NOTES ON CLEOPHON

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He used to be the maker of lyres, born of unknown father and Thracian mother, the most baneful demagogue in Athens during the fateful period 411-404, the corrupt blusterer who constantly impeded peace until it was too late, finally liquidated on the ironic charge of evading military service.

The picture is changing. Ostraca found in recent years have furnished Cleophon with a distinguished father, a suspect brother, and a political career extending back to the ostracism of Hyperbolus and the heady years of the Sicilian expedition.¹

Provocative discoveries, at first blush. For Cleophon does not appear in Thucydides, and the extant references of Aristophanes and the other comedians apply only to 411 and subsequent years. Allusions in Xenophon, Aristotle, and the orators conform to the same pattern.

Reflection tempers surprise. Few scholars are now disposed to swallow the libels of the comedians on the demagogues.² More to the point, the omissions and distorted comments of Thucydides on this topic are equally suspect. Hence the general burden of this paper’s argument is not intrepidly novel.

However, the fullest collections of testimonia on Cleophon were assembled long before the ostraca discoveries.³ The literary evidences are jejune at best, inconsistent and fraught with political bias at worst. Lack of analysis has caused superficial and inaccurate accounts of Cleophon to be enshrined in the textbooks, especially on the matter of his execution. And the epochal study of demagogues by Connor,⁴ although furnishing valuable references and observations, eschews a full survey of Cleophon’s career. This paper, then, is offered as a modest supplement to current knowledge and opinion; and, with less humility, as a new companion to my own earlier considerations of Cleon and Hyperbolus.⁵


³. Apart from Kirchner’s *Prospographic Attica* (henceforth cited as PA), 8638, see H. A. Holden, *Onomasticon Aristophaneum* (1902), s.v. Kleophon, though his references tend to be inaccurate. There is also Swoboda’s article in *PW XI*, cols. 792–6.


First, Aristophanes. His earliest extant allusion is in *Thesmophoriazusae* 805; it is in the parabasis, which ought to be significant. Both context and phraseology are compelling. Just as Charminos is inferior to Nausimache in the preceding line, so Cleophon is dubbed as very much worse than Salabakcho. The scholiast predictably regarded both ladies as whores, which could of course be correct, and opines that Cleophon the lyre-maker is here branded as a *cinaedus*.

There is much more to it than that. The obvious foreignness of the name Salabakcho is employed in this copulative nomenclature to reflect the usual allegations against Cleophon of low or alien parentage on his mother’s side. Hyperbolus suffers the same attacks. So does Cleon, which is immediately pertinent. For in *Equites* 765, Cleon is made to describe himself as the best person in Athens after Lysicles, Cynna, and Salabakcho. Lysicles is that tantalisingly obscure demagogue from the early years of the Peloponnesian War who is said to have married Aspasia after the death of Pericles. Cynna, according to the scholiast (who indulges himself in scholarly rebuttal of the interpretation of Eratosthenes), was another harlot. Her flashing eyes are twice mentioned by Aristophanes (*Vesp.* 1032; *Pax* 755: a one-line description, identical in both plays).

The combination of demagogues with suggestively-named women of low repute is a stock motif of comedy, and nothing is proved against Cleophon’s character. But literary motifs can also be political commonplaces. The introduction of Cleophon in the *Thesmophoriazusae* is made in the immediate context of Charminos. This latter is the general who was sent to Samos, and who was defeated by the Spartans in a sea battle off Smye. Hence his association with Nausimache is punningly appropriate, perhaps suspiciously so. But the literary blends with the political when it is recollected that Charminos is associated by Thucydides with the murder of Hyperbolus on Samos.* Add the fact that the parabasis under discussion builds up to an abrasive attack on the mother of Hyperbolus, and we are getting somewhere. Cleophon is adduced as a name as familiar to the audience as notorieties such as Charminos and Hyperbolus. Further, he is deemed worthy of the exact insult once levelled against Cleon. Cleophon is not a new figure on the political scene in 411.

