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Athenian Civic Identities in Plutarch's Portrayals of Phocion and Demetrius of Phalerum

From the *polites* to the *kosmopolites*

Delfim Leão

Despite the fact that the fourth century BCE was a period of great literary vitality for Athens, the city no longer exercised the political and military hegemony it had throughout much of the fifth century. Moreover, neither Sparta nor any of the other Greek *poleis* were able to occupy such a dominant position for an extended period of time, thus leaving space for the rise of Macedonia. This is the historical context behind figures such as Phocion and Demetrius of Phalerum, who tried their best to find a balance between Athens and Macedonia at that turning point, at least in the way Plutarch portrays them. Like the case of Phocion (albeit in a more drastic manner and with a more violent ending), the activity of Demetrius of Phalerum, probably the last great Athenian *nomothetes*, illustrates the limitations and contradictions of a *polis* as great as Athens, which had to learn how to reinvent itself within the framework of effective Macedonian rule, despite alleged attempts to 'restore' democracy and the true 'ancestral constitution'. Both men are therefore good examples of the way in which various 'identities' could be negotiated and reshaped, paving the way for a broader identity constructed from a synthesis of encounters with 'otherness' in a wider *kosmopolis* that would be progressively integrated into the Roman domain.

Preliminary Remarks: The *Polis* and the Making of the *Polites*

In the opening of *An seni respublica gerenda sit* (784b), Plutarch considered it pertinent to recall the famous saying of Simonides, who declared that the '*polis* is a man's master'.[1] With that sort of declaration, the great poetic voice of Greek

[1] Fr. 90 West²: πόλις ἄνδρα διδάσκει. Unless expressly stated otherwise, the translations presented throughout this study are made by the author. The outline of these introductory remarks is based on

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resistance to the Persian invasions was also defining the essential feature of Hellenic existence throughout the Archaic and Classical periods through his renowned ability to construct pithy and elegant sayings. During this period, Greece developed and refined the *polis* system as the most balanced way of organizing its society, an option which from a Greek point of view was far preferable to the 'barbaric' autocracy that only recognized the power of the monarch—which would become all the more absolute and capricious in the smaller space left for his subjects to act freely. Against this backdrop, at least in theoretical terms, the Greek spirit proudly presented the sovereignty of the law, which bound equally the anonymous and indigent citizen and the most zealous magistrate to his duties.

Education by the *polis* and for the *polis* in the committed and conscious exercise of citizenship requires direct involvement in the interests of the city from each *polites*, a task that simultaneously represented both a prerogative and an obligation. On the one hand it signified privilege in comparison to all those who were excluded to varying degrees from the full use of that status, namely foreigners, metics, slaves, women, and children, whether such a situation was permanent or temporary, as would be the case, for instance, for a boy who had not yet reached the age of majority and whose parents were citizens. However, the exercise of citizenship was also an obligation from which some might feel tempted to escape.[2] From ordinary citizens, even if they were not particularly ambitious, the state required involvement in military activities, in the administration of the *polis*, and in the enforcement of justice. Initially, these domains were strictly reserved for the dominant aristocracy as they were closely linked to nobility of birth and disposable individual wealth. For this reason, broadening the basis of access to these privileges would only result from a long process of intense conflict.[3]

Also characteristic of the *polis* system, however, were its particularism and strong determination to maintain autonomy and identity. Hellas represented a common cultural and ideological space for the Greeks which let them cultivate an attitude of moral superiority over those who did not share this same universe of values, but it also suffered from a congenital inability to become a single, great nation.[4] For that to happen, each city would need to give up the pretence of being

Leão 2012a: 15–31. The chapter as a whole has benefited from more recent research related to the topic of the volume, which I have been developing under two projects: 'Crises (*staseis*) and Changes (*metabolai*). The Athenian Democracy in Contemporary Times', supported by CAPES (Brazil) and FCT (Portugal); and the project 'Rome Our Home: (Auto)biographical Tradition and the Shaping of Identity(ies)' (PTDC/LLT-OUT/28431/2017), funded by the FCT—Foundation for Science and Technology.

[2] For example, in order to avoid putting one's life at risk on the battlefield or disposing of one's own assets to perform a costly public service such as a liturgy.

[3] For a global approach to these factors and the way they were dealt with throughout the history of Athenian constitution see Leão and Ferreira 2010: 9–145, with extensive discussion of sources.

[4] Cohen 2000 challenges the prevailing Athenian paradigm by focusing his approach 'on Athens as an *ethnos* (a "nation")—one of its ancient characterizations—rather than as a *polis*, the dominant

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autonomous and sovereign with its own laws and constitution, capable of promoting an independent internal and external policy—and losing these characteristics was tantamount to denying the very essence of the system. Therefore, apart from occasional alliances with other *poleis* motivated by needs that were often occasional, city states as a rule preferred to cultivate self-sufficiency and direct participation in government, which in both cases confined the state and its body of citizens within relatively narrow limits.

In Athens, the majority of the citizenry had obtained the status of citizen (*polites*) as part of the inheritance of a legitimate child, someone who had been born (and thus publicly recognized) within a family of citizens. Citizenship rights could sometimes exceptionally be granted, as Plutarch describes during the time of Solon, who is said to have granted citizenship 'to those in permanent exile from their own land or to those who migrate to Athens with their whole household to ply a craft'.[5] During the first half of the fifth century when Athenian democracy was strengthening its stability, it would in principle have been sufficient for the father to be a citizen to secure that status for his descendants. Consequently, even if marriage had been enacted with a woman from another *polis*, that prerogative was maintained. This principle was amended by a law proposed by Pericles in 451/50 which stipulated that both parents should have citizenship status from the outset as a *sine qua non* for that same status to be passed to their offspring.[6]

The overall scope of Pericles' law seems clear: to limit the number of citizens through a more restrictive application of the *ius sanguinis*. In fact, while the democracy of the fifth century had expanded access to participation in popular sovereignty like no other regime, it could not increase the number of citizens indefinitely without questioning the very nature of direct and participatory democracy. Thus, while the concept of the citizen as well as the importance of Attica in Greece was becoming more apparent and thus making the status of an Athenian *polites* more appealing, obstacles were being increased at the same time. Certain forms of exclusion were therefore intensified, as is symbolically illustrated by the popularity of the autochthony myth in the second half of the fifth century.[7] The term *autochthon* is rarely used by Plutarch: only once in the *Lives*, at the beginning of Theseus' biography, where he states that 'Theseus' paternal ancestry goes back

modern denotation, and on slaves, foreigners, and women within this *ethnos* (rather than on *politai*, so-called male citizens)' (ix). Despite this focus on *ethnos* rather than on *polis*, it is still Athens that is considered as a 'nation' and not the whole of Greece as a big territorial entity.

