

# Thucydides 1.23.6: Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Scholion

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IN DESCRIBING THE ORIGINS of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides asserts that the real explanation for the conflict—less obvious to contemporaries and discussed less openly than the parties' specific grievances—was the growth of Athenian power and the resulting fear among the Lacedaemonians that compelled the Greeks generally, *i.e.*, these two opposing states and their allies, to go to war (1.23.6): τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ, τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἡγοῦμαι μεγάλους γιγνομένους καὶ φόβον παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν· αἱ δ' ἐς τὸ φανερόν λεγόμεναι αἰτίαί...<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Ostwald, *ΑΝΑΓΚΗ in Thucydides* (Atlanta 1988) 3ff, following Croiset (1886), agrees that there is an ellipse of the direct object of ἀναγκάσαι at 1.23.6, and that if the object αὐτούς were to be supplied, it would refer to both Athenians and Spartans. The closest parallel seems to be Thuc. 2.75.3, ἠνάγκαζον ἐς τὸ ἔργον (*cf.* LSJ *s.v.* ἀναγκάζω, who would supply an acc. pers. in both places). P. J. Rhodes, *Thucydides: History II* (Warminster 1988) 133, translates 2.75.3: “the *xenagoi* (of the Lacedaemonians) ... compelled *the men* to persevere in the work,” as if something like αὐτούς were left out here too. The problem with αὐτούς at 1.23.6 is that because the Athenians (acc.) are the subject of ἀναγκάσαι, αὐτούς ought to refer to the Lacedaemonians. Perhaps a freer expansion of the text, such as τοὺς Ἕλληνας, should be in the reader's mind at 1.23.6. One need only add that Thucydides states at the outset (1.1.2) that the two sides included allies from among most Greek cities—some of whom joined the hostilities at once, while others became involved after long deliberation—and also drew a part of the barbarian world into the conflict, which meant that this war affected the largest portion of mankind (ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων). Any object assumed at 1.23.6 surely resumes the scope of the thought of the opening chapter. Ostwald maintains that the omission of a direct object after ἀναγκάσαι creates a pronounced emphasis upon it, but he prefers translations that transform the infinitive into the noun *necessitatem* (Valla; this is the point of Dionysius' and the scholiast's remark [see further below] or the adjective 'inevitable' [=ἀναγκαιόν: Crawley]). For the meaning of the phrase ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ see n.6 *infra*.

An identical reaction to the style of this passage appears in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Amm.* 2.6) and the scholia vetera:<sup>2</sup> βούλεται γὰρ δηλοῦν, ὅτι μεγάλοι γιννόμενοι οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἀνάγκην παρέσχον τοῦ πολέμου.<sup>3</sup> Modern scholars have tended to repeat what they find in this brief explanation;<sup>4</sup> and the passage is still not well understood, although it continues to provoke speculation on Thucydides' concept of metaphysical—or at least meta-historical—determinism.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> C. Hude, *Scholia in Thucydidem ad optimos codices collata* (Leipzig 1927) 26.

<sup>3</sup> W. K. Pritchett, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: On Thucydides* (Berkeley 1975) 90 n.23, observes how freely Dionysius alters the original in his purported quotation preceding the comment cited above ('τὴν μὲν οὖν ἀληθεστάτην αἰτίαν, λόγῳ δὲ ἀφανεστάτην, τοὺς Ἀθηναίους οἶομαι μεγάλους γιννόμενους ἀναγκάσαι εἰς τὸ πολεμεῖν'): γὰρ becomes οὖν, πρόφασις αἰτία, and ἡγοῦμαι οἶομαι; word order is slightly altered; and the phrase that speaks of stirring up fear in the Spartans is completely omitted. G. Pavano, *Dionisio d'Alicarnasso: Saggio su Tucidide* (Palermo 1958) 39n., suggests that the difference between *Th.* 10, where Dionysius quotes Thucydides 1.23.6 accurately, and *Amm.* 2.6, where 1.23.6 is altered, occurred because Dionysius was relying on memory when he composed the letter to Ammaeus. J. G. A. Ros, *Die METABOLH (Variatio) als Stilprinzip des Thukydides* (Nijmegen 1938) 67, proposes that Dionysius, in composing the letter, had to contend with marginal notes in his text of Thucydides; as a result, Dionysius paid less heed to the text itself than to the comments on and explanations of the text in his notes.

