

USING CORINTH'S RHETORIC TO UNDERSTAND ARISTOTLE'S *RHETORIC*

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In Book I of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle outlines the functions of deliberative rhetoric and assigns specific requirements to deliberative rhetors, who “will need to know” (I.4.1359b24) the five “main matters about which all men deliberate and on which political speakers make speeches” (59b19–20). The five matters he insists deliberative rhetors maintain knowledge about are “ways and means, war and peace, national defence, imports and exports, and legislation” (59b21–22). In *Aristotle, Rhetoric I: A Commentary*, William Grimaldi contends that Aristotle makes these demands because he considers the five matters to be essential heuristic tools for invention (94); Grimaldi points to Book II, in which Aristotle writes, “[W]e must know some, if not all, of the facts about the subject on which we are to speak and argue. Otherwise we can have no materials out of which to construct arguments” (II.22.1396a6–9).

Therefore, as E. M. Cope asserts in *An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric*, we can understand these five matters to be “the principal questions and subjects with which a deliberative or public speaker will have to deal,” and those which must be incorporated into all deliberative speeches (175). The implication of Aristotle's demands is that an argument would be incomplete without the inclusion of each matter, meaning that deliberative rhetors must make the five matters central to their invention processes: rhetors must be knowledgeable on each matter in order to formulate an informed position; they must address each matter in their argument; and they must anticipate how their opposition will address each matter and prepare to answer claims that are likely to be advanced against them.

Other than specifically applying these requirements to deliberative rhetors, Aristotle does not further qualify their application. That is, it seems that Aristotle deems this knowledge as required for *all* deliberative rhetors—regardless of time period or circumstance—as long as the discourse is deliberative in nature. However, employing knowledge of the five matters is not enough to guarantee that a deliberative rhetor will be successful or that an argument will be persuasive. To examine the demands Aristotle places on deliberative rhetors and evaluate the matters' effects on deliberative rhetoric, I will analyze a crucial historical moment of deliberation that settled on the ancient world in 432 BC: after years of enmity, the Spartans summoned their allies to debate whether rival Hellenic superpower Athens had overstepped its bounds to the extent that war was necessary. Victor Davis Hanson, in *A War Like No Other*, explains that the Peloponnesian War (432–404 BC) was launched as a result of this debate—decades of ideological and militaristic rivalry now came to a head after Sparta and Athens committed a series of trespasses against each other and their shaky alliance crumbled (6).

Although the Spartans eventually did declare war on Athens, they might not have without the instigating role played by Spartan colony Corinth. The Corinthians spearheaded the argument against Athens and, in the Spartans' two deliberative meetings, provided three crucial speeches against Athens. The Corinthians not only helped actuate the war but also ended up on the winning

side of it. Yet despite their apparent militaristic success, the Corinthians were rhetorical failures. Even though they thoroughly satisfied Aristotle's 1359b demands, the Corinthians did not succeed in any major rhetorical situation leading up to the war, actually failing to persuade an audience of Athenians and two audiences of Spartans to initiate war. In an attempt to understand their rhetorical failings and Aristotle's demands of deliberative rhetors, I will analyze the Corinthians' use of Aristotle's five matters.

The Beginnings of War

According to Donald Kagan in *The Peloponnesian War*, Sparta and Athens had fought cooperatively in the Persian War (480-479 BC), working together to defeat King Xerxes with their allies in the Delian League (8). This alliance was short-lived: before long, the First Peloponnesian War (461-446 BC) broke out—partially due to the Athenians' (correct) sense that Sparta would betray Athens and help the besieged island of Thasos (465 BC), and partially due to Megara's 459 BC shift in loyalty from Sparta to Athens (14-16). After fifteen years, the First Peloponnesian War finally ended with the Thirty Years' Peace of 446/5 BC (18).

