

“Demagogues in Hellenistic Greece: An Athenian Export?”

Matt Simonton
Matt.Simonton@asu.edu
Arizona State University

I. Demagogues in the Hellenistic Sources

1. Hegesander of Delphi ap. Athen. 6.160f:

οἱ δὲ δημαγωγοὺντες, φησὶν, Ἀθήνησι κατὰ τὸν Χρεμωνίδειον πόλεμον κολακεύοντες τοὺς Ἀθηναίους τᾶλλα μὲν ἔφασκον πάντα εἶναι κοινὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, τὴν δ' ἐπὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνθρώπους φέρουσιν ὁδὸν Ἀθηναίους εἰδέναι μόνους.

2. Plut. *Pyrrh.* 13.2:

οἱ δὲ μήτε φέρειν τὸν πόλεμον δυνάμενοι μήτε θέσθαι θρασύτητι καὶ μοχθηρίᾳ δημαγωγῶν, ἐβουλεύοντο ποιεῖσθαι Πύρρον ἡγεμόνα καὶ καλεῖν ἐπὶ τὸν πόλεμον, ὥς σχολὴν ἄγοντα πλείστην τῶν βασιλέων καὶ στρατηγῶν ὄντα δεινότατον.

3. Plb. 15.21.1-2:

Ὅτι Μολπαγόρας τις ἦν παρὰ τοῖς Κιανοῖς, ἀνὴρ καὶ λέγειν καὶ πράττειν ἰκανός, κατὰ δὲ τὴν αἵρεσιν δημαγωγικός καὶ πλεονέκτης. ὃς πρὸς χάριν ὁμιλῶν τῷ πλήθει καὶ τοὺς εὐκαιροῦντας τοῖς βίοις ὑποβάλλων τοῖς ὄχλοις, καὶ τινὰς μὲν εἰς τέλος ἀναιρῶν, τινὰς δὲ φυγαδεύων καὶ τὰς οὐσίας τὰς τούτων δημεύων καὶ διαδιδούς τοῖς πολλοῖς, ταχέως τῷ τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ περιεποιήσατο μοναρχικὴν ἐξουσίαν.

38.11.11:

λοιπὸν ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης δημαγωγίας [sc. of Critolaus and company] πᾶν τὸ λεγόμενον ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πιστὸν ἐγίνετο, καὶ πρὸς πᾶν τὸ παραγγελλόμενον ἔτοιμον ἦν τὸ πλῆθος, περὶ μὲν τοῦ μέλλοντος ἀδυνατοῦν προνοεῖσθαι. τῇ δὲ παρ' αὐτὰ χάριτι καὶ ραστώνῃ δελεαζόμενον.

4. Diod. Sic. 20.79.3:

εἰ κατέλθοι δ' εἰς τὰς Συρακούσας, πάντως ἀναγκαῖον ἂν ἦν ιδιώτην ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἓνα τῶν πολλῶν ἀριθμεῖσθαι, τῆς αὐτονομίας ἀγαπώσης τὴν ἰσότητα, ἔν τε ταῖς χειροτονίαις ὑπὸ τοῦ τυχόντος δημαγωγοῦ παρενημερεῖσθαι, τοῦ πλῆθους ἀντικειμένου ταῖς ὑπεροχαῖς τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἀγόντων παρρησίαν.

II. Early meaning of “*dēmagōgia*”

5. Ar. *Eq.* 191-3:

ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ / ἔτ' ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους, / ἀλλ' εἰς ἀμαθῆ καὶ βδελυρόν

6. Thuc. 8.65.2:

καὶ γὰρ Ἀνδροκλέα τέ τινα τοῦ δήμου μάλιστα προεστῶτα ξυστάντες τινὲς τῶν νεωτέρων κρύφα ἀποκτείνουσιν, ὅσπερ καὶ τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην οὐχ ἥκιστα ἐξήλασε, καὶ αὐτὸν κατ' ἀμφοτέρα, τῆς τε δημαγωγίας ἔνεκα καὶ οἰόμενοι τῷ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ ὥς κατιόντι καὶ τὸν Τισσαφέρνην φίλον ποιήσονται χαριεῖσθαι, μᾶλλον τι διέφθειραν.

