

Odysseus the Athenian: Antisthenes, Thucydides, and an Homeric Hero in an Intellectual Age

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Antisthenes' *Ajax* and *Odysseus* speeches are his only complete surviving works.¹ As texts which use Homeric characters to portray contemporary Athenian ideas of justice, heroism, bravery and rhetoric, it is perhaps surprising that they have not received as much attention as they deserve.² The speeches display the characteristics of the Homeric heroes in their respective bids to win the armour of Achilles, and in their arguments they show the polarity between two types of hero.

One of the most interesting contributions of the *Ajax* and *Odysseus* is the development and presentation of Odysseus' character and how Antisthenes defends him as the most valuable of all the Greek warriors at Troy. This paper intends to show that Antisthenes aligns Odysseus' character to the fifth-century Athenian ideals espoused in Pericles' *Epitaphios* or Funeral Speech as recorded by Thucydides (2.34-46). Specifically, Antisthenes' Odysseus and Pericles' idealised Athenians can be seen to embody many of the same characteristics in their energy, versatility and their recognition that words and thought (λόγοι) are not inimical to effective action (ἔργα), especially in times of war.³ All this stands in contrast to

¹ Citations of Antisthenes' *Ajax* and *Odysseus* speeches are from Caizzi (1966) frs. 14-15.

² This is not to suggest that they have been completely ignored. Most recently, Montiglio (2011) has contributed to the scholarship concerning these speeches; rather than seeing them as purely rhetorical, or of interest solely for the Socratic or proto-Cynic ideas which are raised, she explores the speeches with specific interest in the character of Odysseus, and how Antisthenes 'rehabilitates' Odysseus, whom she sees as a previously maligned character in tragedy and post-Homeric poetry. She begins by discussing how Athenian audiences saw Odysseus negatively in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Euripides' *Hecuba*, et al (pp. 2-19), and moves on to introduce Antisthenes as the defender of a maligned hero (pp. 20-37). Stanford (1954) also saw Odysseus as a villain on stage (pp. 102-117). Scholars who have discussed Antisthenes' speeches with more interest in their Socratic/proto-Cynic views include Höistad (1948) 94-102, Stanford (1954) 96-100, and Prince (1999) 61. See also Worman (2002) 185-188, and Rankin (1986) 151-173.

³ In Antisthenes we can see an alignment with certain major strands of intellectual discourse which value words and the ability to speak in order to inform action. It is clear, however, that there were some misgivings about the power and effects of rhetoric; for example Cleon (ironically a powerful orator himself) in the Mytilenean debate accuses the Athenian people as having become regular speech-goers, and denounces the importance of words compared to deeds (Thuc. 3.38.4, see also n.22 below). See also some descriptions of rhetoric and persuasion in Attic tragedy, for example Aeschylus *Ag.* 385-6. Such concerns are taken, of course, to comic extremes in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and *Frogs* (971-9, 1491-9, etc.), notwithstanding the poet's clearly demonstrated debt to sophistic learning. Plato's position on rhetoric and persuasion is ambivalent; in the *Gorgias* rhetoric is the art of persuading the multitude, while giving no instruction (*Gorg.* 451a-457c; cf. also 464b-466a, 502b-d). In the

Antisthenes' monolithic Ajax, whose stated antipathy to λόγοι in all forms renders him an anachronism in relation to a major strand in fifth-century intellectual discourse, and even falls short of the Homeric concept of the hero which also emphasizes the importance of words and action (*Iliad* 1.247-9, 2.370-4, 3.209-24, 9.443, etc.).⁴ In fact, much of what Odysseus says about himself in Antisthenes is a natural extension of the Homeric Odysseus; he makes this explicit at the end of his speech when he alludes directly to specific Homeric episodes and epithets describing himself and Ajax (*Od.* 14).⁵ These speeches, then, can give us an insight into Odysseus as the embodiment of Athenian ἀρετή and intellectual values, as delineated in Thucydides and elsewhere, which develop aspects of his persona already in Homeric epic. The deep-running links between Antisthenes' Odysseus and the idealized Athenians of Pericles' *Epitaphios* reveal important aspects of the reception of this central Homeric figure, who, as Plato's *Hippias Minor* demonstrates (esp. 363b-371e), continued to attract the attention of intellectuals in the fifth and fourth centuries.⁶

The competition between Ajax, the second best of the Achaians in Homer,⁷ and Odysseus to claim the arms of Achilles is revisited frequently in Greek literature, beginning with the mention of it in the *nekuia* of the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 11.543-565). The story is part of the epic cycle, told in the *Little Iliad*; it was the subject of an Aeschylean tragedy (fr. 174-8 Radt) and popular in Archaic and Classical art in works by Exekias (Boulogne-sur-Mer 558), among others.⁸ The aftermath of the decision to grant the arms to Odysseus is famously told in Sophocles' *Ajax*, but there are allusions to the supposed unfairness of the decision in

Phaedrus it has the power of leading the soul with words (*Phaed.* 261a-b), yet this dialogue more fully cultivates the notion of a philosophical rhetoric (cf. *Pl. Gorg.* 503a-504e).

