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CLEON AS THE ANTI-PERICLES

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IN EPIGRAPHY it is a well-established principle that in restoring an inscription the shortest possible line is to be preferred. The principle is honored not so much because short lines are known to have been particularly favored (they were not) nor because the document in question is likely to have been expressed in the briefest possible terms, but in order to keep to a minimum the restored material. And for its purposes the principle is admirable, since readers of the restored inscription can be confident that, although what they read may bear comparatively little relation to the original document, at least it includes the fewest possible additional letters or words necessary to make sense of what remains to us on stone.

As far as epigraphy is concerned, we would not wish it otherwise, but when the same principle is applied, more implicitly than explicitly, to the reconstruction of historical events, it seems to me pernicious in the extreme. Because it keeps at a minimum modern supplement and invention, it lulls into a receptive and acquiescent frame of mind an audience that should be both wary and skeptical. But why should historical reconstruction differ from epigraphical restoration? In both cases all that remains to us is a fragment (or fragments) from which we must re-create the whole. In both cases it was chance that played the largest role in determining

what fragment (or fragments) of the document or event was to survive. And here we begin to see the difference: the fragment of stone gives part of the document, which is itself our object; but the fragment of history is not part of our object, which is the event itself, but part of an account of that event. Accounts necessarily involve a human element, so that our sources give us what someone saw or heard or thought. And, though all history must be based on such human reportage and selection, there is little hope where the passage of time and of civilizations has reduced the reports to odd bits and pieces that sheer mass and variety of accounts will preserve the kernel of truth.

So it often happens that we have, as the fragmentary material from which to reconstruct an ancient event, an array of items like the following, each conceived in particular circumstances and preserved by chance: a summary from a contemporary, a passing reference by a writer of comedies, a partial (in both senses) account by a later orator, circumstantial details from a later historian who may or may not have had a contemporary source, and an unusual expression quoted by a grammarian. Using the epigraphical principle quoted above, we would join the five elements, add only whatever is the minimum of connective tissue required to hold them together, and call it history. And so

with jesting Pilate we may wash our hands of responsibility and ask, "What is Truth?"

That our items of evidence are not bits and pieces of what actually happened we may see most quickly in cases where one directly contradicts another. Therefore, each item must be evaluated in the light of the position, purpose, and prejudices of its author, so that it may be seen in relation to the event and so that the source of the light which it sheds on the event may be revealed. Only after such evaluation may a combination of items be attempted, and even then the reconstruction cannot be made with the assumption that chance has been so provident as to preserve all the necessary items. In fact, in reconstructing an event about which most of us would agree that we know far less than half of what was known in its time, if we limit ourselves to the evidence preserved, we do so at the very probable risk of falsification. That is, the false modesty and false piety that refuse to supply a B where only A and C have survived is far more damaging to the truth than the invention of a B that is clearly labeled as unattested. At the very least such a reconstruction will help to create (rather than allay) the spirit of skepticism which ought to be our constant companion in the study of ancient history.

It may be argued that the selection of material evidence that has come to us is not a matter of blind chance but that the important items were emphasized and preserved by writers who knew far more of the facts than we shall ever know. But the preservation of inscriptions, and even of relevant scholia and late references generally, is truly a random matter; we may not even say that only the most important acts of the Athenian demos, for example, were committed to stone and hence potential survival, since it is demonstrably not so. Even the preservation of material in the

accounts of ancient historians is random in the sense of its having been selected with varying degrees of subjectivity and partiality. And the survival of their works has often depended more on literary quality, popularity, or prejudice than it has on their strict adherence to fact.

Remembering then that important material can have failed to survive, we realize that it may be false economy to minimize the gaps in our evidence. We might do better to regard the surviving bits and pieces mostly as signposts useful to keep us on the track but often separated by large expanses where we must make our own road. That is, given our scanty evidence, the only virtue in a reconstruction which uses the least possible amount of connective tissue in order to tie together what survives is that invention on our part plays the smallest role. This is to imply that our invention (not untutored by experience) is less useful and valid than the chance which selected the material to survive.

It is easy, as a matter of fact, to imagine cases (take the prosecution of Pericles' friends, for example) where contemporary innuendo and prejudice combined with later misunderstandings to provide us with a sieve by which the truth is more likely to be strained out than contained; the only rational and historically sound method of approximating what really happened is to invent probable situations and facts which would have given rise to the contemporary innuendo and the later misunderstandings. Such a reconstruction may not reproduce to the letter the original situation, but it has a better chance of recapturing essential truths than the pious and overthrift attempt to weave whole cloth out of questionable and more or less isolated threads. In either case, no reconstruction should ever be regarded as final; not only new evidence of a factual

sort, but also the new insight that comes of participating in current "history," may make a difference in the understanding of both evidence and episode.