7. Xen. *Anab.* 7.6.4:

ἐρωτώντων δὲ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων τίς ἀνὴρ εἴη Ξενοφῶν ἀπεκρίνατο ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα εἶη οὐ κακός, φιλοστρατιώτης δέ· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο χεῖρόν ἐστιν αὐτῷ. καὶ οἱ εἶπον· Ἀλλ' ἡ δημαγωγεί ὁ ἀνὴρ τοὺς ἀνδρας; καὶ ὁ Ἡρακλείδης, Πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη.

III. Stratocles as “demagogue”

8. Plut. *Demetr.* 24.10 = Demochares *BNJ* 75 T7:

εἰπόντος δέ τινος τῶν καλῶν καγαθῶν μαίνεσθαι τὸν Στρατοκλέα τοιαῦτα γράφοντα, Δημοχάρης ὁ Λευκονοεὺς ‘μαίνοιτο μέντ' ἂν’ εἶπεν ‘εἰ μὴ μαίνοιτο’. On demagogic *mania* cf. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.9; Thuc. 4.39.3; Plb. 38.11.7; Artem. 3.42.

IV. Church fathers on demagogues

9. Gregory of Nazianzus *Ep.* 178.7 (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 218):

Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ φωνὴ μιαιρά σοι, οὐδὲ γέγονας κακός, οὐδὲ ἀγοραῖος εἶ, οὐδέ τι τῶν τοιούτων ἔχεις, ἵν' εἴπω συντόμως, οἷς πλάττει τὸν Ἀγοράκριτον εἰς δημαγωγίαν Ἀριστοφάνης.

V. The ubiquity of “demagogues” until the late fourth century

10. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 28.4: ἀπὸ δὲ Κλεοφῶντος ἤδη διεδέχοντο συνεχῶς τὴν δημαγωγίαν οἱ μάλιστα βουλόμενοι θρασύνεσθαι καὶ χαρίζεσθαι τοῖς πολλοῖς πρὸς τὸ παραυτίκα βλέποντες.

VI. Plutarch on demagoguery in *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*

11. Plut. *Mor.* 813e-14c (trans. Fowler):

arrange your cloak more carefully and from the office of the generals keep your eyes upon the orators' platform, and not have great pride of confidence in your crown, since you see the boots of Roman soldiers just above your head

εὐσταλεστέραν δεῖ τὴν χλαμύδα ποιεῖν, καὶ βλέπειν ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατηγίου πρὸς τὸ βῆμα, καὶ τῷ στεφάνῳ μὴ πολὺ φρονεῖν μηδὲ πιστεύειν, ὁρῶντα τοὺς καλτίους ἐπάνω τῆς κεφαλῆς·

No, you should imitate the actors who, while putting into the performance their own passion, character, and reputation, yet listen to the prompter and do not go beyond the degree of liberty in rhythms and metres permitted by those in authority over them. For to fail in one's part in public life brings not mere hissing or catcalls or stamping of feet, but many have experienced 'the dread chastiser, axes that cleaves the neck,' as did your countryman Pardalas and his followers when they forgot their proper limitations...

ἀλλὰ μιμεῖσθαι τοὺς ὑποκριτάς, πάθος μὲν ἴδιον καὶ ἦθος καὶ ἀξίωμα τῷ ἀγῶνι προστιθέντας, τοῦ δ' ὑποβολέως ἀκούοντας καὶ μὴ παρεκβαίνοντας τοὺς ῥυθμοὺς καὶ τὰ μέτρα τῆς διδομένης ἐξουσίας ὑπὸ τῶν κρατούντων. ἡ γὰρ ἔκπτωσις οὐ φέρει συριγμὸν οὐδὲ χλευασμὸν οὐδὲ κλωγμόν, ἀλλὰ πολλοῖς μὲν ἐπέβη

δεινὸς κολαστὴς πέλεκυς αὐχένος τομεύς,

ὥς τοῖς περὶ Παρδάλαν τὸν ὑμέτερον ἐκλαθομένοις τῶν ὄρων

The officials in the cities, when they foolishly urge the people to imitate the deeds, ideals, and actions of their ancestors, however unsuitable they may be for the present times and conditions, stir up the common folk and, though what they do is laughable, what is done to them is no laughing matter

οἱ δ' ἄρχοντες ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἀνοήτως τὰ τῶν προγόνων ἔργα καὶ φρονήματα καὶ πράξεις ἀσυμμέτρους τοῖς παροῦσι καιροῖς καὶ πράγμασιν οὕσας μιμεῖσθαι κελεύοντες ἐξαίρουσι τὰ πλήθη, γέλωτά τε ποιοῦντες οὐκέτι γέλωτος ἄξια πάσχουσιν, ἂν μὴ πάννυ καταφρονηθῶσι.

