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THUCYDIDEAN RHETORIC AND THE PROPAGANDA OF THE PERSIAN WARS TOPOS

The victories of the Greeks over the Persians in early fifth century B.C. inevitably led to an upsurge of patriotic pride that consequently was translated into an unparalleled propaganda. The prevailing opinion is that sometime after Xerxes' defeat, the Persian Wars became a rhetorical theme that was incorporated in the *Tatenkatalog* tradition,¹ and, according to J. de Romilly, a topos 'classic for anyone wishing to praise or defend Athens'.² These representative statements are only partly supported by Thucydides' narrative. For the topos was not an exclusive theme of epideictic oratory, as it developed in the fourth century B.C., by which time its arguments were well established.³ In Thucydides it is mainly a theme developed in deliberative speeches that deal with inter-city-state politics for propaganda purposes, and the topos is almost absent from the

¹ E. KIERDORF, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege* (Hypomnemata, 16; Göttingen, 1966), pp. 83-110; N. LORAUX, *The Invention of Athens. The Funeral Oration in the Classical City* (trans. A. SHERIDAN, Cambridge, Mass., 1986), *passim*.

² In her *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism* (trans. P. THODY, Oxford, 1963), p. 244. See also A.W. GOMME, A. ANDREWES and K.J. DOVER, eds., *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vols. 1-5 (Oxford, 1945-1981), vol. 4, p. 161 (hereafter abbreviated as *HCT*).

³ For the fourth century B.C. evidence see: C.G. STARR, *Why Did the Greeks Defeat the Persians?*, «PP», 17, 1962, pp. 321-332; W.C. WEST III, *Saviors of Greece*, «GRBS», 11, 1970, pp. 271-282; LORAUX (above note 1), pp. 132-171.

Funeral Oration. This, we may safely assume, was commonly done by everyone even with the smallest involvement in the Persian Wars, in order to manipulate rhetorically past achievements for the justification of present and future behaviour.

It is the purpose of this paper to revisit the arguments of this topos put forth in Thucydides' *History*, first in the narrative and then in the speeches.⁴ Given the assumption of every Thucydidean student that the historian felt more free in the composition of his speeches than in that of his narrative, such an examination will enable us to see whether there is any discrepancy between the narrative and the speeches over the topos, and what is more important to appreciate Thucydides' own attitude towards the claims that the different speakers make concerning the Persian Wars and their aftermath.

First the topos in the narrative. That Thucydides is greatly interested in the Persian Wars and conceives of them as a turning point in Greek History is a commonplace and evident from the many instances of phrases like 'before/during/after the Persian Wars'.⁵ Thucydides, particularly in the first books, constantly contrasts and compares the two major Wars, the Persian and the Peloponnesian, to show the significance of the latter whose origins and inner causes lie in the aftermath of the former. In the Archaeology he stresses that Greece before the Persian Wars lacked daring (ἀτολμοτέρα), i.e. she did nothing by common effort (κοινῇ 1.17);⁶ during the course of the War the

⁴ M. KUBO, *Thucydides and the Persian War*, «JCS», 19, 1971, pp. 43-57 (in Japanese with English summary at pp. 162-3), deals with all the instances of the topos in Thucydides, and my work corroborates and develops further some of his conclusions.

⁵ Thuc., 1.14.2; 18.3; 23.1; 41.2; 69.1; 73.2; 90.1; 95.7; 97.1-2; 118.2; 142.7; 2.21.2; 3.10.2; 56.5; 6.82.3. For Thucydides' careful use of the expressions τὰ Μηδικὰ πράγματα, τὸ Μηδικὸν ἔργον, ὁ Μηδικὸς πόλεμος see: N.G.L. HAMMOND, τὸ Μηδικὸν and τὰ Μηδικά, «CR», 71, 1957, pp. 100-101. For the predilection of Μηδικά instead of Περσικά E.J. JONKERS, *Μῆδοι, τὰ Μηδικά, Μηδισμός*, in: *Studia Varia Carolo Guilielmo Vollgraff a Discipulis Oblata* (Amsterdam, 1948), pp. 78-83.

⁶ For discussions on the Archaeology see: J. DE ROMILLY, *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* (Paris, 1956), pp. 241-298; V.J. HUNTER, *Thucydides and the*

Lacedaemonians assumed the command of all the Greeks by virtue of their superior power (δυνάμει προύχοντες), and the Athenians, forced by the circumstances, became a naval power (ναυτικοί); after repulsing the barbarian by common effort (κοινῇ) the confederacy of the Greeks split, with the Lacedaemonians and their allies being in control of the land (κατὰ γῆν), the Athenians and their allies of the sea (κατὰ θάλασσαν 1.18.2). This geographical division of control, being the result of the Persian Wars, created between Athens and Sparta a new situation of power struggle. It lasted up to the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (1.18.3) whose true cause (ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις) was the Athenian growth of power and the alarm this caused at Sparta (1.23.6).

In the excursus of the Pentecontaetia Thucydides provides a detailed discussion of the Athenian achievement:⁷ immediately after the Persian repulsion the Lacedaemonians and their allies 'were alarmed at the strength of her [sc. Athens'] newly acquired navy (πλῆθος τοῦ ναυτικοῦ) and the valour (τόλμα) which she had displayed in the war with the Medes' (1.90.1).⁸ Similar sentiments are expressed as a result of the construction of the Athenian walls: Themistocles — 'for he first ventured (ἐτόλμησεν) to tell them [sc. the Athenians] to stick to the sea' (1.93.4) — reminds the Spartans of the Athenian daring (τολμηῆσαι) to leave the city and embark on the ships (cf. 1.18.2), and forces them to accept *de facto* the walling of Ath-

Uses of the Past, «Klio», 62, 1980, pp. 191-218 and especially 216 note 80; W.R. CONNOR, *Thucydides* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 20-32; and J.R. ELLIS, *The Structure and Argument of Thucydides' Archaeology*, «ClAnt», 10, 1991, pp. 344-375.

⁷ Note that the Pentecontaetia comes after the debate at Sparta, where similar arguments were heard. For discussions on the Pentecontaetia see: CONNOR (above note 6), pp. 32-52; and E. BADIEN, *Thucydides and the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. A Historian's Brief*, in: J.W. ALLISON, ed., *Conflict, Antithesis, and the Ancient Historian* (Columbus, Ohio, 1990), pp. 46-91.

⁸ Translations of Thucydides' text are from R. CRAWLEY (New York, 1951).

ens (1.91.5). The Lacedaemonians, although secretly annoyed by this incident, were well disposed towards Athens at the time 'on account of the patriotism (προθυμία) which she had displayed in the struggle with the Mede' (1.92). Moreover, because of Pausanias' indiscretions, the Lacedaemonians

desired to be rid of the Median War, and were satisfied of the competency of the Athenians for the position, and their friendship at the same time towards themselves. The Athenians had thus succeeded to the supremacy by the voluntary act of the allies (1.95.7-96.1; cf. 1.118.2).

