

SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY IN THUCYDIDES

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Sicily and southern Italy lay beyond the horizons of Greek historians. Thucydides was only interested in this region when the Athenians were there—just three times during the Peloponnesian War. In this chapter, however, I shall not be concerned with the aims of the Athenians or with Thucydides' assessment of their intentions or prospects of success, so much as with the information his work gives us about the history of the western Greeks and their cities. At the beginning of Book VI, Thucydides puts the following characterization into the mouth of Alcibiades:

As to the voyage to Sicily, do not change your minds on the ground that you are going against a formidable power. For it is only with a mixed rabble that the cities there are populous, and changes and accessions in the body of their citizens are easy . . . And it is not likely that a rabble of this kind would either listen to counsel with one mind or turn to action with a common purpose; but quickly, if anything were said to please them, they would each for himself come over to our side, especially if they are in a state of revolution as we hear . . . Such, then is the situation in Sicily, to judge from what I learn by report, and it is likely to be still more easy to deal with—for we shall have many barbarians, who from hatred of the Syracusans will join us in attacking them; and matters here will be no actual hindrance, if you are rightly advised (6.17.2–6).¹

Thucydides himself shares this assessment, as he makes clear in his characterization of Pericles and in his documentation of the mistakes of his successors:

And from this, since it happened in a great and imperial state, there resulted many blunders, especially the Sicilian expedition, which was not so much an error of judgment, when we consider the enemy they went against, as of management (2.65.11).

¹ For quotations from the *History*, the translation of C.F. Smith (*The Loeb Classical Library*) is used throughout this paper.

The internal disunity in the Greek cities of Sicily, the tensions between them, and the hatred the Sicels felt for the Syracusans were facts that, at the end of the fifth century, Athenian politicians could turn to their own advantage, and which historians could take as a basis for their expositions.

The conditions Alcibiades describes were a legacy from the time of the first tyranny in Sicily and southern Italy and the years following its overthrow. However, the roots of the situation can be traced to the arrival of Greek colonists in the West, their expansion along the coasts and into the interior, and their clashes with the indigenous tribes. This is where Thucydides' account starts, and it is here that we too must begin.

At the beginning of Book VI, Thucydides speaks of the various inhabitants of Sicily and the colonization of the island by Greeks of various origins. There has been a great deal of discussion about the source of this report,² but it is generally acknowledged that Thucydides' foundation dates are reliable.³ The Sicanians (6.2.2) are mentioned only once during the course of the war (6.62.3); the territory of the Elymians (3) is virtually identical with the city of Egesta and the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Eryx (6.46.3). The Sicels (4f.) were to play a very important role in the war. The information about the Phoenicians and their settlements all around Sicily (6) is surely erroneous: they arrived on the island at about the same time as the Greeks and settled only in the northwest. In 6.3–5 there follows a description of the Greek colonization of Sicily; Thucydides does not confine himself to listing the first foundations but also speaks of later ones and of the fates of individual cities; these in many cases were connected with the tyrants, who appeared in several cities at the end of the archaic period.⁴

The first of these tyrants to be mentioned is Hippocrates of Gela, who conquered the Chalcidian colonies on the eastern coast of Sicily, Leontinoi, Catane, Naxos, Kallipolis, and Zankle, and appointed subtyrants in at least some of these cities.⁵ Shortly before the con-

² Cf. Dover (1953), who convincingly suggests Antiochus of Syracuse. On the "Sicilian Archaeology" and its function within the work, cf. Tsakmakis (1995a) 159–75.

³ Cf. Coldstream (1977) 233ff.; Graham (1982) 83ff.

⁴ On the tyrants of the Western Greeks, cf. also 1.14.2; 1.18.1, and the outline of Asheri (1988b) 757ff.; (1992) 147ff.

⁵ Hdt. 7.154.1f. mentions only Leontinoi, Naxos, Kallipolis, and Zankle, but given its location Catane must have been subjugated too.

quest of Zankle, the Zankleans had invited the Ionians to take part in the foundation of a colony on the northern coast of Sicily. After the defeat at Lade the Samian aristocrats accepted this invitation and sailed to the west (Hdt. 6.22). In the meantime Hippocrates captured Zankle and installed a certain Skythes there, and in 494 Anaxilas established himself as tyrant of Rhegion. When the Samians arrived there, he induced them to attack Zankle while Skythes and the Zankleans were away laying siege to a Sicel town. Hippocrates was forced to hand over Zankle to the Samians but was able to make slaves of the Zankleans, who were of no further use to him (Hdt. 6.23; Th. 6.4.5). Not long afterward he marched against Syracuse and won a battle at the river Heloros; an agreement was concluded whereby the Syracusans ceded the territory of Camarina to him and their prisoners were returned (Hdt. 7.154.3).

Hippocrates was the first Sicilian to achieve hegemony over large parts of the island, and he was very soon emulated. Around the year 490, Anaxilas conquered Zankle, expelled the Samians, colonized the city with a very mixed population, and renamed it Messene, which later became Messina.⁶ In Gela meanwhile, Hippocrates had died and the Deinomenid Gelon had seized power (Hdt. 7.155.1). Soon afterward he contacted Theron, who had set up a tyranny in neighboring Akragas, and together the rulers strove to expand their power. Sometime before 480 Theron captured Himera, a colony jointly founded by the Zankleans and Syracusans (Th. 6.5.1), and drove out the tyrant Terillos (Hdt. 7.165), while Gelon set about extending the territory in the east of Sicily, which he had taken over from Hippocrates. In around 485 he seized Syracuse and made it his new capital, moving half the population of Gela and all of the inhabitants of Camarina to the city. He also transferred the landowning oligarchs of Megara Hyblaea to Syracuse, thus incorporating the city's territory into his own, and sold the common people into slavery (Hdt. 7.156; Th. 6.5.3; 6.94.1). The population of Syracuse was thus drastically increased and of extremely mixed descent; in addition Gelon eventually enfranchised his mercenaries, who allegedly numbered ten thousand (D.S. 11.72.3).

Gelon died in 478, after which the tyrannies of the island went into decline. When the Himeraeans began to feel oppressed and

⁶ Th. 6.4.6; Paus. 4.23.5ff.; differently Hdt. 7.164.1; on the evidence of the coins, cf. E.S.G. Robinson (1946).

asked Gelon's successor Hieron for help, the tyrant betrayed them and handed them over to Theron for revenge. The slaughter Theron brought about at Himera made it necessary for the depleted population to be supplemented by the settling of Dorians, among others (D.S. 11.48.6ff.; 11.49.3f.). There were different motives behind Hieron's resettlement policy: being only the guardian of Gelon's son (who was still a minor), and feeling that his rule in Syracuse was unstable, he needed a place of refuge. In or around 485 he transferred the inhabitants of Naxos and Catane to Leontinoi and integrated them into the population of the city. The suppression of the Ionian element on the island, which had started with Hippocrates' enslavement of the Zankleans, was now nearly complete: with the exception of a residual population in Himera and Messana, Ionians were only to be found in Leontinoi. Naxos remained uninhabited, while the territory of Catane was enlarged with land taken from the Sicels. Ten thousand settlers, half of them summoned from the Peloponnese, half of them transferred from Syracuse, were given domicile and land in the new foundation, which was named Aetna (D.S. 11.49.1f.).

