From Ponêros to Pharmakos:
Theater, Social Drama, and Revolution in Athens, 428–404 BCE

The stage drama, when it is meant to do more than entertain—though entertainment is always one of its vital aims—is a metacommunicative, explicit or implicit, witting or unwitting, on the major social dramas of its social context (wars, revolutions, scandals, institutional changes). Not only that, but its message and its rhetoric feed back into the latent processual structure of the social drama and partly account for its ready ritualization. Life itself now becomes a mirror held up to art, and the living now perform their lives, for the protagonists of a social drama, a “drama of living” have been equipped by aesthetic drama with some of their most salient opinions, imageries, tropes and ideological perspectives.¹

Victor Turner stresses the power of theater to articulate and to transform the acts and attitudes of social and political life, influencing what he terms their “social dramas,” sequences of conflict and resolution which unfold as breach of a norm, crisis and dissolution into factions, the process of redress, and finally, reintegration or acknowledgment of permanent schism.² For Turner, dramatic representation affects the form social conflict and resolution assume, and informs the perception and narration of social dramas. These in turn condition stage drama, which in due

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course “feeds back” into social drama. Some have argued that the rise and fall of Athenian imperialism in the period 478–404 BCE both transpires and is narrated as tragedy despite the implicit and explicit warnings sounded throughout the genre. Others have detailed points of intersection between theatrical spectacle, jury trials, and forensic oratory.

Scholars have devoted less attention to the role Old Comedy plays in the formulation of Athenian social drama. This paper explores how the Old Comic stage, and to a lesser extent tragedy, articulated, mediated, and ultimately transformed the struggle between elites competing for leadership in Athens after the death of Perikles. Conceptualizing and labeling members of the newly emerging commercial elite πονηρός and μυχθηρός (“bad,” “base,” “inauthentic”) and citizens who opposed them as χρηστός (“good,” “noble,” “authentic”) the theater exercised a kind of cultural dokimasia, abrogating the status of the new elite, and representing a ruling coalition of it and the demos as a corruption of the community.

The rejection of the new elite’s bid for hegemony challenged the ideological hegemony of the people in democratic Athens. As I argue, demotic hegemony developed as the discourse of the hegemony of the new elite—men whose wealth derived from production for exchange, was held in liquid form rather than in land, and who made their bid for leadership as prosecutors before mass juries and as speakers in the assembly and Boule rather than as military leaders and liturgists. The theater sought to secure the ideological solidarity of the polis; but it did so in the exclusion of the new elite and in the reformation of its following—the demos—conceived as the poorest and least educated segment of the polis. The theater depicts the alliance of the new elite and the “urban peasantry” as dominant and repressive but not hegemonic, imagining it as a purely economic coalition based upon deception, bribery, and force which uses the law courts to oppress the city’s elite of birth, wealth, and military excellence. The figure of the

6. For the hegemony of the masses in democratic Athens, see Ober 1989: esp. 332–39.
metrios politeś—the “middling citizen”—which in principle excludes extremes of wealth and poverty, in reality designates an imaginary coalition of large and small land holders—farmers and aristocrats—in clear antithesis to the new elite and its fictional constituency, an “urban peasantry” composed of old men. The alliance of farmers and aristocrats, by contrast, directs the polis morally and politically, unifying it in the present and renewing its connection with the heroic, prestigious time of the patrioi nomoi and of the Persian Wars. In this way, the theater problematized the demos as an imagined community: chrēstoi make it chrēstos; ponēroi make it ponēros. The identity of the demos derives from the status of its leaders.

Theatrical ideology tended to favor the political styles of men such as Nikias and Alkibiades, who converted their private fortunes into public benefactions on an unprecedented scale to define themselves as chrēstoi and to distinguish themselves from the ponēroi of the new elite. Their conspicuous expenditure at religious festivals and Panhellenic competitions evoked Kimonian megalophrosynē (Kritias fr. 8.1; Gorgias fr. 20 DK; Plut. Kim. 10.1–5) and a politics of “aristocratic largess.” Nikias’ and Alkibiades’ revival of aristocratic megaloprepeia as the essence of their political styles was part of a wider cultural trend—comedy, for instance, produced a fantasy of Kimonian nobility in leadership as part of its representation of the Athenian illud tempus. The leading political orators of the period, Kleon, Hyperbolos, Demostratos, Androkles, and Kleophon, did not convert their private fortunes to the public sphere to the same degree; they redistributed public money.

Clifford Geertz observes that ideological discourse is the result of “...cultural as well as social and psychological strain. It is a loss of orientation that most
directly gives rise to ideological activity, an inability, for lack of usable models, to comprehend the universe of civic rights and responsibilities in which one finds oneself located.”

The lack of models to legitimate the leadership of a monied elite tested in the assembly, dikasterion, Boule, and marketplace rather than on the field of battle produced strain in Athenian culture. The problem, as Pierre Bourdieu has demonstrated for socio-economic conditions comparable to those of late fifth-century Athens, is that “Economic capital can...only work in the euphemized form of symbolic capital. The conversion of capital which is the condition of its efficacy is in no way automatic.”

The theater blocked transformation of the economic capital of the new elite into symbolic capital, refusing to validate its wealth as contributing to the well-being of the polis. Dramatists debunked demotic hegemony as mired in the culture of the agora and embedded in the private economic objectives of the poor and its leaders. The comic stage in particular resisted demotic hegemony by valorizing itself as the antithesis of the agora, both as the “marketplace” and as location of the courts.

There is no consensus on the ideological tendencies of old comedy. Recent work views the comic stage as reinforcing the democratic order of the city. There

13. Geertz 1973: 219. My discussion of ideology is indebted to Geertz 1973: 194–233 who stresses that ideology: (1) is a symbolic formation in response to strain or loss of orientation—it provides meaning in the face of uncertainty—and hence “make[s] an autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful, the susasive images by means of which it can sensibly be grasped” (218); (2) constitutes “maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience” (220); and (3) establishes commitment: “Ideology bridges the emotional gap between things as they are and as one would have them be, thus insuring the performance of roles that might otherwise be abandoned in despair or apathy” (205). Cf. Althusser 1976/1984: esp. 36–39 for the formula “ideology is the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” For other attempts at defining ideology, see Eagleton 1991: 1–61.

14. Bourdieu 1980/1990: 128. For the definition of symbolic capital, see p. 118. “In an economy defined by the refusal to recognize the ‘objective’ truth of ‘economic’ practices, that is, the law of ‘naked self-interest’ and egoistic calculation, even ‘economic’ capital cannot act unless it succeeds in being recognized through a conversion that can render unrecognizable the true principle of its efficacy. Symbolic capital is this denied capital, recognized as legitimate, that is, misconceived as capital (recognition, acknowledgement, in the sense of gratitude aroused by benefits can be one of the foundations of this recognition)...”

15. Democratic culture: Nub. 417–19, 1002–1003, 1052–55; Ran. 1069–73, 1083–88; [Andok.] 439; cf. Ar. Eq. 1375–80; E. El. 528; [Xen.] AP 1.13; democratic leadership: Eq. 188–93, 984–96. For democratic leaders as agoraioi, see below. The distinction maps onto other concerns of the stage: traditional vs. contemporary, military vs. forensic culture (e.g. Vesp. 1060–62; Ran. 1491–99), peace vs. war (Pax 975–76, cf. Av. 729–36; Lys. 1274–1321; E. Su. 486–93), elite vs. non-elite leadership. For a different view of the culture of the agora, see Millett 1998: esp. 218–27.

is some truth to this view. That the Megarians claim to have invented comedy “at the time when they had a democracy” (Poet. 1448a31–32) suggests a link between comedy and democracy. The Old Oligarch argues that the Athenian demos uses this connection to its advantage (2.18). He claims that the Athenian demos forbids comedians from abusing itself or its members to preserve its reputation, but “if someone want to ridicule someone, they bid him to do it privately” (ιδίᾳ δὲ κελεύουσιν, εἴ τις τινα βούλεται) knowing that comedians ridicule “either a rich or noble or powerful man” (ἡ πλουσίος ἡ γενναῖος ἡ δυνάμενος, 2.18). The Old Oligarch’s treatment of restrictions on comic speech has some affinity with the Acharnians’ depiction of charges against Aristophanes as a result of the Babylonians. Dikaiopolis declares that Kleon dragged him before the Boule over last year’s comedy, falsely accusing him of “reviling the city while strangers were present” (377–82). He insists that he can criticize the city freely now because it is the Lenaia and strangers are not yet present (502–508). In the parabasis, the chorus complains that the poet’s enemies falsely allege “that he subjects our city to comic ridicule and commits hybris against the demos” (ὦς κωμῳδεῖ τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν δήμον καθυβρίζει, 630–31). Dikaiopolis’ concern is not to ridicule and hence dishonor the demos or its members in front of outsiders—he claims he can do this in the privacy of the Lenaia. The Old Oligarch considers ridicule against members of the demos acceptable, if conducted privately.

Although it may account for differences in comic speech at the Lenaia and City Dionysia, the Old Oligarch’s model fails to illuminate comedies such as the Knights and the Wasps, which subject the demos as an imagined community to penetrating criticism; this is true of all demagogue comedy. The Old Oligarch’s demos allows its members to be mocked if they try to rise above their station “by meddling in others’ affairs” (διὰ πολυπραγμοσύνην, 2.18) and “by seeking to get the better of the demos” (διὰ τὸ ζητεῖν πλέον τί εξεβέν τοῦ δήμου, ibid.). This might explain comic ridicule of sykophants, hucksters, and intellectuals who became prominent through unjust means. But what of democratic leaders? Are they members of the demos who rose to prominence through such means and hence acceptable targets according to the Old Oligarch’s criteria? The comedians certainly present them in this way; but in the Old Oligarch’s view, the demos “loves those who are friendly and profitable to them, even if they are ponéroi, and rather hates the chrēstoi” (2.19). Democratic leaders are ponéroi whom the demos

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18. For demagogy comedy, see Lind 1991: esp. 235–52; Sommerstein 2000: 437–51. I agree with Gomme 1940/1962: 44 that Aristophanes’ “main task” in his plays of the period 426–411 was κωμῳδεῖν τὸν δήμον and would extend this period to 392, adding the Ekklesiasousai. But the critique is most intense and marked in demagogue comedy.
loves (and does not view as unjust or unworthy of their positions). Nor are the comedians’ politicians and prosecutors “rich, noble, and powerful” in the same sense as the Old Oligarch uses these words.

The Old Oligarch fails to see that comedians represent democratic leadership in terms identical to his.19 His desire to reveal Athenian democracy as the repressive domination of ponéroi over chrêstoi in all its dimensions (1.1, 4–6)—economic (1.13, 2.9), judicial (ibid.; cf. 1.14–18), social and cultural (1.13, 2.10), political (1.6–9, 2.19)—blinds him to the fact that the democratic regime itself accommodated the essence of his critique: democracy is a form of repression that insures its own survival, but inverts the social and moral orders and deserves no praise as currently constituted (1.1, 3.1; cf. 1.6–9, 11–13, 3.10). The essential difference between the Old Oligarch and the comic stage is this: while the comic stage pleaded to return chrêstoi to leadership positions and to restore democracy in its “ancestral form,” as the politeia of the Persian War period, the Old Oligarch considered the leadership of chrêstoi tantamount to the enslavement of the demos (1.9), and thought any major improvements in the government would jeopardize democracy itself (3.8–9).

The free speech accorded the comic poet was a profoundly democratic privilege.20 But comedians used this license to ridicule democracy as currently constituted and practiced and to long for a patrios politeia of the kind articulated during the oligarchic takeovers of 411 and 404. The comic stage ridiculed practices considered essential to demotic hegemony—jury pay and the authority of the demotic jury (Pol. 1293a1–11; AP 9.1, 35.2). Aristophanes deprecates pay for activities other than military service; forensic oratory is central to his mockery of contemporary democracy: it enacts the ideological hegemony of the masses as judicial theft from the wealthy and the chrêstoi to enrich prosecutors and keep the demos dependent upon wages, transforming a city of farmers and warriors who won fame by fighting the Persians into a collection of urban peasants who gain subsistence by oppressing their own elite. His solutions to Athenian social and political problems involve making scapegoats of democratic leaders and/or transforming the courts (Ach., Eq., Vesp., Pax, Eccl.). There is more than a casual similarity between comic ideology and oligarchic revision of the democracy. Both oligarchic takeovers rescinded misthophora except for military service, the nine archons, and the prytaneis (AP 29.5, 33.1; Thuc. 8.65.3, 67.3, 97.1). The first wave of oligarchs abolished the graphê paranomôn, eisangelia, and proklêsis (Thuc. 8.67.2; Dem. 24.154; AP 29.4); the second wave undid Ephialtes’ reforms, rescinded contested laws of Solon, and dissolved the authority of demotic jurors (τὸ κύρος ὑπὸ τοὺς δικασταῖς κατέλυσαν, AP 35.2; cf. Dem. 24.154).

19. Contrast Gomme 1940/1962: 44, “He is simply saying something false and which he must have known to be false (if he thought at all), but which suited his mood.”
To be sure, Aristophanes shows disdain for those who might be involved in oligarchic revolution \( (\text{Lys. 577–78}) \). Yet the ridicule of those who participated in the takeovers of 411 and 404 is of a different order of magnitude from that accorded the new elite (the ponéros, agoraioi, bómolochoi, pharmakos; see below). Comedians mock those involved in oligarchic revolution, if they do so at all, with puns on their names, mockery for physical deformity (cf. Perikles’ head), gluttony, cowardice, and alazoneia. No citizen is ridiculed as a leader of kaloi k’agathoi. In comedy, the only enemies of the demos are the leaders it selects for itself. This is decisive against claims such as Malcolm Heath’s that Aristophanes manipulates a single set of political commonplaces that were contested on all sides, mocks them, and ironically subverts himself. The topoi of democratic political and forensic rhetoric are the problem: they represent the illusion of the demos’ pleasure, power, and profit and function as the basis for demagogic power which corrupts the demos as an imagined community.

In fact, the theater was divided between competing cultures. It was a democratic institution; but it also produced the city’s elite. Dramatists used their position as “internal critics” both to reinforce demotic power and to preserve the values and voice of the leaders threatened by the ascendancy of the new elite, establishing the theater as the principal site for the negotiation of ideologies and practices in fifth-century Athenian culture. One non-negotiable demand of the theater was that an elite of birth, wealth, education, and culture lead the demos.

21. I am not convinced that \( \text{Thesm. 331–71} \) refers to a recall of Alkibiades and establishment of tyranny. For this view, see \( \text{HCT 5.190–93; Ostwald 1986: 367–68. Aristophanes treats the threat of oligarchic revolution as a trick to “protect” democracy (\text{Vesp. 488–99; Pl. 948–50). At \text{Eccl. 452–53, “dissolving democracy” and “playing the sykophant” are two of the vices peculiar to men. The rejection and balancing of extremes are typical of Aristophanes’ ambivalent position. See \text{Lys. 575–86; Ran. 686–705.}} \)

22. E.g. Aristokrates (\( \text{PA 1904; APF 56–57} \)) gives aristokratia a bad name (\( \text{Av. 125–26} \) with \( \Sigma \)). Charminos’ (\( \text{PA 15517} \)) name indicates his inferiority to Nausimachus as a naval leader (\( \text{Thesm. 804; cf. Thuc. 8.42–43.} \)). Laipsodias has scythe-like feet (Hesych. s.v. \( \Lambda\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\omega\delta\iota\varsigma, \lambda \) 158) and wears his himation on the left (\( \text{Av. 1569} \) with \( \Sigma \); Strattis fr. 19; Theopompos fr. 40). Eupolis mocks his shins and tree-like appearance (fr. 107). Phrynichos abuses him as “warlike” (\( \pi\omega\lambda\epsilon\iota\mu\omicron\omicron\omicron\varsigma, \text{fr. 17.} \)). Philyllios calls him \( \phi\lambda\delta\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\varsigma \) (fr. 8). If his target is in fact the Drakontides who proposed the oligarchy of 405/404 (\( \text{PA 4546; Lys. 12.73; AP 34.3.} \)), Plato calls him \( \pi\omicron\eta\rho\omicron\varsigma \) (fr. 148, \( \pi\omicron\eta\rho\omicron\varsigma \) \( \omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma \) \( \omicron\tau\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \) \( \kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\delta\alpha\omicron\omicron\omicron\varsigma \) \( \epsilon\omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \) \( \omicron\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron \), \( \Sigma \) \( \text{Ar. Av. 798, which admits this might be “irony”.} \). For the others, see Sommerstein 1996: 342–48.


25. Griffith 1995: 107–24 treats tragedy from this perspective. See esp. 109–10 for tragedy as mediating between “conflicting class interests and ideologies within the \( \text{polis,} \)” producing “solidarity without consensus.”

26. For the elements of elite status, see Arist. \( \text{Pol. 1291b28–30: τῶν δὲ γνωρίμων πλούτας, εὐγένεια, ἀρετή, παιδεία, καὶ τὰ τοῦτοις λεγόμενα κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν διαφόρον.} \) “wealth, noble birth, excellence, education, and things spoken of as in the same class as these, define the elite”).
Aristophanes claims that *palaistrai*, *choroi*, and *mousikê* produced the noble-men (*chêroi, kaloi k’agathoi, eugeneis*) who ought to lead the city but whom the demos rejects and outrages (καὶ τραγεδίαις ἐν ταλαισταῖς καὶ χοροῖς καὶ μουσικῆς, *Ran* 729, cf. 718–37; *Eq.* 735–40; *E. El.* 528; *Eup.* fr. 384). The triad symbolizes the non-monetary dimensions of status—birth, education, culture. Euripides appears to undermine this symbolism in the *Palamedes*: “all men, both the friends of *mousikê* and all those who live apart from it, labor for this: money. Whoever has the most of it is wisest” (fr. 580.3–5). Euripidean characters often collapse the distinction between wealth and status, criticizing the moral economy of contemporary Athens.

For the Old Oligarch, lack of *mousikê* and of *gymnastikê* is the mark of the demos (1.13). Dramatists transfer this lack from the demos to its signifier, the demagogue. The cultural ignorance of the post-Periklean rhetor isolates him from the civic tradition and from the poetic present: “leadership of the people is no longer for an educated man nor for a man of noble character” (η δημαρχεία γὰρ οὗ πρὸς μουσικὸν / ἐτ’ ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὔδε χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους, *Ar. Eq.* 191–92). Kleon is the “most persuasive man of his day by far in the assembly” (Thuc. 3.36.6), but possesses a “swine’s culture” (ὑπομονῆις, *Ar. Eq.* 985–96) and can tune a lyre only to the “briberian mode” (Δωροδοξιστή). Hyperbolos “controls the rock of the Pnyx” (Pax 681–87); yet he is barely literate and lacks all refinement (Eup. fr. 208; Plato fr. 251; Σ Αρ. *Nub.* 876b; Suidas α 2010; cf. Eup. fr. 4). Such is the character of democratic leadership (Ar. *Eq.* 188–94, 985–96; Krat. fr. 128). This is not merely comic abuse. Hippolytos’ declaration that “I am unsophisticated at delivering a speech to the mob, but more skilled at speaking to the few and to those of my age group...for those who are of no account (οἱ ψαλτῇς) among the wise (ἐν σοφίας) are more favored by the Muses when addressing a mob” (παρ’ ὧχλω μουσικῶτεροι λέγειν, Hipp. 986–89), creates high and low status groups, οἱ σοφοὶ and οἱ ψαλτῇς, whose speech appeals to audiences of corresponding status. The adjective *mousikos* applied to practitioners of mass rhetoric ironically underscores the lack of cultural education required for the task.

27. For *gymnastikê* and *mousikê* as constitutive of the education of a *kalos k’agathos*, see [Plato] *Theages* 122e8–11; Alk. 1.106e4–108d8; cf. Rep. 376e2–4; Prot. 325d7–326e5.


29. Yet at 2.10 the demos appropriates and displaces elite culture, constructing *palaistrai*, changing rooms, and baths for itself: the “mob” (ὁ ὄχλος) enjoys their use more than “the few and the well-to-do” (οἱ ἄλλοι καὶ οἱ εὐθαλάμους).

30. The opposition between *phaulos* and *sophos* in Euripides normally privileges the *phauloi*: *And.* 378–79, 481–82; *Ion* 834–35; *Ba.* 430. Cf. Kleon at Thuc. 3.37.3.
The strategies of representation and outcomes of stage drama prefigure cultural performance in significant ways, for contestation between chrestoi and ponéroi recurs as a form of religious, social, and political action—as social drama—in the period 415–404 BCE. The ostracism of Hyperbolos in 415, “not because of fear of his power or prestige but because of his ponéria and the shame he posed for the city” (Thuc. 8.73.3) can be seen as the political realization of a comic plot, the union of the demos and the chrestoi around the expulsion of the demagogue from the community, and understandable as Hyperbolos’ challenge to the ideology of the theater, which treated him as the quintessential ponéro and subjected him and his mother to ruthless mockery.31 The exiles and prosecutions in the aftermath of the mutilation of the Hermai can be seen as the continuation of the social and political struggle of the ostrakophoria, as the politicians sought to drive the dominant survivor of the ordeal, Alkibiades, from the city because he “got in the way of their leading the demos securely” (ἐμποδόν ὄντι σφίσι μὴ ἀυτοῖς τοῦ δήμου βεβαιῶς προστατάναι, Thuc. 6.27.2).32 The oligarchic takeovers of 411 and 404 intensified the contest between ponéroi and chrestoi for control of the city. In both cases, chrestoi dissolved the demos, installed themselves as ruling elites, and extended political rights to fictional groups of chrestoi. They exiled and murdered men labeled ponéroi to purify the city and to usher in the prestigious time of the fathers, what Mircea Eliade has called the illud tempus, expressed in slogans such as patrioi nomoi and patrios politeia.33 The utopian political visions of the theater and the oligarchic takeovers of 411 and 404 express a unitary cultural ideology that has at its heart a moral-economic basis: that genuinely elite leadership is a kind of noble kinship, a symbolic paternity, and that class and status are indicative of the moral character required for the task. Leaders represented as prostatai tou démou and abused most viciously in comedy—Hyperbolos, Androkles, Kleophon—were murdered in oligarchic violence not only because of the clandestine beliefs and brutal actions of a few, but because such an outcome was fundamental to the cultural program in Athens from 428 to 404; and the stage was the primary public vehicle for its articulation and enactment.

31. For the ostrakophoria of 415 (probably) and ostracism of Hyperbolos, see Carcopino 1935: 191–251; Camon 1963: 142–62; Fuqua 1965: 165–79; Connor 1971/1992: esp. 79–84; Rhodes 1994: 85–98. For Hyperbolos’ depiction in comedy, see below.

