

# TYRANNY, *ANARKHIA*, AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE *BOULE* IN THE *ORESTEIA*

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In 462/1 B.C. the Council on the Areopagus, we are informed, was stripped of most of its political power and left primarily as a homicide court.<sup>1</sup> Later in the same year Athens revoked her alliance with Sparta and formed a new alliance with Argos, Sparta's main rival in the Peloponnese.<sup>2</sup> The initiative for both of these moves came from the democratic faction under the leadership of Ephialtes and Pericles.<sup>3</sup> Although many of the details surrounding these events still remain unclear, there is no doubt that "party" feelings ran high. Cimon, the conservative statesman, who had supported Athens' alliance with Sparta and had upheld the authority of the Areopagus, was ostracized, and Ephialtes was assassinated.<sup>4</sup> It was, to use the words of Sir Richard Livingstone, "the greatest domestic struggle that Athens was to know for sixty years."<sup>5</sup>

What has added spice to our curiosity about this historical era is that in the *Eumenides*, performed in 458 B.C., Aeschylus seems to make several allusions to these events, apparently beyond the strict requirements of the plot of a play that deals with the consequences of Orestes' murder of his mother. References are made on three occasions to an Argive alliance (289-91; 670-4; 762-74); Athena establishes the court of the Areopagus to try Orestes for matricide (483-4), an institution which is designed to serve as a vigilant guardian of the land (704-6; cf. also, 683 ff.); in addition, the Athenians are advised to avoid the extremes of anarchy

and despotism (526-8; 696-8), and pleas are uttered against civil war (858-66; 976-87).

In recent years there has been a considerable amount of discussion about the precise significance of these political allusions and Aeschylus' attitude to the events that took place.<sup>6</sup> Although different opinions have been expressed it is often accepted that it is only in the last play of the *Oresteia* that these contemporary political issues come to the fore. On this point two of the most eminent critics are agreed. As Sir Kenneth Dover writes, "Of one thing, however, we may be sure. When *Eumenides* begins no spectator, unless he is a very frivolous spectator, is thinking about politics."<sup>7</sup> And in similar fashion Professor Dodds has stated, "the political implications of the *Oresteia* begin to force themselves on the reader's attention only in the scenes at Athens."<sup>8</sup> It is not my intention in this paper to give simply one more detailed treatment of all of the political problems that arise out of the *Eumenides*, but rather to question the assumption of Dover and Dodds that the discussion of this aspect of the trilogy can largely be confined to a discussion of the *Eumenides*. In fact, what I shall argue is that Aeschylus has deliberately structured the other two plays of the trilogy in such an overtly political way that the original audience would have already donned its political thinking cap before the *Eumenides* began. I shall also argue that the political aspects of the *Eumenides* are in a very real way connected with the dramatic issues of the first two plays.

That Aeschylus intended to impose a political framework on the myth is evidenced by his situating the house of the Atreidae at Argos rather than at Mycenae or Sparta. So much, at least, is generally recognized.<sup>9</sup> What has been given less emphasis is that each play of the trilogy is set against the background of a different form of government. In the *Agamemnon* it is kingship; in the *Choephoroi* it is tyranny; in the *Eumenides* it is, by implication at least, a form of democracy.<sup>10</sup> The contrast between Agamemnon's kingship and Aegisthus' tyranny is drawn in simple but unmistakable terms. Agamemnon's power derives from Zeus (*Ag.* 42-4; *Eum.* 626); he is a *basileus* (*Ag.* 114; 521; 783; 1346; 1489; 1513) and, in so far as the dramatic action permits, he rules in a constitutional manner (844-50). On the other hand, Aegisthus is never referred to as a *basileus*; he is either

referred to in terms of a *turannos* (Ag. 1633; Ch. 973) or in more general terms suggestive of power.<sup>11</sup> Aristotle provides us with a succinct distinction between kingship and tyranny: "Monarchy exists, as the name suggests, where one man is lord over all; if it operates within a certain framework, it is kingship; if it is not subject to any limitations, it is tyranny."<sup>12</sup> Although the verbal indications in the *Oresteia* do not amount to very much in themselves, nevertheless on this point they are clear and explicit.

Kingship was no longer a live political issue at Athens in the fifth century B.C. As a form of government it had long since been superseded. Tyranny, however, was still very much a live issue. Aeschylus, as a young man, had witnessed the expulsion of the tyrant, Hippias, from Athens in 510 B.C., but a threat of Hippias' restoration still existed in 490 B.C. during the first Persian campaign.<sup>13</sup> In celebration of the overthrow of tyranny bronze statues were erected in honour of Harmodius and Aristogiton as tyrannicides and, when the original monument was removed by Xerxes during the invasion of 480 B.C., a new monument was erected shortly afterwards.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the Athenian literature of the fifth century B.C. there was expressed a strong antipathy towards tyranny, which influenced later discussion about the nature of government.<sup>15</sup>

This antipathetic tradition finds its earliest expression in the *Agamemnon*,<sup>16</sup> where it is first brought to the audience's attention during the murder-scene, when the Chorus of Elders hears the death-cries of the king. "T'is plain to see, for these are the preliminary indications, that they plan to establish a tyranny over the city," one member of the Chorus exclaims (1354-5).<sup>17</sup> A few lines later another member cries: "It is intolerable and death is to be preferred, for it is a milder fate than tyranny" (1364-5). These lines have a distinctly contemporary ring, for as Schneidewin once commented on line 1355, "Aeschylus transfers situations and ideas of the historical period to the heroic age, just as the dictum in [line] 1365 betrays the Athenian of the post-Persian-war period."<sup>18</sup>

The scene (1343-71) in which these references to tyranny appear has caused a considerable amount of perplexity to modern interpreters and has even been the subject of ridicule.<sup>19</sup> Why does Aeschylus make the Chorus stand around and debate instead of making it take some positive action, when it hears the death-cries of the king? No convincing explanation has

been given,<sup>20</sup> but the clue to the correct interpretation of the scene is to be found in the language of the Chorus of which the references to tyranny form an important element. Each member of the Chorus expresses his own opinion in a distich, twelve in all.<sup>21</sup> In fact, what the Chorus does is to conduct a debate in a very orderly "democratic" fashion, so that each member is allowed equal time to state his own point of view.

