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Sea-Power in Greek Thought

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THE CLASSICAL REVIEW

MAY 1944

SEA-POWER IN GREEK THOUGHT

As far as I know, the history of the idea of thalassocracy in Greek thought has never been written—a surprising fact. Neither can I deal with it here adequately. But an outline from Herodotus to the Greek source on which Cicero drew may well be attempted for the use of future students.¹

I. Reckoning power in terms of ships is already a feature of the Homeric Catalogue—not an obvious thing (apart from the position of the Catalogue in the *Iliad*), on which I should like to hear more from Homeric scholars.² The *Odyssey* gives an account of a naval power in its description of the Phaeacians: they delight in ships rather than in war, their fault is isolation (not promiscuity in their foreign relations, the usual later criticism of maritime cities). But the poet is somewhat politicizing fairyland. His tale, although largely utilized by philosophers and moralists for contrasting purposes, did not influence the later discussion on sea-power to a noticeable extent. Thalassocracy, as is well known, becomes a clear-cut idea in Herodotus.

¹ The learned friends who helped my paper 'Terra marique' (*Journ. Rom. Stud.* xxxii, 1942, 53) have contributed to this sketch also (I add the names of A. W. Gomme, P. Treves, and A. N. Sherwin-White); but they do not necessarily share my belief that a synthetic survey, however bad, must precede analytic study, however good. Herodotus is quoted in Rawlinson's translation, Thucydides in Jowett's, Isocrates in G. Norlin's (Loeb Library), Plato's *Laws* in A. E. Taylor's (J. M. Dent).

² *Il.* ii. 614 distinguishes sea-power from land-power. F. Jacoby explained 'Die Einschaltung des Schiffkatalogs in die Ilias' in *Sitz. Preuss. Ak.* 1932, 572 ff., but the historical interpretation of the catalogue has hardly progressed since B. Niese (1873) and E. Rohde, *Kl. Schriften*, i. 107 (= *Rh. Museum*, xxxvi, 1881, 570). W. Leaf, *Homer and History*, 1915, though certainly right versus T. W. Allen, *J.H.S.* xxx, 1910, 292 (an article expanded, but not improved, in his book of 1921), is again too conjectural. At the moment *non liquet* is the wisest conclusion. Cf. J. L. Myres, *Who were the Greeks?* 1930, 312.

According to him Polycrates was the first who conceived the design of gaining the empire of the sea, 'unless it were Minos the Cnossian, and those (if there were any such) who had the mastery of the Aegean at an earlier time' (iii. 122). A period of thalassocracy is attributed also to Aegina (v. 83). In the alleged debate at Gelo's court, where the Spartan and Athenian ambassadors are supposed to have come for help (vii. 157 ff.), Gelo asks for the supreme command, but would remain content with the command of the fleet. The Athenians refuse it indignantly: if the Spartans do not want to have it, the Athenians, who have 'raised up a navy greater than that of any other Greek people', are the only ones entitled to the succession. This is a good piece of Athenian retrospective propaganda of the time of the Delian League (cf. vii. 139 and Aesch. *Pers.* 728).¹ I leave aside the list of thalassocracies which Eusebius' *Chronikon* derived from Diodorus (Book VII). Some modern scholars have attributed it to the labours of an unknown Greek historian of the fifth century B.C., and, indeed, any research of that type would fit the fifth century. But I do not see sufficient evidence that the list, as we have it, is earlier than Diodorus' contemporary Castor of Rhodes, whom we know to have composed a treatise on thalassocracies. That Castor and, in general, the scholars of the Alexandrian tradition were able to utilize fifth-century studies on that theme (besides Herodotus and Thucydides) is possible, but not yet supported by proofs.²

¹ The latest discussion is by P. Treves, *Class. Philol.* xxxvi, 1941, 321; but I am not certain, as Treves is, that the embassy to Gelo is not historical. Cf. F. Jacoby, P.-W., Suppl. ii, s.v. 'Herodotus', 453-4.

