Thucydides' Corinthians: an examination of Corinth in Thucydides' account of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Thucydides’ presentation of the Corinthians in his account of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. It discusses how and where Thucydides manipulates his description of events in order to stress the impression of Corinthian belligerence as a cause of the war, and highlights how this presentation allows Thucydides to present Athenian actions in a positive light, by making them appear as reactions to Corinthian intransigence. This thesis also examines the background to the conflict and discusses how the Athenians can be seen as largely responsible for creating the tension between Athens and Corinth because of their desire for the natural resources of the west, which resulted in a policy aimed at controlling strategic locations along the Corinthian Gulf. Finally, the Corinthian navy is examined from two perspectives: Thucydides’ presentation of it in action; and what the reality of Corinthian naval strength was at the time of the war’s outbreak. This section discusses how the less professional nature of the Corinthian navy allowed Thucydides to exaggerate certain weaknesses in order to make the Athenian navy appear even more superior than it already was. Ultimately, this thesis shows how a closer and more critical examination of Thucydides’ presentation of Corinth helps us to understand better the complex background to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: The Corinthians’ Role in the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Corinth’s Relations with Athens through the Fifth Century</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: The Corinthian Navy</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps:</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Greece</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Isthmus Region</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Corinthian Gulf</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sicily and Italy</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td><em>Inscriptiones Graecae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEG</td>
<td><em>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLG</td>
<td><em>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) was fought between two alliances led by the “superpowers” of fifth century Greece: Athens and Sparta. According to the contemporary historian Thucydides, this war was the greatest disturbance in the history of the Hellenes, affecting more cities and more people than any previous conflict (1.1.1-2; 1.23.1-3). The cause of this great conflict is a complex question. Thucydides claims that the truest reason (ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν) for the war was the Athenians becoming powerful and the fear this inspired in the Spartans (1.23.6). Yet, Thucydides also set out to give a detailed account of the complaints and disputes (τὰς αἰτίας ... καὶ τὰς διαφορὰς) which led to the Spartans declaring war on Athens (1.23.5). The most prominent polis in his record of these complaints and disputes is Corinth.

The majority of scholars who discuss the causes of the Peloponnesian War tend to focus on whether Thucydides was right to attribute the Spartan fear of Athenian growth as the ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν of the war.¹ In doing so, many have questioned Thucydides’ presentation of events and discussed at great length the complaints and disputes which he does not describe in any detail, especially those of the Megarians and Aeginetans, in an attempt to explain why Thucydides presented the outbreak of the war in the way he has. While the role of the Corinthians is rarely ignored, it is often not given the attention it deserves, and Thucydides’ depiction of them as aggressive and warmongering is usually

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¹ Given the vast amount of literature on Thucydides and the causes of the Peloponnesian War I have decided not to include a literature review in this introduction. The views of the modern scholars will become apparent in the body of this thesis, especially in the footnotes.
followed by modern scholars. Few have paused to examine critically Thucydides’
negative presentation of the Corinthians. The purpose of this thesis is to examine whether,
and if so, how and where, Thucydides has deliberately manipulated his narrative in order
to emphasise the negative impression of the Corinthians. By doing so, it is hoped that a
more balanced interpretation of Corinthian actions in the events leading to the war can be
reached.

Chapter one will offer a detailed discussion of Corinthian actions in Thucydides’
account of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. The first section of this chapter will
discuss the Corinthian dispute with Corcyra, which Thucydides presents as the first αίτία
of the war. It will attempt to show that the Corinthians were not simply acting irrationally
in their dispute with Corcyra over Epidamnus, but that they had legitimate reasons for
becoming involved in the conflict. Moreover, it will point out that the Corcyraeans were
not free from blame in the affair. The attempted mediation by the Corcyraeans at Corinth
will be highlighted as an example of Thucydides attempting to portray the Corinthians as
excessively belligerent and responsible for the eventual involvement of the Athenians. The
debate between the Corinthians and Corcyraeans at Athens will also be discussed, in order
to show how the Corinthians attempted to warn the Athenians that an alliance with
Corcyra would be a breach of the “spirit” of the Thirty Years Peace, and could lead to war.
This section will then move on to describe how Thucydides presents the Corinthians as
responsible for the collision between the Peloponnesian and Athenian ships at the battle of

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2 Even Badian (1993) 125-62, who advanced the thesis that Thucydides deliberately misrepresented
the Spartans in his account of the war’s outbreak, did not seem to consider the possibility that the
Corinthians may also have suffered similar misrepresentation.

3 Salmon (1984) 281-305 is one scholar who has examined the Corinthian actions in some detail.
However, in a book devoted to looking at the history of Corinth, he takes a surprisingly Atheno-centric view
of the causes of the war.
Sybota. Particular attention will be placed on Thucydides’ description of the aftermath of the battle, and how he manages to deflect attention from Athenian aggressiveness by creating drama to his narrative and through focusing his account on the actions of the Corinthians.

The second section of chapter one will discuss Thucydides’ description of the Potidaean revolt. It will focus on how Thucydides cleverly turns Corinthian anger over the Athenian involvement at Sybota into a motivating factor for the Potidaeans to revolt. This section will also note that the Athenians were acting more aggressively in the north Aegean prior to the war than what Thucydides’ narrative would imply. The final section of this chapter will discuss how Thucydides treats the Corinthians as the catalyst for the eventual involvement of the Spartans in the escalating conflict, thereby sealing the impression of Corinthian responsibility for the war.

Chapter two will examine the relationship between the Corinthians and Athenians through the fifth century. This is essential to the discussion because it shows how the Athenians can be seen as largely responsible for creating the tension between Corinth and Athens prior to the war. In particular, this chapter will discuss whether the growing Athenian interest in the natural resources of Sicily and Italy played a significant role in bringing the two poleis into conflict. It will also examine the possibility that the Athenians were highly motivated in securing key strategic locations along the Corinthian Gulf during the fifth century, as a result of their interest in the resources of the west. This chapter will then discuss the Megarian decree in order to highlight how the Athenians used economic pressure on Megara in an attempt to force them to rejoin their empire, which would give the Athenians access to both sides of the Isthmus. Finally, this chapter will briefly examine the archaeological evidence from Corinth to see if the Athenians were placing economic pressure on the Corinthians like they were on the Megarians.
The third and final chapter will focus on the Corinthian navy, since Thucydides places great importance on naval matters in his narrative of the war’s outbreak. Moreover, it seems to be another area where Thucydides shapes his narrative to misrepresent the Corinthians. The first section of this chapter will explore Thucydides’ presentation of the Corinthian navy in action. Three naval battles in the Corinthian Gulf will be highlighted to show how Thucydides over-emphasises Corinthian ignorance in naval matters, while at the same time exaggerating the skill and ability of their Athenian counterparts. The second section of this chapter will examine the reality of the Corinthian navy at this time. While there is no doubt the Corinthian navy was much weaker than the Athenian, in this section I intend to place this weakness into a wider perspective. I will discuss whether the Corinthians were using outdated naval tactics and organisation, and in particular, I will highlight the possibility that the Corinthians were using privately owned ships in conjunction with their specialised, polis-owned triremes in certain naval operations. This chapter will also briefly look at the possibility that the Corinthians used mercenary and slave rowers in their fleet. By discussing both Thucydides’ presentation of the Corinthian navy and the reality, it is hoped that a more nuanced picture of Corinthian naval strength can be reached.

Finally, this thesis will draw all three areas discussed into a general conclusion.

Because this thesis is predominantly concerned with the historian’s presentation of the Corinthians, much of the following discussion is based on a personal reading and translation of Thucydides’ text. As a result, it proved necessary to quote long passages in order to explain clearly how certain conclusions were reached. In the translations of these passages I have attempted to stick as closely as possible to the original Greek in order to try and capture both what Thucydides was saying and how he was saying it. In addition, since there is such a vast amount of literature available on Thucydides, Corinth, and the
causes of the Peloponnesian War, my secondary reading has focussed on those scholars whom I considered to be the leading experts in the area. The majority of these scholars have published in English, although a few key works in German and French will be cited when relevant. However, this master’s thesis largely deals with modern authors from the Anglo-American school of Classics.

In following the *OCD*\(^3\) I have used the Latinized forms for Greek names and places. The extracts of Thucydides have been taken from the Oxford Classical Texts edited by H. S. Jones and J. E. Powell (1942 and 1964). All translations are my own.
THE CORINTHIANS’ ROLE

IN THE OUTBREAK OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

The purpose of this chapter is to examine closely Thucydides’ depiction of the Corinthians in his account of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. The Corinthians play a large role in book one of Thucydides and are often seen as overly belligerent, irrational, and primarily responsible for driving the Greeks towards war. It is therefore essential for anyone wanting to understand what caused the Peloponnesian War to examine Corinthian actions prior to the war and Thucydides’ presentation of them. This chapter will discuss the Corcyraean affair, which, in Thucydides’ account, set the war in motion, before closely examining Thucydides’ presentation of the Potidaean affair and the Corinthian appeals to the Spartans and their allies.

The Corcyraean Affair

The first of the αἰτίαι Thucydides describes is the dispute between Corcyra and Corinth over Epidamnus, a Corcyraean colony which was founded by a Corinthian named Phalios (1.24.1-30.1). Following an internal conflict the democratic party in Epidamnus approached Corcyra, Epidamnus’ mother city, for help. Upon being rejected by the Corcyraeans, the Epidamnians approached the Corinthians, and managed to enlist their support. Thucydides tells us that the Corinthians agreed to give assistance partly out of justice (δίκαιον), since they considered Epidamnus just as much their own colony as Corcyra’s, and partly because they hated (μισεῖ) the Corcyraeans, who were colonists of
Corinth but paid them little heed (1.25.3).\(^1\) Thucydides then goes on to give the reasons for this hatred: the Corcyraeans did not allow a Corinthian the first honour at sacrifices, they were wealthy, more powerful than Corinth in military resources, and had a large navy (1.25.4). It is important to note that prior to the Corinthian involvement, the Epidamnians had gained the approval of the Delphic oracle to hand their city over to the Corinthians (1.25.1-2). The Corinthians, therefore, had a legitimate reason for interfering in what was essentially an internal dispute.\(^2\) However, this reason is soon forgotten about and the focus of Thucydides’ description emphasises the hatred felt towards the Corcyraeans (as can be seen by the sheer “weight” of narrative devoted to the hatred explanation as opposed to the legitimate ones).\(^3\) Corinth’s desire to humble Corcyra is heavily emphasised in the rest of Thucydides’ description of the Epidamnian affair.\(^4\)

When the Corcyraeans learned that the Corinthians had sent settlers and troops to Epidamnus they reacted violently (ἐχαλέπαινον) and abusively ordered (ἐκέλευον κατ᾽ ἐπίρειον) the Epidamnians to take back the exiles (who, in the meantime had appealed to

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\(^1\) See Herodotus (3.49) who claims that relations between Corinth and Corcyra were bad right from Corcyra’s original founding. On Corinthian relations with Corcyra see Graham (1964) 146-9 and Salmon (1984) 270-80.

\(^2\) Bloedow (1991) 193-4 notes that viewing the Corinthian intervention in Epidamnus as “irrational” fails to take into account the following five points: the Epidamnians had requested their help (1.25.1); the Delphic oracle had authorised the intervention (1.25.1); the founder of the colony had been a Corinthian (1.24.2); a number of Corinthians had been among the colonists (1.24.2); a special relationship seems to have existed between Corinth and her colonies (see 1.25.4).


\(^4\) See de Ste Croix (1972) 68; Salmon (1984) 283 notes that the legitimacy of the Corinthians interfering in Epidamnus’ internal dispute was hardly the reason they did so; the legitimate aspect merely provided the justification. This is no doubt correct and is certainly the impression Thucydides has created by emphasising the hatred explanation in his description. However, we should not ignore the fact that the Corinthians did have legitimate reasons for interfering.
the Corcyraeans), and to send away the garrison and colonists of the Corinthians (1.26.3).\(^5\)

When this abusive order failed, the Corcyraeans laid siege to Epidamnus. This reaction of
the Corcyraeans is an indication that the hatred between the Corinthians and Corcyraeans
worked both ways. It must not be forgotten that the Corcyraeans had a chance to prevent
Corinthian involvement in the whole affair: the Epidamnians originally approached the
Corcyraeans and supplicated them in the temple of Hera (1.24.6-7). The Corcyraeans did
not accept their pleas and sent them away. It is only after the Corinthians became involved
that the Corcyraeans decided to act and they must bear some of the responsibility for
escalating the conflict because of their hatred of the Corinthians.\(^6\)

The Corinthians prepared to sail to Epidamnus with a large force of sixty-eight
ships (including ships from Megara, Pale, Epidaurus, Hermione, Troezen, Leucas and

\(^5\) Crane (1992b) 5 (n. 15) has noted that the sequence of 1.26.3 is unclear. Thucydides tells us that
the Corcyraeans became angry when they learned of the Corinthian involvement in Epidamnus, but then
goes on to say that the Epidamnian exiles had come to Corcyra in supplication. It is not clear whether the
Corcyraeans accepted the exiles’ pleas before news of the Corinthian involvement arrived, or whether the
Corinthian intervention only accelerated a plan which had already been decided. I would suggest that
Thucydides’ presentation indicates that the Corcyraean action was a reaction to Corinthian involvement in
Epidamnus, and Thucydides’ mention of the Epidamnian exiles’ appeal was merely the justification for the

put all (or most) of the blame on Corinth for the escalation of the conflict: e.g. Kagan (1969) 221; de Ste
Croix (1972) 67-8; Salmon (1984) 283-4. Graham (1964) 149-50 suggested that the Corcyraean refusal to
help the democratic appeal could be explained by the fact that the Corcyraean sympathies were with the
oligarchs from the start (this is based on Thucydides 1.26.3, where he states that the oligarchic exiles
appealed to the ancestral tombs and kinship, and were successful in their appeals). This was (rightly)
rejected by Kagan (1969) 208-9 who noted that Diodorus informs us that the democrats also asked for help
from the Corcyraeans on the grounds of kinship (12.30.3). The issue of democratic vs. oligarchic is not the
important issue here. The Corinthians would have been happy to assist whichever of the Epidamnian
groups approached them for help in order to increase their influence in the area, while the Corcyraeans,
once they realised the Corinthians had asserted their influence in the area, were prepared to use the
oligarchic exiles’ claims of kinship as an excuse to legitimise their action against Epidamnus.
Ambracia), and three thousand hoplites supplied by the Corinthians themselves (1.27.2).\(^7\)

Once the Corcyraeans learned of these preparations they sent ambassadors to Corinth (1.28.1). There are several points to note in Thucydides’ presentation of this embassy. To begin with, Thucydides tells us that the Corcyraeans went to Corinth with Lacedaemonian and Sicyonian ambassadors (πρέσβεων), whom they invited to go with them (1.28.1). This has led some to think that the Spartans were prepared to back the Corcyraeans in this affair and wanted to defuse the situation before events spiralled out of control.\(^8\) This may well be correct, but Thucydides’ presentation is interesting (see further below). Thucydides tells us that the Corcyraean ambassadors warned the Corinthians not to start a war for

\[\text{ἐὶ δὲ μὴ, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀναγκασθῆσαθαι ἔφασαν, ἐκείνων βιαζόμενων,}
\[\text{φίλους ποιεῖσθαι οὕς ὦ βούλονται ἐτέρους τῶν νῦν ὄντων μᾶλλον}
\[\text{ωφελίας ἔνεκα.}

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\(^7\) There is a discrepancy in Thucydides’ numbers between 1.27.2 and 1.29.1. At 1.27.2 Thucydides informs us of the poleis which provided ships for the mission: the total here adds up to sixty-eight ships. At 1.29.1 Thucydides claims there were seventy-five ships. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the Eleans were asked by the Corinthians to provide hulls (1.27.2), which possibly made up the extra seven ships: see Gomme (1945) 162. There is also a discrepancy in the number of hoplites: at 1.27.2 Thucydides claims there were three thousand, but at 1.29.1 he claims two thousand. See Gomme (1945) 163-4 for possible corrections. It may be futile to worry about this discrepancy as at 1.27.2 Thucydides is merely describing the preparations, and not necessarily what happened, while at 1.29.1 he is describing the start of the mission itself. See Hornblower (1991) 73.

\(^8\) For example, Gomme (1945) 162; Kagan (1969) 225-6; de Ste Croix (1972) 68-9; Salmon (1984) 284; Hornblower (1991) 72. Griffin (1982) 63 suggested that the Sicyonian ambassadors were invited because of the close tie between Corinth and Sicyon (as can be seen by their combined actions at Haliēs and Megara: see chapter two), and therefore the Corinthians would be likely to listen to their ambassadors.
otherwise, they said, with them (i.e. the Corinthians) forcing [the issue], they
themselves would be compelled to make friends with others whom they did not
wish to, rather than the ones they had now, for the sake of aid (1.28.3).\textsuperscript{9}

This threat by the Corcyraeans is a key part of Thucydides’ presentation of this embassy.
The Corcyraeans introduce the idea that the Athenians could become involved, if the
Corinthians do not stop their aggressive behaviour. Therefore, the eventual involvement
of Athens in the escalating conflict essentially becomes the Corinthians’ fault, as they do
not heed this warning and submit the matter to arbitration. However, one wonders why the
Corcyraeans did not follow up on this threat at this stage but waited until after the battle
off Leucimme and almost two years before eventually appealing to Athens.\textsuperscript{10} This makes
one slightly suspicious of Thucydides’ presentation of the threat by the Corcyraeans. It is
possible that Thucydides has inserted this threat here, in order to plant the idea of

\textsuperscript{9} Gomme (1945) 163 noted that the use of \textit{ο\kappa\iota in \textit{ο\kappa\iota βο\um{ι}λονται} (“whom they did not wish”)
rather than \textit{μ\iota η\iota} means that the threat is not generic, and the Corcyraeans are hinting at particular allies,

\textsuperscript{10} Diodorus (12.33.1) places the Corcyraean ambassadors’ appeal to the Athenians (described below)
in 436/5 BC (Thucydides places it in 433 BC). There is (of course) a chronological problem in Diodorus’
account of the prelude to the Peloponnesian War, and a recent study on a different chronological problem
in Diodorus has noted that the “search for chronological problems in Diodorus is – to amend the proverb
slightly – like looking for a haystack hidden by a needle. They are to be found in abundance” (Walsh (2009)
74). However, Peter Green (2006) 227 (n. 166) has asked why should the approach to Athens not have been
made in 435 BC? This question is a very valid one when we consider the threat made by the Corcyraeans in
435 BC in Thucydides’ account (i.e. why did they not approach the Athenians prior to the battle off
Leucimme?). This is not the place to enter the debate on Diodorus’ chronology (see Green (2006) 227 (n.
166) for a good discussion on the chronological issue in Corcyra’s approach to Athens, including the
potential for another reading of \textit{IG i}\textsuperscript{2} 364. For a discussion on the restoration of \textit{IG i}\textsuperscript{2} 295 (=\textit{IG i}\textsuperscript{3} 364) see
Johnson (1929); Fornara (1983) 143; Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 167-8). However, it is important to note that
Thucydides’ account must not always be taken as the definitive chronological version of events leading to
the war without examination of the other available sources.
Athenian involvement at an early stage of events.\textsuperscript{11} The effect of doing so not only emphasises Corinthian irrationality in not accepting arbitration to prevent this happening, but also places less blame on the Athenians for their eventual involvement in the conflict which helped lead to the war. Eventual Athenian involvement becomes a reaction to Corinthian belligerence and refusal to negotiate peacefully with the Corcyraeans. The mention of the Spartan and Sicyonian envoys accompanying the Corcyraeans also adds to the emphasis of Corinthian irrationality: everyone could see the escalating danger but them because of their hatred for Corcyra.

There are further significant points of note in Thucydides’ description of this embassy to Corinth. After demanding that the Corinthians remove their garrison and colonists from Epidamnus (1.28.1), the Corcyraeans go on to make some concessions, should the Corinthians wish to contest (ἄντιποιοίωνται) their claim to Epidamnus (1.28.2). The first concession the Corcyraeans made was that:

\textit{δίκας ἥθελον δοῦναι ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ παρὰ πόλεσιν αἰσ ἄν ἀμφότεροι ξυμβῶσιν ὁποτέρων δ’ ἄν δικασθῇ εἶναι τὴν ἄποικίαν, τούτουσι κρατεῖν.}

\textsuperscript{11} One obvious question is how did Thucydides know what was said in this embassy at Corinth? This question becomes even more relevant if we consider that at this stage (435 BC) the war would not yet have concerned Athens. Until the Corcyraeans approached the Athenians, why should they have cared if the Corinthians wanted to punish the Corcyraeans? This makes it unlikely that the details of the embassy were common knowledge in Athens in 435 BC, and leaves open the possibility that when Thucydides was writing about the causes of the war (whenever that may have been) after the war had already escalated into a grand-scale conflict, he was able to look back to this moment and insert the idea of Athenian involvement in order to strengthen his impression of why the Athenians became involved.
they were willing to submit to arbitration by Peloponnesian cities that both
sides would agree to; whoever was awarded the colony [they were willing] that
they should be the winners [of the dispute] (1.28.2).\footnote{On the translation of \textit{tou/touj kratei=n} referring to the winners of the dispute, rather than control over Epidamnus, see Graham (1964) 134-5.}

This is a decent concession by the Corcyraeans. The Corinthians were allied to a lot of \textit{poleis} in the Peloponnese and clearly had a lot of influence with them.\footnote{Note how the Corinthians were able to get support for their (personal) expeditions against Corcyra (1.27.2 and 1.46.1). See also Herodotus 5.75 and 5.91-3 for further indications of Corinthian influence over their Peloponnesian allies.} Presumably, the \textit{poleis} chosen to arbitrate would have to be powerful enough to back up their decision with (the threat of?) military force, otherwise neither side would take the decision seriously. This makes one inclined to think that one of the \textit{poleis} chosen would have been Sparta.\footnote{Griffin (1982) 63.}

The Spartans had no formal connections to the Corcyraeans and were allied to the Corinthians. Therefore, the Corcyraean offer to use arbitrators from the Peloponnese raises the question of whether the Spartans would be willing to back the Corcyraeans over their formal allies. It seems safe to assume that the Corcyraeans would not have made this offer unless they thought they had a decent chance of winning the dispute. This is where Thucydides’ mention of the Spartan and Sicyonian ambassadors being invited by the Corcyraeans to accompany (\textit{pare/labov}) them to Corinth (1.28.1) becomes important to note. The implication of this invitation by the Corcyraeans is that the Spartans and Sicyonians were willing to back Corcyra in this affair, although Thucydides never expressly claims that this is the case.\footnote{Gomme (1945) 162 noted that it is curious Thucydides did not make clear why the Spartans and Sicyonians had sent ambassadors to this embassy. He supposed that they supported “probably very weakly” Corcyra’s proposal of arbitration. I would suggest that Thucydides has deliberately not made clear}
In this regard it is important to consider very briefly whether the Peloponnesian League was a formal or informal organisation.\textsuperscript{16} Bolmarcich has recently made a good case for supposing that the Peloponnesian League had two types of \textit{symmachoi}; those independent of, and those subservient to Sparta.\textsuperscript{17} Briefly put, her argument suggests that the Spartans were able to impose a more formal control on the \textit{poleis} they conquered, but could not impose such control on the more powerful \textit{poleis} such as Corinth, who were thus more independent.\textsuperscript{18} If the Spartans only had a “loose” control over Corinth, one wonders why they would be prepared to back Corcyra and thus potentially alienate their strongest ally. The obvious answer is that the Corcyraeans had a strong navy (1.25.4. cf. 1.68.4). This may be the reason why the Spartans went to Corinth with the Corcyraeans. They may have seen an opportunity to enlist Corcyra into the Peloponnesian League, if they could talk the Corinthians into backing down over Epidamnus. Naturally, this would have angered the Corinthians and perhaps explains some of their belligerence during the negotiations. In any case, it seems that the Spartans were unwilling to back the Corcyraeans “formally” over their powerful Corinthian allies, as there is no reference to them attempting to stop the Corinthian preparations for war.

However, one becomes suspicious of Thucydides’ mention of Spartan involvement when we consider what follows. Following the battle off Leucimme, Thucydides tells us of

\textsuperscript{16} This is not the place to go into depth on the issue of the constitution of the Peloponnesian League. For a recent bibliography on the vast amount of literature see Bolmarcich (2005) 5 (n. 1). For a bibliography on the opposing points of view (formal vs. informal organisation) see Bolmarcich (2005) 5 (n. 2).

\textsuperscript{17} Bolmarcich (2005). See in particular her concluding sections, 30-4.

\textsuperscript{18} There is quite a bit of evidence which suggests that the Corinthians had a looser and more independent relationship with Sparta than many of the other \textit{poleis} in the Peloponnesian League. See, for example, Herodotus 5.74-5; 5.91-3; Thucydides 1.27.2; 1.46.1 (note that there is no reference to the Corinthians asking for Spartan assistance); 5.17.2; 5.27.1-38.4; 6.7.1; Xenophon Hellenica 2.4.30; 3.2.25.
the increased Corinthian preparations for war with Corcyra (1.31.1). He also tells us of the Corcyraean concern upon hearing this, because they had isolated themselves and had no powerful allies, since they had not allied themselves with Sparta or Athens (i.e. their two options for powerful allies). Therefore, they decided to go to Athens and ally with them (1.31.2). Given Thucydides’ presentation of the failed assembly at Corinth, the Corcyraeans had no choice but to go to the Athenians for help. The Spartans had already failed to “control” Corinth and find a peaceful solution. This presentation helps to reinforce the idea that Corinthian belligerence drove the Corcyraeans to the Athenians.

The second concession the Corcyraeans made was that: ἦθελον δὲ καὶ τῷ ἐν Δέλφοις μαντείῳ ἐπιτρέψαι, “They were willing to entrust [the matter] to the Delphic Oracle” (1.28.2). This is another reasonable concession by the Corcyraeans. As mentioned above, the Delphic oracle had already sanctioned Corinthian involvement in Epidamnus (1.25.1), and presumably would support further Corinthian involvement in the affair. This makes one suspicious of the Corcyraean appeal. If the Corcyraean suggestion was genuine, then it may be an indication that the Corcyraeans had some “inside information” and knew that the Delphic Oracle would fall in their favour (otherwise why would they ask for it?).

19 See Badian (1993) 129 for an insightful interpretation of the Spartans presence at this embassy. He notes that this is the first instance where we see the Spartans in action (i.e. in attempting to persuade the Corinthians to submit their dispute with Corcyra to arbitration), and he argues that Thucydides deliberately introduced the Spartans in this way in order to show their ineffective control over their allies (i.e. the Corinthians do not submit to the Spartans’ will). Interestingly, Diodorus (12.30.5) makes no mention of the Spartan and Sicyonian ambassadors accompanying the Corcyraeans.

20 Wilson (1987) 28 considers this suggestion by the Corcyraeans “remarkable” and notes that Corcyra must have had some reason to believe that Delphi would not support Corinth to the point of war, despite her earlier approval of Corinthian action. It may be significant that the Spartans were present in this case. The Spartans have been known to try and bribe the oracle (e.g. Herodotus 6.66; Thucydides 5.16.2-3; Diodorus 14.13.3), and possibly the Delphic oracle had been bribed in order to get Corinth “on side.” If this is the case, it is not surprising that the Corinthians refused to submit the matter to Delphi.
The refusal of the Corinthians to submit the matter to the Delphic Oracle furthers the motif of Corinthian irrationality. Although Delphi had already approved of their action, they were too belligerent to ask the oracle again if their action was legitimate.

The Corinthians replied to these suggestions by saying that they would consider it (βολεύσεσθαι), if the Corcyraeans removed their ships and the barbarians from Epidamnus: πρῶτον δ’ οὐ καλῶς ἔχειν τοὺς μὲν πολιορκεῖσθαι, αὐτοὺς δὲ δικάζεσθαι, “before this, it was not honourable on the one hand for them to be besieging [Epidamnus], and on the other hand for them (i.e. the Corinthians) to give judgement (i.e. go to arbitration)” (1.28.4). It is important to remember that the Corcyraeans were still besieging Epidamnus during these negotiations. Therefore, it was not unreasonable for the Corinthians to refuse the offers of arbitration. The Corcyraeans had acted just as aggressively as the Corinthians in the affair, and any attempt at mediation while Corcyra was still acting aggressively could have put Corinth at a severe disadvantage in the negotiations.21

The Corcyraeans put forward a counter-offer to the Corinthian reply:

ἡν καὶ ἐκεῖνοι τῶν ἐν Ἔπιδαμνῳ ἀπαγάγωσιν, ποιήσειν ταύτα· ἐτοίμοι δὲ ἔστω καὶ ἠμφότερος μὲν κατὰ χώραν, σπουδὰς δὲ ποιῆσασθαι ἕως ἣν ἡ δίκη γένηται.

if they (i.e. the Corinthians) also removed their men from Epidamnus, they would do these things. Or, they were prepared, on the condition that both sides stayed in place, to make a truce until the judgement had been reached (1.28.5).

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This offer was the most reasonable of the concessions the Corcyraeans made to the Corinthians, and would have put neither side at a disadvantage during negotiations. However, the Corinthians accepted none of the proposals (οὐδὲν τούτων ὑπήκουν) and prepared for war (1.29.1).

The usual interpretation of these attempted negotiations is that the Corcyraeans genuinely desired peace, while the Corinthians had no desire for a peaceful solution and acted out of anger rather than rationally. However, a couple of things need to be taken into account. As Bloedow has noted, the Corcyraeans, through their policy of isolation (see 1.32.3-5), had left themselves with little option but to try and reach a peaceful solution. It must be remembered that the Corcyraeans had acted aggressively in regards to Epidamnus as well, and if they thought they could match the large Corinthian fleet that was assembling, then presumably they would have adopted a military approach. The second thing which needs to be discussed is the assumption that this was the last chance for a peaceful solution to the conflict before Athens became involved. Stahl has wondered why Thucydides bothered to include this failed peace conference, and suggests that he is pointing out the last, but missed, opportunity for peace before the movement towards war would “spiral up to the next level” and get even more powers involved. This would seem to be projecting the eventual Athenian involvement, which does not occur until two years later, back on to this attempted mediation (see above). Because the Corcyraeans do eventually appeal to Athens, the Corinthian refusal to negotiate does seem rather irrational.

