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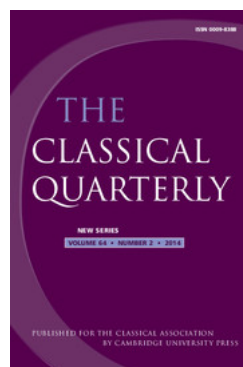
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On the Date of the Trial of Anaxagoras

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ON THE DATE OF THE TRIAL OF ANAXAGORAS.

IT is a point of some interest to the historian of the social and intellectual development of Athens to determine, if possible, the exact dates between which the philosopher Anaxagoras made that city his home. As everyone knows, the tradition of the third and later centuries was not uniform. The dates from which the Alexandrian chronologists had to arrive at their results may be conveniently summed up under three headings, (a) date of Anaxagoras' arrival at Athens, (b) date of his prosecution and escape to Lampsacus, (c) length of his residence at Athens. (a) The received account (Diogenes Laertius ii. 7),¹ was that Anaxagoras was twenty years old at the date of the invasion of Xerxes and lived to be seventy-two. This was apparently why Apollodorus (*ib.*) placed his birth in Olympiad 70 and his death in Ol. 88. 1, thus giving the years 500-428 B.C. of our reckoning. (*ib.*) The further statement of Apollodorus that Anaxagoras ἤρξατο φιλοσοφεῖν Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Καλλίου has given rise to discussion; but when we remember that Demetrius of Phalerum had made what 'Diogenes' regards as an equivalent statement in his register of archons, and had said that Anaxagoras was twenty years old at the time, I think there can be no doubt of the meaning. Demetrius had clearly mentioned something about Anaxagoras which was looked on as giving the date at which he 'began to philosophize,' and had given his age at the time. The natural interpretation is that Demetrius mentioned the year of Anaxagoras' arrival at Athens, and that this was taken as the time at which he ἤρξατο φιλοσοφεῖν.² And it is further reasonable to suppose that this date was the source of the further statement of Demetrius, that Anaxagoras was born in or about 500 B.C. We may, I think, infer that Demetrius recorded the arrival of Anaxagoras in Athens under the year 480, giving his approximate age at that time. ἐπὶ Καλλίου will therefore mean 'in the year of Calliades,' the archon of 480, and in the phrase ἤρξατο φιλοσοφεῖν Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Κ., Ἀθήνησι will go, as the order of the words requires, with ἤρξατο φιλοσοφεῖν, 'he began his life as a φιλόσοφος at twenty years of age, in the year of Calliades and at Athens.' The rival suggestion that

¹ The full text, as given by Diels (*Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*³ I. p. 375), runs: λέγεται δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ξέρξου διάβασιν εἰκοσὶν ἔτων εἶναι, βεβιωκέναι δὲ ἐβδόμηκοντα δύο. φησὶ δ' Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν τοῖς χρονικοῖς γεγενῆσθαι αὐτὸν τῆν ἐβδόμηκοστῆν ὀλυμπιάδι, τεθνηκέναι δὲ τῷ πρώτῳ ἔτει τῆς ὀγδοηκοστῆς ὀγδόης. ἤρξατο δὲ φιλοσοφεῖν Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Καλλίου ἔτων εἰκοσὶν ὄν, ὡς φησὶ Δημήτριος ὁ Φαληρεὺς ἐν τῇ τῶν Ἀρχόντων ἀναγραφῇ, ἔνθα καὶ φασὶν αὐτὸν

ἔτων διατρίψαι τριάκοντα. (There are no variants of reading which seriously affect the sense.)

² What other statement is it reasonable to imagine occurring in a list of Athenian archons? Even if it had been possible to determine some date at which Anaxagoras 'began to be a philosopher' before his arrival at Athens, is it conceivable that that date would have been inserted by Demetrius in such a work?

the Callias meant is the archon of 456 admits of an easy explanation, as we shall see directly, but is pretty certainly erroneous.¹

