Democracy 2500?
Questions and Challenges

Edited by
Ian Morris and Kurt A. Raaflaub

With Contributions by
David Castriota
Walter Eder
Michael H. Jameson
Leslie Kurke
Ian Morris
Josiah Ober
Kurt A. Raaflaub
David B. Small
Barry S. Strauss
Robert W. Wallace

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Revolution Matters: Democracy as Demotic Action (A Response to Kurt A. Raaflaub)

Josiah Ober

Cleisthenes was a rhetor. (Philodemus de rhet. 3 = P. Herc. 1506 [Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 32 (1991): 366–68])

I could more easily have written an essay emphasizing those points of Kurt Raaflaub’s discussion of the “foundations of Athenian democracy” (Ch. 3) that I found convincing. The “questions and challenges” format invites us, however, to emphasize areas in which there is still significant disagreement. Our charge was to state our positions as boldly as possible so as to highlight those as-yet unresolved questions requiring further research and to clarify what is at stake—that is, what accepting or rejecting our several positions might entail for a broader understanding of the phenomenon of democracy. So here I respond to Raaflaub’s discussion of the origins of democracy in terms that are less balanced and nuanced than I would otherwise employ. Passing over our very broad areas of agreement, I have selectively emphasized what I see as the most important differences between our interpretations and approaches.

ANNIVERSARIES, PUBLIC PROGRAMS, AND HOOPLA

Among the concerns motivating this collection of essays, Democracy 2500? Questions and Challenges, is an uneasiness about the “fit” between Classical historical scholarship and large-scale public programs in the Classics (e.g., exhibitions, films, lecture series) designed to reach out to a broad lay audience. Some Classicists despise popularization in any form. While the contributors to this volume clearly do not share in that extreme position, some remain deeply uneasy about publicly commemorating any aspect of the Classical past. That unease is manifested in references (in the oral presentations from which these papers developed) to the “hoopla” associated with the anniversary. Anniversaries can imply genealogical relationships and Barry Strauss pointedly reminds us that every “genealogy is also an ideology” (Ch. 7).

For Classical scholars who are in principle willing to countenance public educational programs aimed at a popular audience, the question is quite rightly posed in terms of suitability. In this case, they ask whether there can be anything in the political history of an overtly patriarchal, militaristic, imperialistic, slave-owning society that justifies stirring the passions of the public with an expensive program paid for with (increasingly) scarce tax dollars? The question is made more pointed by a recognition that any public program will necessarily present a simplified history of Athenian democracy. That simplified history may in turn be used to buttress ideological claims to a Classical genealogy by modern partisans of government policy
I am sympathetic to these approaches and, having spent much of my career producing synchronic studies of relatively long (multi-generational) historical periods, I feel somewhat misplaced as a defender of the event as historical determinant. I am impressed by Morris’s arguments for deep structure and Raaflaub’s for democratic evolution. But here I will argue as forcefully and sharply as I can for the virtue and necessity of making qualitative judgments about historical causes. In the late twentieth century serious historians must and should be extremely sensitive to the complexity and problematic nature of arguments for causation. Discussion of causation is, however, intrinsic to the practice of historiography, and, to misquote George Orwell’s cynically hierarchical pigs, “Some historical causes are more equal than others.” While not attempting to deny that the achievement of democracy at Athens was a complex, long-term process with no single cause, I will argue for the priority and centrality of a single event in that process. And in so doing I will try to defend the legitimacy of the rather old-fashioned historical enterprise of trying to reconstruct who did what and why over a period of a few days on the basis of a close reading of literary sources.

This sort of approach to facts is, I repeat, overtly judgmental: it rejects the notion that all past events are equally worthy of our respectful attention—the positivist doctrine that Moses Finley scornfully used to call “the democracy of facts.” My argument will be for the hierarchical priority of a certain category of events in understanding the phenomenon Athenian democracy. I am not proposing that Greek historians abandon the study of long-duration processes—whether they are evolutionary, cyclical, or relatively static. But I do think that we should be willing to admit that some historical moments are especially important. We should embrace the possibility that there are identifiable moments of discontinuity in ancient Greek history, points of rupture between one system of doing things and understanding the world and
I try to avoid employing these three assumptions, which, for the sake of convenience, I will call the individualist, institutionalist, and foundationalist assumptions. My own approach to the history of Athenian democracy cares relatively little for the motivations of Cleisthenes (or Solon, Ephialtes, Pericles, or any other individual), since I do not think that democracy was "invented" or "discovered" by an individual. Next, while I acknowledge that institutions are important in that they allow for the stabilization of a new order of doing things and thus provide a basis for subsequent evolution, I regard institutional structures in general as second-order artifacts that arise and then evolve in response to first-order "epistemic" sociological or ideological shifts in the ways that people think, speak, and behave toward one another. And finally, I reject the notion that Athenian-style democracy was the product of or was dependent on a constitutional "foundation." Rather, I suppose that demokratia was pragmatic (in the sense of the term as it was used by John Dewey and other philosophical pragmatists; cf. Morris, Ch. 12): originally a product of action by a mass of citizens and subsequently maintained by (and existing in and consisting of) the ongoing set of decisions, actions, and common practices performed by the citizenry (Dewey 1954; cf. Rorty 1982; C. West 1989). What I am seeking in this apologia for "Democracy 2500" is the event that crystallized the epistemic shift and thereby entailed the creation of institutions capable of framing and giving substance to a dramatically new understanding of society.

There are many stories one might tell about Athens in the year of the archonship of Isagoras. The traditional story, often told by modern scholars, emphasizes elite personalities and inter-elite conflicts and sees the democratic reforms as the gift (whether altruistic or self-interested) of the Athenian elite to the commoners. But my story about 508/7, which I tell in greater detail elsewhere (Ober 1993a), is that of a revolution without leadership in the traditional sense. In this story it is not Cleis-
Cleisthenes but the Athenian demos (qua citizen body) that is the protagonist. As a rhetor, Cleisthenes plays an important supporting role in this story, but he is not the leading man. I regard the year 508/7 as important—indeed worth commemorating and maybe even worth celebrating—because (borrowing concepts and imagery from Hannah Arendt [1959; 1968] and Sheldon Wolin [1994; 1996]) it marks the moment at which the demos stepped onto the historical stage as actor in its own right and under its own name. To make this sort of claim is, I recognize, to lay myself open to Raaflaub's cogent criticism of "monocausality." But I do not wish to claim that the revolution of 508/7 caused democracy in the strong sense of being both a necessary and sufficient condition. The revolution (or a similarly revolutionary moment of "stepping out") was, I think, a necessary condition in that it made the overt rule of the people possible. And I think that the energy released by the revolution was an important factor in Athens's evolution to full democracy (in Raaflaub's sense) in the course of the fifth century. But in and of itself the revolution was certainly not sufficient to create the complex and sophisticated body of institutions that Raaflaub argues defines democracy "in the full sense of the word" (Ch. 3).