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24 Bloedow (1991) 194. In this regard it is beside the point that the Corcyraeans actually won the battle off Leucimme (1.29). They would not have known that they could defeat the large Corinthian force until they actually did so.
However, as has been suggested above, although the Corcyraean proposals do look to be reasonable conciliatory gestures towards the Corinthians,\textsuperscript{26} there are grounds for suspicion as to how “favourable” these proposals actually were. Moreover, the Corinthians no doubt thought that they would win the battle they were preparing for (which would eventually take place off Leucimme). If this had happened, then Athens probably would not have become involved in the conflict. It is only because of the Corinthian anger (\(\delta\rho\gamma\tilde{\iota}\ \phi\acute{\rho}\omicron \omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma\)) at their defeat and the great building project they undertook to increase the efficiency of their fleet (1.31.1), that the Corcyraeans were driven to the Athenians out of fear (\(\epsilon\phi\omicron\beta\omicron\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\)) (1.31.2). Thucydides’ himself, in looking back at what caused the war, may have looked to this moment and saw it as the last chance for a peaceful solution before Athens became involved in the movement towards war, hence the “pause” in his narrative to describe it.\textsuperscript{27} Yet we cannot solely attribute Corinthian irrationality for either the breakdown of the negotiations or for the eventual involvement of the Athenians.\textsuperscript{28}

Following the failed attempts at mediation, Thucydides very briefly describes the battle off Leucimme, where the Corcyraeans won a decisive victory (1.29), which resulted in them controlling the entire sea in the area (1.30.3). Thucydides then goes on to tell us how in the two years following the battle, the Corinthians were building ships and preparing to make their fleet the strongest possible (1.31.1). Anger (\(\delta\rho\gamma\tilde{\iota}\)), is specifically named by Thucydides as the motivation behind the Corinthian preparations for military action against the Corcyraeans. This can be compared to the hatred (\(\mu\beta\sigma\sigma\varsigma\)) Thucydides

\textsuperscript{26} De Ste Croix (1972) 69 considered that the Corcyraean proposals to submit the matter to arbitration by \textit{poleis} in the Peloponnese, and the offer to refer the matter to the Delphic Oracle, were two conciliatory gestures towards the Corinthians.

\textsuperscript{27} Note what comes directly before and after 1.28: 1.29.1 is a continuation of 1.27.2.

\textsuperscript{28} There was of course an element of Corinthian (irrational?) anger which did play a part in the breakdown of these negotiations and in bringing the Athenians into the war. My purpose here is simply to point out that we cannot place the blame solely on Corinthian belligerence for what eventually happens.
described as one of the reasons for the Corinthians becoming involved in the Epidamnian affair (see above). The specific mention of the Corinthians acting out of anger strengthens the negative impression Thucydides has created of them: they act out of emotion rather than reason. While no doubt anger played a large part in their preparations for further military action, presumably there were also more “legitimate” reasons as well. The fact that the Corinthians could get the support of other poleis for their mission (1.46.1) is an indication that there was more to these preparations than simply irrational anger.

When the Corcyraeans learned of the Corinthian preparations, they feared (έφοβοῦντο) for themselves because ἦσαν γὰρ οὐδὲνος Ἑλλήνων ἐνσπονδοὶ οὐδὲ ἐσεγράψαντο ἐαυτοὺς οὔτε ἐς τὰς Ἀθηναίων σπονδὰς οὔτε ἐς τὰς Λακεδαιμονίως, “they were included in truce with none of the Hellenes, and enrolled in

29 Thucydides (1.30.2-3) tells us that after the Corinthian defeat at Leucimme, the Corcyraeans ruled (ἐκράτουν) the sea in the area and sailed against Corinth’s allies. In response, the Corinthians sent ships and troops to Actium and Cheimerium in Thesprotia to guard (φυλακῆς) Leucas and the other poleis friendly to them. This specifically tells us that the Corcyraeans were harassing the Corinthian allies in the area and the Corinthian preparations can therefore be seen partly (but no more than partly) as a mission to help protect their allies. Contrast with Wilson (1987) 33.

30 In using the phrase “irrational anger,” I am referring to the scholars who view the Corinthian action against Corcyra on account of their anger as an unjustified reason for risking the involvement of the Athenians and escalating the conflict towards a large scale war. See, for example, Kagan (1969) 220-8; de Ste Croix (1972) 67-71; Salmon (1984) 283-5; Hornblower (1991) 71; Stahl (2006) 309-10. Crane (1992b) has looked at the problem from more of an anthropological angle, and points out that the key question is not whether Corinth was prepared to go to war with Athens over Corcyra, but rather why did Corinth attach so much importance to Corcyra that it helped push the Greek world into a larger war? Crane’s argument attempts to place the conflict into the cultural context of the fifth century Greek world. He argues that Corcyra had made a challenge to Corinthian prestige and social standing which resulted in the Corinthian hatred against them (see Thucydides 1.25.4 and Crane (1992b) 5-12). The Corinthians, therefore, had to act and reassert their status in the Greek world. The “anger” of Corinth should probably not be seen as an indication of the Corinthians being a people “dominated by emotion” (Stahl (2006) 310), but rather as a result of their desire to regain their prestige after being insulted by the Corcyraeans and having been defeated by them in the naval battle off Leucimme. See van Wees (2004) 19-26 for a brief discussion of the importance the Greeks placed on honour in undertaking military campaigns.
neither the Athenian nor Lacedaemonian alliances” (1.31.2). Therefore, they decided (ἔδοξεν σὺν τοῖς) they would go to Athens to make an alliance and to try and get some help from them. The Corcyraean decision to appeal to the Athenians is thus a reaction to the Corinthian anger with them (i.e. they approached the Athenians out of fear). So, Thucydides specifically tells us here that the Corcyraeans were in alliance with neither the Athenians nor the Lacedaemonians. However, the Corcyraean fear of the increased Corinthian preparations for war meant that they needed a strong ally. As mentioned above, in Thucydides’ presentation of events, the Spartan failure to control Corinth at the assembly prior to the battle off Leucimme has essentially forced the Corcyraeans to approach the Athenians. Therefore, as readers, we are set up to see the Corcyraean approach to Athens as the justified response of a polis which is in danger and needed to find support from a strong ally.

The Corinthians also sent ambassadors to Athens to try and prevent the Athenians attaching themselves to the Corcyraean navy (1.31.3). The debate between the Corinthian and Corcyraean speakers made in the Athenian ekklesia, is reported by Thucydides in direct speech, which attests to the importance of the argument that would decide whether the Athenians would become involved in the conflict or not.31

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31 Although this is not the place to enter into a discussion on Thucydides’ accuracy in reporting direct speech, it is important to define my position on the trustworthiness of his speeches. The problematic sentence is in Thucydides’ description of his method at 1.22.1. After noting the difficulty he had in remembering precisely (ἀκριβείας) what was said he states: ὥς δ’ ἐν ἑδοκοῦν ἐμοὶ ἔκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ’ εἶπέν, ἐχομένω δι’ ἐγγύτατο τῆς ἔμπισας γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως ἐίρητοι, “for my part (i.e. I made the speakers say), what I thought to be most appropriate to what they would have said under the present circumstances, while maintaining as closely as possible the general scope of what was really said.” The issue arises in the difficulty between τὰ δέοντα and τῆς ἔμπισας γνώμης. One seems to imply suitability (i.e. a speech recorded in the words Thucydides thought should have been said), while the other implies recording truthfully what was said (as far as could be remembered). My personal opinion of this statement is that Thucydides realised the
The Corcyraeans begin their speech with Δίκαιον, “It is just” (1.32.1), and go on to portray themselves as the victims of Corinthian aggression (1.33.1; 1.34). However, the justice of the Corcyraean appeal under the traditional values of Greek justice is weak: the Corcyraeans were not kinsmen of the Athenians nor could they point to any favours done in the past for Athens.\footnote{32} Indeed, why should the Athenians be concerned with Corcyra’s plight when they have never done anything in the past for Athens?\footnote{33} On the other hand, the difficulty in recording speeches in his work with regards to their accuracy, and this is his acknowledgement of that difficulty: he could not record exactly what was said as that would be impossible. Therefore, he will try to be as accurate as possible, but where he (or his source) could not remember exactly what was said, the “missing pieces” will be filled in by what Thucydides thinks would have been said, given the context of the speech. It is my belief that Thucydides’ speeches reflect what was said but are put into his own words. As a result, we should probably treat his speeches as we would his narrative: they are his version of what happened, in this case his version of what was said. Therefore, in general, it will be my approach to accept the details of a speech overall while having a critical eye to the presentation. The bibliography for the issue of Thucydides’ speeches is enormous, and every modern commentator is required to define their position in order to use the speeches for their own historical analysis. Because of this, I have simply given my own opinion on the issue here.

\textsuperscript{32} Connor (1984) 34-5 (n. 33).

\textsuperscript{33} In this context it is especially interesting to note Herodotus’ description of the failed attempt by the Greek envoys to gain the aid of the Corcyraeans in the fight against the Persians (7.168). The Corcyraeans agreed to help, but when the time came, sent their sixty ships only as far as the Peloponnese. Herodotus claims that this was a deliberate ploy by the Corcyraeans so that if Xerxes was victorious they could claim to have done him no harm, and at the same time they had an excuse to offer the Greeks, namely, that they had been prevented from sailing around Cape Malea by the prevailing north-east winds. How and Wells (1928) 202-3 noted that it is remarkable the Corinthians do not taunt the Corcyraeans in their speech to the Athenians (see below) with this instance of selfishness and double dealing. This possibly indicates that Herodotus’ story is an invention by either Herodotus himself or his source. It is generally accepted that Herodotus was publishing/reciting his work between roughly 450-420 BC, although exactly when the Athenians heard/read his work is practically impossible to answer (on the chronology of Herodotus’ life – a notoriously difficult problem – see Asheri (2007) 3-5). One wonders whether Herodotus’ description of the Corcyraeans’ “double dealing” was influenced by this debate in Athens (433 BC). In any case, it is interesting that roughly contemporary to Thucydides’ description of the Corcyraeans attempting to come out of their policy of isolation, another author was describing a previous selfish act of the Corcyraeans.
Corinthians have an alliance (ἐνσπονδοί) with the Athenians, and can point to past favours they have done for them (1.40.4-41.3).

The most interesting of these past favours the Corinthians mention is that they had prevented the Peloponnesians from helping the Samians when they revolted from Athens in 440 BC. The Corinthians claim:

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡμεῖς Σαμίων ἀποστάντων ψήφον προσέβημεθα ἐναντίον υμίν, τῶν ἄλλων Πελοποννησίων δίχα ἐψηφισμένων εἰ χρὴ αὐτοῖς ἀμύνειν, φανερῶς δὲ ἀντεἶπομεν τούς προσήκοντας ξυμμάχους αὐτὸν τινα κολάζειν.

For when the Samians were in revolt we did not place a vote against you, although the other Peloponnesians were divided about voting whether it was necessary to aid them, but we clearly responded that anyone can punish the allies who belong to themselves (1.40.5).

Later in their speech, the Corinthians claim that now the roles are reversed, and plead with the Athenians to follow the principle they set at the conference in Sparta about punishing one’s own allies, and therefore not to side with the Corcyraeans (1.43).

The comparison the Corinthian speaker attempts to make between Athens’ relationship with Samos and the Corinthians’ with Corcyra has been seen as a false parallel and a weak argument, as Corcyra was not formally allied with Corinth as Samos was with

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The other favour the Corinthians specifically mention is the lending of twenty ships to the Athenians during their war with Aegina (1.41.2. cf. Herodotus 6.89). Gomme (1945) 175 noted that the Corinthians omit two other favours done for the Athenians that are described by Herodotus: when they prevented the Spartans from reinstating Hippias (5.91-3), and when the Corinthians mediated between Thebes and Athens over Plataea (6.108).
Athens. While this is true, it may be an overly legalistic approach to looking at the matter, for surely the Corinthians were aware that “legally speaking” this was a false parallel. There are more things going on in the Corinthian speaker’s speech to the Athenians than simple appeals to the legal aspect of their case. For example, the speaker is also trying to show how the Corinthians are morally in the right (see the opening of the Corinthian speech on how their actions have been more just than the Corecyraeans: 1.37.1-40.1).

The prevention of the Peloponnesians giving aid to the Samians when they revolted from Athens was the greatest recent favour the Corinthians had done for the Athenians. Their specific mention of it in their speech operates on two levels: first, it shows that the Corinthians are trustworthy and can be helpful to the Athenians; secondly, they are attempting to place themselves on the same “power level” as the Athenians. In effect, the Corinthians are saying that they allowed the Athenians to punish a subordinate (although they had the power to prevent them), and therefore the Athenians should allow the Corinthians to punish a less powerful polis which has shown them disrespect. In this regard, the strictly “legal” aspect of their argument becomes less important. If the Corecyraeans did not have such a powerful navy one wonders whether the Athenians would have backed the Corinthians over them. The Corinthian “misjudgement” was not so much that they had misjudged the “legal” aspect, but the fact that they were attempting to punish a polis that was roughly on the same “power level” as they were, and not a subordinate like Samos was to Athens.

As mentioned above, the Corcyraeans could not claim to have done any favours for Athens in the past, and therefore their appeal relies on the potential future advantages they could offer the Athenians. The greatest advantage the Corcyraeans can appeal to is the fact that they have a large navy, and this is stressed throughout their speech to the Athenians (1.33.2; 1.35.5; 1.36.3). The naval aspect ties into another theme of the Corcyraean speech: the inevitability of the approaching war (1.33.3; 1.36.1-3. cf. 1.42.2). Their navy is the only piece of future “credit” the Corcyraeans can offer the Athenians, but for this to be beneficial there needs to be the threat of a coming conflict. Strictly speaking, the war does not become “inevitable” until the Corinthians and Athenians come to blows at the battle of Sybota (see below). However, it is a theme which runs strongly in the background of book one, and there are indicators of the war’s inevitability up to the point when the Athenians accept the Corcyraean alliance (e.g. 1.1.1; 1.18.2-3).

Even in the Corinthian speech, although they claim that the coming war is uncertain (ἀφινεί: 1.42.2), there are still elements which emphasise the hostility of the Peloponnesians. For example, the specific mention of their efforts to stop the Peloponnesians interfering in the Samian revolt (see above), actually reinforces the Corcyraean claim that the Peloponnesians were keen for war: they were only just prevented from going to war with Athens a few years earlier. In this sense, the Corinthian

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38 See Crane (1992b) 20: “Social credibility is the foundation on which the Corcyraean offer rests, for if the Athenians do not trust them in the future, they will have no motive to advance them the help that they need now.”

39 Connor (1984) 34 notes that it is the naval factor which proves decisive in Corcyra’s appeal to Athens: the justice of their case is weak and “their arguments are largely tendentious and ultimately irrelevant.”

40 See Ober (1993) 88: “one might go so far as to suggest that Athens’ making of the alliance ... was the act that fulfilled the Corcyraean prophecy.”
speech is partly a warning to Athens. They are clearly saying that they have the power to prevent the Peloponnesians interfering in Athenian affairs, and therefore the Athenians should not interfere in their business if they want to keep the peace. Again, an overly legalistic approach to looking at the parallel between Samos and Corcyra misses the point: the Corinthians are trying to speak to the Athenians as an equal power (see above), while at the same time warn them of exactly how powerful/influential they are in the Peloponnesian League (cf. 1.33.3).

According to Thucydides, the Athenians accepted the Corcyrean alliance partly because they thought the war with the Peloponnesians was going to come anyway (1.44.2). There are also the Decrees of Callias, which (if correctly dated to 434-433 BC), indicate that the Athenians thought war was coming before the Corcyraeans approached them. This places Thucydides’ presentation of this debate in an interesting light. Thucydides deliberately chose to present these arguments in direct speech, presumably to emphasise their importance. The effect of this is that the Athenians, in accepting the Corcyraean appeal, are presented as reacting to this argument. In other words, the Athenians are presented as being placed in a situation not of their design, which led to war. However, if the Athenians were already preparing for war (or at least were worried that war might be coming), then the importance of this debate becomes much less important: the Athenians would naturally take the advantage of the Corcyraean navy to increase their power before war.

42 However, see the objections of Kallet-Marx (1989) who would date Decree A to 431 BC.
43 On the Callias Decrees see Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 154-61: the treasuries of the temples of the rural demes and lower city were moved to the acropolis, a move which would not have been taken unless the Assembly had been persuaded that there was a serious risk of war.
There is yet another important element to note in these speeches: would the Athenian acceptance of the Corcyraeans in an alliance be a breach of the Thirty Years Peace? The Corcyraeans claim that:

λύσετε δε οὐδὲ τὰς Λακεδαιμονίων σπουδὰς δεχόμενοι ἡμᾶς μηδετέρων ὄντας ξυμμάχους: εἰρηται γὰρ ἐν αὐταῖς, τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων ἤτις μηδαμοῦ ξυμμαχεῖ, ἡξείναι παρ᾽ ὁποτέρους ἂν ἀρέσκηται ἐλθεῖν.

You will not break the treaty with the Lacedaemonians in receiving us, since we are allies of neither side. For it is agreed in the treaty that those cities of Hellas who are allies with no one, are allowed to go to whichever side pleases them (1.35.1-2).

From a strictly legal perspective it seems that an Athenian alliance with Corcyra would not be a breach of the Thirty Years Peace. However, the Corinthian response to this is informative:

ὡς δε οὐκ ἂν δικαίως αὐτούς δέχοισθε μαθεῖν χρή, εἰ γὰρ εἰρηται ἐν ταῖς σπουδαῖς ἡξείναι παρ᾽ ὁποτέρους τις βούλεται τῶν ἀγράφων πόλεων ἐλθεῖν, οὐ τοῖς ἐπὶ βλάβη ἔτέρων ἰουσίν ἢ ξυνθῆκη ἔστιν, ἀλλ’ ὦτις μὴ ἄλλου ἐαυτὸν ἀποστερών ἀσφαλείας δεῖται καὶ ὦτις μὴ τοῖς δεξαμενοῖς, εἰ σωφρονοῦσι, πόλεμον ἀντ᾽ εἰρήνης ποιήσει.

thus it is necessary for you to understand that you cannot justly receive them (i.e. in alliance). Although it is agreed in the treaty that any unallied cities can come to whichever side they wish, this agreement is not for those intending to harm others, but for whoever does not desert others in need of security for

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themselves, and not for whoever, if they are of sound mind, will bring war instead of peace [to those accepting the alliance] (1.40.1-2).

As Kagan has noted, the Corinthians here are referring to the “spirit” of the Peace, rather than the legal aspect.\(^{45}\) The Corinthians were surely aware of the legal position of the Corcyraeans, and there may be another warning to the Athenians in the Corinthian response quoted. The Corinthian speaker points out that if the Athenians accept the Corcyraean request, it will bring war instead of peace, and they go on to warn the Athenians that if they are turned into enemies, they will have to include them in their response (ἀμύνεσθαι) as well (1.40.2-3). Given these warnings, the Athenians must bear some of the blame for what follows.\(^{46}\) While they were legally in the right, they had been clearly warned by the Corinthians that accepting the Corcyraeans into an alliance would lead to war.

Thucydides describes how after hearing both sides the Athenians held “even two assemblies” (γενομένης καὶ διὸ ἐκκλησίας):\(^{47}\)

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\text{τῇ μὲν προτέρᾳ οὐχ ἦσαν τῶν Κορινθίων ἀπεδέχαντο τοὺς λόγους, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἱστερίᾳ μετέγνωσαν Κερκυραίοις ἐμμαχίαν μὲν μὴ ποιήσασθαι ὦστε τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐξῆρος καὶ φίλους νομίζειν ἐγὼ ἐπὶ Κόρινθον ἐκέλευσον σφίσιν οἱ Κερκυραῖοι ξυμπλεῖν, ἐλύσατε ἂν αὐτοῖς αἱ πρὸς Πελοποννησίους σπονδαῖ, ἐπιμαχίαν δὲ ἐποίησαντο τῇ ἀλλήλων βοηθεῖν, ἕαν τις ἐπὶ Κέρκυραν ἢ Ἡ Ἀθήνας ἢ τοὺς τούτων ἐμμαχόσαν.}
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\(^{46}\) Contrast with de Ste Croix (1972) 70-9.

\(^{47}\) On the translation of καὶ διὸ as “even two” see Stahl (2006) 311-12 who suggests that καὶ διὸ may point to something unexpected or unusual. See also Hornblower (2008) 1059.
at the first, they accepted that the argument of the Corinthians was not the weaker, but in the next one changed their minds and formed an alliance with the Corcyraeans, not so that they would have the same enemies and friends as them (for if the Corcyraeans urged them to sail against Corinth, they would be breaking their treaty with the Peloponnesians), but they made a defensive alliance, to come to the aid of one another, if anyone attacked Corcyra, Athens, or an ally of them (1.44.1).  

The fact that the Athenians felt the need to hold (even) two assemblies attests to the importance they placed in the decision, and also indicates that they felt some “discomfort” at forming an alliance with the Corcyraeans. This is also indicated by the fact that they decided to form an ἐπιμοχήα rather than a full offensive and defensive alliance. From a legal perspective, the Athenians could form any alliance with the Corcyraeans that they wished, yet they seem to have realised that if they did they could be drawn into war with the Peloponnesians, should the Corcyraeans take the offensive. Therefore, their decision to form an ἐπιμοχήα only has been interpreted as a very reasonable decision by the Athenians: the responsibility of breaking the treaty now rests with Corinth (i.e. the Athenians are only prepared to help the Corcyraeans if they are attacked).

However, the problem with this interpretation is that the Corinthians were already planning to attack Corcyra and everyone involved knew this. The distinction between a ἐγγυμοχήα and an ἐπιμοχήα becomes irrelevant if everyone knows that the “defensive”

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49 De Ste Croix (1972) 72 suggested that at the first assembly the issue was whether to accept or reject a ἐγγυμοχήα, while at the second assembly an ἐπιμοχήα was proposed as a compromise. Salmon (1984) 287 considered this suggestion “very probable.” However, see Hornblower (1991) 86.
50 See, for example, de Ste Croix (1972) 71-3; Salmon (1984) 286-7.
alliance will be invoked immediately after its creation. The ἐπιμαχία was merely a disguise under which the Athenians could justify becoming allies with the Corcyraeans, while knowing full well that it would bring them into conflict with the Corinthians (see the Corinthian “warnings” above). The Athenians were not trying to avoid conflict by forming this ἐπιμαχία, they were merely trying to manoeuvre themselves into a position where they could claim to be “technically” in the right over any future conflict with Corinth. This has interesting implications for what follows.

After forming the ἐπιμαχία with the Corcyraeans, Thucydides tells us that the Athenians sent ten ships to help them, with Lacedaemonius, Diotimus and Proteas in command (1.45.1-2). He continues by saying:

προεῖπον δὲ αὐτοῖς μὴ ναυμαχεῖν Κορινθίοις, ἣν μὴ ἐπὶ Κέρκυραν πλέωσι καὶ μέλλωσιν ἀποβαίνειν ἢ ἐς τῶν ἑκείνων τι χωρίων· οὔτω δὲ κωλύειν κατὰ δύναμιν. προεῖπον δὲ ταύτα τού μὴ λύειν ἐνεκα τὰς σπουδὰς.

52 It may be significant that the Athenians decided to send three strategoi with only ten ships on this mission. It may also be significant that one of the generals was Lacedaemonius, the son of Cimon, whose very name announces his father’s close connection with Sparta. Plutarch, Pericles 29.1-2, records a tradition where Pericles sent “only” (μόνος) ten ships with Lacedaemonius in order to insult him (οἶον ἐφυβριζοῦν); if nothing noteworthy was achieved it would bring him into greater disfavour (προοδιοβιβληθείν) with the Athenians because of his pro-Spartan sympathies. Plutarch’s version is usually rejected, and the appointment of Lacedaemonius has been seen as a shrewd political move, because, if the Athenians did come to blows with the Peloponnesians, it would be best if the man who made the decision to engage was a friend of the Spartans. See, for example, Kagan (1969) 243-4; de Ste Croix (1972) 76-7; Salmon (1984) 288-9; Stadter (1990) 266-8; Hornblower (1991) 88-9; Green (2006) 228 (n. 168). If this interpretation is correct, then yet again, we have an indication that the Athenians felt some discomfort in their decision to aid Corcyra. If they could legitimately go to the aid of Corcyra without breaking the treaty, why did the Athenians need to send three generals, one of whom had a close (and obvious) connection to the Lacedaemonians, with instructions to avoid a battle?
They publicly instructed them not to fight a naval battle with the Corinthians, unless they were sailing against Corcyra and they were about to disembark there or on a part of their land; in this case they were to prevent them by force.

These public instructions were given so that they would not break the treaty (1.45.3).

These “public instructions” (προείπον) are a clear indication that the Athenians felt some discomfort in their position. If they felt they were “in the right” in forming this ἐπιμοχία, and that they were merely defending the Corcyraeans, then there was no need to publicly instruct their generals to avoid a battle unless Corcyra was being attacked: for the only reason the Athenians would send ships was if the Corcyraeans were being attacked. These public instructions may be an indication that the Athenians were worried that they could be seen as the polis who broke the “spirit” of the Peace through their involvement with the Corcyraeans.\(^{53}\)

Thucydides goes on to describe the disordered naval battle of Sybota (1.48.1-54.2: see also chapter three). In his description of the Athenians’ role in this battle, he claims that:

ἐν ἂν οἱ Ἀθηναίοι μὴς παραγιγνόμεναι τοῖς Κερκυραίοις, εἷς πη
πίεζοντο, φόβον μὲν παρείχον τοῖς ἐναντίοις, μάχης δὲ οὐκ ἦρχον
dedioses oi stratigoi tηn prōrrhain ton 'Athenaiωn.

in it (i.e. the “disordered” naval battle) the Attic ships came to the aid of the Corcyraeans, if anywhere they were being pressed, and they caused fear in the

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\(^{53}\) Bloedow (1991) 186 considers these instructions “most extraordinary” and asks the question: “If it were legitimate to make an ἐπιμοχία, how could it be illegitimate to act within the framework of it?”
other side, but the generals were not the first to do battle, fearing the previous instruction of the Athenians (1.49.4).\(^{54}\)

Thucydides, therefore, carefully notes the Athenian attempt in the battle itself to avoid conflict with the Peloponnesians. However, when the Corinthians began to get the better of the Corcyraeans:

\[\text{o}i \text{ de } \text{Δ} \text{θηνα} \text{ϊοί } \text{όρ} \text{φ} \text{ό} \text{τες } \text{τούς } \text{Κ} \text{ερκυρα} \text{ίους } \text{π} \text{i} \text{ε} \text{ξ} \text{o} \text{μ} \text{έ} \text{ν} \text{ούς } \text{μ} \text{ᾶ} \text{λ} \text{l} \text{λ} \text{ού } \text{hound } \text{ά} \text{δη } \text{á} \text{π} \text{ρ} \text{o} \text{φ} \text{ας} \text{ί} \text{στ} \text{ως } \text{έ} \text{π} \text{ε} \text{k} \text{ό} \text{ύ} \text{ρουν}, \text{το } \text{μ} \text{έ} \text{n } \text{πρ} \text{ό} \text{τον } \text{ά} \text{π} \text{ε} \text{x} \text{ό} \text{μ} \text{έ} \text{n} \text{ο} \text{ι } \text{ό} \text{στε } \text{μή } \text{έ} \text{μ} \text{β} \text{ά} \text{λ} \text{l} \text{λ} \text{ε} \text{i} \text{n } \text{τ} \text{i} \text{ν} \text{i} \text{ν} \text{e} \text{p} \text{ει} \text{δ} \text{i} \text{δ} \text{e } \text{ή } \text{τ} \text{ρ} \text{o} \text{π} \text{ή } \text{έ} \text{γ} \text{ί} \text{γ} \text{υ} \text{ν} \text{ε} \text{τ} \text{o } \text{λ} \text{αμ} \text{π} \text{ρ} \text{ώ} \text{s } \text{k} \text{ά } \text{i } \text{έ} \text{n} \text{έ} \text{k} \text{ε} \text{i} \text{ν} \text{t} \text{o } \text{öi } \text{Κ} \text{o} \text{ρ} \text{i} \text{n} \text{v} \text{θ} \text{i} \text{o} \text{i}, \text{t} \text{o} \text{τ} \text{e } \text{δ} \text{ή } \text{έ} \text{ρ} \text{γ} \text{ου } \text{p} \text{ά} \text{s } \text{e} \text{i} \text{x} \text{ε} \text{t} \text{o } \text{hound } \text{k} \text{ά } \text{i } \text{δ} \text{i} \text{e} \text{k} \text{έ} \text{k} \text{r} \text{i} \text{t} \text{o } \text{o} \text{ú} \text{d} \text{e} \text{n } \text{ë} \text{ti}, \text{á} \text{l} \text{l} \text{à } \text{ξ} \text{u} \text{n} \text{έ} \text{p} \text{e} \text{s} \text{e} \text{v } \text{ës } \text{t} \text{o} \text{ú} \text{t} \text{o } \text{á} \text{n} \text{á} \text{g} \text{k} \text{i} \text{s } \text{ó} \text{σt} \text{e } \text{é} \text{π} \text{i} \text{x} \text{e} \text{i} \text{r} \text{h} \text{é} \text{s} \text{ai } \text{á} \text{l} \text{l} \text{h} \text{l} \text{oi} \text{s } \text{t} \text{ò} \text{ùs } \text{Κ} \text{o} \text{r} \text{i} \text{n} \text{v} \text{θ} \text{i} \text{o} \text{i} \text{s } \text{k} \text{á } \text{é } \text{A} \text{θ} \text{n} \text{a} \text{n} \text{a} \text{i} \text{ó} \text{us}.\]

The Athenians, seeing the Corcyraeans being greatly pressed, were now unhesitatingly giving aid, although they at first were holding off so as not to ram anyone. But when the rout was becoming clear and the Corinthians were pressing hard, at this point everyone was taking a hand in the work, and by this time there was no longer any separation, but matters came to such a pass that the Corinthians and Athenians were compelled to attack one another (1.49.7).

This is a crucial moment in Thucydides’ description of events leading to the war.\(^{55}\) It is the first instance where the Athenians and Peloponnesians have come to blows. Once again,

\(^{54}\) Stahl (2006) 316 wonders why Thucydides mentioned the fact that the Athenians were avoiding battle and (for the third time) the Athenian instructions to avoid battle, “if not – as in tragedy – to alert the reader to the next step, which will be another trigger along the road to the great catastrophe, i.e., the war?” I would suggest that Thucydides’ purpose here is not so much to alert the reader to the next step but rather to stress the idea that the Athenians wished to avoid conflict (i.e. this mention of the Athenian instructions before the Athenians and Corinthians come to blows reminds the reader of those instructions and reinforces the idea that the Athenians wished to avoid conflict).
Thucydides stresses the fact that the Athenians have done everything they can to avoid this collision. It is not until the Corcyraeans are all but defeated that the Athenians step in, and Thucydides is careful to point out that the Athenians had, at first, held off (ἀπεχόμενοι) from attacking the Corinthians. While Thucydides is careful in his language not to assign blame to either the Corinthians or Athenians for this eventual collision (note especially ἀλλὰ εὐνέπεσεν ἐς τούτῳ ἀνάγκης ὡστε ἐπιχειρήσαι ἄλληλοις τοὺς Κορινθίους καὶ Ἄθηναῖους), the way he presents what happens before and after this collision has a direct bearing on how we view Corinthian and Athenian culpability in the whole affair.

