

## DELIBERATION IN ANCIENT GREEK ASSEMBLIES

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WHEN AN ANCIENT GREEK *dēmos* (“people,” “assembly”) deliberated, what did it do?<sup>1</sup> On one view, it engaged in a form of public conversation along the lines theorized by contemporary deliberative democrats; on another, a small number of active citizens debated before a much larger, more passive audience. Both accounts represent deliberation as an external, speech-centered activity rather than an internal, thought-centered one. The democratic ideal, it is suggested, was at least occasional participation in public speech.

This article questions that interpretation. A study of βουλευομαι, “deliberate,” and related terms from Homer to Aristotle reveals three models of deliberation: internal, dialogical, and another that I shall call “audience,” in which a deliberating audience came to a decision after hearing advice. Assembly deliberation was almost always represented as audience deliberation. The *dēmos*, or listening mass, deliberated (ἐβουλευετο), that is, came to a decision about an action in its power, while those who spoke before it advised (συμβούλευσε). Citizens did not fall short of a democratic ideal when they did not speak publicly. To the contrary, the *dēmos* was expected to exercise its authority through internal reflection, culminating in a vote.

This argument has profound implications for our conceptualization of ancient Greek democracy and its differences from its modern counterpart. A common criticism of modern representative democracy is that ordinary citizens play too small a part in it, their role typically being limited to voting in periodic elections. Ancient Greek democracy has been represented as more inclusive at least in part because ordinary citizens shaped policy through public speech. This article suggests that that view is based on a misinterpretation. The mass of citizens

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1. “Assembly” is often rendered “ecclesia,” but ἐκκλησία was almost never the subject of a verb, and never the subject of βουλευομαι, “deliberate.” The agent that deliberated was always the δῆμος. See Hansen 2010; Cammack 2019.

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shaped policy by deciding it, not by speaking publicly. The most significant difference between ancient and modern democracy concerns the scope of mass decision-making power, not the mode of mass participation in politics. Then, as now, the crucial mode of participation was the vote.

#### DELIBERATION AS CONVERSATION AND AS ORATORY

Deliberation (τὸ βουλευέσθαι)<sup>2</sup> by large groups of citizens was commonplace in ancient Greece. Aristotle defined a citizen as “one who has the right to participate in deliberative [βουλευτικῆς] or judicial office” (*Pol.* 1275b20) and associated these functions particularly with the multitude: “Over what matters ought the freemen and mass of citizens to have authority? . . . It is not safe for them to participate in the highest offices . . . It remains then for them to share in deliberation [τὸ βουλευέσθαι] and judging” (1281b24–31). The Athenian, Spartan, Syracusan, and other assemblies were frequently the subjects of βουλευόμεαι,<sup>3</sup> and *dēmos*, “people” or “assembly,” also regularly governed this verb.<sup>4</sup>

What activity did βουλευόμεαι imply? It could indicate internal reflection, as it often does in Aristotle’s ethical writings. “A doctor does not deliberate [βουλεύεται] whether to restore to health,” but rather *how* to do it, a task typically completed alone (*Eth. Nic.* 1112b). It could also indicate dialogue, as in Herodotus’ account of the seven Persians who conspired to kill the Magian pretender to the throne (3.71–84), or in Socrates’ comment to Callicles in the *Gorgias*, “I once overheard you [pl.] deliberating [ὑμῶν βουλευομένων] how far you ought to practice wisdom” (487c).

Deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies is usually interpreted dialogically. In T. A. Sinclair’s translation of Aristotle’s *Politics*, τὸ βουλευόμενον περὶ τῶν κοινῶν (“the element that deliberates on public affairs”) is that which “discusses everything of common importance” (1297b40). K. J. Maidment’s Andocides recalls how after the loss of Athens’ fleet in 405, “you discussed [ἐβουλευέσασθε] ways and means of reuniting the city,” while Douglas MacDowell rendered this line “you had a discussion about unity” (1.73). C. D. Adams’ Aeschines cites a motion restricting “the *dēmos*’s discussion [βουλευέσασθαι] of peace” to particular days, and another specifying that “the *dēmos* should discuss [βουλευέσασθαι] an alliance” (2.109–10). J. H. Vince’s Demosthenes berates his audience for “not discussing [βουλεύεσθαι] any question at your leisure, but waiting until you’re already losing” (10.29), while Jeremy Trevett’s comments on “the great public interest of the matters you are discussing [ὑμῶν βουλευομένων]” (8.1).

The translation “debate” has a similar effect.<sup>5</sup> Like “deliberate,” “debate” may suggest either internal reflection or public speech, but in political contexts

2. Or ἡ βούλευσις, but that appears only in Aristotle and is seemingly distinguished from τὸ βουλευέσασθαι at *Eth. Nic.* 1113a and *Eth. Eud.* 1226b. εὐβουλία, “good counsel,” may also be translated “deliberation,” but since I am specifically interested in the action denoted by βουλευόμεαι as opposed to its outcome in the hands of a capable practitioner, it will not be explored here.

3. E.g., *Ar. Eccl.* 474–75; *Lys.* 510–14; *Hdt.* 7.144; *Thuc.* 1.36, 71–86, 3.36–44, 4.84, 118, 6.36; *Xen. Hell.* 5.3.8, 6.5.49; *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 40; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1.

4. E.g., *Xen. [Ath. pol.]* 1.16; *Aeschin.* 2.60, 67, 109–10, 3.67, 142; *Dem.* 18.74, 165; *Arist. Pol.* 1298b20–30; *Din.* 1.90; *Theophr.* 26.1; *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 34; *IG* II<sup>3</sup> 1 337.

5. E.g., *Dem.* 4.33, 5.3, 10.10, trans. Vince; *Isoc.* 13.2, trans. Norlin; *Theophr. Char.* 26.1, trans. Rusten.

the latter is likely to be assumed. The representation of assembly speech as “deliberative rhetoric” or “deliberative oratory,” and its exponents as “deliberative speakers” or “deliberative orators,” as in many translations of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, equally implies a communicative conceptualization of deliberation.<sup>6</sup>

Ancient Greek politics has long been specially associated with speech. John Stuart Mill, in 1856, described Athenian democracy as a “government of boundless publicity and freedom of speech,” a characteristic he deemed “more practically important than even the political franchise.”<sup>7</sup> Hannah Arendt called the *polis* “the most talkative of all bodies politic,”<sup>8</sup> while Moses Finley defined politics itself, as discovered by the ancient Greeks, as “the art of reaching decisions by public discussion”<sup>9</sup> and noted that *isēgoria*, the equal right to speak in the assembly, was “sometimes employed by Greek writers as a synonym for ‘democracy.’”<sup>10</sup>

Recent interest in deliberative democracy, spurred in part by the writings of Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls, has brought this interpretation into sharper focus.<sup>11</sup> Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, citing *Politics* 1281b (discussed below), call Aristotle the “first major theorist” to defend the “deliberative ideal,” defined as a process in which “through the give-and-take of argument,” citizens “learn from one another, come to recognize their individual and collective mistakes, and develop new views and policies that are more widely justifiable.”<sup>12</sup> Jon Elster—citing the same passage of Aristotle along with Pericles’ defense of *logos*, “speech,” “discussion,” or “verbal reason” at Thucydides 2.40—agrees that “the idea of deliberative democracy and its practical implementation . . . came into being in Athens in the fifth century BC.”<sup>13</sup> David Held represented Athenian public deliberation in explicitly Habermasian terms as “free and unrestricted discourse” governed by the “force of the better argument.”<sup>14</sup> Ryan Balot suggests that “classical Athenian democrats believed that every Athenian had something potentially important to contribute to public discourse.” They thus aimed at “true democratic deliberation,” a “public conversation” in which “ideas are floated freely, objections and dissent are confidently and respectfully aired, further revisions and refinement of different opinions can take place, and a

6. Arist. *Rh.* 1354b, 1358b–62a, 1359b, 1369b, 1377b, 1413b, 1415b trans. Roberts, Freese, Cooper, Lawson-Tancred, Kennedy, Waterfield/Yunis; *Lys.* 14.45 trans. Lamb; *Dem.* 19.15, 22.48 trans. Vince; *Aeschin.* 1.1, 2.56 trans. Adams; *Din.* 2.15 trans. Burt.

7. Mill 1978, 324.

8. Arendt [1958] 1998, 26.

9. Finley 1985, 13–14. He added “and then of obeying those decisions as a necessary condition of civilized social existence.”

10. Finley 1985, 18–19. On *isēgoria*, see Hdt 5.78; *Eur. Supp.* 438, 441; *Xen. [Ath. pol.]* 1.2; *Pl. Grg.* 461e; *Prt.* 319b–d, 322d–23a; *Dem.* 15.18, 20.105–6; *Aeschin.* 3.20; Lewis 1971; Miller 2001; Monoson 2000, 56–60; Ober 1989, 72–79, 295–97; Sluiter and Rosen 2004.

11. Habermas 1985; 1989; 1996; Rawls 1999. Other landmark writings on deliberative democracy include: Benhabib 1996; Cohen 1989; Dryzek 2000; Elster 1998; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; 2004; Manin 1987; Mansbridge et al. 2012. On the diversity of conceptions of deliberative democracy (all of which, however, assume a speech-centered conceptualization of deliberation), see Bächtiger et al. 2010. This paragraph echoes the opening paragraph of Cammack 2020.

12. Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 43; 2004, 8.

13. Elster 1998, 1.

14. Held 2006, 15.

collectively supported decision issues in the end.”<sup>15</sup> More recently, Mirko Canevaro has argued that the Athenian assembly employed “deliberative procedures and institutions meant to foster debate, exchange of points of view and ideas, and reasoned arguments, and geared towards reaching, ultimately, consensus.”<sup>16</sup>

This interpretation is not free of difficulty. A major problem is the number of citizens involved. With a capacity of some six or eight thousand attendees during most of the Classical period, the Athenian assembly-place on the Pnyx was one of the largest venues, but even smaller ones held several thousand citizens.<sup>17</sup> As has often been observed, genuine conversation was in these conditions impossible.<sup>18</sup> In Josiah Ober’s words, “if even one in a hundred citizens chose to exercise his *isēgoria* at any given meeting, the volume of debate that would precede the vote would cause the system to founder.”<sup>19</sup> Yet meetings lasted no more than a few hours. Evidently only a tiny fraction of assembly-goers spoke at any given session; the rest simply listened and voted.<sup>20</sup> How should we interpret this situation?

One possibility is to deploy the idea of a conversation over time. Though only a small number of citizens spoke at any one meeting, over the years it may have been possible to hear from many more. This suggestion finds support in Mogens Hansen’s estimate that some 700–1400 citizens acted as “occasional *rhētores*” in Athens in 355–322, in addition to the ten or twenty citizens who spoke regularly at any given time.<sup>21</sup> It is also supported by Robin Osborne’s observation that in the inscriptional record of the late fifth century, “the men who get up in the Assembly and successfully persuade their fellow citizens to amend the decisions they are taking are, in the large majority of cases, otherwise unknown to us,” which, he suggests, shows that the “practical business of getting their fellow citizens to get the details right was widely shared.”<sup>22</sup> Yet the numbers involved remain very small. 700–1400 “occasional *rhētores*” amounts to only 2–5% of the Athenian citizen population, while we know the names of only sixteen fifth-century amenders.<sup>23</sup>

15. Balot 2006, 66.

16. Canevaro 2018, 125.

17. The meeting-place in fifth-century Argos held around 2500; Mantinea and Acragas, both 3000; Megalopolis, 6000. Robinson 2011, 13–14, 37–38, 42–43, 95, 229.

18. Elster 1998, 2; Finley 1985, 24; Johnstone, 1996; Manin 1997, 16; Ober 1989, 324–25; 2008, 164; Remer 1999, 75; Rhodes 1972, 80.

19. Ober 1989, 325.

20. Ober 1989, 325. Cf. Dahl 1989, 16–19, 225–31; Hansen 1999, 136–37.

21. Hansen 1989, 93–127. Ober (1989, 107–9) suggests a greater number of regular speakers, but that entails a rapid decrease in the number of occasional ones (Hansen 1989, 124). An arguably more significant problem is that *rhētoīr* could indicate either (a) a citizen who spoke publicly or (b) a citizen who sponsored a decree but did not speak in its support—and as Hansen (1989, 97) has argued, this group may have been quite large. I hope to pursue this point elsewhere.

22. Osborne 2010, 5.

23. Osborne (2010, 6, n. 12) lists the names of proposers of amendments to fifth-century decrees published in *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1–228: “Antibios (8), Euphemos (11), Lysanias (32, an interested party), Hestaios (35), Arkhestratos (40), Phantokles (46, an interested party), Skopas (63), P. . . kritos (68), Arkhestratos (72, also the proposer of the primary decree), Eukrates (76), Diokles, Eudikos (102), Antikhares (110), Arkhe . . . (125), Klesophos and his fellow prytaneis (127, the proposers of the primary decree), Phrasmon (228).” If the Arkhestratos in 40 is the same as that in 72 (and/or the “Arkhe . . .” in 125) then we have, in fact, only fourteen or fifteen fifth-century amenders—two of whom were also the sponsors of the primary decree, making the distribution of activity look still less widely shared.

An alternative to the “conversational” model is an “oratorical” one, advanced by many scholars, including Hansen and Osborne. As presented by Gary Remer, the conversational model of deliberation is suited to informal settings (Cicero observed that conversation, *sermo*, “finds its natural place in social gatherings, in informal discussions, and in intercourse with friends; it should also seek admission at dinners”); it is characterized by equal or at least very extensive participation, “so that as many voices as possible are heard in the debate”; and it proceeds according to the “force of the better argument” among essentially cooperative interlocutors.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, the oratorical model appears in formal settings (Cicero described oratory, *contentio*, as “the kind of discourse to be employed in pleadings in court and speeches in popular assemblies and in the senate”); speaker and audience are “not identical, as in conversation, but distinct,” in that “a few are speakers, the majority are listeners”; and orators are not cooperative but “agonistic,” aiming (again in Cicero’s words) to “prove one’s own case and demolish the adversary’s.”<sup>25</sup>

The oratorical interpretation of deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies certainly seems plausible. As Hansen argues, there was no “exchange of views” in the Athenian assembly, only “debate,” that is, a “series of speeches of varying length” dominated by “a small group of half- or fully-professional orators.”<sup>26</sup> These debates were inherently agonistic, in that speakers aimed to persuade the audience to vote as they advised, against the arguments of their rivals. As Elster notes, speakers did not even necessarily address one another. They might talk “*about* each other—to point out weaknesses in their opponents’ characters or arguments—but not *to* each other,” a procedure quite different from what most deliberative democrats have in mind.<sup>27</sup> Professional training would moreover seem to have been required by the acoustical challenges of some venues, such as the fifth-century Pnyx. The reconstruction of Christopher Lyle Johnstone suggests that even in the best conditions, “it is doubtful whether even half of the 5000 present could regularly understand what speakers were saying.”<sup>28</sup> Yet even after the Pnyx was rebuilt at the end of the fifth century, the Athenians continued to elect a secretary to read proposals and other documents aloud to the crowd.<sup>29</sup> The election process cannot have been necessitated by uneven levels of literacy, since other positions requiring literacy in that period were filled by lot.<sup>30</sup> Rather, it must have been sufficiently audible speech that was in short supply.

