GREEK VIEWS ON THE ECONOMY OF THE WAR AND MILITARY EXPANSION*

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War seems to have been endemic in the ancient Greek world. To most Greeks, military preparations and open conflicts were the normal way of life. As one of their number remarked, "in reality all cities are by nature in a permanent state of undeclared war against all other cities" (Pl., *Laws* 626a). Honour, fear and profit were three very powerful motives guiding the policy of Athens and other important cities.[1] Greek cities often fought against each other over boundary disputes[2] –"to cut off a slice of (their) neighbours' territory" (Pl., *Rep.* 373d 7)–, but they also fought against more distant communities over various issues of practical or symbolic importance. They waged their wars alone or as members of broader alliances. Some military alliances dated back to the early archaic age (or even earlier), but none proved to be stable over long periods.[3] Most cities changed sides as the need arose. "It is necessary to obtain allies", a Greek theorist observed, "on occasions when the citizens are not able to guard the country and the forts or to keep off the enemy by their own efforts; but an alliance should be forgone when there is no necessity to form it or when the people concerned are far distant in locality and unable to come to our aid on the proper occasion" ([Arist.], *Rh. Al.* 1446b 27-32).[4]

The Greeks were often at war against non-Greeks as well. This was more common in the colonies. Ideally, new colonies were founded in areas where little or no resistance from the natives was anticipated. But sooner or later, Greek colonists were forced to defend their presence in the territories they had chosen to settle.[5] Thus, when the population of Cyrene greatly increased,

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1. These three terms are given by Thucydides as an Athenian explanation for creating and maintaining their empire (1.76.2).

2. See G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, Duckworth, London 1972, p. 218.

3. V. Ehrenberg, *The Greek State*, Methuen, London 1974, pp. 103-31.

4. I take the treatise to be an early Hellenistic product.

5. T. Rihll, "War, slavery, and settlement in early Greece", in J. Rich & G. Shipley (eds), *War and Society in the Greek World*, Routledge, London & New York 1993, pp. 77-107.

> "... it began to encroach upon the territory of its neighbours. Its expansion continued, until the Libyans under their king, Adicran, in resentment at their loss of territory and the domineering attitude of Cyrene, dispatched an embassy to Egypt and put themselves at the disposal of the Egyptian king Apries, who collected a strong force and sent it against Cyrene. The Cyrenaeans took the field and, marching to the Well of Thestis in Irasa, engaged and defeated the Egyptian army." (Hdt 4.159)

When the Persian empire expanded in Asia Minor, several Greek cities found themselves involved both in international conflicts and military alliances.

Most of the wars waged by the Greeks were not very expensive and did not lead to massacres. For the economy of their cities, however, the human and financial resources required, even for small-scale conflicts, were far from negligible. Crops were often neglected or destroyed by enemy forces, weapons were damaged or lost to the enemy, wages and rations had to be paid, ships to be built; the numbers of dead may not normally have been very large, but prisoners were also a loss to the economy of a city, either because they never returned to their productive occupations or because they had to be ransomed.[6]

The preoccupation of the Greeks with war is clearly reflected in their visual art and literature. The *Iliad* was at all times the most popular poem, but other major archaic and classical poets were also inspired by military affairs.[7] "War is common" and "war is the father of all", a major philosopher declared (Heraclitus fr. 80, 53). Such was the impact of war, that as soon as the Greeks started systematically recording their past, they could hardly think of anything more appropriate than military affairs as a subject for historical enquiry.[8] War was not even excluded from the utopian or ideal societies conceived by philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle.

Given the importance of war, it is curious that no serious attempt was ever made to determine its origins or its long term effects.[9] War remained one of the few subjects not considered appropriate for philosophical contemplation.[10] Plato and Aristotle just took it

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6. On the average percentages of those killed see V. D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry battle in Classical Greece*, O.U.P., Oxford 1990, p. 209. Hanson argues, however, that "comprehensive destruction [of agricultural production] was unlikely", p. 3. On captives see Y. Garlan, "War, Piracy and Slavery in the Greek World", in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Classical Slavery*, Frank Cass, London 1987, pp. 7-21. Also L. Foxhall, "Farming and fighting in ancient Greece", in Rich & Shipley (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 134-45.

