

HEGEMONIC FINANCES

FUNDING
ATHENIAN DOMINATION
IN THE
5TH AND 4TH CENTURIES BC



Edited by

Thomas J. Figueira
and
Sean R. Jensen

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Contributors

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PREFACE

Thomas Figueira

We dedicate this volume to the memory of Michael Hamilton Jameson (1924–2004), who was one of my principal mentors and, along with Martin Ostwald, supervised my dissertation. In a long teaching career that was mainly spent at the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford University, Mike Jameson was one of the most active educators of Greek historians in the United States during the later years of the twentieth century. He founded the Ancient History program at the University of Pennsylvania, which became a model for similar curricula elsewhere in North America, especially in its incorporation of ancient cultures other than Greek and Roman. His mentorship was notable for his expectation of excellence and his freedom from bias of any nature. His contributions to ancient Greek history may not now always receive all the appreciation they deserve, since his rich dossier of work did not include a signature monograph. Nevertheless, a scholar of unusually broad interests and learning, he produced many important works, which treated agriculture and rural settlement, warfare, Sophoclean drama, ekistics, slavery, epigraphy (especially of the Peloponnesus), mythology, cult, and Attic calendars (note his posthumous *Cult and Rites in Ancient Greece: Essays on Religion and Society*, A.B. Stallsmith, ed., Cambridge 2014). He co-directed the excavations at Halieis and led the southern Argolid research project. His discovery and careful editing of the ‘Themistokles Decree’ elicited a torrent of publications commenting on this enigmatic and provocative document.

I hope that our volume is particularly suited for this honorand, who not only possessed extraordinary learning about the Athenian Empire, but understood intimately the personalities and interpersonal dynamics that have shaped our views on fifth-century Athenian history. The rich syllabus and stimulating meetings of his graduate seminar in Fall 1975, entitled ‘The Athenian Empire’, frustrated me at the time for our failure to complete its ‘lesson plan’, but in retrospect I have come to appreciate the questions Mike Jameson left hanging as motivations for seeking my own closing flourishes and attempting to stimulate others in the same spirit.

I should like to thank for their support in bringing this project to fruition both the Department of Classics of Rutgers University, New Brunswick and its Chair, Professor James McGlew. Thanks are also owed for their support of my scholarly activities to the School of Arts & Sciences,

New Brunswick, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. I should also like to thank Aaron Beck-Schachter of the Graduate program in Classics at Rutgers for compiling the indices. Also I cannot fail to thank Anton Powell for his friendship and his stewardship in the evolution of this project, and Mr. J. M. Trappes-Lomax who was a vigilant reader before press. It would be ungrateful not to observe in a homely metaphor that the Classical Press of Wales always ‘punches above its weight’.

INTRODUCTION

Sean R. Jensen

Throughout the 20th century the Athenian Empire (478–404) has been the focus of a broad spectrum of scholarship, exploring almost every conceivable aspect of its history, among which naturally have been included the financial dimensions that provide the main emphasis for the papers united in this volume. The landmark publication of the four volumes of *Athenian Tribute Lists* (1939–1950 = *ATL*) redefined and established much of this field of inquiry. Influential successors to the editors of the *ATL*, such as Russell Meiggs, David Lewis, and Antony Andrewes, at Oxford University, expanded on the legacy of the *ATL*, in particular forming a view of the Athenian *arkhē* that tended to emphasize its more repressive aspects.¹ The core of the analysis of the *ATL* and their Oxford-based successors centered on the means of Athenian power and hegemony building and Athens' responses to defection and challenges to its dominance. The important collection by Meiggs and Lewis of archaic and classical Greek inscriptions also helped to solidify a predominant view of the chronology and interpretation of much of the evidence regarding Athenian hegemony.² Meiggs and Lewis also forcefully upheld the dating of many of the fragments of the quota lists and a large number of Athenian decrees that regulated the empire. The impact of these scholars has been immense and their view of the harsh nature of Athenian imperialism has been highly influential.

Moreover, their criteria and methodology for dating Athenian decrees was also almost universally followed, especially regarding their emphasis on the date for the abandonment of the three-barred *sigma*.³ However, not all scholars accepted this view. Harold Mattingly began a half-century long campaign c. 1960 against the prevailing views of much of the corpus of *ATL* inscriptions as well as the accepted course and nature of the Delian League. Mattingly, in a large number of learned articles, argued that many of the accepted dates of Athenian inscriptions should be lowered from the 450s and 440s to the 420s or later.⁴ His redatings also had the effect of placing much of the imperial developments after the death of Pericles (429 BC). For example, Mattingly saw the demagogic successors of Pericles as the real architects of the most oppressive aspects of Athenian rule. For years, Mattingly waged an almost solitary campaign against the *ATL* view of the empire. As the earlier disputants died off,⁵ over the past few decades