That conclusion will need more investigation, as will the wider issues thus raised. These will all be reverted to, later on. The other play of Aristophanes in which Cleophon features is the *Ranae*. There are three overt allusions. The first (679) occurs in the opening of the parabasis. Cleophon is adduced as a name synonymous with ambition, and there is mockery (somewhat obscured by textual problems in 682/3) of his supposedly Thracian connections. In the second passage (1504), Aeschylus is urged to save Athens from the many fools and rogues infesting the city, including Cleophon. The final reference (1532) is

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6. Thuc. 8. 30; 41-2; see my Hyperbolus article on all this, and *PA* 15517 for Charminos.
in the very last sentence in the play. The chorus urges peace and advises Cleophon and other 'foreigners' to depart and fight at home.

The allusion to Cleophon's ambition was to become a proverbial tag in later antiquity; a similar phenomenon is discernible in the cases of Hyperbolus, Peisander, and others. Cleophon's own case is cited by the scholiast on *Ranae* 1532. Thus another literary-political cliché is established. No further comment on Thracian origins is needed, for the moment. The scholiast on *Ranae* 679 claims, without furnishing (or fabricating) details, that Cleophon was a general. This is a fascinating possibility in several regards, especially in the light of his newly-discovered father's career and his own execution; it is not confirmed elsewhere, and is not unique to Cleophon. Cleon was a general; Hyperbolus may have been general or trierarch; Lysicles and Eucrates are other candidates for the role of demagogue-general.  

The second passage links Cleophon with the *Poristae* named Myrmex, Nicomachus, and Archenomos, although the scholiast separates the first two names from the *Poristae* and claims that they are simply being attacked for their vileness. The copulation of Cleophon and financial officials can be connected to the demagogue's association with the controversial *diobelia*. However, one cannot help thinking also of the alleged son of Lysicles and Aspasia, called Poristes.  

The fact that Cleophon is brought back to round off the *Ranae* as the only named warmonger is both a tribute to his eminence in Athenian politics in the last stages of the war, and an explanation as to why it was his removal that was most desired by the oligarchs.

Apart from Aristophanes, the major name in comedy in the context of our demagogue is Plato, who wrote a play entitled *Cleophon*. This is presumably another tribute to Cleophon's ascendancy, though it may equally reflect only that playwright's hostility to the politico. The surviving fragments and ancient comments indicate that the basic jokes are Cleophon's cupidity, depravity, and mother. No surprise there, though it will be seen that the first accusation is expressly refuted (at least in a sense) by Lysias. We know that Plato's *Cleophon* came third to the *Ranae*. It is hard to say whether this is suggestive of anything about popular opinion and Cleophon's standing. After all, the triumphant *Ranae* hits hard at the demagogue, and one remembers that Aristophanes also took first prize with the *Equites*.

Otherwise, the surviving comic fragments have no overt and little covert criticism of Cleophon. A hit at his mother has been detected in the use of

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7. Connor, 139, registers examples and references.
8. For demagogues as generals, Connor, 143f.; for Lysicles, *PA* 9417; for Eucrates, *PA* 5759; for Hyperbolus, my article.
9. The evidence for this is the scholiast on Plato, *Menexenus* 235b, but the matter is under suspicion; see Gomme on Thuc. 3. 19. 1, and J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (1971), 458. The name *Poristes* is not admitted in *PA*.

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Thracian women in the *Pisces* of Archippus\(^{11}\) (perhaps produced in 401), but the Thracian motif is too common to allow such precise identification of targets. The correct explanation of Archippus’ scenario is given by Athenaeus, who extrapolates from his own monograph on the point and concludes that *Thratta* (=a small fish) is used for a pun.\(^{12}\)

While on this subject, we may as well finally expel Thracian women from the scene. Cratinus wrote a play called *The Thracian Women* (perhaps produced in 442), in which Pericles is attacked.\(^{13}\) A character in the *Prosptalians* of Eupolis (produced in 429?) has a mother who is a Thracian ribbon-seller.\(^{14}\) Aristophanes was fond of the motif.\(^{15}\) It was a refinement of the basic joke to claim that bad tragedians were of Thracian stock; Aristophanes uses this against Meletus.\(^{16}\) So, more interestingly, does Theopompus against Acestor, who was a friend of Cleon.\(^{17}\) Finally, the *Baptae* of Eupolis used the theme of the Thracian rites of Cotytto, which involved men dancing to the music of a lyre-playing girl.\(^{18}\) That might suggest that the picture of Cleophon, the alleged lyre-making son of a Thracian mother, is nothing but a composite of comic motifs.

