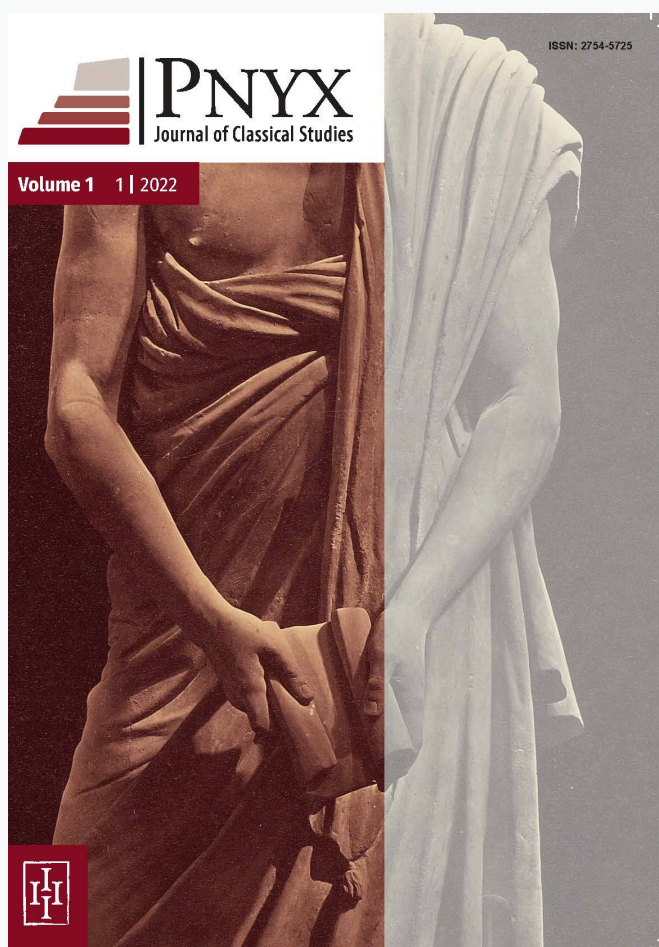


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The Vocabulary and Moments of Change: Thucydides and Isocrates on the Rise and Fall of Athens and Sparta

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Abstract

This paper presents the events classical authors deemed as key moments in the rise and fall of Athens and Sparta, and examines the vocabulary they used to describe change: its extent (momentary or long-lasting), nature (evolution, transition, reversal, destruction, or renewal), and effects (positive or negative). It relies mainly on Thucydides and Isocrates and uses supporting evidence where appropriate. The Persian Wars, the end of the Peloponnesian War, and the battles of Knidos, Naxos, and Leuktra were frequently thought of as the causes of Athens' and Sparta's growth or collapse, prosperity or misfortune. These events were not only key moments in the balance of power in interstate relations, but also part of a particular argumentation which exploited and presented the phenomenon of change in several ways and through varying narratives. The study of the vocabulary pertaining to the rise and fall of the two cities reveals, on the one hand, the different ways one can treat change and, on the other hand, that the relevant words can convey neutral, positive, or negative connotations, depending especially on an author's intentions when emphasising a particular event.

Keywords

Change; Classical period; Athens; Sparta; interstate relations; Thucydides; Isocrates

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Introduction

Herodotus acknowledges in the proem of his *Histories* that ‘human prosperity never remains constant’ (τὴν ἀνθρωπικήν... ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τῷ τῷ μένουσαν), that ‘many cities that were great long ago have become inferior’ (τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε), whereas ‘some that are great in his own time were inferior before’ (τὰ δὲ ἐπ’ ἐμέο ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρὰ).¹ Herodotus’ interpretive framework of historical change that political communities may experience² reflects a common perception in Greek discourse, the changeability of human fortune.³ Along the same lines, Isocrates clearly states in his *Panegyricus* that ‘changes often occur, and power never stays in the same hands’ (πολλὰς τὰς μεταβολὰς γίγνεσθαι, τὰς γὰρ δυναστείας οὐδέποτε τοῖς αὐτοῖς παραμένειν).⁴ The adjective πολὺς, followed by the term μεταβολή, is used to show how frequently a change in the concentration of power can take place. Isocrates then juxtaposes to these two words the verb παραμένω, which, combined with the adverb οὐδέποτε, repeats and emphasises how easily a major power may rise and fall. This general observation may well apply to Athens and Sparta of the classical period, two Greek cities which, according to the ancient authors of the era, were the foremost examples of great powers undergoing such a reversal of fortune regarding their public affairs standing.⁵

The notion of historical change (μεταβολή) is a major aspect of ancient Greek history. Modern scholars have turned their attention to the subject of constitutional change (μεταβολή πολιτειῶν),⁶ and in recent years there is renewed interest in studying its various aspects through the organisation of seminars and colloquiums around this notion.⁷ Among these aspects, the change in possession of power regarding Athens and Sparta is a topic thoroughly examined in most works about the political history of the two cities. However, these studies concentrate on the implications of this phenomenon (political, social, economic) and not on reading the vocabulary pertaining to their growth and collapse.

To this end, this paper examines the different opinions expressed by the authors of the classical period about the rise and fall of Athens and Sparta, emphasising the vocabulary these authors used

¹ Hdt. 1.5; cf. Pl. *Leg.* 676c: καὶ τοτὲ μὲν ἐξ ἐλαττόνων μείζους, τοτὲ δ’ ἐκ μείζονων ἐλάττους, καὶ χείρους ἐκ βελτιόνων γεγόνασιν καὶ βελτίους ἐκ χειρόνων. For the translations of Demosthenes’ and Isocrates’ works I used the Loeb Classical Library (LCL) collection as well as the relevant volumes of M. Gagarin’s series *The Oratory of Classical Greece* (for Demosthenes, Harris, 2008; Trevett, 2011; for Isocrates, Too and Mirhady, 2000; Papillon, 2004). For Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon’s *Hellenika*, I used Strassler, 2008; 2009; 2010 respectively.

² Cartledge and Greenwood, 2002: 357; Rösler, 2002: 92; van Wees, 2002: 328; Asheri, Loyd and Corcella, 2007: 78.

³ See e.g., Antiph. 1.4.9 (*Tetralogy 1*; Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἀτυχοῦσι νεωτερίζειν συμφέρει· ἐκ γὰρ τῶν μεταβολῶν ἐπίδοξος ἢ δυσπραγία μεταβάλλειν αὐτῶν ἐστὶ· τοῖς δ’ εὐτυχοῦσιν ἀτρεμίζειν καὶ φυλάσσειν τὴν παρούσαν εὐπραγίαν· μεθισταμένων γὰρ τῶν πραγμάτων δυστυχεῖς ἐξ εὐτυχούντων καθίστανται.); Thuc. 2.53.1 (ἀγχίστροφον τὴν μεταβολήν), 4.17.5 (πλείσται μεταβολαὶ ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρω ξυμβεβήκασι); Dem. 20.49 (*Against Leptines*; οὐ γὰρ ἂν μετέπιπτε τὰ πράγματα ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρω).

⁴ Isoc. 4.22 (*Panegyricus*).

⁵ Cf. Aeschin. 2.131 (*On the Embassy*), on the rise and fall of the power of the Phocian tyrants.

⁶ Ryffel, 1949; Bertelli, 1989: 275-326; Ingravalle, 1989: 327-352; Liddel, 2010: 15-29; Poddighe, 2014; Loddò, 2016: 175-206; Poddighe, 2019: 271-300. See also the HDR of P. Hamon, *Metabolai politeiôn*, conducted in EPHE, under the supervision of D. Rousset.

⁷ Seminars: *Le vocabulaire politique grec: le vocabulaire du changement politique*, ENS, Paris, France, 2018; *Change and Resilience in Classical Antiquity*, Exeter, United Kingdom, 2021. Colloquia: *Le changement: conceptions et représentations dans l’Antiquité gréco-romaine*, Paris, 14-15 October 2016; the acts have been published in *Camenulae 18*: <https://lettres.sorbonne-universite.fr/camenulae-18-novembre-2017>; *Historical Change in the Ancient Aegean: A conference in honour of John K. Davies*, Rethymno, Greece, 16-18 October 2020; *Metabolé: Crisis and Transformation in Antiquity*, Madrid, Spain, 25-27 November 2021.

to reflect on the succession of hegemonies, and by taking into account their usually Athenocentric narratives.⁸ Due to the available evidence, it relies mainly on Thucydides and Isocrates, two authors who were particularly interested in discussing the constant changes of power, and uses Herodotus, Xenophon, Ephorus, and Demosthenes when possible. More precisely, this paper determines, on the one hand, which particular events were regarded as critical moments in the rise and fall of Athens and Sparta: the Persian Wars, the Peloponnesian War, and the battles of Knidos, Naxos, and Leuktra. On the other hand, it examines the vocabulary used to describe the transformation of the two *poleis* and underlines the different ways one can depict change, in terms of its extent and frequency (momentary or long-lasting change), nature (evolution, transition, reversal, rupture, destruction, renewal), and impact on those who experienced change (positive or negative). The first part of the paper focuses on the growth and collapse of Athenian power, the second on Spartan supremacy and its downfall.

Growth and Collapse of the Athenian Power

1. The Persian Wars

In Book 6, Thucydides presents the Athenian ambassador Euphemos speaking before the people of Kamarina in an attempt to persuade them to remain allied with the Athenians instead of offering their support to Syracuse.⁹ Euphemos did not convince the Kamarinians, who decided to stay neutral in the conflict between Syracuse and Athens. Regardless, his speech is of great value to historians. It offers important information on the Athenians' perception of their empire and their difficulty in gaining the support of the Sicilian cities.¹⁰ To this end, Euphemos explains how the Athenians acquired their empire and how circumstances forced them to expand it;¹¹ it was, in fact, the perennial hostility between Ionians and Dorians that contributed to Athenian growth. Concerned about the size of the Dorian population in the Peloponnese and their proximity to Athens, the Athenians sought the best means to avoid becoming subjects of the Peloponnesians.¹²

Καὶ μετὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ ναῦς κτησάμενοι τῆς μὲν Λακεδαιμονίων ἀρχῆς καὶ ἡγεμονίας¹³
ἀπηλλάγημεν, οὐδὲν προσήκον μᾶλλον τι ἐκείνους ἡμῖν ἢ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκείνοις ἐπιτάσσειν,
πλὴν καθ' ὅσον ἐν τῷ παρόντι μείζον ἴσχυον, αὐτοὶ δὲ τῶν ὑπὸ βασιλεῖ πρότερον ὄντων
ἡγεμόνες καταστάντες οἰκοῦμεν.¹⁴

⁸ On the Athenocentric models of change that modern research applies to the study of the classical period and the Athenian perceptions of Greek interstate relations, Low, 2007: 213-215. On the succession of hegemonies in the Greek and Roman worlds, Bearzot, 2010: 11-24; Landucci, 2018: 7-28.