Mattingly's dating of 'imperial' inscriptions found some further support among other historians. More recently, a new enhanced reading of the Athenian treaty with Egesta (*IG I³ 11*), now moved by many to 418/7 BC from an earlier mid-century date with the identification of Antiphon as the archon, has contributed greatly to a reception of his ideas.⁶ Any work on the Delian League must therefore seriously consider his lowered dates for many inscriptions, although there has been considerable conditioning against any tendency to rush toward acceptance of Mattingly's overall portrait of Attic hegemony based merely on a revised chronology for a few inscriptions (and some resistance even against a redating of the Egesta treaty).⁷

Nevertheless, recent treatments of the *archē* do manifest a freedom from older orthodoxies, although their mastery of the source material and earlier bibliography may seem at times problematic. Recently, Ian Morris, in a volume co-edited with Walter Scheidel that is dedicated to analysis of a range of ancient empires, has argued that the Athenian empire should rather be termed a supra-national Attic state (Morris 2009), since the Athenians in his view sought to incorporate mainly kindred Ionian Greeks into an overarching Athenian state. Whether Morris' view should be accepted is not as important as the signal sounded by his approach, which challenges many long-held assumptions. An important collection of papers recently published by Duckworth and edited by John Ma, Nikolaos Papazarkadas, and Robert Parker has offered new interpretations on a whole range of issues connected to Athenian hegemony (Ma, Papazarkadas, and Parker 2009). Issues that were addressed included Nikolaos Papazarkadas' paper supporting Harold Mattingly's dates of many Athenian decrees. Kurt Raaflaub has offered a reinterpretation of the so-called 'instruments of Empire' as influenced and derived from the Persian Empire, while Alfonso Moreno examined the history and formation of the Athenian cleruchy. The enduring interest in the Athenian empire is certainly a product of the wide range of evidence and the complexity of the issues that scholars must continually confront.

As noted above, a major thrust of the most recent works, especially in the Anglophone world of scholarship, has been the chronology of the large number of undated imperial decrees found in various stages of preservation. In particular, Mattingly's model of a decidedly post-Periclean Athenian imperialism has now found some favor among scholars. Lacking thus far, however, has been a contextualization for suggested redatings. For example, Papazarkadas' contribution (2009) asserted the validity of Mattingly's dates regarding much of the corpus of the Athenian imperial decrees but did not attempt to answer the vital questions concerning the

ramifications of these later dates for scholars. According to Mattingly, only after the death of Pericles had the Athenians, led by Kleon and other demagogues, imposed many of the most severe hegemonic policies on the allied states.⁸ This theory is questionable at best, since Thucydides describes an earlier development for Athenian exploitation of the allies and the existence of the quota lists themselves attests to a vigorous imperial system in place by the mid-fifth century BC. Whether the corpus of Athenian decrees should be down-dated from the midcentury to the 420s or later is an important question, but should not be regarded as the central issue. The bulk of the evidence suggests a continual process of Athenian hegemonism that began shortly after the creation of the Delian League and extended down to its final dissolution by Sparta in 403 BC. The transfer of the League treasury to Athens and the dedication of the 1/60th of the allied tribute to Athena were significant milestones which had occurred at the latest by 454 BC. Even if the bulk of the decrees regulating allied behavior or punishing supposedly disloyal allies can be dated to the 420s, it is still clear that the structures of imperial control had been established by the 460s or 450s. Pericles himself, whose death supposedly altered the course of the empire, was active in expanding Athenian power and the exploitation of the allies, especially through the expulsion of dissident islanders from their homes and the establishment of cleruchies and colonies during the *Pentekontaetia* (the roughly fifty-year period between the repulse of Xerxes and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War).⁹

A major strain of contemporary scholarship is primarily concerned with foregrounding the imperialist techniques of Athens. When the quota and assessment lists have been the focus, almost every change in tribute levels has customarily been interpreted as reflecting a desire of the Athenians to enhance imperial control. This approach is especially visible in the interpretation of the imperial decrees. It would be unreasonable to deny that the Athenians sought to enhance their control of the Delian League by many methods throughout its existence. However, this emphasis has often prevented the emergence of more nuanced approaches that see Attic hegemony as a more adaptive force that might have left significant room for allied aspirations or was, at least, more flexible than usually thought in its accommodations of local conditions and vicissitudes. Recently, attempts have been made to offer new paradigms for understanding the complexities of Athenian empire building. Ma's paper entitled 'Empires, Statuses, and Realities' (in Ma et al. 2009) focused on Athens' championing of smaller regional units at the expense of larger allies. Ma sees similarities between Athens' imperial administration and that of the Romans. Ma's comparative analysis offers an important new approach in studying the aims and

workings of Athenian imperialism. Yet scholars must show caution in assuming a strong similarity of Roman-style governance and Athenian leadership. The scale and needs of both empires were often very different and the intrinsic economic and constitutional differences are significant.