Greece's path from the Thirty Years' Peace back to war—and incidentally, the speeches at hand—involved four major stresses against the treaty. The first occurred when Athens militarily backed Miletus against the island of Samos, warring (despite mutual Delian League membership) over the nearby town Priene in 440 BC. At this juncture Sparta could have joined Samos against Athens, with military support from Persia no less, and only narrowly passed up the opportunity because of Spartan ally Corinth's vote against the attack—a fact that would soon become important (Kagan, *Peloponnesian* 22-24). The second stress occurred in 433 BC, when the Athenians were persuaded in the Corcyrean debate to aid Corcyra in its revolt against its mother country Corinth, despite the Corinthians' protests. This debate is the source of the first Corinthian speech I will examine. Lawrence Tritle, in *The Peloponnesian War*, explains: as “an old colony of Corinth's, Corcyra hated its ‘mother city’ and Corinth shared the sentiment for its colony” (3), largely due to Corinthian intervention between Corcyra and its civil-war-torn colony Epidamnus (Kagan, *Peloponnesian* 32). The third stress occurred in 433-432 BC when Athens, fearful of Corinth, preemptively ordered Potidaia (a strategically placed city sympathetic to Corinth) to “pull down the walls that protected [the Potidaeans] on the seaward side, to send away the magistrates they annually received from Corinth, and to deliver to Athens a number of hostages” (37). And finally, in the same year, Athens committed the fourth stress when it passed the Megarian decrees “barring the Megarians from the harbors of the Athenian Empire” in order “to help prevent the spread of the war to Corinth's allies by ensuring that Megara was punished” for assisting Corinth in the Battle of Sybota—an act that later, in the second Lacedaemonian debate, caused the Megarians to join the Corinthians in demanding war against Athens (39).

After all four stresses, Sparta called the first Lacedaemonian debate, deciding “that the Athenians had committed aggression but . . . also wish[ing] to summon all the allies together and have them vote” (Thucydides 1.87.10).¹ At the second Lacedaemonian debate, Sparta and its allies decided that the treaty had been broken and war with Athens was necessary. The last two speeches occurred at these two Lacedaemonian debates, with one speech taking place at each meeting.

Corinth's Use of Aristotle's Five Deliberative Matters

Ways and Means

The first matter that Aristotle demands a deliberative rhetor to be knowledgeable about is the “Ways and Means” of his or her country (I.4.1359b23), requiring that the rhetor “know the number and extent of the country’s sources of revenue” (59b24–25), both to “increas[e] existing wealth” (59b31) and to eliminate “superfluous” losses (59b28). The Corinthians demonstrate knowledge of Corinth’s funding in the second Lacedaemonian debate, explaining that they will match the wealth of Athens using “the funds in Delphi and Olympia” to build their navy (Th. 1.121.7–8). The Corinthians realize they must address Athens’ famously powerful navy because, as Kagan remarks in *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*, other than “Athens, Corcyra was the only state to maintain a fleet in peacetime, and a powerful one” (39). The Corinthians are also aware of their own monetary resources and of how they can be used to Corinth’s greatest advantage. The Corinthians are consequentially prepared to form their knowledge of Corinth’s ways and means into a persuasive claim, explaining how they will fund a formidable resistance they do not yet possess.

In addition to demanding that deliberative rhetors know the ways and means of their own countries, Aristotle also insists that they “must be keenly interested in the methods worked out in other lands” (I.4.1359b32–33). Adherently, the Corinthians use knowledge of Corcyra’s ways and means when appealing to the Athenians in the Corcyrean debate. In response to the Corcyreans’ assertion that their great wealth makes them excellent allies, the Corinthians remark, “[I]n the insolence of wealth they have wronged us in many ways” (Th. 1.38.13). The Corinthians use their prior knowledge to answer the claim of their opposition; they know that Corcyra *is* extremely wealthy and that it is necessary to address Corcyra’s considerable financial resources—indicating that ways and means were already considered during invention. The Corinthians dismiss the Corcyreans’ wealth by linking it to their past treacheries, arguing that financial prosperity makes them unreliable and fickle allies. (This supposed treachery is perfectly illustrated by the situation the three countries are in, making it a legitimate consideration to the potentially allied Athenians).

Later in the second Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians once again display knowledge of other countries’ ways and means when they comment on the significance of Athens’ finances: “For the power of the Athenians is more purchased than homegrown, but ours would be less vulnerable there because of being based on manpower instead of money” (Th. 1.121.10–11). Although Athens is commonly known as a military superpower, the Corinthians know that Athens possesses a strength that is essentially financial. Because they are aware of how Athens spends its money—its wealth serves as the backbone to the Athenian army—the Corinthians are able to acknowledge and discredit Athens’ militaristic strength and argue their own superiority, using an argument from ways and means.