But Marathon, the Eurymedon, Plataea, and all the other examples which make the common folk vainly to swell with pride and kick up their heels, should be left to the schools of the sophists.

τὸν δὲ Μαραθῶνα καὶ τὸν Εὐρυμέδοντα καὶ τὰς Πλαταιάς, καὶ ὅσα τῶν παραδειγμάτων οἰδεῖν ποιεῖ καὶ φρυάττεσθαι διακενῆς τοὺς πολλούς, ἀπολιπόντας ἐν ταῖς σχολαῖς τῶν σοφιστῶν.

VII. Rhodian Resistance to Cassius

12. App. BC 4.9.66:

Of the Rhodians, those who were more reputable were afraid, since they were about to come into conflict with Romans, but the people had an arrogant attitude, since they remembered ancient deeds against men of a very different sort.

Ῥοδίων δὲ οἱ μὲν ἐν λόγῳ μᾶλλον ὄντες ἐδεδοίκεσαν Ῥωμαίοις μέλλοντες ἐς χεῖρας ἰέναι, ὁ δὲ λεῶς ἐμεγαλοφρονεῖτο, ἐπεὶ οἱ καὶ παλαιῶν ἔργων πρὸς οὐχ ὁμοίους ἄνδρας ἐμνημόνεον.

Cf. Athenian examples, Classical through early Hellenistic:

13. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.5: ἐν γὰρ τοῖς βελτίστοις ἐνὶ ἀκολασία τε ὀλιγίστη καὶ ἀδικία, ἀκρίβεια δὲ πλείστη εἰς τὰ χρηστά, ἐν δὲ τῷ δήμῳ ἀμαθία τε πλείστη καὶ ἀταξία καὶ πονηρία

14. *Hell. Oxy.* 9.3, 10.2 Chambers:

τῶν δὲ Ἀθηναίων οἱ μὲν ἐπ<ι>εικεῖς καὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἔχοντες ἔστεργον τὰ παρόντα, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ δημοτικοὶ τότε μὲν φοβηθέντες ἐπέισθησαν τοῖς συμβουλευούσι... [ο]ἱ δ' [ἐ]ν ταῖς Ἀθήναις ἐπιθυμοῦντες ἀπαλλάξαι τ[οῦ]ς Ἀθηνα[ί]ους τῆς ἡσυχίας καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ [πρ]οαγαγεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ πολεμεῖν καὶ π[ολ]υπρα[γ]μονεῖν

15. *Diod. Sic.* 18.10.1:

ὁ δὲ δῆμος τῶν Ἀθηναίων, τῶν μὲν κτηματικῶν συμβουλευόντων τὴν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, τῶν δὲ δημοκόπων ἀνασειόντων τὰ πλήθη καὶ παρακαλούντων ἐρρωμένως ἔχεσθαι τοῦ πολέμου...

16. Appian, cont.:

the right-thinking Rhodians became even more afraid, but Alexandros and Mnaseas played the demagogue to the masses, reminding them that Mithridates had sailed against Rhodes with a greater number of ships, as well as Demetrius on an occasion earlier still than Mithridates.

οἱ εὖ φρονοῦντες Ῥοδίων μᾶλλον ἐδεδοίκεσαν· τὸ δὲ πλῆθος ἐδημαγωγούν Ἀλέξανδρός τε καὶ Μνασέας ἀναμιμνήσκοντες, ὅτι καὶ Μιθριδάτης πλέοσι ναυσὶν ἐπιπλεύσειε τῇ Ῥόδῳ καὶ Δημήτριος ἔτι πρὸ τοῦ Μιθριδάτου.

VIII. Monuments and honors for “good men” in Hellenistic Rhodes

17. *Diod. Sic.* 20.84.3:

ἔγραψαν δὲ καὶ τῶν τελευτησάντων ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τὰ μὲν σώματα δημοσίᾳ θάπτεσθαι, τοὺς δὲ γονεῖς καὶ παῖδας τρέφεσθαι λαμβάνοντας τὴν χορηγίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ ταμείου, καὶ τὰς μὲν παρθένους δημοσίᾳ προικίζεσθαι, τοὺς δ' υἱοὺς ἐν ἡλικίᾳ γενομένους ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ στεφανῶσαι τοῖς Διονυσίοις πανοπλίᾳ.