The language of an orderly constitutional procedure runs through their words. Emphasis is placed upon sharing opinion, proposing motions, casting votes and making proclamations to the citizens of Argos: *κοινωνώμεθ' ἦν πως ἀσφαλῆ βουλευμάτων' ἤ* (1347, "Let us take counsel together to see if in some way there may be some safe resolutions"). The notion of *koinōmai* is picked up later in 1352 by the phrase, *κἀγὼ τοιοῦτου γνώματος κοινωνῶν δὲν* ("Since I share such an opinion"); likewise, the notion of *bouleumata* is reiterated at 1358 by *boulês* ("plan/counsel"), and at 1359 by *to bouleusai* ("deliberation"). *ὑμῖν τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην λέγω, πρὸς δῶμα δεῦρ' ἀστοῖσι κηρύσσειν βοήν* (1348-9, "I tell you my proposal: issue a proclamation to the citizens to bring help here to the house"). The phrase *gnōmên legô*, which is reinforced by *gnōmatos* (1352), is a regular phrase for proposing a motion in a council or an assembly or for expressing an opinion in a law-court.<sup>22</sup> *ψηφίζομαι τὸ δρᾶν τι* (1353, "I vote for some course of action"): in similar fashion the *psêphos* ("vote") is an important instrument of a council, assembly and law-court; it forms the main component of "democratic" procedure. It is worth noting that this word will be used frequently in the *Eumenides*,<sup>23</sup> where there will be twelve votes cast, an identical number of votes as the Chorus here expresses opinions.

Up until this point of the *Agamemnon* the Chorus has brooded deeply about the events of the past and has given voice, whether consciously or unconsciously, to fears for the future.<sup>24</sup> With the death of the king the role of the Chorus undergoes a change, for it has been caught up in the violence of the present and will be forced willy nilly to declare its partisan position. The very fact that the Chorus, on hearing Agamemnon's death-cries, conducts an orderly debate like ideal democrats serves as a dramatic counterpoint to the violence of the assassination. The juxtaposition of the heinous act of regicide, on the one hand, and the orderly deliberation of the Chorus, on the other, should be seen as a representation,

in stage terms, of the opposing methods of tyranny and "democracy."

From now on the Chorus takes a politically more active role,<sup>25</sup> as it expresses the outrage of the Argive people at the murder of the King. All its former doubts about Agamemnon are suppressed. Instead, assuming something of the character of a citizens' court, it accuses Clytemnestra of casting aside the curses of the *dêmos* and threatens her with exile (1409-11).<sup>26</sup>

In the murder-scene the tyranny-motif is expressed primarily in verbal terms. With the unexpected arrival of Aegisthus in the last scene of the play it becomes part of the visual action. In Aegisthus we find portrayed the evil nature of the tyrant. Violent, boastful and cowardly -- the Chorus contemptuously addresses him as a woman (1625) -- he aspires to be the tyrant overlord of the Argives, although he does not have the courage to fight his own battles (1633-5).<sup>27</sup> Whereas the Chorus had been forced to temper its denunciation of Clytemnestra by acknowledging the demonic influence of Helen (1455 ff.) and the family curse (1468 ff.), in the case of Aegisthus it finds no redeeming factors. Rather, the Chorus seems to speak with the voice of the Argive people when it warns him that he will meet his death by public stoning (1615-6):

οὐ φημ' ἀλύξειν ἐν δίκῃ τὸ σὸν κάρα  
δημορριφεῖς, σάφ' ἔσθι, λευσίμους ἀράς.

[I say that on the day of justice your head - be well assured - shall escape neither the stones nor the curses hurled by the people.]

When Aegisthus enters, he is accompanied by a body of armed guards.<sup>28</sup> The guards provide a visual dimension to the impending tyranny. Since these guards have an important part to play in the tyranny-motif, we must pause to consider their role and, at the same time, try to clear up the confusion about the distribution of the speaking parts in lines 1650-3 of the *Agamemnon*, where editors are in disagreement as to which lines are spoken by the Chorus and which ones by Aegisthus.

Since the crux of the matter centres around lines 1650-1, I shall concentrate on a discussion of these lines:

εἶα δῆ, φίλοι λοχῖται, τοῦργον οὐχ ἐκάς, τόδε.

εἶα δῆ, ξίφος πρόκωπον πᾶς τις εὐτρεπιζέτω.

[Come now, loyal comrades, your work here is close at hand  
Come now, let every one make ready his sword with  
hand on hilt.]

Fraenkel and others assign line 1650, in which the word *lokhitês* occurs, to Aegisthus and line 1651 to the Chorus.<sup>29</sup> But Page and Lloyd-Jones have objected to this distribution on the ground that it is impossible that the Chorus of Elders, who in the earlier part of the play (75) have described themselves as old men, propped up on staves, should wear swords. These editors, therefore, assign line 1650 to the Chorus, thus making the word *lokhitai* refer to it as a "company" of *Choreutae*, and line 1651 to Aegisthus.<sup>30</sup> *Lokhitês*, however, is commonly used of an armed guard<sup>31</sup> and is, therefore, much more naturally taken to refer to those accompanying Aegisthus than to the Chorus as a group. There seems to me strong circumstantial evidence to support this view.

The word *lokhitês* appears only twice in the *Oresteia*, once in the passage under discussion and once in the *Choephoroi* (768). In both passages it occurs in contexts that relate directly to Aegisthus. The *Choephoroi* passage is most illuminating. When Orestes' nurse is sent by Clytemnestra to fetch Aegisthus to hear the false news of Orestes' death, the Chorus of Libation Bearers contrives to deprive Aegisthus of his *lokhitai* (766-773):

Chorus: How then equipped does she bid him come?

Nurse: In what way how? Speak again that I may learn more clearly.

Chorus: With guards (λοχίταις) or unattended?

Nurse: She bids him bring his escort of spearmen.

Chorus: No, do not give this message to our hated master, but bid him come in all haste, alone, and in a happy frame of mind that he may hear without feeling alarmed, for in the mouth of a messenger a crooked word is made straight.

If no reference had been made to Aegisthus' *lokhitai*, it is generally agreed that the audience would not have given any thought to his arriving unattended. Such a convention is quite normal in Greek tragedy. By giving,

however, this unusual task to the Chorus (i.e. making the possible success or failure of the plot to kill the tyrant dependent, at least in part, upon the intervention of the Chorus into the dramatic action) Aeschylus obviously wanted to make a special point. That point has much to do with the waxing and waning of Aegisthus' power. Considered in terms of stage action, the only two entrances that Aegisthus makes, one in the *Agamemnon* and one in the *Choephoroi*, are immediately contrasted. In the *Agamemnon* Aegisthus enters with his *lokhitai*; his fortunes are in the ascendant. In the *Choephoroi* he is stripped of his *lokhitai*; his fortunes are in the descendant. *Lokhitês*, then, is a thematic word, used to draw the audience's attention to the fact that Aegisthus' power is based upon naked force.