No need to linger on the matter of low-born or foreign mothers. It would be surprising if Cleophon had not been furnished with the same trappings as had been Acestor, Cleon, Euripides, Hyperbolus, and the like. Equally unsurprising is the continuance of the motif by the fourth-century orators and the later commentators. The former employ all the scurrilous techniques of comedy; the latter elevated them to the status of proverb and history.

A last word on the subject of alien birth. The theme is a consequence of Pericles’ law on citizenship eligibility. In the first half of the fifth century, Cimon (for easy example) had not had to worry about his Thracian mother. In one sense, it is paradoxical that the comedians flaunt the *democratic xenophobia* of their age. Of course, this is largely explained by the simple fact that they were out to please their Athenian audiences. Reverting to Cleophon, there was the old mystery of his father: a mystery, indeed, as old as Aelian, and one shared by Hyperbolus and Demades.\(^{19}\) The ostraca discoveries now appear to have provided Cleophon with a doughty father: Cleippides, son of Deinias, of Acharnae. We did not know this until a few years ago; Aelian did not know it; Aristophanes and company must have known it. Hence the paternity of Cleophon had to be played down. But there was one possible smear even here

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11. Archippus 27 (Edmonds, 802).
13. Cratinus 71–83 (Edmonds, 44 f.).
15. *Ach.* 273; *Vesp.* 828; *Pax* 1138; *Thesm.* 279, 280, 284, 293.
17. Theopompus 60 (Edmonds, 868): on Acestor, see Connor, 130.
18. According to the scholiast on Juvenal 2. 91–2; see Edmonds, 330.
which they might have used, at least implicitly: the name Deinias. For in a fragment of the Medea of Strattis, there is an Egyptian called Deinias, shamefully familiar with unguents. This is not to impugn the credentials of Cleippides' father, but simply to show that one male name in Clephon's family tree lent itself to ethnic jokes.

All in all, there is not really much about Clephon in the extant plays and fragments of Aristophanes and the other comedians. The balance would obviously be redressed if Plato's play had survived. And there is the simple fact that no play by Aristophanes between the Thesmophoriazusae and the Ranae, that is, for the period of Clephon's greatest eminence, happens to survive.

This simple point is important. Along with the misrepresentations of Thucydides, it further distorts the picture we have of the post-Periclean demagogues from the extant comic references. Had it not been for the comedians (and their scholiasts and other commentators), what would we (or, for that matter, Plutarch) know of Hyperbolus? Very little, thanks to the blatant suppression of his career and influence by Thucydides. The same is true of Lysicles, Eucrates, and the various friends and allies of Cleon. And there is the even more pertinent case of Androcles. This latter is scantily and confusingly represented in the remains of comedy. Like Hyperbolus, albeit with less overt malice, he is mentioned only once by Thucydides: introduced and killed in one sentence. But, again like Hyperbolus, he was deemed important enough by the revolutionary elements of 411 to be liquidated with celerity. This is very relevant to the picture of Clephon in the sources, especially that of his ultimate fate.

One final point on the comic evidence. Clephon is nowhere dubbed with his infamous epithet of lyre-maker. In fact, λυροποιός is not used in any (surviving) context by Aristophanes. The scholiast has it, of course, but the most 'respectable' sources for the term are Andocides, Aeschines, and the Ath. Pol. The orators could have inherited the epithet from comedy, but it is impossible to be sure, since they were themselves so addicted to mutual exchange of such insults. It is not employed by Xenophon, which may be significant, for he was no lover of popular leaders. However, there is very little about Clephon in the Hellenica; Xenophon may simply have imitated the Thucydidean technique of suppression. Nor does the term occur in Lysias. Nothing can be inferred from that, for, as will be seen later, Lysias on Cleophon is, to say the least, equivocal.

