὴν ἀξίωσιν μὴ
> ἀφανίζειν (ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι δικαιοῦσι τῆς τε
> ὑπαρχούσης δόξης αἰτιᾶσθαι ὅστις μαλακίᾳ ἐλλείπει
> καὶ τῆς μὴ προσηκούσης μισεῖν τὸν θρασύτητι
> ὀρεγόμενον), ἀπαλγήσαντας δὲ τὰ ἴδια τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς
> σωτηρίας ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι.

> Born, however, as you are citizens of a great state, and
> brought up, as you have been, with habits equal to your
> birth, you should be ready to face the greatest disasters and
> still to keep unimpaired the luster of your name. For the
> judgment of mankind is as relentless to the weakness that
> falls short of a recognized renown, as it is jealous of the
> arrogance that aspires higher than its due (2.61.4).

The standard against which men judge a state or individual is accrued renown,

ὑπαρχούσης δόξης. In other words, status counts. Men, according to Thucydides, see

status as a product of power and the standard which the holder must consistently achieve.

It is fragile, and requires constant living up to the standard. The "judgment of men is

relentless" and that is a threat. Though Thucydides makes no mention of danger in this

instance, he makes it plain to his reader that a *polis*' reputation is a powerful tool, about

which others are jealous and over which one must jealously guard.

Later in the speech, however, Thucydides makes the links to danger explicit. He

has Pericles make it clear that any perceived loss of power would be dangerous for

Athens. A reputation, once gained, must be maintained. He has Pericles say:

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[9] Thuc. 2.60-62.

μηδὲ νομίσαι περὶ ἑνὸς μόνου, δουλείας ἀντ' ἐλευθερίας, ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρχῆς στερήσεως καὶ κινδύνου ὧν ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ ἀπήχθεσθε. ἧς οὐδ' ἐκστῆναι ἔτι ὑμῖν ἔστιν, εἴ τις καὶ τόδε ἐν τῷ παρόντι δεδιὼς ἀπραγμοσύνῃ ἀνδραγαθίζεται· ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣν λαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον.

You should remember also that what you are fighting against is not merely slavery as an exchange for independence but also loss of empire and danger from the animosities incurred in its exercise. Besides, to recede is no longer possible, if indeed any of you in the alarm of the moment has become enamored of the honesty of such an unambitious part. For what you hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny; to take it perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is unsafe (2.63.1-2).

Here Thucydides explicates the danger of the dilemma facing the Athenians. Twice in these short sentences he incorporates words for danger: κινδύνου and ἐπικίνδυνον. Danger is, according the Thucydides, at the very heart of the problem facing the Athenians. They are caught in the horns of a dilemma. To maintain their empire, they must fight a dangerous war. To let go their empire, they would risk an appearance of weakness and accept the dangers of "animosities incurred." Letting go of the empire would result in violence against Athens as other *poleis* would become emboldened by their perception that Athens' power has been diminished. Furthermore, the idea of inactivity, ἀπραγμοσύνη, is viewed with contempt by Pericles himself. The Athenians are trapped by dangers which are essentially of their own making. Thucydides is trying to make plain the idea that a *polis'* reputation for power provides constant danger in its maintenance. Any perceived diminution of power encourages others to attempt a revision of the *status quo*.

What is interesting to note, however, is the awkward balance – almost a contrast – in the first part of this passage, μηδὲ νομίσαι περὶ ἑνὸς μόνου, δουλείας ἀντ' ἐλευθερίας, ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρχῆς στερήσεως καὶ κινδύνου. What they are fighting for, Pericles says, is not the difference between slavery and freedom, δουλείας ἀντ' ἐλευθερίας. They are fighting against the loss of empire and danger, ἀρχῆς στερήσεως καὶ κινδύνου. The two are not equal, hence the strong adversative ἀλλὰ. The difference might be subtle but it is powerful, and it is important to note that Thucydides makes it. Slavery and freedom are conceptual status labels that might just as easily be used in political speeches in order to brand one's opponents as being of low-birth.[10] What Thucydides is saying is that this is not *just* an issue of perceived status, whether Athens is to be considered free or beholden to another. Rather, ἀλλὰ, this is an issue of the loss of real power, ἀρχῆς στερήσεως, and the danger that will follow, κινδύνου. The danger, of course, is that those who were in Athens' power, can be expected to take advantage of any loss of that power and seek revenge.[11] Thucydides has written this section in such a way as to cause the reader to pause and analyze what is really being said. Where a quick perusal suggests that slavery and freedom are merely synonyms for danger and empire, they are actually much more than that. Slavery and freedom are status symbols, the assignment of which can lead to danger or power. That is the dilemma the Athenians face and the impulse by which they felt they had to be constantly ready to act against any perceived loss of status.

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[10] Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 270-79. See also M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Reprint 1999), esp. 35-61.

[11] Revenge has already been discussed as a dangerous aspect in the Greeks' ethos of honor and shame. See chapter 3.4 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame.

Thucydides' final assessment makes it clear that Pericles grasped the internal dangers of the status dilemma facing the Athenians. He highlights the advice Pericles gave to the Athenians warning them to control their appetite for greater power and reputation and to find a way to be satisfied with the *status quo* where others' perceptions of their reputation were concerned. Thucydides presents his reader with a summary of Pericles' advice at the start of the war:

> ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἡσυχάζοντάς τε καὶ τὸ ναυτικὸν θεραπεύοντας καὶ ἀρχὴν μὴ ἐπικτωμένους ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ μηδὲ τῇ πόλει κινδυνεύοντας ἔφη περιέσεσθαι· οἱ δὲ ταῦτά τε πάντα ἐς τοὐναντίον ἔπραξαν καὶ ἄλλα ἔξω τοῦ πολέμου δοκοῦντα εἶναι κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας φιλοτιμίας καὶ ἴδια κέρδη κακῶς ἔς τε σφᾶς αὐτοὺς καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἐπολίτευσαν, ἃ κατορθούμενα μὲν τοῖς ἰδιώταις τιμὴ καὶ ὠφελία μᾶλλον ἦν, σφαλέντα δὲ τῇ πόλει ἐς τὸν πόλεμον βλάβη καθίστατο.

> He told them to wait quietly, to pay attention to the marine, to attempt no new conquests, and to expose the city to no hazards during the war, and doing this, promised them a favorable result. What they did was the very contrary, allowing private ambitions and private interests, in matters apparently quite foreign to the war, to lead them into projects unjust both to themselves and to their allies – projects whose success would only conduce to the honor and advantage of private persons, and whose failure entailed certain disaster on the country in the war (2.65.7).

Thucydides notes that Pericles advised the Athenians to give up their ambition for greater power by "keeping quiet" or "being patient," ἡσυχάζοντάς.[12] As Gomme points out, this advice would be tough for any *polis* to follow, much less πολυπραγμοσύνη Athens.[13]

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[12] Gomme provides both phrases as translations which capture the sense of Pericles' advice, 2:191. P.J. Rhodes argues that ἡσυχάζοντάς certainly stands apart from any meaning of "avoiding trouble" though elsewhere it has connotations of maintaining neutrality, 2.72.1 and 6.18.2. See *Thucydides: History II* (Wiltshire, England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1988), 242.

[13] Gomme 2:191.

Thucydides inserts the phrase κινδυνεύοντας into Pericles' advice to show that it would be risky for the Athenians to conceive of expanding their empire, μὴ ἐπικτωμένους. Though Thucydides is not explicit, he is likely alluding to the Athenians' "fatal passion" for a Sicilian campaign.[14] There may indeed have been some rational, perhaps fiscal motivations, for further conquests and expansion of the Athenians' sphere of influence. A major factor, however, must have been the desire to convince other *poleis* that Athens would not hesitate to use its power to further its interests. Adding Sicily to the Athenians' sphere of influence would increase Athenian power and hence prestige. Prestige is the shadow of power; power comes first but status flows from it. Thucydides recognizes the cultural necessity that his contemporary Athenians felt to increase their power without giving proper consideration to the potential consequences. He also recognizes that at least one leader tried to warn the Athenians of this very danger. While Pericles could only theorize what might happen should the Athenians give in to their appetite for power (and a greater reputation), Thucydides knew how the story would to end, in the bloody mud of the Assinarus River.[15] His eulogy of Pericles is very much a case of "he told you so."

The Syracusan leader Hermocrates also understood the dangerous nature of the security dilemma on a macro-level and, perhaps more importantly, knew how to manipulate it in his *polis'* favor.[16] Hermocrates, according to Thucydides, knew that one way to gain real security would be to be perceived by others as having power. As such, he is portrayed as advising potential Sicilian allies to take actions which would cause them

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[14] Gomme 2:191.

[15] Thuc. 7.84.

[16] Thuc. 4.59-64 and 6.33-34.

to be perceived as powerful when, in fact, they may not have been as powerful as thought. Thucydides highlights this in his rendition of Hermocrates' speech at Gela in 424. He has Hermocrates say:

> οὐδεὶς γὰρ οὔτε ἀμαθίᾳ ἀναγκάζεται αὐτὸ δρᾶν, οὔτε φόβῳ, ἢν οἴηταί τι πλέον σχήσειν, ἀποτρέπεται. ξυμβαίνει δὲ τοῖς μὲν τὰ κέρδη μείζω φαίνεσθαι τῶν δεινῶν, οἱ δὲ τοὺς κινδύνους ἐθέλουσιν ὑφίστασθαι πρὸ τοῦ αὐτίκα τι ἐλασσοῦσθαι·

> No one is forced to engage in [war] by ignorance, or kept out of it by fear, if he fancies there is anything to be gained by it. To the former the gain appears greater than the danger, while the latter would rather stand the risk than put up with any immediate sacrifice (4.59.2).

Hermocrates argues that there are two reasons for choosing danger: to gain rewards, τὰ κέρδη, or to avoid the appearance of momentary weakness, πρὸ τοῦ αὐτίκα τι ἐλασσοῦσθαι.[17] According to Thucydides, it is this second category which is especially bleak: undergo dangers or accept becoming weaker in both power and status – a condition no less dangerous in the Greeks' competitive anarchy.[18] Thucydides has Hermocrates put forward this grim imagery to highlight the dangerous world, made all the more dangerous by *poleis*' concern for their reputation. Thucydides' description of the

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[17] A different translation for πρὸ τοῦ αὐτίκα τι ἐλασσοῦσθαι might be "a momentary weakness." This is the translation of the Loeb Classical Library edition of this text, trans. Charles Forster Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920). It reads "rather than submit to a temporary disadvantage" which is not fundamentally different from "momentary weakness." G.P. Landmann, however, argues against this and renders the meaning as "loss," completely opposed to τὰ κέρδη. See *Eine Rede des Thukydides: Die Friedesmahnung des hermokrates* (Lipsius and Tischer, 1932), loc. cit. 61.3.

[18] Eckstein (2006) presents an in-depth analysis of the competitive anarchy in Classical Greece, 37-78.

world often has only two dangerous options: war or weakness.[19] Presented in

Hermocrates' words as a choice, it is, in fact, no choice at all; states simply exist between

conditions of danger and *poleis* must be concerned with the appearance of weakness or be

prepared to suffer the consequences.[20] That defines the danger of the security dilemma.

Reputation is a product of power, which can only be gained by engaging in danger. But

attempting to avoid danger diminishes a *polis*' reputation for power. This leads to a real

loss of security and an increase in danger.

Later in this same speech, Thucydides shows that Hermocrates believes that some

danger is necessary, perhaps even desirable, and there is a way for a state to benefit from

the security dilemma. The end of his speech reinforces the idea that states cannot avoid

danger because they are believe they must either expand, or risk the appearance of

weakness. Thucydides has Hermocrates present the assembled delegates with two

dangerous options, only one of which has obvious benefits:

> Καίτοι τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἑκάστους, εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, χρὴ τὰ
> μὴ προσήκοντα ἐπικτωμένους μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ ἑτοῖμα
> βλάπτοντας ξυμμάχους τε ἐπάγεσθαι καὶ τοὺς
> κινδύνους προσλαμβάνειν.

> And yet as sensible men, if we call in allies and court
> danger, it should be in order to enrich our different
> countries with new acquisitions, and not to ruin what they
> possess already (4.61.1).

Thucydides reinforces the notion that the two possible outcomes in the status dilemma

are both defined by taking on danger, τοὺς κινδύνους προσλαμβάνειν. The state either

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[19] One notable exception is Corcyra which remained neutral and at peace for most of the fifth century (1.32.4). One might argue, however, that this is because they were powerful enough and maintained their reputation for powerr to such an extent that they were able to fend for themselves, the "self-help regime."

[20] On the dangerous state of nature, see Chapter 2.1 Κίνδυνος and the General State of Nature.

gains power or loses it; there is no middle ground of power maintenance. This is the crux of the security dilemma; issues of power determine actions among various *poleis*. Hermocrates, however, has the ability to see the Sicels as a whole and unite them with this dilemma as if they were not a temporary congress of otherwise autonomous *poleis*.[21] Internal conflicts will only wear them all out in terms of real power while Athens watches and waits. Hermocrates believes this to be exactly what Athens wants and Thucydides has him say "we may expect when they see us worn out, that they will one day come with a larger armament, and seek to bring all of us into subjection."[22] The Sicilian *poleis* are going to risk their real power by fighting. Hermocrates wants them to engage the Athenians together so they can increase their power and safety throughout the Hellenic world.[23] To do otherwise only gives Athens the ability to wait for the moment when the Athenians perceive the power of the Sicels to be diminished. At that moment, with reduced status, the Syracusans' own security will also be reduced and they will be unable to withstand the Athenian invasion.

Thucydides uses Hermocrates' speech at Syracuse in 415 to show his reader how a shrewd leader might use the status dilemma for his *polis'* advantage. He has Hermocrates explain why the Athenians are choosing to attack Syracuse now and what the most effective defense might be:

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[21] This is related to the role of intervention in Thucydides' contemporary society. See Chapter 3.3.

[22] Thuc. 4.60.2.

[23] Patrick Coby interprets this is a statement that the weak are not required to submit, but entitled to band together to make themselves equal and increase their security. See "Enlightened Self-Interest in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydidean Speakers on the Right of the Stronger and Inter-State Peace," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24 (1991), 75.

ἀγγελλοίμεθα δ' ἂν εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι ἐπὶ τὸ πλέον· τῶν δ'
ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ αἱ γνῶμαι ἵστανται,
καὶ τοὺς προεπιχειροῦντας ἢ τοῖς γε ἐπιχειροῦσι
προδηλοῦντας ὅτι ἀμυνοῦνται μᾶλλον πεφόβηνται,
ἰσοκινδύνους ἡγούμενοι. ὅπερ ἂν νῦν Ἀθηναῖοι
πάθοιεν. ἐπέρχονται γὰρ ἡμῖν ὡς οὐκ ἀμυνουμένοις,
δικαίως κατεγνωκότες ὅτι αὐτοὺς οὐ μετὰ
Λακεδαιμονίων ἐφθείρομεν· εἰ δ' ἴδοιεν παρὰ γνώμην
τολμήσαντας, τῷ ἀδοκήτῳ μᾶλλον ἂν καταπλαγεῖεν ἢ
τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς δυνάμει.

We should also be reported, I am certain, as more numerous
than we really are, and men's minds are affected by what
they hear. Besides, the first to attack, or to show that they
mean to defend themselves against an attack, inspire
greater fear because men see that they are ready for the
emergency. This would be precisely the case with the
Athenians at present. They are now attacking us in the
belief that we shall not resist, having a right to judge us
severely because we did not help the Spartans to destroy
them; but if they were to see us showing a courage for
which they are not prepared, they would be more dismayed
by the surprise than they could ever be by our actual power
(6.34.7-9).

The Athenians, he says, are attacking because they sense some weakness in the

Syracusans' earlier unwillingness to help the Spartans, ὅτι αὐτοὺς οὐ μετὰ

Λακεδαιμονίων ἐφθείρομεν. A dangerous perception of weak will has worked against

Syracuse as the Athenians attack out of contempt for Syracuse's perceived weakness.

Thucydides is showing that a display of weak will can lead to a real physical attack. Yet,

according to Thucydides' depiction, Hermocrates believes the Syracusans can actually

use the security dilemma to their advantage. They need to appear strong by launching a

well justified preemptive attack.[24] Even though the Syracusans are relatively unprepared,

an aggressive strike would both represent justifiable action and earn them the perception

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[24] E.F. Bloedow argues that Hermocrates advice was sound and represents rational military planning in "Hermocrates' Strategy Against the Athenians in 415 B.C." *Ancient History Bulletin* 7 (1993), 115-24. Hunt (2010) argues that preemptive action was considered justifiable in Thucydides' time, 150-53.

of strength and, in Hermocrates' analysis, real security. The unexpected show of strength would shock the Athenians more than the Syracusans' actual strength, τῷ ἀδοκήτῳ μᾶλλον ἂν καταπλαγεῖεν ἢ τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς δυνάμει. This highlights the security dilemma: the Syracusans can gain real security through a false image of power and willpower. Hermocrates sees this opportunity and advises his fellow Syracusans to take advantage of what is normally a dangerous dilemma but Thucydides is just trying to remind his reader just how dangerous the reputation for power might be. It can mislead *poleis* with either a false perception of weakness, or a false image of power. Either can lead to dangerous, aggressive action.

3.5.4 Internal Dangers of Reputation and Power: The "Peripheral" Perspective

While previous sections have dealt with the perspective of powerful states and specific leaders from within those powerful states, this final section focuses on the perspective of *poleis* which might be considered second- or even third-tier powers in the major struggle between Athens and Sparta. These states, perhaps even more so than the major powers, appear in Thucydides' analysis to have been ruthlessly opportunistic in the exploitation of perceived weakness by more powerful *poleis*.[1] Their examples serve to remind Thucydides' reader that the security dilemma can be all the more dangerous when one accounts for the long-standing hunger of less-powerful states for their own chance at autonomy and increased power, if not dominance.

Part of Thucydides' analysis of the Mytilenean Debate of 427 underscores the internal danger of the Greeks' security dilemma by arguing that if a state shows mercy, or even only justice that is perceived to be less severe than expected, that state can expect to face danger from every direction. The Mytilenean Debate has been discussed elsewhere.[2] So a few details will suffice to put this particular aspect of the speech in context. After highlighting the Athenians inconsistency in policy matters and their tendency to be distracted by clever rhetoric, Thucydides writes that Cleon tried to prove that no one had harmed the Athenians more than the Mytileneans.[3] The Mytileneans were the worst sort of offenders because they revolted while still in possession of their navy, their walls, and

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[1] This does not oppose Wohlforth's (2009) argument that second-tier states "grudgingly acknowledge" the power of those states above them. In fact, this is very much in keeping with his analysis both the "peaceful rise" of China's power and second-tier states "preference for a flat hierarchy," 54-57.

[2] See 3.3.2 Internal Dangers of Intervention: Perceived Ties of "Fictive" Kinship.

[3] Thuc. 3.37-3.39.1.

their fundamental autonomy.[4] They committed, according to Thucydides' Cleon, an act of unwarranted aggression and Athens' reputation as a powerful *polis* would be diminished should they not respond harshly. This would lead to an increase in the external dangers facing Athens from opportunistic *poleis*. Thucydides has Cleon say:

> τῶν τε ξυμμάχων σκέψασθε εἰ τοῖς τε ἀναγκασθεῖσιν ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων καὶ τοῖς ἑκοῦσιν ἀποστᾶσι τὰς αὐτὰς ζημίας προσθήσετε, τίνα οἴεσθε ὅντινα οὐ βραχείᾳ προφάσει ἀποστήσεσθαι, ὅταν ἢ κατορθώσαντι ἐλευθέρωσις ᾖ ἢ σφαλέντι μηδὲν παθεῖν ἀνήκεστον; ἡμῖν δὲ πρὸς ἑκάστην πόλιν ἀποκεκινδυνεύσεται τά τε χρήματα καὶ αἱ ψυχαί, καὶ τυχόντες μὲν πόλιν ἐφθαρμένην παραλαβόντες τῆς ἔπειτα προσόδου, δι' ἣν ἰσχύομεν, τὸ λοιπὸν στερήσεσθε, σφαλέντες δὲ πολεμίους πρὸς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἕξομεν, καὶ ὃν χρόνον τοῖς νῦν καθεστηκόσι δεῖ ἐχθροῖς ἀνθίστασθαι, τοῖς οἰκείοις ξυμμάχοις πολεμήσομεν.

> 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 (3.39.7-8).

The question at hand does not concern the Mytileneans' innocence or guilt. Even Cleon's opposition, Diodotus, admitted that they are guilty.[5] The question is what sort of punishment would most benefit Athens. Where Cleon argued for extermination of the

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[4] Thuc. 3.39.2.

[5] Thuc. 3.44.1-2.

male population and enslavement of the women and children, Diodotus wanted only to put the ringleaders on trial.[6] Several issues are involved in this debate but this particular section of Cleon's speech highlights the Greeks' concern over perceived willpower as an element of power or perceived power and hence (indirectly) status. If any mercy is shown, according to Cleon, the Athenian state could expect to waste its money and lives in constant struggle against other states which will perceive the moment of mercy as a moment of weakness and launch their own attacks on the once powerful Athenians. The issue is of such importance that Cleon later counseled the Athenians either to punish the Mytileneans severely or to give up their empire and resort to philanthropy, ἢ παύεσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι.[7] This is, perhaps, hyperbolic; no one expected the Athenians to transform their empire into a benevolent society.[8] But the deeper message is clear. Thucydides' Cleon argued that the perception is reality: perceived power results in strength and perceived weakness – including weakness of willpower – results in danger. The Athenians must either act to augment their power and reputation for violence or concede their empire and security. The security dilemma is the basis for Creon's argument that only the most violent option will help Athens maintain its reputation for power and – more importantly – its willingness to use that power.

To understand just how accurately Cleon analyzed perceived power, one has to look no further than Thucydides' analysis of the aftershocks from the Athenian disaster in Sicily. When news of the the Athenian force's destruction reached Athens, the Athenians

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[6] Thuc. 3.48.1

[7] Thuc. 3.40.4.

[8] David Cohen calls the conclusion to this idea the "crudest sort of sophistic reasoning in "Justice, Interest and Political Deliberation in Thucydides," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura* 16 (1984), 48.

were "seized by a fear and consternation quite without precedent."[9] To have lost so much

of their military power in one operation nearly drove them to despair. Thucydides writes,

however, that they acted prudently and immediately carried certain resolutions into effect

to preserve their remaining power and to rebuild their fleet as best they could.[10] Among

other *poleis*, however, Thucydides highlights examples of the powerful influence of the

perceived loss of power. Thucydides describes the emotions felt across the Hellenic world

at the perception that Athens was no longer strong. His description of the emotional

response that gripped various *poleis* after the Athenian disaster helps the reader

understand exactly *why* there was such a cultural necessity to project a reputation for

power even when the *polis* suffers a real loss of power.

The reader is struck that so many Greeks were immediately carried away by the

change in the *status quo*, εὐθὺς <u>οἱ Ἕλληνες πάντες</u> ἐπηρμένοι ἦσαν.[11] The neutral

poleis were ready to march against Athens, believing Athens would have marched against

them eventually.[12] Athens' subjects, on the other hand, "showed a readiness to revolt even

beyond their ability, judging the circumstances with passion."[13] As for the Spartans, the

Athenian disaster caused them to "throw themselves without reserve into the war.[14] It is

in this part of the analysis that Thucydides shows how dangerous the security dilemma

could be for his contemporaries. He writes:

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[9] Thuc. 8.1.2.

[10] Thuc. 8.1.4.

[11] Thuc. 8.2.1.

[12] Thuc. 8.2.1.

[13] Thuc. 8.2.1.

[14] Thuc. 8.2.4.

> πανταχόθεν τε εὐέλπιδες ὄντες ἀπροφασίστως ἅπτεσθαι διενοοῦντο τοῦ πολέμου, λογιζόμενοι καλῶς τελευτήσαντος αὐτοῦ κινδύνων τε τοιούτων ἀπηλλάχθαι ἂν τὸ λοιπὸν οἷος καὶ ὁ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων περιέστη ἂν αὐτούς, εἰ τὸ Σικελικὸν προσέλαβον, καὶ καθελόντες ἐκείνους αὐτοὶ τῆς πάσης Ἑλλάδος ἤδη ἀσφαλῶς ἡγήσεσθαι.

> With these reasons for confidence in every quarter, the Spartans now resolved to throw themselves without reserve into the war considering that, once it was happily terminated, they would be finally delivered from such dangers as that which would have threatened them from Athens, if she had become mistress of Sicily, and that the overthrow of the Athenians would leave them in quiet enjoyment of the supremacy over all Hellas (8.2.4).

From a certain perspective, this analysis makes little sense. How was it that Sparta had been at war with Athens for the past fourteen years and only now could they be resolved to "throw themselves without reserve" into the effort? What has changed? The change, of course, is obvious: there has been a transition in the balance sheet of power between the great *poleis* and this particular moment is one fraught with both danger and potential gain.[15] From the perspective of other *poleis*, Athens has lost its reputation for power even though Thucydides notes that they were taking appropriate measures and were fully prepared to "last out the coming summer." They had the winter to refit the fleet and reorganize their power.[16] But their reputation for power had been damaged, which increases the threats they faced. This is why Thucydides puts danger, κινδύνων τε τοιούτων, in the foreground. The Spartans thought themselves free of the dangers they

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[15] This situation is what Eckstein refers to as a "power transition crisis." See Eckstein (2006), 24-26.

[16] Thucydides points to the power of Athens' democracy to be "as prudent as possible" (8.1.4). He hints that other states were being irrational when they were "refusing even to hear of the Athenians being able to last out the coming summer" (8.2.2).

feared should the Athenians have been victorious in Sicily. They were therefore ready to incur greater danger now in an effort to increase their establish steadfast hegemony over all Hellas, αὐτοὶ τῆς πάσης Ἑλλάδος ἤδη ἀσφαλῶς ἡγήσεσθαι. That is why Thucydides sees the relationship between power and reputation as being so dangerous: where one *polis*' power was perceived to decline, others could be expected to seize the opportunity to improve their own, even if their initial perceptions are exaggerated. Athens' loss of power did not lead to an armistice or peaceful resolution. Thucydides highlights that it led to even more violent aggression as Sparta sought to increase its security, ἀσφαλῶς, the exact opposite of the situation Thucydides postulates as the "truest cause of war." [17] Thucydides is showing that the perception of power and was "zero sum." [18] The loss of Athenian power provided a potential increase for other *poleis*. This potential, in Thucydides' analysis, is practically felt as a cultural necessity from which his contemporaries were hard pressed to escape.

Thucydides later presents a more specific image of the danger the Athenians experienced as a result of their reduced power and the resultant diminution of their reputation. In the winter of 413/2, some impatient Chians prepared to revolt from Athens.[19] By the summer of 412, their preparations were ready and, though most of the Chians had been unaware of the rebellious goings-on, they were finally urged on to

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[17] Thuc. 1.23.5-6. For detailed analysis, see 1.2.4 Thucydides 1.23.5-6: A Realist Perspective

[18] This is consistent with modern international relations scholars such as Daniel Markey who sees prestige as a component of political interaction in which "one actor's gain is everyone else's loss" (157-8). Wohlforth (2009) agrees that "high status is … inherently scare and competitions for status tend to be zero sum" (30).

[19] Thuc. 8.5.4-5.

revolution by the arrival of the Athenian exile Alcibiades.[20] When the Chians revolted,

according to Thucydides, the Athenians recognized the synergy between this real loss of

power and the further loss of their reputation should the news spread to others.

Thucydides writes:

> … ἐς δὲ τὰς Ἀθήνας ταχὺ ἀγγελία τῆς Χίου
> ἀφικνεῖται· καὶ νομίσαντες μέγαν ἤδη καὶ σαφῆ τὸν
> κίνδυνον σφᾶς περιεστάναι, καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς
> ξυμμάχους οὐκ ἐθελήσειν τῆς μεγίστης πόλεως
> μεθεστηκυίας ἡσυχάζειν…

> News of Chios speedily reached Athens. The Athenians
> thought the danger by which they were now menaced was
> great and unmistakable, and that the rest of their allies
> would not consent to keep quiet after the secession of the
> greatest of their number (8.15.1).

