

# PLOUTARCHOS, n.s.

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Plutarchus



Plutarchus ein natürlicher maister vnd aussprechender geistlicher vberbeschreyer ein gepie-  
ter vñ anrichter des kaisers Trayani ist zu diser zeit an firmen vmbtingen vñ glantz-  
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Plutarchus der natürlich maister ist ein mensch in de beschreyunge vñ vnsungigen vñ glantz-  
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chus tet sundern fleiß dem kaiser seinen unger vier ding eingepilten. nemlich vñ so fest  
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sachen in frechyschem vnd hochgelerter man gar vil bicher von mancherley materien vñ so  
tappferheit bey Trayano angenehme begabung erlangt.

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# PLUTARCH AND THE DARK SIDE OF SOLON'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY

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## Abstract

The fame that from an early stage started to surround the figure of Solon caused him to be seen to be involved in accounts without historical basis, as happened in the well-known interview with Croesus. When, during the last quarter of the fifth century, Solon began to be used in ideological disputes, in connection with the rise of the theme of *patrios politeia*, it is natural that some episodes destined to call into question the *ethos* of the savant would take shape. In attributing dubious political maneuvering to Solon, certain people might have been attempting to stain the statesman's traditional image of integrity and impartiality, when he had only been responding to the desire to encounter the salvation of his city. It is not unlikely that this tradition would have begun to circulate in political pamphlets, that it began to figure, afterwards, in some *Atthis*, and that, in this way, would have influenced the *Peripatos*, and historiography that was to follow, as we see by the fragments of the oeuvre of Phaenias and of Polyzelus, cited, among other sources, by Plutarch.

One of the most amazing characteristics of Plutarch's work is the immense volume of authors and studies that he cites, especially throughout the *Vitae*, though he did apply the same practice to the *Moralia*. Because of this, over a period of decades the savant of Chaeronea delighted the *Quellenforschung*, drawing attention not because of his art, but because he provided a fertile field of citations from where each scholar might pick the 'flowers' of his own predilection. Plutarch was viewed as a mere collector of *testimonia*, often incoherent, and as someone who gathered together, without pondering them, sources that

varied as much for their pertinence as for their quality. Criticism of his sources has gone much further, to the point of denying that the biographer had really read what he indicated he had; much to the contrary, that he had limited himself to learning a single source (*Mittelquelle*), where he would rummage information not only about what the author was thinking but as well what his predecessors had said. In citing secondhand, he boasted of erudition that, in truth, he did not possess. Fortunately, in recent decades these exaggerated criticisms have been abandoned and now no serious scholar would defend the notion that Plutarch drew all of his knowledge from a single font. Freed of this specter,

philologists are now able to dedicate themselves more securely and profitably to the artistic quality of the biographer, and the form in which he was able to combine his gathered material, giving it thematic consistency and a psychological thrust all its own<sup>1</sup>.

In the *Life of Solon*, for example, there appear, as well as the reference to four Delphic oracles and a single mention of the *Delphic Records*<sup>2</sup>, fifty-three citations of twenty authors; among them, more than twenty pertain to Solon's verses, a fact which makes Plutarch one of the principal sources for the transmission of the poems of the ancient Athenian legislator. In any case, this preeminence is only challenged by Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*. Before the rediscovery of this work, it could have been thought that Plutarch used Aristotle in a more systematic fashion than was really the case. In truth, both authors cite several of Solon's verses, though not always in exactly the same way. Besides these oscillations in the use of the legislator's oeuvre, there are as well differences in detail. For example, the biographer tells us of the amorous connections between

the legislator and Pisistratus, as well as of the entire expedition to dispute the island of Salamis; Aristotle, however, repudiates these facts, using arguments of a chronological order. Plutarch presents the subdivision of Attica in three parties as having taken place anterior to the archonship of Solon; however, Aristotle affirms that this measure occurred after Solon's government, though before Pisistratus has risen to power. On the other hand, there are such similarities as to make it quite improbable that the biographer was completely unfamiliar with the philosopher's oeuvre. Among the several points of contact, the period fixed for the validity of the laws can be counted; in both authors it is one hundred years. Likewise, identical terms and expressions occur. One way to explain the differences could reside in the use of one or several *Mittelquellen*, yet perhaps it is enough to consider the working methods of the biographer, that is, that Plutarch could be drawing from memory and from notes taken during his readings<sup>3</sup>.