A quick word on another wretched business. References to evil leaders and foreign babblers in the Orestes of Euripides (772, 903f.) were taken by some

20. Strattis 33 (Edmonds, 822); see also V. Ehrenberg, People of Aristophanes (1951), 151.
21. For Androcles, see PA 870; PW I, col. 2148; Connor, 143, 155 n.40; D. M. MacDowell, Andocides: On the Mysteries (1962), 81–2, 179, 182–4, 190, 193; I hope to write elsewhere on this demagogue.
22. Thuc. 8. 65. 2.
commentators to allude to Cleophon. But the scholiasts themselves make it clear that such equations were conjectural, ultimately deriving from Philochoros in the case of the first passage.\textsuperscript{24} And other commentators on the second alleged reference had absurdly connected it with the long-dead Cleon. Even if one accepts that Euripides intended a contemporary allusion, his phrases are so commonplace that they cannot be assigned to a precise individual. One might wish to except from this stricture the adjective ἀθρόγλαστος (903), a word so rare that it could be taken to be a recognisable hit at a particular contemporary. Accept this, and a cognate temptation offers. Aristotle (\textit{Rhetoric} 3. 7. 2) condemns the style of a Cleophon for expressions as silly as ποτνια σωφρ. It is impossible to say whether this Cleophon is the demagogue, the tragic poet, or another. Earlier in the \textit{Rhetoric} (1. 15. 13), the demagogue had been cited for his speech against Critias. An acceptable pattern emerges, especially if one believes that Aristotle is the author of the \textit{Ath. Pol.}, a document contributing greatly to the bad reputation of Cleophon. However, when one recollects how widespread were the attacks on demagogues for their foreign parentage, sobriety rushes back and the structure collapses like the proverbial pack of cards. The \textit{Orestes} is of no help to an investigation of Cleophon.

Oratorical and historiographical references to the demagogue afford disparate facts, desperate libels, and assorted clues. Isocrates\textsuperscript{25} linked his name with that of Hyperbolus as the archetypal bad influence on the people; this copulation persists at least until the time of Aelian. Aeschines\textsuperscript{26} represented him as the man who finally ruined Athens: the corrupt lyre-maker, once a slave in fetters, fraudulently enrolled as an Athenian, the briber of the people, the manic opponent of peace who threatened to slit the throat of any man who dared mention that word.

All good rip-roaring stuff, so far. And utterly conventional. We need talk no more about lyre-making and illegal citizenship. The allegation of former slavery is comparable to a fragment of Andocides,\textsuperscript{27} who called Hyperbolus’ father a branded slave still working at the public mint. As almost always, Cleophon and Hyperbolus are interchangeable types.

Andocides\textsuperscript{28} announced in the \textit{De Mysteriis} that the greatest disgrace to befall him during exile was the occupation of his house by lyre-making Cleophon. More about that later. The Aeschinean portrait is painted from the same palette as that used by the author of the \textit{Ath. Pol.}. In this document, Cleophon succeeds Cleon as the popular leader;\textsuperscript{29} it is notable that Hyperbolus is suppressed altogether in this account. It is baldly stated that he introduced

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  \item \textsuperscript{24} See E. Delebecque, \textit{Euripide et la Guerre du Péloponnèse} (1951), 302.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} De Pace 75.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} De Legat. 76; \textit{In Ctes}. 150.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Fr. 5 (Blass).
  \item \textsuperscript{28} De Myst. 146.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ath. Pol.} 28. 3.
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the *diobelia*, later abolished by Callicrates, and was eventually executed (as was Callicrates also). In the other relevant passage of the *Ath. Pol.*, Cleophon dissuades the people from accepting the Spartan peace proposals after Arginusae. He appears in the Assembly wearing a breast plate, and delivers a drunken speech urging that peace must depend upon Spartan surrender of all the cities.

Cleophon as the intransigent opponent of peace is a regular motif in the sources. But the circumstances keep changing. Lysias concentrates on the events after Aegospotami, asserting that the demagogue based his opposition to peace on the Spartan demand for demolition of the Long Walls. Diodorus Siculus introduced Cleophon as the opponent of peace in 410, after Cyzicus. Xenophon, by stark contrast, omits all three situations. Indeed, Cleophon is mentioned only once, on the occasion of his death: the parallel with Thucydides' treatment of Hyperbolus and Androcles is obvious.

