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Thucydides 1, 19

By Richard I. Winton, Sheffield

καὶ οἱ μὲν Λακεδαιμόνιοι οὐχ ὑποτελεῖς ἔχοντες φόρου τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἡγοῦντο, κατ' ὀλιγαρχίαν δὲ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς μόνον ἐπιτηδεῖως ὅπως πολιτεύσουσι θεραπεύοντες, Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ ναῦς τε τῶν πόλεων τῷ χρόνῳ παραλαβόντες πλὴν Χίων καὶ Λεσβίων, καὶ χρήματα τοῖς πᾶσι τάξαντες φέρειν. καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς ἐς τόνδε τὸν πόλεμον ἡ ἰδία παρασκευὴ μείζων ἢ ὥς τὰ κράτιστά ποτε μετὰ ἀκραιφνοῦς τῆς ξυμμαχίας ἦνθησαν.

The final sentence of this passage presents two main problems: first, does αὐτοῖς refer to both the Athenians and the Spartans, or to the Athenians alone? Secondly, what alliance is Thucydides referring to?

It has been argued that since this statement concerning military preparedness in 431 concludes Thucydides' analysis of Greek history prior to the Peloponnesian War, which begins with the assertion that in 431 the Athenians and the Peloponnesians were both at the height of military preparedness, αὐτοῖς should refer to both the Athenians and the Spartans¹. But Thucydides has already returned to his opening comment on the military preparedness of both sides, at 18, 3: ὥστε ἀπὸ τῶν Μηδικῶν ἐς τόνδε αἰεὶ τὸν πόλεμον τὰ μὲν σπενδόμενοι, τὰ δὲ πολεμοῦντες ἢ ἀλλήλοις ἢ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν ξυμμάχοις ἀφισταμένοις εὖ παρεσκευάσαντο τὰ πολέμια καὶ ἐμπειρότεροι ἐγένοντο μετὰ κινδύνων τὰς μελέτας ποιούμενοι. He may be adding to this statement in the final sentence of 1, 19; but it seems an exaggeration to say that he must be, and the preceding sentence seems to me to suggest that he is not. This sentence contrasts Sparta's and Athens' conduct towards their allies: the Spartans did not impose tribute, and were concerned only to maintain the oligarchic status quo; the Athenians, on the other hand, in time took over the naval forces of, and imposed tribute on, all but two of their allies. Now the sentence that follows, whatever its precise force, clearly concerns an increase of power; given the negative tone of what Thucydides has just said about the Spartans, one does not expect to be told of an increase in Spartan power. Moreover, if nonetheless Thucydides was referring to both the Spartans and the Athenians, he could have easily made this quite clear by writing ἀμφοτέροις or ἑκατέροις instead of αὐτοῖς².

1 So e.g. Albert Delachaux, *Notes critiques sur Thucydide (Livre I)* (Neuchâtel 1925) 30.

2 Cp. Delachaux, *Notes* 29; Gomme, *Commentary* I 134.

However, let us suppose that Thucydides does in fact have both the Spartans and the Athenians in mind here; what point is he making? The *ξυμμαχία* will be the Hellenic League³, and *ἀκραϊφνοῦς* will refer to the period of the Persian War (i.e. before the Hellenic League was weakened by dissension between Athens and Sparta)⁴. One notes however that in his account of the Persian War and its aftermath (18, 2ff.) Thucydides has strikingly not used the term *ξυμμαχία* or its cognates in speaking of the Hellenic League; he does use the word *ξύμμαχος*, but of the two groups of states led by Athens and Sparta that emerged after the Greek victory over Persia⁵. But this is of course not a conclusive argument against the view that *ξυμμαχία* refers to the Hellenic League; let us suppose that we have here simply an instance of Thucydidean *variatio*⁶. What then is he saying? The adjective *ἰδία* in the phrase *ἡ ἰδία παρασκευή*, together with the phrase *μετὰ ἀκραϊφνοῦς τῆς ξυμμαχίας*, suggests that he is comparing individual and combined forces; what forces are these? On one widely-accepted view, Thucydides is saying that the individual forces of Athens and Sparta in 431 were both greater than the sum of their forces when they were allies during the Persian War⁷. Those who adopt this view do not always make clear precisely what comparison they understand Thucydides to be making. If one takes the phrase *ἡ ἰδία παρασκευή* to refer to the forces of Sparta and Athens alone, the statement is absurd: in 431 Sparta had no naval forces of her own⁸, and her army, whatever its precise size, quite certainly numbered far fewer than 13,000 (the total of the Spartan and Athenian contingents at Plataea)⁹. But there would of course be little point in considering the forces of Sparta by herself; her strength, for purposes of war against Athens, lay in