32. Cf. Xen. Hell. 1.4.13–14. Isok. 16.5–8 claims oligarchic conspirators drove Alkibiades from the city, coopting the politicians for their purposes (τοῖς ἐντορακῷ ὡς ἀυτοῖς ποιησάμενοι, 7). In a certain sense this is true: Peisander did become a ruling oligarch in 411 and Charikles was one of the 30 tyrants, though the former was also instrumental in seeking Alkibiades’ recall (Thuc. 8.49, 53.3) But this is not what Isokrates means. His narrative associates the events of 415 with those of 411 and 404/03 to represent Alkibiades’ sufferings as identical to those of the demos. Thuc. 8.47.2 offers a more plausible scenario: Alkibiades has it spread among the δυνατότατοι and βέλτιστοι that he wants to return “in an oligarchy, not in the state of ponéria and democracy which cast him out” (ἐπ’ ἀλληγρία...οὐ πονηρία οὐδὲ δημοκρατία τῇ ἀντικέβαλοση). Cf. Thuc. 6.89.5, 92.3; 8.48.4; Xen. Mem. 1.2.40–46.

FIGURING DEMOS’ HEGEMONY: TRIALS ARISING FROM EUTHYNAI

The new elite made its bid for hegemony in the role of prostatés tou démou, devising the rhetoric of prosecution that was central to demotic control. The role was complex: as the person who stands before his group as its defender and champion, as the sponsor of a resident alien, as the voluntary prosecutor (ό βουλόμενος) of a graphê, or as the leader of the demos or other faction, the prostatés “stands for” another as its representative. To harm the prostatés is to harm the group for which he stands. In the Knights, Kleon treats the plot against himself as a conspiracy against the demos (Eq. 235–39, 255–57, 626–31; cf. 730–31). Kleon’s eisangelia against Aristophanes for hybris against the demos probably depended upon this trope. Demosthenes exploits it against Meidias: his hybris against Demosthenes was hybris against “you [the jurors], the laws, and everyone else” (21.7; cf. 126–27, 219–20).

The role and those who filled it became targets for abuse. In the Peace, Eirene looks away with disgust when she learns that Hyperbolos controls the Pnyx because “the demos enrolled a bad prostatés for itself” (τὸν δῆμον...αὐτῷ πονηρὸν προστάτην ἐπεγράψατο, 683–84). The sykophant of Aristophanes’ Ploutos claims to be a volunteer prosecutor of public crimes whose concern is the entire polis (906, 911–17). His adversary, the “just man” (dikaios), laments that if this is the case, “yes by Zeus, then the city has a bad protector” (νῦν Διὸς πονηρὸν γὰρ ἐξελευθέρων ἔχει, 920). Euripides’ Suppliants, perhaps performed at the same festival as the Peace, uses similar language to describe leaders who harness the envy of the poor to goad the rich, “tricked by the tongues of their bad leaders” (γλύσσαις πονηρῶν προστάτων ψηλούμενοι, 243; cf. 423–25).

34. For the title prostatés tou démou, see Reverdin 1945: 203–208; Connor 1971/1992: 110–15. Ober 1989: 316n.38, denies any ambiguity in the term, but Aristophanes’ puns on the prostatés who sponsors and represents metics and the prostatés tou démou mark his constituency as déclassé ( Pax, 683–84; Ran. 569–70; Isok. 8.53; cf. S. OT 410–11; Arist. Rhet. 1408b24–26). Demosthenes and Aischines do not describe themselves as prostatai: these are either the prestigious leaders of the past (Aisch. 3.154; Dem. 3.26–27) or rivals who consider themselves “greater than the many” (Dem. 19.295). Those for and against whom the prostatés stands confer his title; it is not a self-description. For the participle prostaxeis in self-description, see Dem. 18.298–99.

35. The champion who fights a duel for the group: A. Se. 798; prostatés of a metic: A. Su. 963; Dem. 25.58, 30.30; [Dem.] 44.48; volunteer prosecutor (sykophant): Ar. Vesp. 418–19 (Theoros); Pl. 907–20; leader of the demos: esp. Hdt. 3.82.4; Thuc. 3.75.2, 82.3; 4.46.4, 66.3; 8.62.5, 66.2, 81.1, 89.4; Xen. Hell. 3.2.27–29; 5.2.4, 6; 7.4.33. See further Lys. 13.7; Aisch. 2.176; AP 36.1, 38.3.

36. The prostatés is a factional leader, whether considered in terms of geography (Hdt. 1.59.3) or of ethnos (1.127.1). Non-democratic factions have prostatai (Thuc. 8.90.1; Isok. 12.148; Xen. Hell. 2.3.51; 3.3.6). Prostatai simply means “leading men” of a polis, often when they represent their cities and are susceptible to flattery and bribery (Hdt. 9.41.3; Thuc. 3.11.8; Xen. Hell. 3.5.1; Dem. 19.10, 300 [bis]).

The prostatēs maintains the conditions for his leadership as protector of the demos by fomenting class conflict. He is the “watch-dog” of the people against conspiracy (Eq. 861–63, 1017–20, 1023–24; Vesp. 915–16, cf. 596–97; Pax 313–15) who “fights for the people” (Ar. Eq. 767, 1038, cf. 1341–42; Vesp. 593, 667). The Old Oligarch’s axiom, that “in no city is the best element well-disposed toward the demos” (ἐν σύστημα γὰρ πόλει τὸ βέλτιστον εὖνουν ἐστὶ τῷ δήμῳ. 3.10; cf. 1.5) functions within democratic ideology to breed hostility and suspicion between the demos and those labeled “the best element.” The figure of the noble conspirator is the obverse of the prostatēs tou démou.

The new elite deploys the prosecutor’s voice to articulate the values and interests of the demos, protecting, representing, and leading it, attacking the rich, the well-born, and the chreستoi through litigation which earns it and the demos money in the form of penalties, bribes, and wages. The prostatēs tou démou, as the protector of a democracy which sought to limit patronage of rich to the poor, was represented as the official patron of the poor. Kleophon’s introduction of the diobelia probably transformed the figure and may explain why the Athēnaiōn Politeia reserves its harshest criticism for him and his successors (AP 28.3–4).

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We can chart the rise of the new elite in the successful prosecution of Perikles in 430, perhaps as a result of his euthynai (Thuc. 2.65.3; Plut. Per. 32.3–4; 35.3–5), in Phormion’s disenfranchisement because of his euthynai in 428 (Σ Ar. Pax 348e), in Paches’ suicide at his euthynai the following year (Plut. Nik. 6.1, Arist. 26.5), and in the exile and fining of the generals for taking bribes not to conquer Sicily in 424 (Thuc. 4.65.3). Such trials assembled mass juries—501 seem to have been the rule (Lex. Cantab. s.v. λογισταὶ καὶ συνήγοροι). The character who addresses “auditors of choruses under audit” (Ἀνδρεῖς λογισταὶ τῶν ὑπευθύνων χορῶν, fr. 239) in Eupolis’ Poleis probably speaks to the audience in the theater...
as judges of the drama. Aristophanes stresses the symbolic importance of trials arising from euthynai. He represents them as enactments of the hegemony of masses which he ridicules as a pretext for sykophants and demagogues to acquire power and profit (Vesp. 682–95, 698–710). Aristophanes’ jurors believe they occupy a god-like kingship (518, 546–49). This delusion blinds them to their slavery to a leadership that holds them in contempt (Vesp. 515–20, esp. 517, ἀλλὰ δουλεύων λέγειται, 518–19, ἀλλ’ ὑπηρετεῖς οἴωμενος ἄρχειν: 602; cf. 603–604). The master is actually a slave.

Such trials dramatize the democratic political order as an inversion of the social order. For Aristophanes, this inversion is an inspiration for humor: the demotic juror translates political supremacy into a sense of social superiority while the elite defendant exclaims his misery and equality with the mass of jurors. No creature is “more fortunate” and “blessed” (εὐδαιμον καὶ μακαριστὸν μᾶλλον), more luxurious (τρυφερότερον), or more fearful (δεινότερον) than an elderly juror (550–51). The “great six-footers” behave as his clients, watching him as he strolls from his bed to the law courts, extending the delicate hand that has stolen public property toward him (552–54). The rhetoric of the hypeuthynos flatters the jury (563). Wealthy defendants bewail their poverty and proclaim equality with the poor juror: “they add other sufferings to the real ones, until as he proceeds, he makes them equal to mine” (προστίθεσαν κακὰ πρὸς τοὺς οὖσιν, ἐὼς ἄν ἰὸν ἀνισώσῃ τοῖς ἐμοίσιν, 562–65). If myths, fables, and jokes do not induce the juror to put aside his anger, the defendant drags out his children, “and then the father beseeches me on their behalf, trembling before me as if I

42. Most scholars date the Poleis between 422 and 420. See Storey 1990: 18–20. See also KA 5.435.
43. As MacDowell 1971: 145 notes, the official under audit is the defendant par excellence in the Wasps and such a trial is parodied in the Dog of Kydathenaion’s prosecution of Labes at Vesp. 891–1008 (cf. 240–44). See Konstan 1985: 27–46; Olson 1996: esp. 138–42; and discussion below. See further, Vesp. 100–102; Pax 1187–88; Arist. Pol. 1274a16–22.
45. Cf. Ar. Eq. 1330; E. Su. 352; Dem. 19.297; Aisch. 3.233; Isok. 7.26; Arist. Pol. 1292a11–17. The demos’ kingship in Athens overlaps with its imperial rule (Eq. 1330; Vesp. 577–78, 666–79, 699–700; cf. Thuc. 1.122.3, 124.3, 2.63.2, 3.37.1–2, 6.85.1). Aristophanes and the Old Oligarch suggest the demos treats the Athenian elite as it treats its imperial subjects: the allies must flatter and beg in the courts and grab the hand of the juror as he enters ([Xen.] AP 1.18; Vesp. 552–54). The demos hates the chrêstoi of Athens and of the subject cities (1.14, 19). The demos is also the “subject” of the demagogues, who keep it poor by offering it subsistence, just as the demos does to the allies (Vesp. 702; [Xen.] AP 1.15).
46. Democratic rhetoric delicately handles the motif of the demos as slave. Perikles hints at it (Thuc. 2.61.3). Kleon uses it as a metaphor (3.38.5). Andokides, like Bdelykleon, claims the demos has exchanged its rule for slavery to its leaders (2.27). Cf. Dem. 23.209, 24.143; Aisch. 3.3; Dein. 3.19. For the comic topos of the “city of slaves” see below.
were a god, to get him through his audit” (Ὧστερ θεόν ἀντιβολεῖ με τρέμων τῆς εὐθύνης ἀπολύσαοι, 571).

The ordinary citizen makes his epiphany as a juror. Philokleon sees himself in the image of Zeus (619–20). Jurors reign by repressive fear: they shout and the courtroom thunders; they flash and “the rich and highly respected” (οἱ πλουτοῦντες καὶ πάνυ σεμνοὶ) soil themselves. The aristocrat Bdelykleon fears Philokleon; but Philokleon declares, “may I die if I fear you” (621–30; cf. 652). The power of the juryman is unrivaled and unchecked. He has “a great rule and contempt for wealth” (574) and “these things we do without being held to account; there is no rule of others” (καὶ ταῦτα ἀνυπεύθυνοι δρόμην τῶν δ’ ἄλλων οὐδεμί’ ἀφῇ, 587). The jokes about jurors having sex with the daughters of defendants (573) and deflowering epiklēroi (583–89) suggest a similarity between the mass jury and the tyrant (see, e.g., E. Su. 450–55; cf. Arist. Pol. 1274a4–7; Xen. Symp. 4.32).

The Aristophanic villains in such trials are the synēgoroi appointed to prosecute on behalf of the city—glib and effete young men on the track to leadership of the demos (Ach. 680, 685) yet entirely inimical to demotic culture—Euathlos son of Kephisodemos (703–12), the unnamed son of Charaes (Vesp. 686–95), Hyperbolos (Eq. 1358–64), and Alkibiades (Ach. 713–18). Their youth figures their status as a new and dangerous elite incapable of reproducing the social order. Rather, they destroy the social order, subjecting the elders and the chrestoi to ridicule before mass audiences (Ach. 679–80), binding and striking them with “well-rounded rhetoric” (στρογγούλως τοῖς ῥήμασιν, 686). They trap them like birds, “setting spring-traps of words” (σκανδάληθρ’ ἵπταξ ἐπών, 687), “tearing a Tithonos man to shreds by shaking and stirring” (688, 707).

Matthew Christ suggests that the transformation of class conflict into inter-generational struggle removes the focus from class. In the ideology of the stage and courtroom, however, generation figures status, which subsumes class (cf. esp. Dem. 10.45–55 and discussion below). Youth is the ultimate marker of elite status. Its ambivalence in Old Comedy has puzzled critics, but the

47. For the use of children and supplication in Athenian forensic performances, see Johnstone 1999: 114–20.

48. For the synēgoroi see AP 54.2; Lex. Cantab. s.v. λογισταῖ καὶ συνήγοροι; Bonner/Smith 1938: 25–38, 256–59; MacDowell 1971: 198–99; Rubinstein 2000: esp. 121–223. συνήγοροι were also appointed in cases of prodosia (Ar. Vesp. 480–83; [Plut.] Mor. 833F). In Aristophanes, the συνήγορος is κάλος, “glib” (Ach. 705. Euathlos; 715–16, Alkibiades; cf. 685–88); εὐφύσιοι (Ach. 715, Alkibiades); κατακτάγων (Vesp. 687; Nub. 1089–90; cf. fr. 205.9), βουμιλόχος (Eq. 1358, Hyperbolos; see further below), and πονηρός (Ar. fr. 424, Euathlos).


51. Demosthenes challenges Aischines: “and so in what were you neamias and when were you lampros?” (Dem. 18.313; cf. 3.32, 13.25, 21.131, 201, 25.29, 54.35). At 21.154, Demosthenes
logic of the trope is clear.\textsuperscript{52} When viewed in opposition to the old hegemonic alliance—men such as Thucydides son of Melesias and the citizen-soldiers of the Persian Wars—youth signifies the new elite which profits from political and legal institutions (\textit{Ach.} 595–718; \textit{Vesp.} 1060–1121), devotes itself to rhetoric and idle discourse in the agora (\textit{Eq.} 1373–83; \textit{Nub.} 916–18, 927–28, 985–99, 1055–59, 1067–82, 1391–96; \textit{Ran.} 1069–73; Eup. fr. 367; cf. Ar. \textit{Eccl.} 112–14, 427–31), and rejects the παιδευσης of the Marathonomachai (\textit{Nub.} 986). Such youths ruin tragedy (\textit{Ran.} 89–95) and the \textit{stratégia} (Eup. fr. 104); they speak before their elders in the assembly (Eup. fr. 333), and function as rhetors even though they are too young (Kratt. fr. 282; Eup. fr. 252; cf. E. \textit{Su.} 231–37).\textsuperscript{53} When viewed in opposition to the new hegemonic coalition of old man Demos (or his substitutes, e.g. Philokleon, Strepsiades) and the \textit{agoraioi} demagogues, youth symbolizes the elite of birth, landed wealth, education, and culture excluded from power as inimical to the ideological hegemony of the masses.\textsuperscript{54}

Aristophanes’ parody of a trial stemming from \textit{euthynai}, the Dog of Kudathenaion’s (Kleon’s) prosecution of Labes (Laches) for theft during his term of office, dramatizes the confrontation of two elite types as constituted by legal dispute. The trial pits rhetor against general, sailors against their leader, poor against rich, and democracy against its wealthy and well-born internal enemies, articulating tensions within democratic ideology between the claims of mass and of elite to the fruits of military labor, and representing two elite claims to redistribute public wealth. The prosecutor masks his own interest behind demotic interest: the \textit{hypeuthynos} harms him and the “call of the sailors” (τὸ ἄμυντα καὶ τοὺς ἄλιππους, 909) by his theft. In fact, however, the general harms the prosecutor directly and the demos indirectly: he prevents anyone from benefiting the masses by not sharing his plunder with the prosecutor. The prosecutor pretends he alone redistributes public wealth to the demos (914–16). The general, by contrast, devours the demos’ property alone and in secret (μονομαχότατον, 932; cf. ἐν τῷ σχῆμα, 911), and steals from the subject cities (922–25). Both the \textit{strategos} under audit and the rhetor enrich themselves from their leadership roles (903–904, 927–30); but the prosecutor demands a share of all profit. He will not allow a rogue profiteer to operate

\textsuperscript{52} Gomme 1938/1962: 70–91 rejects political readings of Aristophanes because of his contradictory treatment of the older generation.

\textsuperscript{53} See further, Ar. \textit{Vesp.} 1037–42; Av. 1362, 1431; \textit{Nub.} 1417–19.

\textsuperscript{54} The young knights of \textit{Eq.}; Pheidippides before sophistic training in \textit{Nub.}; Bdelykleon in \textit{Vesp.}\ Cited \textit{E. Ion} 598–601; Eup. fr. 392.7–8
outside of his control (922–23, 927–30). For his part, the juror perceives the entire process through the prism of private and class interest which he assimilates to “the common” (τὸ κοινὸν, 917). He presumes the general is guilty (900–901, 912–14, 920–21, 931–34), and that he is a thief and a conspirator against the democracy (συνωμότης, 953; cf. Lys. 28.7).

The protocol of defense combines elitist posturing with abject exclamations of lack of culture and appeals to demotic pity. First of all, the general cannot even speak. Chréstoi such as Labes and Thucydides son of Melesias are vulnerable to the magical spells of their opponents (i.e. prone to lose their composure and speaking ability and claim they are victims of magic). Moreover, silence denotes aretê and plays into the fiction that the chreëstos is not a clever speaker. Labes follows in the tradition of Euripides’ Hippolytos (Hipp. 986–91) and Thucydides’ Antiphon (Thuc. 8.68.1): he refuses to address the masses or to engage in argument with a man of inferior status. Bdelykleon pleads his case for him (946–48). The ploy elicits pity—emotion overwhelms the noble victim of slander (διαβεβλημένον). The first part of the defense is an extended claim of superlative status. Labes protects the demos from external enemies and predators. The defendant “is the best of today’s dogs” (ξιστός ἐστι τῶν νυνὶ κυνῶν, 954). He is good (ἀγαθός) and chases wolves (952). He can oversee many cattle (955), fights on behalf of the juror, guards the door, and is best in other respects (καὶ τὰλλα ἄριστος, 957–58). The attempt to represent the defendant as an aristos fails to convince the juror: his consumption of public property negates any service he may render to the city (956).

Bdelykleon then takes the opposite tack, identifying Labes with members of the jury. He admits his theft on the grounds of failure to receive an elite education—he does not know how to play the kithara—and begs forgiveness (957–59). The juror refuses to acquit the defendant for the same reason: he

55. For Thucydides as the victim of magical spells and such claims as face-saving gestures, see Faraone 1989: 149–60; cf. 1999: 99–121.
58. For nobility (εὐγένεια) as pitiable for a mass audience, see E. Or. 783–84.
59. The kithara is emblematic of the social and cultural elite in opposition to the political and judicial “non-elite.” Learning to play the kithara along with wrestling and literacy form the triad of the kalos k’agathos’ education ([Plato] Theag. 1228e–11; Alk. 1.106e4–108d8 adds song and dance). The lyre and kithara are “useful for the polis” (Plato Rep. 399d7–9). The teacher of elite boys is a kitharístēs (Ar. Eq. 992; Nab. 964; [Plato] Alk. 1.118d4). Like many elements of aristocratic culture, the kithara is associated with the feast and symposion (e.g. Xen. Symp. 2.1–2, 3.1), with eastern culture (Eup. fr. 311; cf. E. Cyc. 443–44; Hyps. frr. I.iii.10, 64.101 [Bond]), and hence with luxurious pleasure that is useless to the polis (E. frr. 184, 185, 187; cf. also Su. 880–87; El. 948–51). Yet to be a member of the elite and not to know how to play the kithara invites contempt (Ar. Eq. 984–96; cf. Krat. fr. 247, Phryn. fr. 2; Eup. 392.8). Ion of Chios apud Plutarch claims the symposiasts
does not know how to play the kithara (989). The general’s lack of culture is not enough: the juror wishes the defendant were illiterate so that he could not falsify his accounts (961–62). Bdelykleon calls a cheese-grater to testify that it grated the stolen cheese and distributed it to the soldiers (962–65), refuting the charge that Labes devours public property in the shadows by himself.60 From the juror’s perspective, however, the defendant’s witnesses are irrelevant: they lie (966).61

Bdelykleon unexpectedly achieves success with his father (973–74) by ridiculing the prosecutor as a stay-at-home who uses his position to appropriate a share of all income payable to the treasury. If he does not get it, he bites (970–72). The defendant, by contrast, is one of “those who suffer hardships” (τούς ταλαίπωρουμένους).62 He “eats scraps and thorns, and never stays in the same place” (967–74). This tactic presents synoptically the thrust of the defense: the defendant’s elite status combined with his risk and suffering for the city and for the demos warrants pity (967, 975–78, 982–83) while the prosecutor is a politician who deserves contempt, a mere stay-at-home (ὁ δ’ ἐτερος οἶδος ἐστιν. οἰκουρὸς μόνον, 970; cf. Eq. 1054–57).63 The designation of the political prosecutor as an oikouros counters and seeks to invalidate the new elite’s claim to be “protectors” and “watch-dogs” of the demos. The prosecutor barks, bites, and shakes down the other dogs, staying home from battle to profit from those who endure its hardships; the general is silent and does his duty, stealing to provide for his men, praised Kimon as “more clever” than Themistokles, who did not know how to sing or play the kithara, but knew how to make the city great and wealthy (Kim. 9.1; cf. Perikles’ musical culture. Plut. Per. 4.1, 13.11; Plato fr. 207). To have kitharists around the house is a sign of aristocratic culture. Plutarch claims that Themistokles begged the kitharist Epikles to practice at his house (Them. 5.3), and the kalos k’agathos Misgolas surrounded himself with kitharodes and kitharists (Aisch. 1.41, cf. 168). The comedians mocked him for the convergence of his aristocratic desires: he loved kitharodes as paidika (Alexis fr. 3; Antiphanes fr. 27.14–17). Playing the kithara professionally was a cause for ridicule: the “worst” (κακόστας) kitharode is a comic topos (Pherekrates, fr. 6 names Meles and Chaires as first and second worst; Aristophanes targets Arignotos son of Automenes, Eq. 1278–79; Vesp. 1277–78; cf. Krat. fr. 338). Aristotle classes professionals among the banausoi (Pol. 1339α8–10), and rejects the use of the kithara in education because it requires too much time to master (1341α18–21).

60. Heath’s 1987: 32 claim that the scene is equally biased against Labes and the Dog of Kudathenaion fails to account for this difference: the general steals for his men, the prosecutor steals for himself and is merely an oikouros.

