

Democracy in Athens from Pericles to Cleophon.

SOURCES: Aristophanes, Euripides.

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This passage by the Athenian tragedian EURIPIDES (c. 480–406) is a conspicuous example of the political argument to be found in many of his plays and shows the influence of the sophists on his style. The *Suppliants* was written in the latter half of the Archidamian War.

Euripides, *Suppliants* 399–441; 476–493

400 Herald:- Who is tyrant of this land? To whom should I address the message sent by Creon, who has been lord of Cadmus' land since Eteocles was killed by his brother's hand before the sevenfold gates (of Thebes)?

405 Theseus:- Firstly, you begin your speech on a false note, stranger, by asking for a tyrant here. For this city is free and not ruled by one man. It is the *dēmos* that rules as year by year new men succeed to office, giving no advantage to the rich, while even the poor have equal rights.

410 Herald:- Admitting this to me is like giving me the first throw at dice. For I come from a city ruled by one man, not by the rabble (*ochlos*). There is no one there to puff up the city with speeches and to twist men's wavering minds for private gain – popular for a moment and conferring great favours, but later bringing harm upon the city, then making further wild accusations so as to disguise his former mistakes and escape justice. Besides, how could the *dēmos* guide a city rightly if they cannot even talk straight? For it is time, not haste, that gives men better instruction (*mathēsis*). The poor man who tills the land, even if he does not suffer

425 from lack of education (*amathia*) would not be able to attend exclusively to the public good, because of his own work. Indeed, it causes resentment among the better men (*ameinones*) when a jumped-up commoner (*ponēros*) gets respect because his tongue gains him a hold on the *dēmos*.

430 Theseus:- Yes, the herald is smart and quite a master of words. But since you have entered upon this contest, listen to me. For it was you who gave the challenge for a debate. A city has no worse enemy than a tyrant: for under a tyrant, above all, the laws do not belong to the community, but one man takes possession of them and he governs on his own. And so equality is lost. But with written laws both the weak and the rich have equal rights and it is possible for the weaker man, if insulted, to reprove the prosperous in the same terms, and an inferior, if his cause is just, can overcome the powerful. This is the call that freedom makes:- 'Who has good (*chrēstos*) counsel for the city and wishes to propose it publicly?' The man who does this gains glory, whereas he who does not, keeps silent. How can there be greater equality than this in a city?

The Herald eventually dismisses ideologies and reflects on the over-riding folly of war.

476 Herald:- Reflect, and don't be angered by my words. Just because you have a free city, don't make an arrogant answer when yours is the weaker case. For hope is not a thing you can trust; it has embroiled many a state, by arousing excessive ambition. For when the question of war is brought to the popular vote, no man thinks yet of his own death, but averts this threat and hopes it will fall upon another's head. But if death were in full view during the vote, Greece would never have been ruining herself with her lust for war. And yet we all know the better of the two arguments, what is good (*chrēstos*) and what is evil, and how much better is peace for men than war. For Peace, the Muses' dearest friend but the enemy of Vengeance, delights to be blessed with fine children and rejoices in prosperity. But we disregard all this and perversely embark on wars, and we men consign to slavery the man who comes off worse, and one city imposes that same fate on another.

Praise for the Middle Classes

Despite his enthusiasm for democracy, Theseus has previously revealed in a speech to Adrastus that he is no extremist.

Euripides, *Suppliants* 229–245

230 Theseus:- But by leading out all the Argives to war, despite the divine warnings uttered by the prophets, you dishonoured and wilfully flouted the gods, and so ruined the city. You were led astray by those young men who delight in gaining honour for themselves, and, without regard to justice, promote wars and corrupt their fellow-citizens. One aspires to the command of armies, another to win power and the licence (*hubris*) that goes with it, yet another aims for personal profit, ignoring the harm that the *plēthos* may thus suffer. For citizens may be divided into three groups: the wealthy, useless and always longing for more; and the have-nots, living on subsistence level, dangerous men, overfull of envy, who, when beguiled by the tongues of common (*ponēroi*) *prostatai*, shoot out bitter barbs against the rich; but of the three, it is the middle rank that saves cities, by preserving the order which the city ordains.

The Funeral Speech of Pericles in honour of the Athenians who died in battle in 431 is largely a panegyric on Athenian democracy at its zenith.

See Thucydides 2. 36-46 (P. 116-123).

### The Imports of Athens

This is a fragment from the comedian HERMIPPUS, written between 430 and 424. The style is mock-heroic.

#### Hermippus, Phormophoroi. Fragment

Tell me now, you Muses who have dwelt in the halls of Olympus, ever since  
 Dionysus has owned a ship on the wine-dark sea, what goods he has brought for  
 men here in his black ship. From Cyrene he has brought silphium and ox-hide.  
 5 and from the Hellespont fresh fish and all sorts of fish which are then dried:  
 while from Italy come grains of wheat and sides of beef, not to mention from  
 Sitalces scurvy for the Spartans, and from Perdiccas lies by the armada.  
 10 Syracuse provides pigs and cheese, and I wish Poseidon would destroy the  
 Corcyraeans in their hollow ships, because they disagree with us! That's all  
 we get from them, but from Egypt come hanging sails and papyrus, and from  
 Syria frankincense. Beautiful Crete provides cypress-wood for (the shrines of) the  
 15 Gods, while Libya provides quantities of ivory for sale. Rhodes obliges with  
 raisins and figs that bring on sweet dreams. Besides, from Euboea come pears  
 and big juicy apples, and from Phrygia slaves, and from Arcadia allies. Pagasae  
 20 gives slaves and runaways. The Paphlagonians send chestnuts and glittering  
 almonds, which will be the delight of a feast. Phoenicia grows dates for us and  
 makes a fine wheat flour, and Carthage provides carpets and embroidered cushions.

#### Athens the Brilliant

Euripides includes this beautiful song in praise of his native city, Athens, at a tense moment in the play, where Medea has outlined her plan to kill her own children, and then to accept an earlier offer of asylum in Athens. The play was produced in 431.

#### Euripides, Medea 824-845

Chorus of Corinthian Women:- From of old the children of Erechtheus (i.e. the  
 825 Athenians) have been fortunate, sons of the blessed gods. They trace their  
 origin to a sacred and unconquered land, where they feed on her far-famed  
 830 wisdom (*sophia*); and for ever pass gracefully through the most brilliant air,  
 where once, men say, the nine pure Muses of Pieria gave birth to golden Harmony.  
 835 And beside the fair-flowing stream of Cēphissus, the Cyprian goddess (Aphroditē)  
 is said to have drawn water and breathed upon the land sweet and gentle breezes;  
 840 on her hair all this time lay a sweet-scented garland of roses as she was escorted  
 by the Loves, who sit at the side of Wisdom (*sophia*) and help men to achieve  
 845 every kind of excellence (*aretē*).

The Poet and the Dēmos

ARISTOPHANES (c. 450-c. 385) provides in his comedies a valuable source of information about the years from 425 onwards. His own standpoint is conservative, and the excesses of contemporary democracy gave him ample scope for ridicule. But beneath the comedy, his attacks on the demagogues and his pleas for peace appear to be motivated by a sincere patriotism. In this passage from the *Archarnians*, produced in 425, he maintains that it is the politician's duty to give the best advice, not just what the people want to hear. (Cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 521 D, p. 32). Since this duty was shirked by the speakers in the Assembly, it often had to be performed by the poet - and before a much larger audience.

Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 628-658

Chorus of Acharnians:- Since our master (i.e. Aristophanes) was first in charge of comic productions, he has never yet come to the theatre to say how clever he is. But being accused by his enemies in the presence of the Athenians, rash in judgement that they are, of making a mockery of our city

and insulting the dēmos, he now has to answer in the face of Athenians, quick to change their minds as they are. Our poet says he deserves great reward at your hands for having stopped you being grossly deceived by foreign words and from enjoying being flattered, and from being soft-headed citizens. Previously when ambassadors came from various cities with their deceits, they used first of all to call you 'violet-crowned'; and whenever anyone said this, because of those crowns, you at once sat up on the tip of your little bottoms. And if anyone flattered you by calling Athens 'gleaming', he got everything he wanted through that word 'gleaming', although applying to you the praise due to anchovies. By doing this and by showing the dēmoi of our allied cities how democratically they are ruled, he has earned great reward for you. Now therefore, your allies will come from their cities bringing you their tribute (phoros) and eager to see that excellent poet who has taken the risk of saying in Athens what is right. In this way the fame of his daring has spread far, when even the Great King, in questioning the ambassadors of Sparta, asked them first which people rules the seas, and then, regarding this poet here, which people it is whom he warns of their many evils. For, said he, these men are far superior and will win a decisive victory in the war with this poet to advise them. For this reason the Spartans are offering you peace and asking for Aegina back. Not that they care about that island but they want to take this poet for themselves. But don't you ever let him go, since his ridicule will be just. And he says he will teach you much that is good, so as to make you prosper, without flattering you or holding out promises of pay or humbugging you: he won't play you false nor butter you up, but will teach you all that is best.