⁹ Thuc. 6.81-87.

¹⁰ On the function of the speeches in Thucydides that failed to convince but at the same time remain important for the economy of the work, Tsakmakis, 2017: 270.

¹¹ Euphemos' speech is a good example of the pressure to pursue the power one has acquired and the constant vigilance it demanded; cf. Saxonhouse, 2017: 347-349.

¹² On the argument involving kinship and the justification provided for the consolidation of Athenian domination, Kagan, 1981: 246; Connor, 1984: 182-184 (who emphasises the difference between Euphemos' argumentation and the Athenian version of the facts before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War; see below). On Athens' kinship connections across the empire, Fragoulaki, 2013: 210-227.

¹³ On the meanings of the words ἡγεμονία and ἀρχή, Low, 2007: 201-202 n. 67; Boëldieu-Trevet, 2016: 68-72.

¹⁴ Thuc. 6.82.3.

And after the Persian war we acquired a fleet, and so got rid of the empire and the supremacy of the Spartans, who had no right to give order to us more than we to them, except that of being the strongest at that moment; and having ourselves become leaders of the King's former subjects, we are continuing to be so.

(Trans. by R. Crawley, with adjustments)

According to Euphemos, the critical moment came after the Persian Wars,¹⁵ when the Athenians were delivered (ἀπηλλάγημεν) from the rule of the Lakedaimonians with the help of their newly acquired navy and, thus, assumed the leadership of the Persian King's former subjects. The construction of their fleet made the Athenians the dominant force at that time,¹⁶ because, Euphemos points out, the Spartans had no more right to give orders to the Athenians than the Athenians to the Spartans, except being the strongest in that instance.

To describe change in the Greeks' leadership, Euphemos uses the verb ἀπαλλάσσω, 'to deliver', 'to liberate'. The choice is not accidental and serves two purposes that are directly linked to its particular meaning. The term is part of the medical vocabulary and usually denotes the complete cure of an illness. For example, Isocrates uses this verb where he compares the treatment necessary for the cure of bodily illnesses (ἀπαλλαγῶμεν) with the remedies necessary for minds that are ignorant and full of evil desires.¹⁷ Except for its medical use, the term is also attested in other passages in Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon's works, as well as in Greek oratory,¹⁸ where, in political terms, it denotes the definite end of a previous situation. In our case, it describes the end of Spartan leadership.¹⁹ Indeed, it is used to criticise the power Sparta was exercising and at the same time to imply the sentiment of relief²⁰ that the Athenians expressed for having been delivered from the Spartan rule.

Euphemos' wording on the opposition between Ionians and Dorians, the Athenian fleet, and its role in the development of the Athenian hegemony and empire, presents different versions we must consider when assessing change in the Greeks' leadership after the Persian Wars (478/7).

¹⁵ On the prestige that the Athenians gained after the Persian Wars, Bonnin, 2015: 87-89.

¹⁶ Cf. Thuc. 6.83.1 on the right of the Athenians to rule (ἄξιοι τε ὄντες ἅμα ἄρχομεν), because of the largest fleet they possessed and their services towards the Greeks. Also, Thuc. 2.41.3 (ὡς οὐχ ὑπ' ἄξιων ἄρχεται) and 5.89.1 (ὡς ἡ δικαίως τὸν Μῆδον καταλύσαντες ἄρχομεν).

¹⁷ Isoc. 8.39-40 (*On the Peace*): τὰς μὲν καύσεις καὶ τὰς τοιμὰς τῶν ἱατρῶν ὑπομένειν ἵνα πλείονων ἀλγηδόνων ἀπαλλαγῶμεν. The verb ἀπαλλάσσω is frequently attested in Galen's treatises. On the medical references found in Thucydides' Book 6 – in Nicias' and Alcibiades' speeches – and their political significance, Jouanna, 2012: 21-38. On the use of medical metaphors as a model for politics by ancient historians, Jouanna, 2005: 17-20. On the interaction of Thucydides with the medical writers of his era, Thomas, 2006: 92-108; 2017: 569-576.

¹⁸ Different uses of the term in Thuc. 1.95.7, 7.42.3, 8.86.6, 89.1; Hdt. 1.170, 5.65-66; Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.7; *Poroi* 6.1; and in Attic orators, e.g., Dem. 1.8 (*Olynthiac I*); 4.13 (*Philippic I*); 6.25 (*Philippic II*); 9.17 (*Philippic III*); 10.64 (*Philippic IV*); 18.324 (*On the Crown*); 19.314 (*On the False Embassy*); 22.37 (*Against Androtion*); Isoc. 3.6, 3.23 (*Nicocles*); 4.39 (*Panegyricus*); 5.49 (*To Philip*); 7.16 (*Areopagiticus*); 8.20, 8.25 (*On the Peace*); 12.77, 12.164 (*Panathenaicus*); 14.18 (*Plataicus*); Epistle 9.19 (*To Archidamus*); Lyc. 1.114 (*Against Leocrates*); Lys. 1.45 (*Against Eratosthenes*); 6.35 (*Against Andocides*); 7.35 (*Areopagiticus*).

¹⁹ Exceptions in Aeschin. 2.13 (*On the Embassy*): βούλεσθαι δὲ καὶ νῦν ἀπαλλαγῆναι τοῦ πολέμου, where the author refers to Ctesiphon's embassy to Philip II of Macedon and to the king's desire to be rid of the war. Placing the adverb νῦν (at that moment) next to the term ἀπαλλάσσω limits the extent of the change and suggests that Philip wanted to stop the war only temporarily. Cf. the verb ἀναβάλλω ('to postpone') which is used to denote the temporary character of a change and contrasts with the ἀπαλλάσσω. Also, Isoc. 4.172 (*Panegyricus*); 8.25 (*On the Peace*).

²⁰ Cf. Sanders, 2012: 151-152, about the emotions implied in Thuc. 1.70. On historiography as a source of information for the part played by emotions in various domains of communication, Sanders, 2012: 153, 159, 162-165.

First, the version presented by the Athenians in Sparta before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, when they claimed that they had acquired their leadership ‘by no violent means’ and at the request of the allies, since Sparta was no longer willing to continue the war against the Persians.²¹ A few chapters after (1.95.7-96.1), in his account of the foundation of the Delian League, Thucydides himself offers a different version from the Athenian ambassadors’ one. He suggests that the Athenians succeeded the Spartans ‘by the voluntary act of the allies’, not only because Sparta wanted to end the war, but also because of the hatred (μῖσος)²² of the allies for the Spartan king Pausanias. In other words, Thucydides specifies that the allies asked the Athenians to take over the leadership of the Greeks since Sparta appeared preoccupied with problems of internal and external politics.²³ On the contrary, Herodotus does not stress any initiative of the allies but suggests it was the Athenians who seized leadership (ἀπείλοντο), because they took advantage of the problems Sparta was facing at the time (Pausanias’ *hubris*).²⁴

All these versions reveal how a particular change could be exploited and presented in multiple ways and through varying narratives. That is, Herodotus and Thucydides insist on Pausanias’ behaviour that proved decisive in changing the Greeks’ leadership, but they write from a different perspective. Herodotus explains this change regarding the Athenian attitude: two years before, the Athenians were willing to cede naval command to the Spartans to confront the Persians, because they put the survival of Greece first,²⁵ but now Pausanias’ *hubris* came at the right moment for them to take over the leadership. Thucydides, in turn, puts emphasis on the connection between Pausanias’ behaviour and the allies’ attitude, by underlying that the latter would not have petitioned to the Athenians to become their leaders had it not been for Pausanias. Again, the Athenians of 432/1, who needed to legitimise their rule before the Peloponnesians, give no details about the exact historical conditions that made their allies request Athenian command. In fact, it is worth noting that in the Athenian ambassadors’ version of the events, the justification of Athens’ dominant position is not just an Athenian construct but became an argument accepted and used by their allies:²⁶ the Athenians claim that it was their allies who attached themselves to Athens and requested to take over command due to the default of Sparta from continuing the war. This need for legitimacy becomes even more apparent in Euphemos’ speech of 415, where the envoy needs to defend Athenian hegemony to avoid losing the support of the Kamarinians: by using the argument of kinship and the justification it provided for the consolidation of Athenian domination, he explains how the fear of the growing power of others compelled the Athenians to pursue power themselves.

²¹ Thuc. 1.75.2.

²² On the emotion of hatred, Konstan, 2006: 185-200. Also, Fragoulaki, 2016: 121, on the emotion of hatred in Thucydides’ Plataian debate.

²³ On the difference between the ambassadors’ version and the one presented by Thucydides, Kallet, 2017: 65-66. Cf. Philochoros *FGrHist* 328 F 117: ὁ δὲ Φιλόχορος φησι καὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους λαβεῖν διὰ τὰς κατασχούσας τὴν Λακεδαιμόνα συμφοράς. For a discussion of this fragment and Philochoros’ attitude to Athenian imperialism, Harding, 2008: 108-109.

²⁴ Hdt. 8.3. On the difference between Herodotus and Thucydides, Hornblower, 1991: 141, 142-143; Bouchet, 2014: 47-48; Kallet, 2017: 65-67.

²⁵ On this Athenian attitude praised by Herodotus, van Wees, 2002: 341-342.

²⁶ On how the Athenians exploited the circumstances to legitimise their hegemony and empire, Bartzoka, 2020: 60-61.