Moreover, the transgressive (Wolin again), episteme-shattering-and-creating moment of revolution certainly did not come about accidentally or by magic; it required a long prior history of volatile mass-elite relations and a relatively highly evolved demotic self-consciousness (see, in general, Morris 1996b; Ober 1989: ch. 2). In order to tell a fuller story about what conditions enabled the revolution of 508/7, one might well attempt to incorporate the work of, among others, Morris (in preparation) on eighth-century egalitarianism, Leslie Kurke (1992) and Morris (1996b) on Archaic attitudes toward habrosune and the metrios, and Victor Hanson (1995; 1996) on the conjoined evolution of Greek agriculture, hoplite warfare, and republican politics. This background should help us better understand the reaction of the Athenian non-elite to the oppressive social order that seems to have formed in Attica by 594. Then one could bring in Brook Manville's (1990) work on Solon and the "origins of citizenship," and Robert Wallace's definition (Ch. 2) of "Solonian democracy," and Walter Eber's (1988) study of the development of "civilian self-consciousness" under the Pisistratid tyranny. This background can help us understand why it was that the Athenian demos was ready and willing to act as a collectivity in response to the offensive actions of Isagoras and Cleomenes on the one hand, and to the resistance offered by the Athenian boule on the other. And yet deep background can take us only so far; there must be a moment when potential energy is released as kinetic energy—when possibilities become realities. In the history of Athenian democracy that moment occurs while Cleisthenes is in exile and when (to repeat the metaphor) the demos steps out onto the historical stage as actor to besiege Isagoras and his Spartan minions on the Acropolis. Revolutionary action is important in my story because (whether or not the word demokratia was used in the immediate aftermath of 508/7) it made democracy possible by changing the terms of discussion, by enlarging the bounds of the thinkable, and by altering the way citizens treated one another.

But, as Raaflaub rightly points out, to say that an event made democracy possible requires us to define what we mean by democracy. Raaflaub's solution is to examine the institutional practices prevalent between about 461 and 411. He points out that contemporary writers said this way of doing things was democracy. And thus he defines ancient democracy in terms of the institutional arrangements of about 461-411, rejecting both modern and Aristotelian alternatives in favor of this "contemporary" vision of what ancient democracy really was. It is important to note that Raaflaub's approach to the issue necessarily gives a specifically institutional focus to his discussion and his definition of democracy. In so doing it aprioristically eliminates any period before the establishment of the full institutional matrix as truly "demo-
Raflaub's argument is circular insofar as it defines democracy as embodied in the specific institutional arrangements of about 461-411 and then answers the question "When did Athens become democratic?" with "461-411." My point is that the institutional matrix defined by Raflaub is not "the ancient" definition of democracy. That matrix is indeed what democratic government had become by the mid-to-late fifth century and was certainly important to the ways in which an Athenian of that time would think and speak about democracy. But, unless we say that the search for the origin of democracy is a purely philological matter—that is, we have found democracy when we have found the earliest use of the word (or a close paraphrase) in our sources—the question of when remains more open than Raflaub's discussion might seem to imply.

My preferred alternative is to look at the root meaning of the compound word demokratia and the ideals that are exemplified in philo-democratic writing (and parodied by democracy's critics) in the fifth and fourth centuries. Demokratia is, first, the power of the people: the publicly manifested power of the demos to make things happen. It is the authority or dominance of the demos in the polis, that demos to include as full "sharers" in the politeia not only the hoplites but the common (working, sub-hoplite) people who make up the clear majority of the adult native male population. As Raflaub rightly notes, the distinction between demos = all native males and demos = lower classes only is one drawn by critics of democracy, not by supporters. The history of the distinction is extremely important in studying the impact of democracy on the attitudes of literate elites; it is not, however, co-extensive with the history of democracy itself. Individual Athenian elites, who were still able to play leadership roles after the revolution, may have been rather slow to recognize the profundity of the epistemic shift. In the 1835 introduction to Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville chided his aristocratic French contemporaries for their failure to grasp the scope of democratic change in the early 19th century.

As Tocqueville pointed out 15 years later, in the introduction to his 12th edition, it was not until the revolutions of 1848 that many aristocrats woke up to the new order of things (de Tocqueville 1954). So too it was only in the mid-fifth century—when the political options for each elite Athenian had quite clearly been reduced to asserting himself within the new order (by becoming a rhetor), working at overthrowing the order (like the counter-revolutionaries of 411), or criticizing it from the sidelines (as, later, Plato did)—that the two different meanings of demos became crucial in elite literature.

Second, as both democratic orators and critics of democracy such as Aristotle (among others) pointed out, demokratia is the celebration by the demos of a way of life centered on the freedom of the citizen and political equality. Clearly the content and application of both eleu/h-root and iso-root terms evolved drastically in the course of the fifth century, in part as a result of political debates between democrats and their critics (Raflaub 1983; 1985; 1989). Yet I would say that whenever a demos that included sub-hoplites (1) possessed and employed the power to make things happen and (2) used that power to establish or to further practices predicated upon and productive of freedom and equality among the members of that broadly based citizen body, demokratia in a Classical Greek sense also pertained. Under this definition, democracy became at once a possibility and a reality only when the demos became a self-conscious and willful actor in its own right, a grammatical subject rather than an object of someone else's verb, when that which edoxe toi demoi determined policy.

DEMOTIC ACTION IN 508/7 B.C.

In the course of arguing that democracy "in the full sense of the word" did not pertain at Athens before 462, Raflaub criticizes my attempt to show that the uprising of 508/7 can be regarded as a democratic revolution. He rightly
points out that my reconstruction depends on a close analysis of passages in Herodotus (and, to a lesser extent, the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians*), and he notes that Herodotus wrote "several generations" after the events (although Herodotus may well have begun gathering material within 60 years of the revolution of 508/7 and so just within living memory of it). He asks how badly the story might have been distorted in the course of oral retelling, and how much Herodotus, living under very different conditions, might have added to flesh out the narrative.