⁴ See P. O'Sullivan (2005) for an overview of rhetoric in Homer as a heroic precept. It is worth noting that Ajax gives an abrupt but effective speech to Achilles in the *Iliad* and receives a significant concession from him (*Il.* 9.624-642). This Homeric Ajax is not the same as the monolithic, Antisthenean Ajax depicted in these speeches.

⁵ Ajax is seen in specifically *Iliadic* terms: he is compared to a stubborn ass being beaten by boys with sticks, *Il.* 11.558. He is also compared to a wild beast (*Il.* 11.546) and a lion (*Il.* 11.548) just prior to this. The reference to Ajax falling upon something is a reference to his suicide by falling upon his sword, an episode known from the *Little Iliad*. Antisthenes' Odysseus speaks of a poet who will give him the Homeric epithets πολύτλας, πολύμητις and πολυμήχανος (*Od.* 14).

⁶ Homeric characters, including Odysseus, appear in a Socratic context in Plato's *Hippias Minor* and *Republic*. It is outside the scope of this paper to discuss Platonic reworkings of Homeric characters; it will instead focus on the reworking of Homeric characters in Antisthenes. This is itself a complex topic; for recent scholarly work on the subject, see for instance Montiglio (2011) 38-65.

⁷ In the *Iliad* Ajax is referred to as the second-best of the Achaians, most notably in Book 2, where he is μέγ' ἄριστος while Achilles is away angry (*Il.* 2.768).

⁸ See *Little Iliad*, Fragment 1, outlining the events told in the *Little Iliad*, and Fragment 3, a scholion on Aristophanes' *Knights* 1056. The fragment suggests that the decision to award the arms to Odysseus was made from overhearing the conversations of Trojan girls. The argument used by the girls may have been known to Antisthenes, who makes Odysseus also argue that two men (rather than a woman in the girls' conversation) could carry Achilles' body if Ajax could not (*Odysseus* 11).

Pindar *Nemean* 7 and 8.⁹ Antisthenes' treatment of the story thus deals with an important issue in ancient intellectual life, and his presentation of Odysseus as the rightful victor warrants closer scrutiny, despite some recent analysis.¹⁰ In his *Ajax* and *Odysseus* speeches, Antisthenes shows an interest in the conflict between the Homeric characters in a work that is an example of Sophistic prose. Antisthenes' rhetorical style was said to be influenced by Gorgias,¹¹ whose interest in re-working Homeric and Trojan themes is evident in his *Encomium of Helen* and the *Defence of Palamedes*.¹²

By comparing Odysseus with the idealized Athenians, the importance of Odysseus' intellectual heroism becomes more evident, consistent with his Homeric model. As early as Homer we can see that the ideal hero was not just a pure fighting machine but strove to achieve excellence in public speaking as well as fighting; 'a doer of deeds and a speaker of words', according to Phoenix in *Iliad* Book 9: μύθων τε ῥητῆρ' ἔμεναι πρῆκτῆρά τε ἔργων (*Il.* 9.443). The assembly (ἀγορή) and the battleground (μάχη) are both described as places where men win glory (κυδιάνειρα).¹³ In Antisthenes, the character of Ajax contradicts this paradigm. At the beginning of his speech he shows a lack of confidence in his judges, saying that 'the events happened in deed', τὸ δὲ πρῶγμα ἐγένετο ἔργῳ, and that the judges know nothing 'through speeches', διὰ λόγων (*Aj.* 1).¹⁴ From the start of Ajax's speech we see the development of a λόγος-ἔργον antithesis, in which Ajax not only asserts the superiority of ἔργον but crassly denigrates λόγος. In (7) he makes his position even more clear in his injunction to the jurors whom he denounces as ignorant:

...ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ὑμῖν λέγω... μὴ εἰς τοὺς λόγους σκοπεῖν περὶ ἀρετῆς κρίνοντας, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰ ἔργα μᾶλλον. (*Aj.* 7)

So I tell you ... not to examine words when making judgements concerning excellence, but rather to look to deeds.

⁹ See Pindar, *Nemean* 7.20-27 and *Nemean* 8.23-34. For a brief analysis, see Stanford (1954) 93-95. Consideration of these texts lies beyond the scope of this paper, the point here being that the Judgement of the Arms remained an important subject for poets across genres.

¹⁰ See above, n.2.

¹¹ See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 6.1.1.

¹² The bibliography on Gorgianic literary theory is vast, but valuable discussions can be found in, for instance, Buchheim (1989), Poulakos (1983) 1-16, Segal (1962) 99-155.

¹³ *Il.* 1.490, *Il.* 12.325; see above, n.4.

