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ALCIBIADES THE DESERTER: P. OXY. III 411 COL. IV. 98

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## ALCIBIADES THE DESERTER: P. OXY. III 411 COL. IV. 98

P. Oxy. III 411 is a parchment fragment of a biography of Alcibiades which covers the period from the mutilation of the Herms until his arrival in Sparta in 413 BCE (Pack<sup>2</sup> 2077).<sup>1</sup> Because of the use of ἐξορχήσασθαι τὰ μυκτήρια (lines 25-6), a phrase unattested before Lucian, the editors have dated this biography to the first or second century of this era. The fragment provides an interesting comparison with Plutarch's *Alcibiades*, particularly the following passage, for which I propose a change in the restoration of line 98:

Col. IV	95	κε[ . . . . . Θου]ρίων
	96	κάκειθ[ε]ν [ἀπ]οδράς εἰς [Πε]λοπόννησον ἔπλευ- [σε]ν αὐτόμ[ολο]ς πρὸς [Λ]ακεδαιμονί[ι]ους καὶ
	100	παρ' ἐκ[ε]ῖνοις ἐδ[η]μη- γόρησεν ὕστερον τῶν κακῶν ὧν εἰρ- γάσατο τὴν Πελοπό-
	104	νησον

98 αὐτόμ[ατο]ς edd.

The original publication translates line 98 as “voluntarily surrendering himself” to the Lacedaemonians. It makes more sense from the point of view of idiom and context for the author to say that Alcibiades is a “deserter” (αὐτόμ[ολο]ς) to the Lacedaemonians. The overwhelmingly preferred usage of αὐτόματος is impersonal as ἀπ' αὐτομάτου or τὸ αὐτόματον.<sup>2</sup>

In addition it is geographically difficult and grammatically unlikely that πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους is governed by ἔπλευσεν. The prose authors listed in note 2 use πλέω, καταπλέω, διαπλέω, and ἀποπλέω in combination with πρὸς governing a person in accusative about 20 times. In all cases, πρὸς represents motion towards, with friendly or unfriendly intent. However, the object of πρὸς is, with only one exception, a single individual and is never a collective group or city.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the expression πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους is never used to express motion. The same prose authors use this expression about 80 times, mainly to express a hostile or friendly relation.<sup>4</sup> The 40 uses of the expression πρὸς τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους (with the article) include verbs of sending but never have a verb of motion; again they mainly are used for making or breaking alliances.

What then is the meaning of πρὸς in this passage? It seems likely that it should be read together with the word immediately before it. The authors listed above (n. 2) never use αὐτόματος or αὐτόμολος in conjunction with πρὸς, but Plutarch provides a comparandum for αὐτομολῶ and πρὸς: αὐτομολοῦντα πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους (Plut. *Alexander* 24.7).

<sup>1</sup> I thank David Martinez for his generous and helpful critique of an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> According to a TLG search of representative prose authors, αὐτόματος is never used impersonally in the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Arrian, Appian, or Cassius Dio. It is so used twice by Diodorus, four times by Plutarch, and once by Aristides. The same authors use αὐτόματος impersonally and in connection with inanimate objects 76 times and αὐτόμολος in the sense of “deserter” 138 times.

<sup>3</sup> The exception is Diodorus 13.41.4: Ἀλκιβιάδης---κατέπλευσε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Σάμῳ διατρίβοντας.

<sup>4</sup> It is used 31 times for war against the Lacedaimonians, 24 times for treaties or alliances with the Lacedaimonians, 14 times for sending messengers and, rarely, money to them, 7 times for partisan feelings for or against them, 6 times for some other relationships towards them, and 5 times for speeches directed to them. The figures add up to more than 80 because in some contexts the phrase is used ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, e.g., Diodorus 12.5.2: πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους διαπρεβευσάμενοι συμμαχίαν ἐποίησαν; cf. 12.80.5; 14.54.2; 15.9.4; Thucydides 5.37: καὶ πολεμεῖν καὶ σπένδεσθαι καὶ πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους.

The combination of αὐτόμολος with ἀποδράς in the fragment serves a clear purpose and is by no means redundant. The same combination appears in a sentence in Plutarch, which may have been taken from Polybius: ἀποδράς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ Κρής αὐτόμολος ἦκε μηνῶν τὴν περίοδον τῶν Ῥωμαίων. (Plut. *Aemilius Paullus*, 16.1 [Polybius 29.15.1]).

If we accept αὐτόμολος as the likeliest reconstruction, how does this affect our understanding of the text? The term is stronger than φύγας or ἀποδράς, in that it implies not merely fleeing but voluntary aid to the enemies. While no other source labels Alcibiades an αὐτόμολος, many sources refer to Alcibiades' military activities against his homeland.