Indeed, in book 1 Thucydides puts forth the major prerequisites needed for the shift of power that happened in Greece after the Persian Wars: πλῆθος τοῦ ναυτικοῦ, τόλμα, προθυμία, (or προθυμία τολμηροτάτη), and Themistocles who τὴν ἀρχὴν εὐθὺς ξυγκατεσκεύαζεν (1.93.4; cf. also the exceptional characterization of Themistocles in 1.138.3).⁹ These components constitute according to Thucydides the ἡγεμονία that was obtained by Athens gradually, in spite of the δύναμις of Sparta, and in fact with her consent. These three elements that define Athens' character will appear and be referred to in Athenian speeches apropos of the Persian Wars, because they triggered a chain of events. Athens, the real winner of the Persian Wars, with her newly acquired navy, displaying τόλμα and προθυμία and employing the best generals, establishes herself as the leading city-state of Greece; and this alarming increase of power causes yet another war, the Peloponnesian.

Even so, Thucydides' narrative does not have to agree always with the argumentation presented in the speeches, as far as the Persian Wars topos is concerned. This is self-evident, if we consider the bias of the participants in the Wars, in order to establish themselves at least as contributors in the battles

⁹ For Themistocles in Thucydides' account see: V.J. HUNTER, *The Composition of Thucydides' History: A New Answer to the Problem*, «Historia», 26, 1977, pp. 287-291, where previous bibliography is discussed.

fought against the Medes, or in Athens' case exceptionally as the saviours of Greece.¹⁰

In the speeches we come across the Persian Wars topos used variously according to the particular political bias of each speaker.¹¹ The frequency of this topos suggests a grouping of the relatively similar arguments in spite of the peculiarities involved in each speech. Yet, in the main the groupings are along expected lines: the Athenians (speaking anonymously, or through Pericles, Alcibiades, Euphemos and Nicias) and their allies (Plataeans and Mytilenaeans) reflect the one side; on the other are the speeches of Sthenelaidas and Archidamos, and the Thebans' words represent their allies' views. The speeches of the Corinthians and particularly of Hermocrates, although they belong on the Spartan side and echo the Spartan propaganda, need to be treated separately. For not only do they not follow the Spartan arguments, as they are presented in Thucydides' narrative, but on the contrary these speakers rather adopt and manipulate the Athenian line of argumentation put forth in the *History*. In this order we will try to establish how and why each group respectively employs the Persian Wars topos, what is the propaganda they present, and at the same time to compare one group both with the other and with the narrative of Thucydides.

The first time that Thucydides records the full Athenian arguments on the topos is when Athenian envoys, who happen to be at Sparta, appear in the Apella to dissuade the Lacedae-

¹⁰ WEST (above note 3), pp. 271-282.

¹¹ For rhetoric in Thucydides see: H.L.L. HUDSON-WILLIAMS, *Thucydides, Isocrates and the Rhetorical Composition*, «CQ», 42, 1948, p. 79; L. BODIN, *Isocrate et Thucydide*, in: *Mélanges Gustave Glotz* (Paris, 1932), pp. 93-102; P. MORAUX, *Thucydide et la rhétorique*, «LEC», 22, 1954, pp. 3-23; J. GOMMEL, *Rhetorisches Argumentieren bei Thukydides* (Spudasmata 10; Hildesheim 1966); C.W. MACLEOD, *Rhetoric and History (Thucydides, VI, 16-18)*, «QS» 2, 1975, pp. 39-65; and especially S. HORNBLOWER, *Thucydides* (Baltimore, 1987), pp. 45-72; A.J. WOODMAN, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography. Four Studies* (London & Sydney, 1988), pp. 1-69, 197-215.

monians from rushing into war.¹² For this purpose they feel obliged to attempt a justification for the fair title to their possessions (οὔτε ἀπεικότως) and suggest that their country has claims to considerations (ἄξια λόγου 1.73.1), although they are going to repeat tiresome, because well known, events (1.73.2). Their achievement in Marathon is dismissed in one sentence (Μαραθῶνί τε μόνοι προκινδυνεῦσαι τῷ βαρβάρῳ 1.73.4), as it was before by Thucydides (ἢ ἐν Μαραθῶνι μάχῃ Μήδων πρὸς Ἀθηναίους ἐγένετο 1.18.1).¹³ For the defeat of Xerxes at Salamis the envoys emphasize the three decisive factors that brought victory (1.74.1-2):¹⁴

τρία ὠφελιμώτατα ἐς αὐτὸ παρεσχόμεθα, ἀριθμὸν τε νεῶν πλεῖστον καὶ ἄνδρα στρατηγὸν ξυνετώτατον καὶ προθυμίαν ἀσκνοτάτην. ναῦς μὲν . . . , Θεμιστοκλέα δὲ ἄρχοντα, ὃς αἰτιώτατος ἐν τῷ στενῷ ναυμαχῆσαι ἐγένετο, ὅπερ σαφέστατα ἔσωσε τὰ πράγματα, . . . προθυμίαν δὲ καὶ πολὺ τολμηροτάτην ἐδείξαμεν.

This behaviour especially during Salamis is enough proof of Athens' superiority and therefore justifies the acquisition of the empire (1.75.1-2):¹⁵

¹² Useful discussions for the Athenian speeches are: ROMILLY (above note 2), pp. 242-62, especially 244-50; A.E. RAUBITSCHKE, *The Speech of the Athenians at Sparta*, in: P. STADTER, ed., *The Speeches in Thucydides* (Chapel Hill, 1973), pp. 32-48; D. COHEN, *Justice, Interest and Political Deliberation in Thucydides*, «QUCC», 45, 1984, pp. 35-60; M. HEATH, *Justice in Thucydides' Athenian Speeches*, «Historia», 39, 1990, pp. 385-400; and J. OBER, *Civic Ideology and Counterhegemonic Discourse: Thucydides on the Sicilian Debate*, in: A.L. BOEGEHOLD and A.C. SCAFURO, eds., *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology* (Baltimore and London, 1994), pp. 102-26.

¹³ For the Athenian propaganda on Marathon see: WEST (above note 3), pp. 273-282; Loraux (above note 1), pp. 155-171; and K.R. WALTERS, 'We Fought Alone at Marathon': *Historical Falsification in the Attic Funeral Oration*, «RhM», 124, 1981, pp. 204-11.