Dēmos and his Slave

The *Knights* was produced in 424 when Cleon (Paphlagon) was at the height of his power. The theme of the play is, briefly, how a sausage-seller out-Cleons Cleon in the favour of Dēmos, who personifies the Athenian people.

Aristophanes, *Knights* 40-72

Demosthenes:- I'll tell you now. Our master is Dēmos, a countryman by temperament, a glutton for beans, quick-tempered, hard to please, getting on in years, a little deaf, and his home is the *Pnyx*. At last month's market he bought a slave, a tanner called Paphlagon, an out-and-out rogue and liar. This leathery-Paphlagon discovered the old man's tastes and began to cringe before him and wheedle, fawn, cajole and cheat him with leather-shreds of flattery, and words like these:- "Dēmos, as soon as you've got through one verdict in the jury-court, you must have a wash, then eat up, have a good hot drink, swallow down the sweets, and hold on to your three obols. Would you like me to serve a late supper for you, too?" And then whatever food any of us has prepared, Paphlagon steals and makes a present of it to our master. The other day, when I had just struggled to knead a Spartan barley-cake at Pylos, like the cunning rogue that he is, he slipped past me and snatched it and served up my cake as if it was his own. He keeps us at a distance and won't let anyone else wait upon our master, but while Dēmos is dining, he stands brandishing a leather-strap and scares away the speakers (*rhētores*). He keeps singing oracles to him: he knows the old man thinks of nothing but the Sibyl. And when he sees him in his dotage, he performs his trick of telling blatant lies about all of us in the household. Then we get a beating, but Paphlagon runs about among the servants laying down his demands, creating mischief and then accepting their bribes. "You see," he says, "how Hylas got beaten because of me. Make it worth my while, or today will be your dying day." So we pay up; otherwise the old man would kick the stuffing out of us. So now, my friend, let's decide at once what course to take and who to turn to.

Dēmos claims not to be such a fool as he looks. The Chorus is formed of oligarchic Knights.

Aristophanes, *Knights* 1111-1130



A Meeting of the Assembly

Although this is a mock Assembly, the general procedure is taken from fact. Cf. Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 169-170, p. 20.

Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 17-173

- Dicaeopolis:- Since the day I first washed myself, I have never been so stung by soap in the eyes as today, when there's a Principal Assembly (*kuria ekklēsia*) this morning and the *Pnyx* here is deserted. They're chattering in the *Agora*, edging this way and that to avoid the red rope (with which the *Archers* herded loiterers into the Assembly). Even the *prytaneis* aren't here yet either; they'll be late and then they'll come jostling each other for the front row like nobody's business, flooding down in throngs. But as for peace, they don't care a damn for that. O my city, my city! And I'm always the first to come to Assembly and take my place; and then when I'm alone, I groan and yawn and stretch, break wind and don't know what to do. I doodle, tear my hair and reckon my accounts, gazing at the countryside, yearning for peace, hating town and longing for my own folk who never said 'Buy charcoal', 'Buy vinegar', 'Buy oil' and didn't even know the word 'buy', but produced everything themselves and that rasping word 'buy' was left unused. So now I have come quite prepared to shout and interrupt and slang the speakers (*rhētores*) if any of them says a single word other than on the subject of peace. But here are the *prytaneis* arriving - now that it's noon. Didn't I tell you? This is just what I said - every man jostling for the front seat.
- Crier:- Move up to the front, move inside the limits purified by ritual.
- Amphitheus (entering late):- Has anyone spoken yet?
- Crier (opening the session):- Who wishes to address the Assembly?
- Amphitheus:- I do.
- Crier:- Who are you?
- Amphitheus:- Amphitheus.
- Crier:- You're not a human being, are you?
- Amphitheus:- No, I'm an Immortal; Amphitheus was the son of Demeter and Triptolemus. Triptolemus had a son, Keleus; and he married Phaenaretē, my grandmother; and she had a son, Lycīnus. I am his son and an Immortal. It is to me alone that the gods have entrusted the task of negotiating peace with the Spartans. But although I am an Immortal, gentlemen, I haven't any money for my journey. For the *prytaneis* aren't giving any.
- Crier:- Archers!
- Amphitheus:- Triptolemus and Keleus! Will you let this happen to me? (Amphitheus is hustled away by the Scythian Archers)
- Dicaeopolis:- *Prytaneis*, you are acting in contempt of the Assembly by arresting this man; he only wanted to negotiate a truce for you and to get the shields hung up.
- Crier:- Sit down! Silence!
- Dicaeopolis:- By God, I won't! Not unless you *prytaneis* put the question of peace for me.
- Crier:- The ambassadors from the Great King! (Enter the returning Athenian ambassadors, escorting the Persian envoys who include Pseudartabas and two eunuchs; the Persians are dressed in gorgeous oriental apparel).
- Dicaeopolis:- The Great King indeed! I'm fed up with ambassadors, with all their peacocks and humbug.
- Crier:- Silence!
- Dicaeopolis:- Phew! Ecbatana! What clothes!
- Ambassador:- You sent us to the Great King with an allowance of two drachmas a day when Euthymenes was *archon* (437/6, i.e. eleven years earlier).
- Dicaeopolis:- O dear! So much for our drachmas!
- Ambassador:- And were we fatigued wayfaring under sun-shades over the Caystrian plains, reclining on soft pillows in covered carriages, utterly fagged out!
- Dicaeopolis:- Yes, and I was having it cosy amidst the filth on the battlements.
- Ambassador:- And when we were entertained we were forced to drink dessert wine neat out of crystal goblets and golden beakers.
- Dicaeopolis:- City of Cranaus! Do you see how absurd ambassadors are?
- Ambassador:- For the barbarous Persians only regard as men those who can eat and drink the most.
- Dicaeopolis:- While with us it is womanisers and perverts.
- Ambassador:- After three years we reached the King's court; but he had gone with his army to the bog and was spending eight months in the Golden Hills to ease his bowels.
- Dicaeopolis:- And when did he close his bowels?
- Ambassador:- At the full moon: and then he came back home. Then he entertained us, serving us with whole oxen from the pot.
- Dicaeopolis:- Who ever heard of pot-baked oxen? What humbug!
- Ambassador:- And he served us with a bird - as Heaven is my witness - three times the size of Cleonymus (who was noted for his gluttony); it was called rook.

