

# KLEOPHON

(PLATE 31e)

**K**LEOPHON, the lyre-maker, was one of the leading politicians in Athens in the late fifth century before Christ. As leader of the popular party he first came into power in 410 B.C. and played a dominant role in affairs of state until his execution in 404. He is known to us from a number of references in the ancient historians, orators and comic poets where he appears as a headstrong demagogue with a character very like that of his predecessor Kleon.<sup>1</sup>

The name of Kleophon's father is not recorded in ancient literature. Kleophon is identified not by the usual patronymic or demotic but by an epithet, "the lyre-maker," or sometimes "the demagogue." His mother was a Thracian, and he himself is said to have been illegally enrolled as a citizen. Aelian, writing in the third century of our era and moralizing on famous men of obscure origin, says "one could not readily name the fathers of Hyperbolos, Kleophon and Demades, although they became leaders of the popular party at Athens."<sup>2</sup> All this has led modern historians to assume that he was of lowly birth, and Wilamowitz has even gone so far as to refer to him as "a man without a family."<sup>3</sup>

There is now some new evidence bearing on the question of Kleophon's origin. An ostrakon found in the Athenian Agora in the summer of 1951 carries the inscription Κλεοφῶν | Κλειππίδο (Pl. 31e). It comes from a layer of the late fifth century B.C., and as the writing is in the Ionic alphabet, we may feel confident that the ostrakon too dates from this period and not from some earlier time.<sup>4</sup> There can be no reasonable doubt, then, that it refers to Kleophon, the lyre-maker and demagogue; he is indeed the only possible candidate among known Athenians of the period. If this is so, we learn his father's name for the first time. If now we seek to identify Kleippides, we find that again there is only one possibility among known Athenians. A certain Kleippides, son of Deinias, of Acharnai, was a general in 428 B.C. and was voted against in an ostracism, probably that of 443 B.C.<sup>5</sup> His activity falls exactly a generation before that of Kleophon, the lyre-maker, and it is hard to avoid the con-

<sup>1</sup> The ancient references are conveniently collected in Kirchner, *Prosopographia Attica*, I, No. 8638, and in Swoboda's article in *R.E.*, s. v. Kleophon, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Var. hist.*, XII, 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Aristoteles und Athen*, I, p. 130, note 14. He is followed by Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, III, 2, p. 1535, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> Inv. No. P 21581. Max. dim. 0.085 m. Fragment from the wall of a large, unglazed amphora. Inscription incised on the outside. Found in the northeast part of the Agora. The Hyperbolos ostrakon, Inv. No. P 12484 (*Hesperia*, VIII, 1939, p. 246, fig. 47) was found about eight meters away in filling of the same general period.

<sup>5</sup> As general, Thucydides, III, 3, 2. The ostraka, *I.G.*, I<sup>2</sup>, 911, 2; J. Carcopino, *L'ostracisme athénien*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 123-5, pl. II. cf. *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, pp. 410, 412. The demotic, which is given on some of the ostraka, was not known to Kirchner, *P.A.*, No. 8521.

clusion that the two men are father and son. If this be accepted, we then have Kleophon's full name: Κλεοφῶν Κλειππίδου Ἀχαρνεύς.

We see then that Kleophon was not of obscure birth but belonged to an Athenian family of some prominence. How is it that he has come to be called "a man without a family" in our modern histories? Two main things seem to have contributed to this. First he appears to have been known almost invariably by his epithet "the lyre-maker"—as Kleon was sometimes called "the tanner"—to the exclusion of his patronymic or demotic. His patronymic does not appear in extant literature, and even in late antiquity Aelian could not, or did not discover it. This naturally suggested that his father was either unknown or else a person of no account. Secondly, our sources, which are almost all prejudiced against Kleophon, try to show him in the most unfavorable light possible. This often takes the form of references to his Thracian mother,<sup>6</sup> thus implying that he too was a foreigner. There is even a direct statement that he had been illegally enrolled as a citizen, the implication being that he had no right whatever to citizenship.<sup>7</sup> This constant reference to his foreign connections and dubious citizenship combined with the fact that his father's name was not recorded have thus led modern historians to the erroneous conclusion that he was of obscure or foreign or even servile origin, "a man without a family."

The new evidence from the ostrakon now shows us Kleophon's family connections and lays to rest the "man without a family" idea. It provides too the earliest record we have of Kleophon's activity, for it shows that he must have been in politics at least as early as 415 B.C. The ostrakon must be assigned to the year of Hyperbolos' banishment, the last ostracism ever held and the only one recorded in this general period.<sup>8</sup> This is now dated in 415 B.C. by Raubitschek;<sup>9</sup> hitherto it has been placed in 417 or 418 B.C.<sup>10</sup> The earliest previously known reference to Kleophon's activity was that in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, of 411 B.C.

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<sup>6</sup> Aristophanes, *Frogs*, lines 678 and 1532, with scholia. One of the scholia tells us that in Plato's comedy, *Kleophon*, she was represented on the stage speaking broken Greek.

<sup>7</sup> Aischines, II, 76. C. D. Adams, the translator of Aischines in the Loeb Classical Library, goes so far as to suppose that he was a slave; but the reference in this passage to his having been bound in chains need not mean more than that he was once imprisoned. On the other hand, however, it is probably true that his enrollment as a citizen was not strictly legal. Under the terms of a law passed in 451/0 B.C., not long before Kleophon reached his majority, a youth was required to be of Athenian parentage on both sides in order to be admitted to the citizenship (Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.*, XXVI, 3). Exceptions were sometimes made, however, and no doubt Kleippides, being a man of some prominence, was able to exert his influence to have his son enrolled. There is, therefore, some foundation for the charge.

<sup>8</sup> As there is no record in our literary sources that Kleophon was involved in this ostracism, the ostrakon must be interpreted as part of the scattering vote.

<sup>9</sup> *T.A.P.A.*, LXXIX, 1948, pp. 191 ff.; cf. Woodhead, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pp. 78 ff.

<sup>10</sup> See J. Carcopino, *L'ostracisme athénien*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 178, 191 ff.; W. Peek, *Kerameikos III*, pp. 101-104.



a-d. Fragments by the Dinos Painter (P17089, 21534, 5865, 21526)



e-f. Ostraka of Kleophon (P21581) and Perikles (P21527)

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