¹⁴ K.R. WALTERS, *Four Hundred Ships at Salamis?*, «RhM», 124, 1981, pp. 199-203, suggests about this passage and its parallel one in Lysias' funeral oration (2.42) that 'this structure and its contents derive in both cases from a common funeral oration tradition' (p. 202). I would argue instead that Lysias is following Thucydides who epitomized the Athenian ideology and propaganda concerning the topos in his *Histories*.

¹⁵ See also A. MISSIOU, *The Subversive Oratory of Andokides: Politics,*

Neither by the patriotism that we displayed at that crisis, nor by the wisdom of our counsels, do we merit our extreme unpopularity with the Hellenes, not at least unpopularity for our empire (μη ἄγαν ἐπιφθόνως διακεῖσθαι = 1.75.5 πᾶσι ἀνεπίφθονον). That empire we acquire...because you were unwilling to prosecute to its conclusion the war against the barbarian and because the allies attached themselves to us and spontaneously asked us to assume the command.

It is along the arguments established by Thucydides himself in the Archaeology and the Pentecontaetia that the Athenians try to justify their empire. At least temporarily, the Athenian argumentation proves to be persuasive enough to deter the Lacedaemonians from starting hostilities with Athens.

After the speech of the envoys at Sparta the topos is mentioned by Pericles summarily, since Thucydides does not want to be repetitious, unless there is something new to be added or a different attitude concerning the topos. Thus, Pericles agrees with what the envoys at Sparta present as the *logos* of the city. He repeats that their fathers resisted the Medes and repulsed the barbarian more by wisdom than by fortune (γνώμη . . . ἢ τύχη), more by daring than by strength (τόλμη . . . ἢ δυνάμει 1.144.4). Similarly, in the Funeral Oration the topos is dismissed *in praeteritio*, as Pericles, or better Thucydides does not want his audience to be weary of listening to familiar topics (ἐν εἰδόσιν 2.36.4).¹⁶ Nevertheless, Pericles hints at the already known characteristics of Athens during and after the Persian Wars: προθύμως ἡμυνάμεθα (2.36.4); οὐδείς πω πολέμιος ἐνέτυχε διὰ τὴν τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἐπιμέλειαν (39.3); πᾶσαν μὲν θάλασσαν καὶ γῆν ἐσβατὸν τῇ ἡμετέρῳ τόλμῃ καταναγκάσαντες γενέσθαι (41.4).

Things, however, change radically from the Melian Dialogue onwards. The Athenians do not simply reject the topos of

Ideology and Decision-Making in Democratic Athens (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 109-121, especially p. 120.

¹⁶ I.T. KAKRIDES, *Ερμηνευτικά σχόλια στον Επιτάφιο του Θουκυδίδη* (Athens, 1981), p. 18 suggests that the topos was 'a well established theme of the *rerum gestarum*.'

the Persian Wars, but strongly refuse to exploit it for the justification of the empire (5.89):¹⁷

For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretences (μετ' ὀνομάτων καλῶν) — either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Medes (καταλύσαντες) ... — and make a long speech which would not be believed.

The main reason for Thucydides' mentioning the topos summarily here, as he does later on in Alcibiades' speech, is that the primary purpose of the Melian Dialogue is the portrayal of the new *ethos* and conduct of Athenian imperialism.¹⁸ Reliance on such arguments is now a specious pretence, and surprisingly not persuasive any more, whereas in book 1 the Athenians at Sparta won over the Lacedaemonians, even if temporarily. What is more important, the defensive posture of Athens is now transformed into an offensive one. The timely scandal of Melos gave Thucydides an excellent opportunity to hint at the changes even in Athens' political propaganda. Thucydides no doubt intended to place the Melian incident in a prominent place of his *History*, and taking advantage of this event he highlighted the extreme stage and new *ethos* of Athenian imperialism.¹⁹ A more detailed presentation of the new discourse on the topos had to await its

¹⁷ For the Melian Dialogue in addition to the books cited above, note 12 see also: C.W. MACLEOD, *Form and Meaning in the Melian Dialogue*, «Historia», 23, 1974, pp. 385-400; CONNOR (above note 6), pp. 147-157; A.B. BOSWORTH, *The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue*, «JHS», 113, 1993, pp. 30-44.

¹⁸ ROMILLY (above note 2), pp. 249-250 has argued that, 'since justice is excluded from the whole Melian Dialogue, the topos of the Persian Wars cannot be used, because it refers to justice'. That, however, is only part of the explanation.

¹⁹ A. ANDREWES', *The Melian Dialogue and Pericles' Last Speech*, «PCPhS», 186, 1960, p. 10, suggestion 'to take it (sc. the Melian Dialogue) out of this context, not a comment on one stage of Athens' career but a stage in Thucydides' own exploration of the problem of imperialism' seems unfair to Thucydides himself and his careful structure of the whole *History*. See further H.R. RAWLINGS III, *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (Princeton, 1981).

due time:²⁰ in the speeches of Alcibiades and particularly Euphemos the topos is significantly changed according to the new standards of Athenian behaviour and her political propaganda that was only touched upon at Melos.

When Alcibiades addresses the Athenian ekklesia in the debate of the Sicilian expedition, he very briefly touches on the topos and explains (6.17.7 and 6.18.2):²¹

Our fathers with these very adversaries (sc. Lacedaemonians) which it is said we shall now leave behind us when we sail, and the Mede as their enemy as well, were able to win the empire (τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκτήσαντο), depending solely on their superiority at sea (τῇ περιουσίᾳ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ).

It is thus that empire has been won (τὴν τε ἀρχὴν οὕτως ἐκτησάμεθα), both by us and by all others that have held it, by a constant readiness (προθύμως) to support all, whether barbarians or Hellenes, that invite assistance.

As at Melos, so too here Alcibiades talks of the Persians in general without distinguishing the Athenian contributions at Marathon and Salamis. Furthermore, he emphasizes only one instrumental factor on which Athens depended, her navy. The three important elements contributed by the Athenians against Xerxes at Salamis, or their uniqueness in fighting alone the Persians at Marathon, are now not as important, and, so it seems, not part of the propaganda anymore. Themistocles, or the ablest general, and the daring — a word markedly absent from Alcibiades' speeches (6.16-18 and 6.89-92) — are not mentioned at all. In addition, the two speeches of Alcibiades at Athens and Sparta are much changed in tone and arguments from the speeches of the Athenians at Sparta and of Pericles. In particular, Alcibiades seems to indicate that the Persian Wars were not defensive, but offensive, when he suggests that the Athenian goal

²⁰ It is not, as A. ANDREWES, *HCT* 4, 161 has suggested, 'Thucydides' general reluctance to dwell on such themes'.