The final years of the tyrannies and subsequent decades are not so thoroughly documented by Thucydides: he writes only of the refoundation of Camarina by the Geloans (6.5.3). However, Diodorus supplements this information, making it possible to comprehend the course of events to some extent. Furthermore, P.Oxy. 665 (= *FGrHist* 577 F 1) contains part of an index of a Sicilian history; the details given in this text concern the time immediately following the end of the tyranny and provide a large amount of information not found in Diodorus. The fragment indicates that additional fighting occurred, not only between Greek cities, but also against mercenaries, and that Greek cities were active in providing assistance for one another. To judge from this fragment, there must have been more instability throughout Sicily after the end of the tyranny than the text of Diodorus would lead us to believe—although even his report hardly gives the impression of a peaceful period.

Theron's death and the resulting downfall of the Akragantine tyranny also brought about the independence of Himera, albeit without any change in the composition of its population.⁷ Five years later

⁷ D.S. 11.53.1–5; on the “Fall of the Tyrannies” generally, cf. Asheri (1992) 154ff.

the sons of Anaxilas became rulers of Rhegion and Messana, and, in Syracuse, Thrasybulos succeeded his brother Hieron (D.S. 11.66). After a rule of just eleven months, he was expelled and found refuge in Locroi, which had been bound to the Deinomenids since Hieron's time (D.S. 11.67f.). With the overthrow of the Deinomenids, the empire created by Hippocrates, Gelon and Hieron in the east of the island disintegrated: Gela and Leontinoi became independent and the ruler of Aetna was isolated. At the same time, the Geloans who had been moved to Syracuse or their descendants must have returned to their city; only Megara was not restored. However, this did not spell peace in Syracuse: clashes erupted between citizens and mercenaries, the old town was occupied then besieged by the Syracusans and all supplies were cut off. Consequently the mercenaries' connections with Aetna were severed. The fighting seems to have lasted for more than a year, until the mercenaries were overcome; their eventual fate is unknown (D.S. 11.72f.; 11.76,1f.). Under the leadership of Duketios, the Sicels, whom Hieron had deprived of part of their territory to found Aetna, rose against this last stronghold of the tyranny, joined by the Syracusans. The Aetnaeans were forced to flee from their city but found a new home on the slopes of Mt. Aetna at Inessa, which was renamed Aetna. Catane and Naxos were restored, and the old Chalcidian inhabitants returned from Leontinoi (D.S. 11.76.3). At about the same time, the sons of Anaxilas were expelled, the political union between Rhegion and Messana was dissolved, and the city of Camarina was resettled by the Geloans (D.S. 11.76.5). This became a new center of conflict, since the Syracusans were laying claim to their colony Camarina. There were also apparently tensions in Messana—or at least a revival of the Ionian population; the old city name of Zankle reappeared on coins for a time.

Forty years of tyranny had had a severe impact on the Greek cities of Sicily, which had to a large extent regained their independence or been restored. The annulment and foundation of cities and the movement of citizens had resulted in the creation of heterogeneous populations and a climate of rootlessness. Another legacy of the tyranny was the strain that various border problems and territorial claims put upon relations between cities. As far as its foreign policy was concerned, democratic Syracuse pursued the same aims as the Deinomenids. In common with their former tyrants, the Syracusans aspired to a hegemony directed at the eastern part of the island; in the second half of the fifth century these Syracusan

ambitions were to lead to numerous clashes, which the Athenians were eventually dragged into. But for the time being the Syracusans had other problems.

Among those who had returned to their homes after the end of the tyranny were the Sicels, who had served as mercenaries for the tyrants. The dissolution of the Deinomenid empire had also increased the number of independent Sicel communities. In Duketios the Sicels now found a leader who had already led the successful campaign against Aetna and won back the territory which Hieron had seized. Within a short time Duketios compelled numerous Sicel communities to recognize his rule and created a considerable empire in eastern Sicily, finally becoming strong enough even to attack Greek cities. His first victim was Aetna (Inessa), whose capture obliterated the last remnant of Deinomenid rule. But the Syracusans and Akragantines joined forces against him, and he surrendered to the Syracusans (D.S. 11.91f.). His empire disintegrated, the southern part soon falling into the hands of the Syracusans while the northern part regained its independence.⁸

The *entente* between Syracuse and Akragas lasted just a few years before war broke out, prompting other Greek cities to ally themselves with one or the other (D.S. 12.8). In a battle at the river Himeras, the Akragantine coalition was defeated, and the Akragantines had to sue for peace. The attempt to prevent Syracuse from regaining its power had failed. For the year 442/1 Diodorus characterizes the situation on the island as follows:

Affairs likewise in Sicily also were in a peaceful state, since . . . the Greek cities of Sicily had voluntarily conceded the hegemony to the Syracusans, and the Akragantines, after their defeat at the river Himeras, had come to terms with the Syracusans (12.26.3).

In the meantime the Syracusans had conquered nearly the whole of the territory of the southern Sicels and had once again completed their empire in the southeast of the island (and in the hinterland of the Chalcidian colonies). As a result of these successes they apparently increased their troops and imposed heavier tributes upon the Sicels, who were now subject to them. "This they were doing with the intention of subduing all Sicily little by little" (D.S. 12.30.1). One

⁸ On the "Sicel Movement" and its fate, cf. Asheri (1992) 161ff.

would have expected the first victims of this expansion to be Camarina on the one hand, and the Chalcidian cities in the north of Syracuse, Leontinoi, Catane, and Naxos, on the other. But it is not until 427 that we hear of a war between Syracuse and Leontinoi, the latter of which was supported by Camarina, Catane, Naxos, and Rhegion (Th. 3.86). Until this moment, none of the Greek cities which could have been regarded as targets of Syracusan expansion had lost its independence. It might be assumed that a great power must have foiled the Syracusan plans, yet such a power did not exist in Sicily or in southern Italy—only on the Greek mainland. And this brings us to Athens and the Athenian Empire.