[5] *Sol.* 24.4: *τοῖς φεύγουσιν ἀειφυγίᾳ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἢ πανεστίοις Ἀθήναζε μετοικιζομένοις ἐπὶ τέχνῃ*. For the reasons lying behind this decision, see Leão and Rhodes 2016: 131–32.

[6] This legislation is mentioned briefly in the *Constitution of Athenians* (*Ath. Pol.* 26.4) and has sparked heated debate. For an overview of the most significant secondary literature on the topic see Leão 2012c: 135–52, at n. 3.

[7] The observations made in this paragraph are based on Leão 2012c: 135–36. On the connection between the evolution of citizenship rights and the traces it left on literary expressions of the myth of autochthony, see among others Rosivach 1987; Bearzot 2007; Blok 2009.

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to Erechtheus and to the first *autochthones*'.[8] In fact, this reference suggests that Plutarch was not entirely immune to the idea that the 'founding father' of Athens relied on a privileged, innate connection to the very soil on which the *polis* was based.[9]

As is widely known, the long conflict between the Greeks during the Peloponnesian War had very important political and cultural repercussions, and in literary texts of that period there are recurring echoes of the vicissitudes caused by this struggle. Moreover, the two oligarchic attempts to overthrow radical democracy (in 411 and 404) must be understood as a result of the fatigue and setbacks produced by this long fratricidal conflict. Therefore, in addition to seizing the opportunity created by unsuccessful military campaigns, the perpetrators of these *coups* also took advantage of a desire to return to the *status quo* that prevailed before the war—an aspiration shared by many of the Athenians huddled within their city walls. The revolutionaries were also able to associate certain political ideas with this nostalgic feeling, promoting ideological propaganda in favour of the *patrios politeia*, 'ancestral constitution', whose recovery was becoming increasingly urgent in order to reverse the downward spiral into which the democratic regime had fallen.

Although *patrios politeia* is the expression that best embodies this concept, there are variants in the sources about recovering an 'ancestral' constitutional model which would mirror the true civic spirit that had shaped the greatness of Athens, e.g. expressions such as *patrioi nomoi* ('ancestral laws') or *kata ta patria* ('according to ancestral precepts'). Although this is not the place to analyse in detail this topic which I have discussed at length elsewhere,[10] it is nonetheless useful to highlight the moment when this concept of recovering an ancestral constitution entered the political debate, for we shall detect its influence throughout the political struggles of the fourth century as will be illustrated by the way Plutarch depicts Phocion and Demetrius of Phalerum.

In fact, throughout Athens' troubled history during the Peloponnesian War, *patrios politeia* appeared in political and even philosophical debates, and its increasing prominence is inseparable from the crisis of the democratic regime, especially after the disaster of the Sicilian expedition in 413. Although at various times this idealization of the past appears to be linked to moderate politicians, this

[8] *Thes.* 3.1: *Θησέως τὸ μὲν πατρῷον γένος εἰς Ἐρεχθέα καὶ τοὺς πρώτους αὐτόχθονας ἀνήκει.*

[9] In her contribution to this volume, Chapter 7, Kavoulaki argues that in the section devoted to the building programme of the *Pericles* Plutarch implies that the way this programme shaped the topography of Athens is directly connected to its identity as a *polis*.

[10] Fuks 1953: 33–83 launched in systematic terms the discussion of this problem; Cecchin 1969 and Witte 1995 provide as well a comprehensive approach. For the most relevant sources and secondary literature regarding this propagandistic ideal, see Leão 2001: 43–72. On the slogan of the city's *soteria* during the crises of 411 and 404, and how it was systematically exploited to undermine the bases of popular resistance and of democracy itself, see Bearzot 2013.

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does not mean that the concept is their creation.[11] What the sources suggest is that this ideal of a *patrios politeia* would have been one that circulated in political debates of the time, and even if it was not the sophists who introduced it, one must at least accept that their method of education, which almost all the Athenian public figures of the last quarter of the fifth century had experienced, would have contributed greatly to feeding the discussion.

On the other hand, *patrios politeia* also designated a vague enough reality that it could lend itself to propagandistic use by the three great political viewpoints of the time: extreme conservatives, moderates and radicals. The creation of this ancestral constitution was originally credited to Cleisthenes, but in a reverse of the actual chronology was transferred to Solon and eventually, at the turn of the fourth century, to Draco.[12] Despite differences in some details, references to *patrios politeia* are a clear symptom of a more pervasive reality: the widespread feeling of decadence in Athens. Nevertheless, the Athenians continued clearly to prefer the democratic regime in which they would live for much of the fourth century, a period of vigorous literary vitality. In any case, Athens would not recover the political and military hegemony that it had held for much of the fifth century. Moreover, neither Sparta nor any of the other Greek *poleis* were capable of leading Greece indefinitely, thus paving the way for the growing power of Macedonia, first with Philip II and then with his son, Alexander, whose remarkable charisma would bring him enormous military and political success and mark the end of the particularism and vitality characteristic of the *polis* system. This political ambience pervades the way in which Plutarch perceives the deeds of several Athenian statesmen and the circumstances in which they lived as an increasingly palpable sign of a budding decadence.[13] It is now time to approach the way this process may be detected in the portraits of Phocion and Demetrius of Phalerum, which present significant similarities, even if they also display important differences in extent and intensity.