2. The Peloponnesian War

As far as Thucydides and the epigraphic evidence allow us to tell, the transformation of the Athenians from leaders to rulers of the Greek world was a gradual process.²⁷ But the Peloponnesian War itself was a dramatic change and is assessed by Thucydides as the ‘greatest movement (κίνησις μεγίστη) yet known in history not only of the Greeks, but of a large part of the barbarian world.’²⁸ If one puts aside the questions raised by the precise translation of the word κίνησις (whether as ‘upheaval’ or as ‘preparation’),²⁹ this term reflects exactly, I think, the way the Peloponnesian War set in motion the struggles for a significant number of Greek cities,³⁰ the effect it had on them, and the revolution it provoked in terms of possession of power.³¹ Regarding this last point, Thucydides uses the verb καταπαύω to denote precisely the collapse and destruction of the Athenian power at the end of the war.³²

Although Xenophon narrates the last years of the Peloponnesian War,³³ he makes no use of specific words to describe the Athenian fall. Instead, he only mentions the reaction of the exiles who returned to Athens and, thus, benefited from the terms of the peace of 404. ‘They believed,’ he says, ‘that that day would be the beginning of freedom (ἄρχειν τῆς ἐλευθερίας) for all of Greece.’³⁴ That is why the next interesting set of words that describe the Athenian decline are found in Isocrates’ works, where the orator draws the readers’ attention to the major historical ruptures and constant changes of power that concern the greater cities of the Greek world exclusively,³⁵ leaving aside other, smaller powers that were, however, capable of changing the state of affairs.³⁶ Due to his views on a broad

²⁷ On the much less dramatic nature of this transition, Low, 2007: 234-237. On a summary of the difficulties in reconstructing the administration and mechanisms of the League with great detail, due to Thucydides’ particular narrative, its omissions, and the limitations of the epigraphic evidence, Kallet, 2017: 74-76; Low, 2017: 99-100. For a summary of the different dates proposed for these inscriptions, Rhodes, 2008: 500-506; Pébarthe, 2011: 59-73. On the history of the Delian League, Meiggs, 1972 (the dating of certain decrees has now been reconsidered); Scheibelreiter, 2013. On the pragmatism of the Athenian policy towards its allies, Brock, 2009: 149-166. For a summary of the finances of the League, Migeotte, 2014: 438-443. On its judicial aspects, de Ste. Croix, 1961: 94-112; Gauthier, 1972; Bartzoka, 2018: 113-118, 131-149 (with references to earlier bibliography).

²⁸ Thuc. 1.1.2: κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη δὴ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐγένετο καὶ μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὥς δὲ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἀνθρώπων.

²⁹ On the different translations and interpretations of this term, Rusten (2015: 27-40), who translates it as ‘the largest mobilisation’ of manpower, money, and materials. Among the most recent views that adopt the traditional translation of the term as ‘upheaval/convulsion’, Munson, 2015: 41-43.

³⁰ See also the use of the term in Thuc. 3.82.1 (τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐκινήθη), regarding the effects of *stasis* that broke out in the Greek cities. On this term, its allusion to the physical and moral disruptions of the war, and its connection with Thuc. 1.1.2, Connor, 1984: 103-104; Hornblower, 1991: 478-479. On the fact that a city in *stasis* is not only shaken by the forces of motion, but also entrapped in a paralysed condition, Loraux, 1997: 102-106; Joho, 2021: 34-35. On the verbs κινέω and μετακινέω conveying the meaning of change occurred in a political context, Ar. *Ran.* 759; Arist. *Pol.* 1306b 22-26, 1307a 40-1307b 19; [Ath. *Pol.*] 29.1, 31.2; Dem. 2.21 (*Olynthiac II*); 9.24 (*Philippic III*); 11.14 (*Response to the Letter of Philip*); 23.205 (*Against Aristocrates*); Hdt. 3.80; Isoc. 2.17 (*To Nicocles*); 7.30 (*Areopagiticus*); 8.95 (*On the Peace*); 9.63 (*Evagoras*); 16.5 (*On the Team of Horses*); Pl. *Resp.* 426b-c, 545d; Xen. *Ages.* 1.37; [Ath. *Pol.*] 3.8.

³¹ For an overview of the effects of the Peloponnesian War, Hornblower, 2011: 190-216.

³² Thuc. 5.26.1: τήν τε ἀρχὴν κατέπαυσαν τῶν Ἀθηναίων Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι, καὶ τὰ μακρὰ τεῖχη καὶ τὸν Πειραιᾶ κατέλαβον.

³³ On Xenophon’s narrative about the ‘coup techniques’ that led to the overthrown of Athenian democracy in 404, Bearzot, 2013: 88-103, 109-170 (with analysis of the other sources as well); Sebastiani, 2018: 498-501, 504-507, 509-515.

³⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.23.

³⁵ On Isocrates’ preference to focus on the greater cities instead of the small ones, Gauthier, 1987-1989: 187-202; Daverio Rocchi, 1991: 54-55.

³⁶ On the role that smaller regional powers may play in the interstate relations, Buckler and Beck, 2008: 7-8.

range of political issues and to the length of his life (he is reported to have died at the age of 98), Isocrates' works offer a great variety of vocabulary about the changes of power at the end of the fifth and fourth century.

Let me first examine *Areopagiticus*, a speech probably written before the so-called Social War (357-355),³⁷ where Isocrates directly connects the transformation of the Athenian power and its decline with the reforms of 462/1 that deprived the Areopagus Court of its authority to ensure the preservation of the laws and to supervise the behaviour of the citizens, and that resulted in the moral decadence and injustice of the Athenians.³⁸ He explicitly shows how great powers, such as Athens and Sparta, can be quickly destroyed, and, as in the *Panegyricus* before, he uses the noun μεταβολή,³⁹ that is preceded by the adjective τοσοῦτος, to show how frequent these changes could be. He additionally employs the verb ἀναιρῶ, which has the same effect as καταπαύω mentioned above, and the adverb ταχέως, to refer to a particular kind of change, that of a power's destruction, and to how quickly it may occur. He states, more precisely, that the Athenians 'were nearly enslaved', when they thought they had 'invincible power' (ἀνυπέρβλητον).⁴⁰ The Athenian defeat at the end of the Peloponnesian War was, for him, the result of an extended policy of arrogance demonstrated towards its allies.⁴¹

His explanation for the Athenian collapse was not, of course, a new one. Isocrates had expressed the same idea almost twenty years earlier, when in his *Plataicus* the Plataean representative to the Athenian Assembly reminded the Athenians of their destruction (κατέλυσαν) by the Spartans, when the former appeared 'invincible' (ἀνυπόστατον).⁴² In order to show the extent of change and the emotions the Athenians experienced when they realised that they had lost all their empire, Isocrates uses in his *Evagoras* the expression μεγάλη μεταβολή and the adverbs λυπηρῶς and βαρέως that all together indicate the fundamental change that fell upon the city, which was 'painful and hard to bear'.⁴³ These emotions contrast directly with the feelings of relief and hope expressed by the exiles in Xenophon's narration.

³⁷ For a recent summary of the debate about the date of the speech, Bouchet, 2015: 423-430.

³⁸ Cf. 7.15: ὅπως ἐπανορθώσομεν αὐτήν; 16: καὶ τῶν μελλόντων κινδύνων ἀποτροπὴν καὶ τῶν παρόντων κακῶν ἀπαλλαγὴν, ἣν ἐθελήσωμεν ἐκείνην τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἀναλαβεῖν, ἣν Σόλων μὲν ὁ δημοτικώτατος γενόμενος ἐνομοθέτησε; 77: ὑμᾶς παύσασθαι τοιαύτ' ἐξαμαρτάνοντας; 78: ἣν δὲ μεταβάλλωμεν τὴν πολιτείαν. On the necessity to restore the privileges of the Areopagus Court and return to the ancestral habits, Demont, 2003; Bouchet, 2014: 68-70; Bartzoka, 2015: 178-183. On the nature of Isocrates' proposals, Bearzot, 2020: 23-39.

³⁹ Isoc. 7.8 (*Areopagiticus*): τοσαύτας μεταβολὰς γεγενημένας καὶ τηλικαύτας δυνάμεις οὕτω ταχέως ἀναιρεθείσας; 4.116 (*Panegyricus*): πυκνότητα τῶν μεταβολῶν.

⁴⁰ Isoc. 7.6 (*Areopagiticus*): ἐπειδὴ δ' ἀνυπέρβλητον ᾤθημεν τὴν δύναμιν ἔχειν, παρὰ μικρὸν ἤλθομεν ἐξανδραποδισθῆναι. This calls to mind the proposal to destroy Athens advocated by many Greeks gathered in Sparta after the Athenian defeat of 405 and Sparta's refusal to comply: Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.19-20.

⁴¹ On the fatal ruin of the powerful who constantly seek to acquire more than necessary, Demont, 2003; Perysinakis, 2015: 396-397.

⁴² Isoc. 14.40 (*Plataicus*): τὰ δ' οὖν ἐφ' ἡμῶν γενόμενα τίς οὐκ οἶδεν, ὅτι καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀνυπόστατον δοκοῦσαν εἶναι κατέλυσαν, μικρὰς μὲν ἀφορμὰς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν κατὰ θάλατταν τὸ πρῶτον ἔχοντες, διὰ δὲ τὴν δόξαν ταύτην προσαγόμενοι τοὺς Ἕλληνας. On the different opinions expressed about the function of this speech (actual delivery, exercise, political pamphlet), Papillon, 2004: 228-229 with n. 2.

⁴³ Isoc. 9.54 (*Evagoras*): Ὅρῶντες γὰρ αὐτὴν ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίοις οὖσαν καὶ μεγάλη μεταβολὴ κεκρημένην λυπηρῶς καὶ βαρέως ἔφερον, ἀμφοτέρωι προσήκοντα ποιοῦντες.

Spartan Supremacy and its Downfall

1. The End of the Peloponnesian War

What is more interesting in Isocrates' *Areopagiticus* is the assumption that maritime power was ultimately the cause for the fall of the Spartans as well. In their case, he says, although they used to live moderately,⁴⁴ they became more arrogant after the end of the Peloponnesian War, when they gained control of both land and sea, and thus encountered the same dangers as the Athenians.⁴⁵ In other words, in Isocrates' thought, the defeat of Athens had a twofold effect on Sparta's power. First, the Spartans took the chance to establish their maritime empire.⁴⁶ Second, their maritime empire proved to be short-lived.

The idea that having a naval empire was the cause of seemingly all problems is better attested in Isocrates' *On the Peace*, a treatise discussing the so-called Social War (357-355), when a group of allies revolted against the Athenian leadership of the Second Athenian League.⁴⁷ Although in his *Areopagiticus* he did not advise the Athenians yet to correct the abuses of their naval empire but their internal policy, in this speech, Isocrates urges the Athenians to 'stop' (παυσώμεθα – same use as in Thucydides before) desiring an unjust naval empire,⁴⁸ since this acquisition was what was throwing them into 'confusion' (ταραχή)⁴⁹ and had 'destroyed' (καταλύσασα) twice the democracy of their ancestors of the fifth century.⁵⁰ Instead, he advises them to establish a long-lasting and peaceful hegemony.⁵¹

⁴⁴ On how the difference of character (Spartans: slowness and lack of daring, Athenians: dash and enterprise) is linked to the development of a maritime empire, Thuc. 8.96. On the corrupting force of sea, Pl. *Gorg.* 519a; *Leg.* 705a; Arist. *Pol.* 1303b 7-15. Cf. Daverio Rocchi, 2015: 84-88, on the image of sea as space of inequality, violence, and power struggle in fourth-century philosophical and political thought.

