

# HISTORY OF GREECE.

## PART II.

### CONTINUATION OF HISTORICAL GREECE.

#### CHAPTER XLVII.

FROM THE THIRTY YEARS' TRUCE, FOURTEEN YEARS BEFORE THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, DOWN TO THE BLOCKADE OF POTIDÆA, IN THE YEAR BEFORE THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR.

THE judicial alterations effected at Athens by Periklês and Ephialtês, described in the preceding chapter, gave to a large proportion of the citizens direct jury functions and an active interest in the constitution, such as they had never before enjoyed; the change being at once a mark of previous growth of democratical sentiment during the past, and a cause of its farther development during the future. The Athenian people were at this time ready for personal exertion in all directions: military service on land or sea was not less conformable to their dispositions than attendance in the ekklesia or in the dikastery at home. The naval service espe-

Personal activity now prevalent among the Athenian citizens—empire of Athens again exclusively maritime, after the thirty years' truce.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

cially was prosecuted with a degree of assiduity which brought about continual improvement in skill and efficiency, and the poorer citizens, of whom it chiefly consisted, were more exact in obedience and discipline than any of the more opulent persons from whom the infantry or the cavalry were drawn<sup>1</sup>. The maritime multitude, in addition to self-confidence and courage, acquired by this laborious training an increased skill, which placed the Athenian navy every year more and more above the rest of Greece: and the perfection of this force became the more indispensable as the Athenian empire was now again confined to the sea and seaport towns; the reverses immediately preceding the thirty years' truce having broken up all Athenian land ascendancy over Megara, Bœotia, and the other continental territories adjoining to Attica.

Chios, Samos, and Lesbos, were now the only free allies of Athens, on the same footing as the original confederates of Delos—the rest were subject and tributary.

The maritime confederacy—originally commenced at Delos under the headship of Athens, but with a common synod and deliberative voice on the part of each member—had now become transformed into a confirmed empire on the part of Athens, over the remaining states as foreign dependencies; all of them rendering tribute except Chios, Samos, and Lesbos. These three still remained on their original footing of autonomous allies, retaining their armed force, ships and fortifications, with the obligation of furnishing military and naval aid when required, but not of paying tribute: the discontinuance of the deliberative synod, however, had deprived them of their original security against the encroachments of Athens. I have already stated

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, Memorab. iii. 5, 18.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## CHAP. XLVII.] ATHENS BEFORE THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR. 3

generally the steps (we do not know them in detail) whereby this important change was brought about, gradually and without any violent revolution—for even the transfer of the common treasure from Delos to Athens, which was the most palpable symbol and evidence of the change, was not an act of Athenian violence, since it was adopted on the proposition of the Samians. The change resulted in fact almost inevitably from the circumstances of the case, and from the eager activity of the Athenians contrasted with the backwardness and aversion to personal service on the part of the allies. We must recollect that the confederacy, even in its original structure, was contracted for permanent objects, and was permanently binding by the vote of its majority, like the Spartan confederacy, upon every individual member<sup>1</sup>: it was destined to keep out the Persian fleet, and to maintain the police of the Ægean. Consistently with these objects, no individual member could be allowed to secede from the confederacy, and thus to acquire the benefit of protection at the cost of the remainder: so that when Naxos and other members actually did secede, the step was taken as a revolt, and Athens only did her duty as president of the confederacy in reducing them. By every such reduction, as well as by that exchange of personal service for money-payment, which most of the allies voluntarily sought, the power of Athens increased, until at length she found herself with an

<sup>1</sup> Thucyd. v. 30: about the Spartan confederacy—*εἰρημένον, κύριον εἶναι, ὅ,τι ἂν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ξυμμάχων ψηφίσηται, ἣν μή τι θεῶν ἢ ἠρώων κώλυμα ᾖ.*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

irresistible navy in the midst of disarmed tributaries, none of whom could escape from her constricting power,—and mistress of the sea, the use of which was indispensable to them. The synod of Delos, even if it had not before become partially deserted, must have ceased at the time when the treasure was removed to Athens—probably about 460 B.C., or shortly afterwards.

Athens took no pains to inspire her allies with the idea of a common interest—nevertheless the allies were gainers by the continuance of her empire.