From the 440s onward, Athenian diplomatic activity in the West was more intense than many scholars admit. In 444/3 the Athenians founded a colony upon the ruins of Sybaris and settled Greeks of different origin in this new city (Thurioi); Athens was to be regarded as its mother city (D.S. 12.10f.). However, the Athenians were not content merely to have founded a colony, but also found allies in the area who could protect it. In exchange for this, the Athenians guaranteed the allies protection from their neighbors. We know of two treaties with Rhegion and Leontinoi that were renewed in 443/2; they may have originally been concluded at the time of the foundation of Thurioi.⁹ Other treaties are furthermore alluded to by Thucydides. In 427 the allies of the Leontines, who had come to Athens, referred to an earlier alliance and to the fact that they were Ionians (3.86.3); this reference to an earlier alliance may mean that other Chalcidian cities had also concluded treaties with Athens. Similarly there may have been relations between Athens and the Sicels in the north of Sicily. In 414 King Archonides, who had been known in this area since the time of Duketios, is referred to as a friend of the Athenians (7.1.4). The following year the Athenians renewed an old alliance of friendship with Artas, chieftain of the Iapygians in southern Italy, and received soldiers and ships from Metapontion in accordance with the terms of their alliance (7.33.4f.). None of these relations can be dated with certainty, but it is possible that all of them were intended to protect Thurioi and contain the aggression of the Syracusans and their friends in southern Italy,

⁹ *ML* 63f.; cf. D.M. Lewis (1976) 225; in greater detail Wick (1976).

Taras and Locroi. Finally, the Corcyreans speak of Athenian interests in Italy and Sicily (1.36.2; cf. 1.44.3).

The Spartans also had friends in this area, and at the beginning of the Archidamian War they ordered them to build ships (2.7.2); but nothing seems to have happened, nor is there mention of any help being given to the Athenians' enemies.¹⁰ On the other hand, the Syracusans reverted to their former policy and began threatening their Chalcidian neighbours. The latter were allied with Rhegion and Camarina, while the Syracusans had alliances with the other Dorian cities of the island and with the Locrians (3.86.2). The enmity between Syracuse and Camarina was historical; in the past there had also been clashes between Rhegion and Locroi, which was supported by Syracuse. By 427 war had broken out, and the Chalcidian cities were under heavy pressure. They turned to the Athenians, who resolved to send twenty ships under the command of Laches and Charoiades,

professedly on the ground of their relationship, but really because they wished to prevent the importation of grain into the Peloponnesus, and also to make a preliminary test whether the affairs of Sicily could be brought under their own control (3.86.3f.).

The first may have been the official—and technically indisputable—reason, but the second is also comprehensible: as long as the Peloponnesians were importing grain from the west, they could remain in Attica and cause even more destruction. However, because it is doubtful that the Athenians would have had much hope of gaining a foothold in Sicily at that time, it will be as well to defer the problem of their motives and concentrate on the course of their actions. Unfortunately the sources are not much use: Thucydides' account is incoherent, short, and definitely incomplete; D.S. 12.53f. puts all the events into one year, providing no additional information (with the exception of a short section on Gorgias), and Just. 4.3.4–7 is no use at all. A papyrus fragment from an unknown historical work, possibly by Philistus, supplies some details not in Thucydides, but the date is controversial.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. Moxon (1980).

¹¹ *FGHist* 577 F 2; on the dating of these events to 426, cf. recently Bosworth (1992).

The Athenians established themselves at Rhegion (3.86.5); the same winter they and the Rhegians made an expedition against the islands of Aiolos, which were allied with the Syracusans (3.88). In the summer of 426 there was further activity, but unfortunately Thucydides omits mentioning all but the most important facts and even suppresses events that are reported in the papyrus, namely operations by the Athenian generals north and south of Syracuse, the death of Charoiades, and an attack on Locroi.

Some time later the Athenians captured Mylai, whereupon the Messanians also submitted (3.90). The Athenians now had a base for their operations in Sicily, but before moving on into the island they undertook another successful raid into the territory of the Locrians (3.99). In Sicily, time was on their side: many Sicels, who had been unwilling subjects and allies of the Syracusans, had revolted and gone over to the Athenians. In the winter of 426/5, together with these Sicels and their Greek allies, the Athenians attacked Inessa, which lay on the southwestern slopes of Aetna and whose acropolis was held by the Syracusans. The attack was in vain, however: the Athenians were forced back, and during their retreat the Syracusans managed to inflict a number of casualties upon the Athenian allies (3.103.1f.); thus the attempt to force an entry into the Syracusan sphere of control and remove the threat to the Chalcidian cities had failed. The location of Inessa clearly shows the size of the territory still under Syracusan control. After this setback, the Athenians' priorities were to protect their position on the straits and support the Rhegians. They undertook another successful raid into Locrian territory (3.103.3), made a landing in the territory of Himera, supported from the interior by the Sicels, and once more attacked the islands of Aiolos (3.115.1).

In the meantime the Sicilian allies had sent to Athens to request reinforcements. The Syracusans were in control of their territory and were now putting together a fleet against the few ships that kept them off the sea. The Athenians therefore manned forty ships, believing that this would hasten the end of the war in Sicily (3.115.3f.). One of the generals was sent ahead with a few ships and took over the command; at the end of the winter he also tried to distinguish himself against the Locrians but was defeated (3.115.5f.).

The enemies of the Athenians began to act before the reinforcements arrived. At the beginning of the summer of 425 the Syracusans and Locrians sailed to Messina and occupied the city, having been

invited by the inhabitants. It is known that Zankle/Messana had frequently changed hands and received new sections of population. Thucydides gives the following main reasons for the seizure of Messana: the Syracusans thought that it would be a good base from which to attack Sicily and feared that the Athenians might come back at some point in the future with a larger force. The Locrians' motive was their hostility toward the Rhegians, whom they hoped to attack from two sides. Rhegion itself was also in turmoil, and a number of Rhegians who were living in exile among the Locrians urged them to invade Rhegian territory and ravage the country. The Locrian land forces soon withdrew, but their ships continued to guard Messana; they even manned more ships, which were to be stationed at Messana and carry on the war from there (4.1).

The Athenian fleet had not yet arrived, and so the Syracusans and Locrians were once again able to take the initiative. The Syracusans and their allies collected their ships and continued the war from Messana, while the Locrians invaded the Rhegian territory. Their aim was to expel the Athenians from Rhegion and capture their second base on the strait, but this plan failed and the Locrians withdrew. However, the Syracusan ships did enjoy some success, and the Athenians' maritime superiority was lost. Even worse, the Athenians were nervous about the durability of their alliances. Upon learning that Camarina was going to be betrayed to the Syracusans by a pro-Syracusan faction, the Athenian fleet sailed there. The Messanians now had an opportunity to attack Naxos, but were beaten back with the help of the Sicels. Taking advantage of the fact that the Messanians had suffered heavy casualties, the Leontines and their allies attacked Messana, together with the Athenians, who had returned from Camarina. But the attack failed, costing the Leontines many lives. The Athenians withdrew to Rhegion, perhaps to await the arrival of their reinforcements, leaving the Sicilian Greeks to continue fighting among themselves. Since Thucydides confines himself to recounting the actions of the Athenians, nothing is known about these events (4.24ff.).

