

George Grote's First Writings on Greek History*

Among the manuscripts of George Grote (1794-1871) at the British Library in London, there are several essays written by the author in his youth and devoted to the study of the ancient world. Between these, an essay *On the Athenian Government* (Add. MS. 29520, ff. 41-53)¹, one *On the Character of Sokrates* (Add. MS. 29522, ff. 162-167)², one *On Ancient and Modern Education* (Add. MS. 29529, ff. 29-30)³ and three papers on Roman culture – two on Cicero (Add. MS. 29522, ff. 31-59) and one on Lucretius (Add. MS. 29522, ff. 1-30)⁴ – have already been published in recent years. The notes on Cicero

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¹ J. Buckler-M. Chambers-J. Vaio, «*Of the Athenian Government*». *Introduction and Text*, in W.M. Calder III-S. Trzaskoma (eds.), *George Grote Reconsidered. A 200th Birthday Celebration with a First Edition of his Essay «Of the Athenian Government»*, Weidmann, Hildesheim 1996, pp. 75-94.

² K.N. Demetriou, *Grote on Socrates: an unpublished essay of the 1820s in its context*, «*Dialogos*» 3, 1996, pp. 36-50 (= in Id. (ed.), *Studies on the Reception of Plato and Greek Political Thought in Victorian Britain*, Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate 2011, pp. 36-50).

³ K.N. Demetriou, *George Grote on Plato and Athenian Democracy. A Study in Classical Reception*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 1999, pp. 29-31 (*Appendix. Ancient and Modern Education*).

⁴ F. Santangelo, *George Grote's Early Papers on Roman Culture*, «*Quaderni di storia*» 63, 2006, pp. 57-109.

can be considered Grote's first writing on the ancient world, being dated 22-23 October 1815⁵. But the earliest writings in which Grote grappled with historiographical questions, specifically Greek history, are two essays dated the following month, which may also be found in one of the volumes of Grote's manuscripts in the British Library (Add. MS. 29520, ff. 17-39), and form the subject of the present edition. In the preceding page, in fact, we find the following label, written by Harriet, Grote's wife (1792-1878)⁶:

Studies of Greek History
Mitford criticized
Nov. 15. 1815.
(G.G. just coming of age viz. on 17. Nov.)

The dating reported by Mrs Grote is very precise, to the point of indicating the exact day of the work: two days before her future husband's 21st birthday. At this time, in fact, the two were not yet married, but had already met the previous year and would begin a relationship that would lead them to secretly marry in 1820, because of the refusal of their respective families to approve it⁷. Written on watermarked 1812 sheets⁸, the two papers are preceded in the manuscript by another writing (ff. 1-16), dated 1815, but lacking month and day, in which Grote summarizes the events

⁵ See *ivi*, p. 62.

⁶ It was Mrs Grote herself who donated the British Library the manuscripts of George Grote that we can consult today. They consist of essays, letters, extracts, and drafts of work: Add. MSS 46691, 29513-29532.

⁷ See M.L. Clarke, *George Grote. A Biography*, The Athlone Press, London 1962, pp. 10-26. On Harriet Grote, see also J. Hamburger, *Grote, Harriet*, in *Oxford National Biography*, XXIV, University Press, Oxford 2004, pp. 110-111; S. Richardson, *A Regular Politician in Breeches: The Life and Work of Harriet Lewin Grote*, in K.N. Demetriou (ed.), *Brill's Companion to George Grote and the Classical Tradition*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2014, pp. 134-160.

⁸ It should be noted that in some cases the dates given by Harriet Grote contradict the watermarks in the manuscripts (see A. Loizides, *James Mill and George Grote: a Benthamite Defence of "Theoretic Reform"*, in Demetriou (ed.), *Brill's Companion to George Grote and the Classical Tradition* cit., p. 76 n. 143). In the papers published here, the 1812 watermark is present on ff. 28-39; the preceding sheets (ff. 17-27) are of the same batch.

that took place in Greece from the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War to the peace of Antalkidas (404-387 BC)⁹.

Although his wife reported that Grote began work on the *History of Greece* at her suggestion in 1823¹⁰, there is evidence that he was already doing some research in 1822, probably at the instigation of James Mill¹¹. The first edition of the twelve volumes was published between 1846 and 1856¹², but Grote's first printed work on Greek history dates back to 1826. It is a long review article in the *Westminster Review* on Henry Fynes Clinton's *Fasti Hellenici*, which had appeared two years earlier¹³. Here Grote actually puts a very stern critique of William Mitford (1744-1827), author of a *History of Greece*, the first edition of which was published between 1784 and 1810, but very soon sought new editions¹⁴. Grote contests Mitford's historiographical method, his dealing with ancient texts,

⁹ These sheets, and not the entire volume of the manuscript (as they seem to assume Buckler-Chambers-Vaio, «*Of the Athenian Government*» cit., p. 75 n. 1), are labelled by Harriet Grote as «Notes on Grecian hist<or>y from the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War to the peace of Antalcidas. 404-387 B.C. (written 1815-1822. Mitford's history in hand at this date)», which later deleted «1822».

