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Source: *Phoenix*, Autumn, 1965, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Autumn, 1965), pp. 178-211

Published by: Classical Association of Canada

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1086282>

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THE DATE AND ATHEISM OF DIAGORAS OF MELOS

LEONARD WOODBURY

A SMALL POET, a great name, a doubtful date.¹ The son of Teleclytus or Telecleides and a native of Melos, Diagoras is known as a writer of lyric and dithyrambic verse.² Outside of Athens, he composed poems for citizens of Argos and Mantinea, as well as an encomium on the latter city.³ With Nicodorus of Mantinea, who had been a champion boxer and became in his old age the law-giver of his city, he had a particularly close relation. The gossip of late antiquity made him Nicodorus' lover and his associate in legislation.⁴ According to our sources he is connected in various ways with a number of philosophers, notably with Democritus.⁵ One absurd story represents him as both the slave and the pupil of the latter.⁶ Athens put a price on Diagoras' head for his impiety and he fled to Pellene in Achaëa.⁷ He died at Corinth, unless the notice in the Suda has confused him with Diagoras of Eretria.⁸

¹The chief authorities are: U.v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Lyriker* (Berlin 1900) 80–84 and *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin 1921) 426, n.4; M. Wellmann in *RE* 5 (1905) 310–311; A. B. Drachmann, *Atheism in Pagan Antiquity* (London 1922) 31–34, 155–156; E. Derenne, *Les Procès d'impieété in Bibl. de la Fac. de Philos. et Lettres de Liège* 45 (1930) 57–70; W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* 1.4.2¹ (Munich 1946) 493–495; I. Lana, "Diagora di Melo," *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino: (sc. moral., stor. e filol.)* 84.2 (1950) 161–205; and especially F. Jacoby, *Diagoras 'O "Atheos, Abhandl. Berlin* (Sprach., Lit. u. Kunst) (1959) no. 3, who gives a full bibliography (31, n.2) and a convenient collection and analysis of our sources (3–8 and 17). These works will be cited hereafter by the author's name alone.

²Aristoph. *Ran.* 320 and Schol.; Suda, *s.v.* Διαγόρας; Aristoph. *Nub.* 826–830 and Schol.; *Av.* 1071–1078 and Schol.; [Lys.] 6.17; Diod. 13.7; Joseph. *C. Ap.* 2.266; Ammon. *Differentiae* 56; Ael. *Var. Hist.* 2.23; Diog. Laert. 6.59; Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* 14.16.1; Sext. Emp. *Pyrrh. Hyp.* 3.218; *Adv. math.* 9.50; Cic. *De nat. deor.* 1.1–2; Diog. Oen. F12 col. 1.8–2.1 Grilli; Min. Fel. *Octav.* 8.2.

³Philod. *De piet.* col. 18–19 (p. 85 Gomperz); Aristoxenus fr. 127a (10.198 *Sch. d. Arist.* Wehrli).

⁴Ael. *Var. Hist.* 2.23.

⁵He is called a philosopher by the biographical notice in the Suda, and is made the centre of a school of physicists (*οἱ περὶ Διαγόραν φυσικοὶ φιλόσοφοι*) by Jerome (on *Ol.* 74.3: 482/1), and is synchronised with a whole gamut of philosophers ranging from Heraclitus to Democritus by Mubaššir (see p. 188 below).

⁶Suda, *s.v.* Διαγόρας.

⁷Schol. Aristoph. *Av.* 1073; Suda, *s.v.*; Mubaššir (see p. 189 below).

⁸With the statement in the Suda that Diagoras died at Corinth, compare Aristotle's mention (*Pol.* 5.5.10) of a Diagoras who overthrew the oligarchy of knights in Eretria and the statement of Heraclides (*De reb. publ.* fr. 12; *Arist. Fragm.* ed. Rose, p. 379, no. 40; *FHG* 2.217) that Diagoras died at Corinth and had a tomb erected to him by the Eretrians. Cf. Jacoby 13, line 43–14, line 2 and 35, nn. 68–71.

The brief snatches of his verse that have survived testify to a traditional taste in poetry and a conventional piety in religion.⁹ For all that, he is best known as “the atheist”¹⁰ who was outlawed by Athens for revealing and satirising the Eleusinian mysteries and was said to be the author of an atheistic book.¹¹ Little more is known of this paradoxical man, and his date is as much a puzzle as his opinions. The Greek chronologists put his *akme* in 482/1 or 468/7,¹² but the date of the decree by which he was outlawed was given as 415/4.¹³ In this flux of contradictions the firmest stepping-stone for the adventurous is offered by this decree, and with it we begin.

That the decree existed we know beyond a doubt, thanks to the Scholiasts on Aristophanes’ *Birds* (1073) and *Frogs* (320). They tell us, on the authority of Melanthius’ *On the Eleusinian Mysteries* (*FGrHist.* 326 F3) that a proclamation was made at Athens, and its text inscribed in bronze,¹⁴ concerning Diagoras’ denigration of the mysteries to the prejudice of initiations. Further, they state that Craterus, presumably in his *Collection of Decrees* (*FGrHist.* 342 F16),¹⁵ related a similar story, and add a quotation taken from the text of the decree by Melanthius: “for anyone who kills Diagoras the Melian, a talent; for anyone who takes him alive, two talents.” Craterus and Melanthius are good authorities of the third and fourth centuries B.C. (Jacoby 11, 12) and, because of their possession of the text, are witnesses of the first importance. Unhappily, the Scholiasts who serve us so well in regard to the decree itself give only confused information, as will be seen, concerning its date.

Aristophanes himself, in the passage of the *Birds* of 414 on which the Scholiast is commenting, has a comic proclamation for his avian commonwealth. It runs as follows (1072–1078):

τῆδε μέντοι θῆμέρα μάλιστ’ ἐπαναγορεύεται·
 “ἦν ἀποκτείνῃ τις ὑμῶν Διαγόραν τὸν Μῆλιον,

⁹The fragments are collected by D. L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962) 382–383. For a conjectural restoration of the contents of Diagoras’ poem for Nicodorus of Mantinea, cf. Jacoby 14, lines 19–40; and for the lack of evidence to show that Diagoras had any importance in Greek literary history, cf. Jacoby 17, lines 12–19. The paean mentioned in the notice in the *Suda* has only the dubious authority of the anecdote that is there told of it.

¹⁰Cf. nn. 46 and 85 below and Jacoby 17, lines 28–29.

¹¹*Suda*, s.v.; Tatian *Adv. Graec.* 27; Mubaššir (see p. 189 below) and pp. 197–211 below.

¹²Jerome has under Ol. 74.3:482/1 (v.ll. 74.4 and 75.1) Diagoras and his school of physicists, but under Ol. 78.1:468/7 (v.ll. 78.2 and 78.3) *Bacchylides et Diagoras atheus plurimo sermone celebrantur*. See also pp. 187–188 below.

¹³Diod. 13.7 and Mubaššir (see p. 189 below).

¹⁴For the suggestion that the bronze was set up at Eleusis, cf. Jacoby 11, lines 34–38; also 33, n. 43.

¹⁵The title is given by Schol. Aristoph. *Ran.* 320, who has a similar account of Diagoras.

λαμβάνειν τάλαντον, ἣν τε τῶν τυράννων τίς τινα
 τῶν τεθνηκότων ἀποκτείνῃ, τάλαντον λαμβάνειν.”
 βουλόμεσθ' οὖν νῦν ἀνειπεῖν ταῦτα χήμεῖς ἐνθάδε·
 “ἦν ἀποκτείνῃ τις ὑμῶν Φιλοκράτη τὸν Στρούθιον,
 λήψεται τάλαντον, ἣν δὲ ζῶντ' ἀπαγάγῃ, τέτταρα . . .”

It is certain that Aristophanes is using the formulas of Athenian decrees in general and echoing in particular the language of the decree by which Diagoras was outlawed, as the Scholiast points out. Furthermore it seems clear that Aristophanes contrasts, in the proclamation of the day (1072), public acts that actually occurred at Athens (1073–1075) with those which have no existence except in Cloud-cuckoo-town (1076–1078). These latter, it is said emphatically, are what “we wish to proclaim.” It is clear too that Aristophanes, by proscribing “dead tyrants,” intends a burlesque of Athenian legislation. As it seems unlikely, to say the least, that Athens ever issued a decree in such terms, he must be taken as exaggerating some actual occurrence. It is difficult to conceive that this can have been anything but the public furor caused at Athens in the preceding year (415) by the mutilation of the Hermae and the profanation of the mysteries (Thuc. 6.27–29, 53–61). To the outrage of the pious was added a political hysteria which led the Athenians to search frantically for evidence of activities aiming at a revived oligarchy or tyranny. The fear of tyranny seemed to Aristophanes to be, at least in large part, illusory and he derides it, not only here, but also in the *Wasps* (502) of 422 and in *Lysistrata* (619) of 411.¹⁶ To outlaw dead tyrants is to cry up a danger that has ceased to exist, but there can be no doubt that Aristophanes is laughing at a cry that was actually raised in Athens not long before.

The allusion to Diagoras must be explained by reference to this context. It is certain that there is an allusion to his outlawry and probable that this, like the excitement about tyrants, had recently occurred, and so could properly be included in the birds' proclamation of the day in 414. What is more, the reference to Diagoras must be somehow derisive, whether by contrast with the true criminal Philocrates the bird-catcher (cf. *Av.* 14) or by association with the dead tyrants. In the one case Diagoras is facetiously changed from a major into a minor malefactor, in the other the Athenians are ridiculed for outlawing someone who is out of their reach. In any case Aristophanes is contrasting the mistaken or futile provisions of Athenian legislation with the really important danger about which something effective can be done, if the authorities will only offer the usual rewards—or double them.

¹⁶Cf. also *Vesp.* 345, 417, 464, 488, 953; *Av.* 1074; *Lys.* 630; *Thesm.* 338, 1143; Thuc. 6.27.3, 28.2, 53.3. On the legal history of the charge, cf. M. Ostwald, “The Athenian Legislation against Tyranny and Subversion,” *TAPA* 86 (1955) 103–128.

Unnecessary difficulties have been caused by those who have supposed that Diagoras, who is coupled here with dead tyrants, must have been dead in 414. There is no sufficient warrant in the text for such an inference.¹⁷ τῶν τεθνηκότων applies only to the tyrants, cannot be part of any legal formula actually used by the tyrant-hunters,¹⁸ and must be Aristophanes' own sardonic comment on their efforts. The first clause is a straightforward version of the decree issued against Diagoras and the second clause aims at comic effect by unexpectedly burlesquing the proceedings against tyrants. To infer that Diagoras is dead, like the tyrants, would spoil the joke by robbing the second clause of its unexpectedness.¹⁹

Legislation which is aimed at atheists and tyrants is trivial when compared with measures that deal with a truly dangerous bird-catcher, and futile as well as mistaken when directed against crimes that are no longer committed. It is possible that the point of mentioning Diagoras is that his outlawry was also notoriously futile, for we learn from another source that he fled to safety beyond the reach of Athenian power, to Pellene in Achaëa. If this is right, Aristophanes' point is that it is not only more important, but also more practicable, to outlaw Philocrates than to proscribe Diagoras and imaginary tyrants. However that may be, it is certain that Aristophanes in 414 thinks the outlawry of Diagoras, like the tyrannophobic clamour of 415, a subject for comment. The easiest inference is that Diagoras had been recently outlawed. The climate of opinion that prevailed in Athens in the latter part of 415 would also explain very well the action taken against him for revealing and belittling the mysteries.²⁰ The date is in fact that given for the affair by Diodorus and Mubaššir (see p. 189 below), which is the archonship of Charias (415/4).

