

HERMOCRATES THE SYRACUSAN¹

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*ἀνὴρ καὶ ἐς τὰλλα ξύνεσιw οὐδενὸς λειπόμενος καὶ κατὰ τὸν
πόλεμον ἐμπειρία τε ἱκανὸς γενόμενος καὶ ἀνδρεία ἐπιφανής*

(THUCYDIDES)

A NOTEWORTHY feature of Greek overseas expansion to which attention is frequently drawn is that in some cases a new city established abroad outstripped its mother-city at home. It is perhaps more remarkable that these colonies, which were founded on sites chosen for their agricultural or commercial advantages and enjoyed political independence from the outset, did not soon become the chief centres of power in the Greek world and that old Greece did not become a political backwater long before the Hellenistic Age. Many reasons might be suggested to explain why this development did not take place, but the most influential single factor was probably the political instability of the overseas settlements, where strife between rival factions, often combined with strife between neighbouring cities, was even more prevalent and intense than in the Greek homeland. Although Greeks settled abroad felt pride in their membership of the Greek race and reached a high standard of literary and artistic achievement, they were less firmly rooted in their homes, because their cities, being comparatively new, had not accumulated a store of local traditions. Most of them lived in close contact with non-Greek peoples with whom they probably intermarried more than was generally admitted. A sharp division often developed between the leading families responsible for founding the colony, who owned most of the land, and the mixed mass of the population usually eager for any revolutionary change. In Sicily all these influences were at work, and in addition the tyrants sowed the seeds of future unrest by forcibly transplanting whole populations from one city to another and by enfranchising

¹ The substance of a lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 15th of January, 1958.

their discharged mercenaries. Both these practices led almost inevitably to conflict between the new citizens and the old. The Sicilian Greeks often proved strangely reluctant to submit to discipline or to make any sustained effort in their own defence until their liberty and prosperity were almost lost. They produced few great leaders who were not tyrants because they were seldom willing to accept unpalatable advice. That these defects imposed a severe handicap upon even the most enlightened of those who sought to lead them is seen in the career of Hermocrates.

It is not surprising that Greek Sicily seemed in the fifth century to be a tempting prey to two great powers, Athens and Carthage. As soon as Athens became a naval power, some Athenians began to show an interest in the west, Themistocles being apparently one of these. There seems to have been much talk of western expansion at Athens during the Pentacontaetia, but it is a mistaken assumption from later events to imagine that many Athenians seriously contemplated an attempt to conquer Sicily.¹ Pericles is said to have disapproved of Athenian imperialism in the west.² He did, however, favour the establishment of Athenian influence there, as elsewhere, provided that military action was not involved: he played a leading part in the foundation of Thurii and was probably responsible for the alliances with Leontini and Rhegium concluded perhaps about 445.³ These cities and others of Chalcidian origin had begun to feel their security threatened by the Syracusans, who since the expulsion of the tyrants had won for themselves a dominating position in eastern Sicily and were suspected of imperialist ambitions.⁴ The Athenians evidently welcomed the opportunities afforded by these alliances to establish their influence firmly in Sicily and to curb the increasing power of the Syracusans,

¹ Cf. Plut. *Per.* 20.3-4, where the general picture of Athenian ambitions is extravagantly rhetorical and the reference to Sicily looks forward to the schemes of Alcibiades.

² Plut, *Per.* 20.3-21.1, cf. *Alcib.* 17.1.

³ M. N. Tod, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, i². (1946), 57 and 58. They were renewed in 433; the year in which they were originally made is uncertain. In 458/7 the Athenians had concluded an alliance with Elymian Segesta.

⁴ Cf. Diod. 12.30.1, where the military preparations of the Syracusans and the extent of their ambitions seem to be exaggerated. H. Wentker, *Sizilien und Athen* (1956), 78-81, overrates the significance of this passage.

who, it was believed, might well send naval and financial aid to the Dorians of the Peloponnese.¹

When the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war was imminent, the Spartans instructed their western allies to provide ships for service against the Athenians (2.7.2). The number of ships which they demanded from the west is not certain but was probably two hundred; if so, the figure was outrageously optimistic.² No ships were sent, or apparently even built, and by 427 the cities allied with Athens were at war with the Syracusans and their allies (3.86.2). The antecedents of this war are unknown, but it may be that the Syracusans were the aggressors, feeling that the Athenians, weakened by the plague, would be unable to intervene. The Chalcidian states proved no match for their enemies and appealed to Athens for naval support. Twenty ships were sent, which, arriving in Sicilian waters in the autumn of 427, could do no more than keep the war alive by engaging in operations of limited scope. A further appeal to Athens at the end of 426 led to the dispatch of a larger fleet of forty ships. It sailed in the following spring but, because it became involved in the fighting at Pylos, did not reach Sicily until the campaigning season of 425 had ended. The scale of Athenian intervention now evidently alarmed the smaller cities on both sides, and in 424 they began to negotiate with the object of terminating an exhausting war conducted in the selfish interests of the great powers. The initiative came from Gela, a Dorian ally of Syracuse.³ The Geloans concluded an armistice with their neighbours and kinsmen the Camarinaeans, who, though Dorians, were fighting on the Athenian side, and subsequently a general peace conference was held at Gela. Its opening stages were contentious and unpromising, each delegate pressing the grievances of his own city (4.58).

¹ 1.36.2, cf. 44.3; 2.7.2; 6.6.2; 6.18.1. (These and all subsequent references in which the name of the author is not stated are to Thucydides.)

² In 2.7.2, where the text is disputed, this figure, which appears in Diod. 12.41.1, has been supplied by emendation. Even if the Siceliots and Italiots could have built two hundred ships, the training of skilled crews to man them would have been a long and laborious task.

³ This detail, which seems to be authentic, is supplied by Timaeus, *F Gr Hist* 566 F 22.

It is at this point that Hermocrates makes his first appearance in the *History* of Thucydides, introduced merely as "Hermocrates, the son of Hermon, whose speech also proved to be the most convincing" (4.58). Thucydides gives no details of his career hitherto¹ and includes at this stage no estimate of his ability. The quality of the man is at once apparent from the quality of his speech (4.59-64).²

His plea is for Siceliot unity. The Greeks of Sicily, having a common name and a common heritage, should settle their differences by negotiation and should unite in resisting intervention by outsiders such as the Athenians, who sought to exploit these differences in the pursuit of their own imperialist ambitions. It would be hazardous to claim that this doctrine had never been preached before or was never preached again; but there was perhaps only one leading figure in Siceliot history whose policy was based on similar principles, namely Timoleon, who was not a Siceliot by birth. Apart from the primary loyalty of a Greek to his own city, there was the somewhat artificial bond between Dorian and Dorian, Ionian and Ionian, and also the broader feeling of kinship between all Greeks, varying considerably in intensity from time to time, which divided them from "barbarians". That the Greeks of Sicily were united by living in one island and were thereby isolated from the inhabitants of all other lands, Greek and barbarian, was an idea that did not develop naturally and was not easily fostered; it ignored the fact that Sicily was shared with four other races. To Hermocrates,

¹ He must already have been a political figure of some standing when appointed as a delegate to this Congress. There is, however, no foundation for the view of Wentker, *op. cit.* 81 with n. 366, that he had been the prime mover of an imperialist policy since before 440.