3 L. Herbst, Rh. Mus. 38 (1879) 535 n. 3 takes αὐτοῖς to refer to both the Athenians and the Spartans, and τῆς ξυμμαχίας to both the Delian and Peloponnesian Leagues. Pointing out that in the preceding passage Thucydides has spoken of the Spartans' and Athenians' treatment of their respective allies, Herbst comments: "... beide sich jetzt, ein jeder auf seine weise mit kränkung seiner bisherigen bundesgenossen, so zu sagen eine eigne hausmacht beschafft haben. Diese hausmacht des einzelnen jetzt ist grösser als die grösste macht, die der einzelne je früher in verbindung mit seiner noch ungeschädigten bundesgenossenschaft besessen hatte." But in what sense was this true of Sparta?

4 Athens did not renounce her alliance with Sparta until after Sparta's insult to her at Ithome (1, 102, 4).

5 As e.g. Jowett and Forbes observe.

6 Cp. τοὺς ξυμμάχους / τῶν πόλεων in the preceding sentence (so also e.g. at 1, 96, 1).

7 So Crawley, Croiset, Maddalena, ad loc.; N. G. L. Hammond, Cl. Quart. n.s. 2 (1952) 133; John R. Grant, Phoenix 28 (1974) 85.

8 At least we hear of none.

9 According to Herodotus (9, 28, 2, 6), 5000 Spartiates and 8000 Athenians fought at Plataea; if one includes the 5000 *perioeci* (9, 28, 2) in the calculation, the disparity obviously becomes far greater. On the vexed question of the size of the Spartan army during the Peloponnesian War, see Gomme and Andrewes ad Thuc. 5, 68, 3; W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950–192 B.C.* (London 1968) 131ff.; J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1970) 225ff.

her position as leader of the Peloponnesian League. Is then the phrase ἡ ἰδία παρασκευή in the case of Sparta to be taken to refer to the forces of the Peloponnesian League? If so, what are these being compared with? Presumably, with the entire forces of the Hellenic League, since it is not clear why Thucydides should compare the forces of the entire Peloponnesian League in 431 with the combined forces of Sparta and Athens alone in the Persian War¹⁰. But again, the statement becomes absurd: the Peloponnesian navy in 431 will have been roughly half the size of the Athenian navy alone in 480¹¹.

Recognising these difficulties, Gomme (ad loc.) took Thucydides to be saying no more than that in 431 the Spartans and the Athenians were both “wealthier and better equipped than in the Persian wars when they were allies”. But what then is the point of ἰδία? And, given ἰδία, is it likely that μετά is purely temporal, as on this interpretation it must be?¹²

An alternative view accepts that τῆς ξυμμαχίας refers to the Hellenic League, but takes αὐτοῖς to refer to the Athenians alone: Thucydides is saying that the individual power of Athens in 431 “exceeded that of Athens and Sparta together when their alliance at the time of the Persian Wars was at its height”¹³. As regards naval forces, this is of course true, though – since Sparta’s naval contribution during the Persian War was minimal – hardly very remarkable¹⁴; as regards hoplites, it is true only if one includes those reserved for garrison duty within Attica¹⁵. And why, one wonders, should Thucydides choose to compare

10 It is not absolutely clear which of these alternatives represents Grote’s view: he writes that at the end of 1, 19 Thucydides “states the striking fact, that the military force put forth separately by Athens and her allies on the one side, and by Sparta and her allies on the other, during the Peloponnesian war, were each of them greater than the entire force which had been employed by both together against the Persian invaders” (George Grote, *A History of Greece*, London 1888, IV 351 n. 1). I suppose that the phrase ‘by both together’ means ‘by both Sparta and Athens, with the other allies’ rather than ‘by both Sparta and Athens alone’. – Grote takes ἐξ τόνδε τὸν πόλεμον to mean ‘during the Peloponnesian war’; but Thucydides is surely here referring to resources available at the *beginning* of the war.