This long introduction must serve as justification for a somewhat radical re-evaluation of Cleon, who seems to me to have been the victim not only of contemporary prejudice but also of our historical method. First, we may take as our text Aristotle's estimate (*Ath. Pol.* 28. 3) of Cleon's unique place among the *prostatai tou demou*: "and the leader of the people was Cleon, son of Cleaenetus, who seemed especially to corrupt the people by his urgings and was the first to shout on the platform and make abusive remarks and gird himself up to act like a demagogue."¹ If we examine Aristotle's list of earlier Athenian *prostatai tou demou*, the "title" seems to be assigned most often to aristocrats whose power and influence stemmed at least in part from the people. Like the patron-client relationship, that between *prostates* and *demos* was one of cooperation for mutual benefit. In Aristotle's list Solon is the first *prostates tou demou*, and next is Pisistratus, both aristocrats who conferred benefits on the people and who were confirmed in their authority thereby. The tyranny which Pisistratus created from his mutual-benefit association with the people was a bad and dangerous thing only from the point of view of other aristocrats. For the *demos* the accent was on the benevolence rather than on the despotism: in return for the support which they gave the "tyrant," they gained an increasing share in the government. So Thucydides himself testifies to the "constitutionalism" of the regime and the way in which the *demos* helped to keep the "tyrant" in power (6. 54. 5-6).

When the tyranny had been dissolved, Cleisthenes became *prostates tou demou* and continued the policy of giving increased power to the *demos* in return for their support against a rival aristocrat (Isagoras). This access of power was sufficient to put the *demos* "over the top" or "in the saddle," and so Cleisthenes inadvertently (as it seems to me) invented democracy. "After this," Aristotle goes on to say at *Ath. Pol.* 28. 2, "Xanthippus headed the people and Miltiades the well-off; then Themistocles and Aristides." This statement seems, at least to party-oriented modern readers, to suggest some kind of party organization, but the interpretation which best fits what we know of Athenian political history is that a man headed the people if he was for increasing their power, even though his real intent was sometimes to use the people's support to win out over rivals. Such an interpretation would explain why sometimes the *prostates tou demou* stands alone in Aristotle's survey and sometimes he is listed as being opposed. Thus both Xanthippus and Miltiades were aristocrats, but the former sided with the *demos* and Miltiades eschewed the "popular gesture." Aristotle had already said elsewhere (*Ath. Pol.* 23. 3) that both Themistocles and Aristides were *prostatai tou demou*; that was a case of rivals who both used the same methods in endeavoring to gain leadership through the cultivation of the *demos*. And so it went through the time of Pericles, about which Thucydides said, "It was nominally a democracy but in fact rule by the first citizen" (2. 65. 9). Thereafter, Nicias and Theramenes are listed as opposed to men like Cleon who not only led the people but also helped to give the word demagogue its modern connotation.

1. τοῦ δὲ δήμου Κλέων ὁ Κλεαίνετου, ὃς δοκεῖ μάλιστα διαφθεῖραι τὸν δῆμον ταῖς ὁρμαῖς, καὶ πρῶτος ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἀνέκραγε καὶ ἐλοιδορήσατο καὶ περιζωσάμενος ἐδημηγόρησε.

Perhaps we should look to the history of ostracism for further indications of the relations between the demos and its leaders. The purpose of ostracism, as it is most often stated, was to get rid of a man whose power approached tyranny or might be converted thereto. That this purpose was modified during the course of the fifth century seems certain from the nature and activities of those ostracized. Four stages may be distinguished: (1) when the new democracy feared most the re-establishment of the Pisistratid tyranny, not so much as a tyranny but as the predemocratic stage before the balance of power had shifted from leader to people, the friends of the Pisistratids were first victims, Hipparchus, Megacles, and Alcibiades the Elder; (2) when the somewhat more established democracy feared the possibility of other leaders using the demos more for their own purposes than for *its* good, these men had to go, Xanthippus, Aristides, and Themistocles; (3) when the securely established demos no longer feared its own leaders but wished merely to remove a statesman who used his personal power to obstruct the demos and their *prostates*, the nature of the tyranny to be prevented began to be thought of as an aristocratic or oligarchic resurgence and the victims were those leaders like Cimon and Thucydides the son of Melesias who opposed the champions of the demos; and (4) when the demos began to be wielded by unscrupulous men who played upon its passions, ostracism came to be a mere instrument of dirty politics, and the final victim (Hyperbolus) was a fitting symbol of the deterioration in both demos and demagogues.

