

CLEON'S ATTACK AGAINST THE CAVALRY

ARISTOPHANES speaks in *Equites* 225 f. of the rancour borne Cleon by the cavalry: ἀλλ' εἰσὶν ἱππῆς ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ χίλιοι | μισοῦντες αὐτόν, οἳ βοηθήσουσί σοι. The scholiast at verse 226 cites Theopompus (*F. Gr. Hist.* 115 F 93) for the explanation: Θεόπομπος ἐν δεκάτῳ Φιλιππικῶν φησιν ὅτι οἱ ἱππεῖς ἐμίσουν αὐτόν. προπηλακισθεὶς γὰρ ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ παροξυνθεὶς ἐπετέθη τῇ πολιτείᾳ καὶ διετέλεσεν εἰς αὐτοὺς κακὰ μηχανώμενος. κατηγορήσε γὰρ αὐτῶν ὡς λειποστρατούντων. The curious words ἐπετέθη τῇ πολιτείᾳ were (by implication) explained by Gilbert, *Beiträge*, 133, as referring to Cleon's alleged entrance into the Boule of 428/7 so as to prosecute the cavalry *en masse* for desertion.¹ This explanation was accepted by Jacoby in his commentary.² Nevertheless, the best that can be said for it is that it is an apparently necessary means of imparting some sort of meaning to an inconsequential sentence. It makes no sense to say, on the face of it, that because Cleon was angered by the cavalry 'he attacked the constitution' or, worse still, 'applied himself to the politeia'.³ What is needed is the assertion that Cleon attacked the cavalry in some manner or other.

The assumption of an easy slip on the part of the scholiast in his transcription (or paraphrase) of Theopompus' words will erase the difficulty. It is well known that *κατάστασις* can serve as the synonym of *πολιτεία*. It carries another meaning, however, more specialized and of infrequent occurrence.⁴ In this sense the term applies to the money paid the cavalry for the provision of equipment.⁵ So Lysias 16 (*Apology for Mantitheos*). 6-7: ἐπεὶ γὰρ κατήλθετε, ἐψηφίσασθε τοὺς φυλάρχους ἀπενεγκεῖν τοὺς ἱππεύσαντας, ἵνα τὰς καταστάσεις ἀναπράξῃτε παρ' αὐτῶν. ἐμὲ τοίνυν οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀποδείξειεν οὗτ' ἀπενεχθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν φυλάρχων οὔτε παραδοθέντα τοῖς συνδίκους οὔτε κατάστασιν καταβαλόντα. The specific and exclusive applicability of this term, when used in a military sense, to the cavalry, together with the fact that Theopompus was cited for information about Cleon's attack on that very body, makes plausible the inference that the scholiast, misunderstanding the term's special meaning, consciously or unconsciously wrote what he thought was an equivalent. What Theopompus wrote was: προπηλακισθεὶς γὰρ ὑπ' αὐτῶν καὶ παροξυνθεὶς ἐπετέθη τῇ καταστάσει καὶ διετέλεσεν εἰς αὐτοὺς κακὰ μηχανώμενος. 'Having been insulted by them, and worked up into a rage, he made an attack against the payment of their equipment-money and continuously devised evil against them.' It would have been in character for Cleon to have made some such threat.⁶

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¹ The same view is (again) implied by Van Leeuwen ad loc.: 'postea autem rerum potitum desertionis eos insimulasse, quo veterem ulcisceretur iniuriam'.

² His gloss of the words: 'durch eintritt in der rat 428/7'.

³ Connor, *Theopompus*, 50 f.

⁴ Apart from the reference in Lysias which I quote, two other citations are listed in L.S.J. s.v. I. 2. b.: Eupolis F 268, Plato

Comicus F 165.

⁵ See W. K. Pritchett, *Ancient Military Practices*, Part I (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1971), p. 3, n. 3.

⁶ It is worth adding that if this explanation is correct, speculation about any actual 'desertion' by the cavalry in summer 427 B.C. is even more hazardous than Gomme, *Commentary*, ii. 290 supposed.