¹⁴ Rankin notes that this is a supremely tactless introduction by Ajax, although not unlike that of Socrates in Plato's *Apology*. Rankin determines that Antisthenes has some sympathy for the 'Laconian' simplicity of Ajax, and rightfully points out some similarity between his speech and that of the Spartan Sthenelaidas in Thucydides *History* 1.87. See Rankin (1986) 150-172.

Ajax considers that deeds are more important than words when judging matters of excellence; and his view is just as dogmatic concerning the importance of each in war:

...καὶ γὰρ ὁ πόλεμος οὐ λόγῳ κρίνεται ἀλλ' ἔργῳ: οὐδ' ἀντιλέγειν ἔξεστι πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους, ἀλλ' ἢ μαχομένους κρατεῖν ἢ δουλεύειν σιωπῇ. (*Aj.* 7)

... for also war is not decided by word/argument but by action: it is not possible to contradict the enemy, but either to prevail by fighting or become enslaved in silence.

Antisthenes' Ajax determines that words cannot win a war, because a word has no power and cannot be used to defeat an enemy in battle. He says that the word has 'no strength compared to deed', οὐδεμίαν ἔχει λόγος πρὸς ἔργον ἰσχύν (*Aj.* 7), and that 'many long speeches are made', πολλοὶ καὶ μακροὶ λόγοι λέγονται, because of a lack of deeds (*Aj.* 8). Ajax's λόγος-ἔργον distinction is an oversimplification, and is anachronistic by fifth-century standards in asserting that there are only ever simple facts which speak for themselves, requiring no further interpretation. But Protagoras had pointed out in a work titled *Antilogiai* (B5 D-K) that there are at least two sides to every story, and Gorgias, whose influence on Antisthenes was recognised in antiquity, also tells us that we have only 'opinion' δόξα to rely on since remembering the past, understanding the present and prophesying the future are no easy things, and δόξα itself is unstable and uncertain (*Hel.* 11-13); yet the sophist tells us that λόγος is a great master capable of inducing all sorts of emotions in us (*Hel.* 8-10).¹⁵ Ajax's denigration of λόγος is thus likely to be seen by a sophisticatedly-trained audience as a self-defeating move.¹⁶ Moreover, when Antisthenes' Ajax says οὐδ' ἀντιλέγειν ἔξεστι, there may be considerable irony here, whereby the hero undercuts his own argument. For the idea that 'it is impossible to contradict', οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντιλέγειν, is a fairly common sophistic idea which is attributed to Protagoras and Antisthenes in ancient sources (Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 9.8.53, 6.1.1-2).

Indeed, Pericles shows how the Athenians considered both ἔργα and λόγοι to be equally important in action, consistent with the views of Antisthenes' Odysseus, and in contrast to those of Ajax. This, too, shows how Ajax's views are at odds with Protagoras again and also Homer. As mentioned previously, the ideal hero in Homer is a man of action

¹⁵ See above, n.12; also Lee (2005) 24-26.

¹⁶ See also Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* (8). Gorgias imbues λόγος with the power to create θειότατα ἔργα, rather than making λόγος inferior to ἔργα, as Ajax asserts.

but also one capable of speaking. Likewise, Protagoras explains that his teachings are designed so that his pupil ‘might become most able in word and action in the affairs of the city’: ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατότατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν (Plato, *Protagoras*, 319a). As has been shown, this appears to be a direct echo of Thucydides, and could possibly be linked to Protagoras’ own admiration for Pericles (e.g., B9 D-K);¹⁷ in Thucydides’ first description of Pericles the statesman is λέγειν τε καὶ πράσσειν δυνατότατος (Thuc. 1.139.4). What is suggested by Antisthenes and Homer is also proposed by both Protagoras and Thucydides: that greatness in an individual rests both upon his ability to act and his ability as a speaker.¹⁸ Ajax in Antisthenes not only lacks power in speaking, but actively denies the importance of λόγος. To Ajax, only ἔργα matter in war.

Ajax’s concepts of ἔργα and λόγοι appear naïve and simplistic, not only to those in Antisthenes’ audience familiar with sophistic speculation, but also to a writer like Thucydides. For example, in *Ajax* (1), Ajax simply announces that the matters happened in deed, ἔργα, hence making the rest of the case irrelevant. He then, in (2), proceeds to explain the ἔργα, that he carried the corpse of Achilles, which was the object of the Trojans’ interest rather than the armour, since they wished to defile the body. The naïvety of Ajax is evident if we consider Thucydides’ own views on the fallibility of witnesses (1.22.3). Like Gorgias, Protagoras, and others, Thucydides recognizes that establishing the truth is no easy thing, and more than one version of events can exist. He claims he did not write down events according to the first account he heard, and he did not even trust his own impressions. Some of his account is derived from his own presence at events, some of it from others who were present. Thucydides’ commentary upon the value of witnesses shows how he perceives that even firsthand witnesses come up with different stories for the same events, because of biased or imperfect memories:

... ἐπιπόνως δὲ ἠύρισκετο, διότι οἱ παρόντες τοῖς ἔργοις ἐκάστοις οὐ ταῦτὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔλεγον, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἑκατέρων τις εὐνοίας ἢ μνήμης ἔχοι (Thuc. 1.22.3).¹⁹

¹⁷ See N. O’Sullivan (1996) 15-23.