Taking Aristotle's estimate of Cleon as something new in the way of demagogues, I want to see if it was because of this new departure from the Periclean democracy or rule of the people that Thucydides and

Aristophanes were so prejudiced against Cleon. That is, Cleon's leadership style would have had not only an absolute impact on his contemporaries but also one that was relative to the Periclean leadership that it replaced. In short, for Thucydides and Aristophanes Cleon was the Anti-Pericles! By the Anti-Pericles I mean that, as Aristotle says, he was the first of the leaders of the people who made his appeal to what was worst in them rather than what was best. The previous leaders of the people whom Aristotle mentions (Solon, Pisistratus, Cleisthenes, Xanthippus, Themistocles, Ephialtes, Pericles) all seem to have used the people or led them for what turned out to be the people's good; whether for the sake of their own individual power or to oppose the power of others, they increased the people's role in government and encouraged the people to play that role with responsibility. For this there is evidence both in the explicit statements attributed by Thucydides to Pericles and in the fact that the democracy worked, as it could not have (for long) if the people had acted like a mob, to be swayed by emotions.

So Cleon was an innovator in that he led the people not constructively but destructively. Even where his actual policy differed little from that of Pericles, for example, the methods which he used undermined the democracy by making a mockery of it. The best demonstration of this is in the speech about the Mytileneans (as Thucydides presents it), where he played on the fears of the people, appealed to their baser side, sneered at reasoning, and showed a cynical scorn for their serious concerns. Surely this marks him out as no democrat but rather one who uses and corrupts the people. He doubted whether a demos could rule an empire (Thuc. 3. 37. 1); he questioned the value of discussion (37. 3-4); he was suspicious of all who

would lead the people (38. 3–4); he would have had the demos of Mytilene punished as well as the leaders (39. 6). In his scorn for those who would think their way through problems he showed himself more like the Spartan Archidamus than a democrat had any right to be.

Whether and to what extent Thucydides has given us Cleon's actual words in this speech does not matter, since it is not so much what he said and did apparently as the way he went about it that was responsible for Thucydides' objection, and what his account does most clearly is exemplify that objection. For example, Thucydides allows Cleon to use Periclean policy in action but tries to show the violence of his methods—both in the Mytilenean speech and in the whole Pylos episode. In this latter case it may be that the people were right to reject Spartan peace moves, but the violence, brutality, and irresponsibility of Cleon's maneuvers show that he was using the people, that he thought of them as an instrument on which he played, a tool which he wielded, and so deprived them of the self-respect and sense of responsibility which Pericles and his forerunners had so carefully built up.

Cleon's policies were often good, and it may well be that he sincerely aimed at what he thought were the best interests of the Athenian state. But it was his dislike, based apparently on fear, of the demos which made him a danger not only to the demos, which he could brutalize, but also to the state, which could not long survive the corruption of the demos toward which his methods tended. It seems certain that Cleon was an anti-democrat and that he mistrusted and feared the people. But because they held the chief power in the state through and after Pericles, it was necessary for him, despite his fear and mistrust, to reckon with that power if he was to gain power for himself and to

implement his policies. Just as during the previous century aristocrats had allied themselves with the demos for the mutual advantage of both parties, so now Cleon followed in their footsteps, but with a difference, since he led the demos against its own advantage. Because he needed the people and at the same time feared them, he perverted the methods of the aristocrats in order to undermine the people's power as he encouraged them to use it for their own destruction.

And yet it seems to be generally thought that Cleon must be a democrat because he was a demagogue. Here we are apparently victimized by our own use of the latter word. It is true that demagoguery might be defined generally as acting in a cheap, popular fashion, but, in its origin and in sixth- and fifth-century Athenian use, it is more literally "leading the demos" or, as the Romans said it, *agens populariter*. Demagoguery was at that time the means, not the end; it was the method, not the platform, of the statesman. Pericles was from one point of view (i.e., by birth) an aristocrat; but he was a democrat by conviction and a demagogue so as to implement his belief in the people and bring out the best in them. Cleon may have been almost anything by birth (we must not believe the contemporary slander without objective proof); but by conviction he certainly was not a democrat, nor did he believe in either the people's right or their ability to rule; his demagoguery, by which he led the people astray, marked the beginning of the word's modern connotation.

Some scholars have thought of Cleon as a radical democrat on the grounds that he allowed himself to be led by the people. But such passive behavior could never have given rise to both the prejudice and the picture of active maleficence seen in Aristophanes and Thucydides. Nor does

the latter have any passive kind of behavior in mind when he says (2. 65. 10) that Pericles' followers gave in to the people; he means that they did not, like Pericles, challenge the demos to a sense of its responsibility but appealed instead to the irrational fears and desires of the people to enlist support for their own schemes.