The immense religious and political excitement of that year must be the cause of the extraordinary lengths to which the Athenians went: the decree of outlawry, its publication in bronze, the magnificent reward for Diagoras' death or capture, and the negotiations with Pellene to the point of bringing her citizens under the same ban as the fugitive to whom they had given asylum. It seems probable that Diagoras was one of those sought not only for his crime but also for the information that he was thought to possess concerning the complicity of others (cf. Thuc. 6.27).

¹⁷So, e.g., Wilamowitz, *Gr. Versk.* 426, n. 4 and Jacoby 8-9.

¹⁸Cf. Thuc. 6.60.4; Philochorus in *FGrHist* 328 F134 (*FHG* 1.402. 111).

¹⁹I. Lana (166-168) fails to see that Aristophanes is referring to two events of the preceding year, and is led to make Diagoras a contemporary of the long-dead Peisistratids. This erroneous reading of the text goes back as far as Fritzsche's edition of the *Frogs* (1845).

²⁰A similar interpretation of the passage from the *Birds* is given by Derenne, 67-68.

In any case this hypothesis would explain why the Athenians offered one talent for Diagoras' death, but two talents for his capture alive.

After this reading of Aristophanes' own words it becomes profitable to examine the statements of his Scholiasts concerning the date of the decree. They are as follows:

Διαγόραν τὸν Μήλιον. οὗτος μετὰ τὴν ἄλωσιν Μήλου ᾤκει ἐν Ἀθήναις, τὰ δὲ μυστήρια ἠτέλιζεν, ὡς πολλοὺς ἐκτρέπειν τῆς τελετῆς. τοῦτο οὖν ἐκήρυξαν κατ' αὐτοῦ Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ ἐν χαλκῇ στήλῃ ἔγραψαν, ὡς φησι Μελάνθιος ἐν τῷ Περὶ μυστηρίων. ἄλλως· ταῦτα ἐκ τοῦ ψηφίσματος εἴληφεν. οὕτως γὰρ ἐκήρυξαν· τῷ μὲν ἀποκτείναντι [αὐτὸν] τάλαντον λαμβάνειν, τῷ δὲ ἄγοντι δύο. ἐκηρύχθη δὲ τοῦτο διὰ τὸ ἀσεβὲς αὐτοῦ, ἐπεὶ τὰ μυστήρια πᾶσι διηγείτο, κοινοποιῶν αὐτὰ καὶ μικρὰ ποιῶν καὶ τοὺς βουλομένους μυεῖσθαι ἀποτρέπων, καθάπερ Κρατερὸς ἱστορεῖ. ἐκκεκήρυκται δὲ μάλιστα ὑπὸ τὴν ἄλωσιν τῆς Μήλου· οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει πρότερον. Μελάνθιος δὲ ἐν τῷ Περὶ μυστηρίων προφέρεται τῆς χαλκῆς στήλης ἀντίγραφον, ἐν ἧ ἔπεκέρυξαν καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς (μὴ) ἐκδιδόντας Πελλανεῖς· ἐν ἧ γέγραπται καὶ ταῦτα “ἐὰν δὲ τις ἀποκτείνῃ Διαγόραν τὸν Μήλιον, λαμβάνειν ἀργυρίου τάλαντον· ἐὰν δὲ τις ζῶντα ἀγάγῃ, λαμβάνειν δύο.”

[Schol. *An.* 1073]

ἀνακινεῖ οὖν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ὁ κωμικός, ὅθεν καὶ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ὡς διαχλευάζοντος τοὺς θεοὺς καταψηφισάμενοι ἀνεκήρυξαν τῷ μὲν ἀναιρήσοντι ἀργυρίου τάλαντον, τῷ δὲ ζῶντα κομίσαντι δύο· ἔπειθον δὲ καὶ τοὺς † ἄλλους Πελοποννησίου, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Κράτερος ἐν τῇ Συναγωγῇ τῶν ψηφισμάτων.

[Schol. *Ran.* 320]

We do not know what connection there was thought to be between the capture of Diagoras' native island in 416 and the decree. It is possible to assume that Diagoras was believed to have survived Melos and its murdered citizens, or even to have lived in Athens for some time thereafter (as the Aristophanic scholiast asserts and Diodorus implies) until he was outlawed. But if such a view was ever held, it seems likely to be untrue. To be sure, we know that some Melians escaped the general massacre that followed the capture and Diagoras may well have escaped the fate of his fellow-citizens because he was living somewhere in the Peloponnese in 416.²¹ Nevertheless, even if he survived, it seems on general grounds highly improbable that a poet of undoubted Melian citizenship, however modest his reputation, was publicly evident in Athens in 416 or 415. If

²¹On Melian fugitives from the massacre, cf. Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.9; Plut. *Lys.* 14.4; and Jacoby 40, n. 152.

some such line of reasoning lies behind the statement of the Scholiast, we may safely dismiss him and his mention of the capture of Melos.

A somewhat more probable explanation is that the Scholiast's source has made an approximate synchronism between the capture of Melos of 416 and the decree of outlawry in the following year. This would have been made easier if the two events were separated by only a few months. Diagoras' Melian descent would be more than sufficient justification, in the judgment of Hellenistic chronologists, for so small an accommodation. The Scholiast's language gives some support to this interpretation. He says both that Diagoras lived in Athens *after* the capture and that the decree was proclaimed at approximately the time of the capture (*μάλιστα ὑπὸ τὴν ἄλωσιν τῆς Μήλου*). It is impossible to reconcile these two statements, except on the assumption that the dating is not exact to a year. There may, of course, have been some more weighty reason than Diagoras' citizenship for dating the decree in this approximate way. It is possible to imagine, for example, that the decree mentioned not only Diagoras' citizenship but also the fate of the other Melians. In that case, a chronologist would have had good reason to date the decree within a year of the capture of Melos. Unhappily, we have no confirmation for the hypothesis that there was any such solid evidence for the synchronism. The only relevant fact that we possess is Diagoras' national origin.

If an approximate synchronism of two events is the true explanation of the account given by Aristophanes' Scholiast, it is probably the case that he, or his source, assumed a definite date for the decree. Otherwise he would not have had reason to connect the two facts. His date was certainly 415, the year of the archonship of Charias, which is given by Diodorus and Mubaššir and is attributed by Jacoby to Apollodorus.²² Melos fell in the winter of 416/5, in the archonship of Arimnestus.²³ The Hermae were mutilated in the summer of 415 and the public furore ensued. Aristophanes in the *Birds*, which was produced in the spring of 414, was able to parody the decree. On the basis of evidence of this kind, it cannot have been difficult to conclude that a Melian accused of impiety would have received short shrift in Athens in 415 and so to fix the date of the decree in that year. It is, of course, possible that Apollodorus, or whoever was originally responsible for the dating, possessed some positive evidence that clinched the matter. Wilamowitz believed that this was provided by the text of the decree, which was preserved by Melanthius and Craterus, as the Scholiast tells us.²⁴ The Scholiast himself, it is true, gave only an approximate date, but according to Wilamowitz this was because

²²Cf. Jacoby 18, lines 39–40; but see also 20, lines 21–29.

²³Cf. Thuc. 5.116; 6.1; 6.8.1.

²⁴Cf. Wilamowitz, *Textgeschichte* 82; *Gr. Versk.* 426, n. 4.

he worked with an undated excerpt of the decree. This inference was indignantly rejected by Jacoby, who pointed out that the Scholiast, although analysing the official text, was unable to find an exact date.²⁵ The debate is unfortunately futile. The truth is that we simply have no way of knowing whether the text of the decree provided firm evidence for an exact date. If it provided such evidence, the dating was certain; if not, it was only a probable conjecture. What is sure is that the source of Diodorus and Mubaššir, who may well have been Apollodorus himself, fixed the date of the decree in 415.

Thus far the Scholiast's account has a kind of consistency: the decree was issued after the capture of Melos but the interval between the two events was not sufficiently great to exclude an approximate synchronism. However, he goes on, with cryptic brevity; *οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει πρότερον*: apparently, "for there is no objection to an earlier date." *γὰρ* at once gives trouble, as the statement seems not to support the Scholiast's dating, but rather to admit an alternative. Bergk proposed to meet the difficulty by substituting *δέ*. Failing that, *κωλύει* had to be emended to *κελεύει*—"for there is nothing to require an earlier date." That is to say, the Scholiast is either conceding that there is an alternative to his date or supporting his own date as a *terminus post quem*. Less probable is the proposal of Fritzsche, who conjectured (*ἄλλως τοῦτο ψεύδος.*) *οὐδὲν γὰρ κτλ.* This expedient in effect achieves at greater cost the meaning given by Bergk's *δέ*. It differs only in reporting a variant opinion held by another, instead of attributing to the Scholiast the admission that an earlier date could not be excluded. Others have interpreted the text without alteration. Wilamowitz gives: "d. h. ungefähr damals, möglicherweise nämlich noch früher." Jacoby (19, lines 41–43) renders: "about the time of the capture of Melos—or (and, perhaps, more probably) 'at the latest about the capture of Melos'—'but there is no objection to an earlier date.'" This is to take the first sentence as the statement of a *terminus ante quem*, which the following sentence then supports with *γὰρ*. The version is close to paraphrase and depends largely on an inference drawn from the vague particle. It is strictly inconsistent with the earlier assertion in the scholium that the decree was later than the capture of Melos and Jacoby therefore rejects the first sentence of the scholium as an "extract of an extract," and so untrustworthy (10, line 45).

On any reading of the received text the Scholiast must be condemned for failing to express his meaning unambiguously. Nevertheless it seems just possible to interpret the unaltered text without introducing contradictions, if the hypothesis of an approximate synchronism is accepted. The decree was believed to have been made soon after the capture, and

²⁵Cf. Jacoby 19, lines 23–24 and lines 46 ff.

so was dated at approximately the same time. In what follows the Scholiast may be too concise to be clear. If he is consistent, he must be relying on an unexpressed presupposition and this would probably be the wide divergence between the two dates given for Diagoras by ancient chronology. The earlier dating was either Ol. 74.3 (482/1) or Ol. 78.1 (468/7). On this reasoning, the Scholiast is simply acknowledging the existence of the earlier dating. His meaning would then be this: "I give and prefer the later of the two dates. But this is not certain, as the earlier date is not excluded."

It is, however, probably the most prudent course to abandon the attempt to find a coherent interpretation of all that Aristophanes' Scholiast wishes us to believe. With the help of fine distinctions and an active ingenuity it is possible to build a delicate structure that will just fit the facts. The difficulty is that a doubt soon arises that the construction may be a good deal more refined than the material upon which it is imposed. The two parts of the scholium are distinctly separated by *ἄλλως*, with which the second begins. This may therefore be, not merely additional to what precedes, but incompatible with it. *μετὰ τὴν ἄλωσιν Μήλου* of the first part contradicts, at least formally, the words of the second, *ἐκκεκῆρυκται δὲ μάλιστα ὑπὸ τὴν ἄλωσιν τῆς Μήλου· οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει πρότερον;* and the sound and clear information about the decree which both are able to give, ultimately on the authority of Melanthius and Craterus, is in contrast to dubious statements about Melians living in Athens after the capture of their native island and assertions about the date which are incompatible so far as they are not obscure. It seems best, therefore, while giving full credence to what is reported on good authority about the decree, to regard the chronology with the greatest suspicion. The most important implication of this line of reasoning is the judgment that both parts of the scholium agree in what they report about the decree but disagree, and perhaps contradict one another, in their chronology. It follows that, if we wish to discover what Melanthius and Craterus, who had the text of the decree before them, concluded about its date, we cannot find an accurate report of it in the chronological information given by the Scholiasts jointly.