¹⁰ See H. Grote, *The personal life of George Grote. Compiled from family documents, private memoranda, and original letters to and from various friends*, II edit., John Murray, London 1873, p. 49. Of the same opinion E.R. Estackle, *Mrs. Grote, a Sketch*, John Murray, London 1880, p. 74.

¹¹ See A.D. Momigliano, *George Grote and the Study of Greek History* An Inaugural Lecture delivered at University College London on 19 February 1952, H.K. Lewis, London 1952, pp. 7-8 (= in Id., *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 1955, pp. 23-31 = in Id., *Studies in Historiography*, Garland Pub., New York-Evanston 1966, pp. 56-74 = in Id., *Studies on Modern Scholarship*, University of California Press, Berkley-Los Angeles-London 1994, pp. 15-31); Clarke, *George Grote. A Biography* cit., p. 33; M. Chambers, *George Grote's History of Greece*, in Calder III-Trzaskoma (eds.), *George Grote Reconsidered* cit., p. 3, who brings as further evidence a letter from Grote attributed to 1822 (British Library, Add. MS 37949).

¹² G. Grote, *History of Greece*, XII voll., John Murray, London 1846-1856.

¹³ See J. Kierstead, *Grote's Athens and Its Legacy*, in D. Piovan-G. Giorgini (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Athenian Democracy. From the Late Middle Ages to the Contemporary Era*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2021, pp. 238-239.

¹⁴ On the edition held by Grote, see *infra*, note 41.

and the theoretical premises of his political thought, which was critical of Athenian democracy and guilty of praising oligarchic systems of government¹⁵.

But it is in these papers, first edited in the present article and written eleven years before the review article in 1826, that the earliest criticism to Mitford appear. Dated 1815, when the author was almost 21, they can thus be considered as the first essays by George Grote on Greek history, and it was thus Mitford's reading that was a major source. In that year, he, as attested by his wife Harriet¹⁶, had among his books also Mitford's work, that was second edited the previous year.

In those years, Grote had not yet come into contact with David Ricardo, who would later introduce him, in 1819, to Jeremy Bentham, James Mill (with whose son John Stuart he remained friends within later years, cultivating a rich intellectual exchange¹⁷), and the Radical Society milieu. This is evident in these two papers, in which Grote's arguments lack the advice that James Mill would have given him about writing history, as well as the complex and coherent political, social and economic vision that many years of attendance at the Radical Society would have left him with. These aspects, in fact, can already be seen in action in Grote's first publication on ancient history in 1826. It was in such a context that he, a banker alien to academia, but whose interests had led him to a great deepening of Economics, Ancient History and Philosophy,

¹⁵ G. Grote, review of Henry Fynes Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici. The Civil and Literary Chronology of Greece, from the 55th to the 124th Olympiad*. Oxford. 1824, «Westminster Review» 5, April 1826, pp. 269-331.

¹⁶ See *supra*, note 9.

¹⁷ On the influence of Grote's writings on Athenian democracy on John Stuart Mill's political thought, see L. Catana, *Grote's analysis of Ancient Greek political thought: its significance to J. S. Mill's idea about 'active character' in a liberal democracy*, «British Journal for the History of Philosophy» 28/3, 2020, pp. 553-572; L. Iori, *Studio dell'antichità e pensiero democratico moderno: George Grote e John Stuart Mill interpreti dell'Epitafio di Pericle*, «Rivista Storica Italiana» 144/3, 2022, pp. 897-903.

could find inspiration to work on one of the richest and most influential histories of Greece¹⁸.

However, it cannot be denied how the two elements that link the argumentation of these two papers, namely the critique of Mitford's pro-oligarchical view and the focus on the Athenian constitution, reveal Grote's tension towards liberal democracy even at the time. This was in opposition to those who, like Mitford, were horrified by the events in revolutionary and Napoleonic France and saw democratic Athens as a danger to modern society¹⁹.