If line 1650 of the *Agamemnon*, in which *lokhitês* occurs, is assigned to Aegisthus, we still have to face the problem of "the Chorus wearing swords" in line 1651. The simplest explanation of this problem is that it does not wear swords, and the phrase πᾶς τις εὐτρεπίζετω does not refer to them. If the Chorus were exhorting one another to draw swords we might have expected the hortatory subjunctive.<sup>32</sup> The phrase *pas tis* and the third person singular of the imperative can have a broader and less specific frame of reference. We should remember that since the death of Agamemnon the Chorus has increasingly adopted the role of spokesman for the Argive people (cf. 1409-13; 1615-6; 1633). As the Chorus will say soon after this altercation with Aegisthus: "This would not be characteristic of Argives to grovel before a wicked man" (1665). I am inclined to think, therefore, that the line, "let everyone make ready his sword with hand on hilt," should be taken as a general appeal, though a vain one, to the Argive *dêmos* to resist the tyranny. Although we need not assume that representatives of the Argive people appear on stage,<sup>33</sup> the effect would have been to draw the Athenian *dêmos*, sitting on the spectators' benches, closer to the action by engaging its sympathies for its fellow Argives.

If my argument is correct, the appeal of the Chorus to the people of Argos to take up arms against Aegisthus is but a dramatic gesture, designed to represent the last resistance of the Argive people before it succumbs to the tyrants. But the Chorus is no match for Aegisthus, his *lokhitai* and Clytemnestra. At the end of the play the Chorus files off in

silence without any of the customary words that Choruses are wont to utter. As Hermann once wrote:<sup>34</sup>

facit Clytemnestra finem tragoediae, quoniam chorus, cuius alias hoc officium esse solet, susceptis hac in scena actoris partibus non recte potuit ad perorandum adhiberi.

[Clytemnestra brings the tragedy to a close, since the Chorus, whose function this usually is elsewhere, cannot properly be used to make the concluding remarks because it has adopted the role of an actor in this scene.]

We will not see or hear of these Elders again for, when the *Choephoroi* begins, there will be no place for Elders. Argos has become enslaved to tyrants.

The last part of the *Agamemnon* helps to set the scene for the *Choephoroi*. Many of the ambiguities that had characterized the dramatic action of the first play have been resolved and the groundwork has been laid for the ensuing conflict in which the lines of battle are drawn in black-and-white terms.

Much of the dramatic action of the *Choephoroi* is presented in military terms. In the early scenes the forces of exile and representatives of the oppressed population of Argos slowly gather around the tomb of the dead king. In the opening lines Orestes invokes the god Hermes as his *summachos* (2, "ally") and at the end of the prologue he invokes Zeus in an identical manner (19). Later in the play he calls upon his dead father to send *Dikê* as a *summachos* to aid his *philois*, "friends" (497) and to direct him aright in his "conflict with the sword" (584),<sup>35</sup> a phrase later echoed by the Chorus (729). Orestes' conflict with Clytemnestra and Aegisthus constitutes a *machê*, "battle," (484; 874; 946; 948). The Chorus prays for a man, mighty with the sword, to come, brandishing his bow and wielding his sword in close combat, a veritable God of War (160-4). As Orestes expresses the point, "War-god will engage with War-god" (461).

Emphasis is also given to *nikê*, "victory." Electra prays to Agamemnon to convey blessings above with the help of the gods, Earth and *Dikê*, the bearer of victory (147-8). The Chorus invokes the nether powers to send aid to Agamemnon's children so that they may be victorious (476-8).



Orestes asks his father to send *Dikê* as an ally to his friends if after his defeat he wishes to be victorious in his turn (499). Clytemnestra calls for a man-slaying axe to see whether "we will be victorious or vanquished" (890). After his moment of triumphant exultation (973 ff.) Orestes realises that his victory brings with it an unenviable pollution (1017).

If much of the action of the *Choephoroi* is depicted in terms of war, it is also civil war. From the beginning of the play onwards the audience is exposed to the conflict from the point of view of the conspirators. The two sides to the conflict are described in terms of *philoi*, "friends," (110; 456; 497; 552; 833; 1026), and *ekhthroi*, "enemies," (460; 790; 952; cf. 123), terms which in the context assume political overtones.<sup>36</sup> If Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are the enemies, Orestes, Electra and the Chorus are the partisans of the dead king, whose roles time and again have a political dimension.

At the beginning of the play Orestes returns from exile (3), having been, in his own opinion at least, cast out of Argos and shamefully bartered away, even though he was the son of a free man (913-5; cf. 136). He is goaded on not only by his own wrongs, those done to his father and the command of Apollo, but also by the fact that his illustrious citizens, who were the conquerors of Troy, have been subjected to the rule of two women (302-4). He kills the two tyrants (973) and is proclaimed by the Chorus the liberator of his polis (1046).

While Orestes was growing up in exile, the Argive *dêmos* had been forced to suffer the oppressions of tyranny. The steadfast loyalty that had characterized the allegiance of the *dêmos* to its former king had been cast off in the general reign of terror (55-8):

σέβας δ' ἄμαχον ἀδάματον ἀπόλεμον τὸ πρῖν  
 δι' ὤτων φρενός τε δαμίας περαῖνον  
 νυν ἀφίσταται. φοβεῖ-  
 ται δέ τις.

[And the awe that once irresistible, invincible,  
 not to be withstood,  
 passed through the ear and mind of the people  
 now stands far away; and fear  
 is rife.]<sup>37</sup>

Here in the *parodos* the war theme (*amakhon . . . apolemon*) which has commenced in the prologue speech of Orestes is continued by the Chorus and, in conjunction with the verb *aphistatai*, which suggests political revolt,<sup>38</sup> prepares for civil conflict that is to ensue.

The Chorus of the *Choephoroi* consists of female slaves. Both aspects of its characterization have dramatic point. Constantly throughout the early scenes of the play the Chorus demands blood for blood and induces Orestes and Electra in unequivocal terms to exact vengeance.<sup>39</sup> In so doing the Chorus foreshadows the role of the Erinyes in the *Eumenides*. The startled reaction of Orestes on seeing these black-sabled women enter in the prologue (10-12) finds an echo at the end of the *Choephoroi*, when in his fevered imagination he sees the black-robed and snaky-haired Erinyes of his mother (1048-50).<sup>40</sup>

Vengeance, then, is a constant refrain of the Libation Bearers. For them *dikê* is conceived in the simple terms of the vendetta. To Electra's question whether she should pray for the help of a judge or an avenger (120) the Chorus replies, "Say simply one who will commit murder in return for murder" (121). Only at the end of the play, when Orestes has killed Clytemnestra, does the Chorus seem to reveal some awareness of the large issues involved (1065-76). Before that the Chorus is the expounder (*ex-êgoumenê*, 118) of the archaic code of the vendetta.

