

## THUCYDIDES 1. 2. 6

καὶ παράδειγμα τόδε τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἐλάχιστόν ἐστι διὰ τὰς μετοικίας ἐς τὰ ἄλλα μὴ ὁμοίως αὐξηθῆναι· ἐκ γὰρ τῆς ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος οἱ πολέμῳ ἢ στάσει ἐκπίπτοντες παρ' Ἀθηναίους οἱ δυνατώτατοι ὡς βέβαιον ὄν ἀνεχώρουν, καὶ πολῖται γιγνόμενοι εὐθύς ἀπὸ παλαιοῦ μείζω ἔτι ἐποίησαν πλήθει ἀνθρώπων τὴν πόλιν, ὥστε καὶ ἐς Ἰωνίαν ὕστερον ὡς οὐχ ἱκανῆς οὔσης τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἀποικίας ἐξέπεμψαν.

THIS is one of the most controversial passages in Thucydides' Archaeological Introduction, and perhaps the least happily phrased. Scholiasts explain ἐς τὰ ἄλλα as meaning (a) Athens in other respects, (b) Greece other than Athens. Jowett,<sup>1</sup> whose suggestions have not on the whole been bettered by later commentators, suggests three main possibilities of interpretation:

- (1) 'Greece, as to its other parts, progressed more slowly than Athens.' Here, the subject must be τὴν Ἑλλάδα, and μὴ ὁμοίως must mean 'less'.
- (2) If Attica is the subject, we may take the sentence to mean 'Attica increased in population more than in other respects'; in this case, μὴ ὁμοίως means 'more', and ἐς τὰ ἄλλα means 'in comparison to other respects'. The sense is the same if we take it as meaning 'Attica in other respects grew less [than in population]'.
- (3) 'Attica increased *more* than other parts of Greece.' If we accept the terms of the comparison, but take μὴ ὁμοίως as meaning *less* instead of *more*, the resultant argument would, as Gomme suggests,<sup>2</sup> fit in with the recognized fact that in spite of, or because of, the frequent changes of population in Thessaly, Boeotia, and the Peloponnese, the history of Mycenaean Athens was less spectacular than that of wealthier states.

There are, of course, other possible combinations, and there are doubts about the meanings of τόδε and of τοῦ λόγου; and, since the scholiasts themselves found the phrase ambiguous, our difficulty in understanding it is not simply due to our ignorance of Greek. But I would suggest that if we study the whole passage as a piece of logic, rather than as a linguistic difficulty, it will seem relatively clear. What, in fact, is Thucydides' argument?

2. 3: 'Good land was most subject to *stasis* and invasion.'

Thucydides is thinking about the bloodstained epics of Thebes, Orchomenus, Mycenae, and Argos, followed so closely by the Boeotian and Dorian invasions; his memory is probably also influenced by contemporary *stasis* in Thessaly, Boeotia, and Argos, which had invited intervention from both Sparta and Athens.

2. 5: 'We can see this from an *argumentum e contrario*: Attica, where the soil is poor, had no *stasis*, and was never effectively invaded.'

He seems to forget about the Pallantids; but he might have added, as he has implied in 2. 3, that the same could be said of Arcadia.

<sup>1</sup> Jowett, *Thucydides Translated into English*, ii. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> Gomme, *Commentary on Thucydides*, i. 94.

2. 6: 'The argument [i.e. the argument of 2. 3, 'Good land means trouble'] is supported by the fact that not even large-scale immigration, where there was no agriculture to support it, could make Athens a first-class power; refugees and immigrants, generously enfranchised, made Athens too populous for her own economy to support [no trade, no Empire; the immigrants themselves, οἱ δυνατώτατοι, were wealthy people who presumably paid for their own upkeep]; hence the surplus population had to hive off to Ionia.' [They had, presumably, ships enough to cross the Aegean, but not enough to form a thalassocracy.]

This argument would be clear enough to Thucydides, and probably to his contemporaries; they knew the accepted versions of Dark Age history, and that Athens had been traditionally hospitable to immigrants—a tradition partly upheld, and partly betrayed, by the Periclean democracy. One near-contemporary parallel may be noted; Miltiades, an Athenian *émigré* with Thracian connections, had come to Athens as a refugee from Scythian—or Persian?—invasion, and both he and his half-Thracian son Cimon had exerted great influence and led colonizing expeditions.<sup>1</sup>

Even the grammar does not seem difficult until we begin to analyse it. Then the familiar difficulties appear. We may as well put them in order.

- (i) What does τόδε mean?
- (ii) What is the λόγος that needs proving?
- (iii) What are the μετοικίαι?
- (iv) What does ἐς τὰ ἄλλα mean?
- (v) Does μὴ ὁμοίως mean more, or less?
- (vi) What is the subject of ἀνέστηναι?