Peace and War

Even in their use of ways and means, the Corinthians display knowledge of “Peace and War” (Aristotle I.4.1359b33), the matter they appropriately focus on out of the five demanded. Aristotle claims that a deliberative rhetor “must know the extent of the military strength of his country, both actual and potential”; “the nature of that . . . strength”; and “what wars his country has waged, and how it has waged them” (59b33–37). The Corinthians boast about their military strength in the second Lacedaemonian debate: “[W]e surpass [Athens] in numbers and military experience, next

because we all uniformly obey our orders, and we will also build up naval power, where their strength is” (Th. 1.121.4–6). The Corinthians also use knowledge of their potential strength (and awareness of current weakness) as an appeal: “Once we have drawn even in [naval] skill, there is no doubt whatsoever that we will surpass them in courage” (1.121.13–14). The Corinthians craft their knowledge into a claim, arguing their fitness as a militaristic force against Athens.

More than just knowing the military strength and history of one’s own country, Aristotle demands that one know “whether the military power of another country is like or unlike that of his own” (I.4.1360a2–3). The rhetor “must . . . have studied the wars of other countries as well as those of his own” (60a2–4) and “know these facts . . . also about neighbouring countries; and also about countries with which war is likely” (59b37–39). Using knowledge of Corcyra’s war history, the Corinthians attempt to disarm the Corcyreans’ most persuasive argument: the strength of the Corcyrean navy. The Corinthians assert, “[D]o not be swayed by the argument that they are offering a mighty naval alliance; to avoid wronging one’s equals is a more secure basis of strength than can be found by grasping a dangerous advantage when incited by the immediate prospects” (Th. 1.42.12–15). The Corinthians allude to Corcyra appearing deceptively and superficially powerful, and assert that even with its navy, Corcyra is still not the “equal” of Corinth or Athens. Kagan, in *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War*, explains that the Corinthians are warning Athens that pursuing the absorption of Corcyra’s navy is “as dangerous as it [i]s attractive” (233). In his essay “Interaction of Speech and Narrative in Thucydides,” James V. Morrison similarly remarks that the Corinthians’ message promises “that it would be advantageous to Athens not to miscalculate by assuming that war is coming” (273). In other words, the Corinthians advise that the loss of Corinth’s alliance would be more immediately detrimental than the loss of Corcyra’s navy, regardless of the likelihood of proximate war. The Corinthians are aware both of the Corcyreans’ strengths and of how they differ from their own; therefore, they are prepared to address and dismiss opposition.

Similarly, in the first Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians express knowledge of the Athenian military’s strength and capabilities: “We know the way the Athenians encroach on their neighbors, how they proceed little by little” (Th. 1.69.12–13). Here, the Corinthians assert that they advantageously possess familiarity with wartime Athens, an attractive quality in an ally. They describe the Athenians as “innovators” (1.70.5–6)—“bold beyond their strength and risk-takers beyond their judgment” (1.70.9–10)—warning that “when they conquer their enemies they advance the farthest and when beaten fall back the least” (1.70.16–17). Kagan remarks that this was “the most effective device employed by the Corinthians . . . depict[ing] the Athenians as a permanently restless, aggressive, and dangerous people who must be stopped before it [i]s too late” (*Outbreak* 308). David Cartwright, in *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, confirms that Sparta “never went to war unless compelled to do so” (42), causing the Corinthians to realize that “it was necessary to frighten Sparta into action, for fear seemed to be the only way to move her” (Kagan, *Outbreak* 287). Therefore, the Corinthians elaborate on what formidable enemies they know the Athenians to be, making their alliance more attractive by appealing to the Lacedaemonians’ survival instinct. They implement this tactic again in the second Lacedaemon debate, warning the Spartan allies that the “Athenians are a match for all of us combined and even more powerful against us city by city. And if we do not make our defense against them with every people and every city united with a single purpose, they will have little difficulty overcoming us in our divided state” (Th. 1.122.10–13). Here, the Corinthians use knowledge of peace and war first to frighten their

audience toward alliance, and then to present the alliance as a practical defensive measure that benefits all countries.

