

Xen. Hell. 2,3,11-2,4,1

Text Übersetzung:

(Übersetzung Carleton L. Brownson)

[11] Now at Athens the Thirty had been chosen as soon as the long walls and the walls round Piraeus were demolished; although chosen, however, for the purpose of framing a constitution under which to conduct the government, they continually delayed framing and publishing this constitution, but they appointed a Senate and the other magistrates as they saw fit.

[12] Then, as a first step, they arrested and brought to trial for their lives those persons who, by common knowledge, had made a living in the time of the democracy by acting as informers and had been offensive to the aristocrats; and the Senate was glad to pronounce these people guilty, and the rest of the citizens—at least all who were conscious that they were not of the same sort themselves—were not at all displeased.

[13] When, however, the Thirty began to consider how they might become free to do just as they pleased with the state, their first act was to send Aeschines and Aristoteles to Lacedaemon and persuade Lysander to help them to secure the sending of a Lacedaemonian garrison, to remain until, as they said, they could put “the scoundrels” out of the way and establish their government; and they promised to maintain this garrison at their own charges.

[14] Lysander consented, and helped them to secure the dispatch of the troops and of Callibius as governor. But when they had got the garrison, they paid court to Callibius in every way, in order that he might approve of everything they did, and as he detailed guardsmen to go with them, they arrested the people whom they wished to reach,—not now “the scoundrels” and persons of little account, but from this time forth the men who, they thought, were least likely to submit to being ignored, and who, if they undertook to offer any opposition, would obtain supporters in the greatest numbers.

[15] Now in the beginning Critias and Theramenes were agreed in their policy and friendly; but when Critias showed himself eager to put many to death, because, for one thing, he had been banished by the democracy, Theramenes opposed him, saying that it was not reasonable to put a man to death because he was honoured by the commons, provided he was doing no harm to the aristocrats. “For,” said he, “you and I also have said and done many things for the sake of winning the favour of the city.”

[16] Then Critias (for he still treated Theramenes as a friend) replied that it was impossible for people who wanted to gain power not to put out of the way those who were best able to thwart them. “But if,” he said, “merely because we are thirty and not one, you imagine that it is any the less necessary for us to keep a close watch over this government, just as one would if it were an absolute monarchy, you are foolish.”

[17] But when, on account of the great numbers continually—and unjustly—put to death, it was evident that many were banding together and wondering what the state was coming to, Theramenes spoke again, saying that unless they admitted an adequate number of citizens into partnership with them in the management of affairs, it would be impossible for the oligarchy to endure.

[18] Accordingly Critias and the rest of the Thirty, who were by this time alarmed and feared above all that the citizens would flock to the support of Theramenes, enrolled a body of three thousand, who were to share, as they said, in the government.

[19] Theramenes, however, objected to this move also, saying that, in the first place, it seemed to him absurd that, when they wanted to make the best of the citizens their associates, they should

limit themselves to three thousand, as though this number must somehow be good men and true and there could neither be excellent men outside this body nor rascals within it. “Besides,” he said, “we are undertaking, in my opinion, two absolutely inconsistent things,—to rig up our government on the basis of force and at the same time to make it weaker than its subjects.”

[20] This was what Theramenes said. As for the Thirty, they held a review, the Three Thousand assembling in the market-place and those who were not on “the roll” in various places here and there; then they gave the order to pile arms, and while the men were off duty and away, they sent their Lacedaemonian guardsmen and such citizens as were in sympathy with them, seized the arms of all except the Three Thousand, carried them up to the Acropolis, and deposited them in the temple.

[21] And now, when this had been accomplished, thinking that they were at length free to do whatever they pleased, they put many people to death out of personal enmity, and many also for the sake of securing their property. One measure that they resolved upon, in order to get money to pay their guardsmen, was that each of their number should seize one of the aliens residing in the city, and that they should put these men to death and confiscate their property.

[22] So they bade Theramenes also to seize anyone he pleased; and he replied: “But it is not honourable, as it seems to me,” he said, “for people who style themselves the best citizens to commit acts of greater injustice than the informers used to do. For they allowed those from whom they got money, to live; but shall we, in order to get money, put to death men who are guilty of no wrong-doing? Are not such acts altogether more unjust than theirs were?”