As to the rest of the sources cited by Plutarch, only nine come from authors whose works have survived to our day<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Vide STADTER (1992) 1-9; FRAZIER (1996) 15; PICCIRILLI (1998) 39-60.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Solon*, 4.4; 9.1; 10.6; 14.6; 11.2.

<sup>3</sup> This is what PICCIRILLI (1977) 1013-15 believes. As well, this is not to neglect the possibility of using common sources, as surely happened with Androtion, who Plutarch cites (*Solon*, 15.3) and who Aristotle uses as well.

<sup>4</sup> The authors are not always referred to directly. In the order of occurrence, they are as follows: Euripides (*Solon*, 1.5), Sophocles (1.6), Hesiod (2.6), Homer (10.2; 25.4), Aeschines (11.2), Aristotle (25.1), and Plato (26.1; 31.6).

Finally, there exist the citations, still a great number of them, taken from lost works<sup>5</sup>. There is yet another class of opinions and commentaries that the biographer did not attribute to anyone in particular, introducing them as sources without references (λέγουσι, φασί, ἀναγράφουσι, μαρτυροῦσι)<sup>6</sup>. However, our objective, for the moment, is to avoid a general discussion of Plutarch's sources, and about the way the biographer dealt with them. If we broach the problem, it is to argue for the origin of a current in the tradition, reverberating through certain passages in the *bios* of Solon, that present some unusual and hardly edifying details about the political moves of the Athenian statesman.

One of the moments in which this kind of information can be glimpsed occurs when Plutarch evokes the evidence of Phaenias of Eresos or Lesbos. Phaenias was, together with his contemporary and friend Theophrastus, one of the first students of Aristotle, becoming, as well, one of the most productive scholars of the first generation of the

*Peripatos*<sup>7</sup>. The remains of his oeuvre (*On the Tyrants of Sicily*, *Tyrants Killed in Revenge*, *The Prytaneis of Eresos*, *On the Socratics*, *On Poets* and a few fragments on Solon and Themistocles) show that Phaenias cultivated a wide diversity of interests, and that he should be viewed as a considerable milestone in the development of Greek biography<sup>8</sup>. In the *Life of Solon*, Plutarch cites Phaenias twice<sup>9</sup>:

At this point, the wisest of the Athenians cast their eyes upon Solon. They saw that he was the one man least implicated in the errors of the time; that he was neither associated with the rich in their injustice, nor involved in the necessities of the poor. They therefore besought him to come forward publicly and put an end to the prevailing dissensions. And yet Phaenias the Lesbian writes that Solon of his own accord played a trick upon both parties in order to save the city, and secretly promised to the poor the distribution of land which they desired, and to the rich, validation of their securities. But Solon himself says that he

<sup>5</sup> Index of passages and authors involved in PICCIRILLI (1977) 1004-7; MANFREDINI-PICCIRILLI (1995) ix-xi. We owe to these studies part of the systematization that we have made at this point.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *Solon*, 3.5; 7.2; 9.1; 11.1.

<sup>7</sup> An entrance in the *Suda* (*FGrHist* 1012 T 1) puts his *akme* in the 111<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (336/2), for which reason his birth should be put at around 365 or some years before. The date of 376/3 is obtained through the traditional calculation of subtracting forty years to the *akme*.

<sup>8</sup> Vide JACOBY (1998) 294-5.