⁴⁵ Isoc. 7.7 (*Areopagiticus*): Λακεδαιμόνιοι τε τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν ἐκ φαύλων καὶ ταπεινῶν πόλεων ὀρμηθέντες διὰ τὸ σωφρόνως ζῆν καὶ στρατιωτικῶς κατέσχον Πελοπόννησον, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα μείζον φρονήσαντες τοῦ δέοντος καὶ λαβόντες καὶ τὴν κατὰ γῆν καὶ τὴν κατὰ θάλατταν ἀρχὴν, εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς κινδύνους κατέστησαν ἡμῖν.

⁴⁶ Its creation was the result of a long process that did not begin only in the last decade of the Peloponnesian War; rather, it was throughout the war that Sparta pursued an active naval policy. On Spartan naval policy during the fifth century, contrary to the standard assumption regarding the conservative nature of Sparta as a land power, Millender, 2015: 299-312, with bibliography.

⁴⁷ On the events of these years, Buckler, 2003: 351-384. On the relations between Athens and its allies in the Cyclades during the war and on its consequences, Bonnin, 2014: 65-66; 2015: 274-283.

⁴⁸ Isoc. 8.64-65 (*On the Peace*): Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἡμᾶς ἄμεινον οἰκῆσιν καὶ βελτίους αὐτοὺς ἔσεσθαι καὶ πρὸς ἀπάσας τὰς πράξεις ἐπιδώσειν, ἢν παυσώμεθα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς κατὰ θάλατταν ἐπιθυμοῦντες. Αὕτη γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ καὶ νῦν εἰς ταραχὴν ἡμᾶς καθιστάσα καὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἐκείνην καταλύσασα μεθ' ἧς οἱ πρόγονοι ζῶντες εὐδαιμονέστατοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἦσαν, καὶ σχεδὸν ἀπάντων αἰτία τῶν κακῶν ὧν αὐτοὶ τ' ἔχομεν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις παρέχομεν. Cf. Davidson, 1990: 21-24, 25; Masaracchia, 1995: 107-108; Bearzot, 2020: 118. On the terms Isocrates uses to refer to this change, Bartzoka, 2017: 2-4.

⁴⁹ On the term ταραχή as cause of the transformation, see Isoc. 3.31 (*Nicocles*); as its result, Isoc. 3.55 (*Nicocles*); 4.104 (*Panegyricus*); 7.9, 7.76 (*Areopagiticus*).

⁵⁰ Ceccarelli (1993: 453-455) notes that there is no exclusive link between naval empire and democratic government, but naval supremacy may have had a detrimental effect on both types of constitution, democratic and oligarchic, even in Isocrates' works.

⁵¹ Cf. Low, 2007: 155; Bouchet, 2014: 41-43. Xenophon (*Poroi* 5.2) also speaks of a new, more just, Athenian hegemony; cf. Gauthier, 1976: 199, 212-213; Farrell, 2016: 331-355; de Martinis, 2018: 149-150.

Since, according to Isocrates, the naval empire ‘by its very nature’ (πέφυκε) makes those who are part of it worse,⁵² it ‘destroyed’ (διέφθειρεν) not only the Athenians but the Spartans too,⁵³ and destruction came ‘much more quickly’ (πολὺ γὰρ θάττον) for the Spartans than for the Athenians.

Μέγιστον δὲ τεκμήριον· οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἡμᾶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων πόλιν διέφθειρεν, ὥστε τοῖς εἰθισμένοις ἐπαινεῖν τὰς ἐκείνων ἀρετὰς οὐχ οἷόν τ’ ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, ὥς ἡμεῖς μὲν διὰ τὸ δημοκρατεῖσθαι κακῶς ἐχρησάμεθα τοῖς πράγμασιν, εἰ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ταύτην τὴν δύναμιν παρέλαβον, εὐδαίμονας ἂν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐποίησαν. Πολὺ γὰρ θάττον ἐν ἐκείνοις ἐπεδείξατο τὴν φύσιν τὴν αὐτῆς· τὴν γὰρ πολιτείαν, ἣν ἐν ἑπτακοσίοις ἔτεσιν οὐδεὶς οἶδεν οὐθ’ ὑπὸ κινδύνων οὐθ’ ὑπὸ συμφορῶν κινήθεισαν, ταύτην ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ σαλεῦσαι καὶ λυθῆναι παρὰ μικρὸν ἐποίησεν.⁵⁴

The greatest evidence of the danger of empire is that it destroyed not only us but the Spartan state too. Thus, those who always used to praise the valour of Sparta cannot make the claim that we mishandled our affairs because we were a democracy, whereas if Sparta had had that power, they would have made themselves and everyone else happy. Indeed, the empire showed its true nature much more quickly with the Spartans, for it caused their polity in a short time to shake and almost end, although no one had seen it moved by dangers or troubles for seven hundred years.

(Trans. by T.L. Papillon, with adjustments)

I would say that the verb διαφθείρω is a good example of the kind of transformation the Spartan supremacy underwent, as it does not only describe the collapse of the Spartans’ position in interstate affairs but also, in a moral sense, their ruin and corruption. Except for several passages where this word indicates the change/corruption of one’s opinion or character,⁵⁵ it is worth examining in greater detail how Demosthenes uses this term in *On the Crown*.⁵⁶ In his account of Aeschines’ disruptive role in the Peace of Philocrates and its aftermath, the orator explains how he warned about and protested against Philip II’s interference in the Greek cities in a way that the latter ‘became sick’ (ἐνόσουν) because their active politicians were ‘venal’ (δωροδοκούντων) and ‘corrupted’ (διαφθειρομένων) by money. As with Thucydides before, Demosthenes uses in a political context a verb (νοσέω) that is part of the medical vocabulary and combines it with the verb διαφθείρω to note that corruption may be regarded as a moral disease. Considering this metaphor, one may add that the naval empire itself may also be regarded as a disease that ruined the Spartans and needs to be cured.

Indeed, Isocrates asserts that although the Spartan polity ‘had not been moved’ (κινήθεισαν) ‘by dangers or troubles for seven hundred years’, ‘in a short time’ (ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ) after the Spartans assumed the leadership of the Greeks, their naval empire caused their government ‘to shake’ (σαλεῦσαι) ‘and almost end’ (λυθῆναι παρὰ μικρόν). With great artistry, Isocrates chooses specific terms to demonstrate the effect of naval power on the fall of Sparta. On the one hand, he combines

⁵² Isoc. 8.94 (*On the Peace*).

⁵³ Cf. also Isoc. 5.61 (*To Philip*): ὥστ’ εἰ τις φαίη τότε τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτοῖς γίγνεσθαι τῶν παρόντων κακῶν ὅτε τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς θαλάττης ἐλάβανον. Isocrates plays with the word ἀρχή, which means both beginning and power/empire, Papillon, 2004: 89 n. 42; Lévy, 2015: 250-251.

⁵⁴ Isoc. 8.95 (*On the Peace*).

⁵⁵ On this use cf. Aesch. Ag. 932 (γνώμην μὲν ἴσθι μὴ διαφθεροῦντ’ ἐμέ); Pl. Ap. 30b (διαφθείρω τοὺς νέους).

⁵⁶ Dem. 18.45 (*On the Crown*): αἱ δὲ πόλεις ἐνόσουν, τῶν μὲν ἐν τῷ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ πράττειν δωροδοκούντων καὶ διαφθειρομένων ἐπὶ χρήμασι.

three verbs that escalate in intensity, namely κινῶ ('to move, to disturb'), σαλεύω ('to shake'), and λύω ('to destroy; to put an end'), to show the impact and lurking danger of having an empire. On the other hand, he uses the synonymous expressions πολὺ θᾶττον – ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ to compare the swiftness of the change with the stability of the Spartan constitution. Isocrates follows here the established tradition about the origin, stability and duration of the Spartan *politeia*, already expressed by Thucydides and Xenophon, who point out how Spartan constitution in its entirety or some of its aspects continued uninterrupted.⁵⁷

The effect of the Peloponnesian War and the victory of Sparta on its polity are repeated in *On the Peace*.

Διὰ μὲν γὰρ τὴν κατὰ γῆν ἡγεμονίαν καὶ τὴν εὐταξίαν καὶ τὴν καρτερίαν τὴν ἐν αὐτῇ μελετωμένην ῥαδίως τῆς κατὰ θάλατταν δυνάμεως ἐπεκράτησαν, διὰ δὲ τὴν ἀκολασίαν τὴν ὑπὸ [ταύτης] τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτοῖς ἐγγενομένην ταχέως κάκεινης τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἀπεστερήθησαν. Οὐ γὰρ ἔτι τοὺς νόμους ἐφύλαττον οὓς παρὰ τῶν προγόνων παρέλαβον, οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἔμενον οἷς πρότερον εἶχον, ἀλλ' ὑπολαβόντες ἐξείναι ποιεῖν αὐτοῖς ὅ τι ἂν βουληθῶσιν, εἰς πολλὴν ταραχὴν κατέστησαν.⁵⁸

Through their hegemony on land and the discipline and endurance they learned from it, they easily gained control of power at sea too, but through the lack of restraint they acquired from this naval empire, they quickly lost even their former hegemony. For they were no longer observing the laws that were handed down from their ancestors, nor were they following former ways; instead, assuming they could do whatever they wanted, they fell into great turmoil.

(Trans. by T.L. Papillon)

There, Isocrates discusses Spartan hegemony and how easy (ῥαδίως) it was for the Spartans to gain control of power at sea, due to their supremacy on land and the discipline and 'endurance' (καρτερίαν) they had learned from it. The word καρτερία is an opposite term to the notion of change. It suggests durability (cf. πέφυκε and τὰ καθεστηκότα in this article)⁵⁹ and illuminates, I believe, the way Spartans reacted to their newly acquired role; it gives us the sense that, after a long time of patience, perseverance, and preparation, it was the right moment for them to regain their power and reap all its benefits.⁶⁰ However, Isocrates says that 'quickly' (ταχέως) 'they lost even their former hegemony' ('κάκεινης τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἀπεστερήθησαν'), 'through the lack of restraint they acquired from their naval empire'. The two adverbs ῥαδίως and ταχέως clearly emphasise here that the second

⁵⁷ Thuc. 1.18.1, on Spartans enjoying the same form of government (τῇ αὐτῇ πολιτείᾳ χρώνται) for more than four hundred years (ἔτη γὰρ ἔστι μάλιστα τετρακόσια καὶ ὀλίγῳ πλείω), a reckoning at the end of the Peloponnesian War, and their capacity to arrange the affairs of other states. For problems of chronology raised by this passage, Hornblower, 1991: 51-54. Xen. Ag. 1.4: ἄλλη μὲν οὐδεμία ἀρχὴ φανερά ἐστι διαγεγενημένη ἀδιάσπαστος οὔτε δημοκρατία οὔτε ὀλιγαρχία οὔτε τυραννὶς οὔτε βασιλεία. αὕτη δὲ μόνῃ διαμένει συνεχῆς βασιλεία; Lac. 15.1: μόνῃ γὰρ δὴ αὕτη ἀρχὴ διατελεῖ οἷα περ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατεστάθη. τὰς δὲ ἄλλας πολιτείας εὖροι ἂν τις μετακεκινημένας καὶ ἔτι καὶ νῦν μετακινουμένας, on how kingship continues as it had been originally established, whereas other constitutions had undergone and were still undergoing modifications.