The blow to Athenian power was certainly much more than a symbolic or perceived loss

of power; the Chians contributed a not insignificant portion of the Athenian naval power

at this point in the war.[21] While the Chians themselves may have had power enough to

think about overthrowing Athenian domination along the Ionian coast, the same cannot

be said of other allies, τοὺς λοιποὺς ξυμμάχους. But they would be emboldened not by

their own strength, but by their skewed perception of Athens' weakness. They are similar

to those Thucydides described earlier as showing "a readiness to revolt even beyond their

ability."[22] The danger in this instance is two-fold: the external danger of the Chians'

actual revolution and the internal danger caused by the ripple effect of the Chians'

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[20] Thuc. 8.14.1-2. This incident enters into the debate over the popularity of the Athenian empire. T.J. Quinn argues that what is often seen as "pro-Athenian feeling" is actually just "fear of Athens" and does not believe that the Chians welcomed Athenian domination. See "Political Groups at Chios: 412 B.C." *Historia* 18 (1969), 30.

[21] For a summary of Thucydides account of Athenian naval power and the contribution of the allies, specifically the Chians, see Gomme 5:27-32.

[22] Thuc. 8.2.2.

revolution. Other *poleis* would see that the Chians have revolted and their misperception of the true nature of Athenian power might lead them to act for the fulfillment of their desire for freedom. The Athenians, according to Thucydides, rightly feared more rebellions if they showed weakness. They recognized the potential for an increasing cycle of dangerous revolution as each new revolt further diminished Athenian power and emboldened still more *poleis*. As a result "no effort was spared" in the Athenian response to this single revolution.[23] Thucydides narrates this entire incident in such a way as to focus his reader on the reality of the dangers from the security dilemma. The Athenians recognized that their perceived loss of power would incite other *poleis* to revise the *status quo* and increase their own standing in the interstate community. Thucydides reader, at this point in the narrative, recognizes that the Athenians would have perceived only one appropriate response for Athens: to spare no effort in regaining its status. They must engage with the dangers of the Chian revolution, thereby exposing themselves to further loss to their already-diminished military power, or accept increased threats from other *poleis* who perceive their willingness to allow the Chians to revolt as an indicator of their diminished power.

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[23] Thuc. 8.15.2.

3.5.5 Κίνδυνος and the Security Dilemma: Conclusion

In this section I have analyzed Thucydides' concern for the dangers inherent in the Greeks' concern for reputation and the security dilemma as I have defined it. This dilemma, as I have argued, arose from the Greeks' perception of their own and others' reputation as an accurate indicator of real power. It was often a compelling factor as states made decisions in the anarchy of Greek interstate relations. From their perspective, any perceived loss of power would be realized as an actual loss of power and an increase in threats to survival. This resulted in a culturally driven impulse for Greeks to act in defense of their reputation for power. Thucydides, without the benefit of modern theory on interstate relations and political leadership understood the dilemma facing his contemporaries and used the term κίνδυνος to highlight the internally generated dangers which resulted from this dilemma as it impelled his contemporaries to act in defense of their reputations. Using Greek tragedy to define the problem as it was understood by Thucydides' contemporaries, I analyzed examples from Thucydides' writing which fell into three main categories: the "powerful perspective" of first-tier *poleis*, the "personal perspective" of key leaders in the war, and the "peripheral perspective" of second-tier *poleis*. These categories, however, demonstrate a consistent theme: Thucydides understood the dangers inherent in a society in which a reputation for power is a determining factor of physical security. He used the term κίνδυνος to shape his reader's perception of the potential for internally generated dangers as states act more aggressively out of concern for the perception of their reputation for power and the willingness to use that power than the long term consequences of their actions.

3.6 <u>Internal Dangers: General Conclusion</u>

In this chapter I have argued that Thucydides recognized certain forms of danger which arose from certain non-rational aspects of his contemporary society in which individuals and states tended to respond violently to instances of perceived disrespect or situations of perceived dishonor, or the fear of appearing weak and unmanly. I referred to these forms of danger throughout as "internal dangers" and showed how Thucydides presents them as part of the human condition which drives men to contend with one another in indignation over perceived slights, insults, disrespect, and threats to honor or status. I analyzed the ways in which Thucydides highlights various aspects of these internal dangers to provide an education to future statesmen in the lesser recognized dangers created by non-rational emotional reaction to difficult external circumstances among his contemporaries. The analysis focused on four major areas. First, I showed how Thucydides uses κίνδυνος to highlight the dangers inherent in his contemporaries' proclivity for quick, often violent action with little consideration of possible outcomes or other solutions. Second, I discussed how this tendency to act created a culture in which intervention in the affairs of other states was not merely considered normal, but even moral, as well as a vital expression of power in order to insure survival in the anarchic international system. Third, I presented examples in which Thucydides demonstrates for his reader the potential dangers inherent in a society founded upon concepts of honor and shame. And fourth, I highlighted Thucydides' awareness of the "security dilemma" as defined not by political scientists, but by examining the overwhelming concern Greeks had for their reputation and others' perceptions that they were willing to use their power against others. Thucydides' message to his reader, however, has been the constant theme

among the seemingly disparate aspects of internal danger. Throughout his narrative,

Thucydides highlights κίνδυνος in his analysis to guide his reader towards a didactic

message: the only way to mitigate danger is to eschew the traditional, emotional approach

to interstate competition and violence in favor of a more rational approach to interstate

relations leading if not to success, then at least to survival.

Chapter 4: Old Passages, New Readings / Old Dangers, New Awareness

4.1 General Introduction

Having provided a detailed analysis of the various ways in which Thucydides relies on the term κίνδυνος to demonstrate the several kinds of dangers (both external and internal) that are ever-present for his contemporary readers, it is now possible to realize the valuable potential of this sort of detailed study: providing the modern reader with the tools to allow for a more nuanced perspective on Thucydides' narrative. To demonstrate this, I will use this section to examine two key passages, the Mytilenean Debate and the Melian Dialogue, through the lens of κίνδυνος. That is to say, in this section I will take the modern reader through these famous texts in order to show just how varied are the ways in which Thucydides weaves the concepts of danger, both external and internal, into his narrative. Thucydides relies heavily on decisive moments in the war such as these to demonstrate for his reader the complex nature of the dangers facing his contemporaries and the synergy that exists between the two, as internally-generated urges often compound the external dangers already present in his dangerous world. In both passages I will argue what I have argued throughout this dissertation: Thucydides uses stark images of danger to guide his reader towards his didactic message that the only way to mitigate danger is to embrace a more rational approach to interstate relations by restraining the emotionally-driven urges which often make success, or even survival, difficult in Thucydides' world.

4.2 <u>The Mytilenean Debate: A New Interpretation</u>

While simultaneously dealing with the Peloponnesians' annual invasion of Attica

in 428, the Athenians were suddenly forced to respond to the revolt of one of their allies,

the Mytileneans.[1] Though the revolt lasted nearly a year, in the end hunger compelled the

Mytileneans to come to terms with Athens.[2] When the leaders of the revolt were captured

and sent to Athens to face punishment, the assembly initially decided to execute the entire

male population of Mytilene and to enslave all the women and children.[3] The following

day, however, brought with it a sense of repentance and regret on the "horrid cruelty" of

such a decree, leading the Athenians to a second assembly to reconsider; they responded

with another round of debate.[4] At this assembly, Thucydides says there was much

expression of opinion on both sides, but he focuses his narrative on the speeches of two

leading politicians, Cleon and Diodotus.[5] Though these two speeches are often seen

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[1] Thuc. 3.1-5.

[2] Thuc. 3.27-38. Details of the revolt and the literature which explains the military aspects of this situation as well as its impact on the debate concerning the popularity of the Athenian Empire have been provided in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

[3] Thuc. 3.36.2. Both the proposed genocide and the subsequent revised punishment, death to the ringleaders and significant punitive measures against Mytilenean autonomy, relate to Aristotle's idea that the city-space was one of the defining aspects of *polis* identity. Its loss would essentially signal extinction for the *polis* as a whole. Claudia Zatta explores this concept in depth in "Conflict, People, and City-Space: Some Exempla from Thucydides' *History*," *Classical Antiquity* 30 (October, 2011), 318-350.

[4] Thuc. 3.36.4-6. Orwin calls this a "massive moral hangover" in "The Just and the Advantageous in Thucydides: The Case of the Mytilenian Debate," *The American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 486. Daniel Boyarin argues that Thucydides' comments upon this decision to reconsider the original decree makes it "quite clear where his own sympathies lie;" he is opposed to the initial decision and has "contempt" for Cleon and his argument. See "Deadly Dialogue: Thucydides with Plato," *Representations* 117 (Winter, 2012), 72. Adriaan Lanni, however, argues that genocides such as these were more about the changing nature of warfare, i.e. the shift to "total war," and did not reflect any unique violation of the accepted laws of war. See "The Laws of War in Ancient Greece," *Law and History Review* 26 (Fall, 2008), 469-89.

[5] Thuc. 3.36.6. Cleon's speech: 3.37-40; Diodotus' speech: 3.42-48.

merely as a study on the values of justice versus expediency, it is also clear that

Thucydides weaves in his conception of the various forms of danger facing Athens at this

critical juncture in the war.[6] Though he does not always explicitly use κίνδυνος, he is

nevertheless demonstrating to his reader the potential for existing external forms of

danger to be exacerbated by internally-generated reactions and urges, especially for

violent action for the maintenance of Athens' reputation as a *polis* more than willing to

use its power.[7]

Thucydides first presents the speech of Cleon, the most violent and influential of

the citizens at the time.[8] This speech, by painting a less-than-flattering image of the

Athenians' ability to rule their empire, allows Thucydides to showcase the enormous

pressures facing the Athenians, which may very well have contributed to their defeat in

the war.[9] By providing a close analysis of the ways in which Thucydides incorporates

images of danger into Cleon's speech, I will show that his characterization of Cleon

points to the ways in which internally-generated dangers might work in synergy with

external dangers to increase the threats to the Athenians' empire. Thucydides' Cleon

wants the Athenians to act violently and decisively even though there is great uncertainty

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[6] Scholarship on the concepts of justice and expedience is presented in 2.4 Κίνδυνος and Profit Maximizing Behavior.

[7] Ryan Balot argues that these speeches, especially Cleon's, allows Thucydides to show how speakers can "manipulate the dangerous potentialities of the Athenian character to produce devastating practical effects." See "The Dark Side of Democratic Courage," *Social Research* 71 (Spring, 2004), 89.

[8] Thuc. 3.36.6. The scholarship on Thucydides' generally negative appraisal of Cleon's character has been presented in 3.2.2 Thucydides Defines Greek "Ethos of Action."

[9] A. Andrewes notes that the Athenian Empire "was not just a moral problem about aggression," but also an adminstrative problem simply to maintain. See "The Mytilene Debate: Thucydides 3.36-49," *Phoenix* (16 (1962), 83.

about the outcome; the ways in which Cleon diminishes the rational element in Athenian debate are clear from Thucydides' characterization of this speech.[10]

This message is clear from the opening section of his speech. Thucydides has Cleon call for action from the start of his remarks. He has Cleon conclude his opening statement with the following:

> ὡς οὖν χρὴ καὶ ἡμᾶς ποιοῦντας μὴ δεινότητι καὶ ξυνέσεως ἀγῶνι ἐπαιρομένους παρὰ δόξαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ πλήθει παραινεῖν.

> Thus, then, we ought to act and not be so excited by eloquence and combat of wits as to advise the Athenian people contrary to our own judgment (3.37.5).

Thucydides' Cleon clearly wanted the Athenians to give in to their innate urge to act and explicitly calls on them to do so. In other words, his basic recipe for justice is simple: "don't count to ten" before acting.[11] But how does he make this point? He builds up to it with a clear exposition of the dangers he believes the Athenians will face if they do not act promptly and harshly, dangers which will arise if they appear weak to others by their inaction.

Thucydides first has Cleon explain to the Athenians that he believes they are ignorant of the dangers which exist in terms of other *poleis*. They are, in his opinion, unaware of the dangers which can arise from being perceived as weak by other *poleis*, even those with whom Athens is allied.

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[10] Andrewes (1962) argues that Cleon "diminished the rational element in Athenian debate," 84-5. Gerald M. Mara argues that Cleon actually "looks to the passions as the only reliable basis for identifying human interests and for settling conflicts between interest and justice." See "Thucydides and Plato on Democracy and Trust," *The Journal of Politics* 63 (2001), 826.

[11] Orwin (1984), 487.

διὰ γὰρ τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ἀδεὲς καὶ ἀνεπιβούλευτον πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἐς τοὺς ξυμμάχους τὸ αὐτὸ ἔχετε, καὶ ὅτι ἂν ἢ λόγῳ πεισθέντες ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἁμάρτητε ἢ οἴκτῳ ἐνδῶτε, οὐκ ἐπικινδύνως ἡγεῖσθε ἐς ὑμᾶς καὶ οὐκ ἐς τὴν τῶν ξυμμάχων χάριν μαλακίζεσθαι...

The fact is that, because your daily life is unaffected by fear and intrigue in your relations to each other, you have the same attitude towards your allies also, and you forget that whenever you are led into error by their representations or yield out of pity, your weakness involves you in danger and does not win the gratitude of your allies (3.37.2).

In other words, according to Thucydides' Cleon, the Athenians' stable democracy "fosters the fantasy of security." [12] In this early stage of the war, the relative freedom from intra-*polis* danger the Athenian citizens felt was fundamentally the same as it had been when Pericles praised the city in his Funeral Oration.[13] Certainly this debate occurs at a relatively early phase of the war and Cleon is still correct in that there is less danger in intra-polis relations than Thucydides shows will develop as the war proceeds.[14]

More explicit, however, is Cleon's manipulation of the internally-generated urge for the Athenians to protect their reputation as a *polis* willing to use its superior power against other *poleis* – and hence their safety.[15] He argues that the Athenians are not considering just how dangerously any perception of weakness will affect their reputation as a powerful *polis*, οὐκ ἐπικινδύνως ἡγεῖσθε. Any appearance the Athenians give of

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[12] James A. Andrewes, "Cleon's Hidden Appeals (Thucydides 3.37-40)," *The Classical Quarterly* 50 (2000), 51.

[13] Thuc. 3.37.2. Gomme notes that this peace of mind stands in contrast to the tyrant's anxiety and sleeplessness as Sophocles depicts it in *Oedipus Tyrranos* (584-6), 2:299.

[14] Cogan (1981) establishes several phases of the war with respect to various ideologies of leaders and the ways in which they affected the citizens. The idea that intra-polis danger developed as the war proceeded has been discussed previously in this dissertation. See 2.2.2 Danger: A Constant Within the Polis.

[15] Thuc. 3.37.2

"yielding out of pity" will appear to the allies not as magnanimity to be respected, but as weakness to be exploited. The Athenians, according to Cleon, are bringing danger on themselves by entertaining the notion of being merciful. The danger, though, is not the loss of status but what follows from loss of ferocious reputation: the loss of influence and the danger of attack. The only guarantor of security in Cleon's assessment is an aggressive display of violent action. Thus Thucydides highlights the synergy between external and internal dangers; the Athenians' concern for status can be manipulated to the point that they choose a more destructive path when a less destructive option – the one on which they eventually settle – is available to them.

He follows this up by reinforcing Pericles' earlier idea that the Athenians' empire is held together by fear and their danger will increase if that fear diminishes.[16] If their reputation for violence is diminished, threats to their empire will increase. The Athenians, in Thucydides' rendition of Cleon's speech, need to be reminded that their power will be at risk if others are not afraid of them. He has Cleon say:

> ... οὐ σκοποῦντες ὅτι τυραννίδα ἔχετε τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ πρὸς ἐπιβουλεύοντας αὐτοὺς καὶ ἄκοντας ἀρχομένους, οἳ οὐκ ἐξ ὧν ἂν χαρίζησθε βλαπτόμενοι αὐτοὶ ἀκροῶνται ὑμῶν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ὧν ἂν ἰσχύι μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ ἐκείνων εὐνοίᾳ περιγένησθε.

> For you do not reflect that the empire you hold is a despotism imposed upon subjects who, for their part, do intrigue against you and submit to your rule against their

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[16] Thuc. 2.63.1-2. Pericles' idea that danger is at the heart of the problem for the Athenian empire is discussed in 3.5.3 Internal Dangers of Status: The "Personal" Perspective. Mabel Lang points to the different ways in which Pericles and Cleon manipulated the Athenians' feelings of either pride or fear even though they often espoused similar policies. See "Cleon as the Anti-Pericles," *Classical Philology* 67 (1972), esp. 162. Sara S. Monoson and Michael Loriaux also point to the similarities between Cleon and Pericles, both in leadership style and strategic advice, in "The Illusion of Power and the Disruption of Moral Norms: Thucydides' Critique of Periclean Policy," *The American Political Science Review* 92 (1998), 285-97, esp. 287.

> will, who render obedience, not because of any kindnesses you may do them to your own hurt, but because of such superiority as you may have established by reason of your strength rather than of their goodwill (3.37.2).

Cleon makes it clear to the Athenians that their subjects do not follow them willingly or because of any kindnesses done in the past. Power motivates them to stay in line, nothing else. Thucydides shows Cleon preying on the Athenians' fears and insecurities in order to win his argument for immediate, violent action.[17] The allies respect the Athenians' strength more than any display of goodwill or mercy, ἰσχύι μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ ἐκείνων εὐνοίᾳ, which might be seen as an act of "unmanly compassion." [18]Thus it is that he cautions the Athenians to be wary of choosing any course of action that is not exceptionally vivid in its demonstration of Athenian power. To do otherwise – to submit to the "internal danger" of feelings of compassion (!) – would be, according to Thucydides' Cleon, tantamount to exposing real weakness; the consequence would be external dangers of further rebellion from their allies upon Athens.

Thus Thucydides has Cleon finish this section of the speech with such a strong call to action, contrary to what the Athenians' "moral hangover," and rationality, might otherwise urge them to do.[19] He writes:

> ὡς οὖν χρὴ καὶ ἡμᾶς ποιοῦντας μὴ δεινότητι καὶ ξυνέσεως ἀγῶνι ἐπαιρομένους παρὰ δόξαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ πλήθει παραινεῖν.

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[17] Lang, 165. James A. Andrews (2000) refers to this as "foolish idealism" about pitying the weak and expecting gratitude, 50.

[18] See Balot (2004), 86. See also Victoria Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 174-77.

[19] Orwin (1984), 486.

> Thus, then, we ought to act and not be so excited by eloquence and combat of wits as to advise the Athenian people contrary to our own judgment (3.37.5).

Cleon, the Athenian demagogue, preys on Athens' long-established culturally-motivated proclivity for action, a proclivity oftentimes without consideration of the long-term consequences.[20] But here Cleon calls on them to react to an injury: the Mytileneans had indeed revolted from Athens, potentially threatening their influence in the eastern Aegean. But the revolt had been contained without material harm to Athens, only harm to its honor.[21] The Athenians had honored the Mytileneans by allowing them to maintain their fortifications and their fleet of triremes.[22] Thus their revolt represents *hubris* which dishonors the Athenians by making them appear "slavish and weak," an appearance that would bring "scorn and disrespect" from other *poleis*.[23] Disrespect for Athenian power will embolden other Athenian subjects and increase the threats facing Athens. Thus Cleon calls for further action to demonstrate Athenian power and – what is more – Athenian willingness to employ that power quickly and effectively against a perceived slight. He

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` [20] Gomme notes the difference between ἡμᾶς and τῷ ὑμετέρῳ πλήθει and argues that ἡμᾶς indicates "the leading politicians" and not "we here in Athens," 2:302. The distinction does not affect this argument. This is tied to the Athenians' πολυπραγμοσύνη characterization in Thucydides as discussed in 3.2.3 Athenian Impulse to Act: Thucydides' Pedagogical Technique (Pre-Sicilian Examples). See W. Nestle, "ἀπραγμοσύνη," *Philologus* 81 (1925), 129-140; V. Ehrenberg, "Polypragmosune: A Study in Greek Politics," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 67 (1947), 46-67; K. Kleve, "ἀπραγμοσύνη and πολυπραγμοσύνη: Two Slogans in Athenian Politics," *Symbolae Osloenses* 39 (1964), 83-88; A. Adkins, "Polupragmosune and Minding One's Business," *Classical Philology* 71 (1976), 301-27; June Allison, Thucydides and πολυπραγμοσύνη," *American Journal of Ancient History* 4 (1979), 10-22; and Robert D. Luginbill, *Thucydides on War and National Character* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p. 97, n.5.

[21] Andrews (2000), 50. Adrian Lanni contends that Cleon is "arguing absurdly" in his assessment of the amount of damage done to Athens in "The Laws of War in Ancient Greece," *Law and History Review* 26 (2008), 482, n.67.

[22] Thuc. 3.39.2.

[23] Andrews (2000), 49-50.

demands revenge for Athenian honor.[24] The Athenians, therefore, must recapture their "original anger" at the revolt of an ally to alleviate the danger that would arise from others' perception of their weakness.[25]

Thucydides is showing his reader that Cleon appealed to the worst in the Athenians; he led the people destructively by preying on their proclivity for action over reason.[26] Thucydides uses this first part of Cleon's speech to show just how he focused the Athenians' attention on the perceived dangers of inaction, when the dangers of action were, in the long run, the real threats to Athenian power as Athens' "increasing propensity to substitute impassioned action for reasoned deliberation" may well have contributed to its eventual defeat.[27]

Thucydides has Cleon continue his call for action throughout the next section of the speech. He continues to show his readers how Cleon preyed upon Athenian fear by stressing the danger of delay even if it meant abandoning reason. He even insults those citizens who are wasting time by discussing this issue with clever speeches.[28] Thucydides has him say:

> Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ὁ αὐτός εἰμι τῇ γνώμῃ καὶ θαυμάζω μὲν τῶν προθέντων αὖθις περὶ Μυτιληναίων λέγειν καὶ χρόνου διατριβὴν ἐμποιησάντων, ὅ ἐστι πρὸς τῶν ἠδικηκότων μᾶλλον.

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[24] *Ibid*.

[25] A. Andrewes (1962), 75.

[26] Lang, 162.

[27] David Bedford and Thom Workman, "The Tragic Reading of the Thucydidean Tragedy," *Review of International Studies* 27 (Jan, 2001), 58.

[28] Jon Hesk, "Despisers of the Commonplace: Meta-Topoi and Para-Topoi in Attic Oratory," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 25 (Autumn, 2007), 365.

> As for me, I have not changed my opinion, and I wonder at those who propose to debate again the question of the Mytileneans and thus interpose delay, which is in the interest of those who have done the wrong (3.38.1).

Though Thucydides does not make *kindunos* explicit, two issues here allude to the dangers he has made clear elsewhere. First there is Cleon's amazement, θαυμάζω, that Athens is wasting time with discussion and reason, περὶ Μυτιληναίων λέγειν καὶ χρόνου διατριβὴν ἐμποιησάντων. Cleon argues that action yields not logic and reason, but respect, not logic and reason. In reality, however, this idea only harms Athens' security in the long-run. Throughout his narrative, Thucydides shows that the decline of *logos* and the subsequent focus on *ergon* exacerbates the precarious position of the Athenian empire. Threats to Athenian power grow inversely to its reliance on wise counsel and deliberation.[29]

The second issue is the way in which Cleon tries to manipulate the Athenians' urge to intervene on behalf of those being harmed.[30] The Athenians' reconsideration of this issue is akin to saving wrong-doers; Cleon is stressing that any delay actually helps wrong-doers, ὅ ἐστι πρὸς τῶν ἠδικηκότων μᾶλλον. This might be a moral issue but it is also concerns danger. The appearance of mercy towards those who have wronged Athens will diminish the Athenians' reputation for power and willingness to exert that power for preservation of their empire. This will increase the odds of future revolutions and the dangers facing the Athenians. Cleon is making it clear to the Athenians that the Mytileneans are the wrong-doers and must be punished accordingly.

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[29] Bedford and Workman, 59-61.

[30] The Greeks' urge to intervene on behalf of those done wrong is analyzed in 3.3.3 Internal Dangers of Intervention: "Helping the Wronged."

Cleon continues using fear to goad the Athenians into ill-considered action by making it explicit that any delay for the rhetorical contests of a public assembly will bring danger to Athens. After challenging the citizens either to show that the Mytileneans' wrong-doings were somehow helpful to Athens, Thucydides has Cleon explain that contests of "specious oratory" are dangerous. He has Cleon say:

> ἡ δὲ πόλις ἐκ τῶν τοιῶνδε ἀγώνων τὰ μὲν ἆθλα
> ἑτέροις δίδωσιν, αὐτὴ δὲ τοὺς κινδύνους ἀναφέρει.

> But in contest of that kind the city bestows the prizes upon
> others, while she herself undergoes all the risks (3.38.3).

The city, according to Thucydides' Cleon, bears the risks for contests among speakers in the assembly, ἡ δὲ πόλις ... αὐτὴ δὲ τοὺς κινδύνους ἀναφέρει. These contests, of course, represent the discussion and debate that Pericles once extolled as "indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all." [31] For Creon, however, these "contests" serve no purpose other than bringing danger to the city. He uses the explicit threat of external danger, τοὺς κινδύνους, to frighten the Athenians into believing that in delay lies danger, in action lies salvation. The irony is that Cleon is criticizing his own audience for being "more like men who sit as spectators at exhibitions of sophists than men who take counsel for the welfare of the state." [32] In Thucydides' version of his speech, Cleon berates Athens for taking the time to listen to him; in Cleon's ideal world, they would already be acting without consideration on their impulse for violent action, as they had voted a day earlier.[33] Thucydides is showing his reader how the internally-generated urge

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[31] Thuc. 2.40.2. Bedford and Workman discuss the links between this passage and Pericles' initial assessment of the value of public debate, 59.

[32] Thuc. 3.38.7.

[33] Thuc. 3.36.2.

to act could work in synergy with external dangers to make Athens' situation even worse; demagogues like Cleon had the ability to manipulate these urges to influence policy. In this particular situation, of course, it did not work, as a narrow margin of the assembly voted against his call for immediate action.[34] But Cleon's speech represents a phase in Athens' devolution from rationally-oriented *polis* to one focused solely on quick, violent action without consideration. His rejection of reason represents a "plain man's prejudice against fancy thinking to prevent any thinking at all."[35] Over the course of the war, *ergon* was loosed from the "constraints of prudent deliberation." and Thucydides shows his reader how his contemporaries allowed that to happen, increasing the danger for all as it did.[36]

Thucydides follows this by having Cleon manipulate his audience's desire for vengeance.[37] Giving in to the urge for vengeance has been shown elsewhere in this dissertation to result in ill-conceived and often self-destructive action where further

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[34] Thuc. 3.49.1. Felix Martin Wassermann notes the unique nature of this debate as a moment when the Athenians were "evenly divided into the followers of the rational and of the emotional approach to the issues facing *polis* and *arche* in a moment of crisis." See "Post-Periclean Democracy in Action: The Mytilenean Debate (Thuc. III 37-48)," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 87 (1956), 28. Gribble (1998) notes Thucydides' direct intervention in the narrative at this point (3.49.1) and argues that it indicates the "attitude and perspective of the narrator" in favor of Diodotus' argument. See "Narrator Interventions in Thucydides," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 118 (1998), 52.

[35] A. Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate: Thucydides 3.36-42," *Phoenix* 16 (1962), 75.

[36] Bedford and Workman, 61. All of this is looking forward specifically to another decision: the Sicilian expedition, a decision where emotion (power, ambition, expansiveness) won out over logic, rationality and the advice of Pericles.