²¹ Very helpful for Alcibiades' and Nicias' speeches are: D. TOMPKINS, *Stylistic Characterization in Thucydides: Nicias and Alcibiades*, «YCS», 22, 1972, pp. 181-214; and OBER (above note 12), pp. 102-26.

against the Persians was to win the empire. Hence his ideas for a new and justified expansion bring him much closer to those expressed in the Melian Dialogue than the ones presented in books 1 and 2.

It is Euphemos who undertakes the task of presenting, in the same manner as Alcibiades, but in more detail, what the Athenians believe now, after the incident of Melos, about their former behaviour during and after the Persian Wars (6.83.1-2):

Ἄνθ' ὧν ἄξιοί τε ὄντες ἅμα ἄρχομεν, ὅτι τε ναυτικὸν πλεῖστόν τε καὶ προθυμίαν ἀπροφάσιστον παρεσχόμεθα ἐς τοὺς Ἑλληνας . . . καὶ οὐ καλλιπούμεθα ὡς ἢ τὸν βάρβαρον μόνοι καθελόντες εἰκότως ἄρχομεν ἢ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ τῇ τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν ξυμπάντων τε καὶ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ αὐτῶν κινδυνεύσαντες. πᾶσι δὲ ἀνεπίφθονον τὴν προσήκουσαν σωτηρίαν ἐκπορίζεσθαι.

Finally, Nicias' speech, three days after the Athenian defeat in the Great Harbour, alludes to, among other similar circumstances, that of the Persians (7.77.3-4):

If any of the gods was offended (ἐπίφθονοι) at our expedition, we have been already amply punished. Others before us have attacked their neighbours and have done what men will do without suffering more than they could bear; and we may now justly expect to find the gods more kind, for we have become fitter objects for their pity than their jealousy (οἴκτου . . . ἢ φθόνου).

Nicias in these few lines before the final catastrophe implies that the Sicilian expedition caused the jealousy of the gods. The word ἐπίφθονοι echoes strangely the similar words ἐπιφθόνως and ἀνεπίφθονον used earlier in relation to the acquisition of the Athenian empire (see above 1.75.1, 5; 6.83.2). Nicias opens up the possibility that the Sicilian expedition caused the jealousy of the gods, and this is the one and only instance in Thucydides' *History* that an Athenian employs the topos not for the justification of the empire, as it was done before in books 1 and 6, but as a *paradeigma*, as the Corinthians and Hermocrates do (see below). In Nicias' case, one may argue that his *ethos* is in concert with the statement he makes. Yet, Thucydides' choice of the same word to explain the reaction of other Greek states to

Athenian expansionism and to the Sicilian expedition is very interesting and intentionally suggestive: when Nicias mentions the *phthonos* of the men and the gods, he refers to the theme of *phthonos* that the Athenians developed in book 1 and 6 (ἀνεπιφθονον, ἐπιφθόνως), and articulates explicitly another possible interpretation. In that sense, Nicias' use of the topos indicates a radical departure from previous Athenian usage, and it also serves as a transition between the references in books 1 and 6.²²

All these occurrences of the Persian Wars topos in Athenian speeches suggest strongly that the Athenian expansion and the alarm it caused to friends and foes needed trustworthy and persuasive arguments. Athens' conduct during the Persian Wars offered ample opportunities for powerful argumentation which with proper manipulation could win over her suspicious friends and distrusting enemies.

More specifically, at Sparta the Athenians, being very careful, moderate and restrained describe the two decisive battles, on account of which according to their interpretation they proclaim themselves saviours of Greece — at Marathon they alone fought for all the Hellenes against the Medes (1.73.4); against Xerxes they contributed three very useful elements: ships, Themistocles and daring readiness (1.74.1-2). This attitude is corroborated both by Thucydides in the Archaeology and the Pentecontaetia, and subsequently by Pericles, although the contributions at Marathon and Salamis are no longer distinct (1.144.4; 2.36). At Melos, however, the Athenians, being aggressive and displaying self-interest and brutality, characterize the Persian affairs as specious pretences and an unpersuasive theme. Their defensive pose implied at Sparta (and by Thucydides and Pericles as well) becomes now offensive, when they change the verb to καταλύσαντες, a change that also implies that Athens was the *only* saviour of Greece.

²² On the issues that this speech of Nicias raises and its affinities with the narratives in Herodotus and Aeschylus see: CONNOR (above note 7), pp. 198-209; D. LATEINER, *Nicias' Inadequate Encouragement (Thucydides 7.69.2)*, «CP», 80, 1985, pp. 201-13, and Y.Z. ΤΖΙΦΟΡΟΥΛΟΣ, *Η ρητορική των Περσικών πολέμων: η ερμηνεία της ιστορίας στις Ιστορίες του Θουκυδίδη*, forthcoming.

This new reasoning, apparent in Alcibiades' case, is ratified in Euphemos' speech (καθελόντες, καλλιεπούμεθα).

Euphemos' speech in book 6 stands as the counterpart of the Athenians' speech at Sparta in book 1. Both of these speeches, comprising the full argumentation on the topos, are delivered by persons about who, like the speakers at Melos, we know nothing, and in front of non-Athenians. For J. de Romilly this is an indication that Thucydides 'intends to express the very logos of the city';²³ for A.E. Raubitschek '[these two speeches] represent two different stages in the development of the claim of the Athenians to be entitled to rule'.²⁴ The anonymity of the speakers indicates that what they present is the undisputed, or the majority opinion of the demos at the time. This kind of unanimity apropos the topos may further explain the topos' absence from deliberations in Athens recorded by Thucydides. In other words, what the Athenians believe about the Persian Wars is not debatable, at least not for the time being. Even so, the possibility of the simultaneous existence at Athens of two variant and keen-sighted interpretations of the past (a 'hegemonic and counterhegemonic discourse' to borrow J. Ober's terms) should not be excluded, as Nicias' case well illustrates.²⁵ Whereas the envoys in book 1 and Euphemos in book 6 try to persuade foreign states that Athens is entitled to her empire, Nicias in book 7 addresses Athenians in a foreign land and proposes a different understanding of past events: the topos can be also used as a *paradeigma* for or against imitation.

More radical changes between the two speeches do take place: the distinction between Marathon and Salamis and the specific contributions of Athens in these two incidents are forgotten. The three useful elements, which caused the repulsion of Xerxes in book 1, now have been diminished into one, i.e. ships, which caused the overthrowing of Xerxes by the Athe-

²³ ROMILLY (above note 2), pp. 242-3.

²⁴ RAUBITSCHKEK (above note 12), p. 37.