² The vexed question of Thucydidean speeches cannot be discussed here, but it is surely beyond doubt that Thucydides was well-informed about the content of this speech and of the later speeches of Hermocrates at Syracuse and Camarina. They strike an individual note, and none reads as though Thucydides has merely improvised τὰ δέοντα. On the other hand, Steup in an appendix on 4.58 (*Anhang*, 287-8) goes too far when he claims to find in certain unusual turns of phrase in these speeches authentic traces of the style of Hermocrates. The version of the speech at Gela produced by Timaeus (*F Gr Hist* 566 F 22) was evidently no more than a frigid rhetorical exercise bearing no relation to what was actually said, though it is known only from the criticisms of it by Polybius.

however, the Siceliot cities were so closely linked with one another that in a striking phrase he describes feuds between them as *stasis*, as though they were rival factions in a single community.¹

There was not much difficulty in making out a convincing case for the view that the aims of the Athenians were selfish and that the presence of their forces could harm all Siceliots, including the Chalcidians in whose interests they had ostensibly intervened. It is, however, significant that Hermocrates does not attempt to stir up moral indignation against Athens: imperialism, he says, is natural and excusable, and his criticism is rather of those who make insufficient efforts to avoid becoming its victims (4.61.5-6). Whatever his personal views may have been, it was politic to adopt this attitude towards imperialism because his own city could not claim a blameless record in the decades since the expulsion of the Deinomenids. As spokesman of the most powerful city, he was confronted with a delicate situation demanding skilful handling. Had an Athenian taken part in the debate, as at Camarina nine years later, it would have been easy for him to have argued that the motive of the Syracusans in supporting the proposed settlement was to give themselves a free hand to coerce their Chalcidian neighbours when the Athenians had withdrawn. Hermocrates fully appreciated the suspicion with which his city was regarded: he maintains that the Syracusans despite the strength of their position are prepared to sacrifice the opportunity of damaging their enemies and to make concessions for the common benefit of the Siceliots because they realize the impossibility of controlling destiny (4.59.1; 64.1).² This argument, which cannot have been at all reassuring, suggests that he is trying to evade an embarrassing practical issue; and most modern scholars consider the whole speech to be insincere.³ They believe that Hermocrates, while professing to promote the interests of all Greek Sicily, in fact cared only for those of Syracuse; and Syracusan relations with Leontini after the Athenian withdrawal may be thought to confirm this interpretation. It must, however, be remembered that he was never

¹ 4.61.1, cf. 64.5, *οἰκείου πολέμου*, and the somewhat similar view of Plato, *Rep.* 5.470 b-d. ² He uses a similar argument in his speech at Camarina, 6.78.2.

³ From A. Holm, *Gesch. Siciliens* ii (1874), 8, to Wentker, *op. cit.* 125-6.

in a position to direct the policy of Syracuse as Pericles had directed that of Athens. He was sent to Gela with instructions to negotiate a settlement if he could, and evidently he was himself convinced that peace was desirable. It may well be that some Syracusans favoured its conclusion because they hoped to exploit the situation created thereby in the interests of Syracusan imperialism, but his speech does not prove that he was one of them, and it cannot be assumed that he prompted, or indeed approved of, subsequent action taken by Syracuse. There is no evidence that at any time in his career he encouraged aggression by the Syracusans against other Siceliots, and on one occasion, which will be noted below, he was the prime mover of a decision that involved renouncing an opportunity for aggression.¹ His speeches and actions suggest rather that he strove to prevent local wars because they led to intervention from abroad, and it was for this reason that he tried to create his new kind of patriotism. Thucydides, who cannot be considered gullible, seems to have been convinced of his sincerity, especially as he draws a distinction between the opinions of Hermocrates and those of the other delegates to the Congress, who were concerned only with the interests of their own cities (4.58).

This speech contains only one definite recommendation, which is of a general character and largely negative : that the Siceliots should stop fighting one another, thereby depriving the Athenians of their excuse for intervention. It may be that Thucydides has chosen to omit some details from his version of the speech, but Hermocrates probably considered that it would be unwise to make specific proposals, at any rate at this stage, because the delegates from other cities must not be allowed to feel that Syracuse was dictating to them. They must be left free to conclude with one another whatever agreements they wished, founded on the general principles established by his speech.

The Congress agreed to end the war on a *status quo* basis, and after the cities allied with Athens had informed the Athenian generals and obtained their consent, peace was concluded (4.65.1-2). Had this agreement been made half a century later, it would probably have included a clause guaranteeing the

¹ See below, p. 257.

autonomy of all the signatories, and much uncertainty would have been avoided. At this time, however, the type of general pacification known as *κοινή εἰρήνη* had not yet been developed in Greece: the doctrines of Hermocrates may possibly have contributed to its birth. Thucydides adds that Syracuse ceded Morgantina to Camarina in return for an agreed sum of money. Morgantina was an insignificant place, and his inclusion of this detail is somewhat surprising. He probably mentions it in order to show that the Syracusans made a gesture designed to prove their acceptance of the principles established at the Congress by making a concession to a weaker neighbour. No other agreements are mentioned, and it seems unlikely that any were made.¹ There is evidence that the Athenian alliances with Siceliot cities were not formally abrogated.² Thus, while Hermocrates gained his first objective in removing for the moment the pretext of Athenian intervention, he made scarcely any progress towards the creation of a union of all Greek Sicily.

Not long afterwards there occurred at Leontini a characteristically Siceliot outbreak of civil strife, which led to intervention by Syracuse. The upshot was that Leontini virtually lost its identity as an independent state and that while some Leontines were content to migrate to Syracuse, most of them established themselves at two forts in Leontine territory, whence they conducted hostilities against the Syracusans (5.4.2-4). The opinions of Hermocrates on this Syracusan intervention are not recorded; but he can hardly have approved of it.³ Nothing was more likely to revive Athenian interest in Sicily, and indeed in 422 a diplomatic mission led by Phaeax was sent from Athens with orders to persuade as many Siceliot cities as possible to take

¹ A. W. Gomme, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, iii (1956), 523, who believes that agreements were reached between other cities but have been omitted by Thucydides (op. cit. iii. 522), classes the reference to the agreement between Syracuse and Camarina among "relicts of notes made at the time" by Thucydides on unimportant details. One possible reason for its inclusion has been given above, but subsequent events also suggest that no other detailed agreements are mentioned because none was made, and that the Congress achieved no more than a general agreement in principle.

² 5.4.5; 6.6.2; 6.50.4. The alliance with Camarina may have been an exception (6.82.1); Thucydides is not altogether consistent on this point (6.88.2, cf. 75.3, 79.1).

³ E. A. Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iii (1892), 69.

up arms against Syracuse in support of the Leontines. Camarina and Acragas agreed to take action, but Phaeax failed at Gela, whereupon he abandoned his mission realizing that he would not convince the rest (5.4.1 and 5-6). He must have felt that without military aid from Athens only an alliance including almost all Siceliot cities could successfully challenge Syracuse. Yet the series of events at Leontini, together with a similar episode at Messina (5.5.1), and the success of Phaeax at Camarina and Acragas, left the Athenians in no doubt that the Siceliots were as divided as ever and that excuses for intervention could be found at will.¹

Hermocrates is next mentioned when Thucydides gives an account of a debate in the Syracusan assembly in the summer of 415, after the great Athenian expeditionary force had already sailed for Sicily. Most of this report consists of speeches by two leading figures, Hermocrates and the demagogue Athenagoras (6.32.3-41). The former seeks to convince his audience that the Athenians are really on their way and intend to conquer Sicily (33.1-2), that prospects of defeating them are good (33.3-6), that energetic measures for defence must be put into operation without delay (34.1-9). More than half of the speech is devoted to the last of these, so that, in contrast to his speech at Gela, it consists largely of positive recommendations. Missions must be sent to the Sicels, to the rest of Sicily, to Italy and even to Carthage, and the Spartans and Corinthians must be urged to send help at once and to resume the war in Greece. Much more surprising is the proposal that the Syracusans together with their Siceliot allies should send every available ship to Taras and the Iapygian promontory to intercept the Athenian fleet before it could reach the Italian coast. Hermocrates points out the difficulties that this move would cause to the Athenians, who in his view would not even leave Corcyra if they knew that the crossing was to be contested. He also claims that unexpected resistance at this stage would damage Athenian morale. His plan is indeed a bold one, and modern scholars have with good reason doubted not only its wisdom but also its feasibility.² At

¹ Cf. the highly coloured picture drawn by Alcibiades in 6.17.2-4.