² For the fifth-century origin of the Eusebian list see especially J. L. Myres, *J.H.S.* xxvi, 1906, 84; xxvii, 1907, 123, and A. R. Burn, *ib.*

In Athens facts had a way of becoming spiritual problems; and Athenian thalassocracy itself underwent searching analysis both in its presuppositions and its effects.¹ The controversy did not remain confined to Athens. The pamphlet of Stesimbrotus of Thasos *On Themistocles, Thucydides, and Pericles* (written after 430 B.C.) was in effect an attack on Athenian sea-power and on Themistocles as a corrupter of the Athenian people (Plut. *Themist.* 4). It is no longer possible to say how much Stesimbrotus depended on contemporary Athenian discussions. The Pseudo-Xenophontean *Constitution of Athens*, which I date between 431 and 425 B.C., with a slight preference for the years 431–430, offers more solid ground.² The writer affirms the relation between sea-power and democracy: as the power of Athens depends on the sea, sailors are inevitably the masters of Athens. He illustrates also the strategic advantages of sea-power over land-power in forming and holding an empire: military campaigns can be organized, enemy trade can be hampered, hostile coalitions can be forestalled much more easily by a naval than by a land power. Above all he knows that sea-power means wealth; and wealth makes de-

mocracy easy. Clearly the author is an oligarchic pessimist who despises Athenian democracy, but recognizes its consistency and strength. He despairs of a change, although he does not consider it impossible, Athens not being an island: if she were, her thalassocracy would be unbreakable. The author says much less than he thinks, but obviously does not believe sea-power compatible with decent government. We shall find this conclusion explicit in Isocrates, *De Pace*. On this, as on many topics, Isocrates seems to derive his argument from the anti-democratic tradition of the fifth century.

II. It would be difficult to prove that Pericles' last speech in Thucydides (ii. 60–4) is directed against the Pseudo-Xenophontean pamphlet, but probably Thucydides knew it,¹ and certainly the set of arguments which Pericles takes for granted, and sweepingly turns to a glorification of the current war, would not have been repudiated by the oligarchic writer. Sea-power is at stake in this war. 'You think that your empire is confined to your allies, but I say that of the two divisions of the world accessible to man, the land and the sea, there is one of which you are absolute masters, and have, or may have, the dominion to any extent which you please.' This sea-power implies tyranny, which it may seem wrong to have assumed, but which it is certainly dangerous to let go—and inglorious, because hatred does not last long, but 'besides the immediate splendour of great actions, the renown of them endures for ever in men's memories'. The speech, clearly written or rewritten after the end of the Peloponnesian War, does not deny one of the main contentions of the oligarchic analysis of Athenian power: the Athenian democracy is a tyranny founded upon sea-power. Yet the glory of that power is assumed to justify acceptance of the consequences. If the oligarch's implicit assumption was that sea-power ought to be given

xlvii, 1927, 165. Contra: W. Aly, *Rh. Mus.* lxvi, 1911, 585; cf. R. Helm, *Hermes*, lxi, 1926, 241; Kubitschek, P.-W., s.v. 'Kastor', 2355. Relevant also are Jacoby, *FGrH* ii D, p. 816; G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, 3rd ed., 1924, 322–6, and H. Winckler, *Der alte Orient*, vii, 1905, 20. Castor's work is mentioned by Suidas (Jacoby, *FGrH* 250 T 1).

¹ First direct evidence in Aeschylus, *Pers.* 728, of 472 B.C.

² I think that the pamphlet is later than the first Spartan invasion of Attica and earlier than Brasidas' expedition to Thrace and very probably than Aristophanes' *Knights*; also it is easier to understand if it is earlier than the great plague, although (as H. T. Wade-Gery points out to me) a mention of the plague is not to be expected. For a different view see A. W. Gomme, *Athenian Studies presented to W. S. Ferguson*, 1940, 211 ff., who gives the bibliography (cf. H. Diller, *Gnomon*, 1939, 113–24). On Stesimbrotus F. Jacoby, *FGrH* ii D, p. 343, is more persuasive than R. Laqueur, P.-W., s.v. 'Stesimbrotos'. For the relations between Ps.-Xen. and Thucydides the son of Melesias see H. T. Wade-Gery, *J.H.S.* lii, 1932, 208.

¹ In i. 143 Thucydides uses the same argument of the 'island'; in iv. 85. 4 a rejoinder to Ps.-Xen. ii. 5 seems clear.

up as being related to an immoral form of empire, the implicit conclusion of Pericles (Thucydides) is that the immorality of the Athenian Empire is to be accepted and defended because related to the glory of sea-power.