Lysias has several things to say about Cleophon. Apart from the circumstances of his death, a matter for separate discussion, he draws attention to the fact that Cleophon, whose influence had extended over 'many years', surprised everyone by dying a poor man and leaving his family and relatives in penury. It had been expected that he would make a lot of money out of his position. This negative compliment is partly offset elsewhere, in another comment on his death, where it is stated that there were good grounds for calling the demagogue a bad lot.

A speech by Cleophon against Critias is mentioned in the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle; the demagogue quoted Solon's poetry to prove the long-standing immorality of the oligarch's family. Many centuries later, Himerius envisaged an attack by Cleophon on Alcibiades. One may note that Himerius also had Hyperbolus prosecuting Nicias.

Finally, it is now known that a few Athenians voted for the ostracism of Cleophon on that marvellous occasion when the lamp-selling Hyperbolus was extinguished. Like father, like son, for Cleippides had also been voted against in an earlier ostracism. Also like brother, for at least one vote was cast against Philinos in the year of Hyperbolus' fall. It will be seen that this brother may be significant in the understanding of Cleophon's factional struggles.

What to make of all this? Cautious speculation and close analysis do not furnish a detailed reconstruction of the career of Cleophon, but they will put his factional position into clearer perspective. More importantly, he can be

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30. 34. 1.
31. *In Agoratum* 8–12.
32. 13. 53.
34. *In Nicomachum* 13.
rescued from some of the ancient libels, still perpetuated in too many modern accounts.

Cleippides\textsuperscript{37} was sent as one of three generals against Mytilene in 428. Thucydides records the bald fact, passing no comment on Cleippides, and leaving his colleagues unnamed. He does not recur in the historian. It is usually reckoned that the votes for his ostracism belong to the celebrated occasion of 443, when Thucydides, son of Melesias, was ousted.\textsuperscript{38} If so, he will not have been young in 428, and Cleophon could already have been of an age for politics. So also Philmos.

A father and two sons, candidates for ostracism between the years 443 and 417/16/15. Does this add up to a political family? It depends on what significance is accorded to these ‘scatter votes’. Did some Athenians really think them important enough to be ostracised? Or were such votes cast merely out of non-political animus of a completely personal nature? It may even be conceivable that such men might vote against themselves in order to get some safe bit of political limelight.

It has been suggested that Cleophon and Hyperbolus were in concert at the time of the latter’s eclipse.\textsuperscript{39} There is no evidence for this, and, anyway, Androcles will have to be added to any such calculations. All three were natural rivals, though one or two or all of them could have favoured a short-term alliance against Alcibiades. With Hyperbolus gone, Androcles and Cleophon must be presumed to be amongst the agitators against Alcibiades during the brouhaha over the mutilation of the Hermæ and the profanation of the Mysteries. Thucydides names no names,\textsuperscript{40} which helps rather than hinders this proposition.

There are three related problems. Andocides is an obviously unreliable witness on the matter of the Mysteries. He assigns a leading role in the tortuous events to Androcles. Cleophon is only mentioned in the context of occupying his house in the period of exile. Nothing is said about the character or motives of Androcles. It could be inferred that Cleophon coveted the orator’s house and put a political gloss on actions motivated by greed. But why does Andocides not make more of this? When his speech was delivered, it was already a convention to blacken Cleophon. But, again, such an imputation runs counter to Lysias’ tribute to the surprising honesty of Cleophon. The point cannot be resolved, for both orators are always partial.

Second, there are (so far) no ostraca bearing the name of Androcles. This is surprising, and may only be an accident, since he is better attested as the leading

\textsuperscript{37} Thuc. 3. 3. 2; Diodorus, 12. 55. 3, calls him Cleinippides; see \textit{PA} 8521.

\textsuperscript{38} Gomme, on Thuc. 3. 3. 2; Vanderpool, \textit{Ostracism at Athens}, 27; Meiggs-Lewis, 42.

\textsuperscript{39} By F. Camon, \textit{Giornale Italiano di filologia} 16 (1963), 147–51; see also Connor, 79–84.

\textsuperscript{40} 6. 27–29; however, in his reference to the murder of Androcles, it is said that the demagogue had been a prime opponent of Alcibiades in 415, and was liquidated to please the latter. The truth? Or merely a political assertion of 411?
demagogue in the period 415–411, and must already have been known in the days of Hyperbolus.