Thucydides discusses Alcibiades' operational work against the Athenians, specifically at 8.11-17, and 8.26.3 where he explicitly states that Alcibiades fought in the battle of Miletus: παρῆν γὰρ ὁ Ἄλκιβιάδης καὶ ξυνεμάχετο τοῖς Μιλησίοις καὶ Τισσαφέρνει. If Alcibiades fought with the Milesians in this battle, he would have been arrayed against the Argives, while if he was with Tissaphernes he went to battle with the Spartans against the Athenians themselves. Thucydides' wording leaves it ambiguous as to whether the renegade actually raised arms against his countrymen, and at this point of the narrative he may have fought either by the side of the Spartans or the Milesians.<sup>5</sup>

Alcibiades' contemporaries used more straightforward language than Thucydides: in Lysias 14.30, Alcibiades is accused of fighting against Athens.<sup>6</sup> This tradition continued in Diodorus' histories. According to Diodorus, Alcibiades and Agis led the Spartan invasion of Attica (13.9.2), fought with the Spartans in general (συνεπολέμησε 13.37.2), and aided the Ionian campaign (τούτου συναγωνιζομένου 13.68.6). He even includes a speech of Alcibiades where he tearfully says he was forced to fight personally: ὁμοίως καὶ τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀπολογησάμενος, καὶ πολλὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δακρύσας τύχην, ὅτι τὴν ἰδίαν ἀρετὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἠνάγκαται κατὰ τῆς πατρίδος ἐνδείξασθαι (13.41.5).

These authors do more than just mention Alcibiades' military and strategic efforts against his homeland. It seems that Alcibiades' questionable loyalty to Athens was a critical issue both to his contemporaries and to later writers. At the beginning of Alcibiades' sojourn in Sparta, Thucydides has him defend the morality of defecting to a hostile country at some length (6.92.2-4).<sup>7</sup> In the process Alcibiades redefines fatherland and patriotism.: τό τε φιλόπολι οὐκ ἐν ᾧ ἀδικοῦμαι ἔχω, ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ ἀσφαλῶς ἐπολιτεύθην. οὐδ' ἐπὶ πατρίδα οὐκ ἔτι ἠγοῦμαι νῦν ἰέναι, πολὺ δὲ μάλλον τὴν οὐκ οὐκ ἀνακτᾶσθαι. Thucydides clearly felt that for Alcibiades τὰ δέοντα entailed an obligatory explanation for appealing to the Spartans in his hour of need. Thucydides' representation of Alcibiades' special pleading was considered important enough to merit inclusion in Nepos' account (*Alcibiades* 4.6):

Lacedaemonem demigravit, ibi, ut ipse praedicare consuerat, non aduersus patriam, sed inimicos suos bellum gessit, qui iidem hostes essent civitati; nam cum intelligerent se plurimum prodesse posse rei publicae, ex ea eiecisse plusque irae suae quam utilitati communi paruisse.<sup>8</sup>

Other contemporaries and near-contemporaries of Alcibiades made patriotism the center of their evaluation of him. Aristophanes makes the playwrights' attitude towards Alcibiades the deciding factor in choosing between Euripides and Aeschylus. Euripides' answer, (*Frogs* 1427-9), raises the question of

<sup>5</sup> Bloedow, *Alcibiades Reexamined*, Hermes Einzelschriften, Heft 21 (Wiesbaden 1973) 29 states with certainty that Alcibiades fought with Tissaphernes and therefore with the Milesians. However, Thucydides' description of the battle in 8.25.4 suggests that Tissaphernes, his mercenaries, and his cavalry, were defeated with the Spartans (τοὺς βαρβάρους καὶ τὸν ἄλλον ὄχλον).

<sup>6</sup> Ἄλκιβιάδου ὅς ἐπεισε μὲν Δεκέλειαν Λακεδαιμονίους ἐπιτείχισαι, ἐπὶ δὲ τὰς νήσους ἀποστήσων ἔπλευσε, διδάσκαλος δὲ τῶν τῆς πόλεως κακῶν ἐγένετο, πλεονάκις δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐπὶ τὴν πατρίδα ἐστρατεύεσθαι ἢ μετὰ τῶν πολιτῶν ἐπ' ἐκείνους.

<sup>7</sup> Admirably discussed in Steven Forde, *The Ambition to Rule: Alcibiades and the Politics of Imperialism in Thucydides* (Ithaca 1989) 105-8.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps Nepos is thinking of Caesar's own use of *inimicitiae* to justify attacks on the *res publica*. See Caesar *BC* 1.22, *se non maleficii causa ex provincia egressum, sed uti se a contumeliis inimicorum defenderet*; K. Raaflaub, *Dignitatis Contentio* (Munich 1974) 113-125.