A remarkable statement in this speech of Pericles is that neither have the Athenians ever reflected on this subject of sea-power, nor has he dealt with it in his previous speeches (ch. 62). Thus in the opinion of Thucydides, if not of Pericles, the argument was fairly new about 430 B.C. I do not suggest that we may conclude from this passage alone that the oligarchic pamphlet was not yet published at that date, but certainly we have here a warning against assuming much earlier literature on the subject.

The argument which in Pericles' speech appears as a direct defence of the Athenian Empire runs also through the introductory chapters of Book I, which I still believe to have been written before 404 B.C.¹ The whole growth of Greece up to the Persian Wars is described in terms of naval power. 'Whereas by land, no conflict of any kind which brought increase of power ever occurred; what wars they had were mere border feuds. Foreign and distant expeditions of conquest the Hellenes never undertook, for they were not as yet ranged under the command of the great states, nor did they form voluntary leagues or make expeditions on an equal footing' (ch. 15). Agamemnon's hegemony during the Trojan War was very similar to the hegemony of Athens in the league. 'It was, as I believe, because Agamemnon inherited this power and because he was the greatest potentate of his time that he was able to assemble the expedition; and the other princes followed him, not from good will, but from fear' (ch. 9). Homer, who had ventured to take the opposite view in *Odyssey*, v. 307, is unceremoniously snubbed. That the older cities were built at a distance from the sea is considered a sign of primitive condi-

tions (ch. 7): the point is important because Plato thought differently. At last, after the first experiment of the Peloponnesian Wars, the Persian Wars introduced land-power on a Panhellenic scale and by implication made possible the divisions of Greece between the land-hegemon and the sea-hegemon. That was the balance of power which, in Alcibiades' opinion, it would have been the interest of the king of Persia to preserve (viii. 46).¹ It is obvious, although never explicitly stated, that Thucydides recognized a strict connexion between the sea-power of Athens and the psychological attitude of the Athenians as described in i. 70 and in Pericles' Funeral Speech; he was also clearly aware that sea-power produces wealth and is the best security against enemies.

III. We may well imagine that much literature attacking Athenian sea-power was produced immediately after 404 B.C., but it is all lost, except, in one sense, the *Gorgias* (cf. 519 A)—and the *I Alcibiades* (cf. 134 B) if it is taken as authentic. But it is typical of the earlier Plato that he does not discuss the material features of Athenian imperialism, while he recognizes navigation as an element of a primitive, healthy, political society (*Rep.* 371 B).² Isocrates evidently polemizes against the literature attacking Athenian sea-power in the great manifesto of the Second Athenian League—the *Panegyricus* (about 380 B.C.). He wants to persuade the Greeks that the first Athenian

¹ See also Thucyd. i. 80-1, 93, 121, 143; iii. 13, 39.—Euripides is unkind to the sailor in *Hec.* 606; *Iph. Aul.* 914 (cf. 450, 517). Aristophanes never disapproved of sea-power and he was in sympathy with the sailor: see for instance *Ach.* 648; *Eq.* 551, 1300; *Vesp.* 1091; *Ran.* 698, 1465, and A. W. Gomme's vigorous paper in *Class. Rev.* lii, 1938, 106-7 (also R. W. Macan, *Herodotus*, 1895, ii. 182 ff.). Sea-power was no problem to him.

² E. Schwartz rightly observed: 'es kann kein Zufall sein, dass weder die Reichspolitik noch der Zusammenbruch Athens in den Diskussionen der Sokratik irgend eine erhebliche Rolle spielen' (*Thukydides*, 2nd ed., 1929, 152). For an analysis of Isocrates, *Paneg.* 100 ff., see Wilamowitz, *Arist. und Athen*, ii. 380 ff. I do not consider texts, like Andocides, *De pace*, which are not direct attacks on sea-power.

¹ Cf. *Riv. Fil. Class.* lxxv, 1937, 284.