- 90 Dicaeopolis:- Then that's how you rooked us of two drachmas a day.  
Ambassador:- And now we have brought back with us Pseudartabas, the  
King's Eye.  
Dicaeopolis:- I wish a raven would strike out your eye - the ambassador's,  
I mean.  
Crier:- The King's Eye!  
(Enter Pseudartabas, the King's Eye or confidential officer).
- 95 Dicaeopolis:- Heaven's above! Man, have you a warlike look to the cut of  
your jib? Or are you just rounding the headland and scanning the dockyard?  
I suppose that's an oar-pad below your eye.  
Ambassador:- Now come, tell the Athenians what message the King sent you  
with, Pseudartabas.
- 100 Pseudartabas:- Iartaman exarxan apissona satra.  
Ambassador:- Do you understand what he says?  
Dicaeopolis:- By God! I don't!  
Ambassador:- He says the King will send you gold.  
(To Pseudartabas) Speak louder and mention the gold plainly.  
Pseudartabas:- No get gold, big-arsed Ionee.
- 105 Dicaeopolis:- My God! That's plain, all right.  
Ambassador:- What's he say?  
Dicaeopolis:- What's he say! He says the Ionians are big arses, if they  
are expecting gold from barbarians.  
Ambassador:- No, he means measures of gold.
- 110 Dicaeopolis:- What measures? You're a great fraud. Clear off! I'll cross-  
examine him myself.  
(To Pseudartabas) Now come along! Tell me plainly in the face of this (Dicaeopolis  
brandishes his fist), or else I'll give you a bath of red Sardic dye. Is the Great  
King going to send us gold?  
(Pseudartabas shakes his head).  
Then we are being wantonly deceived by our ambassadors?  
(Pseudartabas nods his head).
- 115 At any rate these fellows nod in good Greek. It's not impossible that they come  
from round here. And one of these two eunuchs I know: it's Sibyrtius' son,  
120 Cleisthenes. You smooth, hot-tempered arse! With a beard like yours, have  
you come here got up as a eunuch, you ape? As for this one here, whoever is  
it? It isn't Straton, surely?  
Crier:- Silence! Sit down! The Council invites the King's Eye to the Town  
Hall (prytaneion).
- 125 Dicaeopolis:- Well, isn't this enough to make you choke? And then I'm left  
hanging round here, but the door is never closed against their entertaining people.  
I'm going to do something really shocking. Where's Amphytheus?  
Amphytheus:- Here I am.
- 130 Dicaeopolis:- Here are eight drachmas: take them and make a private peace  
with the Spartans for me and my children and my wife.  
(To the rest of the Assembly) As for you, get on with your stupid embassies!  
Crier:- Theōrus, returning from an embassy to Sitalces, to come forward!  
(enter Theōrus)  
Theōrus:- Here I am.
- 135 Dicaeopolis:- Here's another charlatan being announced.  
Theōrus:- We should not have stayed so long in Thrace .....  
Dicaeopolis:- My God you wouldn't, if you hadn't been drawing good pay.  
Theōrus:- .....if snow hadn't fallen all over Thrace and frozen the rivers.
- 140 Dicaeopolis:- That was the time when Theognis was such a frost in the festival  
here! (This playwright was in fact nicknamed 'Snow', because his poetry was so  
chilling).  
Theōrus:- I spent this time drinking with Sitalces. He really was extraordinarily  
pro-Athenian. He was such a true friend of yours that he even kept writing on the  
145 walls "Long live the Athenians". And his son, whom we had made an Athenian  
citizen, was passionately fond of sausages from the Apaturia ceremony, and he  
kept begging his father to send help to the fatherland. And his father took a  
solemn oath to send such a great army that the Athenians would say, "What a  
150 swarm of locusts is approaching".  
Dicaeopolis:- I'm damned if I believe a word of what you just said, except  
the bit about the locusts.  
Theōrus:- And now he has sent you the best tribe of fighting men in Thrace.
- Dicaeopolis:- Well, at least that's plain enough!
- 155 Crier:- Thracians who came with Theōrus, come forward! (Enter a throng  
of Odomantians wearing artificial sex-organs of monstrous size).  
Dicaeopolis:- What mischief have we here?  
Theōrus:- An army of Odomantians.  
Dicaeopolis:- Odomantians? What's this? Have any of the Odomantians  
been circumcised?
- 160 Theōrus:- If anyone will give them two drachmas' pay, they will overrun the  
whole of Boeotia.  
Dicaeopolis:- Two drachmas a day for these filthy fellows? The thranite  
sailors (i.e. those on the highest bench, pulling the longest oars), saviours  
of our city, would belly-ache at that. (An Odomantian makes off with Dicaeopolis'  
snack-lunch). Help! This is the end; plundered of my garlic-lunch by  
165 Odomantians! Put my garlic down, won't you?  
Theōrus (to the Odomantian):- You poor fool, don't go near them when they've  
been primed with garlic.  
Dicaeopolis:- You prytaneis, are you going to stand and watch me being maltreated  
on my home ground - and by barbarous foreigners at that? I forbid you to put the  
170 question of pay for the Thracians on the agenda. And I tell you that there's a sign  
from heaven here: I've felt a drop of rain.  
Crier:- The Thracians are to leave and come back on the day after tomorrow.  
The prytaneis now dissolve the Assembly.

A Mock Council

The proceedings parodied are those of the Council when an impeachment (eisangelia) on a treason charge came before it.

Aristophanes, Knights 624-682

625 Sausage-seller:- It's a story worth hearing. Listen! I rushed from here close

on Paphlagon's heels. He was already shaking up a storm inside the Council-chamber, breaking off thunderous words and hurling them, however far-fetched, at the Knights. He piled up his tall stories and called you conspirators (synōmotai) - and made it all sound true. The whole Council was spiced with this growth of lies as it listened to him, and gave a look like mustard, and knitted its brows. When I saw the Council was taking in all he said, and was being tricked by his impostures, I said to myself, "Come down, you guardian spirits of rascals and quacks, gods of all fools, imps and impudent demons, and you, Agora, where I was brought up as a boy, give me audacity, a glib tongue and a shameless voice". As I prayed, I heard thunder on my right - coming from beneath some dirty old man! I prostrated myself at this good omen; and then with a firm butt of the buttocks, I burst open the gate (of the bar of the Council-chamber) and stretching my jaws I shouted:- "O Council, I want to bring you first some good news: Ever since war broke out, I have never seen sprats so cheap". At once their ruffled faces were calmed, and I was voted a garland for my good tidings. And making it a state-secret - for them - I added:- "To get lots of sprats for one obol, you should quickly commiander all the pots from the craftsmen (thus paralysing the market in sprats). They applauded me, gaping in admiration. But Paphlagon tumbled to my game - after all, he knows what sort of talk pleases the Council best - and he made this proposal:- "My friends, I am resolved to offer one hundred oxen in recognition of this most welcome news". The Council veered back towards him. So when I saw I was being defeated by this bullshit, I trumped his ace and cried, "Two hundred oxen", and I moved that a vow be made to Artemis of a thousand goats, if anchovies weren't a hundred for an obol by tomorrow. The Council craned their heads forward - towards me again. When he heard this, Paphlagon in his amazement began to waffle and drivel on - until the prytaneis and the Archers dragged him out. The Councillors stood up and started to talk noisily about the sprats. But Paphlagon pleaded with them to wait just a moment. "Hear what the Spartan envoy has to say. He comes with proposals for a truce", he said. But with one voice the Councillors shouted back:- "What? - a truce at a time like this? Just because the Spartans have heard that sprats are cheap in Athens! You're a dead loss; we don't need peace. Let the war drag on". They shouted for the prytaneis to close the session, and then they leapt over the bar in every direction. But I took a short cut to the Agora, and bought up all the coriander and leeks that were there, and when the Councillors could find no seasoning for their sprats, I gave these to them for nothing. How popular I was! They all made such a fuss of me, and praised me sky-high! That's how I've come here with the whole Council in my pocket, all for an obol's worth of coriander.

The Demagogues

According to the poet, their characteristics are (a) ignorance; (b) a foul tongue and low birth; (c) ubiquity.

Aristophanes, Knights 190-194; 211-219; 303-313

- 190 Demosthenes:- That is your only handicap, your ability to read, however badly. For leadership of the dēmos (dēmagōgia) is no longer the job of a man who is cultured (mousikos) and respectable (chrēstos) in his behaviour, but of the uneducated (amathēs) and brutal. So don't waste what the gods in their oracles offer you.
- 211 Sausage-seller:- The words of the oracle flatter me; but I wonder how I can guide the dēmos.  
Demosthenes:- There's nothing to it; just carry on in your usual way.
- 215 Mangle and make mincemeat of everything, and win over the dēmos by always sweetening them with your cook-shop rhetoric. You've got all the other qualifications for a leader of the dēmos (dēmagōgos), a filthy voice, common birth and barrow-boy (agoraios) character, - yes, everything you need for statesmanship (politeia).
- 303 Chorus of Knights:- You vile and brutal brawler, your impudence has spread  
 305 throughout the land, throughout the Assembly, the government and lawsuits and  
 310 jury-courts, you mud-stirrer; you have shaken up our whole city, and deafened Athens with your shouts, watching like a tunny-fisher from the rocks above for tribute (phoros).