² Notably G. Busolt, *Gr. Gesch.* iii. 2 (1904), 1300-1.

a time when navigation and communications had reached only a primitive stage of development, there were palpable dangers to the Siceliots in trying to intercept so far from their own bases an enemy whose seamanship they could not hope to match. One factor that surely rendered the plan impracticable was lack of time. The fleet of the Athenians and their allies was already assembling at Corcyra when Hermocrates made his speech (6.42.1, cf. 32.3), and in his closing words he declares emphatically that the enemy "has almost arrived" (6.34.9). It would surely have been impossible to muster a fleet including contingents from other Siceliot states (6.34.4) and then to make the long voyage to the heel of Italy before the Athenians left Corcyra. It is also clear that at this time the number of ships fit for immediate service and the number of trained crews available to man them cannot have been sufficient to enable the Syracusans to undertake an operation on a large scale in distant waters. In the war ended by the Congress of Gela the highest recorded number of ships that they and their allies succeeded in mustering was a little over thirty (4.25.1). In the war now about to begin they at first made no attempt to use their fleet (cf. 6.52.1), and it was only in its closing months that, after long preparation and practice and with assistance from their Peloponnesian allies, they were eventually able to challenge the Athenian fleet in conditions that gave them a considerable advantage.

Why then did Hermocrates put forward his ambitious plan? It may be that he completely misjudged the strategic situation,¹ but a man of his sagacity and experience (6.72.2) can hardly have been blind to the difficulties of putting his plan into operation.² It might be argued that Thucydides has incorporated in a single speech the substance of several speeches made by Hermocrates on the defence of Sicily and that this proposal was made at an earlier meeting of the assembly. This explanation would, however, meet only the objection that it could not be put into operation in time to be effective. A more convincing explanation

¹ Cf. Busolt, loc. cit.

² A. W. Gomme, *Gnomon*, xxx (1958), 17, rightly criticizes J. de Romilly, *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* (1956), 61 and 195, n. 1, for subscribing to the view that the plan of Hermocrates "is stated in order to make clear the folly of the Athenian expedition".

is suggested by two passages in the speech. In the first he declares that he will state his plan although the Syracusans are not likely to adopt it promptly because of their habitual inertia (6.34.4); in the second that his plan is the best course of action but that if the Syracusans reject it they must 'make every other preparation for the war with all possible speed' (6.34.9). From these passages it appears that, confronted with the difficult task of persuading the Syracusans to take energetic measures to meet the danger that was almost upon them, he adopted the debating manoeuvre of proposing action demanding of them efforts far greater than any that they were willing to make; he calculated that, as the supporters of Athenagoras were hostile towards him, the assembly would not accept the whole of any defence programme proposed by him but, if given the opportunity to reject his plan to intercept the Athenians in Italy, would be more likely to adopt at least some of the measures recommended in the earlier part of his speech. Nicias had, with an entirely different object in view, used somewhat similar tactics some months earlier when he tried to deter the Athenians from embarking upon their expedition by insisting that it required military resources on a very large scale (6.19.2; 24.1).

While Hermocrates deals mainly with the needs of the situation by which the Syracusan assembly was confronted on the day of the debate, the speech contains echoes of his views on wider issues. He naturally begins by emphasizing the danger to his own city (6.33.1-2), but the defence measures that he proposes are designed to safeguard all Greek Sicily and not Syracuse alone. One passage implies censure of the Siceliots for having failed to respond to the Spartan demand for aid in the Archidamian war (6.34.8); it thus suggests that in his view the destruction of Athenian power, which would automatically have ended Athenian intervention in Sicily, was more important than the establishment of a Syracusan hegemony while the Athenians were diverted from the west by their preoccupations in Greece. Hence his idea of a united Sicily, though much less prominent here than in his speeches at Gela and Camarina, is not forgotten.

Hermocrates failed to convince many of the Syracusans, and some treated the subject of the debate with contempt and

ridicule (6.35.1). Folly of an even more dangerous kind is seen in the speech of Athenagoras (6.36-40), whom Thucydides pictures as a typical demagogue, introducing him in terms very similar to those in which he introduces Cleon.¹ The speech is almost a caricature, in which the ignorance, overconfidence and violent prejudice of the speaker are mercilessly exposed.² His main contention is that the rumours of impending attack have been fabricated by the oligarchs with the intention of creating panic and thus overthrowing the democracy and enslaving the populace. He does not attack Hermocrates directly but makes his charges against the young oligarchs, whom he addresses as ὧ νεώτεροι (6.38.5) and blames for the prevalence of civil strife. His preoccupation with party issues helps to explain why the Syracusans often rejected the advice of enlightened leaders such as Hermocrates. To unite Greek Sicily was indeed a formidable task when the population of Syracuse was so deeply divided.

An unnamed general, who apparently presided over the assembly, then closed the debate without permitting any further speeches (6.41.1). He claimed that he and his colleagues had the situation in hand and would make preparations to repel the enemy, even though these preparations might prove to be unnecessary. The proposal to send a fleet to Italy is not mentioned (6.41.2-4). Hermocrates had at least secured an official assurance that the threat of invasion would not be ignored, but scarcely any action seems to have been taken until the Athenian fleet was known to have arrived at Rhegium (6.45; 73.2).

Because the speech of Athenagoras throws some light on rivalries between factions at Syracuse, it is appropriate to discuss briefly at this point the position of Hermocrates in local politics. There is no doubt that the Syracusan constitution was at this time a democracy: ³ Thucydides expressly states that it was (7.55.2), and all issues of major importance were referred to the popular assembly. Nevertheless a programme of far-reaching

¹ Athenagoras, 6.35.2; Cleon, 3.36.6.

² There is no antilogy in which Thucydides enlists the sympathy of his readers more plainly on behalf of one of the two speakers.

³ The evidence is conveniently summarized by P. A. Brunt, *C.R.* vii (1957), 244-5, in a review of Wentker, *op. cit.*

reforms, based on the principles of extreme democracy, was introduced in 412 by the demagogue Diocles, who, like Athenagoras, was an opponent of Hermocrates. Thereafter most of the magistrates were chosen by lot, and archons instead of generals presided at meetings of the assembly.¹ It is clear, therefore, that before and during the Athenian invasion the Syracusan democracy was less extreme than that of Athens and might even be described as moderate.² There is no reason to believe that Hermocrates disapproved of the constitution as it was before the reforms of Diocles and would have welcomed its overthrow. If a tradition of somewhat doubtful authenticity be accepted, he was a member of an aristocratic family ;³ but so were almost all the leaders of the Athenian democracy before the Peloponnesian war. The widely accepted view that he favoured oligarchy is based partly on the fact that among his opponents were the two demagogues Athenagoras and Diocles and partly on the speech of the former. Athenagoras associates him by implication with the young oligarchs who are accused of plotting to overthrow the democracy but, as has already been pointed out, does not attack him directly.⁴ This absence of direct attack in a speech full of unrestrained violence is significant : Athenagoras would surely have denounced him personally as a would-be subverter of the democracy if this charge would have carried any conviction. It was the practice of demagogues to brand as

¹ W. Hüttl, *Verfassungsgeschichte von Syrakus* (1929), 86.