Empire was never a tyranny (100 ff.), but does not discuss the typical features of a sea-hegemony and subordinates the whole to his propaganda for a crusade against Persia. In Xenophon's description the new Athenian League reopened the contention over sea-hegemony. The speech of Polydamas of Pharsalus (374 B.C.) presents Jason as meaning to get sea-rule (*Hell.* vi. 1, 10); and in 369 the Spartans are said to have recognized the sea-hegemony of Athens in magnanimous words which, intentionally or not, throw unfavourable light on the subsequent behaviour of Athens (vii. 1 ff.).¹ Criticism of Athenian sea-power became louder again after the Social War (about 357–355 B.C.).² Isocrates, caring little for consistency, but not for the first time critical of Athenian democracy, drew far-reaching consequences. Sea-power is the evil, both for Athens and for Sparta. In the *De pace* of 355 B.C.³ the argument is developed at length. Land-power implies and fosters virtue, but sea-power is definitely demoralizing: it causes injustice, indolence, lawlessness, avarice, covetousness, and is equivalent to tyranny. Look at the Spartans: 'Because of their supremacy on land and of their stern discipline and of the self-control which was cultivated under it, they readily obtained command of the sea, whereas because of the arrogance which was bred in them by that power they speedily lost the supremacy both on land and on sea. For they no longer kept the laws which they had inherited from their ancestors nor remained faithful to the ways which they had followed in times past, but conceived that they were licensed to do whatever they pleased and so were plunged into great confusion' (102–3). The point

¹ I cannot discuss here the purpose of these chapters in Xenophon's mind: cf. *Mem.* iii. 5.

² On the chronology see E. Schweigert, *Hesperia*, viii, 1939, 12.

³ Cf. W. Jaeger, *Athenian Studies . . . Ferguson*, 425, n. 1 and the essay mentioned in n. 2. Aelius Aristides wrote a speech with the title 'Isocrates tries to wean the Athenians from their empire of the sea' (Philostr. *Lives of the Sophists*, ii. 9, p. 584 Ol.).

(also touched upon in *Antid.* 64; *Phil.* 61) is perhaps better explained by the words of the *Panathenaicus*: 'a land-power is fostered by order and sobriety and discipline and other like qualities; a sea-power is not augmented by these, but by the crafts which have to do with the building of ships and by men who are able to row them—men who have lost their own possessions and are accustomed to derive their livelihood from the possessions of others' (115–16). Renunciation of sea-power, to Isocrates' mind, is the only solution. Xenophon (who, incidentally, excluded sea-power from the horizon of his ideal state in the *Cyropaedia*) offered at least an alternative to the greedy Athenians by his financial scheme in the *Revenues*—a product of the same years and with the same bias.¹ Like the writer of the pamphlet on the Constitution of Athens, Xenophon was aware that imperialism meant wealth, and wanted to persuade the Athenians that they might obtain wealth from peaceful commerce and from their own mines. Isocrates was much more austere: he offered only moral prestige in exchange. But in the *Panathenaicus* he made a partial recantation. Sea-power was described as a necessary evil which Athens had not been able to avoid lest she should become a prey to her enemies. No wonder that Isocrates' pupils were divided on sea-power. Theopompus, of course, was scornful of sailors and maritime cities; Ephorus thought that sea-power has something to do with a good constitution.²

IV. Plato, who had before ruled out sea-power, but had never discussed it, now became eloquent on the subject. The myth of the *Critias* was imagined

¹ Cf. *Ann. Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa*, s. ii. 5 (1936), 109 ff. (with bibliography).

² On the *Panathenaicus* see the bibliography in Momigliano, *Filippo il Macedone*, 1934, 190. On Theopompus see *FGrH* 115 F 62, 281; cf. 100, 105, 114, 204, 233. On Ephorus 70 F 149; cf. 119; also, most significant, Diod. xv. 79, with which cf. Isocr. v. 53; Plut. *Philop.* 14, and Aristid. 33 (*Leuctr.* I), 421, p. 634, Dindorf. (Research on the sources of Aelius Aristides has overlooked these passages: bibl. in A. Boulanger, *Aelius Aristide*, 1923, 281.)