The oratorical interpretation needs clarification, however. Who deliberated when orators orated? The question arises because whereas the conversational model envisages all assembly-goers performing a single activity—deliberation interpreted as group discussion, whether or not all members of the group

24. Remer 2000, 72–74; Cic. *Off.* 1.37.132, trans. Miller. See also Remer 1999, 43–49.

25. Remer 2000, 75–77; Cic. *Orat.* 25.122, trans. Sutton and Rackham. See further Schudson 1997; Urfalino 2005; Manin 2005 (published in a revised French version as Manin 2011).

26. Hansen 1999, 142, 144.

27. Elster 1998, 2.

28. Johnstone 1997; cf. Ober 1989, 138. The character Demos is described as “half-deaf” (ὀπόκοφον) at Ar. *Eq.* 43.

29. Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 54.5; Dem. 19.70.

30. Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 54.3–4.

actually speak—the oratorical model distinguishes between two sets of actions, performed by two distinct groups: public speaking by a small number of orators, internal consideration by a much larger audience. Who deliberated on this picture—orators, audience, or both?

It is widely assumed that it was above all those who spoke who deliberated. Referring to Aristotle's accounts of deliberative rhetoric in the *Rhetoric* and of the political significance of *logos* in *Politics* 1, Bernard Yack argues that “political deliberation necessarily involves speech and argument because it involves the sharing of our reasoning.”<sup>31</sup> Bernard Manin, too, has interpreted deliberation primarily as participation in speech: “When we collectively deliberate, we adduce arguments to support our position, trying to persuade others that we have the better case.”<sup>32</sup> He quotes Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2, in support of this view: “Deliberation (*sumbouleuein*)<sup>33</sup> consists in arguing for or against something.”<sup>34</sup> Importantly, Manin makes room in his account for the “deliberation within” that “follows, and is shaped by, exposure to external argument.”<sup>35</sup> Yet internal deliberation remains secondary to the communicative kind. Properly “solitary deliberation,” he writes, “without the input and stimulation of others,” would “presumably not have led to an internal deliberation of the same quality.”<sup>36</sup>

The most influential voice in this context is that of Mogens Hansen, and although his account of the classical Athenian assembly is not couched in the language of deliberation, it clearly advances a speech-centered conceptualization of political activity. Hansen portrays a “spectrum” of political participation in which the least active citizens did not participate, the most active spoke and proposed motions, and those who only listened and voted stood somewhere in the middle.<sup>37</sup> “Ideally,” Hansen argues, citing *Protagoras* 319d, “the sum of active citizens”—that is, public speakers—“was equal to the whole body of citizens”; indeed, “the democratic ideology implied that it was a moral duty” to address one's fellow citizens “from time to time.”<sup>38</sup> He freely admits that the “ideal never matched the reality,” but he attributes this to the “gap between the constitution and how it works” common to societies of all periods.<sup>39</sup> Unlike some interpreters, Hansen does not represent those who only listened and voted in mass political contexts as wholly “passive.”<sup>40</sup> But he certainly represents them as *more* passive, and therefore as less perfect citizens, than those who spoke, and this characterization has been widely followed.<sup>41</sup>

Both the conversational and the oratorical models of assembly deliberation thus assume a speech-centered interpretation of deliberation. This corresponds to a wider tendency to treat the application of the term “deliberation” to inward cogitation as an extension of its communicative meaning. That interpretation

31. Yack 2006, 420. Cf. Waldron 1999; Bickford 1996; Mulgan 1999; Garsten 2013a; Garver 2013.

32. Manin 2005, 17. Manin's views have since evolved: his new position is noted in n. 129 below.

33. *Sic*: to be discussed below.

34. Manin 2005, 15.

35. Manin 2005, 3 n. 2. Cf. Goodin 2003, 169–93.

36. Manin 2005, 8.

37. Hansen 1999, 268.

38. Hansen 1999, 268, citing Aeschin. 3.220; cf. 1989, 11, 22.

39. Hansen 1999, 267; 1989, 17.

40. Contrast, e.g., Dahl 1989, 225–31.

41. E.g., Manin 1997, 16; Rhodes 2016, 264; Urbinati 2000, 762–63.

was implied in 1933, when Edward Boucher Stevens defined internal deliberation as “a kind of inner conversation of a mind with itself.”<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Robert Goodin has suggested that “deliberation within” is “perhaps invariably modeled upon, and thus parasitic upon, our interpersonal experiences of discussion and debate.”<sup>43</sup> Richard Mulgan writes that it was “standard Greek usage” for “the verb ‘to deliberate’ (*bouleuesthai*)” to be used “both of collective political debate and, by metaphorical extension, of individual deliberation, ‘taking one’s own counsel,’ as it were by a form of inner consultation.”<sup>44</sup> βουλευόμεαι, these authors agree, originally indicated speech: its application to thought was an extension of the discursive paradigm, not the other way around.

#### THE DISJUNCTION BETWEEN ΒΟΥΛΕΥΟΜΑΙ AND SPEECH

Plausible as this interpretation seems, it is surprisingly difficult to find examples of βουλευόμεαι unambiguously indicating speech. It is not impossible, and a selection of such cases will be discussed below. But the evidence mentioned so far falls into three categories. First, cases where βουλευόμεαι is typically interpreted as denoting speech, but closer inspection suggests otherwise. Second, cases where speech is certainly indicated and “deliberative” or “deliberation” appear in translation, but βουλευόμεαι does not appear in the original. Third, cases believed to suggest the idealization of wide participation in public speech, but where other interpretations are possible, even likely.

Aristotle’s support for deliberation by the multitude at *Politics* 1281b falls into the first category. Drawing an analogy with the superiority of collectively provided dinners over those provided at a single man’s expense, he suggested that some multitudes can contribute more of a certain politically salient thing than can a small number of men or a single man. This thing has often been interpreted as diverse speech,<sup>45</sup> but as I have argued elsewhere, that reading must be mistaken, since the specific tasks that Aristotle assigns to the multitude are deciding elections, audits, and trials, none of which involved speech-making by the decision-makers.<sup>46</sup> Elections took place in assemblies but without accompanying debate,<sup>47</sup> while audits and trials were, across Hellas, decided by panels of judges who, Aristotle tells us, were banned from discussing matters among themselves (κοινολογῶνται, *Pol.* 1268b15).<sup>48</sup> Most significant, Aristotle remarks that his argument “would also apply to animals,” which proves that speech played no part in it (1281b20–82a16). *Logos*, “speech” or “verbal reason,” was precisely what Aristotle thought distinguished human beings from

42. Stevens 1933, 104.

43. Goodin 2003, 169.

44. Mulgan 1999, 195.

45. E.g., Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 131; Ober 2008, 110–14; Waldron 1999.

46. Cammack 2013a; Lane 2013, citing *Pol.* 1281b30–35, 1282a6–14, 1282a25–35, 1286a25–28. Lane argues that the deliberation and judging performed by Aristotle’s multitude are *restricted* to those involved in elections and audits. This is possible, though not necessary (as Lane notes, p. 251). In my view, the passage picks up on the earlier discussion of ways of sharing in the constitution. A citizen may perform either a time-limited office (e.g., archon, treasurer, general) or an indefinite office (deliberating and judging without restriction). Once Aristotle has excluded common citizens from the highest, time-limited offices, “it remains [λείπεται] then for them to share in deliberation and judging,” without restriction (*Pol.* 1281b31).

47. Hansen 1983, 119–21; Piérart 1974; Rhodes 1981.

48. Cammack 2013a, 180–81; Lane 2013, 251–52; Hansen 1999, 159–60, 218–20, 222–24, 233–35.

other animals.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, it cannot have been the politically salient thing he had in mind. *Aretē*, “virtue” or “excellence”—the focus of Aristotle’s analysis earlier in *Politics* 3 and a term that he often applied to animals other than humans—aggregated and even amplified in collective action, seems a more plausible candidate.<sup>50</sup>

βουλευόμεαι is also distinguished from speech in Thucydides. In Book 1, the Corcyraean envoy addresses the Athenian *dēmos* thus: “If anyone thinks that what we have suggested is indeed expedient, but fears that if he yields he will be breaking off the truce, let him consider that . . . he is deliberating [βουλευόμενος] upon the interests, not so much of Corcyra, as of Athens” (1.36, trans. Smith). Both the singular verb and the speaker’s assumption that each listener is deliberating at the very moment he is speaking suggest an internal conceptualization of deliberation. Athenagoras of Syracuse implies the same thing when he argues that “You, if you deliberate well [εὖ βουλευήσθε], will examine [σκοποῦντες] and form your estimate [λογιεῖσθε] of what is probable not from what these men report but from your estimate of what shrewd men of experience are likely to do,” and that “while the rich make the best guardians of property, the wise make the best counselors and the many, having listened, judge the best” (6.36, 39). Both the identification of βουλευόμεαι with “examining” and “forming your estimate” and its differentiation from offering counsel suggest internal deliberation.

Another example of internal deliberation appears in Demosthenes 19 and Aeschines 2, a pair of speeches occasioned by Demosthenes’ indictment of Aeschines in 343 for treason relating to an embassy to Philip of Macedon that had taken place three years earlier. Upon the embassy’s return to Athens, two assemblies had been held, and the case turned, in part, on what had happened there. According to Demosthenes, at the first meeting Aeschines had spoken against the proposed peace settlement, but at the second had switched sides and supported it (19.13–14). According to Aeschines, however, he could not have spoken at the second meeting, for it had comprised only a series of votes. He asked the secretary to read aloud the decree of Demosthenes setting up the meetings, which had directed that “in the first of the two meetings whoever wishes can offer advice [συμβουλεύειν], but that in the second, the presidents shall put the matter to the vote, without giving an opportunity for debate [λόγον]” (2.65). βουλευόμεαι denoted the activity of the *dēmos* at both meetings. Demosthenes referred to “the two assemblies at which you deliberated [ἐβουλευέσθε] about the peace” (19.13), while a witness for Aeschines cited the meeting “when the *dēmos* was deliberating [ἐβουλεύετο] on the subject of the alliance with Philip . . . when no opportunity was given to address the people [δημηγορεῖν] but the decrees . . . were being put to the vote” (2.67; cf. 70). The two-meeting procedure may have been relatively uncommon, but Hansen has argued convincingly that the Athenians often put proposals to the vote without any debate at all, through the process known as *procheirotonia*.<sup>51</sup> Evidently, deliberation by the *dēmos* did not have to involve public speech.

49. Arist. *Pol.* 1253a1–17, 1332b5. Cf. *Hist. an.* 536b.

50. Cammack 2013a. See also Smith 2018.

51. Hansen 1983, 123–30, supported by Canevaro 2018.

The second category of evidence adduced in support of the speech-centered interpretation of βουλευόμεναι comprises cases where speech is indicated and “deliberative” or “deliberation” appear in translation, but βουλευόμεναι does not appear. An important example is “deliberative rhetoric,” the traditional name of the first type of persuasive speech discussed in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1.3, 4). This term appears in the first English version of the text, Thomas Hobbes’ précis, *A Briefe of the Art of Rhetoric* (1637), and in the translations of R. C. Jebb (1909), W. Rhys Roberts (1924), J. H. Freese (1926), Lane Cooper (1932), George Kennedy (1991), Hugh Lawson-Tancred (1991), and Robin Waterfield and Harvey Yunis (2018), as well as in the writings of many recent commentators.<sup>52</sup> By analogy with ἀρχὴ βουλευτική, “deliberative office” (*Pol.* 1275b20), ζῶν βουλευτικόν, “deliberative animal” (*Hist. an.* 488b25), and φαντασία βουλευτική, “deliberative imagination” (*De an.* 434a7), one might expect “deliberative rhetoric” to translate ῥητορικὴ βουλευτική, but that phrase is not attested.<sup>53</sup> Instead, Aristotle uses terms derived from either δημηγορέω, “address the *dēmos*” (cf. Aeschin. 2.67, quoted above) or συμβουλευώ, “advise” or “counsel” (cf. Aeschin. 2.65, quoted above). At *Rhetoric* 1354b, for example, he refers to τὰ δημηγορικά and ἡ δημηγορία, perhaps best rendered “public speeches” and “public rhetoric,” respectively, while at 1358b, the relevant adjective is συμβουλευτικός, “advisory.”

Describing “advisory” or “public” speech as “deliberative” need not, strictly speaking, imply a speech-centered interpretation of deliberation. It could possibly signify rhetoric intended to assist listeners in their internal deliberations, and it may be that that is what some translators had in mind. However, that interpretation is less plausible for “deliberative speaker” or “deliberative orator,” common renderings of ὁ συμβουλευόμενος, “adviser,” and ὁ δημηγορὸς, “public speaker” (*Rhet.* 1358b). A “deliberative speaker” surely deliberates; yet Aristotle never used βουλευόμεναι of orators. When introducing the topics that arise for discussion in assemblies, for instance, he referred to those “about which all men deliberate and those who advise speak publicly” (περὶ ὧν βουλευόνται πάντες καὶ περὶ ὧν ἀγορεύουσιν οἱ συμβουλευόμενοι, 1359b20).<sup>54</sup> Speakers and deliberators are here distinct, but the distinction often disappears in translation. Hobbes titled the relevant chapter “the subject of deliberatives; and the abilities that are required of him that will deliberate of business of state,” where the latter unambiguously referred to a speaker. Freese has topics “about which all men deliberate and deliberative orators harangue”; Roberts, those “on which all men deliberate and on which deliberative speakers make speeches”; Kennedy, those “on which people deliberate and on which deliberative orators give advice in public”; Lawson-Tancred, those “of deliberation, and those most often discussed by deliberative speakers.” Such renderings strongly suggest that “all men” and “speakers” are engaged in a single activity, but there is no basis for that reading in the Greek, and significant confusion may result. We have already encountered

52. E.g., Yack 2006; Garver 2006, 2013; Bickford 1996. Yunis (1996, 16, n. 24) discusses the shift in translating συμβουλευτικόν from “political” to “deliberative” [rhetoric]. I would suggest “advisory” for συμβουλευτικόν and “public” for δημηγορικόν.