Third, if Cleophon had attained any eminence before 411, why was he not liquidated as were Hyperbolus and Androcles? Perhaps he saw what was coming and got away from Athens. Or was he then holding the generalship assigned to him by the scholiast, untouchable for military and geographical reasons?

It has been seen that Aristophanes thought Cleophon worthy of mention in 411 along with such characters as Charminos. However, it is in 410–409 that the demagogue really emerges. He introduces the diobelia, procures the exile of Critias, and forces rejection of the Spartan peace overtures after Cyzicus.

Mercifully, the precise intent of the diobelia need not be discussed here. Suffice it to say that Cleophon did not use his financial policies to line his own pockets, according to Lysias. Indeed, by 406, administration of the fund had passed to 'blear-eyed' Archedemus. His attack on Critias was only one episode in a general paying-off of political scores after the restoration of the democracy. It helps, however, to pave the way for the ultimate liquidation of the demagogue.

Cleophon's role as the preventer of peace has already been established as a regular motif, set in three separate contexts. Nor will it be forgotten that this is a logical extension of the older image of Cleon. An even simpler point needs to be kept in mind. Most hostile comment on Cleophon, ancient as well as modern, is conditioned by hindsight. To those who knew and know that Athens goes on to lose the war in 404, the refusals of Spartan overtures after Cyzicus and Arginusae naturally seem tragic errors, and the opponents of peace are inevitably branded as fools or knaves. But in 410 in particular, Athenian prospects looked good. Decisive victories against the Spartans, the restoration of the democracy, and (although no pleasure to Cleophon) the recall of Alcibiades combined to mitigate the memories of Sicily and induce a renewed confidence in the people. Would anyone seriously maintain that the advice of Pericles in such a situation would have been different from that of Cleophon?

Unhappily, the major source for this episode is Diodorus Siculus. Now Diodorus is not always a fool, and he does not invariably swallow the prejudices of his sources against popular leaders. For instance, on the matter of Cleon's death, he abandons Thucydides and has Cleon perish as bravely as Brasidas. However, one does not care to be reliant on him, and he presents a

41. On the influence of the various demagogues, see O. Reverdin, Museum Helveticum 2 (1945), 201–12.
42. For the record, I share the belief that it was a measure of poor relief, rather than pay for jurors or the Assembly, or the theoric fund.
43. Xenophon, Hell, 1.7.2.
44. See the discussion of C. Hignett, A History of the Athenian Constitution (1952), 280–81.
typical picture of Cleophon as a corrupt persuader of the tragically misled populace.

And another factor is revealed by Diodorus. It does no great credit to Cleophon’s ‘patriotism’, but goes a long way towards explaining his stand and the people’s willingness to follow him. The Spartans sent, as their chief negotiator, Endius. Now about Endius we know this. He had been sent to Athens years earlier, during the manoeuvres concerning a treaty between Athens and Argos. One reason for sending him was that he (and his colleagues) was supposed to be on good terms with the Athenians. He appears in Book 8 of Thucydides as an ephor, as such a close friend of Alcibiades that he actually used the latter’s name as part of his own style, and closely participant in the machinations of Alcibiades. When this character appeared in Athens as the chief voice of Sparta, at a time when Alcibiades was supposed to be returning as the saviour of Athens, Cleophon had fair reason to suppose that he could smell a rat. These Spartan overtures will have seemed to him yet another Alcibiadean ploy. It is relevant to subjoin that Endius recurs as an ephor in 404:

he may well have had a hand in the liquidation of Cleophon.

The failures and final eclipse of Alcibiades disappointed Athenian hopes, and may (somewhat ironically) have affected the standing of the demagogue. It is, of course, possible that it was at this time that Cleophon attacked Alcibiades, though this incident (if it happened) could equally well be assigned to 415. Or, for that matter, to 410. Cleophon will hardly have wanted Alcibiades to return as the prospective saviour, and memories of the trick played on Hyperbolus (especially if Cleophon himself had been involved in that event) were surely uncomfortable. An attack on Alcibiades in 410 was ill-timed, but his success against Critias may have pushed the demagogue to over-confidence. At all events, in Xenophon’s account of the prosecution of the generals after Arginusae, Cleophon plays no overt role. The business is associated with Archedemus, currently in charge of the diobelia and described as the popular influence of the hour.