Plutarch's Portrayal of Phocion: Being a *Polites* in Adverse Circumstances

The sense of a budding Athenian decadence towards the end of the Peloponnesian War, as highlighted in the previous section, continued throughout the fourth

[11] Their main leader was Theramenes—a rather labile character from a political point of view. On the circumstances regarding the *coups* of 411 and 404 and especially concerning the political profile of Theramenes, see Harding 1974; Murphy 1989; Lang 1992; Sano 2018; Sebastiani 2018a; Sebastiani 2018b; Sebastiani and Leão 2020.

[12] This period of political uncertainty which essentially lasted from 411 to 404 had the practical advantage of stimulating a process of legislative revision which began in 410 and would continue until after the second democratic restoration in 403.

[13] From a different angle, this dynamic is pointed also by Kavoulaki and Duff in this volume, Chapters 7 and 8, respectively, particularly in their analyses of Alcibiades.

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century, serving as a backdrop to Plutarch's *Life of Phocion*. Here was a figure whose political career took place in the shadows of Athens' unrealistic expectation of recovering its glorious past and the concrete need to negotiate with a new dominant power. The terms of that effective and humiliating submission reveal the levels of autonomy to which Athens had become accustomed, particularly during the golden years of democracy. Perhaps for this very reason, Plutarch's biography of this statesman is comparable in certain respects to that which he wrote for Alcibiades.[14] Despite the points of comparison, from the outset the two biographies diverge on a key central point: Alcibiades was a *polites* in a city whose democratic institutions were still operative, even if he managed to manipulate them to his advantage; by contrast, Phocion was doubly unfortunate because restoration of Athenian power was unattainable and, by then, democratic institutions were merely nominal.

Despite this basic difference in their historical settings, Plutarch illustrates in both biographies the way in which the notion of *kairos*[15] could explain divergent developments in the careers of politicians who seemed from the outset to have exceptionally favourable conditions for success. As was the case with Alcibiades, the *kairos* would end up being unfavourable to Phocion, but for very different reasons. The former was a victim of the eagerness that marked him out and infected those who crossed his path. This trait was largely responsible for the reckless decisions that marked the beginning of the democratic regime's decline while diminishing Alcibiades' chances of becoming a fully worthy successor to Pericles. In Phocion's case, although he may have been the right person for the job, he could not overcome the fact that he lived in a time that was unfavourable towards him.[16] Moreover, even if Phocion, unlike Alcibiades, was not involved in any crime of *asebeia* ('impiety'), it is still particularly significant that, at the end of the biography, Plutarch compares his death to that of Socrates, these being two examples of religious impiety committed by popular collective blindness. On the other hand, although Eleusis does not, in Phocion's case, have the significance

[14] As has quite often been remarked, there were other treatments of Phocion's deeds, notably by the Roman Cornelius Nepos, who wrote a *Phocion* in the first century BCE. Centred on Phocion's career and political profile, it is very short (less than two Oxford text pages), and he is presented more critically than by Plutarch. Nepos shows, however, that the Romans felt attracted to this statesman, who lived in the twilight of the democratic regime. It is probable that among Nepos' sources were contemporaries of Phocion, such as Demochares (nephew of the orator Demosthenes) and the politician Demetrius of Phalerum. Nepos presents the latter as belonging to the same political faction as Phocion (*Phoc.* 3.1: *Erant eo tempore Athenis duae factiones, quarum una populi causam agebat, altera optimatium. In hac erat Phocion et Demetrius Phalereus*). See Tritle 1992: 4261–66.

[15] The literal meaning is 'favourable occasion', but it can also be interpreted somewhat freely in the sense of 'political timing'. On the way in which Plutarch explores these and other related concepts in Phocion's biography, see Leão 2010; Leão 2020b. On their use in the biography of Alcibiades in connection with the notion of *asebeia*, see Leão 2012b. These three previous studies have inspired the core arguments expressed here. For *kairos* see also Trédé-Boulmer 1992.

[16] The way in which Plutarch opens the biography, comparing the performances of Demades and Phocion, is a clear expression of this (*Phoc.* 1.1–6).

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which it had for Alcibiades, it is worth pointing out that Plutarch also resorts to imagery drawn from the Mysteries to stress the political timing of some of the most significant moments of Phocion's political career, thus pointing out the routes of both ascent and descent which metaphorically mirror the decline of the Athenian *polis* itself.[17]

Alcibiades had a relatively short life, albeit one marked by great adventures and transformations. In contrast Phocion not only lived longer (402 to 318), but also can be distinguished from Alcibiades by his remarkable career in the service of Athens, holding the position of *strategos* an unprecedented forty-five times.[18] Furthermore, although he preferred peace and tranquillity and did not promote military expeditions of his own initiative, he never turned his back on those responsibilities, again marking a profound contrast with Alcibiades, who not only inflamed the long-standing Athenian interest in Sicily, launching Athens into a disastrously megalomaniac campaign, but also changed his national allegiance several times because of his personal ambitions, never truly espousing with any value other than vanity itself.[19]

The historical contexts of Alcibiades and Phocion are also quite different. The former was active during the Peloponnesian War and could have reasonably been expected to help prevent Athens from falling into the swamp of decay as a military power; Plutarch's Phocion in contrast would have been the right person to lead an Athenian recovery if its state of subjection were not already so advanced. But instead he would go on to witness the progressive political and military decline of Athens and the growing influence of Macedonia under Philip and Alexander, as well as the uncertainties and turmoil linked to the early years of the *Diadochi*'s rule. According to Plutarch, both statesmen had the benefit of a good education—Alcibiades enjoyed the privilege of Socrates' company (*Alc.* 1.3; 4.1–4; 6.1–5; 7.4–5; 17.5), while Phocion was a pupil of Plato and Xenocrates (*Phoc.* 4.2). Both nonetheless ended up failing for different reasons: Alcibiades for having squandered the Socratic *paideia* and his natural gifts,[20] and Phocion for having

[17] The 'Socratic' death of Phocion in Plutarch and the idea that it constitutes a crime of *asebeia* have attracted much scholarly attention. See e.g. Tritle 1992: 4258–97; Mossé 1998; Alcalde Martín 1999; Trapp 1999; Fialho 2010–11; Erskine 2018: 252–56; Leão 2020c. The contributions of Kavoulaki and Duff in this volume (Chapters 7 and 8 respectively) offer interesting insights into the relation between Alcibiades and Eleusis.