18. [Arist.] *Rhetoric to Alexander* 2.17:

χρὴ δὲ τοῖς ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τελευτήσασιν εἰς ταφὴν δημόσιον χωρίον ἐν καλῷ πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ἀφωρίσθαι καὶ τοῖς παισὶν αὐτῶν ἕως ἥβης δημοσίαν τροφὴν δίδοσθαι.

19. V. Kontorini, *BCH* 136-37 (2012-2013), 339-61 no. 1:

Ὁ δᾶμος ἐτίμασε Ἀστυάνακτα

Ἀστυμήδευς Πεδιῇ εἰκόνι χαλκῆαι
ὅτι στραταγήσας κατὰ πόλεμον
ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ τοῦ δάμου καὶ
ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γενόμενος ἐν τῷ
πολέμῳ ἐτελεύτασε

Bibliography

- Börm, H. “*Stasis* in Post-Classical Greece: The Discourse of Civil Strife in the Hellenistic World.” In H. Börm and N. Luraghi (eds.), *The Polis in the Hellenistic World*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2018: 53-83.
- . *Mordende Mitbürger: Stasis und Bürgerkrieg in griechischen Poleis des Hellenismus*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019.
- Cooper, C. “Idomeneus of Lampsacus on the Athenian Demagogues.” *EMC* 41 (1997): 455-82.
- Fernoux, H. *Le Demos et la cité: communautés et assemblées populaires en Asie Mineure à l’époque impériale*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011.
- Forster, F. R. *Die Polis im Wandel: Ehrendekrete für eigene Bürger im Kontext der hellenistischen Polisgesellschaft*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018.
- Fournier, J. and P. Hamon. “Les orphelins de guerre de Thasos: un nouveau fragment de la stèle des Braves (ca 360-350 av. J.C.).” *BCH* 131.1 (2007): 309-81.
- Fröhlich, P. “La citoyenneté grecque entre Aristote et les modernes.” *CGG* 28 (2016): 91-136.
- Gray, B. “A Later Hellenistic Debate about the Value of Classical Athenian Civic Ideals? The Evidence of Epigraphy, Historiography, and Philosophy.” In M. Canevaro and B. Gray (eds.), *The Hellenistic Reception of Classical Athenian Democracy and Political Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018: 139-76.
- Gruen, E. S. “The Origins of the Achaean War.” *JHS* 96 (1976): 46-69.
- Kontorini, V. “Inscriptions de Rhodes pour des citoyens morts au combat, ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ γενόμενοι.” *BCH* 136-37 (2012-13): 339-61.
- Luraghi, N. “Stratokles of Diomeia and Party Politics in Early Hellenistic Athens.” *C&M* 65 (2014): 191-226.
- . “Stairway to Heaven: The Politics of Memory in Early Hellenistic Athens.” In M. Canevaro and B. Gray (eds.), *The Hellenistic Reception of Classical Athenian Democracy and Political Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018: 21-43.
- Mann, Chr. “Gleichheiten und Ungleichheiten in der hellenistischen Polis: Überlegungen zum Stand der Forschung.” In Chr. Mann and P. Scholz (eds.), “*Demokratie*” im Hellenismus: von der Herrschaft des Volkes zur Herrschaft der Honoratioren? Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2012: 11-27.
- Momigliano, A. *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Saldutti, V. “Sul demagogo e la demagogia in età classica. Una sintesi critica.” *Incidenza dell’Antico* 13 (2015): 81-110.
- Simonton, M. “The Telos Reconciliation Dossier (*IG* XII.4.132): Democracy, Demagogues and Stasis in an Early Hellenistic Polis.” *JHS* 139 (2019): 187-209.
- . “Representing the Demos: Adapting Insights from the Constructivist Turn in Political Representation.” Forthcoming in *Ramus*.
- Tarn, W. W. *Hellenistic Civilisation*. Third Edition. London: E. Arnold & Co., 1952.
- Thonemann, P. “A New ‘Lydian History’ from Sardis.” *ZPE* 213 (2020): 78-84.
- Urso, G. “Δημαγωγοί e δημαγωγία nella storiografia greca d’età romana.” *Erga-Logoi* 7.2 (2019): 83-116.