7. E.g. Tyrtaeus, Phrynichus, Aeschylus and Aristophanes.

8. A. Momigliano, "Popular Religious Beliefs and the Late Roman Historians", in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, W.U.P., Middletown 1977, pp.141-2.

9. A. Momigliano, "Some Observations on the Causes of War in Ancient Historiography", in *Studies in Historiography*, Garland Publishing, New York & London 1985, pp. 112-26. Greek authors, however, often reflected seriously upon the causes of specific wars, as Thucydides did on the Peloponnesian War. For a more sophisticated approach see M. Austin, "Alexander and the Macedonian invasion of Asia: Aspects of the historiography of war and empire in antiquity", in Rich & Shipley (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 206-7; also G. Shipley, "Introduction: The limits of war", *ibid.*, pp. 8-13.

10. Cf. Aristotle's objections to history in general (which in his days was mostly military) as a philosophical subject, which are discussed in R. Weil, "Aristotle's View of History", in J. Barnes et. al., *Articles on Aristotle. 2. Ethics &*

for granted. The most we get in treatises that purport to deal with causes of war are lists with no indication as to the relative weight of each item.

> "The following [we are told] are the arguments for making war on somebody: that we have been wronged in the past, and now that opportunity offers, ought to punish the wrongdoers; or that we are being wronged now, and ought to go to war in our own defence – or in defence of our kinsmen or of our benefactors; or, that our allies are being wronged and we ought to go to their help; or, that it is to the advantage of the state in respect to glory or wealth or power or the like." ([Arist.], *Rh. Al.* 1425a 10-6)[11]

The same work gives the causes of military success, again with no priorities or details:

> "Success is always due either to the favour of the gods which we call good fortune, or to manpower and efficiency, or financial resources, or wise generalship, or to having good allies, or to natural advantages of locality." (1425a 20)

The Greeks did not even deal in a systematic way with the practical relations between war and the city economy. If we try to collect the evidence of the extant authors pertaining to the economy of war, we observe that it does not amount to much. The relevant remarks are sparse and rather naive.[12] They turn out to be no more than calculations of the resources available (needed mostly for salaries), brief comments on the problem of supplies, and references to booty.[13] During the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians (and probably the Spartans as well) were increasingly sensitive to problems of "preparedness" – as is well demonstrated by Thucydides.[14] But in the relevant acounts there are almost no long-term calculations of the economic effects of wars. Almost all considerations deal with short term financial preparations for anticipated military conflicts.

At the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles, who was aware of its importance, reassured the Athenians of their victory over Sparta, because their city had great financial resources.[15]

Politics, Duckworth, London 1977, pp. 202-17.

11. Cf. Arist., *Pol.* 1333b 40-1334a 2: "The proper object of practising military training is... in order that first (men) may... avoid becoming enslaved to others; then so that they may seek suzerainty for the benefit of the subject people, but not for the sake of world-wide despotism; and thirdly to hold despotic power over those who deserve to be slaves".

12. But note some occasional (though not very profound) remarks on the effects of war on inflation ([Arist.], *Oec.* 1347a-b) or on the disruption of the markets because of war (Dem. 2.16-7).

13. Cf. the sensible remarks of Pericles in Thuc. 1.141-4. On military pay, see W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, U.C.P., Berkeley et. al., 1971, i, pp. 3-29; on provisioning, pp. 30-52; and on booty, pp. 53-84.

14. J. W. Allison, *Power and Preparedness in Thucydides*, John Hopkins, Baltimore & London 1989.

15. On the financial preparations for the Peloponnesian War see Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, p. 74; cf. L. Kallet-Marx, "The Kallias decree, Thucydides, and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War", *CQ* 39.1, 1989, pp. 94-113.