²⁵ OBER (above note 12) pp. 102-26.

nians alone. Themistocles is absent,²⁶ and the daring readiness is changed into προθυμία ἀπροφάσιστος.²⁷ It is already observed that Alcibiades does not use any form of τόλμα. Euphemos uses the verb twice, but not in connection to Athens: first, when he accuses the Ionians that they did not have the courage (οὐκ ἐτόλμησαν) to revolt against the Medes (6.82.4); and secondly, and quite unexpectedly, when he boasts against the Syracusans that they have now the face (καὶ νῦν τολμῶσιν) to ask for help from the Camarinaeans against the Athenians (6.86.4).²⁸ Euphemos at Camarina, or rather Thucydides, willingly deprives Athens of her most decisive factors that laid down the foundation for her empire: her outstanding general and her daring, which now in Sicily begin to be attributives of the Syracusans and their 'Themistocles', i.e. Hermocrates.

So, the theme of the Persian Wars has been exploited at Sparta and Camarina for the same reason: ἀξιοί ἐσμεν ἄρχειν or εἰκότως ἄρχομεν, i.e. the justification of the Athenian empire. The speech of the Athenians at Sparta is in accord with, and approved by the Thucydidean narrative, because it is based on virtuous conduct and presented according to the Periclean idealism. The speech at Camarina, according to Raubitschek, based on power and presented in a realistic tone, stands side by side with the Melian Dialogue and Alcibiades' speeches. It is far removed from what Thucydides narrated in the Archaeology and the Pentecontaetia about the Athenian qualities during and after the Persian Wars.²⁹ What is very interesting, however, is that, when the topos appears again in the fourth century B.C., as Athens is stripped of the so much hated empire, it is em-

²⁶ ROMILLY (above note 2), p. 246.

²⁷ ROMILLY (above note 2), pp. 245-6 note 1.

²⁸ H.C. AVERY, *Themes in Thucydides' Account of the Sicilian Expedition*, «Hermes», 101, 1973, pp. 1-13; J.T. KIRBY, *Narrative Technique in Thucydides VI-VII*, «ClAnt», 2, 1983, pp. 183-211.

²⁹ ROMILLY (above note 2), p. 248; RAUBITSCHEK (above note 12), pp. 36-38. Whether Euphemos' speech represents the personal views of Thucydides about the zenith of a superpower, or Athen's actual condition in 416 B.C. and hereafter, cannot be answered definitely, but only subjectively and according to each one's prejudices or expectations from the Historian.

ployed by famous Athenians in front of Athenian audiences.³⁰ It is as if Athens has forgotten her glorious past achievements and her own rhetoric and propaganda and she needed to be reminded of them again. Moreover, it is now that the empire is gone that the aim of the topos shifts. Instead of being exploited for the empire's justification, as it was done in Thucydides with disastrous results, it is now used as a *paradeigma* for praising past achievements and blaming present misfortunes as Nicias did in book 7. In other words, as we will see later on in the speeches of the Corinthians and Hermocrates, the Athenians in the fourth century B.C. come full circle and follow the Thucydidean arguments on this topos, but shift its purpose: they now follow Nicias, the Corinthians and Hermocrates when they employ it as the perfect example to imitate, and not as proof to justify their empire.

Looking at the Athenian allies who use the Persian Wars topos as one of their arguments, it is self-evident that the same topos the Athenians exploited will now be expectedly changed according to the rhetorical canons of persuasion, i.e. it will serve the particular interests of the representative speaker. Athenian propaganda did not mention the Plataeans in the battle at Marathon, and overlooked completely Artemesium and Plataea, in order not to diminish their own contribution, and thus weaken the argument.

Ipsa jure, the Plataeans being besieged by the Lacedaemonians send envoys who, though allies of Athens, assert that Pausanias freed Greece from the Persians in the battle that took place in their land.³¹ On account of this and their virtue and readiness their land was declared sacred and independent (2.71.2-4). When, however, their existence is at stake during the trial, they call up more past deeds, in order to make an appeal to their judges, the Lacedaemonians. They mention in an

³⁰ See above note 3.

³¹ For the Plataean debate see: C.W. MACLEOD, *Thucydides' Plataean Debate*, «GRBS», 18, 1977, pp. 227-246; and MISSIOU (above note 15), pp. 130-9.

obscure way Marathon (3.54.4, 56.6),³² — how could they reject the Athenian propaganda for Marathon? — and inform that they participated ‘alone of the Boeotians’ in the battle at Artemisium (3.54.3-4) and in the battle at Thermopylae (3.56.5-6) — a notably deliberate falsehood of the sort of which the Athenians were responsible for Marathon. Their major contribution of course was at Plataea and this is stressed in all possible ways throughout the speech (3.54.3-4; 56.4-6; 57.1-3; 58.4-5). In one word, they were virtuous towards the Persians (54.3), and they had the will to be ‘daring’ (56.5).

The other ally of Athens who also refers to the Persian Wars is Mytilene.³³ The Mytilenaeans, however, are not so much concerned with the specific issue of who freed Greece, but rather with what happened to freedom in Greece immediately after the Persian defeat at Plataea: after the Spartan withdrawal from the Persian War the Athenians were supposed to lead the Greeks, not subjugate Greece, but liberate it from the Persians. Athens, however, using shamelessly as a pretence the Persian threat managed to subdue her allies, and continued to do so, even when the enmity of the Persians subsided (3.10.2-4).

Both the Plataean and Mytilenaeon accounts stand in the *History* as representative opinions of the Athenian allies. The exploitation of the Persian Wars theme has in each case its purpose: the Plataeans, having been accused of being pro-Athenian and facing danger from the Lacedaemonians, do not hesitate, and indeed try hard, to flatter them by concentrating on those events of the Persian Wars that they think will help their point. It is not a surprise that they had displayed Athenian qualities during that period, since it is expected from them, as Athenian allies, to be ὁμοίότροποι with Athens. Their desperate situation, however, as C.W. Macleod has convincingly pointed out,³⁴ is

³² GOMME, *HCT*, 2, 339, 342.

³³ For the Mytilenaeon debate see: C.W. MACLEOD, *Reason and Necessity: Thuc. 3.9-14, 37-48*, «JHS», 98, 1978, pp. 64-78; and MISSIOU (above note 15), pp. 126-30.

³⁴ MACLEOD (above note 33), pp. 64-78; *id.* (above note 31), pp. 227-246.

apparently like that of the Melians and the Mytilenaeans, and their propaganda, as compared to that of the Athenians, lacked not the art of persuasion, but a strong backing of power. The exception is the Mytilenaeans who expressing their resentment of and just complaints towards the Athenian empire, as other allies would do, succeed in persuading the Lacedaemonians.