As insisted by Aristotle, the Corinthians are familiar not only with the strength of the Athenian military but also “what wars” it “has waged, and how it has waged them” (Aristotle I.4.1359b36–37). This knowledge is demonstrated in the Corcyrean debate when the Corinthians ask the Athenians not to interfere with the management of Corcyra by citing their own “past favors” to Athens and “demand[ing] a *quid pro quo*” (Kagan, *Outbreak* 234). First, they mention that “at the time of the Samian revolt . . . [the Corinthians] did not cast [their] vote against [the Athenians], but told them plainly that in disciplining allies everyone is on his own” (Th. 1.40.17–20). Continuing, the Corinthians mention a second favor: “[W]hen you were short of warships in your war with Aigina,² before the Persian invasion, you received twenty ships from Corinth” (1.41.5–7). Ultimately, the Corinthians claim that these two Corinthian decisions “made the conquest of the Aeginetans and the punishment of the Samians possible” for the Athenians (1.41.8–9). These are solid points: in comparable situations, the Corinthians acted in the interest of Athens, and consequentially feel that they established the precedent for “the key principle governing the relations between the two alliances, the one vital to the maintenance of peace: noninterference by each side in the other’s sphere of influence” (Kagan, *Origins* 43). Because they are knowledgeable of Athens’ past wars and military actions, the Corinthians are able to use this information to their advantage and request that the Athenians honor this “principle” as well, rather than voting not to reciprocate Corinth’s political gesture (1.43.3–4).

The Corinthians lean on their knowledge of other countries’ military strength and history just as heavily in the first Lacedaemonian debate but not in the same manner as in the Corcyrean debate. Instead of arguing that Lacedaemon should support Corinth because Corinth supported Lacedaemon in the past, the Corinthians remind the Lacedaemonians of incidents in which Lacedaemon acted *against* (or failed to act on behalf of) Corinth. The Corinthians boldly state that the Lacedaemonians “are to blame for [Corinth’s] situation . . . by allowing the Athenians to fortify their city³ after the Persian War,” assigning a strong Spartan responsibility to the war and to Corinth (Th. 1.69.1–2). Simon Hornblower, in *A Commentary on Thucydides*, points out that the “Spartans could perhaps have stopped the first of these operations . . . but hardly the second (Athens was then too powerful and confident). So these criticisms are unreasonable” (113). The fact that the Corinthians have made a stretch here—that they are slightly manipulating common knowledge of past events to benefit themselves—actually verifies use of peace and war knowledge in their invention process: they recognize that this information could be persuasive with some tweaking, and strategically alter their account of events to benefit their argument.

In the same breath, the Corinthians spit out that “it is not the enslaver but the one who has the power to stop him but looks on who more truly does the deed” (Th. 1.69.5–6). Here, the Corinthians argue that through its “passive policy Sparta shared in the blame for the enslavement of Greece, for she had the power to prevent it but did not, although she had the proud reputation of being the liberator of Greece” (Kagan, *Outbreak* 288). The Corinthians use their knowledge of Lacedaemon’s past military decisions to spur it into action—either by logic or by guilt—despite its desire to avoid war and the violation of the Thirty Years’ Peace.

Furthermore, the Corinthians demonstrate knowledge of peace and war by chastising the Lacedaemonians for their insufficient knowledge of the matter. In the second Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians complain, “We actually believe that you have never . . . considered what

sort of opponents you will have in the Athenians” (Th. 1.70.3–4), suggesting that Sparta suffers from a “suicidal incapacity to lead the struggle for freedom against a foe of the restless, innovative, and aggressive character of the Athenians” (Kagan, *Outbreak* 290). Their comment works in four ways: it reveals that the Corinthians so value knowledge of peace and war that they demand their allies to do the same; it allows the Corinthians to use their familiarity with Athens to frighten the Lacedaemonians toward alliance; it transfers credibility onto the Corinthians as knowledgeable and prepared allies; and most importantly, it implies that if the Lacedaemonians were more fit for deliberation—and prepared with the knowledge that Aristotle demands—they would no longer be deliberating whether to act, but how best to move forward.

