
THE PERICLEAN NOTIONS OF 'JUSTICE, EXCELLENCE AND CITIZENSHIP'

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I

As it is known, Pericles' *Epitaphios* has survived as part of Thucydides's detailed historical account of the Peloponnesian War.¹ Pericles, as Thucydides claims, delivered his "Funeral Oration" in 429 BC as a *eulogy*, according to the "annual custom",² for the Fallen Soldiers in the first years of the War. If this speech, because of the occasion, is a praise of the Fallen soldiers, it is also, obviously by intention on the part of Pericles, a speech charged with political and social principles. In his speech, besides the indicated and requisite praise of the soldiers, Pericles praises, mainly and inevitably, the Athenian Democracy and Freedom for which the soldiers gave their life. It is important, however, to notice that, as part of his praise of the Athenian democratic society, Pericles seems to not only raise but also emphasize the specific question of justice, excellence and citizenship,³ which obviously characterised these soldiers and their Athenian society in general. What might be even more significant, though, is his juxtaposing the Athenians' view of these notions as forcefully to the Sophistic as to the Spartan conceptions and practice. In this specific Sophistic reference within the twofold relation and contrast, Pericles' notions become all the more transparent, if not more prominent, since in the post-Periclean era with the fundamental change of philosophical principles in Athens - a change which often goes unnoticed and undetected or neglected and ignored by historians - neither the political and social situation nor the economic and ethical action remained the same.

The purpose of this paper is, precisely, to exude, through a textual exegetical and hermeneutical analysis, the Periclean notions of justice, excellence and citizenship, especially in their differentiation and opposition to both alternatives. The notions of *polis*, *aretê* and *dikaïosunê* are central in this brief and cryptic paragraph and, regardless of whether they may be accepted or not, they are not any less relevant today than they were at the time. Since, at least according to Plutarch, Pericles has not left any text,⁴ all our judgment on the question of his polity, politics and policies

has to rely on external sources and, in this particular case, on Thucydides's meticulous chronicles of a few of his speeches, one of which, and undeniably the most important one, is the *Funeral Oration*. The question in this paper is not whether Pericles' politics and policies were historically consistent with the polity he describes in this Oration, but the principles he presents and their meaning and significance.

Placed, indeed, in its historical context, the Periclean *Epitaphios*, as it is an obvious praise and eulogy for the Fallen Soldiers, proves to be, nonetheless, an equally obvious *epikêdeios* as well as an *enkômion* for that very Freedom and Democracy for which the soldiers gave their life. It must be noticed that the democracy Pericles praises is the one which had been in existence, since Solon, and not the one coming up with the Sophists.⁵ Since this *Oration* was delivered at a sacred moment and addressed directly to the Athenians, this reference to Freedom and Democracy cannot but intentionally be more of a statement for domestic consumption than an attack of the otherwise well known to all Athenians Spartan political system, societal or governmental. It is rather an attempt by Pericles of awakening the Athenians to the consciousness of the fundamental differences of theoretical principles, and practical consequences of the political system the Athenians had so far lived through and been accustomed to from that system which was appearing in the horizon at that moment of their history, a system to which, hedonistically promising as it were, they had manifestly shown that they were attracted.⁶ If that be the case, then this speech becomes all the more significant so much for the notions of democracy and freedom as for those of justice, excellence and citizenship. Seeing it from his own philosophical and ideological perspective, Pericles seems to foresee and predict the imminent end of democracy and freedom *qua* immanent power of the critically deliberating decision-making people and, consequently, of justice, excellence and citizenship as they had been accepted by the Athenians since Solon's "Reforms"; and, in the words and the tone of his speech, he appears to lament its decline and fall into what would be, in his view, more of an ochlocratic polity in which the social liberality and the erratic rule of the flowing current of blindly manipulated and opinionated crowds would be the foundational principles. This attestation and this lamentation not only had been made finally entirely explicit in his later "Plague speech",⁷ but they are in fact those which had also been constantly made by his contemporary Socrates and continued by Plato in the 4th century.

Before discussing the fundamental characteristics of democracy and freedom, Pericles succeeds in providing all the elements and the conditions which permit the *possibility* of such a *polis*.⁸ It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse all the parts of this dense and cryptic paragraph and to exude all the fundamental points which Pericles makes in such a brief and condensed form. This paper will focus, therefore, in an exegetical way, only on the three passages which relate to the questions of this Conference.

II

First, the question of Justice. Although the term itself does not appear in the "Funeral Oration", the question of justice may, however, be inferred as implied in the passage where Pericles juxtaposes wealth and poverty. If not so explicitly in its judicial or juridical sense, the notion of justice is, nonetheless, present as a social and economic question, primarily in the distributive and attributive senses with their retributive implications and ramifications. Pericles declares in this passage that: *We regard wealth as something to be properly used, rather than as something to boast about. As for poverty, no one need be ashamed to admit it: the real shame is in not taking practical measures to escape from it.*⁹

In making this statement, especially immediately following the sentence on cultural "extravagance", Pericles may very well have had in mind the complaints and accusations which had been as current at his time as they have been in ours (whether from the Sophistic opposition within the City limits or from the Allied states without) about the spending of the public wealth and the grave public debt and deficit because of an apparent "artistic megalomania". The preceding statement of *philokaloumen met'euteleias* obviously implied a defense of expenses as well as the intended praise of the Athenian aesthetic and artistic spirit, along with the logical and scientific spirit which is implied in his *philosophoumen*. Because of its relevance and its importance, Pericles returns to this point later in the same paragraph when he talks about excellence.¹⁰ Given the fact of the war and of its prohibitive expenses, it may be possible that Pericles tries, in this speech, to defend his government's decisions at the beginning of this war. However, without entirely excluding this partisan possibility, it is more probable, considering especially the sacredness of the funereal occasion, that these remarks on economy as well as the previous one on culture, were intended to be a matter of principle rather than of a particular historical fact. They were intended to be a

position of polity rather than policy, to be a question of socio-economic philosophy and a question of philosophy of right rather than a partisan defense of specific public expenses. This probability becomes more evident in the specific phraseology Pericles uses. And this phraseology demands a hermeneutical analysis.