> "Apart from other sources of income [Pericles announced], an average of 600 talents was drawn from a tribute of the allies; and there were still 6,000 talents of coined silver on the Acropolis, out of 9,700 that had once been taken there, from which the money had been taken for the Propylaia of the Acropolis, the other public buildings and the Potidaea expedition. This did not include the uncoined gold and silver in private and public offerings, the sacred vessels for the processions and competitions, the spoils taken from the Persians, and similar resources to the amount of 500 talents. To this he added the treasures of the temples... Indeed, if they were absolutely driven to it, they might even take the gold ornaments of Athena herself; for the statue contained 40 talents of pure gold and it was removable." (Thuc. 2.13)

All these resources could be used for the anticipated war, although they had not actually been collected for military purposes, apart from the treasure of the Delian League – much of which was, in fact, spent in Athens for non-military purposes (Plut., *Per.* 12).[16]

Half a century later, Demosthenes, urging the Athenians to fight against Philip, whose wealth and power were well known, felt obliged to deal with the problem of resources. Once again, Athens was completely unprepared financially for the event of a major war. The orator's plan was simple: The Athenians could either "appropriate" the money they had for the festivals or impose a (special) war-tax, the *eisphora*.[17] "Only money we must have", said Demosthenes, "and without money nothing can be done that ought to be done. There are other proposals before you for raising supplies", he went on; "choose whichever of them you think expedient..." (1.20).[18]

That armies needed provisions was well known. Xerxes was warned by Artabanus that as he moved along in his campaign, the "land itself" would ultimately starve his army. The king paid no attention, arguing that, "if upon the proposal of a plan you were always to weigh equally all possible chances, you would never do anything" (Hdt 7.49-50). In preparing to invade Athens, the Spartans were aware that the problem of supplies was not negligible and that they had to make careful preparations (Thuc. 2.10); and so were the Athenians in planning the Sicilian expedition (Thuc. 6.22). But on most occasions, the Greeks proved to be totally unprepared, the problem of supplies being considered the responsibility of the general as he marched along.[19] A good general, it was argued, was he who could find supplies for his men (Xen., *Mem.* 3.4.2). Consequently, lack of provisions

16. The secondary importance of economic considerations in the development of Athenian imperialism (and in Thucydides' reasoning) is discussed by J. de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1963, pp. 58-97; cf. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "The Character of the Athenian Empire", *Historia* 3, 1954, pp. 1-41; M. I. Finley, "The Athenian Empire: A balance sheet", in *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*, Chatto & Windus, London 1981, pp. 41-61.

17. On the war-tax in relation to other taxes see A. H. M. Jones, "Taxation in Antiquity", in *The Roman Economy*, Blackwell, Oxford 1974, pp. 154-5.

18. As Finley points out, Athens was never tempted "to convert the irregular wartime capital levy on wealth, the *eisphora*, into a regular land tax", *The Ancient Economy*, Chatto & Windus, London 1975, p. 175.

19. Greek armies were normally responsible for their food supplies themselves; see Y. Garlan, *War in the Ancient World: A social history*, Chatto & Windus, London 1975, pp. 134-42; P. Millett, "Warfare, economy, and democracy in classical Athens", in Rich & Shipley (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 177-96.

could oblige Greek armies to withdraw – as it often did.[20] Xenophon's remarks illustrate the lack of sophistication in such matters. The Athenians, he argued, need not fear an enemy attack on their mines, for such an enemy would be bound to pass Athens:

> "If his numbers are small, he is likely to be destroyed by (the Athenian) cavalry and patrols. On the other hand, to march on them with a large force, leaving his own property unprotected, is no easy matter; for when he arrived at the mines the city of Athens would be much nearer to his own states than he himself would be. But even supposing that he should come, how is he to stay without supplies? And to send part of their forces in search for food may mean destruction to the foraging party and failure to achieve the ends for which he is contending; or if the whole force is continually foraging it will find itself blockaded instead of blockading." (*Poroi* 4.47-8)

As for booty, everybody knew the "law established for all time among all men that when a city is taken in war, the persons and the property of the inhabitants thereof belong to the captors" (Xen., *Cyr.* 7.4.73). The Greeks, consequently, were not ashamed to admit that plunder could be the cause of a war. Miltiades, we are told,

> "asked for a fleet of seventy ships together with troops and money, without even telling the Athenians the object of the expedition he had in mind, but merely saying he would enrich them if they followed him, because it was a place where they could easily get as much money as they wanted."