Chronology is, in fact, the weak point of the comments of the Aristophanic scholiasts in this matter. The note on *Frogs* (320) finds in Aristophanes' purported allusion to Diagoras in that play (of 405) the cause of Diagoras' condemnation, which must have occurred at least a decade earlier.²⁶ The Scholiast on the *Clouds* (830), however, believes that the mention of "Socrates the Melian" in that play (of 423, or ca. 418)

²⁶Wilamowitz, *Textgeschichte* 81, n. 1, is willing to attribute this judgment to Aristarchus, who is mentioned in the scholium.

is a satirical reference to Melos which was made possible by Diagoras' condemnation for impiety. If the scholium on the *Frogs* and the two scholia on the *Birds* drew on a single source, probably Didymus (as Jacoby, 11, lines 6–9, believed), it cannot have been reliable in chronology. If the scholium on the *Clouds* has the same origin, the source was very confused. Another comment on this last passage is even more pertinent. It relates briefly an anecdote concerning Diagoras' conversion to atheism and then adds that it was the Athenians' anger at this that led to the subjugation of Melos. This grotesque judgment is matched by another a little further on, which states that Diagoras was Socrates' teacher. No one is likely to mistake such eccentricities for serious history, but it is possible that the first of these absurdities is what lies behind the cryptically brief notice of the second Scholiast on the *Birds* (1073). If that commentator believed that Melos was reduced because Diagoras became an atheist, he would have had good reason to date the decree, "approximately at the time of the capture of Melos" and to continue: "I say approximately because it may well have been earlier." This interpretation has the advantage of explaining the logic of the sentence, with its troublesome γὰρ, in the easiest way and of attributing to the Scholiast a judgment which, if not creditable to a commentator on Aristophanes, was certainly credible to one of Aristophanes' scholiasts.

If we accept this reasoning, we are now justified, not only in refusing to attribute the second Scholiast's date to Melanthius or Craterus, but also in rejecting it altogether. It is not even an intelligent guess, like the statement of the first Scholiast, that the decree occurred after the capture of Melos.

In the *Clouds* (826–830) of 423 (or ca. 418) Socrates is called "the Melian," because he is there made to say that Dinos, the cosmic vortex, rules in place of Zeus. The Scholiast on the passage detects rightly an allusion to Diagoras and his "atheism," which must therefore have been common knowledge for some time before 415. The physical theory of the Dinos is attributed by Aristophanes to Socrates, not to Diagoras, and in any case the Socrates of the play, as is well known, serves as a kind of rack for the display of a bizarre variety of contemporary opinions. If, however, the passage tells us nothing about the nature of Diagoras' "atheism," it may give us a glimpse of a time when the poet's opinions and conduct were only a joke in Athens.²⁷ The feverish complexion of Athenian public life in 415 presumably led to an eruption of old scandals, which were then more fiercely dealt with than in the easy and complaisant years of the preceding decade. Socrates too was to fall victim as late as 399

²⁷The statements of Diodorus and the Scholiast on the *Birds* (1073) and Mubaššir, that Diagoras was in Athens before the decree was passed, may be inferences, as Jacoby maintains (23, lines 13–18). Still, the inference, if it is an inference, is reasonable.

to charges which had been made public by Aristophanes in the same play.

A brief fragment of the *Fates* of Hermippus, which has been dated in 430 or 429, refers to the physical size of one Diagoras "the Windbagger" (ὁ Τεραθρεύς).²⁸ The fragment is quoted by the Scholiast on the *Frogs* (320), who explicitly distinguishes "the Windbagger" from the Melian. Jacoby holds that the two are the same and regards the text as the earliest evidence for Diagoras' atheism,²⁹ but there is nothing specific in the passage which requires, or even strongly suggests, the identification. Diagoras' windbaggery might just as well imply any other kind of disreputable opinion. In the absence of positive evidence, it is prudent to accept the Scholiast's distinction, and dismiss the fragment.

Other bits of indirect evidence shed very little light on the problem of Diagoras' date. If his name is rightly included in our text of the *Frogs* (320), as was believed in antiquity by Aristarchus and in modern times by Van Leeuwen, the Oxford editors, and Stanford, nothing is proved, except that his memory was still alive in Athens in 405. And we should know this in any case from the Lysian speech, *Against Andocides*, of 399, which refers to his impiety and outlawry. But it seems more probable that Apollodorus of Tarsus was correct in preferring δι' ἀγορᾶς, which is accepted by Wilamowitz, Radermacher, Tucker, Coulon, and Jacoby.³⁰ We hear also of poems written for citizens of Argos and Mantinea and of an association with Nicodorus, the lawgiver of the latter city. The activity of the latter has been dated by Jacoby in 426/5 or soon afterwards,³¹ but Diagoras' flight from Athens to Pellene can be dated only by the prosecution.

Ancient chronology gave two dates for the *akme*. Jerome, after Eusebius, puts "the physicists of the school of Diagoras" at Ol. 74.3 (482/1). In Mubaššir Diagoras is synchronised with a number of philosophers, including Protagoras, Empedocles, and Heraclitus. Protagoras

²⁸Hermippus, fr. 46 (1.235.42 Kock); fr. 42 (1.296 Edmonds). On the date cf. A. Körte in *RE* 8 (1913) 844, no. 5; P. Geissler in *PhU* 30 (1925) 25.

²⁹Jacoby 9–10, in a valuable treatment of the fragment and the obscure ethnic Τεραθρεύς.

³⁰Cf. the discussion by Jacoby (9).

³¹The period of Nicodorus' activity as law-giver at Mantinea is put between 425 and 423 by Bölte in *RE* 14.2 (1930) 1319–1320; in 426/5 by Jacoby, 18, line 45 and 38, n. 136. For speculation about Diagoras' movements between Athens and the Peloponnese, cf. Wilamowitz, *Textgeschichte* 83–84; Derenne 63–64; Jacoby 18–19; and the criticisms of Jacoby, 23–24, 38, n. 136. Wilamowitz suggested that Aelian's story (*Var. Hist.* 2.23) that Diagoras was the lover of Nicodorus was derived from a poem written for him as a young champion boxer, into which an erotic colouring might easily have come (cf., e.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 6 *init.*). This was then dated in 468, fifty years before the battle of Mantinea, which might have served as a rough approximation to the date of Nicodorus' law-making in his old age. See the criticisms of Jacoby, 35, n. 77.

and Empedocles were dated by Apollodorus from their connection with the founding of Pericles' panhellenic colony at Thurii; their *akme* is therefore in Ol. 84 (444–441) and their year of birth forty years earlier in Ol. 74 (484–481). The death of Heraclitus was fixed in the same Olympiad. It is certain that Diagoras is dated by Eusebius and Jerome on the ground that his atheism implied a connection with physics, and probable that Diagoras has been synchronised with Protagoras, who also suffered under accusations of atheism and is often connected with Diagoras or even confused with him. If this is so, Diagoras' *akme* in Eusebius is a mistake for the year of his birth. In any case, the dating is a flimsy construction, depending on philosophical and chronological inferences from Diagoras' notorious atheism.

The second date for the *akme* given by Jerome is Ol. 78.1 (468/7). Jerome synchronises him this time with Bacchylides; the Scholiast on the *Frogs* (320) with Simonides and Pindar; the Suda puts him after Pindar and Bacchylides. The synchronisms, though based this time on Diagoras' status as a lyric poet, are as vague as before.³² 468 is the year of Simonides' death and could have served as a basis for dating the year of birth of one of his successors. Indeed, 467 is the year of Bacchylides' *akme*, according to Jerome, so that he and Diagoras may have been dated by the same event. Once again, there may have been a confusion between the *akme* and the year of birth, as the Suda implies by making Diagoras later than Pindar and Bacchylides.

The newest evidence for the life of Diagoras is given by a Life of Zeno the Eleatic by the eleventh-century Arab, Abû-L-Uafâ Al-Mubaššir Ibn Fâtik, which was published by Franz Rosenthal in 1937.³³ It was not, however, until 1959 that this text was turned to the account of Diagoras' biography by the late Felix Jacoby, to whom all scholars must continue to owe a heavy debt.

Mubaššir makes use of a Greek source, the *Φιλόσοφος Ἱστορία* of Porphyry of Tyre, which appears to have used compendia like that of Diogenes Laertius and the chronologies of Eratosthenes and Apollodorus. He reports the statements that he found in his sources as it were from some distance, he sees Diagoras' life through Arabic spectacles, and he has, of course, little acquaintance with Greek chronology. This unusual perspective distorts the composition of the picture and adds an incongruous, though enchanting, Islamic cast to its chief features; but there is no denying that it gives a glimpse, which would otherwise be denied to us, of the contents of an ancient Greek biography of Diagoras.

³²Cf. the discussion of Jacoby, 15; and 13 on Diagoras' chronological relation to Melanippides (*Μελαννιπίδης*, or *Μελαννιπίδου, πρεσβύτερος* in the Suda).

³³F. Rosenthal, "Arabische Nachrichten über Zenon den Eleaten," *Orientalia* n.s. 6 (1937) 21–67; translation on p. 33. On the sources of Mubaššir, cf. Jacoby 12–13.

Mubaššir's text, in Rosenthal's German translation, runs as follows:

Leukippos der Sophist war ein schüler Zenons des Weisen. Er, Heraklitos der Dunkle, Empedokles, Melissos, Protagoras, Anaxagoras, Sokrates und Demokrates lebten zur gleichen zeit wie Zenon der Weise. Zu ihrer zeit lebte Diagoras der Gottlose und hielt sich in der stadt Attika auf. Als er aber in gottlosigkeit, unglauben, und gotteslästerung verharrte, da suchte ihn der Sultân und die Weisen und Führer Attikas, um ihn zu töten, und der Sultân—es war Charias der Archon (415/4)—setzte einen preis aus und befahl unter den leuten zu verkünden: "Wer sich des Diagoras aus Melos bemächtigt, dessen belohnung ist eine geldsumme". Er erfuhr das, reiste nach dem lande Achaia in eine stadt mit dem namen Pellene und liess sich dort nieder. Da brach ein krieg aus zwischen den einwohnern von Attika und den einwohnern von Lakonien. Er dauerte lange und man wurde durch den krieg von ihm abgelenkt. Danach blieb er 54 jahre. Nach seinem tode fand man bei ihm ein buch, geschrieben in der sprache der einwohner Phrygiens, voll von schmähungen über die göttlichen dinge.

There are here, just as in the Greek sources that we can read directly, two widely variant dates. On the one hand Diagoras is synchronised with a cluster of philosophers. These are both early and late in the fifth century, from Heraclitus and Anaxagoras to Socrates and Democritus, but this gross synchronism must be a development of the narrower ones in Jerome's version of Eusebius. On the other hand, the "Sultan" who sought to kill Diagoras and put a price on his head is unmistakably identified with the archon Charias (of 415/4), in whose year Diodorus (13.6) dates the decree of outlawry. Mubaššir himself is innocent of any embarrassment, being evidently unaware of the archon's date. Indeed, his ignorance goes much further, as he evidently thinks of the outlawry of Diagoras as immediately preceding an outbreak of war between Athenians and Peloponnesians, which diverted the attention of the Athenians from Diagoras, who was thus able to remain safe in obscurity, probably in Pellene, for fifty-four years while the energies of the Athenians were fully engaged in the war. This is chronological nonsense, not only because of the implied length of Diagoras' obscure exile (and so of the war?) but also because Aristophanes' references show that Diagoras' impiety and outlawry, so far from being forgotten in Athens, were much in the public eye in 423 and 414 respectively. It is certain that we can attach no importance to any statement concerning chronology which is likely to be a construction of Mubaššir himself.