¹⁸ We can assume that πράσσω here replaces ἔργα, since in its meaning is contained the idea of accomplishment. In Book 1, an ἔργα-λόγοι antithesis occurs, in which πράσσω, as a passive participle, is used in conjunction with τὰ ἔργα (1.22.2). τὰ ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων (1.22.2) is a mirror of ὅσα λόγῳ εἶπον and τῶν λεχθέντων (1.22.1).

¹⁹ The text used for Thucydides’ *History* is Jones & Powell (OCT 1970) vol. 1.

... this (sc. achieving accuracy) proved to be difficult, because those present at each event did not say the same things concerning them, but someone from either side (would speak) in accordance with good-will or memory they might have.

Thucydides' task of obtaining the truth is made difficult by the fallibility of witnesses; those being present at each event do not say the same thing. Thucydides reasons that this is because of some εὐνοία, good-will or bias, or because of memory, μνήμη. The implication is that being present at events does not, *ipso facto*, give a witness the ability to perceive events correctly. Thucydides' more nuanced view of recalling events contrasts strongly with that of Antisthenes' Ajax, who presumes that he would not even have to say anything if those who were present at events were judging (*Aj.* 1). Thucydides understands that different people see things in different ways, and this causes his search for the truth to be more difficult.

Odysseus' position is more in tune with fourth- and fifth-century intellectual trends. In *Odysseus* (11), he shows how even an undisputable ἔργον such as this (there was no doubt as to who carried the body of Achilles) can be understood in a different way. He states that if Ajax did not have the ability to carry the corpse, two men could have carried it, and then he would be in contention with them also; and even that the Trojans wanted the corpse less than the armour, since they intended to give it back and dedicate the armour to the gods (*Od.* 12); whereas Ajax presumed that it was the corpse of Achilles the Trojans wanted. Odysseus shows how even ἔργα can be disputed, since it is possible to see these deeds from different perspectives.

Of course, the interaction between words and deeds is a common theme in Greek literature, so its appearance in Pericles' *Epitaphios* and Antisthenes' speeches is not necessarily surprising.²⁰ What is interesting is how Pericles' *Epitaphios* uses the λόγοι-ἔργα nexus to describe Athenian qualities, with a very different conclusion to Ajax's speech and its simplistic claims as to the superiority of deeds over words. In fact, λόγοι and ἔργα frequently do not comprise a dichotomy at all in Thucydides' writings.²¹ Rather, they can work in unison, as is evident in Pericles' views on bravery when he states:

...καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ ἦτοι κρίνομέν γε ἢ ἐνθυμούμεθα ὀρθῶς τὰ πράγματα, οὐ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ μὴ προδιδαχθῆναι μᾶλλον λόγῳ πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ ᾧ δεῖ ἔργῳ ἐλθεῖν. διαφερόντως γὰρ δὴ καὶ τότε ἔχομεν ὥστε τολμᾶν τε οἱ αὐτοὶ μάλιστα

²⁰ The topic of λόγοι and ἔργα in Thucydides has been covered comprehensively by Parry (1981) *passim*.

²¹ Thucydides makes it very clear that his history is about λόγοι and ἔργα (1.22.1-2); see Parry (1981) esp. 9.

καὶ περὶ ὧν ἐπιχειρήσομεν ἐκλογίζεσθαι: ὁ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀμαθία μὲν θράσος, λογισμὸς δὲ ὄκνον φέρει. κράτιστοι δ' ἂν τὴν ψυχὴν δικαίως κριθεῖεν οἱ τὰ τε δεινὰ καὶ ἡδέα σαφέστατα γινώσκοντες καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μὴ ἀποτρεπόμενοι ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων. (Thuc. 2.40.2-3)

and we ourselves either judge or correctly ponder events, not regarding words/argument as harmful to action, but (we consider it harmful) not to be instructed more fully by words/argument before coming to do what is necessary in action. For in this we are different, with the result that we are both the most daring and most calculating concerning what we are about to attempt: among others boldness is ignorance, while reflection brings hesitation. Those who should be rightly judged bravest in soul are those who, knowing most clearly what is terrible and what is sweet, do not on that account turn away from danger.