National Defense

Knowledge of peace and war is not the extent of the militaristic knowledge Aristotle demands from deliberative rhetors. A rhetor must also possess knowledge of “National Defence” (Aristotle I.4.1360a6), knowing “all about the methods of defence in actual use, such as the strength and character of the defensive force and the position of the forts” (60a6–9). In the second Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians adhere to Aristotle’s demand literally, suggesting the establishment of “a fortified outpost in [the Athenians’] territory” (Th. 1.122.1) “from which raids on enemy territory could be conducted” (Cartwright 78). But they exemplify Aristotle’s stipulation further: first and foremost, purely out of their tendency to aggressively seek allies. The Corinthians’ initial reaction to rising hostilities with both Corcyra and Athens is to immediately increase their defense by acquiring an ally.

Moreover, the Corinthians show mindfulness of how new alliances affect their own defense and alter existing alliances between other counties—and use this knowledge in their claims. In the Corcyrean debate, the Corinthians warn that in assisting Corcyra, Athens “would not simply become [Corcyra’s] auxiliaries but [Corinth’s] enemies” (Th. 1.40.10–11), and that “it is obvious that there are just as many [on Athens’] side who will come over to [Corinth]” (1.40.21–22). The Corinthians simultaneously appeal to the Athenians’ logic and threaten them, exhibiting knowledge of Corinth’s current national defense options and a careful monitoring of how alliances could change—either to Corinth’s benefit or detriment—in the face of various possible political shifts.

The Corinthians additionally demonstrate their knowledge of national defense (and the matter’s significance to argumentation) when they again reprimand the Lacedaemonians for not maintaining comparable knowledge on the matter. In the second Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians scold the Lacedaemonians, saying, “[Y]ou must toil in reinforcing what you have on hand” (Th. 1.123.2–3). This is only a continuation of the Corinthians’ comment in the first Lacedaemonian debate criticizing the Lacedaemonian tendency to become trapped in ineffective deliberation without action: “We no longer need[d] to debate over whether or not we are being wronged but over *how to defend ourselves*” (1.69.8–11; emphasis added). This argument not only creates exigency for action—arguing that “Sparta’s cautious awareness of its limitations ha[s] developed into a powerful negative influence that ha[s] strangled its initiative” (Cartwright 41), but more importantly, caters the Corinthians’ argument to the reluctant Lacedaemonians: the Corinthians point out that in this instance, action is actually a defensive measure, and that hesitancy only hinders their safety. The Corinthians, having demonstrated their own ability to generate a bank of defense options, show that the matter is so ingrained in their invention process that they become irritated when other rhetors fail to keep stride.

Imports and Exports

Beyond financial and military knowledge, Aristotle demands knowledge of “imports and exports” (I.4.1359b22), or “Food Supply” (60a12), stipulating that deliberative rhetors must be knowledgeable of “what kinds of food are produced at home and what imported; and what articles must be exported or imported” (60a13–16). Imports and exports are, appropriately, not central to the Corinthians’ arguments, but the issue is not completely absent. The Corinthians forewarn “those who lie farther inland and not on the trade routes” that they “need to know that if they do not defend the coastal states, bringing their produce down and exchanging it for the things the sea provides to the mainland will be difficult” (Th. 1.120.6–9). The Corinthians are stating that the prewar deliberations do not affect only those on the coast; rather, “in the event of war, those inland could not hope to avoid disruption of trade by refusing to join in” (Lazenby 20), meaning that “[t]hey should pay careful attention to the debate as something that touche[s] them closely” (Kagan, *Outbreak* 312). The Corinthians combine their knowledge of the repercussions of war with their knowledge of imports and exports to argue that war affects each country in crucial spheres other than just the military; this serves as a scare tactic to argue the need for immediate alliance.

