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THUCYDIDES 2,37,1: A RE-CONSIDERATION

καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία
κέκληται· μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι
τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ εὐδοκιμῆι οὐκ ἀπὸ
μέρους τὸ πλεόν ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ' αὖ κατὰ
πενίαν, ἔχων γέ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιώματος ἀφανεία
κεκάλυται. (OCT)

I argued in a recent article in this journal¹ (a) that the phrase διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν means 'on account of our involving not few but many'; (b) that neither of the current interpretations of the phrase ἀπὸ μέρους ('on the basis of class' / 'by rotation') is satisfactory. On both points my view remains the same; but the explanation of ἀπὸ μέρους I proposed (μέρους means 'share', the share in question being the right of *ισηγορία*) I have come to believe incorrect. I now suggest re-punctuation, with a comma not after εὐδοκιμῆι but before προτιμᾶται, thus: κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ εὐδοκιμῆι οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλεόν ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς, προτιμᾶται, ... The word μέρους here does indeed have the meaning 'share'; the share in question, however, is the relative size of an individual's liturgic contribution: what Pericles is saying is that in respect of public esteem, individuals enjoy preferment (sc. to public office) in accordance with the distinction they win as liturgists² (ἐν τῷ acknowledging the existence of different types of liturgy) – such distinction depending less upon the size of an individual's liturgic contribution than the spirit in which it is made.³ Further, I now take μὲν in κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους as balancing, not concessive: Athens' πολιτεία involves both

1) Richard Winton, Thucydides 2,37,1: Pericles on Athenian Democracy, *RhM* 147 (2004) 26–34 (with bibliography).

2) James A. Andrews, Pericles on the Athenian Constitution (Thuc. 2.37), *AJP* 125 (2004) 539–561, the most recent discussion of this passage known to me, sees the relevance of liturgies: "It is the rich who, through liturgies and such, are most able to prove their public worth, and, based on that record of public service, receive superior public honors." (549) Andrews shares my doubts as to both current interpretations of the phrase ἀπὸ μέρους; his solution (which assumes the received punctuation) is similar to the one I here retract.

3) On this distinction see recently Peter Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia* (Cambridge 2000), 172 ff., and N. Fisher, 'Let envy be absent': envy, liturgies and reciprocity in Athens, in: D. Konstan and N. K. Rutter, ed., *Envy, Spite and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh 2003), 181–215; and, for a classic deployment, Demosthenes, or.21 (*Against Meidias*).

ἰσονομία and ἀριστοκρατία (note τὸ ἴσον and ἀπ' ἀρετῆς, both emphasized by their position – on the re-punctuation proposed – at the end of a clause); and the phrase τὰ ἴδια διάφορα to refer to differences of wealth and reputation – as regards the law all Athenians, rich or poor, eminent or lowly, have equal political rights.⁴ However, Pericles continues, some enjoy higher standing than others, by virtue of their public-spirited contributions to the commonweal, such public-spiritedness being recognized by preferment to public office. – Not, Pericles immediately adds, that poverty and the obscurity that goes with it is a bar to contributing to the public good: ἰσηγορία – I take his point here indeed to be⁵ – is a reality at Athens.

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4) This slightly modifies the discussion in my previous article (n. 1 above) 33 f.

5) Cp. my previous article (n. 1 above) 33 with n. 25.