It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that George Grote's first printed work, published in 1821, is a pamphlet dealing with a topic of great political relevance at the time, namely parliamentary reform²⁰. The debate concerned the necessity of reform of the election system and of the electoral base for the House of Commons. Supporting the extension of the electoral body and the introduction of the secret ballot, Grote wrote again on this subject ten years later²¹. In June 1832, the *Reform Act* was passed and towards the end of the year new elections were held under the new system²², in which Grote himself, after insistence by various Radical

¹⁸ Consider, for instance, the influence it had on legal studies. Grote's focus on the early organizational forms of societies in the Homeric poems was one of the inspirations for Henry S. Maine's important reflections on the origin of law in antiquity (see L. Capogrossi Colognesi, *Dalla storia di Roma alle origini della società civile. Un dibattito ottocentesco*, il Mulino, Bologna 2008, pp. 151-152).

¹⁹ On the state of Ancient History studies immediately before Grote and the role that the French experience played precisely in negatively re-assessments of Athenian democracy, see Demetriou, *George Grote on Plato and Athenian Democracy* cit., pp. 33-59.

²⁰ See G. Grote, *A Statement on the Question of Parliamentary Reform, with a Reply to the Objection of the Edinburgh Review, No. LXI*, Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, London 1821.

²¹ See G. Grote, *Essentials of Parliamentary Reform*, Baldwin, Cradock, London 1831.

²² On the *Reform Act*, see E.L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform 1815-1870. The Oxford History of England*, XIII, University Press, Oxford 1938, pp. 77-83.

Party members, stood as a candidate and became a Member of Parliament, holding office until 1841²³.

The following is the full edition of the two papers in the manuscript, both preceded by a short introduction. Two orders of notes are present in it. The first, marked *, consists of notes written by Grote himself and indicated with this sign within the manuscript. The second, in numerical progression, consists of notes inserted in this edition to indicate references to ancient sources, to modern characters or works. Interventions within the author's notes are in italics.

Interventions in the text are limited to Grote's rare solecisms, which have been corrected. Words and letters deleted by the author have not been reproduced, since in no case are they decisive in the exposition.

The Greek texts quoted by Grote are retained in the form in which they were transcribed by the author, since the discrepancies from modern editions do not affect the general meaning. However, references to the passages of the footnotes have been given where not specified by Grote.

The abbreviations used by the author have been retained, except for & = and.

1. Essay on the character of Philip of Macedon
London, British Library
Add. MS. 29520, ff. 17-32r

This paper opens, from its very first sentence, with a firm criticism of Mitford's views on the king of Macedon. Grote's focus is on Philip's foreign policy actions, particularly in his relationship with Athens and its democratic institutions. In this aspect, opposing

²³ See B. Kinzer, *George Grote, The Philosophic Radical and Politician*, in Demetriou (ed.), *Brill's Companion to George Grote and the Classical Tradition* cit., pp. 16-46.

any attempts to justify the actions of the Macedonian king, he sees a reflection of Philip's character, ambition and will to rule.

At the time of Grote's writing, Mitford's opinion enjoyed a certain amount of success²⁴, to the point that he countered it with the recovery of an older, mid-eighteenth-century interpretation by Thomas Leland (1722-1785), author of *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip, King of Macedon* (1758)²⁵, who saw ambition as the main trait of Philip's character.

As mentioned above, a tighter historiographical and philological critique of Mitford's work and method will be conducted by Grote in his 1826 review to the *Fasti Hellenici*, in which it is precisely the treatment of Philip of Macedon's story that is examined and challenged²⁶. In these early papers Grote focuses, on the one hand, on the attitudes held by Philip in his foreign policy with Greek cities, especially Athens, and, on the other, on the decadence of the latter's democratic constitution. This aspect, in fact, was the key lever on which Mitford's criticism, his sympathy for the Macedonian king, rested.

Finally, Grote seems to take up from the end of Leland's biography of Philip a brief comparison between the Macedonian king and Julius Caesar²⁷, and expands it into a parallel between the two characters that forms the last paragraph of the paper. The comparison culminates with two striking images: the relationship of Philip and Caesar with their ambition, like that of sons with a mother, and the death of both of them, which occurred at the height of their glory, while they were preparing a great venture to Asia, prompted by their own mother, Ambition.

²⁴ See Clarke, *George Grote. A Biography* cit., p. 33.

²⁵ T. Leland, *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip, King of Macedon*, II voll., Thomas Harrison, London 1758.

²⁶ See specifically Grote, review of Henry Fynes Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici* cit., pp. 308-327.

²⁷ Leland, *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip, King of Macedon*, II, cit., p. 308: «if he was unjust, he was like Caesar: unjust for the sake of empire».