The Athenians agreed, and a fleet sailed to capture Paros (Hdt 6.132). It was as simple as that.

Despite the financial consequences of their military involvement, the Greeks never felt the need for serious cost and benefit analysis.[21] The following arguments advanced by Xenophon imply that they did not even have a clear idea whether wars were, overall, profitable or not.

> "If... anyone supposes that financially war is more profitable to the state than peace, I really do not know how the truth of this can be tested better than by considering once more what has been the experience of our state in the past. He will find that in the old days a very great amount of money was paid into the treasury in time of peace, and that the whole of it was spent in time of war; he will conclude on consideration that in our own time the effect of the late war on our revenues was that many of them ceased, while those that came in were exhausted by the multitude of expenses; whereas the cessation of war by sea has been followed by a rise in the revenues, and has allowed the citizens to devote them to any purpose they choose." (*Poroi* 5.11-2)

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20. A notorious case is the strategy proposed by Memnon the Rhodian to prevent the advance of Alexander by "stripping the countryside" (Diod. 17.18.2).

21. As a rule, modern works on ancient wars follow the lead of the Greeks; see discussion in M. I. Finley, "War and Empire", in *Ancient History: Evidence and models*, Penguin 1987, p. 67.

The casual treatment reserved for such consideration is also obvious in a story related by Aristotle:

> "when Autophradates was about to lay siege to Atarneus, [its ruler] Eubulus bade him consider how long it would take him to capture the place, and then calculate what his expenditure would be for that period, for he himself was willing for the payment of a smaller sum than that to evacuate Atarneus at once; these words caused Autophradates to ponder and led him to abandon the siege." (*Pol.* 1267a 32-7)

The point made in this account was that (even) such calculations were beyond the common way of thinking.

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The case of Alexander's eastern campaign is revealing.[22] The military successes of the joint Macedonian and Greek forces, along with allies from various nations, led to rapid historic transformations. Contact between Greek and Eastern cultures was of paramount and lasting importance: hence the creation of the new term "Hellenistic civilization".[23] People and wealth moved in two directions, from Greece to the East and from the East to Greece, on an unprecedented scale.[24] The East and the West were brought close together, and for the next three centuries the theatres of some of the most important political and military affairs in which the Greeks were involved shifted from the Greek mainland to Asia and Egypt.

The Greeks were not dragged into this new situation. We know little about the initial intentions of Philip (and Alexander),[25] but it is clear that some Greek politicians and orators had been contemplating such a war and its aftermath for a long time. The mythical accounts given in Herodotus' Book One apart, some Greeks appear to have propagated an eastern expedition before the Ionian revolt. Aristagoras of Miletus, we are told, went to Sparta holding a "map of the world engraved on bronze, showing all the seas and rivers". As a remedy to all that had befallen the Ionians, the Miletian suggested a war against the king of Persia.

> "Why, if you take Susa [he concluded his speech], you need not hesitate to compete with God himself for riches. You should suspend your wars over a scrap of land –and a poor land at that– with your rivals the Messenians and Arcadians and Argives, who have nothing whatever in the nature of gold or silver which is worth fighting and dying for, when you are offered the chance of an easy conquest of the whole land of Asia." (Hdt 5.49-50)

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22. Austin, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-223.
23. On the term see L. Canfora, *Ellenismo*, Laterza & Figli, Gius 1987.
24. Most of the evidence is collected in M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, Oxford 1941, ii, 1135-59.
25. J. R. Ellis, *Philip II and Macedonian Imperialism*, Thames & Hudson, London 1976, pp. 227-34.