I do indeed take Herodotus's account as the basis of my story. Since Herodotus is our only detailed ancient source for the events in question, either we follow him or we make up our own story by combining archaeological evidence with what we suppose we know about human nature and Greek society, or we must admit that early Athenian history is unknowable. On the other hand, I am not sure that my conclusions really "rely heavily and literally on every word in Herodotus's text" (Ch. 3). I specifically noted in my earlier article that Herodotus's vocabulary is that of the mid-fifth century (with special reference to *prosetairizetai ton demos*). I do indeed suppose that the late-sixth-century Athenians manifested a "generalized and quite highly developed civic consciousness" and that this is what Herodotus meant by his comment that those who besieged Isagoras and Cleomenes *in auta phronesantes*. But those words need not be part of the oral tradition; they may simply be Herodotus's own inferences, drawn from his knowledge of the events. The big issue for me is that Herodotus and the author of the *Constitution of the Athenians* both assume that the siege of the Spartans and Isagoras was won by a demos that they supposed (based on their language) to have included subhoplites.

Raafraub is certainly right to draw our attention to the dangers of monocausality, and it is clear that more than one story can be told about the origins of democracy that is both logically coherent in terms of linking causes with effects and plausible in terms of historical parallels. My point is that we can construct a narrative based on a close reading of Herodotus and the *Constitution of the Athenians* on the events of 508/7 that is coherent, plausible, and quite different from what Raafraub (among others) supposes "must have been" the case. Raafraub's guiding assumptions require his story to focus on the hoplite class. But Herodotus and Aristotle tell a story that focuses on the *plethos* and demos. The key issue for me is that our closest contemporary account indicates that

1. the demos did act;
2. it acted in the absence of organized leadership (pace Raafraub, the boule did not, in either Herodotus's or Aristotle's account, "lead" the resistance: the *bouleutai* resisted and the rest of the Athenians revolted);
3. the action of the siege was sustained (three days);
4. it was carried through to its end (the surrender of the Spartans); and
5. it had profound implications for the future of the polis.

Those implications began with the actualization of the package of "Cleisthenic" reforms. The exact relationship of those reforms to the promises that Cleisthenes made to the demos in order to bring them into his *hetairia* (before Cleomenes' arrival) remains unclear; I would suppose that the reform package might be summed up as pre-revolutionary promises reviewed and reinterpreted in the new light of post-revolutionary social realities. But the implications of the revolution certainly did not end with the first group of post-revolutionary reforms. In the 30 years following the revolution social and political relations and public institutions continued to change at Athens. As Raafraub emphasizes, still further changes took place later in the fifth century and throughout the fourth. Each was important in the history of
the democracy. But none, I contend, would have occurred had the Athenian demos, the mass of ordinary citizens, not stepped onto the stage to take control of affairs in 508/7.

Raaflaub acknowledges the probable presence of sub-hoplites at the siege but contends that hoplite farmers "must have formed the bulk of the reform's supporters." This conclusion about what must have been the case is the outcome of Raaflaub's assessment of "normal circumstances" in "ancient, especially Archaic, societies," an assessment that is based on material and well-defined class interests: "We may plausibly assume that it was these farmers who were most interested in Cleisthenes' reform plans.... To them domestic peace and stability.... must have been most welcome." He also feels that there really must have been elite leaders to spark the revolution, on the grounds that "spontaneous, leaderless mass action is rare in history" (Ch. 3). All this is fine as a reasoned expression of a thoughtful modern historian's opinion about the bounds of the possible in antiquity, but it nevertheless runs into two problems.

The first problem is that neither Raaflaub's distinction between those who participated in the revolt and those who supported the reforms, nor his assertion that elite leaders were present, has any basis in the sources. Herodotus and Aristotle describe the besiegers as demos and plethos. In the mid-fifth and late fourth centuries, when they were writing, these terms (in reference to Athens) cannot exclude sub-hoplites. The ascription of the leading role in the drama to the demos is reiterated later in Herodotus's text (5.91.2): when the Spartans reconsider the wisdom of having deposed Hippias in 510, they complain to their allies that they had handed Athens over to "an ungrateful demos," which "having just recently been freed by us, reared up (anekupse) and, in an act of exceptional arrogance (periubrisas), drove out [from Athens] both us and our king." This is of course Herodotus and not the "real Spartans" speaking, but it confirms that the historian regarded the Athenian demos as the revolutionary actor; the absence of leaders in his earlier account is no casual lapse. The strength of the tradition of demos as actor is further revealed by Aristophanes' Lysistrata (273–82; cf. Ober 1993a: 223–24), in which the chorus of old Athenian men recall how "I" drove out Cleomenes when he seized the Acropolis. There is, of course, no way to counter the argument that there still might have been revolutionary leaders who were neglected by the Athenian tradition, or that the supporters of the reforms might have been different from the revolutionaries of 508/7. My point is that a coherent and (I think) plausible story can be constructed on the basis of the sources that we do have. These sources focus on a demos that was both revolutionary actor and beneficiary of the reforms that followed the uprising.

The second, related, problem is that Raaflaub's account assumes that the events of 508/7 took place in a context that was "normal" and "Archaic." My point is that the revolutionary event itself ended the Archaic period of Athenian political history by redefining the bounds of the possible and so made the "impossible" system of rule of the people a reality. Leaderless revolts are indeed extremely rare in human history, but the appearance of democracy is also a historical rarity. The problem with a purely longue durée, evolutionary, "business as usual" approach to history that rejects the unique significance of remarkable events is that it cannot allow for sudden and dramatic changes in what is possible; it cannot accommodate the conundrum that revolutionary action (and thus democracy) is impossible until the moment of its occurrence. Explaining the sudden appearance of the possible through (formerly) impossible action is the point of focusing on radical disruption and transformation. This does not happen often in history, but it behooves us to pay special attention when it does.

That attention should never become exclusive or worshipful. Raaflaub is quite right to warn against the tendency to see all subsequent Athenian history as nothing more than a play-
ing out of the revolutionary moment. Without the structure provided by institutional changes (over several generations), the energies of the revolution of 508/7 would surely have dissipated quickly—the revolutionary moment would have been little more than an Archaic Greek Jacquerie—capable of scaring entrenched elites and riffling the surface but incapable of disrupting the deep structures of elite control. Perhaps the Athenian elite would have managed to weather this storm, and perhaps no really significant institutional reform would have taken place if post-revolutionary Athens had not had to confront the prospect of a quick Spartan counterattack. In short, I gladly concede that even in the strongest of readings, the revolution of 508/7 cannot be made important enough to explain the entire history of Athenian democracy. I emphasize the significance of 508/7 not to encourage neglect of prior or subsequent history, but to retrieve the memory of a striking revolutionary historical moment and an emergent demotic historical actor. Both that moment and that actor seemed at risk of being systematically forgotten by modern scholarship.