61. For different views of this forensic commonplace, see Humphries 1985: 313–69; Cohen 1995: 107–12.

62. ταλαίπωρεύω and ταλαίπωρία denote labor that achieves the highest values of a community: ἐλευθερία (Hdt. 6.11–12; Thuc. 1.99), “what seems noble” (τὸ δόξαν καλάν, 2.53.3; cf. Andok. 2.17), and “excellence” (δόξα, Thuc. 1.123.1; cf. 1.20.3; 6.92.5). They are voces propriae for a soldier’s endurance of heat and cold, sleeplessness, hunger and thirst, wounding and death (Thuc. 2.70.2, 101.5; 3.4.6; 4.27.1, 35.4, 117.1; 5.57.1, 73.1, 74.3; 7.78.1, 84.3). The oligarchs of 411 partly justified their takeover by claiming the talaiπóρια of the war was theirs (8.48.1, 64.1). See further Ar. Vesp. 412–19, 1116, cf. 505; Pax 475–77; Lys. 762–68, 778–81, 1216–21. The terms also refer to the suffering of misfortune (Thuc. 2.49.4, 6.9; 3.78.1; 7.16.1, 28.1, 30). For the comparable term ponos, see below.

63. When used of men who avoid battle, oikouros is a byword for contempt and a disqualification from leadership (A. Ag. 809, 1225, 1612–27; S. OK 343–44; E. Hkl. 695–701; Ar. Ach. 1060).
and protecting the demos from its real (i.e. external) enemies. The prosecutor and the defendant are not citizens of equal status and do not perform equally valuable functions in the city. The prosecutor’s rhetoric has programmed the juror to perceive elite defendants as the enemy, and his rhetoric exerts such a hold upon the juror’s imagination that only deception can induce him to exonerate a defendant (991–1002). The rhetorical bond between prosecutor and juror is unbreakable: the defendant is inimical to democracy and conspires to harm the demos. The defendant’s plea strikes a chord despite the juror’s ideological entrapment; yet the juror cannot recognize it for what it is, and blames his intuition on a full stomach (973–84).

The trial in the Wasps represents two kinds of elite roles and their respective status within Athenian culture. Again, this is not merely a comic antithesis. In the Aias, Aias and his supporters develop a comparable rift between Aias and Odysseus. Aias is a noble warrior (479–80, 1355; contrast 1095) who defends the entire Argive army and wins its charis (1266–89), despite being an enemy of the people (43–44, 53–54, 151–55, 408–409, 458, 720–28, 719–32; cf. 1055). Odysseus is a master of peitho who marshals the envy of ordinary people against great members of society (148–57), and forms alliances to defeat them in contests patterned on legal trials. He attracts the kind of ridicule reserved for sykophants and politicians in comedy and oratory. He is a “devious knave” (τούπτερπτον κινδος, 103), offspring of “the wasted line of the Sisyphidai” (τας άσωτος Σισυφιδάις γενεας, 189), “a villain at heart” (παντουργος ψένας, 445), an “instrument of every evil on every occasion, the child of Laertes, most filthy trickster of the army” (379–81), and “the most wheedling, hated trickster” (τόν αιμυλωτατον ἔγθρον ἀλήμα, 389). Like Kleon, he “sees and hears everything” (379; cf. Ar. Eq. 75). Aias refers to him as “my defiler” (ὁ λυμεδών ἐμός, 573). “Defiling” is a characteristic activity of the rhetor (E. fr. 597; Isok. 8.121 [quoted below]; Hyp. 3.36; cf. Ar. Eq. 1408; Men. Sent. 1.709 [Jaekel]).

The Aias, however, is unique in dramatizing the inadequacy of such labels. Odysseus acknowledges the superiority of Aias’ arete as an aristos (1340–41), esthlos (1344–45), and gennaios (1355) and announces that the burial of the “best men” (ἀριστος) requires the ponos of ordinary men (1380). The chorus in turn pronounces Odysseus aristos, esthlos (1398–99), and sophos (1374–75). If the roles of speaker and warrior, rhetor and general, do not achieve parity in the

66. Cf. Andok. 1.99; Ar. Nub. 443–51, 1004; Av. 430–31; Sannyrion fr. 11; Dem. 18.162, 242; Aisch. 3.167; Dein. 1.40.
67. For this language, see [Dem.] 40.58; Dem. 45.77–78; Isok. 15.5, 288; Demad. fr. 77.3; Krobylos, fr. 4; cf. Strattis fr. 54. At A. Ag. 1597, ἀσωτος means “destructive” (i.e. “unsparing”).
68. For πανοργος, see below n.172
69. Aisch. 2.40; cf. the use of παπάλη and παπάλημα (Ar. Nub. 260, 62; Av. 431). For αἰμύλας, see Ar. Eq. 683–87.
course of the play, they attain reconciliation. Viewed from the perspective of the labels *ponêros* and *chrêstos*, however, reconciliation between the two roles is impossible.

**CHRÊSTOI AND PONÊROI**

A Euripidean character laments, “Zeus, why do you give this provision to men, granting fluency to all the *ponêroi* and an inability to speak to those who are *chrêstoi*?” (ὥς Ζεῦ, τι τοῦτ᾽ ἐφόδιον ἄνθρωπως δίδω, / τοῖς μὲν πονηροῖς τᾶσι τὴν εὐγλωσσιὰν, / τοῖς δ’ ὄψιν χρηστοῖς ἀδυναμεῖν ἐν τῷ λέγειν; E. fr. 156 [Austin]). Dramatists assume that successful orators, especially prosecutors, are *ponêroi*. The word’s moral denotation is one of several in the cluster that comprises its meaning. Euathlos son of Kephisodemos is a case in point. Ridiculed as a “rhetor sykophant” (ῥήτωρ συκοφάντης, Σ Ar. Vesp. 592b), he is one of the prosecutors who proclaims, “I will not abandon you, but I will fight for the masses” (Vesp. 592). The comedians deny him Athenian birth and identity: he is the Skythian who prosecuted Thucydides son of Melesias (Ach. 703–12) and is a servile archer (Ar. Ach. 707, 711; fr. 424, πονηρὸς τοξότης συνήγορος). The playwrights express moral qualities in terms of birth and status. Suidas exposes the entailment of Euathlos’ comic depiction, adding “ignoble” (ἀγεννής) to the standard epithets εὐφυτευκτός and λάλος, and offering the gloss on the joke that Euathlos is an archer: “and for this reason he calls him an archer, because he is a servant” (καὶ διὸ καὶ τοξότην ἀὑτῶν καλεῖ, οἶον ὑπηρέτην, ε 3677; cf. s.v. τοξότης, τ 772).

The labels *chrêstos* and *ponêros* characterize the divide between two elite groups represented in the trial of Labes—defendants and prosecutors, generals and rhetors, *hypeuthynoi* and the *synêgoroi* appointed to prosecute them, the wealthy and “leaders of the people.” Fundamental to the contestation of elite status after the death of Perikles, these terms define the major social, economic, political, religious, and moral fault lines among those competing for leadership in democratic Athens. The label *ponêros* deprives performers of elite roles in democratic institutions—the agora and courts, the assembly and the Boule—of elite status. That democratic politicians and prosecutors are *ponêroi* and...

71. The classification of leadership in these terms is foreign to Aeschylus. Sophokles uses the *chrêstos-ponêros* opposition once (Ph. 437–38) but regularly contrasts *chrêstos* and *kakos* (Tr. 452, Ant. 520, OT 609–10; cf. Tr. 3), specifically linking the waning of *ta chrêstai* with the rise of “the worse” and “the coward” to leadership positions (Ph. 456–58). *Chrêstos* and its forms are associated with justice (Ant. 662, Ph. 451), reciprocity (Ph. 583–84), praise (Tr. 231), praiseworthy speech and action (Tr. 470, 1136–37; Ai. 468, 1369) and normative elite roles (OK 1431, El. 972). With χρηστός used of moral-intellectual excellence (Ant. 299, 636) compare S. fr. 925.
72. Whibley 1889: 48–49n.2, stresses the connection between πονηρός, τόνος, πένομαι, and πένης, “those who have to work for a living.” Cf. Artemon in Anakreon fr. 388.5. An overt connection...
mochthéroi is axiomatic for both Aristophanes and Euripides. The third-century comedian Demetrios expresses the essence of ponēria: “ponēria is very easy to catch, because it always looks only to profit; it goes mindlessly to meet it and allows itself to be easily persuaded by it” (σφόδρ' ευάλωτον ἐστιν ἡ πονηρία: / εἰς γὰρ τὸ κέρδος μόνον ἀποβλέπουσιν ἀεὶ / ἀφρόνως ἀπαντά καὶ προτετῶς συμπειθέται, fr. 2). The quintessential ponēros is the sykophant. Aischines proclaims that when Demosthenes “became a man, he took the universal eponym of ponēroi, sykophant” (ἀνήρ δὲ γενόμενος προσεύληψε τὴν τῶν πονηρῶν σωφρόνα ἐπωνυμίαν, συκοφάντης, Aisch. 2.99). The new elite is ponēros precisely because it subordinates all values to private profit, pleasure, and power and employs various forms of deception and diversion—flattery, slander, slander— to attain them. Ponēroi are depicted as trapped within the short-term cycle of private profit (Οἰον κέρδος, E. Su. 413, cf. 236–37; Thuc. 2.65.7; Xen. Hell. 1.4.13; cf. the demos ([Xen.] AP 1.3; Thuc. 6.24.3; Ar. Eccl. 205–208; Arist. Pol. 1318b16–17). Hence they cannot act with justice: “it is obvious all commit injustice for the sake of gain” (δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι πάντες κέρδος ἐνεκ’ ἀδικουούσιν, Isok. 21.6; cf. Ran. 727–29).

73. The epithets ponēros and mochthéroi were Hyperbolos’ distinctive mark: ἄνδρα μοχθηρὸν πολίτην, ἄξινην Ὄπερβολον, Ar. Eq. 1304; Nub. 1065–66; Pax 684; πονηρῷ καὶ ἔξως, Plato fr. 182; Ar. Thesm. 836–37; Thuc. 8.73.3; Philochorus FGrH 328 F30; Plut. Arist. 7.3; Nik. 11.5; 6; Alk. 13.4; ΣΣ Ar. Pax 681b, Vesp. 1007b; Luc. Timon 30. Cf. Andok. fr. 5=Σ Ar. Vesp. 1007b. For other politicians, see Eq. 181, 186, 336–37; Lys. 576; Ran. 419–21 (Archedemos), 731, 1456–57; Eucl. 177–78; Pl. 31; Plato fr. 202; E. Su. 424; fr. 362.28–32; cf. Hek. 592–603, 1187–94; Or. 903–16; fr. 362.19–21. For prosecutors, see Ach. 517, 698; Pl. 862, 869, 920, 939, 957; fr. 424; E. Su. 243. Kleon seldom attracts the epithet ponēros. Demos alone uses the word of him (Eq. 821, 858). He contemptuously calls his rival, Allantopoles, ponēros (Eq. 415, 712, 891). I disagree with Henderson 1993: 311, “The same spirit of ridicule in the name of collective well-being that was applied to people like Perikles continued after 429, when civic leaders began to come mostly from ‘lower’ social strata.” The spirit changed. Perikles is too powerful to be a citizen. He is “king of the fertile polis” (Krat. fr. 61), a “tyrant” born of Stasis and Chronos (fr. 258), and “king of the satyrs” (Hermippos fr. 47) who has “a rule of tyranny” (Krat. fr. 171). Similarly, he is Zeus or “the Olympian” (Krat. fr. 73, 118, 259; Hermippos fr. 42; cf. Ar. Ach. 530–31; Com. Ades. fr. 70; Eur. fr. 102). Comedy depicts the new elite, Kleon, Hyperbolos, and their successors, as slaves, foreigners, agoraioi, ponēroi, bómolochoi, kobaloi and ultimately pharmakoi.

The depiction of democratically selected leaders as ponéroi is a function of the embedding of wealth in nature, the city, and the household, and the subordination of private profit to the long-term interests of the city. The distinction between embedded and disembedded wealth maps onto the difference anthropologists have noted between long- and short-term “transactional spheres” in traditional societies. In such societies, the long-term sphere is linked with the production of collective goods imagined as the maintenance of perilously balanced oppositions—between nature and culture, gods and men, living and dead, rulers and ruled, men and women, young and old. The short-term sphere is defined as its antithesis: it involves the unlimited drive for profit, pleasure, and victory in competition for scarce resources that can disrupt the long-term sphere if not subordinated to it.

The representation of the democratic politician and prosecutor as ponéros figures the inversion of the normative relation between the long- and the short-term cycles in the polis. The ponéros paradigmatically subordinates the city’s social, political, religious, and moral values to private, short-term objectives of profit, pleasure, and power. Politicians convert wealth from the long- to the short-term cycle, reversing the normative flow, provoking harsh criticism. Hence Paphlagon (Kleon) “licks up confiscated goods sprinkled with relish” before falling into a drunken stupor like the Kyklops (ἐπίπαστα λείξας δημόσιαθ’ ὁ βάσσακας, Eq. 103). He “gobbles down common property before its allocation” (tà κοινὰ πρὶν λαχεῖν κατεσθίεις, 258), and “uses bread to sop up public funds with both hands” (χάμψαφον χειροῖν / μυστιλάται τῶν δημοσίων, 826–27).

Bribery is another symptom of the appropriation of wealth from the long- to the short-term sphere. The comic politician parlays his power as a speaker and


78. Cf. Bloch/Parry 1989: 26–27. “But equally there is always the opposite possibility—and this evokes the strongest censure—the possibility that individual involvement in the short-term cycle will become an end in itself which is no longer subordinated to the reproduction of the larger cycle; or, more horrifying still, that grasping individuals will divert resources of the long-term cycle for their own short-term transactions.”

prosecutor and the city’s military power into private gain as a prolific bribe-taker.\textsuperscript{80} Paphlagon extorts money from his competitors in exchange for not denouncing them to the demos (\textit{Eq.} 65–70). Once he buys silence—he offers Allantopoles a talent after he accuses him of taking ten talents from Poteidaia (438–39).\textsuperscript{81} In Aristophanes, bribery involves the extortion of money from the allies under the threat of force (\textit{Eq.} 830–35; \textit{Vesp.} 669–79; \textit{Pax} 639–48), from wealthy citizens under the threat of prosecution (\textit{Nub.} 591–93; \textit{Vesp.} 691–94),\textsuperscript{82} or is a concomitant of \textit{stasis} and \textit{prodosia} (\textit{Thesm.} 361–67; \textit{Ran.} 361–66). Bribery symbolizes the yearning for private profit and diversion of resources from the long- to the short-term sphere that can damage the long-term interests of the polis.\textsuperscript{83}

Pseudo-Andokides sums up the figure of the \textit{ponérōs prostatēs}:

\begin{quote}
\textit{ἐγὼ δὲ νομίζω τὸν τοιούτον ηνηρὸν εἶναι προστάτην, ὡστὶς τῶν παρώντων χρόνον (μόνον) ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀλλὰ μὴ καὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος προνοεῖται, καὶ τὰ ἕδιστα τῷ πλῆθει, παραλιπὼν τὰ βέλτιστα συμβουλεύει.}
\end{quote}

[Andok.] 4.12

I think a bad leader is the kind of man that is concerned only with the present time, but does not think ahead to the future, and recommends what is most pleasing to the masses, neglecting their best interests.

The limitation of the \textit{ponérōs prostatēs} to the short-term sphere has cognitive consequences: he similarly lacks the foresight that validates social and political power.\textsuperscript{84} He constructs the future out of oracles that he interprets to satisfy the demos’ expectations of power and profit, shielding his private desires behind the illusion of the city’s long-term interests.\textsuperscript{85} The \textit{chrèstoi}, by contrast, are apparent in the long term: “so many as will always advise good things with intelligence,

\begin{quote}
\textit{καὶ κατὰ τὰ ἐλάχιστα ἐτοιμάζεται.}
\end{quote}


81. It is better to give than to receive bribes. See Harvey 1985: 81.

82. For the connection between bribery and sykophancy, see Ober 1989: 167, 173–74.


85. “Kleon is Prometheus after the fact” (\textit{Κλέων Προμηθεύς ἐστι μετὰ τὰ πράγματα}, Eup. fr. 456 [Kock]), though not genuine, expresses the sentiment. See \textit{Eq.} 797–98, 960–72, 1002–89; see further, \textit{Σ} \textit{Eq.} 1013a; \textit{Av.} 978, 987, cf. 1337; \textit{fr.} 241. Cf. Eup. fr. 316. Aristophanes also depicts oracles as a ploy by which politicians associate themselves with visionary leaders such as Themistokes (\textit{Eq.} 816–17, 1039–40; cf. Hdt. 7.141–42) and Perikles (\textit{Eq.} 1036–39; cf. Hdt. 6.131). Paphlagon’s oracle foretells his downfall; and he hides this from Demos.
even if they are not useful to the city immediately, are useful at some time in the future” (οὖσι δὲ σὺν νῦ χρηστὰ βουλεύσουσ’ ἂεί, / κὰν μὴ παρατίθει’, αὐθίς εἰς χρήσιμοι / τόλει, E. Or. 909–11). This is the criterion for evaluating a prostatēs (θεᾶσθι δ’ ὡδε χρῆ τὸν προστάτην / ἰδόνθ’, 911–12). Isokrates advises his audience not to listen “to those who curry favor in the present, having no concern for future time, nor to those who say they love the demos, but harm the entire polis, as happened in the past” (τοῖς ἐν τῷ παρόντι μὲν χαρὶζομένοις, τοῦ δὲ μέλλοντος χρόνου μηδεμίαν ἐπιμέλειαν ποιομένοις, μηδὲ τοῖς φιλεῖν μὲν τὸν δήμων φάσκουσιν, ὄλην δὲ τὴν πόλιν λυμαίνομένοις: ὡς καὶ πρότερον, 8.121). The new elite’s ponēria consists in its limitation to the short-term sphere of profit and pleasure and its lack of consciousness of the long-term, which damage and defile the polis. And these dovetail with its claims of love and affection for the demos.

For the Old Oligarch, the “good will” (εὔνοια) of the ponēroi toward the demos and the demos’ philia toward them differentiate them from the chrêstoi. The demos can distinguish between chrêstoi and ponēroi (2.19), but “it loves those who are closely allied and advantageous to them, even if they are ponēroi (φιλοῦσιν κὰν πονηροὶ ὅσι, 2.19), and rather hates the chrêstoi (τοὺς δὲ χρηστοὺς μισοῦσι μᾶλλον), for they do not consider their aretē good for them, but bad” (ibid.). Dramatists present a similar picture. Aristophanes’ demos is “like boys who are loved—you don’t accept the kaloi k’agathoi, but you give yourself to lamp sellers and hide stitchers and shoe makers and hide sellers” (i.e. Hyperbolos and Kleon, Eq. 737–40). The demos “uses” ponēroi as leaders while “hating,” “fearing,” and “outraging” the eugeneis, chrêstoi, and kaloi k’agathoi who should lead (Ran. 718–30, 1454–57; Eccl. 176–82). Like the Old Oligarch’s demos, Aristophanes’ is capable of distinguishing between chrêstoi and ponēroi (Ran. 727–30), and like the Old Oligarch, Aristophanes represents the claim of eunoia and philia toward the demos as the first principle of the new elite’s rhetoric. Eunoia remains crucial to the circuit of communication between rhetor and demos even after the new elite becomes entrenched. Demosthenes maintains passionately in his self-defense that “in no way have I played traitor to my good will for you” (οὐδαμῶς ἔγὼ προδέδωσα τὴν εἰς ὑμᾶς εὔνοιαν, 18.322). Much of the ideological work of Aristophanes’ political comedy realizes this counter-ideology: philia with a

86. For Or. 907–14 as interpolations, see Willink 1986: 231–34. The ideas are typical, whether Euripides’ or not. 87. Christ 1998: 111 tries to distinguish Aristophanes from Isok. 8.122–23 on the grounds that the latter advocates a ruling elite, but restoration of the illud tempus requires the chrêstoi to lead, and everyone knows who they are. 88. The first contest before Demos in the Knights tests which demagogue is εὐνούστερος (746–48). See Eq. 769–70, 773, 779, 788–96, 820–21, 848–49, 860–63, 873–74, 946, 1051–53. Aristophanes comically undermines the bond by transforming it into that of erastēs and erōmenos (732–40, 1162–63, 1341–49). Bdelykleon is misodēmos (Vesp. 473–74), but overcomes the label to be a philos of the demos and to win demotic eunoia (887–90). [Xen.] AP 3.10 reads the affiliation as a case of like-to-like. See Connor 1971/1992: 99–108; Ober 1989: 316.
ponéros is logically and practically impossible. His relationships cannot be reciprocal, because he subordinates them to personal gain.

The class designation corresponding to ponéros is agoraios. Agoraioi sell goods and services in the agora and are characterized by their lack of cultural education, their loud and unpleasant voices, their shamelessness, and their yearning for profit. The theater treats the agora as the antithesis of kosmos, “good order.” In this regard, the institution is aligned with writers such as Xenophon, who praises Kyros’ “so-called free agora” (ἐλευθέρα ἀγορὰ καλομένη), a kind of monument to the idealized chrèstoi. It houses government buildings and is divided into four parts, one for each age class of the military elite. “From here,” he explains, “goods for sale, those who hawk them, their voices, and their inability to experience beauty have been driven into another place, so that the disorderly mob of them does not mix with the good order of educated men” (ὡς μὴ μεγενήται ἢ τούτων τύρβη τῇ τῶν πεπαιδευμένων εὐχοσμία, Kyropaid. 1.2.3). Similarly, Aristotle endorses the Thessalian “free agora” (Ἡ ἐλευθέραν καλούσων), which has to be “untainted by all commodities” (καθαράν τῶν ὄντων πάντων) and into which “neither artisan nor farmer nor anyone of such class must set his foot unless summoned by the archons” (Pol. 1331a33–36). Aristotle divides “this social order” (τούτων τῶν χόσμων) into age classes of “youths” and “elders” and recommends that some archons exercise with the youths, to impress upon them “true shame and the fear that is the hallmark of free men” (τὴν ἀληθινὴν αἰδῶν καὶ τῶν ἐλευθέρων φόβον, 1331a36-b1).

89. E. fr. 53.18–20 (Austin); οὔτε δὲ γυλητῶν (το) πονηρῶν οὔτε δὲι, Arist. EN 1165b9–17; cf. 1155b9–13, 1159b7–10, 1163b11–28, 1166b5–29, 1167b9–16 (phauloi); Krat. fr. 364; Ar. Eq. 1274–77; Lys. 1035. Lys. 24.2 makes ponéria disqualify a man from friendship and enmity; cf. Isok. 16.42; Men. Aspis 115–21; Sent. 638 (Jackel). A tyrant prefers ponéroi philoi, e.g. E. Ion. 627; Arist. Pol. 1314a1–6. Connor 1971/1992: 87–98 interprets the topos of the “friendless demagogue” as partial evidence for the truth of Plut. Mor. 806F-807A, which claims Kleon renounced his friends as a prelude to a political life. Perikles (Plut. Per. 7.5–6) and Nikias exploited versions of this topos as well (Nik. 5.1–4). Connor argues that speakers in the assembly treated the demos as their hetairos and ceased to rely on coteries of philoi or hetairoi to form the infrastructure of their power. I consider the topos a declaration of the hegemony of the demos and of service to its interests. Kleon may have used the topos to accuse rivals of serving the interests of those bent on subverting democracy. The counter-ideology was that the chrèstos converted his private wealth to the public sphere, demonstrating his aretē and philia and earning charis. The demagogues purchased loyalty with food and wages and stole from the demos. They were too socially distant to have philoi (but cf. Eq. 473). They either maintain a crowd of flatterers (Vesp. 45, 683, 1033; Pax 756) or flatter the demos (Eq. 48, Vesp. 419, 592).