² A. Andrewes, *The Greek Tyrants* (1956), 136-7, believes that Diocles restored full democracy, which had been in operation before the Syracusans, on the advice of Hermocrates, reduced the number of generals from fifteen to three (6.72.4-73.1). There is, however, no evidence that this measure, which was certainly desirable on military grounds, had any political significance, or that the work of Diocles consisted merely of restoration.

³ The evidence consists of a fragment of Timaeus (*F Gr Hist* 566 F 102a), who, regarding the Athenian disaster in Sicily as a punishment for the impious mutilation of the Hermae, declares that the man chiefly responsible for the disaster was Hermocrates the son of Hermon, *ὃς ἀπὸ τοῦ παρανομηθέντος διὰ πατέρων ἦν*. Timaeus was addicted to antiquarian flights of fancy and may have inferred the alleged descent of the family from Hermes only from the names of Hermocrates and his father.

⁴ By no stretch of the imagination could Hermocrates, who had represented Syracuse at Gela nine years earlier, be included among *νεώτεροι* whose age disqualified them from being legally appointed to any office (6.38.5).

enemies of the people all who did not share their own extreme views. The political sympathies of Hermocrates were probably no more oligarchical than those of Nicias and other Athenians who, while accepting the principles of democracy, disapproved of demagogues such as Cleon and Hyperbolus. One reason for the dearth of information about his position in local politics may be that he stood aloof from feuds between factions, and the absence of party support may have proved a handicap to him when trying to secure the adoption of his proposals.

During the two years of conflict that ended with the destruction of the Athenian forces he served Syracuse and Sicily more effectively in the assembly than on the field of battle. Knowing the weaknesses of his fellow-countrymen, he was always at hand to give wise counsel and to fortify their morale in times of adversity by encouragement and example. The first occasion on which he is known to have performed this service was in the autumn of 415, when overconfidence and lack of discipline caused the Syracusans to be defeated in their first major battle (6.63-71). After the Athenians had withdrawn, he made a speech in the assembly of which Thucydides gives a summary in *oratio obliqua* (6.72.2-5). Instead of reproaching the Syracusans for their neglect of his advice, he consoled them by arguing that they had not lacked courage and that their inferiority to a far more experienced enemy had not proved so great as might have been expected. He urged the enlargement of their hoplite force and the introduction of compulsory training: it appears that few had undergone training voluntarily. He also proposed that the board of fifteen generals should be replaced by a smaller board with discretionary powers. The reasons given for this proposal show that hitherto the generals had had to consult the assembly on military matters to an extent harmful both to security and to efficiency. The assembly adopted all these recommendations, electing three generals with full powers including Hermocrates himself (6.73.1). Nevertheless the Syracusans did not yet fully appreciate the urgency of the situation: the fifteen generals were not superseded by Hermocrates and his two colleagues until the following summer when their term of office expired (6.96.3).

Meanwhile Hermocrates was called upon to exercise his powers of persuasion at Camarina. The Camarinaeans were suspect because they alone of the Dorians in Sicily had been allied with Athens during the Archidamian war. In 415 they had refused to receive the Athenians (6.52.1) and had sent a token force of cavalry and archers to Syracuse, which took part in the battle fought there in the autumn (6.67.2) ; but the insignificance of this force intensified the suspicions of the Syracusans, who feared that the Athenian victory might encourage Camarina to desert them. They heard that the Athenians were making a fresh approach to the Camarinaeans, and a counter embassy was accordingly sent under the leadership of Hermocrates (6.75.3-4). Both embassies attended a meeting of the assembly, and the occasion is marked by another Thucydidean antilogy, the first speech being delivered by Hermocrates and the second by the Athenian spokesman Euphemus (6.76-87).

The speech of Hermocrates resembles his speech at Gela in that the keynote of both is the need for Siceliot unity. To argue convincingly that the Athenian aim is purely selfish, namely the enslavement of Sicily, is now even easier, but it is as difficult as ever for him to dispel fears of Syracusan imperialism. He admits that some Siceliots may, through envy or apprehension, wish Syracuse to be weakened, but he maintains that destiny cannot be so conveniently controlled (6.78.2). Siceliots fighting on the Syracusan side will be fighting for their own survival and not for that of Syracuse, and their prospects of success will be much brighter while Syracusan power remains unbroken. Camarina will be the next victim and will not be saved by electing to remain neutral now (6.78.3-4). The end of the speech contains a threat of reprisals if the Camarinaeans refuse to listen and Syracuse is victorious (6.80.4). He claims that such reprisals would not constitute aggression but punishment for treachery.

The speech of Euphemus is mainly an attempt to convince the Camarinaeans that Syracusan imperialism is much more dangerous to them than Athenian because Syracuse is their neighbour whereas Athens is far away. He also defends Athenian policy in Sicily and elsewhere against the charges of Hermocrates.

The speech is an interesting example of Thucydidean method, for in no other antilogy does the second speaker concentrate to such an extent on seeking to refute the first.¹

Almost all the arguments of Hermocrates and Euphemus are applicable to Siceliots other than the Camarinaeans. The issue that both speakers have most at heart is whether the Siceliot cities generally will support Syracuse or Athens or neither.² Upon the decisions of these cities much depended. It is tempting to envisage the struggle at Syracuse as one between the Athenians on the one side and the Syracusans with Peloponnesian support on the other, but Thucydides frequently emphasizes the influence of other Siceliots.³ Here he is following his practice of foreshadowing through the medium of speeches a factor that is to be prominent in the subsequent narrative.

The Camarinaeans eventually decided to support neither side at present (6.88.2), adopting one course of action from which Hermocrates had tried to deter them (6.80.1-2). Thus his mission was unsuccessful. Yet the analysis of their feelings given by Thucydides suggests that they favoured the Athenians rather than the Syracusans (6.88.1), so that, though failing to win their co-operation, Hermocrates at least performed a valuable service in securing that they chose neutrality.

The period of a few months in 414 during which he held the office of general was the unhappiest phase of his career. Epipolae, the strategic key to Syracuse, was at once lost. While the retiring generals were evidently guilty of having neglected to prepare for the defence of this plateau, Hermocrates and his colleagues allowed themselves to be surprised and outmanoeuvred by the enemy (6.96-7). The situation continued to deteriorate rapidly. The Syracusan hoplites proved so much inferior to the Athenians in discipline and skill that the generals first decided not to commit their forces to any further engagements on a large scale and later, when they had twice failed to cut the Athenian wall now being

¹ Cf. the able discussion by J. de Romilly, *op. cit.* 186-94.

² Both refer to the attitude of "the others", cf. 78.4 and 80.3 (Hermocrates), 87.1 and 5 (Euphemus).