[37] The Greeks' proclivity for vengeance has been discussed in 3.4.2 Internal Dangers of Honor: Vengeance in Action. James A. Andrews (2000) notes that this section of Cleon's speech is focused on the Athenians' "passion for revenge," 47.

consideration of other options might yield a more productive solution.[38] By identifying

the Mytileneans as the wrong-doers in this instance, Cleon makes it clear that immediate

and violent action is completely justified. Thuydides has Cleon say:

> Ὧν ἐγὼ πειρώμενος ἀποτρέπειν ὑμᾶς ἀποφαίνω
> Μυτιληναίους μάλιστα δὴ μίαν πόλιν ἠδικηκότας
> ὑμᾶς.
>
> And it is from these ways that I seek to turn you when I
> attempt to prove that Mytilene has done you more injury
> than any single state (3.39.1).

The perfect participle, ἠδικηκότας, focuses the reader's attention – and Cleon's original

audience's – on the severity of the Mytileneans' revolt; this degree of wrong-doing is

tantamount to a "public humiliation of Athens." [39] For Thucydides' contemporaries, the

need to seek revenge was significant and could even drive public policy.[40] Cleon realizes

this and goads his audience into action by focusing them on the need for vengeance for

this slight. The Athenians have already overcome the external threat posed by the revolt

itself. It is at this point, according to Thucydides, that Cleon realized how vulnerable they

might be to the internally-generated urge to seek vengeance. Thucydides' reader sees how

these two aspects of danger can work together to increase the threats to Athens' security.

The appropriate time for rational thought is when danger is present. That dangerous time,

however, is often made worse by internally-generated urges for violence and action. The

dilemma facing Athens, however, is complex because Cleon is arguing that the external

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[38] The Greeks' obsession with vengeance have been discussed in 3.4.2 Internal Dangers of Honor:
Vengeance in Action.

[39] Andrews (2000), 50.

[40] J.E. Lendon, "Homeric Vengeance and the Outbreak of Greek Wars" in *War and Violence in
Ancient Greece*, Hans van Wees, ed. (London: Duckworth, 2000), 13. See also Nick Fisher, "*Hybris*,
Revenge, and *Stasis* in the Greek City-States," in *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, Hans van Wees, ed.
(London: Duckworth, 2000), 85.

threat is not over. He is highlighting the fact that any diminution of the Athenians'

reputation for violence and overwhelming force will inspire further rebellions. In that

sense the Mytileneans' very existence continues to injure Athens. Thucydides' reader can

note the muti-faceted nature of the danger facing Athens and recognize this as a time

when only the most careful consideration – even if it results in violent action! – will yield

an optimal solution that might mitigate the ever-present dangers in Thucydides' world.

This insult to Athens might even be understandable, according to Thucydides'

rendition of Cleon's speech. But what seems really awry to Cleon is that the Mytileneans

went to war for the ill-guided reasons: namely, they were not pursuing more power.[41]

Thucydides has Cleon say:

> ἐζήτησάν τε μετὰ τῶν πολεμιωτάτων ἡμᾶς στάντες
> διαφθεῖραι; καίτοι δεινότερόν ἐστιν ἢ εἰ καθ' αὑτοὺς
> δύναμιν κτώμενοι ἀντεπολέμησαν.
>
> [Did they not seek] by taking their stand on the side of our
> bitterest enemies to bring about our destruction? And yet
> this is assuredly a more heinous thing than if they had gone
> to war against us by themselves for the acquisition of
> power (3.39.2).

Thucydides uses Cleon's speech here to show how his contemporaries prioritized power

and how their desire to increase power contributed to making an already danger-filled

world more dangerous. The acquisition of power, to Cleon, is an honorable aim.[42] But

Cleon actually argues that the Mytileneans were simply engaged in "conspiracy and

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[41] Thucydides explains that some of the Mytileneans were "forcibly uniting the island under their sovereignty" (3.2.3). Thus it could be argued that the revolt was, in fact, an opportunity to expand Mytilenean power. John Wilson contends that the *synoikesis* would have given the Mytileneans, both the oligarchs and the *demos*, more power. See "Strategy and Tactics in the Mytilene Campaign," *Historia* 30 (1981), 147 and 158-9.

[42] Donald Walter Baronowski, *Polybius and Roman Imperialism* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), ch. 1.

rebellion" to injure Athens, ἐπεβούλευσάν τε καὶ ἐπανέστησαν.[43] While Cleon's focus

may be on his audience, Thucydides' is on his reader and here the message is how the

Mytileneans compounded the existing dangers facing them with internally-generated

urges.[44] The Mytileneans were allies of Athens and actively involved in the dangerous

war.[45] But they made their own situation worse by giving in to the urge to do something

that would harm Athens. Cleon points out the insult of this action to his audience and

Thucydides has his reader focus on the absurdity of the Mytileneans' motivation. Cleon's

notion that attempting to acting to gain power was honorable was widespread.[46] It was

also dangerous. That the Mytileneans revolted despite the hopeless odds against their

success shows how carelessly Thucydides' contemporaries often acted without thought

for the existing dangers and simply brought themselves more danger as a result, all the

while justifying their actions as valid because they might lead to more power.[47]

    Thucydides does provide indications that Cleon and his audience understood the

true dangers present in relations between *poleis* of varying sizes. Thucydides has him

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[43] Thuc. 3.39.2. Hornblower argues that the point is that they "have not revolted, but have betrayed" Athens, 1:428.

[44] Paula E. Arnold notes the difference between the audiences' quick reception of Cleon's words and Thucydides' reader's ability to ponder more closely and discern underlying motives and themes. See "The Persuasive Style of Debates in Direct Speech in Thucydides," *Hermes* 120 (1992),

[45] Thucydides notes that ten Mytilenean *triremes* were serving with the Athenian fleet at the start of the revolt (3.3.4).

[46] Baronowski (2011), ch. 1.

[47] Wilson (1981) provides a detailed analysis of the Mytileneans' relative weakness against the Athenians, 144-8.

actually address the reality that hope is a very dangerous emotion.[48] In his analysis of the

illogical timing of the Mytileneans' attack, Thucydides has Cleon say:

> γενόμενοι δὲ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον θρασεῖς καὶ ἐλπίσαντες
> μακρότερα μὲν τῆς δυνάμεως, ἐλάσσω δὲ τῆς
> βουλήσεως, πόλεμον ἤραντο, ἰσχὺν ἀξιώσαντες τοῦ
> δικαίου προθεῖναι·

> Becoming over-confident as to the future, and conceiving
> hopes which, though greater than their powers, were less
> than their ambition, they took up arms, presuming to put
> might before right (3.39.3).

Thucydides shows throughout his narrative that "hope is a passion that sublates reason."[49]

And here he uses Cleon's speech to argue that it was hope that urged the Mytileneans to

take reckless action. Because of this, the Mytileneans were wrong to put their perceived

power ahead of the commonly accepted laws, ἰσχὺν ἀξιώσαντες τοῦ δικαίου.

Thucydides' presentation of this debate, which will determine the ultimate fate of the

Mytileneans, shows his reader that the Mytileneans made their situation more dangerous

by allowing themselves to be seduced by hope for success. This hope, as he has Cleon

note, was greater than their actual power and only served to compound the danger they

were facing. So it is that Thucydides' reader can understand even from Cleon the synergy

between the various forms of danger in his contemporaries' world: had the Mytileneans

not abandoned "the caution that attends the reasoned deliberation of [their]

circumstances," they would not be, literally, on trial for their lives.[50]

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[48] Thucydides on the dangerous nature of hope: 2.62.5, 3.45.3, 4.10.1, 4.62.4, 5.103. Gomme notes these instances generalizes on Thucydides' method of thought with respect to hope (2:320). 49.

[49] Bedford and Workman (2001), 65. For further discussion of hope as an emotion that leads to an abandonment of reason, see Patrick Coby, "Enlightened Self-Interest in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydidean Speakers on the Right of the Stronger and Inter-State Peace," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 24 (1991), 83; Connor (1984), 153-7; Orwin (1994), 111-7; and Zumbrunnen (2002), esp. 250.

[50] Bedford and Workman (2001) use this quote as the Greeks' general definition of hope (65).

Thucydides has Cleon follow up this mention of the Mytileneans' recklessness by insulting the Athenians to goad them into action. He has Cleon call into question Athens' status as a powerful *polis*, which forces the Athenians to experience the uncomfortable idea that they have lost their status among the other *poleis* and must act quickly to get it back or risk increased threats not only to their empire, but also to their *polis*.[51] He has Cleon say:

> χρῆν δὲ Μυτιληναίους καὶ πάλαι μηδὲν διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων ὑφ' ἡμῶν τετιμῆσθαι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐς τόδε ἐξύβρισαν· πέφυκε γὰρ καὶ ἄλλως ἄνθρωπος τὸ μὲν θεραπεῦον ὑπερφρονεῖν, τὸ δὲ μὴ ὑπεῖκον θαυμάζειν.
>
> But the Mytileneans from the first ought never to have been treated by us with any more consideration than our other allies, and then they would not have broken out into such insolence; for it is human nature in any case to be contemptuous of those who pay court but to admire those who will not yield (3.39.5).

The Athenians, according to Thucydides' Cleon, are actually committing a fatal error by failing to protect their reputation from perceived diminution. Essentially, Thucydides has Cleon accuse the Athenians of going soft as evidenced in their unwillingness to use their power in such a way as to increase fear and respect among other *poleis*. His point is that previous favorable, *i.e.* "mild," treatment to the Mytileneans was repaid not with loyalty but with (allegedly) contempt, ὑπερφρονεῖν. This should motivate the Athenians to act quickly and violently to punish this insolence, thus preserving their reputation in other *poleis* eyes. To do otherwise, in Cleon's analysis, would be to become submissive and

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[51] The importance of maintaining a *polis'* has been presented with a bibliography of the essential political science scholarship in 3.5 Κίνδυνος and the Status Dilemma. Fundamentally I follow Eckstein (2006) when he writes that "preserving one's reputation for power in the face of challenge is crucial for preserving one's actual power, and an action taken against one's honor and reputation is an action causing real material injury," 63.

subjected to further dangers from their loss in status.[52] The Athenians must act quickly to

preserve their reputation and in that mentality lies danger for Thucydides'

contemporaries. Certainly, at this moment would not lead to any immediate danger;

Mytilene had already surrendered. But Thucydides is highlighting the powerful urge his

contemporaries felt to preserve their reputation. That a public speaker can use the shame

of being potentially perceived as weak – for first acting mildly and then for not punishing

harshly enough! – shows how easily Thucydides' contemporaries could be goaded into

action out of concern for appearances. Though Thucydides does not mention *kindunos*

explicitly, he shows his reader the synergy between external dangers and these internally-

generated urges; the Athenian empire was already threatened by the Peloponnesian

League and the long war. This danger could easily be compounded as the Athenians are

urged to more and more audacious action in defense of their reputation. Fear of the

(alleged) contempt of other *poleis* may well have been a driving factor in the fateful

decision to invade Sicily.[53]

Preservation of reputation is the theme as Thucydides continues to describe

Cleon's perspective for his reader.[54] In Cleon's exhortation for harsh action, Thucydides

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[52] Thucydides has Pericles argue that "the knee once bowed" will lead to a loss of all that they possess (2.62.3).

[53] William O. Chittick and Annette Freyberg-Inan argue that the debate prior to the Sicilian Expedition was a prime example of the degree to which the Athenians were motivated by their fear of losing their empire if they did not consistently demonstrate their ability and willingness to expand to other *poleis*. See "Chiefly For Fear, Next For Honour, Lastly For Profit: An Analysis of Foreign Policy Motivation in the Peloponnesian War,' *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), 84-5.

[54] Andrewes (1962) argues that, while this speech may not be a direct transcription of Cleon's original, it does not represent Thucydides' own opinion of the facts. He argues that "neither speaker [Cleon or Diodotus] is just Thucydides' mouthpiece" (79). But, as elsewhere in this dissertation, it is not important to establish the veracity of the speech itself, but to look at how Thucydides chooses to present the problems in the speeches to his reader.

has him warn the Athenians of the explicit dangers they will incur if they do not pursue

the goal of recovering their reputation. If they do not demonstrate their unwavering

resolve to act decisively against every injury, they will face threats from every other

polis. He has Cleon say:

> τῶν τε ξυμμάχων σκέψασθε εἰ τοῖς τε ἀναγκασθεῖσιν
> ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων καὶ τοῖς ἑκοῦσιν ἀποστᾶσι τὰς
> αὐτὰς ζημίας προσθήσετε, τίνα οἴεσθε ὅντινα οὐ
> βραχείᾳ προφάσει ἀποστήσεσθαι, ὅταν ἢ
> κατορθώσαντι ἐλευθέρωσις ἦ ἢ σφαλέντι μηδὲν
> παθεῖν ἀνήκεστον;ἡμῖν δὲ πρὸς ἑκάστην πόλιν
> ἀποκεκινδυνεύσεται τά τε χρήματα καὶ αἱ ψυχαί, καὶ
> τυχόντες μὲν πόλιν ἐφθαρμένην παραλαβόντες τῆς
> ἔπειτα προσόδου, δι' ἣν ἰσχύομεν, τὸ λοιπὸν
> στερήσεσθε, σφαλέντες δὲ πολεμίους πρὸς τοῖς
> ὑπάρχουσιν ἕξομεν, καὶ ὃν χρόνον τοῖς νῦν
> καθεστηκόσι δεῖ ἐχθροῖς ἀνθίστασθαι, τοῖς οἰκείοις
> ξυμμάχοις πολεμήσομεν.

> Consider therefore! If you subject to the same punishment
> the ally who is forced to rebel by the enemy, and him who
> does so by his own free choice, which of them, think you is
> there that will not rebel upon the slightest pretext; when the
> reward of success is freedom, and the penalty of failure
> nothing so very terrible? We meanwhile shall have to risk
> our money and our lives against each separate state, and
> when we succeed we shall recover a ruined state and be
> deprived for the future of its revenue, the source of our
> strength, whereas if we fail we shall be adding fresh
> enemies to those we have already, and when we should be
> resisting our present foes we shall be fighting our own
> allies (3.39.8).

The Athenians, according to Thucydides' Cleon, are in a pivotal moment. Should they fail

to act with enough audacity, their lives and possessions will be in the utmost danger in

the future, ἀποκεκινδυνεύσεται. Cleon's passionate guidance rests on the idea that "true

human interest lies in material accumulation and security, generally achieved through the

exercise of power," [55] Thucydides' diction, ἀποκεκινδυνεύσεται, makes the risk of these passions explicit for his reader as they grasp the dilemma forced upon them by their need to preserve their status. Should they fail to act, they will soon find themselves at war with their own allies![56] While Cleon may be stretching the truth about the allies' loyalty, Thucydides is comfortable showing the possible deception that may be an "accurate account of Athenian politics." [57] This allows him to focus his reader on broader truths, that the Athenians might be manipulated by the mere thought of the dangers of reducing their allies' fear of their willingness to respond violently to any slight.[58] The irony, of course, is that there is no real danger remaining from Mytilene. The revolt has been put down and the only question remaining is how to deal with the surviving Mytileneans. If the Athenians are not willing to indulge in their initial urge to act with decisive violence against those who threatened their imperial power in the North Aegean they will, according to Thucydides' Cleon, bring more danger upon themselves from all quarters as the rest of their allies perceive weakness and act accordingly. The Athenians are caught in a trap: if they commit genocide against Mytilene, they may be more hated by other *poleis*; if they show mercy, they may be less feared. Both options increase the danger they face from the natural rhythms of Greek interstate relations.

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[55] Mara, 826.

[56] Gomme notes that this is a paradox "but, for Cleon, hardly more than a verbal one" (2:308). Lebow (2001) notes that "by the time of the Melian Dialogue, [the Athenians] have antagonized even neutrals and close allies, which makes their fear of the security dilemma self-fulfilling," 550.

[57] John Zumbrunnen, "Courage in the Face of Reality: Nietsche's Admiration for Thucydides," *Polity* 35 (2002), 256.

[58] Zumbrunnen notes that Thucydides controls and allows the deception to enter his work in order "to allow broader truths to be open for contestation, 256.

The status dilemma provides Thucydides a fearsome conclusion for his rendition

of Cleon's speech. By having Cleon cast the Mytilenaens not as allies, but as dangerous

enemies, he highlights for his reader the dangerous reality of his world: every *polis* is a

potentially deadly enemy, a competitor for power. He has Cleon say:

> ἔλεός τε γὰϱ πϱὸς τοὺς ὁμοίους δίκαιος ἀντιδίδοσθαι,
> καὶ μὴ πϱὸς τοὺς οὔτ' ἀντοικτιοῦντας ἐξ ἀνάγκης τε
> καθεστῶτας αἰεὶ πολεμίους·

> For compassion may rightly be bestowed upon those who
> are likewise compassionate and not upon those who will
> show no pity in return but of necessity are always enemies
> (3.40.3).

The Mytilenaeans, by once threatening Athenian dominance, have become eternal

enemies, αἰεὶ πολεμίους. Thus it is that the Athenians must act harshly and without

delay. To do otherwise would be to commit a fatal error.[59] Thucydides has Cleon describe

the Mytilenaeans not as "former allies" but as people who always were and will always

be opposed to Athens and must therefore be handled violently. As Cleon rekindles the

Athenians' anger, the idea that former allies are actually eternal enemies becomes a

lesson for Thucydides' reader: the dangers of the world are increased by the fact that

poleis might be led to consider it in their best interest to view allies as enemies and to be

prepared to act accordingly.[60] Arguably there is no such thing as "eternal enemies;" the

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[59] Thucydides' Cleon notes that pity and clemency are two of the "three influences most prejudicial to a ruling state" (3.40.2). On pity, ἔλεός, Gomme notes that it was not an "outstanding Greek virtue," 2:310. Norman B. Sandridge agrees and cites this passage in his analysis of Thucydides' perspective in which "pity may fly in the face of self-interest." See "Feeling Vulnerable, but not so Vulnerable: Pity in Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus, Philoctetes and Ajax*," *The Classical Journal* 103 (2008), See also D. Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Torono Press, 2006), 205.

[60] Andrews (2000) argues that Cleon demonstrates a good ability for "rekindling that spent anger" of the Athenian people, 46.

Mytileneans were "only temporary antagonists under the dominion of some master

passion."[61] Thucydides wants his reader to see that it is better for Athens to take rational

action which will encourage other rebellious cities to search for mutually advantageous

solutions.[62]

Thucydides has Cleon make his perspective even more explicit by focusing his

audience on the fact that the dangers of inaction are so great that Athens will, in effect,

become a condemned state if it fails to preserve its reputation for willing use of power.

He has Cleon say:

> ἕν τε ξυνελὼν λέγω· πειθόμενοι μὲν ἐμοὶ τά τε δίκαια
> ἐς Μυτιληναίους καὶ τὰ ξύμφορα ἅμα ποιήσετε, ἄλλως
> δὲ γνόντες τοῖς μὲν οὐ χαριεῖσθε, ὑμᾶς δὲ αὐτοὺς
> μᾶλλον δικαιώσεσθε. εἰ γὰρ οὗτοι ὀρθῶς ἀπέστησαν,
> ὑμεῖς ἂν οὐ χρεὼν ἄρχοιτε. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ οὐ προσῆκον
> ὅμως ἀξιοῦτε τοῦτο δρᾶν, παρὰ τὸ εἰκός τοι καὶ
> τούσδε ξυμφόρως δεῖ κολάζεσθαι, ἢ παύεσθαι τῆς
> ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι.

> I can sum up what I have to say in a word. If you take my
> advice, you will do not only what is just to the
> Mytilenaeans but also at the same time what is expedient
> for us; but if you decide otherwise, you will not win their
> gratitude but will rather bring a just condemnation upon
> yourselves; for if these people had a right to secede, it
> would follow that you are wrong in exercising dominion.
> But if, right or wrong, you are still resolved to maintain it,
> then you must punish these people in defiance of equity as
> your interest requires; or else you must give up your empire
> and in discreet safety practice the fine virtues you preach
> (3.40.4).

One theme runs through this portion of Cleon's speech: the need to preserve status makes

it dangerous to rule others. If the Athenians fail to carry out their initial decree, μᾶλλον

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[61] Cody (1991), 85.

[62] Ibid.

δικαιώσεσθε, Cleon warns them that their own punishment will come from the court of their allies' and enemies' opinion of Athenian power. Gomme argues that the phrase "bring a just condemnation upon yourselves," is more explicitly rendered as "you will be passing sentence" on yourselves.[63] Thus it is that no other option increases their security. For the Athenians, virtue is dangerous and cannot be considered if they want to hold their empire.[64] What must instead be considered is protecting their reputation for "unabashed expansion of the empire." [65] The dangerous synergy is clear for Thucydides' reader: many Athenians feel compelled internally to act aggressively or risk destruction from external enemies.[66] But aggressive action, as witnessed in the Sicilian expedition, generates even greater risks. The only other option here is to give up the empire and become more respectful of others in a less dangerous environment, παύεσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου ἀνδραγαθίζεσθαι. But that is a pipe dream.[67] The options Thucydides has Cleon present are both dangerous. The Athenians are in danger as long as they have an empire; but maintaining the empire itself compels dangerous action as the Athenians must be concerned with others' perception of their willingness to enforce their will with violence. To do otherwise is to be condemned to destruction for their weakness.

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[63] Gomme, 2:310.

[64] Hornblower, 1:431.

[65] Jonathan Monten, "Thucydides and Modern Realism," *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006), 22. Monten cites this passage as part of his analysis of the Athenians' compulsion to expand or risk destruction.

[66] Monten, 22.

[67] This phrase has been discussed earlier in 3.5.4 Internal Dangers of Status: The "Peripheral" Perspective. David Cohen calls the reference to philanthropy the "crudest sort of sophistic reasoning," in "Justice, Interest and Political Deliberation in Thucydides," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura* 16 (1984), 48.

Thucydides' depiction of the final section of Cleon's speech makes it clear that it was all too possible to attempt to manipulate the Athenians by appealing to their "passion for revenge."[68] Thucydides has him say:

> τῇ τε αὐτῇ ζημίᾳ ἀξιώσατε ἀμύνασθαι καὶ μὴ ἀναλγητότεροι οἱ διαφεύγοντες τῶν ἐπιβουλευσάντων φανῆναι, ἐνθυμηθέντες ἃ εἰκὸς ἦν αὐτοὺς ποιῆσαι κρατήσαντας ὑμῶν, ἄλλως τε καὶ προϋπάρξαντας ἀδικίας. μάλιστα δὲ οἱ μὴ ξὺν προφάσει τινὰ κακῶς ποιοῦντες ἐπεξέρχονται καὶ διολλύναι, τὸν κίνδυνον ὑφορώμενοι τοῦ ὑπολειπομένου ἐχθροῦ· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ξὺν ἀνάγκῃ τι παθὼν χαλεπώτερος διαφυγὼν τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἐχθροῦ. Μὴ οὖν προδόται γένησθε ὑμῶν αὐτῶν, γενόμενοι δ' ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ πάσχειν καὶ ὡς πρὸ παντὸς ἂν ἐτιμήσασθε αὐτοὺς χειρώσασθαι, νῦν ἀνταπόδοτε μὴ μαλακισθέντες πρὸς τὸ παρὸν αὐτίκα μηδὲ τοῦ ἐπικρεμασθέντος ποτὲ δεινοῦ ἀμνημονοῦντες. κολάσατε δὲ ἀξίως τούτους τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ξυμμάχοις παράδειγμα σαφὲς καταστήσατε, ὃς ἂν ἀφιστῆται, θανάτῳ ζημιωσόμενον. τόδε γὰρ ἢν γνῶσιν, ἧσσον τῶν πολεμίων ἀμελήσαντες τοῖς ὑμετέροις αὐτῶν μαχεῖσθε ξυμμάχοις.

> Resolve also to punish them with the same penalty that has already been voted, and that those who have escaped the plot shall not appear to have less feeling than those who framed it, bearing in mind what they would probably have done to you had they won the victory, especially since they were the aggressors. Indeed it is generally those who wrong another without cause that follow him up to destroy him utterly, perceiving the danger that threatens from an enemy who is left alive; for one who has been needlessly injured is more dangerous if he escape than an avowed enemy who expects to give and take. Do not, then, be traitors to your own cause, but recalling as nearly as possible how you felt when they made you suffer and how you would then have given anything to crush them, now pay them back. Do not become tender-hearted at the sight of their present distress,

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68 Thuc. 3.37.6. The Greeks' urge to take vengeance is explored throughout 3.4.1 Internal Dangers of Honor: Defining the Ethos, but special focus and a thorough bibliography of the relevant scholarship is found in 3.4.2 Internal Dangers of Honor: Vengeance in Action. J. A. Andrews (2000) points to the fact that Cleon is attempting to satisfy the Athenians' "passion for revenge," 47 and 50.

> not unmindful of the danger that so lately hung over you,
> but chastise them as they deserve, and give to your other
> allies plain warning that whoever revolts shall be punished
> with death. For if they realize this, the less will you have to
> neglect your enemies and fight against your own allies
> (3.40.5-8).

The point is that by taking revenge now, the Athenians will demonstrate to other *poleis*

that they will not hesitate to act in accordance to the accepted code of conduct among

Thucydides' contemporaries: they are willing to demonstrate their power by surpassing

their enemies in harm inflicted.[69] But, as Thucydides has shown his reader, the revenge-

motive is so strong that it becomes an internally-generated form of danger in that it can

surpass concerns for true justice.[70] Cleon here is using the Athenians' ingrained desire for

vengeance to "rekindle their spent anger."[71] He urges them to deter others from violence

by acting violently themselves and carrying out their earlier decision.[72]

The synergy between external dangers and internally-generated urges becomes

clear for Thucydides reader throughout his rendition of Cleon's speech even without a

heavy reliance on the term *kindunos*: the Athenians understand the dangerous world in

which they live and feel threatened by other *poleis*, both enemies and allies. To attempt to

mitigate these external dangers is reasonable. These dangers, however, can be

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[69] Andrews (1994) defines the traditional *arete* of inflicting greater harm to one's enemies, 32.

[70] Michael Palmer argues that the "desire for revenge surpassed concern for justice" in the Athenian assembly. See "Machiavellian *Virtù* and Thucydidean *Arete*: Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides," *The Review of Politics* 51 (1989), 377. Peter Ahrensdorf views it from a different perspective and points to the conundrum that "passion for vengeance is, from the viewpoint of one who seeks vengeance, a passion for justice, since it necessarily entails seeking what is thought to be a previous injustice." See "The Fear of Death and the Longing for Immortality: Hobbes and Thucydides on Human Nature and the Problem of Anarchy," *The American Political Science Review* 94 (2000), 588.

[71] Andrews (2000), 46.

[72] A. Andrewes (1962) argues that Cleon "diminished the rational element in Athenian debate," 84-5.

exacerbated rather than mitigated by the internally-generated dangers that arise when the

Athenians are manipulated emotionally by exceptionally violent men such as Cleon.[73] His

call for immediate and irrevocable action preys on several dangerous urges: the urge to

act, to punish wrong-doers, to protect status, and to exact revenge. These four concepts,

which echo throughout Thucydides' work in his consistent use of *kindunos*, resound in

Cleon's speech as he uses them to block taking a second look at a momentous decision.

The precise nature of the danger is less explicit here than in other parts of Thucydides'

narrative because it is internally-generated and not tied to a specific external source. But

Thucydides is showing his reader just how powerful these dangerous urges were among

his contemporaries; after all, Cleon almost won the vote.[74]

    If Cleon's speech allows Thucydides to show his reader the dangers inherent in

his contemporary society and the ways in which dangerous patterns of behavior might be

manipulated, Diodotus' counter argument serves as a rational foil to show the reader how

logos might trump *ergon*.[75] As previously discussed, most of the literature on the debate

centers on the interaction between Cleon's focus on "justice" and Diodotus' insistence on

"what is expedient." But that misses another aspect of Thucydides' analysis: the

difference between recklessly dangerous actions and possible ways to mitigate the

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[73] Thucydides calls Cleon the "most violent man in Athens," 3.37.6

[74] Thuc. 3.49.1.