Having described the aftermath of the Corinthian rout and how the two sides came out again to face one another (1.50.1-4), Thucydides goes on to say:

ηδὴ δὲ ἦν ὡμὲ καὶ ἐπεπαινίστο αὐτοῖς ὡς ἐς ἐπίπλουν, καὶ οἱ Κορίνθιοι ἐξαπίνησιν πρύμναν ἐκρούνοντο κατιδόντες ἐκκόσι ναῦς Ἀθηναίων προσπλεύσοσι, ὡς ὑστερον τῶν δέκα βοηθοὺς ἐξέπεμψαν οἱ Ἀθηναίοι, δείσαντες, ὥπερ ἐγένετο, μὴ νικηθῶσιν οἱ Κερκυραῖοι καὶ αἱ σφέτεραι δέκα νῆσ ὑπελίγαν ἀμύνειν ὡσιν.

Already it was late in the day and the paean had been sounded for them to attack, but the Corinthians suddenly began to back water, having caught sight of twenty Athenian ships sailing towards them, which the Athenians had sent out later in aid of the original ten, fearing, just as happened, that the Corcyraeans would be defeated, and their own ten ships would be too few to defend them (1.50.5).

Hornblower (1991) 92 suggests that the “desire to record this critical moment in its context is part of [Thucydides’] reason for giving these Corcyraean events in such detail.”
This is a very dramatic piece of writing. Thucydides has built up the suspense and then at the very last moment, and without warning, twenty extra Athenian ships arrive on the scene to save the day. The dramatic nature of Thucydides’ description may affect how we view his presentation of the Corinthians and Athenians in coming to blows at Sybota.  

Simon Hornblower has noted that this is a surprisingly casual mention of the Athenians trebling their aid to Corcyra and suggests the possibility of a deliberate narrative displacement by Thucydides (in not mentioning a third Athenian assembly and the decision to send the extra twenty ships), the effect of which is “to minimize Athenian aggressiveness by leaving in the reader’s mind the impression of scrupulousness created by [1].45.3.” There is no doubt that this casual mention of extra Athenian aid lessens the impact of a more aggressive stance by the Athenians, as the reader finds it harder to see it as a calculated decision, made in the Athenian assembly, which could potentially lead to further clashes with the Corinthians. The question is, was it a deliberate act of

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56 Kagan (1969) 247-8 is a good example of the older belief that Thucydides was not concerned with creating drama in his narrative, but merely reported facts. This scene “would be too dramatic to believe if it had been told by Herodotus or Plutarch, but since we have it from the most sober and austere of historians, we cannot doubt its historicity.” While there is no reason to doubt the historicity of this scene as such, there are very good reasons for questioning Thucydides’ purpose in presenting such a dramatic scene, which much of the older scholarship missed through their belief that Thucydides was “the most sober and austere of historians.”

57 This of course assumes that there was a third Athenian assembly which debated sending more ships to Corcyra; an assumption that seems likely. For Hornblower’s opinion on this passage see Hornblower (1991) 90 and 94 (the quote is taken from 94); (1994) 140-3; (2002) 109-10; (2008) 1055-9. Diodorus 12.33.2 claims that when the Athenians sent the original ten triremes they promised to send more if they were required. This may simply be his reconstruction of Thucydides’ account to help explain the arrival of the extra twenty Athenian ships. In any case, Thucydides’ failure to mention either the promise to send more ships, or a third assembly where the decision was made, adds to the dramatic nature of this scene: we are not expecting more ships to arrive.

suppression by Thucydides for this purpose, or was it simply a way to create more drama to the narrative?

Hornblower himself, in his original discussion of this passage noted the problem, and although he seemed to favour the more “sinister” interpretation, he pointed out that as a story teller, Thucydides, having got to the scene at Corcyra, would not want to break off his narrative and go back to describe the debate at Athens. This would of course take the suspense (and surprise) away from the narrative. Therefore, a purely literary explanation can be given for this passage, with no “sinister intent” on Thucydides’ part. However, one issue with the purely literary interpretation is that it excuses Thucydides from any form of deliberate manipulation and can be invoked in order to discredit any claims of bias.

59 Hornblower (1991) 94. cf. Hornblower (1994) 142-3. See Stahl (2006) 330-3 who, in arguing against Hornblower’s idea of manipulation states: “why should Thucydides have reported a third debate ... if it changed neither the import of the decision taken in the second assembly nor the ensuing course of events? From a literary perspective, such an account would have produced a fragmentation of the teleological economy and destroyed the consistency of the train of thought that Thucydides was entrusting to his narrative” (quote from 332-3). Had Thucydides recorded the decision to send the ships, and not merely presented them as arriving to “save the day,” I think we would have a different impression of this Athenian action in our minds. While the Athenians could still claim that they were acting “defensively” (i.e. in aiding Corcyra), the fact is they sent twenty more ships to do battle with the Corinthians. One of the key questions arising from this passage is, if the Athenians considered that ten ships would be too few to defend Corcyra, why did they not send more in the first place? Surely, the newly formed ἓπιμαχία allowed the Athenians to send as many ships as they wished (Bloedow (1991) 185-6). Moreover, if the Athenians were merely concerned about protecting Corcyra then a larger force would have had a greater chance of successfully deterring the Corinthians than merely ten ships. At the very least, the later decision to send twenty more ships surely indicates that the Athenians were now less concerned to avoid direct conflict with the Corinthians. See Hornblower’s reply to Stahl’s chapter: Hornblower (2008) 1055-9: “it cannot be plausibly maintained that the trebling of the commitment was without consequences; it was a risky, perhaps provocative, decision to take” (quote from 1057). It is interesting to note that Hornblower appears to be torn between accepting a purely literary explanation or an historical manipulation by Thucydides in this passage (see Hornblower (2008) 1058 for his admission of uncertainty). His opinion, however, does seem to have shifted slightly more towards the literary interpretation.

60 See, for example, Rood (1998) 222-3; Morrison (1999) 121-3.
on Thucydides’ part. The very fact that the narrative is so well written and dramatic suggests the possibility that the very reason it has been so dramatically written is in order for the author to mask something which he did not want his readers to consider the full implication of: in this case that the Athenians had decided on a more aggressive line of approach. This would contradict Thucydides’ carefully constructed narrative of the Athenians wishing to avoid conflict.

It is also important to point out that the arrival of the extra twenty Athenian ships is presented from the Corinthian perspective. It is they who take fright and withdraw. Not only does Thucydides potentially suppress the decision to send more ships to Corcyra, he goes so far as to present their very arrival through the eyes of the Corinthians, who are just about to undertake an aggressive attack on the Corcyraean (plus the ten Athenian) ships. To the Corinthians (and the reader because of this focalization), the Athenian ships appear out of nowhere, just in the nick of time to save Corcyra. Therefore, the arrival of these twenty Athenian ships comes across as a justified reaction to an aggressive approach by the Corinthians, in attempting another attack on the island, rather than the calculated decision it was, made well before this second attempt by the Corinthians to land on the island.

After describing how both sides retired for the night, Thucydides tells us that the next day, the Corcyraeans and Athenians sailed out to see if the Corinthians would do

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61 Morrison (1999) 122. The technique of presenting events from a particular point of view can be called by the more technical term focalization. Hornblower (1994) 134 describes focalization as “the different perspectives or points of view from which events are viewed and interpreted.” See also Morrison (1999) 95-6.

62 Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 105 suggest that it would have taken a fleet of triremes four days to sail the 390 sea miles from the Piraeus to Corcyra (this is assuming a speed of seven knots and a sixteen hour day, with a midday break of two hours). The voyage may have been even longer if the winds around cape Malea were unfavourable. On the conditions around Malea see Morton (2001) 81-5.
battle. The Corinthians formed a line in the open sea but were not intending to begin a battle, since they saw the Athenian reinforcements and had prisoners to guard along with ships to repair (1.52.1-2). Thucydides claims that:

τοὺ δὲ οἶκαδε πλοῦ μᾶλλον διεσκόπουν ὅτι κομισθήσονται, δεδιότες μὴ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι νομίσαντες λειύσθαι τὰς σπονδὰς, διότι ἐς χεῖρας ἠλθον, οὐκ ἔωσι σφᾶς ἀποπλέειν.

they were more concerned by which way they would return, sailing for home, fearing that the Athenians, considering the treaty broken, because they had come to blows, would not allow them to sail away (1.52.3).

They then put some men in a small boat, without a herald’s wand (κηρυκείον) and sent them to the Athenians in order to test (πείρασιν) what they would do (1.53.1). When they arrived, they claimed that the Athenians were in the wrong (ἀδίκετε) in starting the war and breaking the treaty, before going on to say that if indeed the Athenians were breaking the treaty, they should take those in the boat as prisoners (1.53.2). The presentation of this desire by the Corinthians to test the Athenian attitude towards whether the peace is broken is important. To begin with, it is the Corinthians who feel that they have to find out whether the peace is broken and if the Athenians will prevent them sailing home. Therefore, not only are we constantly reminded by Thucydides of Athens’ desire to avoid a conflict and breach of the treaty (see the above discussion), he also presents the very idea that the treaty has been broken because of the prior engagement through the eyes of the Corinthians. The impression Thucydides leaves us with is that the Athenians have done everything possible to keep the peace, while the Corinthians fear that they have

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63 The Corinthians sail without a herald’s wand because that would be an admission that the peace had been broken. See Kagan (1969) 249; Hornblower (1991) 96.
64 Bloedow (1991) 189-90 sees an element of bluff in the Corinthian approach to the Athenians.
played a part in breaking the peace, because of their aggressive actions, and are worried the Athenians can (perhaps legitimately) try and prevent them sailing away.

Because Thucydides has presented the Corinthians as “testing the waters,” he can give the Athenians the final word on whether the treaty has been broken. This can be seen in the Athenians’ reply: οὔτε ἄρχομεν πολέμου, οὔτέ ἀνδρὲς Πελοποννήσιοι, οὔτε τὰς σπονδὰς λύομεν, Κερκυραίοις δὲ τοῖς ἔχομεν οὕσι βοήθοι ἠλθομεν, “Neither are we beginning a war, o Peloponnesians, nor are we breaking the treaty, but we have come to aid these Corcyraeans, who are our allies” (1.53.4). The Athenians then inform the Corinthians that they will allow them to sail where they wish, except against Corcyra. Therefore, the Athenians present themselves as not having broken the treaty. They have merely acted to save an ally. The Athenians of course could not consider the treaty broken because of what had happened, otherwise they would be seen as responsible for the breaking of the treaty with the Peloponnesians, given the fact that it was their decision to go and aid the Corcyraeans which resulted in the clash with the Peloponnesians.

Thucydides’ final statement of the Corcyraean affair also ties into the notions discussed above. After describing the Corinthians taking Anactorium by treachery, and selling most of their prisoners (1.55.1), Thucydides states that: αἰτία δὲ αὑτῆ πρώτη ἔγένετο τοῦ πολέμου τοῖς Κορινθίοις ἐς τοὺς Αθηναίους, ἵτι σφίσιν ἐν σπονδαῖς μετὰ Κερκυραίων ἔνασμάτων, “this became the first cause of the war for the Corinthians against the Athenians, that they had fought a naval battle against them with the Corcyraeans while in treaty” (1.55.2). Thucydides does not deny that the Athenians had

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65 Morrison (1999) 124: “It is noteworthy that the first words of the Athenians in the History are a response to charges that they have committed injustice and have broken a treaty.” This is surely deliberate on Thucydides’ part.

66 Contrast with de Ste Croix (1972) 77-8.
fought the Corinthians while under treaty. However, he presents the first cause of war through the eyes of the Corinthians. It is the Corinthians’ first cause for war against the Athenians - not the Athenians first cause for war. Surely (given Thucydides’ emphasis on the Athenians being careful to avoid breaking the treaty), if the treaty had been broken, Athens too had a cause for war. The impression then is that the Corinthians felt that they had a cause for war, while the Athenians had managed to conduct themselves in such a way that they avoided having their own cause for war. Thus the Corinthians come across as the aggressors in the whole affair and the Athenians appear much more “passive.” This impression is especially important for the next of the αἰτία, the Potidaean affair.

The Potidaean Affair

Thucydides tells us that the Potidaean affair immediately (ἐνακολουθοῦσα) followed on from the aftermath of Sybota and caused another διάφορα between the Athenians and Peloponnesians which led to war (1.56.1).67 He states that:

τῶν γὰρ Κορινθίων πρασσόντων ὅπως τιμωρήσονται αὐτούς,
ὑποτοπήσαντες τὴν ἐχθραν αὐτῶν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι Ποτειδαῖται, οἱ
οἰκούσιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἱσθμᾶ τῆς Παλλήνης, Κορινθίων ἀποίκους, ἐαυτῶν δὲ
ξυμμάχους φόρου ὑποτελεῖς, ἐκέλευον τὸ ἐς Παλλήνην τείχος καθελεῖν
καὶ ὀμίρους δοῦναι, τοὺς τε ἐπιδημιουργοὺς ἐκπέμπειν καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν
μὴ δέχεσθαι οὐς κατὰ ἐτὸς ἔκαστον Κορινθίοι ἔπεμπον, δείλαντες μὴ

67 However, see Gomme (1945) 199 who noted that ἐνακολουθοῦσα “may mean no more than the next possible event.”
Because the Corinthians were taking action so as to take revenge on them (i.e. the Athenians), suspecting the hatred of them the Athenians ordered the Potidaeans, who live on the Isthmus of Pallene and are Corinthian colonists but their own tribute-paying allies, to take down the wall at Pallene, give hostages, to send away the magistrates and in the future not to receive those whom the Corinthians sent each year. They feared that they (i.e. the Potidaeans) would revolt, having been persuaded by Perdiccas and the Corinthians, and that their other allies in Thrace would join in revolt (1.56.2). 68

Thucydides’ use of the genitive absolute here is noteworthy. Because/since/as/when the Corinthians were “taking action” (πρασσόντων) for revenge (τιμωρήσονταί) against the Athenians, following the battle of Sybota, the Athenians decided to send their demands to Potidaea (to take the wall down, send hostages, and not to receive the Corinthian ἐπιδημιουργοί). Therefore, Athenian action, in sending the demands, is presented as a reaction to some form of Corinthian action in revenging themselves. However, Thucydides does not tell us what that action was. He merely states that the Athenians took these measures fearing (δείσοντες) that Perdiccas and the Corinthians would persuade the Potidaeans to revolt, which might induce the other allies in Thrace also to revolt. No specific action is mentioned. 69

68 The translation of πρασσόντων as “taking action” is from Salmon (1984) 293 (n. 27).
69 Salmon (1984) 292-6 (see also 392-3) notes that Thucydides does not tell us what action the Corinthians took, and as such we cannot compare his conclusion with the evidence he had for it. “But his authority stands high enough for us to accept that Corinth had already taken positive action against Athens when the orders were sent” (293). Based on this, Salmon goes on to emphasise that the Athenians were
It is also important to note Thucydides’ description of what follows:

ταύτα δὲ περὶ τοὺς Ποτίδαιατος οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι προπαρεσκευάζοντο εὐθὺς μετὰ τὴν ἐν Κερκύρα ναυμαχίαν οἱ τε γὰρ Κορίνθιοι φανερῶς ἦδη διάφοροι ἦσαν.

Concerning the Potidaeans, the Athenians were preparing these things beforehand, immediately after the naval battle at Corcyra; for the Corinthians were now openly at odds (i.e. towards the Athenians) (1.57.1-2).

The Athenians were “preparing beforehand” (προπαρεσκευάζοντο) and were anticipating a revolt, not reacting to one. This would imply that the Athenians acted first in sending their demands to Potidaea.70 Once again, Corinthian hostility is noted in Thucydides’ description of events, but no specific action is mentioned. So far, Thucydides has merely claimed that the Corinthians were “taking action” (1.56.2) and were “openly at odds” with the Athenians (1.57.2).

Thucydides tells us that Perdiccas, the king of Macedon, who had been a friend and ally of the Athenians, had been turned into an enemy because the Athenians had allied

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with his brother Philip and cousin Derdas, who then united against him (1.57.2-3). Perdiccas was taking action (ἐπροσσευ) at Sparta to try and create a state of war for the Peloponnesians, and was trying to get the Corinthians to support the Potidaeans in their revolt (1.57.4). Perdiccas was also attempting to get the Chalcidians in Thrace and the Bottiaeans to join in the revolt (1.57.5), thus confirming the Athenian fears described at 1.56.2 (see above). Thucydides tells us that the Athenians perceived (αἰσθῶμεν) this and wanting to anticipate (προκαταλαμβάνει) the revolt, sent thirty ships and a thousand hoplites to Perdiccas’ territory with instructions to take hostages, pull down the wall and watch (φυλακήν) the neighbouring areas (1.57.6). The Athenians send the ships before Potidaea revolts. So far, in Thucydides’ own description, the Corinthians have not “taken action” despite his earlier claim that they were doing so to revenge themselves. All the action to do with Potidaea has been done by the Athenians.

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71 Meiggs (1972) 196-7 and 308 noted that Thucydides makes no comment on the Athenian change of policy in switching from Perdiccas to Philip and Derdas, and suggested that the change in policy was sheer opportunism. For a discussion on Thucydides’ depiction of the Athenians’ relationship with Philip and their actions in Macedonia, see Badian (1993) 171-85.

72 Schwartz [19292] (1960) 99 suggested that the order to the Potidaeans at 1.56.2 and the instructions at 1.57.6 “are a double narration of the same event” (für die doppelte Erzählung einer und derselben Sache zu halten) resulting from the involvement of an editor.

73 Schwartz [19292] (1960) 96-9 went so far as to suggest that “the whole beginning of the Potidaean affair has been edited faultily” (der ganze Anfang der Ποτιδαίων mangelhaft redigiert ist) and was not written by Thucydides. As he noted, according to 1.56.2 it has to be assumed that the Athenians issued the demands to the Potidaeans because of their fear that the Corinthians could avenge themselves after the Athenian involvement at Sybota. Yet, there is another motive for the conflict in the Chalcidice in the subsequent narration; the Athenians’ fear of the intrigues of Perdiccas. Schwartz claimed that “the evolving narration ... excludes all possibility of doubt” (die allmählich sich entfaltende Erzählung ... schlägt jeden Zweifel daran nieder) that Perdiccas’ machinations (Umtriebe) were the primary cause for the Athenian steps against Potidaea. While I do not agree with his assertion that an editor has connected the Potidaean and Corcyraean affairs, but rather think Thucydides himself has connected the two, I do agree that the
Thucydides continues:

Ποτείδεατι δε πέμψαντες μεν και παρ' Αθηναίους πρέσβεις, ει πως
πείσειαν μη σφών πέρι νεωτερίζειν μηδέν, ἐλθόντες δε και ες την
Λακεδαίμονα μετὰ Κορινθίων, ἑπρασσον ὅπως ἐτοιμάσαντο
τιμωρίαν, ἢ δει, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ τε 'Αθηνῶν ἐκ πολλοὺ πράσσοντες οὐδὲν
ηύροντο ἐπιτήδειον, ἀλλ’ αἱ νῆες αἱ ἐπὶ Μακεδονίαν καὶ ἐπὶ σφάς
ὀμοίως ἐπέλευν, καὶ τὰ τέλη τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων ὑπέσχετο αὐτοῖς, ἢν
ἐπὶ Ποτείδαιαν ἦσαν 'Αθηναίοι, ἐς τὴν Ἀττικὴν ἔαβαλεῖν, τότε δὴ
catat τὸν καιρὸν τούτον ἀφίστανται μετὰ Χαλκίδων καὶ Βοττιαιών
κοινῆς ἐξουσίαντες.

The Potidaeans having also sent ambassadors to the Athenians, in case they
could persuade them not to use forcible measures against them, and also
having gone to Lacedaemon with the Corinthians [were taking action] so that
they would be prepared for retribution, if it was necessary. Since, from Athens,
after negotiating for a long time, they found nothing suitable, but the ships
were sailing against Macedonia and themselves, and the authorities of the
Lacedaemons promised them that if the Athenians went against Potidaea, they
would invade Attica, then indeed, at this time, they revolted, having sworn
together with the Chalcidians and Bottiaeans (1.58.1).74

74 primary cause for the conflict in the Chalcidice seems to be connected to the relationship between
Perdiccas and Athens.

74 ἑπρασσον has been bracketed by the editor and indicates that he thinks it does not belong in the
text. It has been argued that the main verb of the sentence is ἀφίστανται, and that there is no room for
another finite verb in this delicately balanced sentence (see Cameron (2003) 67). However, Gomme (1945)
210 suggested that it can possibly be kept by inserting δε after ἐπειδὴ (or, ἐπεί δε δή), in order to make it
clear that the clause ἐπειδὴ … ἐπέλευν is dependent only on τότε δή, not on ὅπως ἐτοιμάσαντο
Again, it is worth pointing out that the Potidaeans only revolt after the Athenians have sent their ships to Potidaea and Macedonia. It is the Athenians who have taken action, not the Corinthians.

Thucydides’ mention of the Spartan promise to invade Attica if the Athenians attack Potidaea is important to note, for it implies that the Spartans were willing to go to war with Athens over a territory outside their sphere of influence (and one which was admitted to be part of the Athenian arche: 1.56.2). However, Badian, as part of his thesis that Thucydides deliberately misrepresents Sparta, sees this as another example of Thucydides reminding the “naive” reader of Sparta’s willingness to break her oaths. The Spartan failure to follow up immediately on this threat was a cause of complaint for the Corinthians at the meeting of the allies later on (1.71.4: see below). There is little doubt that Thucydides misrepresents Sparta in his account of the origins of the war. In his account, the Potidaeans revolted after receiving this promise from the Spartans, and Thucydides may have been trying to emphasise to his Athenian audience the idea that the Spartans were prepared to interfere in “Athenian business.”

75 Kagan (1969) 279-80 used this promise as evidence that there was a significant “war party” in Sparta by winter 433/2 BC (the failure to follow through on this promise proves that the war party was still a minority).

76 Badian (1993) 138. He examines this promise as part of his argument that there was a general autonomy clause in the Thirty Years Peace, which, if correct, would make this promise by the Spartans more justified.

When the thirty Athenian ships arrived in the Thracian area they discovered that Potidaea and the other areas were in revolt (1.59.1). Thucydides states that the Athenians decided that they were unable to fight both Perdiccas and the other areas in revolt at the same time, so they decided to go to Macedon, the original reason they were sent out (τὸ πρῶτον ἐξεπέμποντο), to carry on the war with Philip and Derdas’ brothers (1.59.2).

Thucydides now informs us of the first specific Corinthian action in relation to Potidaea:

καὶ ἐν τούτῳ οἱ Κορίνθιοι, τῆς Ποτιδαίας ἀφεστηκύιας καὶ τῶν Ἀττικῶν νεῶν περὶ Μακεδονίαν οὐσῶν, δεδίότες περὶ τῶν χαρίω καὶ οἰκεῖον τῶν κίνδυνων ἡγούμενοι πέμπουσιν ἑαυτῶν τε ἐθελοντάς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Πελοποννησίων μισθῶν πείσαντες ἐξακοσίους καὶ χίλιους τοὺς πάντας ὀπλίτας καὶ ψιλοὺς τετρακοσίους.

At this point, the Corinthians, since the Potidaeans were in revolt and the Attic ships were off Macedonia, fearing for the place, and considering the danger personal, sent both volunteers of their own and mercenaries from the other Peloponnesians, totalling sixteen hundred hoplites and four hundred light armed (1.60.1).

It is only now, when the Potidaeans are in revolt and the Athenians have already acted by sending thirty ships north, that the Corinthians act. This makes one slightly suspicious of Thucydides’ earlier claim that the Corinthians were “taking action” (πρασσόντων) for revenge (1.56.2). Thucydides’ case would surely be strengthened by at least mentioning what the Corinthian actions were, but he does not do so. This makes me inclined to think that Thucydides himself has inserted the idea of Corinthian action, due to their hostility and anger over Sybota, into his narrative in order to mask Athenian action in applying force in the north Aegean prior to the outbreak of the war.
Ernst Badian has argued that there was a general autonomy clause in the Thirty Years Peace and that Thucydides deliberately kept silent about it in order to present Athenian actions in a positive light.\(^{78}\) Thucydides, quite famously, only mentions the Aeginetan complaint to the Spartans that the Athenians have violated their autonomy, which was guaranteed in the Peace (1.67.2). If there was a general autonomy clause in the Peace, and not just a special clause for Aegina,\(^{79}\) then the Athenian action at Potidaea can be seen in a different light. Although Potidaea was a tribute-paying ally of the Athenians, we are informed by Thucydides that the Potidaeans also annually received Corinthian ἐπίδημιοργοί (1.56.2), which suggests some degree of “independence” from Athenian control. The sudden withdrawal of this “special status” for a polis with no previous record of disloyalty (surely Thucydides would have mentioned any disloyalty to strengthen his case), would have infringed on an autonomy clause.\(^{80}\)

\(^{78}\) Badian (1993) 137-42. See Rood’s (1998) 216-19 response. Thucydides does not tell us what the terms of the treaty were other than to state that Athens had to give up Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen and Achaea (1.115.1) and we have to infer most of them from bits and pieces of evidence. It seems that “unwritten states” were allowed to join whichever side they wanted (1.35.2; 1.40.2); the Athenians were not allowed to attack the Peloponnesians (1.44.1; 1.45.3 - presumably there was a clause that the Peloponnesians could not attack Athens as well - see 7.18.2-3); they were to settle their differences by arbitration (1.78.4; 1.140.2; 7.18.2-3. See also 1.85.2); there also appears to have been some sort of promise to leave poleis autonomous (1.67.2- specifically Aegina’s autonomy; 1.144.2) and some form of promise not to interfere in trade (1.67.4), although see de Ste Croix (1972) 294. The Megarian decree is incredibly problematic and will be discussed in more detail below. Argos also appears to have received special treatment and could be at peace with Athens (Pausanias 5.23.4). For a summary of the possible terms of the Thirty Years Peace see de Ste Croix (1972) appendix i (293-4).

\(^{79}\) As suggested by Merrit, Wade-Gery and McGregor (1950) 303.

\(^{80}\) Badian (1993) 139-40. Contrast with Rood (1998) 217. Compare with most scholars who claim that Athens was legally in the right over the Potidaean affair and that the Corinthians had no right to interfere in Potidaea, as it had been formally recognised as an ally of Athens in the Thirty Years Peace: e.g. de Ste Croix (1972) 79-85; Salmon (1984) 295-6; Rhodes (1987) 162.
Given the nature of the evidence, we simply cannot tell whether there was (or was not) a general autonomy clause in the Thirty Years Peace, and therefore, a “legalistic” approach to the Potidaean affair does not advance our understanding of the causes of the war. Moreover, the strictly legalistic approach may be less relevant in this case, given the fact that the Corinthians and Athenians had already fought at Sybota. Even if there was not a general autonomy clause, it is easy to see how the Corinthians would be prepared to react to the Athenian demands on a city they clearly had influence in (a desire for revenge does not necessarily mean that the Corinthians were agitating for a rebellion – opportunism is also a possibility). The removal of the Corinthian ἐπιδημιοργοί was, at the very least, a show of force by the Athenians and an attempt to impose themselves on the Potidaeans.  

\[81\] Exactly what the term αὐτονομία defines is a difficult problem. Ostwald (1982) 28-9, in discussing Aegina’s autonomy states that: “By itself neither the razing of her walls, nor the loss of her fleet, nor the payment of tribute constitute a loss of αὐτονομία. But since there is no evidence for any state being called αὐτόνομος which was compelled (and not merely requested) to demolish its walls and surrender its fleet, and since the payment of tribute is compatible with αὐτονομία only if it is not exacted under compulsion (βία), we may conclude that a state is αὐτόνομος when it is left free to exercise on its own the most rudimentary powers necessary for its survival. In practice it means that it can make its own decisions, free from violent interference by a stronger state, about what is and what is not in the interest of its survival, and that it can dispose of the military means necessary to implement measures necessary to ensure its survival.” While this definition may well be correct, I would suggest that a definition of autonomy should possibly not be limited to the idea of exclusion of compulsion/violent interference by a major power. Potentially, autonomy includes the ability of a polis to control its own internal political processes (for example, its own law courts). This of course is so long as these internal processes do not affect the more powerful polis’ hegemony (note that the concept of αὐτονομία always involves a weaker power’s relationship to a stronger: see Ostwald (1982) 1-9). Gomme (1945) 342, in commenting on the settlement between Athens and Chalcis, noted that having complete control over your magistrates was the “true mark of autonomy” (Interestingly, in the settlement, the Chalcidian magistrates’ authority was limited, as cases of treason, and those involving exile, death, or loss of citizenship as the penalty, were referred to Athens). Meiggs (1972) 183-4 suggested that so long as Aegina paid her tribute regularly she would not be required to send her most important trials to Athenian courts, nor be subjected to an Athenian garrison or political resident. Compare with the Athenian speech at Sparta 1.77.1-4, which, although general in nature, could potentially be applied to Aegina. If this is correct, then it puts the Athenian orders to Potidaea in an
There are some indications that the Athenians were acting more aggressively in the north Aegean prior to the Potidaean revolt than what Thucydides’ narrative would imply. There is a possibility that Potidaea’s tribute was raised from six to fifteen talents some time between 439/8 BC and 435/4 BC, but this suggestion is problematic. The tribute lists show that Scione (also on the Pallenic peninsula) had its tribute assessment raised from six to fifteen talents in 435/4 BC: prior to 435/4 BC Scione had paid six talents, in 432/1 BC it paid four talents, while in 430/29 BC and 429/8 BC it paid nine. It appears that the amount paid by Potidaea was regularly six talents (in 444/3 BC, 443/2 BC, 440/39 BC and 435/4 BC), but in 434/3 BC the amount paid by Potidaea is missing, while in the following year the tribute was fifteen talents, after which came the revolt and the Potidaeans disappear from the tribute lists. The authors of *The Athenian Tribute Lists* made the suggestion that a stonecutter substituted Scione for Potidaea in the tribute lists by mistake (thus Scione paid six talents in 435/4 BC as previously, while Potidaea paid fifteen), and this reflects the trouble in Potidaea, which began earlier than we suppose, with the Athenians adopting

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interesting light. If the Aeginetans could complain of an infringement on their autonomy in this respect, then surely the Potidaeans could also (given that both were tribute-paying states). The Athenians removed the Corinthian magistrates who, given the nature of the evidence, we can assume the Potidaeans wanted; the Potidaeans’ appeal to Corinth for help is surely a sign they were happy with the nature of Corinthian involvement in their polis. Presumably, the Athenians would replace these magistrates with their own (i.e. who the Potidaeans did not want). This, of course, assumes that there was not a specific clause relating to Aegina alone, but rather a more general promise of autonomy, which I consider plausible given Thucydides’ comments at 1.139.3 and 1.144.2. This assumption also assumes that Aegina was not a member of the Peloponnesian League - a problematic issue. See Figueira (1981) who plausibly concludes that Aegina was not a member of the League. Contrast with de Ste Croix (1972) 333-5. If Figueira is correct, then Aegina and Potidae are on a similar footing as both pay tribute to Athens (although Potidae of course was a member of the Athenian arche). Therefore, the removal of Potidaea’s magistrates would constitute an infringement on their autonomy.

disciplinary measures as early as 435/4 BC. If this is correct, then Thucydides’ account in presenting the Athenians reacting to unspecified Corinthian action is deliberately misleading, as the tribute lists would indicate that the Athenians had been taking provocative measures against Potidaea well before any Corinthian action against Athens. However, it would have been incredibly careless of the Athenians (and the stonecutter) to have such a mistake on an important and public document, potentially for several years. Because of this, we probably should not place too much emphasis on fluctuations in tribute assessment for the area (especially given the patchy nature of the tribute lists).