^{17r} Philip of Macedon

I can by no means agree in the excessive panegyrics which Mr. Mitford bestows on the character of this prince. One would imagine, in perusing the account he has given of his reign, that Philip who had raised his kingdom, from the dismembered and half ruined state in which he succeeded to it, to the wealthy, flourishing and powerful monarchy which he left it, and from the weakest potentate had become the undisputed master of Greece, had really received all his conquests as free gifts, may even rather against his inclination. D. ^ Leland's²⁸ account which resolves all his actions into one ruling passion, ambition, appears to me far more candid and probable. If several of his actions bear the stamp of generosity, as they undoubtedly | ¹⁸ do, are we to attribute it to any sincere desire of benefiting the parties to whom it was displayed? Far from it; the benefit of it accrued and was intended to accrue solely to himself. He received the full fruit of them in the reputation which they gained him, a reputation which seems so generally to have prevailed, that had they not all uniformly been attended with some present or future advantage to him, one might almost suppose them to have been sincere. Yet if not the most generous conqueror, he undoubtedly was the best actor of generosity the world ever saw. There exist many points of resemblance between Philip and Cæsar, and none greater than the assumption of clemency by the one and generosity by the other. The reason is obvious; each was contending for permanent empire, and it was the | ¹⁹ interest of neither to ruin the country, or injure the persons, of those whom they were afterwards to govern; Had he displayed a different temper and driven his opponents to despair, it had been utterly impossible for Cæsar and very nearly so for Philip to have attained the height to which he aspired.

There are one or two perplexing circumstances, which it is not easy to reconcile with the idea that Philip acted throughout on a deliberate design of enslaving Greece. The chief of these is the character of the party who uniformly furthered Philip's views, whom Mitford calls "the most respectable men of this, or perhaps of any time".²⁹ Is it imaginable that such men as Phocion and Isocrates, with the rest of what is generally termed the aristocratic party at Athens could have been so far | ²⁰ mistaken as to believe the designs of Philip fair and amicable? Or can we admit the idea that they would ever have promoted those designs, had they been aware of their real nature and spirit? A passage in the Oration ad Philippum of Isocrates will, I think, incline us to this latter opinion, tho it must necessarily diminish our ideas of the high honor and inflexible

²⁸ The abbreviation «D. ^», as it appears in Grote's manuscript, stands for «Doctor of Divinity», obtained by Leland in 1757.

²⁹ See W. Mitford, *The History of Greece*, VIII, printed by Luke Hansard & Sons, near Lincoln's-Inn Fields, for T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, London 1814, p. 107.

integrity of the party to which he belonged; (p:232-235 Battie³⁰) He has been previously recounting to Philip the reports which evil disposed persons had been spreading of his intention of marching with the Thebans, Thessalians, and all the Amphictyonic states into Peloponnesus, under pretence of aiding the Messenians, but in reality with the view of subjecting the country, and utterly subjecting (ποιεῖν ἀνασάτους³¹) | ²¹ the Lacedæmonians; It was impossible, he says, that the king of Macedon ever could have entertained any such ideas * because he was a descendant of Hercules, who had conferred such lasting benefits on Greece, and therefore none of his progeny could ever disgrace himself so far as to attempt any thing against it, though such an attempt might do honour to the king of Persia. Yet, after enumerating these reports with an accuracy which would almost induce us to think that he did not entirely disbelieve them, he advised Philip not entirely to despise them, incredible as they were; *χρὴ δὲ τότε νομίζειν καλὴν ἔχειν καὶ μεγάλην τὴν δόξαν, καὶ πρέπουσαν σοὶ καὶ τοῖς προγόνοις, καὶ τοῖς ὑφ' ὑμῶν πεπραγμένοις, ὅταν οὕτω διαθῆς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὥσπερ ὄρᾳς Λακεδαιμονίους τε πρὸς τοὺς ἑαυτῶν βασιλέας ἔχοντας, τοὺς τε | ²² ἑταίρους τοὺς σοὺς πρὸς σὲ διακειμένους³².* Isocrates wished then that the Grecians might stand to Philip in the same relation as his ἑταῖροι stood to him and as the Lacedæmonians did to their kings. Now the ἑταῖροι of the king of Macedon, (equivalent to the comites or Counts of more modern days) though they stood in the first rank of his subjects, were still his subjects in the strictest sense of the word, and could refuse no duty which he might impose on them. The Lacedæmonians too were at least the subjects, tho not the slaves of their kings. If the royal power was there restrained beyond the possibility of extension, it was restrained not by any extraordinary privileges possess by the people, but by the balancing influence of a third body in the state, the Ephori. Had Philip of Macedon obtained the same | ²³ power over Greece which the Spartan kings possess over the Lacedæmonians, no means could have been devised to prevent his extending it without limit, for no balancing power could possibly have existed. In either case, if the ideas of Isocrates were fulfilled, Athens would have fallen under the sway of Philip, and we may thence, I think, reasonably infer,

³⁰ The edition of Isocrates' orations and letters used by Grote is the one edited by William Battie, first published in 1729, including notes by Hieronymus Wolf. The page numbering given by Grote corresponds to this first edition. See W. Battie (ed.), *Isocratis Orationes septem et epistolæ*, Typis Academicis, Cambridge 1729.