According to Aristagoras, the wars in the Peloponnese would come to an end if the Spartans could get hold of the Persian treasure. The Ionian leader was not given the opportunity to explain whether he expected the Spartans to come back with the gold or to keep possession of Persia; but it seems reasonable to assume that the treasure alone would be the goal. The reply of the Spartan king that he would not even consider a proposal which would take the Lacedaemonians "a three months' journey from the sea" demonstrates how wrong Aristagoras was about the Spartans. But as reported by Herodotus (5.52), he was probably among the first Greeks to propose an eastern expedition on a large scale as a solution to the internal problems of the Greek world.

The Greek cities which joined the Delian League for defensive purposes were also hoping to "exact vengeance for their suffering by ravaging the king's land" (Thuc. 1.96.1). The Greeks who crossed Asia Minor to fight on Cyrus' side were mercenaries prepared, as Xenophon shows, to go deep into the Persian empire for profit (*An.* 7). Early in the fourth century, "the Lacedaemonians, foreseeing how great their war with the Persians would be, put one of the two kings, Agesilaus, in command. After levying six thousand soldiers and constituting a council of thirty of his foremost fellow citizens, he transported the armament from Aulis to Ephesus", where he enlisted four thousand soldiers. The preparation and the details demonstrate that the objective was not limited.[26] The army was "accompanied by a throng of no less number which provided a market and was intent upon plunder" (Diod. 14.79.1-2).[27]

The idea of a war against Persia was at that time becoming rather widespread. Isocrates referred to the natural enmity between the two nations and produced as evidence the popularity of myths dealing with the Trojan and the Persian wars (4.158). The resources and men needed for the enterprise could not be met by a single city alone; not even by a few cities. Isocrates advocated a joint endeavour. After the battle of Chaeronea, Philip "spread the word that he wanted to wage war on the Persians on the Greeks' behalf and to punish them for the profanation of the temples, and this won for him the loyal support of the Greeks" (Diod. 16.89.2).

Those in the fourth century who advocated a campaign against Persia were rather well informed.[28] Whatever the contribution of Alexander's military genius, the joint forces of the expedition were successful because Persia was already deep in crisis.[29] Isocrates was exaggerating the weakness of the Persians, and overestimating the assistance awaiting the Greeks from fellow-Greeks living under Persian rule, but he had a fairly clear idea of contemporary conditions in the East. A Greek victory over the Persians, he thought, would be beneficial to all Greeks. By transferring the war to the East, the Greek world would find peace. In peace, the propertied classes would be able to enjoy their wealth, while the poorer

26. C. H. Oldfather, the Loeb translator of Diodorus, makes the following remark: "Agesilaus fancies himself a second Agamemnon, leading the Greeks in a new Trojan War...", p. 225 n.3.

27. P. Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta*, Duckworth, London, pp. 215-8.

28. The Greeks obtained much of their information about the decline of Persia from the "Anabasis" affair.

29. Cf. the remarks by Polybius 3.6, but see discussion in A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The limits of Hellenization*, C.U.P., Cambridge 1975, pp. 132-6 and Cartledge, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-5.

classes would find solutions to their problems (4.182). Those sensible enough to join the campaign, either from the beginning or at a later stage, would benefit from their salaries and the booty (Arr., *Anab.* 5.27.7-8, 7.8.1, 7.9.6; cf. Plut., *Alex.* 15).

Until the early fifth century, the Greeks did not believe that a sharp cultural divide separated them from their eastern neighbors.[30] In earlier times they had absorbed freely from eastern wisdom and culture.[31] They did not hesitate to acknowledge the priority of Egyptian religious beliefs (Hdt 2.52). As late as the fifth century, Athens accepted eastern deities as regular members of her pantheon.[32] Some Greeks even expressed admiration for some Persians and their customs.[33] When they were brought into close contact, most Greeks realized that the idea of intermarriage with the Persians was not unthinkable.[34]

Some of Alexander's companions reacted violently when they realized that their king had been influenced by eastern practices, but the king's policy of bringing the two cultures closer together was not his own invention; the *proskynesis* apart, it found support among several of his officers (Arr., *Anab.* 7.4.8).