Everything seems to point to Cleon as the enemy of the demos. First, there is his opposition to Pericles, attested by both Hermippus, who speaks of "Pericles, bitten by the mad Cleon" (Frag. 46K), and Plutarch, who reports that Cleon was an accuser of Pericles in 430 B.C. (*Per.* 35). Second, and more important, is the strong dislike in which both Thucydides and Aristophanes held him; for whatever their own political coloration may have been, their loyalty to Athens is apparent in their disgusted but fearful presentation of Cleon as a corrupter of the demos.

If then Cleon was no democrat, what was he? In another context he might have aimed at a tyranny, but the situation in fifth-century Athens made the natural refuge of the anti-democrat not tyranny but oligarchy. Could Cleon have been an oligarch, one of a new breed that used democracy for its own ends?

Aristotle, at any rate, justifies us in seeing Cleon as the beginning of something new. We must go the next step on our own to ask what factors could have caused this new departure in the old, established political practice of people-leading or demagoguery. And since we are not fortunate enough to know as a matter of fact what Cleon's intentions and purposes were, we must be satisfied to look to his results and make a reasonable guess about the extent to which they reflect his aims. We may note in passing that Thucydides leads us to believe that he was luckier than we are in this respect when he tells us what

was in Cleon's mind on various occasions (e.g., 4. 21–22, 27–28; 5. 7), but since there is nothing to suggest that he was on such terms with Cleon as to have been taken into his confidence, we must assume that Thucydides' knowledge is two parts conjecture and one part prejudice. But if we look to results to determine Cleon's aims, we see that a primary result, both as stated by Aristotle and as demonstrated by Thucydides, was his corruption of the demos; and the fact that this was the "success" that crowned his efforts not once but many times justifies the assumption that it was a primary purpose as well.

A further question arises. Since it is unlikely that corruption of the demos was an end in itself, to what further end was Cleon addressing himself by means of this corruption? One answer (that of Aristophanes and probably also of Thucydides) is personal power, pure and simple. But there may be another answer which is based less on personal prejudice and which fits better with the very real evidence of Cleon's statesmanlike concern for Athens, which has been firmly presented most recently by G. Woodhead (*Mnemosyne*, XIII [1960], 289 ff.): that, given the corruptibility of the demos, Cleon felt in duty bound to corrupt it for the good of the state (in his view) rather than allow it to be corrupted by itself or by others for more private and less public ends.

What evidence do we have that Cleon was convinced of the people's liability to corruption and consequent inability to rule? For what it is worth, we have his variously stated assertions to this effect in the speech Thucydides gives to him in the Mytilenean affair; and, because the whole tone of the argument here is so un-Thucydidean, we have some right to think that Thucydides is attempting to adhere as closely as possible to the manner and method of the speaker as well as to his

words. In that speech Cleon first asserts his conviction that democracy is incapable of empire (3. 37. 1) because of its naïveté and emotionalism (37. 2), its instability (37. 3), and its preference for cleverness over constancy (37. 4–5). Second, he asserts the demos' responsibility for dangers to the state (38. 3) through their sensation-seeking, whoring after novelties, and lack of discrimination (38. 4–7). Furthermore, the very way in which he puts his case in this speech shows his belief that the people can be influenced by a judicious combination of flattery and threats. First he threatens them with his conviction of their inadequacy (37. 1); then he flatters them on their lack of internal dissension, inciting them to righteous indignation (37. 2: "here we treat these allies just the way we do each other, and they turn on us!"); and then he plays on their fears of what may happen if they do not exercise their tyranny by means of force (37. 2).

If, as this speech suggests, Cleon was the Anti-Pericles and anti-democrat of Athens in the early years of the Peloponnesian War, it is at least possible that his sympathies were oligarchic. And we are fortunate in having from this period an extended statement in pamphlet form of an oligarchic view of the democracy which we may use as a standard by which to measure the extent and degree to which Cleon's views coincided with those of the oligarchs. That is, the pseudo-Xenophonic *Athenaion Politeia*, whose author is usually known as the "Old Oligarch," attempts to expose the democracy as a government that has as its primary aim not the good of the whole state or of the virtuous and worthy few but the good of the worthless rabble and the preservation of the power in their hands. The cleverness of the attack lies in the way that the democracy is not simply condemned as bad but is shown to be successful in and

through the very baseness of its aims. The oligarch who composed it not only "gave the Devil his due" but showed thereby what a devil it was! Furthermore, by looking at the democracy from the inside, as it were, and examining its purposes as well as its results, the writer showed himself capable of at least partially objective analysis as well as party prejudice.