THE ATHENIAN REVOLUTION IN CONTEXT

Were the events of 508/7 unique in Athenian or Greek history? The parallel to the Cylon incident of 636 or 632 B.C. is certainly noteworthy. Thucydides says that Cylon and his mercenary force seized the Acropolis and that “when the Athenians learned of this they came from the fields in full force to the rescue” (1.126.7: hoi Athenaioi aisthomenoi eboethesan te pandemei ek ton agron) and besieged the Cylonians on the Acropolis. But the important issue for me is that at the time of Cylon’s coup, the elite (presumably client-based) Athenian leadership structure was intact. Thucydides goes on to relate that “the Athenians got bored” (hoi Athenaioi truchomenoi) with the siege after a while and left it under the charge of t.l.e nine archons, “who were given full authority to settle the whole matter in whatever way they decided was best.” He reminds us that “at that time the archons conducted most of the public business” (1.126.8). Herodotus’s abbreviated account makes no mention of the general population and makes the primary actors “the chiefs of the naukraroi, who were at that time in charge of Athens” (5.70.2). This is all very different in tone and outcome from the determined three-day siege of Cleomenes by the demos. Raaflaub is quite right to point out that the pattern ‘Athenian usurper plus foreigners on the Acropolis, all must act in concert to expel them’ may have been in place well before 508/7. The demos indeed had a script to work with when it rose up in response to the resistance of the boule. But the key point is that by 507 the demos could carry out the whole of the script itself without an elite director: no archons, no naukraroi, no Cleisthenes or other heroic leader: just the plethos/demos.

Similarly, Raaflaub is right to draw our attention to the fragments of Solon and Tyrtaeus and to certain similarities between Archaic Athens and the hoplite-powered Spartan regime. But there was also a big difference: in post-Lycur­gan Sparta, land was divided between the political shareholders and worked for them by the helots. The members of the Spartan hoplite elite were the only full citizens (i.e., the homoioi, those who attended the assembly of the Apella). Thus there was no confusion about citizenship at Sparta: a man could not be a Spartan citizen without maintaining control of land and the surplus generated by unfree labor. If he lost control of his land, surplus, and/or helots, he lost his citizenship. It was apparently as simple as that. Solon’s seisachtheia was messier. It freed both the black earth and the Athenians and made them (in the view of Manville 1990 and Ober 1989: 62–63; cf. Wallace, Ch. 2) citizens, but pointedly did not redistribute the land among them or offer them automatic control
over the labor of an unfree population. Rather, along with "middling" hoplites and leisured aristocrats, it left some citizens in the status of laborers for others, and left others as very small-scale (sub-hoplite) farmers. And therefore, whereas in post-Lycurgan Sparta it was easy to equate demos qua citizenry with hoplites qua armed landowners and exploiters of unfree labor, in post-Solonian Athens this tidy equation was more difficult. At Athens there was an ongoing and potentially destabilizing problem of distinction and identity. Many Athenians were citizens in name (by Solon's emancipation proclamation, by his ho boulomenos-centered legal reforms, and by their right to attend the Assembly; see Wallace, Ch. 2), yet they were not recognized (by the Solonian tele) as full or active citizens. And this messy distinction between partial, incomplete, potential citizens and full citizens was a big problem for any polis, as Aristotle makes abundantly clear (Politics 1277b 33–78b 5, with Ober 1993b: 137–38).

In both Raaflaub's story and in mine the Athenian demos gains in self-consciousness during the period of the tyranny. In my story (but not in his) that self-consciousness pays off in the moment of revolution, the moment when "things change" and from which there is no turning back. The revolution solves the problem of the two types of post-Solonian citizen and standardizes the political status of the Athenian citizen by bringing the demos into history. From here on it is the demos qua all Athenian citizens that will be the primary actor on the Athenian stage. Men "of the middle" will continue to be proud to be hoplites, but the hoplite class will lose its distinctive institutional and political identity (cf. Ober 1994a). Individual elites will continue to play very important roles, but in order to do so they have to find their way into the new script by adapting themselves to the new order of politics. At first this seemed fairly easy, and Athens's sudden rise to prominence after the victories of 506 gave the Athenian elite a much larger stage on which to play out its games of aristocratic rivalry. It was only around the middle of the fifth century that the elites seemingly realized how fully they had been co-opted by the democracy and how out of control the system had become (Ober 1989: 84–86). It was at this time that their opposition to democracy crystallized and generated the political debates and critical vocabulary which Raaflaub has analyzed so skillfully.

THETES AND THEIR LEGITIMACY: OBJECTS OR AGENTS?

Raaflaub's account—with its focus on institutions, the hoplite class, and elite leadership—concludes that democracy does not exist until the political structures that would "allow" the thetes to participate as full equals are in place: "Cleisthenes' system was not democratic in the full sense of the word because it neither took demos in its comprehensive meaning nor assigned to the institutions of the demos such a comprehensive and powerful role that would have allowed the demos to fully control the government" (Ch. 3). Accordingly, "the Athenian revolution of 508/7 was not really a democratic revolution." His argument here is sophisticated and based on compelling comparative evidence regarding the link between military capacity and political rights: "In ancient, especially Archaic, societies these two civic functions were intimately connected." Indeed, this is exactly why I claimed in my earlier article that the revolution of 508/7 should be regarded as the moment at which the Archaic period of Athenian political history ends and the Classical begins. Yet for Raaflaub, revolutionary action and ideological change are inadequate to the difficult task of integrating the thetes. Following a distinguished tradition of social history, he argues that the integration of the lower classes "required as a precondition some massive and lasting change in their eco-
nomic or social status and/or communal function” to overcome “their traditional handicap” (emphasis in the original). For Raaflaub, the popular uprising of 508/7 is a “one-time event”; “massive and lasting change” only occurs with a change in the material conditions of the polis: the development of the empire and the navy, which together provide regular military employment for the thetes (paying rowers allows them to fulfill one civic function) and revenues sufficient to pay them to participate in the institutions of government (their other civic function).

In Raaflaub’s story, the hoplite class successfully guards its prerogatives for as long as it can; the political integration of the thetes is an unexpected by-product of foreign policy. Yet this account has its own unintended by-product: the thetes themselves are never agents or actors. Rather, they remain passive objects who are “under consistent pressure to prove and legitimize themselves,” who are conditionally “allowed” to participate only when and for so long as they can demonstrate their worth to the community and so long as the community can extract enough money from others to “allow” them to participate: “success provided democracy with legitimacy and was crucial to justifying the political equality of the lower class citizens.... Imperialism...provided the citizens with the opportunities they needed to prove themselves, to renew their legitimation and to keep it alive through continuing success” (emphases added). Note that “success” and “imperialism” are the subjects of the verb “provided”; “democracy” and “citizens” are its direct objects. The focus is on the difficulty that democracy and the thetes had in gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the upper-class citizens, who remain the gatekeepers to the palace of civic participation and legitimation. And this in turn means that the “Archaic” hoplite/aristocratic ideology remained fully intact until the middle of the fifth century and very influential long after: in Raaflaub’s account the thetes remain nervous about their recent arrival at the political party. They need to “renew their legitimation,” and they seem always to be a little embarrassed that their clothes and social manners are not quite right.