[75] There is general agreement on the idea that Thucydides' characterization of Diodotus stresses the importance of the rational element that should be part of a democratic assembly. See Clifford Orwin, "Democracy and Distrust," *The American Scholar* 53 (1984), 320; and *The Humanity of Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 158-62; Arlene Saxenhouse, *Athenian Democracy: Modern Mythmakers and Ancient Theorists* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 75; Gerald M. Mara, "Thucydides and Plato on Democracy and Trust," *The Journal of Politics* 63 (2001), 828-32.

synergy between external and internally-generated dangers at this critical moment in the war.

Thucydides' focus on Diodotus' rational approach is evident from the beginning of his speech. The theme of *logos* versus *ergon* resounds throughout the first section, which seeks to refute Cleon's notion that Cleon's opponents are traitors to Athens. In the opening section, he has Diodotus say:

> Οὔτε τοὺς προθέντας τὴν διαγνώμην αὖθις περὶ Μυτιληναίων αἰτιῶμαι, οὔτε τοὺς μεμφομένους μὴ πολλάκις περὶ τῶν μεγίστων βουλεύεσθαι ἐπαινῶ, νομίζω δὲ δύο τὰ ἐναντιώτατα εὐβουλίᾳ εἶναι, τάχος τε καὶ ὀργήν, ὧν τὸ μὲν μετὰ ἀνοίας φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι, τὸ δὲ μετὰ ἀπαιδευσίας καὶ βραχύτητος γνώμης. τούς τε λόγους ὅστις διαμάχεται μὴ διδασκάλους τῶν πραγμάτων γίγνεσθαι, ἢ ἀξύνετός ἐστιν ἢ ἰδίᾳ τι αὐτῷ διαφέρει· ἀξύνετος μέν, εἰ ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἡγεῖται περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος δυνατὸν εἶναι καὶ μὴ ἐμφανοῦς φράσαι, διαφέρει δ' αὐτῷ, εἰ βουλόμενός τι αἰσχρὸν πεῖσαι εὖ μὲν εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἂν ἡγεῖται περὶ τοῦ μὴ καλοῦ δύνασθαι, εὖ δὲ διαβαλὼν ἐκπλῆξαι ἂν τούς τε ἀντεροῦντας καὶ τοὺς ἀκουσομένους.

> I have no fault to find with those who have proposed a reconsideration of the question of the Mytilenaeans, nor do I commend those who object to repeated deliberation on matters of the greatest moment; on the contrary, I believe the two things most opposed to good counsel are haste and passion, of which the one is wont to keep company with folly, the other with an undisciplined and shallow mind. As for words, whoever contends that they are not to be guides of our actions is either dull of wit or has some private interest at stake – dull, if he thinks it possible by any other means to throw light on that which still belongs to the dim and distant future; self-interested, if, wishing to put through a discreditable measure, he realizes that while he cannot speak well in a bad cause, he can at least slander well and thus intimidate both his opponents and his hearers (3.42.1-2).

In response to Cleon's attempt to goad the audience into action, Diodotus attempts to educate them on the value of a moment's reflection by "pointing to the force of the passions."[76] Two things that can make a precarious situation worse are haste and passion, τάχος τε καὶ ὀργήν. Thucydides has earlier portrayed these two traits as obstacles to rational thought, which might increase the ever-present external dangers.[77] Though he has not tied the term τάχος explicitly to *kindunos*, Thucydides' narrative makes it clear that hasty decisions and passion-driven actions are not consistent with the rational thought needed to surmount external dangers.[78] He has Diodotus connect haste to unthinking actions, ὧν τὸ μὲν μετὰ ἀνοίας φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι; to make haste is literally to lack the ability to think, ἀνοίας.[79] So too is anger, ὀργήν, the hallmark of an uneducated mind, ἀπαιδευσίας … γνώμης. Thucydides has Diodotus uses these two terms to highlight the synergy between internally generated dangers and the external dangers already present in Athens' situation. Uneducated, mindless citizens are susceptible to the dangers of decision brought on through haste and anger, but Diodotus offers a mitigating alternative "model of calculation and debate": τούς τε λόγους.[80]

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[76] Mara, 830. Boyarin (2012) argues that Diodotus' opening statement contradicts Cleon's entire speech which extolled "the virtue of acting in haste and in the heat of first anger and not of rational reconsideration," 74.

[77] Gomme notes the similarity between this passage and both Pericles' defense of the value of debate and reflection (2.40.2-3) and Cleon's advice to the Spartans (1.84.1-2), 2:313. Andrewes (1962) notes that this reference to haste and anger would appeal to anyone, oligarch or democrat, 74.

[78] Virginia Hunter, "Athens Tyrannis: A New Approach to Thucydides," *The Classical Journal* 69 (1974), 122.

[79] Gomme describes ἀνοίας as the "direct opposite" of πρόνοια, 2:313.

[80] Cohen (1984), 50.

I have argued in other parts of this dissertation that Thucydides' contemporaries were culturally prone to violent, often self-destructive action.[81] Thucydides has Diodotus highlight *logos* to show his reader that a rational approach has the "possibility of containing the passions," of mitigating the synergy between existing dangers and the Greeks' proclivity for action.[82] He has Diodotus say that words can be the educators of our actions, τούς τε λόγους … διδασκάλους τῶν πραγμάτων γίγνεσθαι. In other words, rational discussion is just as Thucydides shows Pericles arguing it was: an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.[83] *Logos* is not the same harsh schoolmaster Thucydides shows war to be.[84] It is a positive means of guiding action and his reader can understand from Diodotus' speech that *logos* can guide the actions of the *polis* in the same way an educator can guide a pupil to more well-reasoned insight. *Logos* is, according to Thucydides' Diodotus, the only means of illuminating the uncertainties of the future, εἰ ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἡγεῖται περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος δυνατὸν εἶναι καὶ μὴ ἐμφανοῦς φράσαι.

Thucydides has Diodotus follow this line of reasoning with a discussion of intra-*polis* dangers and why they must be mitigated if a *polis* is to prepare adequately for the naturally-occurring dangers of the external world. Though the term *kindunos* is not always explicitly used, Thucydides' Diodotus is a rational foil to Cleon's negative view of the role of competitive debate in the assembly when he says:

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[81] See 3.2 Κίνδυνος and the "Ethos of Action."

[82] Bedford and Workman focus on how *logos* contains passion, 59.

[83] Thuc. 2.40.2. Gomme notes the similarity between Diodotus' and Pericles' phrases, 2:313.

[84] Thuc. 3.82.2.

χαλεπώτατοι δὲ καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ χρήμασι προσκατηγοροῦντες ἐπίδειξίν τινα. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἀμαθίαν κατῃτιῶντο, ὁ μὴ πείσας ἀξυνετώτερος ἂν δόξας εἶναι ἢ ἀδικώτερος ἀπεχώρει· ἀδικίας δ' ἐπιφερομένης πείσας τε ὕποπτος γίγνεται καὶ μὴ τυχὼν μετὰ ἀξυνεσίας καὶ ἄδικος. ἥ τε πόλις οὐκ ὠφελεῖται ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε· φόβῳ γὰρ ἀποστερεῖται τῶν ξυμβούλων. καὶ πλεῖστ' ἂν ὀρθοῖτο ἀδυνάτους λέγειν ἔχουσα τοὺς τοιούτους τῶν πολιτῶν· ἐλάχιστα γὰρ ἂν πεισθεῖεν ἁμαρτάνειν. χρὴ δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν πολίτην μὴ ἐκφοβοῦντα τοὺς ἀντεροῦντας, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου φαίνεσθαι ἄμεινον λέγοντα, τὴν δὲ σώφρονα πόλιν τῷ τε πλεῖστα εὖ βουλεύοντι μὴ προστιθέναι τιμήν, ἀλλὰ μηδ' ἐλασσοῦν τῆς ὑπαρχούσης, καὶ τὸν μὴ τυχόντα γνώμης οὐχ ὅπως ζημιοῦν ἀλλὰ μηδ' ἀτιμάζειν. οὕτω γὰρ ὅ τε κατορθῶν ἥκιστα ἂν ἐπὶ τῷ ἔτι μειζόνων ἀξιοῦσθαι παρὰ γνώμην τι καὶ πρὸς χάριν λέγοι, ὅ τε μὴ ἐπιτυχὼν ὀρέγοιτο τῷ αὐτῷ χαριζόμενός τι καὶ αὐτὸς προσάγεσθαι τὸ πλῆθος.

Most dangerous of all, however, are precisely those who charge a speaker beforehand with being bribed to make a display of rhetoric. For if they merely imputed ignorance, the speaker who failed to carry his audience might go his way with the repute of being dull but not dishonest; when, however, the charge is dishonesty, the speaker who succeeds becomes an object of suspicion, whereas if he fails he is regarded as not only dull but dishonest as well. And all this is a detriment to the state, which is thus robbed of its counsellors through fear. Indeed it would prosper most if its citizens of this stamp had no eloquence at all, for then the people would be least likely to blunder through their influence. But the good citizen ought to show himself a better speaker, not by trying to browbeat those who will oppose him, but by fair argument; and while the wise city should not indeed confer fresh honors upon the man whose advice is most often salutary, it certainly should not detract from those which he already has, and as for him whose suggestion does not meet with approval, so far from punishing him, it should not even treat him with disrespect. For then it would be least likely that a successful speaker, with a view to being counted worth of still greater honors would speak insincerely and for the purpose of winning favor and that the unsuccessful speaker would employ the same means, by courting favor in his turn in an effort to win the multitude to himself (3.42.3-6).

Thucydides shows Diodotus' focus on certain elements of the assembly which actually "frustrate deliberative rationality" if democratic ideals are not followed.[85] Where Cleon's speech increased the danger by attacking the honesty of opposing speakers and his own audience and focusing on its competitive aspects of the assembly,[86] Diodotus sees this as the "destructive habits of deliberation under which the Athenians labor." [87] He preaches against the idea that this competition is dangerous at all. The wise state must not disrespect opposing viewpoints and must not dishonor those whose advice is not accepted, τὴν δὲ σώφρονα πόλιν τῷ τε πλεῖστα εὖ βουλεύοντι μὴ προστιθέναι τιμήν, ἀλλὰ μηδ' ἐλασσοῦν τῆς ὑπαρχούσης, καὶ τὸν μὴ τυχόντα γνώμης οὐχ ὅπως ζημιοῦν ἀλλὰ μηδ' ἀτιμάζειν. The assembly must be a sanctuary where citizens can engage their *logos* without fear of danger or retribution. Though the translation points to false charges, such as bribery, as "most dangerous," Thucydides' Greek is more subtle. He actually writes that those who spew false charges against other speakers are χαλεπώτατοι, the most painful or grievous to bear among the citizens. Men such as Cleon offer the most potential for harm by depriving the city of its counsellors through fear, φόβῳ γὰρ ἀποστερεῖται τῶν ξυμβούλων. The valued speakers, according to Diodotus, are those who willingly demonstrate *logos* in a precarious moment, not those who stir up the citizens and browbeat them into submission at that precarious moment. A

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[85] Though he does not focus specifically on this section of the speech, Mara (2001) demonstrates how Diodotus generally focuses on the problems within the assembly that "frustrate deliberative rationality," 829. The concept of intra-*polis* conflicts has been presented in 2.2.2 Danger: A Constant Within the Polis.

[86] Connor (1984), 82; Boyarin (2012), 74.

[87] Harvey Yunis, "How do the People Decide? Thucydides on Periclean Rhetoric and Civic Instruction," *The American Journal of Philology* 112 (1991), 193.

polis' willingness to let citizens show themselves to be good speakers, φαίνεσθαι

ἄμεινον λέγοντα, can mitigate the synergy between the present danger and the increased

dangers brought on by popular emotions, and when men fear the results of their attempts

to engage their *logos* in the assembly.

Thucydides has Diodotus take this message one step further by pointing out that

this dangerous tendency exists in the Athenian culture itself. In his next section, Diodotus

chides Athens' foolishness, as one might chide an individual.[88] Thucydides has Diodotus

focus his audience on the "excessive cleverness" that is a uniquely harmful force in

Athens.[89] He has Diodotus say:

> μόνην τε πόλιν διὰ τὰς περινοίας εὖ ποιῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ
> προφανοῦς μὴ ἐξαπατήσαντα ἀδύνατον· ὁ γὰρ διδοὺς
> φανερῶς τι ἀγαθὸν ἀνθυποπτεύεται ἀφανῶς πῃ πλέον
> ἕξειν. χρὴ δὲ πρὸς τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε ἀξιοῦν
> τι ἡμᾶς περαιτέρω προνοοῦντας λέγειν ὑμῶν τῶν δι'
> ὀλίγου σκοπούντων, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὑπεύθυνον τὴν
> παραίνεσιν ἔχοντας πρὸς ἀνεύθυνον τὴν ὑμετέραν
> ἀκρόασιν. εἰ γὰρ ὅ τε πείσας καὶ ὁ ἐπισπόμενος ὁμοίως
> ἐβλάπτοντο, σωφρονέστερον ἂν ἐκρίνετε· νῦν δὲ πρὸς
> ὀργὴν ἥντινα τύχητε ἔστιν ὅτε σφαλέντες τὴν τοῦ
> πείσαντος μίαν γνώμην ζημιοῦτε καὶ οὐ τὰς ὑμετέρας
> αὐτῶν, εἰ πολλαὶ οὖσαι ξυνεξήμαρτον.
>
> And because of this excessive cleverness Athens is the only
> state where a man cannot do a good service to his country
> openly and without deceiving it; for whenever he openly
> offers you something good you requite him by suspecting
> that in some way he will secretly profit by it. Yet even so, in

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[88] Virginia Hunter highlights Diodotus' view that the city is similar to an individual in its ability to make errors and experience feelings in "Thucydides and the Sociology of the Crowd," *Classical Journal* 84 (1988), 26. James V. Morrison builds on Hunter's analysis and aruges that Diodotus sees cities and individuals as fundamentally the same. See "A Key Topos in Thucydides: The Comparison of Cities and Individuals," *The American Journal of Philology* 115 (1994), 529.

[89] Gomme points out that the phrase τὰς περινοίας is a *hapax legomenon* in Classical Greek (except Ps.-Plat *Axioch. 370c*), 2:315. Hornblower notes that the phrase μόνην τε πόλιν must mean "'in this city and this city only' (that is, as opposed to other cities)," 1:434.

> view of the very great interest at stake, and in so grave a
> matter, we who advise must regard it as our duty to look
> somewhat further ahead than you who give matters only a
> brief consideration, especially since we are responsible
> advisers, while you are irresponsible listeners. Indeed, if
> not only those who gave advice but also those who
> followed it had to suffer alike, you would show greater
> prudence in your decisions; but as it is, whenever you meet
> with a reverse you give way to your first impulse and
> punish your adviser for his single error of judgment instead
> of yourselves, the multitude who shared in the error
> (3.43.3-5).

Thucydides' Diodotus lays bare the potential dangers of Athenian politics – specifically, over-emotional reactions to events – and cautions against them. He makes it clear that even speaking out in assembly with a good plan, διδοὺς φανερῶς τι ἀγαθὸν, brings suspicion back on the speaker about his true motives. The *polis*, when drawn together in a group, often "loses its rationality and becomes the slave of its emotions." [90] This tendency puts the speaker in a defensive position with regard to his honor and even safety in the community. Diodotus' response to Cleon allows Thucydides to make it clear to his reader that the dangers are growing for Athens as a result of the volatile emotions surrounding external threats.

But the dangers of this situation are precisely the reason rational leaders such as Diodotus must provide counsel: their insight can break the synergy between external dangers and the internally-generated dangers. By exploring the situation in a forward-looking manner they protect the mass of citizens who see but a part of the whole problem, ἡμᾶς περαιτέρω προνοοῦντας λέγειν ὑμῶν τῶν δι' ὀλίγου σκοπούντων. A speaker such as Diodotus has a much clearer picture of the synergistic effects between the external sources of danger and the internally generated ones that increase the danger. The

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[90] Hunter (1988), 26.

Athenians, as Thucydides has Diodotus say, are too often attached to their emotional

anger, πρὸς ὀργὴν.[91] Throughout his narrative, Thucydides takes pains to underline the

internally generated dangers associated with emotional reactions and ill-considered

actions. In this section of Diodotus' speech, he makes it clear that Athens was uniquely

susceptible to these emotions.

In the next section of Diodotus' speech, Thucydides offers solutions from which

his reader might learn. He has Diodotus say:

> Ἐγὼ δὲ παρῆλθον οὔτε ἀντερῶν περὶ Μυτιληναίων
> οὔτε κατηγορήσων. οὐ γὰρ περὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ἀδικίας
> ἡμῖν ὁ ἀγών, εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας
> εὐβουλίας. ἤν τε γὰρ ἀποφήνω πάνυ ἀδικοῦντας
> αὐτούς, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἀποκτεῖναι κελεύσω, εἰ μὴ
> ξυμφέρον, ἤν τε καὶ ἔχοντάς τι ξυγγνώμης † εἶεν †, εἰ
> τῇ πόλει μὴ ἀγαθὸν φαίνοιτο. νομίζω δὲ περὶ τοῦ
> μέλλοντος ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον βουλεύεσθαι ἢ τοῦ παρόντος.
> καὶ τοῦτο ὃ μάλιστα Κλέων ἰσχυρίζεται, ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν
> ξυμφέρον ἔσεσθαι πρὸς τὸ ἧσσον ἀφίστασθαι
> θάνατον ζημίαν προθεῖσι, καὶ αὐτὸς περὶ τοῦ ἐς τὸ
> μέλλον καλῶς ἔχοντος ἀντισχυριζόμενος τἀναντία
> γιγνώσκω. καὶ οὐκ ἀξιῶ ὑμᾶς τῷ εὐπρεπεῖ τοῦ ἐκείνου
> λόγου τὸ χρήσιμον τοῦ ἐμοῦ ἀπώσασθαι. δικαιότερος
> γὰρ ὢν αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος πρὸς τὴν νῦν ὑμετέραν ὀργὴν
> ἐς Μυτιληναίους τάχ᾽ ἂν ἐπισπάσαιτο· ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐ
> δικαζόμεθα πρὸς αὐτούς, ὥστε τῶν
> δικαίων δεῖν, ἀλλὰ βουλευόμεθα περὶ αὐτῶν, ὅπως
> χρησίμως
> ἕξουσιν.

> But I have come forward neither as an advocate of the
> Mytileneans in opposition to Cleon nor as their accuser. For
> the question for us to consider, if we are sensible, is not
> what wrong they have done, but what is the wise course for
> us. For no matter how guilty I show them to be, I shall not
> on that account bid you to put them to death, unless it is to

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[91] Hunter (1988) discusses three instances of the Athenians' anger – their deposition and recall of Pericles (2.65.4), their initial fear and anger at the news from Pylos (4.27-8), and a comparison to the Syracusan assembly (6.63.2) – to highlight the ways in which Thucydides pointed to their volatility and susceptibility to anger, 21-3.

our advantage; and if I show that they have some claim for forgiveness, I shall not on that account advise you to spare their lives, if this should prove clearly not to be for the good of the state. In my opinion we are deliberating about the future rather than the present. And as for the point which Cleon especially maintains, that it will be to our future advantage to inflict the penalty of death, to the end that revolts may be less frequent, I also in the interest of our future prosperity emphatically maintain the contrary. And I beg you not to be led by the speciousness of his argument to reject the practical advantages in mine. For embittered as you are toward the Mytileneans, you may perhaps be attracted by his argument, based as it is on the more legal aspects of the case; we are, however, not engaged in a law-suit with them, so as to be concerned about the question of right and wrong; but we are deliberating about them, to determine what policy will make them useful to us (3.44).

This passage highlights the themes of wisdom and *logos* that can protect the *polis*. In the opening phrases of this section, Diodotus' rhetorical question, "if we are sensible," εἰ σωφρονοῦμεν, foreshadows another of Thucydides' rational leaders, Hermocrates.[92] With such an explicit phrase, Thucydides makes it plain for his reader: the wise course of action is as follows. He establishes Diodotus as the rational advisor in this debate and pushes the reader to follow his logic throughout this section. As Diodotus focuses his audience's attention to the course of action they will pursue "if [they] are sensible," Thucydides focuses his reader on the terms and concepts associated with rational thought. He has Diodotus frame the debate with the "wise course," περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐβουλίας, which hearkens on the idea of a topic well-reasoned in council, with all the potential delay and discussion inherent in a council or assembly session.

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[92] Thuc. 4.64.4. This example has been discussed in 3.3.2 Internal Dangers of Intervention: Perceived Ties of "Fictive" Kinship. Scholarship on Thucydides' depiction of Hermocrates as a rational leader has been presented in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

Thucydides' Diodotus, of course, plays the role of primary rational advisor to the assembly as the reader is presented only with his and Cleon's speeches. But Thucydides' diction, though somewhat obscured in the translation, identifies the broader sagacity of Diodotus' argument. Two key verbs showcase Diodotus' intellectual authority, νομίζω and γιγνώσκω. Huart categorizes these verbs as having significant images of rational thought.[93] Both, however, are a bit muddled in the translation. The translation renders the first, νομίζω, as "in my opinion we are deliberating about the future rather than the present," when in reality the verb signifies much more than mere opinion. The verb νομίζω carries a significant valence of understanding and insight about a particular topic. So rather than being one man's simple "opinion," Diodotus' idea that the real debate is about the future is based on his in-depth analysis and insight into the situation. Political deliberation must look beyond the present circumstances.[94] Thucydides' reader is being shown that Diodotus' assertion comes not from the heart, but from the intellect, the tool for breaking the dangerous synergy between current external threats and internally-generated urges for action.

Diodotus' second intellectual assertion, γιγνώσκω, is also weakly rendered: "I also in the interest of our future prosperity emphatically maintain the contrary." Certainly there is a measure of emphatic denial conveyed in the term ἀντισχυριζόμενος, itself a unique term, a *hapax legomenon* in the Classical corpus.[95] But this term only supports his

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[93] On νομίζω see Huart, 262-65. He points to the specificity of rational consideration indicated by the verb νομίζειν: … la plupart du temps,νομίζειν ne nous montrera pas la réflexion d'un esprit sur l'ensemble d'une situation, ou des vues d'une grande portée, mais un jugement sur un point précis, 265. On γιγνώσκω, see Huart, 290-99. He notes that γιγνώσκειν is equivalent to a term of perception from the perspective of intellectual reflection, 291.

[94] Macleod (1974), 391.

[95] It only appears one other time in Plut. *De Vitioso Pudore* 528c

argument by providing as strong an opposition to Cleon's motion as possible. The point of his argument is not what he feels or worries about, but what he understands through intellectual reflection, γιγνώσκω. What Thucydides has presented as Diodotus' speech here is more akin to "I emphatically maintain the contrary in that I know very clearly how Cleon's proposal will affect our future." With the use of the intellectually-weighted verb γιγνώσκω, Thucydides continues presenting his reader with the idea that Diodotus' speech represents a well-reasoned position, offering a rational, less dangerous alternative to Cleon's passionate argument.

The final phrases in this section of the speech focus the reader on the important contrast between reason and emotion in the state's decision-making. Diodotus labels his point of view with *logos,* τοῦ ἐκείνου λόγου and ὁ λόγος, These two explicit mentions of rationality define his argument both for his audience and for Thucydides' reader. They paint a stark contrast to the anger Cleon attempts to arouse in the Athenians, πρὸς τὴν νῦν ὑμετέραν ὀργὴν. Thucydides' reader can understand the synergy between internal passions and existing external dangers as he has Diodotus demonstrate that, if the Athenians give in to their anger, ὀργὴν, they will suffer all the more in the long run. Thucydides has Diodotus acknowledge the anger that the Athenians feel – and that was certainly stirred up by Cleon! – and then remind them gently that the positive solution is for them to return to their rationality. They can accomplish more by looking to the *logos* in his own counsel for patience and forethought.

In the next section of his speech, Thucydides has Diodotus provide a more in-depth analysis of the various emotions that increase the external dangers already permeating interstate relations. Though Diodotus is focused on the Mytileneans,

Thucydides uses his analysis to point his reader to broader emotional challenges facing his contemporaries. Thucydides has Diodotus say:

> Ἐν οὖν ταῖς πόλεσι πολλῶν θανάτου ζημίαι πρόκεινται, καὶ οὐκ ἴσων τῷδε, ἀλλ' ἐλασσόνων ἁμαρτημάτων· ὅμως δὲ τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐπαιρόμενοι κινδυνεύουσι, καὶ οὐδείς πω καταγνοὺς ἑαυτοῦ μὴ περιέσεσθαι τῷ ἐπιβουλεύματι ἦλθεν ἐς τὸ δεινόν.

> Now the death-penalty has been prescribed in various states for many offenses which are not so serious as this is, nay, for minor ones; but nevertheless men are so inspired by hope as to take the risk; indeed, no one ever yet has entered upon a perilous enterprise with the conviction that his plot was condemned to failure (3.45.1-2).

After a brief discussion of the historical evolution of penalties, Thucydides has Diodotus continue describing the emotions which prey upon men's willingness to take risks. He has Diodotus continue:

> ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν πενία ἀνάγκῃ τὴν τόλμαν παρέχουσα, ἡ δ' ἐξουσία ὕβρει τὴν πλεονεξίαν καὶ φρονήματι, αἱ δ' ἄλλαι ξυντυχίαι ὀργῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὡς ἑκάστη τις κατέχεται ὑπ' ἀνηκέστου τινὸς κρείσσονος ἐξάγουσιν ἐς τοὺς κινδύνους. ἥ τε ἐλπὶς καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐπὶ παντί, ὁ μὲν ἡγούμενος, ἡ δ' ἐφεπομένη, καὶ ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν ἐκφροντίζων, ἡ δὲ τὴν εὐπορίαν τῆς τύχης ὑποτιθεῖσα, πλεῖστα βλάπτουσι, καὶ ὄντα ἀφανῆ κρείσσω ἐστὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων δεινῶν. καὶ ἡ τύχη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς οὐδὲν ἔλασσον ξυμβάλλεται ἐς τὸ ἐπαίρειν· ἀδοκήτως γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε παρισταμένη καὶ ἐκτῶν ὑποδεεστέρων κινδυνεύειν τινὰ προάγει, καὶ οὐχ ἧσσον τὰς πόλεις, ὅσῳ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων τε, ἐλευθερίας ἢ ἄλλων ἀρχῆς, καὶ μετὰ πάντων ἕκαστος ἀλογίστως ἐπὶ πλέον τι αὐτὸν ἐδόξασεν. ἁπλῶς τε ἀδύνατον καὶ πολλῆς εὐηθείας, ὅστις οἴεται τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως ὁρμωμένης προθύμως τι πρᾶξαι ἀποτροπήν τινα ἔχειν ἢ νόμων ἰσχύι ἢ ἄλλῳ τῳ δεινῷ.

> Nay, men are lured into hazardous enterprises by the constraint of poverty, which makes them bold, by the insolence and pride of affluence, which makes them greedy, and by the various passions engendered in the other

conditions of human life as these are severally mastered by some mighty and irresistible impulse. Then, too, Hope and Desire are everywhere; Desire leads, Hope attends; Desire contrives the plan, Hope suggests the facility of fortune; the two passions are most baneful, and being unseen phantoms prevail over seen dangers. Besides these, fortune contributes in no less degree to urge men on; for she sometimes presents herself unexpectedly and thus tempts men to take risks even when their resources are inadequate, and states even more than men, inasmuch as the stake is the greatest of all – their own freedom or empire over others – and the individual, when supported by the whole people, unreasonably overestimates his own strength. In a word, it is impossible, and a mark of extreme simplicity, for anyone to imagine that when human nature is wholeheartedly bent on any undertaking it can be diverted from it by rigorous laws or by any other terror (3.45.5-7).

Pride, anger, hope and desire are among the emotions which urge men and *poleis* consistently to choose to face dangers.[96] Thucydides uses this section of Diodotus' speech to explain how internally-generated impulses work in synergy with the ever-present external dangers of interstate relations to decrease the odds of success – and even survival. He makes the dangers explicit by incorporating three instances of *kindunos* in this short section: κινδυνεύουσι, ἐξάγουσιν ἐς τοὺς κινδύνου, and κινδυνεύειν. His reader is struck by degree of danger Diodotus insists is part of the world.