Pericles emphasizes the fact that all Athenians take part in politics, and that all decisions of policy are submitted to proper discussions. It is important that he considers that the Athenians do not believe there is an incompatibility between words and deeds. Again there is a clear contrast with Antisthenes' Ajax, who claims that long speeches are made because of a lack of deeds, or that the judges can know nothing from λόγοι.²²

The idea of Pericles as a man of words and action is strengthened in the *Epitaphios*. Pericles discusses how an interest in politics is important for the Athenian citizen, and that decisions on policy are submitted to proper discussion; and he makes it clear that the Athenians do not consider λόγοι to be damaging towards ἔργα, but rather it is worse to go into action (ἔργῳ) without learning beforehand from words/speeches (λόγῳ). Pericles here raises several issues. First of all, there is an idea that λόγοι and ἔργα are not incompatible; indeed, the former even appears to be more important than the latter in determining the kind of actions or ἔργα to be taken. Pericles in fact goes on to say that it is damaging to rush into action without first deliberating with words.²³ Antisthenes' Ajax is once again on a different

²² It is worth noting that there is also a distinct similarity between Ajax's speech and some parts of Cleon's speech in the Mytilenean Debate in Thucydides (3.38.4), when he accuses the Athenians of being regular speech-goers rather than men of action; and his attack is answered masterfully by Diodotus, who reaffirms the idea that λόγος is not unnecessary, but an essential tool for shaping policy before action. Diodotus' description of Cleon and his frightening techniques (3.42.2) are also similar to Odysseus' description of Ajax threatening the jurors (*Od.* 5). For an analysis of the speeches of Cleon and Diodotus in Thucydides, see Connor (1984) 82-91.

²³ See Rhodes (1988) 224. Rhodes notes that the combination of practical ability with intelligence among leaders becomes a rhetorical *topos*; see 2.13.2, 2.62.4-5, and Thucydides on Themistocles (1.138). Pericles is also praised for his ability to control the *demos* with his rhetorical ability in Thucydides 2.65.8-9; see P.

wavelength altogether here in claiming that λόγοι have no power over ἔργα. It is possible also that Pericles is alluding to what he sees as the different nature of the Spartans, since he refers to the Athenians as οἱ αὐτοὶ, ‘we ourselves’, emphasizing the fact that all Athenians take part in the government of the state, and perhaps τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι is meant as a direct comparison to the ‘laconic’ brevity of the Spartans.²⁴ Here we can make a direct comparison between Pericles’ statement and the speeches of Antisthenes. Pericles’ opinion is that action requires deliberation, whereas Ajax believes that ‘there is not a man who will aid you by saying something’, οὐδ’ ἔστιν ὕμᾱς ὃ τι λέγων ἀνὴρ ὠφελήσει (*Aj.* 8). It is quite telling that the speech of Ajax is very brief, roughly half the length of the speech given by Odysseus.

If the views of Ajax on λόγοι and ἔργα are at odds with those of Pericles in the *Epitaphios*, the corollary is that Ajax’s opponent, Odysseus, has much in common with the great Athenian statesman and other leading thinkers of the day. There are notable similarities concerning the concept of courage, for instance, between Thucydides’ description of the idealized Athenian and Antisthenes’ Odysseus. Odysseus presents himself as the hero who takes risks which Ajax could not, and yet knows of the dangers. He criticizes Ajax’s fighting style in *Odysseus* (6), saying that he rushes into battle like a wild boar in anger, and he claims that Ajax is brave out of ignorance, not knowing that strength and courage are different things:

...διότι γὰρ ἰσχυρός, οἶει καὶ ἀνδρείος εἶναι. οὐκ οἶσθα ὅτι σοφία περὶ πόλεμον καὶ ἀνδρεία οὐ ταῦτόν ἐστιν ἰσχυῖσαι; ἀμαθία δὲ κακὸν μέγιστον τοῖς ἔχουσιν (*Od.* 13).

... for because you are strong you think you are brave, too. Do you not know that being strong is not the same thing as cleverness and courage in war? Ignorance is the greatest evil to those who have it.

As a contrast to the ‘bravery’ of Ajax, who throws about himself invincible armour (*Od.* 7), Odysseus says that he goes behind the enemy walls without armour, knowing the state of things ‘here and with the enemy’, οἶδα τὰ τ’ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς πολεμίοις (*Od.* 8), showing

O’Sullivan (2012) 176-77. This power of persuasion in democracy is also discussed in Eupolis (*Dem.* Fr. 102KA); see Yunis (1991) 179-186. Rhodes also notes that Pericles’ speech at 2.40.3 can be contrasted to the speeches of the Spartans Archidamas and Sthenelaidas (1.84-87). These are the same speeches which Rankin compared to Antisthenes’ Ajax (see n.14).