When the new ships eventually arrived at the end of the summer of 425, it was too late in the year for any activity. Although Thucydides maintains that the Athenians proceeded to carry on the war in conjunction with their allies on the island (4.48.6), he supplies no details about the end of 425, nor about 424. However, Timaeus says that the new Athenian general had to urge the cities to pursue their war

against the Syracusans, and that the Geloans, who were suffering as a result of the war, sent to Camarina begging for a truce.¹² The impression given is that the Athenian reinforcements did not see any action. According to Timaeus, the Geloans had suffered from the war, but Thucydides does not even mention this city, which had certainly sided with the Syracusans. This again demonstrates that his account of the fighting on the island was only partial. Representatives from the Greek cities of Sicily met in Gela and held a conference (4.58). They agreed to end the war on the basis of the *status quo*, except that the Camarinaeans were to have Morgantina on payment of a stated sum of money to the Syracusans (4.65.1). Apparently the Camarinaeans had had some success in the interior, and this was now acknowledged in the treaty.

Thucydides' account of the peace conference contains a lengthy speech by the Syracusan Hermocrates¹³ that clearly shows that the primary motive of the Greek cities for the conclusion of peace was not the fact that they were war-weary but rather the presence of a large Athenian fleet and the fear that the Athenians might set up a hegemony in Sicily rather than protecting their western allies. Hermocrates did not believe that the present fleet was capable of doing this, but feared that if the war went on and the Sicilian Greeks continued to undermine each other, the Athenians might at some point in the future come with a larger fleet and try to subjugate the whole of Sicily; hence his plea for Siceliot unity and against interference from abroad.

After the terms of the peace had been negotiated, the allies of the Athenians summoned the Athenian generals and told them that they proposed to make peace and that the treaty would also include them (4.65.2). It is clear that the Chalcidians longed for peace but at the same time were reluctant to relinquish their ties with the Athenians, whose help they might need in the future. At this moment, Chalcidian independence from Syracuse was achieved. When the Athenian generals assented to the allies' proposal, they proceeded to make the agreement and the Athenian fleet left Sicily.

In his speech, Hermocrates urges the delegates to reconcile not only the cities with one other, but also their people, alluding to the

¹² *FGrHist* 566 F 22 = Plb. 12.25k.3.

¹³ 4.59–64; on the personality of Hermocrates, cf. Westlake (1969).

same internal instability which Alcibiades would speak of nearly ten years later. Between 427 and 424 this instability worked to the disadvantage of the Athenians: Messana was lost at the instigation of people in the city, the Rhegians were torn apart by internal strife and struggled to ward off the Locrians. The Camarinacans were also unreliable allies. It is natural that the Athenian allies should have preferred peace to the continuation of a war in which they had to live with the fear of fifth columns in their cities.

The aims of the Athenians in Sicily have been the object of much speculation in the literature.¹⁴ The main Athenian military base was at Rhegion, and much of the fighting took place in the vicinity of this city. One of the first targets was Messana, which together with Rhegion controlled the strait. The repeated attacks on Locroi show that the Athenians were primarily concerned with securing their position in and around Rhegion, and that they took—or rather had to take—the interests of the Rhegians into account. The attacks on the islands of Aiolos are similarly understandable, since complete control of the strait was feasible only if they were subjugated. So control of the strait was the first aim of the Athenians, and this was accomplished after they had won over the Messanians; with Messana they also gained a base for their subsequent operations in Sicily. The Syracusans also recognized the importance of the sea passage and regarded Messana as a base for launching attacks. Consequently, the Syracusan and Locrian counteroffensive began in the strait.

In general, the strategy of the Athenians seems to have been rather improvisational; all—or at least most—of their operations were conducted with the objective of supporting their allies and damaging their enemies whenever the opportunity arose. Laches pursued this policy, and not without results, although his successor was less fortunate. Apparently the Athenian generals saw it as their role to foster opposition toward Syracuse and the other Dorian cities, and to prevent them from dominating their Siceliot and Italiot neighbours. There was always the possibility that cities in this region might assist the Peloponnesians, and therefore their opponents on both sides of the strait needed to be strengthened and the sphere of Syracusan control restricted. This at least is the impression created by Thucydides'

¹⁴ Cf. Westlake (1960); Kagan (1974) 181ff.; 188ff.; Holladay (1978); Wick (1979).

account. Against this background it is not difficult to understand the position of the Athenian generals with regard to the peace agreement—if they really considered it to be their task to guarantee the safety of the Athenian allies in Sicily and, as mentioned above, when reinforcements were sent, to bring the war in Sicily to an end sooner. With the peace treaty negotiated in Gela—albeit without the Athenians—both goals were achieved, and the Camarinacans even received some additional territory. The Athenian generals were able to return home from Sicily in the certain knowledge that they had done their job properly. Even if they had not believed this, it was in any case impossible for them to stay any longer or undertake any operations without a base on the island. Nevertheless, after their return to Athens the generals were accused “on the charge that when it had been in their power to subdue Sicily they had been bribed to withdraw from it” (4.65.3). Thucydides attributes this to the Athenians’ euphoria in the wake of the successes they had been enjoying and a conviction on their part that anything was achievable (4.65.4). But when he implies that the Athenians had already been cherishing similar hopes when they dispatched the first twenty ships (3.86.4), he is either speaking of the dreams of a handful of imperialists or has extrapolated the intentions of 427 from the accusations of 424. It was the misfortune of the generals who were sent to Sicily at the beginning of 425 and condemned in the summer of 424 that they had left the Athens of the *Acharnians* and returned to the Athens of the *Knights*.

In summer 422 the Athenians tried to intervene in Sicily once again. The peace concluded in 424 had not lasted long. After the agreement the Leontines had enrolled many new citizens, as was natural in the wake of the losses they had suffered in the attack on Messana. Now the *dēmos* wanted to redistribute the land. When the governing classes realized this, they called in the Syracusans and drove the *dēmos* out, then settling at Syracuse on the condition that they would have citizenship. Thus the Syracusans eventually acquired the territory of Leontinoi, typically enough not by aggression but as a result of internal strife in the city whose opposition to Syracuse had triggered off the first Athenian expedition. These events are indicative of the internal weakness of the Chalcidian cities, itself unquestionably a legacy of the repeated population shifts in the first half of the century. Some of the Leontines later became dissatisfied, left Syracuse and occupied Phocaeae, a part of Leontinoi, and also

Briccinniae, a stronghold in Leontine territory. Most of the members of the *dēmos* returned and carried on the war from their strongholds (5.4.1–4). On hearing of this, the Athenians sent Phaiax with two ships to Sicily to persuade their own allies—and the other Siceliots if possible—to make a joint attack on the Syracusans, who were continually extending their power, and to save the *dēmos* of Leontinoi. Apparently the Athenians were only able to send two ships, having mobilized the rest for the decisive encounter in Thrace. In Camarina and Akragas the Athenian embassy met with success, not surprisingly in view of the former relationship between these cities and Syracuse. But in Gela, which had sided with the Syracusans in the previous war, the Athenians failed; as a result of this, they did not go on to the other states, believing that they would be unable to persuade them. They returned through the territory of the Sicels to Catane and sailed home (5.4.5f.).