<sup>4</sup> In his discussion of Dionysius' comment on 1.23.6, the distinction made by Ros (*supra* n.3: 56f) between μεταβολή and ἐξαλλαγή ('departure from normal usage') is important, especially because Thucydides usually departs in exactly the opposite direction from what we take to be standard usage by substituting, or even inventing, nouns for verbs (ὀνομαστικὴ λέξις). On this point, see the introduction to J. Steup's edition of *Thukydides, erklärt von J. Classen* (Berlin 1919) lxxiii. The analysis of 1.23.6 that originates in Dionysius and the scholion and continues in comments like those of Steup and Ros is sometimes ignored by those who deal principally with 'historical' questions. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides I* (Oxford 1956) 152 n.1, for example, has little to say about ἀναγκάσαι εἰς τὸ πολεμεῖν, other than to indicate annoyance at Jaeger's suggestion that the "rule of necessity"—an amoral rule at that—is involved in Thucydides' analysis of the war's causes.

<sup>5</sup> For W. R. Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton 1984) 126 n.41, 1.23.6 is "the most discussed" passage in the history, yet "poorly understood" for all that. What was not apparent to Thucydides' contemporaries, according to Connor, and turned out to be the historian's keenest insight was his assertion that the pattern of Athenian expansion overwhelmed in importance all the alleged rights and wrongs of particular disputes among the Greek states. Connor also notes (32 n.31) that the passage has given rise to many arguments about determinism. On the issue of philosophical determinism Connor seems right: there is no force or idea transcending human action and human knowledge

Students of Thucydides' manner of expressing himself in this crucial chapter claim that he has displayed a characteristic peculiarity at 1.23.6 by substituting *ρήματα* for *ὀνόματα*. They point out that in formulating what he calls the *ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις* Thucydides has varied his language in a noteworthy way by using *ἀναγκάσαι* and *ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν* instead of the nouns *ἀνάγκη* and *πόλεμος*.<sup>6</sup> But these commentators have not, in my view, brought out the full implications of the ancient interpretation of the passage. Dionysius and the scholiast clearly indicate that Thucydides' judgment about the true cause of the war can best be understood by expressing it in simpler Greek: "the *πόλεμος* came about *κατ' ἀνάγκην*," or "this came to be

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that necessitates the war. I question, however, Connor's rejection of the phrase "practical inevitability." What the Greek states were doing in 431 B.C., how they had acted since the end of the Persian Wars, and the way they judged one another's actions (their *πράξεις* and their *γνώμαι*) made the war unavoidable once a certain threshold of distrust and hostility had been crossed. Surrender to rival city-states without a fight (which meant that they would no longer be *ἐλεύθεροι* but would become *ὑπήκοοι*) must have been the only other choice, and in states that did not view fighting in itself as evil, that was no choice at all.

<sup>6</sup> H. R. Rawlings, *A Semantic Study of Prophasis to 400 B.C.* (= *Hermes Einzelschr.* 33 [Wiesbaden 1975]) 80, gives an exact analysis of the passage and shows what an unusual use of the *πρόφασις* is involved here. As others have noted earlier, Rawlings points out that the word, especially in the phrase *κατὰ πρόφασιν*, is often antithetical to *τὸ ἀληθές* but here the *πρόφασις* is *ἀληθεστάτη*. Further, the etymologies that underlie two distinct *προφάσεις* (one derived from *φαίνω*, the other—in Rawlings' view—from *φημί*) are undercut by Thucydides' statement that this *πρόφασις* was *ἀφανεστάτη λόγῳ*. On the question of etymology, L. Pearson, "Prophasis: A Clarification," *ΤΑΡΑ* 103 (1972) 381 n.3, seems right in arguing that *πρόφασις*, from *προφαίνεσθαι*, can mean nothing but 'explanation' (as a 'showing forth'), although an explanation or showing forth will almost invariably give 'the reason why', *i.e.*, it will make plain what we call causal factors. An explanation of causal factors is easily transformed into 'cause', so that a translation of *πρόφασις* as 'cause' is not necessarily mistaken. I would also urge that the *ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις* of 1.23.6 involves a play on words in the manner of Gorgias. It is the 'most revealing' or 'most noteworthy' explanation (*ἀληθεστάτη* from *ἀ-*privative + *λανθάνω*, 'escape notice'), but is simultaneously 'least apparent' (*ἀφανεστάτη*); the key antithesis is between adjectives derived from *φαίνομαι* and *λανθάνω* or *λανθάνομαι*, and the unusual juxtaposition is meant to insure, if words can ever insure the defeat of *λήθη*, that this *πρόφασις* will not escape *μνήμη*, as does so much historical knowledge (1.22.3). The *ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις*, *ἀφανεστάτη δὲ λόγῳ* is the explanation that must not be forgotten.