<sup>9</sup> We quote from the English translation by PERRIN (1967-1968).

entered public life reluctantly, and fearing one party's greed and the other party's arrogance. (Plutarch, *Solon*, 14.1-3 = *FGrHist* 1012 F 14)

Well, then, Solon lived on after Pisistratus had made himself tyrant, as Heraclides Ponticus states, a long time; but as Phaenias of Eresos says, less than two years. For it was in the archonship of Comeas that Pisistratus began his tyranny, and Phaenias says that Solon died in the archonship of Hegestratus, the successor of Comeas. (Plutarch, *Solon*, 32.3 = *FGrHist* 1012 F 15)

The first occurrence is particularly interesting because it shows a discrepant image of the traditional Solon, who seemed to be a person who was indifferent to politics, and who came to be involved in them against his will. Phaenias's version, on the contrary, presents him as a skillful and calculating politician, who would not hesitate in making secret and contradictory promises to parties in conflict (which made them impossible to fulfill) yet with the end of reaching the laudable conclusion of attending to the salvation of the city<sup>10</sup>. As

tempting as it is, this compromising and unusual picture of the Athenian statesman probably has no historical value. The origin of this line of thought perhaps lies in the solemn declaration that the archons made, in the fifth and fourth centuries, during the ceremony of induction into office, according to which they committed themselves to guaranteeing the preservation of each man's property, which was the same as assuring the maintenance of legal and social order. Perhaps it is Phaenias himself who invented this account in order to resolve the apparent contradiction between the commitment that the archons made in his day and the revolutionary nature of the *seisachtheia* that Solon had implemented<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, Phaenias is seen by some scholars as representing a certain propensity for the anecdotal (which in some ways characterized Peripatetic historiography), as well as for a tendency for psychological analysis<sup>12</sup>.

The second passage is equally complex because it puts in question the authority of Heraclides Ponticus, who affirmed that Solon lived well into the period in which Pisistratus had ushered in tyranny. This information coincides

<sup>10</sup> This pragmatic behavior coincides with the characteristic astuteness of the Seven Wise Men and approaches, in a certain way, Solon and Themistocles's portrait. Cf. *infra Moralia*, 154c; *Themistocles*, 2.6.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Constitution of Athens*, 56.2. MÜHL (1955) was the first to justify Phaenias's version according to this historical context and did not hesitate in attributing this episode to the sphere of moralizing legend. The same line was taken by JACOBY (1998) 322.

<sup>12</sup> Vide MÜHL (1955) 349-54; MÜHL (1956), 322-3, where he analyses the relation between Pisistratus and Solon in light of the influx of Peripatetic historiography.

with the interest Heraclides seems to have in connecting the two statesmen<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, Plutarch shows himself at times chary in accepting this author's view, such that it is not surprising that he inclines towards Phaenias's version, which, as well, seems preferable to us. In this case, Solon would have died earlier, still within the archonship of Hegestratus, which occurred in 560/559<sup>14</sup>. At any rate, this passage reveals a notable interest for chronological precision in a sphere where there should be many doubts. It is possible that Phaenias has used the official Athenian *List of Archons*, since he refers to the names of two subsequent magistrates and, as the author of a work entitled *The Prytaneis*

of *Eresos*, he must have been in the habit of using official documentation<sup>15</sup>.

The idea that Solon was somehow in favor of tyranny seems to come as well from Phaenias: καλὸν μὲν εἶναι τὴν τυραννίδα χωρίον, οὐκ ἔχειν δ' ἀπόβασιν<sup>16</sup>. The authenticity of this information has come to be questioned, given the well-known aversion to this form of government that the legislator expresses in the poems. It is a pertinent objection, even though Solon, in this sense, would have condemned tyranny all the same, because it constituted an unreal option<sup>17</sup>. Joining these two pieces of information reinforces the possibility that the biographer would have read Phaenias directly<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Solon*, 1.3. This type of data is not trustworthy, simply because it tends to court a taste for the fabulous which was an indelible part of the biography of great personalities. However, it is understandable that Plutarch was as well tempted by the potential for ethics in connecting the two men. Even so, the biographer did not fail to accuse Heraclides of being a writer who was a «fabulist and an inventor of anecdotes» (*Camillus*, 22.3). Cf. Cicero (*On the Nature of Gods*, 1.13.34), who presents him as a narrator of *pueriles fabulae*. On this subject, vide LEÃO (2001) 182-3.