Legislation

Although Aristotle lists the other four matters first, he declares that rhetors must “before all things understand the subject of legislation; for it is on a country’s laws that its whole welfare depends” (I.4.1360a18–20). As a deliberative rhetor, one must “study the past history of one’s own country, in order to understand which constitution is desirable for it now, but also to have a knowledge of the constitutions of other nations, and so to learn for what kinds of nation the various kinds of constitution are suited” (60a30–33). While the Corinthians tend to create their arguments based on the general character of other countries rather than their governments (Kagan, *Outbreak* 289), the Corinthians do incorporate the governmental or legal structure of states into some of their character claims. In the Corcyrean debate, the Corinthians make a “complaint [to Athens] about the one-sidedness of Corcyrean legal practices” (Hornblower, *Commentary* 81), remarking on the “autonomy” granted to the Corcyreans due to their refusal to make allies, and, consequentially, their ability to do as they please (Th. 1.37.10). Again in the second Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians remark on Athens being a “tyrant state”—“a vivid and emotive expression” (Cartwright 79)—which “was established against all alike” (Th. 1.124.13–14). Here, the Corinthians attempt to “exploit Sparta’s reputation for hostility to tyrants” and to appropriately establish “the theme of ‘one against many’” among the Spartan allies (Hornblower, *Commentary* 200).

If the definition of legislation can be expanded to include broader legal matters—such as policies and treaties, which put political binds and obligations on a country’s legislative decisions—then the Corinthians can be said to use legislation in several of their arguments. Although George A. Kennedy, in *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civil Discourse*, does not permit such expansion, referring to “legislation” as “the framing of laws” (53), where laws are “what we would call constitutional provisions” (54), Grimaldi uses a more flexible definition, describing a constitution as “what constitutes the formative principles which shape a political community” (98). While policies and treaties are not explicitly included in Aristotle’s stipulation, both offer insight into the founding principles of a state and do just as much as an understood constitution to shape relationships with other countries and inform deliberation, making knowledge of policies and treaties essential.

Under Grimaldi's interpretation, the Corinthians commonly exhibit and incorporate knowledge of legislation into their arguments—commenting on the policies and treaties of their neighboring countries. In the Corcyrean debate, the Corinthians address Corcyra's "policy" of not making alliances (Th. 1.37.8): "They say that it was out of prudence that they never entered into an alliance, but they have followed this policy with evil intentions, not out of virtue, and did not want to have an ally as witness to their crimes nor to face disgrace by calling one in" (1.37.7–10). Because the Corinthians noted Corcyra's proclaimed policy—as well as the convenient timing of its change of heart—the Corinthians are able to analyze how the Corcyreans misrepresent their circumstance and use their findings against the Corcyreans. The Corinthians also comment on how the Athenians' alliance with Corcyra would offend Athens' general lawfulness. The Corinthians, considering knowledge of Athens' basic legal structure in their argument, claim that an alliance with Corcyra would mean "establishing a principle that allows alliances with defectors" (1.40.16–17) and that the Athenians would "start harboring and abetting the wrongdoers" (1.40.21)—an unflattering brand and universally detrimental precedent to set.

However, most of the Corinthians' discourse regarding policies and treaties revolves around the Thirty Years' Peace (or, who is violating it and how). In the second Lacedaemonian debate, the Corinthians assure the Spartan allies that they "will not be the first to break the treaty," but will, in fact, be "supporting a treaty that has been outraged" (Th. 1.123.9–11). The Corinthians use their knowledge of legislation to coax the Lacedaemonians toward war by assuring that they will not be the party responsible for the treaty's dissolution. Similarly, in the Corcyrean debate, the Corinthians warn the Athenians about allying with the Corcyreans, saying, "[Y]ou cannot justly receive them. For if it is stated in the treaty that any city not already included may join whichever side it wishes" (1.40.3–4) if the request "for protection does not involve deserting someone else and does not bring those who accept the alliance . . . war instead of peace" (1.40.6–8). They argue that because the Athenians are "party to a treaty with the Corinthians but never had so much as a truce with the Corcyreans," siding with the Corcyreans would be a breach of the treaty (1.4.15–16).

Here, the Corinthians are wrestling with what is contemporarily referred to as the "neutrals clause"—and through their efforts, proving that legislation has been considered during invention. The situation is not actually as simple as the Corinthians imply: the neutrals clause "presents them with an awkward problem" (Cartwright 32) because "[t]echnically, the Thirty Years' Peace permitted an alliance since Corcyra belonged to neither bloc" (Kagan, *Origins* 43). The Corinthians contend with this technicality by adopting a slightly more defensible angle, claiming that an alliance with Corcyra "violate[s] the spirit of the treaty and common sense" (43) because, logically, "[n]o state should accept an alliance with a neutral if the acceptance of such an alliance is likely to cause a war" (*Outbreak* 232). The Corinthians demonstrate not only that they possess knowledge of legislation but that they recognize the opportunity to preemptively address a possibly damaging legislative argument and reframe it to benefit themselves.