end result of all the preceding events that made the Athenians powerful and the Spartans fearful.<sup>7</sup>

Did Thucydides avoid a simpler formulation of this idea for stylistic reasons? The answer depends of course to some degree on how we construe the word ‘stylistic’. One result of using the simplified phrase πόλεμον κατ’ ἀνάγκην (with the accusative following ἡγοῦμαι) would have been a rhythmical clausula, with two and one-half feet of dactylic hexameter. Other alternatives—γίγνεσθαι πόλεμον κατ’ ἀνάγκην (“that the war was coming-to-be through necessity”) or πόλεμον γένεσιν κατ’ ἀνάγκην (“that the war was a coming-to-be according to necessity”)—would produce the same effect. And avoiding diction that was distinctly ‘epic’ in tone or rhythm was apparently important to Thucydides. Shortly before this (at 1.21.1), Thucydides has criticized the logographers for the myth-like element (τὸ μυθῶδες) in their chronicles, an element that makes the telling of traditional tales more persuasive to the listening audience (προσαγωγότερον τῇ ἀκροάσει).<sup>8</sup> At 1.22.4 he acknowledges that the lack of a mythic element (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες) in his own work causes it to be less enjoyable for its audience (ἔς ἀκρόασιν ... ἀτερπέστερον). If the connection between what is ‘mythic’ and the pleasure of listening is as close as the author himself claims, then clearly his idea that the war arose necessarily out of a shift in power between Athens and Sparta and out of Spartan alarm over that destabilizing shift ought not to be

<sup>7</sup> Ostwald (*supra* n.1: 15f and 53) speaks of the war as the necessary consequence of an entire chain of circumstances. J. de Romilly, “La notion de nécessité dans l’histoire de Thucydide,” *Science et conscience de la société: Mélanges ... Raymond Aron* (Paris 1971) I 127, points out that the word ἀνάγκη “respirait la certitude scientifique et tirait de là son attrait”; she also remarks (119) that Thucydides’ views bear comparison to the mechanical outlook of the atomists. P. R. Pouncey, *The Necessities of War: A Study of Thucydides’ Pessimism* (New York 1980) 173 n.6, following Guthrie, reminds readers that the use of ἀνάγκη had become a philosophical commonplace and that Thucydides’ use of the term, even if not strictly philosophical, did convey a sense of what can be called determinism.

<sup>8</sup> S. Flory, “The Meaning of τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες (1.22.4) and the Usefulness of Thucydides’ History,” *CJ* 85 (1990) 193ff, emphasizes the connection of the word μυθῶδες with epic stories that glorify warlike deeds, but gives too little attention to the notion, originating with Dionysius, that the word has also to do with the poetic form of myth (196f and n.12). Each occurrence of μυθῶδες is accompanied by an occurrence of ἀκρόασις in the very short span from 1.21.1 to 1.22.4; the ‘shape’ or ‘form’ (εἶδος) of myth has a direct link to the listening pleasure of the audience.

ly out of a shift in power between Athens and Sparta and out of Spartan alarm over that destabilizing shift ought not to be couched in a clausula that evokes hexameter verse, for the idea itself is a non-mythic construct.<sup>9</sup>

We should acknowledge that neither ἀνάγκη nor such adverbial phrases as κατ' ἀνάγκην and ὑπ' ἀνάγκης were exclusively epic or Homeric, although the history of both begins in Homer; they had made their way thence into the vocabulary of the cosmologists of the generations that preceded Thucydides. We depend on rather late sources for most of our citations and paraphrases of the teachings of the pre-Socratics, and some details about the early usage of ἀνάγκη may be skewed; but the overall picture is unlikely to be wrong. At times, those who speculated on the structure or development of the universe retain in their descriptions of its workings a demonic Ἀνάγκη derived from myth, but at other times or in different cosmologists ἀνάγκη is demythologized and transformed into something like a mechanical principle that governs μεταβολαί in the universe—particularly the growth and/or shrinking of the cosmos, of which ἀνάγκη is an inherent part. Several well-known texts make these points clear.