53. *TLG* search to within fifteen words, last accessed April 24, 2018.

54. Cf. *Rh.* 1356b30–35, 1357a1–6, 1359a30–35, 1362a15–20.

one example: Manin's quotation of Aristotle as saying that "Deliberation (*sumbouleuein*) means arguing for or against something."<sup>55</sup> But while *συμβουλευεῖν* does indeed mean "arguing for or against something," it is different from deliberation (*τὸ βουλευέσθαι*), which is the object of Manin's interest in the rest of the article.<sup>56</sup>

The third category of evidence concerns participation in public speech. Pericles' funeral oration is often cited (Thuc. 2.40):

ἐνι τε τοῖς αὐτοῖς οἰκείων ἅμα καὶ πολιτικῶν ἐπιμέλεια, καὶ ἑτέροις πρὸς ἔργα τετραμμένους τὰ πολιτικά μὴ ἐνδεῶς γνῶναι: μόνοι γάρ τόν τε μηδὲν τῶνδε μετέχοντα οὐκ ἀπράγμονα, ἀλλ' ἀχρεῖον νομίζομεν, καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ ἦτοι κρίνομεν γε ἢ ἐνθυμούμεθα ὀρθῶς τὰ πράγματα, οὐ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ μὴ προδιδαχθῆναι μᾶλλον λόγῳ πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ ᾧ δεῖ ἔργῳ ἐλθεῖν.

Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, we regard the citizen who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, and we are able to judge proposals even if we cannot originate them; instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all. (Trans. Smith)

Elster represents this passage (in this rendering) as a positive view of "decision making by discussion among free and equal citizens."<sup>57</sup> But the distinction Pericles draws between public men who originate proposals and ordinary citizens who judge them suggests that, like Athenagoras of Syracuse, he did not expect ordinary citizens to speak publicly. What is celebrated here is the Athenian custom of "being instructed" (*προδιδαχθῆναι*) by speeches prior to taking action, a process characterized by internal thought on the part of the decision-makers. Hobbes, in his 1629 translation, brought this out clearly: "We likewise weigh what we undertake and apprehend it perfectly in our minds, not accounting words for a hindrance of action but that it is rather a hindrance to action to come to it without instruction of words before." The Athenian multitude, on this representation, did not engage in public speech but rather envisaged and adopted proposals on the basis of advice.

*Protagoras* 319d is also significant. "When the Athenians have to decide [*βουλευέσθαι*] something to do with the administration of the *polis*," Socrates argues, "the man who rises to advise [*συμβουλεύει*] them . . . could equally well be a carpenter, a bronzesmith, a shoemaker, a merchant, a shipowner, rich or poor, well-born or lowly. . . ." As we know from other evidence, anyone who wished could indeed speak publicly at Athens;<sup>58</sup> Socrates implies that anyone *did*. But Plato's well-known hostility to democracy raises the possibility that this sketch may be a caricature or a *reductio ad absurdum*.<sup>59</sup> Even if, as Peter Rhodes has argued, what Socrates describes "cannot be totally unlike what actually

55. Manin 2005, 15.

56. The same conflation of *συμβουλεύειν* and deliberation appears in Hourcade 2015.

57. Elster 1999, 1–2.

58. E.g., Xen. [*Ath. pol.*] 1.2.

59. Cf. Cammack 2015.

happened,” Plato’s dialogues are not a fully reliable guide to either democratic ideology or practice.<sup>60</sup>

The Athenian orators, as both Ober and Hansen have emphasized, are a better bet.<sup>61</sup> Hansen quotes Aeschines 3.220:<sup>62</sup>

ἐπιτιμᾶς δέ μοι, εἰ μὴ συνεχῶς, ἀλλὰ διαλείπων, πρὸς τὸν δῆμον προσέρχομαι, καὶ τὴν ἀξίωσιν ταύτην οἶε λαμβάνειν μεταφέρων οὐκ ἐκ δημοκρατίας, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἐτέρας πολιτείας. ἐν μὲν γὰρ ταῖς ὀλιγαρχίαις οὐχ ὁ βουλόμενος, ἀλλ’ ὁ δυναστεύων δημηγορεῖ, ἐν δὲ ταῖς δημοκρατίαις ὁ βουλόμενος, καὶ ὅταν αὐτῷ δοκῇ, καὶ τὸ μὲν διὰ χρόνου λέγειν σημειῖόν ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῶν καιρῶν καὶ τοῦ συμφέροντος ἀνδρὸς πολιτευομένου, τὸ δὲ μηδεμίαν παραλείπειν ἡμέραν ἐργαζομένου καὶ μισθαροῦντος.

And you blame me if I come before the people, not constantly, but only at intervals. And you imagine that your hearers fail to detect you in thus making a demand which is no outgrowth of democracy, but borrowed from another constitution. For in oligarchies it is not he who wishes, but he who is in authority, that addresses the people; whereas in democracies he speaks who chooses, and whenever it seems to him good. And the fact that a man speaks only at intervals marks him as a man who takes part in politics because of the call of the hour, and for the common good; whereas to leave no day without its speech, is the mark of a man who is making a trade of it, and talking for pay. (Trans. Adams)

According to Hansen, this passage “well presents” the “Athenian ideal” of “diffusion of political activity and avoidance of professionalism,” and he cites no other sources either here or elsewhere in defense of that claim.<sup>63</sup> Yet while Aeschines certainly depicts occasional public speaking in a positive light, he contrasts it not with failure ever to speak, but with speaking incessantly. “He who wishes” should come forward because of the “call of the hour,” rather than “leave no day without its speech.” *Pace* Hansen, we cannot infer from this that public speaking was regarded as a “moral duty” for *all* citizens.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, Aeschines was not here merely sketching an ideal but defending himself against a specific attack from Demosthenes, and that attack reveals a significantly different conceptualization of ideal political behavior (18.307–8).

οὐδέ γ’ ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν ἄδικον καὶ ὑπουλον, ὃ σὺ ποιεῖς πολλάκις. ἔστι γάρ, ἔστιν ἡσυχία δίκαια καὶ συμφέρουσα τῇ πόλει, ἣν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν πολιτῶν ὑμεῖς ἀπλῶς ἄγετε. ἀλλ’ οὐ ταύτην οὗτος ἄγει τὴν ἡσυχίαν, πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ, ἀλλ’ ἀποστάς ὅταν αὐτῷ δόξη τῆς πολιτείας (πολλάκις δὲ δοκεῖ), φυλάττει πηνίκ’ ἔσεσθε μεστοὶ τοῦ συνεχῶς λέγοντος ἢ παρὰ τῆς τύχης τι συμβέβηκεν ἐναντίωμα ἢ ἄλλο τι δύσκολον γέγονεν (πολλὰ δὲ τάνθρωπινα): εἴτ’ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ ῥήτωρ ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας ὥσπερ πνεῦμ’ ἐφάνη, καὶ πεφωνασκηκῶς καὶ συνειλογῶς ῥήματα καὶ λόγους συνείρει τούτους σαφῶς καὶ ἀπνευσταί, ὄνησιν μὲν οὐδεμίαν φέροντας οὐδ’ ἀγαθοῦ κτήσιν οὐδενός, συμφορὰν δὲ τῷ τυγχόντι τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ κοινὴν αἰσχύνην.

Nor was it his duty to hold his peace dishonestly and deceptively, as you [Aeschines] so often do. There is, indeed, a silence that is honest and beneficial to the city, such as is observed in all simplicity by the majority of you citizens. Not such, but far, far different is the silence of Aeschines. Withdrawing himself from public life whenever he thinks fit—and that

60. Rhodes 2016, 251.

61. Ober 1996, 119; Hansen 2010, 505.

62. Hansen 1987, 61.

63. Hansen 1987, 61.

64. Hansen 1999, 267.

is very frequently—he lies in wait for the time when you will be weary of the incessant speaker, or when some unlucky reverse has befallen you, or any of those vexations that are so frequent in the life of mortal men; and then, seizing the occasion, he breaks silence and the orator reappears like a sudden squall, with his voice in fine training; he strings together the words and the phrases that he has accumulated, emphatically and without a pause; but, alas, they are all useless, they serve no good purpose, they are directed to the injury of this or that citizen, and to the discredit of the whole community. (Trans. Vince)

Hansen takes account of this passage by observing, correctly, that “the orators found no fault with the fact that many Athenians never addressed their fellow citizens.”<sup>65</sup> But Demosthenes goes further than that. He implies that there are not one but two ideal citizens at Athens: the ideal *rhētōr* and the ideal man of the mass.<sup>66</sup> Most men are not expected to speak, and their silence is both “honest” and “beneficial” to the *polis*. But expectations differ for those who do come forward. They should not speak incessantly—thus far Aeschines and Demosthenes agree. But neither should they stay silent, carp, or criticize fruitlessly. Rather, they should put their rhetorical skills to good use, which meant proposing and leading actions: Demosthenes mentions alliances, expeditions, embassies, and domestic and foreign projects (18.311). On this interpretation, democratic ideology demanded not occasional public speech from all, but useful speech-making by some and honest silence from most. The more than four-fifths of the audience that voted with Demosthenes on this occasion presumably accepted this.

The evidence that βουλευομαι implied public speech is thus surprisingly weak, warranting a more comprehensive investigation. How was this term defined by contemporaries? Was internal deliberation really as prominent as the foregoing analysis suggests? What other models of deliberation were available, and how far do they illuminate the activities of ancient Greek assembly-goers? The rest of this article seeks to answer these questions.

#### DEFINING TO ΒΟΥΛΕΥΕΣΘΑΙ

βουλεύεσθαι is formally defined in four extant texts: Plato’s *Cratylus*, the pseudo-Platonic *Sisyphus*, and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*. The related βουλή also appears in the Platonic *Definitions*. Aristotle’s discussion is by far the most extensive and will accordingly be my main touchstone, but it is striking how little it conflicts with the Platonic accounts.

The most idiosyncratic (though not incongruous) definition appears in the *Cratylus*, where βουλεύεσθαι is associated with shooting (βολή) or “aiming at something” (τὸ ἐφίεσθαι, 420c). Specifically, Socrates argues that βουλή (“will” or “counsel”), βούλεσθαι (“to want” or “to wish”), and βουλεύεσθαι (“to deliberate”) “express the idea of shooting, just as ἀβουλία [“poor counsel”] . . . appears to be a failure to hit, as if a person did not shoot or hit that which he shot at or wished [ἐβούλετο] or planned [ἐβουλεύοντο] or desired [ἐφίετο]” (420c, trans. Fowler). Exactly what βουλεύεσθαι aims at is suggested

65. Hansen 1999, 267.

66. Cf. Manin 1997, 16 n. 17: “The process of self-selection that . . . limited the number of speakers actually received explicit recognition . . . in the ideology of the first comer; *ho boulomenos* denoted *anyone wishing to come forward to make a proposal*, not simply anyone” (italics original).

elsewhere. In the *Definitions*, βουλῆ is glossed as σκέψις περὶ τῶν μελλόντων πῶς συμφέρει, “consideration of what will be beneficial in the future” (414a), while in the *Sisyphus*, τὸ εὖ βουλευέσθαι, “deliberating well,” is described first as “a kind of seeking to discover the best actions to use for oneself [τὰ βέλτιστα ἐξευρεῖν τινα ἑαυτῷ διαπράξασθαι], though without knowing them clearly, but this being some form of thought [ἐν νοήσει]” (388b); and then as “seeking after the best means to use for oneself for one’s own benefit,” specifically “as concerns practical matters” (τῶν πραγμάτων, 389b).

Putting these claims together, βουλευέσθαι seems to imply the consideration and selection, in thought in the first instance, of possibly beneficial future actions. This is also the kernel of Aristotle’s account.<sup>67</sup> τὸ βουλευέσθαι, as represented by Aristotle, was typically internal; it meant coming to a decision about a course of action within one’s own power; and it was a two-stage process, involving first considering, then deciding. Moreover, while it could be performed by groups, Aristotle never explained precisely how.

That Aristotle took deliberation, typically, to be internal is easily shown. Nearly all his exemplars are single men—a doctor, a general, a gymnastic trainer, an orator, a Lacedaemonian, a prudent man, Pericles.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, such is his focus on individual deliberation in his ethical writings that this, rather than deliberation in general, has sometimes been identified as his immediate object of interest.<sup>69</sup> That goes too far, since groups do appear in his analysis: in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, he observes that “all particular divisions of men deliberate [βουλευόνται] about things attainable by their own actions” (1112b37), while in the *Eudemian Ethics* he states that “we do not deliberate [βουλευόμεθα] on affairs in India,” where “we” presumably refers to Greek communities rather than to single men (1226a28). Yet even when others are involved, internal deliberation is represented as paradigmatic. As Aristotle notes, and as will be discussed further below, when deliberating we sometimes “bring in advisers [συμβούλους δὲ παραλαμβάνομεν], distrusting our own capacity to think things through [διαγνῶναι]” (*Eth. Nic.* 1112b10).

What did this activity involve? According to Aristotle, we deliberate about “things from us and from action,” or, more elegantly, “practical matters within our power.”<sup>70</sup> We do not deliberate about eternal things such as geometrical truths, regular things such as solstices, irregular things such as the weather, random things such as finding treasure, or anything else caused by nature, necessity, or chance (*Eth. Nic.* 1112a20–30). We deliberate only about outcomes attainable by human agency and not even most of those. A Lacedaemonian would not deliberate about the best political system for the Scythians, for Scythian government is not under his control (*Eth. Nic.* 1112a36). Equally, we do not deliberate about spelling, since how to spell a word correctly is not up to any one of us (*Eth.*

67. *Eth. Nic.* 1112a12–13a15; *Eth. Eud.* 1226a20–27a30. What follows draws on Cammack 2013b and Cammack 2020.

68. *Eth. Eud.* 1227a6–8, 1227a19, 1227b25; *Eth. Nic.* 1112a32, 1112b12–14, 1140a26, 1140b6, 1142a34. Cf. *Hist. an.* 488b25; *Pol.* 1260a1.

69. Garsten 2013, 326; Yack 2006, 420. Contrast Bickford 1996, 400.

70. *Eth. Nic.* 1112a30–31. Cf. *Eth. Eud.* 1226a26–33; *Rh.* 1357a. Cammack (2013b) defends the claim that this meant means as opposed to ends (*Eth. Nic.* 1112b12–15; *Eth. Eud.* 1226b10–13).