In this regard, what Pericles does on the lines of this passage is clearly a twofold juxtaposition and contrast; first between wealth and poverty and second within each one of these categories separately. Furthermore, that he does not mention, let alone discuss, any middle course is as significant as this double juxtaposition itself; and that he makes the distinctions within each one is arguably in order to contrast the polity of his Athenian society to both the Spartan and the upcoming Sophistic polities. The ramifications of these juxtapositions are fundamental.

Remarking, first, on "the proper use" of, and "the boasting" about, wealth, Pericles refers to both the Spartans and the Sophists. What he obviously insinuates here is that the Athenians, as opposed to the Spartans, are not in a state of 'common ownership', or *koinoktêmosunê*, but that, for them, possession of private property and enrichment are both legitimate and legal, a legitimacy which stems from their politeiological principles and a legality which is the result of mutual consent in their democratic process, a process which he would discuss later in the same paragraph. However, having made this obvious point, he also insinuates - and this insinuation seems to be far more important and revealing since it is opposed, this time, to the Sophistic conception of society defended, as he very well knew, by many in his present audience - that the Athenians, at least so far, did not accept an untempered maximization of profit (a point which becomes clearer later in the same paragraph in his notion of *aretê*) by being self-centered and self-interested at the expense of the community as such (*polis*). Pericles presents the view of his Athenian society (in his use of the plural *chrômetha*) as one which, without rejecting the accumulation of wealth, whether private or public, does not consider libertarian capitalism as the economic philosophy which would determine social life in the Athens of his time. In his choice of words about "boasting", Pericles seems to reject the egocentric and egoistic rich individuals and societies for the sake of a society in which, caring for and sharing with one another, all its members emerge equally well-off (rather than some richer than others) in the proper use of their individual as well as societal wealth. According to this Periclean statement, in this social and economic notion of justice and its

practice the common good prevails over the individual good and, although his Athenians reject the principle of 'common ownership', they have nonetheless endorsed, so far at least, the principle of a 'common wealth' rather than an untempered 'private ownership'; they accept neither an exclusively common ownership nor an exclusively private.¹¹

On the other hand, talking about poverty, Pericles makes another equally fundamental distinction; not only one must be productive for oneself and for society, but also must try to escape his poverty so that he does not become a conscious and intentional burden to the others.¹² An exploitative appropriation of the 'common wealth' is an egocentric individual act which emerges in both a *laissez-faire* and a *laissez-aller* economic philosophy, an act which appears either in the avoidance of a proper contribution to the public purse or in the appropriation of a proper distribution of the public wealth. It is this intended egoistic exploitation - in either of its two forms - of the 'common wealth' which, as Pericles states, is the most shameful action (*aischion*). This *intentionality* is fundamental in this Periclean Athens since it raises the question not only of justice itself but also that of the conditions of excellence and citizenship and, of course, that of the possibility of a true democracy and freedom.¹³

The characterisation and the contrast of *apragmona* and *achreion* make the point quite clear. Such individuals,¹⁴ Pericles insists, are considered by the Athenians of his time as having no place in their society since they are esteemed as 'worthless' and, consequently, are excommunicated. In either of the two cases of exploitative appropriation, such an individual is considered *achreios* by the entire community (*nomizomen*). The one is not condemned for being rich nor the other for being poor, but both are condemned for not contributing to the 'common-wealth'. This notion of *achreios* implies retribution; yet this retribution implies the possibility of restitution as well. This notion of *achreios* is, then, fundamental not only in an ethical sense but also in an ontological and existential sense as well as in an economic and judicial since it emphasizes the notion of the dignity and integrity of the human being, his personal 'worth' and 'value' as *axia* which Pericles considers later in this paragraph as the basis of excellence (*areté*). Thus, the existential responsibility is the ground of the social responsibility. The contrast of 'words' to 'deeds' in the *logou kompô* (or *homologeîn*) and *ergou kairô* (or *diapheugeîn ergô*) should not be taken as an incidental or accidental play of words. This reference, as a constant and recurrent contrast of *logos* to *ergon* in this paragraph alone, seems to be

clearly a strong comparative contrast to the Sophistic egocentric individualism and its rhetorical futility.

The Periclean description presents, therefore, a society with the view of an equitable distribution of the public wealth on the basis of a proportional contribution to the public purse for the benefit of all, an equitable individual contribution and an equal public distribution.¹⁵ The Athenian common weal is, thus, based on an economic equity which is consequently the foundation of the social equality; it is the 'entire population' which cares and shares without distinction or discrimination so that there be no 'base populace' in the *polis*. The common weal is the result of the common wealth, a common weal which takes care not only of the economic needs of the people but also of the educational, the medical and the psychical; it is a societal support which is needed for the good functioning of the *polis*. One example, present in the same speech, would suffice at this point: the *polis* itself on public funds will take care of the upbringing of the children of the fallen soldiers, upbringing which obviously includes their educational and medical welfare; "*and for their future their children will be supported at the public expense by the city, until they come of age*".¹⁶ This economic supportive pedestal brings, then, the balance between wealth and poverty, that is to say between a 'wealth' which contributes to the welfare of the disadvantaged and a 'poverty' which distributes the workfare for the very possibility of that contribution.¹⁷ With this principle of 'worth and work' applying equally to both the more and the less fortunate and in the consequent absence of an extreme opulence or destitution, would be maintained both the dignity of all the people as 'human' beings and the harmony of society as a 'political' entity. Human personal dignity, as Pericles said in another occasion while replying to the Spartan *ultimatum*, is considered above the individual social and economic distinctions; "*human beings come first; the rest is the fruit of their labor*".¹⁸ The Periclean message is that it should not be the human in the service of the economy, whether a market economy or not, but the economy should be in the service of the human and, on this principle, each person seems to be judged (*dikê*) not on the basis of his individual assets or income, but on the basis of what he brings, as a human being, into his community. In this Periclean description, the economic and social justice is, therefore, the manifestation or the externalisation of the existential and ethical justice which becomes ultimately the fundamental criterion for the legal and judicial justice.