90. The ponéros will not pay back a loan. Strepsiades is a lover of ponéra pragmata (Ar. Nub. 1458–60); Lys. fr. 38.2 [Gernet-Bizos]; Arist. EN 1165a8–10; Axionikos fr. 10.

91. Arist. Pol. 1289b33, 1291a4–6, b21–28, 1319a24–30, 35–38, 1321a5–7, 1328b33–29a3; EN 1158a21; Suidas s.vv. ἀγοραῖος νοῦς (α 308), ἀγοραῖοι (α 309); Photios α 233: “Agoraioi men are ignorant and uneducated” (οἱ γὰρ ἀγοραῖοι ἀνήρωτοι ἀμηχανεῖς καὶ ἀπαθεῖτοι εἰσιν). Dem. 57.30–31 claims it was slander to reproach the work in the agora of a male or female citizen and that only citizens could work in the agora. Hyp. 5.3 is the sole deprecating use of ἀγοραῖος in extant oratory. The treatment of the agora is one differentia of theatrical and forensic acts of speech. See esp. Dem. 25.51–52.
Comedians imagine democratic leaders as *agoraioi* because they figure disorder and the inversion of *aretē* (cf. [Xen.] AP 2.19 cited above). *Ponēria* is the basis of their leadership. Demothenes informs Allantopoles, “for this reason you’re on the verge of greatness—because you’re *ponēros*, and from the agora, and insolent” (ὁτι η πονηρός κακοκ άγορακ ει καλ θρασος, Eq. 180–81). He amplifies this point, telling Allantopoles, “you’ve got the other tools for leading the people—a disgusting voice, you’re from bad stock and you’re *agoraios*. You’ve got everything you need for political leadership” (τα δ’ ἀλλα σοι πρόσεπτα δημαργονικά, / φωνή μιαρά, γέγονας κακος, ἀγοραίος εἰ. / ἔχεις ἀπαντα πρὸς πολιτείαν ἀ δει, 217–19).

The voice is central to the figure of the *agoraios*; and the verb *κραζω* is the *vox propria* for demagogic vocality. Meaning “shout,” “screech,” “bark,” the word suggests the sound of the huckster’s voice (Ar. Pl. 426–28; Antiphanes fr. 123) and the sound of low status speech from a high status perspective (S. Ai 1235–37; Ar. Thesm. 222; cf. Vesp. 415). Apart from the loud and disgusting non-human sound of his voice, the *agoraios* deceives the demos, mystifying reality (Vesp. 1007; Ran. 1079–88) through flattery, pronouncements of love, and the provision of the *misthos* (Ach. 657–58; Eq. 46–48, 1115–20 [with Demos’ denial], 1121–30, 1141–50, 1340–45; Vesp. 666–68), promises of food and wages (Eq. 1100–1103; Vesp. 716–18) slander of rivals (Eq. 632–33; E. Su. 243, 415–16; Thuc. 3.43.2–4), shameless sleights of hand and tongue that permit him to steal and to deny it (Eq. 417–26, 1224), and the fog of war that conceals theft (Eq. 803–809; Thuc. 5.16).  

92. In addition to the passages discussed below, see Ar. Eq. 293, 297, 410, 498–500, 632–38, 1257–59; Pax 750; Vesp. 489–99, cf. Ran. 1013–17, fr. 488. Connor 1971/1992: 154–55; Ostwald 1986: 214–15. Edwards 1993: 99–100 follows Bakhtin in viewing ... assembled there” (89), and the popular grotesque as the genre that establishes the misrule of this culture against official culture. Since the dominant power of Athens was institutionalized as the culture of the marketplace, a strain of the popular grotesque metastasized into an anti-popular grotesque genre, and turned its desire to debase and uncrown the dominant culture upon its own original constituency, the crowd in the marketplace; old comedy therefore starved itself by losing contact with its origins. This formulation has one flaw: that the culture of the marketplace is the original culture of comedy. Whether politicized or not, the culture of old comedy is that of the countryside in stark opposition to that of the marketplace. The utopian yearning of the genre is for an existence outside of urban culture—the age of Kronos, a world without money, labor, and commodities; a world where the use-values of food, drink, and sex reign supreme. The politicization of the genre is a natural outgrowth of its original form, when its original “other,” the culture of the agora, was in the process of becoming hegemonic.

93. Eq. 255–57, 274, 285–87, 485–87, 642, 863, 1014–21, 1403; Vesp. 596 (Κλέον ὁ κεφαλάζως), 929–30; Pax 637; Eup. fr. 316.3; Antiphanes fr. 194.6–10; cf. the verb *κεφαλάζω*: Eq. 919; Pax 313–14; Eup. fr. 192.135; Timokles fr. 17.3 (Hypereides). See further Eup. frr. 113 (Demosthenos), 220 (Syarakosios), cf. 259.72–82; Thuc. 6.28.2; AP 28.3; Plut. Nik. 8.6. See also Eq. 137, 218, 637–38; Vesp. 36, cf. Eq. 986–87; Vesp. 1034= Pax 757. The first contest in the Knights is a shouting match (275–76, 311, 351–52, 358; Eccel. 403). When an aristocrat shouts, it is a mark of prowess (Ach. 710–12). Cf. Aristophanes while being “flayed” by Kleon (Vesp. 1285–89).

94. For deception in the Knights and Achænians, see Hesk 2000: esp. 255–74. For the new elite as masters of deception for profit, *kobaloi* and *bšmovlochoi*, see below. For flatterers as *ponēroi*, see E. fr. 363.19–20; Isok. 2.28. For rhetors as seeking to please or to flatter the demos, see E. Hek.
The *agoraios* is also a creature of the courts. The dikasteria were located in the agora, and Euboulos, for his part, imagines elements of trial by jury—witnesses, trials, water-clocks, laws, graphai—as commodities for sale (fr. 74). The new elite’s commodities cling to their names like patronymics, effacing their personalities and abetting their political ambitions.45 “Extinguish Hyperbolos,” proclaims a character in Kratinos’ *Pytinê*, assimilating the man to the commodity, and “register him in the lamp-market” (Ὑπέρβολον δ’ ἀποσβέσας ἐν τοῖς λύχνουσι γράφσουν, fr. 209). Kleon’s political organization consists entirely of *agoraioi*—young hide-sellers ready to join with honey- and cheese-sellers in the event of an ostrakophoria, and prepared to use the shields Kleon dedicated from Sphakteria to control the entrances to the barley market and to prevent Demos from ostracizing him (*Eq.* 847–57). Kleon’s leather thong (βυρσίνη) is a political tool, keeping rival orators away while Demos dines (59–60). Kleon himself is the “hide gurgler” (βυρσοπαψλαγγων, *Eq.* 47) and “hide-eagle” ( βυρσαίτος, 197, 203, 209) in oracles. His opponent, Allantopoles, is another hide he will tan (369). His person is surrounded by hides: he uses them as blankets (*Eq.* 892) and reeks of them (*Vesp.* 38; *Pax* 753).

Under Kleon’s influence, the mind of the city is in hides (*Pax* 669). Similarly, Hyperbolos’ lamps will illuminate the deliberations of a city used to making decisions in the dark (690–92). Commodities as emblems of political consciousness interlock with the representation of political speech as billingsgate: democratic rhetoric is itself a commodity which the demos consumes, which gives it pleasure, and which blinds it to its long-term interests. The *agoraios* as rhetor and prosecutor sells the delusion of the ideological hegemony of the demos, which implies world domination; but in fact he traffics in the peasantry (*Ach.* 370–74, *Pax* 632–33), the islands, emporia, merchantmen, and empire from Karia to Carthage (*Eq.* 168–76). An Aristophanic chorus may accuse such leaders of “diluting our city like wine and sell[ing] it to the poor by the cupful” (κυρνάντες γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν κοτυλίζετε τοῖς πένησιν, fr. 699). The *agoraioi* politicians commodify the polis itself.

132, 257; *Su.* 412–15; *Or.* 907; *Ar.* *Eq.* 47–54; Thuc. 2.65.10; 3.42.6; 7.8.2; Arist. *Pol.* 1292α4–30, 1313b41–42 (ἐστι γὰρ ὁ δημαρχὸς τοῦ δημοῦ κόλαξ) For the demagogue as slanderer, see *Ach.* 380–82, 502–503, 630–31; *Eq.* 6–7, 45, 63–64, 288, 355, 486–87, 490–91, 494–96, 626–31, 710–11; *Pax* 642–43; *Av.* 1541. For shamelessness, see *Ar.* *Eq.* 765b, c). Kleon is *bursodèyhj* (*Eq.* 44; *Nub.* 581), *bursopåljhj* (*Eq.* 132 with *SS* 132a,b; 138) or *bursopἀlhj* (*Eq.* 739–40 [the *SS* to 739a, c, 740a, c relate the neurὶ rrafoj to Lysikles, though the titles *bursopαlhj*, *skutotìmoj* and *neurὶ rrafoj* are amplifications of Kleon]). Kleon sells bad shoe leather (*Eq.* 314–21, cf. 868–70). Hyperbolos is a *luxnopåljhj* (*Eq.* 739; cf. *Ar.* fr. 209, *Nub.* 1065–66, *Eq.* 1315) or *luxnìpoioj* (*Pax* 690). Kleophon is *luxνοςιοj* (*Andok.* 1.146; *Aisch.* 2.76; *AP* 28.3; *Σ Ar.* *Thesm.* 805; *Σ Ran.* 681). The attitude begins to soften in the fourth century (*Ar.* *Eccl.* 252–53).
The figure of the agoraios-ponéros represents the politician in terms of extreme “social distance” and “negative reciprocity.”96 “Social distance” is Marshall Sahlins’ term for the proximity or distance in kinship or affinity that structures the norms of reciprocity. The extreme of kinship, for instance, a mother suckling her child, requires “generalized reciprocity” in which “the expectation of a direct return is unseemly. At best it is implicit.... Failure to reciprocate does not cause the giver of stuff to stop giving: the goods move one way, in favor of the have-not, for a very long period.”97 Greek culture conforms to this notion. Aristotle’s example of the quintessential philos is the mother (EN 1159a27–b1, 1166a5–10). In tragedy, mothers lament the loss of their ponos and charis at the death of their children (E. Su. 1134–37; Tr. 758–60). For a mother to bare her breast to a son calls in the debt of maternal trophé (Il. 22.79–89; A. Ch. 896–98; E. Or. 526–29).

The next degree of social distance is “balanced reciprocity,” “the simultaneous exchange of the same types of goods to the same amounts..., transactions which stipulate the returns of commensurate worth or utility within a finite and narrow period.”98 At the far end of the spectrum is “negative reciprocity,” the widest span of “social distance,” ranging from haggling to theft and violence.99 Homer attributes such extremes of social distance to traffickers—Phoenicians, Taphians, and Thesprotians—who deceive and capture freeborn people, transforming them into commodities.100 The comedians’ agoraios politician can be a “slave dealer” (ἀνδραποδοσίας, Eq. 1030; cf. Thesm. 818).101 Typically, however, the comedians exclude him from the free community of Athenians. The politician is the most de-privileged outsider, a barbarian and slave who deceives and profits from the Athenians.102 The idea of “social distance” underlies the series of thefts of women...
committed by Hellenes and non-Hellenes at the outset of Herodotos’ Histories (1.1–5). Complete outsiders treat one another this way.

Hyperbolos personified the negative extremes of social distance and reciprocity. Aelian placed him among those whose fathers no one could easily name (VH 12.43, along with Kleophon and Demades). Those who did mention his father, such as Andokides, called him a branded slave in the city’s mint (οὐ πατὴρ ἑστιγμένος ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ ἀγρυπνοκοπείῳ δουλεύει δημοσίῳ, Andok. fr. 5). His mother, if not a bread-seller, was a money-lender. In Aristophanes’ Thesmophoriazousai, the chorus describes her as dressed in white, her hair flowing at public celebrations beside Lamachos’ mother—when she should have had her hair cropped and sit behind him (Thesm. 836–42). Lamachos was a “man useful and good to the city” (Ἀνδρὰ χρηστὸν τῇ πόλει, 833), while Hyperbolos is classed as “a coward and a bad man...a bad triarch or helmsman” (δειλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἄνδρα...τριήραρχον πονηρὸν ἢ κυβερνητήν, 836–37). The chorus recommends that prospective debtors seize his mother’s assets and tell her “this is the interest you deserve for bearing such a child” (ἀξία γοῦν εἰ τόξον τεχοῦσα τοιοῦτον τόξον, 845). Depicting Hyperbolos as the son of a branded slave in the mint and of a money-lender, Aristophanes imagines him as monetary interest, anticipating Aristotle’s memorable phrase for this unnatural social convention: “money, son of money” (Arist. Pol. 1258b5–7). Monetary interest is a literal form of negative reciprocity; the process of lending money at interest presumes a high degree of social distance between the borrower and the lender. For Aristophanes, the real negative reciprocity is Hyperbolos himself: his mother owes the city for his birth. Socio-economic criteria, however, are not sufficient to determine the labels χρεστός and πονέρος: the poor can be χρεστοί, and (rarely in the fifth century) the wealthy and well-born can be πονέροι. Aristophanes and Euripides use
ponéros in ways that combine suggestions of class, status, political, and moral fitness. The primary variables for the use of the term are birth, education, mode of wealth-acquisition and use, and conduct. The terms exemplify Lukács’ dictum that “status-consciousness...masks class consciousness” in pre-capitalist societies: ponéros and chréstos are status designations that contain assumptions about class.

The Old Oligarch employs a system of implication among three distinct variables, economic class, social status, and moral worth (1.5). The root variable in this political sociology is economic class: lack of money implies lack of education, which entails disorderly and blameworthy attempts to acquire wealth (ἐπιταξία καὶ ποιησία). The fundamental terms are ponéros and chréstos because they represent the fusion of all three variables. Technically they are status terms, but they imply the other variables: poverty and wealth, ignorance and knowledge, badness and goodness. The Old Oligarch explains that ponéria is more frequent among members of the demos because they have to acquire wealth to live. Lack of cultural education (ἀπαθευσία) and ignorance (ἀμαθία, 1.5) increase their likelihood of their doing so by dishonest means (cf. E. El. 375–76; Thuc. 3.45.4; Dem. 57.45). The Old Oligarch refuses to praise democracy because it organizes itself for the benefit of ponéroi as opposed to chréstoi (1.1, 1.4; cf. Thuc. 6.53.2 for the use of the terms in this sense). This is a way of depicting moral disorder in the community.

But the author also uses ponéros to brand those who perform leadership roles in the democracy (1.6 [bis], 7, 9; 2.19 [bis]), assuming that demotic hegemony depends upon the maintenance of ponéroi in these roles. He realizes that if the chréstoi assume control of the city, the most knowledgeable and intelligent (δεξιώτατοι) would write laws, the chréstoi would punish the ponéroi, and “lunatics” would no longer be allowed to serve in the Boule, address the assembly, or even attend it. Without its leaders, the demos would fall “quickly into slavery.”

107. Eq. 181, 186, 336–37, 415; Nub. 1066, cf. 1056; Ran. 710, 731; E. Hek. 591–602; frs. 331, 520, 1068. Birth alone is not sufficient: chréstoi can father ponéroi (Antiphanes fr. 203; Dem. 24.127). Chrésta tekna can have kakoi as fathers (E. El. 369–70). Nothoi can be chréstoi (E. fr. 377). Wealth is not sufficient for the status of a chréstos, eugenés, gennaios, or sophos, though Euripidean characters sometimes talk as if it were. See above n.28.

108. Lukács 1971: 55; the entire discussion at 55–59, however, is severely flawed: the Athenian peasantry could not live in total independence from the state. For the rhetoric of class and status in fourth-century oratory see Ober 1989: 280–327.

109. Gomme 1940/1962: 49 accuses the author of a “sophistic confusion of ethical and political uses of πονηρός, κακός, χρήστοι, βέλτιστοι...” It is perhaps more accurate to say that the author makes explicit what is implicit in other fifth-century texts. The vocabulary of social and moral status in democratic Athens is a thin veil for class bias.

110. Isok. 3.14, 7.21–22. Isok. 8.122–23 makes an historical argument: chréstoi made Athens eudaimôn and preserved the democracy unchanged, but ponéroi twice caused the dissolution of the democracy. See further, Lys. 31.25; Dem. 25.75, 97, 50.65. The problem goes back to Il. 9.315–21.
(1.8–9). The Old Oligarch enunciates what we might call the “anti-democratic social drama.” This scenario played itself out in 411 and 404.111

Unlike the “Old Oligarch” who describes democracy as an inversion of good social and political order, a form of poneiria,112 the comedian seeks to establish the dominance of to chreston and chrestoi over to poneiron and poneiroi. Aristophanes announces that “there is nothing invidious in reviling the poneiroi—it’s an honor for the chrestoi, if anyone calculates it well” (και δορξάσαι τῶς πονηρῶς οὐδὲν ἐστ’ ἐπίφθωνον, / ἀλλὰ τιμῇ τοῖς χρηστοῖς, ὥστις εὖ λογίζεται, Eq. 1274–75). Comic abuse is a zero-sum game in which ridicule of the poneiroi entails honor for the chrestoi. Similarly, according to Aeschylus in the Frogs, the poet must “conceal the bad...and say what is good” (ἀλλά ἀποκρύπτειν χρῆ τὸ πονηρὸν τὸν γε ποιητὴν...πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν, 1053...1056). Aristophanes himself “makes bad jokes vanish” (ἀφανίζων πονηρὰ σκόμματα, Nub. 542) and advises and teaches what is “good for the polis” (χρηστὰ τῇ πόλει, Ran. 686–87), the paradigmatic action of the good citizen (cf. E. Su. 439; Ph. 1015–18). Dionysos’ criterion for selecting which poet he will bring from Hades to Athens is “whichever of the two recommends something more chreston for the city” (ὅποτερος οὖν ἀν τῇ πόλει παρανέσῃ / μᾶλλον τι χρηστόν, 1420–21). The language of “concealing to poneiron” and “causing poneira to vanish” is particularly important: the poetics and politics of poneiria converge around this concept, and oligarchs in 411 and in 404 will seek to cause the poneiroi to vanish altogether.

The status label poneiros for the new elite demonstrates that the wealth of its members is disembedded from the polis and, more damagingly, that its members divert wealth from the sphere of long-term transactions to that of the short-term by theft, bribery, deception, and other underhanded means, while at the same time professing friendship and love for the demos and claiming to protect it from its high-status enemies. The label agoraios brings out the class bias inherent in poneiros and functions to depict the new elite in terms of extreme “social distance” and “negative reciprocity”: not only the haggling that transpires between huckster and buyer, but also the deception, theft, enslavement, and commodification that characterizes the way total outsiders treat one another, for the agoraios-poneiros is not a member of the free community of Athenians. He is a barbarian and a slave who deserves punishment for corrupting the community, embedding the polis in the agora, subordinating political to economic objectives and values, diverting resources from the long- to the short- term sphere. He is a


112. Cf. Thucydides’ Alkibiades, who calls himself an “an exile from the poneiria of those who drove me out” (Thuc. 6.92.3; cf. 89.5)—and later insists that he will not return to the “democracy and poneiria that cast me out” (8.47.2).
figure for the utterly disembedded citizen, the extreme of negative reciprocity, whose leadership is repressive domination; his antithesis, the *chrêstos*, figures the citizen completely embedded in the long-term sphere of the city, who operates at the extreme of generalized reciprocity, and who provides the moral leadership required for hegemony.

**“NOBLY WITHOUT COMPENSATION”: LEADERSHIP AS GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY**

Comedy seeks to disrupt the bond of *eunoia* and *philia* between the demos and new elite, replacing wages for jury service and judicial theft from the wealthy with “noble gifts and acts” which symbolize a leader’s capacity to ensure the well-being of the demos and to reproduce the social order.\(^{113}\) Kleon demonstrates his *philia* for Demos by judicial theft: “How could there be a citizen who loves you more than I, Demos? When I was just a member of the Boule I showed you the greatest profit in the treasury, torturing some, throttling some, and blackmailing others, not giving a thought to any private citizen, if I could please you” (*Eq*. 773–76).\(^{114}\) The comic fiction that demagogues, prosecutors, or the *kôlakretai* are the demos’ paymaster rather than the polis as “supra-individual order” underscores the incompatibility between the political economy of democratic leadership and the moral economy of *philia* which underlies elite leadership.\(^{115}\) Similarly, oxymora such as “phratries of the triobol” (*Eq*. 255) and “drinking the milk of the *kôlakretês*” (*Vesp*. 724; cf. 695, *Av*. 1541) that represent the *misthos* as a kind of generalized reciprocity indicate the contradiction between democratic forms of solidarity and the social fiction of *philia* which endows that solidarity with meaning. An anonymous comedian stresses this incompatibility when he asks, “for what man is friend to a man for a wage?” (μισθοῦς γὰρ ἀνθρώπων τις ἀνθρώπων φιλεῖ, Com. Ades. fr. 721; cf. *Dem*. 18.51–52).

Elite leadership is a form of generalized reciprocity. The premise of the *Knights*, for example, is that Allantopoles will defeat Paphlagon because he is a more polluted creature of the marketplace.\(^{116}\) Yet Allantopoles also mimics a *kalos*

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113. For the opposition between gift and commodity, see Gregory 1982: 10–28. Gifts symbolize the reproduction of the long-term cycle whereas commodities belong to short-term, private cycle. Cf. Bourdieu 1980/1990: 129, “The transformation of any given kind of capital into symbolic capital, a legitimate possession grounded in the nature of the giver, is the fundamental operation of social alchemy (the paradigm of which is gift exchange).”


115. For the polis as a “supra-individual order,” see von Reden 1995: 92. For the status of democratic *misthos* in comedy, see below.

116. Allantopoles’ education, profession, and lifestyle are even fouler than Kleon’s, and he is more *miaros*, *kobalos*, *panourgos*, and *bômolochoi* (*Eq*. 450, 684–88, 948–50, 1229–52). To defeat Kleon, Allantopoles must be more basely born and poorly educated; he also must be a better rhetor
From Pone ˆ ros to Pharmakos

Demos judges three contests for leadership between Allantopoles and Paphlagon in the Knights. First, he oversees a contest for the title “more well-disposed” (ευνοοστερος) toward Demos and for the position of tamias (“steward”), symbolized by the ring bearing Demos’ official seal (728–959). Second, he judges a contest of flattery in which contestants recite oracles that portend power and luxury for Demos (997–1106). Demos announces the winner as the one to whom he will “entrust myself...to guide me in old age and educate me anew” (1098–99). Third, Demos tests which leader donates the largest proportion of his own property to feed him. To this leader Demos offers “the reins of the Pnyx” (1107–1109), a crown (1227–28, 1250–52), and himself (1259–60). The figures contending for Demos’ eunoia and charis may occupy the lowest level of Athenian society; nonetheless, they contend to persuade Demos that they convert their economic into socially recognizable or “symbolic” capital.