³¹ Cf. Isocr., *Phil.*, 74.

* ^{20v} I know not whether the mode of reasoning he adopts towards the Lacedæmonians or towards the king of Persia, be the most singular. It is at least candid to allow, as he conceived attacks on Barbarians were creditable to Greece, that any attempts on the latter would also do honour to the Barbarians.

³² Isocr., *Phil.*, 79-80.

that the wishes of the Aristocratical party, indirectly at least, had a view to that end.

It may perhaps be said in excuse for Isocrates, that he found the Athenian constitution so oppressive and hazardous that it was impossible not to wish for an alteration, and that such alteration could not be for the worse. He found it so no doubt, and it would be matter of surprise if he had not desired a change, but to achieve that change by the ²⁴ intervention of foreigners was not the less unjustifiable. Can we pardon the all-accomplished and excellent Lord Russell's correspondence with the French Ambassadors even to attain ends the most important and invaluable?³³

Another perplexing circumstance is the masterly letter written by Philip to the Athenians after his failure before Byzantium, which contains charges so direct, and facts so clearly stated, as to bear the appearance of the most unanswerable accuracy. Not a single charge is disproved, not a single fact is contradicted, by Demosthenes, though his Oration, delivered purposely on this letter, is still extant. In this letter the king of Macedon takes advantage of the many imprudent acts of the Athenian republic, together with the abuses which ²⁵ ensued from the employment of mercenaries, and the unlimited discretionary power conferred on the general. The usual commander of that period, Chares, applied the armaments under his orders to his own emolument in any operations by which that purpose was best attainable. Such was the wretched state of the Athenian judicature, that the ἐπιθύνη, or censorial examination which awaited his return, was easily overleapt or eluded by corruption or improper influence. The greater part of the charges may be accounted for, though certainly not justified, from the senseless weakness which at that time pervaded the Athenian republic. That the politics of the Athenians were often marked by insincerity and want of principle, and almost constantly by indecision and

³³ Lord William Russell (1639-1683), called "the Patriot" or "the Martyr", MP, in the first half of 1678, in order to avoid an English war against France, met several times with Henri de Massue de Ruvigny, Lady Russell's cousin, sent by King Louis XIV in an attempt to persuade the English MPs to oppose this project. The emergence of some letters forced Russell, at the end of the year, to defend himself in Parliament against the accusation of being in league with the French, along with the rest of the parliamentary opposition. Lord Russell acted on the assumption that King Charles II wanted to use the war with France as a pretext to reduce English parliamentary liberties and Protestantism by force of arms once he had arranged a peace with the enemy state. See L.G. Schworer in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. «Russell, William, Lord Russell [called the Patriot, the Martyr]», online version, Oxford University Press, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/24344. The parliamentary debate, held on 20 December 1678, can be read in A. Grey (ed.), *Debates of the House of Commons*, VI, T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, London 1769, pp. 359-364.

fickleness, is beyond |²⁶ dispute. Yet whatever opinion we may entertain of the character and conduct of the Athenians, the views of Philip will appear in the same light; an uniform and grand plan of rendering himself the master of Greece, towards which point all his measures tended. It is true, that the unprincipled conduct of Athens afforded him often pretences, as her indolence did facilities, for executing his designs; but as his activity could supply the defect of the one his ambition likewise could that of the other. Ambition discovers itself in unprovoked attacks upon weaker powers; and according to all the historical testimony that remains to us, no aggression could be more unprovoked than that of the king of Macedon on the Thracian cities Perinthus and Byzantium.

²⁷ Philip's panegyrists instance his conduct in Thessaly, and the goodwill universally displayed towards him there, as proofs of the generosity with which he acted. The Thessalians were doubtless kindly disposed towards him, and it would be matter of surprise if they were not so, since the rival influence against which he directed his force was the τυραννική οἰκία³⁴, from which they had suffered the most cruel oppression. But how general soever might be the popularity he enjoyed there, it was not to that arm alone that he trusted for controuling what Demosthenes calls τὸ ἄπιστον ἀεὶ³⁵ of the Thessalian temper, since he found it necessary to place Macedonian garrisons in their principal cities, Pagasa and Magnesia.