*Nic.* 1112b1–4). Deliberation concerns only things within the power of the deliberator to effect, either via his own agency or via that of others under his direction (*Eth. Nic.* 1112b28). Its subject matter is limited because its purpose is limited. Deliberation decides the action of the deliberator. It is thus linked to both agency and choice. It presupposes that the deliberator is deciding between at least two courses of action, both of which, at least initially, strike him as possible to perform.<sup>71</sup>

This may seem a surprisingly narrow account. According to Aristotle, philosophical, historical, and scientific questions cannot be deliberated about, because they cannot be influenced by the actions of the deliberator. That is not to say that they cannot be considered, examined, contemplated, discussed, and so on. Ancient Greek, like English, recognized many kinds of intellectual activity. Among the terms Aristotle used to describe his characteristic occupation were θεωρέω, “theorize” or “contemplate,” σκέπτομαι, “consider,” and σκοπέω, “examine.”<sup>72</sup> But βουλευόμαι he reserved for practical matters, excluding even the process of settling on an opinion (*Eth. Nic.* 1111b30–12a13; *Eth. Eud.* 1226a1–7). Though some form of imagination is common to all animals, he says in *De anima*, the deliberative (βουλευτική) imagination belongs only to those that decide whether to *do* this or that (434a7–9).

βουλευόμαι thus implied coming to a decision about an action within one’s power. Probably the best English rendering is “make up one’s mind,” since that not only preserves the emphasis on internal activity found in both Plato and Aristotle but also accords with the conventional translation of the related term μεταβουλεύομαι, “change one’s mind.”<sup>73</sup> Importantly, this was a two-stage process. In English, both “come to a decision” and “make up one’s mind” are ambiguous: either the consideration performed prior to a decision or the final act of decision-making may be meant. There was less ambiguity about βουλευόμαι, because the stage reached was often revealed by tense.<sup>74</sup> In the present tense, βουλευόμαι could denote either the entire deliberative process, that is, both considering and deciding, or the process of consideration alone, while in past tenses it implied “decide after consideration.”<sup>75</sup>

Aristotle, for instance, used the present participle when the deliberator was still making up his mind. “The deliberator [ὁ βουλευόμενος] always deliberates for the sake of something . . . he always has some aim in view” (*Eth. Eud.* 1227a6–7). The aorist (or another past tense) appeared once the decision had been made. Distinguishing between two forms of *akrasia*, “weakness of

71. *Eth. Eud.* 1227a18–19; *Eth. Nic.* 1113a2–12. Nielsen (2011) denies that Aristotle thought deliberation involved choosing between alternative courses of action, but she does not discuss *Rh.* 1357a1: βουλευόμεθα δὲ περὶ τῶν φαινόμενων ἐνδέχεσθαι ἄμφοτέρως ἔχειν (“we deliberate about things that seem to admit of issuing in two ways”).

72. θεωρέω: *Hist. an.* 491a; *Metaph.* 1001a4; *Eth. Nic.* 1104a12, 1139a1; *Pol.* 1334b5. σκέπτομαι: *Arist. Eth. Eud.* 1214a15, 1217b1, 1218b27; *Pol.* 1324a14. σκοπέω: *Eth. Eud.* 1214b29, 1217b16; *Eth. Nic.* 1112a10.

73. The active voice μεταβουλεύω appears in Homer, but in classical sources, only the middle/passive μεταβουλεύομαι (*TLG*, last accessed October 14, 2018). The significance of this change in voice with respect to βουλεύω is discussed in the next section.

74. Including in parts of speech that do not show tense in English, such as participles and infinitives. In such cases tense shows not time but aspect: progressive/repeated aspect by the present tense, simple aspect by the aorist, and completed aspect by the perfect.

75. LSJ.

will” or “unrestraint,” Aristotle observed that “The weak, having come to a resolution [βουλευσάμενοι], on account of passion do not keep to what they decided [ἐβουλεύσαντο]. The impetuous, on the other hand, on account of not making a resolution [τὸ μὴ βουλεύσασθαι], are led by passion throughout” (*Eth. Nic.* 1150b18). Neither the weak nor the impetuous, on this account, fail entirely to deliberate. The weak complete both parts of the process and form a decision, though they do not execute it, while the impetuous may begin but do not complete the process. And in Greek, the stage reached was shown simply by tense. There was no need to use another verb to specify the final act of decision-making, as there may be in English (see “making a resolution” in my translation above). Decision-making was intrinsic to βουλευόμεαι.

This leads to a key point. The fact that βουλευόμεαι denotes a two-stage process may hardly matter when the deliberator is one person, since both considering and deciding are internal and the transition between them may be virtually seamless. When the agent is a group, however, it matters quite a lot, because different processes will necessarily feature at each stage. “Considering” may involve internal thought, group discussion, or hearing speeches; “deciding” may involve voting or establishing a verbal consensus. And this poses a problem for those interested in the mechanics of group deliberation. βουλευόμεαι tells us only that a decision is reached. If we want to know *how*, we need more information. What more can we glean from Aristotle?

As it turns out, surprisingly little. Groups certainly did deliberate, in both the *Rhetoric* and the *Politics* as well as in Aristotle’s ethical writings. We are told, for example, that decisions about war and peace, alliances, laws, and so on may be assigned to all citizens, to some, or to single officials, and that allowing all to deliberate (βουλεύεσθαι) about everything was standard in democracies of Aristotle’s day (*Pol.* 1298a1–35; cf. 1318b22–30). Another line in the *Politics* provides a clue as to the mechanics of this process: “They will deliberate [βουλεύσονται] better when all are deliberating together [κοινη βουλευόμενοι], the *dēmos* with the notables and they when with the masses” (1298b20). We shall return to this line below. For now, we may simply note that Aristotle never directly addressed how, or even whether, group deliberation of this kind differed from the internal paradigm he presented in his dedicated account—a lacuna that may itself be significant.

#### THE INTERNAL MODEL CONFIRMED

While Aristotle left the details of group deliberation open, in other respects his account is as apt as one might wish. Every extant use of βουλευόμεαι does indeed indicate coming to a decision about a course of action within the deliberator’s power. Moreover, the philosophical priority that both Plato and Aristotle accorded to internal deliberation is matched by its historical priority, in that every early use of βουλευόμεαι denotes internal activity. Internal deliberation even comes first grammatically, in that what originally distinguished βουλευόμεαι, “deliberate” (in the middle voice) from βουλευῶ, “plan” or “advise” (in the active voice) was the fact that the subject of the verb was considering his or her own action, with emphasis on the “own.”

The earliest uses of βουλεύομαι all indicate decision-making by single agents. In the *Iliad*, Zeus is said to have gone back on a promise to Agamemnon and “determined upon [βουλεύσατο] cruel deceit” (2.114, 9.21). Theognis tells his reader “you should think [βουλεύου] twice and thrice . . . for the headstrong man comes to grief” (633–34), while Semonides’ vicious “monkey” woman “ponders [βουλεύεται] only this, how to do the greatest harm she may” (*Women* 81–82). Later examples include Electra’s “Hear what I have determined [βεβούλευμαι] to accomplish!”; Oedipus’ “O Zeus, what have you decreed [βεβούλευσαι] for me?”; and Phaedra’s statement that she goes to die, but how “shall be my own devising” (βουλεύσομαι).<sup>76</sup> In each case, a single person decides on an action within his or her power, and that usage remained common down to the end of the Classical era.<sup>77</sup>

Such uses are just what Aristotle leads us to expect. But something else emerges from our earliest texts that does not appear in his analysis. Internal decision-making was in the Archaic and early Classical period represented not only by βουλεύομαι, “deliberate,” but also by βουλεύω, “plan.” In Hesiod, Phocylides, and Pindar, in fact, only βουλεύω appears in this context, while in Homer and Aeschylus βουλεύομαι appears once, βουλεύω many times. In Sophocles and Euripides, βουλεύομαι and βουλεύω are used about equally for this purpose, while in the fourth century βουλεύομαι was by far the more common. What accounts for this change? The answer both confirms the association of βουλεύομαι with internal activity and lays the groundwork for a better understanding of collective political deliberation.

To begin with the grammatical issue: βουλεύω and βουλεύομαι are not different verbs but different voices of the same verb, the active and the middle, respectively. The textbook distinction between these voices is that the active “represents the subject performing the action of the verb,” while the middle “shows that the action is performed with special reference to the subject.”<sup>78</sup> Specifically, according to Smyth, “as contrasted with the active, the middle lays stress on the conscious activity, bodily or mental participation, of the agent.” Heading Smyth’s examples are “βουλεύω, plan, and βουλεύομαι, deliberate.”<sup>79</sup>

Drawing on their earliest uses, we may elaborate on Smyth’s distinction. Though βουλεύω could show the subject planning—that is, designing and/or deciding<sup>80</sup>—his, her, or their own action, it could also indicate the making of a plan by someone other than the decision-maker, that is, the production or provision of advice. βουλεύομαι, by contrast, specified that the subject of the verb was the decision-maker. He, she, or they were engaged in forming their own will (βουλῆ).

76. Soph. *El.* 947; *OT* 738, trans. Lloyd-Jones; Eur. *Hipp.* 723, trans. Kovacs.

77. Soph. *El.* 1046; *OT* 537, 1367; *Ant.* 772; *Trach.* 589; *Phil.* 1228; Eur. *Supp.* 248; *IA* 1102; *Ba.* 842–43; *Phoen.* 735; *Andr.* 63, 1280; *El.* 269; *Hipp.* 900; *Med.* 567, 893; *Orest.* 637–38, 1131; Ar. *Ran.* 865; *Eq.* 88; *Lys.* 951; *Pax* 58, 106, 230; *Hdt.* 1.20, 79, 91, 116, 3.17, 119, 134, 153, 154, 5.35, 111, 6.3, 86; 7.10, 12, 13, 49; 8.100, 101; 9.12, 13, 14, 16; *Thuc.* 1.36, 2.64, 3.48, 5.8, 71, 6.12, 8.58; *Antiph.* 1.17; *Andoc.* 1.42, 145; *Lys.* 14.45; *Xen. Hell.* 1.30; *Isae.* 1.11, 20, 41, 43, 50, 2.1, 15, 3.64, 7.33, 8.36, 10.16; *Isoc.* 1.34, 35, 2.2, 47, 51, 3.51, 9.41; *Pl. Resp.* 390b, L.1 309b, L.7 324a, 346d–47c; *Aeschin.* 1.64, 2.114, 3.81, 209; *Dem.* 21.74; *Din.* 2.24; *Hyp.* 6.15.

78. Smyth 1956, §§1703, 1713.

79. Smyth 1956, §1728.

80. *OED*.

The flexibility of βουλεύω is plain in Homer. Most often, the subject is a single person planning (or more negatively “plotting”) his or her own action, as in Phoenix’s report, “Then I hatched a plan [βούλευσα] to slay him with the sharp sword” (*Il.* 9.458).<sup>81</sup> But plural subjects are also common. The Trojans wish to know “whether our foes are planning [βουλεύουσι] flight,” so Dolon goes to Agamemnon’s ship, “where the chief men will be holding council” (βουλὰς βουλεύειν, literally “planning plans,” *Il.* 10.310–11.325).<sup>82</sup> Here communication is certain, as it also is in Achilles’ lament for Patroclus, “Never more . . . will we sit apart from our friends and make plans together” (βουλὰς . . . βουλεύσομεν, *Il.* 23.77–78).<sup>83</sup> Additionally, Nestor’s request that Agamemnon “follow whoever devises the wisest counsel [βουλήν βουλεύσῃ]” (*Il.* 9.74–75) and Odysseus’ reference to a Phoenician who had given him “lying counsel” (βούλευσας, *Od.* 14.295–97) suggest “advise,” that is, producing a plan for another rather than for oneself.<sup>84</sup>

In other archaic texts, βουλεύω indicates not only “plan,” “plot,” and “advise,” but also “conspire,” “deliberate,” and “consult.”<sup>85</sup> These uses reappear in Aeschylus. βουλεύω suggests “plan” in the exclamation of an Argive elder, “One who wants to act must first plan [βουλεύσαι] what action to take” (*Ag.* 1359); “advise” in Prometheus’ sad plaint, “I, though advising [βουλεύων] for the best, could not persuade the Titans” (*PV* 206); and “decide” or “decree” in Eteocles’ declaration, “If anyone fails to obey my authority, a vote of death will be decreed [βουλεύσεται]” (*Sept.* 198).<sup>86</sup>

βουλεύομαι, by contrast, appeared only when the subject was himself or herself the decision-maker, especially when conflict with others was involved. In the line from the *Iliad* quoted above, what will transpire is what Zeus has privately determined upon, as opposed to what he had, apparently, previously promised. Likewise, Theognis’ “think twice and thrice” and Semonides’ description of the “monkey” woman suggest private, even secretive, decision-making. Aeschylus’ sole use of the middle βουλεύομαι is also noteworthy here. When the chorus of maidens defies Eteocles, he tells them, in Sommerstein’s translation, not to “behave imprudently” (βουλεύου κακῶς, *Sept.* 223).<sup>87</sup> “Behave” is far from a literal rendering of βουλεύου, but it aptly conveys the connection between thought and one’s own action that was essential to βουλεύομαι.

The association between βουλεύομαι and deciding one’s own action is further revealed by a significant decline in the relative frequency of the active βουλεύω during the Classical period. In Homer, the proportion of active to total uses was 31/33 (0.94), and in the other archaic poets, 13/15 (0.87). But in Aeschylus it was 12/21 (0.57); in Sophocles, 16/25 (0.64); Euripides, 26/41 (0.63); Pseudo-Xenophon, 4/9 (0.44); Aristophanes, 6/22 (0.27); Herodotus, 23/135 (0.17); Antiphon, 5/15 (0.33); Andocides, 6/19 (0.32); Thucydides,

81. Cf. *Il.* 2.204–6, 9.96, 10.343–44; *Od.* 1.1443–44, 5.22, 9.299, 420, 11.229, 12.55, 14.490, 24.478. “Plot”: *Od.* 5.178, 187, 10.300, 344.