to describe the victory of the ideal State over sea imperialism, though even there navigation is not taken as an evil *ipso facto*. The indictment of navigation is peculiar to the *Laws*. Indeed the verdict of the *Laws* (Book IV) is that a State aiming at peace ought not even to be within sight of the sea lest it should succumb to the sea's temptations. The traffic of a port 'breeds shiftiness and distrustful habits of soul, and so makes a society distrustful and unfriendly within itself as well as towards mankind at large' (705). The State of the *Laws* is notoriously critical of travels and travellers (949; 952). Furthermore, sea-fighting encourages cowardice, as Homer is said to have noticed already (*Il.* xiv. 96-102). Thus the problem of the choice of the best place for a new State becomes intimately connected with the controversy on Athenian sea-hegemony. In the same passage Plato attacks Athens directly and disparages the battle of Salamis.¹

A famous passage of the *Politics* (vii. 4, p. 1327^a 11), obviously aimed at the *Laws*, waters down Platonic intransigence into typical Aristotelian compromise.² All the evils which Plato enumerated exist (Aristotle admits), but the military and economic advantages of a sea-side town must not be overlooked. If the city is a market only for herself and not for others, the dangers of avarice will be avoided; if the port is separated from the city, being almost another town, unpleasant intercourse will be prevented. Nor must a city renounce a fleet, even a powerful fleet, if she wants to have a hegemonical and political life, but the

sailors should not have rights of citizenship. Perioeci and peasants from her territory will make up the crews. Thus Aristotle, being less strict than Plato about war and wealth, could confirm the condemnation of Athenian sea-power without involving sea-power in general: he avoided the political power of the sailors which had characterized the Athenian democracy. Aristotle's solution seems to have won wide acceptance in Hellenistic thought. It advocated a proper distance of the ideal city from the sea, but left her as many harbours as necessary. The letter of Ps.-Aristeas, which is a description of an ideal State,¹ points out that, if Jerusalem is far from the sea and nobly isolated, her State has plenty of good harbours and 'does not suffer for lack of imports by sea' (114). The most important document of the post-Aristotelian tradition is in Cicero's *De Republica*. The passage is well known: 'est autem maritimis urbibus etiam quaedam corruptela et demutatio morum...' (ii. 4. 7). The corruption and misfortunes of Greece are due to the fact that Greek cities are usually by the sea. However, Cicero, like Aristotle, does not repudiate the advantages of a harbour close at hand, and finds merit in Romulus' choice of a position from which 'posset urbs et accipere a mari quo egeret et reddere quo redundaret' (cf. Livy, v. 54. 4 'mari vicinum ad commoditates nec expositum nimia propinquitate ad pericula classium externarum'). Cicero's passage is doubly precious because the comparison with his letter to Atticus, vi. 2. 3, leaves no doubt that his Peripatetic source was Dicaearchus.² In general Hellenistic writers appreciated sea-power,³

¹ On the Salamis-motive in literature, G. Schmitz-Kahlmann, *Das Beispiel d. Geschichte im politischen Denken des Sokrates*, 1939, pp. 77, n. 1; 79, n. 1. Plato probably knew Ps.-Xenoph. *Const. of Athens: Laws* 707 A-X Ps.-Xen. i. 2. The alleged Spartan prohibition of navigation (Plut., *Inst. Lac.* 239 E, ch. 42) is a late falsification.

² See especially W. L. Newman, *Polit. of Arist.* i. 317 ff. On Aristotle's judgement of Athenian sea-power, *Pol.* ii. 1274^a15; v. 1304^a20; viii. 1341^a29; *Ab. Pol.* 23 ff. For later biographical discussion of it, Plut. *Themist.* 19 (cf. 4); *Arist.* 22; *Cim.* 5; *Philop.* 14.

¹ Bibliography in W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, 1938, 424 ff.

² On Dicaearchus, F. Egermann, *Sitz. Akad. Wien*, ccxiv. 3, 1932, 51 ff. R. v. Scala, *Stud. d. Polybius*, i, 1890, 233, on Hippodamus' *Περὶ Πολιτείας* and Cicero must be considered superseded. Pompey, as is well known, was deeply aware of the importance of sea-power (Cic. *ad Att.* x. 8. 4; Plut. *Pomp.* 50; Plin. *N.H.* vii. 98). His son learned from him.