It seems that, in the Periclean notion of justice, it is not a question of "fairness" in Rawls's sense, but a question of dignity (*axia*).¹⁹

That Pericles discusses the question of wealth and poverty in the manner he does and without mentioning any middle situation may well imply that if, because of this proportionate contribution and equitable distribution of the wealth, all the members of society fare equally well, then this *polis* is an egalitarian society. Equality is not an equivalent to, nor a synonym of, 'sameness' as levelness and uniformity; equality presupposes the identity and eponymity of persons while sameness refers to the privacy and anonymity of individuals. True egalitarianism is opposed not only to totalitarianism and authoritarianism but also to individualism and libertarianism since it is opposed to the principle of the competitive *hêdonais* and 'survival of the fittest' of Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* and that of the confrontational *xumpheron* and 'might is right' of Thrasymachus in the *Republic*.²⁰ If this be the case, then this is a *polis* in which 'wealth' and 'poverty', instead of being the upper and lower 'classes' of an inter-class society, prove to be the upper and lower edges of an inner-class society. Instead of being separate and distinctly delineated economic and social 'classes', 'wealth' and 'poverty' prove, in this Periclean statement, to simply be the ceiling and the floor of one in-class within which all, richer or poorer, are considered equal without being the same and in which, as a result, they care for each other. And as it is not a question of sameness, it seems that it is not a question of parity either, but a question of equality. Pericles, therefore, does not mention a middle class not because, in his Athens, there were (in a plausible interpretation) only extremely rich or poor Athenian residents, citizen and foreign alike, without anyone in between, but because there were neither upper nor lower classes the existence of which makes a middle class possible.²¹

If this implication is true then there is a second important implication which is the consequence of the first; a society which, in the *relationships* of its members, functions in such an egalitarian way turns out, in the *interrelations* of its members, to structurally be a quadrilateral society, a society in which, with the absence of any economic stratification, there is no social stratification either. The economic equality implies a social equality. In such a '*parthenonian*'²² society, the poorer, even as workers, are not in any way subservient or subordinate to the richer; and one may plausibly infer that this could include even the transient, alien or 'permit' workers.²³ In the absence of stratification, there is no oligarchic or polyarchic situation and, therefore, there is no minoritarian or

majoritarian power struggle and, consequently, no subjection or subjugation. In this sense, the principle of *human* rights overrides any question of *individual* rights rather than the other way around, a possible situation under an individualistic polity based on the sovereignty of the individual or the majority principle, a situation which came up in Athens later with the Sophistic era.²⁴ In such a society in which predominates neither the principle of the minority nor that of the majority, the *dêmos* is both the *archê* and the *kratos*. In this kind of society, on the one hand, the juridical or judicial justice is not based on social or economic stratification but on human dignity and excellence (*axia* and *aretê*). Dignity and excellence which, as such, are the fundamental criteria of both the legal right and the civil rights; also in the same case, on the other hand, the demotic or popular suffrage, which Pericles raises in the same paragraph, is not based on social or economic criteria but on the civic status and commitment of the members (*dêmos* and *drasis*) which become, in this case, the fundamental criteria of belongingness and citizenship.

III

The question of dignity and excellence (*axia* and *aretê*), both in regard to Pericles' understanding of excellence and to his Sophistic references, is addressed in a much more direct way and in a more explicit terminology than the question of justice, the concept of which becomes itself clarified. Thus, in the last part of this paragraph, he declares that:

Again, in what concerns questions of excellence there is a great contrast between us and most other people. We make friends by doing good to others, not by receiving good from them. This makes our friendship all the more reliable, since we want to keep alive the gratitude of those who are in our debt by showing continued good will to them; whereas the feelings of one who owes us something lack the same enthusiasm, since he knows that, when he repays our kindness, it will be more like paying back a debt than giving something with gratitude. We are unique in this. When we do kindness to others, we do not do them out of any calculations of profit or loss: we do them without afterthought, but in the confidence of our freedom.²⁵

After having presented, in his conception of *philosophy* and *philocally* at the beginning of the paragraph, the Athenian position on the question of truth and beauty,²⁶ the question Pericles raises, at the end of the same paragraph, is that of goodness in a rather obvious reference to his conception of *philanthropy* and

philadelphia.²⁷ The *praxis*, along with the *theôria* and the *poiêsis*, is, in Pericles' description - and, consequently, in his philosophical perspective -, quintessential for his good society.

Thus, on the basis of this prism, Pericles examines the question of *aretê* and the role of the *ergon*, *praxis* and *drasis*. While the immediately preceding part of the paragraph²⁸ deals with the importance of the 'words' and their relation to the proper and true democratic thought and discussion, this last cited part on *aretê*²⁹ is on the importance of 'deeds' and their relation to the proper and true communitarian activity. Words and deeds, discussion and action, are, according to Pericles, bound together: "*we Athenians*", he says, "*in our own persons take our decisions on policy and submit them to proper discussions, for we do not think that there is an incompatibility between words and deeds*".³⁰ This statement is, obviously, in clear reference and opposition both to the rhetorical 'words' of Sophistic subjective nominalism, 'words' which had been debated without any concern for their content nor for their consequences³¹ and to the military 'deeds' of Spartan authoritarianism, 'deeds' which had been performed without any previous public examination and discussion.³² Thus, Pericles, in order to make this point clearer, continues with emphasis: "*the worst thing is to rush into action before the consequences [and, of course, this implies the causes as well] have been properly discussed*" and, obviously, "discussed" rather than "debated".³³ The Athenians, in Pericles' view, not only know what they do, but they do it only after knowing well why they do it; so he reinforces this point by adding that "*the man who can most truly be accounted brave is he who knows best the meaning of what is sweet in life and of what is terrible, - and then goes out undeterred to meet what is to come*". This seems to be a clear reference to the present war and the praised soldiers: that is to say, the Athenians are conscious of both the meaning and the reason why they fight in this war, so they go out undeterred to meet even death as the Fallen Soldiers have proven. That these soldiers did not fight simply because they had been "commanded" from above by their powerful "kings" is an obvious implication; yet, what seems to also be implied in this statement is that nor did they fight because they are "flattered" by their persuasive "politicians". True bravery, strength and power, individual or societal,³⁴ are the result of knowledge, as Pericles states in a rather obvious direct reference to the Spartans (*gignôskontes*); but they also are the result of a very clear and solid knowledge (*saphestata*) as he emphasizes in a possible reference