²⁴ As was noted by Marchant (1891) 175.

that he performs acts of daring that Ajax could not do, yet knows the risks he faces behind the enemy lines. Pericles states how others are bold out of ignorance: ὁ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀμαθία μὲν θράσος (Thuc. 2.40.3). Odysseus perceives that Ajax's bravery is his ignorance, as we can see from his statement that Ajax does not know how to fight, and that he confuses strength, ἰσχύς, and courage, ἀνδρεία. Pericles and Odysseus both link ἀμαθία to the so-called 'bravery' of their rivals. Consequently Odysseus shows that he is aware of his own vulnerability, which is displayed by his emphasis on being ἄοπλος (*Od.* 8). His knowledge of the enemy is contrasted with Ajax's ἀμαθία. As in Pericles' speech (esp. 2.40.3), there is a theme of true bravery coming from the knowledge of the danger, as opposed to bravery from ignorance, or thinking that bravery is related to strength alone in the case of Ajax, or boldness in the case of Athens' opponents.²⁵

Another commonality between Antisthenes' Odysseus and Thucydides is an interest in semantic distinction. This again puts Antisthenes' Odysseus on the same wave-length as the semantically inclined intellectuals of the fifth century, like Prodicus (A 19 D-K) and Protagoras (A 26 D-K).²⁶ Antisthenes shows an interest in the correct usage of words; by clarifying the meaning of ἀνδρεία, Odysseus shows that Ajax is not brave or wise concerning war, since Ajax's own belief is that his bravery comes from his strength. Strength and bravery are not the same thing. Pericles' suggestion is somewhat similar; bravery is a combination of τολμᾶν and λογισμός rather than θράσος through ἀμαθία. Prodicus, a slightly older contemporary of Antisthenes, has been credited with influencing Thucydides' own interest in semantic distinctions by both ancient and modern commentators.²⁷ A similar concept of bravery appears in Plato's *Laches*, which is attributed to Prodicus:

... ἀλλ' οἶμαι τὸ ἄφοβον καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον οὐ ταῦτόν ἐστιν. ἐγὼ δὲ ἀνδρείας μὲν καὶ προμηθίας πάνυ τισὶν ὀλίγοις οἶμαι μετεῖναι, θρασύτητος δὲ καὶ τόλμης καὶ τοῦ ἀφόβου

²⁵ Pericles' speech in many ways anticipates the views of Aristotle, who viewed courage as a mean between cowardice and recklessness. Aristotle also discusses those who appear courageous, but are brave out of ignorance; he does not use the word ἀμαθία but the verb ἀγνοέω to describe this ignorance. See *Nichomachean Ethics* 115a-117b.

²⁶ Prodicus became so famous for making semantic distinctions that he is the butt of a joke by Socrates (Pl. *Cratylus* 384b; cf. Plato's parody of Prodicus' method in *Prot.* 337a-c).

²⁷ See Marcellinus, *Vita Thucydidis* 36. For a discussion of similarities between the style of Prodicus and Thucydides, see Solmsen (1971) 385-408. The interest in semantic distinctions and the correctness of speech recurs in various ancient sources. Protagoras is attributed with teaching ὀρθοέπεια by Socrates (Pl. *Phaedrus* 267c6). Democritus also wrote on the correctness of language in Homer, ΠΕΡΙ ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ἢ ΟΡΘΟΕΠΕΙΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΓΛΩΣΣΕΩΝ (B20a D-K).

μετὰ ἀπρομηθείας πάνυ πολλοῖς καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ παίδων καὶ θηρίων.
(*Laches* 197B)²⁸

However, I think that fearlessness and courage are not the same. But I think that while qualities of courage and forethought are found among very few, qualities of rashness and boldness and fearlessness with lack of forethought are found among very many, including men and women and children and animals.

This statement comes from Nicias, but the method used by Nicias is attributed to Prodicus in Socrates' reply.²⁹ Nicias, like Antisthenes' Odysseus and Pericles, considers the true meaning of the word ἀνδρεία, and determines that fearlessness and bravery are not the same thing. Bravery, ἀνδρεία, is linked to προμηθείας, forethought; this can be compared to the idea of bravery in Pericles' speech and Odysseus', where bravery is understood to comprise daring along with knowledge of the dangers at hand. Likewise, in Nicias' opinion, τόλμης καὶ τοῦ ἀφόβου μετὰ ἀπρομηθείας are found in most men, women, children and animals. These attributes do not constitute true bravery. Like the 'others' in Pericles' speech (Thuc. 2.40.3) who are brave out of rashness, and Ajax, who rushes into battle like an angry wild animal (*Od.* 6) and confuses strength and bravery (*Od.* 13), most people are rash rather than brave. To Nicias, bravery is to be found in being φρόνιμος, being in control of one's senses (*Laches* 197c). This distinction in the meaning of bravery by all three authors shows us that this was a recurring theme in Athenian thought; and, by highlighting these intellectual qualities, Pericles and others can claim for the Athenian people a quality of bravery, ἀνδρεία, which is espoused and embodied by Antisthenes' Odysseus.

In a comparison of some of the elements of Antisthenes' speeches and the *Epitaphios* the similarities between Odysseus' presentation and that of the idealised Athenians become clear. This does not necessarily suggest that Antisthenes is directly influenced by Thucydides; instead, it merely highlights Antisthenes' use of Athenian values to promote his hero Odysseus. There are other examples in Athenian literature which also help to support this idea. For example, the works of Lysias and Isocrates. Buxton, in *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* links πειθῶ (skill with λόγοι) to the Athenian's idealised view of themselves, which is in opposition to βία, force or strength; and he observes that this polarization is connected to

²⁸ Citations of Plato's *Laches* are from Burnet (1968) vol. 3.