[18] Plut. *Phoc.* 8.1–2. Bearzot 1993a: 124–27 questions its historical accuracy, arguing from the absence of confirmation in other sources—only Aelian refers to it indirectly and vaguely (*VH* 12.49: *πολλάκις στρατηγήσας*). As a consequence, Bearzot believes that this information has all the appearance of being an apologetic magnification, aimed at accentuating Phocion's superiority over other politicians, both his contemporaries and those of earlier periods. In this sense, it is possible that *Phoc.* 8.2 (*ἀλλ' οὐδὲ φεύγων οὐδ' ἀποδιδράσκων τῆς πόλεως καλούσης*) may constitute an indirect allusion, by contrast, to the irregular conduct of Alcibiades.

[19] Cf. Plut. *Alc.* 17.1–4.

[20] On Plutarch's Alcibiades as a failed product of Socrates' *paideia* see Fialho 2008.

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lived at a time that was no longer conducive to his capacity to counteract the decline of Athens.

It is this reality that Plutarch underlines in the initial somewhat 'programmatic' part of the biography by introducing the figures of Phocion and his Roman counterpart Cato the Younger. These *Lives* belong to a cluster of four pairs that do not have formal *synkriseis.*[21] The final comparison is not exactly suppressed but rather anticipated at the beginning of the narrative (*Phoc.* 3.2–5), thus inviting the reader to establish parallels between the two statesmen from the very outset (although the implications of this comparison will only become fully perceptible later).[22] Indeed, Plutarch (3.2) begins his comments on Cato with an agricultural metaphor to emphasize the pivotal effect that 'opportune timing' has in this pair of biographies. When fruits ripen out of season (*μὴ καθ' ὥραν' ἐκφανεῖσι καρποῖς*) they earn pleasure and approval, but in the end they do not fulfil their intended purpose. And while Cato's Rome was not equivalent to Phocion's Athens—the former faced only a storm, while the latter had entered into irretrievable degeneration—Cato like Phocion committed himself to rescuing the state's sinking ship and engaged in an enormous struggle against unfavourable circumstances (*μέγαν ἀγῶνα τῇ τύχῃ*). When circumstances are unfavourable, the *arete* of valiant men cannot flourish and bear fruit as would be expected otherwise: Phocion was defeated 'in an unequal contest with an adverse timing' (1.4: *ὥσπερ ἀνταγωνιστῇ βαρεῖ καὶ βιαίῳ καιρῷ*), while Cato's virtue ended up being considered 'old-fashioned behaviour' (3.3: *ἀρχαιοτροπία*).[23]

Nevertheless, the combination of innate qualities and careful *paideia* characterizes the first military campaigns of Phocion, who played a decisive role in the victory of Naxos at the behest of Chabrias. This detail is not confirmed by any source other than Plutarch. Additionally, Phocion would only have been 26 years old in 376, too young for the post of *strategos*. This information thus appears to be historically unreliable and it is not implausible that Phocion's role in the conflict has been exaggerated, perhaps to compensate for the fact that no other military campaigns of his were known until 349/8.[24] Even so, the fact that Plutarch emphasizes Phocion's youth reveals the way in which the biographer shaped his

[21] The other pairs without comparisons are Themistocles and Camillus, Pyrrhus and Marius, and Alexander and Caesar.

[22] As has been underlined by other scholars: see Trapp 1999: 487–88; Fialho 2010–11: 93. Tritle 1992: 4267 considers *Phoc.* 3 a kind of informal *synkrisis*; Alcalde Martín 1999: 160 maintains that the first paragraphs of this biography provide both the comparison and the ethical reason for coupling the two statesmen.

[23] Plutarch deals with a group of relatively contemporary Greek lives that are paired with Roman statesmen from the end of the Republic: Phocion and Cato, Alexander and Caesar, Demosthenes and Cicero, and Demetrius Poliorcetes and Mark Antony. Thus Erskine 2018: 248: 'together they suggest that the late fourth century was the end of an era and one can read the fall of the Republic back on to Greece'.

[24] See Bearzot 1993b: 184; Alcalde Martín 2001: 48.

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presentation of the statesman. Aside from the question of what role Phocion played in that battle, there are two other relevant aspects that are not in doubt historically. The victory in Naxos was the first significant Athenian triumph after the Peloponnesian War ended in a defeat which had forced the *polis* to accept humiliating peace conditions;[25] secondly, that victory had been won during the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries was a favourable omen, perhaps indicating that Athens was regaining its past military and consequently political power. By connecting Phocion to these positive occurrences Plutarch successfully highlights the great expectations Athens had for Phocion.

However, the end of the biography shows the irony of this subtle suggestion, when after Alexander's death Athens is forced into agreement with Antipater. It is at that excruciating moment in which the *polis* is about to lose its identity that Athens once again turns to Phocion, one of its most authoritative representatives, to be sent as ambassador.[26] The feeling that it might still be possible for the city to find a way out of the current evils, however, is quickly dashed by the subsequent chain of events. Phocion is accused of high treason not long after negotiating the terms of the agreement and is eventually sentenced to death, a circumstance that Plutarch presents as a clear symptom of identity turbulence: the universe of the *polis* and the ideals it represents are coming to an end.[27] It is worth quoting this passage extensively because it so clearly illustrates what has been argued so far, i.e. that the democratic institutions of Athens were by then functioning only nominally (*Phoc.* 34.1–8):