Although the evidence from the tribute lists is problematic, there is some other evidence which suggests that the Athenians were attempting to extend their influence in the north Aegean before the war. This can be inferred by Thucydides’ comment that the Athenians had allied with Philip and Derdas, who then teamed up against Perdiccas in Macedon prior to the Potidaean revolt (1.57.2-3). It may be significant in this case that Thucydides informs us that the thirty ships sent to the north Aegean were originally sent (τὸ πρῶτον ἔξετείμπουτο), to campaign in Macedon with Philip and the brothers of Derdas (1.59.2). This may be an indication that the Athenians were already planning to send an expedition north which was “sidetracked” by the Potidaean revolt. Athenian action

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85 Other poleis on the Pallenic peninsula also had fluctuations in their assessment. For example, Mende, in 451 BC paid eight talents, fifteen in 446 BC and 445 BC, five in 443 BC, nine in 442 BC, and five in 439 BC, before the assessment levelled off at eight in 437 BC. While the fifteen talents paid in 446 BC also included Scione’s tribute (Meritt, Wade-Gery, and McGregor (1950) 64), there are clear fluctuations in the level of assessment.
in the north Aegean did not simply come about as a reaction to Corinthian aggression and desire for war. Potidaea could have revolted for its own purposes and the Corinthians were not necessarily behind it.

Thucydides has cleverly turned the Corinthian anger over Sybota into a motivation for a revolt in the north Aegean which would prove to be one of the αἰτίαι of the war. As we have seen, there are indications that the Potidaean revolt had more to do with the Potidaeans reacting to Athenian actions in the north rather than the Corinthians using the polis as a means to get revenge on the Athenians. Thucydides’ depiction of the Corinthians being eager for revenge and desiring war plays an important part in his description of how the Spartans became involved in the escalating conflict.

Another relevant action of the Athenians in the north Aegean is the founding of Amphipolis in 437 BC. Thucydides does not mention it in book one and leaves it until 4.102 when he gives us the background of Amphipolis before describing its capture by Brasidas in 424/3 BC. Amphipolis was clearly an important area as can be seen by the number of attempts to form a colony there (4.102 cf. 4.108.1 along with Hornblower (1996) 340-2). The founding of Amphipolis, at the very least, indicates a pro-active (aggressive?) policy of the Athenians in the area. The question is whether or not Thucydides deliberately left out a description of the founding in book one, in order to keep it out of sight, and thus keep his presentation of Athens reacting to events in the area, or whether its omission is not for apologetic purposes but simply left until the background is most needed (i.e. the description of the numerous attempts to found Amphipolis indicates its importance to Athens, and therefore Thucydides is merely emphasising this before its capture). See Hornblower (1991) 98-9; (1996) 323-4; (2002) 106. Compare with Rood (1998) 219-20. If Thucydides had informed us of the founding of Amphipolis in book one, and given us a better description of the Athenian actions in Macedonia, I think we would have a different impression of the Potidaean revolt. It would look less like a means for the Corinthians to get revenge on the Athenians, and would look more like a response to Athenian actions in the north Aegean.
The Debate at Sparta and the Declaration of War

Following his description of the Potidaean revolt Thucydides states:

Tois δ’ Ἀθηναίοις καὶ Πελοποννησίοις αἰτίαι μὲν αὕται προφεγένητο ἐς ἀλλήλους, τοῖς μὲν Κορινθίοις ὅτι τὴν Ποτιδαίαν ἕσυχων οὖσαν ἀποκιόντα καὶ ἄνδρας Κορινθίων τε καὶ Πελοποννησίων ἐν αὐτῇ ὄντας ἐπολιορκοῦν, τοῖς δὲ Ἀθηναίοις ἐς τούς Πελοποννησίους ὅτι ἕσυχων τε πόλεων ξυμμαχία καὶ φόρου ὑποτελῆ ἀπέστησαν, καὶ ἔλθοντες φύσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ προφανοῦς ἐμάχοντο μετὰ Ποτιδαίων. οὐ μέντοι δὲ γε πόλεμός πω ἐξενεργάθη, ἀλλ’ ἐτὶ ἀνοκωχῇ ἡ ἡ ἰδίᾳ γὰρ ταῦτα ὁι Κορινθίοι ἐπράξαν. πολιορκομένης δὲ τῆς Ποτιδαίας οὐχ ἡσύχαζοι, ἄνδρῶν τε φύσιν ἐνότων καὶ ἄμα περὶ τῷ χωρίῳ δεδοτές· παρεκάλουν τε εὐθὺς ἐς τὴν Λακεδαιμόνα τοὺς ξυμμάχους καὶ κατεβόων ἔλθοντες τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὅτι σπονδᾶς τε λελικότες εἶεν καὶ ἀδικοίεν τὴν Πελοπόννησον.

For the Athenians and Peloponnesians, these complaints already existed towards each other; for the Corinthians, that the Athenians were besieging Potidaea, their own colony, and with Corinthians and Peloponnesians who were in it; for the Athenians towards the Peloponnesians, that they had caused to revolt their own allied and tribute paying city, and in going there they were openly fighting against themselves with the Potidaeans. However, war at any rate had not yet broken out, but there was still an armistice: for the Corinthians had done these things privately. But since Potidaea was being besieged they no longer were keeping quiet, since their own men were inside and at the same
time they feared for the place. Immediately they began inviting the allies to Lacedaemon, and going there they spoke out against the Athenians, that they had both broken the treaty and were doing wrong to the Peloponnese (1.66-67.1).

There are a couple of significant details to note in this passage. The first is that although Thucydides claims both sides had complaints against each other, war had not yet broken out “for the Corinthians had done these things ἰδιὰ.” This refers back to Thucydides’ description of the Corinthians sending out a force of their own volunteers (ἐθελοντὰς) and mercenaries (μισθοὶ πείσαντες) to Potidaea under the command of Aristeus, son of Adeimantus (1.60.1-2). Thucydides’ claim that the Corinthians have done these things ἰδιὰ has been taken to mean that Aristeus’ volunteer army was acting “unofficially” in going to Potidaea, and thus Corinth was trying to avoid openly breaching the Thirty Years Peace.87 However, de Ste Croix made a powerful case for supposing that ἰδιὰ refers to the Corinthian action being independent of the rest of the Peloponnesians, rather than a private action of Aristeus’.88 If this is correct, it is claimed, Corinth broke the Thirty Years Peace by interfering in a territory which belonged to Athens in the Peace.89 However, the fact that the Corinthians and Athenians had already come to blows at Sybota surely constituted a breach of the Peace, and therefore the Corinthian action at Potidaea (be it polis sanctioned or private) becomes less important to the question of strict causal responsibility (i.e. if the Peace was already broken how could the Corinthians be breaking it again?).

88 De Ste Croix (1972) 82-5. See also, for example, Andrewes (Gomme, Andrewes and Dover) (1970) 26; Salmon (1984) 294-5; Hornblower (1991) 107.
89 De Ste Croix (1972) 82 (n. 43), 84-5.
It is also important to note that once again it is the Corinthians who are driving the movement towards war. In Thucydides’ account it is the Corinthians who bring matters into the open and summon the allies to Sparta; therefore, they are responsible for getting the Spartans involved and escalating the conflict to the next level.\(^{90}\) While Thucydides claims that the ἀληθεστάτην πρόφοσιν of the war was the growth of Athenian power and the fear this inspired in Sparta (1.23.6), he presents the private Corinthian complaints as the catalyst for Spartan involvement. This is important to bear in mind, because it is only now, once Thucydides has set the scene for Spartan involvement, that we hear other poleis also had complaints to make against the Athenians. The two prominent ones which Thucydides mentions are those of the Aeginetans, who complained about their loss of autonomy (1.67.2), and the Megarians who, among other complaints, complained about their exclusion from both the harbours of the Athenian empire and the agora of Attica (1.67.4).\(^{91}\) It is not until later on in Thucydides’ narrative that we find out how important these complaints actually were in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (1.139.1-2; 1.140.2-5; 2.27.1).\(^{92}\) Various attempts have been made to explain (and often to justify) why Thucydides decided to focus on the Corinthian complaints and barely mention the others.\(^{93}\) However, the importance for this study is simply the fact that Thucydides does


\(^{91}\) Athenian relations with Megara will be discussed in more detail in chapter two. One should also note that at 3.2.1 Thucydides informs us that the Lesbians had wanted to revolt from Athens before the war, but the Spartans had not received their appeal favourably. Although de Ste Croix (1972) 204-5 rightly pointed out that this appeal is undatable, and could have occurred even in the early 430s, it is still an indication that more poleis were unhappy with Athenian actions prior to the war than what Thucydides lets us see. Compare Hornblower (1991) 382-3 with de Ste Croix.

\(^{92}\) Compare with Aristophanes Acharnians 517-39; Peace 605-14; Diodorus 12.39.4-5; Plutarch Pericles 29.4-5.

downplay the other complaints, while giving us a full and detailed description of the Corinthian ones. The effect of this is that the Corinthians appear aggressive, eager for war, and help to escalate the conflict by getting the Spartans involved in their “private” (ιδία) war. If Thucydides had decided to give us more detail on the other complaints, we would have a much different impression of the Corinthian and Athenian actions, as the Corinthians would be seen as only one polis among many who had complaints to make. This of course would make Athenian actions appear much less reactionary.

Having given us a brief snippet of the complaints of the Megarians and Aeginetans, Thucydides goes on to present his famous quartet of speeches prior to the declaration of war by the Spartans (1.68–86). Most of the Corinthian speech (1.68–71) is rhetorical, and the speaker seems more concerned with pointing out the different characteristics of the Spartans and Athenians than any specific mention of the Corinthian complaints against Athens. After highlighting to the Spartans the Athenian speed (οὐκεῖα) compared with their slowness (βραδυτής), the Corinthians finish their speech with a threat, should the Spartans fail to act:

νῦν δὲ τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ Ποτειδαέταις, ὥσπερ ὑπεδέξασθε, βοηθήσατε κατὰ τάχος ἐσβαλόντες ἐς τὴν Ἀττικήν, ἵνα μὴ ἄνδρας τε φίλους καὶ ξυγγενεῖς τοῖς ἐχθίστοις προῆσθε καὶ ἴμας τοὺς ἄλλους ἀθυμία πρὸς ἔτέραν τινὰ ξυμμαχίαν τρέψητε.

94 There is some debate as to whether these speeches were all composed at the same time or if some are later insertions when Thucydides revised his opinion on the causes of the war. I follow, for example, Hornblower (1991) 107-8 in thinking that all four speeches were composed at the same time, against, for example, Andrewes (1959) 223-30.

95 See Crane (1992a) for a detailed discussion on the differences between the Spartans and Athenians in an intellectual context.
now, give help to the others and the Potidaeans, just as you promised, by swiftly invading Attica, so that you do not abandon men who are both your friends and kinsmen to their bitterest enemies, and turn us others in despair towards some other alliance (1.71.4).

After emphasising the opposite nature of the Spartans and Athenians, the Corinthian speaker now brings the audience back to the immediate situation, and reminds us of the Spartan promise to invade Attica (1.58.1: see above). This threat is the “icing on the cake” for the Corinthian speaker: not only will the Athenians keep taking everything they can until they are stopped (see especially 1.70.2-9), but inaction on the Spartans’ part could cost them the most powerful polis in their alliance. If this were to happen, the Spartans could lose their grip on the leadership of the Peloponnese.96

There is some debate whether or not the Corinthian speaker is referring to a specific alliance with either Argos or Athens,97 but it is likely that this threat was deliberately kept vague.98 As the events of the Peace of Nicias show (5.27-38; 5.48),99 the Corinthians were able to form other alliances, and it is therefore likely that the Spartans had to take this threat seriously.100 However, this threat seems to be rhetorical,101 and, if the Spartans had not decided to act, it seems unlikely that the Corinthians would have

99 For discussion on what the Corinthian aims were in the Peace of Nicias and Thucydides’ presentation of them see, for example, Westlake (1940); Kagan (1960); Westlake (1971); Seager (1976); Kagan (1981) 19-59; Salmon (1984) 324-31; Rood (1998) 95-7.
100 Contrast with Brunt (1965) 255-6.
101 Note that almost immediately after making this threat the Corinthian speaker states that if the Spartans are willing to act they will stay (1.71.6).
immediately attempted to form another alliance. Its purpose, therefore, was to try and get the Spartans to act immediately, while Potidæa could still be rescued (cf. 1.67.1; 1.119). 102

Once again it is the Corinthians who provide the catalyst for getting the Spartans (who were traditionally slow to go to war: 1.118.2) to take action against the Athenians. 103

The Corinthians make one last appearance in Thucydides’ account of the outbreak of the war with a speech to the allies at Sparta (1.120-124). This speech is different in tone to the one made earlier to the Spartans, and is more about highlighting the future strategies which will win the war (see especially 1.121.1-122.1), and making sure that all of the allies are unified and eager for war (see especially 1.120.2; 1.122.2-4; 1.124). The Spartans had already decided that the treaty was broken (1.87.3-88), and the Delphic Oracle had already sanctioned the Spartan request for war (1.118.3. cf. 1.123), therefore Thucydides’ report of this speech is somewhat surprising. It has been well noted that Pericles’ speech which closes book one (1.140-144) practically responds to, and answers the Corinthian speech. 104

As the excursion on the lives of Themistocles and Pausanias (1.128-138) separates the two speeches, Pericles’ speech stands alone. By only giving us Pericles’ speech (there were other speakers who came forward and spoke in Athens: 1.139.4), Thucydides basically

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102 Salmon (1984) 299-300 claims that this threat was “perhaps the most persuasive point of all” in getting the Spartans to act. This possibly goes too far as it seems evident that the Spartans were already fearful of Athens and may have been considering action before this speech (see, for example, 1.23.6; 1.33.3; 1.79.1; 1.88; 1.118.2). However, I would place more emphasis on the Corinthian threat to secede than, for example, Brunt (1965) 255-6 and Kagan (1969) 291-3 who see the Corinthian threat as an “empty” one.

103 The effectiveness of the Corinthian threat may be seen in Sthenelaidas’ response to Archidamus’ call for patience: he notes that while others may have much money, ships and horses, the Spartans have good allies who must not be given up (παροδοτέα) to the Athenians (1.86.3).

forces us to accept his version, that war was necessary. Moreover, in the narrative of the war itself, Pericles’ speech was to prove correct, and the Corinthian wrong. Therefore, by including this Corinthian speech, Thucydides may have been trying to emphasise Corinthian irrationality in being eager for war with the Athenians. It is important to note that other allies spoke out against the Athenians at this meeting (1.119), and when a vote was taken, the majority of the allies voted for war (1.125.1). However, once again, Thucydides does not see fit to give us a greater description of these other allies’ complaints, and focuses on the Corinthian ones, which Pericles can successfully respond to.

This chapter has closely examined the Corinthians’ role in Thucydides’ depiction of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. As it has shown, Thucydides constantly presents the Corinthians as belligerent and driving the Greek world towards war. In contrast, the Athenians are presented as reacting to the actions of the Corinthians, and

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105 See Badian (1993) 145.

106 Compare especially the Corinthian claim that they will be able to match the Athenians at sea (1.121.3-4), with Pericles’ “response” (1.142.6-143.2): the first naval action in the war will prove Pericles’ version correct (2.83-84): see chapter three.

107 οἱ τε ἄλλοι εἶτον ἢ ἐβούλουσθο, κατατιμουρόντες οἱ πλείους τῶν Ἀθηναίων, “the others spoke as they wished, the majority denouncing the Athenians.”

108 Stroud (1994) noted that Thucydides seems to have been particularly well informed about the Corinthians, and he put forward the suggestion that Thucydides spent his years in exile (see 5.26.5) in Corinth. If this is correct, then Thucydides’ focus on the Corinthians may partly be due to the fact that he used/relied on Corinthian sources when researching the causes of the war. However, Thucydides was not exiled until 424 BC, and was in Athens during the years prior to the war’s outbreak. Therefore, presumably, he had personal knowledge of what the Athenians were planning during this time, and if he had wanted to, he could have focussed his narrative on the build-up to the war from an Athenian point of view (it is important to note his authorial statement at 5.26.5 where he claims to have lived through the whole of the war, being of an age to understand (αιτθανόμενός) (cf. 1.1.1)). Because of this, the focus on the Corinthians cannot be attributed solely to Thucydides’ sources, but rather to Thucydides’ deliberate decision to focus on them.
therefore come across less eager for war than their Peloponnesian rivals. Although Corinthian aggression did play a large part in causing the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides has artfully emphasised their belligerence in order to present them in a bad light, thus making them appear largely responsible for the Peloponnesian War. As we have seen, this presentation is culpable as Athenian actions contributed just as much to the outbreak of the war, but Thucydides has deflected attention from these actions by focussing on the Corinthian ones.
CORINTH’S RELATIONS WITH ATHENS THROUGH THE FIFTH CENTURY

In order to understand the causes of the Peloponnesian War better, it is important to look at the relations between Athens and Corinth prior to the war’s outbreak. Throughout the fifth century the Athenians seem to have become more aware of the advantages their navy offered them in terms of searching for material gain. This helped lead the Athenians to look to the west (specifically Italy and Sicily), culminating in the great Sicilian expedition of 415 BC. This western expansion of the Athenians potentially brought Athens into conflict with Corinth, the Greek polis with the most influence in the west up till now. This chapter will discuss Athenian-Corinthian relations through the fifth century to examine whether Athenian interest in the west helped increase the hostility between the two poleis.

Athenian Interest in Sicily and Italy, and the Impact on Corinth

In 415 BC Thucydides tells us that the Athenians decided to sail to Sicily with a larger force than that which sailed under Laches and Eurymedon (in 427 BC) and to conquer (καταστρέψασθαι) the island if it was possible (6.1.1. cf. 3.86). Of the Athenians, Thucydides claims

ἀπειροὶ οἱ πολλοὶ ὄντες τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς νῆσου καὶ τῶν ἐνοικούντων τοῦ πλῆθους καὶ Ἕλληνων καὶ βαρβάρων, καὶ ὅτι οὐ πολλῶν τινὶ ύποδεέστερον πόλεμον ἀνηροῦντο ἢ τὸν πρὸς Πελοποννησίους.
the majority were ignorant of the magnitude of the island and the great
number of those living there, both Hellenes and barbarians, and that they were
about to undertake a war not much inferior to that against the Peloponnesians.
(6.1.1)

Thucydides would have us believe that the Sicilian expedition was a piece of rash
imperialism by the Athenians (see also 6.6.1; but contrast with his assessment at 2.65.11).1
However, Thucydides’ emphasis on the rash nature of the decision to go, and the notion of
most Athenians being ignorant (ἀπειροί) is misleading.2 The Athenians had diplomatic
ties with poleis in Sicily well before this decision to try and conquer the island, and
moreover, there may have been more to the Athenian decision to send a large force to
Sicily than imperialism, namely the desire for material gain.

In 427 BC the Athenians decided to send twenty ships to Sicily under the command
of Laches. Thucydides claims that they ostensibly (προφήσει) sent the ships because of

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1 2.65.11 was undoubtedly written later than the account of the Sicilian expedition and possibly
reflects a change of opinion on Thucydides’ part as to why the expedition failed. For a discussion of the
issue, see, for example, Gomme (1951) 72; (1956a) 195-6; Westlake (1969) 161-73; Rhodes (1988) 244-5;
Hornblower (1991) 348; Cawkwell (1997) 76-82. However, see also Rood (1998) 159-82 who argues that
2.65.11 is “completely coherent” with Thucydides’ explanation of the failure of the Sicilian expedition in
books six and seven.

2 Even if we translate ἀπειροί as “lacking experience” or “unacquainted” (so Hornblower (2008)
260), the idea that the Athenians did not know about Sicily is still misleading. See Smith (2004) who
considers Thucydides’ use of ἀπειροί a rhetorical device which refers to the “casual” and “haphazard”
manner which the Athenians acquired their knowledge (rumour and gossip etc.). He argues that
Thucydides, rather than trying to correct this “ignorance,” is instead creating it by giving us many points of
view about the purpose of the expedition (43-7). I am not sure that Thucydides is creating ignorance by
giving us many reasons for the Sicilian expedition, as the one reason which keeps coming through is the
idea that the Athenians wanted to conquer the island (6.1.1; 6.6.1. cf. 3.86.4; 4.65.3-4). Thucydides’ use of
ἀπειροί is designed to emphasize the rash nature of the decision to try and conquer the island; possibly (as
suggested by Smith) because the decision to go was based on “rumour” and “gossip” rather than “facts.”
kinship with the Leontinians (who had appealed to Athens for help in a war against Syracuse), but on the other hand, they wanted to prevent grain (σιτον) from being brought into the Peloponnese (3.86.4). They also wanted to see if they would be able to gain control (ὑποχείριο) of Sicily (cf. 4.65.3-4). The idea of using kinship as a means of furthering imperial ambition is something which Thucydides also brings out in his description of the Athenian decision to go to Sicily in 415 BC (e.g. 6.6.1). However, Thucydides includes another reason for an expedition to Sicily, that is, the importance of the materials found there (in this case grain). There are also hints in Thucydides’ narrative of the Sicilian expedition which may imply that the Athenians were interested in securing supplies of timber from south Italy as well. 3 Where this becomes relevant for the current study is the question of how far back in time does the Athenian desire for materials (specifically timber and grain) from the west go, and did this desire bring Athens into conflict with Corinth, the polis generally considered to have the most influence in western trade?

In 483/2 BC the Athenians amassed a large sum of money (χρημάτων) from the Laurium mines (Herodotus 7.144). 4 Herodotus tells us that they originally proposed to share the money among themselves at ten drachmas apiece, but Themistocles persuaded them to use the money to construct two hundred ships for the war with Aegina (7.144. cf.

3 See 7.25.2 where eleven Syracusan ships sail to the territory of Caulonia (in southern Italy) and burn a supply of timber by the Athenians. Also, Alcibiades, in his speech to the Spartans (6.89-92), claimed that the Athenians were intending to build many more triremes in addition to their own, ἐχούσης τῆς ἱπταλίας ξύλοι ἀθλήσει “having plentiful Italian timber” (6.90.3), and would have enough triremes to blockade the Peloponnesian coast. Although much of Alcibiades’ speech is highly exaggerated, this is still a good example of the belief that there was enough timber in Italy to build a very large force of triremes. See Meiggs (1982) appendix 6 (462-6) on the forests of south Italy.

4 The date 483/2 BC is confirmed by Aristotle in the Athenaios Politeia 22.7, who names Nicodemus as the archon for the year of the discovery. See Rhodes (1981) 277.
Aristotle *Athenaion Politeia* 22.7; Plutarch *Themistocles* 4.1-2). This was a huge undertaking which required a large amount of timber. Russell Meiggs, in his book on timber in the ancient Mediterranean world, wondered where the Athenians got such a large amount of timber and suggested south Italy as the main source.\(^5\) He noted that at this time (c. 482 BC) the Persians controlled the Macedonian and Thracian regions, and that the cutting of timber for two hundred ships would have been a “very conspicuous” operation; therefore, it would be extremely unlikely that the Persians would have allowed the timber to be sent to Athens.\(^6\)

All the sources agree that it was Themistocles who persuaded the Athenians to use the silver from the Laurium mines to build the triremes which would eventually be used in the battle of Salamis (Herodotus 7.144; Thucydides 1.14.3; Aristotle *Athenaion Politeia* 22.7; Plutarch *Themistocles* 4.1-3). Although there is no concrete evidence, it would

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\(^6\) Meiggs (1982) 124. See also Hignett (1963) 97 who anticipated some of Meiggs’ argument. While I do not necessarily see Persian action in the north Aegean as a direct preliminary to an attack on Athens (as Meiggs did), and think that the Persians had their own reasons for wanting to control that region without necessarily involving an invasion of Greece (e.g. for the natural resources; the Greek historians of course see Greece as the final step and everything else as a preliminary build up), I consider Meiggs’ argument, that the Persians would not allow timber to be sent to Athens still valid. In other words, the Persians would want to keep the natural resources of the area for themselves. I am not persuaded by Borza’s (1987) 42 argument that the timber could have come from the parts of Macedonia which were not controlled by the Persian forces. While it may be true that the Persians did not control all of the areas where timber was plentiful, the transportation of timber for two hundred triremes was surely a “conspicuous operation” which would not have gone unnoticed by the Persians. I am also not convinced by Borza’s suggestion that Themistocles’ “ruse” in proposing that the Athenian fleet be built for war with Aegina (Herodotus 7.144; Plutarch *Themistocles* 4.1-2) rather than Persia, “may have been as much an effort to deflect Persian suspicion as it was an attempt to persuade recalcitrant fellow citizens to support his naval program” (see also Johnson (1927) 202-3). I see absolutely no difficulty in accepting that Themistocles was genuinely concerned about a war with Aegina rather than Persia, and find it hard to accept that the Persians, even if they had heard of Themistocles’ “ruse,” would allow a valuable natural resource to be taken from their area of influence in such a vast quantity.
appear that Themistocles had a close tie with south Italy. Herodotus reports a tale prior to the battle of Salamis, where Themistocles, in response to being abused by the Corinthian admiral Adeimantus, threatened to withdraw the Athenian fleet and sail to Siris in Italy (8.62). Siris was located between Metapontum and Sybaris, and Plutarch tells us that two of Themistocles’ daughters were called Sybaris and Italia (Themistocles 32.2), which would suggest a strong connection to the area. Upon being charged with medism and being pursued by the Athenians and Spartans, Themistocles fled from Argos (where he had been living in exile) to Corcyra, which honoured him as a benefactor (Thucydides 1.136.1; Plutarch Themistocles 24.1). Corcyra was the gateway for the coastal route to Italy and Sicily (see, for example, Thucydides 1.36.2; 1.44.3; 6.30.1; 6.32.2; 6.43), and if Themistocles was planning to head to Italy or Sicily, then fleeing to Corcyra would be a good start. Moreover, if Themistocles was planning to flee to Asia (as he eventually did) then by heading to Corcyra first, he has gone in the completely opposite direction. Plutarch also reports a story told by Stesimbrotus which has Themistocles sailing to Sicily and asking the Syracusan tyrant Hiero for his daughter’s hand in marriage (Themistocles 24.4). Although Plutarch rejects this story (Themistocles 25.1-2) it is nonetheless a good indication of the belief that Themistocles had interests in the west. If this is correct, then

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8 Sybaris would eventually become the Athenian-led Panhellenic colony of Thurii (founded 444/3 BC). See Diodorus 12.9-11 and Green’s (2006) 192-3 commentary.
9 Plutarch gives us more detail than Thucydides and tells us that he was considered a benefactor because of his arbitration between Corcyra and Corinth over Leucas. See Marr (1998) 138-9 for a discussion on Plutarch’s claim.
10 See Podlecki (1975) 40; Marr (1998) 142-3.
Themistocles may well have used his connections to gain the timber needed for the triremes.\textsuperscript{11}

Having laid out the argument for Themistocles’ connections with the west I think it is now important to speculate on what effect this would have had on Corinth.

At the end of the sixth and the start of the fifth centuries BC it appears that Corinth was quite friendly towards Athens. In c. 519/18 BC the Corinthians arbitrated in a dispute between the Athenians and Thebans over Plataea (Herodotus 6.108). Prior to the Persian invasion of Marathon, the Corinthians helped prevent Cleomenes from setting Isagoras up as tyrant of Athens (5.74-5), and they also prevented the Spartan attempt to reinstate Hippias as tyrant (5.91-3). The Corinthian desire to prevent the Spartans installing a tyrant in Athens was no doubt more to do with their own affairs than through pure “friendliness” towards the Athenians, and so probably should not be considered concrete evidence of friendly relations between the two poleis.\textsuperscript{12} Much more significant is Herodotus’ report that the Corinthians lent the Athenians twenty ships sometime around 490-484 BC for their war with Aegina (6.89).\textsuperscript{13} Herodotus tells us that: Οἵ δὲ Κορινθίοι, ἤσαν γόρο σφί

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\item[11] See Meiggs (1982) appendix 6 (462-6) on the forests of south Italy, and in particular 462 on how the river Crathis provided an easy extraction route for the timber found in the mountain forests that rise over the Sybaris plain; the Crathis reaches the sea near Thurii/Sybaris. It is also interesting to note Thucydides’ assessment on where the naval power was in the Mediterranean world prior to the Persian Wars. He notes that triremes were first used in great numbers by the Corcyraeans and the Sicilian tyrants (1.14.2). If Themistocles did have connections in the west one wonders whether that is where he got the idea to build such a vast number of triremes for Athens. See Marr (1998) 142-3 on the possible contact between Themistocles and Hiero.
\item[12] Salmon (1984) 248-52 suggests that the Corinthians were attempting to limit Spartan influence north of the Isthmus “and friendly acts towards Athens were merely incidental” (251).
\item[13] The chronology of the Athenian war with Aegina is extremely problematic and will not be discussed here. See Scott (2005) appendix 12 (546-52) for a discussion on the issues. Whenever the lending
\end{footnotes}
The Corinthians, for they were, at this time, very friendly towards the Athenians, ...” (6.89). Again, the Corinthians may have had more selfish reasons for wanting to lend the Athenians these twenty ships than simply out of friendship. At this time Corinth may have been concerned with trying to remove Aegina’s grip on the Saronic Gulf, and some Corinthians may have seen an opportunity to eliminate Aegina’s influence by helping the Athenians in their war against her.14 Our sources do not specifically say this and this argument is quite speculative, but the lending of the twenty ships to the Athenians in order to fight Aegina could indicate a realisation of an opportunity to remove a strong rival. This act was possibly more than simply a “favour” to a friend; presumably there was some benefit for the Corinthians in lending these ships.