this time to the Sophists; as in a real democratic situation one must "know well" (*mê endeôs gnônai*), not even to be "well-informed" is sufficient.³⁵ This is evidently in juxtaposition to the alternative possibilities of relying, on the one hand, only on words in 'rhetorical empty debates' of individual opinions based on flattery and self-appraisal, a fact which by itself creates a dangerous political correctness; or of relying, on the other hand, only on deeds in 'fearful sluggish bravery' of authoritarian commands based on collective ignorance. A fact which this time creates a vacuous state of blind obedience. The words must be followed by conscious deeds and the deeds must be the result of thoughtful discussion: the words are supposed to be actually and 'factually' supported and the deeds must be freely and 'reelly'³⁶ thought. A community (and a truly democratic one, for that matter) is, for Pericles as it had been for Solon, Socrates and Plato, the consequence of proper communication amongst its members in which proper communication itself finds its aetiology only in the true communion of thought of the members, essential elements of a communitarian society.

The question of *praxis* as well as that of *ergon* is therefore fundamental in this question of the Periclean notion of *aretê*. The Athenian 'excellence', as it is presented in the text, relies, at first, on the fact that the people of Pericles' contemporary Athens are, indeed, active and participant persons. The personal presence and participation is therefore fundamental in this conception of Democracy. The emphasis on *drasis* (a repeated term in this passage: *drôntes*, *drasas*) is not of secondary significance, since it seems that it not only refers to the dramatic aspect of the ethical agent but also to the existential drama of the free person. Both references being the antithesis to the passive individual anonymity and political multitudinous representation³⁷ as they are, obviously, the antithesis to the passivity in the individual evaporation and political massive assimilation.³⁸ And the fundamental aspect of this is that, in Pericles' view, it is in this active and dramatic way that the Athenians acquire friends. In his notion of *philia*, Pericles develops the Athenian conception of *aretê* in regard to interpersonal relations. In this way, one may understand Pericles' juxtaposition of, first, friendship to calculation and of, second, freedom to obligation, the first with an explicit reference to the Sophists and an implicit one to the Spartans and the second with an overt reference to the Spartans and a covert one to the Sophists.

Thus, in his contrast of friendship to calculation, Pericles' conception of friendship is rather clear since his list of its essential

characteristics is self-revealing; the contrast of kindness to profit, of giving to receiving, of conferring to taking, of gratitude to debt, of good will to bad feeling, of charity to self-interest, of generosity to afterthought, of benevolence to gain.³⁹ The list reveals a society whose characteristics go against an egocentric atomism and hedonistic utilitarianism. In Pericles' view, true friendship is without ulterior motives, either of political gain or of economic return; it is not based on an *idio*-syncratic self-love and self-interest as Adam Smith would defend.⁴⁰

'Friends', in this Periclean conception, are not the erotic 'lovers' of hedonism, but the aretetic 'lovers' implied in the 'lovers' of the logical, aesthetical and ethical dimensions of the human being, dimensions which become the three fundamental 'values' as evaluative criteria in his axiology of that which leads finally to that axiocratic society he tries to describe. So the principle which guides both the actions and the relations of the Athenian people, as Pericles at least sees it, is that *outward* friendship which is the foundation of the 'fellowship' necessary for a true community of people, community such that characterises Pericles' Athenian community. To the view that competition or confrontation produces excellence in every sphere of human activity, Pericles seems to propose, along with his contemporary Socrates (as Solon did before them and Plato after) the alternative that the source and cause of excellence is the cooperative and conciliatory community spirit.

It is also and equally important to notice here that, according to Pericles, if the Athenians do good, this is done not only in a friendly way, but also in a free disposition. This friendship, which is without ulterior motives of profit and calculations, is also without any superior force of commandment; it is a friendship developed and contracted intentionally and voluntarily based on freedom. In this case, evidently neither the force of a utilitarian profit-in-mind nor, of course, the force of a totalitarian master-mind dictate true friendship and, in this sense, friendship is the manifestation of freedom since true friends are free. Is this freedom taken here in the social or societal sense, as it may be suggested? One may notice here that this freedom is not juxtaposed - either primarily or exclusively - to a social 'slavery', but, instead, it is juxtaposed to the lack of self-consciousness and self-knowledge. The notion of freedom in this Periclean conception is, mainly then, a personal and existential freedom. Civil 'liberties', which refer to an individual's access to political enfranchisements and societal permissions were, of course, absent in the Spartan politically authoritarian society; but civic

'liberalities' (*eleutheriotês*), on the other hand, which give a licence to anarchic actions and ethical permissiveness, was characteristic of the Sophistic gnoseologically doxastic and ethically relativistic philosophy.⁴¹

Within these notions of friendship and freedom, the Athenians, according to Pericles, were not, therefore, indifferent towards their fellow-human-beings; they were neither collectivistically pathetic nor individualistically apathetic; they were, instead, sympathetic in sharing and caring.⁴² This seems to be, or at least to indicate, a meaning of philadelphic and philanthropic characteristics to his conception of "excellence", an aretology which differs fundamentally from both alternative societies, that of the sophomoric and amoralistic hedonism and that of the dogmatic and moralistic conformism. This notion of aretetic excellence, an excellence of *êthos* which establishes the character of the person, is not exclusively ethical in the restricted sense of the term but includes any activity in life, intellectual, political or other, as the existential attempt to reach one's limits of the possible in becoming what one is capable of being.⁴³ Justice is, then, such an *aretê* in which one, any one, may become *aristos* since he is *enaretos*. Instead of the competitive attitude of the sophistically influenced Athenians and the confrontational attitude of the Spartans, Pericles, in his emphasis on this kind of *philia*, proposes a compassionate attitude which leads to negotiation and cooperation,⁴⁴ as well to an interpersonal, interstate and international reconciliation (*symphelein* and *sympheiliazein*).⁴⁵