Unlike Paphlagon, Allantopoles donates gifts to Demos from his own resources with no economic motives, proving himself a “good citizen” (944).118 His first gift is a cushion he stitched so that Demos’ “Salaminian butt” can sit comfortably on the Pnyx (783–85). The gift counters Paphlagon’s treatment of Demos “as charcoal” while professing to love him and be eunous toward him (779–80). It earns him the highest status: “Who are you, man? You aren’t one of the descendants of Harmodios are you? This act of yours is truly noble and philode ˆ mos” (τοιτι γε τοι σου τοςργον ἀλθῶς γενναίον καὶ φιλόδημον, 786–87). His second gift, a pair of shoes he bought (τρίχωμα) for Demos, makes him “the best man of any I know toward the demos and most well-intentioned toward the city and its toes” (873–74), and opposes Paphlagon’s commodities, for he “sold so many hides” (συντή τοσσαυτα πολιον), but never donated so much as a leather sole (χατταμα) to Demos, even though he “keeps on saying he loves you” (φάσχων φυλείν, 868–70; cf. 316–18).

His third gift to Demos, a chiton, catapults him past Themistokles in the pantheon of democratic leaders (884–86). Paphlagon belatedly tries to match Allantopoles by giving Demos a stinking hide of leather, which nearly suocates him, but he rejects it (890–93). Clothing Demos recalls a Kimonian “politics of

and panderer to the demos. Yet unlike Kleon, he expresses himself as a chre ˆ stos and “benefactor” of the demos. The Birds applies the same logic to Athenian imperialism: Peisetairos builds an empire similar to that of Athens (based on the control of food supply), but even more hybristic in its aims, then excludes the hybristic functionaries of Athenian imperialism—the episkopos, decree-seller, and the sykophant—from it.

117. Paphlagon announces he is Demos’ benefactor (741). Allantopoles and the kaloi k’agathoi strive to benefit him (734, 1160). Demos will proclaim the bigger benefactor victor (1108).

118. For the topos of the “good citizen” (ἀγαθός or χρηστός πολίτης) in the fifth century, see Eq. 227; Ran. 718, 728 (kaloi k’agathoi citizens); Eup. fr. 129; Phrynichos fr. 62. In Thucydidies, Diodotos (3.42.5) and Nikias use the topos (6.9.2, 14.1); cf. 6.53.2; [Andok.] 4.1, 12 (Aristeides). See further below.
largess.” The symbolism recurs in Kimonian hagiography: his followers clothed the elderly poor (Plut. Kim. 10.2; Per. 9.2; Theopompos FGrH 115 F89.15–17; contrast Euainon’s proposal, Eccl. 408–26). To clothe Demos symbolizes his renewal and well-being.\(^{119}\) Agorakritos enacts this renewal literally and figuratively at the end of the drama (1331).

Allantopoles advises that the decisive judgment between himself and Paphlagon requires the inspection of their baskets (χίστες, 1207–23) to determine which of them has converted more of his wealth to the public sphere. Allantopoles’ kistê is empty because, “I kept setting everything beside you” (ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ γὰρ σου παρεσφόρουν, 1215). Demos declares “this basket’s on Demos’ side” (στὰ τὰς χίστις τὰ τοῦ Δῆμου φρονεῖ, 1216).\(^{120}\) Paphlagon’s basket is “full of so many goods” (1218) because he gave Demos only a fraction of its contents (1219–25; cf. 716–18). This decisive moment enacts the stereotype of the new elite as “newly rich scoundrels” (νεοπλουτοπόνηροι, Krat. fr. 223) whose political leadership is a way of acquiring wealth rather than converting it into socially recognizable form. The distinction between Paphlagon and Allantopoles remains crucial to the evaluation of democratic leadership. Nearly a century later, Demosthenes insists that his reciprocity toward the demos is generalized: “If by rhetor,” he declares, “you mean some of the kinds of men that you and I see speaking, who are shameless and have grown rich from you, I would not be one of them. For I have never taken anything at all from you; on the contrary, I have spent all my substance on you, except a little” (21.189; cf. Lys. 27.10). Demosthenes claims his kistê is empty.

Paphlagon’s full kistê indicates his failure to act according to the demands of charis placed upon political leadership.\(^{121}\) Demos rebukes him: “O you polluted

\(^{119}\) A chiton leaves Demos technically “naked” (Nub. 498, 965; Lys. 1020; Eccl. 409; Dem. 21.216). Aristophanes imagines political leadership as a garment: Hyperbolos is a cloth with which a “naked” (γυμνός) demos “girded itself” (περιεζόσκετο) temporarily after Kleon’s death (Ar. Pax 685–87). Cf. also in this connection the image of Kleon περικυκλώσαμενος ἐθημαγγέρσα (AP 28.3; Aisch. 1.25–26; Dem. 19.251; Plut. Nik. 8.6). Aeschylus uses a chlaina and sisyra as images for political leaders at Ran. 1458–59 (with Dover 1993: 377). It may be, pace Dover, that the sisyra figures oikouroi as leaders (this coverlet remained indoors), while the himation, worn outside as a cloak, figures the military elite. Lysistrate uses the image of preparing a woolen chlaina for the demos to symbolize the imagined community. See Henderson 1987: 145.

\(^{120}\) McGlew 1996: 355 interprets the moment that Allantopoles has nothing left to give Demos: he is the citizen pure and simple. But the play depicts Allantopoles as increasing his wealth during the contest (1001 with Neil ad loc.), and his greatest gifts to Demos are still to come.

\(^{121}\) For charis between politician and demos, see Ober 1989: 226–33, 245–47; Davies 1981: 92–105; Millett 1991: 123–26. For charis in the construction of group identity, see Johnstone 1999: 100–108. The process of Allantopoles’ accumulation of symbolic capital is gradual: he first proves himself the consummate agoraioi, offering the Boule as a state secret a strategy for reducing the price of anchovies by cornering the market on containers (642–50). He then differentiates himself from the ponéroi by buying up all the coriander and leeks as relishes for the bouleutai’s cheap anchovies “free of charge” (προίκα), winning charis (Eq. 678–79). Allantopoles’ last gifts, prior to his transformation of Demos, are medicine for the sores on Demos’ shins, and a rabbit’s tail to rub on his ophthalmidia (906–10). Cf. Pax 907–11.
man, you stole this from me and deceived me? I crowned you and gave you gifts” (ἐὰν μικρὰ κλέπτων δὴ με ταὐτ' ἐξήπτας; ἕγω δὲ τι ἐστάφανιξα κάδωρησάμαν, 1224–25). Demos expects balanced reciprocity between himself and his leaders. He “crows” the demagogue and allows him to grow rich from public prosperity (cf. 1250–52) but the political leader must convert his wealth to the public sphere. The comedian Antiphanes defines the aretē involved in elite leadership: “virtue is to serve your philoi without compensation” (Ἀρετὴ τὸ προῖκα τοῖς φίλοις ὑπηρετεῖν, fr. 208.1). The chorus of the Knights demands that generals “defend the city and its native gods nobly without compensation” (τῇ πόλει / προῖκα γενναῖος ἄμινεν καὶ θεοῖς ἐγχωρίοις, 576–77; cf. καλὸν δὲ τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν μὴ ἵνα ἀντιπάθη, Arist. EN 1162b36–63a1). Kleon’s compensation for his “heroism” at Pylos—sitēsis in the Prytaneion and prohedria (Eq. 280–83, 573–76, 702, 709, 766, 1404–1405)—is incompatible with the social fiction of elite political leadership as generalized reciprocity, a “noble” (γενναίον) gift which symbolizes philia between giver and recipient, and the charis owed the giver. Demosthenes makes a similar charge against Timokrates: “because he provided no benefit free of charge, Timokrates is hateful to you” (προῖκα γὰρ οὐδὲν ὀφελούμενος ύμῖν Τιμοκράτης ἀπεχθάνεται, 24.199; cf. Dein. 1.43–45).

Financial becomes symbolic capital in the form of generalized reciprocity. As a Euripidean character proclaims, “by as much as you wish to use aretē more, by so much the more it increases when spent” (Ἀρετὴ δ᾽ ὀσμὸ περὶ μᾶλλον ἂν χρησθαι θέλης / τοσὸδε μείζων οὐξεται τελουμένη, E. fr. 1029.3–4). In this context, aretē is symbolic capital: it increases when spent because it earns charis. Athenian imperial ideology constructed its own leadership in this form. As Thucydides’ Perikles proclaims: “When it comes to aretē, we are at odds with the majority. For we acquire friends not by experiencing favors, but by doing them” (Thuc. 2.40.4). The doer of a favor earns charis, while the recipient who returns a favor simply pays back the aretē of the giver, and earns no charis (ibid.). Aretē as symbolic capital is analogous to nobility: unlike wealth, it cannot be depleted (E. fr. 1047; Isok. 10.44).

To be γενναίος toward the demos and the city constitutes a leader’s elite status and reduces social distance between him and the demos to its conceptual minimum—“nobility” is kind of fictionalized kinship. Theater insists on maximizing the actual social distance between leaders and the demos—they must be the eugeneis, chrēstoi, and kaloi k’agathoi—while simultaneously minimizing this distance through the social fiction of generalized reciprocity involved in “noble acts” (γενναία ἔργα). The risk and expenditure of one’s own labor, life, or wealth to perform a service for an individual or group is the highest expression of philia. The standard figure of late fifth-century tragedy, the γενναίος who
risks and expends life and labor for philoi, instantiates this ideal. In the Ajax, Odysseus argues that Ajax’ nobility (οδ´ ἔχθρος ἄνήρ, ἀλλὰ γενναῖος ποτ’ ἦν, 1355; cf. 480) and his aretē overcome the enmity he incurred (1357). Ajax’ status as an aristos obligates Odysseus to “omit none of the things it is necessary for mortals to suffer for men who are best” (μηδὲν ἐλλείπειν ὅσον / χρῆ τοῖς ἄριστοις ἀνδρᾶσιν πολείν βροτοῖς, S. Aj. 1379–80). Ajax may be an enemy of the gods and of the Argive people (see above). Because of his nobility, however, he cannot be treated as an outsider, left for dogs and birds to devour. Nobility is a form of philia that cannot be rescinded.

Demosthenes proclaims that the demos elected him to deliver the funeral oration over the dead at Chaireoneia (18.285–87). The feast which followed had to take place “at the home of a man as closely related as possible to the dead” (ὡς παρ’ οἰκειοτάτῳ τῶν τετελευτηκότων, 288). Demosthenes hosted the feast because “each was more related by blood [to the dead] than I, but in common no one was closer to all” (γένει μὲν γὰρ ἔκαστος ἐκάστῳ μᾶλλον οἰκειός ἦν ἐμοῦ, κοινῆ δὲ πάσιν ὀυδές ἔγγυτέρω, ibid.). The noble benefactor is closest in kinship to the citizen body. Such nobility may derive from generations of patronage to the demos: “And so my father,” writes Isokrates for Alkibiades’ son, “inherited from his forefathers philia toward the demos from his ancestors which has become so ancient and genuine through the greatest benefactions” (τὴν μὲν οὖν φιλίαν τὴν πρὸς τὸν δήμον οὕτω πολλαῖν καὶ γνησίαι καὶ διὰ τὰς μεγίστας εὐεργεσίας γεγενημένην παρὰ τῶν προγόνων παρέλαβεν, Isok. 16.28; cf. Andok. 1.146–47). The leader’s beneficence flows to the demos without a hint of economic interest or demand for repayment, earning the giver the respect and charis of the community (see esp. Dem 18.311–13).

Plutarch reproduces the ideology of elite leadership in its most explicit form: Nikias, Thucydides son of Melesias, and Theramenes all “had a father’s good will and love toward the demos” (καὶ πατρικὴν ἔχοντες εὔνοιαν καὶ φιλίαν πρὸς τὸν δήμον, Nik. 2.1; cf. AP 28.5). The structure of reciprocity between these leaders and the demos is generalized. The paternal metaphor erases social

123. E. Alk. 624, 860 (Alkestis), 860 (Admetos), 1120 (Herakles); Med. 762 (Aigeus); Hipp. 1301, 1390, 1454 (Hippolytos); Hkld. 464, 537 (Makaria); Hek. 592 (Polyxena); Su. 1030 (Euadne), 1178–79 (Theseus and Athens); Or. 870 (the humble peasant); 1155–63 (Pylades); IA 1402, 1411, 1422 (Iphigeneia). As chreˆstos: E. Hkld. 503–10; 999 (Herakles); cf. 555; fr. 739. Aristophanes describes the warriors/citizens/audience whom Euripides corrupted in these terms (Ran. 1011, 1014–15, 1019–20, 1050) and represents himself as a gennaios poet, in strict analogy to the chreˆstos leader (Eq. 509–11; cf. Pax 773–74; Ran. 356, 378–79): he communicates his nobility to the audience (Ran. 1099–98). The audience participates fully in this fiction (Nub. 378–79).

124. The orators use γενναῖος sparingly, either as a model for the demos’ conduct (Dem. 3.20, 18.98), to praise the ancestors (Lyk. 1.122; Isok. 12.60), to portray the elite leader and his acts (Dem. 18.279, 308, 321; cf. Lyk. 1.86, Isok. 15.308), or in sarcasm (Dem. 19.175), reserving εὐγενῆς for noble birth ([Dem.] 57.46, 62; 59.72; Isok. 1.7, 10.44) and for the encomium of Athenian (Dem. 60.4, 12; Lyk. 1.122; Isok. 8.50, 76) and other ancestry (Isok. 3.42; 9.42; 11.10).

125. Such declarations were also contested as the last-ditch efforts of scoundrels who could not clear themselves on the merits of their cases. See Dem. 25.76; cf. Lys. 14.18.
distance, figuring the vertical relationship between leader and followers as kinship. Aristotle’s terms for the democracy based upon the leadership of such men is “ancestral” (πατρίδας δημοκρατία, 1273b38; 1305a29) and “lawful” (ταῖς κατὰ νόμον δημοκρατομέναις, 1292a8). In such democracies, “the best of the citizens are in the front rank” (οἱ βέλτιστοι τῶν πολιτῶν εἰσὶν ἐν προεδρία, 1292a9). The presence of demagogues indicates this form of government’s dissolution: they offer the demos power over the laws and transform it into a monarch (1292a4–34). In one scenario, such leaders give the demos full authority over the laws in exchange for their election, ushering in contemporary democracy (Pol. 1305a28–36). Alternatively, such leaders, “gratifying the demos as if it were a tyrant” (ἀσπέρ τυράννω τῷ δήμῳ χαριζόμενοι) vest ultimate power in the demotic juries, destroying the “ancestral democracy” balanced among the Areiopagos, elected officials, and jurors established by lot, because the demos, made arrogant by naval hegemony, selects “bad demagogues over the good leaders who oppose them” (Pol. 1273b41–74a21; cf. AP 41.2).

A patrios politeia or démokratia requires leaders who are gennaioi, chrêstoi, epieikeis, and eugeneis. Generalized reciprocity between such leaders and the demos forms its ideological foundation. Demotic reciprocity becomes a matter of symbolic violence, concealed within social and political relations between elite leaders and the demos, an internalized claim held over a demos indebted to them.126 The elite citizen replaces the demagogue as the intermediary between the demos and the public treasury. He is the tamias, the figure who redistributes wealth from his own oikos to the polis, rather than from the polis to the demos and himself (Andok. 2.17–18; Lys. 18.20–21, 19.61–62, 21.13–19; Is. 6.60–61; Isok. 8.13).127 Such a leader is “demotic” because he “cares for the masses” (δημοτικῶς μὲν ὄν ὁ τοῦ πλῆθους θεραπεῖα, Isok. 9.46) or because his ancestors took the side of the demos against the tyrants (Andok. 2.26; Thuc. 6.89.4; Isok. 16.25–28; cf. Dem. 21.144) or because he uses his birth, wealth, moderation, and courage to preserve the democracy and to benefit the demos (Andok. 1.146–47; Aisch. 3.168–70), taking risks on its behalf (Isok. 16.36; 18.62). The comic demagogue, by contrast, merely seems demotic because he prosecutes and slanders his betters (cf. [Dem.] 12.19).128 Isokrates reiterates the comic argument: we should stop confusing sykophants with demotic leaders and assuming that the kaloi k’ agathoi are oligarchs (καὶ παυσώμεθα δημοτικῶς μὲν εἰναὶ νομίζοντες

126. For the mechanisms of symbolic violence, see Bourdieu 1980/1990: 122–34, esp. 126–27.
127. For a reading of Andok. 2.17–18 as “oligarchic,” see Missiou 1992: 40–49.
128. δημοτικῶς are the poor for the Old Oligarch (1.4, 5, 6, 15; 2.18) or members of the elite who favor democracy and the demos (2.19), the standard meaning in fourth-century oratory. In Aristophanes, démotikos means “advantageous to the poor” (Nub. 204–205, Eccl. 411–21; cf. 631) or “the poor” (i.e. those who have to work to eat, Vesp. 709). It also means “those in favor of democracy” (Av: 1584). This word is attested only for Aristophanes among the fifth-century comedians. Fourth-century comedians use the adjective ironically. See esp. Euboulos fr. 72.1–2; Men. Sik. 182 (probably); Antiphanes fr. 188; Philemon fr. 3.
κολοφώντας, ὄλγαρχους δὲ τοὺς καλοὺς κάγαθοὺς, 8.133), accepting chreístoi instead of ponéroi as leaders as the city did in the past (ibid.). If the democratic city honors its chreístoi, they will favor democracy (ibid.).

Comic writers can go still further in their representation of noble leadership. A speaker in Eupolis denigrates the current politeia on the grounds that generals are “polluted offscourings” (νυνὶ δ’ ὑπὶ τύχομεν, / στρατευόμεσθ’ αἰρούμενοι καθάρματα στρατηγούς, fr. 384.7–8). Generals of previous generations derived “from the greatest houses” (ἐκ τῶν μεγίστων οἰκίων, 5) and were “first in wealth and birth” (πλούτῳ γένει τε πρῶτοι, ibid.). Citizens “prayed to them as to gods, for indeed, they were gods” (οίς ὤσπερει θεοῖσιν ἡμίχρεισθάκαλὶ γὰρ ἢσαν, 6). Under their leadership, the city always succeeded (cf. Eq. 567–68). After he transforms Demos, Agorakritos informs him, “you could consider me a god” (ἐμὲ γὰρ νομίζοις ἤν θεόν, Eq. 1338). In a limited way, the theater reactivates the epic formula for public honor, “and they look to him as a god as he goes through the city” (ἐρχόμενον δ’ ἀνὰ ἁστυ θεόν ὃς εἰσορῶσαν, Od. 8.173; cf. 5.36, 7.71, 19.280, 23.339).129

The theater blocked the transformation of the new elite’s wealth into symbolic capital by refusing to deny its monetary character. The agoraios-ponéros acts only for monetary profit at the extremes of social distance. The elite leader and his oikos, by contrast, donate their money, labor, and talent to the public sphere and risk their lives for the benefit and protection of the demos proïka, with no economic motives or strings attached. Their nobility reduces social distance to its conceptual minimum. A democracy led by such men and families is “ancestral” both because it operates according to patrioi nomoi and because the paternal metaphor applies to their leadership: they have a father’s philia and eunoia toward the demos, in contradistinction to the new elite, which merely mouths such a bond and then bilks the demos. The theater constructs such a democracy, allying the chreístoi and the demos (imagined as farmers) specifically against the new elite.

**THE DEMAGOGUE’S COMEDY: THE DEMOS AS AN IMAGINED COMMUNITY**

“Ideology,” writes M. I. Finley, “never divides neatly along class lines; on the contrary, its function, if it is to be of any use, is precisely to cross those lines.”130 The theater as an institution stages elite cultural values for its mass audience as an “affirmation of collective solidarity.”131 In Athenian culture of the late fifth century, the figure of the ponéros prostatés is a mark of solidarity, a way of representing long-term interests as shared across divisions of class and

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129. Cf. A. Pe. 80 (Xerxes), 710–11, 856 (Dareios); Ag. 1547 (Agamemnon); S. OT 1235 (Iokaste); E. Hek. 356 (Polyxena); El. 67 (Aoutorgos); Hel. 819 (Theonoe); IA 625–26 (Achilles).
status, a ritual of exclusion which fortifies the bonds among citizens and renews the community’s heroic past. The exclusion of the *ponéros prostatai* symbolically repairs the *kosmos* of city damaged by politicians who “shake it up” in order to extract profit from wealthy citizens. In the *Wasps*, Sosias dreams that Kleon’s demos is the rich fat of an ox (δημός), which he weighs out on a scale, an image Xanthias interprets to mean “he wants to divide our demos” (τὸν δήμον ἰμῶν βοῦλεται διαιστάνει, *Vesp.* 41; cf. *Eq.* 817–18). He pits the poor against the rich for personal profit, dividing the δημός to acquire and redistribute its δημός, its richest part. The strategy for the renewal of the polis is especially clear in Aristophanic comedy of the 420s: to unite the demos and the *chrestoi* by returning the “urban peasantry” to the countryside under a formal peace with Sparta and by humiliating and then excluding the leading politician—Kleon or Hyperbolos—from the city.

In the period after Perikles’ death, the ideology of the *metrios* evolved in response to the rise of the new political elite. Theseus proclaims in the *Suppliants* that the class “in the middle of the three classes preserves cities, protecting whichever moral order a city establishes” (τριῶν δὲ μοιρῶν ἢ ’ν μέσῳ σφίζει πόλεις, / κόσμων φυλάσσουσ’ ὄντινα ἄν τάξιν πόλεις, 244–45). Excluded are the wealthy (ὀλίβιοι), the poor, and the *ponéros prostatai* who lead them: they are in constant turmoil, the former in a state of yearning for more wealth, the latter in a coalition to deprive them of it (243). The theater defined the paradigmatic *metrios* as the self-sufficient farmer, “the autourgos, the men who alone preserve the land” (αὐτοῦργος—ὁπερ καὶ μῦνοι σφόζουσ’ γῆν, *E. Or.* 920; *El.* 386–88). Aristophanes’ Chremyllos is the quintessential *metrios anēr*. He tells Ploutos: “You’ve never met a *metrios anēr*. Somehow I’m always of this turn of mind (μετρίου γὰρ ἄνδρὸς οὐκ ἐπέτυχες πώσοτε. / ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτον τοῦ τρόπου πώς εἰμ’ ἂει): I’m happy when I save money and I’m happy to spend

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135. Cf. Heath 1987: 33. The hegemony of the *metrios*, however, is a coalition of middling and aristocratic values which excludes urban, legal-commercial culture and values.