I find it hard to square the ancient literary evidence with this picture of anxious, legitimation-seeking, ultimately rather passive thetes. The Old Oligarch and Plato (among other representatives of upper-class opinion) are quite consistent in their horror at what they see as the arrogant self-confidence of the Athenian lower classes. In the fifth and fourth centuries alike, Athenian thetes believed that they deserved a full share in the politeia and seem not to have doubted that this state of affairs was quite “natural”—exactly the reason why elite critics attempted to show that the rule of the many was unnatural (cf. Callicles in Plato’s Gorgias). The demos did indeed (rightly) fear plots by the elite (e.g., the affairs of the Herm and Mysteries in 415 B.C. or Demosthenes 21, Against Meidias), and they recognized that the continued economic power and extra-polis contacts of the elite could threaten the dignity (freedom, equality, security) of the non-elite citizenry as a whole or that of the individual citizen. As a result they devised various rituals to humiliate the elites and expel dangerous men from their midst (e.g., ostracism). But the notion that the thetes lived in nervous fear that someone might push them out of the politeia on the basis that they did not “deserve” it sounds less like fifth- or fourth-century Athens than like the Roman world with its strong patron-client system of attitudes and behaviors. Athenian thetes were not shareholders on the basis of their clientship to a set of patrons; rather they had taken for themselves the control of affairs, and they recognized that as long as they continued to act as masters of their own fates they would indeed be masters of the polis.

It is important to note that when the thetes were in fact temporarily removed from the politeia by the coup of 411, the resulting regimes were radically unstable and unable to maintain legitimacy without thetic participation. The initial, narrowly oligarchic, regime of the 400 col-
lapsed because it was suspected of treasonous dealings with the Spartan enemy. It was succeeded by the regime of the 5,000, a hoplite republic. Yet by 409 full democracy was back in force. How so? By the late fifth century the hoplites of the 5,000 simply had no stable corporate identity as shareholders in the polis—or rather, they had no identity that was in practical terms separable from the citizen identity shared by the thetes (see Hanson 1996). The events of 411–409 demonstrate that democratic legitimation had been won, and that it was oligarchy (even in its most moderate “hoplite democracy” versions; cf. Aristotle’s “polity” or his agrarian “best” form of democracy in Politics 1318b) that was now impossible at Athens. Oligarchy (at least when it lacked the active military backing of a foreign regime like Sparta [in 404] or Macedon [in 322]) had become impossible at Athens because of the atrophy of the patterns of social behavior, discourse, and thought capable of sustaining it.

But what of the argument that democracy was a product of conditions made possible only by the growth of the empire and the fleet? First, we may note that (as was recently pointed out by Paola Ceccarelli [1993]) statements to the effect that democracy is in some sense a product of thalassocracy are not to be found in Greek historiography and the democracy-thalassocracy link is not a topos of the orators. Rather, it is a partisan claim made first by the Old Oligarch and later repeated by Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle. The notion that democracy is a product of thalassocracy is a topic only exploited (in the fifth and fourth centuries) by certain critics of democracy: it is a hostile claim with genetic links to other anti-democratic claims regarding the natural inferiority of the thetes. We should not take these sorts of hostile claims as evidence of how most Athenians (hoplites or thetes) thought. Rather they are evidence of the thinking of a relatively small group of elite intellectuals.

Of course simply because an argument is advanced uniquely by partisan critics does not validate it a priori. Did the Old Oligarch have it right after all? I would certainly agree that military service and therefore the rise of the navy are very important in understanding early Athenian democracy (see Ober 1994a), but to derive democracy from the navy is to get the cart before the horse. A problem with the empire-ego-democracy theory is that it takes the fleet as an imperial phenomenon, an artifact, as it were, of the battle of Salamis and its aftermath. Rather, I would say that Salamis was an artifact of the fleet, and that the fleet was a prior artifact of the new politeia. It is certainly true and a matter of great historical importance that in the fifth century the Athenian navy grew large and the thetes were fully and regularly militarized. As a consequence of these developments, Athens gained a permanent, standing military force unlike anything seen before in the city-states (outside the retinues of tyrants), and the possession of that force had profound political implications for internal development and foreign policy. But the prior question is, “What made Salamis possible?” Why could Athens contribute the largest single naval contingent—180 ships—to the key battle of the war?

It is surely quite remarkable that Athens—a continental, not an island power—had already amassed one of the biggest navies in Greece by the late 480s. We may compare other mainland poleis that contributed relatively tiny naval forces to the Hellenic navy in 480: Sparta 16 ships, Megara 20, Sicyon 15, Epidaurus 10, Troizen 5; the island polis of Aegina contributed 30 (Herodotus 8.1, 43–48). The prior conditions for a big polis fleet were a certain amount of communal wealth and a very large pool of trustworthy manpower. Without going into the complicated problem of “Themistocles’ naval law” (on which see Labarbe 1957; Wallinga 1993), it is clear that in the late 480s the Athenians had at their disposal a surplus of wealth in the form of silver from the Attic mines, and that they decided to use that silver to defray the costs of building a very big (whether 100 or 200 ships) trireme navy, rather than using it for any
other pt—pose (including, perhaps, distributing it among the citizens).

The providential silver surplus provided only a partial means to the goal of building a navy; it was certainly insufficient to pay a full compliment of mercenaries to man the great fleet. Athens in the 480s did not enjoy the reliable income that control of the Isthmus provided Corinth, the other major pre-Persian War continental sea power (40 ships in 480). If the key to Corinthian sea power was great wealth to hire reliable oarsmen, then the key to Athens’s navy was the use of the polis’s relatively vast sub-hoplite-citizen manpower reserve. But this reserve could not be tapped until the thetes were “militarized”—until they, like the hoplites, were ready to defend the state with their bodies, and the state in its turn was ready to depend for its salvation on the bodies of thethes. And that condition—the militarizing of the thetes—was, I would say, intimately related to the revolution of 508/7 and its immediate aftermath. The Athenian fleet of 480 B.C. is the counterpart to the Athenian army that faced down the Peloponnesians and defeated the Boeotians and Chalcidians in 506. Both army and navy were unexpectedly successful, and both were made possible by the faith that Athenian citizen society had in itself—a generalized faith in polis qua demos that blurred the lines between the roles appropriate to hoplites and thetes. Because the Athenians could now trust their fellow citizens (including thethes) with military power, Athens as a polis was able to translate the potential power latent in its demography and mineral wealth into actual, deployable military force. It was the new sense that all citizens could safely be asked to guard the polis that led to the radical move of abandoning Attica in 480 and depending on the fleet to preserve the politai.9