There is nevertheless, in addition to what was known before, an important new chronological fact in Mubaššir. This is the prominence given in a Life of Diagoras to a period of fifty-four years. However improbable the chronological context into which Mubaššir fits this period, it must be more than coincidence, as Jacoby points out (15, lines 31–34), that fifty-four years is precisely the interval (by inclusive reckoning) between 468/7 and 415/4; and the calculation is, to all appearances, beyond the powers of Mubaššir himself, who seems quite unaware of the archon's

date and must have found the total of fifty-four in his source. This fact confirms the inference that Porphyry's authority knew both the early and the late datings, but shows also that these two dates were taken by some one in antiquity, as by Wilamowitz in this century, not as alternatives, but as the two significant points in the poet's life. If then Mubaššir's account of this period is probably wrong, the most likely explanation is that the fifty-four years were originally calculated as the length of Diagoras' life. Partly because of the ambiguity of *γένεσις*, notices of birth and of the *akme* are sometimes confused, and this may well have occurred in Jerome as Jacoby suggests.³⁴ The year of the decree, as the last known fact in Diagoras' life, will have been taken as the year of his death. On this reasoning, Mubaššir gives us the length of Diagoras' life according to Hellenistic chronology (certainly earlier than Jerome, probably earlier than Eusebius) and resolves at last the problem of the widely discrepant datings, which has seemed insoluble to so many and drove Beloch and Drachmann to distinguish two persons named Diagoras: the poet of the early fifth century and the atheistic thinker of a much later generation.³⁵ Mubaššir has got from his Greek source two points in the life of Diagoras separated by fifty-four years. He or his source has erred by attaching the decree to the earlier of these dates, which is the more important for him, because of his synchronism of Diagoras with the philosophers, particularly the physicists. Once this step was taken he could infer that Diagoras lived for fifty-four years after his outlawry. His knowledge of the archon's name, which saves us from a like mistake, has of course no chronological significance for him.

Wilamowitz' opinion, which has now received unexpected confirmation in principle, is somewhat less probable in detail.³⁶ He held that Aristoxenus is the source, not only of Philodemus, but also of the story told about Nicodorus of Mantinea by Aelian. The year 468/7 was then Aristoxenus' date for the poem which Diagoras wrote for the victory of the boy Nicodorus in boxing. The battle of Mantinea was taken as a rough approximation of the period of Nicodorus' activity as a lawgiver and fifty years were allowed as the time which had passed since his youthful victory. The hypothesis is characteristically brilliant and illuminating and has the advantage of not postulating, like Jacoby's interpretation, a confusion between the year of birth and the *akme*. But it rests on a number of assumptions which cannot be proved by our scanty evidence. These include the extent of our sources' dependence on Aristoxenus, the inference that Nicodorus was a champion as a boy and that Diagoras wrote

³⁴Cf. Jacoby 15, lines 28–33.

³⁵J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte*² 2.2 (Strassburg 1916) 375; Drachmann 33 and 156.

³⁶See the criticisms of Jacoby, 14–15, and especially 35, n. 77.

an epinician ode for him, and the means by which Aristoxenus could have fixed the date.

From the Scholiast on the *Birds* we already knew that Melanthius published in his *On the Eleusinian Mysteries* a copy of the decree, taken from the bronze, in which the Athenians outlawed Diagoras and the Pellenians, who had refused to surrender him.³⁷ In addition, the Scholiast on the *Frogs* reported, on the authority of Craterus' *Collection of Decrees*, that the Athenians, in addition to putting a price on Diagoras' head, had conducted negotiations (*ἐπειθον*) with the Peloponnesians, presumably for the extradition of the outlaw. To supplement this information from earlier sources we are now told by Mubaššir that the Pellene in question was in Achaea and that Diagoras fled there shortly before the outbreak of a war. Pellene was, as we know, particularly hostile to Athens.³⁸ In 431 she was the only Achaean city to take the side of Sparta from the beginning (Thuc. 2.9.2); in 418 she was again alone among the Achaeans in taking part in the campaign of Agis (Thuc. 5.58.4); and in 413 she joined with Arcadia and Sicyon in fitting out ten ships for the Peloponnesians (Thuc. 8.3.2). If Athens attempted in 415/4 to persuade her to give up the fugitive Diagoras, it is not surprising that she was unsuccessful and that, when the official text of the decree was finally inscribed in bronze, Pellene was named along with Diagoras as an enemy and an outlaw.³⁹ The course of the Athenian adventure in Sicily and the renewal of hostilities with the Peloponnesians would have put an end to all further Athenian attempts at reprisals, and so left Diagoras secure at last.

The sifting of the ancient evidence gives only a meagre result, but it is clear. The ancients knew of a lyric and dithyrambic poet who, they believed, was outlawed by Athens in 415/4 for an offence against the mysteries. Concerning his earlier life they had no sure information, and could do no more than mark out a period during which he might be

³⁷It is tempting to see an allusion to Diagoras' flight to Pellene in the question in Aristophanes' *Birds* (1421): *μῶν εὐθὺ Πελληνῆς πέτεσθαι διανοεῖ*; It is true that the parody of the decree (1071–1078) occurred hundreds of lines earlier, but if Diagoras' exile was a *cause célèbre* and still in the public eye, this is not a serious objection. Granted also that the Scholiasts find no allusion to Diagoras here, but only to the famous woollen cloaks of the town (Pind. *Ol.* 9.97; *Nem.* 10.44; *RE* 19.1 [1937] 365) and that Peisthetaerus has just made (1416) his enigmatic comment on the sycophant's song (*εἰς θοιμάτιον τὸ σκόλιον ἄδειν μοι δοκεῖ*). Still, the one joke does not exclude the other. In a modern comedy a parasitical "free-loader" with a taste for caviar might be asked to "defect to Moscow." A scholiast writing on such a text would comment that Moscow is the capital of Russia and Russia is famous for its caviar; but a critic would find also a hit at flights made to Moscow for other purposes. But see Jacoby's doubts (42, n. 180).

³⁸Cf. Jacoby 42, n. 171.

³⁹On the outlawing of those who received fugitives and refused to surrender them, cf. Demosth. 23.85.

supposed to have been active. The beginning of such a period could be conveniently, though only approximately, determined by the year of the death of Simonides (468/7), which marked the end of an earlier age of poetry, or by the time of the birth of Protagoras (Ol. 74: 484–481), whose name was linked with that of Diagoras because of his reputed atheism. Nothing was known of his later life except that he sought asylum in Pellene by 415/4, and this year had therefore to mark the end of his known activity. Within this context it then became possible to say that he lived for a definite number of years, in fact fifty-four after the death of Simonides. Beyond determining by a rough approximation the limits of the era in which Diagoras was active, nothing more could be done by the scholars of the Hellenistic age, and nothing more can be done by us. We can know no more than that Diagoras was a poet of the post-Simonidean era who was outlawed in the archonship of Charias and suffered, like his contemporary Protagoras, under the imputation of atheism.

Against this reckoning of Diagoras' date stand the conclusions of two recent studies. Italo Lana wishes to put Diagoras' birth about 530 and his death before 446. Diagoras' condemnation, he believes, must have been earlier than the constitution which Nicodorus, with Diagoras' help, drew up for Mantinea about 457/6. But this early dating is improbable in the highest degree.⁴⁰ It depends upon a wrong interpretation of the *Birds* (1071–1078), the haphazard combinations and rough synchronisms of the Hellenistic chronologists, and the unsupported assumption that Nicodorus of Mantinea the lawgiver must have been active at the time of the synoecism of his city. On the other hand, it neglects the definite evidence for the date of the decree and the implications of the fifty-four years of Mubaššir.

Felix Jacoby has collected and sorted all the evidence with the greatest care and acumen and has been the first to make use of the testimony of Mubaššir. His study will be for a long time the primary source-book for all who enquire into the life and works of Diagoras. Jacoby recognises the prime importance of the decree and rejects the dates given for Diagoras' *akme* by the ancient chronologists. However, he differs from all other recent writers on the subject by reviving the old opinion of Fritzsche, Beloch, and Eduard Meyer, that the decree was earlier than 415.⁴¹ He prefers to date it in 433/2, and to make Diagoras a victim, like Anaxagoras, of the decree of Diopieithes.⁴²

⁴⁰See the criticisms of Jacoby, 38, n. 136.

⁴¹For references to other scholars who preferred an early date for the decree, cf. Derenne 66, n. 4; Lana 160, n. 5; Jacoby 39, n. 137.

⁴²The decree of Diopieithes is dated in 433 by H. T. Wade-Gery in *JHS* 52 (1932) 220: reprinted in *Essays in Greek History* (Oxford 1958) 260; possibly in 430 by F. E. Adcock in *CAH* 5.175–176.

Jacoby argues (19–20) that Aristophanes' second Scholiast gives "a lucid and well-considered, if abbreviated, arrangement of facts," dealing with the decree, the offence, and the date in order. The Scholiast, he believes, is analysing an "official document," as is shown by the occurrence of the verb (*ἐκ*)*κηρύττω* at the beginning of each section, although the details concerning the offence in the second section are not derived "from the *καταδίκη*, which neither specified the offence nor mentioned a book written by the offender." Of the third section he writes that "it may be the remnant of a detailed discussion of the time-question," evidently by Didymus or some other learned source. He concludes that "Didymus or his sources, who read the full text of the decree in the book of Melanthis and quoted its treatment by Krateros, were unable to date it accurately." It follows that the decree was not dated by the archon's name, that the occurrence of Charias' name in the tradition is due to inference, and that there was "no other documentary evidence available for determining the time of the proceedings against Diagoras."

This criticism of sources is impressive, but it is fragile. First, Jacoby has to concentrate his attention on the second Scholiast and to exclude the evidence of the first, who also derives his information ultimately from Melanthis and knows that Aristophanes is quoting from the decree. As he admits that we have here two "versions" (10, line 45) of some learned source, it is uncritical to reject one version on the ground that it is "the extract of an extract" when it gives information that agrees with the chronological tradition. Secondly, Jacoby believes (11, lines 12–14) that the information given by Melanthis and Craterus was combined with other information taken from a biography either by Didymus or by his source. There was therefore room for chronological confusion at a relatively early stage. But in that case, what ground is there for supposing that the second Scholiast has picked out of this confusion the better information, leaving the worse for his fellow? Why should it not be equally reasonable to assume the opposite, or that both Scholiasts give confused information? Thirdly, it is evident that Jacoby is on very weak ground in divining the presence of the text of an official document beneath the Scholiast's words. The triple repetition of the verb does not prove this, and *ἐκκεκήρυκται* cannot, as Jacoby shows (12, lines 36–40), be taken from such a document. The details that follow the second occurrence, Jacoby admits, are not drawn from the official text but from Craterus' book. As for the mention of the date, after the third occurrence, Jacoby cannot argue that this is derived from that text nor from Melanthis' discussion of it, as he (20, lines 1–2, 8–9) maintains that the decree did not give the archon's name and that we do not know whether Melanthis tried to date the decree. But if these lines by the

second Scholiast cannot be shown to be an analysis of the official document, then there is no good reason to give preference to this Scholiast over other sources. Fourthly, Jacoby notes (11, lines 19–20; 12, lines 8–27) that it looks as if “Didymus found the text only in Melanthius and not in Krateros” and that Craterus differs from Melanthius in mentioning negotiations with the Peloponnesians, which presumably preceded the decree, rather than the outlawry of Pellene, which formed part of it. On grounds such as these it would be attractive to attribute Jacoby’s lines from the second Scholiast on the *Birds* and the scholium on *Frogs* 320 to Craterus, who is named in both places, but the first scholium and the last part of the second scholium on the *Birds* to Melanthius, whose name occurs in each passage. If this is right, Jacoby has been analysing Craterus, who did not give the text, while spurning Melanthius, who had it. Fifthly, the analysis may be carried a step further by attributing to Craterus the second sentence of the first Scholiast on the ground that what is said there about Diagoras’ offence agrees very well with the statement by Craterus given by the second Scholiast. But in that case both Scholiasts derive from a source that combined, without quite uniting, Craterus and Melanthius. For both Scholiasts then draw on both authorities in the same order, no doubt as they were combined in their source, but the result of the combination, as we see from the second Scholiast, was a repetition of the quotation of the decree, first in Craterus’ indirect form, then in the verbatim text given by Melanthius. If the common source combined testimonies in this rough-and-ready way, it is not surprising that it failed to give a quite unambiguous answer to the question of the date. If we must postulate an answer in its name, an approximate synchronism with the capture of Melos is most probable, covering perhaps 416/5 and 415. The doubt whether this is *terminus ante* or *post quem* might have arisen from a double reference to the date in different contexts, drawn from different sources. For instance, there are signs that the ancient biographies connected Diagoras in some way with the Melian revolt. The Scholiast on *Clouds* 830 reports both that the Melians were satirised for their impiety because of Diagoras and that the Athenians destroyed them because of his conversion to atheism. On the other hand, the first Scholiast on *Birds* 1073, Diodorus, and Mubaššir evidently think of a flight from Attica in the nick of time in 415. Suppose then that the immediate common source of the two Scholiasts on *Birds* combined two mentions of a date, drawn from different sources, the one giving his responsibility for the destruction of Melos, the other telling of his flight from Athens: the discrepancies in the reports of our scholia could be accounted for. As it is most unlikely that Diagoras’ atheism was in any way responsible for the fate of the Melians or that he was present

in Athens after the destruction of Melos, both these details may be written off as the inventions of biographers. But the main point, an approximate synchronism with the capture of Melos, would remain unaffected.