IV

The *Funeral Oration* has often been considered and indicated as one of the most important texts for its eloquent defense of the Ideal of Democracy and Freedom. Its significance, as far as that goes, has been well recognised and appreciated and often cited as a crucial text. In his *Epitaphios*, in a brief description of the Athenian society, Pericles proves to have been a master of eloquence as he is known to have been, during his long tenure in office, a master of politics. Yet, what may be far more important in this speech than its eloquence is Pericles' systematic and methodic, as well as rhetorically and politically dynamic, presentation, in its epigrammatic style, of the most fundamental and foundational principles of the Athenian *politeia* and *polis* of his Golden age. Ingeniously juxtaposing and contrasting his Athenian society to the two adversarial ones, he makes these points be strikingly relevant and pertinent as well as transparent and translucent. That Pericles

succeeds in one brief paragraph and within the limits of a funereal speech to bring all these elements together is an indication of his mastery of logography; but that he accomplishes also to bring out so many logical and ontological differences amongst the three societal polities proves that Pericles must have been well versed into the delicate aspects of their philosophical intricacies. In his *Oration*, Pericles, like Socrates and Plato, questions both the Sophistic model for, and its effects on, the Athenian society. What is historically and archaeologically important to notice is that, with the predominance and prevalence of the Sophistic philosophy and politics after Pericles' death, Athens was never the same again, neither in the notions of justice, excellence and citizenship nor, indeed, in the democratic ideal. To present the *Funeral Oration* for its defense of the ideal of democracy and freedom is not, therefore, sufficient; far more important may be, in fact, the understanding of Pericles' conception of that ideal and those values. For the pragmatic globalization of the economy and politics and the liberal consumerism expanded today (with all their implications like the electronic telecommunication and teledemocracy, representative or not), a *theoria* and a *praxis* which were first proposed and defended in his time, Pericles' answer may be as relevant for our times (at the moment we enter the 21st century and the 3rd millennium) as it was for the Athenians of his time. His as well as Socrates' warnings about the loss of the true Athenian democracy, and Plato's subsequent attempts for restoration, proved to be in vain. That the Athenians lost finally not only the Peloponnesian War but also their Democracy and Freedom is not a historical accident. There is no question, it seems, that, as a rhetorical and literary work, the *Epitaphios* is a work of art and a masterpiece; but also there must be no question that, as a philosophical and political message, it is a work which may very well be heeded and, courageously, be tested in our own troubled times. Regardless of whether his lesson is accepted today (within the mentality of today, pragmatic and liberal as it is, with all its Sophistic principles), or rejected again as it had been by his own Athenians at that time, one may be, however, tempted to critically examine it again and, at least, look into the *possibilities* of its application.⁴⁶

Notes

1. *Peloponnesian War*, Book II, ##34-46. The original Greek (with some modifications) comes from I. Bekker's edition, 1821: *Epitaphios* pp. 267-286 The translation (with some modifications) is that of Rex Warner (1954) in the Penguin Edition, Penguin Books, London, 1972, p.143-151 (Penguin).
2. *Ibid.* #34 (Penguin, p. 143 and 144). An 'annual' and 'ancient' custom (νόμος) for the Athenians which has been revived in our own times as a commemorative annual affair.
3. This paper, although originally included the examination of the notion of citizenship, is restricted, in its present version, only to the notions of justice and excellence; the notion of citizenship will be presented in a separate article.
4. *Bioi, Periklēs*, 8,7.
5. This Sophistic 'democracy', along with the 'political' system altogether, ended in 317. The term 'political' is used here in the sense of a system based on the size and the level of the *Polis*, as it is implied in this speech, within the Greek 'Infra-Nation-State' system, a system which was replaced by the Alexandrian 'Nation-State', the *Panhellénion*, uniting all the Greeks as one nation in the 330s and the subsequent 'Supra-Nation-State' system, the *Pancosmion* or *Cosmopolis*, uniting many Asiatic and African nations in the 320s. Implied in this speech is also the Spartan view of the completely homogeneous Nation-State ('ethnopolitical') and the Sophistic fully heterogeneous Super-Nation-State ('cosmopolitical') (cf. below). One may raise, at this point, the question of the Athenian Hegemonic 'Imperialism' of the Periclean 'Golden Era', but this hegemony, despite its controversial nature, was arguably neither ethnocentric nor cosmo-centric in this sense. The question may be raised as to whether it was even an Empire or rather an Alliance or a Confederacy. Warner's translation of *archē* and *archein* by the term Empire (e.g. II, 62) is rather misleading (with all the negative connotations and nuances the term has today).
6. Pericles, speaking to an Athenian audience in the middle of a serious and already devastating war with the Spartans, would obviously not but grasp the chance to stress the importance of the fundamental social and political differences between the two warring City-States. But the well-informed Athenians, on their part, did not need Pericles, at this sacred moment, to remind them what they very well knew and were fighting for. If the notions of *polis* and *aretē* (with their derivative references of the *politēs*, *aristos politēs* and *dikaios politēs* which refer to the agents), as well as those of democracy and freedom, are explicitly discussed (and with Pericles' obvious emphasis) in a brief funeral speech, it may arguably not be - and could not have been - because of the war with the Spartans. These notions are discussed at this crucial time - and sacred moment - of the Athenian history rather intentionally and for purely internal consumption. Pericles apparently felt that he could not let pass unnoticed, nor hide his serious concern for, the fundamental (and manifestly, to his mind, destructive) change of the Athenian society. And this could not have been, at his age and after so many years in office, for merely individual or even partisan reasons. Well aware not only of the presence of the Sophistic philosophy, something which he knew quite well and for quite long (since the 440s), but also of its practical inroads and strength, both intellectual and political, amongst the Athenians and the consequent upcoming societal changes (since the 330s), Pericles stresses these points, in this *Oration*, in the careful and succinct terms he uses apparently expecting his Athenian audience would well understand, even if it would not finally accept. His warning of course, as history tells and Thucydides chronicles, went unheeded and he came back, in a subsequent speech

during the plague, to remind the Athenians of their serious intellectual error and costly societal mistake (cf. II, 60-65). Yet, the Athenians, in their ecstatic and frenzied adherence to the promising hedonistic individualism during - and also after - the Peloponnesian War, did not notice the upcoming end not only of their Athenian hegemony but also of their societal harmony. However, along with that of Thucydides's *History* which has included Pericles' speeches and has been instrumental for its survival, Pericles' challenge still remains with - and for - posterity and especially for mankind now entering a new millennium.