There is another dimension to the Chorus as well. The very fact that it is a slave Chorus that replaces the Elders of the *Agamemnon* reflects the changing political fortunes of Argos. Already we have seen how in the *parodos* the Chorus has given voice to the atmosphere of terror and the loss of allegiance that the *dêmos* feels to the new rulers (55-8). Later in the same *parodos* they sing of how the gods have put the yoke of necessity on their city and have driven them as slaves from their father's houses (75-7). Whether these slave women are foreigners or native Argives,<sup>41</sup> their words are also applicable to Argos, which is suffering from the constraints of divine necessity, and to Electra, who stands black-robed among them as they sing. Although Electra is not a slave, she is very like one (135, *antidoulos*, "like a slave"), and she will tell how she and Orestes have been bartered away (132-3).

Like the Chorus of Elders, when confronted by Aegisthus, the Libation

Bearers are strongly partisan. For them Aegisthus is an object of *stugos*, "loathing" (111; 770; cf. 81; 393). Together with Orestes and Electra they form a political *stasis* that plots by stealth (557) to murder the rulers (100-15):

Chorus: As you pour [*sc.* libations] utter words auspicious for those who are loyal.

Electra: Whom of our friends (*tôn philôn*) am I to address as such?

Chorus: First yourself and whoever loathes (*stugei*) Aegisthus.

Electra: Then I shall pray for this for you and myself?

Chorus: You must learn this for yourself and then give your own interpretation.

Electra: Who else then shall I add to this faction (*stasei*)?

Chorus: Remember Orestes, even if he is abroad.

*Stasis* will recur significantly again at line 458, when the Chorus invokes Agamemnon's help against the enemies (*ekthrou*). In response to this appeal Orestes will utter the momentous line, "War-God will engage with War-God, Right with Right" (461).

Given the political dimension to the Chorus' characterization, we can understand more readily Aeschylus' *coup de théâtre* in making the Chorus actively intervene in the downfall of Aegisthus. The unsuccessful attempt of the Elders of the Agamemnon to provide armed resistance against Aegisthus is counterbalanced by the action of the Libation Bearers who take the necessary measures to deprive the tyrant of his military might. Thus, like the Elders who spoke out in the name of the Argive people against Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, this Chorus of slave women will seem to speak on behalf of the Argive citizenry in proclaiming Orestes the liberator of his people (1046).<sup>42</sup>

At the beginning of the *Choephoroi* Orestes had returned from exile. At the end of the play he is driven into exile once more (1062), pursued by his mother's Erinyes. Although Argos has been liberated from the forces of despotism, the sense of release and joy is momentary, for the larger issues of *dikê* have still to be resolved and Argos does not have the legal, political or religious machinery to settle a matter of such moral complexity. The solution to that problem resides partly at Delphi but mainly

at Athens. The solution offered by Apollo at Delphi is a limited one and does not really address itself to all the ramifications of *dikê* that are involved in Orestes' case.<sup>43</sup> It consists, to a large extent, of submitting Orestes to a number of obligatory rituals in order to purify him (*Eum.* 280-4, cf. 445-57). The real solution resides in Athens, where the goddess Athena will, through her divine auspices, institute a court of law to try Orestes' case through the use of the ballot (*psêphos*), and where the goddess will successfully allay the anger of the Erinyes.

With the arrival of the Erinyes in Athens in pursuit of Orestes the threat of civil strife looms large. *Stasis* is the hall-mark of the Erinyes' presence. *Stasis*, having become an insatiable source of woe to the house of the Atreidae through the presence of the Erinyes (*Ag.* 1117-21), spreads like a cancer throughout the body-politic of Argos. Once the Erinyes are present the spirit of War (Ares) turns inward on home and polis alike. In the first *stasimon* of the *Eumenides* the Erinyes tell how they have chosen as their office the overthrow of houses, when "War, having been nurtured in the home" ("Ἀρης τιθασὸς ὦν), smites down a loved one (354-6). Later in the play Athena pleads with the Erinyes not to cast upon her land incentives to blood-shed, causing harm to the hearts of the young, when they become insensate with no drunken madness, nor to implant, in the manner of fighting cocks, the spirit of civil war ("Ἀρη ἐμφύλιον) among her citizens and thus make them rash in their dealings with one another. Rather Athena prays that war may be with foreign foes (858-64, θυραῖος ἔστω πόλεμος). Finally, when the Erinyes have been won over by Athena's divine persuasion to forego their wrath, the last blessing that they invoke for the Athenians is that *Stasis*, insatiable of woe, may never thunder in the city but that the Athenians may love and hate with one mind (976-87).

The Erinyes, then, turn War (Ares) into civil and domestic discord (*Stasis*). We have already seen how in the *Choephoroi* much of the dramatic action is depicted through images of war. But Ares looms large throughout the whole of the *Oresteia*. In the *Agamemnon* war had begun as a *polemos thuraios*, "a foreign war," but that war had led to domestic and civil conflict. The Chorus of Elders tells us how Ares acts as a money-changer, who barter in dead bodies (438-40), and how resentment against the Atreidae

spreads in secret amongst the citizens as a result of this war, which is cursed by the *dêmos* (449-57). Lurking in the background of these events are the Erinyes (463), who appear significantly in all the odes of the *Agamemnon*.<sup>44</sup> On his return Agamemnon pays the consequences, and his death leads to internal discord in the *Choephoroi*. In the *Eumenides* the threat of civil war is transferred from Argos to Athens as a result of the arrival of Erinyes in pursuit of Orestes.

The heavy task of allaying that threat resides with Athena. Although the goddess herself does not have the power to decide the question of *dikê* in the case of murder that has been provoked by passionate anger (471-72), nevertheless she must devise a means of settling a seemingly irreconcilable conflict without detriment to the land over which she presides. On the one hand, she must protect the rights of Orestes, who arrives at her altar as a suppliant with the promise of an alliance for Athens with his own native Argos (289-91); on the other hand, should she fail to satisfy the claims of the Erinyes, they will pour their unendurable poison, a deadly plague, upon her land (475-9; cf. 780-7). Some indication of what that poison is is intimated in the second *stasimon*, when the Erinyes issue a warning against anarchy and despotism (526-30):

μήτ' ἀναρχτον βίον  
 μήτε δεσποτούμενον  
 αἰνέσης· παντὶ μέσῳ τὸ κράτος θεοῦ  
 ὕπασεν.