There is, in fact, a piece of evidence that may be used in positive confirmation of this hypothesis. The second Scholiast on *Birds* makes use four times of the verb *κηρύττω*. Twice he uses the simple verb, when he is thinking of the proclamation of the decree and the reason for this. Once he uses the compound *ἐπικηρύττω*, quite properly of putting a price on the heads of Diagoras and the citizens of Pellene. In all these places the aorist tense is used. In the remaining occurrence, the disputed chronological passage, the compound *ἐκκηρύττω* is used in the perfect. This verb, as Jacoby noticed (12, lines 36–40) means “to banish” and does not quite fit the facts, as Diagoras was outlawed, and so must have fled Athens beforehand. It must, he believed, be “either corrupt or a loose expression.” Perhaps the second suggestion is right and the Scholiast has mis-spoken himself because he is thinking, not of the proclamation of outlawry, but of Diagoras’ flight. It would be understandable, if not correct, to use, in such a context, *ἐκκηρύττομαι* in place of *φεύγω*, and “Diagoras” can serve as subject as well as “the decree.” It is certainly the case that we hear similar confusions every day. On this view the perfect tense implies that he was in banishment before the price was formally placed on his head—“at about the time of the capture of Melos, or even earlier.” The enigmatic phrase, *οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει πρότερον*, would then mean that there is no obstacle to believing that Diagoras was in Athens and fled from it before the capture of his native island.

The outcome of this criticism of the sources of the Scholiasts is to undermine all of Jacoby’s main conclusions. The Scholiasts drew, directly or indirectly, on a source that made use of Melanthius, Craterus, and at least a partial text of the decree. But it is impossible to show that the second Scholiast preserves an analysis of the text, and it seems highly probable that what he gives us is a combination of documentary evidence, and early comments on it, with biographical conjectures of dubious worth. There is no sufficient reason for believing that the sentence of the second Scholiast dealing with the date is Didymus’ conclusion from the text of the decree and other evidence. Our evidence shows no more than a confusion, in Didymus or another source of the Scholiasts, concerning the temporal relation of Diagoras’ flight and outlawry to the destruction of Melos. This question is likely to come from a biographical source, which might possibly have sprung ultimately from an attempt by Athenian propagandists to smear Melos in 415 with Diagoras’ atheism. However that may be, Jacoby is quite right in holding that the date cannot be shown

to be based on the text of the decree; but in that point he does not differ from Wilamowitz. The only point at issue between them is whether the Scholiast or his source used a decree that bore no date or an undated excerpt from the decree, and we possess at present no means of settling this dispute.

Nor should it be said that the use made of a biographical source for the purpose of dating proves that Didymus or others possessed no documentary evidence for a date. Nothing is clearer in what we know of Hellenistic biography and in the use made of it by Aristophanes' Scholiasts in particular, than that biographical interest is permitted to outweigh chronological exactness. No one supposes in these cases that better means of dating were lacking, and it would be gratuitous to introduce this argument here.

We do not know and cannot discover whether the decree bore a date, nor whether Melanthius or Craterus recorded such a fact, nor what relation their discussion of the date may have borne to the Scholiasts' information. What we can say is that the Scholiasts derive from their source an approximate date centring on 416/5 and 415, which is connected with the capture of Melos and combined, we do not know how, with the documentary evidence of the decree. As this date agrees with the archon's date given by Diodorus and Mubaššir, with the literary evidence, especially of the *Birds*, and what we know of the general historical situation, it is reasonable to accept it as probable.

In order to argue his case, Jacoby has to deny that the *Birds* refers to a recent decree, to find in the *Clouds* and in the *Fates* of Hermippus allusions to the atheistic book (23, lines 1–6), to interpret the Scholiast on the *Birds* as giving the capture of Melos as a *terminus ante quem*, and to reject the explicit testimonies of Diodorus and Mubaššir to the year 415. He can appeal to Mubaššir's statement that a long war broke out between Athens and the Peloponnesians after Diagoras escaped from Athens to Pellene, and believes that "the hostile measures which Athens took against the city of Pellene in the course of the Diagoras-affair would furnish a perfectly good" explanation why Pellene, alone in Achaea, took the Spartan side from the beginning of the war (22, lines 22–28).

It seems highly doubtful, as has been seen, that we can give any credence to the chronological implications of Mubaššir's account. Even if this were accepted at face value, it would not exclude 415, before the outbreak of the second war. It is not inherently more likely that Pellene broke with Athens over the extradition of Diagoras than that he chose to seek refuge in Pellene because of the enmity that already existed between her and Athens.⁴³ If it was imprudent to provoke the Pelopon-

⁴³Jacoby himself (23, lines 24–26) appears to recognise this fact.

nesians by a demand for extradition in 415, it was not less reckless to make enemies unnecessarily by the same step in 433/2. Neither the *Clouds* nor the *Fates* contains any reference to a book, much less to the decree of outlawry, and it is quite uncertain that the latter contains any reference whatever to our Diagoras. The Scholiast's chronological inferences are too confused, obscure, and evidently wrong-headed to carry weight, and do not, in any case, refer to Diopieithes nor to 433/2. Even Jacoby is driven by the evidence for 415 to leave open the possibility that the decree was renewed in that year.⁴⁴

The decree of Diopieithes seems to have been used as a means of attacking Pericles through his friends, Pheidias, Anaxagoras, and Aspasia.⁴⁵ We know, however, of no connection between Pericles and Diagoras. The decree was directed against those who did not keep the usual religious observances or gave scientific instruction concerning the upper air and heavens. But Diagoras was outlawed for a specific offence against the mysteries, of the kind that were the target of the prosecutors of 415. Political motives, though of a more obscure sort, were of course at work in 415 as well, but the prosecutions were more widespread, and presumably less discriminating, than those of 433/2. When in 415 the net was cast so wide, it is unlikely that a poet who had been for some time notorious for impiety, and was a Melian to boot, escaped the general sweep, whereas Diagoras was, so far as we know, of no political or other importance in 433/2 and so an unlikely victim of the heresy hunt of that year.

Mubaššir's period of fifty-four years is most unlikely to be his own calculation and 415 must mark its end. On Jacoby's view, 415 could in fact serve this purpose, only if Apollodorus or another took the capture of Melos in 416 as "the last known fact touching his life" and calculated the next succeeding year as the time of his death (Jacoby 20, lines 33–36). Here again, Jacoby must lean heavily on Aristophanes' Scholiast, who shows us no reason for believing that Diagoras' connection with the capture of Melos was anything but a guess. On the other hand it is a certainty that the source of Mubaššir, like Diodorus, regarded 415, not in this way, but as the year in which Diagoras was outlawed.

The atheism of Diagoras was notorious in antiquity and his name is always prominent in lists of atheists which are found in various ancient

⁴⁴Jacoby's view entails (23, lines 11–13; 43, n. 186) that Diagoras was never in Athens after 433/2. It seems improbable that the Athenians in 415 again put a price on the head of an outlaw who had been absent for nearly twenty years.

⁴⁵Cf. Plut. *Per.* 32 and H. T. Wade-Gery in *JHS* 52 (1932) 220: *Essays in Greek History* 258–260.

sources.⁴⁶ He was, it is said, converted to atheism by an experience that caused him to doubt the justice of the gods. According to one anecdote, this involved the successful plagiarism and perjury of a fellow-poet; according to another, the embezzlement of a trust.⁴⁷ A different story says that he once used a statue of Heracles as fuel for his fire, saying, "Come, perform a thirteenth labour for us and cook the lentils!"⁴⁸ Still another anecdote (which is also and more convincingly told of Diogenes of Sinope) relates that, when Diagoras was shown at Samothrace, as a proof of divine providence, the numerous votive offerings of those who had been saved from the sea, he replied, "They would have been much more numerous still, if they included the offerings of those who were lost."⁴⁹ The form of atheism that is always attributed to him is a plain denial of the existence of gods.⁵⁰ This seems to be the implication of Aristophanes in the *Clouds* (826–830), at least in relation to Zeus, and it is more clearly stated by later authorities. Diagoras is said to be connected in various ways with others who had a similar reputation, such as Protagoras, Democritus, and the physicists. A book containing his opinions, presumably in prose,⁵¹ was attributed to him, under the title *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* or *'Αποπυργίζοντες Λόγοι*.⁵² For all the ancients he is simply Diagoras "the atheist."

The evidence seems impressive, because it is plentiful, varied, and detailed, but upon examination it is seen to have quite a different value. The fundamental difficulty is of a very general kind. We are asked to believe in a poet of traditional piety who turns to prose to write a book in which he rehearses arguments borrowed from the philosophic schools and designed to disprove the existence of gods. It is as if we were to hear that Billy Graham had become an exponent of the views of Bertrand Russell. We should reject such a report, not because the opinions of the

⁴⁶The catalogue of atheists is attributed by Diels (*Doxogr. Gr.* 58–59) to Cleitomachus of Carthage, who was head of the Academy from 127/6–110/09 B.C. Diels regards him as the common source of Cic. *De nat. deor.* 1.1–2; Sext. Emp. *Pyrrh. Hyp.* 3.218 and *Adv. Math.* 9.50; and of the texts used by Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* 14.16.1 (Aetius?). Cf. Jacoby 15–16, 25, with notes, especially 36, n. 91a and A. S. Pease in his edition of *De nat. deor.* 1 (Cambridge, Mass. 1955) 120–122.

⁴⁷Suda, *s.v.* and Schol. Aristoph. *Nub.* 830.

⁴⁸Schol. Aristoph. *Nub.* 830. B. Keil ("Ein neues Bruchstück des Diagoras von Melos," *Hermes* 55 (1920) 63–67) believed that the story about Heracles was derived from a poem by Diagoras. See the criticisms of Wilamowitz, *Gr. Versk.* 426, n. 4 and Jacoby, 38, n. 110; 44, n. 198.

⁴⁹Diog. Laert. 6.59 and Cic. *De nat. deor.* 3.89.

⁵⁰Cf. Jacoby 26, lines 5 ff.

⁵¹Philodemus (see n. 3 above) evidently contrasts the genuine verse with the doubtful prose of the atheistic book.