Nevertheless, the disposition of these arguments about the Persian Wars topos highlights Thucydides' attitude: by showing a reluctance to repeat things, he registers the discourse of and counter-arguments to the topos. He reports through the eyes of each individual what he, as well as others, thought of the Persian Wars, and presumably what the respective propaganda of the cities was during the years following them. Interestingly enough, the Plataeans and the critical Mytilenaeans do not touch at all on the Athenian claims of what happened during the Persian Wars, and *ex silentio* give them credit for their past behaviour (as the Lacedaemonians do as well; see below). The Mytilenaeans' objection and disapproval arise from the events that followed the Persian Wars, specifically the establishment of the Athenian empire during the Pentecontaetia on false pretences.

The same principles for the topos' treatment by Thucydides, inferred above, continue for the enemies of Athens, namely the Lacedaemonians and their allies. The first Spartan who uses the topos is the Ephor Sthenelaidas,³⁵ who without admitting that Athens was the decisive factor, believes that (1.86.1):

If they behaved well against the Medes then, but ill towards us now, they deserve double punishment (διπλασίας ζημίας ἄξιοί εἰσιν) for having ceased to be good and for having become bad.

³⁵ For the Ephor's speech see: E.F. BLOEDOW, *The Speeches of Archidamus and Sthenelaidas at Sparta*, «Historia», 30, 1981, pp. 129-43; J.W. ALLISON, *Sthenelaidas' Speech: Thucydides 1.86*, «Hermes», 112, 1984, pp. 9-16, where she shows convincingly that the speech of the Ephor is a masterpiece of rhetoric and serves the purpose of Thucydides.

The same reasoning is employed later on twice by the Thebans, the Spartan allies whose speech stands in accord with the policies of the leader of the Peloponnesian League. Being accused by the Plataeans, they make a confession of their 'unwilling medism' and reverse the accusation by blaming the Plataeans in turn for their 'voluntary atticism' (3.63.1):

You have injured the Hellenes more than we, and are more deserving of condign punishment (ἀξιώτεροί ἐστε πάσης ζημίας);

and (3.67.2):

we would also prevent you (sc. Lacedaemonians) from being melted by hearing of their past virtues, if any such they had: these may be fairly appealed to by the victims of injustice, but only aggravate the guilt of the criminals (τοῖς δὲ αἰσχρόν τι δρῶσι διπλασίας ζημίας), since they offended against their better nature.

The words, syntax and meaning are strikingly similar. It may also be observed that the easiness, with which the Thebans borrow the accusation of Sthenelaidas and apply it to the Plataeans, might be an indication of how stable the Peloponnesian League is and how loyal its members — provided of course that the two parties shared common interests. Both the Lacedaemonians and the Thebans target their criticism on Athens' conduct after the Persian Wars, just as the Mytilenaeans do. Even so, the Thebans stand in sharp contrast to the Athenian allies, Plataea and Mytilene, who adopt a more or less independent and critical stance towards Athens and her propaganda. Within the fifty years interval between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars Athens underwent significant changes, which affected her allies as well: in this instance the result was the destruction of Plataea, and in the long run of Athens herself.

And yet, the Lacedaemonians, perhaps because of their natural aversion to *logoi*, are not so fond of the theme of the Persian Wars in their speeches. King Archidamos, the Spartan with the Periclean qualities, uses the topos, agreeing in a general sentence with the Plataean flatteries that Pausanias freed Hellas,

thus underlining the battle at Plataea (2.74.2).³⁶ Finally, at Syracuse, we are told by Thucydides that before the naval battle in the Great Harbour, Gylippos and the other generals encouraged their troops as follows (7.66.2): since they had already defeated the Athenian navy 'which made them (sc. the Athenians) masters everywhere' — implying thus the Athenian superiority at sea from Salamis on — they can do it again.

This laconic, indirect and poor exploitation of the topos in the Lacedaemonian and Theban speeches is not a marvel and without purpose after all, nor is it implying that at Sparta there was not any kind of propaganda about the Persian Wars. It is interesting that the Lacedaemonians tacitly and indirectly give due credit to the Athenian behaviour during the Persian Wars. They do not attempt to correct the Athenian omissions perhaps, as C.G. Starr has suggested,³⁷ because of Pausanias' indiscretions that overshadowed the victory at Plataea. More importantly, it is rather Thucydides' conviction that the Lacedaemonians are not forced by the circumstances to rely on past deeds, in order to prove and justify their hegemony, because they did not possess any in comparison with Athens, at least not yet. The Athenians are the ones who are in need of these arguments and not the Spartans.

This, however, is not the case in the speeches of the two outstanding Lacedaemonian allies, the Corinthians and the Syracusans: the former in words, the latter in both words and deeds were instrumental in winning the war for the Lacedaemonians. It is the Corinthians and Hermocrates that present the Lacedaemonian propaganda as the antipode to the Athenian interpretation of the events during and after the Persian Wars. Moreover, they manipulate the Athenian arguments employing the topos not as proof for justification, but as a *paradeigma* for imitation that eventually brings about Athens' own annihilation.

³⁶ For the Spartan speeches see: F.M. WASSERMANN, *The Speeches of King Archidamus in Thucydides*, «CJ», 48, 1953, pp. 193-200; Id., *The Voice of Sparta in Thucydides*, «CJ», 59, 1964, pp. 289-96; E.D. FRANCIS, *Brachylogia Laconica: Spartan Speeches in Thucydides*, «BICS», 38, 1991-93, pp. 198-212.

³⁷ STARR (above note 3), p. 330.

Addressing the Apella in the first Assembly of the Peloponnesian League, the Corinthians emphasize that the Athenian empire came into being after the Persian Wars due to Sparta's inactivity and responsibility (ἔασαντες αὐτούς 1.69.1). Moreover, by comparing for the first time the Persians and the Athenians, they draw the logical, albeit unheard of for the Athenians, conclusion that the Medes were defeated by their own mistakes (ἐπιστάμενοι καὶ τὸν βάρβαρον αὐτὸν περὶ αὐτῷ τὰ πλείω σφαλέντα); likewise, it is the Athenians' blunders if the Spartan allies have not been annihilated (1.69.5). Finally, the Corinthians advise Sparta that she must react and change her behaviour according to the new conditions (1.71.2-3), a suggestion that comes right after and alludes not only to the description of the Athenian qualities they have just outlined (παρὰ δόναμιν τολμηταί), but also to their next speech on the eve of the War.