Dikaiopolis and Trygaios are realizations of the ideal on the fifth-century comic stage. These farmers have a definite disgust for the culture of the city and of the market and yearn to return to the countryside (Ar. Ach. 32–40, 263–70; Pax 556–97; cf. E. Or. 919). They and other rural people detest the politicians who dominate the courts and assembly and who control the monetary payments that bind the demos to them.136 Dikaiopolis and Trygaios lead the resistance against the prevailing political and cosmic order, ending the war either for themselves or for all Hellas. Each is a “good citizen” (χρηστός πολίτης, Ach. 595, Pax 910; cf. Thesm. 835). The Orestes makes the coalition of agrarian and elite values inherent in such figures explicit: an aroundgos argues in the assembly that Orestes should be crowned for avenging his father and killing his godless mother, and for upholding the honor of warriors who go to battle against those who stay home and defile their beds (Or. 917–29), a position that aligns him with the chréstoi (“to the chréstoi at least he seemed to speak well,” καὶ τοῖς γε χρηστοῖς εῦ λέγειν ἐφαινετο, 930). A politician, on the other hand, voices Tyndareus’ desire to have Elektra and Orestes killed and persuades the crowd (902–916, 943–45).

The Old Oligarch would class such metrioi among “the hoplites, the noble, and the chréstoi” (οἱ ὑπάλληλοι καὶ οἱ γενναιοὶ καὶ οἱ χρηστοὶ, 1.2; cf. Arist. Pol. 1321a13–14) and ally them with the rich against the “demos” which he conceives as landless thetes (2.14).137 The theater constructs a comparable ideological alignment. Aristophanes allies Dikaiopolis with Amphitheos, who traces his lineage back to “gods on both sides” (Ach. 45–55), although the farmer’s eight drachmai actually purchase the vintage peace (50–52, 129–33, 175–203). In the Knights, the entire elite of Athens—the hippeis, the καλὰ τε κατὰ τόν κόσμον, the clever spectator, the generals, even god (Eq. 225–29)—sides with the ponérois Allantopoles (185–86, 188–94, 211–19) to drive Paphlagon from power. In the Wasps, the aristocratic son Bdelykleon convinces his father, the old juror Philokleon, who has been ensorcelled by the demagogues, to join his side which despises politicians and prosecutors. While it is true that only the farmers liberate the goddess Eirene (Pax 508–11) and Trygaios alone gets credit for returning the demos to the countryside, he acts in the interests of the chréstoi (cf. Thuc. 2.65.2; 136. For the peasant’s hatred of demagogues and prosecutors see Ar. Ach. 300–301, 659–718, 836–47; Eq. 224, 315–18, 801–809; Pax 632–69, 679–92. In Eup. fr. 99.30–34, a rustic utters a curse upon citizens who choose caustic demagogues as leaders. For the opposition between farmer and sykophant, see Ar. Pax 190–91; Lys. 20.12; Dem. 25.82; cf. Av. 1694–99; Carter 1986: 82–87.

137. [Xen.] AP uses “demos” sometimes to refer to the poor, in opposition to the chréstoi, the rich, and the farmers: 1.2 (2x), 3 (3x) 2.9 (2x), 10, 14.
[Xen.] AP 2.14; Ar. Eccl. 197–98) and against those who profit from the war, whether demagogues, sykophants, or arms-makers (447–49, 543–49; 1210–69). The plane where the interests of the chreístos and the demos intersect defines not only the metrios, but the ideological solidarity of the polis.

Such solidarity may take the form of an alliance between solider and general (cf. S. Ai. 158–63), but typically it involves farmer and chreístos. Euripides’ Elektra stages an alliance between the aristocratic house of Atreus and a “noble” but poor autourgos to avenge Agamemnon’s murder and his children’s dishonor (El. 37–46; cf. 68, 253, 365). Euripides depicts the autourgos to whom Aigisthos married Elektra as a man of true Mykenaiain heritage (λαμβάνων γένεσις γένος, El. 37), but poor. His poverty destroys his claim to nobility (ἔνθεν ητύγχει, ἀπόλλυμαι, 37–38) and he lacks prestige (ἵστομαι, 40). His respect for “children of rich men” and his sense of inferior origins make him ashamed to consummate his marriage: it would be an act of hybris (ἀπόλαυμαι ὄλβιων ἀνδρῶν τέχναι λαμβάνων ὑβρίζειν, οὐ κατάξιος γεγόνως, 45–46). The autourgos is a man of sophrosyne (50–53, 261) whose respect for nobility in general and for Elektra in particular places her in his debt (cf. πένης ἀνήρ γενναῖος ἐς τῇ ἐμῇ εὐσεβής, 253; γενναῖον ἀνδρὶ ἐλέησε, εὖ τε δραστέσθον, 262). Elektra does menial chores in his household: he is “a friend equal to the gods” (67), and in him she has found “a healer in times of great distress” (69–70). Fundamental to this encomium is the autourgos’ perception of his inferior value (46).

When the autourgos offers his noble visitors xenia from his humble household (358–62, esp. “for even if I am poor, in no way shall I offer you an ill-bred character,” καὶ γὰρ εἰ πένης ἔφυν, ὀὔτοι τῷ γῇ Ἰῆσος δυσσεγενεῖς παρέξομα, 362), his conduct prompts Orestes to distinguish worth as a man (εὐανδρία) from birth, wealth, and military performance.138 As a status trait, nobility is not inheritable: a gennaios father has a son who is nothing; kakoi can father chreísteta kina. Similarly, class cannot measure status: “there is famine in the mind of a rich man, while great thought can exist in a poor body” (369–72).139 Wealth is therefore a bad criterion (ποιησῶ...κρίτης, 373). Poverty is an even worse standard: “poverty teaches a man to be bad by necessity” (376). Excellence in battle is an illusory measure, for it is based upon fictitious narrative. No one really sees or knows what transpires on the battlefield (377–79; cf. Su. 847–56).140 The measure of nobility is character and social group (τῇ δ’ ὁμολαβοντα γνώσις καὶ τοὺς ἴδεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς; 384–85). The peasant is an aristos even though he is just one of the masses and is neither a “great man” in Argos nor from a great house (380–82). In this way, Euripides aligns the autourgoi of the Elektra and

138. Euandria is “teachable” (Su. 910–17), but wealth is a bad teacher of it (fr. 54). It requires risk and the expenditure of labor (fr. 1052) and is opposed to the delightful life of the rich and leisureed.

139. The affinity between sophia and penia is a Euripidean topos: frs. 246, 327, 362.16–17, 641.

140. Wilamowitz deleted El. 373–79, 386–90. Diggle follows him.
Orestes with *chrêstoi* both socially and politically, praising each for his ability to preserve the city and manage it well (*El*. 386–88; *Or*. 920).

That the autours of the *Elektra* wins the epithet “noble” is a consequence of his consensual participation in an alliance with the nobility of birth, wealth, and merit. The hegemonic class of the coalition offers its status to its followers—*chrêstos, gennaios, eugenês, aristos*. This is the crucial move, and applies particularly to political leadership: whether *chrêstoi* or *ponêroi* lead determines the character of the demos as an imagined community. “The many are a terrible thing, whenever they have villains for leaders” (δεινῶν οί πολλοί, κακούργους ὅταν ἔχωσι προστάτας), asserts Orestes. “But whenever they take good leaders, they always make good decisions” (ἀλλ’ ὅταν χρηστοὺς λάβωσιν, χρηστὰ βουλεύουσιν), replies Pylades.141 The orator Demosthenes best articulates the symbolic register of political leadership: “The one who does anything on behalf of the polis must imitate the character of the polis (τὸν γὰρ ὑπὲρ πόλεως πράττοντά τι δεί τὸ τῆς πόλεως ἡθὸν μιμεῖσθαι). ... I might be saying this to those who already know it,” he continues, “but I’ll say it anyway: whatever kinds of people you appear to embrace and preserve, you will seem to be like these” (οποίους τινὰς ἤν φαίνησθι ἁγαπῶντες καὶ σφιγνότες, τούτοις ὁμοίοι δόξετε εἶναι, 22.64).142

The theater imagines and insists on discrediting a rival hegemonic alliance between a commercial-industrial elite and what Aristophanes represents as an “urban peasantry,” farmers who migrated to the city, and “looked to the speakers” (καὶ δι’ ώς ὑμᾶς οἱ λέγοντες οὕτως ποιητοὺς οὕτως χρηστοὺς ποιούσιν); you make them good or bad whenever you want,” 13.36). Paphlagon boasts that he can make Demos “broad and narrow” with his “cleverness” (καὶ ὑπὸ διεξόδητος τῆς ἐμῆς / δύναμιν ποιεῖν τὸν δῆμον εὐφόρον καὶ στενόν, *Eq*. 719–20). Allantopoles is unimpressed: his anus “knows that trick” (ἐξ’ ἀρχαῖος ὁμοίος γενόσθαι, *Eq*. 9–10). For the “urban peasantry” see *Ar*. 489–516; *Andok*. fr. 4=Suidas s.v. *skênía* (*s* 536); Thuc. 2.14–17; *AP* 27.2–3; *Krat.* fr. 211 with Hesych. s.v. *lipèrnhj* (*l* 1096). The category of “urban peasant” does not seem to have been stressed as a comic topos. See Carter 1986: 92–98; Hanson 1995: 165–66; Ostwald 1986: esp. 199–202 is aware of the topos. Ehrenberg 1951: 73–94 interprets τὸν ἐθνόκρατον ὁμοίον καὶ τὸν γεωργικὸν λέον of *Pax* 920–21 as “urban demos” and “farmers” (82–83n.3). In comedy, however, δημός refers to demesmen and the deme, as opposed to tragedy, where it might mean “ordinary people” in opposition to the elite. Olson 1998: 244–45 is therefore right to interpret the passage to mean that Trygaios released his demesmen and the farmers. *Pax* 636–41 probably means that peasants looked to the speakers for “sweets” (cf. fr. 681) but other passages place their sustenance (i.e. *άλφατα*) in the hands of the speakers. See n.149 below. For

141. Willink 1986: 206–207 would delete these lines as interpolations. The Σ claims the line refers to Kleophon who prevented peace with Sparta and means “they will be able to kill you for exceeding the law.” For other references to *prostatai* in Euripides, see frs. 194, 774.3–4.

142. For versions of this topos, see, e.g., Xen. *Por*. 1.1; Isok. 2.31; Dem. 20.14. Demosthenes formulates the ideological alternative as well: “Never do your speakers make you good or bad (οὐδέποτ’ ὑμεῖς οἱ λέγοντες οὕτως ποιητοὺς οὕτως χρηστοὺς ποιοῦσιν); you make them good or bad whenever you want,” 13.36). Paphlagon boasts that he can make Demos “broad and narrow” with his “cleverness” (καὶ ὑπὸ διεξόδητος τῆς ἐμῆς / δύναμιν ποιεῖν τὸν δήμον εὐφόρον καὶ στενόν, *Eq*. 719–20). Allantopoles is unimpressed: his anus “knows that trick” (ἐξ’ ἀρχαῖος ὁμοίος γενόσθαι, *Eq*. 9–10). For the “urban peasantry” see *Ar*. 489–516; *Andok*. fr. 4=Suidas s.v. *skênía* (*s* 536); Thuc. 2.14–17; *AP* 27.2–3; *Krat.* fr. 211 with Hesych. s.v. *lipèrnhj* (*l* 1096). The category of “urban peasant” does not seem to have been stressed as a comic topos. See Carter 1986: 92–98; Hanson 1995: 165–66; Ostwald 1986: esp. 199–202 is aware of the topos. Ehrenberg 1951: 73–94 interprets τὸν ἐθνόκρατον ὁμοίον καὶ τὸν γεωργικὸν λέον of *Pax* 920–21 as “urban demons” and “farmers” (82–83n.3). In comedy, however, δημός refers to demesmen and the deme, as opposed to tragedy, where it might mean “ordinary people” in opposition to the elite. Olson 1998: 244–45 is therefore right to interpret the passage to mean that Trygaios released his demesmen and the farmers. *Pax* 636–41 probably means that peasants looked to the speakers for “sweets” (cf. fr. 681) but other passages place their sustenance (i.e. *άλφατα*) in the hands of the speakers. See n.149 below. For
the Peace figure this state of socio-political limbo—the peasant as an urban creature and political animal.\(^\text{144}\) Demos and Philokleon in particular might be considered “elderly heliasts, phratries of the triobol” (\(\omega\ \gamma\varepsilon\rho\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\zeta\ \eta\lambda\iota\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\iota\), \(\phi\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\epsilon\zeta\ \tau\rho\iota\omicron\beta\omicron\omicron\lambda\omicron\sigma\), \(\text{Eq.}\ 255, \text{cf.}\ 1098–99; \text{Vesp.}\ 240–44; \text{Com. Ades. fr. 11}\)) attached to democratic leaders who perform in the dikasteria and on the Pnyx.

The democratic politician is a figure for the transformation of the demos as an imagined community from self-sufficient farmers into an “urban peasantry” which attacks the \(\chi\rho\varepsilon\tau\omicron\sigma\iota\) in the courts and rejects them in the assembly because they depend upon the new elite for subsistence.\(^\text{145}\) Kleon’s \(\text{misthophora}\) strips the peasants of their ability to feed themselves and alienates them from the goods of the farmer’s life (\(\gamma\nu\omicron\sigma\varepsilon\tau\eta\iota\\alpha\omicron\nu\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\omicron\omega\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\omicron\ \tau\iota\mu\sigma\theta\omicr\omicron\omicron\tau\alpha\pi\rho\epsilon\chi\omicron\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon\), \(\text{Eq.}\ 807\)). After the peace they will eat their humble \(\chi\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\) and \(\text{stemphylon}\) again and return as a “sharp-tempered rustic” (\(\delta\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \\acute{\alpha}\gamma\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\)) to wreak revenge (805–809).

Citizenship in this imagined community is degrading labor in the dikasteria for a subsistence wage, which blinds the demos to the long-term interests of the polis and inverts the relationship between ruler and ruled, enslaving the demos to its paymasters.\(^\text{146}\) The dramatic fiction of Aristophanic comedy is that the triobol for jury service, and later for attendance at the assembly, constitutes the bond of \(\phi\i\lambda\i\i\a\) between demos and demagogue and creates the illusion that the demagogues’ interests are the same as those of the demos (\(\text{Ach.}\ 657; \text{Eq.}\ 51, 255, 800, 797–809, 904–905, 1017–20, 1050–53, 1350–53; \text{Vesp.}\ 300–302; \text{Av.}\ 1541; \text{cf.}\ \text{[Xen.]}\ \text{AP}\ 1.3\)).\(^\text{147}\) On the one hand, the \(\text{misthos}\) inadequately rewards the demos: it constitutes less than ten percent of the total state revenue (\(\text{Vesp.}\ 655–64\)) and for a paltry triobol (\(\text{Pax}\ 849; \text{Pl.}\ 125–26, 328–32; \text{cf.}\ \text{Vesp.}\ 1128\)) subordinates the demos to demagogues and to prosecutors (\(\text{cf.}\ \text{Ant.} 5.80\))—men who take bribes from the allies, put their cronies in paid positions, and run trials. As the builder of an empire, the demos deserves better treatment (\(\text{Vesp.}\ 666–95\)). Twenty thousand \(\text{d\'emotikoi}\) could be supported luxuriously from tribute (698–712). From the perspective of the juror, however, the triobol is the climax of dried figs as “low-status food,” see Foxhall 1993: 141. Ar. \(\text{Pl.}\ 191, 810–11, 1120–23, \text{frr.}\ 406, 681\) may suggest otherwise. \(\text{Pax}\ 1219–23; \text{Pl.}\ 798; \text{cf.}\ \text{Lys.}\ 564\) are more difficult to gauge.

\(^{144}\) The pairing of Pheidippides and Strepsiades, the young aristocrat and the old rustic (\(\acute{\alpha}\gamma\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\), 39–55, 138–39, 628, 646, 655, 1457) in the same oikos is a variation on the theme of Bdelykleon-Philokleon. Forced into debt by his aristocratic son, Strepsiades must attach himself to an urban \(\text{pon\'er\'os},\) the sophist, to escape his debt, just as the “urban peasants” attach themselves to \(\text{pon\'er\'oi}\) demagogues and sykophants to earn the triobol.

\(^{145}\) \(\text{Eq.}\ 857, 1104, 1359; \text{Vesp.}\ 715–18; \text{Pax}\ 636.\)


\(^{147}\) Pay for assembly attendance divides the city (\(\text{Eccl.}\ 185–88\)), makes citizens pursue self-interest and neglect the common interest (205–208, 289–92, 377–93), and is a sign of the degenerate present (300–10).
the legal process: it makes him the hero of his household, offers him a means of subsistence, and makes him independent of the rich (Vesp. 525, 604–18, cf. 785; cf. Lys. 614–25).

Aristophanes’ politicians realize their constituency is poor and prey on its poverty, thrusting the goddess Eirene from Athens, and keeping her away, so that they can grow rich from “shaking down” the wealthy members of allied cities with charges of being on Brasidas’ side, “knowing well that the poor were weak and lacked barley meal” (οἱ δὲ γιγνώσκοντες εὖ / τοὺς πένητας ἁθρενοῦντας κάτωροῦντες ἄλφταν, Pax 635–40). Bdelykleon’s politicians say, “I shall not betray the rabble of the Athenians, and I shall fight for the masses always” (οὐχὶ προδόσις τὸν Ἀθηναίων κολοσσύτων, / ἄλλα μαχοῦμαι περὶ τοῦ πλῆθους ἀεὶ, Vesp. 666–67). The allies see that “the rest of the rubbish (i.e. the demos) grows thin from the voting urn and gets no dessert” (τὸν μὲν σῦρφακα τὸν ἄλλον / ἐκ θηραρίου λαγαριζόμενον καὶ τραγαλίζοντα τὸ μηδέν, 673–74). Hence they bribe the politicians rather than the demos. Demagogic politicians (τὸν ἀεὶ δημιύζοντον, 699) drip feed the demos from the imperial revenues “little by little always for the sake of subsistence, like olive oil in wool” (ἐριῳ ἐνστάζουσιν κατὰ μικρὸν ἀεὶ τοῦ ζήν ἐνεκ’ ὅσπερ ἔλαιον, 702). Philokleon might consider Kleon his “protector” (Κλέων ὁ χρησμόν ἣμιν, 243), but, as Bdelykleon tells him, the demagogues “want you to be poor” (βούλονται γάρ σε πένητ’ εἶναι, 703; cf. Isok. 8.129–30).

As the prosecutor who promises wages for the jurors in exchange for the conviction of a defendant, Hyperbolos makes the demos a creature of its belly who is unable to feed himself and blind to the demands of justice. The new elite transforms the demos as an imagined community into attack dogs (Vesp. 704–705), cocks who fight their battles (Eq. 946), and olive pickers who follow the man with the wage (Vesp. 712), gaping at Kleon “out of necessity, poverty, and a wage” (Eq. 804). The demos is charcoal for Kleon’s feasts (Eq. 780), the rich fat of an ox (Vesp. 38–41; Eq. 947–58), “citizens of a small city” (μικροπολίται, Eq. 817–18), or simply slaves. The comedians imagine the community of Athens as a “city of slaves” (Krat. fr. 223; Eup. fr. 212), perhaps because its leaders transform democratic citizenship into a means of subsistence through wage-earning (cf. Arist. Pol. 1280a31–33), and its citizens are ponéroi who have lost their autarchy.

148. Kaibel interpreted Plato’s Syrphax as a reference to the ochlos or hoipolloi. See KA 5.502.

149. Cf. [Xen.] AP 1.13. The ultimate criterion for judging the contest between Paphlagon and Allantopoles is which of the two is the best toward Demos and his belly (Eq. 1207–1208). After Demos entrusts himself to the Allantopoles, Kleon promises Demos daily barley rations and sustenance (1100–1101) and barley meal ready for baking (1104) to prevent him from making his choice. Cf. 1359–60; Vesp. 715–18. For the notion of dependence involved, see, e.g., E. fr. 49; [Arist.] Oik. 1344b4: δοῦλω δὲ μυσθὸς τροφῆ.

150. Edwards 1993: 98–99 with n.35. The topos was handled allegorically, since “the city of slaves” was located in Libya or Crete. For the demagogue as a slave-dealer or kidnapper, see above.
It is difficult to determine whether the comic stereotype of the elderly “urban peasant” as the core of the demagogues’ constituency corresponds to social reality. If it does, it is not difficult to see why politicians and litigators would have found elderly men a reliable bloc. Unlike younger men who would row in the fleet and farmers who served as hoplites or tried to work their fields throughout the war, “urban peasants” might be present at political and judicial venues throughout the year. Like the politicians, whose wealth allowed them to devote their time to political leadership, they could devote their time to the exercise of democratic citizenship. We should not rule out the possibility that the “urban peasant” figures an urban demos of thetes, banausoi, and agoriai who readily assemble because of their proximity to the Pnyx and the agora and whom Aristotle considers incapable of the aretē required for citizenship (Arist. Pol. 1319a24–30; 1328b42). Like the dramatists, Aristotle constructs his favored hegemony as a coalition of the “best citizens” and farmers (1318b7–17; cf. 1292b25–30, 1296b24–31).

It is likely, however, that the urban peasant is a comic figure that problematizes the demos as an imagined community. Whatever we may say about Aristophanes’ fondness and sympathy for the “urban peasant,” he is out of place in the city. The comic plot of the 420s culminates in the urban peasant’s return to the countryside and his realignment with the farmers against the new elite (Ach., Eq., Pax) or vainly tries to domesticate him under the patronage of an aristocrat (Vesp.); but if politicians and prosecutors serve as his patron, the city has a disease (Vesp. 650–51). The citizen as an urban peasant figures the city’s lapse from the ideal of Marathon and Salamis which specifies the normative and long-term values of the city. Such a citizen is the father of a chrestos because his oikos functions as a metonym for the polis. Just as it is naturally and legally imperative to support parents materially (Dem. 10.40), it is morally, politically, and economically imperative for the wealthy to subsidize citizens in need (35–45). “It is necessary,” Demosthenes proclaims, “to consider all in common parents of the entire polis” (οὕτω συμπάσχεις τῆς πόλεως κοινοὺς δεῖ τοὺς γονέας σύμπαντας ἰγεινθῆκαί, 10.41). Agoratos proclaimed the entire demos his father but treated his “father” so shabbily he deserves to die “according to the law of abuse of parents” (Lys. 13.91). The old man in comedy takes the form of an urban peasant because he figures the non-elite citizen (cf. Ar. Pl. 786–87). Moreover, the elderly “urban peasant” symbolizes the transformation of the city of the fathers into its present state, embracing both continuity and change. He has undergone the transformation from farmer to urban peasant, from warrior to juror, from earning glory and praise...

For an historical city of slaves, see Suidas s.v. Δοῦλοι πόλεις, δ 1423=Theopompos FGrH 115 F110. That the polis is a slave by nature is impossible, since a polis is autarchic, and a slave is not (Arist. Pol. 1291a8–10).

151. For the continuity of agricultural labor during the Spartan invasions of the Peloponnesian War, see Hanson 1983: 111–27; 1996: 297–99; Foxhall 1993: 147 notes the presence of cultivated plots within the walls.