More recent work on the Delian League has recognized that the flow of resources in the Athenian *arkhē* constitutes the engine that powered all the other processes of Attic hegemony. This focus in the work of several American scholars on more specific issues of hegemonic finances (more specific than the comprehensive work of the *ATL*) is important for the emphasis of our essays below.¹⁰ In two monographs, Lisa Kallet has concentrated on the finances of the empire by juxtaposing our epigraphic evidence with the work of Thucydides: *Money, Expense, and Naval Power in Thucydides' 1–5.24* (1993) and *Money and the Corrosion of Power in Thucydides* (2001).¹¹ Loren J. Samons Jr. has also examined the financial underpinnings and policies of the Athenians in his important volume entitled *Empire of the Owl* (2000). This study drew from a number of articles on Athenian finances (e.g., 1993, 1996). My co-editor, Tom Figueira, has concentrated on money, monetary policy, and economic integration in his *Power of Money* (1998), and a series of articles (Figueira 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2016a, 2016b).¹² This commitment to envisage Attic imperialism through an integration of its fiscal and economic dimensions has also been prominent in Francophone scholarship, as represented by two leading scholars in Bordeaux, Patrice Brun¹³ and Christophe Pébarthe,¹⁴ and elsewhere in the work of Marcel Piérart.¹⁵ Elsewhere, emphases have lain in different areas. It is striking that German scholarship has mainly tended to address issues other than the financial aspects of hegemony.¹⁶ An exception is a series of short articles by Eberhard Ruschenbusch that explored the interaction of population, arable territory, and *phoros*.¹⁷ On the *arkhē*, there have, however, been a number of monographs that have made important contributions to the study of Athenian hegemonism: Igelbrink 2015; Koch 1991; Schmitz 1988; Smarczyk 1986, 1990.¹⁸

This present volume began as a series of papers from a panel entitled ‘Athenian Hegemonic Techniques’ at the Celtic Conference in Classics held in Edinburgh, Scotland from July 28–31, 2010. A wide range of papers was presented, with an overview of the history of Athenian imperial expansion from the archaic through the classical period. Jay Samons’ paper (‘Periklean Imperialism and Imperial Finance in Context’) as one of the keynote addresses to the whole conference offered a reconstruction of the history of Athenian imperialism that argued for an ever-present aggressive and expansionist attitude of the Athenian community. Samons presents a countervailing picture of the rise of the Athenian state, one that supposes

an active imperialism significantly before the appearance of the Delian League. This piece is a challenge not only to those stressing the foundation of the Delian League as a dramatic watershed in Athenian aspirations, but also especially to those foregrounding a mid-century crisis of Attic leadership.

William Bubelis' contribution ('Imperial Numeracy? Athenian Calculation of Some Imperial Taxes') addresses Athenian tax policy in its specific aspect as a system of numeracy or numerical reasoning. Here Bubelis is interested in the reasons for the simultaneous use of the decimal and sexagesimal computation systems. The ways in which choices between systems of computation or recognitions of points of intersection between the alternative modes of computation influence the modalities of Athenian taxation, whether one considers the *phoros* system, its successor the *eikostē* '5% duty', or Athenian domestic levies.

My own chapter ('*Synteleia* and *Apotaxis* on the Athenian Tribute Lists') examines phenomena within the tribute system called *synteleia* (also *syntely*) and *apotaxis*. These terms refer to the union or the separation of tributaries for tax purposes. Both processes are visible on the tribute and assessment lists and have yet to be fully understood. Contrary to earlier views, I argue that both phenomena should best be understood as arrangements that were primarily shaped by local conditions in the allied states and are not to be seen as impositions of policy emanating from Athens in order to enhance imperial control or financial exploitation. Here I discuss the background of the earlier approaches to *synteleia* and *apotaxis* that have tended to view them chiefly as manifestations on the tribute lists of a generalized aggrandizing Athenian policy. I prefer to see a more localized process in which the allies were in constant negotiation over the impact of the tribute system in yearly or, more significantly, four-yearly cycles. Many of the changes in tribute levels were outcomes of adjustments made by Athens and individual allies as they sought a *modus vivendi* within an imperial system that balanced their now clashing, now converging, interests.

The contribution entitled 'Karystos in Euboia and Attic Hegemony' from the late Malcolm Wallace has been edited and supplemented by Thomas Figueira. It offers a detailed history of Euboian Karystos in the Delian League, with particular attention to the Euboian city's role as a material supporter of the *arkhē*. Wallace's contribution is particularly valuable as he spent a lifetime researching the island of Euboia, especially its role in the Athenian empire. In particular, Wallace and Figueira have tried to uncover the intimacy of Euboian connections with Attic hegemony, suggesting a special place for Athenians of Euboian ancestry.

In 'Patterns in Variation in Tribute Assessment', Aaron Hershkowitz

measures the flow of tribute from the various districts of the empire, and for the first time applies a spreadsheet program to the statistical evidence from the tribute and assessment lists. His findings reveal that changes in tribute assessment appear to depend generally on administrative dynamics. With the vast majority of League members paying stable amounts to Athens, the size of cities tends to shape the frequency of reductions or increases. There are two quantitative thresholds in the patterns of increasing or reducing tribute assessments that distinguish the tributary states by the size of their assessments. Notably, the largest tributaries experienced the most extreme changes in tribute levels. Hershkowitz's analysis certainly has important ramifications for evaluating the aims of the tribute system and assessing our conclusions about Athenian 'exploitation' of the allied states.