[Neither a life of anarchy  
 nor a life under a despot  
 should you praise.

To all that lies in the middle has a god given  
 excellence.]<sup>45</sup>

In other words, the same spirit of civil discord, which had characterized the Erinyes' presence at Argos, will be visited upon Athens. Thus, if I understand the matter correctly, the trial of Orestes has important political implications for Athens from the outset.

Athena's first ordinance is to establish a tribunal of her best citizens to decide Orestes' case (484-8). This tribunal of judges is,

in fact, a *boulê*, "a council" (570; 684; 704), which is designed to be immune from corruption and an ever-wakeful guardian of the land (704-6). It meets on the hill of Ares, where once Amazons had encamped in their conflict with Theseus (685-90). Thus, that place which had once been the arena of conflict between male and female is transformed into a council chamber for the settling of claims between man and woman. In this way, Athena attempts to mitigate the fierce spirit of the War-God and harness it to a more peaceful and constructive purpose. But her citizens must do their part (690-8). Their fear (*phobos*) and reverence (*sebas*) must restrain them from wrong-doing. If, however, they tamper with the laws by contaminating them with evil influences and if they cast all sense of awe (to *deinon*) out of the city, there will be a danger of either anarchy (to *anarkhon*) or despotism (to *despotoumenon*).

The Areopagus, then, is intended to be the main bulwark of the land and the source of its safety which, if held in respect, will serve as an institution unparalleled among Peloponnesians or Scythians (700-3). The sanctuary of the War-God has been turned into a council of justice, where twelve Athenian burghers, true to their oath, will deliver their impartial verdict (707-10).

Let us now pause to review some of the main historical events that seem to form the background to the action of the *Eumenides*. The Spartans, having been confronted with a revolt of their helots and some of their *perioikoi*, appealed to Athens for help in 462/1 B.C. Ephialtes spoke out against aiding the Spartans, while Cimon urged his fellow Athenians to support them. Cimon's view prevailed, and he was sent with 4,000 hoplites to help relieve the Spartans.<sup>46</sup>

With Cimon gone and 4,000 hoplites with him, the balance of power at Athens immediately shifted. The radical elements among the *dêmos*, we are told, overthrew "the established political order" and, under the leadership of Ephialtes, stripped the Council on the Areopagus of nearly all of its power, thus turning Athens into a pure democracy. Having become suspicious of the revolutionary nature of the Athenians, the Spartans suddenly dismissed Cimon and the Athenian hoplites. On his return to Athens Cimon tried to reverse the radical reforms that had been passed in his absence, but the tide of opinion had turned against him in view of

the slight done to the Athenians by the Spartans. Athens broke off her alliance with Sparta and formed a new one with Argos. Cimon himself was ostracized, but an even worse fate befell Ephialtes who had opposed his policies, for Ephialtes was mysteriously murdered.<sup>47</sup>

With the death of Ephialtes the leadership of the *dêmos* fell to Pericles. Pericles' policy was to turn Athens' aspirations towards its sea power, thereby enhancing the power of the masses.<sup>48</sup> The decisive move in this direction was to come in 457 B.C., a year after the performance of the *Oresteia*, when the Athenians began building the long walls.<sup>49</sup> It was not, however, a policy that was to find favour in every quarter, for, as Thucydides informs us, a party at Athens opened secret negotiations with the Spartans to get them to invade Athens, in the hope of putting an end to the democracy and the long walls that were in the process of construction.<sup>50</sup>

For students of Greek history there are several problems connected with these events, but probably the most difficult one centres around the Areopagus. What exactly were the powers that it was stripped of in 462/1 B.C.? This problem is also a tantalizing one for students of Greek literature, for, when Athena establishes the court of the Areopagus in the *Eumenides*, she seems to imply, as Professor Dodds has said,<sup>51</sup> that the Areopagus is to be something more than a homicide court (690-706).

In her foundation speech Athena counsels her citizens to avoid the extremes of anarchy and despotism, a warning which had formerly been voiced by the Erinyes (526-7). According to the *Athênaiôn Politeia* Solon had established the procedure known as *εἰσαγγελία*, through which the Council on the Areopagus was empowered, among other things, to bring to trial "those who conspired to destroy 'the democracy'" (τοὺς ἐπὶ καταλύσει τοῦ δήμου συνιστάμενους).<sup>52</sup> There is also evidence that, even before the probable institution of *εἰσαγγελία*, the Areopagus had had jurisdiction over cases involving tyranny, for, as Professor MacDowell has pointed out:<sup>53</sup>

Plutarch quotes a law of Solon extending amnesty to men who had been outlawed before Solon became Arkhon "except those condemned by the Areopagus or by the ephetai or at the Prytaneion for homicide or bloodshed or for tyranny." This is good evidence that

before 594 the Areopagus held trials for tyranny and imposed outlawry (*atimia*) on those found guilty.

If the Areopagus had jurisdiction over trials for tyranny, when did the Council lose this power? P.J. Rhodes, in his book *The Athenian Boule*,<sup>54</sup> has argued plausibly that this power remained intact until Ephialtes' reforms of 462/1 B.C. If Rhodes is right, then it could well be that it is this function of the Areopagus that Aeschylus is alluding to, at least in part, in Athena's speech in the *Eumenides*.

Before discussing this aspect of the *Eumenides*, I should like to return to the *Agamemnon*, which seems to me to contain some clues about what may be taking place in the last play of the trilogy. Professor Dodds has noted, with regard to the *Agamemnon*, that "references to the δῆμος are more frequent than we expect in a Mycenaean monarchy."<sup>55</sup> In the *Agamemnon* a foreign war leads to resentment against the Atreidae (448-50). The people's talk becomes fraught with anger, which serves as the payment of a debt exacted by those of the δῆμος who had cursed the expedition (456-57). As Fraenkel says, "this is the first step towards revolt."<sup>56</sup> That *Agamemnon* has to respect the voice of the δῆμος is attested in the "carpet scene" when he says (938):

φήμη γε μέντοι δημόθρους μέγα σθένει.

[Yet gossip, voiced by the people, has great power].