⁵⁸ Isoc. 8.102-103 (*On the Peace*).

⁵⁹ On the words and expressions that suggest historical continuity and reveal how the ancients expressed their reaction – positive or negative – towards the multiple transformations their societies underwent, Bartzoka, 2022.

⁶⁰ Cf. Xen. Cyr. 3.3.8, on how obedience (πειθῶ), perseverance (καρτερία), and endurance of toil (οἱ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ πόνοι καὶ κίνδυνοι) bring great pleasure and blessings.

rise of the Spartans to the leadership of the Greeks did not last long, and that it was more of an interval in the long process of power changing hands. When this loss took place is an issue that I will address later.

The orator continues by saying that the Spartans, believing they could do whatever they pleased, eventually ‘fell into great turmoil’ (εἰς πολλὴν ταραχὴν⁶¹ κατέστησαν). Indeed, their policy⁶² confronted the reactions of the Greek cities, reactions that manifested themselves, first, in the outbreak of the Corinthian War,⁶³ later, in the foundation of the Second Athenian League⁶⁴ and, finally, in the rise of Thebes.⁶⁵ For example, in Xenophon’s account of the outbreak of the Corinthian War, the Theban envoys sent to Athens in 395 to persuade the city to join them against Sparta talked about ‘the greedy rule’ (πλεονεξία) of the Spartans that would be ‘much easier to overthrow’ (πολὺ εὐκαταλυτωτέρα) than it was with the Athenian empire:⁶⁶ namely, the Athenians had a navy and ruled over those who did not, whereas the Spartans, who were few in number, were exercising their rule over men who were far more numerous and in no way inferior to them in arms. This kind of argument that aims to persuade the Athenians to take action deals once more with the lack of restraint that the most powerful demonstrate and that eventually leads to their fatal ruin.

In other words, as Isocrates states in his *Evagoras*,⁶⁷ it was in fact the Spartans themselves who ‘soon’ (ταχύν) provided ‘the opportunity’ (τὸν καιρὸν) for the change in possession of power and, more precisely, for Athens to shake off its misfortunes (ὅπως τῶν συμφορῶν αὐτὴν ἀπαλλάξουσιν). On the one hand, Isocrates describes this opportunity in moral terms,⁶⁸ when he refers to the ‘insatiable appetite’ (ἀπληστία) the Spartans acquired through their rule of the Greeks by land and sea and their effort to ‘damage’ (κακῶς ποιεῖν) Asia, and sees a direct connection between their immoral behaviour and the rise of Athens. On the other hand, in historical terms, what Isocrates describes here refers to the Spartan war that was conducted in Asia Minor (399-394) and began after the Lakedaimonians responded to the demand of the Greeks of Asia for protection against the Persians.⁶⁹ Namely, what the orator has in mind regarding the moment that marked the liberation of Athens from its misfortunes is the naval battle of Knidos.

⁶¹ Lévy, 2015: 251, on the fact that the word *ταραχή* is studiously vague on the kind of confusion into which the Spartans fell.

⁶² For a summary of the Spartan policy and the reactions it provoked, Cartledge, 2002: 228-251; Roberts, 2017: 324-346, 355-361; Ruzé, 2018: 326-345.

⁶³ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.16, 4.2.1; Diod. Sic. 14.82. On the Corinthian War, that was declared by the Persian-financed alliance of Athens, Argos, Corinth, and Thebes against Sparta, Seager, 1967: 95-115; Strauss, 1986: 121-169; Seager, 1994: 97-119; Buckler, 2003: 75-128.

⁶⁴ RO 22; Diod. Sic. 15.28. On the foundation of the Second Athenian League and its evolution (with the inscriptions of this period accepting different interpretations), Accame, 1941; Cargill, 1981; Dreher, 1995; Baron, 2006: 379-395 (on the expansion of the League); Cawkwell, 2011: 192-240; Kierstead, 2016: 164-181 (on the Athenian Leagues acting as groups to secure for themselves certain public goods).

⁶⁵ On Theban hegemony from the Theban victory in Leuktra (371) to the battle of Mantinea (362), Rockwell, 2017: 110-124. On the pursuit of Theban hegemony, as presented in Xenophon’s *Hellenika*, Sterling, 2004: 453-461. On Theban hegemony and the hegemony of the Boeotian League, from 371 to 346, Mackil, 2013: 71-85.

⁶⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.15: ἡ Λακεδαιμονίων πλεονεξία πολὺ εὐκαταλυτωτέρα ἐστὶ τῆς ὑμετέρας γενομένης ἀρχῆς. On this speech, Tuci, 2019: 35, 38, 41, 43-44 (with references to earlier bibliography). On this negative description of Sparta by Xenophon whose validity should not be questioned because it is expressed by the Theban ambassadors, Tuplin, 1993: 62; on the rhetorical purpose of the speech, Gray, 1989: 107-112; Flower, 2017: 316-317 with n. 46.

⁶⁷ Isoc. 9.54 (*Evagoras*): Σκοπούμενοι δ’ αὐτοῖς ὅπως τῶν συμφορῶν αὐτὴν ἀπαλλάξουσιν ταχύν τὸν καιρὸν Λακεδαιμόνιοι παρεσκεύασαν. ἄρχοντες γὰρ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν εἰς τοῦτ’ ἀπληστίας ἦλθον ὥστε καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν κακῶς ποιεῖν ἐπεχείρησαν; Lévy, 2015: 248-249.

⁶⁸ Alexiou 2010, 146. On the emphasis on the notion of ‘greed’ in Isocrates’ works, Alexiou, 2015: 411-417.

⁶⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.3-6, 4.1.41; Diod. Sic. 14.35.6-7. On this war, Buckler, 2003: 39-74.

2. The Battle of Knidos

The authors of the classical period regarded the battle of Knidos as a key moment in the renewal of the Athenian power and the decline of Sparta. It took place in the eastern Aegean in 394 between the Spartan fleet, under the command of Peisander, and the Persian one, under the joint command of Pharnabazos and Conon.⁷⁰ This battle was a disaster for Sparta; Peisander was killed, fifty triremes were captured, and some five hundred crew members were taken prisoners.⁷¹ All available sources agree that the architect of the victory was the Athenian general Conon.⁷² For example, as noted by Demosthenes in *Against Leptines*, Conon's contemporaries believed that 'by destroying the power of the Spartans' (τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων ἀρχὴν καταλύσαντα), 'he put an end to a great tyranny' (οὐ μικρὰν τυραννίδα πεπαυκέναι).⁷³ Likewise, Isocrates, in his *Panegyricus*, says that Conon campaigned for Asia and thus 'ruined the power of Sparta' (τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων κατέλυσεν);⁷⁴ in *Evagoras*, he praises Conon for making the Spartans 'lose their supremacy' (τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπεστερήθησαν), for freeing the Greeks and making Athens 'receive again' (πάλιν ἀνέλαβεν) part of its ancient glory and become leader of the allies;⁷⁵ finally, in his *Areopagiticus*, he talks about the Greeks who 'fell into Athens' control' after Conon's victory (ὑπὸ τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ὑποπεσοῦσης).⁷⁶

It is worth discussing here in greater detail the vocabulary used by Attic orators to present Conon's victory, namely the three verbs καταλύω, παύω, and ἀποστερῶ. These usually mean 'to deprive', 'to bring something to an end' and, thus, from an Athenian perspective, they describe the destruction of the power the Spartans used to exercise both on land and sea after the Peloponnesian War.⁷⁷ But one may add that this is not the case here, as we know that both Spartan hegemony and their arrogance towards the Greek cities continued to exist,⁷⁸ especially after the King's Peace in 386⁷⁹ and until the foundation of the Second Athenian League in 377. Therefore, these three terms reflect, I think, the retrospective thought of the Attic orators on the battle of Knidos and show the effect this encounter had on Athens in the long term, as it marked the beginning of the revival of the Athenian power and thus the gradual decline of Sparta. But, again, it may be worth noting that the importance of the battle of Knidos for the restoration of the Athenian power appears already in Isocrates' *Panegyricus*,

⁷⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.10-12, who offers no details of this naval battle. On his paucity, explained by his absence from Asia and his participation in the battle of Coronea in Boeotia, Cartledge, 2002: 240. On this account being subordinate to the description of the battle of Coronea in order to highlight what the Spartan king Agesilaus achieved there, Gray, 1989: 151.

⁷¹ Diod. Sic. 14.83.7. It is interesting to note that, according to Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.13-14 (as in Plut. *Ages.* 17.3), when Agesilaus learned of the defeat before the battle of Coronea, he decided to hide the truth from his troops and to announce a Spartan victory at sea instead. On the function of this stratagem, Gray, 1989: 149-152; Tuplin, 1993: 68.

⁷² Isoc. 4.142, 154 (*Panegyricus*); 7.12 (*Areopagiticus*); 9.56 (*Evagoras*); Dem. 20.70 (*Against Leptines*); Diod. Sic. 14.83.4-7, 84.4; Nep. *Conon*, 4.4. On the reception of Conon in Athenian oratory, Nouhaud, 1982: 333-338.

⁷³ Dem. 20.70 (*Against Leptines*).

⁷⁴ Isoc. 4.154 (*Panegyricus*).

⁷⁵ Isoc. 9.56 (*Evagoras*).

⁷⁶ Isoc. 7.12 (*Areopagiticus*). The same passage also associates Athenian control over Greece with the military successes of Timotheus, son of Conon, between 375 and 364.

⁷⁷ On this Athenian tradition, which is different from non-Athenian perceptions that regarded the battle of Leuktra as the key moment for the end of the Spartan hegemony on land, Bearzot, 2015: 90.

⁷⁸ Also Buckler and Beck, 2008: 9. On Isocrates' simplistic view of history, Bouchet, 2014: 58.

⁷⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.30-36; Diod. Sic. 14.110.

composed in the 380s and published in 380.⁸⁰ This was a time of confusion for the Greek affairs due to the Corinthian War, the conclusion of the King's Peace, and the ongoing efforts of Sparta and Athens to reaffirm their power.