When Aetius, following Theophrastus, says that Heraclitus taught the doctrine that all things exist καθ' εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην (A 8 Diels-Kranz), and then adds, following Posidonius, that εἰμαρμένη itself was the αἰθέριον σῶμα that Heraclitus called the σπέρμα τῆς τοῦ παντός

<sup>9</sup> An anecdote in Quintilian confirms the importance of the rhythmical qualities of Greek prose for rhetorical criticism. Declaring that *nec aliud potest sermonem facere numerosum quam opportuna ordinis permutatio* (8.6.64), Quintilian recounts the purported discovery of a tablet on which the first four words of the *Republic* had been written in various orders. κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραιᾶ is the actual opening of the dialogue (*Resp.* 327A). The other possibilities—χθὲς κατέβην εἰς Πειραιᾶ and εἰς Πειραιᾶ χθὲς κατέβην—yield fragments of hexameter, provided that the αἰ of Πειραιᾶ may be long (*cf.* Ar. *Pax* 145 and 165). The story may be worth little as evidence for Plato's methods of composition, but it does show that Quintilian or his Greek source believed that the opening of the *Republic* was chosen for its prose rhythm after the other variations were discarded because of their poetic character. It is well known that Quintilian disliked the hexameter rhythm at the beginning of Livy's proem, but he nevertheless rejects emendation of *facturusne operae pretium sim* (9.4.74). *Cf.* R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1–5* (Oxford 1965) 25 *ad Praef.* 1; and on Plato see now D. Clay, "Plato's First Words," *YCS* 29 (1992) 114 and n.3 and 125ff.

γενέσεως, it is difficult to judge whether this “body of ether,” “seed of the coming-to-be of the whole,” and “fated necessity” is a divine power or purely natural force. But when Aristotle argues in the *Metaphysics* (=A5) that Heraclitus ποιεῖ δὲ καὶ τάξιν τινα καὶ χρόνον ὠρισμένον τῆς τοῦ κόσμου μεταβολῆς κατὰ τινα εἰμαρμένην ἀνάγκην, his interpretation of what his predecessor taught points to a far greater degree of abstraction: Heraclitus’ ἀνάγκη measures and controls the pattern and the time of cosmic change. Yet what Diels-Kranz classify as a paraphrase of Heraclitus’ teaching in Hippocrates (C1: πάντα γίνεται δι’ ἀνάγκην θείην) returns interpreters and the ἀνάγκη under examination to a mythological framework.

For Parmenides the picture is perhaps clearer. When Aetius summarizes his teaching that the cause of motion and coming-to-be in the universe is a δαίμονα κυβερνήτην καὶ κληδοῦχον whom Parmenides calls Δίκην τε καὶ Ἀνάγκην (A37), we can compare verses of Parmenides himself, in this case B8.30, where Ἀνάγκη controls the sky and the boundaries of the stars. The regulator of cosmic change is not a mechanism or principle of the universe itself, but rather that divine ἀνάγκη better suited to a theogony or cosmogony than to physical speculation.

If our late sources are generally accurate, then it must have been the atomists Democritus and Leucippus who made the cosmic ἀνάγκη into something akin to notions of force or energy as such terms might be employed in physics. Diogenes Laertius’ life of Democritus (9.45=A1 D.-K.) reports that he taught that πάντα ... κατ’ ἀνάγκην γίνεσθαι, τῆς δίνης αἰτίας οὔσης τῆς γενέσεως πάντων ἢν ἀνάγκην λέγει. For Democritus ἀνάγκη was the name given to the vortex that was the cause of the coming-to-be of all things. And Diogenes (9.33=A1 D.-K.) also credits Leucippus with the view that εἶναι ... ὡς περ γενέσεις κόσμου, οὕτω καὶ αὐξήσεις καὶ φθίσεις καὶ φθορὰς κατὰ τινα ἀνάγκην. Leucippus’ ἀνάγκη governs not only comings-to-be in the universe, but growth or expansion, withering away, and destruction as well.