⁵²Tatian *Adv. Graec.* 27; Mubaššir (see p. 189 above); Suda, *s.v.*

one are opposed to those of the other, but because they belong to quite different universes of thought. Even if Billy Graham were to suffer a loss of faith, his repudiation of his former beliefs could never take the characteristic forms of Russell's thinking. If Diagoras wrote the kind of verse that is attributed to him, and then went on to arguments of the kind that we find in the sophists, Critias, Euripides, and Democritus, he must have suffered an inner disjunction more radical than any schizophrenia.

Other difficulties are of less importance. The combination of verse with prose first becomes regular at this period, as in the work of Ion of Chios, who wrote not only poems in various *genres* but also a philosophical prose work, the *Triagmos*, and may perhaps be called the first man of letters. But we expect to find a common intellect and imagination underlying both kinds of writing. Much of what Critias and Euripides wrote might have been expressed just as well in prose, and Protagoras and Prodicus, like Plato later, actually preferred the form of the prose myth, which seems perfectly suited to be the leash on which reason allows imagination to run. What is impossible is a combination of the old innocent verse and myth with the new rational and sophisticated prose. Between them lies the difference between the old and the new education, and between the Just and the Unjust Argument.

What is possible is a combination of the old piety and poetry with impiety, sacrilege, or blasphemy. Indeed, these offences presuppose the authority of something holy; for without this there would be nothing to offend. A black mass implies the power and validity of the sacrament, an irreverent or lewd carving on a misericordia reflects the majesty of sacred images, and the spirit of carnival could not exist without the discipline of Lent. Even theological jokes have no point for non-believers. It is therefore credible on general grounds, whether or not the charge be true, that Aeschylus was guilty of impiety by an offence against the mysteries.⁶³ In the same way, we have no general reason to reject the tradition that the pious Diagoras was guilty of a similar crime and so became notorious for impiety.

The difficulty in believing in an atheistic book by a converted poet was presumably felt by Aristotle's pupil, Aristoxenus, who denied the attribution of the book to Diagoras. It was certainly felt by Philodemus, to whom we owe our knowledge of Aristoxenus' denial. He quotes the tiny fragments of Diagoras' indubitable verses as evidence of his piety, and concludes that either Diagoras' atheism was a joke, or the attribution is false. Aristoxenus, who spent some time in Diagoras' old haunt in

⁶³Cf. Nauck's *Trag. Graec. Fragm.*² 28; W. Schmid, *Gesch. d. griech. Lit.* 1.2.106, n. 2; 185, nn. 7-8.

Mantineia,⁵⁴ is probably the source from which Philodemus drew these lines, written for an Argive and a Mantinean. His reasoning was probably of the same kind as Philodemus'.⁵⁵

The doubts of Aristoxenus and Philodemus are now strengthened by the new testimony of Mubaššir, who says that Diagoras was prosecuted for persisting in his atheistic opinions and that the atheistic book was discovered in Diagoras' possession only after his death. There is at the very least an echo here of a tradition that the provenience of the book was different from that of the poems. If the inexplicable book was not published until after Diagoras' death, we have a second, and particular, reason for following Aristoxenus in rejecting Diagoras' authorship.

Other doubts now follow quickly. Why is it that we hear of the views on religion held by Protagoras, Prodicus, Critias, Democritus, and the like, but not a word about the doctrines of the most notorious atheist of all?⁵⁶ The only information that we have concerning the contents of the book is given by the brief statement in the Suda: ἔγραψε τοὺς καλουμένους Ἀποπυργίζοντας Λόγους, ἀναχώρησιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκπτώσιν ἔχοντας τῆς περὶ τὸ θεῖον δόξης. The notice is, as Jacoby notes (46, n. 227), not properly bibliographical. It does not, for instance, quote the opening words nor give the number of books or lines, although we should expect to find this sort of information in notices deriving from the Πίνακες of Callimachus. What we have is a description of the biographical contents of the work: it told of Diagoras' apostasy and defection from belief in the gods.⁵⁷ The description therefore has an affinity with the anecdotes that were told concerning Diagoras' conversion to atheism.⁵⁸ If the book was really

⁵⁴Cf. the Suda s.v. (fr. 1 Wehrli *Sch. d. Arist.*).

⁵⁵Aelian (*Var. Hist.* 2.23), who tells us of Diagoras' association with Nicodorus, the law-giver of Mantineia, breaks off his account of Nicodorus in an outburst of petulance, in order to avoid seeming to be involved in praise of Diagoras, who was an enemy of the gods. We cannot know what Aelian's obtrusive piety prevented him from saying, but it is easy to guess that an account of Nicodorus' activity as law-giver would have implied commendation of Diagoras' part in it: cf. Wilamowitz, *Textgeschichte* 83. Aristoxenus may be Aelian's ultimate source, as well as Philodemus'. Both passages are acquainted with Mantineia, with Nicodorus' connections with Diagoras, and with the atheism of the latter, and Aristoxenus is mentioned by Philodemus. If this hypothesis is correct, Aristoxenus may well have had another reason for rejecting the attribution of the book: the public position and evident respectability of Diagoras at Mantineia.

⁵⁶Not a word, except that he denied the gods: cf. Jacoby 15–16.

⁵⁷On ἀναχώρησις, cf. Lampe, *Patr. Gr. Lex.* Lampe's work has not yet advanced to ἐκπτώσις, but the article on ἀπόπτωσις is helpful. Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math.* 9.53 has μεθρημόσατο εἰς τὸ λέγειν μὴ εἶναι θεόν; Schol. Aristoph. *Nub.* 830 has ἐπὶ τὸ ἄθεος εἶναι ἐξέδραμεν; and Ael. *Var. Hist.* 2.31 has ἐς ἀθεότητα ἐξέπεσε.

⁵⁸We cannot tell what was the relation between the book's contents and the anecdotes, except that they cannot all be derived from the book because their versions vary. On the other hand, the notice in the Suda is slipshod and amateurish and suggests a second-

made up of stories of this sort, we understand why nothing is reported of Diagoras' arguments for atheism. The book was not in that case a theological, nor an anti-theological, work. It was a narrative of a kind that always enjoys a sensational interest: not *On the Nature of the Gods* but *How I Lost My Faith*. If, on the other hand, the notice in the Suda is false, then neither this nor any other ancient witness has anything to tell about the book's contents.⁵⁹

Two titles or descriptions are given for the book. The Suda mentions *τοὺς καλουμένους Ἀποπυργίζοντας Λόγους* but Tatian (and evidently Mubaššir) speaks of *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι*. No one mentions more than one book and Mubaššir says of the work "written in the language of the inhabitants of Phrygia" that it was "full of abuse of divine things," and so shows that this was the same as the book described by the Suda under a different title. *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* was the title of an anonymous work, probably of the third century B.C.,⁶⁰ which was later attributed to Democritus.⁶¹ It belonged to a class of writings which flourished in the Hellenistic age. These professed to disclose the secret lore of the Orient and to relate it, by way of explanation or correction, to familiar Greek notions (*VS* 68 B299e). Democritus was a famous traveller; it was told of him that he became a disciple of the Magi, the Egyptian priests, and the naked fakirs of India; other books of the occult were attributed to him.⁶² It seems possible that the title *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* was transferred from Democritus to Diagoras, because of an imagined association between them. There is a story, which is found in the Life of Diagoras in the Suda, that Democritus bought Diagoras as a slave and made him his pupil. A similar tale is told about Democritus and Protagoras.⁶³ This ready-made anecdote is

hand report. If it was such, it may well have been inspired by the anecdotes, which derive from Hellenistic biographies.

⁵⁹W. Nestle made a number of attempts to discover traces of Diagoras' doctrine, in the Callicles of Plato's *Gorgias*, in the *Sisyphus* of Critias and the *Bellerophon* of Euripides, and in the arguments of the Aristophanic Socrates in the *Clouds* (398 ff., 830, 1024). Cf. *NJ* (1903) 101 and *Vom Mythos zum Logos*² (Stuttgart 1942) 416–418. But short of knowing in advance that all such doctrines are due to a single source and Diagoras' book the only candidate, all such speculations are empty. Cf. also Jacoby 44, n. 200.

⁶⁰Cf. Lysimachus of Alexandria (ca. 200 B.C.; *FGrHist* 382) *ap.* Schol. Apoll. Rhod. 1.558 (ὁ τοὺς Φρυγίους Λόγους γράψας); Cic. *De nat. deor.* 3.42 (*alter* [sc. *Hercules*] *traditur Nilo natus, Aegyptius, quem aiunt Phrygias litteras conscripsisse*); Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 29 (2.499 Bern.) and *De Daedal. Plat.* 1 (7.43.3–13 Bern.); Damascius, *De prim. principiis in Plat. Parm.* 2.154.17 Ruelle. The evidence is discussed by Jacoby, 46, n. 231. On Phrygian literature generally, cf. also Diod. 3.68; Plut. *De def. orac.* 10.414 f (3.82 Bern.); *FGrHist* 795–800; R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (Leipzig 1904) 162–165.

⁶¹Diog. Laert. 9.49; *VS* 68A33 and B299e.

⁶²Cf. *FGrHist* 263 T2–4; F1; *Komment.* 3A, 24 ff.

⁶³The story is in Diog. Laert. 9.53 and Athen. 8.354c, where we learn that it is at least as old as Epicurus. Cf. *VS* 68A9 and 80A1, with the notes of Diels.

evidently used to demonstrate the dependence of all atheists upon the atomism of Democritus. The attribution of the *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* to Diagoras might very well have served a similar purpose.⁶⁴ In somewhat the same way, the story that Democritus was educated in Abdera by the Magi left behind by Xerxes is told also of Protagoras and the tale is used by Philostratus to explain the atheism of the sophist.⁶⁵

The Greeks were equivocal in their judgment of the oriental lore in which they took so much interest. On the one hand they might, like Plutarch (*ap. Euseb. Praep. Ev.* 3.1.1), see in the *Λόγοι* of Orphics, Egyptians, and Phrygians a secret philosophy, hidden in myth and symbol. A certain Leon of Pella, who lived in the age of Alexander's earliest Successors, said that he was an Egyptian priest and gave a rationalistic account of the Egyptian gods, for which he claimed the authority of their priesthood.⁶⁶ But the Greeks might also look upon the barbarians as cunning heathen, whose magical practices were irreligious and subversive of Greek faith. So Protagoras was led into atheism, and presumably Democritus himself. Even Leon was to be included in the canon of atheists.⁶⁷ Because Diagoras is always represented as a radical atheist, it must be assumed that those who attributed the *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* to him understood such a work in the second of these two ways. That is, they believed that Diagoras was seduced by the false wisdom of the east. This is just the kind of book that Mubaššir's source supposed was discovered, "written in the language of the inhabitants of Phrygia," in the possession of Diagoras after his death—under the pillow, as it were, of the dead atheist.

In these stories of recondite eastern teaching and books on secret Oriental lore⁶⁸ there is evident a concerted attempt to fit all Greek atheists into a single category and to find for the category a single explanation. In many cases it must be beyond our powers to determine what historical truth is contained in the myth of the Orientalisers, but in the case of Diagoras we can see that, if *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* is a true title,

⁶⁴Aelian (*Var. Hist.* 2.31) includes in a catalogue of atheists both Diagoras and "Diogenes the Phrygian." Diels recognised the latter as Diogenes of Apollonia (*VS* 64A3), and inferred that the Cretan and the Phrygian Apollonia have been confused. However, it seems likely also that Diogenes, like Diagoras, was put down at some time by some one as an atheist of the Phrygian school. This was not Aelian himself, who takes the alternative interpretation of Oriental wisdom, by contrasting its piety with the atheism of the Greeks.

⁶⁵Cf. Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 1.10.

⁶⁶Cf. Aug. *De civ. dei* 8.5; 8.27; 12.11; *De cons. evang.* 1.33; J. Geffcken in *RE* 12.2 (1925) 2012–2014; *FGrHist* 659.