After the battle, Conon sailed to Athens bearing Persian funds and assisted the Athenians in rebuilding their fortifications. His purpose was to use the Great King's money 'to maintain his fleet and to win over to the Athenian side both the islands and the cities on the mainland.'⁸¹ As expected, Xenophon says, Conon's action worried, on the one hand, the Spartans, who even offered to make peace with the Persians in 392, thereby relinquishing control of the Greek cities in Asia to the King and offering autonomy to the islands and the other Greek cities; however, peace was not achieved.⁸² On the other hand, Conon's military success was the reason for the relief felt among the Athenians. Isocrates' *To Philip* gives such an impression,⁸³ where Conon is thought to be the man responsible for the reversal of the fortune of Greece (ἀναστροφήσεσθαι τὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος πράγματα), the one who 'removed the Spartans from their rule' (ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς), 'freed the Greeks, rebuilt the walls of his city, and brought Athens back to the high reputation from which it had fallen' (τὴν πόλιν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν δόξαν προήγαγεν ἐξ ἧσπερ ἐξέπεσεν).⁸⁴ The victory of Conon is, thus, seen as the cause and the link for all the events that followed the battle of Knidos in a simple, linear way.⁸⁵ This complete change in the balance of power is shown through the verb ἀναστρέφω, which is a general term to signify a neutral transformation. The repercussions of change are usually denoted by the context of the phrase where this verb is cited, in our case, by the verbs ἐκβάλλω, ἐκπίπτω, and προάγω. Similarly, in Xenophon's account of the peace negotiations in 371, just before the battle of Leuktra, the Athenian Callistratos delivered a speech, in which he insisted on the fact that Athens and Sparta should make peace while they were strong and fortune was on their side, because in this way their influence in Greek affairs would grow even stronger (μείζους... ἀναστρεφοίμεθα).⁸⁶ The verb ἀναστρέφω, combined with the adjective μείζων, implies the expectations in Athens and Sparta about how the conclusion of the peace would make things better for both and bring about another change.

3. The Battle of Naxos

Delivered in 341, Demosthenes' *Third Philippic* examines, among other things, the gradual domination of Greece by Philip II and the unwillingness of the Greeks to act against him in such a way that they have given the Macedonian king more freedom to dominate Greece than they ever allowed Athens or Sparta. To this end, the orator compares the Athenians with the Spartans and points out how fast

⁸⁰ On its composition, Papillon, 2004: 24; Bouchet, 2014: 43.

⁸¹ Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.9-10, 12. On winning over the Cyclades and replacing the oligarchic governments with democratic ones, Diod. Sic. 14.84.4; Paus. 6.3.16: οὕτω μετεβάλλοντο οἱ Ἴωνες. On the same change as far as Rhodes is concerned, *Hell. Oxy.* 10: οἱ δὲ τὴν σφαγὴν ἐξεργασάμενοι καταλύσαντες τὴν παρούσαν πολιτείαν κατέστησαν δημοκρατίαν καὶ τῶν πολιτῶν τινὰς ὀλίγους φυγάδας ἐποίησαν. ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐπανάστασις ἡ περὶ τὴν Ῥόδον τοῦτο τὸ τέλος ἔλαβεν; Paus. 6.7.6: Ῥοδίων δὲ τὸν δῆμον πεισθέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ Κόνωνος ἀπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων μεταβαλέσθαι σφᾶς ἐς τὴν βασιλείᾳ καὶ Ἀθηναίων συμμαχία. On the importance of the battle of Knidos for the renewal of the Athenian power in the Aegean, Bonnin, 2015: 231-233.

⁸² Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.14-15.

⁸³ Isoc. 5.63-64 (*To Philip*).

⁸⁴ Here, the battle of Knidos marks the beginning of the recovery of Athens. On the contrary, in Isoc. 12.58 (*Panathenaicus*), the victory at Knidos is presented as the final step of this revival, as Isocrates states that Athens recovered from its defeat in less than ten years. Roth, 2003: 118.

⁸⁵ Nouhaud, 1982: 336.

⁸⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.17: οὕτω γὰρ ἡμεῖς τ' ἂν δι' ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑμεῖς δι' ἡμᾶς ἔτι μείζους ἢ τὸν παρελθόντα χρόνον ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἀναστρεφοίμεθα.

things changed for the Spartan policy.⁸⁷ He refers to the seventy-three years the Athenians were the leaders of the Greeks, from the moment of the foundation of the Delian League in 478 to the defeat in the battle of Aigos Potamoi in 405,⁸⁸ and contrasts those years with the twenty-nine years of Spartan supremacy, counting approximately from the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 to their defeat by the Athenians in the battle of Naxos in 376.⁸⁹ In this battle, the Spartans lost twenty-four triremes and eight more were captured with their crews, while the Athenians lost eighteen. Chabrias, the victorious Athenian general, received an enthusiastic welcome from the Athenians and subsequent honours awarded for his service.⁹⁰ As the epigraphic record indicates, the Second Athenian League grew with new members.⁹¹ Additionally, according to Diodorus, this was the first naval battle the Athenians had won since the Peloponnesian War, as the victory of Knidos had not been achieved with their own fleet but by the use of the Persian one.⁹² Therefore, the battle of Naxos was thought to have provoked a dramatic shift in the balance of power in the Aegean.⁹³

Consequently, two battles, the one at Aigos Potamoi, the other at Naxos, function in the speech of Demosthenes as the two key moments that marked the collapse of Athenian and Spartan power respectively. The reasons for this end are the same as those presented in Isocrates' works, where the notion of 'greed' appears in his narrative frequently. Demosthenes, thus, says that 'since the Athenians were thought to be treating some unfairly' (ἐπειδὴ τισιν οὐ μετρίως ἐδόκουν προσφέρεισθαι), war was declared on them. 'Again' (πάλιν), 'when the Spartans succeeded the Athenians to their position of supremacy' (Λακεδαιμονίοις ἄρξασι καὶ παρελθοῦσιν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν δυναστείαν ὑμῖν) and started 'to disturb the established order of things' (τὰ καθεστηκότ' ἐκίνουν) 'beyond what was reasonable' (πέρα τοῦ μετρίου), they made the Greeks react and declare war on them. One understands that, as Isocrates before, Demosthenes explains the rise and fall of Sparta and Athens as part of a general and frequently attested phenomenon. That is why the orator emphasises the three following words: first, the two opposing terms καθίστημι and κινῶ that represent the change between stability and development in the area of the Greek interstate politics respectively,⁹⁴ and, second, the keyword πάλιν ('again, in turn'), a word that shows how repeatedly one power succeeds another due to a policy of arrogance that may end or decline with the outbreak of war. The word πάλιν is central to the description of frequent reversals of fortune and of the succession of hegemonies. This is also made clear in Isocrates' *Plataicus*,⁹⁵ where it appears again, this time in relation to the battle of Knidos and the way the Athenians 'took away' (πάλιν... ἀφείλεσθε) Sparta's supremacy.

⁸⁷ Dem. 9.23-24 (*Philippic III*).

⁸⁸ The count is ambiguous; cf. Croiset, 1925: 98 n. 1 (477-404); Trevett, 2011: 161 n. 27 (476-404). On the different ways of counting, Roth, 2003: 117 n. 208. See also below (n. 109, 111), Isoc. 12.56 (*Panathenaicus*).

⁸⁹ Diod. Sic. 15.34.5-35.2.

⁹⁰ Aeschin. 3.243 (*Against Ctesiphon*) 243; Dem. 23.198 (*Against Aristocrates*); 24.180 (*Against Timocrates*). On his honours, Gauthier, 1985: 99-102. The same decree was unsuccessfully refuted by Leodamas of Acharnai for being unconstitutional; Hansen, 1974: 30; Bartzoka, 2018: 262-264 (on how external politics interact with public trials).

⁹¹ RO 22, l. 79-90, with 104, noting that the names of the allies inscribed in these lines could have been added after Chabrias' campaign.

⁹² Diod. Sic. 15.35.2.

⁹³ On the importance of this battle for the decline of the Spartan power and the re-establishment of Athens as the leading naval power, Cargill, 1981: 190; Buckler, 2003: 249; Bonnin, 2015: 239. Trevett (2011: 161 n. 28) notes that it was the battle of Leuktra that marked the end of Spartan hegemony.

⁹⁴ On the question of stability in the conduct of interstate relations, Low, 2007: 212-251.

⁹⁵ Isoc. 14.40 (*Plataicus*): καὶ πάλιν ὑμεῖς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀφείλεσθε τὴν ἐκείνων, ἐξ ἀτειχίστου μὲν τῆς πόλεως ὀρμηθέντες καὶ κακῶς πρᾶττούσης. See also above (n. 75), Isoc. 9.56 (*Evagoras*) and below (n. 98), Isoc. 5.44 (*To Philip*).

4. The Battle of Leuktra

Isocrates' praise of Conon's achievements in his *To Philip* is part of an argument that aimed to convince Philip II to unify the Greek states in a campaign against the Great King. Isocrates cites examples of famous leaders and their deeds that were more difficult to achieve, in his view, than the one he advised Philip to undertake. That is why it is no surprise that in the same speech, he views the battle of Leuktra in 371 as another critical moment in the collapse of Spartan hegemony.⁹⁶

Isocrates mentions this battle when talking about the misfortunes of the Greeks and the usual changes in the balance of power in interstate relations (τηλικαύτας μεταβολὰς γιγνομένας). He refers to the Greek affairs after the end of the Peloponnesian War, when Sparta appeared as the leader of the Greek world and was trying to destroy the Boeotian League reunified under the leadership of Thebes.⁹⁷ As with the case of Knidos, the narrative that follows is once more simplistic and draws no distinction between the moment Sparta lost its naval power, either in the battle of Knidos or in the battle of Naxos, and the time it lost its supremacy as a whole.