82. Trans. Murray, rev. Wyatt. Cf. 10.398, 14.464; *Od.* 23.217.

83. Cf. 1.531, 2.344–46, 377, 10.415; *Od.* 6.60, 13.439, 16.233–34.

84. Hom. *Il.* 9.74–75; *Od.* 14.295–97, trans. Murray, rev. Wyatt. Cf. *Il.* 10.146, 24.650.

85. Tyrt. frag. 4 in West *IE*<sup>2</sup>; Theog. 69–72, 1050–51, 1088; Pind. *Nem.* 9.37; Phoc. in Orion *Anth.* i.22.

86. Cf. *Ag.* 1223, 1614, 1627, 1634; *Eum.* 696; *Pers.* 758; *Sept.* 200, 248; *PV* 206, 1031.

87. Aesch. *Sept.* 223, trans. Sommerstein (modified). Cf. Ar. *Eccl.* 769–70.

23/110 (0.21); Lysias, 27/58 (0.47); Isocrates, 2/114 (0.02); Xenophon, 11/122 (0.09); Plato, 6/143 (0.04); Isaeus, 0/11 (0); Aeschines, 6/42 (0.14); Demosthenes, 19/164 (0.12); Aristotle, 20/172 (0.12); Lycurgus, 0/9 (0); Hyperides, 0/3 (0); Dinarchus, 2/8 (0.25); and Theophrastus, 0/5 (0).<sup>88</sup>

What accounts for this change is specialization over time. The early prominence of βουλευώ gave way to less frequent usage as some of its functions devolved to other terms. Most importantly, “deliberate,” that is, “come to a decision about one’s own action,” became the near-exclusive province of βουλευόμαι. What had been a way of emphasizing the subject’s authority over an action gradually became standard usage whenever the proposed action was decided by the subject. βουλευώ still performed this function occasionally,<sup>89</sup> especially when the meaning was closer to “plot” than to “plan.”<sup>90</sup> But “plot” was soon taken over by ἐπιβουλευώ, literally “against-plan.”<sup>91</sup> At the same time, “advise” began to be expressed more often by συμβουλευώ, literally “with-plan,”<sup>92</sup> while βουλευώ itself came to denote primarily the activity of formally constituted councils and councillors.<sup>93</sup> Lysias’ speeches contain only one use of βουλευώ that does not indicate council activity,<sup>94</sup> as do those of Demosthenes.<sup>95</sup> Conversely, in Demosthenes, “come to a decision about an action,” expressing no negative intent, was always represented by βουλευόμαι—just as in Aristotle.<sup>96</sup>

Demosthenes and Aristotle were contemporaries (384–322), so we need not be surprised that they used βουλευόμαι in the same way. But we should note how fully Aristotle’s analysis has been confirmed. Our earliest examples of βουλευόμαι suggest not only that it indicated internal deliberation, but that it emphasized the internality of the deliberation taking place. Later, just as Aristotle implies, βουλευόμαι became the standard way to denote coming to a decision about one’s own action. During the same period, however, we also find the first cases of βουλευόμαι used with a plural subject, some of which—unlike in Aristotle—definitely indicated speech.

88. TLG search, last accessed September 10, 2018.

89. Soph. *OT* 618, 1417; *Ant.* 1179; Eur. *Ion* 984; *El.* 618; *Med.* 874; *Or.* 773; *Ar. Av.* 637; *Nub.* 419; *Eccl.* 505; poss. *Pax* 690; *Hdt.* 1.73, 117, 120, 3.84, 6.52, 130, 8.97, 100, 9.106; *Thuc.* 1.85, 97, 132, 2.6, 3.28, 4.15, 37, 41, 51, 74, 5.63, 87, 111, 116, 6.18, 91, 8.50; *Lys.* 3.42; *Dem.* 19.21; *Arist. Met.* 1013a.

90. Soph. *Aj.* 1055; *El.* 1001, 649; *OT* 606; *Ant.* 490; *Trach.* 807; Eur. *Andr.* 804; *El.* 27, 1012; *Hec.* 855, 870; *Med.* 37, 316, 401; *Orest.* 1089; *Rhes.* 862, 950; *Hdt.* 1.11, 210, 5.106, 6.61, 7.197, 9.110; *Antiph.* 1.26, 3.7, 6.16; *Andoc.* 1.95, 2.20; *Aeschin.* 2.115, 117; *Dem.* 19.21; *Din.* 1.30; *Arist. Pol.* 1310a10.

91. *Aesch. Sept.* 29; Soph. *OT* 618; Eur. *Or.* 1237; *Hdt.* 1.24, 99, 183, 209, 210, 2.121, 3.119, 122, 134, 6.65, 137, 8.132; *Ar. Eq.* 894; *Pax* 404, 407; *Thesm.* 83, 335; *Plut.* 570, 1111; frequently thereafter.

92. βουλευώ suggests “advise” at Soph. *Antiph.* 267; *Phi.* 423; Eur. *Hipp.* 89; *Rhes.* 108; *Thuc.* 3.42, 4.68, 6.39, 8.76; *Lys.* 31.31, and seldom thereafter. συμβουλευώ appears in Soph. *OT* 1370; 57 times in Herodotus; *Thuc.* 1.65, 8.68; *Ar. Nub.* 475, 793–94, and frequently thereafter.

93. Usually in the senses “serve on a council” or “sit as a council,” sometimes “give advice as a council/councillor.” Possible attestations: *Hdt.* 6.57; *Xen. [Ath. pol.]* 1.9. Probable: *Ar. Eccl.* 444; *Eq.* 774; *Pax* 690. Certain: *Ant.* 6.45; *Andoc.* 1.75; *IG P* 105.30, 49; *Lys.* 26.10–11. Strikingly, βουλευόμαι was not conventionally used of councils in democracies. It appears only eight times with the Athenian βουλῆ, all atypical for one reason or another. The discursive and decision-making activity of democratic councillors was normally represented by προβουλεύω (first attested *Hdt.* 1.133), where the προ- presumably alluded to its preliminary status (cf. *Arist. Pol.* 1299b30–35). This point is discussed further in Cammack 2020; cf. Andrewes 1954.

94. *Lys.* 3.42 (“plot”). Cf. 13.19, 20, 74; 16.8; 25.14; 26.10–11; 30.10, 22, 23; 31.2, 5, 14, 24, 26, 31–32, 34. Two other attestations are fragments, so the context is unclear.

95. *Dem.* 19.21 (“plot”). Cf. 18.25; 19.154, 286; 21.111; 22.5, 9, 12, 16, 36, 40; 47.44; 57.8; 59.3–4.

96. *Dem.* 4.33, 8.67, 18.235, 272, 19.226, 21.41, 74, 23.12, 27.4, 36.31, 50, 37.13, 47.71, 52.30, 61.34, 41, 56; *Ex.* 19.

## DIALOGICAL DELIBERATION: DECISION-MAKING THROUGH DISCUSSION

The earliest examples of βουλευομαι implying speech are mid-fifth century: “Have they actually decided [βεβούλευνται] to do this to me?” spoken by Sophocles’ Electra in reference to her mother Clytemnestra and stepfather Aegisthus (*El.* 385), and Aeneas’ comment to Hector in Euripides’ *Rhesus*, “if this signaling is a trap . . . we shall deliberate” (βουλευσόμεσθα, 129–30). In neither case is discussion explicitly attested, though it may be assumed.

Elsewhere, discussion is certain. Herodotus, for instance, used βουλευομαι in reference to the first meeting of the seven Persians who conspired to kill the Magian pretender to the Persian throne—a meeting at which they explicitly “exchanged speeches” (ἐδίδοσαν σφίσι . . . λόγους, 3.71). The term reappears in the context of the “constitutional debate” said to have taken place a few days later (3.80).<sup>97</sup> Thucydides used it in military situations, as in “the allies deliberated [ἐβουλευοντο] which of the remaining places they should go against next—the Eleans urged Lepreon, the Mantineans Tegea, and the Argives and Athenians sided with the Mantineans,” and the discussions of Nikias, Alkibiades, and Demosthenes prior to the expedition to Sicily (6.25, 7.47).<sup>98</sup> Dialogical deliberation also appears in Plato, as in Socrates’ comment to Callicles in the *Gorgias* (quoted above), “I once overheard you [pl.] debating [ὑμῶν βουλευομένων] how far you ought to practice wisdom” (487c), and in the *Critias*, where it is said that ten kings “took counsel [ἐβουλευοντο] about common affairs” (119d), agreeing that “if anyone should attempt to overthrow any city . . . they should all lend aid, taking counsel in common” (κοινῇ . . . βουλευόμενοι, 120c–d).<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Xenophon and Lysias used βουλευομαι to describe the decision-making discussions of Athens’ Thirty Tyrants.<sup>100</sup> Another example is supplied by Demosthenes: following a meeting of the assembly, “the envoys met and discussed [ἐβουλευόνθ’] which of them should be left behind” (19.122, trans. Vince).

What can we say about these cases and others like them? To begin with, each involves small numbers of participants. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are two, the senior Trojans in *Rhesus* not many more, the Persian noblemen seven, the Athenian generals three, Callicles and friends four, the kings in the *Critias* ten, the Athenian oligarchs thirty, and the envoys in Demosthenes nine. The number of allies in the Thucydidean passage is unknown, but probably fell within this range.

Next, although βουλευομαι in these examples certainly indicated discussion, so could other verbs. One, encountered above in Aristotle’s report of the ban on discussion among judges, was κοινολογέομαι, “speak together” (*Pol.* 1268b5–10; cf. *Thuc.* 8.63, 98). Others include δίδωμι αὐτοῦς λόγους, “give each other speeches,” as seen in Herodotus;<sup>101</sup> ἀνακοινῶ, “communicate,” found in Lysistrata’s demand, “get your allies’ heads together [ἀνακοινώσατε] and come

97. Cf. 1.112, 133, 143, 2.160, 3.74, 76, 84, 4.102, 119, 137–38, 178, 5.92, 119–20, 6.7, 22, 138, 7.144–45, 173–75, 207–8, 219, 8.4, 7, 18, 40, 49, 57, 71, 75, 108, 130, 9.23, 41, 51–52, 86, 96–97, 106.

98. Cf. 6.1, 46, 93, 7.1, 50, 8.8, 54; *Xen. Hell.* 2.1.6, 31, 6.4.15.

99. Trans. Lamb. Cf. *Meno* 90e–91a; *Charm.* 176c; *Leg.* 784b.

100. *Xen. Hell.* 2.3.13, with 3.27–50; *Lys* 12.25, 50.

101. *Hdt.* 3.71, 76, 84, 6.138, 8.9. Cf. *Eur. Or.* 774.

to some decision [βουλευσασθε]";<sup>102</sup> and διαλέγομαι, "discuss," "argue," or "confer," source of the English "dialogue." διαλέγομαι often appeared in philosophical contexts, and "dialectic" was conventionally contrasted with political speech, as in Plato's *Gorgias* and the opening of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.<sup>103</sup> A more political example appears in a decree quoted in Demosthenes' speech "On the Crown," which directed envoys to visit Philip of Macedon and "confer" (διαλέζονται) with him (18.164).<sup>104</sup>

Another option was κοινόω, "make common" (middle κοινόωμαι, "make common to one another"). An important example appears in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.<sup>105</sup> Hearing Agamemnon's groans, the chorus of elders suspects he has been killed and, in Sommerstein's translation, declares "Let us deliberate [κοινοσώμεθ'] and see if there might be any safe plan to follow" (1346–47). What happens next looks like ideal deliberative practice on the Habermasian model. A small number of speakers (between six and twelve) discuss what the group should do, responding to one another and giving reasons for their positions. Three proposals are advanced: to call for help, to apprehend the murderers on the spot, and to ascertain the facts before proceeding. The last secures general assent and the entire group acts accordingly. This is probably the best ancient Greek example of what many contemporary deliberative democrats mean by deliberation, but it is represented not by βουλεύομαι but by κοινόωμαι.<sup>106</sup>

What distinguished cases where βουλεύομαι was used from those where it was not? The main difference is exactly what Aristotle leads us to expect. βουλεύομαι appeared only when what was reported was not merely discussion but specifically decision-making. Herodotus' constitutional debate is commonly cited for its theoretical content, but the reported context was practical. The future government of the Persians lay in its participants' hands, and after three speeches, a vote was held, with a majority favoring monarchy (3.83).<sup>107</sup> The discussion of Callicles and friends also had a practical purpose: they were deciding what style of life to pursue (*Grg.* 487d). The allies' and generals' next steps, the ten kings' policy-making, the oligarchs' decrees, and the envoys' plans also fall into this category. Conversely, when only discussion, not decision-making, was implied—as in the decree ordering the conference with Philip—a different verb was used.

Most significantly, when βουλεύομαι denoted group discussion, every member of the group took part in making the decision. This is clearest in Herodotus' "constitutional debate," since the speeches culminate in a formal vote. The

102. Ar. *Lys.* 1176, trans. Lindsay. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.8; Isoc. 1.34, 5.19, 235, 12.235; Pl. *Prt.* 314b, 349a; Aeschin. 2.64, 68.

103. Pl. *Grg.* 448e–49b, 500c; Arist. *Rh.* 1354a1. Cf. Isoc. 5.18, 234, 9.34; Pl. *Prt.* 314c–d, 335d–36a; Chambers 2009; Garsten 2006. Xen. *Mem.* 4.5.12 connects διαλέγω to βουλεύομαι.

104. Dem. 18.164, cf. 28, 73; Isoc. 2.46, 15.256; Aeschin. 2.18, 103.

105. Aesch. *Ag.* 1347–71; cf. *Cho.* 673, 716–18; Ar. *Nub.* 197; Thuc. 4.4.

106. The soldiers' assembly at Thuc. 8.76–77, at which numerous speakers engage in mutual exhortation and encouragement, also bears comparison with the Habermasian model. However, again, βουλεύομαι does not appear.

107. The text seems to imply that only the four Persians who did not make speeches actually voted: "these three proposals having been set forth, the four of the seven men declared for the last" (γνώμαι μὲν δὴ τρεῖς αὐτὰ προεκέατο, οἱ δὲ τέσσαρες τῶν ἐπὶ ἀνδρῶν προσέθεντο ταύτη). This suggests that speaking and voting may have been regarded as partly substitutable, in that speaking could be interpreted as a declaration of a vote. That interpretation will be discussed further below.

Thirty Tyrants, too, typically voted on their actions.<sup>108</sup> Majoritarianism is implied in the Thucydidean case: the Mantineans' plan is adopted because it is supported by the Argives and Athenians, leaving the Eleans in a minority. How the kings in the *Critias* reach their decisions is not specified, but we can assume that each attended the meeting not simply to air his opinion, but to take part in deciding policy.<sup>109</sup> The same seems true of Callicles and friends and the envoys in Demosthenes. The decisions they were making were ones in which all could be expected to have a say, not only through their voices but also through their votes.

βουλευόμεαι, then, only represented group dialogue when everyone included in the grammatical subject of the verb was a decision-maker. As we have seen, the final decision could be taken by a vote; establishing a consensus verbally would also have been possible. Either way, the deliberative process culminated in the choice of an action for which the group as a whole would be responsible.