7. Thuc. II, 60-64. Compare Thucydides's own remarks and comments in II, 65 and II, 53.

8. In that crucial paragraph 40 of the *Oration*, Pericles starts by giving, quite succinctly and successfully in one short line, the existential and educational characteristics of the membership of his Athenian *polis* which characteristics imply, in the careful use of the terms, a 'personalistic' entity and a 'philosophical' mentality of the members. Secondly, in less than three lines he raises the question of the cohesiveness and justice of his society which imply an 'egalitarian' function in a 'quadrilateral' structure of society. Thirdly, he discusses the notions of the community spirit and attitude of the citizens which imply a sense of 'communitarian' belonging and a 'political' participation. Under these conditions, then, Pericles proceeds in discussing, fourthly, the true 'democratic' decision-making power in the functional operation of the *polis* and the 'participatory' citizen involvement in its governance. Before concluding in the following paragraph 41 that for all these reasons, his Athens may be the *paideia* for all the Greeks (and, indeed, the synchronic world and the diachronic posterity), Pericles ends this paragraph 40 with the discussion, in a fifth part, of the Athenian notion of excellence and freedom which imply 'ethical' actions and 'open' relations in the friendly disposition of the citizens.

9. II, 40, p.275, II.1-4: πλούτος τε ἔργου μᾶλλον καιρός ἢ λόγου κόμπος χρώμεθα, καὶ τὸ ὀ πένεσθαι οὐχ ὁμολογεῖν τιμὴ αἰσχρόν, ἀλλὰ μὴ διαφεύγειν ἔργω αἰσχύων.

10. Cf. below: Pericles' distinction of excellence on calculation or on friendship.

11. In this juxtaposition, one may easily recognise Pericles' answer to the modern classical capitalism of Adam Smith's principle of self-love and self-interest or Jeremy Bentham's hedonism (pleasure principle) and John Stuart Mill's liberalism (principle of the sovereignty of the individual). Cf. A. Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and the Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), especially (for the principles) Bk I, ch. II "Of the Principle which gives occasion to the Division of Labour"; J. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chs I-V "Of the Principle of Utility"- "Pleasures and Pains, their Kinds"; cf. J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. I "Introductory" (cf. "one very simple principle").

12. One may again recognise in this remark, for our contemporary era, Pericles' answer to the principle of a Marxist universal welfare system or to a non-interventionist and uncontrolled one which would eventually bring its own downfall.

13. In this Periclean description, the consequences are rather obvious. It is important to see that, in the fact of not working exclusively for themselves by downsizing workforce and maximising profit, the richer people willingly contribute to the workfare and to the welfare of the less fortunate. Neither pathetic nor apathetic, the richer were sympathetic towards the poorer on the basis of the Athenian notion of ethical responsibility, a point which Pericles discusses in relation to the notion of excellence. Yet, equally important is that, in their turn, the poorer people, trying to be productive by their offering to work, become creative and independent rather than, by exploiting it, bring the downfall of the welfare system in the created resistance of those who contribute. In this view, loafing is

just as wrong as boasting. The Athenian society, according to Pericles, condemns, then, not only the extreme maximisation and sole appropriation of profits but also its symmetrical indolence and exploitation of welfare. In this Periclean statement, one's right and opportunity to work imply also one's obligation and duty to work.

14. Thus, on the one hand, although it is not wrong to be wealthy, all the people do acquiesce, in the "proper use of wealth", to a meaningful contribution to the welfare and to the workfare of all; on the other hand, although it is not shameful to be poor, all the people comply, in their "practical measure to escape poverty", with the productivity in the workforce and in the public wealth. If any individual minds only his own business by boasting about his wealth without real contribution or, on the other hand, any individual exploits the welfare system without real distribution, then, any such individual, whether rich or poor, has no business in the Athenian society since he is not a true member of society.

15. The *chorêgia*, in lieu of taxation, was only one example of individual contributions.

16. ## 45-46: Τὰ δὲ αὐτῶν τοὺς παῖδας τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε δημοσία ἢ πόλις μέχρι ἡβῆς θρέψει. It is implied that this communitarian support extends to the widows as well, especially (but not exclusively) since this care means that these children will not be the burden of their single mothers. That there is no distinction between rich and poor, cf. the terms "future" (*apo toude*) which applies to all (including the richer) and "of age" (*mechri hêbês*) which makes the point of the eventual contribution by all (including the poorer).

17. It is not, then, a case of either overtaxing the poor so that the rich would not emigrate, nor overtaxing the rich in order to indulge and please the poor (cf. The hedonistic principle).

18. Thuc. I, 143.

19. In this Periclean notion of justice, it is not a simple question of "fairness" in John Rawls's contractual sense, a conception of justice which, as a social justice, is closer to the Sophistic utilitarianism despite Rawls's claim to the contrary (cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard U.P. Cambridge, MA, 1971). Rawls claims to follow the "contractual" conception of justice (social justice) in order to overcome "utilitarianism", yet, it is questionable whether he succeeds. It must also be noticed that one may detect the Periclean implied answer to our contemporary notions of globalisation of the economy, of multinational corporations, of mercantile profits, all of which were also implied, at that time, in the utilitarian cosmopolitical philosophy of the Sophists.

20. Cf. *Gorgias* 482e-484b (cf. quotation from Pindar), 491e-492e; cf. *Republic* 336b-354c.

21. I.e. since there are always some richer than others even among the wealthy as there are some poorer than others amongst the poor. If, in fact, in societal classes there is an upper and lower edge and if Pericles talks about the wealth and poverty in such a connected and related way, then the implication is that he considers all the people being equal in the same economic and social situation without any class distinctions.

22. 'Parthenonian' which, as quadrilateral, symbolizes both architecturally and historically, as well as philosophically, the structure of the Solonian Athenian society and it is well contrasted (a) to the 'pyramidal' hierarchical one of which the Egyptian society is the paradigm and (b) to the 'geodesical' majoritarian society (large middle-class) of which the Roman is a paradigm (cf. below).