The relations between Athens and her allies were thus materially changed by proceedings which gradually evolved themselves and followed one upon the other without any preconcerted plan: she became an imperial or despot city, governing an aggregate of dependent subjects, all without their own active concurrence, and in many cases doubtless contrary to their own sense of political right. It was not likely that they should conspire unanimously to break up the confederacy, and discontinue the collection of contribution from each of the members: nor would it have been at all desirable that they should do so: for while Greece generally would have been a great loser by such a proceeding, the allies themselves would have been the greatest losers of all, inasmuch as they would have been exposed without defence to the Persian and Phœnician fleets. But the Athenians committed the capital fault of taking the whole alliance into their own hands, and treating the allies purely as subjects, without seeking to attach them by any form of political incorporation or collective meeting and discussion—without taking any pains to maintain community of feeling with the idea of a joint interest—without admitting any control, real or

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## CHAP. XLVII.] ATHENS BEFORE THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR. 5

even pretended, over themselves as managers. Had they attempted to do this, it might have proved difficult to accomplish,—so powerful was the force of geographical dissemination, the tendency to isolated civic life, and the repugnance to any permanent extramural obligations, in every Grecian community: but they do not appear to have ever made the attempt. Finding Athens exalted by circumstances to empire, and the allies degraded into subjects, the Athenian statesmen grasped at the exaltation as a matter of pride as well as profit<sup>1</sup>: nor did even Periklēs, the most prudent and far-sighted of them, betray any consciousness that an empire without the cement of some all-pervading interest or attachment, must have a natural tendency to become more and more burdensome and odious, and ultimately to crumble in pieces. Such was the course of events which, if the judicious counsels of Periklēs had been followed, might have been postponed but could not have been averted.

Instead of trying to cherish or restore the feelings of equal alliance, Periklēs formally disclaimed it. He maintained that Athens owed to her subject allies no account of the money received from them, so long as she performed her contract by keeping away the Persian enemy and maintaining the safety of the Ægean waters<sup>2</sup>. This was, as he represented, the obligation which Athens had undertaken, and provided it were faithfully discharged, the allies had no right to ask questions or institute

Conception of Periklēs —Athens, an imperial city, owing protection to the subject allies; who on their part, owed obedience and tribute.

<sup>1</sup> Thucyd. ii. 63. τῆς δὲ πόλεως ὑμᾶς εἰκὸς τῷ τιμωμένῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄρχειν, ὅπερ ἅπαντες ἀγάλλεσθε, βοηθεῖν, καὶ μὴ φεύγειν τοὺς πόνους, ἢ μηδὲ τὰς τιμὰς διώκειν, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, Periklēs, c. 12.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

control. That it was faithfully discharged no one could deny: no ship of war except that of Athens and her allies was ever seen between the eastern and western shores of the Ægean. An Athenian fleet of sixty triremes was kept on duty in these waters; chiefly manned by Athenian citizens, and beneficial as well from the protection afforded to commerce as for keeping the seaman in constant pay and training<sup>1</sup>. And such was the effective superintendence maintained, that in the disastrous period preceding the thirty years' truce, when Athens lost Megara and Bœotia, and with difficulty recovered Eubœa, none of her numerous maritime subjects took the opportunity to revolt.

The total of these distinct tributary cities is said to have amounted to 1000, according to a verse of Aristophanês<sup>2</sup>, which cannot be under the truth, though it may well be, and probably is, greatly above the truth. The total annual tribute collected at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, and probably also for the years preceding it, is given by Thucydidês at about 600 talents; of the sums paid by particular states, however, we have little or no information<sup>3</sup>. It was placed under the superintendence of the Hellenotamiæ; originally officers of

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, Periklês, c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Aristophan. Vesp. 707.

<sup>3</sup> The island of Kythêra was conquered by the Athenians from Sparta in 425 B.C., and the annual tribute then imposed upon it was four talents (Thucyd. iv. 57). In the Inscription No. 143, ap. Boeckh Corp. Inscr., we find some names enumerated of tributary towns with the amount of tribute opposite to each, but the stone is too much damaged to give us much information. Tyrodiza in Thrace paid 1000 drachms: some other towns, or junctions of towns, not clearly discernible, are rated at 1000, 2000, 3000 drachms, one talent, and even ten talents. This Inscription must be anterior to 415 B.C., when the tribute was converted into a five per cent. duty upon imports and exports:

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## CHAP. XLVII.] ATHENS BEFORE THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR. 7

the confederacy, but now removed from Delos to Athens, and acting altogether as an Athenian treasury-board. The sum total of the Athenian revenue<sup>1</sup> from all sources, including this tribute, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war is stated by Xenophon at 1000 talents: customs, harbour and market-dues, receipts from the silver-mines at Laurium, rents of public property, fines from judicial sentences, a tax per head upon slaves, the annual payment made by each metic, &c., may have made up a larger sum than 400 talents; which sum, added to the 600 talents from tribute, would make the total named by Xenophon. But a verse of Aristophanês<sup>2</sup> during the ninth year of the Peloponnesian war (B.C. 422) gives the general total of that time as “nearly 2000 talents:” this is in all probability much above the truth, though we may well imagine that the amount of tribute-money levied upon the allies may have been augmented during the interval: I think that the alleged duplication of the tribute by Alkibiadês, which Thucydidês nowhere notices, is not borne out by any good evidence, nor can I believe that it ever reached

see Boeckh, Public Econ. of Athens, and his notes upon the above-mentioned Inscription.

It was the practice of Athens not always to rate each tributary city separately, but sometimes to join several in one collective rating; probably each responsible for the rest. This seems to have provoked occasional remonstrances from the allies, in some of which the rhetor Antipho was employed to furnish the speech which the complainants pronounced before the dikastery: see Antipho ap. Harpokration, v. Ἀπόταξις—Συντελείς. It is greatly to be lamented that the orations composed by Antipho for the Samothrakians and Lindians (the latter inhabiting one of the three separate towns in the island of Rhodes) have not been preserved.

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, Anab. vii. 1. 27. οὐ μείων χιλίων τάλάντων: compare Boeckh, Public Econ. of Athens, b. iii. ch. 7, 15, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Aristophan. Vesp. 660. τάλαντ' ἑγγύς δισχίλια.

the sum of 1200 talents<sup>1</sup>. Whatever may have been the actual magnitude of the Athenian budget,

<sup>1</sup> Very excellent writers on Athenian antiquity (Boeckh, *Public Econ. of Athens*, c. 15, 19, b. iii.; Schömann, *Antiq. J. P. Att. sect. lxxiv.*; K. F. Hermann, *Gr. Staatsalterthümer*, sect. 157: compare however a passage in Boeckh, ch. 17, p. 421, *Eng. transl.*, where he seems to be of an opposite opinion) accept this statement, that the tribute levied by Athens upon her allies was doubled some years after the commencement of the Peloponnesian war (at which time it was 600 talents), and that it came to amount to 1200 talents. Nevertheless, I cannot follow them, upon the simple authority of Æschinês, and the Pseudo-Andokidês (*Æschin. De Fals. Legat. c. 54*, p. 301; *Andokidês, De Pace, c. 1*, and the same orator cont. *Alkibiad. c. 4*). For we may state pretty confidently, that neither of the two orations here ascribed to Andokidês is genuine: the oration against Alkibiadês most decidedly not genuine. There remains therefore as an original evidence only the passage of Æschinês, which has apparently been copied by the author of the *Oration De Pace*, ascribed to Andokidês. Now the chapter of Æschinês, which professes to furnish a general but brief sketch of Athenian history for the century succeeding the Persian invasion, is so full of historical and chronological inaccuracies, that we can hardly accept it, when standing alone, as authority for any matter of fact. In a note on the chapter immediately preceding, I have already touched upon its extraordinary looseness of statement—pointed out by various commentators, among them particularly by Mr. Fynes Clinton: see above, chap. xlv. note <sup>2</sup>, p. 409–411 in the preceding volume.

The assertion therefore that the tribute from the Athenian allies was raised to the sum of 1200 talents annually, comes to us only from the orator Æschinês as an original witness: and in him it forms part of a tissue of statements alike confused and incorrect. But against it we have a powerful negative argument—the perfect silence of Thucydidês. Is it possible that that historian would have omitted all notice of a step so very important in its effects, if Athens had really adopted it? He mentions to us the commutation by Athens of the tribute from her allies into a duty of 5 per cent. payable by them on their exports and imports (vii. 28<sup>1</sup>)—this was in the nineteenth year of the war—413 B.C. But anything like the duplication of the tribute all at once, would have altered much more materially the relations between Athens and her allies, and would have constituted in the minds of the latter a substantive grievance such as to aggravate the motive for revolt in a manner which Thucydidês could hardly fail to notice. The orator Æschinês refers the augmentation of the tribute, up to 1200 talents, to the time succeeding the peace of Nikias: M. Boeckh (*Public Econ. of Athens*, b. iii. ch. 15–19, p. 400–434) supposes it to have taken place earlier than the representation of the *Vespæ* of Aristophanes, that is, about three years before that peace, or 423 B.C. But this would have been



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAP. XLVII.] ATHENS BEFORE THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR. 9

however, prior to the Peloponnesian war, we know that during the larger part of the administration

just before the time of the expedition of Brasidas into Thrace, and his success in exciting revolt among the dependencies of Athens: if Athens had doubled her tribute upon all the allies, just before that expedition, Thucydides could not have omitted to mention it, as increasing the chances of success to Brasidas, and helping to determine the resolutions of the Akantians and others, which were by no means adopted unani- mously or without hesitation, to revolt.