11 The Peloponnesian fleet in 431 cannot have comprised significantly more than 100 triremes: see Gomme ad 2, 7, 3. In 480 the Athenians had 200 triremes: Hdt. 7, 1, 1–2; 14, 1 (cp. 44, 1; 46, 2).

12 Gomme offers no comment on his understanding of the term παρασκευή here; but, as far as Spartan wealth is concerned, Thucydides’ immediately preceding statement that the Spartans did not receive φόρος from their allies, and Archidamus’ gloomy statement at 1, 80, 4, do not suggest that Sparta’s finances in 431 were particularly promising; and Sparta was certainly not ‘better equipped’ in 431 in terms of hoplite numbers than she had been during the Persian War (see n. 9 above).

13 Adam Parry, *Yale Classical Studies* 22 (1972) 55. This is the interpretation Jowett adopts in his translation; he discusses other interpretations in his note ad loc.

14 The Athenian fleet numbered 200 in 480 (see n. 11 above); the Spartans provided ten ships at Artemisium (Hdt. 8, 1, 2) and sixteen at Salamis (Hdt. 8, 43). In 431 the Athenians had 300 triremes (Thuc. 2, 13, 8).

15 The combined Spartan and Athenian contingents at Plataea numbered 13,000, or 18,000 if one

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BODMER XXIX

Vision de Dorotheos



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PAPYRUS BODMER XXIX – VISION DE DOROTHÉOS

Edité avec une introduction, une traduction et des notes par André Hurst, Olivier Reverdin, Jean Rudhardt. En appendice: Description et datation du *Codex des Visions* par Rodolphe Kasser et Guglielmo Cavallo.

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Avec le volume XXIX, la publication des Papyrus Bodmer sous forme de livre reprend.

La *Vision de Dorotheos* est le premier des textes contenus dans le *Codex des Visions* de la Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, un manuscrit sur papyrus datant de la fin du IV^e siècle ou du début du V^e siècle de notre ère.

C'est un poème mystérieux à plus d'un titre qui revient à la lumière du jour grâce à ce nouveau papyrus; il se présente comme la confession d'un narrateur, Dorotheos: au cours d'une étrange vision, ce dernier commet une faute, subit un châtement qui fait songer au martyr et reçoit le baptême avant de se voir confier une mission. Le texte est rédigé en hexamètres homériques souvent repris textuellement de l'épopée; son étendue est celle d'un bref chant épique: 343 vers plus ou moins mutilés auxquels s'ajoutaient quelques vers perdus au bas des feuillets.

Les éditeurs, tous trois professeurs à l'Université de Genève, ont joint au texte qu'ils ont établi une traduction, un bref commentaire ainsi qu'une introduction où se trouvent abordées en particulier les questions de la composition du texte, de sa langue, de sa métrique, de sa théologie implicite, du problème que pose l'attribution à un poète qui se dit «Dorotheos fils de Quintus poète».

En appendice, les professeurs Rodolphe Kasser (Genève) et Guglielmo Cavallo (Rome) donnent une description de l'ensemble du *Codex des Visions*.

Ce témoin nouveau du christianisme à ses débuts, d'un christianisme imbu de culture hellénique, ne devrait pas manquer de soulever bien des questions.

Athens' forces in 431 with the combined forces only of Athens and Sparta during the Persian War? The alternative – that he is comparing the total forces available to Athens in 431 with the total forces of the Hellenic League during the Persian War – seems implausible: while Athens' total naval forces in 431 may well have been somewhat larger than had been those of the Hellenic League¹⁶, her total hoplite forces are likely to have been considerably smaller¹⁷.

Does the sentence yield a more satisfactory meaning if τῆς ξυμμαχίας is taken to refer to the Delian League, and αὐτοῖς to the Athenians alone?¹⁸ It seems to me that it does. On this interpretation, Thucydides is comparing Athens' ἴδια παρασκευή in 431 with the combined forces of the Delian League when it was ἀκραϊφνής. What precisely is he saying?

