

DESTRUCTIVE STATE INTEREST AND PANHELLENISM IN THUCYDIDES

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ABSTRACT

Thucydides in his text about the war between Athens and Sparta derides individuals, either members of a community or states in an international system, acting to increase their own power at the expense of others and promotes the same individuals to act in ways that support the community. This critique is not unique to Thucydides as it was a common *topos* among other classical Greek authors of the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC. Thucydides constructs his history in such a manner as to emphasize that when individuals act in this manner, they merely hurt the community and endanger themselves. Not only does Thucydides demonstrate the danger of individuals (either people or cities) acting in such a fashion through his description of the Corcyraean *stasis* and other episodes, he also promotes actions taken to support the community. In the Mytilene Debate and Hermocrates' speech at Gela, the writer shows the alternative possibilities to states acting on their own and portrays how profitable such actions can be. In this manner then, Thucydides promotes a form of Panhellenism seen in contemporaries like Aristophanes and Isocrates.