If in measuring Cleon against the Old Oligarch we try to find specific echoes of one in the other, we shall necessarily run into difficulties, because both Thucydides' presentations of Cleon's points of view and the Old Oligarch's pamphlet have *ta deonta* peculiar to their particular aims and audiences which require that their ideas receive appropriately specific expression. But certain generalized attitudes are clear: the Old Oligarch shows repeatedly that the advantage of the demos is the *raison d'être* of the democracy; Cleon makes the advantage of the demos the basis of his appeal for particular decisions (Thuc. 3. 37. 3–5; 4. 22. 2). The Old Oligarch shows consistent mistrust of the demos and is convinced that in ruling for its own good it damages the whole state; Cleon asserts the incapacity of the demos to rule others (Thuc. 3. 37. 1) and shows how the demos allows the state to suffer while consulting its own pleasures (Thuc. 3. 38). The Old Oligarch emphasizes both the instability of the demos and the lack of continuity in its policies (2. 17); Cleon asserts that the worst part of democracy is its inconstancy (Thuc. 3. 37. 3). Both play up the rule by the demos to undermine it: the Old Oligarch does it frankly; Cleon uses the demos' jealousy of its power to manipulate it. And if we were to ask how the author of the *Athenaion Politeia* would go about persuading the demos to a particular course of action, it seems almost certain that, with his understanding of their aims

and motivation, he would use tactics very like those employed by Cleon: challenging their ability to rule (cf. Thuc. 3. 37. 1), playing on their fears of being overreached (cf. Thuc. 3. 37. 2–3), urging them to act with passions still high before reason returns (cf. Thuc. 3. 38, 40. 6), warning them against advisers who might use them for their own personal aggrandizement (cf. Thuc. 3. 38). Or perhaps we should say that only a man who has thought through as cynically as has the Old Oligarch the way in which the demos preserves itself in power would know (as Cleon seems to know) both that the demos must be wielded and how to wield it. And only such an oligarch would be clever enough to act not as an oligarch against the demos but as a demagogue with the demos.

By paralleling the attitudes of the Old Oligarch and Cleon we have stumbled on the rather surprising possibility that, despite their different purposes, the similarity of their sentiments and of their manipulative techniques is a strong argument for the identity of their persons. So let us look to see what might be the results of assuming Cleon to be the author of the oligarchic *Athenaion Politeia*, whether we shall thereby create new problems to add to the old or whether our understanding will be enlarged and new light will be shed on other problems besides the identity of the Old Oligarch. First, it is necessary to consider the chronology of Cleon as possible pamphleteer and as actual politician. The *Athenaion Politeia* has been dated variously from the early 440's to the years after 415 B.C., always on the basis of internal evidence and with reasonably good arguments for each date suggested.² But since all cannot be right and so some

of the good arguments based on interpretation of internal evidence must be wrong, it may be that a more objective argument for dating can be arrived at by seeing where the work best fits in the career of a potential author. It is immediately obvious that the Cleon we meet in the pages of Thucydides is an actual politician and no armchair student of political affairs. That he had progressed from theory to practice, however, seems likely from the contrived and premeditated nature of his arguments to the demos. And it seems right to think of the *Athenaion Politeia* as representing an earlier stage of thought than, for example, the debate with Diodotus, a stage at which the author had convinced himself that opposing the democracy from the outside was hopeless since its greatest strength was its "instinct" for self-preservation. And if Cleon was the author, this would fit in well with his reported attempt to ally himself with the knights. Theopompus (Schol. Ar. *Eq.* 225) says that Cleon was rejected by the knights when he wanted to act with them and so he threw in his lot with the demos. If we ask how Cleon made overtures to the knights and how he was rejected by them, one answer might be that he wrote the *Athenaion Politeia* pamphlet to share with them his new insight into the workings of the demos. That it is in all probability addressed to the knights is suggested by the way in which it shows that the demos must be put up with because it is necessary for sea power and that it is by sea power rather than by hoplites and nobles that the city has its greatness and its empire (1. 2, 2. 2). The clear implication is that the only hope oligarchs have of taking over the state is by betraying it to an outside power (2. 15). The alternatives are only implicit, but the

2. The most recent review of the question is that of G. Bowersock, *HSCP*, LXXI (1966), 33 ff. Those who would date the pamphlet on internal evidence alone tend to take

as gospel everything it says, as if the Old Oligarch had taken an oath to tell the truth, although we know perfectly well that exaggeration for rhetorical effect is one of his favorite devices.

choice is up to the Athenian better classes: do you want to defeat the demos, thereby losing our sea power, by compounding with Sparta; or do you want to have it both ways by “leading” the demos on *their* terms for *our* good? If we take over as an oligarchy, we will have to be consistent and provide a stable government, but if we have the demos as a front, we can operate as we will—chopping and changing and blaming it on the irresponsibility of the mob (2. 17).