Earlier in the same *epeisodion* Clytemnestra justifies to *Agamemnon* the absence of *Orestes* on the ground that, with the king in danger at Troy, the anarchy of popular clamour might overthrow the council (883-5):

εἴ τε δημόθρους ἀναρχία  
 βουλήν καταρριψέειν, ὥς τι σύγγονον  
 βροτοῖσι τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον.  
 [and in case the anarchy of popular clamour  
 should overthrow the council, since it is  
 inborn in men to kick a man more when he  
 is down.]



The words, δημόθρους ἀναρχία βουλὴν καταρρίψειεν, are surprising in the context, since we have not heard of any council ruling during Agamemnon's absence. Some scholars, therefore, have resorted to unlikely expedients in an attempt to explain away the natural meaning of the words.<sup>57</sup> But the words do strike a note in terms of contemporary Athenian politics. During the absence of Cimon, the *dêmos* had taken the opportunity to destroy the powers of the *boulê* on the Areopagus. The expedition, we know, was unpopular in certain quarters and Cimon was ostracized after his return. At Argos the danger to the polis will arise not simply from the anarchy of popular clamour but more from the forces of tyranny. These two extremes, tyranny and anarchy, are precisely the ones that Athena and the Erinyes issue a warning against in the *Eumenides*. At Argos, however, as events will show, the weakness of the *boulê* will mean that there is no safeguard against the aspiring tyrant.

But is there a *boulê* at Argos and, if so, who constitute it? A not uncommon view in the past, generally discarded nowadays, was that the Chorus of Elders formed a *boulê*.<sup>58</sup> There seems to me some reason for reviving this view. We should remember that the Areopagus traditionally functioned both as a *boulê* and as a court of law. In the *Eumenides* the twelve members of the Areopagus deliver a verdict in the case of Orestes. As a result of the persuasion of Athena the Erinyes are induced to accept that verdict and are restrained from inflicting civil discord on her citizens. Neither the forces of anarchy nor tyranny prevail. At Argos, however, when the Chorus of Elders hears the death-cries of the king, it behaves very much in the manner of a *boulê* (cf., esp., 1347; 1358; 1359). It is a unique feature of this Chorus, unparalleled in Greek tragedy, that each member of the Chorus in an iambic scene has twelve individual speaking parts in the form of twelve separate distichs. Like the twelve members of the Areopagus, it delivers twelve opinions, but these twelve opinions are just talk. The Chorus has no real power and it does not reach any concrete verdict. Later, acting somewhat in the manner of a people's court, it will try to condemn both Clytemnestra (1410-14; cf. also, 1420-21) and Aegisthus (1615-16). But its verdict is ineffective and it finds itself swept away in the civil conflict that ensues. In the way in which Aeschylus has handled the dramatic issues in the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephoroi*

is there not, perhaps, some foreshadowing and even forewarning of the political issues he will treat in the *Eumenides*? Could it be that he is trying to say that an effete council that has been weakened by the anarchy of popular clamour can lead to the danger of the opposing extreme of tyranny?

If the line of argument that I have followed in this paper is correct, Aeschylus presents in the *Oresteia* a defence of the powers of the Areopagus, which is to be conceived not simply as a homicide court, but as Athens' main security against the extremes of the anarchy of the *dêmos*, on the one hand, and of tyranny, on the other. But how exactly does the trilogy relate to the reforms of the Areopagus in 462/1 B.C.? If the Areopagus had lost jurisdiction over cases of tyranny in that year, was it not a futile gesture to produce a play in 458 B.C., pleading against what was already a *fait accompli*?

A definitive answer to these questions is undoubtedly impossible unless further historical evidence comes to light. A number of tentative guesses, however, can be made. It is possibly wrong to think that all the powers of the Areopagus were removed on a single occasion. The policy of stripping the Areopagus of its powers began in 462/1 B.C. under Ephialtes. Since he was assassinated soon afterwards, probably as a result of his radical measures, there may have been a natural inclination in the popular mind to associate all the reforms that took place in respect of the Areopagus with the policy that he had instituted. Quite possibly, however, some measures in this regard were introduced later by Pericles, whose name is associated with Ephialtes' reforms in some of our sources<sup>59</sup> and who became the leader of the *dêmos* after Ephialtes' death. It is interesting to note that in the *Athênaiôn Politeia* the part that Pericles is supposed to have played in the reforms of the Areopagus is treated independently from that of Ephialtes, and the two names are not linked. At the same time, the sentence in which Pericles' role in the reforms is referred to also mentions the role that he played in turning Athens' aspirations towards her sea-power, which, as the following sentence emphasizes, gave the masses greater control of the state.<sup>60</sup> The building of the long walls, begun in 457 B.C., was a natural outcome of this policy and led to a plot by "a few desperate oligarchs," as Gomme calls them,<sup>61</sup> to put an end to the democracy. At the time of the *Oresteia*, then, the danger of

tyranny was a threat and had quite possibly been there since Ephialtes' reforms and Cimon's banishment.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, we also know that not all tampering with the Areopagus had finished in 458 B.C., when the *Oresteia* was produced. As the *Athênaiôn Politeia* also informs us, the *zeugitai* were admitted to the office of archon in 457 B.C., and, therefore, to membership of the Areopagus.<sup>63</sup> Those lines in the *Eumenides*, which have excited so much controversy, would certainly support the view that the Areopagus had not yet lost all its political power but was in imminent danger of a new attack (693-7):

αὐτῶν πολιτῶν μὴ ῥικαινούντων νόμους·  
κακαῖς ἐπιρροαῖσι βορβόρω θ' ὕδωρ  
λαμπρὸν μιαίνων οὖποθ' εὐρήσεις ποτόν.  
τὸ μήτ' ἀναρχον μήτε δεσποτούμενον  
ἀστοῖς περιστέλλουσι βουλεύω σέβειν.

[provided that the citizens themselves do not make innovations upon the laws. If you pollute clear water with foul influxes and mud, you will never find it drinkable. I counsel my citizens to maintain and reverence neither anarchy nor despotism.]

In sum, I suggest that at the time of the production of the *Oresteia*, when anarchy and tyranny were a very real threat to Athens, the Areopagus still had jurisdiction over cases of tyranny. Having shown in the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephoroi* the consequences of an ineffective *boulê*, Aeschylus, through the mouth of Athena, the guardian deity of Athens, pleads passionately on behalf of the *boulê* on the Areopagus, since it is the only institution with sufficient authority to prevent the dangers which, as Aeschylus sees it, are confronting Athens.<sup>64</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Ath. Pol.* 24.2; 27.1; 35.2; *Arist. Pol.* 2.9.3; *Plut. Cim.* 15.2; *Per.* 9.4; *Dio. Sic.* 11.77.6.