⁶⁷Cf. Tatian *Adv. Graec.* 27; Arnob. *Adv. gent.* 4.29.

⁶⁸Cf. Jacoby 28–29.

or even a description of the book attributed to him, this fact is an additional reason for doubting the attribution.

It is true that it is possible to suppose that the work had from the beginning alternative titles: *'Αποπυργίζοντες ἢ Φρύγιοι Λόγοι*. Formally the latter is not unlike the *Τρωικός* attributed to Hippias⁶⁹ and a connection might be made in substance as well, if "Phrygian" in the title of Diagoras' work meant, as it might mean, "Trojan." Here it is interesting to notice that the image of a "crown of towers," which is used in tragedy of a city's battlements, occurs in Euripides' *Hecuba* (910) in connection with the destruction of Troy (*ἀπὸ στέφαναν κέκαρσαι πύργων*). The same play contains references to the destruction of the towers of Troy (*ἔως . . . πύργοι τ' ἄθραυστοι Τρωικῆς ἦσαν χθονός: Hec. 17*) and to the fall of the Phrygians' towers (*Φρυγῶν πύργους πεσόντας: Hec. 1112*). As the date of the *Hecuba* is thought to fall in the decade preceding Diagoras' outlawry in 415, it is easy to guess that somewhat later Diagoras or another put his book, bearing a double title, in the form of a dialogue or monologue, having as its setting the fall of Troy, just as Hippias had Nestor discourse to Neoptolemus, on the same occasion, about ethics. However, the objections to this hypothesis are weighty. Although it is possible to conceive of the fall of Troy as the occasion of an essay aiming at a rejection of providence and a proclamation of atheism, there seems to be no evidence that the occasion and the theme were ever in fact so connected in a Phrygian conversation. It is certain, on the other hand, that the heroic setting was not well suited to an autobiographical account of Diagoras' own apostasy, which the anecdotes and the description in the *Suda* lead us to expect from the book. Further, the meaning which we do find attached to *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* is, as has just been seen, quite different from that postulated here and even the meaning required for *'Αποπυργίζόντες* is, as will be seen presently, not demonstrable for the fifth century.

This title is indeed more puzzling than the other.⁷⁰ In form it resembles other titles of Diagoras' time, such as the *Καταβάλλοντες* of Protagoras and the *Ἐπερβάλλοντες* of Thrasymachus; in fact, the *Suda* clearly regards it as some kind of title. In meaning too, there may be a likeness,

⁶⁹*VS* 86B5 (and 6?): Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 1.11.4 and Plat. *Hirr. Maj.* 286a. Note, however, that the title, which is given by Philostratus only, has been held to be an inference drawn from Plato's account of the work: cf. F. Heinimann in *MH* 18 (1961) 111, n. 27. Another attempt to connect the two titles is found in the suggestion (made, e.g., by Worth in his edition of Tatian, 44, p. 96; accepted by Derenne, 61 and Lana, 180) that the book was an attack on the Phrygian goddess Cybele, and that the alternative title refers to her in her capacity as *πυργοφόρος*. The hypothesis has the merit of economy of explanation, but misconceives the nature of *Φρύγιοι Λόγοι* and can only be a guess in other respects.

⁷⁰Cf. the *Suda*, s.v. *'Αποπυργίζοντας, Διαγόρας, Πυργίσκος*.

but we are handicapped here because the word occurs nowhere else and even Liddell, Scott, and Jones, who list it, offer no translation. "Den Titel," writes Wilamowitz, "der sonst nicht vorkommt, verstehe ich nicht."⁷¹

The version most often given is "destroying the towers" (*sc.* of the gods).⁷² This fits the radical atheism of its purported contents, and the privative or negative sense of the prefix ἀπο-, producing a reversal of meaning of the simple verb.⁷³ It has been pointed out, however, by E. Derenne (59–60) that the parallel formation ἀποτειχίζω means "to wall off" or "to blockade" and does not acquire the meaning, "to raze walls," until imperial times. Similarly, ἀπογεφυρόω in Herodotus (2.99) means "to protect by a dike" and ἀποικοδομέω in Thucydides (1.134; 7.73) means "to barricade." With the support of such parallels Derenne argued that ἀποपुरγίζω meant "to fortify with towers" in Diagoras' time, and that the title either belongs to an apocryphal work or, more probably, is a second title given later to Diagoras' Φρύγιοι Λόγοι. In drawing the latter conclusion he overlooked the evidence that Φρύγιοι Λόγοι is unlikely to be earlier than the third century, but the other thesis must be taken seriously.

Derenne's linguistic argument is accepted by Jacoby (29–31), who prefers however to abandon the traditional translation rather than the title. It must have meant, he believes, "arguments blockading the gods" or "against the opinion that there are gods." In this way he finds a translation that is compatible with the rule implied by the usage of Derenne's examples, but at the cost of reading a very specific set of connotations into the word. ἀποपुरγίζω must, on his view, imply gods or arguments in favour of their existence. Such a connotation is, in fact, present in the use of ἀποτειχίζω by Aristophanes in the *Birds* (1576): ὅστις ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ τοὺς θεοὺς ἀποτειχίσας. The example proves that the connotation could accrue to a word of this kind, but the blockade of the gods is part of Aristophanes' comic idea and the connotation seems more likely to be part of his fantasy than an established usage. It would be gratuitous, on the other hand, to suppose that Diagoras somehow had a part in this fantasy, or modelled his usage upon it. Jacoby's answer to Derenne is unsatisfactory.⁷⁴

⁷¹Cf. *Textgeschichte* 82, n. 2.

⁷²A variation is "discours où les dieux étaient jetés du haut du ciel," which is attributed to Fabricius by Derenne, 59. Jacoby (48, n. 250) considers but rejects "throwing from the towers."

⁷³Cf. K. Dieterich in *Indog. Forsch.* 24 (1909) 105–115, who gives examples like ἀπογαλακτίζω, ἀποφυλλίζω, and ἀποχαλινώω.

⁷⁴Jacoby's conjecture (30, lines 23–43) that the Epicurean notion of defending mankind may go back to Diagoras and be the explanation of his title must, in the absence of evidence, remain a speculation.

Thus far the argument from morphological analogy. If it is accepted, the title (with any appropriate meaning) is probably too late for Diagoras himself. However, the argument is not quite cogent, as the semantic history of a word is not determined by its morphology and etymology alone. In any case, *πύργος*, though a synonym of *τείχος*, is not identical in meaning with it, and even if it were, the meaning of *ἀποπυργίζω* need not have the same history as that of *ἀποτειχίζω*, any more than “determination” is synonymous with “definition.” We cannot therefore be certain that the traditional meaning is excluded for the fifth century, although we can say that it is unexampled and analogy is against it.

Semantic analogy is no more decisive. The title implies a developed metaphorical meaning, such as is evidently possessed by *πύργος* and its congeners in the fifth century. Aristophanes has *καλλιπυργον σοφίαν* in the *Clouds* (1024) and elsewhere *πύργος* and *πυργόω* have a wide application, to language, song, character, and status.⁷⁵ Wilamowitz held that the metaphorical sense is almost exclusively fifth-century, and never without a hint of unjustifiably exaggerated pride.⁷⁶ Particularly suggestive is a fragment of Euripides’ *Bellerophon* (fr. 286 Nauck²), which was earlier than Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* of 425. Here is found, in the story of the impious Bellerophon who attempts heaven itself, an emphatic denial of the gods on the ground of the prosperity of the impious.⁷⁷ The ending is unfortunately corrupt, but we can make out the line,

τὰ θεῖα πυργοῦσ(ω) αἱ κακαί τε συμφοραί.

When *πυργόω* can be used of the exaltation of religion in such a context, the ground has been prepared for the growth of a corresponding negative. But we cannot tell when in fact such a negative form sprang up, nor whether it took the form of *ἀποπυργίζω*.⁷⁸ If it did so, the title is something like *Wreckers* or *Debunkers*.

When so much is uncertain, it is perhaps useful to point out another meaning, even if it cannot be more than a possibility. *ἀπογεισώω*, “to crown with a cornice” and *ἀποθριγκόω*, “to furnish with a coping” are both attested in the fourth century (Xen. *Mem.* 1.4.6 and *IG* 11(2).144

⁷⁵Cf. Eur. *Her. Fur.* 238; Aristoph. *Ran.* 1004; *Pax* 749 (and Platnauer’s note); Eur. *Suppl.* 998; *Or.* 1568; *Her. Fur.* 475; *Med.* 390 (with Page’s note); and Bacchyl. 3.13 and fr. 39 (Snell).

⁷⁶In his note on Eur. *Her. Fur.* 475 in his edition of the play (Berlin 1885).

⁷⁷It is interesting that the play contained also the famous line (*εἰ θεοί τι δρῶσιν αἰσχρόν, οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοί*: fr. 292 Nauck²), in which Euripides gave classical expression to the moral criticism of traditional theology.

⁷⁸Euripides, in *Troad.* 612–613, uses *πυργοῦσι* of the power of the gods to exalt things from nothingness, but the verb used for the opposite activity is *ἀπώλεσαν*. For the latter usage, cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.556; Anacr. fr. 46.391 *PMG*; Hdt. 7.140.3. For other verbs used in this sense, cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 104; *Sept.* 882; Thuc. 4.69.

A84), the former in a metaphorical sense. It is conceivable that *ἀποπυργόω and ἀποπυργίζω belong to the same group of words, and therefore mean “to provide with a battlement.” They would then be proper to the completion of walls, and the latter form in particular might be used by extension of any building, or any act of completion or culmination. One is reminded of “to top off,” which is used in Canada of the completion of the steel framework of a high building; but the Canadian usage is probably transferred from another sphere of meaning. If the meaning postulated for ἀποπυργίζω ever developed and occurred metaphorically in the title of a book, the book was intended as an ancient counterpart of *The Summing Up*. Such a title would suit very well the autobiography of a converted atheist and the retrospective outlook which should be expected in a book published posthumously. It does not imply atheism, but it fits the two facts about the book’s contents that we learn from the Suda and Mubaššir. However, positive confirmation is lacking, and proof impossible.

For lack of evidence an investigation of the two titles must be inconclusive. The most definite result is the probability that Φρύγιοι Λόγοι is much later than Diagoras, whereas Ἀποπυργίζοντες Λόγοι has a number of analogies with the usage of the fifth and fourth centuries. Further, the earlier title implies either a direct attack on religion or an account of Diagoras’ conversion to atheism.

It now appears that the atheism of Diagoras, though notorious, is elusive and indefinite. The most certain thing about it is the absence of any evidence that would confirm the view that he was a systematic thinker with a reasoned philosophy that excluded theism. The view is implied in his inclusion in the canons of atheists, his synchronisation with the philosophers and physicists, and his assimilation to Protagoras and Democritus. It is to be rejected. Anaxagoras and Socrates, to mention only two examples, found that the practice of philosophy was popularly supposed to imply atheism. We may be sure that there were many who commonly made the reverse inference and would therefore be likely to attribute Diagoras’ offence to his training in the philosophic schools. It is most improbable, on intellectual and psychological grounds, that the conventional poet ever thought in a systematic way, unless we are to suppose that his practice of poetry was a conscious fraud. But Diagoras, although subjected to much abuse in antiquity, was never accused of that.⁷⁹

The charge that we do hear is one of revealing and ridiculing the

⁷⁹Except by Derenne, 58–59, who draws his inference from a false interpretation of Philodemus (see n. 3 above). Philodemus contrasts the pious but authentic verse with the light-hearted or apocryphal prose book, not the poet who conforms externally to convention with the emancipated atheist.

mysteries, and Philodemus, who either read the atheistic book or followed Aristoxenus who had read it, says plainly that, if Diagoras wrote the work, he was joking. The anecdotes of his conversion, if we could put any trust in them, testify to a real change, but one that had its ground in a problem of popular belief, as we see in Solon, the Theognidea, and Aeschylus.⁸⁰ Diagoras did not need to be a philosopher, nor even a sophist, to be troubled by the prosperity of the wicked. If he really underwent a conversion for this reason, it must be that he was convinced that the existence of the gods implies their just government of the world. The mystery religions, on the other hand, presumably laid more emphasis on holiness than on justice. They would have offered an easy target for the derision of Diagoras, if he held the position implied in the anecdotes. Still, these are doubtful evidence, and all that we can affirm is ridicule of the mysteries, including a denial that the gods, or certain gods, existed.