In the conference of the Peloponnesian League at Sparta, when the decision was made to break the treaty (1.118.3), the Corinthians put forth the details of, and elaborate on what they have argued earlier. This second Corinthian speech is the only one of the conference reported by Thucydides on the eve of the War, very probably because the plan it proposes is the best war-conduct for Sparta, which would lead — and it actually did — to the ultimate and unmistakable destruction of Athens. The Corinthians' first concern is the navy, which they will have to acquire, because one Athenian defeat at sea will end the war; and for that they will also need naval training, in order to be in an equal position with Athens in ἐπιστήμη (1.121.4). The next step is first to avoid the three gravest failings: ἀξυνησία, μαλακία, ἀμέλεια (1.122.4), then to advance to the war, one way or another, 'with daring' (θαρσοῦντας 1.123.1), and to venture to protect themselves; otherwise, they will meet disaster (1.124.1) — a disgrace for descendants of forefathers who freed Greece (1.122.3). Surprisingly enough, the Corinthians' speeches in which they employ the Persian Wars topos indicate that at Sparta there was indeed a different understanding of who were the saviours of Greece. Moreover, the Corinthians propose a very clever and fascinating plan, known already from the defeat of Xerxes: to beat the Athenians on their own terms,

i.e. by furnishing ships and by emulating the Athenian qualities displayed from Salamis on, daring par excellence. The former of these was easier to be accomplished by the Spartans; but the latter, being impossible given Sparta's tradition, failed markedly.

And yet, Hermocrates had the advantage because the Syracusans were already *ὁμοίотροποι* to Athens (7.55.2; cf. also 8.96.5), a fact that proved his endeavours to convert the Syracusans into 'Athenians' totally successful. For this Hermocrates is put by Thucydides in an exceptional position in the *History*, as he is the only speaker from the opposite camp allowed to exploit extensively the Persian Wars topos with emphasis on the three decisive elements that caused Xerxes' defeat. At Syracuse in the debate about the rumours that an Athenian fleet is sailing towards Sicily, Hermocrates adopting the Corinthian suggestions compares the Athenian and Persian expeditions and reaches the same conclusions as the Corinthians did:

εἰ δέ τῳ καὶ πιστά, τὴν τόλμαν αὐτῶν καὶ δύναμιν μὴ ἐκπλαγῆ . . . οὐθ' ὅτι μεγάλῳ στόλῳ ἐπέρχονται, . . . (6.33.4). ὀλίγοι γὰρ δὴ στόλοι μεγάλοι ἢ Ἑλλήνων ἢ βαρβάρων πολὺ ἀπὸ τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀπάραντες κατώρθωσαν. (33.5). ὅπερ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι αὐτοὶ οὗτοι, τοῦ Μήδου παρὰ λόγον πολλὰ σφαλέντος, ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι ὡς ἐπ' Ἀθήνας ἦει ηὐξήθησαν, καὶ ἡμῖν οὐκ ἀνέλπιστον τὸ τοιοῦτο ξυμβῆναι (33.6). θαρσοῦντες οὖν τὰ τε αὐτοῦ παρασκευαζώμεθα . . . (34.1) . . . εἰ δ' ἴδοιεν παρὰ γνώμην τολμήσαντας, τῷ ἀδοκῆτῳ μᾶλλον ἂν καταπλαγεῖεν ἢ τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς δυνάμει. πείθεσε οὖν μάλιστα μὲν ταῦτα τολμήσαντες, . . . (34.8-9).

In the same tone, after the first unsuccessful encounter with the Athenians, Hermocrates is urging the Syracusan Assembly for daring (*ἐθάρσυνε* 6.72.2) and suggests in *oratio obliqua* that: they should find more troops and train them; moreover, they should add discipline in the field, since they do not lack bravery; thus their courage would become greater (*θαρσαλευτέραν*) by the confidence that skill inspires (72.4). This reality was a commonly accepted deficiency of the Syracusans before the battle: Nicias in his address to the troops asserted that the Siceliot in general will not be able to sustain the Athenian force *διὰ τὸ τὴν ἐπιστήμην τῆς τόλμης ἥσσω ἔχειν* (6.68.2); and

Thucydides understood the result of the Syracusan defeat likewise (6.69.1):

οὐ γὰρ δὴ προθυμία ἐλλειπεῖς ἦσαν οὐδὲ τόλμη οὔτ' ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ μάχῃ οὔτ' ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις, ἀλλὰ τῇ μὲν ἀνδρεία οὐχ ἦσσαν ἐς ὅσον ἢ ἐπιστήμη ἀντέχοι, τῷ δὲ ἐλλείποντι αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν βούλησιν ἄκοντες προυδίδοσαν.

At Camarina, however, the willingness of Euphemos to point out that the Syracusans display daring allows Hermocrates to touch upon the theme of the Athenian empire, and in an anti-Athenian tone to present a different explanation concerning Athen's expansion:

ἡγεμόνες γὰρ γενόμενοι ἐκόντων τῶν τε Ἰώνων καὶ ὅσοι ἀπὸ σφῶν ἦσαν ξύμμαχοι ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ Μήδου τιμωρία, . . . κατεστρέψαντο. καὶ οὐ περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἄρα οὔτε οὔτοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων, οὔθ' οἱ Ἕλληνας τῆς ἑαυτῶν τῷ Μήδῳ ἀντέστησαν, περὶ δὲ οἱ μὲν σφίσιν ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐκείνῳ καταδουλώσεως, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ δεσπότητος μεταβολῇ οὐκ ἀξυνετώτερου, κακοξυνετώτερου δὲ (6.76.3-4) . . . ἔχοντες παραδείγματα τῶν τ' ἐκεῖ Ἑλλήνων ὡς ἐδουλώθησαν οὐκ ἀμύνοντες σφίσιν αὐτοῖς, . . . (77.1).

The final exploitation of the topos by Hermocrates comes in an indirect speech at a decisive moment just before the naval battle in the Great Harbour. Gylippos has just encouraged the Syracusans to man as many ships as possible (7.21.2), and Hermocrates agreeing with him completes his parallelism of the Persian to the Sicilian expeditions in his attempt to persuade the Syracusans to attack the Athenians at sea (7.21.3):

οὐδ' ἐκείνους [sc. Athenians] πάτριον τὴν ἐμπειρίαν οὐδ' αἰδίων τῆς θαλάσσης ἔχειν, ἀλλ' ἡπειρώτας μᾶλλον τῶν Συρακοσίων ὄντας καὶ ἀναγκασθέντας ὑπὸ Μήδων ναυτικούς γενέσθαι,

while he constantly urges them to display dash and daring (τολμηρούς, ἀντιτολμῶντας, θράσει, τῷ τολμῆσαι ἀπροσδοκῆτως 7.21.3-4).³⁸