If this argument is along the right lines then some interesting avenues can be explored. If, as suggested above, the Athenians got their timber for the triremes built around 483/2 BC from south Italy, one wonders whether the Corinthians were involved in some way, given the fact that the Corinthians dominated western trade. It has been suggested that the Corinthians may have even carried the timber from Italy to the Piraeus in their round ships.15 While this is an attractive suggestion it does not seem to be fully necessary; the Athenians may well have carried the timber in their own merchant ships. Alternatively, the Athenians may have used some Corinthian ships alongside their own to

of the ships occurred in the 480s BC, my point remains the same: the Corinthians seem to have had friendly relations with Athens at this time.

14 See Will (1955) 656-63; Lewis (1981) 73 states “the historical evidence is clear in showing that, for thirty years or so, from 518 to about 488, it was an important part of Corinthian policy to nourish the growth of Athenian power and there is no doubt that the main reason for this was to set Athens against Aegina, at that time the dominant naval power in the Saronic Gulf.” Also Salmon (1984) 251-2.

15 See Adshead (1986) 68 (see also her note 279 on page 121: if south Italy was the source for this timber “the Corinthian grip on western trade will have made her ὀλσκοδίς the likely carriers”).
transport the timber (again, it is worth emphasizing the large amount of timber required), or the Corinthians may have carried the timber as far as their port at Lechaeum, where it was transported across the *diolkos* to waiting Athenian ships. Or it may simply be that the Corinthians saw an opportunity to gain a large amount of income through taxes levied against Athenian ships coming into their harbours and transporting the timber across the *diolkos*. Given the nature of the evidence we simply cannot tell exactly what benefit there would have been for the Corinthians, but it seems safe to assume that, if they were involved in the transport of the timber, there would have been a benefit of some kind.

There is even less evidence for Corinth’s attitude towards the Athenians from the time of the Persian invasions to the outbreak of the first Peloponnesian War c. 460 BC. Herodotus reports the Corinthian admiral Adeimantus at odds with Themistocles prior to the battle of Salamis (8.59; 8.61), and records an Athenian story which has the Corinthians fleeing before the battle itself only to be met by a strange boat informing them of the Greeks’ victory and convincing them to turn around (8.94). The story of the flight is almost certainly an invention of the Athenians. Herodotus himself states that it was an Athenian story and that the rest of Greece cited evidence of Corinth playing a

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16 For discussion on the nature and purpose of the *diolkos* see, for example, Wiseman (1978) 45-6; Cook (1979a); Salmon (1984) 136-9; Cook (1986); MacDonald (1986); Werner (1997). MacDonald (1986) 193 notes that we must assume the *diolkos* represented a technical advance that was intended to serve some portion of transit trade across the Isthmus (given the fact that many goods could simply be transported by wagons and pack-animals). He suggests that the *diolkos* was designed to carry cargoes of substantial weight, which could not easily be transported by pack-animals, and that marble and timber were the two materials which were especially appropriate for transport across the *diolkos*, given their weight and geographic distribution. MacDonald also notes (194) that, although there is no evidence that timber was routinely transported across the Isthmus in the sixth and fifth centuries BC, there is later epigraphic evidence which suggests regular Corinthian involvement in the timber trade (see his examples).
distinguished (πρώτος) role in the battle. This story is probably a later invention of the Athenians, reported to Herodotus in the latter half of the fifth century when he was recording his work and the Athenians and Corinthians were at odds. It also may be no coincidence that much of the malice is directed against Adeimantus, who was the father of Aristeus, one of Athens’ chief enemies at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides 2.67.4).

There seems to be little reason for Corinthian-Athenian hostility during the Persian Wars, other than possibly some personal rivalry between Adeimantus and Themistocles (Themistocles, it seems, would hardly have been an easy man to get along with). For the period following the Persian Wars to the outbreak of the so-called first Peloponnesian War, the meagre evidence available does not tell us much about the relationship between the Corinthians and Athenians, but it does seem to indicate that the Corinthians were attempting to expand and gain control over (at least parts of) the north-east Peloponnese, which may be relevant to our study.

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17 See also Plutarch Malice of Herodotus 39 for further evidence of the Corinthians having taken part in the battle. Hignett (1963) 413-14 and Lazenby (1993) 189-90 have rejected the story of the Corinthian flight. For the possibility that the Corinthian flight was a tactical manoeuvre see, for example, Grundy (1901) 405; Green (1970) 187-9; Burn (1984) 445; Wallinga (2005) 125-9.

18 Contrast with Adshead (1986) 70-1 who considers these stories as part of Themistocles’ anti-Corinthian propaganda put about after the battles of 480 BC, “to establish beyond doubt the unrivalled superiority of Athens, when Corinth, once thalassocrat herself, could be seen to have fallen so low.”

19 See also Herodotus (8.5) where Adeimantus is bribed by Themistocles. This too is probably pure invention, perhaps playing on Themistocles’ love of money (see Herodotus 8.112). It may also be significant that Herodotus shows he is aware of Aristeus’ death in Athens in 430 BC (7.137), and it is the latest event he records in his work. How and Wells (1928) 267 stated that Adeimantus “suffers for the sins of his son Aristeus, one of the most active enemies of Athens at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.” Contrast with Westlake (1969) 83 who claimed that the hypothesis that Adeimantus is suffering the sins of his son “has nothing to recommend it.”
Plutarch reports a tale after Cimon’s return to Athens following Athenian assistance to the Spartans in the siege of Ithome in the mid 460s:

"Επεὶ δὲ βοήθησας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀπῆει διὰ Κορίνθιου τὴν στρατίαν ἄγων, ἔνεκάλει Λάχαρτος αὐτῷ πρὶν ἐντυχεῖν τοῖς πολιταῖς εἰσαγαγόντι τὸ στρατεύμα· καὶ γὰρ θύραν κύψαντας ἀλλοτρίαν οὐκ εἰσιέναι πρότερον ἦ τὸν κύριον κελεύσαι. καὶ ὁ Κίμων "Ἀλλ᾽ οὖχ ὑμεῖς," εἶπεν, "ὠθ Λάχαρτε, τὰς Κλεωναίαν καὶ Μεγαρέων πύλας κύψαντες, ἀλλὰ κατασχίσαντες εἰσεβίασας μετά τῶν ὄπλων ᾧσιόντες ἀνεωγέναι πάντα τοῖς μείζον δυναμένοις."

When, after helping the Lacedaemonians, he was retiring through Corinth, leading the army, Lachartus harassed him for leading in his troops before meeting with the citizens. In fact, he said, that those who knock on the door of another do not enter before the master tells them. And Cimon said, “but you (i.e. the Corinthians), Lachartus, did not knock at the gates of Cleonae and Megara, but burst them open and forced yourselves in with weapons, thinking that all is to be opened to the greater power” (Cimon 17.1).

This piece of anecdotal evidence should not be used to indicate relations between Corinth and Athens at the time (the purpose of the tale is to show Cimon’s spirit), but it does imply that at some point prior to the Athenians being dismissed by the Spartans, the Corinthians attacked Megara and Cleonae. Corinth’s relations with Megara will be discussed in more detail below. The reference to Cleonae may be an indication that the Corinthians were attempting to expand their influence over the north-east Peloponnese between the Persian invasions and the first Peloponnesian War. Cleonae, it seems, had control of the Nemean
games during this time, a privilege it normally exercised under Argive suzerainty. It also appears, judging from hypotheses c and d to the scholia for Pindar’s *Nemea*, that at some point Corinth had control of the Nemean games, although these scholia do not date exactly when this was.

It is possible that Corinth, taking advantage of Argos’ weakness following their defeat to the Spartans at the battle of Sepia in 494 BC (see Herodotus 6.76-83), was expanding and attempting to assert its dominance in the north-east Peloponnesian during the period between the Persian and first Peloponnesian Wars (controlling the Nemean games would be one way to emphasise control over the area). There may also be some archaeological evidence to support this theory with two helmets and parts of at least six shields being found at Olympia with the inscription: “The Argives dedicated these to Zeus from their spoils from Corinth.” This indicates that there was a conflict between Argos and Corinth at some point between c. 500 and 460 BC. These pieces of evidence are of course far from conclusive. However, they do indicate a need to bear in mind that things were going on in the Peloponnese during this period, and that poleis such as Corinth were not simply remaining idle. Our Athenian sources are naturally concerned with the growth

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20 See Pindar *Nemea* 4.17 where he calls the games “Cleonae’s games” (cf. 10.42). Forrest (1960) 228 dated *Nemea* 10 to the 460s.

21 Hypothesis c states: προέστησαν δὲ τοῦ ἀγώνος καὶ Ἄργειοι καὶ Κορινθιοὶ καὶ Κλεωναῖοι, “the Argives, Corinthians and Cleonaeans were in charge of the games.” Hypothesis d: προέστησαν δὲ τοῦ ἀγώνος πρῶτοι μὲν Κλεωναῖοι, εἶτα Κορινθιοὶ, “the Cleonaeans were in charge of the games first, then the Corinthians.” Drachmann (1964) 3, 5. See also Adshead (1986) 72-3. Jeffery (1990) 149 gives a queried date of 470-460 BC for Corinthian control of the Nemean games. See also Lewis (1981) 74.

22 See Jeffery (1990) 162; also 169 n. 18 where she queries a date 500-480 BC for the dedication (but see Lewis (1981) 75). Hill (1951) 322 (n. 110) dated the dedication to c. 460 BC.

23 Diodorus (11.65.2-6) records a war between Argos and Mycenae caused by the Mycenaeans who were attempting to become independent of Argive control. They kept disputing with Argos over the Heraion and claimed that they had a right to administer the Nemean games by themselves. I do not agree with Lewis’ (1981) 75 suggestion that Mycenae was in some sense an “instrument” for Corinthian
of Athens, and so it is necessary to examine the circumstantial evidence that remains in order to try and uncover a “fuller” picture of the mainland Greek world at this time.

The first act of the first Peloponnesian War was the Athenian landing at Halieis where they were engaged and defeated by a force of Corinthians, Epidaurians, and Sicyonians (Thucydides 1.105.1). One wonders why the Athenians decided to land at Halieis, and it has been suggested that they were trying to open up a communication route with Argos, with whom they had recently formed an alliance (1.102.4). This line of thought is perhaps reinforced by Thucydides’ description of Alcibiades’ and the Argives’ desire to gain control of Epidaurus in 419/18 BC, τὴς τε Κορίνθου ἐνεκα ἰσχύσας καὶ ἐκ τῆς Ἀίγινης βραχυτέραν ἔσσεθαι τὴν βοήθειαν ἢ Ἐκκύλλαιου περιπλείν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις, “in order to keep Corinth quiet and so that the reinforcements would have a shorter journey from Aegina rather than sailing round Scyllaeum from Athens” (5.53).

More interesting for this study, however, is the question of what the Corinthians,

pretensions and aggressions in the northern Argolid. The Mycenaeans may well have been prepared to go to war with Argos for their own purposes, perhaps (as Diodorus tells us) because of a desire to re-establish their ancient prestige. Nevertheless, this evidence is a good indication that poleis in the Argolid and northeast Peloponnese saw Argos’ weakness as an opportunity to assert themselves, and Corinth may well have been one of many who saw the opportunity. Lewis (1981) 75 was also tempted to use the archaeological evidence of the helmets and shields as direct evidence that the Corinthians were assisting the Mycenaeans in their war with Argos (i.e. the Argives dedicated these pieces after their victory over the Mycenaeans). Again, I do not think this is necessary. There is of course no written evidence of an Argive victory over the Corinthians between c. 500-460 BC to help inform us of the occasion for the dedication. Because of this silence, it is highly speculative to try and connect this archaeological evidence with any specific event (such as the Argive defeat of the Mycenaeans), and it is best simply to use it as evidence for a conflict between Argos and Corinth sometime between c. 500 and 460 BC.

Thucydides only mentions the Corinthians and Epidaurians but there is archaeological evidence which shows that the Sicyonians also fought the Athenians there: SEG xxxi no. 369. See Holladay (1977) 57 (n. 24); Lewis (1981) 75 (n. 26); Griffin (1982) 62; Hornblower (1991) 164-5.

See Jeffery (1965) 53-5; Meiggs (1972) 97.

See Lewis (1981) 76.
Sicyonians and Epidaurians were doing in the area, especially as the first two are a long way from home. Lewis has suggested that Corinth, having profited from Argos’ weakness, had established a “fairly strong interest” in the eastern (or the area east of the) Argolid.\(^{27}\) This presence of Corinthians at Halieis, the attacks on Cleonae and Megara, the apparent control of the Nemean games and the battle with Argos all suggest that between the Persian invasions and first Peloponnesian War, Corinth was attempting to assert its dominance over the north-east Peloponnese and the eastern Argolid.

It is at this point the Corinthians “change sides” and attempt to help Aegina against Athens (Thucydides 1.105.2-4). About 30 years earlier the Corinthians had assisted the Athenians in their war with Aegina and perhaps helped supply them with the timber for the construction of their triremes (see above). The Athenians, with the construction of the two hundred triremes, had completely changed the game in the Greek world. They were now by far the most dominant naval power, and moreover, this force was controlled by a democracy, which was not so much concerned with traditional aristocratic ties and alliances as it was with the prospect of what it could gain.\(^{28}\) What had possibly begun as an opportunity for some Corinthians to gain money from trade with Athens had quickly turned into something potentially disastrous for them.

Just prior to the description of the Corinthians assisting the Aeginetans in their war with Athens, Thucydides tells us that Megara joined the Athenian alliance because Corinth

\(^{27}\) Lewis (1981) 75. Lewis notes that Corinth had relations with Epidaurus at the time of Periander, who married the daughter of Procles, the tyrant of Epidaurus (Herodotus 3.50). This marriage was probably political and secured Corinth a maritime base on the Saronic Gulf (see Will (1955) 544-5). It may be the case that this relationship with Epidaurus was created partly to secure another base from which to keep an eye on Aegina, Corinth’s main maritime rival in the archaic period.

\(^{28}\) One wonders about the nature of the link between Ephialtes’ reforms and the outbreak of the first Peloponnesian War since both occurred at the end of the 460s BC. However, this topic lies outside the scope of this discussion.
was attacking her in a war over land. He tells us: καὶ Κορινθίοις μὲν οὖχ ἤκιστα ἀπὸ τοῦτο τὸ σφοδρὸν μῖσος ἤρξατο πρῶτον ἔσ Ἀθηναίους γενέσθαι, “For the Corinthians, it was above all because of this, that they first began to conceive their bitter hatred towards the Athenians” (1.103.4). This new alliance would prevent the Corinthians having their way with Megara in the conflict over the land. However, there is another element to this hatred. Thucydides tells us (1.103.4) that because of the alliance with Megara, the Athenians now held Pegae, the Megarian port on the Corinthian Gulf. They also built the long walls between Megara and Nisaea, the Megarian port on the Saronic Gulf. Therefore, the Athenians now had access to both sides of the Isthmus and no longer needed to go through Corinth. This of course would result in a loss of revenue for some Corinthians due to the drop in trade over the diolkos. This loss in revenue should not be over-exaggerated and would surely not be the full reason why the Corinthians conceived such a σφοδρὸν μῖσος against the Athenians. However, when we take it into consideration with other events Thucydides describes in the pentecontaetia, I think we can see that Athenian action in the Corinthian Gulf played a part in the bitter hatred.

One of the Athenian strategies in the first Peloponnesian War seems to be aimed at controlling key points along the Corinthian Gulf.29 Of particular interest is Thucydides’ description of the Athenians settling the Helots from Ithome at Naupactus (1.103.3). It would seem that the capture (ἡ ἐν τῶν ἡρμηκῶν νεὼστὶ) of Naupactus came before the alliance with Megara, although simply because it comes first in Thucydides’ order of events in the pentecontaetia, it does not necessarily mean that it came first in reality (note that he also links it thematically with the Athenian withdrawal from Sparta).30 Later, after

30 See Parker (1993) 137 (n. 35). Compare with Badian (1993) 75: “It is not precise dates, but sequence, that [Thucydides] seems to be mostly concerned about.” See also Badian’s chapter on ‘Athens,
Aegina surrenders to Athens, the Athenians, under the command of Tolmides, sailed around the Peloponnese and captured (ἐιλοῦ) the Corinthian city of Chalcis, at the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf, before landing at Sicyon and defeating (ἐκράτησαν) the Sicyonians in battle (1.108.5). Diodorus (who correctly dates Tolmides’ expedition to 456/5 BC) adds that Tolmides took the islands of Zacynthus and Cephallenia as well (11.84.7). This would strengthen the argument that Tolmides’ expedition was an attempt to

the Locrians, and Naupactus (163-9) and in particular n. 13 (pages 237-8) where he notes that the capture of Naupactus by the Athenians must have been from a periplous of some kind, for it would be logistically impossible to capture the place over land. As Badian notes, the only relevant one in the sources is Diodorus’ description of Tolmides’ periplous, where he informs us that it was Tolmides who captured Naupactus (11.84.7). This of course would put Thucydides’ sequence of events out of order, as he has the capture of Naupactus coming before the alliance with Megara (1.103.3-4) and roughly five chapters ahead of his description of Tolmides’ periplous (1.108.5). I see no issue in accepting Diodorus’ version which has Tolmides capturing Naupactus and settling the Messenians there. To my mind, Thucydides reports the settlement of Naupactus at 1.103.3 rather than in “strict chronological sequence” because it fits thematically with the story he is telling (i.e. the helot revolt), and he is simply telling us what happened to them (i.e. they were eventually settled by the Athenians at Naupactus because of the Athenians’ hatred (ἔχοντο) towards the Spartans). Contrast with Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor (1950) 162-4. See Green (2006) 164 (n. 343) who notes that there was a small period of time between the Messenians’ departure from Ithome and their settlement at Naupactus by Tolmides.

31 Freitag (2000) 55, in speculating about Corinth’s motives for originally acquiring Chalcis, suggests that it was used as a base for maritime communication with the colonies in the north-west, Epirus, southern Italy and Sicily. He also suggests that Chalcis was used as a base from which to stop pirate encroachments of the other Gulf residents. Interestingly, Thucydides (2.83.3), in his description of Phormion’s first naval victory in the Corinthian Gulf, tells us that the Peloponnesians saw the Athenians sail out against them from Chalcis (and the river Euenus). The Peloponnesians were planning to cross into Acarnania (i.e. on the western side of the Rhium promontory – the narrowest point of the Gulf) from Patrae, and so the Athenians would need to base themselves on the western side of the promontory if they were to prevent the Peloponnesians from crossing over. The fact that they sailed from Chalcis would suggest that this was a recognised strategic base in the area and would help to explain Athenian interest in it.

32 See the Scholiast to Aeschines 2.75 (Dilts (1992) 73) who notes that Callias was archon when Tolmides undertook his periplous, dating the expedition to 456/5 BC. On the usefulness of this source see Reece (1962) 114. Contrast with Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor (1950) 169-71.
control the Corinthian Gulf as these two islands essentially control the Gulf’s entrance. Diodorus also adds that Tolmides captured (λοβεών) Naupactus and settled the Messenian refugees from Ithome there.\(^{33}\)

A few years later a similar expedition was undertaken by Pericles, with a force of one thousand Athenians, who this time embarked at Pegae (which Thucydides again reminds us is under Athenian control), and sailed to Sicyon where they again defeated (ἐκρατησών) the troops opposed to them, before sailing across the Gulf to attack Oeniadae, a strategic polis for control of the western end of the Corinthian Gulf (1.111.2-3).\(^{34}\)

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\(^{33}\) See Gomme (1945) 304 who, without any real discussion, stated that Diodorus’ account of the capture of Naupactus by Tolmides on his periplous “deserves no credence.” See also Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor (1950) 166-7. This derives from their belief that Thucydides never deviates from a strict chronological reporting of events (not to mention the bias against Diodorus where his account differs from Thucydides’): see Gomme (1945) 51-4; Pritchett (1995) 163-71 for some very negative criticism on the usefulness of Diodorus. Contrast with Green (2006) 23-47 on the value of Diodorus’ account of the pentecontaetia. I see no problem in accepting Diodorus’ version of events especially as Thucydides is very skimpy on the details.

\(^{34}\) Diodorus (11.85.2) and Plutarch (Pericles 19.2-4) give the impression that Pericles ravaged the Peloponnesian coast and brought over to Athens all the cities on the other side of the Gulf except for Oeniadae. This gives a different impression from Thucydides who implies that only Sicyon and Oeniadae were the targets of Pericles’ expedition. Diodorus’ and Plutarch’s descriptions would imply that the Athenians were attempting to control the Corinthian Gulf. However, there is a problem in Diodorus’ account. He gives another expedition by Pericles (11.88.1-2), in which Sicyon and Oeniadae seem to be the only targets (this appears to agree with Thucydides’ account). The double-up is hard to explain and Diodorus may be reporting from two different sources without realising they were recording the same action. However, see Green (2006) 168-9 (n. 362). On the strategic importance of Oeniadae see Polybius (4.65.8-10) (but see Walbank (1957) 520 who thought that Polybius exaggerated the convenience of Oeniadae for the crossing to the Peloponnese). For a brief overview of the history of Oeniadae until the first century BC, see Freitag (2000) 30-4.
These expeditions suggest that the Athenians were concerned with controlling key strategic locations along the Corinthian Gulf.\textsuperscript{35}

There is also an Athenian alliance with the Sicilian polis Egesta that was potentially formed around this time. Meiggs and Lewis would date this alliance to 458/7 BC, but the dating is problematic and controversial.\textsuperscript{36} If the dating of this alliance is

\textsuperscript{35} Relevant to this interpretation is Thucydides’ (2.68.7-8) description of an alliance formed between the Athenians and Acarnanians. Thucydides leaves the formation of this alliance “timeless” and only tells us that the Athenians sent Phormion with thirty ships to help the Amphilochoians and Acarnanians against Amphilochoian Argos. This alliance has been dated by some scholars earlier than 446 BC: for example, Gomme (1956a) 416; Salmon (1984) 422-3; Krentz and Sullivan (1987). Others prefer a date in the early 430s: for example, Hornblower (1991) 353-4; (2002) 105-6 dates the alliance to about 438 BC; Westlake (1968) 43 to 437 BC. Other scholars would prefer a date in the late 430s after the battle of Sybota: for example, Meritt, Wade-Gery, and McGregor (1950) 320; Kagan (1969) 252-3. Whenever the alliance was formed it is certainly troubling that Thucydides has not mentioned it in its proper chronological position (i.e. in the penticoeta or the Corcyraean affair) and would suggest that Thucydides has deliberately delayed telling us about the alliance in order to de-emphasize its importance to the story of the outbreak of the war (contrast with Rood (1998) 219-20). The alliance may well have been formed in the aftermath of the Athenians’ failure to capture the Acarnanian city of Oeniadae (see above). At some point following the failure (it could even be years later) the Athenians may well have seen an opportunity to gain influence in the area through an alliance with the Acarnanians after their appeal to Athens. If this is along the right lines, then the alliance with the Acarnanians may be considered as part of a continued policy of the Athenians during the mid-fifth century aimed at exerting their influence in key areas along the Corinthian Gulf and north-west Greece.

\textsuperscript{36} See the discussion in Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 80-2. Briefly put, the controversy surrounds the restoration of the archon’s name; all that is left is –ov (line 3) which Meiggs and Lewis would restore Habron, placing the alliance in 458/7 BC. However, they note there are other possibilities which could date the alliance to 454/3 BC (which would match Diodorus’ description (11.86.2) of a war in which Egesta was engaged) or even as late as 418/17 BC (first proposed by Mattingly (1963) 267-9 - although this late date is usually rejected). I would agree with Meiggs’ and Lewis’ assessment that on “broad historical grounds” an alliance with a Sicilian polis is more likely in the early 450s, when the wars in Egypt and against the Peloponnesians were running smoothly, rather than in 454/3 BC when the Athenians were being overwhelmed in Egypt. Although this is by no means concrete reasoning (for example, after the failure of the Egyptian expedition the Athenians may have been looking to secure a grain supply – also see note 38 below).
correct, then it was formed two years before Tolmides’ *periplous* round the Peloponnisus, and potentially suggests that the securing of the Corinthian Gulf by the Athenians is a follow up to their interest in Sicily,\(^{37}\) possibly to secure a grain route (which may also partly help to explain the Egyptian expedition).\(^{38}\)

With the creation of the Thirty Years Peace Athens was forced to give up Nisaea and Pegae, the two Megarian ports (1.115.1), but there is no indication she had to give up any of the other strategic locations along the Corinthian Gulf, and there is evidence which suggests that the Athenians still had their minds on the west. In 433/2 BC the Athenians renewed alliances with the Sicilian *polis* Leontini and the Italian *polis* Rhegium. The original alliances may have been formed in the 440s BC, although again, the date is controversial.\(^{39}\) The Leontini plain was a very good producer of wheat.\(^{40}\) Also, it is surely no coincidence that (potentially) around the same time as the original alliances with Leontini and Rhegium, in c. 444/3 BC, the Athenian-led Panhellenic founding of Thurii occurred (Diodorus 12.9-11). Diodorus tells us that this land was fruitful and produced

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\(^{37}\) Freitag (2000) 335, in his discussion of the Athenian interest in the Gulf, points out that none of the ancient sources specifically mention the Athenian motives for their “massive penetration” (massive Eindringen) into the Corinthian Gulf. He goes on to say that we do not know whether economic factors played a part, or if the Athenians were planning to increase their involvement in north-west Greece, Epirus, the Adriatic and Sicily. He states that this is a question which must “remain open” (offenbleiben). While it is true that, given the nature of the evidence, we cannot be sure of the Athenian motives for their involvement in the Gulf, the alliance with Egesta formed around this time, is a strong indication that the Athenian interest in the Gulf is related to their interest in Sicily and the west.

\(^{38}\) See, for example, Dunbabin (1948) 215; Meiggs (1972) 95; Garland (1987) 24. Contrast with Garnsey (1988) 124-31. Even if a later date is accepted for the alliance I still think there may be a direct relationship between Athenian interest in Sicily and their attempt to control the Corinthian Gulf. Alliances are generally made after a period of mutual interest for both sides, and the close dating of this alliance to the attempted control of the Gulf surely suggests the possibility that they are related.

\(^{39}\) See the discussion in Meiggs and Lewis (1988) 171-6.

\(^{40}\) See Dunbabin (1948) 212-13.
much wealth (12.9.2). The foundation of Thurii and the alliances with Leontini and Regium (if correctly dated to the 440s BC) suggest Athens still had a strong interest in the west. This western interest may well be due to the fact that Athens was suffering from a grain shortage by 445 BC which was only relieved by a shipment of 30,000 medimnoi of grain from the Egyptian king. As Green notes, in his discussion of the foundation of Thurii: “It is hard to believe that the motives for this reaching out to one of the naturally richest sites in the West did not include the chance of securing desperately needed grain and timber.”

The importance of all this is the question of how did the Athenian interest in the west affect Corinth, and did it help lead to the hostility which played a part in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War? Athenian interest in the west is often downplayed as a minor

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41 See also Green’s (2006) 189-90 (n. 43) note on the wealth of the area.
42 See the scholia to Aristophanes’ Wasps 718 (Koster (1978) 116-7). See also Plutarch Pericles 37.3. who claims that Psammetichus sent 40,000 medimnoi. However, Garnsey (1988) 123-31 is sceptical that grain shortage was a main reason for the Athenian colonial interest.
43 Green (2006) 192-3 (n. 52). The italics are his. That Sicily could produce enough grain to feed Greece is present in a tale in Herodotus, where Gelon, the Syracusan tyrant, offers to feed the entire Greek army for as long as the war with Persia goes on (7.158). Although this tale (or elements of it) may be an exaggeration by Herodotus to remind his audience, who may have been reading/listening to his work during the Archidamian War, that Sicilian grain could be used to build political power (see de Angelis (2006) 36-8), it is still a good indication of the belief that a vast amount of grain could be acquired from Sicily. In this context it is interesting to note the comments of the ‘Old Oligarch’ (2.6), who states that while crop diseases affect even the strongest land power, all the earth is not diseased at the same time and so imports from an area which is flourishing (ἐυθερούσης) will reach the ruler of the sea. Although the ‘Old Oligarch’ has recently been dated to c. 425 - 424 BC (see Marr and Rhodes (2008) 3-6) one wonders how long the idea of a link between naval power and the securing of grain for the demos was around prior to this treatise. Also relevant to this line of thought is Pericles’ Pontic expedition of 436 BC (Plutarch Pericles 20.1-2), which was probably an attempt to secure the grain route along the Black Sea. The conclusion from these pieces of evidence is that through the middle of the fifth century the Athenians were making serious efforts to secure their grain supplies.
factor leading to the war,\textsuperscript{44} and the economic elements which this interest entailed are also often pushed to one side without a full discussion.\textsuperscript{45} However, if the Athenians were getting grain, timber, or other goods from the west, one wonders how they were getting them to Athens? As mentioned above, in the terms of the Thirty Years Peace of 446 BC, Athens was specifically forced to give up the Megarian ports of Nisaea and Pegae (Thucydides 1.115.1). While the Athenians still held key places along the Corinthian Gulf following the Peace, they had lost their crucial access to both sides of the Isthmus. If the Athenians were bringing their goods from the west to Athens via the Corinthian Gulf (rather than round the precarious cape Malea),\textsuperscript{46} then potentially they were once again bringing them over the \textit{diolkos} at Corinth, and were therefore paying taxes to (some?) Corinthians. If this is correct, then the Corinthians were again possibly receiving some benefit from the Athenians’ western interest.

Corcyra, as Thucydides reminds us in his report of the Corcyraean speech to the Athenians, was on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily (1.36.2. cf. 1.44.3). Moreover, the Corcyraeans had the second largest fleet in the mainland Greek world. If the Athenians were attempting to gain control of the western end of the Corinthian Gulf then an alliance

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{44} See, for example, Meritt, Wade-Gery, and McGregor (1950) 305 (n. 20); Kagan (1969) 154-69; de Ste Croix (1972) 220-4. \\
\textsuperscript{45} De Ste Croix (1972) 218-20 was right to point out that wars in the Greek world usually arose out of disputed border land rather than a “commercial” rivalry. However, this was largely due to the fact that no Greek \textit{polis} had the ability to go further afield in war than to attack those close by, and even then the wars were only for a short period of time (even in the Peloponnesian War: Thucydides (2.57.2) tells us that the longest Peloponnesian invasion of Attica was only about forty days). However, Athens, with her vast resources and fleet could look further afield and could control areas far away from Athens. Thus new reasons for warfare had emerged, in which economic/commercial implications played a part (although I would not necessarily prioritise these aspects as to why the Athenians fought wars, but merely point out that economic factors could have played a part in their decisions). \\
\textsuperscript{46} See Strabo (8.6.20) on the dangerous nature of sailing round cape Malea and the advantages of using Corinth and the Corinthian Gulf instead. On the conditions around Malea see Morton (2001) 81-5.\end{flushleft}
with Corcyra would be an important strategic manoeuvre. The dispute between Corinth and Corcyra gave Athens the opportunity to form this alliance (see chapter one). With the formation of this alliance the Athenians had greater access to the entrance to the Gulf.\(^{47}\) Additionally, at the beginning of the war, Thucydides tells us that on the Athenian side were the Messenians in Naupactus, most of Acarnania, and Zacynthus (2.9.4). They also possibly controlled Chalcis and Molycreium.\(^{48}\) Moreover, in the first year of the war Athens captured (αἱροῦσι) Solium and won over (προσηγόγοντο) Cephallenia (2.30.1-2).\(^{49}\) However, while the Athenians may have had greater access to the entrance of the Gulf, they did not have access over the Isthmus, as they no longer held Megara, and, if they annoyed Corinth (as clearly they did by the formation of the Corcyraean alliance), they were surely prevented from dragging their goods over the diolkos. This may help to explain Athenian relations with Megara at this time.\(^{50}\)

\(^{47}\) Thucydides tells us that part of the reason the Athenians accepted the Corcyraeans into an alliance was because Corcyra was on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily (1.44.3. cf. 1.36.2). This would indicate that the Athenians thought an alliance with Corcyra would give them some form of preferential access to that coastal route.