By stressing the strength of democracy, its importance for sea power, and the great value of sea power for Athens as a whole, the author of the *Athenaion Politeia* seems to be trying to convince his audience that it is both necessary and advisable to work within the system rather than to overthrow it and lose an empire in the process. And, by emphasizing at the same time the baseness, the greed, the irresponsibility, the inefficiency, and the selfishness of the demos, the author is clearly reminding the better classes of their duty to make changes, even if it is possible only to add or subtract a little (3. 8–9). For as he says (2. 20), “I can understand democracy for the demos itself, since it is excusable for all men to benefit themselves. But whoever,

not being of the demos, has chosen to live in a democratic rather than an oligarchic state, has prepared himself to do wrong and has recognized that it is more possible to escape notice being base in a democracy than in an oligarchy.” That is, although the knights cannot overturn the democracy without losing in the process the command of the sea, they cannot continue to live in a democratic state without incurring charges of wrongdoing. So the only solution is to work within the democracy to manipulate the demos for the good of the whole state rather than allow the demos to go its own way for its own selfish advantage.

The charges against democracy which should, according to the author of the *Athenaion Politeia*, arouse all right-thinking nobles and good men to action, are particularly interesting because of the way in which so many of the points are so neatly answered in the Funeral Oration attributed by Thucydides to Pericles at the end of the first year of the war. Let us first note the parallels, so that we may then ask to what extent they could be coincidental or to what extent there is some possibility of charge and rebuttal in these two opposing views of the Athenian democracy.

Athenaion Politeia

1. 1: Περὶ δὲ τῆς Ἀθηναίων πολιτείας, ὅτι μὲν εἴλοντο τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τῆς πολιτείας οὐκ ἐπαινῶ διὰ τόδε, ὅτι ταῦθ' ἐλόμενοι εἴλοντο τοὺς πονηροὺς ἄμεινον πράττειν ἢ τοὺς χρηστούς· διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦτο οὐκ ἐπαινῶ. ἐπεὶ δὲ ταῦτα ἔδοξεν οὕτως αὐτοῖς, ὥς εὖ διασφύζονται τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὰλλα διαπράττονται ὃ δοκοῦσιν ἀμαρτάνειν τοῖς ἄλλοις “Ἐλλῆσι, τοῦτ' ἀποδείξω.

1. 5: ἔστι δὲ πάσῃ γῇ τὸ βέλτιστον ἐναντίον τῇ δημοκρατίᾳ· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς βελτίστοις ἐνὶ ἀκολασίᾳ τε ὀλιγίστη καὶ ἀδικία, ἀκρίβεια δὲ πλείστη εἰς τὰ χρηστά, ἐν δὲ τῷ δῆμῳ ἀμαθία τε πλείστη καὶ ἀταξία καὶ πονηρία· ἢ τε γὰρ πενία αὐτοὺς μᾶλλον ἀγει ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσχροῦ καὶ ἡ ἀπαιδευσία καὶ ἡ ἀμαθία <ἢ> δι' ἐνδειαν χρημάτων ἐνίοις τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Funeral Oration (Thucydides)

2. 37. 1: Χρῶμεθα γὰρ πολιτείᾳ οὐ ζηλοῦση τοὺς τῶν πέλας νόμους, παράδειγμα δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτοῖ ὄντες τισὶν ἢ μιμούμενοι ἑτέροις. καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία κέκληται.

2. 37. 1: μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὥς ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ εὐδοκίμῳ, οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλεόν ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ' αὖ κατὰ πενίαν, ἔχων γέ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιώματος ἀφανείᾳ κεκώλυται.

1. 6: εἶποι δ' ἂν τις ὡς ἐχρῆν αὐτοὺς μὴ ἔαν λέγουν πάντας ἐξῆς μὴδὲ βουλευεῖν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς δεξιωτάτους καὶ ἄνδρας ἀρίστους. οἱ δὲ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἄριστα βουλευόμενοι ἔωντες καὶ τοὺς πονηροὺς λέγειν. εἰ μὲν γὰρ οἱ χρηστοὶ ἔλεγον καὶ ἐβουλευόντο, τοῖς ὁμοίοις σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἦν ἀγαθὰ, τοῖς δὲ δημοτικοῖς οὐκ ἀγαθὰ· νῦν δὲ λέγων ὁ βουλόμενος ἀναστάς, ἄνθρωπος πονηρός, ἐξευρίσκει τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις αὐτῷ.

1. 10: Τῶν δούλων δ' αὖ καὶ τῶν μετοίκων πλείστη ἐστὶν Ἀθήνησιν ἀκολασία, καὶ οὔτε πατάξει ἕξεστιν αὐτόθι οὔτε ὑπεκατήσεται σοι ὁ δοῦλος.