(b) As is well known, there are two rival statements about the trial of Anaxagoras which points to two discordant views about its date. Sotion (D. L. ii. 12) said that his accuser was Cleon, and the charge *ἀσέβεια*, but Satyrus that the accuser was Thucydides the son of Melesias, and the charge *ἀσέβεια and Medism*. Of course what this means is that while it was agreed that the prosecution was really a political attack on Pericles, Sotion supposed it, as Plutarch apparently did (*uit. Periclis* 32), to be part of the attack on Pericles by the more advanced democrats at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, while Satyrus regarded it as connected with the struggle by which Pericles originally rose to unchallenged political supremacy. It is rather important to ascertain, if we can, which view was the correct one, as the question of date is bound up with the wider question of the nature of the connection between Pericles and Anaxagoras. Was Anaxagoras simply a man of science, whom Pericles had brought to Athens during his tenure of virtual sovereignty as part of his policy of making the city the centre of Greek intellectual life, and to whom his position was simply that of patron, or was there a different and closer relation between them?

(c) On this point we have only one definite statement. 'It was said' (*φασίν*, D. L. ii. 7) that Anaxagoras spent thirty years at Athens. Presumably this was deduced from assumptions as to the dates of his arrival there, and his escape to Lampsacus. Hence modern writers, who almost universally assume the later date for the trial, are bound, like Diels, to suppose that the Callias in whose 'year' Anaxagoras came to Athens is the archon of 456, or else, like Professor Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, to give a forced exegesis of the statement of Demetrius that he *ἤρξατο φιλοσοφεῖν Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Καλλίου*.² (This exegesis, however, is apparently no longer maintained by Professor Burnet.) Of course, if you suppose that Anaxagoras came to Athens in 456, you must reject either the apparently excellently attested statement that he was only twenty at the time, or the account of Apollodorus of his age at death. No one can suppose that Anaxagoras lived on at Lampsacus until 404 B.C. And it ought to be apparent that the presupposition of the statements in Diogenes Laertius is that the years spent by Anaxagoras at Athens were the thirty years from 480

¹ The *ἐπὶ Καλλίου* of the statement ascribed to Demetrius need cause no difficulty. For it is equally possible (1) that *Καλλίου* is simply an error for *Καλλιᾶδου*, which should be replaced in the text; (2) that it is an early correction of what Demetrius said, based on the very assumption which I am trying to disprove, that the trial of Anaxagoras belongs to the years just before the Peloponnesian War; or (3) that *Καλλιᾶδης* was commonly called *Καλλίας* 'for short,' just as Zeuxippus was currently known as Zeuxis, or as Philistides (as Plato calls him) is most often spoken of in Greek history as Philistus. At any rate, if Demetrius said that Anaxagoras came to

Athens at the age of twenty, it is clear, in view of the other current statement, that Anaxagoras was just twenty at the time of Xerxes' expedition, and of the fourth-century belief that he had actually 'educated' Pericles, that Demetrius meant the notice to refer to 'the year of Calliades.'

² See Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. 1, pp. 272-3, ed. 2, p. 290. Contrast the more guarded statements (*Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato*, p. 76): 'his date is quite uncertain'; 'we do not really know either the date of it (the trial of Anaxagoras) or the precise nature of the charge.'

to 450, or, in other words, that the account given by Satyrus was right in placing his prosecution at the beginning and not at the close of Pericles' political career.

I propose to point out certain reasons which seem to me to decide the point absolutely in this sense, and in opposition to the confident statements of nearly all modern writers on the point :

(a) It is at once noticeable that the established tradition from the third century on was that Pericles was not merely the patron but the *μαθητής* of Anaxagoras. Even Sotion, who made Cleon the prosecutor of Anaxagoras, has this point when he says (D. L. ii. 12) that the speech for the defence was made by 'his disciple Pericles' (*ἀπολογουμένου δὲ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ Περικλέους τοῦ μαθητοῦ*). So Hermippus (*ib.* 13) represents Pericles as actually saying to the dicasts *καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ τούτου μαθητής εἰμι*. Yet it is clear, of course, that the view that Pericles had been a *μαθητής* of Anaxagoras is quite inconsistent with the notion that Anaxagoras was only brought to Athens by Pericles when the latter was already beginning to be a prominent statesman. What is clearly meant is that Pericles had been actually 'educated' by Anaxagoras, a perfectly possible thing if, and only if, the account which brings Anaxagoras to Athens in the time of the Persian wars is correct.