\(^{48}\) See Gomme (1956a) 217 and Salmon (1984) 268 (n. 52) and 277 (n. 24). See Freitag (2000) 64 on the potential strategic importance of Molycreium as a base.

\(^{49}\) It is unclear why the Athenians needed to “win over” Cephallenia at the start of the war. As mentioned above, Cephallenia had been captured on Tolmides’ periplous in 456/5 BC along with Zacynthus, who Thucydides tells us was still on the Athenian side at the start of the war (2.9.4). At 2.7.3 Thucydides tells us that the Athenians reviewed (ἐξείπατον) their existing (ὑπόπορχοναν) alliances, and ambassadors were sent to Corcyra, Cephallenia, Acarnania and Zacynthus. That Cephallenia needed to be “won over” would suggest that there was some resistance to their alliance with the Athenians at the start of the war.

\(^{50}\) Cornford (1971) 25-51 saw an Athenian design in the west dating from before the war itself, and noted that Attica was cut off from the western seas by Boeotia, the Megarid and Corinth: the “weak point in this chain was Megara, which possessed, moreover, a port on each sea – Pegae on the west, Nisaea on the east – with a road over the pass joining them” (35-6). While I do not agree with his assertion that the Megarian decree was “the policy of the Piraeaus” (30), forced upon Pericles, I agree with his general assumption that the Megarian decree (and the various actions against Megara – see below) had something to do with Athenian interest in the west.
Athens and Megara

The Megarian decree which barred (εἰργεσθαι) the Megarians from the harbours of the Athenian empire and the Attic agora is one of the most controversial issues in Greek history. In the later tradition, the Megarian decree, and Pericles’ enforcement of it, was the main factor which caused the Peloponnesian War. However, in Thucydides’ account there is virtually nothing on the nature, or purpose, of the decree (1.67.4. cf. 1.139.1-2; 1.140.3-5). Various attempts have been made to explain this decree and excuse either the Athenians from blame in creating it, or Thucydides for not having reported on it in full detail. Ostensibly, the decree was enforced because of the Athenian accusation that the Megarians cultivated sacred ground (ἐπεργασίαν ... τῆς γῆς τῆς ἱερᾶς) and that they had taken in slaves (ἀνδραπόδων) who had escaped (1.139.2). As has long been recognised, the Greeks had a habit of accusing their enemies of religious violations when

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51 Although there may have been more than one Megarian decree prior to the outbreak of the war (see de Ste Croix (1972) 226-7) I am only concerned here with the main decree which excluded the Megarians from the Attic agora and the harbours of the empire.

52 See, for example, Andocides 3.8; Aeschines 2.175; Diodorus 12.39.4-40.6; Plutarch Pericles 29.4-31.1. Compare with the contemporary Aristophanes’ Acharnians 515-39 (425 BC) and Peace 606-14 (421 BC). See also chapter one.

53 The amount of literature on the Megarian decree is enormous and simply cannot be fully referenced here. De Ste Croix (1972) 225-89 is still the fullest discussion of the decree (although his conclusions are largely rejected). De Ste Croix also included in an appendix (xxxv: 381-3) references to scholars who had commented on the decree prior to 1972. See also, for example, Brunt (1951) (not included in de Ste Croix’s appendix); Sealey (1975) 103-5; Legon (1981) 200-27; MacDonald (1983); Salmon (1984) 424-6; Hornblower (1991) 110-12; Cawkwell (1997) 27-8, 31-4; Rood (1998) 214-15; Pelling (2000) 103-11.
there are political or economic factors in the background. The Megarian decree appears to be another example of this. The issue revolves around what exactly these other purposes were.

As mentioned above, the Athenian alliance with Corcyra allowed the Athenians greater access to the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf. However, they did not have access to the other end, and Corinth, according to Thucydides, was now visibly at odds (ὁπερῳκὸς ... δίονομοι) with the Athenians (1.57.2). The potential ability of another polis (and one as powerful as Athens) to close off the entrance to her Gulf would be particularly troubling for the Corinthians, and this may help to explain some of the hostility of the Corinthians towards the Athenians after the formation of the Corcyraean-Athenian alliance (see chapter one). The Athenians, who now had access to the entrance of the Gulf and controlled key areas along it, needed to get access to both sides of the Isthmus – what would be the point in controlling the Gulf if they were unable to get across the Isthmus? This may, in part, help to explain the Megarian decree. If the Megarian decree was passed in or after 433 BC, and more importantly, around the time of the alliance with Corcyra, then it may have been an attempt by Athens to impose itself on Megara for this purpose. It is tempting to

54 For example, compare with Thucydides’ report of the diplomatic manoeuvring between the Spartans and Athenians prior to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (1.126-135.1). See also Lazenby (2004) 19; van Wees (2004) 20-2.

55 Exactly when the Megarian decree was enforced is simply impossible to answer: for a date around 433/2 BC see, for example, Kagan (1969) 257-60; de Ste Croix (1972) 226-7; Meiggs (1972) 430-1. Brunt (1951) rejected the view that the decree was passed just prior to the outbreak of the war, and thought that it was passed long before. Hornblower (1991) 110-11 suggests a date in the early 430s BC. Also, Schwartz [1929] (1960) 123 (n. 2) thought that the decree was in effect before 433 BC.

56 In the Corinthian speech to the Athenians prior to the formation of the Athenian-Corcyraean alliance the Corinthians ask the Athenians to remove the suspicion (ὑποψιός) already existing over Megara (1.42.2). There is some controversy as to whether the Corinthians are referring to the Megarian decree or to the beginning of the first Peloponnesian War, where Megara switched sides and joined the Athenian empire, which began the Corinthian σφοδρόν μίσος towards the Athenians (1.103.4). See Tuplin (1979);
suggest that the Megarian decree was a measure designed to force Megara either to capitulate to the Athenians or to switch sides and join in their archē as she had done in the first Peloponnesian War (1.103.4), thus giving the Athenians access to both sides of the Isthmus.

Much has been made of Aristophanes’ reference in the Acharnians to the Megarians as “slowly starving” (πείνων βάδην: 535. cf. 729-835). This of course implies that the Athenians were performing an effective blockade on Megara. The evidence from Thucydides suggests that by 425 BC (the year the Acharnians was produced) the Athenians had made serious attempts to blockade Megara by sea. Thucydides (2.69.1) tells Hornblower (1991) 86. Both options seem to me linguistically possible: briefly put, the issue surrounds the use of πρῶτερον and whether this refers to something which existed in the past, but now no longer exists, or if it can refer to something which existed in the past, and now still exists. If the former is correct, then the Megarian decree may well have been formed after the formation of the Athenian alliance with Corcyra. If this is so, then the Athenian pressure on Megara may be seen as a follow-up to the Athenian control of the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf.

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See, for example, Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor (1950) 304 (n. 15); Sealey (1975) 105; Cawkwell (1997) 33; Lazenby (2004) 19. The continued resistance of the Megarians against Athens (see below) would suggest that they were not interested in forming an alliance with the Athenians along similar terms as the Corcyraeans. This may help to explain why the Athenians felt the need to place economic/military pressure on Megara. The Megarians only joined the Athenian empire in the first Peloponnesian War because of a war with Corinth over border land (1.103.4). Once this dispute was resolved they revolted from Athens and even enlisted the help of the Corinthians in doing so (1.114.1).

Compare with de Ste Croix (1972) 187 who noted that the route over the Isthmus between Nisaea and Pegae may have been used in trade between Athens and the west when the way across the Isthmus of Corinth was closed to them. He suggested that this route would be unsuitable except for articles of great value (i.e. timber and grain) and concluded that it “would be wrong to conceive the Athenian interest in Pagae as commercial rather than strategic and naval.” See also Freitag (2000) 334-5 who noted that through the deployment of naval units (Flottenverbänden) at Pegae and/or Naupactus, it was possible for the Athenians to interrupt the maritime communication between mainland Greece and the Peloponnes. In relation to the Athenian aims at controlling the Corinthian Gulf, I do not see why commercial, strategic and naval elements have to be separated. Surely the Athenians could see both strategic and commercial opportunities in controlling the Megarian ports and the Corinthian Gulf.
us that in 430 BC, the Athenians sent twenty ships to base themselves at Naupactus, μὴ ἐκπλεῖν ἐκ Κορίνθου καὶ τοῦ Κρισαίου κόλπου μηδένα μὴ ἐσπλεῖν, “to prevent anyone from sailing out of the Corinthian Gulf and the Crisaean Gulf, or sailing in.” This attempted blockade would affect Megara as it could potentially cut off access to Pegae, the Megarian port on the Corinthian Gulf. Along with trying to blockade the Corinthian Gulf the Athenians also attempted to blockade Nisaea, Megara’s port on the Saronic Gulf. At 2.93.4 (under the year 429 BC) Thucydides mentions that there were three ships on Salamis τοῦ μὴ ἐσπλεῖν Μεγαρεύσι μηδὲ ἐκπλεῖν μηδὲν, “to prevent anything sailing to or sailing from Megara.” Moreover, in 427 BC, the Athenians made an expedition against the island of Minoa (see map 2), which lies off Megara, in order to prevent the Peloponnesians sailing out unobserved in triremes, to prevent pirates (λῃστῶν) sailing out, τοῖς τε Μεγαρεύσιν ἁμα μηδὲν ἐσπλεῖν, “and, at the same time, to prevent anything sailing into the Megarians” (3.51.2).

If the attempted blockades by the Athenians were successful, then by 425 BC the Megarians would have been severely affected and were potentially starving, as implied in Aristophanes’ Acharnians. However, de Ste Croix has made a powerful case for the ineffectiveness of an attempt by the Athenians to block all trade into and out of Megara,

59 See Wick (1979) 3-5 who argues that the Athenian decision to try and blockade the Corinthian Gulf has a lot more to do with Megara than what Thucydides would have us believe.

60 The Athenian capture of Minoa in 427 BC comes just prior to Laches’ expedition to Sicily, which Thucydides tells us was ostensibly about kinship with the Leontinians, but in reality they wanted to prevent grain being brought into the Peloponnese, and to see if they could gain control of the island (3.86.4: see above). Wick (1979) 6-11 suggests the possibility that the capture of Minoa and the Laches’ expedition to Sicily are related, in an attempt by the Athenians to cut off Megara’s grain supply from the west.

61 Legon (1981) 217-18 noted that Megara was a grain-poor state and therefore imported the bulk of its grain from Byzantium and Chalcedon. If this is correct, then a successful blockade of Nisaea would have severely affected the Megarians as it would have cut off the port of call for the grain ships. Compare with Wick (above n. 60) who thinks that the Athenians attempted to cut off western supplies of grain as well.
given the nature of ancient trade. While de Ste Croix may be correct about the ineffectiveness of a “ban” on Megarian trade in and out of Attica, the original aim of the Athenians, in putting the Megarian decree into effect, could well have been to try and starve the Megarians into submission. Just because the decree may not have worked as effectively as the Athenians wished, it does not mean that the original policy did not envision a total blockade. This may help to explain the increase in Athenian pressure on Megara with the capture of Minoa in 427 BC.

Along with placing a large amount of economic pressure on the Megarians in the early stages of the war, the Athenians were also using military pressure in an attempt to force the Megarians to capitulate. Thucydides tells us that around autumn of the first year of the war, the Athenians, with their entire forces, invaded the Megarid with Pericles as the general (2.31.1). He goes on to say that this was the largest army to come from Athens, with no less than ten thousand Athenian citizens, who were joined by three thousand metics and a large number of light armed troops (2.31.2). The sheer size of this force is an indication of the importance placed on intimidating Megara. After laying waste to much of the land the Athenians returned home and Thucydides concludes his report of this invasion by saying:

`'εγένετο δὲ καὶ ἄλλαι ύστερον ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ κατὰ ἔτος ἔκαστον ἐσβολάς Ἀθηναίων ἐς τὴν Μεγαρίδα καὶ ἵππεων καὶ πανστρατιά, μέχρι οὗ Νήσαια ἔσλω ὑπ’ Ἀθηναίων."

There were also other Athenian invasions annually into the Megarid later in the war, both of cavalry and with the whole army, until Nisaea was captured by the Athenians (2.31.3).

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62 De Ste Croix (1972) 252-3; 259-84.
The mention of annual invasions of Megara, until the capture of Nisaea, reinforces the idea that Megara was a key objective for the Athenians. It has been noted that if the Athenians could control the Megarid they could block (or at least hinder) the Peloponnesian land route over the Isthmus into the main Greek peninsula. While this is right, there is another element to the Athenian desire to control the region. The mention that the annual invasions of the Megarid stopped when the Athenians captured Nisaea (in 424 BC: Thucydides 4.66-73) would suggest that the Athenians had achieved their main objective with the invasions: control of the port. It seems that this was an aim of the Athenians since before the outbreak of the war itself, and can possibly be linked to their desire to gain access to both sides of the Isthmus.

In de Ste Croix’s opinion, the references to “starving” Megarians in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* refer to the annual invasions and blockades after the war had broken out, rather than as a result of the Megarian decree. This seems a less natural interpretation of the passages, and Hornblower rightly points out that the key lines in the *Acharnians* (530-8) “clearly link the decrees and starvation as cause and effect.” However, de Ste Croix noted that in the ten lines or so prior to the mention of the Megarian decree, which talk

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63 It is not until 4.66.1 that we learn the invasions of the Megarid actually took place twice each year. Hornblower (1994) 145-6 notes that this delay reduces the impact of the Athenian invasions of the Megarid. Compare with Hornblower (1996) 230-1.
64 See, for example, de Ste Croix (1972) 187-95; Wick (1979) 1; Lewis (1992) 387-8.
65 However, it has been suggested that the Athenians no longer needed to invade Megara after the capture of the Spartans from Sphacteria; the Athenian promise to kill the Spartan prisoners if the Spartans invaded Attica (4.41.1) secured Attica from Peloponnesian invasions. See Wick (1979) 11. Compare with Rood (1998) 67.
66 See Wick’s (1979) 2 interpretation of Thucydides 2.31. “By what he says here, especially in 31.3, Thucydides suggests both (1) that Megara was not without importance for the Athenians, and (2) that 424 marked the culmination of a policy initiated in the war’s first year.” See also Lewis (1992) 387-8.
67 De Ste Croix (1972) 237-44.
68 Hornblower (1991) 111.
about the kidnapping of Simaetha and Aspasia’s whores, “scarce a single word ... corresponds to historical fact” and that the two lines which follow, “speak of the decree as ‘the decree on account of the harlots’. What we are being given is a whole series of comic exaggerations, with scarcely an atom of truth in them.”

It is of course improbable that the kidnapping of whores led to the enforcement of the Megarian decree, and this passage has been seen as a parody of the opening of Herodotus’ Histories (1.1-5), where snatching women leads to the hostility between Greece and Asia. It is important to remember that the whole purpose of the play was to be funny, and since it won first prize at the Lenaea we can safely assume that the audience found it funny. Since the references to starving Megarians are “wrapped up in humour” one wonders how seriously we are supposed to take them. It is entirely possible that the humour lies in the fact that the Megarians were supposed to be starving. The continued resistance of the Megarians throughout the Archidamian War would suggest that they were not in fact starving, at least not badly enough to capitulate to the Athenians. Aristophanes, in a play which emphasises the idea

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69 De Ste Croix (1972) 242.
70 However, see Hornblower (1991) 111 who suggests the possibility that Thucydides may not have given us more about the Megarian decree because he did not want to make Aspasia a prime historical agent. As he notes, it “would be out of character for [Thucydides] to give prominence to this Herodotean female angle.” Compare with Hornblower (2002) 108-9.
72 Thucydides’ description of the Athenian capture of Nisaea (4.66-74) informs us that there was internal conflict in Megara between the democrats, who at some point previously had taken control of the city, and the exiles, who were at Pegae. Because of this conflict the democrats planned to surrender the city to the Athenians. The planned betrayal of the city to the Athenians appears to be more as a result of internal politics rather than as a direct result of the blockades and invasions (that is, not because of starvation. This is not to deny that the annual invasions and the blockades played a part in the political upheaval). Even after the Athenian capture of Nisaea the Megarians did not capitulate to the Athenians. This would suggest that the Megarians could still provide enough food for the populace even without control of their ports; possibly by goods/foodstuffs travelling overland from Corinth and/or Boeotia, or by
that the Spartans may not be totally to blame for the war, could simply be having a dig at the Athenian politicians for the ineffectiveness of their efforts to force the “starving” Megarians into submission.

If the Athenians were placing economic pressure on Megara in an attempt to gain access to both sides of the Isthmus, one wonders whether they were attempting something similar with Corinth. This is where the archaeological evidence becomes important.

The Archaeological Evidence

Corinth has been continuously excavated since 1896 and has revealed a lot of information with regards to the issue of trade. The discovery in 1977 of the Punic Amphora Building, located west of the South Stoa, has increased our understanding of the range of Corinthian trade through the fifth century. Uncovered in the building were a large number of smashed transport amphoras containing traces of salted or pickled fish. Approximately 40% of these vases were from the Punic west, another 40% were Chiot, 5% from Mende in the Chalcidice, and roughly 5% were local Corinthian transport amphoras. This evidence implies that the Corinthians (or at the very least one Corinthian trader) were trading both

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74 See Williams (1979) 118: “a rough count” shows that about 40% of the discarded amphoras are Punic, “perhaps an equal amount are Chiot, and a number are from the Chersonese.” See also Zimmerman Munn (2003) 199-200.
east and west during the fifth century, and, interestingly enough, were trading with members of the Athenian empire.

Zimmermann Munn has identified sherds from transport amphorae known as Mañá-Pascual A4 amphorae in the Punic Amphora Building, and associated them with the kilns at Kouass, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. She further links these transport amphorae to the salt-fish factories discovered near Gades, on the Spanish side of the Pillars of Hercules, and suggests that there was a direct trade in fish between Corinth and Gades, a known fishing and trading centre. The sudden abandonment of an evidently thriving business around the time of the beginning of the Peloponnesian War has naturally led scholars to speculate that the abandonment of the Punic Amphora Building may have been a direct result of the war.

The Punic Amphora Building dates from the second quarter of the fifth century and has two phases. In the first phase, it was probably a house with some space dedicated to the occupants’ commercial activities, while in the second phase, the building was altered as a result of the occupants’ expanding trade. This can be seen by the tremendous increase in the number of transport amphora sherds, the lack of fine-wares, and the total absence of loomweights, which were present in the first phase. The Punic Amphora Building was abandoned at some point in the third quarter of the fifth century, probably in the 430s BC. The sudden abandonment of an evidently thriving business around the time of the beginning of the Peloponnesian War has naturally led scholars to speculate that the abandonment of the Punic Amphora Building may have been a direct result of the war.

75 Zimmermann Munn (2003).  
76 Zimmermann Munn (2003) 200 suggests that the amphorae from Chios and Mende provide evidence that Corinth imported wine from several north Aegean centres in the mid fifth century. Both poleis were known in antiquity for their wine (see her n. 38).  
Williams originally suggested that the Athenian capture of Potidaea may have eliminated the Corinthian trader’s port of contact in the north Aegean, while Phormion’s blockade of the Crisaean Gulf (Thucydides 2.69.1) in 430/29 BC, “may have done much to cut off the import of fish to Corinth from the west.”

It has been suggested that the Athenian blockade of the Gulf was ineffective, and that merchant vessels could find ways to escape the notice of the Athenians at Naupactus. However, if Zimmerman Munn’s interpretation is correct, and the nature of the trade was on a large scale and direct, then the merchant vessels used may have been much larger than those used in coastal trading. If so, the merchantmen may simply have been unable to escape the notice of the blockading Athenians. The fact that the Punic Amphora Building was abandoned around the 430s BC makes it plausible that it was the result of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. Still, it may be the case that the building was abandoned as a general result of the war itself, rather than the result of a direct blockade of the Athenians.

There is some further archaeological evidence which potentially suggests that the Athenians deliberately ceased trading contact with Corinth around the time of the war’s outbreak. The evidence of white-ground lekythoi from the North Cemetery has been interpreted to show that contact between Athenian and Corinthian potters ceased at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. Palmer, in 1964, saw three distinct phases in the Corinthian development of white-ground lekythoi. In the first phase, which she dated to a decade or two after the middle of the fifth century, Attic ivy lekythoi were replaced by a local product, which were “painstaking copies” of the Attic lekythoi. The second phase

79 The Potidaeans eventually surrendered in 430/29 BC: Thucydides 2.70.
80 Williams (1979) 118.
81 See, for example, Westlake (1945) 77-8; Brunt (1965) 271-2; Wick (1979) 8; Salmon (1984) 176-7.
83 See further Palmer (1964) 121, 141-3.
also ultimately derived from Attic, but the forms were less controlled and the vases were “almost a caricature of the Attic prototype.”

This phase ceased abruptly and was replaced by the third phase, which seemed once again to copy contemporary Attic lekythoi. Palmer claimed the “inevitable conclusions” were that all importing stopped at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, and, since the Corinthian potters could not see what their Athenian counterparts were doing, they were forced to produce their own versions of the lekythoi. Then, when relations briefly resumed (she suggested the possibility of 421 BC), the Corinthian potters were again able to make accurate copies of the contemporary Attic lekythoi.

Palmer’s reconstruction seems to rely too heavily on the notion that the developments of the Corinthian lekythoi were reliant on inspiration from Attica. More recently, Steiner has noted, based on evidence from the Sacred Spring, that more types of lekythoi exist than have previously been described. She also notes that there is evidence which indicates the Corinthian potters were more independent than the earlier analysis.

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84 “The most notable development is in the mouth, which, from its early deep bell-like form, became more and more shallow with an extraordinary flare at the top.” Palmer (1964) 121.

85 This new version “displayed a very deep, straight-sided mouth, a black neck, and a comparatively slender body. A comparison of this with the typical Athenian lekythoi of the last quarter of the century can leave no doubt that there was again contact between the potters of the two cites.” Palmer (1964) 121.

86 “Corinthian potters were forced to make out for themselves, either by imitating traditional forms, or by attempting to produce vases comparable to those they thought were being made in Athens.” Palmer (1964) 121.

87 Palmer (1964) 121. Contrast with MacDonald (1982) 114-17. See also the comments of McPhee (1987) 277 (n. 8).

88 Note especially her assertion that the “odd shape” of her phase two came into being because the Corinthian potters were “lacking new stimulus from Athens.” Palmer (1964) 121. See Pemberton (2003) who discusses the perception of Athenian influence on Corinthian pottery and notes that a more critical examination is required: we need not assume that the development of Corinthian pottery in the fifth century (and later) was always influenced by Attic examples.

89 Steiner (1992) 398.
suggested.\textsuperscript{90} If the Corinthian potters were not relying on Attica for inspiration, then
developments in the local production of white-ground lekythoi may have more to do with
an attempt to create a distinct, local version, rather than because they no longer had access
to Athenian models.\textsuperscript{91} When these local versions proved unpopular the Corinthian potters
may have resorted back to copying the Attic models. Therefore, perhaps, we should not
necessarily see the changes in design as the direct result of Corinthian potters being unable
to see what their Athenian counterparts were doing as a result of the war.

At about the same time as the development of a local Corinthian style of white-
ground lekythoi, the Corinthians also began to produce their own red figure vases. After
one hundred years or so of resisting the urge to produce their own red figure pottery, the
Corinthians suddenly began to do so in the last quarter of the fifth century. It has been
suggested that the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War caused trade to cease between
Athens and Corinth and made Attic pottery difficult to obtain, which led to the Corinthian
potters producing their own red figure pottery to satisfy the established market.\textsuperscript{92} This
suggestion is possibly supported by the evidence of the replacement of Attic white-ground
lekythoi with Corinthian in the North Cemetery (see above). However, Attic red figure
pottery is never completely replaced by Corinthian and continues to appear in domestic
contexts throughout the remainder of the fifth century; the Corinthians were not strictly

\textsuperscript{90} Steiner (1992) 398.

\textsuperscript{91} See MacDonald (1982) 115 who suggested that the second phase in Palmer’s reconstruction
represents a local style whose production overlaps the first and third phases, where the Corinthians were
copying the Athenian models. Interestingly, Palmer (1964) 142-3 seems to have noticed some overlap in
her groups.

\textsuperscript{92} See Herbert (1977) 3-4; Salmon (1984) 176. Compare with Cook (1979b) 182 who, in a review of
Corinth VII, iv, claimed that the development of Corinthian red figure was a result of the rising prices in
importing Attic pottery indirectly (he suggested the possibility that the pottery arrived via Argos).
prevented from importing Attic pottery during the Peloponnesian War. However, after c. 430 BC there does appear to be a decrease in the imports of Attic red figure pottery.

McPhee would push the date of the development of Corinthian red figure back to about 440 BC rather than to the early years of the Peloponnesian War (as Herbert dates it). If this date is correct, then the decline in Attic red figure pottery from Corinth may have more to do with the development of local production rather than as a result of a trade embargo. On this note, it is interesting to see that, based on the evidence from the Forum, there is a general trend in the imported Attic red figure open shapes: kraters, skyphoi, cups and stemless cups are the most abundant shapes found. These shapes indicate that the Corinthians (or some Corinthians) were importing the Athenian designs for use in public dining, and the importation of Attic pottery for this purpose may be a reflection of taste rather than a strict reliance on Attic pottery. If this is the case, one wonders whether the decline in Attic red figure has more to do with a change in some individual tastes rather than as the result of a trade embargo or lack of access to Athenian potters. At the very

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93 See Herbert (1977) 3, 15-19. MacDonald (1982) believes that the Peloponnesian War had little to no effect on the pottery trade between Athens and Corinth and concludes that interference in non-essential items “was simply not a worthwhile state policy.”


96 See McPhee (1987) 277 (n. 8).

97 See McPhee (1987) 275-6. However, see Boulter and Bentz (1980) 295 (n. 4) who note that the predominance of kraters “may simply testify to the greater durability of thicker-walled vessels.”

98 See Williams and Fisher (1972) 164-5 for the possibility that civic or sacred celebrations took place in Building I in the Forum.

99 It is also worth pointing out that the Corinthians no doubt used other, more expensive, metal vessels (which do not survive) at their civic functions as well as the Athenian pottery, and therefore it may be possible to over-emphasise the importance of the Attic pottery being present (although, of course, the fact that it was found still needs to be explained).

100 We may also need to bear in mind the possibility that skilled potters were prepared to move around in order to find more work or greater pay. This may have helped to influence which style of pottery
least, the fact that a decent amount of Attic red figure has been found in Corinth dating to around the beginning of the Peloponnesian War indicates that there was no trade embargo on pottery in place. 101

Because the archaeological evidence from Corinth is inconclusive in answering whether the Athenians interfered in Corinthian trade during the war, this is probably an issue which is best left open. While it seems unlikely that the Athenians directly interfered in the pottery trade, Corinthian potters and traders may still have suffered as a general result of the war itself, which probably helped to aggravate the general feeling of animosity towards the Athenians.

In conclusion, as the fifth century progressed and the Athenians continued to develop their empire, they seem to have become more aware of the potential advantages of interfering in other poleis’ trade for their own benefit. The development of the Athenian navy gave them a powerful weapon to search further afield for natural resources and material goods, along with the ability to control where these goods came into mainland Greece. Surely, some Athenians saw the advantage of preventing their enemies from obtaining goods which could be brought to Athens, and (for example) in 427 BC we see the Athenians attempting to prevent grain from being brought into the Peloponnese (see above). Presumably, this grain would then be destined for Athens or Athenian merchants

was popular at various times in different poleis. See McPhee and Kartsonaki (2010) 136 who note the possibility that the Suessula Painter worked in both Attica and Corinth. MacDonald (1981) noted that there is evidence of potters emigrating from Athens to poleis such as Corinth, Olympia, Old Smyrna, Olynthus, and some western areas such as Thurii (see 162-3 on the emigration to Corinth). Papadopoulos (2009) 235 notes that there is also evidence of potters relocating from other poleis to Athens.

101 One issue against the idea of a trade embargo in pottery during wartime is the fact that the high point of Corinth’s importing of Attic vases occurs at the same time when the two poleis were in conflict during the first Peloponnesian War (c. 460-445 BC). See MacDonald (1982) 114; Arafat and Morgan (1989) 338-40.
for selling on. The enforcement of the Megarian decree is also a good indication of an Athenian attempt to interfere in another polis’ trade.  

The growing Athenian interest in obtaining material goods from the west, along with the ability to interfere in other poleis’ commercial activities would have affected the Corinthians. Corinth, because of its central location at the Isthmus, was the key trading centre in the mainland Greek world. However, by the late fifth century Athens had taken over as the main commercial centre. The Athenians presumably saw the advantages their powerful navy offered and the potential benefits of making their polis the commercial centre of the Greek world. This of course was not something which happened over night but was developed throughout the fifth century. The continued encroachment on Corinth’s area of influence and the attempted control of the Corinthian Gulf, along with the possible interference in trade, all suggest that the Athenians were attempting to replace Corinth as the polis with the most influence over the key commercial areas. The Corinthians, for their part, may well have not seen it coming until the late 430s BC. To a large extent, this may help to explain their hatred towards Athens and desire to push Sparta into war. Thucydides claims that it was the growth of Athens and the fear this inspired in the Spartans which led to the Peloponnesian War (1.23.6), yet his narrative indicates that it was the Corinthians who felt the most fear and desire for war.