23. Although relevant, the question of 'slaves' is not within the scope of this article.

24. This is a "geodesical" society since in this structure of society not only there is a social (and economic) stratification but also the middle class is in the majority. This is the Sophistic and the Aristotelian structure of Society. For Aristotle, cf. *Politics* IV, xi,

10, 1295b35; cf 12, 1296a 1f correct, these two implications in Pericles' statement on wealth and poverty are evidently referring to, and contrasted with, the alternatives of the Spartan and the Sophistic conceptions of society both in the functional and structural sense. First, in regards to the functioning of a society, the Periclean notion of such an egalitarian society is juxtaposed to the Spartan corporatism and the Sophistic capitalism; it is opposed to the Sophistic leveled and uniform society as well as to the Spartan hierarchical and subordinative one. On the other hand, in regard to the structure of a society, if a Spartan 'pyramidal' society, with the powerful few in the upper class, is an oligarchic and minoritarian one and the Sophistic 'geodesical' with a powerful middle class, is polyarchic and majoritarian, the 'parthenonian' society that Pericles describes is, with the absence of any socio-economic stratification, the only demarchic and demotic society.

25. II, 40, p. 276, ll. 5-12: Καὶ τὰ ἐς ἀρετὴν ἐνητιώμεθα τοῖς πολλοῖς οὐ γὰρ πάσχοντες ἔν, ἀλλὰ δρῶντες κτώμεθα τοὺς φίλους βεβαιότερος δὲ ὁ δράσας τὴν χάριν, ὥστε ὀφειλομένην δι' εὐνοίας ᾧ δέδωκε σώζειν ὁ δ' ἀνοφείλων ἀμβλυτερος, εἰδὼς οὐκ ἐς χάριν, ἀλλὰ ἐς ὀφείλημα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀποδώσων καὶ. μόνου οὐ τοῦ ἑμφέροντος μᾶλλον λογισμὸς ἢ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τὸς πιστὸς ἀδεῦ τινα ὀφελούμεν ll. 5-12, p.276).

26. As it has already been remarked above, it is an obvious defence of the Athenian intellectual and artistic concern and economic expense (for which Pericles himself was instrumental in the 30 years he had been in governmental office) on Science and Fine Arts in general as well as on the specific current Athenian scientific research and artistic beautification.

27. Although literally and explicitly Pericles uses the terms 'philosophy' and 'philocally' in *philosophoumen* and *philokaloumen*, he does not, however, use the term 'philanthropy', nor any of the connected terms like *philagathia*, *agathoergia*, *agathopoia*. Yet the notion of philanthropy is, obviously, implied, as the spirit of the text shows, in the specific terms he uses to express the ethical aspect of his contemporary Athenian society.

28. II, 40, p.275, ll.8 to p.276, ll 5.

29. p. 276, ll.5-12.

30. On the relation of words and action, cf. also I, 144.

31. Obviously because of the nominalistic philosophy of the Sophists. On this point, besides Plato's many *Dialogues*, cf. also Aristophanes's *Clouds* (*passim*).

32. There is a distinction to be made between 'discussion' and 'debate'. In the case of Pericles (as in Socrates and Plato) it is 'discussion' rather than 'debate'. A 'debate' is based on the Sophistic *logomachia*, while a 'discussion' is based on the Solonian and Socratic *autognôsia*. Even the term 'debate' corresponds to the Greek *logomachia* and denotes the 'battle' of 'words' (de -beat, battle). The term 'discussion', on the other hand, implies conscious and knowledgeable reasoning and argumentation by 'shaking' the evidence 'through' the intervention of the interlocutors (dis -quash; cf. the Latin *quater*). Cf. Pericles' terms: *krinomen... orthôs ta pragmata... an... dikaiôs kritheien... saphestata gignôskontes*, a clear reference to both the Sophistic 'debate' (in staying only on the level of words) and the Spartan complete absence of discussion.

33. Cf. Pericles' Speech in I, 140-144 always "giving reasons" for any of his proposals (e.g. 144: "I could give you many other reasons why you should..."). Cf. Socrates' dictum: "An unexamined life is not worth living" (implied *human* life living in a *human* way : *bios... biôtos anthrôpô*; i.e. not *zôê*) (*Apology* 38a).

34. *Kratistoi d'an tēn psychēn* may very well refer to both the individual bravery (cf. the notions of *tolman* and *thrasos* in relation to the *psychē*) and to the societal power (cf. the notion of *kratos* implicit in the *kratistoi*). Cf. *amathia*.
35. Warner's translation as "extremely well-informed" does not render this fundamental difference. "Well-informed" may be even the Sophistic individual in his "opinion" which may be the result of a flattering and hedonistic persuasion by the "public opinion".
36. This is not a play of words and letters. Any act is a fact as 'done'; and any fact is an act with the human intervention with obvious ethical implications and repercussions (e.g. the splitting of the atom and the splitting of the cell either in the natural state or by human action; or the fact of miscarriage and the act of abortion). In the same way, any free decision and choice is an existentially mental "reeling" as a human ability to think and to respond; and this existential freedom precedes and founds the civil liberties. This is, perhaps, what Pericles tries to emphasise in this relation of words and deeds. On his notions of freedom, liberty and liberality, cf. below.
37. It is only a 'multitude' ('crowd or mob') of individuals who can be 're-presented' since they are impersonal and anonymous and, consequently, replaceable. A person cannot be replaced in its existential condition.
38. In the 'mass' ('flock or herd') there is a complete assimilation and the individuality is lost.
39. Cf. *aretēn legei nun tēn philian kai euergesian* - Scholiast. Compare also the terms in B. Jowett's translation in Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1900, pp. 126-135.
40. Cf. Pericles' terms *drōntes*, *charin*, *eunoias*, *eleutherias*; and *paschontes*, *opheilēma*, *xympherontos*, *logismō*, etc. Compare here the view of Adam Smith, *op.cit.*
41. Thucydides's own observations, to this effect, are revelatory (II, 52-55, esp. 53): "Athens owed to the plague the beginnings of a state of lawlessness...and pleasure...". Thucydides seems to attribute the social changes and ills to the plague. Yet Pericles attributes them to the change of the philosophical principles (#61)(cf. below). This confirms both the strength of Sophism at this time and Pericles' perspicacity in this speech. Of course, the plague was the occasion, but the cause of this societal and social radical change was the Sophistic philosophy. This occasion made the Athenians accept Sophism readily and, consequently, Pericles was blamed for everything, not only for the war, but also for the plague (cf. II, 59). Pericles' open reaction to the Sophistic principles did not take long to come (cf. II, 60).
42. Cf. the II.1-4, p.275, on 'wealth' and 'poverty'. See # 51 on the caring of one another during the plague and compare it with # 52 ff and # 61("you have changed [i.e principles]... Yet you must remember that you are citizens of a great city..., condemned are those who, through lack of moral fibre, fail to live up to the reputation which has been theirs already"[principles]). On political apathy, cf. his critique in II, 63.
43. It must be noted that the translation of the classical Greek term *aretē* with the term "virtue" is rather misleading and must be avoided. The classical Greek sense of *aretē*, as is well known, is in relation to the ancient Greek ethics of "excellence" which implies the attempt to reach the limits of the possible in becoming what one is capable of being, an attempt which is in opposition to both the *hamartia* and *hubris*, an attempt to excel, that is, in its rejection of both inactivity (*apraxia*) and excess (*mēden agan*) in regard to one's own limits. The term and the notion of "virtue" has nothing to do with this Greek ethical meaning since it refers either, originally, to the Roman morality of 'manliness' and 'virility'(i.e. *versus* 'cowardice' or 'pusillanimity') for which the Greeks had the term *andreia* or, later, to the Christian morality of 'righteousness' and 'rectitude' (i.e. *versus* 'sin' or 'contumaciousness') which implies a disobedience to a preordained