The Demagogue and the Jury-courtsAristophanes, Knights 255-283

- 255 Paphlagon:- Old men of the Heliaea, members of the three-obol brotherhood, I take care of you, right or wrong, with my bawling; now come to my aid, for I am being attacked by conspirators (synōmotai).  
Chorus of Knights:- Deservedly too, because you gobble up public money before you are allotted your share, and with your eyes on those facing public scrutiny (hypeuthūnoi) you press and squeeze the 'grasses' (literally, figs), however green or soft they may be, and if you see any man who is not active in public life (apragmōn) and gapes at you, then you recall him from Chersonese, slang him, bring him down by hook or by crook, twist his shoulder and end up by getting him with a pin-fall. And you see which of the citizens is a simpleton, and  
 260 rich and respectable (not ponēros) and shuddering at political involvement.  
Paphlagon:- Are you ganging up on me? Men, it is on your account that I am being attacked, because I was just going to propose that it is only fair to set up in the city a memorial to you for your bravery.  
Chorus:- What a charlatan, and a slippery character, too. Do you see how he cringes before us as if we were old men. Look at the tricks he's up to. But  
 270 if he gets the better of us on this side, we'll hit him on the other; and if he dodges in this direction, he'll only come charging into my boot there!  
Paphlagon:- O city, O dēmos, what savage beasts are punching me in the belly!  
Chorus:- And you've started bawling the way you usually do when you're causing an uproar in the city.
- 275 Paphlagon:- But I'll put you to flight with this shouting first.  
Chorus:- Well, if you do win the day with your shouting, you shall have the crown of victory. But if the sausage-seller outdoes you in impudence, the prize is ours.  
Paphlagon:- I'm going to lay information against this man: I say that he fits out the Spartan triremes with - soup.
- 280 Sausage-seller:- Yes, and I denounce Paphlagon too, because when he trots down with an empty stomach to the Town Hall (prytaneion), he's full up when he runs home again!  
Demosthenes:- Yes, loaded with forbidden loot - bread and meat and fish-fillet; Pericles was never rewarded so.

The Demagogues as WarmongersAristophanes, Peace 632-648, (produced in 421)

- Hermes:- Then when the working population flocked in from the country, they did not realise that they were being sold in the same way (as the allied cities had been), but since they were without grapes and were fond of figs, they looked  
 635 to the public speakers. But these speakers were well aware that the poor farmers were weak and short of barley, and drove away this goddess (Peace) with pitch-forked screams, though through her fondness for this land she had often manifested herself; they also shook up any of the allies who were fat and rich, by bringing  
 640 forward accusations that they were supporting Brasidas. Then, like a pack of puppies, you tore the victim to shreds; for the city turned pale and sat in fear, and gladly swallowed all the slanders anyone cast before it. And when the allies  
 645 saw the blows they were suffering, they began to stuff gold into the mouths of the men who were causing this, thereby making them rich, while Greece was milked dry, and you didn't even notice. The man who did all this was a tanner (i.e. Cleon).



The Athenian love of litigation is attacked in many of the plays of Aristophanes, particularly in the *Wasps* (produced in 422) from which the following passages are taken. It is often evident that the poet is not unsympathetic to the jurymen (dicasts) themselves, but is a bitter opponent of the unscrupulous attempts of the demagogues to exploit them.

#### Aristophanes, Wasps 85-135

- 85 Xanthias:- Absolute nonsense. You'll never guess; but if you really want to know, listen quietly and I will tell you what disease our master suffers from. He loves the Heliæa, as no man ever has. He loves it, this dicast business; and
- 90 he groans if he can't sit on the front bench. He doesn't get even a wink of sleep at night, but if in fact he does doze off just for a moment, his mind still flies through the night to the water-clock (clepsydra). And because he's so used to
- 95 holding the voting-pebble, he gets up holding three of his fingers together, as if he's offering frankincense at the new moon. And by God, if he saw any scribbling on the doorway, "Pretty Dēmos, son of Pyrilampes", he would go and write by
- 100 the side, "Pretty Ballot-box". And he said that the cock which used to crow from evening-time, woke him up too late because it had been won over and bribed by officials under investigation (hypeuthūnoi). Straight after supper he shouts for his shoes, and then off he goes to the court in the early hours and sleeps
- 105 there, clinging to the column like a limpet. And through bad temper he awards the long line (i.e. the severer penalty) to all the defendants, and then comes home like a bee or bumble-bee, with wax plastered under his finger-nails. And because
- 110 he's afraid that some day he may run short of pebbles for voting with, he keeps a whole beach in his house. That's how mad he is. And if anyone ever gives him any advice, he plays the dicast all the more. So we're keeping guard on him; we've tied him up and bolted him in, so that he won't escape. For his
- 115 son is angry at this illness of his. At first he tried to console him with words and to persuade him not to put on his ragged cloak and go out; but he would not obey. Then his son washed him and cleaned him up; but he still wouldn't obey. After this, he tried to purify him with Corybantic rites, but his father dashed out,
- 120 kettle-drum and all, and rushed into the New Court and began to play the dicast. Then when his son didn't achieve anything by these rites, he sailed over to Aegina, and then seized his father and made him sleep the night in the temple of Asclepius -
- 125 but he still turned up at the bar of the court at dawn! Since then we've never let him out, but he's taken to slipping away down the drainpipes or through the skylights. We stuffed rags into all the openings there were and blocked them up,
- 130 but like a jackdaw he hammered pegs into the wall for himself, and then out he hopped. So we've spread nets over the whole yard and we're keeping guard all round. The old man's name is Philocleon (Cleon-lover), and his son here is
- 135 Bdelycleon (Cleon-hater), quite an arrogant and haughty character.

#### The Jury-courts (dicastēria)

Four places of business are mentioned and show how widespread were the dicasts activities. The Chorus of *Wasps* represents Philocleon's fellow-dicasts.

#### Aristophanes, Wasps 1102-1121

- Chorus of Wasps:- If you consider us in our many spheres of action, you will find us in all ways very wasp-like in our habits and way of life. In the first
- 1105 place, no creature when provoked is more sharp-tempered or cross than we; then we manage all our business in a waspish fashion. We gather in swarms and, like wasps' nests, some of us serve as dicasts where the archon summons us, others with the Eleven, some in the Odeion, and others by the city walls,
- 1110 huddled closely together, bowing to the ground, scarcely moving, like grubs in the cell of the combs. But in the rest of our way of life we are full of resource; for we sting everyone and that's how we get our livelihood. Yet
- 1115 we have stingless drones sitting among us, who stay at home and eat up the fruit of our labours, doing no hard work themselves. But what we find most painful is if someone who has never seen military service, nor held an oar or a spear or got a blister for this land's sake, swallows up our pay. In short,
- 1120 I think that in future any citizen who has no sting should not get the three obols.

#### Attractions of the Dicast's Life

Philocleon sets out to prove how great is the power held by the dicast and in so doing enumerates the attractions of a dicast's life.

#### Aristophanes, Wasps 548-612

- Philocleon:- Well then, beginning as soon as we leave the starting posts, I will
- 550 prove to you that no king has power superior to ours. For what is there in existence more fortunate and more blessed than a jurymen? Is there any creature more pampered or cleverer, and that too even when he is old? First, when I crawl out of bed in the morning there are watching for me at the bar of the court great six-foot fellows; and then as soon as I approach, one slips his delicate hand into mine, his hand that has stolen from the public funds;
- 555 they bow and beseech me, pouring forth piteous words: "Have mercy on me, father, I beg you, if you yourself ever pilfered when holding office or when buying for your mess-mates on a campaign." And he would never have known of my existence but for his previous acquittal.