In reference to the Oration called that of Andokides against Alkibiades, I made some remarks in the fourth volume of this History (vol. iv. ch. xxxi. p. 201), tending to show it to be spurious and of a time considerably later than that to which it purports to belong. I will here add one other remark, which appears to me decisive, tending to the same conclusion.

The oration professes to be delivered in a contest of ostracism between Nikias, Alkibiades, and the speaker: one of the three (he says) must necessarily be ostracised, and the question is to determine which of the three: accordingly the speaker dwells upon many topics calculated to raise a bad impression of Alkibiades, and a favourable impression of himself.

Among the accusations against Alkibiades, one is, that after having recommended in the assembly of the people that the inhabitants of Melos should be sold as slaves, he had himself purchased a Melian woman among the captives, and had had a son by her: it was criminal (argues the speaker) to beget offspring by a woman whose relations he had contributed to cause to be put to death, and whose city he had contributed to ruin (c. 8).

Upon this argument I do not here touch, any farther than to bring out the point of chronology. The speech, if delivered at all, must have been delivered, at the earliest, nearly a year after the capture of Melos by the Athenians: it may be of later date, but it *cannot possibly be earlier*.

Now Melos surrendered in the winter immediately preceding the great expedition of the Athenians to Sicily in 415 B.C., which expedition sailed about midsummer (Thucyd. v. 116; vi. 30). Nikias and Alkibiades both went as commanders of that expedition: the latter was recalled to Athens for trial on the charge of impiety about three months afterwards, but escaped in the way home, was condemned and sentenced to banishment in his absence, and did not return to Athens until 407 B.C., long after the death of Nikias, who continued in command of the Athenian armament in Sicily, enjoying the full esteem of his countrymen, until its complete failure and ruin before Syracuse—and perished himself afterwards as a Syracusan prisoner.

Taking these circumstances together, it will at once be seen that there never can have been any time, ten months or more after the cap-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00955-3 - A History of Greece, Volume 6

George Grote

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Large amount of revenue laid by and accumulated by Athens, during the years preceding the Peloponnesian war.

of Periklès, the revenue including tribute was so managed as to leave a large annual surplus ; inso-much that a treasure of coined money was accumulated in the Acropolis during the years preceding the Peloponnesian war—which treasure when at its maximum reached the great sum of 9700 talents (=£2,230,000), and was still at 6000 talents, after a serious drain for various purposes, at the moment when that war began<sup>1</sup>. This system of public economy, constantly laying by a considerable sum year after year—in which Athens stood alone, since none of the Peloponnesian states had any public reserve whatever<sup>2</sup>—goes far of itself to vindicate Periklès from the charge of having wasted the public money in mischievous distributions for the purpose of obtaining popularity ; and also to exonerate the Athenian Demos from that reproach of a greedy appe-

ture of Melos, when Nikias and Alkibiadès *could* have been exposed to a vote of ostracism at Athens. The thing is absolutely impossible : and the oration in which such historical and chronological incompatibilities are embodied, must be spurious : furthermore it must have been composed long after the pretended time of delivery, when the chronological series of events had been forgotten.

I may add that the story of this duplication of the tribute by Alkibiadès is virtually contrary to the statement of Plutarch, probably borrowed from Æschinès, who states that the demagogues *gradually* increased (*κατὰ μικρὸν*) the tribute to 1300 talents (Plutarch, Aristeid. c. 24).

<sup>1</sup> Thucyd. ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Thucyd. i. 80. The foresight of the Athenian people, in abstaining from immediate use of public money and laying it up for future wants, would be still more conspicuously demonstrated, if the statement of Æschinès the orator were true, that they got together 7000 talents between the peace of Nikias and the Sicilian expedition. M. Boeckh believes this statement, and says, "It is not impossible that 1000 talents might have been laid by every year, as the amount of tribute received was so considerable" (Public Economy of Athens, ch. xx. p. 446, Eng. Trans.). I do not believe the statement : but M. Boeckh and others, who do admit it, ought in fairness to set it against the many remarks which they pass in condemnation of the democratical prodigality.