1. 9: εἰ δ' εὐνομίαν ζητεῖς, πρῶτα μὲν ὄψει τοὺς δεξιωτάτους αὐτοῖς τοὺς νόμους τιθέντας· ἔπειτα κολάσουσιν οἱ χρηστοὶ τοὺς πονηροὺς καὶ βουλεύουσιν οἱ χρηστοὶ περὶ τῆς πόλεως καὶ οὐκ ἔασουσι μαινομένους ἀνθρώπους βουλεύειν οὐδὲ λέγειν οὐδὲ ἐκκλησιάζειν. ἀπὸ τούτων τοῖνυν τῶν ἀγαθῶν τάχιστ' ἂν ὁ δῆμος εἰς δουλείαν καταπέσοι.

1. 13: Τοὺς δὲ γυμναζομένους αὐτόθι καὶ τὴν μουσικὴν ἐπιτηδεύοντας καταλέλκεν ὁ δῆμος, νομίζων τοῦτο οὐ καλὸν εἶναι, γνούςτι οὐ δυνατὸς ταῦτά ἐστιν ἐπιτηδεύειν.

2. 17: "Ἐτι δὲ συμμαχίας καὶ τοὺς ὅρκους ταῖς μὲν ὀλιγαρχουμέναις πόλεσιν ἀνάγκη ἐμπεδοῦν· ἦν δὲ μὴ ἐμμένωσι ταῖς συνθήκαις, ἢ ὑφ' ὅτου ἀδικεῖ· ὀνόματα ἀπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων οἱ συνένθεντο· ἄσσα δ' ἂν ὁ δῆμος ἀνθίσθῃται, ἕξεσιν αὐτῷ ἐν ἀνατιθέντι τὴν αἰτίαν τῷ λέγοντι καὶ τῷ ἐπιψηφίσαντι ἀρνεῖσθαι τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅτι Οὐ παρῆν οὐδὲ ἀρέσκει ἔμοιγε, ἃ συγκείμενα πυνθάνονται ἐν πλήρει τῷ δήμῳ, καὶ εἰ μὴ δόξαι εἶναι ταῦτα, προφάσεις μυρίας ἐξηύρηκε τοῦ μὴ ποιεῖν ὅσα ἂν μὴ βούλωνται. καὶ ἂν μὲν τι κακὸν ἀναβαίνει ἀπὸ ὧν ὁ δῆμος ἐβούλευσεν, αἰτιάται ὁ δῆμος ὡς ὀλίγοι ἄνθρωποι αὐτῷ ἀντιπράττοντες διέφθειραν, ἐὰν δὲ τι ἀγαθὸν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς τὴν αἰτίαν ἀνατιθέασιν.

It is notable that the parallels are found only in that middle part of the Funeral Oration which begins by defining democracy (2. 37. 1) and concludes by summing up Athens as the School of Hellas (2. 41)—this last being an answer not to any specific point in the *Athenaion Politeia* but to its whole thesis that the Athenian demos seems to the rest of the Greeks to err (1. 1)

2. 40. 1–2: Φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφούμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας· πλοῦτῳ τε ἔργου μᾶλλον καὶ ῥῷ ἢ λόγῳ κόμψω χρώμεθα, καὶ τὸ πένεσθαι οὐχ ὁμολογεῖν τινὶ αἰσχρὸν, ἀλλὰ μὴ διαφεύγειν ἔργῳ αἰσχίον. ἐνὶ τε τοῖς αὐτοῖς οἰκείων ἅμα καὶ πολιτικῶν ἐπιμέλεια, καὶ ἐτέροις πρὸς ἔργα τετραμμένοις τὰ πολιτικὰ μὴ ἐνδεῶς γινῶναι· μόνοι γὰρ τὸν τε μὴδὲν τῶνδε μετέχοντα οὐκ ἀπράγμονα, ἀλλ' ἀχρεῖον νομίζομεν, καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ ἥτοι κρίνομεν γε ἡ ἐνθυμούμεθα ὁρθῶς τὰ πράγματα, οὐ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ μὴ προδιαχθῆναι μᾶλλον λόγῳ πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ ἃ δεῖ ἔργῳ ἐλθεῖν.

2. 37. 2: ἐλευθέρως δὲ τὰ τε πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν πολιτευόμεν καὶ ἐς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ὑποψίαν, οὐ δι' ὀργῆς τὸν πέλας, εἰ καθ' ἡδονὴν τι δρᾷ, ἔχοντες, οὐδὲ ἀζημίους μὲν, λυπηρὰς δὲ τῇ ὄψει ἀχθηδόνas προστιθέμενοι.