As for the atheistic book, it is prudent to regard the tradition with great suspicion.⁸¹ Although Diagoras' atheistic opinions were well known, as we can see from Aristophanes' allusions, there is no mention of a book before Aristoxenus,⁸² who evidently knew one but certainly denied the attribution of atheistic doctrine to Diagoras.⁸³ His offence lay in something that he said, as we learn from pseudo-Lysias, but Melanthius and Craterus, who had read the text of the decree by which he was outlawed, testify to his impiety, though they give no hint that his heterodox opinions had been published in a book.⁸⁴ If on the other hand we are to assume that Diagoras' book was published after the decree, and in fact after Diagoras' death, as Mubaššir seems to say, there is good reason to suspect the authenticity of a work which was brought to light after the death of the notorious atheist, purporting to reveal his secret thoughts. There is other evidence of attempts to lump all atheists together under a

⁸⁰Cf., e.g., Hes. *Op.* 267–273; Sol. fr. 1 Diehl²; Theogn. 731–752; Aesch. *Prom. Vincit.* 1093 Eur. fr. 286 Nauck³.

⁸¹The common opinion has been that the book is not authentic: cf., e.g., Wilamowitz, *Textgeschichte* 84. This has been attacked by Jacoby (24–27), but again defended by F. Wehrli in *Gnomon* 33 (1961) 126.

⁸²W. Schmid, 494, argues that, as Diagoras could not have been present in Athens after the destruction of Melos, the Athenian decree must have been provoked by the influence of his book. But it is not safe to go beyond the fact that Diagoras' offence was committed in words (λόγῳ: [Lys.] 6.17) and was notorious in Athens for at least a quarter of a century (cf. p. 187 above). There is no need to postulate the existence of a book to keep alive the memory of an impiety, as if the Athenians thought of Hippolytus' shocking statement (Eur. *Hipp.* 612; cf. Aristoph. *Ran.* 101, 1471; *Thesm.* 275) or the outrages of Alcibiades only when they read books.

⁸³The book may have been known to Epicurus (fr. 87 Usener; Philod. *P. Herc.* 1077, col. 82.5), who attacked Diagoras for his "madness," very possibly on the grounds of the book's contents; it was certainly known to Aristoxenus (see n. 3 above).

⁸⁴As Jacoby agrees, 19, lines 36–38; 39, n. 145.

single label. Of the titles *Φρόγιοι Λόγοι* is clearly suspect and *'Αποπυργίζοντες Λόγοι* is too uncertain in meaning to be of much help. Only the Suda gives us any idea of the contents of the work and its notice suggests autobiography of a sort that resembles the dubious anecdotes. Nowhere do we find evidence of an intellectual defence of atheism.

It may be that there is one unnoticed clue to the labyrinth of Diagoras' atheism. He is known as "the atheist" to Cicero and Diodorus, who drew on Hellenistic sources.⁸⁵ If his reputation goes back to the fifth century, as appears to be implied by Aristophanes, then the history of the word *atheos* is likely to have had an influence on the development of his reputation. The earliest meaning, which is found in the usage of Pindar and the tragedians, is "without God," "godless," or "God-forsaken." It is only later, in response to the influence of a quite different intellectual climate, that it acquires the sense "atheist" or "denier of the gods." The transition from the one meaning to the other is very clearly shown by the Platonic Socrates in the *Apology* (26b, c). In his interrogation of his accuser Meletus, Socrates probes the meaning of the charge in the indictment that he did not *νομίζειν τοὺς θεούς*. What is implied in this charge concerning Socrates' relation to the gods? Socrates would like to know, "for," he says, "I cannot understand whether you mean that I teach my belief in the existence of certain gods (*νομίζειν εἶναι τινὰς θεούς*), but not those whom the city recognises. If so, I am not altogether *atheos* and cannot be guilty on that count, but am charged with belief in other gods. Or do you mean that I myself absolutely refuse to recognise the gods (*νομίζειν θεούς*) and teach this to others?" The charge was undoubtedly aimed at religious practice, or the lack of it. Anyone guilty of it might be called *atheos*—"ungodly" or "God-forsaken." But Socrates, after his manner, looks for the claim to knowledge that must lie behind the requirement of conformity in practice, and so brings theory to the front. Is he accused, he asks, of failing to *act* in the appointed way (*νομίζειν τοὺς θεούς*) because he does not *believe* in the existence of any gods (*νομίζειν τοὺς θεούς εἶναι*), or because he *believes* in the existence of non-Athenian gods? Practice implies theory, and therefore he is justified in passing from the one phrase to the other. But on the new ground of theory *atheos* may have either an absolute or a qualified meaning. It is only some one who denies the existence of all gods whatsoever who is an *atheos* without qualification.

It must be evident that if Diagoras committed some offence against religious practice, such as blasphemous ridicule or disclosure of the secrets of the mysteries, he might properly have been called *atheos* in the original

⁸⁵Cf. Cic. *De nat. deor.* 1.63 and Diod. 13.6. Later texts are collected by Jacoby, 17, lines 28–29; in the *Onomasticon* of *TLL* 3.1, p. 125; and in the note *ad loc.* of A. S. Pease in his edition of Cicero's work.

sense. The use of the adjective would by itself say nothing concerning his theological beliefs, and its implications might have been brought to light only by a Socratic examination of those who used it. If, in addition, there is anything in the anecdotes concerning his conversion, he rejected the gods, or certain of them who were concerned with the oversight of oaths and trusts, on the ground of the failure of their providence. In these stories, the whole framework of Diagoras' thinking is that of traditional theology, and Diagoras points to particular cases in which the conventional explanation breaks down. There is no good evidence that he attempted to substitute any form of naturalism for traditional theistic belief, or that he would have been capable of the substitution. The Diagoras of the anecdotes is a figure that is all too familiar: a person whose experience and practice are somewhere at odds with his fundamental beliefs. The very power of indignation which inspires an attack on his former opinions seems to spring from the presupposition that these ought to be true. Such a man cannot be more than a qualified *atheos*.

The challenge of Socrates was thrown down to the whole range of Greek opinion, and "atheism" must have felt its influence just as much as any other outlook. Under this stimulus "atheism" was forced to seek an adequate theoretical base in a non-theistic philosophy. Plato takes the measure of such philosophies in Book 10 of the *Laws*. The tendency, which is evident in our late sources, to bring Diagoras and Protagoras under the wing of Democritus and his atomism is to be explained in this context. Here for the first time an atheism that was firmly grounded in theory could arise, and *atheos* could mean "unqualified atheist."⁸⁶

The position of Diagoras as the head of the canon of atheists, with a definite relation to the philosophic schools, and as the author of a prose work on atheism, seems likely to be a construction of the fourth century. That was the time when a book would have been required to provide grounds for Diagoras' atheism, and a work, discovered as it were under his pillow or among his papers and published posthumously, would have served very well to meet the demand.⁸⁷ It must remain doubtful whether

⁸⁶Even Democritus preserves gods of a peculiar kind, the material correlates of the psychology of religion: cf. W. Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford 1947) 181.

⁸⁷According to Jacoby, "a forgery of this kind is in my opinion unthinkable for the 4th century" (25, lines 41–42). But although the fourth century is not the great age of forgery, Jacoby himself (44, n. 202) mentions Anaximenes, "who fathered the *τρικάρωνος* on Theopompus (*FGrHist* 72 T6; F20/1; Commentary 2C p. 105, 30/3; 110, 25/30)." One thinks also of Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 12, 13 Wehrli), who was said by Aristoxenus (fr. 114 Wehrli) to be the author of forged plays attributed to Thespis, and of Dionysius Metathemenus (or Spintharus), who attributed his own tragedy, *Parthenopaëus*, to Sophocles: cf. Diog. Laert. 5.92 and J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962) 20, 170, 173. The case for dating some at least of the Pythagorean pseudepigrapha

Diagoras had any more claim to intellectual eminence than those other famous malefactors of 415, who mutilated the Hermae and profaned the mysteries. There seems little reason to number him, with Professor E. R. Dodds,⁸⁸ among “the leaders of progressive thought at Athens” and no reason to consider, with Jacoby, adding his name to the list of Socrates’ predecessors.

Diagoras’ real affinities are with persons of a different kind. The poet Cinesias is an excellent example.⁸⁹ During the last two decades of the fifth century the comic poets deride him for his inflated verse, unconventional music, physical emaciation, and impiety. He belonged to a roistering group whose members called themselves, not *Ἀγαθοδαιμονισταί* (Fellowship of the Good Daimon), but *Κακοδαιμονισταί*. The reversal of the name is a deliberate irreverence, like an Unholy Name Society. The purpose of the club was evidently to flout the rules and observances of popular piety, and for this purpose they chose to meet on one of the forbidden days. We learn this from a fragment of a speech by Lysias that has been preserved by Athenaeus. Their choice of a name, says the orator,⁹⁰ was appropriate, “considering their evil fate; not, to be sure, that they had got the notion that they were actually bringing this upon themselves, but simply because they mocked the gods and your laws.” All of them, it is said, came to an evil end, except for Cinesias, who was reduced to such a pitiable suffering that his enemies preferred it to his death. In addition, according to the Scholiast on Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (366), he was guilty of an insult of some kind to the goddess Hecate.⁹¹ It is exceedingly suggestive, for any one who has Diagoras in mind, that Cinesias’ notorious impiety has become “atheism” (*ἀθεότης*) for Athenaeus (12.551e).

It is impossible to know how seriously to take the activities of Cinesias and his dining-club. It may be that they were no more depraved than the querulous Yale men of the song, who boast that they are “damned from here to eternity,” and it should not be forgotten that Philodemus thought that even the atheistic book might have been a joke. Or possibly something more vicious may underlie their taunts. What is certain is that

in the fourth century has been argued most recently by H. Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* in *Acta Acad. Aboensis Humaniora* 24.3 (1961).

⁸⁸E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1951) 189.

⁸⁹Cf. Maas in *RE* 11.1 (1921) 479–481, s.v. Kinesias; and Schmid 495–497.

⁹⁰Lys. fr. 73 Th.; 53 Scheibe (*ap.* Athen. 12.551e–552b); the translation is by C. B. Gulick in the edition of the Loeb Classical Library.

⁹¹D. MacDowell suggests, in *Andokides on the Mysteries* (Oxford 1962) Appendix N, that Archippus, Aristomenes, and Cephisodorus of *De myst.* 13 and 15 are the comic poets of the same names. If this is right, they belong to the circle of impious poets, with Diagoras and Cinesias. Note also the strange company kept by dithyrambic poets, according to Aristophanes (*Nub.* 333).

they were moved, as Dodds points out, by a sense of liberation from the rules of a piety that had come to seem meaningless and irrational, even if these remained for them, in an obscure but binding way, rules still. Diagoras is best understood when seen in their company, stirred by their spirit.⁹² If he was a member of such a society, it is understandable, given the political activities of Athenian clubs, that his notorious impiety became a live political issue in the excitement of 415.

⁹²So F. Wehrli in *Gnomon* 33 (1961) 123–126, who properly rejects all attempts to combine Diagoras' offences against Eleusinian piety with philosophic atheism.