In his conduct in the siege of Amphipolis, the |²⁸ king of Macedon was blameless as far as regards the Amphipolitans themselves. Diodorus positively affirms, and his assertion will be emitted to credit where it is consonant to probability, and uncontradicted by better evidence, that the city of Amphipolis gave him many provocations (Lib. 16 c.)³⁶ (πολλὰς προφάσεις αὐτῷ δόντων εἰς πόλεμον). Now Demosthenes expressly asserts, that Philip lulled the Athenians during the siege with promises of surrendering it to them as soon as he should be master of it; But for obvious reasons, his authority unsupported by others is not to be implicitly relied on. Yet allowing but the least possible weight to this assertion, the more natural supposition to believe, that some promise or hint of this kind must have been given to amuse the |²⁹ Athenians; For otherwise, can we imagine that those people would have been so blindly indolent as to suffer a place of the importance of Amphipolis to fall into the hands of Philip without a single effort to prevent it? A place of the most vital consequence to him, and which, in the possession of a state of tolerable force, would have been

³⁴ Dem., *Olynth.*, 2.14.

³⁵ Dem., *Olynth.*, 1.22.

³⁶ Reference to the number of the book of Diodorus was added by Grote in a second time in the main text, on the quotation between brackets. An empty space after "c." is left blank by Grote to insert the reference to chapter, but he never added it. Cf. D.S. 16.8.2 πολλὰς ἀφορμὰς δόντων εἰς πόλεμον.

an insuperable obstacle to the extension of his dominions? Can we imagine that they would have omitted to succour a city, the loss of which they had most bitterly felt, and which they had vainly struggled to recover, and that at a time when Athenians succours would not only have preserved it from the arms of Macedon, but would have regained it completely to the influence of Athens?

It is next to impossible amidst the jarring testimonies | ³⁰ of the two rival orators, to comprehend precisely the intrigues which preceded and led to the treaty between Athens and Macedon previous to the destruction of the Phocians. It seems beyond dispute that the former were ignorant of the designs entertained by Philip and there is high probability that they were misled by Æschines and their ambassadors, as Demosthenes has asserted.* Æschines allows that he mentioned his belief³⁷ that the king of Macedon acted upon motives far more friendly to the Athenians, than his measures afterwards showed him to be; Demosthenes accuses him of having reported promises given by the former to that effect. Philip's conduct through the whole of his treaty appears to have been a masterpiece of art. He veiled his designs with the most impenetrable secrecy | ³¹ until the instant when they were ripe for execution; when once in motion, his march was so rapid, that Phalæcus, who with 8000 men possessed Nicæa, Alponus, and Thronium and commanded the pass of Thermopylæ, not in the least (as* Æschines allows) aware of his approach, was surprised into a capitulation; To crown the whole, his designs were so secret and unforeseen, that the Phocians believing that in him lay their only hope of safety, surrendered to him without a blow their country, their fortresses and themselves. A seat in the Amphictyonic assembly, and the command of the straits of Thermopylæ, by a garrison of Thessalians which he retained in Nicæa, were the fruits of this consummate scheme of policy.

We cannot, I think, reasonably doubt that Philip | ³² was little scrupulous as to the means by which he made his acquisitions. Like Cæsar, he was the first politician and the first general of his age; like Cæsar, he stood preminent in the winning graces of manner and conversation; like Cæsar, he was free in his private life; like Cæsar, he proposed some natural, and much affected, mercy and generosity; like Cæsar, he raised himself by his own exertions from a low beginning to be the master of all around him; like Cæsar, he was ambition's favorite child, and it must be confessed, devoted himself to his mother with a fondness truly filial; in conclusion, like Cæsar, at the summit of his glory, when preparing for an expedition to Asia, his life was cut short by the dagger of an assassin.

* ^{29v} de Legat. cap. 37.

³⁷ The word «belief» is underlined in the manuscript.

* ^{30v} de Legat. 41.

2. Essay on Isocrates' *Areopagiticus*
London, British Library
Add. MS. 29520, ff. 32v-39

In the immediately following sheet, we find the other paper, dedicated to Isocrates' *Areopagiticus*. This paper by Grote is intimately linked to the one on Philip and appears as a kind of continuation of it. It begins on folio 33, but on folio 32v, the same where the previous paper ends, a note is written pertaining to this essay. Up to this point, Grote has contested Mitford's view of Philip of Macedon's history and political personality, based on the idea inspiring Isocrates' appeal to Philip, quoted in the previous paper, namely that the democratic constitution of Athens could no longer be reformed except through the intervention of an externally enlightened ruler. In this note Grote goes to the roots of Mitford's pro-oligarchical conception, which found a key ancient reference point in the views expressed by Isocrates in his oration *Areopagiticus*³⁸. In the previous paper Grote stresses Mitford's consideration of the Athenian aristocratic party, which had precisely in Isocrates one of its major references, as composed of «the most respectable men of this, or perhaps of any time»; it is for this reason that Grote now wants to get to the foundations of Isocrates' thought.