But his point is not simply to expound on the degree to which the world is a dangerous place. Thucydides shows that throughout his narrative.[97] Rather, Thucydides' point in this instance is to highlight the dangerous synergy between these "external

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[96] Morrison (1994) argues that Diodotus' perspective is that "cities, no less than individuals, are subject to the enticements of chance, desire and hope," 530. Thomas Scanlon analyzes this passage and presents it as an ominous foreshadowing of the same hope and desire which led the Athenians to undertake the Sicilian expedition. See "Echoes of Herodotus in Thucydides: Self-Sufficiency, Admiration and Law," *Historia* 43 (1994), 174.

[97] The idea that Thucydides' world is a dangerous place has been presented in 2.2 Κίνδυνος as General State of Nature

circumstances and internal passion, of individuals or states."[98] Thucydides makes the

dangerous emotions explicit: hope, feelings of necessity brought on by poverty, pride

from wealth, and anger. Hope inspires them to rash action by "providing irrational

promises of success" while it "insulates this desire from reality."[99] The necessities of

poverty emboldens men, making them feel that they have little to lose.[100] Men's pride in

wealth increases their feelings of superiority and leads them to take greater risks with less

thought to the possibly self-destructive outcomes.[101] Thucydides' Diodotus puts all of

these emotions together to highlight the dangerous synergy between these emotions and

the already-present external dangers. Making matters even worse, as Thucydides has

Diodotus say, is fortune, ἡ τύχη, which presents itself to men at precarious moments and

sways them from the rational course.[102] These elements, according to Thucydides'

Diodotus, combine to create a situation in which men act illogically, ἀλογίστως,

overestimate their own strength and enter into risks that they might otherwise avoid. In

other words, internal passions increase the danger of external circumstances.

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[98] Gomme, 2:319.

[99] Steven Forde, "Thucydides on Ripeness and Conflict Resolution," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004), 185. Thucydides rarely presents concepts such as hope from a single perspective. Kokaz (2001) notes that Thucydides demonstrates that "hope … can be destructive or productive depending on its use," 40.

[100] Orwin (1984) highlights Thucydides' insistence on "poverty with its daring that necessity inspires" as a fatal and imperious passion," 491. He cites Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 234.

[101] Thomas F. Scanlon notes that states that do not understand the pride's powerful influence engage in "risks of unreasonable audacity or overly cruel arrogance," in "Thucydides and Tyranny," *Classical Antiquity* 6 (1987), 297.

[102] Connor (1984) points to Thucydides' view of τύχη as the "antithesis … of reason and intelligence," 55, n. 9. See also Edmund (1975), esp. 145-7,

Pointing out this synergy allows Thucydides to conclude Diodotus' speech with a didactic message for his reader: a moderate course mitigates danger. Thucydides uses the next section of Diodotus' speech to show his reader how danger might be reduced – though *kindunos* is not made explicit, it has appeared three times in the previous section of the speech – if rational thought is given to less violent and impulsive actions. He has Diodotus focuses his audience on some of the possible problems that may arise from their initial, impulsive response to the revolt. For example, it allows no chance for the inhabitants of a *polis* to repent and change their attitude towards Athens.[103] This, of course, would allow them to come to terms with Athens and continue paying tribute instead of fighting to the death because they lack a reason to seek terms.[104] Finally Thucydides has Diodotus explain the material cost of a siege which nets nothing more than a ruined *polis* in the end.[105]

It is after this cost-benefit analysis that Thucydides has Diodotus clarify that he is really arguing for a rational approach to governance of the empire itself. Thucydides has him say:

> ὥστε οὐ δικαστὰς ὄντας δεῖ ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον τῶν ἐξαμαρτανόντων ἀκριβεῖς βλάπτεσθαι ἢ ὁρᾶν ὅπως ἐς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον μετρίως κολάζοντες ταῖς πόλεσιν ἕξομεν ἐς χρημάτων λόγον ἰσχυούσαις χρῆσθαι, καὶ τὴν φυλακὴν μὴ ἀπὸ τῶν νόμων τῆς δεινότητος ἀξιοῦν ποιεῖσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων τῆς ἐπιμελείας.

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[103] Thuc. 4.46.1.

[104] Thuc. 4.46.2.

[105] Thuc. 4.46.3-4. Diodotus' argument in this section is almost completely focused on the balance between justice and expedience. Relevant scholarship on this broad topic has been presented in 2.4 Κίνδυνος and Profit Maximizing Behavior.

> We must not, therefore, be such rigorous judges of the delinquents as to suffer harm ourselves, but we must rather see how for the time to come, by punishing moderately, we may have at our service dependent cities that are strong in material resources; and we must deem it proper to protect ourselves against revolts, not by the terror of our laws, but rather by the vigilance of our administration (3.46.4-5).

Diodotus' rational call for moderation stands in stark contrast to Cleon's "kill 'em all, let others decide for themselves" plan. Twice Thucydides' diction focuses his reader on moderate action. First, he has Diodotus call on the Athenians to punish "moderately." μετρίως, taking into account the long-term implications. The second instance is a bit muddled in the translation. Where the translation says "we must deem it proper to protect ourselves against revolts, not by the terror of our laws, but rather by the *vigilance of our administration*," Thucydides' Greek is actually ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων τῆς ἐπιμελείας. Thucydides' reader is not really confronted by a call for "vigilance," which sounds vaguely militaristic. Instead, Thucydides' reader sees that Diodotus' overarching theme is to take guidance from τῆς ἐπιμελείας, which implies "careful attention" or even "attention paid to actions," ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων τῆς ἐπιμελείας. It is akin to the power Thucydides' reader knows Athens to have derived by its careful attention to preparation in the early days of its empire.[106] With this phrase, Thucydides shows his reader that the Athenians' surest path to stability would have been to attend to their undertakings with an eye on the possible long-term outcomes. Diodotus' call for "careful attention" reinforces his role as a foil to Cleon's righteous indignation. It must be noted, of course, that Diodous is not calling for a complete moratorium on punishment; he understands the

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[106] June W. Allison discusses the important role of preparedness in growing Athenian power and contends that *paraskeue* "articulates the concept in its role as an abstract noun." The concept is the attention paid to all alternatives and being prepared for exigencies of the moment. See *Power and Preparedness in Thucydides* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1989), 30-44.

importance of preserving Athens' reputation of willingness to act powerfully and decisively. His plea and Thucydides' message is for a moderate and restrained approach that will "put the blame on as few as possible." [107]This approach will preserve the potential for long-term benefit.

Diodotus builds on this general theme of moderation with more explicit refutations of Cleon's passionate assertions. Thucydides has him identify the flaws in Cleon's argument by predicting the events that might occur if passions go unchecked. First, as Thucydides has him explain, Athens would create more dangerous enemies for itself. He asserts that the populace of allied *poleis* is generally well-disposed to Athens and only revolts when forced to by aristocrats.[108] Should the Athenians follow Cleon's urging, they will simultaneously kill their present benefactors and create future enemies. The populace in other *poleis* will side with revolutionary aristocrats because they know the punishment that awaits them regardless of their personal feelings about Athens.[109] Finally, Thucydides has Diodotus present the dangers of giving in to vengeful urges and suggest that there is an appropriate time to risk a submissive appearance towards the allies by selectively ignoring insults. He has Diodotus say:

> δεῖ δέ, καὶ εἰ ἠδίκησαν, μὴ προσποιεῖσθαι, ὅπως ὃ
> μόνον ἡμῖν ἔτι ξύμμαχόν ἐστι μὴ πολέμιον γένηται. καὶ
> τοῦτο πολλῷ ξυμφορώτερον ἡγοῦμαι ἐς τὴν κάθεξιν
> τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἑκόντας ἡμᾶς ἀδικηθῆναι ἢ δικαίως οὓς μὴ
> δεῖ διαφθεῖραι·

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[107]Thuc. 3.46.6.

[108] Thuc. 3.47.1-2. This section of the debate factors prominently in the modern discussion of the relative popularity or unpopularity of the Athenian empire. Relevant scholarship on that topic has been presented in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

[109]Thuc. 3.47.3-4.

> Why, even if they were guilty, you should pretend not to know it, to the end that the only class that is still friendly to us may not become hostile. And it is, I think, far more conducive to the maintenance of our dominion, that we should willingly submit to be wronged, than that we should destroy, however justly, those whom we ought not to destroy (3.47.5).

Thucydides understands his contemporaries' concern for punishing wrong-doers and helping the wronged.[110] But he uses Diodotus' speech to demonstrate how Athens can reduce the danger by not being overly concerned with who is more wronged in this instance. He has Diodotus suggest that the Athenians should calmly choose to ignore the wrong done to them.[111] He expands on this idea by having Diodotus say that it would be "far more conducive to the maintenance of our dominion, that we should willingly submit to be wronged." The translation, as elsewhere, skews the impact of Thucydides' Greek on his reader. Where the translation advises the Athenians to "willingly submit to be wronged," Thucydides' Greek simply says ἑκόντας ἡμᾶς ἀδικηθῆναι, "we should willingly be done wrong." There is no explicit mention of negatively-viewed concept of submission.[112] Instead what Thucydides has Diodotus propose is simply a "rational appeasement." [113] By ignoring this injury the Athenians can save their allies for future

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[110] This topic has been presented in 3.3 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Ethos of Intervention.

[111] The idea that Greeks often chose to ignore insults from a rational calculation of cost and benefit has been discussed by several modern scholars. Fiona McHardy points to the rational calculations of potential costs and benefits from taking revenge or choosing to ignore the slight throughout her work. See *Revenge in Athenian Culture* (London: Duckworth, 2008). Daniel Treisman refers to this concept as "rational appeasement" or even "anticipatory appeasement" in the sense that Diodotus wants to prepare Athens' allies for future utility. See "Rational Appeasement," *International Organization* 58 (2004), 395-73, esp. 351. Lendon (2000) concludes with the idea that states almost always have "adequate grounds to feel insulted and seek revenge" but often choose to allow the feud to sleep, 22.

[112] The Greeks' conception of submissive behavior has been presented in 3.4.2 Internal Dangers of Honor: Vengeance in Action.

[113] Treisman (2004), 351.

usefulness, the advantageous approach.[114] This mitigates the synergy between external dangers and internally generated urges. There is already external danger from aristocratic external governments and other subject-allies who might be planning revolts[115] Thucydides shows his reader that this danger might actually be reduced if the Athenians restrain their desire for vengeance and allow a certain amount of injury to go unpunished.

Thucydides has Diodotus conclude his speech with a call for "deliberation on matters of expediency governed by reason." [116] After acknowledging Cleon's assertion that pity and other motives are generally detrimental to responsible governance, Diodotus agrees that the Athenians should pass judgment on the clearly guilty leaders of the revolution. But it is here that he draws a sharp distinction between his argument and Cleon's: "let the rest dwell in peace." [117] He argues that this is the most rational course, the most beneficial course, and that it will cause alarm among Athens' enemies for a powerful reason. He has Diodotus close his argument with that reason:

> ὅστις γὰρ εὖ βουλεύεται πρὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους
> κρείσσων ἐστὶν ἢ μετ' ἔργων ἰσχύος ἀνοίᾳ ἐπιών.

> For he who is wise in counsel is stronger against the foe
> than he who recklessly rushes on with brute force (3.48.2).

Thucydides' Greek once again delivers his reader a more direct message on rational thought than the translation. Where the translation renders the ending as "recklessly rushes on with brute force," Thucydides' Greek, ἰσχύος ἀνοίᾳ ἐπιών, is more focused

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[114] Orwin (1984), 490.

[115] Thuc. 3.47.3.

[116] Macleod (1978), 77.

[117] Thuc. 3.48.1.

on the mental process. Gomme renders the phrase as "attack with force and folly."[118]

Hornblower also offers a variation, "the severity of unreasoning violence," which carries

the force of ἰσχύος ἀνοία more clearly.[119] Thucydides' rendition of Diodotus' speech

builds to this powerful conclusion. Cleon's call for quick action is dangerous folly. The

Athenians would be acting without rational consideration of the future dangers they

might be increasing by giving into their violent urge for vengeance now.

In sum, Thucydides' rendition of Diodotus' speech is not simply one side of the

debate between what is just and what is expedient; it is also about the value of rational

thought.[120] Thucydides uses this debate to reinforce for his readers the types of dangers,

both external and internally-generated, that face his contemporaries. But the real problem,

as Thucydides sees it, is that these two sources of danger work in synergy. In a dangerous

world, external dangers are increased by his contemporaries' willingness to give in to

their urges for quick, violent action. That is the situation facing Athens at this critical

juncture in the war: they condemn the Mytileneans by giving in to their anger and desire

for revenge and only afterwards realize that they might be making the overall situation

for their empire more dangerous as a result. The speakers in this debate allow Thucydides

to dissect the issue and show his reader not only the synergies between the two types of

dangers but also the ways in which a rational approach might mitigate the danger.

Diodotus' argument won the assembly's vote, but only narrowly.[121] Thucydides'

position on this debate is that Diodotus was right and that Cleon, as well as the initial

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[118] Gomme, 2:324

[119] Hornblower, 1:438.

[120] Macleod (1977), 77; Cohen (1984), 49; and Cody (1991), 84.

[121] Thuc. 3.49.1.

vote, was misguided.[122] But he shared this position with only a slim majority of his contemporaries in the assembly on that day which highlights the corrosive nature of the problem facing the Athenians as the war dragged on. While there were enough citizens willing to engage in rational debate about matters of the utmost weight at this stage of the war, there were already nearly as many who were unwilling to do so and who were easily carried away by momentary passions. It is perhaps from these citizens that later demagogues such as Alcibiades were able to draw their support for unbridled attempts to spread Athenian influence over other *poleis* which had previously remained neutral. Thucydides highlights for his reader the ways in which the necessities of war diminished men's ability to reason.[123] And as I will show in the next section, the narrow majority of Athenians who agreed with Diodotus' rationality is gradually replaced by those who follow their passion for action. Perhaps led by Alcibiades himself, the Athenians first close their minds to other options on the island of Melos before recklessly sailing towards disaster on the island of Sicily.[124] War indeed taught the Athenians to be more violent and the Melian dialogue that follows provides a solid example of "the nature of Athenian imperialism once it had turned really nasty." [125]

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[122] Boyarin (2012), 72

[123] Peter Pouncey, *Necessities of War: Study of Thucydides' Pessimism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, esp. 22 and 144; Colin Macleod, "Reason and Necessity (t. 3.9.14, 37-48)" in *Collected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 68.

[124] On the idea that Alcibiades himself was part of the Athenian contingent that engaged the Melian oligarchs in dialogue, see Martin Ostwald, *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law: Law, Society and Politics in Fifth-Century Athens* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 305; Michael Vickers, "Alcibiades and Melos: Thucydides 5.84-116," *Historia* 48 (1999), 265-81.

[125] Vickers (1999), 281.

4.3 <u>The Melian Dialogue: A New Interpretation</u>

The Melian Dialogue provides Thucydides with another critical juncture in his narrative of the war through which he can highlight the synergy between external dangers and internally generated passions. In this dialogue, however, he is able to provide the point of view of another *polis*, Melos, to highlight both the Athenians' proclivity for action and other Greeks' resistance to rational, practical considerations when facing exceptionally dangerous situations. With more rational and less destructive options still available, Thucydides' contemporaries often suffer from the premature cognitive closure which leads them to perceive but one option: violent action.[1] Thucydides' reader can see in the Melian Dialogue, which is very often cited in debates about the Realist Paradigm and the role of power in interstate relations, an analysis of the synergy between the two forms of danger.[2] This synergy often went unperceived by Thucydides' contemporaries. But for Thucydides' reader the danger is always there, even if the term *kindunos* is not.[3]

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[1] The term "premature cognitive closure" was presented as "a failure to search seriously for alternative policies" in 1.2.4 Thucydides 1.23.5-6: A Realist Perspective. It is further explained as a "psychological phenomenon... particularly dangerous during crisis situations involving stress and time pressure." See Eckstein (2006), 25; Kauppi (1991),115

[2] For scholarship involving the Melian Dialogue in a discussion of the Realist Paradigm, see Woodhead (1970); Cohen (1984); Cohen. David (1984); Marshall Cohen, "Moral Skepticism and International Relations," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13 (1984), 299-346; Garst (1989); Forde (1992); Laurie M. Bagby, "The Use and Abuse of Thucydides in International Relations," *International Organization* 48 (1994), 131-53; Stephen Forde, "International Realism and the Science of Politics: Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Neorealism," *International Studies Quarterly* 39 (1995), 141-6.; Crane (1998), 237-57; Morrison (2000); Kokaz (2001);Bedford and Workman (2001); Lebow (2001); Zumbrunnen (2002); David A. Welch, "Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides," *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003), 301-19; Forde (2004), 177-95; Jonathan Monten, "Thucydides and Modern Realism," *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006), 3-25; and Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "The Post Colonial Moment in Security Studies," *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006), 329-52. This list is not exhaustive.

[3] The term *kindunos* appears only eight times in the twenty-chapters which comprise the Dialogue: 5.90.1, 5.91.2, 5.99.1, 5.100.1, 5.103.1, 5.107.1, 5.108.1 and 5.111.3.

Thucydides uses this dialogue to show how both Athens and Melos alike fell prey to dangerous emotions and entered a destructive state of premature cognitive closure.

The Athenians launched an expedition against the Lacedaemonian colony of Melos in the early summer of 416 and goaded into combat by the Athenians' assault on their territory.[4] The Athenians sent envoys to the Melian commanders. But these envoys were not allowed to speak before the full Melian assembly. They instead spoke only with the magistrates and oligarchs.[5] Thucydides depicts this discussion through a unique dialogue form in order to challenge his reader to weigh the flaws and merits of the arguments made by the representatives of both *poleis*.[6] His employment of this unique format helps to reinforce the lessons that the reader is expected to have learned from his engagement with the narrative as a whole. "In essence, the Athenian-Melian exchange has become a kind of test case for the reader, asking how much the reader has learned by the end of five books." [7] Thucydides' analysis of the synergy between external and internal dangers runs throughout the dialogue with both *poleis* offering rational as well as non-rational points of view depending on the degree to which they are experiencing premature cognitive closure.

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[4] Thuc. 5.84.1-2.

[5] Thuc. 5.84.3.

[6] Daniel Boyarin explores the trends among scholars debating the reason for this unique form and provides a thorough bibliography in "Deadly Dialogue: Thucydides with Plato,"*Representations* 117 (2012), 59-85. His conclusion on this point is that Thucydides offers the dialogue form as "an attempt to instruct his audience, an artificial exposé of the inequities, dangers, and consequences of dialogue/dialectic itself, of the speech situation of Plato's dialogues also, in which there are only two parties present (in the speech situation itself others of course may overhear or interject), the proponent and the opponent, and 'they' themselves are meant to judge the success or failure of the arguments," 67-8.

[7] Morrison (2006), 82.

In the opening exchanges of the dialogue, Thucydides has the Athenians and Melians settle the potential outcomes that are being debated. The Athenians assume that the reason they have not been brought before an assembly of the people is is to prevent them from swaying the *demos* with a "seductive and untested" speech. As a result, they declare that the Melians are not to be allowed to make a comprehensive speech but must instead take up each point individually. They must only reply to Athenian statements that to them "seem to be unsatisfactory."[8] This initiates a dialogue which – as Boyarin contends – invites Thucydides' reader "to judge the success or failure of the arguments."[9] The dialogue form also gives Thucydides an opportunity to highlight specific examples of the various synergies between existing external dangers and the internally generated passions that make them worse.

The Melians' opening point, however, is that even this form of debate will be unproductive for the Melians. They are already trapped between two options, to yield to servitude or accept the dangers of war against the Athenians. According to Thucydides' Melians, the Athenians are ignoring rational options in favor of a "thinly disguised ultimatum" from the outset.[10] He has the Melians say:

> ἡ μὲν ἐπιείκεια τοῦ διδάσκειν καθ᾽ ἡσυχίαν ἀλλήλους
> οὐ ψέγεται, τὰ δὲ τοῦ πολέμου παρόντα ἤδη καὶ οὐ
> μέλλοντα διαφέροντα αὐτοῦ φαίνεται. ὁρῶμεν γὰρ
> αὐτούς τε κριτὰς ἥκοντας ὑμᾶς τῶν λεχθησομένων
> καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς

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[8] Thuc. 5.85.

[9] Boyarin (2012), 67-8.

[10] Felix Martin Wassermann, "The Melian Dialogue," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 78 (1947), 20. Boyarin (2012) notes that the opening is a "particularly vicious form of the exercise of power," 64.

περιγενομένοις μὲν τῷ δικαίῳ καὶ δι᾽ αὐτὸ μὴ ἐνδοῦσι
πόλεμον ἡμῖν φέρουσαν, πεισθεῖσι δὲ δουλείαν.

The fairness of the proposal, that we shall at our leisure
instruct one another, is not open to objection, but these acts
of war, which are not in the future, but already here at hand,
are manifestly at variance with your suggestion. For we see
that you are come to be yourselves judges of what is to be
said here, and that the outcome of the discussion will in all
likelihood be, if we win the debate by the righteousness of
our cause and for that very reason refuse to yield, war for
us, whereas if we are persuaded, servitude (5.86).

Thucydides' Melians do not object to the "fairness of educating each other in leisure,"

τοῦ διδάσκειν καθ᾽ ἡσυχίαν ἀλλήλους. The Melians actually welcome rational

discourse that can lead to better outcomes. Unfortunately, as the reader sees, this debate is

not about the future outcomes or conflict avoidance, τὰ … οὐ μέλλοντα. It is a reaction

to events that have already occurred, δὲ τοῦ πολέμου παρόντα ἤδη καὶ. At this point

there is only time for reaction to the already-present external dangers. The Athenians'

"passion to dominate" leaves no room for reasonable alternatives and the Melians' own

desire for what they see as justice brings up "conflicts that cannot be won."[11] The

synergy between these two factors makes violence inevitable.

From the outset, Thucydides shows that the Athenians had but one focus, the

dangers of the moment, and they rejected "the relevance of the future."[12] Despite the fact

that they created these dangers and could instantly ameliorate them if they wished,

Thucydides has them exclude all other options with their myopic response:

Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν ὑπονοίας τῶν μελλόντων λογιούμενοι ἢ
ἄλλο τι ξυνήκετε ἢ ἐκ τῶν παρόντων καὶ ὧν ὁρᾶτε

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[11] Forde (2004), 192.

[12] Morrison (2000), 133. See also Paula Arnold Debnar, "The Unpersuasive Thebans (Thuc. 3.61-67)," *Phoenix* 50 (1996), 109.

περὶ σωτηρίας βουλεύσοντες τῇ πόλει, παυοίμεθ’ ἄν· εἰ
δ’ ἐπὶ τοῦτο, λέγοιμεν ἄν.

Well, if you have met to argue from suspicions about what
may happen in the future, or for any other purpose than to
consult for the safety of your city in the light of what is
present and before your eyes, we may as well stop; but if
you have this end in view, we may speak on (5.87).

The Athenians have one point: "their overwhelming superiority."[13] The reasonable aspect

of their argument is that the Melians' main concern should be the safety of their city, περὶ

σωτηρίας βουλεύσοντες τῇ πόλει; this thesis perfectly matches the "logic of a self-help

system," in that the Melians must find a way to survive in their present circumstances

without assistance.[14] But Thucydides' reader also notes that the Athenians refusal to

explore other rational options beyond their own demand for the Melians' submission.

Where the translation reads "if you have met to argue from suspicions," Thucydides'

Greek actually reads, ὑπονοίας τῶν μελλόντων λογιούμενοι. Thucydides' Athenians

are focused less on denying them the chance to "argue" and more on denying them the

chance even to make reasonable calculations about the future. They cannot apply any

logos to this discussion, in Thucydides' rendition of the Athenians' argument. Thucydides

points his reader to the idea that the Athenians' internally-generated urges – here the urge

to confirm their reputation as a *polis* willing to employ its power[15] – remove potentially

more-rational options from consideration. Though *kindunos* is not explicit, it is clear that

the Athenians have both created an external danger and made it worse.

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[13] Gomme, 4:160.

[14] Monten (2006), 18.

[15] Richard Ned Lebow argues that the Athenians' sole motivation for invading Melos was to
"enhance [their] state's reputation for strength and resolve at home and abroad." See "The Paranoia of the
Powerful: Thucydides on World War III," *Political Science* 17 (1984), 11.

Thucydides' diction reinforces the Melians' role as rational foil to the Athenians.

In their next response, he has them say:

> Εἰκὸς μὲν καὶ ξυγγνώμη ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε καθεστῶτας ἐπὶ
> πολλὰ καὶ λέγοντας καὶ δοκοῦντας τρέπεσθαι· ἡ
> μέντοι ξύνοδος καὶ περὶ σωτηρίας ἥδε πάρεστι, καὶ ὁ
> λόγος ᾧ προκαλεῖσθε τρόπῳ, εἰ δοκεῖ, γιγνέσθω.
>
> It is natural and pardonable for men in such a position as
> ours to resort to many arguments and many suppositions.
> This conference, however, is here to consider the question
> of our safety; so let the discussion, if it please you, proceed
> in the way that you propose (5.88).

Thucydides' reader will notice the logical valence behind Thucydides' diction. His Greek,

which is rendered as "resort to many arguments and many suppositions," actually

provides two participles, λέγοντας καὶ δοκοῦντας. Thucydides' version of the Melians'

response reminds the reader that men in dire straits, such as the Melians, should be be

speakers, λέγοντας, and thinkers, δοκοῦντας.[16] So they are not merely reminding the

Athenians that others in their position might "offer suppositions;" there is more to it than

that. They are reminding the Athenians, and Thucydides is reminding his reader, that it is

reasonable to expect them to engage their intellect. They should be expected to search for

broader solutions instead of merely focusing on the present danger and throwing out

arguments which distract from the long-term impact of the present crisis.

The Melians concede that they will respond in the manner that seems best to the

Athenians, ᾧ προκαλεῖσθε τρόπῳ, εἰ δοκεῖ; but it is the Athenians' response that

provides perhaps one of the most oft-quoted phrases from this dialogue: the powerful

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[16] Gomme argues that δοκοῦντας is "some apology for the [ὑπονοίας] of which the Athenians had complained in 87," 4:160.

exact what they can, while the weak yield what they must.[17] But with respect to Thucydides' focus on those aspects of Greek society which generate additional dangers, there is more in this particular response than this single – albeit important – phrase. Thucydides also points his reader to his contemporaries' dangerous passion for revenge for perceived slights. Thucydides has the Athenians say:

> Ἡμεῖς τοίνυν οὔτε αὐτοὶ μετ' ὀνομάτων καλῶν, ὡς ἢ δικαίως τὸν Μῆδον καταλύσαντες ἄρχομεν ἢ ἀδικούμενοι νῦν ἐπεξερχόμεθα, λόγων μῆκος ἄπιστον παρέξομεν, οὔθ' ὑμᾶς ἀξιοῦμεν ἢ ὅτι Λακεδαιμονίων ἄποικοι ὄντες οὐ ξυνεστρατεύσατε ἢ ὡς ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ἠδικήκατε λέγοντας οἴεσθαι πείσειν, τὰ δυνατὰ δ' ἐξ ὧν ἑκάτεροι ἀληθῶς φρονοῦμεν διαπράσσεσθαι, ἐπισταμένους πρὸς εἰδότας ὅτι δίκαια μὲν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρωπείῳ λόγῳ ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἀνάγκης κρίνεται, δυνατὰ δὲ οἱ προύχοντες πράσσουσι καὶ οἱ ἀσθενεῖς ξυγχωροῦσιν.