<sup>2</sup> *Thuc.* 1.102; *Plut. Cim.* 14-17; *Paus.* 4.24. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Plut. Cim.* 17.2; *Per.* 9.4-10.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ath. Pol.* 25.4; *Plut. Per.* 10.7; *Diod. Sic.* 11.77.6.

<sup>5</sup> "The Problem of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus," *JHS* 45 (1925) 125.

<sup>6</sup> For the background of these problems and references to the main works that have been written on this subject see A.J. Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (Ann Arbor 1966) 63-100; 168-76.

<sup>7</sup> "The Political Aspect of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*," *JHS* 77 (1957) 230.

<sup>8</sup> "Morals and Politics in the *Oresteia*," *PCPhS* N.S.6 (1960) 19. Dodds acknowledges the existence of political vocabulary in the earlier part of the trilogy, but suggests that "these things are no more than straws in the wind" (20). B. Daube, *Zu den Rechtsproblemen in Aischylos' Agamemnon* (Zürich and Leipzig 1938), esp. 48-63, discusses much of the political terminology, and my discussion is indebted to this. M. Gagarin, *Aeschylean Drama* (California 1976) does try to relate the political issues of the *Eumenides* to the earlier part of the trilogy, but his discussion is of a rather general nature except as it relates to the sexual politics of the *Oresteia*. F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* IIIb Suppl.i 25, writes, "Personally I have no serious doubt that Aischylos (to put it roughly) wrote his trilogy because of the Areopagus; that he composed his poem under the influence and because of (to use a neutral term) the reform of 462/1 B.C." He may well be right, but I cannot agree with him that Aeschylus "defends the democratic restriction of the Old Council to jurisdiction in cases of homicide."

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Podlecki, (at n. 6) 82 and 171 n. 19.

<sup>10</sup> See, however, Dodds (at n. 8) 20, who touches upon this point but does not really develop it, and Daube, loc. cit. (n. 8).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., *Ch.* 267; 377; 658; 689; 770; 875. Daube, op. cit. 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Rhet.* 1.8.4. See, also, *Thuc.* 1.13; *Arist. Pol.* 3.9.4-5.

<sup>13</sup> *Herod.* 6.107.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the cult in honour of Harmodius and Aristogiton see Podlecki, "The Political Significance of the Athenian Tyrannicide-Cult," *Historia* 15 (1966) 129-41.

<sup>15</sup> See Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* 105-09 and 177 n. 17, where the reader will find references to G. Thomson's collection of the relevant data. On the later part of the 5th century see also, Gomme, Andrews, Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides IV* (Oxford 1970) 323.

<sup>16</sup> I am assuming, as is generally accepted nowadays, that the *Oresteia* pre-dates the *Prometheus Bound*, especially in view of M. Griffith's *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1977), whose conclusions have been widely accepted. See, however, D.J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound: A Literary Commentary* (Toronto 1980) 141-74, who voices some reservations but still accepts a late date.

<sup>17</sup> All quotations from the *Oresteia*, whether translated or in the original, as well as line references, are derived from Sir Denys Page's *Aeschyli Tragoediae* (Oxford 1972).

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus, Agamemnon III* (Oxford 1950) 638. In the following notes I shall simply refer to Fraenkel's edition by his name only.

<sup>19</sup> See Fraenkel III, 642-44 and H. Lloyd-Jones, *Agamemnon by Aeschylus, translation with commentary* (New Jersey 1970) 89.

<sup>20</sup> I cannot agree with R.P. Winnington-Ingram, "Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1343-71," *CQ N.S.* 4 (1954) 23-30, who tries to explain the Chorus' actions in these lines through an examination of its characterization in the earlier part of the play.

<sup>21</sup> I shall return to this unique feature of the Chorus later in this paper, p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> See Fraenkel III 636. For some examples see Thuc. 8.68; Lys. Or. 20, 7; Ar. Eq. 268.

<sup>23</sup> *Eum.* 597; 630; 675; 680; 709; 735; 748; 751. Cf., also, *isopsêphos*, 741. The word *psêphos* occurs frequently in the *Suppliants*, where prominence is given to the power of the *dêmos*.

<sup>24</sup> For some excellent comments on this aspect of the Chorus see B. Knox, "Aeschylus and the Third Actor," *AJP* 93 (1972) 117 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Daube (at n. 8) 45-46 writes, "Als der Chor die Todesrufe Agamemnon's hört, wird er aktiver. Er will beraten, und ein Teil will die Bürger zum Kampf aufrufen (1349), er verurteilt die Tat der Mörder und droht mit vom Volk zu vollziehenden Strafen (1410, 1615 f.). Hier stützt sich die βουλή auf den δῆμος."

<sup>26</sup> Fraenkel, III 666, writes "that the old men should sit as a court and pass judgement on her is for Clytemnestra a piece of provocation, more intolerable than anything else, because she has insisted again and again on her incontrovertible claim to justice and on the justification of her deed."

<sup>27</sup> For Aegisthus' characterization see G. Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens* (2nd ed., London 1946) 264.

<sup>28</sup> I follow O. Taplin on this point, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 329 n. 1: "The henchmen, like most 'spear carriers' probably entered with their master, rather than on summons at 1649 ff."

<sup>29</sup> Fraenkel III 781-84. I have only summarized the main objections. Readers should consult Fraenkel for a detailed history of the problem.

<sup>30</sup> See J.D. Denniston and D. Page, *Aeschylus Agamemnon* (Oxford 1957) 220-21. Lloyd-Jones in his translation follows Page's distribution. For some recent different solutions, with which I do not agree, see G. Wills, "Agamemnon 1346-71, 1649-53," *HSCP* 67 (1963) 262-64 and D. Young, "Gentler Medicines in the Agamemnon," *CQ* N.S. 14 (1964) 21-23.

<sup>31</sup> See, in addition to *Ch.* 768, *Soph. Oed. Tyr.* 751; *Xen. Cyr.* 2.2.7; *Anab.* 6.6.7; *Plut. Arist.* 17.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. εὐτρεπίζωμεν, εὐτρεπίζώμεθα, εὐτρεπίζώμεθ', or an aorist equivalent.