#### AUDIENCE DELIBERATION: DECISION-MAKING AFTER ADVICE

The third model of deliberation found in the ancient sources is a partial combination of the first two. It involved both decision-making and communication, but those who decided (that is, the grammatical subject of βουλευόμεαι) typically did not communicate their reasoning, while those who articulated reasons for or against a given course of action did not decide. This is the model of deliberation to which Aristotle referred when he observed that deliberators “sometimes bring in advisers [συμβούλους δὲ παραλαμβάνομεν], distrusting our own capacity to think things through [διαγνῶναι]” (*Eth. Nic.* 1112b10). I shall call this model “audience deliberation,” since deliberation is in these cases attributed to the decision-making audience as opposed to those who offered their views.

The simplest form of audience deliberation involved a single decision-maker and his advisers. A paradigmatic example is a monarch and counselors. The exiled Athenian tyrant Pisistratus “deliberated alongside his sons” (ἐβουλευέτο ἅμα τοῖσι παισὶ, 1.61), the Milesian tyrant Aristagoras “deliberated with those of his faction” (ἐβουλευέτο ὄν μετὰ τῶν στασιωτῶν, 5.36), and the Persian emperor Xerxes deliberated with those he summoned to assist him (ἐβουλευέτο ἅμα Περσέων τοῖσι ἐπικλήτοις, 8.101). Other examples include a father taking advice from his sons and a husband from his wife (*Hdt.* 2.107, 9.133). This form of deliberation also appears frequently in the writings of Isocrates, as in his address to Philip of Macedon (L5.18; cf. L1.5, 34–5, L2.51–2). In each case the decision-maker received input from others, but the use of βουλευόμεαι in the singular indicates that the final decision was his alone.

Two consecutive speeches in the Demosthenic corpus illustrate the difference between dialogical and audience deliberation. In “Against Olympiodorus,” two men swear to proceed by mutual agreement and take counsel together several

108. The attack on Theramenes described at *Xen. Hell.* 2.3.50 is a notable exception.

109. See further Schwartzberg 2010.

times before relations go sour. Here βουλευόμεαι appears in the plural and κοινή, “in common,” is added for clarity. “Mutual agreement” is κοινή βουλευόμενοι, and the two men’s discussions are represented by ἐβουλευόμεθα . . . κοινή, “we came to a decision together” (Dem. 48.9, 10, 22, 28).<sup>110</sup> This is a clear case of dialogical deliberation: joint decision-making through discussion. In “Against Evergus,” however, although discussion takes place, the decision, and thus the attribution of βουλευόμεαι, falls to one man only. The litigant “deliberated with my friends [ἐβουλευόμεην μετὰ τῶν φίλων] as to what course of action I should pursue” (47.71).<sup>111</sup> Vince offers the apt translation “I consulted with my friends.” The litigant sought his friends’ assistance: he wished to hear what they had to say. But crucially, the appearance of βουλευόμεαι in the singular reveals that his friends did not themselves deliberate. Though his friends addressed him, only the litigant deliberated, because only he decided: a clear case of audience deliberation.

What verb, if not βουλευόμεαι, represented the activity of those who spoke but did not decide? The answer is συμβουλευέω, “advise,” or sometimes a synonym.<sup>112</sup> While the speaker in “Against Evergus” deliberated, ἐβουλευόμεην, his friends advised, συμβουλευόντων (71). Xerxes asked Artemisia to “advise [συμβούλευσον] me as to which of these things I shall best decide [βουλευσάμενος] to do” (Hdt. 8.101), and Isocrates’ friends warned him, “You are about to send something offering counsel [συμβουλεύσοντα] to Philip, a man who . . . surely believes that he more than anyone is able to take counsel [βουλεύεσθαι] by himself!” (5.18).<sup>113</sup>

That βουλευόμεαι and συμβουλευέω often appeared together is no surprise. They represented complementary strands of a single advising/deciding dyad, both parts of which, as we saw above, had previously been expressed by βουλεύω. Their connection is reinforced by the fact that the middle and passive forms of the Greek verb look the same. βουλευόμεαι could mean either “come to a decision” or “be advised.” The English equivalent is “take counsel”: one may take counsel either alone or more literally from others. βουλευόμεαι appears in the latter sense in Aeschylus’ *Choephoroe*: “Since we are not short of friends,” Clytemnestra announces, “we will take counsel” (βουλευσόμεσθα, 718).<sup>114</sup> The mention of friends makes it clear that advice is expected. This situation could equally have been expressed by the middle voice of συμβουλευέω, that is, συμβουλεύόμεαι, “consult,” as seen in Herodotus. When Sesostri’s house is set on fire, “he at once consulted his wife” (συμβουλεύεσθαι τῇ γυναικί), that is, “took advice from his wife” (2.107). Similarly, Masistes, in a moment of uncertainty, συμβουλευσάμενος τοῖσι παισὶ, “consulted his children” (9.113).<sup>115</sup> These cases are equivalent to that in “Against Evergus.” Though communication took place, the singular verb shows that Sesostri and Masistes

110. Cf. Lys. 13.24; Isoc. 17.7; Hyp. 3.12.

111. Cf. Thuc. 1.128; Isoc. 5.69, 12.233; Pl. *Resp.* 400b.

112. E.g., πείθω, “persuade,” Thuc. 1.73; παραινέω, “exhort, recommend, advise,” Hdt. 9.79; Isoc. 2.46, L3.3.

113. Cf. Hdt. 3.156, 5.124, 7.10; Xen. *Hell.* 2.14–15; Isoc. 1.5, 34–35, 44, 2.6, 49–53, 3.8, 12, 17, 5.88, 6.4–5, 8.13, 54–55, 12.170–71, 17.7–8. See also Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1112b8–12, Lys. 22.8–9.

114. A future middle used passively; cf. *Ag.* 844.

115. Cf. Ar. *Nub.* 457; Thuc. 8.68; Xen. *Cyr.* 2.1.7; Pl. *Theag.* 122a; Isoc. 9.44.

decided alone. They were the rulers in these contexts, their wives or children their counselors.

The same pattern appears in cases of what we may call participatory oligarchy, where a group of rulers takes advice from its subjects, except that here, the decision-maker is a collective body rather than a single person. The pseudo-Platonic *Sisyphus* opens with just this scenario. The previous day, the rulers of the Pharsalians had been deliberating (ἐβουλεύοντο), and had “compelled” Sisyphus to advise them (συμβουλεύειν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἠναγκαζόν με, 387c). That Sisyphus is not himself a deliberator is implied both by the βουλεύομαι/συμβουλεύω dyad and by the report of compulsion, and confirmed by the following line: “Now with us Pharsalians it is a law to obey the rulers, should they order one of us to advise them” (ἄν κελεύωσι συμβουλεύειν τινὰ ἡμῶν αὐτοῖς, 387c). Another form of participatory oligarchy appears in Plato’s *Laws*: the elder guardians are to deliberate (βουλεύεσθαι) while the younger ones give advice (συμβουλίας, 964e–5a). Aristotle, too, mentions a form of oligarchy in which “the function of advising is given to all, but only the rulers deliberate” (τῆς συμβουλῆς μὲν μεταδίδοναι πᾶσι, βουλεύεσθαι δὲ τοὺς ἄρχοντας, *Pol.* 1298b28). If the deliberation of the rulers in these cases included discussion among themselves, then what is portrayed is a combination of dialogical and audience deliberation. If not, then the rulers engaged in audience deliberation alone.

Those who deliberated could of course ignore the advice they received. Referring to Xerxes’ desire to return home after the battle of Salamis, Herodotus wrote that in his opinion, “he would not have remained even if every man and woman had counseled [συνεβούλευον] him to do so” (8.103). Presumably those who offered counsel were influential often enough that they usually continued to make suggestions. But, lacking decision power themselves, they were only as influential as the deliberator allowed them to be.

#### DELIBERATION IN ANCIENT GREEK ASSEMBLIES

Three models of deliberation thus appear in the ancient Greek sources. Internal, in which one person makes up his or her mind alone; dialogical, in which a pair or a group comes to a joint decision through discussion; and audience, in which a decision-maker (either single or collective) comes to a decision after receiving advice. This tripartite classification is interesting in itself, since deliberation is not normally analyzed this way: rather, internal and dialogical deliberation alone are typically distinguished.<sup>116</sup> How far did deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies, as represented in our texts, conform to any one of these models?

As discussed above, assembly deliberation has long been interpreted dialogically, although (as we saw) the evidence usually cited is weak. Nonetheless, one very important body of evidence does provide support, namely the use of βουλεύομαι in the first-person plural by assembly speakers with reference to themselves and their audience.

116. See, e.g., Goodin 2008.

In Thucydides, for example, the Spartan king Archidamus exhorts the crowd thus: “Let us not, in so short a part of a day, decide on [βουλευόμεν] so many lives . . . but at our leisure” (1.85). The ephor Sthenelāides responds: “Let no one tell me that we ought to deliberate [ἡμᾶς . . . βουλευέσθαι] only once we have been wronged” (1.86). Diodotus, addressing the Athenian assembly, says “We are deliberating [ἡμᾶς . . . βουλευέσθαι] not about the present but about the future . . . we are not litigating with the Mytilenaeans . . . but deliberating [βουλευόμεθα] about them” (3.44).<sup>117</sup> Further cases appear among the orators. “We imagined . . . that with Boeotia on our side we could take on the whole world,” declared Andocides in 391, “but here we are considering [βουλευόμεθα] how to keep fighting the Lacedaemonians now Boeotia is making peace” (3.25).<sup>118</sup> Isocrates, writing in the person of the younger Archidamus, claimed that “Never . . . has so much has been at stake as in this question which we are now assembled to decide [βουλευόμενοι]” (6.7).<sup>119</sup> Elsewhere, in his own person, he argued that “no good will come of the resolutions made so far . . . unless we determine [βουλευόμεθα] well on the rest” (8.15).<sup>120</sup> Aeschines celebrated Athens’ lawgiver for laying down “the proper manner of deliberating [βουλευέσθαι] . . . when we [ἡμᾶς] gather at meetings” (1.22), and praised attempts to maintain order lest “we not even be able to deliberate” (βουλευέσθαι . . . ἡμᾶς, 1.33). And Demosthenes wrote, “Let us . . . make a plan [βουλευόμεθα] for dealing with these men” (17.17, cf. 9.7); “The really shocking thing is not that we deliberate [βουλευόμεθα] worse than our ancestors . . . but that we do it worse than all other men” (23.21); “Are we never to meet and deliberate [βουλευόμεθ’]?” (24.99); and “You would rightly pay attention if anyone promised that in the matters we are considering [βουλευόμεθα] justice and expediency coincide” (*Ex.* 18).

How should we interpret this material? Two possibilities present themselves. One is that βουλεύομαι was in these cases intended dialogically. The speakers deliberated *inasmuch* as they spoke: accordingly the entire gathering, speakers and listeners alike, may be conceived as engaging in communicative decision-making, the speakers directly and the listeners more vicariously. The other is that βουλεύομαι here denotes not speech-making so much as the broader enterprise in which speakers and listeners are engaged, that is, coming to a decision about the proposal under consideration. On that interpretation, speakers did not deliberate *inasmuch* as they spoke, but *inasmuch* as they played some role in the policy-making process.

How may we choose between these interpretations? Final certainty is impossible, but several points support the latter. For one thing, although (as we saw above) several verbs other than βουλεύομαι—such as κοινολογέομαι, ἀνακοινῶ, and διαλέγομαι—could denote discussion, none was ever used in conjunction with all assembly-goers. διαλέγομαι, “discuss,” is an important case in point. Though it often denoted the activity of orators, it never embraced

117. Cf. Thuc. 6.21, 23.

118. Cf. Andoc. 29.

119. Trans. Norlin; cf. Isoc. 6.51, 56.

120. Cf. Isoc. 8.18, 25, 57, 7.78.

their audiences, nor was *dēmos* ever the subject of this verb, but only its object.<sup>121</sup> Yet if βουλευόμαι in the cases above implied discussion among speakers and listeners—as so many translators have suggested—we would surely expect to find cases where the audience was unambiguously represented as the subject of a verb meaning “discuss.”

For another thing, speakers’ use of the first-person plural to refer to themselves and their audience was inconsistent. In each case quoted above, the speaker had a special reason to emphasize his identification with his audience: he was discussing an external threat to the polis (Archidamus, Andocides, Demosthenes, Isocrates), distinguishing himself from a rival speaker (Sthenelaidēs, Diodotus, Demosthenes), or showing respect to a founding hero (Aeschines). But speakers also often used the first-person plural to refer to themselves and other speakers. Diodotus distinguished between “we who advise” and “you who give matters only brief consideration” (Thuc. 3.44), Demosthenes referred to “all of us who address you” (14.2) and Hypereides, addressing a panel of judges, referred to the assembly (*dēmos*) as “it” and those who spoke before it as “us” (5, cols. 28–29).

Most important, the cases cited above are, to the best of my knowledge, the only ones extant where assembly speakers are represented as deliberators. Every other time βουλευόμαι appears in connection with an assembly, the grammatical subject is the audience alone, while the actions of speakers are represented by another verb such as λέγω, “speak,” δημηγορέω, “address the *dēmos*” or “speak publicly,” or συμβουλευῶ, “advise”—just as in the cases of audience deliberation presented above.

The association of deliberation with ancient Greek assembly audiences is easily established. In Thucydides, Cleon accuses his listeners (ὑμεῖς, “you”) of behaving “more like spectators . . . than deliberators [βουλευομένοις]” (3.38), while other speakers exhort their hearers to “deliberate well” (εὖ βουλευήσθε; e.g., 4.87, 6.17, 36).<sup>122</sup> Andocides noted to the Athenian assembly that “today you are considering [βουλεύεσθε] a peace” (3.12), Aeschines wished “to recall to you the time and circumstances of your deliberations [ἐβουλεύεσθε]” (2.70), Demosthenes argued that other speakers had “made the mistake of submitting to you the wrong subject for deliberation [βουλεύεσθε]” (3.1), Dinarchus described the herald praying “before he hands over to you the task of deliberation [ὑμῖν τὸ βουλεύεσθαι]” (2.14), and so on.<sup>123</sup>

The representation of public speakers as advisers is also easily shown.<sup>124</sup> What the would-be orator must know in order to offer advice (συμβουλεύω) is the topic of the Pseudo-Platonic *Alcibiades* I, Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* 3.6, and Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* 1.4. Aeschines prosecuted Timarchus for failing to live

121. See, e.g., Aeschin. 1.25: “Now this is a reminiscence, fellow citizens, and an imitation of the posture of Solon, showing his customary bearing as he used to address the people of Athens [διελέγετο τῷ δήμῳ τῶν Ἀθηναίων]” (trans. Adams): Cf. Dem. 24.48, 58.45; Aeschin. 2.12; Hyp. 5 frag. 7; [Arist.] *Ath. pol.* 43.6.