> Well, then, we on our part will make use of no fair phrases, saying either that we hold sway because we overthrew the Persians, or that we now come against you because we are injured, offering in a lengthy speech arguments that would not be believed; nor, on the other hand, do we presume that you will assert, either that the reason why you did not join us in the war was because you were colonists of the Lacedaemonians, or that you have done us no wrong. Rather we presume that you aim at accomplishing what is possible in accordance with the real thoughts of both of us, since you know as well as we know that what is just is arrived at in human arguments only when the necessity on both sides is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, while the weak yield what they must (5.89).

The Athenians, according to Thucydides, are focused on identifying the wrong-doers in this instance. Though they couch it in terms implying that they would rather not mention it, the Athenians cast themselves in the position of having been wronged, ἀδικούμενοι νῦν ἐπεξερχόμεθα, and "don't claim you have not done us wrong." On a certain level,

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[17] Thuc. 3.89.

they are justifying their violent actions against the Melians as revenge for an earlier

injustice or harm; Gomme contends that the phrase ἀδικούμενοι νῦν ἐπεξερχόμεθα

should be rendered "seek retribution." [18] Thucydides' Athenians are charging the Melians

with doing an injustice to Athens, ἠδικήκατε. The Athenians give no specifics

concerning the harm Melos caused them.[19] Nor does Thucydides explain their dubious

claim beyond highlighting the Athenian action it inspires and which works in synergy

with the present external dangers. The Athenians have been facing the external dangers of

the war for sixteen years at this point. Certainly by this point several things have gone

well for the Athenians: the Spartans' leadership among their allies has been threatened,

the Athenians have entered into a treaty with the powerful Argives, and the Athenian

general Alcibiades has led a successful campaign in the Peloponnese; [20] The so-called

"Peace of Nicias" is still in effect, freeing the Athenians from any direct threat from

Sparta.[21] But the Athenians are not satisfied with the *status quo*. They cannot refuse their

dangerous urge for action: it brings the Athenians into a new conflict at a time when their

resources might be better spent enjoying the dividends of peace after sixteen years of war.

Thucydides' reader notes the synergy between the Athenians' overreaching at this

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[18] Gomme, 4:161.

[19] Gomme notes that this may have been nothing more than a "theoretical possibility with no basis in fact," 4:162. Lazenby (2004) points to the "slim evidence" that "Melos may have been contributing to the Spartan war effort by about 427," 59.

[20] Spartan leadership threatened, 5.27-31; Athenian-Argive alliance, 5.46; Alcibiades' success, 5.52;

[21] Thuc. 5.18-19 and 5.23.

moment and what follows: the disastrous Sicilian expedition.[22] Thucydides' Athenians could not restrain their urge to act and increased the dangers already present in the world of Greek interstate relations.

The Melians' response is once again focused on the long-term view as they, for the moment, continue to represent the rational perspective. Though this will change as the dialogue develops, Thucydides' Melians continue seeking a more productive outcome in contrast to the Athenians who are focused on their immediate crisis. Thucydides has them say:

> Ἦι μὲν δὴ νομίζομέν γε, χρήσιμον (ἀνάγκη γάρ, ἐπειδὴ ὑμεῖς οὕτω παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον τὸ ξυμφέρον λέγειν ὑπέθεσθε) μὴ καταλύειν ὑμᾶς τὸ κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ τῷ αἰεὶ ἐν κινδύνῳ γιγνομένῳ εἶναι τὰ εἰκότα καὶ δίκαια, καί τι καὶ ἐντὸς τοῦ ἀκριβοῦς πείσαντά τινα ὠφεληθῆναι. καὶ πρὸς ὑμῶν οὐχ ἧσσον τοῦτο, ὅσῳ καὶ ἐπὶ μεγίστῃ τιμωρίᾳ σφαλέντες ἂν τοῖς ἄλλοις παράδειγμα γένοισθε.

> As we think, at any rate, it is expedient (for we are constrained to speak of expediency, since you have in this fashion, ignoring the principle of justice, suggested that we speak of what is advantageous) that you should not rule out the principle of the common good, but that for him who is at the time in peril what is equitable should also be just, and though one has not entirely proved his point he should still derive some benefit therefrom. And this is not less for your interest than for our own, inasmuch as you, if you shall ever meet with a reverse, would not only incur the greatest punishment, but would also become a warning example to others (5.90).

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[22] Many scholars acknowledge the possible links between these two events in Thucydides' narrative. See Stahl (1966), 160; W. Liebeschuetz, "The Structure and Function of the Melian Dialogue, "*The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 88 (1968), 75-6; Harry C. Avery, "Themes in Thucydides' Account of the Sicilian Expedition," *Hermes* 101 (1973), 10; Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 143-4; Forde (1986); Connor (1984), 158, n.1; Palmer (1992), 140, n.17; Peter J. Ahrendorf, "Thucydides' Realistic Critique of Realism," *Polity* 30 (1997), 244; and Bedford and Workman (2001), 58.

The Melians' danger is explicit, τῷ αἰεὶ ἐν κινδύνῳ γιγνομένῳ, and arose from the naturally dangerous position of weaker *poleis*.[23] The explicit *kindunos* highlights the dangerous reality: weaker *poleis* are always in danger, αἰεὶ ἐν κινδύνῳ. As the Melians attempt to provide the Athenians with a long-term view, Thucydides' reader retrospectively understands how this lesson applies to later stages of the war. This same danger may arise for the Athenians when they meet with a reverse of their current powerful position, ἐπὶ μεγίστῃ τιμωρίᾳ σφαλέντες. The Melians use this logic to point the Athenians to the idea that giving in to their internally-generated urge for expansionist action – which they might justify through a dubious claim of revenge – the action may have far-reaching consequences when they are less powerful. Thucydides' explicit *kindunos* makes it vivid that danger is out there for the Athenians; the reader is asked to evaluate what effects their short-term approach, giving in to internally-generated urges, will do for them when they are in similar circumstances.

Thucydides' Athenians have a simple response: the danger may be out there, but they should be allowed to take those risks; it is not the business of the Melians. In other words, Thucydides focuses on the Athenians' *hubris* in the face of overwhelming evidence that he has provided that danger is a constant in the state of nature for his contemporaries.[24] Thucydides has the Athenians respond:

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[23] The relationship between strong and weak *poleis* has been presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All Poleis.

[24] Though he does not cite this example, Douglas M. MacDowell identifies the treatment of certain *poleis* as "slaves" to be a form of the *hybris* that existed in Athens during the Peloponnesian War. See "Hybris in Athens," *Greece and Rome* 23 (1976), 23. William T. Bluhm argues that the Melian expedition itself "arose not out of a sense of weakness and fear, but out of an arrogant confidence in Athens's ability to expand her empire almost limitlessly out of Athenian hybris (overweening pride)." See "Hybris and Aggression: A Critique of Lebow's 'Paranoia of the Powerful' and an Alternative Theory," *Political Science* 17 (1984), 587.

Ἡμεῖς δὲ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχῆς, ἢν καὶ παυθῇ, οὐκ ἀθυμοῦμεν τὴν τελευτήν· οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἄλλων, ὥσπερ καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, οὗτοι δεινοὶ τοῖς νικηθεῖσιν (ἔστι δὲ οὐ πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους ἡμῖν ὁ ἀγών), ἀλλ᾽ ἢν οἱ ὑπήκοοί που τῶν ἀρξάντων αὐτοὶ ἐπιθέμενοι κρατήσωσιν. καὶ περὶ μὲν τούτου ἡμῖν ἀφείσθω κινδυνεύεσθαι· ὡς δὲ ἐπ᾽ ὠφελίᾳ τε πάρεσμεν τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ νῦν τοὺς λόγους ἐροῦμεν τῆς ὑμετέρας πόλεως, ταῦτα δηλώσομεν, βουλόμενοι ἀπόνως μὲν ὑμῶν ἄρξαι, χρησίμως δ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἀμφοτέροις σωθῆναι.

But we on our part, so far as our empire is concerned, even if it should cease to be, do not look forward to the end with dismay. For it is not those who rule over others, as the Lacedaemonians also do – though our quarrel is not now with the Lacedaemonians – that are a terror to the vanquished, but subject peoples who may perchance themselves attack and get the better of their rulers. And as far as that is concerned, you must permit us to take the risk. But that it is for the benefit of our empire that we are here, and also the safety of your city that we now propose to speak, we shall make plain to you, since what we desire is to have dominion over you without trouble to ourselves, and that you should be to the advantage of both (5.91).

Thucydides' Athenians deny that the Spartans (who will be their judges) will judge them harshly if they fall, because the Spartans are imperialists too. Thucydides' reader, however, recognizes that dangers exist for all states.[25] Even so, the Athenians contend that they should be allowed to subject themselves to this danger, should it arise, περὶ μὲν τούτου ἡμῖν ἀφείσθω κινδυνεύεσθαι. The phrase "subject themselves to it" seems appropriate considering the middle voice infinitive, κινδυνεύεσθαι, and underscores the Athenians' hybris: they believe they can choose the dangers that arise for them. Thus they are solely focused on achieving their present goals. Thucydides' reader can see the synergy between this myopic perspective and the external dangers that will naturally arise

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[25] This idea has been presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All Poleis.

in the future. Though they acknowledge the possibility of future defeat, the Athenians argue that they will be safe because the Spartans understand their imperial impulse. But the future is not their main concern. They are, as Thucydides has them say, interested only in having dominion over the Melians without trouble to themselves and to the advantage of both *poleis*.[26]

The Melians, as Thucydides' reader might expect, have a hard time understanding how the only option that is in both *poleis'* interest is their own submission. Thus it is that Thucydides has them engage in an exchange with the Athenians about this question. They begin by asking the Athenians how it could be as good for them to become slaves as it would for the Athenians to gain dominion over them.[27] The Athenians respond straightforwardly: it simply better for them to recognize the inevitability of their defeat and submit before they suffer "the most horrible fate."[28] The Melians counter with a less destructive option: can they remain neutral in the war between Athens and the Peloponnesians, friends of both, allies of neither?[29] The Athenians, unfortunately for the Melians, do not accept this idea. Their concern, according to Thucydides, is how this situation might affect others' perception of their power.

Though powerful enough to conduct this expedition and invade Sicily in the very next year, the Athenians appear somewhat insecure. They seem to have been concerned that others might perceive that their power was waning and therefore "felt the need to

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[26] Thuc. 5.91.2.

[27] Thuc. 5.92.

[28] Thuc. 5.93.

[29] Thuc. 5.94.

convince others of their power and resolve." [30] In other words, the security dilemma

compelled them to attempt to increase their reputation for being willing to use their

power against others. Thucydides has them respond:

> Οὐ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ἡμᾶς βλάπτει ἡ ἔχθρα ὑμῶν ὅσον ἡ
> φιλία μὲν ἀσθενείας, τὸ δὲ μῖσος δυνάμεως
> παράδειγμα τοῖς ἀρχομένοις δηλούμενον.
>
> No; for your hostility does not injure us so much as your
> friendship; for in the eyes of our subjects that would be a
> proof our weakness, whereas your hatred is a proof of our
> power (5.95).

The Athenians see Melian friendship, ἡ φιλία, as evidence of Athenian weakness,

ἀσθενείας. It would give other *poleis* cause to believe that the Athenians were either not

willing to or not capable of forcing other *poleis* to submit to their will. This mindset

highlights the Thucydidean synergy between external dangers and internally generated

urges. Athens is already facing danger from the ongoing war and allies who may or may

not support her fully.[31] But the Athenians are willing to exacerbate any feelings of ill-will

and risk losing the potential profit from having the Melians as their friends.[32] They are

willing to risk these things out of concern for others' perception of their power. From the

Athenians' perspective, it is better for them to be hated than loved. To be loved means

they appear weak and amenable to the wishes of lesser *poleis*; to be hated means other

poleis recognize their willingness to employ their overwhelming power. The dangerous

problem with this internally-generated status dilemma is that it establishes a precedent:

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[30] Lebow (1984), 11.

[31] The most relevant scholarship on the relative popularity or unpopularity of the Athenian empire
has been presented in 2.3.3 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Three Spartan Examples.

[32] The Athenians recognizes that they would profit by not destroying Melos (5.93).

lest they wish to appear weak, they must consistently seek out external dangers and consider them as opportunities for increased status. Thucydides' reader understands the contrast. While the Melians are searching for long-term beneficial outcomes to save them from the exigencies of the moment which satisfy Athens, the Athenians' insecure view of others' perception of their power allows the Melians only two options: submission or death.

The Melians respond by asking the Athenians to explain how their subjects view the equation between "those who have nothing to do with [Athens] … their own colonists, and some conquered rebels."[33] The Athenians' response explains their concern with others' perception of this situation and the dilemma in which it places them. He has them say:

> Δικαιώματι γὰρ οὐδετέρους ἐλλείπειν ἡγοῦνται, κατὰ δύναμιν δὲ τοὺς μὲν περιγίγνεσθαι, ἡμᾶς δὲ φόβῳ οὐκ ἐπιέναι· ὥστε ἔξω καὶ τοῦ πλεόνων ἄρξαι καὶ τὸ ἀσφαλὲς ἡμῖν διὰ τὸ καταστραφῆναι ἂν παράσχοιτε, ἄλλως τε καὶ νησιῶται ναυκρατόρων καὶ ἀσθενέστεροι ἑτέρων ὄντες εἰ μὴ περιγένοισθε.

> As to pleas of justice, they think that neither the one nor the other lacks them, but that those who preserve their freedom owe it to their power, and that we do not attack them because we afraid. So that, to say nothing of our enlarging our empire, you would afford us security be being subdued, especially if you, an insular power, and weaker than other islanders, should fail to show yourselves superior to a power which is master of the sea (5.97).

The Athenians argue that they need to continue enlarging their empire, but Thucydides' use of the word ἔξω here implies "that this is not the underlying motive for the expedition but that it is subsidiary to the one that follows; namely, that an independent

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Melos is a threat to Athenian interests."[34] While there is no explicit *kindunos* in this instance, Thucydides provides his reader with an explicit discussion of one of the Athenians' internally-generated dangers: the urge to preserve their reputation for power and others' belief that they are willing to use that power against any other *polis*. The reality of the situation, of course, is that "the notion that the continued independence of Melos might damage Athens is both unattractive and unreal as it is presented here."[35] But Thucydides' Athenians contend that any resistance by a weak island *polis* would be exceptionally dangerous.[36] From the Athenians' perspective, however, any instance in which they choose not to demonstrate their power will be perceived by other *poleis* as a fearfulness to use that power. Thucydides' reader can see in this mentality the synergy between the two forms of danger. Though the Athenians constantly face external danger, both from the war and the need to maintain their own empire, in the face of resistance they also feel compelled to react violently against every other *polis,* lest they appear fearful. Certainly they cannot be physically afraid of the Melians. But the mere idea that another *polis* might perceive inaction on their part as a sign of fear and weakness is enough to compel the Athenians to act violently against another *polis*. For Thucydides, this is a trap from which there seems no escape. His reader sees the fault of the Athenians' logic in the Melians' suggestion that a middle ground, friendship with neutrality, exists. The Athenians, however, are unable to let go of their harsh, cynical

[34] Michael G. Seaman, "The Athenian Expedition to Melos in 416 B.C.," *Historia* 46 (1997), 390. J.E. Lendon argues that the Athenians' motive for the expedition to Melos was to humiliate the Spartans "who would be proven impotent or unwilling to protect their children." See *Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 219-21.

[35] Gomme 4:168.

[36] Seaman argues that the phrase ἄλλως τε καὶ indicates Thucydides' focus on the exceptionally dangerous nature of this situation, 390

view of power relationships among *poleis*, and by so doing condemn themselves to engage with danger constantly.

Thucydides has the Melians respond by pointing out the ways in which the Athenians ignore the impact of the synergy between external and internal dangers. He has them offer a rational alternative for both their benefit and his readers'. There is, according to Thucydides' another way to achieve security. He has the Melians say:

> Ἐν δ' ἐκείνῳ οὐ νομίζετε ἀσφάλειαν; δεῖ γὰρ αὖ καὶ ἐνταῦθα, ὥσπερ ὑμεῖς τῶν δικαίων λόγων ἡμᾶς ἐκβιβάσαντες τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ξυμφόρῳ ὑπακούειν πείθετε, καὶ ἡμᾶς τὸ ἡμῖν χρήσιμον διδάσκοντας, εἰ τυγχάνει καὶ ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ ξυμβαῖνον, πειρᾶσθαι πείθειν. ὅσοι γὰρ νῦν μηδετέροις ξυμμαχοῦσι, πῶς οὐ πολεμώσεσθε αὐτούς, ὅταν ἐς τάδε βλέψαντες ἡγήσωνταί ποτε ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ σφᾶς ἥξειν; κἀν τούτῳ τί ἄλλο ἢ τοὺς μὲν ὑπάρχοντας πολεμίους μεγαλύνετε, τοὺς δὲ μηδὲ μελλήσαντας γενέσθαι ἄκοντας ἐπάγεσθε;

> But do you not think there is security in the other course? For here also it is necessary, just as you force us to abandon all pleas of justice and seek to persuade us to give ear to what is to your own interests, that we, too, tell you what is to our advantage and try to persuade you to adopt it, if that happens to be to your advantage also. How, we say, shall you not make enemies of all who are now neutral, as soon as they look at our case and conclude that some day you will come against them also? And in this what else are you doing but strengthening the enemies you already have, and bringing up you, against their inclination, others who would never have thought of becoming your enemies (5.98)?

Thucydides continues to cast the Melians in the role of rational actors, exemplifying one of the lessons of the *Histories*, that "statesmen must consider the past and speculate about the future."[37] They provide for Thucydides' reader a rational foil to the Athenians' tendency for ill-considered action with an alternative: shed the overwhelming concern for

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[37] Morrison (2000), 119.

status in favor of being merciful. Their argument is simply that acting violently

demonstrates power but puts Athens in a less – not more – advantageous position than

before as neutral *poleis* would turn against Athens and help their current enemies.[38]

Merciful action, according to Thucydides' Melians, creates security, as others (especially

neutrals) would see Athenian self-restraint as a sign that they are not savagely aggressive.

It is a simple argument, but one that falls on deaf Athenian ears, showing them to be so

susceptible to their internally-generated compulsions to act violently when they perceive

the potential for diminution of their reputation that they reject all other possibilities. The

Athenians seem to refuse to engage the *pronoia* that is a characteristic of Thucydides'

rational statesman.[39]

Thucydides, however, does not characterize the Athenians as being completely

irrational. To the contrary, he uses their next response to remind his reader that the

dangers the Athenians perceive are actually very real in the dangerous world of Greek

interstate relations. Danger is an ever-present aspect of their world, one that tends to

occur regardless of the best intentions of any *polis*.[40] He has the Athenians explain:

> Οὐ γὰρ νομίζομεν ἡμῖν τούτους δεινοτέρους ὅσοι
> ἠπειρῶταί που ὄντες τῷ ἐλευθέρῳ πολλὴν τὴν
> διαμέλλησιν τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς φυλακῆς ποιήσονται, ἀλλὰ
> τοὺς νησιώτας τέ που ἀνάρκτους, ὥσπερ ὑμᾶς, καὶ
> τοὺς ἤδη τῆς ἀρχῆς τῷ ἀναγκαίῳ παροξυνομένους.
> οὗτοι γὰρ πλεῖστ' ἂν τῷ ἀλογίστῳ ἐπιτρέψαντες σφᾶς
> τε αὐτοὺς καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐς προῦπτον κίνδυνον
> καταστήσειαν.

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[38] *Ibid.*, 132.

[39] Macleod (1974), 391. Macleod notes that Diodotus made it clear in the Mytilenean debate, as previously discussed, that the point of political deliberation was to consider well the future, νομίζω δὲ περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον βουλεύεσθαι ἢ τοῦ παρόντος (3.44), 391.

[40] This idea has been presented in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All Poleis.

> Not so, for we do not reckon those as the more dangerous
> to us who, dwelling somewhere on the mainland and being
> free men, will defer for a long time taking any precautions
> against us, but rather those who dwell in some of the
> islands, both those who, like you, are subject to no control,
> and those who are already exasperated by the necessity of
> submission to our rule. For it is these who are most likely
> to give way to recklessness and bring both themselves and
> us into danger which they cannot but foresee (5.99).

Thucydides' Athenians clearly understood that every *polis* is susceptible to the internally-generated urges that result in ill-considered actions, and danger from others in interstate relations is a foreseeable part of the natural order. Thucydides makes this explicit with one of the dialogue's few instances of *kindunos*, ἐς προὖπτον κίνδυνον. Thucydides' Athenians remind his reader that danger should be expected to arise naturally between *poleis* out of conflicting concern for safety and autonomy. They understand that other *poleis* will, just like the Athenians, give in to their illogical urges for action, τῷ ἀλογίστῳ ἐπιτρέψαντες, when faced with danger (in this case, Athenian expansion). The Athenians believe they must crush the Melians *because* the Melians are weak, and the weaker they are, the more impressive must be the demonstration of Athenian power.[41] Thus the Athenians ignore any other options, here expressed by the Melians, which might alleviate others' fears of Athens. Instead they adopt short-sighted behavior which increases others' fears and exacerbates the dangers already present in a world in which they stood for the time being as a powerful *polis*.

The Melians agree that this the attitude of willingness to engage so quickly in violent action practically compels other *poleis* to take extreme measures to avoid being enslaved. Thucydides has them emphasize that the Athenians' inability to see but one

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[41] Macleod (1974), 392.

option, the use of their power to spread empire, puts the Melians in a position where they (and others) have no options but to choose sides. In other words, the Athenians' premature cognitive closure creates a dangerous reality for all involved. Thucydides has the Melians explain how every other option has been removed:

> Ἦ που ἄρα, εἰ τοσαύτην γε ὑμεῖς τε μὴ παυθῆναι ἀρχῆς καὶ οἱ δουλεύοντες ἤδη ἀπαλλαγῆναι τὴν παρακινδύνευσιν ποιοῦνται, ἡμῖν γε τοῖς ἔτι ἐλευθέροις πολλὴ κακότης καὶ δειλία μὴ πᾶν πρὸ τοῦ δουλεῦσαι ἐπεξελθεῖν.

> Surely, then, if you and your subjects brave so great a risk, you in order that you may not lose your empire, and they, who are already your slaves, in order that they may be rid of it, for us surely who still have our freedom it would be the height of baseness and cowardice not to resort to every expedient before submitting to servitude (5.100).

Thucydides' Melians label the Athenians' efforts to demonstrate power in defense of their imperial status a reckless danger, τὴν παρακινδύνευσιν, because it denies the potential for any other options. But the tragedy, according to Thucydides, is that it compels others to engage in the same, often self-destructive behavior in defense of the irrational demands of the Greeks' ethos of honor and shame.[42] The Melians are currently free, ἡμῖν γε τοῖς ἔτι ἐλευθέροις, and pose no physical threat to the Athenians. They can not hope to withstand the Athenians' assault in the long run.[43] Yet freedom is so important among Thucydides' contemporaries, that the Melians will choose to resist because they value

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[42] The weight of honor and shame as a determining factor in Greeks' decision-making has been presented in 3.4 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame.

[43] Wilson (1981), 144-8.

freedom more than self-preservation.[44] Thucydides is showing his reader that the

Athenians' inability to perceive other options effectively compels the Melians to argue

that it would be base, shameful not to give expend every effort against enslavement, μὴ

πᾶν πρὸ τοῦ δουλεῦσαι ἐπεξελθεῖν. The Athenians' rigid and irrational position

compels the Melians to take an equally rigid and irrational decision rather than stick to

their rational position. The more large *poleis* give in to the urge to demonstrate their

power, the fewer options exist for smaller *poleis* such as Melos. The danger, for all *poleis*,

constantly grows.

From this point forward, Thucydides' reader can detect a shift in the rationality of

these two *poleis*. As the Melians themselves experience premature cognitive closure,

seeing futile resistance as their only option, the Athenians begin to make sense! The

discussion shifts into a analysis of the role of honor and survival in Greek society.[45]

Thucydides has the Athenians respond:

> Οὔκ, ἤν γε σωφρόνως βουλεύησθε· οὐ γὰρ περὶ
> ἀνδραγαθίας ὁ ἀγὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου ὑμῖν, μὴ αἰσχύνην
> ὀφλεῖν, περὶ δὲ σωτηρίας μᾶλλον ἡ βουλή, πρὸς τοὺς
> κρείσσονας πολλῷ μὴ ἀνθίστασθαι.

> No, not if you take a sensible view of the matter; for with
> you it is not a contest on equal terms to determine a point
> of manly honor, so as to avoid incurring disgrace; rather the
> question before you is one of self-preservation – to avoid
> offering resistance to those who are far stronger than you
> (5.101).

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[44] The importance of freedom and *autonomia* in Greek society has been presented with a
bibliography of the most relevant scholarship on the subject in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All Poleis. For
the Melians' particular example, see Lebow (2001), 554.

[45] Gomme, 4:169.

This statement implies that among more equally powerful *poleis*, combat is a contest to gain manly honor and to avoid disgrace. That may be true: the main conflict defining this war is between several pretty powerful states each of which believes it cannot once "bend the knee" to the other.[46] But the conflict between Athens and Melos is not a contest between equals. Thus Thucydides makes it clear to his reader that the Athenians are responding wisely to the imbalance of powers in this conflict. They are thinking wisely, σωφρόνως, and have "stripped away elevated appeals to country, honor and justice" from the very outset when they framed the structure of this debate.[47] Though they first entered a state of premature cognitive closure, they are now pointing out that the Melians are equally shut off from the rational option: submit and survive. Though Thucydides does not explicitly use the term *kindunos*, his reader is not unfamiliar with the value of being well-matched in power to the dangers at hand. Pericles praised Athens' ability to face dangers equal to those faced by the Spartans in his funeral oration, ἐπὶ τοὺς ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους.[48] The Athenians take pride in their willingness to pursue a point of honor in the face of danger to which they see themselves equal. But they argue that there is no justification for the Melians to make the same decision against impossible odds. The Athenians are now arguing that honor is not always a worthwhile goal if it compounds the existing dangers beyond a *polis*' ability to survive. The honor the Melians

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[46] Archidamus urges the Spartans to vote for war "as the honor of Sparta demands," 1.86.5; Pericles argues that Athens cannot once submit to Spartan demands without losing its empire, 2.62.3.

[47] Morrison (2000), 128.

[48] Thuc. 2.39.1. This instance of *kindunos* has been discussed in 2.2.1 Danger: A Constant For All Poleis.

are attempting to preserve is no more than a "delusive and destructive … patriotic

catchword," detrimental to survival.[49]

The Melians' response to the Athenians' logic provides another indicator that the

situation has changed and the Melians are now pursuing a less-rational option.

Thucydides has them respond:

> Ἀλλ' ἐπιστάμεθα τὰ τῶν πολέμων ἔστιν ὅτε
> κοινοτέρας τὰς τύχας λαμβάνοντα ἢ κατὰ τὸ
> διαφέρον ἑκατέρων πλῆθος· καὶ ἡμῖν τὸ μὲν εἶξαι
> εὐθὺς ἀνέλπιστον, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ δρωμένου ἔτι καὶ
> στῆναι ἐλπὶς ὀρθῶς.

> But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes impartial
> and not in accord with the difference in numbers. And for
> us, to yield is at once to give up hope; but if we make an
> effort, there is still hope that we may stand erect (5.102).

Thucydides' diction points to the hopeful passions of the Melians, τὰς τύχας,

ἀνέλπιστον, and ἐλπὶς.[50] The Greeks, as has been discussed, did not share Christians'

positive sense of "hope for better days." [51] Pericles in fact characterized it as a "prop of

those who are without recourse." [52] It is this sort of hope that Thucydides highlights for

his reader as a cause of irrational and ultimately self-destructive action, and the Melians,

by basing their actions on hope, are arguably just as responsible for their own destruction

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[49] A. B. Bosworth, "The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993), 31.

[50] Hayward R. Alker argues that passions are "infecting" both the Melians and Athenians at various points in this dialogue. See "The Dialectical Logic of Thucydides' Melian Dialogue," *The American Political Science Review* 82 (1988), 805-20, esp. 816.

[51] Cornford (1907), 167; Huart (1968), 145; and Allison (1997), 61. This topic has been analyzed in 1.1 General Thesis.