- Bdelycleon:- Let me make a note here about these people pleading with you.  
 560 Philocleon:- Then once I'm inside the court after listening to their pleas, with my anger all wiped away, I do none of these things that I've promised. But I listen to them uttering all sorts of words designed to obtain acquittal. Now let me see! What flattery can one not hear there, addressed to a jurymen?  
 565 Some bewail their poverty and exaggerate their misfortunes until, in the end, they make them out to be equal to - mine. Others tell us tales, some try a comic fable of Aesop's, others crack jokes, to make me laugh and lose my anger, and if we are not persuaded by these devices, the defendant leads in his small children, his girls and his boys, by the hand, and I listen. They huddle together and bleat like lambs; and then, trembling, the father on their behalf beseeches me, as if I were a god, to acquit him and pass his accounts (euthūna): "If you love the bleating of a lamb, hear with pity my boy; or if you delight in piglets, listen to my daughter." And we then slightly relax the tension of our anger.  
 575 Oh, is this not a great office, that quite puts riches in the shade?  
 Bdelycleon:- Now I write this second note about you: 'This office puts riches in the shade'. And now relate to me the advantages that you have, to support your claim that you rule Hellas.  
 Philocleon:- It is one of our duties to look at the private parts of young men when they are registered (dokimasia) in the rolls of adult citizens. And if Oeagrus comes to court to plead, he is not acquitted until he recites for us  
 580 his best speech from the 'Niobe'. And if a flute-player wins his case, as a

- payment for acquittal he pipes a march - wearing the mouthband and producing his sweetest tone - for the jurymen as they leave the court. And if a father leaves an heiress daughter and on his deathbed entrusts her to someone, we say  
 585 that the will and the cap that sits so solemnly on the seals can go to pot, and we give her to the man who persuades us by his pleas. And this we do without having to render an account (anhypēuthūnoi). But no other office has such unfettered power.  
 Bdelycleon:- Truly grand, but only in this one respect do I call you fortunate. Yet you are wrong to open the seal on a will about an heiress.  
 590 Philocleon:- And if ever the Council or the Assembly of the dēmos cannot reach a decision in judging some weighty matter, they pass a vote that the wrongdoers are to be handed over to the jurymen; then Euathlus and this great toady Cleonymus who threw away his shield declare that they will never betray us, but will always fight for the plēthos. And nobody ever gets a measure passed before  
 595 the dēmos, unless he proposes that the jury-courts should be discharged as soon as they have given one verdict; and Cleon himself, that great tub-thumper, is the only one who does not carp at us, but sets his hand to the job of protecting us and waves away the flies for us. You never did a single one of these things for your very own father. But although Theōrus is a man as important as Euphēmios, even he blacks our shoes with a sponge from the jar. Consider of what great  
 600 advantages you deprive me and rob me; and yet you said you would prove that this power of mine is mere slavery and menial work.  
 Bdelycleon:- Have your fill of chattering. You will stop some time and then I will show that, in this matter of your vaunted office, you are just an old left-over that nobody bothers to clear away.  
 605 Philocleon:- But the sweetest pleasure of all, which I forgot to mention, is when I go home with my pay; and then when I come in, everyone welcomes me because of the money. First my daughter washes me and anoints my feet and hangs over me and kisses me, and while she calls me "Dear Daddy", she winkles out my  
 610 three obols. And my wife pets me and brings me a barley scone, and then as she sits beside me, urges me, "Eat this", and "Get your teeth into that".

This pay for attendance at the jury-courts was an important source of income to needier Athenians.

#### Aristophanes, Wasps 303-311

- Boy:- Well then, father, if the archon is not holding a sitting of the jury-court  
 305 now, how shall we buy any lunch? Have you some hopeful plan for us, or some means..... (he continues, singing a well-known line) "some sacred means of crossing Helle".  
 310 Chorus:- Woe is me! Alas, woe, woe! No, I don't know where our next meal is coming from.

#### The Dicast Disillusioned

Bdelycleon replies that, whereas the dicasts think themselves masters of everyone, they are in fact slaves of the demagogues.

#### Aristophanes, Wasps 655-724

- Bdelycleon:- Now listen, Daddy darling, and relax your stern expression a little. First reckon roughly, not in exact figures, but in round numbers, the tribute (phoros) that we receive altogether from the allied cities; and in addition to this, reckon the dues (telē) and all the 1% duties, the court fees (prytaneia), the dues on mines, markets (agorai) and harbours, the rents, and the public  
 660 sales. The sum of these brings us somewhere near 2,000 talents. From all this now put aside the annual pay for the jurymen, 6,000 of them, and the total has never yet been larger: 150 talents a year, I suppose, is what it costs us.  
 Philocleon:- Then our pay is not even one tenth of the revenue.  
 665 Bdelycleon:- That is perfectly true.  
 Philocleon:- And what becomes of all the rest of the revenue?

- Bdelycleon:- It goes to those who 'will never betray the rowdy Athenian mob (kolosyrτος); but will always fight for the plēthos,' because you, father, are taken in by their rhetoric and choose them to rule over you. And they take
- 670 bribes from the allied cities, 50 talents or so, threatening them and frightening them with words like these: "You will pay your tribute (phoros) or I will come thundering and will overthrow your city". And yet you are content with nibbling away at the remnants and shreds of your own power. But when the allies see
- 675 the rest, the dregs, wasting away at the voting-urn and eating nothing, they think you are not worth more than a pauper's vote, and so it is to these (demagogues) that they bring their presents: jars of pickles, wine, rugs, cheese, honey, sesame seeds, pillows, bowls, woollen cloaks, wreaths, necklaces, beakers, health and wealth. But to you, you who have toiled so much on land and sea, from all that you control nobody gives you so much as a head of garlic to flavour your boiled sprats.
- 680 Philocleon:- That's true, for, by Zeus, I sent out just now for three heads of garlic from the greengrocer myself. But you're wearing me out by being so slow in proving this slavery of mine.
- Bdelycleon:- Well, is it not pure slavery that all these men are in office, and their hangers-on too, earning pay, and yet if anyone gives you your three obols, you are full of gratitude? - obols which you won yourself with a lot of hard toil
- 685 whilst rowing in the navy, serving with the infantry, and taking part in sieges. And in addition to this, - and this makes me choke with rage - you come constantly, under orders, whenever some young whipper-snapper, some son of Chaereas, comes forward, straddling his legs, swaying his body, with mincing airs, and orders you to be punctual and be in your seats on time, because if any of you
- 690 comes after the signal, he will not be paid his three obols. But he carries off his drachma, his fee as counsel for the prosecution, even if he does arrive late. Then if any of the defendants gives him a bribe, which he shares with a colleague in office, they hurry to arrange the matter between them, like men
- 695 sawing, one pulling, the other giving way; while you gape at the Treasurer (kōlakretēs) and never notice what is happening.
- Philocleon:- Is that what they do to me? Oh, what are you saying? You disturb me to the depths of my being, you undermine my ideas, and I do not know what you are doing to me.
- Bdelycleon:- Consider then, when it is possible for you and all your fellows to be rich, how you have somehow been hedged in by all these 'people's men'.
- 700 You who rule most of the cities from Pontus to Sardis enjoy nothing, not so much as a scrap, except what you earn. And even this they dole out to you in drops, like oil from wool, just enough to keep you alive. For they want you to be poor, and I will tell you why: so that you may recognise your keeper. And then
- 705 whenever he hisses at you, urging you against one of his enemies, you will spring fiercely to the attack. For if they wanted to provide a livelihood for the dēmos, it would be easy. There are at least 1000 cities that now pay tribute (phoros) to us; if anyone commanded each of these to feed twenty men, 20,000 of the ordinary citizens (of Athens) would be living in luxury, with
- 710 garlands of all sorts, and the freshest milk and creamy puddings, enjoying things worthy of this land and of the trophy won at Marathon. But as it is, you're like olive-pickers, following after the man who hands out your pay.
- Philocleon:- Alas, what is this numbness that steals over my hand? I cannot even hold my sword; I'm feeling weak now.
- 715 Bdelycleon:- But whenever these officials are afraid, they are ready to give you Euboea and promise to supply corn, 50 bushels for every man; but they never yet actually gave you any, except 5 bushels just recently - and this you received
- 718 doled out by the quart, only after you had had a lot of trouble proving your citizenship. That's the reason why I always kept you shut inside the house, because I wanted to look after you, and didn't want these men with their empty
- 720 vauntings to laugh at you. And now my entire wish is to provide what you want, except only a draught of Treasurer's (kōlakretēs) milk.

Athens had no standing public prosecutors and Solon's legislation permitted anyone to prosecute wrongdoers. The system worked well at first, but by c. 450 a class of professional prosecutors had grown up. These were called sycophants and often prosecuted for political motives and private profit. The most obnoxious practice that they employed was blackmail. But despite the abuses to which it became subject, Solon's law was never repealed, so fundamental was it held to be to the democracy.

Aristotle, Constitution of Athens 9.1

The three most democratic features of Solon's constitution seem to be these:- First and foremost, that no one shall lend money on the security of a person's body; secondly, that anyone "who wishes" to do so may assist the victims of wrongdoing to obtain redress; thirdly, and this is generally said to have resulted in political power for the plēthos, the right of appeal to the jurycourt.