If a huge navy is inconceivable before the democratic revolution, then so too, a fortiori, is the empire. After the Persian Wars, the Delian League and eventually the empire became possible because Athens (unlike other poleis) could tolerate the long-term presence of a large standing armed force. Standing armies in poleis are typically associated with the rule of tyrants, who require mercenaries to secure their control of affairs (e.g., Xenophon Hiero). Aside from Sparta, with its special condition of a massive helot population, the Greek “hoplite republic” is defined by the amateur and occasional nature of its politics and its armed forces (Hanson 1995; 1996). The demos of a hoplite republic (qua political assembly), like its army (qua phalanx of hoplites), existed only in emergencies: at and for those moments when it called itself into being. By contrast, the Athenian demos met frequently and regularly to transact all manner of business. And, as a corollary, Athens could afford (politically and ideologically as well as materially) to maintain in its navy a potentially dangerous standing armed force. It could afford to maintain the permanent force that made the empire possible because of the social relations, the generalized feelings of trust and good faith between middle and low, between hoplites and thetes. Those sorts of social relations are (I would argue) peculiar (if not unique) to democracies. And thus democracy (as state of mind, an ideology) was the enabling condition of the Athenian Empire, even if the empire was in turn the enabling condition of the fully elaborated institutional structures that Raaflaub argues were the preconditions of “democracy in the full sense of the word” (Ch. 3).

ARTIFACTS OF THE REVOLUTION?

If we can read the creation of the great navy by the late 480s as an artifact of the revolution, we might expect some evidence for other developments which would point to demotic self-consciousness and self-confidence in the
generation after 508/7 and well before 462. I think that such evidence does exist, although it is important to bear in mind the insecurity of the chronology (typically based on the seriation of pottery styles and a lacunose literary record) on which these arguments are founded. Be that as it may, it seems pretty clear that, on any likely chronology, a lot was happening in Athens in the generation between 508 and 478. Here I offer a bare and programmatic list of some of the developments that seem to date from this period and appear to me potentially significant. Each of the items requires much more discussion than I can give it here, and the list could surely be extended.

The “Cleisthenic” reforms themselves are truly remarkable. As Pierre Léveque and Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1996) argued (and we need not accept all their ideas to take the basic point), these were sweeping, amounting to nothing less than a rupture in the ways that public space and public time were imagined. The original reforms were soon followed by other changes including the institution of the bouleutic oath (Rhodes 1972: 190-99) and the introduction of the board of generals (Rhodes 1981: 262-63). The practice of ostracism is especially notable, in that it was an overt assertion of the power of the collectivity to judge the behavior of each individual member of the community and to expel deviants. Indeed, the ostracism procedure—which moved from a decision by the Assembly, to a mass gathering in the Agora, to the preparation of makeshift (metaphorical) weapons to be aimed at a dangerous man, to the expulsion of the designated public enemy—could be seen as a recapitulation of the revolutionary moment itself. The reallocation of the “extra powers” of the Areopagus in 462 is simply not a comparable change. It marks a shift in established institutional powers from one body to another within an existing constitutional or iter, not the redefinition of power and the public regime.

As Herodotus (5.74-78) points out, within a year or so of the reforms, the Athenians won their first really significant foreign policy-military success, against a Spartan-Boeotian-Chalcidian alliance. The four-horse bronze monument erected on the Acropolis with its cocky inscription commemorating the victory over the Chalcidians, along with the establishment of a cleruchy at Chalcis, sums up the new Athenian self-confidence. The post-Cleisthenic army was very much an artifact of the revolution and immediately changed Athens’s status in the world of the poleis. We need not imagine this as the victory of a clearly articulated hoplite class within the Athenian state. Pericles Georges (1993) makes the very interesting suggestion that the Cleisthenic reforms, which put the Athenian citizens in control of their own membership, may have been more radically egalitarian in their effects than is often supposed. Georges points out that most elements of the hoplite panoply could be quite cheaply “home-made” and that the worth of the warrior was tested in battle. Given that a man’s zeugite status would be asserted by himself and confirmed by those of his demesmen and tribesmen with whom he fought (rather than being tested by some government functionary or tax collector), there was undoubtedly a great deal of slippage between sub-hoplites and hoplites, between thetes and zeugites. This sort of slippage would surely have been encouraged in the aftermath of the military success of the 508/7 siege, which, as we have seen, included Athenians of sub-hoplite status.

The Salamis decree (IG 11 1), which Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (1988) date to shortly after 510 (although by the letter forms it could go as late as 480 or so), is the first attested use of the edoxe toi demoi formula. It provides clear evidence for real enactments by the demos gathered together in Assembly. Whatever else is going on in this difficult inscription, the demos is taking for itself the authority to regulate the conditions under which certain people in Salamis (whether Athenians or Salaminians) would...
be allowed to hold land and what their military obligations would be. In sum, the demos is making state policy in its own name and, what is more, has probably taken for itself the power to decide the conditions of citizenship.

The major building program, which included the Royal Stoa and the Old Bouleuterion (both among the first civic structures in Greece built in the Doric order; see Shear 1994) as well as the erection of horoi (Ober 1995) formally demarcating the Agora as public space, was, according to the latest chronology (Shear 1993; 1995; Camp 1995), launched right around 500 B.C. The building program established the central, open area below the Acropolis, Pnyx, and Areopagus as the center of Athenian civic life. Moreover, ca. 500 B.C. remains the most likely date for the construction of the Pnyx as a separate political meeting place for the Athenian Assembly. The significance and originality of the Athenian separation of theater and assembly-place has recently been emphasized by John Camp (1995: 239–41).

The Tyrannicide group was erected as the first statuary in the public Agora (M.W. Taylor 1991; Castriota, Ch. 10). Whatever the complexities of its intended ideological message (see McGlew 1993)—part of which may have been an attempt by aristocrats to reappropriate the revolution by downplaying the role of the demos and privileging that of individual elite lovers—the statue group is certainly to be dated to the period around the revolution (ca. 514–506). Whatever the artist’s intentions or those of his patrons, the group was quickly linked in the popular imagination with the origins of democratic freedom, which is why Thucydides (1.20; 6.53–60) and Aristotle (Constitution of the Athenians 18) were so eager to debunk the myth of the Tyrannicides as freedom fighters.