In the Ath. Pol., Cleophon returns at this juncture as the great villain: Archedemus, like Hyperbolus, finds no place in that document. The Spartans again offer peace, but are again rebuffed by Cleophon, who makes his famous appearance in the Assembly: drunk, and wearing a breast plate.

These colourful details cannot just be ignored as a piece of comedy-inspired malice. Politicians have been known to give speeches whilst intoxicated. The breast plate could have been a gimmick, designed to show the Athenians that

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45. 13. 52. 2.
46. Thuc. 5. 44. 3.
47. 8. 6. 3; 8. 12. 1; 8. 17.2.
48. Xenophon, Hell. 2. 3. 1, 10.
49. Hell. 1. 7. 2; see PA 2326 for Archedemus, also Connor, 139 n.3.
50. Sir John A. McDonald, the architect of Canadian confederation, now virtually canonised in the folklore of his country, is a pertinent example.
they could not relax their guard as soon as Sparta offered terms. Or it could have implied to the people that their popular leader walked in fear of violence from the oligarchs. On another level, it might have recalled the portraits of Pericles with his inevitable helmet, serving simultaneously as a favourable contrast to the fineries of Alcibiades. For the references in the Ranae demonstrate that the name of Alcibiades was a potent one as late as 405.

Then came the disaster at Aegospotami. Cleophon, always resilient in the wake of his policy's failures, appears yet again. This time, he causes rejection of the Spartan terms, objecting to their demand for a partial destruction of the Long Walls. His stand is usually regarded as his ultimate madness.

A cooler look is required. Lysias makes it quite clear that it was the issue of the Long Walls which was decisive. They were a symbol to both sides; one remembers the rituals of propaganda with which the Spartans were to commence their destruction. Cleophon may be criticised for such obduracy over a symbol (a common enough fault with politicians), but his stand was genuinely popular. For Theramenes was compelled to offer as bait, when angling for the position of plenipotentiary ambassador to Sparta, the pledge that he would ensure that the walls would not be breached at all.

It may also be pertinent to subjoin a passage from Eupolis, which suggests that the Long Walls symbolised the shelter of the evacuated country-folk against the urban population. Concern over their position, which may be related in general terms to his diobelia, may have sharpened Cleophon's resistance. It would also antagonise some of the demagogue's natural urban support, thus helping his political enemies contrive his ruin.

For there is no doubt at all that his downfall was arranged by his factional enemies, and that the formal charge against him was trumped-up. The details given by Xenophon and Lysias are discrepant, but complement each other and arrive at the same conclusion. Xenophon omits all mention of Cleophon in the present context. The Athenian who advocated acceptance of the Spartan terms was Archestratus, a member of the Boule. He was imprisoned, and a decree was passed forbidding any proposal to accept the terms. Without pressing family connection or identification, one will bear in mind that an Archestratus had been appointed as one of the generals after Notium.

Lysias claims that Cleophon made a generalising assault on the Boule, asserting that its members were in conspiracy against the people. The charge is by no means wild, especially if one reads 'Cleophon' for 'the people'. The jailing of Archestratus must have raised the demagogue's hopes. They were soon to be fatally dashed.

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51. In Agoratum 8–12.
52. Eupolis 110A (Edmonds, 346).
53. Hell. 2. 2. 15.
54. Hell. 1. 5. 16; Diodorus 13. 74, 1. Not our man, since he was dead before the episode in question, according to Lysias (21. 8).
55. In Nicomachum 10.
Xenophon passes over the liquidation of Cleophon in a vague sentence, asserting that he perished in a factional struggle. True: but of equal significance is the suppression of names and details. Lysias supplies the full version (his version, of course), allotting space to the story in two speeches. In the longer account, Cleophon is accused by the oligarchs on some sort of charge that he had evaded his military duties. The orator's formulation of the charge is odd, perhaps hinting at its frailty: ὅτι οὐκ ἠλθεν εἰς τὰ ὅπλα ἀναπαυσόμενος. Whatever this means, Lysias insists that it was a false charge. His real offence was to have opposed the demolition of the Long Walls. Oligarchs brought the accusation, and Cleophon was condemned by a packed jury. His death is contrived after the departure of his natural enemy, Theramenes, who later returns to announce the betrayal of his own pledge to the people: the walls must, after all, come down.