Scholars have not demonstrated a precise connection between Thucydides and the atomists (of whom Democritus is generally regarded as the refiner and expounder, during the period *ca* 420 B.C., of Leucippus’ teachings), but there is a sense among critics that Gorgias, Protagoras, Democritus, the anonymous author in Iamblichus, and Thucydides shared in the

same intellectual climate.<sup>10</sup> Common stylistic devices and patterns of argument can be found,<sup>11</sup> and the ‘anthropology’ of Democritus may have influenced Thucydides.<sup>12</sup> In my view,

<sup>10</sup> H. Herter, “Thukydides und Demokrit über Tyche,” *WS N.F.* 10 (1976) 108–28, argues that despite differences created by Thucydides’ political focus and Democritus’ central ethical concern, each author minimized irrational factors such as τύχη in the lives of individuals and states (125); Herter concludes (128) that the two shared the outlook of an age that in breaking away from belief in non-rational factors looked instead to such factors as γνώμη to find the determinants of the happy life and the well-regulated state. E. Hussey, “Thucydidean History and Democritean Theory,” *History of Political Thought* 6 (1985) 118–38, suggests that parts of Thucydides can be understood more clearly if the historian is read as an adherent of the theories that Democritus had already formulated about balance in the soul and the balance of interests in the state. A. T. Cole, “The Anonymous Iamblich and his Place in Greek Political Theory,” *HSCP* 65 (1961) 127–63, finds both Protagorean and Democritean elements (150–56) in the Anonymous. Cole believes that the Anonymous relied on a work of Democritus, perhaps the *Περὶ ἀνδραγαθίας*, and was not himself Democritus (as has sometimes been argued); he also claims (143) that the ἀρετή to which the Anonymous devotes his attention is not entirely individualistic but is comprised of political components. It is the kind of excellence that one finds in statesmen, for it is made up of eloquence, bravery, strength, and cleverness; and, for Cole, there is a comparable concept in Thucydides.

<sup>11</sup> J. de Romilly, “Sur un écrit anonyme ancien et ses rapports avec Thucydide,” *JSAv* (1980) 19–34, concludes that the Anonymous shares themes, methods of argumentation or standards of proof, and ways of expressing himself with Thucydides. Earlier (20) she suggests that the texts of the Anonymous and of Thucydides cannot be used to show precise links between the two authors, but rather that the texts demonstrate that the two men emerged from the same intellectual milieu.

<sup>12</sup> C. Farrar, *The Origins of Democratic Thinking* (Cambridge 1988), for whom there is some general progression of thought from Protagoras to Democritus and Thucydides (2f), argues that the elaboration of a concept of human nature and of an historical anthropology in Democritus are not unlike elements of Thucydides’ Archaeology (243), but she also points out (263) that for Thucydides the shaping of society occurs in the context of political change rather than in the pursuit of the individual good, as seems to be the case in Democritus’ thought. A. T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (= *APA Philological Monographs* 25 [Cleveland 1967]) 145, points out that the Archaeology relies not solely on ‘likelihood’ (τὸ εἰκός) as a basis for his reconstruction of the remote past, but on τεκμήρια as well. (Although Cole does not refer to it, the opening of the tombs on Delos and the identification of more than half the burial sites as belonging to Carians [1.8.1] seems a perfect example of this procedure.) Cole also notes certain passages in Aristophanes, Antiphon the Sophist, and Thucydides to show that all three shared the contemporary belief in “human nature” (ἡ ἀνθρωπιὰ φύσις) that is always and everywhere the same in some aspects but is also distinct from, though not necessarily at odds with, νόμος.