[52] Thuc. 2.62.5. See also, Allison (1997), 61.

as the Athenians.[53] They argue that yielding means abandoning all hope, ἀνέλπιστον, though a rational military analyst would argue that the particular level of external danger they are facing makes their situation already hopeless.[54] The external danger is obvious: the Melians will be overwhelmed by the Athenians if they resist. They will live if they submit. Yet they make their situation worse by choosing to fight with hope as their only immediately available ally.

Thucydides uses the Athenians' response to continue exploring the synergy between hope and danger. Thucydides' reader understands retrospectively that the Melians' insistence on entrusting their security to hope will end in their destruction: this was a famous incident. But Thucydides uses the Athenians' response to make it clear just how recklessly they are acting in this situation. He has them say:

> Ἐλπὶς δὲ κινδύνῳ παραμύθιον οὖσα τοὺς μὲν ἀπὸ περιουσίας χρωμένους αὐτῇ, κἂν βλάψῃ, οὐ καθεῖλεν· τοῖς δ᾽ ἐς ἅπαν τὸ ὑπάρχον ἀναρριπτοῦσι (δάπανος γὰρ φύσει) ἅμα τε γιγνώσκεται σφαλέντων καὶ ἐν ὅτῳ ἔτι φυλάξεταί τις αὐτὴν γνωρισθεῖσαν οὐκ ἐλλείπει. ὃ ὑμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς τε καὶ ἐπὶ ῥοπῆς μιᾶς ὄντες μὴ βούλεσθε παθεῖν μηδὲ ὁμοιωθῆναι τοῖς πολλοῖς, οἷς παρὸν ἀνθρωπείως ἔτι σῴζεσθαι, ἐπειδὰν πιεζομένους αὐτοὺς ἐπιλίπωσιν αἱ φανεραὶ ἐλπίδες, ἐπὶ τὰς ἀφανεῖς καθίστανται μαντικήν τε καὶ χρησμοὺς καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα μετ᾽ ἐλπίδων λυμαίνεται.

> Hope is indeed solace to danger, and for those who have other resources in abundance, though she may injure, she does not ruin them; but for those who stake their all on a single throw – hope being by nature prodigal – it is only when disaster has befallen that her true nature is

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[53] Connor (1984), 153-57; Orwin (1994), 111-17; and Zumbrunnen (2002), 250

[54] Bosworth (1993) points to the size of the initial invasion force, 38 triremes and 3,000 fighting men as being larger than the entire population of Melos. Even the detachment left behind to conduct the siege most likely matched the Melian male population. He argues (38) "it could not be more apparent that resistance was suicidal, and then, if ever, calculations of utility should have taken the first priority."

> recognized, and when at last she is known, she leaves the victim no resource wherewith to take precautions against her in future. This fate, we beg of you, weak as you are and dependent on a single turn of the scale, do not willingly incur; nor make yourselves like the common crowd who, when it is possible still to be saved by human means, as soon as distress comes and all visible ground of hope fail them, betake themselves to those that are invisible – to divination, oracles, and the like, which, with the hopes they inspire, bring men to ruin (5.104).

Hope is a dangerous consolation to those in peril, Ἐλπὶς δὲ κινδύνῳ παραμύθιον οὖσα, and "religion is the form of hope most effective at masking reality."[55] Thucydides is explicit on this point. But with his dice-throwing imagery he adds another perspective which links hope to random chance. Thucydides' Athenians categorize the Melians with those who are risking it all on a single pitch: τοῖς δ᾽ ἐς ἅπαν τὸ ὑπάρχον ἀναρριπτοῦσι. It is a theme with which Thucydides' reader is familiar.[56]

The Athenians note that the Melians are in that place where "distress comes and all visible ground of hope fail them" and they deny any divine power influences human affairs. This may be Thucydides' harsh verdict against his own countrymen's piety.[57] And as the Melians hold their belief that the gods have power to dispense good fortune at will, the Athenians' position now becomes the more rational one.[58] Men in the Melians' position often turn away from the rational option available – in this instance, to submit –

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[55] Forde (2004), 186.

[56] The links between dice-throwing images, chance and *kindunos* have been discussed in 2.4.2 Κίνδυνος: A Component of Chance (Athenian Examples).

[57] Borimir Jordan, "Religion in Thucydides," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 116 (1986), 140.

[58] Jordan (1986), 139. Forde (2004), 186.

and instead grasp at unseen hopes, hopes that can bring about total destruction, ὅσα

τοιαῦτα μετ᾽ ἐλπίδων λυμαίνεται.

The Melians, however, insist that there is more to their defiance than simple hope

for a positive outcome. And it is in this insistence that Thucydides highlights for his

reader another way in which the various forms of danger come together and make the bad

situation worse. The Melians, according to Thucydides, are also being misled by their

belief on the Greek ethos of intervention, and their belief that other Greeks will intervene

on their behalf actually increases their danger, for it steers them away from the rational

option. The Melians respond:

> Χαλεπὸν μὲν καὶ ἡμεῖς (εὖ ἴστε) νομίζομεν πρὸς
> δύναμίν τε τὴν ὑμετέραν καὶ τὴν τύχην, εἰ μὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ
> ἴσου ἔσται, ἀγωνίζεσθαι· ὅμως δὲ πιστεύομεν τῇ μὲν
> τύχῃ ἐκ τοῦ θείου μὴ ἐλασσώσεσθαι, ὅτι ὅσιοι πρὸς οὐ
> δικαίους ἱστάμεθα, τῆς δὲ δυνάμεως τῷ ἐλλείποντι τὴν
> Λακεδαιμονίων ἡμῖν ξυμμαχίαν προσέσεσθαι,
> ἀνάγκην ἔχουσαν, καὶ εἰ μή του ἄλλου, τῆς γε
> ξυγγενείας ἕνεκα καὶ αἰσχύνῃ βοηθεῖν. καὶ οὐ
> παντάπασιν οὕτως ἀλόγως θρασυνόμεθα.

> We, too, be well assured, think it difficult to contend both
> against your power and against fortune, unless she shall be
> impartial; but nevertheless we trust that, in point of fortune,
> we shall through the divine favor be at no disadvantage
> because we are god-fearing men standing our ground
> against men who are unjust; and as to the matter of power,
> that the alliance of the Lacedaemonians will supply what
> we lack, since that alliance must aid us, if for no other
> reason, because of our kinship with them and for very
> shame. So our confidence is not altogether so irrational as
> you may suppose (5.104).

The Melians have fallen into a dangerous trap by being deluded about the nature of their

kinship with the Spartans.[59] While it is true that the Melians were Spartan colonists, their

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[59] The concept of perceived ties of kinship and "fictive kinship" has been discussed in 3.3.2
Internal Dangers of Intervention: Perceived Ties of "Fictive" Kinship

belief in the Lacedaemonians' impulse to come to their aid is at best an exaggerated view of the relationship, a "pathetic delusion" at worst.[60] The Melians ignore the simple fact that the Spartans have little to gain from intervention at Melos.[61] Their suggestion that the bonds of kinship between the two *poleis* would bring shame to the Lacedaemonians should they fail to intervene is little more than another variant of hope. Shame, of course, has been an important theme so far in this dialogue and, as elsewhere in Thucydides' narrative, is similar to hope in that it indicates a dangerous irrational internal motivation.[62] This time, of course, it is hope that Athens' enemy, who only recently settled its own difficulties with the Argives (Thuc. 5.82.3), will come to the island-colony to offer assistance. In trusting in the power of the Greek ethos of intervention, especially for kinsmen, to provide them with a savior, the Melians embracing an irrational hope and rejecting the rational option; submit and survive. Their internally-generated belief that other Greeks will help compounds the danger they face and, as Thucydides' retrospective reader knows, results in their destruction.

The Athenians' response is two-fold: they explain the fundamental nature of power and then they refute the Melians' trust in the Lacedaemonians showing it to be not congruent with reality. Once more we see that roles have reversed and it is the Melians who are now irrational and the Athenians who urge practicality on them. Thucydides has them say:

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[60] Thucydides states that the Melians were a colony of the Spartan, 5.84.2; Geoffrey Eatough describes the Melians' exaggerated view of their relationship with the Spartans as a "pathetic delusion." See "The Use of *Osios* and Kindred Words in Thucydides," *The American Journal of Philology* 92 (1971), 247.

[61] Monten (2006), 18.

[62] The dangers inherent in the Greeks' concern for honor and shame have been presented in 3.4 Κίνδυνος and the Greek Conception of Honor and Shame. Thucydides' perspective on hope has been presented in 1.1 General Thesis.

Τῆς μὲν τοίνυν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐμενείας οὐδ' ἡμεῖς οἰόμεθα λελείψεσθαι· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔξω τῆς ἀνθρωπείας τῶν μὲν ἐς τὸ θεῖον νομίσεως, τῶν δ' ἐς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς βουλήσεως δικαιοῦμεν ἢ πράσσομεν. ἡγούμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξῃ τὸ ἀνθρώπειόν τε σαφῶς διὰ παντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας, οὗ ἂν κρατῇ, ἄρχειν· καὶ ἡμεῖς οὔτε θέντες τὸν νόμον οὔτε κειμένῳ πρῶτοι χρησάμενοι, ὄντα δὲ παραλαβόντες καὶ ἐσόμενον ἐς αἰεὶ καταλείψοντες χρώμεθα αὐτῷ, εἰδότες καὶ ὑμᾶς ἂν καὶ ἄλλους ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ δυνάμει ἡμῖν γενομένους δρῶντας ἂν ταὐτό. καὶ πρὸς μὲν τὸ θεῖον οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ εἰκότος οὐ φοβούμεθα ἐλασσώσεσθαι·

Well, as to the kindness of the divine favor, neither do we expect to fall short of you therein. For in no respect are we departing from men's observances regarding that which pertains to the divine or from their desires regarding that which pertains to themselves, in aught that we demand or do. For of the gods we hold the belief, and of men we know, that by a necessity of their nature wherever they have power they always rule. And so in our case since we neither enacted this law nor when it was enacted were the first to use it, but found it in existence and expect to leave it in existence for all time, so we make use of it, well aware that both you and others, if clothed with the same power as we are, would do the same thing. And so with regard to the divine favor, we have good reason not to be afraid that we shall be at a disadvantage (5.105.1-3).

Thucydides has the Athenians shift focus from the idea of divine intervention, i.e. the oracles and divinations that they earlier say "brings men to ruin," to focus on seeing in the divine a reflection of their attitude concerning power.[63] It is not, according to Thucydides' Athenians, that they are acting irrationally when they choose to expand their power through violence. Instead it is simply a natural necessity, ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας. This exposition of "natural" expansion ties in to Thucydides' concept of the

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[63] Thuc. 5.103.

natural occurrence of danger.[64] Just as danger "happens," so too does a powerful *polis* naturally act to increase its power.

The Athenians' attitude towards power shows Thucydides' reader why danger is so abundant in his world. The Athenians recognize no other authority other than power, and every other *polis* "would do the same thing." [65] Every *polis* in Thucydides' world of "brutal self interest" sees every other *polis* as a potential target for violent action designed to spread its power.[66] The problem, as is evident to the reader, is that no *polis* has a completely accurate assessment of its own power relative to others' power;[67] instead the external conditions each state perceives outweighs the internal conditions of that state in determining behavior.[68] So the reality is that every *polis* is tempted to expand its power based on the necessity of the natural order which stipulates they should rule where they can. The Athenians' explanation of the natural laws of power highlights another aspect of the synergy between external danges and internally-generated urges. In the world of greed, fear and mistrust, danger abounds. The internally-generated urge to "always rule," however, compounds the external danger by making the world that much more violent. Each *polis* is, according to the Athenians, completely justified in ruling over those whom

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[64] This concept has been presented in 2.2.3 Danger: An Impersonal Force.

[65] A. French, "Thucydides and the Power Syndrome," *Greece and Rome* 27 (1980), 28.

[66] Eckstein (2006) discusses Thuc. 5.105.49 and characterizes Thucydides' world as one of "brutal self-interest," 49.

[67] This is an aspect of what Realist theoreticians refer to as the "uncertainty principle." The concept has been presented in 1.2.3 Modern Interstate Relations: Basic Concepts and Definitions. See Eckstein (2006), 17.

[68] Monten (2006), 11.

they can. Determining which *poleis* are stronger and weaker, unfortunately, is a question that can only truly be settled through the "cruel test of war." [69]

The Athenians next explain the Melians' folly in hoping for Lacedaemonian intervention. The Melians' folly about this, – an internally generated folly – threatens their survival, whereas the original danger only threatened their autonomy. He has the Athenians continue:

> τῆς δὲ ἐς Λακεδαιμονίους δόξης, ἣν διὰ τὸ αἰσχρὸν δὴ βοηθήσειν ὑμῖν πιστεύετε αὐτούς, μακαρίσαντες ὑμῶν τὸ ἀπειρόκακον οὐ ζηλοῦμεν τὸ ἄφρον. Λακεδαιμόνιοι γὰρ πρὸς σφᾶς μὲν αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰ ἐπιχώρια νόμιμα πλεῖστα ἀρετῇ χρῶνται· πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους πολλὰ ἄν τις ἔχων εἰπεῖν ὡς προσφέρονται, ξυνελὼν μάλιστ᾽ ἂν δηλώσειεν ὅτι ἐπιφανέστατα ὧν ἴσμεν τὰ μὲν ἡδέα καλὰ νομίζουσι, τὰ δὲ ξυμφέροντα δίκαια. καίτοι οὐ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας νῦν ἀλόγου σωτηρίας ἡ τοιαύτη διάνοια.

> But as to your expectation regarding the Lacedaemonians, your confident trust that out of shame forsooth they will aid you – while we admire your simplicity, we do not envy you your folly. We must indeed acknowledge that with respect to themselves and the institutions of their own country, the Lacedaemonians practice virtue in a very high degree; but with respect to their conduct towards the rest of mankind, while one might speak at great length, in briefest summary one may declare that of all men with whom we are acquainted they, most conspicuously, consider what is agreeable to be honorable, and what is expedient just. And yet such an attitude is not favorable to your present unreasonable hope of deliverance (5.105.3).

The Athenians focus on the Melians' lack of experience with the realities of evil in the world, ἀπειρόκακον, with a patronizing lecture about the Spartans' lack of concern for

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[69] Eckstein (2006), 17.

others' best interests.[70] The Melians are placing their trust in distant ties of kinship which they believe will motivate the Spartans to help them. While there is some evidence that they had supported the Lacedaemonians in the past, it does not convincingly establish reliable ties between the two *poleis*.[71] The inscription from 427 indicating the Melians' financial support for the Spartans is not a completely weak argument, and even within Thucydides' text there is a brief reference to Sparta using Melos as a base once, much later in the war.[72] So within the text itself, the Melians' notion of kinship is not completely foolish. But it is somewhat foolish and the Athenians' prediction about Sparta is correct: they will not come to the Melians' aid. The Athenians are showing the Melians that their faith in the reliability of support from Lacedaemonia is unfounded; Thucydides is showing his reader the Melians' willingness to compound their original dangers with the internally-generated reliance on the Greek ethos of intervention, πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας νῦν ἀλόγου σωτηρίας. Their safety cannot be guaranteed through outside agency, whether divine or mortal. The Melians must make a rational assessment of the external dangers presently facing them and recognize that the only survivable option is to submit to the Athenian. While this would be a bitter pill for any *polis* to swallow, it is the only rational alternative in this scenario. The Athenians earlier reached premature cognitive closure with regard to Melian neutrality; now the Melians have done the same with regard to submission. The roles have been reversed: the Melians are now exacerbating the

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[70] Gomme notes that the Spartans were ready to betray cities they had promised to liberate in 425 (4.20.4) and actually did betray them in 421 (5.18.5-8). From this he notes that the Athenians' amazement that the Melians are "inexperienced in evil" are not surprising 4:175.

[71] Lazenby (2004), 59

[72] Seaman (1997) provides a detailed analysis of the inscription in question, 391-402; Thucydides says the Spartan fleet "touched at Melos" in 412/1. 8.39.3.

external dangers by clinging to internally generated folly; the Athenians, on the other

hand, are pleading with the Melians to decrease the external danger by simply

acknowledging that they are no match for Athenian power and should give up their

autonomy in order to guarantee their survival.

Thucydides makes the dangers more explicit for his readers in a quick interchange

of ideas. First, the Melians' insistence on the ties of kinship reinforces the dangerous

ethos of intervention. He has the Melians say:

> Ἡμεῖς δὲ κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἤδη καὶ μάλιστα πιστεύομεν
> τῷ ξυμφέροντι αὐτῶν, Μηλίους ἀποίκους ὄντας μὴ
> βουλήσεσθαι προδόντας τοῖς μὲν εὔνοις τῶν Ἑλλήνων
> ἀπίστους καταστῆναι, τοῖς δὲ πολεμίοις ὠφελίμους.

> But we find in this very thing our strongest ground of
> confidence – that in their own interest the Lacedaemonians
> will not be willing to betray the Melians who are their
> colonists, and so incur, on the one hand, the distrust of all
> the Hellenes who are well-disposed towards them, and, on
> the other, give aid to their enemies (5.106).

The Melians are making an argument based on their understanding of the Spartans'

rational interest and are relying on a variation of the argument Thucydides' reader saw in

the earlier Mytilenean debate; the need to protect their status as a powerful *polis* will

compel the Spartans to react violently and wholeheartedly to this perceived slight.[73] The

Spartans, from the Melians' perspective, should willingly compound the dangers facing

them by engaging with the Athenians on behalf of the Melians.

Thucydides' main point, however, is found in the Athenians' immediate response.

He shows his reader that security is in everyone's best interest, while less-tangible ideas

such as honor are dangerous. He has the Athenians say:

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[73] Thuc. 3.37.2, 3.39.8, and 3.40.3.

Οὔκουν οἴεσθε τὸ ξυμφέρον μὲν μετ᾽ ἀσφαλείας εἶναι,
τὸ δὲ δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν μετὰ κινδύνου δρᾶσθαι· ὃ
Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἥκιστα ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τολμῶσιν.

Do you not think, then, that self-interest goes hand in hand
with security, while justice and honor are practiced with
danger – a danger the Lacedaemonians are in general the
least disposed to risk (5.107)?

The link between honor and danger is explicit: καλὸν μετὰ κινδύνου δρᾶσθαι.

Thucydides' Athenians are highlighting the Melians' folly by pointing out the dangers

they are generating for themselves through their insistence on preserving their hope for

outside intervention. But Thucydides' reader can detect the irony between this advice and

Pericles' exhortation in the opening phases of the war.[74] In that speech, given to an

Athenian audience beset by dangers from both plague and Lacedaemonian invasion,

Pericles insisted that nothing was more important than the preservation of Athenian

honor, regardless of the dangers they faced and made worse by their concern for honor.

But here, at this later stage in the war, the Athenians show that they do, at least,

acknowledge the fallacy of this argument. This does not mean, of course, that they are

willing to heed their own advice; they will soon launch the largest force ever assembled

to invade Sicily, arguably a combination of both the *polis'* honor and individual leaders'

honor.[75] The Melians are compounding a dangerous situation with their belief in honor.

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[74] Thuc. 2.63-4; Gomme, 4:176.

[75] Nicias points to the personal honor Alcibiades stands to gain from the success of the Sicilian
expedition, 6.24. See Balot (2004). 87. This idea has been discussed in 3.4.3 Internal Dangers of Honor:
Making Gains from Danger. But the Athenians as a group may well have been compelled by the urge to
gain honor from responding to the pleas of the Egestan envoys who sought their help. The Athenians'
willingness to intervene may well have been considered an honorable trait. See 3.3 Κίνδυνος and the
Greek Ethos of Intervention. Forde (1986), however, cites Thuc. 6.24 as proof that honor was not a motive
for the expedition, 444. It should be noted that Thucydides elsewhere passes favorable judgment on those
who placed honor above survival. He writes "honor made them unsparing of themselves in their attendance
in their friends' houses," 2.51.5. See Lebow (2001), 554.

The Lacedaemonians, according to Thucydides, are least likely to be drawn into that snare because they have consistently demonstrated the greatest restraint on their emotionally-inspired urges for action and intervention.[76] The synergy between external and internal dangers affects every *polis* in Thucydides' dangerous world. Some, such as Sparta, do manage to mitigate the effects somewhat. The Athenians and the Melians, however, seem less capable of restraining their urges; it may be for this reason that both suffer defeat in the end, Melos at Athenian hands, the Athenians at Lacedaemonian hands.

The Melians' dangerous insistence on their distant kinship with the Lacedaemonians becomes more explicit in their next response. Thucydides incorporates *kindunos* to highlight the issue for his reader as he has the Melians say:

> Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς κινδύνους τε ἡμῶν ἕνεκα μᾶλλον ἡγούμεθ᾽ ἂν ἐγχειρίσασθαι αὐτούς, καὶ βεβαιοτέρους ἢ ἐς ἄλλους νομεῖν, ὅσῳ πρὸς μὲν τὰ ἔργα τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἐγγὺς κείμεθα, τῆς δὲ γνώμης τῷ ξυγγενεῖ πιστότεροι ἑτέρωνἐσμέν.
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> But we believe that they would be more likely to face even danger for our sake, and with more confidence than for others, as our nearness to the Peloponnesus makes it easier for them to act; and our common blood insures our fidelity (5.108).

This instance of *kindunos* has been presented earlier in this dissertation as an example of how danger is a factor in a rational decision-making process. But when Thucydides' reader sees it in a broader context, it illustrates how the Melians' faith in distant ties of kinship makes a dangerous situation worse.[77] The rational aspect of their argument is in the geographical relationship between Melos and Lacedaemonia. The Melians explain to

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[76] Jacqueline de Romilly actually calls the Athenian response a "severe judgment on Sparta's attitude." See "Fairness and Kindness in Thucydides," *Phoenix* 28 (1974), 98.

[77] Refer to 2.3.4. Kindunos in Military Planning.

the Athenians that they trust in the Spartans because their "nearness to the Peloponnesus makes it easier for [the Spartans] to act," πρὸς μὲν τὰ ἔργα τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἐγγὺς κείμεθα. Though the Melians' exaggeration ignores Athenian naval dominance, it does have some merit. The island is close enough to the Peloponnese to be tactically significant should the Spartans try to operate in the Aegean in the future.[78] The reality, however, is that the Spartans are in no position to make such an incursion into the Athenian-dominated Aegean and will not be until they receive outside support for any naval operations.[79] Even with this rational argument, the reader – like the Athenians – knows the Melians are deluding themselves. Thus it is that this seemingly-rational assessment that takes danger into account and would normally present a rational assessment of the situation, is actually providing Thucydides' reader with a deeper understanding of the Melians' desperate situation. Instead of being just inside the Lacedaemonians' sphere of influence, they are actually just outside the Lacedaemonians' concern. The kinship upon which the Melians are relying is not strong enough to compel Spartan action. The Melians are compounding their dangerous situation by relying on this internally-generated notion for support.

The Spartans, in fact, are provided as an example of rational behavior in the Athenians' next response. According to Thucydides' Athenians, the Spartans create the least danger for themselves by avoiding involvement others' affairs. He has the Athenians say:

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[78] Gomme, 4:176

[79] The Peloponnesian fleet had been supplied entirely by allies at the start of the war, 2.9.3. In a later stage of the war, a fleet manned and led by Sparta is funded by the Persian satrap, Pharnabazus, 8.39.1.

Τὸ δ' ἐχυρόν γε τοῖς ξυναγωνιουμένοις οὐ τὸ εὔνουν τῶν ἐπικαλεσαμένων φαίνεται, ἀλλ' ἢν τῶν ἔργων τις δυνάμει πολὺ προύχῃ· ὃ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ πλέον τι τῶν ἄλλων σκοποῦσιν (τῆς γοῦν οἰκείας παρασκευῆς ἀπιστίᾳ καὶ μετὰ ξυμμάχων πολλῶν τοῖς πέλας ἐπέρχονται), ὥστε οὐκ εἰκὸς ἐς νῆσόν γε αὐτοὺς ἡμῶν ναυκρατόρων ὄντων περαιωθῆναι.

But for men who are about to take part in a struggle, that which inspires their confidence is clearly not the good will of those who call them to their aid, but such marked superiority in actual power of achievement as they may possess; and to this superiority the Lacedaemonians give heed rather more than do the rest of mankind. At any rate, they so mistrust their own resources that they always associate themselves with many allies when they attack their neighbors; so that it is not likely they will ever cross over to an island while we are masters of the sea (5.109).

Sufficient for a *polis* is its own dangers, and Thucydides' Athenians contend that good will is not a rational justification for becoming involved with others' danger. What is rational, as Thucydides highlights for his reader, is to focus on the existing threats and imbalances of power. The Spartans are here presented as having *coup d'oeil*.[80] They are simply too rational to become involved in a conflict such as this in which the tactical consideration of present dangers makes it clear that the external dangers are in themselves enough. To come the Melians' aid, the Spartans would have to best the Athenians' strength with their own weakness in a naval battle. Therefore compounding their own dangers – they may have been facing a manpower shortage and relations with

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[80] Clausewitz' concept of *coup d'oeil* has been presented in 2.3 Κίνδυνος as an Aspect of Rational Tactical/Strategic Planning.

their "allies" in Argos were still in flux[81] – giving in to the urge to become involved would be reckless. Thucydides' point is that the Melians are not being rational at this point. They should heed the Spartan example and recognize those moments when the odds are simply too great and the results of a defeat too costly. As the Spartans did at Pylos, the Melians should do here: submit and survive.[82]

The Melians' response reminds Thucydides' reader that both Melians and Athenians were compounding significant external dangers by giving in to internal passions. He has the Melians highlight the Athenians' precarious position at this stage in the war:

> Οἱ δὲ καὶ ἄλλους ἂν ἔχοιεν πέμψαι· πολὺ δὲ τὸ Κρητικὸν πέλαγος, δι' οὗ τῶν κρατούντων ἀπορώτερος ἡ λῆψις ἢ τῶν λαθεῖν βουλομένων ἡ σωτηρία. καὶ εἰ τοῦδε σφάλλοιντο, τράποιντ' ἂν καὶ ἐς τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς τῶν ξυμμάχων, ὅσους μὴ Βρασίδας ἐπῆλθεν· καὶ οὐ περὶ τῆς μὴ προσηκούσης μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς οἰκειοτέρας ξυμμαχίδος τε καὶ γῆς ὁ πόνος ὑμῖν ἔσται.

> But there are others whom they might send; besides, the Cretan sea is wide, so that upon it the capture of a hostile squadron by the masters of the sea will be more difficult than it would be to cross over in security for those who wish to elude them. And if they should fail in this attempt they could turn against your territory and against any of the rest of the allies whom Brasidas did not reach; and then you would have to exert yourselves, not for the acquisition of territory that never belonged to you, but for the

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[81] Thuc. 5.82-84. Paul Cartledge details the possible manpower shortage the Spartans were facing at this point in the war after suffering heavy casualties in their victory at Mantineia (Thuc. 5.70-74). This is somewhat balanced by the fact that all of their campaigns were successful and that their "only failure was at Argos." See *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300 to 362 BC* (New York: Routledge, Second Edition 2002), 219-20.

[82] Thuc. 4.38.1-3. The dangers presented in this campaign have been discussed in 2.3.2 Κίνδυνος in Military Planning: Demosthenes' and Lamachus' Athenian Examples.

> preservation of your own confederacy, aye, and your own country (5.110).