³ Cf. my paper 'Terra marique' in *Journ. Rom. Stud.*, 1942. Cf. also Athen. viii. 334 a, b.

but the prestige of land-power remained greater. The superior moral qualities of a land-power over a sea-power were reaffirmed by Polybius in his comparison between Rome and Carthage (vi. 52), although his arguments do not consider sea-power *per se*.

V. Also a different, non-philosophical, tradition played a part in this limited defence of sea against the attacks of land-minded philosophers: the tradition of the 'encomium'. At least from Sophocles, *Oedipus Col.* 711, or, perhaps better, from Homer onwards (for instance, *Odys.* xix. 172), the eulogy of a country used to include the eulogy of the sea surrounding it. Even Xenophon in his *Revenues* 3 (where he repeats a commonplace on Attica) glorifies the sea of Attica. This tradition (to be found also in Ephorus' description of Boeotia, *ap.* Strab. ix. 2. 2 = *FGH* 70 F 119 Jac.) obviously influenced Ps.-Aristeas and Cicero, and appears again in the encomia of Rome and Italy by Virgil (*Georg.* ii. 162), Pliny (*N.H.* iii. 41; xxxvii. 201), Aristides (*To Rome* 7), etc. All this encomiastic literature never implied more than an acknowledgement of sea-facilities as one of the advantages offered by the eulogized country and therefore contributed to what we would call the Aristotelian compromise.¹

On the other hand, no important part in this development can be attributed to the usual Graeco-Roman conception that primitive and 'Golden Age' peoples did not know of navigation. The idea of a state of nature either was antithetic to that of a body politic (cf. *Odyssey*, ix. 125, on the Cyclopes) or was meant to describe a condition of happiness without war and trade (as Hesiod, *Works*, 236-7, says

¹ On this encomiastic tradition cf. G. Gernentz, *Laudes Romae*, diss. Rostock, 1918; A. H. Krappe, *Class. Quart.* xx, 1926, 42; L. Castiglioni, 'Le lodi dell' Italia e la visione della piccola Roma pastorale', *Atti II Congresso Studi Romani*, iii (1931), 244 (also, slightly expanded, in *Rend. Ist. Lombardo*, 1931); E. Kienzle, *Der Lobpreis von Städten und Ländern in der älteren griechischen Dichtung*, diss. Basel, 1936, 20 ff., 72. The eulogy of Rome as sea-power in Dionys. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* i. 3, 9 is very interesting.

just men 'do not travel on ships, but grain-giving earth bears them fruit'). In the former case it was presupposed that sea-power was a normal element of a political society; in the latter both sea-power and land-power were eliminated.¹ But of course it is very probable that the idea of a Golden Age without navigation slumbered at the back of the mind of writers like Plato.²

Another point remains to be examined: whether the Platonic condemnation of sea-power was repeated by the Romans in order to justify the destruction of Carthage. So much is certain, that the Roman offer that the Carthaginians should settle at least eighty stades from the sea corresponds exactly to the suggestion of the *Laws* for the ideal city. Appian goes a step farther. He attributes to the Roman consul L. Marcus Censorinus a long speech which develops the Platonic argument against sea-power (*Pun.* 86-9). If the speech could be proved to derive ultimately from Polybius, it might correspond to the real words of a Roman consul. But the derivation has never been demonstrated (though never disproved), and all we can say is that Appian provides evidence that Platonic arguments were utilized by Roman annalists to justify Roman cruelty.³ In other words, the passage of Appian is evidence for the survival of the

¹ Cf. Aesch. *Prom.* 467; Eurip. *Suppl.* 209; Arat. *Phaen.* 110; Strab. xi. 4. 3; Philo, *Quod omnis probus*, 12, 78; Lucret. v. 1006; Virg. *Georg.* i. 137; ii. 503; Tib. i. 3. 35; Ovid, *Met.* i. 94; *Amor.* iii. 8. 43; Manil. *Astr.* i. 77; Sen. *Med.* 301; *Phaedra*, 530. These and other texts are quoted by A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, Baltimore, 1935, *passim*. Negatively, it is interesting that sea-power is not discussed in Plat. *Protog.* 320 c ff.; Polybius, vi. 4-6; Diodor. i. 8, and Hippodamus' *Περὶ Πολιτείας* (Stobaeus, 43, 94 = iv. 1, 95, p. 33 H.), on which especially cf. W. Theiler, *Gnomon*, 1926, 151.