152. See, e.g., the remarks of Whitman 1982: 139 on Philokleon.
for “celebrated Athens” to earning the triobol, from serving under generals to being the client of demagogues and sykophants and judging generals harshly, from farming and defending the land against foreign invaders to working as hired labor for a new elite of foreigners as it divides and conquers the demos.153 The old man figures the non-elite citizen from the synoptic perspective of a degraded present and a glorious past.154

“To fare” and “to reap fruits worthy of Marathon” are comic code for the transcendence of citizen life as defined by contemporary democracy and exploited by the demagogues; they mean the end of jury service (Eq. 1334; Vesp. 706–12). Military glory against non-Greeks in battles such as Marathon and the capture of Persian-held cities after Salamis are the precisely defined antithesis of contemporary political life in which men of that generation are both “prosecuted excessively by bad men” (Ach. 692–70) and form the backbone of the jury system. In their youth, this generation thought only about who was the best rower (Vesp. 1097–98), while contemporary youth is concerned mainly with “delivering a speech well” (ἐρήσιν εὖ λέξειν, 1095–95), or “prosecuting someone” (συνοφραντήσειν τινά / φροντίς, 1096–97). The trope of the non-elite citizen as a dyskolos old man (Eq. 42; Vesp. 106, 882–84, 942, 1104–1105; Pax 349) stresses the complementarity and opposition between the citizen as warrior and as juror, and articulates antithetical social psychologies of democratic citizenship. Orgê, temper or anger, is their point of convergence.155 Orgê is characteristic of the Marathonomachai (Ach. 1083; cf. Av. 402, Ran. 844, 855–56, 998) and of war and warriors in general (Ach. 530; Pax 204, 613; Av. 383). The transformation of the citizen from warrior to juror entails the diversion of his orgê from non-Greeks to Athenian elites. The symmetry and opposition between the warrior and the jury are explicit in Kleon’s instruction to the jurors to arrive on time in court with “three days of bad temper (ἐχοντας ὡμέρων ὀργὴν τριῶν πονηράν) to punish those he has harmed” (Vesp. 243–44) instead of three days’ rations.

The idealization of Persian Wars as the Athenian illud tempus is a species of the opposition between paid jury and military service as forms of civic action and images of the demos. Military success justifies the hegemony of the demos, “the thranites folk that preserves the city” (ὁ θρανίτης λεώς, σωσίπολις, Ach. 375–76; Eq. 41; cf. 537; Vesp. 223–24, 404, 424, 560–61, 574, 646–47; cf. 727, 877–84. θημός likewise binds juror (Vesp. 383–84, 567, 649, 877; cf. διόκημος, 406, 455, 1105; διεύκρατος, 430), warrior (Eq. 570; Vesp. 1082; Av. 401–402), and spectator (Eq. 537). Contrast the θημός of the farmer (Pax 559, 1169). This language interlocks with Aristophanes’ self-presentation as the heroic destroyer of the democratic politician (Vesp. 1030–37; Pax 752–59; cf. Ran. 994–1009). For orgê in the Wsps, see Allen 2000: 128–33.


154. Cf. Aisch. 3.251, “The demos from loss of heart over what has happened, just like a retiree (παραγεγερηκός) or a man convicted of mental incompetence (παραφόνοις ἐπαθοκός) preserves just the name of democracy (τῷ νόμῳ τῆς δημοκρατίας), but hands over the realities (τῶν δ’ ἔργων) of it to others.”

155. Ar. Ach. 375–76; Eq. 41; cf. 537; Vesp. 223–24, 404, 424, 560–61, 574, 646–47; cf. 727, 877–84. θημός likewise binds juror (Vesp. 383–84, 567, 649, 877; cf. διόκημος, 406, 455, 1105; διεύκρατος, 430), warrior (Eq. 570; Vesp. 1082; Av. 401–402), and spectator (Eq. 537). Contrast the θημός of the farmer (Pax 559, 1169). This language interlocks with Aristophanes’ self-presentation as the heroic destroyer of the democratic politician (Vesp. 1030–37; Pax 752–59; cf. Ran. 994–1009). For orgê in the Wsps, see Allen 2000: 128–33.
162–63). The *ponos* of the masses in their youth brought the tribute to Athens (Vesp. 1098–1101, 1114–16, 684–85; Lys. 648–55), but their youthful leaders steal it (Vesp. 1101), drones who “devour our labor for the tribute,” and “lap up our wage” without enduring the hardships of battle (οὐ ταλαιπωροῦμενοι, Vesp. 1114–21). Pay for military service accords with comic ideology and the long-term interests of the polis (Eq. 555, 1065–66, 1078–79, 1350–54, 1366–67; cf. Ach. 597; Av. 1367) and should be the prerequisite for pay for jury service (Vesp. 1114–21). The Old Oligarch gives the principle its barest expression: a form of government which offers a greater share of its power and riches to “the demos and the poor” is just because “the demos drives the ships and confers power on the city” (ὁ δῆμος ἔστιν ὁ ἔλευσον τὰς ναῦς καὶ ὁ τὴν δύναμιν περιτίθεις τῇ πόλει, 1.2). The comic stage constructs the ideological hegemony of the demos as a forensic topos in strict opposition to the “just” form of demotic hegemony, imagined as successful military performance. It follows that the “just” form of democratic leadership is the *strategia*. We have already seen this played out in the trial of Labes in the *Wasps*, which pits the main Labes against the *oikouros* dog of Kudathenaion (Vesp. 970). Praxagora, a rhetor, receives her sign of legitimacy as *strategos* (Eccl. 246–47, 491–92, 500–501, 725–27) or *strategis* (834–37, 870–71). God, nature, and the triremes themselves declare rhetors such as Kleon and Hyperbolos unfit for the generalship (Eq. 1300–15; Nub. 581–86; Eup. fr. 384).

The end of the *Knights* is a solution to the problem of the demos as an imagined community. It transcends the conflict between *chrestos* and *poneros*, rich and poor, imperial glory and squalid sykophancy, past and present, private interest and public good. The action of the *Knights* transforms the *poneros* Allantopolis into an *aner* (1253–56) who magically converts Demos into a *chrestos*. Once ugly and decrepit, Agorakritos’ Demos is now youthful and handsome (Eq. 1321, 1349). No longer the *eromenos* of democratic leaders, he is an old-fashioned Ionian aristocrat who enjoys his own *paidika* (1331, 1384–86). “Brilliant in his archaic dress” (1331), he no longer smells of the dikast’s voting shells but is redolent of myrrh (1332). At the same time, Demos is a farmer who returns to the fields under a thirty-year truce with Sparta, imagined as female sexual objects (1388–95). Demos is King of Athens and of Hellas (1330, 1333) and the messmate of Miltiades and Aristeides (1325). He “fares worthy of the city and of the victory at Marathon” (1334), and lives in the past, “in the violet-crowned Athens of old” (ἐν ταῖσιν ἱστερφάνοις οἰκεί ταῖς ἀρχαίσιν Αθηναίας, 1323; cf. Ach. 637–38), which was the subject of Panhellenic praise as the stay that supported Hellas (Pi. fr. 76.1), “both marvelous and praised in song, where celebrated Demos lives” (καὶ θαυμαστοῖς καὶ πολύμνοις, ἐν ὦ κλεινὸς Δήμος ἐνοικεῖ, 1327–28).

When Demos receives his *paidika*, he proclaims, “blessed indeed am I restored to my old form” (1387). Demos is now immune to the blandishments of the democratic politicians and prosecutors as they claim to be his lovers (1340–49). He understands that they seek to divide him along the lines of class and status by appealing to short-term goods such as food and wages over long-term communal interests such as the building of ships and provision of rowers’ pay, the integrity of the hoplite catalogue, the maintenance of justice in the courts, and the oversight of the young (1350–83; cf. fr. 230, 611). The *chrêstos* as leader subsumes the demos, the demos as king of Athens and Hellas subsumes the *chrêstos*.

The restoration of Demos’ youth is crucial, for youth is the elite characteristic *par excellence*. Old age and poverty figure the masses in their dependence upon the demagogue as an *epitropos*: he serves as their “regent” politically, their bailiff or *tamias* economically, and their “guardian” socially and culturally. Kleon promised to make Demos young (νέον) by plucking his gray hairs (Eq. 908)—the gesture of the flatterer (Theophr. *Char.* 2.3; cf. Ar. frs. 416, 689); but Agorakritos achieves the restoration of Demos’ youth. Youth excludes the harsh juror. In the *Wasps*, Philokleon becomes a *neanias* after he renounces jury service (1306–1307, 1308–10, 1332–34, 1362, 1384). The chorus of the *Peace* declares that once Eirene is recovered, “no longer would you find me a harsh (δικαστήν δρεμόν) or ill-tempered juror (δισκολον), hard in my ways as I was before, but you might see me as tender and much younger (πολλο νεατερον), once I’m released from troubles” (349–52). On the other hand, the old citizen-soldier must retain the remnants of his youthful vigor (ἐλαχιστην ναινικήτην) because his upbringing and culture are superior to those of the present elite: “for I think that my old age is better than the curls of many youths and their style of dress and their *euryprôktia*” (Vesp. 1066–70).

To restore Demos’ youthful vigor is to imagine him in his ancestral form as an aristocrat who represents the citizen-warrior-farmer. He embodies the *patrios politeia* and figures the hegemonic coalition of *chrêstoi* and farmer-soldiers as they were before the dominance of the demotic jury. The theater transforms Demos by ridding the city of *ponêroi* and foreclosing any hegemonic coalition between a commercial-judicial elite and the “urban peasantry.” In the process, the stage transforms the *ponêros* into a ritual *pharmakos*, a social drama that was reenacted...
first in the ostracism of Hyperbolos and then in the two oligarchic takeovers of the late fifth century.

FROM PÓNÈROS TO PHARMAKOS:
SCAPEGOATING THE NEW ELITE

Ponèria and its practitioners are often associated with impiety. Since the person of the ponèros exists entirely outside the city’s moral economy, he is a target for ritual violence. Dramatists exploit the association between ponèria and pollution that cuts across their entire culture. Medical writers, for instance, use ponèros for every sort of diseased condition and sign of disease, linking the term specifically with a lack of purification or purity. In comedy, the ponèros is a pollution that must be cleansed from the city: he is miaros, kobalos, bômolochos, katharma, and ultimately, a pharmakos. The democratic leader outrages strangers and the gods in violation of the “unwritten laws.” That Paphlagon cannot help but steal from xenoi is his fatal flaw. As he darts after the wallets of xenoi, Allantopoles filches his hare and presents it to Demos as his own, enabling him to win the contest for Demos (1193–1206). At the conclusion of the Knights, Kleon will sell sausages at the gates, “so that the strangers whom he outraged may watch him practice his art” (ἐπὶ τὴν τέχνην/ ἢν ἵθωσιν αὐτὸν οἷς ἐλωβάζῃ ὁί ξένοι, 1407–1408).

The Old Comic figure that combines low social origins, theft of sacred objects, flattery, deception, the inflation of the truth, slander, and the perversion of ancestral culture into that of the agora (Ar. Nub. 969, Thesm. 819–20, fr. 930; Suidas β 488) is the bômolochos. Aristotle defines this figure as the man who takes nothing seriously and turns everything into a joke at another’s expense. His bômolochos is less suited to the culture of the eleutherios than the eirôn whose humor is self-deprecating; his opposite is the agroikos who laughs at nothing. The “wit” (eutrapelos) is the intermediate figure. Harpokration divides bômolochoi into three types: those who sit under the altar and beg for food by flattery, functionaries, and imposters. For exaltation of money from imperial cities and wealthy xenoi, see Eq. 313, 326–27, 802–804, 830–40, 930–40, 1034, 1067–73; Vesp. 669–71; cf. 922–25; Pax 639–41; Av. 1410–69, esp. 1448–50; Eup. fr. 99.85–90, 245; [Xen.] AP 1.14–15; Lys. 25.19. For respect toward xenoi as thesion see, e.g., A. Su. 701–703; Eu. 538–48; cf. Ar. Ran. 455–59. I am not convinced by Christ’s 1998: 108 attempt to read Eq. as indicating approval of non-Athenian victims of sykophancy. Cf. also his reading of Eq. 1254–56 as an attempt to spread the profits of sykophancy to all classes.

161. Hippoc. Acut. 15; Epid. 5.31; de Sem. 18; de Aer. 4.
162. For extortion of money from imperial cities and wealthy xenoi, see Eq. 313, 326–27, 802–804, 830–40, 930–40, 1034, 1067–73; Vesp. 669–71; cf. 922–25; Pax 639–41; Av. 1410–69, esp. 1448–50; Eup. fr. 99.85–90, 245; [Xen.] AP 1.14–15; Lys. 25.19. For respect toward xenoi as thesion see, e.g., A. Su. 701–703; Eu. 538–48; cf. Ar. Ran. 455–59. I am not convinced by Christ’s 1998: 108 attempt to read Eq. as indicating approval of non-Athenian victims of sykophancy. Cf. also his reading of Eq. 1254–56 as an attempt to spread the profits of sykophancy to all classes.
163. For semantic field of βομολόχος see Ar. Nub. 909–15, Thesm. 810–21.
164. For the culture of the eleutherios, see Raafälb 1983: 517–44.
165. Arist. EE 1233b38–34a11; EN 1108a19–26, 1128a4–b9; MM 1.3.1–2; Rhet. 1419b8–9. Under Aristotle’s definition, Euphydides at Av. 463–626 and Dionysos in the Frogs qualify as bômolochoi (see Dover 1993: 42 with n.17), but I doubt Aristophanes would call them this. Philochoros may refer to the Frogs when he claims that “we should not consider Dionysos a kobalos
at the sacrifice who are tangential to the sacrificial community such as auletes and seers, and a metaphorical type, “certain jovial and lowly men who dare anything whatsoever for gain through jesting and mockery” (βομολόχοι εὐκολοὶ τινες ἀνθρώποι καὶ ταπεινοὶ καὶ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ὑπομένοντες ἐπὶ κτέρδει διὰ τοῦ παιζειν τε καὶ σκώπτειν, 76.16–18; he cites Ar. fr. 171; cf. Suidas β 486). Suidas defines the metaphorical meaning of the term as “flattering anyone for gain” (ὥρελείας ἑνεκά τινας κολακεύων, β 489), and notes that some define the term as “a flatterer with some wit” (τὸν μετὰ τινος εὐτραπελίας κόλαξα), and “the thief and the sykophant” (καὶ τὸν πανούργον δὲ καὶ συκοφάντην, ibid.).

Harpokration’s and Suidas’ metaphorical meanings fit the usage of Old Comedy, which preserves a link between the βομολόχοι and its literal meaning, “he who ambushes the altar to get a portion of the sacrifice” (Pherekrates fr. 150).

Aristophanes stages scenes in which βομολόχοι oracle-mongers angle for a libation and a share of the sacrificial innards, though he does not call them βομολόχοι (Hierokles, an alazon: Pax 1043–1126; Av. 958–91). In general, the βομολόχοι uses flattering and abusive language for profit; he figures a kind of sacrilege, the theft of a consecrated object. Aristotle conceptualizes the βομολόχοι as the antithesis of the ἀγροίκος; comedy uses the βομολόχοι, like the ἀγοραίοι and the πονέρος, to incite the ill will of the ἀγροίκος, for he symbolizes profit disembedded from any moral economy. For Aristophanes, democratic political tactics are βομολοχευματα that ensure the profit of the politicians (Eq. 894–903, 1192–1205; Ran. 1083–86).

Kobalos is synonymous with βομολόχος. Kobaleia refers more specifically to diverting another’s attention to commit theft. The act of an alazon or mαστθλὲς, like Kleon, it is easier to commit against the dull senses and slow reflexes of old men (Eq. 269–70). The Allantopoles’ proudest moments in his youth were his kobala. He would say things to the butcher like “Look boys, don’t you see? It’s the beginning of spring—here’s a swallow.” Then he would steal meat while they looked (Eq. 417–20). If they caught him, he would hide the meat in his buttocks and swear by the gods that he did not do it (423–25). If a rhetor saw him performing, he would say “there’s no way this kid’s not going to lead the demos” (οὐχ ἐσθ’ ὅπως ὁ παῖς ὃθ’ οὐ τὸν δῆμον ἐπιπροεύσει, 425–26).

Deception, theft, shameless denial, false oaths to the gods—these are summed and βομολόχος, as some say” (οὐ γὰρ, ὕστερ ἔνοι λέγουσιν, βομολόχον τινα καὶ κόβαλον γίνεσθαι νομιστέον τῶν Διόνυσον, FGrH 328 F6).

166. The scholiasts recognized this: e.g. ΣΣ Αρ. Eq. 901a, b; Νυβ. 910b.

167. LSJ s.vv. κόβαλος, κοβαλεωί claims the original sense of the word is “to be a porter,” but the use of the word in this sense is late. Harpokration defines kobaleia as Ἰ προσποιηθῇ μετ’ ἀπάτης παιδί καὶ l航 claims the kobalos is synonymous with the βομολοχος (180.7–13). See further, Suidas × 1894–97. Flattery, pretense, and imitation, as well as deception, are essential to this form of appropriation. Synonyms of kobalos include βομολόχος, πανούργος, λαρτίς, and κακότεχνος. Aristophanes associates kobaleia with πανουργία; the kobalos is θρασίς. Both are required for political leadership (Eq. 330–33; cf. 450). See further, Pherekrates fr. 173 (Ωβριστον ἔργον καὶ κόβαλον εἰργάσαο); Timokreon fr. 1.6.
up in figures Allantopoles invokes before his speech to the Boule (Eq. 634–35) and associated particularly with the “agora in which I was raised as a boy” (ἀγορακότι, ἐν ἤ παις ὦν ἐπαυδεύθην ἐγώ, 636) as providers of “insolence, a ready tongue, and a shameless voice” (637–38; Ran. 1015; cf. 104).

Aristophanes uses these terms to represent the new elite in terms of the most demeaning lower-class conduct, associating democratic leaders with religious pollution and capital crimes against the polis. Hesychios glosses βόμολοχος with hierosylos (“temple robber,” β 1389). Hierosylia belongs in a class with murder and prodosia as the greatest crimes (Antiphon, 5.10; Dem. 23.26). Both could be prosecuted under a single law (Xen. 1.7.22) and are conceptually linked (Plato Rep. 443a3; Xen. Apol. 25). Uncommon in the fifth century, the figure of the hierosylos appears frequently in the fourth century.168

The βομολοχος-κοβαλός is a complementary but opposed figure to Aristophanes, who claims to have built the comic art to towering heights, removing its “vulgar cargo” (φόρτον) and its “ignoble βομολοχευματα” (βωμολοχευματα ἁγγενή), excluding “jest from the agora” (σκουμμασιν ἀγορακις, Pax 748–50; cf. fr. 488). In the parabasis of the Wasps, Aristophanes stresses his Heraklean temper as the adversary of the monster Kleon, rather than of “ordinary men” (1029–37; Pax 749–60) and emphasizes the purity of his message (1015). He is “a purifier of this land who wards off evil” (ἄλεξικαθην τής χώρας τῆς θεὸς καθαρτήν, 1043). On this comic stage, the monsters requiring “purification” are politicians and sykophants (cf. Diphilos, fr. 31.12–17, esp. 17, το τοιούτον ἐκκαθαρίσωμεν ἐν γένος [sc. sykophants]; cf. Dein. 3.9). They are “polluted” (μιρόδε). The term designates objects or actions that are repulsive.170 Aristophanes tends to associate the miasros and the thief.171 Kleon is “the most polluted man, because he committed the most thefts” (μιρόδετος...πλείστα πανούργα δεδρακός, Eq. 823).172 The religious significance of miasros is not far from the

168. See Dem. 24.119–22, 137, 177; Cohen 1983: esp. 115. Death is the penalty (Xen. Mem. 1.2.62; Lys. 5.1; Isok. 20.6; Dem. 22.69; Lyk. 1.65). The bones of the deceased may not be buried in Attika; his property is confiscated.


170. Eq. 303–304; Vesp. 39, 1151; Pax 38 (cf. 47), 812; Av. 1209; fr. 336. Poneros can have this sense (Pax 1077).

171. The comic association of miasros and the thief is so strong that when Strepsiades addresses Phedippides the father-beater as μιρέ (Nub. 1325; cf. 1332), he slips in “burglar” (ὁ μιρέ καὶ πατρολοία καὶ τοιχωρυχέ, 1327) for good measure. See further Eq. 800, 1124; Vesp. 900; Thesm. 649, 1092, 1133, 1222; Ran. 466–59, 571. Penia is miasros: Pl. 451, 472. For the semantic range of the term, see Parker 1983: 3–5.

172. Kleon is the only politician in extant fifth-century comedy to be ridiculed as a πανούργος, a “villain,” but more or less a common thief in comedy (cf. Ar. Thesm. 726–27, 929–34; Eup. fr.
surface. The rhetor Demostratos is “hateful to the gods and miaros” (Lys. 396; cf. Βουζύγης ἄριστος ἀλήθερος, Eup. fr. 103; cf. fr. 157 for Protagoras). The democratic politician and prosecutor is “hated by the gods” (sykophant, Ach. 934; Kleon, Nub. 581; Theoros, Vesp. 418–18; taxarch, Pax 1172; cf. Nikias, Eq. 34; Euripides, Ran. 936).

This complex of ideas culminates in the depiction of the democratic politician as a pharmakos, a ritual scapegoat.173 “Ignoble,” “poor,” and “useless,” such a figure is the antithesis of the elite leader (ἐτρεφον γάρ τινας Αθηναίων λινὸν ἀγεννείς καὶ πένητας καὶ ἁρήστους, ΣΣ Αρ. Eq. 1136c; cf. Plut. Arist. 7.3 for Hyperbolos). Temporarily treated as an elite member of the community, even fêted in the Prytaneion, the pharmakos was ceremoniously expelled from the city during the Thargelia or, in some places, stoned, burned, or thrown into the sea.174 The pharmakos was a criminal and, in particular, a thief of sacred objects. He is a bômolochos and kobalos. In the foundation myth of the pharmakos, Achilles’ followers stone Pharmakos to death for stealing cups sacred to Apollo (Harpokration s.v. Φαρμακίς=Istros FGrH 334 F50). The poets imagined democratic politicians according to this pattern. Leukon claims that Hyperbolos stole cups the Egyptian Paapis sent to the Athenians (fr. 1; cf. Plut. Alk. 4.5–6; [Andok.] 4.33). Similarly, the sykophant’s extortion of cups in lieu of cash is a comic motif (Ar. frr. 68, 75; cf. Eq. 235). Aristophanes’ Demos claims that he fattens a single thieving prostatês for sacrifice (Eq. 1121–50; ΣΣ 1136a, c, refer to the pharmakos). Demos invites Agorakritos to replace Paphlagon in the Prytaneion and to sit “where that pharmakos used to be” (ἐξ τῆς πρυτανείας χαλόδ / ἐξ τῆν ἐδραν θ’, ἱν ἐκείνος ἤν ὁ φαρμακός, Eq. 1404–1405). Paphlagon enjoyed a scapegoat’s feast in the Prytaneion before his expulsion to the gates.