Let us answer ὕστερον πρότερον 'Ομηρικῶς.

(vi) The subject should be something already mentioned, preferably a political or geographical entity. In order of proximity, possible subjects are Attica, Peloponnesian states, Boeotia, Thessaly, and good land in general.<sup>2</sup> Greece as a possible subject has not been mentioned since the beginning of the chapter, where it is admitted to be an anachronistic geographical term.<sup>3</sup> It is mentioned again in the sentence immediately following our passage, but even Thucydides can hardly expect a reader to supply a subject from a sentence he has not yet read, unless the word in question has been so strongly implied that it is already in the reader's mind. Hence, of the two possible subjects, Attica is more likely than Greece.

(v) The natural meaning of μὴ ὁμοίως is 'less'. Forbes gives a few examples of οὐκ ἴσος or οὐχ ὅσος meaning 'more';<sup>4</sup> but out of twenty-one fairly clear uses

<sup>1</sup> Hdt. 6. 40. 140; Thuc. 1. 98. 2, cf. Plut. *Cimon* 8. As a descendant of Miltiades, Thucydides would have this analogy clearly in his mind. Similarly his description (1. 4. 1) of Minos and the Cretan thalassocracy seems to me to have been coloured by his memories of Cimon and the early Delian League.

<sup>2</sup> Attica, 2. 5; Peloponnese, Boeotia, τῆς γῆς ἡ ἀρίστη, 3.

<sup>3</sup> ἡ νῦν Ἑλλάς καλουμένη, 2. 1; the reason

for this qualification is explained more fully below, 3. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Forbes, *Thucydides I*, p. 150, referring to 1. 51. 1 immediately followed by ἀλλὰ πλείους; 1. 132. 2, where μὴ ἴσος clearly implies a desire to rise above the level of the ὅμοιοι; cf. 99. 2, οὔτε ξυνεστράτευον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου, which clearly means not that the Athenians shirked the burdens of Empire, but that Athenians and allies were no longer comrades on an equal footing. Forbes also

of *ὁμοιος* or *ὁμοίως* with a negative, I can find only three passages in which Thucydides clearly means 'more', and in those cases, as in the parallel instances cited by Forbes, Thucydides means clearly that an expected state of equality is denied, in a context which makes it perfectly clear which of the two contrasted elements is the greater. In the absence of these two conditions, *οὐχ ὁμοιος* means 'less'; and this usage has an overwhelming majority.<sup>1</sup> In the present instance, commentators, both ancient and modern, have been misled by the word *μείζω*, and by the natural assumption that the sending out of colonies is an appropriate action for a first-class power; but Thucydides sees these emigrations as a safety-valve, not as an imperialist adventure, and he qualifies *μείζω* by *πλήθει ἀνθρώπων*; Athens is greater in population, but in other respects her increase is 'not proportionate'.

(iv) If Attica is the subject of *αὐξηθῆναι* and *μὴ ὁμοίως* means 'less', then *ἐς τὰ ἄλλα* might mean either 'compared to the rest of Greece' or, as I have just rendered it, 'in other respects'. If one objects that for the latter sense *κατὰ τὰ ἄλλα*, *ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις*, or a plain *τὰ ἄλλα* might be more natural, we can reply that in two other passages within two pages Thucydides uses *ἐς τὰ ἄλλα* in precisely this sense,<sup>2</sup> and I can find no parallel for the use of *ἐς* to mean 'compared to', or indeed of *τὰ ἄλλα* to mean 'other States'. Gomme wonders what the 'other respects' could be, besides population, since Athens did not in fact achieve much power and wealth in this period;<sup>3</sup> but if, unlike Gomme, we take *μὴ ὁμοίως* as 'less', his question is easily answered. *τὰ ἄλλα* are the precise respects in which, as he says, Mycenaean Attica did not 'increase', though the *μετοικίαι* might have been expected to make her do so. The use of *μὴ* might make us suspect that he really means that the *μετοικία* prevented a possible increase; but in fact *μὴ* is the regular negative in an infinitive clause, unless the clause is an indirect statement, and, unless we take this clause as directly dependent on *τοῦ λόγου*, it is a plain infinitive clause governing *ἔστι*, and *παράδειγμα* is its predicate.