Thucydides uses the word παρασκευή as a general term for military resources, of whatever kind¹⁹; he also uses it in a narrower sense, to refer to particular forces, deployed²⁰ or available²¹. I suggest that in 1, 19 παρασκευή denotes, not Athens' military resources in general, but specifically her navy. In 18, 2 Thucydides has identified Athens as a naval power (ναυτικοὶ ἐγένοντο, and ἰσχυρον ... οἱ δὲ ναυσίν); and in the opening sentence of 1, 19 he has said that the Athenians had gradually taken over the naval forces of, and imposed tribute on, all their allies except the Chians and Lesbians. I suggest that he now goes on to say that in 431 Athens' individual force (of triremes) – i.e. excluding the Chian and Lesbian forces²² – was larger than the largest combined force that had been available to her during the period before the Delian League began to lose its original character²³.

includes the *perioeci* (see n. 9 above); in 431 Athens had a field-army of 13,000 and a garrison-force of 16,000 (Thuc. 2, 13, 6–7; cp. Gomme ad loc., and A. H. M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy*, Oxford 1957, 161ff.).

16 Herodotus (8, 48) reports that the Greek fleet at Salamis totalled 378 ships; the figure generally accepted is 300 (see How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus* II 363f.). In 431 Athens had 300 triremes of her own (Thuc. 2, 13, 8); the Chians and Lesbians were obliged to contribute contingents totalling perhaps 50 ships (see Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte* III 2, 869f.). At 2, 9, 5 Thucydides includes the Corcyreans among Athens' allies in 431, but it seems unlikely that he is taking Corcyra's navy into account in our passage.

17 According to Herodotus (9, 29, 1), the Greek army at Plataea numbered 38,700 hoplites. In 431 Athens herself had a total force of 29,000 hoplites (see n. 15 above), and, while some allies contributed hoplites (cp. Thuc. 2, 9, 5), these allied contingents are unlikely to have increased the total number of hoplites available to her to any very significant extent (cp. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte* III 2, 890).

18 So, e.g. Steup, Stahl, and Forbes, among the commentators; this is the interpretation adopted in the Budé, Loeb, and Penguin translations.

19 E.g. 1, 1, 1; 25, 4; 2, 100, 2; 3, 45, 1; 6, 37, 1. Cp. June W. Allison, *Hermes* 109 (1981) 118ff.

20 E.g. 2, 11, 1; 6, 31, 1; 44, 1; 7, 12, 1.

21 E.g. 2, 62, 2 τῇ ὑπαρχούσῃ παρασκευῇ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ; 3, 39, 2 τριήρων παρασκευῇ.

22 Which were not insignificant: see Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte* III 2, 869 n. 1.

23 It might be suggested that the term παρασκευή does here have a limited force, but that αὐτοῖς nonetheless refers to both the Athenians and the Spartans, and τῆς ξυμμαχίας to the Hellenic

Is this historically plausible? In 431 the Athenians had a navy of 300 triremes²⁴. We do not know for certain how big the Delian League fleet was at its height; but the largest fleets we hear of in Thucydides numbered 200²⁵, and though Diodorus reports that Cimon had a fleet numbering over 300 in the Eurymedon campaign²⁶, and Plutarch, perhaps, a fleet numbering 300²⁷, “the benefit of the doubt should go to Thucydides: 200 ships may be accepted as the largest League fleet commanded by Athens”²⁸.

As Forbes noted, “the words τὰ κράτιστά ποτε look as if Thucydides was stating a kind of paradox”²⁹; on this interpretation, the paradox is clear: it is surely remarkable that Athens’ own navy in 431 was larger than any force at her disposal when her own fleet was combined with naval contingents from a considerable number of her allies³⁰.

League: at the end of 18, 2 Thucydides has said that after the Persian War the Greeks split into two groups, led by the two strongest powers, Athens and Sparta, the former dominant at sea, the latter on land; at the end of 1, 19, he is saying that the *distinctive* forces of the two states in 431 – the naval forces available to Athens, and the hoplite forces available to Sparta – were both larger than the largest forces of the same type available to the Hellenic League. This is historically quite plausible: for Athens’ naval resources in 431, and those of the Hellenic League, see n. 16 above; according to Herodotus (9, 29, 1), the Hellenic League had 38,700 hoplites at Plataea, and Plutarch, *Pericles* 33, 4 (perhaps following Androton: cp. FGrHist 324 F 39, with Jacoby’s note) gives 60,000 as the total number of Peloponnesian and Boeotian hoplites involved in the invasion of Attica in 431 (Thucydides gives no figure, but has Archidamus assert (2, 11, 1) that no larger force had ever been fielded by the Peloponnesians and their allies). Linguistically, however, this seems an implausible way of taking the sentence: as already noted, αὐτοῖς is more naturally taken to refer to the Athenians alone, and Thucydides’ usage in the preceding passage suggests that τῆς ξυμμαχίας does not refer to the Hellenic League; more importantly, the phrase ἡ ἰδία παρασκευὴ is not very easily taken in this sense – if this were Thucydides’ point, one would have expected him to have expressed it more clearly.