Although the *Plutus* is a late play of Aristophanes (388), the behaviour of its informer is typical of his fifth-century predecessor. For scenes involving informers in earlier plays, see *Birds* 1410-1468 and *Acharnians* 908-958.

Aristophanes, *Plutus* 899-934

- 900 Informer:- How I suffer for being respectable (chrēstos) ! What trouble my patriotism brings!
- Just Man:- You - patriotic and respectable?
- Informer:- There's no one to touch me.
- Just Man:- Now answer this question.
- Informer:- Well then?
- Just Man:- Are you a farmer?
- Informer:- Do I seem so sour?
- Just Man:- A merchant then?
- Informer:- Yes - at any rate I diddle people when it suits me!
- 905 Just Man:- Well, have you learnt a trade?
- Informer:- Good Lord, no.
- Just Man:- How have you managed to live without doing anything?
- Informer:- I am superintendant of all public and private business.
- Just Man:- You? What qualifications have you?
- Informer:- I am the man "who wishes".
- Just Man:- How then could you be respectable (chrēstos), you crook, when
- 910 nothing is your concern and everybody hates you?
- Informer:- Isn't it my concern to benefit my own city, you twit, to the utmost of my power?
- Just Man:- Does meddling (polypragmosynē) benefit the city?
- Informer:- No, but coming to the rescue of the established laws does, and
- 915 not allowing anyone to violate them.
- Just Man:- Doesn't the city appoint jurymen to office for this very purpose?
- Informer:- But who prosecutes?
- Just Man:- Any man "who wishes".
- Informer:- That's who I am, and so the city's business is my concern.
- 920 Just Man:- Good Lord, what a worthless (ponēros) champion (prostatēs) the city has. Why don't you be the man "who wishes" to keep quiet and lead a life of ease?
- Informer:- But that's a sheep's life with nothing to do.
- Just Man:- So you wouldn't learn a new trade?
- 925 Informer:- Not even if you gave me *Plutus* (Wealth) himself and *Battus*' silphium.
- Just Man:- Quick, take your cloak off.
- Cario (a slave):- You there, he's speaking to you.
- Just Man:- Now untie your shoes.
- Cario:- This all applies to you.
- Informer:- Let one of you "who wishes" come near me!
- Cario:- Then I'm your man.
- 930 Informer:- Oh dear, help! I'm being stripped in broad daylight.
- Cario:- Yes, because you choose to live by meddling in other people's business.
- Informer:- Do you realise what you're doing? I appeal for a witness.
- Just Man:- Your witness has just left in a hurry.
- Informer:- Help! I've been deserted - I'm trapped!

# THE NEW EDUCATION: THE SOPHISTS AND SOCRATES

Before the rise of the Sophistic movement in the fifth century Athens had only the most elementary education to offer her citizens. The Sophists filled the need, created by the rise of the democracy, for an intellectual training to fit a man for service in the Assembly and the juries. It was at Athens, the intellectual centre of Greece, that the Sophists conducted most of their teaching. Even in the fifth century they charged high fees, and it was therefore the richer class who had the time and money to avail themselves of this type of education. It is easy to understand how to democratic eyes the Sophists' teaching came to appear partisan, for from the ranks of their pupils came the leaders of the oligarchs. (See, e.g., Thucydides 8. 68 (P. 526)). The Clouds was produced in 423: in these passages (written some years later for a revised version), Aristophanes contrasts the hardy simplicity and good manners of olden times with the new intellectualism.

## The Old Teaching

Aristophanes, Clouds 961-1008

Just Argument:- So now I'll explain the old educational system of the days when I flourished through advocating justice when moderation (*sōphrosynē*) was the regular thing. In the first place, boys were seen and not heard; secondly, our fellow-villagers used to walk in the streets in an orderly fashion on their way to the harp-teacher's house, all keeping together, and lightly-clad even if there was a blanket of snow on the ground. Then again they used to learn off by heart a chant, either "Terrible Pallas, sacker of cities", or "Some far-ranging shout". They didn't sit cross-legged, but raised high the traditional tune handed down from their fathers. And if one of them should sink so low as to make a sudden trill in it, like the intricate flourishes introduced by Phrynis' followers nowadays, he would be punished and beaten severely, for darkening the reputation of the Muses. The boys had to keep their thighs covered up when sitting in the wrestling-teachers school, so as to show nothing indecent to passers-by; then again, when they got up, they had to smoothe out the sand and take care not to leave an impression for the lovers of youth. In those days no boy anointed himself below the navel, and so the first downy hair on his genitals bloomed as on a fruit. Nor would he go to a lover, putting on a soft voice or flashing his eyes to flaunt his attractions; nor could he take even a head of radish at dinner, or snatch any dill or celery from the older men, or live on dainty dishes, or giggle, or cross his legs at the table.

Unjust Argument:- What quaint ideas - a hangover from the *Dipolieia*, choc-a-bloc with cicadas and Kekeides and the Bouphonia!

Just Argument:- But all the same, my system of education was based on this ancient discipline, and it provided the veterans of Marathon with their upbringing. But you teach modern man from birth to wrap himself up in a cloak; so it chokes

me when one of the men who are there to dance at the *Panathenaea* holds up his shield, reveals all, and quite forgets Athena, the Triton-born. So, young man, choose me with confidence as the "Stronger Argument", and you will learn a few lessons - how to hate the *Agora*, stay away from the baths, be ashamed at what is shameful, and be angry if anyone laughs at you; and to stand up when your elders approach, and not be rude to your parents, and do nothing else that is shameful, because you want to form an image of modesty in your heart; and not to rush into any dancing-girl's house - otherwise, as you're gawking at her, the tart may hit you with her melons and your reputation will be shattered; and not to argue with your father, or hold his age against him by calling him Iapetus, when it was he who raised you from the day you were hatched.

Unjust Argument:- Good Heavens, if you take any notice of this, young man, you will be called a Mummy's boy, just like the sons of Hippocrates.

Just Argument:- But then at least you'll pass the time in the *Gymnasia*, looking sleek and fresh, instead of making crude jokes in the *Agora*, like the present generation, or being dragged into the courts on some hair-splitting-pettifogging-barefaced-good-for-nothing issue; no, you'll go to the Academy with a sensible (*sōphrōn*) young friend, and, wearing a garland of white reed, will run races under the sacred olive trees. You'll be fragrant with honeysuckle and the quiet life (*apragmosynē*) and the lime-tree, and rejoice in the season of spring, when the plane-tree whispers to the elm.



The New TeachingAristophanes, Clouds 1036-1062

1040 Unjust Argument:- I've been bursting for ages with the desire to overthrow all these ideas. The philosophers have called me the "Weaker Argument", simply because I was the very first to devise a way of speaking out as an opponent of law and justice. It is worth more than any number of staters to choose the weaker arguments and still win. But watch me now expose the educational system (paideusis) he believes in - the system which first of all forbids you to have a hot bath. And yet by what reasoning do you find fault with hot baths?

1045 Just Argument:- Because it is altogether evil, and makes a man a coward.

Unjust Argument:- Wait! It hasn't taken me long to get a hold on your waist; you won't escape from this. Tell me, which of the sons of Zeus do you consider was the bravest soul and suffered the most labours?

1050 Just Argument:- I think none surpasses Heracles.

Unjust Argument:- Well, have you ever seen cold water at Heracles' baths (at Thermopylae)? Yet who was braver than him?

Just Argument:- It's because of arguments like this that the baths are full of young men nattering all day long, while the wrestling-schools are empty.

1055 Unjust Argument:- Next, you criticise those who spend time in the Agora: but I approve. If it had been a common (ponēros) activity, Homer would never have made Nestor an orator in the Agora, nor all the other wise men. And that brings me to the subject of the tongue, which he says young men shouldn't use, while I say they should. Again, he says they should act with moderation (sōphrosynē): silence and moderation, the two worst qualities! I mean, tell me who you have ever seen benefit from moderation, and prove me wrong by what you say.

1060

The Sophists

Protagoras of Abdera was born about 485 and spent his long life as one of the most successful of the early sophists, teaching mainly at Athens. His high repute won him the appointment as legislator of the new colony at Thurii in 444. He was the first to accept fees for his teaching. The sophists did not, of course, confine their teaching to political excellence (aretē), which is the subject here. The jibe at Hippias below shows well the breadth of their interests.