²⁹ Socrates says in reply to Nicias' statements that this wisdom comes from Damon, who constantly associates with Prodicus, ὃς δὴ δοκεῖ τῶν σοφιστῶν κάλλιστα τὰ τοιαῦτα ὀνόματα διαίρειν, 'who now seems to be the most able of the Sophists at separating names (meanings) such as these', *Laches* 197D.

the contrast between the Athenians and the rest of the Greek world, or barbarians, or Spartans.³⁰ This conclusion is not obtained from Thucydides or Antisthenes, but Isocrates and Lysias. Lysias, in his own *Epitaphios*, in explaining the origins of Athens as a pioneer of democracy, describes how the Athenian ancestors deemed that it was the way of wild beasts to control one another by βία. To convince by argument, (λόγῳ δὲ πείσσαι) was the duty of men;³¹ and that this was to be served in action (ἔργῳ) through the instruction of reason:

...ήγησάμενοι θηρίων μὲν ἔργον εἶναι ὑπ' ἀλλήλων βία κρατεῖσθαι, ἄνθρωποις δὲ προσήκειν νόμῳ μὲν ὀρίσαι τὸ δίκαιον, λόγῳ δὲ πείσσαι, ἔργῳ δὲ τούτοις ὑπηρετεῖν, ὑπὸ νόμου μὲν βασιλευομένους, ὑπὸ λόγου δὲ διδασκομένους (Lysias, *Funeral Oration* 19).

... since they believed it was the function of animals to be ruled by violence, while it was proper for men to dispense justice by law, to persuade through speech/reason, and to serve these, by being both governed by law and instructed by reason/argument.³²

Buxton discusses how Isocrates also considers that persuasion and deliberation through words has a special association with Athenian democracy.³³ Isocrates' view is that of the Athenian statesmen of old, it was the ἀρίστοι ῥήτορες who brought the most good to the city. His examples are Solon (*Antid.* 231), Cleisthenes (*Antid.* 232), Themistocles (*Antid.* 233), and, of course, Pericles, who is described as a good leader and best orator (*Antid.* 234). We can see the parallels here to Thucydides' description of Pericles in Book 1 of the *History* as the most powerful among the Athenians in action and speech. Further to this, Isocrates determines that it is the Athenians' education in wisdom and speech which sets them apart from all others, and what makes the Athenians better than the rest of the Hellenes (*Antid.*

³⁰ Buxton (1982) 55.

³¹ There is a notable parallel here to Democritus (D-K B181), who remarks that persuasion, πειθῶ, through λόγος is a superior guide to ἀρετή than law, as law will not prevent a man from committing injustice in secret. Democritus also states, διόπερ συνέσει τε καὶ ἐπιστήμη ὀρθοπραγέων τις ἀνδρείος ἅμα καὶ εὐθύγνωμος γίγνεται, that 'through acting correctly man will become at the same time brave (ἀνδρείος) and upright through understanding and knowledge'. This concept of bravery through understanding has much in common with that of Pericles, Antisthenes and Prodicus discussed above.

³² Citations of Lysias' *Funeral Oration* are from Albin (1955). A *topos* in fifth century literature is 'progress theories', i.e. that early human life was bestial, and ruled by violence until the invention of laws and/or religion via persuasion: e.g., Protagoras' explanation of the origin of the *polis* (Pl. *Protagoras* 320c7-322d5). The so-called *Sisyphus* Fragment, ascribed to Critias (*TrGF* 43 fr. 19 Snell), emphasises the rhetorical powers of the 'sound and clever-minded man' (πυκνός τις καὶ σοφός γνώμην ἀνὴρ) who invented belief in the gods, which led to social cohesion and ended human wrong-doing; for discussion, see P. O'Sullivan (2012) 167-185, esp. 176-77.

³³ See Buxton (1982) 55.

292-4). Isocrates states that it is proper for all men to want to have their youth trained to become powerful speakers, but most of all for the Athenians, who do not distinguish themselves from all others in matters of war or government, but in the fact that they have been taught better than all others in φρόνησις and in λόγοι, ‘in judgment and in speeches’. This is what distinguishes man from animals, Hellenes from barbarians, and the Athenians from the rest of the Hellenes: the ability to arrive at sound judgements and the ability to persuade through the power of λόγος. Isocrates claims that men who have attained eloquence through philosophy and reasoning (φιλοσοφία καὶ λογισμῶ) do not speak without reflection, and therefore are less likely to make errors in πράξις. Like Pericles in the *Epitaphios*, Isocrates considers words to be important in relation to decisions of action; λόγος enables correct judgments to be made.