> *Τὸν δὲ Φωκίωνα καὶ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ φυλακῆς περισχούσης, ὅσοι τῶν ἑταίρων ἔτυχον οὐκ ἐγγὺς ἑστῶτες, ὡς τοῦτ' εἶδον ἐγκαλυψάμενοι καὶ διαφυγόντες ἐσώθησαν. ἐκείνους δὲ Κλεῖτος εἰς Ἀθήνας ἀνῆγε, λόγῳ μὲν κριθησομένους, ἔργῳ δ' ἀποθανεῖν κατακεκριμένους. καὶ προσῆν τὸ σχῆμα τῇ κομιδῇ λυπηρόν, ἐφ' ἁμάξαις κομιζομένων αὐτῶν διὰ τοῦ Κεραμεικοῦ πρὸς τὸ θέατρον· ἐκεῖ γὰρ αὐτοὺς προσαγαγὼν ὁ Κλεῖτος συνεῖχεν, ἄχρι οὗ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐπλήρωσαν οἱ ἄρχοντες, οὐ δοῦλον, οὐ ξένον, οὐκ ἄτιμον ἀποκρίναντες, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι καὶ πάσαις ἀναπεπταμένον τὸ βῆμα καὶ τὸ θέατρον παρασχόντες. ἐπεὶ δ' ἥ τ' ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀνεγνώσθη, λέγοντος αὐτῷ μὲν ἐγνῶσθαι προδότας γεγονέναι τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἐκείνοις δὲ διδόναι τὴν κρίσιν, ἐλευθέροις τε δὴ καὶ αὐτονόμοις οὖσι, καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ὁ Κλεῖτος εἰσήγαγεν, οἱ μὲν βέλτιστοι τῶν πολιτῶν ὀφθέντος τοῦ Φωκίωνος ἐνεκαλύψαντο καὶ κάτω κύψαντες ἐδάκρυον, εἷς δ' ἀναστὰς ἐτόλμησεν*

[25] On the nature of those peace terms see Rhodes 2006: 196.

[26] One of the harshest clauses of the agreement was the establishment of a Macedonian garrison in Munychia, a clear sign of dependency on the occupying force. In addition, it guaranteed that the faction favourable to Macedonia (in whose ranks Phocion might fall) could maintain power in Athens, as is argued by Bearzot 1993b: 238–39 n. 174 and n. 178. For Hellenistic Athens see also Habicht 1982.

[27] See Poddighe 2019 for an insightful overview of this turbulent historical setting and the way it determined Phocion's tragic outcome in a political situation marked by the 'sfondo della *Realpolitik* fatta da tutte le parti in causa' (211).

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> *εἰπεῖν ὅτι, τηλικαύτην κρίσιν ἐγκεχειρικότος τῷ δήμῳ τοῦ βασιλέως, καλῶς ἔχει τοὺς δούλους καὶ τοὺς ξένους ἀπελθεῖν ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας. οὐκ ἀνασχομένων δὲ τῶν πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ἀνακραγόντων βάλλειν τοὺς ὀλιγαρχικοὺς καὶ μισοδήμους, ἄλλος μὲν οὐδεὶς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Φωκίωνος ἐπεχείρησεν εἰπεῖν, αὐτὸς δὲ χαλεπῶς καὶ μόλις ἐξακουσθείς, 'πότερον' εἶπεν 'ἀδίκως ἢ δικαίως ἀποκτεῖναι βούλεσθ' ἡμᾶς;' ἀποκριναμένων δέ τινων ὅτι δικαίως, 'καὶ τοῦτ'' ἔφη 'πῶς γνώσεσθε μὴ ἀκούσαντες;'. ἐπεὶ δ' οὐθὲν μᾶλλον ἤκουον…*
>
> A guard was now placed about Phocion and his associates, and at sight of this all of his friends who were standing at some remove covered up their faces and sought safety in flight. Phocion and his party, however, were taken back to Athens by Cleitus, ostensibly to be tried, but really under sentence of death. And besides, the manner of their return to the city was shameful, for they were carried on wagons through the Cerameicus to the theatre. For thither Cleitus brought them and there he kept them, until the magistrates had made up an assembly, from which they excluded neither slave, foreigner, nor disfranchised person, but allowed all alike, both men and women, free access to theatre and tribunal. After the letter of the king had been read aloud, in which he said that according to his judgement the men were traitors, but that their fellow citizens, who were freemen and self-governing, should pronounce sentence upon them, Cleitus led the men in. Then the best of the citizens, at sight of Phocion, covered their faces, bent their heads, and wept. One of them, however, rose up and had the courage to say that, since the king had put a case of such importance into the hands of the people, it were well that slaves and foreigners should leave the assembly. This the multitude would not tolerate, but cried out to stone the oligarchs and haters of the people. Therefore no one else undertook to speak in behalf of Phocion, but he himself, with great difficulty, at last made himself heard, saying: 'Do ye wish to put us to death unjustly or justly?' And when some answered, 'Justly,' he said: 'And how will ye determine this without hearing me?' But they were not a whit more willing to hear him…[28]

Plutarch makes it clear from the outset that although Phocion was given the opportunity of a formal trial, in practical terms it was nothing but a democratic charade (*λόγῳ μὲν κριθησομένους, ἔργῳ δ' ἀποθανεῖν κατακεκριμένους*) with the blessings of the Macedonian ruler (*ἐπεὶ δ' ἥ τ' ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀνεγνώσθη, λέγοντος αὐτῷ μὲν ἐγνῶσθαι προδότας γεγονέναι τοὺς ἄνδρας*). In fact, this impression is significantly enhanced by the detail that the trial was held in a theatre (*πρὸς τὸ θέατρον· ἐκεῖ γὰρ αὐτοὺς προσαγαγὼν ὁ Κλεῖτος συνεῖχεν, ἄχρι οὗ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*

[28] The translation is that of Perrin (Loeb, 1919).

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ἐπλήρωσαν οἱ ἄρχοντες).[29] Moreover, the composition of the assembly that dictated Phocion's death sentence lets the reader visualize this emerging reality because everyone was able to take part in this assembly without distinction of status or gender (*οὐ δοῦλον, οὐ ξένον, οὐκ ἄτιμον ἀποκρίναντες, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι καὶ πάσαις ἀναπεπταμένον τὸ βῆμα καὶ τὸ θέατρον παρασχόντες*). The institutions maintained the appearance of functioning in the customary way (*ἐκείνοις δὲ διδόναι τὴν κρίσιν, ἐλευθέροις τε δὴ καὶ αὐτονόμοις οὖσι*), but the inner energy that sustained them was already very different.