On his voyage to and from Sicily, Phaiax negotiated with certain cities in Italy and also met some Locrians who had moved to Messina and then been expelled (here, as in the case of Leontinoi, Thucydides records incidents which happened subsequent to the peace of Gela). In the summer of 425, the Syracusans and Locrians had taken Messina with the help of partisans in the city. Apparently the latter felt in need of reinforcement and called in some Locrians who moved to Messina, and brought the city into the hands of the Locrians for a time, until they were expelled. We do not know whether these events had any repercussions for the relationship between Messina and Athens, but we do hear of an agreement between Phaiax and the Locrians. The latter had not originally wanted to join the common peace in Sicily but were now under pressure due to the war with their colonies Hipponion and Medma, and therefore had no choice but to submit to the Athenian terms (5.5.2f.).

The diplomatic mission of 422 is usually regarded as a failure, and indeed the Athenians did not succeed in weakening the Syracusans. On the other hand, as far as it is possible to tell, the situation of the Athenian allies in Sicily did not decisively deteriorate during the years that followed, except that the Leontines, who had returned, were driven out again some time later. Due to this latter situation, the restoration of Leontinoi was among the aims of the great Sicilian Expedition of the Athenians in 415–413. This expedition was partly a consequence of the diplomatic mission in 422. After the Athenians

had shown an interest in Sicily, even in the final stage of the Archidamian War, the enemies of Syracuse also felt that they could count on their assistance in the future as well. And indeed such a request for help triggered off the third, the largest and consequently the most serious expedition, the account of which fills two books in Thucydides.¹⁵ This great Sicilian Expedition shows plainly what a radical democracy could and could not do, yet this is not relevant to the present discussion. Here we are again interested in what information Thucydides' account provides in terms of the situation in and around Sicily.

In the west of Sicily war had broken out between the Egestans and the Selinuntians. The Selinuntians had made allies of the Syracusans and were putting heavy pressure on the Egestans. The latter turned to Athens, where, according to Thucydides, their envoys used the following arguments:

If the Syracusans should go unpunished for depopulating Leontinoi, and by destroying those of their allies that were still left should get the whole of Sicily under their power, there was danger that some time, lending aid with a great force, both as Dorians to Dorians on account of kinship, and at the same time as colonists to the Peloponnesians that had sent them out, they might help to pull down the power of the Athenians. It would be wise, therefore, with their allies that were still left, to oppose the Syracusans, especially as the Egestans would furnish money sufficient for the war.

The Athenians therefore sent envoys to Egesta to check whether the Egestans were really able to pay (6.6.2–3). In spring 415 the envoys returned along with an Egestan delegation, bringing sixty talents of silver; both spoke of large amounts of money in the temples and in the treasury, whereupon the Athenians voted to send to Sicily sixty ships with the generals Alcibiades, Nicias and Lamachos,

to aid the Egestans against the Selinuntians, and also to join in restoring Leontinoi, in case they should have any success in the war; and further to settle all other matters in Sicily as they might deem best for the Athenians (6.8.1f.).

Initially the expedition was to be on a modest scale; the Athenians had sent sixty ships to Sicily ten years previously and at that time a peace had been concluded that was not entirely disadvantageous

¹⁵ Literature: Kagan (1981) 157ff.; Andrewes (1992a) 446ff.

for the Athenian allies. However, they now sent a force about three times as large as this, and this was partly why the expedition failed. On the one hand, in contrast with its stated aim, the forces were so large that even former friends were intimidated; on the other, they could not easily be withdrawn without serious loss of prestige, although this latter course of action had suggested itself from the outset. After more than two years, the expedition ended in catastrophe.

The Siceliots were completely unprepared for war, and when reports of the imminent attack reached Syracuse, it was a long time before they were taken seriously. The Athenian fleet was already at Corcyra by the time an assembly was summoned in Syracuse to discuss the rumors, which were coming from many quarters. Thucydides gives a detailed report.¹⁶ The first speaker mentioned is Hermocrates, who came forward and said that he had reliable information that a large Athenian fleet was sailing toward Sicily,

on the pretext of an alliance with the Egestans and the restoration of the Leontines, but in truth with a covetous desire for Sicily, and above all for our city, thinking that once in possession of it they would easily get possession of the rest also (6.33.2).

This in itself should not necessarily frighten the Syracusans: the size of the Athenian forces alone would compel the other Siceliots to unite, and disposed them favorably toward an alliance with the Syracusans. Thucydides' Hermocrates reckons on an effect similar to that created ten years previously by the strengthening of the Athenian fleet. The bulk of his speech deals with the measures that needed to be taken immediately to protect the city: envoys must be dispatched to the Sicels, to the rest of Sicily, and to Italy, even to the Carthaginians. As is usually the case with the speeches, we can assume that Thucydides has incorporated his own ideas, so it makes little difference whether Hermocrates really recommended sending to the Carthaginians for help or not; it was Thucydides who regarded the Carthaginians as a power that could be applied to for assistance, like the cities of Sicily and Italy. In any case, Thucydides did not consider them to be arch enemies of the Greeks, nor in particular of the Siceliots—and Thucydides was a contemporary, who had witnessed the wars in Sicily at the end of the fifth century.

¹⁶ 6.32.3–6.41. According to 7.55.2 there were democracies in the Sicilian cities; on the democracy in Syracuse, cf. recently E.W. Robinson (2000).

Only a few people believed what Hermocrates had to say. The final speaker was a certain Athenagoras, a popular leader who had great influence with the people at that time, according to Thucydides. He denounced the whole affair as an obvious maneuver by the oligarchs. The rumors about the imminent attack were being circulated in order to frighten the masses and so make it possible for them to dominate the city. The speech that Thucydides has Athenagoras make is not a direct answer to Hermocrates' speech; it seems rather that the historian wanted to draw attention to certain features of the Syracusan constitution that would remind the reader of the Athenian democracy, as, for example, when he has Athenagoras maintain that the judgment of the people is infallible. Ten years later this mistaken belief was to cost the Athenians their empire—and the Syracusans their freedom. But Athenagoras could do no more than polemicize, since one of the generals stood up and categorically declared the end of the debate, announced the next measures, and disbanded the assembly.