³ Cf. 7.1.5; 7.2; 25.9; 32.1-2; 33.1-2; and his statement in 58.4, which might seem superfluous, that the Syracusans supplied more troops than the other Siceliots.

built across Epipolae, had to withdraw their entire army within the city defences. There seemed to be no hope, with the forces at present available, of preventing the completion of the Athenian wall (6.98-102). Already consultations about surrender were being held among the Syracusans themselves and also with Nicias.¹ In an age when the technique of siege operations was so undeveloped that the defenders of small towns such as Potidaea and Plataea were reduced to surrender only by hunger, it was highly discreditable to the Syracusans that they so soon found themselves in a situation that appeared to be desperate. It is not surprising that in the prevailing atmosphere of depression and suspicion their generals were made scapegoats. Hermocrates and his colleagues were dismissed on the ground that the present crisis was the outcome of "either their ill luck or their treachery" (6.103.4). Of their three successors two appear again as generals when the demagogue Diocles was at the height of his power.² Hence it is likely that popular agitation, led perhaps by Athenagoras, caused the dismissal of Hermocrates and his two colleagues. Charges of treachery were in the demagogic tradition. If an impeachment followed, the defendants must have been acquitted: the influence of Hermocrates continued to be considerable, while Sicanus, who was dismissed with him, apparently served on the board of generals in the following year.³

When Hermocrates makes his next appearance in the narrative of Thucydides, only a few months have passed, but meanwhile the situation has been transformed. The blockade has been broken, and on land the Syracusans have gained the initiative. While various factors contributed to this change, the most important was undoubtedly the success of the Spartan Gylippus in organizing the defence. Thucydides nowhere suggests that

¹ 6.103.3-4, cf. 7.2.1; Plut. *Nic.* 18.11-12.

² Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.8, Eucles and Heracleides (the son of Aristogenes, who is to be distinguished from Heracleides, the son of Lysimachus, who was a colleague of Hermocrates, 6.73.1).

³ 7.46; 50.1; 70.1; Diod. 13.13.2 and 6. An achievement accredited by Polyaeus (1.43.1) to Hermocrates during his generalship is the suppression of a slave revolt by means of trickery. This sensational story has been justifiably suspected (Freeman, *op. cit.* iii. 673-4), but it may well have some foundation.

Gylippus possessed the inspiring personality of Brasidas, and according to Timaeus the Syracusans found him uncongenial (*F Gr Hist* 566 F 100). Nevertheless he quickly succeeded where Hermocrates and others had failed: discipline was greatly improved and substantial aid was obtained from other parts of Sicily. It was not the only occasion in their history that the Siceliots showed a surprising willingness to obey a leader from the Greek homeland. In the spring 413 Gylippus and Hermocrates together urged the Syracusans to undertake the formidable task of challenging the Athenians at sea. From the summaries of their speeches given by Thucydides in *oratio obliqua* it appears that Gylippus spoke with characteristically Laconic brevity, leaving to Hermocrates the responsibility of producing convincing arguments (7.21.2-4). The latter pointed out that the Athenians had not always possessed their skill in seamanship but had acquired it compulsorily in consequence of the Persian invasion. He also argued that the very unexpectedness of their resistance at sea would give the Syracusans an advantage that would discount their lack of experience.¹ The combined pressure of Gylippus, Hermocrates and others overcame any misgivings that may still have been felt, and at long last the Syracusans prepared to use their fleet (7.21.5).

This collaboration between Gylippus and Hermocrates, which must have benefited the Syracusan cause in other ways during the last months of the campaign, throws light upon the character of the latter. Inevitably, and perhaps justifiably, he must have felt that the failures of the Syracusans during his generalship were due to their own shortcomings and not to faulty leadership on his part. Nevertheless he was prepared to use all his energy and influence in support of Gylippus, who had in effect supplanted him. He gave his services unsparingly wherever they seemed likely to further the cause of Greek Sicily, and, unlike Alcibiades, he did not allow personal considerations to blunt his patriotism. He is not known to have played any part in the work of preparing the fleet for action, which was largely a Corinthian achievement, or to have fought in the sea battles in the Great Harbour. The only record of his participation in

¹ Cf. 6.34.6-8, where he uses a similar argument.

military operations at Syracuse after his dismissal from the generalship is a statement by Diodorus (13.11.4) that he commanded a detachment of picked troops in the night battle on Epipolae. This body after a spirited resistance was put to flight (7.43.4-5), and the Athenian advance was first stemmed by the Boeotians.

The last of his services during this campaign was one that substantially influenced the course of history. Had he not acted as he did, the defeat of the Athenians would have been grievous enough, involving the loss of the entire fleet operating in Sicily; as it was, they lost almost the whole of their army as well and suffered an overwhelming disaster. The story, which is a very famous one, illustrates both his resourcefulness and his persistency in refusing to abandon his aims despite seemingly insuperable obstacles. The Athenians had planned to withdraw from Syracuse to Catana by land if they failed in their final attempt to break out of the Great Harbour (7.60.2) and as soon as the sea battle was lost, they made preparations to put this plan into operation during the ensuing night. Hermocrates, appreciating that the Athenians could still be formidable if allowed to escape to some other part of Sicily, urged the generals to have the principal roads blocked and guarded before nightfall. The generals agreed with his views but were convinced that their orders would not be obeyed by troops already beginning to celebrate the victory together with a feast of Heracles which happened to fall on that day. Accordingly he sent some of his friends at dusk to the Athenian camp, where they shouted a warning to delay the withdrawal and make it in daylight after due preparation because the roads were already guarded. As he intended, these messengers were mistaken for traitors who had long been in touch with Nicias, and their false message was believed to be authentic. The Athenians postponed their evacuation, and from that moment their fate was sealed.¹

Thucydides does not record the views of Hermocrates on the proposal that Nicias and Demosthenes should be executed (7.86.2-4). According to Diodorus and Plutarch he was howled

¹ 7.73.1-74.1. The versions of the story by Diodorus (13.18.3-5), Plutarch (*Nic.* 26.1-2) and Polyaeus (1.43.2) add nothing of any substance.

down in the assembly when he tried to dissuade the Syracusans from treating the generals and other prisoners inhumanely, declaring that the honourable use of victory was superior to victory itself.¹ Although this story is almost certainly derived from a Sicilian source which might tend to exaggerate the magnanimity of Hermocrates, there is no adequate reason to reject it. His principal aim was now achieved in that Greek Sicily was safe from the menace of Athenian intervention, at any rate for some years. Savage reprisals against helpless prisoners would contribute nothing towards the permanent removal of Athenian imperialism.

Although the Syracusans were weakened by their efforts of the last two years, their self-confidence and their prestige must have been enormously enhanced. It might have been expected that they would now proceed to exploit their victory by attempting to establish a hegemony over eastern Sicily and that, if the plea of Hermocrates for Siceliot unity had been designed to pave the way for Syracusan expansion, he would have been active in encouraging the pursuit of these ambitions. Syracuse, however, does not appear to have made a determined effort even to punish the Siceliots who had sided with the Athenians. Hostilities against the Chalcidian cities dragged on for several years, but Catana maintained its independence, apparently without much difficulty, aided by Athenians who had evaded their pursuers during the withdrawal from Syracuse or had later escaped from captivity.² This absence of vigorous action by the Syracusans against their local enemies cannot be attributed wholly to exhaustion or to their tendency to relaxation of effort when not directly threatened, for they sent a fleet to co-operate with the Peloponnesians in the Aegean. Thucydides expressly states that Hermocrates was the principal instigator of this decision, urging the Siceliots to "join in completing the destruction of Athens" (8.26.1). The Peloponnesians expected naval assistance from Sicily (8.2.3), and indeed the Syracusans could have

¹ Diod. 13.19.5-6; Plut. *Nic.* 28.3. The story quoted by Plutarch (*Nic.* 28.5) from Timaeus (*F Gr Hist* 566 F 101) that Hermocrates contrived to give the Athenian generals the opportunity to commit suicide in prison is certainly false.