In the eyes of the biographer, just as Phocion—the very last true *polites*, an indirect disciple of Socrates in life and his parallel in the circumstances of death (*Phoc.* 38.5)—was sentenced to death, the civic energy that had nourished the most emblematic of the Greek *poleis* was also fading away. And this is where the reason why the character of Phocion was so appealing to Plutarch becomes clear: just as Phocion had to reconcile his own political role and identity (and that of Athens) with the Macedonian conquerors, Plutarch and his contemporary representatives of the Greek elite stood in a similar relation to the Roman conquerors.[30]

Plutarch's Portrayal of Demetrius of Phalerum: A *Philosophos* in Politics

In the light of Phocion's importance to Plutarch and the way in which he embodied a vivid representation of a fading Athenian democratic identity, it is intriguing that Plutarch did not write a biography of Demetrius of Phalerum, a character that would take this process of negotiating terms of collective identity to a whole new level (although he did write biographies of statesmen closely connected with him, Phocion and Demetrius Poliorcetes).[31] The fact that Demetrius of Phalerum had been a student of Theophrastus and was representative of Peripatetic intellectuals who had directed criticism towards Socrates may have discouraged the 'Platonic' Plutarch from giving him more attention. Be that as it may, Plutarch was well acquainted with the work of Demetrius of Phalerum and with the circumstances surrounding his personal upheavals. This is clear from the way in which Plutarch uses Demetrius as his explicit textual source regarding

[29] Dubreuil 2018: 262 underlines pertinently that in this particular biography 'Plutarch did not idly mention the theatre as a setting for political scenes, but used this space to present his picture of Athens' gradual decline'. Fialho 2010–11: 94–95 argues that by comparing the *Lives* of Phocion and Cato 'Plutarch aimed to appeal to the theatrical culture of the reader', namely the hypotext of Sophoclean tragedy. Trapp 1999: 498 suggested already that a parallel with the Sophoclean *Ajax* could as well be detected in the treatment of Cato.

[30] Or, to put this in terms used by Erskine 2018: 256, if 'Phocion was caught between the *demos* and Macedon, then Plutarch and his peers were caught between the *demos* and Rome'.

[31] The outline of this part of the work resumes and expands some arguments presented first in Leão 2018.

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other characters, from his comments on his political choices (a pattern more visible in the *Lives*), or even from the manner in which Plutarch describes him as a kind of *exemplum* of rise and fall that could educate others (more noticeably in the *Moralia*).[32] From these direct or indirect references emerges the multifaceted figure of the intellectual, the politician, the legislator and, finally, that of the disgraced exile who nonetheless manages to reinvent himself and recover a remarkable level of influence in the court of the Ptolemies. Admittedly, for Demetrius of Phalerum Plutarch is not as important a source as he is for Phocion. Nevertheless, Plutarch's biography still provides significant details for the reconstruction of Demetrius' political career. In this context those details deserve to be briefly outlined as a vivid illustration of the strategic negotiation of identities in times of political turmoil.[33]

As a young man, Demetrius increased his public visibility in the context of the Harpalus case (324) during which he may have taken part in the prosecution of Demosthenes, although the details of his involvement are unclear (Diogenes Laertius 5.75 = T 1 SOD). Two years later, after the battle of Crannon (322), the Athenians sent legates to Antipater and Craterus with instructions to negotiate a peace treaty (Plut. *Phoc.* 26–27; Diod. Sic.18.17–18). Among the negotiators mentioned by name are Demades, Phocion, and Xenocrates, but Demetrius was also likely to have been part of the group, as can be deduced from a quotation in *On Style* (*Eloc.* 289 = T 12 SOD). In this work (falsely attributed to him) in which is stated that in the face of Craterus' insolence in receiving the Greek ambassadors, Demetrius managed indirectly to censure him using innuendo. The peace terms agreed upon with Antipater were quite demanding, including a change in the constitution and a minimum payment of 2,000 drachmae as a requirement for obtaining full citizenship. Even so, this situation did not last for long, since Antipater died in 319, leaving Polyperchon as his appointed successor. The latter decided to head off rivalry with the other *Diadochi* by adopting a strategy that favoured a return to the *status quo ante* in Athens, thus restoring democracy. Although in public Phocion enjoyed a good reputation as shown earlier, he was still deeply involved with the former government and was eventually sentenced to death as a consequence of the new political arrangements and concomitant reconfiguration of forces. Demetrius, who was politically connected to Phocion, was given the same death sentence, but managed to avoid execution because he was not in Athens at the time he was convicted (Plutarch, *Phoc.* 35.4–5; Nepos, *Phoc.* 3.1–2 = T 15a–b SOD).

[32] The way Plutarch rebuilds on Demetrius's work and life is the question addressed by Leão 2020a.

[33] Fragments and *testimonia* regarding the Phalereus were collected, with translation and commentary, by Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf 2000. SOD is the abbreviation adopted by the editors (p. 10) to refer to the texts pertaining to the works and *Life* of Demetrius. Throughout this section, the original Greek version and the translation of these texts (abbreviated as T) will be provided according to their edition.

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In the meantime, events had developed in favour of Demetrius. The government formed in Athens by Polyperchon was unable to expel the garrison that Antipater had previously established in Munychia, while his son Cassander regained control of the city and Piraeus. As a result, a new government was installed in Athens under which a payment of 1,000 drachmae was required to qualify for full citizenship. It was also determined that the *polis* should be run by an *epimeletes* ('overseer') who in the period of democratic Athens was an elected magistrate, but who represented the Macedonian overlord.[34] Demetrius was to negotiate the terms of the compromise, having been chosen by Cassander in 317 to head the new government as *epimeletes* (Diod. Sic. 18.74.1–3; *IG* II[2] 1201 = T 16a–b SOD).[35] He thus obtained the necessary authority to formulate new laws for the city.

Subsequent testimonies have described his government as a return to democracy or alternatively, as a drift towards tyranny, and modern scholars assess his political activity in similarly disparaging terms.[36] While this much-debated topic is beyond the scope of detailed analysis here, it is important to discuss briefly what Plutarch's view may have been.[37] In the biography of Demetrius Poliorcetes (*Demetr.* 10.2 = T 18 SOD) he states that 'the constitution had been oligarchical in name but monarchical in fact, owing to the power of the Phalerean' (*λόγῳ μὲν ὀλιγαρχικῆς, ἔργῳ δὲ μοναρχικῆς καταστάσεως γενομένης διὰ τὴν τοῦ Φαληρέως δύναμιν*). This accords with what Plutarch says about how the Phalerean was thinking after his downfall, stating that he feared his fellow citizens more than his enemies (*Demetr.* 9.3 = T 29 SOD: *τοῦ δὲ Φαληρέως διὰ τὴν μεταβολὴν τῆς πολιτείας μᾶλλον τοὺς πολίτας ἢ τοὺς πολεμίους δεδοικότος*).