2. 37. 3: ἀνεπαχθῶς δὲ τὰ ἴδια προσομιλοῦντες τὰ δημόσια διὰ δέος μάλιστα οὐ παρανομοῦμεν, τῶν τε αἰεὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντων ἀκροάσει καὶ τῶν νόμων, καὶ μάλιστα αὐτῶν ὅσοι τε ἐπ' ὠφελίᾳ τῶν ἀδικουμένων κείνται καὶ ὅσοι ἄγραφοι ὄντες αἰσχύνῃ ὁμολογουμένην φέρουσιν.

2. 38. 1: Καὶ μὴν καὶ τῶν πόνων πλείστας ἀναπαύλας τῇ γνώμῃ ἐπορισάμεθα, ἀγῶσι μὲν γε καὶ θυσίαις διετησίαις νομίζοντες, ἰδίαις δὲ κατασκευαῖς εὐπρεπέσιν, ὧν καθ' ἡμέραν ἡ τέρψις τὸ λυπηρὸν ἐκπλήσσει.

2. 40. 4–5: καὶ τὰ ἐς ἀρετὴν ἐνθουσιώμεθα τοῖς πολλοῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἀσχόντες εὖ, ἀλλὰ δρώντες κτώμεθα τοὺς φίλους. βεβαιότερος δὲ ὁ δράσας τὴν χάριν ὥστε ὀφειλομένην δι' εὐνοίας ᾧ δέδωκε σῶζειν· ὁ δὲ ἀντοφείλων ἀμβλύτερος, εἰδὼς οὐκ εἰς χάριν, ἀλλ' ἐς ὀφείλημα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀποδώσων. καὶ μόνοι οὐ τοῦ ξυμφέροντος μᾶλλον λογισμῷ ἢ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῷ πιστῷ ἀδεῶς τινα ὠφελοῦμεν.

or to plan badly (1. 16, 3. 10). Since the rest of the Funeral Oration is concerned with its proper function (praise of the dead and affirmation of the tradition), only this middle section deals with matter not dictated by the occasion. There are, of course, many good reasons which hearers and readers of the Funeral Oration can see or have seen for the inclusion here of this

disquisition on democracy (its educative value for the human spirit, its inspiration as a cause for which men gladly live and bravely die, etc.), but there is always the question whether such generalized reasons are as likely to have motivated Pericles to go beyond the well-established traditional themes as some specific attack on the democracy which he thought required an answer that might at the same time justify these deaths and restore public confidence.

Since almost every sentence of these chapters (2. 37–41) in this middle section seems to take up and counter points made in the *Athenaion Politeia*, it is fair to consider the possibility that the pamphlet had been recently issued in an effort to crystallize discontent at the way the war was going (cf. Thuc. 2. 20) and to mobilize anti-democratic forces for action. And the one chapter of this section which is exceptional and does not take up any points from the *Athenaion Politeia* is the very one (2. 39) which may prove our earlier contention that the pamphlet was written for the knights and consequently deplored the democracy which concentrated power in the hands of the demos to the exclusion of the “hoplites, the nobles, and the good men.” That is, there is no criticism of the better classes in the *Athenaion Politeia* which Pericles would have felt obliged to answer, and yet they were a significant part of the state which he could not ignore in his glorification of the Athenian government. And indeed, by acknowledging the virtues of these classes, with their “general education in a free society” as opposed to Spartan militarism, at the same time as he defended the demos against their charges, he might weld together opposing factions and show how complementary were the strengths of the demos and the aristocracy.

We have come a long way in the formulation of our hypothetical view of

Cleon. It has seemed right to see him first as a rival and opponent of Pericles who was mistrustful of Pericles’ alliance with the demos and eager to ally himself with the knights in order to defeat both Pericles and the democracy. Then apparently came the realization that, with empire and sea power both democratically based, an oligarchic government, even if possible to achieve, would almost certainly bring a decline in the city’s power. If then the demos was necessary, the demos must be led as it had often been led before, but with a difference: now it must be converted into a mob to be swayed by emotional appeals to its fears and desires so that the real power might be wielded by the clever few—ochlocracy with oligarchic direction. This insight into both the strengths and weaknesses of democracy could have led Cleon to the writing of the *Athenaion Politeia* in an effort to show the knights how they and he together might undermine the democracy without losing the advantages attendant upon full participation of the demos in the fleet and in the life of the city. That such a cynical proposition would be rejected by the knights might well have been predicted, as could also Cleon’s headlong drive to implement by himself the new kind of demagoguery that was to radicalize the people to their own detriment. That an even more immediate result should have been Pericles’ impulse to defend and glorify the democracy is something for which we can only be grateful.

In this new look at our scanty evidence, full advantage has been taken of the original suggestion that discovery of truth in ancient history may often require generous additions and interpretations. Is the generosity more than we can afford in this particular area?