Corinth's Knowledge, Corinth's Failure

Through their speeches, the Corinthians prove themselves to be knowledgeable in each matter demanded by Aristotle: ways and means, peace and war, national defense, imports and exports, and legislation. The Corinthians also demonstrate that they know how to weave this knowledge into their arguments, using the matters as a stasis exercise to discover what must be addressed to persuade their audience. But the Corinthians' implementation of Aristotle's five matters did *not* actu-

ally bring them rhetorical success: incorporating the five deliberative matters into an argument is not enough to ensure that the argument will be persuasive—only that the invention process will be well-founded and comprehensive. That is, the matters work together heuristically to make sure all talking points are covered: that deliberative rhetors possess all the knowledge necessary to craft an informed and persuasive argument; that rhetors rigorously analyze their knowledge of the matters and synthesize it into a tight and organic speech that addresses each matter; that rhetors consider how their opposition will approach each matter and prepare appropriately.

But this is not enough. Invention is only the beginning of the complex developmental process that goes into a successful argument, and deliberative rhetors must succeed in the steps *following* invention as well. The Corinthians could have made any number of mistakes after invention, ranging from poor organization, style, memory, or delivery to insufficient consideration of their audience or failure to establish credibility. The execution of one of these later stages caused the Corinthians to repeatedly fall short of the goals of deliberative rhetoric, which intuitively lends itself to two main ends: *rhetorical* effectiveness (persuading an audience to accept the rhetor's position), and what I will differentiate as *political* effectiveness (making decisions that politically or economically benefit the deliberative body)—hopefully both. However, the Corinthians are unsuccessful in achieving either.

Although the Corinthians initially appear to be *rhetorically* effective in two-thirds of their rhetorical situations (they fail to persuade the Athenians, but seemingly win over both audiences of Lacedaemonians), Thucydides argues that the Corinthians do not actually *persuade* Sparta of anything—that Sparta is already predisposed to its final decision—making the Corinthians completely rhetorically *ineffective*. Thucydides claims the Spartans decide that they “must go to war not so much because they were persuaded by the arguments of their allies as because they feared further increase in the power of the Athenians” (1.88.2–4). When the Corinthians appeal to the Lacedaemonians, they address an audience that publically sought war with Athens not long ago in the Samian revolt. Thucydides argues that the Lacedaemonians enter the debate prepared to attack a feared enemy, and the Corinthians face an audience that already favors their argument. Therefore, this is not an example of persuasion at all—just a good example of using Aristotle's invention heuristic by showing knowledge of national defense. Kagan suspects that the second Lacedaemonian audience *did* require some persuasion, which the Corinthians successfully executed. He suggests that “the bellicose ephors” present during the first meeting were already in favor of war (*Origins* 52), but “[n]either their king nor a majority of the Spartans were prepared to go to war yet” (51). However, Kagan's own research proves that the Corinthians cannot take credit for persuading the second Lacedaemonian audience: “the allies and the Spartans themselves were not totally converted to the views of Corinth and the Spartan war party. The arguments of Archidamus must have had their effect after the rhetoric of the Corinthians and the fiery, single-minded patriotism of Sthenelaidas were more carefully assessed” (*Outbreak* 316). We see three parties: first, a party that was predisposed to war and was not persuaded by the Corinthians; second, a group of Spartans and allies that still voted *against* going to war and was not persuaded by the Corinthians—a group thought to be considerable in size, as “a majority (not a large majority, such as Thucydides reports in the purely Spartan vote) voted for war” (*Origins* 58); and third, a group of Spartans and allies that was persuaded to go to war by the Corinthians working *in conjunction* with Archidamus and Sthenelaidas (as well as the other rhetors who spoke earlier). The Corinthians enjoyed the sup-

port of other rhetors—particularly Sthenelaidas, who finally turns a majority—but were not necessarily persuasive on their own.