Conversely, in the *Pericles* Plutarch several times mentions the 'monarchical' or 'aristocratic' power of Pericles: 9.1. *λόγῳ μὲν οὖσαν δημοκρατίαν, ἔργῳ δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχήν* (here quoting directly from Thuc. 2.65.9, cited also at *Prae. ger. reip.* 802c).[38] However, this does not prevent Plutarch from recognizing at the

[34] See Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf 2000: 49. For more detail on this question see Banfi 2010: 53–63.

[35] Gagarin 2000: 348–49 accepts *epimeletes* as the title given to Demetrius, arguing that '[the sources] indicate that he certainly enacted some legislation, but we can only determine the substance of two or three laws, and we have no evidence that the legislation was comprehensive'. Banfi 2010: 53–63 equally favours *epimeletes*. A different perspective is advocated by Canevaro 2011: 64–65 who, while recognizing that the term *epimeletes* is in accord with Diodorus's account, nonetheless argues that the missing word in *IG* II2 1201, line 11, is most probably *nomothetes*.

[36] As Gottschalk 2000: 370 emphasizes 'the circumstances of its institution lend some plausibility to either view'. For an analysis of the main points of the debate, see Tracy 2000; Muccioli 2015: 18–38; Faraguna 2016.

[37] The line of reasoning here is based on Leão 2020a: 275–76. For other sources, see e.g. Paus. 1.25.6 (= T 17 SOD) who states that Cassander 'arranged for Demetrius to be made tyrant over the Athenians' (*εἷλε τύραννόν τε Ἀθηναίοις ἔπραξε γενέσθαι Δημήτριον*); Strabo in contrast (9.1.20 = T 19 SOD) states that '[Demetrius] not only did not put an end to the democracy but even restored its former power' (*οὐ μόνον οὐ κατέλυσε τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπηνώρθωσε*).

[38] See also *Per.* 11.1 (in the context of the division of the *polis* into two political tendencies); 16.1–2 (citing Thuc. and comic poets).

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end of the biography that complaints about Pericles' monarchical or tyrannical tendencies were in direct proportion to his great responsibilities in defending the *politeia*.[39] Plutarch does not make a similar statement about Demetrius of Phalerum, but in his description of Demetrius' departure for exile, the suggestion is there (see Concluding Remarks, pp. 000–000).

Demetrius's political and legislative activity should most probably be understood as both a consequence and reflection of the times in which he lived. It reflects the friction between the end of the *polis* system of the Archaic and Classical periods, and the preservation of some internal autonomy within the greater framework of Macedonian domination, as was already evident in Phocion's political activity. That Demetrius was very successful can be inferred from the period of peace and prosperity enjoyed by Athens under his rule—an achievement that even his fiercest critics were forced to acknowledge, albeit by sometimes devaluing it as the simple conquest of a 'common tax-collector proud of himself' (*τελώνης σεμνυνθείη βάναυσος*) to adopt the expression that his opponent Demochares reportedly used about him (Polyb. 12.13.9 = T 89 SOD).

Demetrius was able to maintain his government for ten years until another Demetrius, the son of Antigonus later known as *Poliorcetes*, 'the Besieger', unexpectedly entered Piraeus in 307, announcing that he had arrived to restore freedom to Athens. Taken by surprise, he could not resist and eventually accepted safe conduct to Thebes, where he remained until Cassander's death in 297, an event which for him represented the end of any prospect of being able to regain power in Athens. Plutarch's description of his departure into voluntary exile has some positive overtones which insinuate that the biographer may have been too harsh in his global analysis of his regime when he depicts Demetrius Poliorcetes as recognizing the merit of his adversary: it was 'out of respect for both his reputation and his virtue [that he] helped him to get away to Thebes in safety as he wished'.[40]

After that turning point, Demetrius's activity could be interpreted as a living metaphor for the new emerging reality and the way Greek *politai* could handle the opportunities arising from it. Following Cassander's death Demetrius went to Alexandria, where he helped Ptolemy I *Soter* to draft laws and perhaps even to design the Library of Alexandria, but his real contribution to these projects remains shrouded in doubt and is the subject of much debate. Plutarch maintains that 'Demetrius of Phalerum advised King Ptolemy to acquire books dealing with kingship and leadership, and to read them: "For the things their friends do not

[39] See *Per.* 39.4. As pointed out by Stadter 1989: 349, 'in the grandness of the final sentences, monarchy is no longer a charge to be avoided, but a boast'.

[40] *Demetr.* 9.3 (= T 29 SOD): *καὶ τὴν δόξαν αἰδεσθεὶς καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῦ ἀνδρός, εἰς Θήβας αὐτὸν ὥσπερ ἐβούλετο μετ᾽ ἀσφαλείας συνεξέπεμψεν.*

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dare to offer to kings as advice, are written in these books"'.[41] Regardless of the role he may or may not have played in relation to Ptolemy I, Demetrius was unable to maintain the same level of influence over his successor.[42] When Ptolemy II came to power, he chose to banish Demetrius to Diospolis, where he would end up dying soon after being bitten by a snake. Cicero (*Rab. Post.* 9.23 = T 42 SOD) states that he was deliberately murdered, but Diogenes Laertius (5.78 = T 1 SOD) implies that it was only an accident and that Demetrius died in his sleep.[43]