122. Cf. Thuc. 1.36, 43, 71, 73, 78, 80, 6.92, 7.14, 15.

123. Cf. Andoc. 1.73, 82, 3.33; Lys. 18.18; Isoc. 6.52, 8.80, 14.16; Aeschin. 2.50, 61, 81–82, 134, 3.69, 120, 150–51, 250–51; Dem. 4.1, 31, 33, 40–41, 5.2–3, 6.5, 28, 8.1, 74, 9.20, 10.1, 28–30, 13.2, 14.39, 15.1–2, 6, 13, 21, 31, 18.24, 65, 86, 18.24, 65, 86, 196, 235–36, 19.5, 13, 34, 96, 206, 23.106, 109, 115, 24.32; Letters 1.2, 8, 2.23.

124. As established by Ober 1989, 317; Kallet-Marx 1994.

up to the moral standards expected of an Athenian σύμβουλος (1.185); Demosthenes asked his audience to “show yourselves willing hearers of those who wish to counsel [συμβουλεύειν] you” (*Ex.* 3); and Dinarchus identified advising (συμβουλεύσαι) as the special duty of public speakers and attacked Demosthenes for occasionally failing to do so (1.35), among many other examples.<sup>125</sup>

Most significant are cases where assembly speakers and listeners are represented as, respectively, advising and deliberating at the same time, and again, examples are plentiful. Some we have already encountered, such as *Protagoras* 319d (“When the Athenians have to decide [βουλευσασθαι] . . . the man who rises to advise them [συμβουλεύει] . . .”).<sup>126</sup> Others appear in *Alcibiades* I, such as “on what subject do the Athenians propose to deliberate [βουλευεσθαι], that you should stand up to advise [συμβουλεύσων] them?” (106c, cf. 107a–e). As usual, the orators prove to be a rich resource. Lysias mentioned how Diocles had “advised you while you were deliberating” (συνεβούλευσε βουλευομένοις ὑμῖν, 6.54). Aeschines recalled Demosthenes saying that he was “amazed at both the listeners and the ambassadors, for they were carelessly wasting time—the listeners wasting time taking counsel [βουλευεσθαι], the ambassadors in giving it [συμβουλεύειν]” (2.49). Demosthenes said that if in the past Athens’ regular speakers had advised (συνεβούλευσαν) well, “there would have been no need for you to deliberate today” (ὑμᾶς . . . βουλευεσθαι, 4.1); “If you will listen with the attention appropriate to men deliberating [βουλευομένοις] . . . I shall be able to advise [συμβουλεύειν]” (5.3); “It is your duty when deliberating [βουλευομένους] . . . to allow freedom of speech to all your advisers [τῶν συμβουλευόντων]” (15.1); and so on.<sup>127</sup>

The Demosthenic *Exordia*, a collection of fifty-six stock openings to assembly speeches, illustrates the general pattern. Out of thirty uses of βουλευομαι, only one, a first-person plural, denotes an action undertaken by both speaker and audience (18, quoted above). Another is first-person singular and refers to the speaker making up his mind about whether or not to speak (19); another, first-person plural, refers to the deliberations undertaken by assembly speakers prior to speaking (50); and yet another is third-person plural and refers to the deliberations undertaken by all men in adversity (43). The remaining twenty-six cases are all second-person plural and denote the activity of the audience in contradistinction from that of the speaker.<sup>128</sup>

#### AUDIENCE DELIBERATION AS COLLECTIVE ACTION

We have thus arrived at an answer to the question posed earlier: Who deliberated when orators orated? Not, at least on the usual representation found in our

125. Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.16, 19, 2.2.15, 2.4.40; Andoc. 4.12; Lys. 10.1, 14.45, 25.27, 33.3; Isoc. 4.3, 19, 170–71, 5.88, 143, 8.1–2, 27, 52–55, 75, 12.170–71; Aeschin. 1.1–3, 1.26, 64, 110–11, 120, 180, 186, 2.29, 49, 65, 79, 157, 165, 158, 225–26, 3.71; Dem. 4.1, 8.1, 4, 73–74, 9.19–20, 10.17, 75, 14.8, 15.1, 18.86, 236. *Ex.* 1, 3, 6, 11, 20, 26–27, 30, 33, 35–36, 56; Din. 1.31, 35–36, 40, 72, 76–78, 81, 93, 2.14, 15; Hyp. 5 col. 28; Pl. *Prt.* 322d–24c; *Grg.* 455b–56a; Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 23–24, 29.

126. Dem. 19.13–14, with Aeschin. 2.65–67; Arist. *Rh.* 1359a.

127. Dem. 15.6, 18.65, 19.13; *Ex.* 6, 26, 27. Cf. Isoc. 12.170; Pl. *Leg.* 949e; [Pl.] *Dem.* 380a–c.

128. Dem. *Ex.* 6.2, 10.1–2, 11.1, 12.2, 18.3 (two cases), 19.1, 20.1, 21.3 (two cases), 22.1, 26.1, 27.1–2, 29.1–2, 30.1, 35.1–2, 36.1, 40.1–2, 47.2, 50.3, 56.3.

sources, the orators themselves, but their audiences, those who turned up at meetings, heard—perhaps with difficulty—the speeches addressed to them, and voted yes or no on the proposals under consideration.<sup>129</sup> While speakers occasionally represented themselves as part of the deliberating group, far more often they were portrayed as playing the distinct role of adviser.

This interpretation raises some important questions. Even if the deliberation performed by ancient Greek assembly audiences did not involve participation in public speech, was it not communicative at all? If not, how could it have been collective? And why should public speakers have been so ready to represent themselves as advisers rather than deliberators? Were not they, too, part of the decision-making *dēmos*?

As is well known, ancient Greek assembly audiences did not sit in silence. *θόρυβος*, “clamor,” was commonplace and could have significant consequences, as in the cases of Cleon’s generalship (Thuc. 4.28) and the “trial” of the Arginusae generals (Xen. *Hell.* 1.7).<sup>130</sup> An extended example of speaker-audience interaction appears in Aeschines’ speech against Timarchus.<sup>131</sup> Autolycus, speaking on behalf of the council of the Areopagos, had let slip a number of double entendres in a speech concerning Timarchus and the result was much laughter and shouting (*μετὰ γέλωτος θόρυβος*, 1.83). Then, “Pyrrandrus came forward to censure you, and he asked the *dēmos* if they were not ashamed of themselves for laughing in the presence of the council of the Areopagos. But you drove him away, replying, ‘We know, Pyrrhandrus, that we ought not to laugh in front of them, but so strong is the truth that it prevails over all the calculations of men’” (1.84, trans. Adams). This “reply” is surely not to be taken literally—Aeschines can hardly have meant that the audience chanted these words in unison—but the important point is clear. Communication in the assembly was not one-way. Audience members often shouted back to those who addressed them. Presumably still more frequently, they also spoke to one another.<sup>132</sup>

Yet such behavior was not represented as dialogue or discussion. As we have already observed, verbs such as *κοινολογέομαι*, *ἀνακοινῶ*, and *διαλέγομαι* do not appear in this context. Nor were either *θόρυβος* or intra-audience conversation regarded as essential to the deliberative process, since (as we saw in the second section above), votes in the Athenian assembly could be taken without debate.<sup>133</sup> Most significantly, *θόρυβος* was typically portrayed as an

129. Bernard Manin has recently represented deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies in the same way. Referring to the debate over Mytilene, he argues that “in such deliberation, the driving element is the *hearing* of *opposed* persuasive speeches” (italics original). Turning to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Manin (2017, 41) writes: “Here, as well, the orators speak, offering opposed opinions and arguments, but the citizens deliberate.”

130. See Andoc. 1.69–70; Isoc. 15.272; Dem. 18.52, 23.19, 47.44, 50.3, L1.3; Ex. 5, 21, 26; Lyc. 1.52, 58, 127; Hyp. 1.2, 20, 4.41; Theophr. *Char.* 7. Discussed in Gish 2012; Hansen 1987, 70–72; Schwartzberg 2010; Tacon 2001; Thomas 2016; Villacèque 2012; Roisman 2004; Wallace 2004. On *θόρυβος* in the courts, see Bers 1985. *θόρυβος* also frequently appeared in military or revolutionary contexts: see, e.g., Hdt. 3.80; Isoc. 4.97; Thuc. 1.49, 4.68; Arist. *Pol.* 1269b39.

131. Cf. Thomas 2016.

132. As the acoustic reconstruction discussed in Johnstone 1996 assumes.

133. Hansen 1983, 123–30; 1987, 90–91. In an important recent paper which I hope to discuss elsewhere, Mirko Canevaro (2018) has argued that audience response played a crucial role in determining which proposals were put to the vote. This is possible, although it is not clear that several competing proposals were often debated in tandem with one another, thus necessitating a choice by the *proedroi* which the audience might have been able to influence.

interruption of the deliberative process, not as a part of it. In the passage quoted from Aeschines above, Pyrrandrus comes forward to “censure” the *dēmos* for its reaction. Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* expects his heckling to put a stop to the day’s deliberations, not to be treated as part of them (37–39, 170–71), and Demosthenes twice explicitly represented crowd noise as an unwelcome distraction from deliberation (5.3, quoted above, and 8.3). Only once is the relationship between θόρυβος and βουλευόμεαι represented more neutrally (Aechin. 2.50–51). By contrast, many other terms are positively associated with βουλευόμεαι (across all contexts): δοκέω, “decide” (188 cases); ἀκούω, “listen” (89 cases); σκέπτομαι, “consider” (55 cases); σκοπέω, “examine” (35 cases); λογίζομαι, “calculate” (19 cases); and ψηφίζω, “vote” (18 cases).<sup>134</sup> Of special interest with respect to assemblies are the imperatives σκέψασθε,<sup>135</sup> σκοπεῖτε,<sup>136</sup> λογιεῖσθε,<sup>137</sup> and ἐνθυμεῖσθε,<sup>138</sup> which parallel the injunctions to “deliberate well” cited above. Again, this suggests that deliberation was associated primarily with internal reflection, just as Aristotle (and Plato) led us to expect.

Yet if the deliberation performed by ancient Greek assembly audiences was not intrinsically communicative, how can it have been collective?<sup>139</sup> It is clear that the ancient Greeks conceived of assembly deliberation as a collective action. Although, as we have seen, βουλευόμεαι often appeared in the plural in this context, suggesting a distributive conceptualization of deliberative activity, it also appeared in the singular with the collective subject *dēmos*.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, collective political action was well theorized by ancient Greek authors, particularly Aristotle, who gave *logos* a central place in his analysis.<sup>141</sup> What if not dialogue could have knitted the actions of an assembly together?

A possible answer is the fact that all audience members heard the same speeches. Having listened to the same set of arguments for and against each proposal under consideration, those present shared in the same deliberative process. This is plausible, and is supported by the fact that listening (ἀκούω) was also commonly represented as a collective action performed by the *dēmos*.<sup>142</sup> Yet if Johnstone is right that many assembly-goers, at least in fifth-century Athens, could not hear the speeches addressed to them, then this may not, perhaps, adequately justify the representation of deliberation by *dēmoi* as collective.

An alternative interpretation starts from a consideration of a wider range of actions performed by the *dēmos*. As well as deliberating and listening, the

134. Word frequency to within fifteen words. *TLG*, accessed April 24, 2018.

135. *Andoc.* 1.144, 3.12, 17; *Aeschin.* 2.7, 51–52, 153.

136. *Aeschin.* 2.69, 160, 3.120, 176; *Dem.* 13.2, 15.26; *Ex.* 10.1.

137. *Thuc.* 6.36; *Dem.* 4.31; cf. *Ex.* 21.

138. *Thuc.* 5.11; *Dem.* 4.31; cf. *Ex.* 12, 26. See also *Andoc.* 2.19, 3.34; *Dem.* 24.32, *Ex.* 10, 18, 30, 32, 35; *Pl. Def.* 414a.

139. I thank *CP*’s anonymous referees for asking me to say more on this issue. Cf. Waldron 1999, 92–123; List and Pettit 2011; Yack 2006; Garsten 2013. For an alternative way of thinking about collective action (to which I am greatly indebted), see Tuck 2008.

140. *Xen. [Ath. pol.]* 1.16; *Aeschin.* 2.60, 67, 109–10, 3.67, 142; *Dem.* 18.74, 165; *Arist. Pol.* 1298b20–30; *Din.* 1.90; *Theophr.* 26.1, *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 34, *IG II<sup>3</sup>* 1 337. Cf. *Dem.* L1.2; *Arist. Pol.* 1298b15.

141. See, e.g., *Arist. Pol.* 1253a7–30. Emphasized particularly by Waldron (1999, 92–123) and Yack (2006).

142. *Aesch. Supp.* 623; *Thuc.* 8.54; *Isoc.* 12.170; *Dem.* 19.8, 35, 236, 21.214, 217, 50.13.

*dēmos* acted (πράσσω),<sup>143</sup> judged (κρίνω),<sup>144</sup> crowned (στεφάνωω),<sup>145</sup> besieged (πολιορκέω),<sup>146</sup> made agreements (συντίθημι),<sup>147</sup> and—most commonly—decided (δοκέω)<sup>148</sup> and voted (ψηφίζω).<sup>149</sup> Strikingly, the *dēmos* did not, in our sources, laugh (γελάω), consider (σκέπτομαι), or examine (σκοπέω), although those actions were, as we have seen, assigned distributively to members of assembly audiences.<sup>150</sup> *Dēmos* was also never the subject of θορυβέω in an assembly, but only on the battlefield.<sup>151</sup> Nor, it bears repeating, did *dēmos* ever govern κοινολογέομαι, ἀνακοινόω, or διαλέγομαι, even though the actions represented by those verbs were surely performed by many—perhaps all—audience-members individually during meetings.

What distinguished actions performed collectively by the *dēmos* from those performed severally by members of that body? The evidence presented above suggests that actions were represented as collective if and when they related directly to the shared purpose for which the members of the group had gathered. Athenian citizens did not meet on the Pnyx to laugh or to shout (although shouting was, this argument implies, an intrinsic feature of hand-to-hand combat). Nor did they gather merely to consider or to reflect. Their thinking was more purposive than that. They gathered to make decisions by voting on proposals of common interest, and any action that could be interpreted as fulfilling that purpose could be characterized as one performed collectively. There were, in fact, two significant communicative elements to this process: simply by turning up, audience members communicated their intention to vote; and they communicated their views by voting, either by raising hands, by balloting, or (in Sparta) by shouting. But the deliberative process was not collective *because* it involved those forms of communication, but *because*—to draw on a less widely discussed part of Aristotle’s definition of political animals—citizens were engaged in a “common task” (κοινὸν . . . τὸ ἔργον)—the task of deciding policy for the polis.<sup>152</sup>

On this view, the *sine qua non* of deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies was the vote, or perhaps more accurately the prospect of one. In contemporary political theory, deliberation and voting have more often been counterposed than conflated.<sup>153</sup> But it was voting that enabled each attendee to participate in the decision-making process, thus giving the proceedings not only their collective character but also their deliberative one. As we saw above, βουλευόμαι denoted a two-stage process, the run-up to a decision and the decision-making

143. Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.12; Dem. 3.30.