Grote's attention in this short paper, indeed, is focused on Isocrates' idea of democracy and on its application as a reading tool in Athenian and Spartan society. According to Grote himself, Isocrates presents «a perfect idea of a democracy; where the legislative and judicial powers are in the hands of the people, and the executive in the hands of the optimates, who receive rewards for their services, not in power or hereditary rank, but in praise and reputation alone»³⁹. Following this definition, what is most striking about Grote

³⁸ The consistency of Grote's criticism of Mitford between the first and second papers is also confirmed by the challenge of Mitford's dating of the oration, immediately at the beginning of this essay.

³⁹ On Grote's praise of popular courts as a useful element in preventing an oligarchic turn, see C. Marcaccini, *Democrazia e impero ad Atene nella History of Greece di George Grote*, «Gerión» 37/2, 2019, pp. 496-499.

is Isocrates' consideration of Sparta as a democracy. Likewise, he points out how Isocrates' praise of the constitutions of Solon and Clisthenes, compared to the degeneration of the present times, would find reason in the greater influence that wealthier citizens could exert on poorer ones at the time. In this way, by praising the democracy of the origins the Athenian orator would in fact only express his preference for a regime that is much more similar to an oligarchy.

^{33r} *Isocratis oratio Areopagitica

This oration, or rather pamphlet in the form of an oration for it was never spoken, was composed, as far as we can collect from its own internal evidence, certainly after the conclusion of the social war, and the loss of all the Athenian possessions in Thrace, and probably from an expression p. 281⁴⁰ – τούς μὲν Θηβαίων φίλους σώζειν ἠναγκασμένοι, τοὺς δ' ἡμετέροισιν ἀπολωλεκότες. – after the transactions relating to the Megalopolitans. 352.B.C. Mitford (8.72⁴¹) seems to place it rather earlier, but I do not know what other allies of

^{32v} * A passage in this oration (p. 304 B.) seems to have been misunderstood by Wolf; In defending himself from the imputation of being μισόδημος, Isocrates says; ἐγὼ δὲ εἰ μὲν περὶ πραγμάτων ἀγνοουμένων καὶ κοινῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐποιούμην, καὶ περὶ τούτων ἐκέλευον ὑμᾶς ἔλεσθαι συνέδρους ἢ συγγραφέας, δι' ὧν ὁ δῆμος κατελύθη τὸ πρότερον, εἰκότως ἂν ἔσχον τὴν αἰτίαν ταύτην. W. thinks that this alludes to the 10 συγγραφεῖς αυτοκράτορες chosen by Pisander and his party, which the Athenian fleet were at Samos, and quotes a passage of Thucydides to that effect. It is however far more likely to allude to the 30 tyrants, who were appointed first with that title, and by whom the democracy was indeed dissolved. The Government of Pisander's party was of such short duration, as to have scarcely produced any effect worth recording at the distance of time that Isocrates wrote. Xenoph. Hell. Lib. 2. Cap. 3.2. ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ τριάκοντα ἄνδρας ἔλεσθαι, οἱ τοὺς πατρίους νόμους συγγράψουσι, καθ' οὓς πολιτεύσουσι. The decemviri at Rome were appointed with the same powers and abused them in the same manner, as the thirty at Athens. The same expression – τῆς τοῦ δήμου καταλύσεως – occurs as relating to the operations of the 30 Tyrants Hellen. 2. 3. 28. *The first Greek passage cited by Grote is Isocr. Areopag. 58.*

⁴⁰ Isocr., *Areopag.*, 10.

⁴¹ The reference stands for number of book and page of Mitford's *History of Greece*. Since Grote's manuscript is dated 1815 and in Mitford's first edition

the Thebans were protected by the Athenians, excepting the city of Megalopolis, to which from the nature of the phrase – ἠναγκασμένοι – it is exceedingly probable that Isocrates alludes, as the measure was always opposed by his party, and Megalopolis, as being a foundation of Thebes, would probably be spoken of in this manner. | ³⁴ The title by which this little work is distinguished appears rather surprising, when we find that the Court of Areopagus is only once mentioned during the whole, and that in a space of no great length. It is highly panegyricized certainly, but no direct opinion is given as to its probable effect in restoring the purity of the ancient discipline, nor any advice as to its reestablishment. The oration is throughout a sort of comparison of the actual with the former state of Athens, in which the excellent effect of the constitutions of Solon and Clisthenes on manners and discipline, are warmly eulogized, and contrasted with the deplorable condition of both at the time the author wrote. Scarcely any thing indeed can be imagined more fallen than the existing state of the republic. Their ancient sacred | ³⁵ rites were unattended, or those alone regarded to which some banquet was attached (p. 289); the people were drawing lots before the doors of the courts of justice for their livelihood, lounging in the baths or attending on the theatre, while mercenaries were hired for all military services (p. 302); laws had increased greatly, both in number and accuracy, and of course the crimes which rendered them necessary had multiplied in a far greater proportion (p. 295). So jealous was the Athenian democracy, discontented with the actual state of affairs, and yet preferring it to the preceding, (p. 283) that Isocrates scarcely dares to put forward even the contrast in the strongest light, but is obliged to use great precaution and dexterity in insinuating his meaning.