After the Persian wars, however, the dominant attitude was to regard all barbarians (i.e. non-Greeks) as inferior.[35] Herodotus introduced his history with accounts of rivalry and conflicts between Greeks and (eastern) barbarians since time immemorial. According to a widespread view, the barbarians were to be treated in a way appropriate to their inferior nature. Aristotle based his theory of natural slavery upon the servile nature of the barbarians and considered their enslavement a perfectly reasonable cause for war (*Pol.* 1256b 25-7).[36]

Mobility and the transfer of wealth were also part of a Greek plan. "It is my belief", Isocrates declared, "that those who will be inclined to remain at home will be far fewer than those who will be eager to join this army. For who, be he young or old, is so indolent that he will not desire to have a part in the expedition?" (4.185). Isocrates also had in mind a more permanent settlement of Greeks in Asia. He advised King Philip

> "to establish cities in (Asia), and to settle in permanent abodes those who now, for lack of the daily necessities of life, are wandering from place to place and committing outrages upon whomsoever they encounter." (5.120)

As for the transfer of wealth, the orator was very clear in suggesting that Greeks should "bring the prosperity of Asia across to Europe" (4.187). The Greeks were also interested in

30. E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989.
31. W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern influence on Greek Culture in the early archaic age*, H.U.P., Cambridge (Mass.) 1992.
32. On the introduction of the Thracian cult of Bendis, see R. Garland, *Introducing New Gods*, Duckworth, London 1992, pp. 111-4.
33. Notably Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia*, but also in his *Anabasis*.
34. Cf. the case of Miltiades. J. K. Anderson, *Xenophon*, Duckworth, London 1974, p. 142.
35. On "cultural imperialism" see P. Cartledge, *The Greeks*, O.U.P., Oxford 1993, pp. 36 ff.
36. P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustin*, C.U.P., Cambridge 1996, pp. 107-27.

the movement of men from the East to Greece. They expected to bring back barbarian slaves to their cities in large numbers. In Aristotle's words, one of the purposes of war was to "hold despotic power over those who deserve to be slaves" (*Pol.* 1334a 3).

By the early fourth century, the Persian aim of conquering Europe had been checked. Some Greeks were now hoping to bring that part of Asia from Sinope to Cilicia under their control (Isoc. 5.120; cf. 4.179).[37] Isocrates expressed his reasoning on several occasions. Local wars over minor issues should be exported to Asia and the Asian wealth imported to Greece (4.174). By exporting their wars, the Greeks could live in peace, allowing the East to become the theatre for the most important political affairs. Philip and Alexander propagated their plans along this line of reasoning, advocating peace for Greece and war in Asia.[38] In Arrian's account, Alexander had conceived a full-scale plan of uniting the world under his command (Arr., *Anab.* 5.25-6; cf. 7.1, 15).[39]

However, despite their calculations and long preparations, Greeks completely failed to predict the most important and radical consequences of their victory over the Persians. As far as we can tell, it never occurred to them that the conquest of Asia would mark the end of their independent cities.[40] Isocrates claimed that the common Greek endeavour would go hand in hand with the real independence of the Greek cities (7.134). Worse still, even when the Greek cities had actually lost their autonomy, their theorists and politicians failed to realize it; they went on thinking and, to a degree, acting as if their cities were still states. In Aristotle's *Politics*, which must have been completed after the conquest of the Persian empire, there is no hint that the autonomous Greek *poleis* would ever cease to be the aim of civilized life.

Whether they liked it or not, Greek cities after Alexander could only act politically as members of newly created kingdoms and federations. Most Greeks seem to have thought that this was temporary, whereas it proved to be a permanent development.[41] In the late third century, the statesman Agelaus of Naupactus implored the Greeks to join forces against the Romans.

> "For if you wait [Agelaus concluded] until the clouds which are now gathering in the west settle upon Greece, I very much fear that these truces and wars and games at which we now play may have been knocked out of our hands so completely that we shall be praying to the gods to grant us still this power of fighting or making peace with one another as we choose, in other words of being left the capacity to settle our own disputes." (Polyb. 5.104)

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37. This inversion was expressed in many ways: Atossa's desire to have slave handmaids from Sparta, Argos, Attica and Corinth (Hdt 3.134), for example, was reflected in later Greek obsession with barbarian slaves.