144. Lys. 30.30; Dem. 18.165; Arist. *Pol.* 1292a28.

145. Aeschin. 3.34, 35, 36; Hyp. *Lyc. Fr. Ar.* col. 14, l. 22, and numerous inscriptions.

146. Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 20.

147. Xen. [*Ath. pol.*] 2.17.

148. Aesch. *Supp.* 601; Thuc. 4.118; Andoc. 1.28, 79, 83, 96; Isoc. 18.68; Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.2; Pl. *Phdr.* 258a; Dem. 18.29, 75, 84; Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 44. ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ also appears in hundreds of inscriptions.

149. Andoc. 1.77; Lys. 13.59, 30.19; Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.45, 6.3.2; Aeschin. 2.60, 86, 3.36, 47–48; Dem. 18.121, 24.23; Lycurg. 1.16, 41, 113; Hyp. 5 frag. 1; Arist. *Pol.* 1298b3; Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 45.

150. This is true even of Aeschin. 1.84, where one would expect to find γελάω in the singular, since the subject is apparently *dēmos*. Nonetheless, interestingly, Aeschines uses the plural.

151. Thuc. 4.130.

152. Arist. *Hist. anim.* 488a7.

153. See, e.g., Mansbridge et al. 2010; 2012.

moment itself—but it was the decision that made the consideration stage deliberative rather than merely reflective or (in the case of dialogical deliberation) discursive.

The association of assembly deliberation with preparing to vote and voting is widely supported. In the second meeting on the peace with Philip, the *dēmos* deliberated (ἐβουλευέτο) and voted (ἔπεψηφίζετο) at the same time (Aeschin. 2.67). Eteocles in *Seven against Thebes* announces that if anyone fails to obey his command, “a vote [ψηφος] of death will be decided [βουλευέσεται]” (198). *Lysistrata*’s Myrrhine reminds her husband to vote (ψηφιεῖ) for peace, and he rejoins, “I’ll think about it” (βουλευέσομαι, 951–52). The Spartans put the war to the vote (ψηφον) of their allies, in order that it might be “jointly decided” (κοινῆ βουλευσάμενοι, Thuc. 1.87), while the Platonic *Demodocus*, which treats the relationship between advising, deliberating, and voting, takes for granted that the culmination of the collective deliberative process is casting a vote.<sup>154</sup>

The correspondence of βουλευόμαι in the aorist with voting is particularly clear in decrees. In the decree of the allies quoted at Aeschines 2.60, βουλευόμαι in the present tense denotes the ongoing deliberations of the Athenian *dēmos* while the aorist denotes the result of the vote. The aorist also appears throughout the decrees quoted at Aeschines 3.67–69, which concern Demosthenes’ attempt to hurry the Athenians into a decision on peace and an alliance (not to hurriedly begin deliberating about them). *IG II<sup>3</sup> 1 337*, which records a decision of the Athenian council in 333/2, is especially illuminating. The Kitians had asked for permission to found a sanctuary of Aphrodite, and the council agreed “that the *dēmos*, having heard [ἀκούσαντα] the Kitians . . . and any other Athenian who wishes, shall decide [βουλευόσασθαι] as seems to it best.” Deliberation will take place *after* hearing speeches: βουλευόσασθαι, here, can only refer to a vote.<sup>155</sup>

Further support appears in Aristotle. It was noted above that although large groups do deliberate in his work, the details of the process are left open. Yet a significant line appears in *Politics* 4. “They will decide [βουλευόνται] better [βέλτιον] when all deliberate together [κοινῆ βουλευόμενοι], the *dēmos* with the notables and they when with the masses” (1298b20). Evidently Aristotle envisaged a joint meeting of *dēmos* and notables, in which all heard the same speeches and considered the same proposals, rather than two separate meetings like a modern House of Commons and House of Lords, or the Cimmerian *dēmos* and notables mentioned in Herodotus 4.11. The same idea appears in *Politics* 3:

πάντες μὲν γὰρ ἔχουσι συνελθόντες ἰκανὴν αἴσθησιν, καὶ μιν γινόμενοι τοῖς βελτίοις τὰς πόλεις ὠφελούσιν, καθάπερ ἢ μὴ καθαρὰ τροφή μετὰ τῆς καθαρᾶς τὴν πᾶσαν ποιεῖ χρησιμωτέραν τῆς ὀλίγης . . .<sup>156</sup>

For all have sufficient perception when assembled, and when mixed up with the better class benefit the *polis*, in just the same way that unrefined food when mixed up with what is refined makes the whole meal more nourishing than a small amount of refined food alone . . .

154. Cf. Andoc. 1.72, 82; Ar. *Lys.* 507–14; Thuc. 4.87–88, 6.14; Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.49; Aeschin. 2.60.

155. Cf. *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1*; *IG I<sup>3</sup> 40*; Thuc. 6.39: “The many, having listened, judge the best” (κρίναι δ’ ἂν ἀκούσαντας ἄριστα τοὺς πολλοὺς).

156. Arist. *Pol.* 1281b34–39.

Yet why should a decision made jointly by *dēmos* and notables prove “better”? The context of the line from *Politics* 4 supplies a clue. Aristotle was discussing how to improve τὸ βουλευέσθαι in communities where the *dēmos* was maximally powerful, and to this end he proposed increasing the number of elite citizens on the deliberative body; fining elite citizens for non-attendance—the immediate prompt for the line quoted above; electing deliberators or choosing them equally by lot from each class; giving payment for attendance to no more than the number of non-elite citizens needed to balance those in the political class; and eliminating by lot any excess of the former over the latter (1298b10–28). In every case, the goal was to balance the number of non-elite and notable citizens who would take part in deliberation. In other words, Aristotle aimed to boost the elite’s influence on the outcome of a vote.

A final question concerns the distinction between public speakers and deliberating *dēmos* for which I argued earlier. Especially if I am right to emphasize the significance of voting in assemblies, why should orators have been so ready to represent themselves as advisers, distinct from the deliberating group? In coming forward to speak they did not, after all, lose their right to vote. At the end of their speeches they returned to their seats and when the vote was called raised their hands along with everyone else. Moreover, as we have seen, speakers did sometimes use βουλεύομαι in the first-person plural to refer to themselves and their audience. Contrast this with the situation of, say, Xerxes’ adviser Artemisia, who could never have represented herself as deciding an issue jointly with the emperor. Why should assembly speakers, who had the same decision-making power as other citizens, have tended to emphasize the authority of their listeners by contrast with their own?

One possibility is tact, or, less generously, flattery. As Josiah Ober has argued, those who spoke publicly in ancient Greek democracies trod a difficult path. On the one hand, in proposing and debating motions, they provided structurally necessary leadership; on the other hand, their prominence conflicted with democratic ideology, which stressed citizen equality.<sup>157</sup> Consequently, to gain the audience’s goodwill, speakers may have wished to play down their personal influence and to play up that of their listeners. By repeatedly representing their audience as the *polis*’ principal deliberators, they may have been tipping their hats, rhetorically, to the audience’s ultimate political power.

That interpretation is plausible but incomplete. Those who offered advice in assemblies were being perfectly accurate when they excluded themselves from deliberating group, not because they had lost their decision-making power, but because, in speaking, they were effectively casting an early and patently non-decisive vote. Audiences were supposed to keep an open mind during meetings: as Demosthenes argued, “the first step in correct examination [τοῦ σκοπεῖν] is not to have decided [βεβουλευῆσθαι] before you have heard that upon which you should base your decision [βουλευῆσασθαι]” (*Ex.* 18).<sup>158</sup> But public speakers completed their deliberations in advance. Aeschines attributed both his speeches and his silences to “having deliberated” (βουλευσάμενος),

157. Ober 1989; cf. Finley 1985.

158. Cf. *Dem. Ex.* 10, 47, 56.

while Demosthenes claimed that “it is difficult . . . not only to say before you what must be done, but even to have found it out by solitary reflection” (καθ’ αὐτὸν σκοπούμενον, *Ex.* 33).<sup>159</sup> Even those (few, Demosthenes implies) speakers who came forward on the spur of the moment did so because a “timely suggestion” had *already* occurred to them (1.1, *Ex.* 3.1). Most important, speakers did not expect to change their minds on the basis of others’ arguments. For a speaker to vote against the position he had just publicly recommended would have been as incredible as a candidate for office today to publicly endorse his opponent. It follows that in offering advice, speakers self-consciously withdrew from the collectively deliberating *dēmos*—and that is precisely how they are normally represented in our sources.

As we saw above, Thucydides’ Pericles distinguished those who had “besides politics, their private affairs to attend to” from others who “though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters.”<sup>160</sup> Isocrates called orators a “tribe” (γένος) opposed to the majority (πλήθος), while Hypereides characterized speakers as “snakes” distinct from “men,” although he allowed that some were nonetheless useful.<sup>161</sup> The two parties had distinct tasks: speakers made proposals, took a “broad view” and “explored best policy,” discerned the trend of events, forecast results, and offered warnings when necessary,<sup>162</sup> while “the right course for you,” Demosthenes said, “is first to hear the situation next to decide [βουλευσασθαι], and finally to carry out your decision” (19.34, trans. Vince, modified). His obligation was “to tell you what I have convinced myself is advantageous,” his audience’s “to listen, to judge, and if it is your pleasure, to adopt” (*Ex.* 33, trans. DeWitt). Most significantly, it was the audience that was deemed responsible for the actions of the *polis*. “Who sent reinforcements to Byzantium and prevented the entrapment of the Hellespont?” Demosthenes asked, and answered himself: “You, and when I say you I mean the *polis*.” He went on: “Who advised the *polis*, moved resolutions, took action? I did.”<sup>163</sup>

In democratic Athens, this division of labor had legal implications. Speakers could face stiff penalties for making an illegal proposal, for deceiving the *dēmos*, or for speaking when prior immoral behavior disallowed it.<sup>164</sup> By contrast, voting carried no risk at all.<sup>165</sup> Yet, as Demosthenes argued, “No one is ordered or obliged by you to engage in public affairs. When someone comes forward . . . you vote him appointments and put your business in his hands. If he succeeds, he will be honored and to that extent gain more than the masses; but if he fails, is he [merely] to offer excuses and apologies?” That would be “unfair” and “poor consolation” to those he had ruined.<sup>166</sup> As Demosthenes recognized, speakers

159. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.30; Lys. 14.45; Isoc. L3.8, 15.256, Dem. 21.74, 130, 191; Aeschin. 2.35.

160. Thuc. 2.40, trans. Smith. Cf. 3.37–38, 43, 6.39.

161. Hyp. frag. 19.5 (Burt ed.); Isoc. 8.129. Cf. Hyp. 4, Isoc. 8.26; Dem. 21.189–90; Aeschin. 2.74; Lyc. 1.31; Din. 3.19. Cf. Ober 1989, 104–18.

162. Din. 1.35; Dem. 16.1, 18.246.

163. Dem. 18.88, trans. Vince. Cf. *Ex.* 4; Aeschin. 2.160.

164. Aeschin. 1; Dem. *Ex.* 6. Hansen 1974; 1975; Sinclair 1988, 136–62.

165. Thuc. 3.43; Xen. [*Ath. pol.*] 2.17; Dem. 19.182, 21.189–90, 23.4, 24.123, 25.41, 26.4–6; *Ex.* 25; Aeschin. 1.194–95, 2.160; Hyp. 4.4, 9, 27, 31.9.

166. Dem. 19.103–4. Cf. 23.97; Hyp. 4.9.

played an individual role in a political system defined by the rule of the collective. In doing so they knowingly cast themselves outside the collective body.<sup>167</sup> And in disciplining advisers while maintaining its own inviolability, the Athenian *dēmos* merely enjoyed one of the prerogatives of *kratos*, “superior power” or “rule.” Isocrates, Aeschines, and Aristotle all likened the *dēmos* in democracies of their day to a collective monarch, and that characterization had much to recommend it.<sup>168</sup> Xerxes, Darius, and Philip treated their advisers with exactly the same freedom.

#### CONCLUSION

Political deliberation is today often construed dialogically and associated above all with those who speak publicly. Deliberation in ancient Greek assemblies has been interpreted on the same lines, but I have argued against that interpretation. βουλευόμεναι, “deliberate,” was historically associated with internal reflection and was typically ascribed to assembly audiences rather than to those who addressed them. The *dēmos* did not discuss proposals but considered and voted on them. Those who spoke publicly cast themselves outside the deliberating *dēmos*. They acted as advisers, analogous to the advisers to kings found elsewhere in the ancient evidence.

The distinction between speakers who advised and audiences which deliberated is only one aspect of the difference between those who played individual political roles in ancient Greek *poleis* and those who participated in politics through collective action—a difference that I have begun to elaborate elsewhere.<sup>169</sup> But it is important for our conceptualization of ancient Greek democracy. On the dialogical model of assembly deliberation, deliberation was performed by speakers and listeners alike, and both groups comprised the *dēmos*. On the audience model advanced here, *dēmos* denoted those who listened, deliberated, and voted collectively—and thus, in democracies, ruled over the rest of the *polis*, including over their own advisers.

That group has been represented by scholars as more or less “passive,” but a better understanding of βουλευόμεναι confirms that it was the supreme political agent, in the literal sense of acting for the *polis*. The fact that assembly audiences did not engage in public discussion did not make them passive, any more than a king, brooding in silence over the recommendations of his counselors, is a passive figure. Where a *dēmos* differed from a monarch was, of course, in producing its decision through voting. And as far as that practice is concerned, ancient Greek democratic politics does not, after all, look so different from its modern counterpart. There are many undeniable and significant differences between ancient and modern democracy. But the use of the vote rather than the voice as the mode through which ordinary citizens participated in politics was not one of them.

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167. Finley 1985, 62 (quoting Grote); Ober 1989, 295.

168. Isoc. 15.170; Aeschin. 3.233; Arist. *Pol.* 1292a15. See further Landauer 2014; Hoekstra 2016.

169. See further Cammack 2013a; 2013b; 2019.

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