According to the most likely chronology (Kroll and Waggoner 1984: 327–33), it was shortly before 500 (and not earlier than 525) that Attic coinage switched from the diverse Wappenmünzen types to the standard Athena-owl type. The switch has sometimes, plausibly if speculatively, been associated with the period 510–506 (W.P. Wallace 1962: 23–28; Price and Waggoner 1975: 64–66). The introduction of coinage into the Greek world (like that of paper money in 18th-century Europe) made it easier for financial transactions to be depersonalized, taken out of the network of patronage and personal knowledge of participants that a barter system encourages. The establishment of a supposedly neutral standard of value meant that strangers could exchange goods without knowing each other or each other’s personal “worth.” Now people who formerly would have been regarded as “unworthy” or untrustworthy could exchange goods for a profit; the old networks of exchangers (especially aristocratic xenoi) could be circumvented by the direct action of persons who did not have access to those networks. Thus coinage offered opportunities for economic (and thus ultimately social) advancement to ordinary men. We might, therefore, expect the old aristocracy to be hostile to coinage; and Kurke (1995) has recently explored aspects of that hostility. While the dating must remain tentative, the new Athena-owl coinage might be read as marking the assertion of a newly self-confident public authority over a potentially revolutionary and “democratic” medium of exchange.

Finally, Athenian elite burial practices changed abruptly in the years around 500 B.C. The sixth-century pattern of lavish display was quite suddenly abandoned, and a new, restrained style of funeral became dominant for the next 75 years (Morris 1992: ch. 5). I reiterate that the chronology is contested, but the developments mentioned above do all seem to come about in the very late sixth to very early fifth century in the absence of any great change in Athens’s material circumstances, that is, before the great silver strike of the mid-480s and before the empire. It may well be that material factors affecting much of the Greek world were involved in some of these changes; a wide-
spread tendency toward more intensive forms of agriculture has been postulated for Greece in this period on the basis of archaeological evidence (Morris 1994b). Yet the Classical Athenian experience of popular rule remains highly distinctive even within the Greek context; Panhellenic material conditions seem to me inadequate to account for Athenian democracy. And, while changes in material conditions and relatively egalitarian social relations common to much of Greece may well have provided an environment in which democracy was a possibility, the turn to democracy was certainly not inevitable; most poleis never established democracies, even when they were “republican” in their institutions and ideologies (see Hanson 1995). If it is impossible and unnecessary to prove that the revolution was both the necessary and the sufficient condition of democracy, it is surely the case that without a revolutionary action like that of 508/7 democracy would have remained inconceivable; the particularities of the history of Athens in the generation after 508/7 are, I would argue, deeply imprinted with the sign of the revolution.

THE LONGUE DURÉE

If Athenian democracy originated with the explosive energy of a revolutionary action by the demos, how enduring was that energy? How long did democracy remain a revolutionary system of human organization? Raaflaub reflects a wide spectrum of historical opinion when he suggests that in the fourth century B.C. “the Athenians grew more willing to compromise,” that after the Peloponnesian War their democracy became more mellow, “more balanced and differentiated,” and (at least by implication) less revolutionary (Ch. 3). Once again, I disagree with this characterization, which derives from what I tend to regard as an overemphasis on institutional adjustments at the expense of social relations and popular ideology. There seems to have been little mellowing in the Athenian suspiciousness regarding elite pretensions, nor in the fierce popular commitment to an overtly demotic ideology that asserted the authority of the collectivity over every Athenian, including public speakers. I have argued elsewhere (Ober 1989) that fourth-century Athenian orators faced the ongoing and rigorous test of demotic opinion; whenever they spoke they were constrained to present themselves as “men of the people” who acknowledged the superior power and wisdom of the demos. A demonstrated status as demotikos was a prior condition to the politician’s claim to possess special skills that made him worthy of addressing the demos.

The impression one gets from reading fourth-century oratory, of an ongoing popular determination and an ability to force elites into a democratic pattern of public behavior and address, is reinforced by reading fourth-century critics of democracy. Here I note only one famous example: in the Republic, Plato is concerned (among other things) with the awesome hegemonic power of popular ideology to “corrupt” young people, even those with a naturally philosophical character, and to turn the best of them into servile politicians. Socrates says that his interlocutor, Adeimantus, must not suppose, as do the many, that certain private teachers destroy the youth. Rather, it is those who say these things (the many) who are themselves the great sophists who educate most completely and mold the young and the old, men and women, making them just as they want them to be (492a–b). Adeimantus wonders when it is that this education takes place. Socrates replies that it is

when many gathered together sit down in assemblies, courts, theaters, army camps, or any other common gathering of the multitude [ple
Socrates goes on to explain that the ideological constraint drummed into the young in the assemblies is reinforced by practice, since he who is not persuaded by their clamor to conform suffers punishments: disenfranchisement, fines, and death (492d). No mere sophist or private argument can hope to prevail (kratesin) against these odds. And so no human ethos, however educated, can, or has, or shall prevail against this sort of paideia (492e). Indeed, the so-called sophists themselves, who are thought to be the rivals of the masses, in fact teach nothing but the opinions (dogmata) of the many—the very things that the many proclaim (doxazousin) when they are gathered together in assembly. The sophists call what they teach wisdom (sophia). But it is nothing more than the "wisdom" that is learned and might be transmitted by the keeper of a great and ferocious beast. The keeper is quickly trained to cater to the beast's needs, its infernal bellowing, and its responses to different sorts of speech. In the end he will learn to provide the beast with whatever it wants. Having been well trained, the keeper, although self-evidently the beast's servant, then claims to have mastered (and to be able to teach others) the secret of beast-management (493a-b). Moreover, the basic point can be generalized: the painter, poet, and politician—like the sophist—merely learn to accommodate themselves to the anger and pleasures of "the many and various foragether folk"; they make the many their masters, and of necessity produce what they praise (493c-d).

This is of course a highly tendentious portrait of democratic Athens. My point is that not only fourth-century orators, who actually addressed the Assembly, but also fourth-century critics like Plato, who did not, are at one in acknowledging the power of democratic ideology. The Athenian orators claim that popular power to control public behavior and speech is a good thing, and Plato, that it is a bad thing, but neither side provides much evidence for a fourth-century tendency to "compromise" democratic ideals or for a mellowing of the demos's determination to be both director and choreographer, as well as star actor, in all productions appearing on the Athenian political and historical stage.

I am in complete agreement with Raaflaub's heartfelt statement that, as historians, we should try to stay in touch with the "otherness" of ancient democracy and to avoid domesticating that otherness to modern notions of how societies must work. My primary complaint about his paper is one that can be raised against much historical work (including my own): it is not always true to its own admirable program. Raaflaub sometimes seems to be forcing the strange, dramatic, and often quite terrifying history of Athenian democracy into conformity with the constraints imposed by individualist, institutionalist, and foundationalist assumptions. He suggests that until 462 Athens was an "Archaic society," and so Athenians must have thought and functioned like members of other Archaic societies; that individual leaders are the actors in history even when they fail to show up in our sources; that institutions determine realities; and that political history is evolutionary in a biological sense, moving from immature youth to vigorous adulthood to mellow old age.