Even without explicit mention of *kindunos*, the danger facing Athens is clear. At this point in the war, they have endured five Peloponnesian invasions, two terribly destructive plagues and the death of their greatest statesman, Pericles.[83] But their navy and their ability to supply themselves from allies, subjects and other *poleis* throughout the Aegean, has allowed them to survive these dangers. These potential vulnerabilities, however, are what the Melians are trying to focus them on with reminders of the very real threats Brasidas' invasion of Thrace brought to bear against them.[84] They remind the Athenians that, in reality, their empire provides both security and danger for their *polis*. This assault, they believe, is "imperial overreach" and may lead to a dangerous loss of control in other areas of the empire. The Athenians, of course, do not believe them and are correct in this instance. But if the Spartans had acted, perhaps the Melos would have been an overextension. But the point is that the security dilemma has become a self-fulfilling fear for the Athenians: they may be able to impose their will at any given moment but cannot expect to do so indefinitely.[85] The Melians are trying to impart this lesson, and Thucydides highlights how the Athenians exacerbate the external dangers they face as an imperial power by continuing to attempt expansion. Pericles warned the Athenians to attempt no new conquest.[86] Thucydides is showing his reader that Pericles was right.

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[83] Peloponnesian invasions: In 431, 2.18-23; in 430, 2.47-57; in 428, 3.1; in 427, 3.26; and in 425, 4.6; Plagues: 2.47-54 and 3.87; and Pericles' death: 2.65.6

[84] Thuc. 4.78-88, 102-16, 120-35, 5.8-10.

[85] Lebow (2001), 550.

[86] Pericles advises tight control of the allies: 2.13.2; cautions against expansion, 2.65.7.

Thucydides uses the Athenians' final remarks to summarize the various forms of danger that have factored in this dialogue: honor, shame, and the security dilemma. Thucydides has the Athenians begin by citing their own reputation as a rationale for the Melians' submission:

> Τούτων μὲν καὶ πεπειραμένοις ἄν τι γένοιτο καὶ ὑμῖν καὶ οὐκ ἀνεπιστήμοσιν ὅτι οὐδ' ἀπὸ μιᾶς πώποτε πολιορκίας Ἀθηναῖοι δι' ἄλλων φόβον ἀπεχώρησαν.

> Of these contingencies one or another might indeed happen; but they would not be new to our experience, and you yourselves are not unaware that the Athenians have never in a single instance withdrawn from a siege through fear of any foe (5.111.1).

Though Thucydides makes it clear that fear can be both a rational tool for interstate relations, here he focuses on the Athenians' claim that they have never been dissuaded by fear once their plans are in motion.[87] The Athenians are more concerned with maintaining the image that they will not modify their behavior simply because the unknown might cause trepidation. This attitude towards the conflict they have created at Melos effectively renders them blind towards the broader problems it may cause for them in the future. Their insistence on being perceived as unflinching, unwavering and unconcerned with external dangers makes those dangers all the more of a threat as they continue to commit their power to what are essentially needless undertakings. This particular boast, never to withdraw from a siege through fear of any foe, is indeed an "ominous boast" when one considers the disastrous Athenian expedition to Sicily, and the siege of Syracuse that follows their victory over this small island *polis*.[88] By highlighting the Athenians' refusal

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[87] On fear as a rational element in planning and international relations, see Desmond (2008), 378.

[88] Desmond (2006), 366.

to change their plans based on rational fears of existing danger, Thucydides seems to "depict the fatal fearlessness that caused Athens' imperial overstretch, and thus her eventual defeat."[89]

The Athenians continue their response by focusing on the Melians' hope for a better outcome; for Thucydides' reader, it is a reminder of the sometimes destructive synergy between hope and existing danger. He has them say:

> ἐνθυμούμεθα δὲ ὅτι φήσαντες περὶ σωτηρίας βουλεύσειν οὐδὲν ἐν τοσούτῳ λόγῳ εἰρήκατε ᾧ ἄνθρωποι ἂν πιστεύσαντες νομίσειαν σωθήσεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὑμῶν τὰ μὲν ἰσχυρότατα ἐλπιζόμενα μέλλεται, τὰ δ' ὑπάρχοντα βραχέα πρὸς τὰ ἤδη ἀντιτεταγμένα περιγίγνεσθαι. πολλήν τε ἀλογίαν τῆς διανοίας παρέχετε, εἰ μὴ μεταστησάμενοι ἔτι ἡμᾶς ἄλλο τι τῶνδε σωφρονέστερον γνώσεσθε.

> However, we cannot but reflect that, although you said that you would take counsel concerning your deliverance, you have not in this long discussion advanced a single argument that ordinary men would put their confidence in if they expected to be delivered. On the contrary, your strongest grounds for confidence are merely cherished hopes whose fulfillment is in the future, whereas you present resources are too slight, compared with those already arrayed against you, for any chance of success. And you exhibit a quite unreasonable attitude of mind if you do not even now, after permitting us to withdraw, come to some decision that is wiser than your present purpose (5.111.2).

The Athenians here highlight the Melians' hopeful delusion that makes a dangerous situation much worse. But soon the "hopefulness of Athenians ultimately surpasses even that of Melians," as the Athenian leader, Nicias, will experience in Sicily.[90] In the present situation, however, it is the Melians who are facing overwhelming odds and certain

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[89] Desmond (2006), 366.

[90] Palmer (1989), 380-81.

destruction, τὰ δ᾽ ὑπάρχοντα βραχέα πρὸς τὰ ἤδη ἀντιτεταγμένα περιγίγνεσθαι.

While it is true that there may have been some reason to hope for Spartan intervention –

Thucydides is not explicit as to why they did not intervene – the Melians certainly "make

an improper use of hope."[91] Still, the Melians are not completely delusional and this

further links Thucydides to the Realist paradigm of interstate relations theories: systems

may exert pressures on states, but individuals maintain free will and make decisions

based on their perception of the situation, incomplete or inaccurate though it may be.[92] In

the end, according to Thucydides' Athenians, their minds are devoid of reason, πολλήν

τε ἀλογίαν τῆς διανοίας παρέχετε. Thucydides' terminology highlight for his reader

exactly what the Melians need: more wisdom, ἄλλο τι τῶνδε σωφρονέστερον. As it

stands, their over-reliance on hopeful emotion, has compounded the danger facing

them.[93]

Thucydides then summarizes for his reader the synergy between the grave

external dangers and the Melians' concern for avoiding shame. He has the Athenians

explicate the pressures to which the Melians are succumbing when they choose honor

over survival. He has them say:

> οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐπί γε τὴν ἐν τοῖς αἰσχροῖς καὶ προύπτοις
> κινδύνοις πλεῖστα διαφθείρουσαν ἀνθρώπους
> αἰσχύνην τρέψεσθε. πολλοῖς γὰρ προορωμένοις ἔτι ἐς
> οἷα φέρονται τὸ αἰσχρὸν καλούμενον ὀνόματος
> ἐπαγωγοῦ δυνάμει ἐπεσπάσατο ἡσσηθεῖσι τοῦ

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[91] Kokaz (2001) discusses the "improper use of hope" and presents the idea that the Melians may have had some rational reason to believe in Spartan intervention despite the Athenians' insistence on the reckless nature of that hope, 40 and 40, n. 77.

[92] The Realist view of interstate relations has been presented in 1.2.3 Modern Interstate Relations: Basic Concepts and Definitions.

[93] Ahrensdorf (2000) argues that the Melians lack a "rational fear of violent death" and choose instead to believe in their hope for deliverance from the danger they face, 590.

ῥήματος ἔργῳ ξυμφοραῖς ἀνηκέστοις ἑκόντας περιπεσεῖν καὶ αἰσχύνην αἰσχίω μετὰ ἀνοίας ἢ τύχῃ προσλαβεῖν.

For surely you will not take refuge in that feeling which most often brings men to ruin when they are confronted by dangers that are clearly foreseen and therefore disgraceful – the fear of such disgrace. For many men, though they can still clearly foresee the dangers into which they are drifting, are lured on by the power of a seductive word – the thing called disgrace – until, the victims of a phrase, they are indeed plunged, of their own act, into irretrievable calamities, and thus incur in addition a disgrace that is more disgraceful, because associated with folly rather than with misfortune (5.111.3).

The dangers, according to Thucydides' Athenians, are clearly visible, προύπτοις κινδύνοις, though the Melians seem not to have recognized them. Instead, they have compounded the dangers by their concern for avoiding the appearance of shameful action, which, as Thucydides portrays, can be ruinous, διαφθείρουσαν ἀνθρώπους αἰσχύνην. He underscores the importance of shame by referring to it explicitly three more times in this brief section, τὸ αἰσχρὸν ... αἰσχύνην αἰσχίω. Though failure of any kind could be considered shameful to Thucydides' contemporaries, this repetition focuses Thucydides' reader on the idea that the Melians should "look carefully at their chances before they decide for suicidal heroism" because folly, ἀνοίας, is shameful.[94] The Melians' conception of shame in this instance is similar to that articulated in Hesiod's tale of the hawk and nightingale: "senseless is he who wishes to match himself against the stronger; he is deprived of victory and suffers pain in addition to his shame."[95] Pushing

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[94] Gomme, 4:179.

[95] Bosworth (1993), 41. Hes. *Op.* 210-11. ἄφρων δ', ὅς κ' ἐθέλῃ πρὸς κρείσσονας ἀντιφερίζειν· νίκης τε στέρεται πρός τ' αἴσχεσιν ἄλγεα πάσχει. Both Thucydides and Hesiod are explicit about the shame, αἴσχεσιν, that befalls those who struggle against insurmountable odds.

against insurmountable odds is not heroic; it is reckless folly, which brings dishonor.[96] As Thucydides' reader will see, such repetition of terms indicating shame will be a factor in the positive example set in Book Eight by the Athenian leader Phrynicus who retreats in the face of overwhelming odds rather than choosing suicidal heroics.[97] Thucydides' diction here makes the dangerous concern for appearances of shameful behavior clear to his reader in the sense that it often overrides rational calculations at moments when they are most necessary. The Melians, in other words, here exhibit a total lack of rational thought, μετὰ ἀνοίας, and make their present dangers even worse.[98]

In the end, the Athenians finish the discussion as they started it: they are the more powerful *polis* and any concerns beyond power disparities only worsen the existing dangers for the weaker side. Thucydides closes this speech by pointing his reader to the reality that a rational assessment of danger is feasible and must not be ignored. He has the Athenians say:

> ὃ ὑμεῖς, ἢν εὖ βουλεύησθε, φυλάξεσθε, καὶ οὐκ ἀπρεπὲς νομιεῖτε πόλεώς τε τῆς μεγίστης ἡσσᾶσθαι μέτρια προκαλουμένης, ξυμμάχους γενέσθαι ἔχοντας τὴν ὑμετέραν αὐτῶν ὑποτελεῖς, καὶ δοθείσης αἱρέσεως πολέμου πέρι καὶ ἀσφαλείας μὴ τὰ χείρω φιλονικῆσαι· ὡς οἵτινες τοῖς μὲν ἴσοις μὴ εἴκουσι, τοῖς δὲ κρείσσοσι καλῶς προσφέρονται, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἥσσους μέτριοί εἰσι, πλεῖστ' ἂν ὀρθοῖντο. σκοπεῖτε οὖν καὶ μεταστάντων ἡμῶν καὶ ἐνθυμεῖσθε πολλάκις ὅτι περὶ πατρίδος βουλεύεσθε, ἧς μιᾶς πέρι καὶ ἐς μίαν βουλὴν τυχοῦσάν τε καὶ μὴ κατορθώσασαν ἔσται.

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[96] Bosworth (1993) analyzes the similarities between Thucydides' Melians and Hesiod's nightingale, 41.

[97] Thuc. 8.27.2-3; Gomme, 4:179. This example has been presented in 3.4.4 Internal Dangers of Honor: Avoiding Shame.

[98] Gomme notes that ἀνοίας is the exact opposite of σωφροσύνη, 4:178.

> Such a course you will avoid, if you take wise counsel, and you will not consider it degrading to acknowledge yourselves inferior to the most powerful state when it offers you moderate terms – to become allies, keeping your own territory but paying tribute – and, when a choice is given you of war or safety, not to hold out stubbornly for the worse alternative. Since those who, while refusing to submit to their equals, yet comport themselves wisely towards their superiors and are moderate towards their inferiors – these, we say, are most likely to prosper. Consider, then, once more after our withdrawal, and reflect many times in your deliberations that your fatherland is at sake, your one and only fatherland, and that upon one decision only will depend her fate for weal or woe (1.111.4-5).

As before, Thucydides' diction makes it explicit for his reader that the Athenians are calling for reason. They urge the Melians not to consider it shameful submit to a *polis* which is so clearly more powerful. Thucydides' rational alternative is for the Melians to think clearly and not to consider it unfitting to submit in this instance, εὖ βουλεύησθε, φυλάξεσθε, καὶ οὐκ ἀπρεπὲς νομεῖτε πόλεώς τε τῆς μεγίστης ἡσσᾶσθαι. The stakes could not be higher; the Melians' decision will determine their very survival. Thus Thucydides makes it clear to his readers that the Melians must not exacerbate the dangers they face by bowing to internal pressures from their deeply-ingrained sense of the importance of avoiding appearances of shame. They should instead bow to the logic that, in this instance, resistance is futile. In that sense, however self-interested, it is humanitarian advice and the truly shameful act in this instance, as previously noted, is in choosing heroic suicide when a survivable option was still available.[99] The Melians' desire to avoid the shame of submission, of course, overrides the Athenians' rational plea.

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[99] Bosworth (1993), 43.

Their decision compels the Athenians to commence hostilities against the city immediately. They first built a wall around the Melians and then departed with most of their force, leaving the rest behind to carry on the seige.[100] But if they were expecting a quick victory, they were disappointed with the events that later unfolded.[101] Twice the Melians lauched successful counter-attacks against their besiegers: the first against the Athenian lines "near the market," which resulted in a windfall of food supplies for the Melians, and the second against another "feebly garrisoned" part of the Athenian lines.[102] In the end, the Athenians sent reinforcements and were successful, but only due, in part, to treachery.[103] The length of the siege possibly explains the savage nature of the punishment inflicted on the Melians: the adult males were executed, the women and children were sold into slavery.[104] This represents the total destruction of the *polis*. While it may be that the Melians proved a more evenly-matched opponent than the Athenians originally thought, in the end, the outcome was as predicted. Thucydides' reader sees in this outcome proof that it was in fact reckless for the Melians to have placed such faith in the hope for salvation and to have wished so strongly to avoid the perception of shameful submission. This incident of genocide highlights for Thucydides' reader the ultimate

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[100] Thuc. 5.114.

[101] Lazenby (2004), 130.

[102] Thuc. 5.115.4, 116.2.

[103] Thuc. 5.116.3.

[104] Lazenby (2004), 130. Thucydides' qualifying statement that "they put to death all the grown men whom they took" makes it reasonable to assume that the entire male population was not executed. See J.B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1909), 139; J.H. Finley, *Thucydides* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 211; J.V.A. Fine, *The Ancient Greeks: A Critical History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 490; and Seaman (1997), 397.

synergy between internally-generated passions and the external dangers which populate

his world.

4.4 <u>Old Dangers / New Awareness: Conclusion</u>

Reading the Mytilenean Debate and the Melian Dialogue with a focus on the Greek text and an awareness of the importance Thucydides has ascribed to danger throughout his narrative allows a modern reader to appreciate yet another aspect of his multi-faceted analysis of these two critical moments in the Peloponnesian War. His renditions of the competing speeches between Cleon and Diodotus, between the Athenians and the Melians, highlight one of the broader didactic messages of his analysis of the war: giving in to internally-generated passions, and impulses for quick action, often increases the destructiveness inherent in an already-dangerous world. Cleon's speech, for instance, highlights the enormous pressures facing the Athenians as they attempt to maintain their hold on empire; Thucydides' diction, however, argues that Cleon's suggestions to mitigate these pressures actually increase the danger facing the Athenians in the long run. This message is reinforced in Thucydides' rendition of Diodotus' speech in which the main theme is arguably that moderation mitigates danger.

So too in the Melian Dialogue does Thucydides' reader witness both the Melians and the Athenians alternatively giving in to their passions and ignoring other available options which might allow for a less destructive outcome than the one that was threatening. For the Melians, of course, the synergy between existing danger and their passion has immediate consequences. For the Athenians, the lessons of the dialogue do not become apparent until the final destruction of their Sicilian expedition causes them to rage against those who "had encouraged them to *hope* that they should conquer Sicily." [1] Thucydides relies on decisive moments in the war such as these to highlight the dangers

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[1] Thuc. 8.1.1.

facing his contemporaries from both the external world and their internal reactions to the world's dangers and how all of it can have a deleterious impact on crucial decision-making. As is the case throughout his narrative, Thucydides presents his reader with stark images of danger to argue for a more rational approach to behavior in interstate relations and (if necessary) in war, reforms that might mitigate the existing dangers and increase the odds of success – or at least survival – in a dangerous world.

Chapter 5: General Conclusion and Broader Implications

Books are to be call'ed for, and supplied, on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-sleep, but, in the highest sense, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay – the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start of the frame-work. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. That were to make a nation of supple and athletic minds, well train'd, intuitive, used to depend on themselves and not on a few coteries of writers.

–Walt Whitman, "Democratic Vistas" [1]

While W.R. Connor concluded his own work on Thucydides with this quote, so too is it applicable to my own discussion of Thucydides' narrative.[2] Throughout this dissertation, I have consciously focused on the phrase "Thucydides' reader" in order to highlight the fact that Thucydides would have intended his work to be read actively and critically by individuals – oftentimes with foreknowledge of the events which best define this war and its outcome – as they inquire about the deeper meanings, the causes and motivations that changed the nature of warfare in Greece from single-day hoplite battles on carefully chosen level plains to a decades-long crisis involving peoples and *poleis* throughout both the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. Thucydides' reader is truly tasked with learning the lessons to which Thucydides provides "the hints, the clues, the start of the frame-work." In this decision to focus on Thucydides' impact on his retrospective reader, as opposed to a passive audience, I have followed the arguments of several prominent scholars who also note the demands Thucydides places on his reader in order that they too may understand the major themes that defined this war.[3] The reader, in other

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[1] *Prose Works 1892*, ed. Floyd Stovall, vol. 2 (New York, 1964), 424.

[2] Connor (1984), 231.

[3] Connor (1984), 28; Crane (1996), esp. chapter 1; Rood (1998), 4-5; and Morrison (2006), esp. chapters 1-2.

words, is an integral part of Thucydides' analysis and whether that reader is ancient or modern, he must pay careful attention to the events Thucydides describes and – perhaps even more so – to the ways in which Thucydides describes these events if he is too hopes to learn from the past and realize Thucydides' intended insight into the future.

I began this dissertation with an analysis of the most relevant scholarship on Thucydides' work, with a special focus on the literary theories and interstate relations theories that help provide a specific vocabulary with which to analyze Thucydides' understanding of the dangerous world in which he lived. I explored the tension between those who believe Thucydides to be a writer who cast the war as a prose version of the tragic themes which dominated literature of his day and those who see in his work the mind of a purely objective historian searching for absolute truth through a stringent exposition of facts. Both of these perspectives, of course, are valuable to the understanding of Thucydides' writing and, in the final analysis, I have consistently viewed Thucydides as an amalgamation of both images: influenced as he was by contemporary themes of epic and tragic poetry, he was also an objective historian whose analysis provides for his reader a unique understanding of the war that defined his – and several other – generations and that he saw as the "greatest movement" in recorded history." [4]

Beyond exploring this tension, of course, I also look to other disciplines for an effective vocabulary with which we might analyze his work even though they were not disciplines Thucydides himself would have recognized: literary theory and interstate relations theories. Using literary theories to analyze the narrative form of Thucydides'

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[4] Thuc. 1.1.2.

work makes it possible to explore the ways in which he shapes his reader's perception and understanding of events. His writing style, especially the diction he employs and the frequency with which he employs certain words, helps him guide his reader to his intended lessons on the dangers of the world and how they might be mitigated.

These lessons, though drawn from ancient sources, are most easily defined and discussed in the context of modern interstate relations theories. Thucydides' understanding of the systems-level pressures which were exerted upon various *poleis* and the individual decision-makers within those *poleis* meshes almost seamlessly with the framework provided by modern theorists, especially theorists of the Realist paradigm. Thucydides' modern reader, when armed with political theories unavailable to Thucydides himself, can appreciate the necessities of "self-help" felt by the *poleis* which existed in an anarchy. In an environment characterized by the lack of central authority to settle disputes or prevent conflicts and a lack of reliable intelligence about other *poleis* motives and capabilities, states had only themselves on which to rely for safety. This fact, among others, made it the case that human decisions, far from being determined by systems-level pressures or concerns only for efficiency and stability, were often made under great emotional pressure. The results, as Thucydides' narrative clearly attests, were often sub-optimal.

Within these sub-optimal outcomes, however, are contained many opportunities for Thucydides' reader to gain a better understanding of the problems with human nature that so often lead to disaster. Thucydides provides these lessons to his readers by guiding them to the realization that a didactic message is one of the most important aspects of his narrative. That message, as I have argued, is that the world is a dangerous place filled

with external threats to security. In order to have any chance of mitigating these dangers,
leaders must learn to control their internally generated urges for action. The external
forces, of course, are easily identified as any forces outside of the state or individual that
threaten survival. This includes opposing states, opposing politicians or even factions
within a state. Natural forces outside of human control also threaten survival. But for
Thucydides' contemporaries, these dangers were often exacerbated by internally
generated dangers. Men's "spirits" – as Plato later defined the concept – caused them to
react violently in the face of perceived insults or potential threats to their honor or
reputation. Throughout his narrative, Thucydides focuses his reader on the synergy
between these two forms of danger: irrational, and often self-destructive, internal urges
often make the already present dangers of the world worse and lead to more destruction
than otherwise might have occurred in the natural course of interstate relations.
Thucydides' consistent employment of the term κίνδυνος highlights these dangers for his
reader and helps him understand the destructive synergy that occurs when men's reason is
set aside in favor of quick, violent response to any situation of perceived insult or
disrespect.

Of these two types of dangers, I have offered many examples in order to
demonstrate how Thucydides understood them and how he intended his reader to benefit
from understanding them. First I examined the more obvious of the two forms of dangers:
the external dangers. Thucydides' world, as I have shown, was a dangerous place filled
with violence and forces beyond men's control. Oftentimes individuals and *poleis* were
faced with options which presented only lesser and greater forms of danger; truly safe
options were – like security – a scarce commodity in Thucydides' world. But Thucydides

recognized that certain individuals were capable of mitigating these dangers somewhat by consciously accounting for them in their strategic or tactical planning process. Some leaders, as Thucydides presents, found ways of maximizing the potential profit to be made from risky situations and even reduced the elements of random chance that presented additional dangers in combat. Other individuals, however, were less likely to reduce the dangers of the world and actually increased them by giving in to internally generated urges for action. Thucydides highlights these individuals and *poleis* for his reader by highlighting instances in which the dangers were made worse from the non-rational aspects of his contemporary society. He shows his reader how individuals and states tended to respond violently to instances of perceived disrespect, a potential loss of honor, or diminution of a reputation for power. These "internal dangers," as I have called them, are all part of the image Thucydides presents of the human condition. They fall into four major categories: the proclivity for quick, often violent, action, the belief in intervention as a vital expression of power, the pursuit of honor and avoidance of shame, and the overwhelming concern for preservation of one's reputation. His examples of the ways in which men contend with one another in the preservation of their honor or reputation provide an education to future statesmen in the more difficult to understand dangers created by emotional reactions to dangerous external circumstances. Within these categories, as I have argued, Thucydides uses variations of the term κίνδυνος to teach his reader that rational leaders must control their internal urges if they hope to mitigate the external dangers which are always present in the world.

In the last chapter, I focused on the valuable potential this examination of Thucydides' use of κίνδυνος provides the modern reader: the ability to gain a more

holistic understanding of Thucydides' multi-faceted narrative. To do this I explored the relationship between two key passages, the Mytilenean Debate and the Melian Dialogue, and Thucydides' conception of the various forms of κίνδυνος. Decisive moments in the war such as these two allowed Thucydides to highlight for his reader the complex nature of his dangerous world and the ways in which his contemporaries' internally-generated urges often increased the already present dangers. In both passages, as I have shown, Thucydides' message remains the same: the only way to succeed, or even survive, in a dangerous world is to restrain the emotionally-driven urges which often drive men to self-destructive actions and to embrace the more rational approach of engaging the intellect before committing oneself to irreversible action.

This analysis and the additional perspective it provides to Thucydides' readers, who are already informed by so many themes, questions, and scholarly debates presented by generations of Thucydidean scholars, is interesting enough. But additionally it holds broader implications for our understanding of several other topics concerned with both the ancient world and our own modern conflicts, which are both decidedly different and eerily similar to these ancient conflicts. Where issues of fifth-century politics and culture are concerned, reading Thucydides' narrative from this perspective helps us moderns see the both the similarities and – perhaps more importantly – the differences between our two cultures. Certainly the similarities are clear: politicians still compete for the crowd's momentary adoration; a leader's reputation, influence and public speaking acumen can still determine his success or failure; and the mutable fortunes of various politicians and their ability to restrain the emotions of a people or re-energize their anger as the situation dictates continues to determine the actions states take. One has to look no further in the

past than to President George W. Bush's ability both to calm Americans' fears at the time of the September 11th attacks and then to rekindle their anger – or at least continue feeding their anger – to win support for the invasion of Iraq almost two years later to see parallels with Thucydides' Pericles who quieted the Athenians' fears at the danger posed by the Spartan invasions and Thucydides' Cleon who nearly succeeded in rekindling the Athenians' anger at the Mytileneans' revolt.

But the differences between our cultures are just as readily apparent. Certainly politician in the modern era do not face the real danger of exile, ostracism and even death that Thucydides' contemporaries faced. While modern politicians may well face dangers in the form of political defeat as a loss of reputation, this is a far cry from the dangers faced by Themistocles, Nicias, Alcibiades, and Thucydides himself. Exile was Thucydides' penalty for losing an opportunity for victory at the Battle of Amphipolis. But a modern politician suffers much less for his failures. President Jimmy Carter, for instance, merely lost his bid for re-election in part for his mis-handling of economic issues but also as a result of the damage done to America's reputation by the hostage crisis in Iran and the spectacular failure of the "Desert One" debacle, the ill-fated hostage rescue attempt he authorized. His fate, however, is dramatically different from the ancient politicians whom Thucydides describes: instead of exile from his country, President Carter simply retired to a lifetime of philanthropic work and international diplomacy which resulted in his receipt of a Nobel Peace Prize. Thucydides' text and his focus on danger allows modern readers to appreciate the fact that while political competition is fundamentally unchanged since the fifth-century, the rewards for success and the penalties for failure are – thankfully! – much less dramatic. Democratic society seems to

have matured somewhat to the point where leaders need not physically fear offering their opinions for the public's benefit.

Unfortunately Thucydides may have a good point in his assumption that the basic patterns of human nature are unchanging. Just as his contemporaries were susceptible to internally-generated urges for action and the need to protect reputations in the face of perceived disrespect, so too are we moderns oftentimes susceptible. In analyzing the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, one can see that many, if not most, of the political advisors surrounding the leaders who had in their power the ability to destroy the world did not "act in predictable ways of developing alternatives or choosing from among them."[5] Instead of searching for alternatives, leaders aggressively chose to seek the other state's compliance to demands and stood ready to back up these demands with the force of a nuclear holocaust. In this example we can see the parallels to both Thucydides' Melians, who insisted their honor demanded they stand up to the Athenians regardless the cost, and his Athenians who later refused to withdraw from their Sicilian campaign even after it seemed to be going against them. Instead they chose to reinforce their failure with more resources in order to avoid the loss of reputation they would suffer should other *poleis* see them leaving Sicily without having won the victory. Thus it is in these parallels and in this recognition that human nature is essentially unchanged that the modern reader can understand another important message conveyed in Thucydides' narrative. The world is still a dangerous place and people still suffer. But these dangers can either be exacerbated or mitigated by human actions. If we give in to our internal urges and react violently to dangerous external circumstance, the world becomes a more dangerous place; but if we

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[5] John R. O'Neal, "The Rationality of Decision Making During International Crises," *Polity* 20 (1988), 608.

pause for a moment's reflection before acting when faced with an interpersonal or

interstate conflict, we can often find a more mutually beneficial outcome. This lesson in

itself proves that Thucydides' work is indeed a κτῆμά ἐς αἰεὶ and our odds of survival

and success as a violent species is improved for having learned it.

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