<sup>33</sup> There would be nothing to stop a few supernumeraries, representing Argive citizens, from appearing from one or both of the *parodoi* and being kept back by Aegisthus' guards.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Fraenkel III 804. See, also, Taplin, (at n. 28) 331-32 and the same writer's *Greek Tragedy in Action* (London 1978) 35, where he writes "It is possible that some closing lines have been lost from *Agam.* but, assuming they have not, this silent dispersal must show their dejected, yet hostile, subordination to Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. To some extent they represent the city as a whole which suffers a humiliation by

the *regicide*" [my italics].

<sup>35</sup> With Lloyd-Jones, *The Libation Bearers by Aeschylus: a translation with commentary* (New Jersey 1970) 42, I take τούτω in line 583 to refer to Agamemnon, though there are other possible interpretations.

<sup>36</sup> For φίλος in this sense see e.g. *Ath. Pol.* 21.3; *Xen. Hell.* 6, 5.48; *Dem. Or.* 9.12. See, also, Liddell, Scott, Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1940) s.v. ἔχθρός III.

<sup>37</sup> Lloyd-Jones' translation (at n. 35) 13. See the *Scholiast* for the meaning of this passage.

<sup>38</sup> See Liddell, Scott, Jones (at n. 36) s.v. ἀπίστημι, B. 2 for examples.

<sup>39</sup> See 121; 123; 160-3; 267-8; 312-3; 386-8; 400-5; 649-51; 789-93; 855-68.

<sup>40</sup> On this question I am inclined to accept A.W. Verrall's idea, *The Choephoroi of Aeschylus* (London 1893) 151, "As Orestes gazes at the slave-women (who are probably the only female figures upon the scene) they take to his diseased eye the form and garb of the Erinnyes." Verrall's view receives some support from A. Lebeck, *The Oresteia: A Study in Language and Structure* (Washington 1971) 194 n. 5.

<sup>41</sup> It is generally assumed from this passage that the Libation Bearers are foreign slave women, but it is not essential for the plot to hold this view. What is important is that they are slave women.

<sup>42</sup> I, thus, believe that there is a more important political dimension to this Chorus than is often supposed. A number of critics have treated the Chorus of Libation Bearers solely in terms of their relationship to the *oikos* theme, e.g. J. Jones, *Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London 1962) 142-43; R.W.B. Burton, *The Chorus in Sophocles' Tragedies* (Oxford 1980) 186-87.

<sup>43</sup> For the role of Delphi see Jacoby (at n. 8) IIIb Suppl. ii.24-26.

<sup>44</sup> See Fraenkel II. 39. It is interesting to note that in the four choral odes in which the Erinyes are mentioned, a statement about the Trojan War becomes, with the appearance of the Erinyes, a statement about the house of the Atreidae and/or Argos.

<sup>45</sup> Lloyd-Jones' translation, *The Eumenides by Aeschylus: a translation with commentary* (New Jersey 1970) 43.

46 Thuc. 1.102.1; Plut. *Cim.* 16. Diod. Sic. 11.64.2. Ar. *Lys.* 1143.

47 See nn. 1 - 4 for sources.

48 *Ath. Pol.* 27.1.

49 Thuc. 1.107.1

50 Thuc. 1.107.4

51 Dodds (at n. 8) 22.

52 *Ath. Pol.* 8.4. See P.J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* (Oxford 1972)

162, for a discussion of this passage and its wording.

53 D.M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (London 1978) 28.

See Plut. *Sol.* 19.4.

54 Rhodes (at n. 52) 199-207. The main thrust of his argument is

that there is "no clear evidence that Cleithenes showed any interest in the Areopagus" (200), whereas the evidence is clear in connecting Ephialtes with the reform of the Areopagus.

55 Dodds (at n. 8) 20.

56 Fraenkel II. 234.

57 See Fraenkel II. 397-401 for a discussion of the problem.

Fraenkel's unnatural interpretation of the words is rightly rejected by Denniston-Page (at n. 30) 146. See, also, Dodds (at n. 8) 20.

58 For references see Fraenkel II. 398. Daube (at n. 8) 45 ff., among more recent scholars, holds the view that the Chorus represents a council.

59 Plut. *Per.* 9.4; Arist. *Pol.* 2.9.3.

60 *Ath. Pol.* 27.1 Podlecki (at n. 6) 97, "Where the author [of the *Athênaiôn Politeia*] found a secure date for one of Pericles' measures, he recorded it, as with the citizenship law of 451 (26.4); otherwise, the measure was simply mentioned in a catch-all chapter like 27. Although this absence of a chronological frame makes it illegitimate to argue that the *Constitution of Athens* dated this attack of Pericles on the Areopagus after Ephialtes' reforms, which are discussed in Chapter 25, the fact that the treatise did not associate Pericles' name with the reforms of 462/1 suggests that this was an entirely different stage in the 'democratization' of the state. Pericles' absence from the Ephialtic context is important and has not been sufficiently emphasized; the later and more usual tradition, as recorded in the *Politics* and Plutarch, invariably mentioned



Pericles and Ephialtes in the same breath. Equally significant in this connection is the *Constitution of Athens*' latest reference to 'the laws of Ephialtes and Arcestratus' without any mention of Pericles (35.2)." In view of what Podlecki writes, one wonders what he finds illegitimate about separating the role of Pericles from that of Ephialtes in the reform of the Areopagus.

<sup>61</sup> *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides I* (Oxford 1959) 314. For other hints of treachery in addition to Thucydides' statement at 1.107.4 see Plut. *Cim.* 17.4.

<sup>62</sup> See *Ath. Pol.* 25. 3-4. Although the account here is confused, since Themistocles is mentioned, who otherwise has no place in these events, nevertheless it is not impossible that rumours of a plot to overthrow the power of the people were rife during this era.

<sup>63</sup> *Ath. Pol.* 26.2.

<sup>64</sup> On the relationship of the Argive alliance and the reforms of the Areopagus, I have nothing to add to what Lloyd-Jones (at n. 45) 76, has already written: "Most of those who hold that Aeschylus looked with favor on the Areopagus reforms assume that a poet who complimented Argos and her alliance must also have sympathized with the views in domestic politics of those who were responsible for the Argive connection. But it does not follow that a poet who makes a polite mention of an ally must necessarily share the attitude in internal matters of those who have promoted the alliance. Organized political parties in the modern sense did not exist in ancient Athens, and at this time the case for abandoning the old friendship with Sparta and contracting one with Argos was strong; it must have appealed to many Athenians who disagreed with the policies of its chief advocates but were capable of seeing the strong arguments in terms of national self-interest that could be urged in favour of this measure."