My suggested alternative is that the way Athenians viewed the world and acted in it shifted dramatically with the surrender of the Spartans on the Acropolis—the energy of the
The democratic moment of the revolution both sparked and helped fuel the next 185 years of democratic evolution. To shift from the automotive metaphor to Socrates' horsey image: the demos got the bit between its teeth, and the elite never got it out again. This is, of course, my story, but it does have the conservative virtue of support in the ancient sources. Herodotus, closest in time to the actual events, saw 510–506 as the period when Athens was liberated and when the Athenians began to play a real international role in the Greek world, a role worthy of their potential power. Perhaps Herodotus was not justified in saying that "CLEISTHENES established ... democracy for the Athenians" (6.131.1: Kleisthenes ten demokratian Athenoiosi katas tesas); indeed, I do not accept the historical agent Herodotus proposes here, and I have tried to show that he elsewhere views the demos as the main agent of democratic change. But the point is that he did say it; he put the origin of democracy in 508/7. Moreover, although Aristotle sees Solon as the protos prostat tes tou demou (Constitution of the Athenians 2.2; see Wallace, Ch. 2), it is after the revolution of 508/7 that "the people having taken control of public affairs (kataschontos de tou demou ta prag mata), Cleisthenes was hegemon and tou demou prostates" (20.4). The last surely indicates that Aristotle saw democracy, "the possession" of public affairs by the people, as the result of the events of 508/7. By contrast, the notion that Ephialtes and the reforms of 462 (whatever they really entailed) mark the origin of "real" democracy is a product of institution-centered modern historiography. In my book, that justifies a certain amount of fanfare, even 2,500 years later.

NOTES

1. This essay took its present form in the course of an exchange of several drafts with Kurt Raaflaub. As a result of that process, Chapters 3 and 4 have changed their titles and undergone considerable modifications in wording and Chapter 5 has been added. The substantial arguments have been refined without, I hope, losing their dialectical quality. I take this opportunity to thank Professor Raaflaub for the chance to engage in this highly stimulating dialogue and for the enlightenment I have received over the years from his work on many aspects of Greek and Roman history.

2. The "Democracy 2500" program sponsored by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens was financed in large measure by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). As I write these words, a budget measure is being debated in the United States Congress that would eliminate funding for the NEH and thus render this sort of discussion nugatory for the foreseeable future.

3. Consider, for example, the worshipful tone of the two-page advertisements for the National Gallery's exhibition The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy, The Fifth Century B.C. that ran in 1992 in major magazines like the Economist:

"We are all Greeks," the poet Shelley said. Born of democracy.... And art, born from that democracy itself, makes us so. For out of fifth-century Greece, modern man was given life.... An historical event—of great importance to all of the western world—a study of man and democracy through art.... History writes itself anew. Man challenges his world. Art tells the
story. And we, in awe, muse over the miracle of democracy. So yes, we are all Greeks.

Buitron-Oliver 1992 provides the full catalogue (see also Morris and Raaflaub, Ch. 1). This exhibition had no connection with the "Democracy 2500" program sponsored by the American School.

4. Of course, the process is complex, since the experience of using institutions will affect people's attitudes. The relationship between sociocultural norms and institutional structure is the subject of Putnam 1993. This long-term (20-year) study of regional differentiation in Italian politics is especially impressive in that it is based upon a massive collection of empirical evidence. The bottom line of Putnam's study is that even very profound "top-down" institutional changes will have relatively little practical impact on the process of democratization when the underlying attitudes of the populace are stable and are predicated on fundamentally undemocratic assumptions (e.g., about patron-client relations). Putnam's study, it should be noted, tends to assume that regional Italian sociocultural attitudes are historically conditioned and deeply entrenched. Putnam does not envisage the sort of epistemic shift I propose for Athens in 508/7.

5. Raaflaub would like to argue that "on the evidence currently available" (the appearance of the name Demokrates around 470 and the paraphrase in Aeschylus's Suppliants of ca. 463) the term demokratia was coined around 462. Yet he acknowledges that our source record could be chronologically misleading when he notes that state pay, "although only attested later, must have been introduced" around 462 (Ch. 3).

6. Herodotus (5.69–72), who is confused about the substance of some of the reforms, puts their enactment before Cleomenes' arrival. Aristotle (Constitution of the Athenians 20.1), in an apparent attempt to square his account with that of Herodotus while retaining chronological sense (see Rhodes 1981: ad loc.), says that Cleisthenes gained the advantage over Isagoras "by proposing to hand over" (apodidous: trans. Rhodes 1984) the politeia to the plethos. Then (20.2–21) comes Cleomenes' intervention and the uprising, in the course of which the people got control of affairs. Cleisthenes then became leader and hegemon. The demos placed its trust in Cleisthenes who then, still during the archonship of Isagoras (i.e., 508/7), undertook the reforms.

7. On the social basis of Sparta's military system and its great distance from Athenian democracy, see Cartledge 1996.

8. Parallels with Macedon and Rome, which were radically different from any Greek polis in social and economic structures, seem to me to be even less useful in explaining the origins of democratic Athens than is the Spartan example; see also Lane Fox 1995.

9. On the radical newness of the form of polis power that was thereby made possible, and attempts to understand it in terms of Persian models, see Crane 1992a, 1992b; Georges 1993; 1994.

10. The revolutionary aspects of ostracism are discussed in detail in a Ph.D. dissertation in progress by Sara Forsdyke of Princeton University, on the subject of exile in Athenian history and political development.

11. E.W. Robinson (1997) collects the available evidence for early Greek democracies other than Athens. He concludes that ancient democracies were similar in their organizing principles to modern liberal democracies, and that the Athenian example was neither particularly original nor particularly radical. I obviously do not agree with these conclusions. Lane Fox (1995) seems to me on-target in emphasizing the distinctiveness of Athenian democracy in the sixth-century context.


13. Much more could be said about the historiographical process. I would suppose that the obscure figure of Ephialtes first became
a major player in the story in the course of very late fifth- and fourth-century conservative attempts to reappropriate Solon and Cleisthenes as agents of a "good, old-fashioned, moderate" demokratia (most evident in Isocrates' Areopagiticus). This appropriation entailed lowering the origins of the "bad, modern, radical" demokratia into the mid-fifth century. The irony is that this move (dividing a "good" from a "bad" form of demokratia, as opposed to claiming that demokratia was simply bad) was conditioned by the success of the Athenian demos in associating demokratia with "legitimate government." I hope to tell part of that story in a forthcoming book entitled Athenian Critics of Popular Rule.