<sup>14</sup> For more details, vide LEÃO (2001) 277-9.

<sup>15</sup> JACOBY (1998), 324, also subscribes to the possibility that Phaenias had used, for example, the *Atthis* of Hellanicus of Lesbos or, more probably, data gathered together by the *Peripatos* for the collection of *politeiai*.

<sup>16</sup> *Solon*, 14.8: “tyranny was a lovely place, but there was no way down from it”. Cf. MANFREDINI-PICCIRILLI (1995) xxvii.

<sup>17</sup> FERRARA (1964a), 128 and n. 20, thinks that the legislator's objections to tyranny were only theoretical, and so the expression could belong to Solon. There were still those who wanted to see in this view the adaptation of a verse of Solon; DEN BOER (1966), 46-7, believes so; this hypothesis, if it were accepted, would reinforce the pertinence of the attribution of the sentence to the ancient reformer. Ponder, however, the objections of MARTINA (1972) 41-5.

<sup>18</sup> Especially if we take into account that Plutarch frequently used the Peripatetic in the *bios* of Themistocles, where, in any case, Phaenias is referred to in quite flattering terms (cf. *Themistocles*, 13.5 = *FGrHist* 1012 F 19, where he characterizes him as “philosopher and well read in history”).

Nevertheless, it is impossible to know for sure in which work the author spoke of Solon<sup>19</sup>. Based on what we know up to now, Phaenias is finally a source of irregular value, bringing together a concern for rigor in questions of detail (like the probable date of Solon's death) with a taste for variants in relation to *communis opinio* that are probably marked by the ideological exploitation of the figure of Solon.

The indirect influence of Phaenias' opinion in relation to the figure of Solon can still be detected in the *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*; to fully appreciate this it will be necessary to consider as well certain data that appear in the *Life of Themistocles*. We propose to do this below.

The *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* is a deliberately literary recreation and is not as interesting to us as the *bios* of Solon in terms of a reconstruction of the activity of the Athenian reformer; even so, in the end it reflects the essential data on Solon which has been established by tradition, especially the ethical dimension, though there are as well echoes of his political

side. In any case, throughout the banquet some of Solon's contributions reveal more about the education of Plutarch than about the ideology of Solon. However, more important for the moment than these philosophical reminiscences is Mnesiphilus's significance as one of the characters present in the *Conuiuium*, because of which we are able to refer to the indirect influence of Phaenias<sup>20</sup>:

Mnesiphilus the Athenian, a warm friend and admirer of Solon's, said: "I think it is no more than fair, Periander, that the conversation, like the wine, should not be apportioned on the basis of wealth or rank, but equally to all, as in democracy, and that it should be general".

Mnesiphilus' words serve to introduce reflections on democratic government into the debate. The honor of initiating the discussion falls upon Solon, who underlines the importance in popular sovereignty of the fact that trials against infringers can be driven as much by the plaintiff as by somebody else<sup>21</sup>. The opinions expressed by the other interlocutors reinforce the principles of a

<sup>19</sup> Phaenias again refers to Solon because of the etymology and technical use of the term *kyrbeis*, in a passage cited by lexicographers (*Suda* K 2745; *Et. Gud.* 164.11 = *FGrHist* 1012 F 16a; 16b), that shows that the scholar of Eresos became interested as well in the problems derived from Solon's code, following the example of his master Aristotle, who had written a commentary *On the axones of Solon*, in five volumes. On the problems concerning the *axones* and *kyrbeis*, vide STROUD (1979); LEÃO (2001) 329-40.