there is an additional area of overlap related to these but mentioned less frequently. In defining the Peloponnesian War as the greatest κίνησις ever to affect the Greeks and even a segment of the barbarian world (1.1.2), Thucydides is clearly taking a word that had belonged to the realm of physics and appropriating it for history. He must mean that ‘motion’ in the physical world and ‘movement’ (change or coming-to-be) in the lives of men and the affairs of their cities are analogous. And if Thucydides had an interest in the philosophical terminology concerning motion, it is logical to suppose that he also had an interest in arguments about the necessity of motion. The atomists neither originated nor monopolized such speculation, but it must have been particularly crucial in their thinking to explore, perhaps even to sort out, the relationships between or among necessity, motion, the vortex (δίνη), and coming-to-be.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> D. J. Furley, *The Greek Cosmologists I* (Cambridge 1987) 146–51, gives an account of the atomists’ explanation of motion, culled from the hostile testimony of Aristotle, with some attention to the necessity of that motion. L. Edmunds, “Necessity, Chance, and Freedom in the Early Atomists,” *Phoenix* 26 (1972) 343, shows quite clearly that the concept of necessity in a key fragment of Leucippus explains how things come into being, and also demonstrates that necessity and the vortex or whirl were not identical, though they are certainly related, in Democritus’ thought. The jokes in Ar. *Nub.* 373–80 on Zeus’ urinating through a sieve (an atomist metaphor for the whirl, if Sextus Empiricus [cited by Edmunds 345] is quoting Democritus correctly), those about the rolling (κυλινδόμεναι) clouds that are compelled to be borne along (κἀναγκασθῶσι φέρεσθαι) because they are filled with moisture, hang down by necessity (δι’ ἀνάγκην), and burst open as they fall upon one another, and the following joke about Vortex (αἰθέριος Δίνος), who is the power compelling (ὁ ἀναγκάζων) the clouds to move in this way, may exaggerate the atomists’ theories grossly, but they presuppose familiarity with the atomists’ vocabulary and the audience’s knowledge that cosmologists, including atomists, conceived of motion and necessity as linked to the world of becoming. A logical connection between the atomists’ physical theory and the ‘anthropology’ might well have produced a theory of motion in the souls or minds of men in society (G. Vlastos, “Ethics and Physics in Democritus, II,” *The Philosophical Review* 55 [1946] 56, suggests as much; cf., *contra*, Edmunds 345 n.47). It seems inadequate to claim that trial and error (πείρα) on the part of men caught in the grip of necessary circumstances (τὰ ἀναγκαῖα) is the sole cause of any but the most primitive social practices (cf. Thuc. 1.2.2, where nomadic existence is attributed to the day-to-day search for ἀναγκαῖα τροφή). If Thucydides 1.23.6 is influenced by the atomists’ vocabulary, this may be why the historian adds the notion of the fear (φόβον παρέχοντας) among the Lacedaemonians to the idea that the Athenians were becoming powerful and considers that the war was necessitated by these two factors. This fear was certainly the reaction, the ‘motion’ (or ‘motive’ or ‘emotion’), in the souls of the Spartans and their allies that corresponded to the increase in Athenian power. J. R. Ellis, “The Structure and Argument of

Thucydides certainly had to be aware of the connotations of the word ἀνάγκη still known to us, and he must have understood something of the way in which the term had been adapted from Homeric usage to denote a power that caused change in the universe. It seems obvious that such a development would have posed problems for the historian: in Thucydides' view it would have been inconceivable that the fundamental cause of the war should lie anywhere but in the conduct of human affairs. Neither θείη ἀνάγκη nor the ἀνάγκη κόσμου could matter in his account of the war's origins, although each ἀνάγκη had had causal power attributed to it. Such speculation in epic and the pre-Socratics represented a danger for the historian: the events leading to war, and of the war itself, occurred not κατ' ἀνάγκην but κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, as Thucydides points out in explaining why his history affords its audience permanently useful knowledge (the famous κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ of 1.22.4).<sup>14</sup>

Dionysius and the scholiast suggest that Thucydides would have employed only the nouns ἀνάγκη and πόλεμος if his style had been more ordinary and straightforward. But the phrases πόλεμον κατ' ἀνάγκην and ἀνάγκην πολέμου, which can be

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Thucydides' Archaeology," *CA* 10 (1991) 365, calls the κίνησις of 1.1.2 "buildup" because both the Spartans and Athenians were ἀκμάζοντες ... παρασκευῆ. That is certainly 'movement', but so too is the war itself and so especially is the sorting out of allies to one side or the other.

<sup>14</sup> It may be that the phrase κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον is a way of alluding to another sort of necessity, in a brachyology for κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσιν. If so, then Thucydides has introduced the ἀνάγκη φύσεως into his history in an indirect way; but a discussion of this issue must be reserved for another time. O. Lendle, "Κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ: Thucydides und Herodot," *RhM* 133 (1990) 235 nn.9f, maintains that a κτῆμα cannot belong to the undifferentiated mass of humankind but only to individuals, and that ἐς αἰεὶ refers to the ἐς αἰεὶ τοῦ βίου of an individual. Lendle concludes that Thucydides had the lifespan of his contemporary audience, not the everlasting future of mankind, uppermost in mind when he composed his proem (242), and he thus rejects such translations of the phrase as those of Lesky, Classen-Steup, and Weinstock (231). But even if Thucydides composed his history with a view to the immediate concerns of his public, this need not exclude his ability to foresee that individuals who lived after his own generation would have the same or nearly the same concerns about power and warfare as his contemporaries, just as those who had lived before his time had such calculations to make, whether under Minos or Agamemnon or during the conflict between Chalcis and Eretria.