Such treatment of politicians rendered the ostracisê Hyperbolos indistinguishable from his conceptual opposite, a pharmakos.175 The comic poet Plato complained that Hyperbolos’ ostracism was an affront to the institution. His exile from the city suited his character (τρόποι), but he fared “unworthily of himself and of his slave’s brands, for ostracism was not invented for such men” ( νῦνοι δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώποι). 99.114–16). See Ach. 658; Eq. 45, 56, 247, 249 [bis], 250, 317, 803; Vesp. 1175; cf. Vesp. 932, 961. Sykophants and sophists also merit this form of abuse (Av. 1468, 1695–99; Eup. fr. 99.85; cf. Archippos fr. 37.3; Ar. Eccl. 436–40).

173. Burkert 1979: 65 maintains that “The pharmakos ritual turns out to be the equivalent to a king’s tragedy.” Perhaps it is more accurate to call it the demagogue’s comedy. See further, Ar. Ran 732–33; fr. 655; Eup. fr. 132, 384. In the fourth century, pharmakos and its synonym katharma are commonplace in the dikasterion ([Lys.] 6.53; Dem. 18.128, 19.198, 199, 21.185, 198, 25.80; Aisch. 3.211; Dein. 1.16).

174. For the concept and characteristics of the pharmakos, see Burkert 1979: 64–72; Bremmer 1983; esp. 301, 305, 313, 318–20.

175. For the polarity and symmetry between the pharmakos and the ostracisê, see Vernant/Vidal-Naquet 1972: 123–26 (based on remarks of Gernet [n.120]); cf. Gribble 1999: 21–22. Mirhady 1997: 15 criticizes Vernant for deriving ostracism from scapegoat ritual on the basis of their similarity, but neither he nor Gernet made this historical claim for ostracism. For the opposition of the sykophant and the ostracisê, see Christ 1992: 338.
Aristophanes noted the excesses of the genre in its depiction of Hyperbolos—he defends his comic invention and honor in bashing Kleon while at the height of his power against the plagiarism and excess of his rivals who trample Hyperbolos and his mother once they have given them a wrestling hold (Nub. 545–62). Nevertheless, Hyperbolos is the foil for his comic ideas and appears as a villain in key moments of his plays (Ach. 845–47; Eq. 1300–15, 1356–63; Nub. 615–26, 874–76, 1063–66; Vesp. 1007; Pax 680–92; Thesm. 830–45). In the Peace, Trygaios celebrates his accomplishment of peace and the release of the people from pain as “stopping Hyperbolos” (919–21). The demos’ return to the countryside and the celebration of peace is “driving out Hyperbolos” (1318–19). His exile was prefigured in cultural ideology and in comic performance.

It is tempting to read Hyperbolos’ proposal of an ostrakophoria (Plut. Alk. 13.6, Nik. 11.4) as a direct challenge to the symbolic action and ideology of the comic stage. The ostrakophoria articulated identical objectives from an antithetical perspective—to unite the demos around leaders labeled ponéria against those represented as chréstoi and to renew the heroic past associated with ostracism. Its outcome, the ostracism of a ponéros, was the political realization of a comic plot. The ideological gradient against which Hyperbolos proposed the ostrakophoria was too powerful to overcome. Solidarity between the demos and the chréstoi was the hallmark of the theater in the period 424–405; and it withstood the pressures of this ostrakophoria. An ostrakophoria typically broke this very bond. The demos ostracized men of aristocratic birth whose wealth was landed or derived from military conquest such as Xanthippos, Megakles, Alkibiades I, Kimon, and Thucydides son of Melesias. It was rarer for a democratic leader such as Themistokles to fall victim to the ostrakon.

Thucydides introduces the terms ponéria and ponéroi into his History in connection with the ostracism of Hyperbolos (8.73.3) and its aftermath. In his account of the search for asebountes after the mutilation of the Hermai, the demos trusts ponéroi informers, arresting and imprisoning men who were “very chréstoi,” “thinking it more useful (chrésimòteron) to put the affair to the test and to discover the truth, than for an accused man who seemed chréstos to go free without a trial because of any ponéria of an informer” (6.53.2). Thucydides’
Alkibiades frames the lines of conflict in the same terms. He calls himself “an exile from the *ponēria* of those who drove me out” (6.92.3; cf. 6.89.5)—and later insists that he will not return to the “democracy and *ponēria* that cast me out” (8.47.2). Thucydides maintains that the charges of mutilating the Hermai and of performing the mysteries against Alkibiades were the politicians’ attempt to gain secure leadership of the demos (6.27.2; cf. 2.65.11). Alkibiades boasts of leading the entire demos, a label he might adopt as a consequence of surviving the ordeal of ostracism (6.89.4–6). The remarkable unity of his support for the Sicilian expedition underwrites his contention (Thuc. 6.24).

The aftermath of the ostracism was perceived as a struggle between *ponēroi* and *chrestoi*. I would argue that the ostrakophoria, the mutilation of the Hermai, and the impending prosecutions all enacted the struggle between *chrestoi* and *ponēroi* for power in the city: Hyperbolos proposed an ostrakophoria to arouse demotic envy and fear of conspiracy among the *chrestoi*.\(^{178}\) Alkibiades’ nobility, hippotrophy, Olympic victory, conspicuous consumption, and *paranomia* could be used to signify tyrannical intention,\(^{179}\) as could Nikias’ enormous wealth and lavish expenditure, which created resentment (τὸν δὲ Νικίαν ὁ τε πλούτως ἐπίφθοινον ἐποίει, 11.2).\(^{180}\) His culture was not entirely democratic. He lacked aristocratic charm and affability and cut a rather odd figure; he could be represented to the people as an oligarch rather than a democrat (Plut. *Nik*. 11.2; *Xen. Hell*. 2.3.39; but cf. Lys. 18.2–4 for Nikias’ *eunoia* toward the demos).\(^{181}\)

When a *prostatēs tou dēmou* was ostracized, the demos felt vulnerable to subversion, and its enemies mutilated the Hermai as an expression of their loathing for democratic leadership and the demos, and as a symbolic reenactment, at a more menacing level, of the exile of a *prostatēs tou dēmou*. For the mutilation of the Hermai struck at the heart of the demos’ control of communication between mass...

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\(^{178}\) This conflicts with Plut. *Nik*. 11, Alk. 13, *Arist*. 7.3–4, and [Andok.] 4.2 but space does not permit a full justification of my rationale for rejecting these accounts.


\(^{180}\) For the connection between conspicuous consumption and the threat of tyranny, see Kurke 1991: 176–82; Wilson 2000: 145. The speaker of Lys. 26 claims that Euandros’ father’s liturgies earned him the trust of the demos that allowed him to overthrow the democracy (26.4). The fact that Kimon possessed “tyrannical wealth” and used it to perform liturgies “brilliantly” entails a relationship between the two concepts (AP 27.3; Theopompos, *FGrH* 115 F98 says Kimon imitated Peisistratos; Plut. *Kim*. 10). If liturgy was, as Walcot 1978: 59 has termed it, “an institutionalized expression of sop expenditure” (i.e. a way that winners compensate losers and avoid malice), then consciousness of its function entails envy. Alkibiades considers it axiomatic that liturgies provoke envy (Thuc. 6.16.3). See further, Lys. 27.10–11; Is. 6.61; Ober 1989: 226–33, esp. 232. Kallet 1998: 363n.102 claims that “Nikias’ lavish liturgical spending caused no problems.”

\(^{181}\) For the paradox that Nikias was considered an “aristocrat” even though he was the first prominent member of his family and his wealth, derived from slave labor, had more in common with that of the demagogues than with that of aristocracy, see APF 404; Ostwald 1986: 294–95. Ehrenberg 1951: 121n.3 argues that the distinguishing feature is that Nikias did not “sell” anything. Connor 1971/1992: 151–73 concludes (172–73) that “class bias” was not a factor in comedy’s depiction of the demagogues because Nikias’ socio-economic profile was identical to theirs. But Nikias’ wealth was derived from the soil; and as I argued above, class bias was expressed as the denial of elite status.
and elite (cf. Aisch. 3.183–85 on the “Eion Epigrams”). As a phallic god, Hermes symbolized the mastery of the demos (cf. Ar. Eq. 962–64, 1028–29, 1384–92; Eccl. 626–34); as the herald, he was the spokesman of Zeus just as the new elite was the mouthpiece of the demos. As agoraios, Hermes was the god of those who manufactured commodities for exchange—the god of ponéroi, demagogues, thieves, and tricksters. It is therefore possible to view the hunt for asebountes as continuation of the conflict the ostrakophoria failed to resolve. An ostrakon (P 30190) assignable to this event which calls Krates Athmoneus “Phrynondas” suggests that the ostrakophoria may have articulated a division between ponéroi and chréstoi. Phrynondas was a byword for ponéria in the late fifth century, and became proverbial in later generations.

Aristophanes’ treatment of Hyperbolos, the συνήγορος βωμολόχος who makes jury-pay dependent upon the conviction of the defendant, emphasizes the moral and religious dimension of the bómolochos. The prosecutor’s abuse, flattery, and deception are forms of self-enrichment and provide the demos with its wage, perverting justice. Agorakritos makes Demos swear that, “lifting him up on high, I shall cast him into the pit, hanging Hyperbolos from his throat” (άρας μετέφερον εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλὼν, / ἐκ τοῦ λάρυγγος ἐκχειρεύσας ὁ Τύπερβολον, Eq. 1362–63). The scholiasts and Suidas note a pun on the name Hyperbolos: “‘Hyperbolos’ is a stone tied around the necks of those who are drowned by katapontismos” (ΣΣ Ar. Eq. 1363a–b; Suidas s.v. Τύπερβολον [v 245]). Theopompos claims that after Charminos and Samian oligarchs killed Hyperbolos in 411 (Thuc. 8.73.3), they stuffed his corpse into a skin and dumped

182. Osborne 1985: 58–64 stresses importance of the “Eion Epigrams,” inscribed on three Hermai, for understanding the... 1990a: 35–36; Wohl 1999: 360–65; for the rhetor as the demos’ spokesman, see Ober 1989: 315–16. 184. For Hermes’ goraios see Ar. Eq. 297 with ΣΣ 297a-c.; Hesych. s.v. ἀγοραῖος Ἐρμῆς (a 415); Paus. 1.15.1, 7.22.2; Luc. Jup. Trag. 33; [Plut.] Mor. 844B. Ar. Pl. 1152–70 offers a litany of Hermes’ attributes, all of them especially pertinent to the politicians: στροφαῖος, ἐμπολαῖος, πλαγκάτης, δόλιος, ἡγεμόνος. The multiple names entail that Hermes can “find a living for himself,” like dikasts who have their names written on several lists. For politicians as ἀγοραῖοι, see above.


186. Suidas s.v. Φρυννόντας (f 770): τῶν ἐπὶ πονηρὰ διαβεβεβημένων which cites Ar. fr. 26 (Amphiaraoς of 414); see further, Thesm. 861 (with Σ), fr. 484; Eup. frr. 45, 139. He is paired with Eurybatos by Plato Prot. 327d6-e1; Aisch. 3.137; Luc. Alex. 4. For this figure of the ponéros, prodotês, kleftès, and panourgos, see Ar. fr. 198; Dem. 18.24; Suidas ε 3717–18. Isok. 18.57 pairs Phrynondas with Philourgos as representatives of panourgia and hierosylia respectively.

187. For the topos, see Lys. 27.1, 30.22; cf. 21.12–14 for the rich defendant’s reply. See also Hyp. 3.32–36.

188. Cf. Dover 1993: ad 573, “the expression of the wish to cast someone in the pit is quite violent.”
it into the sea, performing the ritual of *katapontismos* upon it (Σ Luc. *Timon* 30; Σ Ar. *Vesp.* 1007=Theopompos, *FGrH* 115 F96a, b). The conspirators treated the *bômolochos* Hyperbolos as a *hierosylos*, whose traditional ordeal was to be cast into the sea (τοὺς δ’ ἄλλους ὡς ἱεροσύλους κατεπόντισεν, Diod. 16.35.6). The symbolism of his representation in drama and of his ostracism converge into a meaningful whole in his murder. As a *ponêros*, a man “worth little” (*Xen.* *Hell.* 2.3.14), “who has little value to the obol” (Eup. fr. 198; cf. *Eq.* 945), his life had no intrinsic value. *Ponêria* does not merit honorable exile; it warrants death (Lys. 3.44; 12.78; 14.23).

The comic stage yearned for the death of the *ponêroi*. The comedian Plato tries to cap Aristophanes’ Heraklean personality by maintaining that the city really needs his cousin and helper, Iolaus:

> ἐὰν γὰρ ἀποθάνῃ
> εἷς τις πονηρός, δύ’ ἀνέψυχαν βήτορες:
> οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἤμιν Ἰδᾶνος ἐν τῇ πόλει,
> ὡστες ἐπικαύσαει τὰς κεφαλὰς τῶν βητόρων.
> fr. 202

If a single *ponêros* dies, two rhetors sprout up to replace him. We don’t have a Iolaus in the city to cauterize the heads of the rhetors.

Oligarchs acted out this script. In 411, the murders of those who opposed the new order silenced the demos and prevented it from using *zêtêsis* and *dikaiôsis* to quell the subversion as it did after the mutilation of the Hermai in 415 (Thuc. 8.66.2; cf. 8.70.2). The *hetairoi* murdered Androkles, butt of the comedians’ ridicule as a slave, a cut-purse, a *neoploutoponêros*, a prostitute, and a sykophant, because he was the *prostatês tou démou* during the *stasis*, and to curry favor with Alkibiades who blamed him for his exile (Thuc. 8.65.2). They killed others “ill-suited” to their cause (ibid.) whose names have not survived.

When oligarchs seized power again after the Peloponnesian War, the purification of the *ponêroi* began in earnest. They claimed “it was necessary to make the city pure (καθαρά) of unjust men and for the remaining citizens to turn themselves to justice and *aretê*” (Lys. 12.5; cf. Plato *Epist.* 7.324d). The thirty sought to purge the *ponêroi* from the citizen body entirely, protecting only 3,000 citizens from death without a trial before the Boule (*Xen.* *Hell.* 2.3.51; cf. 2.3.13–27; *AP* 36.2). The attempt to unite citizens around the purification of the *ponêroi* from the city reenacted the comic social drama. The *Athênaion Politeia* claims that the city rejoiced at their deaths:

189. See *Eq.* 973–76; *Ran.* 685, 1510–14.
190. Ober 1989: 328 argues that the oligarchic takeover of 411 was essentially a conspiracy of rhetors who limited the options available to the demos. I would argue that their use of violence was the critical element, for there were speakers willing to offer other options, but they were killed.
191. For Androkles (PA 870), see Krat. fr. 223, 281; Ar. *Vesp.* 1187 with Σ; Ekphantides, fr. 5; Telekleides fr. 16; Com. Ades. 278; Andok. 1.27; Arist. *Rhet.* 1400a9–14; Plut. *Alk.* 19.1, 3.
They murdered both sykophants and those who associated with the demos to gratify it in deviation from the best policy because they were criminals and *ponéroi*, and when this happened the city rejoiced, thinking they acted for the best.

A speaker in Lysias claims before a democratic jury that if the thirty had killed only *ponéroi*, they would have earned the title *kaloi k’ agathoi* (25.19; cf. 27, 30.13). Images of public rejoicing over the slaughter of *ponéroi* confirm the ideological solidarity of the *chréstoi* and the peasantry; yet the images should not be taken at face value. Diodoros limits this feeling to the “most noble and fair” (τοῖς ἐπεισεκατάτοις, 14.4.2–3), while Xenophon restricts this response to the Boule and “to all those who knew in their hearts that they were not like that” (Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.12, cf. 13, 14, 38).

The thirty killed *kaloi k’ agathoi* (2.3.38; Lys. 30.14) for their property, nobility, or prestige (Lys. 25.19; Isok. 7.67, 20.11; Aisch. 2.77; *AP* 35.4 claim 1,500 were killed), alleging they wanted democracy (Diod. 14.3–5). They murdered metics for their money (Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.21; Lys. 12). The bloodbath orchestrated in the name of purifying the *ponéroi* from the city and ushering in the prestigious time of the *patrios politeia* destroyed the fiction that *ponéroi* were leaders of the demos who exploited democratic institutions for personal profit. The oligarchs represented a *ponéría* far more vicious than that of democratic politicians or prosecutors and stood as a negative exemplar against which democratic ideology could redefine itself: the true *ponéros* destroyed the demos, irrespective of class or status.192 The thirty’s atrocities created a new symbolism for the violence “private profit” inflicts on the fundamental values of the polis (see esp. Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.21).

**CONCLUSION**

The label *ponéros* undermines any claim an actor may have to elite status and was applied to the emerging commercial-judicial elite to thwart its rise from economic prominence to political leadership, and hence to undermine the hegemony of the demos which it represented. The label is a status term which has class implications, but is almost always applied to upper-class members of

192. See esp. Isok. 4.110, 7.73, 18.17, 20.10–14. For the thirty and their supporters as *ponéroi* and sykophants see Andok. 1.95, 99; Lys. 6.45, 12.5, 75, 78, 84, 86, 94, 18.11, 25.22, 30.11. Alkibiades similarly becomes a *ponéros* for his acts against the democracy 14.35–40, and his son competes with his *ponéría* (35; cf. 23, 26, 32–33, 35). For the role of the thirty in consolidating democratic ideological hegemony, see Krentz 1982: 18; Ober 1998: 42; Christ 1998: 43.
Athenian society. Dramatists also figured members of the new elite as youths incapable of reproducing the social order while at the same time venerating youth as the ultimate marker of elite status and figuring the demos and low-status citizens as old men. The dramatic poneros prostatês is tagged as an agoraios, sykophantês, kobalos, bómolochos, pharmakos, a creature that uses all the wiles of its lower-class origins and lack of cultural education, first, to incur pollution by transgressing unwritten laws, stealing objects of sacred value, and making negative conversions from the long- to the short-term sphere of transactions; and second, to renew and to purify the city by being expelled from it. Citizens reenacted this social drama in the polis, first by ostracizing Hyperbolos, then by slaughtering poneros in the name of the patrioi nomoi and patrios politeia, which attempted literally to realize the ideological figure of the chrêstos as an amalgamation of the peasantry and the nobility, during the oligarchic takeovers of 411 and 404.

The label poneros expresses, I suggest, social resentment suppressed by the Athenian moral economy which is based upon the risk and expenditure of life (σωματα), labor (πνος), and property (τὰ οἰκεῖα) to acquire power (δύναμις), profit (ἀφελίς), honor (τιμή), and glory, maintaining equilibrium with the past and future generations of the city, protecting the most cherished values of Hellas, exhibiting the aretê of the polis, and earning charis from those who benefit from Athenian nobility in action.193 The highest forms of value in the Athenian moral economy, timê, eukleia, and kleos, can be expressed only in terms of ponos. The poneros is the negative embodiment of the Athenian moral economy, the reality that subverts it. The poneros acquires wealth by theft, cherishes money rather than aretê as a measure of value, and rejects charis as the form in which value is stored. As a figure for the democratic leader, the poneros symbolizes the practices of contemporary democracy as the “sacrilegious cunning” of the marketplace, embedding the polis in the agora, inverting the short- and long-term sphere of transactions. As leader, he signals the transformation of the demos into an imagined community of wage-earners and slaves, of old men dependent upon him for the wages of jury service, an activity that enriches the new elite and oppresses the genuine elite of wealth, birth, talent, and military leadership.

193. Expenditure of life and labor: Thuc. 1.70.8, 2.36.2, 42.4, 43.2, 62.3, 64.3; cf. 1.70.6, 2.62.1; risk: 1.70.3, 70.8; cf. 1.73.2, 73.4, 74.2, 74.3, 76.1, 144.3–4; 2.39.2, 39.4, 40.4, 42.4, 43.5, 44.4, 61.1; 6.83.1. The biggest risk is giving up the empire: 1.75.4, 76.1; 2.63.2–3, or trying to increase it during the war: 1.144.1, 2.65.7. Glory and honor: 1.75.4, 76.2, 144.3–4; 2.35.1, 41.4, 44.4, 45.1, 45.2, 63.1, 64.5, 65.7; Plut. Per. 8.9, 18.1; immortality: Plut. Per. 18.1; cf. Eq. 1090–95. For the ponos and mochristhena of Athens and of Theseus, see Su. 185, 342, 345, 373–74, 393–94, 573, 763, 940, 1187–88, 1232–34. This is the Heraklean strain of Athenian political ideology: E. Alk. 487, 499. 1024–34, 1035 (to acquire something by ponos is the antithesis of theft), 1149; Hkld. 331–32, 503–506; Her. 22; Ion 199–201. For aretê, eukleia, timê, and eudoxia as based upon ponoì, see A. fr. 315; E. Her. 125–29, 357–58; fr. 134, 233, 237, 473, 1052; cf. Isok. 1.7; for the link between agatha and ponoì, see E. fr. 236, 364. For talaiîpôria, see above.

194. For the phrase “sacrilieus cunning,” see Bourdieu 1980/1990: 123.
whom the prostatai cast as villains and conspirators against democracy in judicial narrative. The ponérōs figures demotic hegemony as an alliance of wage-earners and the commercial-judicial elite in opposition to the patrios politeia, which features the hegemonic alliance of farmers and chrēstoi. Because the ponérōs is incapable of relations in which generalized and balanced reciprocity are the norms—he must always profit in monetary terms—he is a figure for the negative extreme of what Marshall Sahlins terms “social distance,” and cannot be philos and eunous toward the demos. In opposition to the negative reciprocity due the ponérōs, the theater constructs elite leadership as generalized reciprocity and deploys such social fictions as nobility and symbolic paternity to minimize the actual social distance between leaders and demos.

The fifth-century theater articulated the ideological solidarity of the polis by staging the exclusion of the new elite, and adopted an ambivalent posture toward demotic hegemony which this elite devised and articulated. In the fourth century, forensic rhetoric articulated hegemonic leadership, controlling the chrēstos-ponérōs dichotomy and the values it entails, which dictated public timē or timória.195 The dikasterion itself worked out the definition of elite status, internalizing and neutralizing the terms which fifth-century comedy, and to a more limited extent, tragedy, used to deprive democratic leadership of elite status.196 Theater after the fifth century marks the distinction between chrēstos and ponérōs as fundamental, but its fundamentally political and hence revolutionary force has dwindled.197

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ABBREVIATIONS


196. Fourth-century mockery of politicians does not take the same form or serve the same function. See Alexis frs. 16, 121, 211 (Aristogeiton); Amphis fr. 30; Antiphanes frs. 167, 196 approach the spirit of Old Comedy, but name no politicians; Nikostratos fr. 24; Philetairos fr. 2 (Hypermsides); Timokles frs. 4, 7, 12, 17, 18, 23; Com. Ades. fr. 149. Politicians take bribes and convert cash into fish, are cowards, talk too much, and slander one another. But the code has changed: no politician is ridiculed as a slave, barbarian, ponérōs, mochthēros, agoraios, sykophantēs, panourgos, kobalos, or bômolochos; the comedians do not threaten politicians and prosecutors with violence or represent them as katharmata and pharmakoi.
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