In short, the Corinthians cannot be considered rhetorically effective: they failed to persuade Athens and did not need to persuade the already-supportive Sparta. But beyond rhetorical ineffectiveness, history shows that the Corinthians were *politically* ineffective deliberators as well, failing to lead their deliberative body to a politically beneficial outcome: the war benefited Sparta, but not Corinth. Corinth painfully lost its alliance with Athens to Corcyra: not only did it lose a colony and gain a powerful enemy in the Battle of Sybota, but Corinth also lost men and “about thirty ships” (Th. 1.54.11). After Sparta went to war with Athens, however, the war took a more serious toll on Corinth; as Hornblower summarizes in *The Greek World, 479–323 BC*, “Corinth suffered badly from the war” (97). The Peloponnesian War not only caused strain on Corinth’s naval production and “erode[d] the Corinthian middle class,” it also forced Corinth’s 390s fusion “with Argos to form a single, *democratic*, anti-Spartan state. Corinth, which had done so much to bring on the war by urging on Sparta, was more damaged by it, and more permanently, than any other city” (97–98). The Peloponnesian War crushed Corinth in every sphere: it crippled the Corinthian economy through the disruption of trade routes and alliances; it broke apart Corinthian social organization (Kagan, *Peloponnesian* 488); it decimated a generation of the Corinthian population, retarding its ability to generate a functioning army (487); it caused a restructuring of the Corinthian government and foreign affairs and destroyed its relationship with its mother city. The Corinthians were not only rhetorically ineffective but thoroughly politically ineffective as well, leading their country to politically and economically detrimental outcomes.

Through the Corinthians’ failure to produce a favorable or effective rhetorical result (despite possessing and skillfully employing knowledge of Aristotle’s five deliberative matters at critical rhetorical junctures), we see that knowledge and incorporation of the five deliberative matters is not enough to guarantee rhetorical effectiveness—other preparatory strategies, analytical processes, and rhetorical skills must be effectively executed to achieve rhetorical success. According to Eugene Garver and Harvey Yunis, Aristotle fails to express *why* deliberative rhetors “must” possess knowledge regarding his five matters. Although it seems logical to assume that doing so would help yield rhetorical or political success, Aristotle’s reasons may diverge from matters of persuasiveness completely—perhaps ensuring high credibility in deliberative rhetors or establishing standards for an “ideal” rhetor. In *Aristotle’s Rhetoric: An Art of Character*, Garver supports the former thesis, commenting that a “good speaker is someone who knows what he is talking about,” and regarding Aristotle’s chapter 4 as “organized directions about what must be known and where the speaker can find out about it” (84). In *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens*, Yunis argues that Aristotle does not seek “the ends and consequences of persuasive speeches” (22), only the “main matters on which all men deliberate” (Aristotle I.4.1358b19)—that perhaps considering the deliberative matters as a means to a particular ends (such as rhetorical or political effectiveness) is either unintended or impossible.

The Corinthians failed in their arguments’ creation or delivery at some point after the invention process, and their successful use of Aristotle’s invention heuristics (although necessary for a successful argument) was not enough to ensure persuasiveness. Although the Corinthians excel in each stipulation Aristotle places on deliberative rhetors in 1359b, exhibiting the required knowledge—ways and means, peace and war, national defense, imports and exports, and legislation—

and using it to craft arguments, to consider the issue fully, and to anticipate oppositional arguments, they fail to be rhetorically or politically effective in their deliberative situations because the five matters simply don't guarantee effective rhetoric. It is not a matter of the Corinthians failing to do enough to achieve persuasiveness, but a matter of persuasiveness being, at times, unachievable. Rhetoric cannot be effective in every situation and, even at its most artful and most skilled, it is not always enough to turn minds.

Notes

¹All subsequent Thucydides citations will be abbreviated to "Th."

²Aegina was "a defeated island community hated by the Athenians" (Tritle 26). Nigel Bagnall, in *The Peloponnesian War*, explains further: "While the Athenians were occupied with an expedition to Egypt in 453 BC, Aegina took the opportunity and renewed her war with Athens, and, though the Aeginetan fleet was virtually annihilated, because of the support given by the Corinthians and others . . . the island was not captured, remaining autonomous but having to pay tribute to Athens" (14).

³Kagan explains, "Sparta had allowed Athens to fortify her city after the Persian Wars and then to build the long walls that made their city invulnerable" (*Outbreak* 288).

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