² 7.85.4; Lys. 20.24-26; Paus. 7.16.5; Diod. 13.56.2.

been charged with ingratitude if they had not attempted to repay their allies for the substantial aid received during the Athenian invasion. To Hermocrates, however, the fleet surely did not sail only to discharge a debt of honour, nor was the enterprise merely an act of retaliation. Athenian intervention had always constituted the greatest obstacle to his plan for Siceliot unity, and here was an opportunity to remove this danger for ever. He was himself chosen to command the expeditionary force, an appointment perhaps supported by his political opponents, who may already have been planning to take advantage of his absence. The size of this force, which consisted of twenty Syracusan and two Selinuntine ships together with a body of hoplites, may seem modest, even niggardly, but because its members were veterans of the battles in the Great Harbour, it was an asset of great value to the inexperienced Peloponnesians. Even its size is not unimpressive when it is remembered that no Greek state other than Athens sent a larger expedition to a distant theatre of war throughout the fifth century.

The Syracusans distinguished themselves in their first engagement in Asia (8.28.2) and continued to show fighting qualities superior to those of other contingents. Their effectiveness was undoubtedly due in some degree to the leadership of Hermocrates. Yet while he overshadowed his colleagues on the Peloponnesian side both in ability to win the loyalty of his troops and in strength of character, his influence upon the course of the campaign was limited by his subordination to a succession of Spartan admirals. The principal reason why so little progress was made against the weakened and disunited Athenians was that relations became increasingly strained between the Peloponnesians and the satrap Tissaphernes, who had become their paymaster but soon began to withhold part of the agreed subsidy with the object of prolonging the war and weakening both sides. Hermocrates, speaking on behalf of the whole fleet, protested more vigorously than any of the other commanders against this humiliating and dishonest treatment, and his protests caused Tissaphernes to make some concessions. Unlike most of his colleagues, he refused Persian bribes, and his forthright attitude gained him the lasting enmity of the satrap (8.29.2 ; 45.3 : 85.3).

Feeling against Astyochus, the Spartan admiral, and Tissaphernes subsequently became so embittered that mutinous disturbances occurred at Miletus, in which the Syracusans played a leading part (8.78 ; 83-4). The malcontents blamed Astyochus because he did not engage the Athenian fleet in a major battle and had not secured the payment of the Persian subsidy ; they were even more enraged against Tissaphernes for failing either to pay his Greek allies or to produce the Phoenician fleet which was to have aided them. Some officers supported the action of their men, but the attitude of Hermocrates towards these disturbances is not recorded. He doubtless approved of attempts to bring pressure upon Tissaphernes, but it seems unlikely that he encouraged insubordination against the supreme commander of the Peloponnesian forces, though the weakness and incompetence of Astyochus evidently exasperated him.

When Astyochus soon afterwards sailed for home, having completed his term of office, he took with him an agent representing Tissaphernes, who was anxious to exculpate himself in the eyes of the Spartans (8.85.1-2). At the same time a second mission left for Sparta consisting of a Milesian embassy and Hermocrates. The Milesians were sent to denounce the satrap, while Hermocrates "intended to show that Tissaphernes was ruining the Peloponnesian cause in association with Alcibiades and was playing a double game".¹ Thucydides does not

¹ 8.85.2. Thucydides refers at this point to the dismissal and banishment of Hermocrates (8.85.3), and Wilamowitz, *Hermes*, xliii (1908), 608-12, and Steup in an appendix on this passage (Anhang, 295-6) maintain that he was already an exile when he accompanied the Milesian envoys to Sparta (summer, 411). They reject the evidence of Xenophon (*Hell.* 1.1.27-31), who dates his banishment much later (autumn, 410), and of Diodorus (13.39.4), who states that he fought at Cynossema. The problem is a complicated one, but it seems preferable to accept the view of many scholars (cf. T. Lenschau, *R.E.* viii (1912), col. 886) that Thucydides is here referring to a later event out of its chronological context. A similar anticipation occurs in the preceding chapter, where he mentions the death of the Spartan Lichas which occurred some time afterwards (8.84.5, cf. 87.1, where Lichas accompanies Tissaphernes to Aspendus). It is true that τὰ τελευταῖα in 8.85.3 means not "subsequently" but "finally": the phrase marks the culmination of the quarrel between Hermocrates and Tissaphernes, and Thucydides perhaps completes his account of this quarrel here because he does not intend to mention it again. The accusation of Tissaphernes that Hermocrates had asked him for money is doubtless a malicious distortion of the

record how these missions fared: in any book other than the eighth he might well have included speeches summarizing the debate at Sparta. According to Xenophon, however, the charges made by Hermocrates against Tissaphernes were supported by Astyochus and were accepted by the Spartans as proven (*Hell.* 1.1.31). If, as is probable, these denunciations of Tissaphernes contributed to the Spartan decision to transfer the fleet from his satrapy to that of Pharnabazus, Hermocrates helped to terminate a situation which might well have led to the disintegration of the Peloponnesian forces in Asia.¹

After Mindarus had moved from Ionia to the Hellespont, he had to face an Athenian fleet much better handled than his own and accordingly suffered a series of defeats. In the major battles at Cynossema and Cyzicus the Syracusans seem to have fought with more skill or more determination than their allies. At Cynossema they pressed the enemy hard at first but were later forced back and took to flight when they saw the rest of the fleet routed; only one of their ships fell into enemy hands, whereas the losses sustained by most other contingents were proportionately much higher.² At Cyzicus, where the Peloponnesians were overwhelmed, only the Syracusan ships were burned by their crews before the Athenians could seize them; all the rest of the fleet was captured by the enemy (*Xen. Hell.* 1.1.18).

Xenophon provides one last glimpse of Hermocrates with the Syracusan fleet in Asia, and it is an illuminating one (*Hell.* 1.1.27-31). The passage is characteristic of its author, commonplace in thought and expression, probably inaccurate in detail, and yet portraying most graphically the relations between troops on active service and their leaders, a subject of which he had much personal experience. While the Syracusans were at

protests which Hermocrates had made when pressing for the payment of the Persian subsidy (8.29.2; 45.3).

¹ Cf. 8.99. Presumably Mindarus, the successor of Astyochus, had orders to sail for the Hellespont if Tissaphernes did not at once give the Peloponnesians wholehearted support.

² 8.104-6. At Abydos, where the Peloponnesians were again defeated, the Syracusans fought on the left wing (*Diod.* 13.45.7); nothing further is known of their part in the battle.