identified as the simple expressions already existing or with existing parallels in the Greek of Thucydides' day, would have reminded his audience of epic poetry or of the cosmologists' usage. The expression actually used at 1.23.6 avoids such mythological and cosmological connotations. Stylistic variation is only one aspect of the formulation ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν: the phrase also ensures that the focus will include nothing beyond the Athenians' growing power and its threatening effect on the Lacedaemonians as the provocation to conflict.

After saying so much about the historian's avoidance of traditional diction, there remains an unavoidable formulaic element in Thucydides' expression at 1.23.6. In a number of passages, of which this is simply the earliest to occur in the history, Thucydides employs what amounts to a conceptual formula for the necessity that he discerns in certain occurrences. This 'formula' has no metrical shape, but it calls attention to a remarkable regularity in human affairs, a regularity that depends on three connected phenomena: a coming-to-be, enmity or conflict, and necessity. A few passages will illustrate the various ways in which these realities, denoted by a limited set of words, are joined together.<sup>15</sup>

In his speech on the Mytilenian question (3.40.3) Cleon remarks that a just man pities those who are like himself and does not pity those who extend pity only out of necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) and have in reality become permanent enemies (καθεστῶτας αἰεὶ πολεμίους). Here, because Cleon claims to be

<sup>15</sup> The number of passages to be examined might be multiplied many times by including those in which δεῖ and χρή replace ἀνάγκη/ἀναγκάζω, or where the concept of becoming is very loosely defined. εἰδέναι δὲ χρή ὅτι ἀνάγκη πολεμεῖν at 1.144.3 is a tempting expression to try to force into this analysis, but only those passages that include all three elements—ἀνάγκη/ἀναγκάζω, the actual mention of war, enemies, or opponents, and the actual mention of a 'coming-to-be' (γίγνεσθαι or related nouns or the intransitive tenses of καθίστημι)—are made part of the discussion. Even some passages, such as 6.92.2, where the formula is inserted into a speech of Alcibiades as ornamental verbiage (οἱ τοὺς φίλους ἀναγκάσαντες πολεμίους γενέσθαι), are not essential to the discussion. The reason for excluding passages in which δεῖ and χρή convey the idea of necessity is that their semantic overlap with ἀνάγκη/ἀναγκάζω is slight. G. Redard, *Recherches sur XPH, XPHΣΘAI: Étude sémantique* (Paris 1953) 70, argues that χρή "indique bien tentative—intentionnelle ou non—d'appropriation" (as opposed to δεῖ, which, for Redard, denotes an obligation outside the subject and a movement opposite that of appropriation [56]). S. Benardete, "XPH and ΔEI in Plato and Others," *Glotta* 43 (1965) 285–98, confirms and extends Redard.

describing those who act with deliberate deceit vis-à-vis their opponents, necessity appears to impel the unjust toward clement behavior; but enmity for the just has become their fixed attitude and condition, and such enmity affords no basis whatsoever for pity. Almost the opposite situation is described at 7.57.6. Here, long-standing ethnic solidarity is shattered by developments that compel even a mother city and its colonies to make war on one another. Thucydides notes the adherence of the Cytherians and Rhodians to the Athenian side, though both were Doric peoples. The Rhodians, in particular, who were Ἀργεῖοι γένος, were compelled to make war (ἠναγκάζοντο πολεμεῖν) on the Doric Syracusans and even on the people of Gela, who were their own ἄποικοι but had sided with the Syracusans (a γένος, as this chapter shows, is no static thing for Thucydides, but can be extended by colonization or even broken into opposing parts).<sup>16</sup> Somehow ‘coming-to-be’ (γίγνεσθαι, γένεσις, γένος) has gone wrong here. The natural bond has been broken and political interests based on calculations about power have compelled war between cities that became enemies despite their origin in the same stock.