In the meantime the Athenians crossed over from Corcyra and experienced their first disappointment: none of the Italian cities allowed them inside their walls or provided them with a market, though they did provide them with water and allow them to anchor their ships—with the exception of Taras, the Spartan colony, and Locroi, the traditional ally of the Syracusans. The Athenians had not expected anything else from these cities, but the reaction of their old ally Rhegion came as an unpleasant surprise. In contrast with ten years previously, the city totally rejected the Athenians: they were not admitted within the walls but had to pitch camp outside of the town, where a market was provided for them. The Rhegians did not accept the argument that as Chalcidians they should help the Leontines, who were also Chalcidians, but said that they would remain neutral and do whatever the rest of the Italiots decided (6.43.1–6.44.3; 6.46.2). In truth the Italiots did not have any body for common discussion and decision making; the cities had already decided separately upon their relationships with the Athenian expeditionary fleet, so the answer of the Rhegians was no more than a polite refusal. It is clear that the size of the Athenian fleet frightened them, since it was much larger than the officially stated aim would have necessitated. In 424 the presence of sixty Athenian ships had induced them to conclude peace; now more than twice that number had come, and there were also land forces. But there may have been yet another reason for

their refusal. In 427 the Leontines and their allies had called upon the Athenians, who had chosen Rhegion as their base. Leontinoi no longer existed, so assisting the Leontines would mean war with the Syracusans, and in such a war the Rhegians would again have the Locrians on their backs. Given this, the neutrality of the Rhegians is hardly surprising.

So the Syracusans energetically set about making the necessary preparations, sending guards to some Sicel cities and envoys to others (6.45). This distinction is characteristic of the relations between the Syracusans and the Sicels: subjects had to be kept down, but others were courted.¹⁷ Evidently the Syracusans had realized that the Athenian expedition was aimed primarily at the greatest city of the island and that assisting the Egestans was merely a pretext.

Indeed the Athenians very soon lost interest in the Egestans once it became clear that they could not pay more than thirty talents—the second major disappointment of the expedition following the refusal of the Rhegians. The Athenian generals took counsel on the situation and decided to look for allies, beginning with the Messanians, who refused to enter into any alliance, then sailing on to Naxos, where the Naxians received them inside their city. They then approached the Cataneans, who, however, refused to receive them, since there were people in the city who favored the Syracusan cause (6.50.1–3). The Athenian fleet continued on towards Syracuse, with ten ships being sent ahead into the Great Harbor, where the commanders proclaimed

that the Athenians had come to reinstate the Leontines in their own country on the ground of alliance and kinship; any Leontines therefore who were in Syracuse should come over without fear to the Athenians as friends and benefactors (6.50.4f.).

This proclamation amounted to an ultimatum to the Syracusans, and from then on they were at war with the Athenians. On their way back, the Athenians were able to take Catane by surprise after the pro-Syracusan partisans had fled (6.51). Finally, the Athenians experienced a further disappointment with a former ally. After hav-

¹⁷ In a similar way Hermocrates had spoken of Sicels, whose allegiance had to be confirmed, and of others with whom friendship and alliance should be made (6.34.1). Alcibiades also advised trying to detach some of the Sicels from the Syracusans and make friends of others (6.48).

ing been called to Camarina by a pro-Athenian, anti-Syracusan group, they turned up with their entire force but could not induce the Camarinaeans to join them (6.52).

If one looks at the initial activities of the Athenians, it becomes clear that there was no actual opposition to Syracuse on the island that could be mobilized. Even Chalcidian (and therefore Ionian) cities, namely Rhegion and initially Catane, refused to join; so did Camarina, the traditional enemy of the Syracusans, which had only the subjugated Sicels to fear. Alcibiades in particular needed to be successful since he had been accused in Athens of profanation of the mysteries. However, when he returned to Catane he found an Athenian galley waiting to take him and others to Athens; but he and his companions were able to escape in Thurioi, and some time later he reached the Peloponnesus.

After Alcibiades was recalled, the remaining generals set off with the whole army into the west of Sicily. They sailed along the coast to Himera, where the people refused to receive them. West of Panormos they took the Sicanian town of Hyccara and gave it to the Egestans, who had assisted them with their cavalry; the inhabitants were enslaved and shipped to Catane. Nicias went on to Egesta and received thirty talents, while the war between Egesta and Selinus seems to have come to an end. In the end, the Athenians had no other option but to send round to their allies among the Sicels asking them to supply troops. They themselves attacked Hybla Geleatis, about fifteen kilometers west-northwest of Catane, but failed to capture it (6.62; cf. 6.63.2).

The Syracusans had not only made preparations but were also supported by troops, particularly from Selinus and to a lesser extent from Gela and Camarina (6.65.1; 6.67.2). Nicias realized that he would eventually have to attack Syracuse. He managed to bring his troops, comprising Sicels and others, into a favourable position near Syracuse and to defeat a numerically superior enemy. Nevertheless, not having cavalry he could not contemplate besieging Syracuse, and so the Athenians returned to Catane and sent to Athens for money and horsemen. They believed that after their success other Sicilian cities would join them (6.64–71), and sailed to Messina in the hope that the city would be betrayed to them. However, Alcibiades had informed the friends of the Syracusans in Messina of the plot and had also betrayed the friends of the Athenians there, who were quickly eliminated. Once again the Athenians had been unsuccessful (6.74).

The Athenian withdrawal gave the Syracusans time to organize their defense. Hermocrates was again the driving force and was able to induce the assembly to reduce the number of generals from fifteen to three, to give them full powers, and to release them from the obligation to consult the assembly. These measures curtailed Syracusan democracy considerably but seemed to be the right decision in the crisis at hand. In any case, the Syracusans resolved to do what Hermocrates had proposed and elected him general, along with two others (6.72f.).

Meanwhile the Athenians embarked on another diplomatic offensive in Camarina, hoping to win the city over. The Syracusans immediately sent a counter-embassy, being particularly skeptical about the willingness of the Camarinacans to help them. It was true that the Camarinacans felt uncomfortable, fearing on the one hand that the Athenians might seize control of Sicily, and on the other that the Syracusans might achieve victory without them and take revenge; they had so far contributed a few horsemen and were willing to continue to assist the Syracusans in the future, albeit in as modest a way as possible. In effect, they pointed out that they had treaties with both sides and declared their neutrality (6.75.3–6.88.2).

The Athenians were more successful in their negotiations with the Sicels. Some of those who were Syracusan subjects and lived nearer the plains had revolted; but the Sicels of the interior, who had always been independent, sided almost exclusively with the Athenians, supplying the army with grain and in some cases also money. The Athenians attacked those who did not come over but only forced some of them to join them, since the Syracusans had sent garrisons for their relief (6.88.3–5). The Athenians also saw fit to send a trireme to Carthage on a goodwill mission, hoping that they might be able to get some help. They sent to Tyrrhenia too, as some of the cities there had voluntarily offered to join them in the war (6.88.6). The Carthaginians apparently did not respond, or at least Thucydides does not record any reaction. The Tyrrhenians on the other hand were inveterate enemies of the Syracusans and easier to mobilize, and they assisted the Athenians until 413.¹⁸

In the spring of 414 the Athenians marched against the Sicel town of Centoripa and brought it over by agreement. Returning to Catane,

¹⁸ In 413 Tyrrhenians repulsed an attack on the Athenian camp (7.53.2; cf. 7.54).

they burnt the grain belonging to Inessa and Hybla (6.94.3). The names of these cities are revealing: we have just heard of the Sicels of the plain who were under Syracusan control, and the Sicels of the interior who had in their vast majority sided with the Athenians. Centoripa was a town in the interior that had not yet joined the Athenians; perhaps the territory of the Sicels who had joined them was farther to the north and to the west. Here lay Herbita, the seat of Archonides, friend of the Athenians, whereas on the western slopes of Aetna lay Inessa and Hybla, two Sicel towns that were still siding with the Syracusans, voluntarily or not. Their complete isolation had not been achieved during this winter, either militarily or diplomatically.