Antandrus building ships to replace those lost at Cyzicus, news arrived that their generals had been banished by popular vote. There is every reason to believe both that this action was taken on political grounds at the instigation of Diocles, who had recently introduced his programme of constitutional reform, and that the loss of the Syracusan ships at Cyzicus afforded a pretext for the impeachment. Hermocrates, acting as spokesman for his colleagues at a mass meeting of the Syracusans, protested that they had been banished unjustly and illegally, but rejected the clamorous demand that they should continue in office and defy the decision of the home government.¹ This refusal by the generals to consider only their own interests is highly creditable: had they consented, a state of civil war would have been created similar to that between the Athenian forces at Samos and the Four Hundred at Athens, and the consequences might have proved harmful to the Peloponnesian cause. The generals did, however, agree to remain in command until the arrival of their successors, and most of the trierarchs undertook to secure that the sentences of banishment should be revoked when the fleet returned home. Xenophon draws a lively picture, which must surely be authentic, of the devotion to Hermocrates felt by his officers and men and of their regret that he would no longer lead them: he had made himself immensely popular by his care for their interests and by his practice of taking them into his confidence and welcoming their advice. When the new generals arrived, he visited Pharnabazus with whom he had evidently established friendly relations, for the satrap provided him unasked with money for effecting his return to Syracuse.² Later he joined an embassy

¹ The sentence in which Xenophon describes the reactions of this military assembly (*Hell.* 1.1.28, οἱ δ' ἀναβοήσαντες ἐκέλευον ἐκείνους ἄρχειν, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ τριήραρχοι καὶ οἱ ἐπιβάται καὶ οἱ κυβερνήται) has been given a political interpretation by some scholars (Freeman, *op. cit.* iii. 430-1; Busolt, *op. cit.* iii. 2.1549 with n. 1) which is surely unwarranted. Xenophon, who had himself attended many meetings of this kind, is only pointing out that the generals were most enthusiastically supported by the more responsible members of the audience whose military status gave them the greatest influence. He is not suggesting that the crews of the ships were even lukewarm, much less that they were eager to be rid of their generals for political reasons. The whole passage implies solidarity in support of Hermocrates and his colleagues (cf. 29, οὐδενὸς δὲ οὐδὲν ἐπαιτιωμένου).

² *Xen. Hell.* 1.1.31; *Diod.* 13.63.2.

sponsored by Pharnabazus which was on its way to the Persian court,¹ but he cannot have accompanied it far, for shortly afterwards he was back in Sicily.

It is regrettable that the closing stages of his career are known only from the account of Diodorus (13.63 ; 75.2-9), who seldom provides a coherent picture of important characters. His actions after his return to Sicily seem to be reported accurately enough, but the motives underlying them are not at all clear. The recent Carthaginian invasion, in which Selinus and Himera were destroyed, had exposed once more the weakness and disunity of Greek Sicily, and the efforts of the Syracusans under Diocles to save their Siceliot kinsmen had lacked determination and military skill. Hermocrates seems to have felt himself called upon to serve his fellow-countrymen against Carthage as he had served them against Athens.² With money supplied by his friend Pharnabazus he built five ships at Messana and hired 1,000 mercenaries.³ Then after a vain attempt to secure his recall through the influence of his friends at Syracuse, he proceeded to pillage the Carthaginian province with a force now swollen to 6,000. Though he was not strong enough to besiege the fortified towns of Motya and Panormus, his raids were very successful and inflicted severe damage. He must have appreciated the danger of provoking another Carthaginian offensive. For the present, however, his success created a favourable impression at Syracuse, where the populace was now willing to restore him, though opposition was to be expected from his enemies ; for the future he may have believed that his old dream of a united Greek Sicily could best be realized by launching a

¹ Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.13. Xenophon gives a confused account of this embassy, and it is not clear why Hermocrates was invited to join it or why he left it.

² E. Meyer, *G. d. A.* v (1902), 70. There was even a possibility of co-operation between Carthage and Athens : they were in diplomatic contact in 406 (cf. K. F. Stroheker, *Historia*, iii (1954-5), 163-71).

³ Lenschau, *op. cit.* col. 885, maintains that the ships were built in Messenia and are to be identified with the Sicilian ships which took part in the recovery of Pylos (Diod. 13.64.5 with Wesseling's emendation). It is, however, difficult to believe that the phrase *αἱ μὲν ἀπὸ Σικελίας* refers to ships built in the Peloponnese. On other occasions ships from Sicily assisted the Peloponnesians in operations off the coast of Greece (8.91.2).

crusade against Carthage.¹ The booty gained during these raids must have been very welcome, for apart from the funds provided by Pharnabazus his financial resources can hardly have been substantial and must have been strained by the growth of his army.

He then took a further step designed to win support at Syracuse, and also to discredit his opponents there, by recovering the bones of the Syracusans killed at Himera and having them conveyed to their homes. This action caused an outbreak of popular anger against Diocles, who, when in command of the force sent to relieve Himera, had left the Syracusan dead unburied. Diocles was now banished, but Hermocrates was not recalled and withdrew to western Sicily : according to Diodorus (13.75.5) the Syracusans were afraid that, if given a position of authority, he would establish a tyranny.² Soon afterwards he returned to the vicinity of Syracuse at the instigation of his partisans in the city, who seem to have misjudged the feelings of the populace. Being apparently led to believe that if once he showed himself inside the walls he would be acclaimed by a great majority of the Syracusans, he pressed forward by night with a few men and arrived at the gate of Achradina, which his partisans had already occupied. While he was awaiting the rest of his army, large numbers of armed Syracusans gathered in the market-place and fighting broke out in which he and most of his followers were killed. The survivors were tried and banished except some of the most seriously wounded who escaped impeachment because their relations alleged that they were dead. Among these was the future tyrant Dionysius.

Diodorus reports the suspicion that Hermocrates intended to make himself a tyrant without stating whether or not it had any foundation and without providing his readers with adequate evidence to enable them to judge the issue for themselves. Presumably the authority upon which his narrative is based was equally non-committal. Greek statesmen who displayed marked ability and individuality tended to incur charges of plotting to

¹ A similar policy was later adopted by the elder Dionysius, though his motives were almost certainly more selfish.

² The validity of these suspicions is discussed below.

establish a tyranny, the stock example being that of Alcibiades. It was almost inevitable that the actions of Hermocrates since his return to Sicily gave rise to such accusations by his fellow-citizens, who had had long experience of his initiative and determination. There is no justification for assuming that, because hitherto he had subordinated personal ambition to patriotic zeal—a view that this paper has sought to establish—the suspicion that he now intended to make himself tyrant should necessarily be dismissed as groundless. It would doubtless have suited him best to have occupied a position similar to that of Pericles and to have been in effective control of Syracusan policy without being invested with dictatorial powers. The Syracusan democracy, however, was far less developed than that of Athens, and his intimate knowledge of its defects must surely have convinced him that he could accomplish little if his authority were limited and insecure. He might have been content with the status of *στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ*, but apparently no one who was not a tyrant held this office before the time of Dion.¹ Syracuse had proved dangerously vulnerable in the earlier stages of the Athenian siege before the Peloponnesians intervened, and the more recent Carthaginian invasion suggested that these weaknesses might even have been intensified by the reforms of Diocles. Another Carthaginian invasion might shatter the prosperity of Greek Sicily or even drive the Greeks from the island. Conscious of all this, Hermocrates may well have concluded that only by becoming tyrant would he enjoy sufficient authority to enable him to put into effect the drastic and unpopular measures which the situation demanded. The benevolent tyranny of Gelon, who was for generations remembered with affection by the Syracusans,² afforded a precedent.

Hermocrates is one of Thucydides' few heroes. That he is a member of this select company may seem surprising, because

¹ E. Pais, *Storia dell' Italia antica e della Sicilia* i² (1933), 431 expresses the reasonable view that because Hermocrates would have had to assume a dictatorship of some kind, the question of his status is not one of much consequence. It is, however, very doubtful whether at Syracuse in this period any position other than that of tyrant could have been devised which would have satisfied his needs.