38. As a response, the Greek general Memnon thought of opposing Alexander by transferring the "impact of war to Europe"; but the idea "seemed beneath the dignity of the Persians" (Diod. 17.18.2-3).

39. It is unlikely that the wording corresponds to Alexander's way of thinking. I take, however, the formulation to be a Hellenistic rather than a Roman product.

40. We have no idea about the long-term plans of the Macedonian kings, but it is unlikely that they were anticipating a permanent political unity of the Greek cities.

41. A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1940, pp. 95-112.

The statesman from Naupactus was clearly speaking as if the Greek cities were members of temporary alliances, whereas most of them were already subjects of kingdoms and federations with common foreign policies. Furthermore, the remedy he proposed for a successful opposition to the western enemy actually meant submitting to King Philip V of Macedonia. With the arrival of the Romans, the Greek cities were nominally proclaimed autonomous and free, which was what they wished most. In actual fact, autonomy and freedom was the last thing they got.[42]

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Alexander's campaign transformed the Greek world in a most radical manner. The newly created empire was short-lived, but even the kingdoms into which it was divided were far more powerful than any previously known Greek alliance. The mere size of the new confrontations went beyond anything the Greeks had known in previous generations. The numbers of conscripts needed and the resources required for their mobilisation were unprecedented. In spite of the vast wealth they appropriated, all the Hellenistic kings were in constant demand of money for military purposes. Wars led to new wars, and those cities that were left in peace were marginalised. The economy of war was thus rapidly undermining the foundation of traditional Greek cities. What Aristotle and others had seen as the perfect size for a community, if it were to meet its military needs, now proved completely out of place (*Pol.* book 2). However, there is no hint that any Greek thinker before Alexander ever envisaged these developments.

The Greeks were certainly aware of the economic significance of wars. If they were ever asked to single out the most important cause of war, they would very likely have conceded that "all wars are undertaken for the acquisition of wealth" (Pl., *Phd.* 66c). "The art of war", says Aristotle, "will by nature be in a manner an art of acquisition" (*Pol.* 1256b 23-4). The study of war, however, did not come under the heading of what we call economics, for which the Greeks did not even have a proper word.[43] War, so far as it was a subject for theoretical speculation, was discussed in works called Politics or the like.

From the mid fifth century, the Greeks inaugurated the systematic study of the constitutions of individual cities ([Xen.], *Ath. Pol.*), and in the fourth they started writing on the problem of constitutions in general. Xenophon wrote on the *Politeia of the Lacedaemonians*. Plato wrote a *Politeia* and a *Politikos*, as well as a book on (city) *Laws*. Aristotle and his school undertook the study of numerous individual constitutions, culminating in the *Politics*. In all these works there are remarks on war and the way it was or should be conducted, yet it is clear that no author felt the need to go into details regarding the long-term effects of war, conquest and empire on the economy of the cities. The capacity of

42. E. S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, vol. 1, U.C.P., Berkeley et. al. 1984, pp.132-57.

43. At best, "the management of private concerns", it was thought, "differs only in point of number from that of public affairs" (Xen., *Mem*, 3.4.12). The city was seen as a large and composite household.

a city to conduct its wars successfully is almost never attributed to its economy, and when resources are mentioned they are but one –never the most important– among several factors. Ultimately, a city's military strength was almost invariably attributed to its constitution, which, among other things, determined the education and the training of its citizens. Aristotle went as far as to suggest that the Greek race was "capable of ruling all mankind if it attains constitutional unity" (*Pol.* 1327b 33). The same view is expressed by Isocrates, who argued that the Persians were destined not to win.