By this time money and horsemen had arrived from Athens, and the attack on Syracuse could begin. The Athenians managed to land on the coast north of Epipolai and to safeguard this area of high ground, which rises north and west of the town and dominates the whole of the surrounding area. With the help of the allied Sicels, Catane, Naxos, and Egesta it was possible to increase the cavalry to 650 horsemen (6.98.1). The siege of Syracuse that followed is described by Thucydides, but it is not necessary to discuss these events here, particularly since many of the topographical details are controversial. Within a short time the circumvallation of Syracuse was almost complete. Note was being taken of the new situation everywhere: provisions were arriving for the Athenian army from all parts of Italy, Sicels who had thus far kept their distance now turned up as allies, and the Tyrrhenians sent three ships (6.103.2). The Syracusans no longer thought they could resist. Hermocrates and his colleagues were replaced by three other generals who were apparently true democrats, and the Syracusans started talking about an agreement among themselves and with Nicias; the capitulation of Syracuse seemed to be imminent (6.103.3f.).

In the meantime the Spartan Gylippos arrived with four ships at Himera after an adventurous journey. He persuaded the Himeraeans to join him in the war and to provide arms for the crews of his ships, and also sent a request to the Selinuntians to mobilize all their forces. Troops were also promised by the Geloans and some of the Sicels, who were now far more willing to join him due to the recent death of Archonides, who had had considerable influence in the area and had been a friend of the Athenians (7.1). Gylippos set off for Syracuse with some three thousand men and managed to get into

the city shortly before it was completely walled off. His arrival drastically altered the situation: on land he soon took the initiative from Nicias, and when eventually the Syracusans resorted to naval warfare, the Athenians were lost.

Again the new situation was noted everywhere. Straight after his first successes, Gylippos set out to collect military and naval forces from elsewhere in Sicily and to win over those cities that were either not zealously supporting the Syracusans or had kept out of the war altogether (7.7.2; cf. 7.12.1). Nicias wrote to the Athenians urging them either to recall the expedition or to send another army and more money. The first ten ships sailed that winter carrying 120 talents, with the bulk of the force to follow in the spring: sixty-five ships and several thousand hoplites. The Peloponnesians and Boeotians also sent soldiers to Sicily.

These troops did not depart until the beginning of spring 413. In the meantime the situation of the Athenians at Syracuse continued to deteriorate. Gylippos had met with success in some of the Sicilian cities and returned to Syracuse with reinforcements (7.21.1). He was eagerly assisted by Hermocrates, who had regained his former influence, and both of them encouraged the Syracusans to challenge the Athenians by sea. Within a short time they succeeded in seizing control of the sea from the Athenians and besieging their forces in their camp. Once again the Syracusans sent envoys to the Sicilian cities, to report on their successes and ask for additional support (7.25.9). The envoys managed to raise another body of troops and were on the point of bringing them to Syracuse, when Nicias sent word to the Sicel allies in the interior instructing them not to let them pass. Here Thucydides names Alikyai and Centoripa, which lay on a route through the middle of the island. The troops had to go this way because the Akragantines had remained neutral and would not allow them to pass through their territory. One thousand five hundred men, probably mainly from Selinus and Himera, made it through alive. The links with the other cities of the south coast were not threatened, however, and troops soon arrived from the Geloans and Camarinaeans, who were now willing to lend the Syracusans forceful support (7.32–7.33.2). Apart from Akragas, only Messina was neutral. Naxos and Catane sided with the Athenians (7.14.2; 7.57.11). Hermocrates' prophecy was fulfilled, so to speak, although one has to ask whether it was not simply opportunism that led the majority of the Siceliots to take the Syracusans' side following the unam-

biguous change in the situation.¹⁹ The more distant Italiot cities from Rhegion to Croton did not support either side, nor did the Tarentines, although two years earlier Locroi and Taras in particular had shown their enmity toward the Athenians.²⁰ However, when the Athenian generals Demosthenes and Eurymedon reached the Iapygian promontory in midsummer 413, they succeeded in renewing an old alliance of friendship with Artas, chieftain of the Iapygians, and enlisted one hundred and fifty Iapygian javelin men. They also persuaded the Metapontines, in accordance with the terms of their alliance, to send with them three hundred javelin throwers and two triremes. Finally the Thurians, who had recently expelled their anti-Athenian faction, were induced to join them in the campaign with seven hundred hoplites and three hundred javelin throwers. Here the friendly reception ended, though; the Athenians were expelled from the territory of Croton, while at Locroi they did not even manage to berth their ships (7.33.3–6; 7.35).

In the meantime the fighting in the Great Harbor continued to the advantage of the Syracusans, but the arrival of the Athenian reinforcements came as a great shock. Demosthenes wanted to make the most of the Syracusans' consternation in order to destroy their fortifications on Epipolai and complete the circumvallation of Syracuse. A night attack on the plateau ended in a severe defeat for the Athenian troops. Demosthenes was then convinced that they should sail home at once, but Nicias, both fearing the reaction of the Athenians and viewing the situation in a less pessimistic light than Demosthenes, said that "there was still a party in Syracuse that favored submitting to the Athenians" and that "it was secretly sending proposals to him and urging him not to withdraw".²¹

¹⁹ Cf. also Hermocrates' speech at Camarina (6.76–80), in which he mentions the possibility that other cities might be afraid of Syracuse (6.78.2), and, near the end, even threatens the Camarinaeans with Syracusan revenge if they should be victorious without their neighbors' support (7.80.4f.).

²⁰ In winter 415/4 Syracusan envoys had tried in vain to persuade the Italiots "not to tolerate the conduct of the Athenians" (6.88.7); Gylippos also failed to win over the Thurians (6.104.2). On the other hand, provisions arrived for the Athenian army from all quarters of Italy (6.103.2) in 414; in the following winter Nicias speaks of "regions in Italy which supply us with food" (7.14.3), and some months later the Syracusans were able to burn some timber in the territory of Caulonia that was lying there ready for the Athenians to use for shipbuilding (7.25.2).