Grégory Bonnin offers a study (*Phoroi, Syntaxeis*, and Loans from Delian Apollo: The Cyclades under Athenian Financial Imperialism) of Athenian policy towards the Cycladic islanders in the first and second Athenian Leagues. Bonnin finds that Athenian tribute levels assessed on the islanders were generally light before the advent of the Peloponnesian War. The onset of the war forced the Athenians to extract greater amounts of tribute, as evidenced by the famous Thoudippos decree of 425/4 BC. However, Bonnin argues that the Thoudippos decree was only a temporary measure and, by the end of the Archidamian War, tribute levels had been reduced in the Nesiotic district of the hegemony. Bonnin also discusses the ramifications of Athenian control of the Temple of Apollo on Delos, suggesting that the Cycladic islanders only had access as borrowers when the Athenians controlled the temple. Bonnin's hypothesis offers another example of how the Athenians ensured cooperation from the Cyclades in their sphere of influence, and he has marked several stages in the manner of Attic exploitation of the Athenian superior position toward the islanders. At the request of the editors, Bonnin has appended to his chapter a treatment of the conclusions of his doctoral research on Athenian imperialism, as illustrated by the Cycladic islanders.

Thomas Figueira's paper, entitled 'The Aristeidian Tribute and the Peace of Nikias', uses an investigation of a reference to Aristeidian *phoroi* in the Peace of Nikias of 421 as a springboard for two intertwined inquiries, one into the nature of the peace process between the Athenians and Spartans in the 420s and the other a reimagining of the earliest assessment conducted at the formation of the Delian League in the early 470s. The latter inquiry is necessarily coupled with an examination of the later appreciation of the Aristeidian assessment in Athenian politics. The exact nature of the original assessment of the Delian League has been a

notoriously controversial and complex problem. By examining Thucydides' account of the Peace of Nikias, Figueira argues that the reversion of six rebellious Thracian allies to Athens under the stipulation that they pay Aristeidian tribute in fact required payments in 421 that were consistent with the spirit of an initial assessment by Aristeidēs 'the Just' and did not mandate a return to the actual assessments established in 478/7 BC. These six states, particularly in their contemporary organization, are unlikely original members of the Delian League and were not assessed by Aristeidēs and his collaborators in 478/7. Figueira's paper reveals this enigmatic aspect of the Peace of Nikias by understanding Aristeidian tribute both as a propagandistic assertion that Athens was exacting traditional levels of *phoros*, legitimately assessed, and as a militant assertion of Athenian readiness to uphold their prerogatives vis-à-vis the Spartans and their own disaffected allies.

Brian Rutishauser examines the question of the legal status and privileges of Athenian metics in the fourth century BC. He suggests that wealthy metics occupied positions as trierarchs funding the ships for the Athenian navy, which is a conclusion contrary to interpretations that prevailed in the main body of earlier scholarship. Rutishauser's findings reveal the success of the integration of resident foreigners in Athens and their importance for Athenian naval hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean. Rutishauser's conclusions affirm the flexibility and openness of classical Athens in order to maintain maritime ascendancy in challenging external situations by mobilizing any socio-economic advantage that lay to hand.

The range of papers presented in this volume allows for a multifaceted exploration of Athenian hegemony. Moreover, the views presented offer various soundings of the meaning and motivation for Athenian imperialism. Even when tendencies in analysis seem superficially at odds, our common commitment to understand the actual mechanics of hegemony led to converging results. For example, Samons' articulation of a long-standing aggressive expansionist mindset for the Athenians in some ways is matched by my own views in favor of a more pragmatic nature for interstate relations in the Athenian Empire. This volume will hopefully serve as a resource for tackling issues of importance in the study of Athenian international power politics. At the same time, there is the hope that the papers presented here will stimulate further discussion among colleagues.

Notes

¹ P.J. Rhodes has been a prominent successor in the next generation (note, e.g., Rhodes 1985). Andrewes, Lewis, and Rhodes authored several important chapters in the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* 5: Andrewes: 'The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition', 'The Spartan Resurgence'; Lewis: 'Mainland Greece, 479–451 BC', 'The Thirty Years' Peace', 'The Archidamian War'; Rhodes: 'The Delian League to 449 BC', 'The Athenian Revolution'.

² See Meiggs and Lewis 1988.

³ See, e.g., Meiggs 1966. Meiggs' other major contributions to the subject include the leading, large-scale study of the 'empire' (Meiggs 1972) and Meiggs 1943, 1950, 1952, and 1963.

⁴ See Mattingly 1996 for the collection of his many articles, for which see Figueira 2001.

⁵ Wolfgang Schuller had made a significant contribution to earlier debates with Schuller 1974 (and by his shorter works, e.g., Schuller 1978, 1981, 1984, 1985–88). In a conference of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, he has reexplored the means by which the Athenians sought to weaken the larger allies of the Delian League through economic exploitation (Schuller 1995). Moreover, he has offered sage caution against a wholesale acceptance of the Mattingly approach to the *arkhē* in Schuller 2002.