² Cf. Plut. *Timol.* 23.7; [Dio Chrys.] 37.21.

his personal successes are far outweighed by his failures, at any rate during the phases of his career about which any information has been preserved. At Gela his plea for Siceliot unity was virtually ignored. When nine years later he urged the Syracusans to prepare energetically for defence before the arrival of the Athenian expedition, his advice was to a large extent unheeded. His speech at Camarina proved only partly successful, and the brief period of his generalship was one of almost uninterrupted failure for the Syracusans. Although Sicilian tradition, unwilling to admit that Syracuse survived mainly through the intervention of Gylippus and the Peloponnesians, pictures Hermocrates as its saviour,¹ the more objective account of Thucydides shows that, valuable as his contribution was, it was not the deciding factor. In Asia his uncompromising opposition to Tissaphernes and his inspiring leadership of the Siceliot contingent were highly creditable, but in all three major engagements at sea he was on the losing side, and in the third the whole Siceliot fleet was lost. Finally, after his return to Sicily his attempt to secure reinstatement at Syracuse ended in a somewhat inglorious debacle.

Why then among contemporary leaders does he occupy a place of honour in the *History* of Thucydides next only to Pericles and perhaps to Brasidas? It is hardly necessary to point out that Thucydides does not measure greatness solely by the criterion of success; ² but while Pericles and Brasidas had their failures, they were far more consistently successful than Hermocrates. It might be argued that Thucydides has based his estimate of Hermocrates largely upon knowledge of achievements in Sicily not mentioned in his work because they were not relevant to the history of the Peloponnesian war. He was doubtless in possession of information about Hermocrates which he has for this reason not chosen to record, though leading figures in whom he was particularly interested tend to receive rather fuller treatment than would seem strictly necessary, as

¹ This was undoubtedly the standpoint of Timaeus, cf. especially *F Gr Hist* 566 F 102, with Jacoby's commentary on F 99-102, and Polyb. 12.25k2 and 11 (where Polybius, though severely critical of Timaeus, evidently accepts his estimate of Hermocrates).

² His admiration for Antiphon (8.68.1-2) affords a striking illustration of this.

may be seen in the case of Themistocles. Yet Hermocrates is pictured to so large an extent as the embodiment of the qualities in a leader most valued by Thucydides¹ that his high estimate of him seems to be founded mainly upon the evidence included in the *History*.

Hermocrates is presented as a man of complete integrity and high principles which he refused to abandon or compromise, preferring to accept the handicaps which they imposed. Because Syracuse was politically immature, it was far more difficult for him than for Pericles to win for himself a position of personal authority which would have enabled him to put his enlightened ideas into practice. Unlike the successors of Pericles whose methods Thucydides condemns (2.65.10), he refused to seek personal advancement by gratifying the mob. On the contrary, like Pericles himself, he was prepared to endanger his own popularity and prospects by advocating measures which he knew to be unwelcome but believed to be desirable. His attitude towards what may be termed political morality contrasts with that of Timoleon, who later for a short time achieved in Sicily much that Hermocrates had attempted in vain. Timoleon, though enjoying the advantages of a dictatorship, was willing in the public interest to adopt unscrupulous methods when dealing with unscrupulous opponents;² Hermocrates evidently was not. It was only at the end of his life that the shortsightedness and ingratitude of the Syracusans led him to resort to force in an attempt to win personal ascendancy, and even then, if the interpretation given above has any validity, he was actuated by patriotism rather than by ambition.

He was indeed a true patriot; and true patriotism was rare enough among politicians during the Peloponnesian war. It was a quality seen rather in military leaders who played little or no part in politics such as Phormio, Demosthenes and Lamachus. Hermocrates, however, was a patriot of an unorthodox kind in that his patriotism was not limited by the boundaries of his own city-state but embraced all Greek Sicily, foreshadowing in some

¹ G. F. Bender, *Der Begriff des Staatsmannes bei Thukydides* (1938), 82-103, shows that Hermocrates has all the hallmarks of statesmanship as defined in .60.5.

² Cf. my *Timoleon and his relations with tyrants* (1952), *passim*.

degree the panhellenism of the fourth century. It was perhaps this conception more than anything else that won for him the admiration of Thucydides; for to Thucydides the intellectual quality of a statesman was crucial,¹ while of the intellectually gifted only the greatest, such as Pericles, possessed the spark of genius, a combination of idealism with imaginative vision, capable of creating original and illuminating ideas. Hermocrates' dream of a united Sicily, abortive though it was, is scarcely less noble, and certainly less conventional in Greek eyes, than the ideals of the Funeral Speech.

In addition to moral and intellectual qualities Thucydides demands of his great men practical ability and a capacity for leadership. As a strategist and tactician Hermocrates appears from the extant record of his career to have been undistinguished, and the judgment of Thucydides on his military qualities (6.72.2, *κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἐμπειρία τε ἱκανὸς γινόμενος*) does not credit him with any natural aptitude in this sphere and seems a trifle lukewarm. On the other hand, there can be no doubt of his personal bravery, to which Thucydides refers in much stronger terms in the same passage (*ἀνδρεία ἐπιφανής*). Not only was he courageous himself in difficult situations but also indefatigable in his efforts to sustain the morale of others, as he showed during the Athenian siege and while commanding the Siceliot contingent in Asia. The impact of his personality is perhaps most clearly discernible from the passage of Xenophon, to which reference has already been made, describing the scene when the news of his banishment was received. In his contacts with others he seems to have shown the genial warmth of Brasidas rather than the cold austerity of Pericles.

Should Thucydides' picture of Hermocrates be accepted as a true one? Unfortunately its authenticity cannot be tested by examining the evidence of other contemporary authorities. As might have been expected, Hermocrates apparently made much less impression upon public opinion in Greece than Brasidas, who became a sort of bogy in Attic comedy,² and it is perhaps

¹ Bender, *op. cit.* 95 n. 261, draws attention to the prominence of *ξύνομος* in Thucydidean judgements on great leaders.

² Aristoph. *Wasps*, 475, cf. 288; *Peace*, 281-3 and 640.

not wholly fortuitous that in no extant work written at the end of the fifth century or at the beginning of the fourth is Hermocrates even mentioned, apart from that of Thucydides. Later writers from Xenophon onwards could have been, and most doubtless were, influenced by Thucydides' estimate of him or by that of the Sicilian tradition, which, as already noted, was led by local patriotism to exaggerate his achievements.¹ It might be argued that Thucydides has treated him too sympathetically because the Syracusan assembly banished him. Several other characters whose ability is rated most highly in the *History* were, like Thucydides himself, the victims of an unappreciative mob: Themistocles, Alcibiades, Pericles at the end of his life, perhaps Phormio. It is, however, possible, and in my opinion very probable,² that the part of the *History* in which Hermocrates is most prominent were composed before 410, the year of his banishment. Although Thucydides should not be assumed to be infallible, his general reputation for impartiality does afford some grounds for accepting his picture of Hermocrates as authentic and unprejudiced. A more specific indication of impartiality is his rejection of the temptation, to which the Sicilian tradition succumbed, to represent Hermocrates as the saviour of Syracuse despite his own admiration for him and despite the fact that some at least of his information about him was doubtless derived from Siceliot reports which can hardly have been entirely free from bias. As in other cases, he has refused to allow his judgment to be warped either by his own predilections or by those of his informants.

¹ Plato, who during his visits to Syracuse must have heard much about Hermocrates and may well have discussed him with the historian Philistus, introduces him as a character in the *Timaeus* and *Critias* and was to have made him the principal speaker in the third dialogue of the trilogy, which was never written.

² *C.Q.* viii (1958), 108-9.