καὶ πάλιν μεταπεσούσης τῆς τύχης καὶ Θηβαίων καὶ Πελοποννησίων ἀπάντων ἐπιχειρησάντων ἀνάστατον ποιῆσαι τὴν Σπάρτην, [...] εἴ τις ὁρῶν τηλικαύτας μεταβολὰς γιγνομένας [...] καὶ πρῶτον μὲν σκεψαίμεθα τὰ Λακεδαιμονίων. Οὗτοι γὰρ ἄρχοντες τῶν Ἑλλήνων, οὐ πολλὸς χρόνος ἐξ οὗ, καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν, εἰς τοσαύτην μεταβολὴν ἦλθον, ἐπειδὴ τὴν μάχην ἡττήθησαν τὴν ἐν Λεύκτροις, ὥστ' ἀπεστερήθησαν μὲν τῆς ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσι δυναστείας, τοιούτους δ' ἄνδρας ἀπώλεσαν σφῶν αὐτῶν, οἱ προηροῦντο τεθνάναι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῆν ἡττηθέντες ὧν πρότερον ἐδέσποζον.⁹⁸

Again, when fortune changed, and the Thebans and all the Peloponnesians were trying to destroy Sparta, [...]. Therefore, anyone who sees such changes happening [...]. First, let us look at the Spartans' situation. Although they ruled over Greece not too long ago by both land and sea, they suffered such a reversal when they lost the battle at Leuktra that they were stripped of their empire over the Greeks and lost many of their men who chose to die rather than live after being defeated by those who used to be their subjects

(Trans. by T. L. Papillon)

Sparta, he says, had not ruled over Greece for too long (οὐ πολλὸς χρόνος) by both land and sea that 'fortune changed again' (πάλιν μεταπεσούσης τῆς τύχης) and this time it was the Thebans who were trying to destroy Sparta. The expression τῆς τύχης μεταπεσούσης shows the complete transformation that may concern either the collapse or the renewal of a city's power, as the verb ἀναστρέφω before. More precisely, the verb μεταπίπτω (to change) has a neutral meaning.⁹⁹ Its positive or negative connotations

⁹⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.1-20; Diod. Sic. 15.51-56.4. On this battle and its military significance, Buckler, 2003: 286-295; 2013: 657-670; Rockwell, 2017: 101-104.

⁹⁷ Spartan occupation of Thebes in 382 and the liberation of the Cadmeia in 379: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.25-31, 5.4.1-12; the re-establishment of the Boeotian League after 379: Buckler and Beck, 2008: 87-98; Beck and Ganter, 2015: 147-148; Thebans recovering the neighboring cities of Boeotia: Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.63; the destruction of Plataea and Thespieae: Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.1-5; and the expansionist aspirations of Thebes that paved the way to the battle of Leuktra: Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.1-20.

⁹⁸ Isoc. 5.44-47 (*To Philip*).

⁹⁹ See Dem. 20.49 (*Against Leptines*): οὐ γὰρ ἂν μετέπιπτε τὰ πράγματα ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρω (‘things would not change for better or worse’).

depend on the context of the phrase where it is cited.¹⁰⁰ Here, the change of fortune is detrimental to the Spartans but beneficial to the Thebans. The noun τύχη¹⁰¹ itself may acquire in Isocrates' works the meanings of chance, destiny, fortune, but it may also be synonymous with good or ill fortune, depending again on the author's description.¹⁰²

In Isocrates' view, the crucial moment for the change came with the battle of Leuktra, where the Spartans were defeated and 'suffered such a reversal' (τοσαύτην μεταβολὴν ἦλθον) that 'they were stripped of their power over the Greeks' (ὥστ' ἀπεστερήθησαν μὲν τῆς ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσι δυναστείας) and lost many of their men.¹⁰³ Isocrates repeats the vocabulary attested in his other works and in Demosthenes: one may find the similar words about the oscillation of fate and frequency of change (πάλιν, τηλικαύτας μεταβολάς), about the short time the Spartans dominated the Greeks (οὐ πολὺς χρόνος) compared to the Athenians, and, finally, about the consequences the Spartans suffered after their defeat (ἀπεστερήθησαν).

These consequences are also pointed out by the non-Athenian historian Ephorus. In fragment 118 from Book 23 of his *Histories*, he refers to the Spartans of old who, after the conquest of Lakonia turned over their state to Lycurgus and, thus, surpassed the Greeks to such a degree that they alone ruled both by land and sea. They continued to do so until the Thebans 'deprived' (ἀφείλοντο) them of their hegemony.¹⁰⁴ Although in his previous books Ephorus discusses important turning points regarding the renewal of the Athenian power and the decline of Sparta, such as the battles of Knidos and Naxos,¹⁰⁵ here he omits the rise of Athens, either in the fifth or in the fourth century.¹⁰⁶ He stresses, instead, the continuity of Spartan hegemony (διετέλεσαν) until Leuktra. The claim of Ephorus is thus problematic in terms of interpretation. Different solutions can be proposed to explain his omission. Perhaps this continuity must be understood if we think that Ephorus presents here his views on the succession of terrestrial hegemonies in Greece,¹⁰⁷ or that he has in mind the territorial unity of Lakonia that was preserved as long as the Spartans held their dominant position in this area.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰ On its positive meaning, see, e.g., Aeschin. 3.75 (*Against Ctesiphon*; οὐ συμμεταπίπτει), on the usefulness of preserving the texts of public documents; Din. 1.65 (*Against Demosthenes*; μεταπεσούσης τῆς τύχης), 'on the hope that the situation of Athens would improve' (ἐλπίζουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἂν τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράγματ' ἔλθῃν) if a suitable penalty was imposed on Demosthenes during his trial about the Harpalus affair; Lyc. 1.60 (*Against Leocrates*; μεταπεσεῖν), on the hope of any man who is alive to improve his fortune. On its negative meaning, see, e.g., Isoc. *Epistle* 7.12 (*To Timotheus*; μεταπεσεῖν), on how seizing power may change an individual's behaviour; Lyc. 1.50 (*Against Leocrates*; μετέπεσεν), regarding the battle of Chaeronea and its consequences.

¹⁰¹ On the different notions of τύχη and its significance for the Greeks, Eidinow, 2011: 45, 150-154.

¹⁰² Chance: 3.47 (*Nicocles*); 4.91, 134 (*Panegyricus*); 6.92 (*Archidamus*); 7.23 (*Areopagiticus*); 10.40 (*Encomium of Helen*); 19.35 (*Aegineticus*). Destiny: 1.29 (*To Demonius*). Fortune: 5.44 (*To Philip*); 6.47 (*Archidamus*); 9.59 (*Evagoras*); 12.32 (*Panathenaicus*); 15.292 (*Antidosis*); 20.8 (*Against Lochites*). Good fortune: 1.3, 1.49 (*To Demonius*); 2.30 (*To Nicocles*); 4.26, 4.132 (*Panegyricus*); 5.15, 5.152 (*To Philip*); 7.11 (*Areopagiticus*); 9.36, 9.45 (*Evagoras*); 15.36, 15.128 (*Antidosis*); 18.68 (*Against Callimachos*). Ill fortune: 12.9 (*Panathenaicus*).

¹⁰³ Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.15.

¹⁰⁴ Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 118: Οἱ δὲ κατασχόντες τὴν Λακωνικὴν καὶ κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν ἐσωφρόνουν, ἐπεὶ δ' οὖν Λυκούργῳ τὴν πολιτείαν ἐπέτρεψαν, τοσοῦτον ὑπερεβάλλοντο τοὺς ἄλλους, ὥστε μόνοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης ἐπῆρξαν, διετέλεσαν τε ἄρχοντες τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἕως ἀφείλοντο αὐτοὺς τὴν ἡγεμονίαν Θηβαῖοι καὶ μετ' ἐκείνους εὐθὺς Μακεδόνες.

¹⁰⁵ Parmegianni, 2011: 537-539, with n. 10, 546. For a summary of Ephorus' historical thought on the succession of hegemonies and the different modern interpretations and approaches on Ephorus, Luraghi, 2014: 147-148.

¹⁰⁶ Christesen, 2010: 247-248, n. 14; Landucci, 2018: 11.

¹⁰⁷ On this solution, Christesen, 2010: 247-248 n. 14.

¹⁰⁸ On this interpretation, Parmegianni, 2011: 559.

Finally, Isocrates discusses the battle of Leuktra in his *Panathenaicus*.¹⁰⁹ In a speech that celebrates the superiority of the Athenians over the Spartans, Isocrates discusses the leading role of Athens among the Greeks.¹¹⁰ His city, he states, held its empire for sixty-five years ‘continuously’ (συνεχῶς), from 478 to the disaster of the Sicilian expedition in 413, whereas the Spartans held to the rule for ‘barely’ (μόλις) ten years, counting from 404 to the battle of Knidos in 394.¹¹¹ Contrary to his *To Philip*, Isocrates here draws a distinction between the collapse of Sparta’s maritime power in Knidos and the continuation of its supremacy at land. However, he proceeds with this distinction in a way that underplays the fact that Sparta maintained its dominant position on land until the battle of Leuktra and, thus, he gives no exact number of the years its supremacy lasted.¹¹² He says, instead, that ‘both cities were hated’ during their rule ‘and ended up in war and turmoil’ (ἀμφοτέραι μισηθεῖσαι κατέστησαν εἰς πόλεμον καὶ ταραχήν), but Athens was able to hold out for ten years after its defeat in Sicily, whereas the Spartans, though still the leading power by land, could not resist the Thebans and were defeated in a single battle, that of Leuktra. The defeat, he says, had such a great impact on Sparta that it ‘lost all its possessions’ (ἀπάντων ἀποστερηθέντας) and was not able after its loss to regain the position from which it ‘fell’ (ἐξέπεσον).

I wish to add two remarks here about the verb ἀποστερῶ (deprive). First, we have already seen this term being used by Isocrates in his *Evagoras* to depict the negative results of the battle of Knidos for the Lakedaimonians (τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπεστερήθησαν) and in *To Philip* to emphasise the outcome of the battle of Leuktra (ἀπεστερήθησαν μὲν τῆς ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήσι δυναστείας). It appears again in Isocrates’ argumentation in *Panathenaicus*. But there is a difference in the way it is employed in these three passages, which can be seen most clearly in the use of the terms ἀρχῆς, δυναστείας, and ἀπάντων that are associated with this verb respectively: in the first two cases, the Spartans lost their supremacy, in the third case, they lost everything they had. The word ἅπαν does not only add dramatic intensity to the consequences the Spartans suffered in the aftermath of Leuktra, but is also used in a passage whose main purpose is to compare Athens and Sparta and celebrate Athenian history and culture. Even more so, it reflects the historical reality of how Sparta could no longer play a significant role in Greece at the time of the speech’s composition (342-339) due to Philip’s political ascendancy – however, Isocrates remains silent about Macedonian hegemony in this speech.

Conclusions

Pivotal events in the balance of power in interstate Greek relations are part of a particular argumentation that exploits the phenomenon of change according to historical context and the rhetorical purposes of the speakers or authors who refer to these moments. These events are presented in different ways not only by different authors (historians, orators, or other kinds of speakers — ambassadors, allies) but also within their own work, as the case of Isocrates amply illustrates. Inevitably, we rely on these narratives to reconstruct the history of the period, but this reconstruction considers the context in which these episodes are invoked. During this process, the study of the vocabulary that the ancients used may help us to understand the multiple ways through which they perceived and presented every change.

More precisely, the words that describe change in the rise and fall of Athens and Sparta, its extent, nature, and impact may appear either with a neutral meaning or with a positive or negative connotation.