⁶ See Chambers, Gallucci, and Spanos 1990; also Chambers 1992–3, 1993.

⁷ See, e.g., Lewis 1993; Henry 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001; Figueira 1998, 442–8, 2001; Rhodes 2008; Kallet 2009.

⁸ See Mattingly 1966 (reprinted in Mattingly 1996, 147–79) for perhaps its fullest exposition.

⁹ See Thuc. 1.114–15; Plut. *Per.* 11.4–5 and 23.2.

¹⁰ Also note Blamire 2001, Pritchard 2012.

¹¹ Note also her other contributions: Kallet 1989a, 1989b, 1999, 2013.

¹² See also Wallace and Figueira 2010.

¹³ Brun 1983, 1987, although the point of balance in his scholarship has lain in Attic hegemonism of the first half of the 4th century.

¹⁴ Pébarthe 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006. Dr. Pébarthe could not contribute to this volume owing to the press of other commitments.

¹⁵ Piérart 1974, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1995.

¹⁶ Noteworthy pieces are Gawandka 1998 on the assessment of 425/4 and Giovannini 1990, 1997 (cf. 2000).

¹⁷ Ruschenbusch 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985.

¹⁸ Also cf. Leppin 1992 and, more tangentially, Bleckmann 1998; Geske 2005.

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PERIKLEAN IMPERIALISM AND IMPERIAL FINANCE IN CONTEXT

To R. Sealey

Loren J. Samons II

Around the middle of the twentieth century Greek historians reached a (near) consensus about the development of the Athenian Empire. That consensus, which rested especially on the work of Benjamin Dean Merritt and his collaborators H.T. Wade-Gery and M.F. McGregor, held that the Athenians moved from the status of leaders of a voluntary league to the control of an empire in the years just before and after 450 BC. Around 454/3 they transferred the moneys collected (ostensibly) for the protection of Hellas from Persia from their previous home on the island of Delos to a treasury in Athens. About the year 449, the Athenians made a treaty of peace with the Persians, an action which – especially when combined with a supposed suspension of tribute payments for one year followed by their subsequent reimposition – provoked some of Athens’ former ‘allies’ into revolt. In the acts of making a formal peace with their Persian enemies and of forcing their former allies to resume paying tribute and endure other acts of Athenian aggression (including the confiscation of prime lands, the installation of garrisons, the transfer of litigation to Athens, the swearing of oaths of loyalty, and the exclusive use of Athenian coins, weights, and measures), the Athenians accepted and heralded their new role as governors of an empire.¹

As all Greek historians know, a few detractors identified problems with this picture, which nevertheless dominated the scene for almost half a century and can be found, for example, in the latest edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*.² Objections rested most often on epigraphic grounds: some scholars argued that it was unreasonable to assume that Athenian stonecutters had uniformly stopped employing *sigmas* with three bars after 446/5, a hypothesis which had seemingly confirmed the dating of many ‘imperialistic’ Athenian decrees to the middle of the fifth century BC. Linguistic anomalies, orthography, and formal criteria (such as the employment of the archon’s name in an inscription’s prescript or the

categorization of cities as ‘allies’ or ‘cities which the Athenians rule’) sometimes seemed to run counter to the orthodoxy. Unwarranted emendations or fanciful interpretations of reliable texts based on questionable restorations of papyri of unknown provenance or nature raised some suspicions.³ Historical grounds for resistance were also adduced, including – occasionally – the idea that such imperialism as the orthodoxy envisioned (for example, in the so-called ‘Coinage Decree’) was better associated with a figure like Kleon than with the statesman Perikles.⁴

The orthodoxy’s leading adversary – H.B. Mattingly – bore the brunt of a concerted and sometimes brutal counter-offensive. But Mattingly’s ultimate and most vexing heresy, it almost seems, was to have been proven right (in his essential claim that three-barred *sigmas* appear in Athenian inscriptions after 446) – and this while still living!⁵ Reading the work today of some scholars who had not (openly) doubted the orthodoxy all along, one senses a palpable resentment. Scholars who now admit the principle – three-barred *sigmas* appear in ‘late’ documents – have rushed to condemn Mattingly’s motivation, which is usually characterized as an attempt to save Perikles from charges of ‘harsh imperialism’ by returning decrees bearing this ‘tone’ to the age of Kleon.⁶ A dubious charge, if one reads Mattingly’s work with care. Mattingly’s arguments almost always rest on other and firmer supports than the ‘tone’ of a document, which is a factor he uses more to cap than to buttress an argument.⁷