D trying to do against the wishes of the city you could then have done with its approval. But what did you do? During the trial you put on a noble front of indifference to death and preferred, so you said, death to exile: now you show no shame before these words nor any regard for us laws whom you seek to destroy, but are behaving like the meanest slave in trying to run away in breach of the contracts and agreements under which you agreed with us the terms of your citizenship. First then answer us this very question - Is it true, what we say, that you have by your own actions made a contract to be a citizen under us, or is it not? What are we to reply, Crito? Can we do anything but agree?

Crito:- We are bound to agree, Socrates.

E Socrates:- 'You agree, then', they would continue, 'that you are breaking contracts and agreements made in person with ourselves, that you did not make the agreement under duress, that you were not tricked into it, and that you were not given too little time to make up your mind, but had seventy years in which you were free to depart if we did not please you and you thought our contract unjust. As it is, you did not prefer Sparta or Crete, whose laws (eunomia) you are always praising, or any other city, Greek or barbarian, but left Athens less often than the lame and the blind and the maimed, so surpassingly did you outdo any other Athenian in your liking for the city and, it follows, for us laws: for who can like a city without liking its laws? After all this, are you now going to fail to stand by the terms of your contract? We at any rate advise you to stick to it, Socrates, and avoid making a mockery of yourself by leaving the city.'

33 A



The mutilation of the Hermae, and accusations against Alcibiades; the State Galley, Salamina, is sent to fetch Alcibiades home to stand trial; then Thucydides inserts his account of the murder of Hipparchus and the fate of Harmodius and Aristogeiton (in 514). Cf. the Anonymous Drinking-song, p. 1.

See Thucydides 6.27-29 (P. 383-384); 53 (P.399); 60-61 (P.403-405).

### Witch-Hunting

The witch-hunting atmosphere had existed before 415, as can be seen from this extract from the Wasps (422).

Aristophanes, Wasps 482-499

**Chorus of Wasps:-** At present you don't know what trouble is, but you will know when the counsel for the prosecution pours this same flood of words over you and summons his confederates (*synōmotai*).

485 **Bdelycleon:-** I beg you, by the gods, won't you leave me alone? Or are you determined to tan me and be tanned all day long?

**Chorus:-** No, I will never leave you, so long as there is anything of me left - you who are set on tyranny over us.

490 **Bdelycleon:-** How you do turn everything into 'tyranny' and 'conspirators' (*synōmotai*), if anyone brings a charge before you, whether it's an important matter or not! I have never heard the word 'tyranny' in the last fifty years, but now it is much cheaper than dried cod; just look how its name is bandied about in the Agora. If a man is buying anchovies and does not want sardines, 495 at once the man who is selling sardines nearby says: "This fellow seems like a man buying luxuries, with a view to tyranny". And if a man asks for leeks as a relish for his sprats, the greengrocer says, with an insolent look: "Tell me, you ask for leeks. Is this with an eye to tyranny? Or do you think Athens should provide your relishes?"

### A Plea for Moderation in 405

Aristophanes, Frogs 686-705

It is right for our sacred chorus to give good (*chrēstos*) advice and instruction to the city. First we think that all the citizens should be put on a par and that all fear should be removed; and if any have been thrown by Phrynichus' tricks, 690 then I declare that they must be granted a chance to shed the blame for past slips and make up for their former mistakes. Secondly, I say that no citizen should be disfranchised (*atimos*). For it is a disgrace that while those who fought in one sea-battle should, like the Plataeans, immediately become masters 695 instead of slaves, - not that I would say this was wrong; indeed I approve of it. This was your only sensible action. But besides this, it is reasonable that at their constant request you should forgive for this one misfortune those who are your kin and have fought on your side many times, as did their fathers. Your wisdom (*sophia*) is instinctive, so let us abate our anger and willingly take as 700 our kin and as fully enfranchised (*epitimoí*) citizens every man who fights in the navy with us. But if we swell with arrogant pride like this, especially when 705 our city is in the clutches of the waves, in later times our policies will appear foolish.

In 406/405 Athens had issued bronze coins in place of the normal gold or silver for the first time. Aristophanes likens the admission of an alien riff-raff to the magistracies, when Athenians of pure blood were excluded, to the introduction of this debased coinage.

Aristophanes, Frogs 718-737

720 We have often thought that the city's treatment of the true gentlemen (*kaloi k'agathoi*) among her citizens was the same as her use of the old currency and the recent gold coins. We make no use of those coins, which are not adulterated, but which are in my opinion the finest of all anywhere in Greece or abroad, the only ones to have been properly struck and soundly tested. 725 Instead we use this common (*ponēros*) bronze coinage of a very bad stamp, struck but a day or two ago. Likewise we maltreat those citizens we recognise to be noble (*eugeneis*), sensible (*sōphrones*), just, and true gentlemen (*kaloi k'agathoi*), who were educated in wrestling, dancing and music (*mousikē*). The men we employ for everything are like the debased 730 bronze coinage - foreigners, red-heads, commoners (*ponēroi*) who are the sons of commoners, the most recent arrivals in Athens, all men whom the city would not readily have employed before, even as scapegoats. But now, you fools, change your ways; respect once more respectable (*chrēstoi*) citizens. If 735 you meet with success, the credit will be yours; if not, the wise will think, if you do suffer any reverse, that at least you were hanged from a decent tree.

## GLOSSARY

N. B. For significant passages relating to the more important of these terms, see the Index.

1. The following are neutral terms applied to features of Athenian political organisation. By 'neutral terms' is meant terms which do not normally carry with them any tone of praise or blame.

**DĒMOS and PLĒTHOS** - These words have a similar range of political meaning. They may mean, according to context

- 1) The common people (as opposed to the aristocracy, the rich, etc.)
- 2) The whole citizen body
- 3) Democracy
- 4) The popular assembly.

Plēthos, (like HOI POLLOI - the multitude) has the basic sense of 'the great number' or 'the mass'.

Dēmos has the additional meaning of 'deme', or 'parish'. The mayor, or president of a deme, was called a DĒMARCH.

**Assembly** (ekklēsia) - The popular Assembly, usually held on the PNYX, a slope near the Acropolis and above the AGORA, the market place. (For the functions of the Assembly and the meaning of KURIA EKKLĒSIA, see p. 9).

**Council** (boulē) - The Council of 500, which prepared business for the Assembly and acted on its behalf. (For its composition and functions, see p. 9).

**PRYTANEIS** - The presiding sub-committee of the Council, 50 in number, provided by each tribe in turn. (See p. 9).

**EPISTATĒS** - The chairman of the prytaneis.

**PRYTANY** - The period (35 or 36 days) during which each board of prytaneis held office.

**PRYTANEION** - The Town Hall, where outstanding citizens (e.g. victors in the pan-Hellenic games, or distinguished generals) were entertained for life at public expense. (N. B. PRYTANEIA were court-fees paid by both parties before a lawsuit began).

**THOLOS** - The Rotunda in which the prytaneis fed and slept.

**ARCHERS** (toxotai) - used by the prytaneis as disciplinary officers to control meetings of the Council or Assembly.

**CRIER** (kērux) - made announcements in the Assembly and called for speakers.

**RHĒTORES** - Those people who made a habit of speaking in the Assembly.

**PROSTATĒS TOU DĒMOU** - Whatever rhetor was for the time being regarded by the dēmos (in sense 1) as best representing its interests; an entirely unofficial position. Similar is DĒMAGŌGOS, leader of the demos (in sense 1), but it came to be used almost always in a derogatory sense.

**PROBOULEUMA** - A motion drafted by the Council for the Assembly to discuss and vote upon.

**PSĒPHISMA** - A decree of the Assembly.

**GRAPHĒ PARANOMŌN** - An indictment against a decree or the proposer of a decree that was alleged to conflict with a law or to have been passed unconstitutionally.

**EISANGELIA** - Prosecution before the Council or the Assembly.

**EUTHŪNAI** - A public scrutiny of an official's conduct, held at the end of his term.

**HYPEUTHŪNOS** - liable to such scrutiny.

**ANEUTHŪNOS, ANHYPEUTHŪNOS** - not liable to such scrutiny.

**DOKIMASIA** - A public scrutiny of qualifications (for office, citizenship, etc.).

**POLITEIA** - A word of many meanings, according to context: they include

- 1) Citizenship, 2) Policy, 3) Government, 4) Constitution. (In sense 4, only the English translation is given, without the Greek word being added).