Relevant here is Thucydides’ report of the Corinthian speech to the allies at Sparta. In an attempt to gain the support of all the allies for war the Corinthians say: τούς δὲ τὴν μεσόγειαν μᾶλλον καὶ μὴ ἐν πόρω κατοικοῦντος εἰδέναι χρή ὅτι, τοῖς κάτω ἄμμως, ἐχαλεπτότερον ἔχουσι τὴν κατακομβὴν τῶν οἰκίων καὶ πάλιν ἀντίληψιν ἄν ἡ θάλασσα τῇ ἱππείρῳ δίδωσι, “for those who live further inland and do not dwell on the sea route, it is necessary to know that, if they do not defend those near the sea route, they will find more difficult the export of their produce and the importing of those things which the sea gives to the mainland” (1.120.2). If this speech is historical, then it implies that the Peloponnesians were suffering economic damage prior to the outbreak of the war: Hornblower (1991) 197; Lewis (1992) 377. Compare with Lazenby (2004) 20. At the very least, this sentence implies that the Corinthians realised the potential of the Athenians to do economic damage by controlling the coastal ports.
THE CORINTHIAN NAVY

There is no doubt that the Athenians had the most powerful navy of mainland Greece during the fifth century. The numerous references in Thucydides to the pride the Athenians felt in their naval ability attests to the importance they placed in being the greatest naval force of Greece.  

Although this naval power was real, Thucydides selectively emphasises certain elements in his descriptions of the naval battles in order to prove Athenian naval superiority. The first section of this chapter discusses Thucydides’ presentation of three naval battles in the Corinthian Gulf fought between (largely) Corinthian and Athenian fleets, in order to show how Thucydides stresses the idea of Athenian superiority against Corinthian (and Peloponnesian) ignorance at sea. The next section will look at what the reality of Corinthian naval power was during the opening stages of the Peloponnesian War.

The Corinthian Navy: Exaggerations

In 429 BC, two naval battles were fought in the Corinthian Gulf between a predominantly Corinthian fleet consisting of forty-seven, and then seventy-seven ships, against twenty Athenian ships under the command of Phormion (2.83–92). The Athenians managed to get the better of their rivals in both of these battles. The typical reaction to Thucydides’ description of these battles is that they are shining examples of how a brilliant Athenian general was able to defy the odds and defeat a much larger number of enemy ships because of his brilliance, the Athenian training, and the inexperience of the Peloponnesians in naval

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1 See, for example, 1.74.1-2; 2.41.4; 2.62.2; 2.88.2; 4.12.3; 6.83.1.
There is no doubt some truth to these assertions. However, a closer examination of Thucydides’ description is required.

Thucydides tells us that when the Corinthian fleet, which was sailing across the Gulf to Acarnania, realised that they could not avoid a battle, they created a circle in order to face the Athenians, with their five fastest ships and all the light craft (λεπτὰ πλοῖα) inside (2.83.5). Thucydides goes on to describe how the Athenian ships sailed around the Peloponnesians, forcing the circle in, but not attacking it, as they had been ordered by Phormion not to attack until he himself gave the signal (2.84.1).

For he expected that they would not be able to stay in formation, like an army on land, but that their ships would clash against one another and that their small ships would cause disorder. And if the wind blew in from the Gulf as it usually did about dawn (he kept sailing around [them] waiting for this), they would not be able to stay still for any length of time. Also, he thought that he could attack whenever he wished, as his ships were the better sailers, and the most favourable time was then (i.e. when the wind got up) (2.84.2).

Thucydides goes on to describe how this is exactly what happened:

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When the wind came in, the ships, being already in a small space were being hard pressed by both the wind and the smaller ships, and at the same time they were thrown together in disorder. Ship kept falling upon ship and they had to be pushed away with poles. They were busy watching against one another, shouting insults and abuse, and no one was listening to the orders being given nor to the boatswains. Also, as the men were inexperienced, they were unable to bring up their oars in the rough sea which caused the ships to be less responsive for the steersmen. Then indeed, at this point, Phormion gave the signal, and the Athenians attacked, disabling one of the flagships first before beginning to destroy the other ships wherever they could (2.84.3).

Thucydides has beautifully contrasted the two fleets. The Athenian fleet, with its brilliant general Phormion, have the patience, ability, and skill to attack whenever they want, while the Peloponnesian fleet, when faced with unexpected circumstances (i.e. the wind) fall into disarray. Everything happens exactly as Phormion expected (ἡλπίζε) and the Athenians defeat their numerically superior opponents. Thucydides has attributed
incredible foresight to Phormion, who correctly predicted both that the wind would pick up at dawn, and that it would cause confusion in the Peloponnesian fleet. Hunter has viewed this description as reasoning after the fact and argues that, “what were in reality Phormion’s responses to the Peloponnesian defensive strategy and to their confusion, especially after the wind began to blow, the historian converted to purposes which correctly anticipate what were in fact only probabilities.”

Thucydides’ description implies that the morning wind which Phormion waited for was a regular event (εἰώθει γίγνεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἔως). Morning and evening wind changes in the Gulf of Corinth can be pretty reliable and can be predicted with some accuracy, especially by an experienced sailor like Phormion. However, two things need to be considered. The first is that Phormion could not predict the time of the battle, but could only respond to the Peloponnesian attempt to cross the Gulf. Thucydides himself, in his description, seems to imply that the wind was something which Phormion took advantage

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3 Hunter (1973) 45. The italics in the quotation are her own. See also de Romilly (1956) 127, who noted that the probabilities expected by Phormion (i.e. the wind and confusion) are going to be proven very true by the narration (“ces probabilités vont être très rigoureusement vérifiées par le récit”). Compare with Hornblower (1991) 365 who notes that Thucydides is very sure about Phormion’s thinking, and suggests that he discussed it with Phormion afterwards. This is of course a possibility, and it may well be that Phormion himself exaggerated his own foresight when recounting his description to Thucydides. However, as will be discussed below, there are other elements in Thucydides’ account of the battles in the Corinthian Gulf which make me inclined to think that Thucydides himself has emphasised (and possibly exaggerated) certain elements to enhance the view that the Athenians were superior in all things naval.


5 Hunter (1973) 45 (n. 2). Contrast with Morton (2001) 91-3 (n. 37) who argues that Phormion could, to some extent, predict the time of the battle. While he raises some good points about how Phormion could influence the Peloponnesian decision to cross the Gulf, the fact remains the same: he had to wait for the Peloponnesians to attempt a crossing before he could make his move. He may well have hoped to use the wind to his advantage if the Peloponnesians decided to cross at a certain time, but he could not make them cross exactly when he wanted to.
of once the Peloponnesians had made their defensive manoeuvre (i.e. forming a circle), rather than forcing the Peloponnesians into that position in order to use the wind in his attack.\(^6\) The second thing which needs to be taken into account is the fact that this battle was fought in the Corinthian Gulf, and the Peloponnesian fleet was made up of Corinthian ships and the other allies on the Crisaean Gulf (2.83.1). Although Thucydides emphasises this fleets’ inexperience (\(\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\omicron\omicron\iota\)) leading to the confusion, the Corinthians were not inexperienced sailors and were surely as aware of the wind changes in the Gulf as Phormion.\(^7\) This is not to deny that Phormion could have used the wind better than the Peloponnesians, because of his naval ability, but we should hesitate before asserting that Phormion knew the weather conditions better than the locals.

It is interesting to note that Plutarch records a tradition where Themistocles, at the battle of Salamis, waited for the wind to blow up the strait, causing a heavy swell, before attacking the Persians (\textit{Themistocles} 14.2). Given the fact that Plutarch is our only source for this tradition, his account has often been called into question.\(^8\) It is possible that if there was a tradition in the fifth century of Themistocles waiting for the wind to disrupt the enemy’s fleet, Phormion (being aware of Themistocles’ tactic), would have acted as

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\(^6\) Contrast with Morton (2001) 91-3 (n. 37). It is worth noting that the reason the wind became an issue for the Peloponnesians was because they were stationary in the water. Again, Phormion may well have intended to use the wind \textit{if} the Peloponnesians crossed at a specific time, but it was the Peloponnesians own tactic which led to the trouble, not Phormion’s prediction of it.

\(^7\) Contrast with Westlake (1968) 45-7; Hunter (1973) 48. Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 72 claim that Phormion had “superior knowledge of local weather conditions.” While there is no doubt Phormion had superior knowledge of naval tactics, it seems highly unlikely that he had better knowledge of the local weather conditions than the Corinthians and allies who lived on the Gulf, and were known seafarers (cf. Thucydides 1.13.2-5).

\(^8\) The story is accepted by, for example, Grundy (1901) 398; Green (1970) 190; Hammond (1973) 284-5; Burn (1984) 461; Strauss (2004) 152-3. The story is rejected by, for example, Hignett (1963) 21, 223; Frost (1980) 154-5; Marr (1998) 108.
Themistocles did and waited to take advantage of the breeze.\(^9\) Conversely, it has been argued that Plutarch’s story may be a “duplication of an action for another occasion” which Plutarch anachronistically attributed to Themistocles, “for Themistokles would have acted as Phormion did.”\(^10\) Given the fact that it is only Plutarch who records the tradition, one cannot assume that it was a tradition in the fifth century itself. Possibly, Plutarch gave Themistocles the same foresight that Thucydides gave Phormion in order to emphasise his naval brilliance: both Athenian commanders were so clever they could even predict the weather and use it to their advantage.\(^11\)

Thucydides also uses a similar technique in his description of the second battle in the Gulf to emphasise the idea that the Peloponnesians were inexperienced compared with the Athenians in naval matters. To begin with, Thucydides describes how the Peloponnesians were able to outmanoeuvre Phormion and cut off nine of the twenty Athenian ships sailing back to Naupactus (2.90.4-6).\(^12\) This “victory” of the Peloponnesians is not dwelled upon for long. Thucydides quickly shifts the focus of his description to emphasise the idea that the Athenians were the superior naval force.

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9. Compare with Hunter (1973) 45 (n. 2) who looks at the issue from a literary perspective, i.e. if there was a tradition of Themistocles’ tactic in Thucydides’ day, then Thucydides may have ascribed it to Phormion as well in order to emphasise his brilliance.

10. Gomme (1956a) 219 (n. 1). The emphasis is his.

11. See Morton (2001) 97-100 (especially n. 47) for a full discussion on Themistocles’ use of the wind. He considers the story true, and argues that we should not underestimate the importance of a sailor’s knowledge and understanding of local weather patterns and conditions. This is certainly a valid point. However, his argument relies on the assumption that Plutarch (or his source) understood local weather conditions fully and knew exactly what Themistocles was thinking. This of course is not impossible, but the fact that no fifth century source which survives records the tradition of Themistocles’ key strategic manoeuvre, makes me inclined to think that it was not a tradition in the fifth century, and that Plutarch has used this description in order to emphasise Themistocles’ ability and foresight as Thucydides has Phormion’s.

12. See Gomme (1956a) 229 who argued that Brasidas was behind this outmanoeuvring of Phormion. Contrast with Westlake (1968) 48 (n. 3).
narrative to describe how ten of the eleven remaining Athenian ships managed to reach Naupactus, while twenty Peloponnesian ships (out of the seventy-seven total) were in pursuit. He continues by describing how one Athenian trireme was being pursued by a ship from Leucas, and, due to the chance event of a merchant vessel being anchored off shore, how the Athenian trireme managed to circle around it and disable (καταδύει) the pursuing ship (2.91.1-3). This was a daring and exceptional move by the Athenians and therefore we perhaps should not be surprised by Thucydides’ focus on it. However, his description that follows is interesting. He states that:

τοῖς μὲν οὖν Πελοποννησίοις γενομένου τούτου ἄπροσδοκήτου τε καὶ παρὰ λόγου φόβος ἐμπίπτει, καὶ ἂμα ἀτάκτως διώκοντες διὰ τὸ κρατεῖν αἱ μὲν τινες τῶν νεῶν καθείσαι τὰς κόπας ἐπέστησαν τοῦ πλοῦ, ἀξέμφορον δρῶντες πρὸς τὴν ἐξ ὀλίγου ἀντεφόρμησιν, βουλόμενοι τὰς πλείους περιμεῖναι, αἱ δὲ καὶ ἐς βράχεα ἀπειρία χωρίων ὠκειλαν. τοὺς δ’ Ἀθηναίους ἰδόντας ταῦτα γιγνόμενα θάρσος

13 Because of their design it appears that triremes did not “sink” (i.e. fall to the bottom of the sea) but rather were “swamped” and became waterlogged, putting them out of action. See Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 127-8.

14 See Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 77 for their description of this move. They state that this account underlines the qualities which made the Athenians so formidable: “refusal at the outset to accept the logic of numbers and of a tactically unfavourable situation, refusal to accept defeat when nearly half their ships were out of action, a magnificent and glorious opportunism and an ability to react quickly and decisively to a sudden change of fortune.” This was exactly the kind of reaction Thucydides would have been hoping for when he decided to focus on this part of the battle (i.e. rather than focussing on Phormion being outmanoeuvred and losing nearly half of his ships). It is interesting to note that Diodorus has no mention of this action in his account of the battle. He appears to follow a tradition more hostile towards Phormion and claims that his victory was doubtful (ὁμφίδοξον) (12.48.3). It makes one wonder whether Thucydides’ focus on the brilliant move by the Athenian ship was purposely designed to try and “cover up” what was essentially a loss (i.e. losing nearly half of the fleet). Contrast with Westlake (1968) 58. See Gomme (1956a) 234-7 for a discussion on Phormion’s later life; in particular 235 for a discussion on the possibility of criticism against Phormion by the Athenians on his return to Athens.
For the Peloponnesians this was an unexpected and unanticipated action and created fear. At the same time, on account of the victory, they were not pursuing in battle order; some of the ships had let their oars fall and stopped sailing (an inappropriate action in the face of an attack from close quarters), wanting to wait for the majority. Others had run aground in the shallows through ignorance of the coast. Seeing this happening, the Athenians took courage, and with one command set out against them shouting. The Peloponnesians, because of their previous failures and present disorder remained for only a short time, before they fled to Panormus, from where they came originally (2.91.4-92.1).

Even though the Peloponnesians had captured nearly half of the Athenian fleet,\(^{15}\) the focus of Thucydides’ narrative is on the superior Athenian seamanship compared with the disorganised, unprofessional nature of their Peloponnesian counterparts. Once again Thucydides notes the Peloponnesian ignorance (ἀπειρία) of the local conditions, this time ignorance of the coast.

Thucydides tells us that after the first battle, Cnemus, the Spartan general, sent messages to the poleis for more ships (2.85.3). Unfortunately, he is not more specific on where the ships came from, but presumably some were from Corinth and the other allies in the Gulf of Crisa, as in the first battle (2.83.1). There were some Leucadian ships as well

\(^{15}\) However, it must be noted that the Athenians were later able to recover their ships (2.92.2).
According to Thucydides, the Spartan allies who provided ships for the war were Corinth, Megara, Sicyon, Pellene, Elis, Ambracia and Leucas (2.9.3). Corinth, Megara and Sicyon all had ports on the Corinthian Gulf, while Ambracia and Leucas, who were colonies of Corinth and had a close connection with their mother-city, presumably sailed the Corinthian Gulf often.\(^{16}\) Pallene lies further inland in the Peloponnese (see map 3), but the fact that she provided ships for the Peloponnesians would indicate that she had a port on the Gulf as well. All of this indicates that those sailors in the Peloponnesian fleet would have known the Corinthian Gulf well, and would therefore not have been ignorant of the coast, as Thucydides claims.\(^ {17}\) Thucydides possibly included the idea of Peloponnesian ignorance in his narrative in order to emphasise the notion that the Peloponnesians were inexperienced and fell far behind their Athenian counterparts in naval warfare. However, it seems hard to believe that the Peloponnesians, who were known sailors and would have sailed the Corinthian Gulf often, would really have been ignorant of the local conditions.

The contrast between the Athenian naval skill and Peloponnesian inexperience is a theme brought out by Thucydides in various speeches, as well as in his narrative of the

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\(^{16}\) Note how the Corinthians enlist the support of Leucas and Ambracia in their war with Corcyra: 1.26.1; 1.27.2; 1.46.1. See also 2.80.3; 3.114.4 for indications of a close Corinthian relationship with Ambracia. On relations between Corinth and her north Adriatic colonies see Graham (1964) 118-42 and Salmon (1984) 274-9, 394-6.

\(^{17}\) However, Thucydides tells us that after the first battle the Peloponnesian fleet based itself at Cyllene, the port of Elis (2.84.5), and so presumably some Elean ships were also present in the second battle. This could, potentially, help to explain Thucydides’ comment that some of the Peloponnesians were “ignorant” of the coast as Cyllene lies outside the Corinthian Gulf (although see 1.27.2 and 1.46.1 where Elis lends ships to Corinth for their missions against Corcyra. This possibly indicates that the Eleans and Corinthians had a close connection, and therefore, the Eleans may have sailed the Corinthian Gulf regularly). Still, when Thucydides’ comment here about Peloponnesian ignorance is taken into account with the other descriptions of the Corinthian navy in action, it would seem that this is another example of Thucydides trying to stress Peloponnesian weakness at sea.
battles themselves. At the allied congress prior to the outbreak of the war, the Corinthians claim that the Peloponnesians will win (ἐπικρατήσαι) the war because: πρῶτον μὲν πλῆθι προύχοντας καὶ ἐμπειρίᾳ πολεμικῇ, ἔπειτα ὁμοίως πάντας ἐς τὰ παραγγελλόμενα ἵνας, “first, we possess greater numbers and are experienced in war, secondly, we all follow orders alike” (1.121.2). 18 However, this is proven untrue by Thucydides’ narrative of the first major sea-battle: the Peloponnesians have more than double the number of ships on both occasions but are still defeated by the Athenians. Their experience in war is only on land, not on the sea, and in their confusion they do not follow orders but get into disarray. The Peloponnesian courage is no match for Athenian skill at sea. Pericles’ prediction (1.142.6-9) prior to the war that the Peloponnesians will not be able to match the Athenians in naval skill is proven correct by Phormion’s exploits in the Gulf. 19 One wonders whether Thucydides had Phormion’s victories in mind when he composed the Corinthians’ and Pericles’ speeches prior to the outbreak of the war.

It is interesting to compare the above battles fought in the Corinthian Gulf to another one fought between the Corinthians and Athenians some sixteen years later. Thucydides tells us that the Corinthians were intending to send a force of hoplites to Sicily in merchant vessels (ὀλκάσι), and in order to protect these ships they manned twenty-five triremes with the intention of offering battle to the Athenian blockading squadron at Naupactus (7.17.3-4). Thucydides goes on to describe how the Athenian commander at Naupactus asked for

18 While this statement is not directly referring to naval warfare, it comes in the same sentence as the Corinthians’ advice on how they will be able to defeat the Athenian navy: by borrowing money from Olympia and Delphi to build up their naval resources, and through superior courage (1.121.3-4).

19 Westlake (1968) 59; Hunter (1973) 56-8. One is possibly reminded of the Corinthians’ and Pericles’ speeches prior to the war by the speeches of the Peloponnesian commanders and Phormion before the second naval battle (2.87-9). These speeches are very similar in nature, and one wonders whether Thucydides himself inserted them here in order to emphasise the notion that Athenian naval skill will defeat Peloponnesian courage in naval warfare.
more ships, since he did not think that his own eighteen were sufficient to deal with the Corinthian twenty-five, and so Demosthenes and Eurymedon (who were intending to sail to Sicily) left him ten (7.31.4-5). This is in stark contrast to the confidence of the Athenians shown in Phormion’s battles described above, where the Athenians had felt that they could resist any number of ships and that μηδὲν οἷς Ἀθηναίοι ὄντες Πελοποννησίων νεῶν ὑποχωρεῖν, “being Athenians they would never give way to a crowd of Peloponnesian ships” (2.88.2). It has been argued that this lack of confidence in the Athenians may be in part due to the fact that their best ships and men were in Sicily at the time. This may well be true. However, it is important to note Thucydides’ description of the battle.

Thucydides describes an indecisive battle where the Corinthians had three ships destroyed (διαφθείρονται), but managed to put seven Athenian ships out of action through the innovation of strengthening their prows and ramming the Athenians head on. The result of the battle was ambiguous, although the Athenians managed to gain control of the wrecks (7.34.5-6). Thucydides goes on to state that once the Athenians had sailed back to Naupactus:

οἱ Κορίνθιοι εὕθες τροπαῖον ἔστησαν ὡς νικῶντες, ὅτι πλείους τῶν ἑναντίων ναύς ἀπλους ἐποίησαν καὶ νομίσαντες αὐτοὶ ο骓 ἑσάσθαι δι’ ὁπερ οὐδ’ οἱ ἐπεροὶ νικᾶν· οἱ τε γὰρ Κορίνθιοί ἔγνεαντο κρατεῖν εἰ μὴ καὶ πολύ ἐκρατοῦντο, οἱ τ’ Ἀθηναίοι ἐνόμιζον ἑσάσθαι ὅτι οὐ πολὺ ἑνίκων.

21 On this innovation see Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 163-7.
the Corinthians immediately set up a trophy for victory, because they made more of their opponents’ ships unseaworthy, and considered that they had not lost just as the others (i.e. the Athenians) did not consider that they had won. For the Corinthians considered themselves victors if they were not greatly defeated, while the Athenians thought that they lost if they did not win easily (7.34.7).²²

The account of this battle is often glossed over and described only within the context of the Sicilian expedition, with no more comment than how the Corinthians had modified their ships, a modification which the Syracusans would later adopt and use to help defeat the Athenians in the Great Harbour at Syracuse (see especially 7.36.2-6; 7.40.5).²³

The comment that the Corinthians considered themselves victors if they were not greatly defeated, somewhat nullifies Thucydides’ earlier description of how the Corinthians were able to get the better of the Athenians through a naval innovation, and seems prejudiced against Corinth. Moreover, the statement that the Athenians considered it a loss if they did not win easily is blatantly untrue, for Thucydides goes on to tell us (7.34.8) that, when the Peloponnesians left, the Athenians also put up a trophy as for victory (ὅς νικήσαντες).²⁴ Thucydides, through his comment, takes the shine off what

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²² This comment by Thucydides reminds one of modern day sporting commentaries. One recent example which springs to mind is the achievements of the New Zealand football team at the world cup in South Africa. The New Zealand team drew all of their games, and although they did not win a single game, their exploits have been labelled as New Zealand’s greatest ever sporting achievement. In contrast, one of their opponents, the Italians, who were heavy favourites to beat New Zealand, were severely criticized on their return to Italy for not being able to win the match “easily.”


²⁴ Both Dover (Gomme, Andrewes and Dover) (1970) 415 and Hornblower (2008) 612 ignore the fact that the Athenians did claim victory in this battle, and both simply relate Thucydides’ comment about the
was essentially a Corinthian victory.\textsuperscript{25} This was the first time that the Corinthians were able to get the better of the Athenians in a naval battle. Given the propaganda of Athenian naval invincibility that was no doubt circulating around the Greek world, the Corinthian victory was probably a shock to those who heard about it. Since the Corinthian innovation which helped the Corinthians to victory in the Gulf also helped the Syracusans destroy the Athenian force in Sicily, one wonders whether Thucydides’ “sneer” is related to the bitterness felt over the disaster of the Sicilian expedition.

These three naval battles have been highlighted in order to show how Thucydides over-emphasises Corinthian weakness to add to his impression of the invincibility of the Athenians at sea. As we have seen, Thucydides exaggerates Corinthian weakness at sea by claiming that the Corinthians were ignorant of their coastline and the local weather conditions. At the same time he shifts the focus of his account any time the Corinthians appear to have gained an advantage over their Athenian rivals. However, while Thucydides clearly exaggerates certain elements of his narrative, it is undeniable that the Corinthians at this time were much weaker than their Athenian counterparts in naval ability. Thucydides was only able to exaggerate the weakness because it already existed; a fact of which his audience would have been well aware. The next section of this chapter moves on to examine what the reality of Corinthian naval ability was at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, to try and give a more balanced picture of the Corinthian navy at this time.

\textsuperscript{25} See Kagan (1981) 303 for his assessment that the result of this battle was a moral, as well as strategic victory for the Corinthians.
The Corinthian Navy: The Reality

This section examines the evidence available on the organisation and ability of the Corinthian navy at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. Three key areas will be examined: the Corinthian naval tactics; the organisation of their navy; and the issue over who was rowing the fleet.

In Thucydides’ description of the first naval battle in the Corinthian Gulf, he tells us that the Corinthians adopted a defensive position and formed a circle (κύκλον) with their prows facing out and sterns in. Inside this circle they placed their light ships (λεπτὰ πλοῖα) and their five best sailing ships (πέντε ναύς τὰς ἀριστὰ πλοῖας), which could sail out a short distance if they were attacked (2.83.5).26 The defensive tactic of forming a circle, or bunching up when attacked by an opponent with faster ships, seems to be a traditional one. The Corinthian manoeuvre in the Gulf has been compared to the Greek strategy described by Herodotus at the battle of Artemisium (8.11).27 At the battle of

26 Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 72 consider the Corinthian decision to place their five best sailing ships in the middle of the circle a “curious failure to understand the proper use of ‘fast’ ships in battle.”

27 For example, by Rodgers (1964) 132; Kagan (1974) 109; Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 72. Lazenby (2004) 45 has doubted whether the two hundred and seventy-one ships at Artemisium could have formed a circle, and considers it even less likely that the Persians would then have rowed around them. This argument certainly has some merit: two hundred and seventy-one ships would make an incredibly large circle and would be very hard to co-ordinate (as Lazenby notes, it may be significant that Herodotus does not use the word “circle” in his description of the Greek formation, but simply states that they were “brought together” (συνήγαγον)). This may be an example of Herodotus exaggerating the ability and co-ordination of the Greeks. However, the idea of “bunching up” seems to be a traditional one. Compare also with the naval action off Corcyra in 427 BC (Thucydides 3.78.1-2).
Artemisium, the Greeks were able to get to work and win the battle, capturing thirty Persian ships. Herodotus does not tell us exactly how they managed to win, but presumably the Greeks attacked outwards from their “circle” to ram the Persian ships.\textsuperscript{28}

During the first naval battle in the Corinthian Gulf, after the Corinthians formed their defensive position, Thucydides tells us that the Athenians created a single line and kept sailing around (\textit{περίπλεον}) the circle, forcing them into a smaller space and threatening attack (2.84.1). If the Athenians were sailing around the circle as Thucydides describes then they are prime targets for ramming, as they have their sides exposed to the Corinthian rams.\textsuperscript{29} However, the Corinthians did not consider this option and attempt to ram the Athenian ships.\textsuperscript{30} It may be the case that the Corinthians were simply too intimidated by the Athenian fleet to attempt an attack on them (note Thucydides’ comment (2.83.3) that the Corinthians had failed to escape the notice of the Athenians although they set out at night, i.e. they were trying to avoid a battle).\textsuperscript{31}

While intimidation may have played a factor in the adoption of a defensive strategy and failure to attack the Athenians, there are indications which suggest that the Corinthians were simply much further behind their Athenian counterparts in naval organisation. Thucydides tells us that in the first naval battle in the Corinthian Gulf, the Corinthians and their allies were not sailing as for a sea battle, \textit{ἄλλα στρατιωτικῶτερον}

\textsuperscript{28} Compare with Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 53-5. Contrast with Scott (2000) 102 who thinks that the fighting at Artemisium was probably undertaken by soldiers and archers on the ships (i.e. rather than through ramming).

\textsuperscript{29} See Whitehead (1987) on the \textit{periplous}. See Shaw (1993) for a discussion on ramming tactics.

\textsuperscript{30} The imperfect \textit{περίπλεον} “they kept sailing around” along with the description of Phormion waiting for the wind to blow before attacking, suggests that the Athenians sailed around the Corinthians multiple times and therefore the Corinthians would have had ample opportunity to attack the Athenian ships.

\textsuperscript{31} Compare with Lazenby (2004) 45.
“but they had been prepared for carrying troops to Acarnania” (2.83.3). Thucydides also mentions the fact that λεπτὰ πλοῖα “light ships” were placed in the centre of the defensive circle formed by the Peloponnesians (2.83.5). The use of λεπτὰ πλοῖα in what was essentially a troop transport operation may be an indication that the Corinthians were prepared to use a range of non-specialised ships for troop transport and supply. This becomes even more interesting when we consider that in 413 BC the Corinthians sent hoplites to Sicily in ὀλκάσι “merchant ships” (7.17.3; 7.34.1). The Corinthian use of merchant and light ships as troop carriers is possibly an indication that they were using privately owned ships for certain operations, i.e. these ships were not owned by the polis.\(^{32}\) If this is the case, then the Corinthians may have been undertaking naval warfare with mixed fleets, i.e. some privately owned ships along with some owned by the polis, which may help to explain their reluctance to attack the Athenians. A comparison to Thucydides’ description of the battle of Sybota may support this suggestion.

Thucydides describes the battle of Sybota (433 BC) fought between the Corinthians (and their allies) and the Corcyraeans (plus ten Athenian ships):

εὐμείξαντες δὲ, ἐπειδὴ τὰ σημεῖα ἐκατέρως ἦρθη, ἐναυμάχουν, πολλοὺς μὲν ὀπλίτας ἔχουσεν ἀμφότεροι ἐπὶ τῶν καταστρωμάτων, πολλοὺς δὲ τοξότας τε καὶ ἀκουτιστὰς, τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ ἀπειρότερον ἐτι παρεσκευασμένοι. ἦν τε ἡ ναυμαχία καρτέρα, τῇ μὲν τέχνῃ οὐχ ὁμοίως, πεζομαχία δὲ τῷ πλέον προσφερῆς οὕσα. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ

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\(^{32}\) The term πλοῖα seems to be a general term for an oared ship which differs from the generic ναῦς “warship.” On πλοῖα as privately owned ships, one may compare Thucydides’ comment (6.44.1) that many πλοῖα and ὀλκάδες voluntarily (ἐκούσιοι) chose to attach themselves to the Athenian expedition to Sicily for the purpose of trade. The implication is that these ships were privately owned. See also 4.26.7 for an indication of privately owned Peloponnesian πλοῖα being employed by the Spartans. On the use of these ships as troop transports compare with 3.85.3. On these terms see Morrison and Williams (1968) 244-54.
They came together in a sea-battle when the signals had been raised by each side, both having many hoplites on the decks, also many archers and javelin throwers: still inexperienced, they had prepared in the old manner. The sea-battle was strongly contested, not so much with skill, but being more like a land-battle. For whenever they struck one another, they could not easily separate on account of the great number and crowd of the ships, and they were relying more on the hoplites on deck for victory, who were fighting on the spot while the ships were inactive: there were no diekploi, but they were fighting the sea-battle with more courage and strength than skill (1.49.1-3).

Thucydides here contrasts the “old manner” of naval warfare which involved the use of hoplites on deck, against the more “modern” method of using the ship itself as a weapon.\(^33\)

He also tells us the Corinthians took three days’ worth of food with them when they went out for battle (1.48.1), and it seems clear that the goal was to land on Corcyra. Therefore, Thucydides may not have been totally fair to the Corinthians in his description of this naval battle, as they would have needed a large number of troops on their ships in order to

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force a landing on Corcyra. However, it is clear that the Corcyraeans are also included in Thucydides’ description of the old style of naval warfare. Surely the Corcyraeans could have used the “modern” tactic of using the ship itself as a weapon to great effect against the overloaded Corinthian ships. Yet they do not appear to do so. Therefore, the description of the Corinthian ships as “overloaded” does not fully explain why both sides adopted the old style tactics.