I was personally delighted to see Mattingly’s basic claim proved correct, and not just because of the condescending tone of those who dismissed or belittled his work. Nevertheless, this argument about the origins or development of Athens’ *arkebē*, while certainly stimulating, has too often taken its leave from what seems to me a flawed premise. Modern historians of Greece have sought an explanation for ‘Athenian imperialism’ in the fifth century BC, when Athens collected tribute from other Greeks and ultimately fought an unsuccessful war against its former ally, Sparta. Yet it is possible, and in this paper I argue it is likely, that the Athenians’ aggression against other Greek states has a much longer history. Athens did not ‘become’ imperialistic only after the Persian Wars, or after she became democratic. The Athenians pursued an aggressive policy intended to expand Athens’ control over parts of the Aegean and create additional space for Athenian settlement from at least the early sixth century BC, and the city of Athens proper had aggressively expanded its territory from an even earlier period. Indeed, Athens pursued a relatively consistent (and aggressive) foreign policy under every form of government the Athenians possessed: aristocratic, tyrannical, democratic, and oligarchic. The principles that underlay Athens’ acquisitive foreign policy reflected

the Athenians' desire for increased influence in or control of (at least) 1) areas of the Aegean, including (but not limited to) the islands near Attica, 2) the Hellespontine region, 3) the route between Athens and the Hellespont, 4) the Thraceward district, and 5) the Ionian sacred center of Delos. When placed in its proper context, 'Periklean' imperialism appears unusual only in its well-developed bureaucratic and (perhaps innovative) financial aspects, in its consistent hostility to Sparta, and in its seeming desire to reach accommodations with the Persians. In its most developed form in the late 430s, Periklean imperialism, as Thucydides recognized, also stands out for its relative 'moderation' when compared with the periods immediately before and after it.

Athenian aggression before, and in, the sixth century

At some point during the time of Solon, the Athenians fought a war (or wars) with Megara over control of Salamis.⁸ Were it not for the fact that our knowledge of Athenian history in the early sixth century is so poor, one might be tempted to associate Athens' aggression here with the new Solonian regime or, rather – since the war apparently preceded the reforms – with the forces that produced both that new regime and the war. It is clear, for example, that the need for land that could be worked freely by independent farmers formed one of the motivations for the Solonian legislation.

In fact, however, we have little evidence for Athens' 'foreign policy' (for lack of a better term) in the time before Solon, and so we cannot say whether the war with Megara over Salamis continued any previous trend of extra-Attica aggression or marked a change in policy.⁹ Nevertheless, we surely must admit that the process by which the city of Athens came to dominate the entire area of Attica is not likely to have been entirely peaceful. Indeed, traces of conflicts between Athens and Eleusis and perhaps Athens and Marathon appear in our tradition. As some scholars have noted, wars between Athens and Eleusis were remembered into the fifth century BC, and Marathon forever retained a special status that possibly bespeaks recalcitrance in the face of Athenian aggression.¹⁰ We should, therefore, conclude that the city of Athens absorbed or acquired the towns, villages, and countryside of Attica sometime (probably) in the eighth and seventh centuries BC and that some of these formerly independent political entities may have resisted or resented the action. The tradition of attributing the synoikism to Theseus (another of Theseus' remedial labors, which sought to place Athens on an equal footing with states that possessed a more glorious heroic-age inheritance) obscured and perhaps attempted to palliate the origins of the creation of the political

entity, 'Athens' (= Attica).¹¹ There was, after all, no reason Athens was compelled to absorb surrounding towns into an Athenian polity, although modern accounts of this action read as if it were somehow fated or the reflection of some Athenian 'manifest destiny.' Comparisons with other Greek *poleis* show that the scale of Athens' actions was highly unusual. No other archaic or classical Greek polis succeeded in the total absorption of so much territory. Sparta's control of the southern Peloponnese – the nearest analogue¹² – rested on different systems, in which the *perioikoi* seemed to have retained control of their own cities and their formal independence in all areas but foreign policy, while others (including many Messenians of the west) were simply enserfed.¹³

We must conclude, therefore, that before and during the time of Solon, while Athens enjoyed a form of government we might call 'aristocratic' – in that significant emphasis was placed on the birth and (at least in the last part of the period) the wealth of citizens and leaders, with those of Eupatrid ancestry claiming a greater share of political authority than those without it – Athens fought wars for the control of Attica and for the control of Salamis.¹⁴ Apparently the future tyrant Peisistratos served in this latter war: certainly he appears on the historical horizon first as a well-known military leader (and perhaps general) in the context of conflict with Megara.¹⁵ Apparently Peisistratos had accomplished something of note in that war (or wars) before he ever attempted to seize the tyranny.

The Peisistratids eventually gained control of Sigeion for the Athenians, but the city's interest in the Troad stretched back to the previous century and predated the tyranny. Probably late in the seventh century, Athens seized Sigeion and fought Mytilene for control of the area.¹⁶ Supposedly the tyrant Periander arbitrated in this dispute, awarding control of Sigeion to Athens.¹⁷ We must lament that we know so little about this conflict, since the Athenians' aggression where Sigeion was concerned provides the first clear evidence of the Athenians' interest in the Hellespontine area.¹⁸ This interest would continue unabated through the history of Athens as a military power and (effectively) independent state. At the end of this period, when Athens finally came to blows with Philip of Macedon, the final breach occurred when Philip moved into the Hellespont and attempted to cut Athens off from its Black Sea grain supply.