> "For it is not possible for people who are reared and governed as are the Persians either to have a part in any other form of virtue or to set up on the field of battle trophies of victory over their foes. For how could either an able general or a good soldier be produced amid such ways of life as theirs?" (4.150)

In the late second century, Polybius, following the Greek tradition, wrote a full chapter (Book 6) to explain efficiency in war as a result of the relevant constitutions.[44]

As the Greeks saw things, compared to the importance of the constitution, the economy was clearly a secondary factor when it came to the military capacity of cities. Financial considerations were reserved mostly for individuals, not cities. Xenophon and the school of Aristotle wrote books on household management. Most Greek politicians seem to have thought that the economy of the city rested upon the wealth of its inhabitants (whether they were citizens or not). In time of need, cities had simply to collect as much as was required from those who possessed it. This was the attitude of politicians such as Demosthenes. In discussing war finances, he always urged the Athenians to tax the rich only when money was needed, never in advance.[45] In other words, the issue of resources was not considered by the Greeks as pertaining to what we would call economics, but to what they and we would call politics. The same holds true for the consequences of war on the economy. The Greeks ignored the importance of the economy partly because they overestimated politics.

The solutions to the social and economic problems of Greek cities during the fourth century were, accordingly, sought by politicians and orators in political terms. Demosthenes and Isocrates, who otherwise had radically different views, went on discussing the social and economic problems of Athens as if they merely depended upon choices in international relations. Cities with insufficient wealth should find ways to appropriate the property of other cities or other states. As many Greeks thought, war affected the distribution of wealth, not its production. And distribution was a purely political issue.

As we can now see, the problems of the Greek cities were not purely problems of distributing existing wealth. They were also related to production. An influx of numerous barbarian slaves, for example, would certainly make life easier for some Greek citizens. But it would also make the extraction of greater agricultural surplus possible. Possession of

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44. F. W. Walbank, *Polybius*, U.C.P., Berkeley et. al. 1972, pp. 130-56.

45. E.g. *On the Symmories* and *De Corona*. W. Jaeger, *Demosthenes: The origin and growth of his policy*, Octagon Books, New York 1977, pp. 176-98.

the Persian treasures would increase the wealth of the Greeks, but it would also increase social inequalities among its inhabitants. Above all, the conquest of Asia was to bring about a radical transformation in the productive systems of Greek cities.

Alexander's eastern campaign did not simply amount to slave raids. In Asia Minor and Egypt production was neither based on the labour of free citizens, nor on the exploitation of slaves. In the absence of a better term, we may regard the productive masses in the East as serfs, neither free nor enslaved. By possessing these territories, the Macedonians and the Greeks inherited productive systems that differed considerably from those prevailing in their old cities – although they may have had some features in common with the systems of Sparta and a few other Greek areas.[46] The effective extraction of the surplus produced in the conquered areas meant the maintenance of imperial states with a standing armed force and the appropriate resources to mobilize it. The Hellenistic kingdoms did not even remotely resemble the old Greek cities. With their large armies and treasures, they were in need of a strong state apparatus run by professionals, and hence they could be nothing but kingdoms with monarchs as leaders. Democracy, and even traditional oligarchies, were outdated.

Isocrates seems to have grasped the problem correctly, at least up to a point. He reproached the Lacedaemonians for having compelled their neighbours to live in serfdom (as helots), while refusing to help the Greeks do the same with the eastern barbarians.

> "It lies in their power [he argued] to make up their quarrel with us [Athenians] and reduce all the barbarians to a state of subjection [*perioikoi*] to the whole of Hellas." (4.131)

Elsewhere he advised Philip to "compel the barbarians... to be serfs (*heloteuein*) of the Greeks" (*2 Phil.* 5). But such observations did not lead the orator to realise that the new productive systems would bring about radical political changes. As a good Greek intellectual, Isocrates went on thinking the other way round. He thought that, ultimately, politics was everything, and that the economy was of secondary importance. If the Greeks wished, he seems to have believed, they could retain both: their own political systems and the productive systems they would inherit. The fallacy of this reasoning was, I believe, a most impressive failure among numerous Greek intellectual achievements.

46. For a brief comment see F. W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*, Fontana, London 1992, p. 159.