Wallinga has argued that the tactics Thucydides describes for the Corinthians and Corcyraeans at the battle of Sybota were likely to have evolved in situations where “specialized state-owned ships were used in combination with less- or non-specialized naukraric ships.” This line of thought becomes interesting when we consider that this mission in 433 BC was largely an attempt to land on Corcyra and can possibly (at least partly) be seen as a troop transport operation. When we compare this to the first naval

34 See Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 67-8. They plausibly suggest that the Corinthians took food for three days with them as they could not assume that they would immediately find food on Corcyra when they landed.
36 Part of the reason for the “old style” of fighting may be due to the large number of ships being involved in the battle and the lack of space for manoeuvring which this would entail. However, Thucydides tells us that many hoplites, archers and javelin throwers were on the decks, and that they had prepared (πόροσκευασμένοι) in the “old manner” (1.49.1). This would indicate that both sides planned to do battle from the decks of their ships, rather than through ramming, before each side lined up to face one another as the hoplites and others on the decks would have got themselves ready before going out to battle. Because of this, we cannot attribute the “old style” of fighting solely to the large number of ships being present in a small space, as both sides had a preconceived plan to fight that way, i.e. there was never any intention to use the ships themselves as weapons.
38 Wallinga (1993) 24-6 believes that the battle of Sybota was fought between specialised fleets of triremes, and that rather than using a mixed fleet of non-specialised and specialised ships, both sides
battle in the Corinthian Gulf in 429 BC, one wonders whether the Corinthians were using non-specialised (potentially privately owned) ships, in conjunction with specialised warships (i.e. triremes) to transport their troops across the Gulf. If so, then this may help to explain why the Corinthians did not attempt to attack the circling Athenian ships; many of their ships in the circle were not triremes and therefore were simply not designed for ramming.

If the above argument is along the right lines, and the Corinthians were using non-specialised ships to transport their troops, then this may help to explain how they were able to acquire such a large number of ships for the battle of Sybota. Thucydides tells us that the Corinthians were able to man ninety ships of their own, and with the help of their allies, man a fleet of one hundred and fifty ships (1.46.1). This is a huge increase from the thirty ships the Corinthians were able to man for the battle off Leucimme a couple of years earlier (the Corinthians manned thirty ships themselves and with the help of their allies manned a fleet of seventy-five ships: 1.27. 2. cf. 1.29.1). Thucydides does not often specifically inform us of the number of Corinthian ships in the Peloponnesian fleet. One of the few times he does, he tells us that Evarchus was able to persuade the Corinthians to sail

merely fought tactically as if they still did. However, his reasoning for this assumption (see especially his n. 30 and n. 34) relies on the fact that Thucydides does not mention other types of ships. This is unconvincing. In fact, for the entire Sybota campaign (1.46-55) Thucydides refers to the ships as νοὸς and does not refer to triremes at all. Thucydides only uses the specific term “trireme” fifty-six times in his work (TLG). Given the fact that Thucydides was a general in charge of at least seven ships (4.104.4-5) it is somewhat frustrating that he was not more precise in his terminology. Because of the unspecific nature of Thucydides’ terminology I do not think that we can assert (as Wallinga does) that only triremes were present at Sybota. Therefore, it is possible that there were other types of ships involved in this battle which may have been specifically used to transport troops.

This becomes especially relevant when we take into account Thucydides’ mention of λεπτὰ πλοῖον being present during the first battle in the Gulf.

On the discrepancy in the numbers between 1.27.2 and 1.29.1 see chapter one n. 7.
with forty ships to Astacus in order to restore him to power (2.33.1). This is the same number of ships that the Corinthians were able to man for the battles of Artemisium and Salamis (Herodotus 8.1; 8.43), and is practically the same number given by Thucydides in his description of the first naval battle in the Corinthian Gulf (see above: the Corinthians and their allies manned forty-seven ships, 2.83.3). Forty would therefore appear to be the traditional limit of their naval force.\(^{41}\) It must be noted that the fleet at Sybota is also much bigger than nearly all the naval action undertaken by the Peloponnesians during the Archidamian War,\(^{42}\) and one wonders what happened to these ships following the battle.\(^{43}\) If the Corinthians had built up a fleet of ninety triremes, one would expect there to be more descriptions of larger Corinthian (and by association Peloponnesian) fleets during the Archidamian War. It is possible that the Corinthians simply could not man all of their ships other than this one occasion, given the expense involved in undertaking such a large mission.\(^{44}\)

While manning such a large number of ships would have been a logistical challenge, the Corinthians were clearly able to do so on this occasion.\(^{45}\) Given the huge


\(^{42}\) The one exception is Thucydides’ mention of one hundred ships sailing to Zacynthus (2.66.1).

\(^{43}\) Gomme (1945) 193 suggested the Corinthians scrapped the fleet sent to Sybota as they had learned that the old-fashioned, slow-going boats, were useless against the Athenian fleet. This seems unlikely: see Salmon (1984) 430.

\(^{44}\) Compare with Salmon (1984) 430. See also below.

\(^{45}\) However, see Wallinga (1993) 172-3 who argues that, given the description by Thucydides of the ships remaining motionless in the battle, the ships involved at Sybota were undermanned. If this is correct, then it may help to explain why both sides adopted the static battle tactics – there were not enough rowers to power the ships for faster movements. While Wallinga’s argument is plausible, he relies on the assumption that all of the ships at Sybota were triremes, which I doubt. Moreover, it seems to me that it would be extremely odd if the Corinthians went to all the trouble to create such a large fleet (see 1.31.1) and then not fully man it. Because of this, I do not think that we can attribute under-manning of the ships
increase in the number of ships and Thucydides’ description of the battle itself (see above), one wonders whether the Corinthians had enlisted some privately owned ships for their fleet. While there is little doubt that the Corinthians built some more ships after the failure of Leucimme (1.31.1), it is important to note that the Corinthians were furious with the Corcyraeans, and seemed determined to teach them a lesson (see chapter one). Given their anger, we should not be surprised if the Corinthians were prepared to use every available ship that they could for their mission. Just because Athens was no longer using privately owned ships for naval expeditions, we should not too readily assume that poleis such as Corinth were unwilling to do so. If this is the case, then it may partly help to explain why the Corinthians managed to man such a large fleet on this occasion in comparison to the rest of their naval actions.

The above argument is quite speculative. However, there is some evidence in Herodotus which may strengthen this speculation. Herodotus tells us that when Athens was at war with Aegina around 490 BC, the Corinthians gave the Athenians twenty ships charging five drachmas apiece: δωτίνην γὰρ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ οὐκ ἔξην δοῦναι, “for they were not allowed by law to give (the ships) as a gift” (6.89). This law (nomos) implies that the sale of ships was a regular occurrence (otherwise why would there be any need for a law?). Presumably, this was a rare instance where the sale of warships was between two 

as the primary reason for the static nature of the battle (although I would not necessarily count out the possibility that some of the ships were undermanned).

Legon (1973) 162 claimed that: “It is no exaggeration to rank the rebuilding of the Corinthian fleet in these two years among the most significant military developments of the fifth century.” Contrast with Salmon (1984) 289 (n. 21). However, if the Corinthians were using some privately owned ships as suggested above, then the Corinthians were not building a new fleet from scratch, and therefore Legon perhaps overestimates the military significance of the increase in the numbers of Corinthian ships for the battle of Sybota.

These ships were long ships (νῆσόν ... μακρῶν) and not triremes (Thucydides 1.41.2): Scott (2000) 103 (n. 47) contra Salmon (1984) 251-2.
different poleis, hence Herodotus’ special mention of it. Wallinga has argued that this law also applied to the sale of ships within the polis, presumably to Corinthian citizens.\textsuperscript{48} He argues that the sale of ships to private shipowners had two benefits: the first was that if the ships were not too old they could still fetch a good price, and secondly if they were in the hands of these private owners they could still serve the polis if the need arose.\textsuperscript{49} If this interpretation is along the right lines, then it is conceivable that private Corinthian citizens owned old warships, which the Corinthians could have called upon, and fixed up, for their naval objective against the Corcyraeans in 433 BC.

Private Corinthian citizens may have wished to purchase old warships in order to protect their commercial interests.\textsuperscript{50} It is interesting to note Thucydides’ comment (1.13.5) that when the Greeks began travelling more on the sea, the Corinthians acquired ships in order to destroy piracy (ληστικὸν). This comment indicates that piracy was a problem in the Corinthian Gulf, and therefore some of the more wealthy citizens may have felt the need to protect their commercial interests (it is important to note that Thucydides links the

\textsuperscript{48} Wallinga (1993) 26. He also argues that this law implies that Corinth had publicly owned ships, since they practically gave away these twenty ships, which they could not have done if they were private property (p. 19). Also Scott (2000) 107. It does not seem to me that this piece of evidence necessarily implies that Corinth had a polis navy. For example, the law could presumably be applied to private citizens who owned ships in order to prevent individuals from controlling a large number of warships, which could be seen as a sign of power and therefore potentially dangerous to those oligarchs in power. Compare with van Wees (2004) 205.


\textsuperscript{50} Compare with Scott (2005) 324-5, 467 who suggests that Corinth possibly had a navy for patrolling the Corinthian Gulf against pirates. He makes this suggestion in relation to Herodotus 6.89 (see above) and considers that Corinth had a polis navy. However, it is possible that those ships which “patrolled” the Gulf were privately owned.
Corinthian attempt to destroy piracy to their commercial interests).\textsuperscript{51} The acquisition of even one warship (a pentecontor?) may well have been enough to deter pirates interested in robbing commercial ships sailing the Corinthian Gulf. Again, this argument is speculative. However, it should be noted that Herodotus tells us that at the battle of Artemisium, Cleinias provided his own personal trireme, manned with his own crew and at his own personal expense (8.17).\textsuperscript{52} If the Athenian Cleinias owned a trireme, then it is at least plausible that private Corinthian citizens could own warships.\textsuperscript{53} If this is along the right lines, then it is possible that the Corinthians and other Peloponnesian \textit{poleis} were still using both “old style” ships (pentecontors, “light ships” and so on) as well as “old style” organisation (i.e. the use of privately owned ships) in their fleets, alongside their “specialised” trireme force, when extra ships were required. Just because Athens had an extensive supply of triremes we should not assume that \textit{poleis} such as Corinth did as well.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} The nature of ancient Greek trade will not be discussed here. However one conceives the Greek mechanisms for trade, the point I am making still holds: powerful men in Corinth would have had an interest in protecting the imports and exports to and from Corinth. Given the fact that Corinth was an oligarchy there may be a fine line between considering the warships which “patrolled” the Corinthian Gulf privately owned or owned by the \textit{polis}. However, I see no reason why these warships (or at least some of these ships) could not have been privately owned (possibly by members of the oligarchy) and put to use protecting their commercial interests.

\textsuperscript{52} Herodotus does not specifically call Cleinias’ ship a trireme. However, the fact that it was manned by two-hundred men would suggest that it was one. There are other examples of private citizens owning triremes: e.g. Miltiades (Herodotus 6.41); Pericles (Plutarch, \textit{Pericles}, 35.1) and Alcibiades (Thucydides 6.50.1; 6.61.6: see Hornblower (2008) 425-6).

\textsuperscript{53} I use the unspecific term “warship” on account of Thucydides’ description (1.41.2) of the ships lent to the Athenians as νεῦτων ... μακρῶν. I would suggest that it was more likely private Corinthian citizens owned warships, possibly pentecontors, rather than triremes given the expense involved in owning triremes: although private trireme ownership cannot be ruled out.

\textsuperscript{54} Contra Davison (1947) 18 the introduction of the trireme did not render existing warships “obsolete.” Pentecontors were used in the Persian Wars (Herodotus 8.1-2; 8.46-8) and it is more than likely
In regards to the above argument it is important to point out that until the
Peloponnesian War naval battles were not frequent events. It has been noted that prior to c.
500 BC we have evidence for only eleven sea-battles, in one of which Corinth took part.\(^{55}\)
The Corinthians were involved in the naval battles of Artemisium and Salamis (Herodotus
8.1; 8.43), and, judging by the evidence from Thucydides, the Corinthians were involved
in only six sea-battles from the end of the Persian Wars until the end of the Archidamian
War.\(^{56}\) Naval tactics take time to evolve and much practice is needed in order to get them
up to a high standard. Given the infrequent nature of Corinthian involvement in naval
warfare, we perhaps should not be too surprised that the Corinthians lagged behind their
Athenian rivals in naval matters.

One other factor which needs to be discussed in order to try and determine what the
reality of the Corinthian navy was at the time of the war’s outbreak, is the issue of who
was actually rowing the fleet. It appears that the Corinthians were prepared to hire rowers
for their fleet. In his account of the origins of the war, Thucydides gives us a Corinthian
speech outlining the advantages they felt they had over the Athenians. In this speech the
Corinthian speaker claims:

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that many of the smaller poleis could not afford to man a large fleet of triremes and therefore were
prepared to use other warships in naval affairs. See also Wallinga (1993) 25 on the evidence from
Thucydides 4.118.5 for an indication that the Peloponnesian sea-powers lagged behind their Athenian rivals
in naval matters. The Athenians had such an excess supply of triremes that they were prepared to use them
for horse transports (2.56.2; 4.42.1) and troop transports (6.25.2; 6.31.3; 6.43) as well as for naval battles.
On the different types of triremes available to the Athenians (so called “fast” ships, troop transports, and
horse transports), see the discussion in Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 150-7.

\(^{55}\) See Scott (2005) 477-8. The Corinthian battle was against Corcyra, and according to Thucydides
was the first naval battle ὧν ἵσμεν “that we know” (1.13.4).

\(^{56}\) 1.105.1 (off the coast of Cecryphaleia); 1.27-29 (the battle off Leucimme); 1.46-51 (the battle of
Sybota); 2.83-4, 2.90-2 (the battles with Phormion in the Corinthian Gulf); 3.76-9 (the battle at Corcyra: this
is assuming that some of the ships Thucydides describes as “Peloponnesian” are Corinthian).
as for naval power, in which they are strong, we will equip ourselves from the existing resources each of us has and from the funds at Delphi and Olympia. By borrowing money we can draw away from them their foreign sailors with greater pay. For the power of Athens is bought rather than home-grown (1.121.3).

While it has been denied that the Corinthians borrowed money from Olympia and Delphi, it is interesting to note the terms of the armistice between Sparta and Athens in 423 BC (4.118.3). In the armistice, both sides promised to investigate who took money from the god. It is possible that some of this “missing money” was taken by Corinth to pay for foreign sailors, as they suggested prior to the war. At the very least the Corinthian statement cannot be rejected outright.

Prior to the war, the Corinthians were able to attract foreign sailors for their fleet in order to do battle with the Corcyraeans at Sybota (1.31.1; 1.32.5; 1.35.3). This may partly help to explain why the naval battle at Sybota was fought in the “old manner”: these rowers possibly had not rowed together before and therefore lacked the practice to

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57 See, for example, Brunt (1965) 260-1; Salmon (1984) 306.
59 Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 63 suggested that the need to recruit rowers from the rest of Greece for the Sybota campaign may be due to the fact that the Corinthians could not produce enough citizens to row in such a large fleet. This may well be true and perhaps partly explains why the Corinthians were only able to man such a large fleet once. Compare with Salmon (1984) 430.
undertake the “modern” manoeuvres (e.g. the *diekplous*). However, it is important to point out that two years pass between the battles of Leucimme and Sybota (1.31.1), and Thucydides’ statement that the Corinthians were παρεσκευάζοντα “preparing” the strongest fleet of ships possible could potentially refer to training crews as well as building ships.

Whether the Corinthians (and Peloponnesians) would have been able to recruit rowers from all over Greece once the Peloponnesian War began is difficult to assess. This is partly due to a speech by Pericles which seems to respond to the Corinthian one given at Sparta (1.121.3: see above). According to Thucydides, Pericles said to the Athenians:

καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ κινδύνῳ οὔδεὶς ἀν δέξαιτο τῶν ξένων τὴν τε αὐτοῦ φεύγειν καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἴσασθος ἀμα ἐλπίδος ὀλίγων ἡμερῶν ἕνεκα μεγάλου μισθοῦ δόσεως ἐκείνοις ἥπειραν ἔξερεθαι.

Also, on account of the risk of being exiled from their [city] and being defeated, none of the foreigners would fight with them, for the sake of the expectation of a gift of a few days’ greater pay (1.143.2).

The implication of this statement is that the Athenians were so powerful on the sea that no one would dare face inevitable defeat for the sake of a few days’ extra pay. Moreover, it implies that the Athenians were powerful enough to exile individual rowers from their own *polis* if they were caught rowing for the other side. Pericles’ statement is clearly a piece of Athenian propaganda, and simply cannot be taken as proof that the Corinthians were

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60 See Thucydides’ account of Pericles’ speech to the Athenians on the importance of practice for success in naval warfare: 1.142.7-9. See also Rankov (1993) for a discussion of the difficulties faced by the rowers of the *Olympias* in trying to re-create the movement of the ancient trireme.

61 See Gomme (1945) 166.

unable to recruit rowers from all over Greece with the offer of more money than what the Athenians were offering.\textsuperscript{63} This speech was made to an Athenian audience who wanted to believe that they were unstoppable in all things naval, and therefore no one would dare to oppose them. The very fact that Pericles mentions the possibility that some of their subjects would go over to the Peloponnesians for more money indicates that it was a reasonable concern of the Athenian public at the time, which he felt he needed to address.

There is also some indirect evidence which suggests that the Corinthians may have used slaves to row in their fleet. Thucydides describes the Athenians sailing back to Athens following their success in the Corinthian Gulf with captured “free men” (ἐλευθεροῦς), who were then released man for man (2.103.1). The specific mention of “free men” may imply that the Athenians had also captured slaves (whom they did not bother to bring back to Athens).\textsuperscript{64} Also, in the aftermath of the battle of Sybota, Thucydides tells us that of the one thousand and fifty Corcyraean prisoners the Corinthians captured, eight hundred were slaves (1.55.1). This implies that in the Corcyraean fleet a large proportion of the rowers were slaves. While this piece of evidence does not directly relate to Corinth, it makes one wonder whether the Corinthians also employed a large number of slaves to row in the mission, especially given the large number of ships involved (see above).\textsuperscript{65} While these pieces of evidence for the use of slaves in the Corinthian fleet are quite speculative, one wonders why the Corinthians would not use slaves as rowers in their fleet, especially given their reputation for having a large number

\textsuperscript{63} Contrast with Gomme (1945) 419; Brunt (1965) 259; Salmon (1984) 430.
\textsuperscript{64} Hunt (1998) 85. But see the comments of Salmon (1984) 167-8 (n. 13).
\textsuperscript{65} Gomme (1945) 196 stated that the use of slaves was probably contrary to Corinthian practice. Given the nature of the evidence I am not sure we can claim that the Corinthians did not use slaves in their fleet.
of slaves.\textsuperscript{66} Although there is not a lot of direct evidence, it would seem likely that most fleets of the Greek poleis contained rowers who were slaves.\textsuperscript{67}

Even if the Corinthian fleet contained mercenary and/or slave rowers, it does not fully explain Thucydides’ emphasis on Peloponnesian inexperience and ignorance of the local conditions. If they were mercenary rowers, then presumably they had previous rowing experience, while the steersmen of the ships were more than likely from the Corinthian Gulf and knew the area well.

The simple fact of the matter is that the Corinthians and Peloponnesians were outclassed by their Athenian rivals through the Archidamian War. The Athenians paid great attention to their navy in the years after the Persian Wars, and judging by the evidence we have available, the Corinthians simply did not do the same. It has been suggested above that the Corinthians may have been using a mixture of specialised, polis-owned triremes, with other types of privately owned warships in certain battles at the start of the Peloponnesian War. While much of the evidence is speculative, it is important to bear in mind that not every polis placed as much focus on their navy as the Athenians did, and we should not jump to the conclusion that because the Athenians had a specialised force of polis-owned triremes, the Corinthians must have had as well.

During the Archidamian War the Corinthians were the dominant naval power of the Peloponnesian. Because of this, they represented the opposition to the Athenians in naval

\textsuperscript{66} Athenaeus (6.272b) states that in book three of his History, Timaeus (c. 350-260 BC) claimed that Corinth owned 460,000 slaves. This figure, while clearly an exaggeration, is still a good indication that the Corinthians had the reputation of having a large number of slaves. See Salmon (1984) 165.

\textsuperscript{67} There has been some debate in the past as to whether the Athenian fleet contained slave rowers. I follow the more recent interpretations which conclude that the Athenians regularly used slaves in their fleets. See, for example, Jordan (1975) 260-4; Graham (1992); Hunt (1998) 87-101; Hornblower (2008) 563. Contra the old view of Sargent (1927) and Gomme (1945) 196.
warfare, an area in which the Athenians considered themselves to be the best. Thucydides, in his descriptions of the naval battles between the Athenians and Corinthians, stresses the negative aspects of Corinthian action in order to take away any chance of the reader seeing the Corinthian navy in a positive light. At the same time he emphasises the supremacy of the Athenians and quickly moves on or shifts focus from anything that could be seen negatively. The most extreme example of this is his comment that the Corinthians considered it a victory if they were not greatly defeated, while the Athenians considered it a loss if victory did not come easily (7.34.7: see above). One is almost reminded of modern day sporting comments when a rival manages to get one over a favourite team. Thucydides, no doubt reflecting the contemporary mood of the Athenians, has emphasised the weakness of the Corinthian navy in order to strengthen the Athenian belief that they were superior in naval matters.
CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine Thucydides’ negative presentation of the Corinthians in his account of the events leading to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. It discussed how and where Thucydides has manipulated his description of events in order to stress the impression of Corinthian belligerence as a cause of the war. It also examined the background to the conflict in order to try and place the Corinthian hostility towards Athens into the wider context of the events throughout the fifth century BC. Finally, this thesis discussed the Corinthian navy from two perspectives: Thucydides’ presentation of it in action; and what the reality of Corinthian naval strength was at the time of the war’s outbreak. Some general conclusions reached from these three discussions follow.

The close examination of Thucydides’ account in chapter one showed how he consistently shapes his narrative to emphasise Corinthian belligerence in the events leading up to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. In contrast, the Athenians are presented as a passive party; Thucydides would have us believe that they were placed in situations not of their own design and were forced to take military action because of Corinthian intransigence. In the Corcyraean affair, the Corinthians are presented as an overly aggressive party who essentially forced the Corcyraeans into appealing to Athens for aid. Therefore, as readers, we are set up to see both the Corcyraean appeal for an alliance, and the Athenian acceptance of one, as a justified reaction to hostile Corinthian actions. Moreover, the clash of Peloponnesian and Athenian ships at the battle of Sybota is essentially presented as Corinth’s fault. Thucydides, through the repetition of Athenian orders to avoid a battle, stresses the idea that the Athenians did everything they could to avoid coming to blows with the Peloponnesians, and were forced into action by the
Corinthians. Furthermore, to add to this impression of Corinthian belligerence, in his description of the aftermath of the battle, Thucydides skilfully creates drama in his narrative to mask the fact that the Athenians had taken a more assertive line of approach in regards to their aid to Corcyra. Twenty extra Athenian ships arrive just in the nick of time to save Corcyra from another aggressive attack by the Corinthians. This presentation by Thucydides leaves one with the impression that the arrival of these ships was a justified response to an impending attack, rather than the calculated decision it was, made well before the second Corinthian approach to the island.

Having set the scene of Corinthian belligerence in the events leading to the war, Thucydides cleverly goes on to present Corinthian anger over the Athenian involvement in the battle of Sybota, as a motivating factor for the Potidaean revolt. Because of this, the Athenian demands to the Potidaeans to take down their wall, give hostages, and send away the Corinthian ἐπιδημιουργοί, are presented as a reaction to this Corinthian desire for revenge, rather than a provocative action which helped cause the revolt. As our discussion noted, there are clear indications that the Potidaean revolt had more to do with the Potidaeans reacting to Athenian actions in the north Aegean, rather than the Corinthians instigating it as a means for revenge.

Thucydides reinforces the impression of Corinthian belligerence and responsibility for the war though his depiction of their appeals to the Spartans to declare war on Athens. While the Spartans may have been willing to go to war with Athens anyway, in Thucydides’ account, the Corinthians act as the catalyst for the Spartans to become involved in the escalating conflict.

The continued emphasis on Corinthian belligerence throughout book one makes me inclined to think that Thucydides’ account of the war’s outbreak is largely an indictment of
Corinth. By the same token, the presentation of Athenian action as reacting to this Corinthian aggression is a strong indication that book one of Thucydides is an *apologia* for Athens. Exactly why Thucydides chose to shape his narrative to emphasise Corinthian responsibility for the war is a difficult problem, and more research on this issue is required at the doctoral level. However, it may be the case that, in attempting to mask Athenian responsibility for the war, the Corinthians provided an easy solution for Thucydides to “shift the blame.” Because his intended audience would have known that the Corinthians and Athenians had come to blows at Sybota, and that the Corinthians had become involved in the Potidaean revolt, Thucydides may have seen an opportunity to emphasise Corinthian belligerence in these events, in order to leave his audience with the impression that the Corinthians were largely responsible for escalating the conflict, while the Athenians had done all they could to avoid war. This may partly help to explain why Thucydides describes the Corcyraean and Potidaean affairs in such detail, while virtually ignoring the Megarian and Aeginetan complaints. It was simply easier for Thucydides to present the Athenians in a positive light in the Corcyraean and Potidaean affairs than it was in the complaints of the Megarians and Aeginetans.¹

Although Thucydides exaggerated Corinthian warmongering in his account, there was, nevertheless, an element of Corinthian aggression which played a role in the war’s outbreak. Thucydides was only able to exaggerate it because it already existed. As discussed in chapter two, through the fifth century, the Athenians seem to have had an ever-increasing interest in the natural resources of Sicily and Italy, where the Corinthians already had great influence. As the fifth century progressed, the Athenians became more aggressive in attempting to obtain these resources. Moreover, as a result of this western interest, the Athenians appear to have adopted a policy from about the middle of the fifth

¹ This point of view is similar to that of Rhodes (1987) 162-3.
century aimed at controlling key points along the Corinthian Gulf. There is little doubt that this policy would have angered the Corinthians and made them suspicious of Athenian intentions. The Corinthians could not afford to have a *polis* as powerful as Athens controlling parts of *their* Gulf. Furthermore, if the Megarian decree was a measure designed to force Megara back into the Athenian alliance, thus giving the Athenians access to both sides of the Isthmus, then Corinthian suspicion could only grow; this would be a clear indication that the Athenians were attempting to gain access to the Corinthian Gulf as a sea-route. This may, in part, help to explain why the Corinthians appear so eager for war and why the Megarian decree appears to be the main issue for the Peloponnesians against the Athenians.

The Megarian decree also provides evidence that the Athenians were prepared to interfere in the commercial activities of other *poleis*, including Corinth. Although the archaeological evidence from there is problematic, there are indications that Corinthian traders suffered as a result of the war, as can be seen in the abandonment of the Punic Amphora Building during the early years of the war. While it is of course speculative to attribute this abandonment specifically to an Athenian blockade (i.e. directly aimed at interrupting Corinthian commercial activities), the loss of trade because of the war probably aggravated the general feeling of animosity towards the Athenians.

One question which arises from all of this is why does Thucydides not describe in more detail the background to the hostility between Corinth and Athens, which plays such a prominent role in book one? As with many interpretations of Thucydides, there may be more than one answer to this question, and unfortunately, a comprehensive answer lies beyond the limited scope of this master’s thesis. However, two suggestions may be put forward here. The simple, and less sinister interpretation, is that as an Athenian, Thucydides was simply not concerned with any fears (legitimate or otherwise) that the
Corinthians may have had through the fifth century at the rise of Athenian power. The focus of Thucydides' account of the period between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars (the so-called pentecontaetia) is on the creation of the Athenian empire, not on the effect this may have had on other poleis. Therefore, Thucydides does not give us more detail on the Corinthian fears because they were not a part of the story he was (briefly) trying to chronicle: the rise of Athens. The more sinister interpretation is that Thucydides did not describe the background of Corinthian hostility in any detail because he wanted to present Athenian actions in the lead-up to the war as reactions to Corinthian aggression. A detailed account of the Athenian encroachment into the Corinthian Gulf would make Corinthian actions appear less belligerent and the Athenian actions much less reactionary, as it would highlight the fact that the Corinthians had a legitimate reason for being hostile towards the Athenians.

It is evident that in the fifth century BC the Athenians took great pride in their naval ability and were the most dominant naval force of the mainland Greek world. The Corinthians, being the greatest naval power in the Peloponnese, represented the main opposition to the Athenians on the sea during the Archidamian War. While this opposition was evidently not that great in reality, Thucydides has exaggerated the skill and ability of the Athenians in naval warfare, and over-emphasised the weakness and inexperience of the Peloponnesians. The best examples of these exaggerations are in his descriptions of the three naval battles in the Corinthian Gulf discussed in chapter three. Thucydides’ emphasis of Athenian superiority and Peloponnesian weakness may be seen as part of the Athenian propaganda of invincibility that was no doubt circulating throughout the Greek world at this time.

While Thucydides exaggerates the Athenian naval skill compared to the Peloponnesian, there is no doubt that the Athenians significantly outclassed their
opponents in naval matters. As discussed in chapter three, the evidence, although somewhat speculative, suggests that the Corinthians were still using a mixture of private and polis-owned ships in their naval battles. At the very least, they were prepared to use them for troop transport operations. Therefore, we should bear in mind that, just because the Athenians were exclusively using polis-owned triremes, we should not automatically assume that poleis such as Corinth were as well. In addition, it seems clear that, despite Athenian propaganda, the Corinthians were able to hire rowers from member states of the Athenian empire, and there may also have been slave rowers in their fleet. The end result was that, during the early years of the war, the Corinthian navy was simply a less professional outfit that was out of the Athenians’ league, and it was therefore easy for Thucydides to exaggerate their weakness compared to Athenian skill.

In conclusion, there is little doubt that the Corinthians must bear some of the blame for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. They were, at times, excessively belligerent and refused to back down when the Greek world was on the brink of war. However, as this thesis has shown, a closer, more critical, examination of Thucydides’ negative presentation of the Corinthians helps us to understand better the complex background to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC. The responsibility for the Peloponnesian War should not be solely placed on Corinth. Other poleis, especially Athens, must take a share of the blame.
MAPS
Map 1. Greece (taken from Green 2006).
Map 2. The Isthmus Region (taken from Hammond 2009).

Map 4. Sicily and Italy (taken from Green 2006).
Aeschines


Andocides


Aristophanes


Aristotle


Athenaeus


Diodorus


Herodotus


Pausanias

**Pindar**


**Plutarch**


**Polybius**


Pseudo-Xenophon


Strabo


Thucydides


**Xenophon**


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