Under Peisistratos and his sons the Athenians continued to pursue an aggressive policy. Peisistratos' attempt to champion (to put the best possible spin on the action) the island of Delos by having it purified may have been nothing more than an act of piety towards Apollo and the Ionian Greeks, of whom the Athenians claimed to be the mother city. However, the symbolic and geopolitical importance later attached to Delos will cause

some to question the tyrant's motives. In any case, motives of piety and political expedience need not be mutually exclusive. The Athenians in this period clearly already had interests in the southern Aegean: Peisistratos placed a tyrant-ally (Lygdamis) in charge of the island of Naxos. On Naxos Peisistratos also stored his hostages – insurance policies, no doubt, against the recalcitrance of other aristocrats.¹⁹

Peisistratos' alliances and support upon his third (and successful) seizure of the tyranny (perhaps in 546) remain very telling. We learn from Herodotus and Aristotle that he had support from the Thraceward region, Thebes, Euboia (Eretria), and (based on his marriage to an Argive woman and the presence of Argive mercenaries) from Argos.²⁰ Peisistratos' family, upon their expulsion from Athens, sought refuge in Sigeion and ultimately with the Persians.²¹ But the Peisistratids also carried out their foreign policy through others: the Athenians who ruled the Chersonese (Kimonids: the family of Miltiades and Kimon) were no more sworn 'enemies' of the Peisistratids than were the Alkmeonids.²² Herodotus records (6.34–40, 121, 123–24, 132–40) the transparent defenses of both families, and while the Alkmeonid 'defense' has often been recognized as such, that of the Kimonid family has rarely drawn attention. Yet this family not only ruled the Chersonese on behalf of the Peisistratids, but they also cooperated with the Persians when Darius invaded Europe. Under Miltiades (the later victor at Marathon), the family seized Lemnos (and probably Imbros),²³ and under his son Kimon Athens took Skyros and Karystos, completing thereby a chain of ports upon which Athenian ships traveling to and from the Hellespont could call.²⁴

Of course, it might be possible to defend the Athenians of the Peisistratid age against charges of aggression by placing responsibility on the tyrants themselves and their followers. It *might* be possible, that is, were it not for the acquisitive history of Athens before and after the Peisistratids' rule. Immediately after the overthrow of the tyrants, in the last decade of the sixth century the Athenians launched an aggressive campaign into Euboia against Chalcis. According to Herodotus, the Chalcidians had seized an opportunity – created by the Spartans' abortive campaign to overthrow the new Cleisthenic regime – to plunder Attic territory. However, the Athenians, so far from satisfying themselves with a raid of reprisal, soundly defeated the Chalcidians in battle and then seized enough Chalcidian land to install 4,000 cleruchs in the territory.²⁵ Herodotus comments that the Athenians became a formidable military power only after they had gained their 'freedom,' but the historian has forgotten his own evidence (summarized at 5.66.1) demonstrating earlier Athenian aggression.²⁶ It is nevertheless significant that Herodotus associates Athens'

new democratic government with increased military action and success: certainly no one in the fifth century could have argued that after Athens became democratic she became *less* aggressive.²⁷

Athenian aggression in the fifth century

Once we reach the fifth century, we may leave aside Athens' lackluster involvement in the Ionian Revolt from Persia, an action which later Athenian activity in the eastern Aegean suggests was perhaps undertaken as much for the opportunities for exploitation it offered as for sympathetic feelings toward Ionian blood relations. In any event, after this we do find the Athenians resisting invasions by the great Persian empire. The scope and epochal nature of Athens' involvement on the allied Greek side of these conflicts – remembering that there were, of course, Greeks fighting on both sides, and that more Greeks were 'neutral' or joined the Persians than fought against them in the alliance – have all but obscured the aggressive Athenian actions towards other Greeks early in the fifth century. Herodotus reports that, in the immediate aftermath of Marathon, Miltiades took the fleet to Paros after claiming the attack would make the Athenians rich; failing to take the island, the general died in disgrace (489).²⁸ Are we to believe that Paros 'deserved' such aggression for the one ship she provided to the Persians? If so, why did not the Athenians attack other states that had helped the Persians equally or more willingly? By comparison, in the aftermath of Xerxes' invasion Athens incorporated 'collaborator' states into the new Delian League, which then in turn applied pressure to recalcitrant states. Thucydides tells us that Themistokles recommended to the Athenians that they build a larger fleet with the surplus revenues from Laureion (in 483/2) because of the hostilities between Athens and Aigina, the Dorian island that Perikles would later call 'the eyesore of the Peiraeus'.²⁹ Now, no one has suggested that the Aiginetans were threatening to invade Attica, although both sides had engaged in raiding and counter-raiding. Rather, the Athenians contended with Aigina (at the very least) over control of the waters of the Saronic Gulf or (at the most) over control of the island itself. The latter suggestion not only comports with the Athenians' later actions (when they indeed seized and colonized Aigina in 431: Thuc. 2.27; Hdt. 6.91.1), but also reminds us of their earlier take-over of Salamis. Based on the events we know, one would be hard-pressed to assume that it was Aigina that was the aggressor in the island's long-standing conflict with Athens.³⁰