At 5.25.2–3 the pattern of affairs described at 1.23.6 is repeated. The Lacedaemonians were becoming suspicious (ὑποπτοι ἐγένοντο) that the Athenians were not living up to the truce that had halted military campaigns in each other’s territory for almost seven years, and the parties were compelled to break the peace and returned to open warfare (ἀναγκασθέντες λῦσαι τὰς ... σπονδὰς ... ἐς πόλεμον ... κατέστησαν). At 4.63.2 Hermocrates raises the spectre of a similar situation, one in which distrust of each other would mean that the Sicilian cities had no collective retaliatory capability but instead, out of necessity, would become hostile toward those with whom they ought not to be at odds, namely their fellow Sicilians (διάφοροι δὲ οἷς οὐ χρὴ κατ’ ἀνάγκην γιγνοίμεθα). And at 7.21.3 the very same

<sup>16</sup> The ‘living’ quality of a γένος is understood by those who look at the genealogical catalogues in Hesiod; cf. the still basic P. Philippson, “Genealogie als mythische Form: Studien zur Theogonie des Hesiod,” *SymbOslo Suppl.* 7 (1936) 1–37; but there seems to be little appreciation of the ‘mythic’ aspect of Thucydides 7.57–59 beyond Dover’s analysis in A. W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, and K. J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides IV* (Oxford 1970) 432ff. Dover argues that a γένος is normally a sort of ἀνάγκη, but by contrast 7.57.6 shows that there exist exceptional ἀνάγκαι stronger than the compulsion to fight for one’s race or ethnic group.

Hermocrates encourages the Syracusans not to fear Athenian naval power because the Athenians had historically been a land-based power, more so than the Syracusans themselves, and were only compelled to take to the sea by their enemies the Medes (ἀναγκασθέντας ὑπὸ Μήδων ναυτικούς γενέσθαι). The name Medes replaces the common noun πολεμίων here, and the formulation of the idea in this passage is, to be sure, virtually identical with the expression used by Herodotus at 7.144.2, where he credits the Aeginetan War with saving Greece because it forced the Athenians to become a naval power (οὗτος γὰρ ὁ πόλεμος συστάς ἔσωσε τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἀναγκάσας θαλασσίους γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους).

The categories of this conceptual formula are the ideas of conflict—particularly war, warlike attitudes, and sharp political disagreement—of necessity, and of development or coming-to-be. And the conceptual formula is justified because it is only the representation in words of a regularity in human events themselves. This Thucydidean formula is sufficiently flexible that in one place in the history it may be used of an enemy or a war that is said to compel some new development, such as the Athenians' construction of a fleet and becoming adept at fighting at sea (7.21.3), while in other passages, where the formula is employed in a way not directly parallel to anything in Herodotus, it may refer to a new development or a development that reaches a new threshold—such as the Athenians' growth (1.23.6), the Spartans' suspicions of treaty-breaking (5.25.2–3), or the Sicilians' mutual distrust (4.63.2)—that becomes a force so great that it necessarily entails open hostilities.

By comparing the comments of Dionysius and the scholiast on Thucydides 1.23.6, we have seen that the simpler Greek that might have been used at this point in the text would have carried with it unwelcome overtones, either in the rhythm of hexameter verse or in the implication that the cosmologists' ἀνάγκη in and of itself was the demonic or mechanistic cause of change in the political as well as in the physical universe. But it also seems clear that the linkage of necessity, war, and becoming that occurs at 1.23.6 and elsewhere in Thucydides' account is a development of the earlier poetic and philosophic formulas that centered on ἀνάγκη, and it is evident that the

expression used at 1.23.6 has emerged as a permanent idiom in historical writing.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Even those historians who claim to be creating a historiography that looks deeper than the level of events sometimes fall back on the categories of Thucydides' conceptualization. In describing the slow pace of technological change in the spinning of yarn in the English cotton industry of the late eighteenth century, F. Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, tr. Sian Reynolds (New York 1981) 435, describes a structurally repeatable 'battle' between the traditional reliance on homespun thread and the innovative mechanical spinning done in factories with such looms. Obstacles, such as the inherited social patterns of village life among the cottagers or economic ones like falling wages that kept handspun thread cheap, are overcome only when there is a crisis and widespread "fear of economic failure." Then men turn 'of necessity' to the innovation that takes on an aura of inevitability. If these are Thucydidean categories, Braudel perhaps acquired them in his courses of Latin and Greek at the Lycée Voltaire or from the Greek epigrapher and historian M. Holleaux at the Sorbonne. See F. Braudel, "Personal Testimony," *Journal of Modern History* 44 (1972) 449f.

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