24 Thuc. 2, 13, 8; cp. David Blackman, *Gr. Rom. Byz. St.* 10 (1969) 212f.

25 2, 104, 2; 112, 2.

26 11, 60, 3ff. Diodorus’ figure for the size of Cimon’s fleet at the actual naval battle is 250 ships (11, 60, 6; cp. FGrHist 70 F 191, fragments 9. 10. 53).

27 *Cimon* 12, 2: the manuscripts vary between 200 and 300.

28 Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford 1972) 77. Blackman, *Gr. Rom. Byz. St.* 10 (1969) 185 suggests that “a maximum figure of 200 ships seems reasonable” as a conjecture for “the total initial assessment of the ship-contributing states”, with Athens herself contributing perhaps 150 ships; N. G. L. Hammond, *Studies in Greek History* (Oxford 1973) 334 estimates “a total fleet of 300 triremes”, of which Athens contributed half. On the interpretation proposed, both these estimates are revealed as too high.

29 Appendix, ad loc.

30 Forbes, who in his main note ad loc. takes Thucydides’ point to be that “Athens in fact was stronger as the head of an empire, than she had ever been as leader of a confederacy”, comments in his subsidiary note that Thucydides seems to be referring to “a time when the power of Athens might reasonably be supposed to have been greater than it was just before the Peloponnesian War. Whereas it is not at all surprising that Athens was stronger after the reduction of her independent allies than before”. Similarly Gomme, ad loc.: “it is too obvious to need statement that Athens’ individual power was stronger when the other members of the League were her subjects than when they were free allies.” If one takes παρασκευὴ to refer specifically to Athens’ naval power, these objections seem to me to lose their force.

Some linguistic comments on the interpretation proposed.

(i) The adjective ἴδιος denotes individuality³¹; here, Thucydides is concerned with Athens' own navy as one element of her entire naval resources.

(ii) The adverb ποτε introduces a note of imprecision, which on this interpretation is easily understood. Thucydides is referring to some point during the period between the formation of the Delian League and the subjugation of Naxos.

(iii) I take ξυμμαχία here to have the sense 'allies', rather than 'alliance', a usage found elsewhere in Thucydides³².

(iv) The preposition μετά has the force 'together with', 'by aid of', as e.g. in 18, 3: ἐπολέμησαν μετὰ τῶν ξυμμάχων πρὸς ἀλλήλους.

(v) The adjective ἀκραιφνής occurs only here and at 1, 52, 2 in classical prose. In the latter passage it is used of ships coming fresh from Athens to reinforce the Athenian fleet at Sybota; here I take the phrase μετὰ ἀκραιφνοῦς τῆς ξυμμαχίας to mean 'together with their allies in their original condition'³³.

A final point: one may note that a statement on the strength of Athens' navy in 431 forms a fitting conclusion to Thucydides' analysis of Greek history before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, in which the development of specifically naval power is a central theme (note in particular Chapters 13–14)³⁴.

31 Contrast the different nuance in the phrases τὴν παρασκευὴν ... οἰκείαν (3, 45, 2) and τῆς ... οἰκείας παρασκευῆς (5, 109): in these passages, the point is that the forces belong to the states concerned; in our passage, the point is that the force is separate from other forces.

32 E.g. 1, 118, 2; 119; 130, 2.

33 Arnold takes Thucydides to be referring to "the period a little before the conclusion of the thirty years' treaty, when the Athenians were masters not only of the islands, and the Asiatic Greek colonies, but had also united to their confederacy Boeotia and Achaia on the continent of Greece itself" (he might have added Megara). However, as Forbes (Appendix) remarks, "these events are not present to the mind of the reader: there is nothing about them in the context, and Thucydides nowhere marks them as an epoch in the history of Athenian domination".

34 Thucydides' detailed interest in the origin and growth of trireme fleets strikingly contrasts with his total silence on the development of hoplite warfare in archaic Greece.