It is thus through this wide-ranging mosaic of experiences and responses that the image of Demetrius is constructed, a living example of both statesman and philosopher who was neither a true democrat (at least by the standards of the Classical period, despite insistent comparisons with Pericles,[44] though not always in flattering terms), nor an autocratic tyrant, as he was portrayed by certain hostile sources. Indeed, Demochares (quoted by Plb. 12.13.10–12 = T 89 SOD) charges his political opponent Demetrius with a policy of *panem et circenses*, although Cicero counters (*Off.* 2.17.60 = T 110 SOD) that Demetrius disapproved of the excessive costs racked up by Pericles in building the Propylaea.[45] As with Phocion before him (albeit more drastically and with a more violent ending), the political performance of Demetrius of Phalerum mirrors, above all, the limitations and contradictions of a great *polis* like Athens, which had to learn to reinvent itself within the framework of what was effectively Macedonian domination, despite proclaimed attempts at the 'restoration' of democracy and true 'ancestral constitution', as conveyed in various ideological and propagandistic expressions of the ideal of the *patrios politeia*. In fact, Demetrius is also the last really important *nomothetes* in Athens, in line with great figures like Draco and Solon—as he himself would have liked to be represented.[46]

[41] *Reg. et imp. apophth.*, 189d (= T 38 SOD): *Δημήτριος ὁ Φαληρεὺς Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ παρῄνει τὰ περὶ βασιλείας καὶ ἡγεμονίας βιβλία κτᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν· 'ἃ γὰρ οἱ φίλοι τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν οὐ θαρροῦσι παραινεῖν, ταῦτα ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις γέγραπται'*. See T 58a–66 SOD for the other testimonies pertaining to the founding of the Library of Alexandria.

[42] He had given Ptolemy I the advice to decide on the succession in favour of Ptolemy *Keraunos* (son of Eurydice) and not Ptolemy II Philadelphos (son of Berenice).

[43] Gottschalk 2000: 373 argues that 'we can give Philadelphos the benefit of doubt', for he had nothing to fear from an old man like Demetrius. Sollenberger 2000: 325–26 maintains that Demetrius may have simply committed suicide, based on Diogenes' account of the episode.

[44] E.g. *Prae. ger. reip.* (818c–d = T 50 SOD), where Plutarch aligns Demetrius with Pericles and Cimon, whose 'political acts' (*politeumata*) are presented as examples of measures aimed at a collective distribution of benefits.

[45] On this question, see O'Sullivan 2009: 128; Banfi 2010: 188–89. On Athenian monumental architecture, as perceived by Plutarch in *De gloria Atheniensium*, see the contribution to this volume, Chapter 18, by Athanassaki, who discusses, among others, the building programmes of Cimon and Pericles.

[46] Canevaro 2011: 65 pertinently underlines the importance of Demetrius of Phalerum in providing the last example of what he calls the 'twilight of *nomothesia*' in early Hellenistic Athens. Faraguna 2015: 154 believes that the possible institution of *nomophylakes* by Demetrius may be a consequence of the debate around the *patrios politeia*.

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Concluding Remarks: From the *Polites* to the *Kosmopolites*

The introductory Simonides quotation that the '*polis* is a man's master' (fr. 90 West^2) assumes that the full maturation of an individual has as its ultimate goal the collective exercise of citizenship. Therefore if all *politai* are called upon to participate in the defence, government, and administration of the *polis*, this implies that such activities are a natural component of citizen status rather than tasks to be left only to experts. The situation in Hellenistic times is substantially different, with a growing professionalization in these sectors, a fact that on the one hand reveals the need for increasingly specific competence, but also the progressive alienation of the common citizen from the notion of the state.

Since the old *poleis* continued to exist in the Hellenistic period, at least in populated urban spaces, it is important to understand the extent to which they maintained autonomy and effective freedom of action. Since the essence of Hellenistic monarchies rested on the figure of the monarch and the group of officials who worked most closely with him, the structure of the *polis* ultimately constituted a foreign body within this emerging reality. In any case, it could not simply be eliminated, given the great significance it had held throughout Greek history. The *poleis* continued to operate using the same constitutional apparatuses they had in the past (popular assembly, courts, and magistrates elected annually), but they were now dependent on the will of the monarch whose orders were to be carried out even if they were only transmitted by letter, regulation (*diagramma*), or ordinance (*prostagma*). The appearance of autonomy was formally maintained provided there was an effort to shape the decrees of the *polis* in accordance with the monarch's instructions, which were thus transformed into law.[47]

In closing, it is useful to contemplate what Plutarch thought about the Athenians' actual ability to disobey royal instructions without openly challenging central authority. Sources indicate that there would be no room for manoeuvre, even for cities as powerful as Athens. Plutarch provides two very illuminating examples of this.

As previously discussed (pp. ~~000–000~~), in 318 Polyperchon, acting as regent of Macedonia, sent Phocion and some other companions to Athens to be tried in their home city, although in reality he had already given instructions that they should be sentenced to death (Plut. *Phoc*. 33–34). It is possible that Athens would have reached the same verdict independently, but ignoring Polyperchon's instructions and testing its supposed freedom required questioning his authority and

[47] In any case, the payment of taxes and integration of royal garrisons, among other charges borne by the *polis*, were an unmistakable symbol of its dependence on the power of the sovereign. As is pertinently underlined by Ma 2018: 280, 'the end of hegemony for certain *poleis* generalized the possibility of autonomy for all *poleis*'. In his approach (especially 279–87), he further argues that one of the most interesting developments of Hellenistic history is the 'Great Convergence' of city-civic practices and institutions during this period.

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then facing to probable retaliation. While both parties therefore observed the formal fiction of an independence in order to avoid future complications, the result should not have been unexpected.

Plutarch gives us another even more revealing example concerning the Macedonian king Demetrius Poliorcetes. Disturbed by his interference in their domestic affairs, the Athenians passed a decree (*psephisma*) that sought to limit his capacity for action. However, the Athenians were not only forced to revoke the decree and condemn the respective proponents to death and exile, but also to approve another decree according to which anything that Demetrius ordered would be considered sacred before the gods and just before men (*Demetr.* 24.3–4). In short, the Athenians were obliged expressly to integrate into their laws the royal authority that they had initially intended to curtail.[48]

[48] Even so, in the future, Demetrius showed some sensitivity in not ostentatiously disregarding the Athenian laws, as illustrated by the episode of his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Since he could not be in Athens at the proper time, he asked for a solution to be sought to which the Athenians responded by temporarily changing the name of the months so that the ceremony could take place with respect for ritual formality (Plut. *Demetr.* 26).