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Self-sufficiency: a pursuit under the circumstances

Born in Macedonia but bred in Athens, Aristotle marks out the initial objective of the city, which is self-sufficiency. By this term the philosopher means not only the geographical and political independence, but mainly the economic development, so that the citizens can prosper and flourish in several aspects of personal and public life. The city of Athens – at the beginning of 5th century B. C. – couldn't have been ignorant of this primal purpose, therefore great efforts had been made to ensure a variety of supplies for the city before and after the repulsion of the Persian attack (479 B. C.). Since Solon's period the city of Athens had issued laws concerning land property, had taken care of the direct as well as the indirect supplying of grain, had introduced new laws and imposed mandates or even conditions to its allies about the taxes regarding the imported goods. What brought for the above actions was exactly the awareness that there was no abundance of goods to cover the needs of the Athenian citizens. The attempts reveal the conscience of the people in relation to their economical problems, through a different angle though from what is happening in modern life.

Nevertheless, the democratic Athens during the second year of the Peloponnesian civil war came up against the biggest challenge of its since then history. Was it prepared to face the shortage of goods (water, food e.t.c.), when the plague was spread and cost the life of 50.000 Athenians, including the young Myrtis? Could this shortage be considered as a subversive factor that caused the epidemic disease to spread? How could Athens manage to respond?

The athenian land: a vital area for the Athenians

Athens, 431 B.C.: How the quest for self-sufficiency became the Trojan horse

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