³⁸ ROMILLY (above note 2), pp. 242-250; V.J. HUNTER, *The Artful Repor-*

So far, Hermocrates throughout his speeches exploit deliberately as the perfect *paradeigma* the Persian Wars topos, in order to accomplish his purpose. To no surprise he employs the same three decisive factors that caused not only Xerxes' defeat, but the emergence of the Athenian empire as well: πλεῖστον ναυτικόν, προθυμία τολμηροτάτη and ἀνὴρ στρατηγὸς ξυνετώτατος. Admittedly, the furnishing of ships was the easiest part, since Syracuse already possessed a fleet (in 6.20.3 Nicias reports that especially Syracuse and Selinous are παρεσκευσμένοι τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοιοτρόπως μάλιστα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ δυνάμει). The problem for Hermocrates was the second part, namely to persuade his fellow-citizens to fight the Athenians at sea, a problem which Themistocles had already faced successfully by means of his trick (1.74.1 and Hdt. 8.74-75). Successful too was Hermocrates' endeavour as he gradually converted his audience into 'Athenians': in the beginning (6.34.8-9) he mentions twice τόλμα as a required trait for his bold plan; and, although we are told by Thucydides that the Syracusans display τόλμα in their first encounter with the Athenians (6.69.1), nevertheless, Hermocrates does not use this word in his speech right after this battle. For him it is lack of science, experience and training that defeated them (6.72). Moreover, at Camarina surprisingly enough Euphemus applies the Athenian characteristic of dash and daring to the Syracusans. And in a remarkable way the same word reappears four times later on in Hermocrates' speech (τολμηρούς, ἀντιτολμῶντας, θράσει, τῷ τολμῆσαι ἀπροσδοκῆτως 7.21.3-4). At this crucial moment the Syracusan general, 'remembering' the Corinthian words that one defeat at sea will end the war (1.121.4), urges for greater daring which will outdo and defeat the Athenians.

The culmination of the parallels Thucydides drew between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars center on the third and most important factor: the intelligent general. In Euphemus' speech Themistocles is absent, and his absence from the topos is

ter (Toronto, 1973), 149-74; AVERY (above note 28), pp. 6-8; HUNTER (above note 9), pp. 289-90; CONNOR (above note 6), pp. 189-98.

not only an indication of the lack of leadership in Athens,³⁹ but a hint at the presence of a 'new Themistocles', as W.R. Connor has argued convincingly, Euphemos' counter-speaker Hermocrates.⁴⁰ It is his presence that forces Euphemos not only to discard Athenian daring from the *topos* and attribute it to the Syracusans, but also to eliminate Themistocles, the most important factor for Xerxes' defeat. Yet, the parallel between the two generals exists and is brought into the fore by Thucydides himself 'at the decisive moment, when he [sc. Hermocrates] is about ... to become responsible for the defence of Syracuse' (6.72.2):⁴¹

Ἑρμοκράτης ὁ Ἑρμωνος, ἀνὴρ καὶ ἐς τὰλλα ζύνεσιν οὐδενὸς λειπόμενος καὶ κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἐμπειρία τε ἰκανὸς γενόμενος καὶ ἀνδρεία ἐπιφανής.

This extraordinary characterization, reserved by Thucydides for very few individuals, is not totally supported by the actual career of Hermocrates.⁴² Frequently Thucydides forces his reader to assume *ex silentio* that Hermocrates' contributions either military or political were important. Hermocrates' speeches, however, had no significant effect on the course of events, although they did predict it.⁴³ For in the Assembly he seldom was able to persuade his fellow citizens. Once, however,

³⁹ ROMILLY (above note 2), p. 246.

⁴⁰ CONNOR (above note 6) p. 198; J.W. ALLISON, *Power and preparedness in Thucydides*, («AJP» Monographs in Classical Philology, 5, Baltimore and London, 1989), pp. 116-120.

⁴¹ G.T. GRIFFITH, *Some Habits of Thucydides When Introducing Persons*, «PCPhS», 187, 1961, p. 31. Presumably Hermocrates is one of the στρατηγοὶ αὐτοκράτορες to be appointed at Syracuse (6.72.5 f.).

⁴² GOMMEL (above note 11), pp. 74-78; HUNTER (above note 33), pp. 149-174; H.D. WESTLAKE, *Hermocrates the Syracusan*, in: *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History* (New York, 1969), pp. 174-202; F.T. HINRICHS, *Hermocrates bei Thukydides*, «Hermes», 109, 1981, pp. 46-59; CONNOR (above note 6), pp. 197-8; ALLISON (above note 40), pp.116-120.

⁴³ For the relation of the speeches and the subsequent events see in particular: H.-P. STAHL, *Speeches and Course of Events in Books Six and Seven of Thucydides*, in: P. STADTER, ed., *The Speeches in Thucydides* (Chapel Hill, 1973), pp. 60-77.

Thucydides had drawn the parallels between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars, it was natural and necessary for him to attribute Themistoclean qualities to Hermocrates, since only such a general would be able to accomplish what nobody at Athens could ever believe possible when they voted for the expedition.⁴⁴

The way in which the Corinthians and Hermocrates exploit the Persian Wars topos is indeed the exception to the rule. The Athenians and their allies offer arguments of the topos that in reality prove almost always fruitless. The Athenian hegemonic discourse is persuasive only temporarily at Sparta. Subsequently, it is forced upon friends and foes aggressively, but to no avail. Only Nicias realizes the full potential of the topos in book 7, but by that time it is too late. Likewise, the Plataeans and the Mytilenaeans do all they can to persuade, but in their case their being successful has a limited range, as they do not possess power. The Lacedaemonians and their allies are not as effective as the Athenians are inarticulating their position in both words and deeds. In addition to their being rather disinterested in the topos, their main competence rests almost exclusively on deeds. Their discourse is presented by the exceptional Corinthians and Hermocrates: the former more in words, the latter in both words and deeds win the agon at the level of discourse for the Lacedaemonians. The Corinthians and Hermocrates are the only ones that manipulate the Athenian arguments in such a way that results in Athens' defeat on all fronts: her propaganda, or the *logos* she so forcefully promoted became a boomerang in the Corinthians' and Hermocrates' hands and led to a disaster in the battlefield, even if only temporarily. Athens' exploitation of the topos failed markedly, because it was misguided towards the wrong ends: a theme for the justification of the empire and not a *paradeigma*, in her case *not* to imitate. Her resilience, however, proved remarkable during the Peloponnesian War. With the envy-causing empire gone the

⁴⁴ J.R. ELLIS, *Characters in the Sicilian Expedition*, «QS», 10, 1979, p. 41.

Persian Wars topos appears again in the fourth century B.C., only this time the eponymous Athenian speakers present the topos as a *paradeigma* to imitate in front of Athenian audiences. 'Mindful' as it were of Nicias' last speech and of the topos' remarkable results at the hands of the Corinthians and Hermocrates, they follow and develop further the arguments that Thucydides presented in his *History*.⁴⁵

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