divine commandment for which the Greeks had not a problem. Although the term *areté* has some connotations and similarities in meaning with the term "virtue", it is always preferable, therefore, to use the term "excellence" in order to translate it in general as well as in this particular passage in which Pericles seems to make precisely these points.

44. On the basis of his principles, Pericles seems to propose the policy of negotiations rather than of military operations in conflict resolutions (in reference to the present war). If Pericles' juxtaposition of his Athenians with the Spartans is obvious, his emphasis nevertheless of the difference between *his* Athenians of the "Funeral Oration" (before the plague) and *the* Athenians of his "Plague Speech" (during and after the plague) is, in this case - as Pericles points out in the later speech - striking and relevant in understanding his policy position in the earlier speech. On this point, one may only refer to II, 61, and especially when he makes the remark, towards the end, on the "arrogant" and "those who, through lack of ethical fibre, fail to live up to the reputation which is *theirs already*" in which remark one may notice his observation that the Solonian democracy had changed to an amoral expediency and an anarchic ochlocracy. The Peloponnesian War has always been considered as a war between the warring parties of Athens and Sparta. Yet the fundamental point which must be taken into account when considering this war is that Athens had not been one and the same in its 25-year duration. While the Spartan guiding principles remained the same throughout the length of the war, the Athenian ones did not and so did not their relations and their policies. The change after Pericles' death is not, therefore, only a simple change of government or of policies, but, instead, a radical change in philosophical principles and in polity and, as a consequence, comes the change in societal and state relational attitudes and policies. Thus, this fundamental change can be noticed, after Pericles' death, not only in Athenian societal attitudes as the previous case shows (II, 61), but also in Athenian state and governmental behavior and policy. Two significant and characteristic examples - which would suffice - are (a) the "Melian Dialogue" in 416BC (V, 84-116) with "the massacre of the male population". To some objections regarding historical accuracy, one may point out that it is not so much whether this event took place in the way Thucydides records it or not; or whether it is Thucydides's own reflections, views and words or not. What is important to notice, in this case, is the predominance of the principles which are at stake and which, this time, are those of 'self-interest' and 'profit', of 'expediency' and 'efficiency', those principles precisely which Pericles seems to have rejected in his *Funeral Oration*. One may only compare the Athenian attitude in the emissaries *imposing* their will and *compelling* submission with the Melian replies on the principles of moderation and friendship. (b) That the Sicilian expedition was viewing the conquest not only of the Sicilian and Italic Greek City-states but also of Carthage and the Carthagenians (VI, 90) is a rather clear indication that the expansionist policy of the politicians of that time was guided, first, by the antagonistic and confrontational politics of the power of the stronger ("might is right" as Callicles and Thrasymachus would defend later in the Platonic *Gorgias* and *Republic*) rather than the Periclean conciliatory politics; and, second, by the "panhellenic" and "cosmopolitical" policies of the Sophists (introduced by the rhetoricians who, as migrants, had arrived in Athens after the 450s, especially from Sicily) rather than the "political" (i.e. of the "*polis*") policies which Pericles describes in his speech.

45. It is revealing and significant that this Conference is taking place in South Africa where this notion of "reconciliation" (*symphilia* and *symphiliôsis*) has become the core of the New Society which develops after the fall of the *Apartheid*.

46. The question of the historical accuracy of the speech and the historical application of its content during the Periclean tenure in office (and the purported Athenian imperialistic hegemony) are out of the scope of this article. The purpose of this paper is a textual exegesis and hermeneutics in order to exude its meaning and implications. Hence, whether this Oration was indeed historically delivered by Pericles himself at the time Thucydides claims to have been, whether it was literally delivered in those very same words as the historian records it or, even, whether it is simply attributed to him by Thucydides himself, this is not the essential point at this moment. Pursuing even further the objections, it is also secondary as to whether this Oration was written and delivered personally by Pericles or, as the Platonic Socrates would ironically have it in the *Menexenus*, by Aspasia or, for that matter, by any other rhetorician or logographer. And even if one objects, furthermore, that this speech does not give us an accurate account of the Athenian society or the Athenian democracy or the Athenian relations with their Greek or non-Greek neighbors, still this is a matter of historical interpretation - and a very controversial indeed - which is not relevant to the purpose of this article. The fact still remains that the content of the speech leaves a specific and clear picture of the political and social context and situation of the Athenian society as Pericles sees it in that historical period and, at the same time, sends a message of intent that the expressive art of the text communicates succinctly as well as beautifully. For Thucydides, it seems, it made a lot of historical and philosophical sense, otherwise he would have referred to it, in his critical methodology, in completely different way. Is Pericles' view a utopic one? it may easily be considered as visionary as has been that of Socrates' and Plato's. Yet, the Periclean lesson is not altogether irrelevant for the societies of the 21st century.