²¹ 7.48.2; cf. 7.49.1 and 7.73.3 on those who regularly reported all that went on in Syracuse to Nicias.

However, Gylippos had now arrived with the additional troops he had collected in the Sicilian cities (7.46; 7.50.1). He also brought with him some Peloponnesian hoplites who had sailed in the spring but been driven off course toward Libya (7.50.2). They had arrived at Selinus via Neapolis, a trading settlement east of Cap Bon. Evidently the Carthaginians had allowed them to march through their territory and once again missed the opportunity to support the Athenians against the Syracusans.²² In the face of these reinforcements, as well as the worsening state of health among the Athenian forces, Nicias at last gave up his resistance and had agreed that orders be given to secretly withdraw, when an eclipse of the moon (on 27 August) caused panic among the troops and prevented them from departing. This hesitation led to the utter destruction of the whole expeditionary force.

The Syracusans not only gained another victory in the Great Harbor but even succeeded in blocking its entrance, cutting off all supplies and making it impossible for the Athenians to escape. The Athenians tried to break through, but in vain; they also tried and failed to escape on foot to the Sicels in the interior. The sections of the army that were under the command of Demosthenes and Nicias were forced to surrender, although a few soldiers managed to escape and eventually found refuge in Catane. The prisoners, still more than seven thousand in number, were brought to Syracuse and thrown into the quarries; Nicias and Demosthenes were executed.

Officially the Athenians had gone to Sicily to support the Eggestans and Leontines, but it had soon become clear that the size of their expeditionary force permitted them to pursue further-reaching aims that could ultimately lead to the conquest of the whole island. This possibility raised doubts even among former allies of the Athenians, so that in Sicily, apart from Eggesta, only Naxos and (after the flight of the Syracusan partisans) Catane supported them. In addition, many Sicels understandably had an interest in the humiliation of the Syracusans.²³ As far as Italy was concerned, the only support came

²² This conduct of the Carthaginians is inconsistent with the widespread assumption that they were the archenemies of the Sicilian Greeks; at least neither Hermocrates nor Nicias had any inhibitions about seeking their help against their Greek enemies.

²³ Even shortly before the final catastrophe, the majority still sided with the Athenians (7.57.11), and conversely the fleeing Athenians hoped to reach the territory of Sicels (7.77.6; 7.80.5).

from the Thurians and Metapontians, who, as Thucydides says, had both been reduced to such dire straits by party crises at this time that they could not have acted otherwise (7.57.11). Soldiers were also sent by the Tyrrhenians, who were on hostile terms with the Syracusans, and by the Iapygians. The Syracusans for their part were supported by Camarina, Gela, Selinus and Himera (but not immediately and certainly not wholeheartedly) and by some of the Sicels (cf. 7.58.1–4). In actual fact both Hermocrates and Athenagoras counted on some feeling of solidarity in the Sicilian cities (6.33.4f.; 6.37.2), whereas Lamachos wanted to prevent this by immediately attacking Syracuse (6.49.4); but in reality, only the successes following Gylippos' arrival made the Siceliots support the Syracusans more energetically. Nicias notes in his letter to the Athenians that now "all Sicily is united" (7.15.1).

In this war we again notice the conflict between Dorian and Ionian colonies on the one hand and the rivalry between Syracuse and Akragas on the other. However, the partisanship was not always unanimous and in the interest of all citizens. We have already seen that the Cataneans only sided with the Athenians after the flight of the pro-Syracusans (6.50.3; 6.51.2). But even then there were still Syracusan partisans in Catane, or at least this appeared to be the case (6.64.2f.), while at the same time Syracusan exiles accompanied the Athenians (6.64.1). And at Messana, where internal dissensions had already existed during the Archidamian War, different groups were agitating; but here the pro-Athenian elements were eliminated before they could do any damage (6.74.1). At Camarina it was initially the pro-Athenians who seemed to assert themselves, and only in 413 was decisive support given to the Syracusans. In the same year it seemed for a short while that the Akragantines might side with the Syracusans, but before the Syracusan general arrived, the members of the pro-Syracusan party had been expelled (7.46; 7.50.1).

It is not surprising that there were disagreements in the cities. The population of Catane was almost exclusively Ionian, and that of Messana at least partially. In the past, both cities had largely been opposed to Syracuse. The same is true of the Dorian cities Camarina and Akragas; the former had concluded an alliance with the Athenians during the Archidamian War, while the latter had been won over by Phaiax in 422. Nevertheless, the Akragantines remained neutral, not giving any active support to the Athenians. What is astonishing is

that even after the severe defeat of the Athenians in the nighttime attack on the plateau, there were still people in Syracuse who were willing to betray the city to the Athenians and were constantly sending proposals to them covertly and urging them not to withdraw (7.48.2; cf. 7.49.1). The hopes Nicias pinned on this fifth column prevented him from agreeing to Demosthenes' demand for immediate departure. The following incidents show that these Syracusan partisans of the Athenians did not owe their existence to wishful thinking on Nicias' part: when, after the final severe defeat of the Athenians in the Great Harbor, Hermocrates wanted to prevent their immediate flight, he sent certain friends of his with some horsemen to the Athenian camp; they pretended to be friends of the Athenians and were believed when they said that the Syracusans were guarding all roads and when they advised Nicias not to depart the same night (7.73.3–7.74.1). In actual fact this delay brought about the final catastrophe of the expeditionary force. After his capture Nicias was executed at the instigation of those very Syracusans who had negotiated with him and now feared that they would be discovered (7.86.4).

Following the victory over the Athenians Hermocrates became the most influential man in Syracuse. He had already played an important role in bringing about the peace of Gela and thus putting an end to the first Athenian attempt to win more influence in Sicily. Ten years later, up until the arrival of Gylippos, and later in cooperation with him, he had directed the defense of Syracuse, and it was mainly thanks to him that the Syracusans had also dared to challenge the Athenians by sea. After their defeat he urged the Syracusans to send a fleet to the East to contribute to the overthrow of the Athenians, and as early as the winter of 413/2 the Spartans were able to count on the support of their Sicilian allies (8.2.3). In the summer of 412 twenty Syracusan and two Selinuntian ships arrived at Miletos and subsequently took part in the fighting (8.26.1; 8.28.2; 8.84.4; 8.96.5). The next winter the Thurians also sent ten ships (8.35.1; cf. 8.61.2; 8.84.2). Finally, in the summer of 411, contingents from Taras and Locroi arrived (8.91.1).

The warfare in the Aegean was no longer part of the history of Sicily and South Italy, and we need not follow the course of events. Hermocrates only remained in command for about two years, being exiled in 410 by the new, more radical democracy in Syracuse. In 408 he returned to Sicily and set in motion a development that

before long led to serious clashes with the Carthaginians on the island and also to the rise of the tyrant Dionysios in Syracuse. Unfortunately, since Thucydides' work breaks off in 411, we shall never know what he thought about this period of Hermocrates' activities.