What is more important is that this view of the connection between the two men is as old as the fourth century. Isocrates expressly says (*περὶ ἀντιδόσεως* 235) that Pericles was a *μαθητής* of two men, Anaxagoras and Damon, and the remark is all the more significant that it is made in the course of a defence of the so-called 'corrupters' of the young, and has just been preceded by an apology for the name *σοφιστής*, based on the argument that Solon had in former times been called one of the *ἐπτὰ σοφισταί*. It is clear from this that Isocrates means to suggest that Anaxagoras too was a *σοφιστής* who had had charge of the early education of Pericles.¹ The well-known remarks of Plato in the *Phaedrus* (269e) about the influence of association with Anaxagoras on the oratorical style of Pericles really imply the same thing. When Plato says that Pericles had two great advantages, an endowment of natural genius (*τὸ εὐφυῆς εἶναι*), and the good fortune to fall in with Anaxagoras, from whose studies he *εἴλκυσε ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν λόγων τέχνην τὸ πρόσφορον αὐτῇ*, he clearly does not mean that Pericles was already a grown man and an active politician when he made the acquaintance of the philosopher. Unless his words are a wild exaggeration, he must mean that Pericles *came* to the career of the orator and statesman with the double initial advantage of natural genius and a mind elevated by early education in the favourite sciences of Anaxagoras.

(b) The assumptions made in the *Phaedo* about the relations between Socrates and Anaxagoras rest on the same view of chronology. For the purpose

¹ Isocrates, *op. cit.*, Σόλων μὲν τῶν ἐπτὰ σοφιστῶν ἐκλήθη καὶ ταύτην ἔσχε τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τὴν νῦν ἀτιμαζομένην καὶ κρινομένην παρ' ὑμῖν, Περικλῆς δὲ δυοῖν

ἐγένετο μαθητής, Ἀναξαγόρου τε τοῦ Κλαζομενίου καὶ Δάμωνος κ.τ.λ. Indeed, as a point of grammar, *σοφισταῖν* is obviously to be supplied with *δυοῖν*.

of the present argument it is immaterial whether the account Socrates gives in that dialogue of his early years is fact or fiction. The point is that even if it is fiction Plato has been careful, as it was his business to be careful, that it shall be chronologically possible. As may be seen from the notes e.g. in Professor Burnet's edition of the dialogue, the theories which are represented as perplexing the young Socrates are just those which would naturally be interesting to students of *ἱστορία περὶ φύσεως* about the middle of the fifth century, the views of Empedocles, Archelaus and Diogenes of Apollonia, and the mathematical puzzles of Zeno. It is therefore very significant that Socrates is depicted as first learning the views of Anaxagoras from hearing his 'book' read aloud by 'somebody' (presumably his successor Archelaus, *Phaedo* 97b-c, ἀκούσας μὲν ποτε ἐκ βιβλίου τινός, ὡς ἔφη, Ἀναξαγόρου ἀναγινώσκοντος). He then read the book for himself (98b, λαβὼν τὰς βίβλους ὡς τάχιστα οἶός τ' ἢ ἀνεγίνωσκον), and was much dissatisfied with it. But he did not, it appears, take the natural course of asking the author of the book for any explanation of his difficulties. In fact, as I have said elsewhere, Anaxagoras is the only first-rate figure among the 'wits' of Athenian society in the Periclean age whom Plato never represents Socrates as meeting. He is quite familiar with Protagoras and Hippias, and highly admired by Parmenides and Zeno, but, though so much impressed by the Anaxagorean doctrine of *νοῦς*, he appears never to have exchanged a word with Anaxagoras. This must mean that Plato thought of Anaxagoras as having already written his book and disappeared from Athens at a date when Socrates was still quite young.