Some detached passages in this work deserve particular | ³⁶ notice. A very correct idea is given (p. 288) of a proper and pure democracy; ἐκεῖνοι (οἱ πρόγονοι) διεγνώκότες ἦσαν⁴² “Our ancestors had discerned, that the people, as sovereign, should appoint to the offices, punish offenders, and decide on doubtful points; and that those who had leisure, and a competent fortune, should have the care of public affairs, paying the same attention to them as they would to their own nearest concerns. These persons if they conducted themselves well, should receive applause and be contented with that honour; if they behaved ill, should meet with no mercy, but be liable to the highest penalties. How can there be imagined a more solid or fairer Democracy than this, which places the most powerful men in the active part, and makes the people sovereign over them?”

(printed by Luke Hansard & Sons, near Lincoln’s-Inn Fields, for T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, London 1810) the page does not correspond, Grote read the edition printed by the same publishers in London, 1814 (cf. note 29).

⁴² Isocr., *Areopag.*, 26. Grote adds the translation of the entirety of chapters 26-27.

This is indeed a perfect idea of a democracy; where the |³⁷ legislative and judicial powers are in the hands of the people, and the executive in the hands of the optimates, who receive rewards for their services, not in power or hereditary rank, but in praise and reputation alone. Yet, as accurate a conception as Isocrates had formed of a democracy, he considered the Lacedæmonian governments as the most eminent example of a democratic government *μάλιστα δημοκρατούμενοι*⁴³ (p. 306). If any ancient government were to be instanced which bore the least semblance of a Democracy, few, I think, would be preferred to Lacedæmon. The body of the people were there without any legal power; and the equality, which Isocrates remarks as existing there, was an equality, not of power, but of subjection to an higher influence. He mentions the *ἀρχῶν ἀίρεσις*⁴⁴, but the elective power at Sparta never at |^{38r} any time seems to have belonged to the people.

A passage in this oration (p. 291) marks clearly the kind of influence which the rich at Athens, in the early times of the republic, held over the poor. "They let them farms at low rents, they fitted them out for commercial expeditions, they assisted them to set up in other trades". Isocrates says that this kind of assistance was found to answer so well to both rich and poor, that the rich never lost any money by it. Of that I should entertain great doubts; but what they lost in money, they probably gained in influence. If these practises were general in Athens in the earlier years of the state, the government must have been far more leaning towards oligarchy than it was afterwards, and that probably is the cause of the warm eulogy which |^{38v} Isocrates bestows upon it, for in spite of his denial of any such predilection, we may observe in him and in his party a very strong tendency to oligarchy, altho he chases to term it democracy, as in the case of the Lacedæmonian government. In fact it seems an absolute contradiction to term the Lacedæmonian Government a democracy as he allows that they established the oligarchy at Athens of thirty (p. 309-310) who during their short sway put to death 1500 and exiled more than 5000 of the citizens, the one 1/14, the other 1/4 of the whole number in the time of Pericles and of Demetrius Phalereus. During their administration the thirty had borrowed 100 talents of the Spartans to expel the exiles from the Piræus, and this debt was publicly discharged by one of the first measures of the new government |³⁹ on the return of those exiles; a proceeding equally creditable whether we view it on the side of honour or of good policy. The line of conduct adopted by Athens immediately on the restoration of her liberties, and before she recovered her full power, was indeed most prudent and dignified, and is greatly to the praise of Thrasybulus and its other leading men. The government had then been brought back to its first principles, from which it very shortly after degenerated.

⁴³ Isocr., *Areopag.*, 61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

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Abstract.

Edition of two unpublished early papers of George Grote on Greek history. Grote's focus on Philip of Macedon and Athenian democratic constitution reflects the cultural and political debate in Britain between the Napoleonic wars and the *Reform Act* (1832), that modified the electoral system for access to the Parliament.

Keywords.

George Grote, Greek History, British Historiography, Philip of Macedon, Athenian Democracy, Isocrates.

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