<sup>20</sup> *Moralia*, 154c. We quote from the English translation by BABBITT (1971).

<sup>21</sup> *Moralia*, 154d. Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens*, 9.1) has already drawn our attention to this clause in Solon's code as among his most "democratic" measures.

moderate democracy, an ideology whose attribution to Solon's days is part of the propaganda developed from the end of the fifth century<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, more than these standard reasons, what is important is to underline the fact that Mnesiphilus is claimed to have had a close relationship with the ancient legislator. This could simply constitute an expedient for expressing the opinions of Solon from the mouth of one of the other characters, in this way preventing, in the literary context, the Athenian reformer's contributions from hypertrophying<sup>23</sup>. However, in the *Life of Themistocles*, Plutarch furnishes some more data about Mnesiphilus that appear to be the link in the connection between these apparently scattered elements<sup>24</sup>:

Rather, then, might one side with those who say that Themistocles was a disciple of Mnesiphilus the Phrearrhian, a man who was neither a rhetorician nor one of the so-called physical philosophers, but a cultivator of what was then called *sophia*, although it was really nothing more than cleverness in politics and practical sagacity. Mnesiphilus received this *sophia*, and handed it down, as though it were the

doctrine of a sect, in unbroken tradition from Solon. His successors blended it with forensic arts, and shifted its application from public affairs to language, and were dubbed 'sophists'.

The originality of this passage resides in the detail referred to above that Mnesiphilus seems connected to the education of Themistocles, similar to the way he had been with Solon. In any case, Plutarch clearly includes him in a school derived from the ancient legislator, identified as a type of *sophia* which expressed a sense of pragmatism and skill applied to political action. More curious still is the fact that the same character appears in Herodotus, though without reference to Solon, as a prudent counselor instrumental in getting Themistocles to convince those who were reluctant to do so to confront the Persians at Salamis<sup>25</sup>. The historian's information is derived, with some probability, from a source that was unfavourable to the *strategos*, since it presupposes that Themistocles had appropriated a plan that did not belong to him, omitting Mnesiphilus's contribution<sup>26</sup>. It would seem, as such, strange that this hypocritical and ambitious hero would be held up as the heir to the teaching of

<sup>22</sup> Cf. AALDERS (1977) 34-5.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. *Moralia*, 156a-b.

<sup>24</sup> *Themistocles*, 2.6. We quote from the English translation by PERRIN (1967-1968).

<sup>25</sup> 8.57-78.

<sup>26</sup> This would be, according to Plutarch (or Pseudo-Plutarch), one of the 'evils' of Herodotus, having stripped the Athenian *strategos* of the merit of victory. Cf. *Moralia*, 869c-e.



Solon, the eminent representative of Apollonian ethics. It is for this reason that the majority of scholars have ignored this information, or have simply relegated it to the domain of legend, all the more for the fact that since Solon and Themistocles were both connected to Salamis, making it tempting to establish some kind of relationship between them. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the tradition generally accentuates the elevated moral stature of Solon, we have seen that there is a current in the tradition that also evokes a 'darker' side of the statesman's personality, represented by contradictory promises hypothetically made before the archonship. In the *Vita Solonis*, the source that Plutarch indicates for these insinuations corresponds to the Peripatetic Phaenias and we believe that he could also be the author who established the axis Solon-Mnesiphilus-Themistocles. In the passage under analysis, Plutarch uses a vague Greek expression (λέγουσιν), but, a little before, with respect to Themistocles's mother, the direct refer-

ence to Phaenias seems to enforce our conjecture<sup>27</sup>. In any case, it is hardly probable that the information would have historical value, though its occurrence in Herodotus raises certain perplexities<sup>28</sup>.