[23] Then the Thirty, thinking that Theramenes was an obstacle to their doing whatever they pleased, plotted against him, and kept accusing him to individual senators, one to one man and another to another, of injuring the government. And after passing the word to some young men, who seemed to them most audacious, to be in attendance with daggers hidden under their arms, they convened the Senate.

[24-34] (Kritias hält eine Anklagerede gegen Theramenes. Dieser sei ein notorischer Opportunist, Verräter und Fahnenwechsler. Er habe bereits eine Oligarchie verraten und plane dies nun erneut. Ferner habe er die Polis schon bei anderen Gelegenheiten verraten, so bei der Seeschlacht an den Arginusen. Kritias schließt damit, dass ein solcher Verräter in Sparta, das ja die beste Verfassung habe, sofort hingerichtet würde. Dies solle hier nun auch geschehen.)

[35-49] (Theramenes verteidigt sich mit einer Rede. Er habe niemanden verraten, außerdem sei auch Kritias ein Opportunist, da er für die Demokratie gearbeitet habe. Er, Theramenes, sei Feind der 30 geworden, als sie verdiente Bürger aus Gier töten ließen und die Polis durch die Entwaffnung der Bürger schwächten. Ferner sei er selbst ein Freund aller Klassen, Kritias ein Feind aller – extreme Oligarchien wie Demokratien lehnt Theramenes ab.)

[50] When with these words he ceased speaking and the Senate had shown its good will by applause, Critias, realizing that if he should allow the Senate to pass judgment on the case, Theramenes would escape, and thinking that this would be unendurable, went and held a brief consultation with the Thirty, and then went out and ordered the men with the daggers to take their stand at the railing in plain sight of the Senate.

[51] Then he came in again and said: “Senators, I deem it the duty of a leader who is what he ought to be, in case he sees that his friends are being deceived, not to permit it. I, therefore, shall follow that course. Besides, these men who have taken their stand here say that if we propose to let a man go who is manifestly injuring the oligarchy, they will not suffer us to do so. Now it is provided in the new laws that while no one of those who are on the roll of the Three Thousand may be put to

death without your vote, the Thirty shall have power of life or death over those outside the roll. I, therefore,” he said, “strike off this man Theramenes from the roll, with the approval of all the Thirty. That being done,” he added, “we now condemn him to death.”

[52] When Theramenes heard this, he sprang to the altar and said: “And I, sirs,” said he, “beg only bare justice,—that it be not within the power of Critias to strike off either me or whomsoever of you he may wish, but rather that both in your case and in mine the judgment may be rendered strictly in accordance with that law which these men have made regarding those on the roll.

[53] To be sure,” said he, “I know, I swear by the gods, only too well, that this altar will avail me nothing, but I wish to show that these Thirty are not only most unjust toward men, but also most impious toward the gods. But I am surprised at you,” he said, “gentlemen of the aristocracy, that you are not going to defend your own rights, especially when you know that my name is not a whit easier to strike off than the name of each of you.”

[54] At this moment the herald of the Thirty ordered the Eleven to seize Theramenes; and when they came in, attended by their servants and with Satyrus, the most audacious and shameless of them, at their head, Critias said: “We hand over to you,” said he, “this man Theramenes, condemned according to the law. Do you, the Eleven, take him and lead him to the proper place and do that which follows.”

[55] When Critias had spoken these words, Satyrus dragged Theramenes away from the altar, and his servants lent their aid. And Theramenes, as was natural, called upon gods and men to witness what was going on. But the senators kept quiet, seeing that the men at the rail were of the same sort as Satyrus and that the space in front of the senate-house was filled with the guardsmen, and being well aware that the former had come armed with daggers.

[56] So they led the man away through the market-place, while he proclaimed in a very loud voice the wrongs he was suffering. One saying of his that is reported was this: when Satyrus told him that if he did not keep quiet, he would suffer for it, he asked: “Then if I do keep quiet, shall I not suffer?” And when, being compelled to die, he had drunk the hemlock, they said that he threw out the last drops, like a man playing kottabos, and exclaimed: “Here's to the health of my beloved Critias.” Now I am not unaware of this, that these are not sayings worthy of record; still, I deem it admirable in the man that when death was close at hand, neither self-possession nor the spirit of playfulness departed from his soul.