What these authors also emphasize strongly, like Pericles in the *Epitaphios*, is that this disposition towards deliberation, and the wisdom that comes with the instruction of words ahead of deeds, is an essentially Athenian quality. These authors are contemporaries of Antisthenes, and, since they endorse Pericles’ presentation of the Athenian character, they are relevant to Antisthenes’ speeches as well. Antisthenes’ presentation of Ajax as decidedly opposed to Athenian characteristics is contrasted to the character of Odysseus. This polarity helps to suggest that Antisthenes makes Odysseus an intellectual hero, presenting him with ‘Athenian’ qualities; Ajax, on the other hand, fills the role of the ‘other’: the Spartans, barbarians, or even animals, to which he is compared in (*Od.*6) and (*Od.*14).³⁴

While the main purpose of this paper is to explore Odysseus’ endorsement of λόγοι in Antisthenes and Ajax’s dismissal of it, much more could be said about parallels between Antisthenes’ Odysseus and the idealised citizen in Athenian self-presentation — especially the energy and versatility shared by each. Pericles claims in the *Epitaphios* that the Athenians are constantly on the move, involving themselves in politics, and willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the city (Thuc. 2.39-42). Antisthenes’ Odysseus would have indeed made a fine Athenian; he also strives to help the army day and night, planning his next move. Odysseus never ceases to find out ways to hurt the enemy, day and night; he goes behind the walls of the enemy at night (*Od.* 8) and dresses as a beggar (*Od.* 9). Even when wearied by fighting, Odysseus attacks the enemy at night (*Od.* 10). He fights in all the same

³⁴ The comparison of the stubbornness of Ajax to a mule in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 11.558) is seen as a positive, if unglamorous, attribute; in Antisthenes, it is turned into a negative quality. Likewise, Ajax’s towering shield (*Il.* 7.220) is seen as a supreme defensive weapon in Homer, but Antisthenes’ Odysseus turns it into a weapon of cowardice which Ajax hides behind (*Od.* 7).

battles as Ajax, but embarks on his own private dangers as well (*Od.* 1). It is no surprise that Pericles uses the term εὐτράπελος (resourceful or witty) to describe the Athenians (Thuc. 2.41.1). Odysseus in Antisthenes is πολύμητις καὶ πολυμήχανος (*Od.* 14), and, above all, he is πολύτροπος, the resourceful man of many ways, as we learn also from Homer in the first line of the *Odyssey*. The importance of the qualities of resourcefulness and versatility is a key part of Pericles' characterisation of the Athenians, since it is what makes them stand out from the more conservative, less dynamic nature of the Spartans. If these attributes suit the character of Odysseus so well and align him with the Homeric Odysseus, the question is raised of the extent to which ancient audiences saw Odysseus as a 'villain' in plays such as Sophocles' *Philoctetes* or Euripides' *Hecuba* and even *Cyclops* — dramas in which his status as a villain has become a truism of modern scholarship.³⁵ But the Athenian characterization of Odysseus in Antisthenes perhaps tells us that his favourable presentation here may have implications for various other fifth-century representations of him, which may not be as hostile as they are usually seen.

Antisthenes' take on Odysseus, then, need not be seen merely as a rehabilitation of a hero whom Athenian audiences loved to hate. This is a topic for another paper, but it calls into question the concept of Odysseus' transition from a villain to a hero in Athenian literature. The deep connections between Antisthenes' Odysseus and Athenian intellectual ideals of λόγοι and ἀνδρεία also harken back to Homer; we can see in Antisthenes the reception of a Homeric hero through elite intellectual sources. The fact that Antisthenes endows the character of Odysseus with 'Athenian ideals' has other interesting implications, since Ajax was the more 'Athenian' in a geographical sense, as a hero of Salamis; this figure even became an eponym for one of the Attic tribes (*Hdt.* 5.66).³⁶ By a neat sophistic paradox, it is Ajax's opponent — by virtue of his versatility, intellect, and predisposition to the importance of λόγοι as well as ἔργα — who becomes an Athenian by φύσις, as imagined by

³⁵ See Stanford (1954) 102-117 and Montiglio (2011) pp. 2-19 for a discussion of Odysseus as a stage villain in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Euripides' *Hecuba*, *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Trojan Women*. This idea of Odysseus as a villain in drama has spread into much of the scholarship of Euripides' *Cyclops*. See for example Seaford (1984) 55-56 and Ussher (1978) 93-94, 191. For a valuable corrective to the overstated view that Euripides denounces the character of Odysseus in his *Cyclops*, see Goins (1991) 187-194.

³⁶ In Homeric epic Ajax is described as being from Salamis, and it is specifically explained that he beaches his ships alongside the Athenian contingent (*Il.* 2.556-558). This passage is famously disputed as an Athenian interpolation (Plut. *Solon* 10.2). Plutarch also refers to Ajax's ancestors being given Athenian citizenship (*Solon* 10.3).

Pericles and other major thinkers of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.³⁷ In word and deed, the true Athenian in Antisthenes' account is the Ithacan hero, Odysseus.

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³⁷ For the Funeral Speech as a uniquely Athenian forum collective self-fashioning and propaganda, see Loraux (1986) *passim*.

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