(iii) The rare word *μετοικία* appears in only two other fifth-century texts, and in both cases it means an act, or a period, of co-residence, once of the Eumenides residing in Athens, and once, grimly, of Antigone residing, for a short time, with her kinsfolk in the land of the living.<sup>4</sup> In the fourth century, it denotes the legal status of a metic.<sup>5</sup> Some commentators have emended it to *μετοικήσεις* or *μετοικίσεις*,<sup>6</sup> so as to make it refer directly to the population

cites 1. 143. 3, *οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου μεγάλα*, which is immediately explained by the paradox *οὐκέτι ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου ἔσται Πελοποννήσου τε μέρος τμηθῆναι καὶ τὴν Ἀττικὴν πᾶσαν*.

<sup>1</sup> 1. 35. 5, 'more', as the context makes clear; 120. 5, 'not the same thing', implying 'easier said than done'; 7. 28. 4, *οὐχ ὁμοίως καὶ πρὶν*, *ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μείζους*. Contrast 1. 73. 5; 2. 45. 1 (not a perfect analogy), 69. 2; 4. 29. 3, 34. 1, 60. 2, 106. 1; 5. 8. 4, 11. 1; 6. 64. 1; 7. 36. 3, 42. 3, 44. 5, 50. 3, 78. 6; 8. 35. 4, 50. 3; in all of which the meaning, whether explained or not, is clearly 'less'.

<sup>2</sup> 1. 3, *οὔτε κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους οὔτε ἐς τὰ ἄλλα*, 6. 4, *ἐς τὰ ἄλλα . . . ἰσοδίατοι μάλιστα κατέστησαν*; cf. 2. 39. 4, where *ἐν ἄλλοις* describes a static condition, not a dynamic

development.

<sup>3</sup> Gomme, loc. cit.: 'To what are the "other respects" related? All we are told is that Athens was poor but secure . . .'

<sup>4</sup> Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1017; Sophocles, *Antigone* 890.

<sup>5</sup> [Lysias], 6. 49; Plato, *Laws* 850 c.

<sup>6</sup> *μετοικήσεις*, F. W. Ullrich; *μετοικίσεις*, Hommel, *RE* xv. 1419. The G reading *ἀποικίας* makes good sense ('Athens did not become a great power; the reason was, that her population kept hiving off, instead of attacking the neighbours') but poor logic (since it overlooks the reason already given and emphasized: that the soil was too poor to support a first-class Mycenaean monarchy, based on the landed interest).

shifts of 2. 3; but it needs no emendation if we take it to mean simply the presence in Athens of several immigrant groups—just as, in the next clause, the word ἀποικίαι is used to denote the departure of emigrant groups, or the departing groups themselves.

(ii) The λόγος is either, as Jowett held, 'my general argument', or, perhaps more probably, 'the *argumentum e contrario* which I have just advanced'; not, as Gomme suggests in explanation of Ullrich's emendation, 'the point which I am going to define, or recapitulate, in my next clause'. That is, it should mean either 'the general argument', that good soil means many invasions, or 'the particular instance', that the poor soil of Attica invited no invaders and provoked no *stasis*. If Thucydides had meant to refer to the clause which follows, he would have used the word ὅτι, or at least introduced an article to attach the infinitive clause to the λόγος.

(i) τόδε on the other hand looks forward, to the failure of Athens to become a first-class Mycenaean power; it is defined by the substantival clause δὴ . . . αὐξηθῆναι. A γάρ-clause can define a τόδε, as in 3. 1 immediately below, but this γάρ-clause simply gives the reasons for the μετοικίαι, and μὴ αὐξηθῆναι is explained by the ὥστε-clause.

Paraphrased, then, and with the concepts kept in Thucydides' order, Thucydides' argument is this:

'The best soil had the most frequent population transfers (witness the lurid sagas of Thessaly, Thebes, the Pelopids, and the Heraclids), because good soil invited both *stasis* and invasion. Conversely, Attica had poor soil, no *stasis*, and no population changes—there was indeed considerable immigration by refugees, but this proves my point; instead of becoming a pan-Hellenic power like Oedipus' Thebes or Agamemnon's Mycenae, Attica could not support its surplus population, and had to export it to the colonies.'

Whether it is true that poor soil provokes no *stasis* is another question, and perhaps the history of sixth- and fifth-century Megara might suggest that it is not; but Thucydides has expressly stated that wealth produces *stasis*, perhaps as a rationalization of contemporary religious beliefs about wealth and Nemesis. It might also be observed that the *stasis* which Thucydides has been considering in the Archaeological Introduction is not the *stasis* of the social conflicts in Corcyra and elsewhere, described so luridly in the famous passages in Book 3, but the *stasis* of dynastic rivalries in the Heroic Age, which led to the collapse of Mycenaean civilization and to the Boeotian and Dorian invasions; just as, in the half-century which preceded his own birth, the rivalries between aristocratic dynasties in Athens had led, first to demagogic vote-catching and electoral empire-building, and then to the collapse of the aristocratic establishment itself.