¹⁰⁹ Isoc. 12.56-58 (*Panathenaicus*).

¹¹⁰ On how Isocrates uses Sparta to show Athenian pre-eminence, Atack, 2018: 157-184.

¹¹¹ Roth, 2003: 117, with n. 208.

¹¹² On this negative description of the Spartan power by Isocrates, Roth, 2003: 117-118.

For example, in the works of Isocrates, where particular attention is paid to the successive changes of power, the word μεταβολή is used five times, as a general term to signify change neutrally. The frequency, impact, and repercussions of these changes are denoted by the adjectives πολὺς, τοσούτος (repeated twice), μέγας, and τηλικούτος in connection with μεταβολή, or by the use of the adverb πάλιν ('again') – also attested in Demosthenes' speech. This demonstrates how inevitable and repetitive the phenomenon of the succession of hegemonies may be. The complete transformation may be shown as well through the verb ἀναστρέφω (reverse) or by the expression τῆς τύχης μεταπεσούσης meaning the reversal of fortune.

The rest of the vocabulary is invested with a particular meaning that describes mostly the fall of a power and, consequently, the rise of another. Although the succession of hegemonies is a common topic in the aforementioned authors, the range of evidence and disparities therein are indicative, on the one hand, of the different ways through which one can depict change, in linguistic terms, and, on the other hand, of an author's intentions when emphasising on the event he refers, with certain verbs creating a particularly strong effect. To this end, there are verbs that show the misfortune or the beginning of the decline, such as κινῶ (move; disturb) and σαλεύω (shake); verbs that depict the actual downfall, such as ἀφαιρῶ (take away; remove), ἐκβάλλω (remove), ἐκπίπτω (fall), λύω (put an end), and παύω (to put an end); finally, other verbs emphasise how complete this downfall was, such as ἀναιρῶ (destroy), ἀποστερῶ (deprive), διαφθείρω (destroy), καταλύω (ruin), καταπαύω (destroy). Of course, these verbs are colored by adverbs or adverbial phrases that convey the swiftness of a change (ταχέως, ταχύν, ῥαδίως, πολὺ θᾶττον, ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ, οὐ πολὺς χρόνος) or indicate the duration of the situation preceding the forthcoming change (συνεχῶς and μόλις). In the texts discussed above, change is often viewed either as a result of a war, a misfortune, a state of confusion, or as the cause for all these. Finally, in the face of a new situation, reactions may differ, varying from feelings of joy and relief, if the individuals in question benefited from the change, to expressions of sadness and despair about their future, if they belonged to the defeated party.

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Abstract (Greek) | Περίληψη

Ο όρος αλλαγή-μεταβολή αποτελεί βασικό σημείο αναφοράς ενός ερευνητή των κλασικών σπουδών στο πλαίσιο της μελέτης και έρευνας του παρελθόντος. Ιδιαίτερα δε τα τελευταία χρόνια, έχει ανανεωθεί το ενδιαφέρον των ερευνητών γύρω από τη διερεύνηση του όρου τόσο ως προς το εννοιολογικό του φορτίο όσο και ως προς τις ποικίλες εκφάνσεις του. Μεταξύ αυτών των εκφάνσεων, η σύγχρονη έρευνα έχει εξετάσει διεξοδικά τον ανταγωνισμό Αθήνας-Σπάρτης και την εναλλαγή της αθηναϊκής και σπαρτιατικής ηγεμονίας στον ελληνικό κόσμο της κλασικής εποχής. Ωστόσο, οι μελέτες αυτές επικεντρώνονται στις επιπτώσεις (πολιτικές, κοινωνικές, οικονομικές) του φαινομένου και όχι στην εξέταση του λεξιλογίου που αποτυπώνει την άνοδο και παρακμή της δύναμης των δύο πόλεων.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, το παρόν άρθρο παρουσιάζει τις απόψεις ιστορικών και ρητόρων της κλασικής εποχής γύρω από την ακμή και πτώση των ηγεμονιών της Αθήνας και της Σπάρτης, μέσα από την αναζήτηση και εξέταση των όρων εκείνων που χρησιμοποιούσαν οι Αρχαίοι για να εκφράσουν την εν λόγω αλλαγή, λαμβάνοντας ταυτόχρονα υπόψη τον αθηνοκεντρικό χαρακτήρα των πηγών. Λόγω των διαθέσιμων μαρτυριών, οι περισσότερες πληροφορίες προέρχονται από τον Θουκυδίδη και, κυρίως, από τον Ισοκράτη, δύο συγγραφείς οι οποίοι ενδιαφέρθηκαν ιδιαίτερα για τις συνεχείς μεταβολές που σημειώνονταν στην άσκηση ηγεμονικής πολιτικής στον ελληνικό χώρο. Επιπροσθέτως, οι γνώσεις μας συμπληρώνονται από τις μαρτυρίες του Ηροδότου, του Ξενοφώντα, του Έφορου και του Δημοσθένη. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, το άρθρο εντοπίζει, αφενός, τα γεγονότα εκείνα τα οποία θεωρήθηκαν από τους προαναφερθέντες συγγραφείς σημεία τομής για την άνοδο και πτώση της Αθήνας και της Σπάρτης· σε αυτά συγκαταλέγονται οι Μηδικοί πόλεμοι και ο Πελοποννησιακός πόλεμος, καθώς και οι ναυμαχίες της Κνίδου, της Νάξου και η μάχη των Λεύκτρων του 4ου αιώνα. Αφετέρου, η εργασία εξετάζει το λεξιλόγιο που χρησιμοποιείται για να περιγραφεί ο άνωθεν μετασχηματισμός των δύο πόλεων και υπογραμμίζει τους διαφορετικούς τρόπους αναπαράστασης αυτής της αλλαγής στις αρχαίες πηγές. Η εύρεση των σχετικών όρων αποτελεί τη βάση για να εξεταστεί το εύρος (στιγμιαία αλλαγή ή με διάρκεια) και η συχνότητα της αλλαγής, το είδος της (εξέλιξη, μετάβαση από μια παλαιότερη κατάσταση σε μία νέα, ανατροπή ή εξαφάνιση της καθεστηκυίας τάξης, ανανέωση), καθώς και ο τρόπος αντιμετώπισής της από τους Αρχαίους (θετική ή αρνητική).

Από τη μελέτη διαφαίνεται, πρώτον, ότι το φαινόμενο της διαδοχής διαφορετικών ηγεμονιών στον ελληνικό κόσμο της κλασικής εποχής είναι ένα κοινός τόπος, ο οποίος απαντάται άλλοτε σε μεγαλύτερο και άλλοτε σε μικρότερο βαθμό στους παραπάνω συγγραφείς. Δεύτερον, φαίνεται ότι τα παραπάνω γεγονότα αποτελούν κομβικούς σταθμούς τόσο στην πορεία εξέλιξης των δύο πόλεων όσο και στον συσχετισμό δυνάμεων στον ελληνικό κόσμο. Ωστόσο, τα εν λόγω γεγονότα αποτελούν ταυτόχρονα και μέρος της επιχειρηματολογίας που αναπτύσσουν οι ομιλητές/συγγραφείς που αναφέρονται σε αυτά. Η επιχειρηματολογία αυτή εντάσσεται κάθε φορά μέσα σε ένα διαφορετικό ιστορικό πλαίσιο και εξυπηρετεί συγκεκριμένους ρητορικούς στόχους. Μάλιστα, είναι χαρακτηριστικό ότι οι ιστορικές αυτές στιγμές παρουσιάζονται με διαφορετικό τρόπο όχι μόνο από διαφορετικούς μεταξύ τους συγγραφείς, αλλά και από τον ίδιο έναν συγγραφέα, όπως ξεκάθαρα φαίνεται μέσα από τα έργα του Ισοκράτη. Αναπόφευκτα, βασιζόμαστε σε αυτές τις αφηγήσεις για να ανασυνθέσουμε την ιστορία της περιόδου, αλλά αυτή η ανασύνθεση λαμβάνει υπόψη της το αντίστοιχο ιστορικό/ρητορικό πλαίσιο μέσα στο οποίο προβάλλονται τα γεγονότα. Για τον λόγο αυτόν, η μελέτη του λεξιλογίου που περιγράφει την άνοδο και την παρακμή των ηγεμονιών της Αθήνας και της Σπάρτης είναι σημαντική, καθώς επιτρέπει να αντιληφθούμε και να κατανοήσουμε τους πολλαπλούς τρόπους με τους οποίους οι Αρχαίοι παρουσίαζαν κάθε αλλαγή.

Συγκεκριμένα, οι όροι που περιγράφουν τη μεταβολή στην ισορροπία δυνάμεων στον ελληνικό χώρο είτε έχουν ουδέτερη σημασία (βλ. π.χ. τους όρους μεταβολή, το ρήμα «ἀναστρέφω» ή την έκφραση «τῆς τύχης μεταπεσούσης») είτε εμφανίζονται με θετική ή αρνητική χροιά. Στην τελευταία αυτή περίπτωση, περιγράφουν κυρίως την παρακμή μιας δύναμης και τη συνακόλουθη άνοδο της αντιπάλου της· ο πόλεμος, μια ατυχία ή μια κατάσταση αναταραχής θεωρούνται συχνά είτε η αιτία είτε το αποτέλεσμα της εκάστοτε μεταβολής. Η παρουσίαση της ίδιας αλλαγής με διαφορετικό τρόπο, από τη μία μεριά, εξηγείται γλωσσικά –λόγω των ποικίλων λειτουργικών εκφάνσεων της γλώσσας– και, από την άλλη, εξαρτάται από τις προθέσεις του συγγραφέα όταν επιδιώκει να δώσει έμφαση σε ένα συγκεκριμένο γεγονός. Για τον σκοπό αυτό, χρησιμοποιούνται όροι που άλλοτε δείχνουν την απαρχή της παρακμής, άλλοτε απεικονίζουν την πτώση και άλλοτε τονίζουν τον αντίκτυπό της. Επίσης, τον ίδιο σκοπό εξυπηρετούν και λέξεις ή εκφράσεις που αποτυπώνουν χρονικά την ταχύτητα με την οποία διενεργείται η αλλαγή ή τη διάρκεια της προηγηθείσας της μεταβολής κατάστασης. Και, τέλος, σε αυτό συμβάλλουν και τα λεκτικά σύνολα που εκφράζουν τις αντιδράσεις των Αρχαίων απέναντι στη νέα διαμορφωθείσα κατάσταση και οι οποίες ήταν είτε συναισθήματα χαράς και ανακούφισης, εάν τα υποκείμενα επωφεληθήκαν από την αλλαγή, είτε εκφράσεις λύπης και απόγνωσης για το μέλλον τους, εάν ανήκαν στους ηττημένους.