In this version, no names are named. It is likely that the liquidation of Cleophon was agreed between the extreme oligarchs, Theramenes, and Endius. Absent friends such as Critias will not be overlooked! In Lysias' other account, it was Satyrus of Cephisia, a member of the Boule, who had Cleophon arrested. Since they did not expect a fair court to condemn him, Nicomachus was suborned to pass a law allowing the Boule to participate in the trial.

Satyrus and Nicomachus. Fascinating characters, both. The former is bracketed along with Chremon as one of the two dominant influences in the Boule. In Xenophon, he is the 'most audacious and shameless' of the Eleven at Athens, the man who actually drags (how poetic!) Theramenes from the altar to his doom. Nicomachus (omitted by Xenophon) had been on or under the commission of Nomothetae during the entire period of Cleophon's attested eminence. It is obviously likely that the two had been enemies. An irony subsists. Nicomachus is accused, like an archetypal demagogue in comedy, of alien-cum-servile parentage and doubtful claims to citizenship.

Such was the end of Cleophon. How did the oligarchs get away with it so easily? For no violence seems to have been used, unless some be inferred from Xenophon's talk of stasis. Several factors combine to provide an answer. Increasing distress in Athens must have turned more of Cleophon's old supporters against him. Hopes were now pinned on the promises of Theramenes, who had claimed that he could get better terms than those opposed by Cleophon. And at no time in Athens did one demagogue hold unchallenged sway. Cleophon had rivals on the popular side as well as his more obvious ones in the Boule, in Sparta, and in the ranks of the oligarchs in exile. The Athenians will not have seen his death as the automatic extinction of their leadership.

56. Hell. 1. 7. 35.
57. In Agoratum 8–12.
58. Hell. 2. 3, 54–6; see PA 12598.
59. See PA 10934.
Why was Cleophon not simply murdered, as Androcles and Hyperbolus had been? Crude assassination was probably eschewed because it would have revived memories of 411, and might well have united the people behind some new leader. And the oligarchs doubtless calculated that it would be to their advantage to show Sparta (in particular, Spartans such as Endius) that they could control Athens with at least a façade of legal authority. That would be a particular concern of Theramenes.

This paper is written on the assumption that the ostraca finds relate to the demagogue. To be honest, it is possible that they do not. However, no other Cleophon seems available as a candidate, and the equation is a fair one. The revelation of his paternity should finally warn us against accepting any slur by orators and comedians on a popular leader without vigilant investigation. Unmasked yet again (it cannot happen too often) are the suppressive techniques of Thucydides and Xenophon.

Puzzles, inconsistencies, and new revelations have merged and emerged from the analysis. Cleophon belonged to a highly political family, especially if his brother is the Philinus prosecuted by Antiphon for alleged embezzlement.60 Let Cleippides the father be adduced for the last time: a candidate for ostracism in, perhaps, 443; a general in 428. Cleophon had a longish run in Athenian politics. A politician suppressed by Thucydides, played down by Xenophon. Not an irresponsible bawler, but an honest financial reformer and administrator. A man of war (perhaps even a general), but not unreasonably so when taken in the context of events. Not a belligerent coward, finally unmasked, but a victim of false charges brought by the real enemies of the people. In future, there will be no excuse for traducing him as a bad lot or an utterly and ruinously selfish demagogue.61

60. Choreutes 12, 21, 35f.; fr. 6 (Blass). The equation is suggested by, e.g., Vanderpool, Ostracism at Athens, 28.

61. Hignett, 283–4, is a good example, with his talk of Cleophon’s “selfish folly”. N. G. L. Hammond, A History of Greece to 322 B.C. (1959), 418, could blandly write that “Cleophon was executed for desertion.” Even Vanderpool chatters on about Cleophon being “a bad lot”, and about Cleophon and Philinus who together “went wrong.” This sort of thing is no advance on Attic comedy and oratory.
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