Moving into and past the conflicts of 480–79, we find Themistokles immediately after Salamis seeking to extort money from Greek islands (perhaps those accused of collaboration: Hdt. 8.111–12), the Athenians

seizing the first opportunity after Mykale to renew operations in the Hellespont (winter 479/8, under Xanthippos and without Spartan cooperation; cf. Hdt. 8.108–11 for Themistokles' interests in operations in the Hellespont a year before this), and capitalizing on the Spartan Pausanias' unpopularity to acquire the hegemony of a new alliance (probably winter 478/7).³¹ These actions are (rightly) sometimes seen as precursors of the Athenians' creation of an empire out of the Delian League, but they also clearly form part of a long series of Athenian attempts to increase the city's control and influence in the Aegean as they take place in the traditional areas of interest, the Cyclades and the Hellespont.

Once the alliance which scholars call the Delian League was founded (probably in spring 477), the Athenians under their general Kimon (the son of Miltiades) embarked on a program designed to expand their influence in the Aegean and force recalcitrant states into the new organization. Almost none of the known Athenian actions in the first decade of the League's existence – the seizure and colonization of Eion (which harbored a Persian garrison) and Skyros (alleged base of the Dolopian 'pirates'), the attack on Karystos (reluctant to join the alliance), and the reduction of Naxos when she sought to leave the league – can be fairly categorized as actions 'against the Mede' or as punishing the Great King for the outrages he had performed against the Greeks (cf. Thuc. 1.96). Only the great battle of the Eurymedon River in southern Asia Minor (c. 466) qualifies as such. And once the Athenians and their allies had won that battle, and the Persians were no longer a real threat in the Aegean for the foreseeable future, the Athenians continued to collect tribute as if the Persian fleet might soon sail into the Cyclades.³²

It is a sign of how much some members of the alliance had begun to resent Athenian claims as 'protectors' of Hellas (while making exacting demands for tribute or service) that the Naxians – inhabiting an island already twice attacked by the Persians and very exposed to any future attacks by its location in the southern Aegean – apparently sought, but were not permitted, to leave the Athenian alliance around 467 (Thuc. 1.99). And this occurred, it should be noted, before the Athenians' victory at Eurymedon seemed to free the Aegean from Persian threats. The implication is clear: many Naxians preferred potential Persian overlordship to continued service to the Athenians.

The history of Athens' relations with her allies after the 460s is too well known to require detailed treatment here. However, since some of the inscriptions that shed light on these relations seem destined to find their ultimate home in the 420s or later (where Mattingly and a few others had long placed them), despite the three-barred *sigmas* and other 'early' letter

forms they contain, it will be well to note what the Athenians were almost unquestionably doing in the 450s and 440s.³³ Beyond continuing to collect tribute, the Athenians had begun placing garrisons in cities and imposing some democratic governments (Erythrai).³⁴ Oaths of allegiance were required in some *poleis* and their tax-bases compromised either through the placement of Athenian cleruchs on prime lands or by other means (Chalcis).³⁵ Alliances and territory (parts of Megara, Troizen, Achaia: Thuc. 1.115.1) were gained in the Peloponnese during the first open conflict with the Peloponnesians (c. 460–446/5: Thuc. 1.103–115.1), while a huge force was dispatched to Egypt. Control over large portions of central Greece was won (Oinophyta: c. 457) and then lost (Koroneia: 447). Athens intervened in local disputes (with Phocis over Delphi), sometimes taking the side of one ‘ally’ against another (with Miletos against Samos), and then sometimes imposing democracy and taking hostages from the resistant state (Samos: Thuc. 1.115.2–117). After the reduction of Samos (in 439), the Athenians seem to have retrenched somewhat: cleruchies in the northeast may have been established in this period,³⁶ but major actions in the Aegean and mainland Greece seem to have been curtailed. Perikles and his supporters, some have suggested, endured significant criticism for the brutal treatment of Samos, and this may help explain Athens’ policy in the years just after 439.³⁷ By the mid 430s Athens’ attentions may have turned elsewhere: certainly by 433 Athens was impinging on Corinth’s sphere of influence in Kerkyra and the west (treaties with Rhegion and Leontinoi;³⁸ alliance with Kerkyra), recognizing that such actions might provoke Corinth and Sparta to war but – at the urging of Perikles and undoubtedly others – resolved to accept such a war if the alternative was to make any concessions to the Lacedaemonians. Of course, we must admit that such a turn to the west reflected the fact that Athens by that time utterly dominated the Aegean and any expansion further to the east would risk provoking the Persians.

Periklean imperialism and finance

From a financial perspective, Athens’ actions from the late seventh to the fifth century suggest a city and a population that repeatedly sought additional sources of wealth and power – through the domination of new lands (and opportunities for lower- and middle-class Athenians promised by new colonies and cleruchies),³⁹ securing grain supplies from the Black Sea, and influence in or control of the Thraceward region (with the mining revenues and timber it offered). In a related development, sometime before the fifth century the Athenians had taken collective control over the silver mines in Laureion and begun to treat the revenues from those mines as