The same assumption is made in the *Parmenides*. Socrates is there represented as full of his doctrine of *εἶδη*, which, according to the *Phaedo*, he only formulated *after* his failure to find satisfaction in Anaxagoras, yet his extreme youth is insisted on even more emphatically in the *Parmenides* than in the *Phaedo*. If Plato is making a fictitious 'life' for Socrates, he is doing so with a clear and definite chronological scheme in his mind. He wishes us to believe that Socrates had by about 450 B.C. hit on a doctrine to which he was led after his first acquaintance with the book of Anaxagoras, and that Anaxagoras was no longer a figure in Athenian life when Socrates 'heard some one' give a reading from his book. Plato must therefore, like Satyrus, have placed the prosecution of Anaxagoras early and not late in the public life of Pericles. This agrees precisely with what is implied in his own *Phaedrus* and stated in so many words by Isocrates, that Anaxagoras' connection with Pericles went back to the early years of the latter.

(c) The same conception appears in the opening of the *Greater Hippias*. (Again it does not matter whether, as I myself believe, the dialogue is genuine or not: it is in any case fourth-century work, and therefore evidence for the views of Plato's contemporaries about the chronology.) Through the opening pages of the dialogue there runs a systematic antithesis between Hippias and his contemporaries, and Anaxagoras, taken as an instance of the *σοφοί* of an earlier period. Thus 281c we hear of 'wise men of the past,' as forming

a series which begins with the sixth century and ends with Anaxagoras (οἱ παλαιοὶ ἐκεῖνοι ὧν ὀνόματα μεγάλα λέγεται ἐπὶ σοφίας, Πιπτακοῦ τε καὶ Βίαντος καὶ τῶν ἀμφὶ τὸν Μιλήσιον Θαλῆν καὶ ἔτι τῶν ὕστερον μέχρι Ἀναξαγόρου—where the οἱ ὕστερον are of course a subdivision of the παλαιοί); 283a, Hippias and Anaxagoras are contrasted as examples of the οἱ νῦν ἄνθρωποι and οἱ πρότερον respectively (καλὸν γε, ὦ Ἴππία, λέγεις καὶ μέγα τεκμήριον σοφίας τῆς τε σεαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν νῦν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχαίους ὅσον διαφέρουσι. τῶν γὰρ προτέρων πολλὴ ἀμαθία κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον. τοῦναντίον γὰρ Ἀναξαγόρας φασὶ συμβῆναι ἢ ὑμῖν). So below, after the story of Anaxagoras' abandonment of his inheritance, Socrates continues λέγουσι δὲ καὶ περὶ ἄλλων τῶν παλαιῶν ἕτερα τοιαῦτα. This opposition between Hippias as a 'contemporary' and Anaxagoras as a παλαιός would be unmeaning if the writer had believed, as most of the moderns do, that Anaxagoras was living in Athens down to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. He is evidently thought of as definitely belonging to a past generation—a view only explicable (since his death cannot be dated much before 428) by the supposition that he had long ago ceased to reside in Athens.

(d) Another indication which points in the same direction is that Anaxagoras' activity at Lampsacus plainly lasted for a considerable time after his removal thither from Athens. He was able to organize a school there in which he was succeeded by Metrodorus; he was so much thought of that, according to the anecdote, the authorities asked him, when he was dying, to name the mark of respect he would prefer to receive; even in the time of the Roman Empire the town placed his figure on its coins. All this is quite incompatible with a chronology which assumes him to have been already on the verge of seventy, if not older, when he left Athens and to have died almost as soon as he reached Lampsacus. A city does not erect statues, strike coins, and grant a regular annual holiday to its schoolboys in honour of a stranger who merely passes the last months of his life within its walls.

(e) Again, we have to account for the fact that the doxographical tradition which goes back to Theophrastus regularly mentions Socrates as the disciple of Archelaus who succeeded Anaxagoras as the head of his school at Athens. He is never represented, as e.g. Euripides regularly is, as a μαθητής of Anaxagoras himself. This is the more remarkable as the passage about Anaxagoras in the *Phaedo* might have been expected to give rise to such a tradition. Indeed, I do not see how to explain the absence of all reference to Socrates as a disciple of Anaxagoras, except by assuming that when the tradition was first fixed in the fourth and early third centuries it was pretty well known that Socrates did not come into contact with Anaxagoras but got his knowledge of him at second-hand from his successor (and, of course, from reading). This would be incredible if Anaxagoras had continued to preside over his school until Socrates was a man of forty, but it is what we should expect if Anaxagoras left Athens for ever when Socrates was eighteen or twenty. That leaves time for the succession of philosophers at Athens