However, before bringing this study to a close, it will be advantageous to note that Phaenias is not the only source to indicate possible political maneuverings on the part of Solon. This question comes up again with respect to the *seisachtheia*, in the moment when Plutarch evokes the authority of Polyzelus of Rhodes<sup>29</sup>:

This undertaking is said to have involved him in the most vexatious experience of his life. For when he had set out to abolish debts, and was trying to find fitting arguments and a suitable occasion for the step, he told some of his most trusted and intimate friends, namely, Conon, Clinias, and Hipponicus, that he was not going to meddle with the land, but had determined to cancel debts. They immediately took

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Themistocles* 1.2. In any case, Plutarch used Phaenias with some frequency in the writing of the *Life of Themistocles* (vide *FGrHist* 1012 F 17; 18; 19; 20; 22).

<sup>28</sup> The fact that the historian does not mention Solon is not a determining factor, because the use that he makes of the political side of the ancient legislator ends up by being relatively meager. FERRARA (1964b), 55-60, speaks out for the validity of the evidence; in spite of the fact that this scholar deals with the essence of the problem, he does not establish the connection with Phaenias, which seems to us quite pertinent. COOPER, cited with skepticism in JACOBY (1998), 321, suggests that an exploration of the figure of Solon and Themistocles would have been made by Phaenias in the work *Against the Sophists*, basing itself precisely on the connection between Solon-Mnesiphilus-Themistocles. We were not able to get the work of COOPER, but, through the citation which is based on his positions, we would think that his perspective has a certain pertinence.

<sup>29</sup> *Solon*, 15.7-9 (= *FGrHist* 521 F 8).

advantage of this confidence and anticipated Solon's decree by borrowing large sums from the wealthy and buying up great estates. Then, when the decree was published, they enjoyed the use of their properties, but refused to pay the moneys due to their creditors. This brought Solon into great condemnation and odium, as if he had not been imposed upon with the rest, but were a party to the imposition. However, this charge was at once dissipated by his well-known sacrifice of five talents. For it was found that he had lent so much, and he was the first to remit this debt in accordance with his law. Some say that the sum was fifteen talents, and among them is Polyzelus the Rhodian.

Polyzelus was a local historian, who lived during the first half of the third century B.C. He has been cited with respect to an imputation that involves Solon and the people close to him at the time of the establishment of the *seisachtheia*. This accusation might have been broadened to include the legislator as well, but for the fact that he emerged vindicated because he himself had lost a significant sum in the application of that emergency measure. The case is referred in Aristotle as well<sup>30</sup>. The 'maneuver',

to which both sources allude, consisted in the fact that those people who had learned previously of a future canceling of debts took advantage of the situation by borrowing money that would allow them to acquire large tracts of land. When, a little while later, Solon established the *seisachtheia*, they thought of themselves as men of great riches who were beyond any form of obligation to repay the loans. This story presupposes that, for the time of Solon, certain conditions were in place: first, that the land was alienable, that there were many people ready to sell their property and even that it was possible to effect these kinds of transactions in a short space of time; next, that an issued coinage was in circulation in Athens at the turn of the seventh century and that it was quite easy to obtain it. However, this panorama is far from being certain<sup>31</sup>. Therefore, the accusation is clearly anachronistic<sup>32</sup>. In his account, Plutarch accentuates, as does Aristotle, that Solon's innocence resides in his ethical character, and is amplified by the detail that the legislator himself had been hurt, suffering the loss of five talents, that he had lent, by implementing the general cancellation of debts. More important than this bit of data, are the names of faithful friends in whom the reformer had confided his

<sup>30</sup> *Constitution of Athens*, 6.2-4.