Alcibiades' loyalty to Athens and is not rebutted. In a speech composed for Alcibiades' son, Isocrates defends Alcibiades' actions during exile, first by comparing it with the actions of the exiles at Phyle under the Thirty (Isocrates 16 [*De Bigis*]. 12-14), then by using an argument essentially identical to that made by Alcibiades in Thucydides (Isocrates 16.16):

οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἔχοντας τὴν πόλιν ἐχθροὺς ἐνόμιζον μᾶλλον ἢ Λακεδαιμονίους, οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἐκ Δεκελείας μετεπέμποντο, ἡγούμενοι κρεῖττον εἶναι τοῖς πολεμίοις τὴν πατρίδα παραδοῦναι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως στρατευομένοις τῆς πολιτείας μεταδοῦναι.

Lysias' speech for the prosecution addresses these issues as well. Lysias 14.30-38 is a polemic against Alcibiades' career, particularly his Spartan excursus. In chapter 30 it is alleged that on top of his advice about Decelea and Syracuse, he actually marched against his own country. In chapter 33 his actions are compared unfavorably with the actions of those who took Phyle, in that they used their exile to liberate Athens from foreigners instead of enslaving her. In chapter 38 Lysias argues that Alcibiades was far from being φιλόπολις, but preferred to be a citizen of Thrace or anywhere but Athens: ἀλλὰ φυγὴν αὐτοῦ καταγνοῦς καὶ Θράκης καὶ πάσης πόλεως ἐβούλετο πολίτης γενέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς πατρίδος εἶναι τῆς ἑαυτοῦ. This charge is found in Plutarch as well, where it is presented for what it in all likelihood really was, unsubstantiated character-assassination:

ἐνεκάλουν [sc. οἱ αὐτὸν μισούντες] δ' αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν τῶν τειχῶν κατασκευὴν, ἃ κατεσκεύαζεν ἐν Θράκῃ περὶ Βιάνθην ἑαυτῷ καταφυγὴν, ὡς ἐν τῇ πατρίδι μὴ δυνάμενος βιοῦν ἢ μὴ βουλόμενος. (*Alcibiades* 36.2)

All of these sources focus on Alcibiades' patriotism or lack thereof. They show us that in his own day Alcibiades' case was inextricably linked with questions of citizenship and the moral obligations of an exile.

A reading of ἀυτόμολος in the papyrus thus seems to conform to a long tradition of understanding and interpreting Alcibiades. The editors of the papyrus (Grenfell and Hunt p. 32) classify the overall tone of the fragment as being favorable to Alcibiades: "The sympathies of the writer were obviously on the side of Alcibiades." There is much to support this statement. The writer does not believe the charges against Alcibiades and labels his opponents κυκοφα[νται] (l. 65). He emphasizes Alcibiades' initial successes in Sicily (ll. 57-61) and the power of his advice in Sparta (ll. 115-120). However, the proposed restoration would temper this positive assessment of Alcibiades somewhat, as can be seen from an examination of the nearest comparable text: the *Alcibiades* of Plutarch.

Curiously, few of Alcibiades' activities against Athens find their way into Plutarch. The *Alcibiades* includes the advice for fortifying Decelea and for sending Gylippus, as well as a sentence referring to his Ionian exploits. All told, Alcibiades' years of collaboration and exile are ill-served by Plutarch's account. The difference in *moral* focus is clear when we compare Alcibiades' speech in Thucydides with Plutarch. At the point in his narrative when Alcibiades defects to Sparta, Plutarch states straightforwardly and simply: φοβούμενος δὲ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς καὶ παντάπασι τῆς πατρίδος ἀπεγνοκῶς, ἔπεμψεν εἰς Σπάρτην (*Alcibiades* 23.1). The personal enemies mentioned here are the only hint in Plutarch of the need to justify defection. He was apparently uninterested in what Thucydides and all other earlier sources considered the central issue of Alcibiades' moral life.

The reading of ἀυτόμολος in the papyrus provides an interesting comparandum for Plutarch's reception of the Alcibiades tradition. This unknown author of the imperial period presents an Alcibiades who openly deserts his native country, while Plutarch presents him as a man always true to his country, who even as an exile fights only to win her back (*Synkrisis* 2.5). The papyrus account is certainly favorable to Alcibiades as opposed to his accusers, but it presents a more ambivalent picture of his relations with Athens than that found in Plutarch's near contemporary account.