regularly assumed by the doxographies, Anaxagoras (c. 480—c. 450), Archelaus (whose place is fixed as to date, as Professor Burnet reminds me, by Plutarch's statement that he wrote verses of condolence to Cimon on the death of his wife), Socrates. The admission of the earlier date for the prosecution also gives much more point to the references of Socrates in the *Apology* to the case of Anaxagoras, where his object is to suggest that the supposed charges of believing the sun to be a hot stone and the like are 'ancient history.' And I would just add that if the prosecution of Anaxagoras really belongs to the days of the struggle between Thucydides and Pericles, Satyrus is not at all unlikely to be right in saying that one of the charges against the accused was Medism. We can see from the *Acharnians* that even in the days of the Peloponnesian War an Athenian public man might very well be mixed up in proceedings which would give colour to charges of Medism against him and his friends, but it is much more conceivable that a prosecution for that offence should have taken place about the year 450. We must remember *where* Anaxagoras came from, and in what company a Clazomenian may very possibly have arrived at Athens in the year of Salamis.¹

Postscript.—The conclusion which follows from these considerations, viz., that Anaxagoras lived long enough after his banishment or flight from Athens to organize a flourishing scientific school in Asia Minor seems to me presupposed also by two considerations not mentioned in the text. (1) The existence of such a school with members in Clazomenae itself seems presupposed by the dramatic setting which Plato has given to his *Parmenides*. It is then taken for granted that at the imaginary date of the recital of Antiphon (which must, of course, be later than 399, since otherwise Cephalus and his friends would naturally have applied not to Antiphon but to Socrates himself for a narrative of his conversation with the great Eleatics), Clazomenae was a home of 'philosophers' who were so much interested in the relations of the youthful Socrates with Parmenides and Zeno that they apparently sent a deputation *especially* to learn the facts from Antiphon as the one person still living who could give a correct and full account of them (*Parmenides*, p. 126b-c). (2) It is apparently the same philosophical school who figure in the life of Epicurus (who drew some of his most devoted disciples from among them and seems to have begun his career as one of the circle), as 'the philosophers of Mytilene and Lampsacus.' Of the original Epicureans, Metrodorus, Polyaeus, Leonteus, Colotes, Idomeneus were all from Lampsacus, Hermarchus from Mytilene. Also it is not without significance that we

¹ This may be a good opportunity to call attention to a curious error in Diels' *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* arising from misapprehension of the real date of Anaxagoras' arrival at Athens. In D. L. ii. 16 we read of Archelaus, *μαθητῆς Ἀναξαγόρου, διδάσκαλος Σωκράτους· οὗτος πρῶτος ἐκ τῆς Ἰωνίας τὴν φυσικὴν φιλοσοφίαν μετέγαγεν Ἀθηναίῃς*. Diels (*Fr.*³ I. 410), in despite of the order

of words, insists on taking *οὗτος* to mean Anaxagoras. Of course it means Archelaus. He is said to have 'translated physics from Ionia to Athens' for the simple reason that he was the *first* native-born Athenian physicist. The words would not be true in a *literal* sense even of Anaxagoras, since it is now clear that he 'began to philosophize,' not in Ionia, but in Athens.

are told, on the authority of Diocles (D. L. x. 12), that Epicurus' own special preferences among the 'ancients' were 'for Anaxagoras and Archelaus the teacher of Socrates.' It is quite plain that there was an unusually flourishing body of 'philosophers' at Lampsacus in the early years of the third century, and it seems to me natural to suppose that this is explained by the activity of Anaxagoras there. If his residence there lasted for over twenty years this is intelligible; if, as is usually supposed, he reached Lampsacus a broken old man with no more than a year or two of life before him, this philosophical activity there a generation or so after his death is much more of a mystery.

Perhaps it may be thought that, even if I am right in my contention, I have devoted too much space to the correction of what is all only a very minor mistake in chronology. I admit that the particular mistake is in itself a comparatively small thing, but 'many a little makes a muckle,' and there are a good many similar cases. The history of scientific thought will never be rightly written, even in its main outlines, until we learn that a thing is none the more certain because it has been pronounced *allgemein bekannt* by a chorus of *Herren Professoren*.

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