<sup>31</sup> In accord with what is understood by the analysis of social and economic conditions immediately anterior to Solon's reforms. For more on this widely debated question, *vide* LEÃO (2001) 230-8.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle as well has spoken of the falsity of the accusation, basing his conclusions on the excellence of the legislator's character, mirrored by tradition and his poems.

intents: Conon, Clinias, Hipponicus, who were ancestors of Conon, Alcibiades, and Callias, all of them important figures in the last phases of the Peloponnesian War. This detail shows not only that this version of the story was put into circulation at the end of the fifth century, as it proves, once again, that the image of Solon was used in the ideological and political disputes of the period<sup>33</sup>. Initially Aristotle refers to the authors of the rumor about the legislator in a vague way (τινες); later he becomes more specific, dividing them into two groups (οἱ δημοτικοί, οἱ βουλόμενοι βλασφημεῖν). The Aristotelian source for these value judgments has been identified, generally, as the Attidographers. As such, behind the *demotikoi*, we would possibly find the *Atthis* by the democrat Clidemus, in the same way that the moderate ideas must have been due to the influence of Androtion's oeuvre<sup>34</sup>. In spite of being viable, this reading is not completely secure, simply because the fragmentary nature of the works of these authors does not allow us to decide with any accuracy about their political orientations<sup>35</sup>. It is for this reason that some scholars have concluded that these kinds of allusions must find their source in writ-

ings that express more accentuated political tendencies<sup>36</sup>. Notwithstanding the relative value of these interpretations, we believe that it will be possible to conclude, with some certainty, that the origin of such value judgments must be situated in the disputes in which the radical democrats and the party members of the oligarchy became involved at the end of the fifth century.

Returning once again to the passage in the *bios* of Solon under analysis; we should recognize that the episode offers a wonderful opportunity for reinforcing the excellence of Solon's character. The fact that Polyzelus, and other sources, refer to the fact that the legislator had lost fifteen talents instead of five, must simply correspond to the mythic exaggeration, which is typical of these anecdotal episodes as they begin to crystallize. In which part of his *History of Rhodes* Polyzelus makes reference to Solon is not known; even so, it is probable that Plutarch, in this case, had been working from a *Mittelquelle*, that had been identified in Hermippus, particularly because this information appears as well in Diogenes Laertius, who had used the same source<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Vide RHODES (1985) 128-9; DILLON-GARLAND (1994) 69-70.

<sup>34</sup> That is what believes JACOBY (1949), 75 and 78, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> For more on this problem, vide LEÃO (2001) 73-102.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. RHODES (1985), 26, who in the *demotikoi*, for example, identifies the influence of a political pamphlet hostile to Theramenes.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Diogenes, 1.45. So think MANFREDINI-PICCIRILLI (1995), xxx, who venture that there is even a possibility that the right moment to mention the legislator would have come about because of the founding of Soloi, in Cilicia.

The fame that from an early stage began to surround the figure of Solon caused him to be seen to be involved in accounts without historical basis, as happened in the well-known interview with Croesus. Plutarch knew about the chronological problems surrounding the meeting between Croesus and Solon,<sup>38</sup> nevertheless, this difficulty seemed small to him in comparison to the richness that the episode offered for the definition of the legislator's character<sup>39</sup>. When, during the last quarter of the fifth century, Solon began to be used in ideological disputes, in connection with the rise of the theme of *patrios politeia*, it is natural that some episodes destined to call into question the *ethos* of the savant would take shape. In attributing dubious political maneuvering to Solon, certain people might have been attempting to stain the statesman's traditional image of integrity and impartiality, when he had only been responding to the desire to encounter the salvation of his city. It is not unlikely that this tradition would have begun to circulate in political pamphlets, that it began to figure, afterwards, in some *Atthis*, and that, in this way, would have influenced the *Peripatos*, and historiography that was to follow, as we see by the fragments of the oeuvre of Phaenias and of Polyzelus, cited, among other sources, by Plutarch.

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<sup>38</sup> *Solon*, 27.1.

<sup>39</sup> For an analysis of the various phases concerning the fixation of the tradition of the meeting between Croesus and Solon, *vide* LEÃO (2000).

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