**STASIS** - A faction or a state of faction in the city.

**GENERALS** (stratēgoi) - Military officers, 10 in number, with important political powers. (See p. 10).

**ARCHONS** - The 9 officials whose main duty was to preside in the courts.

**THESMOTHETAI** - The 6 junior archons (i.e. not the Eponymous, King or Polemarch).

**AUTOKRATŌR** - An official (e.g. a General) described as 'autokratōr' had plenipotentiary powers 'ad hoc' and could take decisions without reference to the Assembly; this did not exempt him from euthūnai at the end of his term.

**PROBOULOI** - An emergency committee of 10 for legislative purposes, set up soon after the Sicilian disaster of 413.

- HELIAEA - The chief and largest of the lawcourts.  
 KŌLAKRETĒS - The Treasurer responsible for payment to juryment. The phrase 'Treasurer's milk' refers to this pay.  
 BAR (kinklis or drūphaktoi) - The railings of the Council-chamber or the lawcourts, which separated the place where the Councillors or jurymen sat from the space 'below the bar'. No unauthorised person should pass within the bar.  
 AREOPAGUS - The Council of the Areopagus, consisting of former archons. Membership was for life. It was important mainly as the court where cases of murder were tried.  
 ODEION - A public building built by Pericles for musical performances, but commonly used as a lawcourt.  
 ADEIA - An immunity or amnesty granted by the Assembly or the Council, either  
 1) to women, metics and slaves, as special permission to speak before the meeting granting it, or  
 2) to criminals who volunteered information.  
 ATĪMIA - Disfranchisement, either total or partial loss of civil rights. (See p. 38f). Those who were fully enfranchised were said to be ENTĪMOI or EPITĪMOI. There was an intermediate stage of citizenship to which the PLATAEANS were admitted; they could not hold an archonship or take part in certain religious ceremonies, but were otherwise full citizens.  
 ELEVEN - The eleven commissioners of police.  
 LITURGY (leitourgia) - A public service expected of the rich. (See p. 50ff).  
 HOPLITES - Heavy-armed infantry. Since they were expected to provide their own armour, the term is used of the richest class of citizen.  
 THĒTES - The poorest class of citizen.  
 METIC - A resident alien, settled in Athens.

2. The following are political terms which usually indicate a degree of bias on the part of the user. The bias is usually anti-democratic. (On the political use of moral terms where it is at its most rampant, see The Old Oligarch, introduction and text, in LACTOR 2).

SYCOPHANT - Originally simply a voluntary denouncer of an alleged criminal. In the absence of a public prosecutor, the operation of justice depended on such volunteers. But the excessive number of enthusiastic volunteers (especially to denounce the rich) brought the word into disrepute and 'sycophantein' came to be almost synonymous with 'diaballein', with nuances of both slander and blackmail. (See p. 27f).

NEŌTERIZEIN - 'To introduce new ideas', but usually with the implication that new ideas are bad or revolutionary ideas. (Cf. 'novae res').

OCHLOS and HOMILOS - 'Rabble' and 'mob' are terms used of the plēthos by those who disapproved of it. Similar, but much rarer, is KOLOSYRTOS.

HETAIREIA - Originally 'an association of friends', but it was especially used of political clubs with oligarchic intentions. Members of these clubs were amongst those who were suspected, particularly by demagogues, of being SYNOMOTAI (conspirators) against democracy.

A variety of terms was used to describe those who stood apart from the plēthos and were usually (though not necessarily) hostile to it:-

AMEINONES or BELTIONES - 'the better men'.

ARISTOI or BELTISTOI - 'the best men'.

DUNATOI, DUNAMENOI or DUNASTEUONTES - 'the men of influence and ability'.

EPIEIKEIS - 'the moderate men'.

EPIPHANEIS - 'the men of distinction'.

EUGENEIS or GENNAIOI - 'the men of nobility'.

GNORIMOI or DOKIMOI - 'the men of note'.

KALOI K'AGATHOI - 'the men of good breeding', 'true gentlemen'.

SŌPHRONES - 'the sensible men'.

CHRĒSTOI - 'the sound, respectable men'.

The characteristic virtue ascribed to all these was SŌPHROSYNĒ, (moderation, good sense, restraint).

Men who were regarded as neither well-born nor well-bred nor reasonable nor sound were nearly always called PONĒROI. Akin to ponēros is MOCHTHĒROS: also AGENNĒS (low-born) and BANAUSOS (a mechanic or worker in a vulgar trade). The particular bad qualities attached to the ponēroi are:- AKOLASIA

(lack of self-control), AMATHIA and APAIDEUSIA (lack of education), POLYPRAGMOSYNE (meddlesomeness). APRAGMOSYNE (refraining from officious political activity) is usually a complimentary term.

DRONE-bee - The metaphor of the drone was used to symbolise those citizens who contributed nothing, but lived off their more useful fellows.

EUNOMIA - 'A state of good law' usually implies not only that the laws are good but that they are obeyed, and has the same overtones as our word 'discipline'. It represented part of the ideal of 'the men with the CAULIFLOWER EARS' (p. 15), i.e. those in Athens who admired Sparta.

ISONOMIA - 'A state of equality under the law' expresses the contrasting democratic ideal. The other words which appealed to democratic emotions were:- 'Freedom' and 'equality' (which are simply translated thus in the text, without their Greek equivalents 'eleutheria' and 'isotēs' being given), ISEGORIA and PARRHĒSIA (freedom of speech). EXOUSIA (permissiveness) and PRAOTĒS (leniency) were aspects of the democratic ideal which came in for criticism from opponents.

3. Some Greek words (without special political significance) which have no exact equivalent in English.

- a) Financial.            6 OBOLS - 1 DRACHMA  
                             100 DRACHMAE - 1 MINA (mna)  
                             60 MINAE - 1 TALENT

In the time of Aristophanes, a STATER was equal to 4 drachmae.

It is not possible to give exact English equivalents. 3 obols a day seems to have been something like a minimum wage between 430 - 400.

DIŌBELIA - A payment of 2 obols a day. It is uncertain whether it was paid to the needy as a war emergency measure, or, more likely, for any kind of service to the state. Introduced after the overthrow of the Four Hundred in 410, it was repealed by the Thirty, but restored after their overthrow.

- b) HUBRIS - The sort of arrogance which leads a man to ignore the restraints of religion or his fellow-men and leads to violent, unscrupulous behaviour. It was particularly associated with tyrants.

ARETĒ - Excellence of any kind; the capacity of a creature or thing to perform that for which it was intended. It is particularly used of moral excellence in general or of courage in particular.

SOPHIA - covers a range of meanings between wisdom and intelligence.

TECHNĒ - covers a range of meanings between skill and art.

GYMNASTIKĒ and MOUSIKĒ were the two parts of basic education (PAIDEIA), gymnastikē meaning physical training and mousikē meaning intellectual (and moral) training through music and poetry. AMOUSOS means uncultured.

- c) Festivals.

PANATHENAEA - celebrated each year early in August, and with special magnificence (the Great Panathenaea) every fourth year. It lasted 6 to 9 days and included athletic and musical contests and a ceremonial offering of a peplos (robe) to Athena.

DIONYSIA - The Great or City Dionysia, at the end of March, was the main annual dramatic festival, when most new tragedies and many new comedies were produced. Also held in honour of Dionysus were the Country or Rustic Dionysia, in December; and the Lenaea, at the end of January, when many new comedies were produced.

APATURIA - This festival lasted 3 days early in November and was held to celebrate new enrolments into the PHRATRIES (each tribe was composed of 3 phratries); it signified the religious recognition of citizenship.

THARGĒLIA - held late in May in honour of Apollo; singing contests took place between choruses, both men's and boys'.

PLYNTĒRIA - held early in June, at which the clothes of Athena's statue were washed.

PROMĒTHEA - Torch-race contests were held at this festival in honour of Prometheus.

DIPOLIEIA - An ancient festival of Zeus, held in the far-distant days when the Athenians wore gold cicadas in their hair. One of its ceremonies was the Bouphonia, the sacrifice of oxen.