² See for instance *Laws*, iii. 679D with v. 742D.

³ Cf. Diod. xxxii. 6. 3; Livy, *Per.* 49; Zon. ix. 26; Oros. iv. 22. 3, and also Polyb. iii. 5. 5. On the speech of the Roman consul see S. Gsell, *Hist. anc. de l'Afrique du Nord*, iii. 348, n. 4 (cf. U. Kahrstedt, *Gesch. d. Karth.*, iii. 644, n. 1). The relation with Plato was noted by O. Meltzer, *Neue Jahrb. f. Philol.* cxliii, 1891, 685. F. W. Walbank called my attention to the passage of Appian.

Platonic tradition in the matter of sea-power versus the Aristotelian compromise.

VI. The more profound reasons for the hostility of much Greek political thought to sea-power need not be emphasized: they are to be found in its anti-banausic and anti-democratic bias and largely show the influence of the epic conception of an individual virtue which only land-fighting can show. The Athenian Empire became the best argument for this hostility. In the fifth century 'the question of imperialism was largely one of food' (Glotz). Sea-power gave food and made full democracy possible.¹ Thucydides' effort

¹ Cf. especially B. Büchschütz, *Besitz und Erwerb im griech. Alterthume*, Halle, 1869, 512 ff.; G. Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work*, Engl. transl., London, 1926, 293 ff.; A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, 5th ed., Oxford, 1931; J. Hasebroek, *Trade and Politics in Ancient Greece*, Engl. transl., London, 1933, 130 ff. Furthermore, G. Glotz, 'La marine et la cité de l'épopée à l'histoire' in *Études sociales et juridiques sur l'antiquité grecque*, Paris, 1906, 229-53.

to oppose to this hostility a qualified belief in the constructive sides of Athenian imperialism was doomed to failure by the tyrant character which he attributed to Athens. I suppose that the anti-naval bias is attenuated in Aristotle both for many other obvious reasons and by his better historical knowledge. He knew that sea-power was compatible with more than one political form. Indeed, the association of sea-power with democracy had been an exceptional feature of Athens. Until the formation of modern national States sea-power was more frequently associated with oligarchies, Republican Rome included. But neither Aristotle nor any other Greek philosopher totally overcame the distrust of the acquisitive instinct and of the plebeian habits which were believed to be peculiar to sailors and maritime cities.

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO.

Oxford.

THE STORY OF ATLANTIS: ITS PURPOSE AND ITS MORAL

THE story of the lost island of Atlantis, 'larger than Libya and Asia', with the account given by Critias of how that story had come down to him from Solon, makes a delightful opening to the *Timaeus*, and shows that Plato, at the age of 70 or thereabouts, was still a master of lively narrative and dialogue. But why is the story here at all? Why is it, taken together with its development in the unfinished *Critias*, in such a position that the main body of the *Timaeus* becomes a mere episode in a prehistoric romance?

As Plato did not finish the *Critias* and did not even begin the third dialogue of his projected trilogy, the *Hermocrates*, we cannot answer this question with certainty.¹ But we can perhaps make a reasonable guess.

In the first place, Plato wants to put his reader in the right atmosphere, the

atmosphere of myth, of symbolism and imaginative truth. 'Once upon a time' is the formula of the main myth, the cosmological; and 'once upon a time' not indeed unimaginably remote, but sufficiently distant—9,000 years ago—is the formula of the secondary myth, the myth of the Ideal State projected into temporal existence. No one who is alive to this parallelism will doubt that Xenocrates was right, as against Aristotle, in holding that in representing the making of the ordered universe, the *κόσμος*, as an event in time Plato was writing 'for the sake of exposition' (*διδασκαλίας χάριν*): in other words, that his cosmogony is disguised cosmology. Further, I would suggest that in one particular passage Plato has been at pains to ensure that we shall not miss the parallelism of the two myths. At 24c Athena, the tutelary goddess of Athens and Egyptian Sais alike, is spoken of as having 'bestowed on you (Athenians) first all this ordering and system' (*ταύτην σύμπεσαν τὴν διακόσμησιν*

¹ For some speculations on the projected content of the *Hermocrates*, and on the plan of the whole trilogy, see F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, pp. 6-8.